

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

Dear Ms Jennings

DM/20/00832/FPA Land Adjacent to The Lodge Laburnum Avenue Durham

The City of Durham Trust objects to this application.

The proposed garage conversion, extension forward towards the street and increased height will have a substantial impact upon the original layout for the Byland Lodge development. This was carefully designed to give Byland Lodge, as an unlisted heritage asset, due prominence together with its parkland setting. The lower terrace is tucked away to the side, the rear of Byland Lodge is conceived as a mews court with a break before the row of townhouses. The current building is a replacement for the former Lodge building to the larger Byland Lodge house, the double garage was intended to serve both the former Lodge and its replacement. This conserved the break in housing density and small parkland feel of the Byland Lodge development – acting as a setting to the main house. This is essential in upholding the special character of this part of the Conservation Area.

The garages and their forecourt were designed to take cars off the street and out of the view, giving the Lodge an appropriate level of provision for its size. None of this is included in the submitted heritage/design statement. They also provided for bin access and storage and ancillary storage.

The original siting of the garage block, although within the ownership, created some awkwardness in its positioning on the public footpath and the rear access to Laburnum Avenue houses. This was mostly unseen from within the Byland Lodge development. In thrusting the new block forward and upwards it will intrude substantially more against the Lodge and into the green link and footpath up to the open space at the rear of Laburnum Avenue. There are no garage/mews style conversions close to this development and the proposed design bears no resemblance to those illustrated – it appears as a small oddly proportioned house sitting very uncomfortably against the main Lodge, the original Byland Lodge building setting and the adjacent terrace on Laburnum Avenue.

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The proposal will take away the garage and forecourt for the Lodge, bring in two new separate flats and create greater pressure for on street parking. Forecourt car parking is pushed closer onto the public footpath. It will reduce the chances of creating a mixed structure in local housing use and undermines the underlying concept for the Byland lodge development. It removes the original service access for the Lodge, intensifies it, leading to probable bin storage open to the street view. There will be no other storage for the Lodge or the new flats for cycles, for instance. It also severs the original garden space reducing two difficult to access areas and increasing the probability of more close board fencing – one of the least successful elements of the original scheme along with its removal of all the frontage vegetation. The proposal will therefore have a strong negative impact on this part of the Conservation area and Byland Lodge.

It is contrary to following 2004 Local Plan Saved Policies:

E5A Open Spaces within Settlement Areas

The development will detract from the visual value of the adjacent open garden space that contributes to the special character of the settlement.

E2 Conservation Areas

Policy 1 – This development detracts from the setting of the Conservation Area by siting, scale, and design.

H13 Character of Residential Areas

The development will have an adverse effect on the amenities, character and appearance of a residential area and its residents

Q8 Layout and Design – Residential Development

The development fails to meet these requirements by having inadequate amenity and impacting negatively on nearby occupants. It is not appropriate in scale, form and density to the character of its surroundings.

Q9 Alterations to Residential Property

It will create a level of multiple occupation contrary to Policy H9 by having inadequate parking, adversely affecting the amenities of nearby residents, and not being in scale and character with its surroundings. It also adversely alters the character of the new Lodge building.

Accordingly we ask that you recommend refusal of this application.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe
Chair, The city of Durham Trust