

Redeveloping the Memorial Hall



The original Memorial Hall was opened on 15 April 1961 as a tribute to those who had lost their lives in the two World Wars. It is a village-owned asset. (See <https://shorturl.at/vyIWX>)

The Hall was extended in the 1970s with the addition of two new meeting rooms, a kitchen, toilets, the library and the Parish Office.

By the 2020s, and despite constant maintenance, the Hall was beginning to show its age and the layout was unsatisfactory. For example, users of the main hall were disturbed by people needing to access the Green Room, the Parish Office, the toilets and the kitchen. There was poor soundproofing between rooms, no disabled access to the main entrance, inadequate toilet facilities and no changing facilities. The building was poorly insulated and hence expensive to heat.

With the library moving to the Fire Station, there was an opportunity to completely redevelop the Hall and make it fit for purpose.

With great foresight, the Parish Council had, for 10 years or more, slightly raised the annual precept taken from the St Albans District Council Tax and put aside the amount raised each year into a fund. This accumulated fund was used to pay for the redevelopment together with a Public Works Loan Board loan of £1.1 million pounds taken out on 10 March 2022 for 35 years at a fixed rate of 2.54%. The repayments are already budgeted in the annual precept by virtue of the increases applied over the years. The principle loan is paid off in fixed equal instalments so payments reduce marginally year on year.

The architect was Francesca Weal of Weal Architects and the building work was carried out by local firm T&B (Contractors) Ltd.

The redeveloped Hall, now known as Marford Memorial Hall, was opened on 22 February 2023 when many of the village's community groups and clubs took part in an exhibition to showcase their organisation. Among the improvements are a fine atrium, many new and refreshed room spaces, a sprung wooden dance floor in the main hall, better soundproofing, spaces for exercise, meetings, shows, parties and presentations, a redesigned bar area and a terrace overlooking the Marford Playing Fields. Many of these facilities are available for hire. For details, go to <https://wheathampstead-pc.gov.uk/the-memorial-hall2/>

