

# FORMER METHODIST CHAPEL, STOREY SQUARE, BARROW-IN-FURNESS, CUMBRIA

Archaeological Building Recording



Client: Ian Turnbull

Planning ref.: B13/2009/0040

NGR: 320264 469077

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## Non Technical Summary

Prior to the demolition of a former Methodist Chapel on Storey Square, Barrow-in-Furness, a request was made by Barrow Borough Council for an archaeological building recording to be carried out. This was carried out by Greenlane Archaeology in the May 2010.

A desk-based assessment revealed that despite its relative modernity there was still some confusion regarding the details of its construction and use. The original plans for the chapel show that proposals were made for a larger building on a different alignment in 1875 (rather than 1874 as had been previously suggested). This was evidently never built but a smaller iron chapel was constructed instead. New plans were drawn up in 1894 for the current building, an elaborate structure with decorative brickwork and a domed cupola, although the original chapel was retained for use as a Sunday School. The new chapel remained in use until c1951, when it was advertised for sale and was subsequently used for light industry, as a furniture store and sale room, and as the headquarters and rehearsal space for a local operatic and amateur dramatics society.

The building recording identified two phases of development in the building, which corresponded with its initial construction in 1894 and subsequent change of use. Interestingly the original building utilised a high quality red brick in the front elevations, possibly made in Accrington, and a poorer quality perhaps local brick in the rear elevations. Despite its subsequent reuse there seem to have been relatively minimal alterations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the most significant of which was the removal of the domed cupola sometime after 1949.

## Acknowledgements

Greenlane Archaeology would like to thank Ian Turnbull for commissioning the project, and Nathaniel Robinson for his help in providing access. Thanks are also due to John Dryden for providing 'as existing' drawings of the building and external photographs before the scaffolding was erected. Additional thanks are also due to the staff at the Cumbria Record Office in Barrow-in-Furness (CRO(B)) and Building Control at Barrow Borough Council for their help in accessing the archives, and the staff at the Planning Office at Barrow Town Hall for their help in accessing previous planning applications.

The building recording was carried out by Dan Elsworth, Tom Mace, and Sam Whitehead, all of whom contributed to the production of this report. The project was managed by Dan Elsworth, and the report was edited by Jo Dawson.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Circumstances of the Project

1.1.1 A planning application (B13/2008/0040) was submitted to demolish the former Methodist Chapel at Storey Square, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria (NGR 320264 469077) prior to the development of new housing. Planning permission was granted by Barrow Borough Council with the condition that a Level 2-type archaeological building recording (English Heritage 2006) was carried out prior to demolition. The purpose of this survey was to ensure that a permanent record was made of the building. This formed Condition 4 of the planning permission and stated that:

*Prior to the carrying out of any demolition works the existing buildings occupying the site shall be recorded in accordance with a Level 2 survey as described by English Heritage's document Understanding Historic Buildings A Guide to Good Recording Practice, 2006 and, following its completion, 3 copies of that survey shall be furnished to the Local Planning Authority.*

1.1.2 Following discussions with Charles Wilton, Principal Planning Officer at Barrow Borough Council, regarding the requirements for the work, a project design was produced by Greenlane Archaeology (see accompanying CD). Following its acceptance the on-site work was carried out by Greenlane Archaeology on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2010.

## 1.2 Location, Geology, and Topography

1.2.1 The site is situated within a residential area to the south side of Barrow-in-Furness and is surrounded by terraced housing. The site occupies an area of 300m<sup>2</sup>, at the south-east corner of a row of buildings, and at the junction of Allison Street and Storey Square, about 400m to the north of Cavendish Dock (Figure 1). A bench mark at the south corner of the building is at 12.14m above sea level (Figure 1).

1.2.2 Barrow-in-Furness is largely situated on an area of red Sherwood sandstone of St Bees type, but there is a large area of Carboniferous limestone to the north-east (Moseley 1978, plate 1). The overlying drift deposits comprise glacial material such as boulder clay, which forms a hummocky rolling landscape outside of the urban area (Countryside Commission 1998, 27).

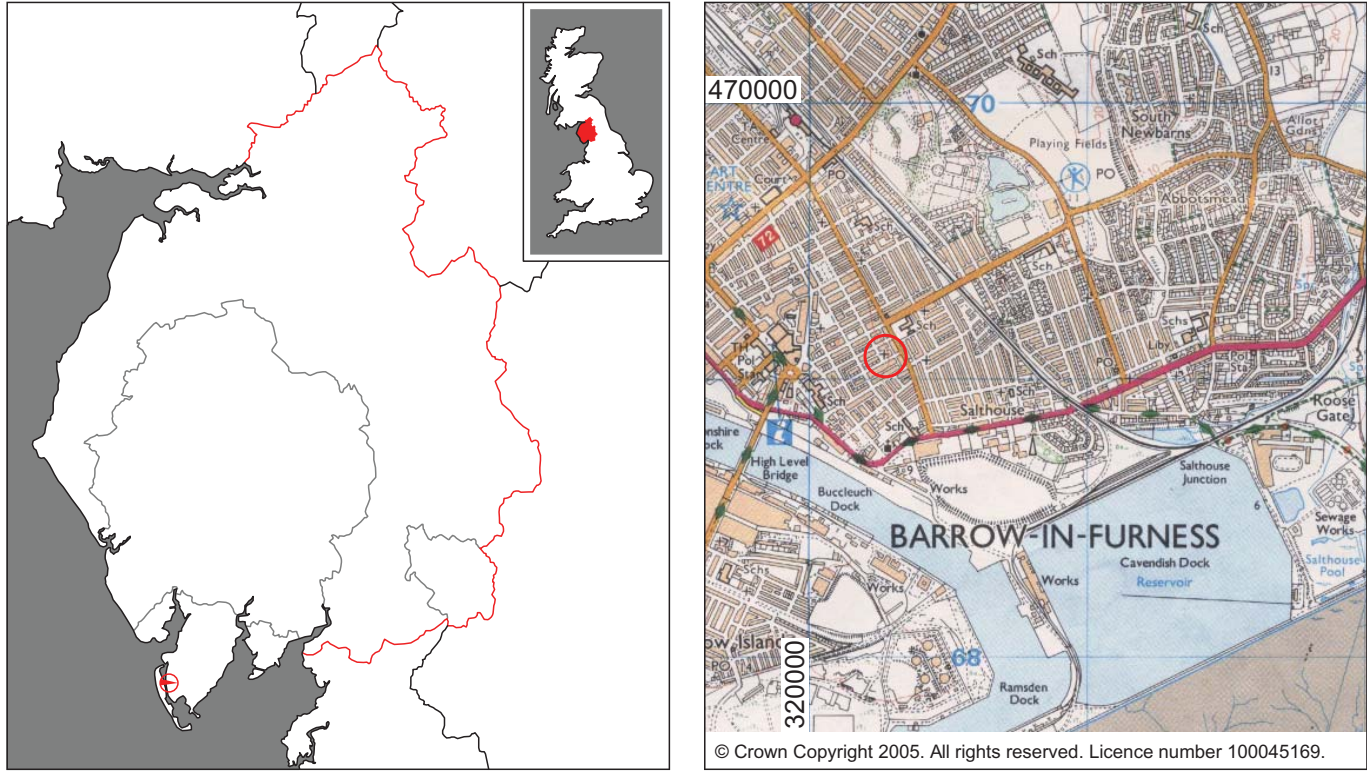


Figure 1: Site location

Client: Ian Turnbull



## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The building investigation comprised three separate elements intended to provide a suitable record of the structures in line with English Heritage standards (English Heritage 2006) and according to the standards and guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008a). In addition, a rapid desk-based assessment was carried out in accordance with the project design (*see accompanying CD*) and IfA standards and guidance (IfA 2008b) and a suitable archive was compiled to provide a permanent paper record of the project and its results in accordance with IfA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991; Brown 2007).

### 2.2 Desk-Based Assessment

2.2.1 Details relating to the chapel and its immediate surroundings were acquired in order to identify evidence for any previous building or buildings on the site, the development of the immediate area, and, more specifically, details relating to the construction, use, and development of the chapel. Three main sources of information were consulted:

- **Cumbria County Record Office, Barrow (CRO(B))**: this was visited in order to examine early maps and plans of the site, original documents relating to it, and local and regional histories and directories. Of particular interest were the original deposited plans from 1875 and 1894;
- **Barrow Borough Council**: details of late 20<sup>th</sup> century planning applications relating to the site were obtained from the Planning Office in the Town Hall;
- **Greenlane Archaeology Library**: additional secondary sources provided information for the site background.

### 2.3 Building Recording

2.3.1 The building recording was carried out to Level-2 type standards (English Heritage 2006). This is a relatively low-level form of investigation intended to record the form, function, and basic phasing of the building, with limited discussion of the evidence on which this is based. The building recording comprised several parts:

- **Written record**: descriptive records of all parts of the building were made using Greenlane Archaeology *pro forma* record sheets;
- **Photographs**: photographs in both 35mm colour print and colour digital format were taken of the main features of the building, their general surroundings, and any features of architectural interest, in particular the external elevations. A selection of the colour digital photographs are included in this report, and the remainder are presented on the accompanying CD;
- **Drawings**: measured drawings were produced by hand on site as well as by hand-annotating 'as existing' drawings provided by the architect. The drawings comprised:
  - i. 'as existing' floor plans of the building at 1:100;
  - ii. 'as existing' elevations of all accessible external aspects at 1:100.

### 2.4 Archive

2.4.1 A comprehensive archive of the project has been produced in accordance with the project design (*see accompanying CD*), and current IfA and English Heritage guidelines (Brown 2007; English Heritage 1991). A copy of the report will be supplied to the client, and within two months of the completion of fieldwork, three copies will be provided for the Cumbria Historic Environment Record (HER). In addition, Greenlane Archaeology Ltd will retain one copy. A record of the project, together with a digital copy of the report, will be added to the *Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) scheme.

### 3. Desk-Based Assessment

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 As the building is relatively recent the background history is concentrated on information relevant to its construction and use. Some information is, however, included regarding the previous land use of the site in order to put it in context, although this is partially contained in the map regression (see *Section 3.3*).

#### 3.2 Background History

3.2.1 **Introduction:** as the chapel was constructed in the latter part of the 19th century the background history will focus on the development Barrow-in-Furness at this time, and in particular how this part of the town developed.

3.2.2 Until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Barrow was only a small village but the coming of the railway and development of iron furnaces, the dock complex and ship building led to an extraordinary growth in size and population from the 1860s onwards (Trescaheric 1985). The area around Storey Square grew during this period of rapid development as great amounts of terraced housing were constructed to accommodate the growing population. Storey Square was initially a relatively middle class district and home to people from a wide variety of professions (*op cit*, 38). However, as the early maps show (see *Section 3.3*) much of Storey Square remained undeveloped until the very end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the chapel was relatively isolated when first constructed.

