

**CUMBERLAND COUNCIL**  
**CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

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**Proposal:** Replacement fascia sign will illumination and two projecting signs

**Address:** 6 Market Square, Millom

**Reference:** 4/23/2262/OA1

**Date:** 02/10/23

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**Description:** Number 6 is an unlisted building within Millom's historic Market Square, in many ways the core of the town and the conservation area. The square was laid out in the 1870s and is currently a focus for the Council's regeneration efforts.

**Conclusion: Request design revision**

**Assessment:** Cumberland Council has guidance on design for conservation area, guidance on design of shop fronts, and a conservation area appraisal for Millom. These will be useful in informing the design.

The existing signage is overbearing, overly bright, and fitted with bulky lighting. It can be seen as an example of poor practice that obscures rather than enhances the timber elements of the shopfront below.

This would be a good opportunity to improve the appearance of this property. Our conservation area good practice design guidance urges against use of overly large fascia boards that dominate and spoil the proportions of the shop front. It also urges against internal illumination, or that which is otherwise unnecessary.

The introduction of the wood effect area, providing a darker colour, while splitting the pink areas into two thin bands top and bottom can be seen as an attempt to address some of the issues with the current signage, as is removing the bulky projecting lighting. However this needs to go further.

I suggest the following:

- Reduce the size of the flat area of the fascia by introducing a moulded architrave to the edges and recessing the flat area, which currently has a box design that projects forward several inches across its whole face;
- Focus on how this can visually unite the fascia with the other elements of the shop below – the pilasters and frames – so they look like they belong to the same shop;
- Introduce a single united colour scheme that ties together the whole shop front;
- Avoid the internal halo lighting
- There should not be projecting box signs. Projecting signage may not be necessary at all, but if it is, should be limited to one, ideally positioned near the shop entrance, and of a timber or sheet metal construction with painted lettering;
- Investigate whether any cabling on the shop front can be removed or tidied up as part of the fascia replacement.

There are some good practice examples nearby that would be worth a look, such as The Bakehouse just down St George's Terrace.

Please feel free to make use of the following guidance:

- [Conservation Area Design Guide](#) (Contains guidance on signage and shopfronts)
- [Shop Front Design Guide](#) (Specifically related to shopfronts and their signage, colours elements etc.)
- [Millom Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal](#) (Suboptimal signage on Market Square is specifically referred to here)

These and more can all be found on our [conservation guidance web page](#).

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### **Relevant Policies and Guidance:**

Section 72 of the 1990 Act states that "special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of [a conservation] area."

Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) asserts that "Development that is not well designed should be refused".

NPPF para. 197 states that "In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation..."

NPPF para. 199 states, in the case of designated heritage assets, "great weight should be given to the asset's conservation", irrespective of whether potential harm is substantial, less-than-substantial, or total loss. Where harm to a designated heritage asset is less-than-substantial, it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (para. 202).

Paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states the effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account when making decisions.

Opportunities should be sought for new development within conservation areas and the settings of heritage assets that enhances or better reveals their significance. (para. 206)

The former Copeland Borough Council's Local Plan contains a number of relevant policies:

- Local Plan Policy ST1C(ii) highlights the importance of protecting, enhancing and restoring the Borough's cultural and heritage features and their settings.
- ST1D emphasises the council's commitment to creating and retaining quality places.
- ENV4A stresses the importance of protecting listed buildings, conservation areas and other features considered to be of historic, archaeological or cultural value.
- ENV4C aims to strengthen the distinctive character of settlements through high quality urban design and architecture that respect character and setting.
- DM10 emphasises the need for high quality design and quality places. Part B requires design to respond to local character at multiple scales, paying attention to plot size and arrangement, massing and scale, interstitial spaces, and materials. Part C requires the incorporation of existing features such as landscape and vernacular style.

- DM27A outlines support in principle for developments that “protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic, cultural and architectural character of the borough’s historic sites and their settings”.
- DM27C outlines the restriction in principle of development within conservation areas to that which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.
- DM27D highlights the necessity of avoiding disrespectful alterations, substantial demolition, adverse effects on setting or views, or changes of use that harm the conservation or economic viability of a listed building.

The Conservation Area Design Guide and Shopfront Design Guide are supplementary planning documents adopted in 2017 and 2021 respectively that are material considerations in the determination of planning applications affecting shopfronts within conservation areas in the legacy Copeland area. They are therefore applicable to this application.

Sammy Woodford

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