



19 November 2008

## RIPON BATHS FIGHT GOES ON, VOW CAMPAIGNERS

Ripon Spa Partnership, the group that brings together a wide range of organisations in the city to fight Harrogate Borough Council's proposals to convert Ripon's Art Nouveau Spa Baths to housing, has vowed to continue the fight after the Council voted in favour of its own officers' plans.

Harrogate's planning committee agreed at its meeting yesterday to allow the demolition of the rear building, which houses the swimming pool, and for the conversion of the front, the original Ripon Spa buildings, opened in 1904, to maisonettes. This would entail the loss of interior details in the wings, and would see an end to public access into the ornately-tiled pump room entrance.

Because the whole building is listed at Grade II, Harrogate Borough Council cannot make the final decision on the site. It now goes to the Secretaries of State at the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and of Communities and Local Government for a final say.

David Winpenny, Chairman of Ripon Civic Society and a Ripon Spa Partnership member, says, 'Harrogate Borough Council has taken little notice of the real anger in Ripon about its plans for removing from the citizens a facility that was provided just over a century ago for our use. They do not appear to have followed government guidance in their approach to this important listed building, and we have grave doubts about the effectiveness of English Heritage; it has been more interested in the design of the proposed new housing than in protecting the original features of the Baths. We shall take the fight to protect the building and its public use to the Secretaries of State. The battle is not yet over.'

ENDS

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