

CHESTER HOUSE  
17 NEW STREET, STOURPORT-ON-SEVERN  
WORCESTERSHIRE



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# Chester House 17 New Street, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcestershire

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21<sup>st</sup> October, 2017

## *Summary*

*Chester House, 17 New Street, Stourport-on-Severn appears to be present on the earliest detailed map of the town dating to 1802. It is probable that the building was then newly built – the internal evidence pointing to a date in the 1790s or possibly very early 1800s. The early history of the property is as yet unclear, but the main house was clearly built for a reasonably prosperous tradesman or gentleman. The earliest identifiable occupant was Edmund Lewty, who initially leased the house. The property was advertised for sale “neatly painted and papered” but not described as “new built” in 1826. The sale notice then mentioned that Lewty held it on a 14 year lease. Lewty was still in occupation in 1835 (Pigots Directory). Lewty was an iron merchant and iron founder, postmaster for Stourport, and also a partner in the Stourport Timber & Dock Company. He was also listed as a shareholder in the Worcestershire, Shrewsbury and Crewe Union Railway. He married the daughter of one of his fellow directors of the Stourport Dock Company. His ownership of No 17 New Street was terminated by bankruptcy of the Wilden Iron and Tinsplate Company of which he was a director. The sale of the house to pay his creditors occurred in 1854.*

*The subsequent occupier of the house was Phoebe Broad, present by 1861 – her niece Elizabeth Danks served as housekeeper and inherited the house – living there till her death aged 84 in 1904. The owners in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century have not been traced, but sometime after 1911 and prior to 1939 the house was purchased by the Pheysey family who had long owned an agricultural implement business in Bridge Street. After the death of William Howes Pheysey in 1944 the property was apparently occupied by a series of legal practices, who occupied the building until c. 2013.*

## Introduction

An historic building record and brief documentary research was undertaken in March 2017 by Mike Napthan Archaeology to determine the origins and structural development of an outbuilding to the rear of 17 New Street, Stourport (Fig 1:NGR SO 8095471303). The project was commissioned by the landowner Don Cox to support a planning application (WF 14/0660/LIST) for partial demolition and restoration of the outbuilding for future domestic use. The present report has been commissioned to give a similar detailed record of the frontage building, which was not part of the original brief.

The buildings are Listed Grade II and lie within the Stourport-on-Severn No1 Conservation Area.

*STOURPORT ON SEVERN*

*SO8071SE NEW STREET*

*589-1/8/63 (North side)*

*Listed 5 July 1950*

No.17

GV II

*House, now in use as offices. c1800. Brick with Welsh slate roof. 3-storeyed, 3 principal bays and additional bay comprising passage way with windows over. Central 6-panelled door and traceried fanlight in pedimented case with Ionic columns and flat entablature. 16-pane sash windows with flat-arched stuccoed heads with voussoirs and keystones. Some upper windows renewed 8-pane sashes in original openings. Modillion eaves cornice, gable end stacks. Listing NGR: SO8095471303*

### *Methodology*

The present report covers the frontage buildings at 17 New Street only. An outbuilding to the rear of 17 New Street was surveyed in March 2017 (Napthan 2017a) following removal of the majority of the ivy which previously concealed the building and largely filled the interior. Whilst the frontage building was briefly assessed at that time it was not recorded in any detail, being beyond the original brief. The historical background was briefly researched from available records held “in house” (Census returns and trades directories) and online sources such as local newspaper archives. In the earlier Census records there was no numbering of the houses in New Street, but the adjacent Hope & Anchor Inn serves as a marker in the enumerator’s progress, and by 1871 the house numbering system was established. Cartographic sources were used to establish that the building was present by 1802 (Fig 1). Additional research for the frontage building has revealed an advertisement of the building for sale (with a running 14 year Lease) in 1826, further refining the likely date of construction.

### *Historical Background*

Development of New Street possibly started shortly after the establishment of the canal “new town” of Stourport at the settlement formerly known as Lower Mitton between 1766-68. The earliest mapping to show the development on the northern side of New Street was that surveyed by James Sheriff in May 1802 (Fig 1). The street may however have had earlier origins, as the building that formerly stood on the northern corner of the New Street / Bridge Street (later High Street) junction was described at the time of its destruction by fire in July 1886 as of three storeys, “*very old and heavily timbered*” (Worcs Chronicle 31 July 1886). This description indicates that the building was 17<sup>th</sup> Century or earlier date - a key piece of evidence for the development of Lower Mitton prior to the establishment of Stourport. The fire of 1886 spread to the Hope & Anchor damaging the first floor, and it apparently also did some damage to No.17.

It is likely that the frontage of No 17 had been built circa 1780-95. The 1802 Sheriff map of Stourport (now held by British Waterways Archives) shows outbuildings to the New Street properties, but the mapping limitations make it difficult to be certain which individual property is represented. Without detailed analysis of the deeds of the properties a more precise date cannot currently be determined. The first sale advertisements for New Street occur in the 1820s, and it is clear that the street was then fairly built up – but possibly only the northern side. First mention of the present house appears to be in 1826 (Worcester Journal 16<sup>th</sup> November 1826) –

*To be sold by auction by Mr Bentley, at the Swan Inn, Stourport on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> day of November*

*All that capital freehold dwelling house and premises, neatly painted and papered and in excellent repair with yard and two stall stable, right of passage, pump and other conveniences, situate in New Street, Stourport and now in the occupation of Mr Lewty. The house contains a good dining room in front, best Kitchen, a smaller Cooking Kitchen, Brewhouse, two cellars, handsome Drawing Room on first floor; best Bed-Chamber adjoining, a small library or study; and on the upper story, three excellent*

*Bed-rooms. This Lot is under Lease to Mr Lewty for fourteen years determinable nevertheless at the end of the first seven years as in the said Lease is mentioned, at the yearly rent of £30. For further particulars, apply to Mr William Wall Esq or the Auctioneer, both of Worcester.*

It may be inferred that Lewty was still in the first seven years of his Lease in 1826 – he is therefore likely to have moved in sometime between 1819-1825, though the building was possibly originally held by his father of the same name.

Another auction held at the Swan Inn on 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 1834 had as Lot 2 “*Three Dwelling Houses with the front land and appurtenances to the same belonging situate in New Street Stourport, now in the occupation of Samuel Hill, George Yapp and Elizabeth Mole*” (Worcester Herald 8<sup>th</sup> February 1834). The mention of front land suggests that the plots opposite, sloping towards the river, may have belonged to the houses they fronted. None of the 1834 tenants were present at the 1841 Census.

In 1835 the occupant of the house (now 17 New Street) was still Edmund Lewty, who had probably bought the freehold in 1826. He was listed in Pigots Directory of 1835 as an “Iron merchant and Ironfounder, New Street, Stourport” – probably the Edmund Lewty baptised at Walsall on 31 May 1795 (note that 1841 Census ages were rounded to nearest ten years). His grandfather (also Edmund Lewty born 1741) died in Aston Warwks in 1813. Another Edmund Lewty, probably father to the New St Lewty, had apparently moved to Stourport by 1817 as he was listed as local agent for the Phoenix Fire Insurance Company (Worcester Journal 1st October 1818) he was also presumably the 56 year old of the same (unusual) name who was buried locally on 24 Mar 1824. As the agency continued after 1824 (indeed until 1836) it is likely to have been taken over by his son. The marriage of Edmund Lewty (III) did not occur until 1st September 1836 (at Kidderminster) when he married Anne Russel. He was described in the 1841 census as “Postmaster” (a role he had held since at least 1838 Worcester Chronicle 04 October 1838). His wife was at the time of the 1841 Census Anne Lewty (30) and they had a son Edward Lewty aged 3. Anne Lewty (nee Russel) was the daughter of his business partner Edward Russel. The business was the Stourport Timber & Dock Company, which was dissolved 24<sup>th</sup> June 1846 by the two surviving partners (Lewty and Corbett) on the death of Edward Russel. Lewty had various business interests and was on the shareholders committee of the Worcestershire, Shrewsbury and Crewe Union Railway (Railway Chronicle May 10<sup>th</sup> 1845). In 1854 Lewty was bankrupted by the failure of the Wilden Iron and Tinplate Company (8th March 1854 - Worcester Chronicle). He died locally in the second quarter of 1868 aged 73.

