

# Old St. Michael's Church Hall

SURVEY  
AND  
CONDITION  
REPORT

1<sup>st</sup> March 2022



ANDREW RODGER ARCHITECT

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**Acknowledgements:**

This survey and report was prepared for The Friends of Old St. Michael's Church Hall & Grounds in March 2022, with the support and funding from The Architectural Heritage Fund and Perth & Kinross Council.

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**J. D. Smith Contractors Ltd.**  
**Alba Platforms**  
**Greyfriars Roofing Services Ltd.**

and with immeasurable voluntary help from:

**Friends of Old St. Michael's Church Hall and Grounds (Crieff)**

FoOSM is a constituted community group with approximately eight people involved in its organisation.

Its stated purpose is to advance heritage and culture, by:

"Maintaining the building and grounds formerly known as Crieff Old Parish Church, St Michael's Church Hall or Crieff Community Hall, located at Church Street, Crieff, and developing these as a community amenity for the people of Crieff and district."

<https://www.facebook.com/Old-St-Michaels-Hall-Grounds-Crieff-360210880833469/>

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1.00 **Location**

St. Michael's Church Hall  
Church Street  
Crieff  
Perthshire  
PH7 3AE

NN 86573 21519

W3W: ///arranged.subtitle.printouts

Title search: SS56394 (PTH)

Proprietors: Crieff Community Hall Inc. (extinct)







John Wood 1822 Plan of the Town of Crieff from actual survey – <https://maps.nls.uk/rec/321>  
extract used with thanks to the National Library of Scotland (CC-BY)

Supplementary information can be found at: <https://www.cgstudio.uk/1840/>

## 2.00 Introduction

2.01 On the completion of the new St. Michael's parish church, on Strathearn Terrace, Crieff, in 1882, the original parish church of St. Michael was converted into a church hall, opening for community use in 1890. The hall was well used and well loved by the Crieff community in the subsequent years; myriad reports of teas, parties, flower shows, plays and revues &c., can be seen in press cuttings from over the decades.



2.03 The building's repairs and maintenance became a difficult burden to the Church of Scotland and they sold the church hall to the Crieff community in 1994, after which it was made available to an arts group and then to the Kyokushin Karate Group. In 2009 it was abandoned and the building and grounds fell into a decline.

2.04 For some time prior to its abandonment, the Old St. Michael's church hall received little or no maintenance and then, unsecured and uncared for, it became vulnerable to vandalism.

2.05 Although interest has been shown in reviving the building, it is mainly the unknown aspects of its condition which have been a deterrent. Also its "ownerless" status, though it seems likely that the right project could help establish a new ownership, with Perth & Kinross Council's help.

2.06 Consequently, a survey and condition report is considered to be a necessary step in evaluating the building, to provide enough information to allow a potential new user to assess the cost of (a) conserving and (b) converting the building to a new use.

2.07 These are distinct but co-dependent aspects of this building's future, in terms of how a project is going to be able to attract funding assistance. "Big funder" grants will only come to feasible projects with a sound business plan and a sustainable model and may only be given for new works. Repairs, maintenance, mothballing and conservation funding may need to come from different sources. So a clear picture of what needs to be done and how it can be done relies on an assessment of the building's value and condition.

2.08 Such an assessment would need to gather available information on Old St. Michael's, to provide a snapshot and a conservation record.

2.09 In 2016 a group began to look after the ancient graveyard, restoring it from an overgrown wilderness and dog toilet to a peaceful green space, at the heart of old Crieff.

This led to the formation of Friends of Old St. Michael's Church Hall and Grounds (Crieff) in June 2018, to secure the building and to develop and maintain the grounds. In the last five years they have worked tirelessly to improve security and amenity and make the memorial garden a success.

Their caring for the grounds is a constant source of delight, with new shrubs, perennials and bedding plants deployed each year. Now several benches are placed strategically to obtain the best views, sunshine or quietude.



*Friends of Old St. Michael's: Craig Finlay - Secretary, Peter Littwin - Chairman, Alastair McEwan - Treasurer\*  
[photo by kind permission of Sean O'Neil, The Courier & Advertiser, Perth & Kinross edition 23.02.19]*

However, deterioration of the building is a growing concern and FoOSM discussed how to tackle the building's conservation, maintenance and funding with Andrew Rodger, a local architect. It was agreed that a survey was needed.

A survey / condition report would assist any interested group to explore the feasibility of designs and develop a business plan which, in turn, should help the group with access to funding.

A proposal was put together to assist FoOSM with access to grants to fund the survey and applications were made to the Architectural Heritage Fund and to Perth & Kinross Council. Funding was awarded in April 2021 and work on the survey commenced the following month.

*\*Very sadly, Alastair McEwan, a retired surveyor, who worked on getting this project rolling in 2018 died suddenly the following year. A new bench in the grounds is dedicated to Alastair.*

3.00	<b>Method</b>	
3.01	Objectives	To accurately represent the building's construction and provide a snapshot of its current condition, to inform a prospective user as to how they may design, adapt and occupy the building; to expose the building's potential.
3.02		To determine where the building is weakened or otherwise flawed and to assess priorities for repairs and improvements and list these clearly so they can be addressed in a prioritised programme of work.
3.03		To propose how to tackle the immediate needs of the building, while there is no prospective user or purpose and to advise on how to maintain the building over the pre-project period, mothballing techniques and to indicate where to aim fundraising efforts.
3.04		To suggest where the building's merits lie in terms of its value to the community and to the place. Propose how to manage the conservation and enhancement of these benefits, possibly irrespective of a future purpose.
3.05		To evaluate the heritage fabric and to predict the nature and scope of the work likely to be required to conserve the building. Also, without prejudging the outcome of the survey, try to anticipate goals for a sustainable solution for the building.
3.06	Research	Subject to the COVID-19 restrictions, many visits were made to the building in the period May 2021 to March 2022.
3.07		A desktop study was carried out referencing a wide range of documentation, some of which is listed in Section 9.
3.08		Various specialists were consulted, some of whom visited the building and a tour / examination of the Hill Church in Blairgowrie was undertaken (thanks to Gill Oakes of the Blairgowrie Players).
3.09	Preliminary work	Before commencing the survey it was necessary to carry out preliminary work, to help with access. This included:
3.10		Downtaking of w.c. cubicles in tower mezzanine and the suspended ceiling in the hall, including salvageable materials, light fittings and insulation quilt which were set aside for reuse elsewhere.
3.11		Removal of some flooring on the ground and first floor levels, plus sections of plaster and lathe at wall head level, to enable inspection of the bearings of timber joists, trusses and rafters.
3.12		Erection of a mobile tower scaffolding (provided by a local benefactor) for safe high level access work in the main hall.
3.13		Removal of sections of plasterboard and stud linings, built over wall openings. Also making various holes to expose structural material.
3.14		Removal of an historical accumulation of guano in the tower mezzanine.
3.15		Temporary removal of a window in the ground floor corridor, to permit the passing into the building of long ladders.



3.16	Programming	It was necessary to ensure the consultants who needed high level access or builder attendance had these available. High level access with the exterior spider platform was only funded for a two consecutive days' hire.
3.17		The survey was restricted to the approved grant funding; there was no scope for a cost overrun so it was important to coordinate the team within those constraints and it was necessary to minimize the risks of bad weather or other uncontrolled limitations.
3.18		The survey team's work was co-ordinated around the hire of the high level access spider platform, which provided an economical solution without the great expense and destructive work that fixed scaffolding would entail.
3.19		The start of work using the spider platform was scheduled for late May which is statistically good for dry weather (and so it proved). Consequently the structural engineer and Apex were on site at the same time while the contractor was on hand to provide attendance as needed.
3.20		Note - The programming of access to the spider platform allowed for two contiguous days' hire, with the platform left on site over night. Though this allowance was considered sufficient, the platform arrived late to site meaning some of the hired time was deferred until the platform could be economically returned later, which caused disruption to the programme.
3.21		The main work of the measured survey could adapt to circumstances on site but would hinge on the high level external access days. The outcome being easier management of the whole team while being adaptable enough to avoid having congestion on site.
3.22	Measured survey + assesment	Aside from engaging with other team members, there was no specific programme for the measured survey, other than to ensure completion within the one year funding frame.
3.23		Despite the advantages of the high level access, there were some areas which were deferred to another phase of investigation. These being:
3.24		A close-detail examination of some parts the roof structure; due to safety limitations and the cost of making safe walkways between trusses.
3.25		Archeological survey of concealed parts of the solum, which will require the whole floor to be lifted and the solum contents examined / cleared.
3.26		It is expected that all surface finishes will be removed eventually, when a managed detailed examination of the structural fabric will be possible.
3.27	Duration	The impact on the survey of the imposed coronavirus measures was significant and led to delays, movement restrictions and availability shortages, directly and indirectly.
3.28		The preparatory work was undertaken in the early part of May 2021, prior to the arrival on site of the spider access platform on the 27th / 28th May 2021. The spider platform returned to site for a part day in November 2021 (which was not satisfactory) and access platform work concluded with a different supplier in February 2022.

3.29		In the programme, the work by Apex Property Care Ltd. (APCL) and David I Burke Structural Design Ltd. (DIBSDL) was coterminous with the platform hire and this was carried out over the same two days in May 2021, though low level supplementary or check visits were subsequently required.
3.30	Structural engineer (Appendix-D)	The structural engineer (DIBSDL) was scheduled to be on site at the same time as the APCL representative, while the spider access platform was available, to ensure all parties requiring access had an opportunity to view the outside of the tower and roof from that vantage.
3.31		The engineer made an assessment of the building's current condition and noted structural risks, while considering the scope to develop the building.
3.32		The structural engineer inspected high level external elements of the building from the safety of the access platform.
3.33		The structural engineer, with contractor in attendance, made an examination of the building footings in two separate locations. Given concerns about digging in a graveyard, which is known to contain many unrecorded burials, the size and location of these hand dug holes were by agreement with the Friends of Old St. Michael's. This work was carefully monitored, with the instruction to halt digging immediately if any human remains were found.
3.34	Damp + Infestation specialist (Appendix-E)	Apex Property Care Ltd. (APCL) specialise in measuring, treating and monitoring the deleterious effects of rot, infestations and damp on old buildings. They were asked to assess the condition of the structure and the ability of the OSM building to resist deterioration during a period of "mothballing". Such that efforts can be made to effectively maintain the building while unused, as well as assist prospective users of the building in budgeting for repairs.
3.35		Darren Foote of APCL examined the roof timbers, in particular where they land on the wall head at 18 points (6/3/6/3) around the perimeter wall head, for which FoOSM made inspection holes in the plasterwork finishes.
3.36		A portion of the flooring in the east end apartments was removed to expose the main joists and to allow the joist ends to be inspected, including those sections within the stone walling. For this the contractor lifted floor boards at $\geq 0.5\text{m}$ from the wall on the ground floor and the first floor.
3.37		In the main hall, a portion of the ground floor (chipboard sheeting and softwood boarding) was removed by the contractor, along the perimeter, to expose the ground floor joist ends and their bearings.
3.38		A borescope was used to assess buried timbers where access was difficult.
3.39	Attendance	J. D. Smith Building Contractors lifted flooring, dug inspection holes and provided / erected scaffolding within the tower, to its full height.
3.40	Urgent repair work	It was not the purpose of this survey to carry out any maintenance work. However, during the survey, areas of deterioration which warranted urgent intervention came to light, for which FoOSM were granted additional funding. This allowed roof leaks to be patched and rotten areas of floor to be made safe.

- 3.41 Volunteer work Peter Littwin and Craig Finlayson (Friends of Old St. Michael's) worked as volunteers, providing help and general attendance to all parties. They managed the safety fencing and site access restrictions. They also helped with internal access (mobile tower, ladders etc.), removal of the suspended ceiling in the main hall and with clearing of drains and rainwater gear.
- 3.42 FoOSM ensured all personnel associated with the building were kept away while the inspection was under way and they prevented the public from accessing areas of risk and, with the help of PKC, arranged HERAS fencing where deemed advisable, around the tower and east chimney.
- 3.43 With FoOSM's help, Andrew Rodger Architect (ARA) carried out a drain position survey using a sonde and scanner. Craig Finlay and Peter Littwin dug inspection holes at intervals and helped with rodding. This to determine the route and approximate depth of the drain only. This was not to record information on the condition, fall or accurate depth of the drain.
- 3.44 3D Scanning ARA arranged for the scanning of the building with a pair of Leica BLK360 LIDAR scanners. The resulting data has not yet been compiled and does not form part of this report but, funding permitting, it will be compiled at a later date, providing a 3D model of the building and graveyard.
- 3.45 General It is expected that this report, both written and drawn, will be augmented when more exploratory work is made possible.
- 3.46 Site safety All members of the team involved in these works were required to be covered by adequate insurance for all risks, including third party cover.
- 3.47 FoOSM, the Employer / Client ensured all reasonable measures were taken to protect the safety of the public by their exclusion from the immediate area of the works, utilising adequate, clear signage.
- 3.48 All survey team members were required to supply their own appropriate clothing and equipment, including hard hats, eye guards, face masks etc. Notwithstanding, in addition to a first aid kit, there was an ample supply of clean bottled water kept on site for eye irrigation or washing of injuries. No fewer than two people were permitted to work on site and a charged telephone capable of summoning emergency services was always to hand.
- 3.49 The survey team carried out external work during fair weather. Access equipment was brought onto site in conditions which permitted safe external use and to carry out work safely, accurately and comprehensively.
- 3.50 The spider access platform used had a 25m reach, which allowed two people to visit all parts of the exterior, including the top of the tower parapet but the cantilever limitations meant there was difficulty in accessing most of the north face of the tower. No survey team personnel were permitted to exit the access platform cage at high level. The restricted access to the tower roof, from the scaffold inside the tower, helped to facilitate inspections of the parapet.
- 3.51 Only two people were allowed in the access platform so one survey team member accompanied the platform operator and the operator assisted in the examination and measuring of the building elements reached by this method.
- 3.52 While the footings were exposed, briefly, for approximately 24 hrs, the holes were covered over with resilient boarding.

3.53 Visitor safety

There were one-off visits by several specialists in conservation over an extended period, including Dr. Susan O'Conner (Scottish Civic Trust), Jamie McNamara (SPAB Scotland), Andrew Miller (Architectural Joinery Ltd.) and Nic Boyes (Nicolas Boyes Stone Conservation Ltd.) during which appropriate safety protocols were observed.



ARA inspection of east face of tower



4.00 **Background and History**

4.01 Pre 1786 There had been a church on the site of Old St. Michael's for several centuries, though records seem to begin in the early 13th century. Churches on the site were originally dedicated to St. Thomas, Crieff's Patron Saint, though possibly not more recently than the early 16th century. Early maps show St. Thomas' Well, just east of the church, now no longer accessible.

According to the 2008 Corpus of Scottish Medieval Parish Churches, in 1274-5 Crieff appears as one of the wealthiest prebends of Dunkeld. In 1501 a dual prebend was annexed to the Chapel Royal at Stirling by King James IV : *"Additional endowed chaplainries were recorded within the parish church in the early sixteenth century. The first recorded was the chaplainry of the altar of St Michael, where Sir James Murray was presented in June 1507 in succession to Sir John Rogy. Murray had demitted his position before April 1508, when Sir William Murray was presented in his place, the chaplainry then being named as the chapel of St Michael of Pittentian after the property to the south east of the town from which it was funded. The chaplainry had changed hands again by August 1509, when sir Alexander Mure was presented to it. A second chaplainry was established at the altar of St Serf on the south side of the church of Crieff by 1538, when royal confirmation of the mortification of property to support it was received. The chaplainry of Crieff was valued at £60 at the Reformation but the chaplain of St Michael's altar, Sir John Bannatyne, who had been presented in 1553, was noted as receiving 22 merks 'allanerlie'."*

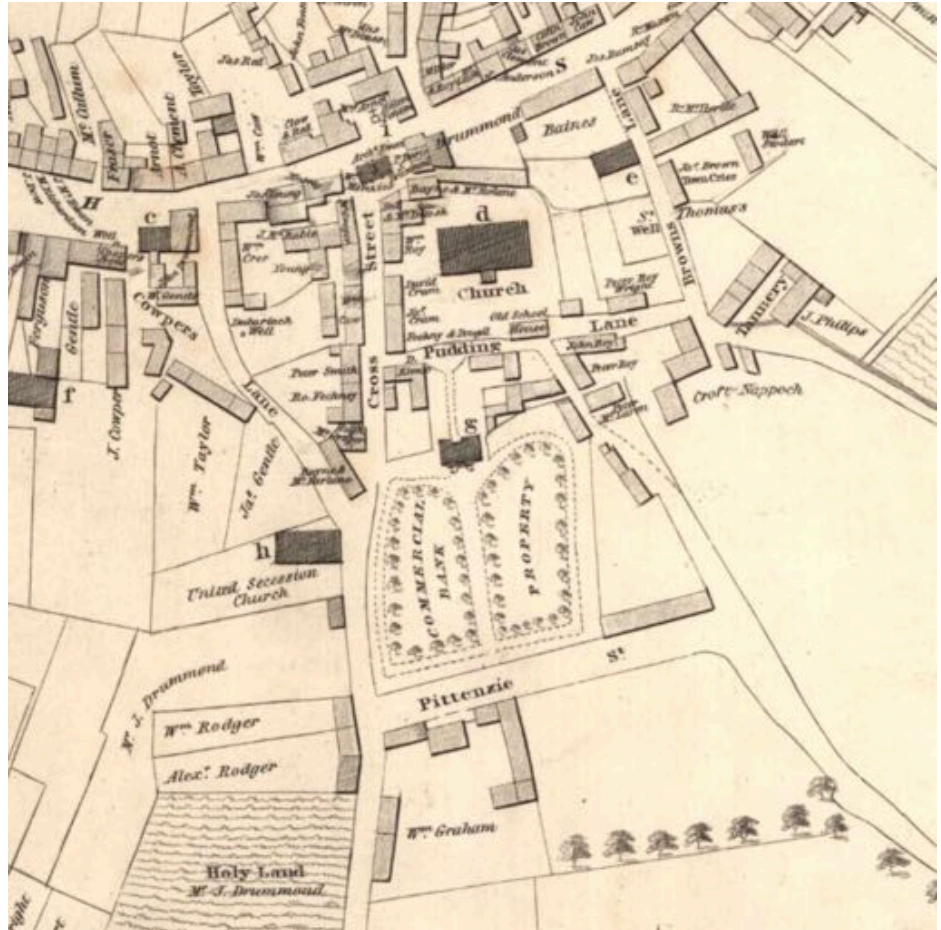
4.02 The church previous to 1786/87 was smaller but, so far, no image of this building has been found. The Ordnance Survey Name Books / Perthshire 1859 - 1862 / vol. 19 / OS1/25/19/77 records the demolished church as being 95 feet (28.6m) long, 18 feet (5.49m) wide and 14 feet (4.27m) in the quire (28.6m x 5.49m / 4.27m), which probably mean it was of a two section construction. Given the size of the existing building, we can deduce that the enlargement was chiefly across its breadth, north to south and not significantly different in its length, east to west.



4.04 Old St. Michael's Church Hall, is claimed to be the oldest public building in Crieff and is possibly, given the burning of Crieff in 1716, the oldest of any buildings in the town.

4.05 As the building is known to have been erected on the site of the original church, it may be that it subsumes an older church's foundations. It is possible that parts of the earlier church were incorporated into the new church, evidence of which may become available during future survey work.

- 4.06 Graves The graveyard is known to substantially predate the existing church hall. There are records of burials dating back to the early 18th century yet some unmarked lairs are claimed to date from much earlier and it is believed that there were burials in this graveyard for a thousand years, up to the adoption of the new cemetery, gifted to the town in 1857. The height of the boundary wall, relative to adjacent ground levels, suggests the graveyard may have been raised in the past to accommodate more interments
- 4.07 Local historian Colin Mayall has written an account of the church, the graveyard and the graveyard's destruction - see Section 9 - References.
- 4.08 The church hall is located in the original heart of Crieff, before the development of the town to form James Square, Burrell Square and infilling links to the Earn crossing.
- 4.09 On the High Street, opposite the top end of Church Street (formerly Cross Street) is the original location of the Town Cross, which is now located in the old gaol, below the Town Hall. At this junction is the original location of the shambles or slaughterhouse, which is thought to have been the focus of the original Crieff Market (see John Wood 1822 map) in times of the Crieff Tryst.
- 4.10 On the south side of the graveyard is Bank Street, previously called Pudding Lane, which nomenclature may reflect a preponderance of butchery and pie making in the vicinity. At the end of Pudding Lane was a tannery.
- 4.11 1786 The parish church of St. Michael was rebuilt over a period of forty years. Construction began in 1786 but ceased before it concluded; construction only resumed in 1826. Information on the particular circumstances of the hiatus can be found in Porteous' History of Crieff and other records, including the Dictionary of Scottish Architects, Canmore and HES [LB23481].
- 4.12 1822 The 1822 imprint of the John Wood map is useful to an understanding of how the construction was affected by the hiatus. It shows the plan of the building at a time before construction is said to have resumed. A contemporary source suggests the church was initially largely complete, if somewhat crudely, but lacked the completion of the tower above wall head level (see D. Macara: Crieff, Its Traditions &c. 1881 (p151-153).
- Of interest in this 1822 map is the depiction of buildings along the west edge of the graveyard which are now absent. Shown in the south east corner of the graveyard is the Old School House, which is now partially demolished and incorporated into the graveyard. The ground between the church and the High Street is shown as mainly open but divided by ownership boundaries. Interestingly, in the 1880-1885 map of Crieff (A K Bell Library, Perth) the ground to the north is largely open to the High Street.



Extract of the John Wood 1822 map of Crieff. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland under the terms of the Creative Commons CC-BY (NLS) limitations.

4.13 1826

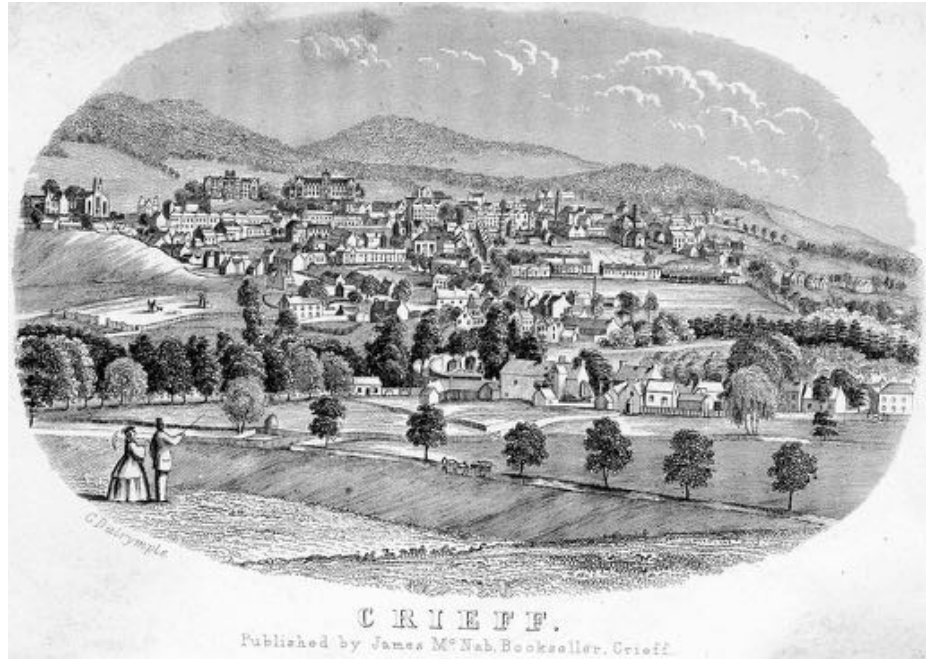
The architects said to be responsible for finishing the Crieff Parish Church, were William Stirling II (1789-1876) whose career began in 1816, and his cousin William Stirling I (1772-1838) of Dunblane. Both are credited with the finishing of the church's construction. WmSI would have been 54 and WmSII would have been 37 in 1826. As neither could have been involved at the start of its reconstruction in 1786, whoever was responsible for the initial design and build remains unknown. The evidence suggests the rectangular plan with tower in the centre of the south elevation, with a gallery, predates the involvement of the Williams Stirling. In the middle of the 18th century the architecture profession barely existed, distinct from masons and builders, so the records of provincial building designers of this period are very few (H. Colvin: Architectural History Vol 29 / The Beginnings of the Architectural Profession in Scotland).

4.14

The similarities in design, if not scale, between Old St. Michael's church and the Hill Church in Blairgowrie (1824), also altered by the Stirlings, allow one to ask if the 1826 form of the Crieff church and the Hill Kirk were related.

4.15

After completion, the Old St. Michael's was only used as the parish church for 56 years before being replaced and converted to a church hall.



1872 View of Crieff [The David Ferguson Collection] in which the parish church is evident.

4.16 1888/1890

The 1826 St. Michael's Church is known to have been altered, occasioned by the building of the replacement parish church of St. Michael on Strathearn Terrace in 1882. There is a drawing available, allegedly from an article in *The People's Friend* in 1888, which appears to be an edited tracing of a photograph used in *Porteous' History of Crieff*, published in 1912. It should be noted that the photograph in *Porteous* (which may date from 1888) has been rather retouched and the drawing or tracing has added peentree flashing details which were not then present. If the photograph and drawing are from 1888 it might be reasonable to think of this as a record of how the building looked when it was a disused church, prior to its conversion to a church hall in 1890. See Appendix C for both.

4.17

Using the "1888" photograph as a reference, it appears there was an accumulated wash or thin lime plaster overlying the rubble stone panels between the quoins and openings. The rebate in the dressed stones suggests this was always the intent, despite the attractively regular disposition of the stonework exposed by the harling falls from the tower.



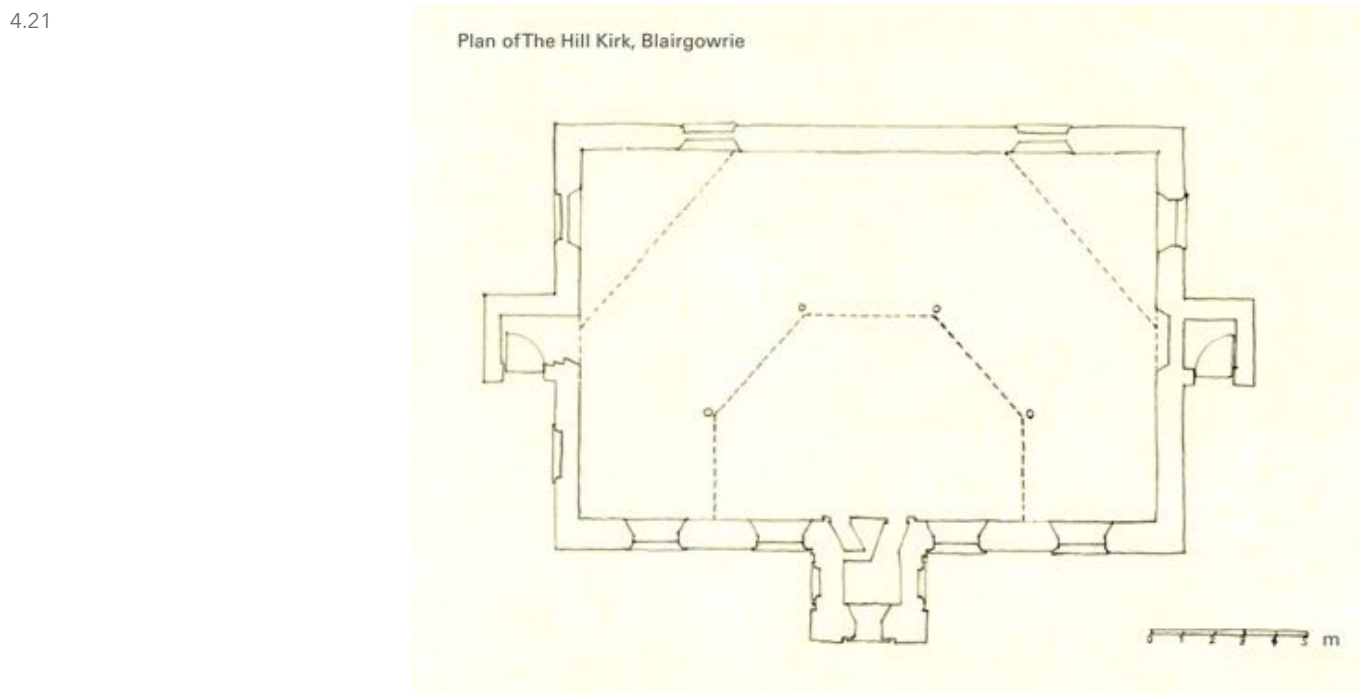
-2105281226 east view of the tower belfry level © A. P. Rodger 2022



4.18 The 1888/1912 photograph (Appendix C) appears to confirm the dressed stones on the tower, above the wall head level, are different to those below the wall head. Not solely because of the buttering over of the stones with cement render at wall head and below but also the rybats and quoins above wall head level are chamfered and severely weathered, whereas they appear squared, generally, below wall head level.

4.19 An internal balcony or gallery level is known to have been removed, presumably when the disused church was converted to a church hall in 1890. In the 1888/1912 photograph, windows which were originally separated vertically, on the west gable and to the west end of the south wall, were joined together to form individual, taller windows. From this we can reliably infer the presence of a balcony, at least situated against the west wall, above the main entrance. Without further examination, it is not possible to say with certainty whether the balcony or gallery was more extensive. However, newspaper reporting of the conversion of the church in 1890 indicates the church space was probably a single volume with a gallery on three sides and the conversion to a church hall involved removing the gallery and infilling with a new wall on the line of the east gallery edge. See Appendix H.

4.20 It is interesting to compare Old St. Michael's with the (Stirling designed) smaller Hill Church in Blairgowrie. Its balcony is ranged along the west, north and east walls, facing a pulpit at the base of a tower. More evidence of a balcony and window alterations at Old St. Michael's may be exposed later when internal and external coatings are removed. Currently we only have the 1888 drawing / photograph and the D. Macara extracts as a reference. According to the former, the south facing ground floor window at the east end was enlarged and it might be assumed that this work was contemporary with the other alterations to openings / stonework.



- 4.22 It is mentioned in press reports, on the opening of the OSM church hall in 1890, that the introduction of new east end rooms included a w.c. We assume the current centrally positioned w.c. is this addition. As it is formed between two bevelled brick-built chimney breasts, it is probable that the east end chimney, though stone-built at higher level, is also from 1890. It gathers flues from the new subdivisions of the east end, which were probably not present before 1890.
- 4.23 The proportions of the east facing windows and their being glazed with leaded lights are also probable new elements from 1890 and, using the Hill Kirk model, we might wonder if there was an east end external door, before the conversion to a church hall.
- 4.24 20th century The character of the opening for the north door suggests it was an addition or alteration likely to date from early in the 20th century, though it could be of 1890. The sandstone used appears paler than elsewhere on the building.
- 4.25 1920s The walls have been coated externally in cement harling, which work was carried out after the "1888/1912" image and probably after the conversion in 1890. Because the harling contains the easily recognisable Balmullo felsite and because the Balmullo quarry opened in 1925 it can be reasoned that the existing harling was carried out after 1925.
- 4.26 It is not known what motivated the later cement harling of the building. It could have been the poor quality of the locally quarried old red sandstone and rapid depletion of the mortar used. Porosity in Devonian sandstone is a common problem found in contemporary buildings in the area, in particular where used for face bedded "ashlar"; the stone placed "on edge", the stone's natural bed providing the face. It is common to see delamination and disaggregation of these stones, especially where walls have been later pointed with an almost impermeable cement mortar, which many were.
- 4.27 Recent history Please also refer to the Buildings At Risk inspections summary in Appendix B
- W.C.s and drains At a date before 1972 the Church of Scotland are believed to have instituted work which included the introduction of w.c.s in the tower mezzanine, with a soil pipe punched through the tower's east wall and fixed to the face of the eastern section of the south wall, round the corner onto the east elevation and dropping into the east wall rainwater gully connection (there is a mixed drainage system in Crieff centre). From there it joined the soil outlet from the existing w.c. More w.c. cubicles were added in the south east ground floor room, used as a changing room. It is not known if these were added at the same time as the w.c.s in the tower or later on. The combined output of the four rainwater drops, these w.c.s and the kitchen were all connected to the original 5" fire clay drain. The section of drain which was exposed is a type with a salt glaze and a spigot, suggesting early 20th century manufacture.

