

**Archaeological Building Recording at
the former Wesleyan Methodist chapel
Botteslow Street
Hanley
Stoke-on-Trent
NGR SJ 8904 4700**

Site Code: BSC 10

Produced for
Stoke-on-Trent Council

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Non-technical summary

Stoke-on-Trent Archaeology carried out an archaeological building recording on the former Wesleyan Methodist chapel, Botteslow Street, Hanley (NGR SJ 8904 4700).

The Level 2 standard building recording was carried out on the 14th April 2010. The chapel was a Gothic-style building built in 1906, replacing a prefabricated corrugated-iron chapel erected in 1880. Both the iron chapel and its replacement were constructed at a time of growth in population in the Potteries generally and more particularly in non-conformist congregations.

The surveyed chapel comprised a principal room, probably with seating facing a pulpit at the south-west end. Ancillary rooms at the rear of the building provided space for meetings, Sunday school classes and social gatherings, supplementing facilities already provided in the adjacent Sunday school building, built 1890. Later modifications to the building were probably carried out during the occupancy of a storage and removals company. The principal room was subdivided into a number of smaller units and a first-floor was inserted above. Access to the building was also improved with the removal of a porch on its north-west side.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Stoke-on-Trent Archaeology was commissioned by Stoke-on-Trent City Council to undertake an archaeological building recording at the Wesleyan Methodist chapel on Botteslow Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent (NGR SJ 8904 4700) (Figs. 1 & 2). The building was to be demolished as part of the proposed Hanley-Bentilee link road scheme. An archaeological assessment of the area (University of Manchester Archaeological Unit 2003) highlighted the historic value of the chapel and a programme of archaeological building recording was requested by the city's Planning Archaeologist (PA) prior to its demolition.

2.0 Scope and aims of the project

2.1 The recording programme supplemented a photographic survey of the chapel Sunday school carried out by Stoke-on-Trent Archaeology in 2009 (Sutherland 2009). The PA required that the building recording of the Chapel should be carried out to Level 2 standard of the English Heritage guidelines *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2006).

2.2 The primary purpose of the project was to carry out the archaeological recording of the chapel, noting structural elements and phasing evidence illustrative of its development and changing functions. This was to be achieved through visual inspection and written description, a measured survey, and a photographic survey.

2.3 The survey and report were undertaken in accordance with guidance laid down in the Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) *Standards and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings and Structures* (revised October 2008) and the English Heritage publication *Management of Archaeological Projects* (2nd Edition).

3.0 Historical background

3.1 Methodism was introduced to the Potteries by John Wesley, who first preached in Burslem in 1760 (Young 1963, 276). Wesleyan Methodism quickly became one of the dominant nonconformist religions, with seventeen chapels in the area by 1851 and 36 by 1900 (Young 1963, 277).

3.2 The first Wesleyan chapel built on Botteslow Street was an iron, pre-fabricated structure manufactured by Isaac Dixon & Co. of Liverpool. Plans had originally been made for a brick church, but were perhaps rejected on grounds of cost. The iron chapel was bought for £110 and erected in 1880 (SCA SA/SM/66/4). There was also a Sunday school on the site, but whether it was held in the chapel or in an adjacent building is unclear (SCA SA/SM/66/4). A new Sunday school (demolished 2009) was built in 1890 at the south-western end of the iron chapel (SCA SA/SM/66/4). Both the iron chapel and the new Sunday school are depicted for the first time on the 1900 Ordnance Survey (OS) map (Fig. 3).

3.3 In March 1901, the possibility of a new chapel, with classrooms, was discussed in the chapel trust meetings by the Sunday school teachers. By 1903, an architect, Mr Campbell of Hanley, had been appointed to carry out the work at a cost of £1,050. The iron chapel was sold for £70 and the foundation stones for the new chapel laid in a ceremony held on the 14th September 1905 (SCA SA/SM/66/4). The new chapel was presumably finished by 1906 (this date appeared on an inscribed stone in the north-east elevation of the building) and is first shown on the 1924 OS map (Fig. 4).

3.4 The chapel and Sunday school appear to have been maintained until 1968, in which year the last entry into the trust's minute book is made (SCA SA/SM/66/6). Thereafter the chapel was used as a base for a removals and storage company, *AI Removals*, but was vacant at the time of the survey.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 The building survey was carried out on the 14th April 2010. It comprised a photographic record of the building's environs, external views and significant details (Fig. 8). Photographs were taken on 35mm monochrome print and with a digital camera, using 2.0m, 1.0m and 25cm scale bars as appropriate. A measured survey was made using 30.0m and 5.0m hand tapes, and a Leica Disto D2. Field notes were made of all structural elements with particular attention to those that provided evidence of alterations and additions. The archive is stored at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, site code **BSC10**

4.2 Internal access to the building was prevented during the survey by the presence of asbestos. Brief inspection of the interior from the main doorway, along with photographs taken by the demolition contractors, did, however, give some notion as to the layout within the chapel.

