

REPORT NO: 92/2015

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

28TH APRIL 2015

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE DETERMINED BY THE
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL AND LICENSING COMMITTEE**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR PLACES
(ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT)**

Rutland County Council

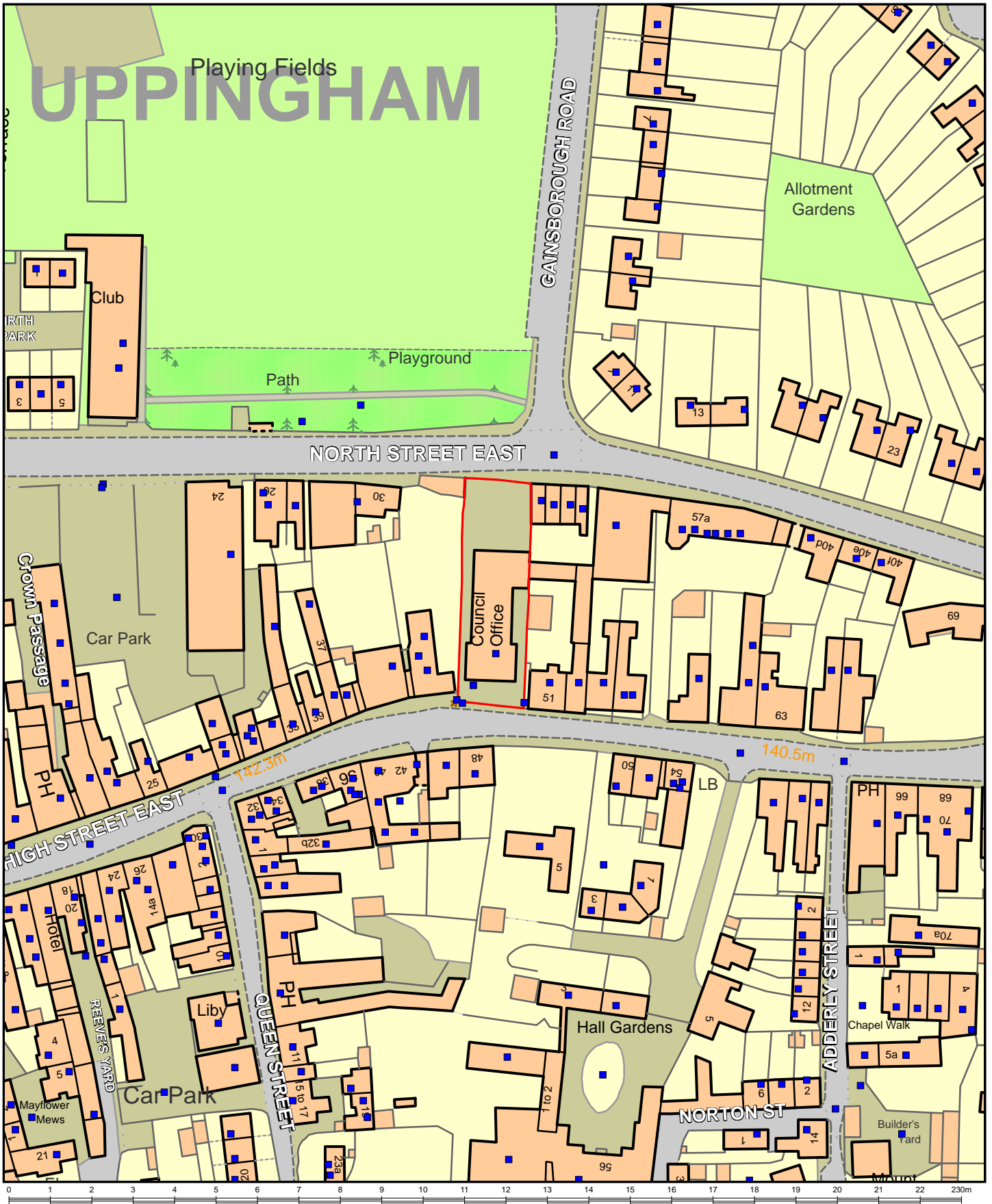
Development Control & Licensing Committee – 28th April 2015

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Appeals Report

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Ordnance Survey [100018056]

