

**BAPTIST CHAPEL
HIGH STREET
THURLEIGH
BEDFORDSHIRE**

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD

Albion
archaeology



**BAPTIST CHAPEL
HIGH STREE
THURLEIGH
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Preface

All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and was prepared solely for the benefit of the client. The material contained in this report does not necessarily stand on its own and should not be relied upon by any third party. This document should not be used for any other purpose without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and the prior written authority of Albion Archaeology (a trading unit of Central Bedfordshire Council). Any person/party relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Albion Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Albion Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the persons/party by whom it was commissioned. This document is limited by the state of knowledge at the time it was written.

The building assessment survey was undertaken by Mark Phillips (Project Officer), who is the author of the report. The project was managed on behalf of Albion Archaeology by Hester Cooper-Reade (Business Manager).

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Key Terms

Throughout this project design the following terms or abbreviations are used:

Albion	Albion Archaeology
BARS	Bedfordshire Archives and Record Service
BBC	Bedford Borough Council
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-Technical Summary

Bedford Borough Council granted planning consent (18/01794/FUL) for the conversion of the Baptist Chapel, High Street, Thurleigh into four flats. The Officer's report noted that harm would be caused to the non-designated heritage asset owing to the subdivision of the chapel and the loss of some internal features. A condition was attached to the planning permission requiring a programme of historic building recording. A Written Scheme of Investigation was produced by Albion Archaeology and approved by the local planning authority. Albion was commissioned by the owners of the building to carry out the historic building recording, the results of which form the subject of the present report.

The first Baptist Chapel in Thurleigh was built in 1827 and it was enlarged in 1841 and again in 1849. Due to a need for a larger chapel and provision of a school room, the old chapel was demolished and the present building erected on the same site in 1888.

The building is T-shaped in plan, with a double-height chapel forming the front part and a two-storey school room block at the rear. There are three entrances, comprising double doors in the south end of the chapel and two doors in the south side of the lower school room. It is in brick with some stone details. The south elevation is in an Italianate style with round arches, keystones, projecting quoins a broken pediment gable and some gauged brickwork.

The interior of the chapel had a lobby formed by a partially glazed timber screen. Originally the gallery was accessed by stairs at either end of the lobby but at some time one of the stairs was removed. The interior fittings of the chapel were in varnished pine. The lower school room is accessed by two doors in the north wall of the chapel to either side of the pulpit. A roller shutter across the middle of the lower school room was installed as part of the original construction and allowed the room to be subdivided into two rooms. The upper school room is access by a stair in the north-east corner of the building.

The chapel was a single phase building with minor 20th century alterations and additions. A single-storey extension on the east end of the school room block contained a kitchen and toilet. During World War II the iron railings around the building were requisitioned. Repairs to the roof include the replacement of slates with concrete tiles and the removal of the stonework of the pediment on the south gable end.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Background to the Report**

Bedford Borough Council (BBC) granted planning consent (18/01794/FUL) for the conversion of the Baptist Chapel, High Street, Thurleigh into four flats. The Officer's report noted that harm would be caused to the non-designated heritage asset, to a less than substantial degree; owing to the subdivision of the chapel and the loss of some internal features. Having considered paragraph 197 of the NPPF which sets out that a balanced judgement would be required having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the asset, it was felt that the harm caused would be acceptable, given the benefits arising from the proposal. The planning authority felt that there was sufficient justification to grant planning permission. However, the harm caused to the asset could be mitigated through a programme of historic building recording. Accordingly a condition (10) was attached to the planning permission as follows:

No development shall take place until a building recording strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall include a timetable and the following components (the completion of each to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority will result in a separate confirmation of compliance for each component):- (i) building recording fieldwork; (ii) a post-recording assessment report (to be submitted within six months of the completion of recording); (iii) preparation of site archive ready for deposition at a store approved by the Local Planning Authority, completion of an archive report, and submission of a publication report (to be completed within two years of the completion of recording). The recording strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timings.

REASON: To ensure the proper recording, reporting and presentation of heritage assets affected by this development, in accordance with Saved Policies BE24 & BE25 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2002, Policy CP23 of the Bedford Borough Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan (2008) and according to national policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2018). The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the timing of compliance is fundamental to the development permitted and that the permission ought to be refused unless the condition is imposed in this form.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by Albion Archaeology and approved by the local planning authority (Albion 2019). Albion was commissioned by the owners of the building to carry out the historic building recording, the results of which form the subject of the present report.



1.2 Site Location and Description

The chapel is located on the north side of Thurleigh High Street, on a corner location at the junction with Keysoe Road, OS grid ref: TL05560,58490 (Figure 1). The building stands in the eastern half of a plot which covers an area of approximately 550sq. meters. At the time of the survey, many of the internal fittings associated with the use of the building as a chapel had already been removed. Photographs taken by the current owner show the former contents of the building.

1.3 Objectives

This type of building is not mentioned in connection with a specific research aim in the regional archaeological research agenda (Medlycott 2011). However the importance of recording non-listed, post-1840 buildings and undertaking thematic studies of different building types is stressed.

The research agenda for Bedfordshire notes the risk to chapels through conversion, specifically the damage to internal spaces by the insertion of floors (Edgeworth 2007 p.126). Historically these buildings were often not recorded prior to conversion. The building has local significance and is recognised as having historic and evidential value. This survey will add important new information to the current knowledge of this building type in Bedfordshire.

1.4 Methodology

The report forms a record of the buildings in accordance with the requirements of the planning condition and the methodology set out in the WSI approved by the planning authority.

The building was recorded by means of a photographic survey accompanied by a written and drawn record in accordance with the requirements of relevant elements of a Level 3 survey as defined by Historic England (2016).



2. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 *Historical Background*

Much of the historical documentary information on the Thurleigh Baptist Chapel is held by the County Record Office in Bedford (Ref. X349). This includes: the church book covering the period 1837-1866 (X349/1); the minutes book for 1861-1941 (X349/2) and the minutes book for c.1930s - 1970s.

The first Baptist Chapel in Thurleigh was built in 1827. It was enlarged in 1841, to approximately double its former size and opened for worship on July 21.¹ It was further enlarged in 1849 (X349/2 p.43).

The evidence from historic maps (see below) shows the church has occupied a restricted sized plot and consequently did not have an attached burial ground. During the 1860s land was sought for a burial ground (X349/1, p.137). In June 1884 an offer of land by the Anglican vicar Rev. Benjamin Trapp was turned down as unsuitable (X349/2).

Discussions about the need for a new schoolroom and restoration of the chapel took place in 1884. Plans for a new chapel and schoolroom were presented in May 1886 (X349/2). Demolition of the old chapel had begun on May 14th 1888.

An article published in the Bedfordshire Times and Independent newspaper (30th June 1888) describes the laying of foundation stones on Monday 25th June 1888 during construction of the new chapel (X349/2). This article includes information on the building. The architect was Mr F. T. Mercer and the building contractors were D. Ellwood & Son from Sandy in Bedfordshire. The building was to be of red brick, pointed in blue-black mortar. It also mentions a glazed vestibule in the entrance with two staircases up to the gallery. The room behind the chapel would be divided with a revolving shutter to allow the room to be used for different purposes. As part of the proceedings a bazaar was held in a temporary wooden building that had been erected in a field as a place of worship while the new chapel was under construction. The memorial stones were laid on the south-west and south-east corners of the school room block and the corners at the south end of the chapel. The article states that the foundation stones were laid by: Miss Farley on the western corner; Rev. E.J. Farley at the other corner; Rev. G. Chandler and the fourth stone by Mr J. Philpot in memory of the late Mr J. Busby, former superintendent of the Sunday school. After the stones had been laid, people deposited offerings of money on top of them, which raised a total of £113 18s. 1½p. This included a donation of £50 from the Rev. Farley, as an offering of thanks for having survived an earthquake the previous year (see Section 3.2.2). The four stones are still present on the church today but have been badly eroded and the inscriptions are now mostly illegible.

