

The Octopus Site: Community Feedback Report for a Future Purchaser

Purpose of this report

The old Octopus site is not just a piece of coastal real estate. In the public response to the site being up for sale, it clearly sits in people's memory as a social place, a view, a childhood marker, a family destination, a lost piece of St Peter Port life and a rare opportunity to do something generous with a tiny but emotionally charged site.

This report distils the community feedback shared in response to the sale and turns it into a practical guide for any potential purchaser. It is intended to help shape a future plan that is commercially realistic, publicly welcomed and emotionally intelligent.

The comments reveal a very broad range of ideas, but a few strong themes came through repeatedly.

People do not want the site to disappear into private residential use.

People miss the Half Moon and the Octopus era.

People want something affordable, social and accessible.

People want the view shared, not captured.

People are worried that another expensive, exclusive restaurant would miss the moment.

People want young people and families to be considered.

People are open to boldness, but not at the expense of local usefulness.

The opportunity is to create something that feels like Guernsey at its best: sea-facing, sociable, practical, relaxed, playful, affordable enough to be used often, and special enough to attract visitors.

Executive summary

The strongest viable direction appears to be a mixed-use public-facing coastal destination rather than a single-use restaurant or private development.

The sweet spot is likely to be something like:

A relaxed, affordable coastal cafe by day, with generous outdoor seating, family-friendly food, ice cream, coffee, casual lunches and simple evening food.

A rooftop or upper-level sunset terrace, bar or bistro that makes the most of the view without becoming too elitist.

A small cultural, creative or community layer: local art, live acoustic music, bookable rooms, workshops, maker space, small performances, youth sessions or low-key events.

A playful outdoor element for children, teens and families: a small beachside play feature, deck chairs, mini-golf, a splash element, board games, arcade area, safe social space or flexible family zone.

A brand that honours the memory of the Octopus and Half Moon without simply trying to recreate the past.

The public mood is not anti-business. It is anti-waste, anti-exclusion and anti-another-expensive-thing-for-a-small-number-of-people. A purchaser who can frame the site as a place for locals first, visitors too, will start with a significant goodwill advantage.

What people seem to be asking for beneath the suggestions

The comments were full of specific ideas, but beneath them were deeper needs.

People want somewhere to gather without too much friction. A place where you do not need to book weeks ahead, dress up, spend heavily or commit to a full meal.

People want young people to have somewhere positive to go. This came through strongly. Several comments challenged the constant call for more cafes and restaurants and asked instead for something for children and teenagers.

People want the coastline to remain emotionally available. The view matters. The site's relationship with Havelet, Castle Cornet and the sea is the asset. People want that view to be shared widely rather than locked away.

People want simplicity. Many comments asked for the Half Moon back, a cafe, a simple restaurant, casual seating, a garden, picnic benches, or something easy. The affection is not for luxury. It is for ease.

People want affordability. There is anxiety that a high-end restaurant would be empty, badly timed and misaligned with the cost-of-living mood. Several people pointed out that many islanders cannot afford more premium hospitality.

People want imagination. Alongside the nostalgia, there were playful suggestions: aquapark, casino, gaming area, arcade, concert hall, cinema, observation deck, Statue of Liberty-style landmark, marina, mini golf, bandstand and even a giant donkey-shaped building. Not all are realistic, but they show a desire for surprise and public joy.

People want the site to feel alive. The worst outcome in the public imagination is a dead site: empty, private, unaffordable, over-developed or used by a tiny audience.

Main feedback themes

Bring back something like the Half Moon or Octopus

This was one of the clearest themes. Many people simply said: bring back the Half Moon, bring back the Octopus, make it a cafe again, make it a restaurant again, restore the simple seaside hospitality that used to work.

The memory is not only of food. It is of going down there, looking out, taking children, having something simple, being part of island life. The old model had a kind of democratic usefulness. People remembered it as busy, accessible and loved.

There is a strong warning here. If the new purchaser ignores the emotional heritage of the site, they may face resistance. If they honour it intelligently, they can unlock goodwill.

