

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

SHREE KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI

1992

AT HARE KRISHNA MANDIR
Bhaktivedanta Manor



WITH COMPLIMENTS

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THE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR FROM CLOSURE TO THE PUBLIC

LATEST NEWS

CURRENT DEADLINE 16th MARCH 1994

At this moment, unless there is some major change in the circumstances, Bhaktivedanta Manor will not be available for devotees coming for worship and festivals from **16th March 1994.**

This means, that after that date you would not be allowed access to the shrine.

No darshan No aratis No Festivals

However.... One hope remains

And that is in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

All the legal remedies available in the U.K. have been tried and have failed us. Why? Because none of them gave any credit to the issue of freedom of religion and rights of worship.

That's why we have applied to have our case heard at Strasbourg and why we believe we have the best chance of success there.

THREAT TO THE TEMPLE

What is the History?

1973-1982- At various times, some local residents complained to Hertsmere Council about Hindus coming to temple.

1981- Council issue first Enforcement Notice to 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 Enforcement Notice withdrawn.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.

1991- High Court turned down appeal

March 1992- Court of Appeal refused to hear the case

April 1992- Application lodged for European Court of Human Rights

July 1992 - Full application submitted to Strasbourg and the Future?

1993- European Court will decide whether to hear our case or not

IF They refuse, and there is no change by the government then.....

March 1994- Temple closes to public

But, if they accept, Hertsmere may hold off the Enforcement Notice to see how the European Court deals with the case.

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 the Janmashtami 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 Hertfordshire.	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 the 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 it's effect on property values.

So, if there's not to be a new temple.....

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?

1. 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.

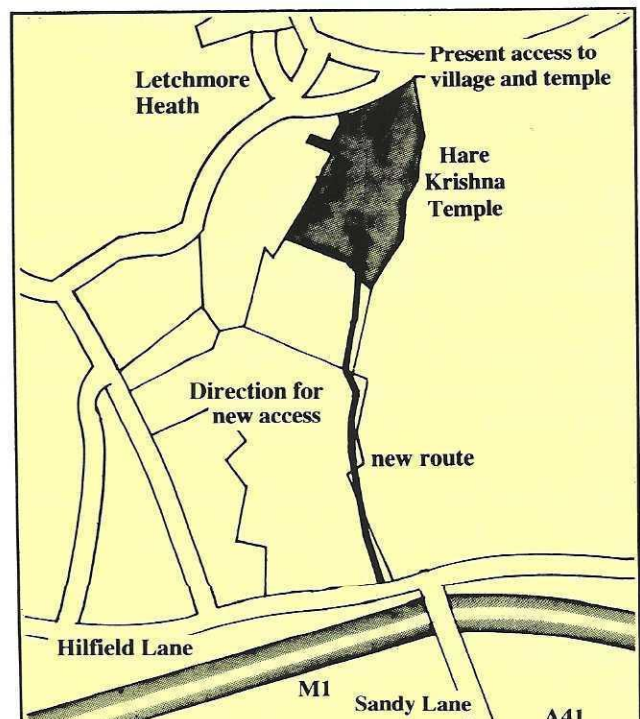
2. New access road to temple.

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 urge St Bartholomew's to sell a small strip of land to enable the driveway to be built and the whole issue could be



THERE WILL BE NO ALTERNATIVE TO BHAKTIVEDANTA MANOR.....

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. 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 at 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.



**BROKEN
PROMISES**

DON'T GIVE UP THE FIGHT FOR YOUR TEMPLE!

The fight to save Bhaktivedanta Manor is by no means over, and our application to Strasbourg may provide the opportunity we need to end the dispute.

THE BEST SOLUTION MAY COME FROM NEGOTIATIONS

If the temple's case is accepted for hearing in Strasbourg, the government may well feel obliged to discuss a resolution of the dispute rather than face defeat on a human rights issue. This would be welcome since we have always said that negotiations are more likely to produce a solution which would be more satisfying to all parties.

It is, of course, disappointing in terms of the campaign to save the temple that the Labour party failed to form a government at this election. They had made very serious pledges to resolving the temple's problems. However, we would hope that the Labour party will continue to support the temple even if from a distance as the opposition.

Since the Conservative government issued their decision to support the council's enforcement notice in 1990, we have heard nothing that would lead us to understand that there has been any change in its attitude toward the temple, even after John Major became Prime Minister and Mr Heseltine became the Environment Secretary. But we do not give up hope that they will see good sense in not allowing this dispute to reach a critical point if the temple was forced to ban its followers.

JOIN THE Hare Krishna Temple Defence Movement

THE HARE KRISHNA TEMPLE DEFENCE MOVEMENT PLEDGE

In 1990, when the government announced its decision to uphold the council's ban on visitors, the Hare Krishna Temple Defence Movement was created to fight for the rights of the community.

Despite the disappointments suffered in the British courts, the HKTDM has not lost heart. Rather, it considers - "What can you expect from the same system that is persecuting you?"

The members of the HKTDM pledge to continue the fight to defend the temple until justice is obtained and all the devotees can visit the shrine without further intimidation and persecution.

It now rests with you.

Your help is needed. Support the HKTDM by:-

- 1. Writing to the Prime Minister, Mr John Major, and demanding the right to worship at your temple - this government could close it!*
- 2. Taking 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. Offering a prayer every day to Lord Krishna that He protect His temple so that His devotees can worship Him without harassment.*

I want to be part of the efforts to save our temple from closure. Please send me more details.

Name _____

Address _____

Tel _____

THE FIGHT TO DEFEND THE TEMPLE

In the last year, the community has declared its determined support to keep the temple open. These were just some of the activities....



September 1991

12-mile sponsored walk from Wembley to the temple. Two teams of oxen and 1,500 people took part and raised £25,000 for the legal costs of the fight.

October 1991

A memorial evening for Mahatma Gandhi was held at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton to focus on injustice in human rights in Britain. MPs pledged full support for the temple.



March 1992

Glenys Kinnock visits Bhaktivedanta Manor on the first day of the election campaign.

March 1992

An ox-cart carried children of the community and a 6,000-letter petition to 10, Downing Street, to urge Mr Major to commit himself to correcting the injustice perpetrated by his predecessor.

