



RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

Registered Charity No 517434

PLANNING CONSULTATION

Planning Reference: 6.31.733.H.SOSLB 08/02082/SOSLB

04 June 2008

Case Officer: Mr A Hough

Dear Sirs,

Listed Building Application, Conversion of Spa Baths and Demolition of Swimming Pool Building and erection of five Town Houses, Ripon Spa baths.

Ripon Civic Society has considered the proposals for the above and we have very serious concerns about these proposals.

It is not clear whether Harrogate Borough Council has properly explored alternative uses for the site and keeping it in public use, as required by PPG15.

Does Harrogate Borough Council have an end user for the proposed housing, as this is a requirement under the current rules for Listed Building Consent.

There are no statements in the proposals regarding future public access to the historic interiors. We have also heard that there may be tiles similar to those in the foyer concealed behind modern cladding in the sauna and in the wing opposite. There must be a full heritage inspection of the building.

We would be interested to know the views of Harrogate Borough Council's own Conservation Officers regarding these proposals.

The proposals for the part of the building which will remain include the introduction of a new first floor, which will cut across the existing windows, requiring the upper panels to be blanked off with dark coloured glass, we feel this is unacceptable. It would in fact be better if the full height spaces beneath the lantern lights could be restored to the original, with the removal of the suspended ceilings, which are a modern addition.

The public consultation figures show that 70 of the 79 respondents were against the use of the site for housing which is 89% against, a very large majority against these proposals.

The plans for this scheme we feel are unattractive, and the massing of the new building is too intrusive and is not in keeping with the surroundings. The Spa baths is single storey, the doctor's surgery is single storey with rooms in the roof, the adjoining hospital buildings are two storey, the only buildings of similar scale are further away.

As the development is within the curtilage of the listed building and is joined to the Spa building, to comply with English Heritage's strict guidelines all materials and detailing should match the existing, in terms of size, colour, texture and pointing of brickwork, and faience window and door surrounds, string courses and the like.

There are serious difficulties with regards to vehicular access. The access will be from Firby Lane and will be shared with the hospital servicing vehicles and ambulances. To add domestic vehicles to the current arrangement is unacceptable, as visibility is not good along Firby Lane. Will it be acceptable to the fire service, particularly with the first floor access corridor which crosses the road.

The bins for the houses are within the 36m carry distance, which means that the bin lorries will block the access road to the hospital and also traffic flow on Firby Lane, as there is inadequate provision and a complete lack of any turning head to the access road.

We believe the main entrance building and wings which are to be retained under this scheme should be properly restored in the manner of the Pump Room in Harrogate, as a permanent record of our Spa Heritage, and a local tourist attraction, with full public access. If this can be incorporated in to an extension to the hospital or some other use, then this should be seriously considered.

There are so many questions surrounding this proposed development that have not been adequately addressed, that Ripon Civic Society must object to these proposals, and cannot support this application.

Yours faithfully,

G Turner

Planning Co-ordinator, Ripon Civic Society