

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

4 August 2023

Mr Graham Blakey  
Planning Development (Strategic)  
Room 4/86-102  
County Hall  
Durham City  
DH1 5UL

Dear Mr Blakey,

**DM/23/01833/FPA Sniperley Farm Durham DH1 5RA**

*Restoration and conversion of existing buildings to form 4no. residential units (use class C3), a farm shop (use class E1) and café (use class E1).*

**Objection Summary**

- 1. The application and its failures demonstrate why it is important to include these buildings in the masterplan for the whole site and to properly incorporate them into the housing proposals adjacent to fulfil the requirements of County Durham Plan Policy 5 e.***
- 2. Part of the farm complex is severed from the main buildings by the artificial application boundary.***
- 3. The proposals fail to properly assess the nature of the farm buildings and utilise this as a basis for conversion and enhancement.***
- 4. There is no assessment of retail need, the type of provision and description of the retail element as a 'farm' shop. It will conflict with other local centre proposals.***
- 5. There is no assessment of parking need and impact on traffic on the A691 in relation to increased use of the former farm access, its proximity to the proposed roundabout nearby, the proposed cul de sac on the main site served by the access road and the existing fire station access.***
- 6. The café element is particularly poorly arranged and the suggested size and design conflict with the main farm building.***
- 7. The Trust objects to the proposals based on failures against National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and County Durham Plan policies.***

**Objection Detail**

1. The Trust objects to this submission based on the proposals' failure to integrate with the main site and the full Sniperley masterplan, its failure to analyse retail need and provision and its traffic impact on the A691. It fails to demonstrate how the proposal integrates with sustainable transport proposals across the full site. It also objects based on negative impact of the proposed café on the provision on the principal farm building.

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2. There was little on the Sniperley site to act as a stimulus for building design and character and the farm buildings offered the only opportunity to create a character area based on enhanced treatment of the buildings through high quality design. The heritage appraisal fails to identify how the farm buildings in the application relate to those immediately outside of it and their potential demolition as shown in the illustrated housing masterplan. The failure to adequately understand the buildings, their character and potential leads to the wholly inadequate suggestion for the café. The illustrated design is highly discordant and detracts from the main farm building. It is overlarge and the design as illustrated is inadequate and the size shown will overwhelm the main building. The potential to utilise the farm buildings adjacent is lost because of their exclusion and suggested demolition.

3. The description as 'farm' shop has no meaning in the context of this site and use is left for future interest by 'entrepreneurs'. The need for and the function of the shop and café are inadequately assessed. Their relationship to the local centre proposed on the other ownership on the Sniperley development is not dealt with. The relationship to the applicant's own housing proposals is minimally explored. The sustainability of the cafe and shop must remain in doubt.

4. The application defers in terms of traffic impact to the principal housing application. No indication is given on how or why this is applicable. The proposed cafe and shop will increase the traffic on the former farm access in addition to that proposed in the adjacent cul de sac on the main housing application. This is not accounted for in the principal site's traffic assessment. Therefore, there is no assessment of traffic impact on the A691. The Trust is concerned that the increased use of the former farm access will cause negative impact given the proximity of the proposed principal site entrance roundabout and the existing fire station access.

5. The Trust has previously drawn attention to the failure of the principal scheme to provide for sustainable transport across the site and through connection to routes beyond the site. The reference in this application is scant and how the shop and café might be accessible is inadequately dealt with. The relationship to the principal application is unexplored.

6. The Trust considers that proposed conversion and additions to the farm complex cause greater harm than any benefit. They have a negative impact on the farm complex. They have the potential to cause negative impact on traffic using the A691. The retail element has the potential both to fail and if successful to negatively impact on the nearby proposed local centre. Sustainable transport connections remain unexplained.

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

## Policy Appendix

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The Trust has identified the following list of NPPF and CDP policies against which we judge the application must fail.

