

Capel Horeb, Four Mile Bridge, Isle of Anglesey

Archaeological Building Record



Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

Capel Horeb: Four Mile Bridge

Archaeological Building Record

Project No. 2217

Prepared for the: Keith Thompson

October 2011

By: Richard Cooke

Report No.993

Illustrations by: Richard Cooke

Cyhoeddwyd gan Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol
Gwynedd
Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Craig Beuno, Ffordd y Garth,
Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2RT

Published by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
Craig Beuno, Garth Road,
Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2RT

Cadeiryddes/Chair - Yr Athro/Professor Nancy Edwards, B.A., Ph.D, F.S.A.
Prif Archaeolegydd/Chief Archaeologist - Andrew Davidson, B.A., M.I.F.A.

Mae Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd yn Gwmni Cyfyngedig (Ref Cof. 1180515) ac yn Elusen (Rhif Cof. 508849)
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING AT CAPEL HOREB, FOUR MILE BRIDGE, ANGLESEY

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING AT CAPEL HOREB, FOUR MILE BRIDGE, ANGLESEY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Keith Thompson (owner) has commissioned Gwynedd Archaeological Trust to carry out a building survey of the grade II Listed Building (ref **19945**) of Capel Horeb in Four Mile Bridge, Anglesey in advance of a residential conversion. The building is located at NGR **SH 2742278061** and is located in an elevated position on the SE side of the B4545, at the SW end of the village of Four Mile Bridge. The archaeological mitigation is being completed as part of a planning condition (Planning Reference: **43C164E**).

The proposed works are to include the conversion of the chapel into two residential units including:

(exterior)

- New timber lancet windows to all existing openings.
- New cast-iron gutters and downpipes.
- Removal of existing wall rendering to expose stonework, repointing with matching lime mortar.
- Installation of velux rooflights.
- Slates to be stripped from the roof and re-hung.
- Addition of new, matching finials.
- Stone gable copings to be refixed.

(interior)

- Division of interior into a one and a half storied building, with two two-bedroom dwellings, creating approximately sixteen rooms.

2.0 SPECIFICATION AND PROJECT DESIGN

Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS) has requested an historic building record commensurate with *English Heritage* equivalent Level 2 of the existing structure in advance of development; this will include a written account to provide basic background and historical information; drawings including any existing plans of the site and architect's drawings; and high quality, detailed photographs showing all features, details, room spaces, and elevations to illustrate the setting, appearance, and structure of the building.

A limited desk-top study, involving a visit to The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth to access records of the building was required.

3 METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The significance, origins and development of the site are discussed with reference to the available historical sources. A detailed floor plan and elevation drawings were provided by the architect, showing structural and architectural features of significance.

A photographic record was made recording all features, room spaces and elevations. The direction of photographs are shown on figure 5. The report conforms to the requirements for a building record at level 2 as set down in English Heritage's *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2006).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL RECORD

4.1 Historical Background

Four Mile Bridge (Pontrhydbont) lies within the parish of Rhoscolyn, which forms the southern half of Holy Island, 'being connected with that of Holyhead, which forms the other half, by a narrow isthmus, along which runs the old London road to that place' (Lewis 1833). The bridge, in existence by 1530, gives its name and focal point to the settlement, approximately four miles from Holyhead. Before the construction of the Stanley Embankment, opened in 1823 as part of Telford's London to Holyhead road, Four Mile Bridge was the only road link between Holy Island and the rest of Anglesey. Samuel Lewis (1833) also noted that 'there are places of worship for Calvinistic and Wesleyan Methodists', the latter of which included the former Capel Bont, on the site of the present Capel Horeb. The land on which Capel Horeb was built formed part of the farm of Plas Rhydbont, which was owned by John Hampton-Lewis of Henllys and Bodiorand occupied by John Hughes. It is shown on the tithe map of the parish of Rhoscolyn of 1840 (Fig.4). The farm took its name from the nearby location of the early bridge, built on the site of a ford, and this in turn was used to identify the settlement which grew up either side the bridge. The farm is first referred to in Land Tax documents under the tenancy of Owen Roberts in 1774, who paid 9s. tax (WQT 73/7). The original chapel on the site, known originally as Capel Bont, was built in 1806, and by 1851 had a regular congregation of 70 people (Jones 1981, 419). It is described in 1873 as being 'small and very dilapidated' (WD 4/307). Permission to erect a new chapel building on the same site was sought from the Wesleyan Chapel Committee on 26th September 1873, as the potential congregation of the chapel now stood at 800 (WD 4/307). The building was to be built in the gothic style, and the two cottages adjacent to it were to be retained. The designs of the new chapel were by Richard Davies, architect of Bangor. The population of the surrounding area was described as 'middle class and poor', and the land for the chapel was proposed to be bought freehold. The chapel building served the community for 105 years and closed for religious worship in 1978.

