

EAST WORLINGTON PARISH HALL

COMMUNITY HUB

HERITAGE HUB

CHARITY NUMBER 267969

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Conservation Plan

East Worlington Parish Hall Trustees 2014

Executive Summary

This Conservation Plan supports the preservation of East Worlington Parish Hall, a Grade II Listed converted cob walled and thatched tithe barn dating from the C17th. The Plan provides strong evidence for the building as a place of heritage significance. This is described by reference to the historic evolution of the building, its unique setting and its cultural relationship with the farming economy in the locality and the social well-being of the community, especially when it was converted to a Parish Hall. The building has charity status and is in public ownership, managed by a group of Trustees who represent local stakeholders. The risks and opportunities associated with the building are outlined below and there is an explanation of how the risks can be managed and the opportunities achieved. While there is good evidence to suggest the building has strong heritage value and is well worth conserving, its sustainability is vital. The reference to long and short term business planning shows the Trust's competence in securing longevity of the building. The building has strong significance to the local community and, through the conservation plan, the potential for regional and national interest can be further realised. The conservation and preservation of the building is vital in maintaining the heritage value which offers greater scope for research, investigation and education and learning.

1 Introduction

Care for our heritage through conservation.

Our Conservation Policy

- 1.1. Trustees of East Worlington Parish Hall consider that conservation is the process of caring for our heritage. We aim to conserve our building to ensure it is relevant, accessible and in good condition. We interpreted heritage as "All inherited resources which people value for reasons beyond mere utility." (English Heritage, 2008)
- 1.2. We recognise the cultural, historical, archaeological, aesthetic, communal and architectural significance of our building and our aim is to sustain it to ensure the heritage value is maintained.
- 1.3. Sustainability is based on the balance of ensuring the building can meet the needs of the present community, whilst not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, together with the need to appreciate and conserve our heritage.
- 1.4. Our decisions and actions will be set within a set of conservation principles. We therefore believe that:
 - i The historic environment is a shared resource
 - ii Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment
 - iii Understanding the significance of places is vital
 - iv As a significant place it should be managed to sustain its values
 - v Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent
 - vi Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.
- 1.5. We will
 - i Maintain and review regularly a routine management and maintenance plan
 - ii Plan for and undertake periodic renewal appropriate to the building to maintain its integrity e.g. thatch: to help conserve and prevent damage and harm through weather ingress
 - iii Repair only when the harm to the building has exceeded the capacity of the maintenance plan
 - iv Ensure that any intervention to increase knowledge of the past will be well planned and take into account the benefit of the intervention against any harm to the heritage value of the building

- v Aim to conserve and contribute to heritage value and avoid undertaking any restoration work that tries to make new additions and improvement look as if they are an original part of the building
- vi Ensure any new work and alteration contributes to the conservation of the building, its sustainability and its heritage value
- vii Integrate conservation with other public interests, to ensure the building maintains a place and function in the community
- viii Enable development only when it contributes to the sustainability of the building and when other conservation principles have been considered.

2 The Heritage Described

- 2.1. This is a building which has its origins as a barn of cob wall construction built on stone lower walls, with an A frame timber roof frame and thatched roof.
- 2.2. The evidence suggests the barn dates from the late C17th and may have been constructed on earlier foundations, but further intrusive investigation will be needed if this is to be confirmed.
- 2.3. There are three reused 16th-17th century ovolo moulded, mullioned windows; two three-light windows, with diamond leaded lights set high within the ground floor level of the west elevation (either side of central door opening) and one two-light window at first floor level in the north gable above the roof of the lean-to.
- 2.4. In the original barn two large barn doors existed, one each on opposite walls to allow cart/waggon and horse access and exit. One door exists to this day and can be observed from outside the east wall of the building. The barn door on the west wall has been removed and a 1960 entrance and toilets have been added to the external west wall. The frame of the old barn door remains in situ and can be viewed.
- 2.5. The barn was converted to a Parish Hall in the 1920's and this has led to some modifications to the inside of the building at different stages of its evolution. A suspended wooden floor has been installed in the main hall, and a stage has been constructed at the north end of the building.
- 2.6. A ceiling consisting of an asbestos based product has been added and this has concealed the view of the A-frame timber roof which is a significant architectural feature. An internal wood frame and board wall has been constructed inside which has concealed the inside of the old barn door from view.
- 2.7. A lean-to extension of the building, dating to the early evolution of the barn is located on the north wall and this has been converted into a kitchen associated with the current building's use.
- 2.8. The site footprint is only the plan of the barn and a small piece of land to the west of the barn between the barn and the road which has been converted to a car park for about six cars.