Scale - 1:1250
Time of plot: 14:37
Date of plot: 15/04/2015



Rutland County Council

Catmose,
Oakham,
Rutland
LE15 6HP

Application:	2015/0125/FUL	ITEM 1	
Proposal:	Redevelopment of Uppingham Town Hall via refurbishment of the original church rooms, the erection of single storey front extension, partial demolition of the rear hall and the erection of a rear two storey extension.		
Address:	Uppingham Town Hall, 49 High Street East, Uppingham, OAKHAM, Rutland, LE15 9PY		
Applicant:	Mrs Susan Awcock, Uppingham Town Council	Parish	Uppingham
Agent:	Mr Colin Wilkinson, Planit-X	Ward	Uppingham
Reason for presenting to Committee:	Ward Member Referral		
Date of Committee:	28 th April 2015		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The works to the rear would enhance the existing facilities of the Town Hall, and would not have a significant detrimental impact upon surrounding residential amenity.

The front extension would adversely affect the character of the Hall in this prominent location, to the detriment of the character and appearance of Uppingham Conservation Area and the street scene.

A split decision is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVAL, for the following development, and subject to the below conditions;

Redevelopment of Uppingham Town Hall via refurbishment of the original church rooms, partial demolition of the rear hall and the erection of a rear two storey extension.

1. The development shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason – To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers 1430/U2, 1430/U3A, 1430/D3C, 1430/D4B, 1430/D5A. Reason - For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3. The external facing and roofing materials to be used shall match in colour, texture and form those used on the existing building.
Reason - This is a publicly visible building where matching materials are a visually essential requirement.

Note to applicant

Please note that this decision notice does not grant approval for the front extension to the Town Hall. Please refer to the separate refusal notice for this extension.

REFUSAL, of the *single storey front extension* for the following reason:

The proposed front extension to the Town Hall, by virtue of its location, scale and design, would appear as a dominant and incongruous addition to the building, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the Uppingham Conservation Area, and the setting of the adjacent listed building (Elton House, no. 47 High Street East). As such, the proposal is contrary to policies CS19 and CS22 of the adopted Core Strategy (2011), policies SP15 and SP20 of the adopted Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document (2014), and Policy 1 of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan (2014).

Site & Surroundings

1. The site is the Uppingham Town Hall building, located within the designated 'town centre area' of the town. To the west of the Hall is a row of Listed Buildings.
2. The front of the Town Hall faces High Street East, and this part of the building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The site is on higher ground than the adjacent pavement (approximately 500mm higher), accessed via a small flight of steps. There is a small brick courtyard to the front of the building, enclosed by a dwarf stone wall. The Town Hall itself is set back from the row of buildings along the High Street.
3. The existing hall has a large extension to the rear, along with parking and vehicular access off North Street East.
4. The proposed plans are attached as **APPENDIX 1**.

Proposal

5. This application proposes various alterations to the front and the rear of the building, to redevelop the Town Hall, creating a modern community hub.
6. At the front, a single storey extension is proposed to provide a lobby area and lift, with two rooms either side. It would be 4.1m high, 3.6m deep and 12.1m wide, spanning the entire width of the front elevation. It would have a dwarf stone wall, large glazed panels, and a hipped roof.
7. To the rear the existing extension is to be demolished to eaves height, and rebuilt, to accommodate a first floor. The new extension would have the same ridge height as the existing building, but would raise the eaves and extend the side of the building 2.8m to the east. This part of the Hall would accommodate a Council chamber/meeting room, toilets, storage and a new library on the ground floor. The first floor would provide a multipurpose hall. A small extension for a large first floor lift is proposed to the west.

Planning Guidance and Policy

(i) Development Plan

The Rutland Core Strategy (2011)

- CS17 Town centres and retailing
- CS19 Promoting Good Design
- CS22 Historic and Cultural Environment

Site Allocations and Policies DPD – Submission Document (2013)

- SP5 Built development in the towns and villages
- SP12 Town Centre area, primary and secondary shopping frontages
- SP15 Design and Amenity

(ii) Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

Section 7 Requiring good design

Section 12 Historic Environment

Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan – Policy 1 – Protect Central Conservation Area

