

Archaeological Building Survey
of
**HARTCLIFFE METHODIST CHURCH,
MOWCROFT ROAD, BRISTOL.**
for
Leadbitter



Report No. 2132A/2009
BHER No. 24781



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services

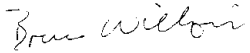

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Archaeological Building Survey
of
HARTCLIFFE METHODIST CHURCH,
MOWCROFT ROAD, BRISTOL.

Centred on
N.G.R. ST 58540 67850

Client: Leadbitter

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<i>Date Issued:</i>	15th May 2009 

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Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini	Km	Kilometre
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum	m	Metre
BaRAS	Bristol & Region Archaeological Services	MoB	Museum of Bristol
BC	Before Christ	NGR	National Grid Reference
BCC	Bristol City Council	NMR	National Monuments Record
BCL	Bristol Central Library	OS	Ordnance Survey
BCMAG	Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery		
BHER	Historic Environment Record		
BRO	Bristol Record Office		
c.	Circa		

NOTE

Notwithstanding that Bristol and Region Archaeological Services have taken reasonable care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

May, 2009.

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SUMMARY

The northern part of a group of buildings erected in 1957 for Hartcliffe Methodist Church was recorded prior to its demolition in connection with redevelopment on the site. Recording was done to English Heritage Level 2 standard, with photographs and some notes made on site. This had formerly been the church building itself, with seating for 180 worshippers plus the choir. There was a small western gallery above the main entrance to accommodate the organ and choir. At the east end was a shallow apse, with a minister's room beyond. It was fairly typical of church accommodation built in the outer suburbs of Bristol in the 1950s and 60s.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Leadbitter to undertake a Level 2 building survey of Hartcliffe Methodist Church. The building survey was commissioned as a condition of planning consent for re-development of the site, which would involve demolition of the building.
- 1.2 The project was designed to comply with a brief prepared by BCC archaeological officer Mr R H Jones (planning ref 09/00197/F) and was conducted in accordance with the methodology outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by BaRAS 2009.
- 1.3 Recording of the building was undertaken on 14th of April 2009 by Chris Pickard. He wrote much of the report, which was completed by John Bryant.
- 1.4 The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery under the Accession Number BRSMG 2009/30 and a paper and digital copy of the report will be sent to the National Monuments Record maintained by English Heritage. The project has been entered in the Bristol Historic Environment Record as: BHER 24781.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site lies on the eastern side of Mowcroft Road on the south corner with its junction with Wroughton Drive at NGR ST 58540 67850 (**Cover & Fig. 1**). Wroughton Drive and No. 83 therein form the northern, eastern and part of the southern boundary, with the church hall building on the remainder of the southern boundary. The main building is surrounded on three sides by open church grounds.
- 2.2 The Church Centre building covers a floor space of approximately 720m² and is surrounded by grounds covering a further area of about 1,850m².
- 2.3 According to the British Geological Survey, the site lies on Lower Liassic clay with limestone, of the Jurassic period. The site drops away gently to the north, with the building sat slightly above 53m aOD.

3. SURVEY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The principle objectives of the survey were to make a complete photographic record of the building prior to its demolition and to record structural changes and developments made to the building since its construction.
- 3.2 A secondary objective was to characterise the spatial organisation of the building and place it in context by comparison with similar local Church buildings.
- 3.3 The survey was conducted to English Heritage level 2 which comprised of photographic recording of the building with written notes and amendments to existing floor plans where needed.

4. GENERAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 No previous archaeological study of this site has been produced, although there have been several archaeological interventions in the area since the early 1990s.
- 4.2 This site lies within what was the historic tithing of Bishopsworth, or Bishport, in the parish of Bedminster. Until 1951 this was part of the County of Somerset, but was then absorbed into the City and County of Bristol and the whole district developed as a large municipal housing estate.
- 4.3 Romano-British activity has been identified for this part of Bristol. The area may have been fairly intensively farmed in that period, and it appears that several of the medieval farms were on sites that dated back at least to that earlier period. The present site lies almost entirely within a triangular field that is close to both Pigeonhouse Farm (to the north) and Pottery Farm (to the west). Both farms have potentially archaeologically significant names, although the former was previously called Arthur's Court (after the Arthur family). The Smyth family of Ashton Court were associated with Arthur's Court from 1570.
- 4.4 From January 1950 a CPO became effective, transferring the land to Bristol council. William White received £33,462 for his two farms, Pigeonhouse (197 acres) and Pottery (137 acres). The houses on the new estate began to be occupied from late 1952. A successful planning application was made early in 1957 to erect a Methodist church, church hall and manse on the site.
- 4.5 Alec F. French & Partners were the architects for this building, and Staverton Builders of Totnes the main contractor. Planning permission was granted on January 30th 1957; according to planning records, the project was completed on February 18th 1960.

Context

- 4.6 There have been several archaeological interventions close by in this part of Hartcliffe, including two evaluations at Briscoes Avenue, one on the corner of Wroughton Drive. Romano-British pottery was found at Briscoes Avenue.
- 4.7 The Methodist Church was one of numerous churches constructed to serve the new estates developing on the outer edge of the city during the 1950s and 1960s. Contemporary estates in the locality include Withywood and Highridge.
- 4.8 The new estate of Hartcliffe, had its own Methodist Church constructed circa 1957 lying roughly 2km east of the church at Withywood, which was built at roughly the same time.
- 4.9 A range of churches were built in the locality during the 1950-60s representing several, largely non-conformist, denominations.
- 4.10 Comparison with the Withywood Methodist Church and other local churches of the same era, such as the Crossways Tabernacle or St Andrews Church, suggest that it was fairly typical in character and building materials. (Note: the breadth of comparative buildings studied for this survey was quite shallow).

5. THE BUILDING SURVEY

- 5.1 Hartcliffe Methodist Church (**Fig. 2; Cover & Plates 1-5**) was comprised of three interconnected rectangular buildings: the disused old church with accompanying square tower near its south-west corner, a rectangular hall with stage (the latter in use as multi-denominational charity shop in 2009), and the present day chapel (worship space), formerly the Infants' Room, a single floor rectangular space with a high ceiling.
- 5.2 Only the original church worship space at the northern end of the group was to be demolished, but the tower (which includes the boiler room chimney) was to be retained. Original design drawings showed the total length of this block to be 81 feet (24.69m), including the minister's room, and full width as 35½ feet (10.82m), with the eastern apse and room behind slightly narrower (**Fig. 3**). At ground floor level, the worship space was 49 feet by 34 feet (14.94m x 10.36m), plus 5 feet (1.52m) for the shallow apse. The main walls were 11 inches thick (0.28m), 18 feet (5.49m) to the eaves. Roof ridge level was at 27 feet (8.23m), the roof covering specified as Noral Snaprib sheet aluminium roofing. There was a small difference in the north-east corner between the design drawings and the surviving building, but it was unclear as to whether this was a variation at the time of construction or a later alteration.
- 5.3 In the main worship space a number of rows of wooden pews were still in place (**Plate 6**): the 1957 design allowed for 15 rows of two pews each, seating 180 persons). Above the western entrance vestibule, or narthex, was a choir gallery with organ, and a choir vestry behind (**Fig. 4; Plate 9**). At the opposite end of the church was a raised platform at the eastern end with the pulpit in the south-east corner (**Plates 10 & 11**); the original design had also allowed for a lectern, font and communion table. A shallow apse extended just 5 feet (1.52m) beyond the main east wall of the church, lit on either side by a tall, narrow window (now boarded up), and with a large cross on the inside of the blank east wall (**Plate 12**). Natural lighting for the main worship space had been provided by tall windows at the east end of each side wall, and high-level windows in the remainder (**Plates 7 & 8**). Behind the east end of the worship space was the minister's room, now in some disorder with the ceiling panels having collapsed, exposing the joists above (**Plate 13**). The old church had a pitched roof that no longer retained its outer covering and probably as a consequence of this had fallen through in several places whilst the minister's room area had a flat roof. Both the old church and minister's room were constructed from red brick clad with cement-based render. The windows and entrances had either been boarded up or protected behind metal grilles.
- 5.4 Connected to the old church by a small passage way was the church hall. The hall was a large rectangular space with a high ceiling with high windows to the east, west and north. In the north-east of the hall a fire exit led to toilets situated on the left and a back door leading to the grounds to the rear. The floor space had been marked out for sporting activities with the blocked off stage to the south. To the west of the hall was the present day entrance and passageway with steps known as 'the crush' (crush hall) and rectangular kitchen adjacent to the tower.
- 5.5 The crush led on to the third building, the present day chapel/worship space, originally designed as the Infants' Room. This area had high-level windows to the east and three bays of high and low windows to the south. The church hall, the toilet and the chapel/workshop space had pitched green corrugated roofs.
- 5.6 The layout of the building had changed little from its original design. The only significant alteration was the conversion of the stage area, at the south of the main hall, into a charity shop. A sub-basement is located beneath the stage but was not accessible at the time of the site visit.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The building survey made a photographic record of the building, interior and exterior. It determined that little structural change had occurred since its construction in 1957. The building was found to be typical of its type and of no special significance.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Maps and Drawings

