

Historic Building Record  
Wm Watson & Sons  
163-167 High Street  
PERTH  
PEX180



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**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD**  
**WM WATSON & SONS**  
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**PEX180**

|                   |  |   |
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*Illustration 1: Site location plan*

*Illustration 2: 163-167 High Street, buildings to be demolished*

*Illustration 3: N elevation (exterior), 163-167 High Street (Watsons)*

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## ***ABSTRACT***

*Alder Archaeology conducted an historic building survey on the site of a current porcelain shop at 163-167 High Street, Perth, in advance of the demolition of storage buildings. The proposed development area is to the rear of the shop, centred on NGR NO 1176 2367. The survey was undertaken on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016 in overcast weather conditions. The requirement was to record the existing structures photographically and in narrative form, noting setting, form, function, fabric and details of construction phasing. The storage buildings appeared to date from the early nineteenth century, when the site had been used as a livery stables, with brick extensions dating from the 1960s.*

# **1 Background**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Clerkland Project Management Ltd commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake a historic building survey on the site of a current tableware and collectables shop at 163-167 High Street, Perth, in advance of the demolition of outbuildings. The proposed development area is to the rear of the shop, centred on NGR NO 1176 2367. The survey (site code PEX180) was undertaken on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2016 in overcast weather conditions. The requirement was to record the existing structures photographically and in narrative form, noting setting, form, function, fabric and details of construction phasing. A subsequent watching brief on the removal of foundations following demolition was cancelled as it was decided to leave the founds in place. A separate building record and watching brief were carried out on a detached store building at 165 High Street, as part of works to record two neighbouring properties- these form the subject of a separate report.

The work was designed to fulfill the archaeological condition on development application reference 16/00773/FLL.

## **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

The main aim of this investigation was to record the date, character and quality of the standing buildings.

## **1.3 Reporting**

The present document has been prepared as the final report on this survey and watching brief. Copies will be sent to the client, to Historic Environment Scotland, and Perth & Kinross Historic Environment Record.

## **1.4 Planning and Curatorial Issues**

This survey and watching brief constitute a programme of archaeological work designed to satisfy the outstanding archaeological condition on the planning consent for this development.

## **1.5 Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank Mr Kerr Watson for his assistance and guidance throughout this project. Mr Watson funded this survey.

# **2 Details of Work**

## **2.1 The Site (Illus 1)**

As part of redevelopment work between Perth High Street and Mill Street, buildings to the rear (N) of the china shop were to be demolished, the ground levelled and turned into a temporary car park. The buildings comprised two parallel rectangular ranges, with the space between roofed over, occupying ground between Perth Theatre to the W and Boots to the E, with Mill Street forming the site boundary to the N.

## 2.2 Archaeological Potential

The buildings due for demolition form part of a backland plot stretching north from the frontage 163-167 on the High Street to Mill Street. They consist of a mix of 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, largely used for storage, plus three interesting former commercial /industrial buildings. This group of buildings represent a rare survival of a succession of buildings on a backland plot, as the vast majority of Perth High Street backlands have been cleared and redeveloped in the 20th century. Map analysis suggests these buildings could date to the late 18th century, with their earliest depiction being on Reid's 1808 map. On the OS 1:500 scale Perth edition the buildings surviving within the development site may be marked as 'Livery Stables and Posting Establishment'. The development site is located within the medieval burgh of Perth; the plot extends northwards from the medieval High Street, through to the backlands bounded by the town's defences (Mill Street). Previous development at the neighbouring sites of Marks and Spencer (1977-1979) and to the rear of Boots (1979-1980) indicates the potential for well-preserved organic deposits of up to 5m in depth in the centre of Perth. These deposits include the remains of medieval occupation from the 12th century onwards (buildings, organic artefacts of wood, leather, bone, pottery, textile etc) and the town's defences (footings of the walls, substantial ditch). Ongoing archaeological work in advance of the redevelopment of the Red Rooms at Perth Theatre (19 Mill Street) has revealed the remains of a stone-built, medieval building surviving directly beneath a 19th century building, 0.5m below the present ground surface.

## 2.3 Archaeological Method

A full Historic Building Record was compiled, as per ALGAO 2011 guidelines, comprising: annotated location and base plans and elevations, indicating phasing and cross-referenced to the accompanying text; a written description of the buildings, considering form, function, location, age, type of building and description of architectural phasing; photographs of all external and main internal elevations, detailing and the setting of the buildings; detailed archival research.

