

A LEVEL 2 BUILDING RECORD OF THE VILLAGE  
HALL, WAKERLEY ROAD, BARROWDEN, RUTLAND  
LE15 8EP



Paul Stamper Heritage  
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Consent has been granted for Barrowden's Village Hall to be demolished and replaced by a new community hub (2023/0155/FUL). A planning condition requires that before works commence the Hall is recorded to 'Level 2' as set out in Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (2016).<sup>1</sup> A full WSI for the archaeological work was produced by drp archaeology (September 2023).

As defined by Historic England, Level 2 record is a descriptive record. Both the exterior and interior of the building will be seen, described and photographed. The examination of the building will produce an analysis of its development and use and the record will include the conclusions reached, but it will not discuss in detail the evidence on which this analysis is based. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will normally not be comprehensive and may be tailored to the scope of a wider project. The account should summarise the building's form, function, date and sequence of development. The names of architects, builders, patrons and owners should be given if known. Although not included in the Historic England requirements, where relevant a brief statement of understanding will be included of the building's place and setting in the local landscape.

The photographic record was made by Dr Paul Stamper, FSA, with site photography being undertaken on 26 April 2024. The scale in external photos is 2m.

## 2 BARROWDEN VILLAGE HALL: HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

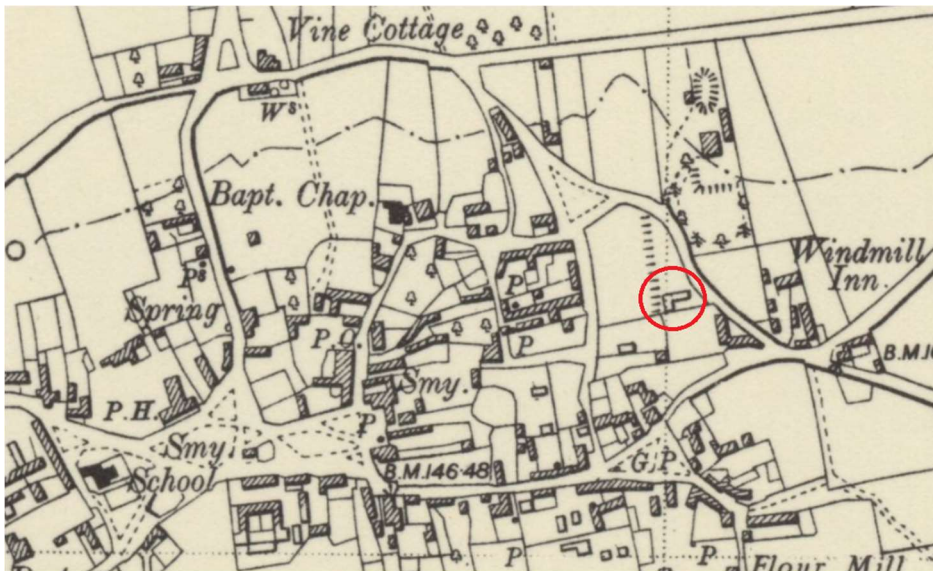


Figure 1. The village hall's location, as shown on OS 6-inch mapping, Northants sheet VI.NW (surveyed 1950, published 1952).

<sup>1</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/understanding-historic-buildings/heag099-understanding-historic-buildings/>

The first village halls in England were a celebratory response to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. However, the main impetus to village hall building came after the First World War with a national drive to develop social and educational provision in rural areas, led by the newly created National Council of Social Service (NCSS now *NCVO*, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations) from which ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England) was formed in 1986. The building or improvement of a village hall was quickly seen to be the most effective way of bringing all interests in a village together, and a Village Halls Department was set up by NCSS providing model charity governing documents. Swelled by the desire to provide a lasting memorial to the Fallen, and the availability at low cost of former army and RAF huts, more halls were built between 1919 and 1929 than in any subsequent ten-year period.

It is reckoned that approximately 10 per cent of the estimated 11,000 village halls and similar community buildings in rural England were built by communities as war memorials, and a number have been listed with this historic association adding significance to their architectural special interest.

