

Asset Ref No.	HB/10/12/003 & IHR 05326:000:00 Gray's Stationary Shop & Printing Presses, 49 Main St, Strabane	
Heritage Type	Built	
	<i>Post-Medieval Shop</i>	
Location	OS 6-inch map sheet	
	Townland	
	Parish	
	LCA	Foyle Valley
	ITM Coordinates	234543;397649
	NG Coordinates	
Protection Status	Listed Grade B+	
Condition		
Ownership (if known)	Heritage – National Trust	
Site Description	<p>Built 1780-1799.</p> <p>An attached asymmetrical two-bay two-storey shop house with attic, built c.1780, located on the north side of Main Street. Generally rectangular but irregular on plan, facing south; single-storey flat-roofed bow shopfront to south, later hipped single-storey extension to north; multi-bay two-storey single-pitched addition. Pitched natural slate roof, blue/black angled clay ridge tiles, half-round cast-iron gutters, modern rooflights. Walling is painted roughcast. Windows are painted timber 6/6 sashes, smooth-rendered reveals, no sills. Principal elevation faces west and has bowed shopfront at right. To left are two doors (four panelled to right, modern eight panelled to left). National Trust plaque (NATIONAL TRUST / GRAY'S PRINTERY) affixed to right. First floor has four windows, 4/4 to left and 6/6 closely spaced in a recess at right. Shopfront is bowed with moulded fascia having plain frieze into which 'GRAY, PRINTER' is affixed in timber letters. Bowed multi-pane windows over rendered aprons flank the entrance, all separated by elongated painted timber columns. Door has two lower bolection-moulded panels, upper panels glazed with decorative glazing bars. Decorative transom over, modern overlight above with painted lettering: 'ESTABLISHED 1760'. North elevation is entirely abutted by adjoining building. Rear (east) elevation projects at left (to irregular plan). Right bay is two-storey with gabled attic, replacement timber vertically sheeted door. Variety of sash windows, including 4/4 and 2/2 vertically aligned, 9/6 to canted cheek (small modern casements to ground floor right). Addition is detailed as main block with door to each cheek. South elevation is entirely abutted by adjoining building. The shop house is situated in the town on the north side of Main Street, near the former location of the town hall to east and the bridge to southeast. There is a courtyard to the rear of the building enclosed by a two storey rectangular plan outbuilding to the east, with whitewashed stone walls, pitched slate roof, painted timber doors and sliding sash windows. Roof: Pitched natural slate roof, blue/black angled clay ridge tiles RWG: Half-round cast-iron gutters Walling: Painted roughcast Windows: Square-headed painted timber 6/6 sashes, smooth-rendered reveals, no sills.</p>	
Landscape Context (setting)		
Site Appraisal	An asymmetrical two-bay two-storey shop and house with attic, built c.1780, located on	

