

**AVISON
YOUNG**



Former Durham Light Infantry (DLI) Museum and Durham Art Gallery

Options Appraisal – Final Report

August 2021

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Appendix I Detailed Planning Appraisal

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Status: Final Report

Date: August 2021

For and on behalf of Avison Young (UK) Limited

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Durham County Council is undertaking a review of the decision to close the DLI Museum and Durham Art Gallery (housed in a single building) and as part of this process have commissioned Avison Young, supported by NORR architects, to prepare an independent review of the possible options for the future use of the building.

1.2 Our work has comprised a high level review of a long list of potential options for the future reuse of the building to assess their suitability by having regard to the following factors:

- Suitability of the surrounding site / environment and how they influence and impact the alternative uses / functions for the building.
- Suitability of the existing building for an alternative function / use and how easy it will be to repurpose the existing building, highlighting any major constraints / impediments that may prejudice the conversion of the property for a particular use.
- Planning considerations and potential planning restrictions / constraints that may prevent the conversion of the building for alternative uses.
- Market demand for the potential alternative uses. Any alternative use(s) for the building / site will need to be market driven and supported by clear evidence of market demand.
- Legal /title review to highlight any restrictive covenants / legal impediments that might prevent the repurposing of the building for an alternative use.

1.3 Drawing on this information we have identified that the DLI Museum and Art Gallery is a purpose designed building and as such any new function will require a significant amount of alteration to the façade unless a similar use / function is chosen.

1.4 In addition the building does not maximise, the potential of its surroundings and this is something that could also be addressed if reused/repurposed in the future.

1.5 Based on the findings of our review of the long list of potential options the only overall feasible option, is to reuse the building for the storage and display / exhibition of other Council collections, which are not being transferred to the new history centre, alongside a new and improved ancillary kitchen, café / restaurant.

1.6 This report has been prepared for the sole use of our client, (Durham County Council) based on the scope of work and on the terms and conditions agreed with our client. It may not be used or relied on (in whole or part) by anyone else, or for any other purpose or in any other contexts, without our prior written agreement.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 The DLI museum at Aykley Heads was constructed in the late 1960's initially as the County Museum, then it became an arts venue and subsequently it was decided that it would also be the focus for the DLI collections¹ until its closure in 2016.
- 2.2 The decision to close the museum was taken because of the increasing standards associated with the collections care and environment meaning the artifacts could no longer be stored and displayed safely within the existing building.
- 2.3 Currently, DLI-related collections are held in three locations: the Durham County Record Office, where the DLI archives are stored and used; the DLI Research and Study Centre at Sevenhills, Spennymoor, where most of the object collections are stored, as well as other Durham County heritage collections, and Durham University, where the DLI medals collection is stored.
- 2.4 A new purpose built Durham History Centre is currently under development, within the Grade II listed Mount Oswald, to store and display collections, including the combined DLI collections together at one site along with other heritage and archival collections. It is anticipated that this new facility will be open to the public in 2023.

Scope of Work

- 2.5 The Council are now undertaking a review of the decision to close the museum and as part of this process have commissioned Avison Young, supported by NORR architects, to prepare an independent review of the possible options for the future use of the building.

¹ The DLI collection includes uniforms, equipment, weapons, silver, photographs, and battlefield relics covering the whole history of the Regiment from its formation in 1758 to the final laying-up of the Colours in 1968 in Durham Cathedral

- 2.6 Our work has comprised a high level review of a long list of potential options for the future reuse of the building to assess their suitability by having regard to the following factors:

- Suitability of the surrounding site / environment and how they influence and impact the alternative uses / functions for the building. Please refer to Section 3. The Council is considering the possibility of converting / dedicating the surrounding grounds as a memorial garden but this will be the subject of a separate options appraisal. This assessment is solely focussed on the reuse of the building and, therefore, will not prejudice the Council's aspirations to create a memorial garden.
- Suitability of the existing building for an alternative function / use and how easy it will be to repurpose the existing building, highlighting any major constraints / impediments that may prejudice the conversion of the property for a particular use. Avison Young and NORR architects inspected the building and the immediate environment with Richard Hill and Keith Nesbitt (DCC) on 18th June. No detailed inspection was undertaken. Please refer to Section 4.
- Planning considerations and potential planning restrictions / constraints that may prevent the conversion of the building for alternative uses. Please refer to Section 5.
- Market demand for the potential alternative uses. Any alternative use(s) for the building / site will need to be market driven and supported by clear evidence of market demand. Please refer to Section 6.
- Legal / title review to highlight any restrictive covenants / legal impediments that might prevent the repurposing of the building for an alternative use. Please refer to Section 7.

- 2.7 Drawing on this information we have identified those uses that appear 'feasible' alternatives. Please refer to Section 8.
- 2.8 This report has been prepared for the sole use of our client, (Durham County Council) based on the scope of work and on the terms and conditions agreed with our client. It may not be used or relied on (in whole or part) by anyone else, or for any other purpose or in any other contexts, without our prior written agreement.

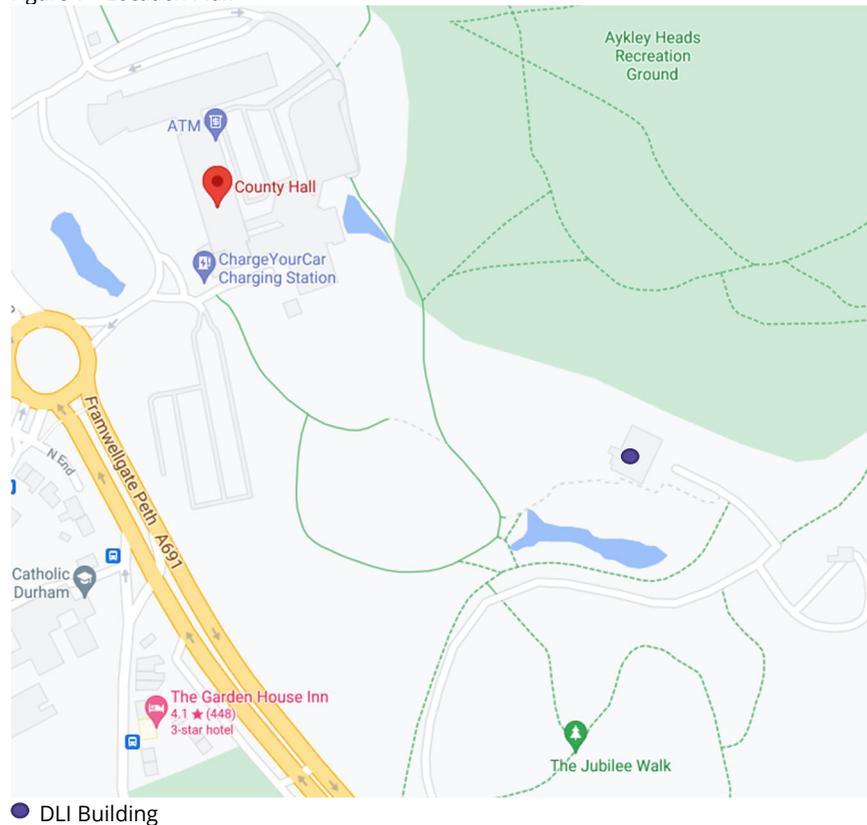
3. Review of Local Environment

3.1 Within this section of our report we consider the suitability of the surrounding site / environment and how they influence and impact the alternative uses / functions for the building.

