

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
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Dear Mr Hopper

DM/20/00873/FPA Demolition of Motorcycle Showroom and Construction of 16 Apartments, Darlington Road, Durham

In principle the City of Durham Trust supports the demolition of this very ugly building and its replacement with domestic accommodation, but we are concerned about, and object to, certain aspects of this particular set of proposals which involve the construction of an additional building as well as the replacement of the showroom.

Firstly, the accommodation is to be built to the minimum national space standards which means they are most unlikely to be suitable for long-term residents. Each apartment contains only one room in addition to bedroom(s) and bathroom(s) and this single room has to serve as kitchen, dining room and lounge. The built-in storage space is a mere 1sqm in the 1-bed apartments and 2sqm in the 2-bed apartments that are designed for 3 people. In other words, although accurately described as C3 accommodation, they will effectively serve as purpose built student accommodation, and this in an area that already has a significant student population. The real housing need, and one that the application claims to meet, is for long-term residents, especially older people, for whom this location is most convenient but this accommodation is not.

Secondly, the application proposes to squeeze too much accommodation into the available space. The fact that each apartment is to be built to minimum space standards clearly indicates this. 16 apartments sounds reasonable enough, but in reality the development is intended to accommodate 29 bedrooms and 42 persons. This is a lot of people to cram into a very confined site. The closeness of the neighbouring terrace houses in Cross View Terrace and Nevilles Cross Bank means that they will be overlooked, particularly by building B. Although the *Design and Access Statement* claims that they have been “very carefully designed to avoid overlooking of the neighbouring properties”, the new buildings would be 3 storeys high rather than the 2 storeys of the existing terraces. The response from the City of Durham Parish Council clearly demonstrates how much they would impose themselves on their neighbours.

Thirdly, the application proposes to allocate 14 car parking spaces within this confined site. This is a use of land that could have been better allocated to dwelling space. On the other hand, the allocation of just 6 cycle parking spaces is woefully inadequate for a total of 29 bedrooms. The *County Durham Parking and Accessibility Standards (2019)* require 2 cycle spaces per 5 bedrooms for residents and 1 space per 10 bedrooms for visitors. If we take the total bedrooms proposed as 30 instead of 29 to keep the maths simple, that would require 15 cycle spaces, whereas only 6 are allocated.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe, Chair of the City of Durham Trust