

Epping Hall

Sports and Leisure feasibility study

Introduction

This paper has been prepared to explore the potential for the delivery of a sports and leisure facility on the Epping Hall site. It sets out a series of options for this, along with an evaluation of the options and estimates of the likely project costs. It also provides an assessment of the likely impact of any leisure development in terms of other potential projects on the wider St John's Road area.

Context

Recently undertaken public consultation has demonstrated that there is very strong local support for the idea that sports and leisure facilities might be provided within the St John's Road site as a replacement for the Hemnall Street facility which is in an old building and requires significant investment. Several options explored through the consultation showed potential for a sports facility within the proposals, albeit with the caveat that this was unlikely to be a viable project without significant investment from the Council. It is considered that a facility on this site would relate better to the town centre. Particularly, users of the sports centre would be better able to use the town centre car parks, including any new areas proposed on the St John's Road area.

In response to the public consultation, the draft brief for the area includes the potential for sports and leisure development. This allows for the Council to evaluate options which could include a sports facility, but also to allow the market to respond to the opportunity. Importantly, the brief does not tie the Council into delivering a sports and leisure facility on this site if it proves to be un-affordable.

The aim of the work is to answer the following questions:

- What extent of land would be required for a replacement sports facility on a near like-for-like basis with the Hemnall Street facility?
- What facility could be accommodated if the site were to be limited to the land in Epping Town Council ownership?
- Are there options which allow some or all of the existing building to be remodelled and incorporated into the new facility in either of these options?
- What are the build cost of the options?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the options?
- What are the implications for other development in the area if a sports centre is delivered on this site, particularly for the larger floorplate food store.

Epping Hall

The Epping Hall building comprises a main hall, conference room, offices, kitchen, bar and ancillary spaces. It is well set back from the street and cut into the slope of the site, leaving it with little street presence and unusual access and servicing arrangements. Over the course of the main project it has been identified as a potential site for redevelopment, subject to the agreement of Eppint Town Council and subject to the land being purchased by EFDC. It is expected that the purchase cost of the land would at least need to exceed the outstanding mortgage on the building to ensure that ETC is not left out of pocket.

Plans for the existing building are included in appendix b.

Existing Hemnall Street facility

The existing building provides a four court hall, gymnasium, fitness studio and four squash courts supported by a range of ancillary spaces. The core of the building is a large Victorian house which has been built around in a series of phases to provide a total of 2,212sqm gross internal area. The result is a building in which it is difficult to achieve an optimal layout and energy efficiency. The age of the building also means that accessibility is an issue and that maintenance is likely to be increasingly expensive.

The location of the building away from the town centre and the lack of parking on the site means that the facility has a significant impact on surrounding streets. In the event that the facility is moved and the land sold, it is considered very suitable for residential development.

Plans for the existing building are included in appendix c.

Options for sports provision

The work which has been undertaken suggests that it could be possible to provide a sports centre on a like-for-like basis within the existing ETC site, either making use of the existing building, or starting with a completely fresh structure. Options have also been explored which retain the existing forecourt and green space at the front of the building.

The options for sports provision have been explored as follows:

- Option 1 - replacement facilities on a like-for-like basis with a new building extending back from the existing Epping Hall building line to retain the green space and accessible parking;
- Option 2 - replacement facilities on a like-for-like basis retaining and reusing the existing Epping Hall building;
- Option 3 - replacement facilities on a like-for-like basis within the curtilage of the ETC ownership; and
- Option 4 - replacement facilities on a like-for-like basis within the curtilage of the ETC ownership and retaining the existing building.

A further variation is possible for option 1 which takes the proposed plan but moves the building line forward to correspond with the extent of the existing excavated area. This has been developed in response to the process of considering these options.

Evaluation of the options

Options 1 and 2

These options both work to the existing building line which is set back from the street.

Strengths:

- Minimal impact on the character of the street – most of the change is well set back from the road;
- Internal layout of the building is less compromised by the configuration of the site – there is greater flexibility to deliver an ideal building, particularly where starting from scratch;
- No further excavation is likely to be required; and
- A layout of the building in this way could work within the main development area as shown in consultation option 2. This allowed for a reconfigured entrance from within the site, releasing the street frontage for other development;

Weaknesses

- The building is well set back from the road and as a result lacks a strong public presence;
- Any development which extends beyond the ETC site will require the purchase of further -land from EEC, increasing the project cost; and
- Option 2 which retains and re-uses the existing building is not as efficient in land terms and would require a greater extent of new building to the rear of the plot – this could have a more significant impact on adjoining neighbours.

Options 3 and 4

Both of these options work within the limits of the existing EEC ownership

Strengths:

- Limited land take, leaving more space for other development and reducing the land cost associated with the project;
- Potential to use the excavated area of land for new buildings to keep the overall bulk of the building as low as possible with further excavation to keep the bulk of the building down at the street frontage; and
- Location of the building with a strong frontage to St John's Road will give it a more public profile, appropriate to a building of this nature;

Weaknesses

- The building would be constrained within the site, potentially compromising the internal layout. This is particularly so for the option which retains the existing building – the large sports hall needs to be slotted in between the existing building and the road and as a result the internal layout is not ideal;

- Considerable amounts of excavation will be required to achieve the layout shown which sticks to the existing site;
- The excavation issue could be overcome by exploring options which step the section of the building. However, this would result in a more bulky building on the street frontage; and
- All the site would be used, leaving no forecourt area or accessible parking for disabled drivers;

Further option 1A

As a result of considering these strengths and weaknesses a further option has been developed as a variation on option 1. This considers the potential for a new building, but pulled forward to extent of the existing excavation line with the following key attributes:

- It would reduce the land take whilst limiting the need for further excavation work;
- There is potential to achieve a near-ideal form of internal layout for the building;
- A small public space can be retained at the front of the building, but with direct access to the building rather than via a bridge link;
- The stepped terrain is used to effect in terms of reducing the apparent bulk of the building; but
- The building is closer to the street and can be designed to have a more positive profile.

Initial costings

The following figures are provided as initial indicative costs and are subject to further review and revision:

Option one	Set back/new build/no excavation/additional land take	£3.6m
Option two	Set back/reuse hall/no excavation/additional land take	£3.5m
Option three	Set forward/new build/excavation/no extra land take	£3.7m
Option four	Set forward/reuse hall/excavation/no extra land take	£3.6m

These figures exclude any potential land acquisition costs. The land acquisition costs for options one and two are likely to be higher due to the larger land take.

The revised option 1A approach has not been costed, but is expected to be the same as option 1, albeit with a slightly smaller land take.

Impact of options on other potential development

In considering the potential for leisure development on the Epping Hall site, consideration has also been given to the potential for development on the rest of the St John's area to the south west of St John's Road. Whilst smaller format development such as residential would be able to adapt and work around such as scheme, there is potential for a food store or comparison retail offer to be compromised.

