

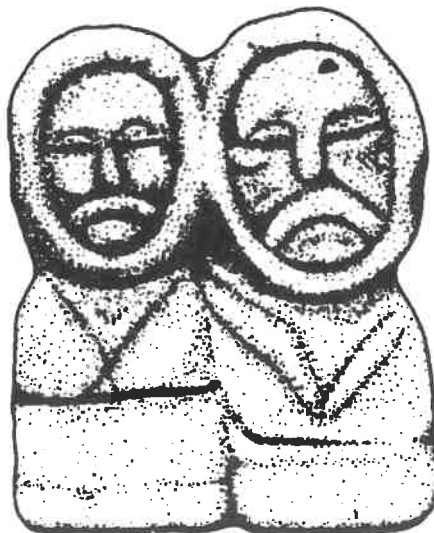
CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS LTD

BUILDING RECORDING AT 'TRAWSCOED'

MIDDLETON HALL, LLANARTHNE

CARMARTHENSHIRE

By D E Schlee, MSc



CAP Report No: 149

Cambrian Archaeological Projects Limited

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CARMARTHENSHIRE.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The stable block and servants quarters (until recently named 'Trawscoed', now named 'Principality House') were to be refurbished as part of the botanic garden complex. Archaeological recording of the buildings was required to document the sequence of alterations since their construction (before the current major refurbishment). To fully understand the changes it was necessary to see the walls when stripped back to their original fabric.

Archaeological recording was undertaken on several visits during the work on 'Trawscoed'. Since the refurbishment was undertaken very quickly, only some parts of the building were suitably exposed for recording features when the visits were made. Some interpretations must therefore remain speculative. The author only visited the building once towards the end of the refurbishment, when only parts of the original fabric of the ground floor were still visible.

Architects plans and drawings of the building were used as a basis for recording alterations. Illustrations were prepared to show the probable original layout and subsequent changes. Notes to accompany the illustrations have been used to identify and describe these changes.

2.0 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

William Paxton, owner of the estate from 1789 to 1824, commissioned the architect Samuel Pepys Cockerell to build a new hall and associated buildings. This work was undertaken between 1793 to 1795.

Middleton Hall, Trawscoed and the stable block were placed on a north-west south-east axis. The Hall itself is no longer standing, having been destroyed by fire in 1931 and demolished in the early 1950's.

The Hall was a double-pile quadrangular block with two storeys over a half-basement. It was designed in a broadly neo-Palladian style, following the conventions of the design period. The house was built of stuccoed brick, with the half basement faced with Bath stone. Moulded details, including a decorative balustrade running around the tops of the walls were also of bath stone.

The Hall was purchased by Edward Hamlin Adams in 1824 after the death of Paxton. Hamlin Adams allowed the estate to run down while embellishing the Hall. In 1842 the estate passed to his son Edward Abadam, who added the wing connecting the servants' quarters to the Hall. In the early years of the 20th century the house passed to the Hughes family. In 1903 it was used temporarily by the Bishops of St. Davids. The Hughes' remained until 1919 when it was sold for the last time to Col. W H Jones.

'Trawscoed' was the servants' block and was built directly to the north west of the Hall. It was contemporary to the Hall and of similar design, but without a basement. Between 1849 (Tithe map) and 1858 (Butlers illustration) a wing was added to connect the servants' quarters to the Hall. It was a three-bay building with solid porticoes to the north-east and south-west, each with a semi-circular headed door flanked by a square headed window. The three first floor windows in each wall were square headed. A balustrade ran around the tops of the walls. From Butlers' illustration of the house, the connecting wing between the Hall and Trawscoed was centrally positioned. No evidence of this wing was visible on the south-east face of the servants block during recording. The wing was demolished along with the Hall in the 1950's.

The entrances to 'Trawscoed' were to the north-west through the surviving semicircular headed doorway which led towards the stables, and a large semicircular headed entry on the south-east, which led towards the Hall. The side walls are divided into two bays by an offset (shown as a pilaster buttress by Butler, 1853). All windows were plain sashes beneath square heads save the middle window in each ground floor wall which was semi-circular headed in a semicircular headed recess. As with the Hall, a decorative balustrade ran around the tops of the walls.

There is a suggestion (DAT Project Record 31018. p49) that the walls may have been heightened at some time, but no evidence of this was observed during inspection of the fabric of the walls. Some surviving roof timbers are believed to be original and in-situ, further suggesting that the height of the walls has not been altered.

The balustrade that originally ran round the tops of the walls was removed some time before the present refurbishment and is not shown in the illustrations accompanying this report. The locations of chimneys are also not indicated on the illustrations.

3.0 DESCRIPTIVE NOTES AND COMMENTS

Generally, the building appears to have three main phases. The first phase consists of the external and internal walls and original windows and doorways. The second phase consists mostly of substantial changes (built in brick and stone) to the internal layout of the building, as well as alterations to the external appearance of the house. The third phase consists of the internal layout (mostly stud walls) of the building as it was before the current refurbishment. It is not clear whether the various changes happened together in major redecoration events, or gradually over the life of the building. As such it is difficult to distinguish between phases two and three, which may in fact simply be different ends of the same phase.

3.1 The Ground Floor Plan (Figure 1)

The ground floor plan of 'Trawscoed' is square, divided in two by a corridor running north-west/south-east through the entire length of the building between the Hall and the entrance facing the stable block. Each half is again divided in two (by walls running south-west/north-east), forming four original rooms on the ground floor. Any evidence of further subdivisions in the original plan were either destroyed by later alterations, or no evidence was visible at the time of recording.

The internal walls in the eastern half of the house mostly appear to be original, indicating the original width of the corridor and room sizes. Although on the same lines of the original, the southern wall of the corridor appears (from its thickness) to be a later rebuild. The internal walls of the western half are later modifications. The corridor was widened to take a staircase, and the original rooms on either side of the corridor were divided in two (also blocking the round headed windows).

The original pairs of rooms to the north and south of the corridor were connected by archways (N) and possibly also by doors (O), though these may be later alterations once the archways were blocked up. The size of these archways suggests some degree of (at least optional) interconnectedness between the rooms. Masonry block (T) is an extension of the 'intermediate phase' south wall of the corridor into archway. Both archways were probably blocked up at this stage.

The eastern end of the north wall of the corridor was the only one still exposed when the author visited the site. Although much altered, it is probably the only surviving original section of the corridor walls. The current refurbishment has created two doorways (R) and (P). In the previous phase there were probably no doorways in either position, though there may originally have been a doorway in position (P). Two bricked up arches (S) survive towards the entrance doorway. It is unclear whether these were once doorways (which seems unlikely) or were decorative niches. Alternatively they might be optional features that were never instigated. The base of a blocked up possible first floor doorway or fireplace was partially visible above and between these two arches. In position (Q) a blocked low arch, possibly for a fireplace, was partially visible. All these blocked up features do not fit with the likely layout or function of the original building and their purposes remain somewhat obscure.

The original layout and use of the rooms remains uncertain. For example it is not known whether the central corridor was open or could be closed off separating the west side of the house from the east. Likewise, the connections between the north side and south side rooms (which are of similar design) are not clear. The original number and location of staircases is also uncertain. Both staircases in the corridor may be later modifications.

