From The Chairman,
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Place-shaping and Economic Growth
Harrogate Borough Council
P.O Box 787
Harrogate HG1 9RW

10 February 2020

Dear Sirs

Planning Application ref. no: 19/05246/COU
39 Market Place, Ripon HG4 1DB

Ripon Civic Society makes the following representations regarding the above application.

The application is for the change of use of the Basement and Ground Floor from Financial and Professional Services (Use Class A2) to Restaurant/cafe (Use class A3) and change of use of First and Second Floors from Financial and Professional Services (Use Class A2) to Dwellings (Use class C3).

The Society supports these changes of use. They reflect the evolution of the city centre over the previous decade from a substantially retail ground floor to one that is more diverse reflecting the changing nature of town centres. The made Ripon City Neighbourhood Plan identifies the city centre as the "meeting place of choice". This application will facilitate this function.

The change of use of the upper floors to residential will pursue a long established initiative introduced some thirty years or so ago as "living over the shop". Many upper floors in the city centre now provide welcome residential accommodation. This adds to the vitality and viability of the city centre. The Society is unaware of concerns for residential amenity caused by holding of events in the Market Place. The latter should not be an excuse to resist the former.

The application includes drawings of the proposed works including elevational changes. The existing building is from the 1960s replacing the former Claro Bank and a building attached between it and the Town Hall and redevelopment has been seen over the years as an unwelcome intrusion in the Market Place. The revised shop frontage has gone some way to improve the front elevation but voices can still be heard complaining about the existing building.

The proposed elevation retains the principal expressed framing of the existing building. Glazing is to be restricted to four of the nine bays and given a Georgian / early Victorian paned appearance. The Westmoreland slate panels of the existing elevation are to be replaced by brickwork. The Society has considered the proposal and has the following comments:

- the proposal seeks to reflect the Georgian / early Victorian appearance of many of the buildings on the Market Place, but this is not an exclusive pattern. The proposal attempts to be more harmonious with other buildings in the Market Place (including the adjoining Dragon restaurant).
- proposals by local commentators have sought replacement of the existing building with a Georgian / early Victorian domestic property including a pitched roof. The proposal retains a flat roof.
- the proposal retains the existing shop frontage.

The Society acknowledged that the property has an existing structure which is capable of retention for the proposed uses. This is a sustainable approach and preferable to demolition. However, this is not

without its dilemmas. The Society accepts the fenestration rhythm but considers that by retaining the expressed framing of the existing building finds the use of brickwork confusing. The use of Westmoreland slate in the 1960s panelling is highly typical of the period and its continued use as the principal elevational treatment would have merit. It is unclear whether it is proposed to use brick slip panels or to build conventional brickwork. (If brickwork is to be provided, the Society would wish to see this patterned to an agreed design.)

The other matter that the Society has considered is the roof line. Although many of the buildings on the Market Place have pitched roofs parallel to the street, there are other roof arrangements. The eaves and ridge lines are varied and are part of the character of the Market Place. The existing building makes a most unsatisfactory attempt in dealing with its eaves line. (It is more like a domestic interior pelmet.) The depth of the upper floor fronting Market Place is too shallow to support a pitched roof of any prominence. The proposal retains a flat roof and gives some indication of a heavier eaves detail than currently exists. However, this is insufficient. The Society seeks a taller, more modelled cornice and eaves detail. There is sufficient depth for this against both the Dragon restaurant building and the Town Hall. Without this amendment our support for the change of use must be reserved.

For the record, the Society is happy to see S. Wilfrid relocated to a central position.

It is important that applications are accompanied by adequate drawings, The Society is disappointed that in this respect the application has failed to provide this standard. Existing elevation drawings are simply too generalised to be able to read the building with any confidence. Detailed drawings of the eaves and cornice arrangement, fenestration and, if pursued, brickwork details are essential. Planning permission should not be granted until the proposal can be effectively understood.

Given the proposed elevational alterations the description of development proposed should be expanded.

The Society trusts that these representations are helpful and will be given full and positive consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Christopher Hughes

Chairman, Ripon Civic Society