Its datestone suggests Barrowden Village Hall opened in 1927. Records held by the Trust which owns it show that the land on which it stands was purchased in December 1925, with the original four trustees being George Dexter, a farmer, and William Henry Waite, a plate-layer – that is a railway worker (both men being nominated by a parish meeting); Malcolm Hutton, a doctor (nominated by the Working Men's Club); and Rachel Mary Toft (nominated by the Women's Institute).

The important part played by Dr Hutton, who died in 1930 just three years after the Hall opened, is remembered on a plaque (Figure 2), while the role of the Barrowden Women's Institute is recalled on a splendid framed embroidery (Figure 3).



*Figure 2. The memorial plaque to Dr Hutton, to be reset in the new community hub.*





Figure 3. The embroidered panel (the hand-carved frame bearing 'HONOUR' and '1926') presented by the National Federation of Women's Institutes to Barrowden W.I.

'For Home and Country' was the motto of the first-ever Women's Institute, formed in Canada in 1897. It was a Canadian woman, Madge Watt, who formed the first WI in Britain, in 1915 in Llanfair PG (Wales). She suggested they adopt an amended version of the Canadian W.I. badge and the Canadian motto, which was especially apposite given part the W.I. played in feeding the country during the First World War.



Figure 4. The original Canadian WI badge (left), and the British version which in amended form appears on the Barrowden embroidery.

### 3 BARROWDEN VILLAGE HALL

The single-storey Hall is orientated east-west, with its frontage close to Wakerley Road. Behind it the ground falls away quite sharply; the Barrowden and Wakerley Community Shop was built here in 2005 (as seen on the cover photograph). Beyond that is the village Surgery, accessed off Kings Lane.

The original Village Hall, which opened in 1927, is of brick, rendered, and with applied decorative timber-framing. Internally it comprised a main hall with at least one lavatory on the left side of the entrance lobby; a second probably occupied what is now the boiler room on the right side. As suggested below on the evidence of the two west-end fireplaces, a small meeting room may originally have taken up at least part of what is now the stage area. The Hall was extended in 1974 when a kitchen (with relocated ladies' lavatory) was added along its south side, and also in 2004 when a new storeroom replaced an earlier structure at the south-west corner.



Figure 5. Existing site layout (Harris McCormack Architects).

