

Westmorland and Furness Design Code Context Checklist

LUC

October 2025

Shopfronts Context Checklists

These checklists support the Context section for shopfronts in the Westmorland and Furness Design Code.

The tables below include question prompts for helping you understand the context of your shopfront in three ways:

- Step 1: the Surroundings of the Site - the area around the shopfront
- Step 2: the Site - the shopfront and building it forms part of.
- Step 3: Heritage Checklist – whether there are any heritage assets or historic character to consider

Step 1: Surroundings

Townscape Context	
What is the settlement character of the surrounding area? For example, rural, hamlet or rural village, large village, market town.	
How well-lit is the place? Does it have street lighting? What other forms of lighting are there? Is light pollution a problem?	
Identity	
Are there any notable local buildings or landmarks within the surrounding area?	
Are there any notable views or vistas within the surrounding area? Are there any notable views into and out of the site?	
What is the local building vernacular? What do the older buildings have in common in their design, size and materials?	
What architectural details are common within the area? Or is there a wide variety?	
What building materials are common, both for walls and shopfronts within the surrounding area? Are there any local variations in colours, textures, shapes and patterns?	

Step 2: Site

Existing shopfront: what is its condition? Is it capable of repair and adaptation?	
Existing shopfront: what is the quality of its design? Is it traditional and/or attractive in its own right? Does it look well alongside the rest of the building and neighbouring buildings?	
Topography – How does topography influence the layout and design of the existing building or shopfront?	
Drainage – Where does rainwater drain from the building? Where does water run to and drain outside of the building or shop?	
Existing utilities – Are there existing utilities on site that will need to be considered in the shopfront design?	
Orientation – How does the path of the sun affect conditions on site and outward views? What is the existing microclimate on the site?	
Flood Risk: Is the area or street at risk of flooding? What measures will you implement to mitigate any flood risks associated with the site?	
Visual Impact: How does your shopfront visually relate to the surrounding townscape, and what strategies will you use to preserve important views and sightlines?	
Materials and Sustainability: What local materials will you use for construction, and how will you incorporate sustainable practices, such as external awnings and natural ventilation?	
Accessibility: What features will you include to ensure the site is accessible to all users, including those with disabilities?	

Typical analysis of the surroundings could include:

- Cultural and Historical Influences: Exploration of historical land use and any significant cultural landscapes in the area.
- Architectural Styles: Review of the built environment, noting variations in architectural styles and materials over time.
- Key Views and Vistas: significant views into, out of, and within the site, highlighting any notable sightlines.
- Public Realm Elements: Consideration of street furniture, signage, lighting, and boundary treatments that enhance or detract from the character.
- Local Landmarks: Identification of prominent features or structures that contribute to the area's identity and sense of place.

Step 3: Heritage Checklist

Are there any listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens or world heritage sites within the site or its surroundings (see https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search)? If so, name them here.	
Is the site within a conservation area or its setting? If so, which area?	
If the site is within a conservation area or its setting, are there any relevant key points from the conservation area appraisal ?	
Is the site within a Parish or Town with a Neighbourhood Plan ? If so, which?	
If there is a Neighbourhood Plan, does it have any key messages about local heritage and/or the site?	
Are there any locally listed buildings on or near the site?	
Walking over the site and its surroundings, are there any buildings, structures or features that might be of historic interest?	
Does the shopfront make a positive, neutral or negative contribution to the architecture of historic character of the building and street?	
Is any past activity on the site known? Such as past industry, buildings, businesses or organisations, activity, infrastructure?	

Possible Topics to include in a Historic Assessment:

- A discussion on location and townscape setting
- Built form and the variety or consistency of architectural styles
- Existing and historic views and vistas, especially leading in or out of a settlement
- Building materials and detailing
- Public realm areas – including street furniture, lighting, boundary walls
- Local landmarks

- Intangible elements which contribute to the areas 'sense of place' like a noisy marketplace or serene churchyard