
NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Client Report No. CP 413/06

February 2007

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
BUILDING RECORDING
AT
BLACKCLEUGH BASTLE,
SWINHOPE, ALLENDALE,
NORTHUMBRLAND**

on behalf of

MR & MRS R M HELLIWELL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2006 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd. were invited by Mr and Mrs R M Helliwell to undertake an archaeological building recording project at the site of Blackcleugh Bastle, Swinhope, Allendale, in advance of a residential development. The building recording project comprised a building survey, and archaeological monitoring, as specified in a Northumberland County Council brief. This report presents the results of the building survey.

At the time of the building survey, Blackcleugh Bastle comprised a rectangular two-storey ruin, which had formerly been used as a farmhouse. The lintel above a ground floor doorway dated the building to 1695, but a number of earlier features had previously been identified, which were believed to belong of the original bastle. The building was to be dismantled and rebuilt as a residential dwelling, re-using the original stone work.

The building survey recorded a number of features from the original bastle house, including a byre doorway, ground floor slit window and small first floor window. The building was remodelled as a farmhouse *c.*1695. A southern ground floor entrance, four flanking windows, and much of the south wall can be attributed to the 17th century farmhouse. Some time later the farmhouse was abandoned, these openings were blocked, and a shed was built against the exterior of the south wall. This helped to preserve the south wall of the building, but the remaining walls deteriorated badly.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd. would like to thank Mr and Mrs R M Helliwell for commissioning the project. NPA are also grateful for the assistance of Nick Best, Conservation Officer at the Northumberland County Council.

Martin Railton, NPA Project Officer, undertook the archaeological building survey between 20th and 28th November 2006 with the assistance of Joseph Doran, NPA Archaeologist. This report was written by Martin Railton, with illustrations by Martin Railton and Cat Peters, NPA Archaeologist. The text was edited by Matthew Town, NPA Project Officer.

1 INTRODUCTION AND LOCATION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 In November 2006 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd. were invited by Mr and Mrs R M Helliwell to undertake an archaeological building recording project at Blackcleugh, Swinhope, Sparty Lea, Allendale, Northumberland (NGR NY 8335 4825).
- 1.1.2 The work followed a planning application to Tynedale District Council (LPA Ref. 20050357) for a residential development at the site of Blackcleugh Bastle, involving the dismantling and conversion of the building. As a result, Northumberland County Council Historic Conservation Team (NCCCT) recommended an archaeological building recording project be undertaken, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, submitted to and approved by NCCCT. The building recording comprised a building survey (corresponding to an English Heritage Level 3 survey), which was undertaken prior to the proposed alterations, and archaeological monitoring, undertaken during the dismantling of the building and associated ground works.
- 1.1.3 Blackcleugh is one of three bastles on the northwest side of the Swinhope Valley. These buildings are peculiar to the border counties of England and were designed to be defensible farmhouses, with a ground floor byre, and living quarters above. Bastles are typically dated to the 16th and 17th centuries, and have been identified as the earliest surviving form of vernacular architecture in Northumberland (Hardie 1994).
- 1.1.4 Blackcleugh Bastle comprises a rectangular two-story ruin, with walls of coursed rubble and roughly-shaped quoins. A survey undertaken in 1989 identified a number of original features including a blocked slit window and a byre doorway (Ryder 1995). The construction date of the original bastle is unknown. A ground floor doorway on the south side (with lintel dated 1695) and two flanking windows, are believed to be later alterations to the building.

1.2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 1.2.1 The site is located on the south side of a tributary to the Swinhope Burn, on the north-west side of the Swinhope Valley, in East Allendale, Northumberland (Figure 1). The ruins of Blackcleugh bastle are located on the east side of a rough track, adjacent to a 19th century barn. The buildings are situated on a raised tongue of land, located between the Swinhope Burn and its tributary (Plate 1).
- 1.2.2 The solid geology of the area comprises Carboniferous limestones, sandstones and soft interbedded shales (BGS 2001), which are dissected by a network of faults and mineral veins. The topography of the area has been shaped by glacial scouring. The site is within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



Plate 1. Blackcleugh, showing the bastle (right) and later farm buildings (looking south)



Plate 2. The interior of Blackcleugh Bastle prior to the removal of soil and stone rubble (looking west)

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 The works were undertaken in accordance with a specification provided by Northumberland County Council Historic Conservation Team (NCCCT), which recommended that an archaeological building recording be undertaken. A project design for the building recording project was produced by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd. (Railton 2006), and was approved by NCCCT prior to work commencing. Following acceptance of the project design, NPA was commissioned by the client to undertake the work. The project design was adhered to in full, and the work was conducted in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (Riley & Wilson-North 2001), and the recommendations of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 2001).
- 2.1.2 The purpose of the building recording project was to produce a detailed record of the existing form and fabric of the building, including structural and architectural details, and any archaeological evidence for the buildings origins and development. The building recording project comprised a building survey corresponding to an English Heritage Level 3 survey (English Heritage 2006), which was undertaken prior to the proposed alterations, and archaeological monitoring, undertaken once works at the site commenced. The methodologies used in the completion of each section of the archaeological building recording project are outlined below.