3 Local Setting

- 3.1. The building is in a unique setting being one of a cluster of buildings at the heart of East Worlington village. Its recorded origins are associated with the Rectory of the parish, which is adjacent and is now a private residence, known as East Worlington House. The barn is at one side of the original yard (West) boarded by East Worlington House (South) and connected to the old stable block which is at right angles to the barn and forming one side of the yard (North). Beyond the yard and to the east is St Mary's Church East Worlington and adjacent to the north boundary of the church is East Worlington Primary School of which the 'old school house' is still in existence and used as part of the current school's accommodation. All these buildings are Listed: East Worlington Parish Hall, Grade II; East Worlington House, Grade II*; the Old Stables, Grade II; St Mary's Church, Grade II and the Old School House, Grade II.

4. Local Context

- 4.1. The locality is predominantly farming and the barn has its origins and original use steeped in the economy of the area.
- 4.2. Also as a property of the church in its historical context it is deemed to be a Tithe barn and linked strongly with the church in this respect.
- 4.3. The archaeological and historical debate about the use of the barn through its history provides a point of view that it was also a Threshing Barn.
- 4.4. There is evidence that even when the barn still existed as a barn it was used for community use; for example photographs exist to show the barn being used as a Devon Dairy School which existed at the turn of the 20th in the Edwardian era.
- 4.5. It was only in 1910 that there is formal recognition that the barn was dedicated for community use by the then rector and in 1920 sold to the community to be used as a Parish Hall.

5. Wider heritage context

- 5.1. There are a wide range of Tithe barns across England and many have community or business related uses. East Worlington Parish Hall is unique in that it is the only Devonian community building of cob wall, constructed with a thatched roof and with a history associated with its evolution. From this sense it can be concluded that it is of heritage value to the nation as well as to Devon and the local community.

6. How the heritage is looked after / managed

- 6.1. The building is held in Trust with a Board of Trustees.
- 6.2. The Trust is registered with the Charities Commission.
- 6.3. The Trustees hold responsibility for the management of the conservation of the site.
- 6.4. The Trustees seek information, advice and support from appropriate building conservation professionals to inform its policies and decisions - e.g. archaeologist; conservation architect; chartered building surveyor; LA conservation officer.
- 6.5. The Trustees adopt and review policies and have developed a plan that ensures the heritage of the site is conserved and preserved; the main ones being: the Conservation Policy Statement, the Management Plan, and the Maintenance Policy and Plan.
- 6.6. The Trust encourages and supports the contribution of volunteers. Volunteers work within the conservation policies and when appropriate under the supervision of conservation specialist / professionals.
- 6.7. The Trust benefits from some voluntary support from professionals, and purchases the services of professionals when needed to secure the conservation of the heritage of the site.

