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Brymbo English Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Mount Sion, High Street, Brymbo, Wrexham, LL11 5DA

September 2024 v1.0



Level 3 Building Survey
Project Code: A0496.1
Report no. 0486
Event PRN. 150438



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Methodist Chapel, Mount Sion,
High Street, Brymbo, Wrexham,
LL11 5DA**

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Report no. 0486

Level 3 building survey

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Client: Wales and West Housing
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Brymbo English Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Mount Sion, High Street, Brymbo, Wrexham, LL11 5DA

September 2024 v1.0

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Figures

Figure 01: Location of Brymbo English Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Mount Sion, High Street, Brymbo, Wrexham, LL11 5DA (SJ 29416 53843). Scale 1:20,000 at A4.

Figure 02: Location of Brymbo English Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Mount Sion, High Street, Brymbo, Wrexham, LL11 5DA (SJ 29416 53843). Scale 1:5,000 at A4.

Figure 03: Location of Brymbo English Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Mount Sion, High Street, Brymbo, Wrexham, LL11 5DA (SJ 29416 53843). Scale 1:1,000 at A4.

Figure 04: Existing elevations. Scale 1:250 at A4.

Figure 05: Existing plan of Brymbo Chapel. Scale 1:150 at A4.

Figure 06: Location and orientation of photographic plates. Scale 1:150 at A4.

Figure 07: Existing plan of Brymbo Chapel (annotated). Scale 1:150 at A4.

Figure 08: Approximate location of Brymbo Chapel on the 1839 map of the township of Brymbo in the parish of Brymbo in the County of Denbigh.

Figure 09: Approximate location of Brymbo Chapel on the six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1879.

Figure 10: Location of Brymbo Chapel on the six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1900.

Figure 11: Location of Brymbo Chapel on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1912.

Figure 12: Location of Brymbo Chapel on the six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1914.

Figure 13: Location of Brymbo Chapel on the six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1946.

Figure 14: Location of Brymbo Chapel on the six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1954.

Figure 15: Location of Brymbo Chapel on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1963.

Figure 16: Historic map regression.

Figure 17: Brymbo Church Schools Procession 1908.

Figure 18: Undated photograph of original Wesleyan Chapel.

Plates 1

Plate 01: Brymbo Chapel in the foreground with Engedi Chapel behind, from the south.

Plate 02: East facing external elevation, from the northeast. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 03: East facing external elevation, from the east. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 04: East facing external elevation showing date stone, from the east.

Plate 05: East facing external elevation showing upper storey windows, from the east.

Plate 06: East facing external elevation showing porch, from the east. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 07: East facing external elevation showing northern ground storey window, from the east.

Plate 08: East facing external elevation showing information board, from the east.

Plate 09: East facing external elevation showing northernmost commemorative cornerstones, from the east.

Plate 10: East facing external elevation showing commemorative cornerstone to the right of the entranceway, from the east.

Plate 11: East facing external elevation showing commemorative cornerstone to the left of the entranceway, from the east.

Plate 12: East facing external elevation showing commemorative cornerstones to left of porch, from the east.

Plate 13: East facing external elevation showing southernmost commemorative cornerstones, from the east.

Plate 14: East facing external elevation showing descending steps to boiler room, from the northeast.

Plate 15: East and south facing external elevations, from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 16: South facing external elevation, from the south. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 17: South facing external elevation, from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 18: South and west facing external elevations, from the southwest. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 19: West facing external elevation, from the west. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 20: West and north facing external elevations, from the northwest. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 21: North facing external elevation, from the northwest.

Plate 22: Chapel, from the east. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 23: Chapel, from the west. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 24: Chapel, from the northwest. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 25: Chapel, from the northeast. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 26: Chapel, from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 27: Chapel, from the southwest. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 28: Chapel showing ceiling trusses with arched braces, from the east.

Plate 29: Chapel showing altar, from the east. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 30: Chapel showing mural on southern elevation, from the north.

Plates 2

Plate 31: Chapel showing southernmost mural on western elevation, from the east.

Plate 32: Chapel showing mural to left of centre on western elevation, from the east.

Plate 33: Chapel showing central mural on western elevation, from the east.

Plate 34: Chapel showing mural to right of centre on western elevation, from the east.

Plate 35: Chapel showing northernmost mural on western elevation, from the east.

Plate 36: Chapel showing mural on northern elevation, from the south.

Plate 37: Chapel showing windows in eastern elevation, from the west.

Plate 38: Chapel showing entrance vestibule in eastern elevation, from the northwest. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 39: Entrance vestibule, from the south. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 40: Entrance vestibule, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 41: Entrance porch, from the west. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 42: Kitchen, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 43: Kitchen, from the south. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 44: Vestry, from the north. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 45: Vestry, from the south. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 46: Vestry safe, from the east.

Plate 47: Corridor, from the south. Scale 1.0m.

Plate 48: Disabled toilet, from the east. Scale 1.0m.

Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.0 POLICY CONTEXT	2
3.0 LOCATION AND AREA HISTORY	4
3.1 Brymbo	4
3.2 Wesleyan Methodist Chapels	4
4.0 METHOD STATEMENT.....	6
4.1 Level 3 Building Record	6
4.1.1 Written Account	7
4.1.2 Photographs	7
4.1.3 Drawings	8
4.2 Processing data, illustration, report.....	8
4.3 Dissemination and Archiving	8
5.0 DIGITAL DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN	9
5.1 Type of study	9
5.2 Types of data	9
5.3 Format and scale of the data.....	9
5.4 Methodologies for data collection / generation	10
5.5 Data quality and standards	10
5.6 Managing, storing and curating data.....	10
5.7 Metadata standards and data documentation	10
5.8 Data preservation strategy and standards	10
5.9 Suitability for sharing.....	11
5.10 Discovery by potential users of the research data.....	11
5.11 Governance of access	11
5.12 The study team's exclusive use of the data	11
5.13 Restrictions or delays to sharing, with planned actions to limit such restrictions	11
5.14 Regulation of responsibilities of users	11
5.15 Responsibilities.....	12
5.16 Organisational policies on data sharing and data security.....	12
6.0 LEVEL 3 PHOTOGRAPHIC BUILDING SURVEY.....	13
6.1 External Descriptions	13
6.2 Internal Descriptions	15
7.0 HISTORY OF BRYMBO CHAPEL	19
8.0 SOURCES	22

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Comisiynwyd Aeon Archaeology gan Wales and West Housing i gyflawni cofnod adeilad hanesyddol lefel 3 o Gapel Wesleidd Seisnig Brymbo, Mount Sion, Stryd Fawr, Brymbo, Wrexham, LL11 5DA.

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by Wales and West Housing, hereafter ‘the Client’, carry out a level 3 historic building record of the redundant Brymbo English Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Mount Sion, High Street, Brymbo, Wrexham, LL11 5DA (centred on **NGR SJ 29416 53843**), hereafter ‘the Site’, in advance of demolition as part of proposed development at the Site.

The historic building record is being undertaken in advance of planning application, however the following consultee comments regarding the proposed development were made by the Development Management Archaeologist (DMA) at Heneb: Clwyd-Powys Archaeology (HCPA) in their role as archaeological advisors to Wrexham Borough Council (hereafter ‘the Council’):

Information retained within the Regional Historic Environment Record indicates the proposed demolition work and construction of new apartments will destroy the existing Methodist chapel complex which includes buildings of 1861 and 1840. These buildings are of least a local historical and vernacular interest, and, in this case, we would recommend pre-determination evaluation which initially includes a Level 3 Archaeological Building Recording completed by a registered Archaeological Contractor of the dwelling to inform a decision on appropriate mitigation.

The proposed development will destroy any archaeological features within the buildings, but from present knowledge it is impossible to estimate how damaging this might be, and thus to frame an appropriate archaeological response. The planning authority appears to have insufficient information about this archaeological resource, or the applicant's intended treatment of it, to make a balanced decision. As archaeology is a material consideration here, I would advise that this application is not determined until this resource has been properly evaluated.

The Level 3 survey would include a desk- based assessment to provide a building history, a detailed written descriptive survey of the present structures, measured survey of the buildings in plan and elevation, a detailed photographic survey, and phased plans of the building's development over time. All work will be completed in accordance with the relevant CIFA standards and guidance on evaluation and project archiving and reporting.

The developer will need to engage a CIFA approved archaeological contractor to complete this work in accordance with an approved written scheme of investigation (WSI) which will be supplied by the archaeological contractor and approved by us in advance of commencement of the investigation.

This design and all subsequent mitigation will conform to the guidelines specified in Historic England’s *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2016) & *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2020).



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Figure 01: Location of Brymbo English Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Mount Zion, High Street, Brymbo, Wrexham, Wales, LL11 5DA (SJ 29416 53843). Scale 1:20,000 at A4.

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Figure 02: Location of Brymbo English Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Mount Zion, High Street, Brymbo, Wrexham, Wales, LL11 5DA (SJ 29416 53843). Scale 1:5,000 at A4.

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Figure 03: Location of Brymbo English Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Mount Sion, High Street, Brymbo, Wrexham, Wales, LL11 5DA (SJ 29416 53843). Scale 1:1,000 at A4.

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2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

At an international level there are two principal agreements concerning the protection of the cultural heritage and archaeological resource – the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage, commonly known as the Valetta Convention. The latter was agreed by the Member States of the Council of Europe in 1992, and also became law in 1992. It has been ratified by the UK, and responsibility for its implementation rests with Department for Culture Media and Sport.

The management and protection of the historic environment in Wales is set out within the following legislation:

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (As amended)
- The Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016
- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 (As amended)

The Historic Environment (Wales) Act is the most recent legislation for the management of the Historic Environment and amends two pieces of UK legislation — the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The new Act has three main aims:

- to give more effective protection to listed buildings and scheduled monuments;
- to improve the sustainable management of the historic environment; and
- to introduce greater transparency and accountability into decisions taken on the historic environment.

With respect to the cultural heritage of the built environment the Planning (Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings) Act 1990 applies. The Act sets out the legislative framework within which works and development affecting listed buildings and conservation areas must be considered. This states that: -

“In considering whether to grant planning permission 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” (s66(1))

Other known sites of cultural heritage/archaeological significance can be entered onto county-based Historic Environment Records under the Town and Country Planning 1995.

Planning Policy Wales sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. Chapter 6 covers the historic environment and emphasises that the positive management of change in the historic environment is based on a full understanding of the nature and

significance of historic assets and the recognition of the benefits that they can deliver in a vibrant culture and economy.

Various principles and policies related to cultural heritage and archaeology are set out in the Planning Policy Wales which guide local planning authorities with respect to the wider historic environment.

The following paragraphs from Planning Policy Wales are particularly relevant and are quoted in full:

Paragraph 6.1.5 concerns planning applications:

The planning system must take into account the Welsh Government's objectives to protect, conserve, promote and enhance the historic environment as a resource for the general well-being of present and future generations. The historic environment is a finite, non-renewable and shared resource and a vital and integral part of the historical and cultural identity of Wales. It contributes to economic vitality and culture, civic pride, local distinctiveness and the quality of Welsh life. The historic environment can only be maintained as a resource for future generations if the individual historic assets are protected and conserved. Cadw's published Conservation Principles highlights the need to base decisions on an understanding of the impact a proposal may have on the significance of an historic asset.

Planning Policy Wales is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TAN). Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment contains detailed guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment during development plan, preparation and decision making on planning and listed building consent applications. TAN 24 replaces the following Welsh Office Circulars:

- 60/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology
- 61/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas
- 1/98 Planning and the Historic Environment: Directions by the Secretary of State for Wales

3.0 LOCATION AND AREA HISTORY

3.1 Brymbo

Brymbo, located in Wrexham, Wales, has a rich industrial history primarily centered around iron and steel production. The Brymbo Ironworks was established in the late 18th century by John Wilkinson, known as "Iron Mad Wilkinson," who purchased the Brymbo Hall estate in 1792. Using the local mineral and coal deposits, Wilkinson developed an ironworks that became a significant site for iron production. By 1796, Brymbo recorded an output of 884 tonnes of iron, marking the beginning of its long association with metalworking. Over the 19th century, the site saw various developments, including the installation of advanced blast furnaces and hot air stoves to improve production. Brymbo transitioned towards steel production by the late 19th century, which became its primary output by the 1930s. The steelworks closed in 1990, marking the end of Brymbo's industrial era, but many of its historical structures remain as monuments (Coflein).

