

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

13 November 2023

Dear Ms Woodruff,

DM/23/03221 & FPA & DM/23/03222/LB, 39 Saddler Street Durham DH1 3NU

Refurbishment of existing shopfront with replaced lighting and new framework to fascia to accommodate planting

1. The refurbishment of the frontage is welcomed. The Trust objects to this application based on the negative impact of the planting and framework on the building frontage, Saddler Street, and the Conservation Area. Although not in the works description, the submitted drawings also show external seating on the path area of the street. If this is proposed then the Trust objects to it also.

Context

2. This section of Sadler Street retains much of its character appropriate to an historic street in the conservation area. Its premises and shopfronts are broadly appropriate for the conservation area, some need improvement. This shop has a basic but traditionally styled wood framed structure.

Proposal and Impact

3. The shopfront repairs are very welcome.

4. The proposal does not include the signage but if proposed as shown on the submitted drawings, this would be appropriate.

5. The introduction of the planting and a supporting structure is not appropriate to a traditional shopfront in this historic location. The Trust understands the drive of businesses to distinguish themselves from one another as leisure increases. However, there is no need to move away from traditional design to achieve this. Greater impact is made by the view through the front window and by the quality of service offered. The framework extends out across the busy street and will be vulnerable to vehicle strikes.

6. Saddler Street is the only vehicle access to the Peninsula, it is busy with both vehicles and pedestrians. It is a shared surface with pedestrian areas indicated. The sides are currently often blocked with seating, A boards and cars parked picking up food deliveries. This forces pedestrians into the path of vehicles. It should be unacceptable to place anything on the street. The suggestion for external seating should be refused if it is part of these proposals.

7. The impact is negative, there is no positive enhancement that will result from the planting and structure. It is the type of poor shopfront alteration that would be picked up in a conservation area survey as needing improvement. It will reduce the quality of the adjacent shops, and this section of an historic street. It therefore has a small but assessable negative cumulative impact upon the wider conservation area.

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Policies

8. The policies that fully reinforce the Trust's objection are listed in the attached appendix.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe

Chair, City of Durham Trust

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Appendix Policies

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

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 heritage assets.

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, materials, and soft landscaping;
- 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 a continuous frontage.
- e) Avoiding harm to an element of an asset which makes a positive contribution to its individual significance and that of the surrounding area.
- 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.