



**CITY OF DURHAM
PARISH COUNCIL**

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10 March 2020

Dear Ms Stephenson,

Planning Application DM/20/00165/FPA | Proposed retention of 2 no. timber dugouts erected to the north west of the existing artificial turf pitch. | Durham School Quarryheads Lane Durham DH1 4SZ

The Parish Council Planning Committee considered this application at its meeting on 6th March 2020 and agreed to object to this application.

The application is for the retention of two wooden structures currently used as team shelters by the school as part of the all-weather sports pitch on the school campus.

The application site is situated within the Durham City Conservation Area (designated 1968, amended 2016) and within the campus of Durham School; an independent boarding school founded by the Bishop of Durham in 1414. The school is Durham city's oldest institution of learning and its campus includes a range of historic and listed buildings. The trees surrounding the site are of a high value for wildlife and conservation usage.

It should be noted that planning permission has not been sought for the erection of these two structures and this application is therefore retrospective. Furthermore, there is no heritage statement available for this application on the County Council's planning portal.

Moreover, the Parish Council does not feel that the description of the structures as "dugouts" is accurate. These structures are approximately 2.5m in height and are visible from Clay Lane (see appendix 1 attached with this letter) and residential properties of Archery Rise. Clay Lane has been an important pedestrian route into Durham since the medieval period and continues to serve as a major pedestrian artery into the City centre. It is an attractive green area of biodiversity, providing a significant habitat for wildlife that includes badgers, foxes, bats and weasel. It also forms one of the green corridors linking the river banks with countryside outside the City. As such, Clay Lane is regarded as a non-designated Heritage Asset and the Parish Council considers that this application adversely impacts upon this area.

Paragraph 197 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) clearly states that: **“the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset”**. Given the adverse impact on the views from Clay Lane as a result of the erection of these structures, the Parish Council considers that this application should be refused on the basis of this breach of the objective of the Framework.

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.

As the application site also sits within the Durham City Conservation Area, the Parish Council also considers that policy E22 of the City of Durham Local Plan 2004 is relevant to this application. Section 1 of the City of Durham Saved Policy E22 clearly states: **“the council will seek to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation areas within the City of Durham by not permitting development proposals which would detract from the character or appearance of the conservation area or its setting. All development proposals should be sensitive in terms of siting, scale, design and materials, reflecting, where appropriate, existing architectural details.”** The Parish Council therefore feels that this application should be refused on this basis.

Section 4 of Policy E22 also requires that a sufficient level of detail accompany applications for development to enable an assessment to be made of its impact on the conservation area. As this application is both limited in detail and retrospective, the Parish Council considers this to be contrary to this policy. Early discussion between the applicant, the local planning authority and the local community about the design and style of such schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local interests. Early engagement as recommended in paragraph 39 of the NPPF has clearly not been undertaken by the applicant.

In summary, whilst the Parish Council recognises the practical uses of these structures for recreational purposes, it is the Parish Council’s view that the siting of these structures has resulted in an unacceptable adverse impact on the views from important sites within the Conservation Area. This application should therefore be refused and the school be asked to re-position these structures to an area which serves an equal purpose without the adverse impact on the aforementioned views.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Shanley
Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council