

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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24th July 2024

Mark Sandford  
Planning  
PO Box 274  
Durham County Council  
Stanley  
County Durham  
DH8 1HG

Dear Mr Sandford,

## **DM/24/01694/FPA 19A Silver Street Durham DH1 3RB**

*Installation of glazed outdoor seating area and retractable canopy to rear, replacement windows and internal alterations to facilitate use as cafe and desserts lounge*

The City of Durham Trust objects to this proposal based on inappropriate design. The proposals will have an adverse impact on the Conservation Area and a key approach to the riverside and the World Heritage Site (WHS).

The context for this proposal is important and sensitive to change. The vennel is a principal access to both the riverside path and Windy Gap, a historic access into the WHS. The building is described as 20thC but appears more likely to be 19thC. It is typical of a type of small additional building added in difficult locations where there has been lack of development space. As such buildings evolve, they create a more organic character particularly as the scale of the buildings reduces with site availability. Although the wall forming the backdrop to the yard is not part of the WHS defensive walls, it is stone and from an earlier building period. The collection of buildings is the built response to expansion outside of the defensive walling and is part of the immediate setting to the WHS on a key approach. It should be noted that the site was included in the proposed expansion area of the WHS.

The yard has been previously used successfully as an outside seating area with small patio canopies. The Trust considers that use of the yard is important. The vennel and adjacent buildings have suffered from poor development and lack of upgrading and maintenance. The historical relevance, sensitivity of the setting and the path approach have not been recognised in the submitted Heritage Statement.

The yard proposal is a contemporary and standard metal pergola with PVC awning. It is also extended up to the yard boundary with glazed panels off the front wall and with glazed roofing infill. It is more akin to a full building extension than temporary cover for the yard. It is basic in design and too contemporary in design. It is too large in relation to the scale of the host building. It obscures the rear stone wall and requires the removal of ivy. The latter contributes to character but may require removal for maintenance purposes. Lighting may well be an issue for this light sensitive location.

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The proposal therefore is inappropriate against the host building and adjacent walling. It will impact on the path approach and immediate setting of the WHS.

The Trust therefore objects on the basis of negative impact on the building, the riverside footpath, the Conservation Area, and the WHS. The planning policies that the Trust considers the proposals fail against are listed in the appendix.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Childs,  
Vice Chair,  
City of Durham Trust

## **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).

#### **Policy 45 Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site**

The Durham Castle and Cathedral World Heritage Site is a designated asset of the highest significance. This development affects the World Heritage Site and its setting and fails to:

- c. Protect and enhance the immediate setting and an important access into the site.

### **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:

- 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.

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## **Policy H1: Protection and Enhancement of the World Heritage Site**

The development proposals within the Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site should sustain, conserve, and enhance its Outstanding Universal Value and support the current adopted management plan.

The development proposal is within the Parish area and fails to sustain, conserve and enhance the setting of the World Heritage Site:

- e) There was no adequate assessment of how the development will affect the setting of the World Heritage Site, including views to the World Heritage Site; and
- f) The proposals fail to protect an important view.

## **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:

- g) protecting important views of the Durham City Conservation Area from viewpoints within the Conservation Area; and
- j) Having detailing appropriate to context, and setting; and
- k) Using high quality design sympathetic to the character and context of the local area and its significance and distinctiveness.