2.2 BUILDING SURVEY

- 2.2.1 The aim of the building survey was to provide an accurate record of the existing structure, and to identify the origins, main phases of development and use of the building. The building survey was also to be used to inform the selection of important structural elements of the existing building, which were to be retained in the development, and facilitate the monitoring of their re-use.
- 2.2.2 Firstly, a metric survey of the plan of the building was undertaken using a Trimble 3605 Reflectorless Total Station. Detailed metric survey of all internal and external building elevations were subsequently undertaken using rectified photography. Fixed targets were used to create a series of control points on the elevations. These were surveyed using the Trimble 3605 Reflectorless Total Station, to form a framework for rectifying digital photographs of the building. The image rectification was undertaken using Monobild Software. The resulting rectified photographs were then digitised in a CAD environment to produce stone-by-stone scale drawings of the building elevations.
- 2.2.3 The building survey also comprised an internal and external observation of the building, and the production of a written and photographic record. Photographs of the interior and exterior of the building were taken using black and white print and colour slide film. Bracketed shots were taken of all internal and external elevations, and to show significant structural of architectural detail. All photographs included a graduated scale, and will form part of the site archive. Photograph indexes are included in Appendix 2. Digital photographs were also taken for use in this report.

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

2.3.1 Archaeological monitoring will be undertaken during the dismantling of the building, and during all associated groundworks at the site. It will commence following the removal of the rubbish/rubble fill of the interior of the building, following completion of the building survey. The monitoring will include the recording of all features of historic or architectural importance that are revealed during the dismantling, and the monitoring of structural elements, which are to be retained and re-used.

2.3.2 In summary, the main objectives of the archaeological monitoring will be:

- to identify the presence/absence, nature, and extent of historic and architectural features and to record these where they are observed
- to accurately locate these features on plans and elevations of the building
- to produce a photographic record of these features, cross-referenced to the building survey
- to monitor the removal, storage and re-use of structural features

The final monitoring visit will be undertaken to identify and record the locations of re-used structural features in the new building.

2.3.3 The results of the archaeological monitoring will be presented in the final version of this report.

2.4 ARCHIVE

2.4.1 A full professional archive will be compiled in accordance with the project design, and with current UKIC (1990) and English Heritage guidelines (1991). The archive is currently held at the North Pennines Archaeology Ltd. offices at Nenthead, and will be deposited with the relevant specialist museum in due course. The archive can be accessed under the unique project code **BBA/A 06**.

2.4.2 A copy of the report will be given to the Northumberland County Council HER, where viewing will be available on request. The project is also registered with the **Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigationS (OASIS)**.

3 BUILDING SURVEY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 An initial site visit was undertaken on 30th October 2006 in order to assess the condition of the building, and identify any impediments to the building survey. At that time the interior of the building was filled with an accumulation of stone rubble and soil, which was gradually being cleared by hand by the owner (Plate 2). The building survey commenced following the removal of these deposits, to ensure that the full extent of the interior walls was visible when the recording took place.
- 3.1.2 The building survey was undertaken over two days on 20th and 21st November 2006, following the removal of the interior stone rubble. The owner had also removed the internal flag floors of the building by this time, which has been stacked nearby for re-use. This had revealed an unknown depth of topsoil and tree roots. No earlier features were visible within the interior at the time of the survey.
- 3.1.3 The building was surveyed in plan using a Trimble 3605 Reflectorless Total Station and is illustrated in Figure 2. The elevations were recorded using a combination of metric survey and rectified photography. The resulting external elevation drawings are illustrated in Figure 3, and the internal elevations are shown in Figure 4. A standard datum line is shown in each elevation. The value is arbitrarily set at 400m, as no Ordnance Survey benchmark was available close to the site.
- 3.1.4 A third visit was undertaken on 28th November 2006 to identify key structural stones, which were to be retained for re-use in the new building *in situ*. These were marked on the elevation drawings (shown in Figure 5), and are listed in Appendix 1.

3.2 BLACKCLEUGH BASTLE SURVEY

- 3.2.1 Blackcleugh Bastle comprised a rectangular roofless ruin measuring 10.5m by 6.7m with walls of coursed undressed sandstone and roughly shaped quoins. The building was situated on the south side of a farm track, close to a later 19th century barn and shed. Until recently a pent-roofed shed was built against the south side of the building, but this has since been demolished (Figure 2).
- 3.2.2 Walls of the bastle measured between 1.2m and 1.3m deep, apart from the south wall, which was slightly less thick at only 1m. These were set on a rough plinth of unshaped boulders. The quoin stones were alternately set at angles and measured up to 0.4m thick and 1m long. On the north side of the building a number of foundations stones marked a rectangular area measuring 4.5m long and between 1.7m and 0.7m wide. This may mark location of a former external stair.
- 3.2.3 The south wall of the building was the best-preserved being up to 3.2m high (Plate 3). A ground-floor entrance, two ground-floor windows and two first floor windows were visible in this wall. These had been blocked (presumably when the former shed was constructed), the entrance having been used as a storage space. The outer wall surface had also been plastered, masking much of the stonework. A number of timber slots were identified in the wall, which had been used to tie the former shed to the wall of

the building. The eastern end of the south wall had suffered damage, due to the collapse of the east wall (Figure 2).