- 4.28 It is worth noting that the line of the only known drain from the premises leaves the grounds through the former opening in the north boundary wall, which is now blocked up with matching stonework. This drain is known to carry rainwater from the scant provision of four rainwater conductors on the east, north and west elevations and is assumed to have discharged to a drain in the High Street. The area north of the graveyard wall was possibly open ground, at the time of the construction of the church. The drain is now buried under later development, which includes High Street shops and extensions to the shops, which crowd the old church and some shop additions are built off the old churchyard wall. This drain pipe is the only known foul drain from the building and, though it appears to be free running, its size limitation may be crucial to the future use of the building.
- 4.29 In 1992 the Church of Scotland marketed the hall and sold it in 1994 to Crieff Community Hall Inc. (previously Waldburn Ltd.). The graveyard then became the responsibility of Perth & Kinross Council, which had proposed the demolition the church hall to make way for a car park over the whole site. This proposal was unpopular with the people of Crieff and the Crieff Community Council.
- 4.30 Graves On an as yet unknown date in the 1990s the local authority removed most of the headstones from the graveyard and they are alleged to have dumped them as ballast on the riverbank. The reason given for this was to facilitate easier cutting of the grass, for which Perth & Kinross Council was then responsible. It is not known whether the grave markers which were planted around the edges of the graveyard, not at their original locations, were salvaged from the stones taken off site. Or if they were retained and none of the stones taken from the site were returned. Inside Old St. Michael's, there is a map of the original graveyard layout, attached to a survey of the graves made in 1972 by John and Sheila Mitchell, helped by Jean Davidson and Marshall Sloan.
- When the building was sold to Crieff Community Hall Inc., repairs were carried out. The scope of these repairs or alterations is not yet known.
- 4.32 In 2012 Old St. Michael's church hall was abandoned by its last key-holder, a martial arts group and the owners, Crieff Community Hall Inc. were struck off the Companies House register
- 4.33 Bona vacantia In December 2015 the building was evaluated by the The Queen's and The Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer [QLTR] and was rejected, becoming bona vacantia; essentially making it officially ownerless.
- 4.34 Also, about this time, despite the earlier removal of the gravestones, the council withdrew its support for the upkeep of the graveyard. The grounds became overgrown and they and the building were used for antisocial gatherings of youths, who would drink alcohol and light fires.
- 4.35 FoOSM This deterioration prompted a group of Crieff volunteers to form Friends of Old St. Michael's, volunteers who keep the grass cut and maintain the graveyard as a prospective memorial garden. FoOSM raised funds for a lawnmower and other equipment and began to tackle the decline.

In 2017 Crieff & Strathearn Museum group (C&SM), in discussion with the Scottish Civic Trust, concluded Old St. Michael's could be a good venue for the proposed new museum, if the ownership issues could be overcome. Though this obstacle proved too daunting for C&SM trustees to tackle in the short term they resolved to review the suitability of Old St. Michael's at a later date, if it was still available.



## 5.00 Heritage Value and Significance

5.01 Old St. Michael's is not considered an attractive building and it features as a "Negative Factor" (5.2) in the Perth & Kinross Council Conservation Area Appraisal. However, it is distinctive and is a local landmark which appears in some of the oldest images of Crieff. There is an affection for the building which, especially since the graveyard has been brought back to use as a local amenity space, translates into a popular desire to save it.



Old St. Michael's from the south west © Andrew Rodger 2021

5.03 The main enclosed volume is substantial; good for repurposing for functions which require a large space and because of its simple form, Old St. Michael's could be readily converted. Recent sketch ideas for the Crieff & Strathearn Museum group showed a sliding wall dividing the main volume into two almost equal volumes which relate to the large south facing windows. A cross wall could strengthen the building without impacting the external appearance, though the archeological implications for a cross wall foundation would need examination.

5.04 Though the building appears to be generally sound, it needs maintenance if it is not to deteriorate significantly in the coming months. So for practical reasons, as well as for saving an important part of Crieff's built heritage, it was necessary for an evaluation to be carried out.

5.05 Symbolically the church hall has significance; it is a landmark for the historic town centre. As a remainder of the old town fabric the church hall and its environs is worthy of repair and reuse. There is unlikely to be the means or a reason to construct a new building in this location and certainly not a building of such significance. A sensitive conversion of the church hall could ensure its survival and would help to repossess and revivify the area; there would be social benefit in restoring Old St. Michael's Church Hall.

5.06 At present it is likely that an Impact Evaluation (BS 7913-2013) would yield a neutral result, in principle, but the ongoing use of the building and the quality of its restoration might argue for an ultimately higher value. Although not part of this assessment, there should be an Impact Evaluation carried out when a new development proposal is being considered and it should be carried out in collaboration with all stakeholders.

5.07 In the past, Old St. Michael's has been included in more than one Crieff Buildings Option Appraisal without success or interest, thought to be because of its ownerless state and concerns about the extent and cost of repairs. However it does lend itself, more than any other empty building available in the town, to conversion to a place for public assembly or a performance space, possibly as part of a community arts provision or a museum, both of which have been suggested.

5.08 The unusual appearance of the building and, in particular, the rather crude design of the tower suggest that a conversion of the building is likely to be less difficult to achieve than if it were a more conventionally attractive building. However, this should not be used as an excuse for ignoring the importance of the building and its role in place-making in this part of Crieff.



Aerial image supplied under the Open Data Commons Open Database License (CC BY-SA 2.0) by the OpenStreetMap Foundation.

5.10 The heritage significance of Old St. Michael's will be properly framed when design proposals are being considered. However, the following are examples of how the building is of value to the Crieff community.

5.11       Aesthetic value:       The building has an unusual design and, with the inappropriate roof finish and modern harling, it seems unattractive. However, careful and sensitive conservation of the church hall would increase the building's importance. Repairing or replacing fenestration with appropriate joinery, re-roofing with an appropriate slate and removing the harling, while pinning and pointing the stonework plus lime plastering the exterior panels should allow us to see the building much as its designer intended. If so it is likely the building would be more cherished by the community than if a brutally pragmatic approach were taken. It will alter the building's appeal substantially for the better, especially when allied to the work of restoring the graveyard.

5.12 Examination of fallen harling pieces suggests there may have been white lime washing or a thin lime plaster applied to the panels between the dressed stones before the cement harling overwhelmed the surface. The damage to the stonework between the dressed stones probably means exposing the stonework would be inappropriate and reinstating a new lime plaster finish on these areas will have a very positive effect.

5.13 Communal value: The people of this part of Crieff are enjoying having a valuable patch of green space which allows them to be in the sun, with views of the surrounding countryside. The work FoOSM volunteers have done to date to preserve the green space and protect the building is only part of the community benefit, which celebrates this centre of Crieff's heritage. Events are held in the grounds and interpretation boards were available to the public inside the building, until it became unwise to make it available for public access, except by appointment. There are also interpretation boards in the grounds. FoOSM have engaged with the Scottish Civic Trust who are very supportive and they participate in Doors Open Days which are well attended by local people and visitors. There is an intention to continue to make use of the space and hold heritage oriented events as long as it is safe to allow the public into the grounds. FoOSM are also very aware of the social wellbeing and the mental health benefits to the community that this garden and peaceful recreational space offers.



Scottish Civic Trust 2018

5.14 It is also hoped that further investigative work to the building and graveyard would be an opportunity for archeological research, which may also involve the local schools and provide valuable learning opportunities which could reinforce the sense of community through heritage.



5.15 Evidential value: The church is a landmark which is evident in records going back to the 18th century and beyond. Aside from some anecdotal evidence, there is also a written record, thanks to the assiduous work by local historian Colin Mayall and others. It is known that the graveyard holds lairs going back several centuries and it has been speculated that some could be 800 – 1000 years old. There is a proposal to use ground penetrating radar to more accurately map the lairs and to develop a better picture of the history (memorialised and not) within the graveyard and (possibly) under the old church floor.

5.16 The building in to the west wall of the 1702 stone memorial to the Stewart / Stuart family may be just one example of referencing the older church when the existing building was built. There were Robert I gold coins found in the wall of the older church when it was being dismantled in preparation for the newer church in 1786 and we may find there are very old remains in the original subfloor which need to be investigated during any future work.



- 5.18 Historical value: Aside from being at the heart of the town's, largely unchanged, 18thC street layout, the parish church was central to the activities of the original market town of Crieff and will be a constant in investigations of the trades and market traditions, as well as central to the significant eras of the Jacobite uprisings. The Highland Tryst is unique to the town for a period when cattle trading was of huge significance to Scotland's economy and traditions. Old St. Michael's tower is like a prominent pin in the centre of that historical map.
- 5.19 Although there is no certainty that Old St. Michael's will be the favoured venue of the Crieff & Strathearn Museum (currently located at the Town Hall), the association with the Murray family would make it a fitting location for the Murray Collection which it is hoped will become a mainstay of the museum's permanent collection.
- The work of the Williams Stirling plays an important part in the architectural heritage of the time and the Strathearn area. Although not the most significant, as much of their work was in either supporting other architects or in modifying existing buildings, they were productive architects of the time who stand out in Scottish history and are noteworthy.
- 5.20 Old St. Michael's is said to have played a pivotal role in the "Organ Question"; of significance to the history of Presbyterian worship in Scotland.
- 5.21 Significance: Old St. Michael's is not an historical artefact, frozen in time. It is a palimpsestic whole structure and context for every age which has made a mark on this spot. Though much has been altered since the end of the eighteenth century, the building seems likely to yield more about itself as its layers are peeled back. Old and well used, it is capable of being repurposed over and over again and still remain quintessentially the same aged character in the town, bonded with affection and without affectation to those who grew old in Crieff and to those who are recently here.
- 5.22 OSM is a part of an old settlement which retains many of its older characteristics and which collectively describe much of what is charming about the town and what makes the town significant in the area. Because of concerns for the decline of the High Street, traffic, air quality and the management of protected buildings and environments, the built heritage of Crieff is at risk. All decisions about managing the existing structure of the town and townscape, the placemaking if you like, should be made with an understanding of how important and yet vulnerable this precious fabric is.
- The success of efforts to save Old St. Michael's may hinge on the sustained appeal of Crieff to the people of the town, to visitors and to investors in its particular integrity. The old church may be emblematic of the town, in that it bears the marks of use but retains its essential character. However, the difference between enhancing its value and damaging it may be marginal. Especially if the Crieff Conservation Area and the protected buildings of the area continue to be undervalued.



- 6.00 **Description and Findings** As the conditions were found in 5/2021-3/2022
- Period : Constructed 1786 – 1826/1890.
- 6.01 **Site** Old St. Michael's Church Hall (OSM) is situated just south of Crieff High Street, accessed by Church Street (formerly Cross Street). Although not readily visible from the High Street it has open views to the south. The backs of High Street shops have encroached to within five metres of the north elevation of the old church.
- OSM stands at the north end of a sloping graveyard of an area slightly under a half acre. It is raised above adjacent ground level at its bottom end.
- To the west, across Church Street is the former 1924 Crieff Cinema the rear part of which has been converted to flats and latterly, to its detriment, harled and and windows replaced.
- <http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/scotland/include.php?filen=crieff.html>



*A view of the graveyard pre clearing with a more attractive version of the old cinema in the background - image date and source unknown*

To the east is a little used metal fabricator workshop and associated ground.

The church hall lies within the Crieff Conservation Area boundary. The immediate environs (including the old cinema) also fall within the Perth & Kinross Council's Conservation Area Enhancement Scheme.

For descriptive information / details of statutory protection see Appendix B.

6.02 General

A two storey / double height rectangular stone-built structure with symmetrical peenend roof and a four stage square tower let into the centre of the south wall. There is a stone-built chimney on the east elevation and a flue incorporated into the north east corner of the tower. All walls are covered with a coating of cement roughcast. The dressed stone quoins and openings surrounds are exposed above wall head level and generally plastered over with a render finish at wall head level and below, except at the north door.

Additional general remarks not covered in Appendix B

- Kingpost roof supports a cambered ceiling, previously concealed from view by a lower modular suspended ceiling (removed for this survey).
- Roof is finished with mixed sizes of Eternit type cement fibre tiles, primarily 300 x 600mm, nailed directly through underslating felt to softwood sarking boards and uses zinc cover flashings on the ridge and peentrees.
- Roof was holed by large piece of harling falling from the tower east face. Now repaired, the hole was open for a number of years.
- There are various plumbing additions, some crudely expressed externally. Various timber windows have missing or broken glass
- The rainwater system appears to have lacked proper maintenance for a long while.
- Obvious signs of stone decay (disaggregation + delamination) + boss sections of cement harling.
- Graveyard has largely been cleared of headstones. Some salvaged and arrayed round edges.
- Interior generally dry in the main volume but there is weather ingress in the tower. Dry rot in the north east tower corner in the area of the open flue.
- Main church volume is used for storage of furniture and gardening tools.
- Long metal gas supply pipe fixed to the outside wall (pipe lacks adequate support).
- Largely intact remnants of timber bell cradle in the tower - no bell present.

6.03 Entrance and vestibule

The church hall is entered on the west side through heavy, outward opening, vertical boarded, double doors, set slightly off centre in the elevation. The doorway is flanked by two tall arched windows set symmetrically in the wall.

There is a single corroded 3" / 3 1/4" cast iron rainwater conductor for the west elevation, between the doorway and the right hand window, which collects run off from the south and west facing pitches with a 5" c.i. gutter.

The door surround is faced with a cementitious render which is partially flaked off. There is a step up into an unlit vestibule with a short flight of concrete steps to the right and to the left. At the top of these steps are double doors to the main volume or Hall.

The vestibule is a lightweight timber box construction with a flat top and a concrete screed floor finish.

- 6.04 Main volume or hall The main volume is large, approximately 19.5m long, 10.9m wide and 6.7m high (212.5m<sup>2</sup> / 1424m<sup>3</sup>). It is rectangular in plan with the tower interjecting on the south side. The hall space is full with the detritus of preliminary clearing operations, as well as tools and materials for maintaining the grounds. There are suspension cables and metalwork hanging from the ceiling which are vestiges of the suspended ceiling which was just below the level of the beams which form the bottom chord of the six main roof trusses.



View of main space, looking south west from north east corner © Andrew Rodger 2021

- 6.05 Hall floor The main hall floor is a suspended construction with softwood boarding overlaid in part with an engineered timber laminate. The floor has been opened for ~0.5m from the north and south walls to allow the bearing ends of the joists and the wall plate to be inspected.
- It was found that some sections of the floor are badly rotted, rendering these areas unsafe to walk on. The rot relates to chronic roof leaks; adjacent to the east face of the tower and a guttering leak central on the north wall. The extent of the rotted sections of floor is noted in the report from Apex Property Care. The floor has been repaired in the past and dates from 1890.

6.06 Hall solum

The solum is visible where portions of the floor have been removed, along the north and south walls and near the n/e corner of the tower. The visible sections of the solum are congested with rubble and rubbish. There is sufficient material lying in the solum to make it impossible to inspect properly. The solum is, on average, ~1m deep. The fresh air inlets for the solum are too few.



Example of a section of the solum

6.07 Hall walls

The external walls are stone-built with lime plaster on the inside and cement harling to the outside. The north wall of the main space has no windows but there is a double doorway near the east end. It has timber framed / ledged doors with vertical boarding to the outside.

There is a brick lined recess adjacent to the doorway which is used as a gas meter cupboard. Note: Gas was used for cooking in the nearby kitchen and there is evidence of at least four gas heaters having been fixed to the hall's external walls, with holes for exhausting to the outside air, now filled.

On the north wall at approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd distance from the west end, there is evidence of there having been a freestanding solid fuel stove. It is possible the stove discharged into a chimney built in to the north wall and the wall head at this point seems to indicate a former chimney has been taken down.

The external walls are lined internally with a softwood vertical boarded dado with top moulding. On the north wall the top moulding has been removed to allow the lower  $\frac{2}{5}$ ths of the wall to be over-sheeted with gypsum board, nailed to a runner at approximately door head height.

At the top of the walls there are curved sprockets connecting the wall surface to the ceiling finish (radius ~750mm) with plaster on lathes or gypsum board. These have been removed in places where the wall head has been opened for inspection. From the top of the sprocket pieces the ceiling is canted up towards the centre at ~4°.

The east wall of the hall is an internal 9" brick dividing wall, built off a stone wall footing below the suspended floor level. The brickwork attaches to the stone external walls above door head height but appears not to be well keyed in to the stonework, though there is too much plaster remaining in place to say how well joined it is with any certainty. It is understood this wall was added in 1890 as part of the repurposing of the church as a church hall.



View north from the base of the kingpost of the truss nearest the east wall © A. P. Rodger

The east end dividing wall is plastered on the hard but also oversheathed on the main hall side, up to door head height. At either end of this wall is a doorway into other apartments (see below). The doorway at the north side is stripped of any decorative surrounds but the door on the south side has a moulded facing with a plain timber frieze and cornice above. A piece has been cut out of the cornice timber for a pipe or conduit (no longer present) and the paint on the frieze above the door has crazed and the timber should be checked for rot. This doorway has been formed hard against the stone south wall and the decorative elements are thus truncated.



*Note 1: There is a lack of clarity about the size of the church before it was rebuilt in 1787 and whether it was rebuilt incorporating existing walls. In the Perthshire OS Name Books, 1859-1862 vol. 19 it states the original church was 92' (29m) long and 18' feet (5.5m) wide (very narrow). It would appear the new church was no longer but more than twice as wide (12.6m). The massive footing which one can see through the open sections of floor to the east of the tower suggest a possible original south wall line and a corresponding parallel footing will be looked for when more of the floor is opened for repairs on the north side.*

*Note 2: The Hill Church in Blairgowrie - also worked on by William Stirling - was built in 1767 and then, to increase its capacity, it was rebuilt in 1824, so it is sufficiently contemporary to bear comparison. Though smaller than Old St. Michael's it follows a plan form which is similar, with a square tower central in the south elevation (the Hill Church tower does not bite into the plan of the church). The Hill Church has a balcony which occupies the West, North and East walls. Had OSM followed the same form, it is likely the supporting posts of the east balcony would have been supported on the same line as the brick separating wall. An archeological survey of the solum could be important to establishing more information about the evolution of Old St. Michael's.*

On the south wall there are tall arched timber windows, one to the east of the tower and a pair to the west side of the tower, their sills indenting the dado slightly. The windows are a mixture of small and large panes with inward opening tilt or hopper lights just below the arch spring. These current windows appear to have different fenestration compared to the photograph in Porteous (Appendix C) but that photograph is not a reliable source of information where retouched.

*Note 3: The drawing which bears the date 1888 (Appendix C) is a puzzle because, though the gravestones are portrayed differently, it appears to be a tracing of the photograph in Porteous' History of Crieff. It not only copies some of the retouching of the photo but also embellishes the roof with peentree flashings which were not there. Neither image is a reliable source but the photo clearly shows a division of the windows at each end, from which one may infer the presence of a raked gallery, possibly at both ends.*

6.08      The tower in the hall      The boarded dado continues across the tower, the height of which corresponds to the mezzanine floor level within the tower. The north wall of the tower in the main space is dominated by an arched niche doorway tapering with mouldings. The main arch has a slightly flattened Romanesque appearance but the timber panel door has an overlapping arch tracery pattern giving a gothic impression.





North wall of the tower in the main volume. It shows the recessed doorway from the tower into the now absent pulpit. It also shows the shot hole above but there is no obvious evidence of the timber canopy, as described by Macara. © A. P. Rodger 2021

There is a narrowing in the thickness of the stone wall at the doorway in the north side of the tower, including a curved recess, as might have been made to accommodate a turnpike stair to the next level in the tower but how this would have worked with the doorway remains to be seen. Above the top of the doorway is a shot hole which may have been made to allow a view into the church from a stair so located. It is possible the design intent for the tower of 1786 was not implemented when the tower was finally built.

On the west side of the tower face are two short timber staircases and two doorways into the tower, one above the other. At the lower stair is a straight flight of two treads, down to two winders, (5 risers total) to a flat stone floor area in front of the doorway, passing under the winding stair to the tower mezzanine (8 risers), which has a decorative turned balustrade. Both stairs seem to be in good order. It is not known if these stairs were new in 1890, when the floor was raised, or if they were adapted to the new floor.

The lower half of the westernmost of the pair of windows to the west of the tower has no glass. Wind-blown rain and snow is able to get into the building, though wire mesh on the outside prevents birds from gaining access. All of the windows require maintenance.

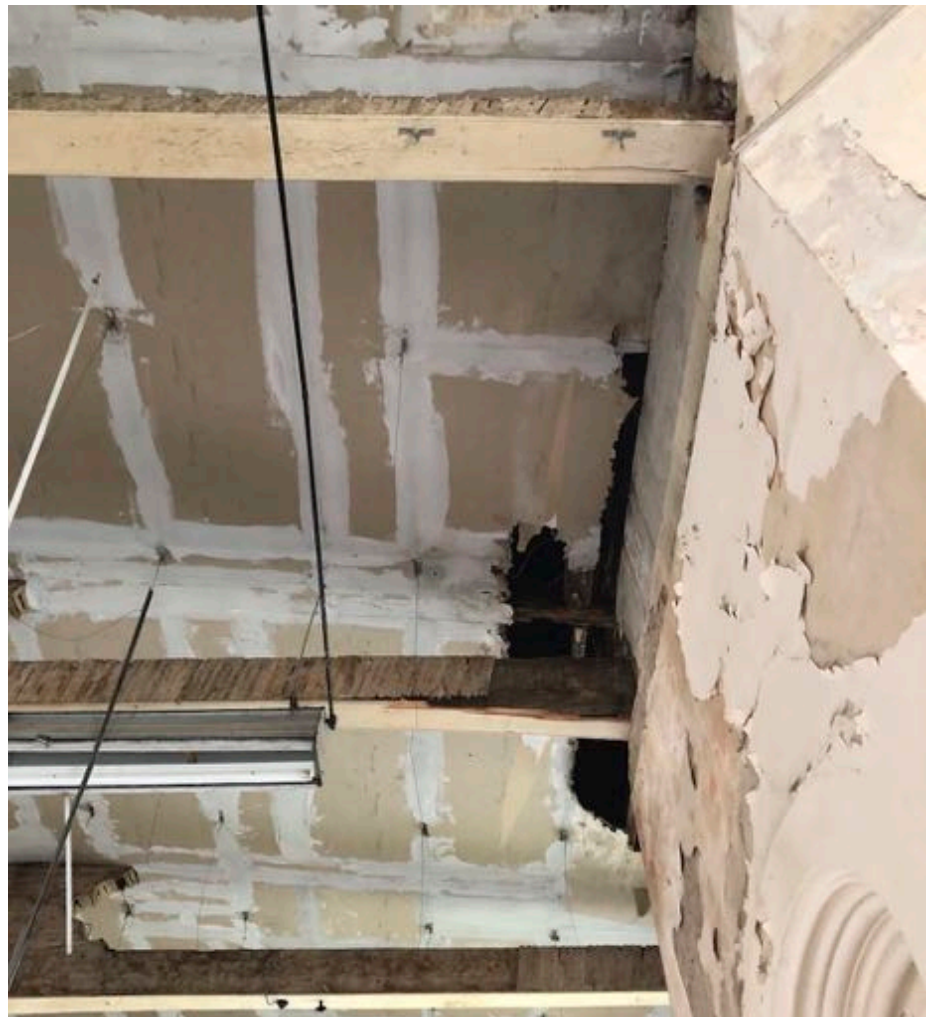
The plaster on the hard is showing the effects of dampness and paint is peeling off the walls and jambs. The remaining paint seems to be vapour impermeable. The plaster is deteriorated.

The west wall head has been exposed by taking down the curved plaster and sprockets around all three main rafter bearings, to allow Apex access to inspect. Doing so revealed a curved profile to the stone west external wall head, perhaps suggesting an original intent to express the west wall head externally. This should be examined more closely.

6.09 Hall ceiling

The plaster ceiling (previously lime plaster on lathe but now plasterboard) curves at the west and north edges and on the south edge, either side of the tower (~750mm radius). It connects directly to the wall finish with no cornice. The base of the radius is at the level of the wall plate, on which bear the six main roof trusses. The curve of the ceiling is supported by regularly spaced shaped sprocket timbers (five per bay) many of which are deteriorated from furniture beetle attack.

The trusses land on the main wall head apart from the south ends of the middle pair which are socketed into the stonework of the north tower wall.



The ceiling cants upwards towards the centre and is supported on dedicated carrier beams on each truss, bridged by substantial timber branders. The whole ceiling profile mimics the shape of the top of the tower parapet, resembling a Tudor arch profile.

The main trusses penetrate the ceiling line, exposing the bottom of the king post and braces and most of the beam which forms the bottom chord of the truss. The plain beams (thought to be pine) had a decorative plaster coating using diagonally fixed lathes, with sculpted intersections with the kingpost and braces. All the plaster coating is gone but most of the lathes remain in place. The bottom face of the beam is finished with a timber plate run with beads on either side, to the original plaster depth.



A typical truss bearing, this being the south end of the truss nearest the dividing wall above the main hall. In it you can see the lathing to accept a plaster coating and the edge bead of the timber applied to the underside of the beam. Also an iron bracket holding the rafter foot onto the beam. Note the plasterboard applied as part of a whole ceiling repair. © A. P. Rodger 2021



6.11 Staircase / Corridor Through the northernmost doorway in the 9" brick dividing wall is a short corridor which gives access to the kitchen (right) and a stair to the first floor (straight on). There is a first floor level to the whole of the area east of the dividing wall. The stair rises straight (10 risers) to a quarter landing then turns right along the east external wall for a short straight flight (7 risers) with a door into the first floor at the top with no landing. The floor of the corridor was not opened at this stage of investigation. It is possible a gallery access stair from the older building could have been repurposed here but there is no evidence of this at the time of the survey.

There is a small sash window lighting the corridor from the north. This window is not a close fit and needs to be repaired and refitted. The internal surrounds to the window are stripped out and the partially rotted safe lintel exposed.

The wall flanking the stair on the outside north wall has been oversheeted with plasterboard and is irregular. It is not obvious why this has been done but the wall above this sheeting and on the adjacent east external wall is much degraded by condensation dampness; crumbling and flaking. So the sheeting may be to try to reduce the impact of condensation or to try to prevent paint and plaster coming off the wall onto people's clothes.

There is a small cast iron skylight directly above the quarter landing, fixed in the east facing roof pitch.



The ground floor wall on the right of the stair appears to have fire blocking sheets fitted, presumably an attempt to improve the fire resistance of the partition between the (escape) stair and the kitchen, a place of fire risk.

6.12 Kitchen There is a gas cooker in the kitchen area and two electric water heaters. All other appliances have been removed prior to the survey. A 30amp type socket is fixed adjacent to the window. There is a vertically boarded recess on the outside wall with a large vertical sliding sash window (1 over 1). The window is boarded up on the outside and is without glass.

The door into the kitchen from the corridor is a solid flush door with a presumed fire rating.

The timber suspended floor has been opened along the outside wall for Apex to inspect the floor joists and their bearings.

There is a cupboard under the stair (lower flight) and the upper flight of the stairs intrudes into the ceiling line and over the window. The cupboard has a short flush door, possibly fire rated.

There is a separate fuse board above the five panel door from the kitchen to the w.c. lobby and an electric heater set against the west kitchen wall.

There is a chamfer to the south east corner of the room which accommodates a disused fireplace and chimney, currently sealed over.



6.13 W.C.

The lavatory is not now connected to a water supply and there is no cistern connected to the w.c. pan. The basin is still in place but not connected to a water supply at present. Both waste outlets seem to be functional.

The side walls have a vertical boarded dado. The end wall is the eternal wall and is substantially thinner than the external wall elsewhere, which may have increased the possibility of condensation forming. This end section of wall is enclosed behind vertical timber boarding, up to the beam soffit at window head height. This thinner section of external wall lies between the two back-to-back fireplaces (see changing room) and could originally have been a doorway. Removal of the harling may confirm this.

The door to the w.c. is a five panel timber door with obscured glazing in the two panels above the lock rail.

The window to the w.c. is a vertical sliding sash, without glass and boarded over on the outside.



6.14 Changing Room

This room has been altered to function as a w.c./changing room, including a basic assembly of two w.c. cubicles. The w.c. pans and seats remain. There is a sign saying "Ladies" above the door from the main hall. Note: There is a corresponding "Gentlemen" sign above the tower mezzanine door.

The east wall had been lined with 2" framing and plasterboard. It overlaid the original plaster and lathe wall lining, which shows evidence of condensation damage, and covered over an east facing vertical sliding sash window. The east facing window is boarded over externally. Internally it is let into a match-boarded recess.



The timber suspended floor has been opened on the east and west sides, to expose the joist ends and their bearings. Note - the different direction of joists compared to the main hall.



In the north east corner there is a chamfer to the room to accommodate a fireplace and chimney. This is constructed using imperial brickwork, not keyed to the outside stone wall. There is some stone in the construction of the chimney breast and poor bonding generally.

The window to the south has a rotten sill and is not functional. Despite the external wire mesh, there is no glass in the main window apart from the top two panes. There are inward opening casements fixed as secondary glazing to the lower 4/5ths with glass intact.

The five panel timber door into the room from the hall is of the same pattern as the internal kitchen door, lavatory door and first floor door, which are all thought to date from 1890.

6.15 First floor room

This room is a single volume with an intrusion on the north east corner for the staircase displacement and a built in shallow cupboard. There is a fireplace approximately central in the east wall. A brick opening with stone lintel and back is all that remains. There is a window on either side of the fireplace and another arched window set low on the south side. The south window height may relate to the position of a raked gallery floor, rather better than the current level first floor.

The vertical sliding sash windows either side of the chimney have a squared form with the upper sash being approximately 2/5ths proportion. These windows are glazed with leaded diamond lights (several broken) and two saddle bars to the lower sash and one to the upper. The window in the south wall and the window to the north of the fireplace have a full thickness of wall below the timber sill. The east wall window to the south of the fireplace is recessed from floor level to the the window head. The safe lintels are exposed.

The first floor room has a timber boarded floor with joists running east to west, bearing on the east external wall and the brick separating wall. The bearings have been exposed on the east + west walls to facilitate inspection.

The ceiling is plaster on lathe with a profile matching the main hall ceiling. The continuation of the large radius and canted ceiling into this room space reinforces the probability that this space was originally part of the whole church volume. The wall head is exposed in the two south corners and the roof abutment to the chimney is opened for inspection.



View of the first floor room's east elevation. © Andrew Rodger 2021

There is a small hatch at the north end of the room giving access to the loft.

6.16 **Tower**

6.17 **General**

The tower is formed in four stages plus the roof/parapet: These are 1: lower ground floor, 2: upper ground floor or mezzanine, 3: room or ringing floor and 4: belfry. These stages are expressed externally with bands or weathering courses, the band between the second and the third levels is part of the general wallhead band.

At level 3 there are opposed stone blind windows in the east and west tower elevations.

6.18



View of the tower from the mezzanine level © Andrew Rodger 2021. Note the running crack on the east wall which is replicated to a lesser degree on the west wall and which aligns, more or less, with the intersection with the main south wall outside face but also relates to the blind window cavities in the wall thickness.

According to the available evidence, the tower is built with roughly coursed old red sandstone rubble with interspersed large stones. The quoins and rybats are generally face bedded old red sandstone used as ashlar but the belfry voussoirs and mullions vary their placement of the stone bed. The more exposed dressed stones are weathered to such a degree that the rebate for a rendering stop has eroded considerably. Externally there is a cement harling applied to all surfaces between the surrounds and chamfered quoins and, in some instances, it is applied over the bands, sills and the south doorway transom. There is a small batter to the outside surfaces between bands, cumulatively ~150mm from ground level to the u/s of the cornice. Which includes stage offsets as well as batter.

Some sections of cement harling have fallen away, exposing stonework to weathering where the pointing is now depleted. The top edge of the remaining harling was checked for stability and some loose pieces were removed during the inspection. The top edges of harling below missing pieces are not weathered so more sections will become affected by the weather and will eventually also fall. This will most likely be caused by driven rainwater freezing in the wetting zone of the stone behind the harling.

Internally the stonework lifts vertically with a narrow (80 - 100mm) scarcement at belfry level, marking a narrowing of the wall thickness. There are putlog recesses in the south and north extremes of the east and west walls and only one of these has been infilled after they ceased to be used.

6.19 Level 1 (Lower ground floor)

The lower ground floor is a stone flag construction and appears to be at the same level as the - presumed - original church floor. The floor runs towards the doorway and the south. It is purely conjecture but there is a likelihood that the whole church was complete up to wall head level and, some years later, the tower was raised to its full height. This may have provoked localised settlement of the tower south of the main wall.

The walls are heavily built rubble masonry with an internal coating of lime plaster on the hard. The north wall has a matt black finish into which has been scratched "PRW 1881" and there are other less distinct marks. The paint could be analysed to see if it is blackboard paint or lamp black lime.

In the north end of the west wall there is an opening with a bevel to the south jamb which gives on to a short staircase up to the main hall. There is a similar recess on the north side of the east wall which has been blocked with masonry and forms a recess.

There are inward opening, double (framed and boarded) timber doors to the outside. The doors have iron band hinges and bedded cruiks in the masonry, set behind dressed stone rybats. The doors are part rotted and broken at the bottom of the vertical boarding.

Above the pair of doors there is a stone transom, above which there is a fixed transom light, one pane high / five panes wide, the width of the doors.