¹ The Baptist Magazine, 1841, p.572



The article in the Bedfordshire Times and Independent also noted that the front fencing and “out-offices” (outside toilets) although very much required were not included in the construction contract due to lack of funds at the time.

The building opened on the November 13th 1888.

The church books and minutes record various repairs. In August 1892 Mr Gale of Bedford was asked to estimate for painting windows and varnishing doors (X349/2). The building was renovated to mark the 50th anniversary of its construction, being reopened on 27th October 1935 (X349/3). The iron railings around the chapel were removed after being requisitioned in February 1943 (X349/3). Electricity was installed in the chapel and manse in 1947 (X349/3). New entrance gates were installed in the chapel and manse in 1949.

Estimates for repairs in 1955 include renewing the chapel windows with leaded lights, repair of the smaller organ and a request for a further report on the state of the larger organ in the gallery (X349/3).

A quotation for re-roofing of the chapel, renewing perished stonework, renewing gutting and rainwater pipe was accepted in August 1972 (X349/3).

2.2 Cartographic Evidence

2.2.1 1808 enclosure map (not illustrated)

The 1808 Thurleigh enclosure map shows a rectangular close with its long side on the High Street, extending up to the junction with Keysoe Road (BARS ref: MAT47). The plot shown on this map corresponds to the location of the cottages shown on later maps.

2.2.2 1835 Old Series Ordnance Survey (not illustrated)

The first published Ordnance Survey map for Thurleigh is sheet LII in the ‘Old Series’, published in 1835. This is a small scale map at one inch to the mile which simply shows one rectangle as an indication of buildings at this location.

2.2.3 1883 25 inch Ordnance Survey (Figure 2)

This map was surveyed in 1883 and published in 1884 (Bedfordshire sheet VII-12). This map shows a rectangular building, labelled as ‘Baptist Chapel (Particular)’ on the site of the current chapel. To the west of the chapel the plan shows a row of buildings set back slightly from the High Street. The east end of the row continued almost up to the side of the chapel, extending into what is now the grassed area attached to the chapel. The buildings presumably represent a row of cottages.

2.2.4 1900 25 inch Ordnance Survey (Figure 3)

The second edition 25 inch OS map was revised in 1900 and published in 1901 (Bedfordshire sheet VII-12). This map shows the present chapel building with the T-shaped plan formed by the school room attached to the north end of the chapel. As shown on the previous edition, a row of buildings extended close to the west side of the chapel.



2.2.5 1950 6 inch Ordnance Survey (not illustrated)

The 1950 6-inch OS map shows no significant changes, with buildings still located close to the west side of the chapel (Bedfordshire sheet VII. south-east, revised 1950, published 1952).

2.3 Historic images

Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service have several historic postcard images of the chapel dating from between c.1900 and 1920. Two of these have been selected to illustrate the building prior to 20th century alterations (Figure 4 and Figure 5).

The images show a boundary wall topped with iron railings and gate. The railings were removed after being requisitioned during World War II. The postcards also show original details of the windows and roof. As first built the window glazing had margins filled with tinted, coloured glass.

The historic postcard images show that the raised section of the boundary wall at the north-east corner of the building was present by the early 1900s. These images appear to show that this part of the wall enclosed a roof, sloping down towards the east end of the school room. Presumably this was a lean-to structure for outside toilets (mentioned in 1888 as the planned 'outside offices' which did not form part of the original construction contract).

Details of the roof shown on the postcards include: a projecting stone pediment on south gable with stone blocks at the ridge and eaves (acroteria); a metal vent in the centre of the ridge of the chapel roof and chimneys on the rear wall of the schoolroom block. All of these details on the roof have been removed during later repairs and the original slate roof replaced with concrete interlocking tiles.



3. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

3.1 Introduction

Throughout the project the standards set in the *CIfA Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings and Structures* (2014) and English Heritage's *Understanding Historic Buildings* (2016) have been adhered to. All work has been done in accordance with the *CIfA Code of conduct* (2014).

The following text should be read in conjunction with floor plans (Figure 6) and images (1 to 43), all of which are bound at the back of the report.

3.2 Exterior and Plan

The building is T-shaped in plan, with a double-height chapel forming the front part and a two-storey school room block at the rear/north (Images 1 to 4). There are three entrances into building, with double doors in the south end of the chapel and two doors in the south side of the lower school room.

Gabled roof over the chapel has a plain tile verge at the south front, at the north end this roof is stepped down in a hip to join the slightly lower apex of the roof over the rear school room block. The roof is clad with modern (20th century) concrete interlocking tiles

The exterior doors in the school room block have recently been replaced with modern units. All of the windows were replaced quite recently, while the building was still in use as a chapel (c. 2011, pers. com present owner). The window frames were replaced with modern timber and internal window architraves were replaced in new timber.

3.2.1 Front (south) Elevation

This is the most architecturally elaborate elevation with projecting brick quoins and a decorative treatment to the door and windows (Images 5 to 7). The brickwork is in an evenly fired orange-red brick with gauged/rubbed brick details. At the base is a brick plinth with a plain chamfer, approximately 500mm above ground level on this side where the ground rises slightly towards the street frontage.

A wider central bay contains the main entrance with a large window above. The door is flanked by sections in rubbed brick. Each of these has plain chamfered edges and a central V- groove to form a simple double pilaster. Above the door is a semi-circular arch with a keystone and a contrasting course in rubbed brick. Both the keystone and panels in the spandrels are finished with a reticulated pattern. The double doors are typical late 19th fittings with raised and fielded panels and bolection mouldings around the edges of the panels. Above the doorway is datestone with raised lettering which reads 'BAPTIST CHAPEL AD 1888'. The large window above is a two-light window with a small circular light in the head under a semi-circular gauged brick arch. This has an expanded decorative keystone with reticulated rustication.



The bays to either side have windows similar to those in the east and west elevations (see below) but with a more decorative treatment. In this elevation panels below the windows are made from rubbed brick, with a plain sunk field framed by a simple moulded surround. The lower windows have wide stone sills supported by small corbels at either end. The upper windows have gauged brick arches with keystones, also decorated with reticulated rustication.

3.2.1 West Elevation

This elevation faces the grassed area to the side of the chapel (Image 8). The walls have a shallow offset plinth with a plain chamfer approximately 700mm above ground level. The brickwork is in Flemish bond, but appears slightly irregular in places where multiple headers or cut bricks have been used.

This elevation has projecting two-bay section at the left, which is the school room, and a four-bay section with wider spaced windows which forms the chapel. The arrangement of the windows in both the west and east is the same. The ground floor windows have projecting sills and a plain chamfered stone lintel in the head. A recessed brick panel between the upper and lower windows is made with horizontal and vertical bricks forming a simple pattern. The upper windows have a semi-circular brick arch. The projecting schoolroom section has a small circular window above in the gable.

In the short return formed by the south side of the school room the ground floor door and the first floor window have keystones and the door has a simple moulding as the springing of the arch. The external doors in the schoolroom are recent modern replacements.

