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2 April 2008

The Director
Planning and Transportation Services
Development Control Section
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
PO Box 604
Barnsley
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For the attention on Mrs. K. Driver

Dear Sir,

Your Ref: DC/KMD/SG/WB

Outline Planning Application for the Extension of the Northern UK Branch of the Aetherius Society at 350 Sheffield Road, Birdwell, Barnsley S70 5TU

Further to our meeting with Councillor Jim Andrews, your letter of the 19 July 2007 and our more recent telephone conversations, on behalf of the Aetherius Society I wish to submit an application for outline planning consent for the extension of their Northern UK Branch at 350 Sheffield Road, Birdwell, and I enclose the following:-

i. Five copies of the application form inclusive of Part B and Certificate B.
ii. Cheque for the application fee of £265.00.
iii. Copy of correspondence accompanying the serving of Notice No. 1 dated 2 April '08.
iv. Five copies of drawing number AS-01 – Site Plan as Existing, Scale 1:100.
v. Five copies of drawing number AS-02 Revision A – Preliminary Layout, Scale 1:100.
vi. Five copies of drawing number AS-03 – Site Plan as Proposed, Scale 1:250.
vii. Five copies of drawing number AS-04 – Location Plan, Scale 1:1250.
viii. Two copies of the Design and Access Statement.

Mrs. K. Driver 2 April 2008

With regard to Part B of the application form, item 3, 'Hours of Opening', The Aetherius Society is usually open from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm and from 7.30 pm to 10.00 pm on Monday to Friday when the office is manned by a team of between 3 and 10 volunteer staff. On Saturday and Sunday the Society is usually open from 10.00 am and 5.00pm and from 7.30 pm to 10.00 pm.

Services, talks, seminars, classes and courses are normally held within the times noted above. In addition, open days are held once or twice per year, normally on Saturdays between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm.

I wish to provide additional information requested by your letter of the 19 July as follows:-

Justification for departure from policy for the development of the land to the north west of the site (Your letter paragraph two)

In the Design and Access Statement I have questioned the present use of the land and suggested a more positive use.

At present the land is of little value as a recreational area and its primary function is to contribute by means of landscaping and planting to the quality of the southern approach into Birdwell and on to Barnsley. The extent of that contribution is however limited due to the low quality of the planting, and further marred by frequent vandalism to the western side and by the exposure of the 'private' side of the Society's building, i.e. the rear access and outbuildings.

The design proposes to enhance the quality of the southern approach into town by improving the landscaping and planting adjacent to the main Sheffield Road, to both the land to the north west and within the boundary of the premises, by introducing measures to deter vandals and proposing a design for the extension which will enclose the 'private' side of the building and contribute more positively to the environment. Whilst the extension is proposed on land which could otherwise contribute to the quality of the southern approach into town, it is suggested that perimeter planting immediately adjacent to the highway is visible to those entering and leaving town whilst any planting to the area of the proposed extension will be largely concealed from view and therefore less likely to contribute to the approach.

The Society hope that your authority will allow them to purchase the land to the north west and that they will be responsible for appointing landscape designers, implementing and maintaining the landscaping scheme.

In addition I wish to note that over the past thirty years the Society has become firmly established as a spiritual centre and that its courses and healing sessions have contributed positively to the range of facilities and services available to the local and extended communities. The loss of land to the north west, currently of debatable value, to enable the Society to enhance the range of services it currently offers represents a further benefit to those communities. Please see the letters of support from local residents prepare in response to a public consultation and included in the Design and Access Statement at the appendix.

Existing car parking requirements and assessment of future requirements (Your letter, paragraph three).

Please note that the extension to the Society's building is proposed primarily to accommodate the present number of members and visitors rather than in anticipation of a large increase in visitors in the short term. On open days and special events/services, which are usually held on four occasions throughout the year, there may be some 70 visitors to the premises at any one time, when the existing space, toilet facilities, provisions for the disabled, space for one-to-one meetings etc. are quite inadequate. In the short term the proposed extension is intended to meet present spatial demands therefore no increase or only a minimal increase in car parking requirements is anticipated.

I have noted in the Design and Access Statement that there are some 30 car parking spaces available near to the site and that those spaces are mostly used on Mondays to Fridays between 8 am and 6 pm, and less during evenings and at weekends. The Society's headquarters are mostly used outside these times, i.e. during evenings and weekends; therefore it is not envisaged that the building of the proposed extension will generate the requirement for car parking spaces above the current provision.