In consultation with Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT), it was decided that the survey did not provide grounds for requiring monitoring during demolition, whilst a decision to leave wall foundations in place obviated the requirement for a watching brief on post-demolition works.

## 2.4 Results of Investigations

The rear of Watsons comprised three distinct but conjoined buildings: an E "range", rectangular and measuring 4.50m E-W x 10.00m N-S (internal); a W range, 4.50m E-W x 15.00m N-S (internal), subdivided into a main room and a stairwell to the S; a former courtyard 4.50m wide enclosed by a brick extension between the two ranges.

The exterior S gable end of the E range was sloped-in to first floor, especially noticeable on the E side, bowed across the N elevation surface above a wide doorway (2.40m square- internal- a loading door, possibly original to the livery stables). The exterior finish of this range was of grey harling, while a brick extension enclosing the N end of the W range from the NE corner of the W range was of modern machined brick, constructed in the 1960s. Within the extension shell, the original W building (stables) was contained, with the shell extending the original building by 4.30m wide (E-W) and

5.20m long (N-S). The pine slat “stable doors” (sliding storeroom doors), along the E wall of the internal stable building (the W range), measured 2.90m wide, 2.05m high, beneath steel lintels- replacements of the original stable doors. Two barred windows were spaced along the W elevation (internal) of the E range, the N example 1.05m wide within an embrasure 1.50m wide, 1.55m high, beneath a wood beam lintel and featuring a replacement concrete sill. The example to the S had no embrasure and was 1.20m wide and 1.55m high.

The majority of interior stonework was whitewashed, but this was eroded in the E building, partially exposing a rubble wall construction with wood beam door and window lintels. The W building incorporated 0.50m long quoins, with brick rebuilds around the door casings. The join between the brick extension and the original stone W wall of the E building was 10.00m from the N end of the range. The extension enclosed what had been originally an open courtyard between the two long ranges, now roofed with corrugated asbestos cement sheets. The ground floor was formed from 5m long concrete slabs, while the first floor of both E and W ranges was of pine boards throughout, the ranges being roofed with grey slate, probably not original.

Immediately to the south of a staircase giving access to the first floor of the W range, a suite of five rooms occupied the SW corner of the site, within a building which appeared to predate the main range. Two large rooms comprised the majority of the suite, along the W side of the building, each with two window embrasures spaced evenly along the W elevation; each embrasure measured 1.40m high, 1.20m wide and 0.50m deep. The embrasures were probably original to the building, but the windows themselves were not, featuring modern textured patterned glass within white-painted wooden frames. The NW room of the suite had been equipped as an office and featured modern plywood panelling throughout and was carpeted. The room measured 5.00m N-S x 3.00m E-W. The SW room was plainly decorated with yellow matt paint. The W elevation featured two rectangular alcoves each 0.65m high, 0.45m wide and 0.30m deep (the wall thickness); as these were backed with plasterboard, they were probably not original features. The room measured 4.00m N-S x 3.00m E-W. The E side of the suite comprised three small box-rooms, including two toilets and a store, all plainly furnished.

The first floor space of the W range was occupied by storerooms, with a smaller room measuring 4.00m E-W x 4.70m N-S (internal) at the S end and a main room 5.20m E-W x 22.20m N-S. The stairs opened S onto the first floor from a central well within the main room, thus dividing the room longitudinally into E and W corridors. The W elevation of the main room featured a straight-sided, 1.20m square window (internal) with fixed frame subdivided into nine panes. The window may have been original to the range. The smaller S room featured a sash window 1.40m high and 0.95m wide within an embrasure measuring 1.20m wide. This was located directly above a window of identical dimensions on the ground floor, suggesting both were constructed together, further suggesting that the building to the S predated the range, which had been built as an extension to the N of the original building. It was further noted that the main room portion of the W range stood up to 1m lower than the end room, visible on the exterior as a gable-end chimney stack (see illus2).