A second phase of alterations to the internal layout of the building is indicated by the thicker brick and stone built internal walls in the north south and west quadrants of the house. These walls incorporate blocking up the arch headed windows (C). The north-eastern arched window (L) may just have been converted to a rectangular window. Alternatively it may have been blocked but later reopened. It is also uncertain whether the building functioned as a single household in this intermediate phase.

A blocked doorway (V) in the south-east wall of the building may have an equivalent in position (K), but no evidence was seen of this. These doorways are presumed to have provided access to two possible rooms indicated by two pitched roof scars visible on the outside face of the building (see figure 6).

Later changes involved the conversion of the building into three maisonettes, one to the west, using the stable-side entrance. The other two dwellings used new doorways (I) and (U) in the hall-side of the building. A third door (H) gave external access to a coal store. Stud walls further divided the ground floor into lounges, living rooms, kitchens etc. for each dwelling.

Key to Figure 1

- (A) Original window opening (with later window).
- (B) Original window opening (with later window).
- (C) Original arched window (opening later blocked up).
- (D) Original window opening (later altered).
- (E) Later wide window (in position of smaller original window).
- (F) Original window opening (with later window).
- (G) Inserted toilet window (Later phase).
- (H) Inserted doorway (later phase).
- (I) Inserted entrance doorway (later phase).
- (J) Original window opening (with later window).
- (K) Position of equivalent doorway to (V) (presumed but not seen).
- (L) Original arched window later altered to rectangular (may have been blocked)
- (M) Original window later converted to doorway.
- (N) Original doorway (later blocked).
- (O) Doorways (Possibly original but probably later).
- (P) Original doorway (later blocked).
- (Q) Possible blocked fireplace?
- (R) Later inserted doorway.
- (S) Blocked up archways/recesses.
- (T) Extension of corridor wall partially blocking original archway.
- (U) Inserted entrance doorway (later phase).
- (V) Inserted doorway (second phase) later blocked (equivalent doorway to (K)).

3.2 First Floor Plan (Figure 2)

The first floor was fully redecorated by the time the author got so see the house so no details of these walls were visible. The majority of the existing room divisions are stud walls relating to the latest phase of occupation (three maisonettes). The likely layout of the intermediate phase alterations is uncertain.

Only the central division wall (running north-west/south east) extends upwards from the ground floor. This appears to effectively divide the first floor in two, but with a central doorway. Though later blocked, it is not known whether this doorway is an

original feature or an intermediate phase modification. It is possible that there was a corridor running the length of the first floor (similar to that on the ground floor). Even if original, access through it may have been restricted. Replaced floorboards in this area may suggest the location of an earlier staircase (presumably 'first phase'), though its exact position is unclear. Any other layout details are speculative.

Stone and brickwork presumed to be chimney stacks extend upwards from the ground floor in the western half of the building. Other intermediate features include the blocking of the central window in the south-east quadrant, and a wall associated with chimneys from ground floor hearths.

Key to Figure 2

- (A) Inserted windows (later phase).
- (B) Original window (blocked in intermediate phase).
- (C) Original window position (widened in late phase).
- (D) Presumed intermediate phase chimney stack etc.
- (E) Presumed intermediate phase chimney stack etc.
- (F) Presumed original arched feature (unexplained).
- (G) Replaced floorboards possibly indicating position of original stairwell.
- (H) Wall and chimney stack (intermediate phase).

3.3 Roof Space Plan (Figure 3)

What appears to be the original roof beam plate was found to have survived, along with a few upright timbers (see plan 3). Replaced timbers are indicated with dotted lines (see plan 3). The roof plate rests upon the external walls and the central division wall. None of the walls appear to have been raised in height. The balustrade that originally ran around the tops of the walls was later removed. It has not been represented on the drawings in this report.

The original Roof was apparently a slated, square, hipped roof. The existing roof structure suggests that at an intermediate stage there would have been twin pitched hipped roofs, with a gutter running along the central division wall. As part of the later alterations an attic was added to the roof.

The arch feature that exists within the roof space is as yet unexplained. It appears to extend upwards from the ground floor on the corridor walls. That these walls are considered to belong to two different phases suggests the arch is a later feature. It is possibly associated with the construction of the wing connecting Trawscoed to the Hall. It may have formed a support at the junction of the two roofs, or even a doorway between the two roof spaces. The inside of the arch is plastered.

The location of existing chimneys suggests that they are all later additions to the building. If so, there is no evidence of the locations of the original fireplaces.

Key to Figure 3

- (A) Apex of arch within roof space (of uncertain purpose).
- (B) Chimney stacks (intermediate phase).
- (C) Apparently original uprights.
- (D) Apparently original roof beams (in-situ).
- (E) Replaced roof beams.
- (F) Line of possible twin pitched hipped roofs.

3.4 North-east Elevation

Original phase (Figure 4)

Originally this elevation was divided into two bays by an offset (shown as a pilaster buttress by Butler, 1853). All windows were plain sashes beneath square heads save the middle window in each ground floor wall (D) which was semi-circular headed. The openings for these may have extended down to floor level (E), suggesting (as with the south-west elevation) the optional possibility of floor length windows/doors.

Key to Figure 4

- (B) Original roof line.
- (C) Line of possible twin gabled hipped roof.
- (D) Originally arched windows, later blocked up.
- (E) Not visible but possibly open to ground, as was case in South west elevation.
- (F) Not visible but possibly open to ground, as was case in South west elevation.

Later Phase (Figure 5)

later alterations to the facade include the blocking of the arch headed windows (E). A rectangular window was (probably later) re-instated in the left hand blocked arch (D). Window (G) was changed to a doorway, while another doorway (F) was inserted to the left of the left hand arch.

The phases of alterations to the roof are indicated on the drawing. (A) is the late attic extension. (B) the probable original roof line. (C) indicates the possible intermediate twin pitched hipped roof.

Key to Figure 5

- (A) Later attic addition.
- (B) Original roof line.
- (C) Line of possible twin gabled hipped roof.
- (D) Rectangular window replacing blocked up arched window.
- (E) Position of blocked up arched window.
- (F) Doorway inserted into arched window surround.
- (G) Doorway inserted in position of original window.

3.5 South-east Elevation

Original Phase (Figure 6)

The large semi-circular headed door led towards the Hall. There was one rectangular ground floor window on either side of the doorway, with three square windows on the first floor.

It is from this face of the building that the wing connecting 'Trawscoed' to the Hall would have been built. While there was no visible evidence for this attachment, at an intermediate stage two pitched roofs (C) were built the scars of which were both visible. It is not known what form these extensions took. Door (D) and presumed door (E) are believed to have given access to these additions. It is clear that these features pre-date the later phase of alterations. It is unclear whether the main doorway was in use or was blocked up at this stage.

Key to Figure 6

- (B) Original roof line.
- (C) Roof scars for roofed extensions (intermediate phase).
- (D) Intermediate phase doorway (later blocked up).
- (E) Presumed location of similar doorway to (D), but not visible.

