

**The Mission Hall,
Pettaugh,
Suffolk
PAU 011**

Historic Building Record

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The Mission Hall, Ipswich Road, Pettaugh, Suffolk

(TM 166 594)

Historic Building Record

This report provides a record at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a former Mission Hall. It has been prepared to a specification written by Sarah Poppy of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (reference: SpecHBR_MissionHall_2011, dated 7th September 2011) and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning permission for conversion (Mid Suffolk District Council consent 2208/10, condition 8).

Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 42 digital images of 21 megapixels (Appendix 1), but also includes 10 printed photographs to illustrate the text. Each image is described in a separate schedule and wherever possible includes a scale rod with half-metre divisions in red and white. The site was inspected on 27th September 2011.

Summary

The Mission Hall at Pettaugh occupies a conspicuous location on the only surviving fragment of a medieval green at the junction of the main A1120 and the road between Coddensham and Debenham. The area was named as 'Pethaugh Grene' in a survey of 1621 and is defined by 17th century houses set well back from the modern tarmac. The hall is unusually well documented, and it is known to have been erected in the corner of a wheelwright's yard in the final weeks of 1888 at a cost of £41 10s and opened on January 2nd 1889. It consists of narrow corrugated iron sheets secured to a wooden framework and represents a typical pre-fabricated 'tin tabernacle' of similar form to the example from Great Moulton in Norfolk (by Boulton and Paul of Norwich) now preserved at the nearby Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket. The project was sponsored by the Cutting family which owned much of the parish in the late-19th century, and was designed to accommodate evangelical religious services, church choir practice, night schools, Sunday schools and 'for any instructive address or lecture ... for the spiritual & mental improvement of the people'. The original building was extended by 10 feet in 1893, although the division is no longer apparent and the dimensions cited in the 19th century records differ slightly from those of the present fabric. The roof covering has been replaced with corrugated asbestos and unfortunately the interior has been stripped of historic fixtures and fittings (with the exception of an impressive array of cast iron coat pegs with acorn terminals in the porch), but the exterior remains largely unaltered and the hall still represents an excellent example of its type. The site is also of historic interest as an undeveloped fragment of medieval green. Given its relatively recent origin, however, and the loss of key features such as its contemporary pews (which are understood to have been stolen in recent years), the building does not meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing.

