

Site & Landscape Survey

Geophysical Survey

55 London Road, Edinburgh **Historic Building Survey**

> **Data Structure Report** No. 1779







CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

The Old Engine House Eskmills Business Park Musselburgh East Lothian EH21 7PQ

Tel: 0131 273 4380 Fax: 0131 273 4381

email: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk web: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Author	Stuart Mitchell MA AIfA
Illustrator	Graeme Carruthers MA MAAIS
Editor	Melanie Johnson MA PhD FSA Scot MIfA
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55 London Road, Edinburgh Historic Building Survey

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of a Standing Building Survey undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd at 55 London Road, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 276 743; Fig. 1) during May 2010. The work was commissioned by Cruden Homes Ltd.
- 1.1.2 A proposed development at 55 London Road includes the demolition of a former Methodist Church. The historic building survey was required by John Lawson of City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by CFA and agreed by John Lawson.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 The building at 55 London Road is a purpose-built Methodist Church and lies on a plot of derelict land. The building is currently unused. No previous archaeological work is known to have been carried out on it or its immediate environs.

1.3 Objectives

- 1.3.1 The project's aims were:
 - To carry out a rapid desk-based assessment and place the survey area in its historical context.
 - To carry out a Level 2/3 standing building survey.
 - To produce a data structure report outlining the results of the work.

2. METHODS

2.1 General

2.1.1 CFA follows the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance and Code of Conduct.

2.2 Desk-based Assessment

- 2.2.1 A desk-based assessment was conducted prior to fieldwork, in order to collate relevant information on the historic development of the proposed development area. Sources consulted included:
 - National Monuments Record of Scotland. All relevant records were checked and bibliographic sources followed up.
 - Early map coverage for the area. An examination of all the Ordnance Survey Large Scale Town Plan (1848-53); and subsequent editions was made, together with any other readily available cartographic information on pre-recent land use in the project area.

2.3 Historic Building Survey

- 2.3.1 A Level 2/3 Building Survey (English Heritage 2006) was carried out on the building. All elevations of this structure were photographed where possible. A narrative on the interior and exterior of the building's character, form and any visible construction phases visible in the fabric were recorded.
- 2.3.2 CFA used a Nikon D100 Professional Digital SLR for historic building recording. Elevation recording techniques included the use of an industry standard Leica TCR 307 in REDM mode linked to PENMAP software. Standard building recording forms were completed and measured sketches taken to aid interpretation.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 Desk Based Assessment

NMRS and SMR

3.1.1 No listing or information was contained within the NMRS or SMR on 55 London Road.

Cartographic

3.1.2 The plot currently occupied by the church is annotated as 'Sunnybank Cottage' on the Ordnance Survey town plan 1847-1872 and on the first edition Ordnance Survey map 1832. The name changes to 'Sunnybank Nursery' on the Ordnance Survey town plan 1870-77. The earliest appearance of a church on the site is on the 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1904.

Anecdotal

- 3.1.3 The Edinburgh and Forth Circuit of the Methodist Church were contacted and William Young stated that the present church building was opened on 15th November 1930 to replace an existing iron building known as "the wee tin kirk" which had been on the site since 1902. The church was built, with funds raised by the members, as it was felt by the membership that a more substantial building was required.
- 3.1.4 When built in 1930, the construction was double skinned partition walls (not brick construction) giving an estimated shelf life of 50 years. The Methodist Church subsequently had problems with the roof, which was replaced in the 1980s, and with wood rot and wet rot in the walls, which was treated in the early 1990s. Due to the construction, the building was difficult to heat and keep warm. The Methodist Church realised that the building was becoming unsustainable and the cost of upkeep and repair was no longer practical.
- 3.1.5 Around 2005 the Methodist Church in Edinburgh was in discussion about creating one City Centre Church to be based originally at Central Hall Tollcross, and at this time the Abbeyhill congregation decided it was time to leave the building at London Road, which was subsequently sold to a developer.
- 3.1.6 Following the sale of the church, the building was used by Sparta Athletic Association as a boxing gym (Barbara Edge: pers comm).

3.2 Standing Building Survey

General

3.2.1 The building is single storey and occupies an 'L' shaped plan (Fig. 4). It comprises a congregation area (1) aligned north to south with a pitched roof, and a hall (2) extending to the south, which also has a pitched roof. The roof is

tiled with grey square tiles (9) and has timber barge boards (3) at all gables. A pitch-roofed annex extends south from the hall, adjoining the side of the church, containing the toilets and kitchen. A pitch-roofed entrance vestibule extends from the north end of the west elevation of the church and a flat roofed entrance vestibule extends from the east end of the north elevation of the hall. The building has cast iron guttering and downpipes (26).

