



**CITY OF DURHAM  
PARISH COUNCIL**

Learning from the past.  
Building for the future.

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

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

17 June 2020

Dear Mr Harding,

**DM/20/01280/FPA | Change of use, alteration and extension to existing Manor House to form Registry Office, County Records and Archive Services, and DLI Collection. | Mount Oswald Golf Club South Road Durham DH1 3TQ and DM/20/01286/LB | Alterations and extension to existing Manor House to facilitate Registry Office, County Records and Archive Services, and DLI Collection | Mount Oswald Golf Club South Road Durham DH1 3TQ**

These applications seek permission to create a new Durham History Centre at Mount Oswald; creating a registrar and wedding venue as part of a new civic building which will also house five existing historical collections under one roof.

The application site is a Grade II listed villa which dates back to the 1830s and is situated approximately 2 kilometres south-south-west of Durham city centre. Both the building and its garden setting give the site the appearance of a rural country house and its previous use as a golf course has ensured that much of its distinctive character has been retained over the years.

The proposed redevelopment of the site seeks to conserve the existing Manor House building; the project will include a roof replacement, updating of the mechanical, electrical and plumbing, repairs to external sandstone walls, damp-proofing, landscaping and retention of original features. A modern glass extension to the listed building on the northern elevation is also proposed in order to house the archives stores, welcoming and reception facilities, lift access, public search rooms and a dedicated exhibition space.

The public were consulted on these proposals in mid-2019 and the Parish Council welcomed the redevelopment of the site and its intended use in principle but did express concern about the lack of available car parking associated with the site at that time. The Parish Council is satisfied that this issue has been sufficiently addressed in this application.

In principle, the Parish Council believes that there would be a net heritage benefit to this proposal and that this would, as a result, accord with para. 192 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states that Planning Authorities should consider:

***a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;***

***b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and***

***c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.***

Furthermore, the primary elevation of the Manor House is clearly of high cultural significance and its relationship to the open parkland setting is fundamental in the overall design of the new History Centre. The Parish Council welcomes the fact that the new extension is to be a fully glazed elevation as this sits alongside the east façade of the Manor House sympathetically. Added to this, the placing of the glazing is such that it is in keeping and mirrors the proportions of the east elevation of the original house.

Whereas the Parish Council welcomes these applications in principle, there is a lack of clear information on the proposed elevations of the building which makes it difficult to comment on the overall design of the project. In particular, these applications would have benefited from more material detailing, a layout plan, 3D visualisations and graphic presentations.

Furthermore, it is also the Parish Council's unanimous view that these applications should be considered by Committee rather than under delegated authority as the County Council is the applicant in both cases.

Yours sincerely,

**Adam Shanley**  
**Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council**