# Heneb: Clwyd-Powys Archaeology

Project PD24-108

Report 2076

# Holt Presbyterian Church

Level 3 Historic Building Recording





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### CRYNHODEB ANHECHNEGOL

Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn amlinellu Arolwg Adeiladu Hanesyddol Lefel 3 o Eglwys Bresbyteraidd Holt a gynhaliwyd gan Heneb: Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeoleg Cymru ar ran Gary Conway. Mae'r arolwg wedi diffinio dau gam datblygu cynradd: yr eglwys wreiddiol a'r ystafelloedd ysgol a sefydlwyd ym 1865, ac ychwanegwyd estyniad cefn diweddarach ar ddiwedd y 1960au. Mae'r eglwys yn cynnwys dyluniad traddodiadol gydag elfennau mewnol allweddol a briodolir i'r pensaer T. M. Lockwood, gan gynnwys y gwaith maen gothig a'r nodweddion pren mewnol gan gynnwys y pulpud, y lobi, a'r rhan fwyaf o'r eisteddleoedd. Mae'r ystafell ysgol yn cael ei nodweddu gan nenfwd cromennog a gefnogir gan fframweithiau coed addurniadol gyda bwa canolog a allai fod wedi rhannu dwy ystafell ddosbarth fewnol yn wreiddiol. Mae'r estyniad cefn o ddiwedd y 1960au yn adeilad concrit 'breezeblock' gyda amwynderau modern ychwanegol, gan gynnwys cegin, toiledau ac ardal cyfleustodau. Mae'r cofnod hwn yn sylfaen ar gyfer ymdrechion cadwraeth yn y dyfodol, gan dynnu sylw at arwyddocâd pensaerniol a hanesyddol Eglwys Bresbyteraidd Holt a'i chofnodi cyn ei addasu yn y dyfodol.

### NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This report outlines a Level 3 Historic Building Survey of Holt Presbyterian Church conducted by Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology on behalf of Gary Conway. The survey has defined two primary phases of development: the original church and schoolrooms established in 1865, and a later rear extension added in the late 1960s. The church features a traditional design with key internal elements attributed to architect T. M. Lockwood, including the gothic style masonry and internal timber features including the pulpit, lobby, and the majority of the pews.

The schoolroom is characterised by a vaulted ceiling supported by decorative timber trusses with a central arch that may have originally divided two internal classrooms. The late 1960s rear extension is a concrete breezeblock construction and added modern amenities, including a kitchen, toilets and utility area.

This recording serves as a foundation for future conservation efforts, highlighting the architectural and historical significance of Holt Presbyterian Church and recording it prior to future modification.

### 1 Introduction

1.1. Heneb: Clwyd-Powys Archaeology were instructed by Mr. Gary Conway, the client, to conduct a Level 3 Historic Building Survey (Lane 2016) of the Grade II listed former Holt Presbyterian Church (Listed Building 16957). This survey is in relation to the proposed redevelopment of the church into a single domestic dwelling (planning reference P/2024/1078). The church is located on Castle Street in the historic village of Holt, Wrexham, LL13 9YW (see Fig. 1). A detailed floor plan of the property is provided at the end of this document (Figure 18).

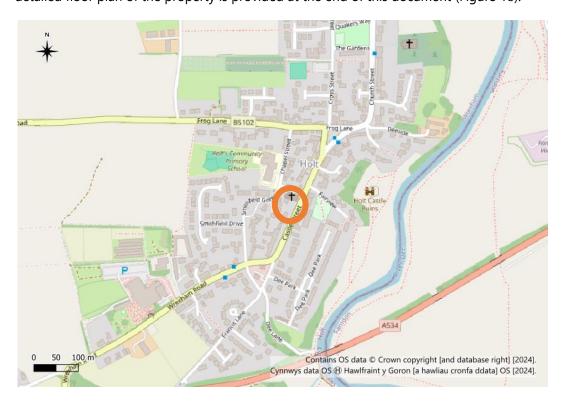


Figure 1: Location of Holt Presbyterian Church (circled)

### Planning background

1.2. The proposed development was granted planning permission on 22/10/2024 subject to precommencement planning conditions. As recommended by the archaeological advisor to Wrexham County Borough Council (LPA), section 5 of the planning condition states that:

No works shall commence until a Level 3 building recording and photographic survey (equivalent to an Historic England Photographic Survey - Understanding Historic Buildings, 2016, 5.5, p.27) of the existing building/s has been secured and implemented in accordance with a brief issued by the Local Planning Authority and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The photographic survey will be completed by a recognised professional in accordance with the brief, approved WSI and relevant CIFA Standards and Guidance.