3.2.1 North Elevation

This is a blank windowless wall (Images 2 and 4). At roof level there is no indication of chimneys corresponding with the internal stacks in this wall. It is presumed that chimneys have been removed, possibly when the building was re-roofed using concrete tiles.

3.2.1 East Elevation

This elevation matches the west side of the building, with the addition of a small flat-roofed later extension at the north end (Images 1 and 2). The extension is enclosed by a curving section of the boundary perimeter wall, raised in steps above the rest of the boundary wall. The ground floor windows of the schoolroom have been converted to form door openings into the extension. The upper part of the left-hand window (as seen in the exterior elevation) has been glazed with glass bricks while the upper part of the other window has been blocked with brickwork. The front (south) wall of the extension appears to be a 20th century construction, with a damp proof course and a top-hinged window.

3.2.2 Foundation Stones

Four foundation stones on the building are located at the south-east and south-west corners of the school room and chapel. These are in limestone which is



badly weathered in places, rendering large parts of the inscriptions illegible. The inscriptions are as follows:

South-west corner of Chapel:

The west face of the stone has a long inscription, most of which is largely illegible. It finishes; AT MENTON... 23 FEB... [illegible]... E.J. FARLEY ..[illegible]. On the south face of the same stone is inscribed; THIS STONE [illegible]th JUNE 18[illegible].

The contemporary newspaper article on the stone laying ceremony reports that the Rev. E.J. Farley talked about being thankful that he and his daughter survived a terrible earthquake at Mentone the previous year. The fragmentary remains of the inscription are clearly a reference to this event. On the 23rd February 1887 an earthquake and tsunami hit the French and Italian Riviera, resulting in the deaths of at least 600 people.

South-east corner of Chapel:

It reads; THIS STONE WAS LAID BY [illegible] 25th JUNE 1888.

South-west corner of School Room:

It reads; THIS STONE WAS LAID BY [illegible] BY SPECIAL REQUEST OF T. SYKES, DEACON.

South-east corner of School Room:

The stone on this corner of the School Room is partially obscured by the brickwork of a later extension and the inscription has been partly restored using cement. It reads; THIS STONE WAS LAID...IN MEMORY OF [restored-JOSEPH BUSBY][illegible]..OF THIS SCHOOL...[illegible] ...OF HIS SCHOLAR..

3.3 Interior

The internal plan comprises a north-south aligned double height chapel with the upper and lower school rooms to the north (Figure 6). The lower school room has a later extension at its east end containing a kitchen and a toilet. Internal circulation is formed by two doors in the north end of the chapel which link this space with the lower school room. A stair in the north-east corner of the building links the upper and lower school rooms.

3.3.1 Chapel

The chapel is a double-height space which is 11m long, 6.68m wide and 6.23m high from floor to ceiling. It is accessed by double doors in the south front and there are two internal doors at the north end into the lower school room. It had three rows of pews on the ground floor with a pulpit against the north wall with a baptistry in front. A gallery which extended around three sides was accessed from a stair in the south-east corner of the chapel.

The floor has a section of black and cream coloured tiles in the lobby area inside the south doors (Image 17). In the main part of chapel the floor is made from pine floorboards forming a suspended floor (Image 12). It was arranged



in two aisles between three rows of raised bases for pews. The pew bases are raised 80mm above the floor level. A plain-chamfered timber along the aisle-sides of the bases is mortised for the pew ends.

The lower parts of the walls on the ground floor and gallery were lined with wainscot. At the time of the survey a small area of the wainscot, next to the south door, remained in situ (Image 17). This was made with bead-edged tongue and groove. Elsewhere the location of the former wainscot is indicated by bare brick walls. Above the level of the wainscot the walls are plastered and painted white. The plaster is incised with lines to imitate ashlar stonework. In the south-east corner of the chapel, where the stairs have been removed, traces of light blue paint were visible beneath the white, indicating an earlier paint scheme (Image 16).

The plaster ceiling is in four bays, divided by three transverse ceiling beams. These have a plain chamfer and applied mouldings attached to the sides of the beams. The roof space was not accessed during the survey but the presence of a bolted fixing at the centre of the ceiling beams indicates a probable kingpost roof structure. At their ends the beams are supported by decorative volute corbels (Image 19). Applied mouldings on the sides of the beams continue around the sides of the ceiling. In the southernmost bay, the plaster ceiling slopes upwards towards the south in order to accommodate the height of the central window at this end.

Internal doors in the north wall, to either side of the pulpit, give access to the lower school room. These are framed four-panel doors with diagonally set tongue and groove board panels (Image 10).

The gallery had been removed prior to the survey but was photographed by the owners prior to its removal (Images 20 to 27). It was accessed by stairs in the south-east corner of the chapel.

Evidence indicated a matching stair in the south-east of the chapel that had been removed during an earlier phase of alterations. Missing plaster near the south end of the west wall corresponds to the position of the wall string for the stair (Image 13). Images taken before the gallery was removed show a matchboard panel with a slightly darker finish to the rest of the woodwork which had been inserted to block the top of the removed stair (Image 27).

The gallery was supported by four cast iron columns set on brick foundations beneath the suspended floor. These have acanthus type decoration on the capitals (Image 18).

The baptistry in front of the pulpit is a rectangular tank, 2.1m long by 1.2m wide, accessed by steps in the east and west ends (Image 14). When not in used it was covered by removal floor panels supported by two removable joists.

At the time of the survey most of the internal fittings in the chapel had already been stripped out. This included wainscot lining, the gallery and gallery stairs,



pews and a partially glazed timber panel which formed a lobby area by the south door. The details of the woodwork are shown in images taken by the present owners prior to its removal (Images 20 to 27). All of the woodwork was in varnished pine. The area in front of the pulpit was surrounded by a balustrade with thin turned balusters and square newel posts. The pulpit was accessed by stairs on its west side by a stair with a matching balustrade and an open string with decorative brackets.

Two memorial tablets on the north wall of the chapel commemorate Rev. Ebenezer Farley (Image 42) and Rev. George Chandler (Image 43).

3.3.2 Lower School Room

This room is 11m long and 4m wide (Images 28 to 31). It is accessed by external doors in the south wall and two internal doors link it with the chapel. It is lit by windows in the west wall. Two chimney breasts in the north wall indicate the location of former fireplaces. A roller shutter in the middle of the room can be used to divide the space into two equal sized rooms.

The floor is in narrow, varnished pine floorboards.

The walls have traces of inscribed lines imitating ashlar stonework, but this has been partially obscured in places by re-plastering or repairs. The walls are painted in off-white/cream colour apart from on the stairs where the section below a dado rail is painted in a bright light blue (Image 31). Much of the woodwork in this room is painted pale light blue; including the woodwork enclosing the stair, two doors in the east wall and the eastern door into the chapel.

Doors in this room comprise two external doors in the south wall, two doors internal doors into the chapel (Image 30), a plain four panel door on a cupboard under the stairs and two modern flush doors to a kitchen and toilet off the east end of the room (Image 31). The external doors are modern units which have been recently fitted. The internal doors in the chapel are framed panel doors, included above in the description of the chapel.

Stairs in the north-east corner of the room lead to the upper school room. This is an L-shaped corner stair with a winder section at the base and two straight flights with winder steps at the corner (Image 31). A short length of balustrade on the lower part of the stair has a plain square newel post and stick balusters.

Two former fireplaces on the north wall have been blocked up and plastered over (Image 29). The chimney breasts remain in place with small hearth stones in the floor.