The lesson is not to copy the past exactly. Several people recognised that you cannot simply recreate older institutions. The opportunity is to modernise the spirit: easy, local, sea-facing, sociable, unpretentious.

A cafe or restaurant, but not just another restaurant

There were many calls for a cafe, restaurant, bistro, rooftop bar, tapas space, French restaurant, diner, Turkish barber and vape shop joke, and casual hospitality. However, this was balanced by repeated concern that Guernsey already has enough cafes and restaurants.

The strongest hospitality concept from the feedback would not be a conventional restaurant. It would be flexible, layered and casual.

It should work for breakfast, coffee, ice cream, lunch, after-school food, sunset drinks, simple suppers, visiting family, tourists, walkers, swimmers and people who just want to sit by the sea.

It should not require a full meal booking to access the view.

It should avoid becoming yet another expensive dining room aimed at a narrow audience.

A likely winning formula would be:

Ground level: affordable cafe, takeaway, ice cream, loos, sea-facing seating, simple food.

Upper level: bistro, rooftop terrace, sunset bar, small plates, private hire, occasional events.

Outside: deckchairs, picnic tables, sheltered terraces, small performance moments, child-friendly features.

This allows commercial reality without making the whole site feel exclusive.

Keep the site publicly usable, not private

One of the strongest emotional signals was resistance to private residential development. Comments included concern about private dwellings, privacy conflicts, apartments, flats, or the site becoming something only a few people benefit from.

There was also a recurring belief, whether fair or not, that Guernsey often allows public-feeling assets to drift into private or exclusive hands. This matters because planning, communication and trust will be part of the development challenge.

A purchaser would be wise to make a clear early commitment:

The view will be shared.

The site will remain publicly accessible.

Locals will be welcome.

There will be affordable options.

The project will contribute to St Peter Port life, not just extract value from it.

This does not mean the whole site needs to be charitable or non-commercial. It means the commercial model should visibly include the public.

Something for children and young people

This was one of the most important threads. Many comments asked for something for children, teenagers and families. Suggestions included an arcade, gaming area, youth club, water or splash park, mini aquapark, open heated pool, beachside playground, sand and climbing frame, mini-golf, cinema, concert space, and a safe social place.

The tone behind these suggestions was sometimes frustrated. Some people felt the island already has plenty for adults who can afford hospitality, but too little for teenagers and families.

A purchaser should take this seriously, even if the final project cannot be youth-led. A small but visible youth/family layer could make a major difference to public support.

Possible elements:

A sheltered family terrace.

A small free or low-cost play feature.

A teen-friendly arcade or games room.

A supervised youth evening once a week.

A mini-golf or putting feature.

Board games, table football, table tennis or retro games.

Ice cream and affordable snacks.

Safe lighting and clear sightlines.

A summer programme with local young musicians, makers or performers.

The message should be: this is not just a place for people with money to have dinner. It is a place where island life happens.

Creative, cultural and community uses

A significant strand of feedback suggested art galleries, maker space, artist studios, performance space, live entertainment, a concert hall, cinema, theatre, bookable rooms, local makers, crafts and a rooftop cafe.

This points to an interesting middle ground. The site probably cannot carry a major arts institution by itself, but it could become a small cultural platform that changes by time of day and season.

Possible uses:

Local art on the walls.

Small maker retail area.

Resident artist pop-ups.

Bookable creative rooms.

Acoustic evenings.

Outdoor cinema nights.

Storytelling, poetry, comedy or small theatre.

Sea swimming talks, nature talks or heritage events.

School group observation and science sessions.

This could give the site a distinctive identity and deepen its usefulness beyond food and drink.

Wellness, nature and sea-facing life

Some people suggested a wellness place linked to the bathing pools, yoga, gym, wildlife observation, sport area for school groups, a diving school, swimming-related uses, and spaces to relax.

The location lends itself naturally to a coastal wellbeing theme, but this should avoid feeling like a luxury wellness retreat for a few. The more community-minded version is stronger.