Later Phase (Figure 7)

In the later phase doorways (D) and (E) (figure 6) were blocked up and the extensions removed. Two new entrance doorways (F) and (G) were inserted below a concrete beam, giving access to the maisonettes. A third door (E) gave access to a coal store. A small w.c. window (D) was inserted. Two additional windows (C) were added on the first floor. A later attic (A) was added to the original roof line (B).

Key to Figure 7

- (A) Attic roof addition.
- (B) Original roof line.
- (C) Inserted windows.
- (D) Inserted toilet window.
- (E) Inserted door to coal store.
- (F) Inserted doorway to maisonette.
- (G) Inserted doorway in position of original entrance (shares lintel with (F)).

3.6 North-west Elevation

Original Phase (Figure 8)

The original facade was similar to that facing the Hall, but with a slightly simpler design. Openings in wall for ground floor arched windows run to the floor, suggesting

that there was the option of them having been doorways or full length windows, but there is no pictorial evidence to suggest this was ever the case.

Key to Figure 8

- (B) Original roof line.
- (C) Openings to floor level (optional doorways), but bricked up to window height.

Later Phase (Figure 9)

Apart from the roof alterations, later changes appear only to be to the windows.

Key to Figure 9

- (A) Attic room addition.
- (B) Original roof line.
- (C) Replacement window frames in original openings.
- (D) Replacement window frames in original openings.

3.7 South-west Elevation

Original Phase (Figure 10)

This elevation was originally the same as the north-east elevation. The opening for windows (F) also run to floor level suggesting the option of doorways. (E) is also open to floor but not (D).

Key to Figure 10

- (B) Original roof line.
- (C) Line of possible twin gable hipped roof (intermediate phase).
- (D) Opening runs to floor (optional doorway ?) but bricked up to window height.
- (E) Opening runs to floor (optional doorway ?) but bricked up to window height.
- (F) Opening to floor (optional doorway?) but bricked up to window height.

Later phase (Figure 11)

Later modifications include the blocking of the arch headed windows the blocking of the first floor central window of the right hand panel and the insertion of larger windows in the left hand ground and first floor windows of the right hand panel.

Key to Figure 11

- (A) Attic roof addition.
- (B) Original roof line.
- (C) Line of possible twin gabled hipped roof.
- (D) Locations of blocked arched windows.

- (E) Larger window frame inserted in position of smaller original window.
- (F) Position of blocked up first floor window.
- (G) Larger window frame inserted in position of smaller original window.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

‘Trawscoed’ has undergone considerable alterations throughout its lifetime. Due to the speed at which refurbishment was undertaken, it was not possible to identify and explain all the modifications, but sufficient evidence was revealed to identify the major phases of alteration.

The various alterations to the building appear to have obscured its original internal features. Little clear evidence was revealed about the original layout of the rooms. What evidence does exist does not clearly indicate what each room was used for, or how the building was used generally.

Originally there appears to have been at least the option of open access through the wide archways between the rooms on either side of the ground floor corridor. What these rooms would have been used for is uncertain.

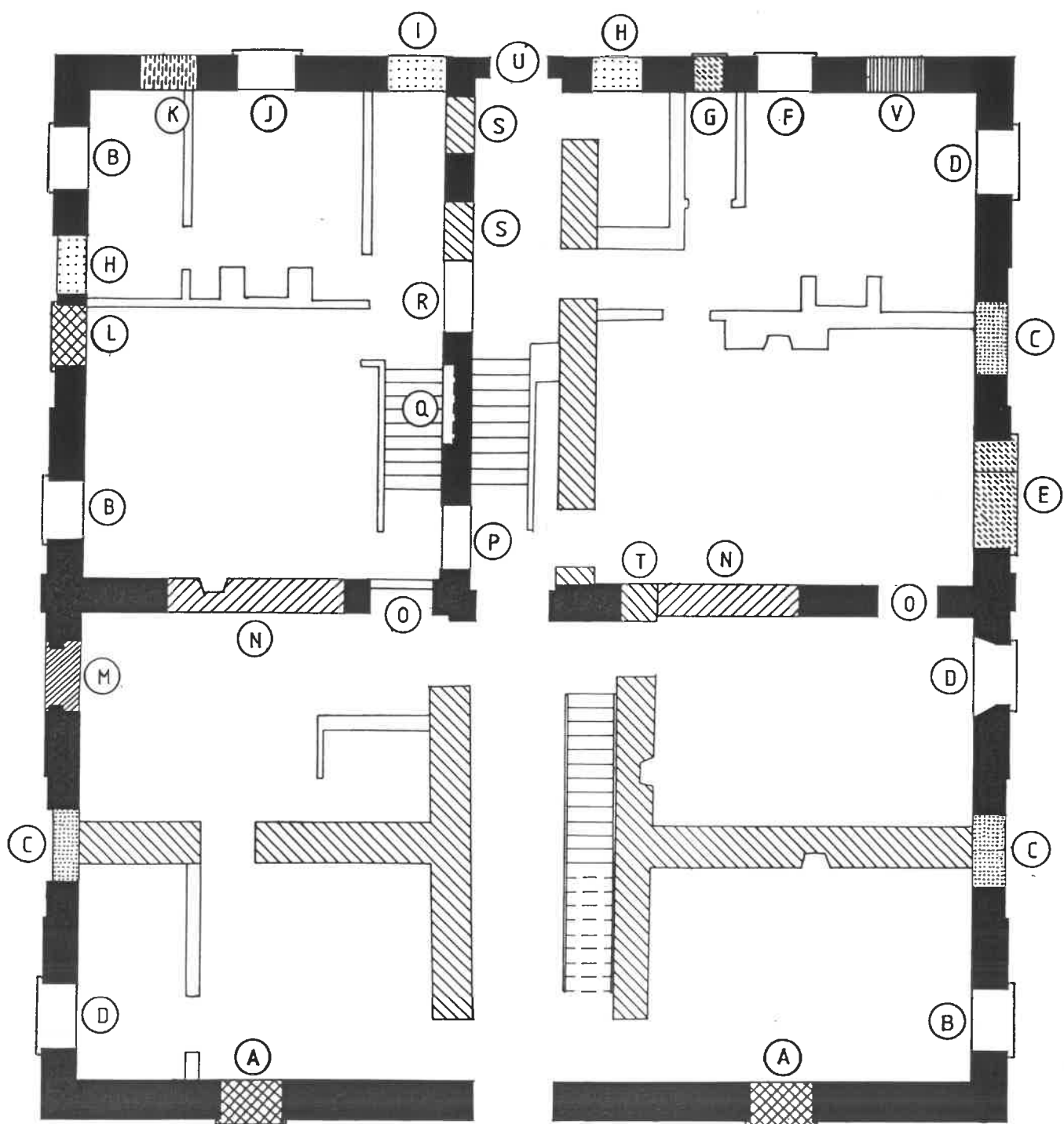
The original arrangement of rooms on the first floor is also unclear. It also seems probable that the existing staircases are later modifications, the location of the original staircase is uncertain.