1.3. The WSI was submitted and approved by the Archaeological Planning Advisor (APA) on 9/12/24. This report seeks to further satisfy section 5 of the planning condition through the implementation of a Level 3 Historic Building Survey.

### Historic background

- 1.4. The following information draws extensively on the Heritage Impact Assessment undertaken in support of the planning application (Wetton 2024). It has been agreed with the LPA that a summary of this information can be included in the current report in lieu of a separate Level 3 documentary study.
- 1.5. The present Holt Presbyterian church was built in 1865 replacing an earlier chapel established in 1843 and ministered by Rev. Ebenezer Powell from 1847. In 1855 Reverend Powell and his wife established a school within their own home, the success of which led to the establishment of the academy school located on Castle Street opposite the present church (Powell, 1982, p. 55). By 1865 Powell also instigated the rebuilding of the church into its present form.
- 1.6. Powell commissioned renowned Chester-based architect T. M. Lockwood, whose designs established a fine example of a Gothic Revival-style church with bar tracery and a stone belfry. This is what has prompted its designation as a Grade II listed building. The church was built by mason Robert A. Macfie of Liverpool, whose name is recorded as an engraving in a foundation stone on the northeastern corner of the church. This new church could seat 350 worshippers and incorporated a school room with accommodation for 150 students (Holt Local History Society, 2000).
- 1.7. Within the church are three memorial plaques (Figure 2), one to its founder Reverent Ebenezer Powell noting that he was minister of this (and the previous) church from 1847 through until 1873, dying in 1876.
- 1.8. The second commemorates another of the church's ministers Reverent Richmond Leich Roose, former minister to the Church at Hay, Breconshire and an important figure in the Presbytery Church of Lancashire and Cheshire. The plaque also commemorated his wife Eliza Leich Roose. The reverend's son, also a resident of Holt and likely a member of the church congregation, was Leigh Richmond Roose, considered one of the greatest football players of his generation, who played as a goalkeeper for the Welsh national team also playing for Everton, Sunderland, Stoke, and Glasgow Rangers during his career (Richards, 1959).
- 1.9. The third plaque commemorates Samuel Dale, an elder of the church and superintendent of the church Sunday school for nearly 50 years.







Figure 2: Memorial plaque to Samuel Dale, Rev Ebenezer Powell and Rev Richmond Leich Roose (Heneb photo PD24-108\_017, 020, 021)

1.10. The church continued to serve as a place of worship and a Sunday school from its construction until its closure in 2012. It has since remained relatively empty, used only for storage until its purchase ahead of the proposed conversion.

### **Historic map regression**

- 1.11. The church first appears on the first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6-inch scale map in 1872, 7 years after its construction. It is depicted with both the main church and a schoolroom to the west of it. The Manse (clergy house) is shown directly to the south of the church which shares its rear yard or garden with the church (Figure 3).
- 1.12. The second edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch scale map dating to 1897 is relatively unchanged but also shows the gateway access into the schoolroom from the north (Figure 4).



Figure 3: First edition Ordnance Survey 6 inch to the mile map Denbighshire Sheet XXIX Surveyed: 1872, Published: 1879 (National Library of Scotland)

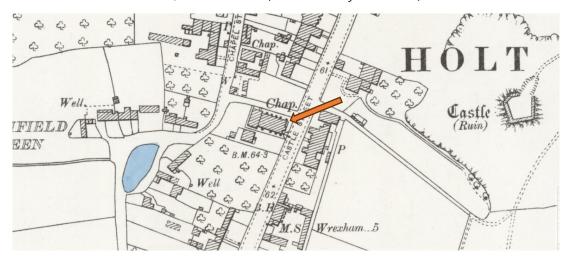


Figure 4: Second edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch to the mile map Cheshire LIII.11 Revised: 1897, Published: 1899 (National Library of Scotland)

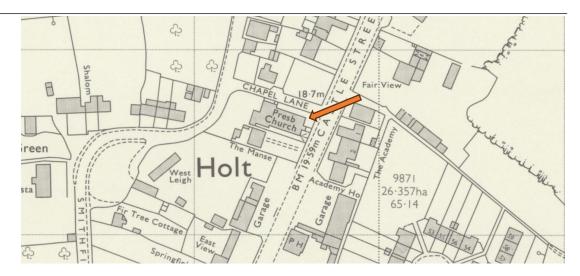


Figure 5: SJ4053-SJ4153 - AA Revised: 1970, Published: 1971 (National Library of Scotland)

- 1.13. By the 1970 National Grid Ordnance Survey Map, the new rear single-story extension is now depicted to the west of the school room. The Manse is also now labelled within this map (Figure 5).
- 1.14. Google Earth archive satellite imagery shows the rear western yard of the still active church joined to the Manse in 2006, but by 2009 it was subdivided to form the present rear western yard and parking spaces.

