Standing Building Survey
Holemill
Whigstreet
ANGUS

FF17

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STANDING BUILDING SURVEY
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ABSTRACT

Alder Archaeology undertook a Level 1 Standing Building Survey of a ruined former cornmill at Holemill, Whigstreet, Angus, in advance of conversion to a new dwellinghouse. The roofless mill building, with a date stone of 1723, was centred on NGR NO 48223 43670. The work was undertaken on 14th September 2018 in clear but overcast weather conditions and comprised the creation of a full photographic and narrative record and annotated plan and elevation drawings. The mill fabric and form were entirely consistent with an eighteenth century date of construction, although manuscript evidence indicates a mill stood on or near the site as early as 1517.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

Bell Ingram Design Ltd commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake a Standing Building Survey of a ruined former cornmill at Holemill, just outside Whigstreet, Angus, in advance of conversion to a dwellinghouse. The proposed development is centred on NGR NO 48223 43670. The work (site code FF17) was undertaken on 14th September 2018 in clear but overcast weather conditions. The requirement was for a Level 1 survey, comprising a full photographic record with annotated plan, phase and elevation drawings, map regression and a narrative summary of the building.

The work was designed to satisfy the archaeological condition on development application reference 16/00231/FULL.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this survey was to create a permanent record of the building in its current condition and setting, taking account of its form, function, fabric and phases of construction and use, with details of features of interest.

1.3 Reporting

The present document has been prepared as the final report on this survey. Copies will be sent to the client, The National Record of the Historic Environment at Historic Environment Scotland, and Angus Historic Environment Record.

1.4 Planning and Curatorial Issues

This standing building survey constitutes archaeological work designed to satisfy the outstanding archaeological condition on the planning consent for this development.

1.5 Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Lauren Livingston of Bell Ingram and Nigel Ruckley and David Walsh of the Kinettles and District Heritage Group for their assistance and guidance throughout this project. In particular, we are indebted to KDHG for the kind provision of their 2011 survey report. Bell Ingram Design Ltd funded this survey.

2 Details of Work

2.1 The Site (Illus 1)

The ruined, roofless former cornmill occupied a gently sloping watermeadow to the S of the Kerbet Burn (downstream, the Kerbet Water), which flows E-W 350m S of the hamlet of Whigstreet, approximately 5km SE of Forfar, Angus. To the SE of the old mill was an active modern farmstead, with a N-S road connecting this with the B9127 at Whigstreet, crossing the Kerbet via a stone bridge (period unassigned in the NMRS). Beyond the meadow, the ground sloped fairly steeply upwards, on either side of the burn and particularly to the N, where a steep E-W ridge formed the N bank.

2.2 Archaeological Potential

The mill was surveyed in 2011 by the Kinettles and District Heritage Group, who found a reference to a mill on or near the site in a charter of 1517, with the last mention of a miller in Holemill in the 1881 census. A photograph dated 1888 shows the mill intact, with a sawmill also standing nearby. The present building was constructed in the eighteenth century, with a date stone of 1723 incorporated into the N wall. It is depicted on the 1st Edition OS Map (1865, surveyed 1859). A 1992 photograph shows one end of the building still roofed. Entirely roofless by 2011, the mill had since suffered significant further collapse.

2.3 Archaeological Method

All exterior elevations were photographed with a Nikon D3100 digital camera. The interior of the building was partially blocked with mounds of stone rubble and heavily overgrown and the walls were found to be unstable (indeed, debris fell during the survey), so only those areas that could be photographed safely were recorded. The building was also photographed in its current setting.

The dimensions of the building and all significant features that could be reached were measured. A narrative account of the form, fabric and details of construction and use of the mill was created, while historic maps of the site in the National Library collection were consulted.

2.4 Results of Investigations

Cartographic and manuscript sources

Maps examined were the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Edition OS maps (one-to-six inch), Timothy Pont (c.1583-96) *Lower Angus and Perthshire East of the Tay*, Robert Gordon (c.1636-52), *A map of Eastern Scotland, including basins of rivers Don, Dee, Tay, Forth and Tweed*, Joan Blaeu *(1662-5) Atlas Maior, Volume 6, Angusia Provincia Scotiae Sive The Shire of Angus*, Herman Moll (1745) *The Shire of Angus or Forfar*, William Roy (1747-55) *Military Survey of Scotland*, John Ainslie (1794, 1801) *Map of the County of Forfar or Shire of Angus*, John Thomson (1832) *Atlas of Scotland (Northern Part of Angus Shire, Southern Part)*. Of these, the name "Holmill" appears on Pont's map adjacent to the "Kerbett" river and "Karbuddow" (Kirkbuddo, to the E of the site); Ainslie depicts "Hole Mill" with its lade to the S of Whigstreet; Thomson shows an un-named watermill S of Whigstreet; all three OS maps show a roofed building in the correct location. Roy's survey, falling between Pont and Ainslie, does not show a mill but also fails to depict sites such as Kirkbuddo and Little Lour which are shown on, for example, Blaeu's earlier map and are therefore known to have existed in Roy's time.

