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Job reference: 2025 enquiry 61

Address: **Change of use from a vacant former St Patricks Catholic club (F1f use) to form mixed use open planned foodcourt units (Eb use) on ground floor (which can be subdivided in smaller units to suit); sky restaurant (Eb use); 60 bed hotel (C1 use) with external alterations including an extension to roof to provide upper floors, single storey ground floor extension, and other alterations (within a Conservation Area).**

Date: 7-10-2026

Extra notes: **Community Facilities and Services: Evidence Statement to justify loss report**

1. Introduction

The proposed Octa Hub at the former St Patrick's Catholic Club provides an opportunity to bring an important town-centre vacant building back into active and sustainable use. The former St Patrick's Catholic Club has historically played a role within the social and community life of Huddersfield. Its function extended beyond that of a conventional commercial premises, providing a place where people could meet, socialise, eat, drink and participate in activities. Its closure has consequently resulted in a genuine loss of an established community facility.

This Assessment report recognises that loss. However, the circumstances surrounding the closure are also relevant. The Club had experienced financial difficulties over a considerable period, and the building ultimately became economically unsustainable to operate in its previous form. The substantial increase in electricity costs, reported to have risen from approximately £800 per month to approximately £5,600 per month, placed a considerable financial burden upon the organisation based on Yorkshire Live newspaper article dated 19-7-2023.

[Huddersfield's St Patrick's Catholic Club shuts as 'killer' electricity bills soar to £5,600 a month - Yorkshire Live](#) The property was subsequently repossessed by the Diocese.

The planning issue is therefore not simply whether the former community use should theoretically be retained. The more fundamental question is how the building can be given a viable and sustainable future which allows it once again to contribute positively to the life and regeneration of Huddersfield town centre. It is within this

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context that the Octa Hub proposal has been developed. The proposal seeks to transform the building into a mixed-use destination incorporating food, retail, hospitality, meeting and accommodation uses.

The concept can be summarised through the simple proposition:

Shopping – Eating – Meeting – Sleeping.

The intention is to create a building which is active throughout the day and into the evening, attracting local residents, workers, visitors and tourists and providing a new reason for people to use and engage with the building.

2. The Community Loss

The closure of St Patrick's Catholic Club represents a loss of an established community asset. For many years the Club provided a recognisable meeting place within the town centre. Such places have value which cannot always be measured solely in economic terms. They provide opportunities for social interaction, informal meetings, celebrations, community activities and the development of relationships between people.

The loss of such a facility is therefore acknowledged as a material consideration in assessing the future of the site. It would nevertheless be misleading to suggest that the previous use can simply be reinstated without considering the circumstances which led to its closure. The Club's closure occurred against a background of significant financial pressures. Operating a large town-centre building requires substantial expenditure on energy, maintenance, staffing, insurance, statutory compliance and general management. The dramatic increase in electricity costs placed an exceptional additional burden on an organisation that was already experiencing financial difficulties.

The eventual closure was therefore not simply the consequence of an alternative planning proposal seeking to displace an otherwise viable community facility. The evidence points instead to a building and use which had become increasingly difficult to sustain financially. Since the closure, the building has suffered considerably deterioration with broken glass windows attracting pigeons and their droppings caused significant damage to the interior. The lack of heating caused timber floors to buckle and the walls finishes to peel off. There are signs of roof leakage where rainwater ingress had caused damage to the interior. To avoid further disrepair, since our clients recent acquisition, Octa Hub multi facets concept have been developed to reimagine the building's future.

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This distinction is important. Planning should seek to protect valuable community facilities, but it must also recognise the need for existing buildings to readapt to have a viable long-term future. A building which remains vacant, financially unsustainable or incapable of supporting its necessary maintenance cannot provide a meaningful community benefit merely because its historic use is retained in principle. The objective should therefore be to secure a sustainable future for the building while maximising the opportunities for continued community engagement.

3. The Need for a Viable Future

The Octa Hub proposal has been conceived in response to this challenge. Rather than attempting to reproduce the former Club in precisely the same format, the proposal introduces a complementary range of mixed uses capable of supporting one another economically and importantly complementing the existing surrounding town centre uses.

The ground floor is intended to provide a food and retail environment, creating an active visual frontage and accessible part of the building. The proposal also provides approximately 60no boutique hotel bedrooms, together with meeting and social opportunities and a rooftop restaurant.

The different uses are deliberately interconnected. The hotel provides an important economic component to the scheme. The food, retail and restaurant uses provide public-facing activity. The meeting and social functions create opportunities for people to gather. The rooftop restaurant element provides an additional destination and a reason for both local people and visitors to engage with the building. The proposal therefore seeks to establish a new form of community destination rather than simply a replacement commercial premises. Rooftop restaurant is not heard of in Huddersfield and it provides a pioneering approach in hospitality.

The scenic lift also creates a focus with animated visual active ascending the external façade up to the rooftop restaurant, similarly nothing exists in Huddersfield and our client is pushing the design boundaries and creating an iconic vision to repurpose the building. This is particularly important in the context of town-centre regeneration. A building which is occupied, animated and economically viable has considerably greater potential to contribute to the vitality of a town centre than a building which remains vacant because its previous use is no longer financially sustainable.

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4. Octa Hub as a New Community Destination

The concept behind Octa Hub is deliberately broad. The intention is to create a place where people can undertake several activities within one destination all under one roof:

Shopping.

The proposed ground-floor uses will provide opportunities for food and retail activity, helping to create an active frontage and attract people into the building.

Eating.

Food and beverage uses will operate at different levels of the building, culminating in the proposed rooftop restaurant. This creates activity during both daytime and evening periods.