The intermediate phase alterations consist of thicker built internal walls. Some are presumed to replace original walls in similar positions, while others (which block windows) indicate a new division of space. How these changes altered the use of the building is uncertain.

The later alterations to the building relate to its conversion into three maisonettes. Internally, the floor plans of the maisonettes are clear. They involved the blocking up or alteration of intermediate phase features. The changes also broke up the symmetry of many of the external elevations.

The original exterior elevations of the building are much easier to discern. Although some of the original windows were blocked, altered and enlarged in the later phases, their original symmetrical arrangement is clear. Other later alterations are conspicuous in that they do not respect the original symmetry of the elevations.

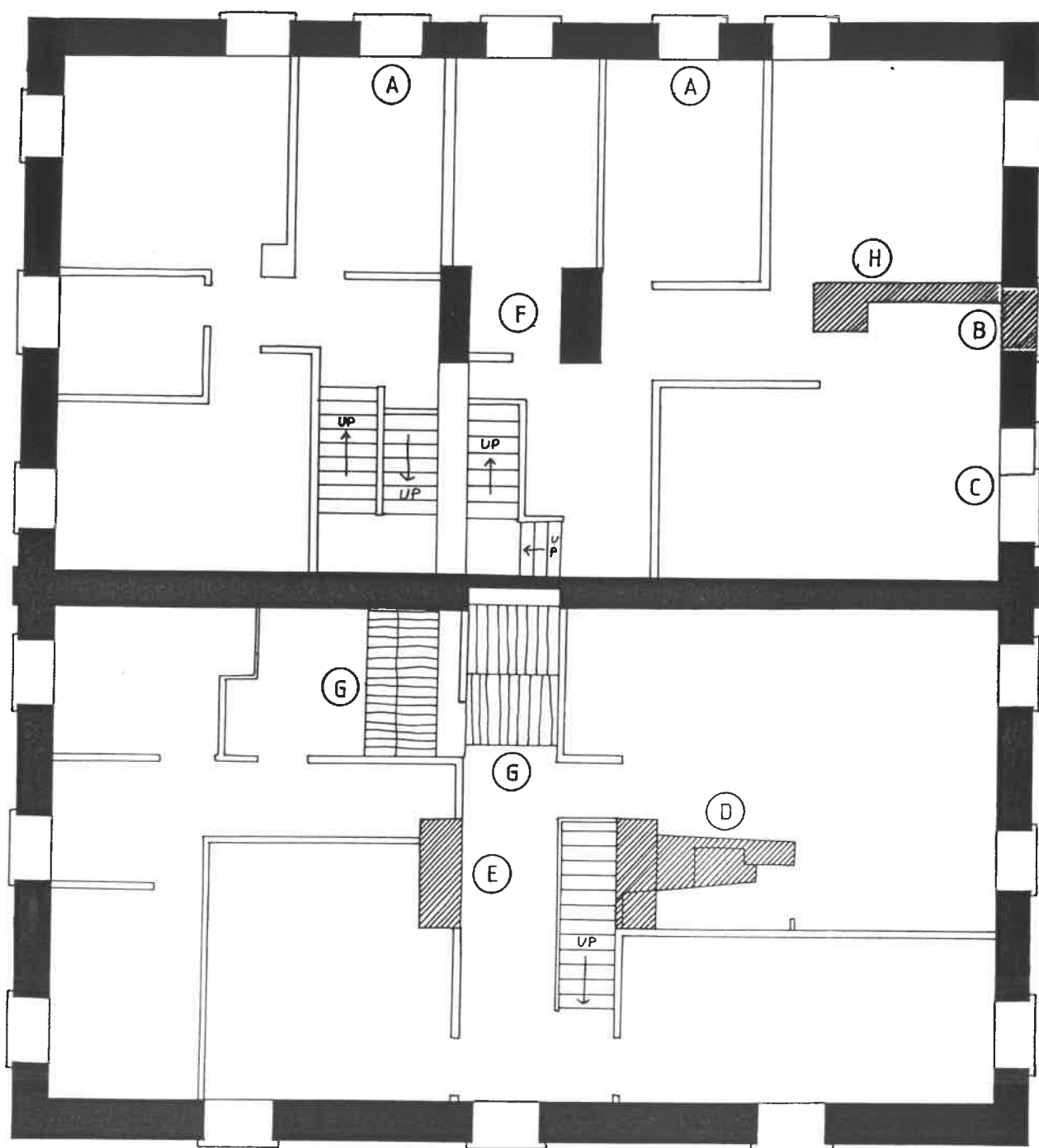
It has not been possible to ascertain at what time the various alterations were made to the building. The intermediate phase may have pre-dated the demolition of the Hall, while the later phase presumably post dates it.



Key

- 'Original' Phase walls
- 'Intermediate' Phase walls
- 'Intermediate' Phase? blocking
- 'Late' Phase stud walls

Figure 1: Ground Floor Plan



Key




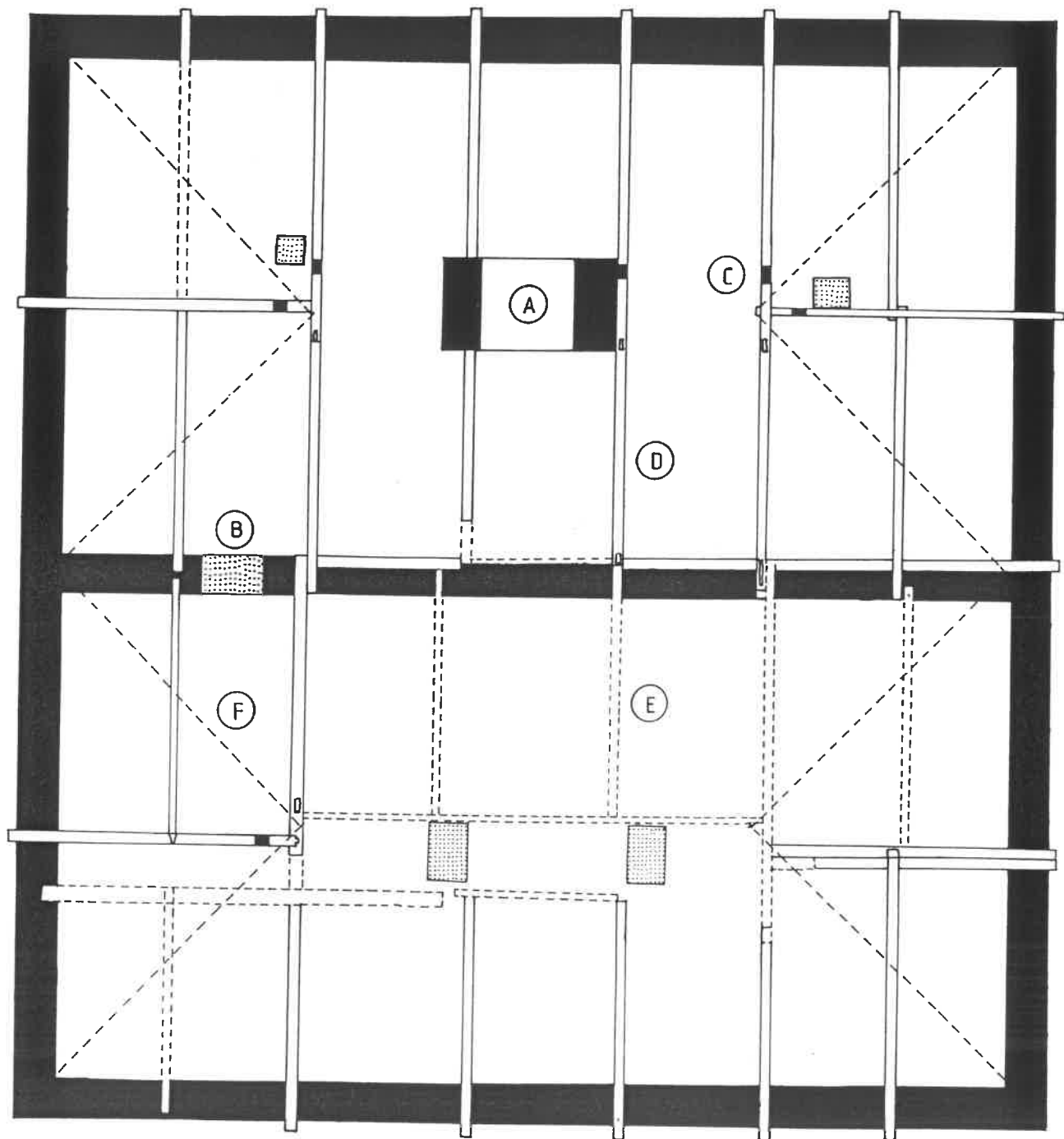
-  'Original' Phase walls
-  'Intermediate' Phase walls
-  'Late' Phase stud walls