7. Statement of significance

- 7.1. The building has significance in a number of dimensions:

i Evidential Significance

- i The building itself is strong evidence of human activity. Its purpose as a barn and the remaining features, e.g. barn door, show how the building was originally used. The installation of a kitchen and stage together with the addition of toilets and a small storeroom show how it has been adapted through the years to meet community use.
- ii Texts, especially those authored by **Hodgson, Rev. H.J.**: *The Evolution of a Devonshire Rectory*; **Hill, H.A.** 1910: *East Worlington Kalendar of Quotidian Quotations*, Hartland; and **Hoskins, W.G.** 1978 (for 1954): *Devon*. Newton Abbot: David & Charles Ltd. provide accounts of the site and building. As quoted from the Archaeologist's Report 2013, '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.
- iii 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..*
- iv 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...*
- v Photographic evidence exists showing images of the barn/hall being used as a Devon Dairy School in the first decade of the C20th together with an external view of the hall probably in the early 1920s. The hall has been used for many significant community events and celebrations, e.g. Queen's Silver Jubilee and Queen's Golden Jubilee, each recorded in photographs
- vi As a Parish Hall a Minute book of the Trustees / Management Committee has been kept over the years. The earliest existing Minute document dates to 1963.
- vii The Archaeologists Report, while referencing other sources, also considers empirical evidence that supports understanding about the evolution of the site.

ii Archaeological Significance

- i The evolution of the building within its setting is well documented in the Archaeologist's report which considers the archaeology associated with the broader settlement and the evolution of the barn / hall. As the report suggests, 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. 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. 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. 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 which may further confirm the relative antiquity of East Worlington.

iii Architectural, Design Significance, and Building technology

- i The building design is of a traditional cob and thatched Devon barn and this design remains recognisable from the exterior. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of type, period or method of construction and represents the work of craftsmen of the period, particularly the cob walling, the joinery and the thatching. The use of ovolo moulded mullion windows reused from another building shows an early approach to recycling and adds architectural interest and value to the building. Maintenance has secured the original appearance and use of traditional materials. However a 1960's addition to the front of the building as a foyer and toilet only represents a construction of that time and according to the local Conservation Officer holds little conservation value compared to the rest of the building. As a building it possesses high artistic values supporting the Devon vernacular. In its location in the village and the broader locality it represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighbourhood due to its physical characteristics.
- ii The building technology, both materials and skills of the craftspeople, are conserved and recognisable for their period in history and for the on-going conservation over the life of the barn / hall.

iii Historical Significance

- i The history of the barn/hall can be charted through texts, maps, together with written and verbal accounts and this illustrates its evolution. The historical links are associated with farming, the church and the community, with each element shaping the use of the barn. The original historical internal features of the barn of the roof construction and the old barn door still exist but have been hidden by the C20th installation of a ceiling and partition wall. However other C20th internal additions to maximise its use as a hall, including installation of a suspended wooden floor, a stage and wall panelling to a height of about one metre, contribute to an understanding of its evolution in the last 100 years.
- ii The barn/hall is an integral element of the history of the community and provides a feature that contributes to the history of the people and indicators of their occupations and lifestyles.

iv Cultural Significance

- i The building has high cultural significance given that over its existence it has played a role in its historic setting, linked to the local economy, namely farming, the church in respect of tithes, and its role within the community especially in relation to venues for meetings and community activities. The building has value as part of the heritage and cultural characteristics of the local area, and the county (Devon).
- ii The community have influenced the use and evolution of the barn/hall, which has in turn, provided a facility to support community cohesion and well-being.

v Educational Significance

- i The building has educational value both as a site for the public to learn about its significant link to our heritage and in its function as a place for learning activities, both for the community and the children at the local primary school. As a community owned building used as a village hall, the public have access to the building and therefore can learn and appreciate our heritage from visits and use.

vi Aesthetic Significance

- i The building retains the external appearance that adheres to its original design and purpose as a barn and its visual qualities and characteristics contribute to the emotional and aesthetic appreciation for the viewer. The mid C20th addition to the front elevation reflects the building's development over time and contributes to an understanding of the considered appropriate addition at that time; however little else has changed and it is easy for the viewer to visualise the building at different times in its history. The stone bases to the walls, roofscape of thatch and the ovolo mullion windows draw the attention and add to its aesthetic qualities.
- ii There is a strong relationship between the building and its setting (village location) and context (working agricultural landscape) and this adds to an aesthetic appreciation of the building and the site.