In addition to its industrial history, Brymbo has a notable heritage in the establishment of Methodist chapels, reflecting the religious and cultural life of the community. In the 19th century, Nonconformist chapels, including Methodist chapels, were built throughout Wales as part of a broader religious revival. Brymbo, with its growing population of industrial workers, saw the construction of several chapels, which played a central role in community life. These chapels not only provided places of worship but also served as social and cultural centers for the community. The Methodist movement, especially the Calvinistic Methodists, had a strong influence in the area, emphasizing piety, education, and social welfare. These chapels often became focal points for local religious and educational activities and were instrumental in shaping the social fabric of Brymbo during the height of its industrial period (Coflein).

3.2 Wesleyan Methodist Chapels

The Methodist movement began in the early 1730s under the leadership of John Wesley, who emphasised personal holiness, the transformative power of grace, and the need for revival within the Anglican Church. Wesley's influence spread rapidly across Britain, and his missionary activities reached Wales by the mid-18th century. One of Wesley's notable visits to Wales was in 1739, when he travelled to Cardiff and Swansea (Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, 1909). However, unlike the Calvinistic Methodism of George Whitefield, which became the dominant form of Methodism in Wales, Wesleyan Methodism was slower to gain ground due to language barriers and cultural differences between English and Welsh-speaking populations (Davies, *A History of Wales*, 1994).

The Wesleyan Methodists began building chapels in Wales in the late 18th century. These chapels were crucial in establishing a permanent presence for the movement. Most of the early Wesleyan converts in Wales were English-speaking, particularly in border regions and industrial towns where there were higher concentrations of English-speaking communities (Jones, *Welsh Chapels*, 1996).

Wesleyan chapels often stood in contrast to Calvinistic Methodist chapels, both in style and theology. The Wesleyans remained more aligned with the Church of England in many ways, whereas the Calvinists developed a distinct theological identity based on predestination (Walker, *A History of the Church in Wales*, 1976).

The industrial revolution in Wales, especially the growth of coal mining and steel production, led to increased urbanisation and population growth, which helped Wesleyan Methodism expand. The construction of Wesleyan chapels often paralleled the growth of industrial towns and villages, such as Brymbo, Wrexham, and Merthyr Tydfil (Jones, *Mountains and Orefields: Metal Mining Landscapes of Mid and North-east Wales*, 2004).

By the 19th century, Wesleyan Methodist chapels had become fixtures of industrial communities in South Wales and the border counties, where English-speaking migrants were more numerous (Jones, *Welsh Chapels*, 1996). These chapels served as both religious centres and community hubs, offering educational programmes and social support to the working-class population (Davies, *A History of Wales*, 1994).

In the early 20th century, the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Wales, like many other Nonconformist denominations, faced challenges due to changing social conditions and declining attendance. Welsh society had become increasingly secularised, and many chapels faced closures due to dwindling congregations (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, *Welsh Chapel Architecture*, 2014).

In 1932, the Wesleyan Methodists, along with the Primitive Methodists and the United Methodists, joined together to form the Methodist Church of Great Britain (Walker, *A History of the Church in Wales*, 1976). This union further blurred the distinctions between the different branches of Methodism in Wales, leading to many chapels being repurposed or closed entirely by the mid-20th century (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, *Welsh Chapel Architecture*, 2014).

4.0 METHOD STATEMENT

4.1 Level 3 Building Record

The requirements are for an archaeological building record to be taken of Brymbo Chapel in advance of demolition, however should observations or desk-based research suggest the potential for significant features to be encountered during the demolition works, the archaeological contractor should make arrangements to undertake any appropriate supplementary recording work during the development. The DMA at HCPA has requested that the building record be roughly commensurate with the English Heritage '*Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*' (2016) **Level 3**.

Level 3 is an analytical record, and will comprise an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the building's origins, development and use. The record will include an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It will also include all drawn and photographic records that may be required to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis.

The information contained in the record will for the most part have been obtained through an examination of the building itself. If documentary sources are used, they are likely to be those most readily accessible, such as historic Ordnance Survey maps, trade directories, and other published sources. The record will not normally discuss the building's broader stylistic or historical context and importance at any length.

The detailed photographic record will consist of English Heritage '*Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*' (2016) elements:

- written account: 1-3, 6-9, 11-13, 22
- drawings: 2
- photographs: 1-9

4.1.1 Written Account

The written account will include:

- The building's precise location as a National Grid Reference and address form;
- A note of any statutory designation and non-statutory designation;
- The date of the record, name(s) of the recorder(s) and archive location;
- A summary of the building's form, function, date, and sequence of development.
- An introduction, setting out the circumstances in which the record was made, its objectives, methods, scope and limitations, and any constraints which limited the achievement of objectives.
- Acknowledgements to all those who made significant contributions.
- A discussion of published sources relating to the building and its setting, an account of its history as given in published sources, an analysis of historic map evidence and a critical evaluation of previous records of the building, where they exist.
- An account of the building's overall form and its successive phases of development, together with the evidence supporting this analysis.
- An account of the past and present uses of the building and its parts, with the evidence for these interpretations.
- Any evidence for the former existence of demolished structures or removed plant associated with the building.
- Full bibliographic and other references.

4.1.2 Photographs

The photographic record will include:

- A general view or views of the building;
- The building's external appearance. Typically a series of oblique views will show all external elevations of the building and give an impression of its size and shape;
- The overall appearance of the rooms to be altered.
- Any internal or external detail.
- Any machinery or other plant, or evidence for its former existence.
- Any dates or other inscriptions.
- Any building contents or ephemera which have a significant bearing on the building's history.
- Copies of maps, drawings, views and photographs present in the building and illustrating its development or that of its site.

A Digital SLR (Canon 600D) set to maximum resolution will be used throughout.

4.1.3 Drawings

The drawn record will include:

- A measured site plan showing the location and orientation of photographs. This will label all room spaces and indicate any architectural features of note.
- Measured elevation drawings of all external elevations.

4.2 Processing data, illustration, report

Following completion of the record as outlined above, a report will be produced incorporating the following:

- A copy of the design brief and agreed specification
- A site location plan
- A plan illustrating the location and direction of photographs
- Basic background and relevant historical, descriptive or analytical detail
- A full bibliography of sources consulted
- Illustrations, including plans and photographs, will be incorporated within the report.
- An updated Data Management Plan (DMP) and an archive content list with updated archive Selection Strategy will be included

4.3 Dissemination and Archiving

A full archive including plans, photographs, written material, and any other material resulting from the project will be prepared. All plans, photographs and descriptions will be labelled, and cross-referenced, and lodged with the RCAHMW within six months of the completion of the project.

A draft copy of the report will be produced within six weeks of the completion of the fieldwork and will include an updated Data Management Plan (DMP) and an archive content list with updated archive Selection Strategy. A copy of the report will be sent to the Client and the DMA at HCPA for comment prior to finalisation of the report and dissemination. Digital copies of the report and archive will be sent to the regional HER and the DMA at HCPA, with the original paper and digital archive being deposited with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) for long term archiving.

The project report and archive will adhere to the Welsh Trusts' and Cadw's *Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs)* (2018 updated 2022) including the translation of a non-technical summary into the medium of Welsh.

5.0 DIGITAL DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

5.1 Type of study

A level 3 photographic building survey of Brymbo English Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Mount Sion, High Street, Brymbo, Wrexham, LL11 5DA (centred on NGR SJ 29416 53843).

5.2 Types of data

File name	File Contents	Linked File(s)	Number of files
A0496.1 Brymbo Chapel, Brymbo HBR3 1.0.PDF	PDF report		1
A0496.1_001 - A0496.1_110.JPG	JPEG site images	A0496.1_Metadata	110
A0496.1_001 - A0496.1_110.TIF	TIF site images	A0496.1_Metadata	110
A0496.1_Metadata.XLSX	Excel file of photographic metadata	A0496.1_001 - A0496.1_110 (JPEG and TIF)	1
Digital Proformae (Descriptions, .TXT)	1 x text documents		1

All data generated during this project has been selected or archive

5.3 Format and scale of the data

Photographs taken in *RAW* format and later converted to *TIF* format for long term archiving and *JPEG* format for use in the digital report, converted using *Adobe Photoshop*. All photographs renamed using *AF5* freeware with the prefix (*project code frame number*) and a photographic metadata created using Microsoft Excel (*.xlsx*) or Access (*.accdb*).

Written descriptions taken in digital *.txt* format and sent via email to ensure a digital backup copy at time of record.

Annotated plans scanned as *.PDF* files.

5.4 Methodologies for data collection / generation

Digital data will be collected / generated in line with recommendations made in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (2014. Rev 2020). Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.3 are relevant:

3.3.1 Project specifications, research designs or similar documents should include a project specific Selection Strategy and a Data Management Plan.

3.3.3 Project designs or schedules of works etc should outline the methodology used in recording all information, in order to demonstrate that all aspects of archive creation will ensure consistency; for instance in terminologies and the application of codes in digital data sets, highlighting relevant data standards where appropriate

5.5 Data quality and standards

Consistency and quality of data collection / generation shall be controlled and documented through the use of standardised procedure as outlined in the WSI. This will include the use of standardised data capture file formats, digital proformas, data entry validation, peer review, and use of controlled vocabularies.

5.6 Managing, storing and curating data.

All digital data was organised into Aeon Archaeology proformae project file systems and backed up to The Cloud using *Acronis Cyber Protect* with additional copies made to external physical hard drive.

5.7 Metadata standards and data documentation

Digital metadata created using Microsoft Excel (.xlsx) or Access (.accdb) of all photographic plates.

Paper metadata created from Aeon Archaeology proformas for contexts, artefacts, environmental samples, watching brief day sheets, trench sheets, and basic record sheets and then scanned to create digital .PDF copies.

5.8 Data preservation strategy and standards

Long term data storage will be through the submission of digital (.PDF) reports to the regional Historic Environment Record (HER), (via HEDDOS); and retention of copies of all digital files at Aeon Archaeology on physical external hard drive and uploaded to Acronis Cyber Protect.

5.9 Suitability for sharing

All digital data will be placed within the public realm (through the channels in 6.8) except for where project confidentiality restricts the sharing of data. All data sets will be selected / discriminated by the Senior Archaeologist at Aeon Archaeology and written permission will be sought from all project specific Clients prior to the sharing of data.

5.10 Discovery by potential users of the research data

Potential users of the generated digital data (outside of the organisation) will be able to source the data and identify whether it could be suitable for their research purposes through access granted via the RCAHMW website. Requests can also be made for data through the regional HER's and directly to Aeon Archaeology (info@aeonarchaeology.co.uk).

5.11 Governance of access

The decision to supply research data to potential new users will be via the associated website request (RCAHMW) or via the Senior Archaeologist when made directly to Aeon Archaeology.

5.12 The study team's exclusive use of the data

Aeon Archaeology's requirement is for timely data sharing, with the understanding that a limited, defined period of exclusive use of data for primary research is reasonable according to the nature and value of the data, and that this restriction on sharing should be based on simple, clear principles. This time period is expected to be six months from completion of the project however Aeon Archaeology reserves the right to extend this period without notice if primary data research dictates.

5.13 Restrictions or delays to sharing, with planned actions to limit such restrictions

Restriction to data sharing may be due to participant confidentiality or consent agreements. Strategies to limit restrictions will include data being anonymised or aggregated; gaining participant consent for data sharing; and gaining copyright permissions. For prospective studies, consent procedures will include provision for data sharing to maximise the value of the data for wider research use, while providing adequate safeguards for participants.

5.14 Regulation of responsibilities of users

External users of the data will be bound by data sharing agreements provided by the relevant organisation or directly through Aeon Archaeology.

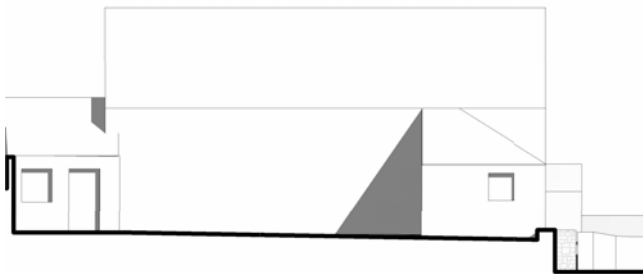
5.15 Responsibilities

Responsibility for study-wide data management, metadata creation, data security and quality assurance of data will be through the Senior Archaeologist (Richard Cooke BA MA MCIfA) at Aeon Archaeology when concerning data generation and early/mid-term storage. Upon deposition with digital depositories the study-wide data management, metadata creation, data security and quality assurance of data will be the responsibility of the specific organisations' themselves.

