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Mike Parkes, Esq
Principal Planning Officer
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13th September 2017

Dear Mr Parkes,

Application Reference: 17/03414/EIAMAJ

I am very fond of the landscape of North Yorkshire, which I regard as a great national treasure, and I always enjoy visiting your borough, and specifically the area of gentle countryside which includes the site which is the subject of the above application. For the following reasons I wish to lodge a strong objection to the plan by Applegreen to site a Motorway Service Area in the vicinity of Kirby Hill.

❖ In the applicants' document **Appendix 5.2: Effects on Landscape Character** they four times admit, "The localised effects of the Proposed Development would be adverse." This statement appears in their own final summary of the effects on landscape in respect of **LCA 74: Skelton on Ure Rolling Farmland** and again in their own assessment of the effects on **LCA 76: East of Ripon Farmland**, and again in their own assessment of the effects on **LCA 81: Dishforth and Surrounding Farmland** and again in their own assessment of the effects on **LCA 85: Thornton Bridge drained, low lying arable farmland**. That is a very sweeping series of admitted adverse effects, and in itself it constitutes grounds for rejection of the application

➤ Particular matters for concern under this heading are

- The proposed development would be inserted into ground which rises eastward from the motorway, with the result that the view from the east towards the local landmark of the windmill will be much more seriously impaired than the submission admits, and the applicants are, I am sure, being over-optimistic in claiming that the existing land-forms

and their “additional planted bund” would effectively conceal the proposed development. In any case the “additional planted bund” will itself be obtrusive, as it will not harmonise with the surrounding area in the way that the traditional agricultural land currently does.

- The proposed new flyover, or “overbridge” would be intrusive because of the considerable height to which it would rise. The applicants themselves state in Appendix 5.2, “The lighting columns at the new overbridge would be visible, as would traffic on this bridge... As such, the influence of the A1(M) corridor upon character would increase locally. There would also be a localised night-time increase in the influence of the motorway corridor upon character, due to the increased number of lighting columns present and hence increased level of lighting.” All this represents very significant visual damage to the area.
- The applicants are being unjustifiably optimistic when in the penultimate box of each of the four of the Landscape Character Assessments in Appendix 5.2 they make the declaration **Significant Effect: NO**. Against that it should be noted that in the same document they themselves assess the **sensitivity as Medium to High in LCA 85**, and as **Medium in LCA 81**, the other two landscape areas being assessed as of low to medium sensitivity.
- ❖ In addition to these landscape concerns the proposed development would represent a highly insensitive intrusion into this essentially rural area.
 - The size of the proposed development is out of all proportion to the natural and man-made environment of the area, and it would be damaging in human, environmental and economic terms:
 - A major piece of prime agricultural land would be lost to a huge (43 acre) site with parking for 384 cars and 90 HGVs
 - The rich bio-diversity, not only of the site but also of a wide swathe of the surrounding area, would be destroyed
 - by concreting over the ground, with the attendant distortion of natural patterns of drainage through the soil
 - and by the fact that inevitably the run-off of petrol, diesel fuel and other petroleum based products would not be 100% caught by the oil, petrol and grit interceptor/separator specified by Yorkshire Water, resulting in degradation of the groundwater and the soil in the area around the proposed development

- and there would also be deleterious effects from the salt spread to counteract freezing of moisture on the roadway and pedestrian surfaces within the development and on access roads
 - Damaging light pollution would be generated by 24-hour operation covering a large area, and by the new flyover, as acknowledged by the developer (see their words, quoted above).
 - The economic environment in the locality would also be damaged: Boroughbridge is a historic community with an attractive architectural coherence, sustained by its relationship to other smaller local communities, and by tourists who make a detour from the main road: there could be no symbiosis between this and the proposed Service Area, but the loss of through traffic, and the blight caused by the neighbouring behemoth, would rapidly suck the life out of Boroughbridge, leaving it as little more than a dying husk of its former self.
- ❖ The proposal represents over-provision. Harrogate Borough Council has established a policy (T7), which specifies that there is only need for one Motorway Service Area within its boundaries, that being Wetherby. It should be noted that the Wetherby facilities are only 12 miles away, and there are already well-advanced plans, with appropriate permissions in place, for upgrading of the Leeming Bar services.
- ❖ Staff vehicles and delivery traffic as proposed would represent a completely inappropriate increase in the traffic level on the rural roads of the area, and specifically on the B6265. In the case of delivery traffic the size and weight of the vehicles would, in many cases, be excessive.
- ❖ The County Archaeologist assesses the site as having “a high archaeological potential, as the general area is rich in cropmark evidence for prehistoric and Romano-British settlement. The site itself is likely to be bisected by the course of a Roman Road,” There is no overwhelming case in economic terms, or for the marginal additional convenience of long distance drivers, to justify destroying this evidence of the early history of the area.

For all the above reasons, I wish to object strongly to the development proposed in Application Reference 17/03414/EIAMAJ

Yours sincerely,

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The Very Revd Robert Grimley