

THE PARISH HALL EAST WORLINGTON DEVON

Results of a Desk-Based Assessment
&
Historic Building Survey



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**The Parish Hall
East Worlington
Devon**

**Results of a Desk-Based Assessment and
Historic Building Survey**

For

East Worlington Parish Hall Committee

By



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Summary

This report presents the results of a desk-based assessment and historic building recording carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at East Worlington Village Hall, during February 2013.

The present East Worlington Parish Hall represents the very early 20th century conversion of a threshing barn to a new use. The barn very probably dates from the (early) 17th century. Historically it is a building within the curtilage of the parsonage or rectory of East Worlington.

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The Parish Hall Management Committee
Steve Baber

1.0 Introduction

Location: East Worlington Parish Hall
Parish: East Worlington
District: North Devon
County: Devon

1.1 Project Background

This assessment has been prepared by South West Archaeology at the request of Steve Baber of The East Worlington Parish Hall Management Committee. The purpose of this assessment is to trace the history and development of the Parish Hall building as far as this is possible, and to place the former barn in its historical and archaeological context and draw out any implications for potential future developments.

1.2 Historical Background

East Worlington, situated about 9 kilometres east of Chulmleigh is the centre of its own parish in the Deanery of Chulmleigh and historically within Witheridge Hundred. For administrative purposes the parishes of East and West Worlington, created as separate entities in the 12th or 13th century, were united for civil purposes in 1885, and are now in North Devon District. The benefices were joined in 1919. The village is situated on south-facing land above the Little Dart River on the Bude Formation of the Carboniferous Culm Measures. Worlington was a Domesday manor. Both East and West Worlington have a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary, both probably originating at the time when the early manor of Worlington was divided. The settlement remains small with a number of thatched properties. The principal buildings are the church, the Church House (now school), Town Farm and East Worlington House which was formerly the rectory and is situated immediately to the south of the church.

The building in question, used for around 100 years now as a parish hall, is Grade II listed and was formerly a barn within the curtilage of the former rectory of East Worlington; East Worlington House (see Figure 1).

1.3 Methodology

The desk-based research was undertaken by Terry Green in accordance with IfA guidelines. The assessment was compiled using records and documents held at the Devon Record Office, the North Devon Record Office, the Devon County Historic Environment Record and the West Country Studies Library. The building survey was undertaken in accordance with English Heritage and IfA guidelines on the recording of standing buildings (Level 1).

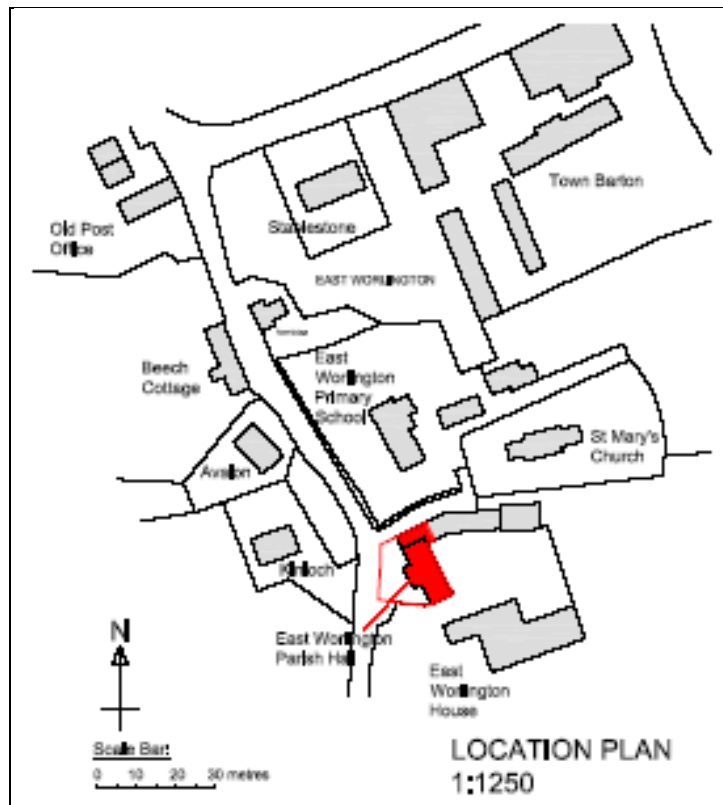


Figure 1: Location plan. (Burn Valley Property)

