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17 February, 2026

Kirklees Council,
Planning and Development,
PO Box 1720,
Huddersfield,
HD1 9EL

Dear Planning Officers,

Proposed change of use from sui generis private members club to Class F1 (Learning and Non-Residential Institutions) at Broughton House, Cambridge Street, Batley, WF17 5JH

Planning, Design & Access and Heritage Statement

We act as planning consultants to Al Hashim Academy and Cambridge Street School who presently operate from the former Technical School on Cambridge Street. However, the school wishes to expand its classroom accommodation and as such it is proposed to relocate the existing mosque facility from the premises to the former Batley and Birstall RAFA Private Members Club.

The subject property was formerly occupied by the Batley and Birstall Royal Air Forces Association (RAFA) as a private members club and is owned by RAFA. The premises has had long standing maintenance issues with the costs involved in maintaining the property outweighing received income. As such, the club closed at the end May 2025 following the decision of the RAFA not to renew the branch lease. The premises has a damaged and leaky roof that had required significant investment for short term repair in 2024 prior to the closure as well as further substantial investment and repair in excess of £200,000 in the long term. The trustees of the charity therefore considered that retaining the building represented too great a risk to safeguarding the charitable assets of the branch. The subject property is owned by the RAFA, and it was their decision to close the premises and sell the property.

The subject property is not statutorily or locally listed but is located in the designated Market Place, Batley Conservation Area. The property is not listed as a building of merit in the adopted Market Place Conservation Area Appraisal but is nevertheless an important contributor to the

character and historic setting of the conservation area. Please note, there are no physical alterations proposed in this application that constitute development as defined in the 1990 T&C Planning Act. As such, there is no impact on the character and setting of the Market Place Conservation Area. Furthermore, this is a relocation of the existing mosque premises from the neighbouring Technical School premises such there will not be any new uses introduced into the town centre. The subject premises pre-dates the construction of both the Grade II Listed Batley Baths (1893) the Technical School (1893) as well as the library (1906) and was originally constructed as a place of worship being a Christian Brethren Chapel with accommodation for more than 300 seated worshipers (see Figure 1 below). The denominational use of the Chapel later changed and became an Independent Methodist Chapel until approximately 1971. Meanwhile, the RAFA club used to be located on Field Lane but relocated to the subject property when its membership outgrew the Field Lane premises. The former Chapel was renovated by the club's members and opened on 1st August 1974. The premises features a large lounge room, bars and a ballroom and bar on the first floor. The function rooms were available for hire, for parties' weddings and occasions as well as for live music with the club hosting regular Northern Soul and Motown nights. The lawful use of the site is therefore established a sui generis private members club. The site is sustainably located in Batley town centre and there is a 46-space public car park immediately to the rear.



Figure 1 – OS Plan - Batley - Yorkshire CCXXXII.11.19 Surveyed: 1889, Published: 1890 – “Christian Brethren Chapel (Seats for 310)



Figure 2 – Front Elevation and Entrance – RAFA Private Members Club



Figure 3 – Rear Elevation



Figure 4 & 5 – Side Elevations

As to planning policy, the Kirklees Local Plan was adopted on 27 February 2019. The subject property is located in Batley town centre but is outside any designated shopping frontages or the primary shopping area. Policy LP13 deals with town centres. Main town centre uses which are appropriate in scale, help to retain an existing centre's market share, and enhance the experience of those visiting the centre and the businesses which operate in that centre are supported. Town centres are designated as being the focus for the local provision of services.

As this is a relocation of an existing place of worship from the neighbouring premises, the proposed use is acceptable in principle.

Policy LP48 concerns community facilities and services. It states –

Community facilities should be provided in accessible locations where they can minimise the need to travel or they can be made accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. This will normally be in town, district or local centres.

Proposals will be supported for development that protects, retains or enhances provision, quality or accessibility of existing community, education, leisure and cultural facilities that meets the needs of all members of the community.

The proposed use as a place of worship falls squarely within the definition of a community facility and the proposal is in accordance with Policy LP48. The existing mosque is to be retained in the town centre, and this will enable the Cambridge Street School use to provide better accommodation for learners. Private members clubs do not fall within the definition of a community facility. The property has been marketed by Ernest Wilson from 4th August 2025 and did not receive any offers of interest for community use other than from the applicant. There was interest in the property for residential use as flats/HMOs, but this did not progress beyond speculative enquiries and viewings.

Policy LP35 deals with the historic environment. However, this application is to establish the principle of change of use only. There are no physical alterations proposed and the use of the premises as a place of worship restores the historic use of the site as originally constructed. The subject proposal is therefore in broad compliance with the aims and objectives of LP35 Part 3 c which secures a sustainable use for an at risk non-designated place of worship heritage asset constructed on the back of the wealth created by the textile industry as expressions of local civic pride and identity.

The subject proposal is also in accordance with the NPPF which stipulates a “without delay presumption in favour of sustainable” for development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan.

Promoting healthy and safe communities is a key tenet of the NPPF. Paragraph 98 of the NPPF directs local authorities to make positive decisions –

for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments

Of course, making effective use of urban land is a fundamental principle of the planning system. The development of underutilised land and buildings is supported by the NPPF where this meets the needs of the communities where land supply is constrained. Specifically, paragraph 128 states that –

Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs. In particular, they should support proposals to:

- a) use retail and employment land for homes in areas of high housing demand, provided this would not undermine key economic sectors or sites or the vitality and viability of town centres, and would be compatible with other policies in this Framework; and*
- b) make more effective use of sites that provide community services such as schools and hospitals, provided this maintains or improves the quality-of-service provision and access to open space.*

For all the above reasons we commend this application for your approval which secure the long term optimum viable use of the premises in accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF.

If you have any questions related to this development, please do not hesitate to contact these offices in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,

HARIS KASUJI BA MA MRTPI