

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

10 August 2023

Dear Ms Woodruff,
Planning Development (East)
Room 4/86-102
County Hall
Durham City
DH1 5UL

DM/23/01914/FPA Bell And Ridley Reform Place North Road Durham DH1 4RZ

Demolish building, clear site, construct a wooden pergola for outdoor seating area and change of use to mixed A3 (café/restaurant) and A4 (Drinking Establishment).

The City of Durham Trust objects to this application.

Objection Summary

- 1. The reason for the building's neglect is not referenced.***
- 2. While demolition is necessary, its replacement should be appropriate to the location and the Conservation Area. The current proposals are of a very basic quality.***
- 3. The applicant's submitted photographs show considerable outdoor beer barrel storage. Reform Place is in use as an amenity and access space for the two businesses located there and has further potential as a positive enhancement for the Conservation Area***
- 4. The Trust objects to the proposals based on failures against County Durham Plan (CDP) and Durham City Neighbourhood Plan (DCNP) and policies.***

Objection Details

1. Reform Place is an interesting and distinctive offshoot to North Road and its use by the Head of Steam bar and Coarse restaurant (in the Michelin Guide) is valuable in the local economy.
2. There are indications of a more interesting infrastructure to the building than demonstrated by its external coverings and its current very poor condition. However, the Trust does not oppose its demolition.
3. The Trust believes that Reform Place needs more permanent and appropriately designed proposals than those submitted that are of a very basic and inappropriate quality.
4. The Trust considers that these proposals fail against planning policies that 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).

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 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.