

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 Mr Hopper,

DM/19/03968/FPA William Robson House Claypath Durham DH1 1SA (Response date 29/01/20)

Extension and conversion of the multi-level decked car park to from 8no. 2-bed apartments.

City of Durham Trust Objection

The Trust wishes to object to the intensification of residential use that will be caused by this extension and the negative impact on the Conservation Area and trees.

1. Context

The Claypath ridge and its historic buildings are both a key approach into the City and a defining element in views across the City. William Robson House is noted as a key component of the view from Elvet and the ridge roofscape. Screening of the lower areas and the negative car park building is formed by the trees on the landscape areas on public land around the Leazes Bowl roundabout. These are currently screening more in winter than would normally be the case due to very extensive ivy growth.

The proposal not only converts the car park building but increase its height and extent. This pushes the bulk of it to reduce the positive impact of William Robson House and obscures part of the view up to the ridge buildings, again reducing their desirable dominance.

While there is a tree report and assessment submitted, the advice is generic. How the principal trees are to be cut back to accommodate the increased height of the building is not shown. A reserved area for scaffolding is shown but how the trees will need to be trimmed to accommodate the scaffolding that wraps around them isn't shown. As with the previous application for conversion, there remains substantial concern that there will be pressure to cut back the key trees because they heavily shade the bedroom windows. That the living accommodation now opens to the inner courtyard doesn't reduce this probability.

Due to the current intensity of student accommodation on Claypath there is considerable concern about the further intensification caused by substantially increased accommodation being inserted into a compact area. This is considered likely to impact negatively on the residents of Claypath and the Conservation Area, give that student use is probable

The design of the extension is generic and offers no positive impact to justify its prominence in views.

2. Comment

The Trust objects to this proposal based on its negative impact on a positive heritage asset, the Conservation Area and the threat to trees. It also objects on the basis of intensification of accommodation, further student accommodation and the negative impact on local residents and the Conservation Area.

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Yours sincerely,

John Lowe,

Chair, The City of Durham Trust