

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

27th July 2023

Ms Kelly Scott
Planning Development (East)
Room 4/86-102
County Hall
Durham City
DH1 5UL

Dear Ms Scott,

DM/23/01709/FPA and DM/23/01710/AD 22 Silver Street Durham DH1 3RD

*Replacement shop front and installation of first floor gable window
and*

*Rebranding of current front and side signage, replacement of wall mounted signage, replacement
of existing awnings' material*

We first set out below our key objections in summary form so that you can incorporate them into your report. We hope this will be of assistance and ensure that Committee Members are informed of our major points without the risk that our objection letter has not reached the Council's Planning Portal in time for the Committee meeting. It is to be hoped that this risk is avoided, as it is important that not only Members but also that other objectors and indeed the applicant and supporters can see for themselves the views expressed by objectors such as the Trust as part of compiling their own representations.

Summary of Objection

- 1. The building gable end and main façade are prominent in views along Framwellgate Bridge and to the World Heritage Site (WHS)***
- 2. The proposed gable window is very discordant and causes harm to the view over the bridge and to the WHS***
- 3. The Trust objects to these based on failures against County Durham Plan and Durham City Neighbourhood Plan policies.***

Detail

1. The Trust objects to these two applications based on the negative impact of the proposed picture window in the riverside gable and the size of the proposed fascia advertising
2. Framwellgate Bridge is a major access into the city and the two modern buildings that flank the end of the bridge on Silver Street are highly prominent. They are part of views to the WHS and specifically the Castle. The building is adjacent to a partly concealed part of the Bridge.

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3. The riverside gable is very visible in this view and, although a basic and unsympathetic modern building with unsuitable windows, it can be made more discordant. The picture window unbalances the gable and needs to be centralised and of a smaller size in an appropriate style to complement the upper gable.
4. The size of the gable window and main frontage advertising lettering are too large for this very sensitive location and should be reduced.
5. The Trust has no objection to the bifolds doors given that the current shopfront design is an unduly oversized interpretation of an appropriate traditional style.
6. The Trust considers that in this instance the proposed window and advertising cause greater harm than any benefit. It has a negative impact set against the significance of Framwellgate Bridge and the WHS and their importance for the character of the conservation area.
7. The policies that Trust considers these proposals fails against are detailed in the policy appendix below.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe,
Chair, City of Durham Trust

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Policy Appendix

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.
- g. The proposals fail to demonstrate the manner in which the proposal responds positively to the findings and recommendations of conservation area character appraisals and management proposals.
- h. The proposals do not respect reinforcement of, the established, positive characteristics of the area in terms of appropriate design (including, features, materials and detailing).

Policy 45 Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site

The proposals negatively affect the WHS (*castle*) 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 proposal fails because it does not:

- 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 designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Policy H1: Protection and Enhancement of the World Heritage Site

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

Development proposals throughout Our Neighbourhood should be shown to sustain,

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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.

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 continuous frontages, street patterns,
- e) Avoiding harm to an element of an asset which makes a positive contribution to its individual significance and that of the surrounding area.
- i) Having appropriate form.
- j) Having, detailing 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.