

# EASTACOMBE CHAPEL, TAWSTOCK, DEVON

(NGR SS 54083 29731)

## Heritage Statement

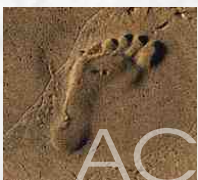
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On behalf of:  
John Blaney Ltd

Document No: ACD1801/1/1

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AC archaeology

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## Heritage Statement

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## Summary

*A heritage statement was prepared by AC archaeology in June 2018 and revised in December 2018 to support a Listed Building Consent application for the conversion of the former Eastacombe Chapel, Tawstock, Devon, into a single residential dwelling. The building is Grade II Listed. It was built in 1818 as a Baptist chapel, and has remained relatively unchanged. The principal later 20th-century alterations comprise the enlargement of the first-floor gallery and replacement of the associated stairs, along with the subdivision of a north extension into a kitchen and toilets.*

*The significance of the chapel is drawn from its historical, architectural, communal and aesthetic values, as well as its setting. The scheme will cause negligible harm through the removal of the pews from the chapel, but overall the heritage values contributing towards its significance remain either unchanged or very slightly altered. Therefore, no change to the significance or special interest of the building is predicted.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

1.1 This heritage statement has been prepared by AC archaeology in June 2018, and revised in December 2018, as supporting documentation for a Listed Building Consent application for the conversion of the redundant Eastacombe Chapel, Tawstock, Devon (SS 54083 29731; Fig. 1) into residential accommodation. The document was commissioned by John Blaney Architects.

1.2 The chapel is located on the east edge of the settlement of Eastacombe Cross, on the north side of the road from the village to Tawstock. It is situated on the top of a broad, flat ridge at a height of approximately 70m aOD. The underlying geology comprises a band (along the ridgeline) of Carboniferous chert of the Codden Hill chert formation (British Geological Survey online viewer 2018). There are no overlying deposits.

1.3 The Chapel is a Grade II Listed Building (National Heritage List for England (NHLE) entry 1253623). The following description was prepared in 1987:

*Non Conformist chapel. 1818. Rendered stone rubble. Slate roof with gable ends. Rectangular on plan. Single storey with west gallery. 2 window range of semi-circular headed windows to each side, and 2 similar windows at east end flanking gabled slated porch. Roundel above with 1818 date. Lean-to to rear left side.*

1.4 A similar, but slightly less detailed, description is given in the former Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England gazetteer of chapels and meeting houses in Southwest England (Stell 1991, 97, entry 170).

1.5 The scheme comprises the conversion of the redundant chapel into a single residential dwelling. On the ground floor the main chapel space will be retained as a lounge with an integral dining area. A new kitchen will be created within the entrance hall, and the current kitchen and toilets will be converted into an en-suite bedroom. The first-floor gallery will be subdivided into two bedrooms and a bathroom. Externally, there will be two parking spaces and a new small walled garden, both located within the current parking area in front of the chapel.

## 2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

2.1 Guidance and policies relating to the protection, maintenance and enhancement of heritage assets relevant to this development may be summarised as follows:

### **Statutory**

2.2 Listed Buildings are protected under the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. Section 66 of the Act requires that 'In considering whether to grant planning permission (or permission in principle) for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.

### **The National Planning Policy Framework**

2.3 General policy and guidance for the conservation of the historic environment are now contained in Chapter 16 (paragraphs 184-202 and associated footnotes) of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF; Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 2018a). A heritage asset is defined as 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)'. A designated heritage asset is defined as 'a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation'.

2.4 The paragraphs relevant to this scheme are listed below (minus associated footnotes):

#### **Paragraph 184**

*Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.*

#### **Paragraph 189**

*In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.*

#### **Paragraph 190**

*Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.*

**Paragraph 192**

*In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

**Paragraph 193**

*When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*

**Paragraph 194**

*Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

**Paragraph 195**

*Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

**Paragraph 196**

*Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*

**2.5 Local authority planning policies**

The relevant policies for the management of the historic environment are contained within the adopted *North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031* (Torridge District Council and North Devon Council 2018):

**Policy DM07: Historic Environment**

*(1) All proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by sufficient information, in the form of a Heritage Statement, to enable the impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset and its setting to be properly assessed. As part of such an assessment, consideration should be given, in order of preference, for avoiding any harm, providing enhancement, then minimising and mitigating any harm.*

*(2) Proposals which conserve and enhance heritage assets and their settings will be supported. Where there is unavoidable harm to heritage assets and their settings, proposals will only be supported where the harm is minimised as far as possible, and an acceptable balance between harm and benefit can be achieved in line with the national policy tests, giving great weight to the conservation of heritage assets.*

(3 ) *Proposals to improve the energy efficiency of, or to generate renewable energy from, historic buildings or surrounding these heritage assets will be supported where:*

- (a) there is no significant harm or degradation of historic fabric including traditional windows; and*
- (b) equivalent carbon dioxide emission savings cannot be achieved by alternative siting or design that would have a less severe impact on the integrity of heritage assets.*

**Policy ST15: Conserving Heritage Assets**

*Great weight will be given to the desirability of preserving and enhancing northern Devon's historic environment by:*

- (a) conserving the historic dimension of the landscape;*
- (b) conserving cultural, built, historic and archaeological features of national and local importance and their settings, including those that are not formally designated;*
- (c) identifying and protecting locally important buildings that contribute to the area's local character and identity; and*
- (d) increasing opportunities for access, education and appreciation of all aspects of northern Devon's historic environment, for all sections of the community.*

**2.6** The Local Plan also includes the following policy relevant to the scheme:

**Policy DM27: Re-use of Disused and Redundant Rural Buildings**

*The conversion of redundant and disused rural buildings will be supported where:*

- (a) such conversion would not harm any intrinsic qualities and historic interest of the building;*
- (b) the proposal will have a positive impact on the immediate setting of the building and the wider rural character is protected;*
- (c) development can be achieved without significant external alteration, extension or substantive rebuilding;*
- (d) suitable highway access can be provided and the surrounding highway network can support the proposed use(s); and*
- (e) any nature conservation interest within the building or wider site is retained.*

### **3. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

**3.1** There were three aims of this document. Firstly, to assess the significance of Eastacombe Chapel. Secondly, to assess any potential impact of the scheme on this significance. Thirdly, to identify any nearby designated heritage assets whose significance may be affected by the development, principally through changes to their setting.

