

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



Interior of first floor level 49G High Street following the removal of panelling and party walls

14th December 2011



Introduction (Illustration 1)

Following the rapid photographic survey and limited documentary research undertaken by the author in February 2011 it was recommended that there was the need for further recording following the gutting of the interior of the building (Hall 2011). This further recording was carried out by the author on Wednesday 28th September and Friday 25th November 2011 (Site Code BRECO3).

Historical Background (Illustrations 2 and 3)

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

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

Structures revealed following gutting of ground and first floors

47 High Street Ground floor

Western Elevation entrance into Former Kitchen, store, toilet and washroom (Illustrations 4 and 5)

Following the removal of the wooden panelling from the face of this internal elevation a blocked doorway was revealed to the South of the existing doorway. This blocked door had a wooden lintel and was filled with a mixture of mortared small and flat stones.

External Eastern elevation of 45-47 High Street (Illustration 6)

Following the demolition of the low level extension to the rear of the buildings it was possible to get a better view of the blocked doorway that had already been identified by the author as part of the first survey.

49G High Street (Upstairs Flat)

Room 1

Eastern and Southern elevations (Illustrations 7 and 10)

The removal of the wall coverings from the Eastern and Southern elevations of this room revealed that both walls were built of small handmade red bricks which were inserted into timber framed panels.

Northern elevation (Illustration 8)

The further exposure of the fireplace in this elevation showed that it had been built in at least two phases and covered a sizeable flue that led up into the gable end.

Roof timbers (Illustration 9)

Several 'V' shaped marks were visible in the roof timbers of Room 1 these were presumably carved by the joiners when they built this roof section.

Room 3

The removal of the wooden panelling from the Northern and Southern elevations revealed further blocked features.

Northern Elevation(Illustration 11)

A blocked doorway is visible in this elevation which is partly covered by the timber framed Eastern elevation of Room 1. This doorway has a narrow stone lintel and has been filled in with clay and stones in a similar a manner to the blocked doors in rooms 4 and 5.

Southern Elevation(Illustrations 12 and 13)

This elevation contains a slightly narrower blocked doorway at its Eastern end and there is a small blocked window on the Western side of this doorway.

Room 4

Northern Elevation

The other sides of the blocked doorway and window recorded in Room 3 are visible in this elevation.

Room 5

Southern Elevation (Illustrations 14 and 15)

The removal of the wall coverings revealed a blocked doorway at its Eastern end that was filled with small stones and clay.

Internal furnishings and entrance doors (Illustrations 16 to 18)

The piece of integrated shelving formerly built into the western elevation of Room 3 has been carefully removed for future use. Both wooden doors into the upstairs flat and former outhouse are good survivals of original furnishings and should also be retained.

Interpretation of features revealed after gutting of buildings

The location of further blocked doorways and a single blocked window at first floor level in 49G High Street have further added to the complicated sequence of historic building events on this part of the High Street. The blocked doorway in the Southern elevation of Room 3 presumably leads out into the covered pend that has access to the High Street via a set of stairs and the blocked doorway in the Northern elevation of Rooms 1 and 3 must lead into the neighbouring United Presbyterian church although this must have gone out of use when the subdividing timber laced brick walls were built against it.

It is harder to interpret the blocked window in the Southern elevation of Room 3 as this would seem to imply that this wall was formerly an external face to the building. The erection of the United Presbyterian church to the South sometime after 1847 has meant that it is now difficult to interpret the phasing of the construction of the buildings that stood on the site previous to that. The discovery of the timber laced handmade brick internal walls in Room 1 is of interest and is a rare survival of this building technique.

Recommendations

Following the recording of the structural elements revealed after the removal of the panelling and wall coverings on the ground and first floors of these buildings the author feels that no further archaeological work needs to take place as part of this redevelopment. Some consideration should be given to submitting several of the hand-made bricks from Room 1 for chemical analysis in an attempt to identify their source.

The refurbishment of this group of buildings on Brechin High Street has confirmed both the survival of earlier building phases and the importance of such structures in aiding the interpretation of this part of the town.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge Sarah Kettles of Brechin THI for her help and interest in this recording work and Ryan MacRae and his workmen for their interest on site.

