

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Phone:
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c/o Blakett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
14th December 2022

Dear Ms Woodruff,

DM/22/03524/LB University College Durham Castle Palace Green Durham DH1 3RW

The addition of a secondary double door-set to create inner lobby, the removal and in-filling of 6no. mid-twentieth century stone niches and the removal of 1no. mid-twentieth century timber door-set at the Norman Chapel, Durham.

The City of Durham Trust wishes to comment on this application, it is supportive of the additional doors but sceptical about the justification for the removal of the 20th niches and cupboard doors.

Context

The Chapel is highly valued for both its historic significance and its special character and ambience. For the Trust it is one of the most sensitive parts of the Castle complex.

Proposals

The environmental problems and damage to the Chapel are understood, and the door proposals to help remedy this are supported. The choice is governed by the previously installed door type and is acceptable.

The Trust generally takes the view that more recent changes to historic buildings should not be removed unless there are very pressing reasons and particular attention to conserving character and features. It views 20thC changes as part of the ongoing organic evolution of historic structures. In this instance the removal of niches and the cupboard doors is not accompanied by an analysis of their condition, character, or significance. The niches are a good quality insertion and well-constructed. Replacing the niches will simply exchange a 20thC intervention for 21stC one. There is no statement of why they must be removed, the quality of the reproduction of the submitted plan is poor and the method of repair is not shown clearly. Unless there is demonstrable necessity for their removal they should remain.

Yours sincerely,

Francis Pritchard
Secretary, City of Durham Trust