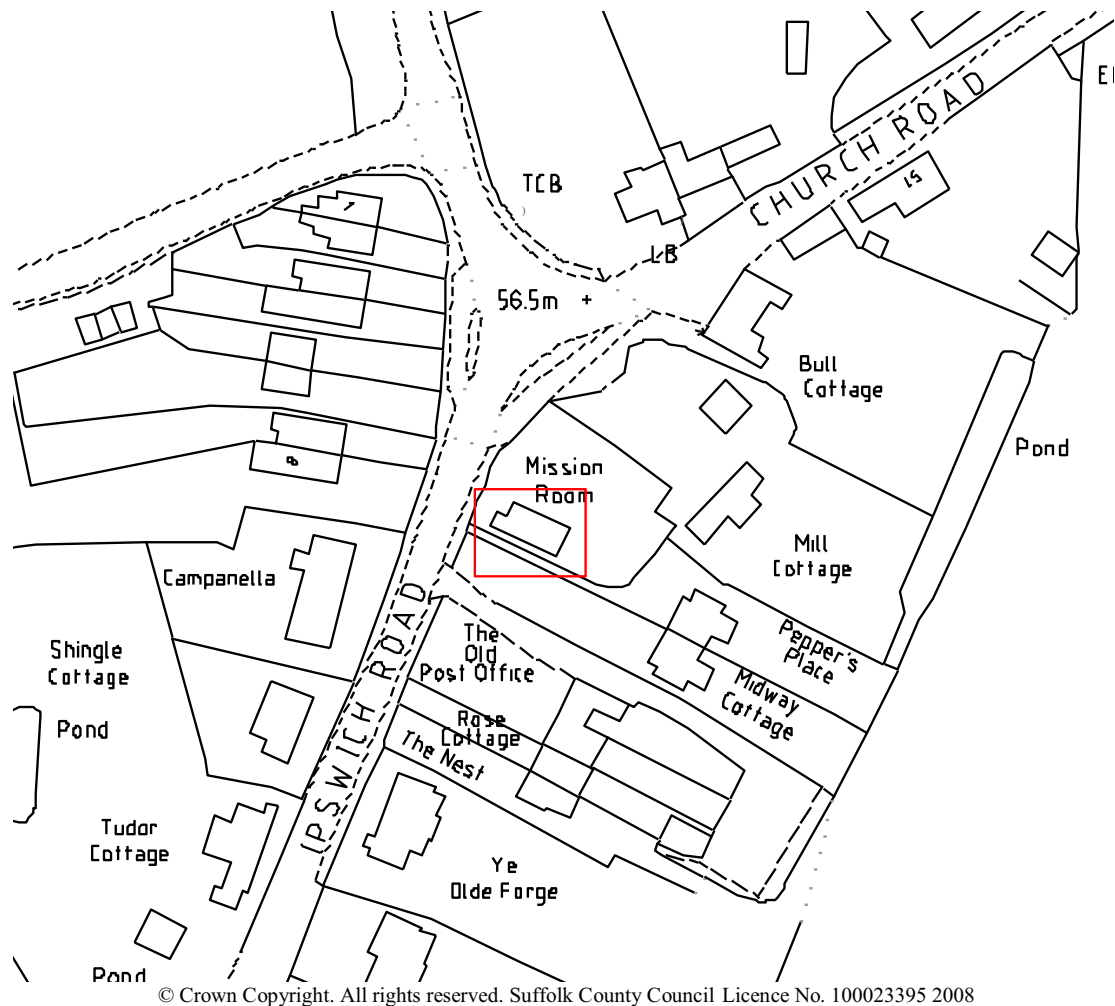


Figure 1
Modern Ordnance Survey
 Enclosing the Mission Hall in red and showing the edge of the former green to the right
 (defined in part by a linear pond). Church Road to the north is the main A1120 route
 between Stowmarket and Yoxford

Documentary and Cartographic Evidence

The Mission Hall in the small village of Pettaugh lies immediately south of the staggered junction between the main A1120 leading east from Stowmarket to Yoxford and the road between Coddensham to the south and Debenham to the north (known here as Ipswich Road). The boundaries of the various properties adjoining the junction form a distinctive triangular outline which closely resembles the many small medieval greens that once existed in this part of the county. The linear pond to the east of the Mission Hall is typical of the broad ditches that often divided these green from the adjoining farmland, and the topographical evidence is supported by documentary references to a 'Pethaugh Grene' here in a survey of 1621. Stephen Podd's excellent volume on Pettaugh in the Deben Valley Place Names series (Suffolk Local History Council, Ipswich, 1994) identifies the name with the ground now occupied by the Mission Hall, and with the exception of the small area in the centre of the road junction the open grassland to the north of the building is among the last remaining sections to have escaped development (figure 2). Like many such greens it was probably enclosed in a piecemeal fashion over the centuries, and the tithe map of 1839 shows a line of buildings representing an initial (probably 17th century) encroachment to the west of the pond but still well to the east of the road edge (figure 3).



Figure 2

A plan of Pettaugh based on surveys of 1562 and 1621 showing the area of ‘Pettaugh Grene’ east of the junction between Ipswich Road and the A 1120 as described in 1621.

From the Deben Valley Place Names study of Pettaugh by Stephen Podd, SLHC 1994(reoriented to show north in the usual direction).

