

Site History

Since its construction in 1863 the site has historically been home to commercial premises fronting on to Union Street. Young & Chapman draper's shop moved to the site in 1935, taking over three existing shops to create a single large store. In 1952 the business was sold to Benzie & Miller, later signposted as Benzie's. The Benzie business itself was sold to House of Fraser in 1957. The store was rebranded as Arnotts, a division of House of Fraser, in the 1970s. The store closed in 2003 - the end of a department store which had played a central role within the daily life of Union Street and the wider city centre. Recently the site has been occupied by the British Heart Foundation Furniture and Electrical store, Slaters menswear and Rogerson footwear.

Baron Taylor's Street was previously known to locals as the Black Vennel. In a deed of 1620 it is named simply as the Common Vennel. The vennel is visible on the 1716 map connecting Church Street, nee Kirk Street, to Academy Street. High Street, nee East Street is also well established on this map. Around the mid-18th century John Taylor, a writer, acquired a substantial amount of the vennel. After he obtained the title of Baron, the vennel acquired the name of Baron Taylor's Lane amongst the middle classes. Union Street was formed later, being first laid out in 1863. The street, envisioned as a wide, modern thoroughfare accommodating shops and offices, was a profitable endeavour for its developers.

The map of 1868 illustrates a traditional urban grain still visible today. Narrow plots front on to the High Street and Baron Taylor's Street, with a series of closes (narrow alleys) running between the two streets. Between 1869 and 1870, the covered market was constructed behind the formal frontage of Union Street.



