

Application Number: F/YR13/0611/F
Minor
Parish/Ward: March Town Council/March West
Date Received: 12 August 2013
Expiry Date: 7 October 2013
Applicant: Snowmountain Enterprises Ltd

Proposal: Change of use of existing first and second floors from retail storage and existing flat to 3no 2-bed flats including the re-positioning of 3 x air-conditioning units

Location: First Floor and Second Floors, 9 - 11 High Street, March, Cambridgeshire

Reason before Committee: The proposal is before the Planning Committee due to an elected member having an interest in the premises

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATION

The application has been assessed in line with Policies H3, H5, E8, E12 and TR3 of the Local Plan and Policies CS1, CS3, CS16 and CS18 of the emerging Core Strategy, together with the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies support new residential development which is sympathetic to the character of the (conservation) area and does not adversely harm the amenity of neighbouring properties or the locality in general.

Key issues relate to:

- Permitted Development tolerances
- Design & Layout
- Impact on character and residential amenity
- Access and parking

The development proposed is within the Conservation Area of March and within the Central Commercial Area Boundary. The proposed change of use will be located above an existing retail use within the town centre.

The recommendation is to approve the proposal.

2. HISTORY

There is no relevant history in relation to this site.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework:

Paragraph 2: Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan.

Paragraph 14: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 17: Seeks to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants.

Paragraph 58: Development should respond to local character and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture and landscaping.

3.2 **Fenland Core Strategy (Proposed Submission February 2013):**

CS1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

CS3: Spatial strategy, the settlement hierarchy and the countryside.

CS16: Delivering and protecting high quality environments across the district.

CS18: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

3.3 **Fenland District Wide Local Plan:**

H3: Settlement Development Area Boundaries.

H5: Reintroducing dwelling in town centres

E8: Proposals for new development.

E12: Conserve and enhance Conservation Areas

TR3: Parking requirements.

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

- | | |
|--|---|
| 4.1 <i>Parish/Town Council:</i> | Recommend Approval |
| 4.2 <i>Middle Level Commissioners:</i> | Will not be commenting |
| 4.3 <i>FDC Conservation Officer</i> | No objections. Recommend a condition controlling materials proposed for new fenestration and for the re-siting of the air conditioning units. |
| 4.4 <i>Police Architectural Liaison</i> | Recommends increasing height of railings to 1.8m for the security of occupants of the flats. |
| 4.5 <i>CCC Highways</i> | Objections raised with regards to the vehicular access, parking arrangements and gates. Conditions recommended to widen the access to create suitable visibility splays, to remove the proposed gates and formalise parking bays on site. |
| 4.6 <i>Local Residents:</i> | None received. |

5. **SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 5.1 The application site lies within the Central Commercial Area Boundary of March and within the March Conservation Area. The area mainly consists of 2 and 3-storey buildings with, primarily, retail establishments at ground floor level. The first and second floors of the properties in the immediate vicinity are generally used for storage or for residential use.

The proposed flats will be accessed via stairs to the rear of the building along Acre Road. Acre Road consists mainly of small retail establishments and provides access to the existing flats and storerooms serving the shops fronting the High Street.

The existing first floor is currently allocated for storage of goods for the ground floor retail operation; however this space is under-used. The principal use of the 2nd floor is residential and provides accommodation for staff.

6. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

6.1 The application has been assessed in-line with local and national planning policy.

The key considerations for this application are:

- Existing permitted development rights
- Layout and Design
- Impacts on Residential Amenity
- Access and Parking

6.2 Existing Permitted Development Rights

The application site currently benefits from permitted development rights enabling the floors above the existing shop to be changed in to 2 flats. Therefore as the principle is already possible without involvement from the LPA, this application should be considered purely on the cumulative impact of a further flat in terms of amenity, parking and access, and design and layout.

6.3 Design and Layout

The flats will be located on the first and second floors of the building, with 2 flat occupying the first floor and 1 flat on the second floor. The current use of the first floor is primarily for storage and the second floor already functions as a flat, albeit as staff accommodation, with a small element used for storage.

Minimal external alterations are proposed, particularly to the elevation fronting High Street and therefore the character of the building will not be affected. New openings are proposed at the rear of the first floor which will provide access and views for 2 of the flats, onto a proposed roof garden. Further railings matching the existing, are proposed to be erected, in order to ensure the safety of occupants when accessing the gardens.

