

**WARDHEAD CROFT  
BALMEDIE  
ABERDEENSHIRE**



**- Standing Building Survey -  
Carried out 10<sup>th</sup> August 2010  
by  
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2010-16  
by  
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**1. Background**

- 1.1 Proposals for the development of a new house and the prior demolition of a cottage at Wardhead Croft, Balmedie, Aberdeenshire, was subject to a planning condition requiring a level 1 Standing Building Survey.
- 1.3 The archaeological condition was applied in the context of the current planning legislation (PAN 42, para 34, 36, SPP 23, SHEP) which states that it is necessary for developers to arrange for an archaeological standing building survey to take place prior to development, in appropriate circumstances.
- 1.4 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by the owner, Steven Black, and the work was undertaken on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

**2. Desk-top survey**

- 2.1 A search was carried out in the Sites and Monuments Record, Archaeology Service, Aberdeenshire Council and in the Sites and Monuments Records of the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments in Scotland (RCAHMS) through Canmore, Canmap and Pastmap.
- 2.2 The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey maps were consulted.
- 2.3 Site plans were kindly supplied by Steven Black.

**3. The Site**

3.1 The buildings are located to the west of the A90 on a minor road to the south of Ellon and some 3km north west of Balmedie, Aberdeenshire. The present name is Wardhead Croft, but it was named Hardhead on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey of 1866 (pub 1870).

Parish: Belhelvie NGR: NJ 9620 2058.

3.2 The house has been in use until recently and few original details remain.



**Illus 1 Location Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright (2008) All rights reserved. Licence number (100049810)**

#### **4. Methodology**

4.1 The ground plans have been annotated to show details and to indicate the development of the building.

4.2 The buildings were photographed. The full set of photographs will be supplied on CD for the archive and annotated plans in the present report indicate the position of each.



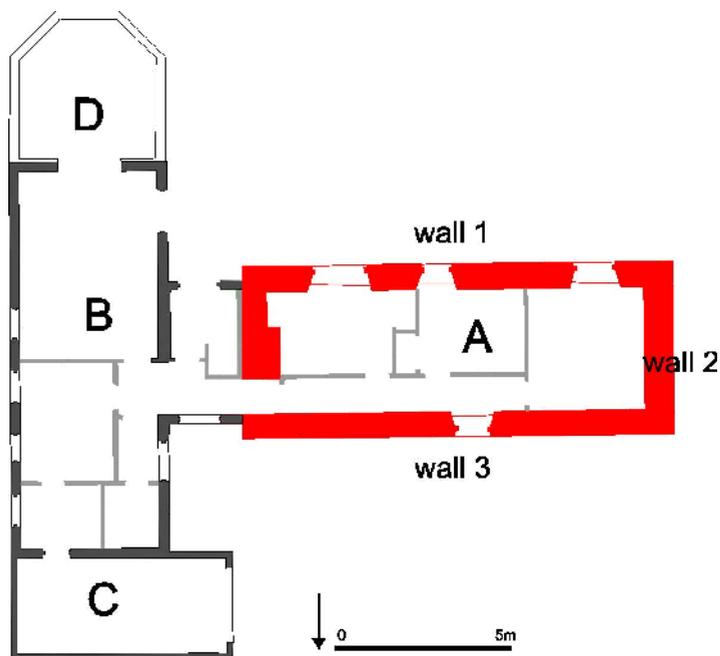
**Illus 2 General view looking east**

## 5. The Building

Dimensions: The original croft house (A) is a rectangular building 11.85m long x 4.95m wide (externally) and orientated east-west with its frontage facing south. It was originally freestanding but in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century a modern extension (B) was added to the east gable and subsequently a garage (C) and conservatory (D) were also added.

Original use: Dwelling

Present use: Not in use.



Illus 3 Plan. Red indicates the 19th century croft (A), Dark grey indicates late 20th century additions (B-D), Light grey indicates internal walls.

### Description

#### ***Croft house (A)***

*Walls:* The walls are harled with little detail of the stonework remaining visible although the wider boulder foundations can be seen in places.

Wall 1: Three windows- all modern PVC frames. The central window opening is 1m wide, narrower than the flanking windows (1.15m). Slight cracking in the harl suggested that this was the original door- this was confirmed by the present owner. (Illus 4).

