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HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT

**62 Deptford High Street
LEWISHAM
LONDON**

June 1997

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ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF ENGLAND

LONDON

NGR: TQ 3720 7715

LEWISHAM

BUILDINGS INDEX NO: 95954

DEPTFORD HIGH STREET, SE8

NO. 62

SUMMARY

This modest brick town house was built in two phases. The earliest part, fronting Deptford High Street, dates from the late 17th or early 18th century; the rear portion is apparently a late 19th century replacement of an earlier addition. The earlier block has two-storeys with attics, an M-profile roof and a central chimney stack. The two-storey extension to the east, equal if not larger in size, has a mansard roof. The front elevation of the building was remade in the later part of the 19th century, when the number of windows was reduced, and it has a modern glass shop front. The interest of the building lies in its earlier part, which has a central-chimney-stack plan. Surviving examples of this plan form in an urban context are few and are conventionally dated to the 17th century. However, the first floor and attic storeys retain joinery of an apparently early-18th-century character that does not appear to be secondary. As comparable recorded survivals are rare the date range for the construction of the building must therefore be quite broad. Further documentary research and the internal study of related buildings in Deptford High Street, where it is likely that numerous unrecorded comparable houses survive, would allow for a much clearer assessment of the building's date and significance.

BUILDING REPORT

Historical Background

Deptford is a district of great historic richness. From origins as a small riverside settlement it grew rapidly through the 16th and 17th centuries, its fortunes inextricably linked with those of the Royal Naval Dockyard founded in Deptford by King Henry VIII in 1513. The dockyard was systematically renewed from 1688 into the 18th century.¹ Robert Morden's 1686 map of London and its environs shows Deptford as a substantial urban area quite distinct from but within easy reach of London.² By 1700 John Evelyn, the diarist and lessee of Sayes Court, the manor house of Deptford Strand, was able to record that 'by the increase of Building may be seen that the Towne is in eighty years become neare as big as Bristoll'.³ By the 1740s the street frontage of Deptford High Street, or Butt Lane as it was then called, was built up along its entire length, although

not solidly developed at its southern end. John Rocque's 1746 map has a block of buildings on the east side of the High Street the position of which appears to correspond with the row which now has No. 62 at its southern end.⁴ By this date the early part of the present building, on the evidence of its fabric and plan form, would have been standing. The development of the area between Deptford High Street and Church Street, along the present day Frankham Street and Hales Street, seems to have reached its present form by the 1770s.⁵ By 1850 the building was occupied by John Ashford, a Builder and Undertaker.⁶ Three generations of the Ashford family lived here, and in 1857 a watercolour painting of the house was made for Frederick Ashton.⁷ This shows the south side of the building with a shopfront and with an additional range to the east, although apparently smaller than the present extension. The families occupation ceased in 1865 and the building remained unoccupied for several years. From 1868/9 it was in use as a pawnbrokers, this being a possible date for the present rear extension. This use continued until at least the mid 20th century, since when it has been used for various commercial purposes. It is presently occupied by the African Design Centre, for the sale of clothes made to African designs.

Description

The earlier part of the building must always have formed a small house, perhaps always including a shop. Its overall dimensions were about 5.7m (18ft 9in.) across the front and 8.9m (29ft 2in.) deep. The plan form is simple, and survives most clearly on the first floor (Fig. 1). This has two principal spaces, forming one room to the west and divided into two rooms to the east, separated by a large stack with back to back fireplaces. Abutting the north side of the stack, and supported by it, is a framed twin newel staircase with its landing doubling as a passageway between rooms. To the south of the stack is a space currently used as a cupboard accessed from the east. The original room plan of the attic storey is less clear as partition walls have been inserted.

This central-chimney-stack plan form is an urban version of the common post-medieval venacular house type, the lobby entry plan. The limited frontages of many urban plots forced builders to put the shorter sides to the street. Unless there was an alley or side entrance this meant there was no space for a lobby, rather there had to be a front entrance with a passageway that took space away from the ground floor room. Typologically these plans represent an early phase in the 17th-century development by speculative builders of London's standard rear-staircase plan. Other examples that have

been recorded or which still survive show considerable variation in their planning.⁸

On typological evidence the plan form of No. 62 Deptford High Street, taken with the size of the house and its roof profile, would appear to point to a construction date in the late 17th century.⁹ However, internal joinery mouldings, which do not appear to be secondary, have a more early-18th-century character. The possibility of a later date is supported by the existence of a builders' manual of 1700 by Joseph Moxon which is illustrated with a central-chimney stack plan that is, in essence, that of No 62 in a mirrored form (Fig. 2).¹⁰ This suggests that centre stack plans for lower-status houses were still current at and after this date.

There appear to be a considerable number of buildings of comparable date and, on the evidence of their elevations and chimneystack positions, closely similar form surviving on Deptford High Street. Additionally, demolished buildings with similar plans have been recorded on Deptford Church Street and Crossfield Street. Indeed, the plans of Nos.12 and 16 Crossfield Street are so similar to Moxon's plan that it is even possible that he provided the prototype, although it may be that the manual simply reflected existing practice. Photographs taken in 1973 show the interior of the building to be similar in detailing to No. 62, and therefore presenting similar difficulties in dating.¹¹ It may be that lower-status dwellings continued to be built with plan forms already passing out of fashion for higher status buildings. Whilst this model of development has plausibility the poor survival rate of low-status urban dwellings of this date makes it difficult to substantiate. Therefore, further documentary research and internal study of related buildings in Deptford would allow for a much clearer assessment of these buildings' date and significance.

The main elevation of the building to the west has been refronted and the brickwork subsequently painted grey. There are two segmental-headed windows to both the first floor and attic storey to the centre and south, but the overall effect is unbalanced as the northern part of the wall is blank brickwork. This asymmetrical arrangement occurs on several other elevations along Deptford High Street. On the evidence of the 1857 watercolour painting the previous elevation had an arrangement of three flat-headed windows to the upper floors. Therefore, the present west elevation post-dates this depiction. In Moxon's published elevation of 1700¹² (Figs. 2 and 3) the asymmetrical front also has three windows, although his suggested plot width is 25ft compared here to just over 18ft. It is possible that this earlier front is the original one. In the painting the entrance is shown as being in the northernmost bay, an arrangement

that may have been continued after the refronting as the glass shop front and tiled surround is a modern insertion. The first floor casement windows are late 20th century replacements. Square four-pane sash windows in the attic storey conform to a late 19th century date for the refronting. A parapet with stone coping partially conceals the pantiled roof, and central chimney stack. A similar arrangement existed on the previous elevation, which, if original, would be unusual as a parapet is a more typically later Georgian feature.

The brickwork of the south return wall is apparently 19th century in date, laid to English bond rather than the Flemish bond of the front elevation. This side of the 18th-century block appears to be essentially the same as that depicted in the 1857 artwork, having the same rendered plinth and coping above the rainwater heads. This shows an arrangement of three blocks. The doorway and flanking shop windows in the middle block have subsequently been filled in. The easternmost block appears to be an earlier extension, the present one being considerably larger and with a mansard roof rather than the shallow pitched roof shown in the drawing. Therefore, this appears to have been enlarged after the 1860s. The early buildings's east or rear wall is just visible internally behind 19th century joinery where a doorway has been formed on the first floor. It is of red brick of a character that could be 18th century or earlier.