Figure 2: First Floor Plan



Key




-  Original timbers
-  Replaced timbers
-  Chimney stacks

Figure 3: Roof Space Plan

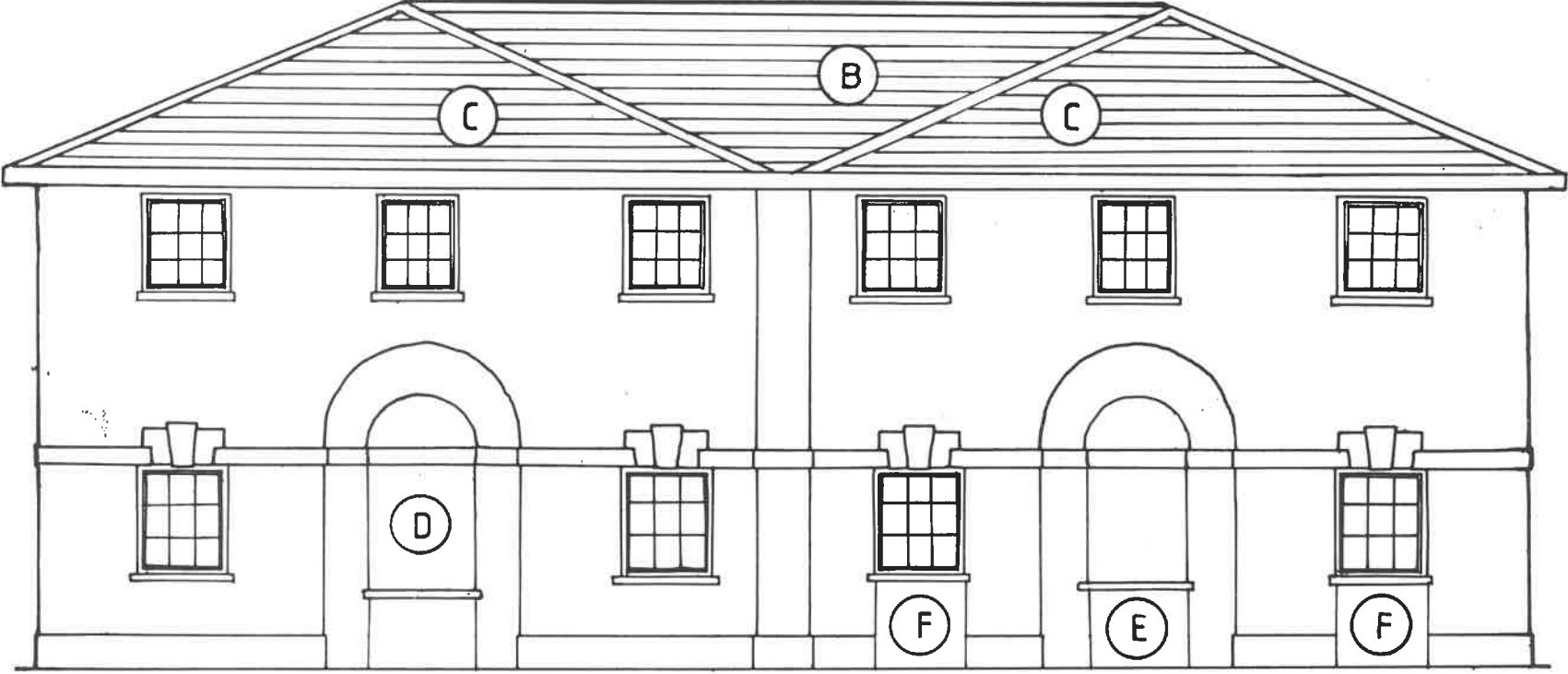


Figure 4: North-east Elevation (Original)



Figure 5: North-east Elevation (Alterations)

