

**Former Methodist Chapel,  
Fox Lane, Darsham, Suffolk  
DAR 028**

**Historic Building Record**

OASIS ID: Suffolkc1-164609



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*on behalf of*  
**Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service**

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**November 2013**



# Former Primitive Methodist Chapel, Fox Lane, Darsham, Suffolk

(TM 413 700)

## Heritage Asset Assessment

*This report provides an archaeological record and analysis at English Heritage (2006) Level 2 of a redundant Primitive Methodist Chapel. It has been prepared to a specification written by Richard Hoggett of Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service and is intended to fulfil a condition of planning consent for conversion (Suffolk Coastal District Council application C/12/1746).*

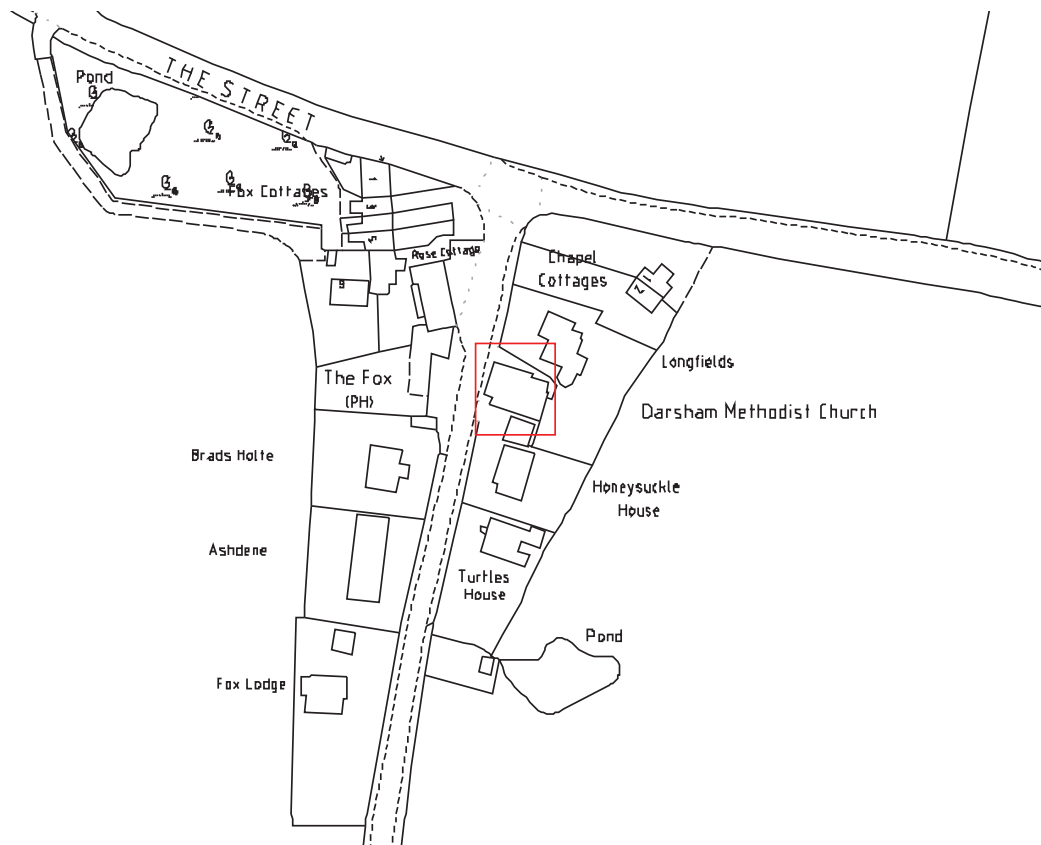
### Introduction

The report is accompanied by a CD containing a full photographic record in the form of 43 digital images of 21 megapixels (Appendix 1), but also contains 12 printed photographs of key features 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 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

### Summary

The former Primitive Methodist chapel at Darsham lies in a small hamlet of chiefly 20<sup>th</sup> century housing approximately 1 km west of the main village. It adjoins the eastern side of Fox Lane opposite the eponymous Fox Inn. This area was formerly a small medieval green known as China Green on Hodskinson's Map of 1783 and Cheney Green on the 1843 title survey. The Primitive Methodist movement was founded as a working class reaction against traditional Methodism and originated in a series of evangelical open air meetings known as camps, often held on isolated locations such as heaths and greens where working men might congregate beyond the reach of the authorities. The isolated location of Darsham chapel in the midst of a poor hamlet of labourers' cottages is consistent with this trend.