The site of the Hall lay in the empty south-western corner of an enclosed yard defined by outbuildings on the north and east and belonging to a house immediately to the south (plot 58 in figure 3). The timber-framed house still survives, divided into three cottages that are listed at grade II and described in the Schedule as ‘probably 17th century with a possible earlier core’. The building is set back from the road and undoubtedly fronted the green when first built. Remarkably, a good early-17th century thatched house which defines the opposite side of the green (plot 32a), is not listed at all. Plot 58 was described as ‘house, shop and yard’ owned by Lionel Pepper, who also owned the small field to the east (56) together with two other houses in the parish and was the tenant of the windmill (plot 189). He was said to ‘occupy’ all three of his houses and it is unclear where he lived. The neighbouring house on the north (59) was a ‘house and garden’ owned and occupied by Joseph Chilvers and the building to the south was a blacksmith’s shop (57). The nature of Lionel Pepper’s shop is not specified but White’s Suffolk Directory of 1844 describes him only as a corn miller and it seems likely that it was leased to a third party – possibly William Cooper, a wheelwright who is not mentioned in the tithe apportionment. Joseph Chilver (sic) was named as a tailor. The T-shaped building beside the linear pond on the tithe map was the ‘Bull Inn and yards’ (plot 60), which had been rebuilt closer to the present road by 1885 (figure 4). The link between William Cooper and the site of Chilver’s shop is reinforced by White’s edition of 1855 which describes him as a wheelwright and shopkeeper, while by 1874 he had diversified to become a miller, shopkeeper, wheelwright, blacksmith and ‘agent for Ransomes ploughs, etc.’

The Mission Hall is also conspicuous by its absence from the Ordnance Survey of 1885, which still shows the outbuildings to the north and east of its site. It appeared for the first time on the Second Edition of 1904, bearing the name ‘Mission Room’, and was shown as a simple rectangle without its western porch. The absence of the porch seems to have been an error as it was shown in exactly the same way as recently as the Ordnance Survey of 1975 (which the

porch clearly pre-dates). The western elevation of the earlier outbuilding which stood in close proximity to the hall's eastern gable was depicted with a broken line as an open-sided lodge or workshop of the kind that might have been expected on a wheelwright's premises. Both the northern and eastern sheds had been demolished by the time of the Ordnance Survey of 1957.



Figure 3

The site on the Pettaugh tithe map of 1839 showing the area of the former green to the east of the road junction. Its triangular outline is clearly indicated by the alignment of the cross-hatched houses to both the right and left of the present road, and the two outbuildings at right-angles which formed the yard into which the Mission Hall was later inserted (plot 58) were clearly encroachments built on the green in the 18th or early-19th century. They belonged to the grade II-listed house to the south and the whole plot was named as: 'House, shop and yard'. Their owner also leased the windmill to the north (indicated by a cross). The predecessor of the present Bull Inn, which adjoins the A1120, lies further from the road in close proximity to the linear pond which probably defined the green's medieval boundary.

The surviving Hall is entirely typical of the many forms of inexpensive 'flat-pack' meeting halls and other buildings of corrugated iron that could be purchased during the second half of the 19th century. Corrugated iron was first used for roofing in London in 1829, and 'portable buildings' of the material were advertised as early as 1832. As many such structures were used to meet the needs of the numerous small, cash-starved non-conformist religious groups that sprang up at the same time they are often referred to today as 'tin tabernacles'. Boulton and Paul of Norwich was a major supplier in East Anglia and is understood to have charged

£105 18s for the almost identical example of the 1890s at Great Moulton in Norfolk (now relocated to the Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket and described on its website). The website of the Pettaugh History Society includes a synopsis of a lecture delivered in 2010 by Hilary Marlow on the subject of the mission movement in Pettaugh which includes details of the Hall's construction. The Cutting family of Abbot's Hall in the parish were keen evangelists, who sponsored, among other things, a travelling mission caravan designed to evangelise children at the sea side, and appear to have underpinned the campaign to establish a permanent room. The synopsis is reproduced in full below:

