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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment  
Department of the Environment  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 3EB

3 July 1985

*Patrick Jenkin*

**DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS LAND IN PUBLIC OWNERSHIP**

Thank you for your letter of 17 June about the initiative to encourage the private sector to identify sites.

I agree with you that in your publicity of the initiative you should make it clear that our efforts are not confined to local authority land. Indeed, I agree that you should publicise in general terms the separate but related E(DL) initiative on the disposal of surplus land by departments and nationalised industries. At this stage I do not think that there should be any mention of our decision to set disposal targets.

I am grateful for your assurance that you can contain the manpower and financial implication of your initiative for the present.

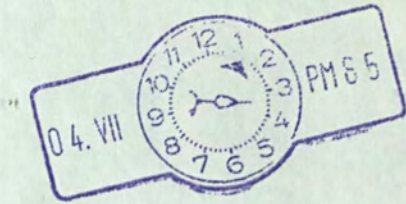
I think it would be helpful if in due course you were to make a progress report to E(DL) on the effectiveness of the initiative to encourage the private sector to identify sites. This would help us to reach a decision on the need for legislation.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of Cabinet and Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Peter Rees*

PETER REES

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A. Watsahun





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19/6

2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434

My ref:

Your ref:

17 June 1985

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter of 3 June about the further action I am taking to encourage disposals of unused and under-used land in public ownership.

You refer to sites owned by nationalised industries and by Government Departments. As we both recognise, I have no powers to direct disposals of Crown land and would need to consult the appropriate Minister in the case of land owned by nationalised industries. Nevertheless, I believe it is important that this new initiative should demonstrate our determination to bring all publicly-owned land into use. I would not wish to give the impression that our efforts are to be confined to local authority-owned land, which represents just over half of the total area shown on the land registers.

As to the possibility of future legislation, at this stage I consider that embodying this extension of the land registers in an amendment to the 1980 Act would have a significant effect in drawing the opportunities to the attention of those likely to make use of them. However, before reaching any conclusion on this, we will need to see what the response is to the publicity being given to this initiative at present.

The manpower and financial implications of the increased activity are difficult to predict. We have no way of assessing public response to the initiative and in those circumstances I have not found it necessary to argue a case for increased resources. I believe that, initially at least, we will be able to contain the extra work within the present provision. However, I may find that a reassessment of this view is necessary in the light of experience.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of Cabinet and Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours  
Patrick

PATRICK JENKIN

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Rt Hon Patrick Jenkin MP  
 Secretary of State for the Environment  
 Department of the Environment  
 2 Marsham Street  
 London  
 SW1P 3EB

3<sup>rd</sup> June 1985

*Patrick Jenkin*

DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS LAND IN PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

I have seen your minute to the Prime Minister of 20 May. I agree generally that it is worth doing more to induce sales of the 113,000 acres of unused and underused land on the land registers. The further directions you propose to issue shortly are welcome.

Some of the sites which may be identified following your initiative by the private sector will be owned by nationalised industries. You will need to reach agreement with the sponsor Minister in these cases where you wish to make a direction. Other sites identified may be owned by Government departments where you cannot make directions, but I welcome your intention in these cases to consult with the responsible Minister on any such sites.

In principle I have no objections to your suggestion that the 1980 Act be amended to enable individuals to initiate statutory action which I understand would give the private sector the right to ask you to register local authority and nationalised industry sites. But we will need to consider this aspect of the proposal in more detail in the context of the tight legislative programme before taking final decisions.

You do not mention any manpower or financial implications for your department arising from the increased activity you envisage. I assume you will contain any extra pressures.

I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet.

*Peter Rees*

PETER REES

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