The sale of the property following the bankruptcy of Lewty gives further identification of the buildings

**STOURPORT, WORCESTERSHIRE.**  
**DESIRABLE FREEHOLD DWELLING-**  
**HOUSES IN NEW-STREET.**

**MESSRS. OATES AND PERRENS**  
 Have received instructions  
**TO OFFER FOR SALE BY AUCTION,**  
 On Thursday, the 9th day of November, 1854, at the Swan  
 Inn, Stourport, at four for five o'clock precisely, subject to  
 conditions then to be produced ;

**T**HAT FREEHOLD Substantially-built and  
 GENTEEL RESIDENCE, with the Stable, Brew-  
 house, Yard, and Appurtenances thereto belonging, suitable  
 for a Genteel Family, situate in NEW-STREET, STOUR-  
 PORT, and late in the occupation of Mr. Edmund Lewty.

The Premises may be seen on application as below ; and  
 for further information apply to Thomas Bittlestone, Esq.,  
 Official Assignee, Waterloo street, Birmingham ; Mr. Henry  
 Corser, Solicitor, Stourbridge ; Mr. Julius Partridge, Solicitor,  
 Birmingham ; or the Auctioneers, Stourbridge.

The building (now 17 New Street) was owned at the time of the 1861 Census by Phoebe Broad an unmarried “Fundholder” aged 75. She shared her house with Elizabeth Danks, her unmarried niece who served as a “House Keeper” and Mary Perkins Servant aged 27. By 1871 however it was occupied by Elizabeth Danks, now a “gentlewoman” (having presumably inherited her aunt’s property) aged 53. Papers relating to the estate of Phoebe Banks are held at WRO - BA4600 ref705:550/ parcel 878/iv.

Elizabeth appears to have been the daughter of Isaiah and Elizabeth Danks of Lick Hill Kidderminster Foreign, where she was living in 1841. Her father was a carrier and farmer. Her nephew Joseph Wheeler Danks, aged 18, a writing clerk, was living with her in 1861 together with Louisa Millington, 14 Domestic Servant. Elizabeth Danks was still present at the 1881 and 1891 Census, and last appears in the 1901 Census, then aged 84 “Living On Own Means” with a single general domestic Mary Lloyd aged 30. Elizabeth Danks died in early 1904 and was buried at St Michael & All Angels, Stourport.

By 1939 17 New Street was occupied (and apparently owned) by William Howes Pheysey, an agricultural engineer and his wife Ada Hannah Pheysey. They had both been born in Stourport and married in 1889. They had previously lived at 23 Bridge Street (1901/1911 Census) where he was described as Agricultural Implement Merchant. When Ada died on Dec 27<sup>th</sup> 1943 her estate was valued at £2411.16s4d – her widower remained at New Street, but died within a year of his wife. It appears that the building soon afterwards became offices.

### ***Building description***

#### *Elevations (Figs 2 and 3)*

The house is of three storeys and has cellarge on the street frontage. The front elevation is of handmade red brick with relatively wide jointing in lime mortar later colour-washed and struck with “penny jointing” to conceal alterations to the fenestration (apparently undertaken not long after original construction). The façade is imbalanced and the principal doorway off-centre. There is clear evidence that the ground floor windows have both been moved or reduced in width, but the original locations were not in line with the windows above, and nor are the present locations better balanced. Overall the elevation presented to New Street appears to be very late 18<sup>th</sup> or very early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but there is a lack of distinctly dateable brickwork features. The absence of any string courses marking the internal storey heights points to likely construction after the 1780s, as does the depth of the brick courses. The window heads, however are of a stucco form common in Worcester in the first and second decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and may well be a secondary addition (related to the re-location of the ground floor windows). The door, door-case and “portico” are similar to examples of the 1790s-1810 period, but were of a classic style in use (with minor variations) into the 1820s. It should be noted that the fanlight appears to have cast iron glazing bars. The inscription “Chester House” on the tympanum appears to be a 20<sup>th</sup> Century addition, and no early mentions of the building record this name. The stone steps have been partially rebuilt and much repaired, and the lower part of the elevation (up to ground floor sill level) rendered with a cement based render. Some damp staining above the render indicates that it is likely to be trapping moisture. The front cellar lights have been partially blocked off, and this undoubtedly has exacerbated damp issues.

At the northern end of the elevation an arched opening leads to a sloping side passage, apparently shared with the neighbouring property – the passage leads to the service yard at the rear. There is no sign of a side doorway opening into this passage (despite this being a common 18<sup>th</sup> C arrangement).

The roof is of relatively low pitch and slated, the principal chimney stacks (both truncated) are to the rear of the main roof.

The rear elevations (Fig 3) are somewhat complex, and show much evidence of previous alterations. It would appear probable that there was initially a single storey double pitched roof rear wing on the

northern side of the property occupying part of the area of the present flat roofed “extension”. The central “stair turret” was possibly also part of the original arrangements. By the 1820s a second rear wing (of three storeys) appears to have been added to the southern part of the rear elevation. There have been subsequently several changes of fenestration. Probably in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century a second floor lean-to toilet block was built over the central passage. There is also some evidence of a further single storey pitched roof block (now demolished) to the east of the southern rear wing. In the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century the northern rear wing was partially demolished and rebuilt on a larger footprint as the present flat roofed single storey extension.

As a result of these changes the rear elevations are somewhat irregular, and additional fenestration (serving toilet facilities) has confused the proportions of the east-facing elevation. At ground floor level at least one of the windows appears to have replaced a former doorway.

#### *Cellarage (Fig 9)*

At cellar level there is a brick vaulted cellar under the southern half of the frontage, whilst a conventional cellar occupies the area beneath the northern front room. The cellars are distinctly different in character, brickwork and plan form. The sequence of cellar development is unclear, but as there is no evidence of an independent entrance to the southern cellar this vaulted area most probably was constructed after the northern cellar. There are some indications that the northern cellar entrance has been altered, but the alterations do not necessarily relate to the construction of the second cellar. The brick partition between the cellars is of similar construction to the vault it abuts. It should be noted that the northern end of the vault is self-supporting, not built over the wall. Whilst the nature and sequence of the cellarage is unusual, the cellars themselves are individually of conventional form. A bridging beam supports the ground floor over the northern cellar, and the oak floorboarding above is exposed. The cellar formerly had a lath and plaster ceiling, but this has been entirely removed. There is a substantial corbelling to support the hearth (and possibly part of the chimney-breast) of the fireplace of the northern front room. Some of the floor joists have been replaced in modern machine sawn softwood; the original joists appear to be of Baltic redwood.

In both cellars there are the remains of brick and slate shelving units, but these provided only limited storage space. There is no evidence of the cellars having been “habitable” space, despite the respectable headrooms and comparatively dry conditions. It is likely that there were originally small windows to the street frontage, but these have been infilled and provided with vents. It is notable that the cellar door was provided with circular (and apparently controllable) vents, now blocked.

#### *Ground Floor (Figs 5-8)*

The entrance hall is approached through a small draught-lobby of early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century origins – the ceiling mouldings continue through to the main part of the hallway, as do the skirtings. The inner door is modern fully glazed softwood, probably replacing a half-glazed door with stained glass, typical of late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> C lobby arrangements. The front door itself is of 6 panel construction; typical of the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century and surmounted by a half-elliptical cast iron fanlight. The door bares traces of several previous lock arrangements; all apparently of mid-19<sup>th</sup> C and later character. The hinges are butt hinges, which also suggest a date for the present door hanging of circa 1830 or later.

The hallway is bridged by the down-stand of a beam continuing from the southern front room – this strongly suggests that the southern wall of the hallway is a later arrangement. The ceiling plaster mouldings and skirtings in the hall are of 1850s-80s character and the door architraves to the northern and southern rooms appear to be late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, or even very early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The doors to these rooms are, however, likely to be early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The arrangement of the back end of the hallway is rather awkwardly planned, and undoubtedly reflects some changes from the original design. The present staircase has been constructed within a “stair-tower” of late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> Century date, but the stair itself has been adapted to meet the altered floor levels

and additions at the rear of the building. At the eastern end of the hall there is a plastered archway leading through the back wall of the main block into the stair tower. It seems likely that the foot of the stairs originally faced west, as that would fit the stair tower window configuration better. The present arrangements, whilst potentially retaining some late 18<sup>th</sup> C stair fabric, seem to be of mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century date.

