

Ms Susan Hyde
Durham County Council
Planning Department
Central/East Room 4/86-102
County Hall
Durham City
DH1 5UL

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

12 June 2019

Dear Ms Hyde,

DM/19/01503/AD Internally illuminated light box to display information related to St Cuthbert and the Journey Statue, Millennium Place Durham.

The City of Durham Parish Council Planning Committee considered this application at its meeting on 24 May 2019 and discussed it further on 7 June.

It noted that the application seeks to replace the existing non-illuminated, two-dimensional interpretation panel associated with the nearby statue, The Journey, with a larger, illuminated box.

Members of the Planning Committee wish to express several concerns about the application, as follows.

1. The proposed interpretation panel is larger but, on the information available, visually inferior to the one it will replace.

The existing panel illustrates in colour and with minimal text the procession of St Cuthbert's body from Northumberland to its present resting place. This makes the background story immediately accessible to children and the many foreign visitors who enter the historic city centre through Millennium Place. The only design information in the current application is *"background will most likely be white and text black. There will be colours through use of imagery and/or illustration"*. Introducing a significant amount of additional text will crowd the space and reduce the clarity and impact of the information. The Committee believes that any replacement panel should enhance rather than diminish the story it delivers to its many viewers, including school parties and visitors.

2. The application for the interpretation panel is confusing in its reference to other matters relating to the sculpture.

It is unclear whether the application is predicated upon or confused with a related proposal - the night time illumination of the sculpture itself. *"The illumination of 'The Journey' will draw attention and potentially enhance the experience of the sculpture at night that, in association with the light box interpretation of the story of St Cuthbert, will provide visitors and residents alike with more information about the city relating to its original establishment. The impact of the proposed illumination would be contained and constrained to within the confines of the modern mixed used development of Millennium Square creating nil or very limited impact in wider terms. The extent, level and type of illumination needs to be carefully considered and controlled".*

The Committee would prefer investment in an improved non-illuminated interpretation medium delivering the best possible visual (and possibly audio so as to be inclusive of the visually impaired) experience to the greatest number of viewers i.e. during daylight hours. Partnership funding by the Parish Council of such a project could be considered.

3. The status of the application is unclear in terms of the proposal's acceptability to other Planning Teams.

The Conservation Officer comment as recently as 31 May is: *"Whilst the principle of improving the associated interpretation with The Journey sculpture is supported, the information provided is rather basic. I have been unable to locate anything which confirms the proportions of the proposed box or indeed the finished materials and colours. I would be grateful if these clarifications could be sought."* There is no indication that such clarification has been provided to the satisfaction of the Conservation Officer.

Furthermore the application contains the Officer's comment *"It is of the utmost importance that this specific scheme is tied into the wider regeneration project for Millennium Square and the enquirer should touch base with officers in Regeneration in this respect prior to taking this forwards. This may in fact include relocating The Journey Sculpture."* There is no reference to a response from the Regeneration Team.

The Parish Council Planning Committee would hope consideration of this application be deferred until sufficient details of the proposal are available.

4. No consultation has been undertaken with the local community.

The Parish Council is aware that the local residents' group, St Nicholas Community Forum, has maintained a close interest in Millennium Place, particularly The Journey sculpture and its place in any scheme for regeneration of the area. They state that they were promised an early introduction to any proposals, and SNCF members have attended monthly AAP meetings to maintain contact with reporting County Council officers. The community wishes to play a positive part in any scheme to enhance this

part of the city and will be disappointed to have not, at least, been informed of this proposal. City residents will be alarmed by the words in the application referring to the possible relocation of the sculpture.

In conclusion, the Parish Council hopes that these comments, made on behalf of the residents of the Parish and those from further afield with a strong attachment to the city, its history and culture, will be taken into account in any decisions made relating to this application.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Shanley

Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council