- 3.2.2 The build comprises a 13cm timber stud frame, probably set onto a brick foundation. In the lower 1.2m of the structure the studs are set 15cm apart. Above this the studs are set 40cm apart. The exterior is rendered and harled directly onto the studs. It has a four-sided steeple (7) with timber louvre vents on the sides. The spire is tiled with overhanging eaves. Much of the lead flashing and the finial have been robbed.
- 3.2.3 All rooms are timber clad (27) with tongue and groove to a dado rail 1.2m high. Above this the plastered walls are lined woodchip wallpaper (28) and coarse horsehair felt (29).

Exterior elevations: Church

- 3.2.4 The north elevation of the church forms the gable of the church (Fig. 2, Fig. 5). It features a Palladian style window comprising a 12-paned window (6) flanked by an eight-paned window (8) on either side, with a centrally placed semi-circular decorative window above.
- 3.2.5 The west elevation comprises the full length of the side of the church (Fig. 3, Fig. 6). It features a pitched gabled extension forming the vestibule of the main entrance (4) to the church. The vestibule has a double doored entrance. A second pitched gabled extension forms the exterior of the chancel (5), and has a central boarded up window. The side of the church has two 12-paned windows (6) between the entrance and chancel. The side of the church to the south of the chancel has a blocked doorway to the corridor and a boarded up window to the vestry toilet.
- 3.2.6 The south elevation of the church adjoins the south gable of the vestry, toilet and kitchen block. Together the church, vestry, toilet and kitchen block form an 'M' shaped gable. Four boarded up windows are set within the 'M' shaped gable.
- 3.2.7 Only 6.2m of the east elevation is external, the rest being internal and adjoining the hall. It has a single 12-paned window.

Exterior Elevations: Hall

3.2.8 The north elevation forms the side of the hall facing London Road and has two 12-paned windows (6) and a lean-to entrance (18). The lean-to entrance has double doors which are currently boarded over.

- 3.2.9 The east elevation of the hall forms the gable and is identical to the north elevation of the church, featuring Palladian style windows. The slope of the pitch extends less steeply over the lean-to entrance (18).
- 3.2.10 The south elevation has an exit door at its east end and one 12-paned window.

Interior: Church (Fig. 8-11, 21)

3.2.11 The church interior comprises a main congregation area, a chancel and a vestibule. It is separated from the hall by sliding 6-panel wooden shutters mounted on a rail. It has timber tongue-and-groove cladding with a dado rail to 1.2m height, painted green. Above this the walls of the north, east and west elevations are painted yellow. The south elevation is painted blue. A wooden bible cupboard (11) is mounted to the timber cladding by the entrance. The east elevation features two 12-paned windows (6) and opens out to the adjoining hall. The south elevation has two doors (30), both leading to the corridor (21). The doors (30) are four panelled, although one has been panelled over with plywood. Much of the plasterwork is missing from higher up the wall, exposing the timber studs. The west elevation features a partial timber screen (15) blocking the chancel, two 12-paned windows (6) and double-doors leading to the entrance vestibule (4). The interior of the chancel has a boarded up 12-paned window on its north wall; it is otherwise plain and has a timber floor. The entry vestibule has a timber floor and a rectangular doormat recess.

Interior: Hall (Fig. 12-14)

- 3.2.12 The north elevation of the hall has two 12-paned windows (6) and a double-doored entrance at the east end leading to the lean-to (18). The east elevation is identical to the north elevation of the church, featuring a Palladian style window which is boarded over. The south elevation has a door at the east end with a transom window (25), a single 12-paned window (6) and an internal door leading to the kitchen (20).
- 3.2.13 Between the church and hall is a hinged 6-panel timber shutter (19) mounted on rails which could separate the two rooms along the axis of the church's east elevation.

Domestic Areas: Interiors (Fig. 15-18)

- 3.2.14 The south end of the church and the kitchen annex contain the domestic area of the building. It comprises a corridor, vestry and toilet, gents and ladies WCs and a kitchen. The corridor (21) connects the church to the domestic area and is also accessible from the outside by a blocked door on the west elevation of the church. It has a carpeted floor and a plaster ceiling, though this is in poor condition, most of it having collapsed.
- 3.2.15 The kitchen (20) is at the east end of the hall and is accessible from the corridor and the hall. The kitchen has two exterior windows and has a linoleum floor. It is fitted with modern flat-pack style kitchen units.

- 3.2.16 The gents and ladies WCs (24) adjoin the kitchen and are accessible from the corridor. They comprise two WCs separated by a later partition wall which splits an exterior window. The sinks have been robbed.
- 3.2.17 The vestry (22) is a small rectangular room off the corridor featuring an exterior window and an opaque interior window to the corridor. It is carpeted and has a flat plastered ceiling. The vestry toilet (23) is located next to the vestry and is accessible from the hall. It is carpeted and has an exterior window on its north elevation.

