

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
29 October 2020

DM/20/02776/VOC, Elddis Business Park, Variation of Conditions

Dear Ms Eden

The City of Durham Trust remains unconvinced of the merits of this out-of-town development that will have an adverse impact on Durham City Centre, particularly at this time when businesses are suffering from the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. We do not think that any of the proposed variations will make a great deal of difference to mitigate this impact.

Moreover, we object to the extensive footpath diversion that is proposed for the west side of Pit Lane and is expected to be in place for the majority of the construction period. The Planning Construction Practice Document says “this will better protect the safety of pedestrians using the footpath to the west side of Pit Lane”. While this may keep pedestrians out of the way of construction traffic, there is an increased risk from the need to cross Pit Lane twice to access the diversion. At present, the only continuous footway on Pit Lane is on the west side. The footway on the east side is diverted via Raby Road and a footpath opposite the development site. The lack of footways gives drivers a strong visual cue that will tend to increase speeds.

The Trust considers that every effort should be made to minimise the period for which the western footway is closed. The following points should be noted:

- Proposed Section 278 works include providing a footway on the east side of Pit Lane, showing that the current lack is an acknowledged deficiency.
- Similarly, a signalised crossing of Pit Lane is to be provided.
- The frontage of the proposed development consists of a large area of car parking.

Where buildings under construction adjoin the public highway, it is clearly necessary to encroach upon the highway while building work is undertaken, but there is no such need in this case. It should therefore be possible to set the boundary of the construction area further back into the site while work is proceeding on the construction of the buildings, sequencing the works to enable a western side footway to be maintained for a large proportion of the construction period. The construction of the new eastern side footway on Pit Lane could be carried out before the footway on the western side is closed, and temporary signalised pedestrian crossings could be provided at appropriate places either side of the diversion to maintain safe pedestrian access throughout the period of the works. Alternatively, the pedestrian route could be diverted onto the north-bound carriageway, with this section of Pit Lane reduced to one-way motor traffic, or with temporary traffic lights controlling alternating one-way flow. In any event, pedestrians should have priority over motor vehicles.

Yours sincerely,

John Lowe
Chair, City of Durham Trust