

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
17 May 2020

Dear Ms Morina,

DM/19/03836/FPA Ground Floor 66 Saddler Street Durham DH1 3NP
Change of use from betting shop (sui generis) to restaurant (use class A3) including extraction to side elevation.

City of Durham Trust Objection

This application includes the new side chimney ventilation extract and associated filter panel, and it is these elements that the Trust objects to.

1. Context

Saddler Lane is a County Council maintained rear access (to Moatside Mews/ Tesco and M & Co yard) and is considerably underrated as an asset. This is the only access off Saddler St offering a view up to the World Heritage Site (WHS). It has been negatively affected by lack of maintenance and numerous unsuitable servicing and security interventions on the adjacent buildings. This is despite being in clear view from Saddler Street and offering a view up to the Castle and its foreground trees. The elegant No. 64 and No. 66 buildings frame this view, No 66 being noted in the Conservation Management Plan and draft Neighbourhood plan as a positive asset. The side of No. 66 is otherwise a well-proportioned brick faced backing to the more ornate frontage.

The Heritage Statement included with the application fails to deal adequately with the impact, siting and justification for the flue and filter. It incorrectly states that only the ground floor is subject to the application when the flue extends over first and second floors. Other restaurant premises locally have managed to achieve adequate ventilation without the flues being prominent to public view. No justification for the exposed flue in this position is provided. No indication is given that the County Council has granted air rights for the flue to be erected over the Lane - access for vehicles to the rear yards will also be impaired by the intrusion.

It is suggested by the applicant that the flue ceases to become 'objectionable' because the building is to be used as a restaurant. The Trust maintains that because of the increased numbers of local restaurants and bars no clear additional public benefit or positive contribution to the Conservation Area will exist. Causing harm to the Conservation area should not be ignored simply because a business wishes to adapt the premises. It cannot assist businesses relying on leisure and passing trade to create ugly and poor quality views off Saddler Street.

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There are clearly impacts upon the historic environment caused by the size and prominence of the side extract and filter. Heritage significance impacts are:

World Heritage Site - Impact on the quality of the historic Saddler St. approach and view up to the Castle

Conservation Area - Reduction in quality of the streetscape.

Unlisted Historic Asset - No. 66 is acknowledged as valuable building and paired with No. 64 is makes an important contribution to the historic streetscape that will be damaged by the proposal.

The context for this is that here are cumulative impacts throughout the historic city centre streets on buildings originally in use as domestic, low key retail or commercial buildings. Servicing has frequently been seen as simply a technical issue with no impact leading to the rear of buildings in particular being badly damaged. There is no control exercised over minor works by tradespeople to minimise aesthetic or heritage damage. This extends to the frontages of Saddler Street where cabling is a significant negative factor. The newer, more intensive leisure and student accommodation uses struggle to fit into often relatively small or awkwardly arranged buildings. Rubbish collection and storage is often an associated issue. Because of Durham's topography the rear of buildings are often on view. In addition ancillary views to the WHS are either being blocked or reduced in quality by new developments. Cumulative impact is becoming a prominent issue.

In this instance the proportions and windows of the side of the building have been marred previously by a range of inappropriate low cost ventilation insertions into the window frames. These simply ripped through the frame, inserting fans in solid mounts. The chimney for the ventilation extract and filter will sit directly in the view up to the Castle, further reducing the quality of the view into the rear yard. The window will be inappropriately adapted to receive the extract, and the chimney will spoil the proportions of the building. Together these cause damage to the conservation area through streetscape impact and by reducing the quality of the building as an unlisted positive heritage asset.

The previous window damage needs reinstating and a more sensitive ventilation scheme appropriate to this building and its heritage context fully investigated.

2. Comment

The Trust objects to this application because of the negative impact upon the World Heritage Site, the Conservation Area and an unlisted heritage asset.

Consequently we ask you to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

John Lowe

Chair, The City of Durham Trust