

Standing Building Survey
45, 47 and 49G High Street,
Brechtin, Angus



High Street frontage of 45 and 47 (49G at First floor level) looking North East

5th February 2011



Introduction (Illustration 1)

Angus Council propose to modernise the buildings at 45, 47 and 49G High Street, Brechin. The consent for this development (Project number 9518 1011) included an archaeological condition which specified the need for the implementation of a standing building survey. The survey was specified to include detailed photographs of decorative and structural elements, a detailed written description and account of the building's origins, development, use and the evidence on which this has been based. This survey was carried out by the author on Wednesday 2nd February 2011 (Site Code BRECO2); weather conditions were overcast and cold with occasional rain.

Historical Background (Illustrations 2 and 3)

A religious community was established at Brechin by the 10th century and in the reign of King David I the bishop and Cudlee's of Brechin were granted the right to hold a market (Pryde 1965). The town eventually became a free burgh belonging to the Bishop but became regarded as a Royal Burgh. Little is known of the nature and style of its medieval secular buildings. Many of the surviving buildings in core of the burgh are liable to be of 18th century date and those on the High Street were probably formerly occupied by merchants (Gordon Adams 1973).

Up until 1770 Brechin High Street is referred to as rising 'steeply in short, irregular terraces from the South Port to the North Port (Thoms 1977, 62), and in that year the Burgh Council decreed the removal of projecting forestairs and gables in the High Street (Gordon Adams 1973). In 1790 the High Street 'was brought to one inclined plane, while, by the removal of the steps at the end of each separate pavement, the footway was thrown upon one gradual slope (Black 1867, 179). It seems likely that such major revamping of the High Street would also have allowed for the construction or remodelling of buildings on its frontages. The earliest available record of occupancy of two the buildings being surveyed is John Wood's town plan of Brechin which shows no 45 as being occupied (or owned) by a Mr Dakers and no 47 by a Mr Pennycook (Wood 1823). The Valuation Roll of 1855 lists 45 High Street as being occupied by William Mitchell (Mason) and David Mitchell (Tailor) and 47 High Street as being occupied by William Shearer (Writer) (Brechin Valuation Rolls 1855). The Valuation Rolls of 1874-75 list 45 High Street as being occupied by one John Burnett (Baker) and 47 High Street as being a shop belonging to one John Belford (no trade listed) (Brechin Valuation Rolls 1874-75). By 1899-1900 45 High Street is occupied by John Gellatly (Baker) and 47 High Street by Marjory Whitelaw (Grocer) (Brechin Valuation Rolls 1899-1900). By the rolls of 1928-29 45 is still owned by the Gellatly family of bakers and 47 is occupied by Isabella Bridge (Grocer) (Brechin Valuation Rolls 1928-29).

Description of 45, 47 and 49g (Upstairs Flat) High Street, Brechin

45 and 47 High Street stand on the East side of Brechin High Street directly across the road from the entrance to the Bishop's Close and within site of the Market Cross. (Note that compass directions in all descriptions refer to the direction that the wall is facing).

45 High Street

External Western Elevation (Illus 4 and 5)

Built of mortar bonded sandstone this elevation is two and a half storeys high with its gable end to the High Street. The ground floor is taken up by a large shop front window with a doorway on its southern side. The First and Second floors have pairs of windows, the upper half storey below the apex of the gable has a small window. The gable end is topped by a chimney. The northern side of this elevation has a covered pend with stairs leading to first floor level.

Ground Floor Description

The ground floor has poured concrete floors with linoleum squares laid on top. A doorway in the Western internal elevation leads up two steps to a small windowless extension at the back.

Internal Southern Elevation (illus 8, 9, 11 and 12)

This wall is built of mortar bonded small rough sandstones and has traces of green plaster in places. It has two fireplaces at its Western end and the bottom of a stone threshold at first floor level is visible 6.5m East of the High Street frontage at a height of 2.07m from the floor level. This threshold lies just below the surviving timber floor/ceiling at first floor level.

Internal Western Elevation (Illus 10)

This wall is built of mortar bonded small rough sandstones and has a central doorway with two steps leading up into a rear extension. There is another fireplace in this wall on the South side of the doorway.

Internal Northern Elevation (Illus 10)

There is no sign of an original wall between no's 47 and 45 and there is a gap for a length of 3.6m which enables both ground floors to operate as one shop unit. From the High Street entrance a 2m length of mortar bonded sandstone wall survives up to the start of the gap. On the Eastern side of the gap the wall starts again for a length of 5.25m up to its junction with the East wall of the building. A visible 2.25m length of the wall is brick built, mortar bonded and unpainted the remaining 2.25m length is painted blue over brick.

Windowless extension to rear (Illus 7, 10, 12, 13 and 15)

This room is accessed by two steps up from the ground floor of 45 High Street and has plasterboard on both walls and ceilings. A doorway from this room leads South into a narrow pend which leads to a locked door that leads out onto the covered pend that leads to the stair access for 49g High Street. The Eastern side of this pend is formed by the mortar bonded original outer sandstone wall of 45 High Street and includes a blocked doorway and window that formerly provided access into 45 High Street from the rear.

47 High Street

External West Elevation (Illus 16)

Built of mortar bonded sandstone this elevation is two and a half storeys high with its gable end to the High Street. The ground floor is taken up by a large shop front window with a gated pend on its Southern side that leads to the stair access for 49G. The First and Second floors have pairs of windows the upper half storey below the apex of the gable has a small window. The gable end is topped by a chimney. The northern side of this elevation has a covered pend with stairs leading to first floor level.

External South Elevation

This narrow projecting wall is built of mortar bonded sandstone blocks and has a blank face at ground level and windows at first and second floor level (see description for upper room 3 for evidence of the construction of this wall).

Ground Floor Description

The ground floor has poured concrete floors with linoleum squares laid on top. A doorway in the Eastern internal elevation leads into a kitchen area with a store, toilet and wash hand basin.

Internal Eastern Elevation (Illus 17)

This wall face is timber panelled and painted a cream colour and has a doorway leading into a kitchen area.

Internal Northern Elevation (South Side)(Illus 18)

This wall is built of mortar bonded sandstone blocks and has a blank face. The first 2m length of this wall is exposed mortar bonded stone the remainder is timber panelled and painted a cream colour for a length of 4m.