Floors

3.2.18 The floors (10) of the church and hall comprise longitudinally laid mahogany strip floorboards. A large timber platform (12) on casters occupies part of the church; it is supposed that this is part of a boxing ring. A faint dark mark with chamfers is visible on the floor immediately in front of the chancel screen. This probably marks the former position of a pulpit (16).

Roof (Fig. 19-20)

3.2.19 The roofs of the church and hall have exposed white-painted timber rafters and sarking boards. The roofs are of through-purlin construction with joists joined by socketed joints, reinforced by timber struts and a wrought iron tie rod suspended from the ridge collar and bolted to rods from the rafter ends. The construction of the visible part of the church roof above the common areas is significantly simpler and less decorative, being of unfinished wood using lap joints and bolts.

4. **CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 A Level 2/3 standing building recording is now complete and it is recommended that no further building recording work is required prior to the buildings demolition.
- 4.2 A summary statement of the results of the building survey, to be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland 2010* (Appendix 4) and OASIS, will be sufficient to disseminate the results of the work.
- 4.3 In line with the Written Scheme of Investigation, copies of the report will be lodged with CECAS Sites and Monuments Record and the National Monument Record of Scotland.

5. REFERENCES

Bibliographic

English Heritage 2006 *Understanding Historic Buildings – A Guide to Good Recording Practice*. London.

Cartographic

Ordnance Survey Edinburgh Large Scale Town Plans 1847-72.

Ordnance Survey Edinburgh Large Scale Town Plans 1870-77.

Ordnance Survey 1904 3rd Edinburgh edition 1" to the mile. Sheet 32.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Architectural feature register

Element	Description
1	Church
2	Palladian windows
3	Barge boards
4	Entry vestibule
5	Chancel
6	12-paned windows
7	Steeple
8	8 paned windows
9	Tiled roof
10	Floor
11	Bible cupboard
12	Platform (boxing ring)
13	Roof
14	Ridge collar
15	Chancel screen
16	Pulpit mark
17	Hall
18	Lean-to entrance
19	Timber sliding shutters
20	Kitchen
21	Corridor
22	Vestry
23	Vestry toilet
24	Gent's and Ladies' WCs
25	Transom window and door
26	Cast iron guttering and downpipes
27	Timber cladding
28	Wallpaper plaster
29	Horsehair felt
30	4-panel timber doors

Appendix 2: Dimensions

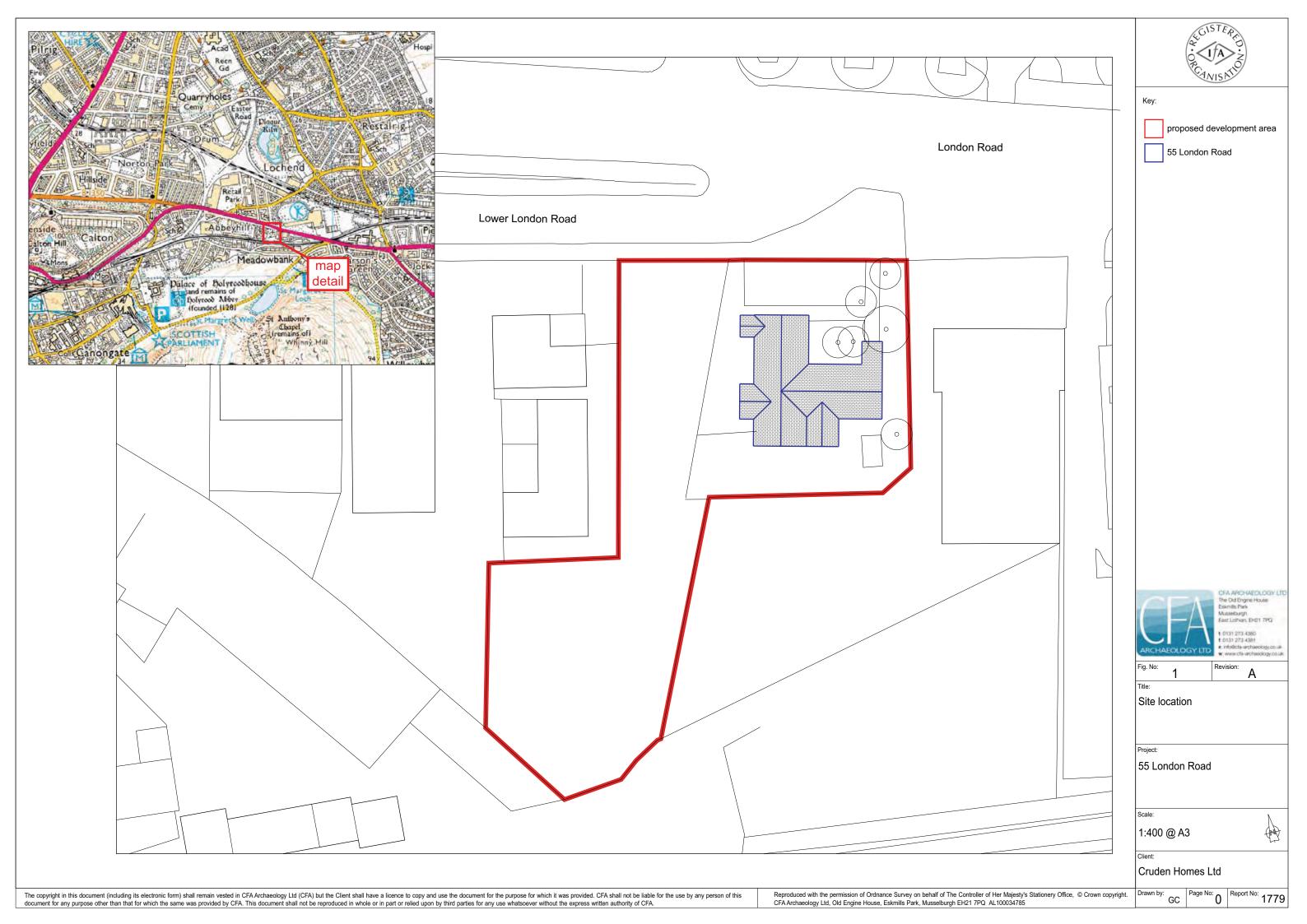
Element	Dimensions (LxW) (m)
Church	12.66 x 6.6
Hall	9.26 x 6.57
Chancel	1.8 x 1.1
Entry Vestibule	1.99 x 1.23
Lean-to Entrance	1.8 x 1.6
Corridor	3.26 x 1.09
Kitchen	3.8 x 3.6
Gent's and Ladies' WCs	2.4 x 2.5
Vestry	2.9 x 2.4
Vestry toilet	2.4 x 1.6

