

Borthwick Castle, near Duns: Excavations, 1979

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INTRODUCTION

The existence of a castle at Borthwick¹, near Duns, has always been known, but prior to 1978-9 no detailed attempt had been made to define and interpret its rather indeterminate remains. Even in the earliest known illustration of the site, a pencil drawing by Alexander Archer dated 1839 (pl 39a), the castle ruins appear as a featureless mound of stony debris; and although the First (1862) Edition of the 25-inch (1 : 2500) Ordnance Survey map clearly outlines the successive buildings and enclosures (fig 2) the more interesting details of the castle's layout were later omitted. Indeed, by the time the first comprehensive survey of Berwickshire's monuments was made at the beginning of this century, the visible remains had come to be regarded as largely 'structureless and unmeasurable' (RCAMS 1915, no 113).

On the hillside immediately S of the castle a quarry was subsequently established by Berwickshire County Council: it is now the property of Borders Regional Council, from whom it is leased by a contractor. During the course of routine workings on the NW side of the quarry in 1976, the intrusion of an unexpected geological fault made it necessary to transfer operations further E. This involved progressive demolition of a whole area of adjacent hillside on which the remains of Borthwick Castle and other buildings stood, an area that had not previously been threatened.

By June 1978, when official notification of the proposal to demolish the castle had been received and acted upon by the Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland, the long range of buildings shown on the larger scale Ordnance Survey maps² had already disappeared, while clearance of the adjacent area of topsoil to the N had resulted in partial removal of the remains of the castle itself (RCAMS Report, 23 June 1978). A sharper definition of the layout and features of the threatened structure was thus a matter of urgent and final necessity, and prompted further detailed investigations of the site on the part of the Scottish Development Department (Ancient Monuments) and the RCAMS. At the request of the SDD (Ancient Monuments) the quarry operators, through their manager, Mr Tom Wightman, kindly agreed to postpone further work in the area of the castle pending completion of the archaeological examination. A short programme of clearance and excavation was accordingly undertaken on behalf of the SDD (Ancient Monuments) by Mr T Nicholas Dixon, with the help of a mechanical excavator kindly loaned by the quarry, during January and March 1979. This work revealed a considerable portion of the ground floor of an L-plan tower-house, and, in the light of these findings, the RCAMS was subsequently able to make a supplementary record and architectural assessment of the site. During July and August the writer and Mr Geoffrey Stell of the RCAMS completed the investigations immediately before the site was demolished.

The purpose of this paper is to present a summary account of these findings and of the

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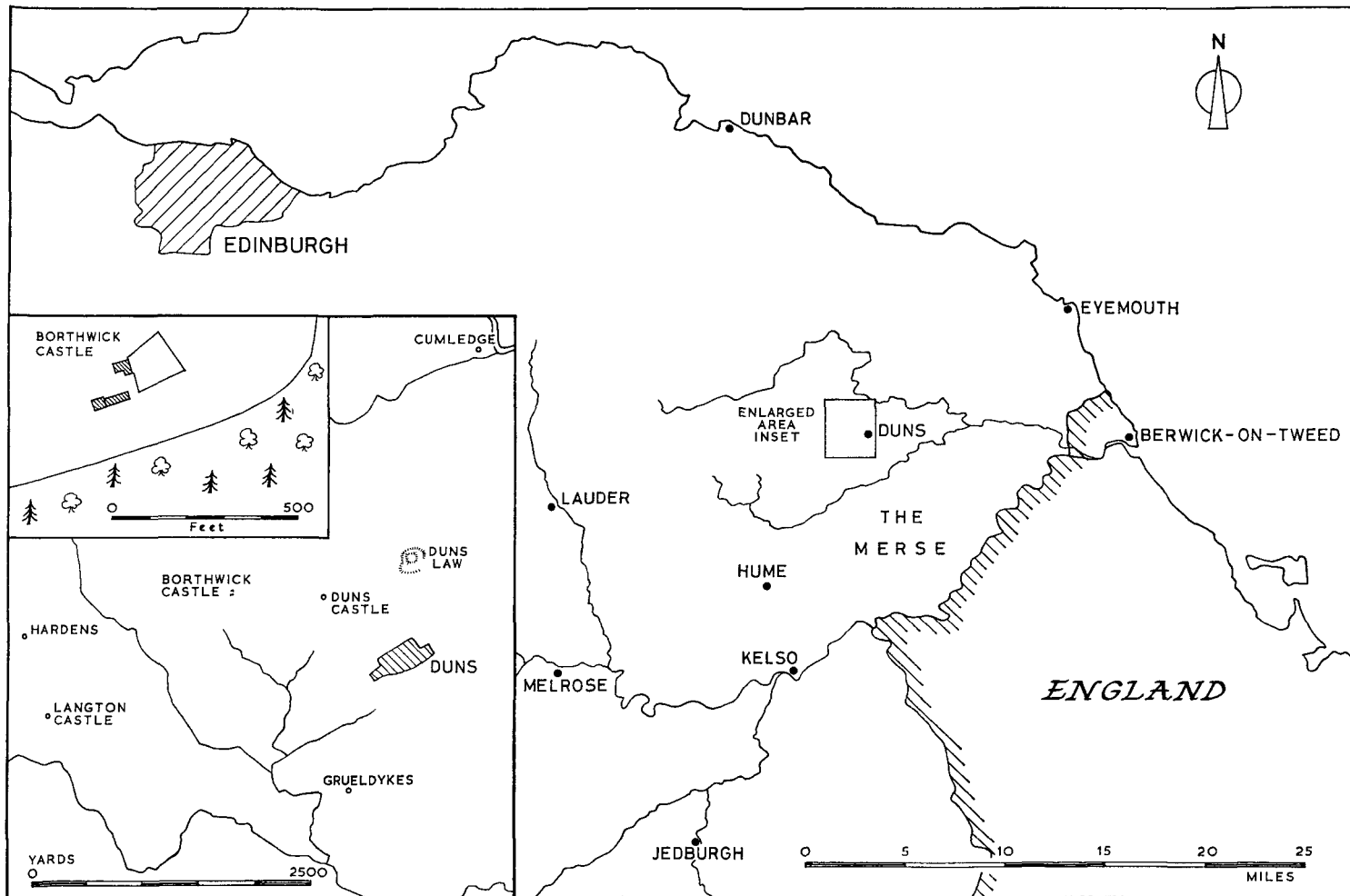


FIG 1 Location Map

building's ascertainable architectural history. Papers and drawings relating to the excavation have been lodged in the archive of the National Monuments Record of Scotland, where the survey reports are also available for public reference. The author is grateful for permission to make free use of this material in the preparation of this paper.