4.2 General description

4.2.1 External description (see plates 1 to 4)

The grade II listed building of Capel Horeb is located in an elevated position on the southeast side of the B4545, at the southwest end of the village of Four Mile Bridge. It is listed as 'a good example of a late 19th century Methodist Chapel, with bold gothic design and of an ambitious scale for its rural village location, retaining contemporary interior fittings' (Listed building ref: 19945). The interior fittings have subsequently been removed.

The chapel is orientated on a northwest to southeast axis, and is fronted by red painted ornate iron railings permitting access from the footpath via a swing gate. The chapel itself is set back several meters from the road, with a grassed front lawn and concrete steps leading from the gate to the main entrance, which is in the north-west gable. The roof is double-pitched and is of blue-grey slate with a red tile ridge-crest of alternating cross and loop decoration, with stone gable copings resting on dressed-stone moulded kneelers. A metal finial is positioned at the apex of both gables. Four modern roof-lights have been inserted into either roof pitch.

The simple rectangular chapel has a lean-to vestibule on the north-west front, with a gabled porch. The walls are of roughly coursed, locally quarried grey stone bonded by mortar; the west front is built of larger squared stones. The dressings are of freestone. A rose window with stone sill is in an elevated position on the northwest elevation, framed by an arch of radiating voussoirs, and made up of eight equally spaced small rondel windows, of

which one still retains a dark green glass, the rest having been boarded up. Two further rondel windows are at the base.

The northwest elevation has a narthex constructed from roughly coursed locally quarried grey stone, with monopitch grey-blue slate roof and stone gable copings resting on dressed-stone moulded kneelers. Both the southwest and northeast elevations have a three-pane lancet window with white painted wooden frame and slate sill. Projecting from this to the northwest is a stone-built entrance porch with double-pitch blue-grey slate roof and stone gable copings to the northwest. An outer two-centred arch with dressed voussoirs frames a chamfered two-centred, dressed-stone arch with a quatrefoil flanked by two rondels in the tympanum. The quatrefoil retains its blue glass, but the rondels are boarded over. The arch frames the main entrance to the chapel which has a dark-stained door of heavy wooden paneling with iron latch, knob, and straps. Both the porch and northwest chapel elevation has two angle buttresses constructed from mortared and faced grey stone, with dressed stone on the copings.

Both the northeast and southwest elevations have four lancet windows each with four lights, with white painted wooden frames and clear glass in some, with others having been boarded over. Both elevations have five angle buttresses constructed from mortared and faced grey stone, with dressed stone on the copings.

The southeast elevation has a triple lancet window with stone arches of radiating voussoirs and white painted wooden frames. The centre window is of four panes, flanked by three-pane windows. The base of the southeast elevation has had a wide opening inserted in preparation for the fitting of modern double-glazed windows.

4.2.2 Internal description (see plates 5 to 12)

The chapel has a plaster wagon ceiling, of four bays, each bay divided into 10 panels by moulded ribs with bosses at the intersects. The bay divisions are aligned with each of the principal trusses, which are of collar beam type, with angled braces below the collar beam, and raking struts above. The ends of the principal trusses each rest on the wall plate, but a decorative moulded timber is carried down as a wall post which rests on a moulded corbel. A wooden moulded cornice runs around the top of the wall.

The upper parts of the wall, to dado height, are plastered and painted magnolia. The lower parts of the wall are now bare stone, though would have been lined with wood panelling. The interior is well-lit by the rose window in the northwest wall, the lancet windows in the south-west and north-east sides, and the triple lancet in the south-east wall.

Most original fixtures and fittings have been removed, and the floor has been lifted with excavations taking the base level down to the naturally occurring bedrock. The interior was recorded by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments at the time of closure, and they record the 'Set Fawr' and pulpit on the west entrance wall, with three banks of raking pews facing these.

5 CONCLUSION

The building is a well preserved example of a post-medieval Calvinistic Methodist chapel built in the gothic style and retains much of its external structural and decorative detail. The building is unfortunately mostly devoid of original internal fixtures and fittings, and as such loses an element of context. There is no evidence of earlier phases to the building, and presumably it has remained structurally unchanged since its construction in 1873.

