

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

c/o Blakett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
27 July 2023

DM/23/01777/FPA | Change of use of from hot food takeaway and bar on the ground and first floors to a large House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (sui generis), including alterations to the west elevation and removal of two flues on the east elevation. | 29 - 33 Neville Street Durham DH1 4EY

Dear Ms Penman

The City of Durham Trust is concerned about the number of planning applications seeking to create houses in multiple occupation. This is increasing the imbalance between the student population and the long-term resident population of Durham City. The purpose of Policy 16.3 of the County Durham Plan is “to promote, create and preserve inclusive, mixed and balanced communities and to protect residential amenity.”

The policy resists the change of use from any use to an HMO sui generis where the percentage of residential units claiming Class N Student Exemption from council tax within 100 metres of the application site is more than 10% but less than 90%. In this case the percentage is 70% so clearly falls within the restricted range. Accordingly, Trustees wish to object to application.

The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application claims that the policy “is of no consequence to the proposal as the property is not a dwellinghouse, and no dwellinghouse will be lost due to the proposal.” (D&AS 20) However, this is incorrect as the policy applies to a change of use to an HMO “from any use.”

The same Statement also claims that “It is highly likely that the actual percentage of student-exempt properties within a 100m radius will be very close to or more than 90%. The housing of the area is almost saturated with HMOs.” (D&AS 39) This claim is unsubstantiated and the actual percentage is clearly stated to be 70%.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe
Chair, City of Durham Trust