THE SITE

Borthwick Castle was situated 1 mile WNW of the burgh of Duns, and stood at an elevation of 640 ft (195 m) where the SE slope of an outlying hill of the Lammermuirs levels out before continuing its ascent more gently. Approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the E, near the foot of the hill, lay the old castle of Duns, the remains of which are now incorporated in a modern mansion (RCAMS 1915, no 114), while $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles to the SW lay the castle of Langton (Berwickshire Sites, no 505). The site had no intrinsic strength, and there was no evidence of any outer earthworks; but from its elevated position the castle had a commanding view over the major part of the Merse from Home Castle in the SW to Berwick in the E, and across the English border into Northumbria (pl 39b).

There is a local tradition that Borthwick served as a lookout for Duns Castle. It could also have served as a lookout for the nearby burgh, which was always considered a place of great strategic importance in the East March³. Indeed, the English believed that possession of Home Castle and Duns would keep the whole Merse in obedience (L & P, XX, ii, 160). However, it was with Langton, not Duns, that the lands and castle of Easter Borthwick were to become intimately associated.

Prior to quarrying and excavation all that could be seen of the castle was a large mound of rubble, with portions of the outer wall-face visible on the N and E sides. Immediately E of this were the overgrown foundations of a wall that surrounded an irregular, 4-sided enclosure, extending to about 0.13 hectares (0.32 acres), with the castle itself forming the fourth side. This wall, which varied in thickness from 1 m (3 ft 3 in) to 1.5 m (5 ft) throughout its length, appeared to be of drystone construction with facing-stones on either side. A short distance to the SW of the castle were the remains of a later house, from which a range of outbuildings ran eastwards towards the enclosure described above.

Nothing more is on record from this period, but the 1862 edition of the 25-inch OS map shows that there was formerly an enclosed garden on the S side of the house (fig 2). It also indicates that the line of an old wall could still be discerned running W from the NW corner of the castle, and then turning S to join up with the later house, thus enclosing the area which might reasonably have been expected to correspond with the castle's courtyard, or barmkin.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CASTLE

The excavation revealed the castle to have been an L-plan tower-house, with the main block running E-W and a stair-wing projecting S roughly aligned with the E gable (see pl 40a). When first visited by the RCAMS, removal of the topsoil on the S, W and N sides had left the ruins standing about 10 ft (3 m) above the surrounding bedrock. This clearance had encroached to within 5 ft (1.5 m) of the wing's S wall, removing most of an adjoining structure to the S in the process; it had also demolished the W end of the main block. The surviving stretch of the N wall measured 42 ft 8 in (13.0 m)⁴ externally and the overall length of the E wall 38 ft 9 in (11.8 m). There is no record of the N wall's total length, the nearest estimate being the 25-inch OS map of 1862, where it scales about 44 ft 9 in (13.64 m). If this is at all accurate⁵, then only the gable wall had been lost during the clearance.

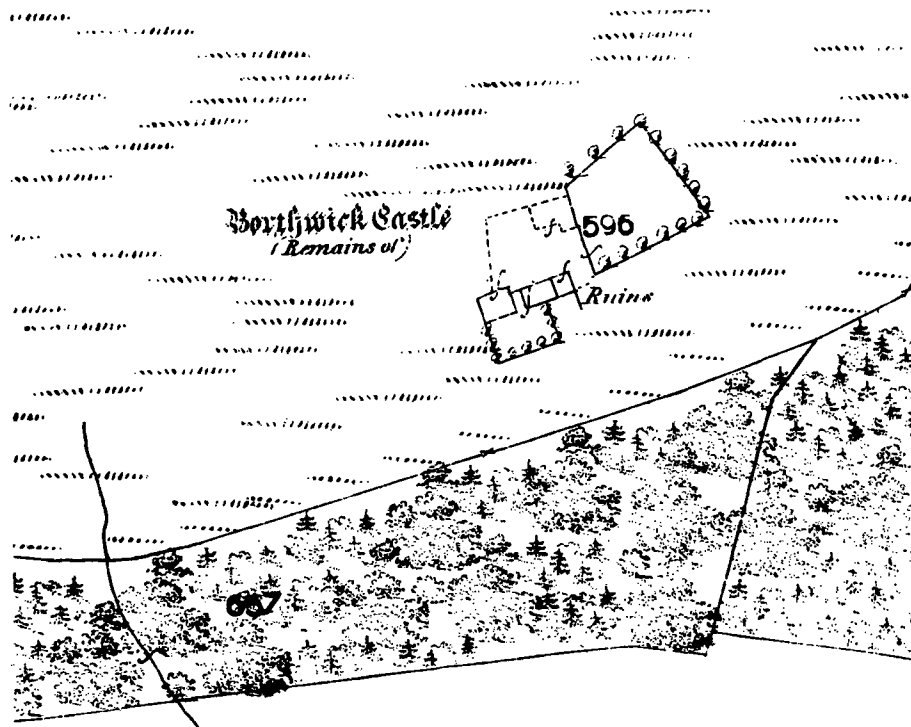


FIG 2 Borthwick Castle as shown on OS map 1862. Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland

The stair wing was irregular on plan (fig 3), measuring approximately 19 ft 8 in (6.0 m), 14 ft 9 in (4.5 m), 18 ft 8 in (5.7 m) and 16 ft 5 in (5.0 m) along the N, E, S and W sides respectively. It contained the entrance to the tower within the re-entrant angle. Immediately outside there was a small area, 6 ft (1.83 m) wide by 4 ft 9 in (1.45 m) deep, paved with rectangular flagstones, beyond which were the last vestiges of an area of courtyard paved with local, basaltic cobbles. In this area Mr Dixon found a small spindle whorl, a piece of green-glazed pottery, and some fragments of bone and glass (see Appendix).

Only the worn threshold of the entrance doorway survived, 3 ft (0.91 m) wide, incorporating on the S side the mitred seating of a round-arrised rybat. The door was formerly secured by a drawbar, and the partial vestiges of a drawbar slot, 5 in (0.13 m) wide by 4 in (0.10 m) high and originally 4 ft 10 in (1.47 m) in overall depth, were visible in the S jamb, 3 ft (0.91 m) above the floor of the adjacent lobby. There was no evidence to show the original door arrangement, but the thickness of the wall between the drawbar slot and outer wall-face, which was 1 ft 3 in (0.38 m) is fairly typical for an entrance provided with both a wooden outer door and an inner iron yett.