On the evidence of the 1857 drawing the ground floor of the building would have had a passage on the north side, giving access to the stairs. There was also an entrance to the shop, or possibly office at this date, on the south side. The present arrangement of the ground floor is entirely modern, although the base of the central stack survives. In contrast, the first floor retains its original layout and much joinery. The west or front room, which has dimensions of about 5.2m (17ft) by 3.6m (12ft), occupies over one-third of the whole floor space and must once have been the principal living space in the house, perhaps both parlour and dining room. The room's symmetry is compromised as the stack is not strictly central, making the fireplace off-centre to accommodate the stair compartment to the north. The widening of the stair forces the wall to the north of the fireplace to be canted out. The plain chimney surround could be 18th century, although the dating of such unmoulded features is perilous, whilst the simply decorated inner iron fireplace with a roll moulding and raised squares to the corners is clearly a 19th century insertion. The six-panel door and parts of the moulded skirting boards also appear to be 19th century, apparently part of a general scheme of refurbishment, perhaps related to the extension or refronting of the building or its change of use in the

1860s. Some of this scheme has been removed recently, the west wall being the most altered part, with a subsequent covering to the wall and replacement wooden-framed casement windows.

The central part of the floor plan is taken up by the stair compartment and landing passageway, chimney stack and cupboard. The compact twin newel stair presently serves only the attic storey but once started on the ground floor. The upper storeys of the building are now only accessible via a stairway in the rear extension. The twin-newel form of the stair and its position are probably as built but much of its joinery dates from the 19th century. The simple balustrade to the stair and attic landing has stick balusters and columnar newel posts, its handrail being almost oval in section. The moulded closed string maybe a remnant of the earlier stair. The limited depth of the house prevented adoption of an open-well staircase, as on Moxon's plan (Fig. 2). A twin-newel arrangement was described by Moxon as an economical alternative that still allowed top-lighting.¹² However, no evidence survives to indicate whether such a lantern existed in this building. Plain panelling, much of which appears to be original, forms the partition walls of the stair compartment on the east and west sides of both storeys, canted out from the chimney stack for the slightly wider staircase. This joinery is robustly finished and a possibly contemporary dado rail on the north wall is comparable to joinery in the early-18th-century higher status houses in nearby Albury Street. The doors and architraves are 19th century or later.

The space between the brick chimney and the south wall of the building is presently used as a cupboard, now only accessible from the south east room. The north side of the chimneystack has been plastered but part of its east side is still visible. This shows it to be built of red bricks with a thick lime mortar. The south and west walls of the cupboard are lined with 19th century matchboarding, that on the west wall obscuring any indication of whether the space was also accessible from the front room. Moxon showed two 'closets' in this position (Fig.2), so small that they can only effectively have been used as cupboards.

To the east there are two rear rooms divided by an off-centre partition wall that is apparently original. The smaller and unheated north room, perhaps a closet, has been modernized and retains no visible features of interest. However, the south room retains a substantial amount of work from the 18th and 19th centuries. Plain pine panelling survives to the west and north walls, with a simple moulding outlining the fireplace opening in the west wall. The west wall also has a four panelled door at its south end,

apparently contemporary although rehung upside down as the different sized panels have the reverse arrangement to the wall panelling. A similar door, its upper panels replaced with glass panes, survives in the north wall. This is all of an early 18th century character although it could be earlier. The joinery is also very similar to that present in both front and rear rooms on several floors in Nos. 12 and 16 Crossfield Street. The 19th century matchboard covering to the south and east walls blends well with the earlier joinery.

The rearrangement of the attic storey into four small rooms was done in the later part of the 19th century after the building had been refronted. The loss of a third window, along with the building's plan and size, has resulted in room spaces being somewhat compromised. On the west side there is an unheated room to the north, whose partition wall is forced uncomfortably close to the northern edge of the fireplace opening to allow for the inclusion of the window. However, the matchboarded partition wall has a residual pilaster in its centre, suggesting some modest architectural pretensions despite the awkward room proportions. The narrow fireplace, now located in the south west room, has a simple wooden mantle shelf and a tiled hearth. On the eastern side of the floor the plank partition wall actually cuts across the fireplace. The implication of this is that heating these spaces was not a consideration when the alterations were carried out. A former opening in the floor of the south-east room suggests they may have been secondarily used for storage. Some early joinery survives at this level, most notably the plain panelling of the partition walls of the stair compartment, and possibly also the wide floorboards that are present throughout. The roof has been wholly renewed.

NOTES

1. British Library, King's Maps 25 C 26 (15). 'A Map of Deptford 1623, from an Original Pen and Ink Sketch with additional remarks by JOHN EVELYN Esq.' made c 1703, published 1750; Kings MS 43, 'Survey of the Harbours and Dockyards of England', 1698; P. MacDougall, 'The Royal Dockyards of Woolwich and Deptford', in ed. R. Carr, *Dockland: an Illustrated Historical Survey*, 1985 pp. 111-126.
- 2.R. Morden, *A Map ...Twenty Miles Round London*, 1686.
3. As quoted by A. Quiney, 'Thomas Lucas, Bricklayer, 1662-1736', *Archaeological Journal*, 136 (1979) p 269.
4. J. Rocque, '*An Exact Survey of the City's of London, Westminster...and the Country*

Ten Miles Round, 1746.

5. B. Gill, *Deptford and its Dockyard: An Archaeological Survey*, 1988, figure 4.

6. *Post Office Directory*, 1850....1870.

7. Lewisham Local Studies Centre, F. Ashton, *Views of Deptford in Kent*, vol. 1, 1860. Frontispiece drawing entitled 'The old house at home' in an unpublished manuscript.

8. A. F. Kelsall, 'The London House Plan in the Later 17th Century,' *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, vii 1974, pp 80-91. A plan similar to that of No. 62 Deptford High Street has been recorded at No. 38 Upper Street, Islington (NMR Buildings Index no: 91046).

9. *Ibid.*

10. J. Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises or, the Doctrine of Handy-Works. Applied to the Art of Bricklayers-Works*, London 1700, plate opposite page 64.

11. Photographs and plans were made by the Greater London Council in 1973. The photographs are currently held by English Heritage, 23 Savile Row, London W1X, the plan and preparatory drawings are held by RCHME.

12. *op cit.* Moxon, 1694, p.147.

Recorded April 1997.

Report by Joanna Smith, revised July 1997.

Measured survey by Colin Burgess, Nevile Stankley and Andy Donald.

Photographs by Derek Kendall.