Plate 3. South elevation showing blocked windows and entrance of the former farmhouse



Plate 4. Lintel above the ground floor entrance inscribed: “16·WR·95”

- 3.2.4 The entrance had a surround formed from large sandstone blocks measuring up to 0.4m thick by 0.65m long, with a 0.05m chamfered outer edge. The doorway was square-headed with a lintel which bore the inscription: “16·WR·95”, although this was very worn (Plate 4). Two iron hinge pins were located inside the doorway on the east side.
- 3.2.5 The ground floor windows measured 0.9m wide and 1.1m wide. Of these windows only the western window retained the original chamfered sandstone surround, lintel and sill. The eastern window had been patched up, and the lintel was not original. Both first floor windows had lost their lintels, but retained original chamfered sandstone sills and surrounds. These were smaller than the ground floor windows being 0.4m wide and 0.5m high. A loose sill/lintel was identified nearby which was similar in size, and indicated that these were originally two-light mullion windows.
- 3.2.6 The interior of the south wall showed a high degree of remodeling and in-filling (Figure 3). Traces of plaster were identified on the inner surface of this wall. The ground-floor entrance and flanking windows had internal timber lintels. The entrance had been bricked-up, whilst the ground floor and first floor windows were in-filled with stone (Plate 5). A possible straight joint above the eastern jamb of the doorway has been sited as evidence for the presence of a possible upper doorway (Ryder 1995). However, the structural evidence for this was unconvincing.
- 3.2.7 An opening at the western end of the south wall at first floor level marked the location of a former window, that was not visible in the wall exterior. The opening measured 0.5m by 0.5m, with roughly-shaped stone surrounds and a 0.06m-thick stone lintel and sill (Plate 6).



Plate 5. Interior of the south wall showing blocked openings



Plate 6. West end of the south wall interior showing the location of a former window (top right)



Plate 7. North elevation showing an original slit window



Plate 8. Blocked slit window in the north wall exterior



Plate 9. Interior of the north wall showing collapsed central section and blocked window opening (left)

- 3.2.8 The north wall of the building was incomplete, having collapsed over much of its length. The west end of the wall was most well preserved, being 3m high and containing many original quoin stones. In contrast, the eastern end only survived to a height of 0.7m (Plate 7). An original slit window was located at ground floor level towards the western end of this wall, made from large roughly-shaped sandstone blocks (Plate 8). Regular stone courses were visible in both sides of this wall. Three roughly-shaped stones marked the location of the slit window on the inside of the north wall where it had been infilled with stone. The interior central section of this wall has suffered badly from collapse and was in an unsafe condition at the time of the survey (Plate 9).
- 3.2.9 The east and west walls were the most poorly. The west wall survived to a height of 2.6m on the north side, although the central section had collapsed badly. At the time of the survey stone rubble, cleared from the interior, was covering the central part of this wall on the outside (Plate 10). The interior of this wall extended 1.3m below the present ground surface, which was marked by a layer of turf and soil (Figure 4). The inner surface also showed evidence of a former opening, lined in brick, although the exact nature of this opening was uncertain (Plate 11).
- 3.2.10 The east wall only survived to a height of 1.3m, and was hidden by collapsed stone on the outside (Plate 12). A blocked doorway was visible in the centre of this wall, where the stone had been cleared from the interior. This is likely to be the original bastle byre doorway (Plate 13). The entrance was 1m wide and survives to 0.6m high. It was framed by coarse roughly-shaped stones of various sizes.
- 3.2.11 No evidence was observed that could shed light on the form of the upper floor of the building, and no evidence survived for a roof.



Plate 10. West wall of the building showing collapsed central section (looking east)



Plate 11. The west wall interior (looking west)



Plate 12. The east side of the building in a bad state of collapse



Plate 13. Blocked byre doorway in the east wall of the building

3.3 DISCUSSION

- 3.3.1 The structural evidence suggests that the original building was a simple two-storey bastle house, comprising a byre with living quarters above. The byre was originally ventilated by slit windows, and entered by a doorway on the east side of the building. A first-floor doorway would have provided access to the living quarters. This may have been located on the north side of the building where a possible external stair has been identified. Bastles were designed to be defensive, and a retractable ladder would have originally been used to reach the upper floor. The external stair may therefore be seen as a later addition. One original window has been identified at first floor level in the south wall. Other windows would have existed but these have been lost.
- 3.3.2 The south wall of the building appears to have largely been rebuilt and, being thinner than the rest, may be dated to a later period when the bastle was remodeled as a farmhouse. The inscribed lintel above the south doorway dates this phase to 1695. The remodeling included the addition of four windows and an entrance on the south side of the building. The ground floor was probably flagged at this time. Traces of plaster on the interior walls testify to the use of the ground floor as living quarters.
- 3.3.3 It is uncertain when the building ceased to be used as a farmhouse. However, the building evidently became unstable and was abandoned, a pent-roofed shed being built against the outside of the south wall of the building some time later. The south entrance and windows were blocked up around this time, and the outer surface of this wall was plastered to create the inner wall of the shed. Ironically this helped to preserve the south wall of the building, while the other three original bastle walls suffered from collapse.
- 3.3.4 The present state of the building is unstable, and the south wall in particular shows severe bowing. The removal of stone rubble and soil from the interior, which may have helped to support crumbling walls, is likely to have exacerbated the building's demise.