The entrance doorway opened into a small lobby in the NW corner of the wing. This had been paved with rectangular flagstones, similar to those outside. Beyond were the stairs, while a doorway on the S side gave access to a small (guard-) chamber occupying the southern half of the wing. The jambs of this latter doorway were well preserved to heights of 2 ft 2 in (0.66 m) and 4 ft 2 in (1.26 m) to E and W respectively (pl 40b). They were of well-cut ashlar, with chamfered arrises and rebated on the inside; the W jamb also retained the fixing holes for the hinges.

One of the rybats bore faint traces of what appears to have been a mason's mark⁶. A further doorway on the N side of the lobby admitted to the basement of the main block. The surround of this doorway had not survived, but the position of the door was clearly defined by a well-worn threshold: the wear extended for a width of 3 ft 9 in (1.14 m). There were also the remains of a comparatively massive drawbar slot, 7 in (0.18 m) square and originally about 4 ft 11 in (1.50 m) deep, in the wall on the E side; this still preserved fragments of an original timber lining. The bottom of the slot was 2 ft 7 in (0.79 m) above the threshold, but, unlike the one at the entrance, the thickness of wall between this slot and its associated outer wall-face was only 10½ in (0.27 m).

The small (guard-) chamber in the wing had an average length of 11 ft 9 in (3.58 m) and a maximum width of 6 ft 3 in (1.91 m). The only opening apart from the doorway was a small, splayed embrasure in the S wall, beneath the sill of which ran the drawbar slot for the tower's entrance. Unfortunately, the external surround of this embrasure no longer survived, so it was impossible to tell whether the splayed ingoings continued to form a narrow slit window, or whether they were splayed outwards on the outside to form the mouth of a gunloop. However, the surviving height of the jambs, which reached 2 ft (0.61 m) on the N side, suggests that a slit window was more likely. In the N wall of the chamber could be seen the haunches of a transverse vault, which may have supported a central pillar within the stair-well, while in the SE corner the stair had apparently been carried on a flat-topped vault, aligned E-W: both vaults had been of sandstone ashlar. The E and W walls of the chamber were 3 ft 9 in (1.14 m) thick, but the S wall was only 3 ft 6 in (1.07 m). Unless the floor was at a lower level than in the adjacent lobby – the rubble infill was never completely cleared – the maximum headroom within this chamber was less than 5 ft (1.52 m).

The main block comprised a vaulted basement 16 ft (4.88 m) wide, with a maximum surviving internal length of 19 ft 9 in (6.02 m) along the N wall. The vault had been aligned E-W, and on either side at the E end could be seen remains of the haunches; the springing level was

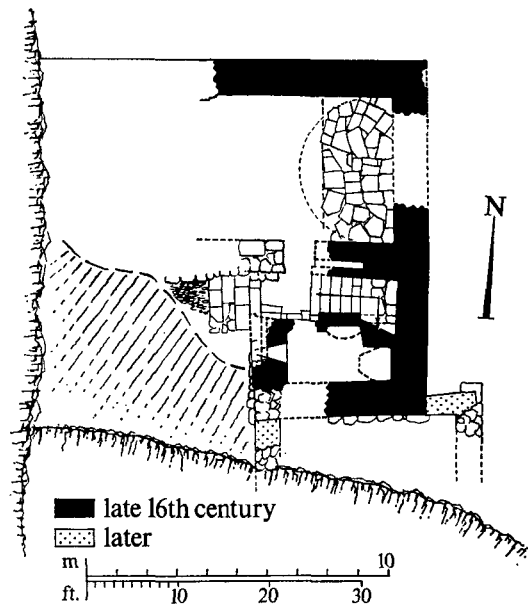


FIG. 3 Borthwick Castle, Duns: ground Plan

3 ft (0.91 m) above the floor. Unlike the smaller vaults in the wing, this one had apparently been built of local rubble. The E wall was 3 ft 9 in (1.14 m) thick and the S wall 3 ft 6 in (1.07 m) at the entrance. Unfortunately, much of the clearance spoil had been dumped over the external face of the NE angle and the N wall, but with the help of earlier measurements the N wall's thickness was found to have been 3 ft 9 in (1.14 m). At the E end of the chamber the floor was paved with close-fitting, polygonal flags, which ended abruptly along a line 7 ft (2.13 m) from the E wall. Traces of coal were found immediately W of this⁷. 8 ft 7 in (2.62 m) from the NE corner of the chamber, and opposite the entrance, there was a break in the N wall-face extending about 1 ft 9 in (0.53 m). At first this suggested tussling for a partition, but on closer examination, and considering its relative position, it is much more likely that it only reflected later disturbance.

The stair was of the scale-and-platt variety, and occupied the E half of the wing. It rose through one landing in the NE corner, and incorporated part of a second straight flight to a further, intermediate platt in the SE corner. The plain treads, which were of dressed sandstone and 3 ft 11 in (1.19 m) wide⁸, were not firmly bonded into the outer walls, nor did they show any noticeable signs of wear, unlike the thresholds. The depths of the treads were 1 ft 1 in (0.33 m) on the first flight and 1 ft (0.30 m) on the second; the risers were each 6 in (0.15 m). Areas of plaster still adhered to the walls and risers of the stair (pl 41).

It appears that there was a second stair of the turnpike variety at a higher level, as what appeared to have been a fragment of the newel-post and part of the tread of such a stair was found lying in the courtyard. It was of dressed red sandstone, with the newel 3 in (0.08 m) in diameter. It is likely that this came from a wheel-stair corbelled out in the re-entrant angle, which would have risen from first floor level to serve the upper floors, as at Greenknowe and Evelaw in the same county.

The walls generally survived to a height of between 4 ft (1.22 m) and 5 ft (1.52 m), while the N side-wall rose to a maximum internal height of 5 ft 4 in (1.63 m). The masonry of the walls themselves was local rubble, bonded with lime mortar, the rubble having been mainly basalt (olivine-dolerite) with some pinnings of red sandstone. What survived of the vaulting in the main basement chamber was also of basalt rubble, but both the vaulting and jambs of the splayed embrasure in the (guard-) chamber were of red sandstone ashlar. The flagstones were also of red sandstone, both inside and out. Although red sandstone is much easier to split, none of the flags showed any noticeable signs of wear, so that they were probably a later addition. The thresholds of the doorways, the jambs of the doorway to the (guard-) chamber, and the stairs were all of a coarse-textured, creamy-green sandstone.