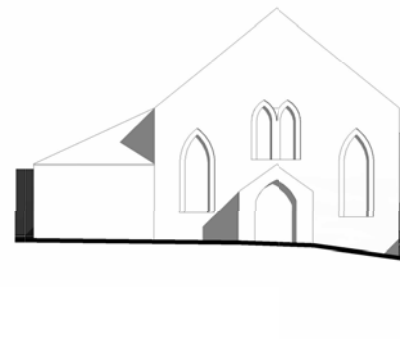
5.16 Organisational policies on data sharing and data security

The following Aeon Archaeology policies are relevant:

- Aeon Archaeology Archive Deposition Policy 2022
- Aeon Archaeology Quality Assurance Policy 2022
- Aeon Archaeology Conflict of Interest Policy 2022
- Aeon Archaeology Outreach Policy 2022
- Aeon Archaeology Digital Management Plan 2022



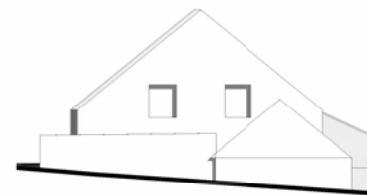
Southern elevation



Eastern elevation



Northern elevation



Western elevation

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Figure 04: Existing elevations. Scale 1:250 at A4.

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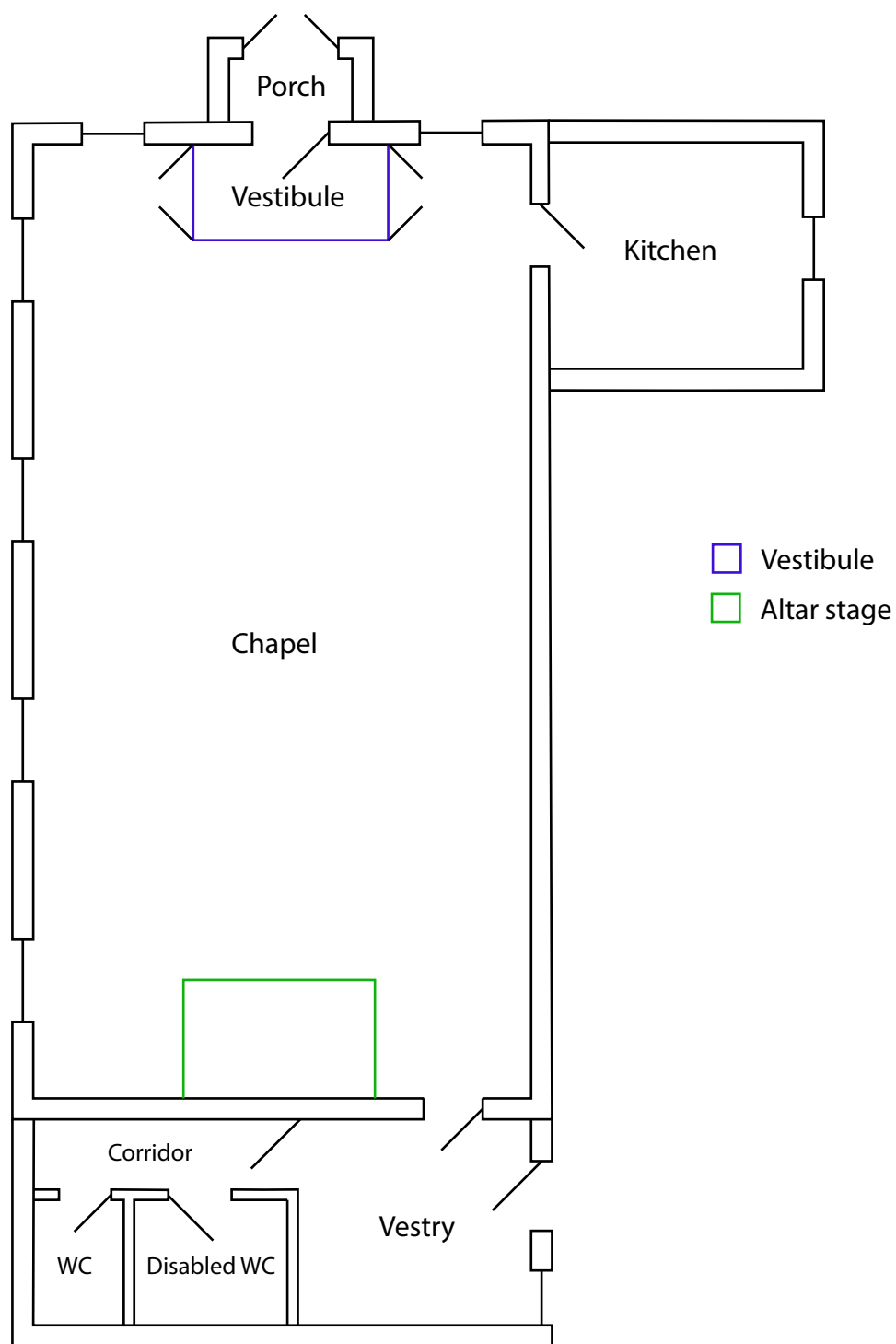


Figure 05: Existing plan of Brymbo Chapel. Scale 1:150 at A4 (do not scale from).

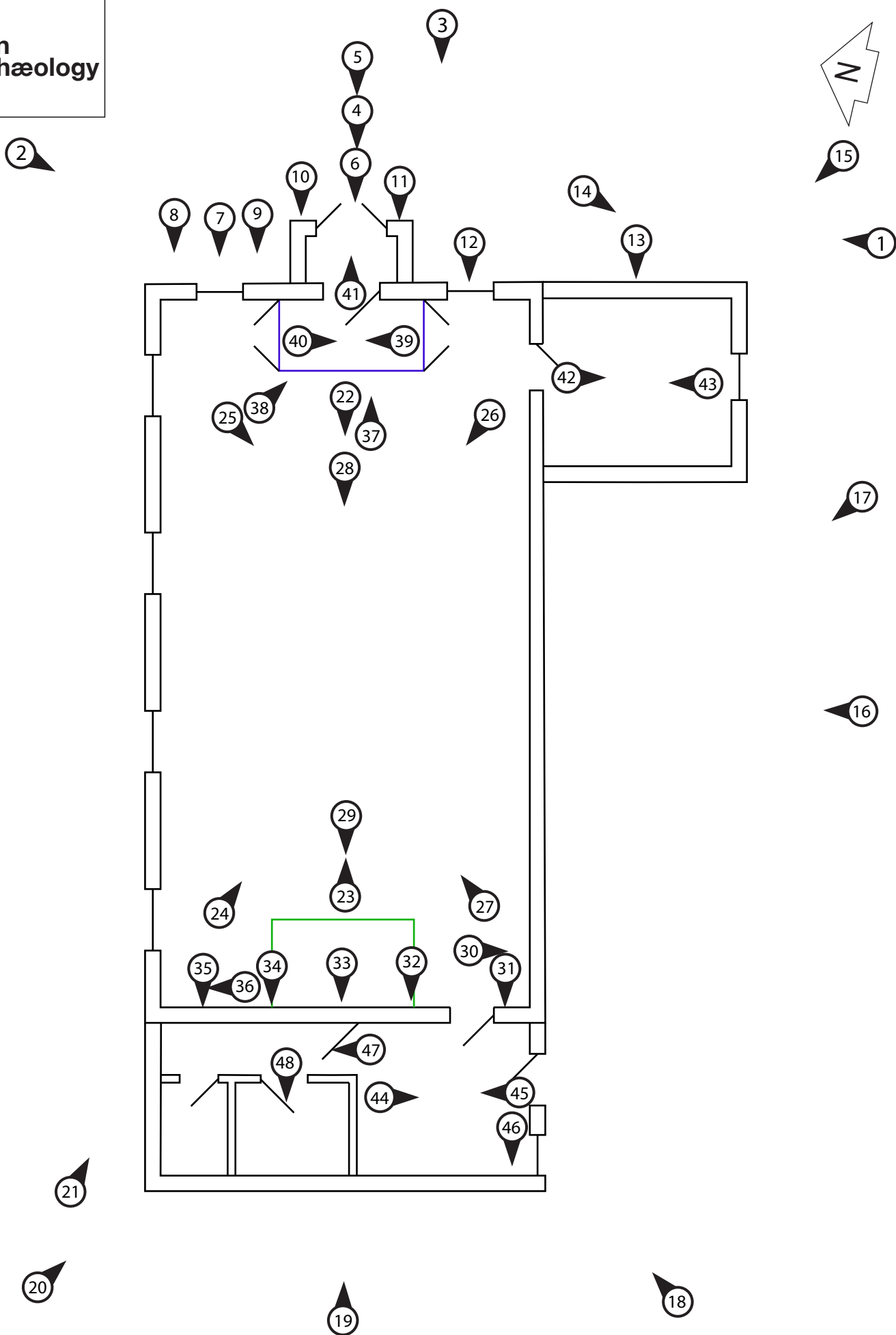


Figure 06: Location and orientation of photographic plates. Scale 1:150 at A4.

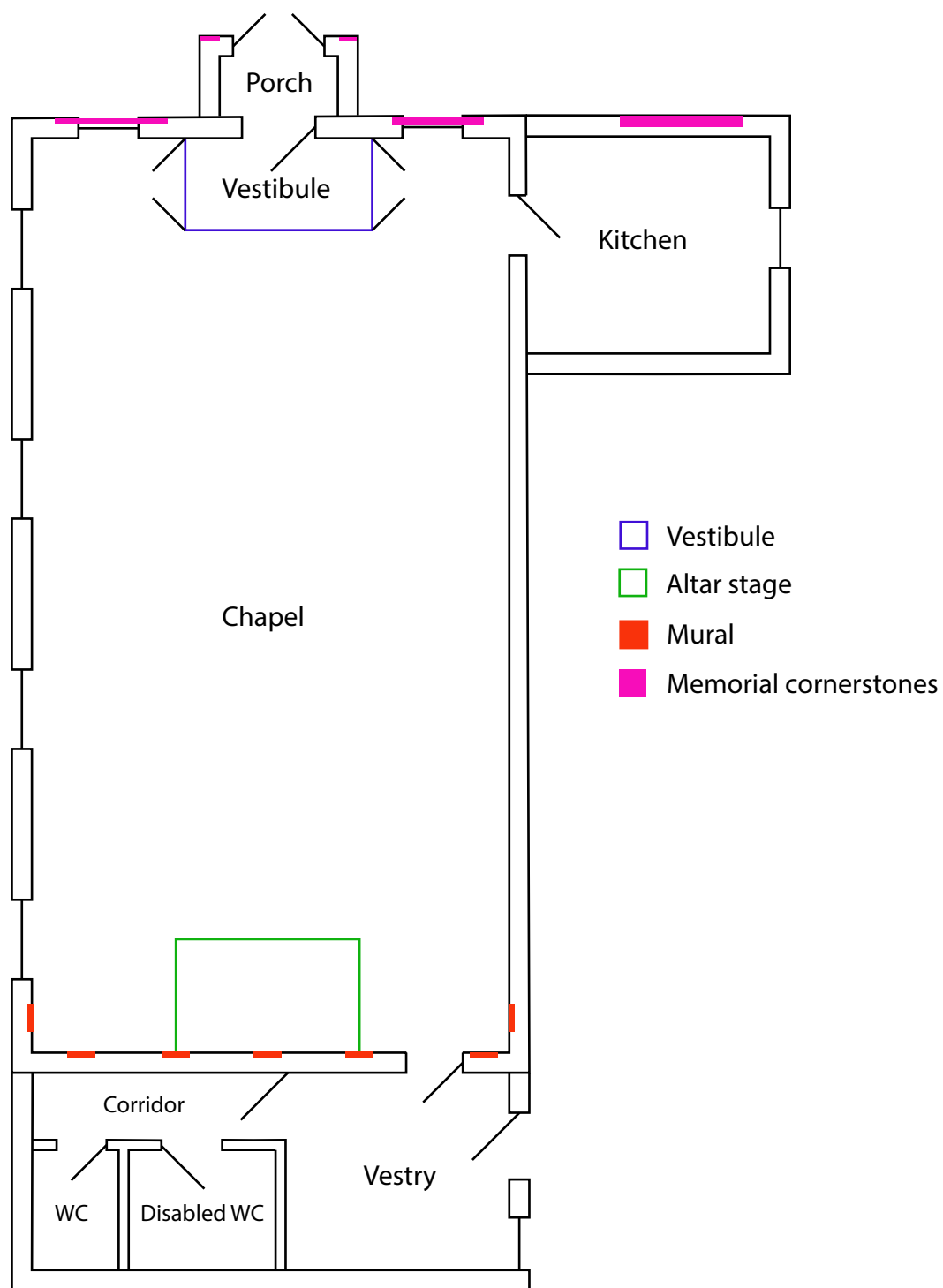


Figure 07: Existing plan of Brymbo Chapel (annotated). Scale 1:150 at A4.

