

2 December 2023

Michael Kelleher
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Dear Mr Kelleher

Energy Efficiency, Renewables and the Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation

The City of Durham Trust is pleased to strongly support the above SPD, which will assist with the implementation of County Durham Plan policies. Given the Climate Emergency, the policy on energy efficiency, renewables and the historic environment is of great importance.

The City of Durham Trust finds the whole document to be judicious and sensitive to the historic built environment. We particularly welcomed the clearly presented tables of examples.

Two areas of concern are replacement of historic windows and doors, and placement of solar panels on historic buildings.

This policy document is strong on the need to replace historic windows sympathetically, ideally with like for like replacements in traditional materials. Wooden windows are to be preferred to uPVC. However, we would like to emphasise the need for this policy to be enforced – that is, to conserve where possible, replace sympathetically, ideally in traditional materials.

External historic doors also need to be sensitively replaced in traditional materials. There are already too many examples of uPVC doors in conservation areas in Durham City. Moreover, the sensitive preservation of historic doors should also apply to interior doors.

On energy efficiency, it should be noted that window shutters can be a traditional means of energy efficiency. Internal and external shutters are a strong tradition in Durham, and ought to be encouraged to be maintained and even used more widely.

Solar panels can be installed in conservation districts and on Listed buildings. King's College Cambridge is currently renewing its lead roof with solar panels. Durham Cathedral and buildings in historic settings could do the same if heritage impact appropriately mitigated. The same is true for other energy efficient modes of heating, such as heat pumps.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

We note that Historic England has recently published a consultation document on Climate Change and Historic Building Adaptation, which might inform County Durham Council's practice. See:

[Climate Change and Historic Building Adaptation - draft for consultation \(historicengland.org.uk\)](https://historicengland.org.uk)

Conclusion

The Trust looks forward to the final Code with hope that the above comments will be reflected in achieving the welcome purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe,

Chair, City of Durham Trust