MOULDING PROFILES AT TEN TIMES SCALE



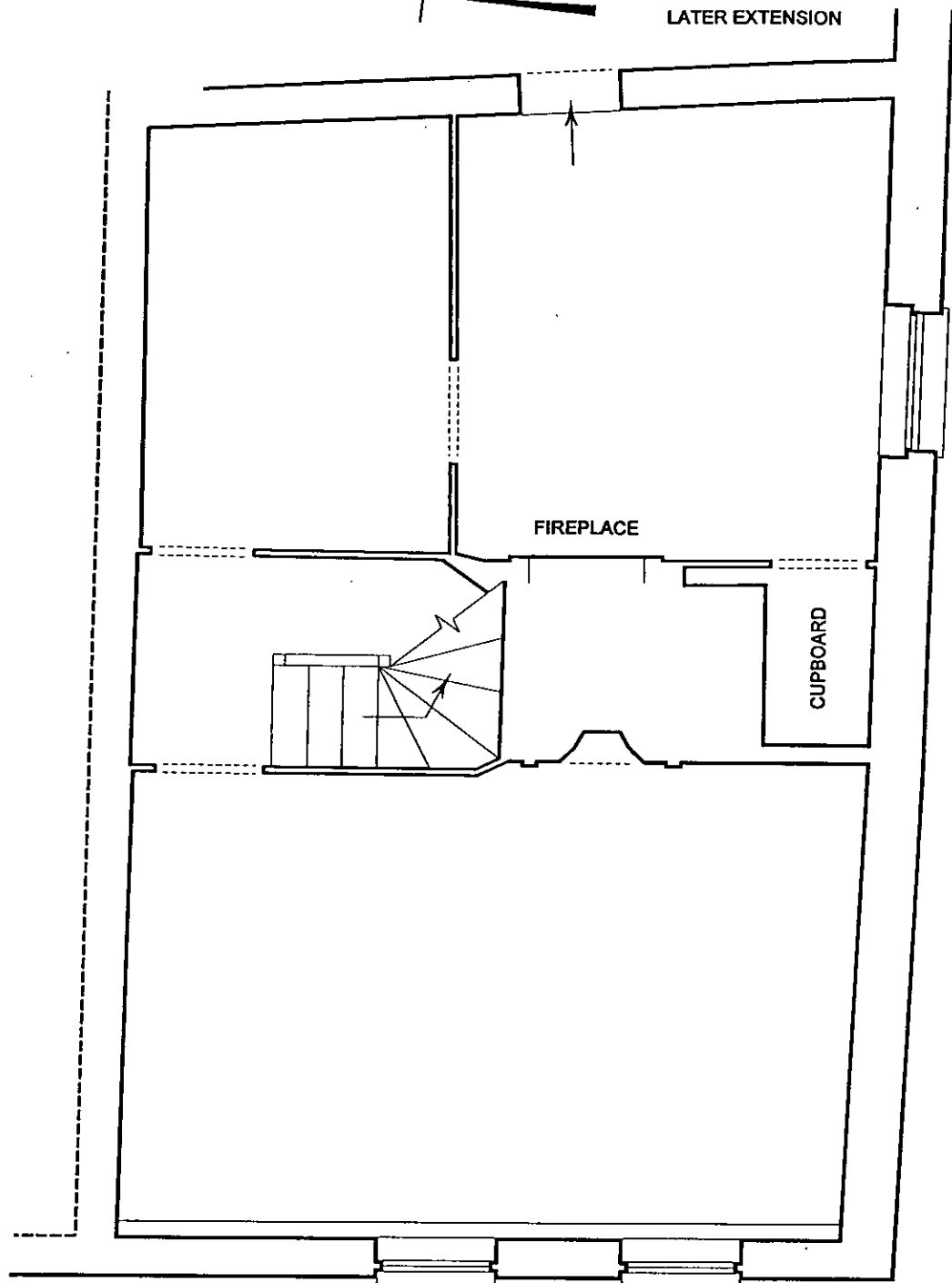
LATER EXTENSION



STAIRCASE STRING



DADO RAIL IN STAIRCASE LANDING



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

62 HIGH STREET
Deptford London SE8

Borough of Lewisham
Surveyed April 1997
by C.Burgess, N.Stankley
Grid reference TQ 3720 7715
NBR no. 95954
Drawn by A.D.



Figure 1

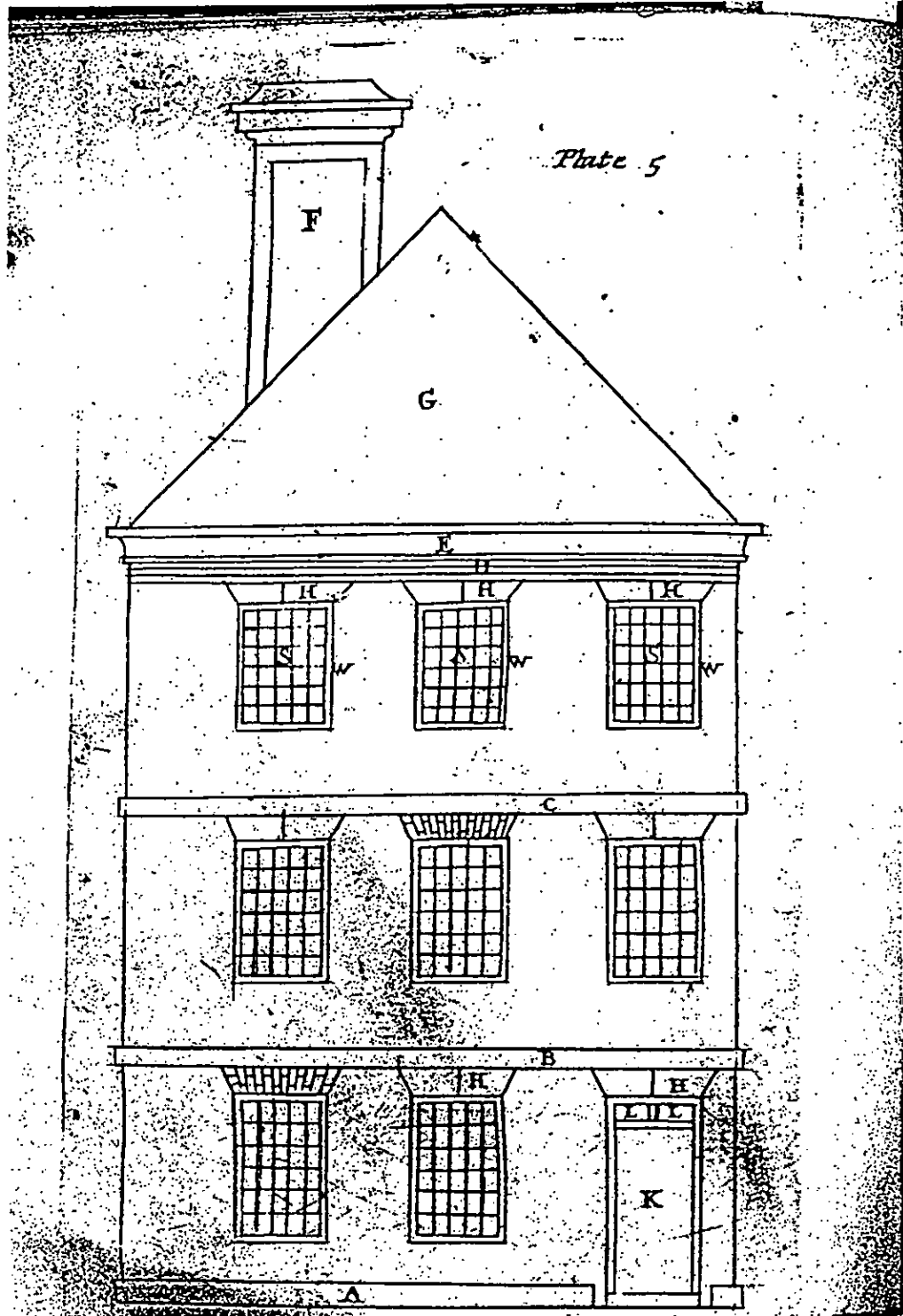


Figure 3 - Elevation (from J Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises or, the Doctrine of Handy-Works. Applied to the Art of Bricklayers-Works*, 1700)