From cartographic evidence, it appears that a mill stood on the site in the sixteenth century and this corroborates the evidence of a 1517 confirmation of charter in which a "Hole et molendino" is mentioned (Royal Geographical Society 1517 157). This is not, of course, necessarily the same building presently on the site, which incorporates the 1723 date stone; in this same year, the Church of Scotland Old Parochial Registers first mention Holemill, although variants of the name appear earlier in other records held by the RGS (Kinettles and District Heritage Group, unpublished report).

Physical survey

The mill was aligned approximately E-W (in reality rather more ESE-WNW) and measured 17.60m x 6.10m, with at least two floor levels. The fabric throughout was of grey stone rubble wall construction, with stugged, squared casings of doors and windows. Traces of lime mortar and possible harling were more apparent on the W and S elevations, having crumbled away across much of the remainder, particularly on the E elevation. Patches of possible whitewash were also apparent on the S elevation. Although rubble, the fabric featured fairly regular courses of rough-dressed blocks, a pattern repeated throughout the building, which bore no signs of clearly distinct phases of construction. The W, N and S elevations formed three sides of a rectangle, with a gable at the W end; the E end, however, was semi-circular, giving the building as a whole a boat-like appearance. The rounded end is believed to have contained a kiln for drying corn, incorporated into the building; however, the interior of the kiln could not be accessed due to rubble build-up. An interior N-S sub-dividing wall partitioned the kiln from the remainder of the building, but was partially obscured by rubble and undergrowth.

The ruin was entirely roofless, with slates remaining only on the gable end. Several fallen slates were present scattered on the ground and were found to be sub-rectangular and a mix of true slate and other delaminated grey stone types, with single circular peg holes towards one end.

The S elevation included an extensive area of total collapse of the wall fabric, which had occurred since 2011. It featured a doorway and window at the W end on the first floor, where a 3.00m-wide earth ramp leading from the upwards slope of the natural hillside to the doorway raised the exterior ground level. The W side of the ramp was 2.50m from the W end of the elevation, with a drop of 0.90m to the ground floor, where a barred widow was set in an embrasure, the sill of which was c.1.00m above the interior ground surface (exact measurement was impossible due to rubble, silt and undergrowth). This lower window was 0.70m wide x 0.60m high. The first floor window 1.32m from the W end of the elevation was 0.75m wide and survived to 0.92m high, with its lintel and the wallhead above absent due to collapse. The stump of a mature ash tree was situated against the wall face between these two windows. The doorway, situated on the W side of the ramp at first floor level, was 1.07m wide and survived to a height of 1.95m, with lintel and wallhead collapsed. Iron hinge pins were present in the E jamb. The door was closed-off by a corroded iron frame gate, but this was clearly a recent and temporary safety measure, the interior first floor having collapsed.

To the E of the ramp, the wall fabric had collapsed leaving a 2.90m wide gap at first floor level which corresponded to the full width of a rectangular double doorway at ground floor level featuring stugged casing, a moulded jamb and a wooden frame still intact on the E side of the aperture. Moulded masonry in a debris pile in front of the doorway probably represented the lintel of a first floor window, two moulded stones representing the W side casing of this window being all that survived in situ on the W edge of the gap. Set into the jamb on either side of the doorway were two iron hinges, with two more set in the exterior wall face of the S elevation beside the doorway, suggesting either two pairs of double doors or a reconfiguration of the doors at some stage in the life of the mill. If the former, this possibly represents a security system protecting what was probably the vehicle entrance to the mill where flour sacks could

be loaded into carts for transportation, the double-skinned doors preventing unauthorised access. This part of the elevation was effectively set within a sub-rectangular pit formed by a N-S slab-built wall retaining the ramp and a similar E-W wall retaining the natural slope to the S, a third wall being the mill building itself. The space thus limited measured 5.50m N-S x 8.00m E-W, with its base at the general level of the surrounding meadow.

At the E end of the S elevation, within the rounded kiln structure, a window at the wallhead with lintel still intact measured c.1.00m x c.0.60m wide and featured a piece of broken millstone as one of its casing stones on the W side.

