

POTTON HISTORY SOCIETY ARCHIVES

‘An Invaluable Asset to Potton which must stay intact’

The Society has had to move its archive collection and its own items into temporary accommodation at the **end of 2015** after 21 years at Biggleswade Road ‘Stables’.

Can YOU help us raise £15,000 to give the Archive a permanent home?

The Society was formed in **1977**. The collection had been started by founding secretary Patricia Yates who kept a small personal archive in her Royston Street bungalow including her distinctive photographic albums. The collection outgrew the bungalow and moved into two small adjacent rooms in out-buildings which were maintained by the Society. Further space was needed and the offer of disused stable space in another part of the town was accepted and the collection was moved on **April 30th 1994**. ‘The Stables’ provided a three bay area with linking corridor to house the growing ‘Potton Collection’ of photographs, scrapbooks, audio & video tapes, documents, paintings, objects, society equipment and display boards. It also provided a working area for archiving work which now feeds the society web site and provides material for exhibitions and displays.

The Legacy of ‘The Stables’ Archives Rooms

- ❖ Substantial Growth in the Core Collection of documents & photographs.
- ❖ Nearly 200 photographic albums with around 9000 photographs from 1880’s to 2015. Now digitised for community access.
- ❖ Six filing cabinets of indexed material with around 20% digitised.
- ❖ Scrapbooks from 1970 – 2016 digitised. 1970-2002 reprinted.
- ❖ Over 40 Community Files for loan to local groups.
- ❖ Store for publications and tea towels.
- ❖ Thriving Web & Facebook sites using digitised material.
- ❖ Constant flow of new material with backlog for indexing and digitising.
- ❖ Expanding audio and video archives covering last four decades.
- ❖ Expanding poster & picture collection.
- ❖ Ownership and maintenance of the ‘Potton Car’.
- ❖ Updated exhibition panels and display materials.

Keeping the Potton Collection Intact

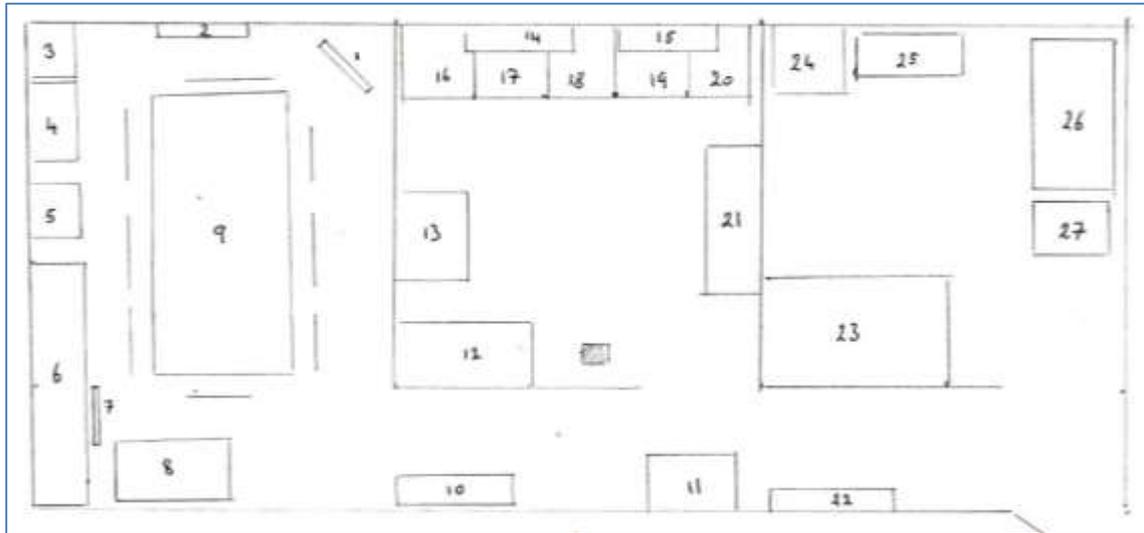
Work over nearly 40 years has created a unique ‘Core’ community resource which is available for local groups, library & schools. The Society now needs a new base to act as a ‘**Mini-Archive**’ or ‘**Community Heritage Centre**’. It had the use of a space of (approx.) 30 sq m which is beginning to overflow! A space of up to 40 sq m would enable to Society to continue its present activities for the next decade. A minimum space of around 20 sq m would enable its core activities to be maintained:-

- Storage and access to its Archive collection of photographs and documents.
- Space to digitise and prepare exhibitions & displays.
- A base to store Community Files & Scrapbooks for local groups.