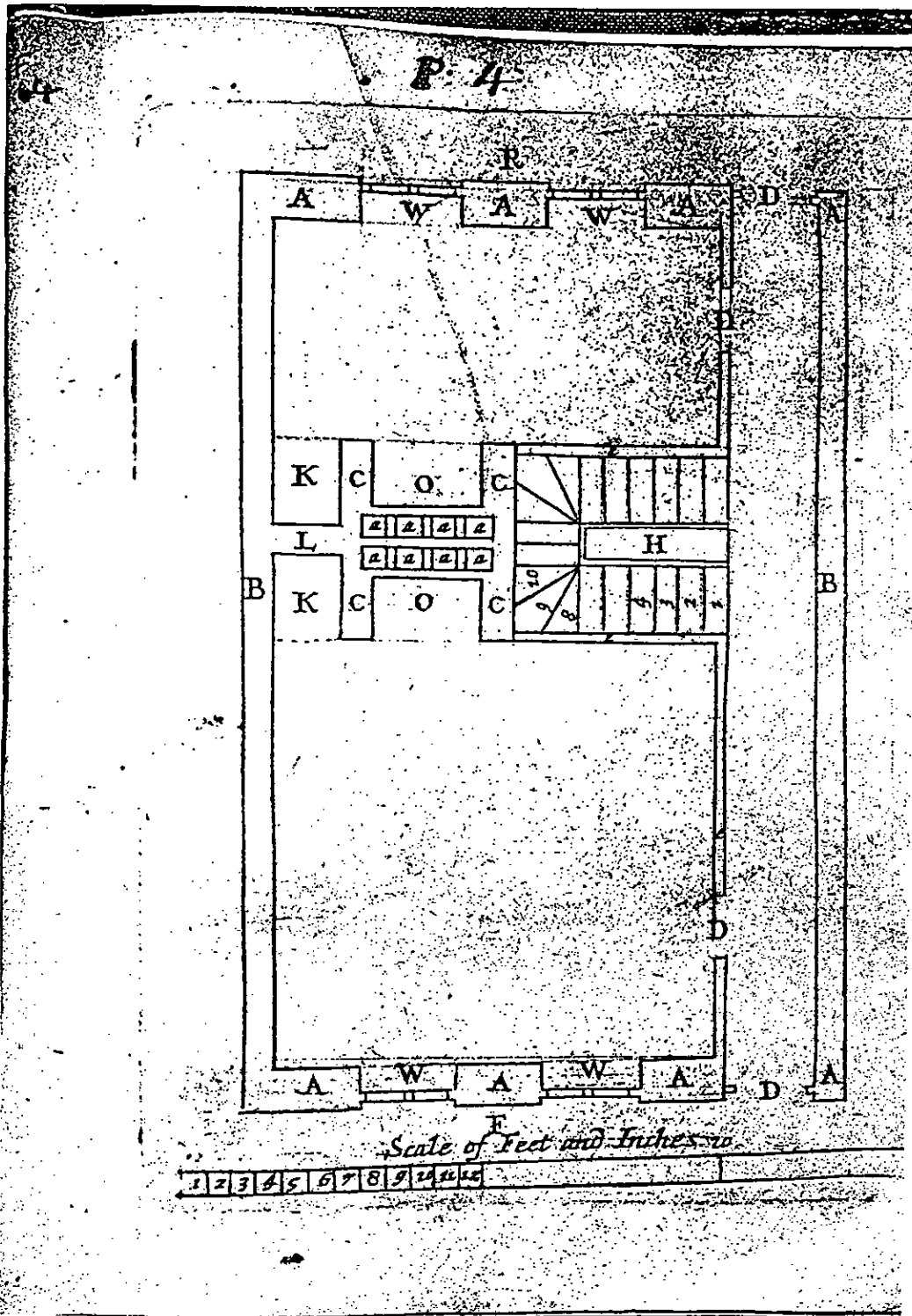
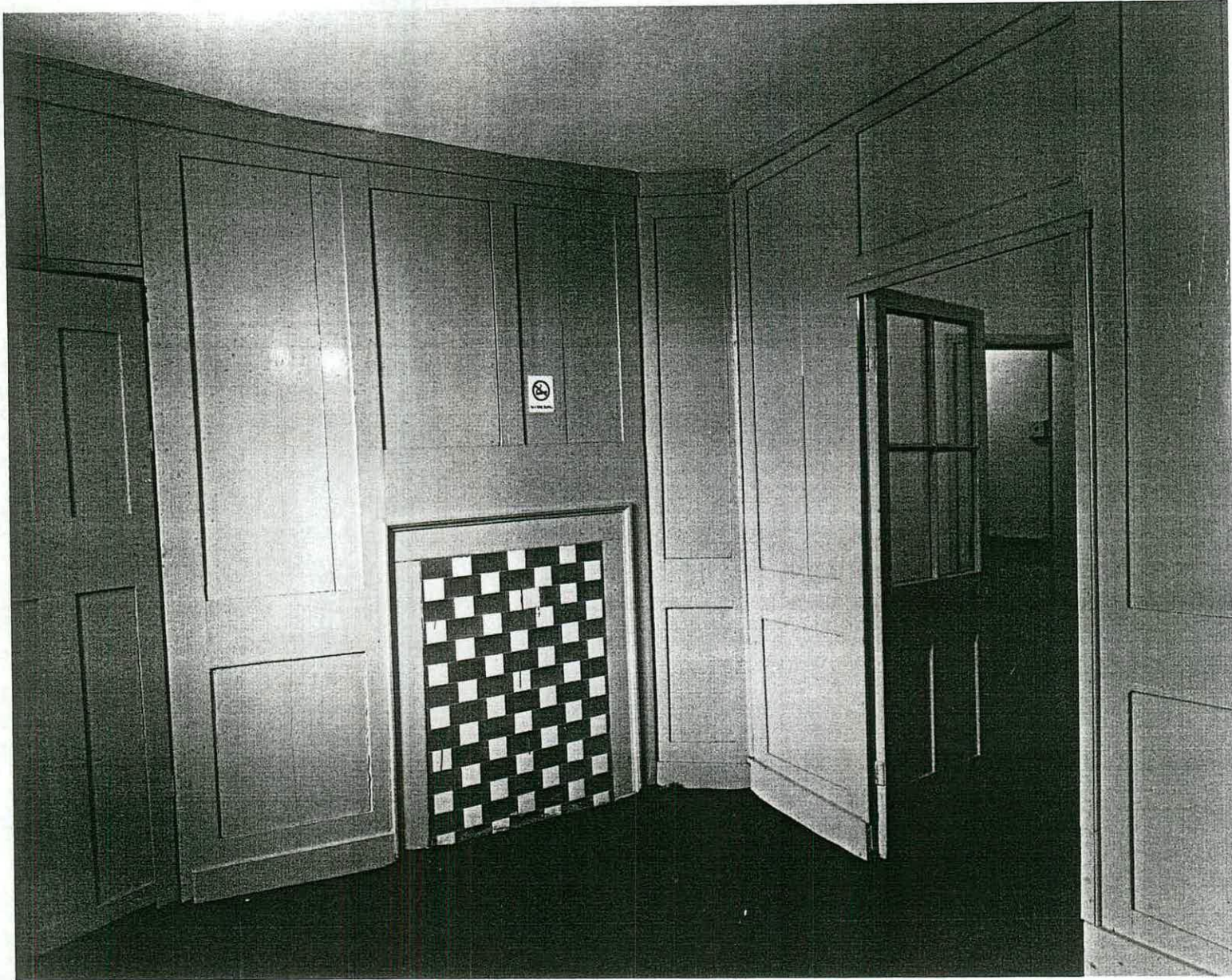