6.20



View of east side of the tower, level 1 © Andrew Rodger 2021

6.20 cont.

The existing ceiling is low; approx. 400mm below the height of the transom light window head. The inward opening doors are nailed shut on the outside but it looks likely that the top of the doors might foul on the ceiling if opened. It is possible that the floor in Level 2 is not original, though the doorway into the tower from the north wall may have required this floor to be set at this level. More superficial recent fabric can be removed to help clarify this point when the scaffolding is removed. Note - the ceiling is lined with a cement asbestos type fibre board which further reduces the height.

The Level 1 ceiling / Level 2 floor is lined on the underside with a 12mm fibre cement sheet which is damaged/incomplete in parts due to the founding of the tower scaffolding onto wooden blocks on the Level 1 floor. It is possible there may be an asbestos component to these sheets if they were fitted before the 1999 ban, so their removal will need to be controlled and an asbestos management plan should be established.

There is evidence of water leaking from above in the north east corner of the tower. It is possible the dry rot (*serpula lacrymans*) found on the north east corner of the tower in the main hall is also present in the construction in this area around the disused chimney flue which is built into the tower wall.

The service entry points for water and electricity are both in the Tower Level 1. The water supply is extended in copper through the solum to the kitchen and w.c. with a gate valve by the tower north wall. The electricity supply is brought to the building below ground level and rises (~1m) externally in a metal conduit fitted to the outside of the west wall of the tower. The sub-main cable passes through the stone-built tower wall to the electricity control panel on the inside of the west tower wall. Metal trunking distributes cables to the Level 1 ceiling void, not visible at the time of the survey.

6.21 Level 2

6.22 (Upper ground floor or mezzanine) This level is reached from the main hall by a small (8 riser) winding staircase and doorway on the north side of the west tower wall.



Within Level 2 there is a south facing window. It is an arched opening containing a timber window with astragals forming 9 rectangular panes, 3 panes wide, with gothic styled arch glazing infill above these 9 panes. The venting part is an in opening "hopper" light formed by the uppermost three rectangular panes.

The room has been lined with plaster on the hard, overlaid in places with painted boarding. Stud walling was built over the north wall curved recess, which was partially removed during the survey, to expose the back of the door from the pulpit position. The curved niche or relief in the stonework may have accommodated a timber turnpike staircase but seemingly in conflict with the doorway to the pulpit (GD13). There is also a shot hole opening in the wall within the scope of this recess but off centre. On the hall side of the tower's north wall there remains an elaborate niche for this recessed doorway.

The mezzanine room at Level 2 has been adapted in more recent times to provide several w.c. compartments, prompting the addition of the 110mm soil pipe on the outside of the eastern south frontage. There remains a water cistern with pipes on the north wall.

The Level 2 ceiling (Level 3 floor) is largely rotted or missing and the curved stone recess in the middle of the north wall extends from Level 2, past the floor level and into Level 3. Subject to further examination, the most plausible reason for this would be to accommodate a turnpike stair of approximately 1m diameter. The top of the recess is within level 3 and is closed by a timber lintel.

6.23



Level 3 view of north west corner of tower, showing typical putlog and the top of the curved recess in the north wall © A. P. Rodger 2021

6.24 Level 3 (Room/  
ringing floor

As noted above, much of the original floor is missing and what remains is either rotted or worm-eaten. There is a purpose-made timber ladder which extends from the existing Level 3 floor level, in the north east corner, up through the belfry to the south east corner, with an improvised mid span prop against the south wall. This ladder is very badly deteriorated through furniture beetle infestation and is partially broken.

There is no indication of a ceiling separating Level 3 from Level 4 but it is possible the stone scarcement supported a division between the ringing floor and the belfry.

There is no wall lining at this level and all stonework can be seen clearly. Also visible is a long, running crack in the east wall approximately 30-35% of the distance from the south wall. It appears to relate to the south jamb of the blind window in the east elevation (visible externally only). There is a cavity between the ashlar face of the blind window infill and the interior part of the stone wall which may be exacerbating this tendency to crack. The long crack is also more or less in line with the outside face of the south wall of the main hall, where it joins the tower wall.

There is a similar but not quite as severe disturbance to the stonework in the opposite west wall, which also has a blind window, visible only from the outside. On both sides the cracking is seen to pass through i.e. break some stones.

Apart from the running cracks, the stone and lime mortar are in generally good condition at this level.

In the south wall is a vertical sliding sash window which is larger than the window at Level 2. The configuration is 12 over 12 (4 wide) with gothicised infilling in the upper sash above. Note: Though both tower windows are nominally in the middle of the south wall of the tower, their centres do not align.

6.25 Level 4 (belfry)

Further up the tower, in level 4, above the scarcement, the stonework is more eroded and there are hungry joints in all parts. The stone elements which form the eight arched louvre openings are in need of urgent attention; this should be a priority concern.

6.26





Aside from the erosion of the stones and the absence of pinning and pointing, there are gaps where stones have fallen from the wall above the louvre openings. At roughly the same level as the bell cradle, one can see through the wall from inside to outside where the flue weakens the structure of the north east corner. The daylight which is visible probably indicates where jackdaws have historically accessed the tower flue cavity for nesting.

6.27



West wall of level 4 showing the unstable roof joist bearings © A. P. Rodger 2021

Internally, at the top of the tower level 4 the stone joints are open. Some stonework seems unstable and some stones have fallen down, in the past. In the north and south walls there are opposed slots, about 100mm wide, built into the stonework. They are about 0.75m high and about 0.75m apart and centred. It is possible that these slots housed two beams. If so, these beams could have carried a peal of bells. They could also have helped to carry the roof joists. There is no evidence of any beams or brackets left and the stonework between the two slots in the north wall has collapsed. This has caused a partial collapse of the timber supporting the roof back gutter and the bedding of the roof joists has slumped or become unstable, on the west elevation in particular.

The timber bell cradle is built independently and stands on the stone sills of the louvre openings and seems to be a later addition. It has apparently been used to suspend one substantial bell which is no longer present and its whereabouts not known. It is possible it was moved to the new church. The cradle appears to be capable of sustaining a centrally mounted single large bell, possibly as large as 40" or more, though there is no evidence other than the scale of the support. There is an ancient 10" bell at new St. Michael's which is known to have been moved from the former parish church, then church hall, in 1948.

The belfry's timber louvres are very weathered and fragile, some pieces are missing. They are covered internally with a fine nylon mesh to exclude birds.

A flat timber roof construction, set at a slight fall, supports a heavy lead covering which is buckled and cracked and the apron flashing is drawing from its raggle in the parapet stonework. The lead roof is set with rolls, falling to a back gutter along the north parapet and interrupted in the south east quarter by a loose, lead covered access hatch with lead upstand.

The back gutter is drained through a round lead pipe which penetrates the parapet, centrally on the north side, discharging into a 3 or 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ " cast iron drain pipe, which drops vertically on the outside of the north louvre opening mullion. Originally discharging onto the saddle roof between the tower and the main roof, it is now guided into a UPVC pipe which conducts the rainwater to the south elevation gutter adjacent to the tower stop end on the west side of the tower. There is no ready means of maintaining this pipe.

At the time of the survey, the roof was supporting some vegetable growth and the back gutter was congested with grass and muddy detritus, assumed to be, in large part, pigeon guano.

There is evidence of pointing repairs, using lime putty, on the central section of stonework on the west parapet. Most of the parapet seems to be eroded but stable though in need of pointing. However the north east corner of the parapet is in need of urgent repair. This corner of the tower has an unlined flue which rises vertically from the stove position in the main hall and exits through a terracotta can bedded in the top of the parapet corner. This flue has evidently been rebuilt at the top with common bricks and, in the process, some of the stone detailing on the corner has been lost. The brickwork is not well bonded and its relatively concentrated mass is separating it from the surrounding stonework. There are substantial cracks and open joints which are open to the weather. Ultimately, it would seem likely to fall and cause very severe damage to the church roof and below.



View of the north east corner of the parapet showing the rebuilt section. The only stone which bonding across the parapet is the broken one with its bed approx. 120mm above the raggle. Above this stone the pier is formed with unbonded brickwork. © A. P. Rodger 2021

Below the south west parapet pillar, the cornice stone corner projection has broken off. Apparently since 1972. (see Appendix H).

### 6.30 Main roof

#### 6.31 Main roof (external)

The original pre-conversion roof (as appears on the "1888" photograph - Appendix C) was covered in a traditional heavy slate. This gave a texture and a bulk which is absent with the fibre cement tiles currently in place. The original roof slates were mitred to the peentrees. The main ridge is indistinct in the photograph but seems likely to have been a lead roll, or possibly a stone capping. The current roof finish has zinc flashings on all ridges.

In the absence of the original slates, the reduced bulk means the mortar fillet which originally weathered the slates to tower abutments now sits well above the fibre cement tiles which has provided a route into the building for rainwater and snow melt. Recent repair work attempted to seal this gap with mortar as an interim repair.

The newer roof finish makes no provision for maintaining the valleys at the saddle behind the tower and it appears these valleys are lined with strips of roofing felt, which have probably failed. There are no lead flashings evident and the abutment flashings appear to be roofing felt heat fixed to tarred upstands, which was ill advised.

Because of the falls of harling from high level there have been bursts in the fibre cement roof tiles. These bursts of the roof finish have been attended to by a roofer, as an urgent temporary repair.

6.32



West side of saddle roof valley as repaired © Ryan Scott 2022

6.33

#### Main roof (internal)

The loft space appears to be generally dry and in good condition though it was noted that the wide board sarking is quite badly deteriorated. There is evidence of underslating felt having been used under the fibre cement tiles and the combination of this, the lack of insulation and minimal ventilation could have contributed to the condition of the sarking. There is evidence of a hall : outside air ventilator duct system but there is no longer an aperture in the hall ceiling nor an opening in the roof ridge.



The construction of the roof uses six king post trusses spanning the width of the building, plus heavy rafters which join the three bearing points on the east and west ends to the apex of the outer trusses. The rafters are linked with purlins and the infilling jack rafters complete the support for the roof.

Although the bottom chord of the trusses is a heavy single timber, this does not support the ceilings. Instead there are separate ceiling bearers incorporated into each truss, solely for this purpose and which utilise a metal support rod. The ceiling bearers are angled and carry heavy branders to span from truss to truss.

There are indications of reused timbers in the roof and there are carpenter marks showing the numbering of joints.

6.34 Rainwater

The cast iron rainwater system (5") is undersized for the numbers of drops. The system has not been maintained and, during the assessment of the building, the gutters were cleared by FoOSM and the drains rodded to ensure rainwater flows away. The centre of the north wall rone appears to be lower than the outfall ends, which may be exacerbating the rot problem at the centre of the north wall.

6.35 Joinery

6.36 Windows

For numbering reference, please see plan drawings in Appendix F. Generally, the windows fall into groups which can be described thus: Multi-pane tall arched windows lighting the main space, probably all made at the time of the conversion to a church hall / Conventional vertical sliding sash windows to ancillary spaces, some with diamond leaded lights, probably all made in 1890 or later / Tower windows with gothic styling of uncertain date / Damaged south facing windows which light the east end apartments.

Of the five windows which light the main space, three are known to have been newly configured on the removal of the raked gallery. As the pattern of subdivision is the same for all five windows, we may reasonably assume they are all contemporary and probably replace earlier gothic styled windows, perhaps similar to the window in tier 3 of the tower, which is thought to be the oldest window in the building and likely to date from 1827.

GW01 Tall west facing window with arched head. A simple single glazed timber framed window made with a single inward opening hopper light, operated with a corded pulley. This window almost certainly dates from the 1890 conversion of the building into a hall and the configuration of the differently sizes panes seems to be unaltered. This being, from the top, the arched section a fixed light divided into eight panes, half of which have yellow stained glass. Below this are two landscape panes, both glazed with purple stained glass. Below this is the opening section with eight equal panes of clear glass, each slightly taller than square. Under the opening light are two panes slightly taller than square and below them, two tall clear glazed panes, such that the astragals below the opening light form a cruciform shape. The reason this window appears to be undamaged can probably be attributed to a crudely erected external screen of metal mesh on a separate softwood frame which is now coming away from the masonry jambs.





Window GW01 © A. P. Rodger 2021

- GW02 Is identical to GW01 but one of the tall lower panes is broken.
- GW03 Is the westernmost of the south facing tall windows. Like the preceding two windows it is a product of the conversion from church to hall, on the removal of the gallery. All three are a similar size and construction. The lower large panes are absent and the weather is able to get into the building. The mesh outer covering is loose and coming away but remains sufficiently intact to exclude birds.

GW04 Is the south facing window between GW03 and the tower. It is larger than the three preceding windows but follows a similar design. It too may have been renewed to this design in 1890. Being larger it has a central mullion but otherwise follows a similar subdivision of panes. The arch, being larger, incorporates the small stained glass panes, of which there are fourteen, including four very small triangular pieces. These are all intact. The panes below these are also within the spring of the arch and, instead of being two landscape rectangles, there are two portrait rectangles either side of the mullion and two further panes outwith, the outer edges being curved to the arch. Consequently, the top of the opening lights, split either side of the mullion, is the line of the arch spring base. Each opening light is an inward opening, pulley operated hopper light with six equal panes apiece, each side of the mullion. Below the opening lights are cruciform subdivisions either side of the mullion. This window appears to be fully intact but, as with the other windows in the main space, no attempt was made to operate the opening sections.



GW04 interior © A. P. Rodger 2021

GW05 This window is the same as GW04 but has two broken panes.

GW06 This is the south facing window in the "Ladies" room of the east ground floor apartments. It is believed that this window was enlarged slightly at the time of the conversion in 1890. The window is in a poor state of repair and is very rotten at the base. It appears not to have had any opening lights but does have secondary glazing for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of its height, fixed as a side hung pair of inward opening casements which are currently glazed.



GW06 with secondary glazing on lower portion. © A. P. Rodger 2021

East facing windows are boarded over with plywood because they cannot be readily overseen, which makes them more vulnerable to break ins or vandalism.

- GW07 The east facing vertical sliding sash window in the same room as GW06 which is boarded over inside. Both sashes are empty of glass or subdivision. The condition of the glazing rebate suggests the empty sash also had a single leaded panel. The outside is covered over with a tight fitting mesh screen fixed to a softwood frame, fixed to the stone jambs.
- GW08 The east facing small v.s.s. window in the w.c. is boarded inside on the lower sash and boarded over completely on the outside. The obscured glass in the upper sash is broken. The electric fan previously mounted in the centre of the upper sash glass is hanging loose on its cable.
- GW09 The east facing v.s.s window in the kitchen is boarded over on the outside. The plywood board is a loose fit. There is no surviving glass and there are no astragals. Nor is there evidence to suggest the use of astragals.

- GW10 The north facing window has been dismantled and, for similar reasons to the east facing windows, is boarded over and made secure.
- FW01 South facing first floor window in the east room. It is believed to be an original opening, from the 1786 church but the joinery is adapted modern in a fixed light subdivided into three elements: arched section (glass in place) and two equal rectangular panes below (glass absent).
- FW02 East facing vertical sliding sash window with diamond leaded lights in the upper sash. Some diamond lights are broken. The lower sash is empty of glass or vestiges of subdivision.
- FW03 East facing pair of vertical sliding sash windows with diamond leaded lights. There is a wire mesh fixed over the window externally but several of the diamond lights are smashed.



GW09 and FW03 © A. P. Rodger 2021

- TW01 The transom light over the double exterior doors at the base of the tower. Fixed glazing in five panes abreast.



TW02 Tower mezzanine level window looking south. It has a slightly flattened arch head with an inward opening three pane wide hopper light just under the arch spring and cord operated pulley. Astragals above the arch spring form a gothicised triptych. Below the hopper light are six fixed panes. There is a softwood frame supporting chicken wire mesh outwith the window frame, up to the arch spring. The condition of the window is poor but serviceable.



TW02 © A. P. Rodger 2021

TW03 Tower ringing floor or level three vertical sliding sash window 12+/12 with gothicised infill of the arch section. Fitted to stone reveals without lining or weights. Most panes of glass are broken or missing despite some wire mesh fitted to the outside. Generally very weathered and some astragals have been broken but possibly serviceable.





TW03 © A. P. Rodger 2021

- 6.38
- RL01 and RL02 Small iron skylights, over staircase and lighting loft, approx 350 x 450 with centre bar. The glass is present but cracked, putty is largely missing and the frame is very corroded; in need of maintenance.
- GD01 Main west entrance doors. Heavy timber; vertical boarded on both faces of framing. Outward opening pair. Query frame size and hinges (2 x 2 prs 100mm butt) sufficient for weight. Query condition of concealed frame. No stays. Slight racking of doors and binding of leading edge of primary door on step. Boarding generally in contact with step with bottom edge decay. Outer boarding cupped and split in places. Meeting cover strip broken top and bottom. Original lock and escutcheon absent; secured with padlock and hasp. Notice boards and recent knocker added to outside of both doors, adding to the weight.



View of GD01 © A. P. Rodger 2021

GD02 Main south tower doors. A pair of inward opening timber doors each with four rails, three panels, hung on two iron straps and cruiks bedded in stone jamb. The vertical planking to the outside is much deteriorated, especially at the foot where there has been contact with the step. Despite the extent of the decay, these are probably not original doors. The straps are let into the rails to establish the correct relationship to the rebate and this recessing of the straps has compromised rail structure. Neither do the heights of the straps and cruiks align with the structure, suggesting these doors have been repurposed. There is a remnant of a box lock, a pair of bolts and an improvised latch. There is a heavy bar stay on the secondary leaf. There appears to be fire or heat damage to the varnish on the upper half of the inside of the doors. On the outside of the principal door is a painted trapezoidal metal plate and lever to operate the (Suffolk type) latch which bears the date 1787. There is also a painted over metal escutcheon for the disused box lock.



GD02 and TW01 - South doorway in the base of the tower © Andrew Rodger 2021

- GD03 North facing escape door, directly from main hall, recessed in the wall thickness and set flush with interior finishes. Two stone steps down to outside ground level. Dressed, chamfered ingoes in sandstone, frame recessed. Framed doors with outside vertical boarding with bead. Slight decay at base of doors where in contact with the ground. Construction of framing, like GD02, has four rails. Apart from graffiti on doors and stone jambs, appears to be in generally good order but in need of painting. Espagnolette escape mechanism. Unable to open as doors nailed closed.





GD04 + GW10 - North doorway with lighter coloured sandstone reveal © A. P. Rodger 2020

GD04 Narrow pair of flush doors. No heritage merit.

GD05 As GD04.

GD06 Tier 1 tower internal access door. A three panel timber door in reasonably good condition. The timber panel below the mid rail is split in two places. No latch. In need of cleaning and painting.

NB If there was a door from the main hall into the corridor it has been removed, along with facings. Current location unknown. No ident number allocated.

GD07 Flush fire door into kitchen from corridor. No heritage value.

GD08 Flush  $\frac{3}{4}$  height fire door with head vent. Access to cupboard under stair. No heritage value.

GD09 Kitchen inward opening five panel door, thought to be original. Box lock and knob set. In good condition.

GD10 W.C. door. As for GD09 with obscured glass let into panes above mid rail.

GD11 Door is absent. Location unknown.

GD12 See image below. As for GD09.



GD13 Small timber door recessed into depth of tower wall, understood to be the method of entering the (absent) pulpit from the tower, when a church. It appears not to have been opened since the church was converted to a hall. It is painted on the hall side and varnished on the tower side. The door is narrow and short and has no visible mechanism for opening or latching on the hall side though a latch is visible on the tower side. The door is constructed with narrow stiles and top rail and a deep bottom rail with turned / carved slender pilasters dividing the panel into three. The pilasters have overlapping arches at the top. The timber panel behind is split to its full height approximately in the middle. Hinges were not seen at the time of the survey and it was not possible to open the door.

GD14 Tower mezzanine access door. Narrow timber three panel door of same pattern as elsewhere. Not hung, leaning against stops in the opening.



FD01 First floor room door. Timber five panel door with box lock and knobset of same pattern as elsewhere. Very worn and grubby but seemingly sound.

Misc. Soot door. East elevation. Missing.

6.42 Chimney

The shouldered stone-built chimney is slightly off centre on the east elevation and serves the flues from the three main east apartments (kitchen, changing and first floor room). It is built from sandstone and has a tiled saddle roof connecting it to the main roof. It has a poorly executed ragged lead flashing; one strip of lead draped over tiles with no clips or apron and inadequate raggle. The stonework is face-bedded, punch dressed, coursed and pointed with cement mortar containing a coarse aggregate. The punched surfaces are almost entirely missing through surface erosion of the stones. Most joints are open and in urgent need of raking and repointing with lime. The bevelled cope is sandstone in several pieces, dressed to a small overhang. The stone under the cope which is on the south east corner is so badly eroded it will probably require to be replaced. The three flues have clayware 9" liners. A clay can is fitted to the middle flue (1st floor). The other two flues have been blocked with cement caps which are broken free and not protecting the flue. The pieces of concrete were left in place to prevent access to jackdaws but could be blown off the chimney with very strong wind. There is a bush growing in the top of the chimney which is well established and will need to be killed. There is no haunching to shed water and the top of the chimney is open to rain.

6.43



East end stone chimney © A. P. Rodger 2021

6.44



## 7.00 CONSERVATION

### 7.01 Preamble

The heritage significance of Old St. Michael's should not be undermined by any proposals for reuse which discard the factors which make its conservation worthwhile. It must be assumed that proper consideration will be given to a new use which is compatible with the fabric as it may be conserved.

It is possible that such a goal may conflict with other aspects of the design's viability and these points of conflict will need to be identified and navigated carefully.

For example, as it stands, the existing windows could be conserved through repair but it is arguable that the cost of doing so would be no less expensive than fitting new windows of a suitably durable manufacture which might also do a better job without looking noticeably different.

Another example might be a need to manage moisture levels and insulation without substantially changing the building's appearance or limiting the building's ability to breathe. What might be called "default" improvements, often demanded by Building Standards, frequently conflict with the long term interests of traditionally built structures.

Though typical of issues which may arise with any new use of the building, there are other factors which relate to specific purposes or usage to consider. Such as limiting wear to vulnerable fabric, when the proposal involves a high throughput of people.

The intent to "do no harm" should apply to avoiding damage to fabric which has heritage value but, more likely with this building, efforts will be made to recognise and maintain its story and to make the right choices; adapting the building to a new purpose with understanding. This will not require slavish copying of the detail of other interventions; where new materials are introduced they should not be a pastiche of what went before but should be openly new, while simultaneously not doing damage to elements of value to the whole narrative.

Other important decisions will relate to undoing previous areas of "damage", such as the management of the cement harling on the walls and the fibre tiles on the roof. The answers to these questions depend on access to particular skills and a knowledge of what is important and how it is so. Similarly, indirect damage through neglect has its consequences from which will arise questions, such as how to manage the materials stripped out as part of the treatment and eradication of dry rot.

In much the same way as it would be undesirable to randomly excavate in the graveyard, respect for the heritage qualities of a building needs to be asserted at times, when a more bullish approach might be seen as sensibly pragmatic.

The sustainability of a project may rely on its appeal to specific audiences and the interface of those needs and the conservation needs of the building and environs require focus. Often Conservation can seem uncompromising and counterproductive, especially if the feasibility of a project is threatened. However, well understood and well maintained built heritage is an important asset which can be underestimated and can be compromised, to a project's disadvantage.

It is arguable that, with the developing success of Strathearn Arts at the old Masonic Hall, Crieff has no need of another large place of assembly or performance space. If so then it is likely that Old St. Michael's future may be found in a specific function, rather than as a large multifunction space.

Perceived needs in the town have been discussed and they include a rehearsal / recording / training space to support endeavour in the performing arts. Also a museum and heritage centre and either may find Old St. Michael's the perfect venue. There may be other organisations which have yet to come forward and there may be new ideas generated or needs recognised through the building's promoted availability.

Simply put, the sustainability of a project is to be found in how to get sufficient revenue out of whatever takes place in the building to be able to reliably keep the lights on; without the assurance of a reliable income, from whatever source, major funders will probably not be able to support a proposal with capital funding.

For there to be enough diversity in income there may need to be a diversity of space created, which can support the objectives of the project and the revenue requirements. The building's adaptation may be complex and, to keep overheads down, may present difficult challenges, such as energy use and staffing, which feed back into the design brief. A good understanding of the conservation challenges can help everyone find the best outcome.

More than one person has said that a good idea would be to retain the tower and demolish the rest of the building, to make way for a new building or even to give the space to the memorial garden. Though this is not out of the question, it is unlikely to work structurally. It is also rather ironic to contemplate, given the part of the building that is most in need of urgent work and which is least usable for another purpose is the tower.

The brief is to provide a survey and to point out what is wrong with the building and suggest how any concerns about its fabric can be best managed and it is unlikely that recommendations would include demolition in part or whole. However, as it stands, the building is a liability which requires maintenance and, if that maintenance is not provided, the future of Old St. Michael's looks bleak. By recognising the building's heritage value and investing in it as part of a broader conservation strategy, OSM can become an important and valuable asset. To get there, however, some people will need to stand up for it, maybe sometimes in opposition to the pragmatically less imaginative. FoOSM are doing this and, hopefully, bringing the Crieff community with them.

7.02 Guidance structure  
BS 7913:2013

*"The immediate objective of building conservation is to secure the protection of built heritage, in the long-term interest of society.*

*Issues relating to building conservation are often complex and interwoven.*

*The conservation of historic buildings requires judgement based on an understanding of principles informed by experience and knowledge to be exercised when decisions are made. British Standards that are applicable to newer buildings might be inappropriate.*

*The decision to conserve historic buildings can be justified on social, cultural, economic and/or environmental grounds, and usually a combination of these. Conflicting pressures often need to be balanced to assist good decision making. Good conservation depends on a sound research evidence base and the use of competent advisors and contractors."*

## Conservation considerations

In this report, observations are made about the condition of the building and how the problems found can be fixed. Although the proposals are borne of a practical need to preserve the building, such that it may have an ongoing use to the community, they also aim to help evaluate what is worth conserving.

Practical thinking and economy have negatively impacted the building in the recent past. Most significantly the well intentioned use of cement harling and the re-roofing with Eternit type fibre cement tiles on underslating felt. Not only have these measures had practical consequences for the building, they have substantially devalued the aesthetic merits of the building. Which in turn may have contributed to the long term neglect and the impact of the lack of maintenance; it having become more a shed than treasured asset.

What is left is a largely sound but unattractive stone building with which people have become familiar but which has not been valued for many years. The consequences of this diminished affection for the building were exacerbated when the grounds were allowed to become the deteriorating context of the building's decline.

The old church building changed substantially when the Church of Scotland took it apart and reassembled it with turn of the century ideas and practical needs and this process probably eradicated fabric and detail which had hitherto marked it as a church building. It is possible the only elements left which represent the previous church's story are buried in the walls, in the tower and under the floor, so the interest in the building from a conservation standpoint is not straightforward.

The physical clues about the church, once a most important building to Crieff, remain in the presence of the tower and the graveyard and the fragments of that former use left in the tower (pulpit door, recess and bell cradle). A stronger connection to that role may be found through archeological survey and it would be fitting that these things are considered before any more change is wrought. Fitting because the significance of the church transcends the building as it has been left to us and resides in historical importance and what the building represents as far as the heritage of place is concerned.

What remains of Old St. Michael's is mostly the Church of Scotland's reinterpretation of the building in 1890, fitting it to their needs of the time in an unsentimental way but bearing some signs of care and craftsmanship none the less. What has happened to the building in more recent times has eroded its dignity and has more to say about parsimony than caring. A reflection of the times and the difficulties of maintaining and servicing a large building which has few friends.



In the current circumstances and considering population growth, availability of funding through certain channels and the growing desire to re-centre our communities and revalue our heritage it is now possible to consider a new purpose for Old St. Michael's. Thirty years ago it might have seemed an insurmountable challenge whereas now, there is abundant evidence of success stories, where communities have been able to lead projects to save or rejuvenate disused buildings, such as this. This change in opportunities for communities and changes to project funding may have arrived just in time for Old St. Michael's Church Hall.

Much of the fabric, as left from the 1890 conversion, still exists and is worth conserving in the context of the preserved narrative but if the building's survival depends on a radical reinvention of the spaces, there may be few opportunities to preserve these details in the long run. However, it is important to record what is found and to evaluate each element on its merits. Especially as yet undiscovered evidence.

To simplify the findings of this survey, in terms of conservation value or significance, the observed detail is tabulated below as a list of significant fabric and spaces. Upper case letters refer to spaces and major elements and lower case letters refer to components.

7.03		Items to be protected, repaired and retained	Aa
		Items to be retained and repaired but may be modified (with conditions)	Bb
		Items which may be removed; of no heritage value	Cc
		Items which are intrusive and should be removed	Dd
7.04	Exterior	Generally - South and front elevation of the original rectangular building	A
		Generally - North, West + East elevations of the original rectangular building	A
		Generally - Four stage tower on south wall	A
		Sandstone chimney on east elevation and clayware chimney cans	A
		Old red sandstone rubble walling, dressed quoins, rybats, lintels etc.	A
		Cement harling to all wall surfaces	D
		Lime and or earth mortar in sound condition	b
		Cement based mortar - pointing (evidence to be kept)	d
		Cement based mortar - rendering (risk evaluation to be carried out)	b
		Brickwork alterations to tower flue/parapet	d
		Timber louvres to belfry	b
		Fibre cement roof tiling and underslating felt	D
		Timber doors to west elevation	b
		Timber doors and associated hardware to south of tower	b
		Timber doors to north elevation	b

		Timber windows and associated hardware to main hall (5N°)	a
		Timber windows to east apartments - south elevation	c
		Timber windows to east apartments - east elevation	b
		Timber window and associated hardware to north elevation	b
		Timber windows and associated hardware to tower	a
		Cast iron rooflights (2N°)	a
7.05	Interior		
7.06	Main space	Lime plaster on lathe at ceiling	b
		Gyproc sheet lining to ceiling	c
		Truss beams (see attic)	
		Hewn softwood sprockets for carrying ceiling curve	b
		Plaster lathing affixed to exposed truss timbers	b
		Lime plaster on the hard finish to walls, incl. beads (keep evidence)	b
		Plasterboard or fibre board wall covering and fixing straps	c
		Ladies' changing room doorway incl. facings, cornice + 5 panel door etc.	a
		Vertical boarded dado including moulded top rail	b
		Vestibule framing and doors	d
		Flooring and floor structure (see Findings/Proposals for reasons)	b
		Recessed pulpit door and plaster surrounds	a
		Mezzanine staircase (and LGF steps) - subject to final floor level decision	a
		Vestiges of suspended ceiling and fluorescent battens	d
7.07	East apartments g/f	Ceramic tiling	c
		Framing over east wall and remnants of plasterboard	c
		Changing room w.c. cubicles, sanitary ware and associated plumbing	d
		Lime plaster on the hard finish to walls, incl. beads / paper (keep evidence)	b
		Plaster on lathe ceiling	b
		Vertical boarding to window reveals + timber facings.	b
		Water heater and other electrical appliances	c
		Flooring and floor	b
		Facings to doorways (see Main space for door GD12)	b
		Doors and facings at GD09 and GD10	b
		W.C. washbasin in w.c. and brackets	b
		W.C washdown pan in w.c.	c
		Kitchen appliances / radiator	c
		Understair cupboard door	c

		Kitchen to corridor door	c
		Staircase	b
		Superficial sheeting to staircase external walls	d
		Superficial fire board sheeting to staircase internal walls	c
		Lime plaster on the hard in staircase area and corridor (disaggregated)	c
		Carpet on staircase	c
		Door into upper floor, including facings and hardware	b
		Lime plaster on the hard finish to walls, incl. beads (keep evidence)	c
		Plaster on lathe ceiling	b
		Brick fireplace	b
		Built in cupboard	b
7.08	Attic	All roof timbers below sarking board level, incl ceiling support + metalwork	A
		Remnants of ventilation duct(s)	b
7.09	Significance	All decisions relating to proposed or future work should be guided by the significance identified. For a fuller view of the conservation significance of Old St. Michael's, in respect to its Historical and Cultural value, please refer to Section 5: Heritage Value and Significance	
7.10	Symbolic	<p>The conversion of the church into a church hall obscured aspects of the building which might otherwise have exemplified a form of church building of its time. However, the general form of the building relates to 18th century changes in patterns of worship and the development of the rectangular plan with a belfry, plus later gallery additions (e.g. Yester Kirk (early 18th c.), Newbattle 1727/1851, Rosskeen P.C. 1830+, Carrington 1836).</p> <p>The "vernacular" style of parish church building, which lacked ornament, using a frugal form of construction, were occasionally built with a peend roof and a simple central tower. They marked an undeveloped classical form which preceded a gothic revival; essentially a T plan without the perpendicular nave but similarly having the focus directed to the middle of a long wall to gather parishioners close to the pulpit. This was emphasised by the augmentation of seating with added galleries. There remains evidence of a gothic influence at Old St. Michael's in the overlapping arc tracery relief on the pulpit door and in the two tower windows, which probably predate the 1890 alterations. The "1888" photograph (Appendix C) has been marked to emphasize gothic forms in the windows but the resolution is too poor to be able to say how authentic they are. However, despite these uncertainties, OSM is of a type and is worthy of conservation because of its being an exemplar of a relatively unusual simple form.</p>	
7.11	Technical	It has been remarked upon that records of the previous church show that it was barely wider than a typical house (5 - 6m) across the beam and that this may reflect the scarcity of timber suitable for a wider building at the time.	