Consultations

8. Conservation Officer – The front extension would be inappropriate and have a harmful impact on the appearance of the building and Uppingham Conservation Area, and the setting of the adjacent listed building. No objection to the rear extension.
9. RCC Senior Culture & Leisure Manager -
 - o Welcomes UTC's proactive approach to the development of services in Uppingham, and recognises that the Uppingham Town Hall is a prime location which could be used effectively as a Community Hub.
 - o It is agreed in principle that it would be possible for a public library service to be operated from such a facility, and that this would benefit both the community and the mutual viability of other services offered from the site. The recent Independent Library Report (Sieghart Review) advocated that library buildings should become “vibrant and attractive community hubs” and noted that a library “does more than simply loan books.” The report recommends wifi and high quality computer facilities “delivered in a comfortable, retail-standard environment, with the usual amenities of coffee, sofas and toilets”:
 - o Unfortunately the plans as submitted with the planning application do not appear to offer an effective or efficient solution for the delivery of services in Uppingham. The designs do not appear to enable shared spaces and operation of the site, which we would hope would be a key element in improving access to the range of services. By placing services in their own discrete areas behind closed doors, it is likely that they will be locked and unused at times when specialist staff are not on site. I would advocate an open access strategy, where key assets are stored securely out of hours, but the majority of services can continue to operate with minimal levels of supervision.
 - o The proposal appears to squeeze the library in to the small extension to the right of the building, but there appears to be the intention to retain the existing external wall (which will become internal). This will give virtually no flexibility with the space whatsoever.
 - o In addition to the overall management of the site, there are the following particular deficits for the library service:
 - a) No provision of staffing or volunteer desk for assisting users of the site
 - b) No space allocated for ICT facilities, an essential component of a modern library service
 - c) No seating or study spaces, an absolutely key element of the library service, particularly with our increasing older population
 - d) No space for self-service machine(s) for extending the use of the site outside staff / volunteer supported hours
 - e) The children's area is very small, with no clear supervision mechanism
 - f) No teenage / young peoples' area
 - g) No administration space for the delivery and processing of new stock, handling of requests, storage of consumables etc.
 - h) Refreshment facilities are located in separate parts of the site which would appear to require separate staffing.

- The overall shape of the space provided is unfortunate and unlikely to be workable – it appears to be rather like a corridor with book shelves, which cannot be overseen unless there is a member of staff within the room.
- I welcome the location of the library elements on the ground floor of the building.
- The toilets and changing areas appear to be sufficient for the needs of the services.

Neighbour Representations

10. One objection received from immediate neighbour to the east, on the grounds that the front extension would obscure their building and business sign (which they place reliance upon for attracting business) and their entrance from public view at the retail end of the High Street. Adding a glass frontage would have no benefits and would look of place on this historic high street. They also object to the side elevation of the rear extension, which may affect their natural light.

Planning Assessment

11. The main issues are:
 - Impact upon the Uppingham Conservation Area / setting of listed building
 - Residential Amenity

Conservation Area / Setting of listed building

12. The Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, and the setting of listed buildings. This carries significant weight in considering the current application.
13. The proposed front extension would appear as a dominant and incongruous addition to the building, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the Uppingham Conservation Area and the street scene. Extending to the front would obscure the existing features and detailing of this attractive building. In addition to this, the extension would also adversely affect the setting of the adjacent listed building to the west (Elton House, no. 47 High Street East). This part of the scheme would be contrary to the Rutland County Council's conservation and heritage policies, and also Policy 1 of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan.
14. Part of the justification for the front extension is to provide disabled access to the hall. While this is currently available to the rear of the building, Officers have advised that this could be achieved at the front by the installation of a ramp. This would preserve the front of the building while still providing disabled access.
15. The objection from the neighbouring property relating to the front extension obscuring their business sign is noted. The Agent has provided a plan showing how the extension would sit in relation to the sign, along with options for the sign's relocation higher up the building. The obscuring of the sign by the extension would be a private matter between the two parties, and any relocation of the sign would require a separate advertisement consent application. However, the combined impact of the front extension and sign is likely to result in visual clutter of this part of the street.
16. The rear extension would not be prominent from High Street East, and is set back from North Street East. The existing rear extension is of no particular merit, and its replacement would not adversely affect the conservation area or setting of the adjacent listed building.