6.0 LEVEL 3 PHOTOGRAPHIC BUILDING SURVEY

A0496.1 Brymbo Chapel

(Figures 1-17; Plates 1-48)

6.1 External Descriptions

Brymbo Chapel is mostly a rectangular building orientated east-west and measuring 17.5m in length by 7.7m in width. There is an original single storey offshoot on the southern elevation at the right hand end. The principal elevation lies on the eastern gable which fronts onto High Street and has a small access yard demarcated by a wall constructed from coursed Ashlar stone bonded by Portland cement. The gable entry is accessed via a wrought iron gate located at the right hand end which permits access to a set of three alighting steps to the front porch.

The building has a double pitched roof of grey slate with ceramic ridge tiles above. Over the eastern gable there is a ceramic ball finial. The building is constructed from red brick bonded by Portland cement in a running bond. The bricks used to the eastern gable and the south-eastern offshoot are of harder machine made brick while the remaining parts of the building are of wire cut red brick.

The eastern gable has a date stone just beneath the eaves which reads *ENGLISH WESLEYAN SCHOOLROOM 1921*. Below this and midway within the elevation are two Lancet windows with radiating brick voussoirs and sandstone sills. These have geometric stained glass windows with leaded comes with a red, tulip-like floral motif at the top, with a heart-shaped yellow and blue form beneath it.

At the left and right hand ends at ground level there are two large lancet windows at either end with radiating brick voussoirs, sandstone sill and stain glass window in leaded comes.

Centred within the elevation of ground floor level is a projecting porch. This has a double pitched roof of slate and a ceramic finial over the gable. In the eastern elevation of the projecting porch is a double doorway permitting access to the interior of the chapel via a wood painted board door with ornate cast iron strap hinges, all set with a lancet arch with radiating brick voussoirs and sandstone detailing.

Set either side of the doorway is a cornerstone, the left of which reads *LAID BY MRS H. HAVELOCK WILLIAMS IN MEMORY OF HER HUSBAND* and the right of which reads *LAID BY MRS ROBERT WILLIAMS HILL SIDE*. At the right hand end of the elevation and to the immediate right of the lancet window an information board reads *Brymbo Methodist Church Sunday services 11am 1st Sunday in the month family worship minister Rev Richard Parkes tel WXM*.

Directly beneath the right hand lancet window are three sandstone memorial cornerstones which read from left to right *LAID BY MISS GLADYS A. JONES STANSTY; LAID BY JOSEPH JONES ESQ STANSTY IN MEMORY OF W TAYLOR JONES; LAID BY MRS H.T. WHITE STANSTY AUGUST 3 1921*.

Beneath the left-hand lancet window are three further sandstone memorial cornerstones which read from left to right *LAID TO COMMEMORATE THE EFFORTS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL; LAID BY MISS MARTHA JONES IN MEMORY OF HER BROTHER W TAYLOR JONES; LAID BY MRS ELIZABETH SIDES AND MRS ELIZABETH EDES*.

At the left hand end of the gable elevation are four further sandstone memorial cornerstones. These read from left to right *LAI D BY W MERSEV JONES ESQ BIRKENHEAD AUGUST 3 1921; LAI D BY NORMAN MILNE HARROP ESQ GWERSYLLT HILL; LAI D BY MRS S.A.PICKERING BOD IDRIS BRYMBO; LAI D BY MR R.E MANUEL ON BEHALF OF THE MEMBERS OF CAERGWRLE CHURCH.*

At the left-hand end of the projecting porch are a set of eight descending concrete steps permitting access to a single doorway opening at basement level which consist of a light grey painted wooden board door set within simple light painted wooden frame and with sandstone lintel above.

To the south of the building is an enclosed car parking yard surrounded by a brick wall constructed from dark grey machine made bricks bonded by Portland cement. On the eastern side of this wall is an iron fence with ball finials set upon spindles.

The southern elevation has a projecting wing located at the east side. An examination of where this wing attaches to the southern elevation would suggest that it is contemporary in date to the main chapel building. The southern elevation of the projecting wing has a mono pitch roof of grey slate with red ceramic ridge tiles, beneath which is a plastic PVC gutter with single downpipe at the right hand end. Within the centre of the elevation is a two pane window set within white PVC frame and with white painted concrete sill and lintel.

The southern elevation of the chapel proper has a dark PVC gutter at eaves height but is otherwise featureless. At the left-hand end is a square single storey offshut which appears to be keyed into the masonry of the chapel building and is therefore contemporary with it. This wing has a double pitched roof of grey slate with grey ridge tiles. The southern elevation of the offshut has a dark PVC gutter at eaves height with a single downpipe at the right hand end. At the right hand end of the elevation is a single doorway opening consisting of a plastic white PVC door set within white PVC frame. Above this is a sandstone or concrete lintel painted white. At the left-hand end of the elevation is a single pane fixed window set within white PVC frame and with white painted concrete lintel and sill.

The western elevation has a ventilation grill at eaves height and centred within the elevation. Beneath this and at first floor height are two equally spaced windows consisting of two pane fixed windows set within white PVC frames and with concrete or sandstone lintel and sills. Beneath this a later lean-to extension has been built into the rear yard and up against the surrounding stone wall. This consists of a modern breezeblock and felt flat roof outbuilding which adjoins a red brick wall with corrugated iron roof.

The northern elevation has four large equally spaced windows consisting of two pane fixed windows in white PVC frames and with sandstone lintels and sills.



Plate 01: Brymbo Chapel in the foreground with Engedi Chapel behind, from the south.



Plate 02: East facing external elevation, from the northeast. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 03: East facing external elevation, from the east. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 04: East facing external elevation showing date stone, from the east.



Plate 05: East facing external elevation showing upper storey windows, from the east.



Plate 06: East facing external elevation showing porch, from the east. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 07: East facing external elevation showing northern ground storey window, from the east.



Plate 08: East facing external elevation showing information board, from the east.



Plate 09: East facing external elevation showing northernmost commemorative cornerstones, from the east.



Plate 10: East facing external elevation showing commemorative cornerstone to the right of the entranceway, from the east.



Plate 11: East facing external elevation showing commemorative cornerstone to the left of the entranceway, from the east.



Plate 12: East facing external elevation showing commemorative cornerstones to left of porch, from the east.



Plate 13: East facing external elevation showing southernmost commemorative cornerstones, from the east.



Plate 14: East facing external elevation showing descending steps to boiler room, from the northeast.



Plate 15: East and south facing external elevations, from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 16: South facing external elevation, from the south. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 17: South facing external elevation, from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 18: South and west facing external elevations, from the southwest. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 19: West facing external elevation, from the west. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 20: West and north facing external elevations, from the northwest. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 21: North facing external elevation, from the northwest.

6.2 Internal Descriptions

Chapel

The main chapel is a rectangular room orientated east-west and measuring 13.7m in length by 7.2m in width. It is partly open to the roof pitch which is separated into four equally sized bays via three wooden trusses supported on white painted stone corbel tables. In between these trusses the ceiling is plastered and painted white and there are three equally spaced square wooden access hatches to the attic space above. The walls are all plastered and for the most part are painted white aside from the western elevation which is painted yellow, with a white painted picture rail. In the lower part of the elevation is dark stained wooden panelling with dado rail above.

The western and principle elevation has two equally spaced windows at first floor height. These consist of two panes in white PVC frames with the lower glass pane being of frosted glass. In between these two windows and centred within the elevation at first floor height is a wooden cross set within a white painted diamond shaped background.

At ground floor level there is a single doorway opening at the left-hand end permitting access to the vestry via a solid wooden cross panel door with simple bakelite knob. This is set within a simple dark stained frame.

There are a series of five equally spaced murals consisting of hand painted wooden boards set within the plaster of the elevation. The left-hand and right hand ones are of an ogee-headed arch shape outlined with a bold border featuring floral motifs, including stylised vine leaves and grape clusters, symbolising the Eucharist (the grapes representing wine). At the centre of the panel is a shield with the inscription "IHS," which is a Christogram representing the first three letters of Jesus' name in Greek. This symbol is commonly found in Christian iconography, especially in Gothic and religious settings. The shield is set against a gold background, further emphasising its importance and drawing the eye to this central religious symbol. The surrounding decorative elements, particularly the grapevine motif, are rendered in a stylised form, with twisting vines and detailed leaves. The use of gold leaf or gold paint in the background gives the panel a sense of richness and reverence, often found in ecclesiastical artwork to represent the divine or heavenly. The black, green, red, and gold colour scheme is typical of Gothic Revival interior design, which aimed to evoke the medieval Gothic period while incorporating modern craftsmanship and materials.

The second mural from the left is also of ogee-headed shape with an identical border to the previous mural but with the Creed written in silver metallic writing.

The central mural is slightly larger and of a lancet arch shape. At the centre of the panel is an ornate Latin cross, which dominates the composition. The cross is embellished with intricate patterns and decorative flourishes, especially at the ends of each arm, which show stylised fleur-de-lis motifs symbolising purity and resurrection. The arms of the cross are highlighted by roundels at the four corners which contain the letters "IHS,". This central cross is bordered by floral designs, which incorporate vines, leaves, and stylised flowers, reinforcing the religious symbolism of life, growth, and resurrection. The surrounding border is richly decorated with a repeated floral pattern using alternating elements of red, gold, and black.

To the right of this is another ogee-headed arch mural with identical border to that carrying the creed but with the Lord's Prayer written in silver italics instead.

The mural located at the right hand end is identical to the left-hand mural.

Immediately in front of the western elevation is a raised stage consisting of upright plan and is accessed via two steps located in the south eastern corner. A second lower stage has been added to the front of this and is one step high.

The northern elevation has four equally spaced fixed two pane windows set within white PVC frames. The lower pane is of frosted glass. At the left-hand end, but to the right of the first window, is another painted mural in ogee-headed arch with an identical border to the creed and Lord's Prayer murals seen on the western elevation, but with the final five Commandments painted in silver italics.

The eastern elevation has two centralised lancet windows at first floor height (as described externally). Beneath this and to the left and right hand ends are two larger lancet windows (as described externally). Centred within the elevation is a projecting vestibule consisting of dark stained wooden panelling with double door access at the east and west ends. These doors are very simple wood panel design with a single frosted pane in the upper quarter. The western elevation of the vestibule has twelve frosted panes in the upper half and is of dark stained wooden panelling below. Centred within the eastern elevation is a single doorway permitting access to the front porch via a solid dark stained cross panel wooden door with simple bakelite knob and set with dark stained wooden frame.

The southern elevation has a single doorway opening at the left-hand end permitting access to the kitchen via a solid dark stained cross panel door with simple bakelite knob and set within a dark stained wooden frame. To the right of this are four equally spaced white painted modern radiators. At the right hand end is a simple lancet shaped wooden hymns board, with the numbers still attached. At the far right end is a ogee-headed arched mural painted with identical border to those seen on the western elevation but with the first five of the ten Commandments painted in silver italics. The floor is of dark stained parquet.

Kitchen

The kitchen is a rectangular room orientated north-south and measuring 3.7m in length by 3.2m in width. The ceiling is plastered and painted white with a single centralised fluorescent light fitting. The walls are all plastered and painted white in the upper half with white ceramic tiles beneath. The northern elevation has a single doorway opening to the right of centre permitting access to the chapel via (door as previously described).

The eastern elevation has a series of kitchen cupboards in the upper and lower half consisting of white painted chipboard with wood affect work surface above. The southern elevation has a centralised two pane casement window in white painted PVC frame with blue and white checked curtains. Beneath this is a stainless steel sink and drainer with stainless steel taps. To the right hand side is a modern condensing boiler with white porcelain basin below.

The western elevation has a fitted extractor fan beneath which the oven has been removed.

The floor is of square red-orange quarry tiles.

Porch

The porch is a rectangular room orientated north-south and measuring 1.8m in length by 0.9m in width. The ceiling is plastered and painted white with a single pendulum light fitting and the walls are all plastered and painted white.

The eastern elevation is dominated by a set of double doors constructed from thick shiplap boards painted dark brown with a simple dark brown painted frame. This is set within a lancet arch.

The southern elevation has a single centralised single pane window in white PVC frame.

The western elevation has a centralised doorway permitting access to the chapel vestibule via (door as previously described).

The northern elevation has a single centralised one pane window set within white PVC frame.

The floor is of red quarry tiles.

