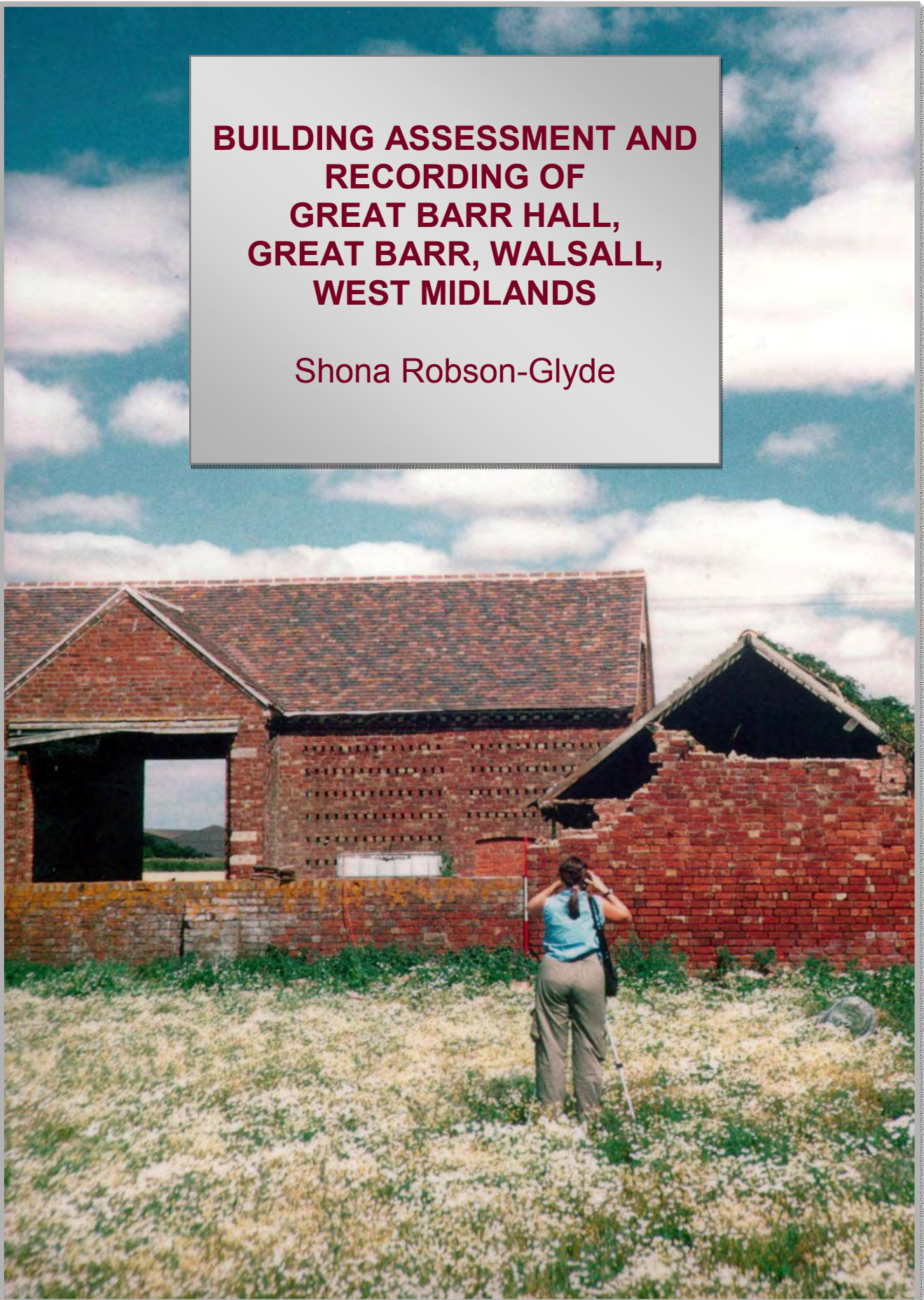


**BUILDING ASSESSMENT AND
RECORDING OF
GREAT BARR HALL,
GREAT BARR, WALSALL,
WEST MIDLANDS**

Shona Robson-Glyde





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Building assessment and recording at Great Barr Hall, Great Barr, Walsall, West Midlands

Shona Robson-Glyde

Summary

This section of the report is an overview of the building recording required to meet a planning condition relating to the redevelopment of Great Barr Hall at Great Barr, Walsall, West Midlands.

The brief specified that the building should be assessed and it was recorded to English Heritage level 2 standard. This required photographing the exterior and interior of the building, and annotating existing survey drawings. This produced an archive of the building before any changes were made to it.

The brief also required an element of historical research and synthesis. Original records relating to Great Barr Hall were studied at Walsall Local History Centre along with historic maps and trade directories. Online census records were accessed along with digitised historic mapping, aerial photographs and other online sources.

Analysis of the building was based upon the recorded fabric and documentary research. The development of the building was reconstructed and illustrated on phased ground plans and elevations. These have been reproduced at the end of the report along with relevant photographs.

The assessment of the structure showed that evidence of the original 17th century Netherhouse still exists on the site although most of this was swept away in the building of the Strawberry Hill Gothic house of 1777. The mid 19th century saw the reconstruction and extension of the Hall into a decorative Gothic mansion. In the 20th century the Hall and Park were bought for use as a hospital. By 1978 Great Barr Hall was empty and it has remained vacant and increasingly ruinous since that time.



Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

Recording and assessment of an historic building was undertaken at Great Barr Hall, Great Barr, Walsall, West Midlands (NGR SP 0546 9538). It was commissioned by Lapworth Architects, on behalf of the clients, who are in pre-planning discussions regarding the development of the Hall and Park with Walsall Council.

The building is a designated heritage asset, within the terms used by the *National Planning Policy Framework*, and a Grade II* listed building that is also on the Buildings at Risk Register. The building is also registered with the Black Country Sites and Monuments Record (BCSMR 1519).

The project conforms to a brief prepared by the Archaeological and Conservation Advisors at Walsall Council (Shaw and Hines 2013) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WA 2013).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (IfA 2008), the *Analysis and Recording for the Conservation and Control of Works to Historic Buildings* (ALGAO 1997) and *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (EH 2006)

2 Aims

The aims of this evaluation are:

- to describe and assess the significance of the historic building;
- to establish the nature, importance and extent of the historic building;
- to assess the impact of the application on the historic building.

Specific aims of the project were also detailed in the brief:

- Documentary study of the accessible history of the site
- Initial building assessment of the Hall and Chapel to document the importance of the various buildings and their phasing.
- Formulation of proposals for detailed recording ahead of and during any future re-development in accordance with English Heritage guidelines.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Shona Robson-Glyde (BA; Post-Grad Dip Arch); who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 1998 and has been practicing buildings archaeology since 1996. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Hal Dalwood (BA; MIfA). Illustrations were prepared by Shona Robson-Glyde.

3.2 Documentary research

All relevant information on the history of the site and past land-use was collected and assessed. Records of known archaeological sites and monuments were obtained from the Black Country Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), as well as a number of reports relating to previous work undertaken within the park area. Historic maps, photographs and primary records were consulted at Walsall Local History Centre during a visit on 7th March 2013. Other additional sources had been previously supplied by Mike Shaw (Walsall Council Archaeological Advisor) and Mike Kalam

with a Sony α 350 digital SLR camera. All photographs were recorded on a pro-forma Photographic Record Sheet. Annotation of existing ground plans and elevations, and completion of pro-forma Building Record sheets complemented the photographic record.

The project conformed to the specification for a level 2 survey as defined in the English Heritage document *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (EH 2006). This level of survey is a visual record supplemented by the minimum of information needed to identify the building's location, age and type. This required the following elements of survey.

Survey and drawings

- Plans of all main floors and elevations as existing (provided by client).
- Measured drawings showing the form of any architectural or functional detail not more readily captured by photography.

Photography

- Overall appearance of rooms and circulation areas.
- General view or views of the building in its wider setting or landscape
- External appearance of the building, using oblique and right angle shots
- Any detail, structural or decorative, relevant to the building's design, development and use, which does not show on general photographs.

3.5 Building analysis

Analysis of the building was based on the study of the photographic record, building recording forms and annotated drawings. It was also informed by the documentary sources listed above. This allowed plans to be drawn up showing the structural development of the building.

The building as recorded is depicted in Plates 1-13. Ground plans, phase plans and elevations have been reproduced as Figures 2 – 4 with historical documents reproduced as Figures 5 - 9.

3.6 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

Having undertaken the project, the following comments may be made with regard to the methods adopted. A detailed record of the building could not be made due to the ruinous state of the structure and therefore its unsafe nature. The recording of the building, however, was an assessment of the structure and therefore did not need to be recorded in detail at this stage. The record produced for this project has allowed mitigation recommendations to be produced for future recording and at that stage the ruinous state of the structure should be taken into account.

4 Context

The history of Great Barr Park has already been discussed in a desk-based assessment produced by Worcestershire Archaeology in December 2012 (Bradley and Patton 2012). The report deals in detail with the development of the Park itself but not with that of the Hall.

Great Barr Hall (Fig 1) is set within Great Barr Park and is located around 2.8 miles south east of Walsall centre, close to junction 7 of the M6. The Hall and Park lie within the Great Barr Conservation Area. The Hall is a grade II* listed building and the park is also a Grade II registered Historic Park. The Hall, and ornamental lakes of the Park, lies in a bowl-like valley in the middle area of the Park, echoing the line of a former watercourse. The geology around the area of the Hall is the permeable and well-drained coarse loamy brown earth of the Wick 1 association (Ragg *et al.* 1984, 323-326).

The name Great Barr has Celtic origins and refers to a 'great hill-top or summit' (Mills 1998, 26). It was part of the Royal Forest of Cannock until 1125 when it was disafforested and became part of Sutton Chase belonging to the Earl of Warwick (Allen 1985, non-paginated 15). Great Barr was

part of Aldridge parish after 1200 and in the 13th century a chapel and manor were established. By 1335 there was also a deer park (Bradley and Patton 2012, 7). A moat still exists in the west part of the park that may date from this period (Black Country SMR 2689).

Archaeologically a small number of projects have taken place in the area around Great Barr Hall. The most extensive of these projects was that carried out by the de Bois Landscape Survey Group (Allen 1985). Work carried out in 1991 for John Cunnington Architects (Shaw 1991) assessed existing documentary and field evidence for the Hall and Park. A watching brief in 2001 in the area of The Duckery to the north west of the Hall revealed no archaeological features or deposits (Patrick 2002). To the east of the Hall an area of new housing now called Nether Hall Park, was evaluated in 2006, revealing that during previous construction on the site, archaeological deposits had been removed (Foundations Archaeology 2006). Archaeological work has also been carried out on an area of the Park to the west of the Hall. This work was looking for archaeological evidence around the area of a moat and has recently been written up (Webster and Rogers 2013).

Full details of the designated and non-designated heritage assets in the area of the Hall and in the Park have already been included in the desk-based assessment on pages 14 to 16.

5 The building

5.1 Building description

Great Barr Hall is a striking ruin of an 18th and 19th century stately home set within its own park land. It is grade II* listed and the Park is also a grade II registered Park (Appendix 1). The Hall is sitting in the central eastern part of the Park on the eastern side of a large lake. The building consists of a rendered, brick structure with little remaining of the roof. The north elevation (Plate 1) has a projecting central porch with ogee arched doorway. The ground floor has four ogee arched windows, of which there are also two on the first floor above the porch. The roof has a battlemented parapet above a moulded cornice. There are single storey battlemented wings to each side with polygonal buttresses at the corners. The west elevation (Plate 2) has the same architectural style with a large central doorway to a central projecting bay with flanking windows, all of which have ogee arches. To each side are bay windows, only the southern-most survives with its ogee arches. The first floor windows all also have ogee arched opening and the parapet is again embattled. Adjoining the south elevation (Plate 3) is a brick chapel building (Plate 4) that continues the west elevation. The chapel is also in a state of considerable ruin but its architectural style is still obvious. It is constructed of red brick with blue brick diapering, in the style of Tudor buildings, and has limestone detailing along the cills and eaves. The surviving portions of windows have Carnarvon arches at the bottom and would have had pointed arch heads with decorated limestone transoms between. The east elevation (Plate 5) consists of stub walls and void openings from the now demolished brick service ranges.

The National Heritage List for England describes the exterior of the Hall and Chapel as follows: *The garden front has, at its centre, a portion of three-bays which projects forward from and above the level of the lateral bays. To the centre is a double doorway. At either side are windows and there are three windows to the first floor. All of the openings have ogee heads and square hood moulds with blind tracery to the spandrels and this feature is common to all openings on the front. Set between the bays are polygonal buttresses which have offsets to their lower bodies. The central two buttresses flanking the door are missing their caps. The lateral buttresses, which clasp the corners of the projecting three bays, have miniature, battlemented parapets as their capping, set half up the first floor walling. To either side of the central three bays, and flush with them, are ground floor bays which have projecting canted bay windows to their centres and further polygonal buttresses to their corners. Above this at first floor level and set back (apparently at the level of the earlier-C18 building line of this front) are three bays, again with ogee heads, square hood moulds and blind tracery. At attic level at the far right and left corners were formerly small square turrets which were removed in the C20. To the tops of the walls are battlemented parapets. The north side of the house has to its centre a projecting porch with ogee arched doorway, to the flanks of which are three-light casements. Immediately behind this is a slightly projecting portion of wall with two bays which has ogee-headed windows to the first floor, above which are panels of blank tracery. To either side of this central arrangement are two bays at ground floor level with ogee heads and panels of blind tracery and between these are set the*

polygonal brackets which formerly supported the first floor oriels. These have now been removed and replaced by C20 metal-framed windows. To the top of the walling is a battlemented parapet and to the far right and left corners are polygonal buttresses which support small, battlemented parapets, as seen on the west front. Extending to the left of this front and set lower, is part of the walling of a service wing which has now been largely demolished. Following the demolition of large parts of the service wing and the additions and alterations made by the National Health Service during the use of the building as a hospital in the C20, the east side of the house now largely consists of exposed internal walling.

Attached at right of the west front and projecting slightly is the chapel building. This is of red brick with blue brick diapering in a lattice pattern. A lower, linking, corridor joins the house and chapel. This has a doorway with moulded ashlar surround. The western flank of the chapel has three bays and a projecting plinth with blue brick moulding and a flush ashlar sill band. Each window is set beneath a window and has two lights with Carnarvon arches to the lower windows and a very generous transom, set with two quatrefoil panels of foliage carving, immediately below the springing of the upper arches. The heads to the windows have cusped lights and trefoils to the heads and dogtooth ornament to the outer arches. At the time of survey (June 2008) the central archway and window had been removed. At either end of the walling are elaborately-carved kneelers and the gables across the building have ashlar copings. The ritual east end (south) has a window of five lights with cusped heads and quatrefoils and trefoils to the apex. The ritual west end has a rose window with deeply-carved ashlar surround and a series of six quatrefoils surrounding a central polygon. The roof of the chapel has suffered from fire damage, although charred the roof trusses remain and consist of a tie, supported by arched braces, which carry a moulded king post. There are ashlar posts connected to the common rafters. To the floor are plain tiles and the internal walls carry the same trellis pattern of diapering seen on the exterior (NHLE 2013, list entry no. 1076395; Appendix 1).

