

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

---

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 May 2020

Dear Mr Spurgeon

The City of Durham Trust is concerned about 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 properties exempt from Council Tax within 100 metres radius of this property is given by the Council officer as 17.2% or 82.8%. From observation the higher figure is more likely to reflect the real situation, but in any case the extension would be contrary to Durham County Council's Interim Policy on Student Accommodation as it is above the limit of 10%. 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.

Despite the amendment to this application so that it is now apparently just for an extension of its current C4 use by increasing from 5 bedrooms to 6, the title page of the *Design and Access Statement* and the Proposal on page 2 of that statement continue to read "Small C4 HMO to 7 bed sui generis HMO". The Trust obviously wishes the application to be refused, but if it is allowed then it must be absolutely clear which permission has been given.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe,  
Chair, The City of Durham Trust