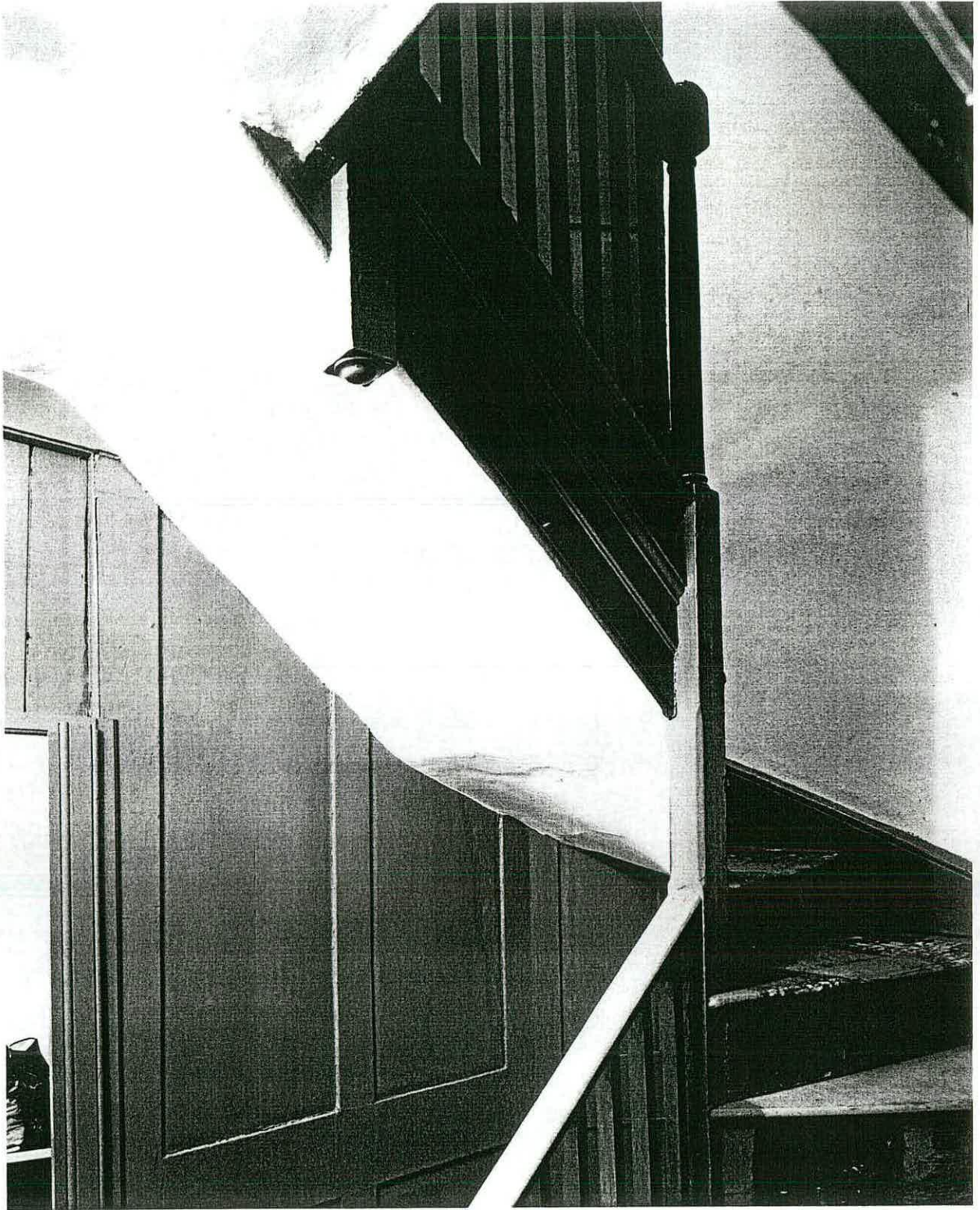
Figure 2 - Ground floor plan (from J Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises or, the Doctrine of Handy-Works. Applied to the Art of Bricklayers-Works*, 1700)