Internal Northern Elevation(shared with no 45)(Illus 10)

There is no sign of an original wall between no's 47 and 45 and there is a gap for a length of 3.6m which enable both ground floors to operate as one shop unit. From the High Street entrance a 2m length of mortar bonded sandstone wall survives up to the start of the gap. The eastern side of this gap stops at the doorway into the kitchen area.

Kitchen, store, toilet and washroom(Illus 19)

This area has poured concrete floors with linoleum squares and is fitted out as a kitchen, store and toilet area. The walls are panelled and painted a cream colour.

Pend(Illus 20)

A gated covered pend leads from the High Street and provides access to the stair tower that leads to the upstairs flat (49G).

49G High Street (Upstairs Flat) (Illus 21)

Room 1

This room has a wooden floor.

Western elevation (Illus 22)

This wall has a window overlooking the pend, it is painted purple.

Northern Elevation (Illus 23)

This wall has a central fireplace and is painted purple.

Eastern Elevation(Illus 24)

This wall has a cupboard at its northern end with a very ornate double door, it is painted purple with an abstract 'explosive' design in red and yellow.

Southern Elevation(Illus 25)

This wall has a doorway at its Eastern end and is painted purple with a pair of spectacles surmounted with 'Dylan BLOWIN in the WIND' painted in purple, yellow and red.

Room 2 (Illus 26)

This is a bathroom with a window overlooking the back garden area and has a wooden floor. It is painted a cream colour.

Room 3

This room has a wooden floor and is wooden panelled. The panelling is painted white and has painted diamond pattern at 'dado' level.

Eastern Elevation (Illus 27)

This wall is 0.70m thick and contains two large well light windows overlooking the High Street. There is a central fireplace in this wall.

Northern Elevation (Illus 28 and 29)

The panelling on this wall has been removed at its Western end to expose the stone wall face. At this point the frontage wall of the neighbouring building (former Episcopal Church) is visible with the projecting Eastern elevation of 47 High Street apparently built against it. There is a single window in this elevation that looks down the High Street to the South.

Western Elevation (Illus 30)

This panelled wall includes a cupboard with a door at its Northern end, a doorway, an ornate shelved cupboard or display area with 5 shelves and a recess at its Southern end.

Southern Elevation

This wall has a blank face and an excellent surviving section of panelling and decorated dado.

Room 4

This room has a wooden floor and has wooden panelling painted white there is no decoration at dado level.

Southern Elevation (Illus 31 and 32)

The panelling has been removed from this wall to expose the stone wall face which is built of shaped sandstone blocks. It contains a fireplace and a blocked doorway with a wooden lintel at its Eastern end. The stone blocking of this doorway is bonded with red clay. This doorway presumably led out onto the pend with stairs on this side of the building.

Eastern Elevation (Illus 33)

This wall has two windows overlooking the High Street.

Northern Elevation (Illus 34)

This wall contains a cupboard at its Eastern end which may contain a blocked window above the fuse box.

Western Elevation

This wall contains a cupboard and doorway and is panelled.

Room 5

This room is fitted out as a kitchen.

Western Wall (Illus 35)

This wall contains a cupboard at its South end and an alcove at its North end. Part of the wallpaper on the East wall of the alcove has been removed to reveal that that section of the wall is timber built.

Eastern Wall (Illus 36)

This wall contains a window that overlooks the back garden area.

Northern Wall

This wall is panelled and painted white and has a fireplace with an Aga stove in it.

Southern Wall

This wall is panelled, painted white and has a cooker and washing machine against it. There is a doorway at its Western end.

Room 6 (Illus 37 and 40)

Stair Tower

There is a narrow stair tower that provides access from ground floor level to both first and second floor levels of the building. The Eastern elevation of the stair tower contains a doorway at garden level and windows at first and second floor levels.

Rear elevation of 45, 47 and 49G (Illus 37, 38 and 39)

45, 47, 49G High Street

Above the covered pend to the south of the stair tower there are single windows at first and second floor levels. The roof of the extension to the rear of 45 High Street is visible from the back garden level standing 1.5m above garden level. Above this the first and second floors have two sets of two windows one above the other. The roof is covered with small grey slates

Back Garden

The back garden area to these buildings is raised considerably higher than street and pend level.

Interpretation of Buildings

Numbers 45, 47 and 49G High Street are interesting survivals of probably late 18th century urban architecture. Careful examination of visible wall elevations suggests that they have quite a complicated history. For example the fragment of threshold visible in the Southern elevation of no 45 just below ceiling level suggests that the former ceiling / floor level in that building was at least 0.10m lower than it is now. In a similar manner to the blocked doorway that is visible in the Southern internal elevation of room 4 in 49G this threshold may relate to a doorway leading out onto the pend with the stairway that lies on the North side of the building. The two fireplaces side by side in the North elevation of no 45 may relate to its recorded use as a bakers shop in the 19th century Brechin Valuation Rolls (see historical background). The blocked doorway and window in the hidden rear Western elevation of no 45 may represent the original access to no's 45 and 47 prior to the construction of the ground level extension to the rear. At first floor level in Room 3 of 49G it is clear that the construction of the neighbouring Episcopal Church in the early 1800's had a considerable effect on the structure of no 47, examination of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1862 indicates a considerable rebuild of this side of the building (see Historical Background and Illus 3).

Recommendations

The author feels that the photographic survey and drawn elevations are a good start to producing a record of the buildings and flat prior to their modernisation, however he would recommend the need for the further recording of exposed wall faces if there is the intention to completely gut the buildings prior to the modernisation work. Great care should also be taken with the removal of the surviving internal wooden panelling.

However the final decision on the need for any further work rests with Aberdeen Archaeology Service (Advisors to Angus Council).

Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge Sarah Kettles of Brechin THI for her help and interest in this recording work and Heather at Angus Archives, Restenneth Library for her help with sourcing the Valuation Rolls.