### 2 Photographic survey and phasing

- 2.1. The historic Building recording was conducted on 10/12/2024 in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) (2020) Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures.
- 2.2. At the time of the survey the south-facing exterior elevation of the property was inaccessible due to heavy vegetation overgrowth and an inaccessible locked door, for which the key had been lost. There was also a significant amount of furniture, debris and stored objects left by the previous owner which prevented some areas of the interior from being accessed. The property also had no power which to some extent limited the visibility of the interior and may have affected the quality of the photography.
- 2.3. None of the internal rendering had been removed at the time of this survey which has limited the identification of some internal masonry relationships as well as earlier architectural features such as blocked windows.
- 2.4. The following presents the photographic recording and investigation of the structure in order of phasing. The phasing, as identified in this assessment, is illustrated in Figure 17 at the end of this document and includes the labelling of features such as doors and windows that are referred to throughout this assessment. A floor plan is shown in Figure 18.
- 2.5. A photographic location plan has also been included at the end of this document as Figure 19, followed by contact prints of all photos taken during the survey.

#### **Phase 1: The Church and Schoolroom**

2.6. Phase 1 comprises both the main church and rear school room. This is based on the visible masonry relationships described below as well as the known history of the site and the church's depiction in the 1872 OS map.

Exterior

- 2.7. The construction of both the church and the schoolroom features broken-range ashlar sandstone masonry, which is both keyed in and laid in consistent courses between the two buildings. The church has a broad, visible foundation with possible damp-proof coursing capped with chamfered sandstone. The side elevations include sandstone buttresses, with five on the north side and four on the south side, in addition to the supporting structure for the belfry tower located at the southeast corner.
- 2.8. Both the church and the schoolhouse are roofed with Welsh slate. The church has shallow-dressed sandstone-capped parapet gables adorned with decorative ridge tiles, while the schoolhouse has simple ceramic ridge tiles.
- 2.9. The eastern gable contains an ornate gable vent set within a gothic-style first pointed arch (Figure 6). It features three windows: two large lancet-style windows, each with two lights, and a pentagonal motif window within the tracery. Below this, there is a central gabled entrance porch showcasing an ornate doorway flanked by columns that support a sandstone early English first pointed-style arch, which is topped by a quatrefoil window. The porch also includes two side windows, each featuring two lights contained within first pointed-style arches, separated by a sandstone mullion with diamond-pattern leaded glass panels.
- 2.10. The visible portion of the west-facing gable (Figure 7) of the church features a blocked-up window or gable vent set within a single pointed arch. Atop the coping stones of the gable parapet is the stack of a narrow chimney, which appeared to be heavily damaged at the time of the survey, missing some blocks from its lower courses above the coping stones. This chimney stack likely originates from the original structure, as the flue incorporated within the gable shows no signs of later modification. However, the upper part of the chimney appears to have been altered, with 20th-century red brickwork that is consistent with phase 2 of the building's modifications.
- 2.11. The windows of the side elevations of the church (Figure 8) comprise gothic-style first-pointed arches with foliated capitals and diamond pattern stained-glass panes. The layout of the windows is mirrored on each side of the church comprising a central tall double light window with a quatrefoil light in the arch and a secondary upper vent or circular window within a side gable (W3, 8) (Figures 11, 17 19). On either side of the church is a further mirrored pattern of four short single lights (W2, 4, 7 and 9) and four short double lights (W1, 5, 6 and 10).
- 2.12. The external elevations of the schoolhouse (Figures 9 and 10) are comparable to the church but with a less ornate design, with four sets of simple lancet windows containing timber frame lights typical of the late Victorian period (Figures 17 19, W17-20). The windows have chamfered sandstone frames with single-pointed arches and a chamfered sill. The schoolhouse is accessed externally through a doorway from the north (Figure 9) which is contained within a chamfered sandstone frame with a pointed segmental arch (Figure 19 D6). This door was mirrored on the south-facing gable of the schoolhouse but had only been accessible from the interior at the time of the survey (Figures 15 and 19 D5).



