

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL OF ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT

REF. NO:	25/01193/ADV
APPEAL REF. NO:	6006319
LOCATION:	Meynell Retail Park (Western verge facing Whessoe Road), Darlington, DL3 0YQ
DESCRIPTION:	Display of 1 No. freestanding digital sign board
APPELLANT:	SMART OUTDOOR LIMITED

BRIEF SUMMARY:

The key issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on the amenity of the area.

KEY POINTS TO NOTE:

The appeal site is a self-contained area of private grass verge land that sits on the western side of the Meynell Road Retail and Industrial areas, specifically in the grass bank to the west of the large B&M unit. This is situated opposite the Railway Heritage quarter which forms the boundary of the newly extended Stockton and Darlington Railway, Northgate Conservation Area. The site sits outside of the Conservation Area, but on the other side of the road forming this boundary.

Advertisement consent was sought for the display of an internally illuminated free-standing digital display unit, sitting on poles of some 2.7m and measuring some 3m x 6m, related to the nearby McDonalds premises to the southeast. This application followed a previously withdrawn proposal for similar signage closer to the roundabout with McDonalds.

REASON(S) FOR REFUSAL:

By reason of its scale, design and position, the proposed signage would have an adverse impact on the visual amenities of the locality and due to harm to its setting, the significance of the Stockton and Darlington Railway; Northgate Conservation Area. There are considered to be no public benefits that would outweigh the harm caused to this heritage asset. The proposed signage is contrary to policies DC1 and ENV1 of the Darlington Local Plan 2016-2036.

APPEAL DISMISSED:

The Inspector agreed that the proposed signage would be viewed as a highly prominent, visually obtrusive addition as a result of its depth, width and height, sitting in an elevated position, and that it would be viewed in stark contrast to the surrounding area due to the limited number of advertisements and absence of other digital adverts. The Inspector considered that the advertisement would be a discordant feature in the context of the surrounding traditional built environment and the verdant backdrop of the highway verge.

The Inspector also noted that when viewed from beside the appeal site on Whessoe Road, views of both the appeal site and the 1861 shed (Darlington Railway Heritage Quarter) could be gained. In this context the advertisement would be read as particularly discordant against this important historic backdrop to the detriment of the historic building and the adjoining Northgate Conservation Area.

Overall, the Inspector agreed that the proposal would harm amenity and would be contrary to policies DC1 and ENV1 of the Darlington Local Plan 2022-2036.