Possible elements:

Morning coffee for sea swimmers.

Changing-friendly facilities if feasible.

Yoga or movement sessions on the terrace.

Cold-water swimming meetups.

Wildlife and sea observation point.

School science visits.

Walking and cycling stop-off.

Healthy but affordable food.

Dog-friendly outside seating.

A good concept could connect the site to Havelet, the bathing pools, Castle Cornet, walkers, families, swimmers and visitors in one simple coastal loop.

Dogs and everyday local life

There were dog-related suggestions, including a dog pool, dog ice cream and a Beau Sejour for dogs style idea. These were partly playful, but they point towards something useful: people want the place to work for ordinary life.

Dog-friendly outdoor seating could be a simple win. It would bring footfall in less formal moments and create a relaxed local feel.

A full dog facility is unlikely to be the best use of such a rare site, but a dog-welcome culture, water bowls, dog treats and a sea-walk cafe identity could be powerful.

Observation, landmark and tourism potential

Several comments imagined the site as an observation deck, viewing platform, rotating cafe, tower, mini London Eye, landmark, statue-style attraction, tourist destination or something architecturally striking.

There is a genuine point here. The view is the product. Any future design should make the view more available, more comfortable and more memorable.

However, there was also concern about overbuilding, unrealistic ambition and a “mini-Monaco” feel. The public may support boldness if it feels beautiful, useful and public. They are less likely to support boldness if it feels flashy, exclusive or disconnected from Guernsey.

A modest landmark approach could work:

A beautiful curved sea-facing deck.

A rooftop view platform.

A small heritage interpretation point.

A sunrise/sunset terrace.

A sculptural but low-impact building.

A night-time glow that feels warm, not garish.

The site can become iconic without becoming enormous.

Parking and practical access

Parking came up more than once. Some wanted parking back before summer. Others suggested underground parking. This is likely to be a practical constraint and a public concern.

The purchaser should treat access as part of the concept, not an afterthought.

Key considerations:

How will older people access the site?

How will families with young children access it?

How will disabled visitors access it?

How does it link to town, Havelet and the bathing pools?

Could there be drop-off provision?

Could it encourage walking from town without requiring every visitor to park outside?

Could cycles, scooters or mobility aids be better accommodated?

Could the site become a natural stopping point on a wider coastal route?

A future plan should explain movement and access clearly. People will not judge the concept only by what is inside the building. They will judge whether they can realistically use it.

Commercial realism

Some comments were blunt about commercial value. People noted that the site is valuable and that a purchaser spending significant money will need a return. Others questioned whether community uses, playgrounds or low-cost facilities can realistically support the purchase price and development costs.

This is the central tension. The community wants public value. A purchaser needs commercial viability.

The best answer is not to pretend those tensions do not exist. It is to design a layered model where different parts of the site cross-subsidise each other.

Possible revenue streams:

Daytime cafe.

Evening bistro or small plates.

Rooftop drinks.

Ice cream and takeaway.

Private hire.

Small events.

Creative workshops.

Local maker retail.

Tourist packages.

School or group visits.

Membership for locals, but with no exclusion from general access.

Sponsorship of youth or cultural programming.

Seasonal pop-ups.

A purchaser should avoid relying only on one premium restaurant model. The site needs to earn across the day, across the week and across the year.

Ideas mentioned in the feedback

The following ideas appeared directly or indirectly in the public comments. They are grouped here to show the full spectrum rather than to recommend all of them.

Hospitality ideas included a cafe, restaurant, Half Moon return, Octopus 2.0, bistro, rooftop bar, terrace bar, tapas bar, French restaurant, American-style diner, simple affordable cafe, restaurant downstairs with tapas or rooftop bar above, cafe with outdoor seating, cafe with garden, cafe with underground parking, ice cream stop and a no-frills food offer.