5.0 Description and analysis of the building

5.1 The Wesleyan Methodist chapel was located on the south-west side of Botteslow Street, orientated on a north east - south west axis (Fig. 2). The chapel was a double-height building of rectangular plan with two wings projecting out from either side at its south-west end. Two low single-storey sections were constructed at the south-west end of the main building. The former Sunday school once stood a short distance to the south-west of the chapel.

5.2 Exterior

5.2.1 The main body of the chapel was constructed with red brick in Flemish bond and had a pitched grey plain-tile roof. In the Gothic style, the building had brick pointed-arch windows with keystones and stone sills arranged in pairs along each side of the building (Figs. 5 & 6, Plate 1). Brick buttresses/pilaster strips with stone copings were located between each pair of windows. The windows had all been covered with wooden boards or security mesh with the exception of one in the north-west elevation and another in the north-east side of the north-west wing, which had been bricked-up. A chimney was visible at the north-east end of the building, rising between the gable of the main part of the chapel and one of the lower single-storey sections.

5.2.2 The main decorative focus of the building was on the north-east elevation, facing onto Botteslow Street (Fig. 5, Plate 2). A large pointed-arch window containing curvilinear tracery and with stone sill and stone label at the head, filled much of the elevation (Plate 3). Stone string-courses were positioned at sill height and at label-stop height. A third stone string course, set above the window, bore the date '1906' (Plate 4) and terminated in moulded stone skew-blocks that supported the coping present only on the higher portion of the gable. A moulded stone skew-block also sat at the foot of the gable on the north-west side. A section of newer brickwork at the foot of the gable on the south-east side indicated from where the equivalent skew-block had been removed. Staged clasping-buttresses with stone copings were positioned at each corner and a blue-

brick plinth extended the length of the elevation. Six stone plaques inscribed with names were set within the plinth. These read from south east to north west as follows:

‘MILLICENT S. CAMBELL; M^{RS} RICHARD EVANS; M^{RS} EDWIN MALKIN; M^{RS} JOHN WAIN; M^{RS} CHARLES W. TIMMS; MILLY HEATH’

A further name plaque, ‘M^{RS} JOHN WHYMAN’, was set in the south-east elevation, at the base of the clasping-buttress.

5.2.3 Access to the chapel was via a pointed-arch double doorway, closed with a wooden panelled door, at the north-east end of the north-west elevation (Fig. 5, Plate 5). The wall immediately surrounding the door was rendered and scarring on the brickwork above, as well as truncated brickwork on the clasping-buttress to the side, indicated that the doorway was once enclosed by a porch. A concrete ramp had subsequently been built up to the doorway.

5.2.4 Of the low single-storey sections, the larger of the two projected out from the south-west end of the main chapel and the smaller from the south-west end of the north-west wing (Fig. 6, Plate 6). Both were built with red brick in Flemish bond and had blue-brick plinths indicating that they were contemporary with the main part of the chapel. The roofs of both sections were hipped and covered with grey plain-tiles. The windows in each had brick segmental-arches and stone sills. External access was possible via a single doorway in the south-west side of the smaller single-storey section, also with brick segmental-arch and stone sill, and closed with a flush metal door.

5.3 Interior (Fig. 7)

5.3.1 The interior of the chapel comprised one large space (100) in the main part of the building with smaller rooms (102 and 103) in the single-storey sections to the rear. This space had dark-stained wooden tongue-and-groove boards on the dado surface with plastered walls painted white above. At some point the north-west wing had been opened out into the main room; a stub wall off the south-west wall indicated where the dividing wall between the north-west wing and the main room had once stood. Scarring on the panelling at the south-west end of room 100 suggested the former presence of a platform or pulpit with steps leading up to it (Plate 7). In its latest incarnation 100 had been subdivided by stud-partitions into several small rooms (Plate 8).

5.3.2 Rooms 102 and 103 were accessed *via* a pointed-arch doorway in the south-west wall of room 100, which entered directly into room 102. Room 102, within the larger of the two low single-storey sections, had white painted walls and moulded ceiling cornice and skirting board. The windows within this room were wooden framed with a lower fixed light and hopper-light openings at the top. A fireplace was set diagonally across the east corner of the room with a dark-stained wooden fire surround (Plate 9). A doorway in the north-west wall opened into a rear entrance lobby (101) and toilets (103) beyond, both with black and red quarry tiled floors.

5.3.3 A first floor had been inserted into the building above room 100 with stairs ascending from the north corner opposite the doorway. The first floor comprised one room (200) open to the king-post roof trusses above (Plate 10).

6.0 Discussion

6.1 The Wesleyan Methodist chapel on Botteslow Street was built on a north-east to south-west axis. With no need to conform to an east-west orientation, the building could make the most of the site with the placement of the main decorative façade on Botteslow Street un-interrupted by the entrance, which was located towards the north-east end of the building.

