

Historic Building Record
Blairfindy Castle
Glenlivet
MORAY
GN02



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**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD
BLAIRFINDY CASTLE
GLENLIVET**

GN02

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ABSTRACT

Alder Archaeology conducted an historic building survey of a ruined towerhouse on Crown Estate land at Castleton of Blairfindy, Glenlivet, NGR NJ 19838 28646. The survey included the creation of measured elevations and plans using a Leica Total Station and a full photographic record in both digital images and black and white film of all external and internal elevations, features of interest and the wider setting of the building, which was constructed in the sixteenth century and abandoned by the nineteenth. The work (site code GN02) was undertaken on 13th-15th June 2018 in varying but frequently wet and windy conditions. A remotely operated drone was also used to compile a record of the upper levels of the ruin, which were not directly accessible; this was accomplished on 2nd July 2018. A follow-up visit to verify certain measurements was made on 8th August 2018.

This version of the report contains addenda relating to: a visit made on 28th May, 2019 (site code GN03), to record chimney heads and other features made accessible by the erection of scaffolding for the consolidation works; a second visit on 19th August, 2019 (GN04) recorded two previously inaccessible intra-mural passages; finally, a watching brief (GN05) on the excavation of pits for lightning conductors on 25th November, 2019, resulted in no new archaeological features.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

Arc Architects Ltd commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an historic building survey of Blairfindy Castle, Glenlivet, in advance of consolidation works, on behalf of the Crown Estate. The castle comprises a rectangular main towerhouse with side stair tower or wing, together forming an L-shape, centred on NGR NJ 19838 28646. The survey (site code GN02) was undertaken during the period 13th-15th June 2018 in varied but frequently very windy and wet weather conditions. The requirement was to electronically and photographically record all main elevations and features of interest, as well as compile a narrative account of the building. The present report also contains data from three 2019 visits to record: chimney heads and other features, accessed via consolidation scaffolding; two newly accessible intra-mural passages; work to install new lightning conductors (see 2.4.1-3 *Addenda*, below). A watching brief on engineering test pits was carried out on 11th July, 2018, and forms the subject of a separate report.

The work was designed to satisfy Scheduled Monument Consent for the consolidation works, as specified by Historic Environment Scotland.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the survey was to create a photographic record, measured survey and narrative account of the form, fabric, phasing and salient features of the castle prior to consolidation, conforming to ALGAO guidelines (2013).

1.3 Reporting

The present document has been prepared as the final report on this survey, updated from the original report (2018). Copies will be sent to the client and The National Record of the Historic Environment at Historic Environment Scotland, and the Crown Estate.

1.4 Planning and Curatorial Issues

This survey is designed to satisfy the outstanding archaeological condition on the Scheduled Monument consent for this development.

1.5 Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Tom Morton and Oliver Goddard of Arc Architects and Simon Ovenden of the Crown Estate for their assistance and guidance throughout this project. Arc Architects funded this survey.

2 Details of Work

2.1 The Site (Illus 1)

The roofless, L-shaped castle ruins occupy a generally flat area to the SE of the Glenlivet Distillery and bounded to the NW by a burn flowing past the distillery. A stand of trees encloses the N/NE side of the site, with housing to the SE and S. The land

surrounding the site rises steeply to the SW and falls away to the E to meet the River Livet. More distantly, hills enclose the glen in all directions, with the battlefield of Glenlivet (1594) approximately 5km distant to the E. Selected trees alongside the castle were partially felled during the works to permit the operation of a remote drone, which photographed the upper levels of the ruin. The threshold of the castle stood at 258.734m above sea level.

2.2 Archaeological Potential

The lands of Blairfindy enter the historical record in 1470, when they are for the first time listed as separate from the wider lands of Strathavon. Both Strathavon and Blairfindy were at this time controlled by the Gordon family, as Earls of Huntly, but Blairfindy was tenanted by the Grants as vassals of the Gordons. Since, presumably, the Grants lived on the land they tenanted, a dwelling of some sort was probably constructed on or near the present site. Precisely what form this construction took is unknown, however, although it may have been a hall or hunting lodge. Not until 1563 did a castle certainly stand on the site, built by John Gordon, 3rd of Cluny in that year. An armorial panel (see Appendix 4) above the entrance to the castle, dated 1586 and bearing the initials IG and MG (not HG), is believed to either record the completion of construction or memorialise John, who died shortly afterwards. The Battle of Glenlivet in 1594 may have led to damage to the castle, since a right to timber to repair Blairfindy was noted in 1606. In 1746, following the Battle of Culloden, the “house of Blairfindy” was burned by government troops in reprisal for the Jacobite sympathies of the Grants; however, it is by no means clear that this refers to the castle, which may already have been abandoned. When McGibbon & Ross included Blairfindy in their survey *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland* (1887-92), it was a standing ruin with surviving vaulted cellars. A metal plaque attached to the castle entrance records the partial consolidation of the ruin by the Ministry of Works during the latter half of the twentieth century, although the exact dates of this work are not given.

The castle appears in the NMRS as site number NJ12NE 4, is scheduled as SM105 and is a Category B-listed building.

2.3 Archaeological Method

A full photographic record was compiled using both a Nikon digital SLR and monochrome 35mm film. All exterior and interior elevations were photographed, together with setting and features of interest. A Leica TCR307 EDM was used to produce measured elevations using Penmap and CorelDraw, exported to AutoCAD. Salient features such as doorways and windows were measured, where these were accessible, as part of a narrative description of the ruin, taking in details of fabric, form, construction phasing and likely use. A remotely operated drone UAV was used to photograph the upper levels of the building, which were otherwise inaccessible.

2.4 Results of Investigations

The building fabric throughout was composed of whin and sandstone rubble, with occasional granite dressings. The ruin was entirely roofless and the vaulted cellars noted in the nineteenth century were absent. Although a considerable deposit of spoil had accumulated within the former cellar, this did not appear sufficient to account for the large quantity of rubble that must have resulted from destruction of the vaults,

strongly suggesting the removal of rubble on a large scale. While stone from ruined buildings is commonly reused in country areas for dykes, sheepfolds and so on, the uniform appearance of the traces of vault along the lower wall faces of the building indicated deliberate reduction rather than ad hoc collapse. It may be presumed, therefore, that the Ministry of Works was responsible and that this was done as part of a general scheme to make the building safe. This may seem perplexing, as barrel vaults, properly constructed, are capable of withstanding severe pressure and would have assisted in maintaining the structural integrity of the castle. Severe cracking was noted on all elevations of the ruin, with steel banding having been applied on at least two occasions: once by the MOW and more recently in 2013 prior to the present consolidation. This cracking appears to have resulted from subsidence, with the corners of the building settling away from each other, leading the walls to split. This effect must also have been apparent within the cellar vaults, which although inherently strong and providing support to the walls above, may eventually have been pulled apart beyond the point of collapse, making it necessary to remove them to prevent an obvious hazard to visitors.

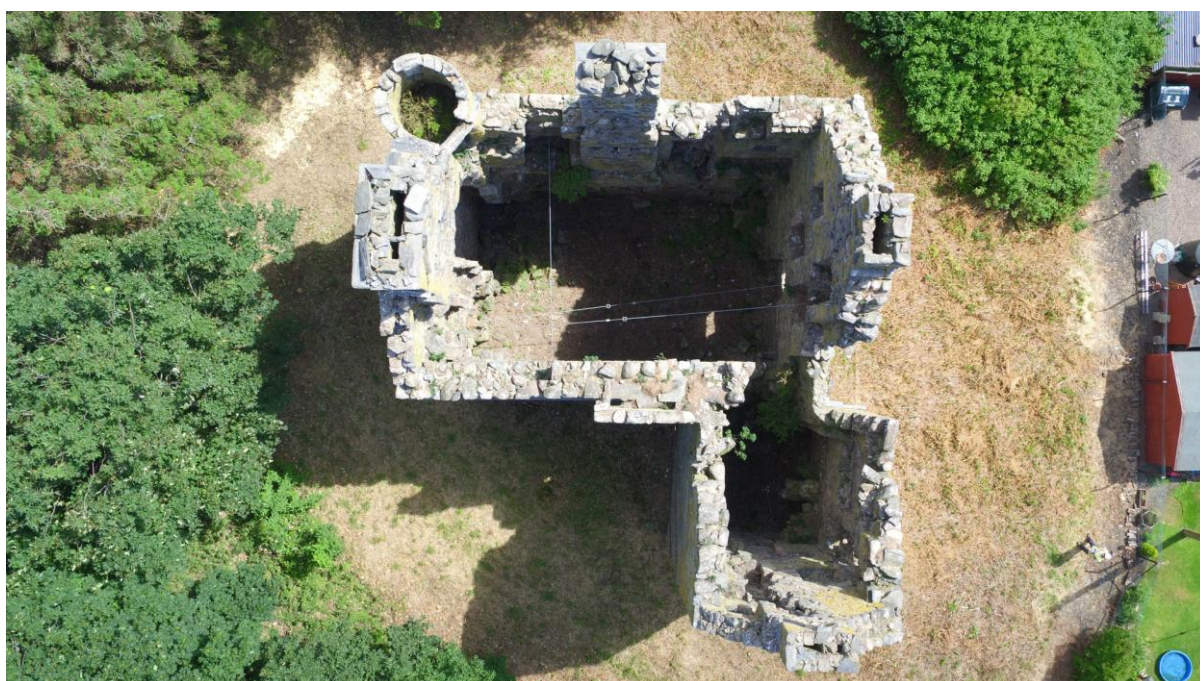


Image 1: Blairfindy Castle from above (drone photograph)

Entrance Wing/Tower

(NB-all spot heights measured from the entrance threshold unless otherwise stated. Threshold 258.734m above Ordnance Datum)

The entrance wing was constructed of the same rubble fabric as the main building and appeared to be fully keyed-in to the latter. There was thus no evidence of a significant difference in phasing, but rather, both parts of the L-shape were probably constructed together.