Alec F French & Partners	1957	Design drawings (Brunel House, file 18449)
Ordnance Survey	1962	1:1250 plan
Ordnance Survey	2005	1:1250 plan

Un-published material

BaRAS 2009	<i>Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Building Recording at Hartcliffe Methodist Church, Bristol.</i>
R H Jones 2009	<i>Hartcliffe Methodist Church, Bristol. Brief for Archaeological Building Recording.</i>

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BaRAS would like to thank the staff at Hartcliffe Methodist Church for their assistance and cooperation during the project.

APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

NATIONAL POLICIES

Statutory protection for archaeology is enshrined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), amended by the National Heritage Act, 1983. Nationally important sites are listed in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (SAM). Scheduled Monument consent is required for any work which would affect a SAM.

PPG 15

PPG 15 Planning and Historic Environment (1994) provides for a full statement of Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, Conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment. More specific issues are raised in PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning (1990), which also indicates the circumstances where further work would be necessary and outlines the use of agreements and conditions to protect the archaeological resource.

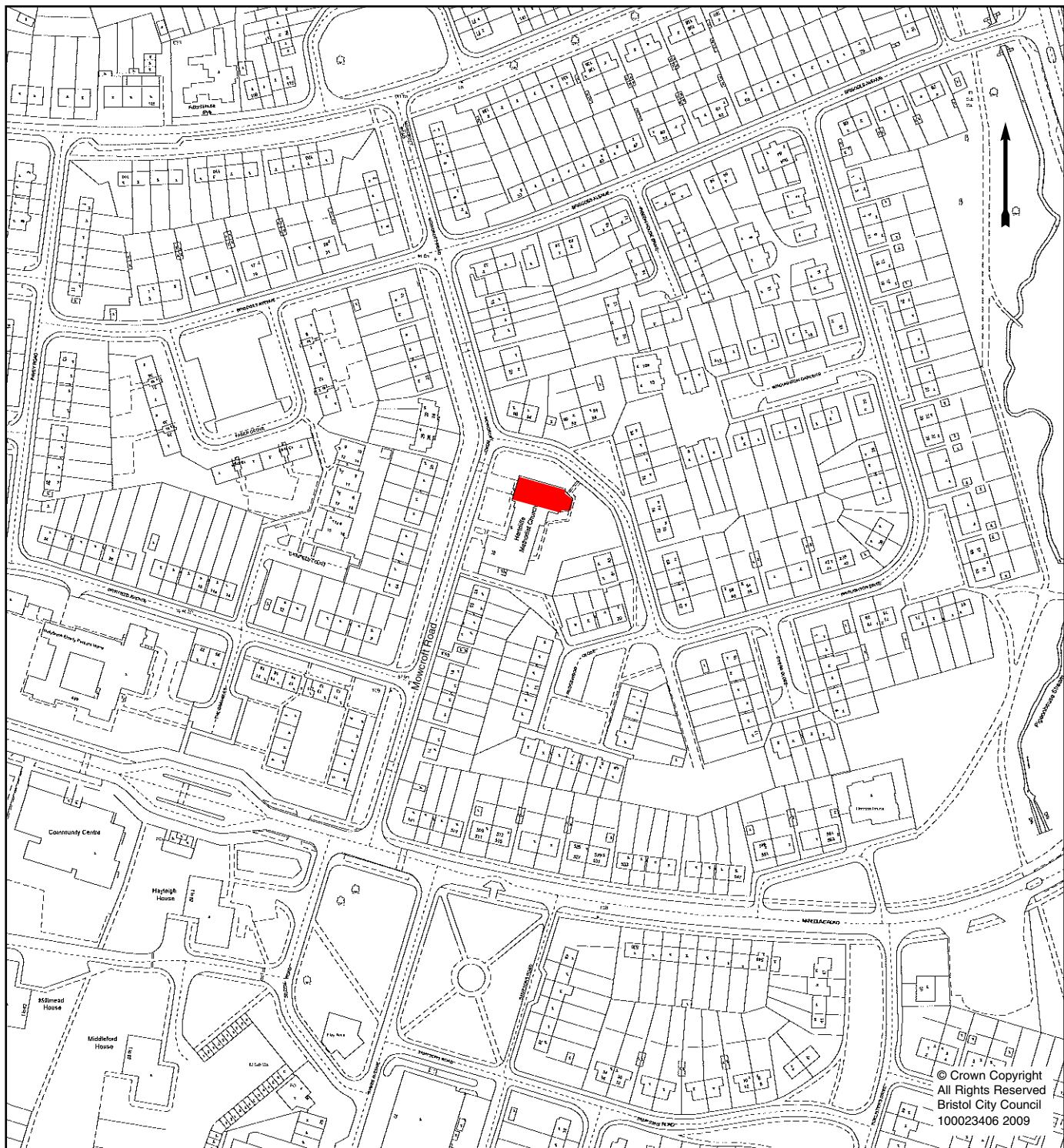
