



Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan Review

Paper 5: Town Centre Planning History & Monitoring

Introduction

In May 2018 a report was produced on behalf of Uppingham Town Council entitled “Consideration of the strategic policy context, sites and issues to inform a proposed review of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan”. The report identified a number of key evidence requirements for a new Neighbourhood Plan. With specific reference to the town centre it recommended that a record of town centre planning decisions and a register of occupancy and vacancy levels should be maintained and monitored. The work undertaken to inform the May 2018 report was based upon a review of the existing and emerging Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plan policies, RCC Retail Capacity Assessment (2016) and site visits which provided a quick visual “health check” of the town centre.

A key element of the report was a critique of the proposed change in designation for Queen Street and High Street West from ‘primary’ to ‘secondary’ in the Local Plan and the likely impact this may have on the retail offer in the town. One of the key findings of the report was the Neighbourhood Plan, not the Local Plan, is the appropriate document to define shopping frontages. The report identified that unique qualities of the town operates alongside than specific frontage policies (especially secondary areas) and are equally important to the success of the town centre.

This paper complements the May 2018 report. It provides more empirical evidence of the current condition of the town centre by examining the planning history of commercial premises and occupancy/vacancies in town centre commercial premises. It provides some pointers for possible policies including frontages in the town centre for the revised Neighbourhood Plan.

Main Conclusions

- 1** The town centre is successful due to a variety of factors, not the least being the hard work and entrepreneurial spirit of many traders and property owners. However, the pressures on traditional retailing are stronger than ever, hence the importance of the approach that is taken in the NP.
- 2** Monitoring is important especially in the face of commercial changes and a looser planning system. A scheme is proposed which will enable the TC and/or the NP SG to undertake this simply and locally.
- 3** Notwithstanding the conclusions of the RCC Retail Capacity Study and the policies in the Draft Local Plan, this study has shown that the properties which RCC propose as being in secondary rather than primary frontages are currently all occupied and in Class A1 use. Taken with the strong argument that such policies are local rather than strategic, there seem little justification for change, as there is no evidence that the area fulfils a “secondary” town centre function. However, this is not an argument that should take precedence over other NP matters, e.g. the location and type of new housing.
- 4** As an anecdotal observation, although the safety/health impacts of traffic need to be considered, good vehicular access to the centre and convenient parking are important to the town centre.

November 2018 - Prepared for Uppingham Town Council by Clive Keble Consulting Ltd. on behalf of OPUN (the Architecture and Design Centre for the East Midlands).

1. Work undertaken and future monitoring

1.1 In response to the recommendations of the May 2018 report two tables have been produced. The first table is entitled “Uppingham town centre planning history” and the second table, “Uppingham town centre commercial premises occupancy”. These tables are in Appendices 1 and 2.

1.2 Table 1, Uppingham town centre planning history has been prepared using the information on planning applications, available on the Rutland County Council website. The time period covered is for 10 years or so from Jan. 1st, 2008 to Oct. 31st 2018. The applications included in the table relate to proposals for the change of use within the town centre. It should be noted that a significant number of other applications relating to alterations, signage and tree works in the town centre have also been submitted but these have not been included in the table.

1.3 Table 2, Uppingham town centre commercial premises occupancy is derived from a combination of a survey of town centre uses undertaken as part of the Rutland Retail Capacity Assessment (2016 update), Google maps, internet searches, the Love Uppingham website <https://www.loveuppingham.org.uk/>, and site visits, but the listing is approximate rather than precise. Occupancy needs to be monitored on a regular basis. Information on the planning use class into which each property falls has been included based upon the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Order) 1987 (and amendments) . The Use Classes Order can be viewed via the Planning Portal <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/>.

1.4 It is considered essential to maintain up to date records of both planning applications/decisions and occupancy/vacancy levels for town centre commercial premises. Both tables should therefore be maintained as live documents which should be updated on an annual basis.