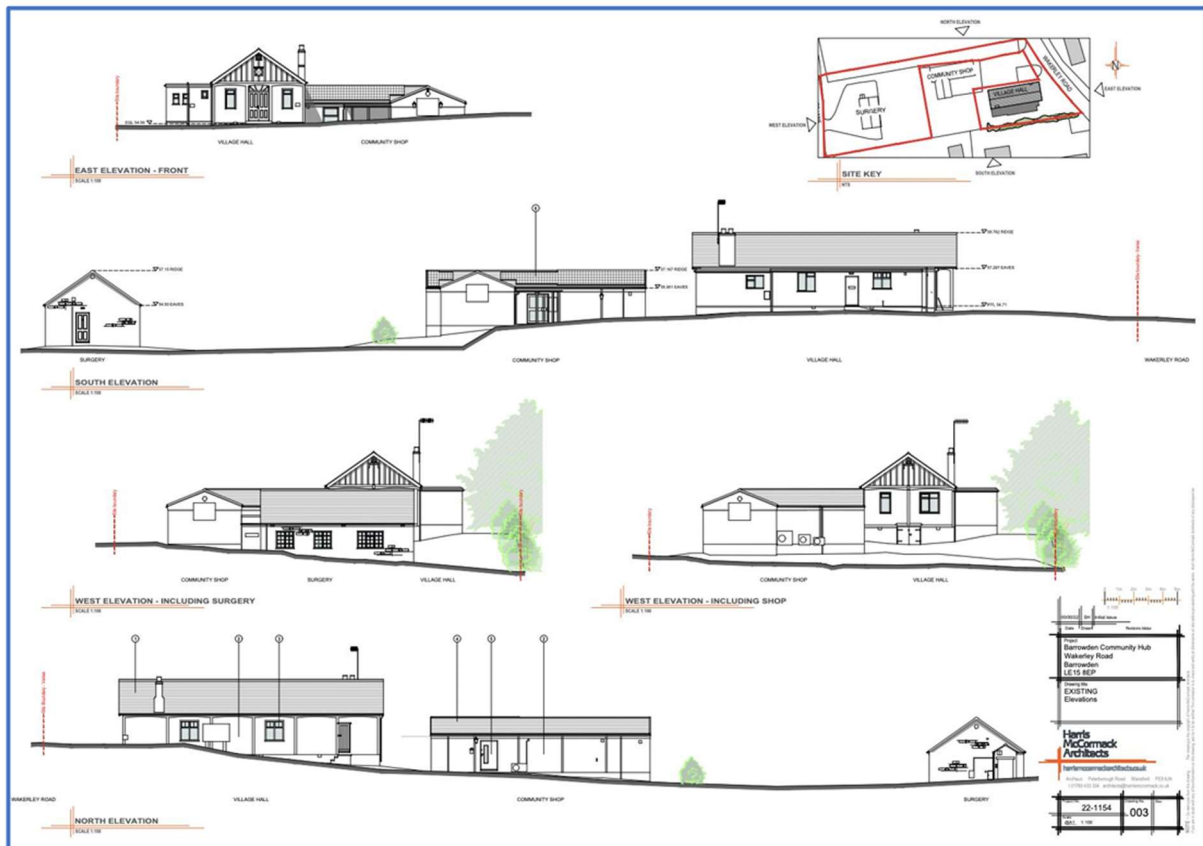


Figure 6. Existing elevations (Harris McCormack Architects).



Figure 7. General view from south-east from Wakerley Road.





*Figure 8. The east front.*



*Figure 9. The gable datestone.*





*Figure 10. The front door, probably original, with fanlight over. Doors to left and right in the lobby beyond access the gents' lavatory and what is now the boiler room.*



*Figure 11. The north side. The fenestration is original. The chimney serves a corner fireplace.*



