

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Web site: <http://www.DurhamCity.org>

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

16th July 2025

Mr Alan Fenwick
Durham County Council Planning Development
PO BOX 274
Stanley
County Durham
DH8 1HG

Dear Mr Fenwick,

DM/26/01512/FPA and DM/26/01513/AD Land To The South Of Former 13 - 17 Claypath Durham DH1 1RH

Installation of 1 no new communications kiosk with integrated defibrillator and advertising display

The Trust objects to both these applications on the grounds of inappropriateness and negative impact on the conservation area, obstruction of the pavement and lack of coordination with walking and cycling primary route proposals.

Context

Claypath remains an important as one of the historic streets forming the centre of Durham. This section has been affected by the construction of the A690 underpass, Millennium Place, and the former modern office block, 13-17 Claypath, now demolished. However, despite modern interventions on the opposite side of the street, this section, and the remainder of Claypath retain their traditional appearance. This corner can be busy with pedestrians. There is a large advertising kiosk already in place nearby at the entrance into Millennium Place.

It is designated as a primary route for pedestrians and cyclists in the Local Walking and Cycling Improvement Plan for Durham City 2021(LCWIP). This is supported by Policy 22 Durham City Sustainable Transport in the County Durham Plan (CDP)

The wider context for the Trust is the general obstruction of the city centre paths by signage. This is a problem in its own right and often causing cumulative problems together with unduly extensive outside seating for leisure premises. Poor shopfront and window signage combines with on street advertising with A Boards and around seating to significantly reduce the quality streetscape of the historic streets. Adding contemporary large kiosks especially using discordantly bright digital advertising panels negatively impacts during the day and this is heightened at night by the intensity of their illumination. They would be a significant detriment to the historic streetscape and approaches to the World Heritage Site.

Proposal

The hub unit is substantial and has an intensely illuminated digital screen. The design and size are not appropriate for this conservation area because of their mimicry of the traditional phone box design. The design fails in its imitation. In the daytime it will contribute to blocking the view up Claypath to the more characterful section. At night, the intrusion will be substantially increased by the brightly illuminated screen causing negative impact to the conservation area. The heritage statement

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submitted is for CK0218 - Site 5: Land outside 94 Claypath, Durham, DH1 1RG that is opposite and is not this site. It is therefore invalid. Even taken at face value the full impact of the screen has not been assessed by the applicant. It even fails to register that the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan has planning policies that apply to this site. The referenced consolidation by removal of other street furniture is not proven by any evidence and this kiosk is simply an addition.

It is not clear whether the former bus stop canopy will be replaced. If so, this kiosk will obstruct the siting of the replacement. The kiosk represents a physical footpath obstruction and visual intrusion. The brightly lit advertising board is designed to draw attention day and night. Being positioned next to the highway is a distraction for motorists given to its intensity of illumination. As well as distracting drivers and it will block their view of the path at a location where they should take extra care of pedestrians crossing the road, this will create an unacceptable road safety hazard. It will also block the view of the road for pedestrians. As it is proposed in advance of any cycleway or path improvements and replacement development for 13-17 Claypath, the Trust believes it to be premature.

The public phone is not considered to outweigh the negative impact of the kiosk. The defibrillator may be useful, but this can be sited within Millennium Place. There is not sufficient community benefit to justify the proposals.

For the reasons above the Trust objects to this application (policy failures are indicated in the appendix below). The proposal also fails to uphold the LCWIP.

Yours sincerely

Sue Childs

Vice Chair, City of Durham Trust

trust@durhamcity.org

Celebrating, Protecting and Enhancing the City of Durham

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Appendix – Planning Policies

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.
- f. The proposals fail to contribute towards healthy neighbourhoods and consider the needs of existing and future users, including those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments.

Policy 31

Amenity and Pollution

The proposal is development which does not minimise light pollution and demonstrate that the lighting proposed is the minimum necessary for functional or security purposes and should not be permitted.

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 heritage assets.
- h. The proposals fail to show respect for, and reinforcement of, the established, positive characteristics of the area in terms of appropriate design (including, features, materials, and detailing).

Durham City Neighbourhood Plan

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

The proposals fail because they do not:

- d) Conserve the significance of the setting, character, local distinctiveness, and the contribution made to the sense of place by Our Neighbourhood's designated and non-designated heritage assets.

Policy H2: The Conservation Areas, Durham City Conservation Area

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

- j) Having detailing appropriate to context, and setting; and
- k) Using high quality design sympathetic to the character and context of the local area and its significance and distinctiveness.