

CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

BULLETIN

Number 61

October 2006

TRUST LECTURE

The Trust's autumn lecture will be given by **Ms Tracey Ingle**, Head of Cultural Services in the City, entitled ***The Visioning of Durham Outlined***. The topic is of over-arching importance to the future direction of change in our City, and we are fortunate to have Tracey Ingle to 'cut through' the maze of recently commissioned reports and Local Development Framework documents. The illustrated lecture will be on **Saturday, 21st October, at 2.15pm in Elvet Riverside 1, room 141.**

TRUST CHRISTMAS CARD

This year's card depicts Durham Cathedral from 19th century Framwellgate. It was drawn by RW Billings in 1842, and formed the frontispiece of his volume, *Architectural Illustrations and Description of the Cathedral Church at Durham* (London, 1843). The view, which is very similar to one sketched by W Pearson c.1830, remained essentially the same until slum clearance in the 1930s. (The occupants were re-housed on the Sherburn Road area and, until the early 1970s, on the site of the present Millburngate shopping centre.)

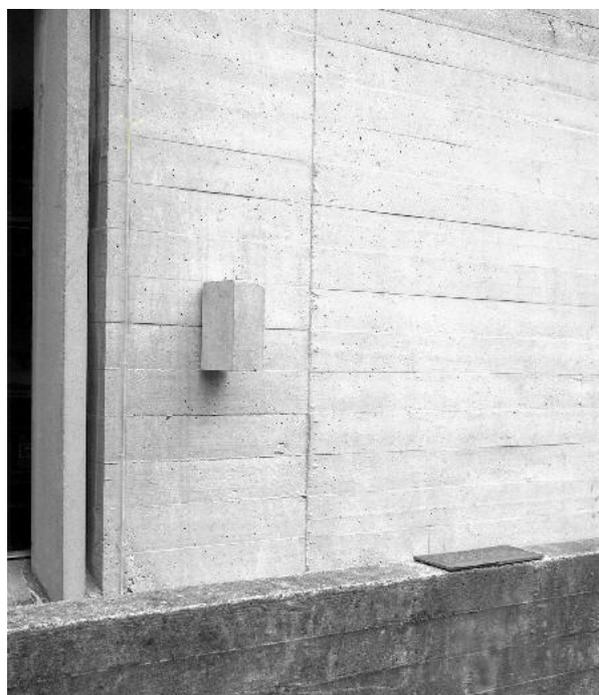
A sample card and order form are enclosed. Cards will also be on sale at the Trust open meeting on 21st October, as well as in non-member packs of Cards for Good Causes (see later in the *Bulletin*).

SCULPTURE STOLEN

In April 2003, on the anniversary of his birthday, a bronze portrait head of Sir Ove Arup was unveiled by his daughter (see *Bulletin* 55). Attached to the side of Dunelm House, for which Sir Ove Arup was the structural engineer, the bronze sculpture by Diana Brandenburger overlooked Kingsgate Bridge, his favourite piece of design.

During the night of 12-13th June of this summer the sculpture was wrenched from its plinth. Although its removal was immediately noticed and reported to the police (and listed by Durham Constabulary as Crime No.BD31199/06), investigations have drawn a blank. At the time of its removal, work was taking place immediately adjacent in

constructing a new access into Dunelm House, but this may have been mere coincidence. Whatever the motive of the perpetrators - whether for an art collection, trophy or perceived value of its bronze - Trustees remain deeply saddened, and the City is the poorer for the loss of a unique piece of social history.



The empty plinth (D. Jones)

KASCADA (ICE RINK) INQUIRY

The Inquiry into the application to build 99 flats on the former ice rink site, plus a heritage centre café in place of adjacent Bishop's Mill, took place over five days in early July. The application had been 'called in' by the Secretary of State following a request by the Trust in view of the manner in which this highly important application had been processed. English Heritage joined the Trust in opposing the application. The Trust's case was presented by your Secretary and Dennis Jones, with written submissions in support from our two patrons, Sir William Whitfield and Sherban Cantacuzino.

The applicants received support from the Local Authority, but not through the City's own planning department; instead, the Authority was represented by a planning consultant from Manchester. This unusual action was both surprising, yet perhaps understandable. It was surprising because the Planning Officer had encouraged the applicants to pursue their project after their withdrawal of an unsatisfactory initial submission. Moreover, the Authority then paid for the services of an outside consultant to improve the applicant's scheme. Such was the Planning Officer's confidence that his report to the Development Services Committee concluded that "a refusal of the application could not, in the circumstances, be reasonably upheld."

On the other hand, the action perhaps becomes more understandable when one learns that half of the Department was against the application (the Heritage and Design section had lodged strong objections), while the Case Officer had disassociated himself from the planning considerations and recommendation. Further, the objections of both the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and English Heritage had been inadequately presented in committee, while the World Heritage body (ICOMOS/UK) had not even been informed.