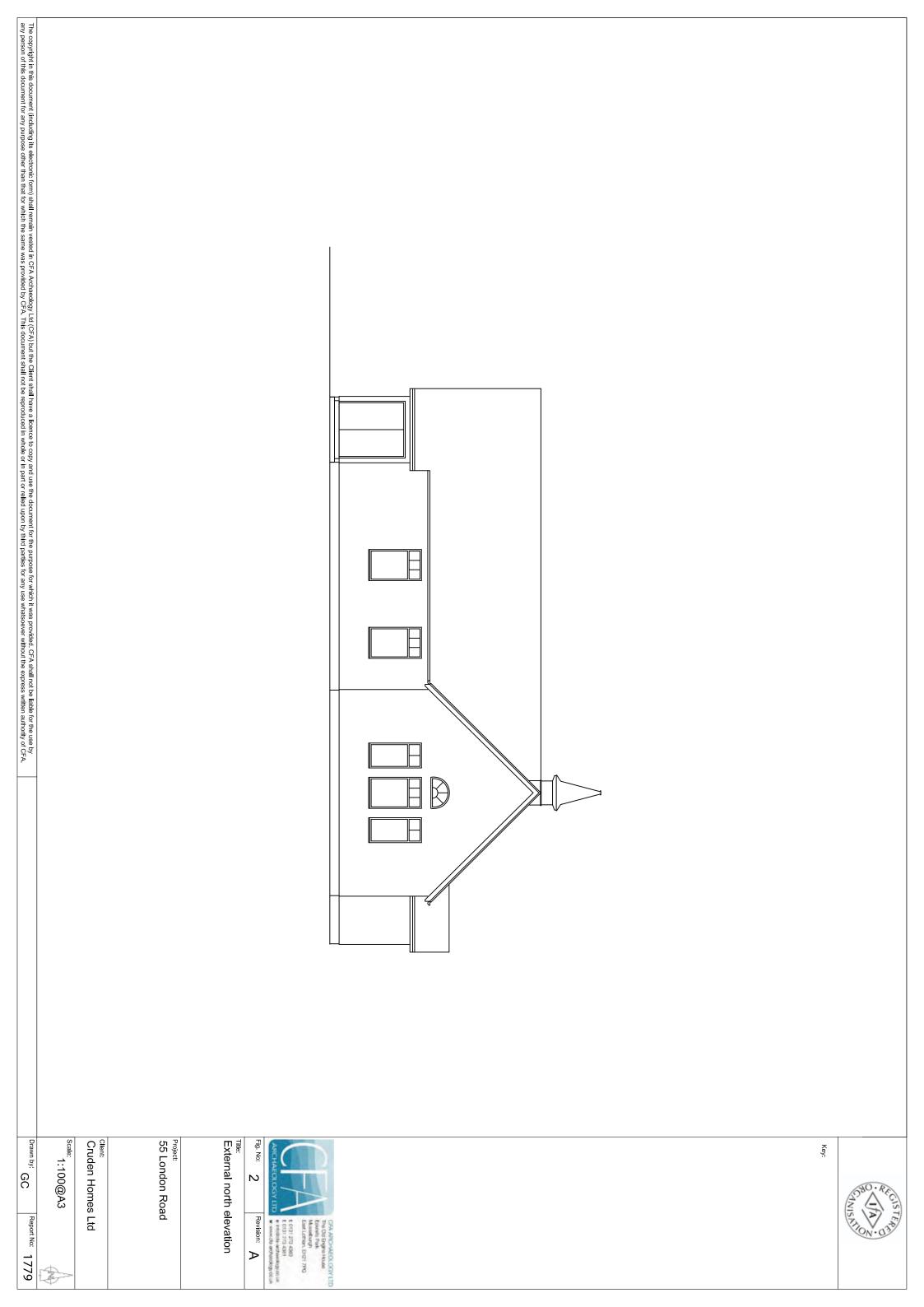
Appendix 3: Digital Photographic Register

