



Order of Augustinian Recollects
St Rita's Centre and Holy Family Church

Planning policy,
East Devon District Council.
Knowle,
Station Road,
Sidmouth,
EX10 8HL

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL ECONOMY			
- 9 JAN 2017			
ACK	CIRC	SEEN	FILE

R.E. Proposed use of land for playing fields at St Rita's Centre and Holy Family Church. (site H1) and (site HB)

To whom it may concern,

Historical note:

The Augustinian Recollects arrived in Honiton in 1936 but in 1939 the house and land were offered for the war effort. The house was taken over by the military and the field (site H1) was turned into an army camp, Broomhills Camp. The Parish Priest moved into a house on Exeter Road. During the camp's existence it served Canadian and American Regiments, who helped to pay for the building of the Church of the Holy Family. After D Day, it served as a prisoner of war camp and finally as a Polish Soldier holding camp. The house and land was returned to the Order in 1947, but it was full of damp rot and had to be refurbished by the Order. The R.E.M.E finally handed the large field (site HB) at the back of the Centre to the Order in 1969.

It should be noted that the land (site H1) does not belong to the Holy Family Church nor St Rita's Centre but to charity number - 237522 'The Order of Augustinian Recollects Charitable Trust' with its headquarters in Spain. St Rita's Centre is a sister charity number - 232501 'Order of Augustinian Recollects - St. Rita's Centre.' The conveyance and settlement is dated 31st may 1934. The Friars in England have no authority to sell or rent land without permission from their higher authorities in the Order. If the land were sold any money received would not go to St Rita's Centre but to the Order's central funds in Madrid Spain.



Who are we?

The Augustinian Recollects are a Roman Catholic Order of one thousand five hundred men spread throughout the world with missions in twenty-six different countries, including China and the Amazon. They spread the gospel and promote faith and justice where ever they are. See www.agustinosrecoletos.org.

What do we do in our Centre?

If you look on our webpage www.stritascentre.org.uk you will see the heading St Rita's a place of peace and tranquility. By the very name a retreat centre is a place for people to seek a spiritual atmosphere. By its very nature a retreat centre with an attached football pitch are not compatible. Noise and disruption especially at weekends is when we are at our busiest and is the most important time for our visitors. For example on the lawn attached to the field in question is the "way of the Rosary" on Saturdays many visitors use the lawn for a quiet meditation.

St Rita's Centre offers East Devon the finest Retreat and Conference Centre Facilities. With its excellent accommodation St Rita's Retreat & Conference Centre is ideal for residential gatherings, community chapters and assemblies, small group conferences, parish and group retreats, workshops and prayer days.

(From our web site) 'Our conservatory, which looks out onto our beautiful front garden, where you can relax with a cup of tea, a book or just to chat with a friend. The conservatory can also be used for small discussion / prayer groups.'

Our Order has planned that St Rita's Centre should also be used as a nursing home for our older infirmed friars. Four rooms have recently been adapted for the sick and elderly with wheelchair facilities.

The service of our parish church.

Our Order Of Augustinian Recollect Friars has been of public service to the community of Honiton and Ottery St Mary since it arrived in Honiton 1936. Serving the needs of people in Honiton and in both communities. Our parish churches care for the spiritual needs of the community. Not only do we supply the sacraments, baptism's, weddings and funerals but also look after the their broader social needs. Our Parish Halls are used regularly by the local community such as the Guardian Angel's Nursery School.



Recreational activities.

St. Rita's Centre has always been most generous to the Town's recreational activities. 15 years ago we agreed to rent a large field (site HB) for sports activities. We are currently in the process of renewing this contract. In total The Augustinian Recollects have offered one third of our land to the town for recreational purposes. By demanding another third of our land, E.D.D.C. would leave our centre totally surrounded by playing fields. We feel this most unfair and unjust and would shatter the peaceful nature of our centre.

Site H1

The piece of land in question (site H1) has been called the most valuable piece of land in the town of Honiton. Regularly, at least twice a year, we receive letters from land agents showing interest to purchase it. Twenty years ago one company was offering in the region of £3.000.000 they wanted to build a supermarket. For St Rita's Centre the field is more valuable to us as a quiet buffer zone.

According to a Town Planner, employed by us, no understanding of highway movements has been discussed in your proposals and the large number of people and vehicles that would be attracted to the site. This would require a substantial amount of land to be given over to the parking of vehicles and coaches. That one element, in our view, makes the proposal a non-starter.

St Rita's is no stranger to compulsory purchase orders. In the past we have had two C.P.O.s on our land. One was to build the Honiton bypass in 1963. The second to build the new road Ottery Moor Lane (Through site H1) to the industrial estate.

Another compulsory purchase order on our land would not only affect the Centre but also the Parish Church, which is built on the land in question. In the deeds it states that sometime in the future we should build a presbytery next to the parish church of the Holy Family on the Exeter Road.

The Order will be obliged to robustly oppose any attempts at a compulsory purchase order.

Yours faithfully,



Fr. Gerald Wilson. O.A.R. Prior.

P.T.O.



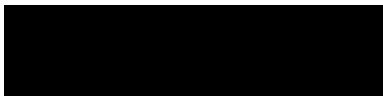
Fr. Francis Umendia. O.A.R. Vice Prior.



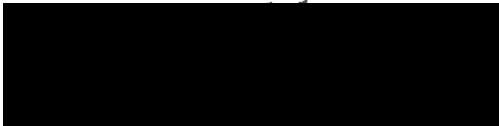
Bro. Terence Mulvey. O.A.R. House Councillor.



Fr Patrick O'Hagan. O.A.R.



Fr Sean Flannery. O.A.R.



Fr Hugh Corrigan. O.A.R.

