

Standing Building Survey
Ayton Farm mill cottage and mill system,
Aberargie, Perth and Kinross



Mill cottage/dam house looking South



24th January 2011

Introduction (Illustration 1)

Mr Steve Hilton-Limb proposes to build a new house on the site of the former mill system and dam cottage at Ayton Farm, Aberargie, Perth and Kinross. The planning consent for this development (Perth and Kinross Planning Application 10/00743/FLL) included an archaeological condition which specified the need for the implementation of a standing building survey to record the former mill cottage and mill system which will be affected by the proposed development. This survey was carried out by the author on Thursday 20th January 2011 (Site Code AYT01); weather conditions were cold and frosty with clear blue skies.

Historical Background (Illustrations 2, 3 and 4)

General Roy's Military Survey of Scotland (1747-55) shows no buildings on the site at Ayton Farm and marks the site of Ayton House as 'Pottie' (Roy 1747-55). James Stobie's map of the late 18th century does show a mill and lead (diverted from the Farg Water) on the site (Stobie 1783). The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1860 has a very clear depiction of the mill pond, dam and sluice, dam house and Farg's Mill (later Ayton Farm) (Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1860). By the 1901 survey Farg's Mill has become Ayton Farm although the pond, lead and dam house are still indicated (Ordnance Survey 1901). A search of the County of Perth Valuation Rolls located plenty of references to Farg's Mill and land from 1858-59 up until 1878-79 when the mill has become Ayton Farm and sawmill (Valuation Rolls of the County of Perth 1858-1879). Tracking down precise references to the building being surveyed proved difficult but entries were located for 1885-86 when the sub tenant of the 'dam house' is J.Brough, further references to the 'house' connected with Ayton Farm were also found for 1886-87, 1887-88 and 1888-89 when the tenants were John Barclay, William Black and A.McIntosh respectively (Valuation Rolls of the County of Perth 1886-1889). By the 1901 Census 'Ayton Dam House' is occupied by Andrew Henderson Gray, his wife Jeanie and three children. Andrew Gray is listed as being a 'cattleman on farm' there is no mention of any responsibility for the dam (Ancestry.co.uk 1901 Census). It appears that the mill at Ayton Farm ceased to function as such in the late 19th/early 20th century although Aberargie flour and corn mill and Aberargie sawmill may have still been using the water power from the lead and mill pond.

Description of mill cottage / dam house

The roofless remains of a single storey building that represents the former mill cottage/dam house at Ayton Farm lie to the South of the farm at 22m OD. This building is aligned East to West and lies on the west side of the former mill lead, it is accessed by a small arched stone bridge (Illus 6).

Northern Elevation (Illustration 7 and 26)

This elevation has a central doorway with a window on either side and is constructed of rough rubble (river cobbles and sandstones) bonded with lime mortar. The windows and doorway are defined by shaped sandstone blocks. The eastern end of this elevation survives to roof level whereas the western end has collapsed to a height of 1.6m. Its wall is 0.60m thick.

Eastern Elevation(Illustration 8 and 27)

This elevation has a blocked small window just below the apex of the gable and a blocked narrow access point at ground floor level. It is constructed of rough rubble bonded with lime mortar.

Western Elevation(Illustration 9 and 27)

This elevation has a window at its southern end and a central hole through the wall behind the fireplace. It is constructed of rough rubble bonded with lime mortar. The window has a wooden lintel but is not defined in the same way as the windows in the front Northern elevation, its wall is 0.60m thick.

Southern Elevation(Illustration 10 and 26)

This elevation has a window at its eastern end and is constructed of rough rubble bonded with lime mortar.

Interior of building(Illustrations 12, 13 and 14)

This building has a fireplace and chimney in each of its internal gable walls. There appears to be the remains of a stove in the western fireplace. The whole interior is full of a collapsed slate roof and associated timbers and it was not possible to locate either an original internal floor surface or remains of any internal subdivisions to the building.

Millpond, dam wall and sluice

Dam Wall and Sluice(Illustrations 15-19)

The dam wall is constructed of mortar bonded sandstone blocks and runs from East to West across the Northern end of the mill pond and stands 2.10m high at its highest point. The wall is 1.25m wide for just over 13.30m before it changes into a much narrower wall (0.42m wide) for another 8m and runs to the foot of the earthwork that forms the western side of the millpond. Almost half way across its length there is a gap 1.3m wide and 0.40m deep that presumably operated as its sluice, there is a visible culverted channel running under this gap through which water still flows.