vii Communal/ Public / Recreational Significance

- i The building has high levels of significance to the local community as a building that offers identity and distinctiveness to the locality. In its current use as a place that supports activities, events and functions that support social interaction and community cohesion it has helped shape community behaviour and attitude. The building's conservation and sustainable use makes a significant contribution to the on-going social, educational, and emotional well-being of the community.
- ii It has high community value through its resonance with significant events made possible because of the Hall's existence, for example, national celebrations, including the Queen's Silver, Gold and Diamond Jubilee celebrations.
- iii There is a strong relationship between the building's communal value as an asset the community relate to and its historical and cultural value that contributes to the experience and emotional impact of the community and Hall users.

8. Risk (Vulnerabilities) and Opportunities

Risk (Vulnerability)	Management of Risk
i General condition of building falls below a standard required to ensure its sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Approve and continuously monitor, evaluate and review the Conservation plan b. Seek and secure funding to ensure the Conservation Plan can be implemented
ii Rain ingress due to failure of thatched roof	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Periodic renewal of thatch (approx. every 25 years) b. Implement a maintenance programme
iii Water damage to floor structure due to rising water table and water drainage from thatched roof (no guttering)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure all surface water drains in the vicinity are functioning effectively b. Where necessary ensure French drains adjacent to the wall/s of the building are in place/functioning and remedy any problems under the maintenance programme c. Install a damp-proof membrane under the floor of the building
iv Timbers within the building decay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implement the Conservation and Improvement Plan to remove all decaying floor timbers and replace with a more sustainable solution b. Expose roof and old barn door timbers

	<p>to conserve and provide on-going access for maintenance</p> <p>c. Treat timbers to minimise any risk with timber infestation e.g. wood worm</p>
v Building fails to function for its current purpose	<p>d. Current use as a 'village hall' held in trust, registered as a charity and governed by a constitution for the purpose of community benefit</p> <p>e. Reduction in usage, as a result of facilities not meeting the needs of the community, managed through on-going needs identification, investment and effective monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>f. Effective management in place including strategic and annual business planning and effective marketing and promotion</p> <p>g. Vision to ensure the building provides a venue as a Community Hub and as a Heritage Learning Hub</p>
vi Poor ineffective governance and management	<p>a. Trustees act as management committee and represent major stakeholders</p> <p>b. Wide range of relevant skills, expertise and experience amongst Trustees</p> <p>c. On-going monitoring through regular meetings of Trustees (minimum of 6 annually)</p> <p>d. Annual General Meeting for public accountability</p> <p>e. Recruitment of new Trustees guided by the Boards overall skills profile and skill gaps analysis</p>
vii Maintenance issues not addressed	<p>a. Maintenance policy and programme in place</p> <p>b. Maintenance policy and programme reviewed annually by Trustees</p> <p>c. One member of Trustees has overview responsibility for maintenance</p> <p>d. Monitoring reports on building condition to Trustees at each regular meeting</p> <p>e. Annual budget allocation to maintenance</p>
viii Sustainability	<p>a. Financial sustainability is achieved through the strategic and annual business plan and income generation.</p> <p>b. Building condition is sustained through the maintenance programme</p> <p>c. An annual budget is allocated to the maintenance programme</p> <p>d. Period renewal of the thatch is planned for through annual allocation</p>