References

Cartographic Sources (<http://www.nls.uk/maps>)

John Wood 'Plan of the City of Brechin' 1823

Ordnance Survey Maps - Six-inch 1st edition, Scotland, 1843-1882

Printed

Black, DD 1867 **History of Brechin**

Brechin Valuation Rolls 1855, 1874-75, 1899-1900, 1928-29 (Angus Archives)

Gordon Adams, David 1973 **Social and Economic Change in the Parish and Burgh of Brechin 1765-1864** (typescript held by Angus Archives)

Pryde, G S 1965 **The Burghs of Scotland**

Thoms, D 1977 **The Council of Brechin: A study in Local Government**

Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Angus
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	45, 47 and 49G High Street, Brechin
PROJECT CODE:	BREC02
PARISH:	Brechin
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Derek Hall
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Derek Hall, archaeologist and ceramic specialist
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Standing Building Survey
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Urban buildings
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NO
START DATE	2 nd February 2011
END DATE	2 nd February 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A photographic standing building survey and drawn sketches were made of nos 45, 47 and 49G High Street, Brechin prior to their proposed modernisation. Evidence for blocked doorways and windows and slight alterations connected with erection of the neighbouring Episcopal Church was recorded.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Angus Council
CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	N/A
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	34 Glenfarg Terrace, Perth, PH2 0AP
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	NMRS
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk

Report Illustration List

Illustration 1 Location of 45, 47 and 49G High Street, Brechin (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2010. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)

Illustration 2 John Wood's 'Plan of the City of Brechin' dated to 1823 showing no's 45 and 47 occupied by Mr Dakers and Mr Pennycook respectively (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

Illustration 3 45, 47 and 49G on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of c 1860 showing rebuild of Southern elevation of 47 High Street associated with erection of Episcopal Church (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

Illustration 4 West elevation of numbers 45 and 47 High Street (Architects drawing)

Illustration 5 Western (High Street) Elevation of 45 High Street (pend with stairs on left)

Illustration 6 Pend with stairs on North side of no 45 High Street

Illustration 7 Ground floor of 45 and 47 High Street (blocked doorway and window marked in red)

Illustration 8 Internal Southern elevation looking North West

Illustration 9 Double fireplace in internal Southern elevation looking North

Illustration 10 Northern elevation and Western elevation showing doorway into extension and fireplace in corner

Illustration 11 Bottom of threshold at first floor level in internal Southern elevation of no 45 High Street

Illustration 12 Internal Southern elevation of no 45 High Street showing double fireplace and first floor threshold at ground floor level and fireplace and blocked doorway in Room 4 at first floor level
Scale 1:50

Illustration 13 Blocked doorway and window in pend leading from extension to rear of 45 High Street

Illustration 14 Blocked doorway and window in rear Eastern elevation of No 45 High Street (see illus 7 for location) Scale 1:50

Illustration 15 View from back extension into 45 High Street (blocked doorway and window through doorway on left)

Illustration 16 Western (High Street) elevation of 47 High Street

Illustration 17 Internal Eastern elevation of no 47 High Street

Illustration 18 Internal Northern and Western elevation of no 47 High Street

Illustration 19 Internal Western elevation of No 47 showing door into kitchen, store and toilet area

Illustration 20 Covered pend providing access to stair tower accessing 49G High Street looking East

Illustration 21 Rooms in Flat 49G as numbered for survey Scale 1:50

Illustration 22 Western elevation Room 1

Illustration 23 Northern elevation Room 1

Illustration 24 Eastern elevation Room 1

Illustration 25 Graffiti on Southern elevation Room 1

Illustration 26 Western elevation Room 2

Illustration 27 Eastern (High Street) elevation Room 3

Illustration 28 Northern elevation Room 3

Illustration 29 Detail of junction of wall of neighbouring Episcopal church and frontage of no 47 High Street

Illustration 30 Western elevation of Room 3 with ornate shelved cupboard and alcove

Illustration 31 Southern elevation of Room 4 showing blocked doorway to right

Illustration 32 Detail of blocked doorway in Room 4

Illustration 33 Eastern (High Street) elevation of Room 4

Illustration 34 Northern elevation of Room 4

Illustration 35 Western elevation of Room 5

Illustration 36 Eastern elevation of Room 5

Illustration 37 Rear (Eastern) elevation of No's 45, 47 High Street (architects drawing)

Illustration 38 Eastern elevation above pend and to South of stair tower

Illustration 39 Rear (Eastern) elevation of No's 45, 47 and 49 High Street, Brechin