Vestry

The vestry is a rectangular room orientated north-south and measuring 3.4m in length by 3.0m in width. The ceiling is plastered and painted white a single centralised electric pendulum light fitting. The walls are all plastered and painted white.

The northern elevation has a single doorway opening to the right hand end permitting access to an access corridor leading to the toilets via a modern brown chipboard door set within simple white painted wooden frame.

The eastern elevation has a single doorway opening to the left of centre permitting access to the chapel via (door as previously described). To the right of this is a white painted modern radiator.

The southern elevation has a single doorway opening at the left-hand end permitting access to the exterior yard via a modern white PVC door set within PVC frame. At the right hand end of this elevation is a single one pane fixed window in PVC frame.

The western elevation is featureless aside from a white painted cast iron safe located at the left-hand end with a plaque reading the *Victoria Safe Company, Wolverhampton* beneath this on a separate plaque it reads *fire resisting safe*.

The floor is of wood effect linoleum.

Corridor

The toilet access corridor is rectangular in shape and orientated north-south measuring 3.8m in length by 1.0m in width. The ceiling is boarded and painted white and the walls are all of exposed brick painted white aside from the northern elevation which is of white painted breezeblock.

The northern elevation is featureless.

The eastern elevation has two sets of cast-iron coat pegs on white painted wooden planks. Beneath this at the left-hand end is a white painted modern radiator.

The southern elevation has a single centralised doorway permitting access to the Vestry via (door as previously described).

The western elevation has a single doorway opening to the left of centre permitting access to the disabled WC via a modern brown woodchip door set with a simple white painted wooden frame. At the right hand end an identical doorway permits access to the WC. The floor is of wood effect linoleum.

Disabled WC

The disabled WC is a rectangular room orientated north-south and measuring 2.2m in length by 1.8m in width. The ceiling slopes downward from west to east and is boarded and painted white. The walls are all plastered and painted white. There is a single centralised electric light fitting within the ceiling but it is otherwise featureless.

The northern elevation has a centralised modern white ceramic basin with stainless steel tap and with white tile splashback. The elevation has a single doorway opening to the left of centre permitting access to the toilet access corridor (door as previously described).

The southern elevation is featureless.

The west elevation has a toilet located to the right of centre consisting of white ceramic cistern, bowl and black ceramic toilet seat.

WC

The WC is a rectangular room orientated east-west and measuring 1.8m in length by 1.3m in width. The ceiling slopes downward from west to east and is of white painted board with a single centralised light fitting. The walls are all of exposed brick painted white.

The north elevation is featureless.

The east elevation has a single centralised doorway permitting access to the toilet access corridor (door as previously described).

The southern elevation is featureless.

The western elevation has a single centralised drop cistern with white ceramic bowl and black painted metal seat.

The floor is of wood affect linoleum.



Plate 22: Chapel, from the east. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 23: Chapel, from the west. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 24: Chapel, from the northwest. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 25: Chapel, from the northeast. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 26: Chapel, from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 27: Chapel, from the southwest. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 28: Chapel showing ceiling trusses with arched braces, from the east.



Plate 29: Chapel showing altar, from the east. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 30: Chapel showing mural on southern elevation, from the north.



Plate 31: Chapel showing southernmost mural on western elevation, from the east.



Plate 32: Chapel showing mural to left of centre on western elevation, from the east.



Plate 33: Chapel showing central mural on western elevation, from the east.

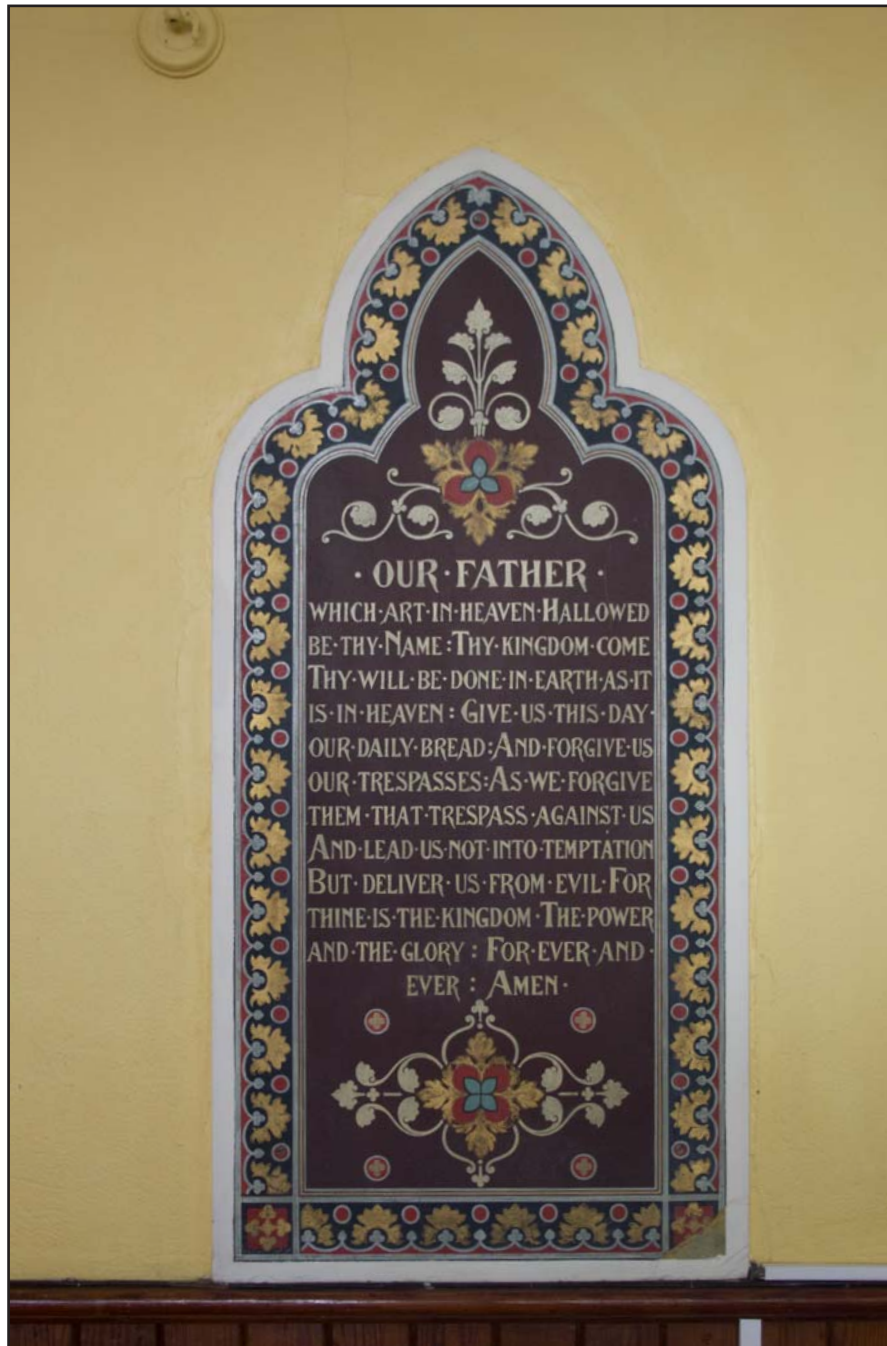


Plate 34: Chapel showing mural to right of centre on western elevation, from the east.



Plate 35: Chapel showing northernmost mural on western elevation, from the east.

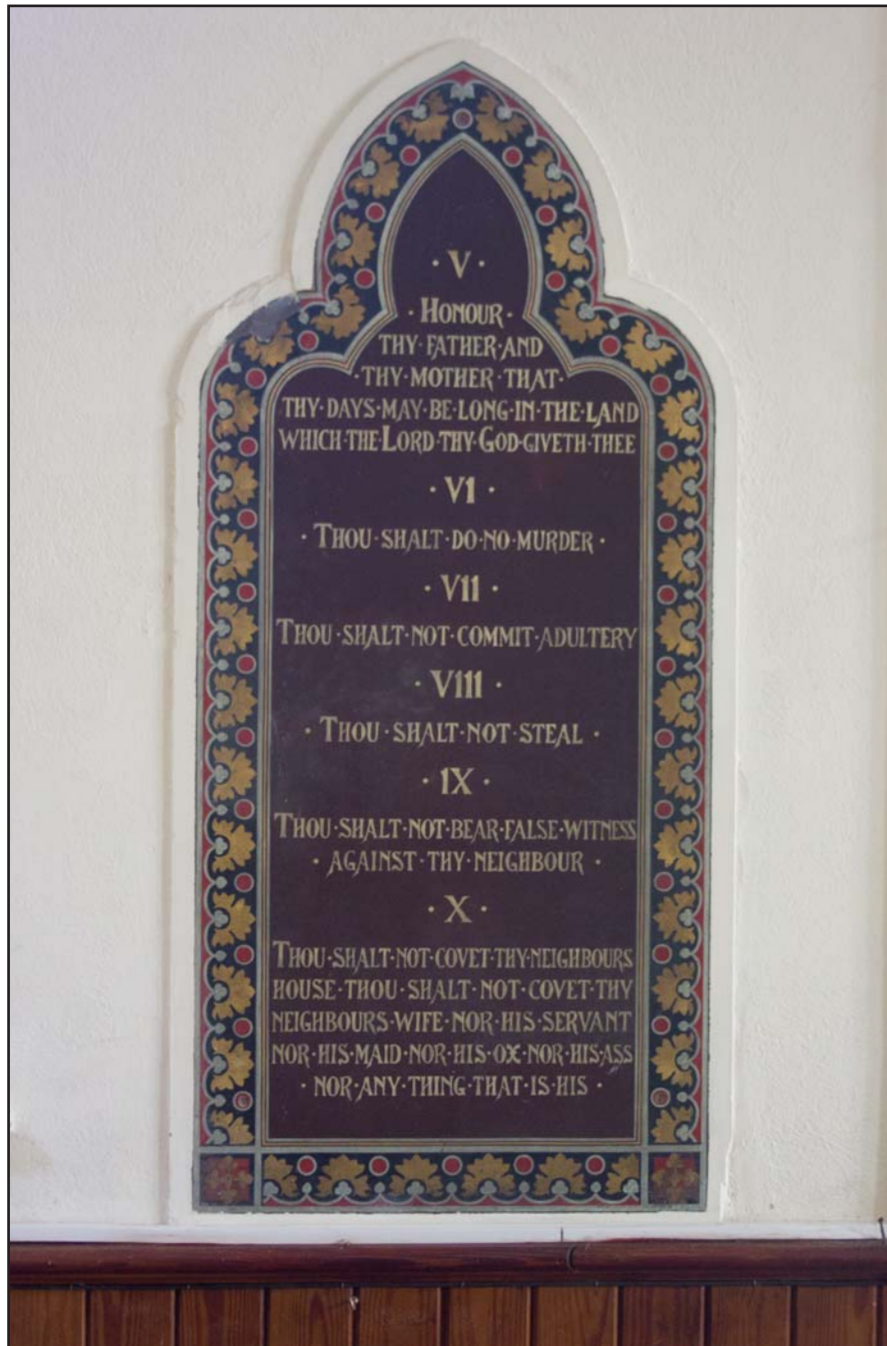


Plate 36: Chapel showing mural on northern elevation, from the south.

