

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
15th June 2022

Dear Mr O'Connor,

DM/22/01606/FPA 50 The Avenue Durham DH1 4EB

Demolition of the single storey utility, store, and garage, Construction of a single storey rear extension (Kitchen, Dining Room, Utility and Shower Room), Construction of external store, Reconstruct part rear boundary wall, Internal alterations. Rebuild right hand front bay window that has settled over the years. Install 3 velux rooflights in the house rear main roof, Replace bay windows in Upvc as no. 51 The Avenue, Renew entrance door and frame. Acoustic insulation treatment to party wall with no 51 The Avenue

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

Context

This house is the end of a short terrace of five houses that are part of the grouping of fifteen houses on this side of the Avenue. They are divided by rear accessways. They vary in size between double-fronted and semi-detached/single-frontage. All show similar original detailing but there are changes to some. This house is one of the large double-fronted buildings. It is one of the more prominent buildings in the Avenue and its rear is on view from the access lane (upper storey) and the rear of Crossgate Peth houses.

The windows and bays are distinguishing features with the double front door being original and an important feature on the larger houses. Consistency of brickwork and detailing are important in maintaining the character, integrity, and significance of the terraces. The door and windows appear original on this house, but this is not confirmed.

The County Council's Conservation Area Appraisal notes this street as follows; '*Crossgate Peth and The Avenue are streets of considerable character.*' It includes The Avenue as an unlisted asset and considers that preservation should be the presumption; '*The following buildings are not statutory listed but do make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and through the planning process could be identified as non-designated heritage assets. There is a presumption in favour of preservation of these structures.*'

None of this is noted in the applicant's heritage statement.

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 2016 Article 4 Direction that was set up to ensure that original features were retained and that replacements

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are authentic. The Durham City Neighbourhood Plan reinforces the requirement to ensure positive treatment of such assets and again lists The Avenue as an unlisted asset. Its policies particularly stress the need to *'Sustain and enhance a continuous frontage.'*

Proposal

There is no detail of the current materials, windows, and doors. There is nothing to indicate the extent (or necessity) of the bay rebuild, accepting that its settlement is evident. The proposal is to replace the bay windows with Upvc (to match No 51 The Avenue). This is a false justification, and it is not clear how many other windows are to be replaced. New windows and doors will be used for the rear extension. The double front door is replaced with a single door and side glazing. A discordant French window with glazing is proposed for the rear extension. The rear extension has a discordant section of flat roof inserted to allow for the first floor window. There is, therefore, loss of original windows and the front door and unsuitable replacements.

The proposals are directly counter to the requirements of the Article 4 Direction, the County Council's own policies and Conservation Area Appraisal. It significantly fails against the requirements of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan policies.

Policies

In detail, as submitted, the proposal fails 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 a building,
- b) Sustain and enhance a continuous frontage.
- 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.

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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