

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

---

**Proposal:** Outline application for residential development of 27 dwellings with details of new access from Egremont Road and all other matters reserved

**Address:** Land Adjacent to Hensingham House, Egremont Road, Hensingham

**Reference:** 4/24/2430/001

**Date:** 4.02.25

---

**Description:** This site is an area of greenery located to the West of Hensingham House and Hensingham Conservation Area, with access proposed onto Egremont Road south of Hensingham House.

**Conclusion:** No objection

**Assessment:**

- This is an outline development, with an indicative layout and full details for the access. Design matters are therefore reserved.
- Impact on the setting of the conservation area is likely to be minimal, given the relatively concealed location of the site.
- Some heritage impact is expected to the setting of St John's Church (non-designated). The heritage statement should be updated to reflect this.
- Although it's shown within the red line, I was under the impression details of the access were submitted as part of the Phase II application (4/23/2327/0F1).
- Regarding the design of the proposal, this being outline only, comments must be limited to general observation.
- My high level feedback on the design of the houses of Phase II can be taken as applicable to Phase III as well.
- I would draw attention to the following aspects at this stage:
  - Hensingham House has a setting. Conservation areas also have settings. Its contribution to their significance should be commented upon as part of this application.
  - The NPPF contains guidance on achieving good standards of design. This includes:
    - Development that is not well designed should be refused, unless it is reflecting of local guidance and policy, or unless it is outstanding or innovative (Para 139).
  - Copeland area Local Plan policies:
  - DS4 outlines the Council's expectation that all new development will meet high-quality design standards that contribute positively to the health and well-being of residents.
  - DS5 refers to the importance of achieving good standards of design in both hard and soft landscaping
  - DS6 contains expectations for achieving good design quality in Copeland area:

- Promotion of activity. How is the opportunity taken to build in activity for promoting health and wellbeing? Sports England has produced guidance on how to achieve this [Active Design | Sport England](#)
  - Inclusive design, which doesn't exclude those who, for example, are very elderly or have dementia.
  - Designing out crime.
  - Protecting heritage (e.g. setting of conservation area or Hensingham House).
  - Making use of site's topography.
  - Avoiding light pollution
  - Sustainable construction
  - Creation of distinctiveness. The development "feels like a place". What that means is a matter of artistic expression.
  - Use of good quality materials.
  - Create opportunities for social interaction.
  - Appropriate density.
  - Flexible and adaptable in design.
  - Layout maximises solar gain without risk of overheating, natural light access and capacity for renewables.
  - Mitigates noise pollution.
- The National Design Guide also provides a general benchmark for good design quality, and should be consulted.
- The Housing Design Audit published by the Place Alliance in 2020 highlights a number of issues with housing developments that should be addressed, including particularly ever engineered highways and integration of bins and parking.
- To begin responding to these, I would ask questions such as the following:
  - What density of houses makes best use of the site? Does an even fill of detached houses provide the best result, or would it be better if density were higher and part of the site were used as a meadow?
  - How can the development be designed to encourage walking and cycling first, and then car travel?
  - How can parking and bins be integrated into the site successfully?
    - Positioning parking immediately in front of a house is typically the least attractive of the various options.
    - Could parking be in special "car barns", which free up the space immediately around houses for planting and attractive materials?
    - Could parking be divided between a single space to the side elevation of a dwelling (or semi-detached), with the front used for garden, and other unallocated spaces clustered in threes and fours around the development?
    - Does it make sense to position parking and bins on the north side of dwellings in order to keep them shaded and therefore cooler and less visible while freeing up the sunnier southern aspects for gardens, through which the sun would shine into the houses? Perhaps this might have a significant effect on the wellbeing of the occupants.
  - Consider whether separating pavements from road traffic would make for a better pedestrian experience. Alternatively, consider whether omitting pavements altogether and having pedestrians share space with vehicles would encourage lower vehicle speeds and a better pedestrian experience. I have seen this approach done

successfully, combined with a lot of planting and consistent paved surfaces for the lanes, which encouraged very low car speeds.

- What topology is naturally present on the site? How can the houses be arranged to take advantage of it?
- There should be a presumption for significant vegetation presence once the site has matured, consisting of low planting, shrubs and mature trees. Consideration should therefore be given to how this planting will be facilitated.
- It is desirable to consider how front and back gardens can be divided up without introducing an unpleasant series of partition fences. One option would be to do away with fences at all to the fronts of properties, and to ensure high quality dividers to the rears, that will be long-lasting and contribute to the attractiveness of gardens.
- Will any noise protection from the bypass on the West side be needed?

### **Summary:**

I hope this is of assistance in understanding what the Council views as relevant to achieving good design when it comes to housing projects.

The above questions and referenced pieces of guidance and policy indicate the framework against which a worked-up scheme would be assessed. Any detailed scheme will need to demonstrate that it has been produced through deep engagement with it from the outset. It is anticipated therefore that a detailed scheme would differ from the indicative layout shown here.

---

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

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 establishes a need “in considering Paragraph 139 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) asserts that “Development that is not well designed should be refused”.

NPPF para. 212 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. 215).

Paragraph 216 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. 219)

The Copeland area’s Local Plan contains a number of relevant policies:

- BE1 provides for the preservation and enhancement of built heritage assets by:
  - Requiring a heritage impact assessment or heritage statement where the proposal would affect a heritage asset;
  - Giving great weight to the conservation of Copeland’s designated heritage assets when decision making;
  - Ensuring that new development is sympathetic to local character and history;

- Supporting proposals that increase the enhancement, promotion and interpretation of Copeland's architectural and archaeological resources;
- Strengthening the distinctive character of Copeland's settlements, through the application of high-quality design and architecture that respects this character and enhances the setting of heritage assets.
- BE2 states that development should preserve or enhance designated heritage assets (or important archaeological sites) and their settings. The more important the asset, the greater weight that will be given to its conservation. Proposals that better reveal the significance of heritage assets will be supported in principle. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset will require clear and convincing justification.
- BE4 refers to non-designated heritage assets, saying that development should preserve or enhance such heritage assets and their settings. Proposals that better reveal the significance of heritage assets will be supported in principle. Proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets or their settings should demonstrate that consideration has been given to their significance.
- BE5 refers to the design of shopfronts, urging that appropriate shopfronts, whether historic or recent, should be retained and restored as opportunity allows. Proposals relating to them should consider relevant guidance, including the Shopfront Design Guide supplementary planning document.
- DS4 outlines the Council's expectation that all new development will meet high-quality design standards that contribute positively to the health and well-being of residents.
- DS5 refers to the importance of achieving good standards of design in both hard and soft landscaping.

Sammy Woodford

Conservation and Design Officer