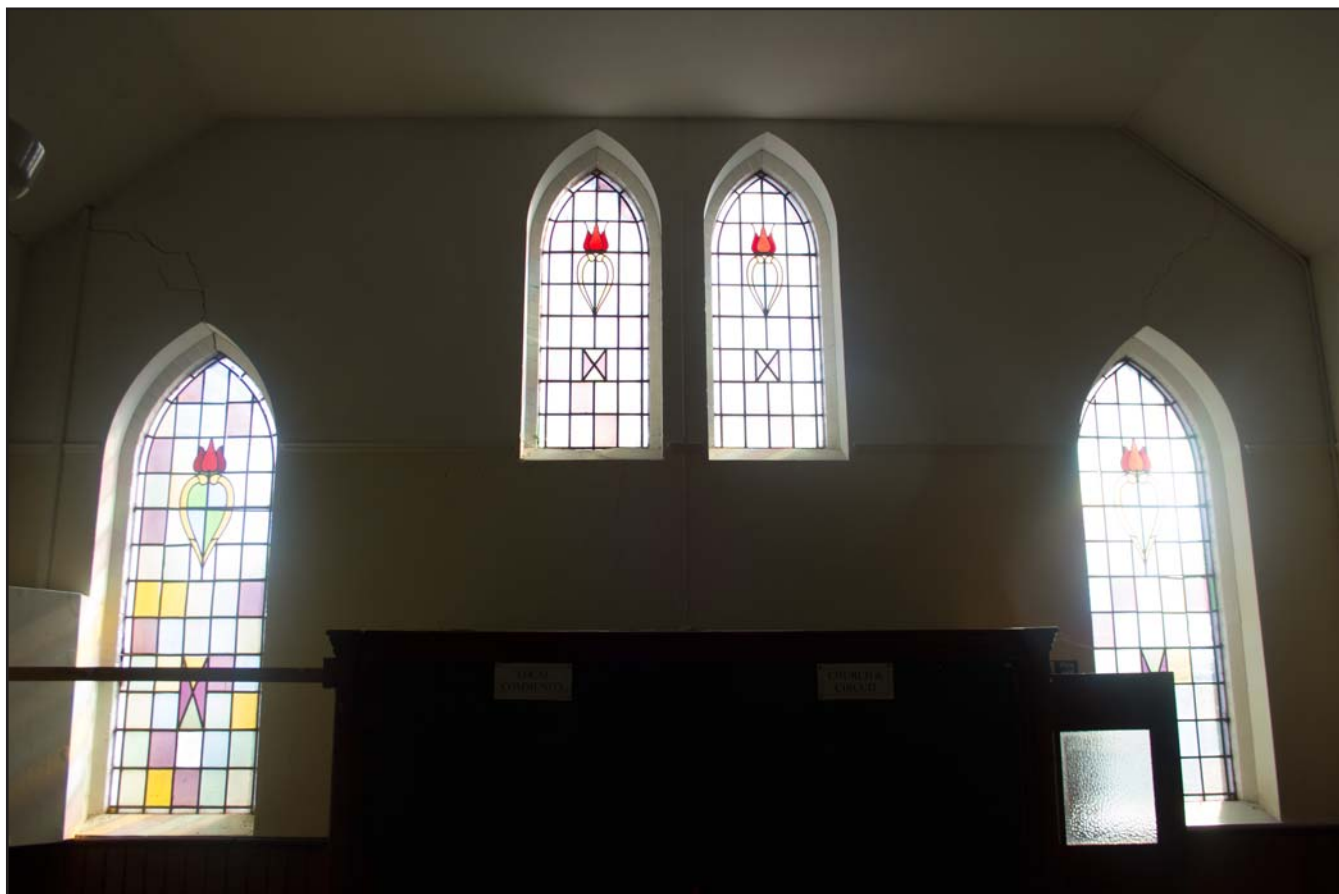


Plate 37: Chapel showing windows in eastern elevation, from the west.



Plate 38: Chapel showing entrance vestibule in eastern elevation, from the northwest. Scale 1.0m.

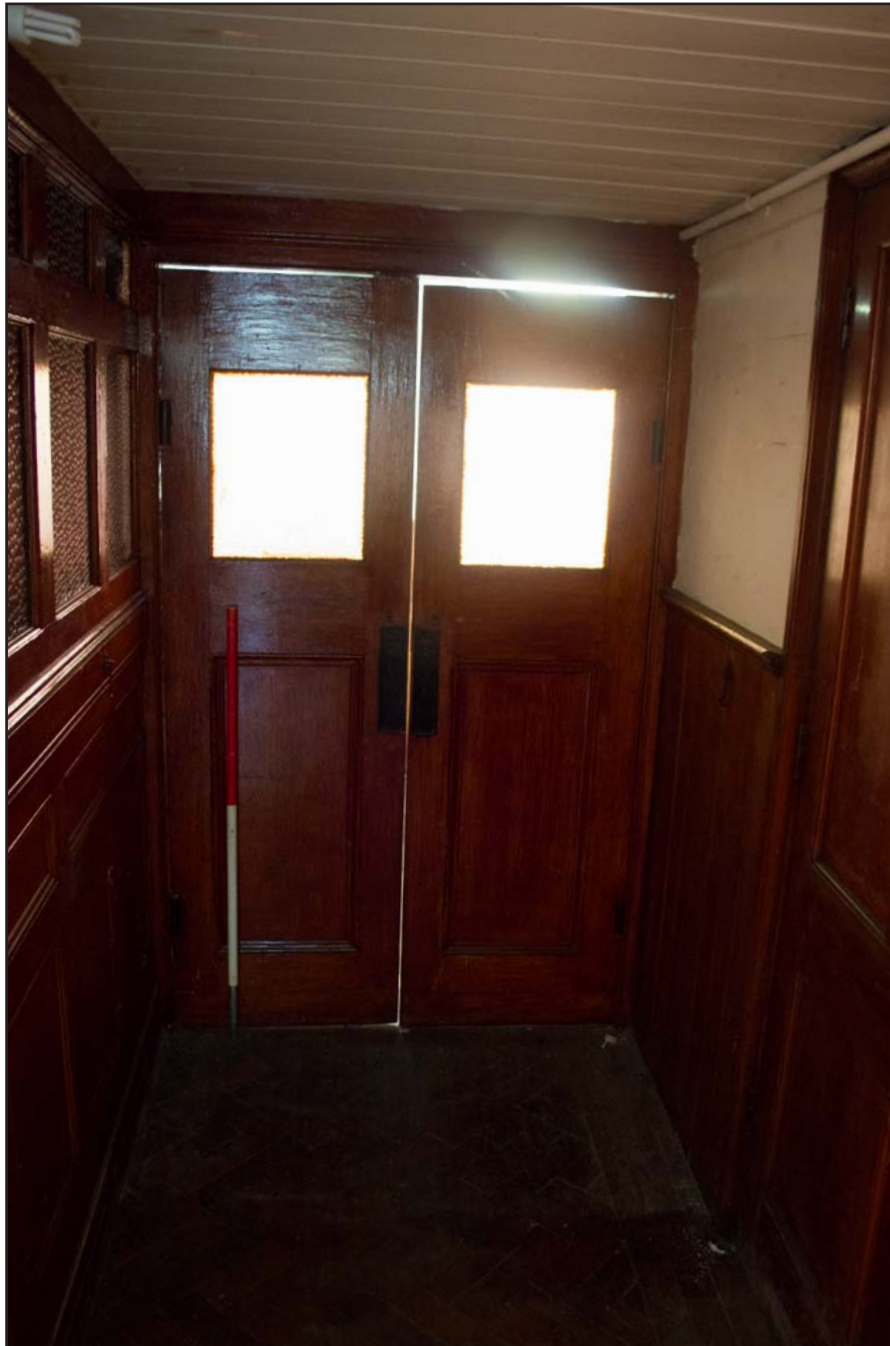


Plate 39: Entrance vestibule, from the south. Scale 1.0m.

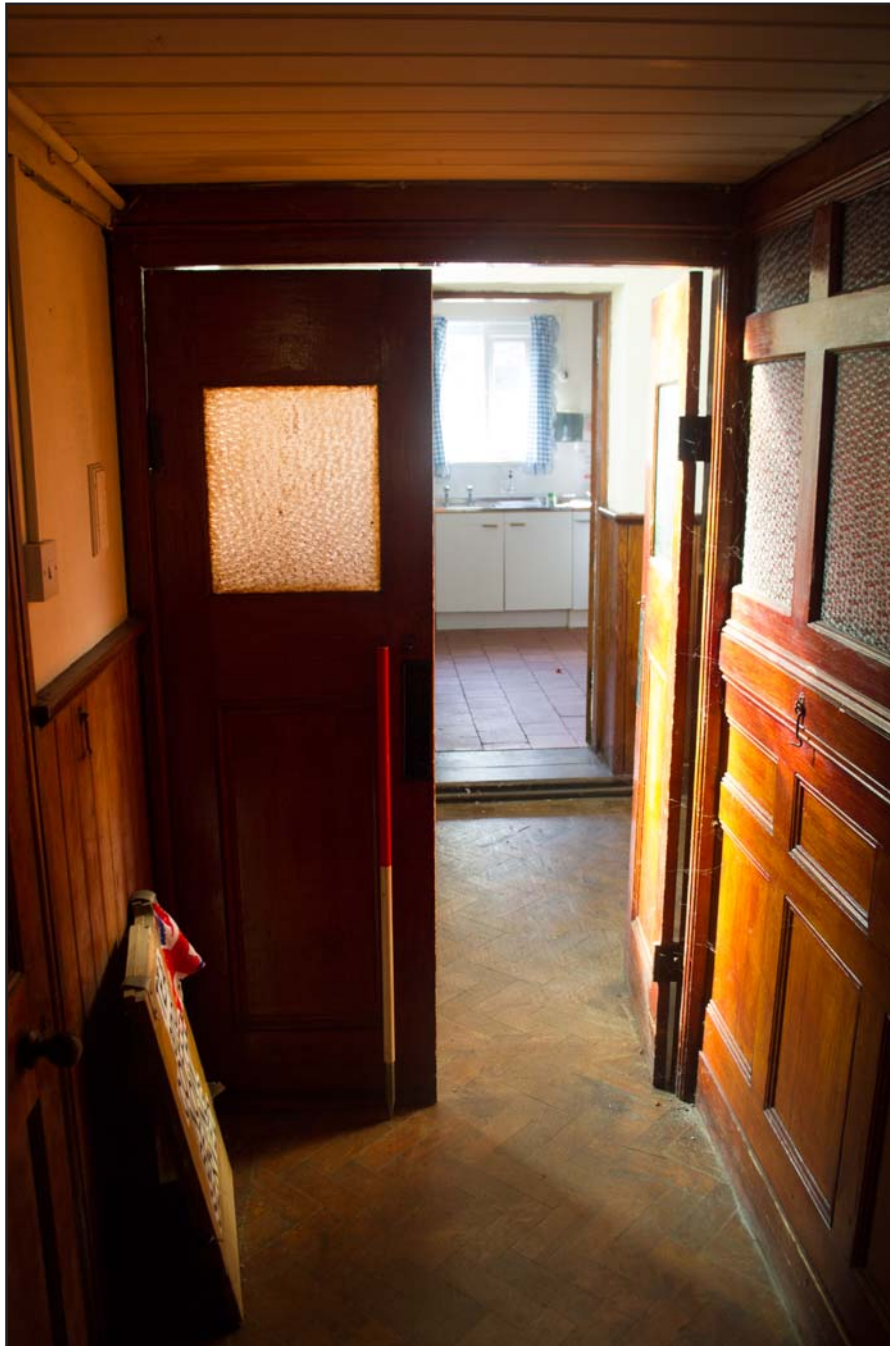


Plate 40: Entrance vestibule, from the north. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 41: Entrance porch, from the west. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 42: Kitchen, from the north. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 43: Kitchen, from the south. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 44: Vestry, from the north. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 45: Vestry, from the south. Scale 1.0m.



Plate 46: Vestry safe, from the east.



Plate 47: Corridor, from the south. Scale 1.0m.