A window of the same dimensions was the only intentional feature of the curving E elevation, where it was set at the wallhead in the exact centre of the curve. The only other feature of note was a vertical crack running from the ground to the sill of the window, a flaw clearly visible in the 1880s photograph of the building.

The E end of the N elevation featured a third window within the kiln, of the same dimensions as the other two but minus its lintel, 2.80m from the end of the elevation. 3.00m from the W (gable) end of the elevation was a ground floor window, the sill of which was located 1.30m from the exterior ground surface. The window measured 0.69m wide x 0.80m high, with three corroded iron bars still in place. In the interior, the window was set within an embrasure directly opposite the first floor entrance in the S elevation. Directly above the window, at first floor level, were a sill and part of the W side casing representing another window, now collapsed.

The W elevation, the gable end of the building, featured slates in place on the S side of the gable, the N side being bare. At the base of the elevation was the sub-rectangular pit for the former waterwheel, located opposite the former lade which flowed S-N towards the building before turning W 8.00m S of the wheel pit, where it had been diverted away from its original course. The pit measured 1.20m wide and 5.00m long, ending at the N end of the elevation, with a 1.00m high x 1.20m wide slab blocking the S end, rubble behind obscuring the former course of the lade. The pit was an average of 1.00m deep, cut into the hillside at the S end and opening at the ground level of the meadow at the N end. A mature ash tree grew on the W retaining wall of the pit, obscuring part of its length, but the slab construction could nevertheless be seen. Within the pit, a blocked aperture in the centre of the W elevation of the mill building extended from the base level of the pit to 0.70m high x 0.63m wide and featured cement rather than the lime mortar of elsewhere in the fabric, suggesting the blocking was relatively recent. The aperture probably represented the position of the wheel axle, which would have passed through it to the milling mechanism within the building, suggesting the wheel was positioned low down against the side of the mill and overshot by the lade rather than undershot. This also suggested the wheel pit was originally considerably deeper than in its present state. An alcove set 0.32m into the wall face 1.10m N of the blocked aperture was of the same width but 0.80m high and perhaps represented an access hatch to control an outflow sluice. Two beam slots 2.50m above the base of the pit possibly represented support for a roof or retaining frame surrounding the wheel.

The interior of the main mill building W of the kiln could be accessed with care but was thickly overgrown and contained mounds of rubble. The walls were found to be unstable. The ground floor room measured approximately 10.00m long x 5.00m wide, with the partition wall at the E end dividing the main building from the kiln. Rotting,

collapsed wooden floor beams along the N and S elevations indicated the position of a wooden floor at the level of the ramp and entrance doorway in the S elevation. This may have permitted the pouring of grain down onto the millstones, the flour being extracted below, an efficient method allowing continuous milling. At the other end of the room, the drying kiln could have been fed in the same fashion.

3 Interpretation

The mill appeared to have been constructed in one phase, with cracking to the curved E end appearing later due to the inherent difficulty of building a curved wall with irregular stones and perhaps also due to the erosion of the lime mortar and harling. There was no evidence to contradict the 1723 date stone, with the fabric and style entirely consistent with an eighteenth century building. It is quite conceivable, however, that material from an earlier mill was re-used, as it is known that a mill was present in the vicinity from at least 1517. The evidence of the 1881 census suggests that the mill continued in use into the late nineteenth century; the blocking-off of the wheel axle aperture indicates later re-use, perhaps as an outbuilding for storage. Certainly, it was not simply abandoned, as map and photographic evidence show the roof to have remained intact into the twentieth century. In contrast, following removal of the remaining roof after 1992, deterioration has been rapid and severe.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Recommendations for Further Work

Alder Archaeology consider the standing building record to have been compiled correctly and do not recommend further work in connection with the present development. However, the final decision ultimately rests with Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service, as curators of Angus archaeology.

5 Bibliography

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition One-to-Six Inch, Forfarshire, Sheet XLV (includes Carmyllie; Dunichen; Inverarity; Kirkden; Monikie; Panbride), surveyed 1859, published 1865

Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition One-to-Six Inch, Forfarshire, Sheet XLV.NW (includes Carmyllie; Dunichen; Forfar; Inverarity), surveyed 1901, published 1903

Ordnance Survey 3rd Edition One-to-Six Inch, Forfarshire, Sheet XLV.NW (includes Carmyllie; Dunichen; Forfar; Inverarity), surveyed 1922, published 1926

