

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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c/o Blakett, Hart & Pratt, LLP  
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Durham, DH1 1TH  
18 June 2020

**DM/20/01286/LB Mount Oswald Golf Club South Road Durham DH1 3TQ**

**Alterations and extension to existing Manor House to facilitate Registry Office, County Records and Archive Services, and DLI Collection**

**&**

**DM/20/01280/FPA Change of use, alteration and extension to existing Manor House to form Registry Office, County Records and Archive Services, and DLI Collection**

Dear Mr Harding,

The Trust has reviewed these proposals and, while broadly accepting the basic principles of the development, wishes to raise concern with the detailed design and some aspects of the access.

The Trust is not commenting on the relocation of the DLI resources or Registry Office closures and is dealing only with the applications as submitted. The submitted information regarding transport and travel deals with cars, other vehicles and active access by cycle and foot. Information on bus stop positions and footpath access is minimally dealt with. There will be those needing to access the Registry facilities in particular and from some distance away within the County that will have difficulty. Those less able to walk and using the bus system will find access less easy as the new centre lies some way from the Park and Ride and other bus stops. The access to these is not explained clearly. The Trust wishes to know what is proposed within the application site and off site changes to cater for this category of user.

The demolition of part of the listed structure and tree impact are accepted. The conservation statement refers to the once close associations between main house and walled garden. What is the future of the space in relation to these proposals and what is the impact on significance caused by severance?

The basic premise of attaching a contemporary build onto the historic building is a tried and proven approach and can succeed. However, the submitted information lacks detail and adequate illustration of how the design will achieve the necessary quality to back this up. The junction between new and old is often a point of failure where floor divisions and opaque sections destroy the lightness of construction and the offset needed to float the new build free of the existing building.

Noting the artwork to some of the more substantial concrete sections of the rear repository, this remains a more challenging contrast with the existing building on the main southern entrance. In particular the bland and 'heavy' west elevation causes concern. This forms the exit view for those leaving the registry office as an example. It is perhaps more of a

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commercial approach than a bespoke finish appropriate to an insertion against a listed building.

The Trust would wish to see greater attention and finesse in the handling of the these elevations and proof that the east glass frontage will appear as the 'light' and delicate construction need to fulfil the promise of the basic concept.

One final concern is that the application is listed to be decided by delegated authority. Surely an application of such significance for the City and indeed the whole County should be decided by Committee, even in these difficult times.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe

Chair, The City of Durham Trust