A roller shutter across the middle of the room enables the room to be divided into two equal-sized rooms. It is supported on short walls projecting from the north and south walls of the room and it rolls up into a box on the east side of the partition.



At the east end of the room are flush doors opening into a kitchen and toilet in modern single storey extension.

There are two memorials on the north wall in the west half of the room. One located to the left of the western chimney breast commemorates Rev. Samuel Wells (Image 40). The other, located to the right of the same chimney breast, commemorates Rev. William Crockford (Image 39).

3.3.3 Upper School Room

This room is 11m long and 4m wide and is accessed by stairs from the lower school room (Images 32 to 37). It is lit by windows in the east and west walls. Internal openings in the south wall form a gallery overlooking the chapel. There are two fireplaces on the north wall.

The floor is in narrow, unvarnished pine floorboards.

The walls are plastered and inscribed with lines to imitate ashlar stonework. A dado rail fixed to the wall just below window sill level is a bolection moulding. The skirting boards are c.180mm deep with a plain chamfer. The majority of the woodwork and the lower part of the walls are painted light blue with cream for the rest of the walls and white on the window architraves.

The stairs in the north-east corner of the room have a balustrade with plain newel posts, stick balusters and a simple handrail (Image 35).

Two fire places on the north wall have cast iron grates with narrow openings and a semi-circular arched top (Image 36). The decoration on the grates consists of two bands with a repeating pattern of a floral motif separated ribbons. A timber fire surround is in plain timber with a simple bead-moulding on the edges with a plain mantelshelf.

In the middle of the south wall a row of three arched openings give a view of the chapel (Image 37). The openings have a semi-circular arched head and the lower part is filled by a timber panel. Roller shutters fixed above each opening can be closed to separate the upper school room from the chapel. The shutters are made of wooden slats. A makers plate on each shutter reads "SAM^L HASKINS & BRO^S 24 OLD S^T. LONDON",

The ceiling has a flat central section and sloping soffits along the north and south sides (Image 34). Three roof trusses are partly exposed below the plaster ceiling; comprising lower ends of the principal rafters, underside of collar beams and horizontal and vertical metal rods. The horizontal rod, serving as a tiebeam, is threaded through a loop in the end of the vertical rod.

A single memorial tablet located towards the east end of the south wall commemorates Joseph Busby (Image 41).



3.4 Memorials

There were six memorial tablets at the time of the survey, two in the Chapel, three in the Lower School Room and one in the Upper School Room. The location of the memorials is marked on the floor plans (Figure 6, locations A to E). The texts are transcribed in Appendix 2.

3.5 Summary and Conclusion

The first Baptist Chapel in Thurleigh was built in 1827 and it was enlarged in 1841 and again in 1849. Due to a need for a larger chapel and provision of a school room, the old chapel was demolished and the present building erected on the same site in 1888.

The building is T-shaped in plan, with a double-height chapel forming the front part and a two-storey school room block at the rear. There are three entrances, comprising double doors in the south end of the chapel and two doors in the south side of the lower school room. It is in brick with some stone details. The south elevation is in an Italianate style with round arches, keystones, projecting quoins a broken pediment gable and some gauged brickwork.

The interior of the chapel had a lobby formed by a partially glazed timber screen. Originally the gallery was accessed by stairs at either end of the lobby but at some time one of the stairs was removed. The interior fittings of the chapel were in varnished pine. The lower school room is accessed by two doors in the north wall of the chapel to either side of the pulpit. A roller shutter across the middle of the lower school room was installed as part of the original construction and allowed the room to be subdivided into two rooms. The upper school room is access by a stair in the north-east corner of the building.

The chapel was a single phase building with minor 20th century alterations and additions. A single-storey extension on the east end of the school room block contained a kitchen and toilet. During World War II the iron railings around the building were requisitioned. Repairs to the roof included the replacement of slates with concrete tiles and the removal of the stonework of the pediment on the south gable end.



4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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5. APPENDIX 1: DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

The following table lists the documentary sources consulted at the Bedfordshire Archives and Records Service.

Reference	Description	Date
X349/1	Thurleigh Baptist church book	1837 – 1866
X349/2	Thurleigh Baptist church minute book	1861 – 1929
X349/3	Thurleigh Baptist church minute book	1930 – 1979
X349/29	Brief note by the Rev. J.C. Shildrick on the history of Thurleigh Baptist Church	c.1929
X349/47	Thurleigh Baptist Church 1807 – 1988 by L.M. Wildman	1988
X396/241	Postcard: Thurleigh Baptist Chapel, postmark 1905	c.1905
X396/241b	Postcard: Thurleigh Baptist Chapel, postmark 1905	c.1905
X396/242	Postcard: Thurleigh Baptist Chapel	n.d.
Z1306/122/5/1	Postcard: Thurleigh, view of front of Baptist Chapel. Postmark 29 July 1907	1907
Z1306/122/5/2	Postcard: Bolnhurst Road Thurleigh, view looking east. Postmark 19 August 1907	1907
Z1306/122/5/3	Postcard: The Chapel Thurleigh, view of chapel from the east. Postmarked 1920	1920
OS 25” 65 1st	Ordnance survey, First edition 25inch map, Bedfordshire sheet VII-12	1884
OS 25” 65 2nd	Ordnance survey, Second edition 25inch map, Bedfordshire sheet VII-12	1901



6. APPENDIX 2: MEMORIAL TABLETS

The memorial tablets are transcribed below and the locations are marked A to E on Figure 6.

6.1.1 Sarah Emma Chandler

Memorial located on south wall of Lower School Room (Image 38), (A on Figure 6).

THIS TABLET WAS ERECTED BY FRIENDS OF THE
CHURCH
AND SUNDY SCHOOL
TO THE LOVING MEMORY OF
SARAH EMMA CHANDLER,
(ELDEST DAUGHTER OF THE LATE REV. G. CHANDLER,)
IN RECOGNITION OF HER FAITHFUL AND DEVOTED
SERVICES AS TEACHER OF THE YOUNG MENS
BIBLE CLASS FOR 36 YEARS,
WHO ENTERED INTO REST, JANUARY 27TH 1918,
AFTER A LONG AND PAINFUL ILLNESS PATIENTLY BORNE.

6.1.2 Rev. Samuel Wells

Memorial located on north wall of Lower School Room (Image 39), (B on Figure 6).

IN
AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE
OF THE
REV. SAMUEL WELLS,
WHO WAS 24 YEARS PASTOR OF
THIS CHURCH, DURING WHICH
TIME IT WAS TWICE ENLARGED
HE DEPARTED THIS LIFE
NOVEMBER 23RD 1860.
AGED 60 YEARS.
“LET ME DIE THE DEATH FO THE
RIGHTEOUS AND LET MY LAST END
BE LIKE HIS”



6.1.3 Rev. William Crockford

Memorial located on north wall of Lower School Room (Image 40), (C on Figure 6).

SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF THE
REV. WILLIAM CROCKFORD,
WHO WAS THE FIRST MINISTER OF THIS PLACE OF WORSHIP,
AND
THROUGH WHOSE PIOUS ZEAL IT WAS ERECTED;
AND IN WHICH TO THE CLOSE OF HIS EARTHLY CAREER
HE CONTINUED
AFFECTIONATELY, FAITHFULLY AND SUCCESSFULLY
TO PREACH THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS;
WHEN AFTER A FEW DAYS ILLNESS
DURING WHICH HE ENJOYED STRONG CONSOLATION
AND GOOD HOPE THROUGH GRACE,
HE ENTERED INTO REST
ON THE 12TH DAY OF AUGUST 1836,
IN THE 78TH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

“Mark the perfect man. and behold the upright:
for the end of that man is peace.”

