

# No. 3 Four Riggs, Darlington

Historic building report: Analysis and interpretation



Report

J. Deadman: Historic Buildings, Survey and Research

On behalf of

Paul Chapman

February 2020

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## Introduction

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This report presents the result of a programme of historic building recording at No. 3 Four Riggs, a small domestic building once part of a terrace of housing located on Four Riggs Lane Darlington DL13 6LP, grid ref. NZ 28658 15760.

The survey was required as a condition of planning approval prior to demolition and the construction of a two storey apartment block containing 4 apartments. Planning was granted 26/11/2019. Planning ref. 19/00585/FUL.

## Methodology

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The survey was undertaken by J. Deadman of Historic Buildings, Survey and Research on behalf of Mr. Paul Chapman, Feb. 2020. It was carried out following Historic England guidelines as drawn up in their publication *'Understanding Historic Buildings; A Guide to Good Practice'* 2016.

The format of the components of the document - drawn record, photographic record and written report follows H.E. guidelines. It includes scale drawings at 1:50, accompanied by a discussion of the historic context of the building and its immediate environs, an analysis and interpretation of the fabric and full photographic record.

## Summary

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No.3 is the only domestic building situated on Four Riggs left standing after a scheme of slum clearance undertaken in the 1960's. Built between the middle and the third quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it originally formed the return of a short row of nine houses located on the west side of Four Riggs close to its junction with Bondgate. A short run of fifteen located on the opposite side of the road were also demolished. Today the immediate area comprises car parks and new builds.

The building has seen many alterations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has lost much of its historical integrity. However, it is still possible to trace its history through an investigation of its fabric and through documentary resources. To build up a fuller picture, a study of Four Riggs and its environs also has been included in the report.



**Location and historical context**

The town’s industrial past is clearly evidenced by the rows of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century workers’ housing laid out in the familiar grid pattern of interconnecting streets. No 3. Four Riggs is located close to Darlington town centre and connects an area of close-knit terraced streets to the north with the main Street, Bondgate, to the south.

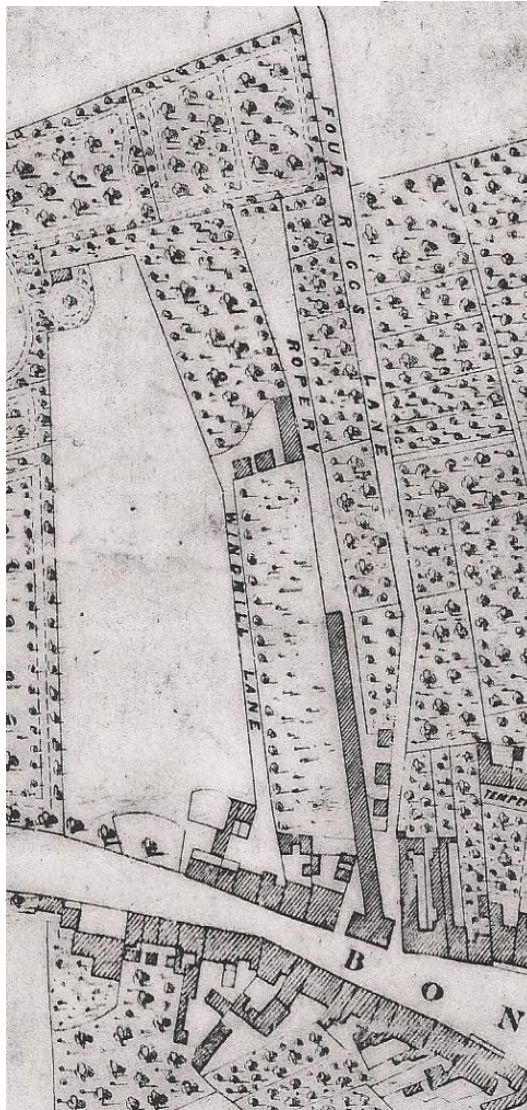




By 1840 the first signs of large-scale industry had appeared on Four Riggs with the introduction of a ropery. Located behind the site now occupied by a shop, no. 70 Bondgate, (to which no. 3 is presently connected by a yard), it ran parallel with Four Riggs Lane and passed directly through the site where, by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a short row of houses had been developed, one of which was no. 3 Four Riggs.