Appendix 1 Photographic Register

Image No	*Description*	*View*
0001-6	Location shots, E end of mill	W, NW, SW
0007-9	Location shots, W end of mill	SE, E
0010-12	W elevation (exterior)	E
0013	Detail, beams slots in W elevation (exterior)	E
0014	Detail, alcove at N end, W elevation (exterior)	E
0015	Location shot, alcove at N end, W elevation (exterior)	SE
0016-17	N elevation (exterior)	S
0018	N elevation (exterior), W end	S
0019	N elevation (exterior), E end	S
0020-21	E elevation (exterior)	W
0022	S elevation (exterior), oblique	NW
0023-24	S elevation (exterior), E end	N
0025	S elevation (exterior), centre	N
0026	S elevation (exterior)	N
0027-28	S elevation (exterior), W end	N
0029-30	S elevation (exterior), gable	N
0031-32	“Vehicle pit”, W wall	W
0033-34	“Vehicle pit”, S wall	S
0035-36	W elevation (interior)	W
0037-38	S elevation (interior), oblique	SW
0039-40	N elevation (interior), W end, oblique	NW
0041	N elevation (interior), centre	N

0042-43	N elevation (interior), W end, oblique	NNW, NW
0044	N elevation (interior), centre, with rubble and debris build-up	N
0045-46	Drying kiln, obstructed by rubble and undergrowth	E
0047-48	Detail, roof slate	-
0049	Detail, collapsed wooden lintel beam	SE
0050-52	Detail, collapsed floor beams	SW, NW
0053	Detail, moulded door jamb with iron hinges	W
0054	Detail, collapsed doorway, rubble and debris build-up, S elevation (exterior)	NW
0055-56	Detail, iron hinges, E jamb, collapsed doorway, S elevation (exterior)	N
0057-58	Detail, iron hinges, W jamb, collapsed doorway, S elevation (exterior), oblique	NW
0059	Detail, lintel fragment from collapsed section of wall, S elevation	-
0060-61	Detail, 1st floor window, S elevation (exterior), E end (kiln)	N
0062	Detail, ground floor window, N elevation (interior), W end	N
0063	Detail, wheel pit, W end of building (exterior)	N
0064	Location shot, lade from wheel pit	S
0065	Location shot, wheel pit and lade	SE
0066	Detail, wheel pit, W end of building (exterior)	S
0067-68	Detail, blocked aperture in wheel pit/W wall of building	E
0069	Location shot, blocked aperture and alcove in wheel pit/W wall of building, oblique	NE
0070-72	Detail, date stone “1723” in W end of N elevation (exterior), taken after tree felled	S