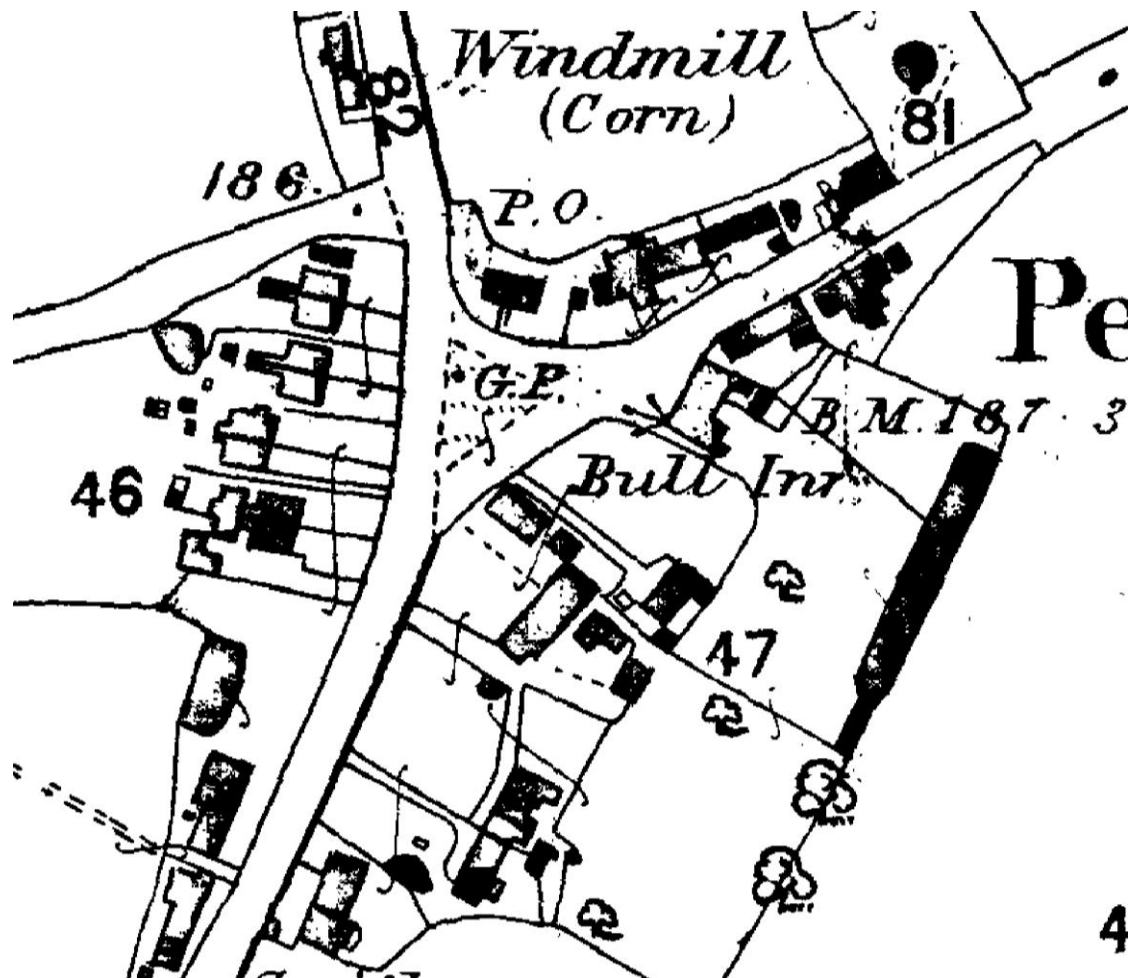


Figure 4

The First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1885 from which the Mission Hall is still absent. The site lies in the south-western corner of a yard in front of a building believed to have been a wheelwright's shop on the basis of the minutes reproduced below.

The Pettaugh Mission Room.

Minutes of the Committee held on 15th October 1888:

'At a meeting held at John Mayhew's when the Revd J K Tucker, Messrs Geo Mayhew, John Mayhew, Geo Cutting, James Cutting, & Edmund Runneckles were present, it was decided to collect funds to erect a room for the parish of Pettaugh estimated to cost (inclusive of seats and stove) £50 of which £24 was promised in the room. The intention of the founders of this room is that it shall be for the benefit of the Parish & that especially it shall be used for Evangelical Religious Services (such services not to clash with Church Services), Sunday

School, Night School, Church Choir Practice, for any Instructive Address or Lecture, and generally for the Spiritual & Mental Improvement of the People.'