Prominent on the exterior N elevation of the wing was an armorial panel, 1.70m above the doorway, carved in yellow sandstone, displaying the impaled arms of John Gordon,

3rd of Cluny, and his wife, Margaret Gordon below the initials IG and MG and above the date 1586 (see Appendix 4).

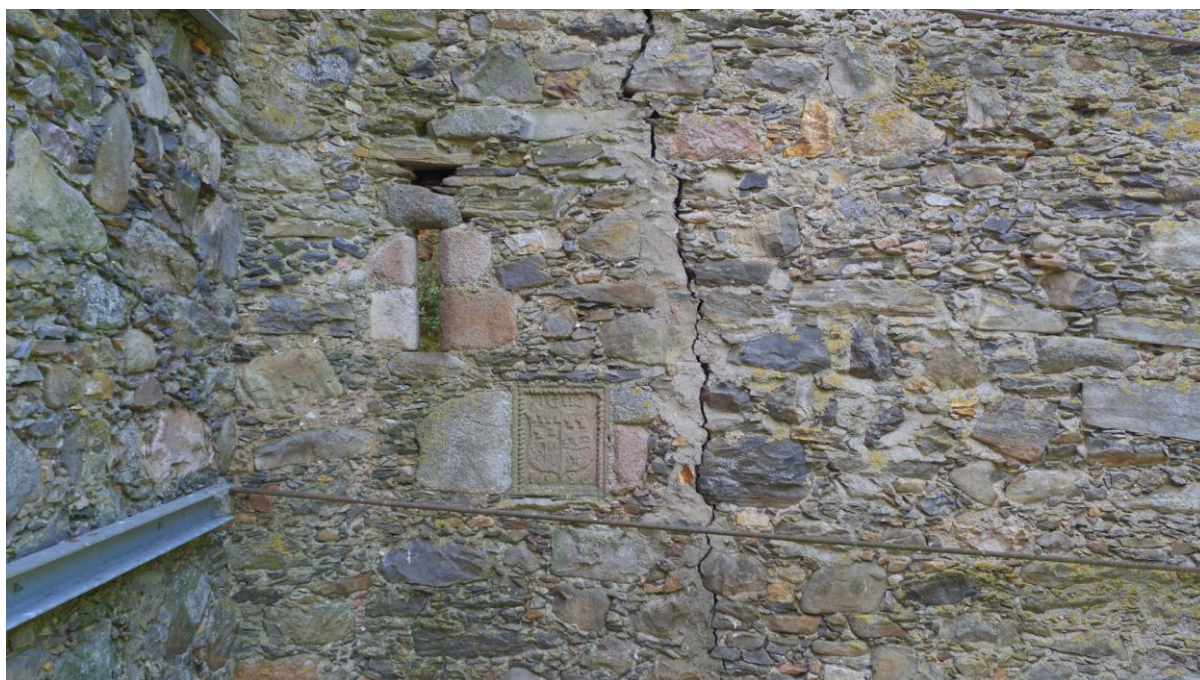


Image 2: The armorial panel above the entrance

The arched doorway, the only entrance to the building, was set into the N wall of the wing, to the E of the centre line. It measured 0.84m wide and, at the time of the survey, 1.49m from the present ground surface to the apex of the arch, which featured a large capstone- of irregular ellipsoid shape suggesting a shaped boulder rather than cut masonry. This formed part of a splayed setting of similar boulders or slabs vaguely resembling a fleur-de-lis or crown (whether or not this was the intention, there was clearly an aesthetic quality to the arrangement as well as the practical result of forming the top of the arch). The threshold was obscured, probably by a build-up of silt and perhaps rubble, which had raised the interior floor level of the wing a considerable height (possibly as much as 1.00m in places) above the external ground surface. Meanwhile, evidence of subsidence raised the possibility that the castle as a whole may have sunk into the subsoil, leading to a reduction in the height of the doorway. Slots in the left of the moulded granite jamb, including a possible latch slot, and a corroded iron hinge opposite indicated the position of the door and that it was hinged on the right (facing from outside). The corroded hinge may have been a later insertion. The wall around the entrance was 0.60m thick, including 0.16m of jamb.



Image 3: The entrance doorway, shothole visible to left

A shothole in the exterior elevation to the left (E) of the doorway appeared to correspond to a gun-port opening within the wall to the rear of the E jamb; however, this aperture was irregular in form and appeared damaged. Moreover, to utilise the gun port, a defender would be obliged to lie sideways within the doorway with head and shoulders within the aperture, unable to take aim and almost certainly deafened and blinded (if not concussed!) by exploding powder. This therefore appeared extremely puzzling and the shothole seemed to be an unusable affectation, until the true gun-port was discovered behind a large “plug” of masonry in the interior, at the junction of the wing with the main building. The semi-circular plug, measuring 1.20m long x 0.55m wide and up to 0.50m thick, consisted of lime-bonded rough-dressed boulders and had been positioned to create a curve in the entrance to the cellar, which it also restricted; patches of mortar on the wall behind suggested it had been attached to the main wall but not keyed-in. It had subsequently pulled away from the wall and collapsed onto the ground. Behind it was found a V-shaped gun-port, through which a defender could fire through the shothole beside the entrance. The plug had either been created to form a (rather treacherous) roof extension above the port or, more likely, to block it off entirely, presumably in more recent times when active defence of the castle was less likely to be needed. The hole accessing the port from behind the door jamb appeared to result from damage or the removal of masonry, rather than being part of the designed defences.

Exterior cracking from base to wallhead on the side tower or wing had been patched, probably by the Ministry of Works, with a window on the W elevation being loosely blocked with rubble. The interior of the same wall featured extensive patching, with most of a former flue having been filled with rubble. The blocked window was arched on the interior face and “man-height”, but appeared as a small rectangular aperture on

the exterior, suggesting a window seat alcove situated beside a dogleg in the flue at second floor level. The setting for the flue ran from ground to wallhead, but the flue itself may only have extended upwards from the second floor. Below this, the remains of an arch formed by vertically-placed slabs were also visible on the exterior; this may have been a former large window or doorway, as unlike the fireplace immediately above it there was no moulded granite setting visible. To the left of the latter on the second floor was a sub-square alcove (0.50m x 0.55m) which was not visible on the exterior and therefore probably not a window; the S elevation featured an open rectangular window within an arch immediately to the S of the alcove. Immediately above the alcove, on the third floor of the W elevation, was what appeared to be a blocked window arch, which, again, was flanked by an open window in the S elevation. No alcove was positioned to the right of the flue on this floor, the flue having doglegged and now taking up more of the wall-face.

The fourth (attic) floor featured a small rectangular window to the right of the flue in the W elevation, just below the gable, the apex of which was visible on the chimney stack as a ghost V-line of stone slab fragments. A slot window was positioned to the left (S) of the flue setting on the ground floor, where it was partially obscured by silting and/or the settling of the structure into the ground; a second slot window was positioned to the right (N) of the flue on the first floor.

The remains of the vaulted cellar ceiling were notable as a line of keyed-in, vertically placed slabs along the S elevation predominantly, an interrupted line on the W elevation and patches of the same along the N elevation, to either side of the arched entrance. Interestingly, the first floor also appeared to have been vaulted within the entrance wing, as two slab-formed arches against the S elevation divided this level into two small rooms facing the entrance stair, which McGibbon & Ross indicate ascended from the doorway, up the face of the N elevation before turning sharply to meet the moulded first floor entrance to the Great Hall, in the interior of the main building. Immediately alongside this doorway, in the E wall of the innermost of the two small rooms, hinge holes pecked into a moulded granite jamb suggested that the room was capable of being closed off from the entrance passage. Opposite, across what would have been the first floor hallway, the remains of a spiral staircase projected from the N elevation, ascending within a well to reach a second floor doorway (surviving as an orphaned lintel projecting from the S end of the Great Hall W elevation) which would have accessed the chambers above the Hall). The threshold of this entrance was supported by stone rubble, in turn supported by a replacement wooden beam forming the lintel of the first floor Hall entrance. Meanwhile, in the N elevation of the wing, the stairwell continued to wallhead height, with slot windows on each landing, culminating with a small (approximately half-height) slot at attic level. Alongside, approximately central to the elevation and outwith the stairwell was a rectangular window divided from the slot by a severe crack running from just above the entrance arch on the ground floor. Above both windows, a substantial section of wall fabric was absent, with a jagged gap of perhaps 2.00m width interrupting the line of the wallhead. It is possible that a bretèche or a caphouse turret occupied this space, where it would have been positioned to defend the entrance directly below; no trace of this structure remained, but the collapsed wallhead perhaps indicated its former presence.

