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

8 September 2020

Dear Sirs

Planning Application ref. no: 20/02809/FUL
Garages North of 1 to 4 Court Terrace, Ripon HG4 1PD

This application is described as demolition of existing prefabricated garages and erection of 4 no townhouses being a resubmission of 19/02576/FUL. It is in the Ripon Conservation Area and within sight of Ripon Cathedral. Indeed the application appears not to meet your requirements for validation for this location.

Whilst noting your refusal of application 19/02576/FUL, Ripon Civic Society is concerned that the sole ground as shown on the public decision notice on Public Access (being a delegated decision) was for refusal as unstable land. It was extremely disappointing that none of the other reasons for objection were given any weight in your officer report. The tone of the officer's report is that anything is to be seen as an improvement to the area. This was most surprising and of concern.

The question is not that improvement is justified, a more close examination of Ripon Neighbourhood Plan policies C1 and C2 regarding Kirkgate Yards would have been a powerful and considered demonstration of this, but how this improvement should be achieved and how the application reaches that. Both applicant and Local Planning Authority, the Society considers, have been remiss in this regard.

The applicant appears to think that there is no need to address the various representations made on application 19/02576/FUL. On the contrary, this should have been the first step in approaching how best to make this submission.

There are some strange comments in the submission which suggest that the applicant is not fully aware of the site; for example, references to bus services on Kirkgate. The only remotely accessible bus stop is at the bus station.

Of particular importance are the representations made by Historic England and North Yorkshire County Council on the potential impact upon the scheduled ancient monument, The Society looks forward to the future improvement of Kirkgate Yards, and residential development can be part of this. As you will know, there are two other adjoining sites of current interest for residential development (at the time of writing one has been refused whilst the other remains pending). It would be advantageous for you to bring the parties together and facilitate the scope and delivery of archaeological investigation.

The quality of drawings is poor. The Society does not accept that it is appropriate for blank walls to be merely annotated as brick. Brick is a important part of Ripon's traditional building palette and requires drawn specification in heritage settings. Explanation of openings, doors, windows, rainwater goods, means of enclosure need to be shown at readable (and enforceable) scale.

It is unclear how the site boundary relates to the garages and open land. Is there land left over? This is important given the paucity of private space, landscaping and, potentially, parking. Better details are required.

The responsibility for making up and maintenance of the highway is not explained. This is another matter where relevant ownerships need to be brought together before decisions can be made with confidence. Ripon Neighbourhood Plan Policy G2 identifies pedestrian routes and paths that need to be addressed by the development.

The Society trusts that these representations are helpful but, on past experience, is concerned that they will not be given full and positive consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Christopher Hughes

Chairman, Ripon Civic Society