

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

Dear Ms Ackerman,

DM/21/03620/FPA 5 Palatine View Durham DH1 4QQ

Chimney pots removed, capped off and ventilation provided by air bricks (retrospective)

The Trust wishes to object to this application based on lack of information and impact within the Conservation Area on an unlisted heritage asset and street character. There is a failure to protect and enhance the house, the terrace, and their character.

Context

This house is part of a continuous terrace frontage, named separately as Palatine View and dated 1895. This is one of two fronting Margery Lane. The terrace is of the same basic design and the original chimney pots are the same type for the two Margery Lane terraces and those immediately behind it. The chimney pots have been altered or lost in a few instances, but the majority are original. This can be clearly observed and is in direct contrast to the applicant's submitted evidence. The roofscape relies for its character on repetition and original features, the chimneys are an important part of this. The Durham County Council Design and Conservation Section recognized the value of this terrace in dealing with a nearby property – *'The significance of the site derives from it forming an integral part of a late Victorian terrace which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area'*.

Ensuring similar treatment to identical buildings is essential in maintaining the character of this street and the City Conservation Area. This has been recognised in the 2007 Article 4 Direction that was set up to ensure that original features were retained and that replacements are authentic. The terraces clustering around the city centre have experienced a cumulative loss of original features and the Trust considers that lack of residence by homeowners and use for student accommodation are contributory causes. The supposed need for capping of chimneys for student properties is noted in the applicant's heritage statement (although removal of chimney pots isn't). This seems to bear out the Trust's view.

Proposal

The chimneys have already been removed and it is not for the Trust to comment on the circumstances. The reason for their loss is not documented in this application other than a reference to the surveyor's noting of internal damp and remedial action. There is no detail of the cause of the damp, alternative solutions retaining the chimney pots or means of ensuring ventilation after their removal. There are commonly available solutions for retaining chimney pots and capping them to prevent rain ingress. Trickle ventilation is also valuable in older properties, and it may be that top ventilation of the chimney stack on this property has been stopped off. The loss of the chimney pots harms the collective impact of the roofscape and

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introduces a discordant element. The Trust suggests refusal of this application and a requirement made for them to be replaced with pots of a similar pattern to the originals and those in the immediate area.

Policies

The proposals are contrary to the intentions of the Article 4 Direction. As submitted, they fail against the following policies:

County Durham Plan

Policy 44 Historic Environment

Conservation Areas

The proposals fail to:

- f. Demonstrate understanding of the significance and character and appearance of the conservation area and how this has informed proposals to achieve high quality sustainable development, which is respectful of local distinctiveness and the conservation or enhancement of the (unlisted) asset;
- h. Respect, and reinforce the established, positive characteristics of the area in terms of appropriate design (including, features, materials and detailing).

City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan

Policy S1: Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions

Conservation, preservation, and enhancement of Our Neighbourhood

The proposal fails to:

- c) Harmonise with its context in terms of materials;
- d) Conserve the significance of the setting, character, local distinctiveness, and the contribution made to the sense of place by Our Neighbourhood's non-designated heritage assets.

Policy H2: The Conservation Areas - Durham City Conservation Area

The proposals fail to:

- a) Sustain and enhance the historic and architectural qualities of buildings,
- b) Sustain and enhance a continuous frontage and roofscape;
- d) Avoid the demolition of assets of historic and/or architectural interest which contribute to the character and appearance of the area;
- e) Avoid harm to an element of an asset which makes a positive contribution to its individual significance and that of the surrounding area.
- j) Have materials and detailing appropriate to the vernacular and context.
- k) Use high quality design sympathetic to the character and context of the local area and its significance and distinctiveness.

The Trust objects to the application, based on the above points.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe,
Chair, City of Durham Trust