Currently there is space for some two or three car parking spaces with very limited turning provision within the site. The design proposes the acquisition of a narrow strip of land adjacent to the west boundary to enable the car parking area to be enlarged, to provide spaces especially for disabled visitors.

Members of the Aetherius Society are committed to the conservation of natural resources and to reduce the use of private transport by making greater use of public transport. It is proposed that future events promoted by the Society will encourage members and visitors to make use of public transport and where necessary to share private transport.

The table on the following page summarises the present requirement for car parking spaces:-

Existing **Time and Number of Visitors/Users**	**Car Parking Requirement**
Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.0 pm 3 – 10 volunteer staff.	2 car parking spaces (most staff live within walking distance).
3 visits by two members, each of 2 hours.	3 car parking spaces required, each for 2 hours duration.
Monday to Friday, 7.30pm to 10.00 pm 18 members and visitors.	5 car parking spaces required (approx. 50% attendees live locally, remainder share transport).
Special evening events can attract up to 40 visitors.	12 car parking spaces required. (approx. 50% attendees live locally, remainder share transport).
Saturday 10.00 am to 5.00 pm. 3 - 10 members throughout the day.	2 car parking space (most staff and many members live locally)
6 visits by members, each of 2 hours.	4 car parking spaces required, each for 2 hours duration.
Saturday 7.30 pm to 10.00 pm. 18 members and visitors.	5 car parking spaces required (approx. 50% attendees live locally, remainder share transport).
Special evening events can attract up to 40 visitors.	12 car parking spaces required. (approx. 50% attendees live locally, remainder share transport).
Sunday 10.00 am. to 5.00 pm. and 7.30 pm to 10.00 pm. 35 – 40 members and visitors.	12 car parking spaces required. (approx. 50% attendees live locally, remainder share transport).
Open Days and Special Events 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. 70 members and visitors.	16 car parking spaces required. (approx. 50% attendees live locally, remainder share transport; the majority of those attending Open Days are for the local community).

The table below summarises the estimated future demand for car parking spaces, assuming an increase of 15% in the number of members and visitors, and the increased use of public and shared transport to the Society :-

Estimated Time and Number of Visitors/Users	**Car Parking Requirement**
Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm	
4 – 12 volunteer staff	3 car parking spaces (most staff live within walking distance)
4 visits by two members, each of 2 hours.	4 car parking spaces required, each for 2 hours duration
Monday to Friday, 7.30pm to 10.30pm	
21 members and visitors	6 car parking spaces required (approx. 50% of attendees live locally, remainder share transport)
Special evening events may attract up to 46 visitors.	14 car parking spaces required. (approx 50% of attendees live locally, remainder share transport).
Saturday 10.00am to 5.00pm	
5 members throughout the day.	2 car parking spaces (most staff and many members live locally)
6 visits by members, each of 2 hours.	5 car parking spaces required, each for 2 hours duration.
Saturday 7.30pm to 10.00pm.	
21 members and visitors.	6 car parking spaces required. (approx 50% of attendees live locally, remainder share transport).
Special evening events may attract up to 46 visitors.	14 car parking spaces required. (approx 50% of attendees live locally, remainder share transport).
Sunday 10.00am to 5.00pm and 7.30pm to 10.00pm	
40 – 46 members and visitors.	14 car parking spaces required. (approx 50% of attendees live locally, remainder share transport).

Mrs. K. Driver

2 April 2008

Open days and Special Events
10.00am to 4.00pm

80 members and visitors	*18 car parking spaces required.* (approx 50% of attendees live locally, remainder share transport; the majority of those attending Open Days are from the local community).

The above table presented on page 5 suggests that an increase of 15% in the numbers of members and visitors will not generate a requirement for car parking spaces above the number which are to be provided within the site boundary.

Finally I have noted on the application form that the proposals affect a public right of way; that right of way is illustrated by drawing number AS-04, Location Plan, adjacent to the north boundary of the Society's site.

I hope the above and enclosures adequately describe the proposals and I should be pleased to provide any further information.

[redacted]

Richard Jaques AA Dipl RIBA AABC
Chartered Architect