Further enquiries were made and estimates sought and 'At a meeting held on 23rd November 1888, Mr Gibbons' estimate of £41.10s for the erection of an Iron Room was accepted. Also a lease for 99 years be given on the Room and a Ground Rent of 5/- per year be paid'

Mr Gibbons constructed the Room, measuring 21ft by 18ft, on a vacant part of the wheelwright's yard which was owned by Mr & Mrs Gibbons. At a meeting held on 27th December 1888 the collecting cards were brought in and paid, the total being £74. 2s. 11d. In only around two and a half months from the first meeting the Mission Room was up and running.

The Room was opened on 2nd January 1889, the opening being celebrated with two services, in the afternoon and evening. Both were well attended, and 'in the evening some were obliged to stand for want of room to sit'.

In 1893 the room was enlarged by 10ft.

1890s typical weekly evening schedule of meetings:

- Monday: YMCA
- Tuesday : Night School
- Wednesday: Bible Class
- Thursday : Lecture, often religious theme, with Magic Lantern
- Friday: Hymn Practice
- Saturday: Prayer Meeting
- Sunday: Sunday School (am), Evangelical Service (pm)

In the 1890s branches of the Scripture Union and Gleaners Union were formed; missions were held annually on Birches Meadow and in the Mission Room, several conducted by Mr John Johnson of the Evangelisation Society, over a two week period.

Rev J K Tucker died in 1896, to be replaced by Rev Edwin Edwards and then Rev Charles Hunter in 1898, who proposed to hold an evening service in St Catherine's church.

James Cutting proposed the evening service be held in the Mission Room but was opposed by his brother, George, who reminded him of the clause in the Mission Room minutes: 'services not to clash with Church services'.

On 18th October 1898, in a public meeting James Cutting and his supporters on the committee won a vote to have the evening service in the Mission Room (score: James Cutting and the Mission Room 1; Rector and Church 0).

In more recent years, as reported by local residents, the hall was used as a village hall for general community purposes until its eventual closure approximately a decade ago. The pews are said to have been stolen since this time.

