

annual report 2007

# CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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The Very Revd Cyril A Alington, DD Dean of Durham 1933-51

#### **Patrons:**

Sherban Cantacuzino, CBE, D.Univ, FRIBA Sir William Whitfield, CBE, FRTPI, ARIBA

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D C D Pocock, MA, PhD (secretary)
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(membership secretary)
Miss M E Sales, BA, BScEcon

Registered Office of the Trust:

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Honorary Secretary:

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Bankers:

Co-operative Bank plc 5-6 Saddler Street Durham DH1 3NP

# SIXTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES 2006-2007

#### **ALL CHANGE?**

Change and rumours of change have again characterised the past year. At District level the Authority has continued to produce plan documents for the Local Development Framework; the City and County, together with One Northeast, have just issued the 20/20 Vision Master Plan, while at regional level the Secretary of State's response is awaited following the examination in public of the Regional Spatial Strategy Submission Draft. If this were not sufficient, the very nature and area context of planning itself is in the melting pot as a result of further central government initiatives.

A Review of Land Use Planning (the Barker Report) was published in the autumn, ahead of a proposed White Paper. A controversial proposal to recommend presumption in favour of economic development would have serious repercussions, not least on the vitality of city centres and green belt. For instance, unless reversed in the White Paper, entrepreneurs would no longer be obliged to demonstrate need/demand in an application for out-of-town development. The Report also wishes to streamline the preparation of Local Development Frameworks - Trustees have expressed a similar desire on what is itself another recent government change - but not at the expense of a proposed reduction in the opportunities for public participation.

Central government's intention of reorganising local government would completely change the area basis on which planning development control is exercised. Abolition of the duality of county and district authorities is proposed, to be replaced by far fewer all-purpose or unitary authorities. In the case of Durham, it will almost certainly mean abolition of all seven districts and creation of one unitary council covering the whole county. A decision is expected in July. Two comments may be made.

Firstly, different functions will continue to have different population thresholds which require service areas of particular size. In this respect, the existing arrangement between county and districts sharing services of different thresholds seems a reasonable 'compromise'. In one large county-wide authority several services, which are essentially local in nature and currently organised at district level, will surely require the creation of area offices (and committees?). There could hardly be one committee, for instance, to consider all planning applications. In Durham District alone there are some one thousand applications a year.

A second comment on local government reorganisation is to say that unitary authorities were considered, and rejected, in 1992, while the referendum in 2004 in association with regional government for the North East hardly endorsed the concept. Moreover, it is to be noted that such proposals push county and district authorities into opposing positions, with both eagerly and anxiously publicising their advantages over the other. It is a natural response, and not without its irony, given the recently formed 'partnership' of Durham City and County to oversee the Vision Master Plan project.

#### **MAJOR PROJECTS**

The proposed erection of 99 apartments on the prominent site of the former ice rink site was halted in October with publication of the Inspector's Report following the five-day Inquiry. The Trust, which in effect had achieved a third-party call-in, was comprehensively vindicated. As detailed in Bulletin 61, the Inspector - and Secretary of State - agreed with the views of the Trust, rather than those of developer and City Planning Office, on all major aspects relating to the apartments.

Another local Inquiry, held following an appeal when the Development Control Committee voted not to accept the Planning Officer's recommendation for approval, concerned a proposal for 52 dwellings on the site of Kepier House, off Claypath. The hearing was notable for the quality of submission of local residents. Rather surprisingly, the Inspector dismissed the developer's appeal, not because of its effect on the character of the Conservation Area - 'The Chains', for instance, was considered as not "looking out of place" - but on the absence of any affordable housing...

The Walkergate scheme nears completion, with the opening of its first units and underground car park. Its architecture, which will be more fully assessed in a subsequent Bulletin, is not of the same quality as the Millennium Centre, which it was intended to complement. A similar complementary role in providing 'commercial leisure' is also disappointing. A potential drinking capacity of some 3000 spaces - more than North Road - is worrying.

On the other side of the through road is newly completed Clement's Wharf. The detailing of its riverside elevation, when seen from Framwellgate Bridge, is appropriate - it also hides part of the Walkergate complex - but its higher, bridgehead block next to Millburngate Bridge, is less worthy of the City.

While construction has begun on the city's new 'pool and fitness centre', the old swimming baths await incorporation within the Elvet Waterside joint project between City and University. An updated leaflet was produced, but the most significant event during the year was the University releasing the Council from its 1944 Covenant covering the bowling green and narrow strip alongside the river. As a result, the former has been taken within the 'development potential'. Ahead of the vote by the University Council, Trustees had written regretting the possible loss of greenery to development, suggesting that townscape design did not require it and querying whether the small commercial gain in such a large, comprehensive scheme would not be outweighed by the good will forfeited.