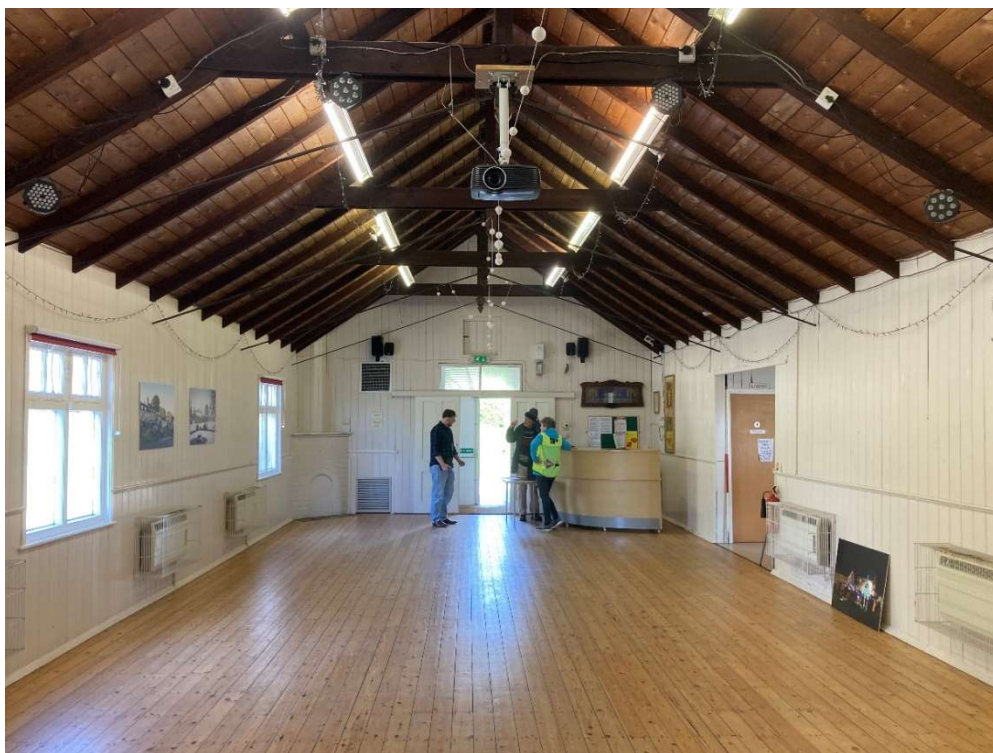


*Figure 12. The south side from the east, showing the added kitchen (entered via the red door) and beyond the storeroom.*

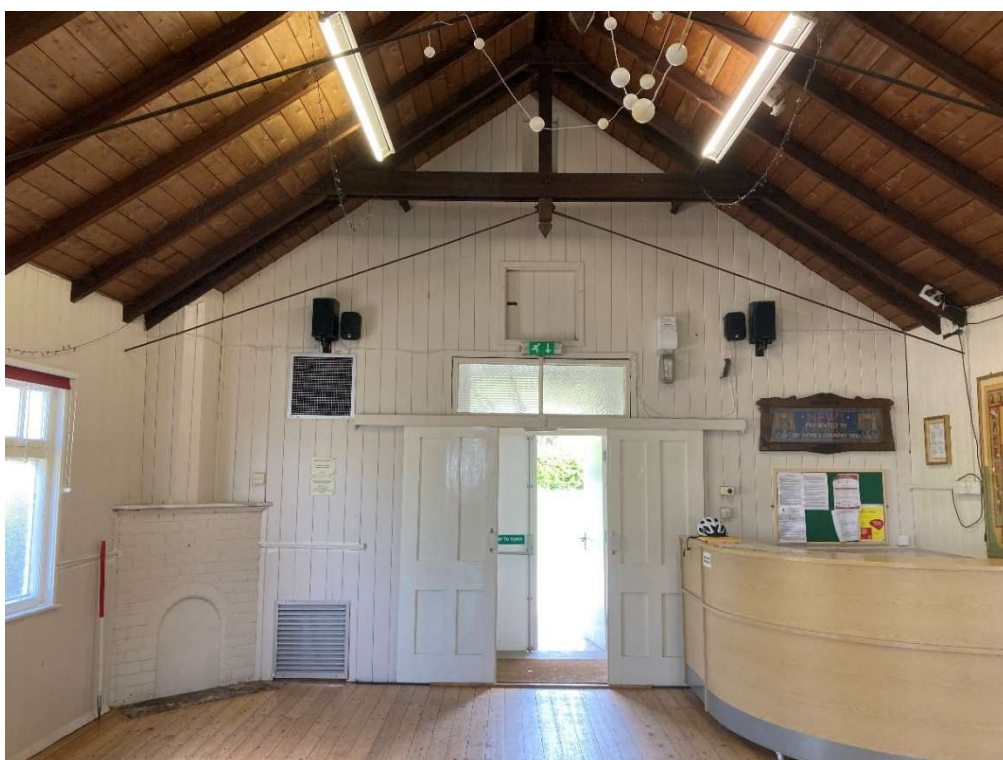


*Figure 13. The west, rear, gable. The falling ground level allows sub-floor storage. Off to the right is the recently-added storeroom.*





*Figure 15. View east from the stage to the door. Note the corner fireplace.*



*Figure 16. A closer view of the east end and roof; sliding doors lead to the lobby and gents' lavatory.*





*Figure 17. The fireplace in the north-east corner.*



*Figure 14. View looking west from the door to the stage. Note another corner fireplace.*



*Figure 18. The corner fireplace in the south-west corner of the main hall. The fireplace beyond (partly obscured by the later stage) suggests that originally a partition ran from the stub wall at the back of the corner fireplace to create what may have been a meeting room beyond. The recent door accesses the storeroom.*



*Figure 19. The original window to one side of the corner fireplace. Beyond is now the storeroom.*





*Figure 20. The kitchen, from its east-end lobby.*