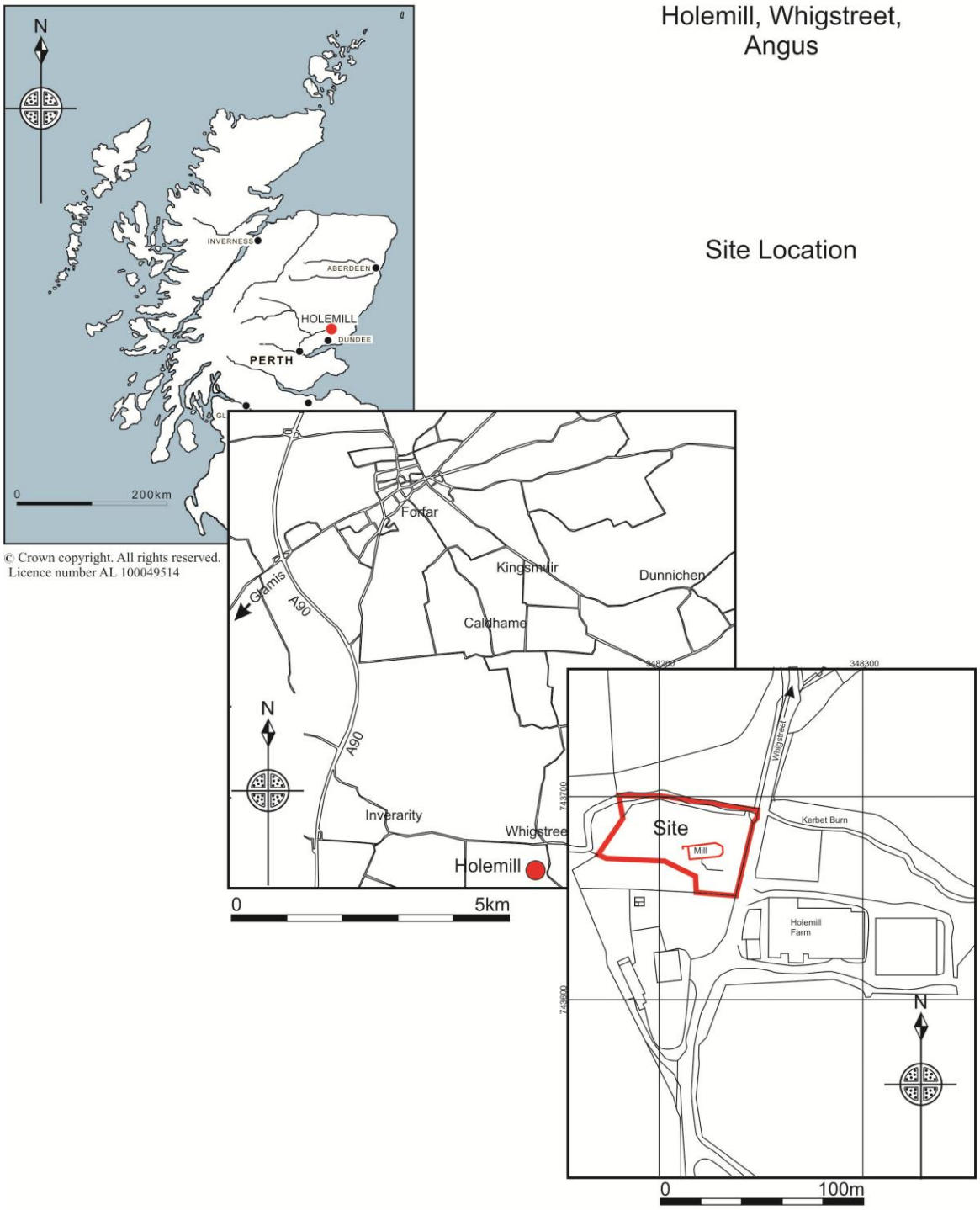
Appendix 2 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Angus
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Holemill, Whigstreet
PROJECT CODE:	FF17
PARISH:	Inverarity
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	C Fyles
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Alder Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	SBR (Level 1)
NMRS NO(S):	NO44SE 59
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Corn Drying Kiln, Grain Mill
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NO 48223 43670
START DATE (this season)	14th September 2018
END DATE (this season)	14th September 2018
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. *DES* ref.)	Survey, 2011
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Alder Archaeology undertook a Level 1 Standing Building Survey of a ruined former cornmill at Holemill, Whigstreet, Angus, in advance of conversion to a new dwellinghouse. The roofless mill building incorporated 1723 date stone. The work was undertaken in clear but overcast weather conditions and comprised the creation of a full photographic and narrative record and annotated plan and elevation drawings. The mill fabric and form were entirely consistent with an eighteenth century date of construction, although manuscript evidence indicates a mill stood on or near the site as early as 1517.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	-
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Bell Ingram Design Ltd
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX
EMAIL ADDRESS:	director@alderarchaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	HES (intended)