Context

3.2 Figure 1 shows the location of the DLI within the context of its wider setting.

Figure 1 – Location Plan

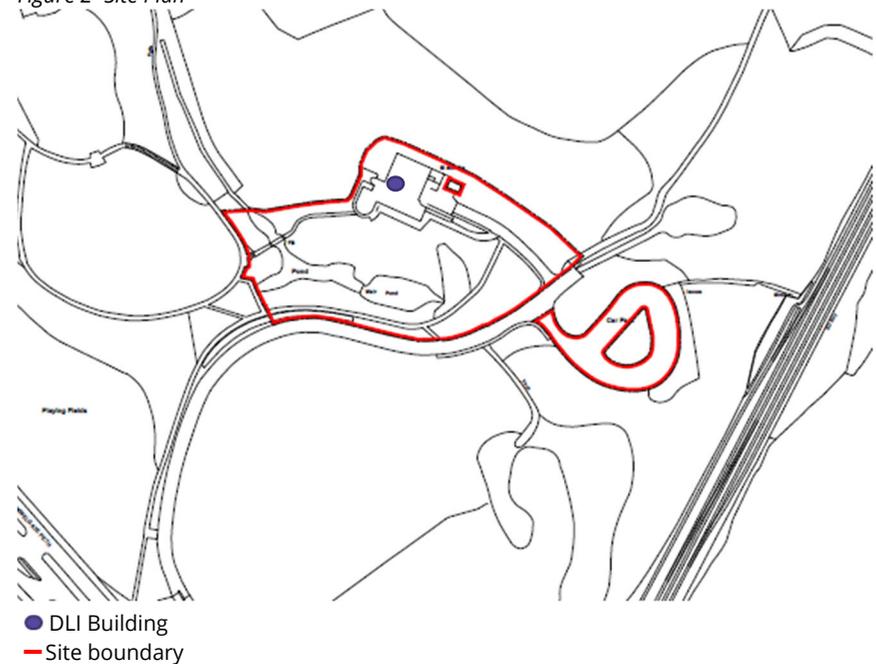


3.3 The site is located in the picturesque area of Aykley Heads, and is situated within a woodland clearing central to the Jubilee Walk and adjacent to the nearby Aykley Heads Recreation Ground and Aykley Wood Nature Reserve.

3.4 The building occupies a scenic setting but one which is detached and slightly remote from other functions, including the County Council Offices (County Hall), which are a short distance to the north west. This is a consideration when reviewing possible function and also when considering suitable uses with regard to town planning and suitability.

3.5 Figure 2 shows the overall demise of the DLI site relative to the building.

Figure 2- Site Plan



3.6 The building is positioned towards the northern boundary of the site and is split level, cut into the hillside, due to steeply sloping terrain.

- 3.7 The visitor entrance to the property is at lower ground level whilst the delivery entrance and some car parking is located at the upper ground level. This area is accessed by a service road, which connects to the main site access providing links to Framwellgate Peth and the main dedicated carparking for the DLI which is within short walking distance to the east.
- 3.8 A point of note is that the wayfinding from the east is unclear due to the extent of planting and visitors could easily mistake the delivery entrance as the main entrance and so legibility here could be improved through landscape treatment, gates or better signage. A gate in this location would have the two fold benefit of clarifying it as not an entrance and also reduce the need for excessive antivandal fencing at the upper level over looking the entrance.
- 3.9 The general condition of the external areas is adequate given its lack of recent occupation, but is in need of renewal. The hard landscaped areas are principally concrete flag paving and tarmac that are in poor condition / missing in areas and would need replacing. Retaining walls are showing their age and require investigation.
- 3.10 The soft landscaped areas are well kept and show the building off to the best advantage, though the land immediately to the north and west of the site is heavily wooded, which encroaches on the building. This would benefit from cutting back (subject to arboriculture advice).
- 3.11 There is a perception, despite not being consecrated, that the gardens serve a memorial purpose. The Council is considering the possibility of converting / dedicating the surrounding grounds as a memorial garden but this will be the subject of a separate options appraisal. Any reuse of the building will not prejudice the Council's aspirations to create a memorial garden in the surrounding grounds.



Lower level visitor entrance with anti-vandal fencing at the upper level (a)



Path leading from Lower level visitor entrance towards car park



Upper level delivery entrance and accessible parking



Landscaped grounds to the south looking towards the pond



Service road leading to the upper level delivery entrance and footpath to the left leading down to the visitor entrance (a)



Southern elevation of the DLI overlooking the landscaped grounds

Alternative Uses Based on Environmental Suitability

3.12 Within this context the suitability of alternative uses, based on the local environment, are summarised in the table below.

Table 1 – Alternative Function / Use Based on Suitability of Local Environment

Use	Comments
 Retail	The limited footfall and remoteness of the building will affect its commercial viability for passing trade as it lends itself to being more of a destination than somewhere you happen upon.
 Residential	Its location within a public place and that of a heavily wooded park realistically prevents a residential use principally for the exposure and the security measures that would be required to 'privatise' and safeguard.
 Community	The nearby recreation grounds and walks would make the site a suitable community building be that the arts, leisure or community support.
 Education	The site has a lot to offer across the full spectrum of age groups be that as a public building or private school facility. However, the exposure of the site would require safety measures for safeguarding of younger children.
 Commercial	The site would work well as a venue or leisure facility and the grounds could be utilised to the buildings advantage.
	This site would likely prove too limiting for hotel or office functions.
 Museum	Reusing the building for a museum would return the property to its previous purposely designed use.

-  Suitable
-  Suitable but issues to be resolved
-  Unsuitable

4. Review of Existing Building

4.1 Within this section of our report we consider the suitability of the existing building for an alternative function / use and how easy it will be to repurpose the existing building, highlighting any major constraints / impediments that may prejudice the conversion of the property for a particular use.

4.2 Avison Young and NORR architects inspected the building with Richard Hill and Keith Nesbitt (DCC) on 18th June. However, no detailed inspection was undertaken.

Context

4.3 The property is largely of steel frame and concrete construction and has been modified several times since it was built in 1966.

4.4 The façade is a mix of concrete block and panel with limited window openings to the south, east and west aside from the curtain wall glazed entrance, cafeteria and stair core. To the north there is extensive curtain wall glazing at upper level, within the office portion of the building, though the lower floor has none, due to it forming the retaining wall.

4.5 The general condition of the brickwork is good however the panelling looks old and tired with discolouration / staining and joints that require address. Views out to the flat mineral felt roofs from the upper floors imply they are at the end of life and will require replacement.