1.5 The record of planning applications/decisions can be maintained by identifying the applications received which include a change of use within the town centre using the monthly list of new planning applications on the Rutland County Council website <https://publicaccess.rutland.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=monthlyList> to identify relevant applications submitted. The outcome of any relevant applications can then be ascertained using the link to the planning application on the monthly list. The table should be updated annually. A planning permission lasts for three years from the date of decision and it would also be useful to also identify any planning permissions which have been implemented and those which are still extant. Identifying the applications which have been implemented is probably most easily done by an annual site survey of the premises where planning permission for change of use has been granted.

1.6 The record of occupancy/vacancy levels of town centre commercial premises should also be updated on an annual basis. The table has been designed to be a live document with columns available for data from subsequent annual surveys to be added. A survey of vacant properties could also be undertaken at the same time as the survey to check whether any planning permissions for change of use have been implemented.

1.7 A summary report looking at both planning permissions and occupancy/vacancy levels should be produced annually which will help identify any changing patterns in the town centre.

2. Key points

2.1 During the time period covered a total of 16 planning applications for change of use were submitted (one remains to be determined) amounting to an average of approximately 1.5 applications per year. All 15 applications were granted planning permission. Bearing in mind there are approximately 80+ business premises in the town centre this represents a low rate of applications for change of use which can be interpreted as a sign of a stable town centre. The table below shows the number of planning applications for change of use of premises each year.

Table 1: Uppingham town centre planning applications for change of use of ground floor premises

2008	4 applications	2014	0
2009	3 applications	2015	0
2010	0	2016	2 applications
2011	1 application	2017	2 applications
2012	0	2018 (31/10)	3 applications
2013	1 application	Total	16 applications

2.2 There are two instances of planning applications for change of use to residential from a commercial use (office/retail) in 2008 & 2015 which have both been implemented. A further application for change of use from retail to residential, approved in 2008 has not been implemented. Therefore, a total of two commercial premises have been lost to residential over the eleven-year period. The table above indicates that there has been a rise in planning applications for change of use since 2016. A table summarising the applications from 2016 to Oct. 31st 2018, is set out below.

Table 2 Applications submitted between 2016 and Oct 31st 2018

Year	Address	Proposed Change of Use	Notes/ whether implemented
2016	1 Queen Street	Residential to mixed use residential and manufacture/sales of violins, violas & cellos.	*Introduction of a mixed use to a residential property.
	4 Queen Street	Change of use from retail to residential	*Work in progress from Google 2016.
2017	4 Orange Street	Change of use from a dress shop to a beauty salon.	No loss of commercial property. <i>Implemented.</i>
	Old Constables 2A High Street West	'Nil use' to Coffee Shop (mixed A1/A3 use) within part of the ground floor (as part of refurbishment/re-use of whole building).	Mixed A1/A3 use occupied by Costa Coffee. <i>Implemented.</i>
2018	8A Ayston Road	From retail shop into restaurant (A3) and installation of extraction flue.	Not yet determined.
	17 High Street East	To holiday let (former tea room which was part of the Uppingham Antiques Centre)	Implemented?? Not known
	8-10 Orange Street	Change of use of ground floor from A1 (retail) to mixed use comprising of A1 (retail) and D1 (acupuncture clinic)	Retail use retained and change of use allows introduction of an additional use.

2.3 Examination of the individual applications indicates that of the six applications determined one results in the absolute loss of a retail unit at 4 Queen Street, which is not in an area covered by retail frontage policies. Of the remainder, three enable a broader mix of uses, one introduces a new Class A1/A3 use in a refurbished property where retail uses did not previously exist, and one results in the partial loss of Class A3 floorspace within a building which is primarily in Class A1 retail use. Overall, these proposals are not considered to be significant in terms of being an indicator of change impacting upon the vitality and viability of the town centre.