Scotland's Churches Trust have made reference to the emergence of the relative popularity of peend-end roofs being due in part to the demand for larger spaces for increased populations being matched by increased skills and the availability of larger timbers from further afield in Scotland and imports from Scandinavia and beyond. The disruption to timber imports caused by the Napoleonic Wars between 1793 and 1815 could mean the big 11.5m long timbers in the roof came from the Black Wood of Rannoch. After forfeiture of the estate, it is known that the supply of pine extended at least as far south as Perth. It is hoped that we may find out more when we can arrange funding + safer access to the timbers for dendrochronological analysis. It is likely that OSM can play a useful part in ongoing research "Timberwatch Scotland" by Drs Mills and Crone.

Conservation work on OSM, when addressing specific areas, would help with the development of knowledge for common conservation problem areas, specifically:

- Managing the process of cement removal for very soft stonework
- Designing optimum mixes for hot lime and aggregates
- Designing optimum mixes for lime plaster coatings of soft sandstones
- Optimising treatment of cement coated surrounds to openings
- Managing all of the above relative to degrees of inaccessibility
- Tackling unforeseen issues with old sandstone rubble walling
- Tackling unforeseen issues with dressed but failing sandstone
- Monitoring performance of techniques used and specifications
- Developing hygrothermal data according to different usage
- Monitoring relative performance of materials and specifications according to place and degree of exposure.

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|------|----------------|---|
| 7.12 |                | Technological development of music for worship: Although there is no pipe organ in the church hall, OSM is significant for the part the church played in the development of church music. See elsewhere.  |
| 7.13 | Repair         | All repairs should be carried out in like materials using traditional methods; repairing and not replacing wherever practicable. Where traditional materials are not available, modern materials and techniques may be used in some circumstances, where the outcome is discreet and has no adverse effect on the traditional construction. |
| 7.14 | Remaking       | Any remaking of lost elements or details should be based on sound evidence and not conjecture. In the absence of such evidence and where an element must be reinstated for functional reasons, the work should be carried out in a subtle and sympathetic manner. Any intervention should be the minimum necessary.                         |
| 7.15 | Implementation | The building is unserviced and unheated, barely weatherproof and in need of repair. The need to address the more urgent repairs is paramount, unless they can be integrated with an approved programme of repurposing works in the very near future.  |

Assuming the more important repair items can be funded and carried out soon, the next stage will be to develop a maintenance plan and set up a regime of regular inspections and reviews for as long as the “mothballing” process needs to last.

Ultimately, a new use and the work entailed in achieving that will be the goal and that project needs to be developed and promoted, as a necessary and important stage in Old St. Michael’s preservation.



## 8.00 PROPOSALS

8.01	Categories	<p>There are several stages of action proposed, most of which depend on funding availability. These proposals presuppose all roof leaks have been dealt with prior to the completion of this report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Ongoing ingathering of survey information and archeological survey work</li> <li>2 Repairs / Improvements: Urgent work, to be carried out as soon as possible</li> <li>3 Repairs / Improvements: Desirable / maintenance work to be scheduled</li> <li>4 Repairs / Improvements: Deferred / regular review / new purpose</li> <li>5 Desired outcomes and promotion of goals</li> </ol>
8.02	General	<p>A log of work should be opened and maintained by an appropriate person.</p> <p>Category 1 items need to be considered through all stages of work on the building but <u>Category 2 work is the most urgent.</u></p> <p>The primary objective is to prevent the building deteriorating further and to prioritise the work according to risks to the building's survival.</p> <p>Implementation of these works will begin with making detailed proposals which lead to application(s) for grant funding.</p> <p>A shortfall in funding may postpone the most urgent work items and it is advised that less urgent items should not draw significant funding away from the priorities. However, the cost of carrying out the most important work is going to be substantial and will need to come from a funding source where an application may not yield an immediate response. This should not mean that no other work can be carried out in the interim, especially routine maintenance and ad hoc volunteer work. It should also be borne in mind that large grants may depend on the availability of match funding.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 <u>Ongoing ingathering of survey information and archeological survey work</u></li> </ol> <p>Skilled survey and investigation work requires funding. All exploratory work must be properly documented and detailed records / evidence kept.</p>
8.03	Main hall floor	<p>[i] Firmly prop affected area(s) of floor, under sound timber joists.</p> <p>[ii] Strip back flooring on affected joists and cut out sections of joists and wall plate affected by rot and remove to coup.</p> <p>[iii] Provide protection to edge of works to prevent accidental falls.</p> <p>[iv] Use increased area of access to solum to pick over detritus and assess whether there is an early church floor beneath. Keep records / evidence.</p> <p>[v] Prevent further deterioration and, as necessary, treat with boron solution.</p> <p>[vi] Determine from findings whether removing the raised floor completely could be worthwhile, without making assumptions about unseen areas.</p>

Notes:

There are recommendations in the Apex report which include the removal of floor timbers in the main hall which are rotted or which are in conditions which may lead to their deterioration.

A minimal or least cost approach would be to cut out and dispose of sections of floor which sustain, or are devalued by, rot. It is believed that the floor timbers mostly date from the raising of the floor in 1890 but all work should be carried out with a care to conserve evidence, especially as the solum has possibly been sealed in part or whole for over 130 years.

The timbers (flooring and joists) can be taken up with care to make salvage possible and those sections which are serviceable can be set aside for reuse.

An objective will be to expose the solum and carry out an archeological survey, examining the detritus and stones buried under the floor, examining the sleeper walls and possibly more substantial former church wall footings and, in particular, looking for evidence of the original church floor including any possible interments.

In the process of tackling the timber decay, useful evidence could be uncovered which may help decide whether to revert to an earlier floor or to reinstate the raised floor, after recording the findings and preserving whatever is found to be of value.

Examination of the solum will inform design thinking for any proposals which require a subdivision of the main hall space and whether a division can be founded without destroying valuable evidence or graves.

It should be borne in mind that complete removal of the suspended timber floors throughout would result in obstacles such as the legacy wall footings and the concrete entrance steps. It will also mean a requirement to adapt the storage of grounds maintenance equipment.

8.04 Main hall walls

- [i] Take down all sections of vertically boarded dado which are affected by rot (including a recommended margin of good timber) and coup.
- [ii] Dispose of grounds, dooks and other associated timbers as exposed.
- [iii] Carefully remove plaster from the south wall panel, east of tower and from the hall / tower walls and coup. Expose safe lintels over windows.
- [iv] Remove to salvage or to coup, all superficial fibre board or gyproc boarding applied to walls, including mounting battens.

Notes:

To allow fabric to air and breathe and to remove finishes infected by rot or likely to pose an ongoing risk of developing rot, remove linings and superficial coverings; record, dispose of or salvage. A substantial part of the timber boarded dado is damaged or rotten and is fixed to grounds or dooks which may also be compromised. Apex advise the removal of all grounds and dooks, which may help to prevent further outbreaks of rot. Theoretically a "dry" wall should not pose a significant risk but good sense dictates that expensive new or repaired finishes should not overlay any potential sources of problems for the future.

A desire to remove all traces of dry rot mycelium may justify the removal of all the plaster (on the hard), which would expose the stone and, perhaps, indicators of changes made to the building. It may reveal more recent changes, like the positions of windows and gallery fixings. It could also reveal whether pre 1786 fabric was incorporated into the newer building.

Exposing the stonework will allow the walls to dry and will permit ad hoc pinning and pointing work to be carried out, possibly as volunteer work or for subsidised training, if conditions are safe enough to do so. The testing of mortar exposed will help with understanding the make up of the mortar used for bedding and for pointing in 1890 and in 1786.

8.05	Other walls	<p>[i] Remove areas of loose or disaggregated plaster from other walls + coup</p> <p>[ii] Take down plasterboard sheets overlying original construction in stairwell and changing room.</p> <p>[iii] Expose safe lintels over openings and review condition.</p>
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Notes:

The same reasoning could apply to the external walls in the east apartments, especially where plasterwork is badly affected by condensation. Where superficially lined walls have been opened, evidence of earlier decorative paper finishes have been exposed and these can be examined / recorded.

8.06	Attic space	<p>[i] Locate walk boards to span gap between trusses with associated rope hand grips.</p> <p>[ii] Examine and record roof structure in detail.</p>
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Notes:

The attic has not been forensically examined, chiefly for reasons of safety; avoiding standing on the long, up-fixed branders spanning between the main trusses. If there were budget and/or volunteer time available to erect safe walkways between the trusses, more thorough examination and recording of the roof can be carried out. This work could be done with support from a dendrochronologist who may be able to identify the species, age, source and date of felling of the trees used in the roof construction. It may also be possible to see how some of the timber sections used have been either brought from another use or reconfigured insitu to reveal a different design pre 1890 or pre 1827.

A more directly practical function of this examination would be to assess in more detail the condition of the sarking and establish when it might need to be replaced, which would influence the programming of work to the roof.

Consider making a new access to the loft, closer to the centre of the first floor room, providing greater clearance for passing long equipment and materials into the loft.

8.07	Graveyard	<p>It has been suggested that FoOSM might try to get access to Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) equipment. Work at burial grounds in the USA has been shown to offer valuable insights so far as finding and identifying human remains and coffins is concerned. It will yield learning opportunities as well as provide a way to, at least virtually, reunite lairs with memorials. It may also be usefully deployed in the solum.</p>
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It could be worth finding out where the headstones were dumped, to see if any pieces can be recovered (see proposed buried headstones detail elsewhere).

## 2 Repairs / Improvements: Urgent / emergency

8.08	Tower parapet	<p>[i] <u>Obtain the advice of a suitably qualified mason and stone conservation specialist</u> to assess the work required to correct the problem of collapse and stabilising the stonework while making repairs.</p> <p>[ii] Discuss options for redundant flue; tying the stonework back together may be more effective without recreating the flue within the new work. The treatment of masonry cracks, consideration of whether ties bridging the flue lower down, plus backfilling of the flue could be discussed at the time.</p>
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[iii] Prepare scope of work and a budget proposal and seek funding. The feasibility of a whole building project is relevant as this will be a large expense and a strategic partial demolition is probably not an option. Early decisions will be required, as initiating these works will represent a large commitment, which must be clearly understood from the start.

[iv] Erect safety barriers and signage on the ground, which anticipate the outcome of a possible collapse. This should be an early step.

[v] Without prejudging the conservation masonry specialist's opinion, allow for very carefully controlled dismantling of the north east corner parapet, the removal of the brickwork and the reconstruction of the parapet with salvaged and new matching stone, replacing the missing cornice stones. Coordinate these works with other repair works to the stone parapet generally, repairs to the stonework immediately below the parapet and replacement of the lead covered roof.

Notes:

This section prioritises the more pressing requirements and begins with the tower parapet and belfry level stonework. Though the cracks in the tower east and west walls have been of some concern, work on these should be guided by the structural engineer and the masonry specialist, indeed they may not warrant early intervention.

There are several concerns about the stability of the tower but none is more pressing than the north east corner of the parapet. It is the writer's opinion that if left without attention to these concerns, the parapet will collapse. Though it is not possible to predict when a collapse might occur, the important factor is that when it does, the impact is going to be substantial. As well as potentially life-threatening, if the brick section falls, it is sufficiently massive to cause significant damage to the structure below. Of great concern is the effect this would have on the adjacent parapet structure, immediately above and around the louvre openings. The weight of the parapet above these openings on the north and east sides of the tower could precipitate a chain of collapse which could present far greater challenges.

A photographic record of the area and the measured survey will help to offset the disadvantages of no longer having scaffolding in the tower but a mobile platform for access for the masonry specialist will be needed for a proper assessment.

8.09 Scaffolding (external)

[i] Erect scaffolding to the tower to its full height and on all sides, which will involve some support from the roof; cantilevers will not be an option.

Notes:

It will be necessary to utilise the tower roof for some tasks though it cannot sustain significant loads. A safe plan for movement from the external scaffolding onto the roof should be established. The scaffolding should provide screening from the weather and the means to raise new materials and dispose of waste material and be capable of sustaining the loads likely to result from moving and temporarily storing large pieces of stone, as well as the masonry team. It will be important to roll into a scaffold hire as many important tasks as possible, within cost and time constraints.

8.10 Harling

[i] Remove all cement harling from the tower and make safe. This may entail some stone indenting work.

Notes:

To carry out the repair works to the corner of the tower parapet and to prevent future falls it will be necessary to remove sections of cement harling which will, in turn, promote a need to repair the stone wall which is then exposed. Evidence from harling falls shows that the separation of the harling has occurred in the outer wetting layer of some stones and when slabs of harling have fallen away they have taken pieces of stone with them. The plan of work should anticipate occasionally more extensive repairs than pinning and pointing.

8.11 Lime coating work

[i] During the work to take down harling etc., carry out such preparation for lime plastering work as may be advantageous.

Notes:

If it is deemed sufficient, on a temporary basis, to leave the tower walling repaired, pinned and pointed, the decisions about a final finish of lime plastering may be deferred until the building's finish can be considered as a whole. The roof interface - flashings and fillets - may be better dealt with as a separate item, though the interdependency of functions may bring forward work to the roof, to ensure a reliable seal is maintained at the tower faces throughout these works. Being currently roofing felt, the efficacy of the existing seal is unlikely to remain good for long.

There will need to be a system of review, as work progresses, to determine the best policy for plastering the rubble panels between edges and openings. The dressed stone rebates have eroded substantially and there are risks associated with feathering lime render edges to almost nonexistent rebates. A lime plaster may be deemed an essential protection for the stonework and the managing of moisture in the wall. Managing rebates would be an item for consideration by a stone specialist.

8.12 Tower interior

Either:-

[i] Erect scaffolding to the full height of the tower interior with a braced stand off for working room and the means to move ladder positions so all areas of the walls can be accessed.

Or

[ii] Utilising existing putlog recesses, erect safe working platforms at intervals up the height of the tower, with moveable floor sheets and the means to swap and stagger ladder and hoist voids.

Notes:

The work to the outside of the tower wall cannot be carried out without access to the inside of the wall. It was noted that the belfry level stonework, as viewed from the inside, is requiring early attention so a means of accessing the full height of the tower from within is essential. This could be done by reinstating a scaffolding though this has limitations, in terms of a confined space in which to move and work. Also costs and limited duration of availability. There is a proposal to examine the feasibility of utilising the retained putlog recesses to support safe working platforms with ladder access between. If this can be achieved within the limitations of the structural bearings and the necessary health and safety measures, it could be the best outcome for a longer term programme of work inside the tower, which can include the later installation of permanent floors and means of access. The highest putlogs are just below the tower roof joists level.

8.13 Tower roof

[i] As stone work progresses to the top of the tower, include for removal of the lead covered roof, the roof boarding and the replacement of the joists onto a firm bearing (possibly from salvage) and preparation of lead to stone interface.



[ii] Reconfigure back gutter bed and replace boarding with new diagonally laid nom. 25mm th. edge nailed, penny gapped, redwood boarding and re-form roof access hatch.

[iii] When masonry work is concluding, reconfigure the lead back gutter, gutter outlet, edge upstands and hatch upstands and finish new roof with  $\geq$  code 8 lead, laid in full accordance with the Lead Sheet Association's published guidance. Install a new apron flashing into stone raggle, allowing for a venting detail, if necessary, according to the use of the space below.

Notes:

Evidence indicates the tower roof has been repaired in the past. It is currently patched to mitigate the worst of the leaks found during survey but this is unlikely to last for more than a two or three years in its current state.

When planning these works it will be necessary to review the method of disposal of the rainwater and snow melt. Currently there is a cast iron pipe directing the water to the saddle roof below. This pipe should be maintainable from the roof of the tower and its outfall should be free, to avoid the risk of an accumulation of debris within the pipe. Where water emerges from the pipe there should be a sacrificial lead flashing layer and a method for dispersal of the water's velocity onto the roof surface. When the main roof is re-slatted, an opportunity may arise to provide a rooflight behind the tower, to help with maintenance.

8.14 Stone erosion /  
damage

[i] Invite stone specialist to inspect the stones generally for erosion, with particular emphasis on the belfry louvre mullions.

Notes:

Within this section there will need to be proper consideration given to some of the more severely eroded mullion stones in the four pairs of louvre openings. The masonry specialist will need to make a judgement about what will be required, which may be difficult without access to the interior of the tower at this level. Photographic records are available and a GoPro on a long pole may help. It seems likely that when the hungry joints around the arches of the louvres are attended to, the urgency of the concern about stone erosion may diminish.





The broken cornice stone on the south west corner should be replaced and there will be several other stones which should be repaired or replaced.

8.15 Dry rot, generally

[i] In addition to the works described above, engage a specialist to remove all affected fabric which is supporting rot infestation, including timbers in the tower. This relates to the removal of the fibre cement (possible asbestos) boarding.

[ii] Engage specialist to repair and treat significant structural timbers affected by rot infestation. If bower beams or fish plates are required, these should be factored into the design thinking for the whole building.

Notes:

Dry rot and wet rot in the building needs to be managed with a degree of urgency but this should not be considered in isolation; environmental controls and management of leaks are relevant factors.

The outbreak of dry rot (*Serpula lacrymans*) in the north east corner of the tower is quite extensive; reaching from the tower to the main space dividing wall and affecting an area of flooring nearby. It would be fair to assume that the established leaks in the tower roof, the tower chimney flue and the longstanding leak where the harling fall punctured the roof have been contributory factors.

While the building is cool and well aired the development of rot will be suppressed. To deal with the urgent aspect of this problem it will be necessary to ensure there are no leaks, to maintain the rainwater system and to ensure the building is kept ventilated. Additionally it would be prudent to remove all affected timbers, cut well back into sound timber and to cut away affected plaster, mortar, grounds and dooks and treat the whole with an appropriate boron solution.

It would be expected that eradication work would be carried out by an established specialist which may issue a guarantee for their work. It is arguably more important that the specialist carrying out this work has a good understanding of conservation principles and that they employ experienced tradespeople with the necessary skills.

As above, the removal to coup or to salvage of all floor and dado timbers may help to accommodate other work while this process of eradication of rot is under way. To facilitate this work, it is advised that the partition which forms the vestibule could be part or wholly taken down, to allow ladders and long timbers to be moved easily into and out of the building, directly through the parking bay.

8.16 Funding

[i] Determine the scope of emergency work, take advice and apply for funding.

Notes:

Funding for emergency work should be a priority but a successful application may depend on a formal proposal for a whole building project. Furthermore, these urgent works need to be coordinated by a competent person and executed with proper management and cost controls.

### 3 Repairs / Improvements: Desirable / maintenance

Some works which are desirable may depend, for funding, on their being part of a whole repurposing plan.

8.17 Roofing

[i] Regularly monitor the roof and roof interfaces for leaks and, when circumstances permit, evaluate the condition of the roof sarking.

[ii] As work on the tower progresses review the need to form effective seals with the roof and how this may impact decisions about when to apply a lime plaster to the tower and when to re-roof the building.

Notes:

The fibre cement roofing, while unattractive and inappropriate, can remain in place while it is functioning as intended; keeping the building dry. When the tower works are complete the incidences of holing of the roof will be fewer or nil. Unless a close assessment of the sarking dictates otherwise, we can assume the lightweight tile finish is a reliable protection from the weather. However, if the sarking is found to be in a fragile state, even for supporting lightweight tiles, it may then be necessary to escalate the roof finish replacement. While the roof remains intact, it is only as good as its joints so the flashings of the saddle roof, the tower and the chimney abutments will need to be closely monitored for leaks and a judgement made about repairs on a regular basis.

8.18 Harling

[i] Establish programme for removal of the harling from the OSM walls, in accordance with feedback from harling and stone repair work on the tower.

Notes:

The walls of the old church hall will be suffering from the lack of porosity or breathability of the cement harling and this should qualify as an urgent repair, even if it is not as urgent as the removal of the harling from the tower. In the event of funders not considering the harling on the walls as a high priority, a rolling programme to tackle manageable sections of wall in sequence, with access from local areas of scaffolding (perhaps owned by Friends of Old St. Michael's) may prove to be a workable method. The work could be undertaken as subsidised training or volunteer work for suitably capable people and programmed according to the availability of these people or of funds. Assuming the wall can be made secure against the weather, the lime plastering of the building can be seen as a later whole-building exercise, rather than plastering in sections and risking differences in the mix or colour arising. A proper relationship of the lime finish to the footings stones will require some modification of ground levels at the base of the walls.

8.19 Lime work

[i] Establish a programme of pinning and pointing sections of wall where the cement harling has been removed. Keep plans under review as evidence comes to light.

[ii] Depending on findings and in consultation with specialist, consider whether areas of degraded stonework will need to have a sacrificial layer of lime protection or if indenting is feasible/necessary.

Notes:

There are difficulties involved in separating out discrete sections of work and all works need to allow for the possibility of "leakage" or "unknowns". For example, when attending to the removal of harling, questions may arise concerning the dressed stones at the margins. At the moment the quoins on the corners of the building are concealed by the harling and, ideally, for the building to be properly articulated in its finished state, these stones need to be expressed again. If the many years of cover by harling has deeply compromised the surface of these stones a decision about how to manage this in relation to the proposed lime plastering of the rubble panels would be needed. There should be a discussion about how "sacrificial" the surface of dressed stones can be and what remedial effects might be worth undertaking but this report assumes that the dressed stones around openings and edges will be expressed, relative to a rolling policy of replacement or indenting, according to need, on an ad hoc basis.

As with work to the roof, it presupposes there are no alterations planned for the repurposing of the building which might significantly undo any of these works

8.20 Rainwater system

[i] Repair and maintain the existing cast iron rainwater system and replace broken clayware traps. Monitor where the system fails during rain storms to better protect new works from the effects of spillage.

Notes:

The rainwater system, as it stands, is inadequate and, even if it is regularly maintained, it is going to fail during heavy rainfall. It will fail for a lack of general flow capacity but also because of the concentration of load on the front elevations, where there are no downpipes. The rainwater system will need to be updated before work to the elevations can be completed and should be considered as part of the re-roofing work; larger cast metal gutters will be heavy and will require strong hangers to be fitted to the roof timbers, before slating. Additional rainwater drops may not be an option.

NB: Based on a rough calculation of the effective roof area (433m<sup>2</sup> / 78m perim) an inclined gutter flow rate would need to be better than 3 l/s which cannot be achieved with the 5" nom. half round c.i. gutters with 3.25" downpipes. A full calculation for sizes of gutter and downpipe to comply with BS 12056 should be carried out. On site soakaways are not thought to be an option but a GPR scan of the graveyard south of the building may yield a route for a new rainwater drain which can connect to the combined sewer in Bank Street. Enquiries have been made with Scottish Water.

8.21 Windows / Doors

- [i] Generally, take down wire screens overlying many windows, to permit access for maintenance. Lay aside for redeployment, subject to evaluation.
- [ii] According to whether they are for repair or for boarding over either :
  - scrape and prepare timber for painting, including repairs to the stone interface and mastic joint and remove dried and cracked putty. Replace broken glass panes with clear float glass of appropriate thickness, re-putty and paint. In some circumstances, sashes will require to be taken off site for repair. If frames are rotted, take window out of the opening and lay aside and board over the opening.

or

- cut a plywood sheet to the size and shape of the opening, making the fewest number of joints as possible and aligning joints to mounting points. Fixing of boards to be to a mounting frame which is inboard of the existing window or reveal (see details elsewhere). Rooms may be sufficiently ventilated if the boards are a close fit (to keep weather and birds out) but not a tight fit. If in doubt, the boards may be drilled to provide additional ventilation.

Notes:

The windows are in differing states of repair at the time of this report. Because there is no electricity on site, the daylight provided by the windows is valuable but several windows are broken through vandalism and in the more seriously damaged cases, wind driven weather is able to penetrate the building. Repairs are therefore necessary.

The options are, to an extent, determined by the condition of individual windows but, in principle, the choices are to either repair the windows capable of sustaining themselves with replacement glass (R) or to board up the opening with 12mm exterior grade plywood. (B). Cost will be a factor. The final decision about how to treat individual windows will be made at the time there are the means to carry out the work. Suggestions are made below with additional comments.

Where the joinery remains sufficiently robust it is suggested that windows are repaired to an original state. There are differing needs and each shall be treated according to those needs. In some cases, the frames are rotten but most could be described as serviceable; in that they can take a pane of glass and are paintable. It will be a matter for judgement according to current site conditions but leaving off wire and extraneous framing, where possible, could be considered. Though there is a risk of further vandalism, the risk does not seem to be as high as it was when the building was first abandoned. It can be said to be in the interests of promoting the project to have the building look its best and having the windows clear of obstructions and regularly cleaned may be an important factor in this.

A popular option for long term protection of openings in old churches is to fit bespoke made polycarbonate sheets to the outside of the window, the edge of which is close enough to the stone surround to prevent the ingress of rain or birds but offset enough to allow for ventilation. This is an expensive option for a temporary measure which would be high maintenance and may not be appropriate for Old St. Michael's.



GW01	Take down wire mesh and support frame. Scrape and prepare the timber frame, clean out defective mastic and remove broken putty. Make any necessary repairs to sill and ensure a working drip. Take down hardware and ease, clean, oil and refit. Apply new paint and putty and repoint stone interface with newly made traditional burnt sand mastic. Clean window.	(R)
GW02	As for GW01 + one of the lower panes has been broken + needs replaced.	(R)
GW03	As for GW01 but the large lower panes are absent. These can be reglazed or a temporary boarding used to close the window to weather or the ingress of wildlife. If the latter, the support framing for the board(s) to be built internally and the boards fixed through the openings into the internal frame, to avoid damaging the stone jambs or the window frame with the board frame fixings.	(R)
GW04	As for GW01.	(R)
GW05	As for GW01 but two large panes are broken and need to be replaced or boarded over as for GW03. These are prominent windows and it may be a better promotion of the project if they are glazed, rather than boarded.	(R)
GW06	This window is severely compromised by rotting in the lower part and weathering generally. The window, as it is, is not original. As there is another window lighting this room it would be feasible to remove all rotten timber and board this opening, retaining daylight from GW07.	(B)
GW07	This window is a vertical sliding sash construction which can provide daylight and some fixed ventilation to this room, though the chimney flue can also help with ventilation. The window can be disassembled and repaired off site if necessary and refitted to repaired jambs. The sashes are not subdivided so may be glazed with float glass, polycarbonate or a mixture of glazing and plywood.	(R/B)
GW08	As for GW07.	(R/B)
GW09	As for GW07.	(R/B)
GW10	As for GW07.	(R/B)
FW01	Repair and paint. Fit new glass in bottom two panels. All as a temporary repair. A new window will need to be made for this opening at a later stage.	(R)
FW02	Repair, ease and paint. Fit new glass in bottom sash (or temporary plywood). Replace broken diamond lights.	(R)
FW03	Repair, ease and paint. Replace broken diamond lights.	(R)
TW01	Repair and paint.	(R)
TW02	As for GW01.	(R)
TW03	As for GW01. Reglaze all broken panes. Repair broken astragals. Note, the astragals adjacent to broken panes are severely weathered / brittle and there is some furniture beetle attack evident in the lower sections, indicating deterioration of timber. Take the sashes off site for workshop repair.	(R)
RL01 + RL02	Strip back tiles and remove iron rooflight to workshop. Strip window back to clean metal and paint, reglaze and refit. Allow for local repairs to sarking.	(R)

GD01	Carefully remove loose sections of render at jambs and expose door frame. Assuming the frame is serviceable for continued use, expose its interface with the stone surround prep to forming new mastic joint. Take down both doors and secure opening with temporary plywood sheets (use GD03 as temporary access). Remove doors to workshop for repair and strip for refinishing. Fit each door with 1.5 pairs of 152mm heavy duty steel hinges and rehang. Add touch up coat of paint and fit suitable security hardware. Hang notice boards etc. on purpose made frame adjacent.
GD02	Remove nailed on planks and open doors to establish if they can be removed (see note concerning ceiling height and the need to lift the doors off their hinges). These doors should be taken off site for workshop repair but it may be wise to fit a weathering board over the decayed bottom edge to secure the opening against the ingress of animals or threats to fire security.
GD03	As for GD01.
GD04	No action. These may be disposed of when vestibule removed.
GD05	Ditto
GD06	Ease, clean and maintain.
GD07	No action. Door has no heritage value.
GD08	No action. Door has no heritage value.
GD09	Clean all parts and decorate.
GD10	Clean all parts and decorate.
GD11	Absent.
GD12	Clean all parts and decorate.
GD13	The door appears to be in good order though it has not been fully accessed at time of report. The door appears to be fixed in position and no longer hung on hinges. The main panel has a crack in the centre. More exploratory work to be done here. Wallpaper seen behind sheeting on tower side.
GD14	Clean all parts and decorate. Rehang door and refit working latch.
FD01	Clean all parts and decorate.
Misc.	The missing soot door may be somewhere on site and should be found, cleaned, painted and relocated. Optionally, find an alternative at correct type / size from architectural salvage, clean, finish and fit.

#### 4 Repairs / Improvements: Deferred / regular review / new purpose

8.24	Hygrothermal risk evaluation	<p>The chosen use for Old St. Michael's, when the time comes, will present problems for the designer of the building conversion. Adhering to the requirements of the current Scottish Building Standards will be problematic. It is unlikely, for example, that Technical Standards Part 6 can be satisfied without substantial alterations to the general fabric of the building as well as the large areas of glazing. Even if high standards are achieved for Part 6 compliance, this may result in the creation of other problems related to the management of moisture in the building and this latter point may be especially onerous for some possible uses.</p> <p>It is advised that any new proposals for the building take account of the most recent developments in hygrothermal analysis to optimise the performance of the structure and to allow for negotiations with Building Standards to achieve the best outcome.</p> <p><a href="https://arrow.tudublin.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&amp;context=sdar">https://arrow.tudublin.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&amp;context=sdar</a></p>
8.25	Security and Fire Safety	<p>While OSM has no owner and it is not feasible to insure the building, the main purpose of security will be to prevent break ins which might result in the setting of fires. There is no active electrical supply or gas supply.</p> <p>Because of the vagueness of the current situation, FoOSM should take advice on their legal status. As there is a potential for FoOSM to be perceived as de facto owners of the building, they may need to distance themselves from liability to the public and to surrounding owners of businesses and buildings. They should also not increase risks, such as by storing volatile liquids, compressed gas or li-ion batteries on the premises. The advice sought should also cover signage, so FoOSM can post informative, legal disclaimers on site.</p> <p>It should also be made clear that the building is currently "unsafe". Not just in the sense that bits may fall off it, or there may be holes in the floor to fall into but also in that permanently sealing doors and windows means that escape from fire may be an enhanced risk for anyone caught in the building; clarity about who is authorised to enter the building will be relevant.</p> <p>Of primary importance is making the building lock fast and though this may mean applying for funding to buy good security hardware, the securing of the building should be as robust as reasonably possible.</p> <p>Fitting solar powered lighting with sensors may help to deter vandals. Also using battery powered security cameras and the display of warning signs may further help to manage security. For the latter to be affordable it may be desirable to come to an arrangement with a nearby business willing to allow the cameras to register with their wireless local area network. Otherwise "trail cams" are an option which would be more autonomous but also more demanding on whoever is monitoring them. For them to function and remain functional, they would need to be securely mounted, out of easy reach, outside the building (for infra red capable cameras). Points of particular vulnerability are the north and east elevations and the tower external door. The west door area is a high traffic area but seating areas should be excluded from camera oversight. When electricity can be restored to the building, security will become much easier to manage.</p> <p>The local Fire Service and Police should be notified of the building's status.</p>

The foregoing in whole or part does not constitute legal advice.

8.26

## 5 Desired outcomes and promotion of goals

This is a slightly more abstract category and may be said to be outwith the remit of this report. However, it is important to the chances of success that obstacles to what is involved in the repurposing of Old St. Michael's are seen clearly.

The challenges of developing proposals and a business plan are immense and not to be undertaken lightly. The intention of this report is to try to enumerate the issues which will need to be tackled at different stages of that exercise. These are non-specific comments, in so far as they relate to the building's needs, rather than a particular project's needs.

The more urgent issues noted above are ones which probably cannot wait for a new user and which require urgent attention without access to the capital funding which might be made available to the prospective new owner. So there are stages through which the building must survive, before it can become the best version of itself; occupied, used, loved, maintained and sustainably funded.