Illus 1

Holemill, Whigstreet,
Angus

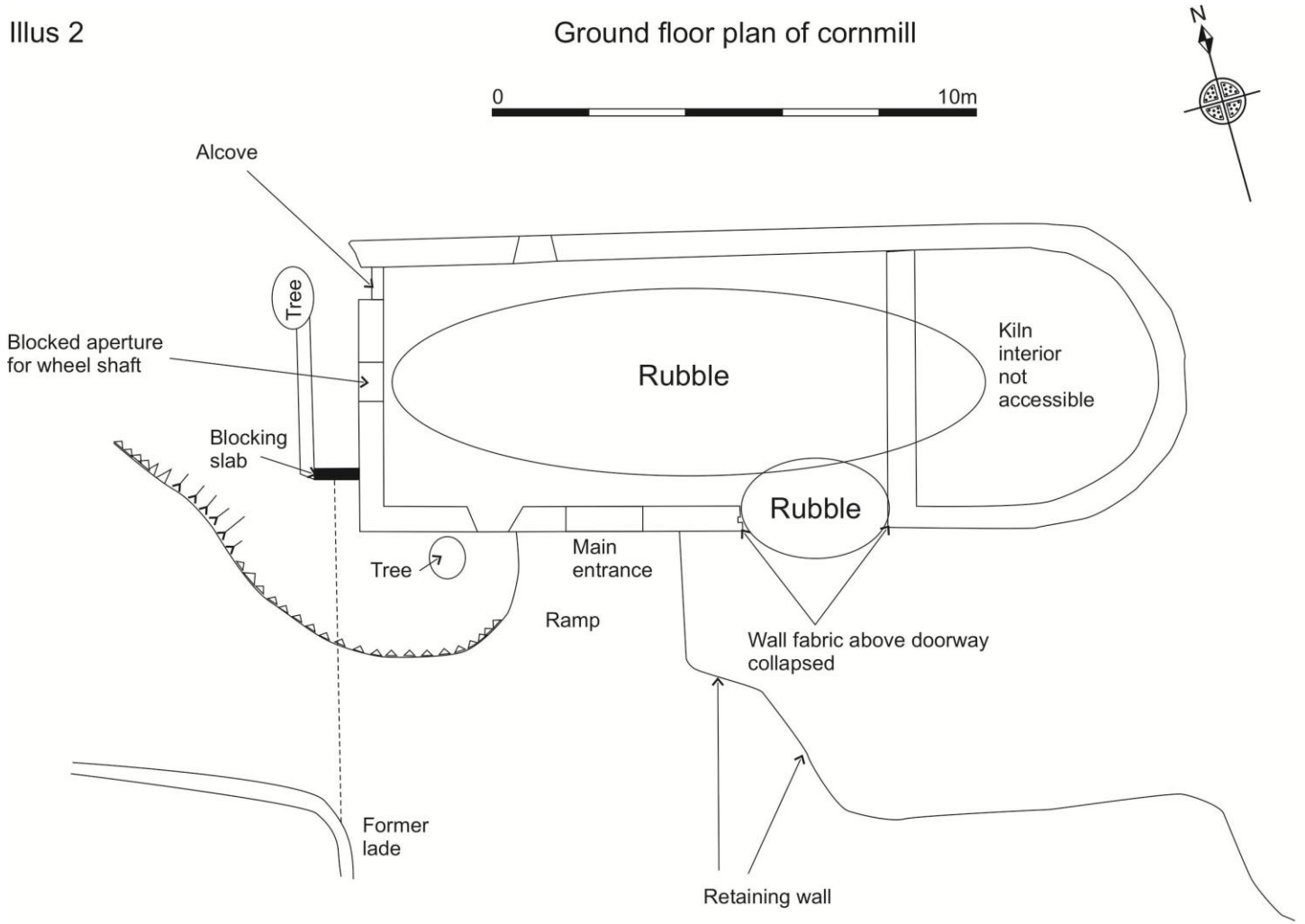
Site Location



FF17

Illus 2

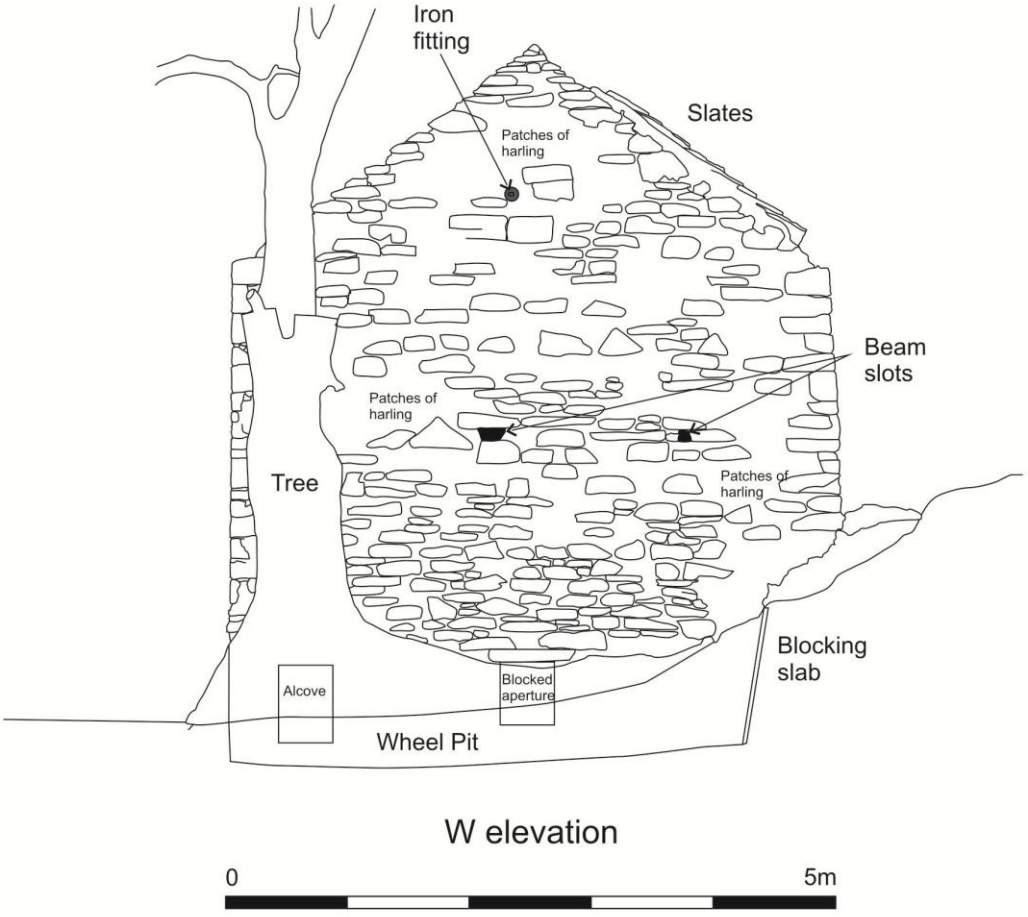