**3.2** The preparation of the document has been guided by the methodologies set out in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* (updated January 2017) and the NPPF.

**3.3** A rapid desk-based appraisal was undertaken. This comprised an assessment of the following relevant sources:

- Historic maps held at the Devon Heritage Centre; and
- Other data held online such as the NHLE and by the Devon County Historic Environment Record.

**3.4** A site visit was carried out on 22 June 2018 and comprised:

- A written description of Eastacombe Chapel and its surroundings;
- Annotated architect's as existing plans, to show builds of different date and architectural fittings and features; and
- A photographic record including the overall character of Eastacombe Chapel and its surroundings, as well as detailed views of any architectural features and fixtures and fittings as necessary to illustrate the document.

### **Assessment of significance**

- 3.5** Advice on the criteria to be used in assessing the significance of heritage assets, as well as an outline methodology, is included in Historic England's *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2* (2015), as well as the earlier English Heritage guidance *Conservation Principles – Policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment* (English Heritage 2008). This guidance states that heritage assets are considered to have significance based on their evidential, historical, aesthetic or communal value. The NPPF also includes the criteria of architectural and artistic value, and states that setting can also contribute to an asset's significance.
- 3.6** Together *Conservation Principles* and *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2* identify the need (a) to understand the importance of heritage values, (b) to understand the level of significance (of an asset), and (c) for an assessment of the impact on significance; the latter two are requirements of the NPPF. However, neither document provides a methodology for the ranking in these assessments. This heritage statement therefore expresses the results of the assessment of significance of an asset using a scale of significance derived from Volume 11, Section 3, Part 2 of the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* (The Highways Agency 2007) and from guidance provided by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS 2011). An understanding of the relative significance of heritage assets is important because of the issue of proportionality expressed in Paragraphs 189, 190, and 193 of the NPPF. The ranking is presented in Table 1 below.



SIGNIFICANCE (VALUE)	FACTORS FOR ASSESSING THE SIGNIFICANCE (VALUE) OF HERITAGE ASSETS
Very High	World Heritage Sites (including nominated sites) Assets of acknowledged international importance Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged international research objectives Assets with exceptional heritage values
High	Scheduled Monuments (including proposed sites) Grade I and II* Listed Buildings Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens Undesignated heritage assets of schedulable or exceptional quality and importance Conservation Areas containing very important buildings Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged national research objectives Assets with high heritage values Hedgerows of national interest that have historical or archaeological importance as defined within Part II, Schedule I of the Hedgerows Regulations of 1997
Medium	Designated or undesignated assets that have exceptional qualities or contribute to regional research objectives Grade II Listed Buildings Conservation Areas containing important buildings Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens Assets with moderate heritage values Hedgerows of regional interest that have historical or archaeological importance as defined within Part II, Schedule I of the Hedgerows Regulations of 1997
Low	Designated and undesignated heritage assets of local importance Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations Assets of limited value, but with potential to contribute to local research objectives Assets with low heritage values Hedgerows of local interest that have historical or archaeological importance as defined within Part II, Schedule I of the Hedgerows Regulations of 1997
Negligible	Assets with very little or no surviving archaeological, architectural or historical interest Assets with minimal heritage values
Unknown	The importance of the asset has not been ascertained

Table 1: Grading of significance (value)

### Assessment of settings

**3.7** Guidance on the potential impacts of any development upon the setting of heritage assets, including an outline methodology for assessment, is contained within Historic England's *The Setting of Heritage Assets, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3* (Historic England 2017), in particular Sections 10-13 which identify views which may add to the significance of heritage assets, and assets which were intended to be intervisible. The NPPF *Planning Practice Guidance* (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 2018b) has been used to assess the contribution of setting to significance.

**3.8** Any impacts of the proposed development on the settings of heritage assets have been assessed in accordance with the methodologies outlined in *The Setting of Heritage Assets, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (Second Edition)* as set out below:

*Step 1: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected*

*Step 2: Assess the degree to which these settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated*

Step 3: Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on that significance or on the ability to appreciate it

Step 4: Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm

Step 5: Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.

### Assessment of effects on significance

- 3.9** In the absence of a standard terminology for the scale of effects on heritage assets the magnitude of change is expressed using a five-point scale of impacts, whether negative or beneficial, based on the *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges* and guidance from ICOMOS (Table 2).

DEGREE OF CHANGE	FACTORS AFFECTING CHANGE
Major	Change in evidential, architectural, historical, artistic, aesthetic or communal value, or setting, of the heritage asset such that the significance of the resource is totally altered
Moderate	Change in evidential, architectural, historical, artistic, aesthetic or communal value, or setting, of the heritage asset such that the significance of the resource is substantially modified
Minor	Change in evidential, architectural, historical, artistic, aesthetic or communal value, or setting, of the heritage asset such that the significance of the resource is slightly altered
Negligible	Change in evidential, architectural, historical, artistic, aesthetic or communal value, or setting, of the heritage asset such that the change in significance of the resource is barely perceptible
No Change	Change in evidential, architectural, historical, artistic, aesthetic or communal value, or setting, of the heritage asset such that the significance of the resource is not altered.

