

# THE CHAPEL, NORTH ROAD, HOLME, MILNTHORPE, CUMBRIA

## Archaeological Building Recording



Client: Andrew Mitchell

NGR: 352440 478898

Planning Application Ref.:  
SL/2012/0892

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## Non-Technical Summary

Following the submission of a planning application for the conversion of a disused Methodist chapel at North Road, Holme, Milnthorpe, Cumbria, a condition was placed on the consent that an English Heritage Level 2 archaeological building recording be carried out. Greenlane Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the building recording, which was undertaken in April 2013.

The chapel is recorded as having been constructed in 1923, to replace premises that had been used by the local Methodist community in Holme since 1833. The original plans show that it was designed by a local builder, W Fulton Pennington, who may also have been a member of the local Methodist community.

The recording of the building confirmed that the surviving structure retains much of its original fabric, and has a hopper dated 1923, confirming the construction date. Much of the original fabric remains in place, although minor alterations were clearly carried out in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and work associated with the current redevelopment has led to the loss of some elements such as the roof, although this was seemingly already in a poor condition.

The chapel is an interesting example due to its relatively late date and simple architectural style. The remarkably numerous sources of documentary information allow its date of construction and details of its original arrangement to be closely compared to the extant remains.

## Acknowledgements

Greenlane Archaeology would like to thank Andrew Mitchell for commissioning the project and providing the 'as existing' drawings of the building. Additional thanks are due to the staff of the Cumbria Archive Centre in Kendal (CAC(K)) for their help in accessing the records.

The desk-based assessment was carried out by Dan Elsworth, and the building recording was carried out by Dan Elsworth and Ric Buckle. The report was written by Ric Buckle and Dan Elsworth and the illustrations produced by Tom Mace. The report was edited by Jo Dawson, and the project managed by Dan Elsworth.

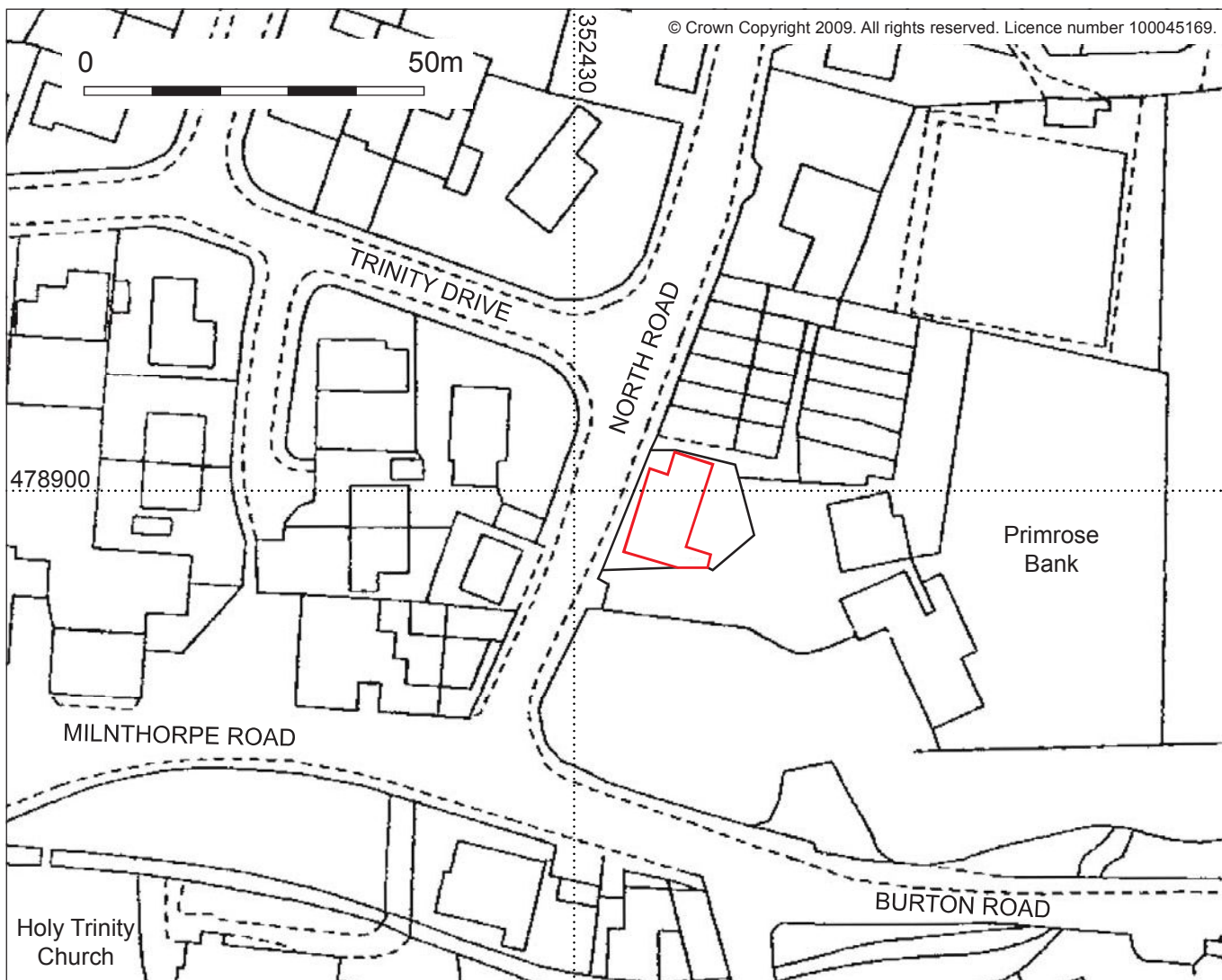
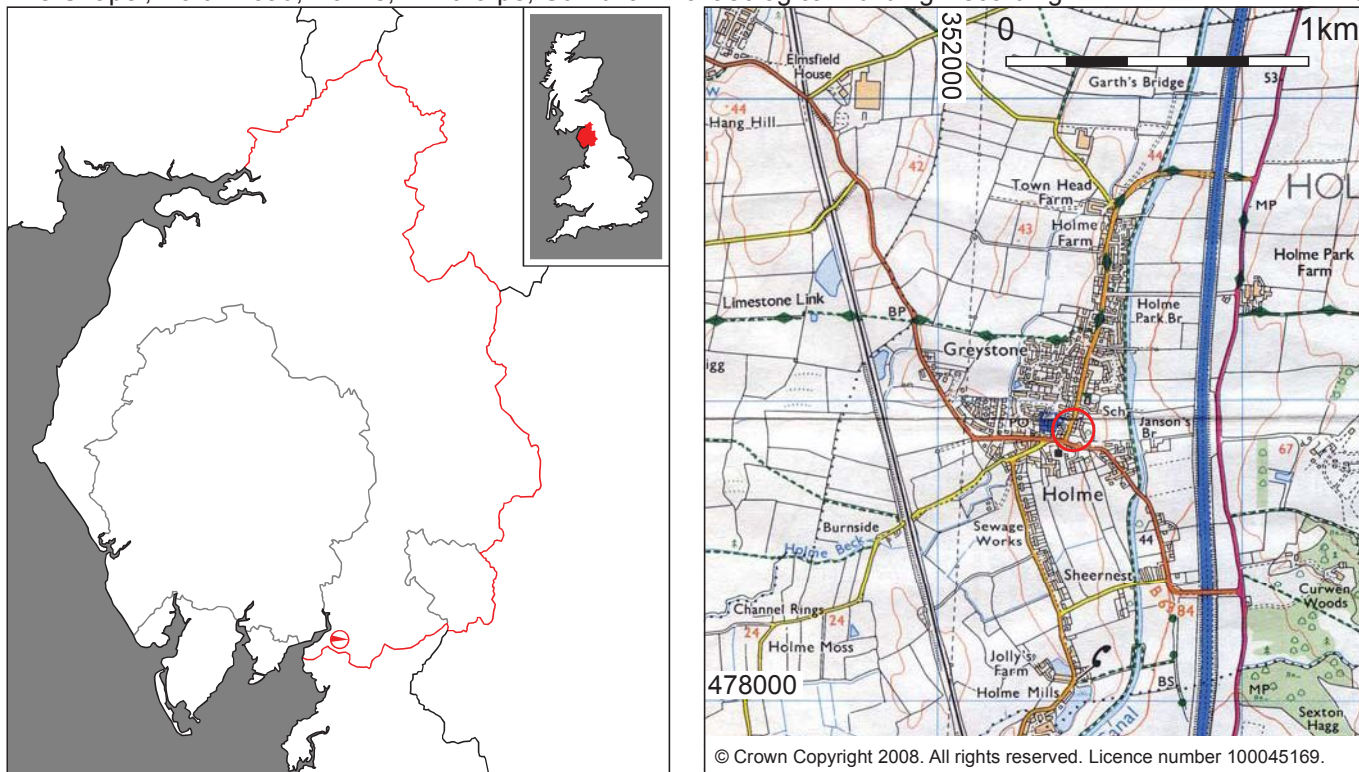
# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Circumstances of the Project