Can YOU help or put us in contact with those who might help us with our project?

Potton History Society Archive Rooms November 2015

The sketch plan below shows our former working spaces:-



Bay 1 (Items 1-9) provided us with the use of a table and eight chairs with room to scan and digitise our material as well as committee meetings. It also had space for our growing scrapbook and map collections.

Bay 2 (Items 10-21) was our main archive of 9000+ photographs and five filing cabinets of indexed documents from Aerial photographs to Weather.

Bay 3 (Items 22-27) was our Society equipment store. The main collection has overflowed into parts of this area.

An 'L' shaped upper shelf ran from item 26 to Item 12 with further society equipment and archive material.

Spare floor space was occupied by boxes of Community Files and new material awaiting indexing and digitisation.

Each Bay was about 10 sq m giving us a space of around 30 sq m. The upper shelf extended our archive 'footprint' to around 33 sq m.

April 2016 'The Cabin' Store



A small 'port-a-cabin' was found at Turnpike Farm on the Biggleswade-Sutton boundary after a fruitless search in Potton. The Society is paying the rent (£86.67 a month plus electricity for light & heat). Room has been made for limited archiving work but a good proportion of material is boxed up and awkward to access easily. We see three solutions:-

1. Building for an Archive Store **Long term ambition**
2. Renting space in Potton
 - a) Private arrangement eg barn space
 - b) Commercial space via formal lease
3. A larger cabin on a Potton site.



The 'Cabin' is overcrowded with only part of the collection easily accessible. There is just room to carry our work at the table. Three is a crowd!



The The Mill Lane Pavilion Archive Store Project.

