

Durham County Council
Planning Development
Central/East Room 4/86-102
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

City of Durham Parish Council
c/o Room 103
Floor 1
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UF
8 October 2018

Dear Ms Hyde,

**Planning application DM/18/02931/FPA:
Sculpture of illuminated heron with associated railings and landscaping
Land to the South of Freemans Reach, Freemans Place, Durham City DH1 1SL**

I write in my capacity as Chair of the City of Durham Parish Council's Planning Committee which, at its meeting on Friday 5 October 2018, resolved to welcome in principle the proposed installation of the illuminated heron in the Freeman's Reach area, but would prefer that its precise location be within the developed area consisting of the Passport Office and National Savings Office, or possibly on the blank wall of the Walkergate development. We ask that the determination of this application be deferred so that the location of the sculpture can be finalised in discussions with the Parish Council.

The principle of public art is fully endorsed, as is the theme of legacy from Lumière. Further, this particular sculpture is striking and highly appropriate given that one of the delights in Durham is the increased presence of real herons. But therein lies our preference for a slightly different location - the real herons use the weirs and the Archimedes Screw installation as platforms to await the chance to catch fish. Rather than place a rival, artificial heron in the location beside the mill race and the Archimedes Screw it would be better to accommodate it within the already developed zone consisting of the Passport Office and the National Savings Office.

The associated Heritage Statement itself makes this point: *"The sculpture is designed to be seen and appreciated in the development context of a modern city."* Undoubtedly, the Passport Office and the National Savings Office provide exactly that context, whereas the currently proposed site is one of the few remaining patches of green space in that locality.

It is true, as the Planning Statement says, that *"The site currently has a negative impact on the area being overgrown and degraded in quality given recent construction and development activity. The landscaping of the site and its better integration in to the riverside landscape has considerable capacity to be a positive change."* However, the remedy to dealing with the unkempt appearance of this County Council-owned land (which the developer of the office developments was required to restore as one of the original conditions, subsequently dropped) is for the County Council to carry out the planting proposed in the current application, namely *"The area will be sowed with a flood-resilient native riverbank mix of native grasses and wild flowers. A tussock grass mix with tall herbs characteristic of the waterside would give a natural setting to the piece."*

As a final point, the title of the planning application includes “with associated railings” but in fact there are no details provided of such railings. Clearly, this information is necessary in the Conservation Area in order for the application to be considered.

Yours sincerely

ROGER CORNWELL

Chair, Planning Committee
City of Durham Parish Council