1.1.1 Following the submission of a planning application (Ref SL/2012/0892) to convert a disused chapel at North Road, Holme, Milnthorpe, Cumbria (NGR 352440 478898) into two domestic dwellings, a condition (No. 4) was placed by South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) requiring a programme of archaeological investigation. Consultation with Jeremy Parsons, Historic Environment Officer at Cumbria County Council, confirmed this to be an English Heritage Level 2-type recording of the building (English Heritage 2006). This is intended to provide a record of the building prior to its conversion as well as providing outline information about its development, form and function. Greenlane Archaeology was approached by Andrew Mitchell (hereafter 'the client') to carry out the building recording in order to fulfil the condition of the planning consent. A project design was produced in response, and following its approval by the Historic Environment Officer for Cumbria County Council the recording was carried out in April 2013.

## 1.2 Location, Geology, and Topography

1.2.1 The site is situated on the east side of the centre of the village of Holme facing onto North Road to the west (Figure 1). Holme is sandwiched between the Lancaster-Kendal canal to the east and the railway to the west, with the M6 to the east of the canal (Figure 1). The underlying geological deposits of the area are dominated by Carboniferous limestone of the Dinantian period (Moseley 1978, plate 1). These are overlain by extensive deposits of glacial material such as boulder clay but there are several outcropping areas of limestone including limestone pavement in the general area (Countryside Commission 1998, 71-72), which is dominated by enclosed fields and unimproved grasslands in higher areas (*op cit*, 73). The site is situated at approximately 15m above sea level (Ordnance Survey 2002).



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Figure 1: Site location

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

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

### 2.2 Desk-Based Assessment

2.2.1 Information was gathered from the following locations:

- **Cumbria Archive Centre, Kendal (CAC(K))**: this was visited in order to examine early maps of the site and other primary sources as well as secondary sources such as trade directories in order to identify information about the development and use of the building;
- **Kendal Local Studies Library**: secondary sources specifically relevant to Holme and mentioning the chapel were consulted;
- **Greenlane Archaeology library**: additional secondary sources were used to provide information for the site background.

### 2.3 Building Recording

2.3.1 The building recording was carried out to English Heritage Level-2 type standards (English Heritage 2006), which is a relatively low level of investigation intended to record the form, function and phasing of the building, without incorporating in detail the results of the desk-based assessment. The recording comprised the following elements:

- **Written record**: descriptive records of all parts of the building were made using Greenlane Archaeology *pro forma* record sheets;
- **Photographs**: photographs in both 35mm colour and colour digital format were taken of the main features of the building, its general surroundings, and any features of architectural or archaeological interest. A selection of the colour digital photographs is included in this report, and the remaining photographs are in the project archive;
- **Drawings**: drawings were produced by hand-annotation of printed plots of 'as existing' architect's drawings produced by Richard Oates Design or by the production from scratch on site. The drawings produced ultimately comprised:
  - i. external elevations at a scale of 1:100;
  - ii. a floor plan at a scale of 1:100;
  - iii. a cross-section at a scale of 1:50.

### 2.4 Archive

2.4.1 A comprehensive archive of the project has been produced in accordance with the project design and current IfA and English Heritage guidelines (Brown 2007; English Heritage 1991). The paper and digital archive and a copy of this report will be deposited in the Cumbria Archive Centre in Kendal on completion of the project. Three paper copies of this report will be supplied to the Historic Environment Officer, who will distribute copies to SLDC so that the condition can be discharged; one will be provided to the client, and one will be retained by Greenlane Archaeology. In addition a copy of the report will also be supplied to the Cumbria Historic Environment Record (HER) in Kendal, via the Historic Environment Officer, and a digital record of the project will be made on the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) scheme.



### 3. Desk-Based Assessment

#### 3.1 Map and Image Regression

3.1.1 **Introduction:** the earliest maps of the area are typically not detailed enough to show individual buildings in a useful fashion, and as the chapel was not constructed until 1923 (see *Section 3.1.5*) below it is not present anyway. No detailed maps post-dating 1923 were available and so those included below are only intended to demonstrate the arrangement of the area prior to that date. However, an early photograph of the village, which includes the chapel, was found and the original plans for the chapel were also located.

3.1.2 **Ordnance Survey (c1857):** these are the earliest available Ordnance Survey maps of Holme, produced at scales of 1:10,560 and 1:2,500. They show that the plot of land on which the chapel was constructed, on the north-east side of the T-junction with the Post Office marked to the east, was at this time occupied by a building or group of buildings (Plate 1).