2.4 An issue considered in the May 2018 report was shopping frontage policies and specifically the proposal by Rutland County Council to define a new secondary shopping frontage for 1-13 (odds only) High Street West and 3-5 Queen Street which the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan defines as primary shopping frontage. Noteworthy from the review of planning applications is that no applications have been submitted over the last 10+ years for change of use for the properties now proposed by Rutland County Council to become secondary shopping frontage. This suggests that there is no significant pressure for change as the businesses are trading satisfactorily and that the frontage policy in the current Neighbourhood Plan is not proving to be a deterrent to the successful occupation of these premises.

Table 3: Uppingham town centre - commercial premises occupancy (November 2018)

2.5 This table (Appendix 2) is currently at one point in time and it is therefore not possible to draw conclusions about the rate of change of occupiers, changes in the nature of Class A1 uses or whether the vacancy level has changed. However, with the future monitoring system proposed this information will be recorded and it will then be possible to draw conclusions about changes to the character and nature of the business premises and vacancy levels in the town centre.

2.6 The table does indicate that the properties which are affected by the proposal to be designated as secondary shopping frontage are currently all occupied as Class A1 retail uses with no vacancies.

2.7 The Rutland County Council 2016 Retail Capacity Study noted that that *"...Overall, for the size of the town the diversity of uses is reasonable, and the vacancy rate does not present cause for concern..."*. The information contained within Table 2 bears out the conclusion of the, indicating a low vacancy rate which compares very favourably with the regional and national situation and a good mix of uses for a town the size of Uppingham. This, together with the recent completion of a mixed-use development in the town centre suggests that the town centre is in good health and that existing planning policies are having a positive rather than negative effect.

3 Conclusions

3.1 This study reveals a town centre which is currently in good health and sustainable. The review of planning history of commercial premises demonstrates that there has been relatively little pressure for change of use and that few Class A1 retail properties have been lost over the last 10 years.

3.2 The May 2018 report identified that this could be due to a range of factors specific to Uppingham. It referred to the drivers of success relating to the following: the local economy, population characteristics, the built environment, the weekly market and the School. It was concluded that these factors combine to create a critical mass of specialist shops and food/drink uses, in addition to useful local shops which attract shoppers and visitors in large numbers. It

suggested that in this context detailed shopping frontage policies are important but may play a complementary role in influencing uses.

3.3 The policies for the town centre also need to be considered in the context of the changes to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 which has introduced greater flexibility to enable a more straightforward change of use within shopping frontages. Of particular relevance, are the amendments which allow permitted change (with some restrictions) from retail premises (Use Class A1) to financial services (Use Class A2), and restaurants/cafes (Use Class A3). The monitoring regime of occupancy/changes of use will provide information on the impact of this change.

3.4 From conversations and an examination of websites, it is apparent that a number of the more specialist shops (e.g. antiques, galleries and bookshops) operate online in tandem with a High Street presence which also contributes to their success, and that of the town centre.

3.5 The properties which fall within the area which Rutland County Council proposed become secondary shopping frontages are currently all occupied and in Class A1 use. In this context there would therefore seem little justification for introducing a secondary shopping frontage policy, as there is no evidence these properties form a “secondary” function in the town centre.

3.6 The introduction of secondary frontages could decrease rental expectations and a fall in income to owners which could have a negative impact on maintenance. Conversely, it is recognised that lower rents/property values could have the effect of attracting entrepreneurial growing or start-up businesses, which could benefit the town.

Appendix 1

Table 3: Uppingham town centre planning applications involving change of use of ground floor premises

Applications received between January 1st, 2008 – October 31st, 2018

Source: Rutland County Council planning applications and decisions <https://www.rutland.gov.uk/my-services/planning-and-building-control/planning/view-planning-applications-and-decisions/>