Note: On this map Windmill Lane is now shown west of the Ropery. Four Riggs Lane is named for the first time.

1840 Town map of Darlington



By late 1842 the ropery was sold by the owner, George Cradock due to bankruptcy. The sale was reported in the 'London Gazette' of the 19<sup>th</sup> of December<sup>1</sup> with a detailed description of the rope walk and associated buildings.

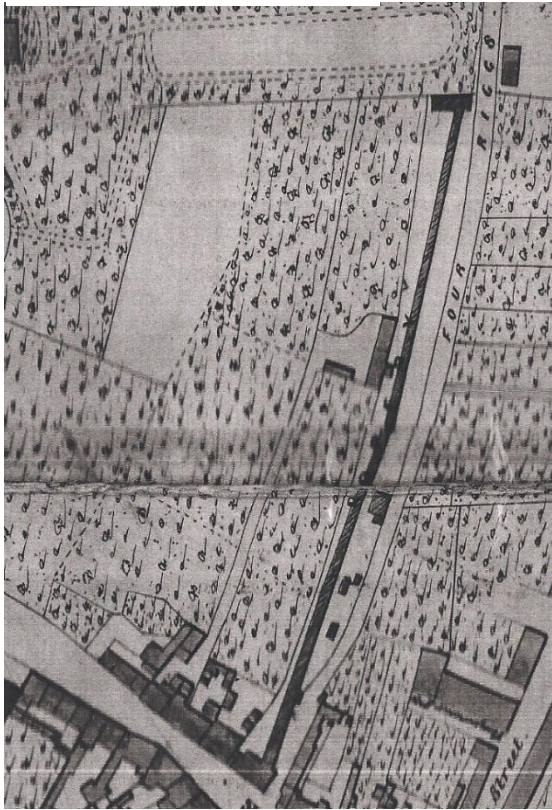
**T**O be sold by action, pursuant to an Order of the Court of Review, by Mr. James Smith, of Stockton on Tees, in the county of Durham, at the King's Head Inn, Darlington, in the said county, on Monday the 19th day of December instant, at two o'clock in the afternoon precisely, and by the direction of Edward Holroyd, Esq. the Commissioner named in a Fiat in Bankruptcy awarded against Joseph Miller and George Cradock, of Stockton on Tees aforesaid, subject to such conditions of sale as shall then and there be produced;

All that extensive rope walk and shade, situate in Bondgate, in Darlington aforesaid, being of the length of one hundred yards, and covered with tile, and supported with iron palisading, together with the rope warehouse, tar house, yarn house, hemp warehouse, hœkling loft, and other conveniences attached thereto; the ropery is two hundred and thirty-four yards long, and the entire property comprises 3,971 square yards, more or less; all which said premises are now in the occupation of Mr. George Cradock, and are admirably adapted for the business of a rope maker, or would afford good building sites.

For further particulars and conditions of sale apply to Messrs. Bartrum and Son, Solicitors, No. 112, Bishopsgate-street Within, London; Messrs. Tilson, Squance, and Tilson, No. 29, Coleman-street, London; or Mr. James Smith, the Auctioneer; and of Mr. George Cradock, on the premises, Darlington.

By 1847 the ropery was still in existence, the building extended in length and terminated close to the open fields. Ref 1847 Town map on following page.

1847 Town map of Darlington



By 1855 the ropery had been sold and the land developed for building. The green spaces, orchards and gardens were in decline, with new construction work evolving either side of the road.

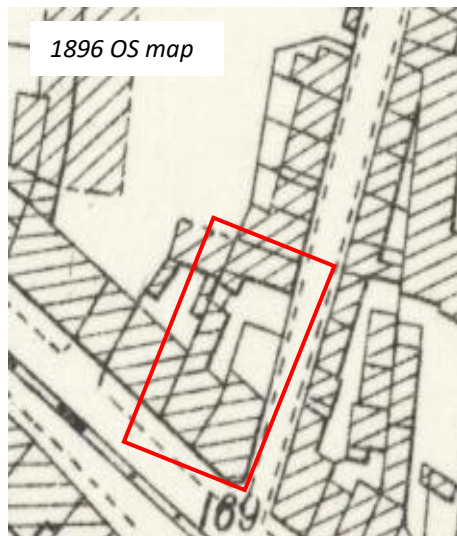
1855 OS map



The OS map of 1855 depicts the yard area to the side of no. 3 with a structure seemingly on the footprint of the present building. However, its angle to the road and that of the structures adjoining do not follow the building line of the house and terrace which is clearly in evidence by the end of the century. (ref 1896 below)



1855 OS map



1896 OS map

The 1896 OS map depicts no. 3 with yard and associated buildings.

