

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

c/o Blakett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
13 May 2022

Dear Ms Morina,

DM/22/01227/AD 12 North Road Durham DH1 4SH

Display of internally illuminated fascia sign and projecting sign to front elevation.

1. The Trust objects to the application based on the illumination of the signs, their size and positioning and their negative impact on the Conservation Area.

Context

2. The building is part of a street character forming 19thC terrace. It has typical Durham oriel windows and an additional small curved bay to the side. They are not interfered with by signage relating to the ground floor use. Adjacent units have a range of signage, often discordant and cumulatively negatively impacting on street and building character. Only a few are illuminated and the other gaming centre signage in the street is not lit. North Road is a key approach into the City centre and the World Heritage Site. This building façade forms part of a view to the Castle.

Proposal and Impact

3. The intensity of illumination of the sign is not properly established – the submission states this as only 2 candela per metre square (Cdm/m²) – equating to only two candles per m². The proposal cannot be properly tested against the recommendations of the Institution of Lighting Professionals (The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (PLG05) 2015).
4. There is no need for the illuminated hanging sign that will intrude into the characterful upper floors of the building, it is large (approx. 1 x 0.75 m) and discordant. The lower fascia sign has oversized font for the type of shop frontage and age of building. It is large - 3.8 x 0.78m and internally lit.
5. Together the signs will be over dominant on the building and are not externally illuminated. The proposed use will be obvious and there is little need for anything other than locational advertising in this relatively narrow shopping street. They will add cumulatively to negative impact from the other poor signage nearby.

Policies

6. The Trust considers that the proposals fail against the following planning policies:

County Durham Plan

Policy 29 Sustainable Design

- a. The proposals fail to contribute positively to an area's heritage significance and townscape

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Policy 31 Amenity and Pollution

The proposals will have an unacceptable impact through visual intrusion, and visual dominance. It is not demonstrated that the signage lighting proposed is the minimum necessary for functional purposes.

Policy 44 Historic Environment

Conservation Areas

f. The proposals fail to demonstrate understanding of the significance, character, appearance and setting of the conservation area and how this has informed proposals to achieve high quality sustainable development, which is respectful of historic interest, local distinctiveness and the conservation or enhancement of heritage assets.

Durham City Neighbourhood Plan

Policy S1: Sustainable Development Requirements of all Development and Redevelopment Sites Including all New Building, Renovations and Extensions

c) Fails to harmonise with its context in terms of scale, layout, density, massing, height, materials.
d) Fails to conserve the significance of the setting, character, local distinctiveness, important views, tranquillity and the contribution made to the sense of place by Our Neighbourhood's designated heritage assets.

Policy H1: Protection and Enhancement of the World Heritage Site

The signage proposals are in the 'Neighbourhood' and fail to sustain, conserve and enhance the setting of the World Heritage Site. They fail because:

e) There is no assessment of how the development will affect the setting of the World Heritage Site, including views to and from the World Heritage Site; and
f) how it protects important views.

Policy H2: The Conservation Areas, Durham City Conservation Area

The signage proposals negatively affect the Durham City Conservation Area by not taking into account, and meeting, the following requirements,

a) sustaining and enhancing the historic and architectural qualities of a building and
b) sustaining and enhancing a continuous frontage, and
e) avoiding or harm to an element of an asset which makes a positive contribution to its individual significance and that of the surrounding area; and
g) Protecting important views of the Durham City Conservation Area from viewpoints within the Conservation Area; and
i) having appropriate scale, and form; and
j) having materials, detailing and lighting appropriate to the vernacular, context and setting; and
k) using high quality design sympathetic to the character and context of the local area and its significance and distinctiveness, and to the immediate landscape; and
l) avoiding adding to the cumulative impact of development which dominates by scale.

Based on these policy failures, the Trust objects to the proposals as currently submitted. Should lit signage be approved, it should be conditioned to ensure it is turned off outside of opening hours.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe,
Chair, City of Durham Trust