Comments received from the Police Architectural Liaison Officer suggest increasing the height of the proposed railings to 1.8m, in order to provide suitable security for the occupants of the flats. However, given the location of the site being within the March Conservation Area, the design of the railings may need to be carefully considered. It is therefore recommended to apply a condition to control the design of these.

The second floor will see the introduction of a new window, in order to provide some light into the newly formed bedroom.

No details as to the materials proposed for the new fenestration has been provided and it is therefore recommended to apply a condition ensuring that this element of the proposal is appropriate given its location.

Adequate provision has been identified for refuse storage and collection.

There are currently 3 existing air conditioning units at first floor level on the southern elevation which are visible from Acre Road. These are proposed to be re-positioned to the first floor eastern (rear) elevation and therefore will appear more prominent from the street scene when viewed from Acre Road. No details have been provided as to whether these will be suitably screened and it is recommended to apply a condition to ensure that the visual impact of these units is acceptable, given they will impact on the Conservation Area.

6.4 Impacts on Residential Amenity

The proposed flats will mainly look out onto the newly formed roof gardens and onto the High Street and are therefore not considered to adversely impact upon residential amenity in terms of overlooking. In this respect the proposal would accord with the relevant local plan policies.

6.5 Access and Parking

Parking already exists on site for up to 3 vehicles which satisfies the Council's current parking standards. Highways comments and proposed conditions are noted regarding the gated access, however as the gates and access already exist and function as parking space for the retail and residential use, it is not considered reasonable to request for the works as requested by Highways. In addition, policy TR3 of the Local Plan makes exceptions for parking provision where the development is located within a Conservation Area and where under used, vacant or derelict buildings within built up areas are brought back into use.

7. **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposal has been considered in light of the above points and the relevant national and local planning policies. The design and layout and of the proposal is considered to be acceptable, together with sufficient access and parking provision and with minimal impact on the character of the area and the amenity of neighbouring properties.

Therefore, in accordance with the advice contained within the NPPF and in accordance with policies contained within the Fenland District Wide Local Plan and the emerging Core Strategy this proposal is recommended for approval.

8. **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant subject to:

- i) **No new objections received in relation to Highways and amenity matters;**

1. **The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.**

Reason - To ensure compliance with Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. **Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved full details of the external finishes including fenestration, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall be executed in accordance with the approved scheme and retained in perpetuity thereafter.**

Reason - To safeguard the visual amenities of the area.