Plate 1: Extract from the 1:2,500 scale Ordnance Survey map of c1857

3.1.3 **Ordnance Survey, 1899:** this is at a smaller scale but shows essentially the same information.

3.1.4 **Ordnance Survey, 1912:** this is at a more detailed scale but shows much the same information (Plate 2). It appears that the building essentially occupying the site of the chapel was a single large structure as no internal divisions are shown although the north end appears to be separate. This map is marked up for the rating valuation of 1910, and the land where the chapel was built (plot 229) is listed as belonging to WJ Edmondson and called Primrose Bank (CAC(K) WT/DV/2/41 1910). An existing Methodist chapel in Holme is also listed at plot 166 but it was not clear where this is.

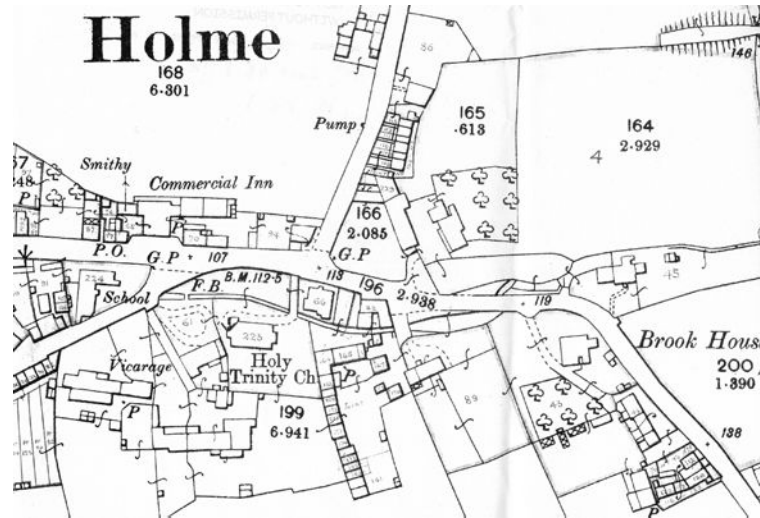


Plate 2: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1912

3.1.5 **Building Register Plans, 1923:** the original plans for the construction of the chapel are now in the archives in Kendal (Plate 3-Plate 8). These are dated March 1923, were approved by the District Council on April 7<sup>th</sup> 1923, and are signed 'W Fulton Pennington' whose address is given as Foxdale House, Holme (CAC(K) WS/RD/SW/398 1886-1930; CAC(K) WS/RD/SW/Plan 107 1923). WF Pennington is listed in the directories for 1921 and 1925 as a builder, but the address given is White Hart Yard, Stricklandgate, Kendal (Kelly's Directories Ltd 1921, 158; 1925, 161). At the same time Foxdale House in Holme is listed as occupied by a Richard Docker (*op cit*, 57). The plans show that the building was constructed essentially as planned, although it originally had a central spire, which is now missing. Of particular interest are the labels given to the rooms, which show that the main space served as the chapel while the smaller rooms at the north end were class rooms. The outbuildings also originally included a boiler house down a flight of steps, as well as outside toilets and the cross-section shows the arrangement of the trusses, which are of a complicated design with curved ends resting on corbels and clearly not the same as the trusses that are actually in the building.

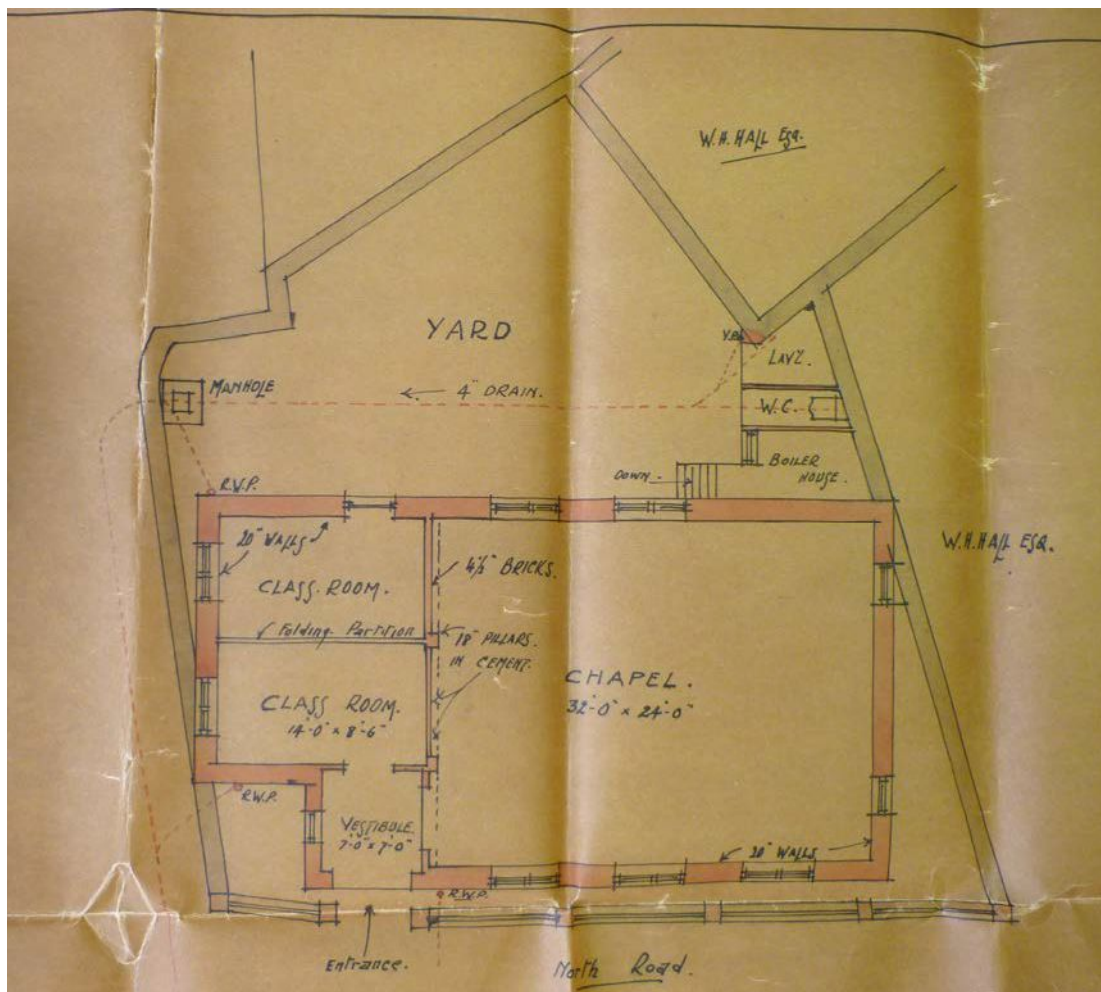


Plate 3: Floor plan from the original drawings of 1923 (CAC(K) WS/RD/SW/Plan 107 1923)