Residential Amenity

17. The objection from the same neighbouring property (no. 51) to the east on the grounds of loss of light is also noted, and is given due consideration below.
18. The rear garden of no. 51 has several outbuildings used as part of the owner's antique business, including a building that runs along part of the shared boundary. In addition to this their rear garden is north facing, and any existing direct light loss as a result of the rear of the town hall would be limited to the late afternoon.
19. While the extension would be closer to the shared boundary and the eaves would be 1m higher, the ridge would not be any higher than existing, and is sloping away from the neighbouring garden. The Agent has provided a plan showing the impact of the extension on direct sunlight, which shows that the impact would not be significant enough to warrant refusal of this aspect of the scheme.
20. There is a 3m high stone boundary wall separating the Hall from the western neighbour. The proposal would not adversely affect this property, and the neighbour has verbally commented on site that they have no objection. While the front extension raises heritage issues, it would not adversely affect residential amenity.

Other Issues

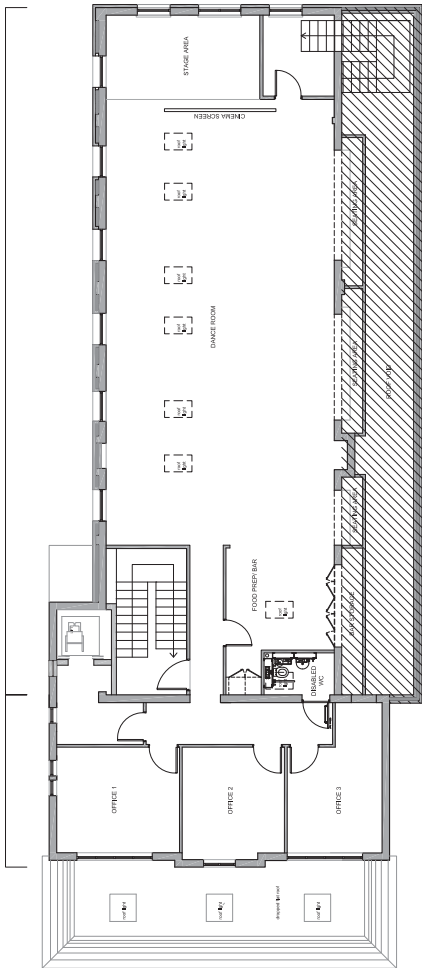
21. The scheme includes a single row of solar panels on the west elevation of the rear extension's roof. These would not be prominent and there is no objection to these being installed.
22. The design and access statement makes reference to air conditioning units, however no details of these have been provided in the application. This would require a separate planning application. Without prejudice to any potential application, the agent has been advised by Officers that due to the close proximity of residential units, air conditioning may not be appropriate.
23. The comments from RCC's Senior Culture & Leisure Manager are noted, and Uppingham Town Council are aware of the issues raised (the Agent has confirmed that separate discussions are on-going with the Rutland Library Service). Notwithstanding this, the final internal layout, arrangements and workings of the Town Hall are not material planning considerations for this application.
24. Notwithstanding that the front extension would not be appropriate, the proposed roof pitch is too shallow for Collyweston slates; if members were minded to approve this element of the scheme contrary to officer recommendation, natural blue Welsh slate would be a more suitable material.
25. An acceptable alternative scheme for the front extension has not been agreed, and as such, a split decision for the current application is proposed, refusing the front extension, but approving the rest of the development. This would enable the applicant to implement the majority of the works to the Town Hall, while retaining its character and its contribution to the street scene and conservation area.

NOTE

- Do not scale from this drawing, use figured dimensions only.
- Report any discrepancies to CA as soon as possible.
- This drawing to be read in conjunction with all other drawings, schedules and specifications relating to the works.
- Check all dimensions and levels on site.
- Drawings to be read in conjunction with a checked digital drawings by engineers & other specialist or consultants.
- Contractors to comply with current British Standards, Codes of Practice & Building Regulations.
- Locate all site services prior to commencement of any work on site.