Ground floor plan of cornmill



Baseplan by Kinettles and District Heritage Group

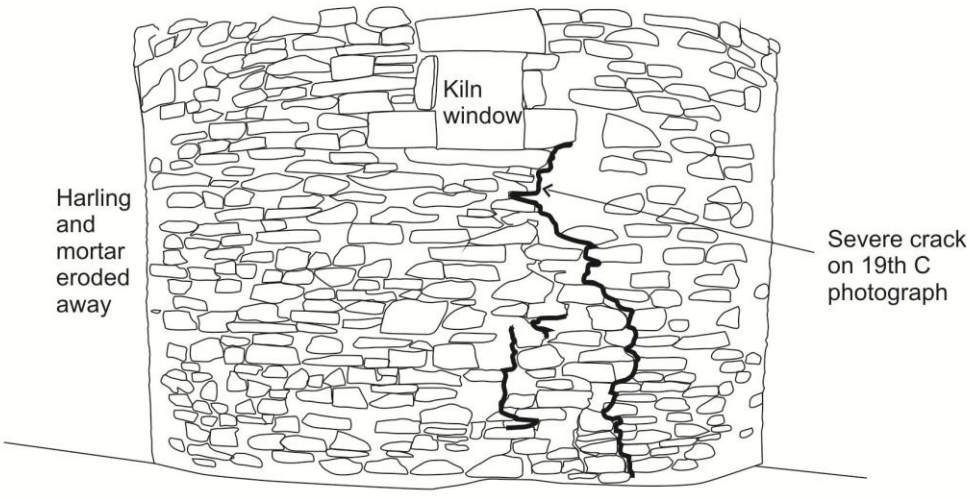
FF17

Illus 3 W and E elevations (external)