1897



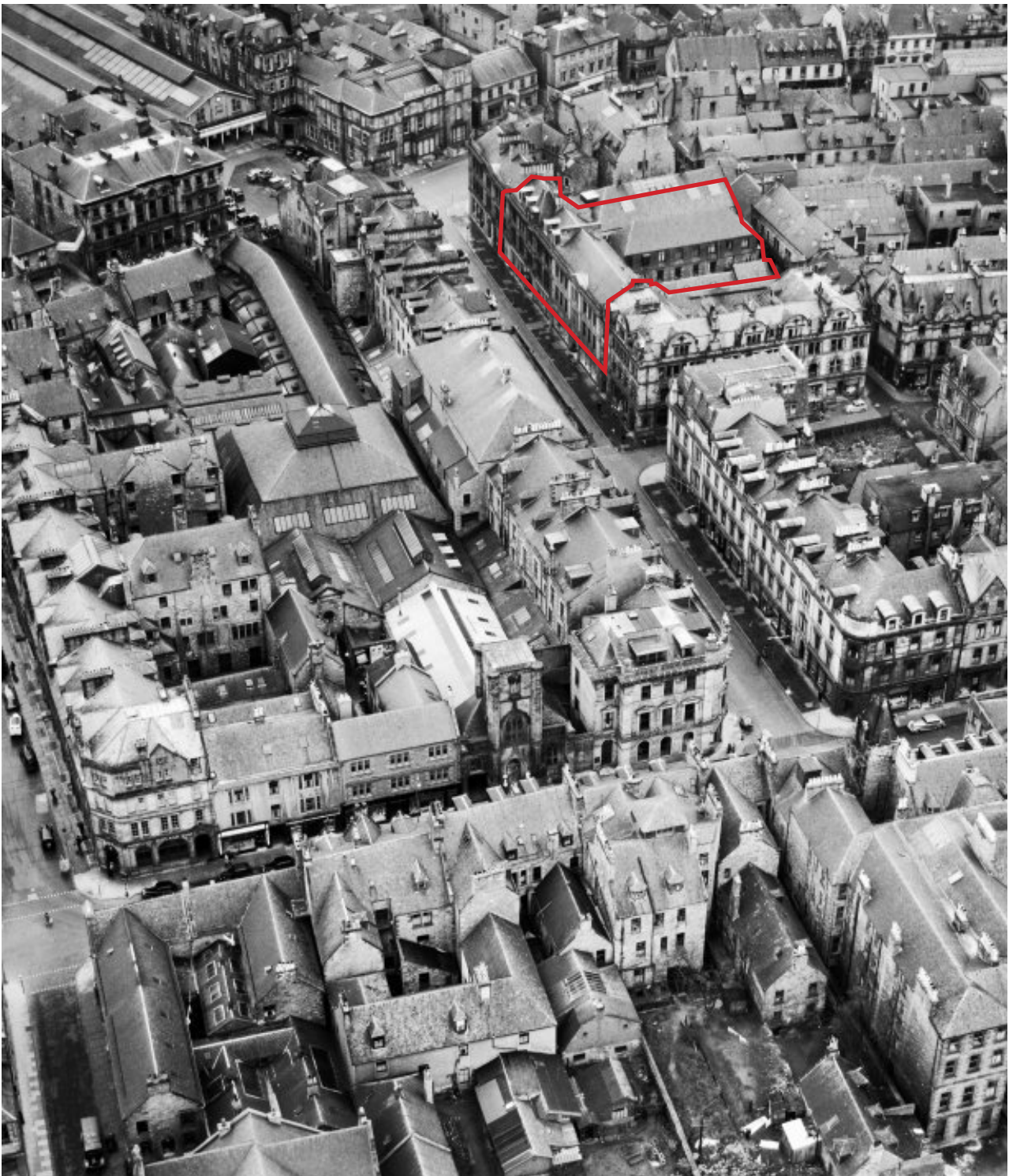
c. 1960 - 1976



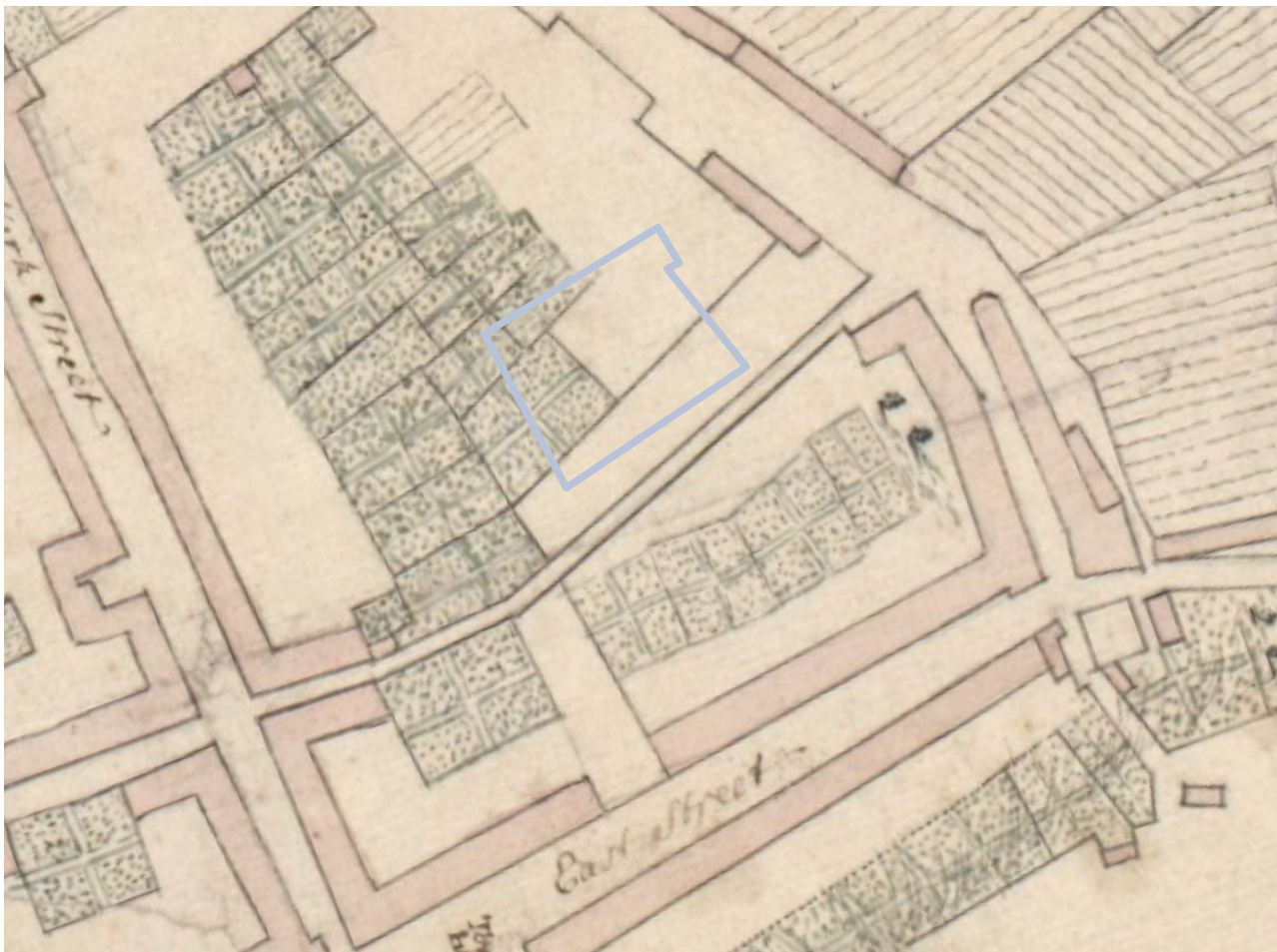
1957



1976



1949



1716



1904



1868



1962