4.6 The Council has confirmed that the building has been plagued by roof leaks and was re-roofed twice between its construction and closure. The signs of leaks are visible everywhere throughout the building, with stains on the floors, down the walls and in suspended ceiling tiles. These are not recent stains, since closure: they present evidence of the structural weakness of the roof and possibly also of the concrete and

steel frame itself. This in turn has led to high moisture content through parts of the building and fungal infections on woodwork for example.

4.7 Inside the building it is simply planned with three floors of exhibition rooms stacked on top of each other to the front/ south with entrance and cafeteria either side at ground level.

4.8 Utility and back of house areas are reserved to the north/ rear with access to the loading dock on the middle floor and offices benefitting from natural light at upper level. The building is a structural frame this provides greater flexibility than load bearing internal walls. This allows large exhibition spaces to connect as required and a variety of single double volume heights also.

4.9 Floor to structural beam/soffit is also reasonable for many functions, but significantly less than you would expect for new build commercial space. The building is also deep plan which makes natural lighting and ventilation difficult.

4.11 Vertical circulation cores are not opportunely located currently (i.e. on the outer extremities) and this will also impact any future use, so the accessibility of the building will need to be carefully considered to ensure freedom of movement for all users in the future.

4.12 We were advised on our visit that the lifts are end of life and likely to be deemed unacceptably small and narrow for human use by Building Regulations. As a result, they will need replacing.

4.13 We were also advised that of the two oil fired boilers, one is no longer operable, and is being used for spare parts, and the other is almost at end of life. Oil fired boilers are also no longer suitable for a low carbon trajectory. There is an opportunity, therefore, to explore more sustainable alternatives.

- 4.14 The air conditioning system is understood to have had to be repaired regularly and was always deemed “inadequate”.
- 4.15 The rooftop plant couldn’t be accessed due to an unsafe ladder.
- 4.16 The pumps which serve the foul water drainage system to the DLI are situated below ground and are located within the adjacent wood between the museum and County Hall. A feasibility study published in March 2015² concluded that the system was ‘well passed’ its life expectancy, leading to regular breakdowns. The Council has confirmed that a new pumping station and foul drainage system, including a new rising main connecting into the existing sewer network³, will be required for any future / alternative use.
- 4.17 Asbestos has been identified within several areas of the building, which may need to be removed. Further information is provided in the Asbestos Management Plan (November 2020). This report also acknowledges that it is not known if asbestos is also present within inaccessible parts of the building and recommends that further work/investigation will be required if work is to be carried out in such areas⁴. The report also recommends that any major refurbishment or demolition will require further investigation.
- 4.18 In 1999-2000, the building and the Regimental displays on the lower ground floor underwent a comprehensive HLF-funded refurbishment. The ‘new’ displays had an expected shelf-life of just ten years, but there was no planning or investment for a renewal, after that time, and the displays were unchanged when the building closed in April 2016, some 16 years later.
- 4.19 The display facilities on the lower ground level are now empty, run down and partly dismantled.



Current oil fired boilers



Existing foul water drainage pump

² DLI Museum and Arts Centre Replacement of Existing Sewerage Pumps – TS1293358 (March 2015)

³ In a worst case scenario this will be the network in the Framwellgate Peth.

⁴ Inaccessible areas were identified as ducts without access covers, behind wall panelling, voids above fixed grid ceilings, live electrical equipment and lift shafts.

4.20 The current kitchen/ server/dining facility is small and very basic, therefore would likely need significant enhancement subject to the potential use.

Alternative Uses Based on the Suitability of the Building for Conversion

4.21 Within this context the suitability of alternative uses, based on the adaptability of the building for conversion, are summarised in the table below.

Table 2 – Alternative Function / Use Based on Suitability of the Building for Conversion

Use	Comments
 Retail	Ceiling/ soffit heights would not be advantageous for retail uses, though variety / interconnectivity of space and lack of natural daylight are typical of this use.
 Residential	Multiple occupier residential accommodation would require significant alteration to the external façade and even with this there is limited outlook/views to two sides (due to encroaching woodland) and inopportune locations of vertical circulation. Deep plan could be made to work. Single residency could work but would be vast in size so would seem inappropriate.
 Community	Height, variety, and interconnectivity of spaces lend themselves well to a community building be that the arts, leisure or community support. The extent of additional glazing to the envelope would vary based on the possible use. Potential community uses include art and sculpture exhibition centre and gardens, community groups and combined club house, sports

Use	Comments
	changing and club house, youth centre and possible arts house cinema.
 Education ⁵	The building would not be suitable for a full-time school due to the lack of large multi-purpose hall.
	However, it could be made suitable for a pre-school nursery but external space would need to be dedicated and secured.
	Further / higher education satellite building for departmental, vocational or research based learning would also be suitable.
 Commercial ⁶	The building would work well as a venue or leisure facility generally.
	The size of building and depth of floor plan would make it challenging for a hotel, but possible with significant adaptation.
	The limited floor to floor height and absence of raised access floor would limit its use as a dedicated office.
 Museum	The building was purposely designed for this use and so could easily be used again for similar uses. Issues for consideration include upgrading the building to ensure compliance with EN 16893:2018 and BS 4971:2017 technical standards

-  Suitable
-  Suitable but issues to be resolved
-  Unsuitable

⁵ Extent of additional glazing to the envelope would vary depending on the specific use.

⁶ The extent of additional glazing to the envelope would vary, but most commercial uses would require significant alteration.

5. Planning Review

- 5.1 Within this section of our report, we provide a summary of the suitability of each use based on planning considerations⁷
- 5.2 We have reviewed the relevant planning history for the site, using the County Council’s online planning portal, and reviewed the relevant planning policies specific to the site.
- 5.2 A copy of our detailed planning appraisal is included at Appendix 1.

Suitability of Alternative Uses Based on Planning Considerations

Table 3 – Suitability of Uses Based on Planning Considerations

Use	Comments
Retail 	Retail is a main town centre use and would require a retail assessment including sequential assessment to demonstrate no suitable premises available in Durham City Centre. Also, the site is in the Green Belt so any retail use which generates a lot of journeys may not be considered favourably, as there is limited parking.
Residential 	Would need to comply with various housing policies, and not prejudice nearby established housing commitments and allocations. However, likely to achieve planning if demonstrated.
Community 	<u>Art and Sculpture Exhibition Centre and Gardens</u> Likely to be supported as similar to existing use. As a main town centre use, would require retail assessment

Use	Comments
	including sequential assessment in line with Policy 9 of the Local Plan.
	<u>Community Groups combined Club House</u> Similar to existing use in planning terms and likely to be supported provided the proposal is compliant with relevant Local Plan policies.
	<u>Sports Changing and Club House, Youth Centre and Art House Cinema</u> There are few planning policies within the Local Plan relating to sport but the provision for outdoor sports is an appropriate use in the Green Belt. A Youth Centre is similar to existing use and likely to be supported provided the proposal is compliant with relevant Local Plan policies. The Arts House Cinema is a main town centre use and would require a sequential assessment to demonstrate no suitable premises available in Durham City Centre.
Education ⁸ 	Education uses would be acceptable in principle. However, the need for these uses would need to be demonstrated. May be issues with access, parking and public transport.
Commercial ⁹ 	Commercial uses are likely to require a sequential assessment to demonstrate no suitable premises available in Durham City Centre and/or an impact assessment. There may also be issues with access, parking and public transport.

