

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

c/o Blakett, Hart & Pratt, LLP  
Aire House  
Mandale Business Park  
Belmont  
Durham, DH1 1TH  
21 April 2020

Dear Mr Spurgeon

The City of Durham Trust is concerned about the steady increase in the number of planning applications seeking to convert family dwellings to houses in multiple occupation or to increase the size of existing HMOs. This is increasing the imbalance between the student population and the long-term resident population of Durham City. Instead we need to promote and preserve inclusive, mixed and balanced communities (NPPF, 8b).

Accordingly, Trustees wish to object to application **DM/20/00841/FPA** which proposes to extend the size of 13 Flass Street. The percentage of student properties within 100 metres radius of this property is not provided on the planning portal, but it must be more than the 10% threshold and so the extension would be contrary to Durham County Council's Interim Policy on Student Accommodation. During the Examination in Public of the County Durham Plan, a main modification to policy 16 was agreed so that this restriction would continue in place.

There are some curious points made in the Heritage Statement which refers at length to the Interim Policy on Student Accommodation's restrictions on converting a family home C3 to an HO C4, whereas this application is about extending an existing HMO. The Heritage Statement also describes the property as a 3-storey house situated in Redhills Lane whereas it is a 2-storey house in Flass Street. The roof space has velux windows and is presumably inhabited, but I don't think it should be described as 3-storey. Crowding 7 bedrooms into this confined terrace property is not conducive to healthy living and the small back yard will be reduced even further and provide little amenity.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe,  
Chair, The City of Durham Trust