

Item 15 – Town Hall Refurbishment

Agenda Item - Consider the immediate next steps and the specific content of the public consultation leading up to the decision in December 2015 to either proceed with the full refurbishment of the Town Hall or otherwise.

- a) **Consider the desire to re-submit the revised plans for planning approval of the front elevation.**

This is a summary provided by Cllr. Ainslie which subject to your discussion will be included or edited for the forthcoming newsletter. It sets out the background to the proposed extension to the front elevation.

Uppingham Town Council was fortunate to obtain a grant from the Homes and Community Agency to produce designs for making the Town Hall more functional in the years ahead. This work follows on from the desire expressed in the Neighbourhood Plan to explore the possibility of eventually developing a community hub that could incorporate the library, provide community rooms, council offices and retain the popular dance floor with associated facilities.

Following a period of public consultation with the people of Uppingham in December 2014 formal planning permission was sought from Rutland County Council earlier this year for an exciting scheme to redevelop the existing Town Hall building to give us the much needed facilities identified in our Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst initially supportive, Rutland County Council refused part of our planning application which has caused us to have to question the whole viability of the Community Hub project. Basically as the Town Hall is within the Conservation Area our submitted design sought to retain the existing building façade whilst extending the rear area. The Planning Authority passed all of our rear area plans but refused to allow the intended use of glass and steel at the front of the building. The Planning Committee did however indicate that they may be more sympathetic to a stone built frontage that keeps the feeling for the existing building.



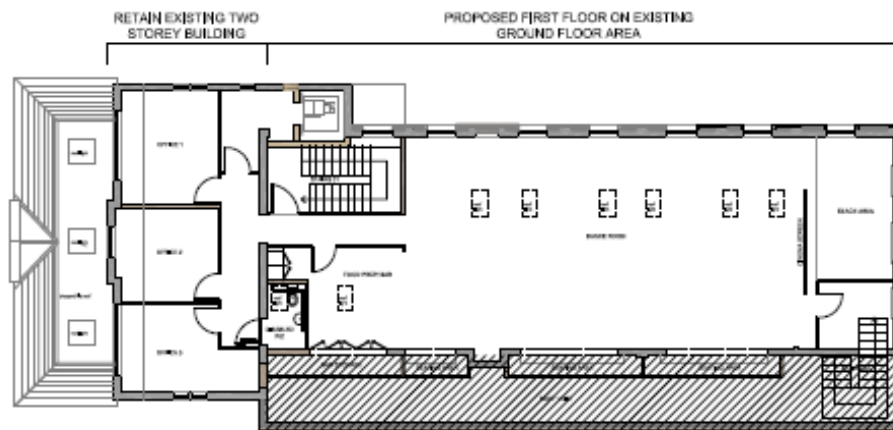
Our original plan for the front of the Community Hub



