

**26 CHURCH STREET, RIBCHESTER, LANCASHIRE, PR3 3XP:**

**ADDITIONAL STATEMENT REGARDING HERITAGE MATTERS**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 This statement adds to the information contained in my Heritage Assessment of August 2019, in relation to two specific areas within the house at 26 Church Street.

**2 Rear wing: floor level**

- 2.1 The existing concrete floor within the rear wing is twentieth century, and has been found to lie approximately 300mm above the likely historic floor level.
- 2.2 A test pit next to the north wall, dug by the owner, shows that limewash or plaster is present on the internal face of the wall, to at least 300mm below the existing concrete floor; the wall itself continues below this. The concrete floor itself is about 50mm deep, and overlies rubble and soil infill. No historic floor surface was identified below this, but the presence of limewash or plaster to the depth of 300mm is clear evidence that the historic floor level was at, or below, that level.



Photo 1: Test pit against north wall. Scale with 100mm markings.

- 2.3 It was previously surmised that the rear wing was built as a cotton loom-shop. Such workshops were commonly built below external ground levels, in order to maintain high humidity, and that would account for the low historic floor level here. Once the wing was no longer used for hand-loom weaving, it is likely that the floor level was raised to reduce its dampness.

### **3 Location of former stairs to second floor**

- 3.1 Although the second floor is presently only accessible through a small trapdoor over the bathroom, it was formerly a habitable room and must have had a staircase to it, even if only a simple one.
- 3.2 The former position of the stairs was not identified within the house in 2019, but since then, the removal of the ceiling around the trapdoor, and tiling to the bathroom walls, reveals good evidence that the staircase was situated within this room in the north-west corner of the house, so it was probably removed to accommodate the bathroom when that was put in, most likely in the 1950s or 1960s.
- 3.3 The ceiling joists immediately to either side of the modern trapdoor are of very mixed types, and notably lack any limewash, so are distinct from the original joists further south. The latter do not show any marks of re-use, and are limewashed on their soffits and sides (meaning there would have been no underdrawing to the ceiling originally, and that the present lath and plaster is later). This shows there to have been an historic opening in the north-west corner of the ceiling, measuring 1450mm between the west wall and a beam, and 1150mm between the north wall and the original ceiling joist, to accommodate the stairs. When they were removed, so the bathroom could be created, the opening was reduced to a trapdoor.
- 3.4 The stairs would most likely have been of dog-leg form, with half-landing against the west wall. A diagonal line in the plaster to the north wall appears to show the upper flight, and two marks in the floorboards below may be where posts supported it.



Photo 2: Location of former stairs to second floor. Now bathroom.  
Diagonal line in plaster immediately above red and white scale.



Photo 3: Modern trapdoor within infilled stairwell. Original limewashed joists at left.