Main Building

Exterior

The most prominent feature of the exterior W elevation of the main building was a box bretèche positioned at the wallhead close to the junction with the wing. The junction itself had been buttressed from 1.80m above ground to wallhead level, partly to reinforce keying and perhaps also due to the former presence of a second bretèche directly above the entrance or alternatively a caphouse turret above the internal stairwell (see above). The surviving bretèche appeared to be positioned too far from the doorway to guard it effectively, but in tandem with another would perhaps have been more formidable. Machicolation (holes permitting the dropping of stones, darts or fluid) was visible in the base of the bretèche, which was supported in its projection from the wall by base corbels that also formed the sides of the apertures. Defences of this kind were archaic by the sixteenth century and it may be that, in addition to providing practical defence, the bretèches were intended to convey an appearance of antiquity and longevity on what was in fact a new construction, perhaps in rivalry with the older castle a short distance away at Drumin. The effect would also have been to give Blairfindy the appearance of a castle “proper”, rather than the fortified house it was in reality.



Image 4: The bretèche

Damage was apparent on the outer face of the bretèche, with a sub-circular hole close to the base and the absence of a section of wallhead. Meanwhile, the central of the three machicolated apertures had been blocked by a slab, perhaps to permit a defender to stand within the bretèche itself rather than behind it on the main wall, or to reduce the possibility of an attacker succeeding in firing upwards through the apertures

(alternatively, the blocking may have been the accidental result of the partial collapse of the structure).

Located directly below the bretèche, on the ground floor, were a slit window and a shothole, the latter positioned 1.00m S of the former, almost at the junction with the wing to fire across the doorway. These features could thus have defended against attack from either W or N and worked in tandem with the bretèches above to halt attackers at the door. Both the arrow slit and the gunport serving the shothole were accessed within the cellar of the main building, with the gunport being a V-shaped embrasure similar to its counterpart in the wing. Both shotholes, even allowing for changes in floor level, would have been below waist-height and intended to direct fire at the legs of external attackers (perhaps in part because leg armour became less common in the later sixteenth century, while a well-equipped assailant might still wear a steel cuirass).

No other windows were present in this elevation. Cracking was apparent in the upper stories, with some deterioration of the wallhead.

The exterior N elevation featured a 2.00m tall circular bartizan turret at the NE corner, 10.775m above the ground, where it was supported by five dressed corbels projecting from 2.00m below the wallhead, where they were in turn supported by three concentric rings of moulded granite. Currently roofless, the turret featured a central rectangular window with stone lintel in the NE quadrant of the circle where it served both to permit a defender to traverse the N and E approaches to the castle and to illuminate the interior of what almost certainly had been a structure with a conical roof. To either side of the window, shotholes allowed fire to be directed along the N and E wall faces of the building without exposing a sentry at the window to counter-fire from the sides.



Image 5: The bartizan

The W side of the N elevation featured a vertical series of five slit windows, one per floor, arranged in a staggered sequence so that none was precisely aligned with any other, a fairly common method of making targeting more difficult for an attacker. Thus, any assault passing across the face of the wall would face increasing resistance as it headed towards the sole entrance, with enfilade fire from the bartizan combining with direct and plunging fire from the slits (how much would of course depend upon the size of the garrison, which in reality could not have been large, given the restricted space). The slits were accessed via an internal stair and probably reflected the spacing of landings or guard stations (see below).

Severe cracking was present on the N elevation, particularly on the W side, with one crack running vertically from E of the cellar floor arrow slit to at least the second floor and another, larger crack from the first floor to the wallhead. The E side, beneath the bartizan, appeared to be less damaged.

The E exterior elevation, as well as also featuring the bartizan, included four rectangular windows in both the first and the third floors. The lower windows were large, each measuring 1.00m wide x 1.20m high; this would certainly have compromised the defensibility of this side of the building, despite their elevated positions c.3.90m above the ground. Not only could they have been points of entry for attackers, they would also have exposed the interior to hostile fire. They were also far larger than any other windows in the castle except the main window in the S elevation (see below). It is therefore quite possible that they were later insertions or enlargements of earlier apertures, a suspicion heightened by their less than perfect alignment with the smaller windows in the second floor above. In the ground (cellar) floor, a blocked window contained a small drain hole which would have served the kitchen; meanwhile, a slit window below the S first floor window was an attempt to improve defensibility and impede access to the large window above which, again, may originally have been smaller.

The upper windows both measured c.0.60m wide x c.0.80m high, but the S example was severely damaged by a crack which ran from ground to wallhead on this side of the elevation. An attempted repair had been made, probably by the MOW, including the insertion of an ad hoc column of blocks to prop the lintel, which would otherwise have collapsed. The larger window below had been entirely blocked-in, again probably by the MOW as part of the same remedial work. The crack as it ran past the upper window was wide and the wallhead appeared unstable. Steel banding ran across both windows and also across a small slit window just below the bartizan, which would have provided additional support or an alternative firing position to a gunner in the turret. A second severe crack divided the slit from the upper rectangular window on this side of the elevation.

The central feature of the elevation was a chimney, standing 14.095m high and 1.80m wide, with stone slab coping and two slab-built strengthening arches within the main wall fabric, intended to spread the weight of the wall across the chimney, where the fabric was thinner. Some damage was visible near the top of the stack.

The S elevation was the most “house-like” of the main building, featuring several large, non-defensive windows, including most prominently the main S-facing window of the Great hall, on the first floor. Positioned centrally, directly below the chimney which served the upper floors, it measured 1.50m high x 1.20m wide, within an embrasure

with an additional 1.00m of wall below to floor level. Below and slightly to the E of this, in the cellar, a blocked slit window had probably been intended (when open) to protect this very obvious weak point from attack; although 3.50m above the ground, the large window would have afforded easy access with a ladder, although as with the E elevation windows, it might therefore have been a later insertion. The exterior wall immediately below the large window (ie, the “window seat” facing) was of a somewhat different fabric from its surroundings, having a greater density of large blocks and also being quite heavily pointed in render (as was the slab arch above the window), suggesting re-building work. To the W of the slit, also in the cellar and positioned at the junction with the wing, a rectangular window measuring 0.70m high x 0.60m had been reduced by 0.10m with the addition of a stone cill above a larger, original boulder cill which was pierced with a drain hole. The newer bar was held in place with cement, suggesting MOW work; the drain aperture probably represented outflow from the kitchen, as with the similar hole in the E elevation. One or both drains may have been later features, as the E elevation example exited through a blocked window.

The upper stories of the elevation featured windows illuminating the apartment rooms at the S end of the building (see below). An area of collapsed wallhead at the junction with the wing could perhaps have represented the position of a bartizan turret, the counterpart to the extant example in the NE corner of the building. This, however, is speculation based purely on the location of the collapse.

Interior

The ground (cellar) floorspace of the main building undulated, with build-ups of silt and rubble creating a highly uneven surface. The remains of the cellar vaulting were visible as broken-off arch stubs projecting from the first floor level in several areas, particularly noticeable at the junction of the S and E elevations and also at the N end of the E elevation. McGibbon & Ross depict a double vault spanning E-W and certainly the alignment of the remains bore out this depiction. The V-shaped gun-port in the W elevation was clearly visible, although closer to the ground surface than when in use, due to the spoil build-up. On the interior wall-face, the port and the slit window to the N were no more than 0.50m apart due to the interior widening of each embrasure, with the N-facing gun-port beside the entrance in the wing also c.50m from its W-facing counterpart (notwithstanding that it was now hidden behind the masonry “plug”); a defender could presumably have switched with ease between each position.

Vaulting was also in evidence in the SW corner, the junction with the wing, where the kitchen drain window in the S elevation was set within an embrasure roofed with a 0.40m thick slab arch, presumably to reinforce the side of the floor passage above, where the Great Hall entrance was located. At this point on the S elevation, there appeared to be a blocked doorway in the S wall; however, no trace of this could be discerned in the exterior fabric and it is more likely to represent a slight recessing of the interior face to permit the smooth opening and closing of the hall door.

Above the opposite corner, the SE, where a noticeable chunk of vault arch remained, a doorway cased in moulded stone with a rectangular transom above permitted access to an intramural passageway. The doorway measured 1.70m x 0.80m and opened in front of the main window at the S end of the Great Hall. The passage did not appear to connect with the upper floors- indeed, the large blocked window in the E elevation cut it off- although a small blocked window to the N of the doorway and a slab arch above

the doorway that may have been load-spreading may have indicated a former internal ascending stair, possibly wooden. However, the surviving passage probably represented a servants' stair descending to the cellars and kitchen. Although the interior was heavily silted-up, the blocked cellar-end of the passage could be discerned, to the N of a large crack which ascended vertically alongside the blocked window to reach the wallhead, where an extensive area of near-collapse had been patched with tiles, cement and other materials as part of the MOW remedial work.

The E elevation was dominated by a large first-floor fireplace, located on the transverse centre-line of the hall, 1.90m above ground level. The fireplace measured 1.50m wide x 2.10m high from its hearth bed to the apex of its shallow, slab-built arched mantle. The mantle was in effect a strengthening arch for the inner wall of the chimney, with a mirroring arch in the fabric 2.00m above. A slab-built pediment was positioned above the wall head 5.60m above the fireplace, where it was presumably only visible from the roof when constructed. The large windows described in the exterior of the elevation were positioned either side of the chimney.

