

Question 46

Policy 45 – Durham Cathedral and Castle World Heritage Site

1. The Trust considers that the protection of the peninsula and setting of the World Heritage Site, given in Policy 45, lacks a sufficiently strong preservation or conservation element. It does not lay down the inviolable nature of the World Heritage Site before turning to possible “applicants” or “developments”. Thus, the opening sentence of the Policy speaks of “requiring development proposals to demonstrate that full consideration has been given to their impacts” The following sentence then refers to “the need to demonstrate that the development will cause no substantial harm.”
2. The *Preferred Option* wording contrasts with that of the current District Local Plan, which proudly announces that the Cathedral and Castle form “one of a select number of sites in Britain to be inscribed as a World Heritage Site” (para 3.27), and begins its Policy E3 by stating that it will be protected by “restricting development to safeguard local and long distance views.” (Moreover, the Local Plan lists some of the “ridgelines” which afford key views. One, significantly, is that of Aykley Heads.) In contrast, *Preferred Options* simply refers to inner and outer bowls “and beyond.” The value of these long views has long been acknowledged by authorities; the WHS Management Plan review is currently considering them.
3. In short, the Trust is disappointed at the generality of this Policy and text.