3.4 BUILDING STONE

- 3.4.1 The existing building can be broken down into a number of key elements: the main body of the bastle is made up of coursed undressed stone, with angled roughly shaped quoins (Figure 5). It is proposed that the quoin stones, which are a distinctive element of the original building, be stored separately during the dismantling process, and are re-used as quoins in the new building. The stones of the flag floor have already been removed and have been stacked separately for re-use.
- 3.4.2 Other original features, which have been identified during the survey include slit windows in the north and south walls, and a ground floor byre doorway (although little of this survives). The slit window in the north wall is framed by large roughly shaped stones, and is one of the most distinctive features surviving from the original bastle. It is proposed that these stones be labeled, stored separately, and used to recreate the slit window in the new building. Similar stones may be revealed during the dismantling process in the vicinity of the former first floor window, and if so will

be recorded. The proposed development will replace this opening with a larger square window.

- 3.4.3 The only dressed stones used in the present building date from *c.*1695. These frame the entrance and three windows in the south wall (all dressed stone from the fourth window having been removed in the past) and includes the inscribed lintel above the entrance. These stones are labeled in Figure 5 and are cross-referenced to an index of stones in Appendix 1. It is proposed that these stones be labeled, as indicated, during the dismantling of the present building, and are stored on pallets until they are re-used in the same locations within the new building. The first floor mullion window lintels, which have been located on site, will also be incorporated in the new building.
- 3.4.4 All dismantling work is to be done by hand and heavy work will be undertaken using a pulley system to avoid damaging the stone. Monitoring visits will be agreed with the client and timed to coincide with the dismantling of the walls, to examine the building foundations, and during any associated excavation work. If further features are revealed during the dismantling of the building, North Pennines Archaeology will record these. The final monitoring visit will be undertaken to identify and photograph the locations of re-used structural features in the new building.



Plate 14. Blackcleugh Bastle with parts of the north, east and south walls removed (looking west)

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The archaeological evidence recorded at Blackcleugh confirms that the building was originally a bastle house, which was remodelled as a farmhouse *c.*1695. The partial remains of byre doorway, a ground floor slit window and small first floor window survive from the original bastle building. A possible external stair has been identified, but the collapsed state of the building means that the location original first floor entrance remains uncertain. Although poorly-preserved, the form and construction of Blackcleugh Bastle is typical for this form of building. It may be classed as a 'solitary' bastle (Ryder 1996) and is likely to date from the 16th or 17th century.
- 4.2 A southern ground floor entrance, four flanking windows, and much of the south wall can be attributed to the 17th century farmhouse, which replaced the original bastle building. It is uncertain when this farmhouse was abandoned, but these openings were blocked and a shed was constructed against the south wall.
- 4.3 A plan of Blackcleugh Bastle and detailed elevation drawings have been produced prior to the dismantling of the building. These drawings have been used to identify key structural elements, which are to be re-created in the new build. A number of key building stones have been recorded, and will be labelled during the dismantling process for reuse. This work is to be monitored at the request of Northumberland County Council.

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APPENDIX 1: BUILDING STONE INDEX

Table 1 Key building stones to be retained and re-used in the new building *in situ*

Stone	Description	Elevation	Period
A	Door frame, west side, base stone	South	1695
B	Door frame, west side, first from bottom	South	1695
C	Door frame, west side, second from bottom	South	1695
D	Door frame, west side, top stone	South	1695
E	Door lintel, inscribed "16·WR·95"	South	1695
F	Door frame, east side, base stone	South	1695
G	Door frame, east side, first from bottom	South	1695
H	Door frame, east side, second from bottom	South	1695
I	Door frame, east side, third from bottom	South	1695
J	Door frame, east side, top stone	South	1695
K	Ground floor window sill	South	1695
L	Ground floor window frame, west side, bottom stone	South	1695
M	Ground floor window frame, west side, top stone	South	1695
N	Ground floor window frame, east side, top stone	South	1695
O	Ground floor window frame, east side, bottom stone	South	1695
P	Ground floor window lintel	South	1695
Q	First floor west window frame, east side	South	1695
R	First floor west window sill	South	1695
S	First floor west window frame, west side	South	1695
T	First floor east window frame, east side	South	1695
U	First floor east window sill	South	1695
V	First floor east window frame, west side	South	1695
W	Ground floor slit window surround, west side	North	Pre-1695
X	Ground floor slit window surround, top	North	Pre-1695
Y	Ground floor slit window surround, east side	North	Pre-1695

APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPH INDEXES

Table 2 Index of colour slides, taken prior to the dismantling of the building

Shot No	Description	Looking
1	North exterior elevation	S
2	East exterior elevation	W
3	South exterior elevation	N
4	West exterior elevation	E
5	South internal elevation	SW
6	West internal elevation	W
7	North internal elevation	NW
8	East internal elevation	E
9	Collapsed east end of the building	W
10	Bastle building from the north	SE

Table 3 Index of black and white prints, taken prior to the dismantling of the building