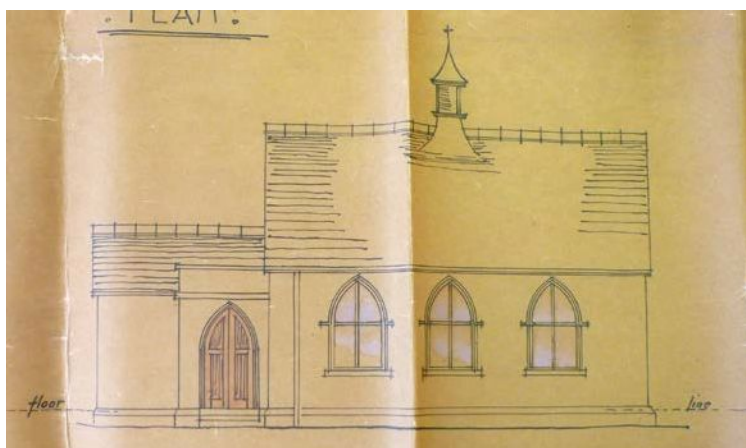


Plate 4 (left): Front (west) external elevation from the original drawings of 1923 (CAC(K) WS/RD/SW/Plan 107 1923)

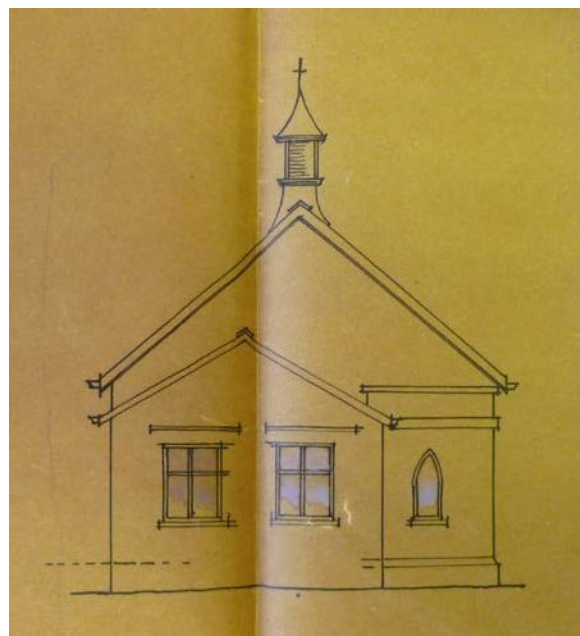


Plate 5 (right): North external elevation from the original drawings of 1923 (CAC(K) WS/RD/SW/Plan 107 1923)

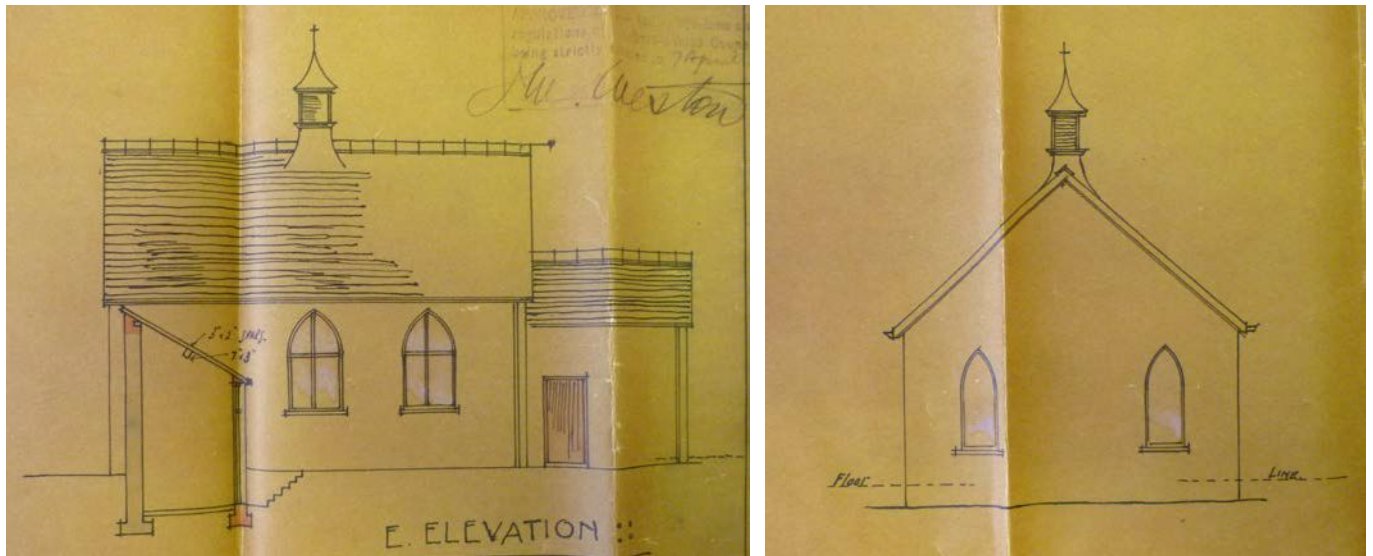


Plate 6 (left): East external elevation from the original drawings of 1923 (CAC(K) WS/RD/SW/Plan 107 1923)

Plate 7 (right): South external elevation from the original drawings of 1923 (CAC(K) WS/RD/SW/Plan 107 1923)

