

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

27<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Dear Ms Woodruff,

## **DM/23/02958/AD 84 Claypath Durham DH1 1RG**

*Internally illuminated fascia sign - Sign over entrance door to flats above (less than 1.2sqm)*

1. The Trust objects to this application based on the negative impact of the signage on the building frontage, Claypath, and the Conservation Area.

### **Context**

2. This section of Claypath retains much of its character appropriate to an historic street in the conservation area. Most of the public houses, food premises and shopfronts are broadly appropriate for the conservation area, others need improvement. Signage has been a factor in degrading the street character. This shop retains its basic traditional wood framed structure but is marred by the existing signage. There is no signage in the position proposed for the flats entrance.

### **Proposal and Impact**

3. The promised shopfront repairs and tidy up (not covered by this application) are very welcome.

4. The proposal repeats the contemporary sign size and approach that marred the existing shopfront. It increases the impact by using internal lighting and extends the signage coverage by proposing a similar sign for the flats.

5. The signage to the shopfront is out of scale and of an inappropriate material. It is an inappropriate contrast set against the finesse of the wood framing of the original shopfront below. It is unnecessary to have a sign of this size and lettering in this relatively narrow street. No justification is given for the lighting based on out of hours use although this may be one that would qualify. The flats signage is very large in relation to the basic requirement of identifying the flat entrance.

6. The impact is negative; there is no positive enhancement that will result from the signage. It is the type of poor shopfront alteration that would be picked up in a conservation area survey as needing improvement. It reduces the quality of the row of shops, and this section of an historic street. It adds to nearby poor examples. It therefore has a small but assessable negative cumulative impact upon the wider conservation area.

### **Potential Mitigation**

7. In order to make the proposal appropriate, the sign needs to be in an appropriate material preferably painted wood, reduced lettering size and externally lit (if this is fully justified). An ideal proposal would be to introduce something of the original fascia and cornice detailing.

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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

9. 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, 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 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, and lighting 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.