Figure 6: (Left) East-facing exterior elevation of the church (Heneb photo PD24-108\_073)

Figure 7: (Right) West-facing gable of the church with chimney stack (Heneb photo PD24-108\_077)



Figure 8: North-facing exterior elevation of the church (Heneb photo PD24-108\_071)



Figure 9: (Left) North-facing gable elevation of rear school room (Heneb photo PD24-108\_066)

Figure 10: (Right) West-facing elevation of school room showing windows 19 and 20 (Heneb photo PD24-108\_065)



Figure 11: Windows within the southern church elevation (Heneb photo PD24-108\_011-015)

#### Interior

- 2.13. The interior of the church features four ornate timber pointed roof trusses set onto painted stone corbels (Figure 12 and Figure 13). Above these trusses is a flat-topped vaulted ceiling made of lathe and plaster, which has been partially exposed in the southwest corner due to a collapse. The masonry walls of the church were rendered, probably using a lime-based plaster, and are complemented by timber dado panels. It is noticeable that the dado slopes gently toward the west, reflecting the subtle incline of the nave leading to the western pulpit.
- 2.14. Much of what is likely to be Lockwood's original internal design remains largely intact, including an eastern timber lobby (Figure 12), the western pulpit (Figure 13), and most of the sloping pews. However, two rows of pews along the southern wall have been removed due to increased damage from dampness and vegetation. This removal uncovered underlying deposits beneath the pews and aisles, which consisted of soil rich in lime mortar, with no visible evidence of earlier features.
- 2.15. The pulpit is a raised timber structure with a lectern positioned on a platform with a surrounding stage area. Behind the pulpit, within the western gable, is a tall decorative recess with a first-pointed arch, containing a fixed cross (Figure 13). The western internal gable also features three memorial plaques which are detailed in Section 1 (Historic background).
- 2.16. On either side of the pulpit are short first-pointed arched doorways leading to the schoolroom at the back of the church (Figure 13). Both doorways have ornate stone frames and large original timber doors with wrought iron fittings.

2.17. Below the central window on the eastern internal gable, there is a small arched recess that might have held a cross. Beneath this recess, you can see the short pointed arch that forms the eastern entrance, although it is mostly obscured by the timber lobby.



Figure 12: Church interior looking east (Heneb photo PD24-108\_001)



Figure 13: Church interior looking west (Heneb photo PD24-108\_039)

- 2.18. The interior of the schoolroom features a vaulted ceiling with two largely decorative timber trusses supported on ornate corbels (Figure 14). The school room is divided by a central flat-topped arch adorned with decorative mouldings. This may have once formed part of an internal timber classroom division, a common feature in Victorian schools. However, no remnants of the associated fittings are visible due to modern rendering. The presence of an external chimney stack suggests that there was probably a small fireplace in one or both of the schoolrooms, but this has since been blocked up. As a result, no evidence of it was found during the survey, again due to the modern internal rendering.
- 2.19. There may have originally been two additional lancet-style windows in the southern half of the western elevation that were modified and blocked during the construction on the phase 2 extension, however, these were not evident due to the internal rendering (Figure 14).
- 2.20. The internal walls of the school were lime rendered with timber dado panelling along the west-facing internal elevation adjoining the church. The panels had been removed along the southern extent of this elevation exposing the masonry of the church.



Figure 14: (Left) Interior of school rooms looking west (Heneb photo PD24-108\_060)

Figure 15: (Right) Interior view of schoolroom doorway on the southern elevation (Heneb photo PD24-108\_042)

#### Phase 2: Rear extension

- 2.21. The rear extension dates to the late 1960s and comprises four rooms and adjoining hallway that have been added onto the southwestern corner of the western elevation of the schoolhouse.
- 2.22. Externally the structure consists of a simple concrete breezeblock construction with UPVC windows with concrete lintels (Figure 16). The structure has a relatively flat roof, sloping slightly towards the schoolrooms.
- 2.23. Internally the structure is accessed through an open flat-topped arch cut through the western elevation of the schoolroom, which in turn may have reused a former window opening. This leads onto a corridor with two larger rooms to the north and south, each used as a kitchen and utility, between which are two toilets, an open disabled toilet, and an adjacent toilet with a single cubicle (Figure 18). In the northern kitchen room, there is a shuttered serving hatch which opens out into the school room. This may also have partly reutilised a former window opening.



