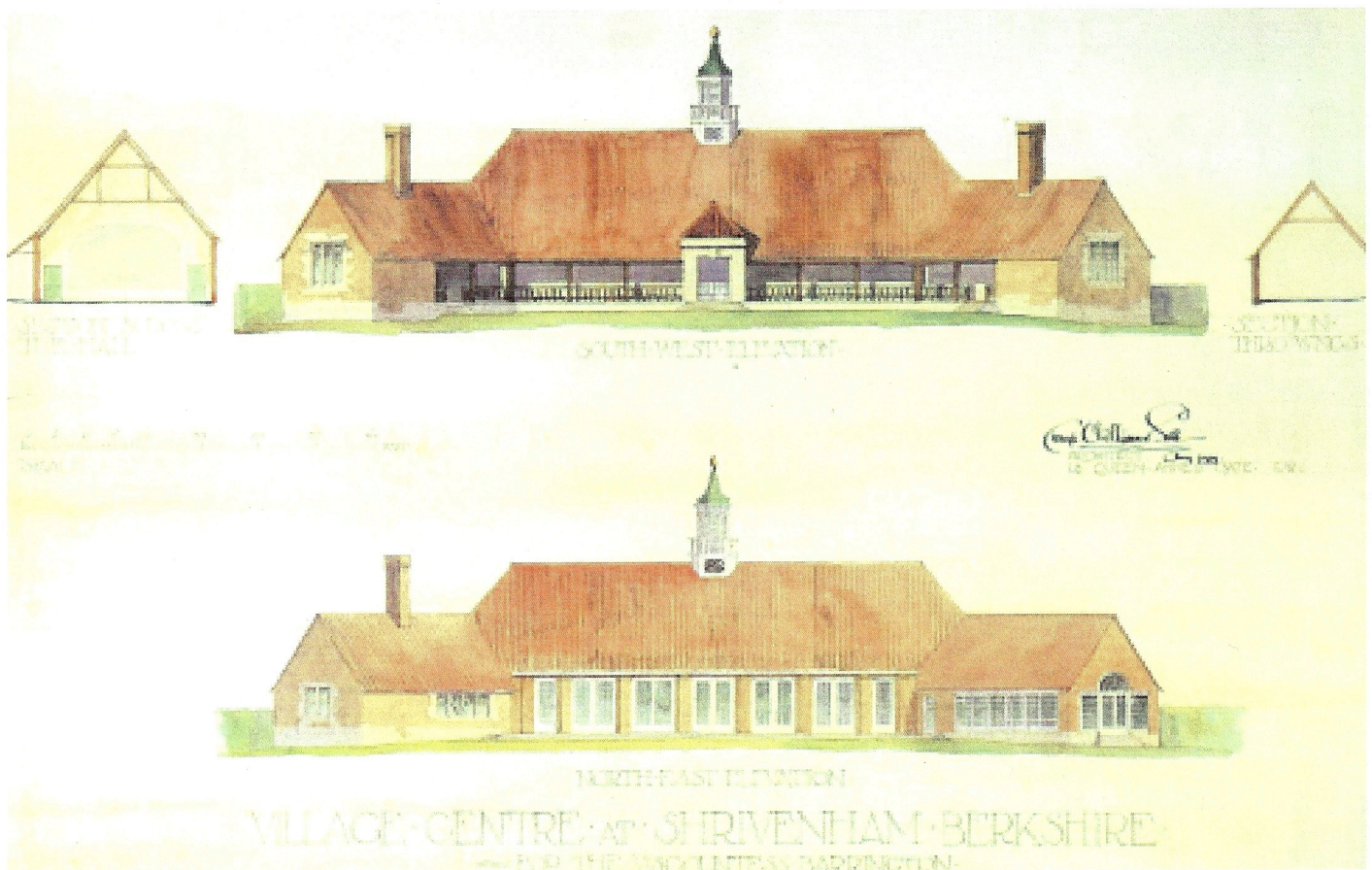


Clough Williams-Ellis's design for village hall/centre at Shrivenham, Oxfordshire (formerly Berkshire), 1919.
(RIBA Drawings Collection [PA442/14 (1-7)])



NOTES

A genuine, wholly committed and deliberately Arts and Crafts approach was found in Clough Williams-Ellis's design for a village hall at Shrivenham in Berkshire (now Oxfordshire), which was in fact never built. Williams-Ellis's design for the Shrivenham village hall adopted a butterfly plan, which was often favoured by a number of Arts and Crafts architects.¹

¹ It was reputedly invented by either C.R. Ashbee or Ernest Gimson, and was utilized extensively by E. S. Prior, E. Cumming, and W. Kaplan, *The Arts & Crafts Movement*, (London Thames & Hudson, 1991, revised 2002); Peter Davey, *Arts & Crafts Architecture* (London: Phaidon, 1995).

Despite the Arts and Crafts plan, CW-E included certain classical details, namely the central cupola, a series of small paned, rectangular double doors and a Venetian window at the end of one of the butterfly wings. Nevertheless the extensive, red tiled roofs of the building maintain the overall Arts and Crafts look of it. Richard Haslam referred to the building which was built in preference to CW-E's design as 'a Cotswold stone great barn', expressing surprise that it was so chosen. One can imagine, however, that, even if it might be thought less distinctive than Williams-Ellis's design, its Cotswold look, with a series of dormer windows, might have seemed more in keeping with the local vernacular, and at the same time rather more imposing; also, with the wings more integrated and providing more substantial first-floor accommodation, it may well have been more economical and have provided better value for money.² The vast roofscape proposed by Williams-Ellis may have been Arts and Crafts, but it was also a type that was reminiscent of those of Voysey, whose connotations of Art Nouveau were found by many at the time to be too angular and innovative, and hence lacked popularity; immediately after the end of the Great War, popular demand would inevitably identify with a design that was homely, nostalgic and traditional, conjuring up a rural idyll.³

It is not clear whether the cupola in Williams-Ellis's design provided for a bell. At this time he was in the habit of including such a Wrenesque cupola without any bell

² Tyack has praised the slate-hung gable and two canted bay windows on the West side as 'particularly inventive'. Geoffrey Tyack, Simon Bradley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Berkshire, in the Pevsner Buildings of England Series* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 516-17.

³ Haslam, Richard, *Clough Williams-Ellis: RIBA Drawings Monographs No 2* (London: Academy Editions, 1996), pp. 52 – 53.

being part of the design.⁴ Somewhat later, however, he did in 1938 convert the old school building at Cornwell in Oxfordshire into a village hall, and that design included an open cupola with a bell hung for chiming, which is still in situ.⁵

⁴ As at Cheyne Cottage, Stanmore and Glen House, Hildenborough, Kent, both dating from c.1910.

⁵ The bell may have been part of the previous school building, since it was cast by J. Warner & Sons, London, in 1879.