⁷

⁸ Including higher, further, school age and pre-school education.

⁹ Including uses such as café/restaurant, small hotel, offices, gym and social club.

Use	Comments
Museum (including café / restaurant)	A museum will be acceptable as within the existing planning permission. Subject to size of café / restaurant , there may be a requirement for a sequential and/or impact assessment. However, this is similar to existing use in planning terms and likely to be supported provided the proposals is compliant with Local Plan policies.



-  Suitable
-  Suitable but issues to be resolved
-  Unsuitable

6. Review of Market Demand

6.1 Any alternative use(s) for the building / site will need to be market driven and supported by clear evidence of market demand. We have undertaken a high level desk top review to identify market trends and known space requirements for Durham. We have not undertaken any soft market testing with local developers and potential occupiers.

6.2 Within the remainder of this section we set out the initial high level demand considerations for the range of potential uses identified.

Retail

6.3 Although online retail continues to grow in importance for large parts of the retail sector, footfall is still the main way that most retailers make their money. This invariably means that nearly all retailers will seek to prioritise the high street (town and city centres) or larger shopping centres and retail parks. For retail businesses, there are several potential advantages to being located on the high street, including:

- Good footfall is to be expected – and could remain steady all week due to the fact people live and work nearby.
- High streets tend to have good links to public transport, which can lead to increased footfall from people who can't or don't want to drive.
- High streets still bring some prestige – which is why independent shops tend to find more success on the high street.
- If there are any historical landmarks or other attractions, they can help to pull increased numbers of visitors in.

- Many shoppers still prefer the idea of spending the day shopping and having a meal on a high street.

6.4 The limited footfall and remoteness of the DLI building will, therefore, significantly affect its commercial viability for retail uses, which rely on passing trade, as it lends itself to being more of a destination than somewhere you happen upon.

Residential

6.5 As outlined previously the environment surrounding the building prevents a residential use principally for the exposure and the security measures that would be required to 'privatise' and safeguard. In addition, the adaptability of the building for residential uses would require significant alteration. It is believed the building could be converted to a single residency but this would be vast in size. Therefore, the market demand for converting the property to residential will be limited.

Community¹⁰

6.6 The voluntary and community sector is widespread and diverse and there may be community groups, voluntary organisations or charity groups who are interested in the building.

6.7 However, in 2012 the Council commenced a community asset transfer programme, which aimed to create a sustainable network of buildings controlled by local people. Although most transfers have now been completed the Council is still inviting organisations, through the

¹⁰ Potential community uses include, art and sculpture exhibition centre and gardens, community groups and combined club house, sports changing and club house, youth centre, environment centre, social club and possible arts house cinema.

Durham Ask, to submit expressions of interest for taking over Council assets or helping to run the Council's services in the future.

6.8 This provides the opportunity for 'community groups' to have control over local land, facilitates or services. Asset transfer is the legal process that allows this to happen and means the organisation/community group takes over full responsibility for the building including ongoing repairs, maintenance, and daily management. This is normally by way of a long-term lease.

6.9 The building has been vacant since the closure of the DLI in 2015 and within the period between now and then there have been no expressions of interest from 'community groups' for this building. It, therefore, seems unlikely that there will be demand for community uses.

Education

6.10 As outlined previously the building would not be suitable for a full-time school due to the lack of a large multi-purpose hall. However, it could be made suitable for pre-school nursery or further / higher education satellite building for departmental, vocational or research based learning.

Pre School Nursery

6.11 There are three types of day nursery.

- State funded – attached to a school.
- Not for profit – a day nursery usually attached to a community centre or religious organisation; and
- Private – a privately or independently owned day nursery.

State Funded

6.12 At this point in time we are not aware of any need from the Council for premises to provide more early years / pre-school nursery provision.

Not for profit

6.13 As outlined previously the Council has already undergone a community asset transfer programme and is currently inviting organisations through the Durham Ask, to submit expressions of interest for taking over Council assets. No expressions of interest from the community /religious or voluntary groups etc. to use this building for a pre-school / nursery have been forthcoming since the building was closed on 2015. It, therefore, seems unlikely that there will be demand for non profit education uses.

Private

6.14 In terms of the private childcare and early education sector this has historically comprised a large volume of small private and voluntary sector organisations with only a small number of corporates, regional and local groups. A recent report¹¹ confirms that most providers (57%) are still single site operators with only 9% running groups of twenty sites or more. The report also states that more than one in four single site operators make a loss, in contrast to those organisations that are able to achieve economies of scale, manage risk across a portfolio of sites and concentrate investment in areas of high private demand, who are well placed to deliver a profit/return.

6.15 The report lists the nursery groups with twenty or more settings / nurseries. We have undertaken a high level web based search to ascertain if any of the providers have a requirement for Durham, the results of which confirm that there are no known requirements. However, several providers do state they are looking for further opportunities without being prescriptive on their preferred locations.

¹¹ Aboutey – Independent research about and for the early years sector by Ceeda (2019)

6.16 Those providers who do have requirements are typically looking for sites or existing buildings between 186sq.m (2,000sq.ft) and 697sq.m (7,500sq.ft). The existing DLI building has a gross internal area of 1,486.39sq.m (16,000sq.ft), meaning it is twice the size of what providers are typically seeking and, therefore, is likely to be unappealing even if there were active requirements in the market.

6.17 Another important consideration which is likely to impact demand is the recent changes to the Use Classes Order. Class D1 (non-residential institution), which creche and nurseries previously fell within, have been abolished and merged into a new 'Class E' along with the previous use classes D2 (assembly and leisure), A1 (shops), A2 (professional services), A3 (restaurants) and B1 (offices). Changes between these uses no longer require planning permission and will lead to increased flexibility between these uses.

6.18 In the past a scarcity of D1 property has driven very strong levels of demand from nurseries, particularly in affluent residential locations. However, nurseries will now be able to occupy a wider range of space, including high street / retail space, offices, and restaurants etc without requiring planning permission. With a large proportion of the retail and the casual dining sector significantly impacted by the pandemic and many commercial occupiers assessing what Covid-19 means for their businesses and operational requirements this will result in vacant offices, retail units and restaurants coming onto the market and thus, a greater number of opportunities for operators to expand into new settings than was previously the case.

6.19 It is our belief that there will be little demand from private nursery /pre-school providers.

Further and Higher Education

6.20 Further and higher education providers have long term estate strategies, which set out their long term investment plans.