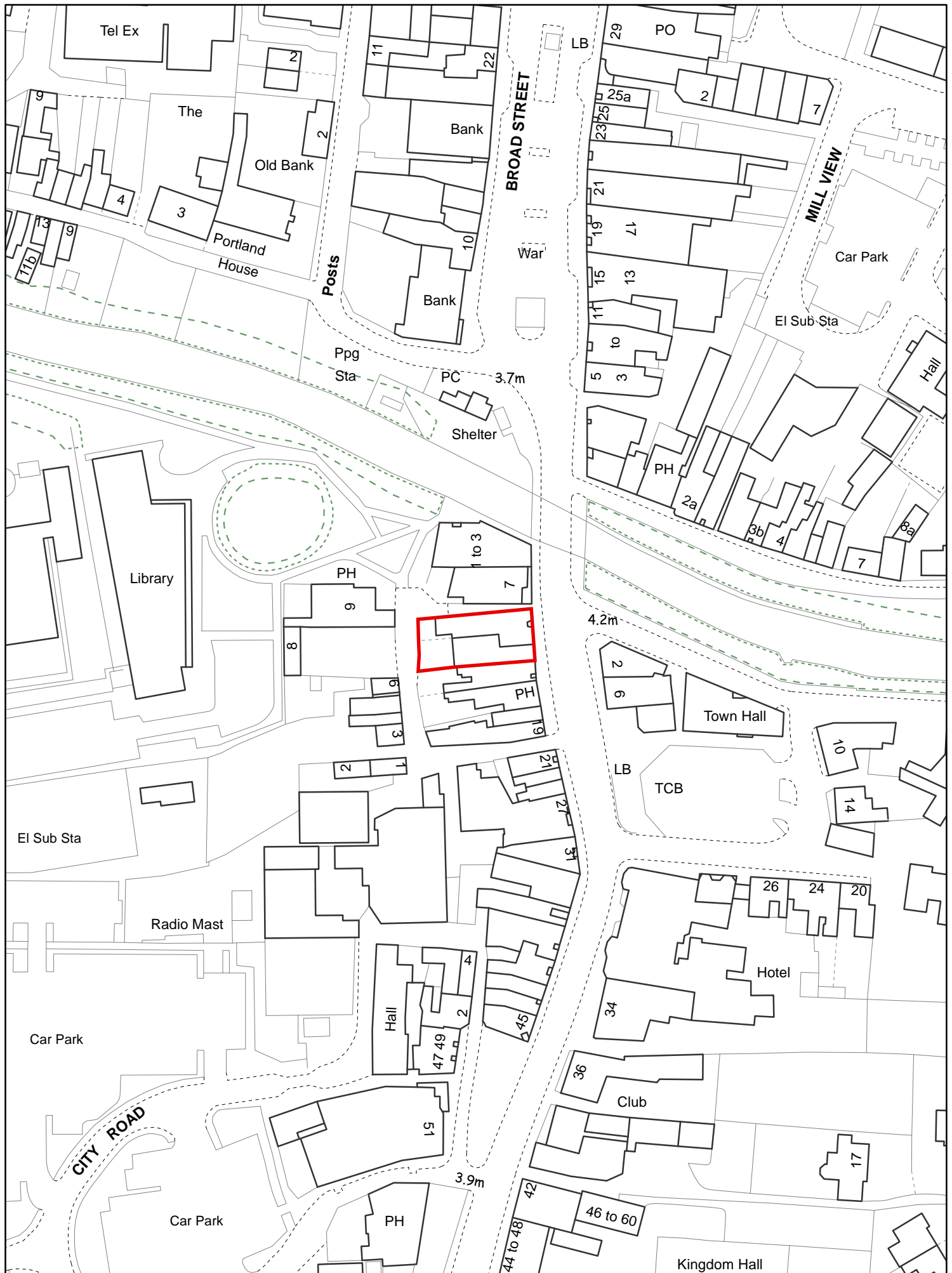
3. **Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, full details including visual and environmental mitigation measures of the re-positioned air conditioning units, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter retained in perpetuity.**

Reason - In the interest of visual and residential amenity.

4. **Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, full details of any boundary treatments including the proposed railings, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter retained in perpetuity.**

Reason - In the interest of visual and residential amenity.