5.2 Historical information

The Scott family are first documented as residing at Great Barr from 1332 and by the beginning of the 17th century the family had divided into several branches living in the Great Barr area (Burrows 1991, 6). Richard Scott is documented as living at Old Hall near Great Barr in the middle of the 17th century and by 1660 he had moved to Netherhouse, a small farm on the site of Great Barr Hall (ibid). The 1666 hearth tax return records Richard Scott living at Netherhouse and the building was of some importance and size and it is recorded as having five hearths.

The probate inventory from the death of Richard in 1675 shows that the house had a '*parlour; best chamber; little chamber; old parlour; parlour chamber; fellows chamber; old kitchen; dairy house; kitchen and buttery*' (Fig 5). On the death of Richard Scott's grandson, also Richard Scott, in 1715 a further inventory was drawn up which showed that Netherhouse was little changed with its '*parlour; hall; kitchen; old parlour; dairy house, buttery and cellar; old parlour chamber; backhouse chamber; entry chamber; hall chamber and parlour chamber*' (Fig 6).

Following the death of William Scott in 1753, shortly after the birth of his son Joseph in 1752, Netherhouse was let out whilst the family lived elsewhere. In 1760, Netherhouse was advertised in Aris' Gazette and was described as '*a handsome and commodious dwelling-house, with a very good four stalled stable; coach house and dove house; a large garden walled; a good orchard well planted, very good fruit trees; several fish ponds and other conveniences*' (Fig 7).

In 1777 Joseph Scott married and brought his wife back to Netherhouse, reclaiming it from being let. He decided to completely improve the house in the new architectural style of 'Strawberry Hill Gothic' and extended it with the construction of a stable in the same style. Scott ran through money very quickly and was forced to let the house soon after the rebuilding. A new 'to let' advert appeared in Aris' Gazette in 1781 (Fig 7). This shows the difference in the two buildings of Netherhouse and the new Barr Hall: '*Capital new-erected messuage or mansion-house, neatly fitted up by and late in the occupation of Joseph Scott, Esqr ... a very pleasant, healthy spot and very eligible for a gentleman or sportsman's family, there being a good fox-hunt, and a pack of fox dogs and several packs of harriers, in the neighbourhood*'.

With the financial difficulties of Joseph Scott, in 1786 the Hall was leased to Samuel Galton a prominent Birmingham banker and gunmaker. The Galtons were Quakers and were also leading lights of the Lunar Society and they met regularly at Great Barr Hall. This illustrious West Midlands society was an unofficial group of the most intellectually capable men of their time. They included

luminaries such as Matthew Boulton, James Watt, Joseph Priestley, Erasmus Darwin and Josiah Wedgwood and probably did more to advance the Industrial Revolution and thus the wealth of the nation than any other group. As soon as he was able, Scott terminated the Galton lease and moved back to Great Barr Hall in 1797.



Great Barr Hall by Stebbing Shaw c1797

In the late 1790s Stebbing Shaw wrote about the new Barr Hall in his *History of Antiquities of Staffordshire* that *'the present possessor about the year 1777 began to exercise his well known taste and ingenuity upon the old fabric, giving it the pleasing monastic appearance it now exhibits ... and has since much improved it by the addition of a spacious dining room, at the East end, and other rooms and conveniences'* (Burrows 1991, 9).. An etching of the Hall also appeared in the book from a watercolour painted by Stebbing Shaw himself. This image of Barr Hall shows an elegant house with castellated roof, corner towers and eleven windows

along the frontage. It is set on a raise above a lake and within a beautiful park.

Land Tax Redemption assessments of 1798 and 1799 show that Joseph Scott was the proprietor of a number of properties in Great Barr. In 1798 he had seven properties under his name, and was occupier of only one which was worth £2.0.0. In 1799 he was still the occupier of the one property, still worth £2.0.0 but was then proprietor of eleven properties. In 1806 Joseph Scott was awarded a baronetcy, he became Sir Joseph and held a seat in Parliament for the Worcester constituency until 1809. Through all this time he was improving the Great Barr estate, both the Hall and Park. With the death of Sir Joseph Scott in 1828, his son Sir Edward Dolman Scott took over the estate and was more inclined to be cautious with his money.



Great Barr Hall c1900

A number of the trade directories of the 19th century show that the Scotts and Barr Hall were well thought of. The 1834 directory records that Sir Edward Dolman Scott resided at Barr Hall and also held a court leet there. A description of Barr Hall states *'Barr Hall, formerly called Nether House, has long been the seat of the family of Scott, and stands in a romantic valley, surrounded by an extensive lawn, a deer park, a great variety and abundance of trees, with a charming sheet of water in front'* (White 1834, 297 and 300). Sir Edward Dolman Scott carried out some alterations to the Hall in

the 1840s and a description of the building in 1850 records that it is *'a spacious and handsome Gothic building, situated in a finely wooded park'* (Kelly 1850, 200).

By the end of the 19th century, images of Barr Hall show that it bore little resemblance to Joseph Scott's Hall of a hundred years earlier. As well as having its appearance altered to be overly Gothic in the 1840s it had had extensions added to its rear to house stables, kitchens and other service buildings. To the south a brick chapel had been added by the late 1860s, if not by Gilbert Scott then it was certainly completed in his style. The landscape of the Park was also altered a number of times from the 1760s onwards, as Bradley and Patton have discussed (Bradley and Patton 2012). It is this building and park that were sold for use as a hospital in 1912, on the death of Lady Bateman Scott.

5.3 Building development

5.4 Phase 1 17th century

It is known that a substantial house existed on the site of Great Barr Hall in the 17th century but the construction date of this building is unknown. The large scale building of houses across the country in the 16th century and 17th centuries is well-known and documented and it is therefore likely that

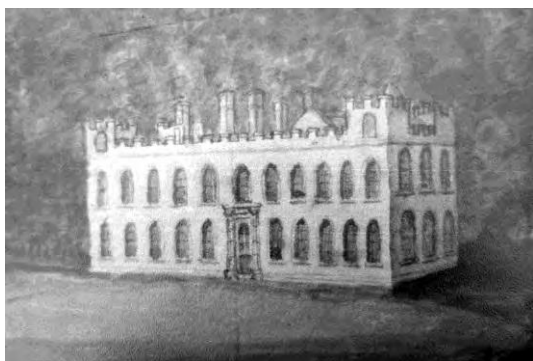
the Netherhouse was built in this period. Documentary evidence shows that at least by 1660, the Netherhouse had been constructed and the usage of the terms 'old parlour' and 'old kitchen' in the probate inventory of 1675 (Fig 5) suggests that the building had already been established and altered by this period.

There is little fabric still visible from this period within the present Hall building although it is possible that more remains may still survive below ground and hidden within the surviving fabric. One wall of the building shows some brickwork of 17th century date and this wall has stone foundations likely of the same period, along with parallel foundations to the east (Fig 2; Plate 6). There is also a brick-lined well which can be found to the south east of these foundations that is constructed of bricks of the same date as the wall (Fig 2; Plate 7). The alignment of the walls of this part of Great Barr Hall (Fig 2) are different to that of the rest of the structure and it is probable that this layout remains from that of the 17th century building.

Therefore it is likely that Netherhouse was constructed in the earlier part of the 17th century. It may have been partly constructed in brick along with timber-framing, which was a common building technique of this period.

5.5 Phase 2 18th century

It is likely that in the 100 years between Richard Scott's inventory of 1675 and the rebuilding of Netherhouse in 1777 by Joseph Scott, that the house was altered on numerous occasions. Certainly there were changes made to the landscape of the park during that period including major alterations in the 1740s by John Scott and his son William Scott with the possible creation of a 'ferme ornée' (Bradley and Patton 2012, 8). By 1760 the house had been altered enough to allow it to be described as 'a handsome and commodious dwelling-house' in the *Aris' Gazette* advert.



Great Barr Hall by Stebbing Shaw c1797

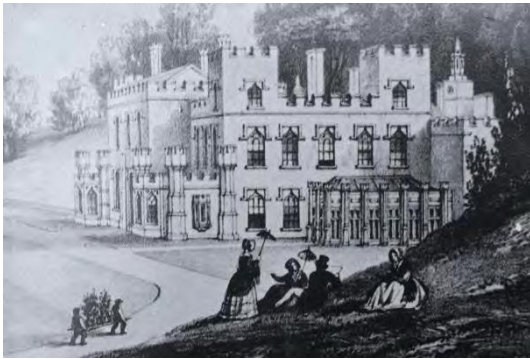
In 1777 however the Netherhouse was considerably altered by the creation of Joseph Scott's 'Strawberry Hill Gothic' mansion. Scott had been influenced by the new Gothic Revival style that began with Hugh Walpole's house at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham. Great Barr Hall is now regarded as one of the earliest surviving

examples of Gothic Revival architecture. The original frontage of this building was completely flush, without the projecting central bay it has now, and its foundations can still be seen in the existing fabric today (Plate 8). The appearance of the 1777 house can be seen in the detail from Stebbing Shaw's etching. The building was of eleven bays with a central door, with decorated surround, facing on to the lake, to the west. An embattled parapet appears to continue around the whole structure and it has embattled corner towers. The parapets that still exist on the building may partly be these original ones of 1777. The Stebbing Shaw image, also shows a roofline at the centre rear of the building suggesting that there was a further unseen wing or extension behind the main building.

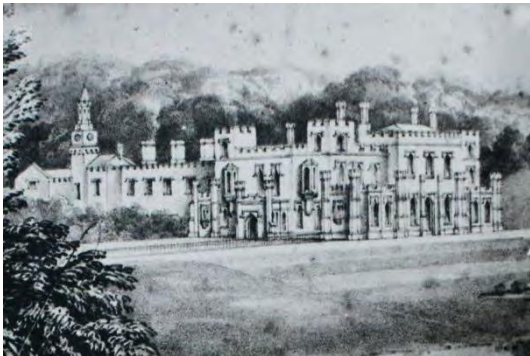
Very little was changed at the Hall in the late 18th century, mainly due to the financial difficulties of Joseph Scott that caused the Hall to be let to Samuel Galton in 1786. A timely legacy allowed Scott to take possession of the Hall again 1797 and he began improvements to the Park almost immediately.

5.6 Phase 3 19th century

Burrows suggests that some alterations had been made by 1830 (Burrows 1991, 11-12) and these must therefore have been carried out by Joseph Scott. However more detailed analysis of the existing structure will enable the exact arrangement of this fabric to be discerned.



Great Barr Hall by W Gaucci 1848



Great Barr Hall by W Gaucci 1848

When Edward Dolman Scott took over the estate and baronetcy in 1828 following the death of his father he waited some time to carry out alterations to the estate. In the 1840s he carried out major changes to the fabric of the building, transforming it into a highly ornamented Gothic mansion. A lithograph produced in 1848 by W Gaucci shows that the frontage of the building, facing the lake, was altered to have a projecting central section flanked by projecting ground floor bay windows. Although the corner towers have been kept intact the windows have been altered and have also been ornamented. A lower level extension, possibly a green house, on the south side of the building (shown in the Gaucci image here) was also added. The most striking change is the addition of polygonal buttresses along the elevations and at the corners of the building. These still exist in the fabric of the building today and can be seen in Plates 1 and 2 and also Plate 9. Many more of the architectural details from this phase have survived.

Gaucci also produced a lithograph of the north elevation of the building which shows that the building was extended to the rear in a very similar style and that a clock tower was constructed. This increased the size of the Hall dramatically.

Between 1848 and the late 1860s Barr Hall was again increased in size, this time with the construction of the 'chapel' against the south elevation. This building, built of red brick with blue brick diapering and limestone decoration, has all the appearance and architectural style of some of Gilbert Scott's great buildings, such as The Midland Grand Hotel at St Pancras Station. Architectural drawings for the Hotel have great similarity to the details shown on the 'chapel' here at Barr Hall. For example the limestone transoms of the windows have foliate carvings (Plate 10) that are very similar to some of the limestone details on the Hotel. English Heritage, in the listing description of the Hall, have ascribed the 'chapel' to Gilbert Scott but their supporting evidence has not been readily available. Local historian, Peter Allen, has carried out a great deal of research on Great Barr Hall and has commented on the construction of the 'chapel' (Appendix 2, 4 – 6) stating that 'there is no evidence the 'chapel' is to a design by Sir Gilbert Scott'. Although it cannot, at present, be conclusively proven that Gilbert Scott was involved in the design and construction of the 'chapel' at Barr Hall, the similarity of its design and use of materials and motifs suggests that if not by Scott himself then it was by a student of his or someone very acquainted with Scott's style.

5.7 Phase 3 20th century

The 20th century saw the biggest change for Great Barr Hall. Following the death of Lady Bateman Scott, the Hall and estate was sold to West Bromwich and Walsall Union to be used as a hospital.

The sale directory of 1911 shows that the estate was still in a great condition and the Hall consisted of a large number of rooms (Fig 8). A number of photographs, taken in 1897, show the interior of the Hall as being incredibly opulent. This image of the staircase hall shows, behind the clutter of pictures, detailed plasterwork on the walls and ceiling. Portions of this have survived in the present fabric (Plates 11 to 13).



Staircase hall in 1897

In 1912, the hospital was opened with a grand ceremony and an official programme was produced with images of the interior of the Hall (Fig 9). These images showed that the detail of the Hall interior was not altered but the opulent clutter of pictures and furniture was removed for its use as a hospital.

Further alterations were made to the structure throughout the 20th century as the building changed from a hospital to an asylum for mental patients and was eventually marginalised as part of a 'colony' for mental patients. The final straw came when the structure ceased being used in 1978 and it has since stood vacant. Vandals have removed historic fixtures and the building has been a target for arsonists. The surviving structure is barely a shell of the magnificent structure of Great Barr Hall.

6 Significance

6.1 Intrinsic interest of the building

The importance of Great Barr Hall has already been established by its recognition as a Grade II* building. The building was reconsidered in 2008 and, despite its current structural condition, was left as Grade II*.

6.2 Relative importance of the building

Not only is Great Barr Hall a Grade II* building, it is also set within a Grade II registered park and lies within the Great Barr Conservation Area.

6.3 Physical extent of important elements of the building

The current condition of the building has been recognised by it being included on the Buildings at Risk Register. This states that its condition is 'very bad' and describes it as '*Gothic country house of 1777 with 1863 chapel attributed to George Gilbert Scott. Set in late C18 landscaped park. Converted to hospital early C20, and surrounded by C20 hospital buildings, now abandoned. House vacant since 1978, suffering from continued decay, vandalism and loss of fabric. The property changed hands in spring 2012, and proposals from the new owner are expected.*'

7 The impact of the development

7.1 Impact assessment criteria

Major Beneficial: Demonstrable improvement to a designated heritage asset of the highest order (or its setting). Designated assets will include grade I/II* listed buildings. Improvement may be in the asset's management, its amenity value, setting, or documentation. It may also be in better revealing a Conservation Area's significance.