Address	Application Ref. No.	Proposal	Decision and date.	Status & Notes red unimplemented/blue extant
Ayston Road				
8A Ayston Road	2018/0472/FUL	Change of use from retail shop into restaurant (A3) and installation of extraction flue.	Not yet determined	
Crown Passage - no applications				
High Street East				
17 High Street East	2018/0525/FUL	Change of use to holiday let with associated alterations (former tea room, was part of the Uppingham Antiques Centre)	Approved 27.09.18	Extant Check whether implemented
31 High Street East	APP/2013/0177	Change of use of ground floor from D1 (Non-residential institutions) to A2 Offices.	Approved 12.04.13	Implemented
49 High Street East	APP/2011/0154	Construction of single storey extension to side (east) elevation (revised scheme APP/2010/1229), and change of use to mixed use as town hall and police office.	Approved 27.04.13	Change of use implemented
31 High Street East	FUL/2009/0958	Change of use of vacant ground-floor from property agents (Class A2) to complementary therapy centre (Class D1) including osteopathy, massage, reiki and reflexology.	Approved 16.11.09	Not implemented
40 High Street East	FUL/2009/0128	Change of Use of ground floor from retail (Class A1) to residential (Class C3) to create a self-contained flat - and minor external alterations to rear/side (south/west) elevations.	Approved 20.04.09	Check whether implemented
3 High Street East	FUL/2008/0242	Change of use from A1 to A3 to form a 'Beans' coffee shop	Approved 21.05.08	Implemented
35 High Street East	FUL/2007/0988	Change of use from shop to dwelling	Approved 19.03.08	Not implemented. Heatsource occupy.

High Street West				
Old Constables 2A High Street West	2017/0961/FUL	Internal alterations to existing apartments, including new staircase/lift and entrance. Change of use from 'nil use' to Coffee Shop (mixed A1/A3 use) within part of the ground floor. Externally: hard landscaping; provision of dustbin/A/C enclosure; parking & turning areas and alteration to existing boundary wall along Orange Street.	Approved 22.12.17	Implemented
Hopes Yard - no applications				
Market Place - no applications				
Mercers Yard - no applications				
Orange Street				
8-10 Orange Street	2017/1119/FUL	Change of use of ground floor from A1(retail) to mixed use comprising of A1(retail) and D1 (acupuncture clinic)	Approved 12.01.18	Extant Check whether implemented
4 Orange Street	2016/1229/FUL	Change of use from a Dress Shop to a Beauty Salon.	Approved 06.12.17	Implemented
18 Orange Street	FUL/2009/0724	Change of use from barber's shop (Class A1) to offices (Class A2), and re-roofing of rear (east) elevation with blue slate.	Approved 14.10.09	Not implemented? Currently a gallery.
18A Orange Street	FUL/2008/0654	Change of use of second, first and part of ground floor from office to residential flat.	Approved 10.09.08	??
North Street East				
8A North Street East	FUL/2008/0830	Change of use from offices to a relaxation clinic.	Approved 19.11.08	??
Queen Street				
1 Queen Street	2016/0914/FUL	Change of use from residential to a mixed use of residential and manufacture and sales of violins, violas and cellos.	Approved 29.12.16	Extant Check whether implemented
4 Queen Street	2015/1017/FUL	Change of use to residential unit (from Class A1 retail)	Approved 03.12.16	Extant? ?? Google photo from 2016 shows building works underway.
Reeves Yard - no applications				

Appendix 2 - Table 4: Uppingham town centre - commercial premises occupancy (November 2018)

Sources: Survey of town centre uses undertaken as part of the Rutland retail capacity study (2016 update), Google maps, internet searches, the Love Uppingham website <https://www.loveuppingham.org.uk/> and informal site visit.

Address	Occupier Nov 2018	Use Class	December 2019	December 2020	December 2021	December 2022
Ayston Road						
2A	Zorba's Kebab and Pizza	A5				
Ayston House Unit 3	Uppingham Dental Practice	D1				
Ayston House, Units 4 -5	Little Angels day nursery	D1				
4A	Hannans Spicy Cuisine	A5				
6	<i>Check if vacant</i>					
8	Mark Gilbert Antiques	A1				
12A	Rutland Veterinary	D1				
Crown Passage						
2	Crown Hair	A1				
3-5	Rutland Antique & Art Centre	A1				
6	Map Knowledge Ltd	A1				
High Street East (odds)						
1	Paul Watts Hairdressing	A1				
5	Mercury News Shop	A1				
5B	Formerly Nook <i>Check if Vacant</i>	A1				
7	Falcon Hotel	C1				
9	Uppingham Sports & Books	A1				
11	Goodwin and Belle	A1				
11	Richard's Hair Studio	A1				
11	Kearneys (solicitors)	A2				
13	Age UK	A1				