Table 2: Assessment of effects on significance

## 4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Figs 2-3)

- 4.1** The chapel was constructed in 1818 (Devon HER MDV32866; see also entry MDV06359) within a field to the northeast of a crossroads on the road from St Johns Chapel and Eastacombe to Tawstock. According to Cherry and Pevsner (2002, 792) the Chapel was built by the local evangelist Robert Gribble in 'c. 1817-1818'.
- 4.2** The area was classified by the Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation project as 'medieval enclosures based on strip fields', described as an area 'probably first enclosed with hedge-banks during the later middle ages', with the surviving form of the boundaries suggesting that it may have been farmed as open strip fields. These characteristic field boundaries can be identified on 19th-century maps.
- 4.3** The chapel is recorded on the 1842 Tawstock tithe map as a broadly L-shaped building comprising the main range with a smaller range at the west end of the north elevation (Fig. 2). The building sits within a broadly triangular plot. This plot (2413) was described as being owned by the Trustees of the Baptist Chapel.
- 4.4** The First Edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1888 (Fig. 3) records a little more detail than the tithe map. It shows a porch on the west elevation, along with attached walls, as well as a path passing through the associated burial ground.

- 4.5 No changes to the chapel and its grounds are recorded on the 1904 revision of the 25-inch Ordnance Survey map (not illustrated). It is however now described as a 'Chapel (Nonconformist)' rather than 'Chapel (General)'.
- 4.6 The 1956 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map now describes the chapel as 'Eastacombe Gospel Hall (Plymouth Brethren)'.

## 5. THE CHAPEL (Fig. 4; Plates 1-12)

### The exterior of the chapel

- 5.1 The chapel is two-storey in height under a pitched slate roof. It is rectangular, aligned along, and adjacent to, the adjacent road and set within a burial ground located to the east and north of the building. The chapel is terraced into the hillside at road level, and the graveyard to the rear is up to a metre higher from the interior floor level. There is a French drain around the building set within the construction terrace. The chapel faces west opening on to a concrete car parking area at the south end of a short track to an adjacent field (Plate 1). The whole building is finished with white-painted render over stonework.
- 5.2 The west elevation features a central doorway, fitted with a pair of modern 6-panel doors, which is situated under a rendered porch with a pitched slate roof (Plate 2). To either side are pairs of round-headed 12-pane windows, with slate cills, on both floors. In the gable is a central, circular recess bearing the date 1818.
- 5.3 The south elevation features a pair of round-headed window openings set towards the east end of the building (Plate 3). These have 12 fixed lower panes, and 3 pane bottom-opening casements in the heads. The east elevation is plain with no architectural features (Plates 2 and 3). The north elevation is partially obscured by an extension at the west end (Plates 3 and 4). To the east is a pair of windows of the type in the south elevation described above.
- 5.4 The extension is single storeyed under a tall pitched slate roof that drops down to the north from high up on the elevation of the chapel (Plates 3 and 4). The extension features a 3-light casement window in the north elevation, a 4-pane top-opening window in the north elevation, a planked door and a pair of 2-pane, top-opening windows in the west elevation.

### The interior of the chapel

- 5.5 On the ground floor the west end of the chapel has been subdivided to create an entrance hall where there is a modern wooden staircase to the first-floor gallery. A door adjacent to the staircase gives access to an understairs cupboard, and into the extension. The partition incorporates a pair of central part-glazed modern doors to the chapel (Plate 5). The entrance hall has modern panelled walls including to the window reveals, a modern tiled floor (replacing an earlier tiled lino floor covering) laid onto concrete and a boarded ceiling. The cupboard partition below the staircase has been constructed from boards reused from around an earlier staircase.
- 5.6 The chapel has a plain finish with two groups of pews laid onto original, raised platforms (Plates 6 and 7). The pews are generally plain with only basic chamfered edges to the aisle ends (Plate 8). The aisle and front of the chapel are carpeted, presumably over an earlier (?wooden) floor. The walls are rendered with beaded, possibly tongue and grooved, boards rising from the floor to the top of the pews. The ceiling and underside of the gallery are fitted with modern boards and the roof structure above is obscured. Modern lighting and speakers hang from these

ceilings. The pulpit is located centrally, and is a simple platform accessed via steps to either sides (Plate 9). The steps have an external handrail with turned balusters and newels. The wall panelling rises over the platform, and supports a bench for the preacher. The front panel of the pulpit is simply finished with partly decorated panels.

- 5.7** The extension houses a kitchen, a female toilet, along with a male toilet accessed from the outside. All the fittings are modern. Part of a single, central rafter supporting the roof is visible below the ceiling.
- 5.8** The first-floor gallery, located at the western end of the chapel, is a modern rebuild of an earlier gallery. It has been extended c. 2.5m to the east where there is a boarded partition to the chapel containing the remains of sliding boards. The gallery is finished with a carpet floor and a boarded ceiling, again obscuring the roof, although two tie beams project below the ceiling. The line of the original east end of the gallery (over the ground-floor partition) is visible as a change in alignment of the south wall (Plate 10), a scar in the plaster of the north wall, and slight change in the floor level.
- 5.9** The roof is supported on five tie beam trusses, of standard 19th-century design, each with a bolted king post and diagonal struts, and a pair of additional vertical braces (Plate 11). The secondary rafters are supported on two rows of trenched purlins, wall plates and a central vertical ridge purlin. The side purlins are not continuous and are stepped between some of the trusses.