Mill Pond(Illustrations 20-22)

The most visible element of the mill pond is the substantial earthwork that formed its western boundary, this still runs up to the field boundary to the south. The eastern side of the pond is less well defined and a small stream still flows sluggishly through its entire length and feeds into the former mill lead to Ayton Farm.

Mill Lead (Illustrations 24 and 25)

This is still visible running up to Ayton Farm where there is still a surviving stone built section just before a drop down to the former mill race and wheel housing of Farg's Mill. The lead can then be seen disappearing under the farm buildings in a culvert.

Discussion

The mill cottage/dam house, mill dam and mill pond are an interesting example of an attempt, presumably by the Ayton Estate, to take advantage of a fast flowing water supply (the Farg water) by diverting it to power several mills. This system may not have functioned for very long as corn became more commonly ground in sizeable urban roller mills from at least 1880 (Hume 1977). Farg's Mill became a sawmill for a while before ceasing to be used in the late 19th/early 20th century. The mill cottage/dam house although a small building was built with some thought as to its appearance as can be seen by the cut block surrounds of its front windows and doorway. Remarkably from the entry in the 1901 census it was the home for a family of 5 at one period of its occupation (Ancestry.co.uk 1901 Census Scotland).

Recommendations

The author feels that the photographic survey, drawn elevations and written notes of the nature of the mill cottage/dam house and mill system are an adequate record of them prior to their redevelopment. However the final decision on the need for any further work rests with Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust.

References

Cartographic Sources (<http://www.nls.uk/maps>)

Roy, William General 1747-55 **Military Survey of Scotland**

Stobie, James 1783 **A large scale map of Perth and Clackmannan**

Ordnance Survey Maps - Six-inch 1st edition, Scotland, 1843-1882 and 1901.

Internet Resources

Ancestry.co.uk *1901 Scotland Census* Parish:Abernethy; ED: 3; Page 9; Line 1; Roll: CSSCT1901_114; Year; 1901

Printed

CC1/8/1/1A-213 County of Perth valuation rolls 1855-1978, 1983-1988 (Perth and Kinross Council Archives, A K Bell Library, Perth)

Hume, J R 1977 **The Industrial Archaeology of Scotland – 2 – The Highlands and Islands**

Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Perth and Kinross
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Mill cottage/dam house and mill system, Ayton Farm, Aberargie, Perth and Kinross
PROJECT CODE:	AYT01
PARISH:	Abernethy
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Derek Hall
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Derek Hall, archaeologist and ceramic specialist
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Standing Building Survey
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Former mill cottage/dam house
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	N0 16394 15547
START DATE	20 th January 2011
END DATE	20 th January 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A photographic and drawn survey was carried out of the derelict former mill cottage/dam house at Ayton Farm. The surviving mill dam, sluice and mill pond were also recorded. This was undertaken in advance of the redevelopment of the site for a new house.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr Steve Hilton-Limb
CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	N/A
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	34 Glenfarg Terrace, Perth, PH2 0AP
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	NMRS
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk

Report Illustration List

Illustration 1 Location of former mill cottage/dam house and associated mill system at Ayton Farm, Aberargie (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2010. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)

Illustration 2 Site on General Roy's Military Survey 1747-55 (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

Illustration 3 'Mills of Farg' marked on James Stobie's map of the late 18th century (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

Illustration 4 Farg Mill, mill cottage/dam house and mill pond on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of c 1860 (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

Illustration 5 General view of mill cottage/dam house looking South

Illustration 6 Small bridge over mill lead providing access to mill cottage/dam house looking South

Illustration 7 Northern elevation of mill cottage/dam house looking South

Illustration 8 Eastern gable of mill cottage/dam house showing blocked window just below gable and access point at ground level looking West

Illustration 9 Western gable of mill cottage/dam house looking East

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Illustration 11 Eastern end of Southern elevation of mill cottage/dam house showing possible window looking North West

Illustration 12 Fireplace and chimney at Western end of mill cottage/dam house looking West