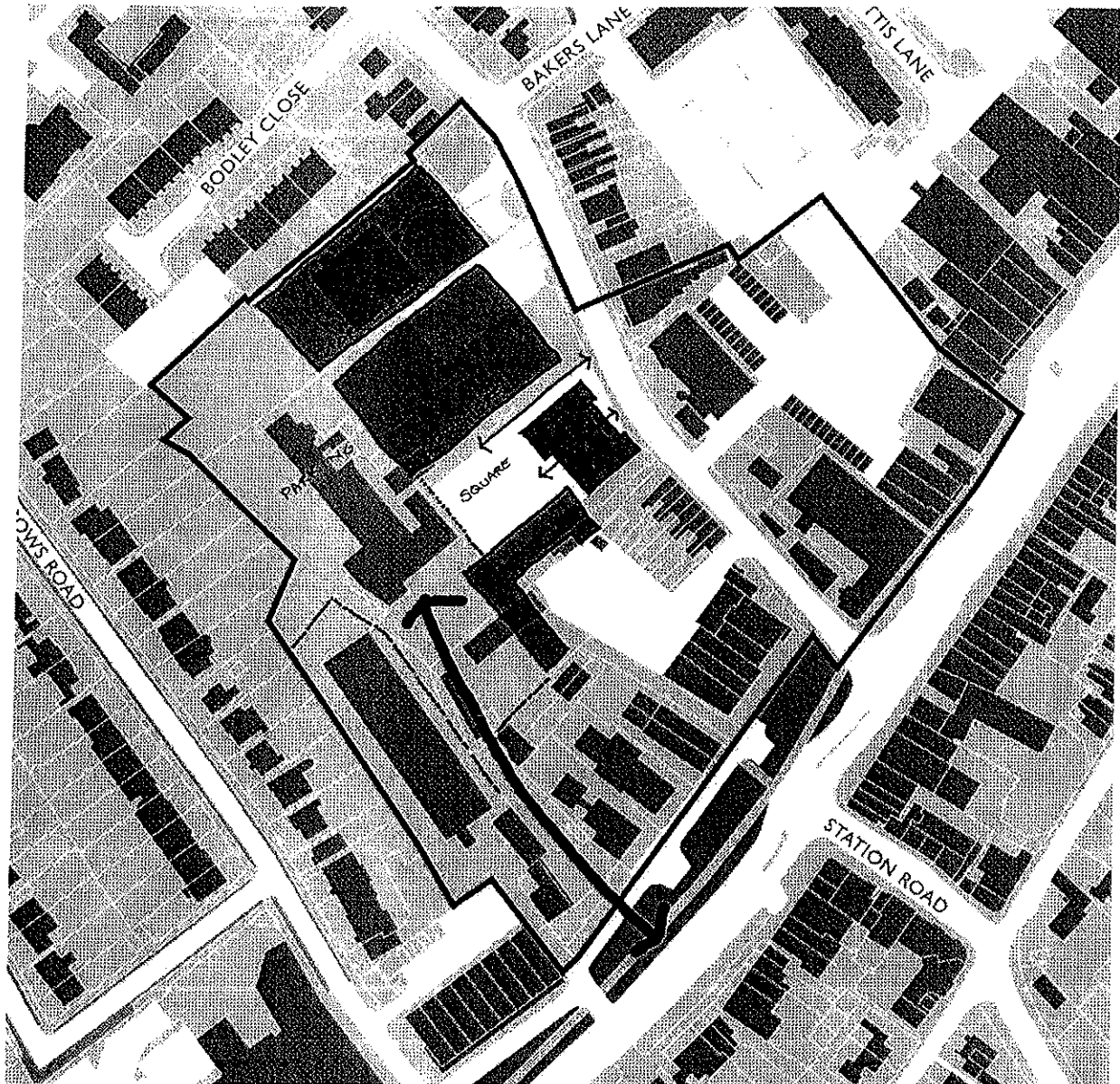
Consultation results provide a clear indication that a large food store within the study area would be opposed by a vocal part of the local population. It is therefore likely that the scale of store should be modest, potentially up to 2,000sqm rather than the larger format which had been modelled originally.

A number of options have been sketched out which test the potential for a store, parking, servicing and other uses such as community provision.

This raises the following key considerations:

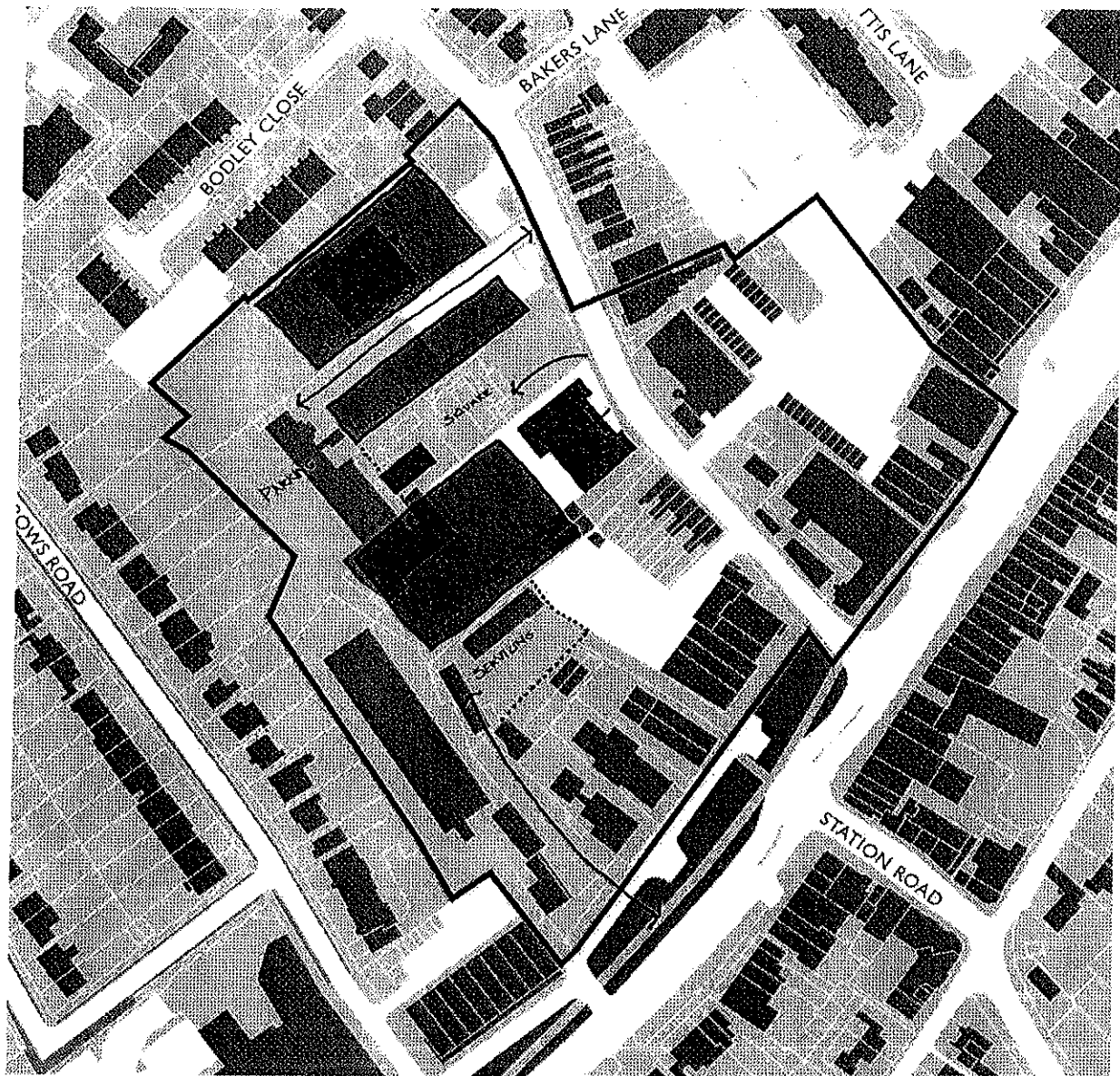
- Any food store is likely to prefer a location which offers some street frontage and visibility to St John's Road in order to establish a presence. Whilst this could be possible, the option(s) which achieve this are likely to limit the development potential of the land to the rear of the building.
- The main consultation option used so far shows how the area of parking can be minimised by tucking a significant amount under the store, using the natural slope of the site and taking advantage of the excavation work already done for the Epping Hall building. This approach will be less viable in other locations.
- The option to deck parking was a key feature of the larger store option, but may be less viable here with a smaller store. As the gradient of a car park is a key factor for supermarkets, this may limit the approach.
- Any option which does not establish a strong critical mass of commercial uses as an anchor cannot hope to deliver or sustain the smaller secondary shops which would be supported by the public or to deliver the infrastructure change needed to create a much better integration with the High Street. A smaller store therefore risks feeling more isolated from the rest of the town centre and as a result may not have the same potential benefits.

