

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

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**Proposal:** Demolition of existing detached bungalow and erection of replacement dwelling

**Address:** Mellendene, High House Road, St Been

**Reference:** 4/24/2096/OF1

**Date:** 11/04/24

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**Description:** Mellendene is a detached bungalow dating from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century

**Conclusion:** Request design revision

**Assessment:**

- The existing property is not a heritage asset and makes a negative contribution to the conservation area's local character and distinctiveness, though it is small and the plot itself spacious and green. This impact extends to the settings of nearby heritage assets.
- I have no objection on principle to the demolition and replacement of the existing dwelling.
- The new dwelling is somewhat unusual in appearance, but quite low and articulated in a number of different ways, by massing, fenestration, detailing, chimneys, and the flared eaves that subtly reference the Telephone Exchange next door. It should sit quite well alongside The Beeches next door, though that property is largely hidden behind its hedge.
- The area of tarmac for parking and turning will have quite a large impact on the appearance of the site, and will be harmful to the conservation area as a result. I would urge another look be taken at this aspect to find ways of reducing the visual impact of hard surfacing.
- Good quality gardening can do a great deal to improve the appearance of a building, and here the site affords the opportunity. Though it is felt a soft landscaping scheme is not required for mitigation, the parking space proposed at the front of the building off the drive risks compromising the potential of soft landscaping.
- Materials. This is not a historic or imitation historic house, and so there is some latitude with respect to the Conservation Area Design Guide's guidance on materials. However, good quality is still expected.
  - UPVC windows are proposed in places, though these are in anthracite grey, which will help mitigate their impact compared with brilliant white.
  - The bay windows are to be in timber.
  - The front door is to be in oak.
  - Walls will be rendered, with red sandstone used for surrounds and opening.
  - Roof will be slated and dormers lead-clad.
  - Rooflights are to be flush-mounted.
  - Bargeboards are to be in grey uPVC to match the windows, and the soffits in white.
  - These materials should be acceptable
- Overall, I would expect the impact on the conservation area and settings of nearby heritage assets to be neutral, subject to the adjustments mentioned above. Though the proposed dwelling is larger than the existing one, it replaces a dwelling of no architectural merit with one that has some character, articulation, and use of good materials.

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## Relevant Policies and Guidance:

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 establishes a need “in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works [for the Local Planning Authority to] have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest” [Section 16(2)]. This requirement also applies to the granting of planning permission affecting a listing building or its setting [Section 66(1)].

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)

Referring to assets in a conservation area, NPPF para. 207 states that loss of an element that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area should be treated as either substantial (under para. 201) or less-than-substantial harm (under paragraph 202).

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 emphasizes 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.
- ENV4B outlines support for heritage-led regeneration, ensuring assets are put to appropriate, viable and sustainable uses.
- 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 is a supplementary planning document adopted in 2017 that is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within conservation areas in the legacy Copeland area. It is therefore applicable to this application.

Sammy Woodford

Conservation and Design Officer