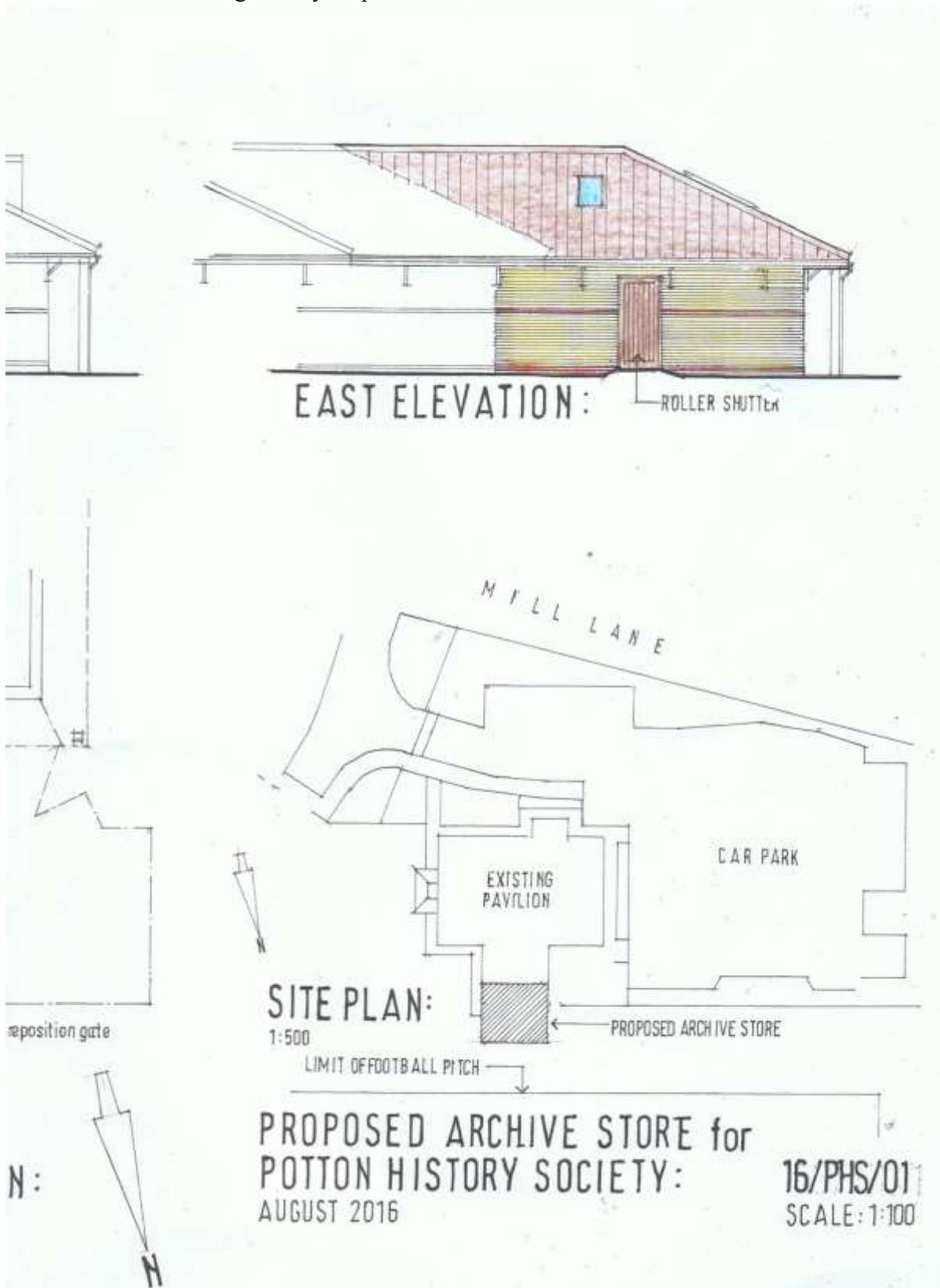


An opportunity has arisen to house the Archive Collection in an extension to the Mill Lane Pavilion in Potton. It will involve building a new room of 45 sq m onto the top centre 'wing'.

- Potton Consolidated Charities provided the building in 2003 which has a Community Room and changing rooms for sports on the field.
- Potton Town Council lease the building.
- Both are sympathetic to helping the History Society to find a lasting home for its Archives for use by the public and the nearby local schools.
- A meeting was held between the Society and the Charities from which emerged the possibility of adding a room to the Pavilion.
- The Society employed a Chartered Building Surveyor to advise on the practicability of creating an Archive store at the Pavilion.
- He advised that the simplest and most cost effective solution would be to add an annex onto the Store side of the building which would have its own access.
- His plans were put to a meeting of the Charities (including Town Council representation) in early September.
- The Charity Trustees 'have agreed in principle to the plan' and have allocated a substantial grant at their 7th November meeting towards the project.
- Full plans have been drawn up during November for planning permission and for submission of four tenders for the project.
- January 2017. No objections to plans in the consultation period. We await final decision by end of January. Evaluation of the tenders reveals that the Society will need to raise an extra £15k to cover all likely costs of the project. We will need the money by the end of April to meet tender deadlines.