The chapel was built in 1873 as demonstrated by a date plaque above its entrance, and originally consisted of a small rectangular hall of just 5.6 m in width by 11.75 m in length (18.5 ft by 38.5 ft). A matching extension was added to the north in 1908 to accommodate a Sunday School, again dated by a plaque in its gable, but the attractive Mock Gothic facade of red brick with gault brick dressing is now largely obscured by a late-20<sup>th</sup> century glazed entrance lobby. There is a small possibility that the yard on which this extension was built may have been used for a short time as a burial ground. The chapel closed due to dwindling congregations in *circa* 2011 and had been stripped of its altar rails and chairs by the time of inspection, but four remaining benches of stained pine may be original features. The Sunday School now accommodates a late-20<sup>th</sup> century fitted kitchen. The building's chief point of historic interest lies in its unusual number of inscribed foundation stones and plaques which date its two principal elements and name the founding ministers and circuit officials as well as various financial benefactors. Despite its relatively unaltered exterior, which retains most of its original arched windows, the chapel is not of sufficient age, completeness or architectural merit to meet the strict English Heritage criteria for listing.



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**Figure 1. Current Ordnance Survey Site Plan.**  
**The chapel is enclosed in red immediately opposite the Fox Inn.**

## Documentary and Cartographic Evidence

The former Primitive Methodist chapel at Darsham lies in a small hamlet of chiefly 20<sup>th</sup> century housing approximately 1 km west of the main village and parish church. It adjoins the eastern side of Fox Lane opposite the eponymous Fox Inn, close to its junction with Darsham Street. This area was formerly a small triangular green labelled China Green on Hodkinson's Map of Suffolk in 1783 (figure 2). Greens of this type originated in the early Middle Ages and often formed the focal points of medieval settlements, but most were subsequently enclosed to form arable land. The Darsham tithe map of 1843 shows the green's distinctive outline at the junction of three roads with a scatter of tenanted cottages on its former margins. No trace of the green then survived but the road was named Cheney Green. The site of the chapel was occupied by the northern end of an enclosed garden belonging to a pair of semi-detached cottages owned by Samuel Kemp and occupied by 'Barker and another' (plot 121 in figure 3). A building on the site of the Fox Inn (plot 125) was described as a cottage and yard owned by James Garrard and occupied by 'Lane and Smith'; the tithe apportionment makes no reference to the Fox itself but it was recorded in White's Directory of Suffolk for 1844 with Henry Day as its victualler.

The chapel was built in 1873 as demonstrated by a date plaque above its entrance. It was too new to gain an entry in White's Directory of 1874, but the Fox was then held by William Garwood, 'cattle and pig dealer and victualler'. The Primitive Methodist movement was founded in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (not before 1800) as a working class reaction against the hierarchy of traditional Wesleyan Methodism which was increasingly seen as part of the establishment. It originated in a series of evangelical open air meetings known as camps, often held on isolated locations such as heaths and greens where working men might congregate beyond the reach of the authorities. The isolated location of Darsham chapel in the

midst of a poor hamlet of labourers' cottages is consistent with this trend, and it is possible that meetings had been held in the open or in one of the cottages before the building's construction.