At the S end of the elevation, level with the upper window with its MOW column reinforcement, was a square, stone-built alcove measuring 0.55m x 0.55m. This represented a storage feature within a second-floor apartment, which was also represented by remains on the S elevation. On the latter, a fireplace and a window were positioned above and to each side of the main Great Hall window (which featured 1.00m of thin rubble wall window seat space within a steep-sided, slab-arched embrasure), with the window to the W (right, facing) measuring 0.90m high but within a much larger arched embrasure extending from floor to ceiling and measuring 2.10m high x 1.05m wide. The third (attic) floor window embrasure above was taller at 2.60m and slightly offset towards the centre-line, a probable strengthening feature to prevent too great a directly vertical stretch of thin wall; this had obliged the builders to dogleg the flue around the window to the W (right, facing) to connect with the stack above. The third floor also featured a fireplace to the E of the flue, which like the window had been offset from its counterpart on the floor below. Both fireplaces were 1.60m tall, from floor level, and 0.80m wide. However, while the second floor fireplace featured a slab arch mantle, the third floor example had a mantle of a single stone block.

The floor beam slots for the upper storeys were most prominently apparent on the W elevation, where a row of seven sub-square holes were visible 5.693m above the threshold, representing the first floor ceiling/second floor; an upper row of seven at 9.318m above the threshold represented the second floor ceiling/third (attic) floor. Spanning the gap between the rows were, at the S end, the collapsed doorway with orphaned lintel noted in the description of the wing (above), while at the N end was a window embrasure measuring 3.00m tall x 0.90m wide, with the window itself 1.00m x 0.55m, set beneath a slab arch and single block lintel.

Immediately above the window, to the N of the wallhead accessing the bretèche and at the level of the attic floorboards, was a ruined but clearly originally cuboid space at the wallhead, measuring 0.80m long x 0.72m high (see *Addendum*, below). A similar recess was noted on the E elevation directly opposite, with a third at the S end of the E elevation, opposite the wing. It seems probable that the recesses represented sentry posts, accessed from the attic- the presence of a sloping slate roof and inwardly projecting chimneys preventing continuous access to the wallhead and making necessary these limited posts. The N post on the E elevation was located beside the

entrance to the bartizan turret in the NE corner, which itself may have been accessed via an intramural stair passage leading off from the second floor room below, to the N of the E elevation chimney. A vertical slot in the inner face of the outer wall appeared to represent the setting for a wooden door frame, while an inner wall projected from above the arch of the first floor window embrasure, forming the inner wall of the passage. Just below this, close to the junction with the N elevation and approximately 6.00m above the ground, a stub of decayed timber was noted, protruding from a beam slot.

The N elevation was dominated by a large chimney flue extending from the cellar floor upwards. 3.15m wide at its base (internally) and 1.00m deep, the flue gradually narrowed to meet the 2.10m wide chimney stack, which stood 13.818m tall. Rubble deposits across the base of the flue may have derived from partial collapse of the inner wall of the chimney, which had largely disintegrated, the flue standing open from the ground to the base of the attic level. Within the flue, six subrectangular beam slots had been built into the outer wall, two at the level of the cellar ceiling, two at approximately the level of the first floor ceiling and two level with the second floor window at the W end of the elevation (see below). These may have been intended to tie in the surrounding wooden floors, but were noticeably uneven, not quite level with the floor beam slots in the W elevation and in the outer rather than inner wall of the flue, so may in fact have been putlog slots deriving from construction scaffolding. A single slot was also visible in the outer wall within the flue at attic level, where the inner wall was intact. It is presumed that the main kitchen fireplace was located at the base of this chimney, but the collapse of the inner wall, coupled with the build-up of silt and rubble, meant that no direct evidence of such a structure could be discerned. McGibbon & Ross depict a circular structure on the W side of the flue, probably an oven, at cellar level, but again, no trace of this remained, beyond a small, vaulted recess now blocked with rubble to the E of the ground floor slit window. At the base of the E wall of the flue was an alcove measuring 0.80m high x 0.55m wide, with a slab lintel. This was probably a small side oven within the main fireplace. To the S of the alcove, on the other side of the flue wall, was the blocked window and drain described above (see *Exterior*).



Image 6: Base of N elevation, interior of main building, with “oratory” to left of flue

The W side of the elevation appeared to be divided into compartments, the front wall of which was represented by protruding vertical stubs in the N end of the W elevation, beginning on the first floor, with their base on the projecting edge of the cellar ceiling. The base of this column of stubs was formed by two moulded stones representing the lower part of a door jamb, located in the W elevation 1.40m from the junction with the N wall. There thus appeared to be an entrance from the Great Hall to a small room in the NW corner of the building, with a slit window in the N elevation providing limited illumination. Above the door jamb (after an area of damaged wall fabric that may have resulted from the removal of stair treads or vaulting) the column of stubs continued at the same distance just below attic level the width of the rooms decreased to 1.20m. In places, projecting slabs probably represented floor levels, but these were out of sequence with the main building floors. Altogether, a vertical set of chambers appeared to be represented, that may well have been landings in a stairwell, each with a vertical slit window to permit defence of the N elevation. The failure of the small chambers to align with the levels of the larger rooms without also suggested landings, rather than simple room extensions or storage space etc. In fact, the lower (first floor) and uppermost (attic) chambers were on the main floor levels, but the two intervening chambers were not (the attic chamber was mostly represented on the N elevation, only slabs reflecting its floor position just below the wallhead were visible on the W elevation). Interestingly, the attic chamber and the chamber immediately below were alongside a subsidiary flue which ran off the main chimney and was visible on the N elevation, its inner wall collapsed and along with it any trace of fireplaces. The chamber below the attic also featured a rectangular alcove in the W elevation; it may be that as well as landings, the chambers were intended as guard posts, which benefited from heat transferred from the side flue, albeit that this was accessed from the apartment rooms to the S.

The first floor chamber in the “stair”, as well as its moulded door jamb, also featured a square alcove set into the wall of the flue, in what would have been the E wall of the chamber. This feature seems difficult to explain, as it did not directly open into the flue. It was fairly deep set (c.30m) and constructed of thick slabs. It may have been some form of warming oven, but an alternative is possible. The Gordon family were noted for their continuing adherence to Roman Catholicism- George Gordon commanded the victorious Catholic side in the Battle of Glenlivet and his descendents later sponsored an illegal seminary at Scalan, not far from Blairfindy, which was attacked by government troops after Culloden (1746). The Grants of Glenlivet, meanwhile, continued as Catholics long after the majority of the family had become Protestant. The position of the alcove in the E wall of the room would be suitable for an aumbry or ambry, a recess within the altar space used for storing sacred vessels and (prior to the Council of Trent) for reserving the consecrated host. It is therefore possible that the chamber, with its moulded door jamb, was designed by the Gordons for use as an oratory. The projecting remains of cellar vaulting in the base of this room indicated that it would have had a stone floor and could also have doubled as a strong room for storing valuables.

The wallheads of the main building were in general around 10.00m high, with the lintel of the bartizan being 10.775m above the threshold. The tallest chimney was on the E side, at 14.095m high, with the N chimney 13.818m and the S 13.593m. The wing chimney stood 13.599m. Thus, allowing for some decay to the upper structure of the chimney stacks and the outward settling and cracking of the building, the castle originally maintained a high degree of uniformity. Traces of gable apex on the interior faces of the chimney stacks suggested the roofing material may originally have been stone slabs, forming a steeply-sloped roof pitched at around 45°.

The majority of the castle fabric derived from a single phase of construction, with little indication of an earlier hall having been incorporated into the extant structure. There was no obvious change in either the fabric or the wall thickness between lower and higher levels, for instance. Defensive features such as slit windows and gun ports were probably part of the original scheme. The bartizan turret and bretèche may also have dated from the earliest part of the castle’s use, although they may alternatively have been part of the completed scheme perhaps commemorated by John Gordon’s 1586 crest (we may indeed regard a 23-year construction process as essentially one phase for a castle, in any case, even if the design evolved during this period). The large first floor windows in the S and E elevations of the Great Hall, however, may well have been enlargements, if not actually new insertions (the use of the window arch as the bed for the intramural passage to the bartizan suggests the arch was already in place). They do appear to compromise defensive security, as well as exhibiting signs of rebuilding of the surrounding wall. They may have been put in place later in the castle’s life, when perhaps the inhabitants felt more secure.

No evidence of destruction by fire was apparent. The relict wall beam stub, while well-preserved, did not appear to be charred, while none of the stone fabric displayed signs of exposure to extreme heat, such as discoloration or flaking. While this in itself does not conclusively prove that the story of the burning of the castle after Culloden is false, it seems more probable that the “house of Blairfindy” destroyed by government troops was a later farmhouse, the castle perhaps having already been abandoned by this time.

2.4.1 Addendum- chimney heads and other features

On 28th May, 2019, access was gained via scaffolding to the chimney heads and wall tops; consolidation work by stonemasons had also resulted in the removal of debris and vegetation from several areas of wall. At the behest of HES, these features were recorded by the author of this report, using the site code GN03.