- **New Durham College** has set out its estates and facilities strategy over the period 2021 to 2026. The Estates Strategy recognises that to effectively respond to their curriculum challenges they need to optimise the current portfolio of buildings and land, including their main campus site at Framwellgate Moor, which they own. As part of their strategy the college has an ongoing programme to develop existing and new physical spaces.

- **Durham University** has set out its strategy up to 2027 which includes 23 projects comprising a total capital expenditure of circa £350m. This investment will be in new departmental space, teaching space, residential accommodation and student facilities as well as improving the condition of their existing estate. The Council are also having conversations with the university about how they might collaborate on Aykley Heads and whether they may invest in this site.

6.21 Within this context it seems unlikely that there will be demand from further or higher educational establishments.

Museum

6.22 Most of the Council's collections are currently stored at Sevenhills at Greenhills Business Park in Spennymoor. However, the Council will be terminating the lease at Sevenhills once the DLI collection and reference library are relocated to the new history centre.

6.23 This means that other storage facilities are required for those collections at Sevenhills, which are not being relocated to the new history centre.

6.24 The Council, subject to the findings of this study, wish to consider the use of the DLI building for the storage and display of other Council collections, restoring its original function. Alongside these uses the

Council may also wish to consider a new and improved café/restaurant offer.

Commercial Uses

Food and Drink (Café and Restaurant)

- 6.25 The UK restaurant and food service industry had undergone a period of growth prior to the pandemic, with revenues showing an increasing trend. However even before the pandemic, restaurants were struggling to survive, as many succumbed to closures in 2018 and 2019. Rising costs, reduced consumer spending, and an over-saturated market from the boom in casual dining brands in the preceding years, are all said to have contributed to insolvencies of independent restaurants, and the closure of several big chain outlets.
- 6.26 Anecdotal evidence suggests that as many as a quarter of UK restaurants and more than 10% of pubs may fail by this September, when furlough ends and VAT relief is tapered. As a result, there is likely to be plethora of 'ready-made premises' likely to come onto the market during the final quarter of 2021 from insolvent businesses at competitive prices. This is an important factor as the DLI will require significant adaption meaning occupiers will favour the ready made premises, as they won't have to wait for conversion works to be completed.
- 6.27 Almost all food and drink operators want to be in areas of high footfall. This is clearly evidenced when looking at the known requirements from food and drink operators for Durham. It should be noted that whilst these requirements are focussed on chain outlets the nature of the food and drink sector generally relies on passing trade / high levels of footfall meaning independent operators will also want to be within areas of high footfall.

Food and Drink Requirements – Durham



Restaurant and bar looking for 'ex fitted units' of circa 372sq.m (4,000sq.ft) to 650sq.m (7,000sq.ft) in prominent locations with good visibility on the high street.



Taco Bell are looking for a drive thru (main arterial routes, standalone and retail and leisure parks) and high street opportunities. Drive thru requirements 167sq.m (1,800sq.ft) to 232sq.m (2,500sq.ft) and high street requirements 70sq.m (750sq.ft) to 167sq.m (1,800sq.ft).



Looking for small urban box of circa 93sq.m (1,000sq.ft) in high pedestrian areas with a strong transient population.



Requires 74sq.m (800sq.ft) to 232sq.m (2,500sq.ft) in high street locations in close proximity to lunchtime trade, retail and tourist attractions and 74sq.m (800sq.ft) to 139sq.m (1,500sq.ft) in shopping centres or leisure schemes.



Seeking 74sq.m (800sq.ft) to 186sq.m (2,000sq.ft) in locations with good visibility and high footfall in cultural, educational, and business hubs and districts.



Seeking 149sq.m (1,600sq.ft) to 242sq.m (2,600sq.ft) on retail leisure parks and arterial roads.



Seeking 175sq.m (1,883sq.ft) in high street locations.

6.28 Another important consideration which is likely to impact demand is the recent changes to the Use Classes Order, which sees the previous uses classes D2 (Assembly and leisure), A1 (shops), A2 (professional services), A3 (restaurants) and B1 (offices) merged into a new E class. Changes between these uses no longer require planning permission and will lead to increased flexibility between these uses. This will be particularly appealing for food and drink operators who will now be able to occupy a wider range of space, including vacant high street / retail space without requiring planning permission. The increased supply available to the hospitality sector will invariably drive competition between landlords and mean bigger incentives to tenants.

6.29 In addition to the increasing supply through permitted development rights there is also new / purpose built retail and leisure space opportunities coming onto the market, including One Milburngate where 5,574sq.m (60,000sq.ft) of floorspace is proposed. Longer term there is also 1,136sq.m (12,228sq.ft) of ancillary space, which could be suitable for food and drink uses, proposed as part of the Aykley Heads masterplan proposals.

6.30 Finally the DLI building at circa 1,486sq.m (16,000sq.ft) is too large to be a single standalone café / restaurant.

Hotel

6.31 The size of DLI building and depth of floor plan would make it challenging to convert to a hotel, but possible with significant adaptation.

6.32 There are currently twelve hotels in Durham offering 954 bedrooms (4* (48%), limited service hotels (39%) and 3* (13%). There are also hotels currently in construction (Premier Inn at Milburngate and

Travelodge Thinford) which are due to open within 12 months adding a further 172 bedrooms to the market.

6.33 The market gap sits between 4* and limited service hotels¹². There is growth in ‘focused service’ upper midscale hotel brands, which include Courtyard by Marriot (CbyM) and Hilton Garden Inn (HGI). We are aware of the following hotel requirements for Durham City.

Hotel Requirements – Durham

	<p>Easy Hotel has a requirement for 1,858sq.m (20,000sq.ft) to 2,323sq.m (25,000sq.ft) near a major transport hub.</p>
	<p>Seeking ‘empty’ land plots between 0.49 acres (0.2ha) and 2.47acres (1ha) in landmark city locations near transport hub.</p>

6.34 Most hotel groups now operate ‘asset-light’ strategies and will not invest/ or wish to own the development. This is a key shift in recent years, reducing their capital investment in bricks and mortar in favour of developers/investors financing the scheme in return for having a recognised brand name. The advantage for the major chains is that they can focus all their resources on the marketing and development of their brand portfolios, securing greater revenue streams than if they had their funds tied up in the property.

¹² A limited service hotel refers to budget-friendly hotels that don't have a food and beverage component like an onsite restaurant. These hotels may have typical amenities like a conference room, business centre, gym, pool, and laundry facilities.

- 6.35 The standard hotel bedroom room size is 45sq.m (484sq.ft), which would equate to circa 26 bedrooms in the DLI building¹³, which is substantially less than the Durham average of 80 bedrooms.
- 6.36 For these reasons it is unlikely that the DLI building will be attractive to a leading hotel group.
- 6.37 There may be interest from independent operators for the DLI building but we are not aware of any requirements. It is likely, that the extent of the market competition from the main hotel groups will deter market interest from independent hoteliers. In addition, the cost of conversion, especially in view of the market competition, is also likely to be prohibitive for most independents resulting in limited demand.