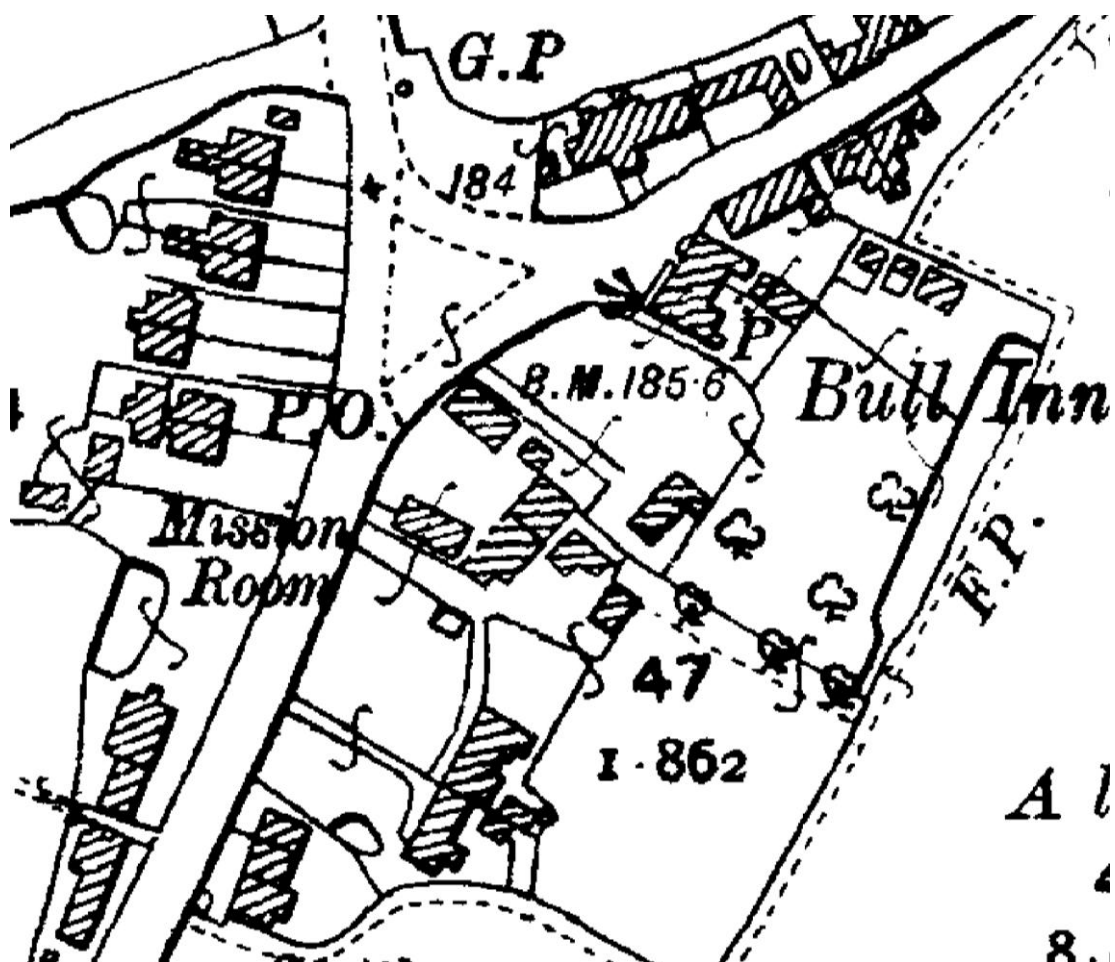


Figure 5

The Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904, showing the 'Mission Room' for the first time. The building immediately to the east is shown with an open-sided western elevation (indicated by a broken line) and was probably a cart lodge or workshop belonging to the wheelwright's shop. The porch appears to have been omitted in error from this and subsequent editions.