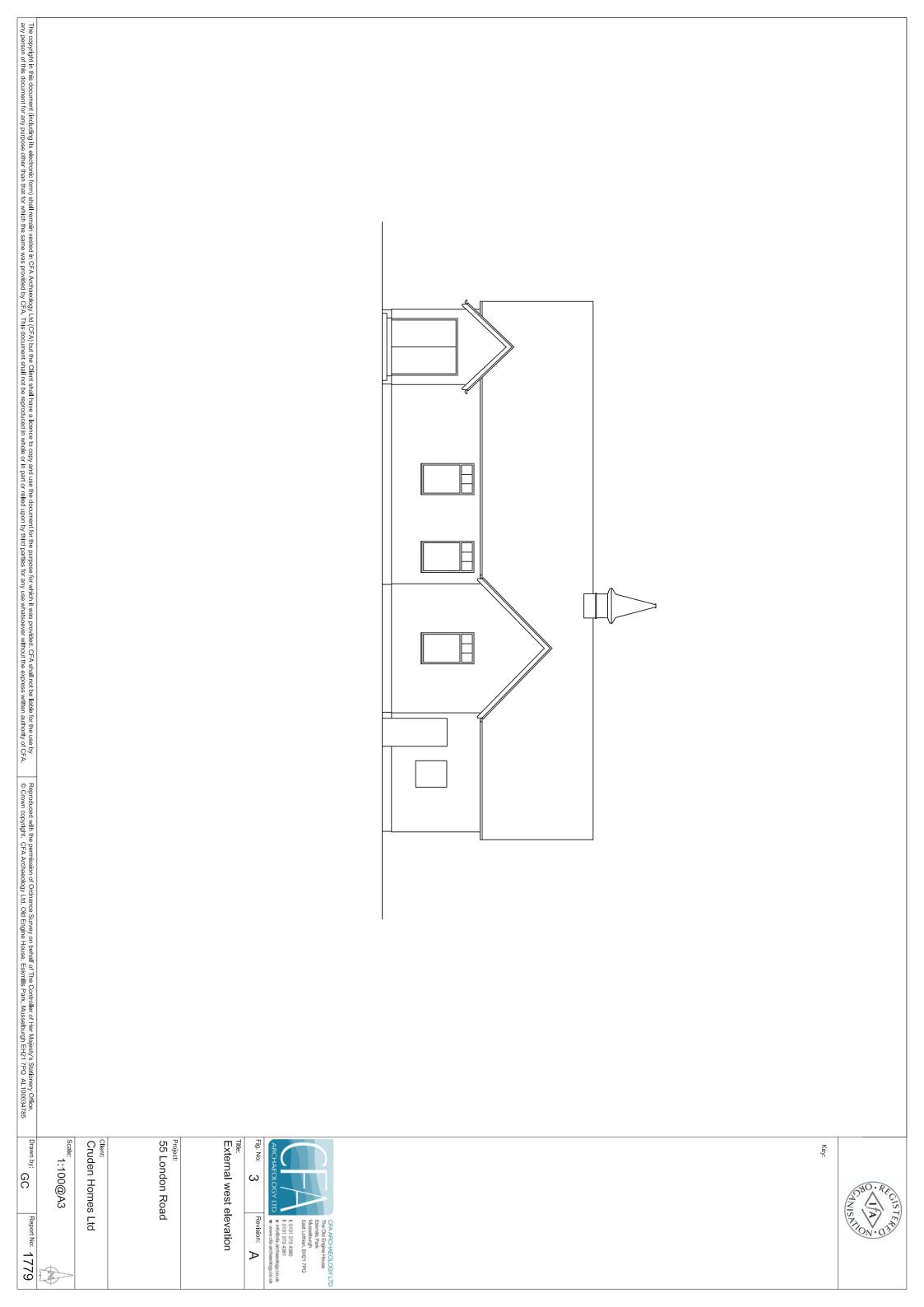
Photo No.	Description	From
1	General view of church	NW
2	General view of church	W
3	General view of church	SW
4	General view of church	SW
5	General view of church	NE
6-14	North elevation	N
15-23	West elevation	W
24-32	South elevation	S
33	Oblique view of east elevation of hall	SE
34-36	East elevation of church	Е
37-40	West elevation of church, interior	Е
41	South elevation of church interior	N
42-43	North elevation of hall interior	S
44-45	East elevation of hall interior	W
46-47	South elevation of hall interior	N
48-52	General view of corridor	
53	Vestry toilet	N
54-55	Interior window of vestry	SW
56	Vestry from hall	NW
57-58	Gent's and Ladies WCs	N
59-62	Internal kitchen shots	
63	Hall roof detail interior	W
64-65	Church roof detail interior	S
66-67	Detail of ridge collar	
68	Detail of roof construction	
69-70	Detail of steeple box	
71	Detail of damage in south elevation, church interior	N
72	Doormat recess in entry vestibule	Е
73	Detail of plaster, felt and timber framing with render behind	S
74-76	North elevation of church interior	S
77-78	General view of church interior	S
79	General view of hall from church	W
80-81	General view of church interior	S
82-83	Steeple	NW
84	Cast iron guttering and downpipes detail	
85	Lean-to entry, hall	N
86-87	Steeple	NE