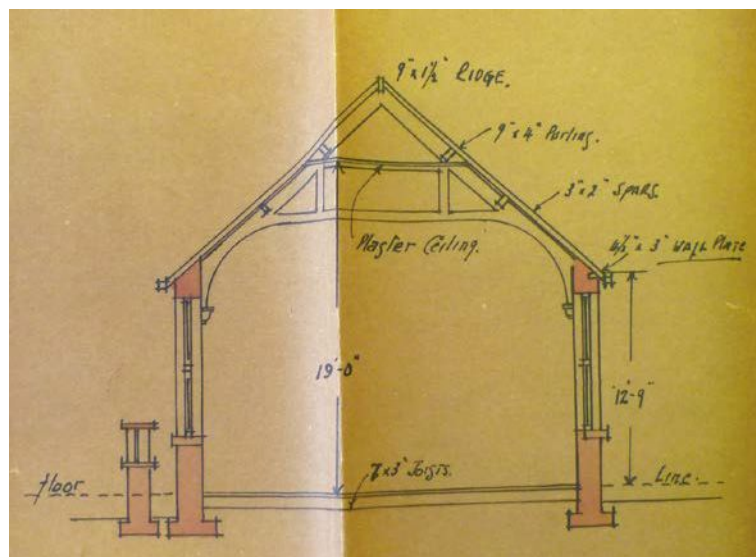
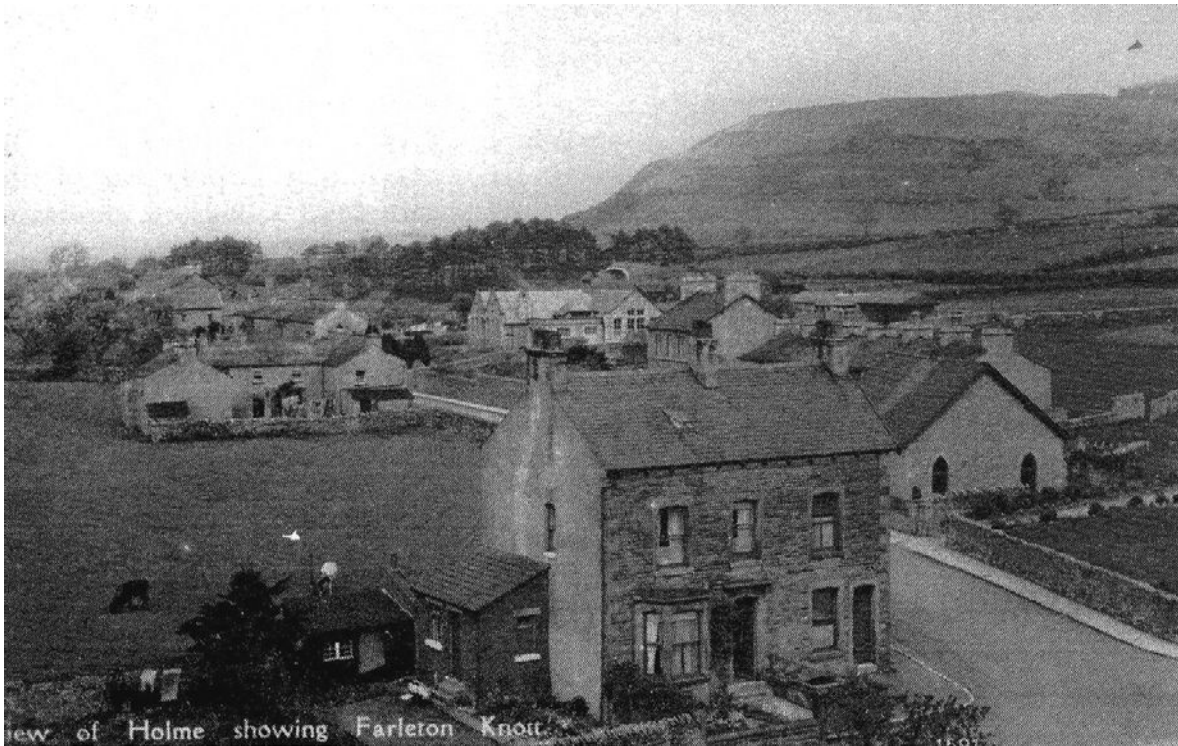


Plate 8: South-facing cross-section from the original drawings of 1923 (CAC(K) WS/RD/SW/Plan 107 1923)

3.1.6 **Photograph of Holme:** this undated photograph of the village, looking north, presumably from there church tower, shows the chapel (Plate 9). Although it is not possible to make out much of the building it appears to be much the same as it is now, although the spire on the roof appears to be still in place.



**Plate 9: Early view of Holme showing the south end of the chapel on the right (from Hayhurst and Hyelman 1987, 6)**

## 3.2 Site History

3.2.1 A Methodist Chapel is known to have existed in Holme from at least 1833, in which year a Wesleyan Chapel was established (Kelly and Co Ltd 1894, 61). However, exactly where this was located is unclear although it clearly did not use a purpose-built chapel. As already shown (*Section 3.1.4*) the rating valuation of 1910 lists a Methodist chapel but the plot referred to could not be identified. What is certain, however, is that by 1922 this building was insufficient. An appeal for subscriptions for a new chapel was made in a letter dated November 17<sup>th</sup>, which stated that *'For nearly ninety years our church has held its meetings in a most unsuitable room, which has been rented. These premises are now too dilapidated to use in comfort or with safety'* (CAC(K) WDFC/M2 Acc 2421 1922). The money was clearly quickly raised because the present chapel was constructed in 1923 (Hayhurst and Hyelman 1987, 6) on land donated by WJ Edmondson (CAC(K) WDFC/M2 Acc 2421 1922), which concurs with the evidence in the rating valuation (see *Section 3.1.4* above). This land had previously been occupied by a stable and barn used one Joe Simpson, a carrier, but *'After he dropped dead in the hayfield from sunstroke it was sold'* (Anon 1977, 4). The plans were submitted in March 1923, the building apparently designed by a local builder W Fulton Pennington (see *Section 3.1.5* above; the cost of building was initially estimated at £1,500 (CAC(K) WDFC/M2 Acc 2421 1922) but it is not known what the actual cost was. Contributions towards the cost were requested from local Methodists and *'Mr Pennington and Mr Docker subscribed amongst others'* (Anon 1977, 4). Unless it is a remarkable coincidence, this would appear to be the same Mr Pennington who designed the building and apparently lived at Foxdale House in 1923 and the Mr Docker who lived at Foxdale House in 1921 and 1925 (see *Section 3.1.5* above), which would suggest that they were both members of the local Methodist community. In addition, stones were laid *'at £5 each in memory of subscribers relatives'* (*ibid*).

## 4. Building Recording

### 4.1 Arrangement and Fabric

4.1.1 The building comprises a main rectangular block orientated approximately north/south (Figure 1). The 'front' elevation faces west onto North Road, the rear into a small walled yard or garden, and there is a low monopitch outshut extension to the east extending from the south end of the east elevation. The windows and doors typically have pointed arches and the former have diagonal leaded lights. The whole of the building is surrounded by a boundary wall (Figure 4), that along the west side is detached and includes a row of pillars; both the wall and the pillars are topped with yellow stone flags. The remaining boundary walling is closer in style to basic field walls and along the north elevation is closely positioned relative to the actual wall of the building.

4.1.2 The entire building is constructed from stone, largely limestone dressed to a rock-faced finish laid in regular courses, but a dark yellow sandstone has also been used for details such as window sills. The corners are typically finished with dressed limestone quoins. The roof is a recent replacement finished with grey slate and with timber barge boards and ceramic bonnet ridge tiles. Internally the walls are finished with plaster and painted with timber detailing such as doors and cladding over the ceiling all machine cut.

### 4.2 External Detail

4.2.1 **North elevation:** this comprises dressed stone with mortar bonding; the east end of the elevation extends out from the main body of the building and has a modern gabled slate roof (Plate 10; Figure 2). To the west of this is a flat stone roof over the entrance porch. There are two rectangular windows in the east section, with flat stone lintels and four-light casements, and a small window in the west section with a pointed arch.

