

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

Web site: <http://www.DurhamCity.org>

Dear Ms Hurton,

DM/22/02514/LB 7 The College Durham DH1 3EQ

Removal of external coal store to create parking area, internal alterations and introduction of secondary glazing to ground floor windows

The City of Durham Trust submits the following objection to this application based on the negative impact of the parking area on the World Heritage Site (WHS) and Conservation Area.

Context and Proposals

The College is a particularly important part of the WHS as an adjunct to the main Cathedral buildings and has its own distinctive character. It needs careful consideration of changes that will impact on the nature of the setting to the buildings of the College and the Cathedral. Although the South side of the College is less disrupted by parked cars, parking in the College is a detraction from the setting. This is exacerbated by vehicles accessing the Chorister School. The general context for this is the Trust's ongoing concern about traffic pressure on the Peninsula and Saddler Street in particular.

The view of the side of 7 The College is an interesting and positive contribution to the College. This proposal will confirm what appears to be a current ad hoc arrangement for parking against the side of 7 The College. The Trust is concerned that there also appears not to be full utilisation of the rear car park. The move inwards by demolishing the coal store does nothing to diminish the negative impact. The otherwise exemplary heritage analysis does not cover the impact of this part of the proposal.

Although there is no objection in principle to the proposed secondary glazing, there are no details of the window design and, therefore, how they are appropriate to the listed building.

Planning Policies

As submitted, the car parking proposal fails against the following:

County Durham Plan

Policy 29 Sustainable Design

The proposals fail to contribute positively and reinforce local distinctiveness as required by this policy.

All development proposals will be required to achieve well designed buildings and places..., and:

- a. contribute positively to an area's character, identity, heritage significance, townscape and, helping to create and reinforce locally distinctive and sustainable communities.*

Policy 44 Historic Environment

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The proposals fail to 'sustain significance':

Development will be expected to sustain the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting. Development proposals should contribute positively to the built and historic environment.

Conservation Areas

The proposals and submission do not demonstrate understanding or respond to the Conservation Area Appraisal or reinforce positive characteristics of the area.

In determining applications, particular regard will be given to the following:

f. the demonstration of understanding of the significance, character, appearance and setting of the conservation area and how this has informed proposals to achieve high quality sustainable development, which is respectful of historic interest, local distinctiveness and the conservation or enhancement of the asset;

g. the manner in which the proposal responds positively to the findings and

recommendations of conservation area character appraisals and management proposals;

h. respect for, and reinforcement of, the established, positive characteristics of the area in terms of appropriate design (including pattern, layout, density, massing, features, height, form, materials, and detailing).

Policy 45 Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site

The proposals negatively affect the WHS, Cathedral and College setting, and this constitutes 'harm' that is not outweighed by the benefit of the proposals.

The Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site is a designated asset of the highest significance. Development within or affecting the World Heritage Site and its setting will be required to:

a. sustain and enhance the significance of the designated asset;

b. be based on an understanding of the Outstanding Universal Value of the site, having regard to the adopted World Heritage Site Management Plan and Statement of Outstanding Universal Value; and

c. protect and enhance the Outstanding Universal Value, the immediate and wider setting, and important views across, out of, and into the site.

Development that would result in harm to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site or its setting will not be permitted other than in wholly exceptional circumstances.

Durham City Neighbourhood Plan

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

The proposals do not demonstrate the following required principles:

All development proposals should, where relevant and appropriate, demonstrate the following principles.

Conservation, preservation, and enhancement of Our Neighbourhood by:

c) Harmonising with its context in terms of scale, massing, height;

d) Conserving the significance of the setting, character, local distinctiveness, important views, and the contribution made to the sense of place by Our Neighbourhood's designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Policy H1: Protection and Enhancement of the World Heritage Site

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The proposals do not support the WHS Management Plan, are not properly assessed, and do not conserve the WHS setting.

*Development proposals throughout Our Neighbourhood should be shown to sustain, conserve and enhance the setting of the World Heritage Site where appropriate by:
e) carrying out an assessment of how the development will affect the setting of the World Heritage Site, including views to and from the World Heritage Site; and*

The Trust therefore objects to this application based on its failures against the County Durham Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies as discussed above.

Yours sincerely,

John Lowe,
Chair, City of Durham Trust