Beneficial: Demonstrable improvement to a designated heritage asset (or its setting), such that the level of improvement will demonstrably have a minor affect the area and its heritage resource, either at a local or regional level. For instance grade II listed buildings, Conservation Areas and undesignated heritage assets important at a sub-national level. Improvement may be in the asset's management, its amenity value, setting, or documentation.

Not Significant: Impacts that have no long-term effect on any heritage asset.

Minor Adverse: Minor harm to a designated heritage asset (or its setting), such that the level of harm will demonstrably have a minor affect the area and its heritage resource, either at a local or regional level. For instance grade II listed buildings, Conservation Areas.

<p>Moderate Adverse: Minor harm to a designated heritage asset (or its setting) of the highest significance. For instance grade I/II* listed buildings.</p> <p>Harm to a designated heritage asset (or its setting), such that the level of harm will demonstrably affect the area and its heritage resource, either at a local or regional level. For instance grade II listed buildings, Conservation Areas.</p>
<p>Major Adverse: Harm to a designated heritage asset (or its setting) of the highest significance. For instance grade I/II* listed buildings or harm to a building or other element that makes a positive contribution to the significance of a Conservation Area as a whole.</p> <p>Substantial harm to, or loss of, a designated heritage asset (or its setting), such that the level of harm or loss will demonstrably affect the area and its heritage resource, either at a local or regional level. For instance grade II listed buildings, Conservation Areas.</p>
<p>Severe Adverse: Substantial harm to, or loss of, a designated heritage asset (or its setting) of the highest significance. For instance grade I/II* listed buildings or the loss of a building or other element that makes a positive contribution to the significance of a Conservation Area as a whole.</p>

Table 1: Impact assessment criteria for heritage asset

7.2 Impact assessment

7.2.1 The Hall

Great Barr Hall is in such a neglected and ruinous condition that any development proposals would involve a great deal of restoration to the historic building and therefore have a significant impact on the remaining historic fabric. It is proposed that a large scale restoration and alteration programme be carried out at Great Barr Hall. In general any development of a Grade II* building would have an adverse effect on the historic fabric of the structure, however given the poor state or repair and appearance of the Hall, the proposed restoration and alteration would be a **major beneficial** impact to the building, Park and Conservation Area as a whole.

Peter Allen, in his document discussing the restoration of the Hall (Appendix 2) and also in his *Mary Scott Blueprint*, puts forward a case for the restoration of the Hall back to its late 18th century appearance when it was used by the Lunar Society. This would involve the removal of all of the later Victorian Gothic fabric and would have a **severe adverse** impact upon the Grade II* listed building.

7.2.2 The Chapel

It has been suggested that part of the development would involve the demolition of the chapel, possibly designed by Gilbert Scott, by a student of his or by someone very acquainted with Scott's style. Local historian, Peter Allen, has commented on the construction of the chapel (Appendix 2,4 – 6) and makes a case that the building is not by Scott. The building has been included as part of the Grade II* listed Great Barr Hall and was left as Grade II* when reassessed in 2008. Despite its ruinous condition it would be possible to rescue the shell of the structure. A large amount of the stonework survives around the building and would allow those portions that are missing to be replaced. Therefore the demolition of this building would have a **major adverse** impact on the Hall as a whole.

It is understood that the clients and agents have been involved in discussions with English Heritage regarding the restoration of Great Barr Hall and the possible demolition of the chapel. Given the status of the structure as a Grade II* listed building, any decisions regarding its future have to be agreed by English Heritage. It may be that the current condition of the building, and the potential restoration costs, would be regarded by English Heritage as outweighing the benefits of retaining the structure in light of the restoration of the remainder of the building. In such a case, a

scheme of detailed recording prior to demolition would be of benefit and mitigate the demolition by producing a record.

7.3 Recommendations

In order to mitigate the impacts identified above, the following actions are recommended.

1. A great deal of architectural material, stone and brickwork, exists around the exterior of the building where it has fallen since the building has become structurally unsound. This material should be cleared away to allow safe access to the structure. The architectural material should be retained for re-use in the restoration of the building.
2. Analysis and recording of Great Barr Hall to, at least, level 3 standard according to according to English Heritage guidelines. This should comprise phase plans showing the growth and layout of the buildings and their internal arrangements, elevations showing the principal features of the buildings, sections through the buildings, a written description and photographs. It may be possible to adapt, check and amend existing architect's plans for much of this work. This would be followed by the production of an illustrated report.
3. Analysis and recording of the chapel to level 4 standard according to according to English Heritage guidelines should it be granted permission to be demolished. This should comprise phase plans showing the growth and layout of the building and its internal arrangement, elevations showing the principal features of the building, sections through the building, a written description and photographs. It may be possible to adapt, check and amend existing architect's plans for much of this work. This would be followed by the production of an illustrated report.
4. Foundations of earlier structures have already been shown to still exist, therefore at least a watching brief on groundworks associated with the restoration of the building and the building of extensions should be carried out to archaeologically record these surviving elements of the earlier history of the site. This would be concluded by the production of an illustrated report.
5. Any site investigation works or watching briefs required, would be concluded by production of a report (and appropriate publication) to be deposited for public consultation and a project archive to be deposited in an appropriate repository.

8 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

Building recording and assessment was undertaken on behalf of Lapworth Architects at Great Barr Hall, Great Barr, Walsall, West Midlands (NGR SP 0546 9538). The assessment of the structure showed that evidence of the original 17th century Netherhouse still exists on the site although most of this was swept away in the building of the Strawberry Hill Gothic house of 1777. The mid 19th century saw the reconstruction and extension of the Hall into a decorative Gothic mansion. In the 20th century the Hall and Park were bought for use as a hospital. By 1978 Great Barr Hall was empty and it has remained vacant and increasingly ruinous since that time.

9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank Mike Kalam of Lapworth Architects, BCG Lakes Limited (the clients), Mike Shaw (Walsall Council Archaeological Advisor), Walsall Council Conservation Officers and Peter Allen for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project. In particular, Peter Allen (a local historian), provided a copy of the Burrows report and its illustrations.

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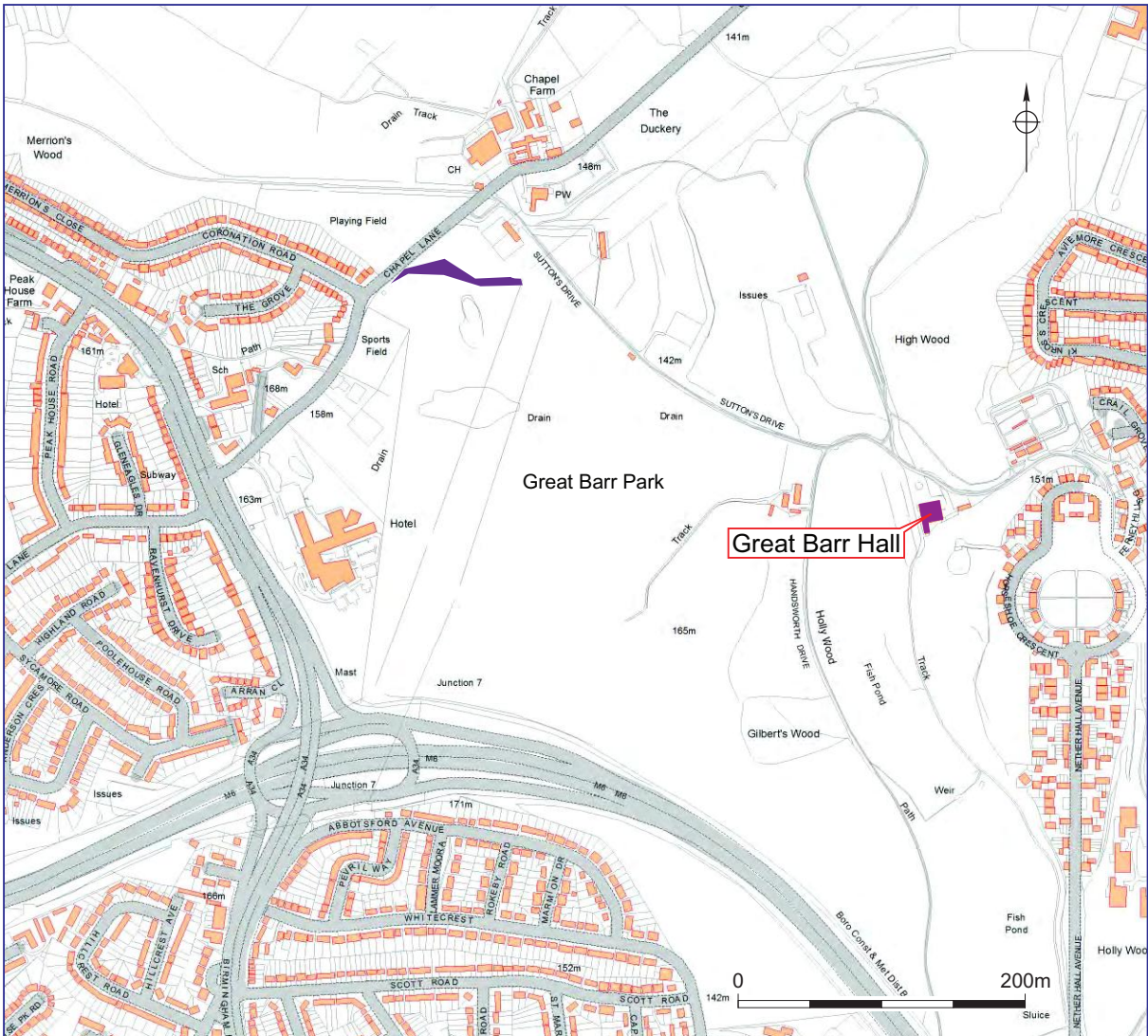
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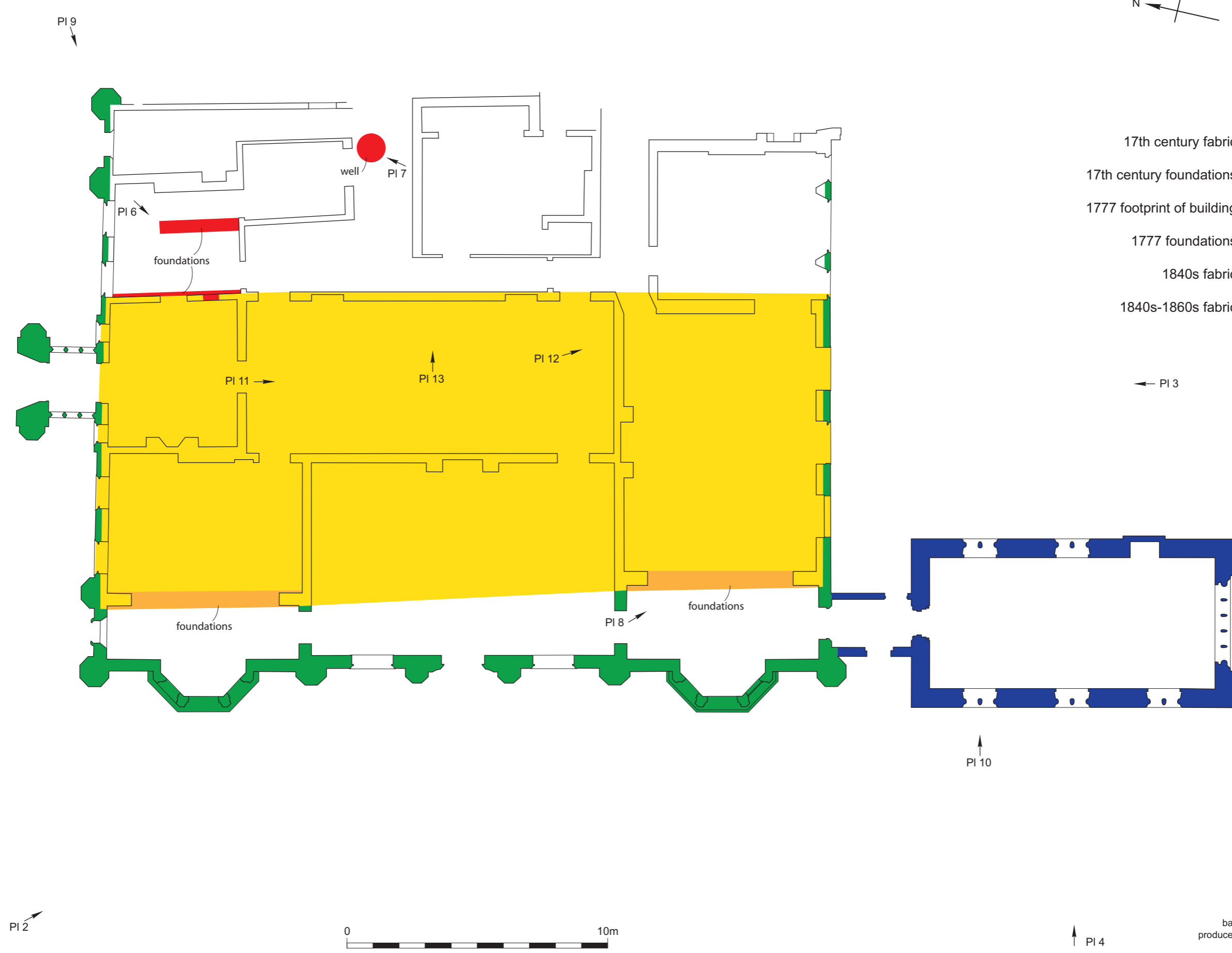
Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