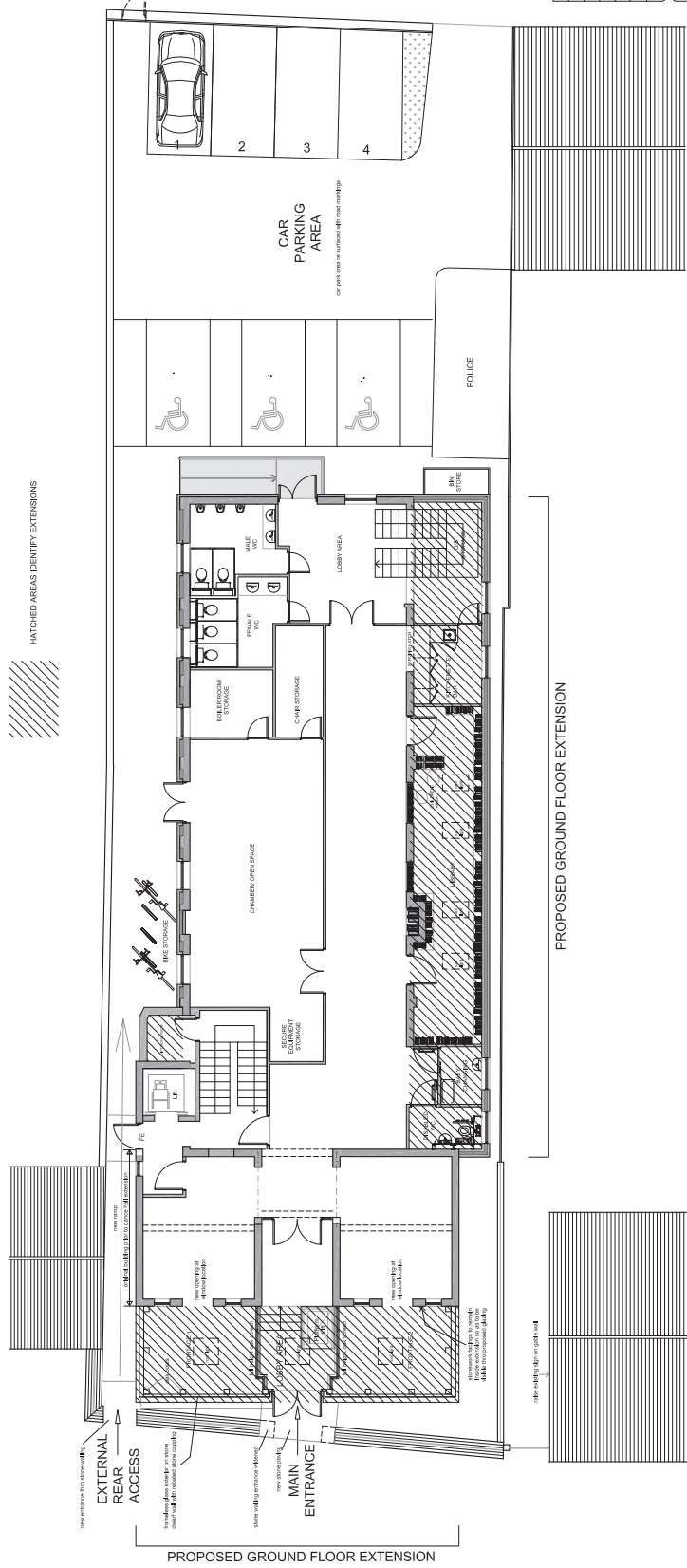
RETAIN EXISTING TWO STOREY BUILDING

PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR ON EXISTING GROUND FLOOR AREA



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

HATCHED AREAS IDENTIFY EXTENSIONS



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Status	Description	Date	Drawn	App'd
C	FRONTAGE ROOF PLAN ADDED / ROOFLIGHT IDENTIFIED / WINDOW LOCATIONS CHECKED	13/02/2014	JIS	
B	ALL PROPOSED WINDOWS TO WEST ELEVATION NOW IDENTIFIED	28/03/2014	JIS	
A	AMENDMENTS TO REAR ELEVATION, EXTENSION ADDED FOR LIFT MOTOR ROOM & WINDOWS	14/11/2014	JIS	

Proposed Plans - Front Extension

UPPINGHAM TOWN HALL RE-DEVELOPMENT
 UPPINGHAM TOWN HALL
 UPPINGHAM
 UPPINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

drawn by : JIS
 approved by :
 date : 24/10/2014
 scale : 1:100@A1
 eng no : 1437/D3C

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