The northern front room is lit by an 8 over 8 sash window with folding internal shutters. The shutters are of tri fold design, internally grained, the hinged wings being of three panels with applied ogee mouldings. The shutters retain original early 19<sup>th</sup> Century fittings. The window sashes also appear to be original and early 19<sup>th</sup> Century in date, but it should be noted that the windows have either been relocated or reduced in width as the brickwork opening has been infilled on the northern jamb. It is also of note that this window stands in a full height recess with a reeded window case and blank squares to the upper corners. The jambs are splayed and panelled to match the shutters. The window case is very similar to the hall door case within this room. The hall door is of six panel design and bears a particularly fine cast finger plate.

The ceiling is enriched by two panels of cornice mouldings, separated by a beam downstand parallel with the frontage. The ceiling heights are generous. At high level in the north-eastern corner of the room there is a cast decorative air vent, undoubtedly reflecting the former provision of gas lighting. The fire-surround has recently been removed, but was only of mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> C date. Close to the fireplace there were some remaining fragments of a possibly late 19<sup>th</sup> C polychrome wallpaper.

To the north of the fireplace an opening has been created through the wall to access a former salting chamber/ dry storage area, originally part of the back kitchen. In recent times this square chamber was used as a storage area, but ceiling hooks and a vent to the exterior indicate the likely original use for hanging meat and other foodstuffs. The floor is of quarry tile of mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> C date. The eastern wall is of mid 20<sup>th</sup> C brick, probably contemporary with the 1950s-early 60s flat roofed rear extension.

Whilst not presently visible, the floor of this room is of good quality oak boarding, probably of early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> C date (visible from cellar). The northern room is probably that described in 1826 as *“a good dining room in front”*.

The southern front room is rather narrow and has a very awkwardly placed 8 over 8 vertical sliding sash window. The window was originally provided with vertically sliding internal shutters – the pulley wheels and rebates for the shutters are still visible behind the flap-doors. The shutter box, below the window, has regrettably been removed and replaced with a crude cupboard, but sufficient remains to allow accurate reproduction of the shutters if so wished. It is noteworthy that the treatment of the window shutters is different between the two front rooms, despite the window joinery appearing to be contemporary. Vertical sliding shutters possibly reflect a need for greater security in the southern room. The window case is similarly reeded with blank corner squares to that in the northern room. The upper part of the window case/architrave retains a grained finish where it was protected by a 1960s pelmet. The partition wall to the north side of the room impinges on the window architrave in a most awkward manner, and it appears very probable that this wall is a later (mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century) insertion.

At the rear of the room there is a blocked former fireplace with a side cupboard. Within the cupboard there are areas of overpainted late 19<sup>th</sup> Century wallpaper. The cupboard, and disused fireplace sit within the hearth area of a larger fireplace (possibly 1.5m+ wide) the lintel of which is visible within the side cupboard. It appears that the fireplace was reduced in size in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, probably when the room was subdivided.

In the south eastern corner of the room there is a doorway through to the rear wing – this appears to be a relatively recent (early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century) opening.

The absence of any decorative ceiling plasterwork/cornicing in this room is notable. There is no evidence that cornicing has been removed, and the bridging beam shows no sign of former plaster

encasement. The door case in this room is also a very plain form with simple mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century or later architrave. The room overall appears to have been very plain and functional; possibly serving for a place of business.

The rear wing at ground floor level contains a single room with relatively large fireplace, apparently adapted for an early 20<sup>th</sup> C cooking range. The height and proportions of the fireplace are typical of free-standing cooking ranges of the early 20<sup>th</sup> C, as is the tiled lining. The remainder of the room shows little other evidence of former use. There are a few hooks in the exposed bridging beam, and these are also suggestive of use as a kitchen – possibly the “best Kitchen” of the 1826 description. The rear wall of the room has been much altered and the presence of two windows suggests that the room may possibly have been later partitioned. The northern window is a 3 over 6 vertical sliding sash of early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century date, and in relatively good condition. The southern window is late 20<sup>th</sup> Century and replaced a former doorway (probably not an original opening) leading to a lean-to building, now demolished but traceable as white painted brickwork on the remaining walls.

The doorway to the rear lobby is unexpectedly narrow, and provided with a mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century sliding door. The arrangement is awkward, and apparently an adaption of an earlier opening. This wall was originally an external wall, the lobby beyond being created by the addition of the first floor toilet facilities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The present back door surround appears to have been moved outwards at this time, having originally been placed immediately to the west of the present sliding door. The present back door is fully glazed softwood, and of circa early 1980s date.

The rear of the northern part of the building is now a flat-roofed extension of circa 1950s-early 60s date, but incorporates the brick-built drying or salting room and some early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> C original external walling at the western end. Another element of historical significance is the cellar entrance door and steps. It would appear (from the scars on the rear elevation) that this block originally had a pitched roof and was relatively tall, possibly one and a half storeys. It is likely to have contained the brewhouse and scullery/back kitchen, but the original floorplan is not now detectable. The present room is largely mid 20<sup>th</sup> C in character and retains no earlier finishes.

#### *First floor (Figs 10-14)*

The northern front room at this level is the largest and most ornate in the house – it is undoubtedly the “handsome drawing room” of the 1826 description. The ornate plasterwork appears to be a little later than 1826, however – possibly 1830s. It is unlikely that the plasterwork was installed at the time of construction of the building, but probably added during the occupancy of Mr Lewty. The room is lit by two 4 over 4 sliding sash windows in good quality full height window-cases with splayed sash-boxes and reeded architraves. The glazing, in horizontal format, is somewhat of a local peculiarity noticeable locally in Stourport and occasionaly Kidderminster, but unknown in the central and southern parts of the county. It may reflect the work of one or two local joiners. The fenestration to this room is also notably off-centre; the northern window being hard against the party-wall. The reason for the imbalance is unclear – there is no external evidence that the windows have been re-located. Externally this imbalance is less visible as the façade extends some 22-24” to the north of the window jamb – internally the jamb is cramped against the wall. It is possible that an additional brick lining has been added within the room or, possibly the “party wall” is of more than double thickness. The window sashes have, in part, been replaced with modern reproductions easily identifiable by heavier glazing bars.

The ceiling is divided lengthwise into two panels by a downstand containing a substantial bridging beam. There is surprisingly little evidence of deflection in this beam, despite the long span -this hints that it may well be flitched. The plasterwork of the beam casing is not provided with a roundel or similar for a central pendant light (which were common by the 1840s), and it appears that the room was lit by wall-lights originally. The plasterwork is of good quality, and may be broadly dated to c.1820-40 by comparison with 77 Montpellier Terrace, Cheltenham, constructed originally 1822-25 (Napthan 2017).



It is likely that Stourport fashions were somewhat behind the ultra-fashionable Cheltenham, and the Montpellier plasterwork is likely to be a little later than the original construction date.

The provision of a flush fireplace (with no chimney-breast) at this period reflects a building with some pretensions – many lesser domestic buildings of this time retained the 18<sup>th</sup> C corner fireplace position, yet there is no sign of that in Chester House.

The floor of this room is of moderately wide oak boarding (recently lifted and loosely re-laid). The fire-surround is of circa 1930s “streamlined” form in beige ceramic, set over an earlier hearth. Three of the walls have inset wrought-iron grilles protecting panels of over-painted coloured glass (amber). These appear to be mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century light fittings cut into recesses created for the purpose. It is possible that they are from the pre-war period, and unlikely to be post 1950s as the wrought grilles are rivetted not welded.

The door case within this room is similar to that in the room below, having a reeded architrave with square corner plaques. In the present case the plaque bears the scar of a removed central patera of uncertain form. The position of the doorcase, cramped against the partition wall on the lock stile is also very noticeable – the architrave being omitted during to lack of space. The door itself is of relatively common early 19<sup>th</sup> Century six-panel design, hung on very heavily worn brass rising hinges.

The southern first floor room has a four over four vertically sliding sash window, similar externally to the other front facing windows at this level except that the sliding sashes have been replaced. Internally however this window lacks the full height window case, raking shutters and architraves. Beneath the sill the wall does not have the recess which is present in the drawing room windows. The window is very simply treated internally, perhaps reflecting the former presence of voluminous curtains.

The room is provided with a relatively small fireplace with cast iron mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> Century insert and simple wooden chimney-piece. The fireplace appears to have been reduced in size, probably in the 1860s-70s, and it is not unlikely that the original arrangement was a hob grate.

The door of this room is provided with a high quality brass cased rim-lock with snib locking (and internal brass escutcheon to the key hole). The lock probably dates to the 1830s or 40s. The door on which it is mounted is of the six panel form found across most of the house. The quality of lock seen here reflects the room’s former status as master bedroom.