- 17th century fabric █
- 17th century foundations █
- 1777 footprint of building █
- 1777 foundations █
- 1840s fabric █
- 1840s-1860s fabric █

based upon drawings
 produced by Lapworth Architects
 dwg no 1273/02

Ground plan of Great Barr Hall

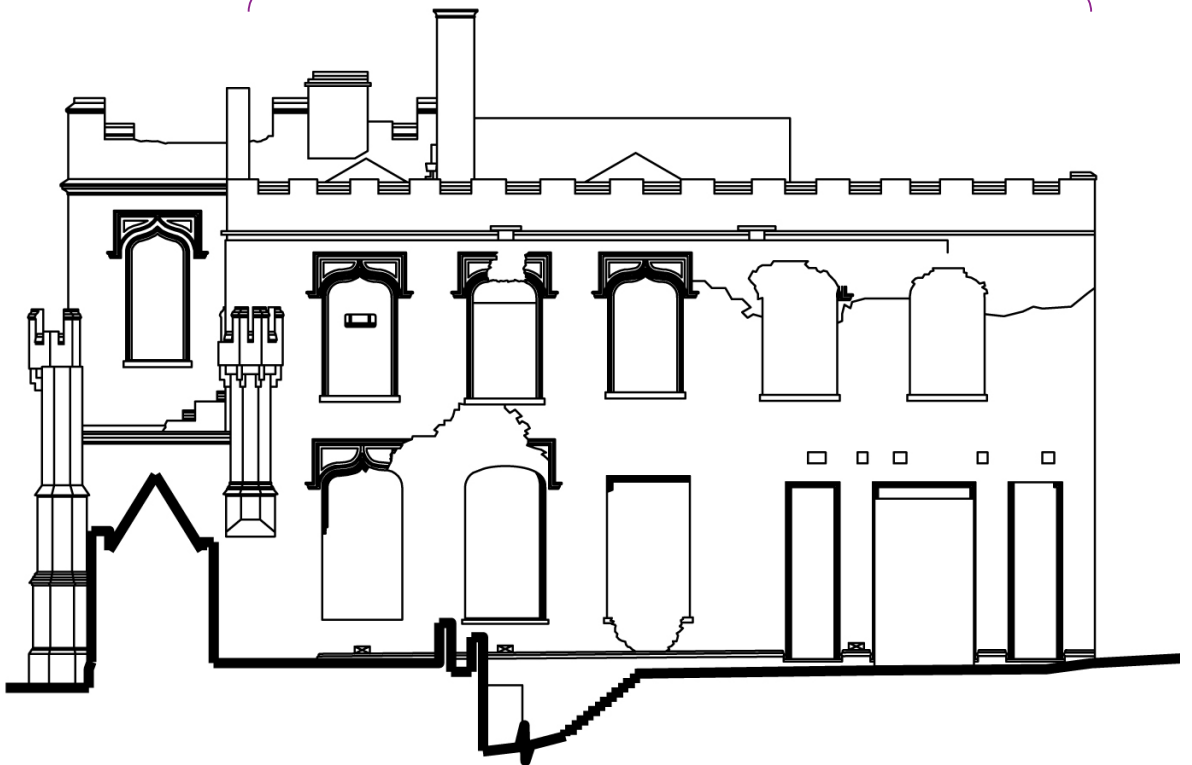
Figure 2

extent of 1777 building



North elevation

extent of 1777 building



South elevation

0 10m

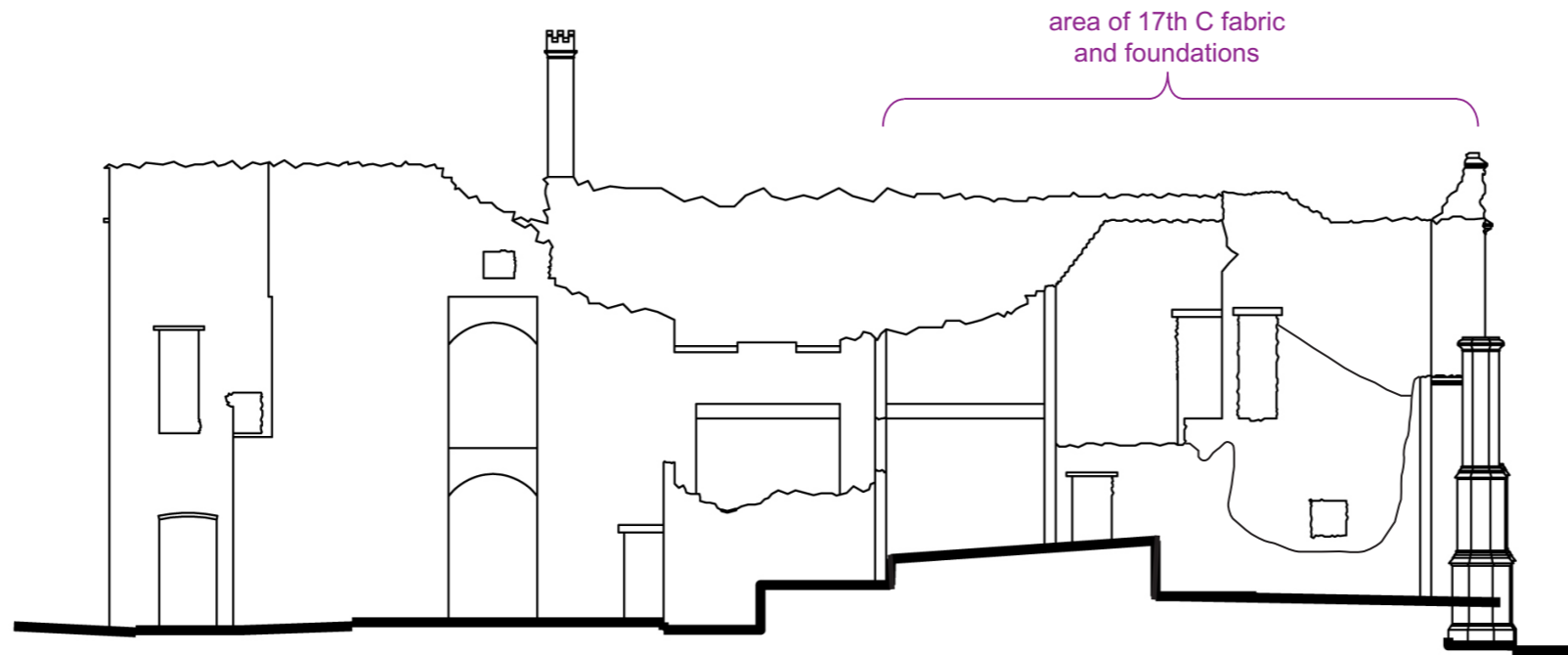
based upon drawings
produced by Lapworth Architects
dwg no 1273/01

North and south elevations

Figure 3



West elevation



East elevation



West and east elevations

Figure 4

Household goods as follows -

into parlour, 1 Bedd & frame & 2 frames	1:6:8
round 2 Bedd & chairs, 1 Chair & 1 Bed	2:13:4
1 Carpet 4 Quilts & 4 Bedd cloth	1:15:0
<hr/>	
Best Chamber & 2 Bedd, Curtains wall paper & 2 Bedd	
Bedd, 2 Bowls, 5 pillows & 4 Bedd	
1 Cupp, 1 Cushion paper, 2 Bedd	16:0:0
1 Bedd & 2 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	
1 wood Bedd under 2 Bedd	
<hr/>	
1 Bedd & 1 Bedd, 1 Chair & 2 Bedd	
1 Bedd & 1 Bedd, 2 Bedd, 5 Bedd	2:0:0
1 Looking Glass	
<hr/>	
Little Chamber, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, Curtains	5:0:0
1 Bedd & 2 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	0:8:0
Salt	
<hr/>	
Old parlour, 2 Bedd, 2 Bedd, 1 Bedd, Curtains	
1 Bedd, 3 Bedd, 2 pillows, 6	8:0:0
1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	
<hr/>	
3 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Chair & 1 Bedd	0:13:4
1 Bedd	
<hr/>	
Best Chamber, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	5:0:0
2 Bedd, 1 Bedd & 1 Bedd	0:5:0
<hr/>	
parlour Chamber, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	2:10:0
1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	1:6:8
<hr/>	
Old Kitchen in Basement, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	2:0:0
James, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	
<hr/>	
Day Kitchen, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	0:5:0
<hr/>	
Kitchen, 2 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 4 Bedd, 5 Bedd, 2 Bedd	
warming pans, 2 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	6:0:0
1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	
1 Bedd	
<hr/>	
Buttery, 24 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 3 Bedd, 2 Bedd, 1 Bedd	4:0:0
3 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	
1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	
1 Bedd	
<hr/>	
Kitchen, 3 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	2:10:0
1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	
1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	00:10:0
1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	07:0:0
1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	00:3:4
1 Bedd	
<hr/>	
Buttery, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	10:0:0
1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	05:0:0
10 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	03:10:0
14 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	02:00:0
10 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	02:00:00
12 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	00:08:00
4 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	00:10:00
1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	00:02:01
1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd, 1 Bedd	86=15:1

image provided by Peter Allen

1675 Probate Inventory of Richard Scott Figure 5

True and perfect Inventory of all and singular the Goods Chattels and Effects of Richard Scott late deceased of Great Barr in the County of Stafford Gent taken and appraised this 17th day of December 1715

Impris In the Parlour
2 Chairs, 12 Chairs, 1 grate - 14/6
2 chindrens - - - - - 3: 0: 0

Item in the Hall
One Clock, 2 Caskets, one Looking glass
One grate, one stool - - - - - 1: 12: 0

Item in the Kitchen
4 dozen of plates, 26 dishes of pewter
6 porringers, 1 powder pan, 2 candlesticks
1 Milk, 2 powder Candles, 1 Dish
2 pair pans, 2 pair skillets, 2 pots
2 salt bottles, a stand a warming pan
2 yacks with ying pan, a dripping pan
2 wipps, One fire grate and bark, 3 iron
fire grates, 2 kessers, one washing plate
2 wipps, one smoothing iron and
Hatchets, One iron covered and Tonger
One Scales, 4 Chairs, 12 chairs - - - - - 17: 6: 0

Item in the old Parlour
2 Bookes (Books with lead stands, books)
and hanging one Chair, 2 Caskets,
One trunk, 2 Chairs - - - - - 4: 10: 0

Item in the Dyer's house Entry
and Cellar
One washing Tubs, 2 Bools, 4 Bools
4 Hurdles, 1 Bed, 1 Bed, 1 Bed
and Bed, 1 Bed, 1 Bed, 1 Bed
5 gowns, 2 Knaving houles - - - - - 3: 11: 0

Item in the Chamber over the Parlour
One feather Bed with Blankets and
Hanging and Matt - - - - - 0: 0: 0

Item in the Chamber over the Entry
One feather Bed with Blankets
One feather Bed with Blankets - - - - - 1: 0: 0

Item in the Chamber over the Entry
One feather Bed with Blankets and
Hanging - - - - - 2: 0: 0

Item in the Chamber over the Hall
One feather Bed with Blankets and
One feather Bed, one hanging
One Bed, 2 Chairs, 4 Bools - - - - - 4: 0: 0

Item in the Parlor Chamber
One feather Bed with Blankets and
One feather Bed with Blankets
1 Chair, 2 Drawers, 2 Looking glasses - 10: 11: 0
1 Trunk, one Grate, one fire grate
Covers - - - - -

Item for one Silver Tankard, a Supper
and 6 spoons - - - - - 10: 0: 0

Item for a Linen of all sorts - - - - - 10: 0: 0

Item for a Linen of all sorts - - - - - 10: 0: 0

Item for his Wearing Apparel and
Money in Pocket - - - - - 20: 0: 0

Item for 2 Salt Dishes & 9 Stone Dishes
- - - - - 9: 0: 0

Item for 700 Sheets - - - - - 230: 0: 0

Item for 15 Bowes 5 different Light
Shirts and 4 Wascotings - - - - - 100: 0: 0

Item for a Lamp of Christs - - - - - 5: 0: 0

Item for 5 Mards, 2 Waggon, 2
Guns, 2 plows and Harrows and
Horsings with all other Implements of
Husbandry - - - - - 65: 0: 8

Item for winter furs growing on the
Land - - - - - 33: 0: 0

Item for winter furs hanging on the
wall - - - - - 40: 5: 0

Item for Carvery Hurdles gun Hurdles
- - - - - 100: 0: 0

Item for woad Hurdles gun Hurdles
- - - - - 30: 0: 0

Item for Hay Ricks and Hay in Stalls
- - - - - 50: 0: 0

Item for Muck - - - - - 10: 0: 0

Item for Book Books, Bills and Bonds
and More papers - - - - - 200: 0: 0

Item for 10000 good things forgotten - - - - - 1: 1: 6

Summe Total - - - - - 939: 18: 8

Inventory
This taken & appraised
by us
Tho: Adams
Rich: Scott.

image provided by Peter Allen

1715 Probate Inventory of Richard Scott

Figure 6

N. B. Any Person who takes
 take all or any Part of the Horses, as will be most agreeable to
 the Purchaser.

To be Lett, and entered on immediately,
A Handsome and commodious Dwelling-
 House, with a very good four stalled Stable, Coach-House
 and Dove-House, a large Garden walled, a good Orchard well
 planted, very good Fruit Trees, several Fish-Ponds and other
 Conveniences, situate and being at Great Barr, in the County of
 Stafford, and called the Nether-House; with which may be also
 had, if required, Ten, Twenty or Thirty Acres of Land, and
 next Year may likewise be added Sixty or Seventy Acres of Land
 more, if required. — For further Particulars, enquire of Mr.
 Joseph Scott, on Snow-Hill, Birmingham; Mrs. Scott, of Great
 Heywood, in the said County of Stafford, or of Mr. Jonathan
 Stiff, of Great Barr aforesaid, who will shew the Premises.

TO COVER this Season, at John Picken's,
 the Sign of the Cock at Spittle-Brook, in the Parish of
 Envill, Staffordshire, a fine strong black Horse, full 16 Hands

Whitchurch.

TO be LET, and entered upon at Lady-
 day next, or sooner if required, All that Capital
 New-erected MESSUAGE or MANSION-HOUSE,
 neatly fitted up by and late in the Occupation of JOSEPH
 SCOTT, Esqr. together with any Quantity of Land, not
 exceeding 70 Acres; situate at GREAT BARR, in the
 County of Stafford, a very pleasant, healthy Spot, and very
 eligible for a Gentleman or Sportsman's Family, there be-
 ing a good Fox-Hunt, and a Pack of Fox Dogs and several
 Packs of Harriers, in the Neighbourhood. — For further
 Particulars apply to Mr. Butler, Attorney, in Sutton-Cold-
 field, near Birmingham; who may be treated with at the
 Hen-and-Chickens, Birmingham, on Thursdays.

ALSO, To be LET, Two small Houses with Gardens,
 in Sutton-Coldfield; and Three Tenements, with Gardens
 and a Barn, and about Eight Acres of Land to one of the
 Tenements, at Hill, in the Parish of Sutton-Coldfield
 aforesaid. — Enquire of Mr. Butler as above.

C O C K I N G.
A MAIN of COCKS to be fought at the
 House of Mr. Charles Harper, at Meriden

Private Co
 HOUSES.
 Barn, Stab
 For furt
 Broughton
 either a P

A FR
 at G
 Birmingha
 at Four o'
 as there
 vate Contro
 of Meadow
 Stable, and
 nant, and
 nant has fi
 For Dues

images provided by Peter Allen

1760 (top) and 1781 (bottom) Aris' Gazette adverts

Figure 7

LOT 24—continued.