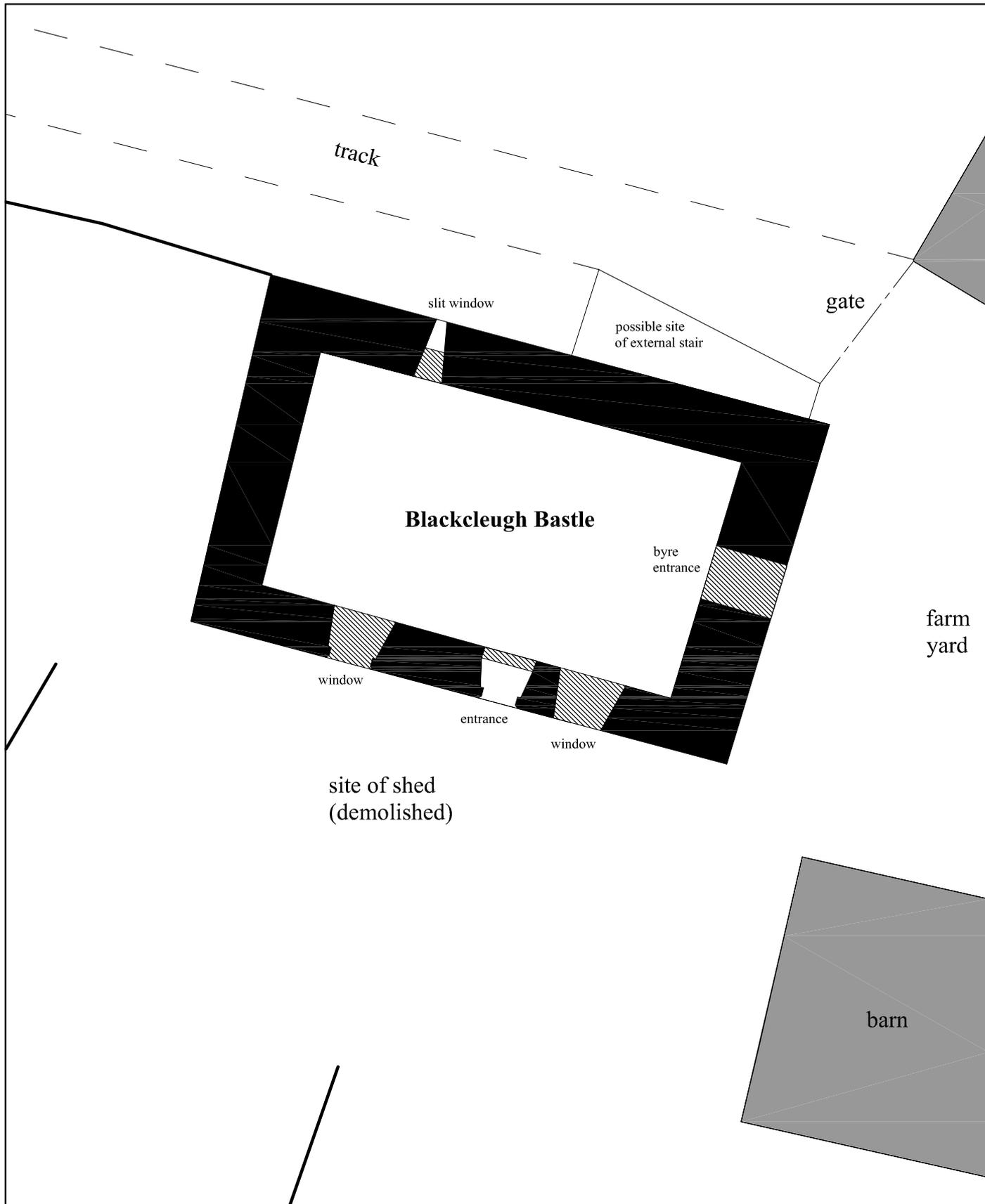
Shot No	Description	Looking
1	North exterior elevation	S
2	East exterior elevation	W
3	South exterior elevation	N
4	West exterior elevation	E
5	South internal elevation	SW
6	West internal elevation	W
7	North internal elevation	NW
8	East internal elevation	E
9	Collapsed east end of the building	W
10	Bastle building from the north	SE
11	Bastle building from the west	E
12	Slit opening in the north wall	S
13	Blocked byre doorway in the east wall	W
14	Blocked windows in the south wall interior	S
15	Dated lintel above the south door (1695)	N

APPENDIX 3: FIGURES



 <p>North Pennines Archaeology Ltd 2006</p>	<p>PROJECT: Blackcleugh Bastle, Northumberland</p> <p>SCALE: 1:25 000</p> <p>REPORT No: CP 413/06</p> <p>CLIENT Mr & Mrs R M Helliwell</p> <p>DRAWN BY: MDR</p> <p>DATE: December 2006</p> <p>FIGURE No: 1</p>		<p>KEY:</p>  site location <p><small>Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100014732</small></p>
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Figure 1 : Site location



 <p>North Pennines Archaeology Ltd 2006</p>	<p>PROJECT: Blackcleugh Bastle, Northumberland SCALE: 1:100 REPORT No: CP 413/06 CLIENT Mr and Mrs R M Helliwell DRAWN BY: MDR DATE: December 2006 FIGURE No: 2</p>	<p>N</p> 	<p>KEY:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  wall  blocked opening  farm building
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Figure 2 : Plan of Blackcleugh Bastle



North Pennines Archaeology Ltd

2006

Blackcleugh Bastle,
Swinhope, Allendale,
Northumberland

COMMISSIONED BY:

