



**CITY OF DURHAM
PARISH COUNCIL**

Learning from the past.
Building for the future.

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13 August 2020

Dear Mr Hopper

**DM/20/01961/FPA: Extension and conversion of the multi-level decked car park
to form 3no. 2-bed apartments and 4no. 2-bed townhouses (resubmission),
William Robson House, Claypath, Durham DH1 1SA**

At its Zoom meeting held on 7 August 2020, the City of Durham Parish Planning Committee discussed the above planning applications and resolved to make the following representations.

The Committee was aware that prior notification approval was given in 2018 for the change of use of William Robson House from B1(a) use to C3 use for 27 one-bedroom studio apartments and 3 two-bedroom studio apartments. In addition, approval was given in 2019 for the conversion of the attic roof space at William Robson House to create 7 one-bed apartments. Thus in total there are 37 dwellings already approved in William Robson House. The current proposals would add a further 7 two-bedroom dwellings making a grand total, if approved, of 44 dwellings. Confusingly, the updated Transport Statement in paragraph 1.1.3 says 49 dwellings and in paragraph 5.1.2 says 74 dwellings. This Statement is probably not quite as updated as it should be, as it claims that the occupants would have easy access to Marks & Spencer in Silver Street (it closed in April 2018).

In principle, we welcome C3 developments in our area that provide residential accommodation for year-long occupation. This is an ideal location for such development, especially suitable for elderly people because of its proximity to the city centre.

There are, however, five matters of concern:

- (1) Essential provision to meet accessibility requirements do not appear to be shown and will therefore need to be specified if approval is to be given.
- (2) Strict conditions will be necessary on any planning approval to ensure that the development results in C3 residential accommodation not C4 houses in multiple occupation or Sui Generis HMOs or Purpose Built Student Accommodation. We note that the updated Transport Statement (paragraph 3.2.8) states that *“it is anticipated that the apartments could prove*

attractive to students and employees of Durham University". William Robson House is in an area with considerably more than the 10% limit of properties being student accommodation and also is very near to Claypath Court which is residential accommodation for the over 55s.

(3) Arrangements for the collection of wheelie bins: the application states that "*Provision has been made for internal bin storage. The bins will be moved to Claypath on collection days and collected by private contractors.*" Claypath is often obstructed by wheelie bins from apartments and restaurants. This issue must be addressed - 44 domestic wheelie bins would totally block pedestrian movement on Claypath. The Planning Committee has doubts as to whether conditions as to obligations and arrangements could in practice ensure this does not happen.

(4) No car parking provision is made. Whilst this is in principle a worthy stance, in practice some of the residents will have a car and will attempt to park somewhere in the area, exacerbating the current situation in which cars searching for a parking place slow down and obstruct traffic flow on Claypath and Lower Gilesgate.

(5) Operational conditions will be needed and enforced to manage the entry and exit of construction and building materials lorries, learning from the difficulties with the Student Castle site opposite that had a major detrimental impact on traffic flows, pedestrians and retailers in Claypath.

In the light of the above, the Parish Planning Committee considers that, despite being a much improved design from the previous schemes that have been refused, lost on appeal, or withdrawn, the application should be refused. If you should be minded to approve the application under delegated powers, we would ask that the application be referred to Committee so that we can put our concerns to Members.

Yours sincerely,

ADAM SHANLEY

Clerk to the City of Durham Parish Council