RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

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

North Yorkshire Council
PO Box 787
Harrogate
HG1 9RW

3rd October 2025

Dear Sirs

25/02975/FUL|ERECTION OF MARQUEE TO VISITOR CENTRE RESTAURANT FOR A TEMPORARY PERIOD OF 2 YEARS

Ripon Civic Society wishes to object to the above proposals to erect a temporary marquee at the Fountains Abbey visitor centre.

Studley Royal Park including the ruins of Fountains Abbey is a UNESCO World Heritage Site which has Outstanding Universal Value and is of international importance. Studley Royal Park is one of the most spectacular water gardens in England and Fountains Abbey, which forms an important part of the water garden, is significant in its own right being one of the best-preserved Cistercian monasteries in the country. The Society recognises that this application is for a temporary structure which is intended to cater for a supposed need for additional refreshment provision while the Studley Royal tea-room at the Canal Gates is remodelled and extended.

Whilst the visitor centre – where the marquee is proposed – is somewhat remote from the core of the water garden and abbey, there are views from the café towards the abbey, with Huby's Tower being this only visible element from this raised position above the Skell Valley. Siting the marquee on the existing terrace would obstruct this view from much, if not all, of the café. Although a temporary structure, it would have a significant detrimental effect on the appreciation and enjoyment of the abbey, obstructing one of the first glimpses of the historic ruins on arrival to the site.

The Society agrees with the comments made by Historic England in relation to this application although we would also suggest that the proposed site has been selected for practicality rather than representing the optimum location considering how best to minimise impact upon the special significance of the wider site. Perhaps a location on the lawned area to the north of the visitor centre would be a more suitable location. Placed here, it would have very little impact, if additional facilities are indeed required in this area of the site.

It is stated in the application documents that the marquee is required to cater for the facilities temporarily lost during the construction works on the Studley Royal tea-room. Whilst the distance between the two sites is only 500m in a straight line, the distance by foot through Studley Royal Park is almost a mile and longer than a mile through the abbey ruins. The Society would question whether many of the customers who use the Studley Royal tea-room would travel this distance for refreshment.

Perhaps a smaller facility in the Studley Royal car park by the lake would provide a more logical temporary replacement during construction works.

The Society would question the need for the provision of additional catering facilities during construction works on the Studley Royal tea-room in this location. Even if this was considered necessary, in our opinion the proposed marquee would have a significant detrimental impact upon the enjoyment of the abbey and we would support Historic England's comments on a more appropriate temporary structure.

We trust you will take these comments into account when considering this application.

Yours faithfully

Ripon Civic Society