Scenario A



- Food store located between a new sports centre and the Centre Point building
- Main frontage to St John's Road with good level of visibility
- Pedestrian access from St John's Road
- Combined access for parking and servicing from Epping High Street
- Potential for a small square to the rear of the community building and for good quality public space on St John's Road
- Level change from the store to the car park is not ideal but some potential for parking tucked under the store
- Limits the potential for other development within the site
- Parking is reasonably well integrated with the urban form and not treated as an exclusively back-land use

Scenario B



- Food store located to the rear of the Centre Point building – lacks visibility and profile
- Opens up the body of the site and allows some potential for other missed development to create a small square
- Servicing access from Epping High Street using the EFDC depot site
- Vehicle access to parking and pedestrian access to the development from St John's Road, but with vehicle access directed away from the main public space
- Potential to retain the cookery school building
- Level changes from the car park to the store are not ideal, but some potential for parking tucked under the store
- Car parking is better integrated with the main urban area in terms of pedestrian linkages

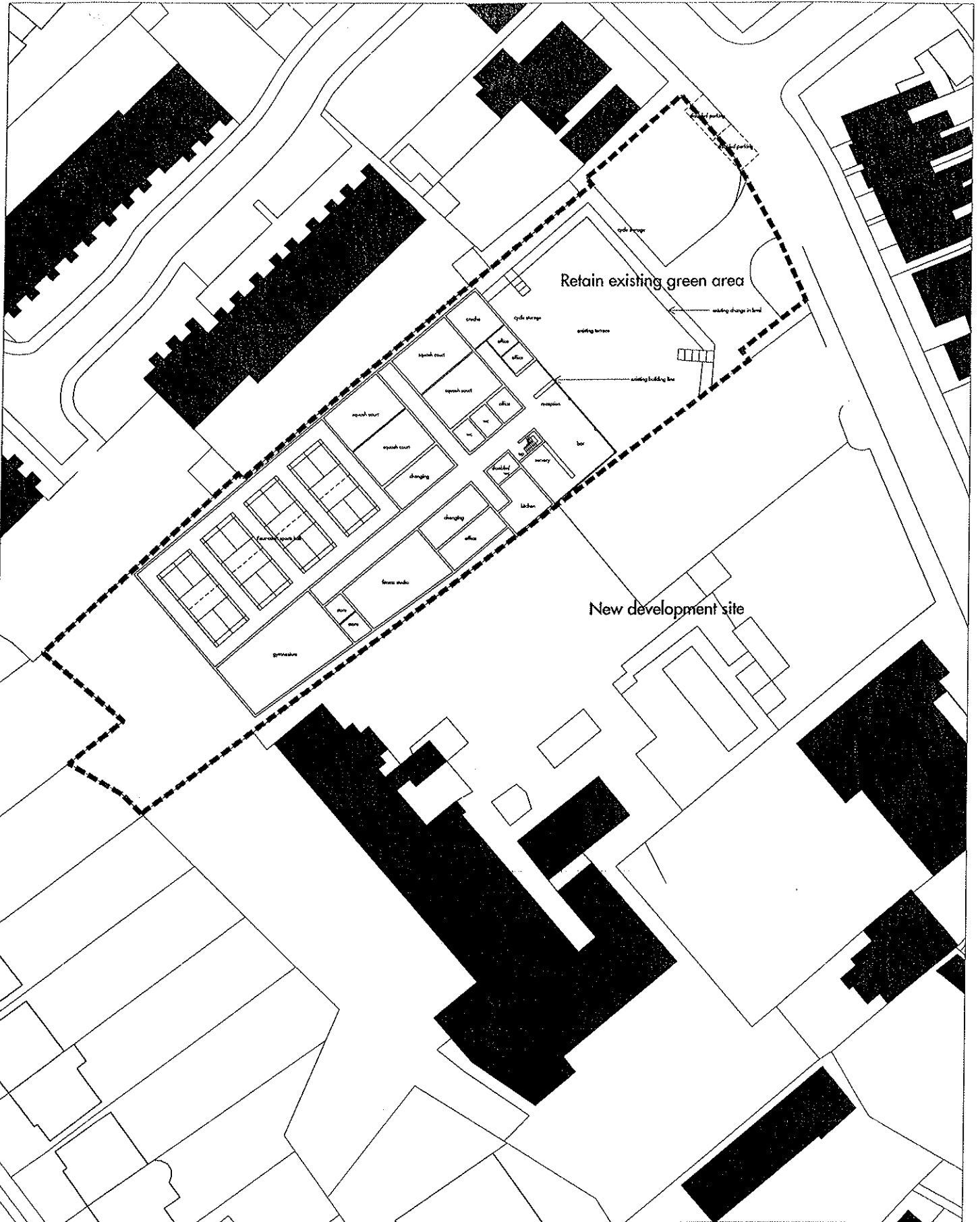
Scenario C



- Food store set back from the road behind the Centre Pont building to create a small public space with potential for public uses and other small commercial uses
- Some flexibility around servicing and parking access, with potential to use either the High Street access or the St John's Road access for either parking, servicing or both. In an ideal world, the two movements would be kept distinct from one another.
- Level changes from the car park to the store are not ideal, but some potential for parking tucked under the store
- Parking is treated as a back-land use, much as happens in the current arrangement on to the High Street
- Limits the potential for more mixed and integrated development, and lacks future flexibility

