THE OSBORNE GROUP

4 December 2005

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Mr Adrian Fisher
Chief Planning Officer
Planning Department
High Peak Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
Glossop
Derbyshire
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Dear Mr Fisher

BUXTON CRESCENT & THERMAL WATER SPA PROJECT

I enclose our Planning Application and Listed Building Application for the restoration of the Buxton Crescent, Natural Baths and the Pump Room and the extension and re-arrangement of the buildings to facilitate the Consent granted for Change of Use.

The Application forms and drawings are supplemented by further plans and reports listed as a part of the submissions document.

The Application follows a public exhibition of the proposals held at The Crescent between 18th and 21st November and Public Meeting which took place in The Palace Hotel on 21st November. The meeting was widely publicised locally and attracted a substantial audience. Comment forms were received in respect of the Interpretation Centre and the project overall. These are being collated by a museum consultant and the company respectively and composite information will be forwarded in due course.

In addition, we have consulted widely with local organisations. English Heritage, the Georgian Group, the Victorian Society, the Heritage Lottery Fund, EMDA and DDEP are fully aware of the project. We believe that they are supportive of the proposals.

Pre-Application discussions with you and your departmental colleagues have proved helpful and have alerted us to issues which have now been fully addressed in the submission which forms part of the Application. This is particularly true of the observations made by English Heritage to which our submission pays particular attention.

The issue of car parking has, however, yet to be fully resolved. The proposal envisages the provision of some 21 car parking spaces of which four will be designated as accessible spaces to the rear of The Crescent and the removal of car parking facilities from its frontage – the use of which will become largely pedestrian, although it is necessary for guests to arrive at the frontage where drop-off, set-down and collection arrangements will be operated for private cars and taxis. It is acknowledged that the development is likely to generate a requirement for some 90 cars in total, making it necessary for a further of 60 cars to be accommodated off-site.

High Peak Borough Council is the authority with responsibility for public car parking within the town centre and Derbyshire County Council is the highway authority. Preliminary discussions have already taken place with both authorities who are currently reviewing policies in relation to this issue. This involves substantial public consultation and discussion of the options. Currently the Councils await the completion of a report by The Colin Buchannan Partnership in regard to these issues. It has, however, been established in principle that arrangements will be made with High Peak Borough Council in relation to off street car parking spaces to be used by hotel guests for both this and other town centre hotels for which on site parking capacity is limited. Whilst the Council has yet to finalise its policies in this regard and has yet to identify the precise location of such spaces, we believe that substantial progress is being made towards these objectives.

In the circumstances, and having regard to the local planning authority's requirement to be satisfied that appropriate car parking will be provided, we would be prepared to enter into a unilateral undertaking or an agreement pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 relating to the provision of car parking. We would propose that the undertaking or agreement should require that the premises comprised within the Applications shall not be operated as a hotel until such time as the Applicant has demonstrated to the local planning authority that it has been able to establish satisfactory off-site car parking provisions for 60 vehicles in a location and on a basis acceptable to the local planning authority. It is accepted that the obligations of such an agreement will be binding on the Applicant and its successors in title for so long as the buildings continue to be used for the purposes authorised by the Planning Consent.

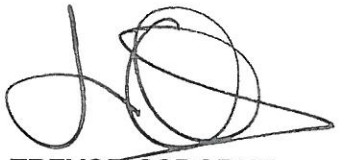
I hope you will agree that this is an appropriate way to deal with this particular issue and that this letter is sufficient for the Applications to be registered. I would be glad to have your confirmation of this so that we might contemplate the provision of a draft form of undertaking or agreement for discussion with the Council.

From our discussion with English Heritage, we have understood that economic justification is required for alterations, extensions and changes which we propose to make to these Listed Buildings. The hotel will include ~~87~~ 79 guest rooms comprising 67 standard and superior double rooms, 13 single rooms, 2 junior suites and 5 suites. Danubius Hotels and Spa r.t, who will be the hotel operator, normally require a minimum of 100 rooms for an efficient and viable spa hotel operation. The special circumstances in relation to The Crescent brings the guest room numbers below the minimum which is normally required to ensure viability. This matter has been addressed by Humberts Leisure in a report which was commissioned by us to up-date a previous report by Fleury Manico in 2002 and was received in October 2005. Because of the confidential nature of the report, it is not proposed that this should be included as part of the Planning Application but we are able to advise that it has confidentially been provided to High Peak Borough Council and Derbyshire County Council in their capacity as landowners in order that the Councils and the HLF are able to be fully satisfied in respect of these financial matters.

I hope that the Application is sufficiently comprehensive for it to be dealt with speedily but we are, of course, available to discuss any issues which arise and look forward to the matter being placed before the Planning Committee in due course.

Best regards,

Yours sincerely



TREVOR OSBORNE

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