6.2 The building was constructed in the Gothic style, common from the mid 19th century onwards. Prior to this the predominant style of architecture for Wesleyan Methodist chapels was Classical. The adoption of the Gothic style was partly due to the fashions of the age, but also to the influence of Wesleyan Methodist architect, Frederick James Jobson. In 1850 he published *Chapel and School Architecture* in which he advocated Gothic architecture as the most appropriate style in which to build Methodist buildings (Dixon and Muthesius 1997, 230). In this work he stated that Classical architecture was born out of Paganism, whereas the Gothic style was a product of the Christian religion, and, as such, more suitable for places of Christian worship (Jobson 1850, 14). He maintained that despite the past use of the Gothic style for superstitious and idolatrous purposes, ‘Truth in Architecture is not necessarily connected with Error in Religion’ (Jobson 1850, 40). Jobson also went on to state that chapels built in the Gothic style were more identifiable as places of worship while those in other styles could be mistaken

for concert-halls, town-halls or theatres and that contrary to popular belief chapels in the Gothic style were no more expensive to build (Jobson 1850, 43).

6.3 In terms of the interior organisation, the over-riding consideration was the ability of the congregation and the minister to see and hear each other (Dixon and Muthesius 1997, 230). In Methodist worship there was no need for a separation of the building into nave, chancel or side aisles; instead seating would be arranged facing a pulpit at one end of the room (English Heritage 2007, 13). The seating for the congregation would have included a mixture of rented pews and free seats, both of the same basic construction (Jobson 1850, 78). The Model Plan Committee, established in 1846 to consider the requirements of Methodist buildings, advised that there should be no aisle down the middle of the chapel so that the minister could look upon his congregation rather than a gap (Jobson 1850, 77). The Committee also suggested that the pulpit should be no taller than necessary and that no galleries should be placed behind it (Jobson 1850, 77). In fact the use of galleries in the Botteslow Street chapel is very unlikely given that they would have cut across the windows blocking out much of the natural light. The communion-table was to be placed in front of the pulpit (Jobson 1850, 77).

6.4 Room 102 at the rear of the Botteslow Street chapel and the room within the north-west wing could have served a variety of functions. The inclusion of vestries, rooms for prayer meetings and social gatherings and of classrooms was advocated by The Model Plan Committee (Jobson 1850, 58-59). Room 102, being at the rear of the building and with separate external access (*via* 101) to the Sunday school, would have been suited for use as a classroom. Certainly provisions for classrooms was discussed in planning the new chapel, but whether or not these were actually included remains unknown. In all likelihood room 102 and that within the north-west wing were multifunctional, catering for a number of different uses. The north-west wing was perhaps opened out into room 101 in order to cope with a growth in congregation.

6.5 The interior of the building was altered in its later use as a storage facility with extensive subdivision of room 101 into a number of small units and the insertion of a first floor above, creating room 200. These alterations, however, had relatively little impact on the original building being of light stud-frame construction. Externally, the removal of the porch and the construction of a ramp up to the main doorway may have been done

to improve access to the building in its latest incarnation

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The building recording at the Botteslow Street Wesleyan Methodist chapel identified a Gothic-style building designed for Christian worship with a simple interior organisation facilitating communication between the minister and congregation. Some provision was also made for teaching, meetings and social gatherings in the rooms towards the rear of the building, supplementing those already present in the Sunday school at the rear of the site.

7.2 The chapel recorded at Botteslow Street, built in 1906, replaced an earlier iron chapel erected in 1880. The iron church was established at a time when the population in the Potteries was growing and there were marked increases in the sizes of all non-conformist congregations (Young 1963, 279). Pre-fabricated corrugated-iron chapels were commonly used by burgeoning non-conformist congregations as a quick and relatively cheap way of providing themselves with a place of worship (Mornement and Holloway 2007, 91). The brick chapel was probably erected once sufficient funds had been raised. Its construction can be seen in the context of ‘the great era of chapel building in the Potteries’ in the late 19th and early 20th centuries during which time the Wesleyan Methodists alone built fourteen new chapels (Young 1963, 278-9).

8.0 Acknowledgements

8.1 This report was written and illustrated by Zoë Sutherland for Stoke-on-Trent Archaeology. Fieldwork was carried out by Zoë Sutherland, Heather Ann Cope and Richard Cramp. Thanks are due to Keith Holdcroft of the North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership, and to Noel Boothroyd, Planning Archaeologist for Stoke-on-Trent. Valuable assistance was also provided by the staff of Kinder.