3.2.3 **The United Free Methodist Chapel:** there is remarkably little contemporary information about the construction of the chapel, and original documents (contained in the file CRO(B) BDFCBWM 10) largely relate to accounts and records from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and did not provide any useful detail. Indeed the administration details of this file suggest that the chapel was first built in 1874 and went out of use in 1953; both of these details seem to be incorrect. During the expansion of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Barrow saw the construction of a massive number of places of worship of different faiths as people from across the UK moved to the town, in particularly various forms of Methodist Chapel. An article written in 1949 provides a brief history of many of these (CRO(B) BDY 245 1949) and states that the United Free Methodist tradition arrived in the town in 1874 and initially made use of a small room in Back Strand and then in Crellin Street, where their first minister was appointed in 1875. They soon afterwards acquired the site in Storey Square and built an iron chapel large enough to seat 250 people, which was opened on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1876 (*ibid*). Within ten years there were looking to enlarge this but it took until 1894 for this to come to fruition, the foundation stone being laid on 31<sup>st</sup> July in a ceremony attended by Sir Charles Cayzer, MP for Barrow, and the Mayor, Councillor Little, Colonel Strongintheam and the ministers of other churches (*ibid*). The new chapel was opened the following year (*ibid*) and described as being able to house 500 adults with a Sunday school held in the 'old church' attended by 200 pupils (The Barrow News and Mail Limited 1905, 106; the 'old church' was presumably the original iron chapel, which had evidently been left standing).

3.2.4 The chapel remained in use until the 1950s; documents from Lowden and Postlethwaite's auctioneers and estate agents show that it was being offered for sale in 1951 (CRO(B) BDB 17/Box 16 1951). A report from that year contained in the same collection gives the following description:

*'...The building is of brick with slate roof and contains Ministers' Vestry and Choir Vestry divided by folding partition, Organ Chancel with electric bellows organ, 9' 4" x 8', Nave, 56' 6" x 37', Lobby on either side of Vestibule, each having stairs up to balcony, 18' 6" x 37' Rostrum and raised communion platform in the Nave, below the Organ. The Cellarage consists of Boiler room and wood store 20' 9" x 10' 3" with modern "Rex" gas-fired boiler, Store, 18' 4" x 13' 4" and a Meeting Room with woodern floor, 18' 4" x 13' 4". A passage 3' 4" wide separates the Boiler Room and the other rooms' (*ibid*).*

3.2.5 It was offered by Lowden and Postlethwaite to Philips Blackburn Works Ltd of Blackburn in January of 1951, who turned it down for being too small (*ibid*). Subsequent planning applications indicate that RF Oxleys of Ulverston either intended to or did use it for light industry in 1952 (Planning Application

Ref. 1980) before its use was changed to storing furniture in 1954 by Simmons Furniture of Newcastle (Planning Application Ref. 1714). They clearly retained an interest in and made use of the site for some time; a subsequent application from 1983 states that they used it from 1960 to 1975 (Ref. 6/83/0465/169) although an application was made in 1976 by the Barrow Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society for change of use to their headquarters and rehearsal room (Planning Application Ref. 6/76/0980/175). Simmons applied for a return to its use as a furniture store in 1983 (Planning Application Ref. 6/83/0465/169) and in 1986 a further application was made to use it as an auction room by Earnshaw's of Morecambe (Planning Application Ref. 6/86/0629/076).

### 3.3 Map and Image Regression

3.3.1 **Introduction:** since nothing was constructed on the site of the chapel until the 1870s the earliest maps of the area were of little use in understanding the development of the site. However, there are a number of original plans of the building available and subsequent Ordnance Survey maps that are relevant.

3.3.2 **Building Control, 1875:** a collection of plans, elevations, and cross sections are available showing a proposed chapel. This was, however, evidently never built as it is on a different alignment to the present building and had a large basement filling the entire footprint of the site, which was intended to house a schoolroom. The drawings were produced by the architects Stott and Butterworth of Rochdale and show a building not unlike what was eventually constructed, with towers flanking the main entrance and porches at the front and side but on a larger scale and in a different architectural style (see Plates 1-7).

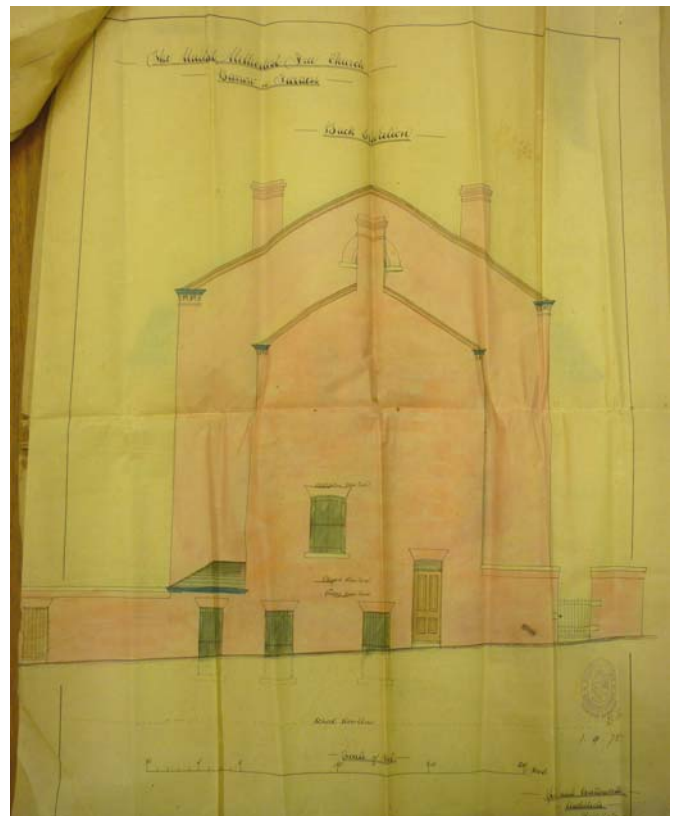
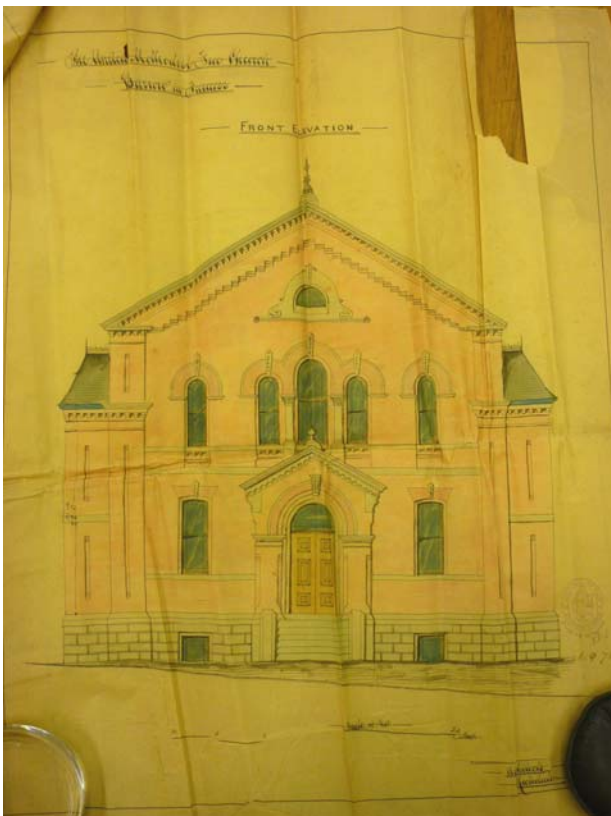


Plate 1 (left): Proposed front elevation (CRO(B) Building Control 988 1875)

Plate 2 (right): Proposed rear elevation (CRO(B) Building Control 998 1875)

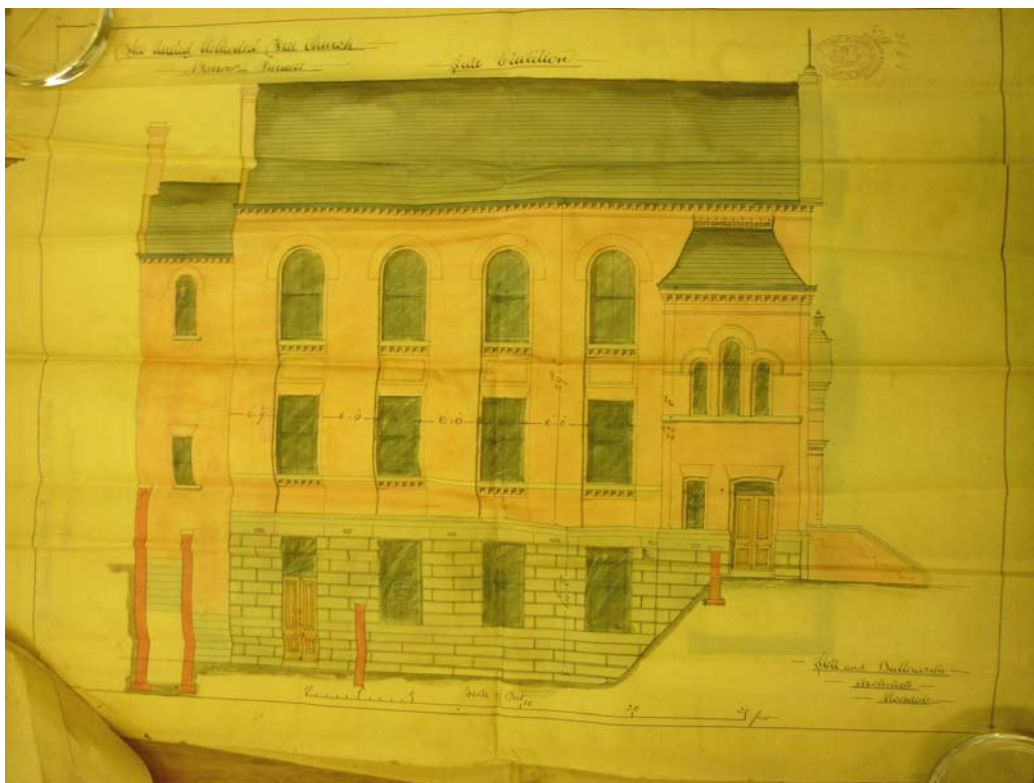


Plate 3: Proposed side elevation (CRO(B) Building Control 988 1875)