#### **The burial ground**

- 5.10** The building is located within the southwest corner of the burial ground. On the west side of the building are rendered stone boundary walls, with lower rendered walls to either side of the porch; the latter are probably modern replacements. The higher southern wall of the burial ground is constructed of unrendered stone with a modern concrete capping, but has been rebuilt or repaired using brick at the west end. The wall rises up to the east where sections have been rebuilt in stone including where a gateway into the burial ground has been blocked. The west wall has been rebuilt in moulded concrete blocks construction onto the lower courses of an earlier stone wall (Plate 12). This wall incorporates a modern replacement pair of gates to a path passing through the rear of the graveyard. The northeast boundary is a stone wall that is largely obscured by ivy.
- 5.11** The burial ground contains gravestones dating from the 19th-century onwards. One of these – the Moone stone – is Grade II Listed (NHLE no. 1253626; MDVs 40125 and 96360).

## **6. DISCUSSION**

- 6.1** Eastacombe Chapel is a typical small non-conformist chapel, dating to 1818. The plan form, with a main preaching space and smaller entrance hall with gallery above, is common in such buildings (see the plans in Stell 1991), as is the general architectural design and window form. The interior of the chapel is typically austere, with no fittings of significant architectural or artistic interest. The north 'extension' appears to be a more recent addition, but since it is recorded on the 1842 tithe map it is probably an original feature. It may well have originally functioned as a vestry, a common addition to Southwest chapels (*ibid.*). The current layout probably dates to the late 20th century.

- 6.2 The building has remained relatively unchanged throughout its 200-year history. Within the chapel the gallery has been rebuilt and extended, with the associated staircase replaced. This probably took place to provide a new multi-purpose function room. Probably contemporary with this alteration was the conversion of the extension into a kitchen and toilets.

## 7. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Historical and communal values

- 7.1 The building has historical value as part of the wider non-conformist religious practice during the post-medieval period, which was particularly popular in the Southwest. Locally it was one of two Baptist chapels in Tawstock parish. Historical and communal values are often interconnected, and religious buildings can usually be considered to have a communal value as a place where a local community seek spiritual guidance. At Eastacombe that value has been diminished by the closure of the chapel. However, the burial ground remained open until recently, and is still used as a place of remembrance, enhancing the communal value of the building.

- 7.2 Historic interest can include an illustrative value in that a building can illustrate the past, including former uses. In this respect, the building can clearly be identified as a former non-conformist chapel through its distinct design, with plain exterior elevations and tall round-headed windows; both features typical of this type of religious building. The presence of an associated burial ground also gives the building illustrative value.

### Architectural, aesthetic and artistic values

- 7.3 The building has limited architectural value, with the principal interest being the plain design distinctive of non-conformist chapels. Whilst non-conformist chapels were executed in a wide range of designs many (particularly rural) Southwest chapels were austere with limited detailing, mainly manifested in the fenestration such as round-headed windows. This is evident at Eastacombe. This gives the building some aesthetic value as it is distinctively different to other rural buildings, such as the nearby cottages. The internal fixtures and fittings are similarly austere with relatively plain woodwork (pulpit, pews and panelling) displaying little detailing. Due to this, the building is not considered to have any artistic value.
- 7.4 The 20th-century changes have to an extent diminished the artistic value, in particular the alterations to the gallery, as this has involved the removal of the original first-floor partition overlooking the chapel.

### Setting

- 7.5 The setting of Eastacombe chapel, which contributes towards its significance, is its associated burial ground, the car parking area to the west and the road to the south, these being the surroundings in which the building is experienced, and where its historical, architectural and aesthetic values can be externally appreciated. The chapel was not constructed with intentional designed views, but its position against the highway may have been deliberate, in that its main west elevation is prominently visible on its approach from the west.

### Assessment of significance

- 7.6 In summary, the significance of Eastacombe Chapel is drawn from its historical, architectural and aesthetic values, and from its setting. These values all contribute towards its significance at a low level. The building is an asset of some local interest

with limited research potential. It is therefore considered to be a heritage asset of **low-medium significance**.

## 8. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

### Eastacombe Chapel

- 8.1 Conversion of redundant non-conformist chapels inevitably cause some change to their character, and potentially their special interest, in particular due to their original design with a large open internal space. Commercial use, such as public houses (e.g. the George's Meetings House in Exeter) can retain these spaces, but may require extensions (e.g. for kitchens and toilets) and changes to their associated burial grounds. Retail use can also retain their character, but are subject to the vagaries of the economic trading climate. Conversion to a residential use, particularly for rural chapels where markets for commercial use are limited or non-existent, offers a long-term viable future for these buildings.
- 8.2 The design of the conversion of Eastacombe Chapel is extremely sensitive to the special interest of the building as a former non-conformist chapel, and creates a three-bedroom house without the need to alter the principal historic interior preaching space, or for any new extensions. The main chapel remains an open space, albeit with the removal of the pews and pew platforms. The new staircase will replace a modern staircase. The insertion of the kitchen in the entrance hall reflects the subdivision of such spaces in other chapels, whilst the internal and external changes to the north extension will only affect the modern layout of this part of the building.
- 8.3 The conversion of the first-floor gallery will subdivide this space into several rooms. The current layout is modern, and larger than the original gallery. The layout, including the presence of any fittings such as pews, of the original gallery is not known.
- 8.4 Externally, the associated burial ground, although disused, will remain in its current form, but separate from the dwelling. A small new garden will be provided to the dwelling adjacent to the north extension, retaining access through the current car parking area to the adjacent field, and to the gate into the burial ground.
- 8.5 The building is in need of repairs showing evidence of cracking plaster and water penetration. Without conversion its condition is likely to deteriorate, and conversion offers the opportunity for a programme of sensitive repairs to make the building watertight in the long term.
- 8.6 In conclusion, the scheme will cause some change to the character of the building, and negligible negative harm to its special interest and significance (specifically through the loss of its (albeit low-quality) pews). However, the principal elements of its significance – its architectural and historical values, along with its aesthetic value and setting – remain either unchanged or slightly altered to a degree where this significance is not altered. Conversion to a dwelling provides a long-term viable use of the structure, preserving the Listed Building for future generations in a form that reflects its history and specific architectural characteristics. It is therefore concluded that overall the scheme will cause **no change** to the significance of Eastacombe Chapel.

