

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

City of Durham Parish Council
c/o Room 103
Floor 1
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UF

19 November 2018

Dear Ms Jennings,

Planning application DM/18/03115/FPA | 36 The Hallgarth Durham DH1 3BJ

I chair the Planning Committee of the City of Durham Parish Council and we discussed this application at our meeting on Friday 16 November. We resolved to oppose this application for the following reasons:

It is plain that this is intended as student accommodation, a fact that is attested to by all of the other objectors to this application. The design of the flats with two bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen / diner is low end student accommodation and would be unlikely to appeal to “young professional people or couples or to mature post graduate students or sabbatical year visiting lecturers”, which is the assertion made without proof in the Design, Access and Heritage Statement. We would point out that this is a matter that is to be decided on the balance of probabilities.

The applicants make the point repeatedly that the size of their proposals falls below the threshold for an HMO. It would however be possible to have double rather than single beds in the two bedrooms, thus facilitating occupation by two two-person households and falling into the HMO category. However, it is the other part of the Interim Policy on Student Accommodation, that relating to purpose built student accommodation, that we feel comes into play. As Councillor Ashfield has noted in her objection

Any proposal for new, extensions to, or conversions to, Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA), will be required to demonstrate:

- a) that there is a need for additional student accommodation;**
- b) it would not result in a significant negative impact on retail, employment, leisure, tourism or housing use or would support the Council’s regeneration objectives.**
- c) consultation with the relevant education provider.**

As there is no definition of a minimum size of a PBSA, it would seem reasonable that the proposal in Hallgarth qualifies.

As there is no evidence that the applicant has done any of the above the application should be refused.

The applicants are claiming that the site history is relevant, and in particular that residential amenity is acceptable. However, the approved scheme that is being cited (DM/18/00328/FPA) was for a family home and this proposal is for student flats. The disturbance caused by student neighbours is a well-known problem in Durham, and the submissions from neighbouring

properties shows that this is an issue in this locality, and also that there are still many permanent residents who are impacted by this, as well, of course, as neighbouring students who will be similarly disturbed.

For all these reasons we urge you to refuse this planning application.

Yours sincerely

ROGER CORNWELL

Chair, Planning Committee
City of Durham Parish Council