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27 August 2008

Diocese of Leeds
Finance and Property Administration Department
Hinsley Hall
62 Headingley Lane
Leeds
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Reference: David Damant

Dear Mr Damant

Regeneration of Central Area, Tadcaster

I thank you for your letter dated 28 July 2008, and note the comments contained therein.

It might be helpful if I expanded somewhat on the terms of my original letter on 14 July 2008, so that you understand the District Council's involvement in the scheme for regeneration of the central Area Car Park in Tadcaster, and the reason why we wrote to you about the land on St Joseph's Street, Tadcaster owned by the Roman Catholic Church.

For many years there have been discussions with regards to the regeneration of the Central Area in Tadcaster. The District Council has a scheme ready for implementation but that scheme is subject to a High Court Judicial Review challenge by Sam Smith's Old Brewery, and the case has remained adjourned since 2004. In the mean time Sam Smith's Old Brewery have put forward an alternative scheme which can best be described as a comprehensive regeneration scheme for Tadcaster and which will be viewed by many as an enhanced scheme when compared with the District Council's own scheme. Be that as it may the District Council is ready and able to implement its own scheme. In the mean time there have been extensive discussions with the Brewery resulting in the Brewery agreeing to provide additional facilities, as outlined in my previous letter should their scheme go ahead in preference to the District Council's Scheme.

The Brewery wish to stress to all parties that their scheme does not involve any commercial gain on behalf of the Brewery and the scheme is entirely uneconomic for them.

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They wish to enhance the conservation area by the restoration of the town's listed and non-listed historic buildings including the undertaking of wide-spread landscaping and environmental improvements part of which involve the removal of through traffic from the core of the town centre. The Brewery have advised us that they have carried out a considerable amount of work so far such as the creation of the Town Green, the laying of new paved surfaces with traditional natural materials and the on-going restoration of the now Grade II Listed Old Vicarage. They have referred to a report prepared by Giles Quarme a conservation architect such report being prepared in February 2000 which gives a useful summary of the background to their proposals for the town.

With regard to works which are being considered at the moment they have listed the following as benefits which would benefit Tadcaster, should the scheme go ahead.

- i) the complete re-design and re-laying of the central car park and its perimeter footpaths using natural materials, together with associated landscaping works
- ii) The extension and opening up with footpaths of the Town Green to provide attractive public amenity space and circulation routes through the Town Centre
- iii) The restoration of a number of key historic buildings within the Town Centre Conservation Area, including 43 Kirkgate, 10 – 12 Kirkgate, 24 – 26 Kirkgate and the completion of the Grade II Listed Old Vicarage
- iv) The creation of a pedestrian-friendly Central Area through the closure of Chapel Street to through-traffic and the pedestrianisation of Kirkgate
- v) The extensive re-surfacing of Kirkgate in high quality traditional natural materials, including Yorkshire Flags and Granite Setts
- vi) The environment improvement of the northern end of St. Josephs Street through the demolition of two brewery-owned cottages to facilitate the re-grading of the highway junction
- vii) The sensitive in-filling of the 'gap' site at 4 – 8 High Street with two new shops, appropriately designed for the Conservation Area
- viii) Environmental improvements within the Conservative Area through the development of Brownfield land for Housing.

As things stand at the moment one thing that must be sorted out before there can be an agreement between the District Council and the Brewery is the road traffic scheme and North Yorkshire County Council as Highway Authority have indicated that the scheme preferred by the Brewery, which would result in one way traffic down St Joseph's Street Tadcaster is acceptable to them provided that there can be a footway on each side of the carriageway. That cannot be achieved of course without the benefit of the strip of land at the frontage of the property owned by the Roman Catholic Church. *thru !*

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At the end of the day it is for the Church to decide if they will release the land and this Authority respects their view on this but we have once again pointed out the benefits which could be obtained if the land is released, resulting in the road traffic scheme going ahead and then an agreement being reached between the Brewery and the District Council on the wider issues. I will advise you on any further developments.

Yours Sincerely

Peter Burns

Peter Burns
Head of Service – Legal and Democratic Services