### **Other heritage assets**

- 8.7 No heritage assets have been identified in the vicinity of Eastacombe chapel whose significance would be harmed (through changes to their setting) by the scheme. This includes the listed Moone headstone whose 'burial ground' setting will remain unaltered. The historic and spatial relationship with the associated former chapel will also remain.

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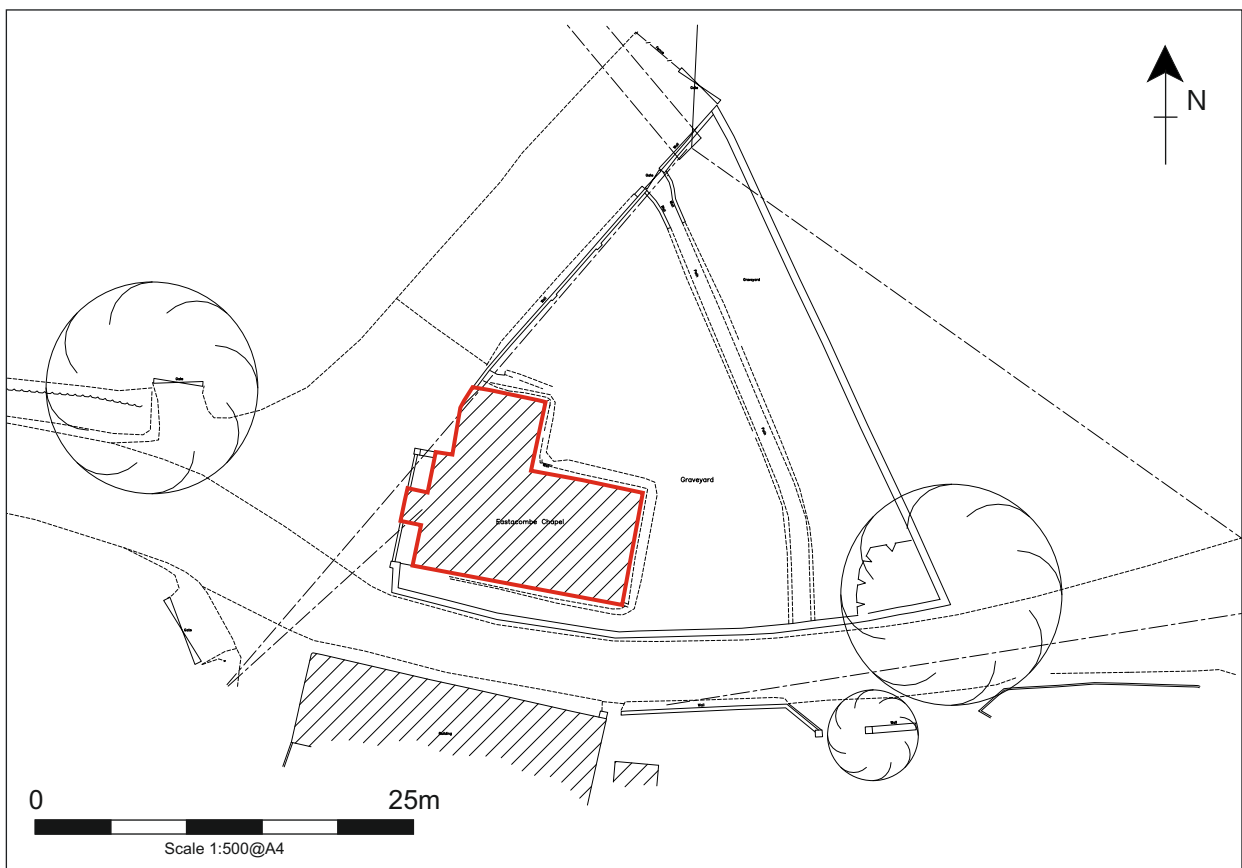
Devon County Historic Environment Record