6.1.4 Joseph Busby

Memorial located on south wall of Upper School Room (Image 41), (D on Figure 6).

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED BY FRIENDS,
IN LOVING MEMORY OF
JOSEPH BUSBY, WHO FOR 57 YEAR WAS A MOST
CONSISTENT MEMBER OF THIS CHURCH; HE WAS A TRUE
FRIEND OF THE YOUNG, AND WAS CONNECTED WITH THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL AS TEACHER, AND SUPERINTENDENT
FOR MANY YEARS, AND WAS GREATLY BELOVED BY ALL.
AFTER A LONG AND PAINFUL AFFLICTION BORNE
WITH CHRISTIAN FORTITUDE, HE ENTERED INTO REST
ON THE 5TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 1883.

“THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED.”



6.1.5 Rev. Ebenezer James Farley

Memorial located on north wall of Chapel (Image 42), (E on Figure 6).

IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF THE
REV. EBENEZER JAMES FARLEY,
THIRTY-FIVE YEARS THE PASTOR OF JAMES STREET
CHURCH, ST LUKES, LONDON, WHO ENTERED INTO
REST, SUDDENLY, AT BOSCOMBE, OCTOBER 1ST, 1894,
AGED 76. HE WAS AN EARNEST CHRISTIAN, A LOVING
HUSBAND AND FATHER, A SINCERE FRIEND, AND A
GENEROUS SUPPORTER OF THE BAPTIST CAUSE, IN THIS
AND OTHER PLACES.

“THE WORD OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOR EVER.”

THIS TABLET WAS ERECTED BY HIS LOVING SON AND
DAUGHTER.

6.1.6 Rev. George Chandler

Memorial located on north wall of Chapel (Image 43), (F on Figure 6).

IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF THE
REV^D GEORGE CHANDLER,
BORN DECEMBER 20ST 1835 – DIED JUNE 20TH 1902.
HE WAS FOR 36 YEARS THE DEVOTED PASTOR OF THIS CHURCH, AND
IN CONJUNCTION WITH THIS PASTORATE, HE HAD FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS
THE OVERSIGHT OF THE CHURCH AT KEYSOE ROW.
AN EXEMPLARY CHRISTIAN, A FAITHFUL PASTOR AND
AN EARNEST PREACHER.
HIS CONSISTENT, UPRIGHT CONDUCT AND GENIAL DISPOSITION
COMMANDED UNIVERSAL RESPECT, HIS INFLUENCE EXTENDING TO
THE ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOOD.
DURING HIS MINISTRY, AND MAINLY THROUGH HIS EFFORTS, THIS
PALCE OF WORSHIP AND THE ADJOINING SCHOOLROOMS WERE ERECTED.

“HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH.” HEBREWS XI.4.

