

Durham County Council
Planning Development
Central/East Room 4/86-102
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

City of Durham Parish Council
c/o 5 Alexandra Close
Ponteland
NE20 0BS

19 March 2019

Dear Ms Jennings,

DM/19/00371/FPA. Change of use from C3 dwelling house to HMO Sui Generis (student accommodation) | Corner House, Potters Bank, Durham, DH1 3PS

The City of Durham Parish Council notes that this application is considered by your internal consultee (Bryn Morris-Hale) to be located in an area where 8.8% of properties (measured from within a 100m radius of Corner House) are currently rented to students. As such it would be compliant with the Council's Interim Policy on Student Accommodation.

However, we are very concerned that the methodology used to calculate the 8.8% relies on the flawed assumption that all houses made available to students are measurable only via their Council Tax exemption. This is clearly not the situation: there are numerous known instances where house owners simply continue to pay Council Tax whilst renting out their property to students. This makes it much less likely that the property will come to the attention of the Council, who would require a planning application to convert the property from category C3 to C4 with the consequent risk that it would be rejected. In this way the Council's methodology therefore systematically under-calculates the number of houses rented to and occupied by students in many city areas.

This situation is particularly relevant with this application for Corner House where only one additional house within 100m would raise the local student household density figure above the 10% threshold.

Therefore, we ask that a strengthened and more effective methodology is deployed in support of this planning decision. We recommend that the Council approaches the University for an up to date and accurate analyses of where students live, prior to making this planning decision.

Furthermore, because the principle involved in making this decision is so important, we ask that this application is taken to Committee prior to its determination.

Yours sincerely,

Adam Shanley
Clerk