Building Analysis

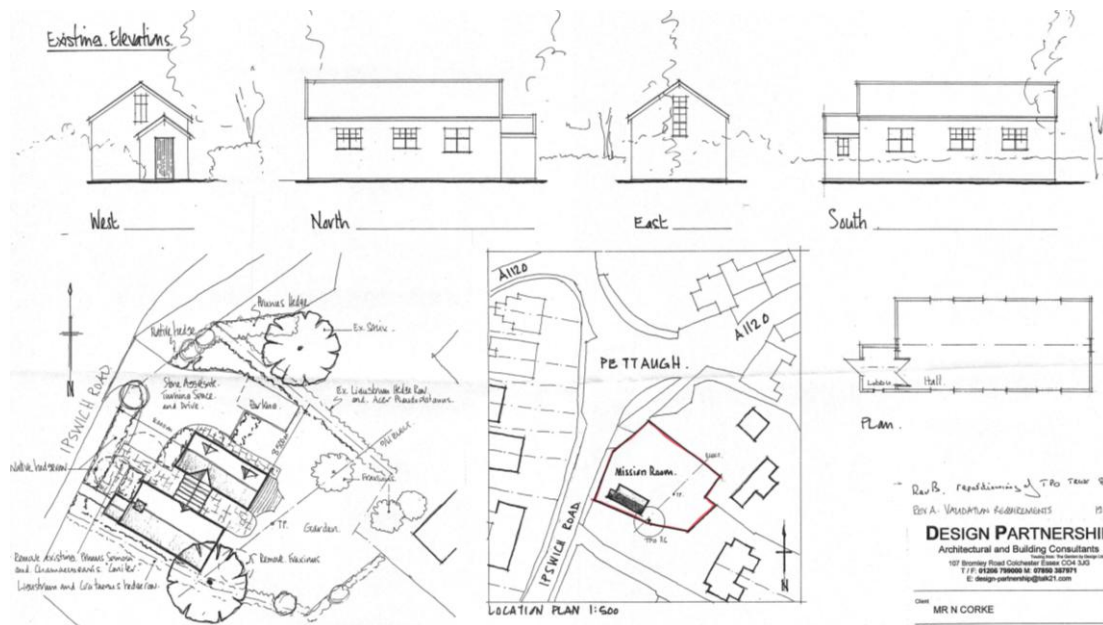


Figure 6
Plan and elevations supplied by the building's current owner

Proportions and Fabric

The main structure of the hall (excluding its porch) extends to 10 m in length by 5 m in overall width (33 ft by 16.5 ft) on an approximately WNW-ESE axis at right-angles to the adjacent road (simplified to east-west for the purpose of this analysis). These dimensions differ significantly from those suggested in the foundation committee minutes of 1888 above, which refer to a wider but shorter structure of 18 feet by 31 feet (after the extension by 10 feet in 1893 of the original almost square hall of 21 feet by 18). The walls rise to 2.9 m (9.5 ft) at their eaves above the internal floor of deal boards and consist (on the basis of a small area of fabric exposed at the time of inspection) of a framework of vertical deal studs with nailed horizontal cross-members to which narrow vertical sheets of galvanised corrugated iron – each measuring 2.4 m by 0.6 m (8 ft by 2 ft) - are secured by large galvanised iron screws with circular heads and washers. There is evidence of light green paint beneath the present dark green, and possibly of a lighter orange colour beneath that. The internal walls are clad in vertical deal boarding and the shallow-pitched roof structure (now covered with corrugated asbestos – presumably replacing corrugated iron) is concealed internally with later fibre board. The studwork rests on a plinth of shuttered concrete which may have replaced brickwork but may be an original feature (now cracking at the eastern gable due to the close proximity of a large sycamore tree – the roots of which are also probably responsible for the pronounced curvature of the floor). The four principal roof trusses are of timber with horizontal iron tie-bars (which may be secondary), and are shaped in a simple but decorative manner as shown in the photographs.

Layout

The hall forms a single open space lit by three windows to each side and one in each gable which has been stripped of any historic fixtures and fittings (with the exception of a mid-20th century stove which presumably replaced the original mentioned in 1888). It is said to have contained pews that were stolen in recent years and there is no evidence of their positions on

the ostensibly original deal floorboards. A small gabled porch of 2.4 m in width (8 ft) projects by 1.7 m (5.5 ft) from the southern end of the western gable where a pair of original double doors with fielded panels opens into the hall (now coloured red but with green paint beneath). Two ranks of black-painted iron coat hooks, each with two acorn finials, line the interior of this porch as shown in illus. A2 10 below.

The documentary evidence indicates the hall was erected in the corner of a wheelwright's yard at the end of 1888, and opened on 2nd January 1889, but was extended by 10 feet in 1893. There is no obvious physical evidence of this extension, presumably because the new materials were identical to the old, but the nature of the fenestration suggests it may have been added to the front (west) rather than the rear as might otherwise have been expected. The roof trusses are more closely spaced at this end of the building, and the two western windows are significantly larger than their counterparts to the east (which are identical to the south, with vertically hinged upper lights, but also differ to the north where the central window is a 20th century replacement).

No burials would have been associated with an evangelical hall of this period.

Historic Significance

The Mission Hall at Pettaugh remains an exceptionally well-preserved example of a late-19th century pre-fabricated 'tin tabernacle' despite the unfortunate loss of its internal fittings. Although erected in two phases it gives every semblance of a single entity and its historic importance is considerably enhanced by the survival of detailed documentary evidence of its construction. The site is also of historic interest as an undeveloped fragment of medieval green. Given its relatively recent origin, however, and the loss of key features such as its contemporary pews, the building does not meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing.

Appendix 1 (on accompanying CD): Full Photographic Record

Descriptions of Photographs in Appendix 1

Photograph no.

1. General view of site from A1120 to north-west showing road junction and former green with hall to right and Bull Inn to left.
2. General view of site from north showing remains of medieval green with hall to right and Bull Inn to left.
3. General view of site from Ipswich Road to south-west showing hall to right with road junction in rear to left.
4. Grounds of Mission Hall (remnant of medieval green) from south-west showing hall to right.
5. View of site from east showing hall to left and remnant of green to right with unlisted early-17th century cottage in rear.
6. General view of site from north-east showing hall in rear and remnant of medieval green in foreground.
7. Western exterior from Ipswich Road showing site entrance in hedge with notice board to left.
8. Notice board to north of western entrance to site showing hall to right and remains of medieval green in rear.
9. Western external gable showing entrance porch to right.
10. Northern exterior showing chimney with two ostensibly original windows to left and later, larger window to right.
11. Detail of chimney to northern exterior showing orange paint to corrugated iron beneath layers of green.
12. Exterior from east showing corrugated asbestos roof with eastern gable to left and northern elevation to right.
13. Eastern external gable showing original narrow eight-light rectangular window.
14. Detail of original eight-light rectangular window to external eastern gable.
15. Detail of eastern external gable showing narrow vertical strips of corrugated iron and concrete plinth.
16. Exterior from south-east showing eastern gable to right and southern elevation with windows matching those of northern elevation.
17. Detail of typical screw in southern exterior securing vertical strips of corrugated iron to wooden framework (lacking washer).