2.0 Desk-Based Assessment

2.1 East Worlington: The Settlement

While Worlington in 1086 was represented by a principal manor with a number of lesser manors, the creation of two parishes (plus the parish of Affeton) in the 12th or 13th century probably corresponds to some sort of consolidation of holdings. Which of the two Worlington settlements represents the original core of the principal manor, or whether indeed either of them does, is not at all clear. The location of the church and settlement of East Worlington in a prominent landscape position may imply occupation at an early date, while the curvilinear southern and eastern boundary of the churchyard tends to suggest a pre-Conquest early medieval date. In addition it is noticeable on the early maps that the settlement lies almost wholly within a roughly square enclosure (Fig.3). Where the boundary of this is cartographically incomplete on the east side, what appears to be the remnant of a substantial boundary bank is visible on the ground completing the enclosure (Fig.4). Low earthworks to the east of the churchyard suggest the platform of another building within the enclosure. Such enclosures are seen elsewhere in Devon in association with early manorial sites (R.Waterhouse, pers.comm.) which may further confirm the relative antiquity of East Worlington. The generally superior quality of the church of West Worlington may be due to its having received greater attention from the Stukeley family as their “house church”.

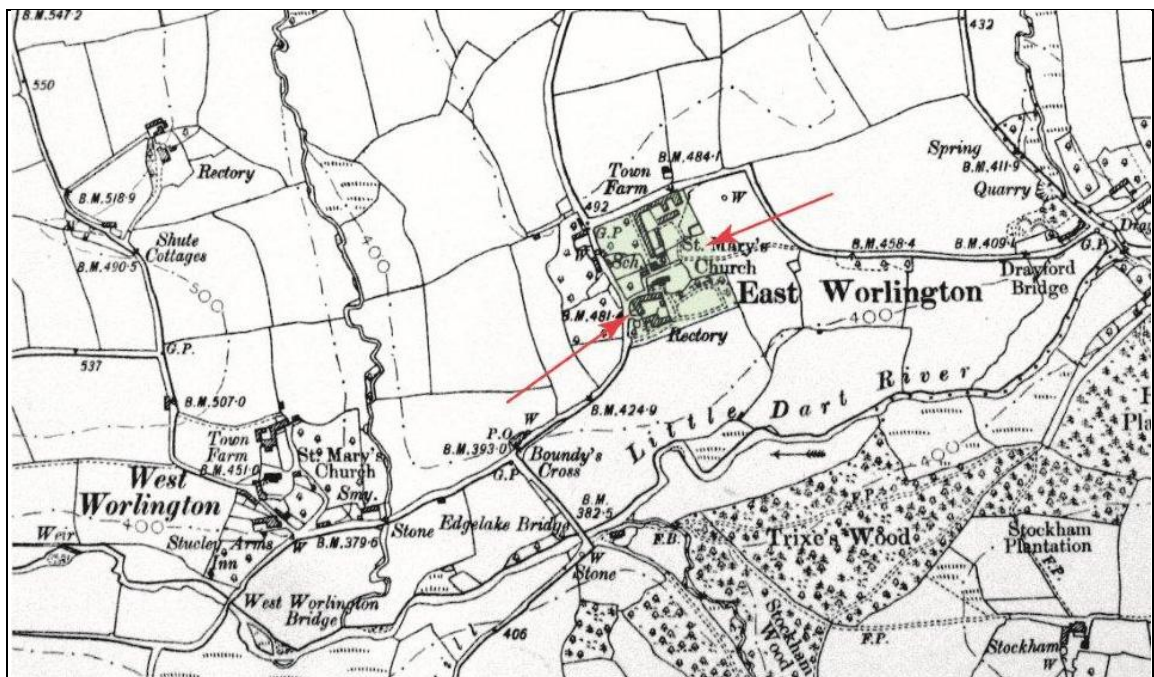


Figure 2: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1:10000 map of 1905. Shaded in green, potential manorial enclosure; arrowed, left - the barn (Parish Hall), right - location of low bank.

The two Worlington settlements remain today much as they must have been in the 13th century with church and “town” farm side by side, cottages round about and other farms scattered throughout the parish. One would often expect that such a settlement would also include a manor house, which, depending on status, might be identical with the demesne farm or might be a separate high-status dwelling. In the case of East Worlington, where the Lord of the Manor had a major residence not far away, but in another parish (for a long time Affeton “Castle” and

subsequently Eggesford House), there may have been no need for a manorial residence other than the “town” or demesne farm.