Illustration 40 Stair tower from Pend looking North West

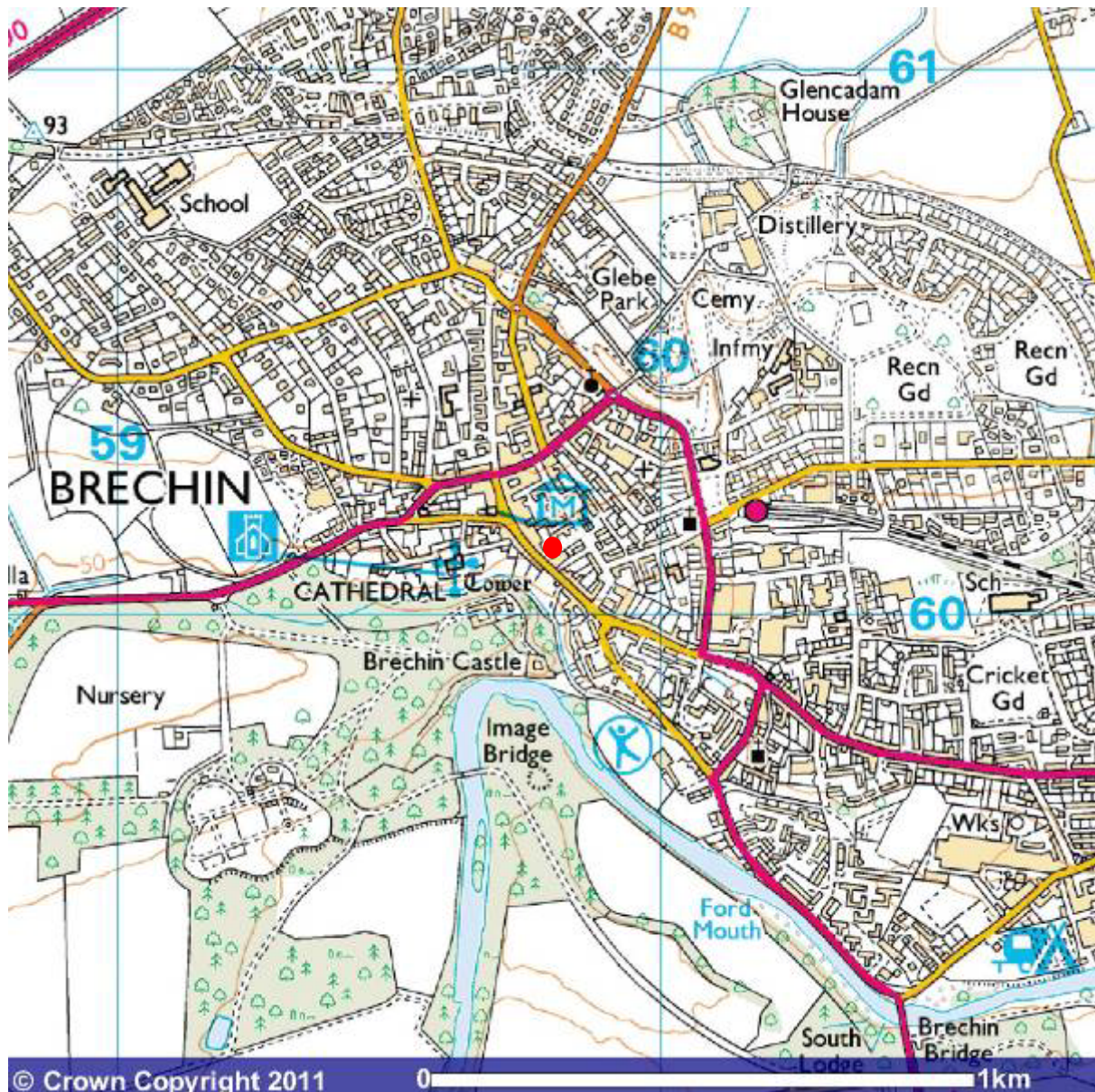


Illustration 1 Location of 45, 47 and 49G High Street, Brechin (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2010. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)



Illustration 2 John Wood's map of 1823 showing no's 45 and 47 occupied (or owned) by Mr Dakers and Mr Pennycook respectively (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

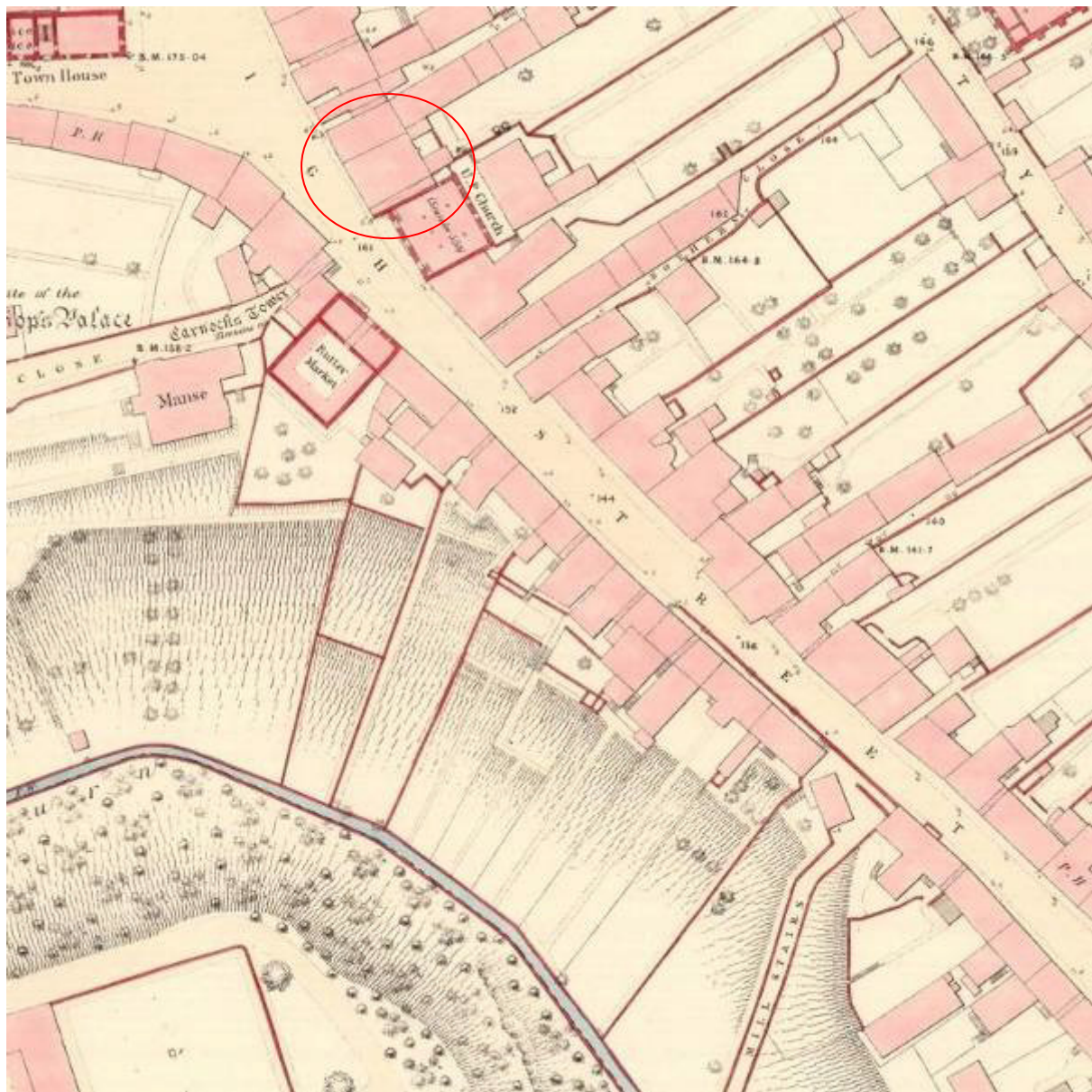


Illustration 3 45, 47 and 49G on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of c 1860 showing rebuild of Southern elevation of 47 High Street associated with erection of Episcopal Church (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