Chimney 1 (N chimney of main building): This measured 2.27m E-W x 1.16m N-S, with horizontal coping slabs projecting an average 0.10m from the wall faces. Above these, piled stone rubble supported three sloping slab copes on the N side, the largest 0.75m long, 0.37m wide and 0.08m thick. The rubble lacked any bonding material, but the chimney proper contained traces of crumbled lime mortar as well as render and it seems probable that this additional capping feature had been loosely bonded in similar fashion. The remaining sloping slabs probably represent the remains of modification to all four sides of the chimney in which sloping slabs were overlaid on the original horizontal copes in an attempt to encourage water run-off away from the flue and prevent pooled water from eroding the lime mortar.

Chimney 2 (E chimney of main building): Measuring 1.62m N-S x 0.85m E-W, this featured no sloping copes but several large boulders sitting upon the projecting horizontal copes, boulders that measured up to 0.27m in diameter and which presumably had supported sloping slabs in similar fashion to those on the N chimney. The horizontal copes projected only on the N and E sides, partly due to a partial collapse in the SW corner of the chimney which reduced the head height to 0.30m below the level of the copes on the N and E. Again, traces of lime mortar were present below the copes.

Chimney 3 (S chimney of main building): This measured 1.44m E-W x 0.93m N-S, this featured only horizontal copes that here were formed from uneven boulders and rough-dressed blocks rather than level, flat slabs. A collapse in the N face meant that no copes were present above the roof ghost, 0.40m below the level of the copes on the other faces.

Chimney 4 (W chimney, entrance tower): This measured 1.44m N-S x 0.76m E-W. A minor collapse in the W face had left a hole 0.15m in diameter; no projecting or sloping copes or rubble was present, with the chimney featuring only small, horizontal coping slabs. As with the main building chimneys, traces of mortar and render were present beneath a general covering of lichen and moss.

Roof joists in wallheads, main building: two sub-rectangular joist slots at the S end of the E elevation (internal) both measured c.0.20m high, c.0.12m wide and 0.50m deep into the wall, with somewhat uneven profiles, spaced 0.25m apart. Three mortared joist slots in the E chimney measured 0.20m wide, 0.12- 0.17m high and opened directly into the flue; they were set at the same level as the corner pair and also the bases of the bartizan and the “sentry posts”. A row of eight joist slots in the W elevation (internal) ran from above the first floor doorway in the SW corner to the “sentry post” S of the N elevation stairwell. These were of similar dimensions to the E elevation pair, but were only 0.30-0.40m deep and spaced 0.40m apart. The sentry post itself was found to measure 0.80m wide, 0.72m high and 0.45m deep, with loose boulders in the wallhead/outer face and the base formed by the slab arch of the window directly below.

Bretèche: three large, unshaped boulders (up to 0.38m diameter) were positioned on the wallhead behind the machicolation of the bretèche, with no bonding material. Although they may well have been relics of decayed wall fabric, it is just possible that they represented a stock of defensive missiles placed in readiness and never removed. Removal of silt and vegetation in and around the bretèche had revealed a deposit of lime mortar and a slab floor walkway along the wallhead, accessing the machicolation.

First-floor doorway, W elevation (internal): Only the lintel and N jamb remained of this feature, set at the top of spiralling slab steps, the topmost of which was 0.12m thick. The lintel was a single greystone block, 0.86m long to its insertion into the wall to the N, tapering to the S end (0.19m thick) from the N (0.23m thick). It was set below a slab arch bonded with lime mortar, with a smaller filler slab within the span. The jamb was a column of four granite blocks standing 1.62m high to the lintel, the bottom two pink granite and the upper two grey/white. The block second from top formed the bulk of the column, measuring 0.77m high, and featured two bar or hinge slots 0.26m apart. The blocks were set into the wall fabric and bonded with lime mortar.

Bartizan: the intramural passage below the turret was found to measure 0.88m wide.

An area of collapse in the outer wall at the junction of the entrance tower and main building, the gap measuring 1.90m across, was photographed prior to the insertion of a reinforcing arch. *See Photographic Register 28/05/19 below for full record.*

2.4.2 Addendum- intra-mural passages

The author revisited the castle on 22nd August, 2019, to record two intra-mural passages to which access had previously been barred (partly due to their use by roosting birds). Both passages lay within the E elevation of the main building, with the first positioned below the bartizan turret in the NE corner and the second in the SE corner of the Great Hall, where it accessed the cellar floor. The passages were recorded under the site code GN04.

1st passage (Bartizan): This formed a right-angle, with a main passage running parallel with the E elevation and a recess running a short distance across the N elevation. The passage was roofed with the slabs forming part of the bartizan floor- the turret was not accessible from here, access only being possible from the floor above. The floor of the passage was rough stone, no more than the rubble wall material, while the inner face of the wall itself was bonded with lime mortar. A small arrow slit was located in the E elevation 0.40m from the N end of the main passage, 1.02m from the floor; this measured 0.45m high, 0.15m wide and 0.35m deep (the wall thickness at this point). The base of the slit was formed by a single rough boulder 0.28m high and with 0.27m of its width exposed in the wall face. The sides of the slit were two thick slabs, the one on the N side 0.12m wide and the S example 0.17m wide. The wall below and to the right (S) of the slit was stepped, projecting outwards by 0.12m from the wall face to form a ledge 0.70m high from the passage floor; this ledge merged with the wall to the N of the slit. The main N-S passage was 1.74m long from a vertical groove cut into the E elevation to take a door frame (no longer present), the groove being an average of 0.11m wide, 0.07m deep and extending from the floor to 1.68m high, 0.24m short of the top of the passage (this perhaps indicating a curved door top). A possible trace of a corresponding groove was observed on the opposite, inner, wall of the passage, but this wall had been consolidated and partially re-built, rendering the feature unclear. The

inner wall averaged 0.10m thick, but was uneven and included modern brick at the base in the S end of the passage. The main passage was 0.66m wide (less 0.12m of stepped wall S of the arrow slit and up to 0.70m from the floor) and a maximum of 1.90m high (uneven ceiling). The turn to the left (W) at the end of the main passage accessed a recess space 0.53m long and 0.53m wide, up to 1.73m high (the ceiling continuing to be uneven). A piece of wood in the floor of the main passage 0.45m N of the door groove-but located on the inner, W side of the passage- sat immediately in front of the line of the wall step and may have represented the remains of a threshold. The wood was set into and among the rough stones of the wall material and appeared to be embedded in the base of the inner wall. It measured 0.26m E-W x 0.14m N-S, its thickness unknown (not excavated or fully exposed). The surface was smooth, with a pronounced dip towards the centre spot.

Given the lack of access to the bartizan and that the passage was accessed from the apartment in the N of the castle, it seems probable that this structure represented the remains of a storage space, perhaps a wardrobe or strong room for valuables. No drainage was present, making it unlikely to have been a garderobe, while what was probably a substantial door would have enabled locking away of the contents. The arrow slit (as well as being a defensive feature) would have provided a small amount of illumination; the passage could therefore have doubled as a final refuge or hiding place, although not one which could have remained hidden for long, unless obscured by features within the apartment rooms.

2nd passage (Great Hall): This was an intramural stairway in the E elevation of the Hall, accessed via the doorway in the SE corner and descending to S of the E fireplace. The doorway featured a moulded pink and grey granite jamb and was 0.74m wide and 1.75m high, from the threshold to a single slab lintel 0.13m thick. The inner wall of the passage was 0.26m thick at the doorway. Beyond the doorway, a flight of stone steps descended from the top of the passage, which was 2.10m high to an uneven stone slab ceiling (with a cavity extending the height by another 0.44m) at the top of the steps, which were 0.22m below the threshold. The passage was 1.78m long, to a blocking wall of three massive, rough-dressed sandstone blocks, each 0.20m thick and extending across the full width of the passage (0.67m E-W). Beyond this wall, which stood knee-high, the passage continued as a 0.80m long recessed space with a sloping ceiling suggesting stairs above (not accessible). The main passage was 1.63m high from the base of the blocking wall to the ceiling, with the recessed space 0.94m high immediately beyond the wall, falling to 0.00m at the end of the passage. The steps descended by 0.89m from the top of the threshold to the base of the blocking wall. The top step was a turn, formed from a single sub-triangular slab 0.68m x 0.50m x 0.40m and an average 0.10m thick; beyond this three straight steps descended along the E elevation to the blocking wall.

A blocked (bricked-up) doorway was discernible in the inner (W) wall, 0.38m N of the threshold at cellar level. It measured 0.60m wide and 1.06m high, extending from 0.50m above the base of the passage at the bottom step. Below this point the wall material was sandstone rubble, as in most of the castle, while the aperture above had recently been reconsolidated with modern brick as part of the present works. The feature may in fact have been a serving hatch rather than a doorway, since it did not extend fully to the cellar floor. In effect, then, the passage was simply a quick turn and steep descent to the cellar, providing servants with quick access to the kitchen via a

hatch through which food and dirty plates could be both be passed. *See Photographic Register 19/08/19 below for full record.*

2.4.3 Addendum- watching brief on lightning conductor installation

The author made a final visit to Blairfindy on 25th November, 2019, to monitor the excavation of pits to contain the earthing mats of four new lightning conductors. Four pairs of linked pits were hand-excavated, each measuring 0.50m square and dug to a maximum depth of 0.40m. Pits 1 and 2 were located beneath the lowest arrow slit in the W elevation of the side tower, Pits 3 and 4 beneath the arrow slit in the NW corner of the N elevation of the main building, Pits 5 and 6 beneath the blocked drain window in the cellar, E elevation, while Pits 7 and 8 were beneath an arrow slit to the S of the main chimney flue, E elevation. All the pits descended through loose, black/dark grey silt topsoil (0101-0801), an average of 0.15m thick, into moderately loose dark grey clay silt with occasional stone rubble fragments (generally split cobbles) (0102-0802). No finds or features resulted.

