

Sent: 11 November 2025 14:25

To: JohnP Holmes <JohnP.Holmes@kirklees.gov.uk>

Subject: Huddersfield Open Market

Dear John Holmes,

I am writing to you about the Huddersfield Open Market, which as far as I know is being considered by Kirklees Council for redevelopment. Because you are involved in Kirklees' Planning Department, I would like to set out my views about the redevelopment.

Huddersfield Open Market, situated on Byram Street and Lord Street, designed by the architect Richard Swarbrick Dugdale, is a historic 1880s Victorian building listed as Grade II by Historic England. It is still used today by a very large number of traders/visitors/shoppers. It is an essential part of the social life of Huddersfield.

It is used by multi-ethnic, multi-age group, working and middle class shoppers, also disabled shoppers, who find its open structure provides easy access for wheelchairs, etc. All the shoppers seem to happily coexist without prejudice, and this in itself is a sign of the market's popularity and usefulness, and capacity for social cohesion.

There has been a demographic change in the town in recent years, which has taken away many town centre shops. The reason for this is without doubt the increase in internet shopping; also the popularity of the outlying districts (e.g. Slaithwaite, Marsden, Holmfirth and surrounding villages, to name a few) as places to move to by the more affluent town residents. This has left the town centre half-empty of shops and to a greater extent, frequented by people with less money. Yet the Huddersfield Open Market continues to thrive, and remains popular and crowded. This indicates a lot, and I have heard people say that the Market is the best thing in Huddersfield – indeed, some people travel there from further afield, even from Lincolnshire!

The Market addresses the needs of people with less money, by offering cheaper items and produce, and the second-hand market on Tuesdays and Saturdays is a treasure trove of endless variety. Some things can be bought very cheaply; but the market also has sellers of e.g. jewellery and furniture – among which one can find choice, vintage pieces, often at reasonable prices compared with the high street. It also has thriving cafes and food shops which are popular and inexpensive, and a great place to meet and chat.

I understand that Kirklees council intends to redevelop this historic building, changing its function and closing in the pillared structure so that it is no longer open to the streets adjacent to it, Byram Street and Lord Street. This would forever alter and compromise the

original open pillared form of the building, the design of its architect, which it has maintained for the past 140 years or so.

The market traders are to be designated the open air area in which to trade with their stalls, between the Open Market building and Tesco's supermarket. This would be impractical in winter and during wet weather. The large pillared open structure of the current building provides considerable shelter from the elements. Many traders and shoppers would not continue to use the market, which would inevitably shrink it. Some of the older market traders have said to me that they intend to retire at that point. Two of the market traders who require two stalls to display their stock, recently told me that if they have to trade in the open area outside the current market building, they will only be allowed one stall. If this is correct, it is another limitation which is being placed on the current pattern of trading. Another concern I have is the possible more expensive stall rental that traders may have to pay after refurbishment of the Market.

For me, the market goes back a long way. From 1964-71 I was a pupil at St Gregory's Grammar School (now All Saints' Comprehensive) at Bradley Bar, Huddersfield. The girls who studied needlework and dressmaking would frequent the 'Monday Market' which was (and still is) an excellent and inexpensive source of fabric (as is the Thursday Market). This was more than 50 years ago.

I oppose the redevelopment of this historic and thriving market hall. When a resource works as well as this does, why change it?

You may also be interested in the work of artists/photographers who have been inspired by the life of the Market. You can view this on Facebook using the following link. I am an artist and photographer myself, and have made documentary work about the Market. I attach scans of four of my drawings made last year in the Market Cafe area. I am a friend of Jonathan Cowell, who has written to you about the Open Market. Like him, I am happy for my objection to be placed in the planning file and taken into account

"Artists and photographers are joining the campaign to save Huddersfield open market!"
<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=savehuddsopenmarket&set=a.122107805661065678>

Yours sincerely,