Wall 2: Gable. No windows.

Wall 3: Roughly central window 1m wide; the rest of the wall covered by creepers. The E gable had been broken through when the house was extended.

*Roof:* The roof is c 3.8m high, pitched and clad with slate with ceramic ridge tiles.

There are two blocked and harled chimneys; one at either gable. No pots survive.

*Internally:* No original internal features remain. The interior had been divided into a passage with three bedrooms opening off it.



**Illus 4 Croft house (A on plan) S wall.**

***Modern Extension (B), Garage (C) and Conservatory (D).***

The extension is of harled block walls with a pitched slate roof at c 4.5m high and a flat roof over the passage between the original croft house and the extension.

Details of the modern extension have not been recorded.

The interior comprised living room, kitchen and pantry with garage and conservatory.

**6. Historical background.**



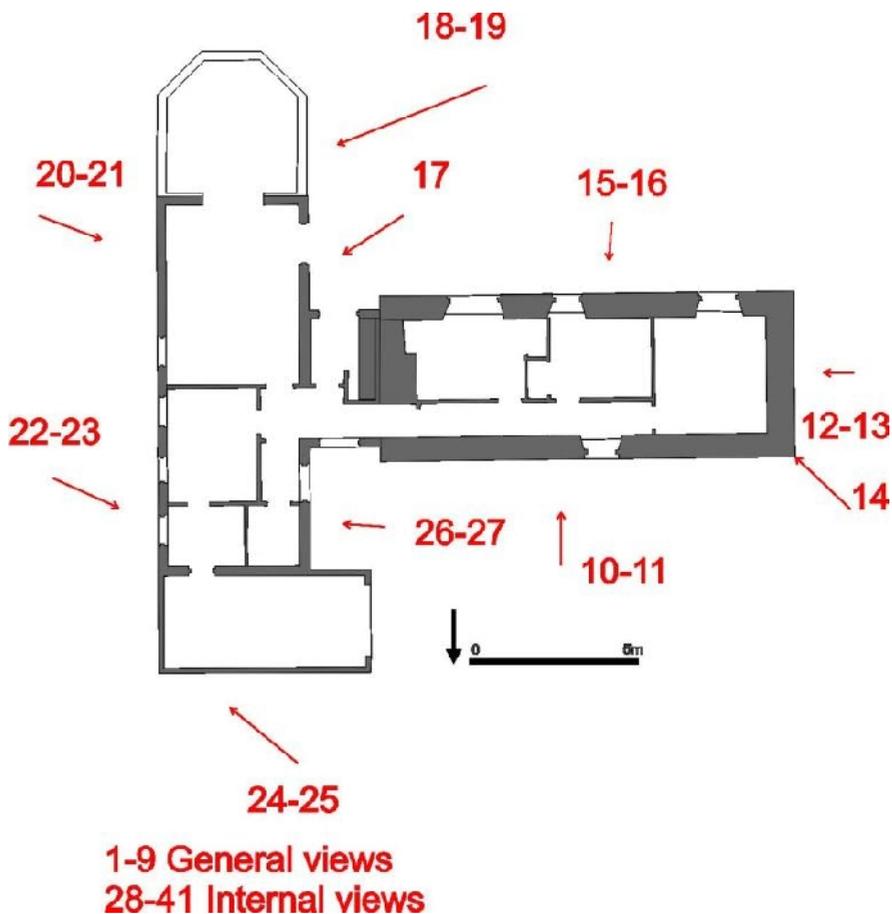
**Illus 5 Croft house looking west to its original steading (now the Pet's crematorium)**

**1866** : The first edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch to the mile map, surveyed in 1866 (published 1870), shows the croft house and a small adjacent steading lying to the west at right angles to it. These appear to be on the same footprint as the old part of the existing house (the croft house) and the pet's crematorium building (original steading) (Illus 5) and suggest that they were originally built in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Oral evidence from the owner relates that at some point the original croft house had a wooden addition on the south side. Prior to its modernisation, the original house had four internal rooms and he has been told that a family of fourteen had lived there at one time.

## 7. Photographic archive

Photographs supplied to Aberdeenshire SMR and RCAHMS archive on CD. The numbers on illus 6 refer to the digital frame numbers on the CD.



Illus 6 Details of location of photographs. Numbers are digital frame numbers.