No. 3 and adjoining terrace are set square on to the road unlike the structures depicted forty years earlier.

On balance of evidence it would appear the present building was erected between 1855 and 1896 replacing an earlier structure on the site whilst retaining the yard area.

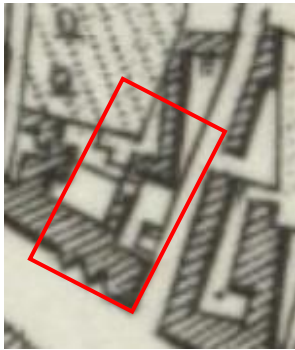
### Development of the yard and associated buildings

The yard area with associated buildings is clearly defined by 1855. It was paved with large flags, some of which remain.

To the south a small enclosure with structure on its north side relates to the property facing onto no.70 Bondgate.

To the west, a range of buildings is depicted, the remnants of which in terms of stub walls, scarring, plaster and whitewash, are visible today. Whether these were domestic or ancillary buildings is unknown, although perceived wisdom suggests that one was a cottage, demolished earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The yard wall which formed the rear wall of these structures is of three phases, the third phase possibly a modern rebuild of the upper section of phase 2.

1855



Phase 1 adjoins no. 70 Bondgate and evidences the remains of a wall return into the yard. This phase appears to have no rear access, whereas phase 2 has two access points.

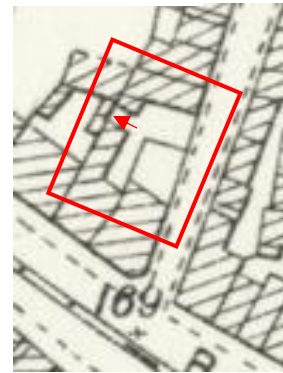




The rear of the wall evidences two doorways, referred to below as **A** and **B**, of which **A** is an original feature. It would have provided access to the neighbouring yard depicted on the 1896 OS map, and was possibly blocked when the two small structures in the adjoining yard were built.



Arrow indicates **A**  
1896



**A** comprises a low entry with arched brick lintel and brick blocking of two phases. **B** appears to be secondary, has a modern wood lintel and breeze block infill. Note the three phases of wall evident above and to the side of door **B**.

**A**



**B**



The scar of a roofline evident on the rear gable of the house relates to one of two phases of building which occurred between 1855 and 1913 (*ref OS maps*) when the land to the north was developed and a large saw mill erected on the site. On the 1896 OS map, the representation of the structure backing onto no. 3, shows a dashed line on the front elevation suggesting it was an open fronted building such as a cart shed.

At some point within the next forty years, this structure was replaced by a much larger building as depicted on the 1913 OS map

1896



1913



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By 1896 the open fields to the north were replaced by rows of terraced housing. Four Riggs comprised a modest amount of housing, but by this date was dominated on the west side by a large saw mill and steam powered corn mill. Either on the left or right-hand side of the road was stabling for tram horses and to the right was an almshouse.

From an examination of census returns and trade directories it would appear that by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, apart from industrial and commercial premises Four Riggs comprised thirty terraced houses, ten on the left-hand side and fifteen on the right.

Due to the fact that the early census returns of 1841, 51, and 61 record only names not house numbers, it is impossible to pinpoint occupancy for those years. However, in 1851 there were only five residences recorded on Four Riggs, ten in 1861. By 1891 the numbers had risen to thirty. No. 3 is recorded in the census returns from 1871 to 1901, with a different household each time. Occupations are listed variously as tailor, printer compositor, steel bridge yard labourer, and general labourer. Interestingly throughout the whole of the period there is only one household occupying the property at any one time.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century no more houses were built on Four Riggs, and in 1960 all but no. 3 were demolished apropos slum clearance. Car parks have now replaced areas of clearance in and around the town centre, with clear visible evidence for former structures and truncated building lines along Four Riggs.