The first floor of the E range comprised a single, windowless room of the same dimensions as the ground floor. Currently an attic room, it had been closed off and was rarely accessed at the time of the survey, having an unsafe, partially rotten wooden

board floor. The S elevation of the room featured a central fireplace measuring 0.90m wide and 0.80m high beneath a stone fascia mantelpiece. This may have been an original feature, possibly representing living quarters or office space of the livery stable. 1m to the E, a bricked-up doorway measuring 2.00m high, 0.80m wide, beneath a wooden beam lintel, formerly gave access to and from the shop buildings to the S.

The W boundary of the site was formed by the rear of Perth Theatre, under development at the time of the survey. No access was possible. The E site boundary featured a 0.70m wide gap on a probable rig line, but this was not wide enough to permit recording.

### **3 Interpretation**

The form and fabric of both E and W ranges was consistent with an original purpose and use as a livery stables, with the space between having originally been an open courtyard. The replacement of lintels in the W range probably represents a re-purposing as storage space, while the brick extension of clear later twentieth century date was constructed within the lifetime of the current owner of the site. The majority of the building fabric probably dates from the earlier nineteenth century, comprising as it does stone rubble with a probable lime mortar bonding (although whitewash and harling made this difficult to verify). Brick reconstruction of the W range doorways, supporting steel joist lintels and roof beams dates from the twentieth century and was probably contemporary with the brick extension, ie, the 1960s.

### **4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

Alder Archaeology consider that the Historic Building Record has been compiled according to the Terms of Reference and do not recommend further work in connection with the present development. However, the final decision ultimately rests with Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust, as curators of Perth archaeology.

## Appendix 1 Photographic Register

| <i>Image No</i> | <i>Description</i>  | <i>View</i> |
|-----------------|---|-------------|
| 001-002         | N elevation, E range, exterior  | N           |
| 003-004         | E elevation, brick extension, exterior  | W           |
| 005-006         | General view, NE corner of brick extension, exterior  | SW          |
| 007             | General view, brick extension, interior   | NW          |
| 008             | N elevation, brick extension, interior  | N           |
| 009             | N elevation and long view, brick extension (space between ranges), interior                                   | N           |
| 010-011         | W elevation, brick extension, interior  | W, SW       |
| 012-013         | Detail, brick wall added to N end of W range, oblique   | SW          |
| 014-015         | S elevation, N end of W range, internal   | S           |
| 016             | Detail, brick rebuild of doorway, N end of W range, interior, oblique   | SE          |
| 017             | S elevation, former courtyard between E and W ranges, interior  | S           |
| 018             | General view, W elevation former courtyard between E and W ranges (E elevation of W range), interior, oblique | SW          |
| 019             | General view, E elevation former courtyard between E and W ranges (W elevation of E range), interior, oblique | SE          |
| 020             | S end of E elevation of courtyard/W elevation of W range, interior, oblique                                   | NW          |
| 021             | Detail, wooden slat doors at S end of E elevation of courtyard/W elevation of W range, interior               | W           |
| 022             | E elevation of courtyard/W elevation of W range, interior, oblique  | NW          |
| 023             | Interior of storeroom, ground floor of W range  | N           |
| 024             | General view, ground floor of E range, interior   | NE          |
| 025             | N elevation, ground floor of E range, interior  | N           |
| 026             | N end of W elevation, ground floor of E range, interior   | W           |
| 027             | Detail, N window in W elevation, ground floor of E range, interior  | W           |
| 028             | Detail, S window in W elevation, ground floor of E range, interior  | W           |
| 029             | S elevation, ground floor of E range, interior, oblique   | SE          |