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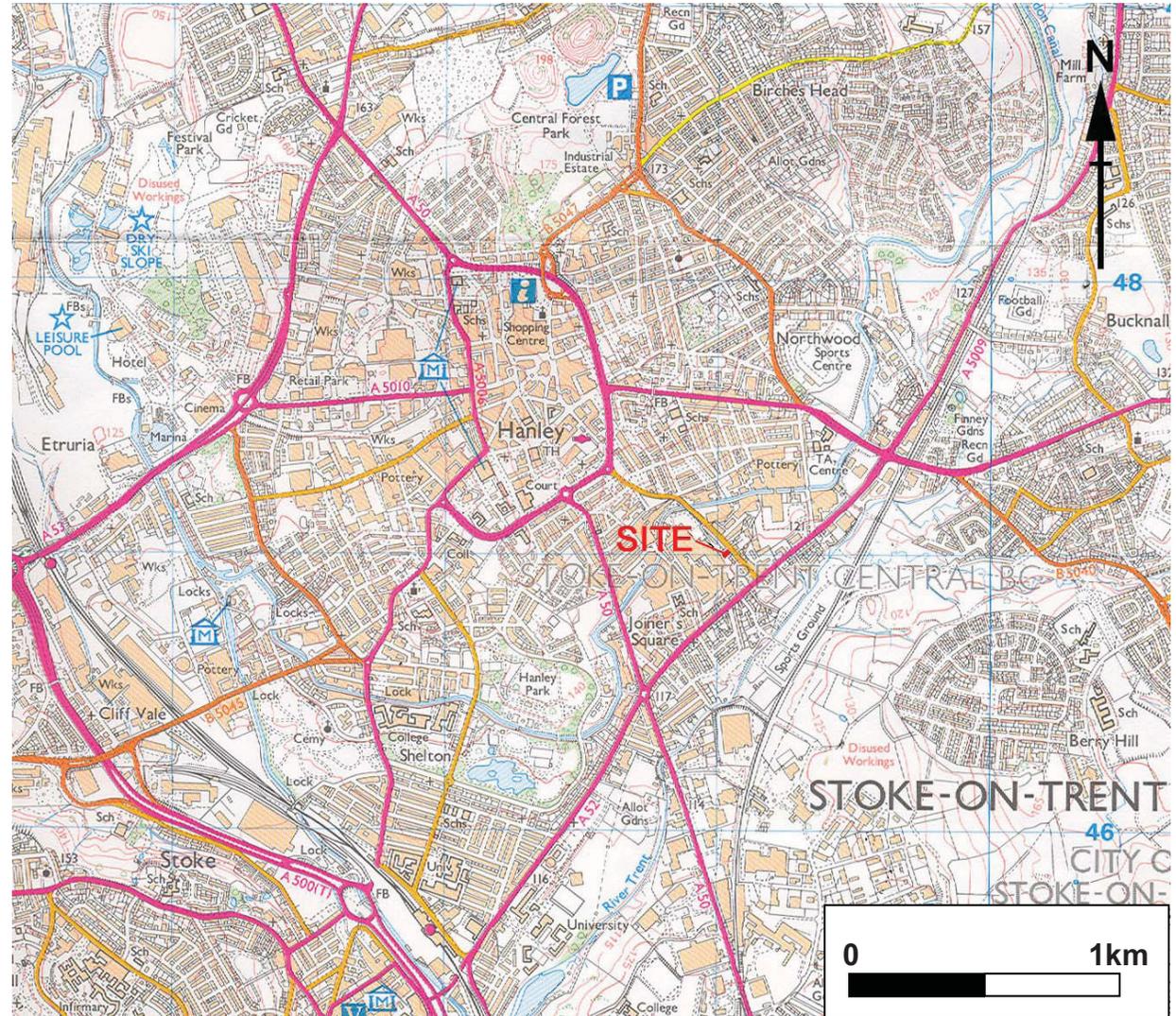
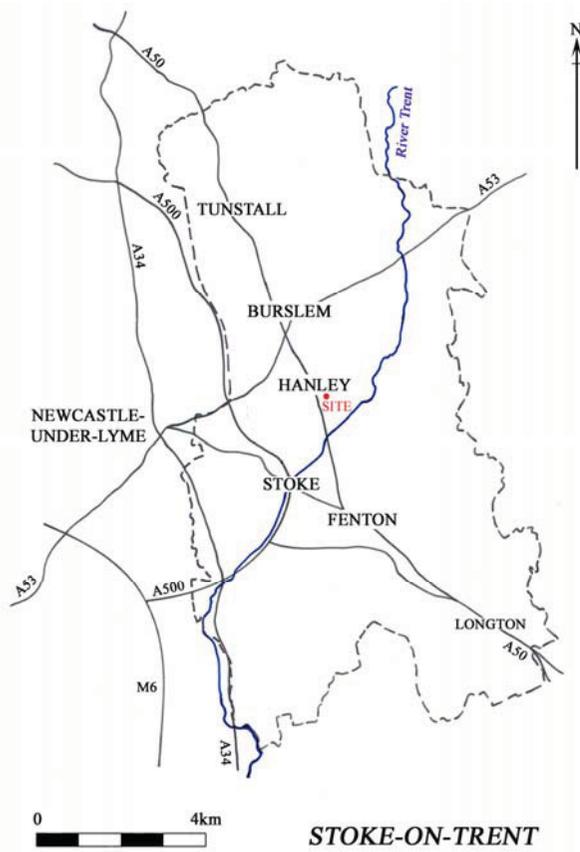


FIG. 1
Site location.

