



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

31 December 1984

Dear Mrs. Jenkins.

Thank you for your letter of 30 November about the planning problems you have been encountering in connection with the business set up by you and your husband.

As you know, the Government is extremely concerned to encourage small businesses; local planning authorities have a very important role to play. This was recognised by the Department of the Environment when they issued advice to local authorities in 1980 about the importance of improving speed and efficiency in planning control. The Circular (a copy of which I enclose) drew particular attention to the need to respond positively to the requirements of small businesses. I hope that the message to local authorities contained in paragraphs 12-14, and also Annex B, is one with which you will sympathise. The spirit of this advice was repeated in a further Circular issued by the Department of the Environment last September which dealt with industrial development, as it remains an essential element of the Department's present policy on development control.

Despite the emphasis which the Government places on the positive and flexible operation of planning control, there are bound to be some circumstances where there is good reason for refusing planning permission. It seems from your letter that the local council have taken this view in your case, and you may well wish to appeal against their

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decision, as is your right under the Town and Country Planning Act. It would not be right for me to comment on the likely outcome of an appeal, but it would ensure that your trade counter was properly assessed by an independent Planning Inspector, weighing the issues carefully against the background of Government policy and all the circumstances of the case.

The Inspector would be able to decide both whether planning permission is by law needed at all for the trade counter, and also whether, if it is needed, it ought to be granted. Making an appeal is not difficult, and I enclose a booklet explaining the steps involved. If you wish to talk to someone about the procedures, Miss J. Huntback of the Department of the Environment in Bristol (telephone 0272-218625) will be happy to help. I hope you will take up this matter - your story of weekwork is just the kind we need.

Yours sincerely

Rangaukshalter

Mrs. J. Jenkins