4.2.2 **East elevation:** this also comprises dressed stone with mortar bonding and two pointed arch windows with yellow sandstone lintels (Plate 11; Figure 2). There is also a doorway at the north end of the elevation with a large stone lintel and a tongue and groove plank door (Plate 12).



Plate 10 (left): North external elevation

Plate 11 (right): South end of east external elevation



**Plate 12: Plank door at north end of east external elevation**

4.2.3 **South- elevation:** this too comprises dressed stone with mortar bonding and has two pointed arch windows (Figure 3; Plate 13). Abutting this elevation is the rear elevation of the outbuildings which are plain although there is a chimney (Plate 14) that currently serves no purpose as there does not appear to be any evidence of a fireplace within the interior.



**Plate 13 (left): South external elevation**

**Plate 14 (right): East side of the south external elevation showing the rear wall of the outshut**

4.2.4 **West elevation:** this too comprises dressed stone with mortar bonding and has three pointed arch windows with projecting sandstone kneelers at the base of each arch (Plate 15; Figure 3). At the north end is a large pointed arch double doorway at the north end with a tongue and groove plank door with an elaborate knocker (Plate 16). Immediately to the south of this is an iron down pipe with decorative brackets, the hopper of which is marked '1923' (Plate 17). Beneath each of the windows is a sandstone plaque; the central one comprising a single rectangular block, those to the north and south made up of six smaller squares in two rows of three forming a similarly sized panel.





**Plate 15 (left): West external elevation**

**Plate 16 (right): Detail of the door knocker**

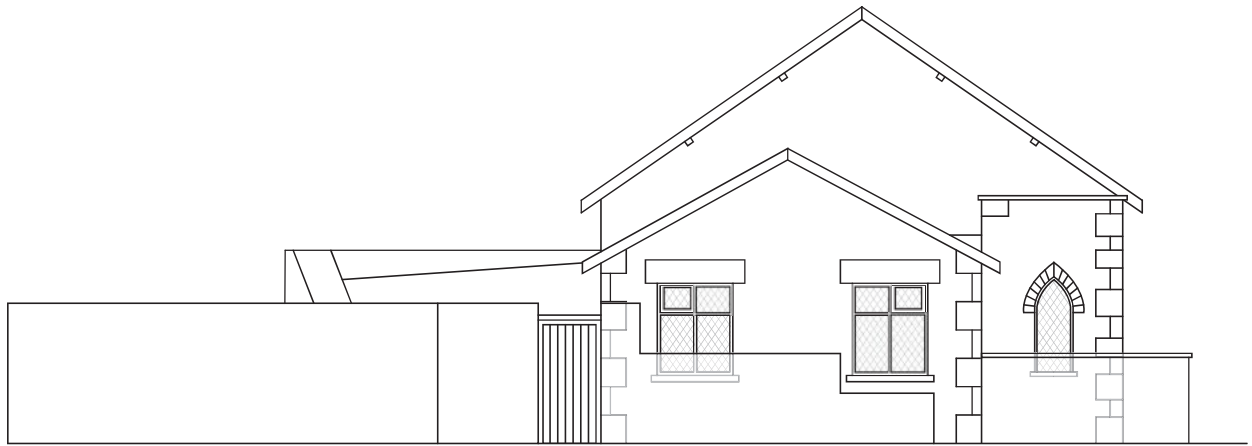


**Plate 17 (left): Downpipe and dated hopper**

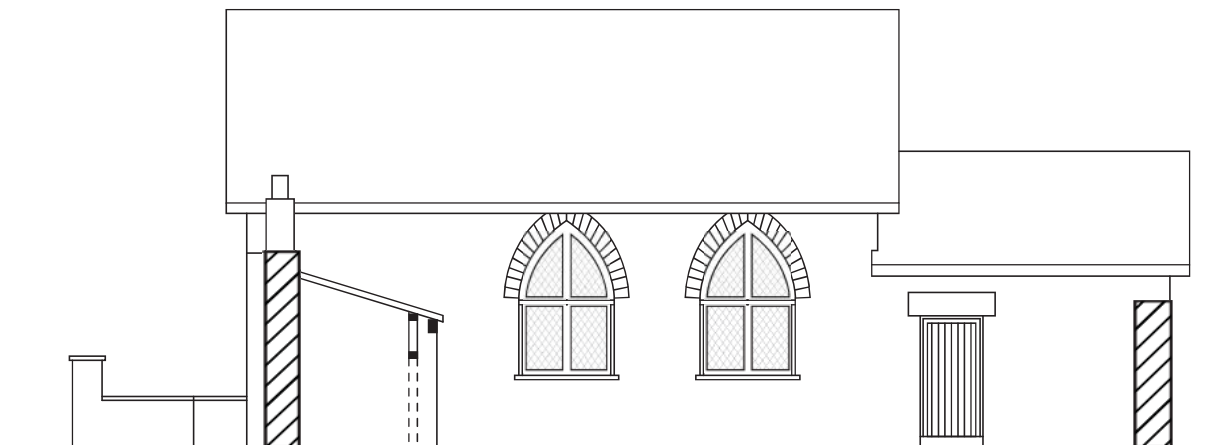
**Plate 18 (right): North elevation of attached outshuts**

4.2.5 **Outbuilding**: this comprises a low monopitch structure divided into three separate rooms (Figure 4), the dividing walls built from either concrete blocks or bricks (Plate 18). The central part currently comprises a toilet with the adjoining areas used as storage space. The roof is finished with slate and the floor is concrete. The interior walls are plain and modern. A chimney is visible from the south of the property although there is no evidence of a fireplace within the building, although there is a block of masonry opposing this and incorporated into the north wall.