The primary objective at the start of this report is to help secure the building's survival by identifying those things which most threaten it. Unfortunately, the report cannot say how this objective can be achieved; who will be doing it and how it will be funded. The work FoOSM have done and are doing, entirely voluntarily, is exceptional but it may be too much to ask them to take on the more onerous task of setting up a properly constituted building preservation trust (BPT), carry out fund raising, organising events and instituting essential works by appropriately qualified conservationists. For advice on this, it is recommended that FoOSM consult with the Heritage Trust Network and become a member body. From which they will get good advice and be shown what the next steps could be.

Another important task is to promote the cause of the preservation of the building. Not just to the public and to potential funders of FoOSM's efforts; the main aim is to find a community group which wants to take on Old St. Michael's and they will have a slightly different agenda. The repurposing of OSM requires a project which is not necessarily about conserving the building. Although conservation, as part of a broader heritage narrative, underpins the motivation for a new use, the new use will need to stand up for itself and be able to attract funding on the merits of the project; funding which may be specifically unavailable to conservation or repair work.

The purpose of preserving Old St. Michael's is ultimately best served by marketing the opportunity to prospective groups but, in the interim, the need for financial help with repairing and, if necessary, mothballing the building needs to be promoted with sympathetic parties by demonstrating a level of commitment to the task and making clear the significance and value the building has to the Crieff community. This can be tackled through continued research and through ongoing community engagement, both of which will take much commitment and energy.

NB: To apply for assistance from Historic Environment Scotland's Historic Environment Recovery Fund for help with the costs involved in "mothballing" a listed building, the applicant should be an SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) or other properly constituted body.

Funding bodies which can grant sufficiently large sums to make an important difference for Old St. Michael's will have strict criteria and there will be a reticence to fund repairing work which may be subsumed by the ultimate plan and which could be covered by the project's development funding. Getting the purpose for the building established may result in better progress with funding.



## References

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Strathearn Herald 15/04/2016 Local people have their say on derelict Crieff church.	2016
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Crieff Community Action Plan - 2013 to 2018	2020
Canmore SC 1531948	
The Land Register / Sasines	
National Library of Scotland	
<u>Dictionary of Scottish Architects for William Stirling I and William Stirling II</u>	

## TABLE OF APPENDICES

A: Table of significant dates

B: Extracts from HES details of listing and from the Buildings At Risk register

C: The "1888" drawing and photograph from Porteous' History of Crieff

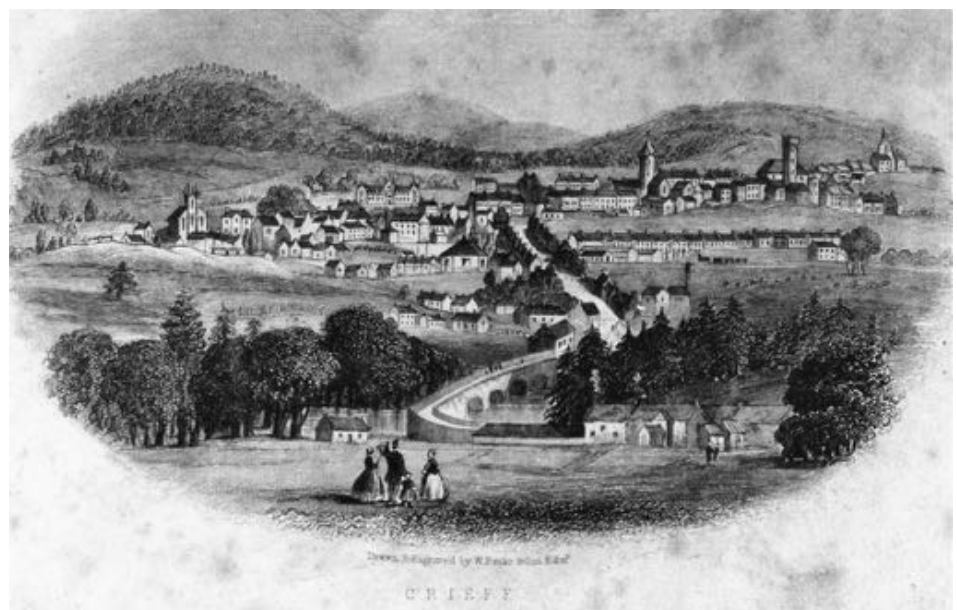
D: Structural engineer's report by David Burke

E: Apex Property Care's report by John Robertson

F: Drawings of the existing building by ARA

G: Biodiversity statement by Andrew Rodger

H: Supplementary images



Mid 19th century view of Crieff by W. Banks, showing the old parish church (D. Ferguson Collection)

## Appendix A: Table of significant dates

1787:–	Building work on the replacement church dedicated to St. Michael commences (no date for the cessation of work)
1827:–	Building work on the replacement church resumes under direction of William Stirling
1882:–	New church of St. Michael completed and former parish church becomes available for conversion to a church hall
1888:–	Alleged date of the only current photograph of church prior to conversion works for hall
1890:–	Conversion work complete, the remodelled church hall opens to the public
1992:–	After 102 years as a church hall, the Church of Scotland markets the Old St. Michael's. Sells to Crieff Community Hall Inc. on 27/01/1994 for £2000.00
2007:–	Large and heavy piece of cement harling fell from high on the north side of the east elevation, which smashed through the tiling, sarking and ceiling of the roof below
2009:–	Karate club, the last key-holder, relinquished responsibility for the building
2012:–	Crieff Community Hall Inc., company SC139677 dissolved and building becomes bona vacantia. Old St Michael's abandoned completely
2015:–	The QLTR disclaims the building 07/12/2015
2016:–	CUSP report + Friends of Old St. Michael's Church Hall and Grounds formed
2017:–	Further inspection by SCT and roof hole repaired by Gary Reid Roofing (foc)



Crieff 1878 [The David Ferguson Collection]

## Appendix B: Extracts from Historic Environment Scotland details of listing and from the Buildings At Risk register (as at March 2022).

DESCRIPTION (per Historic Scotland 1992 - LB23481)

<http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB23481>

Category: B

Date added: 05/10/1971

Local Authority: Perth & Kinross

Burgh: Crieff

Coordinates: 286573, 721519

Begun 1786, completed by William Stirling 1827. Large 5-bay, rectangular-plan, piend-roofed former church with crenellated, 4-stage, centre tower. Harled. Band courses to tower. Round-headed windows.

S (PRINCIPAL) ELEVATION: symmetrical. Tower (see below) projecting to centre bay, flanking bays each with tall window, tall narrow light to outer left and smaller narrow square-headed window to outer right with further round-headed window over.

TOWER: 1st stage with 2-leaf boarded timber square-headed door and 5-part fanlight, and small window to 2nd stage; 3rd stage with taller windows to S, E and W giving way to taller 4th stage with louvered bipartite openings to each elevation. (a)

W (ENTRANCE) ELEVATION: 2-leaf boarded timber door to centre with tall lights to flanking bays.

E ELEVATION: square-headed, asymmetrical fenestration to each floor.

N ELEVATION: largely blank elevation with door and adjacent small window to outer left.

Stylised multi-pane glazing patterns in timber windows. Grey slates. Coped and shouldered brick stack to E. (b)

INTERIOR: altered (see Notes); boarded dadoes retained.

Statement of Special Interest: Ecclesiastical building no longer in use as such. St Michael's Churchyard and boundary walls are listed separately. Formerly Crieff Parish Church, and built on the site of an earlier church of St Michael in the walls of which were found forty Robert I gold coins. Groome describes the current building as "the plain East church, with an ill-designed bell-tower". In 1882 the building became St Michael's church hall, when the new church was built in Strathearn Terrace, and subsequently a community hall in the late 20th century. Protracted building time partly due to a successful lawsuit against the heritors, when the church was abandoned unfinished by the contractor after the congregation occupied it during shower of rain. Finally completed by order of the Court of Session in 1827, at the joint expense of the heritors and feuars. Korner refers to a marble tablet sited over the door and inscribed "In memory of the late gallant Sir David Baird". He also mentions the graveyard being in a "bad state"? Interior alterations include removal of the gallery, installation of stage, raising of floor and altering vestibule to small room now accessed by stair. A king post roof is however concealed by modern ceiling tiles. [c]

*References - Bibliography: STATISTICAL ACCOUNT VOL X (1793), p598. NEW STATISTICAL ACCOUNT VOL X (1838), pp504, 518. Alexander Porteous HISTORY OF CRIEFF (1912), p124. N Haynes PERTH & KINROSS (2000), p89. CRIEFF COMMUNITY HALL: BRIEF OUTLINE OF HISTORY AND AIMS (2000). Sinclair Korner RAMBLES ROUND CRIEFF (1862). Groome's GAZETTEER VOL II, p307.*

*Notes: (a) Erroneously refers to East and West facing windows (b) For clarity, the roof has no slates and is finished with fibre cement tiles. Also the shouldered chimney stack is built from stone, not brick. (c) The suspended ceiling is now removed.*

## **Description (as per Buildings At Risk Register for Scotland)**

[https://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/search/keyword/Crieff/event\\_id/899188/building\\_name/st-michaels-hall-church-street-crieff](https://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/search/keyword/Crieff/event_id/899188/building_name/st-michaels-hall-church-street-crieff)

Large 5-bay, rectangular-plan, piend-roofed former church with crenellated, 4-stage, centre tower. Harled. Band courses to tower. Round-headed windows

### Development History:

23 January 1992: The Blairgowrie Advertiser reports that the Church of Scotland is soon to market the church, following increasing disrepair. Due to a lack of community facilities in the area, Tayside Regional Council and Perth and Kinross District Councils are coming under pressure to purchase the hall.

7 February 1992: The Strathearn Herald reports that Tayside Regional Council has considered demolishing the hall in the past to make way for a car park, but costs proved prohibitive. Crieff Community Council is calling for the retention of the hall and its continued community use under Council ownership.



November 1992: The hall is marketed by the Church of Scotland. 10  
September 1993: The Strathearn Herald reports that the hall has been bought by Crieff Community Arts Festival and fundraising for repairs has now commenced. It is likely to assume ownership next March.

November 1994: SCT understands that repair works are underway.  
December 1996: SCT understands that the hall is now reasonably well-established as a community arts centre.

February 1997: External inspection reveals the hall to appear in poor condition. December 2000: External inspection reveals the hall to appear vacant. Its condition is poor, with broken windows and blocked gutters.

13-07-07: Strathearn Herald reports that campaigners had hit out at an alleged lack of action by Perth and Kinross Council to halt the terminal decline of one of Crieff's landmark buildings. Three foot long piece of stone masonry was reported as having fallen from the rafters onto the floor in the middle of the night taking ceiling tiles and insulation down with it.

June 2009: Strathearn Herald reports that the hall's principal users; Kyokushin Karate Group, plan to close the hall due to lack of funds to repair it and provide adequate facilities.

September 2009: External inspection finds that the hall appears to be in partial use. The gutters are clear but the second floor windows in the tower are broken and there is a sprinkling of graffiti round the walls. The window frames are in need of maintenance.

7 November 2013: External inspection finds the building remains in much the same condition as seen previously.

5 May 2016: Crieff and Upper Strathearn Partnership (CUSP) advise the former church has been of local concern for some time. In March 2016, with financial assistance from Perth and Kinross Council, CUSP commissioned a report from an independent quantity surveyor outlining various options for the building including temporary repairs, full restoration into community use and demolition. The Partnership has ascertained that following the dissolution of the building's last owner, Crieff Community Hall Ltd, the property had been offered to the Crown. However, QLTR elected to disclaim ownership of the building in Autumn 2015. A Friends of St Michael's Church group has been formed and basic works to try and prevent further trespass/ damage at the site has been carried out by people engaged on community service orders.

15 October 2021: Friends of St Michael's Group Facebook confirms they have developed a memorial garden with plan, paths, information panels and benches for community use and have also commissioned a structural survey of the building.

*Bibliography: Haynes (2000), p89; Macara [1896], pp30-33.*

(a)

*Supplementary notes, in red, by Andrew Rodger: (a) "Macara refers to "Crieff its Traditions and Characters with Anecdotes of Strathearn" by Duncan Macara published in 1896 and should note pages 151-158, wherein the anecdotes confirm the presence of a gallery, the raised pulpit against the tower with canopy and the shot hole above. It also confirms the tower was only built up to wall head height at the time referred to, which we must assume is before 1827. The reference to Haynes is the book North Perth & Kinross published by the RIAS in 2000*

**Appendix C: Photograph per Porteous' History of Crieff (1912) and People's Friend 17.10.1888 drawing (possible edited tracing of former)**





**APPENDIX D: Report by David I Burke Structural Design Ltd.**





Friends of Old St. Michael's Hall & Grounds  
Church Street  
Crieff  
Perthshire  
PH7 3AE

17<sup>th</sup> September 2021

Dear Sirs,

**Structural Report on Old St. Michael's Hall, Church Street, Crieff, PH7 3AE**

Further to our recent visits, we would report the following.

**Description & Scope of Structural Inspection**

Old St. Michael's Hall is a substantial former ecclesiastical building of traditional stone masonry wall construction, covered externally with harling. The hipped roof is formed by jack rafters on purlins supported on a series of carpenter built king post trusses. The roof is clad with lightweight slate effect fibre cement tiles and sarking. The ground floor is a suspended timber floor, with dwarf walls, and a solum void. At the eastern end of the hall, there are ground floor and first floor rooms, separated from the main hall by a 9 inch plastered brick wall. This wall does not extend into the roof space. There is a central bell tower partially projecting from the south elevation.

For a full and detailed description of the building and its' history, reference should be made to text written by Andrew Rodger Architect.

David I Burke Structural Design Ltd were appointed to carry out a walk round structural survey and to report on the general structural condition of the building.

**Observations & Recommendations**

**Roof & Ceiling**

With the exception of rotten/worm affected timber, the main roof structure is considered to be structurally sound. If refurbishment/redevelopment proposals require the installation of roof windows, these should be located such that they do not clash with the main King Post roof trusses and hip rafters. Further structural assessment would be required once the size and number of windows, and any other proposed openings, are known.

It is assumed that the original roof would have been clad in traditional slate, with a nominal as laid weight in the order of 50kg/sqm. Sufficient information has been obtained to allow a detailed structural assessment of other roofing materials if necessary.

/ . . .

At this time, the integrity of the existing lath and plaster ceiling is unknown. In particular, the condition of the plaster key above the lath.

Information to help consider the structural aspects of any future redevelopment proposals is recorded on the attached annotated sketches:

DB-A4-21117-03A - Sketch Plan Roof Layout  
DB-A4-21117-04A - Section thro' Roof Structure

For a condition assessment of the slate cladding and underlay, flashings and rainwater goods, reference should be made to the architectural survey report. If re-slatting is to be carried out, it is advisable to budget for the replacement of a number of defective sarking boards. For a full and detailed assessment of the condition of the roof timber, including the wall-plates, reference should be made to the timber preservation specialist's survey report.

### **Bell Tower**

The bell tower is in a poor state of repair internally and externally. In the short-term urgent intervention is required to make safe and prevent further rapid deterioration.

- The harling, especially near the top, is boss and cracked, and probably needs to be entirely removed for reasons of safety. Some areas of harling have already fallen away. Depending on the condition of the stonework behind the harling, it may be possible/desirable to permanently remove the harling.
- Internal masonry has locally fallen away at the end of the beams supporting the bell tower roof/bell frame. The roof beam requires immediate temporary support to prevent roof collapse, until such time the masonry can be repaired.
- Some ends of the flat roof joists are evidently rotten and there are other signs of water ingress. The timber roof structure, covering and flashings require to be replaced in conjunction with local rebuilding of the supporting masonry. If possible, advantage should be taken of the current access scaffolding to carry out this work timeously.
- There is a brick chimney on the north east corner of the bell tower which is not well bonded to the stone masonry. Unless there are good reasons to keep the chimney, it is recommended that it is removed, and the corner rebuilt with fully bonded masonry to match the existing construction.
- The second floor blind window on the east elevation has been formed on the outside with 40mm thick sandstone slabs which are showing signs of exfoliation. Until a permanent repair can be implemented, for reasons of safety, it is recommended that these are held in place by a suitable temporary covering.
- There is broken and missing material at the central stone mullions of the upper double windows. This requires to be repaired/replaced according the advice of a stonemason.
- The internal face of the bell tower requires to be re-pointed.
- There is vertical cracking that can be traced through the joints and occasional cracked stone on the inside of the tower, generally occurring on the line of the main external walls. No evidence of the crack was observed externally. These vertical cracks are considered to be the result of historic differential settlement.

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Reference should be made to the attached annotated sketches:

- DB-A4-21117-02A - Sketch Plan Layout
- DB-A4-21117-03A - Sketch Plan Roof Layout
- DB-A4-21117-05A - Sketch South Elevation
- DB-A4-21117-06A - Sketch North Elevation
- DB-A4-21117-07A - Sketch East Elevation
- DB-A4-21117-08A - Sketch West Elevation

### **External Walls**

The main external walls are considered to be structurally sound. There are some minor cracks in the harling, as noted on the attached sketches, but these are generally considered to be indicative of problems in the harling rather than the masonry walls. The cracks at the ends of the lintels on the east elevation could be indicative of defective lintels, and at this stage, it is recommended to budget for replacing the existing lintels on this elevation with suitable replacement lintels. This to be reviewed when the harling is removed.

No evidence of foundation settlement was observed.

Reference should be made to the attached annotated sketches:

- DB-A4-21117-05A - Sketch South Elevation
- DB-A4-21117-06A - Sketch North Elevation
- DB-A4-21117-07A - Sketch East Elevation
- DB-A4-21117-08A - Sketch West Elevation

### **Ground Floor**

With the exception of rotten/worm affected timber, the main ground floor structure is considered to be presently sound. However, if refurbishment/redevelopment proposals require a greater floor imposed load capacity, then the existing timber ground floor may need to be strengthened or replaced.

Options for increasing the floor load capacity could involve, for example:

- i The installation of additional joists i.e. "doubling up".
- ii The installation of new intermediate dwarf walls.
- iii Replacement with a beam & block type floor.
- iv Replace with a ground supported slab, at/near external ground level.

Information to help consider the structural aspects of any future redevelopment proposals is recorded on the attached annotated sketch:

- DB-A3-21117-01A - Sketch Plan of Substructure

.../

/...

For a full and detailed assessment of the condition of the timber ground floor, including the wall-plates, reference should be made to the timber preservation specialist's survey report.

### **Internal Walls & First Floor**

With the exception of rotten/worm affected timber, the first floor structure is considered to be presently sound. However, refurbishment/redevelopment proposals will require to take in to account the floor imposed load capacity of the existing joists which is estimated to be in the order of 2.5-3.0 kN/sq.m.

The internal brick walls are considered to be structurally sound.

Information to help consider the structural aspects of any future redevelopment proposals is recorded on the attached annotated sketch:

DB-A4-21117-02A - Sketch Plan Layout

For a full and detailed assessment of the condition of the timber ground floor, including the wall-plates, reference should be made to the timber preservation specialist's survey report.

### **Foundations**

Two trial pits were excavated to reveal stone foundations laid upon a firm, sandy clay, formation. The foundations are considered to be adequate and should be suitable to accommodate additional loads from expected refurbishment/redevelopment proposals.

For details of the trial pit findings, reference should be made to the attached annotated sketch:

DB-A3-21117-01A - Sketch Plan of Substructure

.../

/...

## Conclusions

The bell tower needs urgent attention to make some areas of loose harling and stone safe, and to prevent further deterioration. Refer to drawings 02, 03, 05, 06, 07 & 08 for details. The advice of a stonemason should be sought in relation to stone repairs.

With the exception of these urgent repairs, the building is generally considered to be structurally sound.

There are minor cracks in the harling, mostly on the east elevation and north eastern corner, but these are considered to be indicative of damaged/defective harling rather than structural movement.

Sufficient information has been obtained to help consider the structural aspects of any future redevelopment proposals.

The condition of the existing lath and plaster ceiling remains to be assessed. In particular, the condition of the plaster key above the lath.

For a full and detailed assessment of the condition of the timber throughout the building, reference should be made to the timber preservation specialist's survey report.

For a full and detailed assessment of the below ground drainage within the curtilage of the building, reference should be made to the drainage survey report.

We trust that the above is clear and helpful, but readers should not hesitate to contact us to clarify or to discuss further any of the contents.

Yours faithfully,



David Burke, BSc CEng MStructE  
for David I Burke Structural Design Ltd

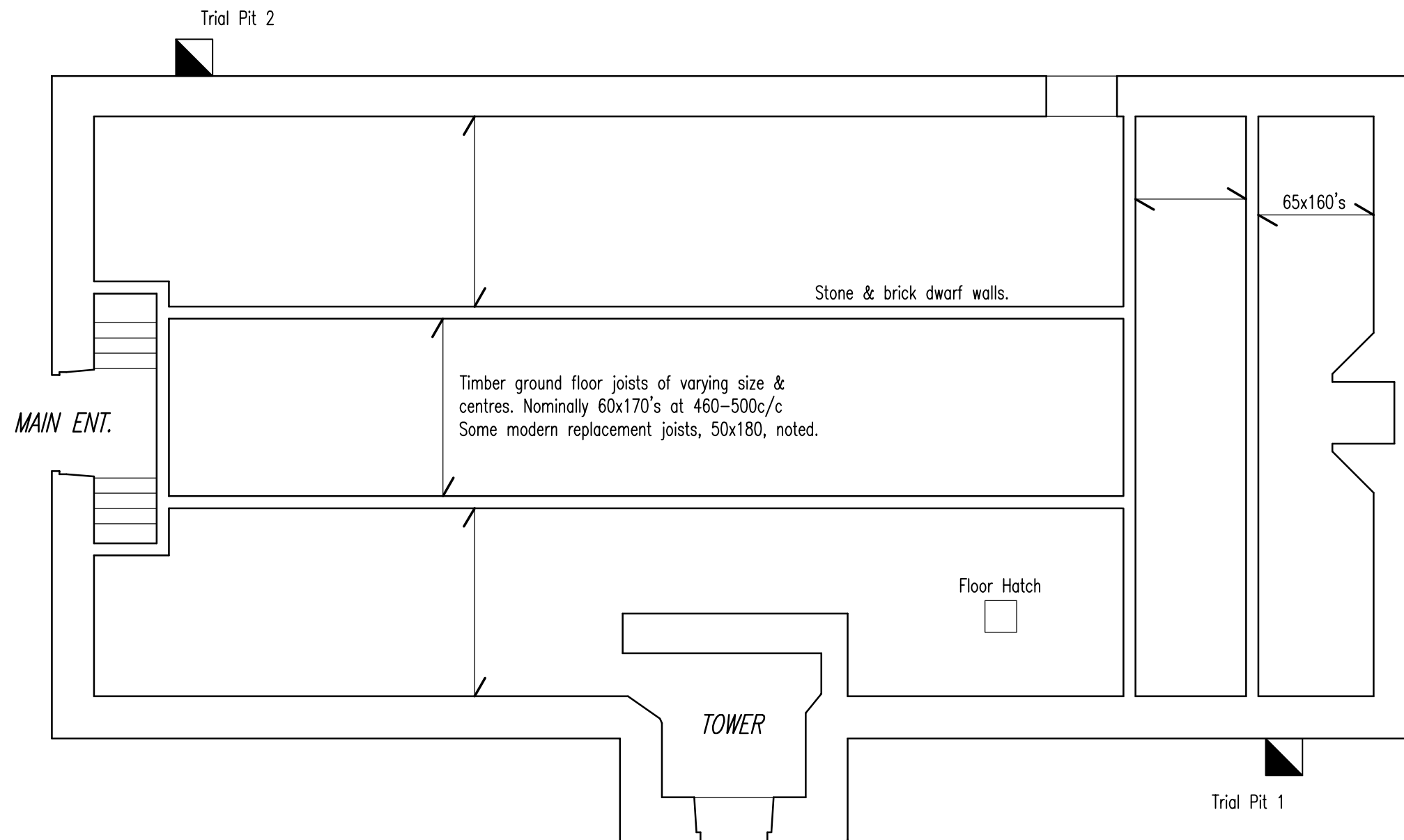
Encl.

This report makes reference to the attached annotated sketches:

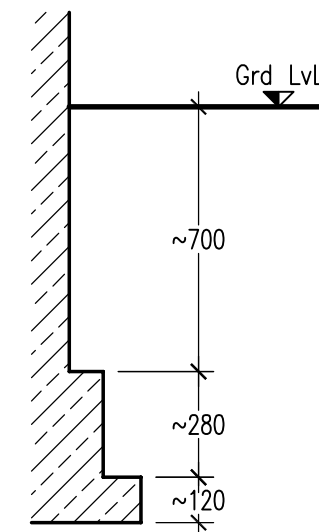
- DB-A3-21117-01A - Sketch Plan of Substructure
- DB-A4-21117-02A - Sketch Plan Layout
- DB-A4-21117-03A - Sketch Plan Roof Layout
- DB-A4-21117-04A - Section thro' Roof Structure
- DB-A4-21117-05A - Sketch South Elevation
- DB-A4-21117-06A - Sketch North Elevation
- DB-A4-21117-07A - Sketch East Elevation
- DB-A4-21117-08A - Sketch West Elevation

Rev.	Comments	Date
A	Reoport Sketch	Aug. '21

Approx. North

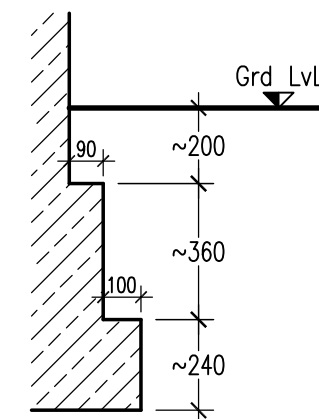


Sketch Plan of Substructure 1:100



Trial Pit 2

Formation: as Trial Pit 1, but less sandy.



Trial Pit 1

Foundation built with 100-150mm thick stones.

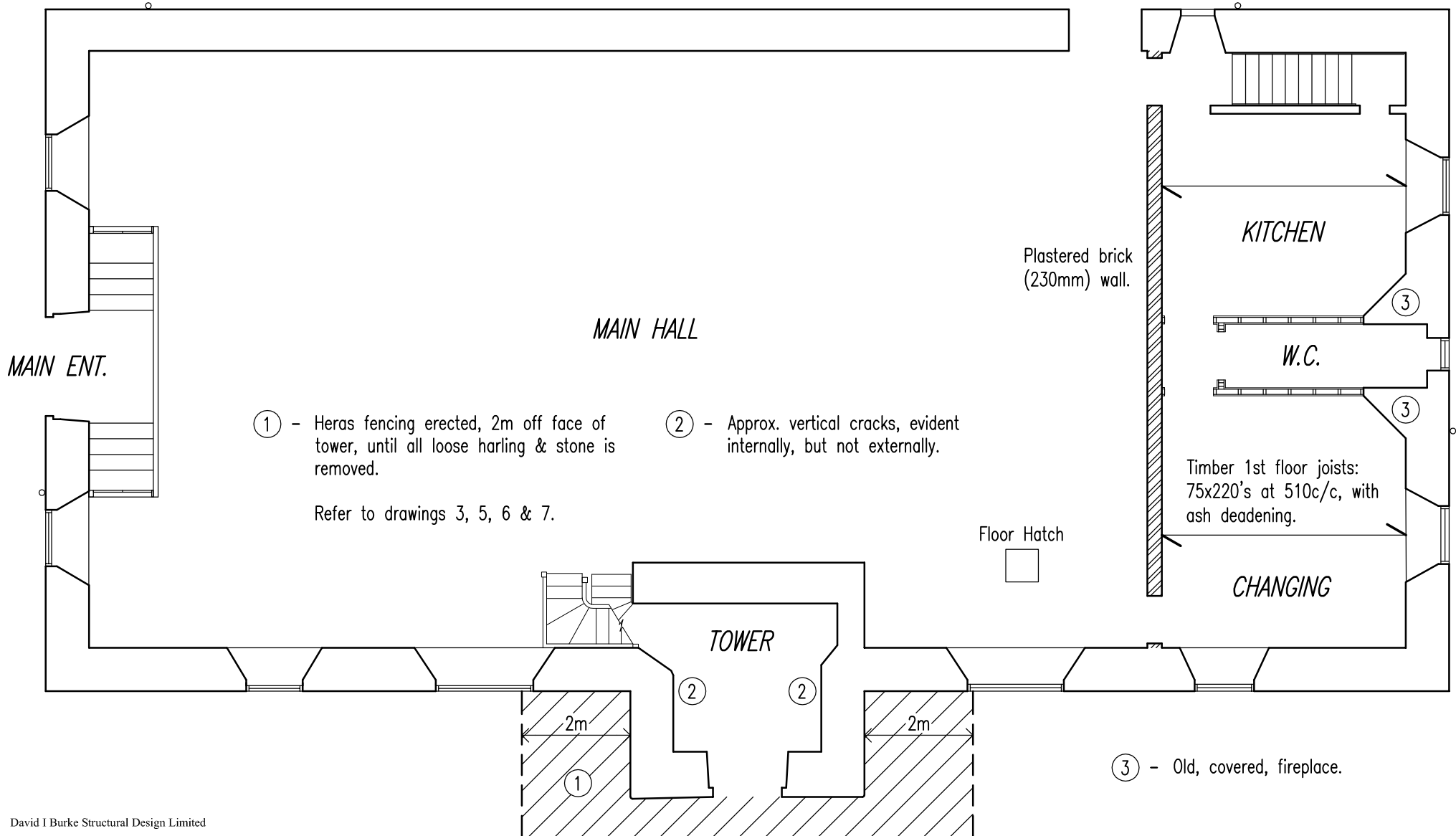
Formation: firm, light brown sandy clay.



# Sketch Plan Layout 1:100

Drg No. 21117/02

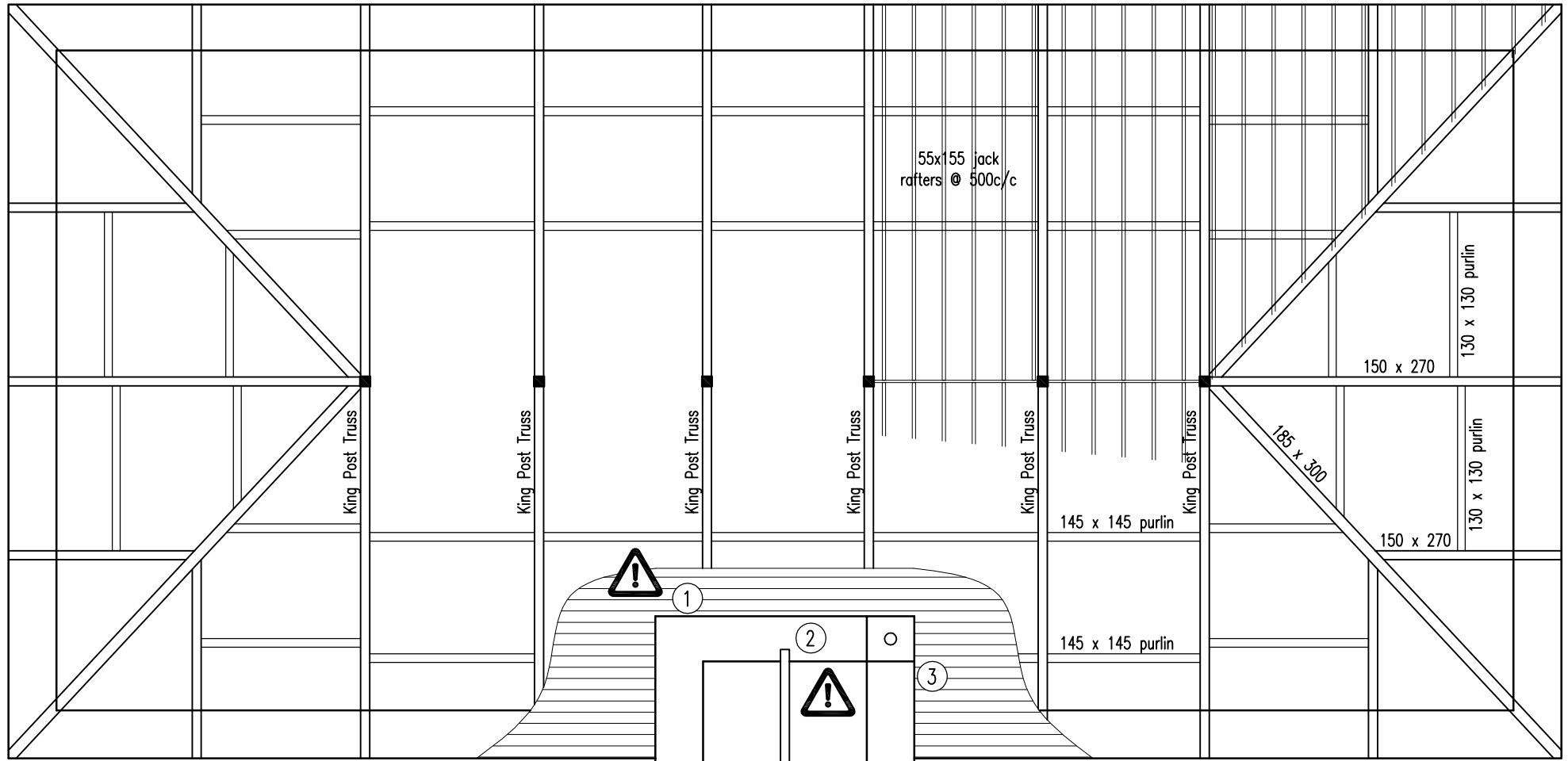
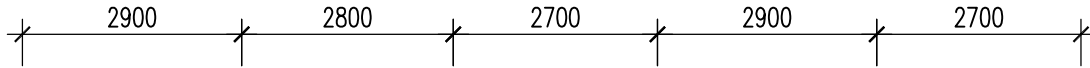
Rev.	Comments	Date
A	Reoport Sketch	Aug. '21



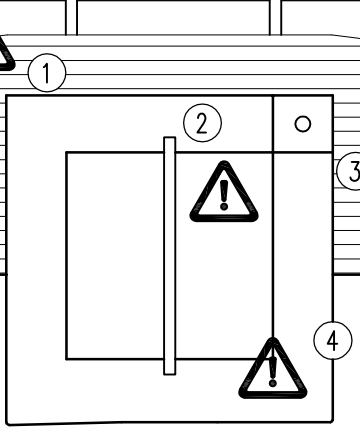
# Sketch Plan Roof Layout 1:100

Drg No. 21117/03

Rev.	Comments	Date
A	Reoport Sketch	Aug. '21



- ① - Bulging roughcast to rear of bell tower has fallen off. Adjacent areas to be checked/removed in order to be made safe. Reinstall/repair to architect's instructions.
- ② - Approx. 1.0sqm of masonry has locally fallen away below end of bell frame. Requires local rebuilding in conjunction with replacement flat roof.