Offices

- 6.38 As outlined previously the site is likely to be too limiting for office uses. Furthermore, the limited floor to ceiling height and absence of raised access floor will limit the market demand for the building as a dedicated office.
- 6.39 Coronavirus also remains a major disrupter and has created profound uncertainty in the office market and has the potential to redefine the use of office space generally.
- 6.40 It's inevitable that we will see a contraction in the volume of space being occupied by businesses. However, some analysts argue that this is simply an acceleration of cost-cutting measures that were already in train pre-pandemic. What is becoming clearer is that the office space that most businesses will wish to return to post pandemic will be of better quality and suited to the needs of the evolving workplace environment.

- 6.41 In the short to medium term the City will be well supplied by high quality offices, as there is up to 21,367sq.m (230,000sq.ft) of new Grade A office space being provided within Milburngate. The first office building, providing up to 5,000sq.m (53,701sq.ft), will be available in 2022.
- 6.42 In the medium to longer term the masterplan proposals for the Aykley Heads site also propose 37,332sq.m (401,851sq.ft) gross of modern Grade A office space.
- 6.43 Within this context there is unlikely to be demand for office space within the DLI building.

Gym

- 6.44 low-cost gyms such as énergie Fitness and Pure Gym have been driving the recent growth in the health and fitness industry, consistently increasing their market share year-on-year. The 'UK Low Cost Gyms – Market headroom forecasts increased' report produced by PwC UK outlines that the low-cost sector will continue to increase its share of the market as new locations open but also as low-cost gyms claim market share from mid-market operators¹⁴.
- 6.45 Another trend in the sector is the increasing number of gyms situated in high street locations increasing by over 15% since 2017.
- 6.46 We are currently aware of one known requirement from Snap Fitness for space within Durham. Details of their requirements are set out below, which emphasises the trend for high footfall locations within city centre and high street locations.

¹³ Assuming 80% of the gross floor area (i.e. 1,189sq.m / 12,796sq.ft).

¹⁴ Mid-market operators are defined as those gyms that charge upwards of £30 per month for their basic membership.



- Medium to high footfall required.
- Optimal size of between 372sq.m to 743sq.m (4,000sq.ft to 8,000sq.ft), with properties up to 929sq.m (10,000sq.ft) being considered.
- Visibility required for transport links.
- Within proximity to parking.
- City centre, out of town and high street locations considered.
- Preferably located near to supermarkets and other convenience stores.

6.47 Due to the relative isolation of the DLI building it lends itself to being more of a destination. Whilst gyms could be categorised as destinations, we are seeing an increasing trend from gym operators wanting to be located on the high street.

6.48 Gyms are also another use where demand is likely to be impacted by the recent changes to the Use Classes Order. Through these changes' gym operators will now be able to occupy a wider range of space, including vacant high street / retail space coming onto the market because of the pandemic without requiring planning permission. The increased supply available to gym operators will invariably drive competition between landlords and mean bigger incentives to tenants.

6.49 Within this context there is not considered to be a strong market demand for a gym.

Suitability of Alternative Uses Based on Market Demand

6.50 A summary of the suitability of alternative uses, based on market demand, is summarised in the table below.

Table 4 - Suitability of Alternative Uses Based on Market Demand

Use	Comments
Retail	The limited footfall and remoteness of the DLI building will severely limit demand for retail uses.
Residential	The adaptability of the immediate environment and DLI building will severely limit demand for residential uses.
Community	The building has been vacant since its closure in 2015 and within the period between now and then there have been no expressions of interest from 'community groups', as part of the Council's original asset transfer programme and subsequent Durham Ask, for this building. Demand for community uses, therefore, seems unlikely.
Education	<u>Pre School / Nursery</u> There no know demand or need for state funded, not for profit or private preschool/nurseries.
	<u>Further / Higher Educational</u> Further and higher education providers have long term estate strategies, which set out their long term investment plans. It is unlikely, therefore, that there will be demand from further or higher educational establishments.

Use	Comments
Commercial	<p><u>Standalone Restaurant / Cafe</u></p> <p>The limited footfall and remoteness of the DLI building will severely limit demand for standalone restaurant and café uses.</p>
	<p><u>Hotel</u></p> <p>There may be interest from independent operators for the DLI building but we are not aware of any requirements. However, we anticipate that the extent of the market competition from the main hotel groups will deter market interest from independent hoteliers. In addition, the cost of conversion, is also likely to be prohibitive for most independents resulting in limited demand.</p>
	<p><u>Offices</u></p> <p>Coronavirus remains a major disrupter and has created profound uncertainty in the office market, and has the potential to redefine the use of office space generally. What is becoming clearer is that the office space that most businesses will wish to return to post pandemic will be of better quality and suited to the needs of the evolving workplace environment. Given the supply of Grade A office space coming forward elsewhere in the City over the short, medium and long term there is unlikely to be demand for refurbished office space within the DLI building.</p>
	<p><u>Gym</u></p> <p>There is an increasing trend from gym operators wanting to be located on the high street, which is likely to be enhanced through changes to the Use Classes Order which will mean gym operators will now be able to occupy a wider range of space,</p>

Use	Comments
	<p>including vacant high street / retail space coming onto the market because of the pandemic, without requiring planning permission. The increased high street supply available to gym operators will invariably drive competition between landlords and mean bigger incentives to tenants.</p>
Museum (including café / restaurant)	<p>The Council are considering the use of the DLI building for the storage and display of other Council collections. We believe there would be demand for a café and restaurant but only alongside a main use for the building that had the ability to generate high levels of footfall.</p>

-  Suitable
-  Suitable but issues to be resolved
-  Unsuitable

7. Title Review

7.1 A high level title review, based on land registry titles provided by the Council, has been undertaken to identify any restrictive covenants and or legal impediments that might prevent the redevelopment / conversion of the building for an alternative use.

7.2 The main findings from this exercise are summarised below.

Restrictive Covenants

7.3 There are no known restrictive covenants or legal impediments that would prevent the building being used for an alternative use.

Leases and Licences

7.4 The car park is currently occupied by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) for Covid-19 mobile testing. A Licence for this is being progressed but is not yet in place. Whilst it is currently unknown how long this site will be needed for this purpose, it's unlikely to prevent the building being used for alternative uses.

7.5 The Aykley Heads land including the land surrounding the DLI museum has been used in the past for various charity fun runs and events. These are only usually for a few days, but do seem to be of an annual recurrence, although they have not been held since the 2020 cancellation of events due to the pandemic. Future events are also unlikely to prevent the building being used for alternative uses.

7.6 There is a substation incorporated within the DLI demise but the Council has been unable to locate the lease for the substation. The Council's Asset Manager has notes showing that this lease is currently missing.

7.7 There are no other known leases or licences affecting the property.

7.8 Prior to progressing any alternative use strategy for the building, a full and detailed title review would need to be undertaken.

