

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>

28th June 2024

Michelle Hurton
Durham County Council
Planning Development
County Hall
Durham DH1 5UL

Dear Ms Hurton,

DM/24/01474/FPA and DM/24/01475/LB 43-44 Saddler Street Durham DH1 3NU

Replace 1no. ground floor window to front

The Trust objects to the removal of the existing window and its replacement. It considers that there will be loss of an earlier window frame and negative change to the character of the building. There is a lack of clarity and supporting research for the window proposal in the submission in terms of heritage assessment and structural implications.

The context for this proposal is that the distorted front windows have been part of the building for a very substantial period (at least 50 years). They are a very distinctive feature, essential to the character of the building and Saddler Street and familiar to Durham City residents. The building appears to have experienced movement, possibly causing the frame to buckle. If removed there may be consequences, and this needs further exploration. Removal and reuse of the existing glass may well prove very difficult. The corner has curved panes, again essential to the character of the frontage and its entrance. The street character plays an important part in forming an appropriate route into the World Heritage Site. It also has a role in attracting visitors and customers to the street and restaurant premises such as this. Ensuring that character is maintained should be considered a visitor and commercial factor.

The Trust is therefore concerned that there is insufficient research into the age and structure of the window. There may be indications of an earlier installation date. The proposal will remove existing framing and replace it with a regular frame, with no indication of how the curved glass is to be retained or replaced. The proposal is very basic and needs greater sensitivity to the significance of the building and windows in this important location. The Trust considers that the loss of the existing frame and the new replacement will create unacceptable character change and negatively impact the building and street. The damage to the window is very unfortunate but repair should be the solution. *(The policies the proposal fails against are listed in the following 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

Listed Buildings

- b. The proposals fail to show respect for the setting, fabric, materials, detailing, and which contribute to the significance of the building or structure.

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.
- 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,
- 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.