**Below:** Evidence for truncated terraces at the Bondgate end of Four Riggs. In the foreground is no. 3 with the roofline, chimney breast and stack representing the cut off point on the east side of the street.



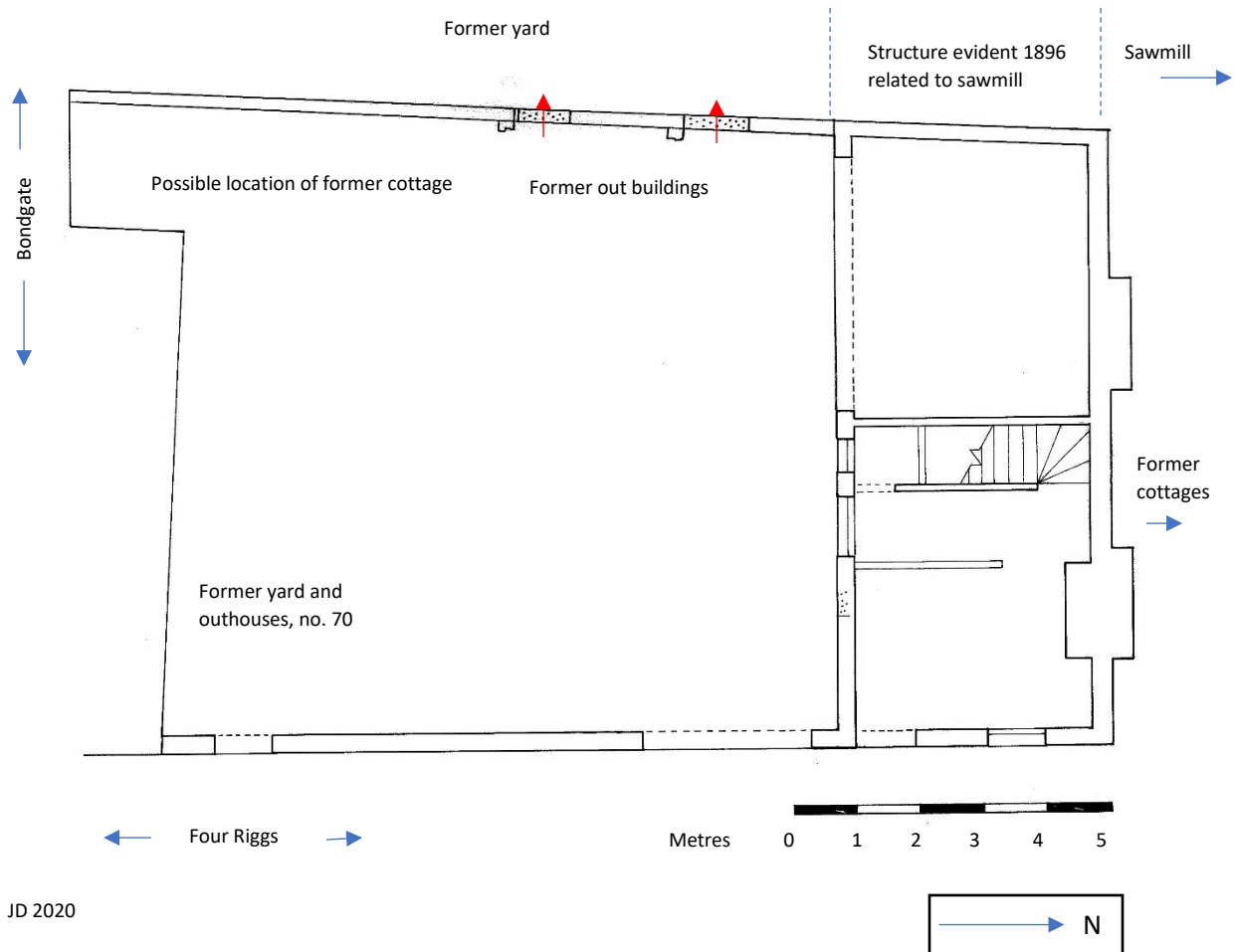
*View from Bondgate looking up Four Riggs, east side. Photo taken in the 1950's<sup>2</sup>.*



## No 3 Four Riggs: Analysis and Interpretation

As discussed, evidence would suggest that no.3 appears to have been built mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century at a time when Darlington was experiencing a growth in population due to the effects of the industrial revolution.

