

## **Renovation of Shop & Flat, High Street, Dornoch - 1984.**



The shop adjacent to the Library in High Street Dornoch had been trading as Weir & Co, Wine Merchants, Grocers and Confectioners. Latterly owned by William (Bill) Ashplant. He closed the business in 1982 and the premises lay empty until 1984 when Barry Turner and his parents Harold and Betty purchased the, by then, rundown property for £11,000.

Barry, who had moved up from Liverpool in 1981, was running a fitted kitchen business from his new home in Skelbo, his parents retired and joined him in the purchase of the property. The shop was renovated and the upstairs was converted into two flats with a shared bathroom and access. The flats were given the name "Ardlamont".

The ground floor, consisting of the shop was in very poor condition, although all the shop fittings were still in place. It was necessary to completely remove the shop floor, lay a concrete base to the basement and rebuild the wooden shop floor.

The first floor was in reasonable condition and only required cosmetic work, however the second floor had been sealed off and the stairs removed. It is understood that there had been a fire in the building at some time, and after that the second floor had been abandoned and the dormer windows replaced by plain roof.

The position of the removed staircase and the former dormer windows was very clear from the inside and these were replaced.

This album of photographs shows the building as it was before and during the works in 1984.

Unfortunately the kitchen business "Highland Kitchens", which also sold electrical goods, white goods and operated a video tape hire business was not a success and the shop closed in 1985. The premises were purchased by Hamish & Angela Will, who moved their cycle business from the other end of the High Street and opened a newsagents in part of the shop. (Until this time the Sunday papers had been sold to the townspeople from the back of an estate car, which was parked for a few hours in Castle Street. The local newsagents "Gillispies" not being open on a Sunday). The Wills purchased the newsagency from the previous operator and expanded it to seven day operation.

After a few years, this business also closed, John Gordon, the local taxi, coach and undertaker operator took over the newsagency and moved it to a shop opposite previously operated as a gift shop "Memories of Scotland". Then Richard Butterworth, who had opened the "Dornoch Bookshop" a few years earlier, near to H & A Will's first shop, moved in to create a much bigger book shop. It was he that removed the harling from the front of the building and formed the round topped windows to the shop.



Outside of the building before renovation commenced.



Inside of the shop, showing the main counter.



Inside of the shop, showing the main counter.



Inside of the shop looking in the direction of the Library, with the front door on the right.



The loft, which had previously been the second floor, showing the pitched pine lining.



The opposite end of the loft showing the old fireplace.





The loft, showing the old fireplace, wall partition and the original space where the stairs were located.



Looking up to the loft through the stair gap.



Two views of the old floor being removed.



Two views showing the reconstructed upper floor supports and the start of the concrete base to the basement.



Four views of the new dormer windows being constructed. The work was done by local joiner Albert Lewis.



Two views of the new basement floor.





Two views of the new floor in the shop. The work was done by local joiner James Gunn.



A view from the Cathedral Tower. The position of the old dormer windows can be seen where the roof tiles are a different shade.



The finished shop at Christmas 1984.