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	<p>the north side of Main Street. It has a rare surviving historical early-nineteenth-century shopfront and the shop itself is a rare survivor and a reminder of when Strabane was an important publishing centre in Ulster. As such, the shop has attracted various connections to notable individuals, such as American Declaration of Independence printer John Dunlap and President Woodrow Wilson's grandfather, James Wilson. Together these attributes make this building one of the most significant in Strabane.</p>
<p>Sensitivity</p>	
<p>Associations</p>	<p>The shop building is likely to date from the late eighteenth century. It is not clear when it became a printer's shop and no primary evidence was found to support the date engraved in glass over the doorway 'Est. 1760'. Dix claims that the printing industry began in Strabane c.1770 (Dix, p5), however, research could find no printer by the name of Gray documented until the nineteenth century. The National Trust Committee for Northern Ireland restored Gray's Stationery Shop in the mid twentieth century and appraise it as 'a remarkable survival from an epoch when Strabane was an important publishing centre in the North of Ireland. At one period in the [eighteenth] century there were no less than ten printing concerns in the town, and several of its citizens carried on successful businesses as printers and publishers in American and the British colonies' (National Trust, p.3,5). The shop is shown on the first edition OS map of 1833. Griffith's Valuation records a house, offices and yard on the site occupied by John Gray and leased from Catherine Cowan. The valuation is £26. The Valuation Revisions (1860-1931) record a 'house, printing offices & yard' leased from Catherine E. Cowan and occupied by Elizabeth Gray. The fieldbook dating from 1864-73 records the addition of further printing offices. Contained within the shop are several printing presses: a Columbian Press, an Albion Press and three Platen Presses. The Columbian was invented c.1813 by George Clymer of Philadelphia and brought to England in 1817. The Albion was invented c.1822 by R. W. Cope. Both it and the Columbian were used commercially well into the twentieth century. The Platen Presses, built 1856 by the American George P. Gordon as a small, fast and versatile press. 'In addition to the printing presses, there is a hand-operated guillotine, perforator, stapling machine, lead cutter and a good supply of type in both wood and metal. Some of the older types are called Pica, Brevier and Long Primer, for example, indicating that they were produced before the adoption of the point system (1886). Wall racks carry a wide selection of wood letter, used in the printing of posters' (National Trust, p.5-6). The shop is traditionally connected with two Americans: John Dunlap, printer of the first daily American newspaper and the American Declaration of Independence and Woodrow Wilson, twenty-eighth president of the United States (1912-1920). John Dunlap left Strabane before the establishment of the printing industry there and so his alleged connection with the shop seems unlikely. 'Tradition has it that [Dunlap] served his apprenticeship [here, although] he was born in Strabane in 1746 and ten years later migrated to Philadelphia to join his uncle William, who was already established there as a printer and bookseller.' John took over this business in 1766 and in 1771 published 'The Pennsylvania Packer or The General Advertiser' a weekly newspaper, which became the first American daily paper on 21st September, 1784 and is now incorporated in the 'Public Ledger' of Philadelphia. Appointed printer to the Continental Congress in 1773, he printed the Declaration of Independence in 1776 (National Trust, p.7). The shop is also believed to have been where James Wilson, grandfather to U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, served his apprenticeship, again, further supporting evidence would need to be found. (Kennedy, p.90-91). Sean Rothery comments that, The surviving traditional shopfronts of Ireland almost all date from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but a few earlier examples still exist. Gray's printer's shop, 49 Main Street, Strabane, Co. Tyrone, is one of the oldest surviving traditional shopfronts in the country, probably dating from the late eighteenth-century. The slightly curved front is typical of the eighteenth century double bow-fronted shops which were abundant in</p>

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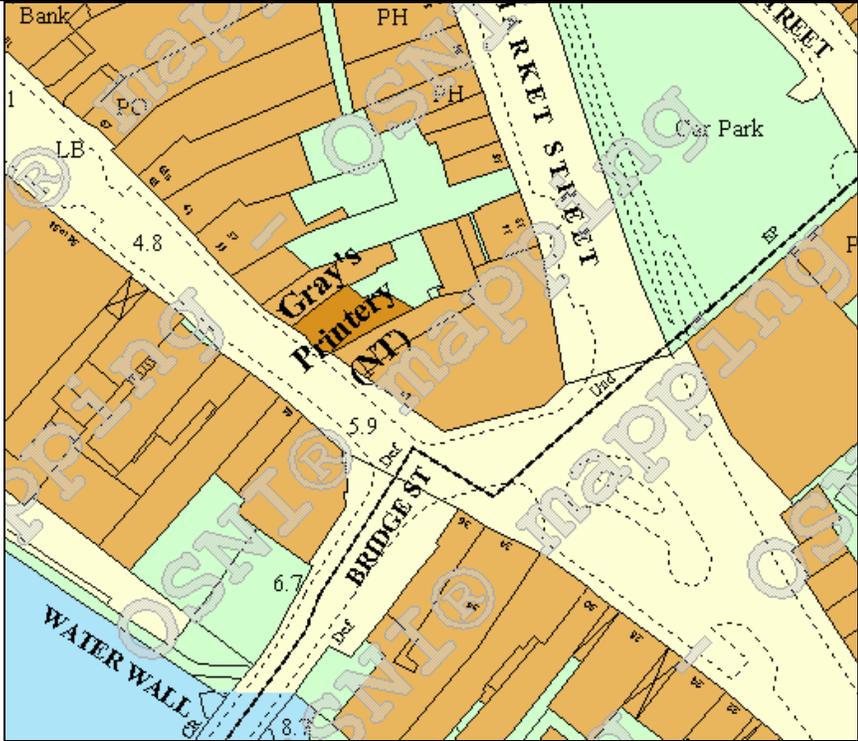
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London and Dublin in the Georgian period 'the timber arrangement of cornice, nameboard and many-paned windows is typical of the earliest shopfronts' (Rothery, p.133).