References

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

John Wood 'Plan of the City of Brechin' 1823

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Black, DD 1867 **History of Brechin**

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

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

Hall, D W 2011 **Standing Building Survey 45, 47 and 49G High Street, Brechin** Report prepared for Angus Council

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

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

Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Angus
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	45, 47 and 49G High Street, Brechin
PROJECT CODE:	BREC03
PARISH:	Brechin
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Derek Hall
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Derek Hall, archaeologist and ceramic specialist
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Standing Building Survey
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Urban buildings
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NO
START DATE	28 th September 2011
END DATE	25 th November 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Further photographic and sketch survey was carried out following the removal of wooden panelling and wall coverings from the buildings. This revealed further blocked doorways and a single blocked window at first floor level and a blocked doorway at ground floor level. One of the rooms on the first floor proved to be subdivided by walls built of timber framed hand made bricks.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Angus Council
CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	N/A
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	34 Glenfarg Terrace, Perth, PH2 0AP
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	NMRS
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk

Report Illustration List

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

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

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

Illustration 4 Ground floor of 45 and 47 High Street showing further blocked doorway and plan of building following demolition of external extension

Illustration 5 Blocked doorway with wooden lintel at ground floor level of 47 High Street

Illustration 6 Eastern rear elevation of 45, 47 and 49G High Street following demolition of extension, blocked former doorway indicated by red arrow

Illustration 7 Plan of first floor level of 49G High Street showing all blocked doorways, blocked window, location of blocked flue and timber laced brick walls

Illustration 8 Blocked flue and chimney entrance visible above fireplace in room 1 of 49G High Street

Illustration 9 Joiners marks visible on roof timbers in Room 1

Illustration 10 Timber framed wall built of hand-made clay bricks between Rooms 1 and 3, blocked doorway also visible to right of wooden stool

Illustration 11 Blocked doorway in Northern elevation of Room 3 49G High Street

Illustration 12 Blocked doorway partially opened up, blocked window behind broom leaning against wall Southern elevation of Room 3

Illustration 13 Blocked window in Southern elevation of Room 3

Illustration 14 Location of further blocked doorway in Southern elevation of Room 5 at first floor level

Illustration 15 Detail view of further blocked doorway in Southern elevation of Room 5 at first floor level