An examination of the fabric would suggest that the front half of the building, facing onto the street, comprised a one up one down dwelling; the rear area, possibly a second. The adjoining yard served the property.



JD 2020

## Exterior

The building is two storeys high, brick built and presently set under a pantiled roof. It was located at the south end of a short run of houses and formed the return at the end of the row as evidenced by the L shaped configuration of the roof. The north elevation is rendered at the point where the terrace was truncated leaving the chimney stacks which served no. 3 and the former adjoining building. The frontage faces onto the street. There is no rear entry to the property.



Bricks are laid to 'English Garden Wall' bond, in this case five rows of stretchers to one of headers. This bond was used in solid walls, i.e. no cavity, and historically was primarily found in the north of England.

The window openings on the front elevation are original which suggests the present fenestration replaced vertical sliding sashes. There are no side dressings to the window reveals, but the lintels comprise a row of vertical headers one and a half bricks in length. The cills are of sandstone and project beyond the face of the wall. The lower cill terminates in rounded corners, the upper cill in squared.

The present door is a 20<sup>th</sup> century replacement. but the small light set above is an original feature.

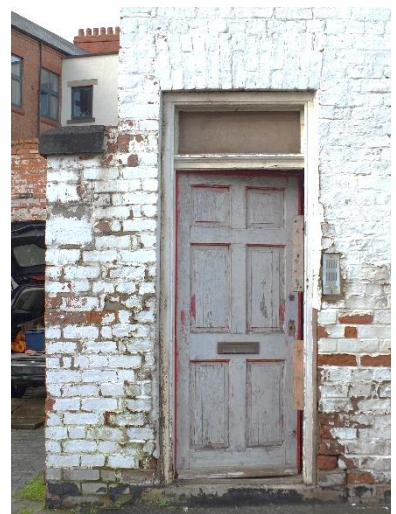
The photograph<sup>3</sup> shown below of the almshouses formerly located on the east side of the street and of a similar date (erected 1868), evidences architectural details in common with no. 3. The windows are sliding sashes although multi paned in contrast with those at no. 3 would have originally comprised four panes. The cills stand proud of the walls. The almshouse window lintels are comprised of headers set vertically to the same design as observed at no.3. The four paneled front door has a central letter box and the light above divided into three/quarter vertical sections