Family and youth ideas included arcade, gaming area, youth club, something for teens, water or splash park, mini aquapark, open heated pool, beachside playground, sand area, wooden climbing frame, picnic benches, mini-golf, putting, old-fashioned fair, cinema, theatre, concert hall, outdoor performance space and safe places for young people to meet.

Creative and cultural ideas included art gallery, artist studios, studio spaces, makers' space, arts and crafts space, local maker retail, live performance space, outdoor cinema or theatre, bookable rooms, functions and small events.

Wellbeing and nature ideas included yoga area, indoor/outdoor gym, wildlife observation, sport area for school groups, diving school, wellness linked to bathing pools, sea swimming hub and relaxing community space.

Tourism and landmark ideas included observation deck, rotating cafe, viewing platform, tower, small London Eye, tourist attraction, Statue of Liberty-style landmark, Martello-style coastal kitchen, sunrise deck and a large sea-facing attraction.

Playful or more speculative ideas included casino, marina, helicopter landing pad, giant donkey-shaped observation deck, making it look like an octopus, a Turkish barber and vape shop, and lifting the Mirus battery gun from the Herd as a joke heritage feature.

Critical or cautionary comments included concerns about apartments, private residences, overdevelopment, another expensive restaurant, lack of affordability, staff shortages, storm/high tide exposure, planning issues, health and safety, parking, commercial viability, too many cafes already, and the risk of building something that sits empty.

Strongest concept direction

The strongest concept emerging from the feedback is not a single idea. It is a hybrid.

The most community-aligned and commercially plausible direction could be described as:

A sea-facing social house for St Peter Port: a relaxed coastal cafe, sunset terrace, small cultural venue and family-friendly public space that honours the Octopus and Half Moon heritage while creating something useful for the next generation.

This gives enough room for commercial return while speaking directly to the public mood.

It is not just a restaurant.

It is not just a cafe.

It is not just a community centre.

It is not just a tourist attraction.

It is a small, beautiful, many-times-a-week place where locals and visitors mix.

Recommended development principles

Share the view

The view should be treated as a common asset. The design should create multiple ways for people to access it, including those who only want a coffee or ice cream.

Keep at least one offer affordable

There can be premium elements, but there must be a low-friction, low-cost offer. A family should be able to use the site without feeling financially punished.

Honour the past without being trapped by it

The Half Moon and Octopus memories matter. The future brand should nod to them, not simply cosplay them.

Design for children, teenagers and older people

A good public place does not only serve the economically easiest audience. The site should have something for families, young people and older islanders.

Make it useful all day

Breakfast, coffee, lunch, afternoon ice cream, post-swim snacks, sunset drinks, simple evening food, events and private hire all help make the economics work.

Make it weather-aware

The site must acknowledge storms, wind and tides. Sheltered terraces, robust materials, raised critical infrastructure and flexible indoor/outdoor design matter.

Avoid sterile luxury

Guernsey does not need another place that photographs well but feels socially cold. Warmth, ease, welcome and local texture should be designed in.

Programme it, do not just build it

The site will need life. Events, youth sessions, music, art, seasonal activities, school links and community partnerships can turn a building into a place.

Possible naming and branding directions

The naming should balance heritage, sea, playfulness and broad public welcome. The name needs to feel local without being parochial, attractive to visitors without feeling like a tourist trap, and warm enough for families.

Direct heritage names

These names lean into the existing emotional memory.

Octopus 2.0

Simple, recognisable and already suggested by the public. It signals continuity and modernisation. The risk is that it may feel too techy or temporary unless softened by the brand.

The Octopus House

Warmer and more flexible than Octopus 2.0. It can contain cafe, culture, terrace and events. It suggests many arms, many uses and many people.

The Old Octopus

Good for nostalgia. The risk is that it may feel too backward-looking.

The Half Moon at Havelet

Strong emotional pull for those who remember the Half Moon. It sounds established and place-based. It may be the best choice if the concept is primarily a cafe, restaurant and terrace.

Half Moon House

A flexible version that could include cafe, events, makers, youth and private hire.