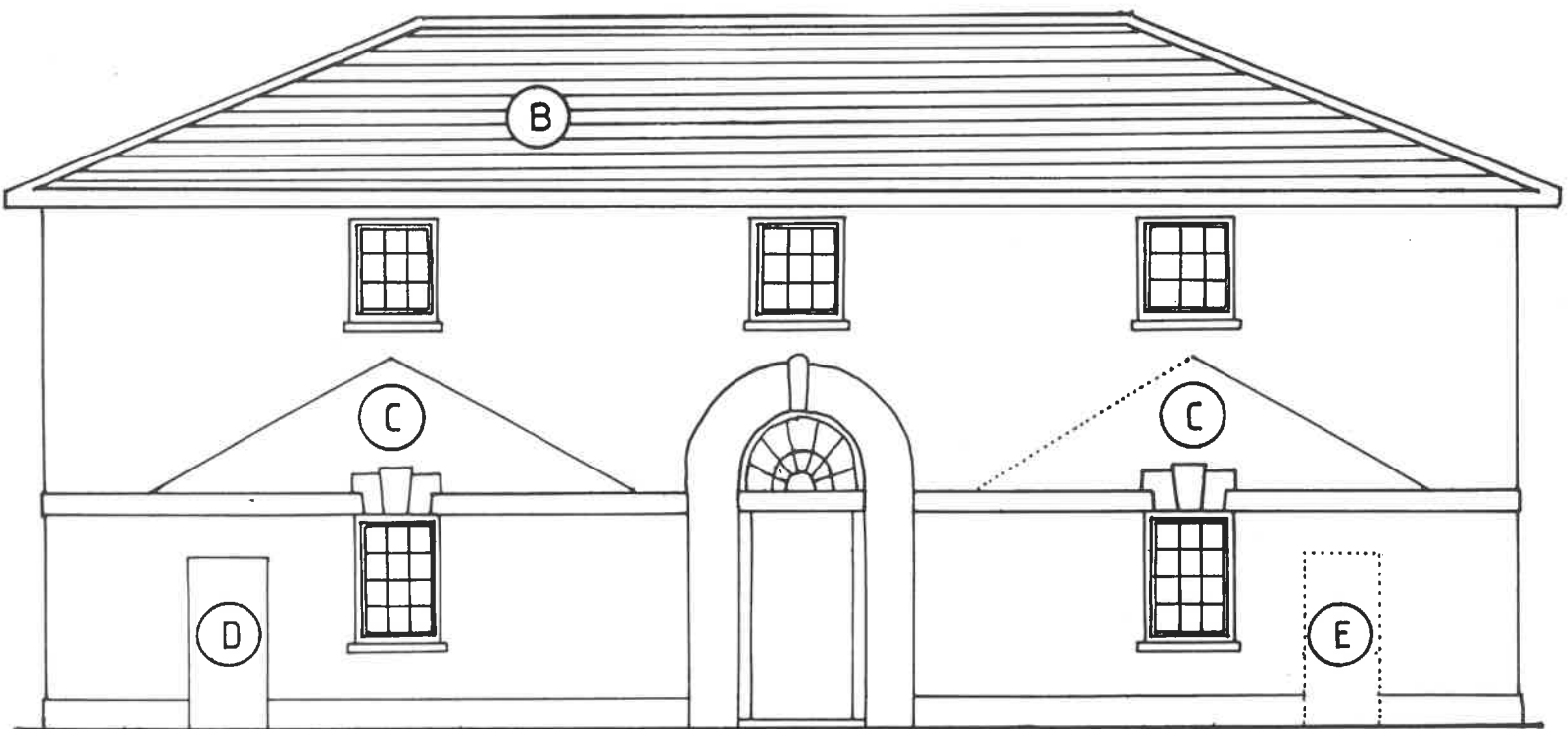


Figure 6: South-east Elevation (Original)

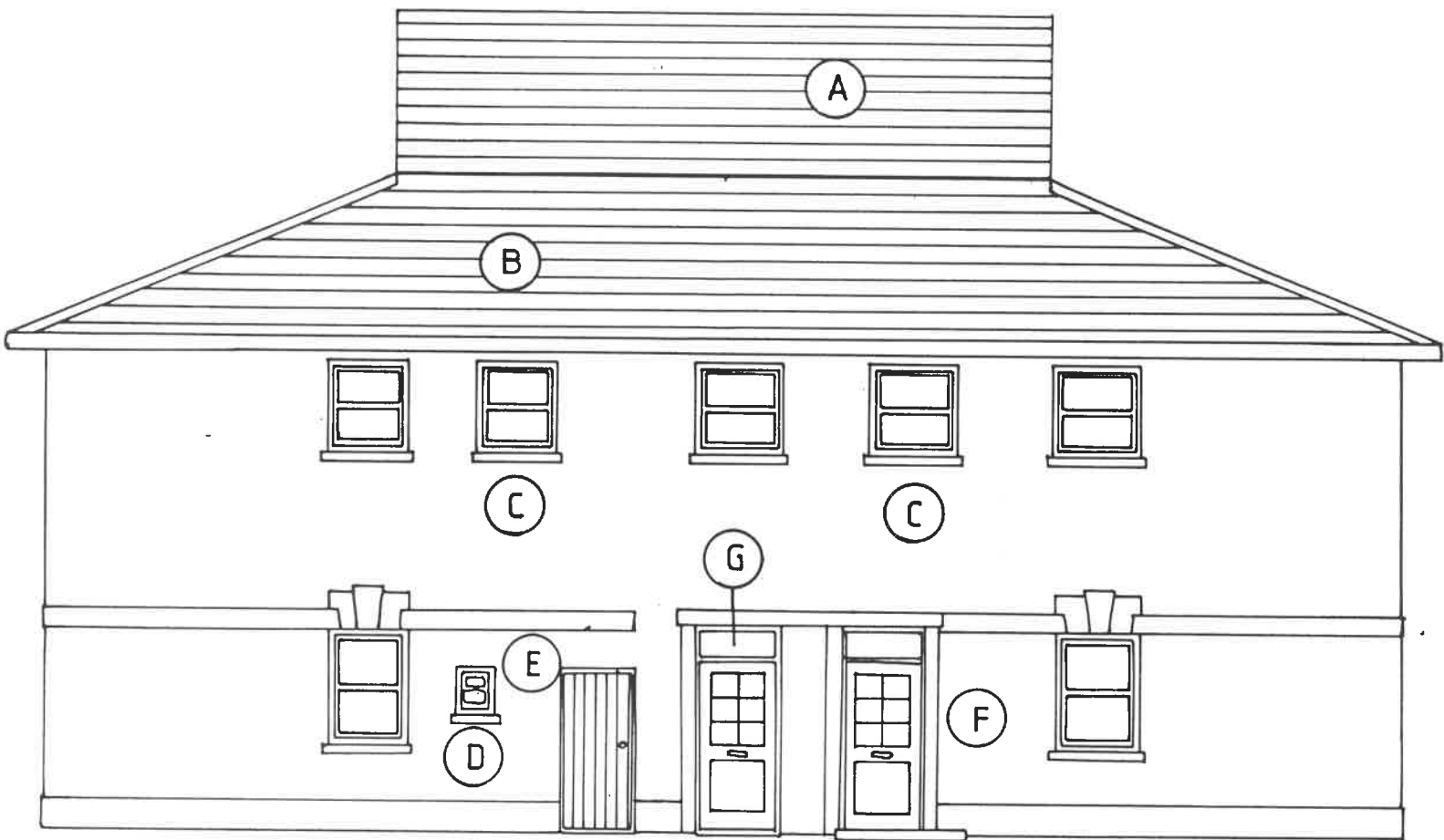


Figure 7: South-east Elevation (Alterations)