The lay-out of buildings in the earliest maps indicates two groups of farm buildings beside the church either of which, on the face of it, could have represented a manorial residence at some point in its history. Reverend Hodgson in his piece “The Evolution of a Devonshire Rectory” states that the parish “has never boasted of a manor house”. Despite the description “former manor house” in the East Worlington House listing document (Appendix 1), examination of early documentation and of the position of the house in the landscape, strongly suggests that Rev. Hodgson was right to exclude the house from any such function and that the house together with its curtilage was always dedicated to church use.



Figure 3: Photograph of the low bank, part of the ‘manorial enclosure’ boundary?

2.2 East Worlington House, formerly The Rectory

The earliest record that we have of what is now known as East Worlington House is a series of ‘Glebe Terriers’ in the Devon Record Office dating from 1605(?), 1613, 1679 and 1727. A ‘glebe terrier’ is an account of church land and holdings. The two earlier documents refer only to the land, but the documents of 1679 and 1727 include descriptions of the house and curtilage. The implication of the earliest document is that the parsonage house and its curtilage were established by the early 17th century and probably had a history going back into the 16th century if not earlier still, while the later documents indicate a process of development and change at around the turn of the 18th century.

2.3 The Barn

The document of 1679, having listed the rooms of the house, concludes with a reference to outbuildings, viz:

Dairy with a chamber over it, malt house with a chamber over it, a drift (?) for drying of malt, a barn built with mud walls, a shiping (shippon) and stable..

The reference to a 'barn built with mud walls (presumably cob) is picked up again in the description of 1727 which states:

The outhouses are a barn consisting of five bays, a sheeping (shippon) of three bays and a stable of two bays all having mud walls and thatch covering...

Writing his 'East Worlington Kalendar of Quotidian Quotations' in 1910, Rev. H.A.Hill was happy to accept that the barn of 1727 – and presumably also that of 1679 - was the very same that had recently been converted into a Parish Room. In 1910 the fabric, he tells us, 'is the same as that described in the terrier of 1727: "built of mudd and consisting of five bays." The old cob walls,' he continues, 'are good and of a soft and matured hue: the roof is of thatch and a pent-house over the doorway has been added and a verandah. Everything has been done in the restoration to preserve the rustic appearance and effect. An old oak window frame with deep moulded mullions was rescued from one of the village cottages, and inserted in the north wall; and two others of similar design have been put in and filled with diamond leaded panes. The courtyard in front has been paved in the old Devonshire fashion...'

This description fits nicely with an undated photograph of the building from the early part of the 20th century (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Photograph of the building dating from the early part of the 20th century, showing the mullioned windows, 'pent house' and verandah.

The oak mullioned windows referred to above are presumably those mentioned in the listing of 1975 (Appendix 1):

Barn, now village hall. Probably C17. Rubble and cob, rendered and colourwashed, half-hipped straw-thatched roof. Rectangular on plan, with former opposing doors to winnowing floor. Opening on frontage blocked and obscured by a late C20 lean-to; set high up on each side a 3-light ovolo-moulded wooden-mullioned window, wood lintels, diamond-paned lights with lead comes, probably inserted C20. Left return with a similar 2-light window. Rear elevation with original large door opening with plank doors remaining, though they are blocked inside; no window openings. Interior: featureless, roof which may be of interest not seen, as concealed by a C20 ceiling.

From the various references and descriptions it is almost certain that this building was in origin a threshing barn within the curtilage of the rectory and thus within the glebe. It was clearly present by the late 17th century and may in fact have been constructed in that century as the listing document suggests.

2.4 The Cartographic Record

For completeness' sake the cartographic record is here included, although it has to be said that it is not very informative. The earliest cartographic record of East Worlington House is found in the East Worlington tithe map of 1839 (Figure 5). Unfortunately this does not record the buildings with any detail and in the case of the Rectory/East Worlington House (Number 335) the sketch appears to be incomplete.