|         |  |           |
|---------|--|-----------|
| 030     | S end of E elevation, ground floor of E range, interior                          | E         |
| 031     | N end of E elevation, ground floor of E range, interior                          | E         |
| 032     | E elevation, ground floor of E range, interior, oblique                          | SE        |
| 033     | Landing of stairs to 1 <sup>st</sup> floor, W range                              | W         |
| 034     | Stairs up to first floor storeroom, W range                                      | N         |
| 035     | W corridor, first floor storeroom, W range                                       | S         |
| 036     | S elevation, first floor storeroom, W range                                      | S         |
| 037     | Detail, window in S end of first floor storeroom, W range                        | W         |
| 038     | S elevation, S end room, first floor, W range                                    | S         |
| 039     | Detail, window in W elevation, S end room, first floor, W range                  | W         |
| 040     | Detail, blocked fireplace in S end room, first floor, W range, oblique           | NE        |
| 041     | Detail, fireplace, first floor, E range  | S         |
| 042     | S elevation, first floor, E range  | S         |
| 043     | General view, ground floor of E range, interior                                  | NW        |
| 044     | N end of E elevation, ground floor of E range, interior                          | E         |
| 045     | E elevation, ground floor of E range, interior, oblique                          | SE        |
| 046     | Landing of stairs to 1 <sup>st</sup> floor, W range                              | W         |
| 047-049 | W corridor, first floor storeroom, W range                                       | S, N      |
| 050     | S elevation, S end room, first floor, W range                                    | S         |
| 051     | Detail, blocked fireplace in S end room, first floor, W range, oblique           | NE        |
| 052     | Detail, ceiling timbers, window in W elevation, S end room, first floor, W range | N         |
| 053     | Doorway into boxroom, SE room of W range, ground floor                           | E         |
| 054-57  | S elevation of boxroom   | S         |
| 058-63  | E elevation of SW room of W range, ground floor                                  | E, SE, NE |
| 064-66  | S elevation of SW room of W range, ground floor                                  | S         |
| 067-68  | N elevation of SW room of W range, ground floor                                  | N         |
| 069-74  | W elevation of SW room of W range, ground floor                                  | W         |
| 075-77  | N elevation of office room, W range, ground floor                                | N         |

|        |  |        |
|--------|--|--------|
| 078-82 | W elevation of office room, W range, ground floor, oblique | NW, SW |
| 083-84 | S elevation of office room, W range, ground floor          | S      |

## Appendix 2 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>  | Perth & Kinross   |
| <b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>  | Watsons, 163-167 High Street, Perth   |
| <b>PROJECT CODE:</b>   | PEX180  |
| <b>PARISH:</b>   | Perth   |
| <b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>  | C Fyles   |
| <b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>   | Alder Archaeology   |
| <b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>   | HBR   |
| <b>NMRS NO(S):</b>   | -   |
| <b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>  | -   |
| <b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>  | None  |
| <b>NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)</b>  | NO 1176 2367  |
| <b>START DATE (this season)</b>  | 10/10/2016  |
| <b>END DATE (this season)</b>  | 10/10/2016  |
| <b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>  | None  |
| <b>MAIN DESCRIPTION:</b><br>(NARRATIVE)<br>(May include information from other fields) | Alder Archaeology conducted an historic building survey on the site of a current porcelain shop at 163-167 High Street, Perth, in advance of the demolition of storage buildings. The proposed development area is to the rear of the shop. The requirement was to record the existing structures photographically and in narrative form, noting setting, form, function, fabric and details of construction phasing. The storage buildings appeared to date from the early nineteenth century, when the site had been used as a livery stables, with brick extensions dating from the 1960s. |
| <b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>   | None  |
| <b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>  | -   |
| <b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>  | Wm Watson and Sons Ltd  |
| <b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>  | Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX   |
| <b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>  | <a href="mailto:director@alderarchaeology.co.uk">director@alderarchaeology.co.uk</a>  |
| <b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b><br>(intended/deposited)  | HES (intended)  |

