

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Phone (0191) 386 2595
Email: chair@durhamcity.org
Web site: <http://www.DurhamCity.org>

c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
12 November 2021

Dear Mr Fenwick,

DM/21/03658/LB (&DM/21/03657/AD) Royal County Hotel Old Elvet Durham DH1 3JN
Listed Building consent for display of Ino. fret cut pin mounted and logo externally illuminated by LED strip above

The Trust wishes to object to these applications based on negative impact on a listed structure and its heritage.

Context

The building is Grade II, listed as being late 17thC. The focus for this objection is the appearance of the frontage balcony and entrance coupled with its intangible heritage. The balcony plays a key role in the Miners Gala procession and is very well known for the number of important politicians and personalities that have used it as a viewing point. There are many photographs of it on Gala Day. It has a place in mining heritage of County Durham and the labour movement more generally. The frontage is also a distinctive 18thC design of importance in its own right and in supporting the character of this part of Old Elvet. It needs care and sensitivity in making proposals because of its historic character and important use.

Proposal

The proposal is for bar logo and name lit by an LED strip. There is currently no signage to the doorway, and this substantially benefits the frontage. The lighting is basic and insensitive to the historic frontage. Although this is bar use, there is no clear business case for lighting in this position. There is more than adequate indication of the bar already and the use is well known and obvious. It will result in discordant underlighting to the balcony. The sign will be prominent in photographs on Gala Day. The hotel already benefits commercially from having its name in photographs from that day. In this instance there is a very clear case for business interest being subordinate to heritage interest. Business gains little from the proposal.

Policies

The proposals as submitted fail against the following policies:

NPPF

Proposals affecting heritage assets, Considering potential impacts

Para. 200. Fails to avoid harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset from its alteration and lacks clear and convincing justification.

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County Durham Plan

Policy 44 Historic Environment

Listed Buildings

b. The proposals fail to respect the historic form, fabric, materials, and detailing,

City of Durham Neighbourhood Plan

Policy H2: The Conservation Areas - Durham City Conservation Area

The proposals fail to:

- a) Sustain and enhance the historic and architectural qualities of a buildings,
- e) Avoid harm to an element of an asset which makes a positive contribution to its individual significance and that of the surrounding area.
- j) To have materials and detailing appropriate to the vernacular and context.

The Trust objects to the applications, based on the above points.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe,
Chair, City of Durham Trust