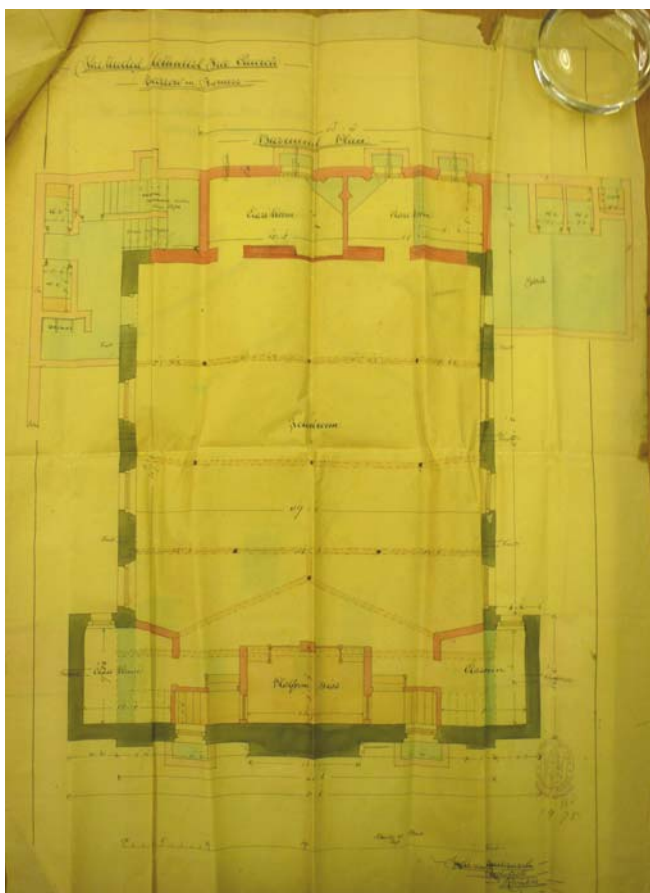
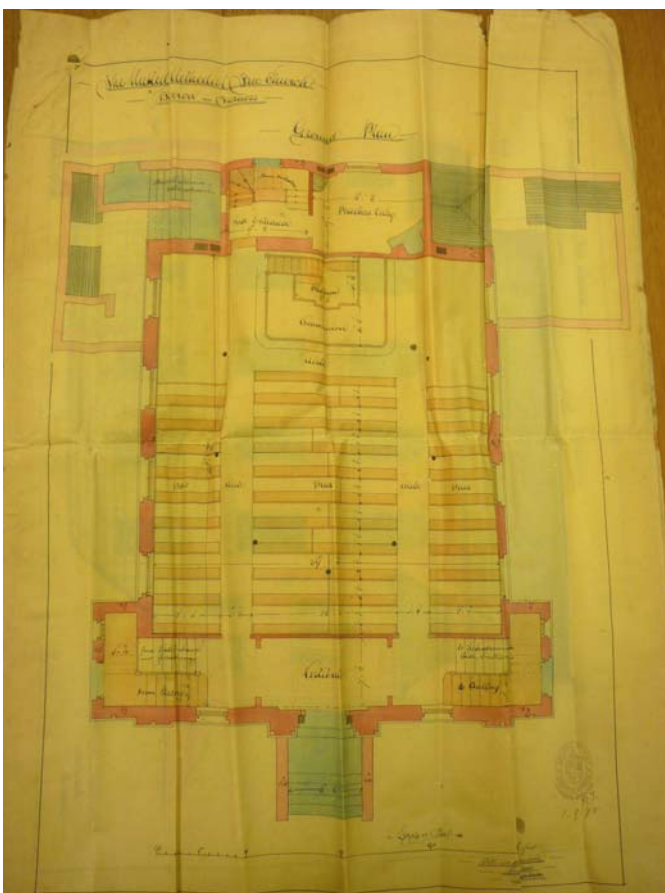


Plate 4 (left): Proposed basement plan (CRO(B) Building Control 998 1875)  
Plate 5 (right): Proposed ground floor plan (CRO(B) Building Control 998 1875)



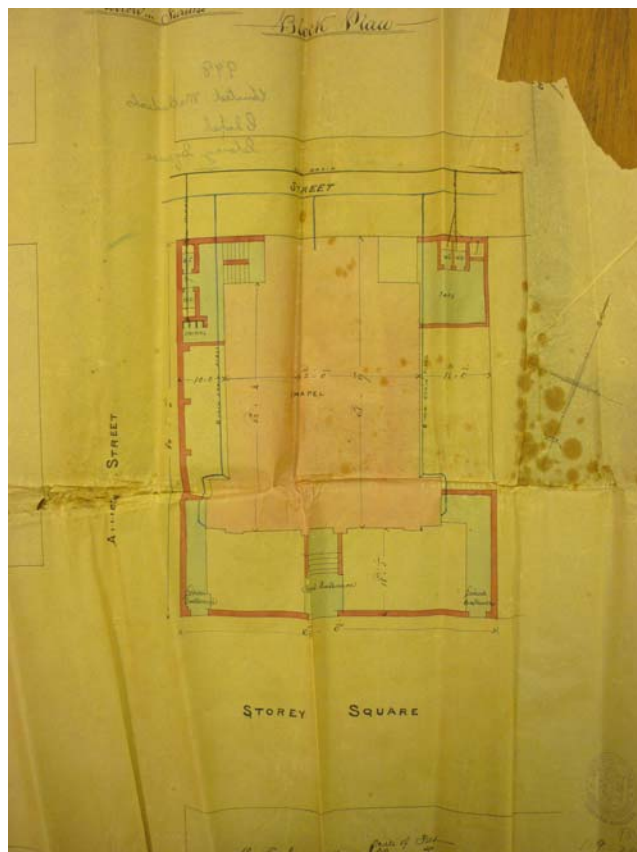


Plate 6 (left): Proposed transverse cross-section (CRO(B) Building Control 998 1875)

Plate 7 (right): Block plan of proposed chapel (CRO(B) Building Control 998 1875)

3.3.3 *Swindlehurst's Plan of Barrow, 1886, and Ordnance Survey, 1891*: while the former is not a particularly detailed plan (Plate 8) it shows that a relatively small building, presumably the iron chapel, had actually been constructed on the site by this time, rather than the large building proposed in 1875. The slightly later Ordnance Survey plan shows essentially the same thing, albeit in slightly more detail (Plate 9). In both cases it is evident that the row of terraced houses adjoining to the north-east have not been constructed by this time, and nor has the land to the south-east.

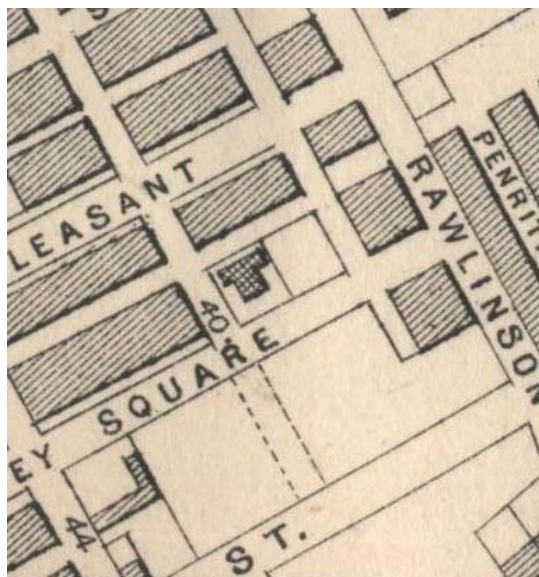


Plate 8 (left): Extract from Swindlehurst's plan of 1886

Plate 9 (right): Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1891

3.3.4 **Building Control, 1894:** a full set of proposed plans, elevations, and sections was produced in 1894 and these clearly depict the present building (Plates 10-17). The drawings were produced by the architect W Hugill Dinsley of Chorley and have some notable differences to the extant building including a domed cupola tower, apparently finished with copper, and an inscription reading 'United Methodist Free Church' at the top of the front elevation, both of which are now missing.



Plate 10: Proposed front elevation (CRO(B) Building Control 3237 1894)



Plate 11: Proposed south-east elevation (CRO(B) Building Control 3237 1894)

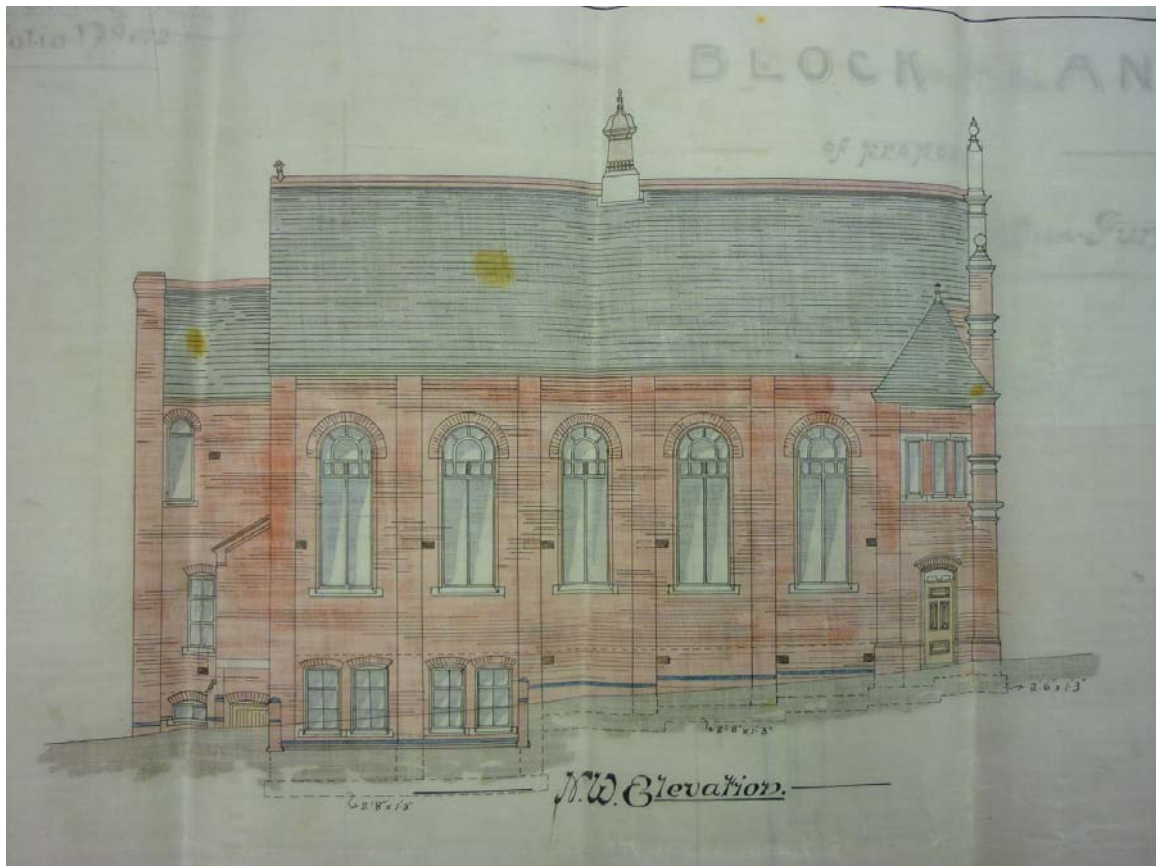


Plate 12: Proposed north-west elevation (CRO(B) Building Control 3237 1894)