OUTBUILDINGS

The excavations revealed the remains of a small enclosure, or more likely a building, abutting the S wall of the tower's wing. This was represented by two, lime-mortared, rubble walls. One ran S from the SW corner, aligned with the W wall; this was 2 ft 9 in (0.84 m) thick. The other ran E from the SE corner, aligned with the S wall for 3 ft 2 in (0.97 m), and then also turned S, parallel to the first wall; this wall averaged 2 ft 3 in (0.69 m) in thickness. Unfortunately, these walls only extended S for a few feet, the ground beyond having already been removed by the quarry. The W wall does not appear on the OS map for 1862, but the E one is shown, where, together with the E wall of the tower, it served as the western boundary of the later enclosure to the E (fig 2).

There was another range of outbuildings on the S side of the old courtyard. It abutted the E gable of the later house, though whether it belonged to the same period is not known. This

range, or at least part of it, is shown on Archer's drawing of 1839 (pl 39a); but when visited by the writer in 1968 it was reduced to no more than overgrown heaps of rubble. The overall length was approximately 63 ft (19.2 m) and the width about 23 ft (7.0 m). Two partition walls could still be discerned towards either end, but the middle partition, which appears on the 25-inch OS map for 1908 but not the 1862 edition, was not evident.

Most tower-houses had one or more outbuildings within the barmkin, but although there is no reason to think that Borthwick was an exception, it could not be said with certainty that any of the above remains dated from the same period of construction.

THE LATER HOUSE

At one time the lands of East Borthwick supported a small community of tenants and other occupiers, some of whom are on record in 1581 following a raid when they were forcibly ejected from their houses (p 437). It is likely that these dwellings were of a fairly rudimentary nature, and no trace of them is known to have survived.

The only dwelling of which anything is known, apart from the tower itself, was the house that stood some 70 ft (21 m) away, in the SW corner of the old courtyard. This dated from the 18th century, and was presumably built to succeed the tower. It may well be the 'Borthwick House' shown on the site on General Roy's Military Survey of Scotland, 1747-55. A later map, published by Captain Armstrong in 1771, refers to both 'Borthwick' and 'ruins' on the site. Comparing this with the designations shown on other, better documented sites, strongly implies the existence of at least two separate buildings by this time; and although John Blackadder's map of 1797 only refers to 'Borthick', it does show three distinct structures – presumably the house, the range of outbuildings, and possibly also the ruinous tower.

The first positive identification of the house is the pencil drawing of 'Borthwick Castle' made by Alexander Archer in 1839, where the house and associated outbuildings are shown beyond the mound of rubble, which was all that could be seen of the castle (pl 39a). At that time the house was structurally complete, two storeys high⁹, apparently roofed with stone flags, and with a chimney stack on each gable. The side walls are obscured by vegetation, but towards the N end of the E gable there is a small stone projection running vertically up the full height of the wall to the roof. By 1862 the house is shown in ruins, without even an access road (fig 2).

When a brief survey was carried out in 1968¹⁰, the house measured 38 ft 9 in (11.81 m) from E to W by 26 ft 11 in (8.20 m) from N to S, over walls 2 ft 5 in (0.74 m) in thickness. The masonry was local basaltic rubble with roughly hewn quoins, while the dressings were of 'off-cream' sandstone. The latter appeared to have been re-used, and may well have come from the tower. This would account for the almost total absence of dressings amongst the rubble excavated there. The only other features noted were two recesses lined with red brick in the E gable (apparently the remains of fireplaces) and a coved recess in the middle of the W gable, all at ground level. The entrance had evidently been in the middle of the S wall, though its exact location was obscured. Fragments of the walling were still standing until demolished by the quarry early in 1978.

HISTORY

Nothing is known of the early history of the lands of Borthwick. Tradition relates that at one time they formed a part of the lands associated with nearby Duns Castle, but as to how they got their name – *the name of a property near Roberton in Roxburghshire, from which the*

Borthwick family took its name – or when the lands were divided into Easter and Wester Borthwick, there is no information.

Wester Borthwick first comes on record in 1502/3, when Alexander Ellem of Butterden and his wife Elene Hume were granted a new crown charter of the lands (RMS II, no 2698). Easter Borthwick, where Borthwick Castle was built, does not appear until eight years later, when, on 22 June 1511, Patrick Dunse, son and heir of Patrick Dunse of Est-Borthuik, was granted a crown charter of the lands (RMS II, no 3577). Nothing more is heard of East Borthwick until 1576, when Archibald Auchinleck of Cumledge received a crown charter of the '40 shilling lands of old extent of Eist Borthuik', which, it states, had been held of the king by Patrick Duns of East Borthwick for service of ward (RMS IV, no 2589). The lands were subsequently recalled by the crown, and, on 15 June 1581, granted to Mr Mark Ker (RMS V, no 217); but only two months later he resigned them in favour of Archibald Auchinleck, who received a new crown charter of the lands on 28 August (RMS V, no 248).

In the meantime, there was a serious incident at East Borthwick, following which a formal complaint was made to the Privy Council by Arthur Montgomerie, William Carfra and Thomas Thomsoun, tenants and occupiers of the lands. They reported that, on 7 July 1581, 'Robert Duns, servant to Beatrix Lyle, old lady Wadelie in Hardens¹¹, of her causing, command, sending and ratihabitoun, James Duns, servant to Alexander Raburne in Duns, . . . Patrick, Adam, James, John and Thomas Cockburn, brother to William Cockburn of Langton, and others to the number of 50 persons or thereby, all boding in fear of war, with jakkis, steel-bonnets, Jedburgh staves, spears, bows, hagbuts, and pistols, prohibited to be worn or used by Act of Parliament and Secret Council . . . forcibly ejected the complainers, their wives, bairns and families from the said lands, struck them to the effusion of their blood in great quantities, set themselves down in the complainers rooms, intrometted with their corn, plenishing, insight, and goods, to wrack and harry the said complainers for ever, their wives, bairns and household in the meantime lying out under dykes'. Archibald Auchinleck appearing for himself and Patrick Cockburn for his family, the matter was referred to the courts. In the meantime Patrick was to find surety for himself and his brother, whilst letters were issued against those defendants who did not appear, denouncing them and putting them to the horn and escheat (RPC III, 418, 443). A short time later, Alexander Cockburn of that ilk had to find caution in £200 that George Cockburn of Langton would answer for 'the troubling' of Archibald Auchinleck of Cumledge and his tenants of the lands of East Borthwick, and for other crimes (RPC III, 445).