NORTH-EAST EXTERNAL ELEVATION



SOUTH-EAST EXTERNAL ELEVATION

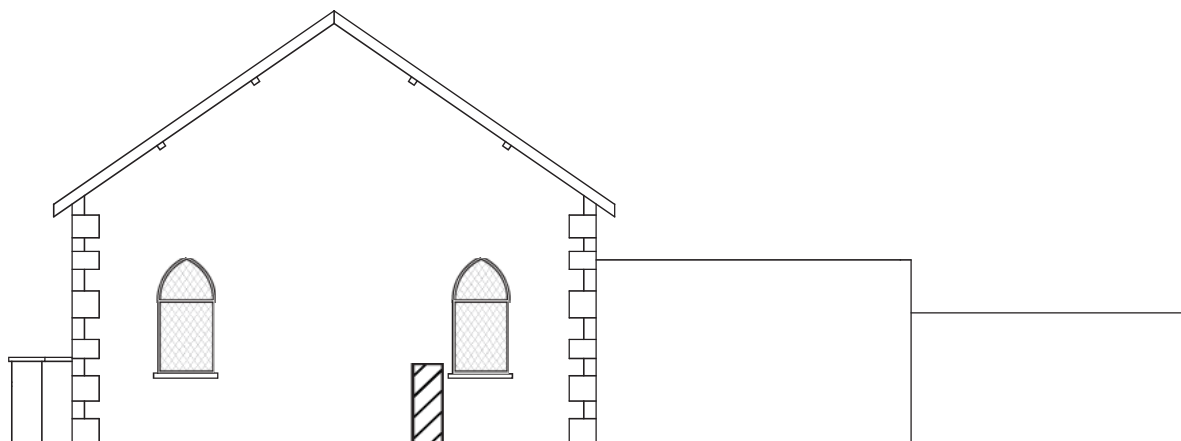


Key:  cross-sectional wall  lead — features to the rear

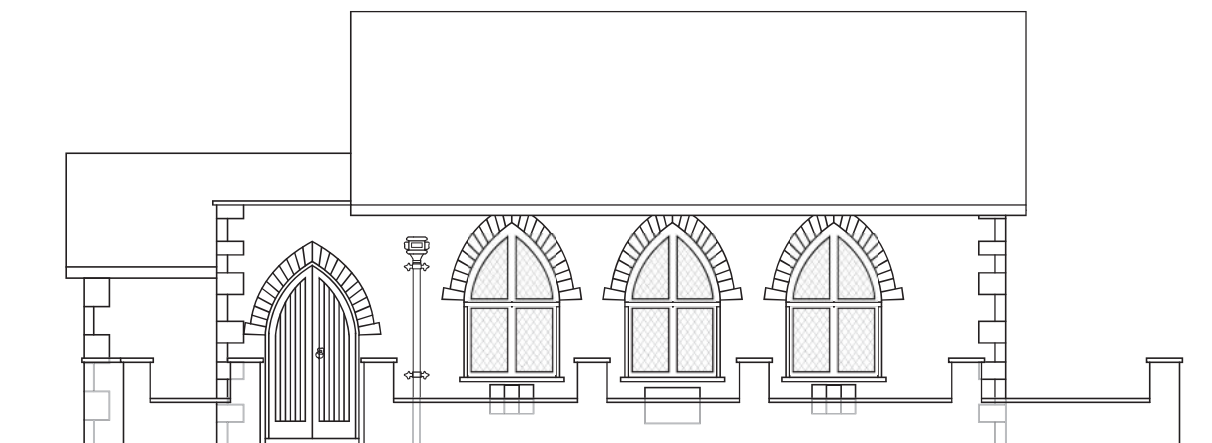


Figure 2: North-east and south-east external elevations

### SOUTH-WEST EXTERNAL ELEVATION



### NORTH-WEST EXTERNAL ELEVATION

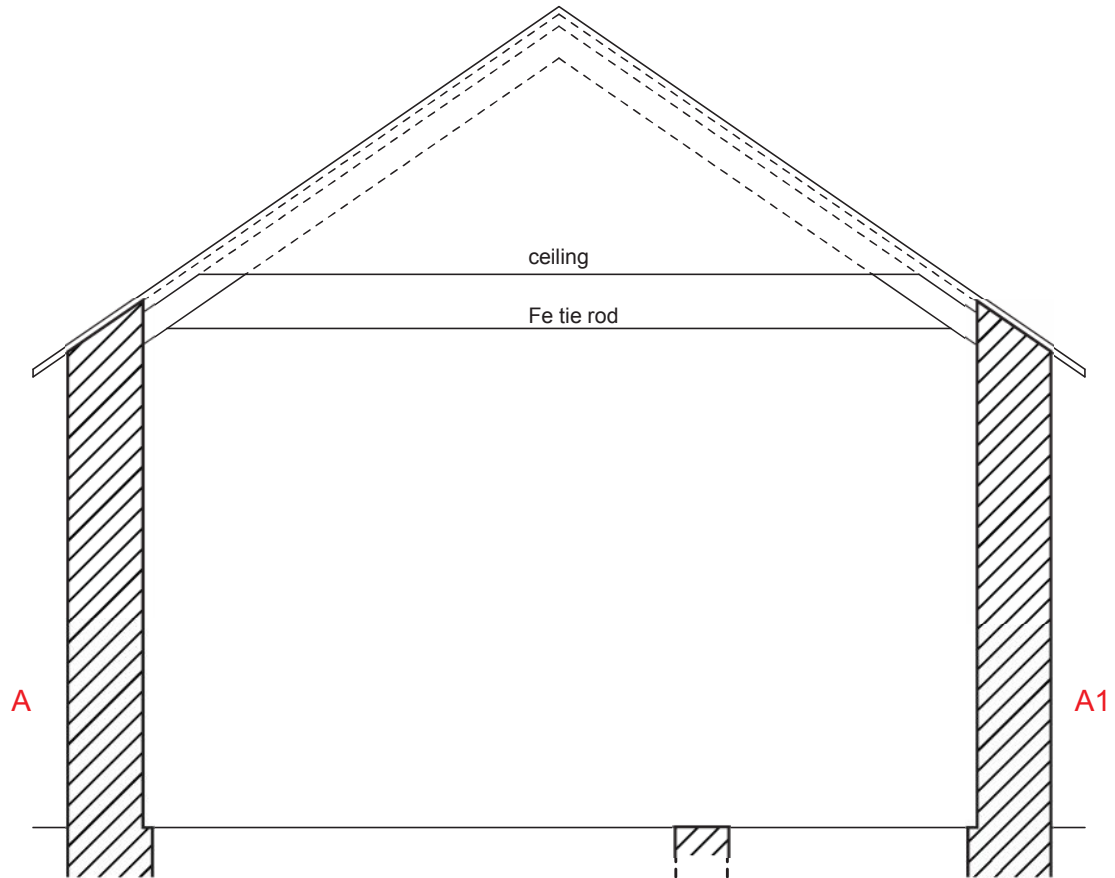


Key:  cross-sectional wall  lead — features to the rear





CROSS-SECTION A-A1



0 5m

Key:  cross-sectional timber  cross-sectional wall --- obscured

### 4.3 Internal Detail

4.3.1 **North-East Room:** the north-east room of the chapel (Figure 4) has recently been re-roofed using modern machine cut timber and insulation and there are three modern timber Velux windows. The floor is compacted, rough made ground comprising earth, stone, and plaster fragments, as a result of the removal of the earlier floorboards as part of the renovation process. Amongst the rubble were fragments of a leather shoe (Plate 19), possibly a lady's shoe although it was difficult to be sure if represented a single shoe or parts of several. The north wall is plastered and painted white with the upper part exposed stone, presumably showing the original position of the ceiling (Plate 20). The lower part also has exposed rough stonework and a concrete mortar bonding, due to the removal of the floor and any skirting board during the renovation work. A concrete step is visible at the base of the wall acting as a step to support a suspended floor and also as a damp course. This wall also has two four light casement windows with diagonal leaded panes within deep rectangular recesses (Plate 20). The east wall is plastered with a modern tiled area and water heater and has exposed water pipes indicating that a sink was also present prior to renovation works. The exposed stonework from the removal of the skirting board is also present along the bottom. A timber door constructed from tongue and groove planks within a timber frame leading to the rear yard or garden is also present within this wall. Although there is no wall as such, the south wall has a timber 'jamb' against the east wall and a large opening, above which is a moulded rail, suggesting that that was at one time filled with a wooden screen serving as a room divider. On the floor immediately below the timber frame is a concrete rectangle that probably served to act as a footing to take the weight of the screen. The west wall is finished with plaster with exposed stonework at the lower section above a damp proof concrete step. There is an interior doorway with exposed factory made brick around it and a timber door frame. On the floor in the doorway is a rectangular rough stone step possibly used as a footing or foundation for a feature that has been removed.



Plate 19 (left): Fragments of leather shoe amongst the material below the floorboards

Plate 20 (right): North elevation of north-east room

4.3.2 **North-West Room:** the roof in this room is flat and finished with plaster, the floor is made up of compacted earth, stone and plaster. This room has had a suspended timber floor removed during renovation hence the rough nature of the floor. The north wall is plain white plaster with exposed rough stonework the same as is found in the north-east room; there is also an exposed section of concrete damp course. On the west side there is a thin pointed-arch window with a diagonal leaded pane within a deep recess. The east wall is finished with plaster with an interior doorway as described in the west wall of north-east room. The south wall is also finished with plaster and has a wide double doorway within a

moulded timber doorframe and with two moulded timber four-panel doors (Plate 21). This wall also contains the fuse box along with the associated wiring and switches on the west side. The west wall has plain plastered walls and a wide pointed arch doorway with a timber frame and double timber tongue and groove doors (Plate 22).



Plate 21 (left): Doorway in the south elevation of the north-west room



Plate 22 (right): Doorway in the east elevation of the north-west room

4.3.3 **South Room:** the roof in this room is a suspended varnished timber ceiling constructed from tongue and groove boards, which slope at the edges to follow the line of the roof and the ends of the principal rafters from the roof trusses visible (Plate 23; Figure 5). The floor is partially furnished with suspended floorboards towards the south end, supported on a low stone footing (Plate 24; Figure 4). In the other half of the room the floorboards have been removed leaving a compacted earth and plaster surface. The north elevation has a large opening, which would originally have held a timber screen that would have divided the north-east room and the south room on the east side, above which is a wide moulded timber rail (Plate 25). The west end of the elevation houses the double doorway leading into the north-west room, which is of the same form as described above (*Section 4.3.2*). The east wall follows the same pattern as elsewhere in the chapel in that it is finished with plaster apart from the lower part which has exposed stonework, although