2.5 Conclusions and Recommendations

The castle was an interesting example of a fortified tower house, with somewhat grandiose elements intended to convey the image of a castle proper and also a construction of greater antiquity than was in fact the case. Nevertheless, in its heyday it would certainly have been defensible, if only against small numbers of attackers lacking artillery (a fairly likely scenario, in the local context). It appeared to have been constructed mainly in one phase, incorporating features such as numerous chimneys fireplaces, and non-defensive windows, which would have made it a more domestically comfortable dwelling. Later alterations included the provision of larger windows at a lower level, decreasing defensibility but increasing illumination (but perhaps also draughts!). There was also some alteration of the servants' stair to the Great Hall, perhaps in connection with the enlargement of the S first floor window. Extensive remedial work in the twentieth century certainly helped to preserve the ruin for the future, although the severe cracking of the main elevations will require further remedy.

2.6 Recommendations for Further Work

Alder Archaeology consider the historic building survey to have been conducted correctly and do not recommend further work on this site. It should be noted that although the excavation of engineering test pits was monitored (see separate report), any additional groundworks will also need to be observed. However, the final decision ultimately rests with Historic Environment Scotland.

3 Bibliography

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<https://thecastleguy.co.uk/castle/blairfindy-castle/>

MacGibbon, D. and Ross, T., *The Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland*, Edinburgh, vol 2, 1887, p82

Appendix 1 Photographic Register

| <i>Image No</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>View</i> | <i>B/W No</i> |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| 004 | General | NE | |
| 005 | General, tower | NW | |
| 006 | Castle general S side | N | |
| 007 | Castle general SE corner | NW | |
| 008 | Castle general SE corner upper | NW | |
| 009-011 | Castle general E side, S end | W | |
| 012-013 | Castle general E side S end upper | W | |
| 014 | Castle general E side mid | W | |
| 015 | Castle general E side mid upper | W | |
| 016 | Castle general E side N end | W | |
| 017 | Castle general E side N end upper | W | |
| 018 | Castle general E side N end upper | W | |
| 019 | Castle detail E side upper corner turret | NW | |
| 020 | Castle general N side | S | |
| 021 | Castle general N side upper | S | |
| 022 | Castle detail N side upper | S | |
| 023 | Castle general W side | E | |
| 024-025 | Castle general W side upper | E | |
| 026 | Castle detail upper W side | E | |
| 027 | Tower general N side with doorway | S | |
| 028 | Tower N side detail of doorway | S | |
| 029 | Tower N side detail of arms panel over door | S | |
| 030 | Tower N side general upper | S | |

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|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---------|
| 031 | Tower W side general lower | E | |
| 032 | Tower W side general upper | E | |
| 033 | Tower S side 2m scale | N | 1:2 |
| 034 | Tower S side general mid part | N | |
| 035 | Tower S side general mid part | N | 1:3 |
| 036 | Tower S side general upper | N | 1:4 |
| 037 | Tower S side detail lower window half blocked | N | |
| 038 | Castle S side general 2m scale ranging rods | N | 1:5-6 |
| 039 | Castle S side general mid part | N | 1:7 |
| 040 | Castle S side general upper | N | 1:8 |
| 041-042 | Castle S side detail lower slit window with ranging rod scale | N | 1:9 |
| 043 | Castle S side detail lower rectangular window with hole below lintel, ranging rod | N | 1:10 |
| 044 | Castle S side detail of mid window | N | 1:11 |
| 045 | Castle S side detail of upper mid window | N | 1:12 |
| 046-047 | Castle S side detail of uppermost window | N | 1:13 |
| 048 | Castle E side general S end with ranging rod scales | W | 1:14-15 |
| 049 | Castle E side S end general mid | W | 1:16 |
| 050 | Castle E side S end general mid upper | W | |
| 051 | Castle E side S end general uppermost | W | 1:17 |
| 052 | Castle E side mid general uppermost with ranging rod scales | W | 1:18 |
| 053 | Castle E side general mid | W | 1:19-21 |
| 054-055 | Castle E side general upper mid | W | 1:22 |
| 056 | Castle E side mid detail of slit window, with 2m ranging rod scale | W | 1:23 |
| 057 | Castle E side mid detail of blocked window | W | 1:24 |
| 058 | Castle E side mid detail of upper window adjacent to large | W | 1:25 |

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|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---------|
| | void or crack | | |
| 059 | Castle E side general N end with 2m ranging rod scales | W | 1:26 |
| 060 | Castle E side general N end mid | W | 1:27 |
| 061 | Castle E side general M end mid | W | 1:28 |
| 062 | Castle E side detail of small window, with 2m ranging rod scale | W | 1:29 |
| 063 | Castle E side detail of large window | W | 1:30 |
| 064 | Castle E side detail of upper window with bracing across | W | 1:31 |
| 065 | Castle E side detail of turret | NW | 1:32 |
| 066 | Castle N side with 2m ranging rod scales | S | 1:33 |
| 067-068 | Castle N side | S | 1:35-36 |
| 069 | Castle N side turret | SE | 1:36 |
| 070 | Castle N side detail slit window 2m ranging rod scale | S | |
| 071 | Castle N side detail small slit uppermost window obscured by reinforcing bar | S | |
| 072 | Castle N side detail small slit window mid way up | S | |
| 073 | Castle W side general 2m ranging rods | E | 2:1 |
| 074 | Castle W side general mid | E | 2:2 |
| 075 | Castle W side general upper | E | 2:2 |
| 076 | Castle W side detail slit window | E | 2:3 |
| 077 | Castle W side detail upper window with reinforcing bar across | E | 2:4 |
| 078 | Castle W side detail, wallhead bretèche | E | 2:5 |
| 079-080 | Tower interior W wall general 2m ranging rods | W | 2:15 |
| 081 | Tower interior W wall general mid | W | 2:16 |
| 082 | Tower interior W wall mid | W | 2:17-18 |
| 083 | Tower interior W wall detail lower slit window 2m ranging rod | W | 2:19 |
| 084 | Tower interior W wall detail slit window with 2m ranging rod | W | 2:24 |

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|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---------|
| | scale | | |
| 085 | Tower interior W wall detail of rectangular alcove mid S side | W | 2:20 |
| 086 | Tower interior W wall detail upper blocked window S side | W | 2:21-22 |
| | Tower interior W wall detail lower blocked window S side | W | 2:23 |
| 087 | Tower interior W wall detail open chimney flue | W | |
| 088 | Tower interior E wall passageway into hall 2m ranging rods | E | 2:25 |
| 089-092 | Tower interior E wall passageway in hall upper part 2m ranging rods | E | 2:26-28 |
| 093 | Tower interior junction of N and W walls, main doorway into tower on N side 2m ranging rod | NE | 2:29-36 |
| 094 | Tower exterior N wall doorway 2m ranging rods | S | 2:6-8 |
| 095 | Tower exterior N wall mid | S | 2:12 |
| 096 | Tower exterior N wall upper | S | 2:13 |
| 097 | Tower exterior N wall uppermost | S | 2:14 |
| 098 | Tower exterior N wall doorway 2m ranging rod | S | 2:6-8 |
| 099 | Tower exterior N wall detail armorial panel above doorway | S | |
| 100 | Tower exterior N wall detail slit window above armorial panel | S | |
| 101 | Tower exterior N wall detail slit window mid elevation | S | |
| 102 | Tower exterior N wall detail square window top elevation | S | |
| 103 | Tower exterior N wall detail chimney stack | S | |
| 104 | Tower exterior N wall detail small slit window top elevation | SE | |
| 104 | Tower exterior N wall corner angle corbelling and stair turret 2m ranging rod | SE | |
| 106 | Tower exterior N wall corner angle stair turret mid part | SE | |
| 107 | Tower exterior N wall corner angle stair turret, upper part | SE | |
| 108 | Tower exterior N wall corner angle stair turret uppermost part and upper defensive work | SE | |
| 109 | Tower doorway W jamb detail | SW | 3:1-2 |

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|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------------|
| 110 | Tower doorway E jamb detail | SE | 3:3-4 |
| 111 | Tower doorway surround exterior | S | |
| 112 | Tower W side lower, general slit windows 2m ranging rods scales | E | 3:5 |
| 113 | Tower W side mid section general iron band reinforcing | E | 3:6 |
| 114 | Tower W side upper part general | E | 3:7 |
| 115 | Tower W side lower, detail S slit window, 2m ranging rod | E | 3:8 |
| 116 | Tower W side lower, detail N slit window | E | 3:9 |
| 117 | Tower W side mid, detail of blocked window with iron band reinforcing | E | 3:10 |
| 118 | Tower W side upper, detail of upper window | E | 3:11-12 |
| 119 | Tower W side uppermost, detail of chimney stack | E | 3:11-12 |
| 120 | Tower S side uppermost window with bird and detail of security bar holes in upper lintel | N | 3:13 |
| 121 | Tower S side uppermost window detail | N | |
| | Tower interior junction of N and W walls, progressively from bottom to top | NE | 3:14-17 |
| 122 | Tower interior N side, doorway, 2m ranging rod scale | N | 3:18 |
| 123 | Tower interior N side, lower, 2m ranging rod | N | |
| 124 | Tower interior N side remains of vaulting and turnpike stair | N | 3:19 |
| 125 | Tower interior N side, remains of vaulting and recessed arched part of N wall, and remains of turnpike stair | N | 3:20 |
| 126 | Tower interior N side, remains of recessed arch in N wall and remains of turnpike stair | N | 3:21 |
| 127 | Tower interior, S wall, lower springers for vaulting, remains of vertical wall, 2m ranging rod | S | 3:22-23 |
| 128 | Tower interior, S wall, lower remains of vertical wall, 2m ranging rod | S | 3:27-28 |
| 129 | Tower interior, S wall, upper windows | S | 3:24 |
| 130 | Tower interior, S wall upper windows and wallhead | S | 3:25, 3:29 |

