Barnsley JHT Group

Planning Statement to Support an Application for Listed Buildings Consent to the Placing of a Small Plaque at the Lamproom Theatre, Westgate, Barnsley

Introduction and Background

1. James Hudson Taylor (May 1832 – June 1905) is generally regarded as one of the most influential and famous people in the world. He was born in Barnsley on the 21st May 1832, above his father's Chemist shop on Cheapside. As a young man he became a Christian and eventually left Barnsley to become a Christian missionary in China. James Hudson Taylor went on to found the China Inland Mission (CIM). This organisation, now called OMF International, is the largest Protestant Christian movement in the world.

2. The American Historian Dr. Kenneth Scott LaTourette said: -'*Hudson Taylor was ...one of the greatest missionaries of all time, and ... one of the four or five most influential foreigners who came to China in the nineteenth century for any purpose...*'

3. Chinese culture places a far greater importance on tradition and ancestors than western culture. Consequently, Chinese Christians view James Hudson Taylor as their Church's founding Father and see Barnsley as a special (sacred) place. This is seen in the following example. In February 2004, Brother Yun and Peter Xu, of the organisation 'Love China International' came to Barnsley to celebrate 150 years since James Hudson Taylor landed in China. When they and their delegation were shown the place of James Hudson Taylor's birth in Cheapside, Barnsley, they kissed the ground. ***Peter Xu declared Barnsley a sacred place 'our spiritual homeland'.*** During Brother Yun and Peter Xu's visit, the delegates were well received by the Mayor and Borough officials. There was talk at that time about raising the profile of James Hudson Taylor in Barnsley but this enthusiasm faded.

The Barnsley Local Economy

4. The UK Border Agency had 138,000 tourist visa applications from Chinese nationals between January and September 2011, a 42 per cent increase on the same period a year previously. Harrods, the central London store, reports that 14% of its UK sales come from Chinese tourists. Currently Chinese visitors to the UK have to apply for a special visa, which involves a personal visit to a centre and a form completing which has only just been made available in Chinese language. A single, easier to obtain, Schengen visa, covers other EU countries. The UK tourism industry is lobbying central government for change.

5. Barnsley Town Hall has been redeveloped to house a museum dedicated to local history. James Hudson Taylor will be featured in that museum and the prominence will be dictated by the quantity and quality of James Hudson Taylor Exhibits and perceived and actual demand from visitors. Several museums throughout the world are seeking James Hudson Taylor memorabilia. Salem Wesleyan Reform Church is prepared to accommodate a museum to JHT within its Grade II listed premises, largely unchanged from the time of JHT and thus an appropriate period setting as described in paragraphs 13 to 17 following. Salem Church also has a pewter commemorative plate plus a plaque on the church wall (inside) commemorating the work of the Taylor family in that place. A blue heritage plaque for James Hudson Taylor currently resides in Barnsley library because it was thought unclear which building was his birthplace. Brother Yun unveiled this plaque in 2004.

6. Worldwide interest (especially the Far East and the USA) in James Hudson Taylor is swelling and Barnsley is uniquely placed in the James Hudson Taylor story because he was born and converted to Christianity here. In China the oppression on religious freedom has all but gone within a few years. Barnsley is still economically disadvantaged but the 'James Hudson Taylor experience' offers an opportunity to market the town to attract new visitors with significant spending power. Chinese Church leaders see Barnsley as a sacred place – a spiritual homeland and they have shown willing to engage in our activities. Chinese culture values heritage even more than the Western world, evidenced by the already huge number of Chinese tourists visiting Britain now that they are wealthier and free to travel.

The Barnsley JHT Group

7. In early 2011, there was renewed interest in commemorating the life of James Hudson Taylor. The newly formed 'Barnsley JHT Group' had its inaugural meeting in the highly appropriate Salem Wesleyan Reform Church in August 2011; all subsequent meetings have been held in the Salem building. The Group has gone from strength to strength. Dr John Foster MBE of Emmanuel Methodist Church chairs the Group and its Joint Secretaries are the Secretary (Jenifer Dore) and Treasurer (Philip Nuttall) of Salem Wesleyan Reform Church. The vision of the Barnsley JHT Group is: -

> *'To renew the memory of James Hudson Taylor in his home town of Barnsley and to present him as an inspiring example for current and future* generations'.

