

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP  
Aire House  
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Durham, DH1 1TH  
9 October 2020

Dear Mr Dalby.

## **DM/19/02199/FPA and DM/19/02200/LB21 Market Place Durham DH1 3NJ**

*Erection of part two storey, part single storey extension to rear to form 1no. self contained 5-bed house in multiple occupation (C4) to 1st and 2nd Floor and additional retail office, storage and welfare facilities to ground floor.*

The Trust wishes to update its response to this application, which has taken 14 months to come to Committee. The Design and Conservation section comment has only now been made available (7/10/20) on the planning portal and in addition both the County Durham Plan and the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan have gained greater relevance as they near final approval.

In the Design and Conservation Section (DC Section) response the full significance of the site and its condition are missed. As with many of the Silver St and Saddler St buildings it is dual aspect in that it faces out onto the riverside and also Back Silver Street and Fowlers Yard. Its significance therefore lies not just with the principal building and Market Place but also at the rear.

The main Market Place frontage has neither been maintained appropriately nor its shopfront designed in a sympathetic style. The rear of this building has been inappropriately extended in a very basic design. It currently falls below the standard of the extensions of the adjacent buildings, 22-23 have a purpose designed extension that steps down the slope and 19-20 have a well designed earlier extension copied in a weaker version by a later addition. The original historic plots for the Market Place properties reached down to the lower levels – the lower area is therefore also very much part of the setting of the listed building. Unfortunately this is suffering from neglect – the part demolished garages and lack of care of steps and terraces have turned this into an eyesore. Substantial attention has been paid to maintain Fowlers Yard in an appropriate manner and in ensuring that the design of the adjacent flats was appropriate to the area.

The existing rear extensions to number 21 are poor in design and appropriateness (including window details) for the dual aspect and listed building to which they are attached. They therefore harm both listed building setting and conservation area. The rear of the building sits in the panoramic view that leads up to the World Heritage Site. Trees that currently soften the view cannot be relied upon as both this and the adjacent site are likely to be subject to substantial tree clearance at some future point due to damage and threat to the application and adjacent site's substantial retaining walls.

The submitted information with the application remains poor and fails to properly identify the significance and relevant history of the site. The DC Section comment misses this and also underestimates the poor quality of the rear and the increase in negative impact of the new proposal. Also missed by both applicant and DC Section is that the rear of the new extension sits on top of very substantial stone retaining wall – absent from the application drawings. The combination will thrust the

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new extension forward into the view up from Back Silver St. The negative impact of the existing extensions will be increased.

Various Durham City Neighbourhood Plan policies now carry weight and are applicable and against which the proposals fail:

- S1
  - c) Failure to harmonise with context
  - d) Failure to actively conserve setting
- H1
  - g) Failure to show relationship to WHS view
  - h) Failure to protect WHS view
- H2
  - a) Failure to respect and enhance relationship to historic building ( inc. wall)
  - c) Doesn't recognise or retain the historic plot boundaries
  - g) Failure to protect Conservation Area views
  - i) Lack high design quality and regard for context and local distinctiveness

Similarly the proposals fail against new County Durham Plan Policies:

Policy 45 – Various aspects relating to quality, positive contribution and enhancement

Policy 46 – No protection or enhancement of WHS immediate setting or views, proposals harm the view.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe

Chair, City of Durham Trust