

Durham County Council
Planning Development
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

City of Durham Parish Council
Office 3 D4.01d
Clayport Library
8 Millennium Place
Durham
DH1 1WA
20 May 2019

Dear Ms Jennings,

Planning application DM/19/01164/FPA | Provide 6 bedroom C4 residential accommodation with shared living space and small extension to the rear and dormer loft conversion. | 9 And 9A Silver Street Durham DH1 3RB

This matter was considered by the Parish Council's Planning Committee at its meeting on 10 May and it was agreed to **oppose** the application because of the risks to the personal safety of the intended occupants caused by the siting of the entrance, and also on the grounds of its adverse impact on the World Heritage Site, specifically Durham Castle.

Personal Safety

The proposed entrance is on a narrow pathway leading from Silver Street to Moatside Lane, but it cannot be seen from Silver Street because of a bend in the path. The pathway is not lit. Saved Policy Q1 of the City of Durham Local Plan states

The layout and design of all new Development should take into account the Requirements of users. It will be expected to Incorporate the following as appropriate:

1. Personal safety and crime prevention; [...]

The justification in the supporting text (paragraph 12.10) reads

Good design practice in new development, can not only aid in the prevention of crime but can increase personal safety and help reduce the fear of crime. Examples of such measures include the need to ensure that access points should be limited: public spaces should be designed to ensure that they can be surveyed and easily maintained, and wherever possible all areas should be well lit. **Care should be taken to avoid sharp bends, dark recesses and restricted views.** *[Our emphasis]*

This proposed development fails on all three counts. In addition, empty lemonade bottles are frequently seen on Moatside Lane in such a state that it is clear that they have been used to concentrate the fumes from cannabis that is being smoked. The residents of these premises should not have to pass people misusing class B drugs.

This application is one where we urge the Council to seek the advice of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer since it seems to meet the criteria set out in paragraph 12.6 of the Local Plan.

Adverse impact on the World Heritage Site

We concur with the misgivings of the World Heritage Site Coordinator. The issues that she raises have not been addressed in either the Design and Access nor the Heritage statements, which are very similar. Without that information it is not possible to carry out the assessment required by

Section 16 of the NPPF. The applicant does state that the development will not block any views of the WHS, which we accept. However this is very limited. Saved Local Plan Policy E3 refers to *restricting development to safeguard local and long distance views to and from the Cathedral and Castle and peninsula*. The issue of views **from** the Castle has not been addressed, and views of the Castle from Moatside Lane could be impacted by any additional lighting.

The lightweight wooden structure that is proposed seems to us to be over-development, and out of keeping with the rest of the building. It may be felt that it won't be seen – but it will be, from the Castle terrace.

Conclusion

As this application stands, it should be refused because it does not provide for the personal safety of its residents, as Saved Policy Q1 requires, and because of the adverse effect on views to and from the World Heritage Site contrary to Saved Policy E3.

Should officers be minded to approve this application in its present state, **we wish to call it to Committee** in order for the members to be able to appreciate, via a site visit, the dangers posed by the access being on Moatside Lane.

If revised proposals are brought forward then these will need to address the issues described above. In these circumstances we feel a S106 agreement will be needed for sensitive improvements to the public realm.

Yours sincerely

ADAM SHANLEY

Parish Clerk.