Science Learning Centre North East award winners
Brian Reston (contractor), Paul Hopson (County Council), Neil Turner (architect)
(R.Cornwell)

The final phase of extensive edge-of-town retail area at Dragonville has begun with the preparation of the site east of Dragon Lane. The size of the overall project suggests it will more than fulfil its counter-balancing role with the Arnison-Mercia centre on the opposite side of the City. Its greater total volume of sales area is boosted by having been built two decades later than the Arnison centre, for additional, mezzanine, floors are now given presumption in planning law. Such volume of retailing surely poses a severe challenge for the nature and vitality of retailing in the City centre.

The Northern Relief Road remains potentially by far the most damaging project hanging over the City (details have been spelled out in previous Bulletins). The past year has brought forth nothing to suggest that the County Highway Management has lessened its determination. Comments by both officers and councillors confirm its commitment to new infrastructure provision should its Transport Innovation Fund investigation give the least hint of encouragement.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL GAIN**

The four buildings considered for the Trust's architectural commendation have all added interest to the architectural stock of the City. The winner, the Science Learning Centre North-East at Pity Me, is a compact well-ordered structure, attractive internally as well as externally, with a central glazed rotunda as its highlight. Several of its environmentally-friendly or sustainable features are represented in a second impressive structure, the Rivergreen Centre at Aykley Heads. Here,

informality, rather than order, underpins both layout and roofline, while wide use of timber confirms the suggestion of Scandinavian influence.

The Josephine Butler College represents the most dramatic addition. A central mound is a distinctive land-scape marker. The approach, off South Road, aims directly for the mound, on the lower slope of which are two 'reception' blocks with roofs angled in unison with the slope. Residential blocks are placed around the far side of the mound.

In the centre of the City, 23a,b,c Neville Street exhibit an exemplary piece of domestic infill. Nothing dramatic or pretentious, but so contextually appropriate that only door numbering hints that they have not always been part of the street scene.

A restoration programme of the highest importance commenced at Durham Railway Station a decade ago, focussing on the north platform. The programme entered its final phase during the year, as a result of which the south platform has been given a civilised make-over and the original station building re-opened as the main entrance. There remain removal of prefabricated structures, installation of lifts and opening up of the passageway between platforms. First impressions of the City are important, and this project promises to be the perfect complement to the dramatic first glimpse from the train. However, a caveat is in order. Crucial to its success will be considered provision for the circulation and parking not least, drop-off spaces - of cars. In this respect, the suggestion contained in the Vision Master Plan for a restaurant in a separate building (with fine views over the

City, needless to say) would unnecessarily constrict the space available - apart from contravening long-established planning policies regarding the inner bowl skyline.

Broken Walls, the path from Windy Gap to Framwellgate Bridge, has recently been upgraded. A 'fibre-deck' gravel surface, together with a metal handrail by Graham Hopper, has created a pathway which at last acknowledges the quality of environment in which it is set. In directing thanks to the County Council, it is to be hoped that attention might now be directed to Bow Lane.

The restoration of that part of The Sands, temporarily surfaced for car-parking, was welcomed in the autumn, with the opening of the Walkergate underground car park. Also welcomed was the placing of an Article 4 (2) direction on a compact area of Crossgate for a trial period in order to gauge its efficacy on preserving the essential character of the Conservation Area. Under it, 'permitted development rights' are removed from unlisted buildings, putting them on a par with listed structures, so that normally permitted small external alterations, which, cumulatively may have significant detrimental effect on the townscape, are brought within development control.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL CLUTTER**

Attention has previously been made to examples of excessive signage and road markings which are detractive, even distractive, features in the total environmental scene. An additional element burst upon many of the City's central streets in February, with dozens of estate agents' boards advertising student lets. In fact, in little more than half-a-mile from the Market Place, more than 150 were counted. In Mitchell Street, 13 of the 24 dwellings had such boards, while another seven had 'to let' notices in he window. The forest of boards was a visible sign, if one were needed, of the extent of conversion of family-occupied terraced housing into student-rented accommodation, a feature first quantified by the survey headed by Muriel Sawbridge.