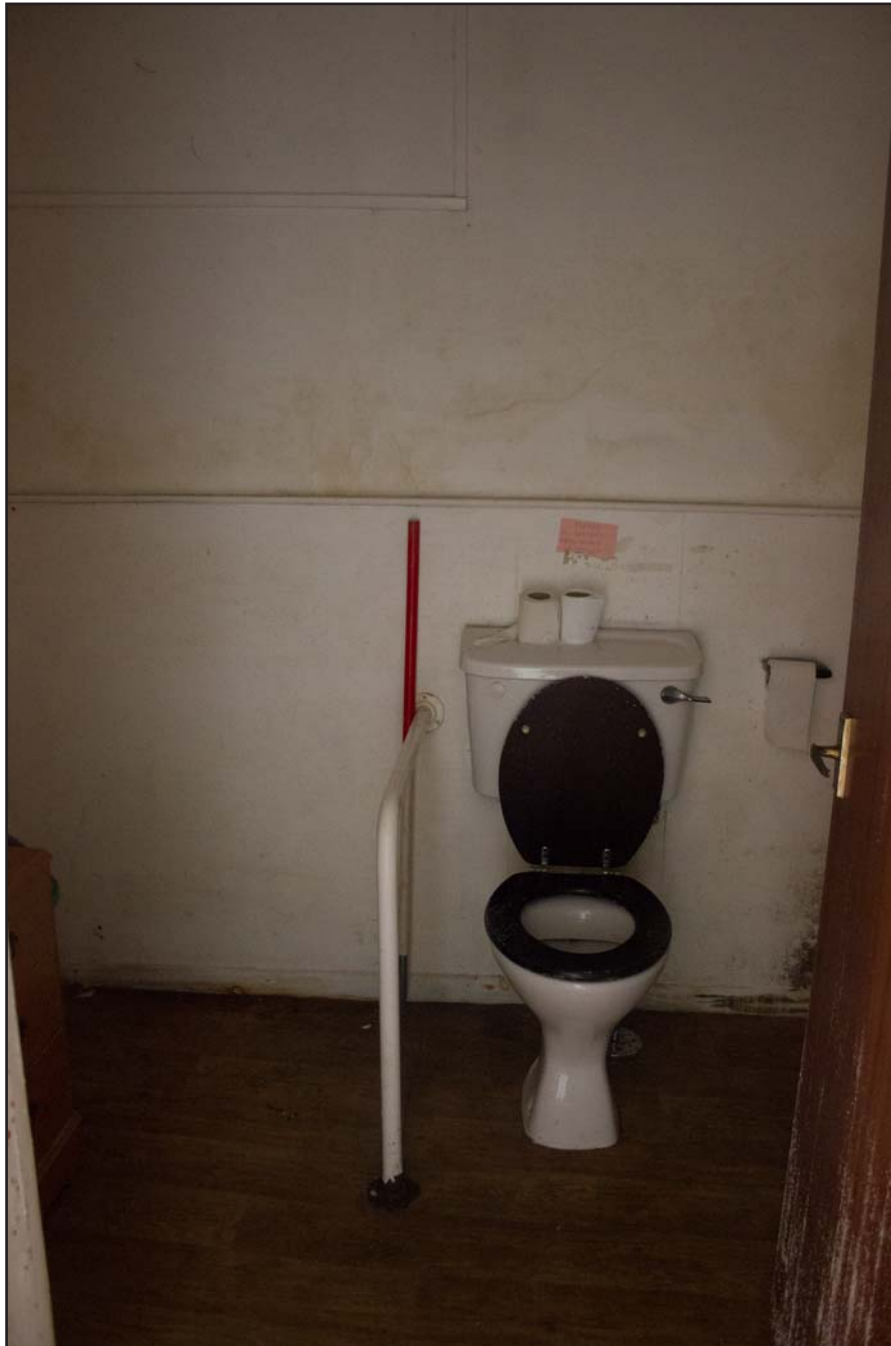


Plate 48: Disabled toilet, from the east. Scale 1.0m.

7.0 HISTORY OF BRYMBO CHAPEL

The overall architectural style of Brymbo Chapel reflects the Gothic Revival influence that was popular in Welsh chapel architecture during the 19th century, characterised by the pointed arches, tall lancet windows, and the general vertical emphasis of the design. The chapel gives a sense of solidity and reverence, typical of Nonconformist and Methodist places of worship from this period, where the architecture is meant to be dignified yet restrained, focusing on simplicity and functionality.

Edward Rogers and William Hughes, from Adwy, are credited with establishing what is thought to be the first Sunday school in the Brymbo district when they introduced Welsh Calvinistic Methodism to the village in 1818 (<https://owensaw.homestead.com/Engedi.html>).

The services were initially held in the home of Mali Davies, in one of the houses located behind what is now the Chapel. These houses were then known as Rhes-pen-y-graig, later referred to as the Long Row (ibid).

The success of these services led to the decision to build a Chapel. The first iteration of the Chapel was of the Wesleyan denomination and was constructed around 1892. This had a corrugated roof and became affectionately known as the "Tin Chapel". It was on the same site as the present building but was orientated north-south with the entrance being on the southern gable. It had a small entrance porch and through the inner door, on the left, were a high pulpit and a square seat in which the deacons sat. It had a handsome pipe organ; the organist was Mr. Leonard Pickering. Behind the pulpit stood the chancel, with two vestries, one each side. In 1900 the first baptism took place, that of Myfanwy Jones, who later became the organist. Whilst the Chapel was being built, the members worshipped at the Schools or Cocoa Rooms (the Old British Legion).

The chapel has an entry on the National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW) **NPRN 7522**, and is recorded as *in 1892 a chapel was built on the present site, to the design of architect William Lloyd Jones of Bangor, in the Gothic style with a gable entry plan.*

The tithe map of 1839 (Figure 08) shows the site of the Chapel but it had not been constructed by this point in time. The plot is numbered as *156* with the landowner detailed as *(trustees) of Baptist*; the occupier as *Edward Jones*; and the land use as *hay*.

Similarly the six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1879 (figure 09) does not show the building in existence, however it is depicted on the 1900 map (figure 10) as a north-south orientated building located to the immediate south of Engedi Chapel. The building is shown in detail on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1912 (figure 11) where the twin vestries are shown at the northeast and northwest corners, as well as a projecting porch on the southern gable. The form of the building is shown clearly on the 1908 photograph and an undated photograph reproduced in figures 17 and 18.

Strangely, despite the datestone on the eastern gable and the memorial cornerstones all showing that the current Chapel was built in 1921, the original Chapel configuration of a north-south building is shown on the 1946 and 1954 six inch Ordnance Survey maps (figures 13 and 14). Sometimes, especially with the six inch Ordnance Survey map, the map data was



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Figure 08: Approximate location of Brymbo Chapel on the 1839 map of the township of Brymbo in the parish of Brymbo in the County of Denbigh.

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Figure 09: Approximate location of Brymbo Chapel on the six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1879.

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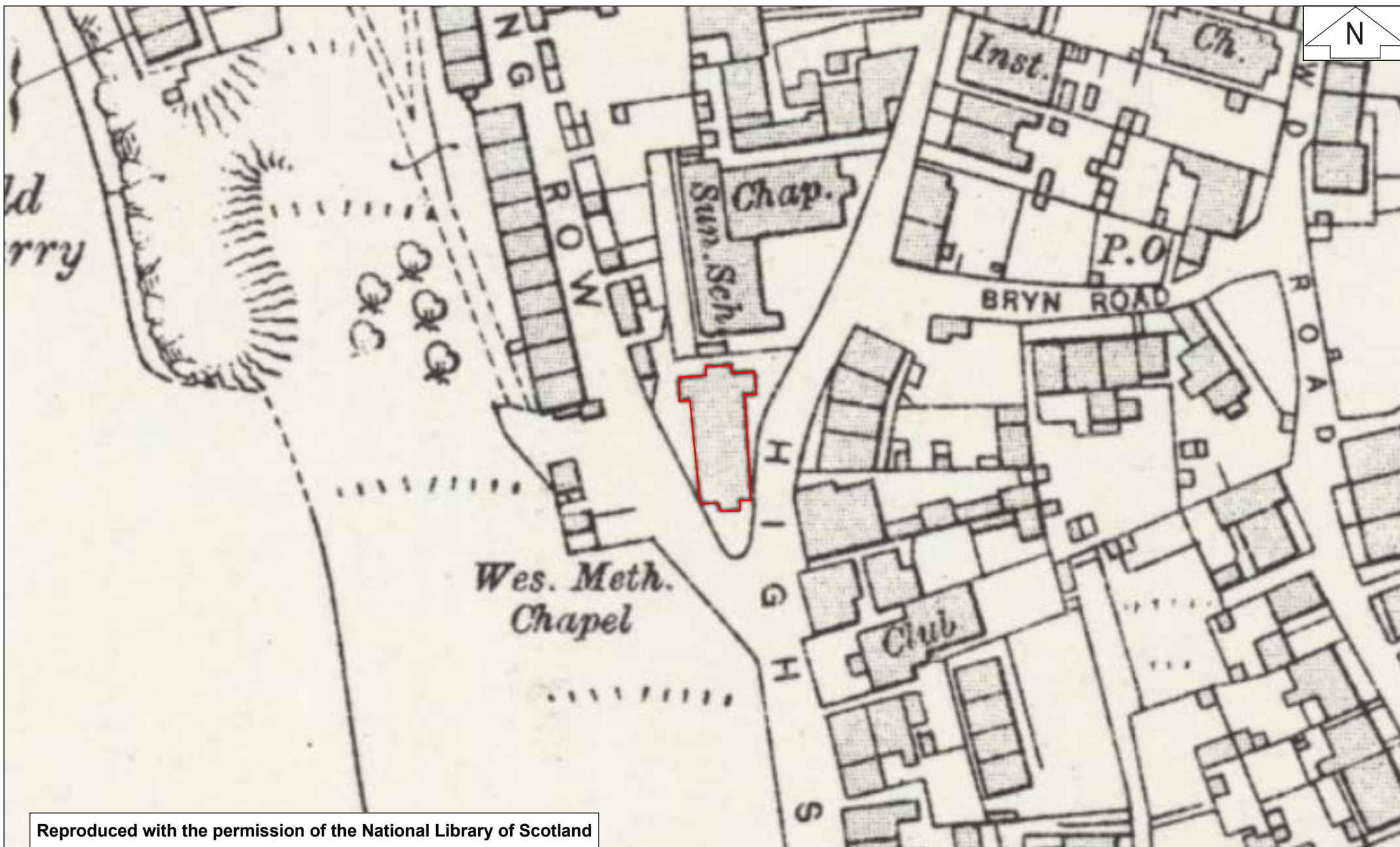


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Figure 10: Location of Brymbo Chapel on the six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1900.

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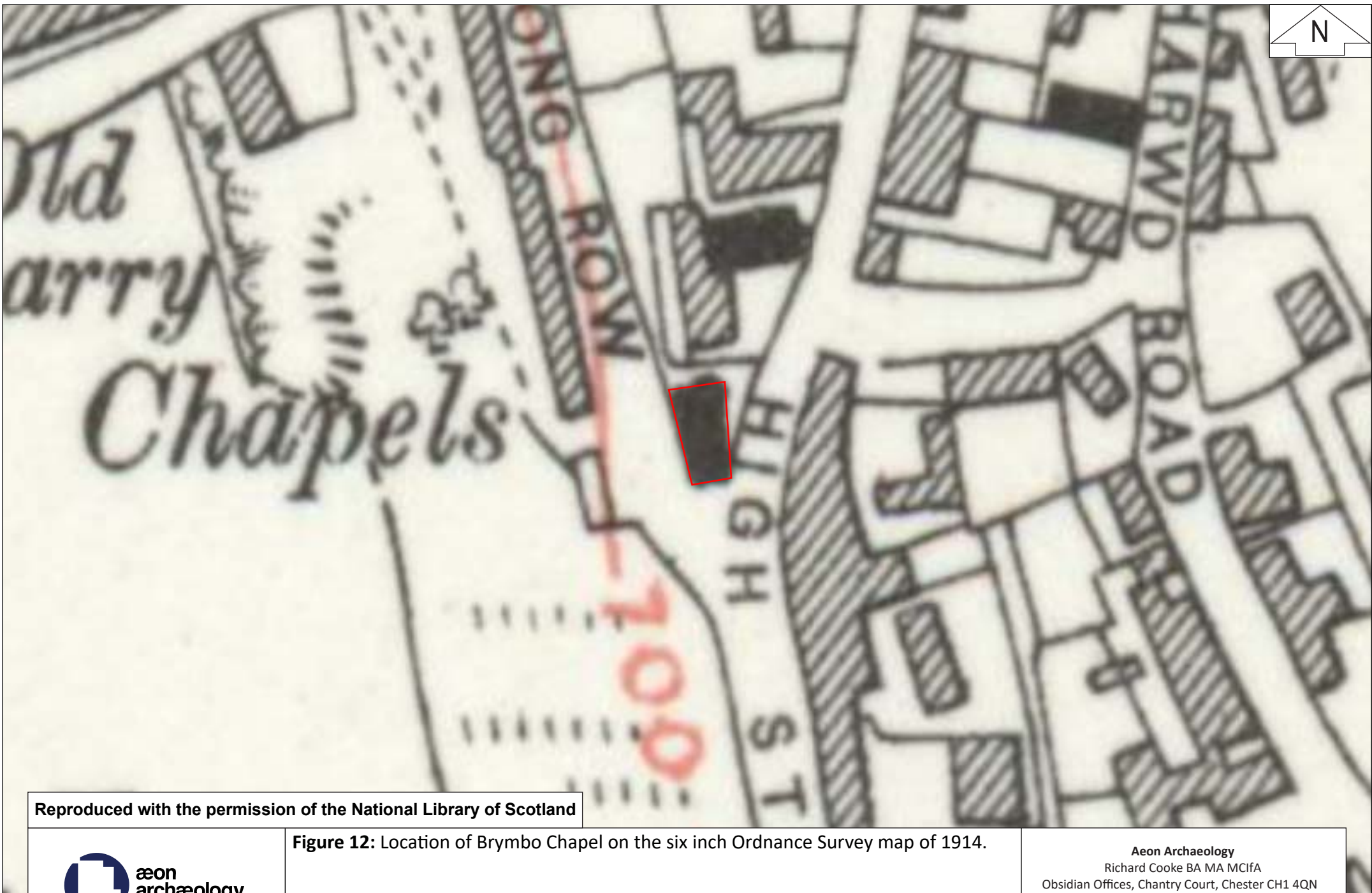


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Figure 11: Location of Brymbo Chapel on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1912.