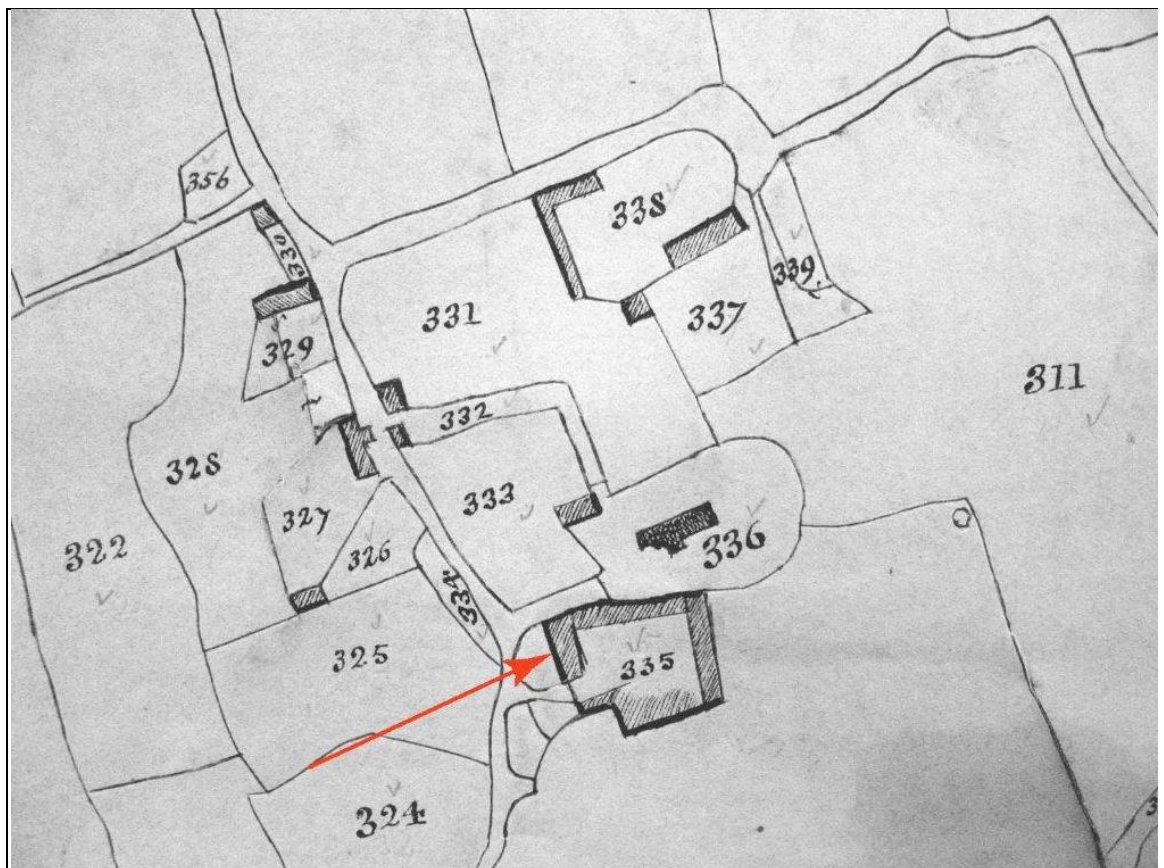


Figure 5: Extract from the East Worlington tithe map of 1839; the barn is arrowed. (DRO)

We are therefore unable to determine the footprint of the barn in the earlier 19th century or to identify any changes which may have occurred between 1839 and 1889, the publication date of the Ordnance Survey First Edition 25 inch map (Figure 6). The Ordnance Survey Second Edition map of 1905 (Figure 7) indicates no change since 1889.

Later 20th century mapping (1974) indicates the addition of a lean-to or pent-house over the doorway on the west side, as described by Rev.Hill and the listing document and presumably constructed between 1905 and 1910.