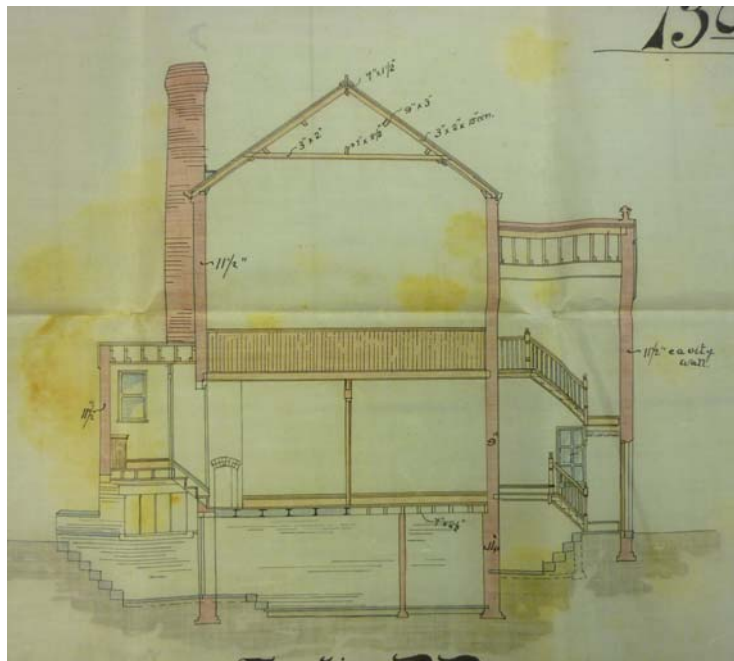
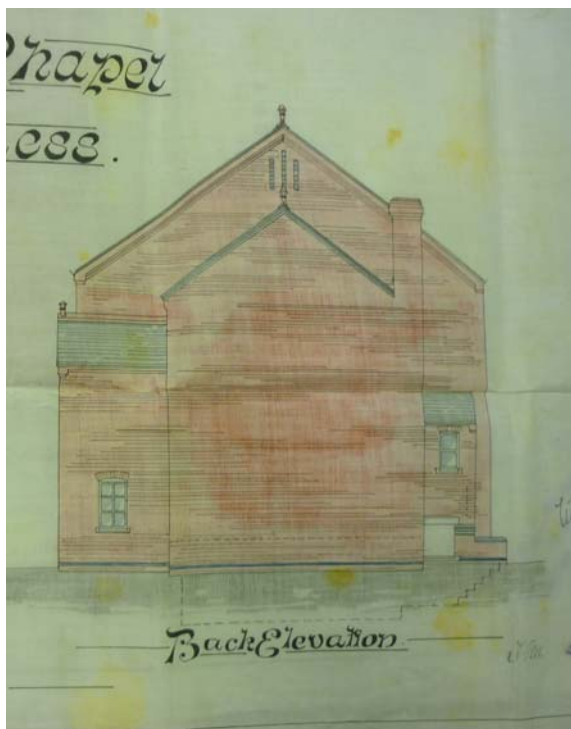


Plate 13 (left): Proposed rear (north-east) elevation (CRO(B) Building Control 3237 1894)

Plate 14 (right): Proposed transverse cross-section of the south-west end (CRO(B) Building Control 3237 1894)

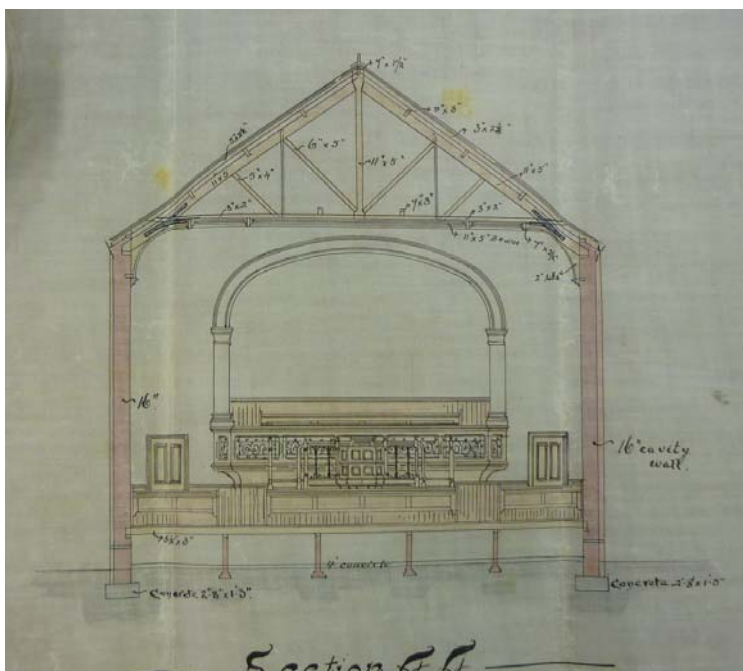


Plate 15: Proposed transverse cross-section at the north-east end (CRO(B) Building Control 3237 1894)



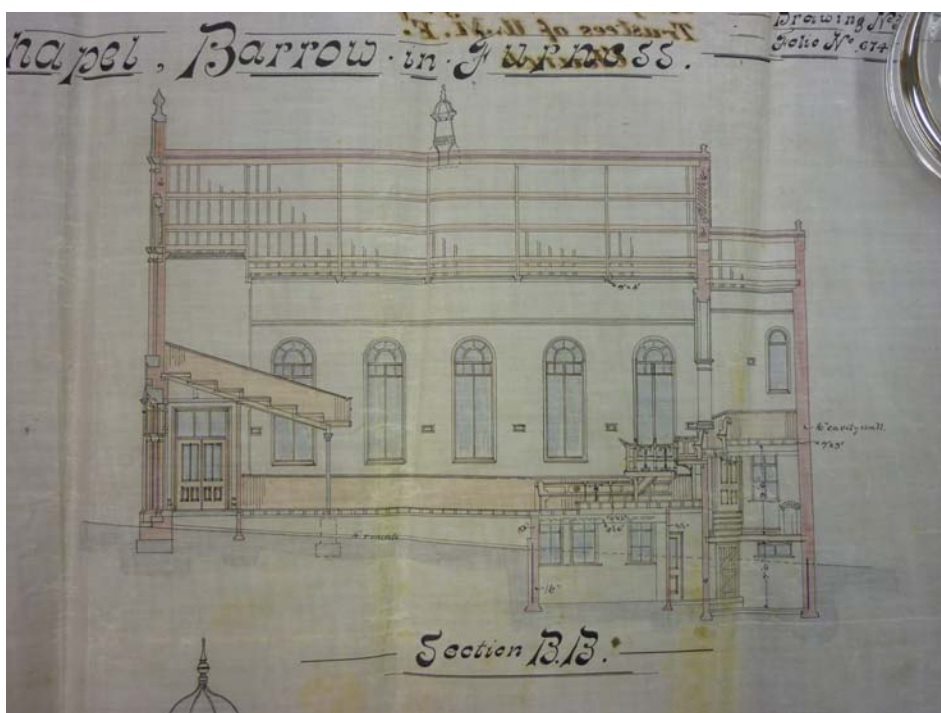


Plate 16: Proposed longitudinal cross-section (CRO(B) Building Control 3237 1894)

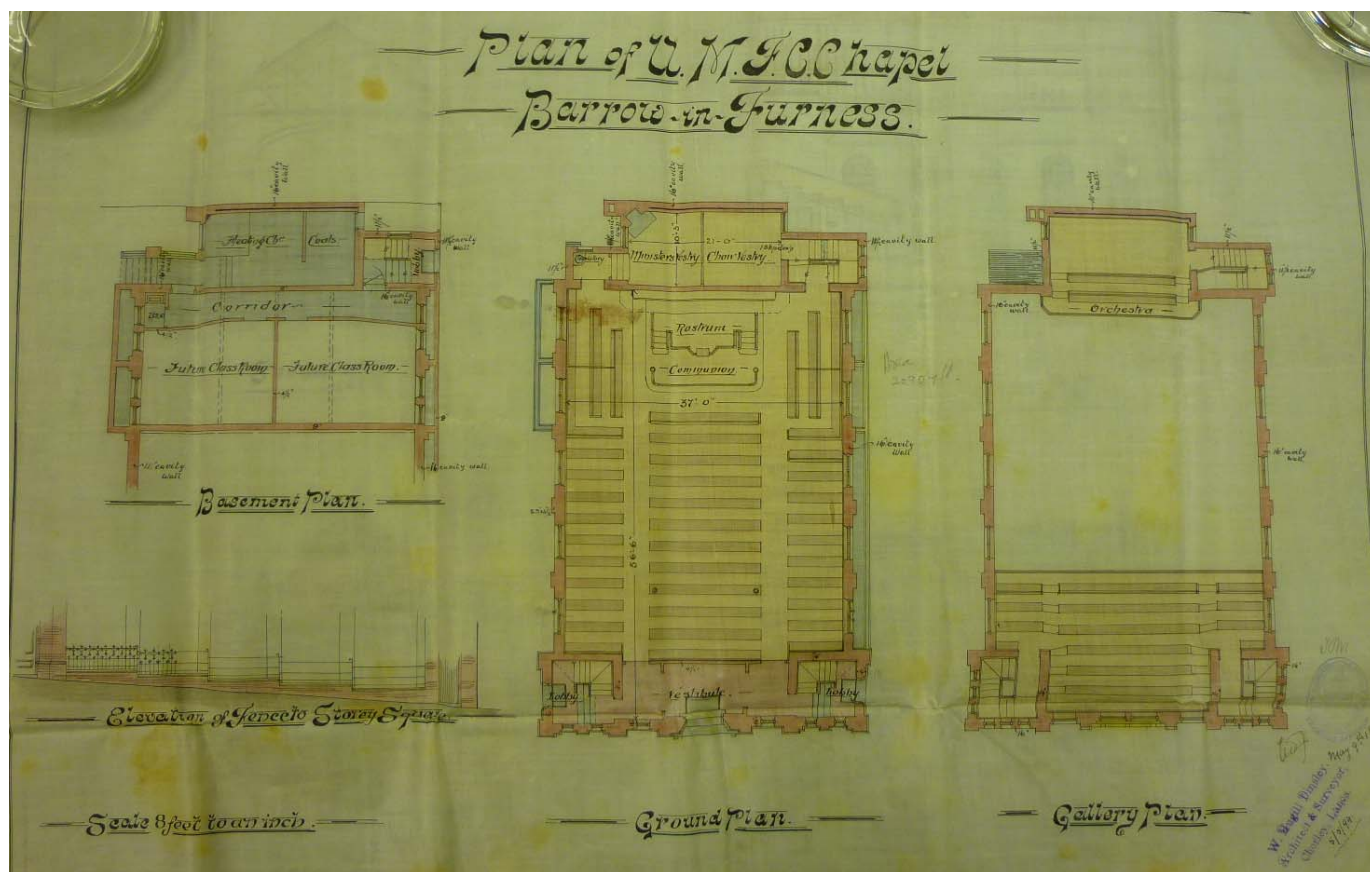


Plate 17: Proposed floor plans (CRO(B) Building Control 3237 1894)

3.3.5 **Ordnance Survey, 1913:** by this date the newly built chapel is evident, with the Sunday school to the north-west (Plate 18). The area around is now entirely filled with terraced houses, including those adjoining the north-east end of the chapel.

