

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
3 January 2019

Dear Ms Hyde,

Planning application DM/18/03418/FPA: Change of use from a C3 dwelling to a C4 HMO (3 bedroom) with external alterations to fenestrations | 24 Mistletoe Street Durham DH1 4EP

The City of Durham Parish Council Planning Committee discussed this application at our meeting on the 14th December and are objecting to it on the following two grounds:

Change of use

This part of the application is in fact retrospective as there are already students occupying this house and the property has already been let by an agent for next year.

The DCC figures for this postcode state that 75% of the residences are Council Tax exempt, the usual and accepted sign of a student let. This means that, out of a street of 28 houses, seven are private residences. We believe that this does not represent a community that is past the tipping point in terms of balance with reference to the Interim Policy on Student Accommodation. This property sold (as a C3 property) for £165,000 in June 2018. This is therefore an affordable property within walking distance of Durham City Centre, something the city desperately needs. It is not the job of the planning system to facilitate the premium charged by estate agents for a student house.

Extra fenestration to the front elevation

Mistletoe Street is within the Durham City Conservation area and of the 28 houses, seven have extra windows. All have tried to fit the additional windows into the street's vernacular (Victorian sash) apart from no 2, where the change was made without the benefit of planning permission. (Permission for this window was actually **refused** in 2004 under policy Q9 of the City of Durham Saved Local Plan 2004, reference is 4/04/00776/FPA). The result looks incongruous and serves as an example of what number 24 would look like were permission to be granted.

Conclusion

We would therefore ask that this application be refused both for the reasons given in the Interim Student Policy and City of Durham Saved Policies Q9 and E22 both of which state that alterations to properties and development should be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area. If officers are minded to approve this application, **we ask that it is called to committee** for a final decision.

Yours sincerely

ROGER CORNWELL

Chair, Planning Committee, City of Durham Parish Council