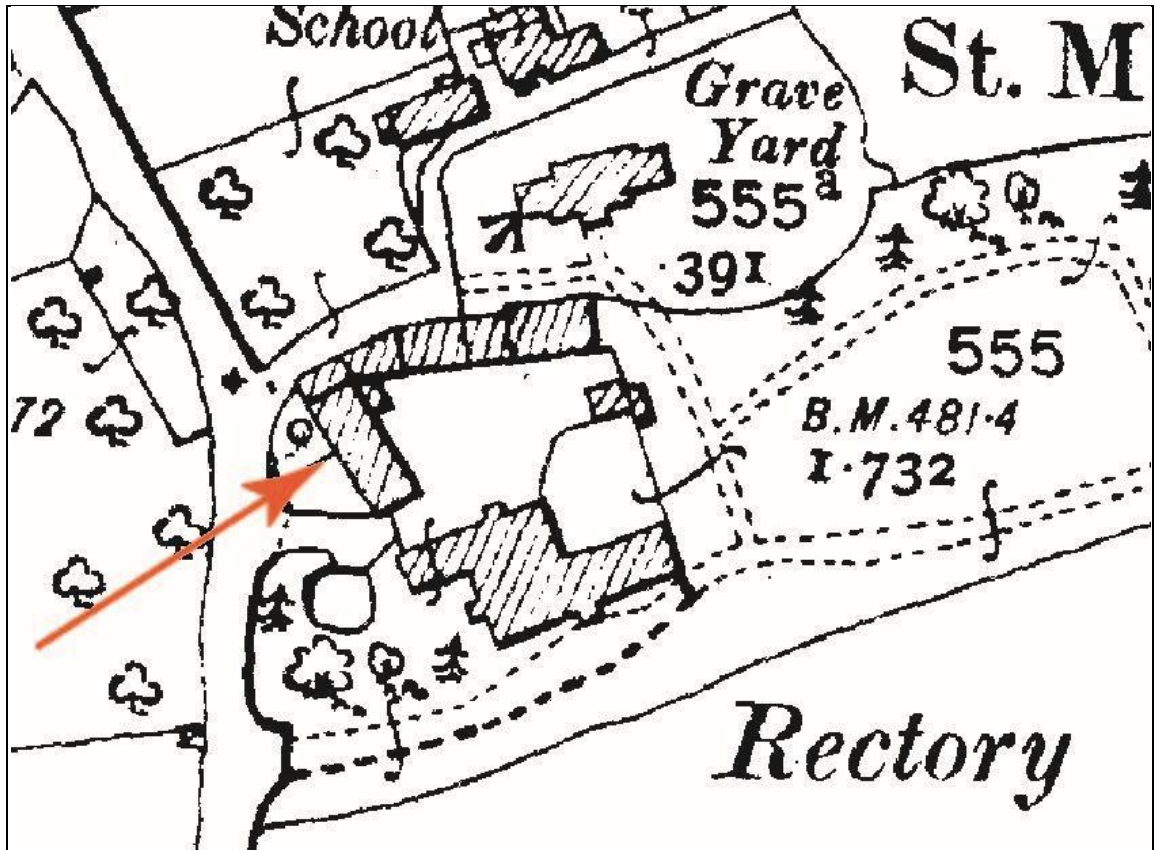


Figure 6: Extract from the Ordnance Survey First Edition map at a scale of 1:2500 published 1889; the barn is arrowed. (WCSL)