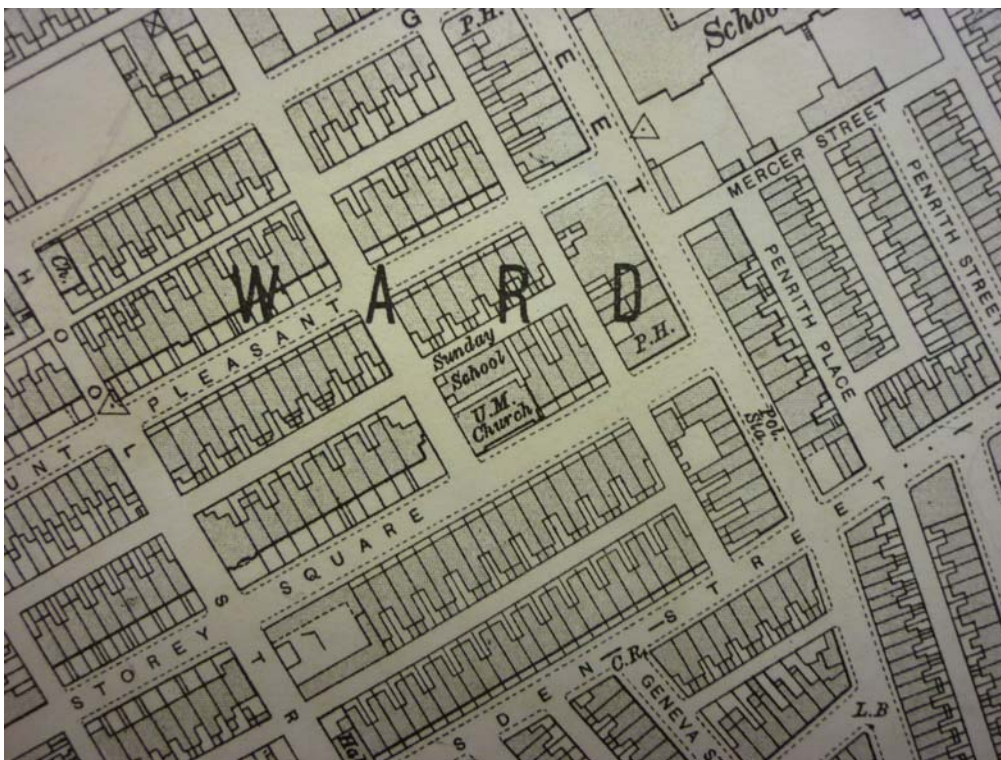


Plate 18: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1913

3.3.6 **Photo from 1949:** a photograph accompanying the newspaper article from 1949 (CRO(B) BDY 245 1949), and presumably of the same date, shows the domed tower as still extant. It was therefore clearly constructed as planned in 1894 (although was obviously later removed). Unfortunately this photograph was not of good enough quality to be reproduced.

### 3.4 Conclusion

3.4.1 The development of the site is relatively straightforward and, in fact, confused by assumed aspects of its history. It is evident that plans were drawn up for an impressive and very large chapel in 1875 but that this was never built. A smaller iron chapel was constructed, however, although the details of this are not known. When the current building was constructed in 1894 the original chapel was retained and used as a Sunday school. The main chapel remained in use until c1951 when it was sold, perhaps initially for industrial use but subsequently for use as a furniture store, auction room, and opera and drama society rehearsal space.

## 4. Building Recording

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The building was approximately rectangular in shape with the longest axis running north-east/south-west parallel to Storey Square. The main façade of the building fronted onto Allison Street to the south-west although there was further access to the building through a small doorway located at the north-east end of the elevation facing Storey Square and at the south-west end of the north-west elevation.

4.1.2 Unfortunately, some building work had already been carried out externally prior to the building recording taking place, specifically comprising the removal of the roof slates and some stone finials, leaving the trusses exposed. Scaffolding had also been erected around the building which was covered in netting, which largely obscured the view of the external elevations from the street level. Although it was possible to examine the exterior of the building from behind the netting on the scaffolding, additional external photographs were provided by the client's architect, John Dryden, which were taken before the scaffolding was in place.

### 4.2 Arrangement and Fabric

4.2.1 The majority of the building was constructed from brick. That used in the front (south-east and south-west) elevations was machine made, frogged, bright red, and marked 'A B & T C° 3 1/3 PLASTIC' and incorporated moulded bricks forming the door and window surrounds and decorative ceramic plaques. These bricks were laid in three rows of stretchers to one row of alternating headers and stretchers. The rear (north-west and north-east) elevations were constructed from a much rougher orangey-red brick, laid in an English garden bond variant of one row of headers and three rows of stretchers. The window sills and string courses were constructed from dressed red sandstone but the original stained glass windows were mostly boarded up. The iron details around the towers and the railing was still intact.

4.2.2 Internally the building was divided over two floors, with a large open hall on the ground floor with a gallery at the south-west end and a projecting balcony (from a gallery that formerly accommodated the orchestra) at the north-east end with small rooms beyond and a basement level below. The floor on the ground floor was typically constructed from boards (where visible) in the basement it was concrete finished with asphalt. In general the walls and ceilings were largely plastered and painted, although some later cladding had been used in places, and the decorative scheme remained in place in the main hall and the lower parts of its walls were clad with tongue and groove boards. Concrete breeze blocks had been used to block several apertures in the basement and modern stud walling had been inserted beneath the south-west gallery of the main hall. Both the gallery and the balcony were constructed from timber.

4.2.3 Access to the basement was via a stairwell in the east corner of the building, which also connected to the north-east gallery. The south-west gallery could be accessed via stairwells from both the west and north corners. For descriptive purposes the rooms in the basement are identified 'Basement 1-10' and the rooms on the ground floor as 'Ground Floor 1-4'.

4.2.3 The grey slate roof had been removed by the time of the survey, revealing the roof structure, which was entirely constructed from machine cut timber (see *Section 4.4.6*).

### 4.3 External Detail

4.3.1 **North-west elevation:** this elevation was not fully accessible at the time of the survey but was essentially similar to the south-east elevation (Plate 19). There were five tall windows, still retaining their original stained glass across the elevation, plus a smaller one at the north-east end, and a door at the south-west end, which had six panels with raised centres. A row of ceramic vents was present across the length of the elevation and there was an evident junction between the two types of brick at the south-west end. At the north-east end all of the windows and doorways to the basement were blocked with

concrete blocks, and there was a low projecting wall around the windows. A square projection at the very north-east end represents the position of a flue from the basement (Plate 21).



Plate 19 (left): General view of the north-west external elevation (photograph provided by John Dryden)

Plate 20 (right): The flue at the north-east end of the north-west external elevation (photograph provided by John Dryden)

4.3.2 **North-east elevation:** the lower part of this elevation was largely obscured by the terraced housing to the east of the building. However, the higher section, which was visible, formed a gable with three rows of slightly projecting bricks forming a coping and an evident junction between the rough bricks used in this elevation and those in the south-east (Plate 21). A row of three slots was also present below the apex of the gable (Plate 22).

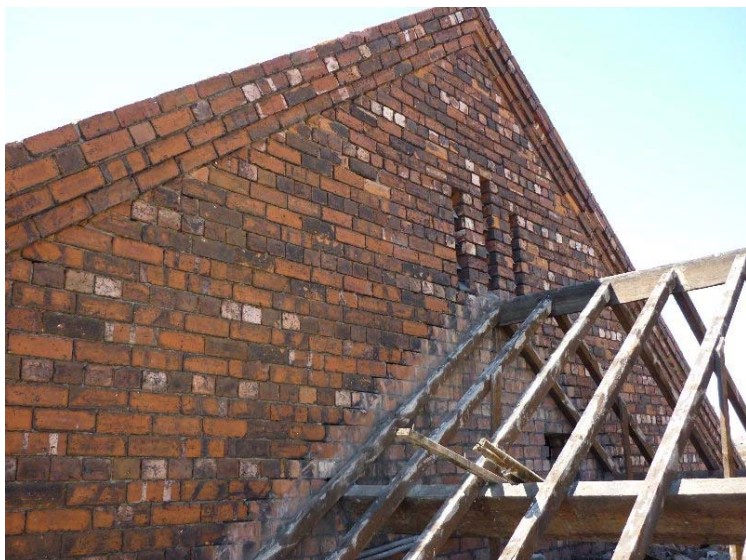


Plate 21 (left): Junction between the machine-made bricks of the south-east elevation and the rougher bricks of the north-east

Plate 22 (right): Gable top of the north-east elevation

4.3.3 **South-east elevation:** this elevation fronts onto Storey Square (Plate 26). There was a small access porch at the north-east end of the elevation which had a gabled top and a flattened arch over a four panel door (Plate 23). In the north-east wall of the porch there was a blocked window and there were two small windows in the return to the north-east and a blocked coal hole (Plate 24). The main elevation had five tall, round-headed windows with moulded brick jambs and at the west end there was a tower, which was square in plan and flat topped, with a moulded edge and two ceramic plaques in each face and small round and square windows. There were projecting pillars between each large window and at the corners of the tower. There was a door at the east and west ends of the elevation. The east door had four moulded panels while the west door had six. A bench mark was carved into the brickwork slightly below the sandstone foundation stone at the south-west corner of the building. There was railing across the elevation set on sandstone coping and there were four smaller cellar lights at the north-east end.