- ③ - Area of poor quality slate repair, with no flashing upstand adjacent to bell tower.
- ④ - Refer to note 5 on drawing -/07

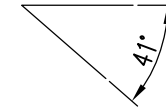
Drg No. 21117/04

Rev.	Comments	Date
A	Reoport Sketch	Aug. '21

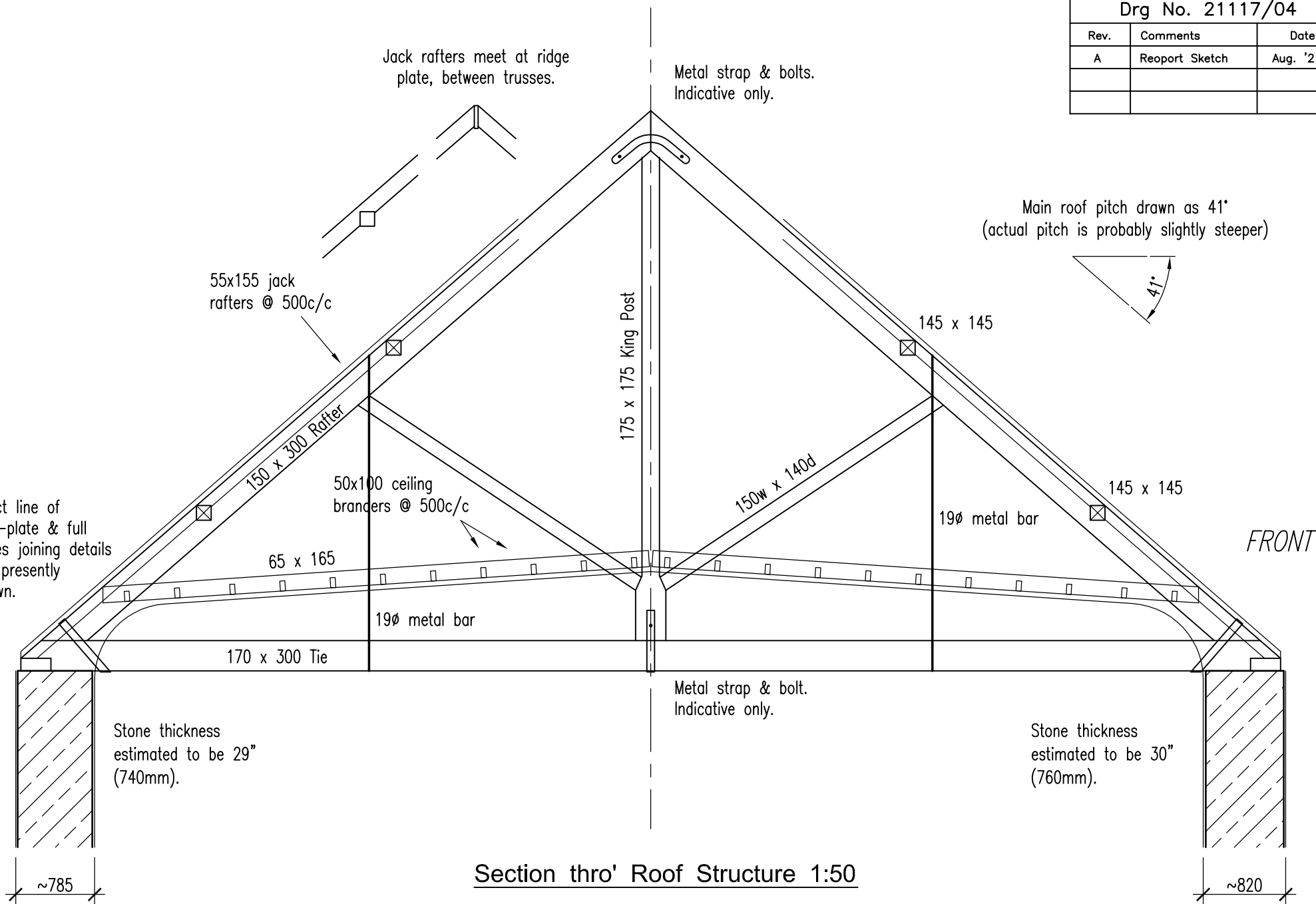
Jack rafters meet at ridge plate, between trusses.

Metal strap & bolts.  
Indicative only.

Main roof pitch drawn as 41°  
(actual pitch is probably slightly steeper)



Exact line of wall-plate & full eaves joining details not presently known.



Section thro' Roof Structure 1:50

# Sketch South Elevation 1:100

Drg No. 21117/05

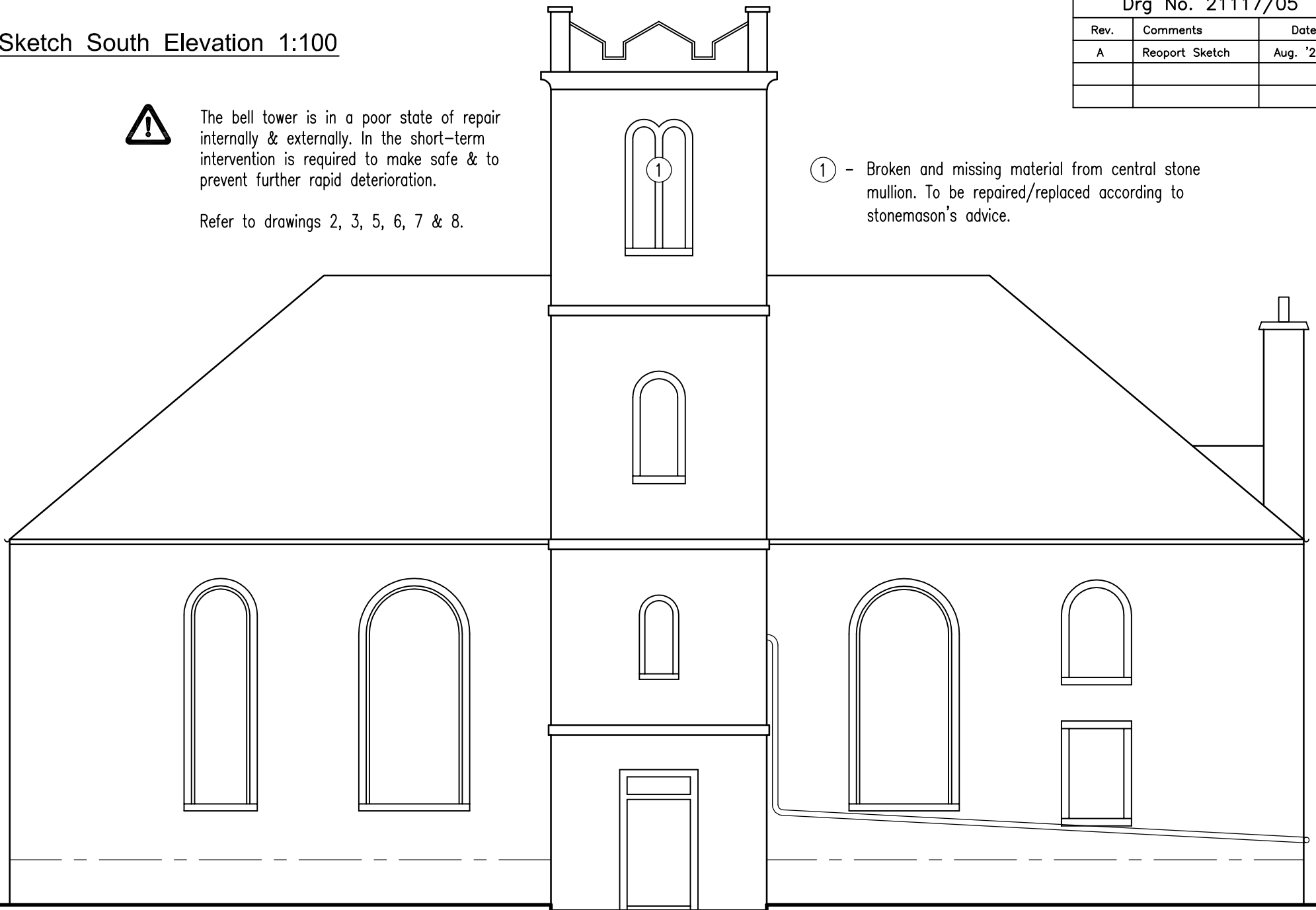
Rev.	Comments	Date
A	Reoport Sketch	Aug. '21



The bell tower is in a poor state of repair internally & externally. In the short-term intervention is required to make safe & to prevent further rapid deterioration.

Refer to drawings 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 & 8.

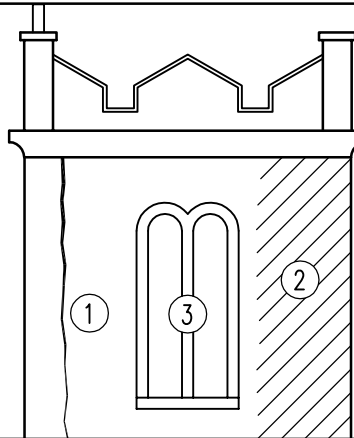
① - Broken and missing material from central stone mullion. To be repaired/replaced according to stonemason's advice.



# Sketch North Elevation 1:100

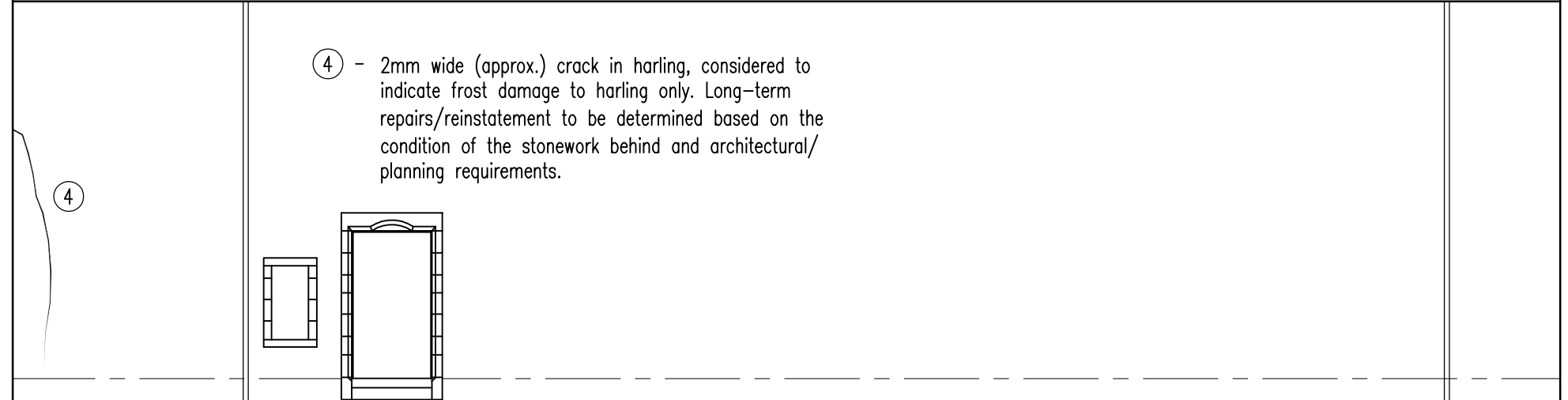
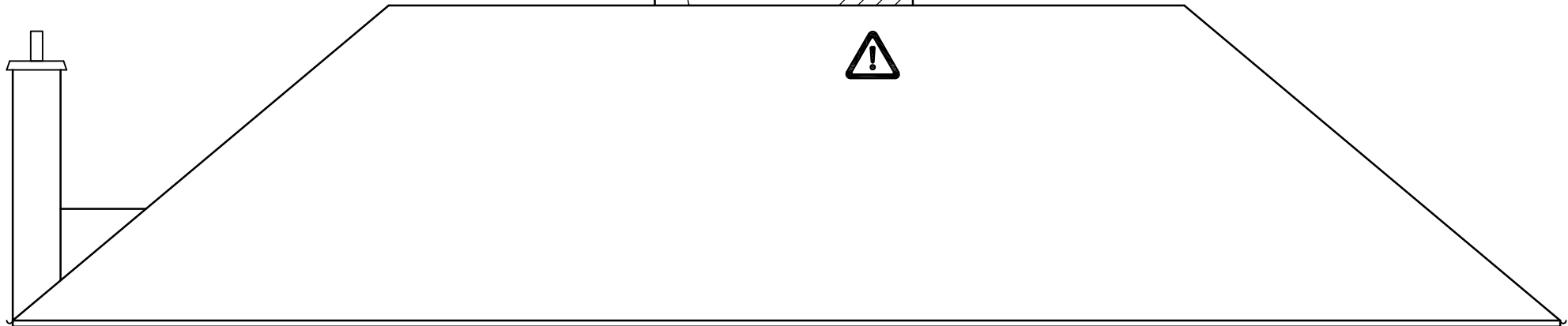
Drg No. 21117/06

Rev.	Comments	Date
A	Reoport Sketch	Aug. '21



- ① - 4.00m long open gap (50mm max. at top) between brick chimney & stonework. To be stitched or taken down & rebuilt.
- ③ - Broken and missing material from central stone mullion. To be repaired/replaced according to stonemason's advice.

- ② - Bulging roughcast to rear of bell tower has fallen off. Adjacent areas to be checked/removed in order to be made safe in the short-term. Reinstate/repair to architect's instructions. Long-term repairs/reinstatement to be determined based on the condition of the stonework and architectural/planning requirements.

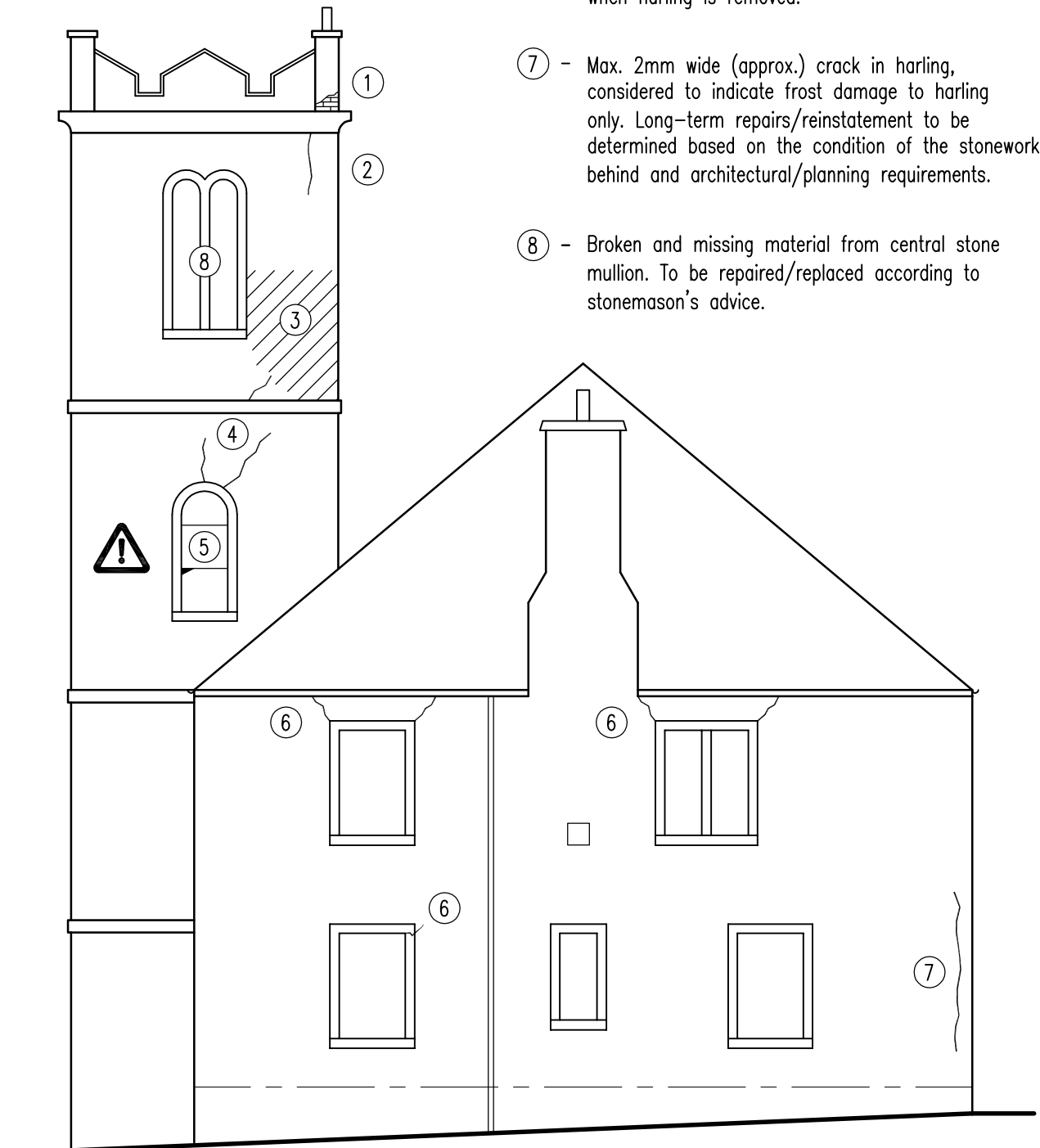


- ④ - 2mm wide (approx.) crack in harling, considered to indicate frost damage to harling only. Long-term repairs/reinstatement to be determined based on the condition of the stonework behind and architectural/planning requirements.

Rev.	Comments	Date
A	Reoport Sketch	Aug. '21

- ① - Smooth render to brick chimney missing. Reinstatement/repair will depend on whether or not the chimney can be removed, subject to architectural/planning considerations.
- ② - Approx. 5mm wide crack in harling. All loose harling in this area requires removal in order to be made safe.
- ③ - Approx. 2.5sqm of missing harling.
- ④ - Cracks indicating loose harling requiring to be removed in order to be made safe.

- ⑤ - 40mm thk sandstone infill slabs heavily exfoliated, down to just 10mm thick adjacent to hole. Until a permanent repair can be implemented, for reasons of safety, it is recommended that these are held in place by a suitable temporary covering.
- ⑥ - Approx. 2mm wide cracks, presumed to occur at lintel ends. Condition of lintels to be assessed when harling is removed.
- ⑦ - Max. 2mm wide (approx.) crack in harling, considered to indicate frost damage to harling only. Long-term repairs/reinstatement to be determined based on the condition of the stonework behind and architectural/planning requirements.
- ⑧ - Broken and missing material from central stone mullion. To be repaired/replaced according to stonemason's advice.

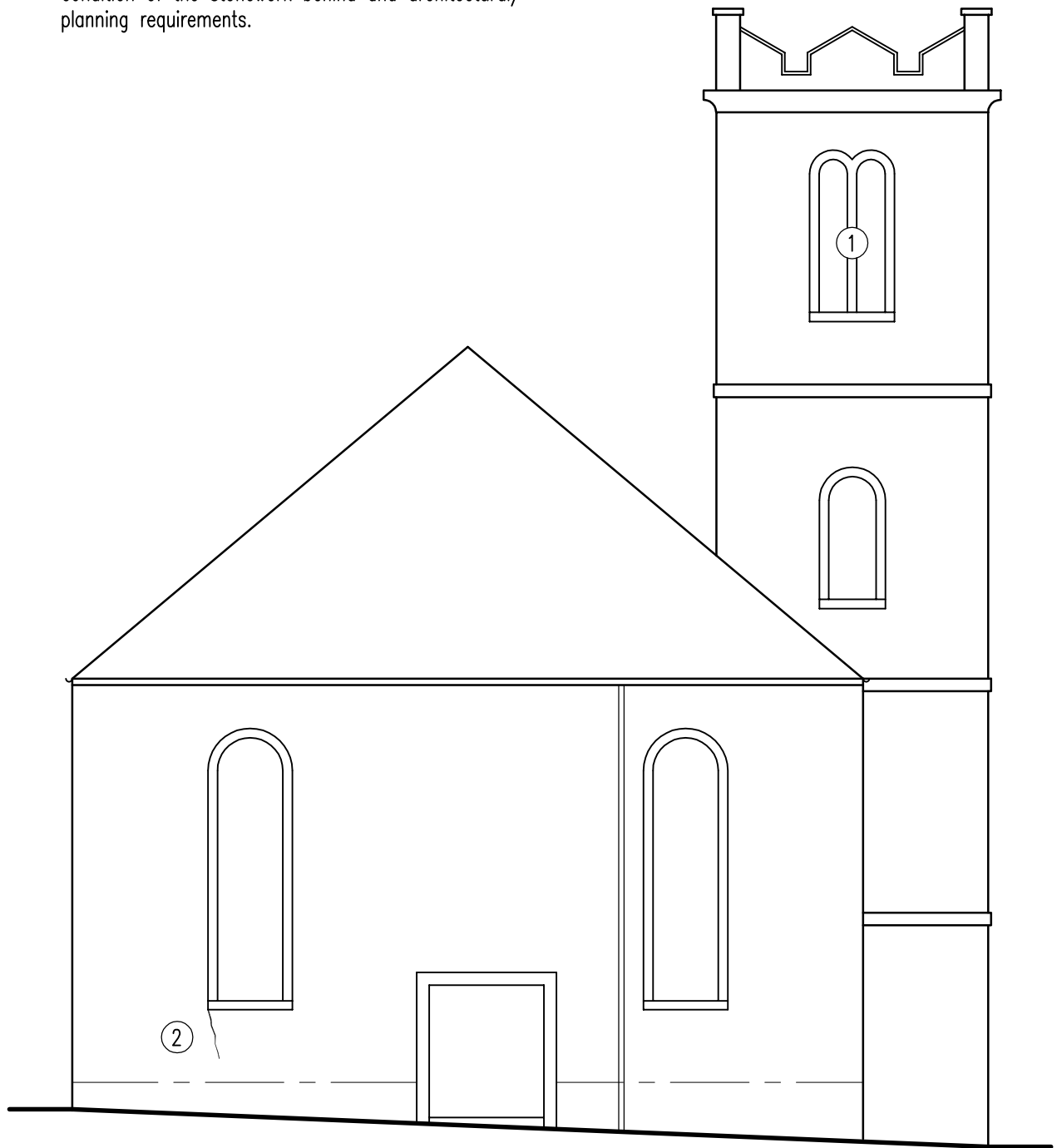


Sketch East Elevation 1:100



Rev.	Comments	Date
A	Reoport Sketch	Aug. '21

- ① - Broken and missing material from central stone mullion. To be repaired/replaced according to stonemason's advice.
- ② - Approx. 2mm wide crack in harling, considered to indicate frost damage to harling only. Long-term repairs/reinstatement to be determined based on the condition of the stonework behind and architectural/planning requirements.



Sketch West Elevation 1:100

**APPENDIX E: Report by Apex Property Care Ltd.**

DJF/CC/27214

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022

Andrew Rodger  
Architect  
Culdees Garden Studio  
Muthill  
Crieff  
PH5 2BD

Email: [ara@cgstudio.uk](mailto:ara@cgstudio.uk)

Dear Andrew

### **Old St Michael's Church, Crieff**

As agreed, we carried out the site visits and inspection proposed in our letter of 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021. This included inspecting the high-level main roof truss beams, along with accessible rafters, wall plates and floor joists. We did this on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May, Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May and Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and revisited in the rain on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 and noted areas affected by ongoing water ingress.

Please note that all directions are given as if standing outside the church looking at the main door on the Westerly elevation.

For the purpose of this report, we have only inspected those exposed surfaces that were accessible at the time of our inspection and accordingly, our assessment and report is based on that visual inspection. Where we have used endoscopes, we have done this where we considered that they would provide most information. Our comments relate to the condition of timbers when we inspected. As we understand there may be a delay before any works are carried out, conditions will almost certainly change, and allowances should be made for these risks.

We report our observations and recommendations as follows.

In summary we have noted infestations of wood boring insects affecting all areas, outbreaks of wet rot and outbreaks of dry rot. As the building and the wet timbers dry out there is an increased risk of dry rot developing in other areas. To reduce this risk, and the risk of dry rot developing after any change of use, it is essential that all the remaining damp masonry is no longer wet or able to cause adjacent timbers to become wet.

We are recommending priority works to stop water coming into the building and for removing the dry rot affected timbers where possible. At this stage we are making recommendations that in

**Apex Property Care Ltd.**

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Reg. in Scotland No. 92112 · Reg. Office Edinburgh Quay, 133 Fountainbridge, Edinburgh EH3 9BA VAT Reg. No. 415 4952 50

In addition to making the building watertight, you allow for localised treatments to slow down or control the rate of growth of areas of dry rot that cannot be removed. In the longer term we are recommending more substantial repairs will be required to truss ends, joists and other built-in timbers at all levels. In this report we have noted recommendations for these timber repairs, treatments and replacement based on that we can see at the moment. In addition to these, given the condition of the building and envisaged timescales, we recommend you build in contingencies for what may be uncovered when works commence as the full extent will need to be reassessed when the building has dried out and repairs are imminent.

### **High level and roof void above the Main Hall**

We started our inspection to the main truss timbers at the southwest corner of the building to the right of the front door on the west elevation and worked anti-clockwise along the South, east, northwest walls. We have looked from above at the top of the wallplate and rafter ends. We have not inspected timbers that were inaccessible above wall head level, e.g., underside of wallplates, so cannot comment on their condition.

We noted a slight to moderate infestation by *anobium punctatum* (common furniture beetle) affecting some roof timbers. The flight holes appeared clean, so this suggests ongoing activity.

Some of the sarking boards are wet and some water stained. A proper assessment of their condition can only be made from above, but we recommend allowing for some repairs as part of re-roofing.

As per our sketch, we have numbered the main truss timber beam ends on the West, south and North wall heads from numbers 1 – 17. Please note that there are still areas of water ingress from above so some of the roof timbers remain wet and the risks associated with wet rot and dry rot remain.

1. Westerly Elevation.
  - a. We noted no apparent visual evidence of fungal growths or timber decay to the front left and right hip rafters or main truss timber beam ends no.15, 16 and 17.
2. South elevation to the bell tower.
  - a. We noted no apparent visual evidence of fungal growth or timber decay to the main truss beam ends numbered 1, 2 and 3.
  - b. At the Southwest corner of the bell tower where it meets the wallhead, we noted wet rot (*Coniophora puteana*) had affected the sarking boards, 2 no. rafters and wall plate.
3. Around the Bell Tower.
  - a. We noted main truss beam end no.5 built into the bell tower wall was severely affected by wet rot. This truss end is built into the masonry so could not be fully inspected, but at this stage given the adjacent conditions, repairs should be allowed for.

4. South elevation between the bell tower and southeast corner.
  - a. Wet rot was noted to the sarking boards, 3no. rafters, wall plate and purlin at the rear southeast corner of the bell tower at the wall junction.
  - b. Wet rot was noted affecting rafters and wallplate to the South west of the bell tower.
  - c. No apparent visual evidence of fungal growth or timber decay was noted to the main truss beam ends no.6 - 7.
5. North wall head of the main hall.
  - a. We noted no apparent visual evidence of fungal growth or timber decay to main truss beam ends no. 8, 10, 12, 13 & 14.
  - b. We noted an outbreak of the dry rot fungus (*Serpula lacrymans*) had manifested on the wall plate and main truss beam end no. 9.
  - c. We noted the main truss beam end no.11 was slightly affected by wet rot where the beam rested on the wall head.

At this level we recommend short term priority treatment of the dry rot affected end to try to control the spread of the dry rot. In the long-term, repairs will be needed to affected truss ends, some wallplate and rafter ends. The extent of the repairs will need to be reassessed at that time.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Floor Level Rear Room and High-level Roof Timbers**

We have numbered the main truss roof beams on the plan.

Slight wet rot was noted to main truss beam ends no.2 & 3. We noted no apparent visible evidence of fungal growth or timber decay to the other truss ends or hip rafters.

Wet rot was noted to the two timber safe lintels above the rear windows.

We have numbered the floor joists from no.1 – 10, with number 1 starting up against the south wall.

We carried out an endoscope inspection of the all of the floor joists and noted that joists no.4 - 8 were showing early stages of timber decay from wet rot.

We noted a slight to moderate infestation by *anobium punctatum* (common furniture beetle) affecting some roof timbers.

We are recommending replacement of the timber lintels in concrete, repairs to the truss ends and affected floor joists, wallplate and rafters.

There is evidence of past water ingress and distressed plaster, and we recommend that the external walls are stripped of plaster and timbers and checked for decay.

## **Floor Level Main Hall**

We have numbered all the floor joists from numbers 1 – 42 from the west elevation to the east on both sides of the main hall.

1. South wall & Bell Tower area
  - a. Wet rot was noted to the joist ends no.2 & 4 at the front right corner of the main hall.
  - b. The dry rot fungus had attacked joists no.26 -31 at the rear left corner of the bell tower
  - c. Wet rot was noted to be affecting joists no.32 -33 & no.36 – 41
  - d. The pine lining boards and plaster on and around the bell tower were affected by dry rot at the rear left corner.
2. North wall
  - a. We noted wallplate and timber joists ends no.1 -9, 11 – 16, 18-22 & 34 – 42 had been affected by wet rot. Joists ends no.23 – 33 and timber wall plate below were affected by dry rot.

On the walls there is evidence of past water ingress and decayed lining boards. In these areas the risk of finding decayed built in timbers affected is high.

We noted a slight to moderate infestation by anobium punctatum (common furniture beetle) affecting some floor timbers. The bore holes appeared clean, so this suggests ongoing activity.

As a priority we recommend cutting out the dry rot affected floor timbers extending about 1m past the last visible evidence of decay in an attempt to stop the decay spreading.

In the longer term, we are recommending replacement of all the joist ends along the north wall in addition to the ones around and to the east of the Bell Tower.

In addition, we are recommending allowing for removing the plaster in the wet areas along with built in timbers.

## **Cloak Room**

We have numbered the floor joists from 1 – 11, with number 1 starting up against the South wall. We noted wet rot had affected floor joists no.7-8 along the east elevation.

We are recommending replacement of the affected joist ends. There is evidence of past water ingress and distressed plaster and we recommend that the external walls are stripped of plaster and timbers and checked for decay.



## **Kitchen**

We have numbered the floor joists from no.1 – 9, with number 1 starting up against the hearth on the south side of the room, to the left of the hearth. We noted wet rot had affected floor joists no.5 – 9 along the rear elevation.

We are recommending replacement of the affected joist ends. There is evidence of past water ingress and distressed plaster, and we recommend that the external walls are stripped of plaster and timbers and checked for decay.

## **Bell Tower**

Where we exposed them, we noted that the timber joists and rafters built into the walls of the bell tower were affected by wet rot to some degree. Some of the wall to the east of the bell tower is affected by the adjacent outbreak of dry rot at lower level and this and the wet walls are likely to have affected some of these joist ends because of its proximity. As a result, we recommend replacement of all these timbers suitably protected from masonry and treated. We noted a moderate infestation by anobium punctatum (common furniture beetle) affecting some floor and supporting built in timbers. The bore holes appeared clean, so this suggests ongoing activity.

We are recommending some emergency works to reduce the risk of the spread of the dry rot in the short term.