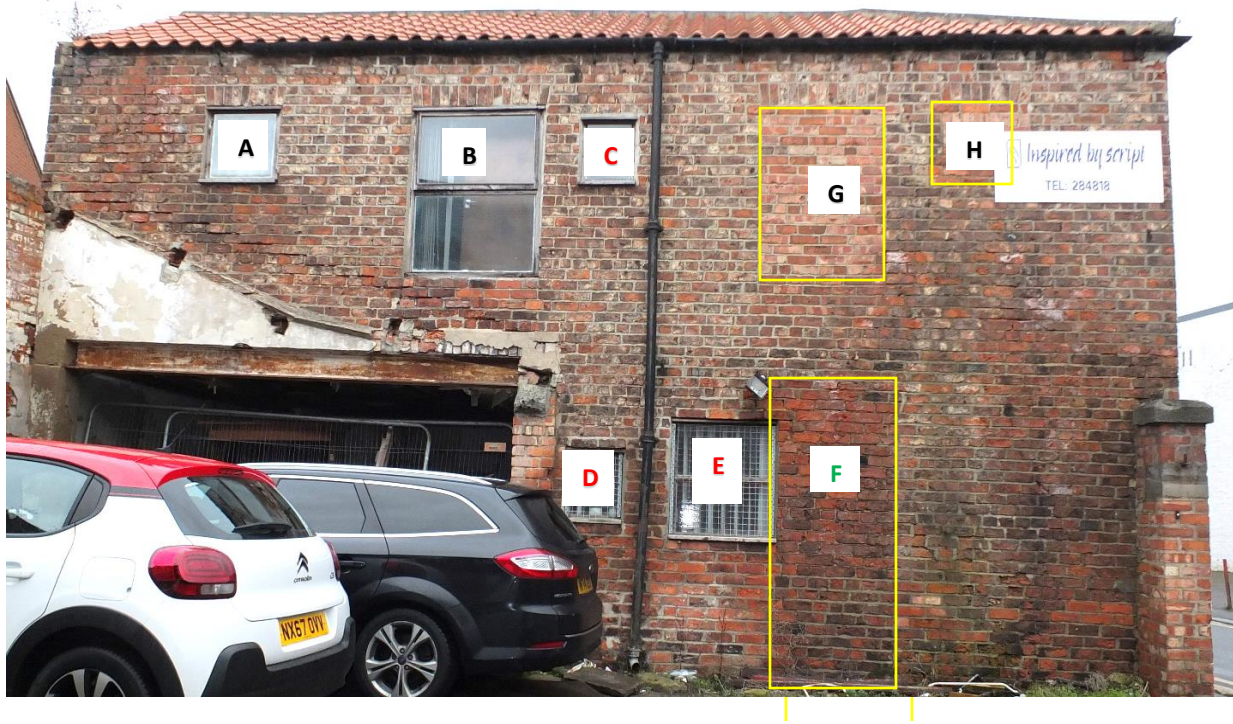
*Almshouses*

*No.3*

*Property on the corner of Four Riggs and Bondgate with four paned sashes. (1950's)*



The south, yard elevation, evidences a mix of later inserted windows, some now blocked. Scarring on the wall above the inserted opening defines the roof pitch and height of one of several outbuildings located against the wall which appeared periodically in the yard.



**A, B, G, H:** Window openings with lintels of headers set vertically, but not laid to the same design as those on the front elevation. Here the bricks are laid singly, whereas those to the front are one and a half bricks laid in a staggered pattern. This would suggest a later, possibly 20<sup>th</sup> century date for these inserts. There is evidence in disturbance below window B which would suggest this was originally of the same dimensions as those on the front elevation, with both the window and the later lintel, secondary features.



**C, D, E:** Later insertions, with neither lintels nor cills. **E** may have replaced a small scullery window.

**F:** Blocked doorway.

There are no openings to the rear or north side of the building.

## Internal layout

The structure is of one build with later alterations into and through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from the window casings, no Victorian architectural details remain. All evidence for possible fireplaces has been lost behind modern blocking.

The front roadside unit originally comprised a self-contained one up one down house with stairs located against the back wall.

Entry from the road led directly into one room which would have served as kitchen and living area. It was lit by a window on the front elevation. To the rear of the room is the possible location of a small scullery. A window, **F**, presently located on the yard side, is a modern insertion which may have replaced an earlier window lighting the scullery area. A doorway, now blocked, possibly provided access to the yard, although it would seem unlikely two entries existed in close proximity serving one room.

A chimney breast located on the east side of the room would have housed a small range. The stack sits back to back with that relating to the former adjoining building.

The first-floor room is accessed from a small landing at the top of the stairs and is lit by a window on the front elevation. It is possible the room was heated but there is no evidence for a fireplace remaining.

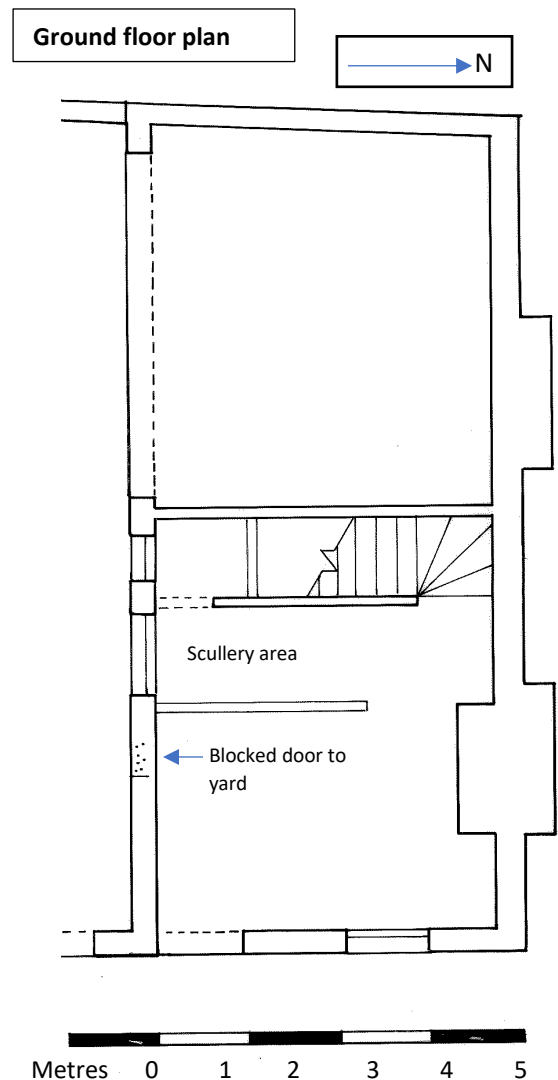
As the two blocked windows **G** and **H**, formerly lit the room, it could be suggested that the space was possibly subdivided at some point in the past.