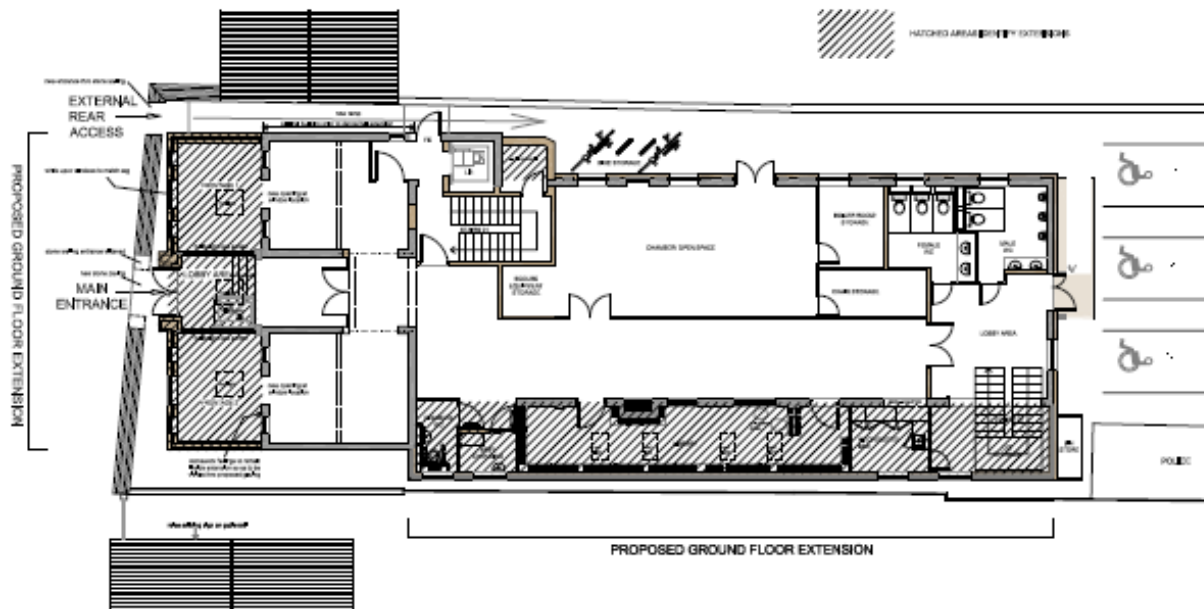
Our revised plan using stone materials

Whilst we have had some amended plans drawn up as requested by the Planning Authority, before we decide whether or not to submit them we want to consult the people of Uppingham once more to ensure that we have the local community with us on this project. Indeed we would like to take this opportunity to seek views not only on the physical design of the building but on the whole idea of

undertaking such a massive redevelopment project. As part of our initial efforts we obtained the services of a Quantity Surveyor and his view is that the potential redevelopment of both the “rear” and “front” sections will cost around £1.3m. Whilst the Town Council have yet to formally debate this issue, but will do so in December once the consultation and feedback from you has been received and studied. I am happy to say that it is not our intention to try to fund this through the Precept (Council Tax) but to continue to seek grants, possibly loans and to look at other fund raising options. Working with our Town Clerk Neil Wedge, the Town Council have put together a formal survey to gather the thoughts of local people and I would ask you to please let us know your views on this important matter. The questions in the survey are far wider than just the fabric of the building but I do appreciate that these will be of interest to you which is why I have shown the latest design for you above. Thank you for your help with this key issue.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



b) Consider the draft consultation questions which will be included in the newsletter in October and on the Council website for 6 weeks

Preface to be on the online survey followed by the questions being posed to the community – the precise detail of the finished layout and design internally will be subject to further work and consultation with interest groups in town. At this point in time your council are just looking to establish local appetite for the general refurbishment of the existing building at an estimated cost of £1.3m. The funding for this would need to be raised over a period of time if the community and council approve the plan. [The survey would be done online, on the newsletter which can be given into the Town Hall – over a 6 week window to be analysed in late November ahead of 2nd Dec council meeting].

1. Do you broadly support the re-development of the existing Town Hall to become a ‘Community Hub’ incorporating the library and upgrading of community rooms for meetings, classes (dance, aerobics etc.) and local services? [Yes/No]
2. [Only to be asked if Council approve re-applying for front elevation] Are you broadly supportive of redeveloping the front elevation of the existing Town Hall to create a ‘heritage space’ for local history artefacts and public information? [Yes/No]
3. Are you keen to see the library incorporated into the new building if it is refurbished? [Yes/No]
4. If there was one other ‘facility or service’ you would like to be included in a new community hub – what would it be? [Free format]
5. Please provide us with any additional comments you have about the front elevation: [Free format]
6. Please provide us with any additional comments you have about the decision to go ahead or not with the overall refurbishment: [Free format]

Feedback is welcome on the above questions – these will be finalised post meeting and then used to populate an online survey and appear in the newsletter. The online survey will have mandatory fields for name, email address in order that multiple responses may be identified.