It is not known what prompted the above raid, nor what transpired when the case was brought before the courts. It would be interesting to know Beatrix Lyle's interest in the affair. But whatever the truth of the matter, the Cockburns of Langton shortly afterwards succeeded Archibald Auchinleck as the new lawful owners of East Borthwick; and on 29 January 1583/4, Patrick Cockburn, brother german of William Cockburn of Langton, received a crown charter of the 40 shilling lands of East Borthwick which, it reiterates, had been held by Patrick Duns for service of ward (RMS V, no 664). This grant was confirmed in August 1587 (RMS V, no 1333). The following year Sir John Ker of Hirsell and Patrick Cockburn, tutor of Langton, had to find caution in 2000 merks for each of Adam and John Cockburn, brothers of William Cockburn of Langton (RPC IV, 272). There are frequent references to other sureties by, or on behalf of, Patrick Cockburn during the next four years, but only one, in 1590, actually mentions his domicile, 'Patrick Cockburn of Eist Borthuik, tutor of Langton' (RPC IV, 510). Life at East Borthwick would then appear to have become more settled. Apart from being tutor to his nephew during his minority, Patrick was also for a time Sheriff-Depute of Berwickshire (Cockburn, 73; Laing, nos 1035, 1140). He died in 1601, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Patrick.

The younger Patrick was apparently still a minor at this time. It was not until 4 December 1617, the year before his first marriage¹², that he was granted a precept of sasine for the '40 shilling lands of Eist Borthuik, with the pertinents', as legitimate son and heir of the deceased Patrick Cockburn of East Borthwick, tutor of Langton (Berwick Sasines 1, 21-2). There is no mention of any tower, fortalice or other dwelling among the 'pertinents'; but the instrument of sasine, dated 18 December 1617, clearly states that sasine was given on the ground of the said lands 'apud mansionem et turrem earundem' ('near the mansion *and tower of the same*'). This is the earliest direct reference to the castle. Whilst Blaeu's map of the Merse, which was surveyed by Timothy Pont in the 1590s, shows one of the symbols used for a tower-house at both Easter and Wester Borthwick (Blaeu), this is not very helpful, as there is no evidence that there was in fact ever a tower at the latter site¹³. There were, however, certainly communities living on both properties at that time.

In 1632 the lands of East Borthwick, together with those of Wolferlands and Grueldykes, were granted by the crown to Beatrice Johnstoun, daughter of James Johnstoun, merchant burghess of Edinburgh (RMS VIII, no 2053); and in 1636 Alexander Cokburne, son of Adam Cokburne, tutor of Langton, received a crown charter of the same lands, following their resignation by William Cokburne of Blakismylne and Patrick Cokburne (RMS IX, no 629). These were presumably both titles of security in return for some loan or obligation, a very common practice in those days¹⁵. In the meantime Patrick remained in possession, and in the registration of a sasine dated 28 October 1637 he is still styled 'Patrick Cokburne of Borthwicke, heritable proprietare of ye lands' (Berwick Sasines 3, 263v-4).

This last deed is of interest. It records that, on 16 June 1637, Patrick, with consent of Elizabeth Home, his mother, and of Sir William Cokburne of Langtoun, knight baronet, sold 4½ husbandlands of Westerlawes of Quhitsum to Robert Edgare in Litill Halyburtoune for 3,000 merks under reversion, while William Cokburne, Walter Swyntoune, minister at Swyntoune, and Alexander Boig of Burnhouses agreed to be jointly bound with Patrick as sureties¹⁶. William subsequently agreed to be liable for Swinton and Boig's part of the obligation. In consideration of this Patrick, on 22 October 1637, granted his brother William a bond of relief and an annual rent of 240 merks from the lands of Borthewick, Wolferland, Grueldykis and Quhitsumlawes.

After 1617 there is no further reference to the castle at Borthwick until 1663, when the lands of Easter Borthwick, with the tower, fortalice, etc; the lands of Wulfurdlands, and those in Grueldykes once belonging to Patrick Cockburn of Borthwick; together with Wester Borthwick and various other lands; were all erected into the free barony of Stevensone in favour of Sir Robert Sinclair of Stevensone (RMS XI, no 411). – Three years earlier the superiority of the lands of Easter Borthwick, Wulfurdlands and Grueldykes had been resigned in Sir Robert's favour by Sir Archibald Cockburn of Langton and Alexander Cockburn in Lothian.

The Cockburns continued to live at Borthwick until 1703, when Ann Cockburn was served heir-general to her eldest brother John, 4th of East Borthwick (Cockburn 1913, 74). Although John had died without issue, he had two younger brothers who may still have been alive at the time, and at least one Cockburn nephew who certainly was: they were not included. Whether Ann lived at Borthwick, or even whether she married and had issue, is not known. It seems likely, however, that the castle was either abandoned at this time, or on Ann's death not more than a few decades later. It would certainly appear to have been fairly early in the century when the modern house was built to supersede it (p 436); and by 1839 nothing remained of the castle but a heap of rubble (pl 39a).

The lands of East Borthwick passed to the Cockburns of Langton some time during the

early part of the 18th century¹⁷, and were included in the Langton estate when it was sold to David Gavin by Sir James Cockburn in 1757. Langton was in due course inherited by David's elder daughter, Mary (d 1845), who had married John Campbell, 4th Earl and later 1st Marquis of Breadalbane. It subsequently passed through the hands of a number of their descendants before Colonel Grenville Davine was finally compelled to break up and sell the estate in 1924. It was at about this time¹⁸ that the Hays of Duns acquired the lands of East Borthwick, including the superiority that had formerly been held by the Sinclairs of Stevenson (p 438), and, apart from the land acquired for the quarry, East Borthwick has remained a part of the Duns Castle estate ever since.

DISCUSSION

Chronology

Very few architectural features survived at Borthwick that could assist in dating the castle. There were, however, a number of characteristics that pointed towards the same general period of construction. Perhaps the most significant of these was the thickness of the walls. In the main these were 3 ft 9 in: none was greater. Such relatively slender walls are not found in Border towers before the second half of the 16th century, or, where more accurate dating is possible, before 1580. They also seem to have a strong, though not exclusive, affinity for towers built on the L-plan. At Greenknowe (1581) and Langshaw (c 1585) they are 3 ft 6 in; at Buckholm (1582) and Elibank (c 1595), 3 ft 9 in; and at Hillslap (1585), 4 ft. These are fairly typical of the period. By the beginning of the following century it had become rare to find a wall thicker than 3 ft, unless it incorporated older work, and so the general trend was for walls to get thinner as the century progressed. The normal time-span for walls of the thickness found at Borthwick was thus very limited, and on this basis would favour a building date during the period c 1580–c 1610.

