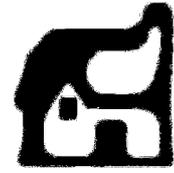


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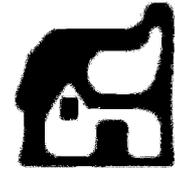
**East Worlington Parish Hall
Architectural Conservation Report**

2014

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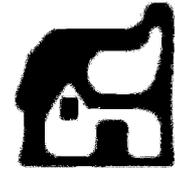
Revision

Rev	Description	Date
A	Amendments and additions	13 June 14

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Building Conservation Services were instructed by the East Worlington Parish Hall Committee (EWPHC) to produce an Architectural Conservation Report to aid the process of project planning.
- 1.2 The report is written by Sam Percival BSC Hons PG Dip MRICS. Sam is Chartered Building Surveyor with a Science Degree in Building Conservation Technology and a Post Graduate Degree in Building Surveying. Sam specialises in the survey, repair and alteration of historic and traditional buildings as well as the design of new buildings within a historical context.

2. Description

- 2.1 The Parish Hall lies within the curtilage of the former rectory adjacent to East Worlington Parish Church of St Marys. The front elevation faces west on to a nearby lane (Photo 1) and the rear elevation faces east on to an enclosed yard to the back of the former rectory (Photo 2 & 3).
- 2.2 East Worlington Parish Hall was designated grade II listed status by English Heritage in 1975. The listing describes the building as being a barn of 17th Century origins with rendered and colour washed rubble and cob walls and a half hipped thatched roof of straw. Mention is made of the ovolo mullion windows and the original barn doors. The listing also refers to the roof structure obscured by the 20th Century ceiling which maybe of interest.
- 2.3 During 2013 EWPHC commissioned a archeologically survey, undertaken by Southwest Archaeology of South Molton (Appendix 4). This report traced the earliest written documentation relating to the barn to a set of 1679 'Glebe Terriers' for East Worlington House which referred to a 'barn built of mud' and in 1727 'a barn consisting of 5 bays...all having walls of mud and thatch covering'. The report concluded that the barn most probably dated from the early part of the 17th Century.
- 2.4 Southwest Archaeology's report quoted Rev. H.A.Hill's 'East Worlington Kalendar of Quotidian Quotations' written in 1910 which referred back to the recent 'restoration' including the insertion of the moulded oak mullion windows. The mullion windows where considered to date form the 16th and 17th centuries (Photo 4). The Parish Hall is believed to have been formally sold to the Parish in 1920 by the then Rectory, although this is unsupported by any written evidence.

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2.5 In addition to the insertion of the mullion windows and roof repairs, changes made during the conversion of the barn to a village hall included the insertion of a raised floor, stage and the blocking of the rear entrance. A small porch housing a cloakroom and a ceiling were added during the later part of the 20th Century.

3. Historical Importance.

3.1 Physical

3.1.1 Despite small changes introduced to provide comfort and light, the Parish Hall remains distinctly barn like and is typical of similar buildings found within farmyards throughout Devon.

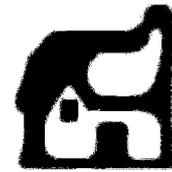
3.1.2 Built for threshing corn, the barn had two entrances opposite each other, wide enough for a wagon load of un-threshed wheat straw to be driven through and unloaded on to the hard mud packed floors on either side. Workers, from the village would pound the wreaths of straw to loosen the corn. Throwing the corn into the air and utilising the cross draught created by the open wagon doors separated the chaff from the corn. This process of preparing corn, known as wind winnowing, is perhaps one of the oldest forms of farming practices and one that continues to be undertaken in large parts of the world today. It was indeed only relatively recently that this method was superseded by mechanical means. It may not be a coincidence that the barn was converted to a village hall shortly after widespread mechanisation had taken place in Devon. A recently redundant farm building would have offered the perfect solution to a Parish in need of a communal space to gather.

3.1.3 The walls are of cob, set on a plinth of rubble stone; a method of construction ubiquitous to Devon. The roof of thatch completes the picturesque composition; a view so obviously appreciated by the Rev. H.A. Halls when it was referred, with pride, to the effort made to preserve the rustic appearance of the barn in 1910. At that time there must have been many hundreds if not thousands of thatched agricultural buildings locally. However, since that time the increasing cost of thatching has ceased to make it financially viable for farmers to thatch their agricultural buildings and subsequently corrugated iron and other cheaper and less impermanent roofing materials have superseded thatch. A similar fate of de-thatching would most probably befall West Worlington's threshing barn by now had it not been re-imagined by the Edwardian parishioners as an agreeable building to make their village hall.