this is exposed because of timber panelling having been removed. There are two windows with pointed arches, four-light casements, and diagonal leaded panes within splayed reveals (Plate 26). The south wall is similarly finished, again with exposed stonework across the lower part. It has two windows with pointed arches and timber two-light casements with diagonal leaded panes within slightly splayed recesses (Plate 27). The west elevation is finished with plaster across the upper part but unlike the other elevations has the timber tongue and groove panelling remaining across the lower part, topped by a thin moulded rail. There are three windows, as per the east elevation, with pointed arches and timber frames within splayed reveals and four-light casements with diagonal leaded panes. The roof space could not be safely accessed but it is apparent that the ends of the tie beams are visible projecting through the planking covering the ceiling (Plate 23) allowing some idea of the truss arrangement to be determined, especially through comparison with the original drawings (Figure 5; see Plate 8).



**Plate 23 (left): South end of south room**

**Plate 24 (right): Exposed footing supporting timber floor**



**Plate 25: The north end of the south room**





**Plate 26 (left): Detail of window in east elevation**



**Plate 27 (right): Detail of window in south elevation**

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Phasing

5.1.1 **Introduction:** the building clearly retains a considerable amount of original fabric while the only major alterations seem to relate to work carried out in relation to the present conversion. However, there is some evidence for minor alterations carried out before this meaning that three phases of development were identified.

5.1.2 **Phase 1 (1923):** it is apparent from the various documentary sources, the original plans, and the dated hopper that the chapel was designed and built in 1923. The original drawings show that the building was constructed much as intended, with the spire included as it is seemingly shown in the early photograph and a folding partition wall dividing what is now a single room (the north-east room) into two. The dividing wall between the south room and the north-east room was evidently to be built in brick, although the evidence on site suggests it was perhaps actually built in timber instead. The form of the roof demonstrates that it was not built according to the original plans (Plate 8); it should be noted that the roof space could not be accessed during the building recording, but that the lack of corbels and angled timbers proves that it was not constructed as intended. It is noteworthy that the original arrangement of the roof is quite old-fashioned, with a more Victorian degree of Gothic complexity, compared to the rest of the building, which has a very simple style. It is therefore possible that the truss design was altered during construction to fit this, although it may have been replaced in the subsequent phase. The shoe fragments found in the material below the original floor are of interest because shoes were traditionally hidden during the construction of buildings (not only churches and chapels) to ward off evil spirits (<http://www.concealedgarments.org/>). While it is not clear if these were deposited intentionally or not they are still of interest.

5.1.3 **Phase 2 (later 20<sup>th</sup> century):** it is clear that alterations were made to the building in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, and although much of the evidence for this is now lost, they are likely to relate to modernisation work improving the plumbing and heating. A sink with tiled splash-back was evidently added on the east side of the north-east room, presumably in this period. The most extensive, and still visible, alterations of this period were carried out in the outshot. This has seen extensive rebuilding in concrete block and also the removal of all features relating to the original boiler, which presumably heated the chapel, although the chimney on the south wall has remained.

5.1.4 **Phase 3 (modern):** recent work, presumably connected to the current redevelopment of the building, has led to the loss of some original fabric. The replacement of the roof presumably led to the loss of the spire, but as the roof was already in poor condition, hence the urgent need for the work, it may already have been lost (Andrew Mitchell pers comm.). It is also apparent that the floor has been removed from the north end of the building, the panelling from the walls, and the dividing wall between the south room and the north-east room, presumably as part of the current work. The section of floor that remains is presumably indicative of the rest, while the original drawings provide some of the remaining detail.

### 5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 The building represents an interesting example of a Methodist chapel of late date, built in a relatively simple architectural style. Much of the original fabric has survived, although elements such as the roof were clearly in poor condition.

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