

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Web site: <http://www.DurhamCity.org>

c/o Blakett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH

29th September 2025

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

Dear Ms Walton,

DM/25/02401/LB 56 Claypath Durham DH1 1QS

Convert existing house into 4 flats, internal alterations to all floors, removal of one external rear door and demolition of external outhouses to rear garden. Installation of 2 conservation area rooflights to rear first floor roof

The Trust objects to this application based on lack of appropriate assessment and information.

Context

Claypath and its range of listed buildings is one of the important city centre historic streets. The building is important in its own right and as part of a street ensemble. It also has a blue plaque funded by the City of Durham Trust celebrating James Finlay Weir Johnston, scientist, and scholar. Its use and condition are therefore of concern in relation to the conservation area. It is clearly in need of an active use and work to remedy its deteriorating condition.

Proposal

There is, as yet, no accompanying change of use application on the Planning Portal. The proposals show a substantial number of internal changes required to achieve sub-division into flats. There is a concerning failure to adequately detail retention and repair of original features and windows. The Trust considers that this detail is required because of the listed building status of the property and number of internal changes to provide bathrooms and multiple kitchen facilities. The impact on the internal layout is substantial, for instance, Flat One is shown as a duplex with an additional set of stairs. This should be assessed for impact because of the building's listed status.

Almost everything is noted as being subject to inspection, with a corresponding lack of any details. The entry is via a shared lobby with Nos 54/55 adjacent; no details are provided on whether this is part of the application and if any work is required to it. The blue plaque should be incorporated into the new proposals.

The Trust is also concerned that changes to windows and/or layouts may be needed in order to comply with means of escape requirements under the Building Regulations, all of which would also need assessment in terms of potential impact on listed building features.

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The Trust objects to this application for the reasons above until sufficient assessment and detail are submitted to ensure the appropriate treatment of the building and its features. (policy failures are indicated in the appendix below).

Yours sincerely

John Lowe, Chair, City of Durham Trust
Celebrating, protecting, and enhancing the City of Durham

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Appendix – Planning 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

The submission fails to demonstrate:

- b. respect for the historic form, setting, fabric, materials, detailing, and, any other aspects including curtilage, which contribute to the significance of the building or structure; and
- c. the retention of the character and special interest of buildings when considering alternative viable uses.

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 proposals fail 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 proposals fail because they do 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.

Policy H2: The Conservation Areas, Durham City Conservation Area

The 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
- e) avoiding loss of, or harm to, an element of an asset which makes a positive contribution to its individual significance and that of the surrounding area; and
- j) having materials, detailing, and lighting 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, and to the immediate landscape.