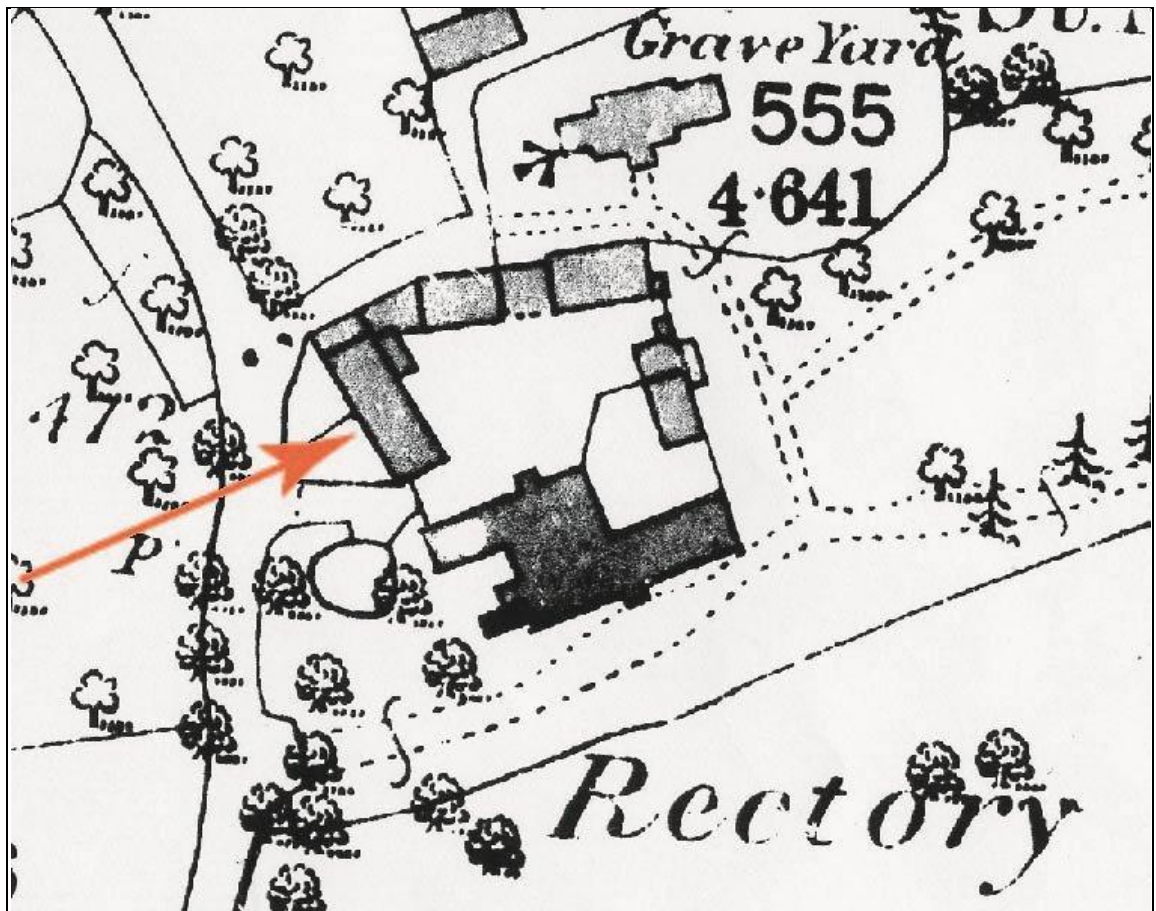


Figure 7: Extract from the Ordnance Survey Second Edition map at a scale of 1:2500 published 1905; the barn is arrowed. (WCSL)

3.0 Historic Building Recording

3.1 General Description of the Building

The Parish hall is a north-south aligned rectangular plan rubble stone and cob former threshing barn, with a thatched roof, quarter hipped at the gables to north and south and with a single storey lean-to against the north end, with a door and a window opening in its north elevation and two roof lights set in a modern roof. The former double threshing door to the east has been blocked internally but the doors remain in tact on the exterior, there is a large modern porch around the opposing doors to the west. There are three reused 16th-17th century ovalo moulded, mullioned windows; two three light windows, with diamond leaded lights set high within the ground floor level of the west elevation to east and west of the central door opening, and one two light window at first floor level in the north gable above the roof of the lean-to. There are two further window openings on the east elevation; a modern timber window with two 1x2 pane opening lights below and a single 1x2 pane fixed light above to the south of the central opening, and a small fixed light to the north. There is also a small fixed light window in the centre of the south gable wall. On the east elevation there are also the protruding ends of two interior timber tie beams and associated securing timbers, located to north and south of the former door opening.

Internally most elements date from the 20th century, after the time of the buildings conversion to a Parish Hall, such elements include the plank panelling to dado height, the stage and the

inserted ceiling. The door openings into the kitchen lean-to at the north end and that into the store to the north-east will very probably also date from this period. Recent modern additions include the western porch, which incorporates toilet facilities. The only easily identifiable earlier elements appear to be the two tie beams that span the width of the building approximately 5m below the level of the ceiling.

3.2 The Roof Structure

Five A-frame trusses creating six bays (see Figure 9). Approximately half of the major elements of the roof structure are comprised of replacement timbers, the majority of a single modern phase, during the 20th century, probably at the time the interior was ceiled. The majority of the newer timbers have been bolted together suggesting a later date than for the few spiked elements, which include replacement collars and ties on the remaining early roof trusses. These spiked repairs/additions are likely to be associated with the final years of the barns agricultural use and the change to community building.

The remaining original oak timbers are confined to the northern end of the building and are comprised of the two blades of a roughly south of centre truss (Figure 9, T3), the western blade of the truss to the north of this (T2) and the eastern blade of the next most northerly truss (T1). All original purlins on both the east and west pitch of this north end remain, trenched into the backs of the earlier truss blades, and scarfed together at this point. The truss blades are set into the wall tops to east and west. All common rafters, battens and the ridge pole are modern and have been replaced during the 20th century, appearing contemporary with most of the replaced roof trusses to the south. The structure is now covered with a seemingly thin layer of thatch, with the feet of the spars protruding through for up to 0.15m (see Figure 8). All collars and tie beams on the remaining early truss blades are replacements, bolted or spiked to the faces of the blades. The single remaining complete A-Frame truss is lapped and pegged at the apex and the former collar was affixed via face pegged notched lap-joints (Figure 8).



Figure 8: The former collar joint above a later spiked timber on an early roof truss.

The two modern trusses to the south appear to have replaced a former single truss, the space between them is .5m-1.0m less than between the older trusses to the north.

