

c/o Blakett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Aire House
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH
14 April 2024

Dear Ms Penman

DM/24/00121/FPA

Change of use of existing small 5-bedroom (C4) House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) to a large 7- bedroom (Sui generis) HMO with rear dormer extension and installation of roof lights. 3 Lawson Terrace Durham DH1 4EW

The City of Durham Trust has considered this application and wishes to object to it because it does not conform to a number of policies of the *County Durham Plan* and the *Durham City Neighbourhood Plan*.

Most obviously, it is contrary to Policy 16.3 of the *County Durham Plan* since it seeks to extend an HMO in an area where the percentage of HMOs is already 69.7%. The application should be rejected on this ground alone.

Furthermore, the proposal is totally inappropriate for the Conservation Area. The terraces on and leading off Hawthorn Terrace create the context for this application. These demonstrate a high degree of regularity specific to their type and period of construction. Their significance for the Conservation Area lies in their relatively unaltered streetscape and roofscape. While there is more variation in rear extensions, many being recent, there are few dormers and a minimal number of rooflights. Despite some roof and window material changes, this is a key characteristic of the roofscape. Pitched dormers are mostly restricted to the Byland Lodge new build houses and a short section of 19thC houses opposite on Hawthorn Terrace.

The submitted Design, Access and Heritage Statement is inaccurate in describing the back street as a '*hotchpotch*.' The essential elements of the buildings remain. It takes a statement by The Design and Conservation team at the County Council out of context in that this only applies to a specific rear extension, not dormers or rooflights. The completely inappropriate attempt to redefine the meaning of vernacular in relation to building as encompassing '*lack of style*' is therefore both inaccurate and misleading.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

In the Trust's view the introduction of the dormer is out of character and inappropriate. It is of a particularly poor design being a simple flat topped box with windows unrelated to the building and its traditional character. The front rooflights are equally out of character and inappropriate. They will help set a particularly poor precedent for the rental properties in this area.

These elements cannot be considered a positive change and are not justified by any public benefit. They are negative addition and as such they fail against the requirements of the **County Durham Plan Policy 29 Sustainable Design** section **a**, and **Policy 29 Sustainable Design** sections **f** and **h**. They also fail against the **Durham City Neighbourhood Plan Policy S1: Sustainable Development** sections **c** and **d**, and **Policy H2: The Conservation Areas, Durham City Conservation Area** sections **a**, **g**, **j** and **k**.

Yours sincerely

John Lowe
Chair, City of Durham Trust