6 ARCHIVE

The archive consists of notes, maps and digital images taken using a digital SLR camera set to maximum resolution. The paper archive will be held by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (project code G2217), and the digital photographs will be curated by the National Monument Record (NMR), Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales, Aberystwyth. Copies of the bound report will be sent to the regional Development Control archaeologist, to the Historic Environment Record (HER) Archaeologist at the curatorial division of Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Bangor, for deposition in the Regional HER, and to the NMR after approval by the client.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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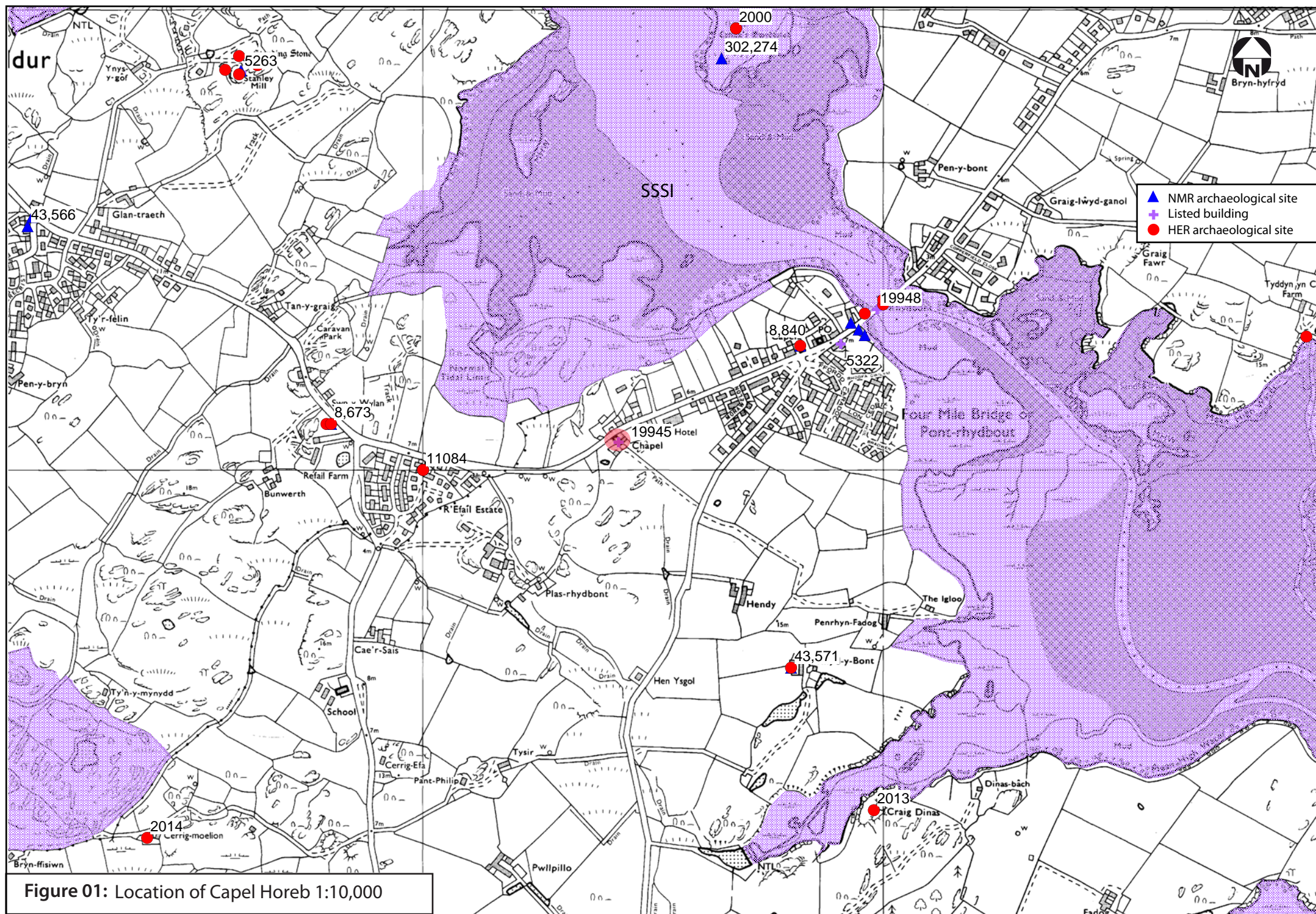
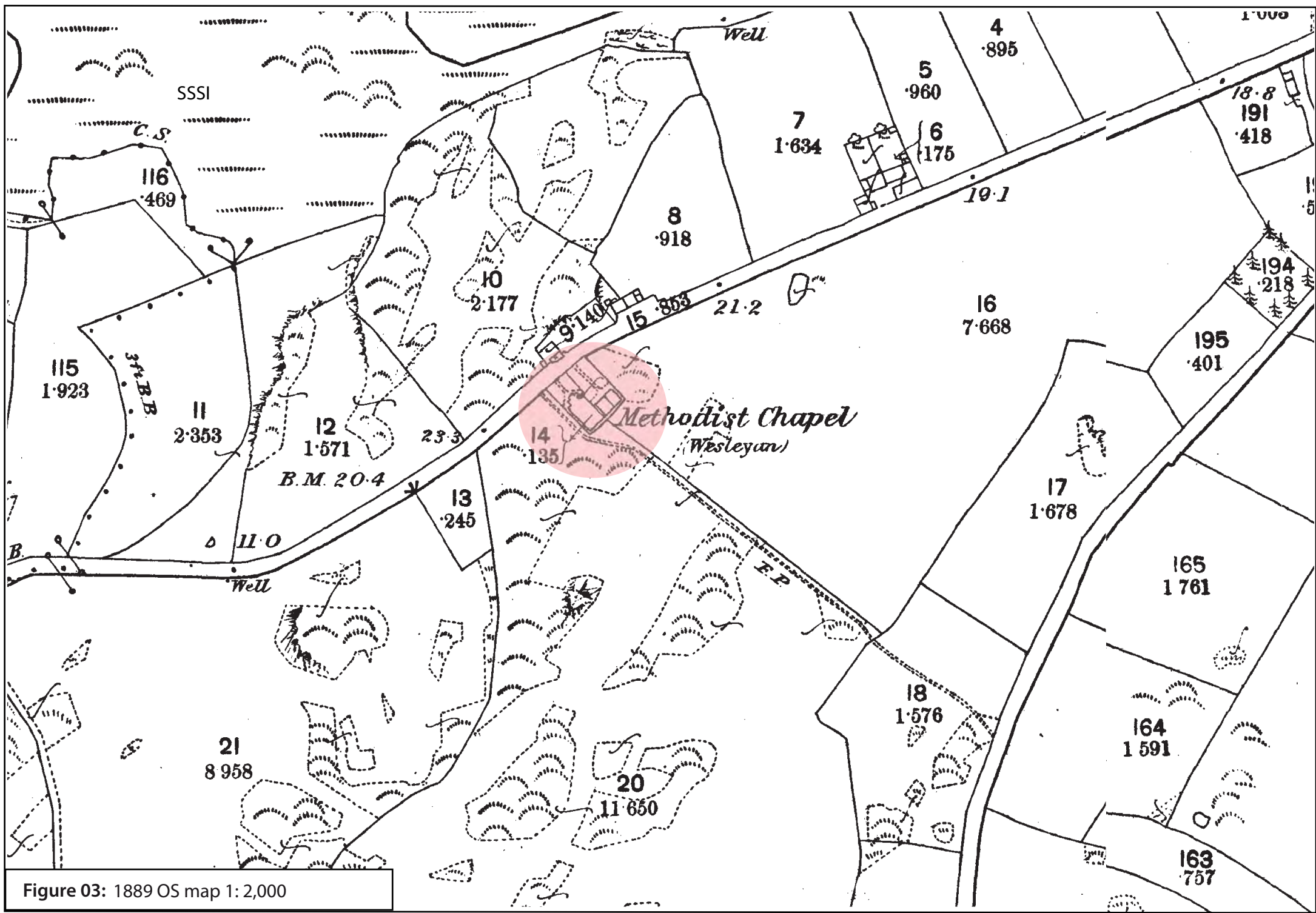