Illustration 16 Wooden shelving formerly built into Western elevation of Room 3

Illustration 17 Wooden door into rear entrance of 49G High Street

Illustration 18 Wooden door into former outhouse attached to back of buildings

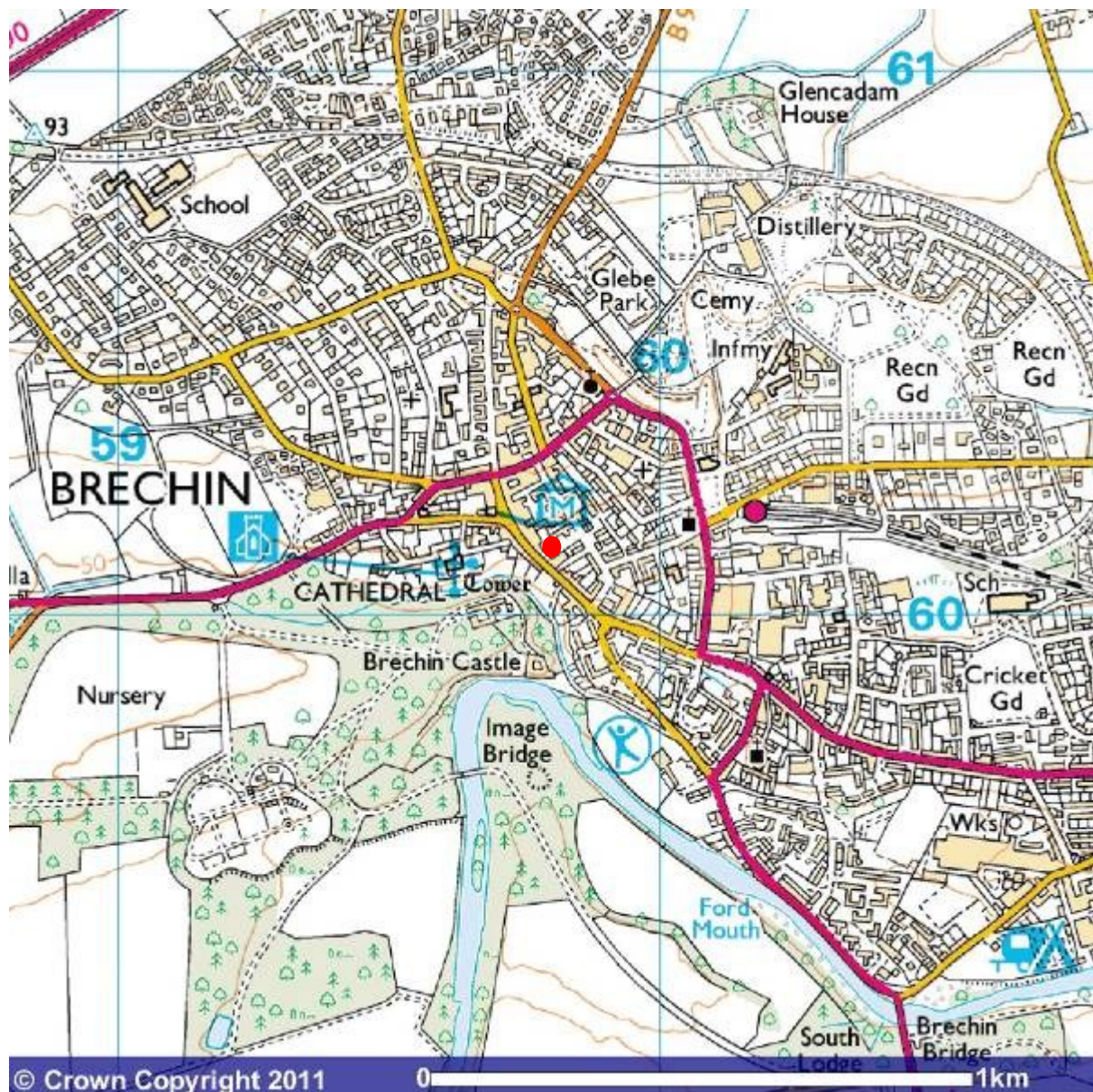


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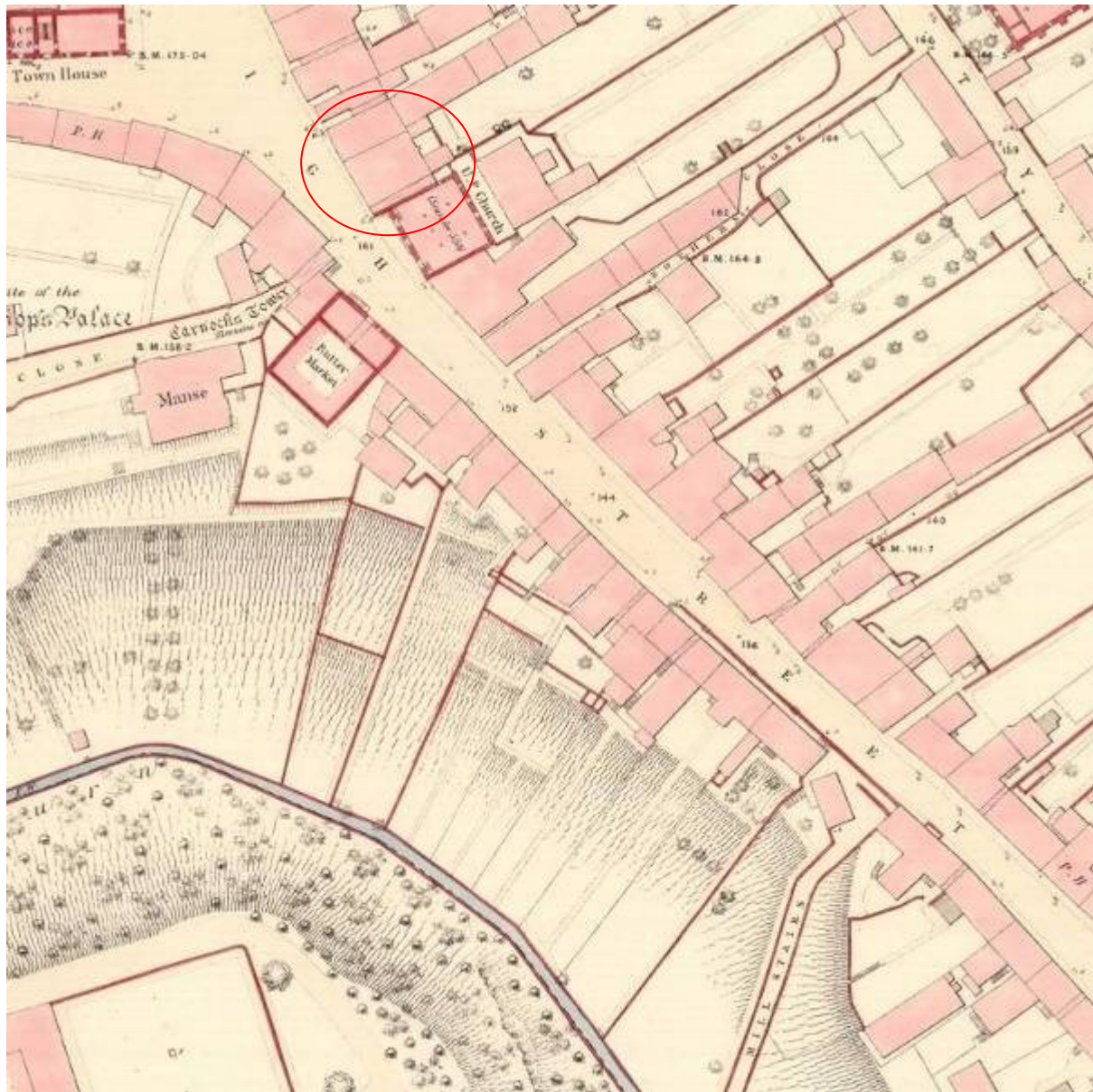


