

Agenda Item 4c

Application 16/00701/FUL
Hilary House

Comments from Conservation Officer

For its time (not context) Hilary House is a relatively low 1960s office block displaying qualities of detailing superior to many other office blocks of its time. It is of some historic interest through associations with its architect, the notorious John Poulson. In spite of this the building is a detractor from the architectural character of the historic area in which it sits. In previous pre-app advice we have been cautious about making this building more prominent, or indeed compromising the honest 1960's expression. So it is helpful in the application there is some clarification of the construction and detail at larger scale. As the extension proposed would be prominent it must be detailed to the highest standard to appear as an elegant roof over-sailing the building, rather than a series of interconnected mono-pitch "boxes".

The "Views and building heights" section of the Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal draws attention to the importance of preserving the dominance of the Minster and its historic city setting in views. This aspect of general views would be preserved, even from the City Walls, due to the relative height of the Minster and the angle of view from the main viewpoints which give wide separation distances between Hilary House and the Minster.

The conservation area appraisal also draws attention to the picturesque quality of the historic roofscape. Unfortunately Hilary House is incongruous within its environment; it projects one floor above the tallest building on St Saviourgate and two floors above Aldwark. In the context of the current application the existing large scale form of the simple flat roof block is harmful to the character of the existing roofscape.

The finer grained massing and serrated silhouette of the proposed extra floor would break down the "block like" form and large scale of the building's roof profile and add interest to the skyline from public viewpoints and this adds more interest to the skyline when seen in long distance views (as from Pavement) and from vantage points at higher level where the building sits clearly above the varied historic roofline but still below the taller bulky buildings such as the mansard of C19th Hunter House and the urban block of C20th Stonebow House.