Student TO LET signs, Mitchell Street, February 2007 (D.Pocock)



House direction signs, Neville's Cross (D.Pocock)

The suddenness of the clutter is explained by the provision last autumn of one thousand extra bed spaces in Josephine Butler and Ustinov Colleges, which brought about an abrupt reversal of market conditions. Given the

general reluctance of agents to remove boards, it is to be hoped that the forest of boards does not become either a permanent or even annual feature. The dominance of a few large concerns may, or may not, simplify the Authority's attempt to achieve a satisfactory solution.

Directional yellow signs for new housing sites is another increasingly ubiquitous feature. On one particular pole at Neville's Cross there are currently four different sites being advertised, with the remains of the fixing of a fifth. In another instance, a plant nursery has taken advantage of the fact that planning permission is not necessary by utilising the yellow directional sign, complete with house logo!

Erection of a brown directional heritage sign on the A177 at Shincliffe is hardly cause for comment, especially when Trustees suggested it. The suggestion was made some years ago, however, and in response to an application for two large signboards facing the main road for a restaurant established in an isolated location at Houghall. Now, two years later, there are all three, with an additional brown sign for good measure at Mount Joy roundabout.



O2 monopole, South Road (D. Jones)

One other recently-erected pole certainly deserves comment. Telecommunication masts are now scattered across the District, with all those alongside highways intentionally designed to resemble roadside lamp standards. This mould has decidedly been broken with the recent O2 monopole on South Road. The company was happy for it to be located within the adjacent Park and Ride site and for it to be in a conventional, neutral colour. The Case Officer, however, in what he considered to be an "imaginative design-led approach", took the initiative on both a roadside location and striped colouring.

Both decisions were contrary to advice from the City's Heritage and Design Section ("The proposed mast will be extremely prominent in this location.. The roadside site is exposed, with little tree cover in the immediate vicinity.. The mast itself is brutal .. and not an object of beauty. A painted finish will do little to disguise this fact.") The application did not reach full committee, but was approved by delegated powers. Even then, the Delegated Powers Report contained the strange comment that "a number of mature trees surround the area offering good levels of screening."

Meanwhile, attached to the monopole is a notice from O2 inviting, not comment, but "complaints". Acceptance of this invitation results in a brief response from the company rejecting responsibility and directing the writer to contact the Planning Office!

#### LICENSING MATTERS

Our role this year has been to keep a watching brief as the first full year of the new Licensing Act unrolled. In February, Roberta Blackman-Woods MP called a public meeting to canvas the views of her

constituents so that she could feed these into a review of the operation of the new law that was taking place. The Chairman and several Trustees attended this meeting and were able to offer the following insights which were reinforced in an e-mail.

The City of Durham Trust has a record of making representations at licensing hearings. We do this with the full knowledge and support of our members, as proved by their approval of our annual reports over several years, when specifically asked to endorse this activity. Under the previous system we had no difficulty in getting a hearing at the Magistrates' Court. We had thought

that, with over 450 members spread throughout the District and with a clear mandate from them to make representations on licensing matters, we would have no difficulty in being able to speak at the new Local Authority Licensing Panel. This turned out not to be the case. The local authority insisted that our role had to be to coordinate objections coming in the first place from residents living in the immediate vicinity of the licensed premises. And "immediate vicinity" turned out to be very close indeed, ruling out many likely to be affected by the pub or club.

We urged that any revision of the guidance issued under the new Licensing Act should allow bodies such as the Trust and residents' associations to make representations on behalf of their members without having to jump through hoops.

The second point concerns the City Council's approach to their own Licensing Policy. We commented on the draft and indeed some of our suggestions were adopted in the final version. The broad approach was right and we were heartened in particular by Policy 9 which states that "The licensing authority will normally require a closing time of 11.00 pm for licensed premises, unless applications are accompanied by the appropriate supporting justification". The policy does go on to state that midnight would be acceptable in the City Centre and that exceptions would be made where it can be demonstrated that..." a list of conditions could be met.

We concluded that the Council's officers would recommend rejection of applications where the

supporting justifications were missing or not up to scratch. In the early days we thought all we had to do was to point out the deficiencies in the applications and they would be rejected. In fact the Licensing Panel did not accept this argument. Nor, in those cases where there were no objections, including where objections had been ruled out out of order, did they seek to examine whether the applicant's proposals were in accord with their licensing policies. This is in marked contrast to the way the Licensing Justices behaved. They would ask searching questions of applicants even when there were no objections. We felt this proactive approach made for a better standard of licensed premises. It is also in contrast to the way the Planning Department handles planning applications, which can be and are rejected for non-conformity with the Local Plan even in the absence of objections.

Trustees feel procedures need to be changed to place a duty on the Local Authority to support its own licensing policy and to reject applications that are not in conformity with it, even if there are no objections from third parties.