Octopus & Moon

A playful bridge between the Octopus and Half Moon memories. Distinctive, poetic and brandable.

Place-based names

These names root the site in the coastline and view.

Havelet House

Classic, simple and adaptable. It sounds credible but may lack playfulness.

The Havelet Social

Strong for a mixed-use cafe, terrace and cultural space. It says this is a place to gather.

Havelet Deck

Good for a sea-facing terrace-led concept. Modern, casual and view-focused.

The View at Havelet

Clear, visitor-friendly and commercially strong. Slightly generic, but effective.

Castle View Social

Makes the most of the Castle Cornet view and positions the site as sociable.

The Sunrise Deck

This emerged from the AI concept direction and has warmth. Good for a cafe, terrace and wellness-linked offer.

The Sea Wall

Strong, simple and coastal. Could feel robust and iconic.

Community and culture names

These names signal public life and multiple uses.

The Lookout

Simple, flexible and sea-facing. Works for cafe, observation deck, youth, events and tourism.

The Lookout at Havelet

More specific and probably stronger.

The Gathering Place

Warm and community-minded, though perhaps less commercially sharp.

The Tide House

Elegant, coastal and flexible. Good for a mixed hospitality and cultural destination.

The Drift

Relaxed, modern and coastal. Good for younger branding, but may be less obviously local.

The Salt House

Strong hospitality feel, but there may be naming conflicts or overuse elsewhere.

The Common View

A more values-led name. It directly says the view belongs to everyone, but it may feel more like a civic project than a commercial venue.

Playful names

These would suit a family-friendly, creative and slightly mischievous concept.

The Many-Armed Cafe

A nod to the Octopus and the mixed-use concept. Fun, but perhaps too whimsical for the main name.

Eight Arms at Havelet

A clever nod to the Octopus. Works well if the building has multiple functions.

The Happy Octopus

Family-friendly and joyful. Could be too childlike unless that is the intended market.

The Octopus Arms

Feels like a pub, cafe and social house. Playful and memorable.

Moon & Tentacle

Funny and memorable, but probably too quirky for broad adoption.

Recommended brand routes

Brand route 1: The Havelet Social

This is probably the strongest overall route if the ambition is to create a broad, public-facing social destination.

Positioning: A sea-facing social house for St Peter Port.

Tone: Warm, relaxed, local, generous, slightly playful.

Best for: Cafe, terrace, events, art, family seating, youth programming, sunset drinks and private hire.

Possible straplines:

"Coffee, coast, culture and community."

"St Peter Port's sea-facing gathering place."

"From morning coffee to sunset stories."

"Built around the view. Open to everyone."

Brand feel: Natural materials, sea-worn textures, warm lighting, local art, relaxed service, no unnecessary formality.

Brand route 2: Half Moon House

This is strongest if the buyer wants to honour local memory and lean into nostalgia while still modernising.

Positioning: A loved Guernsey place, reimagined for today.

Tone: Familiar, warm, generous, heritage-led.

Best for: Cafe, restaurant, rooftop terrace, family lunches, classic local hospitality.

Possible straplines:

"The view we all remember."

"A Guernsey favourite, reimagined."

"Simple food. Big views. Good company."

"Back by the sea."

Brand feel: Heritage signage, simple menus, old photographs, modern comfort, no pretence.

Brand route 3: The Lookout at Havelet

This is strongest if the design includes an observation deck, terrace or landmark element.

Positioning: A public view, a coastal cafe and a small stage for island life.

Tone: Open, optimistic, scenic, accessible.

Best for: Tourism, sunset terrace, public deck, cafe, cultural events, school visits and nature/wildlife links.

Possible straplines:

"Where St Peter Port comes to look out."

"Views, food, stories and sea air."

"A small place with a big horizon."

"Look out to sea. Look back to town. Feel part of both."

Brand feel: Clean, coastal, accessible, warm, with strong wayfinding and a beautiful viewing experience.

Brand route 4: Octopus & Moon

This is the most distinctive and emotionally layered route, blending both old Octopus and Half Moon references.

