

Todds End, Todds Green, Stevenage, Herts., SG1 2JE.

Ms Anne McDonald,
Case Officer, Planning Department,
North Herts. District Council,
Council Offices, Gernon Road,
Letchworth Garden City,

N.H.C.

06 AUG 2024

NORTHGATE

Herts., SG6 3JF. Friday, 2nd August, 2024.

Dear Anne,

**Planning Application ref. 24/01426/FP
Hitchin High Street – ex Woolworth s Building.**

Tom Rea, with whom I am discussing other matters, kindly mentioned that you are the Case Officer regarding the above and the purpose of my writing is to inform you that my sister and I own the adjoining property, Jacksons Yard, a private car park open to the public. Our estate includes the listed Paynes Park House and land fronting West Alley plus the right of way to the High Street between Boots and The Cock Hotel.

In particular we are anxious to preserve our Rights of Light, as per the *Supreme Court* decision in *Fearn & Others v. The Board of Trustees of the Tate Gallery*, 2023.

Planning permission was granted on 7th February 1985 for various uses on our land including a large office block abutting the Woolworth s building and a start was made, keeping the permission valid as confirmed by the Director of Planning's letter of 6th March, 1990.

We have never been in any hurry to undertake these developments and as we were about to start work the Council requested us not to continue as it would much prefer a covered shopping centre linking its multi story Lairage car park with the High Street and Market Place, and for which it had held a design competition. At one stage we had entered into an arrangement with a major developer to undertake this, but the market then fell away.

There was talk of pedestrianising Paynes Park, or closing it to through traffic, and we were waiting to see whether this would materialise, but nothing has happened yet. This could still be possible if it were vital to the Council's preferred development and it could then link the old Library and Museum buildings into the Town Centre.

We feel that some form of community use at the Paynes Park ground floor level would be appropriate and beneficial to Hitchin, be it shops, boutiques or restaurant/cafes together with a lower level car park under and flats above. We were asked if we could provide basement accommodation for the local Boy Scouts, which might be a useful start in providing community space for which there is a demand.

Every time we think of doing something there is a financial crash, or, last time, Covid-19 followed by Lockdown from which we were only just recovering, when along comes a Labour government threatening to increase taxation, thus removing any incentive.

We should be glad to address any questions you may have on the above.

Yours sincerely,


S.T.Smyth