PPG 15 (para. 2.15) recognises that some buildings are scheduled ancient monuments, but many which are not scheduled are either of intrinsic archaeological interest or stand on ground which contains archaeological remains. It is important in such cases that there should be appropriate assessment of the archaeological implications of development proposals before applications are determined; and that, where permission is to be granted, authorities should consider whether adequate arrangements have been made for recording remains that would be lost in the course of works for which permission is being sought.

Paragraph 3.23 states that local planning authorities should consider whether it would be appropriate to make it a condition of consent that applicants arrange suitable programmes of recording features that would be destroyed in the course of the works for which consent is being sought.

DISTRICT POLICY

Bristol City Council Supplementary Planning Document (2006) states (policy SPD No.7, p4):

- (i) There will be a presumption in favour of preserving any archaeological features or sites of national importance, whether scheduled or not.
- (ii) Development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desktop study, and where appropriate a field evaluation. Where there is evidence of archaeological remains, development will not be permitted except where it can be demonstrated that the archaeological features of the site will be satisfactorily preserved in situ, or a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals upon important archaeological remains and their settings; or, if this is not possible and the sites are not scheduled or of national importance, provision for adequately recording the site prior to destruction is made, preferably by negotiating a planning agreement to ensure that access, time and financial resources are available to allow essential recording and publication to take place.



