

DEADLINE EXTENDED

Temple Fights On.

The struggle to save the Hare Krishna temple near Watford from closure to the public is not over yet.

The temple devotees and the Hindu community are as determined as ever to win their rights of worship at Bhaktivedanta Manor. There's still a good chance. In October this year the High Court is to decide if the government's decision to close the shrine to the public in two years was correct. We believe it wasn't and we hope we can prove so to the court.

Meanwhile, the two-year period given by the government does not even begin until the whole appeal procedure is finished. So, should the temple lose its case at the High Court and not take it further, the earliest date when the public has to stop attending the temple would be July 1993 and not March 1992 as we previously announced.

The temple's appeal at the High Court deals only with points of law and not the actual planning issues. However, we hope that if we win our case and the decision is sent back to the Environment Secretary (now Mr Heseltine), he will bear in mind the whole situation and issue a decision which pays due regard to the needs of all the devotees of Lord Krishna.

COULD THIS BECOME A THING OF THE PAST?

Don't let this happen to your temple!



What does all this mean for you?

In legal terms - Hertsmere Council issued an enforcement notice to stop the use of the temple for worship and festivals by the public. The government agreed that Hertsmere were correct, but gave a longer time period before the notice to stop should take effect.

In real terms - perhaps in 1993, you and your family will be stopped from entering the temple. You will be denied all access to the shrine. That means:-

***NO darshan, NO aratis,
NO festivals.***

How is it possible in a democratic country, proud of its sense of fair play, that religious people could be banned from a shrine where they have worshipped for nearly twenty years? This must be opposed.

What will happen in 1993?

The temple authorities are deeply concerned that they have been put in a dreadful situation - How to impose the enforcement notice? So many individuals have indicated they might well ignore the council's ban on the public. They have argued that they are causing no harm or inconvenience to others in their visits.

But if in the end the Enforcement Notice does take effect (and we will fight it all the way), would then the temple have the unfortunate obligation of keeping the devotees out, somehow or other. That is a horrific situation for a temple. Has any other church, mosque or synagogue ever had to do the same?

We are extremely worried that such circumstances will cause unimaginable frustration, anger and deep-rooted animosity

THREAT TO THE TEMPLE

What is the History?

1973-1981 - At various times, some local residents complain to Hertsmere Council about Hindus coming to temple

1981 - Council issue first Enforcement Notice to stop festivals.

1983 - Temple signs Agreement with Council not to organise events likely to attract more than 1,000 devotees, except on six festival days. Enforcement Notice withdrawn.

1985 - Two devotees purchase properties in Letchmore Heath. New wave of complaints to Council.

1986 - High Court refuses Hertsmere's request for an injunction to enforce Agreement.

1987 - Council issues new Enforcement Notice to stop all worshippers attending the temple. ISKCON appeals to DoE. Appeal hearing adjourned to allow time to work out solution.

1988 - On Hertsmere's suggestion, ISKCON applies to build a new temple near Elstree. Then Hertsmere refuses it. ISKCON again appeals.

1988/9 - Two appeals heard by DoE.

1990 - DoE announce decision. No new temple. Worship and festivals at Bhaktivedanta Manor to stop within two years. ISKCON further appeals decision to High Court.

October 1991 - High Court to hear appeal.

1993 - **Possibly** temple closed to worshippers.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

THEY SAY	WE SAY
The temple should just be a residential college.	As a Vaisnava college it must have a shrine, which should and always has been accessible to the public.
So many people coming causes problems of car parking.	All devotees park within our own grounds. It is the pub's visitors which block up Letchmore Heath.
Festivals are noisy.	Not according to the Council's own sound experts.
There's too much traffic.	Only at Janmasthan festival once a year is traffic significant and on those days it is well directed to cause minimal inconvenience. Other days, it is not a problem.
The visitors are a disturbance.	The visitors are religious families coming for prayer and worship.
The worshippers don't come from Hertsmere.	Some do, but Hertfordshire isn't private property. Anyone has a right to go there, if that is their chosen place of pilgrimage and religion.
Why don't you have your temple in a Hindu area?	We like the temple where it is. Your suggestion sounds like apartheid.
Couldn't it be in Milton Keynes or in the Midlands?	Those areas might also benefit from a Hare Krishna temple, but Bhaktivedanta Manor serves an existing congregation mainly in North London.

The temple authorities believe that the various arguments against the temple propounded by local residents do not touch the real issues. We have been told by several villagers that their greatest concern about the presence of the temple is its effect on property values.

Are there any solutions?

A few different ideas have come up over the years. We will examine how realistic they are and what it would take to find a real solution to the dispute.

ISKCON ABANDONS ALTERNATIVE TEMPLE SITE IDEA

Since 1987 there has been much talk of the idea of ISKCON obtaining another site somewhere and developing a new temple on it. Then the Deities at Bhaktivedanta Manor could then be relocated to that site and devotees would no longer need to come to Letchmore Heath.

This idea originally came from Hertsmere Council and, although ISKCON was sceptical because of the enormous task involved, we basically agreed to pursue this plan on the basis of Hertsmere's firm promises:-

- a) that the new temple would fulfil ISKCON's long-term plans to build a major temple and cultural complex for London.**
- b) Hertsmere would help ISKCON find a site it could afford, and,**
- c) Hertsmere would grant the relevant planning permission.**



The history behind all of this is very disappointing. All we need say is that at this moment, Hertsmere has got no interest in this solution, and has reneged on all its promises, because it thinks it has achieved its real objective - the right to close Bhaktivedanta Manor.