5. **Approved Plans**



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F/YR13/0611/F

Scale = 1:1,250





Rear West Facing Elevation

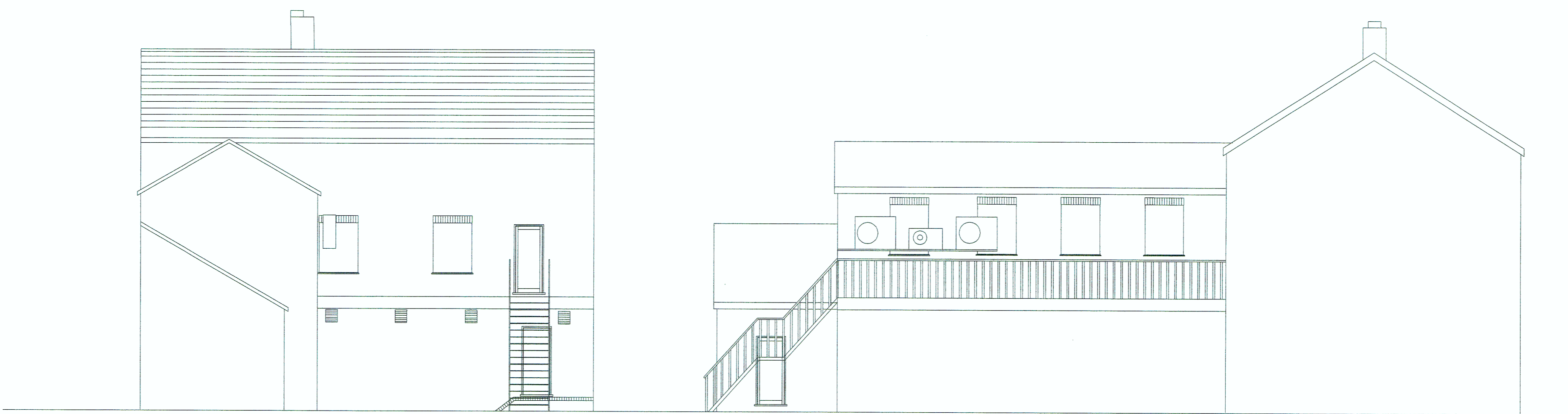
Side South Facing Elevation



Front East Facing Elevation

Side North Facing Elevation

Proposed Elevations



Rear West Facing Elevation

Side South Facing Elevation

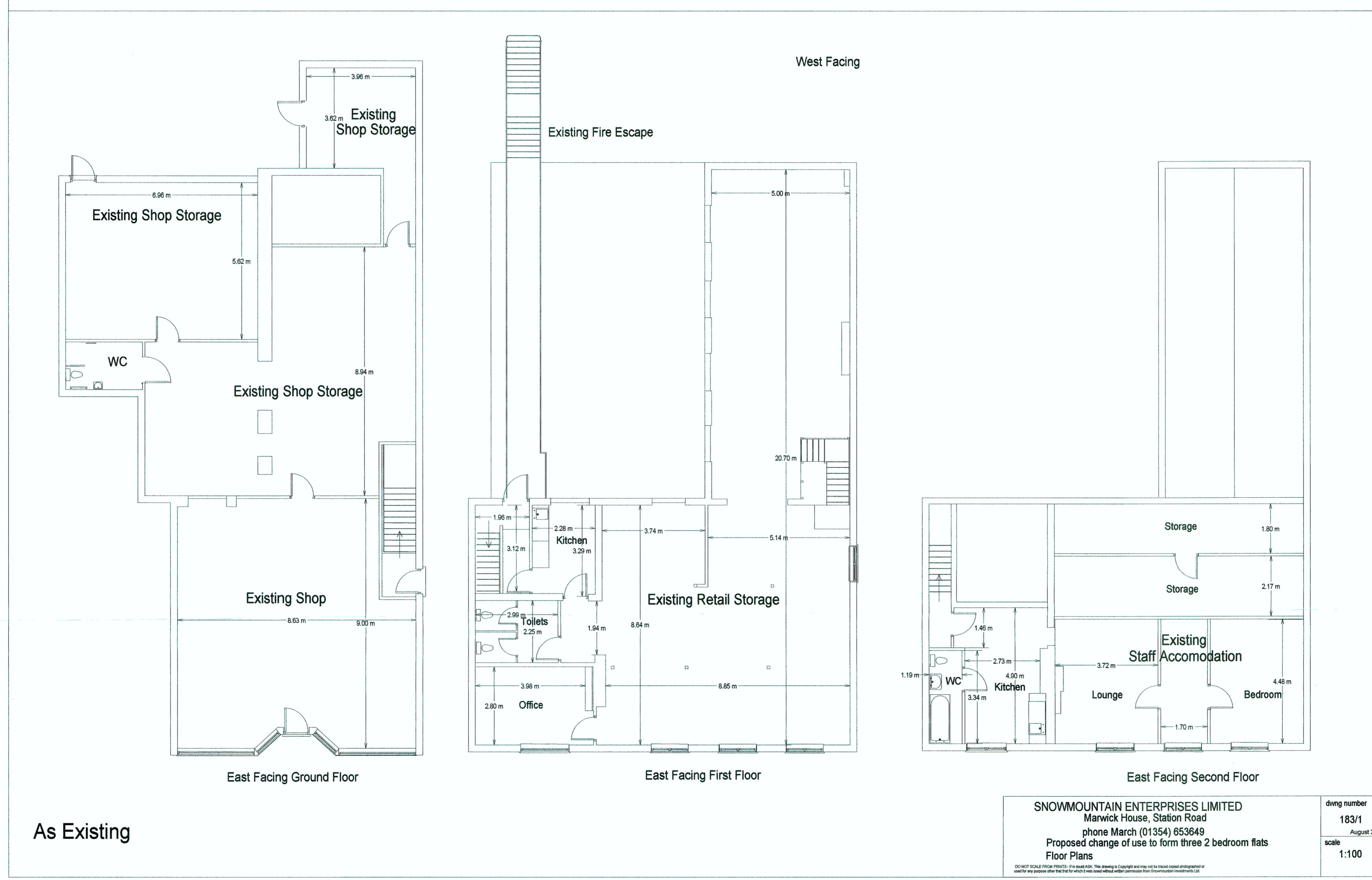
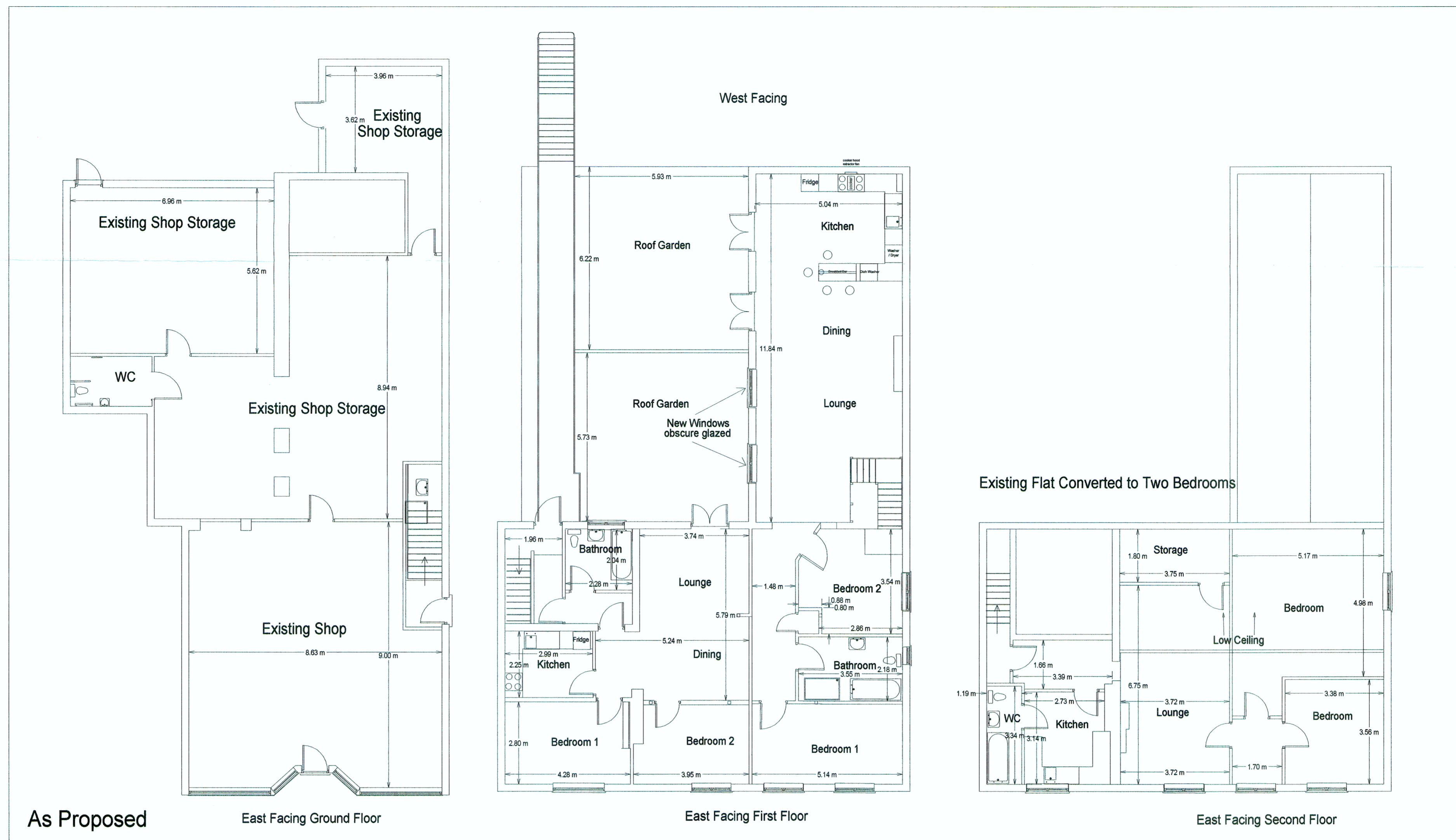


Front East Facing Elevation

Side North Facing Elevation

Existing Elevations

drawing number
 183/2
 August 2013
 scale
 1:100
 SNOWMOUNTAIN ENTERPRISES LIMITED
 Marwick House, Station Road
 phone Marwick (01354) 653649
 Proposed change of use to form three 2 bedroom flats
 Elevations
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SNOWMOUNTAIN ENTERPRISES LIMITED
 Marwick House, Station Road
 phone March (01354) 653649
 Proposed change of use to form three 2 bedroom flats
 Floor Plans

dwg number
 183/1
 August 2013

scale
 1:100