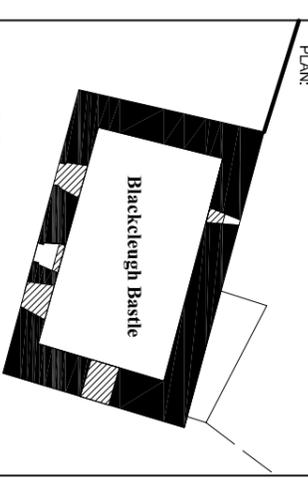
Mr & Mrs R M Hellwell



DRAWN BY: MDR

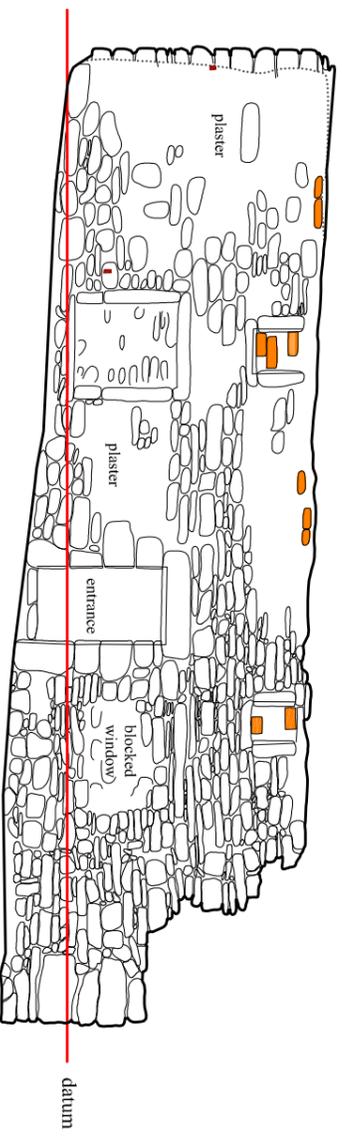
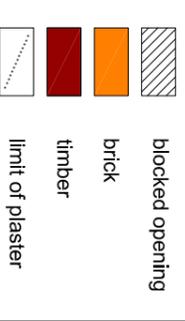
DATE: December 2006

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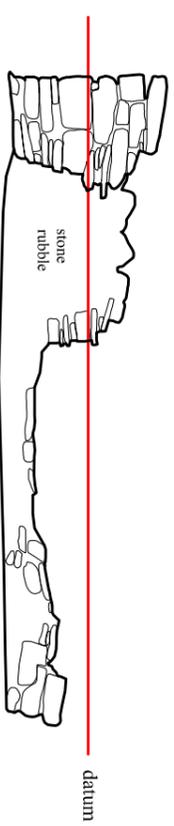


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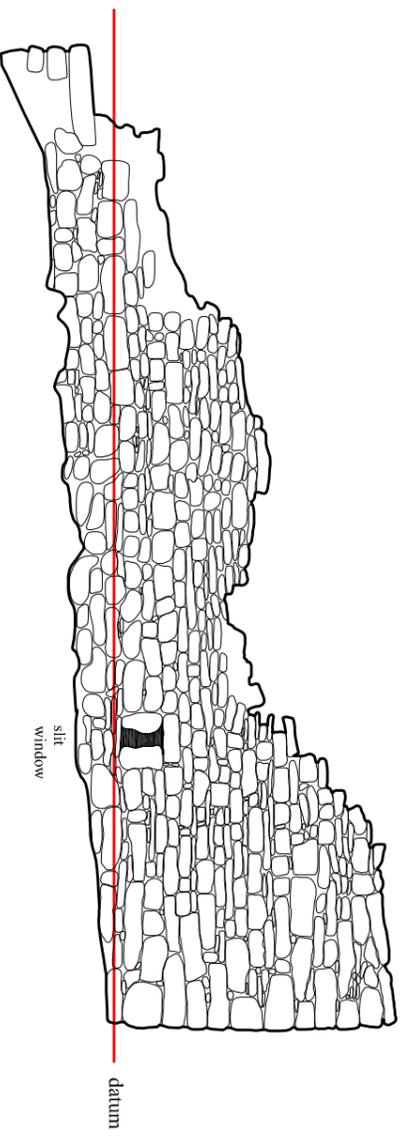
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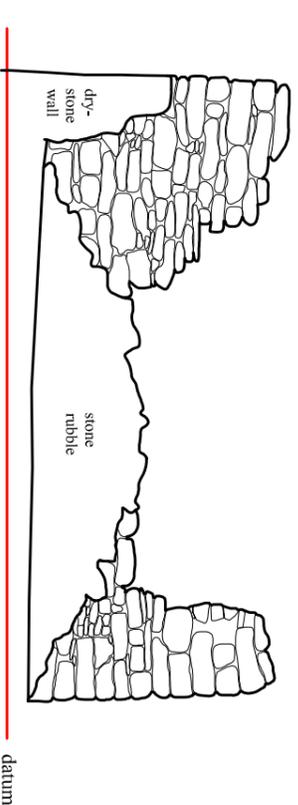
South-facing elevation



East-facing elevation



North-facing elevation



West-facing elevation

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Figure No: 3

Figure 3 : External elevations of Blackcleugh Bastle



North Pennines Archaeology Ltd

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Blackcleugh Bastle,
Swinhope, Allendale,
Northumberland