## **National Planning Policy Framework – 2021**

### **Section 2- Achieving sustainable Development (General requirements, determined by local plans and planning submissions)**

- b). A social objective** - well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being;
- c). An environmental objective** –protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

### **Section 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities**

- a)** That promote social interaction,
- b)** That are safe and accessible
- c)** That enable and support healthy lifestyles,

**Para 93.** To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs.

- a)** By planning positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
- e)** By ensuring an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

### **Section 9. Promoting sustainable transport**

#### **Para. 104.**

- a)** Addressing the potential impacts of development on transport networks;
- c)** Ensuring opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued;
- d)** Ensuring the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects,
- e)** Ensuring that patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places

#### **Para 110**

- a)** Ensuring that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes have been taken up.
- b)** Ensuring safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;
- c)** Ensuring that the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code,
- d)** Ensuring that any significant impacts from the development on the transport network in terms of capacity and congestion or on highway safety are mitigated

**Para 112.**

- a) Give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second to facilitate access to high quality public transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services.
- b) Address the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport;
- c) Create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards;

**Section 12. Achieving well-designed places**

**Para 130.** Ensure that the development:

- a) Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area over the short term and the lifetime of the development;
- b) Is visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- c) Is sympathetic to local character and history.
- d) Will establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.
- e) Will optimise the potential of the site to support local facilities and transport networks.
- f) Will create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users

**Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**

**Proposals affecting heritage assets - Para 197**

- a) Ensure that the significance of heritage assets is sustained and enhanced

**County Durham Plan**

**Policy 5 Durham City's Sustainable Urban Extensions**

- e. Ensure that the design of development in the vicinity of Sniperley Hall and Farm will have regard to their character and setting, and the recognition of the area as an Historic Park and Garden of Local Interest, including through the provision of public open space and the use of reduced housing densities
- l. Ensure that there are no unacceptable impacts on highway safety or severe residual cumulative impacts on the wider road network and agree details of on and off-site highway works and improvements as part of the comprehensive masterplan. These works shall include,
  - capacity improvements along the A167 corridor from Neville's Cross to Sniperley, including improvements to Sniperley Roundabout.

A contribution is required to delivering sustainable transport in accordance with policies 21) and 22 (Durham City Transport)

## **Policy 21 Delivering Sustainable Transport**

Ensure that the development will deliver sustainable transport by:

- a. delivering, accommodating and facilitating investment in safe sustainable modes of transport in order of priority: those with mobility issues or disabilities, walking, cycling, bus and rail transport, car sharing and alternative fuel vehicles;
- b. providing appropriate, well designed, permeable and direct routes for walking, cycling and bus access, so that new developments clearly link to existing services and facilities together with existing routes for the convenience of all users;
- c. ensuring that any vehicular traffic generated by new development, following the implementation of sustainable transport measures, can be safely accommodated on the local and strategic highway network and does not cause an unacceptable increase in congestion or air pollution and that severe congestion can be overcome by appropriate transport improvements;
- d. ensuring the creation of new or improvements to existing routes and facilities do not cause unacceptable harm to the natural, built or historic environment.

## **Policy 29 Sustainable Design**

### **Ensure that the development**

- a. Contributes positively to the area's character, identity, heritage significance, townscape and landscape features, and helps to create and reinforce locally distinctive and sustainable communities;
- g. Responds creatively to topography and to existing features of landscape or heritage interest and wildlife habitats;
- h. Respects and takes opportunities to create attractive views of and from the site;

### **Places and Spaces** - Ensure that the development:

- m. Creates a well-defined, easily navigable and accessible network of streets and spaces which respond appropriately to local context, to ensure that:
  1. The public realm is designed to be functional, well-managed safe and durable, taking into account the lifetime needs of its users;
  2. Convenient access is provided for all users whilst prioritising the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, people with a range of disabilities, and, emergency and service vehicles;
  3. That connections are made to existing cycle and pedestrian networks;

## **Policy 44 Historic Environment**

Confirm that the development will sustain the significance of non-designated heritage assets and their setting. Ensure that the development proposals will contribute positively to and enhance the built and historic environment