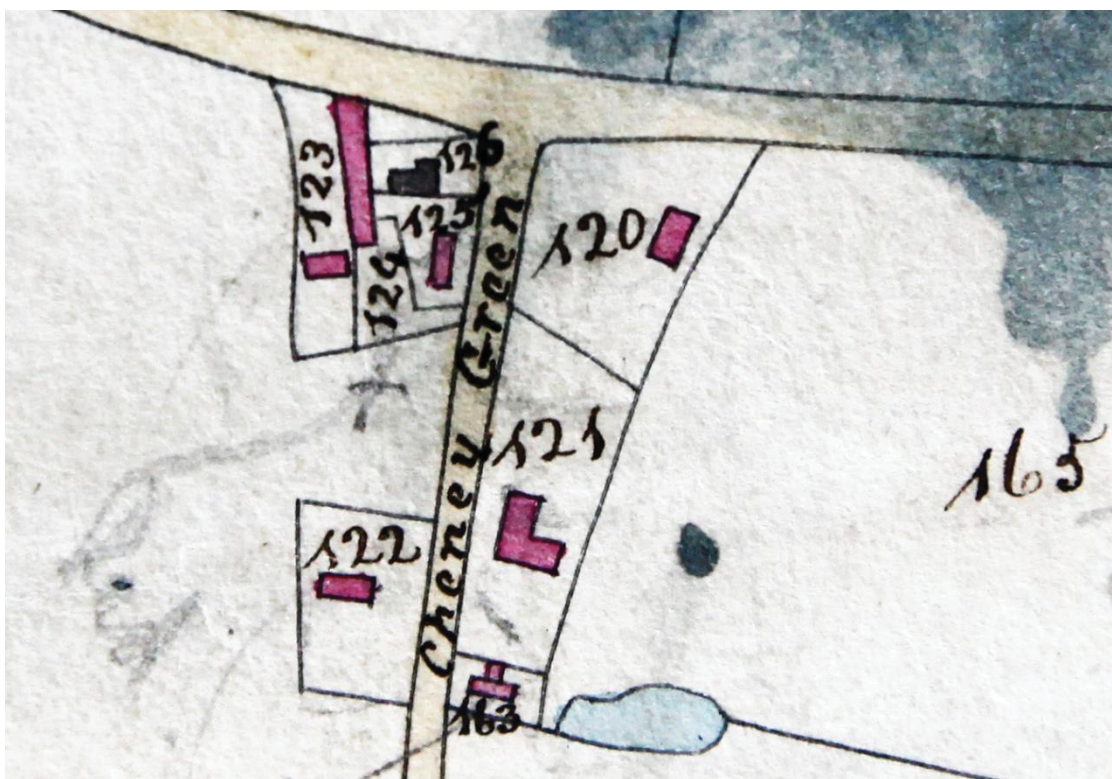
**Figure 2**

**Hodkinson's Map of Suffolk in 1783, showing the triangular area of China Green to the north-east of Darsham Hall (owned by Sir John Rouse, baronet). The main village of Darsham lies approximately 1 km to the east.**

The chapel was shown for the first time on the Ordnance Survey of 1884 as a rectangular structure with a small rear projection to the east (figure 4). A stone plaque beneath the southern window of the new building's western facade records its first ministers and circuit stewards: The church was divided into a series of 'circuits' consisting of several congregations, each organised by stewards who were responsible for finance and other administrative matters. A new Sunday School wing was added to the north of the original hall in 1908 – again conveniently dated by a series of plaques which name the local representatives of the Church of England (CE) and the Sunday School movement (SS) which presumably aided the Methodist trustees in its funding. The 'Society for the Establishment and Promotion of Sunday Schools' was cross-denominational, and through subscription built large halls across the country that could host public lectures as well as classrooms. W. Holmes, who laid the foundation stone on behalf of the trustees, was presumably William Holmes who was recorded as a farmer and machinery owner in Kelly's Directory of 1912. John Crisp was a shopkeeper and furniture dealer in the parish in 1874 but no one of that name was listed in 1912. The Primitive Methodists were reunited with the main Methodist movement in 1932, ceasing to exist as an independent entity.



**Figure 3. The Darsham tithe map of 1843. (Suffolk Record Office.) The hamlet of Cheney Green by the smudge of ink lies to the west of the main village with the lands of Darsham Hall (which paid no tithe) on the west.**



**Figure 3a. Detail of the 1843 tithe map. The site of the chapel is unoccupied in the northern corner of a garden belonging to a sub-divided cottage and garden (plot 121). The triangular outline of the medieval green is clearly visible in the boundaries of the various tenanted labourer's cottages forming the hamlet.**