Appendix A

Options

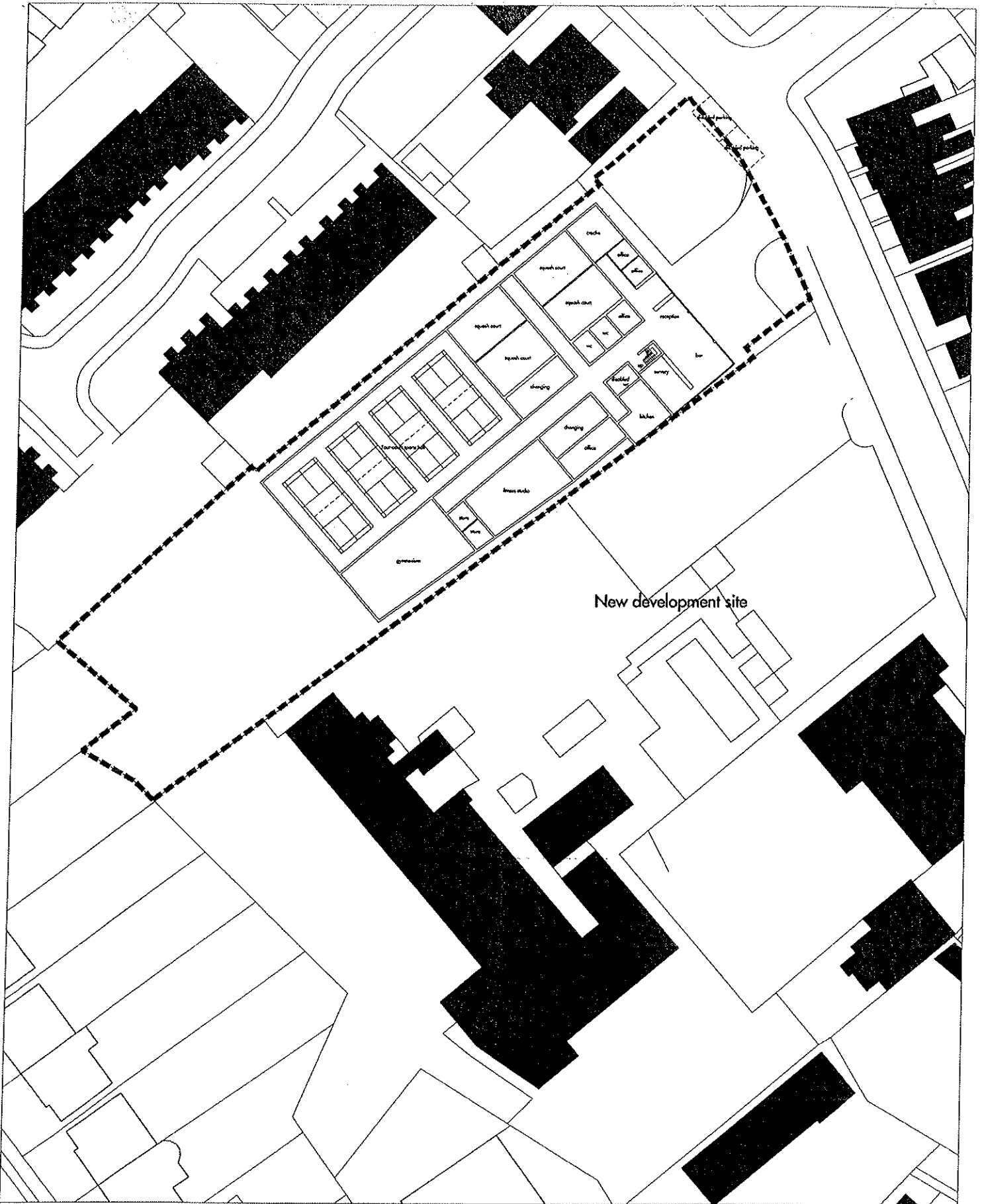


OPTION 1 - LIKE-FOR-LIKE REPLACEMENT + NEW FACILITIES

Total site area: 3816sqm
 Total footprint (GEA): 1870sqm on lower gf + 477 sqm on upper gf
 Proposed building area (GEA): 2347 sqm
 Components: Four-court sports hall, 4 squash courts, gymnasium, fitness studio