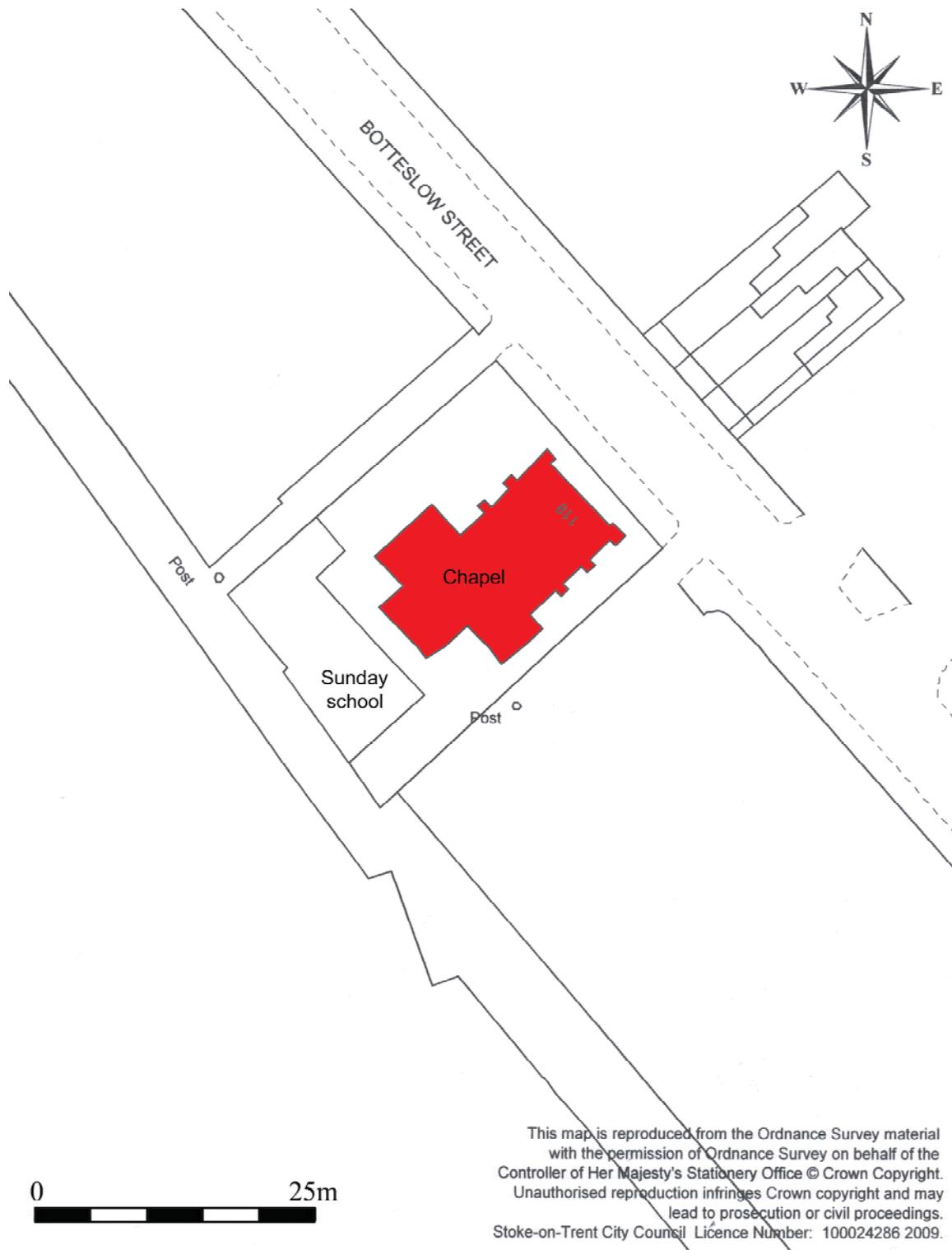


FIG. 2

Site plan with the chapel highlighted in red.

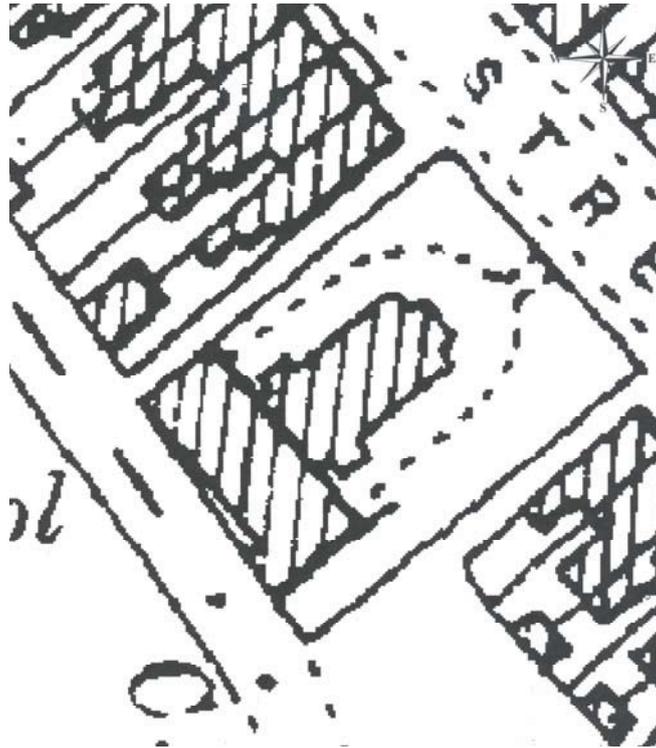


FIG. 3

Extract from the 1900 OS map showing the original iron chapel with the Sunday school to the rear.