The rear wing first floor is set at a lower level; a fact which strongly suggests that the rear wing was a secondary addition. The floor levels are further complicated by the presence of the lean-to wash-room addition. Little remains within the first floor of the rear wing, which has been converted to staff kitchen with washrooms off it. The rear facing window is, however of early 19<sup>th</sup> C date – a six over six vertical sliding sash window. It is notable that this window (unlike the front facing windows at this level) has the rectangular panes in portrait format as is conventional. This window is therefore more likely to contemporary with the ground-floor front windows, which are clearly in secondary locations.

The smaller wash-room windows are crude early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> C insertions with opening louvre glazing of the 1960s or 70s. In the case of the window of the lean-to washroom this window is in an late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> C arch headed opening.

The stairwell window is a much modified tall narrow window, probably originally all fixed glazing similar to the lower panels (fitted with late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> C etched obscure glass). The window has now both a side opening and a top opening section. It is unclear if any of the fabric of the window dates back to the late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> C construction of the stair tower, but the brickwork opening is original. As indicated above there is substantial evidence that the stair arrangement has been modified to incorporate the rear wing and lean-to washroom levels.

### *Second floor (Fig 14)*

The second floor consists of only three rooms, all accessed directly from the stair-tower. Whilst the front rooms are at level with the stair-head the rear wing is a step down. The landing form is also awkward, reflecting the adaptations necessary to access the rear wing. It is this particular area that suggests that the stair tower pre-dated the rear wing, albeit possibly not by much. Had the rear wing been present first then the stairs would presumably have been designed to fit neatly around it. It is notable that the eaves and ridge levels of the rear wing are similar to those of the frontage block, and there is adequate height for the rear wing floor levels to be the same.

The first floor front room in the north corresponds in plan to the Drawing room beneath it, other than that the fireplace (removed 20<sup>th</sup> C surround) is set slightly further to the south. The windows are of four over four vertically sliding sashes (arranged as rows of four fairly large rectangular panes). The windows are very simply treated internally with narrow architraves around the recesses. The imbalanced arrangement of the first floor windows is repeated at this level. The middle window sashes are recent replicas.

The floor at this level is a mixture of board widths and incorporates both deals and some hardwood (elm?) boarding. All has been recently lifted and loosely re-laid. Skirtings are of simple torus form at this level, and likely to be of later 19<sup>th</sup> Century level.

An access hatch gives access to the roofspace (Fig 15) – the roof has been underfelted but appears to be slate. The pitch is relatively low and the structure is entirely of common rafters of mill-sawn Baltic timber nailed to a ridge board. This form of construction was used in the last few years of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, but is more commonly early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The rear wing at second floor has been modernized and has fairly recent flooring and skirting as well as a late 20<sup>th</sup> C softwood window in an original wide window opening. This opening has an arched brick head similar to that of the sash window on the floor below, and it appears that the original window at second floor may have been a tri-part casement window. It is usually the case that these windows were provided with central side opening casement. The presence of this form of window in a house otherwise entirely sash-windowed may reflect the function or lowly status of this rear room, casements being significantly cheaper due to the smaller panes of glass required and construction by carpenter rather than joiner.

### *Analysis*

Whilst on initial external appearance this building appears to be of the very late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and a building is certainly shown on the 1802 mapping it is clear that internally much of the building is of early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century character. Rather than a rebuilding this probably reflects an extensive upgrading of the building in the 1820s-30s, albeit apparently in a fairly unplanned manner. Much of the alterations to the building may well have occurred in the period 1820-39 – which conveniently reflects the period between Edmund Lewty II coming into his inheritance (1824) and his marriage (1836).

Certain elements of the building plan are rather curious – the front door appears to have initially opened directly into the southern ground floor room, and any division of the hall from the southern room can have been little more than a partition. The window position in this room has been moved northwards, having previously been off-centre this made the balance worse rather than better, and seems to have been undertaken for functional reasons within the room. Given the business interests of Mr Lewty it seems possible that the room served as an office open to the public – Lewty was postmaster and insurance agent so would have many callers. Interestingly this room is not mentioned in the description of the house in 1826, possibly because it was held under a different letting arrangement as a commercial office.

The peculiarities of the window arrangements are less noticeable in the northern front room (almost certainly the Dining Room of 1826), but considerable trouble has been taken to re-locate or reduce the width of the window opening. Since the proportions of the window are fairly conventional it would appear most likely that the window was re-positioned. The difference in glazing pattern between the ground floor and first floor windows is also very apparent – generally the smaller panes of the ground floor windows would reflect an earlier date, but in this case it is the ground floor windows that have been changed, with no reason to suspect the first floor windows to be altered.

The unusual floor plan is also evidenced by the position of the stair-tower in the rear centre of the main pile. The presence of an external stair tower/turret was not unusual in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, but often reflected adaption of an earlier building plan without the inconvenience of introducing corridors. In this case the stair tower/turret seems to have been an original very late 18<sup>th</sup> C element, though without the original stair it cannot be accurately dated. The introduction of very tall but narrow windows to light the stairs was typical of the very early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and this may just be a relatively early example.

In the absence of any firm evidence for the position of the brewhouse mentioned in the 1826 and 1854 sales particulars it is likely that the brew-house occupied broadly the footprint of the present flat roofed single storey block. The size of the northern chimney is sufficient to have contained at least one if not two additional flues to serve the brew-house and scullery.

Whilst the building is much altered it retains a surprisingly wide assemblage of 19<sup>th</sup> Century joinery, mouldings and skirtings. It also has a number of minor fittings of interest (a cast doorplate, curtain tie-backs and some other early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> C door and window furniture. Having not been in domestic use during most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century it has not suffered greatly from subdivision and insertion of plumbing, bathrooms etc. Whilst the rear has been affected by inappropriate alterations the street-side appearance is relatively unaltered and the building makes a very positive contribution to the streetscape. Its value is enhanced in that it distracts the eye somewhat from the appallingly bad design of the relatively modern block opposite on the former town hall site.

The present conversion of the building to apartments returns the building to its original domestic function and represents a reasonably sympathetic usage for a building that would not realistically be considered as a single family home in the present economic environment of Stourport. The proposed conversion will inevitably include partitioning and some loss of historic fabric, but is being undertaken in a manner that is largely reversible. A significant bonus of the present scheme is the reclamation of the outbuilding/former stable block from inevitable collapse.

### *Acknowledgements*

Thanks are due to Don Cox, landowner and developer, and his staff for facilitating the survey. Thanks are also due to Peter Bassett, Conservation Officer Wyre Forest District Council, for initiating the project.