Epping Hall Sports Facility

Lower ground floor plan option 1
 Scale 1:500 @ A3
 29 August 2012

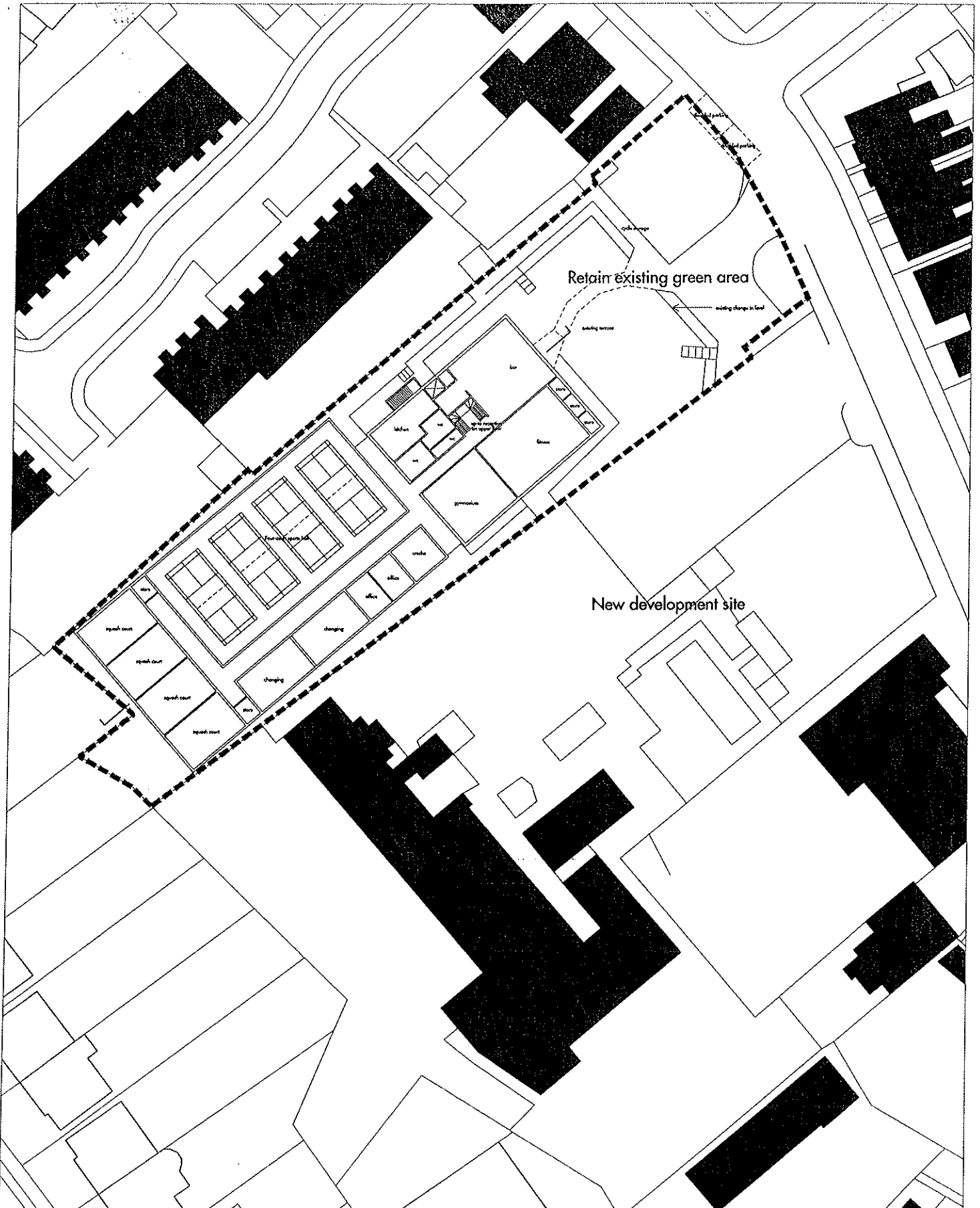


OPTION 1 - LIKE-FOR-LIKE REPLACEMENT + NEW FACILITIES

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 Proposed building area (GEA): 2347 sqm
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Epping Hall Sports Facility

Lower ground floor option 1A
 Scale 1:500 @ A3
 29 August 2012

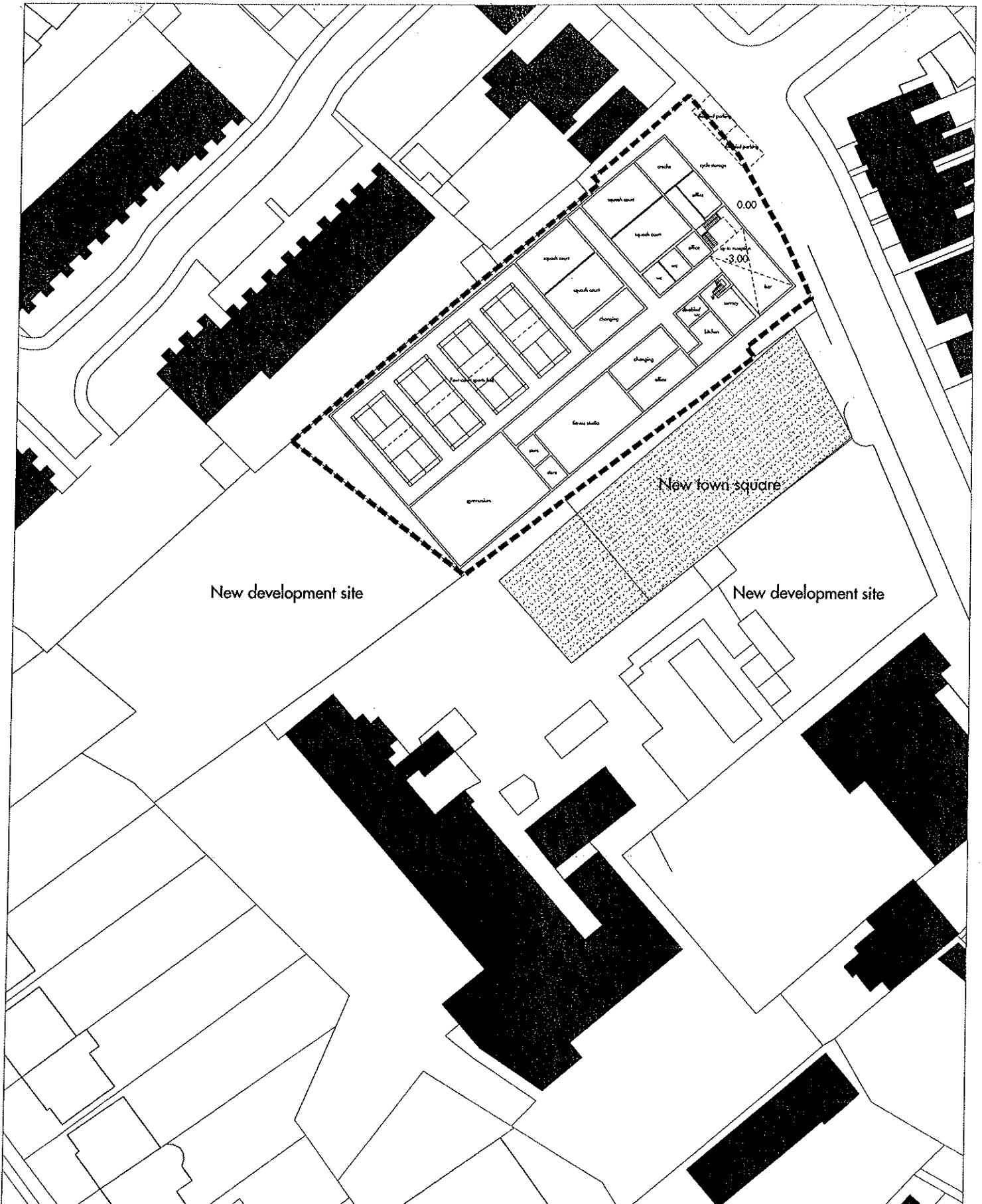


OPTION 2 - LIKE-FOR-LIKE REPLACEMENT + CONVERSION EXISTING BUILDING

Total site area: 3816sqm
 Total footprint (GEA): 592sqm (exist. building) + 1335sqm+420sqm (lower + upper gf new building)
 Proposed building area (GEA): 2347 sqm
 Components: Four-court sports hall, 4 squash courts, gymnasium, fitness studio