Plate 23 (left): Porch doorway in the south-east elevation

Plate 24 (right): Blocked and open windows to the north-east of the porch



Plate 25 (left): South-west external elevation (photograph provided by John Dryden)

Plate 26 (right): South-east external elevation (photograph provided by John Dryden)

4.3.4 **South-west elevation:** this elevation fronts onto Allison Street and formed the main façade of the building (Plate 25). There were two sets of three small round-headed windows on both sides of a large central double-doorway on the ground floor. The red sandstone foundation stone at the south corner of the building reads: 'THIS STONE WAS LAID JULY 31<sup>ST</sup> 1894 BY C.W. CAYZER <sup>ESQ</sup> MP FOR BARROW-IN-FURNESS'. The doorway had moulded ceramic edging and two six-panel doors with a large arched top and blocked over light with a sandstone keystone and pediment on top and the date 1894 inscribed above. There were four tall windows above and the remains of the gable on top, with the façade missing, and ball finials. There was a small round window in the tower to the south and two ceramic plaques (Plate 27) to the north at this level. The whole elevation was finished with decorative stone string courses and moulded brick and the date '1894' was carved in a sandstone block above the door (Plate 28).



Plate 27 (left): Decorative plaque in the south-west elevation

Plate 28 (right): Datestone in the south-west elevation

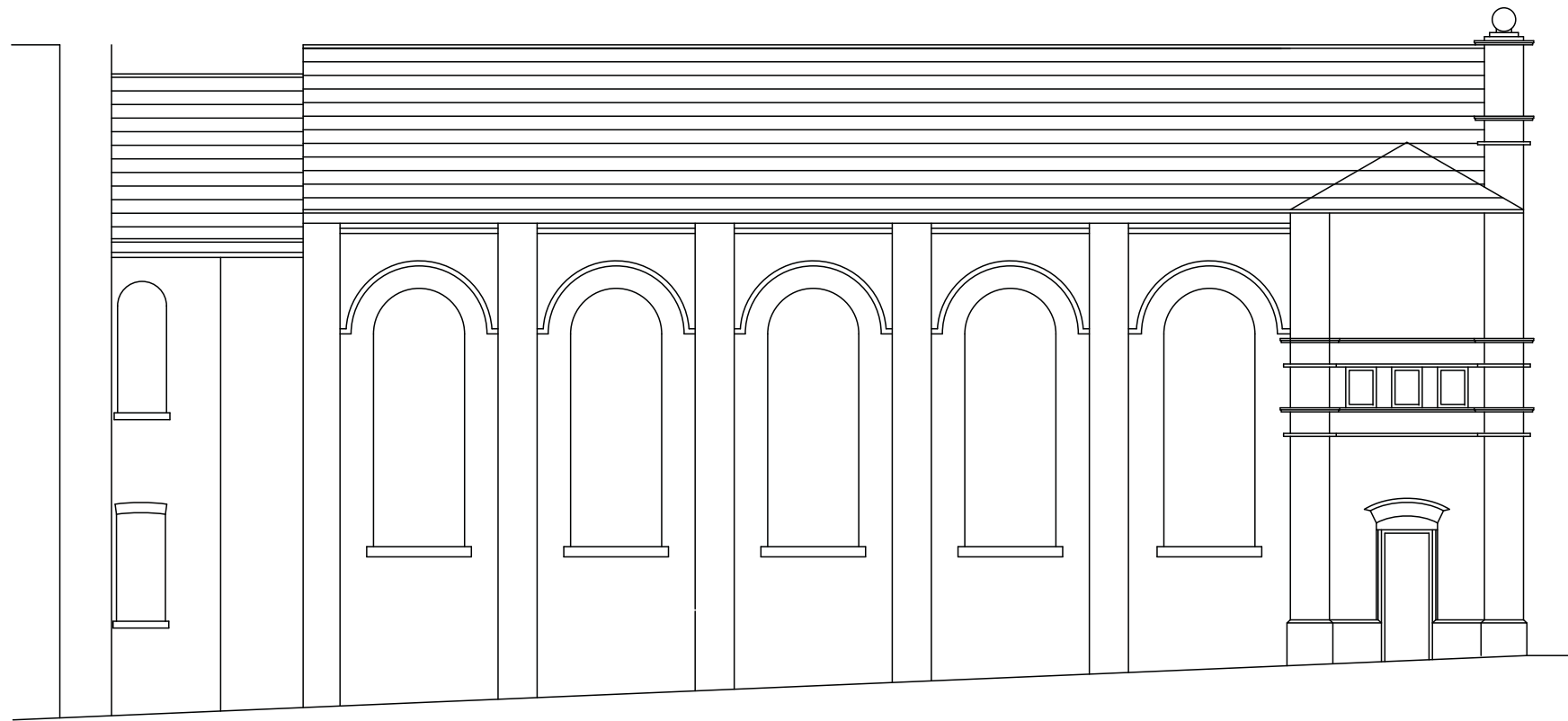


Figure 2: North-west external elevation

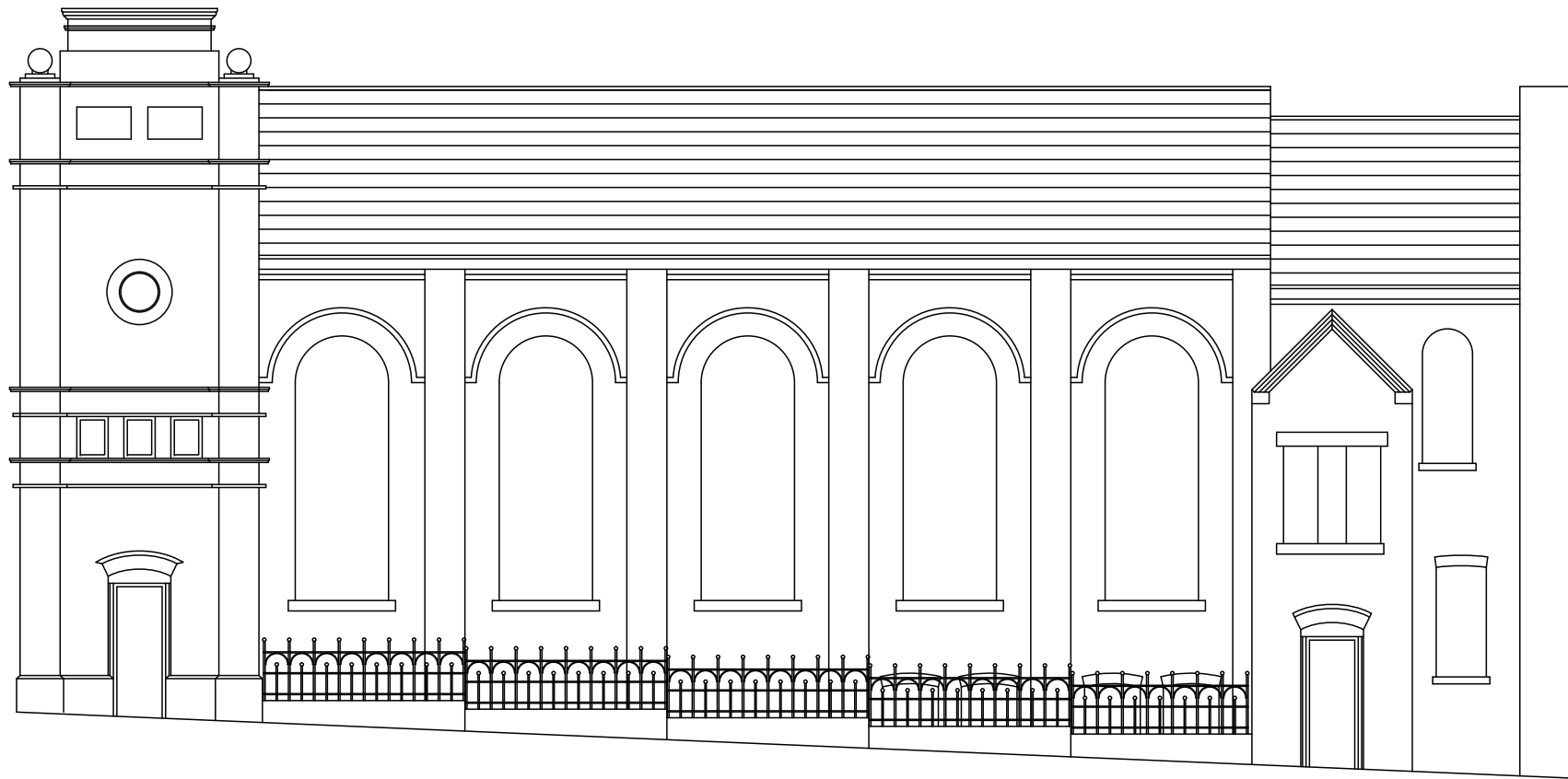


Figure 3: South-east external elevation





4.3.5 The adjoining building to the north-west extended this elevation of the building, and while it evidently butts against the chapel is has been keyed in. A sign on it reads 'BARROW CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP' and there are two stones marked 'LAID ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH 1931'.

## 4.4 Internal Detail

4.4.1 **Ground Floor 1:** this small room at the east end of the main hall (Ground Floor 2) was evidently originally the vestry. The floor was finished with carpet and the ceiling was plastered with a lower area on the west side and a single north-east/south-west beam with stop-chamfered decoration. There were three slots in the south-west side of this beam, denoting the position of a former partition and a modern built in cupboard in the south corner of the room. All the walls were clad with modern timber plywood sheeting forming a tongue and groove effect. There was a single door and window at the south-west and north-east ends of the room. The windows had six-light timber casement with a round head and a hinged opening at the top. The doorframe to the north-west was plain but the door was missing. The door to the south-west had a moulded surround and a modern plain door. This door lead to the main stairs to the south-west and there was a small dog-leg stair connecting the external porched entrance, access to the north-east gallery, and the basement. The stairwell was plain and modernised apart from the original turned banister. The door to the exterior had a moulded surround and a four-panel moulded door. The upper part of the stairs still had the original moulded skirting but lower down it had been replaced with plain square timber. The stairs were timber but clad with vinyl and the walls were finished with modern plaster. A small window in the north-east wall was blocked with asbestos sheeting and plastered over. Uncovered timber steps continued up to the gallery, the doorway to which had a moulded surround. The doorway to the main hall had a moulded door surround and a four panel door. There were two blocked windows in the south-west elevation of the stairwell, with chamfered surrounds and timber sills. There was a room with a smaller staircase at the north end of Ground Floor 1, which was carpeted and had a plaster ceiling. There was a small sink in the north-east corner of this room set within in a timber support, with moulded door surrounds to the room to the south-west and south-east.

