

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
5 December 2023

Dear Ms Beveridge,

DM/23/02728/FPA Replacement Front Door, 53 Hallgarth Street, Durham DH1 1QH

1. The Trust objects to this application based on inappropriate design and materials.

Context

2. This building is adjacent to an important 17C house, one of the oldest residential buildings in Durham. Hallgarth Street is one of the key radial historic streets forming the core of Durham City. The buildings along Hallgarth Street are varied in style and age forming an important part of the character of the Conservation Area. The Keys to the Past website, based on building surveys in Durham, places it as probably 19C and before 1830. It has not retained its original character due to rendering, reroofing and discordant windows and doors being installed. It now stands out as poor in the context of other buildings where appropriate styling of doors and windows has been achieved. The former red door was of an appropriate design but the plastic finish was unsuitable.

It is covered by the Article 4 (2) direction requiring planning permission for such changes as this door. This was established with the intention of preventing loss of original doors and ensuring replacements are of an appropriate style and materials. The County Council advice is as follows:

'Like for like' repairs and replacement of original architectural features will be encouraged, as will the removal of previous unsympathetic changes to historic buildings and the reinstatement of authentic features.'

The Trust stresses that *'like for like'* replacement only applies to original architectural features. In this case the latter part of the sentence applies – *'removal of previous unsympathetic changes'*.

Proposals and Impact

3. The door applied for retrospectively is wholly unsuitable by style and materials. It is clear that the Article 4 direction backed up by the policies of the County Durham plan and Durham City Neighbourhood Plan apply and the change should be refused. It impacts negatively on the listed building adjacent, the historic street and the Conservation Area.

The heritage statement submitted fails to identify fully the context or the significance and characteristics of the building itself. This is also a failure against planning policy.

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Conclusion

4. The application should be refused and the applicant required to submit proposals for an appropriate door. The Trust fully endorses the conclusion drawn by the Council's Design and Conservation team: "the work carried out has neither conserved nor enhanced the character and appearance of the surrounding conservation area, and therefore does not accord with the requirements of NPPF Section 16, CDP Policy 44, and NP Policy H2."

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.
- h. The proposal fails to show respect for, and 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 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; and
- g) protecting important views of the Durham City Conservation Area from viewpoints within the Conservation Area; and
- j) Having, materials and 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.