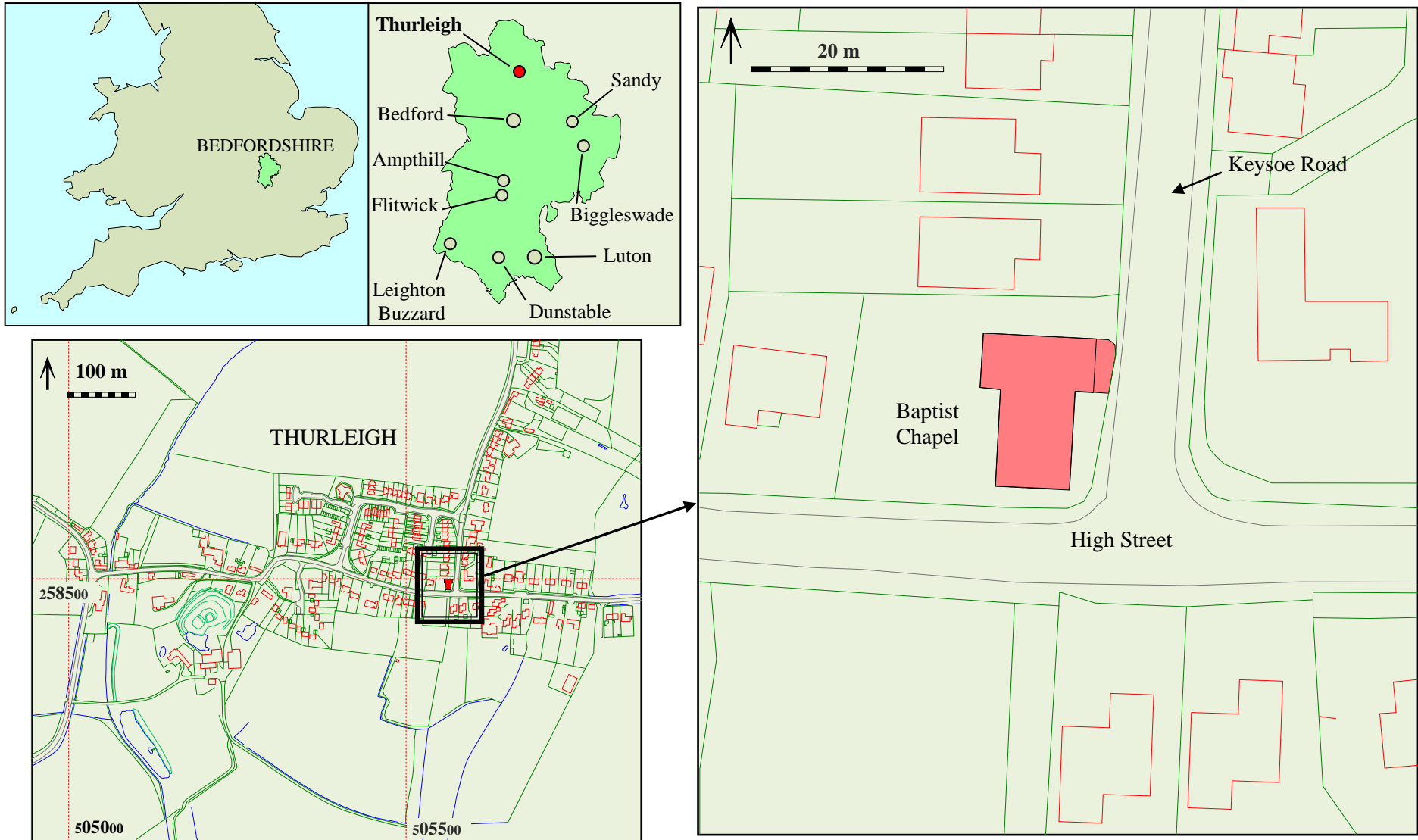


Figure 1: Site location plan

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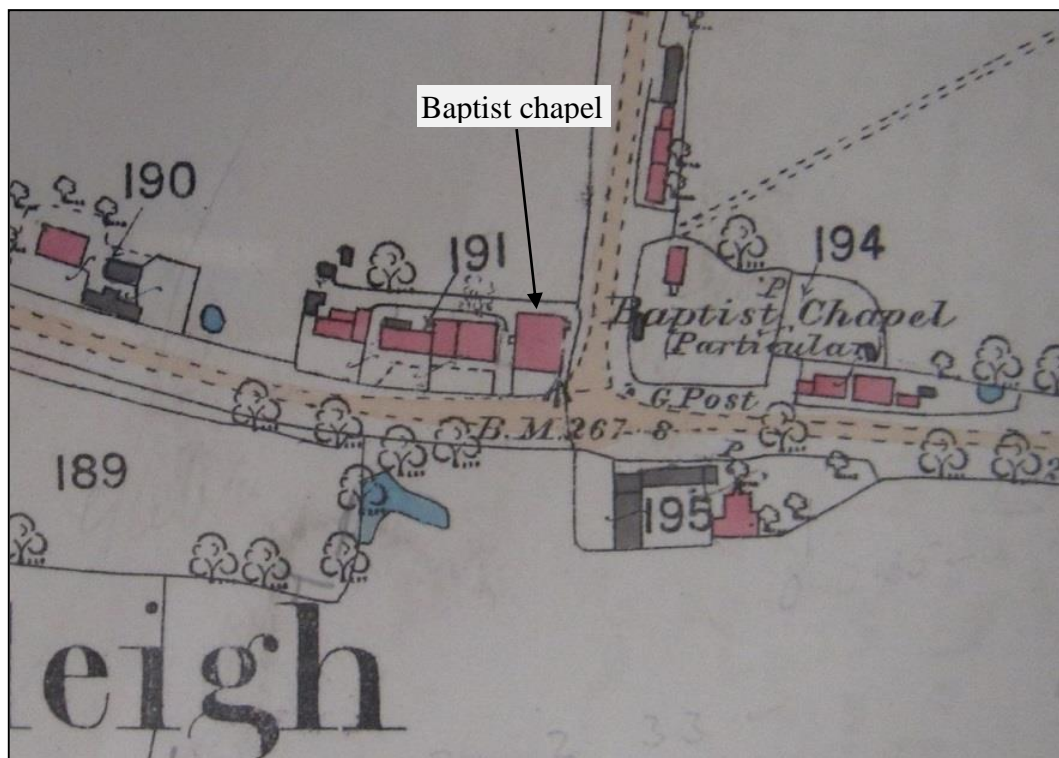


Figure 2: 1883 Ordnance Survey map

First edition 25-inch map surveyed in 1883 and published in 1884. This shows the first chapel which was built in 1827 and enlarged in 1841 and 1849. (Bedfordshire Archives and Record Service)

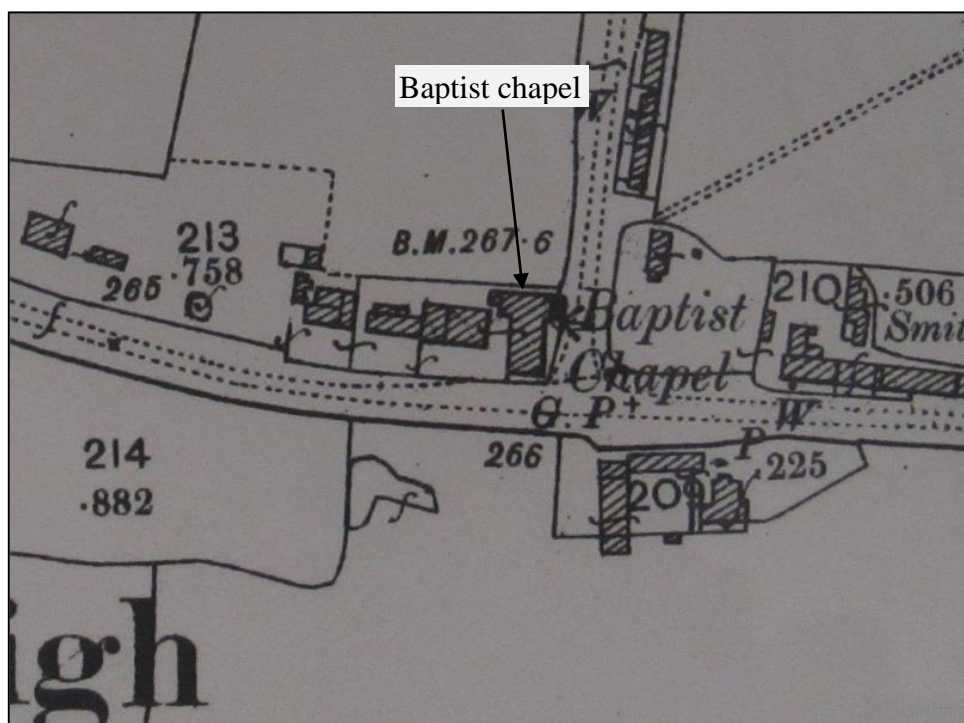


Figure 3: 1900 25 inch Ordnance Survey map

Second edition 25-inch map surveyed in 1900 and published in 1901. This map shows the present chapel which was built in 1888. (Bedfordshire Archives and Record Service)



Figure 4: Postcard, view of chapel from south-east

Undated postcard c.1920 (Bedfordshire Archives and Record Service ref: X396-242)



Figure 5: Postcard, view of chapel from the east

Postcard postmarked 1920 (Bedfordshire Archives and Record Service ref: Z1306-122-5-3)