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Fig.1 Site location, scale 1:2500

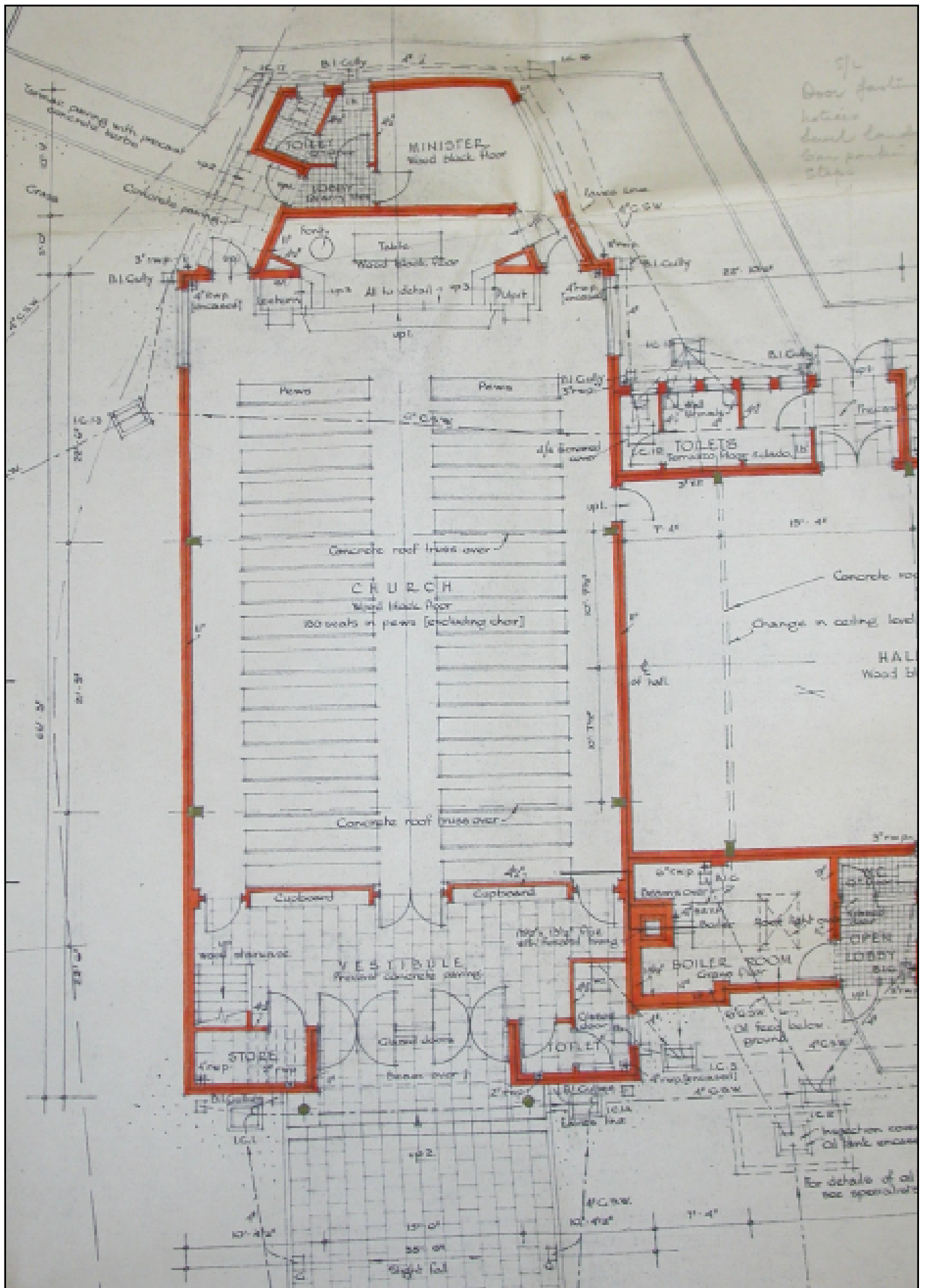


Fig.3 Ground floor plan of church, 1957



Plate 1
West front, from the
south-west



Plate 2
North elevation



Plate 3
Church and hall from
east



Plate 4
East end of church



Plate 5
East end from south-east



Plate 6
Church interior, looking west



Plate 7
South-east corner of worship space



Plate 8
South-west corner of worship space



Plate 9 Choir gallery and organ



Plate 10
East end and apse



Plate 11 Pulpit and door to minister's room



Plate 12 Cross on east wall of apse



Plate 13
Minister's room