The five days of examination and cross-examination may be briefly summarised under the following headings, with the Trust's case put first and the applicant's/Local Authority's case following in brackets.

1. The application had been processed in an unsatisfactory manner. (There was no response.)
2. There was a surplus of housing, not least apartments, in the City Centre; house completions were 50-60% above Structure Plan/ Regional Spatial Strategy allocations, while annual permissions were more than three times this figure; emerging Local Development Framework policy proposed no change. Despite these figures, no application had been challenged on grounds of surplus, while no affordable units were included in the Kascada scheme. (Response: National and regional housing policy was volatile; any embargo would be subject to challenge; the Authority had not stipulated inclusion of affordable units.)
3. The proposal was unsatisfactory in scale, massing and detailing, not least in the high proportion of glazing. (The structure respected its siting, and had had the advantage of an independent design consultant.)
4. The proposal did not relate to the Durham idiom, and did not 'preserve or enhance' the Conservation Area. (There was not a single Durham vernacular; the proposal would conform with its immediate locality.)

5. The structure would intrude (more than the existing ice rink) into the classic, world-famous view from Prebends' Bridge; the view obtaining from the spot had been the reason for its positioning in 1778 - and for the Bridge being included in the World Heritage Site. (The proposal would only be seen from a small part of Prebends' Bridge and would be hardly visible; the view would be irretrievably damaged, anyway, when the Closegate apartment block was built immediately down-river from the Raddison hotel.)
6. Bishop's Mill was the location of the mill for the Bishop's Borough. Despite its more recent fabric, the Mill, together with the Weir, formed a single composition signifying functional significance, visual connection and historical continuity. With nearby Framwellgate Bridge, all were in the vicinity of the World Heritage Site, for which future boundary extension was probable. (The exact site of the original mill was unknown; any interest was below ground.)
7. The Mill could be further restored - it had received an English Heritage grant for restoration in 1972; the structure could be made reasonably resilient to floods of 1 in 100 years' severity, comparable to the Boat-house and the two mills upstream. (The structure had no worth and was vulnerable; it would be demolished and its working parts safeguarded in the basement of a heritage café/restaurant.)
8. No case had been made, quantitatively or qualitatively, for another café/restaurant in the City Centre; adjacent Walkergate was about to open with another seven such establishments. (It would provide the only riverside eating place in the City.)

The Secretary of State's decision is expected in the second half of October.

CONSULTATION

Consultation is a 'good thing', but it can be a demanding exercise, especially when documents are issued with such rapidity as in recent months. Having responded to the Regional Spatial Strategy and four Local Development Framework documents, this summer has brought the World Heritage Draft Management Plan, the Draft Durham City Vision and three more Local Development Framework volumes. In addition, the University produced its Master Plan and Development Framework, which, although not on 'general release', signified profound repercussion on Old Elvet when its properties are vacated.

Two comments arise from this plethora of documents. One is to query whether response fatigue has set in. The World Heritage document, for instance, despite an official

launch, wide publicity and literature available in all libraries for three months, had attracted exactly six responses two days before the closing date. (The Trust submitted a four-page response.) The other is to signal the value of the forth-coming lecture by Tracey Ingle, when the various diverse threads will be brought together.

SOCCARENA

Mention was made in the *Annual Report* to the referral of the above project to the Ombudsman by a member who considered its prominent, shining roof to be a clear case of environmental vandalism, or, in less dramatic language, a breach of Local Plan Policy. Trustees understand that a ruling is expected in the next two months. In the meantime, members might like to compare the prominence of this unintended landmark structure - from the railway, A690 and many other parts of the District - with Policy E11: "The Council will protect and enhance areas visible from the road network, railway lines and recreation routes by (1) seeking to improve unsightly land and buildings, with emphasis on areas visible from main transport routes; ...and (3) not permitting development which detracts from such routes."

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Walk 5: Claypath and Gilesgate. Dorothy Meade, well-known local historian and long-standing Trust member, is the author of the fifth pamphlet in our series of Walks. Here, the walker will be led into little-known corners and interesting views. The publication will be on sale at our open meeting, and, at non-member prices, is available from the City Information Office in Millennium Square, St Mary-le-Bow Heritage Centre and the Sub Post Office at Gilesgate.

The Futures of Durham will also be on sale at the open meeting. It was first given by your Secretary as an illustrated lecture at this year's AGM. Trustees subsequently considered it should be available for wider dissemination in more tangible form. The content derives from more than three decades of 'Durham watching'. Increasing concern at the rate and nature of some of the recent change determined the timing of the reflective essay.

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

The wonderful weather encouraged a record number of visitors to many of the sites. Of those the Trust stewarded, the Bull Hole Byre had 44 (100% increase), the Prison Officers' Club 49 and St Mary-the-Less an astonishing 203.