Positioning: A playful coastal house with food, culture and many arms of community life.

Tone: Imaginative, friendly, memorable, a bit magical.

Best for: A more creative concept with cafe, makers, family play, events, music and evening terrace.

Possible straplines:

"Many arms. One view."

"Where the island gathers by the sea."

"Food, art, play and sunset."

"A little bit Octopus. A little bit Half Moon. Very Guernsey."

Brand feel: Playful but tasteful. Subtle octopus forms, moon curves, warm lights, sea blues, sunset tones and hand-drawn local illustration.

Recommended concept: The Havelet Social, with heritage sub-branding

If I were advising a purchaser, I would recommend using **The Havelet Social** as the main working concept, with visible heritage references to the Octopus and Half Moon within the story.

This gives the brand enough flexibility to become more than a restaurant. It avoids getting trapped in a debate about whether the new thing is "as good as the old thing". It also speaks directly to the strongest public need: a social place by the sea.

The venue could still include named spaces:

The Half Moon Cafe for the ground-floor casual cafe.

The Octopus Terrace for the rooftop or sea-facing deck.

The Lookout Room for private hire, workshops and small events.

The Tide Room for art, talks, school sessions or community use.

This approach honours memory without making the entire development depend on nostalgia.

Possible operating model

Morning

Coffee, breakfast rolls, pastries, healthy options, swimmers' specials, dog walkers, parents after school drop-off, older people, tourists walking from town.

Lunchtime

Simple cafe menu, soups, sandwiches, salads, children's food, affordable specials, sea-facing seating, takeaway for walkers.

Afternoon

Ice cream, cake, school groups, families, youth-friendly snacks, maker pop-ups, quiet working corners, art viewing.

Evening

Rooftop drinks, small plates, bistro menu, live acoustic music, comedy, storytelling, bookable events, sunset terrace.

Weekends

Brunch, mini markets, family activities, outdoor cinema, old-fashioned fair days, local music, creative workshops, sea and nature events.

Seasonal programming

Summer: terrace, ice cream, family events, music, outdoor cinema, visitor packages.

Autumn: warm cafe, storytelling, art, community meals, wellness sessions.

Winter: cosy lights, local menus, workshops, Christmas market, small performances.

Spring: sea swimming, nature, school visits, youth projects, maker launches.

Design implications from feedback

The design should probably be modestly iconic rather than aggressively iconic.

People liked ambitious AI images, but they also worried about overdevelopment and unrealistic glamour. The building should feel beautiful and special, but not like it has landed from somewhere else.

Recommended design cues:

Curved forms that gently nod to the old site, the sea wall, the Half Moon and the Octopus without becoming cartoonish.

Layered terraces with wind protection.

A publicly accessible view deck.

Warm lighting visible from across Havelet.

Robust storm-resistant materials.

Accessible routes wherever physically possible.

A flexible interior that can shift from cafe to event to workshop.

Outdoor seating that feels generous and informal.

A children/family zone that is visible, safe and not hidden away.

Natural textures: stone, timber, marine-grade metal, glass, planting.

Avoid:

A private apartment block feel.

Overly glossy Monaco-style luxury.

A single expensive dining room.

A design that looks good in a CGI but fails in wind, rain and winter.

Too much themed octopus imagery.

Anything that blocks the view without giving something back.

Public consultation opportunity

The purchaser has a rare chance to turn community feedback into goodwill before submitting a final plan.

A good next step would be a simple public engagement process:

Publish three or four possible concept routes.

Ask people what they would actually use weekly, monthly and occasionally.

Test affordability expectations.

Ask young people directly what they would use.

Ask older residents what would make the site accessible.

Ask families what would make it worth visiting.

Ask hospitality operators what would make it commercially viable.

Ask artists, makers and performers what small spaces they need.

Ask swimmers, walkers and dog owners what would help.

Invite people to vote not just on what they like, but what they would spend money on.

This last point matters. Public support and commercial reality need to meet.