Illustration 13 Fireplace at Eastern end of mill cottage/dam house

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Illustration 15 General view of North facing side of mill dam/sluiice looking South West

Illustration 16 Detail view of mill dam/sluiice looking South East

Illustration 17 General view of South side of mill dam/sluiice looking North

Illustration 18 Detail of central part of mill dam/sluiice on its Southern side looking North East

Illustration 19 Top of sluice on top of dam wall

Illustration 20 Narrower piece of dam wall at its Western end

Illustration 21 Earthwork forming Western side of mill pond looking South

Illustration 22 General view showing relationship between mill cottage/dam house and mill dam and pond looking East

Illustration 23 Mill pond looking North

Illustration 24 Mill lead heading towards former mill at Ayton Farm looking North

Illustration 25 Ayton Farm former Farg's Mill wheel pit and lead running under building looking East

Illustration 26 (Top) Northern elevation of Mill cottage/Dam house

(Bottom) Southern elevation of Mill cottage/Dam house Scale 1:50

Illustration 27 (Top) Western elevation of mill cottage/dam house

(Bottom) Eastern elevation of mill cottage/dam house (Scale 1:50)

Full Photographic Archive

61. General view of mill cottage looking South.
62. As above.
63. As above.
64. Detail view of mill cottage looking South.
65. Eastern elevation of mill cottage looking South.
66. As above.
67. Detail of blocked access at ground level in Eastern elevation.
68. Northern elevation of mill cottage looking South.
69. Eastern end of Northern elevation looking South.
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71. Western elevation looking East.
72. As above.
73. Detail of window in Western elevation.
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75. Southern elevation looking West.
76. Fireplace and chimney in Western elevation looking West.
77. Detail of fireplace in Western elevation.
78. Fireplace in Eastern elevation.
79. Detail of Western end of Northern elevation.
80. Interior of cottage looking East showing roof collapse.
81. Handmade bricks used as repair in interior of window in Northern elevation.
82. General view of mill cottage looking South East.
83. General view of mill cottage looking North East.
84. Detail view of mill cottage looking North East.
85. North side of millpond dam wall looking South.
86. Detail of Northern side of millpond dam wall looking South.

87. General view of millpond dam wall looking South.
88. As above looking South West.
89. South side of millpond dam wall looking North.
90. As above looking North West.
91. As above looking North.
92. Mill pond looking North (sheep standing on earthwork)
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94. General view of mill pond looking North.
95. South end of mill pond under tree cover looking West.
96. General view of mill pond looking West.
97. General view of mill cottage, mill dam and mill pond looking West.
98. General view of South end of mill pond.
99. General view of mill cottage looking West.
100. As above detail view.
101. Earthwork forming Western side of mill pond looking South East.
102. As above.
103. Earthwork looking North.
104. As above.
105. Detail view of stone bridge over mill lead looking North.
106. As above looking North West.
107. General view of mill dam, mill cottage and bridge looking West.
108. Detail view of bridge, mill dam and mill cottage looking South.
109. Mill cottage, bridge and mill lead looking North.
110. Western elevation of mill cottage looking North East.
111. Northern elevation of mill cottage looking South East.
112. Eastern end of Northern elevation looking South.
113. Bolt holes in doorway of North elevation.

114. Detail view of fireplace in Eastern elevation of mill cottage.
115. As above.
116. Fireplace in Eastern elevation.
117. Handmade bricks in repair to window in North elevation.
118. General view of mill cottage, mill dam and mill pond earthwork looking East.
119. As above but detail.
120. Relationship of mill cottage to mill dam and mill pond looking East.
121. Mill dam wall looking West.
122. Top view of mill dam wall looking West.
123. 'Sluice' area on top of mill dam wall looking West.
124. Mill dam wall looking East.
125. Narrow wall at Eastern end of mill dam looking West.
126. Mill dam wall looking North East.
127. Mill dam wall looking North West.
128. Field wall running East from mill dam.
129. Detail view of centre section of mill dam wall looking North East.
130. As above.
131. South side of mill dam wall looking North.
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133. Detail of centre section of North side of mill dam wall looking South.
134. As above looking South East.
135. Culvert under mill dam looking South.
136. Mill lead looking North.
137. General view of mill cottage, mill dam and lead looking South.
138. Mill lead approaching Ayton Farm looking North West.
139. As above.
140. Mill race and mill wheel housing at Ayton Farm looking South West.