	<p>of funds to the on-going Thatching Appeal e.g. £25,000 in 2014 based on 2% rise over 25 years (period renewal) £41,000 equals £1,640 per year</p> <p>e. Development as a Community Hub increases usability and viability and as a consequence sustainability</p> <p>f. Development as a venue of choice for specific events increases income and potential to invest in sustainable strategies</p> <p>g. Development as a Heritage Learning Centre increases its Heritage significance and importance locally, within area and nationally</p>
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Opportunities	Actions
i To ensure future generations can appreciate, learn and use the building	a. Conserve the building and continue to implement a sustainable management plan
ii Increase the overall heritage significance of the building	<p>a. Expose architectural features of the building that add to its heritage value e.g ceiling.</p> <p>b. Conserve the original features e.g roof construction,</p> <p>This will ensure they can be appreciated as significant features of the Hall's heritage</p>
iii Implement a realistic business plan that achieves sustainability	a. Based on the conservation of the Hall and it's increased business potential, create a strategic and operational business plan and manage its implementation
iv Increase use of the building	<p>a. By conserving the Hall there is a positive impact on the experience and desirability to use it.</p> <p>b. A positive experience by users, in line with the business plan, will generate more use as a facility in the community and as a place to visit and learn</p>
v Increase learning about our heritage from the building	a. Implement Heritage learning programme as agreed by Trustees

9. Access

- 9.1. Access to the building by the public is an important factor in its heritage value.
- 9.2. The building is in public (community) ownership and held in Trust, governed by its constitution which requires it to be used for community (public) learning, recreational and leisure time occupations, which collectively support access.
- 9.3. The outside elevation can be viewed from outside the building.
- 9.4. Physical access to the inside of the building is in place with disabled access ramp and wide opening doors.
- 9.5. The building can be booked for use.
- 9.6. A variety of events are offered in the building that supports public access.
- 9.7. Websites allow photographic information to be displayed and access to learning about the building through that medium.

10. *Managing information about our heritage*

10.1. Keeping Records

- i Any projects that improve, conserve and change the building in any way will be well documented with public access to the information
- ii As part of any historical and/or archaeological investigations and research the process will be documented and any findings recorded/archived to form an evidence base in support of the buildings heritage value
- iii The meetings of Trustees and Committee sub-groups will work to an agenda and minutes of meetings will be maintained.

10.2. Maintaining an archive

- i A catalogue and referenced archive of information is maintained to secure the evidence base.

10.3. Use of technology

- i All documents and records will be kept in electronic format when possible and filed in folders in the 'cloud'.

10.4. Information and communication

- i Ensuring all those who need or desire access to information should be able to either find it or request it. A number of information-sharing and communication strategies are applied to this requirement
- ii The building provides an ideal place to display relevant information
- iii The internet offers worldwide access to information and the Trustees will continue to use websites, social media and e-communication to share information
- iv Paper based documents, e.g. newsletters and articles for magazines provide access to information by the readers
- v Contacts information and networks will continue to support communication about the heritage.

11. Conclusions

- 11.1. As confirmed in the Conservation Architects Report the Trustees are aware of and apply conservation principles in their decisions and management of the building.
- 11.2. Some evidence exists to support the heritage value of the building and further evidence will be collected on an on-going basis as part of the research and investigation into the history and archaeology of the building.
- 11.3. There is a strong relationship between the historical, communal and cultural significance aspects of the building.
- 11.4. The archaeological and aesthetic significance confirms the importance of the building as a key place within its setting and context and provides a good example of the building technology and craft people skills at the time of its original construction. The building retains its barn appearance externally and has strong aesthetic significance.
- 11.5. Good management has helped retain the heritage significance of the building. However the barn's adaptation over the past century and underdeveloped heritage value to the area and nation confirm that maintaining a focus on conservation is vital to ensure future generations can learn and benefit from its sustainability.

12. Adoption and Review

- 12.1. This Conservation Plan is Adopted by East Worlington Parish Hall Trustees and reviewed annually as part of the Trustees Annual Report.

13. Bibliography

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- 13.3. Conservation Principles - **Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment** *English Heritage* 2008
- 13.4. Conservation Planning – **Conservation Plan Guidance** *Heritage Lottery Fund* 2012
- 13.5. Conservation Planning – **Thinking About Conservation** *Heritage Lottery Fund* 2009
- 13.6. Assessment of Significance – **Guidance Notes for the Assessment of Significance** *East Devon District Council*
- 13.7. Assessing Historic Buildings – **Criteria for Assessing Historic Buildings** *Cadw* 2011