Epping Hall Sports Facility

Lower ground floor plan option 2
 Scale 1:500 @ A3
 29 August 2012

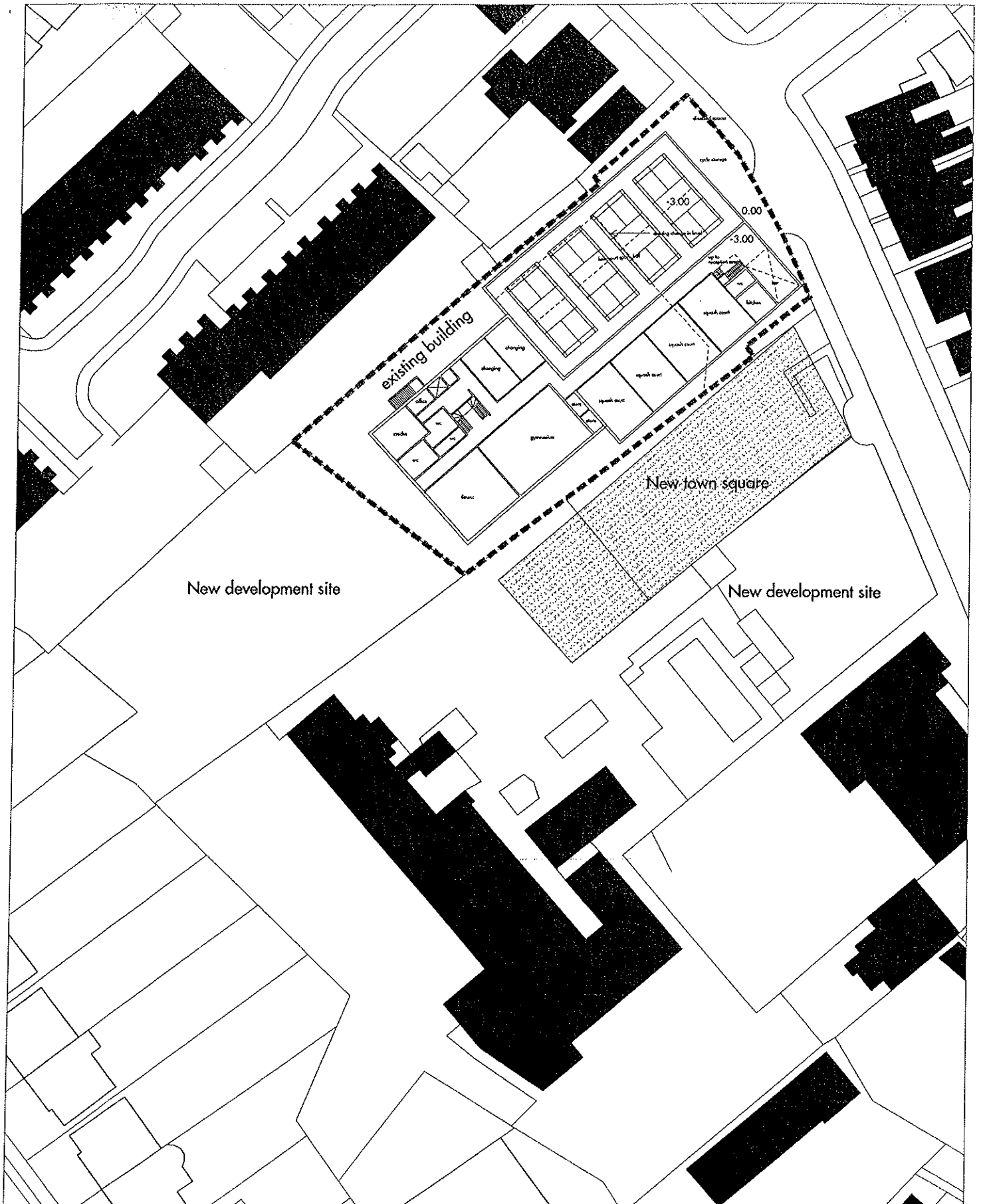


OPTION 3 - ETC LAND ONLY + NEW FACILITIES

Total site area: 2356sqm
 Total area (GEA): 1880sqm on lower ground floor + 467sqm on upper ground floor
 Proposed building area (GEA): 2347sqm
 Components: Four-court sports hall, 4 squash courts, gymnasium, fitness studio

Epping Hall Sports Facility

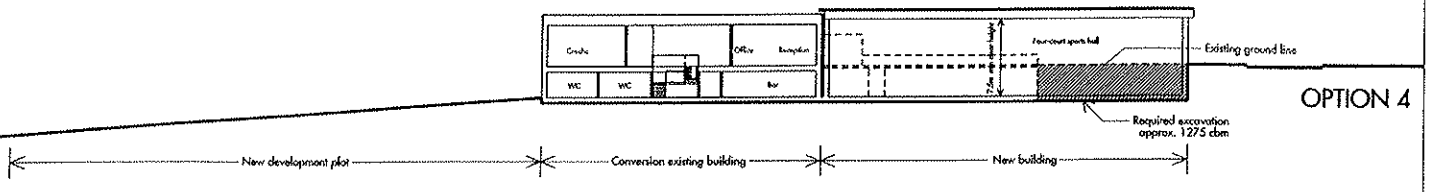
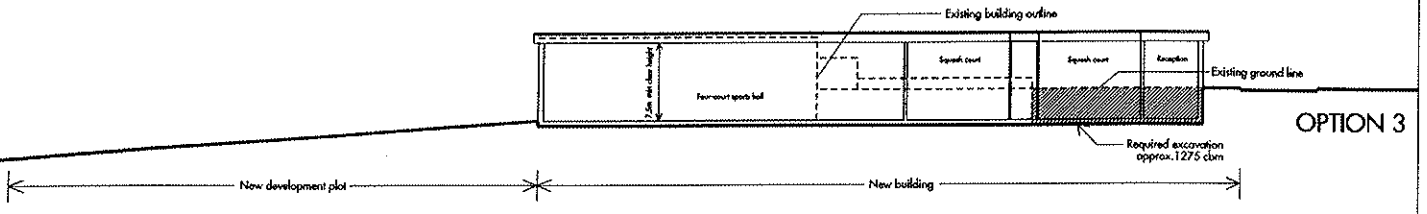
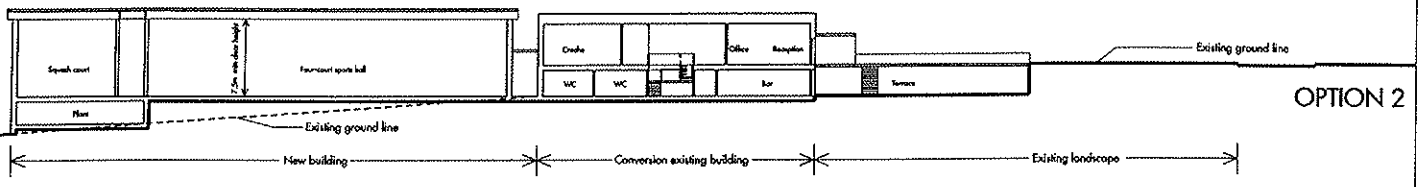
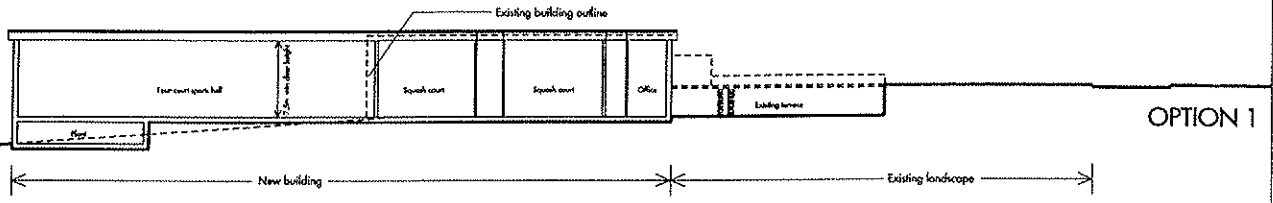
Lower ground floor plan option 3
 Scale 1:500 @ A3
 29 August 2012