The DoE has seized on this idea to soften the effect of its support for Hertsmere's ban on the public. The Environment Secretary stated that he allowed the extended period of two years to give ISKCON the opportunity to find an alternative venue for the temple either by building a new one or by converting an existing building. ISKCON's commitment to trying to achieve this is well-documented but now realises that such a project has no hope of success for the following reasons:-

- 1. Two years is a ridiculously short time to find a site, get planning permission and establish a proper temple.**
- 2. Despite an intensive search, it has proved practically impossible to find a suitable site in a convenient location for the community in North West London. We have no intention of having our congregation travel long distances for regular Sunday activities.**
- 3. No vendor so far has been willing to sell subject to ISKCON getting planning permission for a temple. Vendors and agents know that a temple proposal is likely to be contentious and that the government has already rejected it at Elstree.**
- 4. Because Hertsmere do not want to give planning permission, no other borough is interested. Hertsmere won't even help us talk to other boroughs.**
- 5. Purchasing the land and constructing the temple would have to be done from public contributions. Not an easy task in the present economic climate.**

THERE WILL BE NO ALTERNATIVE TO *Bhaktivedanta Manor.*

Many members of the community have been asking about the progress towards a new site. They are hoping that if the present temple ever closes, there will be an alternative place for them to worship their beloved Deities. However, we must clearly understand that this is highly unlikely, perhaps impossible. For all the above reasons, ISKCON now considers that, despite its best endeavours, it will not be possible to establish an alternative temple.

Therefore, rather than create a false sense of security and hope for the future, ISKCON has given up all attempts at locating an alternative site. We should know that, if Bhaktivedanta Manor closes its gates, there will be nowhere else to go!

This is not our fault. It is because of the lack of help from Hertsmere Council and the government. If they had given proper assistance the situation could have been different.

What is the Solution?

Leave things as they are!

We don't accept that visitors to the temple cause a significant effect on life in the village. The temple has been there for nearly twenty years. The government could end the whole dispute by allowing the public to continue coming to the temple. Perhaps, it might wish to impose certain practical restrictions, but not ban the public altogether.

If the government really does not want to accommodate the needs of the temple and the Hindu community at the risk of upsetting the local residents of Letchmore Heath, it still has an important option available to it.

In 1987 ISKCON proposed to construct a new access drive from the back of the temple almost directly onto the A41. This driveway would avoid all cars coming through the village of Letchmore Heath to get to the temple. Indeed, the temple could completely close itself off from the village.

This idea originally gained a lot of support from politicians and half of the village residents.

Engineers were consulted, designs drawn up and an option was secured to purchase the main piece of land required. We then submitted a planning application which Hertsmere refused. We could have taken the matter to appeal but the big stumbling block was that the second landowner, St Bartholomew's Hospital, after being initially positive about the idea, then flatly refused to sell.

If the government wanted, it could compel St Bartholomew's to sell a small strip of land to enable the driveway to be built and the whole issue could be resolved very happily.

ISKCON TO CONTINUE FIGHT FOR TEMPLE



Labour leader, Mr Neil Kinnock, meets a delegation from the Hare Krishna Temple Defence Movement at last years Labour Party Conference in Blackpool.

Neil Kinnock invited to HKTDM meeting in Brighton.

This year the Hare Krishna Temple Defence Movement have planned to hold "fringe" meetings at both the Labour Party Conference in Brighton and the Conservative Party Conference in October.

Taking advantage of the date of Gandiji's birthday (2nd October), the HKTDM will use the theme of Gandhi's struggle against injustice to highlight the campaign to keep Bhaktivedanta Manor open.

Labour leader, Neil Kinnock has been invited to attend the meeting on 2nd October. He has submitted the following message to show his support of Gandhi's commitment to non-violence and of the Indian community's struggle for their rights of worship in this country.



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Office of the Leader of The Opposition
MESSAGE FROM THE RT HON.
NEIL KINNOCK, MP, LEADER OF THE
LABOUR PARTY.

The occasion of Gandhi's birthday, 122 years ago on October 2nd, provides an opportunity to reflect on his beliefs and the example of his life.

His passionate belief in freedom and his unshakeable commitment to non-violence make him one of the truly great men of our age. We honour his memory.

Neil Kinnock

Since there is no alternative, ISKCON is fully committed to continuing its campaign to achieve justice for all the devotees of Bhaktivedanta Manor. The Temple Must Not Close Its Gates!

As you can understand from these pages, there is tremendous opposition to the temple from some local residents, the Council and the Department of the Environment. Attitudes have to be changed, and if nothing can be done locally, we have to go to the top - the government.

ALL DEVOTEES SHOULD PRESS THE GOVERNMENT FOR JUSTICE

Unless the High Court completely overturns the DoE's decision to close the temple, everybody must play their part in the efforts to keep the temple open.

Everyone can.....

1. Write to the Prime Minister, Mr John Major, and demand the right to worship at your temple - this government cannot close it!

2. Take part in all the rallies and events organised by the temple and its supporters - principally the Hare Krishna Temple Defence Movement which was set up to activate the Hindu community into a determined fight to defend the temple.

3. Offer a prayer every day to Lord Krishna that He protect His temple so that His devotees can worship Him without harassment

Join the Hare Krishna Temple Defence Movement.

I want to be part of the efforts to save our temple from closure.

Please send me more details.

Name _____

Address _____

Tel _____

Send to: HKTDM, P.O.Box 437, Harrow,

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS
FOUNDER-ACARYA HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA.

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