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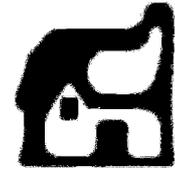
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- 3.1.4 The Barn is conveniently placed with one side facing the lane and the other facing on to the west side of the rectory farmyard. A large stable of considerable age and constructed to a standard which befitted the importance attributed to the horse stands to the north of the yard and to the south the complex thatched roof of the Rectory complete an almost perfect scene of vernacular architectural aesthetics.
- 3.1.5 More recent changes made to the barn include the insertion of three ovolo mullion windows complete with matching ovolo moulded frames. The windows and frames would appear to date from the 16th or 17th Century (Alcock and Hall, 1994). The Rev H.A. Halls stated that they were acquired from cottages within the village. The sheer decorative quality of the mouldings suggest a high status building and it is tempting to suppose that they may have come from the adjacent Rectory, a 16th Century building which has undergone a complete re-fenestration sometime during the 19th and 20th Centuries.

3.2 Social

- 3.2.1 Despite being converted approximately 100 years ago, into a village hall or parish hall as it is now referred to, it is still clearly recognisable to the layman that the building had once a purpose primarily agricultural in nature. Likewise, the rectory is no longer a rectory and the farmyard is no longer a farm; however, it is evident by the setting and appearance of the buildings to the most casual of observers that the purpose of these buildings was closely linked to that of the Church. That the past can be sensed so readily in this way illustrates perfectly how important physical structures are in providing communities with a tangible link to their social history.
- 3.2.2 The Barn was acquired by the Parish some time prior to 1910 as a formal place for village events and socialising. It is however quite plausible that the barn, like barns documented elsewhere (Barton, 1975) was previously utilised as a place for gatherings and holding community events whilst still in agricultural use.
- 3.2.3 Since its formal adoption as a village hall the building has borne witness to over 100 years of events, including weddings reception, art classes, young farmers discos and more recently, fund raising events staged by the parishioners to ensure the continued good health and regular use of the building by future generations.



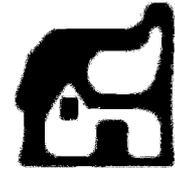
4. Structural Assessment

- 4.1.1 The building was originally divided in to five bays (the two southern bays were subdivide in to three during later repairs to the roof structure) and is approximately 17m long by 6m wide. The height of the eaves is approximately 4m from the ground at the northern end increasing to closer to 5m as the ground slopes towards the southern gable. The ridge lies approximately 4m above the eaves.
- 4.1.2 The earliest surviving attempt to prolong the life of the building appears to be the insertion of a pair of large undecorated timber cross beams. These pass straight through the rear wall and are tied against the outside face of the wall with large timber pegs which pass through the end of the beam and are secured against planks of wood (Photo 5). The insertion of these beams was presumably deemed necessary to prevent the walls from moving outwards; perhaps a result of the roof structure spreading under the weight of consecutive layers of thatch - the normal practice in Devon being to re-thatch over the top of the old thatch, a process that results in a progressive thickening of the thatch over time. The thatch roof now appears to be quite thin and therefore one might assume that it has been stripped back to the roof structure at sometime in the recent past.
- 4.1.3 Southwest Archaeology's report revealed that the roof principles have been altered and repaired on a number of occasions. The two principle trusses at the lower end of the barn are thought to have been replaced during the late 20th Century with three new trusses, dividing the barn in to 6 bays (Photo 6). The remaining trusses and purlins are thought to be original.
- 4.1.4 Further late 20th century modifications include the insertion of a asbestos sheet light weight ceiling at eaves height and the provision of a stage and toilet facilities located within the lean-to porch.
- 4.1.5 A raised timber floor supported on brick piers is thought to have been inserted during the time of the conversion to a Parish Hall. The void has in the past been subject to flooding and issues relating to damp (Photo 7). Recent repairs have included the insertion of vents to aid drying out of the undercroft (Photo 8); however, these have not fully resolved the damp issues and associated wet rot affecting the raised floor.

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4.1.6 The Barn has been well looked after since its conversion to a Parish Hall and the walls remain sound and relatively true. The roof structure despite appearing to remain functional would benefit from some localised repair and rationalisation of the various tie beams, struts and other insertions. The thatch is nearing the end of its lifespan and will require renewal in the near future. In addition there are a number of aesthetic changes which would benefit the general presentation of the hall, such as the removal of the late 20th century ceiling and reopening of the rear set of barn doors.