4.4.2 **Ground Floor 2:** this was the main hall and it had galleries at either end (see *Sections 4.4.3 and 4.4.4*). The timber floorboards were aligned north-east/south-west across the room. The ceiling was plastered with decorative square moulded panels (see *Plate 30 and Plate 31*). The north-west and south-east walls had four tall, round-headed windows with elaborate stained glass behind hardboard coverings and timber sills (*Plate 29*), with a further window partially covered by the south-west gallery, and a row of hinged vents along both elevations between the windows. The lower part of the walls was finished with tongue and groove boards (see *Plate 29*). The west end gallery was supported on two rounded iron pillars with a roll-moulded top and bottom (*Plate 30*) with inserted stud work behind forming walls and electrical housing. The area below the gallery had two doorways to the south-west leading to the access hall/vestibule. The door to the south had six raised and fielded panels, the one to the north had four moulded panels and both had moulded surrounds. There was a central large doorway with a plain surround. The front of the west gallery was finished with timber fret work of elaborate foliage forms with heavy moulded rails above and below (*Plate 31*). The projecting balcony at the north-east end was finished with timber panelling below a large four-point arch with a moulded plaster surround. It has two small brass plaques attached to it, one of which reads '*Officially opened for BARROW AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY by Councillor Mrs JD Fleet Mayoress of Barrow September 1, 1977*', while the other reads '*Barrow Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society STOREY SQUARE HALL Opening Ceremony performed by Councillor Mrs. J.D. Fleet Mayor of Barrow-in-Furness 21st December 1992*'.



Plate 29 (left): Round-headed windows on the south elevation of the main hall



Plate 30 (right): View of the west gallery from the main hall

4.4.3 **Ground Floor 2 – south-west gallery:** this gallery was raised above the floor of the main hall. Its timber floor stepped down to the north-east to accommodate the original seating. The ceiling was plastered and had a moulded rail. There were two vent/access hatches into the former roof space, which also had moulded surrounds. The walls were plastered and had tongue and groove boards along the lower part, some of which covered the windows to the north-west and south-east. The doorways to the stairs in the south-west and north-west corners had moulded surrounds. The stairs were timber with the remains of the original banisters, and turned newels with finials. The stair towers had multiple windows; some small and square and others round in the south tower; some square and others tall and rectangular in the west tower; all with chamfered surrounds. The towers are otherwise plain. The south-west elevation had four large windows which were blocked with boards.

4.4.4 **Ground Floor 2 – north-east gallery:** this gallery was also raised relative to the main hall (Plate 31) and had a timber floor which stepped down to the south-west. Some of the tongue and groove boarding remained on most of the walls. The ceiling was finished with an elaborate plaster ceiling rose (Plate 32) and moulded rails. The door to the south-west had a moulded surround. There were small round-headed windows to the north and south, with stained glass. There were three panels on the north-east wall with relatively plain moulded surrounds.



**Plate 31 (left): The east gallery viewed from the west gallery**

**Plate 32 (right): Detail of the ceiling rose above the east gallery**

4.4.5 **Ground Floor 3:** this formed a small north/south access hall or vestibule connecting the two towers at either end of the south-west end of the building and had doors to the south-west and north-west. The floor was carpeted and the ceiling sloped down to the north-east below the gallery. There were timber stairs into the towers and up to the gallery at both ends, and steps down to the doorway at the south-west side through an inner doorway with plain surround. The outer doorway to the south-west had a four-panel door and a moulded surround. There were a further three concrete steps to a small understair cupboard. The north-east wall incorporated two possibly concrete pillars further supporting the gallery.

4.4.6 **Roof space:** the roof structure was supported by four king post trusses with angled braces and three purlins per pitch and a ridge board and iron tie rods between the principal rafters and the beams (Plate 33 and Plate 34). The trusses had hammered carpenter's marks at the junctions of the braces and principals to the king post principals, labelled 'III', 'II', 'I', 'IIII' from north-east to south-west (their asynchronous ordering might suggest that the roof had been rebuilt at some stage). The king posts had squared heads slightly angled at the top and held with iron straps. There were wedges behind some of the purlins.



**Plate 33 (left): The roof space viewed from a hatch in the west gallery**

**Plate 34 (right): The exposed truss work of the roof**

4.4.7 **Basement 1:** the ceiling was covered with woodchip wall paper and painted white. There was a single chamfered beam which had been painted blue aligned north-east/south-west across the ceiling slightly north-west of the centre of the room. The floor was concrete. All four walls had been plastered and painted white. The north wall was plain with a very simple skirting board. There was a doorway to the main corridor (Basement 2) at the north-west end of the north-east wall, which had a moulded timber frame and modern door. The fuse box was located on the south-west wall, which was otherwise plain. There was an open hatch at the north-west end of the south-west wall providing access under floor space below the main hall (Ground Floor 2). The cover of this hatch had been removed and the red brick construction of the wall was visible, which was two courses thick. The north-east/south-west aligned timber floorboards of the main hall (Ground Floor 2) were visible on top of the north-west/south-east aligned beams.

4.4.8 **Basement 2:** this formed an access corridor was aligned north-west/south-east and ran most of the length of the basement with doorways through to the toilets (Basements 4 and 5) via a small corridor (Basement 3) on the south-west side at the north-west end of the room and through to the stairwell (Basement 10) on the north-east side at the south-east end of the room. The corridor effectively continued to the north-west into Basement 6. The doorway through to the stairwell had a curved archway made from brick and rounded jambs. The doorways in the south-west wall had moulded timber

surrounds. The entire room was plastered and painted white. There was a metal grill above head height in the south-west elevation, which was otherwise plain. The north-east and south-west walls had a dado rail at waist height and moulded skirting along the length of the room. The north-east/south-west beam continued across the ceiling from Basement 1. The floor was finished with asphalt.

4.4.9 **Basement 3:** this small corridor at the north-west end of the main corridor (Basement 2) provided access to the male and female toilets (Basement 4 and 5 respectively). The walls of the corridor were painted white with a continuous dado rail around the room at waist height, which was painted blue. There was a moulded skirting board throughout. There was a chamfered north-east/south-west beam across the ceiling near the north-western door in the south-west wall. The south-east door in the south-west elevation gave access to the male toilets (Basement 4) and the north-west door gave access to the female toilets (Basement 5). Both doorways had plain timber frames. The south-west door was modern but the north-west door appeared older, with a large panel set above three smaller wood panels. The black asphalt floor continued from the main corridor (Basement 2) throughout the toilet blocks (Basement 3 to 5).

4.4.10 **Basement 4:** the walls and floor of this room, which formed the male toilets, were the same as in the adjoining corridor (Basement 3). There were two cubicles to the north-west (Basement 4a and 4b) and a small tiled area and sink in the south-west corner of the room. The chamfered beam continued across the ceiling slightly in front of the cubicles from the adjoining corridor. Both of the small cubicles had a metal grill/vent set back slightly into the north-west wall at head height, revealing the brick construction of the walls.

4.4.11 **Basement 5:** this room, which formed the female toilets, was essentially the same as the male toilets (Basement 4) except there was only a single toilet on the north-east side of the room and a sink and tiled area to the west against the north-west wall. There was a small alcove behind the toilet, which was taller than those in the male toilet cubicles but there was no vent.

4.4.12 **Basement 6:** this room effectively represents a continuation of the main north-west/south-east corridor (Basement 2). The room was painted white and plastered but there was no dado rail and different skirting to in Basement 2. The floor of this room was concrete, not asphalt as it had been elsewhere in the basement (Basement 1 to 5), and it sloped down from the main corridor, Basement 2, from south-east to north-west. There was also a slight curve in the wall to the west corner of the room. A beam orientated north-east/south-west continued across the ceiling. There was a doorway through to Basement 8 in the east elevation, which is described in *Section 4.4.13*. A doorway in the north-west wall had a moulded timber surround and a two-light frosted window within the wooden frame above the door which lead to Basement 7 but the door itself was no longer present (Plate 35).

4.4.13 **Basement 7:** this room was to the north-west of Basement 6 and had at one point been plumbed for a toilet, which was evident from the remaining scars on the north-east elevation. The walls were plastered and painted white and there was a blocked window in the north-west elevation. The window possibly originally had a six-light casement with a wooden frame and timber sill but the top third of the window was obscured. The jambs were slightly splayed at the nearside. The ceiling was plastered and no beam was visible.



**Plate 35: View through to Basement 7 from the main corridor, Basement 2**

4.4.14 **Basement 8:** the doorway to this room from Basement 6 had a brick arch made from two rows of bricks laid end on above the doorway and bull-nosed jambs. There was a plain frame within the archway but the door was not present. There was a similar arched doorway housing a plain doorframe through to Basement 9. The brick jambs were also bull-nosed on the north-east side of the entrance to Basement 9 and the south-west elevation was painted brick. There were two steps at the north-west end that lead up to a doorway in the north-west elevation, which had been blocked with concrete blocks with a single course of frogged bricks on top below a sandstone lintel. The concrete floor and steps were painted red and the walls were painted white. The north-east elevation housed a large blocked window, which had been blocked with concrete blocks (Plate 36). This window had a sandstone lintel and sloping sandstone sill. The south-west end of the lintel was obscured slightly by the ceiling, which sloped towards Basement 9. The ceiling was finished with plastered and plain.



**Plate 36: Blocked window in the east elevation of Basement 8, showing the curvature of the arched doorway from Basement 6**