Meeting.

The building will provide places where people can meet informally, socialise and spend time. This is an important continuation of the social function historically associated with the building, albeit in a different and more contemporary format.

Sleeping.

The proposed boutique hotel provides approximately 50 bedrooms, introducing a visitor accommodation use which can support the town-centre economy and generate activity throughout the week. The combination of these uses creates a much more diverse pattern of occupation than a single-use building. This diversity is important to the long-term viability of the proposal.

5. Community Activity and Social Interaction

It would be incorrect to claim that a hotel and restaurant are direct substitutes for a community club. They are not. The proposal should instead be understood as creating a different form of community opportunity in bringing people together.

Modern town centres increasingly depend upon a mixture of uses which bring people together rather than relying upon single-purpose buildings. Restaurants, cafés, food halls, retail environments, meeting spaces and hospitality uses can all contribute to social interaction and town-centre vitality.

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Octa Hub seeks to exploit this potential. The building's different multi uses will attract different groups of people at different times:

- Local residents may use the food and restaurant facilities;
- workers may visit during the daytime;
- visitors may use the hotel; and
- people may use the various spaces for informal meetings and social activity.

The result is intended to proposed a building which is continuously occupied and animated rather than one which is active only for limited periods. This represents a significant community benefit in its own right.

6. Supporting Town-Centre Regeneration

The location of the building is particularly important. The site is located within Huddersfield town centre and is close to both the bus and railway stations. It is also located within the town-centre ring road and is therefore highly accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

The proposal responds positively to this location. Only 4no car parking spaces are proposed in total, comprising 3no standard spaces and 1no accessible space, together with 2no electric vehicle charging points. This deliberately limited level of parking reflects the site's highly sustainable town-centre location. The intention is not to create a destination dependent upon private car travel. Instead, the proposal seeks to take advantage of the existing public transport infrastructure and the proximity of the building to the railway and bus stations. In this respect, the development can contribute to the wider objective of encouraging people back into the town centre.

7. Economic Sustainability as a Community Benefit

Community benefit should not be considered solely in terms of whether a development contains a traditional community facility. Economic sustainability is an important component of maintaining a healthy town centre. The Octa Hub proposal represents a substantial opportunity to invest in an existing building and return it to active use.

The development has the potential to generate employment across hospitality, food, retail, hotel management, cleaning, maintenance and associated services. It will also bring visitors into the town centre who may use other local businesses and services during their stay. The economic activity generated by the proposal can therefore extend beyond the site itself.

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The scheme should consequently be considered not only as a redevelopment of a former community club but as part of the wider regeneration and revitalisation of Huddersfield town centre.

8. Reuse Rather Than Abandonment

There is also an important sustainability argument in retaining and reusing the existing building. The alternative to redevelopment is not necessarily the continuation of the former community use. In reality, if the previous use is no longer financially viable, the realistic alternatives may include prolonged vacancy, deterioration, piecemeal occupation or eventual loss of the building.

Bringing the building back into productive use provides an opportunity to secure its long-term future. The Octa Hub proposal therefore represents a pragmatic response to the circumstances of the site. It accepts that the historic use has been lost but seeks to ensure that the building itself is not lost as a meaningful part of Huddersfield's town-centre environment.

9. From Community Loss to Community Opportunity

The closure of St Patrick's Catholic Club should not be dismissed. It represents a genuine community loss and the proposal acknowledges that fact. However, planning should also consider what can realistically be achieved now. The objective should not be to preserve a historic use in circumstances where there is insufficient evidence that the use can once again operate on a financially sustainable basis. Instead, the objective should be to secure a viable future for the building which creates new opportunities for people to visit, meet, eat, socialise, work and stay.

That is the underlying philosophy of Octa Hub. The proposal does not claim to recreate St Patrick's Catholic Club. It proposes something different and seeks to take the social qualities of the former building — people coming together, eating, meeting and spending time together — and place those qualities within a financially sustainable mixed-use destination to meet today's needs.

The hotel element provides economic support for the wider scheme. The food and retail uses provide activity at ground level. The rooftop restaurant creates a new destination. The meeting and social opportunities encourage people to spend time within the building. The highly accessible town-centre location allows the development to operate with very limited private car parking. Taken collectively, these characteristics provide a credible opportunity to convert the current community loss into a new form of community benefit.

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10. Conclusion

The former St Patrick's Catholic Club was an established community facility and its closure is regrettable. Nevertheless, the Club's previous operation had become financially unsustainable, and the building requires a new viable use if it is to remain occupied, maintained and capable of contributing to the future of Huddersfield town centre.

Octa Hub provides such an opportunity. The proposal will transform the building into a mixed-use destination incorporating food, retail, hospitality, meeting and accommodation uses. It will create employment, encourage visitors, support town-centre businesses, increase activity throughout the day and evening and provide new opportunities for people to meet and socialise.

Its location close to the bus and railway stations, combined with the deliberately limited provision of private car parking, further reinforces its role as a sustainable town-centre redevelopment. The proposal should therefore be viewed in the context of what the building can realistically become, rather than simply what it historically use was. The loss of the former Club is acknowledged.

The opportunity presented by Octa Hub is to ensure that this loss does not become a permanent loss of the building as a place for people. Octa Hub seeks to give the building a new purpose: a place for people to shop, eat, meet and sleep — and, most importantly, a place which is once again active, occupied and connected to the life of Huddersfield town centre being repurpose to meets today's needs in attracting tourism to Huddersfield, jobs creation and regeneration where our clients seek your support so that Kirklees can be proud of their association with this iconic multi use proposals.

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