OPTION 4 - ETC LAND ONLY + CONVERSION EXISTING BUILDING

Total site area: 2356sqm
 Total area (GEA): 592sqm (existing) + 1070sqm + 685sqm (on lower and upper gf new building)
 Proposed building area (GEA): 2347sqm
 Components: Four-court sports hall, four squash courts, gymnasium and fitness studio

Epping Hall Sports Facility
 Lower ground floor plan option 4
 Scale 1:500 @ A3
 29 August 2012



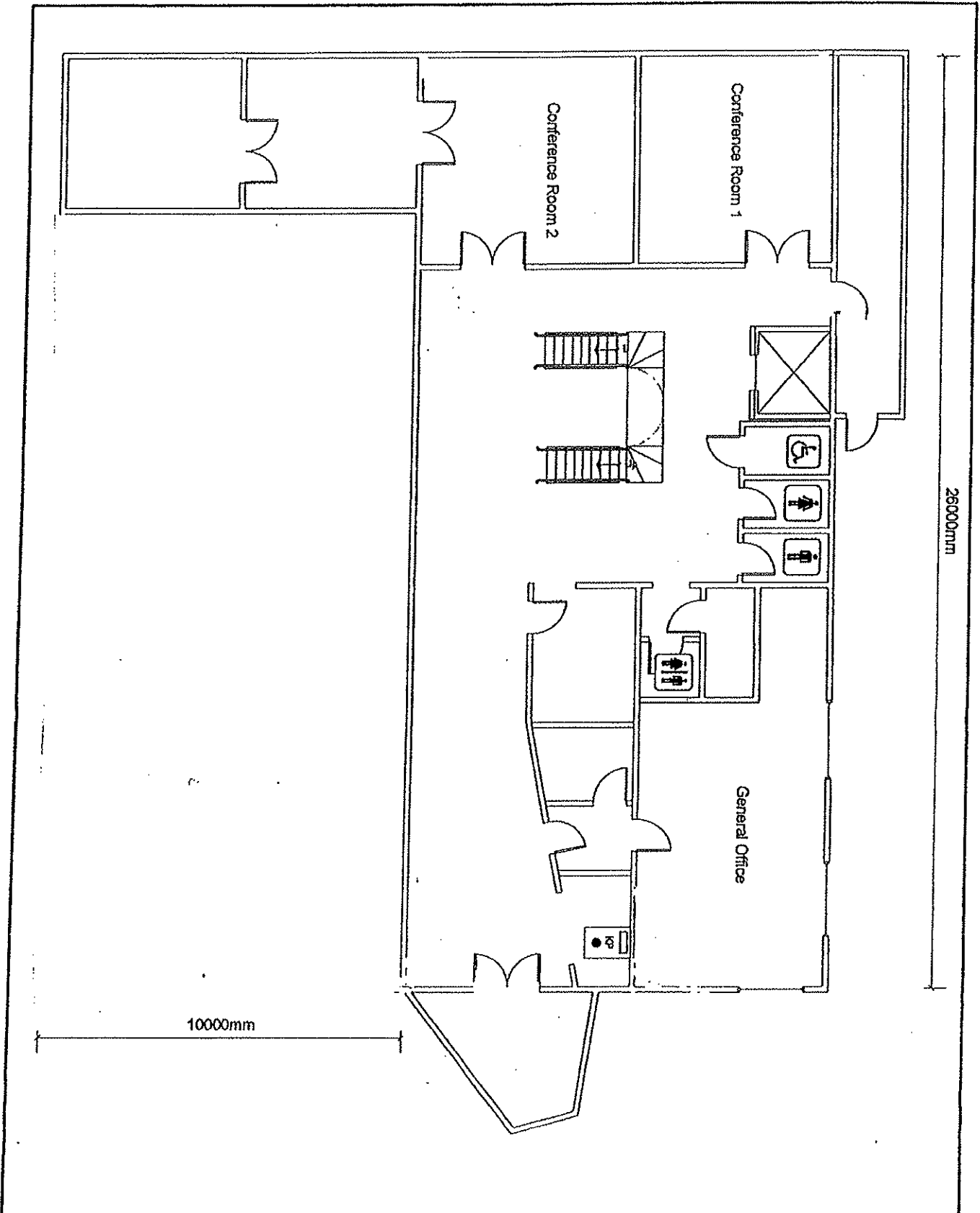
Epping Hall Sports Facility
 Schematic sections option 1 to 4
 Scale 1:500 © A3
 29 August 2012

