

**Radstock Action Group
8 Colliers Rise
Radstock BA3 3AU**

www.radstockactiongroup.org.uk

Varian Tye
Senior Conservation Officer
Bath and North East Somerset

14 July 2010

Dear Varian Tye

Application 10/02063/COND Radstock Railway Land

Discharge of condition 4 of application 06/03753/CA (Demolition of bridges/underpass, former forge/wagon works, railway platforms and wall in connection with the development of the former railway line application ref. 06/02880/EOUT).

We are writing to you as the named officer for the above application and also in your role as Senior Conservation Officer.

Although these matters were raised in the original outline planning application, we believe that there is an overwhelming case for stopping this action now. It is never too late to change decisions, and we want to make a very strong appeal to Bath and North East Somerset to avoid doing irreparable damage to the heritage and natural environment of Radstock.

In particular, we wish to underline that:

1. the underpass, the bridges, the former forge/wagon works, the railway platforms and the wall are all features of our town which have value as evidence of its past history; these items are our heritage and should not be disposed of lightly, as they can never be reinstated
2. B&NES must be sure that the development will be fully mitigated to the satisfaction of Natural England with regard to the impact on bats before any work on the site, other than for conserving ecological value, can be allowed to take place
3. demolishing the underpass effectively isolates Victoria Square, the site of Victoria Hall, the principal civic building of the town. The original alternative route on the plans has been blocked by the owner of the land opposite the Methodist Church
4. the HCA funding for the housing element, which has not yet been approved, is in jeopardy from the Government's austerity measures - these measures include radical reductions to the Kickstart 2 programme which may well mean that the current development does not go ahead

5. to demolish the underpass and dispose of the other buildings and features could prejudice any future alternative use of the site, in the case that the development does not go ahead
6. there has been no substantive archaeological activity on the site which contains a complex historical record which it is our responsibility to value and protect
7. contamination issues on the site may well require addressing in the course of the proposed works; to date there is no evidence of a plausible, responsible and safe plan to manage this issue

We remain totally committed to the regeneration of Radstock. This will depend on retaining the town's distinctive character, valuing and developing its significance as a heritage site, encouraging residents and visitors and hence encouraging increased business.

It is, to say the least, a strange view of regeneration to pursue the demolition of so much that could contribute to the town's future prosperity.

We ask you to put a stop to this latest set of proposed activities and to consider the positive gains to be made by rethinking the plans so that our history and natural environment are preserved for the future.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Leon
Secretary

On behalf of Radstock Action Group