Figure 16: 20th-century extension (Heneb photo PD24-108\_063)

### 3 Conclusions

- 3.1. The assessment of Holt Presbyterian Church has revealed that the structure has remained relatively unchanged, with only two significant phases: the original church and schoolrooms established in 1865, followed later by a small single-story extension built in the late 1960s to serve as a kitchen, restrooms, and utility space.
- 3.2. Within the church, many original internal features designed by T. M. Lockwood have survived, including the pulpit, timber lobby, and most of the pews. These elements are fine examples of Victorian craftsmanship typical of churches from that era, showing relatively few signs of significant alteration.
- 3.3. Several elements have limited the ability to produce a more detailed investigation of this structure including the presence of internal rendering as well as a significant amount of furnishing and objects left by the previous owners of the church. At the time of the survey, the condition of the structure was also notably deteriorating. Vegetation growth along the southern elevation had contributed to the degradation and damage of the gothic-style windows, and there was a partial collapse of the ceiling in the church due to water ingress.
- 3.4. This investigation serves as a basis for future conservation efforts, emphasising the architectural and historical significance of Holt Presbyterian Church while recording its current condition before any future modifications.

### 4 Bibliography

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) (2020) *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures.* 

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Richards, T. (1959). *ROOSE, LEIGH RICHMOND (1877 - 1916), Association football player.* The National Library of Wales.

Wetton, J., (2024) Former Presbyterian Church, Holt Heritage Statement

### **Cartographic sources**

- 1872 Ordnance Survey 6-inch 1<sup>st</sup> edition Denbighshire Sheet XXIX
- 1897 Ordnance Survey 25-inch 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Denbighshire Sheet XXIX
- 1970 National Grid SJ4053-SJ4153

## 5 Archive Selection Strategy

# PD24-108-Holt Presbyterian Church (NGR)

Level 3 Historic Building Recording

10/12/2024

## **Selection Strategy v2.0**

Project Management					
Project Manager	Tim Malim				
Project Supervisor	Chris Matthews				
Archives Manager	Sophie Edwards				
	Project Stakeholders				
Project Lead / Project Assurance	Mark Walters, Neil Bayliss				
Client / Landowner	Gary Conway				
Other					
	Collecting Institutions				
Regional HER	Clwyd-Powys				
HER Enquiry Number	N/A				
HER Event PRN	215639				
Digital Archive Repository	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales				
Documentary Archive Repository	N/A				
Finds Archive Repository	N/A				
Museum Accession Number	N/A				

Digital Project Data					
Project sub-folders	Data	Retained	Selected for Archive		
Admin					
H&S - RAMS	Risk Assessment	Y	N		
<b>►</b> WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation	Y	Y (as report appendix 1)		
Client Data	Planning documents/other files provided by the client.	Y	N		
Correspondence	Correspondence records relevant to the project	Y	N		
Drafting	Working site drawings/illustrations	Y	N		
Finds data	Finds catalogues/specialist reports etc	N/A	N/A		
GIS data	Survey data	N/A	N/A		
Metadata	Metadata report for all files submitted as part of the archive.	Y	Y		
Photography	77 digital photographs (.tif)	N	Y		
Report	HENEB Report 2076 (.docx/.pdf)	Y	Y		
Report Ilustrations	Illustrations generated for inclusion within the project report	Y	N		
Research Data	Research data – always secondary sources and available elsewhere	Y	N		
Site data	None	N/A	N/A		
Temporary	Temporary storage for temporary files – always deleted at project completion	N	N		



