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Dear John and Sue,

Thank you for consulting with us, for taking the time to meet myself and representatives from Durham University on site, and for graciously extending the consultation period.

As discussed on site, we would like to take this opportunity to register our objections to the proposed allocation of Observatory Hill Local Green Space. Please note our comments in this letter, which are in addition to the arguments set out in the attached letter from Savills. The latter was submitted on our behalf in response to the Pre-Submission Draft of the Durham City Neighbourhood Plan (NP) last year, but I understand that it was not yet officially admitted to consultation. Please do admit it now – the letter sets out comments on Policy G2 of the proposed plan.

You kindly shared AECOM's amended Sustainability Appraisal with us in advance of the site visit. It didn't contribute much to the matter, though, as the report looked only at options for the boundary of the proposed Local Green Space (LGS), not the principle of the matter. Its findings are therefore not applicable to the objection at hand.

Savills' letter demonstrates the risk to the workings of the land and hindrance to future development of sporting facilities to the adjacent Durham School and Chorister School arising from the proposed additional designation. I would like to add that the proposed LGS boundary as shown in AECOM's report does in fact include one of the Chorister School's Playing Fields, which is private land not generally accessible to the public. The Playing Fields and adjacent extension area (towards the entrance to Durham School) are operational assets of Durham Cathedral and we would ask for both to be removed from consideration for additional designation.

We discussed parking during the site meeting earlier this week. We all readily agreed that parking in Central Durham is very difficult, and it was with dismay that I learned that this topic does not appear to be given any consideration within the NP. In the context of the increased use of the Market Place for public events, and the impact that vehicular access through Market Place and Saddlers Street generally has, we believe that a suitable analysis and allocation of future parking and access provisions to the World Heritage Site must be undertaken. The only sustainable alternative access to the Peninsula, avoiding the already congested Leazes Roundabout/Durham

City Centre, is from Potters Bank/Quarryheads Lane across Prebends Bridge. Any additional planning restrictions to land in that area would seem short-sighted until a sustainable parking and access policy has been agreed.

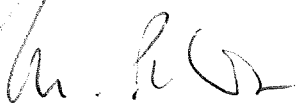
As it is, the parking areas of the Playing Field are used for staff parking connected with the School's operations (the daily 'Walking Bus' leaves from/arrives at Prebends Gatehouse on Quarryheads Lane) as well as general staff parking during the rising numbers of road closures to the Peninsula. We consider this approach by the Cathedral to reduce vehicular traffic across Market Place to be of benefit to the community, and cannot see any advantage in the NP's intention to stop further improvements.

We would further like to register our objections to the proposed allocation of the Riverbanks Local Green Space, marked G.2.1 on your drawings. We note the increased area between 2017 and the current consultation. Similar to the comments set out in regards to the proposed Observatory Hill LGS, the area in question is already afforded a suitable and appropriate level of protection by virtue of being within a Conservation Area, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) as well as the curtilage of several listed buildings (Cathedral, Mills, Counts House) and Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Watergate, Prebends Bridge). The additional allocation would provide no additional benefit to the local community. Regarding the proposed extended boundary line - you are no doubt aware of the proposed extension of the Durham WHS, which would include all the areas of the proposed extended LGS with the exception of Pimlico and residential gardens along South Street. The boundaries of the proposed WHS extension were not only meticulously researched, reflect the history and significance as well as actual physical boundaries of the riverbanks, but they were also agreed with the respective major landowners. We don't think a LGS designation is sensible in the first place; but if it was, we would respectfully propose for it to closely mirror the proposed WHS boundary.

We would welcome acknowledgement of receipt of this letter.

If you have any queries regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact me. In the meantime, we respectfully request that the comments above as well as in the attached letter are taken fully into consideration as the Neighbourhood Plan progresses to its next stage.

Kind regards



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