Other Designations

7.9 According to the Council's GIS Layers the site:

- Is within a designated Conservation Area, designated 1968, amended 2016
- Is part of the Green Belt
- Has two mine inspection areas on either side of the entrance to the car park
- Is an Open Space Needs Assessment site (OSNA), due to the typology being "Accessible Natural Green Space". The DLI building and car park are not included, but all land surrounding them within the site boundary is.

8. Overall Feasibility of Potential Uses

8.1 Taking into account the range of factors that we have considered in the previous sections we have formed an opinion on the overall feasibility for each of the potential uses and present this in the table below.

Use	Local Environment ¹⁵	Building ¹⁶	Planning ¹⁷	Market Demand ¹⁸	Title ¹⁹	Overall Feasibility of Use
Retail						<p>The limited footfall and remoteness of the building will affect its commercial viability for passing trade as it lends itself to being more of a destination than somewhere you happen upon. This will severely limit demand for retail uses.</p> <p>Retail is also a main town centre use and would require a retail assessment including a sequential assessment to demonstrate that no suitable premises are available in Durham City Centre. Also, the site is in the Green Belt so any retail use which generates a lot of journeys may not be considered favourably, as there is limited parking.</p> <p>The ceiling/ soffit heights would also not be advantageous for retail uses.</p>
Residential						<p>The environment surrounding the building prevents a residential use principally for the exposure and the security measures that would be required to 'privatise' and safeguard. In addition, the adaptability of the building for residential would require significant and costly alteration. It is believed the building could be converted to a single residency but this would be vast in size, for which there would be limited market demand.</p>

¹⁵ Please refer to Table 1 on page 11.

¹⁶ Please refer to Table 2 on page 14.

¹⁷ Please refer to Table 3 on pages 15 to 16.

¹⁸ Please refer to Table 4 on pages 23 to 24.

¹⁹ Please refer to Section 7 on page 25.

Use	Local Environment ¹⁵	Building ¹⁶	Planning ¹⁷	Market Demand ¹⁸	Title ¹⁹	Overall Feasibility of Use
Community - Art and Sculpture Exhibition Centre and Gardens	●	●	●	●	●	Community uses are perceived not to be feasible due to their being no proven need / demand. Whilst the building is suitable for a range of community functions/uses the property has been vacant since its closure in 2015 and within the period between now and then there have been no expressions of interest from 'community groups' for this building, arising from the Council's communities' assets transfer and 'Durham Ask'.
Community Groups combined club house	●	●	●	●	●	
Community - sports changing and cub house, youth centre and art house cinema	●	●	●	●	●	
Education - Primary and Secondary	●	●	●	●	●	The building would not be suitable for a full-time school (primary and secondary) due to the lack of large multi-purpose hall. In planning terms education uses would be acceptable in principle. However, the need for these uses would have to be demonstrated. Currently there is no identified need / requirements for all the educational uses.
Education - Early years /nursery	●	●	●	●	●	
Education - Further/higher education	●	●	●	●	●	
Standalone Restaurant Café	●	●	●	●	●	The site and building would work well as a venue for a café or restaurant and the grounds could be utilised to the buildings advantage. However, demand for a standalone restaurant / cafe is unlikely due to the remoteness of the building and limited footfall. In planning terms there will also be a requirement to provide a sequential assessment, to demonstrate no suitable and alternative premises are available in Durham City Centre, and or impact assessment.

Use	Local Environment	Building	Planning	Market Demand	Title
Hotel					
Offices					
Gym					
Museum (including new and improved ancillary café / restaurant)					

-  Suitable
-  Suitable but issues to be resolved
-  Unsuitable

Overall Feasibility of Use

The site would likely prove too limiting for hotel functions and the size of building and depth of floor plan would make it challenging for a hotel, but possible with significant adaptation. It is unlikely that the building will be attractive to a leading hotel group and whilst there may be interest from independent operators the likely extent of the market competition (especially from the main hotel groups) will deter market interest from independent hoteliers. In addition, the cost of conversion, especially when viewed alongside the market competition, is also likely to be prohibitive for most independents further compounding the market demand.

This site would likely prove too limiting for office functions and the limited floor to ceiling height and the absence of a raised access floor would limit its use as a dedicated office. In terms of demand most occupiers / businesses will wish to return to better quality workspace post pandemic which is suited to the needs of the evolving workplace environment. In this regard there is a significant supply of Grade A office space coming forward elsewhere in the City over the short, medium, and long term which will be in direct competition with the DLI building for office use. Consequently, there is not thought to be demand for office use.

Repurposing the building for a gym has been deemed unfeasible due to a lack of demand.

The Council are considering the use of the DLI building for the storage and display of other Council collections. The building lends itself to these uses as it was specifically designed for this purpose. This use also ties in with the existing planning permission.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 Through this work it has been identified that the DLI Museum and Art Gallery is a purpose designed building and as such any new function will require a significant amount of alteration to the façade unless a similar use / function is chosen.
- 9.2 In addition the building does not maximise, the potential of its surroundings and this is something that could also be addressed if reused/repurposed in the future.
- 9.3 Following a high level review of a long list of potential options for the future reuse of the building taking into account a range of factors including the local environment, how easy it would be to adapt the building, planning considerations, market demand and any legal / title restrictions it has been identified that the only overall feasible option, is to reuse the building for the storage and display / exhibition of other Council collections, which are not being transferred to the new history centre, alongside a new and improved ancillary kitchen, café / restaurant.

Appendix 1 - Planning Appraisal

In the first instance we have reviewed the relevant planning history for the site using the County Council's online planning portal. The applications relevant to the property / site span from 1996 to 2011 and include:

- Full planning permission for the installation of 30 solar PV modules on the roof of the existing building. Permission (4/11/00537/FPA) was granted in September 2011.
- Permission for the resurfacing of footpaths and car parks, changes to car park layout, installation of street lighting and CCTV camera masts. Permission (4/04/01043/CM) was granted in September 2004.
- Full planning permission for the erection and extensions to the foyer and café areas, paved terrace and external alterations and extension to approach road to provide parking for disabled. Permission (4/98/00789/CM) was granted in December 1998.
- Advertisement consent for the erection and display of a banner. Permission (4/96/00234/AC) was granted in May 1996.

In addition to the applications listed above, permission was granted in January 2021 for the following development at the site of County Hall to the north of the site:

Hybrid planning application comprising detailed planning application for an office block (Class B1) with associated parking and landscaping on land known as Plot C and an outline planning application, with all matters reserved apart from site access, for the demolition of the existing County Hall site and the development of a business park (Class B1) with supporting retail and leisure uses comprising uses within Class A1 (retail), Class A2 (financial and professional services), Class A3 (food and drink), Class D1 (non-residential institutions) and Class D2 (assembly and leisure) with associated landscaping, multi-storey and surface car parking, servicing and relevant infrastructure.