W elevation

0 5m

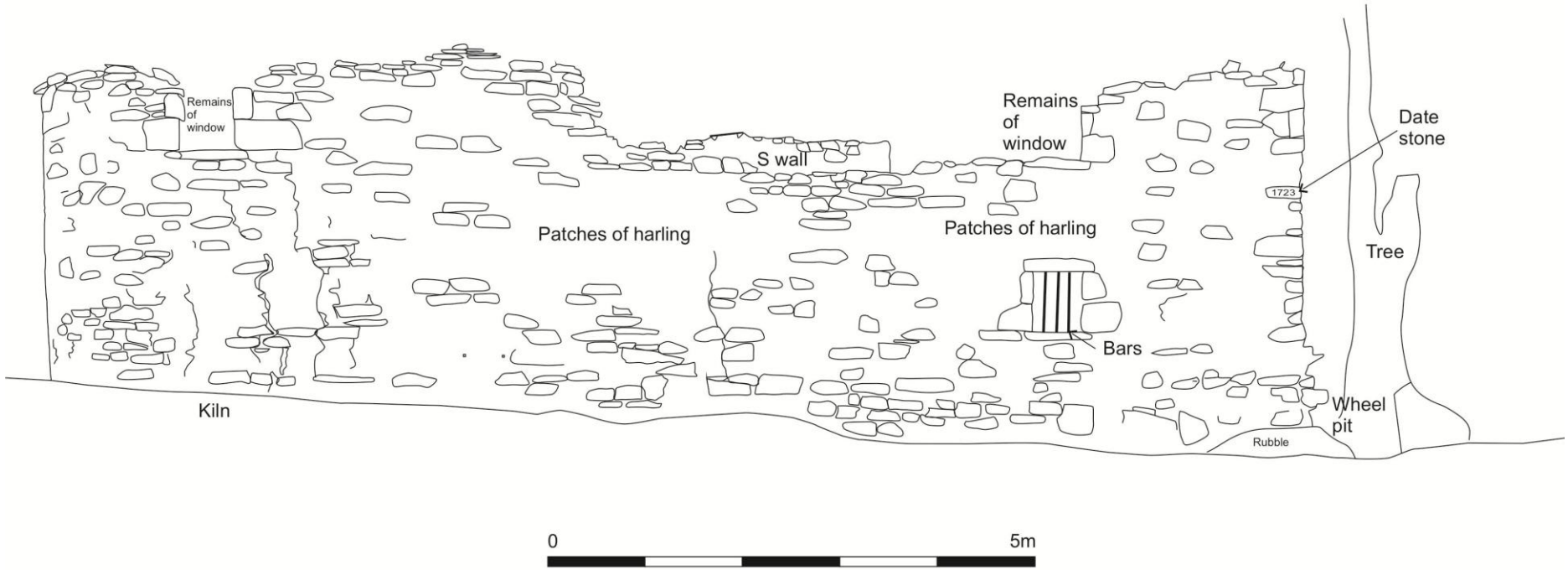


E elevation

FF17

Illus 4

N elevation (external)



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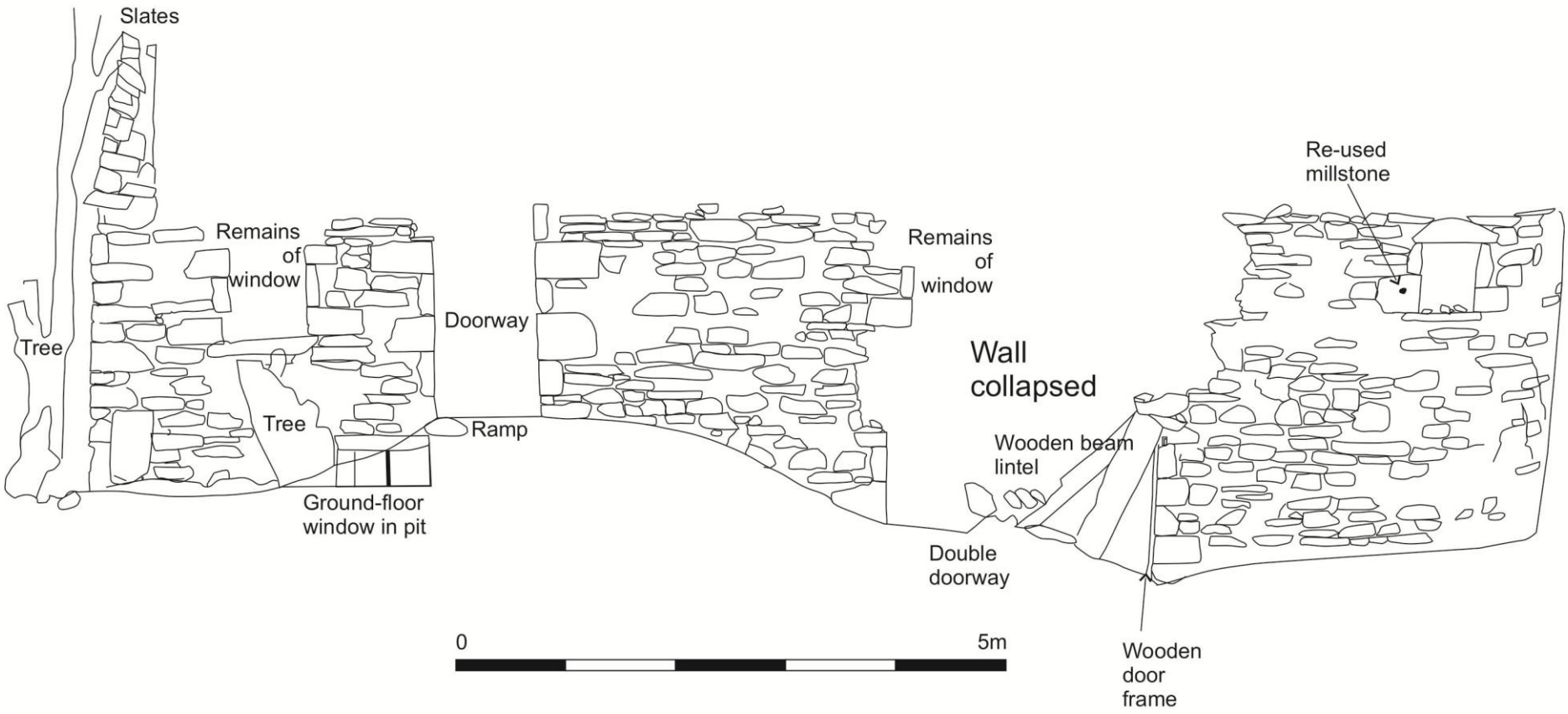
Illus 5

S elevation (external)



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