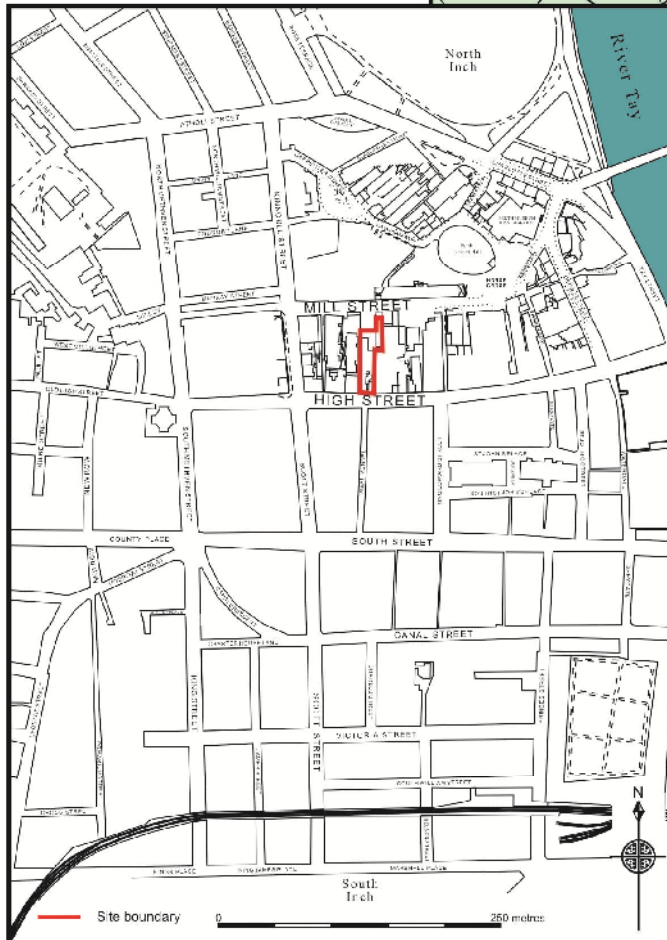
Illus 1

Wm Watson & Sons Ltd  
163-167 High Street, Perth

Site Location



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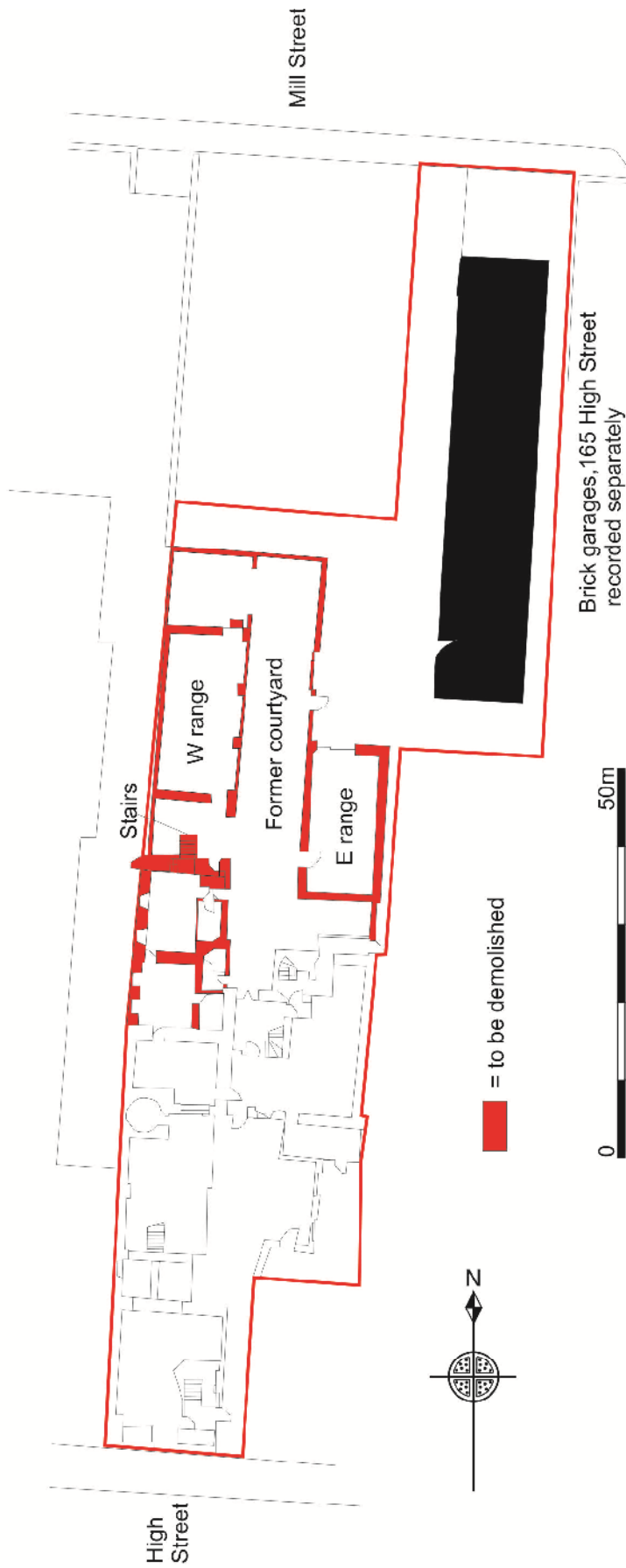


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Illus 2

163-167 High Street, buildings to be demolished



PEX180

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Illus 3 N elevation (exterior) 163-167 High Street (Watsons)