Figure 02: Location of Capel Horeb 1: 2,000



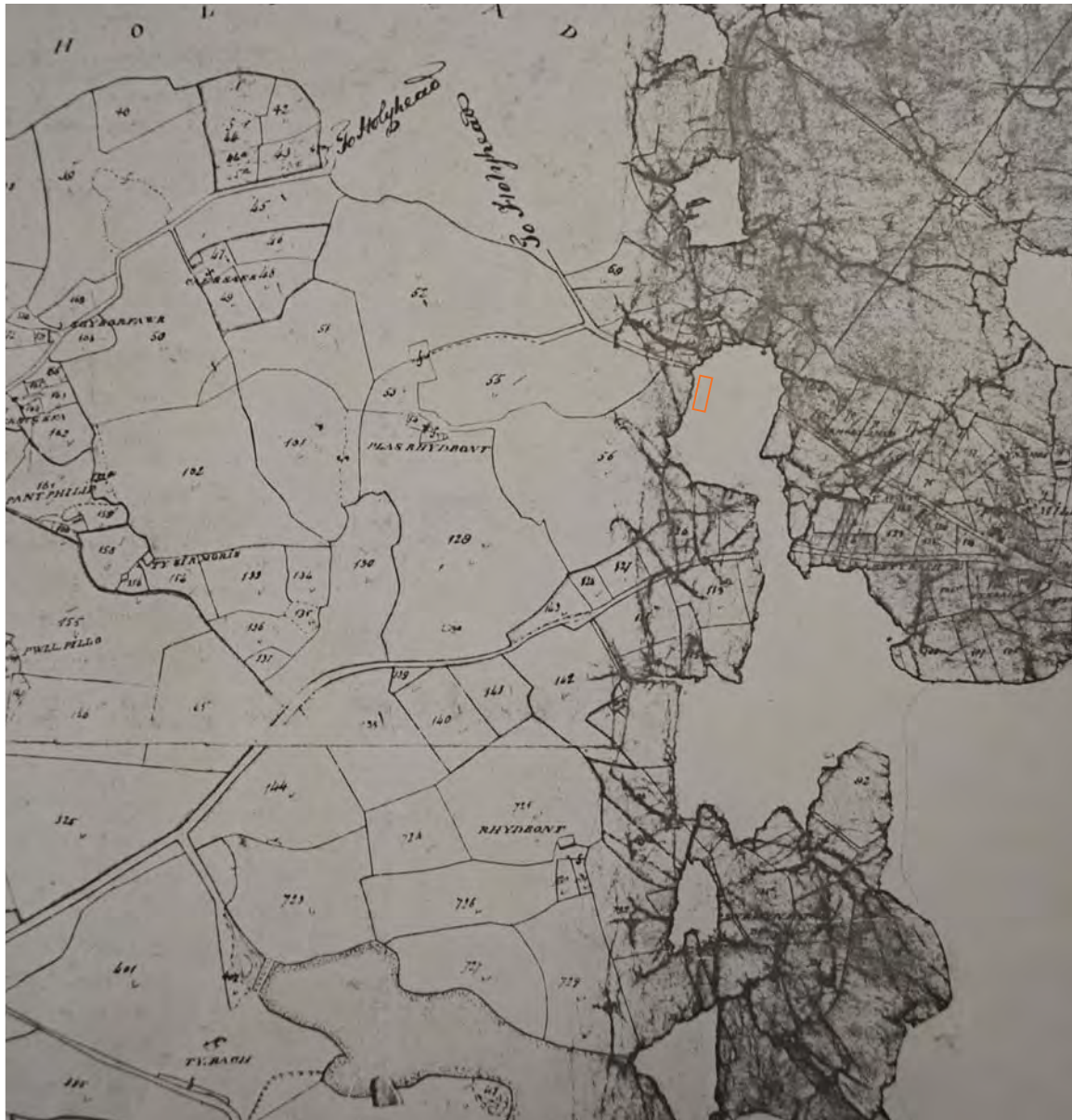
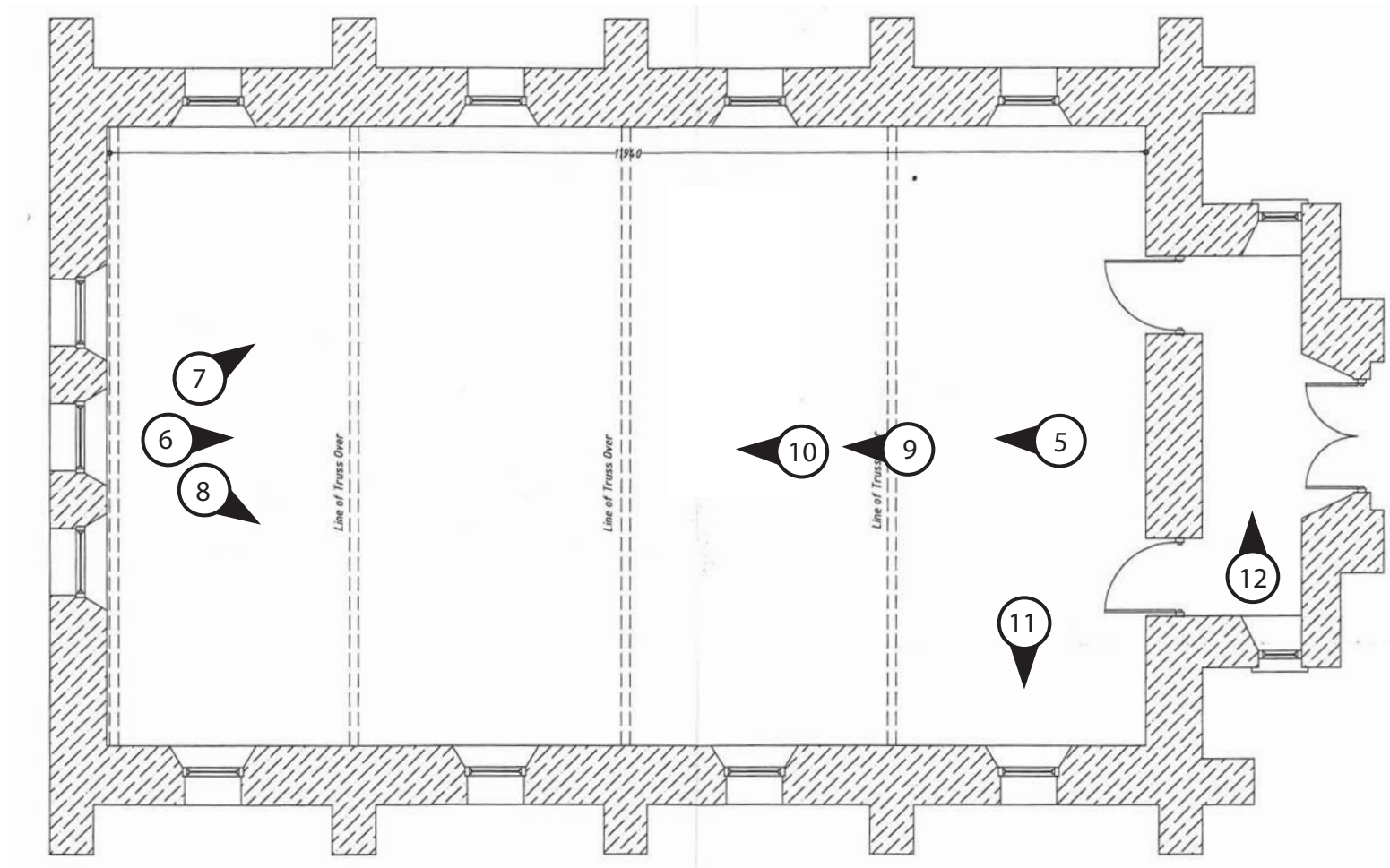