141. Mill race, mill wheel housing at Ayton Farm looking South.

142. Mill race, mill wheel housing and culverted lade running under Ayton Farm

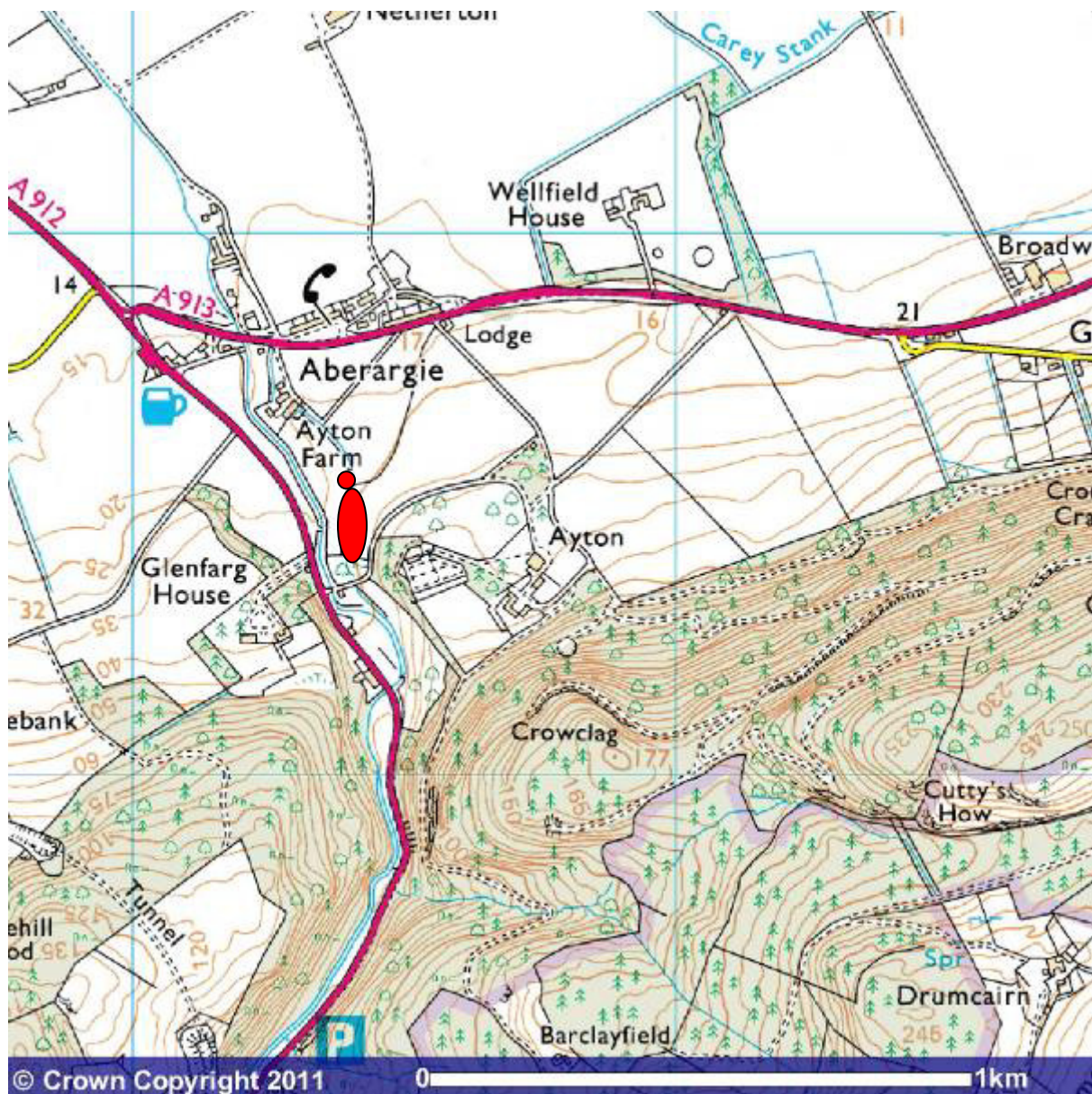


Illustration 1 Location of former mill cottage/dam house and associated mill system at Ayton Farm, Aberargie (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2010. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)

