

DC Admin

From:
Sent: 26 May 2026 18:16
To: DC Admin; Ellie Thornhill
Subject: Objection to Application number 2026/65/90847/E Piazza Centre, Princess Alexandra Walk, Huddersfield, HD1 2RS

Application number 2026/65/90847/E Piazza Centre, Princess Alexandra Walk, Huddersfield, HD1 2RS

I am writing to object to the proposals above.

I reference the Kirklees Local Plan Strategy and Policies Adopted 27 February 2019 (<https://consult.kirklees.gov.uk/kse/event/34328/section/>) and NPPF to support my objections (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>)

I am objecting on the grounds of design, and of achieving sustainable development.

The extension to the library building and the masterplan and public realm proposals have no architectural, planning or cultural merit.

The extension to the library is an unjustified change to the building with no design motivation.

The original cultural heart proposals as published were for a new build art gallery on the Queen St plot of the Piazza, and that the old library building would be a dedicated museum.

When the proposals had to be scaled back in the face of changing circumstances, cost cutting meant that the art gallery and museum have been shoehorned into the old library building, necessitating the extension on the back.

The outcome is that tens of millions of pounds are being spent to relocate Huddersfield Art Gallery from the top floor of the old library building back into the top floor of the old library building with marginally improved facilities and floor space.

Changes of circumstances are an obvious risk for a scheme of this magnitude and should have been allowed for when evaluating whether to invest hundreds of millions of pounds in the proposals. A change of circumstances is not an excuse for bad design and planning, and alternatives to these designs have been proposed for several years.

The extension to the building exists within a masterplan and public realm proposals that place the old library in the middle of an L shaped swathe of council run buildings that extends from the civic centre by the ring road, down through the town hall to the new food hall [old Queensgate market] to the new library building then turning in a right-angle across the town centre through the new museum and gallery [old library building] and across the so-called urban park as far as King Street.

All of these buildings will be run by the council and there is no reason to think that any of them will be regularly open beyond 5pm.

Commercial operators have turned their backs on the food hall already, even with £4 million of fit-out costs covered for them by the council, and so there is good reason to believe that the council itself will not be able to turn a profit and will have to limit opening hours.

St Peter's Gardens are rarely busy, even on summer days, so why is an urban park expected to draw in crowds? Outside of summer months, of course, it will always be empty. At night it is likely to be a no-go zone cutting off any approach to the food hall from that direction. All of the other buildings will be shut.

This master plan and public realm carries the very real risk of creating a dead zone of public sector run buildings that in effect close down one side of the town centre. Even on its own terms, the phasing of the cultural heart development is incoherent, with the only meaningful addition to the town centre - the food hall - opening first surrounded by a building site.

NPPF states that the objective of sustainable development is that of "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

By removing the commercial buildings of the Piazza, with their range of sizes and flexibility for future uses to emerge, and replacing them with monolithic council owned buildings and generic landscaping, with no prospect of any change of use in future, the so-called cultural heart compromises the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The cultural heart ties the hands of all subsequent civic leaders, planners and citizens, and that failure may well become obvious within a matter of years after the demolition of the Piazza, as illustrated by the problems already being faced by the food hall.

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