

Mr Henry Jones
Planning Development Central/East
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City of Durham Parish Council
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6 September 2019

Dear Mr Jones,

DM/19/02553/FPA: Demolition of former baths & construction of new Business School with associated infrastructure, refurbishment/alterations to Vennel Cottage as cafe (A3 Use), conversion of 42, 50 & 51 Old Elvet to 3no. dwellings (C3 Use) and refurbishment of 47-49 Old Elvet as start-up business incubator associated with Business School & Durham University (D1 Use), Former Swimming Baths Durham DH1 3DA

The Planning Committee of the City of Durham Parish Council considered this application at its meeting on Friday 30 September 2019 and resolved to object to the proposal because it raises serious concerns both with its design and with its impact on the historic townscape, Conservation Area and World Heritage Site.

A further concern is with the inclusion within this application of proposals for the conversion of 42, 50 & 51 Old Elvet to 3no. dwellings (C3 Use) and refurbishment of 47-49 Old Elvet. The Parish Council believes that these proposals should have been separated into individual planning applications alongside Listed Building applications currently grouped in DM/19/02544/LB.

Turning to the proposals for the Business School, the Parish Council believes that such a large-scale project in such a sensitive location requires 'virtual reality' modelling to be provided in order to test the impact of this proposed new building in views to and from the World Heritage Site, as required in Saved Policy E3 of the City of Durham Local Plan 2004. It is clear that the present shaping and bulk of the new building would adversely affect the World Heritage Site.

The proposed new Business School lies within the Durham City Centre Conservation Area, where Saved Policy E6 requires that development proposals "*preserve or enhance its special character, appearance and setting*". Although the Parish Council is supportive of appropriate contemporary design in principle, it considers that the particular solution offered here is too strong and 'loud' in an essentially tranquil riverside location and in the lea of Durham Cathedral and Castle. That is, the presently proposed design is too assertive for its tranquil location, and a more appropriate design is therefore required that respects its delicate setting.

In conclusion, the Parish Council objects to the current proposal on the grounds that it causes substantial harm to the Durham City Centre Conservation Area and the World Heritage Site, contrary to City of Durham Local Plan 2004 Saved Policies E3, E6, E22, and E23.

Yours sincerely,

ADAM SHANLEY

Parish Clerk