18. Exterior from west showing entrance porch to left and southern elevation adjoining boundary hedge to right.
19. General view of interior from west showing shaped wooden roof trusses and painted vertical deal boarding to wall fabric.
20. Detail of shaped wooden roof trusses with iron tie bars seen from west.
21. General view of interior from east showing 20th century stove to right.
22. Southern interior showing original identical windows to left and larger ostensibly later window to right.
23. Northern interior showing original identical windows to right and larger ostensibly later window to left.
24. Shaped wooden roof trusses and iron ties seen from east.
25. Western internal gable showing entrance doors to left.
26. Entrance doors of western internal gable showing earlier cream paintwork to boarded cladding within meter box above.
27. Eastern internal gable showing rectangular eight-light window.
28. Section of exposed timber wall fabric to southern interior showing shuttered concrete plinth beneath.
29. Detail of exposed deal framework to southern interior showing nailed joint of horizontal and vertical timbers.
30. Detail of ostensibly original eastern window of northern interior.
31. Detail of ostensibly original central window of northern interior with replacement casements.
32. Detail of ostensibly secondary western window of northern interior.
33. Detail of ostensibly secondary western window of southern interior.
34. Detail of ostensibly original central window of southern interior.
35. Detail of ostensibly original eastern window of southern interior.
36. Floor of deal boards seen from west showing painted plinth of shuttered concrete.
37. Interior of western porch from south showing coat hooks with external entrance to left and hall doors to right.
38. Western interior of western porch showing external door with coat hooks to right.
39. Interior of western porch from north showing external door to right and hall doors with green paint beneath red to left.
40. Double doors to hall seen from western porch showing coat hooks to left.

41. Detail of black painted iron coat hooks with acorn finials to western interior of western porch (seen from south).
42. Detail of black painted iron coat hooks with acorn finials to northern interior of western porch.

Photographic Appendix 2 follows on pp. 13-17

Appendix 2 (pp. 13-17): Selected Printed Photographs



Illus. 1. General view of the site from the north, showing its conspicuous location on the junction of the A1120 (left) and the Ipswich Road, with the remains of the medieval green in the rear, the Mission Hall to the right and the Bull Inn to the left.



Illus. 2. The western exterior from the Ipswich Road showing the porch and site entrance in the hedge with the notice board to the left.



Illus. 3. The northern exterior from the remnant of medieval green showing the chimney with two ostensibly original window apertures to the left and the later, larger window to the right.



Illus. 4. The eastern external gable showing the original eight-pane rectangular window and the narrow strips of corrugated iron on a plinth of shuttered concrete.



Illus. 5. A general view of the interior from the west showing the shaped wooden roof trusses and painted vertical deal boarding to the wall fabric.



Illus. 6. The southern interior showing the apparently original identical windows to the left and a larger probably later window by the entrance doors to the right.



Illus. 7. The section of exposed timber wall fabric to the southern interior showing the nailed junction between a horizontal rail and a vertical stud with the shuttered concrete plinth beneath. Scale in centimetres.



Illus. 8. A detail of the ostensibly original eastern window of the northern interior with fixed lower lights and vertically hinged casements with iron stops above.



Illus. 9. A detail of the larger and ostensibly secondary western window of the northern interior.



Illus. 10. The interior of the western porch or lobby from the south showing two ranks of iron coat hooks with acorn terminals with the external entrance to the left and the hall doors to the right.