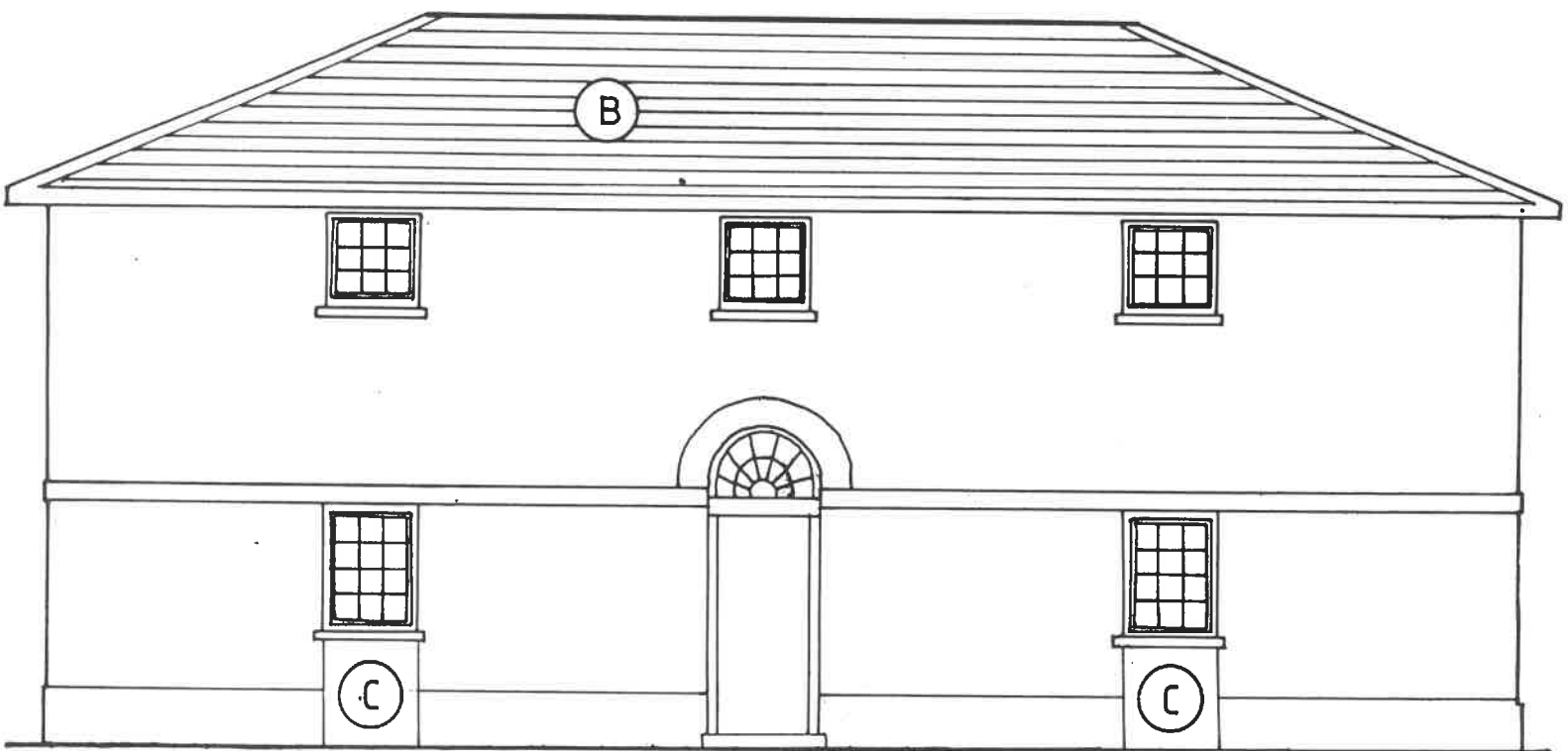


Figure 8: North-west Elevation (Original)

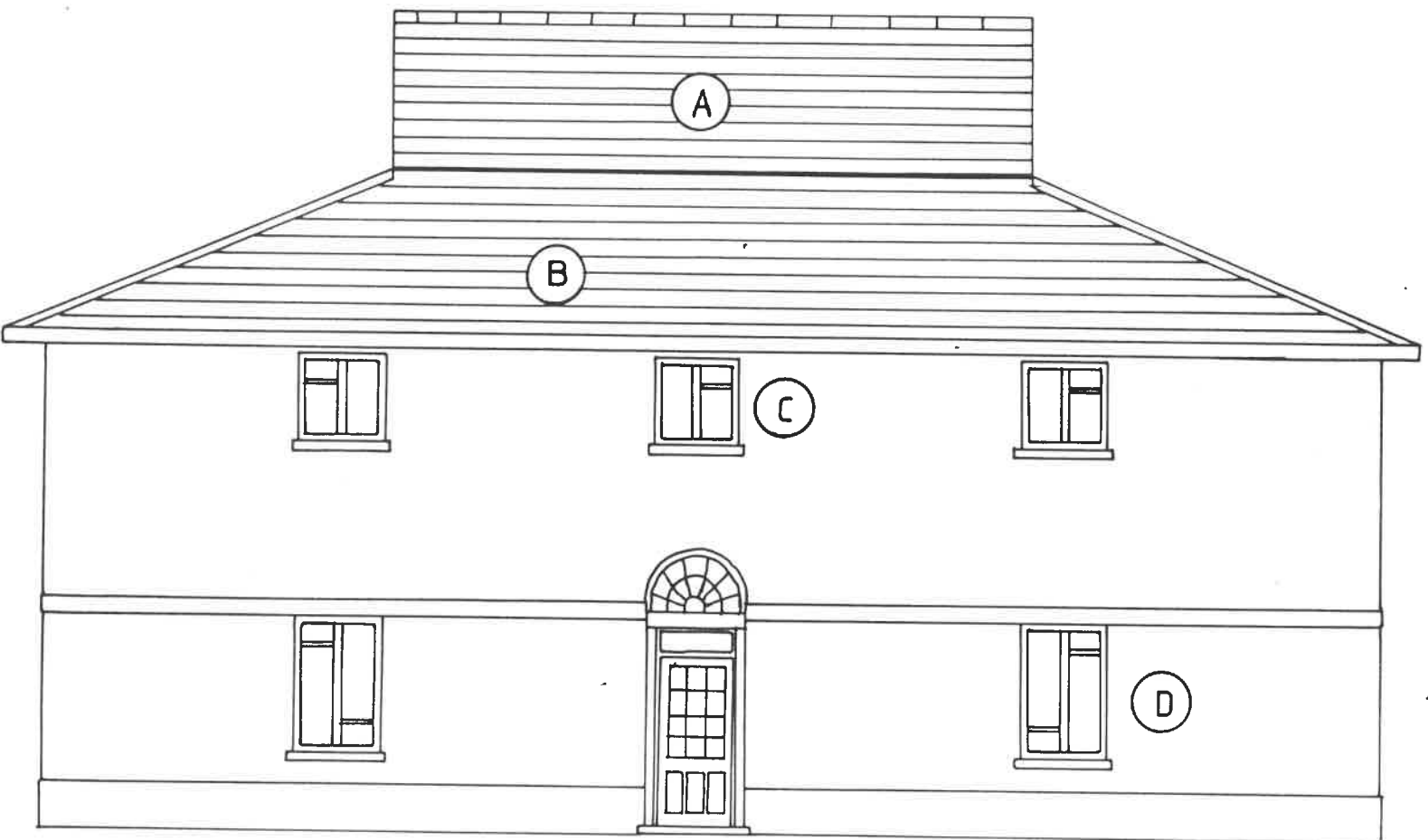


Figure 9: North-west Elevation (Alterations)

