

Mr Barry Gavillet
Durham County Council
Planning Development
Central/East Room 4/86-102
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

City of Durham Parish Council
c/o 5 Alexandra Close
Ponteland
NE20 OBS

2 April 2019

Dear Mr Gavillet,

Application DM/19/00753/FPA
Former R.W.D Motor Body Repairers, Back Western Hill, Durham DH1 4RG

This application was considered by the Planning Committee of the City of Durham Parish Council at its meeting on Friday, March 29th, 2019. Members expressed deep concern about this proposed development because of its overbearing size, over massing and over dominant concentration of buildings on this site, its relationships to adjacent properties, limited and difficult access, lack of parking opportunities, potential hazardous traffic congestion for which there is no mitigation and its impact on the adjacent nature reserve of Flass Vale.

We recommend its refusal on the following grounds.

The City of Durham Local Plan 2004 offers detailed advice on developments in the centre of Durham City and all of them are saved and carry weight. On environmental grounds this proposed development fails Policies E3, E5A, E6, E10, E16, E21 and E22, all designed to protect the environment and setting of the City.

The housing Policies H2, H10, H11, H13 and H14 are also failed by this proposed development.

Traffic Policies T10, T11, and T21 deal with the parking and pedestrian safety at this locality and again these are not met by this application.

Policies Q1, Q2, Q5, Q6 and Q8 all address the quality of any development and its relationship to adjacent buildings and the immediate environment. This proposed development is contrary to these policies.

Policies supporting the essential utilities and infrastructure are also contravened: U9 and U13 (which relate to the unstable foundations of unconsolidated glacial sands forming the raised margin of Flass Vale and Back Western Hill) both give cause for concern.

The NPPF offers general guidance to Planning Departments and can never provide the level of detail contain in a carefully constructed Local Plan. Even so, NPPF Section 12, paragraphs 124-132, and Section 16, paragraphs 184-188, offer no support for this application. In particular paragraph 127 requires any development to *"function well and add to the overall quality of the area"* and be *"sympathetic to the local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting"*. This application offers no such reassurance. Finally, we consider that the Coal Authority should be consulted about this application since a search on their web site www.groundstability.com gives the response "From the information currently available to the Coal Authority, a mining report is recommended for this property. We recommend that you order an Enviro All-in-One, which includes the standard mining report plus detailed, property-specific information on contaminated land, flood risk (in England and Wales), historical land use and natural subsidence hazards."

For these reasons therefore, the Parish Council's Planning Committee recommends refusal and ask that this application be determined by the relevant County Council Planning Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Shanley

Clerk to City of Durham Parish Council