

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

Web site:<https://durhamcity.org/>

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Clare Walton
Durham County Council
Planning Department
PO Box 274
Stanley
County Durham
DH8 1HG

Dear Ms Walton,

DM/25/03604/FPA - 60 Dragonville, Sherburn Road, Durham, DH1 2DX

Change of use from 1 No. 3-bedroom dwellinghouse to 2 No. 2-bedroom flats with single storey rear extension

The City of Durham Trust has reviewed this application to convert an existing 3-bedroom property into 2 no. 2-bedroom flats and wishes to object on the basis that the proposed accommodation fails to comply in several respects with Policy 29 of the County Durham Plan.

Firstly, Policy 29 requires all new residential development to comply with the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS).

This stipulates that a dwelling with two or more bedspaces has at least one double (or twin) bedroom, and consequently each 2-bedroom flat must be capable of occupation by 3 persons. The gross internal floor area required by the NDSS for this purpose is 61m² for a single storey dwelling and 70m² for a 2-storey dwelling. The single storey ground floor flat measures only 50m²; while the first floor flat, which must be regarded as a 2-storey property since it contains a laundry room on the ground floor, measures only 44m². Consequently, both flats fail to meet the minimum requirements.

The NDSS also stipulates that a single bedroom is at least 2.15m wide and a double bedroom is at least 2.75m wide with a minimum floor area of at least 11.5m². The GF flat has a single bedroom with a minimum width of 2.09m, while its double bedroom has a minimum width of 2.35m and an area of 11.31m². The FF flat has a double bedroom with a minimum width of 2.45m and an area of 11.53m². Once again, the accommodation fails to meet minimum requirements.

Finally, the NDSS requires that each flat must have 2m² of built-in storage, but the GF flat has only 1.09m² while the FF flat has none.

The proposed accommodation fails to comply with the NDSS in several key respects.

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Secondly, Policy 29 also requires that all development proposals will be required to achieve well designed buildings and places having regard to supplementary planning documents and to provide high standards of amenity.

The Parking & Accessibility SPD would require 4 parking spaces to be provided for the two flats within the curtilage of the property, but no proposals are illustrated on the drawings showing how these might be accommodated. Indeed, the application form states that there is only 1 such space existing and that only 1 is proposed. Given the nature of the major and very busy roads adjacent to the property, it is difficult to see how any on-street parking could be accommodated. Equally, the application provides no proposals for any covered cycle storage. In short, the application clearly fails to address the requirements of the SPD.

Regarding the issue of well-designed buildings, the proposed layout of the FF flat shows that the combined kitchen/living 'room' is completely open plan with the corridor that should act as a protected escape route for the two bedrooms. Given that the kitchen represents a significant source of fire risk, safe means of escape from the bedrooms is completely compromised. As a result, the internal layout of the property must be regarded as being of extremely poor design.

In summary, given all the failings described above, the Trust considers that the application cannot be said to provide the high standards of design and amenity required by Policy 29 or to comply with relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance. Accordingly, we ask that it is refused.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN LOWE

Chair, City of Durham Trust
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