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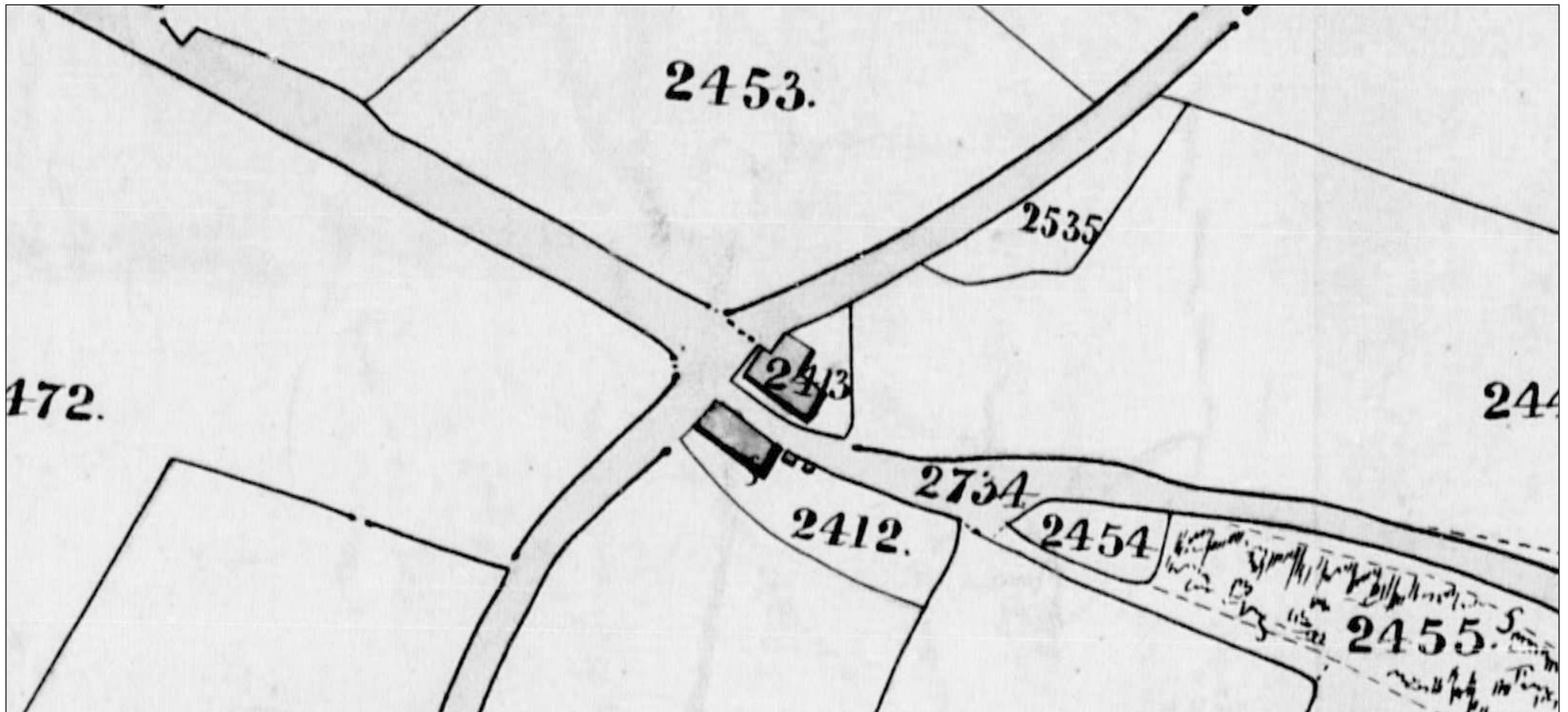
PROJECT