Questions a purchaser should ask before finalising a plan

Who is this place for on a wet Tuesday in February?

Who is this place for at 4pm after school?

Who is this place for at sunset in July?

Can someone use the site without spending much?

Can a family use it without booking?

Can older people access it comfortably?

Can teenagers feel welcome without being treated as a nuisance?

Can visitors understand it immediately?

Can locals love it enough to keep coming back?

Can the view be shared without undermining the business model?

Can the site earn money from several complementary uses rather than one fragile use?

Does the design feel like Guernsey, or just like expensive coastal real estate?

Risks and how to reduce them

Risk: It becomes too expensive for locals

Mitigation: Keep a visible affordable offer. Publish simple sample pricing early. Have coffee, ice cream, snacks and casual food as part of the core identity.

Risk: It becomes another underused restaurant

Mitigation: Build a multi-part day-to-night model with cafe, events, terrace, family activity and cultural programming.

Risk: It is seen as private capture of a public-feeling asset

Mitigation: Commit to public access, shared views, community programming and local benefit from the start.

Risk: Young people are ignored

Mitigation: Include a small but real youth/family element. Consult young people directly.

Risk: The design is too ambitious for the site

Mitigation: Let the site's constraints lead the architecture. Make it beautiful, robust and usable rather than overblown.

Risk: The project is commercially unrealistic

Mitigation: Use layered revenue streams and flexible spaces. Design every square metre to earn or add clear value.

Risk: It gets trapped in nostalgia

Mitigation: Honour the Half Moon and Octopus, but frame the project as the next chapter rather than a replica.

Strategic opportunity for the purchaser

A purchaser who simply buys the site and submits a private or narrow commercial scheme may face a difficult public mood.

A purchaser who says, “We have listened. We know this site matters. We want to create something commercially sustainable that shares the view and gives St Peter Port something back,” could build real support.

The site is tiny, but the symbolic value is large. It can demonstrate a better way to develop in Guernsey: not endless consultation with no delivery, and not private development with no listening, but a practical middle path where public feeling shapes a viable commercial destination.

The right project could become a small case study in how Guernsey turns memory into momentum.

Recommended one-page concept

Working name: The Havelet Social

Core idea: A sea-facing social house for St Peter Port, combining a relaxed affordable cafe, rooftop sunset terrace, small cultural venue and family-friendly public space.

Audience: Locals first, visitors too. Families, young people, sea swimmers, walkers, older residents, dog owners, artists, makers, tourists and people who simply want to sit by the sea.

Offer: Coffee, ice cream, simple food, bistro evenings, terrace drinks, local art, small events, youth/family programming, bookable rooms and seasonal activities.

Heritage: Honour the Octopus and Half Moon through naming, design details, old photographs, community stories and possibly named spaces within the building.

Promise: The view will be shared. The place will be useful. The offer will include affordable options. The site will feel alive across the day and year.

Brand line options:

“Built around the view. Open to everyone.”

“Coffee, coast, culture and community.”

"From morning coffee to sunset stories."

"Where St Peter Port gathers by the sea."

Final reflection

The feedback is not neat because people are not neat. Some want the old cafe back. Some want youth facilities. Some want a restaurant. Some want an arcade. Some want art. Some want a landmark. Some want parking. Some want the States kept well away. Some just do not want another expensive thing that ordinary people cannot use.

The common thread is this: people want the site to matter again.

They want it to be alive.

They want it to be shared.

They want it to hold memory, but not be trapped in it.

They want it to help the island feel more itself.

That is the opportunity for the purchaser. Not simply to buy a site, but to become the custodian of a small, loved, sea-facing piece of Guernsey's social fabric.

Done well, the Octopus site could become one of those rare places that makes both commercial and emotional sense.

A place people use.

A place people talk about.

A place people bring visitors to.

A place young people can feel welcome.

A place older people can remember without feeling left behind.

A place that makes St Peter Port feel a little more joyful.

That is the real brief hidden inside the comments.