



**CITY OF DURHAM
PARISH COUNCIL**

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19 April 2020

Dear Ms Eden,

DM/20/00885/AD | Various advertisements including 3no. digital display boards, new staircase signage and temporary advertisements relating to new retailers and temporary closure of car park 1 (part retrospective). | The Riverwalk Millburngate Durham DH1 4SL

The Parish Planning Committee considered this application on 17th April 2020 and agreed to object to this application.

The proposal is for the erection of various advertisements including 3no. digital display boards, new staircase signage and temporary advertisements relating to new retailers.

Firstly, the application site sits within the centre of the Durham City Conservation Area (designated 1968, amended 2016) and, as such, it is considered that this application is in breach of Saved Policy Q17 of the City of Durham Local Plan (2004) which states: **“advertisement consent will only be granted for hoardings and large advertising panels when they are not located within conservation areas.”**

That being the case, the Parish Council appreciates the need for the advertisement indicating the temporary closure of car park 1, likewise for the new staircase signage. Moreover, the Parish Council believes that the temporary advertising relating to new retailers has generally been done in a tasteful manner which is sympathetic to its wider surroundings.

The Parish Council objects to the aspect of this proposal which includes the digital display boards; particularly the proposed illuminated display board on Framwelgate Bridge. Framwelgate Bridge is a medieval Grade I listed building built in the 15th century, it is a Scheduled Ancient Monument which is based in the Durham City Conservation Area (designated 1968, amended 2016) and has a highly prominent position within the World Heritage Site. The Parish Council believes that the granting of this aspect of the application would have an adverse impact upon the site.

The National Planning Policy Framework section 180c clearly states, **“planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should...limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation”**.

Furthermore, paragraph 127 of the NPPF requires that: **“planning decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting”**. The Parish Council considers this application to be contrary to this objective of the Framework.

Paragraph 48 of the NPPF also permits local planning authorities to give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation of the emerging plan, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF.

Policy 32 of the draft County Durham Local Plan states: ***“Development which does not minimise light pollution and demonstrate that the lighting proposed is the minimum necessary for functional or security purposes will not be permitted”***.

“5.343 Light pollution is artificial light that illuminates areas that are not intended to be lit. The intrusion of overly bright or poorly directed lights can cause glare, wasted energy, have impacts on nature conservation, and affect people's right to enjoy their property. It can also severely affect our view of the night sky. Light pollution may also damage the perception of a heritage asset in its setting, especially if the asset is experienced at night or is floodlit. The NPPF is clear that planning policies should limit the impact from light pollution on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes, and nature conservation, primarily through promoting and requiring good quality design”.

“5.344 Development proposals with the potential to result in unacceptable levels of light pollution, either individually or cumulatively with other proposals, should be accompanied by an assessment of the likely impact to show that the lighting scheme is the minimum necessary for functional or security purposes and that it minimises potential pollution from glare and spillage. Particular attention will be paid to areas where tranquillity and dark skies are valued and may also be sensitive to light pollution, such as the World Heritage Site, North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, open countryside, within the setting of heritage assets close to sensitive uses or to areas or features important for nature conservation”. The Parish Council believes that the proposed digital display board on Framwelgate Bridge would have an unacceptable impact in terms of light pollution on the World Heritage Site and the wider setting of this area and is therefore contract to Policy 32 of the emerging County Durham Plan.

Furthermore, the emerging City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan has now passed its Regulation 16 stage and is now at independent examination stage. Policy H2 of the emerging City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan states: ***“Development proposals within or affecting the setting of the***

Durham City Conservation Area should sustain and enhance its special interest and significance as identified within the Conservation Area Appraisals.

Development proposals within and affecting the Durham City Conservation Area should take into account, and meet where relevant, the following requirements, by having...lighting appropriate to the vernacular, context and setting”

Policy G1, Section 4.91 also states: **“darkness is important to wildlife and to the special setting of the World Heritage Site and the Durham City Conservation area, and provides health benefits to people of relaxation, tranquillity and appreciation of the night sky. Though an urban area, this Neighbourhood Plan considers that parts of Our Neighbourhood should be treated as Zone E1 or E2 for the provision of lighting (Durham County Council, Neighbourhood Services, 2014; Durham County Council, Regeneration and Local Services, 2016), e.g. the World Heritage Site, along the riverbanks and along the traditional footpaths criss-crossing Our Neighbourhood. This would entail either restricting lighting, or providing minimal intensity lighting with a full horizontal cut off. Darkness contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site (Durham World Heritage Site, 2017, p.62)”**. The Parish Council believes that the aspect of the application involving the digital display boards would be contrary to these local policies and the NPPF.

This application should therefore be refused.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Shanley
Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council