

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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

c/o Blackett, Hart & Pratt, LLP
Mandale Business Park
Belmont
Durham, DH1 1TH

20 June 2025

Emma Price
Durham County Council
Planning Department
PO Box 274
Stanley
County Durham
DH8 1HG

Dear Ms Price,

DM/25/01135/CEU - 23 Long Acres, Gilesgate, Durham, DH1 1JF

Use of property as 4 bedroom HMO (Use Class C4)

The City of Durham Trust wrote to you on 2 June 2025 setting out its concerns regarding the above application and now wishes to submit a formal objection on the same grounds.

To recap: firstly, Bedroom 4 is only 5.79m² in area, significantly less than the 'good practice' minimum size of 7.5m² required by the NDSS and the absolute minimum of 6.51m² required by The Housing Act 2004 and the Council's own adopted 'Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation'; and, secondly, the only indicated means of escape from Bedroom 1 is via the kitchen, thus also contravening the Council's HMO Standards.

The Planning Department recognises that the HMO Standards, although not in themselves a local plan policy requirement, nevertheless provide a tool to measure the quality of the development with regard to Policy 29(e) and (f) of the CDP. Clearly in this regard Bedroom 4 is fundamentally unacceptable for use as a bedroom while the compromised means of escape from Bedroom 1 gives rise to serious fire safety concerns. These failings negatively impact upon the amenity and wellbeing of both current and future residents meaning that the application fails to comply with Policy 29.

Whilst not contesting a Certificate of Lawful Development allowing the continued use of the property as an HMO, the Trust requests that: should the application be recommended for approval, a condition be imposed limiting the occupancy of the property to no more than three persons in order that the significantly undersized 'bedroom' may not be used as such in the future; in consequence, the description of the application be amended to "*Use of property as a 3 bedroom HMO (Use Class C4)*"; and, given the absence of any other practical solution, a condition be imposed requiring a compliant escape window to be installed to Bedroom 1.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN LOWE

Chair, City of Durham Trust