Figure 17: Phasing plan

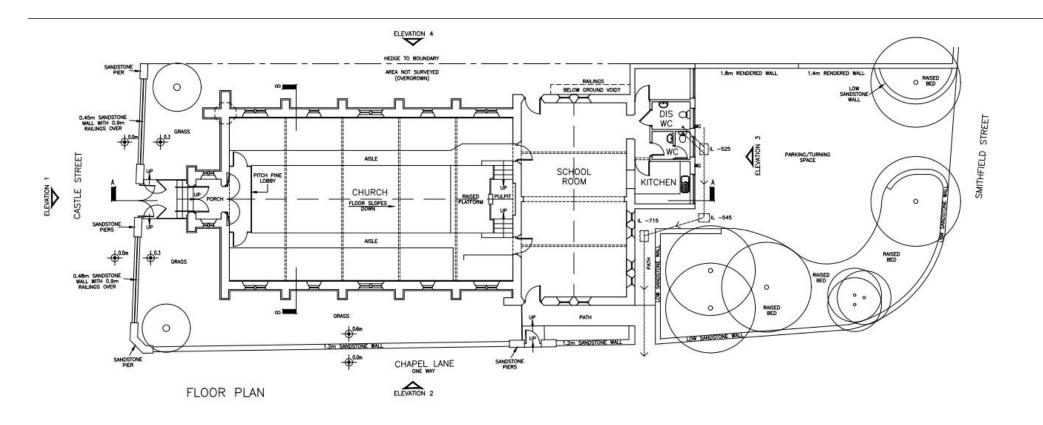


Figure 18: Detailed floor plan of the existing structure

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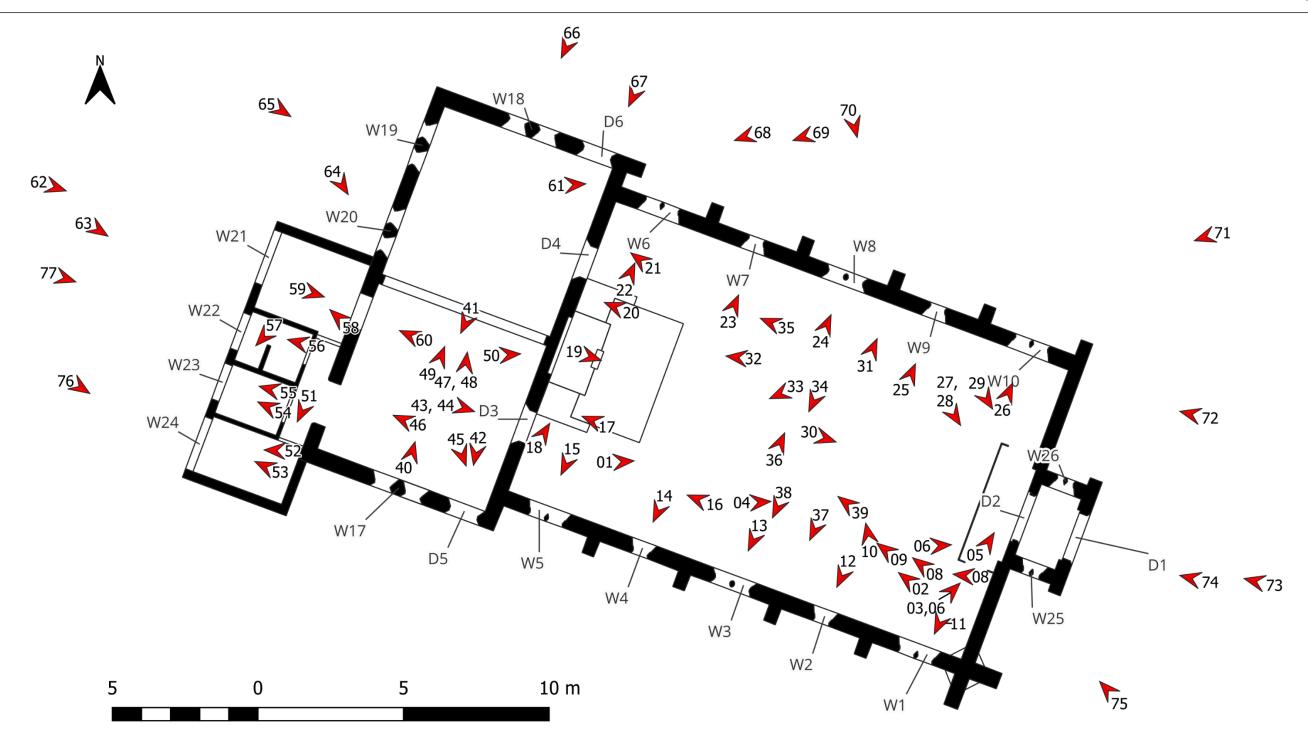


Figure 19: Photographic location plan

















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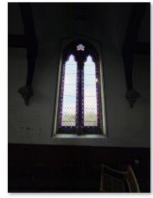














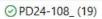


























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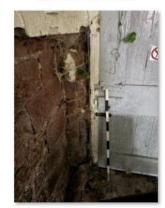
















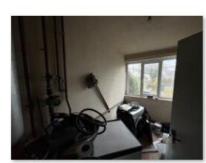
























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⊙ PD24-108\_ (60)



