“ THE HALL ”

contains the following accommodation :—Vestibule ; Entrance Hall, 19 ft. by 16 ft. ; Principal Hall and Gallery, top-lighted, 19 ft. by 46 ft., with handsome Oak Staircase ; Library, 24 ft. 6 ins. by 24 ft. 6 in., exclusive of large Bay ; Drawing Room, 38 ft. by 24 ft., with three windows overlooking the Lawn and Pool ; Dining Room, 43 ft. 6 in. by 24 ft., exclusive of large Bay ; Morning Room, 18 ft. 6 in. by 19 ft. 6 in., with large French casement opening into Conservatory ; and approached by a Passage from the Dining Room is a Billiard Room, 37 ft. by 16 ft. 6 in., with Lavatory attached.

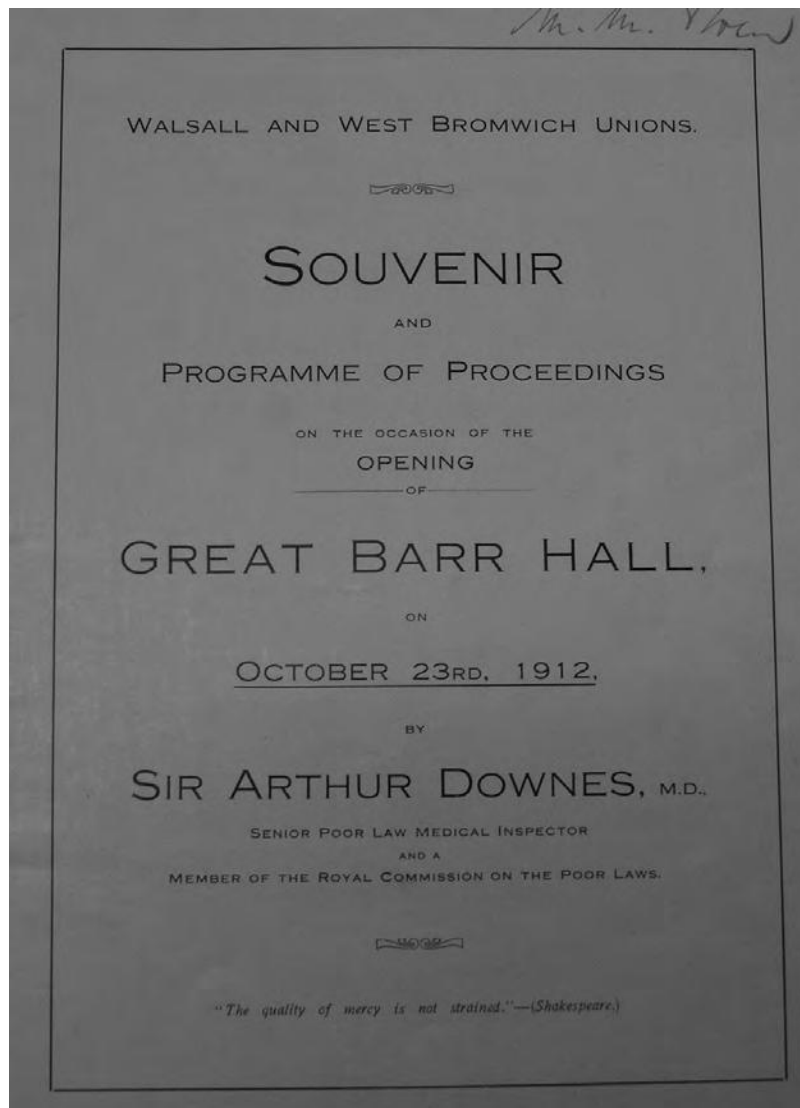
The Kitchens and Servants' Offices are conveniently placed and comprise House-keeper's Room, large Kitchen, Scullery, Cook's Pantry, Servants' Hall, large Butler's Pantry and Bedroom adjoining, Housemaids' Room, Business Room, etc.

IN THE BASEMENT there are very extensive brick-arched Cellars in one of which there is a Pump with an excellent supply of good drinking Water.

ON THE FIRST FLOOR on the principal Landings are eleven Bedrooms, three Dressing Rooms, W.C., and Housemaids' Closet ; and on the back Landing, four Bedrooms, Linen Room, W.C., and Housemaids' Closet.

There are also four Men-servants' Rooms approached by a stone staircase from the Back Hall, a large Boxroom and a ladder-way to the Clock Tower.

Adjoining at the rear is a large paved Yard with an entrance from the Back Drive, in which there are a number of Outbuildings, consisting of Laundry, Brewhouse, Coal and Wood Houses and several Servants' W.C.'s, etc.



1912 Programme from opening of Great Barr Hall

Figure 9

Plates



Plate 1: North elevation of Great Barr Hall



Plate 2: West elevation of Great Barr Hall



Plate 3: South elevation of Great Barr Hall



Plate 4: West elevation of the Chapel at Great Barr Hall



Plate 5: East elevation of Great Barr Hall



Plate 6: 17th century buildings foundations and brickwork (to right of scored plaster)



Plate 7: 17th century brick-lined well



Plate 8: Original 1777 foundations of the west wall



Plate 9: One of 1840s original polygonal buttresses

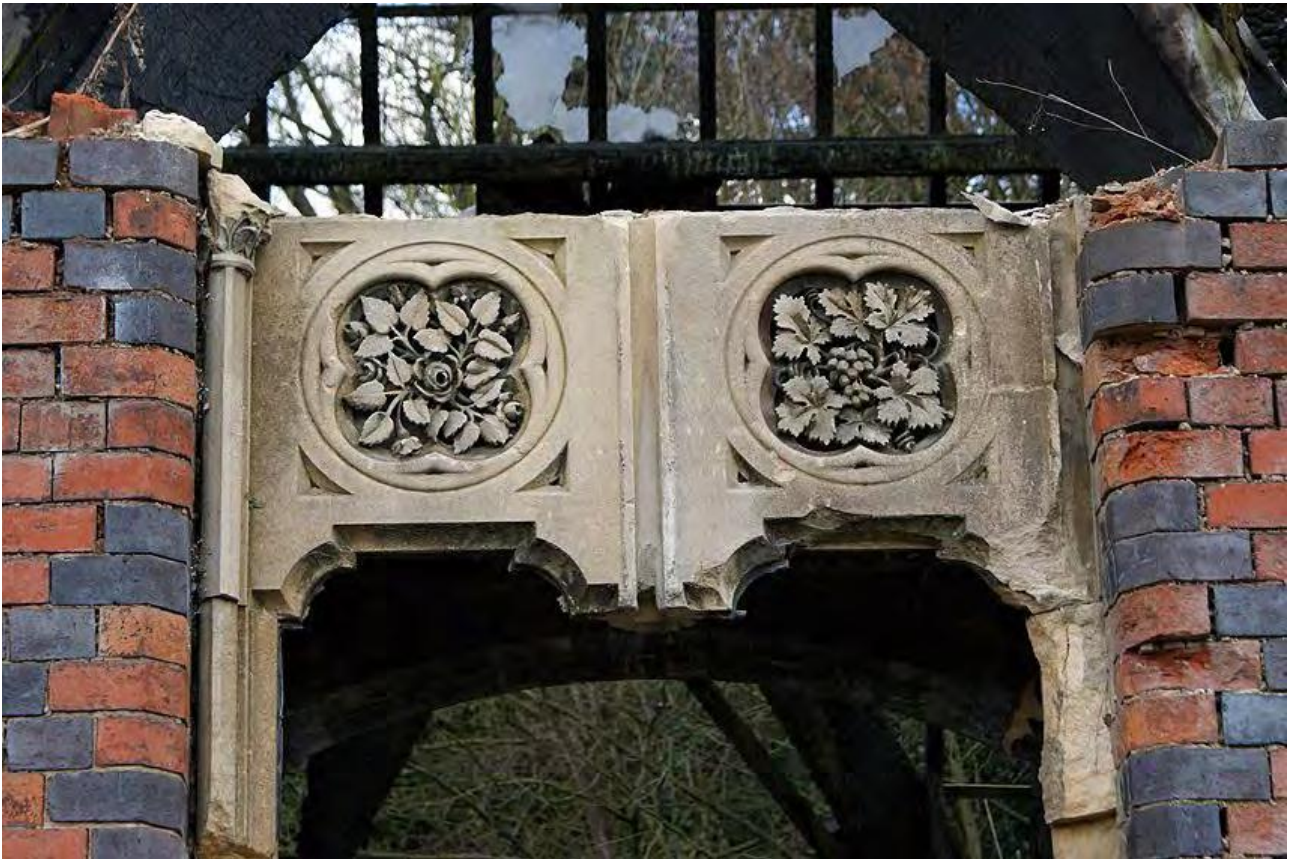


Plate 10: One of the limestone transoms of the chapel windows



Plate 11: Interior of staircase hall



Plate 12: Example of decorative plaster work in staircase hall

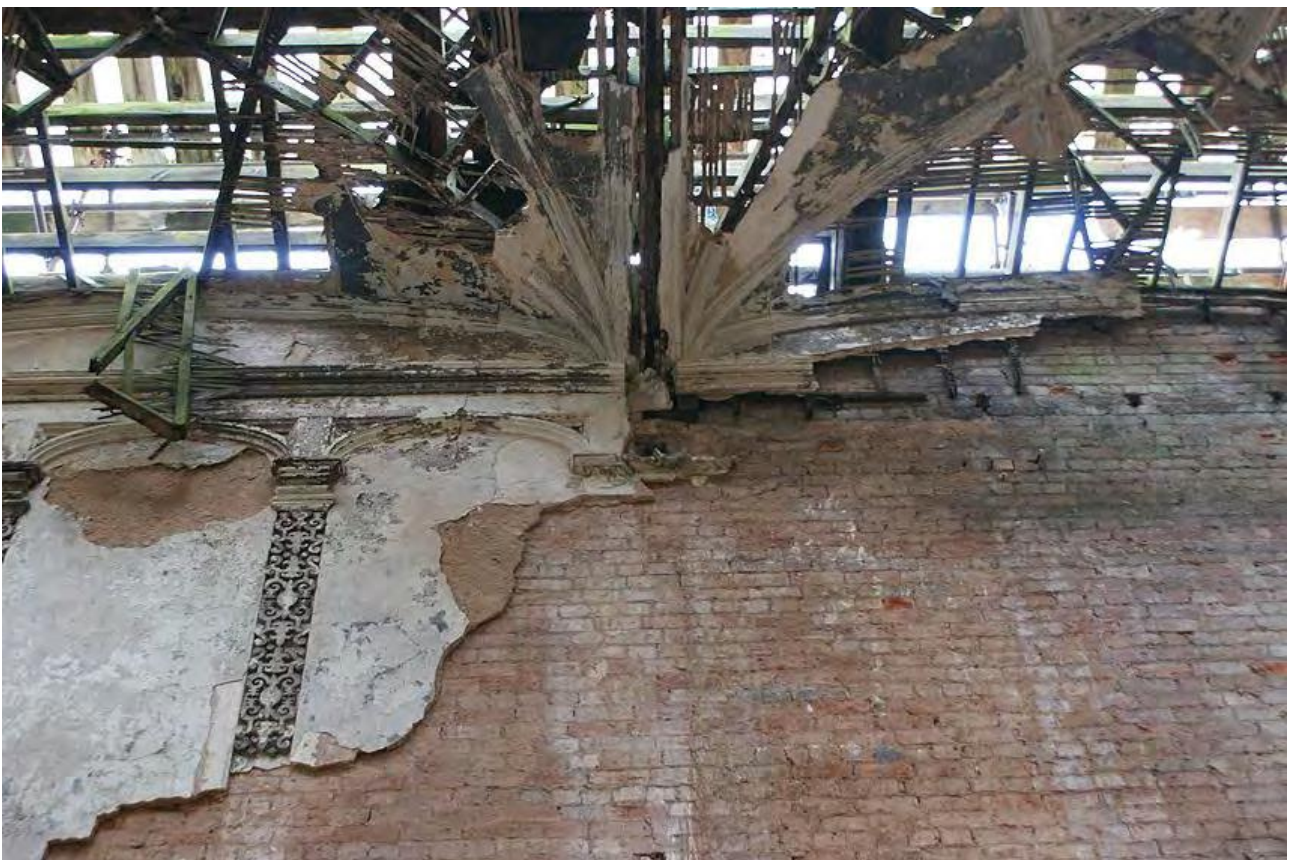


Plate 13: Example of plasterwork, staircase hall roof vault springer

Appendix 1 National Heritage List for England information

List Entry Summary

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: GREAT BARR HALL AND CHAPEL

List Entry Number: 1076395

Location

GREAT BARR HALL AND CHAPEL

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Walsall

District Type: Metropolitan Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 15-Jun-1971

Date of most recent amendment: 31-Jul-1986

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: LBS

UID: 219080

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Building

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

WALSALL MB GREAT BARR
SP 09 NE
8/40 Great Barr Hall and chapel
(formerly listed as St

Margaret's Hospital including
chapel, under Great Barr CP,
15.06.71 Aldridge and Brownhills UD)
- II*

A country house which was converted to use as a hospital in the early-C20.

DATE: Part of the fabric is C17 with additions and alterations of c.1767, c.1800 and a chapel building of c.1863.

ARCHITECT: The early-C19 work has been attributed to John Nash or Francis Goodwin. The chapel building of c.1863 has been attributed to George Gilbert Scott.

MATERIALS: The early-C19 part of the building is of rendered brick with a slate roof and the chapel of c.1863 has red brick walling with blue brick diapering, stone dressings and a slate roof.

PLAN: The house is of two storeys with a cellar. A central, top-lit staircase hall connects with the ground-floor reception rooms along the west front.

EXTERIOR: The garden front has, at its centre, a portion of three-bays which projects forward from and above the level of the lateral bays. To the centre is a double doorway. At either side are windows and there are three windows to the first floor. All of the openings have ogee heads and square hood moulds with blind tracery to the spandrels and this feature is common to all openings on the front. Set between the bays are polygonal buttresses which have offsets to their lower bodies. The central two buttresses flanking the door are missing their caps. The lateral buttresses, which clasp the corners of the projecting three bays, have miniature, battlemented parapets as their capping, set half up the first floor walling. To either side of the central three bays, and flush with them, are ground floor bays which have projecting canted bay windows to their centres and further polygonal buttresses to their corners. Above this at first floor level and set back (apparently at the level of the earlier-C18 building line of this front) are three bays, again with ogee heads, square hood moulds and blind tracery. At attic level at the far right and left corners were formerly small square turrets which were removed in the C20. To the tops of the walls are battlemented parapets. The north side of the house has to its centre a projecting porch with ogee arched doorway, to the flanks of which are three-light casements. Immediately behind this is a slightly projecting portion of wall with two bays which has ogee-headed windows to the first floor, above which are panels of blank tracery. To either side of this central arrangement are two bays at ground floor level with ogee heads and panels of blind tracery and between these are set the polygonal brackets which formerly supported the first floor oriels. These have now been removed and replaced by C20 metal-framed windows. To the top of the walling is a battlemented parapet and to the far right and left corners are polygonal buttresses which support small, battlemented parapets, as seen on the west front. Extending to the left of this front and set lower, is part of the walling of a service wing which has now been largely demolished. Following the demolition of large parts of the service wing and the additions and alterations made by the National Health Service during the use of the building as a hospital in the C20, the east side of the house now largely consists of exposed internal walling.