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Figure 12: Location of Brymbo Chapel on the six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1914.

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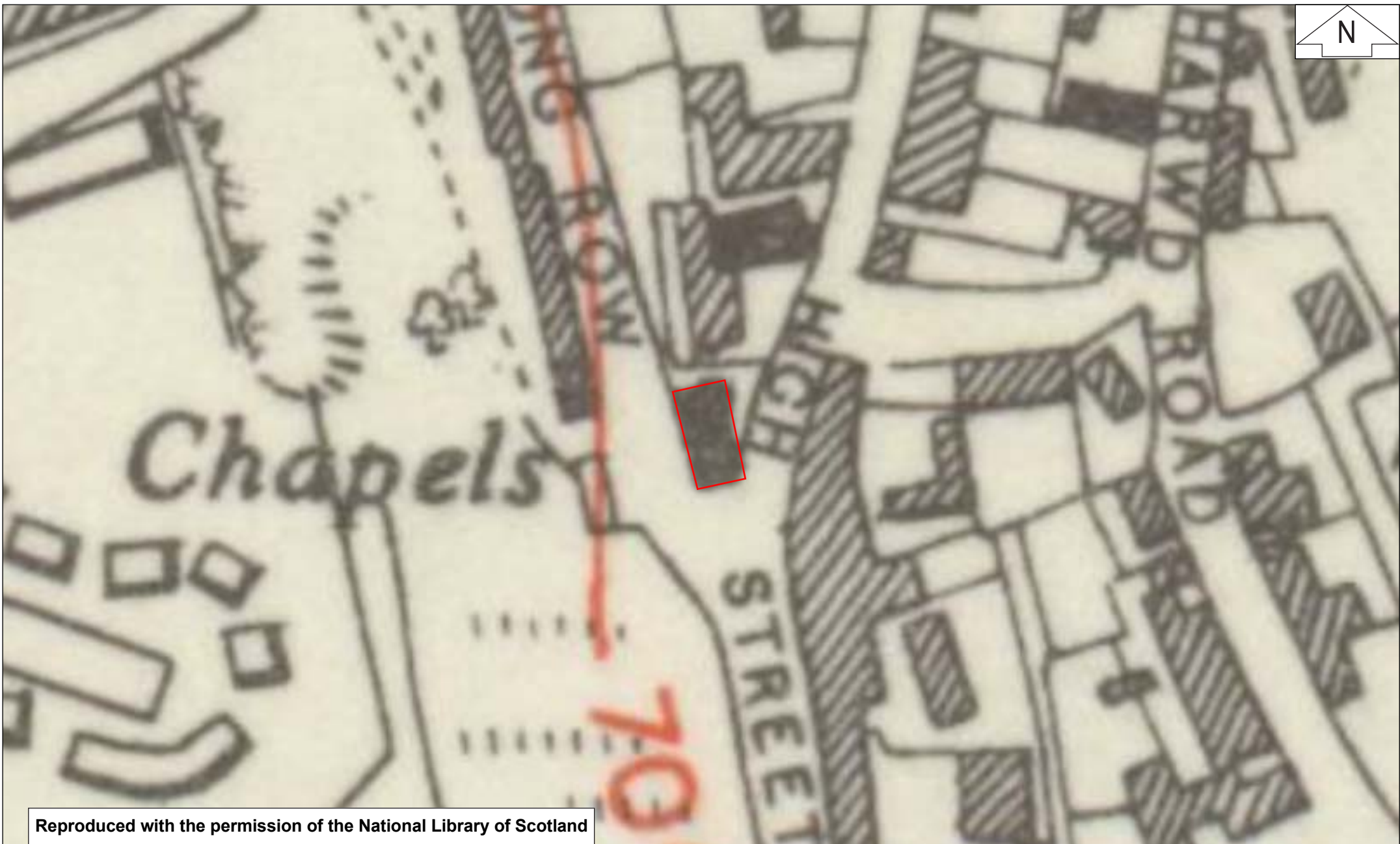


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Figure 13: Location of Brymbo Chapel on the six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1946.

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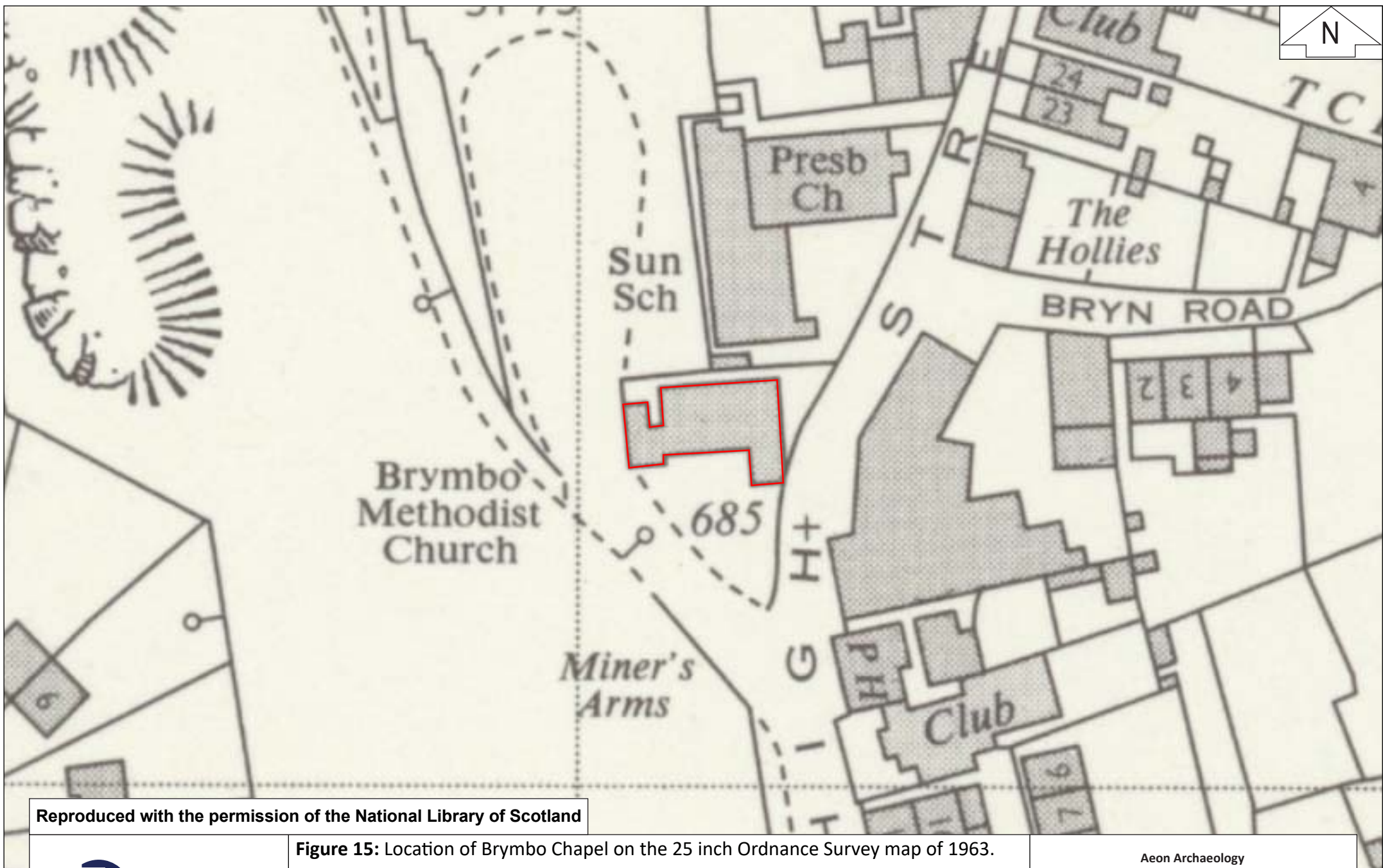


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Figure 14: Location of Brymbo Chapel on the six inch Ordnance Survey map of 1954.

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Figure 15: Location of Brymbo Chapel on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1963.

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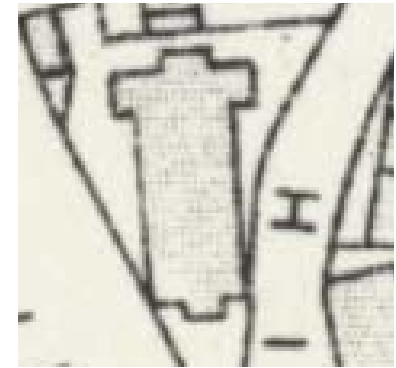
1839



1879



1900



1912



1914



1946



1954



1963

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Figure 16: Historic map regression.

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Figure 17: Brymbo Church Schools Procession 1908.



Figure 18: Undated photograph of original Wesleyan Chapel.

reproduced from earlier maps unless there had been significant change to an area. As such it seems likely that the 1946 and 1954 maps are showing the Chapel as it was on the 1914 map.

The 25 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1963 (figure 15) shows the Chapel in its current configuration. The houses to the rear on Long Row had been demolished by this point in time and the road to the west of the Chapel had been rerouted slightly more to the west. This created the space for the Chapel to be rebuilt on an east-west axis with the entrance in the eastern gable fronting onto High Street. The 1963 map clearly shows the two offshoots located at the south-eastern and south-western corners.

The Brymbo Wesleyan Chapel represents an important part of the region's religious and industrial history. Established during a time of significant social and economic change, the chapel served as a spiritual centre for the local community, particularly those involved in the booming iron and coal industries.

The rise of the industrial revolution in Brymbo, driven by the nearby Brymbo Ironworks, brought many workers to the area. With a growing English-speaking population and industrial workforce, the need for a religious institution to serve this community became evident (Coflein: Brymbo Ironworks).

The construction of the chapel was supported by the local community and business leaders, many of whom had connections to the iron and coal industries. The Wesleyan chapel provided not only a place of worship but also a centre for social and educational activities. Wesleyan chapels, including Brymbo's, often hosted Sunday schools and community meetings, offering both spiritual and practical support to their congregations (Jones, Welsh Chapels, 1996).

The architecture of Brymbo Wesleyan Chapel reflects the Gothic Revival style, popular in the 19th century. This style was often employed for ecclesiastical buildings to evoke the grandeur and spiritual significance of medieval Gothic architecture (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Welsh Chapel Architecture, 2014). The chapel's pointed arches, lancet windows, and decorative stained glass would have been typical features, symbolising a sense of elevation and devotion.

The chapel's relatively simple but dignified design suited the nonconformist ethos of Wesleyan Methodism, which valued spiritual purity over the lavish displays associated with more traditional church buildings, like those of the Anglican Church (Jones, Welsh Chapels, 1996).

For many years, the chapel was a central part of life in Brymbo, attracting a wide range of people from the local area. Its congregation was largely made up of workers from the local ironworks and coal mines, and the chapel played a significant role in offering spiritual solace during difficult times, particularly during industrial downturns and accidents at the works (Davies, A History of Wales, 1994).

By the late 20th century, the fortunes of Brymbo Wesleyan Chapel, like many nonconformist chapels in Wales, began to decline. As the industrial landscape changed, with the closure of the Brymbo Ironworks in 1990, the population began to dwindle, and many people moved

away from the area (Coflein: Brymbo Ironworks). The chapel faced declining attendance, and its upkeep became difficult for the remaining congregation.

In the latter part of the 20th century, many chapels across Wales were either closed or converted for other uses, including homes or community spaces. Brymbo Wesleyan Chapel eventually became redundant and ceased functioning as an active place of worship. Today, the building stands as a reminder of the industrial and religious history of the area (Jones, *Welsh Chapels*, 1996).

The level 3 building survey of Brymbo Chapel, undertaken by Aeon Archaeology, serves as a crucial endeavor in ensuring the preservation and understanding of this historic structure via record. The decision to conduct a level 3 historic building record aligns with the stringent conditions set forth by the Council, emphasising the significance of comprehensively documenting the chapel's architectural, historical, and cultural attributes before any alterations are made.

The necessity for this documentary survey is underscored by the need to fulfill the requirements laid out in planning policy, which mandates the completion of a thorough building recording and analysis process. By adhering to the standards set by organisations like the *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists* (2024), the survey has now produced a comprehensive report that not only documents the physical characteristics of the chapel but also delves into its origins, use, and development over time.

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