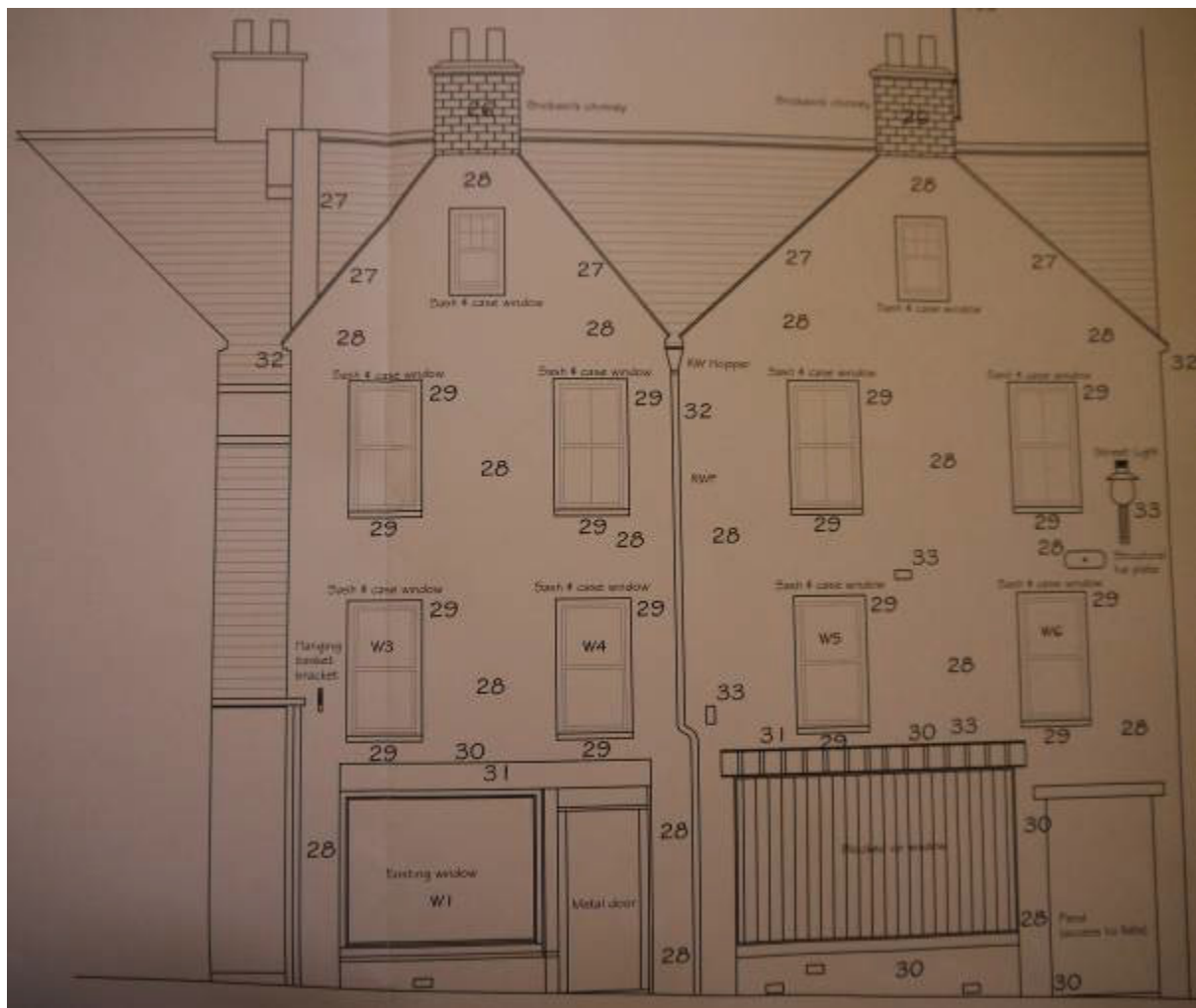


Illustration 4 West elevation of numbers 45 and 47 High Street (Architects drawing Scale 1:50)



Illustration 5 Western (High Street) Elevation of 45 High Street (pend with stairs on left)



Illustration 6 Pend with stairs on North side of no 45 High Street

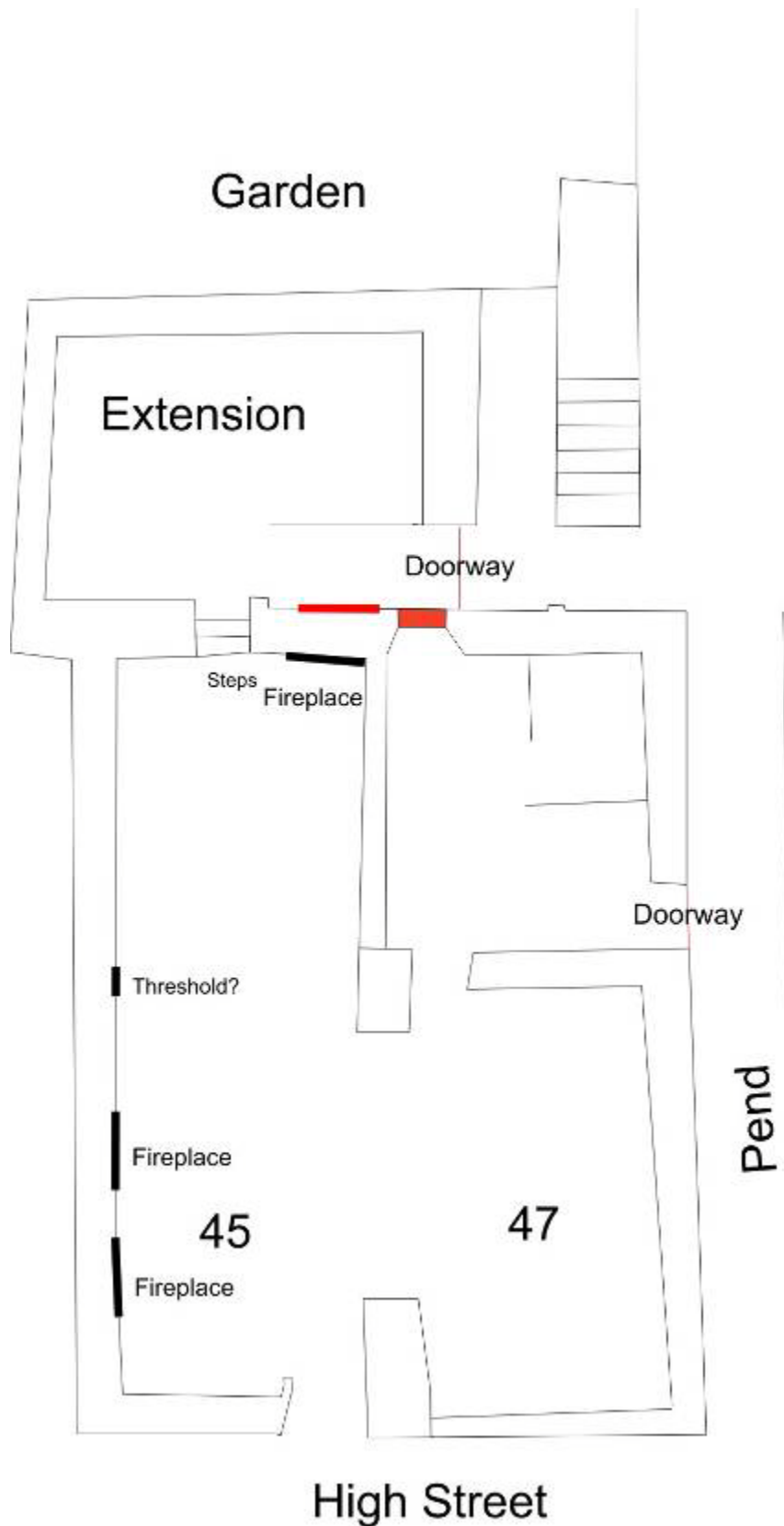


Illustration 7 Ground floor of 45 and 47 High Street (blocked doorway and window marked in red)
Scale 1:50