County Hall is the current offices for Durham County Council until a proposed move to a new modern purpose-built office accommodation at another site. The red line for this proposed development extends beyond the footprint of

the existing building into the car parks and woodland surrounding County Hall but excludes the site of the former DLI museum



Figure 1: Aerial Image of the County Hall Application Site (identified in red) and the DLI Site (identified in yellow)

Planning Policy Context – Site Specific Summary

A review of the relevant planning policies specific to the site has also been undertaken. The site was considered against policies from the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and the County Durham Local Plan (2020) as part of this review.

The site is located within the Green Belt. Policy 20 of the County Durham Local Plan states that development proposals within the Green Belt will be determined in accordance with national planning policy. Paragraphs 143-147 of the National Planning Policy Framework relate to proposals affecting the Green Belt. The construction of new buildings should be considered inappropriate in the Green Belt, unless in exceptional circumstances, such as:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

- a) mineral extraction;
- b) engineering operations;
- c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;

- d) the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.
- e) material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
- f) development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

The site is within a designated Safeguarded Area as identified in Policy 28 in the Local Plan. The safeguarding areas relevant to the site are the defined Durham Tees Valley and Newcastle International Aerodrome Safeguarding Areas. The authorities must be consulted on any developments involving wind farms, pylons and tall buildings.

The site is within an area designated as a Coalfield Development High Risk Area through Policy 32 of the Local Plan. Applications in these areas must demonstrate all investigations and risk assessments have been undertaken and the site is suitable for the proposed use.

The site is within an area designated as Area of High Landscape Value through Policy 39 of the Local Plan. Development affecting Areas of High Landscape Value will only be permitted where it conserves, and where appropriate enhances, the special qualities of the landscape, unless the benefits of development in that location clearly outweigh the harm.

The site is surrounded by a number of trees. Policy 40 of the Local Plan states proposals for new development will not be permitted that would result in the loss of, or damage to, trees of high landscape, amenity or biodiversity value unless the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the harm.

The site is within the Durham City designated Conservation Area through Policy 44 Historic Environment of the Local Plan. Policy 44 states that development will be expected to sustain the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting. Development proposals should contribute positively to the built and historic environment and should seek opportunities to enhance and, where appropriate, better reveal the

significance and understanding of heritage assets whilst improving access where appropriate.

The site is also within a designated Minerals Safeguarding Area, identified as an area for coal resources and glacial sand and gravel. Planning permission will not be granted for non-mineral development that would lead to the sterilisation of mineral resources within a Mineral Safeguarding Area unless it can be demonstrated that the mineral in the location concerned is no longer of any value, provision can be made for the mineral to be extracted satisfactorily prior to the development taking place, or the need for the non-minerals development outweighs the need to safeguard the mineral.

The Policies summarised above relate to the sites location and will apply irrespective of what type of development is brought forward.

This study aims to assess various options for the redevelopment / reuse of the building and the table below aims to identify which policies will apply if the site were to be redeveloped for a range of uses.

Planning Policy Context – Options Specific

Use Option	Relevant Planning Policies
Community	County Durham Plan 2020
Art and Sculpture Exhibition Centre & Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 7 Visitor Attractions • Policy 9 Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development (Main Town Centre Use) • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- Similar to existing use - likely to be supported provided the proposals is compliant with relevant Local Plan policies</p> <p>- May require a sequential assessment and/or impact assessment in line with the requirements of Policy 9 of the Local Plan</p>
Community Groups combined Club House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- Similar to existing use - likely to be supported provided the proposals is compliant with relevant Local Plan policies</p>
Sports - Changing & Club house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- Would be acceptable in principle, provided proposals are compliant with other relevant policies of the Local Plan.</p>
Youth Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- Would be acceptable in principle, provided proposals are compliant with other relevant policies of the Local Plan.</p>
Art House Cinema	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 7 Visitor Attractions • Policy 9 Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development (Main Town Centre Use) • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- Similar to existing use - likely to be supported provided the proposals is compliant with relevant Local Plan policies</p> <p>- May require a sequential assessment in line with the requirements of Policy 9 of the Local Plan</p>
Education Use	
Higher Education Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- The use would be acceptable in principle. However, a need for education uses would need to be demonstrated.</p>
Further Education Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- The use would be acceptable in principle. However, a need for education uses would need to be demonstrated.</p>
School Age Education Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- The use would be acceptable in principle. However, a need for education uses would need to be demonstrated.</p>
Pre-school Age - Nursery/Kindergarden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- The use would be acceptable in principle. However, a need for education uses would need to be demonstrated.</p>
Environment Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- The use would be acceptable in principle. However, a need for education uses would need to be demonstrated.</p>

Reopened Museum	
Reopened Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 7 Visitor Attractions • Policy 9 Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development (Main Town Centre Use) • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- Acceptable as within the existing planning permission</p>
Commercial	
Café / Restaurant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 9 Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development (Main Town Centre Use) • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- May require a sequential assessment and/or impact assessment in line with the requirements of Policy 9 of the Local Plan</p>
Small Hotel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 9 Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development (Main Town Centre Use) • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- May require a sequential assessment and/or impact assessment in line with the requirements of Policy 9 of the Local Plan</p>
Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 2 Employment Land • Policy 3 Aykley Heads • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 9 Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development (Main Town Centre Use) • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- May require a sequential assessment and/or impact assessment in line with the requirements of Policy 9 of the Local Plan</p>
Gym	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 9 Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development (Main Town Centre Use)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- May require a sequential assessment and/or impact assessment in line with the requirements of Policy 9 of the Local Plan</p>
Social Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- May require a sequential assessment and/or impact assessment in line with the requirements of Policy 9 of the Local Plan</p>
Residential	
Apartments / Multiple Occupiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 1 Quantity of New Development • Policy 4 Housing Allocations • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- Housing not usually considered appropriate Green Belt development; proposals would need to comply with various housing policies and not prejudice nearby established housing commitments and allocations. However, residential development could achieve planning permission if demonstrated and compliant with other relevant policies of the Local Plan.</p>
Single House Conversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 1 Quantity of New Development • Policy 4 Housing Allocations • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- Housing not usually considered appropriate Green Belt development; proposals would need to comply with various housing policies and not prejudice nearby established housing commitments and allocations. However, residential development could achieve planning permission if demonstrated and compliant with other relevant policies of the Local Plan.</p>
Retail	

Retail / Shopping Outlet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 9 Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development (Main Town Centre Use) • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- May require a sequential and/or impact assessment in line with the requirements of Policy 9 of the Local Plan</p>
Partial Use / Hybrid Options	
Café/Restaurant and smaller culture venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy 6 Development on Unallocated Sites • Policy 7 Visitor Attractions • Policy 9 Retail Hierarchy and Town Centre Development (Main Town Centre Use) • Policy 10 Development in the Countryside • Policy 20 Green Belt • Policy 44 Historic Environment (Conservation Area): Durham City <p>- Similar to existing use - likely to be supported provided the proposals is compliant with relevant Local Plan policies</p> <p>- May require a sequential and/or impact assessment in line with the requirements of Policy 9 of the Local Plan</p>

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