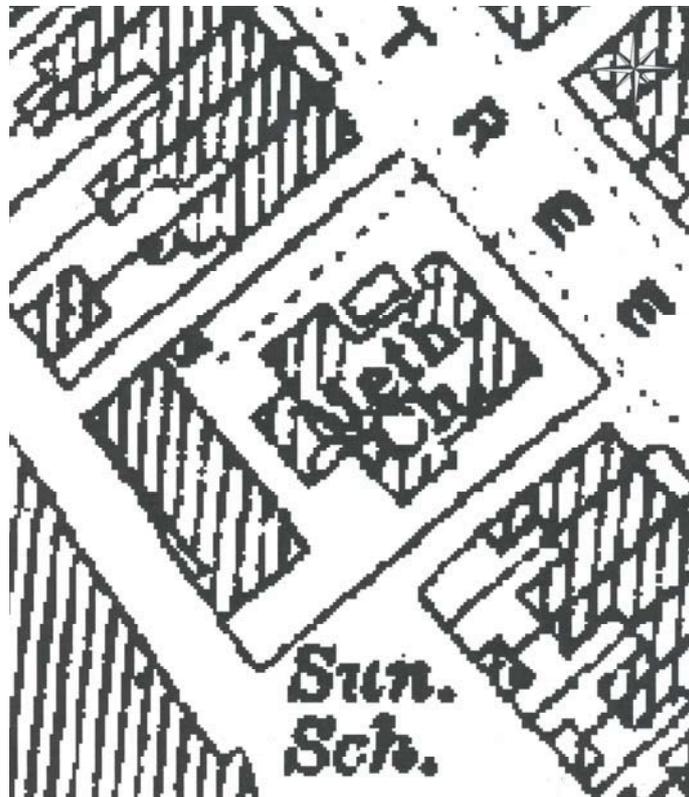
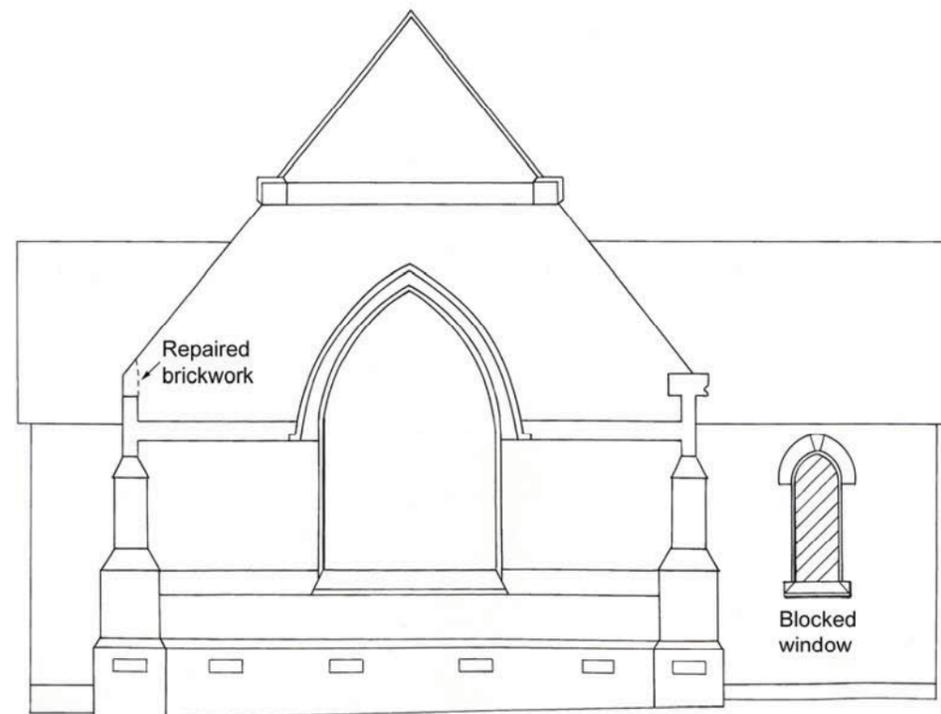


FIG. 4

Extract from the 1924 OS map showing the new chapel.

