

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Proposal: Detached dwelling with detached garage

Address: Land at Inkerman Terrace, Whitehaven

Reference: 4/21/2494/OF1

Date: 04/06/24

Description: This is a vacant, greened site with mature trees at the boundary, situated on a slope near the south-east end of Corkickle Conservation Area

Conclusion: No objection

Assessment:

- Following a complete redesign, this project has become a flat-roofed, two-storey dwelling sunk down into the hillside.
- It appears a great deal more successful than the earlier iterations, which attempted an uneasy alliance of reference to surrounding historic terraced and semi-detached buildings on Inkerman Terrace and a more neutral standard modern home. This was not successful, and was not helped by the addition of a detached garage, or the topography of the site, with which the design clashed rather than flowing.
- The new design by contrast sits low, presenting a stone faced single-storey wall towards the road. This will give a subtle appearance to passing cars and pedestrians, allowing retention of the views across Whitehaven and retaining something of the pastoral appearance of the site, which is highly unusual within the town in being a field.
- The dwelling is orientated so its volumes follow the gradient, and will take advantage of views and sunlight with the south-east, south-west and north-west aspects.
- In being sedum-covered, the main volume will avoid appearing as a large expanse of flat roof from the upper windows of the houses on Inkerman Terrace, and so will avoid any more than a low level of less-than-substantial harm to their settings. Similarly, the paved rather than tarmacked drive surface and natural stone finish to the wall will also mitigate harm.
- The house is accessed initially via a flight of stairs down from the driveway, curled into the wall, which leads in turn to an internal courtyard. This should provide a dramatic and exciting sense of arrival. Internally, bedrooms and bathrooms, along with an enclosed sitting room, are located on the upper floor, with the lower floor, better connected to the garden, featuring open plan family living.
- Externally, the aluminium framing, rendered walls and glazed balustrading appear appropriate for a house of this style. I would expect them to have little impact on the settings of any nearby heritage assets, or on the character and appearance of the conservation area, as there will be little visibility due to the enclosed nature of the site and presence of garden areas.
- In summary, I think this is a big improvement both in terms of heritage impact and design aspiration.

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 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 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.

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