

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

30 August 2023

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

Dear Ms Walton,

DM/23/02080/LB 17 North Road Durham DH1 4SH

Listed Building Consent for the installation of a new mechanical ventilation system across the ground, first and second floors with exit positions to the rear elevation with 4x louvers(NOTE - this application also proposes the frontage signage)

DM/23/02097/FPA 17 North Road Durham DH1 4SH

Refurbishment of existing licensed premises with installation of new ventilation system extracted onto rear elevation

DM/23/02098/AD 17 North Road Durham DH1 4SH

Illuminated individual letters behind sash window and illuminated individual letters above door behind shared light window

The City of Durham Trust objects to these three application, which should only be decided together, particularly because there is overlap and duplication between the applications and because we wish to draw attention to the heritage significance of this unique building. The advertisement signage application needs to take account of the heritage significance of the building, as set out below, and we note that the signage application includes no Heritage Statement on the online planning portal.

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

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supporters can see for themselves the views expressed by objectors such as the Trust as part of compiling their own representations.

Objection Summary

- 1. There is a failure to adequately assess the building's significance and condition relative to its parts included in the application.***
- 2. The building is important for its architectural role in the Conservation Area and also has cultural significance for Durham. This is made more relevant by its link with the Redhills Miners Hall and its bid for World Heritage status combined with other international workers' assembly halls.***
- 3. The signage as submitted is inappropriate for the principal façade.***
- 4. The architectural and amenity impact of the rear venting is not assessed and the Trust considers that it will have negative impact.***
- 5. The current frontage condition is poor and no new applications should be approved without basic maintenance and repair to it.***
- 6. 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. This was the first miners' hall and reflects the important historic growth of organised labour. It is very significant in the development of the Durham Miners Association. It is in a neoclassical style and is one of the three key buildings in North Road. The tower is a landmark. It is in poor condition with weed growth on the lower entablature and upper balustrade. This potentially threatens the stability of the principal facade. The condition of the rest of the building is not known to the Trust. The Durham City Neighbourhood Plan notes it as a building at risk
2. The first Miners Hall on North Road is a unique building – central to Durham's mining heritage and the birth of trade unionism in Durham. Built in 1875 as one of the earliest trade union buildings in the world. Home to the Durham Miners Association from 1875 to 1915. Replaced by more generous accommodation at Redhills (the 'Pitmen's Parliament') from 1915. The statues of miners' leaders in the grounds at Redhills originally stood on the North Road façade.
3. The North Road Miners Hall is a handsome building. Its clock tower (originally lit with gas) stands proud against the view of Durham Cathedral. Its heritage deserves to be explained to the public in tandem with Redhills. The City of Durham Trust welcomes any initiative to repair the building and bring it back into use. Any renovations need to be sensitive to its heritage.
4. Redhills is currently being revamped with major Heritage Lottery and Durham County Council funding. Redhills' role in the international history of trade unionism is the reason for inclusion as part of a bid to become a World Heritage Site. It is included with other international workers' assembly halls. Should Redhills become Durham's second WHS, then the significance of the first Miners Hall on North Road will become a focus of attention. Its physical condition deserves to be protected, yet the first Miners Hall is currently vacant and stands in a state of apparent neglect on North Road.
5. While the Trust supports new uses for the building over it being left vacant, it is inappropriate to simply install new signage and proceed with that use if the façade surrounding the entry doors is unrepaired.

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6. The signage itself is not appropriate for this elegant building.
7. The rear ventilation is very large and while mostly out of public view is likely to be on view from the rear of houses on Neville Street. There is potential for amenity nuisance from smells and machinery noise.
8. The proposals are inadequately assessed and the condition of the building unreported. The impact of the signage and rear ventilation is negative. The ventilation will cause both architectural and amenity harm. The front signage will cause negative impact to the listed building and therefore the Conservation Area. Continuing neglect of the building's condition will lead to substantial harm to it.
9. The Trust considers that these proposals fail against planning policies that are detailed in the policy appendix below.

Yours sincerely

Francis Pritchard

Secretary, 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 31 Amenity and Pollution

Development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impact, either individually or cumulatively, on health, living or working conditions or the natural environment and that can be integrated effectively with any existing business and community facilities. The proposal will also need to demonstrate that future occupiers of the proposed development will have acceptable living and/or working conditions. **Proposals which will have an unacceptable impact such as through overlooking, visual intrusion, visual dominance or loss of light, noise or privacy will not be permitted unless satisfactory mitigation measures can be demonstrated whilst ensuring that any existing business and/or community facilities do not have any unreasonable restrictions placed upon them as a result.**

Development which has the potential to lead to, or be affected by, unacceptable levels of air quality, inappropriate odours, noise and vibration or other sources of pollution, either individually or cumulatively, will not be permitted including where any identified mitigation cannot reduce the impact on the environment, amenity of people or human health to an acceptable level

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; and

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- b) sustaining and enhancing continuous frontages, street patterns; and
- e) avoiding loss of, or harm to, an element of an asset which makes a positive contribution to its individual significance and that of the surrounding area; and
- i) having appropriate form.....; and
- j) having..... detailing appropriate to the vernacular, context, and setting; and
- k) using high quality design sympathetic to the character and context of the local area and its significance and distinctiveness.....

Policy E4: Evening Economy

All development proposals, including those for a change of use, that would promote and/or support the early evening and night-time economy activity related to food and drink, arts and cultural uses, including later trading, will be supported provided that they contribute to the vitality and viability of the City Centre and add to, and improve, the cultural and diversity offer.

Proposals should include a strategy regarding public safety and appropriate evidence that the development will have no significant adverse effect upon local amenity, including the amenity of local residents.
