

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

Web site: <http://www.DurhamCity.org>

29 September 2023

Dear Ms Walton,

23/02538/FPA and 23/02539/LB, 90 Gilesgate Durham DH1 1HY

Convert existing attic space to bedroom with ensuite, including new staircase from 2nd floor, replacement skylights and alterations to existing bedrooms. Convert outbuilding to office space including alteration to the external walls and roof.

1. The Trust objects to both these applications based on the negative impact of the design of the new garden office space on the outbuilding.
2. The Trust appreciates and welcomes the change to the dormer on the main building and the removal of the existing cladding on the outbuilding. The conjunction of an existing traditional building and a contemporary extension is always difficult to design. The Trust understands the applicant's desire to maintain the floor space and make usable the existing building for a new purpose. In this instance the original unity of the outbuilding, now shared between the properties, and the listing of the application section of the main building and importance of its setting, create a need for great care in the detail of the new extension. Unfortunately, the simple device of extending the roof through in a contrasting material fails to conserve the essential roof form of the building. It seems probable that it will also be difficult to detail successfully.
3. The composite roof cladding will create a particularly inappropriate contrast directly with the slate roof and the pitch sides destroy the geometry of the pyramidal roof due to their height. Similarly, the inline junction between the wall cladding and newly exposed brick is also awkward in appearance. In order to assimilate a new build, the roof needs to be retained in its geometric entirety and a break in form or junction materials is needed to create separation against the new materials. For these reasons the Trust repeats its objection as submitted for the original proposals (letter dated 22 May 2023).
4. Gilesgate is an historic thoroughfare and is important for the quality of its buildings and linear streetscape formed from individual buildings and short terraces. The 1760 property is Grade 2 listed and an important component of the streetscape dominating the corner with West View.
5. The rear building is a pleasing and interesting square shape with pyramidal roof and central vent. It is shown on the 1857 OS map. It was one of a range of farm, light industrial, domestic, and residential buildings lying behind the buildings lining Gilesgate. Based on local information, Nos. 89 and 90 were one house at this time and the outbuilding belonged to it. The houses were subsequently divided, as was the outbuilding, half of which remains with the neighbouring property.

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6. Notwithstanding later modifications, the Trust considers the outbuilding to be both of interest and as a remnant of previous uses to the rear of Gilesgate. It should be considered as one building despite its ownership division and is an important adjunct to, and part of the setting of, the listed building. It is therefore significant in its relationship to the character of the conservation area.

Summary

The Trust considers that the negative impact of the new garden building is not offset by any benefits and is an inappropriate change to the surrounds of this listed building. Based on policy failures (listed below) the Trust objects to the proposals as currently submitted. Should an extension be approved then it should be ensured that it includes a condition covering repair of the roof and central vent.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe,
Chair, City of Durham Trust

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Policies Appendix

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

Designated Assets

The proposals do not demonstrate that this listed asset is to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to less than substantial harm to its significance.

Listed Buildings

- b. The proposals fail to show respect for the historic form, materials, detailing, and curtilage, which contribute to the significance of the building.
- c. The proposals fail to demonstrate the retention of the character and special interest of the building when considering alternative use as apartments.

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 pattern, layout, density, massing, features, height, form, 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 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 considering, and meeting, the following requirements,

- a) Sustaining and enhancing the historic and architectural qualities of buildings
- b) Sustaining and enhancing continuous frontages, street patterns, boundary treatments, floorscapes and roofscapes.
- c) Respecting historic boundaries and curtilages.
- e) Avoiding harm to an element of an asset which makes a positive contribution to its individual significance and that of the surrounding area.

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- i) Having appropriate scale, massing, and 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.