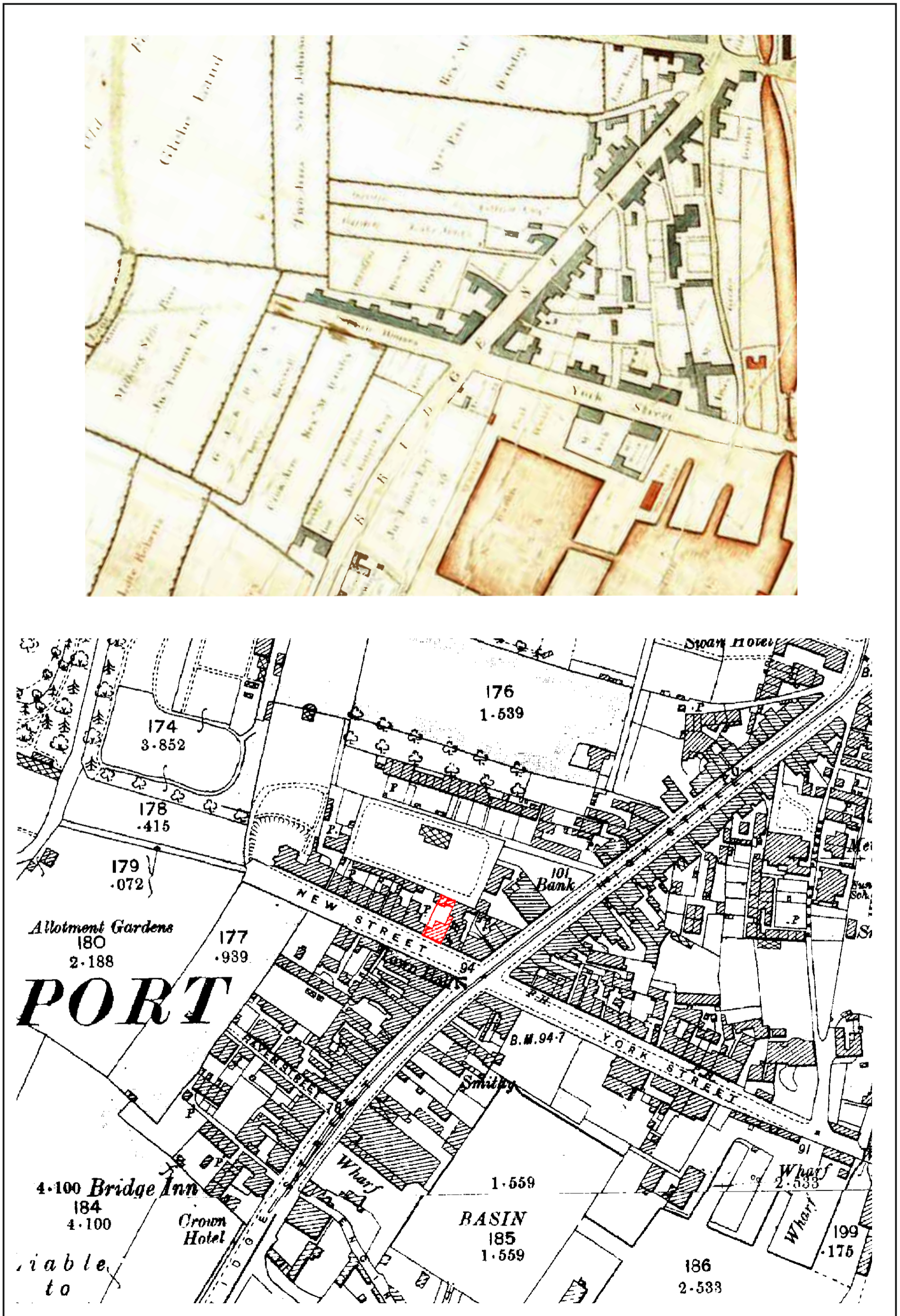
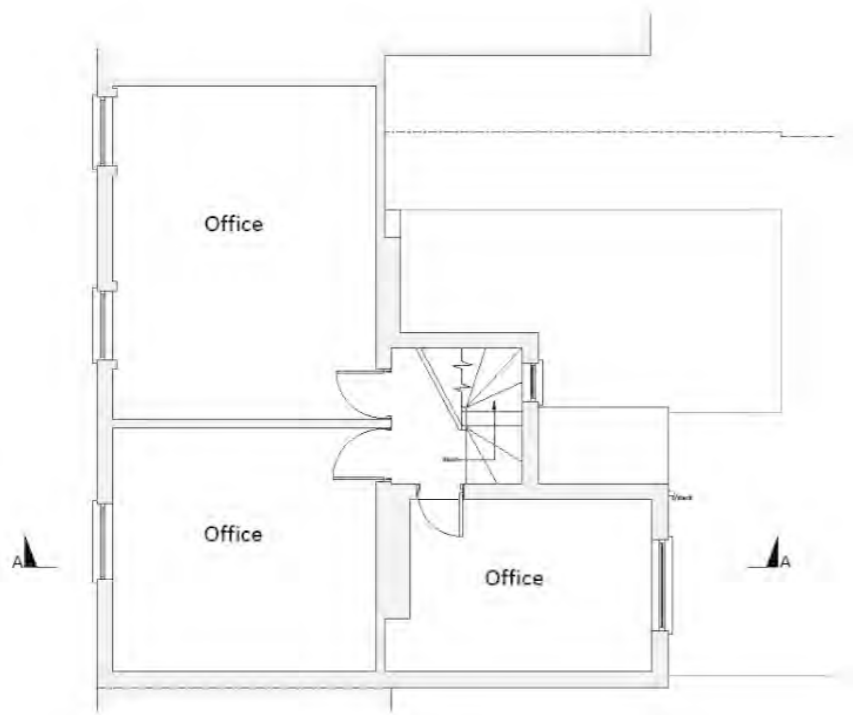
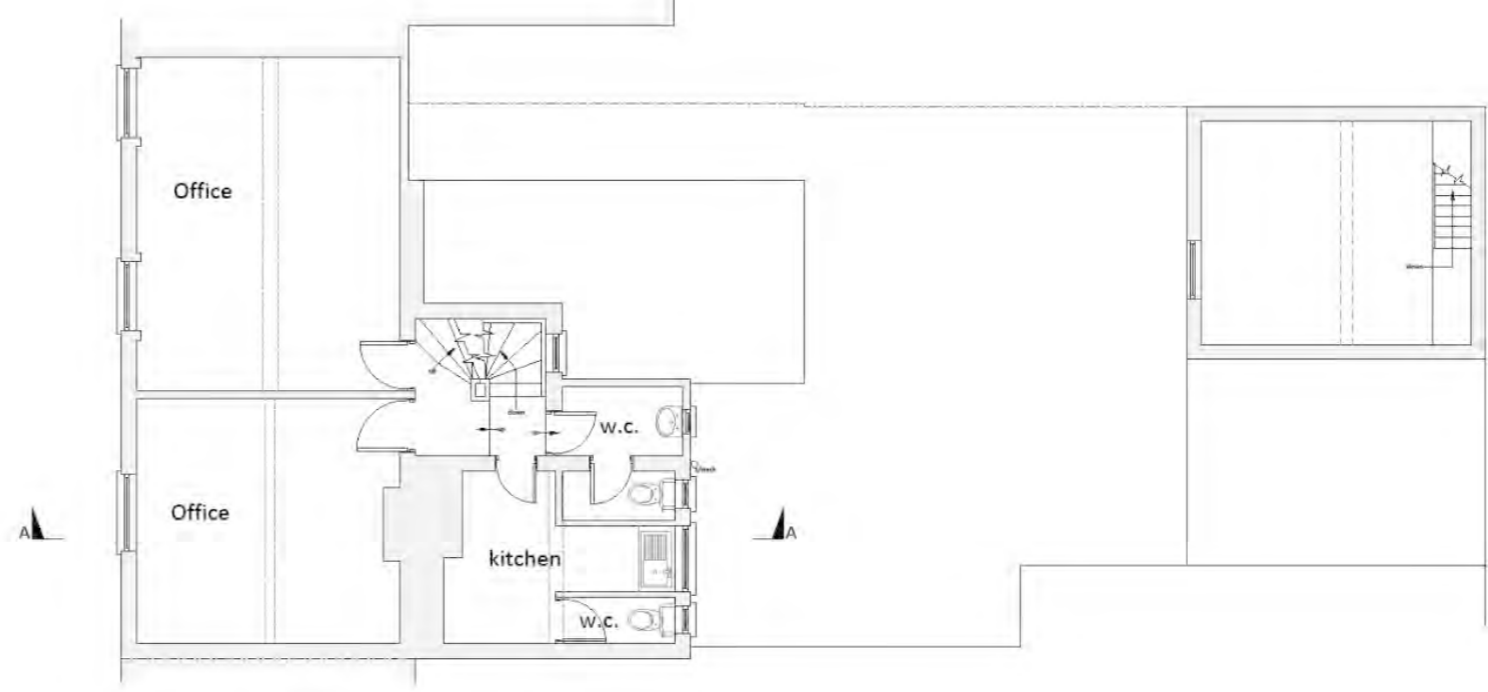


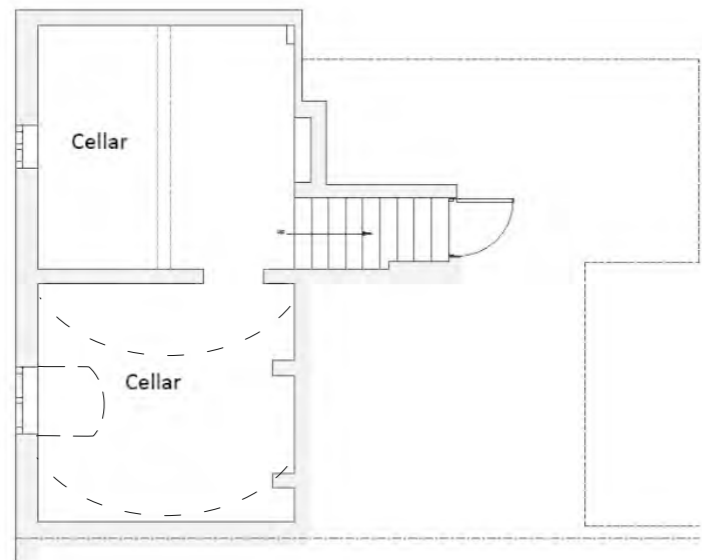
Figure 1: Historic mapping (Sheriff 1802 above and Ordnance Survey 1883 below) Site location indicated on 1883 mapping