The unit to the rear has lost all its historic integrity. The yard elevation at ground floor level was completely opened up, possibly in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, with loss of all original openings.

Internally there is no evidence for a chimney breast. Externally there are the remains of a stack set against the north elevation, relating to the former adjoining house. The position of the staircase cannot be located. The upper room is now accessed from the first-floor landing of the staircase in the front unit.

The room was almost certainly lit by a window in the location of the present window **B**, as discussed previously. Similar to the adjoining unit it may have been subdivided at a later date as evidenced by the two blocked windows visible on the yard elevation.

In all likelihood the rear unit was a small house designed to sit back to back with the front property sharing the yard area to the south although this cannot be fully substantiated.



*Room opening onto road*



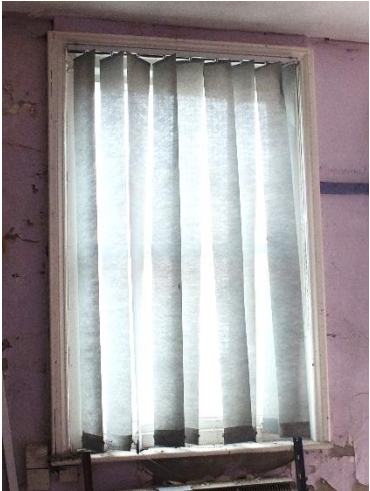
*Scullery area*



*Room looking towards stairs*



*Original window with casings*



*Detail*



*Stairs from upper landing*



*Room above rear unit with modern fittings.*



## Roof structure

Roof truss over rear unit: Simple king post truss with struts to the principal rafter.

Roof over front unit unseen.



## Conclusion

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No.3 Four Riggs is a two-unit structure of one build originally comprising a one up one down house fronting the roadside and possibly a second house to the rear, although the latter cannot be determined fully as all original features have been removed from.

Possibly planned as a single back to back build and served by the yard to the south, it formed the return of a small row located on the west side of the road close to its junction with Bondgate. Built post 1850 but prior to 1871 (ref census returns and OS maps) it would appear to replaced structures represented on the 1853 OS map set on a different alignment to the latter terrace.

Streets of terraced housing sprang up throughout Darlington during a period of change and industrialization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to accommodate an influx of workers to the new manufacturing industries. Four Riggs, which in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, housed little more than a ropery and was surrounded by orchards and open fields was quickly developed to provide a saw mill, corn mill and by the turn of the century stabling for tram horses. An almshouse had been constructed on the east side by 1868. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the two short rows of terracing, numbering 30 properties had been developed to their final form.

A scheme of slum clearance adopted in the 1960's saw all the houses on Four Riggs, bar no. 3, demolished.

Although in itself no. 3 Four Riggs has no particular architectural merit, and is a very common building form of the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is the last man standing in the road, and its story and that of Four Riggs deserves recognition and should be told.

## References

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O.S. maps ref. National Library of Scotland on line [maps.nls.uk](http://maps.nls.uk)

For other maps ref. Darlington Central Library Crown Street.

<sup>1</sup>*London Gazette* 19th December 1842.

<sup>2</sup>*Northern Echo* 1991. Ref Darlington Central Library

<sup>3</sup> Coulthard J. *The Durham Record* ref. DR07392. Darlington