In the longer term we are recommending replacement of the rafters and boarding of the Bell Tower roof on improved bearing, this could be within the wall or on steel angles supported on the walls, subject to an engineer's advice. We are also recommending replacement of some of the other supporting timbers built into or in contact with the wet walls of the tower.

## **Summary of Recommendations**

We understand that this inspection is part of a feasibility study, so on the basis of our inspection we are recommending that you and the trustees consider works in two phases. The full extent of the works required will depend on the timescales involved and how much emergency stabilising work can be carried out quickly.

The first phase should include making the building watertight and allow it to dry. Once that has been done, we recommend a series of priority treatments to

1. Reduce the risk of wet timbers becoming affected by dry rot as they dry out. Subject to an inspection at the time, this may involve more exposure and localised timber treatment with boron.

2. Removal and ideally replacement of dry rot affected floor timbers to prevent structural deterioration. If that is not possible, then some localised treatments should be undertaken to reduce, rather than eliminate, these risks.
3. Repairs to the ground floor joists to allow the floor to give safe access scaffolding for repairs above. Any structural scaffold will need to be supported from the solum.
4. Localised treatment to dry rot affected roof timbers to try to reduce the risk of spread of decay.

The second phase of the works will need to involve a combination of repairs to all affected timbers and localised treatments to timbers and walls as appropriate at the time. We recommend a thorough inspection at that stage to re-assess the extent and nature of appropriate repairs. I understand that you aim to have the trusses exposed so repairs are likely to involve matching timber, that we understand is Douglas Fir, and resin repairs. We are recommending treatment of all the remaining timbers with an insecticide and use of treated timbers for all repairs.

You have asked us to give an indication of the cost of the timber treatments and repairs to the areas we have noted. The final cost will depend on the types of repairs required; the full extent of works is likely to change, given that this may be happening some time in the future. Assuming that we will be working in conjunction with others, we have not allowed for any access or supporting scaffold at this stage, roofing works or associated plaster, but instead for the design and repair of timbers, subject to guarantees. To carry out repairs to as described in phase 2 to include repairs at 6 rafters, 4 truss ends, a purlin, 75 joists, woodworm and associated treatments as described is likely to be in the order of £55,000 to £60,000 + VAT. In addition, you might want to allow for some initial treatment works to reduce the risk of spread of decay, assuming the building is made watertight. A contingency for this of £4,000 + VAT might be reasonable, but again this will need to be reassessed at the time.

We look forward to discussing this with you so that we can agree how best to proceed. I attach two sketch plans that indicate the key areas of concern that we have highlighted.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely



J H Robertson, BSc, MBA, MCIQB, CSRT  
Director



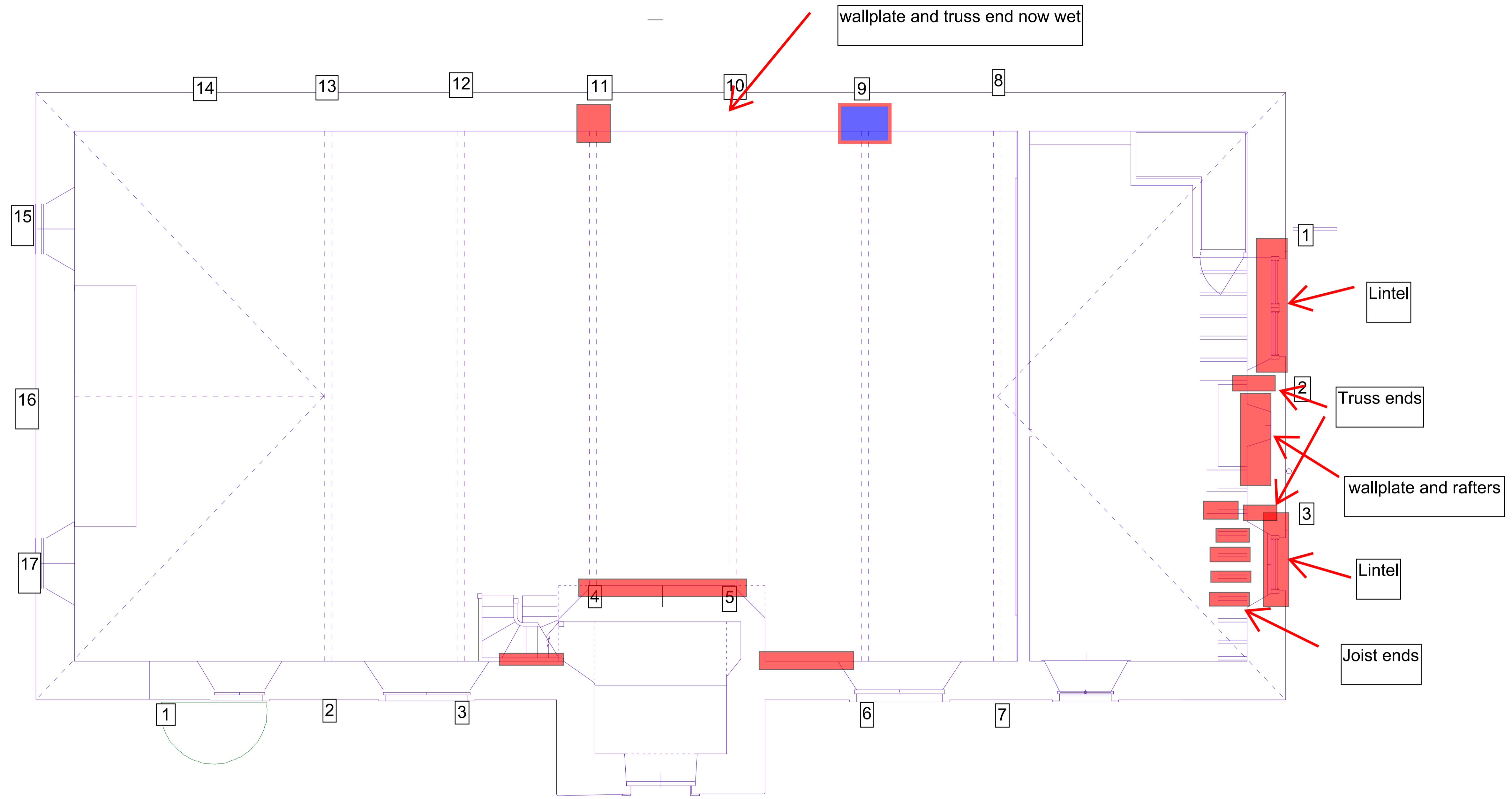
Key

10 Truss numbers

Wet rot affected areas

Dry Rot affected areas

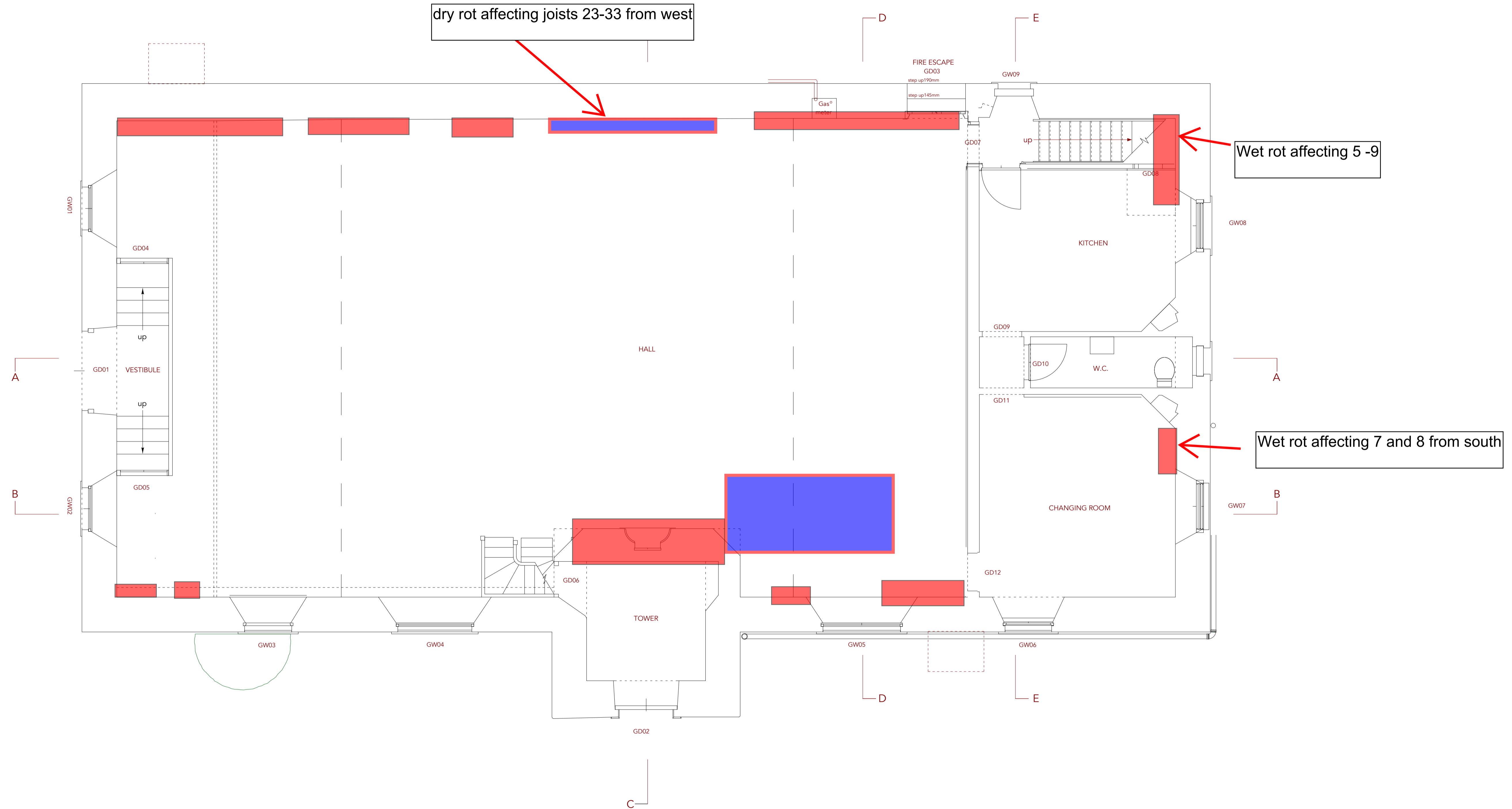
Please read in conjunction with our report dated 3/3/22



Please read in conjunction with our report dated 3/3/22

Wet Rot affected joists

Dry rot affected joists and adjacent timbers



## APPENDIX F: Drawings of measured survey by Andrew Rodger Architect

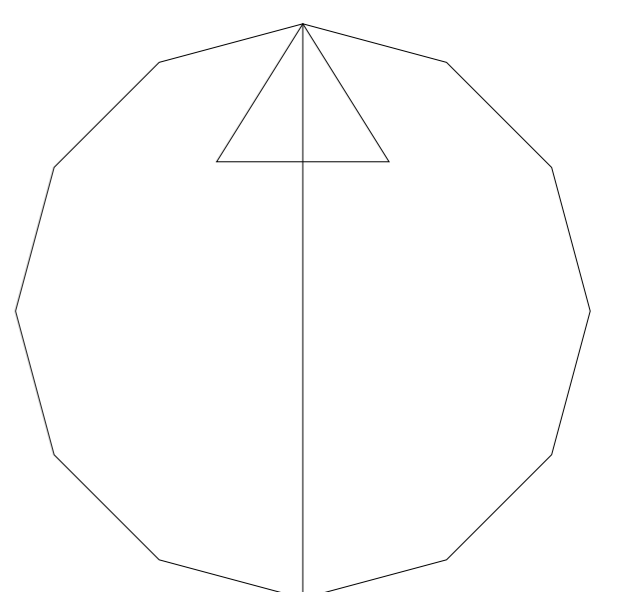
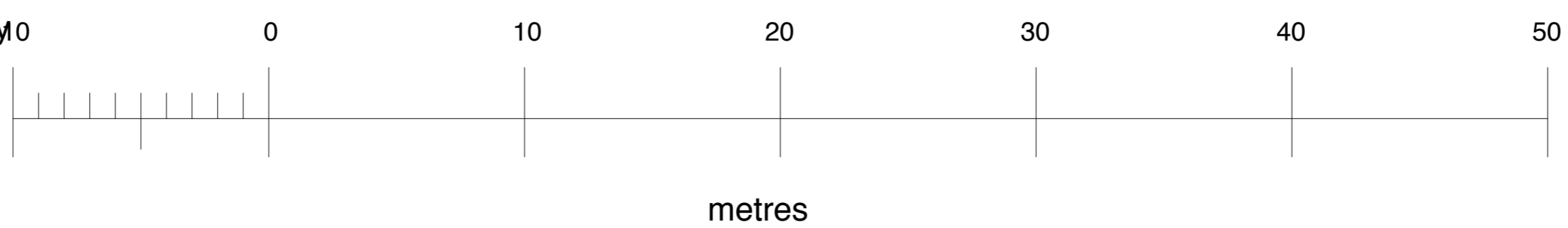
These drawings are reductions of the full size drawing set which are available separately. The full set consists:

drawing number		scale
1840AL(0)01	Survey - Augmented Ordnance Survey Site Plan + roof plan	200
1840AL(0)02	Survey - Solum plan, incorporating tower tier one (incomplete)	50
1840AL(0)03	Survey - Ground floor plan, incorporating tower mezzanine	50
1840AL(0)04	Survey - First floor plan, incorporating tower tier three	50
1840AL(0)05	Survey - Attic plan, incorporating tower tier four	50
1840AL(0)06	Survey - Roof plan	50
1840AL(0)07	Survey - Sections X-X and Y-Y	50
1840AL(0)08	Survey - place holder for additional section(s)	50
1840AL(0)09	Survey - West elevation	50
1840AL(0)10	Survey - South elevation	50
1840AL(0)11	Survey - East elevation	50
1840AL(0)12	Survey - North elevation	50

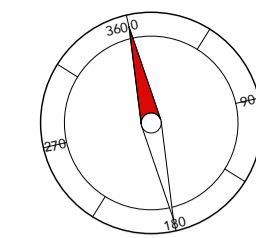


Serial number: 235569

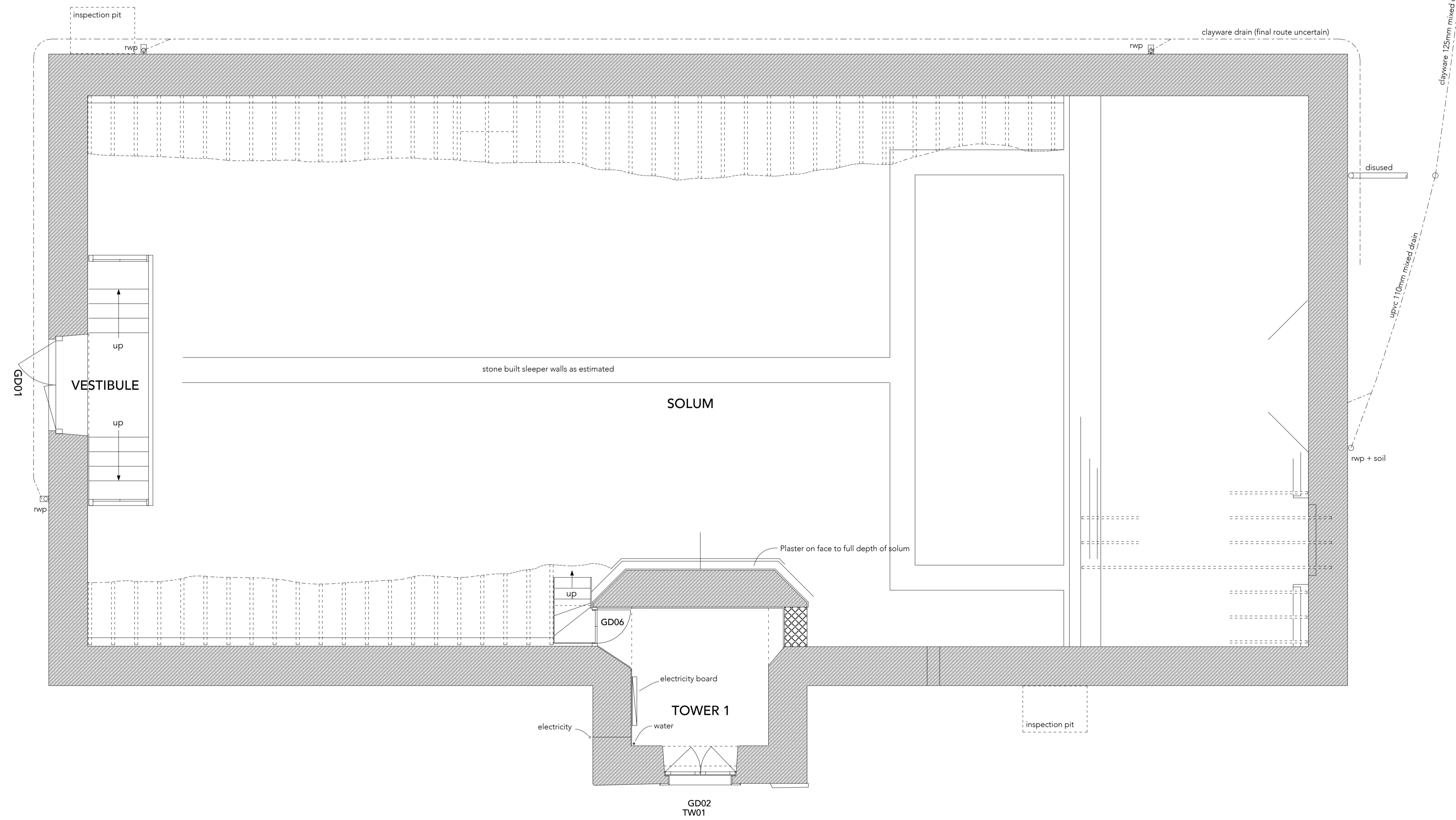
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Reference numbers in ovals refer to the report proposals

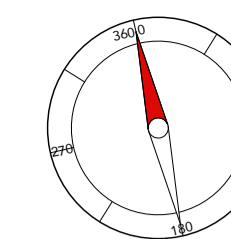


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DRAWN	APR
CLIENT	Friends of Old St. Michael's

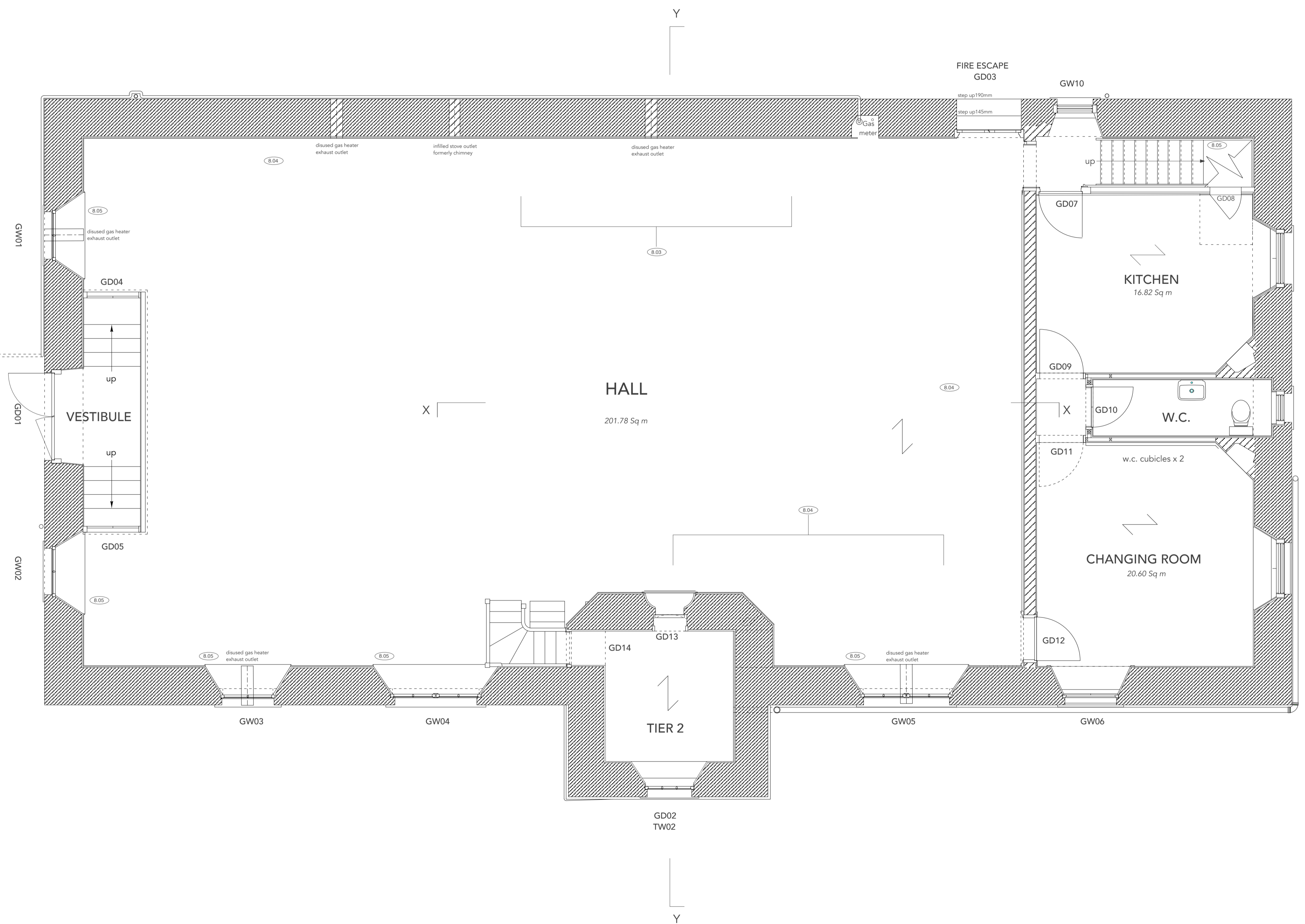
St. Michael's Church Hall, Crieff

1840 AL(0)02

Survey solum plan



○ Reference numbers in ovals refer to the report proposals



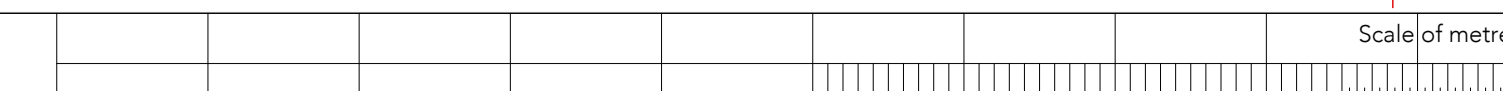
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DATE	May 2021
SCALE	1:50 @ A1 (1:100 @ A3)
DRAWN	APR
CLIENT	Friends of Old St. Michael's

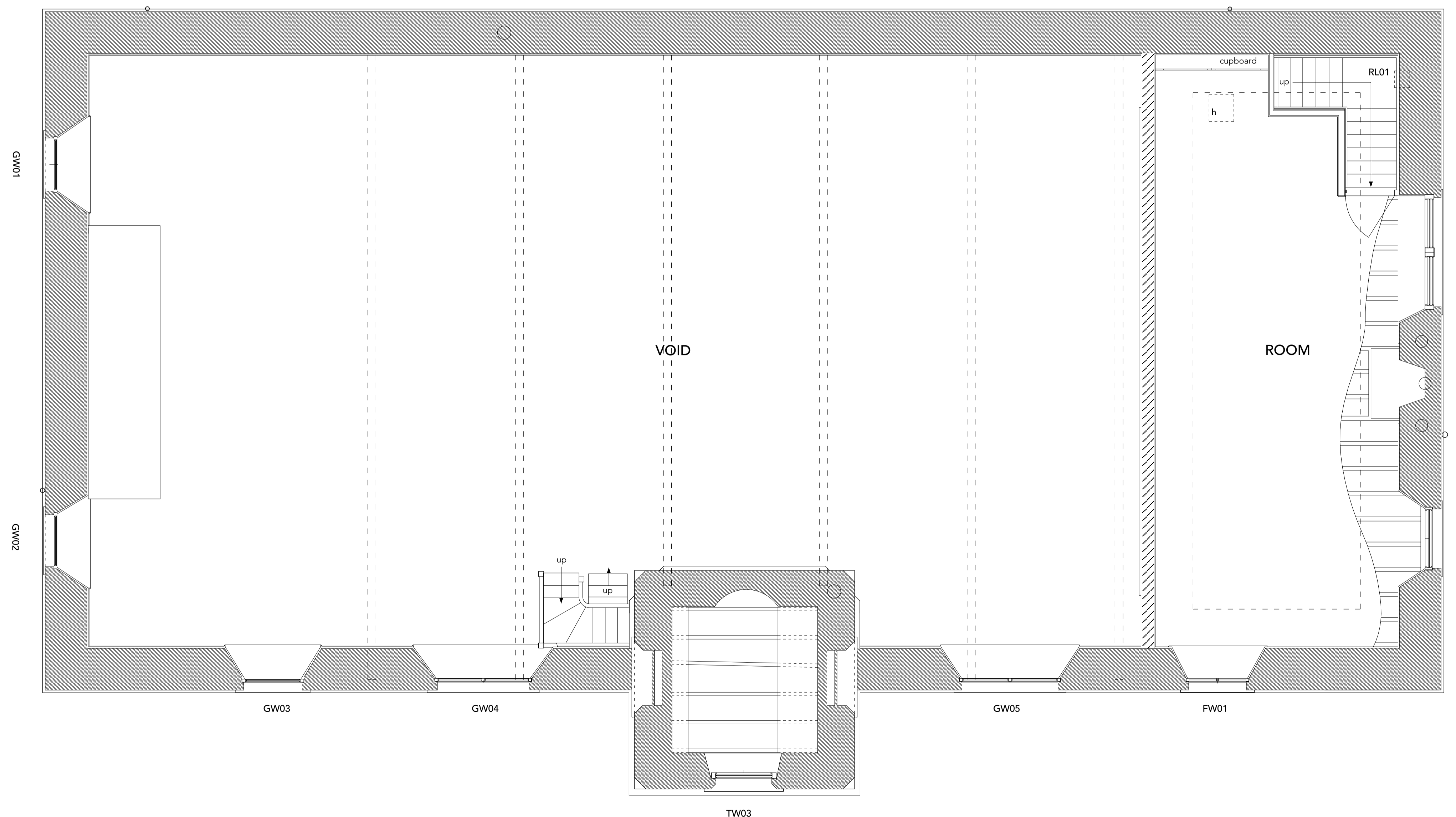
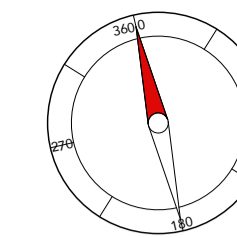
St. Michael's Church Hall, Crieff

**1840 AL(0)03**

Survey ground floor plan

Scale of metres





Rev.	
DATE	May 2021
SCALE	1:50 @ A1 (1:100 @ A3)
DRAWN	APR
CLIENT	Friends of Old St. Michael's

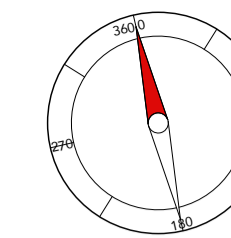
St. Michael's Church Hall, Crieff

**1840 AL(0)04**

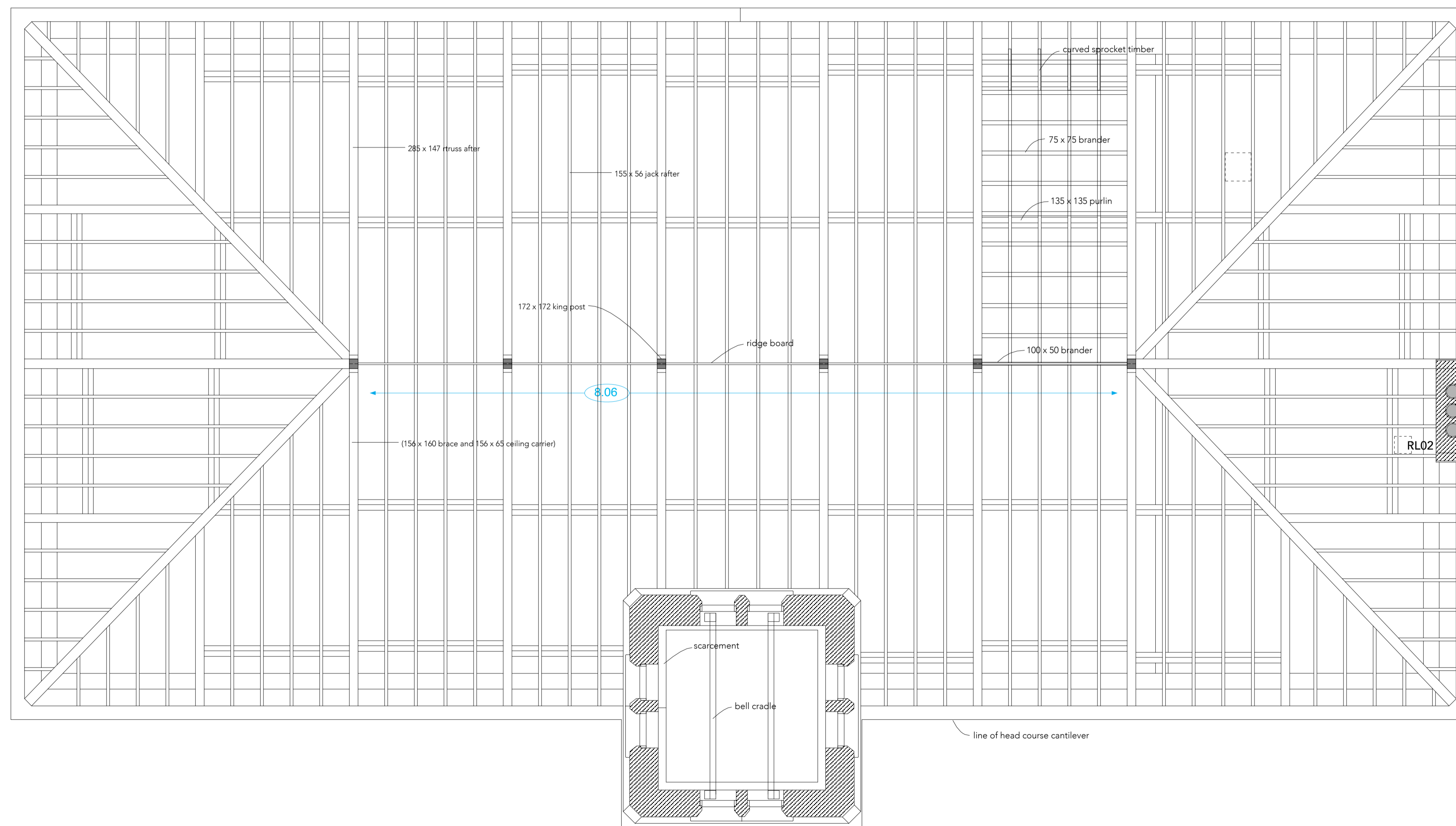
Tower Tier 3 and First Floor Plan

Scale of metres





○ Reference numbers in ovals refer to the report proposals



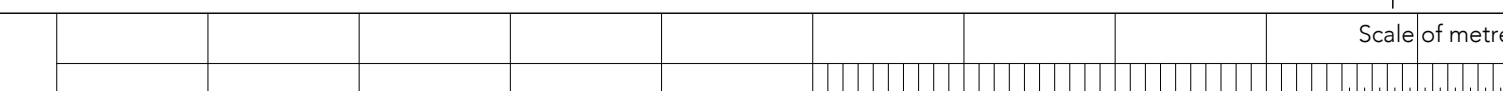
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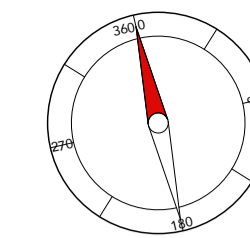
St. Michael's Church Hall, Crieff

