

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

5 April 2023

Dear Mr Fenwick,

DM/23/00445/FPA 5 New Elvet Durham DH1 3AQ

Installation of new shop front and 2no condensing units upon rear elevation

1. The Trust objects to this application based on the negative impact on the building frontage, New Elvet, and the Conservation Area. No analysis of condition or justification for the new sign or lighting is submitted.

Context

2. This section of New Elvet maintains a character appropriate to an historic street in the centre of the conservation area. Most public house and shopfronts are broadly appropriate for the conservation area, others need improvement. This retail unit is one of five in the block formed from two buildings unified when they were part of the Three Tuns Hotel. All these share the same basic shopfront framework of pilasters and fascias. It is one of a matching pair.

Proposal and Impact

3. The proposal appears to take out the window and door and may keep the basic form. This is difficult to see because it is not explained fully on the drawings that are particularly badly copied onto the planning portal.

4. The signage to the shopfront is out of scale and of a very basic quality, appearing to be boarding fixed over the fascia beneath, and lacking any joinery finesse. It fails to match the fascia size of the adjacent matching unit and the nearby units. It is unnecessary to increase the size in this relatively narrow street. No justification is given for the lighting based on out of hours use although this may be one that would qualify.

5. The impact is negative, there is no positive enhancement. It is the type of poor shopfront alteration that would be picked up in a conservation area survey as needing improvement. It reduces the quality of the block, adjacent shop units and this section of an historic street. It adds to the poor examples opposite. It therefore has a small but assessable negative cumulative impact upon the wider conservation area.

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Policies

6. The Trust considers that the proposals fail against the following planning policies:

County Durham Plan

Policy 29 Sustainable Design

a. The proposals fail to contribute positively to an area's heritage significance and townscape.

Policy 44 Historic Environment

Conservation Areas

f. The proposals fail to demonstrate 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 heritage assets.

Durham City Neighbourhood Plan

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

The proposal fails because it does not:

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

Policy H2: The Conservation Areas, Durham City Conservation Area

The development proposals negatively affect the Durham City Conservation Area by not taking into account, and meeting, the following requirements,

- a) Sustaining and enhancing the historic and architectural qualities of buildings
- b) Sustaining and enhancing a continuous frontage.
- e) Avoiding harm to an element of an asset which makes a positive contribution to its individual significance and that of the surrounding area.
- j) Having materials, detailing and lighting appropriate to the vernacular, context and setting.
- k) Using high quality design sympathetic to the character and context of the local area and its significance and distinctiveness.

Based on these policy failures, the Trust objects to the proposals as currently submitted. They might be more acceptable if they were to be based on the existing shopfront framework and of an appropriate type and quality.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe,
Chair, City of Durham Trust