

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
6 March 2025

Ms Clare Walton
Durham County Council Planning Development
PO BOX 274
Stanley Co Durham
DH8 1HG

Dear Ms Walton,

DM/25/00367/FPA 1 Almoners Barn Durham DH1 3TZ

Erection of a detached one and a half storey garage, gym and games room to the southern boundary of the site, covered outdoor seating area to western elevation and 2no. dormer windows to northern elevation.

The Trust wishes to object to this application based on negative impact on trees, and on the area's character, identity, and distinctiveness.

Context

The property is a large house, one of nine in a mature wooded setting. The houses are entered from the cul de sac and the Potters bank frontage contains mature trees that help screen the development giving character to both the development and Potters Bank. This road, with some intrusions, is largely tree lined and drops down into Durham where it is part of the conservation area. The boundary trees along the road are an important part of the character of Potters Bank both within and outside of the conservation area.

Proposal

The proposed building is just under half the size of the current main house in footprint. It is a very substantial multipurpose building more akin to the size of a dwelling. It is close to the cul de sac entrance and will intrude visually onto this. It sits between Potters Bank and the main house. It is only possible to site the building in its proposed position by pruning back two trees, crown lifting one and felling another. This will lead to regular pruning of these trees to prevent clashing with the new building and does not allow for future growth that will be unnecessarily restricted. The replacement of the tree for the one felled is not in a position to help screening and in maturity is likely to clash with the new outbuilding. The Potters Bank frontage relies on the front hedgerow being allowed to grow to a reasonable height and the trees to retain their lower branches to conserve the tree lined character of the road.

Conclusion

The result of the pruning and tree removal is that the building will intrude onto the Almoners Barn entrance and Potters Bank. The tree screen will be weakened. It is a large additional development and is inappropriate to the setting of the house and cul de sac. The proposals intrude on tree protection areas, fail to avoid future conflict and to allow for growth potential.

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The proposed outbuilding therefore has a negative impact on the Almoners Barn cul de sac, and Potters Bank. This affects the area's character of large houses in a wooded setting and tree lined road. The identity of the area will be weakened and its distinctiveness impaired.

For these reasons, the Trust objects to the application. It fails against the planning policies listed below.

Planning Policies

The proposals fail against the following policies:

County Durham Plan

Policy 29 Sustainable Design

The development proposals fail to:

- a. contribute positively to an area's character, identity, heritage significance, townscape, and landscape features, helping to create and reinforce locally distinctive and sustainable communities.

Policy 40

Trees, Woodlands, and Hedges

Trees

The proposals for the new development fail to retain an existing tree where it makes a positive contribution to the locality and maintain adequate stand-off distances between the trees and the new development. The proposals fail to adequately maintain root protection areas, avoid future conflicts, and to integrate them fully into the design having regard to their future management requirements and growth potential

City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan

Policy S1: Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions Conservation, preservation, and enhancement of Our Neighbourhood:

The proposals fail to:

- c) Harmonise with its context in terms of scale, layout, density, massing, and soft landscaping.
- d) Conserve the significance of the setting, character, local distinctiveness

Yours sincerely

John Lowe
Chair, City of Durham Trust