

## **Proposed Developments at Houghall**

Thank you for the opportunity to visit your exhibition and talk with your representatives on 15 May. I have also studied the material on your website and Trustees discussed the proposals at our monthly meeting yesterday.

We are first of all pleased that the college has received funding from the DfE to improve its facilities. Nothing we say is to be interpreted as principled opposition to the planned improvements.

We have two major areas of concern. The first is that the new teaching block is to be located on a field in the Green Belt. The Green Belt in this part of Durham has been severely depleted by developments at both the Maiden Castle sports site and on the Houghall campus. The proposal thus needs to balance the perceived benefits against the obvious harm to openness. The design needs to be very recessive, well landscaped and with carefully controlled lighting throughout. This also applies to the refurbished areas. The quality of views into the site will be a crucial factor in forming the Trust's formal response to the planning application.

The Houghall campus constitutes an important green space on the edge of the city and the Trust would wish to see opportunities for public access enhanced, commensurate with the professional workings of the college. This would help to compensate for the loss of Green Belt.

Our second main concern is about the felling of trees. All the trees on the site are covered by TPOs and there needs to be a comprehensive tree strategy so that any felling is fully justified. Circulation routes for both traffic and pedestrians need to be established without impacting on existing trees.

# THE CITY OF DURHAM TRUST

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John Lowe  
Chair, City of Durham Trust