R.C.

#### **EVENTS**

While Trust membership reached 500 for the first time in its history, our events followed the well-trodden programme. Three meetings were held during the year. After last year's AGM your Secretary gave an illustrated lecture on 'The Futures of Durham'. (It was later printed as a Trust publication; complimentary copies were distributed to all members of the City's Development Control Committee.) In the autumn Tracey Ingle, Head of Cultural Services in the City, gave a lecture on 'The Visioning of Durham outlined'. For the second year running the spring topic and speakers again chose themselves, with Paul Hopson (Durham County Council) and Neil Turner (Howarth-Litchfield Partnership) outlining and demonstrating the properties of the Science Learning Centre North East.

The Trust's Christmas card this year was a depiction of the Cathedral from Framwellgate Bridge by RW Billings in 1842. Bulletins 61 and 62 were issued; Walk No5 (Claypath and Gilesgate) was published, and preliminary thoughts given to Walk No 6. Trustees met for the customary twelve occasions. They appreciated being invited by the Design and Heritage Section for consultation meetings on the Visions topics of signage and lighting. They also received an invitation to nominate a representative on the small Co-ordinating Committee of Durham's World Heritage Site. In September members of the Trust again provided volunteer stewards for five properties during the Heritage Open Days Scheme.

The winner of the Trust's award in Durham in Bloom, given for 'long-term contribution to the local or civic amenity', was won this year by Mr J Lindsley of Helmsley Road, Newton Hall. The City itself could hardly be expected to win first place in Britain in Bloom

for a second year running, but it progressed far. Significantly, but hardly noticed, Durham was also ranked highly among towns for their cleanliness. The City's Environmental Health Department works with considerable effect, at different scales, to bolster our pride of place. As a service which is taken for granted, its contribution would be immediately apparent were it to be interrupted.

The saddest event of the year was the removal by thieves of the Trust's portrait head of Sir Ove Arup from the side of Dunelm House on the night of 12-13 June. The strength required to wrench it from its specially reinforced plinth suggests the work of professionals, although the amount of bronze thereby captured was not excessive. Police investigations drew a blank. Student regret was expressed in their newspaper under the heading, 'Dunelm House loses its head.'

Across the city Trustees welcomed the formal establishment of the Crossgate Community. Together with the Claypath and Elvet Resident Associations, it now means that the whole of the central area is covered by environmentally-alert groups, on the ground, anxious for the best for the areas in which they live.

#### **PERSONALIA**

At the last AGM Dr John Charters was elected as a Trustee. Besides environmental awareness, his medical knowledge brings informed background to our consideration of licensing matters. During the year Dr Colin Green, a Trustee, kindly agreed to take over the vital mantle of Treasurer.

It would be inappropriate not to note here the retirement of Councillor Mary Hawgood after long service to the City. Durham is also in debt to her, and to her husband John, for restoring Crook Hall, their home for many years. Our present enjoyment of both hall and garden owes much to their careful guardianship.

#### THE ANNUAL MEETING

Finally, two points with regard to this year's annual meeting. On the business front, Trustees decided that, after the passage of eleven years, it would be responsible to revisit the topic of subscription rates, with a view to presenting a motion at the autumn meeting.

Following the business part of the meeting we look forward to a lecture by Dr Deary. He is better known as Terry Deary, author of the 'horrible history' series of books, but his activities are widely spread across the field of historical interpretation. There is no denying his particular sense of humour (see his web site: www.terry-deary.net), but he is both entertaining and thought-provoking. He has recently made a programme on Durham's buildings for BBC TV, so his talk may be taken as a trailer. The title, appropriately, is 'Deadly Durham'.

D.C.D.P.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The sixty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the City of Durham Trust will be held in Room 141, Elvet Riverside 1, New Elvet at 7.15 pm on Wednesday 9 May 2007

Members and friends are cordially invited to attend.

#### **AGENDA**

- 1. Apologies for absence.
- 2. Minutes of the 64th Annual General Meeting (Wednesday 10 May 2006).
- 3. Matters arising from the Minutes.
- 4. Report of the Trustees and the Presentation of Audited Accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31 December 2006.
- 5. Appointment of the honorary officers of the Trust.
- 6. Appointment of Trustees.

The following Trustees retire by rotation:
Mr P J F Beard, Dr A I Doyle, Mr D M H Glen, Mr F M Orr and Mr N J Ruffle

All are eligible for re-election.

Names of other possible new Trustees, together with proposer and seconder, and up to 100 words of recommendation, should reach the Secretary before the meeting.