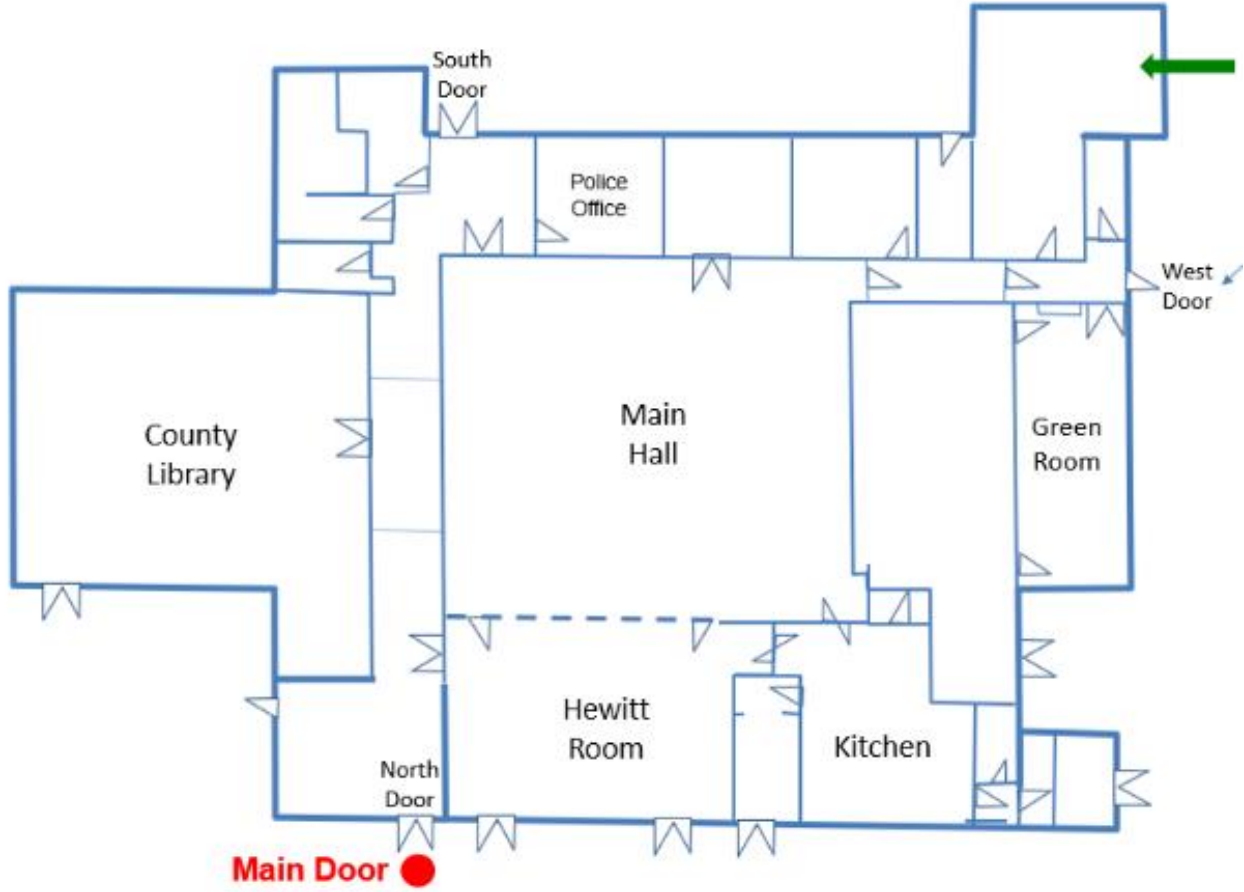


Main hall and stage

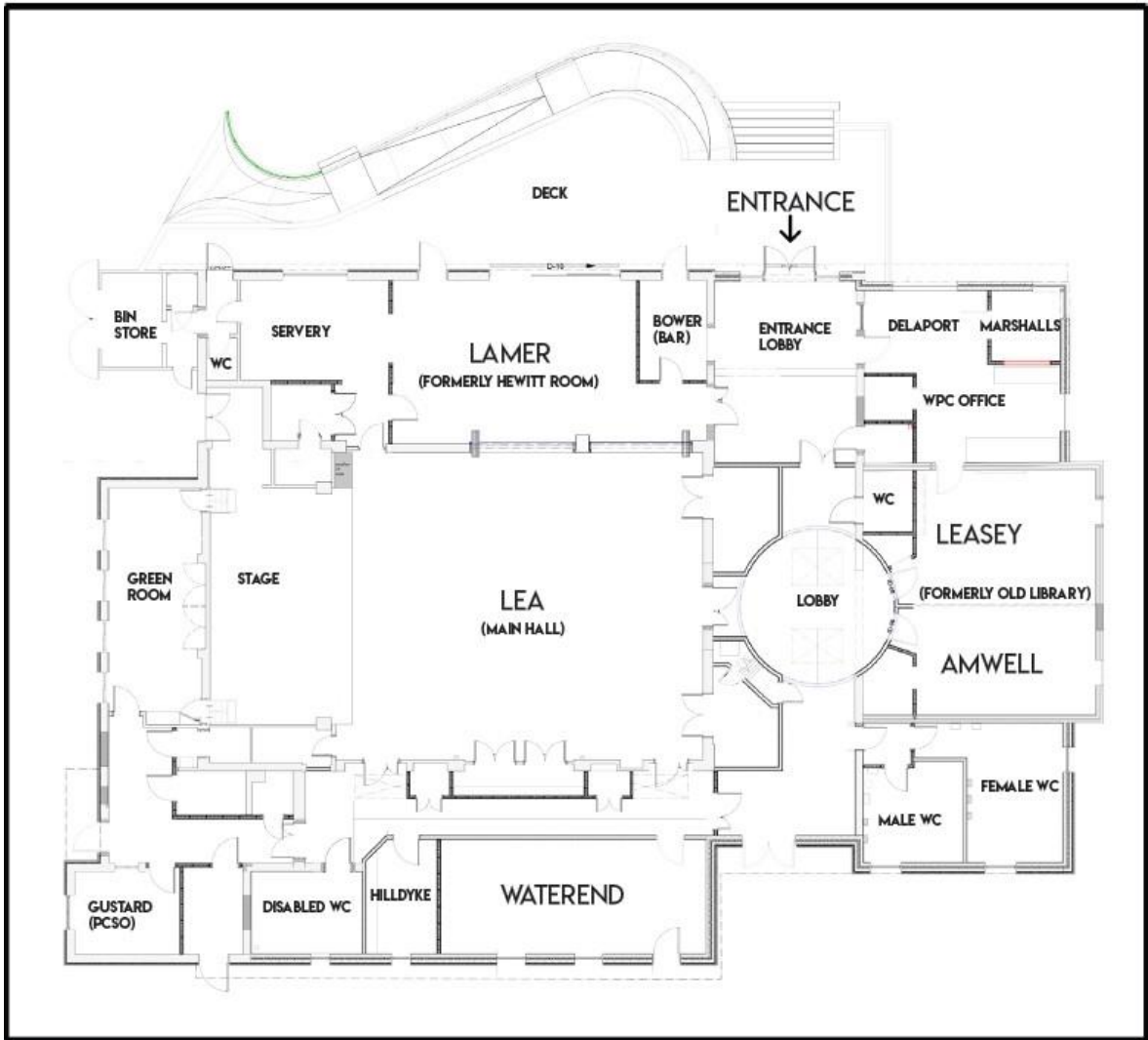


A meeting room

Floor plans before and after the redevelopment



Before



After