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Mr & Mrs R M Hellwell



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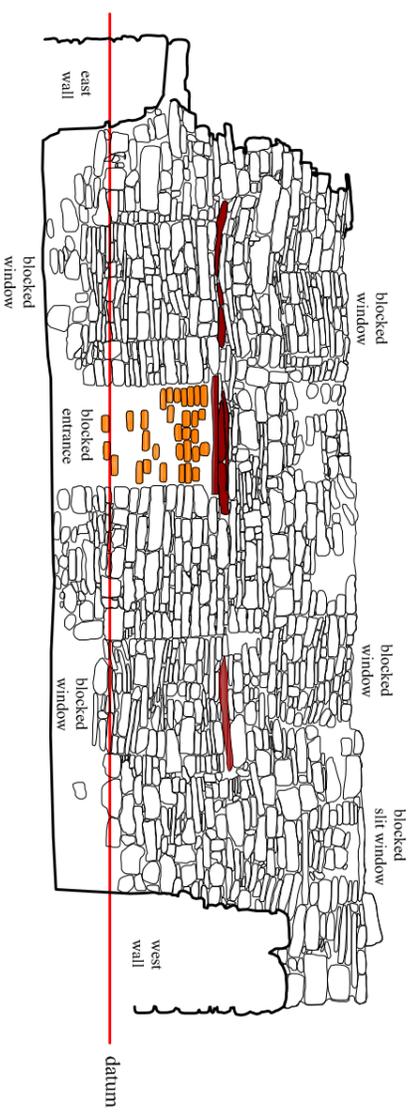
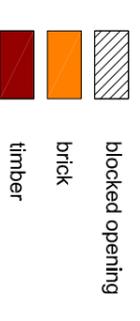
DATE: December 2006

PLAN:

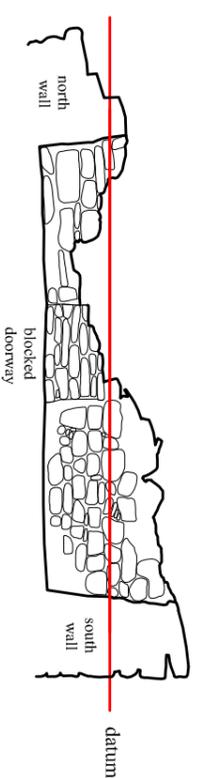


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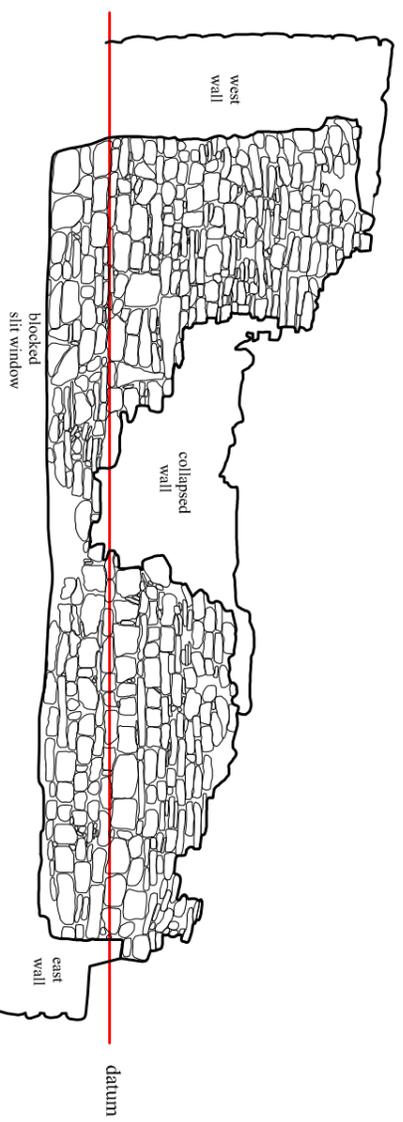
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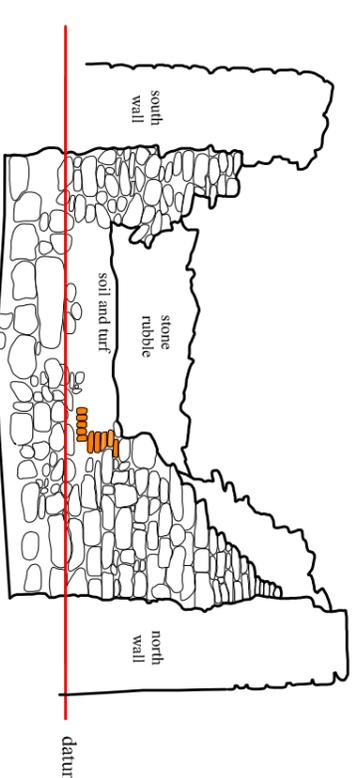
North-facing internal elevation