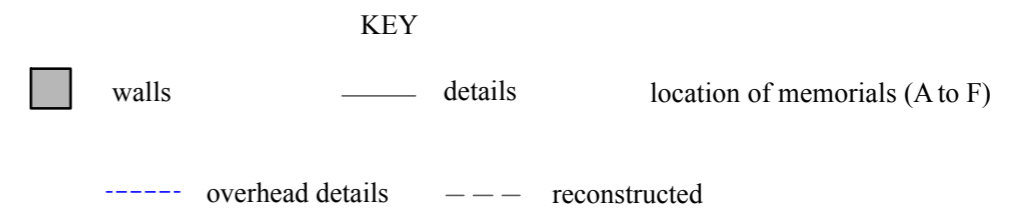
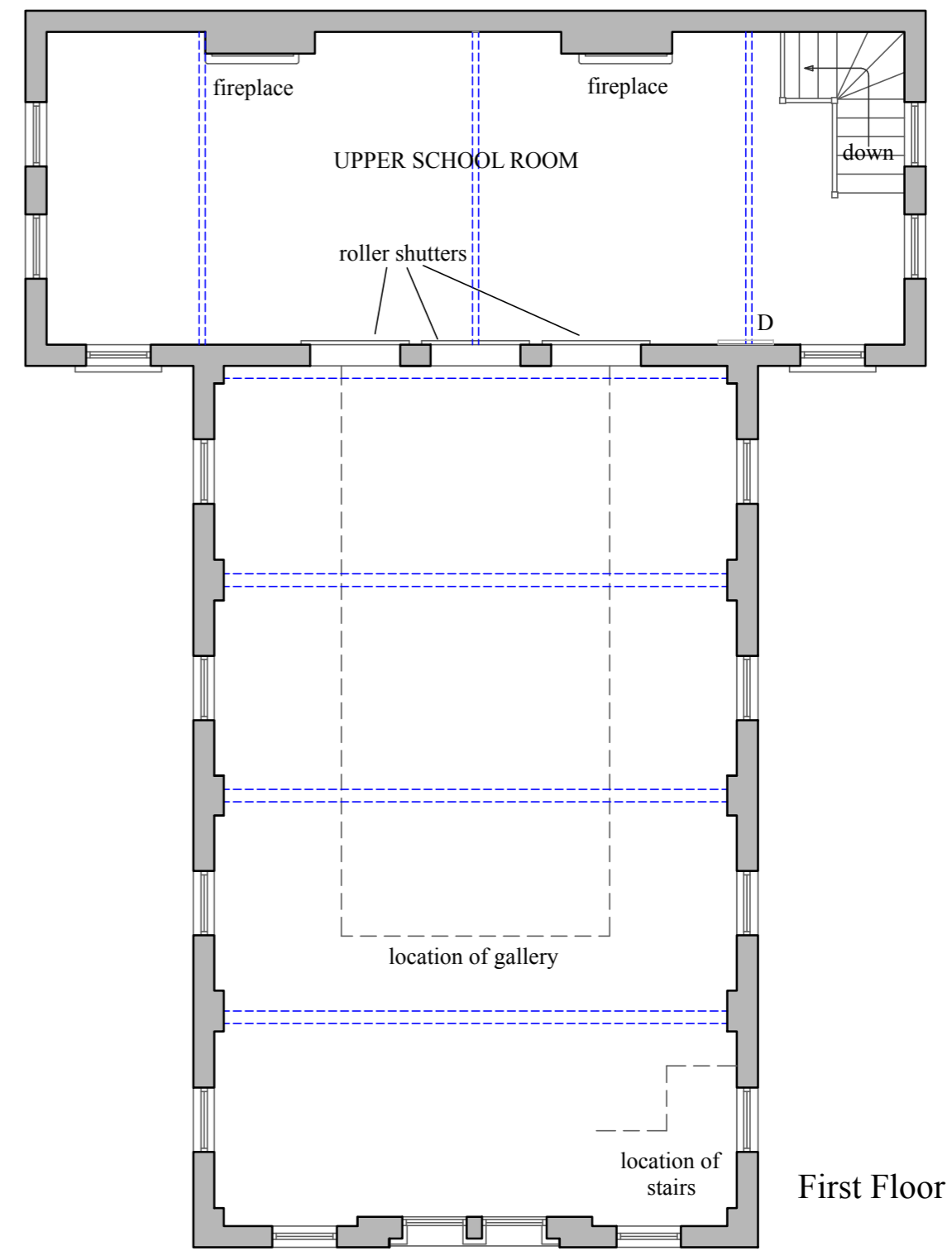
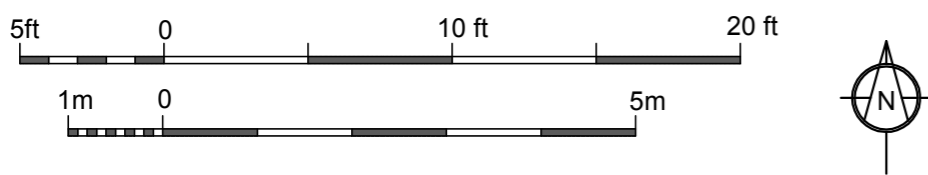
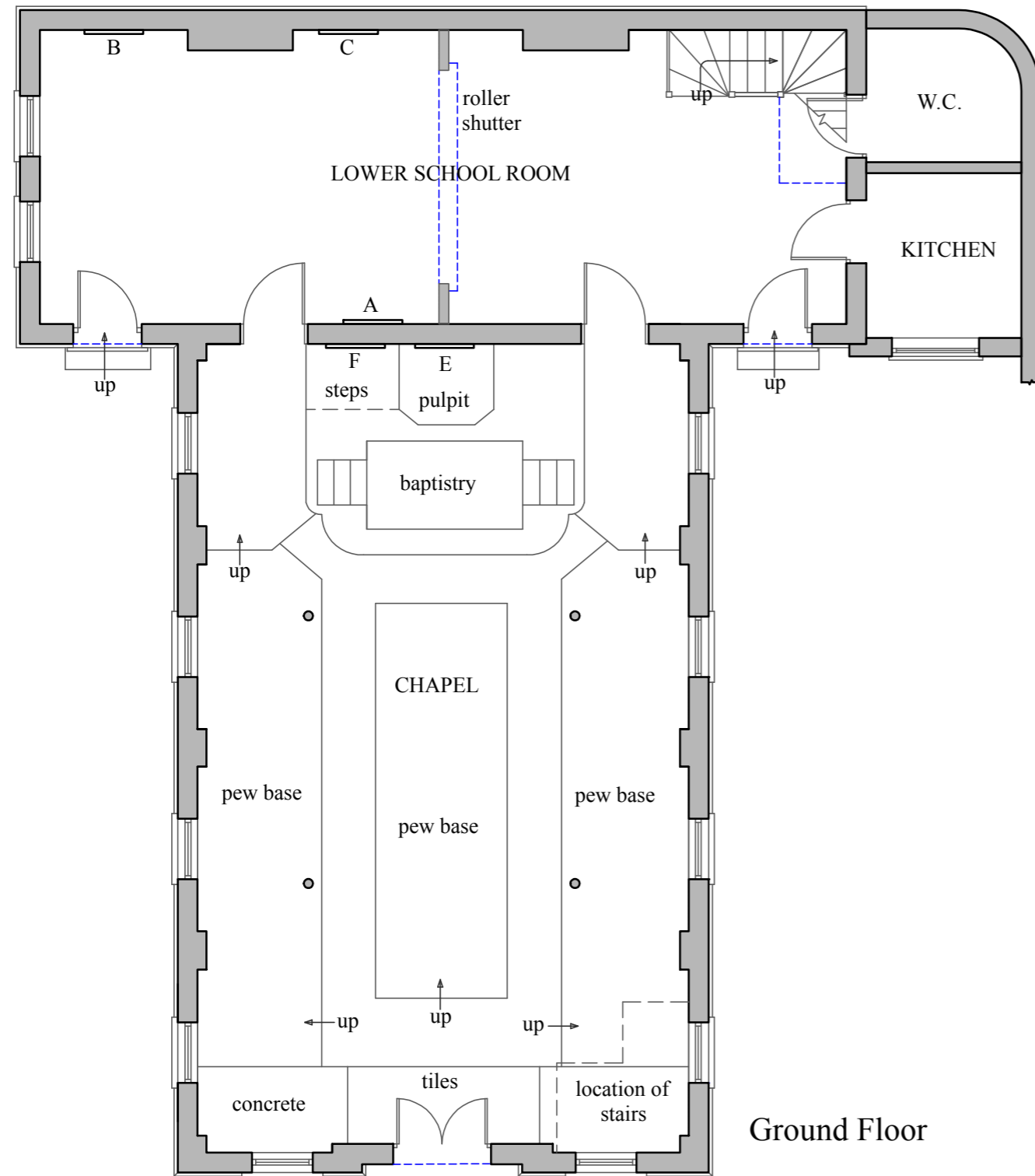


Figure 6: Floor plans



Image 1: Exterior, from the south-east



Image 2: Exterior, from the north-east

(Scale 2m)



Image 3: Exterior, from the south-west



Image 4: Exterior from the north-west

(Scale 2m)



Image 5: South elevation

(Scale 2m)



Image 6: South elevation, detail

(Scale 2m)



Image 7: South elevation, detail
(oblique)

Oblique view of elevation, looking
north-west



Image 8: West elevation

(Scale 2m)



Image 9: Chapel, looking north

(Scale 2m)



Image 10: Chapel, detail of north end

(Scale 2m)



Image 11: Chapel, looking south-east

(Scale 2m)



Image 12: Chapel, seen from Upper School Room

Note the long strips of material in the aisles and across the tiles near the south door are metal plates that would have formed part of the supporting structure on top of the columns which formerly held the gallery (Scale 2m)



Image 13: Chapel, looking south

(Scale 2m)



Image 14: Chapel, detail of baptistry and pulpit

(Scale 2m)



