

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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30 September 2023

Mr Steve France
Planning Development Central/East
Room 4/86-102
County Hall
Durham City
DH1 5UL

Dear Mr France

DM/23/02622/FPA: Full planning application for the erection of a 74 bed care home facility (Class C2 Use), with associated access road, car parking, cycle storage, landscaping, boundary treatments and refuse facilities, land south of South College, The Drive, Durham DH1 3LD and

DM/23/02672/FPA: Construction of access road to serve commercial area, land south of South College, The Drive, Durham DH1 3LD

The Trustees of the City of Durham Trust considered the above related planning applications at our meeting held on 19 September 2023 and resolved to submit the following comments.

We welcome the proposed additional care home facility in Durham city. We hope that the Hallgarth Care Home is retained by a replacement for the current owners who have decided to close it; even if it is retained, the Durham city area will need additional care beds in future due to demographic trends.

The overall Masterplan for the former Mount Oswald golf course site was approved in 2013 and amended in 2016 to re-locate the allocation for a retirement community development to this location. The Trust commented at that time that *“the welcomed omission of access from the A167 in the north-west quarter gives logic to the transfer of the previously proposed unit (a possible community centre) to the north-east (now a retail unit). The loss of the community centre is regretted, but if retired people’s residences are proposed in the north-east, then access to both shop and a frequent bus service will be appreciated.”*

Durham City Neighbourhood Plan Policy C4 sets out the criteria that need to be satisfied for residential care homes, and this proposal broadly meets them (but see comment below on pedestrian access). Neighbourhood Plan paragraph 4.324 describes the anticipated future need and concludes that it will be necessary either to expand existing care homes or to build new ones. This is the basis for the Trust’s support in principle for the proposal.

Criterion d of Policy C4 expects good access for pedestrians and paragraph 4.326 seeks provision of generous amenity space for sitting out and walking in pleasant surroundings. There is a Public Right of Way that crosses nearby and it would be good if a pedestrian path could link to this PROW so that visitors could take residents into the wider parkland.

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The associated separate application for an access road is also welcome as it provides for the development of the adjacent sites either side - offices/retirement/community to the west and convenience store to the east.

We trust that the above comments are of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

John Lowe

Chair, City of Durham Trust