Illustration 3 45, 47 and 49G on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of c 1860 showing rebuild of Southern elevation of 47 High Street associated with erection of Episcopal Church (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

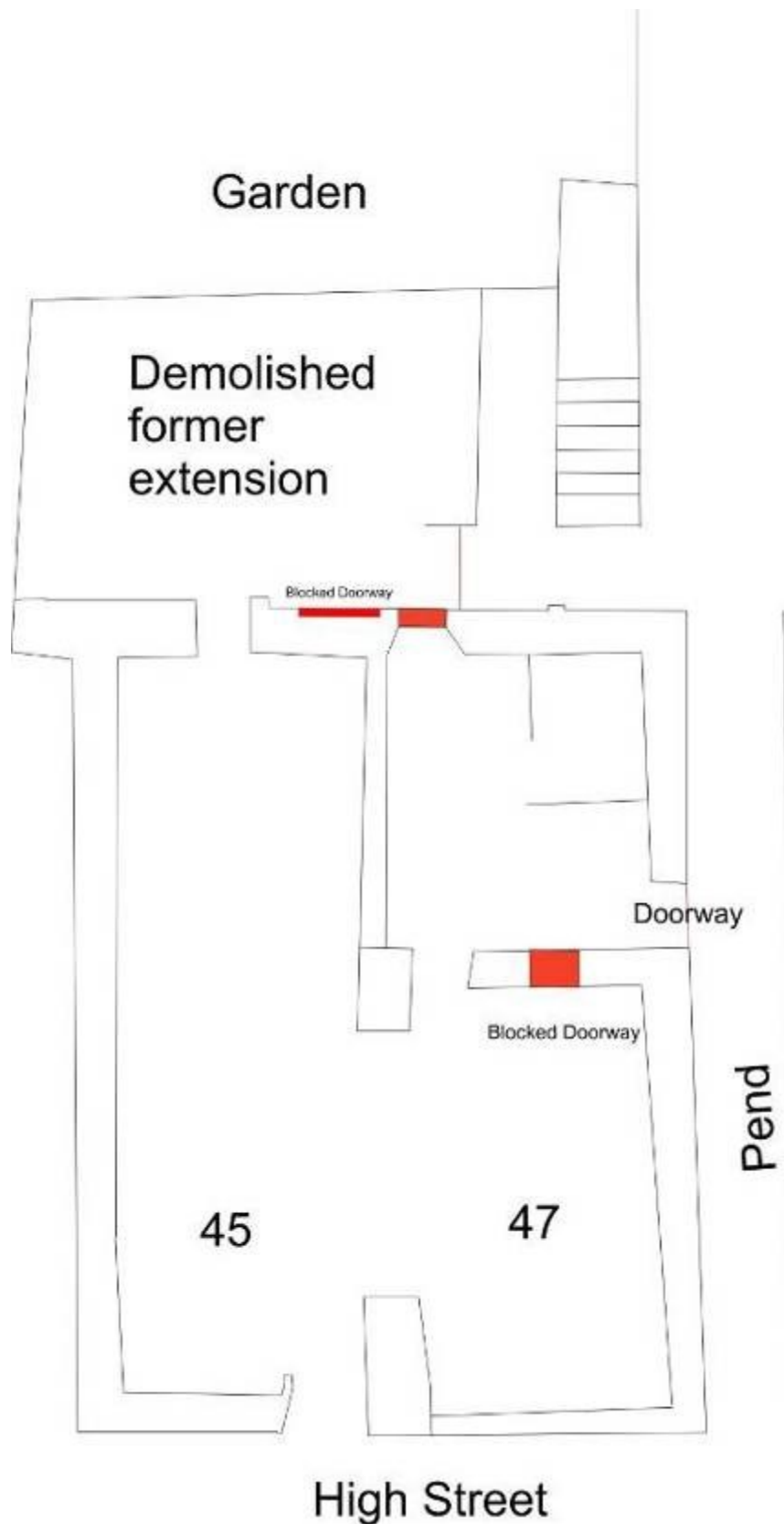


Illustration 4 Ground floor of 45 and 47 High Street showing further blocked doorway and plan of building following demolition of external extension Scale 1:50



Illustration 5 Blocked doorway with wooden lintel at ground floor level of 47 High Street



Illustration 6 Eastern rear elevation of 45, 47 and 49G High Street following demolition of extension, blocked former doorway indicated by red arrow