5. Conservation Principles

5.1.1 The conservation principles applied to the proposed works closely align with those laid down within the SPAB manifesto written in 1877 by William Morris. Morris identified that any building which is artistic, picturesque, historical, antique or substantial is worthy of protection and goes on to encourage the avoidance of 'imagining' or producing a forgery of history. The manifesto raises concerns over the tampering of surfaces so that the appearance of antiquity is taken away and supports the maintenance and unobtrusive upkeep of historical buildings and the confident use of contemporary design when change or intervention is deemed a necessity.

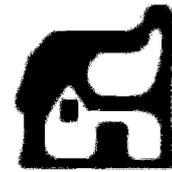
5.1.2 The second point of reference for conservation principles to which the work will be governed are those devised by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). Specifically, the principles laid down within their International Charter For The Conservation And Restoration Of Monuments And Sites (The Venice Charter 1964) and their 2003 Charter, Principles For The Analysis Conservation And Structural Restoration Of Architectural Heritage.

5.1.3 The Venice Charter provides some broad guidance towards conservation principles including Article 12 which stipulates that intervention must integrate harmoniously and yet also be distinguishable from the original so as not to falsify or mislead and Article 13. which continues by adding that 'additions cannot be allowed except in so far as they do not detract from the interesting parts of the building, its traditional setting, the balance of its composition and its relation with its surroundings'.

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- 5.1.4 ICOMOS's Charter, Principles For The Analysis Conservation And Structural Restoration Of Architectural Heritage which dates from 2003 combines the needs of the building with the safety and well being of the occupants. The Principles encourage a multi disciplined approach to conservation and a methodical approach to diagnosis similar to the medical profession. The charter identifies that any 'therapy should address the root causes rather than the symptoms' and that intervention should be in proportion and thus kept to the minimum whilst guarantying the safety and durability of the building.
- 5.1.5 ICOMOS depart from SPAB slightly over the issue of using traditional and innovative techniques, preferring to treat heritage assets on a case-by-case basis. In the case of West Worlington Parish Hall it was considered that the insertion of a modern form of floor construction and ground drainage would provide a permanent solution to the issue of the water ingress whilst also providing a robust finished floor surface suited to the rigours of a social gathering place.
- 5.1.6 The ICOMOS Charter highlight the importance of interventions being reversible, so that other measures can be implemented when new knowledge is acquired. The above ground works, including the new stage and gallery have been design to be independent structures which can be removed without unduly harming the fabric of the original building.
- 5.1.7 The third source of reference to which the works have been measured is the principles laid down with English Heritage's Conservation Principles Policies And Guidance For The Sustainable Management Of The Historic Environment. English Heritage's guidance emphasises the right of everyone to be able to participate in sustaining the built environment and the importance of learning and recording of knowledge. The Parish Hall Committee have strived to ensure that learning becomes a central aim of the project, producing a detailed plan of activities and events to tie in with the works process (Appendix 3).
- 5.1.8 English Heritage's guidance also encourages the understanding of the significance of a place, how people identify with it and how perceptions change as understanding and knowledge is gained. By commissioning Southwest Archaeology's investigation the Parish has for the first time acquired an academic historical appraisal. This willingness to disseminate knowledge through investigation has undoubtedly already lead to a subtle adjustment of perception and likely to have increased confidence to proceed with much needed change.

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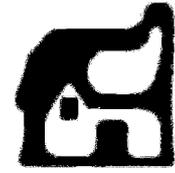
5.1.9 The following are a set of broad principles which have been applied to the proposed works:

- Learning and community participation will form a central aim of the proposed works.
- Repairs will be carried out in like for like materials in manner which makes them clearly distinguishable from the original work and/or using new materials or techniques which enable the maximum amount of original fabric to remain in-situ.
- Repairs and new work will not be artificially aged or made to mislead or confuse the observer as to the date, history or sequence of building and repair phases.
- New intervention will only be carried out where it guarantees the safety and durability of the building.
- Where possible, new work will be reversible and will not hinder the ability of others to undertake future repairs.

6. Proposed Works.

6.1 *Description of Proposed Works*

- 6.1.1 It is proposed that the existing 20th Century raised timber floor and stage be removed and a new insulated floor incorporating under-floor heating be laid down and finished with a modern timber strip board. The new stage will incorporate a gallery and will largely self supporting off the new floor slab (Refer to Surveyor's design drawings C053/010 and C053/006 - Appendix 1).
- 6.1.2 Following a full option appraisal it was decided that a Oil fired condensing boiler would provide the most suitable form of heating (Appendix 2). It is proposed that the boiler and oil tank will be housed within the existing structure. An existing cupboard will be adapted within the 20th Century lean-to to provide a fire resistant enclosure to house the oil tank.