The wall tops and the three quarter height gables are whitewashed as are the feet of the rafters suggesting they were replaced prior to the wall being painted. The majority of the roof timbers show no clear sign of ever having been painted and are not blackened. The slight modern ceiling joists have been fixed by simply gouging out a slot downward from the top of the walls and then inserting the timber.

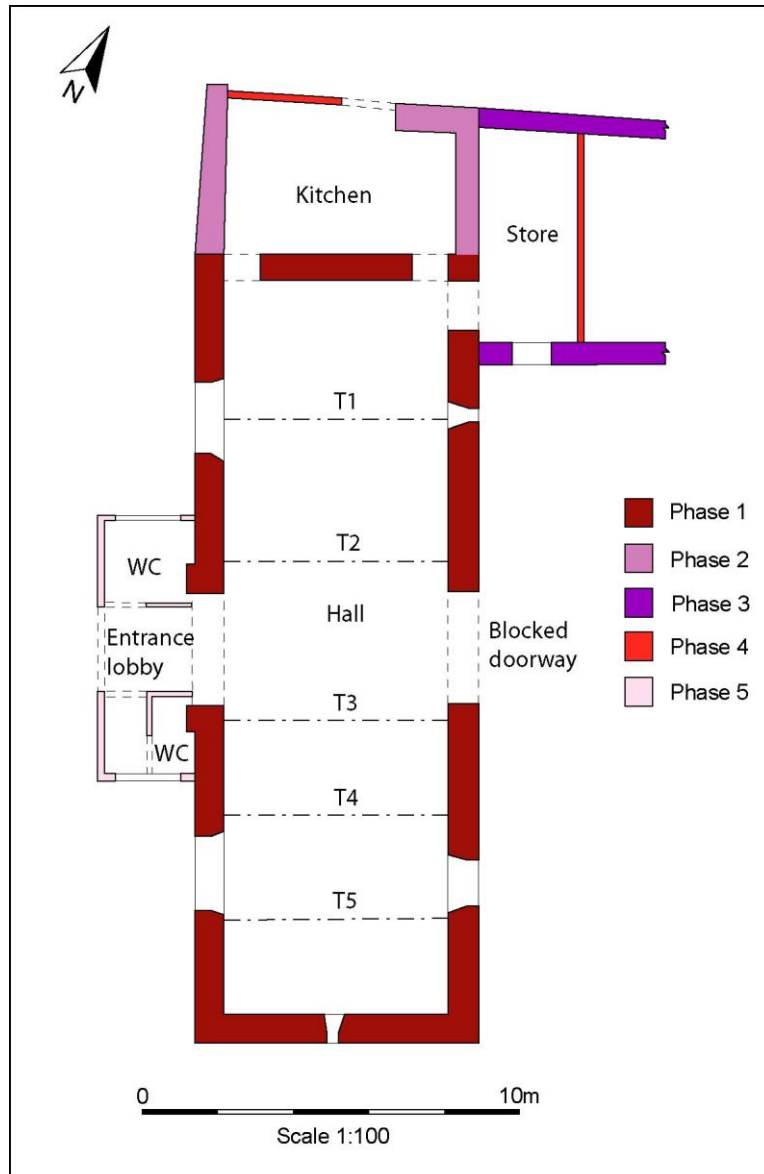


Figure 9: Phased plan of the Parish Hall.

4.0 Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Discussion and Development

The Parish Hall is relatively well documented from the time of its conversion from an agricultural building and its adoption as a community hall. The alterations to the building that were undertaken at that time include the insertion of reused 16th-17th century windows and exterior modifications to the large double door opening to the west, now replaced, and the probable blocking of the opposing entrance to the east, which formerly opened onto the courtyard of East Worlington House. The floor was probably also inserted at this time, raised from the barn flooring on crude brick piers, and access to the small lean-to to the north and store to the south may have been created at this early stage in the buildings community use.

Further modifications which have taken place during the later 20th century include the building of a small stage area at the south end, the addition of an enclosed porch area around the former threshing door opening in the west wall and the insertion of a ceiling. The bulk of the repairs to the roof structure were probably undertaken at the same time as the ceiling was put in, although it is not clear if all the replaced timbers were the original ones. The use of spiked joints suggests earlier phases of repair, and certainly a number of early elements had been replaced prior to this.

The listing document makes no mention of the two tie beams visible below the ceiling within the hall. The timbers have not been faced or moulded in any way and appear 'agricultural' rather than domestic in character. This suggests that they may have been inserted prior to the conversion to Parish Hall, to stabilise the building. a number of small window openings in the east and south walls, at least one of which may have started life as a small slit window (at the north end of the east elevation for instance) which may have been blocked and then subsequently reopened more recently.