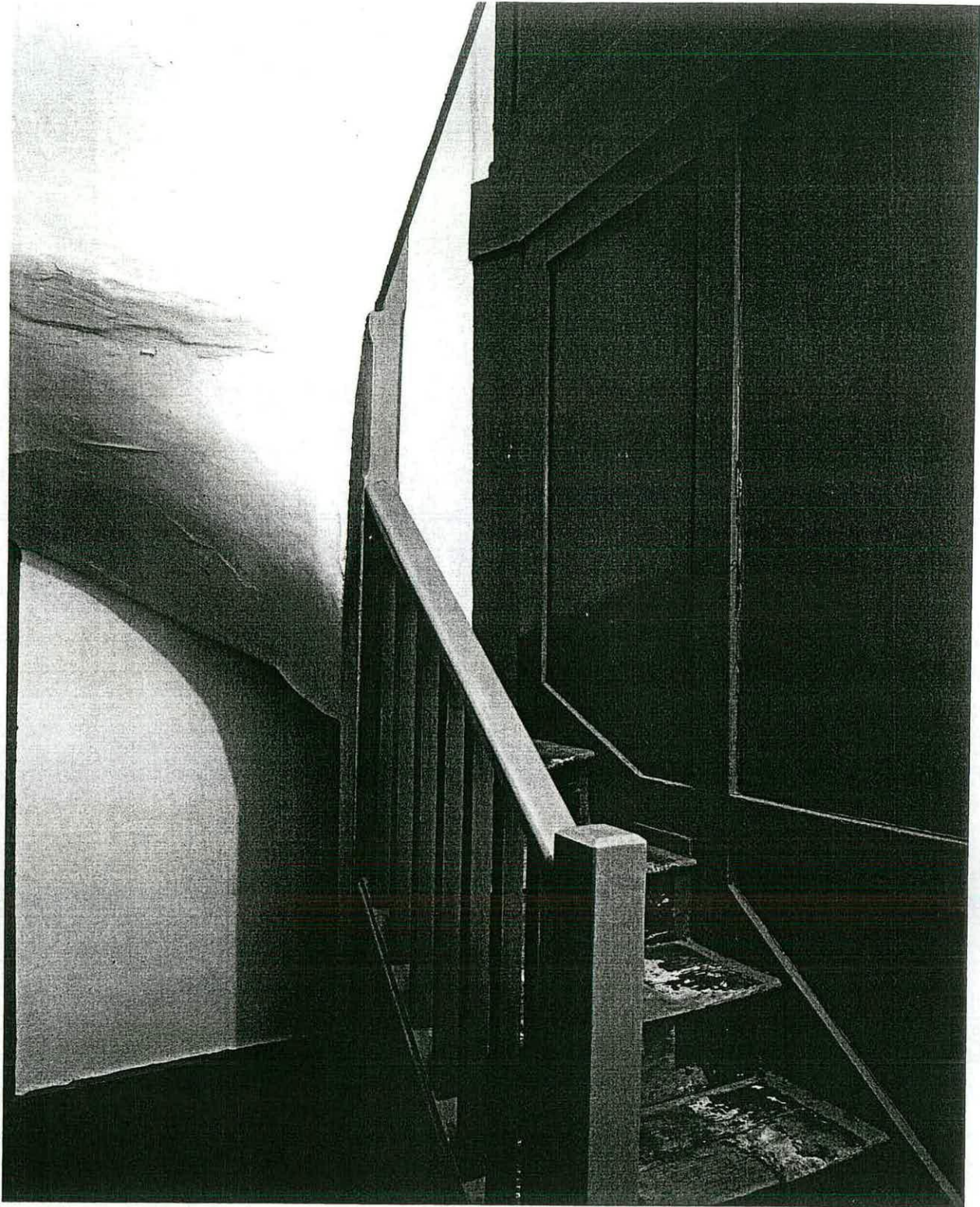
No. 62 Deptford High Street, view from south west (282/N/26A)



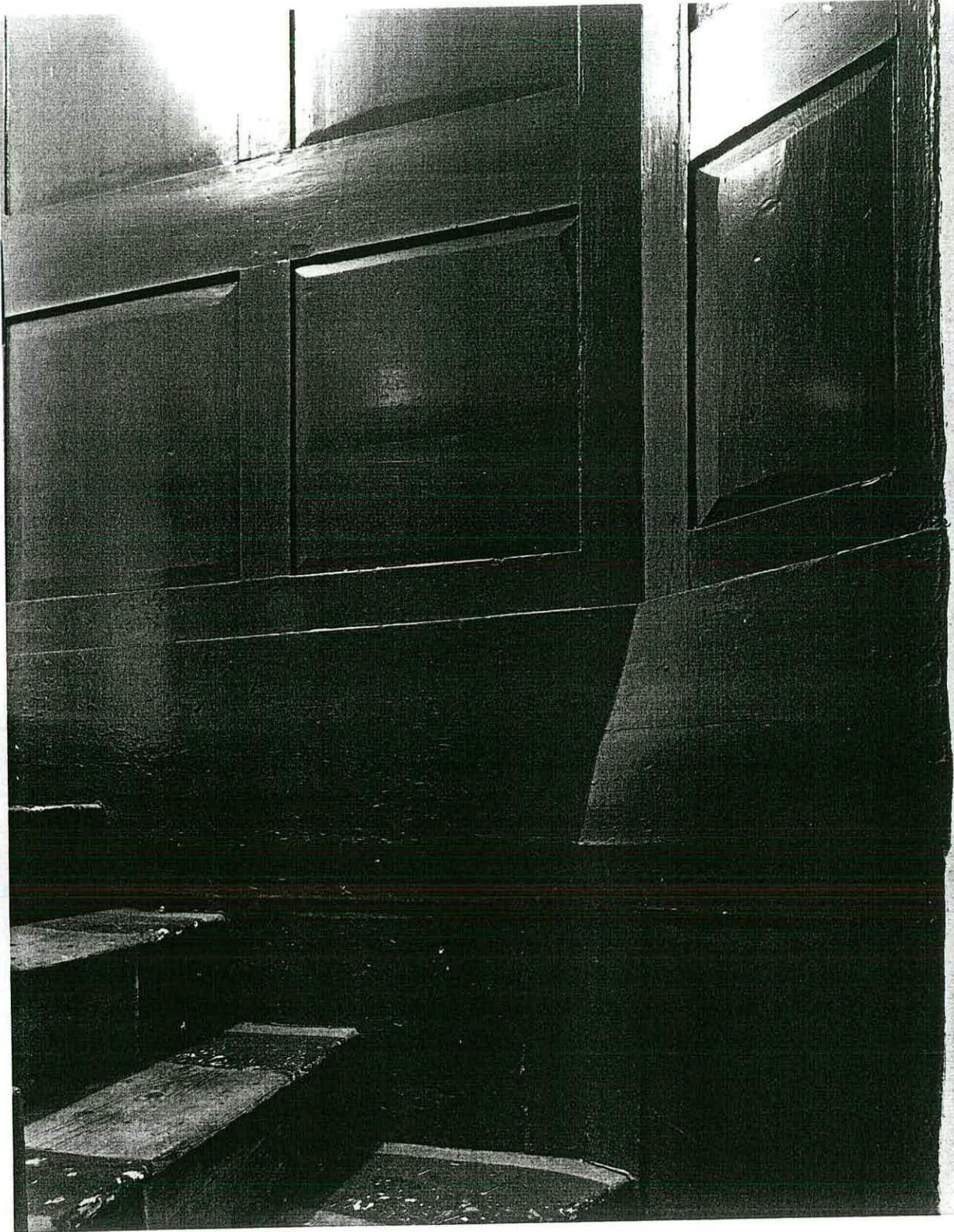
No. 62 Deptford High Street, first floor, south east room, view from south east (BB97/1581)