- 7. Subscriptions.
- 8. Chairman's remarks.
- 9. Any other business which may be brought forward by members. It would be helpful if notice of this could be given to the Secretary.

#### **LECTURE**

At 8 pm, after the AGM, **Terry Deary** will give a lecture on

**DEADLY DURHAM** 

# **BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2006**

		2006 £		2005 £
Current Assets				_
CAF Account Cash at Bank – Current Account		18,216.47 933.49		16,504.84 615.91
Less Current Liabilities		19,149.96		17,120.75
Trade Creditors Other Creditors	628.50 534.24	_1,162.74	<u> </u>	· _
Total Assets		17,987.22		17,120.75
Represented By				
Fund				
Unrestricted Restricted – Tree Planting		17,683.06 304.16		16,796.59 324.16
		17,987.22		17,120.75

For the year ended 31 December 2006 the charity was entitled to exemption under section 249A(1) of the Companies Act 1985. No members have required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 249B(2). The trustee's acknowledge their responsibility for: (i) Ensuring the charity keeps accounting records which comply with section 221; and (ii) Preparing accounts which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity as at the end of its financial year, and of its profit and loss for the financial year in accordance with section 226, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act relating to accounts, so far as applicable to the charity.

Approved by the Board of Trustee	s on a	and signed	on its behalf by	

...... Trustee

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2006

	Notes	Jnrestricted Funds £	Restricted '	Total Funds <u>2006</u> £	Total Fund 2005 £
INCOMING RESOURCES			L	£	L
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds					
Voluntary Income	2	1,864.34	,,,, -	1,864.34	1,751.34
Activities for Generating Funds	3	1,387.16	-	1,387.16	1,790.82
Investment Income		711.63	·	711.63	641.96
Total Incoming Resources		3,963.13		3,963.13	4,184.12
Cost of Generating Funds					
Fundraising Trading Costs		1,167.49	-1	1,167.49	680.30
Charitable Activities	4	1,821.05	20.00	1,841.05	1,807.44
Governance Costs		88.12		88.12	
Total Resources Expended		3,076.66		3,096.66	2,487.74
NET INCOMING RESOUR	CES FOR YEAR	886.47	( 20.00)	866.47	1,696.38
Total Funds at 1 January 2006		16,796.59	324.16	17,120.75	15,424.37
Total Funds at 31 December 20	006	17,683.06	304.16	17,987.22	17,120.75

# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2006

#### 1. Accounting Policies

- a. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the inclusion of fixed assets, investments at market value and in accordance with the financial reporting standard for Smaller Entities (effective March 2000) the Companies Act 1985 and follow the recommendations in Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued in October 2000, and revised 2005.
- b.Incoming resources from the sale of publications and investments is included when receivable.
- c. Resources expended are recognised in the period in which they are incurred.
- d.Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources receivable or generated for the object of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.
- e. Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor.

#### 2. Voluntary Income

	<u>2006</u> ₤	2005 £
Subscriptions Donations Gifts and Refunds	1,494.20 63.55 306.59	1,418.20 63.50 269.64
3. Activities for Generating Funds	_1,864.34	_1,751.34
<u>Publication Sales</u>	2006 £	<u>2005</u> €
'St Cuthbert'	369.20	432.05
'Essays'	148.00	208.00
'Bonomi'	10.00	19.50
'Visions'	2.00	24.50
'Futures of Durham'	40.50	
Walks Leaflet'	103.25	21.44
'Notelets'		2.40
'Xmas Cards'	714.21	1,082.93
	1,387.16	1,790.82

# NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2006 (Cont'd)

# 4. Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds  2006 £	Total Funds 2005 £
Trees		20.00	20.00	300.00
Subscriptions				
Bow Trust	50.00	7 1 <del>-</del>	50.00	50.00
Civic Trust (North East)	10.00	-	10.00	10.00
Friends of Durham Cathedral	20.00	-	20.00	20.00
CPRE	30.00	-	30.00	25.00
Civic Trust (National)	150.00	-	150.00	150.00
Alington House	20.00	-	20.00	-
Beautiful Durham	_40.00		40.00	40.00
	320.00	20.00	340.00	595.00
Public Enquiry Costs	186.00	-	186.00	-
Postage, Stationery & Secretarial	450.21		450.21	436.39
Filing Fee	-	-	-1	30.00
Meeting Expenses	360.04		360.04	180.65
Development Committee Agendas Bulletins etc	314.80		314,80	375.40
Insurance	_190.00		_190.00	_190.00
	1,821.05	20.00	1,841.05	1,807.44