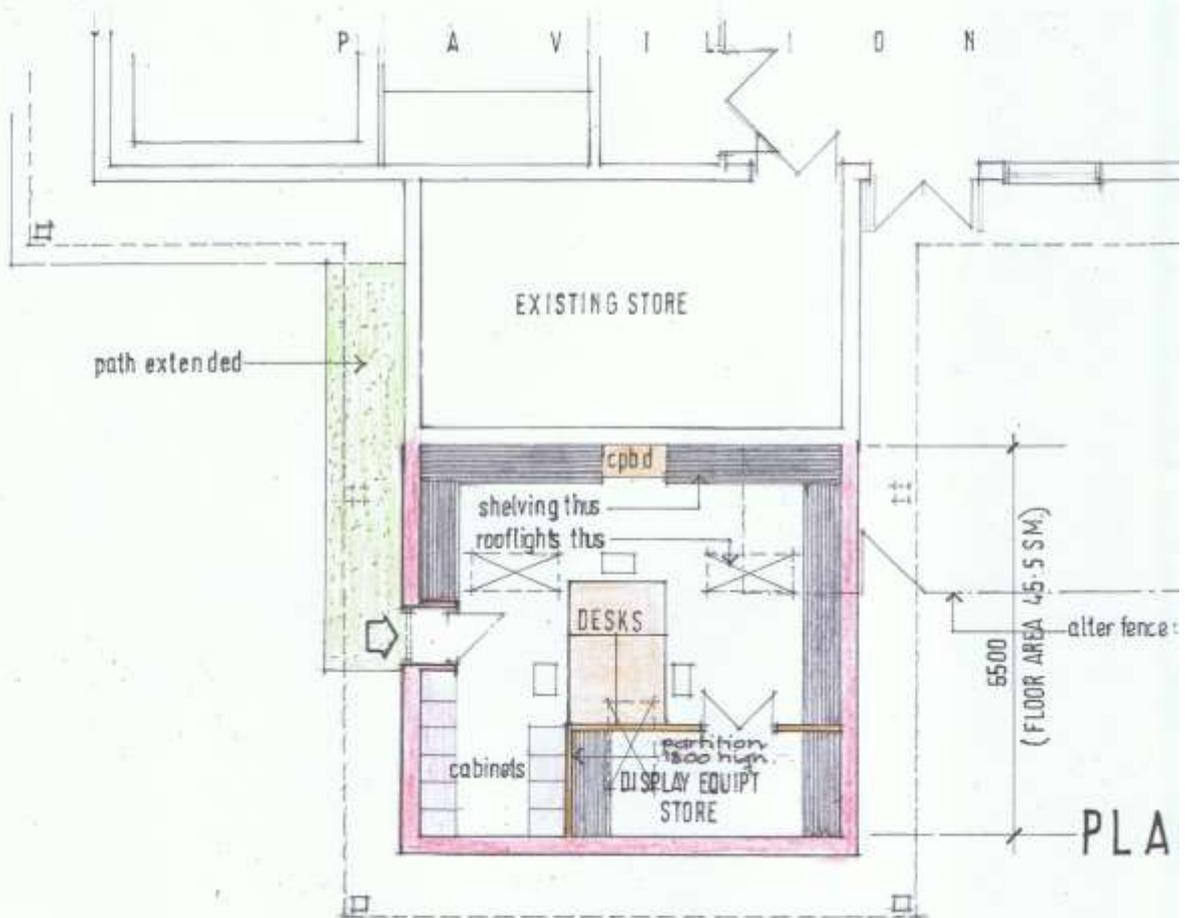


- Our Building Surveyors plans are shown below.

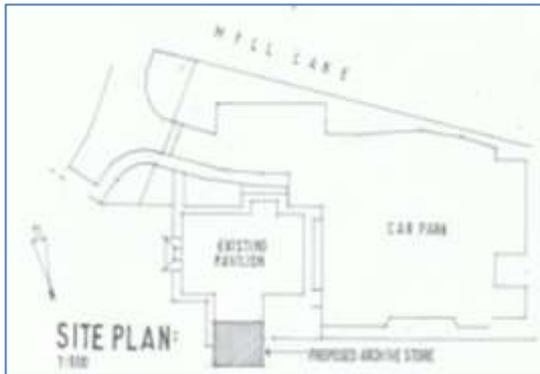




NORTH ELEVATION:



The Mill Lane Pavilion Archive Store Project :- An appeal



An opportunity has arisen to house the archive collection in an annex to the Mill Lane Pavilion. Potton Consolidated Charities provided the building in 2003 which has a community room and changing rooms for sports on the field. Potton Town Council lease the building. Both are sympathetic to helping the History Society to find a lasting home for its archives for use by the public and the nearby local schools. We have a substantial grant from Potton Charities and a smaller one from the William Delafield Charity towards the project.

Formal tendering has taken place and the project could be complete this autumn if we can obtain £15,000 by the end of April. We aim to see if we can raise the money from our members and friends in the local community. The Society is paying for the costs of the planning process from its own funds.

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YES! I / we would be prepared to donate the following towards the cost of the PHS Archive Store Project.

Patron of Potton History Society Archives	£ 1000
Friend of Potton History Society Archives	£ 500
Supporter of Potton History Society Archives	£ 100
Donation	£ ____

Please do **not** send any money at this stage. Please contact pjibbetaol.com or send to George Howe, Chairman, Potton History Society, Station House, Station Road, Potton, Beds SG19 2PZ by the end of February so the Society can evaluate this option for raising the money needed. We shall also be following up other ways of raising the money.