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28 May 2019

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

Dear Ms Hyde,

**DM/19/01359/LB and DM/19/01365/AD: Two banners on the front elevation of Durham
Town Hall, Market Place, Durham DH1 3NJ**

The City of Durham Parish Council Planning Committee discussed these applications at its meeting on 24 May 2019. It noted that the proposal resurrects the installation of banners on the front of Durham Town Hall that had been the subject of applications last Autumn and had been withdrawn as a result of strong objections. The current proposals are for two instead of the previous five or three banners.

The concerns and objections raised previously were about the fundamental principle of placing banners on the face of the Town Hall. Reducing the number does not overcome these objections. The comments of the World Heritage Site Co-ordinator and of the City of Durham Trust on the current applications are crystal clear, namely that the heritage analysis fails to take account of any cumulative impact in increasing presence of relatively unsympathetic advertising on the historic core with its key approach streets to the WHS; that any banners detract from the Town Hall frontage and act as poor example to other city centre businesses; and that Historic England commented that all banners should be omitted to avoid any harm to the significance of the building.

The Parish Council endorses those comments and objects to the applications on the grounds of City of Durham Local Plan Saved Policies E6, E22 and Q16.

Policy E6 states that:

The special character, appearance and setting of the Durham (city centre) Conservation Area will be preserved or enhanced by:

- 1. Encouraging all proposals for new buildings to*
 - (a) Exhibit simple, robust shapes, have a clear predominance of wall surface over openings and be restricted to a limited range of external materials; and*
 - (b) Have simple traditional roofs which do not create long or continuous ridge or eaves lines and which do not include reflective surfaces such as glass; and*
 - (c) Reflect a quality of design appropriate to the historic city centre; and*
 - (d) Use external building materials which are the same as, or are sympathetic to the traditional materials of the historic city or an individual street; and*
 - (e) Fragment proposals for large buildings into blocks of visually smaller elements in a way which is sympathetic to the historic city centre.*
- 2. Not granting planning permission for development or demolition which would damage the historic profile of buildings running from the South Bailey, through North Bailey, Saddler Street, the Market Place and Claypath.*

The proposed banners on the front of Durham Town Hall fail to meet the terms of Saved Policy E6 as it is development that does not reflect a quality of design appropriate to the historic city centre and it would damage the historic profile of buildings including those in the Market Place.

Policy E22 states that:

The Council will seek to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation areas within the City of Durham by:

- 1. 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 proposed banners on the front of Durham Town Hall fail to meet the terms of Saved Policy E22 as they would detract from the character and appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area, and would not be sensitive in terms of siting, scale, design and materials.

Policy Q16 states that:

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 proposed banners on the front of Durham Town Hall fail to meet the terms of Saved Policy Q16 because of their adverse impact upon the character and setting of the Town Hall as a listed building and upon the character and appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area.

In conclusion, the Parish Council objects to this attempt to re-introduce inappropriate harmful development on the face of Durham Town Hall, contrary to City of Durham Local Plan Saved Policies E6, E22 and Q16.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Shanley
Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council