



**CITY OF DURHAM
PARISH COUNCIL**

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29th January 2020

Dear Mr Hopper,

DM/19/03968/FPA William Robson House Claypath Durham DH1 1SA. Extension and conversion of the multi-level decked car park to from 8no. 2-bed apartments.

The City of Durham Parish Council Planning Committee considered the above application on 24th January 2020 and it was agreed to object to this application.

William Robson House (“the application site”) dates from late 19th century and is framed by commercial properties to the north and west, by residential properties to the east and Leazes Lane to the south and is situated to the rear of Claypath, towards the commercial centre of Durham City. The site lies within the Durham City Conservation Area, to the east of Durham City World Heritage Site and to the rear of listed buildings at Claypath.

Whilst not listed, the building is distinctive and of interest as the only substantial historic industrial styled building within Claypath and on this basis it is considered to meet the criteria as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as a non-designated heritage asset for the purposes of paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

In terms of the impact of this proposal on the Durham City Conservation area, the Parish Council considers this proposal to have an adverse impact. Policy E6 of the City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan (2004); the prevailing development plan for the area, requires that “new development to preserve or enhance the special character of Durham City Conservation Area in accordance with the requirements of Sections 66 and 72 of the Town and Country planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990”. In addition, paragraph 132 of the NPPF requires “great weight to be attached to the conservation of a heritage asset (including conservation areas) when considering the impact of a proposal on its significance”.

In view of the proposed increase in height of the existing building, the Parish Council Planning Committee also considers the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the living conditions of neighbouring properties and would therefore be contrary to Policy H13 of the City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan (2004) in so far as it relates to the amenity of neighbouring properties

Committee Members also felt this would have a detrimental impact on views to and from the site.

The Parish Council Planning Committee is also concerned at the potential impact of the development on neighbouring trees and particularly notes the assessment of the trees report which states, "there are potential areas of conflict where damage could be caused to retained trees". Committee Members are concerned that these trees would undoubtedly come under increased pressure from heavy pruning, if not felling, from future occupants as they would restrict light into the proposed windows. In recognition of the sensitivity of the location in the centre of the city and the physical dominance of the existing buildings, it is likely that the development could result in significant adverse landscape and visual effects after the post construction and could be in conflict with saved Policies E6 and E14 of the City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan (2004).

Whilst the Committee welcomed the proposed use class as C3, due to the current intensity of student accommodation on Claypath, there is considerable concern about any further intensification of the area, given the likely future use of the building as student-let accommodation.

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF states that decision-takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to: the stage of the emerging plan; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies; and, the degree of consistency of the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF. Policy S1 of the emerging City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan requires that "all development proposals must, where relevant, demonstrate...conservation, preservation and enhancement of our Neighbourhood by conserving and enhancing the significance of the setting, character, local distinctiveness, important views, tranquillity and the contribution made to the sense of place by Our Neighbourhood's designated and non-designated heritage assets" and Committee Members considered that this application is contrary to the objectives of this policy.

Policy H1 of the emerging City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan also requires that "development proposals throughout Our Neighbourhood must be shown to sustain, conserve and enhance the setting of the World Heritage Site by...e) carrying out an assessment of how the development will affect the setting of the World Heritage Site, including views to and from the World Heritage Site; and f) protecting important views; and g) taking opportunities to open up lost views". In view of the increase in height of the building in this proposal, Committee Members considered that this application is contrary to the objectives of this policy.

This application should therefore be refused.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Shanley
Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council