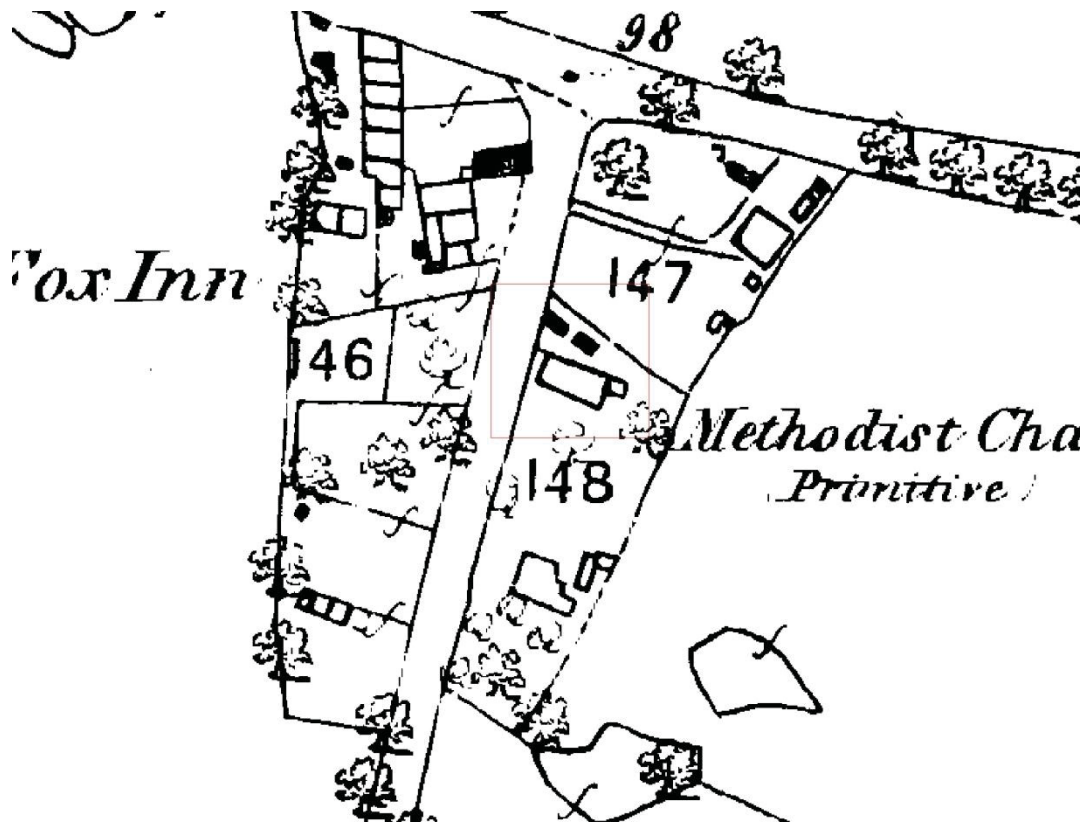


Figure 4. The First Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1884, showing the new chapel of 1873 as a simple rectangular structure with a small projection from its rear (eastern) gable. Two small detached sheds appear to lie in a small adjoining yard on the north.

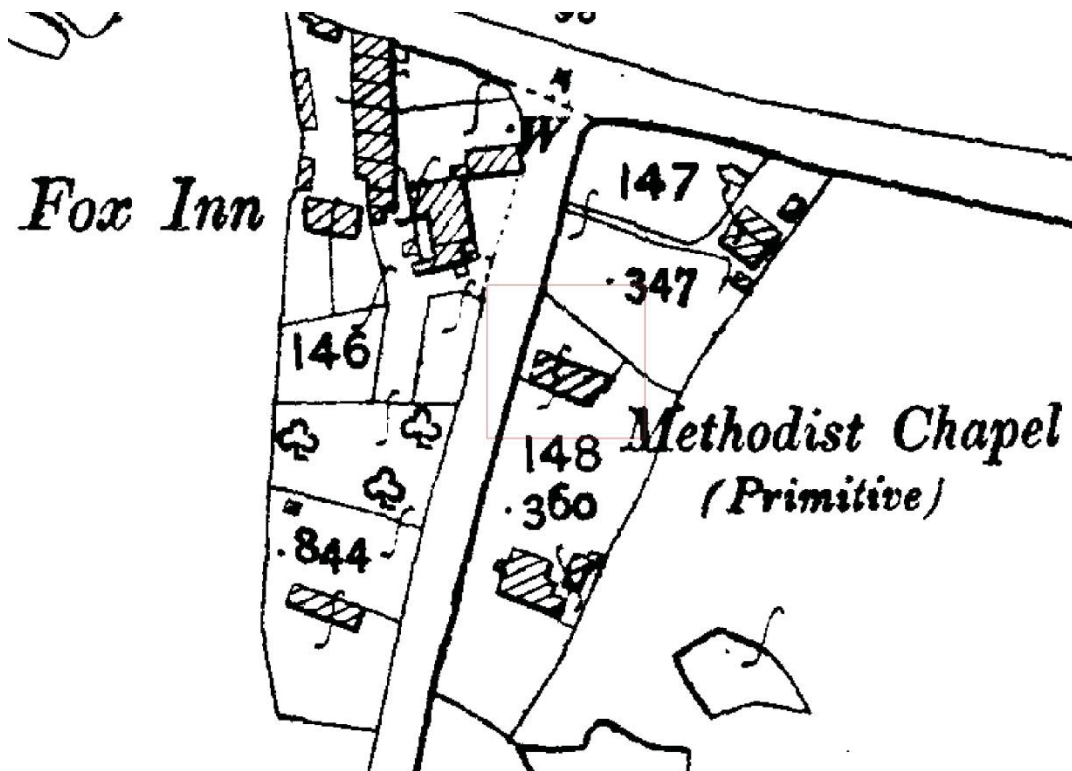
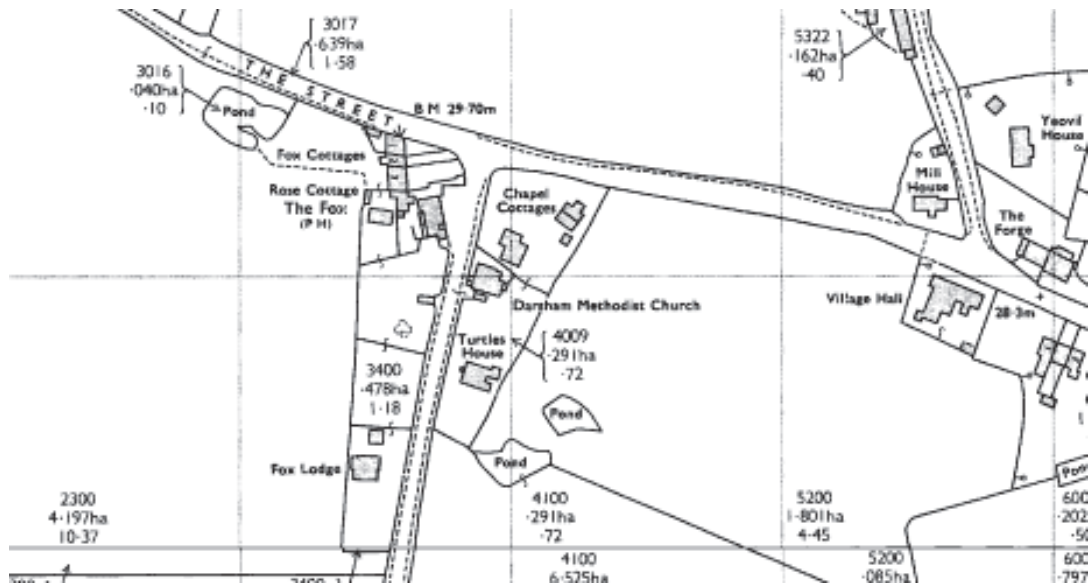