Figure 04: Location of Capel Horeb on the 1840 tithe map (damaged)



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Figure 05: Location of photographs (not to scale)



Plate 01: Capel Horeb external northwest elevation. Photograph taken from the northwest.



Plate 02: Capel Horeb external southwest elevation. Photograph taken from the west.



Plate 03: Capel Horeb external northeast elevation. Photograph taken from the north.



Plate 04: Capel Horeb external southeast elevation. Photograph taken from the southeast.



Plate 05: Capel Horeb internal southeast elevation. Photograph taken from the northwest.



Plate 06: Capel Horeb internal northwest elevation. Photograph taken from the southeast.



Plate 07: Capel Horeb internal southwest elevation. Photograph taken from the east.



Plate 08: Capel Horeb internal northeast elevation. Photograph taken from the south.



Plate 09: Capel Horeb plaster wagon ceiling. Photograph taken from the northwest.



Plate 10: Capel Horeb ceiling showing bosses and ribs. Photograph taken from the northwest.



Plate 11: Capel Horeb internal northeast elevation showing lancet window. Photograph taken from the southwest.



Plate 12: Capel Horeb narthex internal southwest elevation. Photograph taken from the northeast.



Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd

Craig Beuno, Ffordd y Garth, Bangor, Gwynedd. LL57 2RT
Ffon: 01248 352535. Ffacs: 01248 370925. email: gat@heneb.co.uk