West-facing internal elevation



South-facing internal elevation

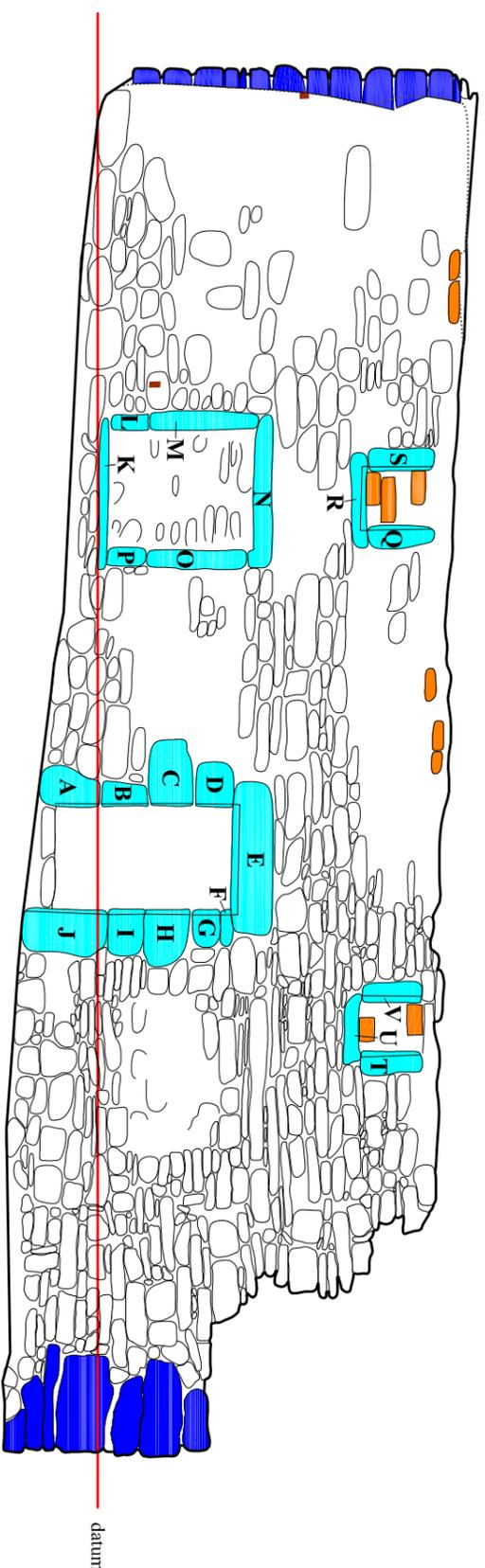


East-facing internal elevation

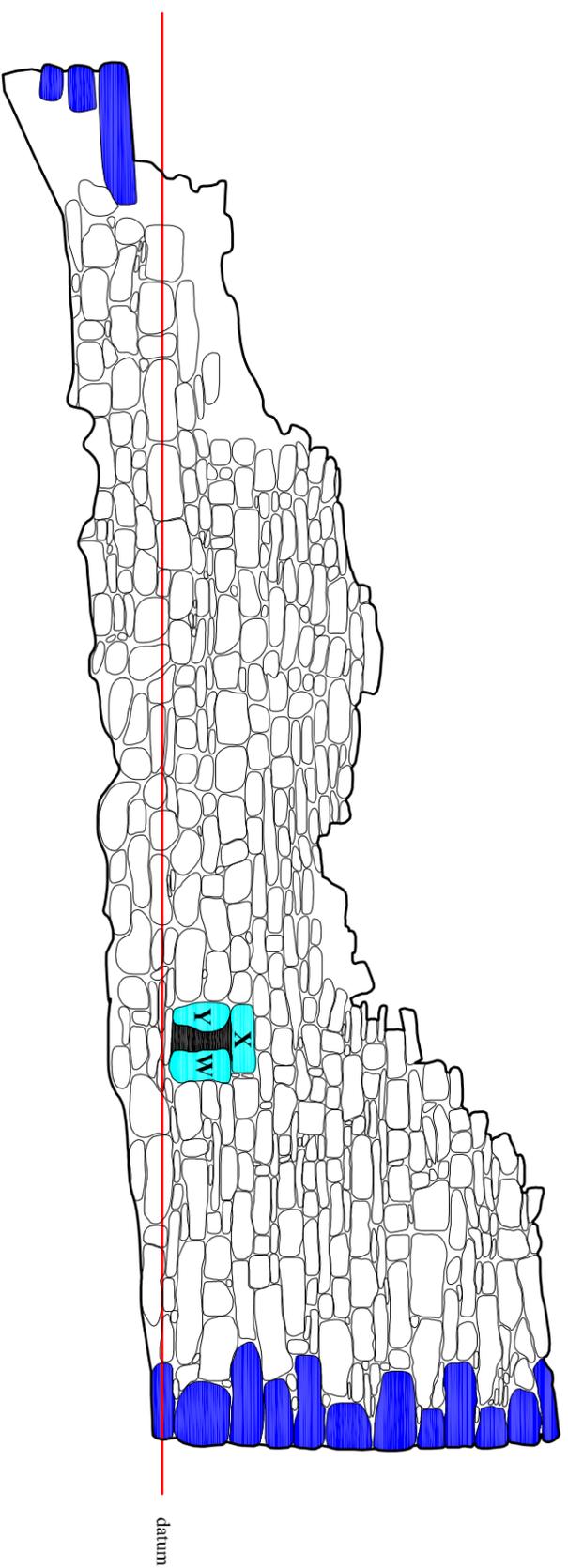
Report No: CP 413/06

Figure No: 4

Figure 4 : Internal elevations of Blackcleugh Bastle



South-facing elevation



North-facing elevation

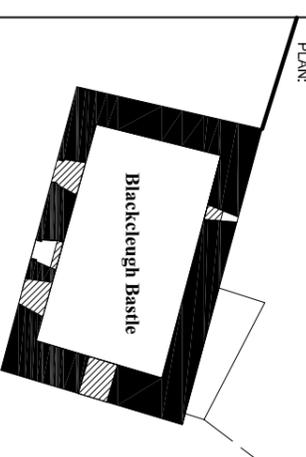


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Scale 1:250

KEY

	blocked opening
	brick
	timber
	limit of plaster
	quoin stones
	key structural stones (for re-use <i>in situ</i>)

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Figure No: 5

Figure 5 : North and south elevations showing stones to be retained for re-use in new build