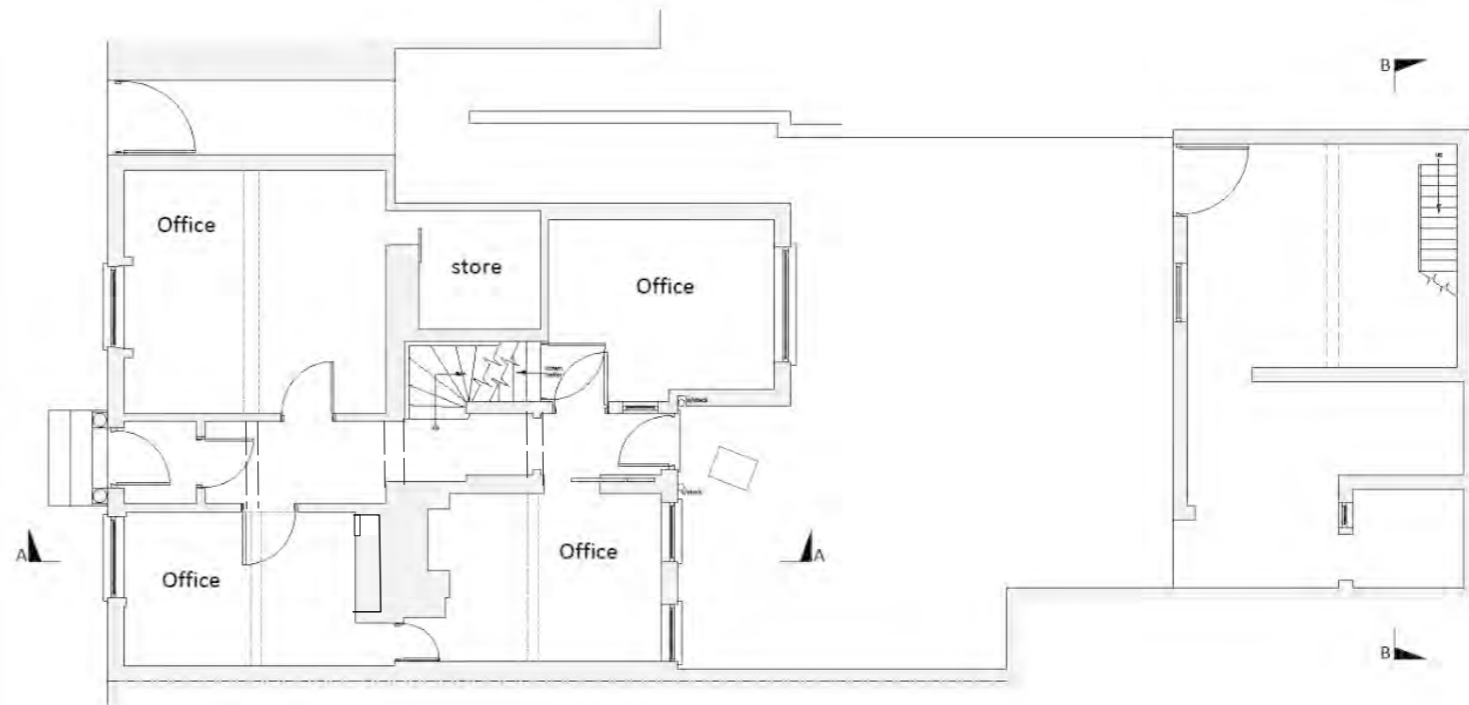
Second Floor



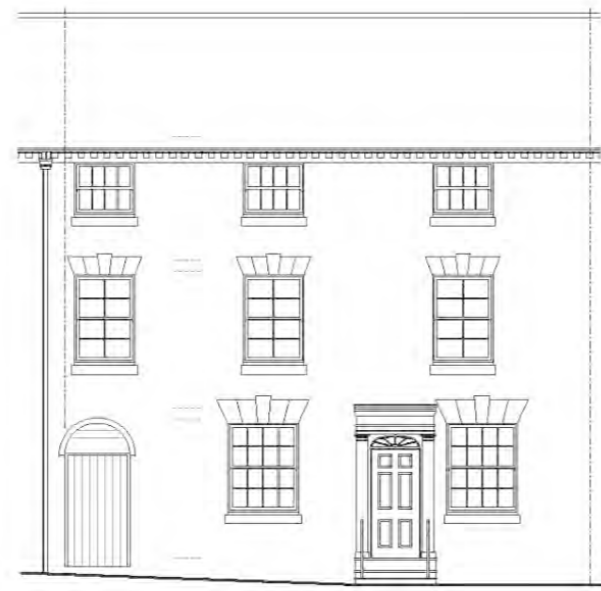
First Floor Plan



Cellar



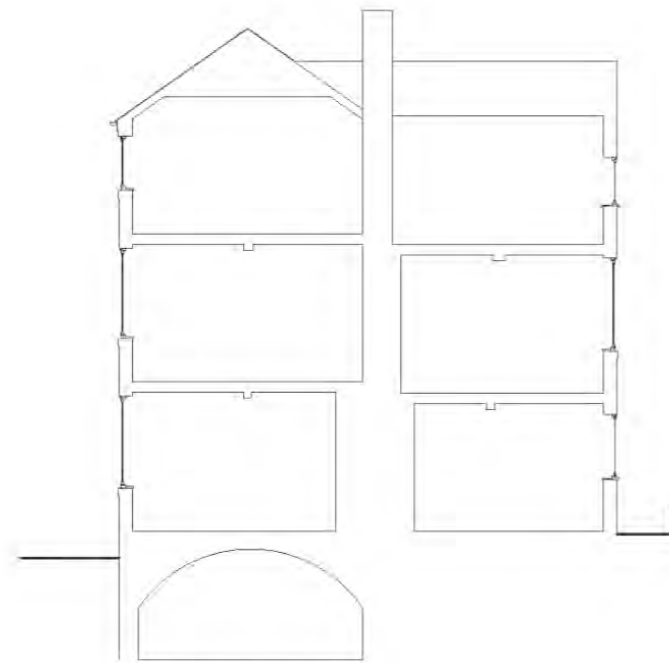
Ground Floor Plan



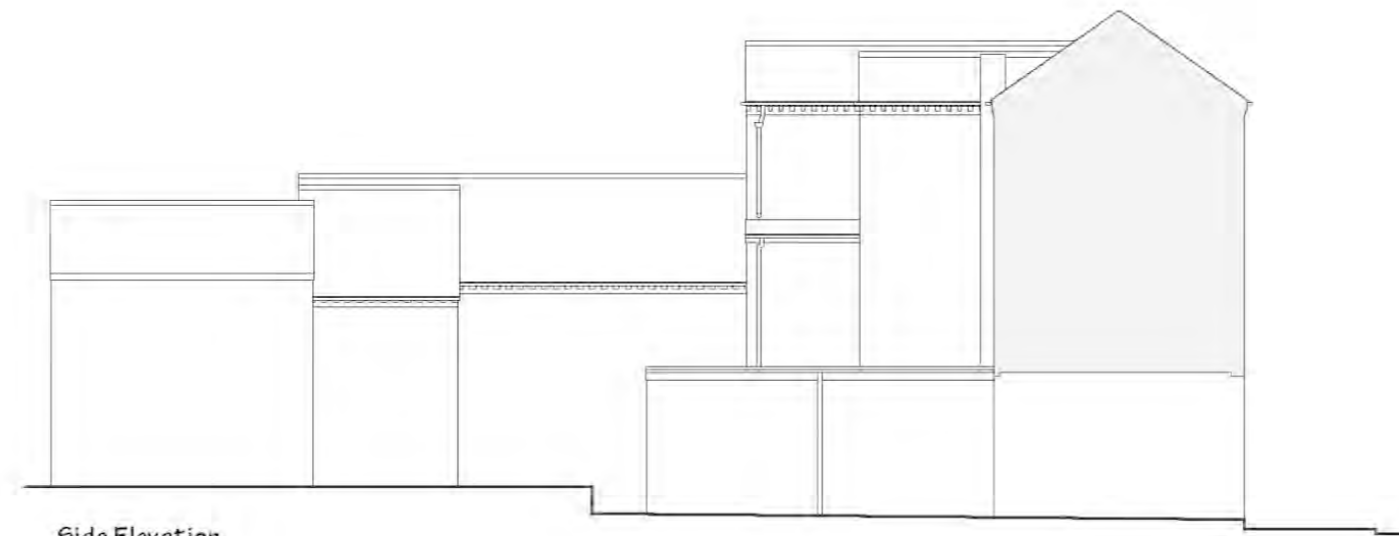
Front Elevation



Rear Elevation



Section 'A-A'



