

Character Statement

Former Romar Factory, Ivy Mill, Main Street, Hensingham, Whitehaven

Gleeson have applied to vary the elevational treatments to be used on our developments permitted under 4/21/2489/0F1 and 4/22/2110/0B1 from our Contemporary” stylings to our “Urban” stylings. Both treatments are fundamentally very similar being of traditional brick construction with the variation being limited to:

- Window stylings (most notably a change from grey casings on the contemporary range to white casings on the urban stylings),
- Canopy types (flat on the contemporary and pitched on the urban),
- Fascia colours (black on contemporary, white on urban), and
- Door types (Vertical slit window on the contemporary vs solid 6 panel on the urban).

The local area is characterised by traditional residential properties, predominantly of two storey construction in a detached or semi-detached form with side drive/garage, front and rear gardens. Gleeson’s proposals under the current permissions marry well with this vernacular, and the variation proposals which have been submitted make no alteration to these principles. The primary building material under the newly proposed “urban” stylings is brick, which is the same as the currently approved “contemporary” stylings and as such is no less incongruous than that already approved. Window casings in the local area are almost exclusively white, and so the similarly white casings proposed on the “urban” stylings is significantly more in keeping with the local area than the grey “contemporary” style currently approved. Canopies in the local area are a mixture of flat and various pitched arrangements and so the change in this regard is not considered to be materially impactful against the local area. Fascia colours are predominantly white in the local area and so again the complementary white on the proposed “urban” stylings is more in keeping than the black fascias on the currently approved “contemporary” stylings. Lastly door types are a mixture of colours and styles in the local area, and so the change in this regard is not considered to be materially impactful.

Commentary in respect of character in the delegation reports for the original permissions is relatively brief. In respect of 4/21/2489/0F1 it is noted that:

“This area of Hensingham is characterised by residential properties located in a traditional estate form, with a mix of detached and semi-detached properties. The proposed development would therefore be considered to reflect the existing character of the area. As the development is surrounded by existing development the proposal is not considered to have an impact on the overall landscape and is complementary to the existing built form. The development of this redundant brownfield site also offers the opportunity to regenerate this area of Whitehaven. The

application includes details of a landscaping scheme which will also help the development to reflect the character of the surrounding area and will retain the prominent boundary wall along the site frontage.”

“As part of this application process extensive discussions have been undertaken with the agent with regard to the overall design and layout of the proposed development. As part of these discussions a number of alterations have been secured to the proposal to ensure the overall design of the development fits with the local area. These alterations include reducing the overall number of dwellings from 38 to 37, amending the orientation of dwellings and creating double frontages to provide natural surveillance, amended layouts to reflect the existing and proposed building line within the development and surrounding area, and altering the key boundaries within the site to walls rather than fencing. Based on these amendments, it is considered that the proposed development is of a suitable scale and design which is considered to reflect the character of the surrounding area. The existing wall to the front of the application site is also to be retained, ensuring that the existing traditional boundary which contributes to the character of the area is maintained as part of this development.”

In respect of 4/22/2110/0B1 very little is added other than to say:

“The proposed amendments will allow for the alteration to the external appearance of the house types previously approved. These are the developers ‘contemporary’ style house types which are currently proposed within the adjacent site currently being considered under planning application reference 4/21/2489/0F1.”

“The layout of the development will not be altered therefore the development is not considered to have an adverse impact on any neighbouring properties.”

Comments pertaining to character therefore have been levied primarily at the layout of the schemes as well as high level building form characteristics, rather than individual stylings or elevational treatments. The proposed amendments will do nothing to change the layout of the scheme, the type of housing, or any of the specifically cited points in the combined delegation reports, and as such it is considered that the proposals will continue to be of “a suitable scale and design which is considered to reflect the character of the surrounding area” and which are “not considered to have an adverse impact on any neighbouring properties” respectively.

It is therefore concluded that the proposed amendments would have no material negative impact on the local character, and in a number of elements will be more reflective of and/or complementary to these characteristics than the stylings currently approved.