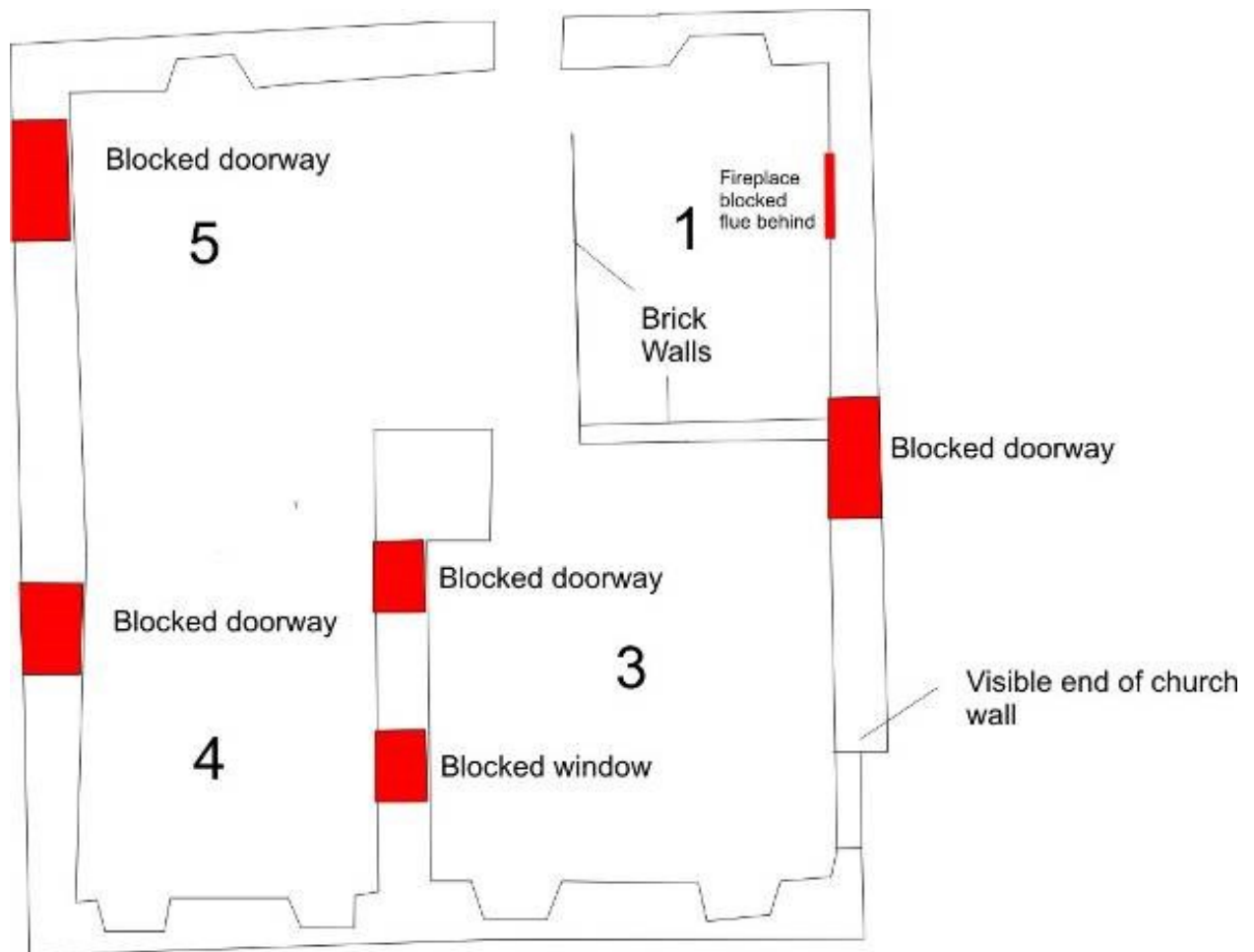


Illustration 7 Plan of first floor level of 49G High Street showing all blocked doorways, blocked window, location of blocked flue and timber laced brick walls Scale 1:50



Illustration 8 Blocked flue and chimney entrance visible above fireplace in room 1 of 49G High Street



Illustration 9 Joiners marks visible on roof timbers in Room 1



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Illustration 13 Blocked window in Southern elevation of Room 3

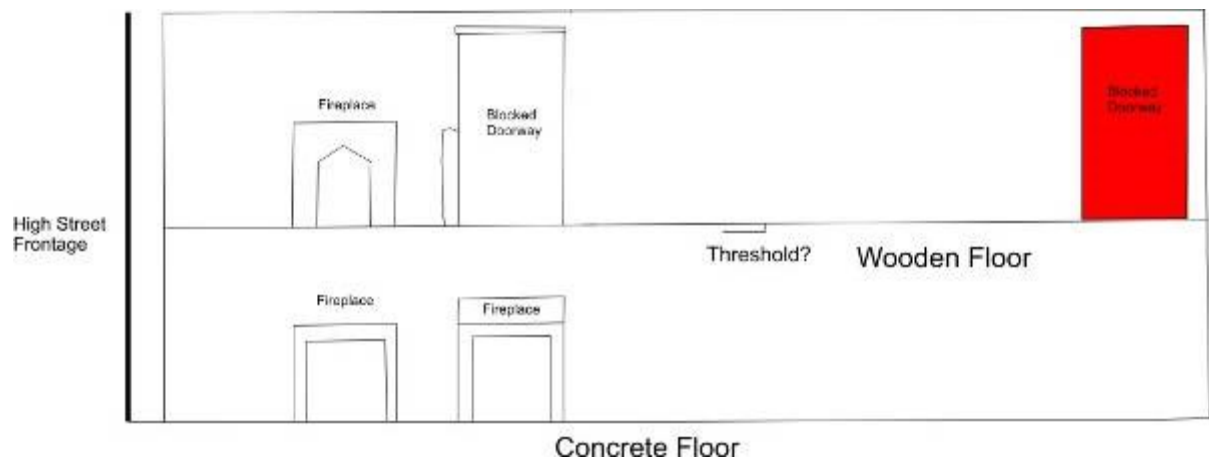


Illustration 14 Location of further blocked doorway in Southern elevation of Room 5 at first floor level Scale 1:50



Illustration 15 Detail view of further blocked doorway in Southern elevation of Room 5 at first floor level



Illustration 16 Wooden shelving formerly built into Western elevation of Room 3



Illustration 17 Wooden door into rear entrance of 49G High Street



Illustration 18 Wooden door into former outhouse attached to back of buildings