Although the Duns family may have lived at Borthwick during the early part of the 16th century, no work of so early a date was found. It is also fairly clear from the records, and in particular those concerning the infamous raid of 1581, that there was nobody living in a tower-house at Borthwick when Archibald Auchinleck of Cumledge was the proprietor. Then, in January 1583/4, the lands were granted to Patrick Cockburn, tutor of Langton, a man of substance whose only recorded domicile is 'East Borthwick'; and by the time his eldest son was retoured heir in 1617 the 'manor and tower' of East Borthwick are on record. There can be little doubt, therefore, that the castle was built by this Patrick Cockburn, 1st of East Borthwick. Moreover, as he did in fact die in 1601, the possible date of building may be further limited to the period 1583/4–1601, and in all probability took place c 1584–5, soon after he acquired the property.

What is far less certain, however, is what exactly Patrick built. The surviving stair certainly did not belong to this period, and why did the doorway to the main basement chamber incorporate a drawbar in addition to the one at the entrance? There is no example of a scale-and-platt stair in the Borders before the second, or more probably the third, quarter of the 17th century. The question therefore arises, was the wing added to an existing tower, or was the stair a later insertion into an existing wing? Examples of both arrangements are known. Frenchland Tower, near Moffat (RCAMS 1920, no 480), which dates from the late 16th century, was originally built on a rectangular plan with a wheel-stair serving all floors. The walls there were 3 ft 6 in thick. Later in the 17th century a substantial wing (though smaller than the one at Borthwick) was added to improve the facilities and provide additional accommodation. The old entrance and stair were abandoned, and in their place a new entrance was incorporated in the re-entrant angle of the wing,

with a scale-and-platt stair rising to first floor level. Thereafter, access to the upper floors was by means of a new wheel-stair corbelled out in the re-entrant angle, while the higher levels of the wing provided additional rooms. At Old Gala House, on the other hand, where a major extension with its own stair wing was added in 1611, the original stair was removed for some reason late in the century and replaced by a new one of the scale-and-platt variety (RCAMS 1957, no 20). At Neidpath, too, the original wheel-stairs were relegated to a subordinate role c 1653–86, when a large scale-and-platt stair was inserted into the thickness of the walls between the basement entresol and second floor levels (RCAMS 1967, no 519).

Borthwick was large on plan compared with other L-plan towers in the East and Middle Marches. It was 28% larger than Greenknowe, and exceeded Evelaw, Hillslap and Cardrona by as much as 43%, 57% and 66% respectively. This could be interpreted as favouring the wing as a later addition on the grounds of size alone. On the other hand, the original L-plan tower at Langshaw, although built by a laird of no special consequence, was in fact marginally larger. The existence of a drawbar to secure the doorway to the main basement chamber might also be taken to indicate that this was the original entrance to the tower. It certainly poses a problem: it is too close to the outer wall-face to secure any conventional type of entrance door; and in the absence of the door surround, one cannot even be sure which way this door opened, or how it was intended to be secured. – Stewart Cruden, a noted authority on Scottish castles and tower-houses, knows of no parallel to the arrangement of two drawbars found at Borthwick.

Had the wing been a later addition, there would have been some evidence of discontinuity where the masonry of its E wall joined that of the main block; but none was found, the stonework being firmly bonded throughout. And although there was, unexpectedly, a slight change of direction at this point (fig 3), the layout of the whole wing was very irregular anyway. The thickness of the wing's walls also corresponded with the main block – unlike Frenchland, where the later walls are only 2 ft 6 in thick. It is difficult, therefore, to escape the conclusion that Borthwick was indeed a structurally integrated L-plan design.

The lack of bonding of the stair treads and virtual absence of any wear (when first exposed by the excavator, and before subsequent weathering) clearly suggested that these were inserted late in the 17th century to supersede an earlier arrangement, of which no evidence survived. This was quite possibly part of a general modernisation of the building, for the paving, especially at the main entrance, likewise showed no signs of hard usage.

Borthwick Park

The Statistical Account of Scotland, writing of Duns in 1792 (*Stat Acc* 4, 392), says: 'There is a very remarkable wall in the parish, inclosing near 100 acres of ground, called Borthwick Park, belonging to the family of Langton; it is of moorstone, without any sort of mortar, and never had any covering, either of sod or any thing else; it has stood 179 years, and never was known to need any repair till within these four years; and though it is but low, yet, in consequence of the unevenness of its texture, and the ruggedness of its top, neither horses nor cattle ever ventured to leap it'. This would give the date of construction of the wall as 1613; and although it is unlikely to be precise, such a positive statement, especially when treated apart from the other field enclosures and improvements carried out during the 17th and 18th centuries (*Stat Acc* 14, 579), would undoubtedly be founded in fact.

The park enclosed the castle near its SE extremity, and extended up the gradually rising ground to the NW. It was probably built by Patrick Cockburn, 2nd of East Borthwick, around the time of his first marriage. Although the wall has now largely disappeared, first as a result of

subsequent agricultural improvements, and more recently due to the encroachment of the quarry, and although the park has long since ceased to look anything like a park, the area is still known locally by its old designation.

MONUMENT TO THE CASTLE

Following the castle's demolition, Wimpey Asphalt Ltd, who lease the quarry, built a cairn in its memory on the hillside nearby. It incorporates masonry from the castle, and bears a commemorative plaque. This cairn will now take over the role formerly played by Borthwick Castle in Duns' annual ceremony of Riding the Marches.

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Reproduction of fig 2 is by kind permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland. Photographs are by the writer.

NOTES

- 1 Ordnance Survey map reference NT 770544.
- 2 OS 25-inch and 6-inch maps of Berwickshire, County Series, Sheet XVI.6.
- 3 Duns was burned by the English under Sir George Bowes and Sir Bryan Layton in July 1544 (Armstrong, Appendix XXXVI, p lxiv).
- 4 Imperial measurements are primarily used when referring to structural details, as these were the basic units used by the builders.
- 5 All measurements on the 1st Edition of the 25-inch OS maps were individually chained, so they should be reasonably accurate.
- 6 Unfortunately, mason's marks are not unique, so cannot by themselves be used for dating purposes. This mark at Borthwick, for instance, is also found in the 14th-century work at Neidpath (RCAMS 1967, II, no 252).
- 7 The presence of coal suggests the possibility that the basement may have served as a store for the later house for a time in the 18th century, prior to the castle's final collapse.
- 8 It may be pure coincidence, but the frequency with which this odd dimension (3 ft 11 in) recurred in the tower could not pass unnoticed. Despite the eccentric plan of the wing, it was found there no less than five times; it was also the overall width of the doorway into the main basement chamber beyond the missing surround.