Side Elevation



Figure 2: New Street elevation - note imbalanced ground floor fenestration and re-located window openings



Detail of struck false jointing and brickwork colouring



Area of brick infill of former window opening - note vertical joint



False jointing (white lines) over infill of former window

Area of brick infill corresponding to former window position



Detail of interior of cast iron fanlight glazing bars

Figure 3: Elevation details





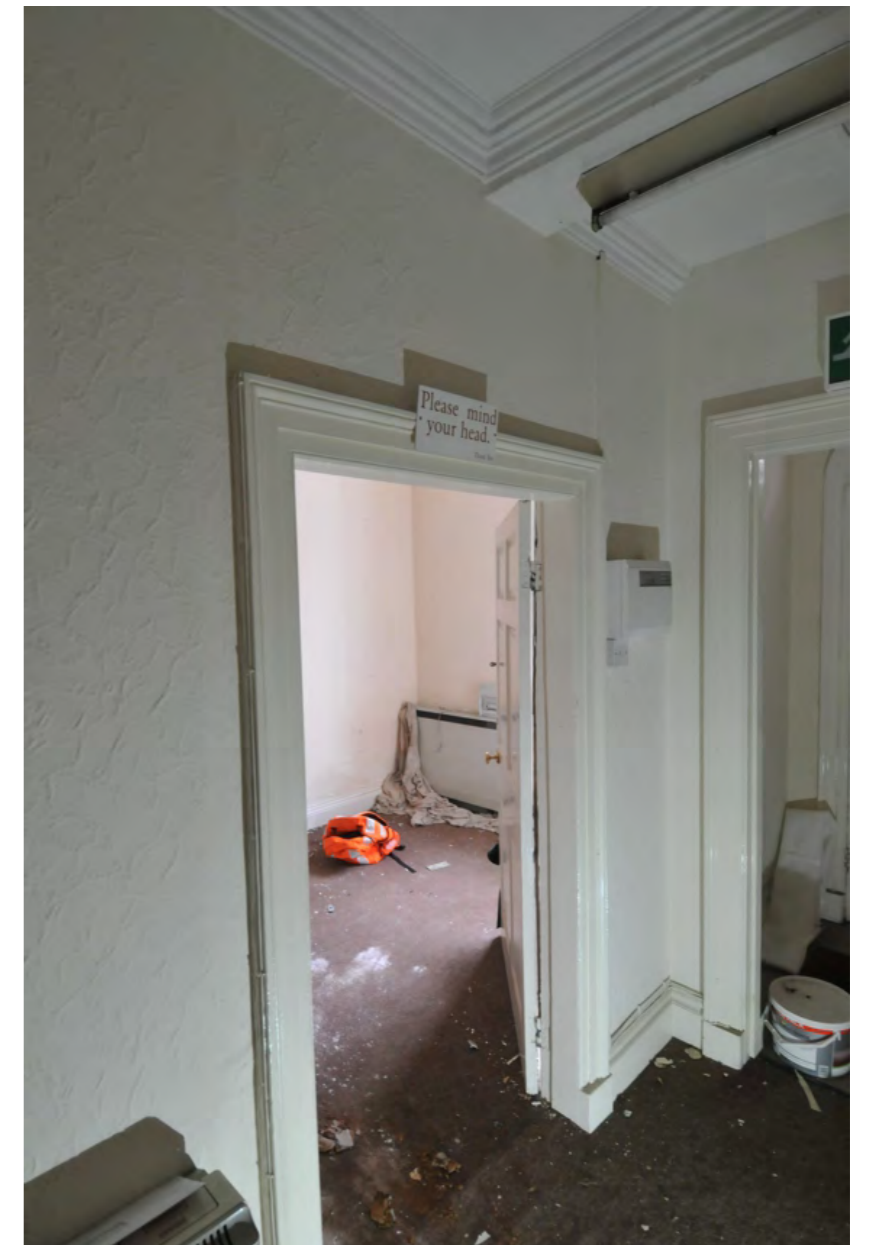
Figure 4: Rear elevation and side passage



Front door



Detail of lobby skirting and doorcase



Doorcase detail



1930s-50s lighting switch



Finger-plate detail



Cornice detail

Internal door to northern room

Figure 5: Hallway details



Figure 6: Northern front ground floor room - details



Window to front elevation - note that the window is both off-centre and partially obscured by partition wall. Cupboard is later addition replacing original vertical sliding shutter box



Front southern room window with evidence of former vertical sliding shutter



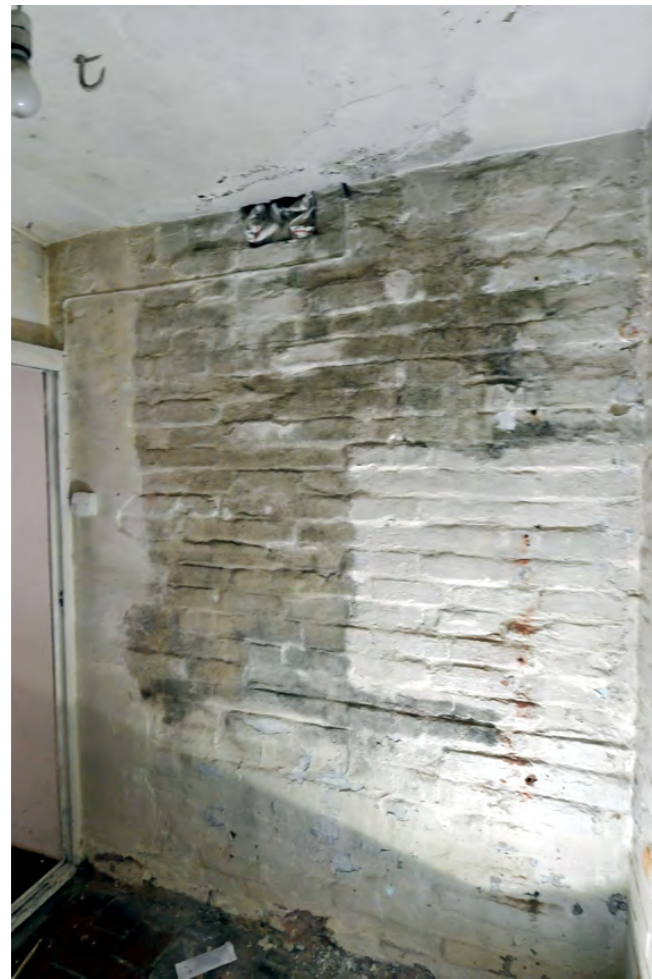
Door to hallway



Chimney recess cupboard and fragment of circa 1870s wallpaper



Figure 7: Southern front groundfloor room



Former cold box/drying chamber (originally part of NW room, now accessible only from northern front room through inserted doorway)



Southern rear room (inserted doorway to front room)