Illustration 8 Internal Southern elevation looking North West



Illustration 9 Double fireplace in internal Southern elevation looking North



Illustration 10 Northern elevation and Western elevation showing doorway into extension and fireplace in corner



Illustration 11 Bottom of threshold at first floor level in internal Southern elevation of no 45 High Street

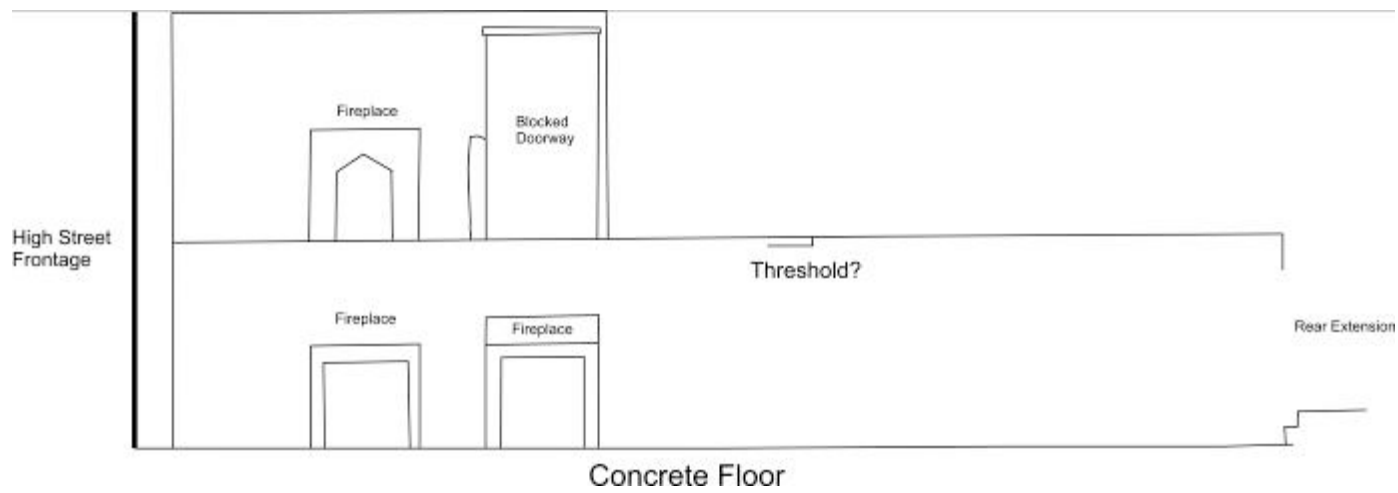


Illustration 12 Internal Southern elevation of no 45 High Street showing double fireplace and first floor threshold at ground floor level and fireplace and blocked doorway in Room 4 at first floor level
Scale 1:50



Illustration 13 Blocked doorway and window in pend leading from extension to rear of 45 High Street

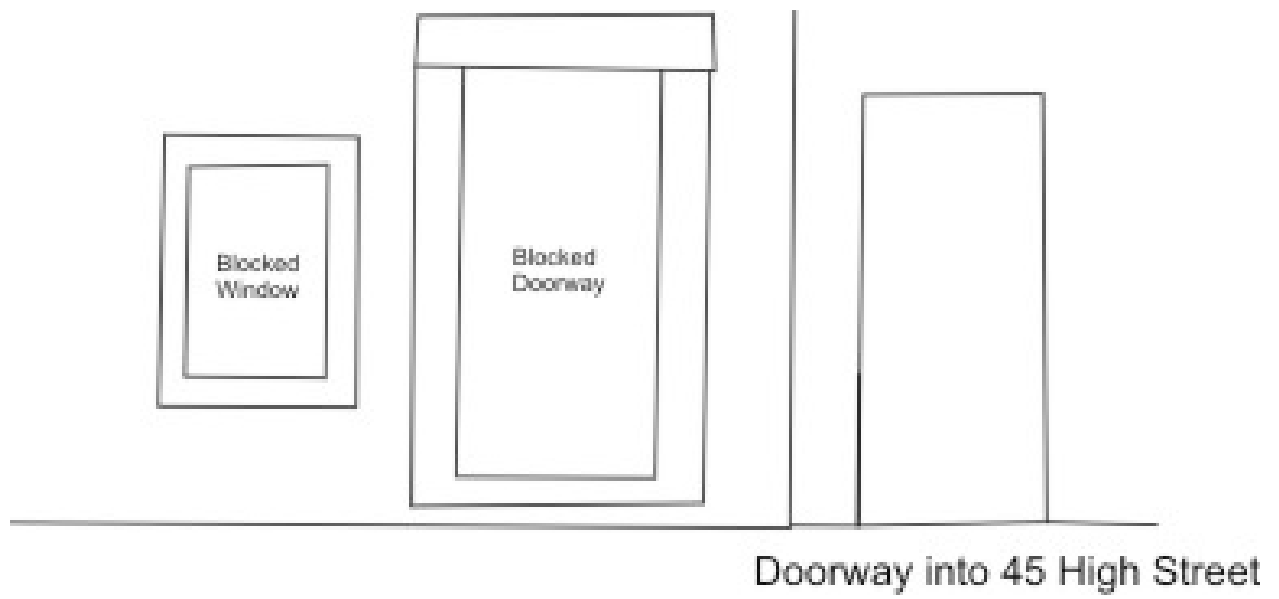


Illustration 14 Blocked doorway and window in rear Eastern elevation of No 45 High Street and doorway from extension into 45 High Street (see Illus 7 for location) Scale 1:50



Illustration 15 View from back extension into 45 High Street (blocked doorway and window through doorway on left)



Illustration 16 Western (High Street) elevation of 47 High Street



Illustration 17 Internal Eastern elevation of no 47 High Street



Illustration 18 Internal Northern and Western elevation of no 47 High Street



Illustration 19 Internal Western elevation of No 47 showing door into kitchen, store and toilet area



