

c/o Blakett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
10 January 2022

DM/21/04153/FPA and DM/21/04155/LB 12 Elvet Bridge Durham DH1 3AA

Change of use of vacant upper floors to 4 bed HMO (C4) and to install new door within shop front

Dear Mr Spurgeon,

The City of Durham Trust wishes to make an objection to these two applications based on lack of detail, lack of space for bins and bike storage and a failure to make a provision for toilet and kitchen servicing for the remainder retail unit.

Context.

12 Elvet Bridge is a grade II listed building which lies within the Durham City Conservation Area and the inner setting of the World Heritage Site. The building listing describes it as a late 18thC house, converted into a shop. The interior is not mentioned.

The building is in a prominent position on the attractive and characterful approach to Elvet Bridge. It may sit at the break point between the original bridge roadway alignment and the connecting roadway. How the shopfront is dealt with is important in maintaining the street character.

Proposal

The development will include substantial works to the upper storeys and realigning the ground floor stair access to a new street door in the shopfront. There is very little information submitted on the current interior condition, especially where any original features are hidden by boarding or panelling. Space is intensively exploited for bedroom/living space on the upper three floors. This displaces the retail unit toilet, kitchen, and storage on the first floor. No allocation is made for rubbish bins or bike storage, and on the proposed layout this appears to be very difficult to accommodate.

Impact

The Trust is concerned that, without further surveying, something of the original interior (if any is left) may be lost in the works. More concerning is that if bin and bike storage is made on the ground floor this will unreasonably reduce the retail space. There may be knock effects on the shop frontage and this needs particular care to retain its character and ensure its good repair. Adding in the necessary retail unit toilet and kitchen will further reduce the available retail space. Accumulations of rubbish or bins are a particular problem associated with this type of rental premises.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Policies

County Durham Plan

CDP Policy 31.

The development should not be permitted because it cannot be demonstrated that there will not be unacceptable impact, either individually or cumulatively, on health, living or working conditions that can be integrated effectively with any existing business (*provision*). The proposal does not demonstrate that future occupiers of the proposed development will have acceptable living and/or working conditions. The development has the potential to lead to, or be affected by, unacceptable levels of inappropriate odours or other sources of pollution, either individually or cumulatively, and should not be permitted as there is no identified mitigation to reduce the impact on the environment, amenity of people or human health to an acceptable level.

Policy 44 Historic Environment

The development proposals do not demonstrate that they will sustain the significance of a designated heritage asset, including any contribution made by its setting.

Listed Buildings

- b. Respect for the historic form, setting, fabric, materials, and detailing which contribute to the significance of the building or structure is not demonstrated.
- c. Particular regard for the retention of the character and special interest of the building is not demonstrated in proposing an alternative viable use.

Durham City Neighbourhood Plan

Policy E3: Retail Development

The development proposals provide residential accommodation in the upper floors of a commercial property but should not be supported because they will have a negative impact on retail, commercial provision, and the general amenity of neighbouring properties.

Policy H2: The Conservation Areas

Durham City Conservation Area

The development proposal is within, and can affect, the setting of the Durham City Conservation Area. It fails to demonstrate that it sustains and enhances significance as identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal.

The proposals do not meet the relevant requirements, by not demonstrating:

- a) The sustaining and enhancing the historic and architectural qualities of the building; and
- b) The sustaining and enhancing a continuous frontage; and
- e) That there is no loss or harm to an element of an asset which makes a positive contribution to its individual significance and that of the surrounding area; and
- g) Protection of an important view of the Durham City Conservation Area
- j) Having materials and detailing appropriate to the vernacular, context and setting.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe
Chair, City of Durham Trust