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East Worlington Tithe Map 1839

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Appendix 1

Details of the English Heritage Listing for East Worlinton House, The Stables and the Parish Hall

Listing, 1967:

EAST WORLINGTON SS 71 SE 8/19
East Worlinton House 20.2.67 GV II*

Manor house, subsequently the parsonage, now house. Circa early or mid C16, remodelled mid or late C17 when extended. Further late C18 extension and extensive remodelling. Rubble and cob, rendered and colourwashed; water-reed thatch hipped roofs, stacks with C19 brick shafts. Plan: the original plan is uncertain, probably 3 rooms and a through- or cross- passage. It was evidently a house of high status since the moulded arch-braced truss towards the right-hand end suggests that there was a first floor chamber at this end, possibly the lower end. Because there are some smoke-blackened rafters remaining in the roof it is likely that the hall was open to the roof originally. In circa early C17 the hall would have been floored and a lateral stack inserted at the back. There also seems to have been a lateral stack at the back of the lower end. There may have been some remodelling in the late C17 when the right-hand room under the first floor chamber was given a fine plaster ceiling. In the late C18 the whole house was remodelled again and extended by a one room plan addition at either end creating a symmetrical front, the left-hand room was a library, and the right-hand room an outhouse, but its front treated as part of the main facade. At the same time 2 wings and a staircase bay were added at the rear. Plan and description: 2 storeys, symmetrical front of 1:5:1 windows, 12-pane sash window on first floor, exposed sash boxes, 2 similar sash windows on ground floor and two 3-light three quarter glazed French windows. Central door opening, C18 panelled door. Hipped roof C18 ranges at rear with casements; C18 stair-bay with sash windows. Interior: with lower room, now a study with Gothick features including fitted bookshelves; central hall with 2 lateral ovolo-moulded ceiling beams with 2 fillets, keel stops; the parlour with fine plaster ceiling in 3 panels, moulded cornices, central oval panel, late C17. Much C18 work including dado-panelling, panelled doors, chimneypieces on first floor with cast-iron grates and a staircase; the latter with turned newels, stick balusters and ramped toadsback handrail, of dog-leg type. Roof: much rebuilt C18 but with C16 arch-braced truss over the lower end of the house, cyma and ogee moulded, no smoke-blackening, diagonal threaded ridge and threaded purlins renewed. Over the hall-passage partition a further C16 truss with morticed ridge, not moulded, some smoke-blackened rafters also remain. Remains of a wooden mullioned window may be seen from inside the roof under the eaves of the rear wall. The manor house was mentioned in a terrier of 1727 stating: "It contains 8 under- rooms viz: great parlour, hall, kitchen, little parlour, cellar, bottle house, and woodhouse. All ye walles are of mudd except ye great parlour which is of stone". Source: Hodgson Rev H J, in Chulmleigh Deanery Parochial Magazine, March-June.

Listing 1987:

EAST WORLINGTON SS 71 SE 8/20
Stables directly adjacent to north of East Worlinton House GV II

Stables with hayloft over. C18. Colourwashed rubble and cob, cob exposed at rear, late C20 concrete-tiled C18 roof with wide eaves, gabled at left end, hipped at right end. Plan: rectangular plan stable range with entrance to left of the front and a hay-loft above. Exterior: 2 storeys, 3 windows, 2-light wooden mullioned and transomed windows on ground floor, glazing with lapped panes; similar 2-light window on first floor, a boarded over window and a hayloft opening with a plank door, these 3 openings of identical size. Broad door opening to left of ground floor, divided plank door with a transom light. Interior: with four C18 stalls, staircase to the first floor. 4 pigeon holes to first floor on front.

Listing 1975:

EAST WORLINGTON EAST WORLINGTON SS 71 SE 8/18
East Worlinton Parish Hall 3.10.75 GV II

Barn, now village hall. Probably C17. Rubble and cob, rendered and colourwashed, half-hipped straw-thatched roof. Rectangular on plan, with former opposing doors to winnowing floor. Opening on frontage blocked and obscured by a late C20 lean-to; set high up on each side a 3-light ovolo-moulded wooden-mullioned window, wood lintels, diamond-paned lights with lead comes, probably inserted C20. Left return with a similar 2-light window. Rear elevation with original large door opening with plank doors remaining, though they are blocked inside; no window openings. Interior: featureless, roof which may be of interest not seen, as concealed by a C20 ceiling.



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