8. The mission of the Barnsley JHT Group is to: -

   - *Create a fitting memorial to James Hudson Taylor from the people of Barnsley, as a mark of our esteem and love.*
   - *Create a trail, charting the ancestry and early life of James Hudson Taylor, to help inform, educate and inspire people from all nations about him.*
   - *Create a warm welcome to anyone following the James Hudson Taylor trail.*

8. The Barnsley JHT Group has now identified 'thirteen stations' for the JHT Trail and completed the exacting research needed to authenticate them. They are

   - *Tudor Cottage. 46 Paddock Road. Staincross
   - Royston Parish Church
   - *Jubbs. Estate Agents, Old Mill Lane
   - *The Central library, Shambles Street
   - *The Lamproom Theatre (Listed Building at Grade II and the subject of this Planning Statement)
   - *The bottom of Pinfold Steps on the left looking up the steps. The wall is on Shambles Street
   - *On the boundary wall of St Georges Church near to the intersection of York St. with Pitt St
   - *The Manse Chambers now the Dove Dental Practice, Pitt Street
   - *On the wall that encloses the Day Nursery which was the site of Pitt St. Methodist Church
   - *Hope House Church Blucher St
   - *Salem Chapel Blucher Street (Listed Building at Grade II and the subject of this Planning Statement)
   - *Boots the Chemist Cheapside, with a plaque to be fixed near to the two existing heritage plaques.

- 25/27 Church St. This building use to be occupied by Barclay's Bank
- *Emmanuel Church Huddersfield Road.

Note: - * *denotes that consent has been obtained to fix a trail plate to the building or boundary wall.*

All plaques will have 'smart phone' bar code scanners to help visitors following the trail. Work is in hand to secure sponsorship funding for the plaques.

Barnsley JHT Group Progress

9. The Barnsley JHT Group was committed to a dedication of the first plaque on the anniversary of the birth of James Hudson Taylor on the 21st May 2012; two plaques (kindly funded by Barnsley Civic Trust) were unveiled at Cheapside Barnsley (the birth place of JHT) by the Mayor of Barnsley, Her Worship Councillor Dorothy Higginbottom. The event began at 1145 hours with a service at Salem Chapel attended by over 100 persons, including the Mayor of Barnsley, civic dignitaries and Dan Jarvis MP MBE (Local Member of Parliament). All processed to Cheapside for the unveiling. Both BBC and ITV covered this historic event on regional television. There have been other programmes on James Hudson Taylor, filmed in the historic setting of Salem Church, including a national BBC programme. Useful additional information is available on the web sites of the Barnsley JHT Group (www.jameshudsontaylor.org.uk) and Salem Wesleyan Reform Church (www.salembarnsley.com).

10. There are many places in Barnsley of especial importance in terms of the life of James Hudson Taylor. The Lamp Room Theatre building housed the first Methodist Church in Barnsley, founded by James Hudson Taylor's grandfather (et al); this was the first church attended by James Hudson Taylor. The church moved to Pitt Street chapel when James was a church member and it is from that place he left Barnsley. Pitt Street Church closed to form Emmanuel Methodist Church on Huddersfield Road, Barnsley. The Pitt Street building is now a children's day nursery.

11. Descendants of James Hudson Taylor now live in the USA. The early story of James Hudson Taylor has reference to Royston Parish Church, Staincross Methodist Church, Old Mill Lane and other places in Barnsley. James Hudson Taylor's grandfather is believed to have been Barnsley's first Methodist Preacher and lived in a cottage in Staincross. From Barnsley, James Hudson Taylor went to Hull, Brighton and London before his venture to China.

12. The Barnsley JHT Group has worked with an accomplished American filmmaker, Ken Haran, who visited Barnsley in mid-2013. He is pursuing the making of a feature film on the life of James Hudson Taylor. This will involve

filming in Barnsley, notably at the highly period setting of Salem Chapel. It will bring positive publicity to Barnsley!

Application Details, Lamproom Theatre

13. The Lamproom Theatre on Westgate is owned and managed by Barnsley Theatre Trust (1998) Ltd, a registered charity (number 1026352) and a company limited by guarantee (number 2851763). The premises were listed at Grade II in January 1986 (list entry number 1315041) as 'Barnsley Boys Club'. It is perhaps unfortunate that the address of the premises on the English Heritage web site is erroneous at 'Westagate' rather than the correct 'Westgate'! The listing details are publicly available on the English Heritage website, with a description: -

    - Non-Conformist Chapel, now Boys' Club. Circa 1780, wings added 1810 with mid C19, altered. Dressed stone. Welsh slate roof. 2 storeys. Entrance at rear. 3-bay symmetrical bow front. Round-arch windows with fixed casements, moulded imposts and grooved voussoirs except ground-floor centre which has moulded arch. Band between floors. Single bay wing to left and right slightly set back, each with paired round-arched doorways (each with one blocked), and a single round-arched light to 1st floor. Moulded eaves cornice and blocking course. The rear (Westgate) elevation has a central doorway under C20 canopy. Mid C19 2-storey addition to left elevation with blocked ground-floor windows and 123 pane sashes to 1st floor.

    - Interior: totally altered.

14. This application for Listed Buildings Consent is for the placement of a small plaque on the Westgate rear elevation of the Lamproom. The plaque is truly modest in size, 30 cm high and 21 cm wide. It will provide basic information in English and Cantonese, including a QR Code to enable visitors with 'smart phones' and electronic 'tablets' to access the website of the Barnsley JHT Group for further information. The Lamproom Theatre is a key part of the JHT Trail that is described in paragraph 8 above and so the placement of an appropriate plaque is of especial importance.

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