Illustration 20 Covered pend providing access to stair tower accessing 49G High Street looking East

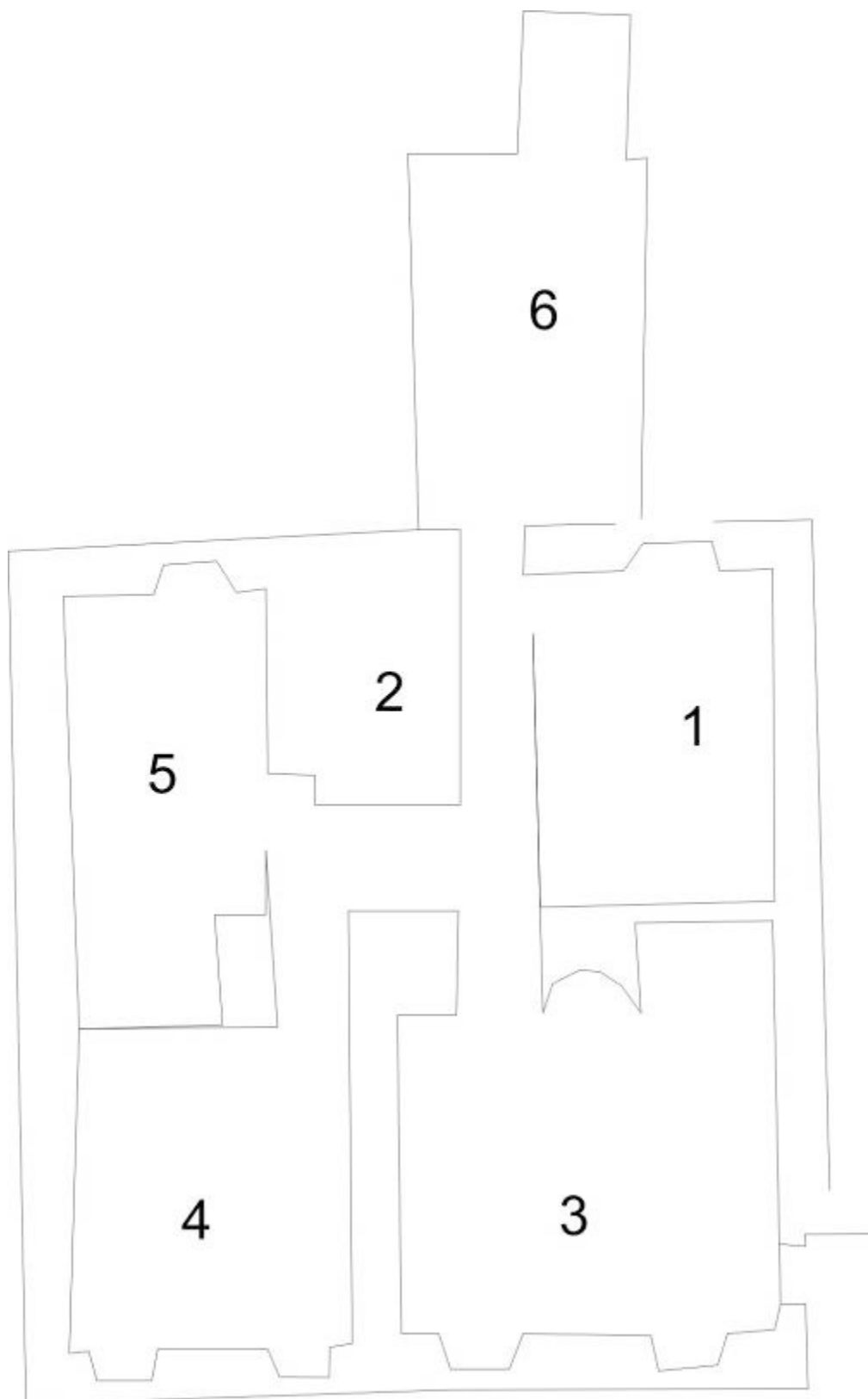


Illustration 21 Rooms in Flat 49G as numbered for survey Scale 1:50



Illustration 22 Western elevation Room 1



Illustration 23 Northern elevation Room 1



Illustration 24 Eastern elevation Room 1



Illustration 25 Graffiti on Southern elevation Room 1



Illustration 26 Western elevation Room 2



Illustration 27 Eastern (High Street) elevation Room 3



Illustration 28 Northern elevation Room 3



Illustration 29 Detail of junction of wall of neighbouring Episcopal church and frontage of no 47 High Street



Illustration 30 Western elevation of Room 3 with ornate shelved cupboard and alcove