Roy Map - zoom out to display Roy Map Index

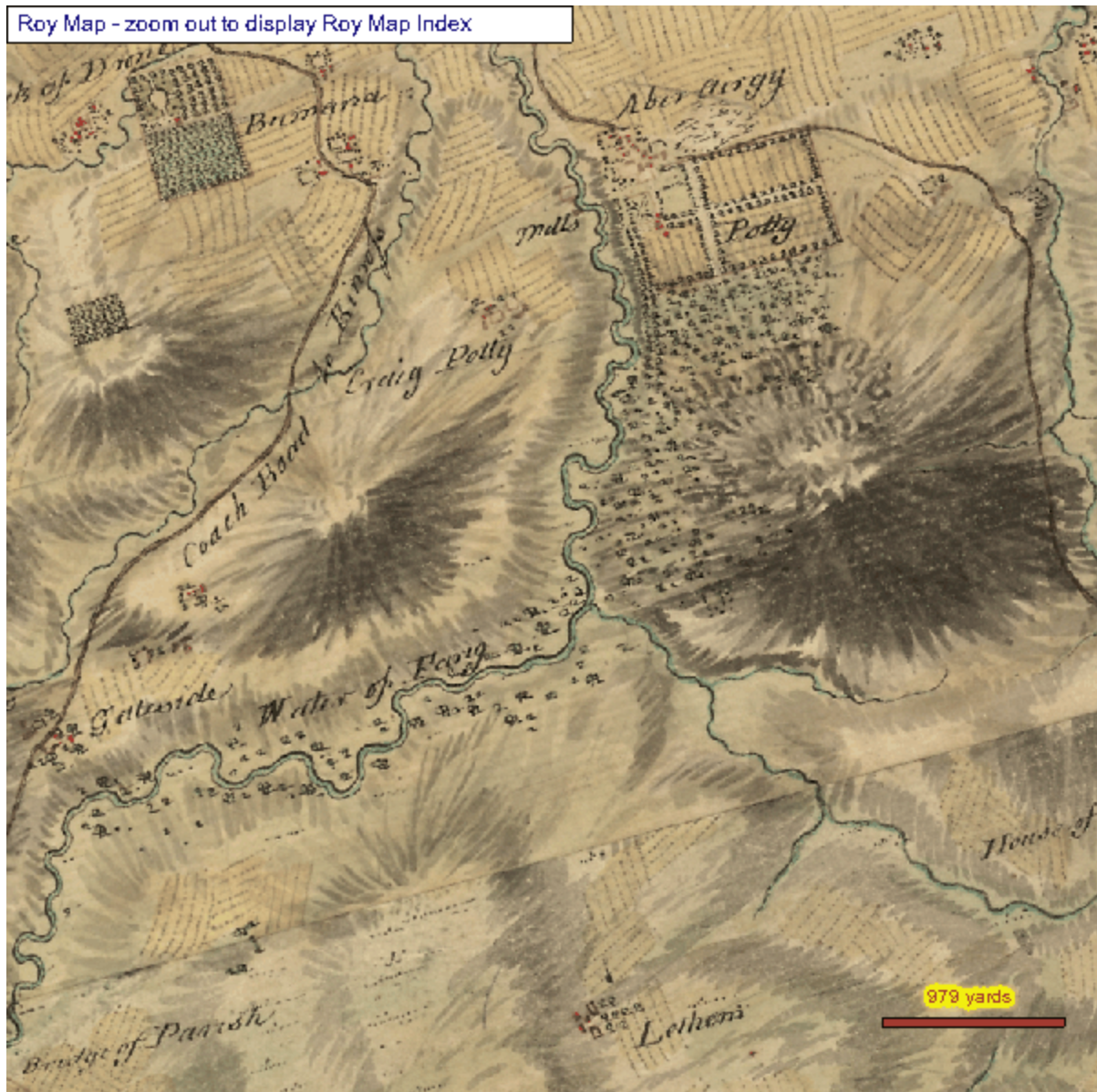


Illustration 2 Site on General Roy's Military Survey 1747-55 (only Pottie mill is marked) (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)



Illustration 3 'Mills of Farg' and lead marked on James Stobie's map of the late 18th century (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)