INTERIOR: to the centre of the plan is a rectangular, top-lit staircase hall. This connects at its northern end to the entrance hall and doors from it lead off to the three principal rooms along the west front; a central drawing room, with doors out to the terrace, a library at the north end and a dining room at the south end. A short passageway from the dining room leads to the chapel. The staircase hall had a central imperial staircase which started as two flights, rose to a central T-shaped gallery and then split again into two flights which climbed around the walls of the hall to a top landing on the west side. (In 2008 the staircase had been taken down and stored, pending restoration). To the upper walls are a series of pilasters which are inset with strapwork decoration. To the heads of these are projecting capitals which support depressed arches. These divide the hall into a series of bays; three to the shorter ends and nine to each of the longer flanks. Vaulting ribs spring from the corners and sides to create an interlacing pattern. Set at the centre of the hall are three octagonal lanterns, with more strapwork decoration to their drums. The interior has

suffered from vandalism, including stripping of roof material, which has allowed water damage. Many of the walls have lost their plaster. Fire surrounds and joinery, including doors and windows have been lost. Some of the material including joinery from the staircase is stored pending the restoration.

CHAPEL BUILDING: Attached at right of the west front and projecting slightly is the chapel building. This is of red brick with blue brick diapering in a lattice pattern. A lower, linking, corridor joins the house and chapel. This has a doorway with moulded ashlar surround. The western flank of the chapel has three bays and a projecting plinth with blue brick moulding and a flush ashlar sill band. Each window is set beneath a window and has two lights with Carnarvon arches to the lower windows and a very generous transom, set with two quatrefoil panels of foliage carving, immediately below the springing of the upper arches. The heads to the windows have cusped lights and trefoils to the heads and dogtooth ornament to the outer arches. At the time of survey (June 2008) the central archway and window had been removed. At either end of the walling are elaborately-carved kneelers and the gables across the building have ashlar copings. The ritual east end (south) has a window of five lights with cusped heads and quatrefoils and trefoils to the apex. The ritual west end has a rose window with deeply-carved ashlar surround and a series of six quatrefoils surrounding a central polygon.

The roof of the chapel has suffered from fire damage, although charred the roof trusses remain and consist of a tie, supported by arched braces, which carry a moulded king post. There are ashlar posts connected to the common rafters. To the floor are plain tiles and the internal walls carry the same trellis pattern of diapering seen on the exterior.

HISTORY

The building was initially known as Netherhouse and a hearth tax return of 1666 records Richard Scott as living there with five hearths in the house. It may have been a large farm house according to the evidence of inventories prepared in 1709 and 1715 with a barn and cockloft, buttery and dairy. By 1760 it was described as a 'handsome and commodious dwelling house' with stables, a coach house and a walled garden. According to Stebbing Shaw in his 'History and Antiquities of Staffordshire' of 1798, 'The present possessor [Joseph Scott], about the year 1767, began to exercise his well known taste and ingenuity upon the old fabric, giving it the pleasing monastic appearance it now exhibits - and has since much improved it by the addition of a spacious dining room at the east end, and other rooms and conveniences'. Shaw's book shows a watercolour depiction of the house with a symmetrical entrance front of 11 bays, having a central doorway, turrets to the corners and battlemented parapet. This is assumed to be the recessed part of the present west front and the flank, or south front, appears to have had three bays. These alterations appear to have left the Scotts in financial straights and they went abroad from 1785 and let the house to Samuel Galton junior, the Birmingham Quaker, banker and gun manufacturer. In his time the house was used as one of the venues for meetings of the Lunar Society, a group of entrepreneurs and intellectuals from the area around Birmingham, many of whom were Fellows of the Royal Society and who included, Matthew Bolton, James Watt, Erasmus Darwin and Josiah Wedgwood. The Scotts returned to Great Barr in 1797 and more alterations to the house followed. Between 1830 and 1848 major works included the addition of a clock tower, together with the extension of the south face of the hall and the removal of the entrance to the north elevation from its previous place on the west side. A chapel was added to the south west corner of the building c. 1863 and is thought to have been to the designs of Sir George Gilbert Scott who is also believed to have added other estate buildings including lodges and a boat house. The chapel was never consecrated and was turned into a billiard room. Following the death of Lady Bateman-Scott in 1909 the hall was bought by the West Bromwich Poor Law Guardians and from 1918 it served as a hospital for the mentally ill. In 1925 a two-storey extension was added to the north elevation. In 1955 the clock tower, stables and part of the east wing were demolished. Alterations in the 1960s included the insertion of load-bearing steel beams and the removal of the oriel windows on the north front and their replacement with the current metal casements. The house ceased to be a hospital in 1978.

SOURCES

N.Pevsner, *The Buildings of England - Staffordshire*, 1974, p.137; The Revd. Stebbing Shaw, *The History and Antiquities of Staffordshire*, 2 Vols., 1798 & 1801, pp105-6; *The Builder*, 6 April 1873,

p.360; J.Summerson, *The Life and Work of John Nash Architect*, 1980, p.192; M.Mansbridge, *John Nash - a Complete Catalogue*, 1991, p.98; H.Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840*, 1995, p.692; Margaret Hanson & Peter Drake, *Great Barr, Oscott and Kingstanding*, 2001, pp.9-22.

Great Barr Hall is designated at Grade II* for the following principal reasons:

* Despite alterations made during its use as a hospital and subsequent damage caused by vandalism, the building has considerable architectural interest.

* Although attributions to John Nash and George Gilbert Scott cannot be proved, the likelihood of their involvement is strong.

* The use of the house as a venue for meetings of the Lunar Society in the late-C18 is of definite interest.

* The partnership between John Nash and Humphry Repton was short-lived but highly influential for the Picturesque movement throughout Britain and Europe. The setting of Great Barr Hall in a landscape designed by both, and possibly also by William Shenstone (which is included on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens at Grade II), gives added interest to the building.

Listing NGR: SP0546195385

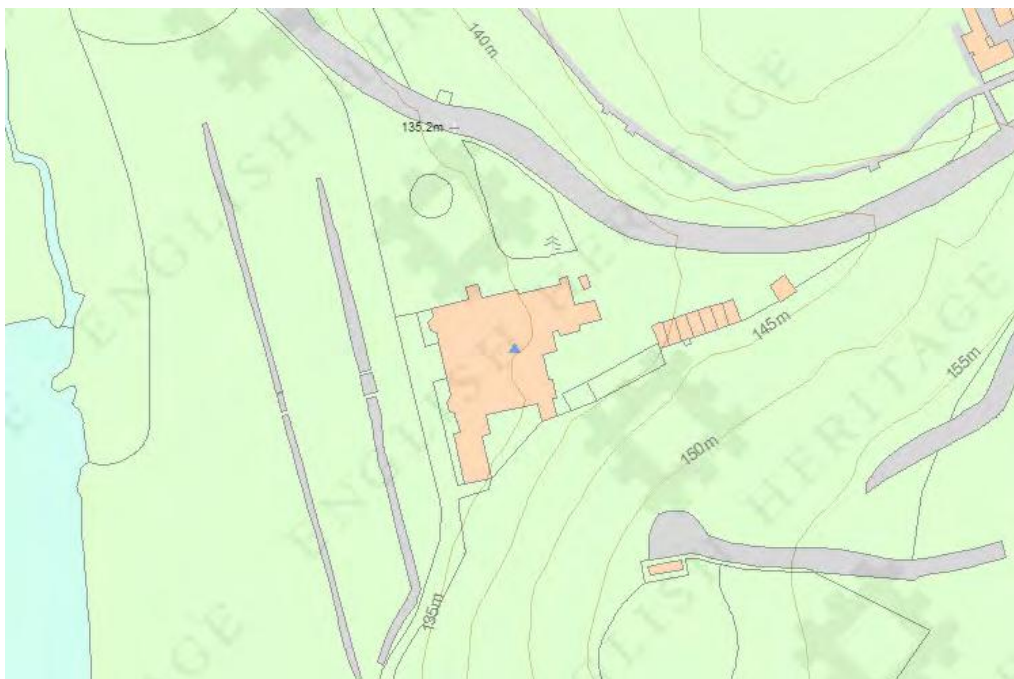
Selected Sources

1. **Book Reference** - *Title*: Landscape Survey of Great Barr Walsall - *Date*: 1985
2. **Article Reference** - *Title*: Part 43 West Midlands - *Journal Title*: Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England

Map

National Grid Reference: SP 05465 95385

The below map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - [1076395.pdf](#)



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This copy shows the entry on 20-Mar-2013 at 11:47:57.

List Entry Summary

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by English Heritage for its special historic interest.

Name: GREAT BARR HALL

List Entry Number: 1001202

Location

The garden or other land may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County:

District: Sandwell

District Type: Metropolitan Authority

Parish:

County:

District: Walsall

District Type: Metropolitan Authority

Parish:

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: II

Date first registered: 01-Jul-1986

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: Parks and Gardens

UID: 2208

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Garden

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

An C18 landscape park associated with a country house; associated with Humphry Repton and John Nash and George Gilbert Scott, and possibly with William Shenstone.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the mid C17 Richard Scott (d 1675), tenant of Old Hall (or High House), the manor house of Great Barr, built Nether-house Farm c 1km to the south-west near the bottom of a wooded valley. In the time of John Scott (d 1755) Nether House was apparently rebuilt or greatly extended and the ornamentation of the landscape begun. An early C19 tradition states that William Shenstone (1714-1763), later a kinsman of the family, helped lay out these improvements. The house was then tenanted until 1777 when his grandson Joseph Scott came to live there following his marriage. Over the next six years he ran through most of his fortune, much of it on rebuilding the house, thereafter known as Great Barr Hall. Some was also spent on its grounds. By c 1785 the Scotts' financial plight had driven them abroad, and Great Barr was leased to the Galton family, Birmingham Quakers. Samuel Galton junior was a member of the Lunar Society, the unofficial scientific body whose members did much to advance the Industrial Revolution, and this met occasionally at Great Barr between 1785 and 1796. The Galtons' lease was terminated in 1797 and Scott immediately called in Humphry Repton (1752-1818) and John Nash (1752-1835) to work on the park. He had presumably become acquainted with them through his kinsman Edward Foley, of the well-known Herefordshire family. Joseph died in 1828 and was succeeded by his son Sir Edward Scott (d 1851), who in the 1840s commissioned considerable improvements at Great Barr. His second wife Lydia Robinson, whom he married in 1848, was an associate of the Brontes; Branwell was supposedly infatuated with her. Sir Francis Scott (d 1863), Sir Edward's son and heir, undertook many changes to the house and park, which have been attributed to the architect George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878), whom he had met in Venice. In 1911, following the death of his widow in 1909, the house and park were sold to West Bromwich Poor Law Union. Three years later work began on Great Barr Park Colony for Mental Defectives, later renamed St Margaret's Hospital. The first phase, an elevated horse-shoe of buildings, was designed by the Birmingham architect Gerald McMichael. In the 1990s most of the extensive older hospital buildings were abandoned, although some clinic services continued to be provided from buildings of c 1990. Recently (2008) the hospital buildings were demolished and replaced with a new housing estate (not part of the area registered).

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Great Barr lies c 5km south-east of Walsall, the former Great Barr park forming a green valley corridor between the housing estates of Great Barr to the west and of Pheasey and Queslett to the east. The north boundary of the site is formed by Chapel Lane, and that to the south by the A4041. The west boundary now follows the line of the M6 motorway, which truncates the south-west tip of the park. The east boundary follows the line of the lakes. It bounds a housing estate built in the early C21 on the horse-shoe shaped site of the hospital buildings that occupied this former part of the park (not included in the registered area). The registered site comprises c 105ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES

Since the C17 there have been numerous approaches contrived to the Hall, some direct and others designed to show off the park. The Hall is approached from the north-west down Sutton's Approach, lined with later C20 horse chestnuts. This drive was laid out in the 1840s, at the same time Sutton's Bridge being built at the north end of the Upper Lake. The drive enters the grounds off Chapel Lane, the public road past Great Barr church; Chapel Lodge (c 1856) which stood on the west side of the drive has been demolished. Opposite the lodge site, on the north side of Chapel Lane, is Avenue Lodge, a red-brick lodge with blue diaper work of c 1856, probably by Gilbert Scott. Iron gate piers of the same date stand at the end of the Walsall Approach drive of 1797, now a footpath, which runs for 1km west through Merrion's Wood. At the end of that path is the mid C19 Walsall (or Merrion's) Lodge of 1854 (listed Grade II); it too has iron gate piers to one side.

Sutton's Approach leads to the north side of the Hall and to its west front. From here a rough drive continues south, down the east side of the lakes. The present lodge on the centre of the south side

of the park dates from the mid C20. A more important approach from the south was the drive through the woodland above the west side of the lakes, from the mid C19 Handsworth Lodge (listed grade II) at the south-west corner of the registered area. Laid out c 1799 the drive survives as a track.

From the stables on the east side of the Hall the Farm Approach of 1856 leads east past the site of Park Farm (built in 1856 on the east side of the walled garden); it originally ran to Beacon Lodge 500m beyond, now subsumed in the dense suburban housing of the 1960s and 1970s which abuts the east side of the registered area.

In the early C18 there was an ornamented walk to High House, past the west wall of the kitchen garden. This was done away with in the 1790s when Repton and Nash reworked the approaches to the Hall. As well as those noted above a further drive was constructed at that time from the south-east corner of the park, where the Queslett Lodge was built c 1800.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING

Great Barr Hall (listed Grade II*) stands central alongside the east boundary of the registered park, and has since the closure and demolition of St Margaret's Hospital been vacant and in poor condition. Built in 1777 for Joseph Scott, it is a rendered, gothic style building. It is set on relatively low ground, facing west towards its lake, and with a wooded bank rising immediately behind it. The main part of the Hall has a nine-bay front, with ogee-headed windows, buttresses done as octagonal turrets, and battlements. At the south end of the Hall is a red-brick with blue diaper work building of 1863 attributed to George Gilbert Scott, constructed as a chapel but never consecrated and used subsequently as a billiard room.

The Hall occupies the site of the mid C17 and later Nether-house Farm.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

West of the Hall is an overgrown lawn, laid out as the Great Meadow in the 1740s and reworked more formally with two low terraces and a central axial path in the 1840s. This lawn extended c 80m west to the Upper Lake, now silted up and overgrown.

On the bank above the Hall and c 150m to the south is a roughly circular grassed area, the site of the late C18 Flower Garden. On its north side is a two-storey brick range, the surviving element of the gothic greenhouse built c 1825 by Robert Lugar and illustrated in his *Villa Architecture* (pl 5) of 1828.