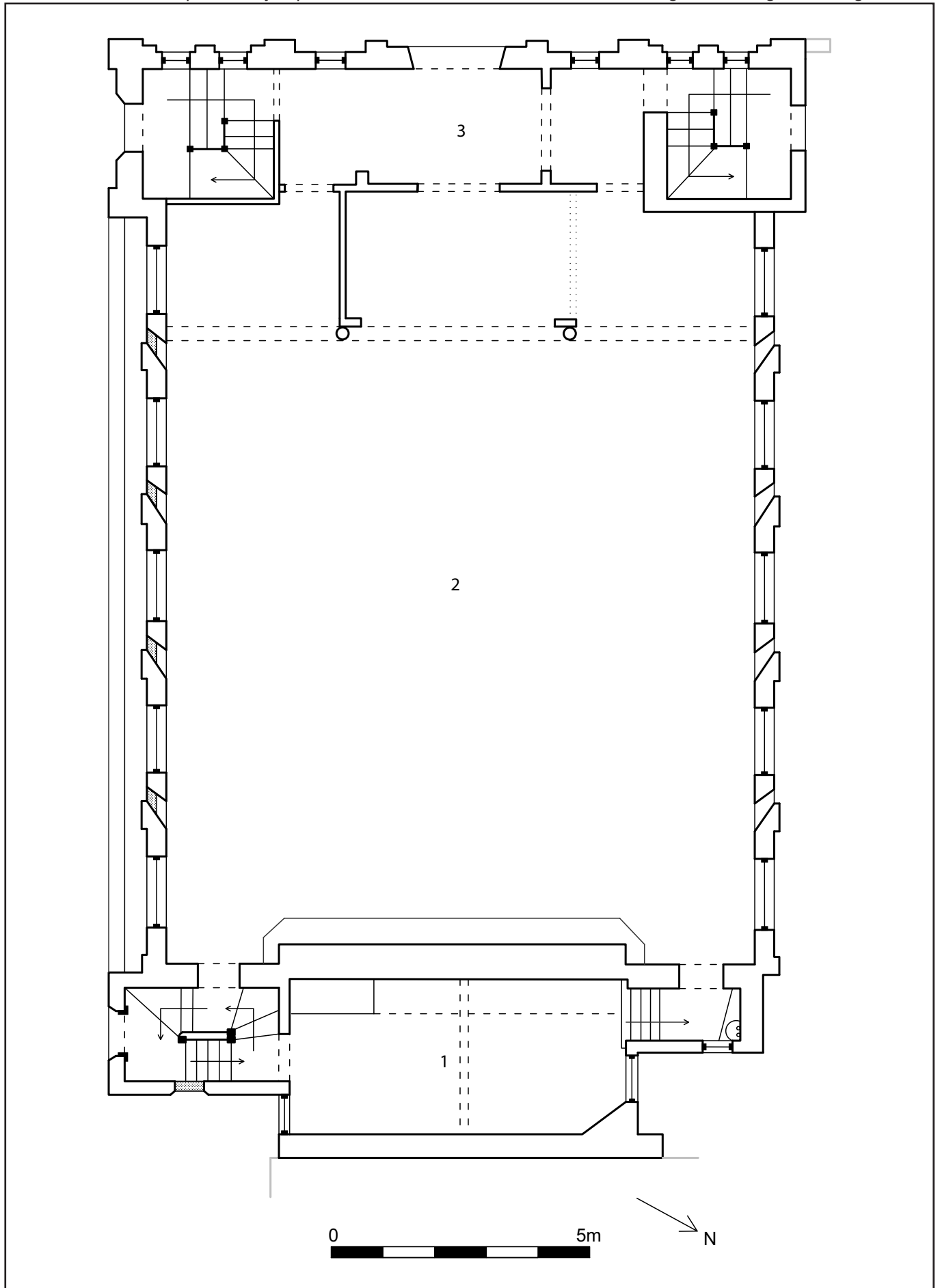
4.4.15 **Basement 9:** this had evidently originally formed a boiler room and coal/wood store. The elevations were all clearly brick, which had been painted white. No beams were visible in the ceiling. There were two steps into the room from Basement 8 in the north-west corner, which were painted red and the floor was concrete. There were two small vents in the north-west elevation with metal grills, within what was evidently originally an opening that had been blocked with brick, below which there was some evidence for metal piping. A short north-east/south-west aligned brick partition wall, a single course thick, divided the room; the north-west side of the room probably having been the boiler room and the south-east the coal/wood store. There was a hinged timber board hatch in the east corner of the room (Plate 37), which probably originally covered a coal hole accessed from Storey Square, but this had been blocked. There was no skirting board in this room.



**Plate 37: Hatch in the south-east corner of Basement 9**

4.4.16 **Basement 10:** this formed the stairwell and was painted white and had an asphalt floor. The stairs leading up to the entrance on Storey Square were concrete. There was a space under stair cupboard that was also plain and painted white.





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Figure 5: Ground floor plan

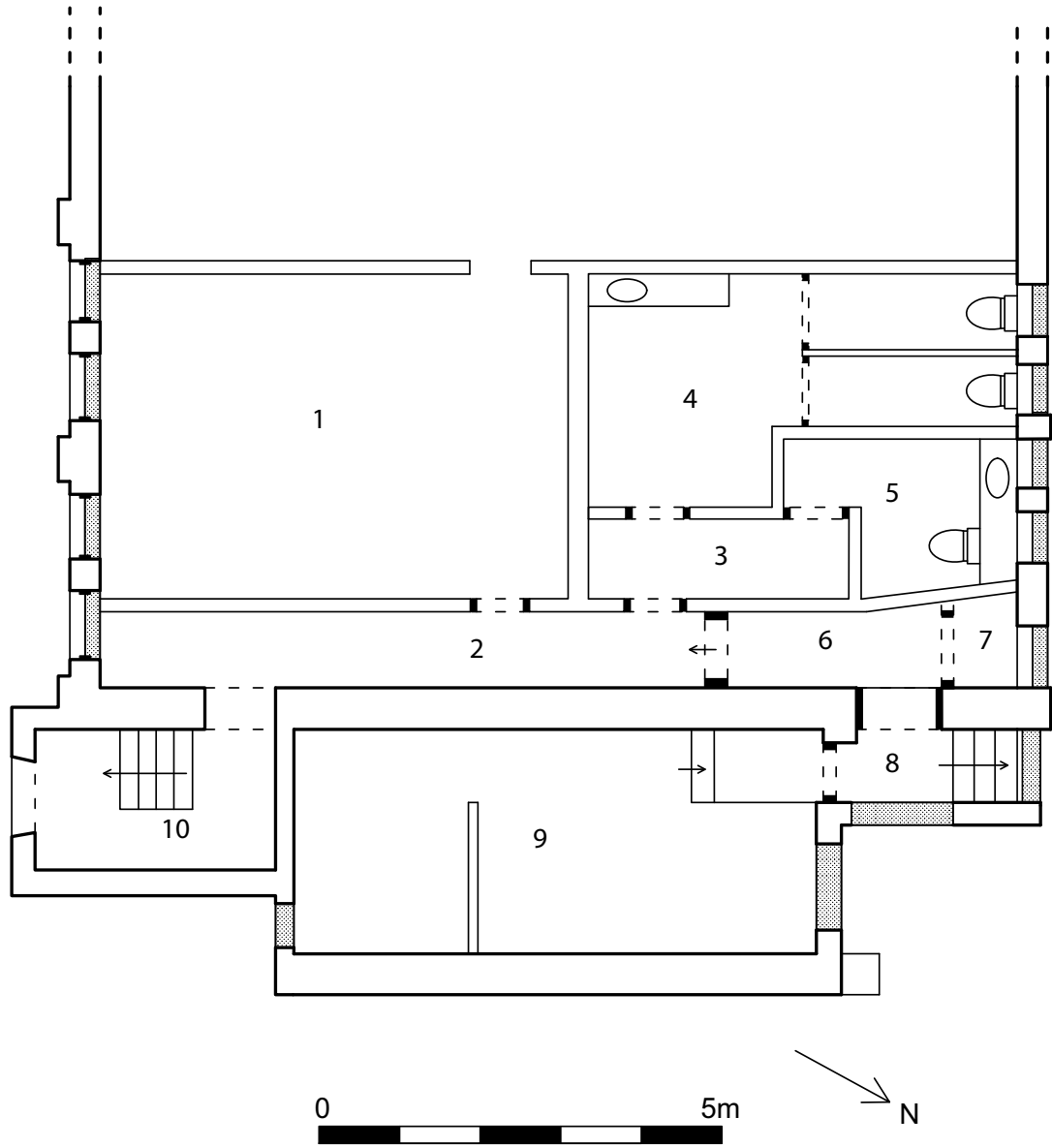


Figure 6: Basement plan

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## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The documentary evidence relating to the original construction of the building is extremely helpful in understanding its development, although the drawings from 1875 confuse matters by showing what was intended rather than actually constructed. Nevertheless, the physical evidence within the building also adds considerably to its understanding, although many of the identifiable phases could be connected to events recorded in the documentary sources.

### 5.2 Development of the Building

5.2.1 The building shows evidence of one main period of construction and a second more minor phase of alteration.

5.2.2 **Phase 1 – construction, 1894:** the documentary sources demonstrate that the chapel was originally constructed in 1894 (although not opened until the following year), following the construction of a smaller iron chapel, which was retained on the site as a Sunday School. The original chapel was one of the first buildings to be constructed at this end of Storey Square but following the construction of the current building in 1894 the rest of the street was soon fully developed. It is apparent that the chapel was constructed in two very different types of brick; a very good quality red machine made type marked 'A B & T C<sup>o</sup>' (perhaps from the Accrington Brick and Tile Company (see Hudson and Gregory 1999); something which perhaps came about on account of the architect being from Chorley) in the front (south-east and south-west façades) and a poorer quality orangey red brick, perhaps locally produced, in the rear (north-west and north-east) elevations. The documentary evidence indicates that the present structure is all of one build, despite the crude junctions between these two brick types, the apparent lack of external vents corresponding to those in the internal face of the south-east elevation (while these are complete and functioning in the north-west elevation), and the blocking of windows by the gallery at the south-west end. Otherwise, the building retains much of its original decorative scheme including the plasterwork, ceramic plaques, windows, and even railings.

5.2.3 **Phase 2 – late 20<sup>th</sup> century modifications:** numerous essentially cosmetic alterations were made subsequent to the building going out of use as a chapel in c1951. The most obvious of these were in the basement and former vestry (Room G1), where new wall finishes and modern toilets were installed. All of the windows and external doorways into the basement were also blocked leaving the only access from the stairs at the south-east corner. Any evidence of the boiler was probably also removed at this time, although it had evidently been replaced shortly before 1951, and the coal hole was also blocked. Within the main part of the chapel all of the pews and other fittings were clearly removed and some remodelling was carried out below the south-west gallery, with new stud walls added and entrances altered. The former fireplace in the vestry was also blocked or at least covered, the walls were covered with plywood, and small window in the porch leading to it was blocked. It is also apparent that the domed cupola that originally topped the south tower was removed after 1949 and the gable top of the south-west façade, which must have included the inscription reading 'United Methodist Free Church' (see Plate 10) was removed more recently still.

### 5.3 Conclusion

5.3.1 The recording of this chapel has provided another opportunity to examine and record a building of this type in the local area (see also Greenlane Archaeology 2006; 2008), which would have also formed an architecturally prominent structure at the time of its initial construction. The extensive documentary sources demonstrate that the extant building has retained much of its original form, and suffered relatively minor losses in more recent times, the most significant being the domed cupola from the tower and part of the gable of the south-west façade. The original plans also show that architects outside of the local area were used. It has not been possible to discover more information about them but presumably they were appointed on account of previous connections with the United Free Methodists. They may also have brought in preferred materials such as the marked bricks, which were

probably from Accrington, although other bricks may have been locally made. It is also apparent that the proposals for a chapel in 1875 were scaled down and led to the building of a smaller iron chapel, which was on the site of the adjoining building to the north-west. Whether this building retains any elements from its original construction is unknown as it was not part of the building recording and it had foundation stones indicating the current structure was built in 1931.

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