Recommendations

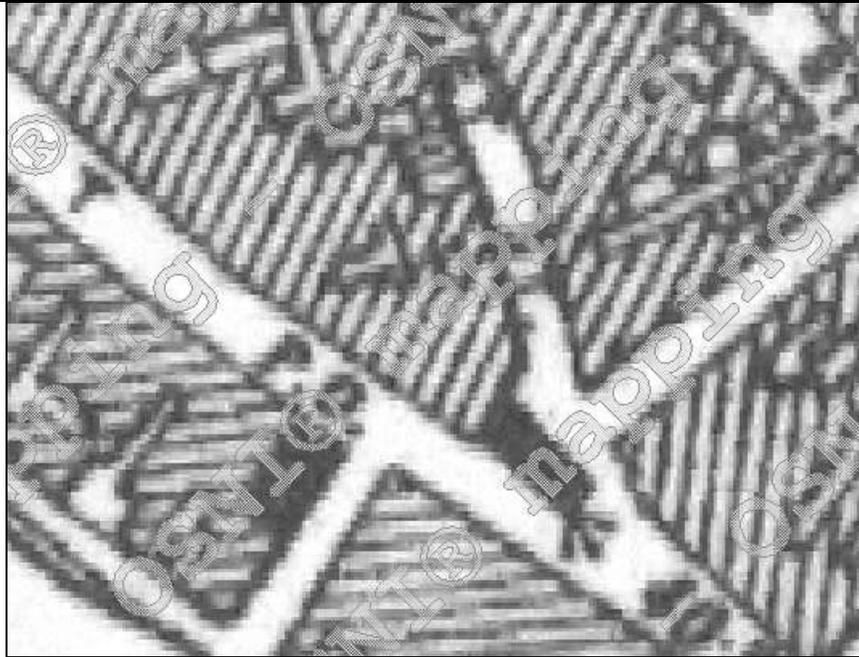
Mapping



Present-day mapping extract (www.osni.gov.uk)



1st edition 6-inch OS map extract 1829-1835



3rd edition 6-inch OS map extract 1857-1932



Extract from NIEA SMR MapViewer of the site (Map ID No.1)

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Extract from NIEA SMR MapViewer of the site (Map ID No.1)

<p>References</p>	<p>http://maps.ehsni.gov.uk/MapView/Default.aspx PRONI OS/6/6/5/1-First Edition OS Map (1833) PRONI OS/6/6/5/2-Second Edition OS Map (1854) PRONI OS/6/6/3 -Third Edition OS Map (1905) PRONI VAL/2/B/6/41 Griffiths Valuation (1858) PRONI VAL12/E/1/187/1-12 -Town Plan of Strabane (1874-1908) PRONI VAL/12/B/42/31A-M -Valuation Revisions (1860-1931)</p> <p>'A Brief Enquiry into the Nature and Origin of the Visible Church: Printed Under the Direction of the Rev. Thos. Percival Magee, Domestic Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Raphoe' Strabane, Co. Tyrone: Joseph Alexander, 1822.</p> <p>'Gray's Printing Press: Strabane, Co. Tyrone.' Belfast: The National Trust Committee for Northern Ireland, 1967.</p> <p>'Press Opinions of Notes on the Literary History of Strabane by A. Albert Campbell' Belfast: Linen Hall Library Book of Newspaper Clippings, c.1921?</p> <p>Dix, Ernest Reginald McClintock, ed. 'List of Books and Pamphlets Printed in Strabane, Co. Tyrone, in the Eighteenth Century.' Second Edition. Irish Bibliographical Pamphlets Series. Dundrum, Co. Down: Dun Emer Press, 1908.</p> <p>Kennedy, Michael G. 'By the Banks of the Mourne: A History of Strabane.' Strabane, Co. Tyrone: Strabane Historical Society, 1996.</p> <p>Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Built Heritage Unit, First Survey of Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest, 1970. 7. Rothery, Sean. A Field Guide to the Buildings of Ireland: Illustrating the Smaller Buldings of Town and Countryside. Dublin: Lilliput, 1997.</p>
<p>Plates</p>	
<p>Additional Notes</p>	

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