Southern rear room

Figure 8: Rear rooms



Cellar entrance



Southern cellar facing north



Northern cellar facing south-east



Underside of oak boarding



Southern cellar facing south



Northern cellar facing north-west

Figure 9: Cellar details



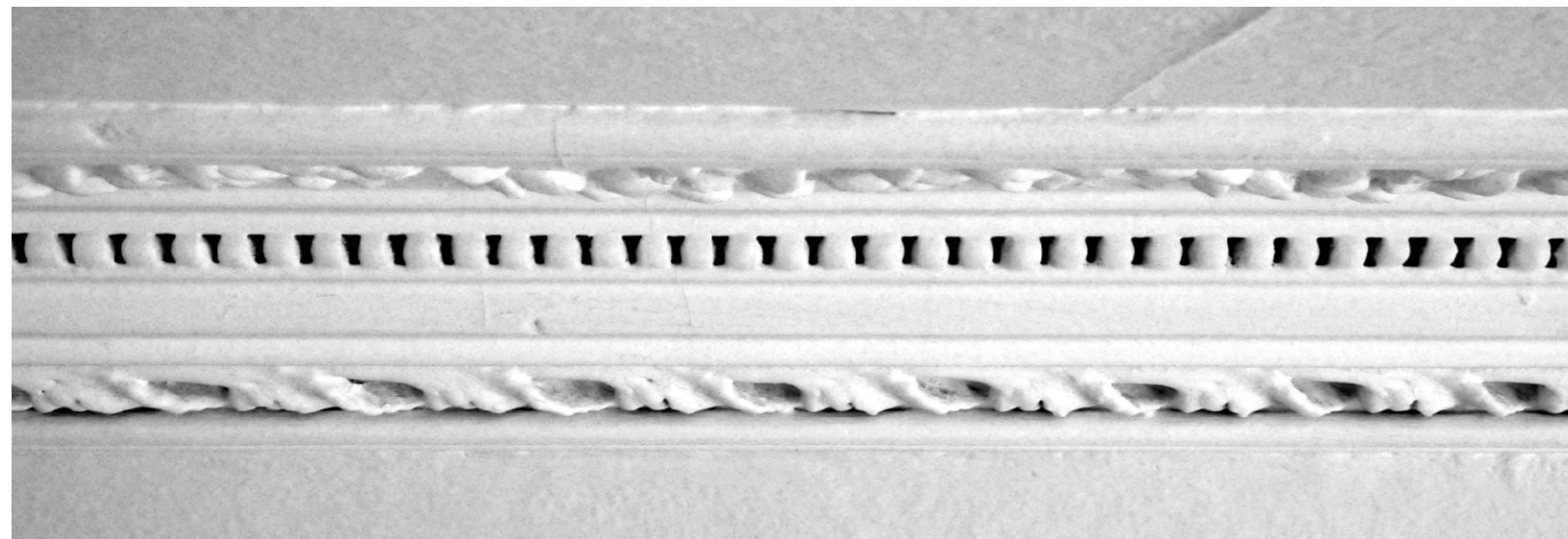
Figure 10: Stairwell details



Plan view



Oblique view



Profile view

Downstand soffit moulding (scars relate to removed flurescent strip lights)

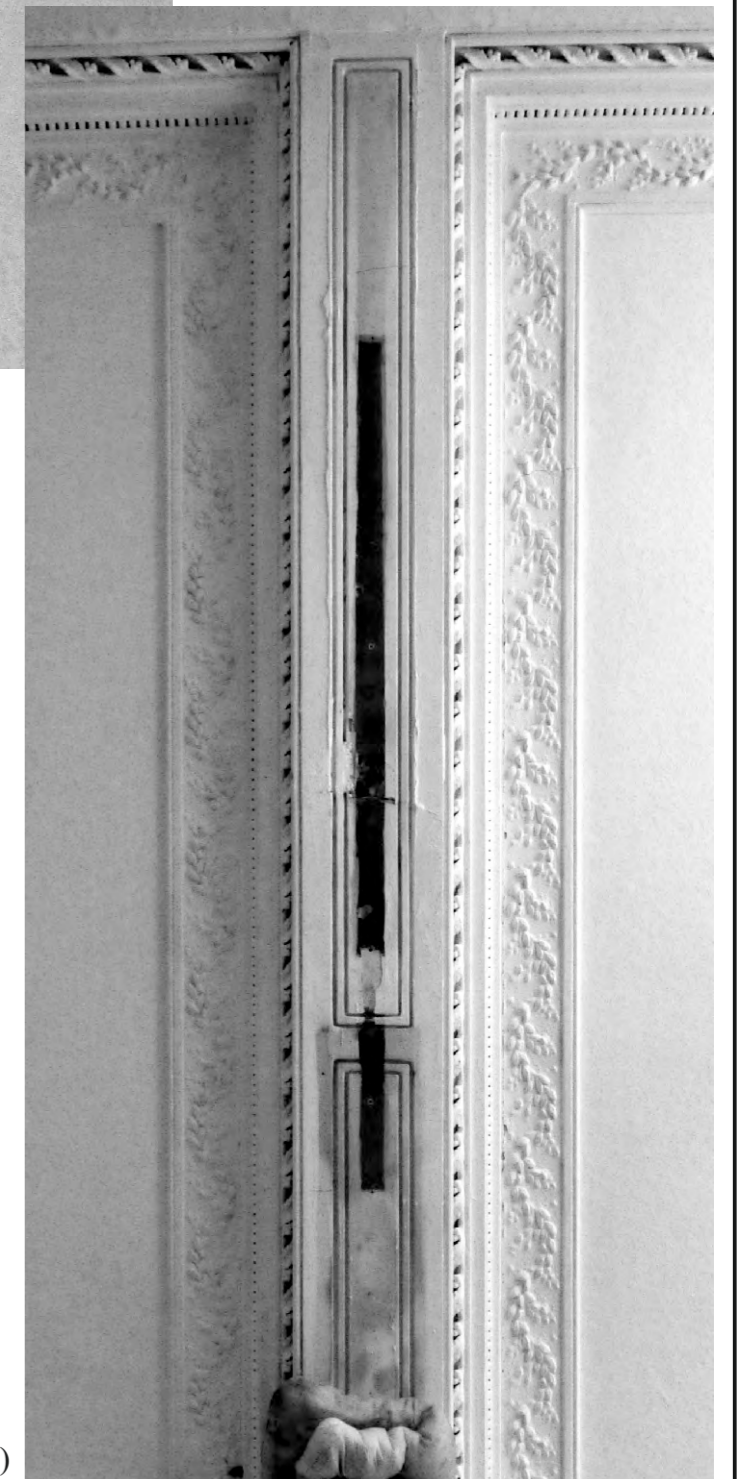


Figure 11: Detail of first floor front ceiling mouldings





1930s ceramic fire surround

General view northwards



Doorcase detail  
note scar of removed  
patera



Figure 12: First floor front northern room details - nb the wrought steel panels conceal former recessed lighting



Window details front elevation 1st floor showing original glazing bar and replica profile ( above)



Paint scrape showing original green paint of window-case



Front southern 1st floor room



Details of front southern room



Light fitting grille (1950s?)



Second floor front (north)



Detail of replica window second floor front

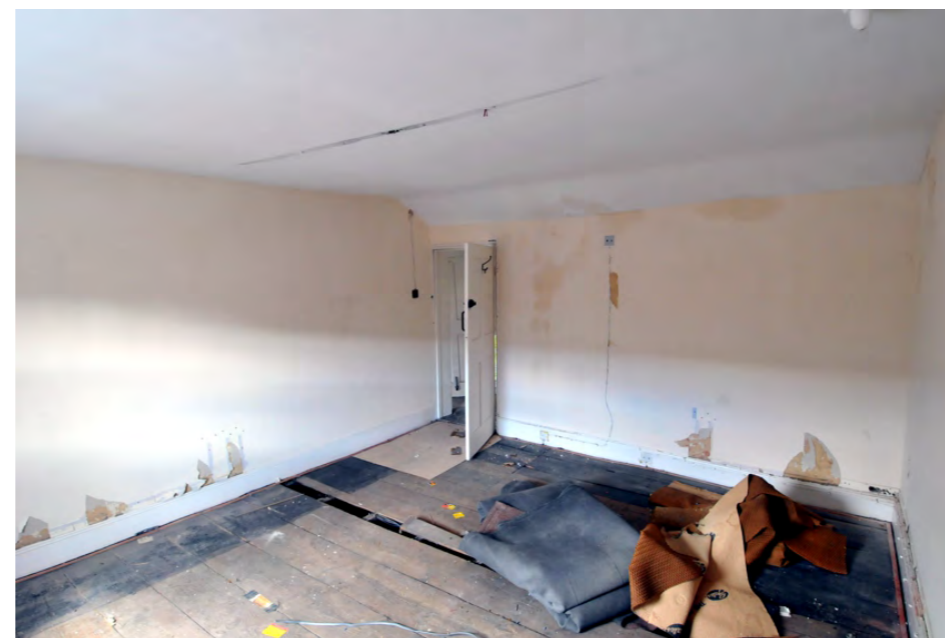
First floor rear wing window



First floor rear wing



Second floor front (south) window detail



Second floor southern front room



Second floor front (north) doorway and removed door



Second floor rear wing (facing west)



First floor rear wing facing stairwell

Figure 14: First floor rear and second floor details



Roof structure (mill sawn paired common rafters on Baltic softwood purlins)



Figure 15: Roof structure