Six-inch 1840s-1880s maps - zoom out to display small-scale 1920s maps



Illustration 4 Farg Mill, mill cottage/dam house and mill pond on 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of c 1860 (© Trustees of National Library of Scotland)



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Illustration 6 Small bridge over mill lead providing access to mill cottage/dam house looking South



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Illustration 25 Ayton Farm former Farg's Mill wheel pit and lead running under building looking East

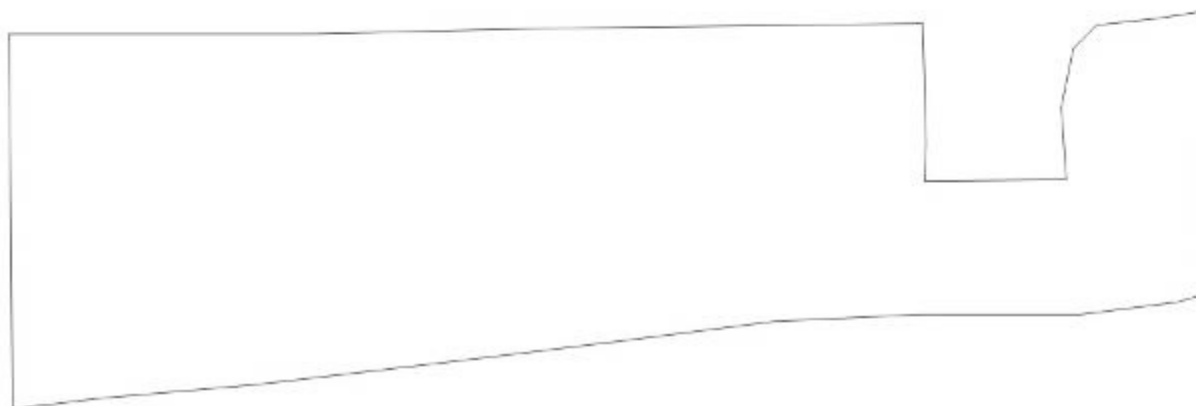
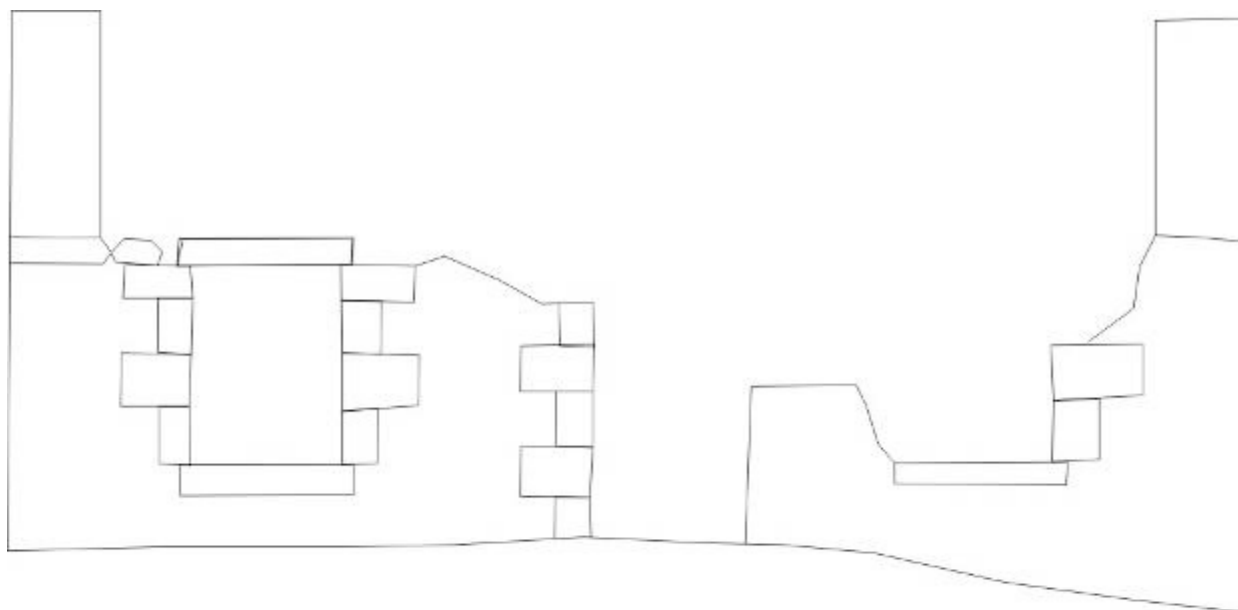