a) North-east elevation



b) North-west elevation

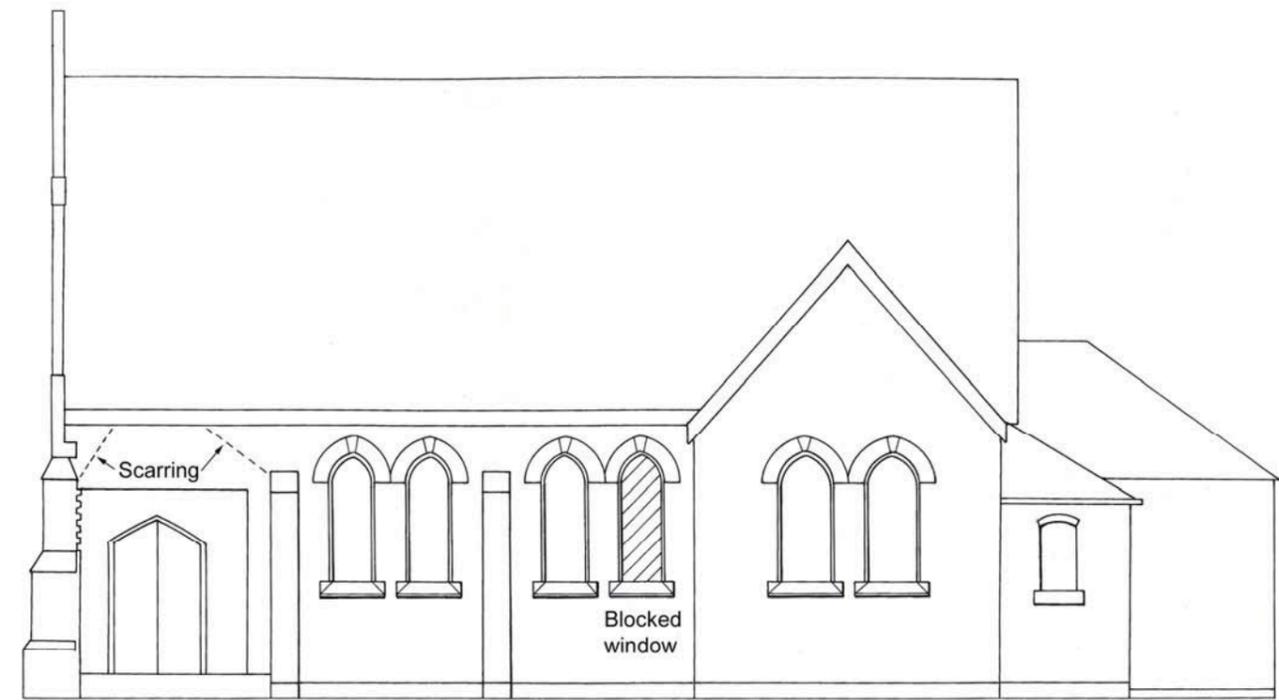


FIG. 5

a) North-east and b) North-west elevations of the chapel

a) South-west elevation



0 5m

b) South-east elevation



FIG. 6

a) South-west and b) South-east elevations of the chapel

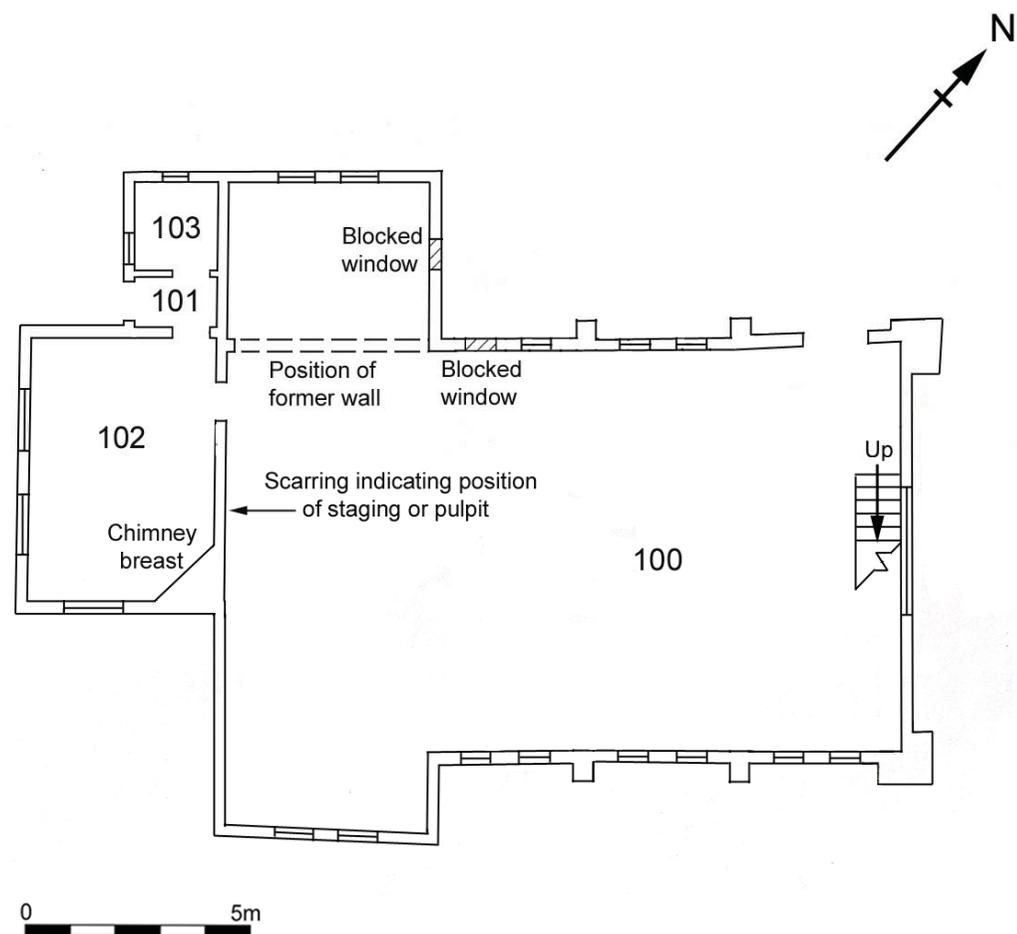


FIG. 7

Ground-floor plan of the chapel as derived from elevation drawings and photographs

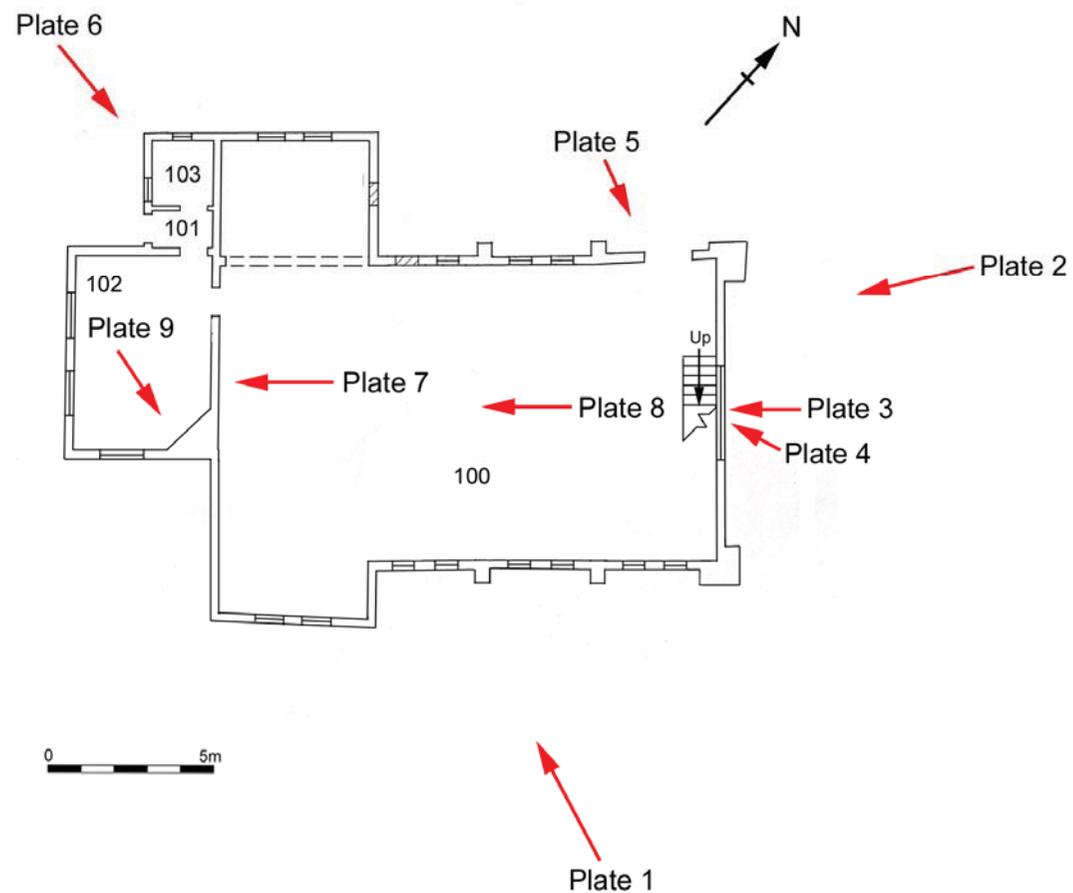


FIG. 8

Plan showing locations from which plate photographs were taken.



PLATE 1

The south-east elevation of the chapel.



PLATE 2

The north-east elevation of the chapel facing onto Botteslow Street (scale: 2.0m).



PLATE 3

The tracery in the north-east window.



PLATE 4

The date stone above the window in the north-east elevation.



PLATE 5

The main entrance in the north-west elevation (scale: 2.0m).



PLATE 6

The low single-storey sections at the south-west end of the building.



PLATE 7

The scarring on the south-west wall of room 100 indicating the former location of staging or pulpit.



PLATE 8

Room 100 looking south-west, showing the later partitions.



PLATE 9

Room 102, the fireplace in the east corner.



PLATE 10

Room 200 looking south west.