15	Smalls	A1				
17	Uppingham Antiques Centre	A1				
17	Murray Estate Agents	A2				
19	The Crown Inn	C1				
21	Gilbert & Thomas	A2				
23	McColls	A1				
25	Priddy Essentials	A1				
27	Topset Jewellery	A1				
29	Culshaw P'tners Comm'l Agents	B1				
31	Simmonds Grant Solicitors (1)	A2				
31B	Bespoke <i>Check if vacant</i>					
35	Heatsource	A1				
39	Staniland Booksellers	A1				
43	Aroha Beauty House	A1/sui generis				
47 (No commercial "shopfront")	Simmonds Grant Solicitors (2)	A2				
51-53	Garner's Antiques	A1				
High Street East (evens)						
2	The Rug Studio	A1				
6	Lorus	A1				
8	Love Eyecare	A1				
10B	Scandimania coffee shop	A3				
12	Stitch Upp	A1				
14	Nelsons					
16	The Lake Isle Hotel	C1				
20	Philip Daulby (accountant)	A2				

22	Earthworks	A1				
24	Uppingham Carpet Co	A1				
26	A E Bilsdon	A1				
26	Boots	A1				
30	Twist and Turn	A1				
32	Culpin and Son	A1				
34	Eyebrook Gallery	A1				
High Street West (odd)						
3 -5	Baines Bakery	A1				
7	Forest Books	A1				
9-11	Legacy	A1				
13	The Rutland Bookshop	A1				
High Street West (even)						
2A	Costa Coffee	A1/A3				
14	Barclays Bank	A2				
16	The Garden Hotel	C1				
32	One Stop	A1				
Hopes Yard						
1	Snips of Uppingham	A1				
2	Curious Designs	A1				
6	Malc's	A1				
11	Good Hair Days	A1				
	Junk & Disorderly	A1				
??	Headhunters	A1				
Market Place						
	The Post Office	A2				

1	The Barbers	A1				
3	Victoria Pharmacy	A1				
4	The Vaults (bar)	A4				
5	Fortune Corner	A5				
6	Sarah Harding Interiors	A1				
7	Essence &	A1				
8	Don Paddy's (bar)	A4				
9	Dental Health Practice	D1				
No number	D Norton and Son	A1				
Mercers Yard						
	Ren-Yi (alt. medicine)	D1				
Orange Street (evens)						
2	Moores (estate agents)	A2				
4	10A Beauty	A1/sui generis				
6	Goldmark Framing	A1?				
10	Anastasia <i>Check if vacant</i>	A1				
14	Goldmark Gallery	A1				
14A	Made	A1				
18	North Street East Gallery	A1				
Orange Street (odds)						
7	Contemporary Arts (Woodbine)	A1				
2 Bear Yard	Upper Cut Barbers	A1				
3 Bear Yard	Virto Frozen Foods Ltd	A1				
	Goldmark Pots	A1				
North Street E. (even)						
8	Sloanes	A1				
22	Co-Operative Food store	A1				

30	Uppingham Yarns	A1				
40	Super Ceramic Services Ltd	A1				
North Street East (odd)						
3	Harley Davidson Ducati Central Jet garage	Sui generis				
3	Choi's Chinese Restaurant	A3				
5	Silver Fish Bar	A5				
7	Junk & Disorderly	A1				
??	Licenced Betting Office	Sui generis				
9	Wing's Chinese Restaurant	A3				
Printers Yard						
1	The Courtyard Deli	A1				
Queen Street						
3	Uppingham Clocks	A1				
5	Olivers	A1				
9	The Royal Oak	A4				
14	G N Pointon (financial)	B1				
Reeves Yard						
<i>Check for vacancies</i>						