Illustration 26 (Top) Northern elevation of Mill cottage/Dam house

(Bottom) Southern elevation of Mill cottage/Dam house Scale 1:50

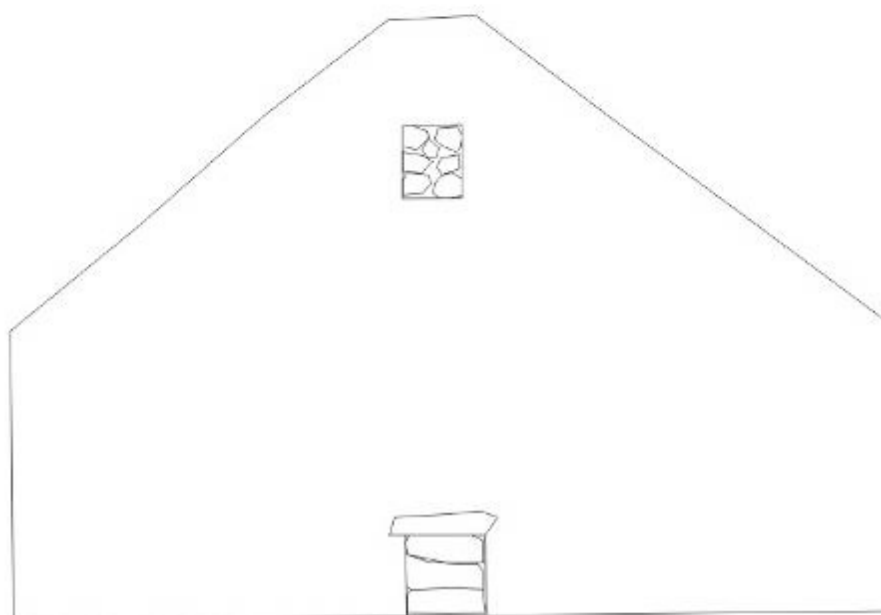
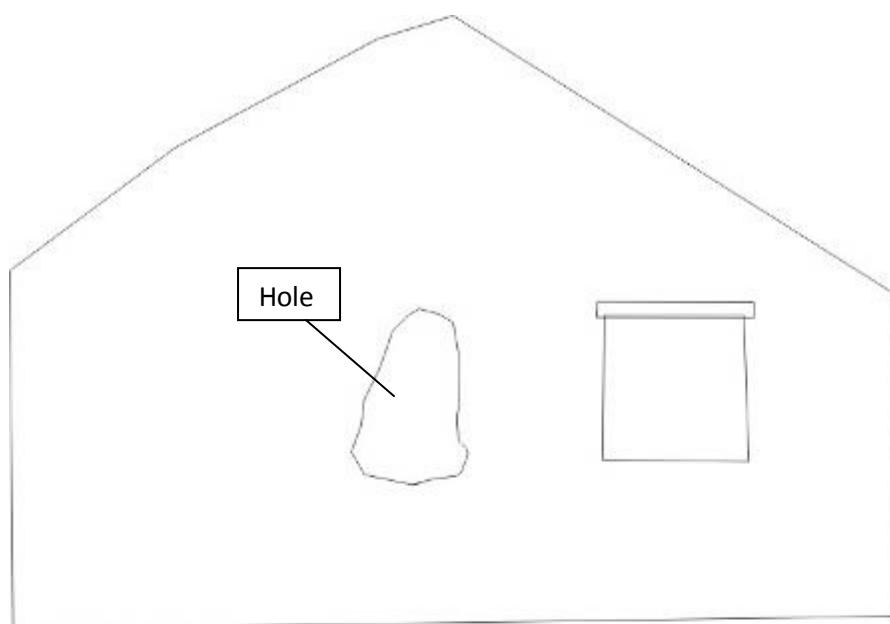


Illustration 27 (Top) Western elevation of mill cottage/dam house

(Bottom) Eastern elevation of mill cottage/dam house (Scale 1:50)