

**CITY OF DURHAM
PARISH COUNCIL**

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18 November 2019

Dear Paul,

Advertisement Consent for the display of 1 No. Externally Illuminated Hanging Sign, 1 No. Internally Illuminated Hanging Sign and 1 No. Internally Illuminated Fascia Sign, The Bishop Langley, North Road, Durham DH1 4PW

I am writing on behalf of the City of Durham Parish Council to object to the above application for three illuminated signs at the former Bishop Langley pub on Framwellgate Bridge, Durham City.

The City of Durham Parish Council Planning Committee discussed this application at its meeting on 8th November 2019 and resolved to object on the following grounds.

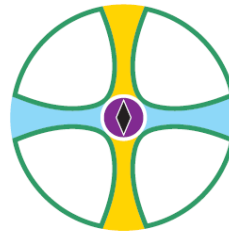
The proposed signs are in a very prominent and sensitive location facing the Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site. Saved Policy E3 of the City of Durham Local Plan 2004 is concerned to safeguard the World Heritage Site by applying relevant policies for restricting development:

“Policy E3: Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site and its setting will be protected by restricting development to safeguard local and long distance views to and from the Cathedral and Castle and Peninsula in accordance with policies E1, E5, E6, E10, E23 and E24 and applying policies E1, E5, E6, E10, E21, E22, E23 AND E24 relating to green belt, landscape setting, conservation areas, listed buildings, and archaeological remains.”

Thus the Saved Policies on the Historic Environment, on Conservation Areas and on the setting of Listed Buildings are engaged. These policies are as follows.

“Policy E21: The Council will preserve and enhance the historic environment of the district by requiring development proposals to minimise adverse impacts on significant features of historic interest within or adjacent to the site.”

“Policy E22: 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.”



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“Policy 23: The Council will seek to safeguard listed buildings and their settings by....not permitting development which detracts from the setting of a listed building.”

Furthermore, there is a Saved Policy specifically on advertisements:

“Policy Q16: Advertisement consent will be granted for non-illuminated and illuminated signs provided that their size, design, materials, colouring and, in the case of illuminated signs, on commercial premises for appropriate uses and particular opening hours, their form of illumination would not be detrimental to visual amenity or highways safety.

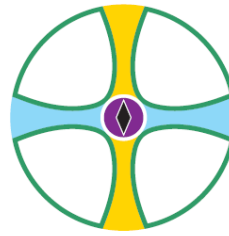
Particular attention will be paid to the impact of advertisements upon the character and setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of conservation areas in accordance with policies E6, E22 and E23.”

The Parish Council has carefully examined the designs of the proposed signs. They are virtually indistinguishable from the signs installed without permission last year and for which a retrospective planning application was refused. That earlier application was accompanied by a Statement of Heritage Impact which asserted that the design of the signs respects or enhances heritage significance and the Conservation Area as being *“bespoke to fit the unique architecture of the building”* and *“overall the signage is minimalistic”*.

The actual appearance and impact can in this case be seen, as in this photograph, because those signs had already been erected. At night particularly, the impact is severely detrimental to the view of the World Heritage Site. To all intents and purpose it appears to be a huge logo stuck onto Durham Castle.



(Photo courtesy of David Freeman)



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The applicant's claim that the design of the signs complied with the Heritage and Conservation Area policies because they are "*bespoke to fit the unique architecture of the building*" is a comprehensive misunderstanding of the terms of the policies. Saved Policy E21 requires proposed developments to minimise adverse impacts on **significant features of historic interest within or adjacent to the site** (our emphasis). It is not the rather unremarkable architecture of the office building and former Bishop Langley pub that required protection from adverse impacts! Similarly, Saved Policy E22 is to protect the Conservation Area and its setting, not this building. Again, Saved Policy E23 is to protect the setting of Listed Buildings, not this building.

Finally, the terms of Saved Policy Q16 leave no room for doubt that advertisements, specifically illuminated advertisements, must not be detrimental to visual amenity and that "*particular attention must be paid to the impact of advertisements upon the character and setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of Conservation Areas in accordance with policies E6, E22 and E23.*" It is evident from the applicant's earlier Statement of Heritage Impact that no attention whatsoever had been paid to impact other than on the nondescript office building hosting the proposed signs.

The current application merely changes the form of illumination of the offending sign from internal to external; the sign would be mounted on the same post in the same location. No Statement of Heritage Impact is offered.

Accordingly, the City of Durham Parish Council recommends that the application should be refused on the grounds that the signage has a materially adverse impact on the World Heritage Site (Saved Policy E3), on Durham City's historic environment (Saved Policy E21), on the Durham City Conservation Area (Saved Policy E22), and on the setting of Framwellgate Bridge and other nearby Listed Buildings (Saved Policy 23); and is detrimental to visual amenity whilst showing no particular attention being paid to the impact of the signage upon the character and setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area (Saved Policy Q16).

Should you be minded to approve this application, we would wish this application to be called to committee so that we can put our case to Councillors.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Shanley
Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council