Tours of Brancepeth Castle at the full 100 allowed and Old Durham Gardens were satisfactorily attended.

Again many thanks to the three trustees and the seven members who manned 'our' properties.

M.F.D.

CARDS FOR GOOD CAUSES

The familiar company will operate this year from familiar premises: the former Tourist Information Office, beside the Town Hall, in the Market Place. From 19th October to 18th December it will sell greeting cards published by a large number of charities including our own. We have again undertaken to staff the shop on Thursday afternoons throughout the period. A rota of two-hour, two-person stints is being compiled, and we would like to hear from members willing to participate. Do consider volunteering! For more details, please phone Mary Sales, 378 1703.

M.E.S.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATION

Listed below are publications received by the Trust in recent months. Members wishing to borrow any title should telephone Mary Sales on 378 1703.

Campaign to protect Rural England
Countryside Voice. Spring 2006
Fieldwork. June 2006.

Civic Trust
Civic Focus Autumn 2005 & Winter 2005-6

Durham County Council
Waste Local Plan. April 2005
Minerals & Waste Development Framework :
Minerals Issues & Options.

Friends of Durham Cathedral
Annual Report 2005

Landmark Trust
Landmark News Spring 2006

M.E.S.

D.C.D.P.

THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST is a society set up in 1942 by local people who saw the need to conserve and encourage the appreciation of the historic City of Durham and its surroundings.

Our members are people who take a keen interest in what goes on in Durham City. They appreciate the role the Trust plays as a strong independent voice, free from party political agendas, that can put their concerns forward.

This leaflet tells you more about the Trust and how you can become a member.

What do we do?

Most people first hear of the Trust because of the campaigns we run, for example to save Brown's Boathouse, to oppose the growth of large pubs in the City centre, and to get a Green Belt for the City.

Behind this lies a solid body of work: around 1200 planning applications are made to Durham City Council each year and the Trust reviews them all, and makes representations where appropriate. Once or twice a year we will put our views at a Public Inquiry. We also have input into the County Structure Plan and City Local Plan, which set the planning policies in the longer term. We also make representations to the Licensing Justices about new pubs and clubs.

We restored the statue of Neptune in the Market Place and the teapot in Saddler Street. We make annual awards to the architects and clients of the best new or restored buildings. The Trust has placed plaques on buildings of interest, and provided trees for sites such as Stockton Road and Old Durham Gardens.

The Trust keeps its members and the wider public informed by holding public meetings and lectures, by publishing Annual Reports, Bulletins, books, and leaflets about the City (see back of the membership form), and via its web site (www.DurhamCity.org).

We co-operate with other City organisations and pressure groups. We have joined other bodies like ourselves by affiliating to the Civic Trust. We also consult with national bodies such as English Heritage.

How do we do it?

The Trust is managed by its Trustees, up to 20 in number, who are elected from the membership by the members. There are no paid employees. The work of running the Trust is carried out by the Honorary Secretary, the Trustees, and other members who are able to give their time and expertise to the Trust. The Trustees meet monthly in Alington House, North Bailey. Members are welcome to attend these meetings, and may speak with the agreement of the chair. But if members want to bring anything to the attention of the Trust, they are encouraged to approach any Trustee, all of whom live in or around the City.

So why not join us?

The effectiveness of the Trust depends on the support and size of its membership. We hope you will want to help the work we are doing by becoming a member. Please fill in the membership form (attached) and send it to:

**The Honorary Secretary,
City of Durham Trust,
c/o Blackett, Hart and Pratt,
Kepier House,
Belmont Business Park,
Durham DH1 1TW**

APPLICATION FORM

I/We wish to become a member of the City of Durham Trust and I/We enclose cash I standing order I a cheque payable to The City of Durham Trust.

Full Name & Address (capitals) Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms

Tel. No. (postcode)

Email

GiftAid: I pay income tax and, unless I cease to do so and notify the Trust, I would like the tax on my subscriptions and any donations to be reclaimed by the Trust.

Signed Date

Current minimum annual membership subscriptions:

- Please tick Ordinary £5 Please Tick
- Joint (couple) £7
- Senior (over 60) £2
- Joint senior (both over 60) £4
- Student £2
- Dependent solely on State Benefit £2
- Life £100

Completion of the following Standing Order form will enable your bank to make the payment now for this year and on 1 January of each subsequent year. Most members pay by this method which is convenient for them and for the Trust.

STANDING ORDER

To: (Your bank's name)

(address)
Please pay to the Co-operative Bank plc, 29 High Street,
Durham DH1 3PL from 1 January 20..... and on 1st
January in each year until further notice, the sum of:

£..... For the credit of the 'City of Durham Trust'
(A/c number 50410022, sort code 08-90-70) and debit
my account; number.....

Signed..... Date

Name (capitals)

Address (capitals)

..... (postcode)