Appendix B

Epping Hall plans

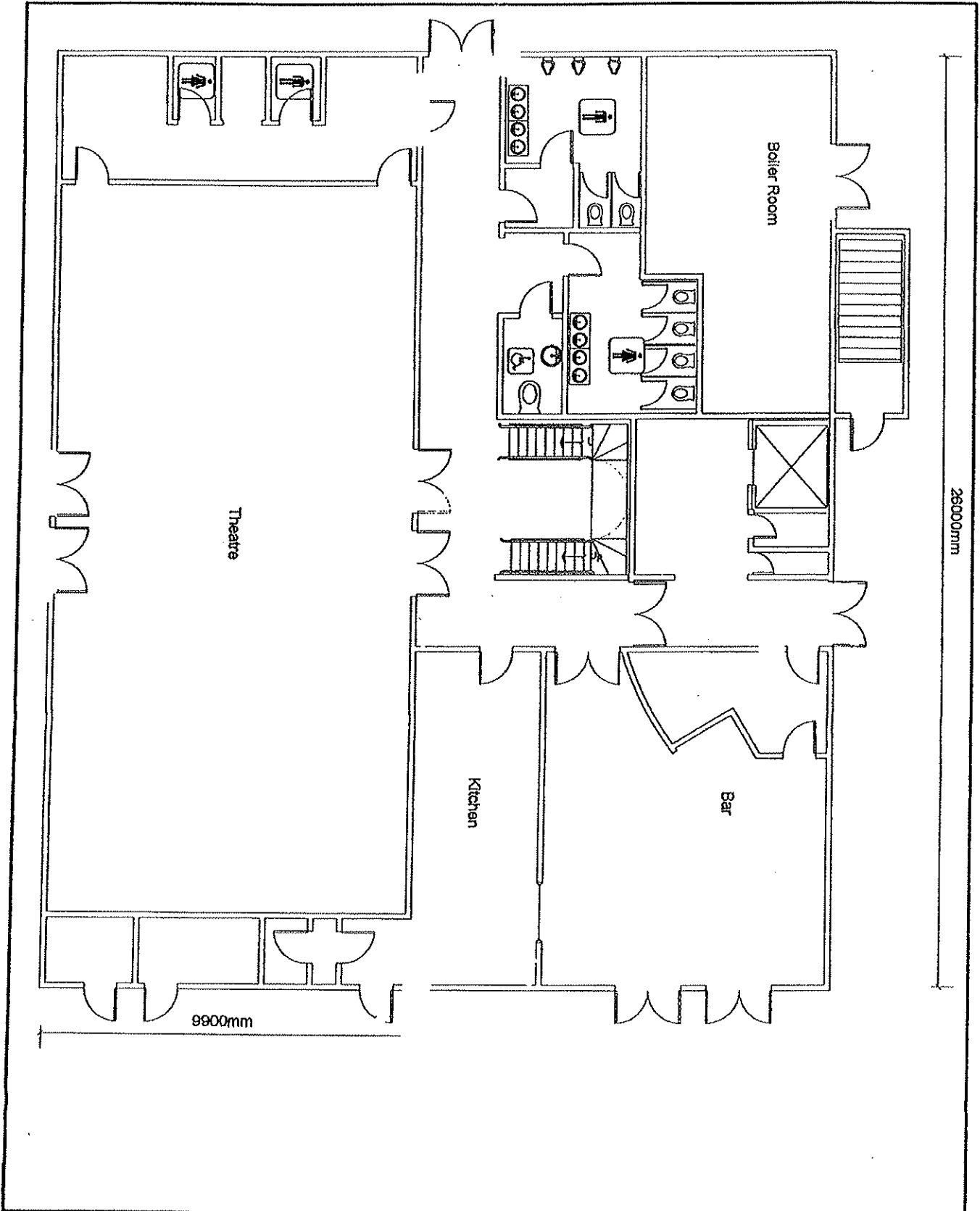
EPPING HALL

NB. All corridor doors are fire doors.



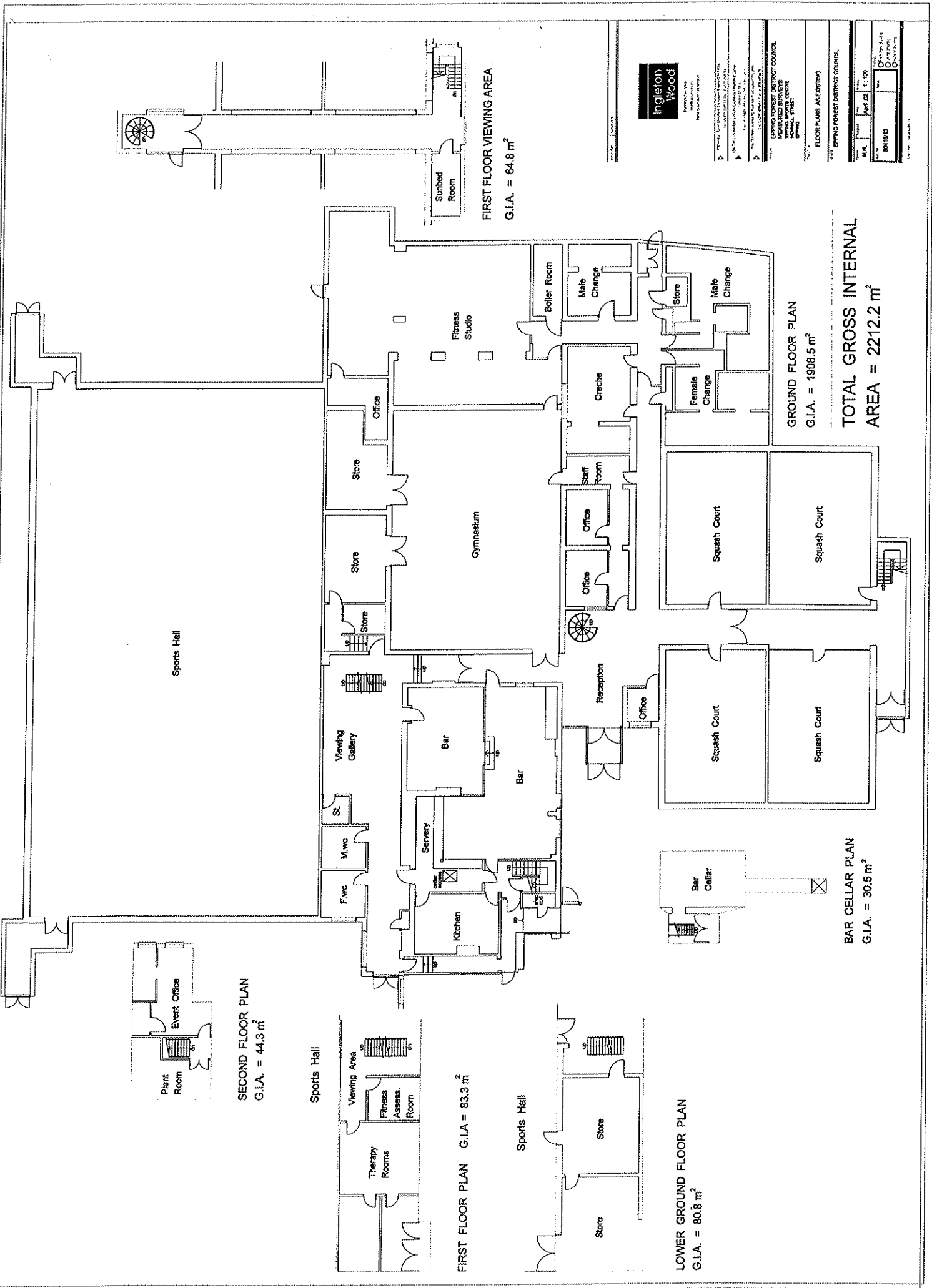
ERPING HALL

NB. All corridor doors are fire doors.



Appendix C

Hemnal Street plans



FIRST FLOOR VIEWING AREA
G.I.A. = 64.8 m²

GROUND FLOOR PLAN
G.I.A. = 1908.5 m²

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
G.I.A. = 83.3 m²

SECOND FLOOR PLAN
G.I.A. = 44.3 m²

LOWER GROUND FLOOR PLAN
G.I.A. = 80.8 m²

BAR CELLAR PLAN
G.I.A. = 30.5 m²



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