Illustration 33 Southern elevation of Room 4 showing blocked doorway to right

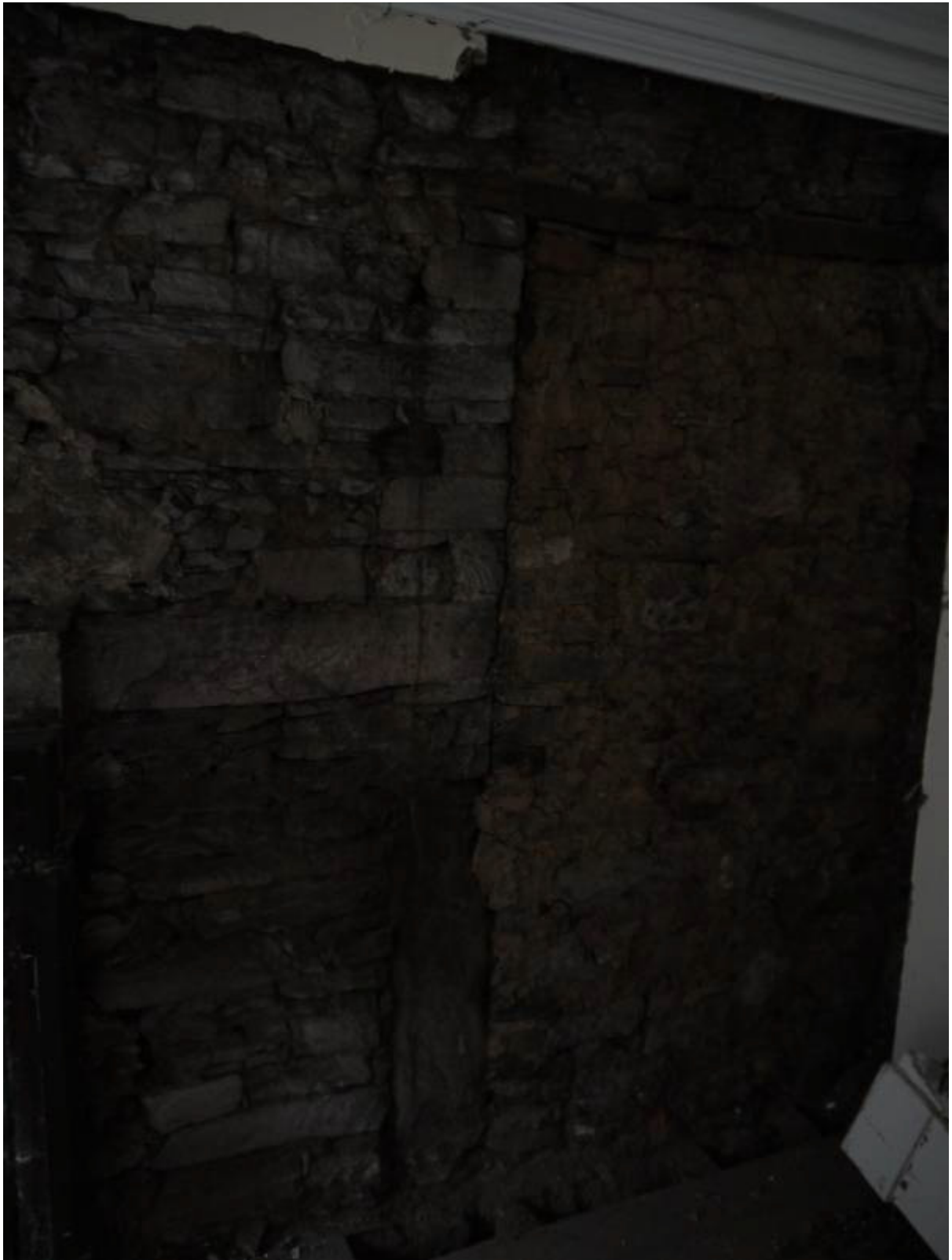


Illustration 34 Detail of blocked doorway in Room 4



Illustration 35 Eastern (High Street) elevation of Room 4



Illustration 36 Northern elevation of Room 4



Illustration 31 Western elevation of Room 5



Illustration 32 Eastern elevation of Room 5

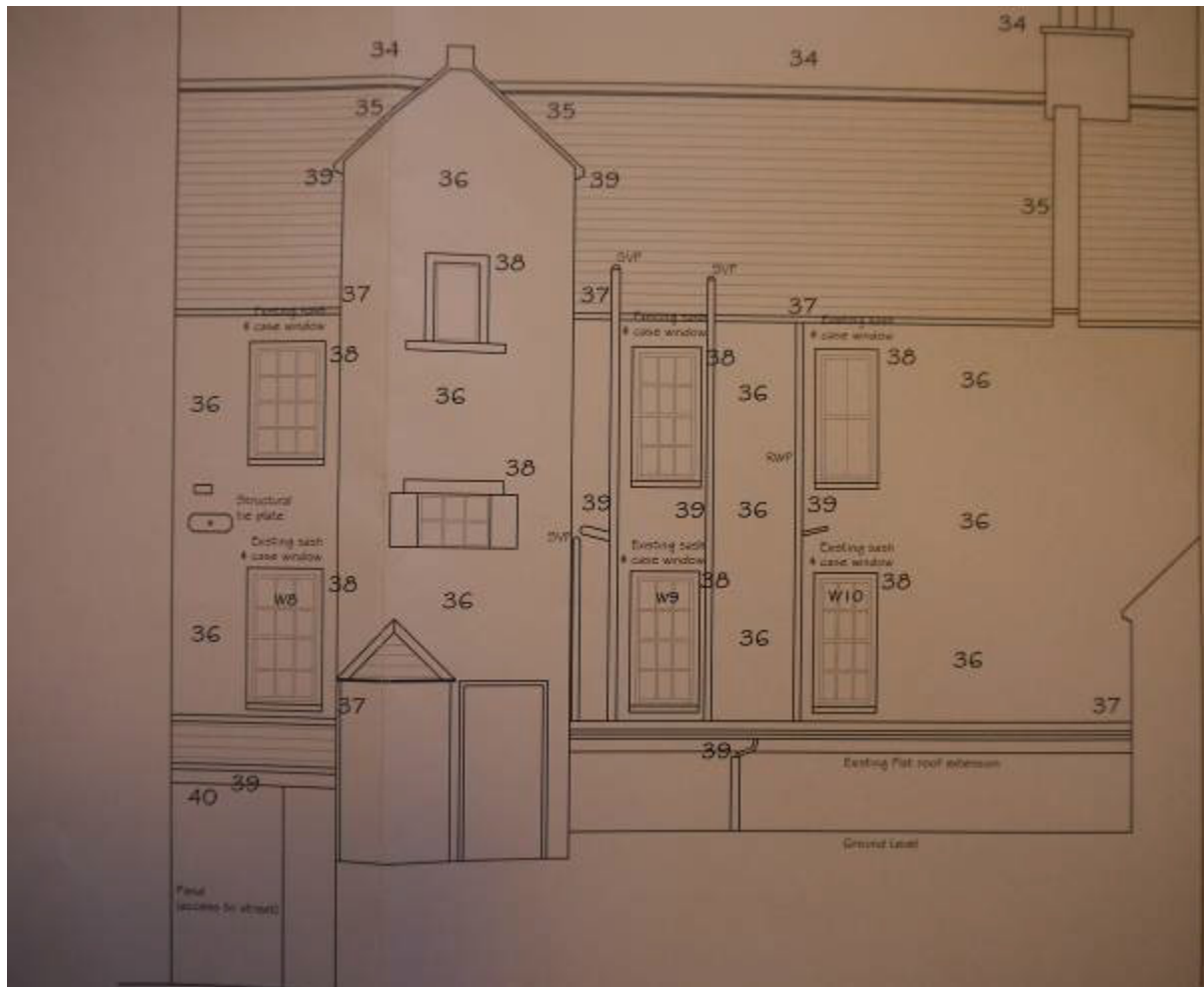


Illustration 37 Rear (Eastern) elevation of No's 45, 47 High Street (architects drawing)



Illustration 38 Eastern elevation above pend and to South of stair tower



Illustration 39 Rear (Eastern) elevation of No's 45, 47 and 49 High Street, Brechin



Illustration 40 Stair tower from Pend looking North West