Figure 5. Second Edition 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1904. The two structures in the northern yard had disappeared but the Sunday School wing had not yet been added.



**Figure 6**

**The 25 inch Ordnance Survey of 1976.**

**The Sunday School wing is now visible to the north and a small porch projects from the western entrance of the original hall. The glazed entrance lobby had not yet appeared.**

The Ordnance Survey of 1976 shows the subsequent addition of a small porch to the western entrance of the 1873 hall, but the existing glazed entrance lobby which spans the entire western facade had yet to be built. The chapel closed in *circa* 2011 due to dwindling congregations and was sold at auction in 2013. A former lay preacher at the chapel who lives nearby reported that seating in the hall latterly took the form of plastic chairs that had been removed prior to inspection. A plain table with a candlestick stood on the raised dais to the east of the hall, which was separated from its body by a set of altar rails, and a wooden cross hung from the wall. The Sunday School building had been converted into a kitchen for social events prior to his arrival in the area some ten years before the closure, during which period he has seen no significant structural alterations. It should be noted that a small proportion of Methodist chapels possessed their own burial grounds which were often short-lived and poorly documented. It is therefore possible, albeit unlikely, that early inhumations may lie on the site of the small yard shown to the north of the original hall, i.e. beneath the Sunday School extension and the narrow area of surviving yard beyond it.