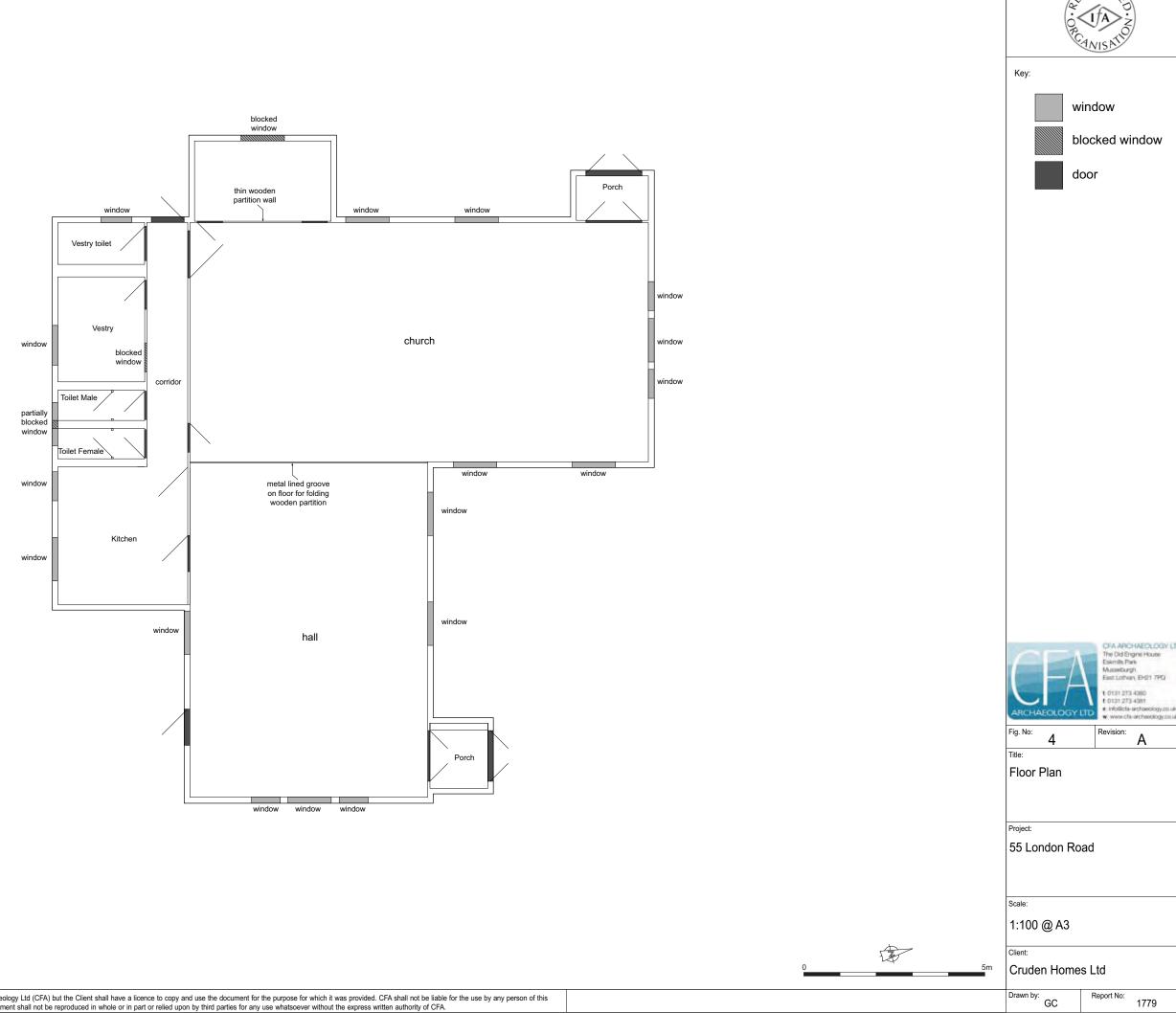
APPENDIX 4: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	55 London Road, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	CLOW
PARISH:	Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	S Mitchell
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Level 2/3 Standing Building Recording Survey
NMRS NO(S):	N/a
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Methodist Church
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/a
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 276 742
START DATE (this season)	May 2010
END DATE (this season)	May 2010
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A building survey was carried out on a derelict Methodist church situated at 55 London Road, Edinburgh. The survey was carried out to fulfil a planning condition prior to its demolition. The church was constructed shortly before 1904 according to cartographic sources and was last used for worship in 2004. Occupying an L-shaped plan, the church has a rectangular congregation area lit by Palladian-style windows. A hall adjoins the congregational area. The building is mainly timber-framed resting on brick foundations. The interior walls are clad with timber panelling to dado height with painted plaster above. The roof is a through-purlin construction with painted sarking boards. The timber rafters are exposed. The apex of the roof is boxed-in and pierced with ventilation holes. The exterior of the church has featureless harled walls. The roof is tiled and has a squat central louvered spire.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Cruden Homes Ltd
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ.
EMAIL ADDRESS:	smitchell@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS, Reports lodged with SMR and NMRS.