**1840 AL(0)05**

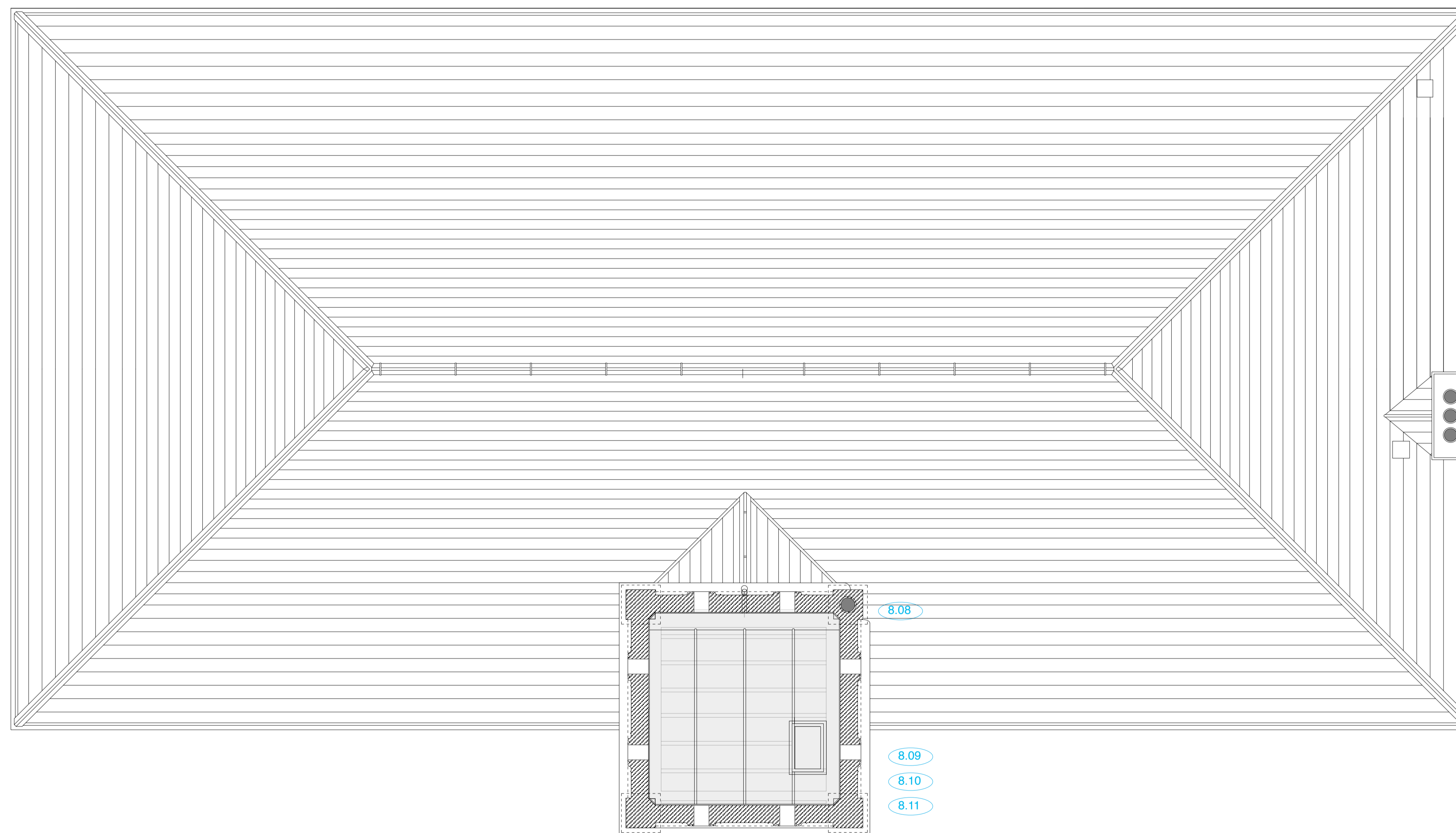
Tower Tier 4 (belfry) and Attic plan

Scale of metres





○ Reference numbers in ovals refer to the report proposals



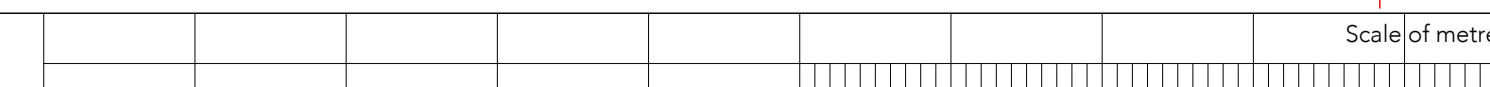
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CLIENT	Friends of Old St. Michael's

St. Michael's Church Hall, Crieff

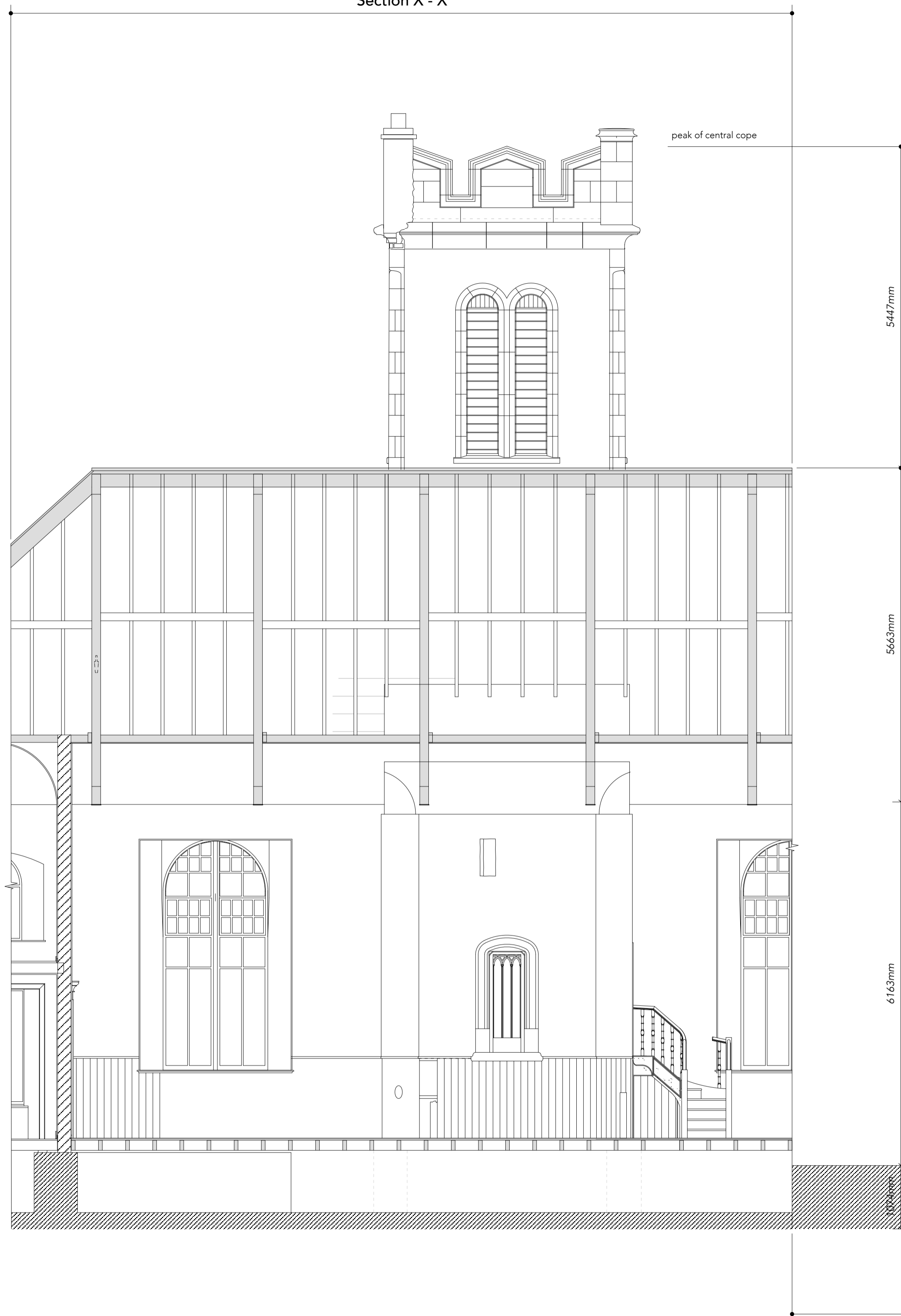
**1840 AL(0)06**

Roof plan

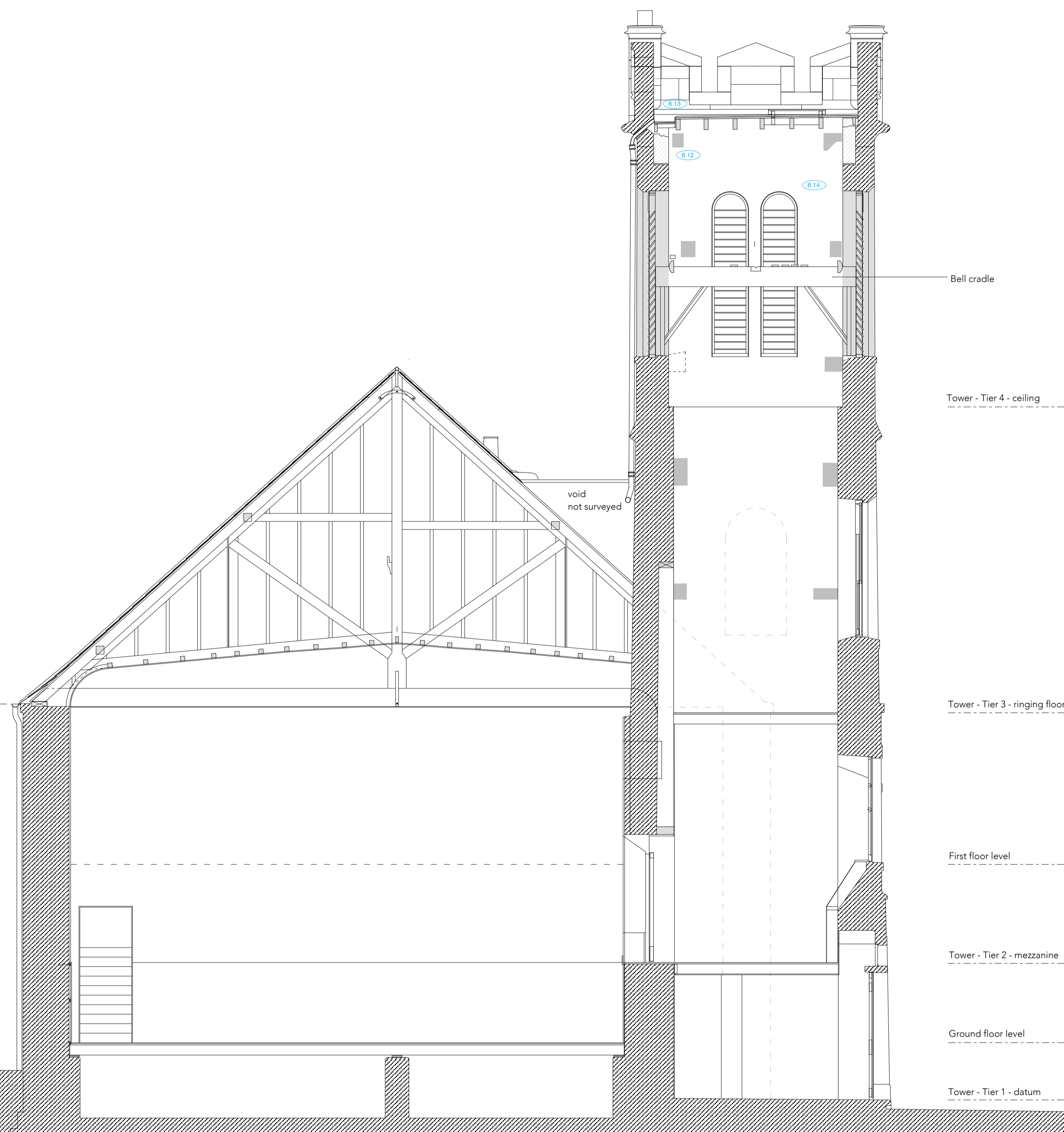
Scale of metres



Section X - X



Section Y - Y

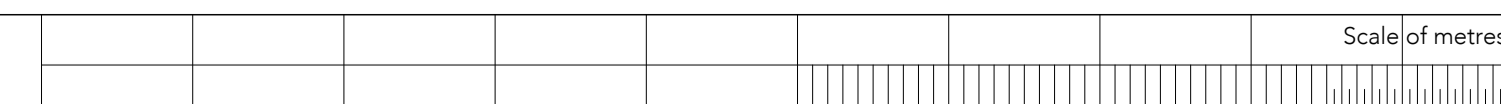


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CLIENT	Friends of Old St. Michael's

St. Michael's Church Hall, Crieff

**1840 AL(0)07**

Sections X-X and Y-Y







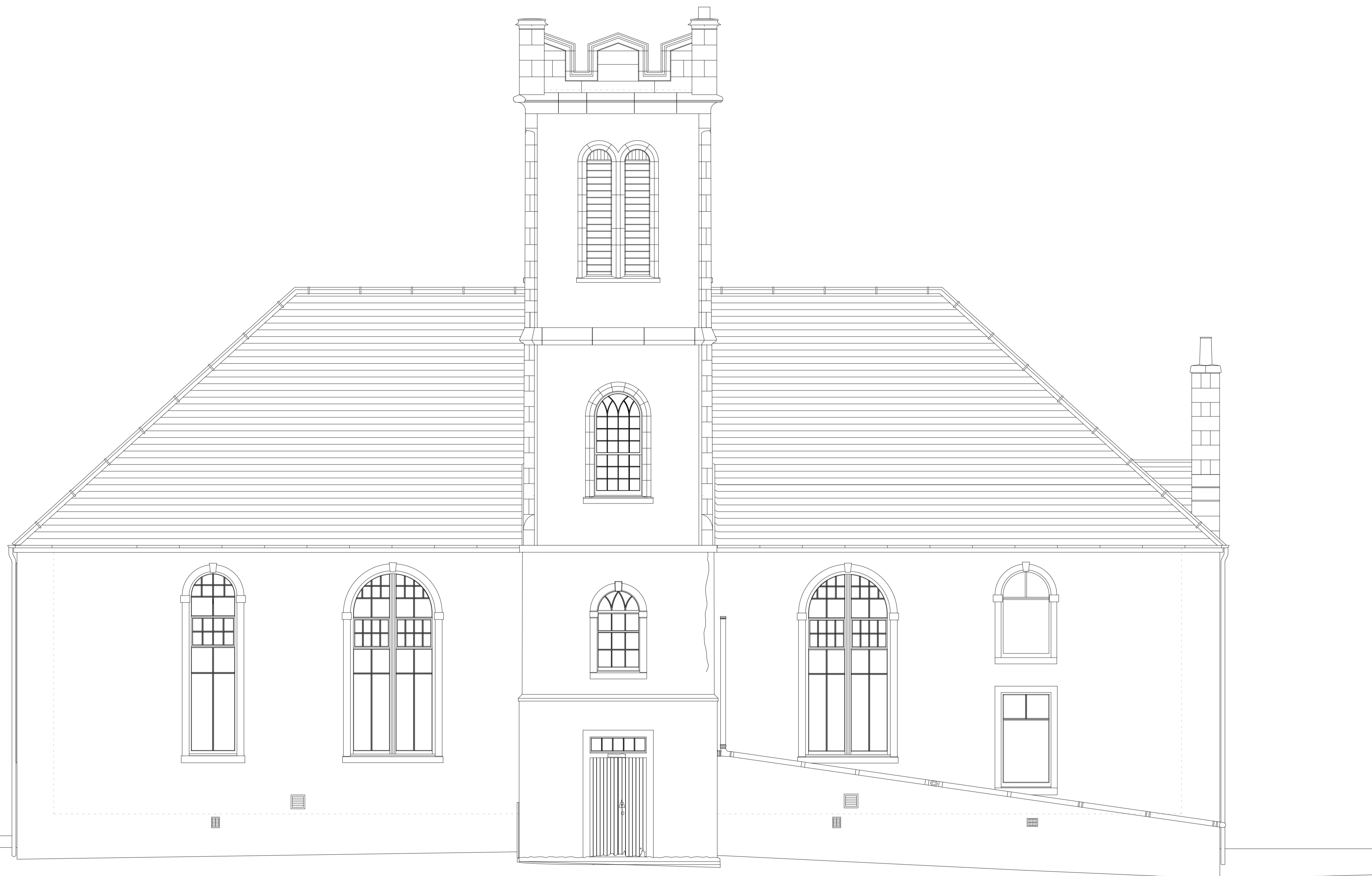
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DATE	May 2021
SCALE	1:50 @ A1 (1:100 @ A3)
DRAWN	APR
CLIENT	Friends of Old St. Michael's

St. Michael's Church Hall, Crieff

**1840 AL(0)09**

West elevation

Scale of metres



Rev.	
DATE	May 2021
SCALE	1:50 @ A1 (1:100 @ A3)
DRAWN	APR
CLIENT	Friends of Old St. Michael's

St. Michael's Church Hall, Crieff

**1840 AL(0)10**

South elevation

Scale of metres



First floor level

Ground floor level

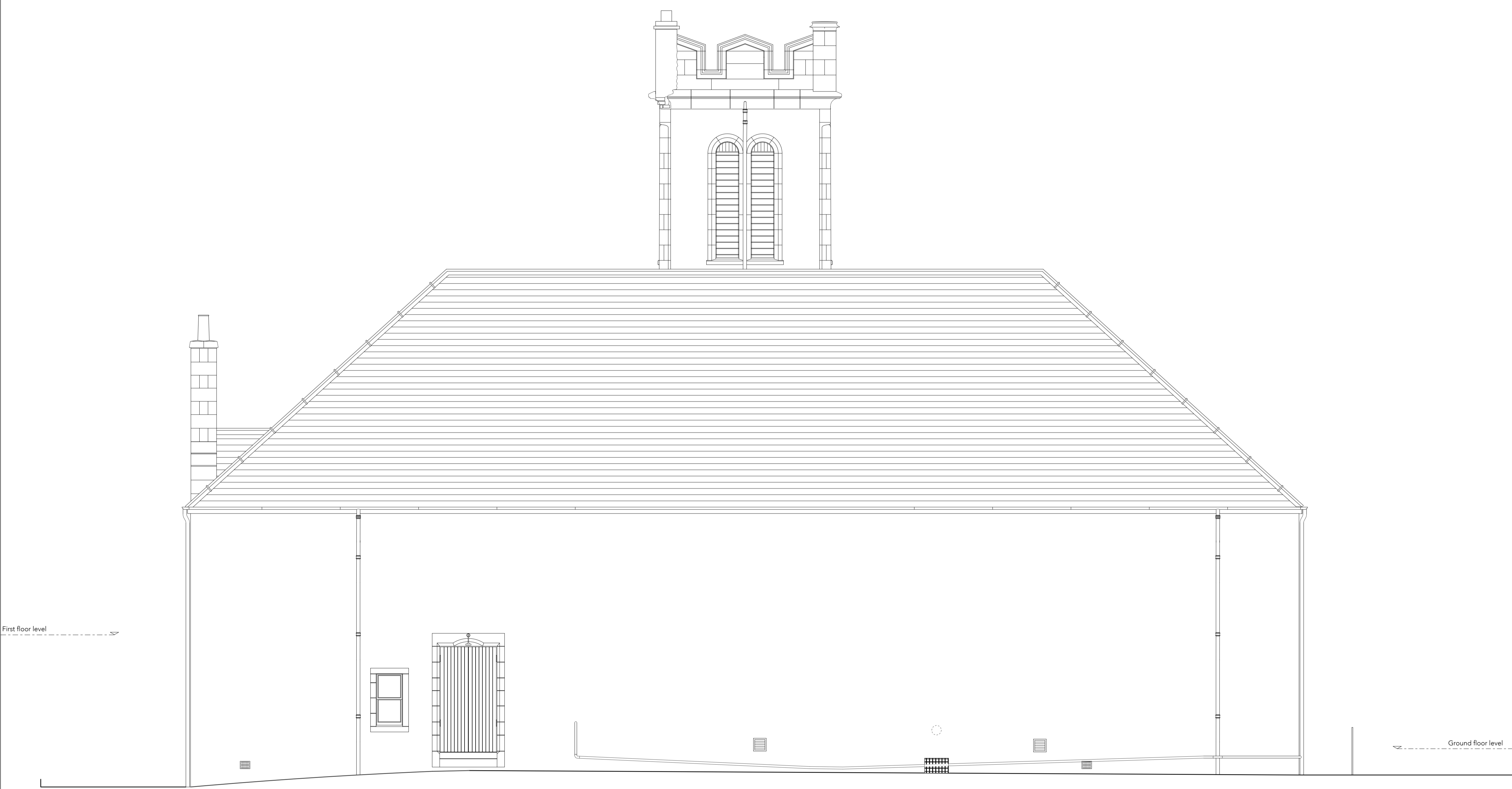
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DATE	May 2021
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St. Michael's Church Hall, Crieff

**1840 AL(0)11**

East elevation



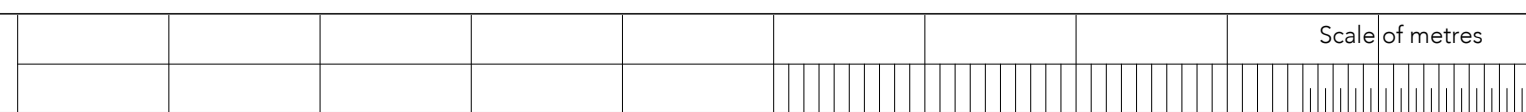


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DATE	May 2021
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DRAWN	APR
CLIENT	Friends of Old St. Michael's

St. Michael's Church Hall, Crieff

**1840 AL(0)12**

North elevation



## APPENDIX G: BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT

### 1. The common swift (*apus apus*)

The site has been visited several times over two consecutive seasons to try to establish whether common swifts are nesting in the building. Although swifts were seen in the area of the building, none was seen entering the building and, given the amount of time spent observing during the swift breeding seasons (May – August incl.) it is considered unlikely that there are any breeding sites in the building at present.

During the inspection, the eaves and tower were checked for signs of swift breeding activity and it was recorded that, were the louvres not protected with netting, several bird species would be likely to nest inside the tower.

N.B. Discussions have taken place between Friends of Old St. Michael's and The Crieff Swift Project about creating a swift "condominium" in the belfry of Old St. Michael's, with a research room at the ringing floor level (3) and public displays below within the tower and in the grounds, as a means of raising awareness and providing useful endangered species research while giving a purpose to parts of the building otherwise not be easily utilised.

### 2. House sparrow (*passer domesticus*)

There were reports of house sparrows calling from the eaves on the south side of the building during the breeding season and it was noted that there are two or three sections of the south facing eaves which may permit use by sparrows. The sites will be confirmed by observation in the coming season and any future work in these area will take account of the legal requirement to not disturb nesting habitat. If it is found necessary to reduce these openings, mitigation measures will be discussed with Joanna Dick of the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership / Perth & Kinross Council.

### 3. Bats (all species)

During the inspection of the building, in particular the loft and the tower, attempts were made to determine if there is any evidence of bats using the building, either for maternity roosts or ad hoc roosts. The nature of the spaces means it is likely to be attractive to several species of bat. So, though no evidence was found of bat activity during the inspection, it is advisable to make sure there are some mitigation measures included in any future plans.

Several dusk surveys were carried out without any evidence of activity connected to the church but pipistrelle or soprano pipistrelle bats were seen. It is advised that dawn and dusk surveys continue from May until August in the coming years(s) and equipment used to determine the species of any bats seen and heard. The results shall be recorded and entered into any mitigation report, as required, prior to significant works being carried out. Works undertaken will probably present opportunities to cater for bat roosts in a controlled manner, whether there is an existing bat presence within any part of the church hall or not.

N.B. The existing nylon netting to prevent pigeons / jackdaws from occupying the belfry should be changed to a larger mesh size. The existing may easily result in bats becoming entangled.

#### **4. Algal growths and lichens**

It is recommended that a more detailed study of exposed stones include an evaluation of the algal growth or lichens so it can be determined whether the growths present a risk to the stones concerned, given their vulnerable state, as has been witnessed in some circumstances elsewhere [Ref: HES TAN 10 - Biological Growths on Sandstone Buildings]

#### **5. Memorial Garden**

Please see the separately published biodiversity statement of intent by Friends of Old St. Michael's Church Hall and Grounds.



Appendix H: Supplementary images

It is, I believe, generally admitted, that no object is more attractive, in a low landscape, than a neat country church, with an accompaniment of holly, yew, and burying-ground; and that nothing is more desirable to keep alive devotional feeling in a church-going people, than the comfortable idea of a tastefully planned and tidily finished interior. The opposite of this is universally acknowledged to show offensive, eyed in the distance, and on a closer inspection, to be absolutely disgusting, in the extreme.

The above was suggested by a sight the other day (both exterior and interior), of the parochial church of Crieff. Such a fabric, appropriated to so sacred a purpose, I confess I never yet saw: so coarsely got up, so far as it goes, for it cannot be said to be finished in any respect whatever. The principal staircase, where I presume the holly was intended to have been, that leading to the pulpit, &c., remains still unroofed, although the church should to was begun to be built some twenty or thirty years ago.

I hope, for the honour of our national establishment, that the church referred to is unique of its kind. Were I a parishioner, I certainly would prefer congregating for worship in a snug, comfortable barn; I don't know, Sir, whether it was owing to the influence of the weather, or the chilly aspect of the church, but some few or other, while under its roof, I felt a disagreeable shivering, as if I had been walking the damp floor, surrounded by the chimney walls of a wretched vault. Will you believe it, Sir, the pavement, or what ought to have been the floor or pavement of this unroofed edifice, is strewn with masses' rubbish; the walls are unplastered, and the naked rafters peer over head with an appearance of the most disgusting; and such a homely pulpit! and such galleries! and, to crown all, the sacred solemnity of the house seemed, when I was there, to be provokingly infringed, with impudence, by the noisy and indecent revelry of crowds of male and female youths, snaying up and down from gallery to gallery, with all the dancing familiarity and freedom which could have been used in a dissipated spinning factory, or deserted fabric, once appropriated to innocent theatricals. In short, Sir, nothing, save loss, can be its parallel.

I have somewhere, I think, read or heard of the north pole of Christianity; but be this as it may, were I an, Sir, that were a stranger, totally unacquainted with the serious church-going habits of the good folks of Crieff and its vicinage, to be unexpectedly set down about the church of that rapidly improving town, and take a hasty glance of the same, outside and inside, were I an, Sir, he would be extremely apt to imagine that he had accidentally hit on that frozen region; and, of course, take credit to himself, as perhaps the original discoverer of that latitude deemed Terra incognita, if not antichristian climes.

I do not, Sir, bring these remarks under public notice, from any lively or disrespectful motives; but as Crieff is confessedly improved in other respects, and as it is surrounded by a cluster of institutions, so much distinguished for fine taste, &c. as for correct moral and religious feeling, I do it with the hope, & it through the medium of the county journals, all concerned in the responsibility, prosperity, and decorum, of their neighbourhood, as well as in promoting the sanctity and comfort of their parochial religious establishment, may, when these observations reach their eyes, be thence induced cordially to unite in making a speedy and creditable attempt to wipe off what I truly reckon not only a parochial, but a national, slur; for, at least according to my feelings and ideas respecting such matters, the present coarse and unfinished state of their parish church, is unfortunately calculated to cramp the genius, and cool the fervor of the pastor, be he who he may, and to still, if not extinguish, the devotional feelings of even the most devout and church-going among the parishioners.

Do you know, Sir, that when I contrasted the progressive improvement evidently observable in the town, with the ruinous and wretched condition of the parish church, it forcibly reminded me of the prophetic question the Prophet addressed to the Jews, to stimulate them to the repair of the Temple at Jerusalem, which, in conclusion, I beg to quote, trusting it may have its due effect on the respectable inhabitants of Crieff, &c. and happily prompt them to bestir themselves to dispel the present disgraceful section by one somewhat correspondent to the solemnity of the Christian religion, and the advanced civilized state of their country, and of society—namely, "Is it a time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cooled houses, and this house to be waste?"

VLADIMIR.

Perth 17th Feb. 1823.

← 28/02/1823 State of Crieff Parish Church, letter to the editor of the Perthshire Courier (per David Ferguson)

↓ 20/12/1856 Our Antiquarian Notes and Queries, Parish Church of Crieff, Herald (per David Ferguson).

OUR ANTIQUARIAN NOTES AND QUERIES.

PARISH CHURCH OF CRIEFF.—The query of your correspondent X. Y. Z. is easily answered. The ancient church of Crieff, dating from a remote antiquity,—and no record remains to show by whom it was originally erected or afterwards repaired,—was capable of containing 500 persons. About 1781 the fabric became ruinous. Question then became by whom, and in what proportions, the cost of building a new one was to be borne? This question was regarded by the lawyers of the day as of considerable difficulty; it formed the subject of a hearing in presence of the whole judges, (20th Nov. 1781, Mor. 7924.) The inhabitants and feuars were ably represented by the well-known Henry Erskine, and Mr William (afterwards Lord) Robertson, the son of the Historian, and afterwards the procurator for the church. The heritors were, perhaps still more powerfully represented by Sir Islay Campbell (afterwards Lord President), and Mr Robert Dundas, successively Lord Advocate, and Chief Baron in Exchequer. The final decision was "the Court found that the expenses of building as much of the church as should be necessary for accommodating the landward parish, should be defrayed by the heritors, according to their respective valued rents, and divided among them in the same proportions; and that the remaining part should be defrayed by the feuars and proprietors of houses, in proportion to their real rents, and divided among them in the same proportions." Under this rule which has become an axiom in the law of Scotland, the church was (so far) built and divided. In 1826 the want of church accommodation was very severely felt. Indeed, the church of 1781 had "never been finished," and those who are old enough to possess recollections over the last thirty years may remember the hideous spectacle which the interior presented prior to its repairs in 1826. On the completion of those repairs, borne according to the rule laid down by the Court of Session in 1781,—the same principle was adopted for the division of the pews, but only of course, among those, or their representatives, who had been assessed under the decision of 1781. The division, now in observance, was judicially made by Sheriff Husband on 10th Nov. 1827, and the result of the whole procedure is detailed in his decret of 25th April 1828, on referring to which your correspondent X. Y. Z. will no doubt find the number of his pew.—AN OLD KIRK MAN.

↓ 30/11/1889 Alterations in old parish church, Strathearn Herald (per D. Ferguson)

OLD PARISH CHURCH.—Considerable alterations and improvements are in contemplation on the Old Parish Church, consequent on the accommodation required for the use of St Michael's Young Men's Guild, Sabbath School, &c. The gallery is to be taken down, two halls are to be erected upstairs, and the lower and ground floor is to be set apart for the Sabbath School. It is also stated that the old graveyard is to be fenced in. It is to be regretted that nothing as yet is to be done with the property facing High Street and Cross, which is quite an eyesore in the East End.

↑ Confirms gallery and subdivision of the space to form separate rooms.

Also indicates the inception of work to opening of hall occurred within one year.

Crieff Parish Church Hall 1972, CPK Collection



Photographs of the bell taken from the old church to the new church in 1948, per Bill Clark of St, Michael's Church, Strathearn Terrace, Crieff



The Hill Church, Blairgowrie 24/02/2020 per Andrew Rodger



**"The Organ Question" - undated and unattributed newspaper or journal cutting regarding organ**

If the visitor turns to his right at the Cinema and proceeds down Church Street for a few yards, he will find, on his left, *Crieff Old Parish Church*, and it was in this building that the then minister, Rev. John Cunningham, installed music into his Church. This was in the form of an organ. There was a great controversy over such an unheard of thing in these Victorian days. Many members left the Church, and much bitterness and strife was shown. However, "John Cunningham won the day," and in *Crieff Old Parish Church* was the first music introduced into a Church in Scotland. To this day, parts of that organ can be seen in the *Crieff Parish Church Hall*, by which name this building is known.

There are other sources which say that *Crieff Parish Church* was the second in Scotland to install and use an organ during worship and that the first, at *Greyfriars* in *Edinburgh*, was (initially an harmonium) installed in 1862.

There was an organ at *St. Andrews* in *Glasgow* in 1804 but this was, allegedly, not inside the church and not used for services. However, it is claimed that this was not only the first use of an organ in a place of worship in Scotland but the first use of any musical instrument in public worship by any presbyterian congregation in Scotland (James Inglis - *The Scottish Churches and The Organ in the 19th Century* - 1987).

According to Inglis, the *Episcopalian Chapel of St. Paul*, in *Aberdeen*, was using an organ and choir in its services in 1726.

No vestiges of the OSM organ have been found during the survey in 2021.

Tower view from the entrance to the mezzanine level showing Tier 3 and part of Tier 4. Note the crack, referred to in the text, which is mirrored, to an extent, on the opposite wall of the tower.tower



Doorway from former pulpit location to tower



View of the tower corner cantilever from main space







1840-2105281113\_DSC0032.jpg



1840-2105281110\_DSC0031.jpg



1840-2105281114\_DSC0035.jpg



1840-2105280949\_DSC0006\_tower.jpg

Clockwise: Opening into flue on N E corner / Brick built parapet pier base (E side) / Parapet pier base (N side) / Typical louvre opening / Typical window head (GW04) / East tower roof abutment, showing the repair to the broken section, the unmaintainable valley and the suspended cement fillet (now filled). Note also the deteriorated blind window ashlar / The area of stonework exposed by the first harling fall from the east face of the tower.



1840-2105281048\_DSC7839.jpg



1840-2105281227\_DSC0052\_tower.jpg



1840-2105280947\_DSC0003.jpg