Eastacombe Chapel, Tawstock, Devon

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location





PROJECT

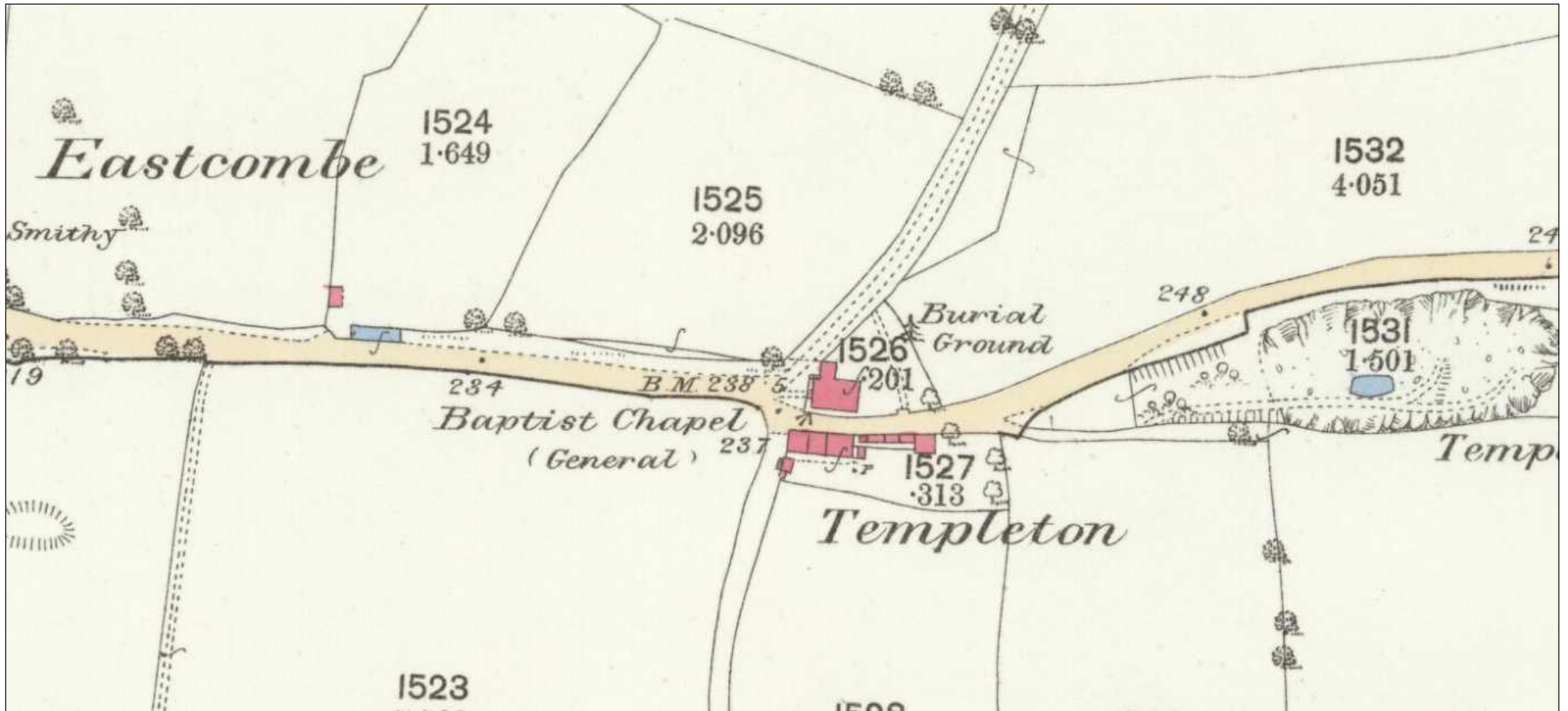
Eastcombe Chapel, Tawstock,  
Devon

TITLE

Fig. 2: Extract from the Tawstock tithe  
map, 1842



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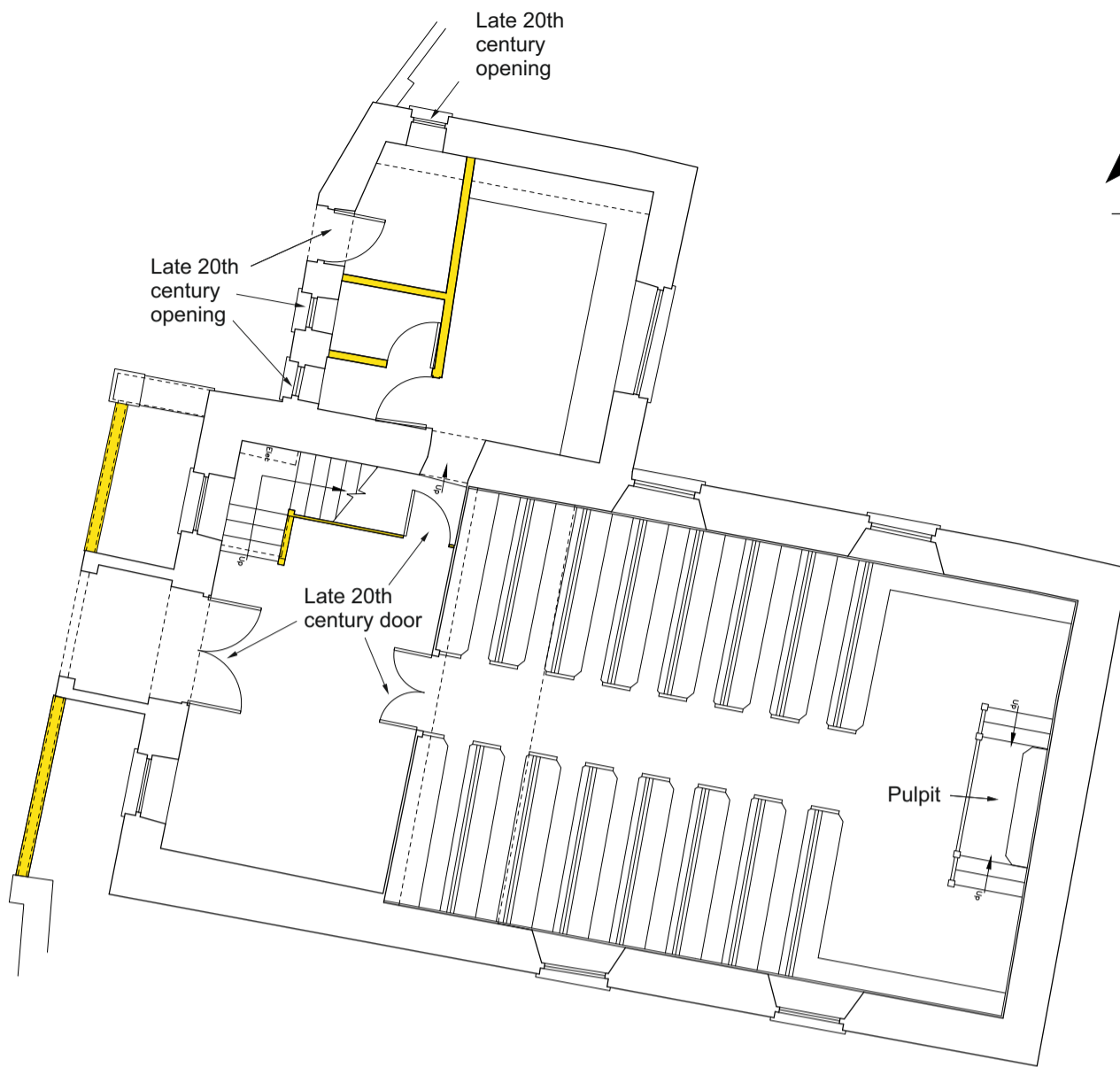
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