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Fig 5. Exterior: view from north-west



Fig 6. Exterior: view from south-west

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Fig 7. Exterior: oblique view of east elevation



Fig 8. Interior: north elevation of church

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Fig 9. Interior: view of north and east elevation of church



Fig 10. Interior: south elevation of church

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Fig 11. Interior: west elevation, pulpit area



Fig 12. Interior: north elevation of hall

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Fig 13. Interior: west elevation of hall



Fig 14. Interior: south elevation of hall

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Fig 15. Interior: corridor detail



Fig 16. Interior: interior of vestry

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Fig 17. Interior: vestry toilet



Fig 18. Interior: toilet with partition and blocked window

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Fig 19. Interior: detail of church roof



Fig 20. Interior: detail of church roof ridge vents and spire box

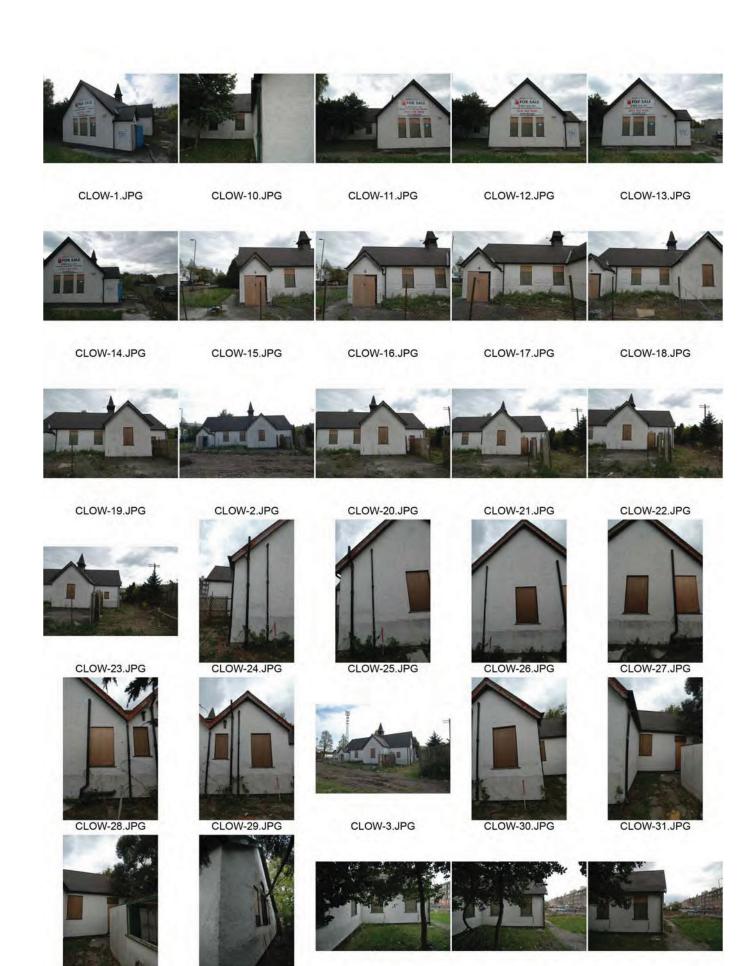
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Fig 21. Interior: general view of church congregation area