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|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---------|
| 131 | Tower interior , S wall, SE corner, lower parts of two door jambs, springing for vaulting | SE | |
| 132 | Tower interior , S wall, SE corner, lower parts of two door jambs, springing for vaulting, 2m ranging rod | SE | 3:26 |
| 133 | Tower interior, S wall, SE corner, upper parts of two door jambs | SE | |
| 134 | Tower interior, S wall SE corner, upper parts of two door jambs and wallhead | SE | |
| 135 | Tower interior, S wall W side, detail lower window, showing hole for iron security bar | S | |
| 136 | Tower interior, S wall W side, detail upper window, showing holes for iron security bars | S | |
| 137 | Castle interior N wall general, 2m ranging rods, E side main chimney flue, W side outline of two chambers | N | 3:30 |
| 138 | Castle interior N wall, E side main chimney flue, W side outline of three chambers, smaller flue on W side of large flue | N | 3:31-33 |
| 139 | Castle interior N wall, detail, NW corner slit window in corner with opening of intramural oven on E side of window, 2m ranging rod | N | 3:34 |
| 140 | Castle interior N wall, detail of opening of intramural oven with bird | N | |
| 141 | Castle interior N wall, W side, detail of lower window with supporting iron rod | N | 3:35 |
| 142 | Castle interior N wall, W side, detail of mid window | N | 4:1 |
| 143 | Castle interior N wall, W side, detail of upper window with iron supporting rod | N | 4:2-3 |
| 144 | Castle interior N wall, detail uppermost window and wall head, iron supporting rods in foreground | N | 4:2-3 |
| 145 | Castle interior N wall, detail of gable end and roofing tile and chimney | N | |
| 146 | Castle interior E wall N side lower level, oven in N corner, window (with drain hole) on S side of oven, lower part of main fireplace and large window on N side of fireplace, 2 ranging rods | E | 4:4 |

| | | | |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---------|
| 147-148 | Castle interior E wall, main fireplace and large window on N side of fireplace | E | 4:5 |
| 149 | Castle interior E wall, upper, chimney stack | E | 4:6 |
| 150 | Castle interior E wall, N end, central fireplace, window on N side of fire place | E | |
| 151 | Castle interior E wall central area, bottom of main fireplace with drain to N, 2m ranging rods | E | 4:9 |
| 152 | Castle interior E wall, central area main fireplace | E | 4:10 |
| 153 | Castle interior E wall central area, above main fireplace, chimney and upper windows | E | 4:11 |
| 154 | Castle interior E wall, S end, S side of main fireplace, blocked large window S side of main fireplace, doorway into cellar, the S side of cellar vaulting | E | 4:12 |
| 155 | Castle interior E wall, S end S side of main fireplace, doorway into cellar, serious crack in wall | E | 4:13 |
| 156-157 | Castle interior E wall, S end, chimney stack and upper windows | E | 4:14-15 |
| 158 | Castle interior E wall, S end, window blocking S side of main fireplace, detail | E | |
| 159 | Castle interior E wall, doorway into cellar, severe cracking in wall, detail | E | 4:16 |
| 160 | Castle interior E wall, S end upper window and severe cracking, reinforcing rod in foreground | E | |
| 161 | Castle interior E wall, S end, alcove over which are three beam slots | SE | 4:17 |
| 162 | Castle interior E wall, N end, detail of oven in kitchen fireplace with resident fledgling | NE | |
| 163 | Castle interior E wall detail of drainage hole, 2m ranging rod | E | 4:7-8 |
| 164 | Castle interior E wall N end, detail of bottom of oven in kitchen fireplace with resident fledgling | NE | |
| 165-166 | Castle interior E wall N end detail of large window on N side of fireplace | E | |
| 167 | Castle interior E wall N end detail of upper window on N side | E | |

| | | | |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---------|
| | of chimney | | |
| 168 | Castle interior W wall N end, detail of repair to hole in W wall and springers for passageway vaulting, sections of a W side door jamb, 2m ranging rod | W | 4:18 |
| 169 | Castle interior W wall N end, mid height, E-W beam slots | W | 4:19 |
| 170 | Castle interior W wall N end, uppermost, double row of E-W beam slots and window | W | 4:20 |
| 171 | Castle interior W wall N end, uppermost window detail | W | 4:21 |
| 172 | Castle interior W wall N end, uppermost chamber and alcove, detail | NW | 4:22 |
| 173 | Castle interior W wall N end, parts of an in-situ W door jamb for N end chamber | W | |
| 174 | Castle interior W wall mid part, barrel vaulting springers, slit window, pistol loop for guarding main entrance, 2m ranging rods | W | 4:23 |
| 175 | Castle interior W wall mid part mid height beam slots for floor beams | W | 4:24 |
| 176 | Castle interior W wall mid part uppermost beam slots and ruined doorway from turnpike stairs | W | 4:25 |
| 177-178 | Castle interior W wall mid part, detail of pistol loop and slit window | W | 4:26 |
| 179 | Castle interior W wall S end pistol loop and slit window and entrance into castle hall from E side of tower, 2m ranging rod | W | 4:27 |
| 180-181 | Castle interior W wall S end, entrance into hall from tower, beam slots, entrance from turnpike onto 2 nd storey floor | W | 4:28-30 |
| 182 | Castle interior W wall S end pistol loop and slit window, detail, 2m ranging rod | W | 4:31 |
| 183 | Castle interior W wall S end W tower wall | W | |
| 184 | Castle interior W wall entrance from tower into hall, rubble over wooden lintel, detail | W | |
| 185 | Castle interior W wall S end entrance from turnpike stair in 2 nd floor | W | |
| 186 | Castle interior S wall, vaulting, main window | S | 4:32 |

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|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------|
| 187 | Castle interior S wall, main window, fireplace and window 2 storey | S | 4:33 |
| 188 | Castle interior S wall, upper level, | S | 4:34 |
| 189 | Castle interior S wall, detail of upper fireplace | S | |
| 190 | Castle interior S wall, detail of upper window | S | |
| 191 | Castle interior S wall mid fireplace, detail | S | |
| 192 | Castle interior S wall, mid window detail | S | |
| 193 | Castle interior S wall, blocked slit window at wall base, detail | S | |
| 194 | Castle interior S wall, square window at wall base, 2m ranging rod | S | 4:35 |
| 195-198 | Castle interior W wall S end at wall base, displaced, stonework with gun loop behind, for defending front door | NW | |
| | 28/05/19- Addendum GN03 | | |
| 001-8 | N chimney, main building, N face | SE, SSE, S | |
| 009 | N chimney, main building, E face (oblique) | SE | |
| 010-14 | N chimney, main building, S face | NW, N | |
| 015-18 | Details, copes and rubble on N chimney | N | |
| 019 | E chimney, main building, W & S faces (oblique) | NE | |
| 020 | E chimney, main building, W face | E | |
| 021 | E chimney, main building, W & S faces (oblique) | NE | |
| 022-23 | Detail, copes on E chimney, E face | W | |
| 024-26 | E chimney, main building, E face | W | |
| 027-29 | S chimney, main building, N face | S, SE | |
| 030-31 | S chimney, main building, E face (oblique) | SE, NE | |
| 032 | S chimney, main building, S face (oblique) | NE | |
| 033-35 | Details, copes on S chimney, main building, S face | N | |
| 036 | S chimney, main building, E face (oblique) | SSW | |

| | | | |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|--|
| 037-41 | W chimney, entrance tower, E face (oblique) | NW, SW | |
| 042 | W chimney, entrance tower, W face (oblique) | NE | |
| 043 | W chimney, entrance tower, W & S faces (oblique) | NE | |
| 044-45 | Details, copes on W chimney, entrance tower | NE, ENE | |
| 046-48 | Detail, SE corner pair of joist slots, E elevation main building (internal) | E | |
| 049 | Overview, joist slots in W elevation main building (internal) | NW | |
| 050-52 | Details, joist slots in W elevation main building (internal) | W | |
| 051-56 | Detail, "sentry post" in W elevation main building (internal) | W, SW | |
| 057 | Location, "sentry post" in W elevation main building (internal) | SW | |
| 058 | Rear of bretèche and wallhead walkway, W elevation main building (internal) | W | |
| 059 | Detail, mortar deposit, S end of walkway | W | |
| 060 | Rear of bretèche and wallhead walkway, W elevation main building (internal), oblique | NW | |
| 061 | Overview, wallhead, W elevation main building (internal) | N | |
| 062-65 | Top of wallhead to be spanned by new arch, junction of entrance tower and main building, S side | W | |
| 066-68 | Detail, "sentry post", E elevation, main building (internal) | E, NE | |
| 069-70 | Detail, top of spiral stairs, N elevation, main building (internal) | N, NW | |
| 071-73 | Remains of 1 st floor doorway, W elevation, main building (internal) | W | |
| 074-75 | Detail, granite jamb of 1 st floor doorway, junction of entrance tower and main building (internal), oblique | NW | |
| 076-79 | Detail, alcove in SE corner, E elevation, main building (internal) | E | |
| 080 | Detail, fireplace in S elevation, main building (internal) | S | |
| 081-82 | Detail, mortared joist slots in E chimney, E elevation, main building | E | |