TITLE

Fig. 3: Extract from the First Edition  
25-inch Ordnance Survey map, 1888

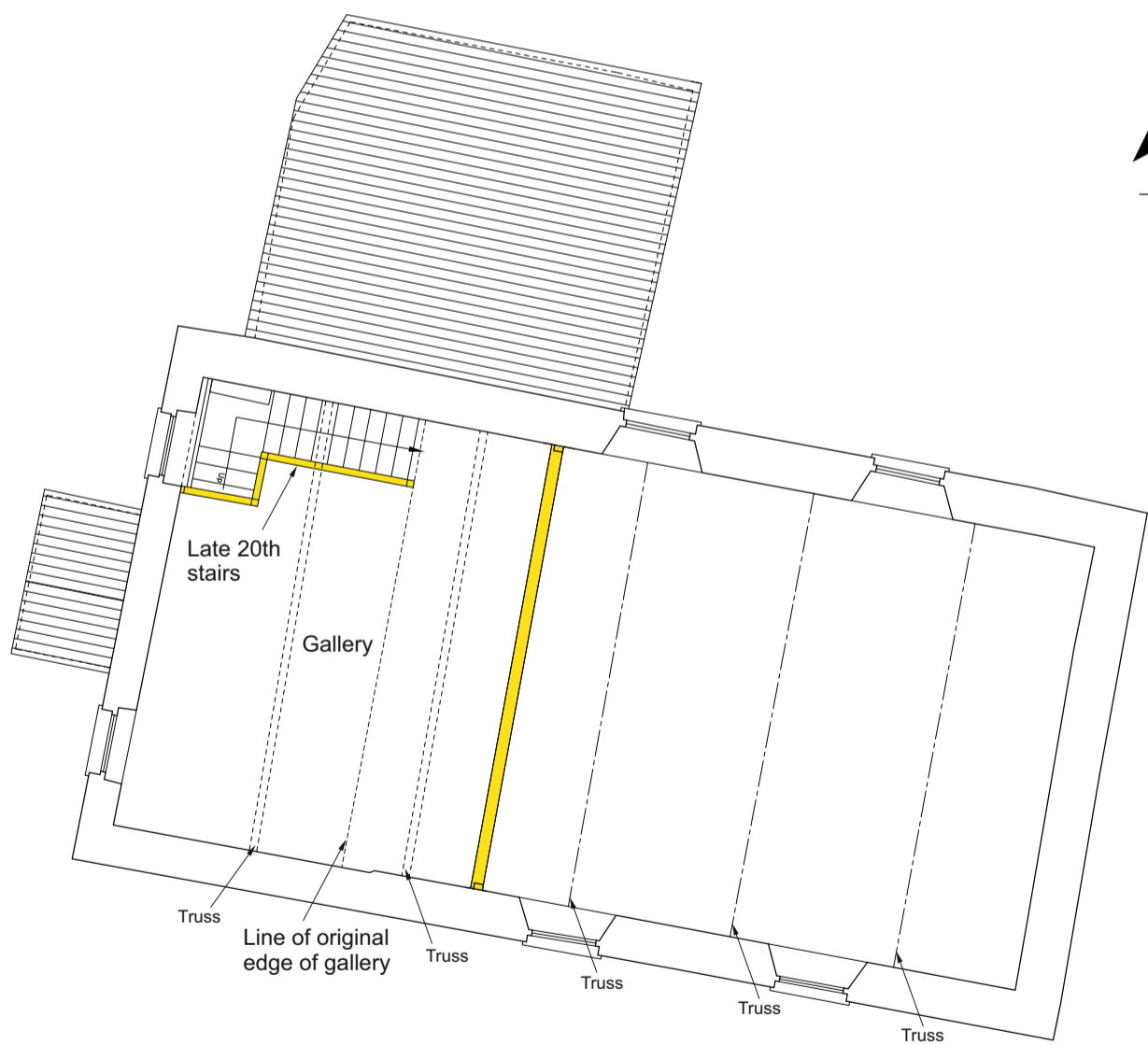


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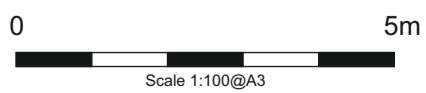


Key	
	1818
	Late 20th century alterations

Ground floor plan



First floor plan



Based on drawing prepared by Philip Price Architectural and Topographical Surveyors



PROJECT  
Eastcombe Chapel, Tawstock, Devon

TITLE  
Fig. 4: Phased floor plans of the chapel



Plate 1: The west elevation, looking east (1m scale)



Plate 2: The south and east elevations, and south boundary wall, looking northwest (1m scale)



Plate 3: The east and north elevations, looking southwest (1m scale)



Plate 4: The north elevation and north extension



Plate 5: The partition between the entrance hall and chapel, looking east (1m scale)



Plate 6: The interior of the chapel, looking east (1m scale)



Plate 7: The interior of the chapel showing the extended gallery, looking west (1m scale)



Plate 8: The pews and wall panelling, looking north (1m scale)

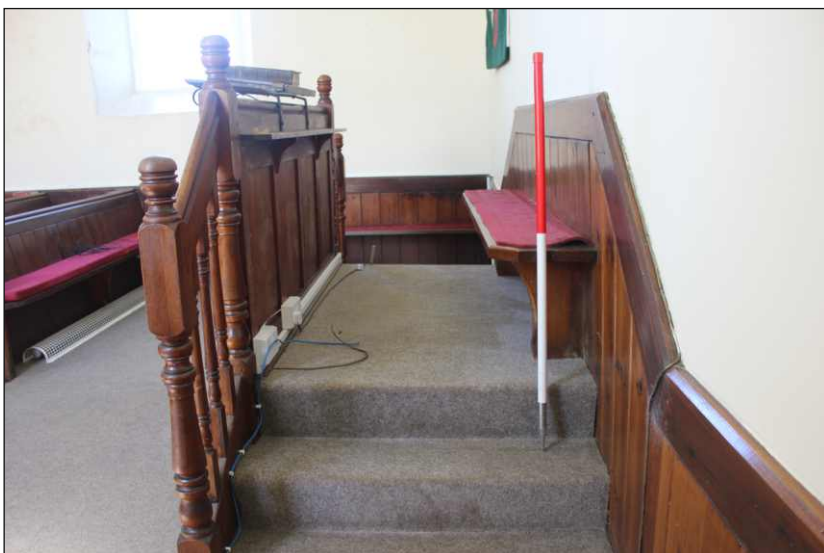


Plate 9: The pulpit viewed from the side, looking north (1m scale)



Plate 10: The gallery showing the change in alignment of the south wall, looking south (1m scale)



Plate 11: The roof structure, looking east



Plate 12: The rebuilt northwest boundary wall to the burial ground, looking south



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