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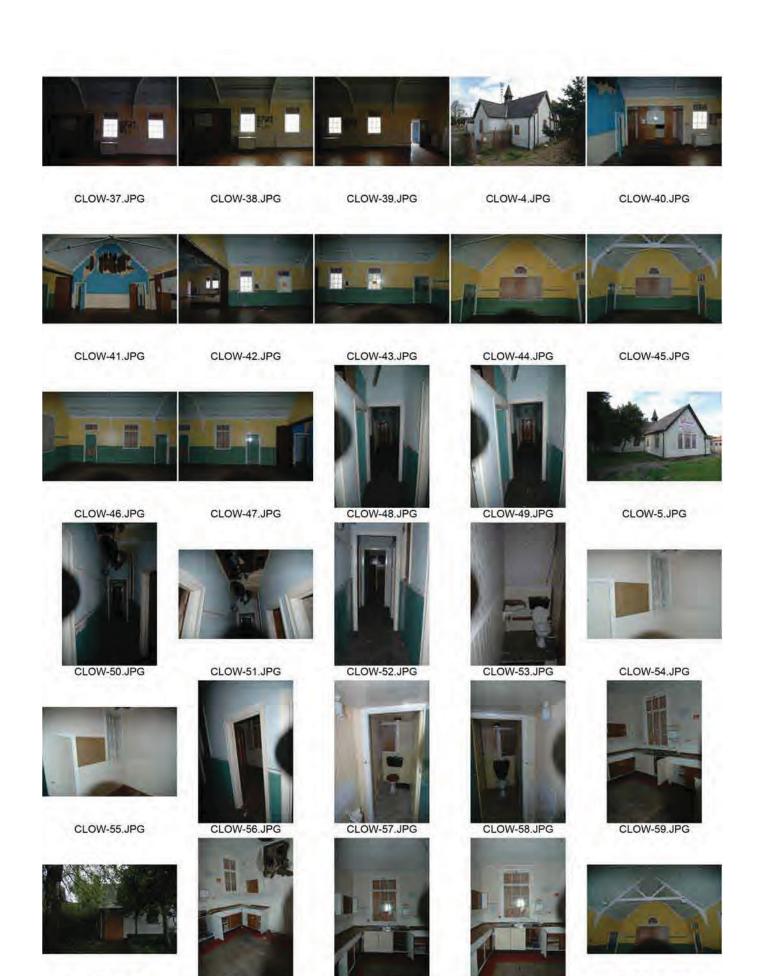
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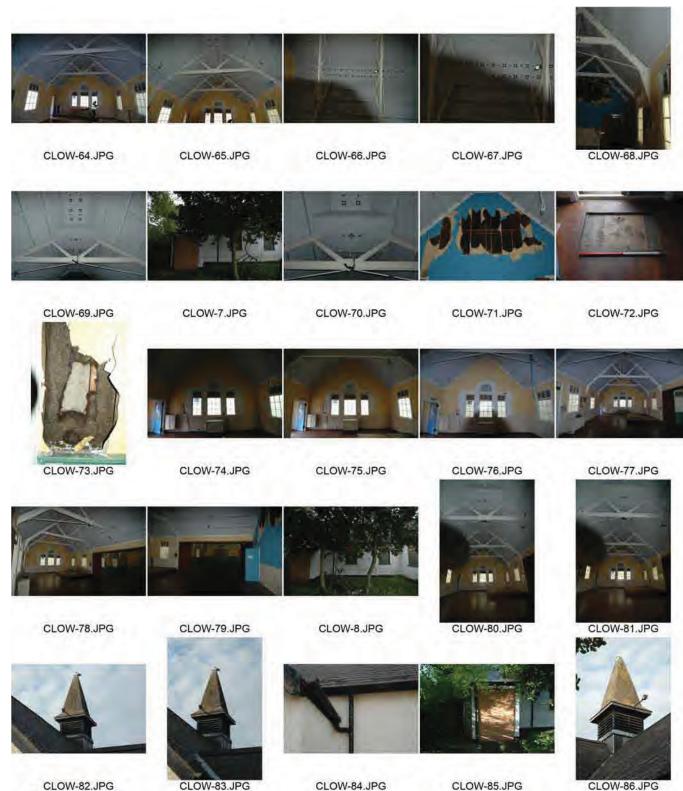


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