

**CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

Proposal: Conversion of the vacant bus depot into the charity headquarters for sound wave. Uses include a performance space, recording studio and live lounge, where young people can learn, experiment and make music

Address: Former Bus Station & Garages, Bransty Row & Wellington Row, Whitehaven

Reference: 4/23/2221/0F1

Date: 14/09/23

Description: Site is a former garages associated with the partially-converted former Bus Station. It is located within the north boundary of Whitehaven Conservation Area and is not within the settings of any listed buildings.

Conclusion: No objection

Assessment:

- This response does not supersede my earlier one, but refers to the alterations to the scheme that have been received since then.
- The proposed solar panels to the roof are unlikely to be visible from the surrounding areas of the conservation area, except from the embankment above, looking down, which is mostly inaccessible and at the top consists of private gardens with screening. I anticipate negligible impact from this, and also note that the industrial style of the buildings would more sympathetically suit solar panels than many other more polite or traditional building styles.
- I do not anticipate any impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area from the revised car park arrangement.
- The internal alterations appear to be of neutral impact on the significance of the building.
- Please read this response alongside my earlier one.

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)

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.
- DM13D outlines the need, in converting non-residential buildings within settlement limits, or in subdividing large residential buildings within settlement limits, for conversion works to conserve the character of the building.
- 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".
- DM27B: "Development proposals which have a significant adverse effect on a Scheduled Ancient Monument or its wider site or setting will not be permitted".
- DM27C outlines the restriction in principle of development within conservation areas to that which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.

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