Creation of pleasure gardens around the Hall began in the early C18 under John Scott who created features including the Great Meadow, a shrubbery, and a summerhouse on the site of the Flower Garden.

PARK

Merrion's Wood, the western arm of the park, is between 50m and 200m wide and 1km long. It comprises mature deciduous woodland through which runs a broad footpath along the line of the former drive, the whole managed as a public amenity by the local authority via a trust. Merrion's Wood was added to the estate by purchase in 1796.

Occupying the high ground down the high, eastern border of the park is mature deciduous woodland: High Wood to the north, and Fox's Plantation to the south. Tradition states that the politician and statesman Charles James Fox (d 1806) had a hand in the laying out of the latter, and there is some evidence that Fox may have visited Great Barr in 1784 or 1785, about the time the Plantation was put in.

The main feature of the park is the two lakes which lie along the valley bottom. The more southerly, Big Pool, was formed c 1744. It is c 400m long and 100m wide. A dam at its north end retains the Upper Lake, which is narrower. Constructed c 1799 and once somewhat longer than Big Pool, its north end, west of the Hall, is now silted up and overgrown. Opposite the axial path west from the

Hall is an embayment wherein stood a boathouse built in 1863 to a design by Gilbert Scott (now gone). The lakes are screened on the west by Holly Wood and beyond it the park (partly ploughed) with Gilbert's Wood at its centre, rises in the direction of the M6 motorway. From this part of the site there are views of Great Barr Hall (now partly obscured), situated on the other side above the lakes. Formerly there were also views from the Hall and the lakes of this part of the park. The western part of the site had been imparked by 1830 (see estate map of that date), probably by Joseph Scott who owned Great Barr Hall from 1777 until 1828.

As with the garden, the wider landscape around what was still then called Nether-house Farm began to be ornamented in the mid C18 by John Scott (mostly c 1744) and by the 1750s there was a cascade on the stream 200m north-west of the house and close to that cascade a botanic garden, while Big Pool had been created 500m to the south of the house. An early C19 tradition states that William Shenstone (1714-1763), later a kinsman of the family, helped lay out these improvements.

The work undertaken to the designs of Humphry Repton and John Nash in c1797, included laying out new approaches from the north (Walsall), south (Handsworth), and south-east (Queslett), constructing the Upper Pool, and making or enlarging the park's woodland, which was cut through with walks: High Wood, Fox's Plantation, and that down the west side of the lakes. The next and last main phase of work took place in the later 1850s when many buildings and features in the park were rebuilt to designs by Gilbert Scott.

KITCHEN GARDEN

The walled garden, standing above and 150m north-east of the Hall, was built in the 1740s. The brick-walled compartment, partly collapsed and overgrown in 2008, is c 100m east/west by 60m north/south, and slopes markedly down from north to south. A rabbit warren was built in the garden c 1777.

REFERENCES

Great Barr Park: A Survey of the Landscape, (De Bois Landscape Survey Group 1985)
Reilly, R, Josiah Wedgwood (1992), 194, 198

Maps

Estate map of Great Barr, 1830, by G Weddal
Tithe Map for Adridge, 1839/40
OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1886
2nd edition published 1918
1937 edition

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Great Barr Hall, Walsall, West Midlands, an C18 landscape park, is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

- * Group value: the C18 landscape park is contemporary with and provides the setting for Great Barr Hall (listed Grade II*).
- * Design interest: C18 and C19 design work by Humphry Repton, John Nash and Gilbert Scott, and possibly William Shenstone.
- * Intactness: the overall layout, boundaries and features of the park remain mostly intact and it retains strong visual links with Great Barr Hall.

Description written: 1997
Register Inspector: PAS
Edited: October 1999
Amended: February 2009
Amended: June 2010

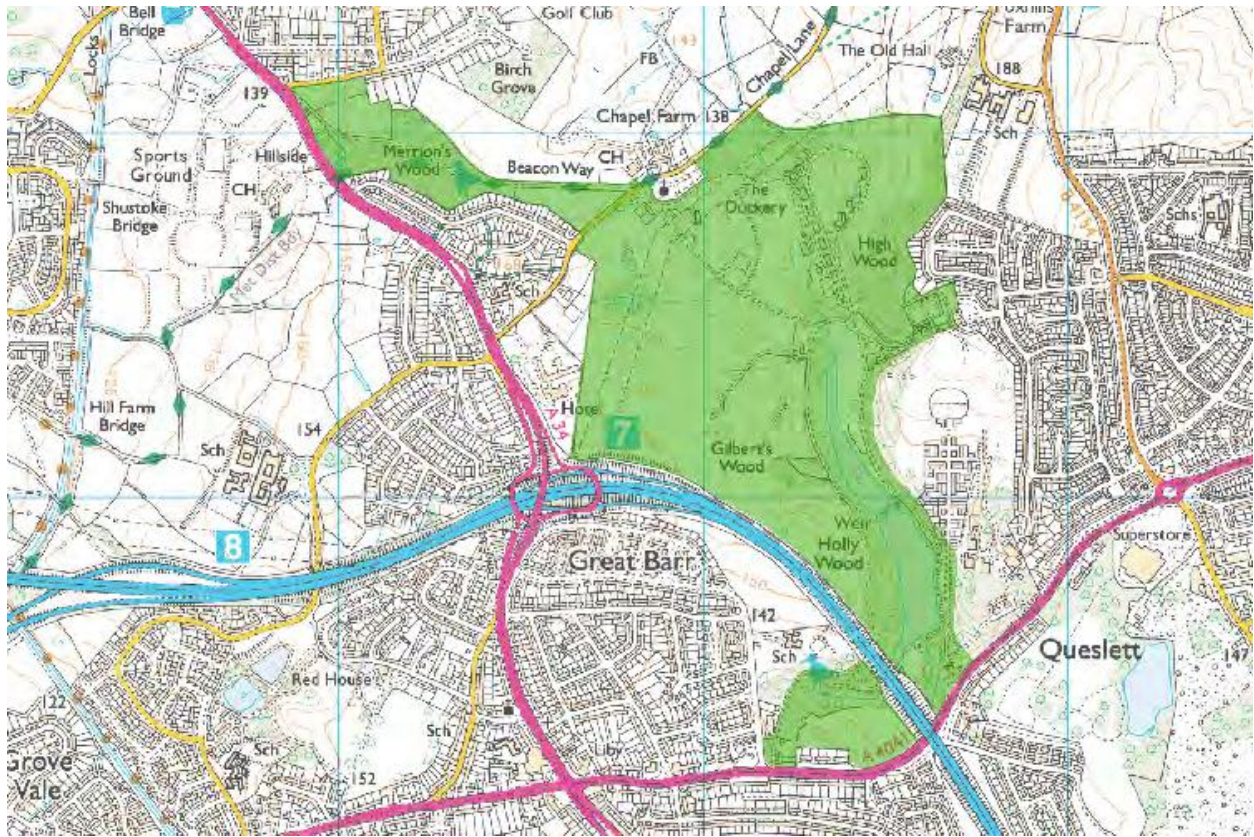
Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Map

National Grid Reference: SP 04800 95482, SP 05375 94417

The below map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - [1001202.pdf](#)



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Appendix 2 Peter Allen *'Points of contention raised by the masterplan under preparation by Lapworth Architects'*

FROM: Peter Allen

Chairman – Barr and Aston Local History Society
Secretary – Great Barr Hall Action Committee
peterallen@tiscali.co.uk / 07985 934215

TO: Interested parties

15 May 2013

Points of contention raised by the masterplan under preparation by *Lapworth Architects*

A PERSONAL REQUEST

My interest in Great Barr Hall (GBHall), its associated estate and people, is deep and sustained. *Lapworth Architects*, with whom I collaborate on a regular basis, have asked me to comment on some of the issues raised during discussions with English Heritage on 16 April 2013 and a subsequent meeting with Mr David Elsworthy of Walsall MBC on 22 April 2013. I am led to believe that a number of restoration elements have been reduced in priority as a result of these deliberations.

I would ask that you indulge me by reading through this letter and noting its content. As evidence of the goodwill that exists I have asked *Lapworth Architects* to forward this letter themselves to whoever they wish.

Please note that these are my own personal views and that I am solely responsible for the layout and typesetting. I am happy to enter into discussion with anyone, formally or informally, on any point. I hope any counter-arguments will likewise be evidence-based and not burdened by conjecture. You may wish to involve me in any further exchange of ideas with *Lapworth Architects* over this and other similar matters.

I have added some personal details below for those who have never heard of me and/or question my intrusion into this debate.

INTRODUCTION

GBHall and its estate is one of Walsall's most important heritage assets—yet it is woefully undervalued. Quite apart from its unfortunate geographical location—on the cusp of two conurbations—its real importance as a Lunar Society meeting place has never been properly appreciated. It was said by contemporaries to be '*the favourite meeting place of the Lunar Society*' and, after Soho House, the most frequent venue for meetings.

There has been an enormous academic focus on the Lunar Society and the West Midlands Enlightenment over the last decade. Evidence of this can be seen in the recent rash of books on Joseph Priestley, Erasmus Darwin, Matthew Boulton, William Withering and other Enlightenment figures, all visitors to GBHall.

Of paramount importance, the only eye-witness accounts of *any* of the meetings of this illustrious body comes from the autobiography of Mary Anne Galton (Schimmelpenninck), eldest daughter of Samuel Galton junior, a prominent Lunar Society member. The Galton family resided at GBHall between 1785 and 1797, the most productive period for the Lunar Society. *The Barr Chronicles*, as I have dubbed them, are replete with references to members of this intellectual galaxy and their deliberations.

Bricks and mortar are important, but it is the historical associations which hold the key to revitalising this superb site. Assisted, of course, by a largely intact Registered Landscape (worked on by Shenstone and Repton) and the exceptional wildlife interest.

It is the opinion of Professor Tony Seaton, a world-renowned authority on tourism, that this site could be “a major international tourism attraction ... if marketed with Soho House and other sites as a network that gave birth to the Industrial Revolution.”

The signs have never been more propitious for bringing off a successful restoration package. A holistic approach is essential and there has to be give-and-take on all sides. Everything could be lost if people show a lack of vision and take entrenched positions. I would refer you to the *Mary Scott Blueprint* (download from www.greatbarrhall.com) for my own views on the way forward. It is now dated and a complete review of the document, first compiled some eight years ago, should be available in a few weeks. The revised edition will concentrate on the important Lunar Society links, but show a significant shift in position as regards the restoration of GBHall, reflecting the views put to me by others.

My philosophy remains as expressed at the Bovis Public Inquiry:

“I wish to see Great Barr Hall and its associated parkland become a vibrant, community-oriented, self-sustaining, multi-faceted heritage asset—with an assured future—so that generations to come will have the opportunity to enjoy its special qualities.”



This map is from the first issue (April 2013) of *History West Midlands - people of ideas, innovation and enterprise*. Great Barr Hall has been added by me, but a Georgian restoration could well see it appear on a future update. This splendid new magazine and website explores the rich and fascinating past of the historic counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. It is aimed at anyone who is interested in discovering the people and events that shaped the West Midlands and the world beyond. You can obtain the first two issues for free by registering at www.historywm.com.

AUTHOR'S CREDENTIALS

The purpose of this section is to provide evidence of a specialised knowledge of the Great Barr Hall (GBHall) Estate in all its aspects. I believe my sustained involvement has earned me a right to be heard on all matters relating to this highly-important heritage asset.

My association with this unique area began in 1974, when I took up a post as a biomedical scientist at St Margaret's Hospital. Shortly thereafter I began researching all aspects of the estate and its people. The bulk of that fundamental research was conducted in the years up to 1982; further less-intense research has continued in the intervening years.

Over nearly forty years I have assembled piecemeal a large personal archive containing books (some extremely rare and valuable), pamphlets, engravings, postcards, maps, surveys, ephemera, taped interviews, thousands of images, and so on. Many of the items are unique.

In September 1982, I compiled an extensive exhibition from the amassed visual, textual and auditory material. This highly successful exhibition was placed for extended periods at central and satellite libraries in Walsall and Birmingham.

Prolonged public airing of all this accumulated information brought about raised awareness of the importance of this historic site. In 1985, the then Conservation Officer for Walsall MBC gained joint-funding from Sandwell MBC, Walsall MBC, West Midlands County Council and Walsall Health Authority for a comprehensive ecological and landscape survey. The De Bois Landscape Survey Group (Dr John Phibbs and three others, including an ecologist) were chosen for the task. They had previously worked at Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight, and other high-profile locations.

The survey was carried out between January and August 1985. I was contacted from the outset and freely made available, without charge, all my hard-won research findings and personal archive. Apart from a few items, I supplied all the historical and illustrative material used in the final report. You will note that I am duly credited on the title-page as editor and historical adviser. The parkland at Great Barr was placed on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (at Grade 2) as a direct result of the survey findings.

The De Bois survey stands as the seminal work on GBHall and the associated estate. Walsall MBC, English Heritage, Bovis Homes and a host of interested parties have freely utilised this large body of data—and long may that continue.

In February 1989, at the request of the then Director of Engineering and Town Planning, I supplied Walsall MBC with photographic copies of many of the illustrations reproduced in the survey report. They remain Walsall MBC's principal source for illustrated material relating to the site.

I have been secretary of the Great Barr Hall Action Committee, jointly founded in 1987 with Bruce George MP, since its inception. It exists to resist *insensitive* development of the Great Barr Hall Estate. For over a quarter of a century it has been my privilege to be chairman of the Barr and Aston Local History Society. I have given well over a hundred talks on a wide range of local history topics to groups and societies at all levels, including Walsall Civic Society.

All planning applications since the mid-1970s relating to the wider Great Barr Hall area have received my attention. I was intimately involved with the marathon Bovis Homes Netherhall planning applications and invited to be a Rule 6 participant at the subsequent public inquiry.

I have written over fifty articles for daily and weekly newspapers and published in a variety of other media. I am currently finishing off a 10,000 word paper on *The Barr Chronicles: Mary Anne Galton's Lunar Society insights*. I am collaborating with Professor Tony Seaton, who is writing a book on the literary achievements of Mary Anne Galton (Schimmelpenninck), recognised as a worthy contemporary of Jane Austen. I am also engaged in a radical revision of my *Mary Scott Blueprint: proposals for the regeneration of a Lunar Society meeting*

place [see www.greatbarrhall.com] in order to incorporate a wealth of new information and illustrated material. This document presents my vision for this extraordinary place. Both of my documents will be freely available to download without charge.

I have recently been consulted by project officers from Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council in respect of the masterplan under preparation. Both their Historic Buildings and Historic Landscape Archaeologists were given full assistance and access to my personal archive.