## Building Analysis

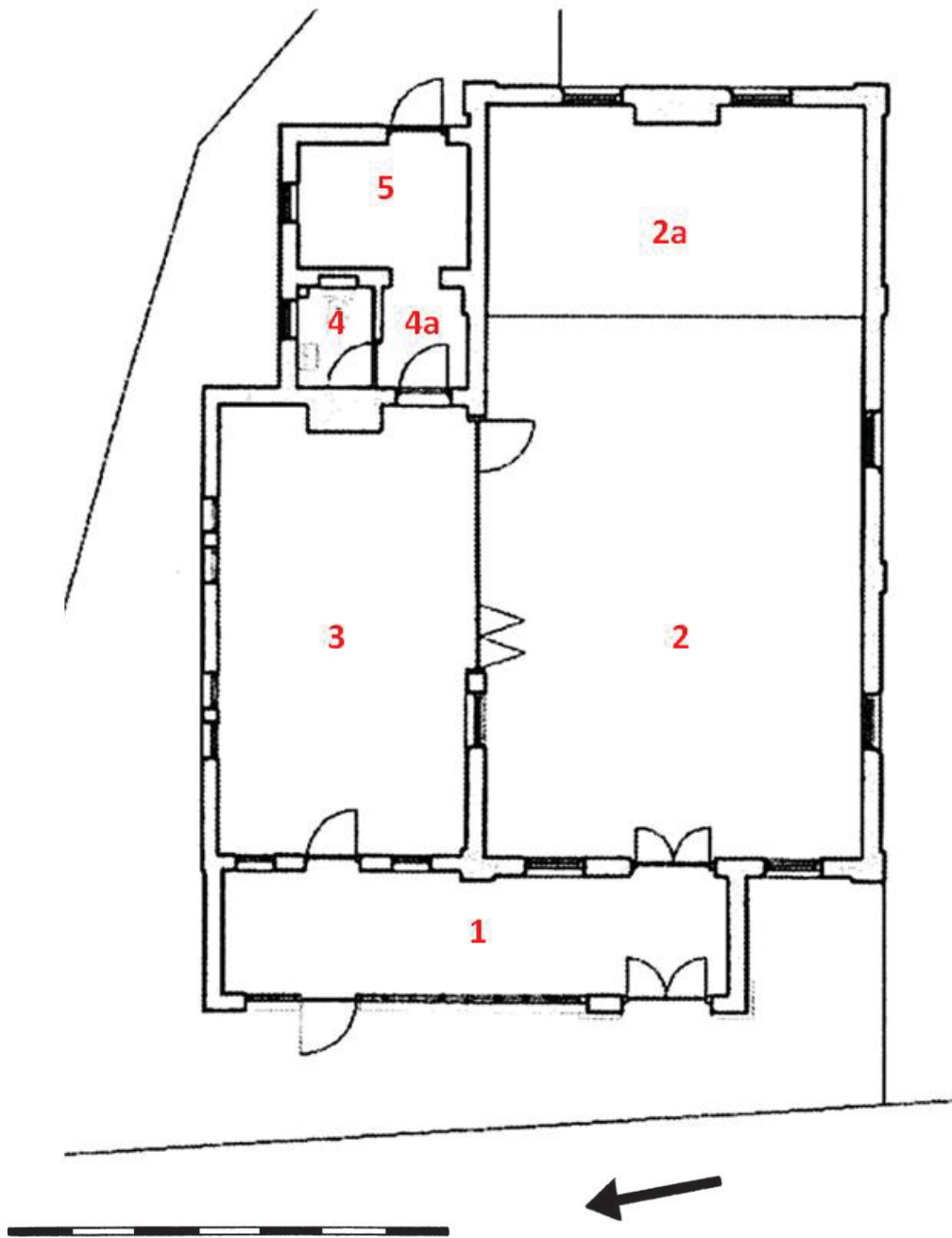


Figure 7

Ground plan of the building adapted from an estate agent's survey. Each structural phase is identified by a number for ease of reference in the text and photographic record. Scale in metres.

### Key

1. A late-20<sup>th</sup> century glazed lean-to entrance porch or lobby incorporating a narrow brick porch that initially protected only the original entrance door to the south and is visible in figure 6. The scar of the demolished northern wall and pitched roof of this earlier porch is visible to the left of the door, but the surviving brickwork of its western gable and southern elevation appears to have been rebuilt with reclaimed bricks in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century.

2. The original chapel of 1873. A red brick structure of irregular Monk bond (generally with two or three stretchers between each header) with gault brick dressing to all external features and a slate roof with original spiked ridge tiles. The building forms an undivided hall of 5.6 m in width by 11.75 m in length internally (18.5 ft by 38.5 ft). The walls rise to 3.6 m (12 ft) at the internal ceiling. The hall was originally lit by two arched windows with glazing bars in all elevations, the western windows flanking a central entrance door with an arched fan light. (The present glazed door is modern and the easternmost window of the northern elevation has been replaced by a folding screen of glazed doors adjoining the Sunday School extension.) The external western gable incorporates a stone plaque incised: 'PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL. 1873.' A similar plaque beneath the southernmost window of the same gable reads: 'R. BETTS, A.C. HALL (MINISTERS) W. NOY, G. HALL (CT STEWARDS)'. A raised dais of 23 cm (9 ins) in height extends by 3.3 m (10.75 ft) from the eastern gable and is understood to have been defined by altar rails prior to the chapel's closure. The internal walls are clad by stained pine wainscot that may be original to the building, and four stained pine benches abutted the walls to the west at the time of inspection. One bench incorporates a pull-out draw. These benches appear to date from the late-19<sup>th</sup> century and may be original to the building, but plastic chairs are understood to have filled the main floor immediately prior to closure. The walls are secured by iron tie-rods that may have been added when part of the northern wall was removed to accommodate the present glazed screen.

3. An extension wing of similar appearance to the original chapel but with single-pane sash windows and gault brick dressing confined to the arches of the central western entrance door and windows. Added in 1908 to accommodate a Sunday School as recorded by a stone plaque above the entrance: 'PRIMITIVE METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BUILT 1908'. Four foundation stones flanking the modern glazed door read from north to south (two on each side of the door):

'THIS STONE WAS LAID BY MR W. HOLMES ON BEHALF OF THE TRUSTEES MARCH 23<sup>rd</sup> 1908'

'THIS STONE WAS LAID BY MR JONAS CRISP AND MRS A.H. ALDRICH FOR THE SS AND CE MARCH 23<sup>rd</sup> 1908'

'THIS STONE WAS LAID BY MR NOAH ETHERIDGE MARCH 23<sup>RD</sup> 1908'

'THIS STONE WAS LAID BY MR & MRS A.H. ALDRICH MARCH 23<sup>RD</sup> 1908'

The interior forms a single space of 3.6 m in width by 7 m in length (12 ft by 23 ft) which now contains only a late-20<sup>th</sup> century fitted kitchen, and the folding screen adjoining the original hall is probably an addition of the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

4. A late-20<sup>th</sup> century red brick lean-to extension adjoining the rear gable of the Sunday School wing which contains a small WC (4) and adjoining passage (4a).

5. A late-20<sup>th</sup> century red brick flat-roofed extension adjoining the rear gable of the lean-to extension (5) and containing a rear lobby and fire door.

