

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

Dear Ms Molina.

## **DM/20/02491/FPA 18 Silver Street Durham DH1 3RB**

Change of use of part of ground floor and first and second floors to 9 studio apartments (use class C3) and one small house in multiple occupation (HMO) (use class C4).

The City of Durham Trust is concerned about the nature of the minor changes, the shopfront changes and any implications for the boundary area to the World Heritage Site and its key access points.

Although an unlisted heritage asset, the sensitivities of the building because of its location have already been demonstrated by the World Heritage Site (WHS) Coordinator's comments on the proposals.

While the Trust remains concerned about the impact of student accommodation, in this instance the likelihood of alternative residential use is limited. As the property is large and complex, full use for retail is also unlikely. It therefore accepts the viability case made for conversion to apartments for student use but only if retail is retained on the ground floor, as is proposed.

In addition to the original planning submission, the architect's additional information and input together with the presentation of the developer to the City of Durham Parish Council Planning Committee meeting (02/10/20), have clarified two of the issues with the proposals. The offer to replace the poor quality shopfront is welcome and the means of refuse disposal should avoid street clutter to affect Moatside Lane.

The application details remain without adequate analysis of the building. This is only needed at sufficient detail to guide the various new and replacement fittings.

It is also lacking any detail on impact on boundary trees or any knock on requirements for the Castle boundary wall, also forming the WHS boundary.

The suggestion is that the following details are required to give reassurance that the impact of the change of use and any building changes have a positive rather than negative impact on the WHS and its access points, conservation area and this important historic street:

1. As a minimum a basic age/character analysis is needed for the building given its sensitive location in order to guide the minor changes. It should include age, style and condition of external windows and doors.
2. The analysis should be used to guide the new window and doors or replacements. It should deal with an appropriate style for the shopfront, other traditional

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replacement designs can be seen elsewhere in the city centre. The shopfront design should include details of placement of advertising pending a tenant. As proposed, the first floor frontage replacement window incorporates a discordant mullion arrangement.

3. The condition and treatment of the Moatside Lane tunnel and walls and riverside footpath boundaries should be detailed.
4. The proposed tree works should be identified.
5. The two rear yards appear to rely on the Castle retaining wall for a backdrop, any implications for the development resulting from their superficially inspected condition should be identified. The treatment of the yards needs identifying.
6. To avoid lighting impact the yard lighting should be down facing and the rear rooflights' light spillage minimised.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe

Chair, City of Durham Trust