- 9 A photograph of the ruins taken by Neil M Lawrence of Duns c 1960 shows evidence in the W gable that the upper floor was contained partly within the roof space. There were presumably dormer windows on the S side, but this is not visible in Archer's drawing.
- 10 Visit by the writer, 20 July 1968.
- 11 Hardens was 1 mile WSW of Borthwick Castle, near the meeting point of the lands of Easter Borthwick, Wester Borthwick and Langton.
- 12 Patrick's first wife was Margaret Wauthope, whose brother William was a witness to this sasine. Their father was George Wauthope of Gleghorne. – On 25 March 1618, while travelling to Edinburgh to buy the 'things necessary for her marriage', Margaret was forcibly abducted by Patrick Home, brother of Alexander Home of North Berwick. Her father complained to the Privy Council, and Patrick Home and his servant were denounced rebels (RPC XI, 342).
- Patrick's second wife, whom he married in 1630, was Katharine, daughter of Sir William Oliphant of Newton (Cockburn, 73).
- 13 See also *Scottish Studies*, vol 19 (1975): 'County Maps as Historical Sources', by M L Parry. Although Robert Gordon provided additional material for Blaeu's atlas c 1636–48, Timothy Pont was the surveyor who did most of the ground work. Gordon was not a map maker as such.
- 14 William Cockburn of Blacksmill was a first cousin of Patrick Cockburn, 2nd of East Borthwick.
- 15 Land titles, and the many different levels of ownership, is a highly complex subject, which has often misled both professionals and laymen. A 'Crown Charter', for example, might confer feudal superiority, actual tenure, security or investment in return for money lent, or a variety of other rights or interests; nor is the original intention always clear to us today. Hence the apparent anomaly, where the lands of East Borthwick are 'granted' to one party, whilst possession is retained by another.
- 16 Walter Swinton had married Patrick's sister Jean (Fasti ii, 59), and Alexander Boig his sister Elizabeth (Cockburn 73).
- 17 It is likely that it was the Cockburns of Langton who built the later house.
- 18 The Hays believe they acquired East Borthwick some years before the Langton estate was broken up, but their titles are not readily accessible to check this.

APPENDIX

Report on Small Finds, by George R Haggarty

1. From cobbles in re-entrant angle (p 433):

POTTERY

One body sherd from the shoulder of a large jug in a hard, smooth, grey fabric with drab olive-green glaze. Large reduced ware vessels of this type are ubiquitous, being found from Galloway in the S to Kirkwall in the N (McGavin pers comm). They first appear in the 15th century (Jope *et al* 1959, 262–6), but have also been found stratified with 18th-century stoneware in Linlithgow (Haggarty 1980, 23–51). With such a long lifespan a sherd of this material is of little use for dating.

GLASS

Two tiny fragments of wine bottle with many pieces of badly decomposed window glass.

LEAD

Two small ribbons of lead twisted together, both 50 mm long by 5 mm in width with a slightly D-shaped profile.

STONE

Spindle whorl 24 mm in diameter and varying in thickness from 10 to 14 mm with a circular perforation of 10 mm. Small spindle whorls are found in various materials and do not seem to change appreciably through the Medieval and post-Medieval periods.

2. Layer above flagged floor at E end of main block:

CLAY PIPES

Complete bowl profile of a tobacco-pipe in a white fabric. The rim is slightly rouletted and on the flat base is the impressed mark of a castle with three towers. The only published Scottish example of this mark is by John Schofield (Lawson 1978, 217–28). Unfortunately the context of this pipe is not very informative, but it has been dated on morphological grounds to the late 17th century. There are also three fragments of pipe stem in the same fabric as above. With a stem bore of 3 mm this is in keeping with the late 17th-century date for the bowl.

IRON

Three badly corroded nails 60 mm in length and square in section with flat heads approximately 15 mm in diameter.

3. Rubble overlying flags (fairly high):

POTTERY

Two sherds of perforated creamware. The glaze has a faint green tinge and may be from the Leeds factory. Late 18th – early 19th century. Two basal sherds, one in a red and the other in a pale pink fabric, from two internally white-slipped bowls. The sherd in red fabric has splashed copper-green decoration. 19th century.

GLASS

Large base fragment from a wine bottle showing a cylindrical form with a greater height than width. A date in the later 18th or early 19th century would seem likely based on seal-dated examples (Price 1910, 116–24).

Additional Find not seen by Mr Haggarty

4. Rubble S of first staircase landing:

BRASS

A small scale weight with a central recess on top. It has since been mislaid. Although its weight is not recorded, photographs taken by the National Museum of Antiquities show its diameter to have been 26.4 mm, which would correspond to a typical weight of about 1 oz. There are three marks stamped within the recess, a crown with an incomplete 'C' or 'G', a ewer, and a dagger. Dr M Suggett of the Science Museum, London, writes of these marks:

'From what is visible of the Royal cypher mark, the founding of the weight can be limited to the reigns of Charles I or George I; and from the style of the crown it seems most likely that the weight dates from the earlier reign: certainly none of the weights in our own collection dating from George I's reign have a crown mark that is at all similar. The other two marks on the weight support this earlier date, also on stylistic grounds. The 'Ewer' mark is the mark of the Founders' Company. The shape of the ewer changed considerably, and this is a strong piece of evidence for the earlier date. The other mark is the Guildhall verification mark, showing its London origins. Often there is yet another mark, showing whether the weight is Troy or Avoirdupois.'

