

Web site: <http://www.DurhamCity.org>

David Richards
Durham County Council Planning Development
County Hall
Durham DH1 5UL

Dear Mr Richards,

**DM/24/00298/VOC | Removal of condition 8 of planning permission DM/23/01690/FPA |
27 Annand Road Gilesgate Durham DH1 1PW**

The City of Durham Trust objects to this planning application because it would cram too many tenants into the property and so would fail against policies 29 and 31 of the County Durham Plan.

Paragraph 5.302 of the County Durham Plan, in support of Policy 29, sets out the Council's rationale for seeking adherence to the NDSS (Nationally Described Space Standard). "The amount of space in a home influences how people live, impacting on their health and wellbeing." The NDSS is being introduced in order to drive up residential internal space standards. It follows that, when changes are to be made, the direction of travel should be towards improved standards.

When 27 Annand Road was a C3 family home it fell just short of the NDSS, primarily because the largest bedroom had an area of 10.86m² whereas the NDSS requires 11.5m². Bedroom 3 at 6.41m² was also undersized, but would probably have been used by a child. The gross internal floor area met the standard for a one child family and was just short for a two child family. (All measurements from the *existing floor plans and elevations* for application DM/23/01690/FPA).

In assessing application DM/23/01690/FPA you considered that the NDSS is a relevant measurement against which to assess the suitability of internal space provided within all residential development in the context of policy 29(e) of the CDP, and continued

Regarding the above, it is noted that two of the three bedrooms would exceed the minimum requirements of the NDSS and provide at least 7.5sq metres per room. The ground floor bedroom would be 7.21sq metres, marginally below the 7.5sq metres, however as already noted, the rigid application of the NDSS is not considered appropriate in this instance for the reasons outlined above and the bedroom is considered to provide sufficient internal space to meet the requirements of policy 29(e). In relation to the total overall internal space provided across the property as a whole, it is noted that the NDSS does not provide guidance specifically relating to 3 bedspace, 3 bedroom dwelling, however it does include standards in relation to a 4 bedspace 3 bedroom dwelling which requires a floor space of 84sq metres. The proposal would have a floor space of approximately 86sq metres and so would therefore exceed the minimum standards overall.

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However, the addition of a further person would mean that the accommodation would fall short of the minimum standard, so condition 8 of the permission is a necessary measure.

The applicant is now proposing a reconfiguration so that six tenants could be accommodated. This would result in an overcrowded house. There is no guidance in the NDSS for a six-bed, six-person two storey house, but a 5b6p is 110m² and a 6b7p is 123m², so we conclude that a figure somewhere in that range would be appropriate. We have measured the gross internal area of 27 Annand Road, including the new extension, as 91m² which is between 20m² and 30m² short of what is required.

The sizes of the individual rooms is irrelevant when the overall area falls so far short. However, although no scaled plans have been produced we have attempted to measure the drawing in the Planning Statement at paragraph 3.5. Bedroom 1 appears to be only 1.8m² wide when the required minimum for a single bedroom is 2.15m².

Policy 29 of the County Durham Plan

With these proposed changes the end result would not be a well-designed building. Even if the rigid application of the NDSS is nor appropriate, this proposal falls so far short that it must fail the requirements of Policy 29. In the paragraph headed *Extensions and Alterations* in that Policy, there are requirements in terms of design and layout which have not been met.

Policy 31 of the County Durham Plan

We have shown that future occupiers of the proposed development will not have acceptable living and/or working conditions, because of the overcrowding. In addition, this property is next door to a five-bedroom student let at 29 Annand Road (see planning application DM/22/01485/CEU). While the HMO percentage in the wider area is below 10%, the addition of a further three students will have a detrimental effect on the living conditions of residents in the immediate locality.

Conclusion

This proposal fails against both policies 29 and 31 of the County Durham Plan for the reasons set out above. It should therefore be refused.

Yours sincerely

JOHN LOWE
Chair