- 6.1.3 To the rear of the Hall a new land drain is proposed as is a new weather tight threshold below the existing barn doors. Internally a new glazed screen will replace existing boarding to enable the door joinery to be revealed internally and admired by the building users.
- 6.1.4 It is proposed that the late 20th Century ceiling be taken down in order to reveal the A-framed roof trusses. The trusses will be repaired, including the removal of some late 20th century softwood repairs.
- 6.1.5 All of the existing windows will be assessed for decay and where required repaired in a suitable matching timber, spliced in a way which maximise the amount of original material retained. Secondary internal aluminium glazing is proposed throughout and will be installed in such a way that it is easily removable without damaging the fabric of the building.
- 6.1.6 All proposed works have been met with approval by North Devon District Council's Conservation Officer and have been granted Listed Building Consent. Building Regulation approval has been granted.

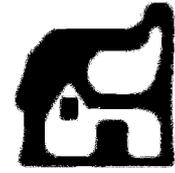
6.2 Method of repair / materials

- 6.2.1 All work will be carried out in accordance with the stated conservation principles.
- 6.2.2 All new work which affects the existing wall surfaces will be made good using lime putty and sand mix
- 6.2.3 The new floor will be laid over the existing bare earth floor, raising the finished floor level above the external ground levels, eliminating the current issues caused by water run off and flooding (Refer to the Surveyor's design drawings C053/006 - Appendix 1).
- 6.2.4 The proposed new stage, access stairs, gallery and balustrade will be constructed in a mortise and tenoned oak timber frame and will reuse the existing floorboards (Refer to Surveyors design drawings C053/010 - Appendix 1)
- 6.2.5 Repairs to windows and doors will be carried out in matching timber, spliced to maximise the retention of original fabric.

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6.2.6 The roof trusses are to be repaired in matching timber. All new work to be distinguishable from the original timbers and free from artificial ageing (Refer to Surveyor's design drawings C053/009- Appendix 1).

7. Learning Potential

7.1.1 By engaging in the process of applying to the Local Authority to undertake changes to the listed building the Parish has already benefitted from the research, conducted by Southwest Archaeology, which has revealed and clarified the age and development of the barn and its subsequent use as a Parish Hall.

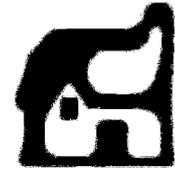
7.1.2 Within their Project Activity Plan (Appendix 3) The Parish Hall Committee have outlined a comprehensive list of research and activity aims, including amongst others the following:

- The proposed works will reveal and put on permanent display the previously hidden structure of the barn roof and doors. This revealing will engage the building users directly and allow them to better understand and contemplate the construction, the age and the development of the building in a more personal and direct way.
- Several locally based historical studies will be undertaken and made publicly available via the Parish Hall website or put on permanent display within the Hall. These will include historical studies of the barn, neighbouring religious buildings and water pump and will also include a general presentation of village life during the time at which the barn was built.
- A book is proposed presenting facts and information about the Parish Hall and community heritage.
- The Committee have stated a desire to stage a number of events which relate to the works, including a theatre presentation, a village fair and hands on practical events such as cob and thatching demonstrations and workshops.
- In total EWPHC have stated within their Project Activity Plan (Appendix 3) over forty separate proposals which will aid and disseminate learning during and after the process of conserving and adapting their Parish hall.

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8. References

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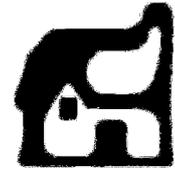
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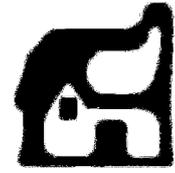


Photographs

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Photograph 1 - West Elevation

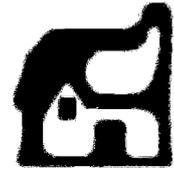


Photograph 2 - East Elevation

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Photograph 3 - North elevation of the former rectory (East Worlington House)

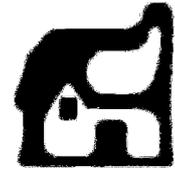


Photograph 4 - 16/17 Century ovolo moulded window

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Photograph 5 - Timber tie beams

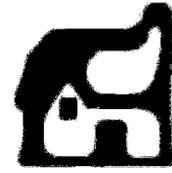


Photograph 6 - Typical truss, purlin and rafter arrangement

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Photograph 7 - Existing undercroft showing raised floor supported on brick piers



Photograph 8 - Slate vents inserted to aid airflow to undercroft