

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

c/o Blakett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
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Web site: <http://www.DurhamCity.org>

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

Dear Ms Hurton,

DM/22/02084/FPA | Change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a house in multiple occupation (Use Class C4) including conversion of garage into habitable room, cycle parking and bin storage | 18 Moor Crescent Gilesgate Moor Durham DH1 1PB

The City of Durham Trust objects to this planning application because it falls short of the requirements of County Durham Plan Policy 29, and specifically *All new residential development will be required to comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS)*. The one year transition period has now elapsed so this is now fully in force.

We note the objections of the Belmont Parish Council and of the neighbours, which relate to problems caused when a domestic property is converted to an HMO occupied by students. These objectors are much better placed than the Trust to comment on the potential impact on their immediate locality and, while supporting these comments in general terms, we have nothing to add to them.

We have used the IDOX measuring tool that is part of the online planning portal to assess these proposals against the NDSS. The existing house has a gross internal floor area of 83.5m², disregarding the garage. This is just 0.5m² short of the 84m² minimum for a 3-bed two storey house. If the 4.4m² bedroom 3 is disregarded as being much too small then the comparison would be with the 70m² minimum for a 2-bed two storey house.

As both the current and the proposed designs have at least two bedrooms at least one of these must be a double or twin (NDSS para 10b) and that room must have a floor area of at least 11.5m². The other bedrooms must have a floor area of at least 7.5m². (NDSS paras 10d and 10c respectively.) There are also minimum width requirements.

The current design falls just short of the standard of 11.5m² as bedroom 1 is 10.88m² in area. Nevertheless, in the broader terms of CDP Policy 29 it is well designed. The whole thrust of Policy 29 is to drive up standards. As we show below, what is being proposed would be a retrograde step.

None of the bedrooms in the proposed design is large enough to be a double, but if that was the only objection it could be resolved by moving the new internal wall by less than a foot. The main issue is that the proposal has six bedrooms which takes the minimum gross internal floor

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area required by the NDSS up to 123m². By converting the garage into living space the floor area has increased to 102m² which is 21m² or 17% short of the standard. The design can only be made compliant by removing two bedrooms.

We agree with the Spatial Policy comments, except to note that the extension is a single storey, not two. They refer to the need to consider the amenity of both existing and future residents. Given that this site is some way from the University it could revert to being a family home, but this design is for a student HMO. But their main point is that the NDSS can and should be used as a benchmark to assess whether the proposal meets the requirements of CDP Policy 29. Quite clearly, as we have shown, it does not.

Consequently we ask you to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN LOWE

Chair, The City of Durham Trust