### Historic Significance

The Darsham chapel illustrates the isolated locations and diminutive proportions of some Primitive Methodist halls, and is accordingly of considerable historic significance. It also survives as a picturesque example of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Mock Gothic architecture, although considerably marred by its late-20<sup>th</sup> century glazed entrance porch. Its chief point of interest lies in its unusual number of inscribed foundation stones and plaques naming its founding ministers and circuit officials as well as financial benefactors. The interior has been largely stripped of original fixtures and fittings, however, and the building is not of sufficient age, completeness or architectural merit to 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 north showing triangular area of Cheney Green with chapel in rear to left & Fox Inn to right.
2. General view of site from south showing chapel to right & Fox Inn to left.
3. General view from north-west showing redundant Primitive Methodist chapel with spiked ridge tiles to roof.
4. Exterior from south-west showing later porch and lobby (1) to left.
5. Western facade showing gable of original hall of 1873 (2) to right & Sunday school extension (2) to left.
6. Detail of date plaque set in western gable of original hall (2). PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL. 1873.
7. Detail of plaque beneath southern window in western exterior of hall (2) naming original ministers and circuit stewards.
8. Detail of date plaque set in western gable of extension (3). PRIMITIVE METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BUILT 1908.
9. Southern external elevation showing original Mock Gothic windows and red brick fabric with gault brick dressing.
10. Exterior from north-west showing late-20th century lean-to glazed entrance lobby adjoining (1).
11. Northern exterior of Sunday School (2) wing showing original windows lacking glazing bars with lean-to extension (1) right.
12. Rear (eastern) gable of Sunday School wing (2) showing late-10th century extensions (4 & 5) to left.
13. Northern exterior of lean-to WC extension (4) with further flat-roofed extension (5) to left.
14. Eastern exterior of late-20th century extension (5) showing rear door & corner of original chapel (2) to left.
15. Rear (eastern) external gable of original chapel (2) seen from narrow fenced yard to north.
16. Rear (eastern) external gable of original chapel (1) showing twin original windows with glazing bars.
17. Enclosed garden to rear (east) of original chapel (1) viewed from north.

18. Interior of 20th century entrance porch (1) from south showing facade of Sunday School extension (3) in rear to right.
19. Interior of 20th century entrance porch from north showing glazed facade adjoining road.
20. Interior of 20th century entrance porch (1) from north showing facade of original hall (2) in rear to left.
21. Western external facade of original hall (2) showing scar of demolished narrow porch to left of door.
22. Detail of entrance to original hall (2) showing roof scar of demolished narrow porch to left of arch.
23. Symmetrical western external facade of Sunday School extension (3) showing junction with later porch roof (1).
24. Symmetrical western external facade of Sunday School extension (3) showing stone foundation plaques flanking door.
25. Detail of inscribed foundation stone to south of external door of 1908 Sunday School wing (3).
26. Detail of inscribed foundation stone to south of external door of 1908 Sunday School wing (3).
27. Interior of original hall (2) from dais to east showing wainscot panelling with western entrance in rear.
28. Interior of original hall (2) from western entrance showing dais to east with later glazed screen to Sunday School (3) on left.
29. Southern interior of original hall (1) showing stained pine wainscot with dais to left and 19th century pine bench to right.
30. Northern interior of original hall (1) showing 20th century folding screen doors to Sunday School extension (3).
31. Detail of portable pine bench with pull-put drawer at western end of northern interior of main hall (2).
32. Dais at eastern end of original hall (2) viewed from north-west showing possible enclosed heating flue between gable windows.
33. Dais at eastern end of original hall (2) viewed from south-west showing 3.3 m dais with access to Sunday School wing (3) on left.
34. Interior of Sunday School extension (3) from east showing modern fitted kitchen with screen to hall (1) on left.
35. Interior of Sunday School extension (3) from west showing modern fitted kitchen with screen to hall (1) on right.

36. Northern interior of Sunday School wing (3) showing fitted kitchen and original windows.
37. Southern interior of Sunday School wing (3) showing fitted kitchen & glazed screen to hall (1) with door to extension (4) to left.
38. Early-20th century glazed screen to hall (1) seen from Sunday School extension (3) to north.
39. Interior from west of late-20th century lean-to extension (4a) showing WC (4) to left and door to rear lobby (5) on right.
40. Internal floor area of late-20th century lean-to extension (4a) showing WC (4) to left.
41. Interior from south-west of WC (4) in late-20th century lean-to extension.
42. Interior of late-20th century flat-roofed extension from east showing door to lean-to extension (4a) with Sunday School (3) in rear.
43. Interior of late-20th century flat-roofed extension from west showing rear fire door in eastern gable.