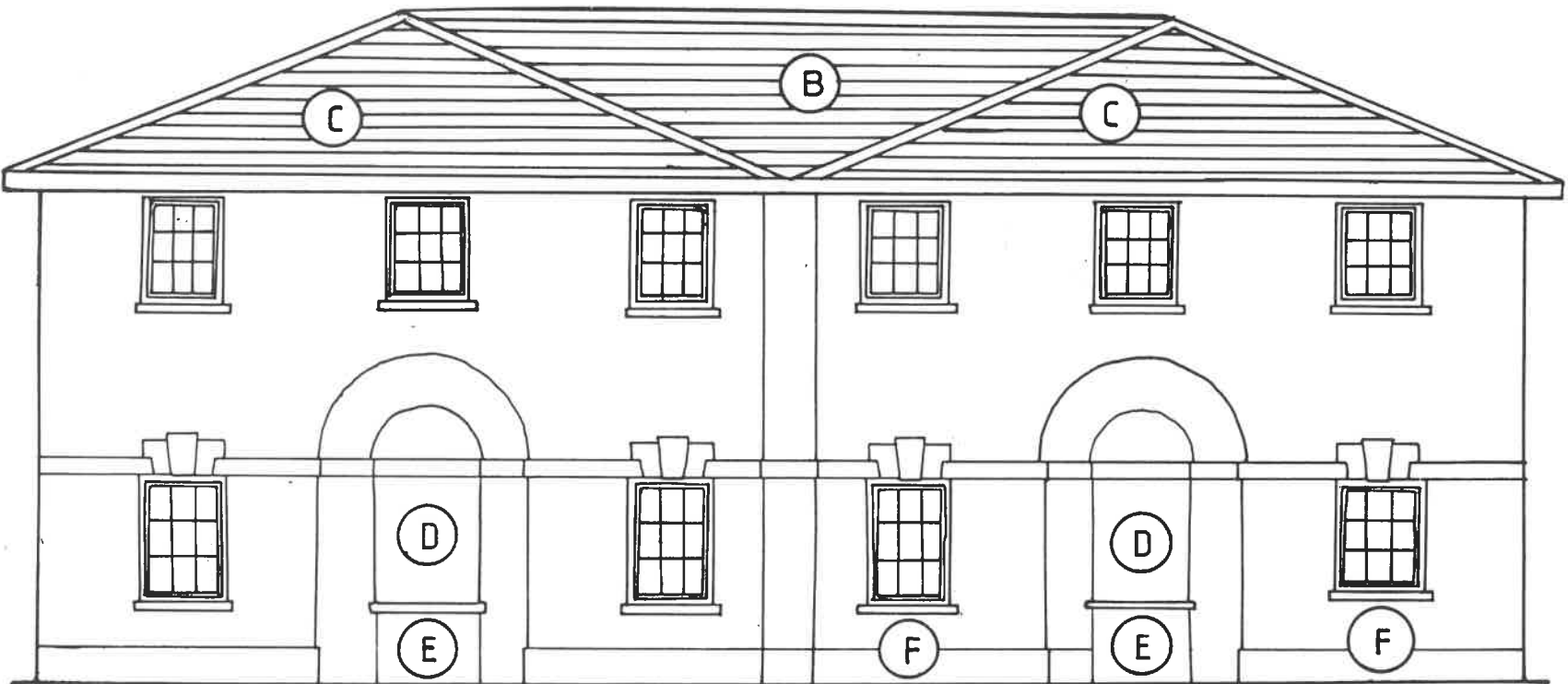


Figure 10: South-west Elevation (Original)

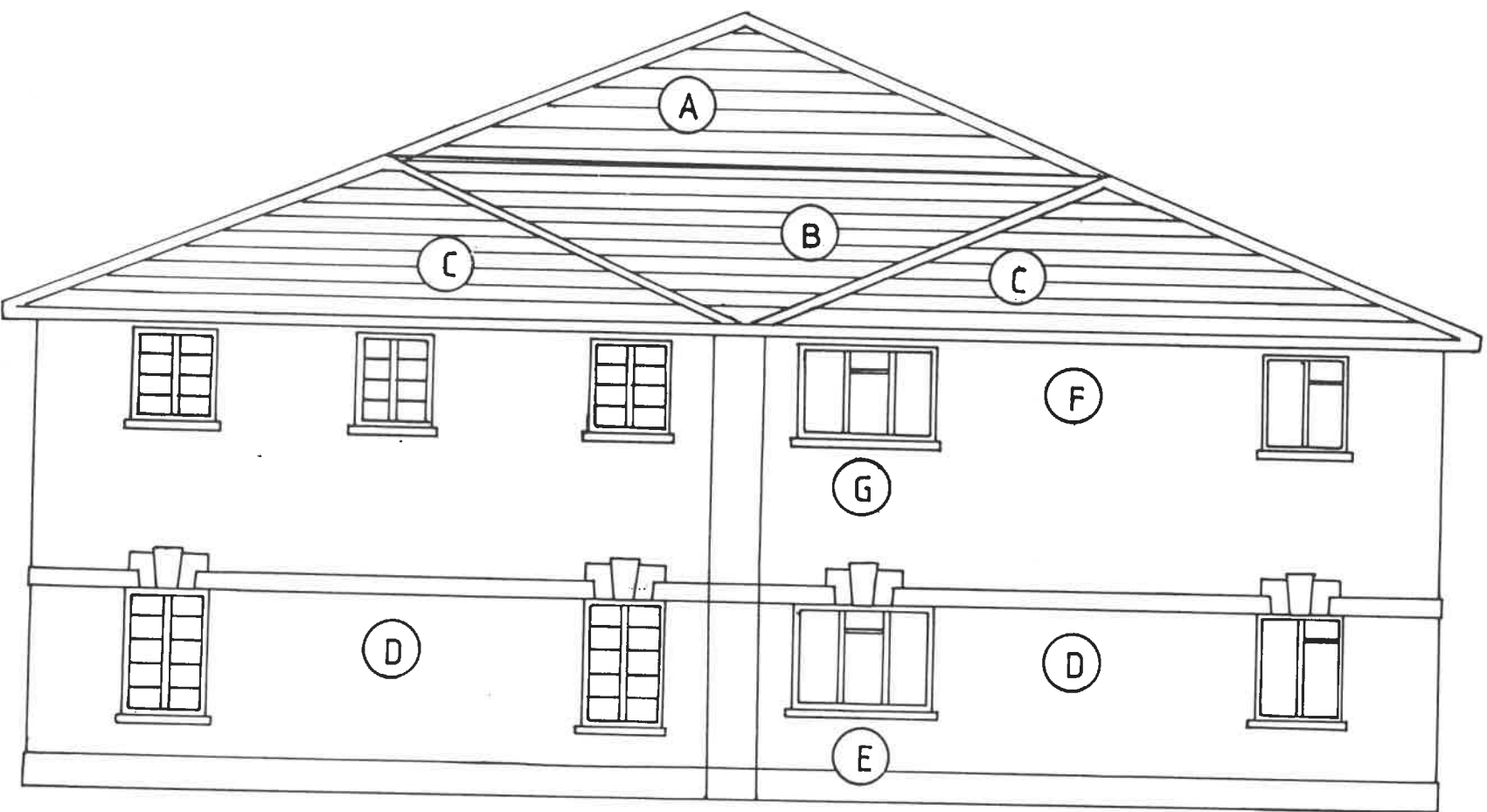


Figure 11: South-west Elevation (Alterations)