RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

c/o The Workhouse Museum
Allhallowgate,
Ripon, HG4 1LE
info@riponcivicsociety.org.uk
www.riponcivicsociety.org.uk

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

27 September 2022

Dear Sirs

Application Ref: 22/02831/OUTMAJ
Outline application, with access considered, for demolition of existing buildings and construction of care home of up to 80 bedrooms (Use Class C2), with associated parking and landscaping, T&R Williamson Business Park 36 Stonebridgegate Ripon HG4 1TP

We read from the applicant's Planning Statement that there are between 12 and 15 jobs on the present business park. The proposed care home is estimated to provide 70 FTE, a net gain. We note as well the objection from the Economy and Transport Officer. The quality and skills offered between the existing users and the proposed use are unlikely to be comparable. The Williamson paint business is a contemporary descendent of a long business tradition in Ripon. Its relocation in the city would be valued.

There is a conflict between the availability of business accommodation said to be available in the Planning Statement and the data available to the Economy and Transport Officer. This needs to be reconciled. We are not convinced by assertion of district-wide availability. We want jobs and business premises in Ripon; accordingly the assessment needs to be Ripon based. We acknowledge the potential for local employment provided by a care home but are not convinced that this provides an overwhelming justification for approval of the application.

We note the Environmental Health comments. These address previous uses of the site and their potential for pollution. Given the residential use proposed, this is a significant concern. What we have not specifically seen is assessment of ground stability arising from the propensity for gypsum dissolution. This is now well addressed in the Local Plan. Bearing in mind the presence of the Skittergate Gutter and known poor ground stability further east, south of Rotary Way, we expect that this will be given explicit consideration before a decision is made.

This is a prominent site on a principal entrance to the city. It is to be regretted that the current visual condition of the business park is extremely poor. Maintenance of the boundary tree and foliage cover shows no evidence of any maintenance over many years. This development, if approved, needs to provide a well designed entrance to the city in both building and landscaping terms (including tree cover). We note that biodiversity net gain is addressed in the Planning Statement. We suggest that this entrance to the city deserves some formality in landscape design while accommodating habitat.

While this is a speculative application, there being no declared end user, we seek conditions that address landscape and boundary matters owing to the prominent location of the site.

Yours faithfully,

Christopher Hughes

Chairman, Ripon Civic Society