*Photographic Appendix 2 follows on pp. 12-17*

**Appendix 2 (pp. 12-17): Selected Printed Photographs**



**Illus. 1. A general view of the hamlet from the north showing the triangular area identified in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as Cheney Green with the chapel in the rear to the left and the Fox Inn to the right.**



**Illus. 2. The exterior of the chapel from the south-west showing its twin gables with the late-20<sup>th</sup> century brick porch and glazed lobby extension (1) adjoining the road. Note the glazed cruciform window to the southern side of the porch.**



**Illus. 3. The western facade showing the wider gable of the original hall of 1873 (2) to the right and the smaller Sunday school extension of 1908 (2) to the left.**



**Illus. 4. A detail of the date plaque set in the western gable of the original hall (2).  
PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL. 1873.**



**Illus. 5. The plaque set beneath the southern window in the western exterior of the original hall (2) naming the original ministers and circuit stewards. R. BETTS, A.C. HALL (MINISTERS) W. NOY, G. HALL (CT STEWARDS)**



**Illus. 6. The interior from the north of the late-20th century entrance lobby and porch (1) showing the facade of the original hall (2) in the rear to the left and the matching Sunday School on the left. Both doors are modern.**





**Illus. 7. A detail of the inscribed foundation stones to the north of the external doorway of the 1908 Sunday School wing (3). THIS STONE WAS LAID BY MR W. HOLMES ON BEHALF OF THE TRUSTEES MARCH 23rd 1908 (left); THIS STONE WAS LAID BY MR JONAS CRISP AND MRS A.H. ALDRICH FOR THE SS AND CE MARCH 23rd 1908 (right).**



**Illus. 8. The interior of the original hall of 1873 (2) from the raised dais to the east showing its stained pine wainscot panelling with the 20<sup>th</sup> century glazed doors to the Sunday School extension on the right and the central western entrance in the rear.**



**Illus. 9.** The interior of the original hall (2) from its western entrance showing the dais to east in the rear. A number of moveable 19<sup>th</sup> century pine benches about the walls but the seating consisted of portable chairs immediately prior to the chapel's recent closure. Altar rails lay on the dais with a plain table bearing a candlestick. A wooden cross was attached to the wall.



**Illus. 10.** The northern interior of the original hall (1) showing the 20th century folding screen doors to the Sunday School extension (3) and a pair of stained pine benches to the left.



**Illus. 11.** The interior of the 1980 Sunday School extension (3) from the east showing the modern fitted kitchen with the screen adjoining the original hall (1) on the left. The arched windows flanking the western entrance and in the northern elevation to the right are entirely original but lack the glazing bars found in those of 1873.



**Illus. 12.** The northern exterior of the late-20<sup>th</sup> century lean-to WC extension (4) with the eastern gable of the Sunday School (3) on the right and the additional flat-roofed extension (5) which forms a rear lobby on the left. The site is closely confined by the property boundaries of the adjoining 20<sup>th</sup> century houses.



## Appendix 3

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**OASIS ID: suffolkc1-164609**

#### Project details

Project name	Historic Building recording of the Primitive Methodist Chapel at Darsham, Suffolk
Short description of the project	The former Primitive Methodist chapel at Darsham lies 1 km west of the main village. This area was formerly a small medieval green known as China Green on Hodskinson's Map of 1783. The chapel was built in 1873 and originally consisted of a small rectangular hall of just 5.6 m in width by 11.75 m in length (18.5 ft by 38.5 ft). A matching extension was added to the north in 1908 to accommodate a Sunday School, dated by a plaque in its gable, but the attractive Mock Gothic facade of red brick with gault brick dressing is now largely obscured by a late-20th century glazed entrance lobby. There is a small possibility that the yard on which this extension was built may have been used for a short time as a burial ground. The chapel closed due to dwindling congregations in circa 2011 and had been stripped of its altar rails and chairs by the time of inspection, but four remaining benches of stained pine may be original features. The Sunday School now accommodates a late-20th century fitted kitchen. The building's chief point of historic interest lies in its unusual number of inscribed foundation stones and plaques which date its two principal elements and name the founding ministers and circuit officials as well as various financial benefactors. Despite its relatively unaltered exterior, which retains most of its original arched windows, the chapel is not of sufficient age, completeness or architectural merit to meet the English Heritage criteria for listing.
Project dates	Start: 28-11-2013 End: 16-12-2013
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	DAR 028 - Sitecode
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	CHAPEL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Photographic Survey"
Prompt	Planning condition

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK SUFFOLK COASTAL DARSHAM Primitive Methodist Chapel, Fox Lane, Darsham

Study area 100.00 Square metres  
 Site coordinates TM 4140 7011 52 1 52 16 31 N 001 32 20 E Point  
 Height OD / Depth Min: 25.00m Max: 25.50m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service  
 Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body  
 Project design originator Richard Hoggett  
 Project director/manager David Gill  
 Project supervisor Leigh Alston  
 Type of sponsor/funding body Land owner  
 Name of sponsor/funding body Miss Susie Gazzard

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No  
 Digital Archive recipient Suffolk County SMR  
 Digital Contents "Survey"  
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Text"  
 Paper Archive recipient Suffolk County SMR  
 Paper Contents "Survey"  
 Paper Media available "Report"

### Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)  
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