Image 15: Chapel, detail of north wall



Image 16: Chapel, detail of south-east corner

Shows location of the former stairs with 'ashlar' lines scored in plaster and traces of blue paint (Scale 2m)



Image 17: Chapel, detail of front entrance

Looking south-west showing tiles inside the south door



Image 18: Chapel, detail of column

Detail showing decoration at top of cast iron column



Image 19: Chapel, detail of ceiling corbel

View from gallery showing corbel and ceiling beam



Image 20: Chapel, looking north showing pulpit



Image 21: Chapel, looking north showing pulpit and gallery



Image 22: Chapel, looking down from gallery towards pulpit



Image 23: Chapel, looking south-east towards entrance screen



Image 24: Chapel, entrance lobby seen from stairs

Looking west from stairs to gallery



Image 25: Chapel, gallery looking north



Image 26: Chapel, gallery looking north-west



Image 27: Chapel, gallery looking south-east
Shows blocked former stair at right of image



Image 28: Lower School Room, looking east
Shows doors to chapel at right (Scale 2m)



Image 29: Lower School Room, looking north-west

Shows blocked chimney breasts on north wall and roller shutter above middle of room (Scale 2m)

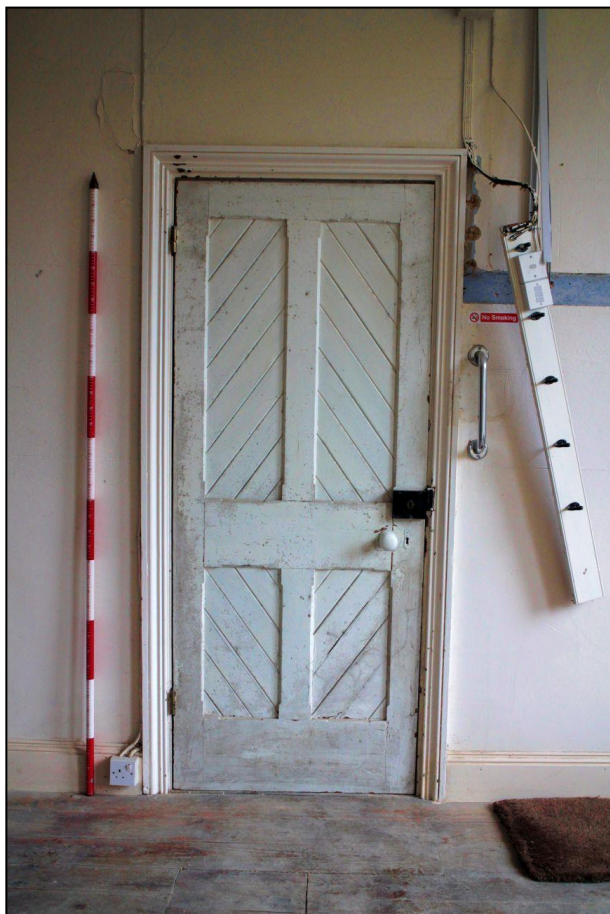


Image 30: Lower School Room,
detail of door to chapel

Shows west door into chapel (Scale 2m)



Image 31: Lower School Room, detail of stairs

Looking north-east showing stairs to first floor with modern doors to W.C. and kitchen to the right (Scale 2m)



Image 32: Upper School Room, looking east

Showing openings overlooking chapel to right with roller shutters (Scale 2m)



Image 33: Upper School Room, looking west
Showing fireplaces on north wall at right (Scale 2m)



Image 34: Upper School Room, ceiling
Looking east showing roof trusses with metal ties



Image 35: Upper School Room, detail of stairs

Looking north-east (Scale 1m)



Image 36: Upper School Room, detail of fireplace

Looking north, showing east fireplace (Scale 1m)



Image 37: Upper School Room,
detail of arched openings

Shows detail of openings giving view
of chapel with roller shutters



Image 38: Memorial to Sarah Emma Chandler

Memorial located on south wall of Lower School Room (see Image 28)



Image 39: Memorial to Rev. Samuel Wells

Memorial located on north wall of Lower School Room (see Image 29)



Image 40: Memorial to Rev. William Crockford

Memorial located on north wall of Lower School Room (see Image 29)

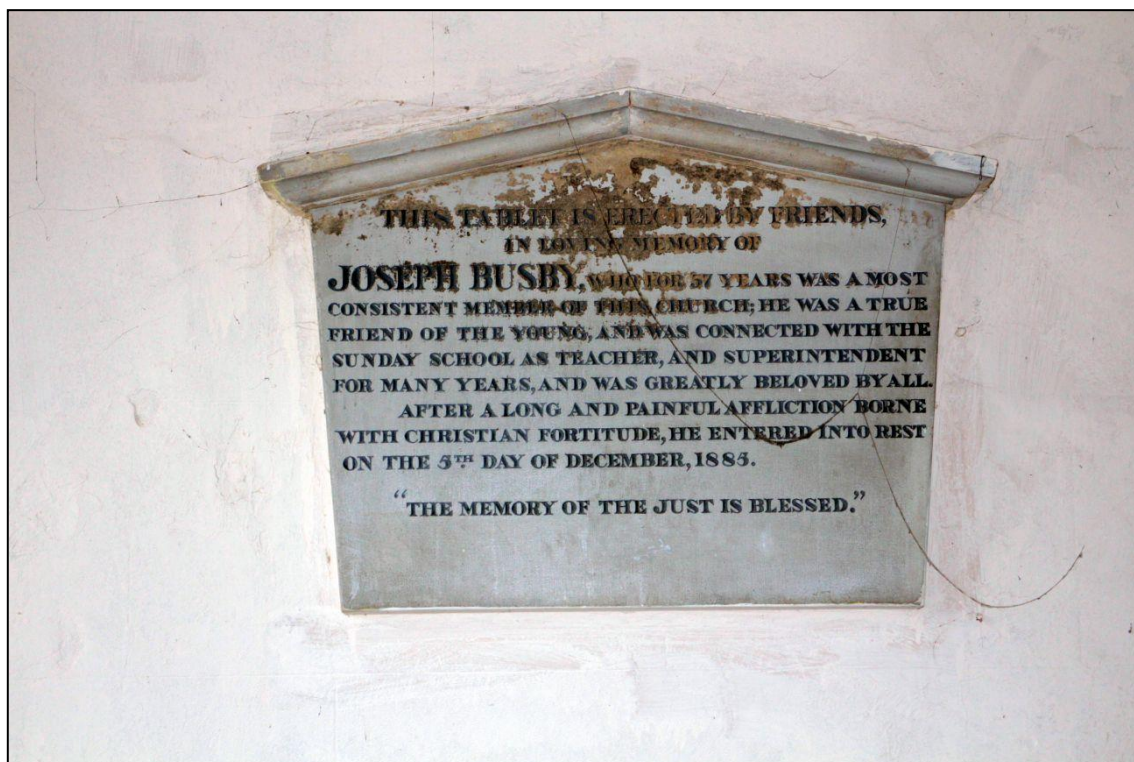


Image 41: Joseph Busby memorial

Memorial located on north wall of Upper School Room (see Image 32)



Image 42: Memorial to Rev. Ebenezer James Farley

Memorial located on north wall of Chapel at centre (see Image 10)

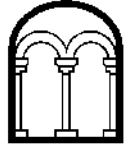


Image 43: Memorial to Rev. George Chandler

Memorial located on north wall of Chapel on left side (see Image 10)

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