



BUILDINGS ARCHAEOLOGY CASEWORK TEAM

A National Amenity Society

Mr Christopher Harrison
Planning Case Officer
Cumberland Council
By email: development.control3@cumberland.gov.uk

9th April 2025

**The Flax Mill, Cleator Mills, CLEATOR, Cumbria, CA23 3DT. Application No.
4/25/2097/0F1**

Dear Mr Harrison,

Thank you for notifying the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) about the above application, based on the information supplied with the application, we offer the following observations and advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Cleator Flax Mill, built in 1859, is a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) with an important role the area's industrial and social history. Despite the building's advanced state of dilapidation / dereliction the structure has strong historical and aesthetic value, contributing to its significance. Supporting documents also evidence the site's important contribution to local identity and sense of place, demonstrating high communal value. The CBA therefore warmly welcome this application to restore the mill building back into active use. Heritage led regeneration schemes are proven means of boosting a sense of resilience in an existing sense of place, maintaining an area's social history as a source of local identity and pride.

We broadly support the proposed scheme, especially proposals to carefully restore masonry and the industrial design aesthetic, including the aluminium framed windows and doors. We believe this will be an effective way of restoring and maintaining the building's high quality mid 19th century industrial character.

We support the principle of reusing architectural features from the site within the site wherever possible. Ordinarily we believe such features should be retained in situ for their evidential value around the industrial processes they relate to – the relationship between form and function being key to industrial buildings. However, in this instance we note the building's condition and recognise the comprehensive scheme of works required to bring the building back into active use. All the same, a positive guiding rule of thumb for regenerating

industrial buildings is to retain as much legibility of the building's historic character and historical use as possible.

We note the brick vaulted ceilings on the ground floor. We strongly advise that they should be kept visible if at all possible. The café / informal meeting space could be an excellent location for retaining at least an area of vaulted ceiling exposed.

Whilst it is not a directly heritage concern, the CBA would like to make the observation that it is clear that the flax mill will be an important heritage site for the local community. If there is a way to enable a degree of public access, perhaps to the café space, within the design proposals then it would increase the contribution this scheme can make to benefitting the local area.

I trust these comments are useful to you; please keep the CBA informed of any developments with this case.

Kind Regards,

Catherine Bell. MA (cons), ACIfA
Listed Buildings Caseworker

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) is the national amenity society concerned with protection of the archaeological interest in heritage assets. Local planning authorities have a duty to notify the CBA of applications for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition, under the procedures set out in, **Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification To Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of state (England) direction 2021**.

The Council for British Archaeology conducts our casework free of charge. If you appreciate our work you can support us by becoming a member or making a donation. Your support helps us continue to champion sensitive change to the historic environment

Visit archaeologyuk.org/support-us/donations to donate today