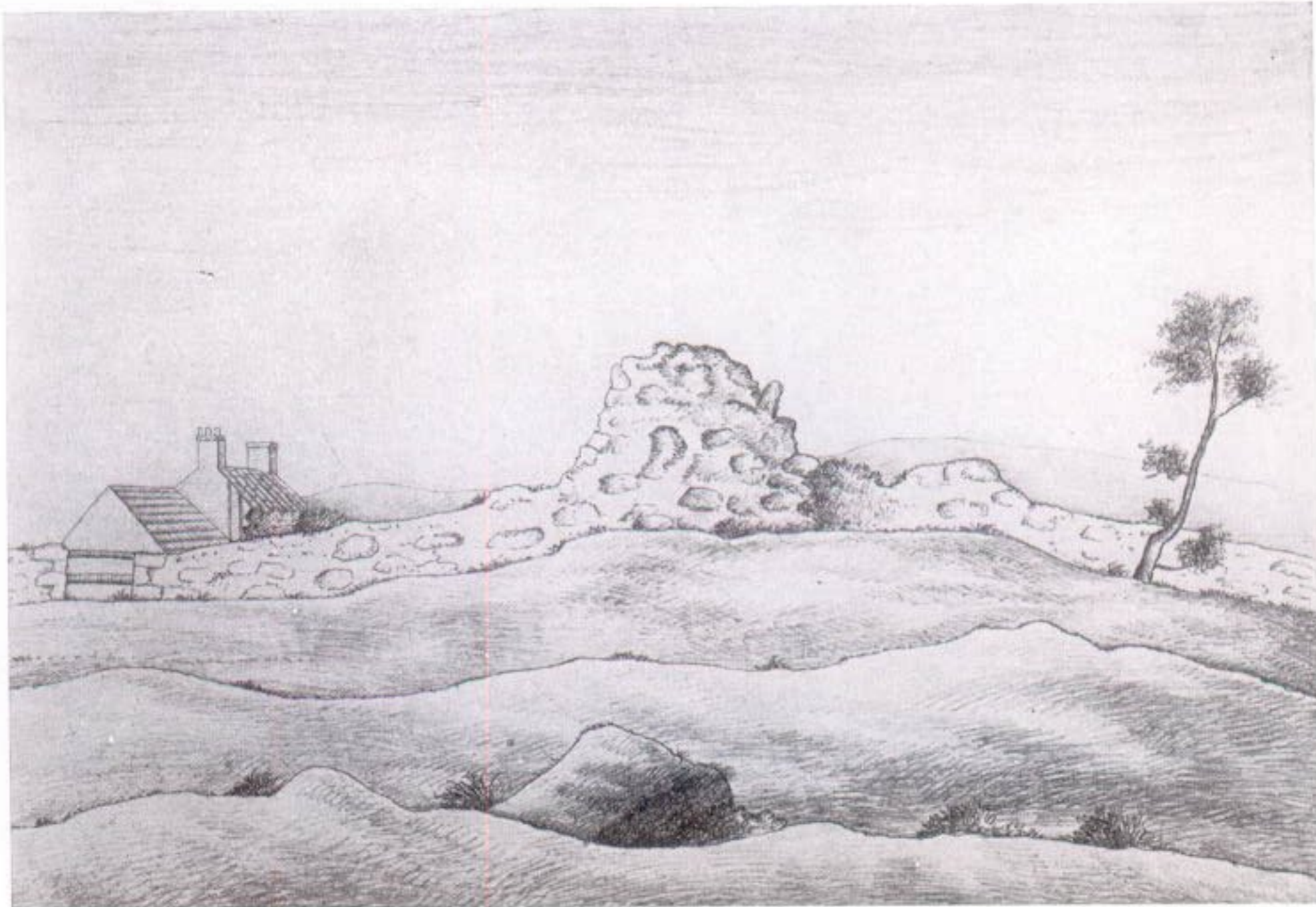
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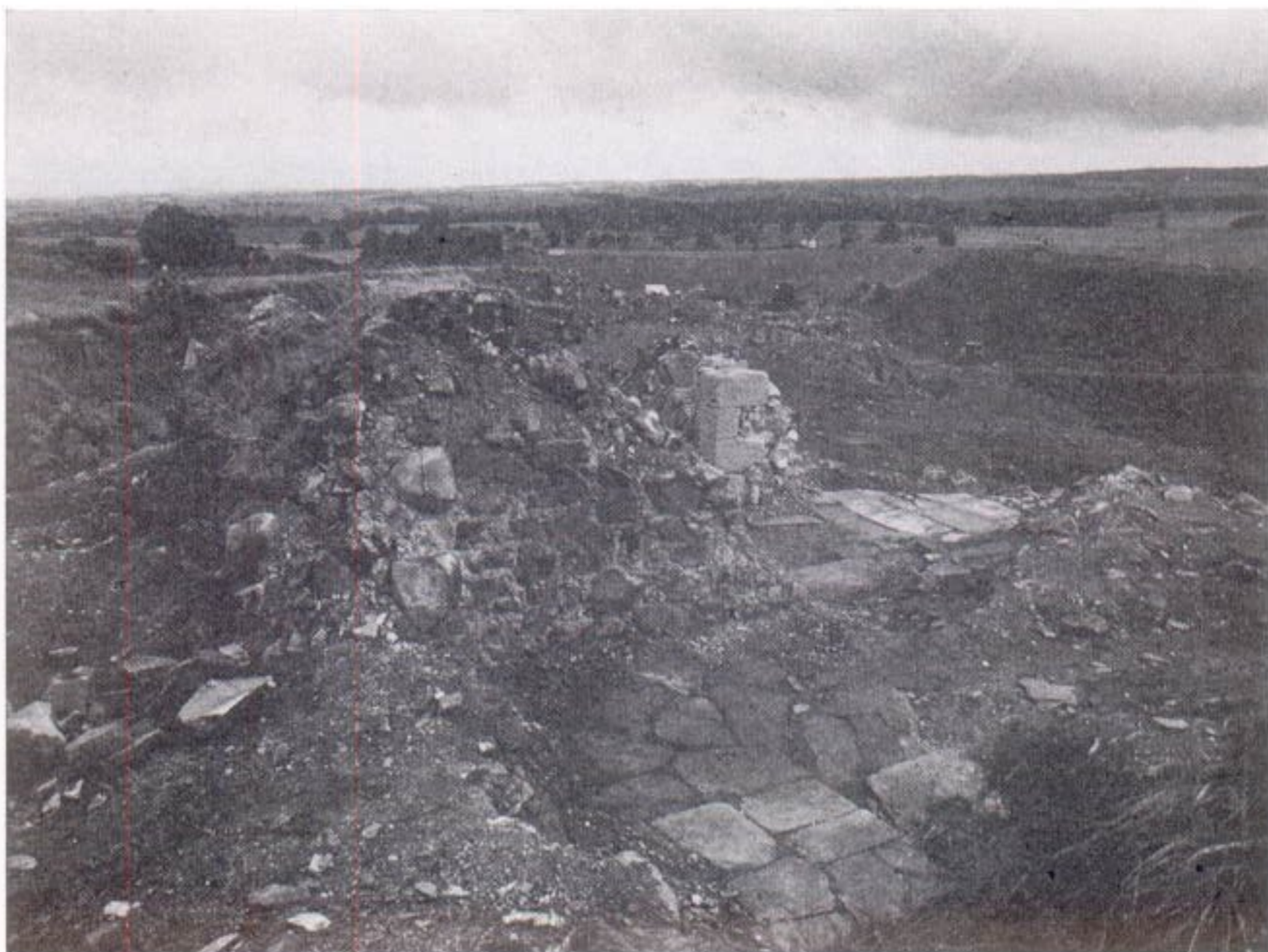
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a Borthwick Castle nr Duns by Alexander Archer 1839 (National Monuments Record)



b Borthwick Castle: View S across the merse from NE corner



a Borthwick Castle: General view from West



b Borthwick Castle: view of entrance and wing from main basement chamber



Borthwick Castle: view of castle entrance from first stair landing