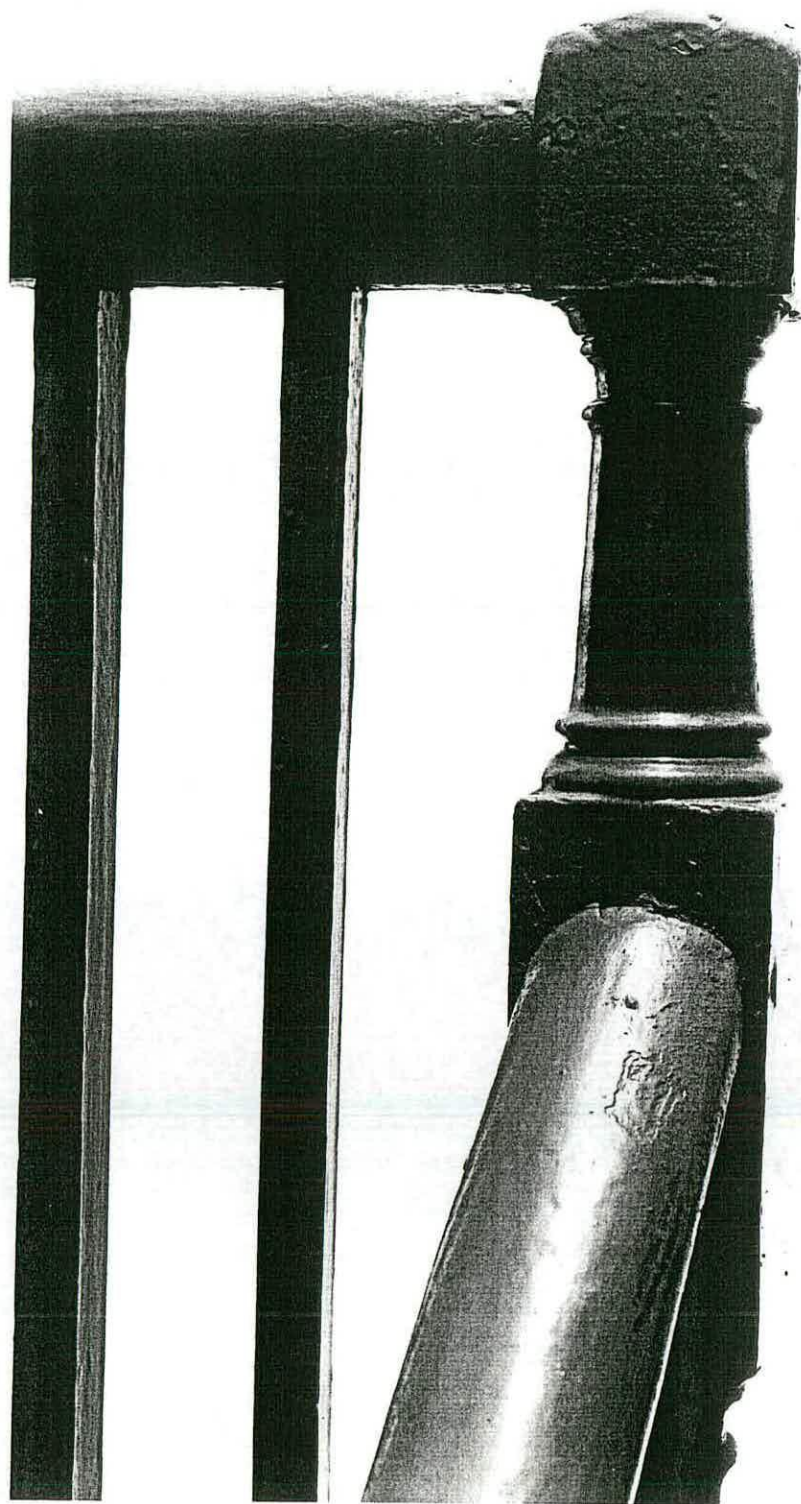
No. 62 Deptford High Street, staircase at first floor, view from north west
(BB97/1584)



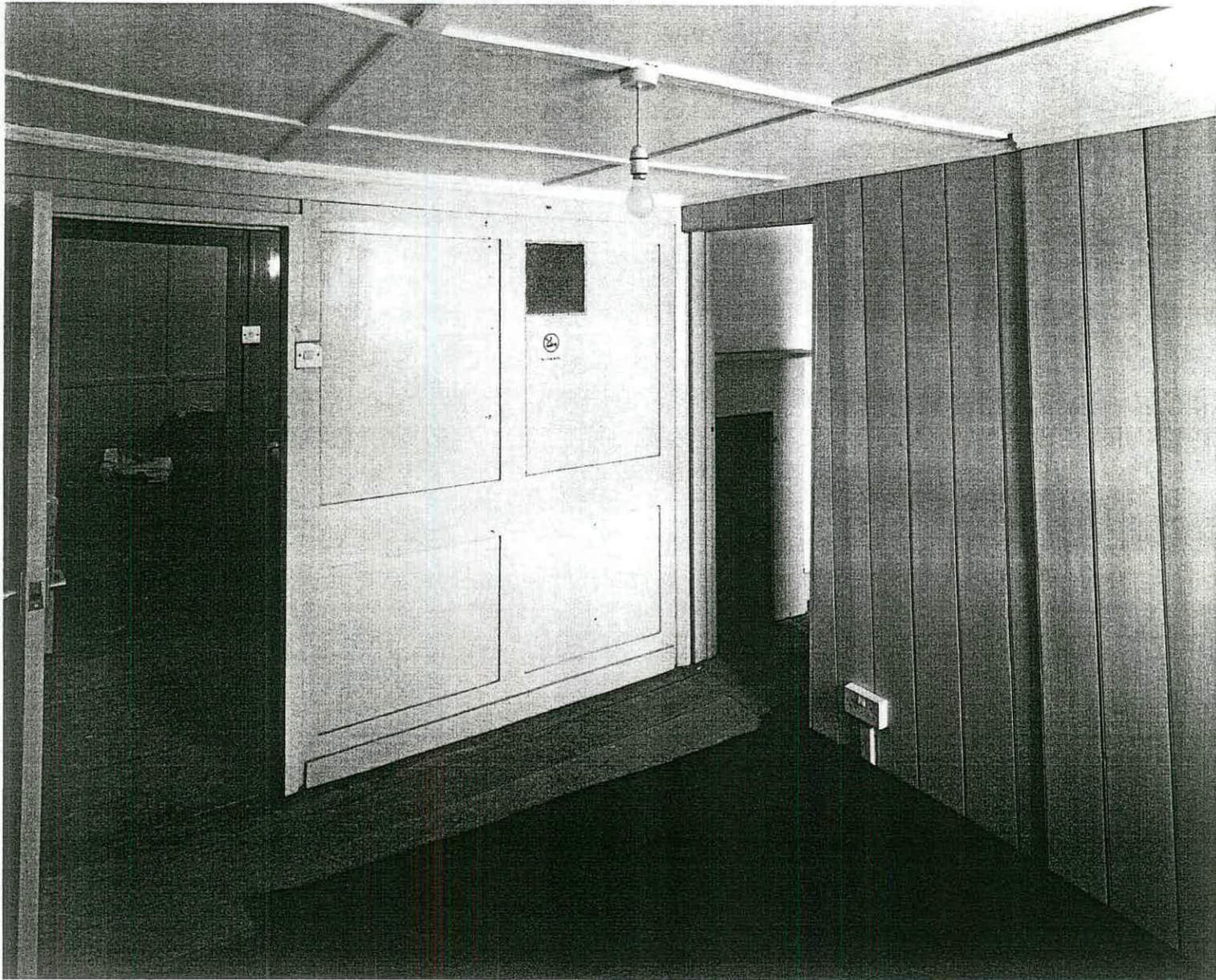
No. 62 Deptford High Street, staircase at first floor, view from north east
(BB97/1584)



