

17 Southfield Road, Almondbury

HD5 8RY

Change of Use: Almondbury Working Men's Club to

Event Hall and Class E

Design and Access Statement

February 2025



Design and Access Statement

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of the application for the change of use of the building located at 17 Southfield Road, Almondbury, Huddersfield (HD5 8RY). The proposal seeks to repurpose the existing Almondbury Working Men's Club into a community-focused Event Hall, incorporating mixed-use Class E spaces. The new use will cater to a wide range of community needs, including spaces for small business operations, recreational activities, and cultural events. The project's intention is to revitalize the building while preserving and enhancing its historical significance.

2. History of the Existing Building

The building at 17 Southfield Road, previously known as the Almondbury Working Men's Club, has historically served as a focal point for the local community. Working men's clubs were established in the UK to provide spaces for social interaction and recreational activities for the working-class population. The building was designed to accommodate such functions, featuring facilities such as snooker, darts, and a performance stage.

Architecturally, the building is typical of early to mid-20th-century public social clubs, with a functional design that prioritized space for communal activities. Its close proximity to residential areas and its spacious interior made it a hub of local life and an integral part of the community's identity.

3. Impact of the Building's Closure on the Community

In early 2023, the closure of the Almondbury Working Men's Club resulted in the loss of a vital community asset. The closure created a noticeable gap in the local social and recreational infrastructure, leaving residents without a central space for events, socializing, and engagement. The absence of this community venue has contributed to a sense of isolation, particularly among those who relied on the club as a place of connection and cultural participation. Additionally, the closure has impacted local employment opportunities and diminished the vibrancy of the area.

4. Impact of the Building's Closure on the Building

Since its closure in 2023, the building has not been maintained. After multiple attempts by unauthorized intruders to vandalize the property, it has been completely boarded up. The first-floor flat roof and skylight are severely leaking, causing significant water damage to the internal floorboards and walls.

Additionally, the electricity has been cut off, and the building is now without commercial heating. Mold has begun to appear in several areas, accompanied by a noticeable damp odor. If the building continues to deteriorate at this rate, restoring it will require a substantial financial investment to bring it back to life.

5. Owner's Strategy and Understanding of the Importance of the Building

The new owners of 17 Southfield Road recognize the building's historical and cultural significance to the Almondbury community. They are dedicated to preserving its legacy while adapting it for modern use. However, they must also ensure the project is financially sustainable and capable of generating reasonable revenue.

To achieve these goals, certain modifications to the original layout have been proposed. These changes aim to revitalize the building, transforming it into a vibrant and inclusive community hub while also ensuring financial viability for the owners.

The plan is to repurpose the building as an Event Hall with integrated Class E uses, including small business spaces, educational facilities, and recreational activities. This mixed-use approach will rejuvenate the building, allowing it to continue serving the community while fostering local business growth and creating job opportunities. The owners' vision is to honor the building's heritage while making it relevant and valuable in today's society.

6. Existing and Proposed Work Description

Existing Condition:

The ground floor of the building comprises three separate halls, each with dedicated toilet facilities. A central lobby area serves as the main access and circulation point, connecting the halls, the rear staircase, and the back of the building.

- Central Lobby: Functions as both an entrance lobby and circulation corridor, connecting Hall No. 01, Hall No. 02, the toilet facilities, and the rear staircase. It is the central hub of the building.

- Hall No. 01: A performance space featuring a stage and seating, traditionally used for social events, performances, and community gatherings.
- Hall No. 02: Contains a bar counter and has been used for social events and recreational activities, serving as a space for clubbing and informal gatherings.
- Hall No. 03: Used for recreational activities and social gatherings, this hall has functioned as a supplementary space for clubbing and community events.

Proposed Work:

- Hall No. 01: The layout of Hall No. 01 will remain largely unchanged, continuing to serve as a venue for performances and events. However, a new entrance will be created at the front of the building, while the existing entrance from the central lobby will be closed. Internal alterations will also be made to physically separate Hall No. 01 from the central lobby, which will be repurposed for Class E use.
- Central Lobby: The entrance of central lobby will remain the same. All connections to Hall No. 01 and Hall No. 02 will be closed off, allowing the space to function as Shop No 01, a dedicated area for Class E uses, such as small businesses or other appropriate activities. The lobby will provide independent access from the front of the building.
- Hall No. 02: This hall will be converted into Shop no 02, a flexible Class E space, suitable for small businesses, educational purposes, or other adaptive uses. A new front entrance will be added, providing independent access. The existing bar counter will be removed to create a more versatile layout for varied uses.
- Hall No. 03: Hall No. 03 will be transformed into Shop no 03, another Class E space, accommodating various community functions such as small business operations, workshops, or fitness activities. A new front-side entrance will be added, providing independent access to this space. The building's front elevation will remain largely unchanged, with only the new entrance doors incorporated into the façade.

The proposed works aim to modernize the facility while retaining its historical character. The transformation will ensure that the building meets contemporary community needs while preserving its original form and architectural features.

7. Community Engagement and Job Opportunities

The redevelopment of the building will bring tangible benefits to the local community, including the creation of employment opportunities during both the construction phase and the ongoing operation of the Event Hall and Class E spaces. The owners are committed to supporting the local economy by hiring locally and ensuring that the new uses provide a wide range of services that cater to the needs of the surrounding community.

Furthermore, the owners recognize the importance of community involvement in the redevelopment process. Public consultations, feedback sessions, and events will be held to gather input from local residents and stakeholders. This ongoing engagement will ensure that the space reflects the needs and aspirations of the community and serves as a valuable resource for years to come.

8. Conclusion

The proposed change of use of 17 Southfield Road from a Working Men's Club to an Event Hall and Class E spaces offers a unique opportunity to restore a historically significant building. The project will provide a flexible, modern space that caters to a wide variety of community needs, including small business opportunities, educational activities, and cultural events. The owners are committed to preserving the building's historical character while ensuring its ongoing relevance and vitality for the future.

This proposal seeks to restore a valuable community hub that has been lost due to the closure of the Working Men's Club. By providing a welcoming, adaptable space, the redevelopment will contribute positively to the social, cultural, and economic fabric of Almondbury, ensuring that the building continues to serve the local community for many years to come.