THE NEED FOR A PRAGMATIC APPROACH

I see no way forward for any restoration plans for Great Barr Hall and the registered landscape unless there is a degree of compromise from all stakeholders. Over nearly forty years I have constantly had to revise my aspirations for this unique site as ‘white knights’ have come and gone. But I believe the period of false dawns has now passed and that the current owners and their architects have the requisite will and expertise to see through a complex restoration scheme. Although there are a number of serious stumbling blocks still remaining I am confident a consensus can be reached. You can be sure my associates and I will continue to engage in rigorous debate until all contentious elements in the forthcoming masterplan have been resolved.

ISSUES RELATING TO CERTAIN RESTORATION ELEMENTS

I should like to comment in detail on a number of issues, some relating to a list of desiderata drawn up by Lapworth Architects and considered by English Heritage and Walsall MBC as being of low priority. Some of these are important embellishments which, for a modest outlay, *could significantly enhance the setting of GBHall and the visual experience of visitors.*

Great Barr Hall ‘chapel’

[1] The official listing of GBHall (as Grade II*) was undertaken in June 1971. It states unequivocally that “The chapel building of c.1863 has been attributed to George Gilbert Scott,” although no source for this claim is given. Now this was the year that Sir Francis Edward Scott died prematurely—he even failed to make his fortieth birthday. It is possible the building was commissioned by his broken-hearted widow as a memorial chapel. By the end of the century it was in use as a billiard room: this is confirmed by the catalogues for the contents sale of 1909 and the subsequent auction sale of GBHall in 1911.

Lady Scott lived alone at GBHall after the death of her last-surviving son in 1884 and the ‘chapel’ hardly features in Scott family folklore. It does not even merit a mention in the historical sketch in the souvenir programme produced for a Unionist Demonstration and Garden Fete held in the grounds of GBHall in July 1907. This sketch, which runs to several pages, boasts of contributions by ‘the late Sir Gilbert Scott’ but goes no further than commenting: ‘Various ornamental additions, and the picturesque Boat-house are evidences of his skill.’ A pen-and-ink vignette of the boathouse is reproduced with the text. The writer, briefed by Lady Scott, would surely have mentioned this pre-eminent Gothic Revival architect as the creator of the ‘chapel’, if that had been the case.

[2] There is certainly ineluctable evidence that Lady Scott’s husband, Sir Francis Edward Scott, commissioned Sir Gilbert Scott to design features for the estate *at least five years before the ‘chapel’ was built.* His contribution encompassed twin lodges, the two boathouses and possibly a wooden post-bridge across the upper lake. Despite an enormous legacy of public and ecclesiastical architecture, Sir Gilbert Scott made no other essay in ornamental park buildings

anywhere else in the country. His work can safely be dated to 1858 from the following entry in the diary of Lord Carlingford:

Oct. 19 [1858]. Great Barr. Scott gave me a lesson in his pottery & china, walked with him to his new lodges, built by Gilbert Scott.¹

Strawberry Hill, getting on well. To Marshall Wood, his 'Daphne' also for Strawberry in progress. To Haymarket, 'London Assurance.'

Oct. 19. Great Barr. Scott¹ gave me a lesson in his pottery & china, walked with him to his new lodges, built by Gilbert Scott. Talk after dinner about his life since we parted in

¹ Sir Francis Scott of Great Barr, see January 5, 1854.

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Roman numerals for 1858 can clearly be seen carved into a piece of sandstone set into the apex of the front elevation of Merrions Wood Lodge. Its twin, sited on Queslett Road, has not survived.

Lord Carlingford would surely have spoken of a newly-built chapel, or even one in the process of being built, on this visit to his friend from Oxford days.

[3] The GBHall 'chapel' has suffered repeated vandalism down the years, starting with a catastrophic arson attack on New Year's Day 1981. In more recent times sandstone mullions and other important features have been robbed-out.

I would refer you to the following image, which compares a Victorian view with one taken exactly ten years ago—much additional damage has occurred in the intervening decade. Note the intricate diaper-pattern brickwork, complex stonework and ironwork in the earlier photograph from 1898. The roof timbers are badly fire-damaged and all of the



¹ Osbert Wyndham Hewett. '*... and Mr Fortescue*'. A selection from the diaries from 1851 to 1862 of Chichester Fortescue, Lord Carlingford, K.P. London: John Murray, 1958.

scalloped tiles are missing. The building is in a perilous state and I cannot see that it could possibly be restored to anywhere near its original condition, even given limitless funds. Besides, any remedial work would stand out like a sore thumb against the old weathered fabric.

This building, to an untrained eye, seems to be seriously damaged structurally.

[4] In summary, (a) there is no evidence the ‘chapel’ is to a design by Sir Gilbert Scott, (b) there is no strong Scott family folklore attached to the building, and, (c) it is beyond practical restoration. In my view, even an attempt at such a task would require such a large element of enabling development as to seriously endanger the fragile landscape.

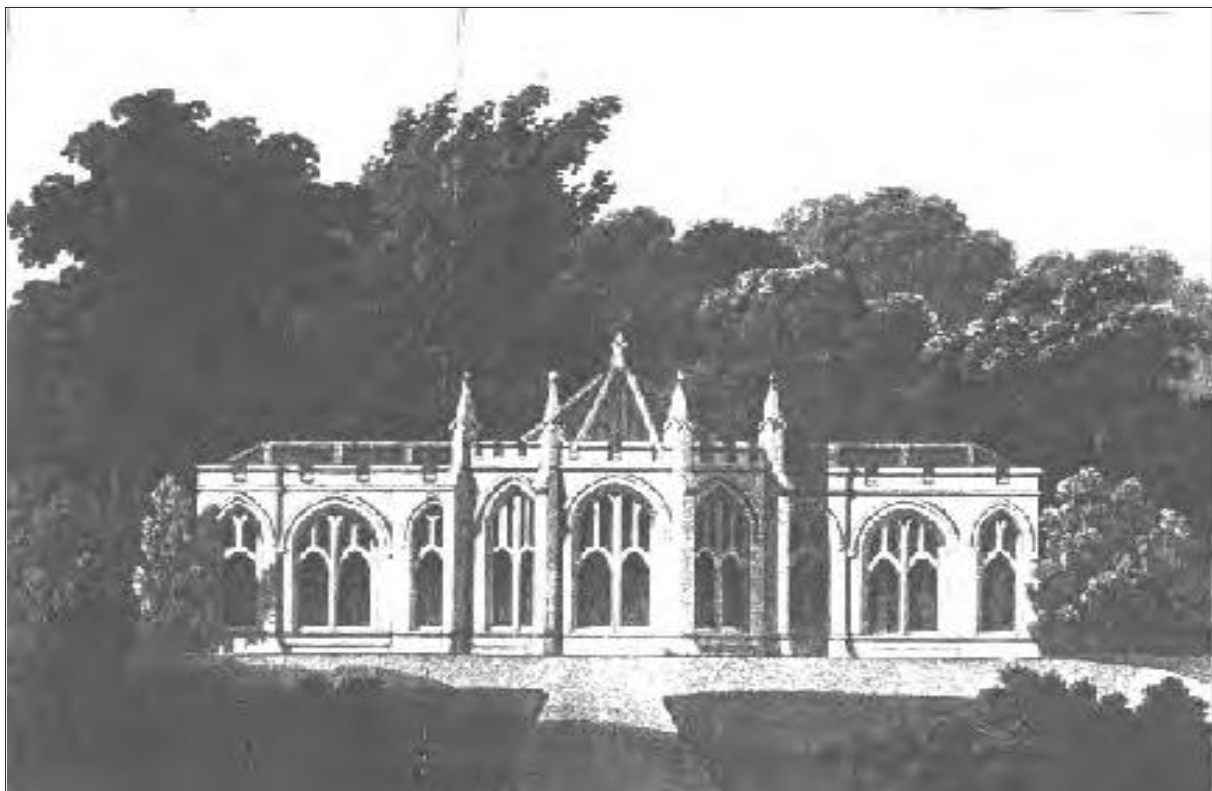
[5] I am informed that English Heritage do not favour retention of the ‘chapel’ for similar reasons. I support their view that some of the best-preserved stonework, its most attractive feature, could be incorporated in an appropriate way in the GBHall restoration scheme.

French Garden Site

At the meeting of 16 April 2013, English Heritage expressed limited support for restoration of the winding path which led from close to GBHall to the French Garden site on the nearby hillside, and reclassified it as low priority. I am hopeful some historic background will persuade them to reconsider.

[1] The French Garden dates from before 1800 and was a creation of Sir Joseph Scott, the first baronet. As a place of seclusion it was greatly valued by the Scott family. It offered unrivalled views of the lakes and parkland below and was a favourite haunt for visitors. At night-time the pathway was lit with oil-lamps.

Sir Joseph originally commissioned Robert Lugar to design a gothic summer-house for the French garden site. Lugar, who had a very widespread practice as a country-house architect, was a practitioner of the Picturesque after the manner of John Nash and Humphry Repton. The design was not taken up but a plan and sketch of this sumptuous creation appears in his *Villa Architecture* (1828) [see illustration]. Part of the original summerhouse, to a more basic



design, remains *in-situ* after nearly two hundred years. My hope, and that of others, is that something approaching Lugar's design might eventually take shape on this important site. In the meantime, a small pavilion, as an adjunct to the surviving structure, would greatly enhance visitor experience.

[2] The following description of the French garden is given in Stebbing Shaw's monumental *History and Antiquities of Staffordshire* [1798-1801]:

The next and most charming feature is the new flower-garden, at the South-East corner of the shrubbery and house, which is cut out into various appropriate beds and forms on the side of the hill facing the South, with a moss-clad alcove, &c. in the back ground, commanding a sweet view of the lake-scenery below, across which is lately thrown a large head and impetuous cascade. [...]

Proceeding North-east from the flower garden, we approach the urn alluded to in the above verses, lately erected to the memory of Miss Mary Dolman, who was second cousin to Mrs. Scott, and first to the Poet Shenstone...

...the ingenious pen of [the] worthy owner has so recently furnished me with the following beautiful embellishment:-

*Lines written in the flower garden at Great Barr Hall
on Mary Scott's birthday, 1800.*

Little Mary, list I pray,
While I sing thy natal day,
(Tho' perhaps with partial praise
Love may gild the votive lays):
Playful mirth awhile suspend;
Hear thy father, hear thy friend.

As in spring the fruitful shower
Swells the bud, and paints the flower;
So, instruction's fost'ring arm
Gives to youth, its brightest charm;
Sweetly as the vernal rose
Lifts its beauteous head, and blows;
Early care, with anxious toil
Fix'd the root, and form'd the soil;
Prun'd the wild luxuriant spray,
Bent the twig with gentle sway,
And gave by kind corrective heat
Every beauty, every sweet.

Think then, Mary, if the rose
Nurs'd with care so sweetly blows,
How each cheerful modest grace,
That fills thy mind and forms thy face,
Spread by *Ward's* instructive care,
In time may shew thee good as fair—
Shew, with elegance and ease,
Sense to charm and wit to please,
Skill to touch the dulcet lyre,
Taste, to catch the poet's fire,
An ear, to trip the airy dance,
An eye, to trace with painter's glance,
And head replete with classic store
Of British and of Roman lore.

Genius of this broider'd mound!
Spread thy guardian influence round,
On Mary's infant steps attend,
Protect her as the parents' friend.
And, as she culls with fond delight
The pansy gay or tulip bright,
Or myrtle from the storied urn,
Teach her these useful truths to learn—

That judgment must arrange the bower
Tho' nature gives the plastick power;
That marble, rugged from the mine,
By industry is made to shine;
And only by laborious skill
This wild became a blossom'd hill.

¹ Her governess, Mrs Ward of Tamworth.

A beautifully-crafted poem, written for Mary Scott (1792-1807) by a devoted father. Sir Joseph Scott's only daughter lived to see just another seven summers—we know nothing of the event which precipitated her early demise. As was too often the case in those far off days, the cloak of parental love offered no protection from the vicissitudes of life.

Note the strong connections between the French garden and William Shenstone of the Leasowes—the famous poet and landscape gardener. In typical Shenstonian style a number of benches were erected in the mid-eighteenth century at strategic points on this and other paths leading to promontories on the estate.

Those who have seen the *Mary Scott Blueprint* may recall the delightful portrait which forms part of the cover of this document. It was painted around the time of the composition of the poem by Joseph Scott (later Sir Joseph, the first baronet). The full-scale work clearly positions the child within the much-loved French garden on the hillside close to GBHall.

[3] The French garden clearly has strong associations with GBHall and the Scott family. It could be a *significant visitor attraction* as part of restoration plans, particularly if the Shentone connection is exploited. It deserves to have a proper access as originally enjoyed. Allowing a modest outlay to restore the original winding pathway seems fully justified, particularly as there is no other means of accessing the site. The course of the pathway is clearly defined on OS maps—it was patent up until thirty years ago.



There is a clear association between GBHall and the boathouse

Boathouses

[1] At a meeting on 16 April 2013 English Heritage expressed limited support for restoration of the boathouse to the upper lake. They did not consider it an essential item worthy of attracting enabling development. Some historic background may persuade them of its merit as a significant component of the restoration strategy.

[2] The boathouse to the upper lake was an important feature of Great Barr Park designed by Sir Gilbert Scott for the third baronet, Sir Francis Edward Scott. It was sited directly opposite GBHall and intended as a significant eye-catcher. A lakeside vantage point on the opposing bank was reached by a direct gravel path from the west entrance to GBHall [see illustration].

[3] Photographs and a drawing in my possession show its outward rustic appearance, which could be reproduced accurately. Since a total ban on boating on the upper lake is necessary because of its considerable wildlife value, restoration should be limited to replacement of the wooden gate and roof and re-establishing very basic internal features.

[4] No case can be made for restoration of the boathouse to the lower lake. The surrounding topography does not lend itself to a similar cosmetic restoration.

Wooden Post Bridge

This feature, which straddled the upper lake south of GBHall, has a good photographic record and is possibly Gilbertian. However, it obstructed views and had no particular function, other than to assist lazy pedestrians accessing the boathouse. A replacement would be costly to build and maintain. Lapworth Architects have a contrary view, backed by specialised opinion.

Bridge Across Weir

[1] The weir between the two lakes has always been traversed via stepping-stones. It is an important access point for the west bank of the two lakes. A modest wooden footbridge at this point would satisfy health and safety considerations and significantly enhance visitor experience.

[2] Becky Clarke from the Environmental Agency has very recently indicated support would be given for a bridge across the weir for environmental reasons. There is a real risk of visitors contaminating the lower lake by using the existing stepping stones.

Corn Mill

All that remains of this structure, sited at the southern edge of the estate, are remnants of the mill race. It was last in use around 1830 and there are no plans, illustrations or documents accruing to it. Restoration is a non-starter.

Bridge Across Southern Extremity of Lower Lake

There is no visual record. It was not an important feature and a replacement cannot be justified.

-END-

Appendix 3 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

- 2 Field progress reports AS2
- 8 Photographic records AS3
- 320 Digital photographs
- 6 Scale drawings
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Walsall Local History Centre
Essex Street
Walsall
WS2 7AS
Tel: 01922 721305