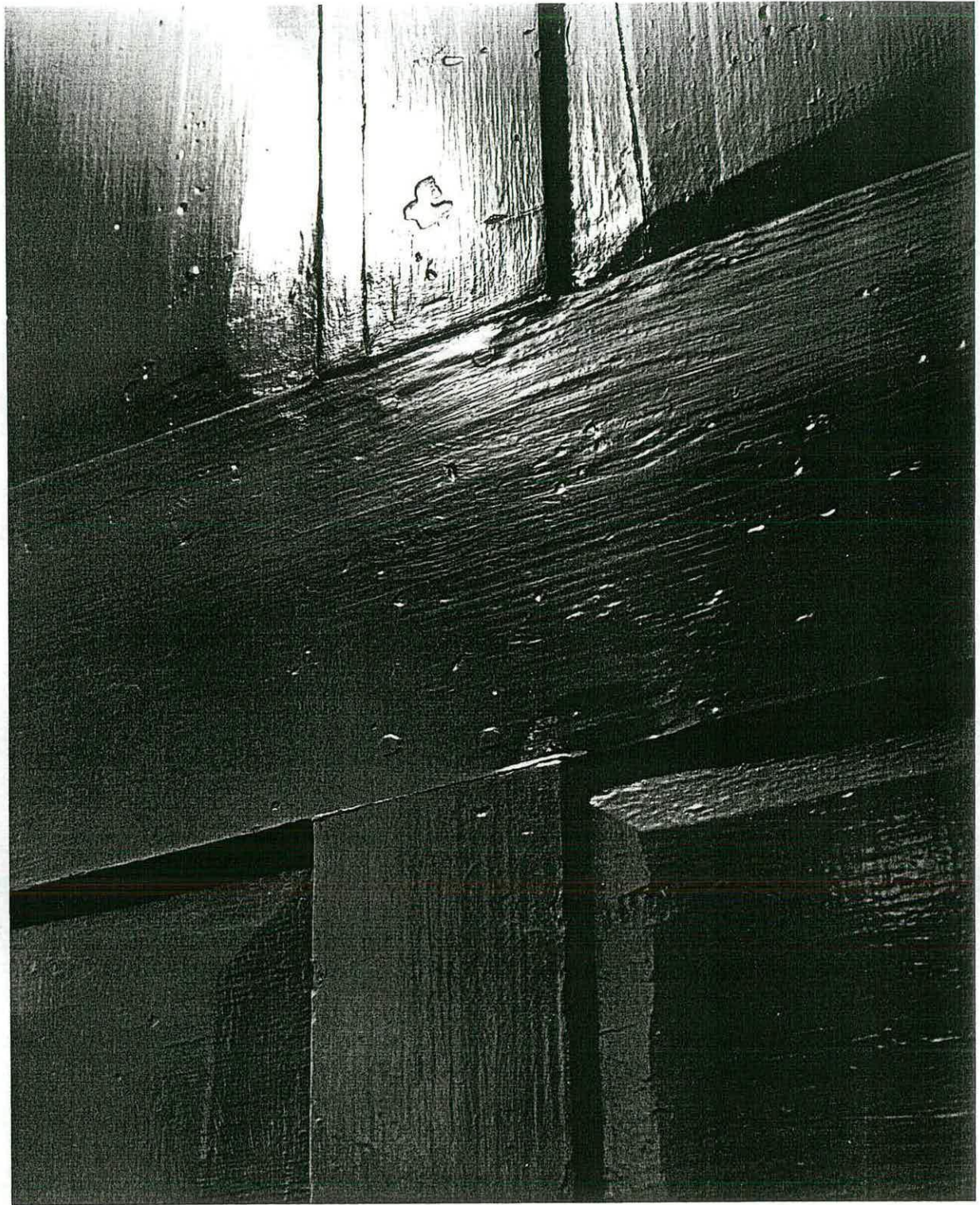
No. 62 Deptford High Street, first floor, staircase, panelling on east side
(BB97/1583)



No. 62 Deptford High Street, staircase at second floor, detail of newel post
(BB97/1586)



No. 62 Deptford High Street, second floor, north west room, view from north west (BB97/1582)



No. 62 Deptford High Street, staircase at second floor, detail of adzed panelling (BB97/1587)

JOB NUMBER 97/1427

DATE TAKEN 24/04/97 PHOTOGRAPHER DJK
ADDRESS

62 DEPTFORD HIGH STREET

NEGS TAKEN 7

BB97/1581 1ST FLOOR, REAR (SOUTH EAST) ROOM, VIEW FROM SOUTH EAST.
BB97/1582 2ND FLOOR, FRONT (NORTH WEST) ROOM, VIEW FROM NORTH WEST.
BB97/1583 1ST FLOOR, STAIRCASE, PANELLING ON EAST SIDE.
BB97/1584 STAIRCASE AT 1ST FLOOR, VIEW FROM NORTH EAST.
BB97/1585 STAIRCASE AT 1ST FLOOR, VIEW FROM NORTH WEST.
BB97/1586 STAIRCASE AT 2ND FLOOR, DETAIL OF NEWEL POST.
BB97/1587 STAIRCASE AT 2ND FLOOR, DETAIL OF ADZED PANELLING.

Part 1 : MONUMENT DETAILS

Unique Identifier: 1084130 NMR Number: TQ 37 NE 228 NBR Number: 95954

Monument Name: 62 DEPTFORD HIGH STREET

Summary : A small brick town house, whose earliest part probably dates from the turn of the 18th century. It has two storeys and attics with a central-chimney-stack plan, a form used in several other buildings in Deptford. Extended in the 19C.

ADDRESSES

Primary Address

County GREATER LONDON
District LEWISHAM
Parish/Non Parish (NPA) DEPTFORD (NPA)
Number(s), Street 62, DEPTFORD HIGH STREET

GRID REFERENCES

Centre / Point TQ 3720 7715 - Feature Centred

DATE AND CLASSIFICATION OF SITE

POST MEDIEVAL 1680 .. 1720 MONUMENT TYPE .. TOWN HOUSE
MONUMENT TYPE .. SHOP
POST MEDIEVAL 1850 .. 1890 MONUMENT TYPE .. SHOP

CONDITION/STATUS OF SITE

MAIN BUILDING MATERIALS : BRICK

ASSOCIATIONS WITH OTHER MONUMENTS

General: General Association - LINEAR 518 DEPTFORD HIGH STREET
General Association - TQ 37 NE 227 203 DEPTFORD HIGH STREET

Part 2 : ADDITIONAL MONARCH AND ARCHIVE INFORMATION AVAILABLE

We have other records linked to this monument. Outline details are noted below. Please contact NMR customer services (see covering letter) and give the UIDs (unique identifiers) for records or archives on which you would like some additional information.

RELATED EVENT AND EXCAVATION ARCHIVE RECORDS

UID 613515 SURVEY BY ARCHITECTURAL DIVISION STAFF Architectural Survey 01-APR-1997..30-APR-1997
UID 1082015 DEPTFORD HIGH STREET RAPID SURVEY Architectural Survey 01-APR-1997..30-APR-1997

ASSOCIATED ARCHIVE MATERIAL

NMR (Buildings) Archive

Please contact NMR customer services (see covering letter) and give the NBR number of the monument if you would like further information on the following.

- REPORT - INTERIM, RESEARCH, SP
PLAN - ARCHITECTURAL (MEASURED)
DRAWING - ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL
MAP - PUBLISHED
PHOTOGRAPH - PRINT (EXTERIOR)
PHOTOGRAPH - PRINT (INTERIOR)
EXTRACT - CUTTING OR COPY FROM