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|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--|
| 083-84 | Overview, mortared joist slots in E chimney, E elevation, main building (oblique) | SE, NE | |
| 085-86 | Detail, fireplace in S elevation, main building (internal) | S | |
| 087-88 | Detail, window in S elevation, main building (internal) | S | |
| 089-90 | Overview, wallheads of main building, bartizan level | NE, NW | |
| 091 | Overview, junction of main building and entrance tower bartizan level | W | |
| 092 | Overview, "sentry post" and E chimney | NE | |
| 093-95 | Detail, entrance to bartizan | NE | |
| 096-97 | Lower part of wall to be spanned by new arch, junction of entrance tower and main building, tower end | W | |
| 098-99 | Lower part of wall to be spanned by new arch, junction of entrance tower and main building, main building end | N | |
| 100-101 | 1 st floor doorway from S wall, junction of entrance tower and main building | N | |
| 102 | Detail, entrance to intramural passage below bartizan (oblique) | NE | |
| 103 | Detail, window beside entrance to intramural passage below bartizan | E | |
| 104 | Detail, intramural passage below bartizan | N | |
| 105 | Detail, wallhead above intramural passage below bartizan | NNE | |
| 106 | Location, intramural passage below bartizan, E elevation main building (internal) | NE | |
| | 19/08/19- Addendum GN04 | | |
| 001-2 | General view of entrance to 1 st passage (bartizan), oblique | NE | |
| 003 | Entrance to 1 st passage | NE | |
| 004 | Detail, ceiling of 1 st passage | NE | |
| 005 | End recess of 1 st passage | NW | |
| 006-7 | Detail, ceiling of recess | NW | |
| 008 | Detail, arrow slit window in 1 st passage, oblique | NE | |

| | | | |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|--|
| 009 | Detail, arrow slit window in 1 st passage | E | |
| 010 | Detail, arrow slit window in 1 st passage, no number board | E | |
| 011 | Wall facing entrance to 1 st passage | SW | |
| 012-13 | Detail, wooden threshold of 1 st passage | NE | |
| 014 | Location of wooden threshold | NE | |
| 015-16 | Roof of entrance of 1 st passage/floor of bartizan | NE | |
| 017 | Entrance to 2 nd passage (Great Hall) | E | |
| 018 | Location of entrance to 2 nd passage, oblique | ENE | |
| 019 | Entrance to 2 nd passage (Great Hall) | E | |
| 020-23 | Interior of 2 nd passage | NE | |
| 024-26 | Detail, fissure in outer wall of 2 nd passage | ENE | |
| 027-28 | Detail, modern brickwork blocking lower door of 2 nd passage | NW | |
| 029-31 | Location of modern brickwork | NW | |
| 032-33 | Top of steps/entrance to 2 nd passage | SW | |
| 034 | Top step in 2 nd passage | SW | |
| | 25/11/19- Addendum GN05 | | |
| 001-3 | General location, Pits 1&2 | SE | |
| 004-5 | General location, Pits 3&4 | SE | |
| 006-7 | General location, Pits 5&6 | SW | |
| 008-9 | General location, Pits 7&8 | SW | |
| 010 | Working shot, excavating Pit 1 | S | |
| 011 | Location/working shot, Pit 1 | S | |
| 012-14 | Pit 1, post-ex | SE | |
| 015 | Lightning conductor mat | E | |
| 016-17 | Working shots, excavating Pit 2 | S | |
| 018-19 | Pit 2, post-ex | SE | |

| | | | |
|--------|-------------------------------------------|------|--|
| 020-21 | Working shots, excavating Pit 3 | SW | |
| 022 | Location/working shot, Pits 3&4 | SW | |
| 023-24 | Pits 3&4, post-ex | W | |
| 025-26 | Location shots, Pits5&6, beneath bartizan | W | |
| 027 | Working shot, excavating Pits 5&6 | S | |
| 028-29 | Pits 5&6, post-ex | S | |
| 030-31 | Working shots, excavating Pits 7&8 | SW | |
| 032-33 | Pits 7&8, post-ex | W, S | |

Appendix 2 Drawing Register

| <i>Sheet No.</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Scale</i> |
|------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Photographic register | - |
| 2 | Site notes | - |

Appendix 3 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LOCAL AUTHORITY: | Moray |
| PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME: | Blairfindy Castle |
| PROJECT CODE: | GN02, GN03, GN04, GN05 |
| PARISH: | Inveravon |
| NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR: | C Fyles |
| NAME OF ORGANISATION: | Alder Archaeology Ltd |
| TYPE(S) OF PROJECT: | Historic Building Record |
| NMRS NO(S): | NJ12NE 4 |
| SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S): | Castle (ruined) |
| SIGNIFICANT FINDS: | None |
| NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures) | NJ 19838 28646 |
| START DATE (this season) | 13 th June 2018 |
| END DATE (this season) | 25 th November 2019 |
| PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.) | None |
| MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields) | Alder Archaeology conducted an historic building survey of a ruined towerhouse on Crown Estate land at Castleton of Blairfindy, Glenlivet. The survey included the creation of measured elevations and plans using a Leica Total Station and a full photographic record in both digital images and black and white film of all external and internal elevations, features of interest and the wider setting of the building, which was constructed in the sixteenth century and abandoned by the nineteenth. The work was carried out in varying but frequently wet and windy conditions. A remotely operated drone was also used to compile a record of the upper levels of the ruin, which were not directly accessible. A watching brief on engineering test pits was conducted on 11 th July 2018 and forms the subject of a separate report. Follow-up visits on 28 th May, 2019 and 19 th August, 2019, recorded wallhead features and two intra-mural passages, while a watching brief on lightning conductor pits on 25 th November, 2019, resulted in no new features. |
| PROPOSED FUTURE WORK: | None |
| CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS: | - |
| SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY: | Arc Architects 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) |

Appendix 4 The Armorial Panel

David Perry

The initials IG and MG (not HG as most writers have assumed) identify the impaled arms on the armorial panel as those of John Gordon, 3rd of Cluny, and his wife, Margaret, daughter of Thomas Gordon of Auchenuive (Gordon 1844, viii, n2). The panel is much weathered but the arms are still identifiable. The dexter side (heraldic right but viewer's left) comprises four quarters: 1st, three boars' heads couped (for Gordon); 2nd, three lions' heads couped (?) (should be erased) (for Badenoch); 3rd, three crescents within a double tressure flory counter flory (for Seton); 4th, much weathered but three, possibly five (2, 2, 1), cinquefoils or fraises (for Fraser). There are examples of Gordon arms with five cinquefoils/fraises, sometimes in saltire (ie, 2, 1, 2) (Malden et al 2016, 172, 173). The sinister side comprises two wavy bars between three boars' heads couped; there may be an unidentified device set centrally between the wavy bars, or this may more likely be the result of weathering. The dexter side represents the arms of John Gordon and contain no apparent difference from the arms of his chief, the Earl of Huntly. John was a grandson of the 3rd Earl of Huntly, whose ancestor, Alexander Seton had married the heiress of Sir Adam Gordon of that ilk, killed at Halidon Hill in 1402 (hence the Seton quarter in the arms). He married Margaret, daughter of Thomas Gordon of Auchenuive (killed at the Battle of Corrichie in 1563), descended in the male line from a brother of Sir Adam Gordon of that ilk.

It is confusing that there are three different families of Gordon of Cluny. The first, descended from a younger son of the 3rd Earl of Huntly, held that estate from 1539 to about 1680. The second, descended from Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonston, younger son of the 11th Earl of Sutherland, held Cluny from 1680 to before 1753. The third, of unknown descent, has held it since at least 1753, when John Gordon, 1st of Cluny, registered his arms in the Lyon Register as *Azure three boars' heads couped Or within a border chequy of the first and last* (Balfour Paul 1893, 143).

While examples of the Gordon of Cluny arms are known from seals for John's son, Thomas, and grandson, Alexander (SAS, Nos 1098 and 1100; Laing, Nos 368 and 370), as well as from 17th-century manuscripts (Malden et al 2016, 172) none are known for Gordon of Auchenuive. This armorial panel is therefore the only known example of these arms.

References

Balfour Paul, Sir J 1893 *An Ordinary of Arms contained in the Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland*. Edinburgh (William Green and Sons).

Bulloch, J M 1911 *The Gordons of Cluny from the Early Years of the Eighteenth Century down to the Present Time*. Privately printed.

Laing, H 1850 *Descriptive Catalogue of Impressions from Ancient Scottish Seals*. Edinburgh (Bannatyne and Maitland Clubs).

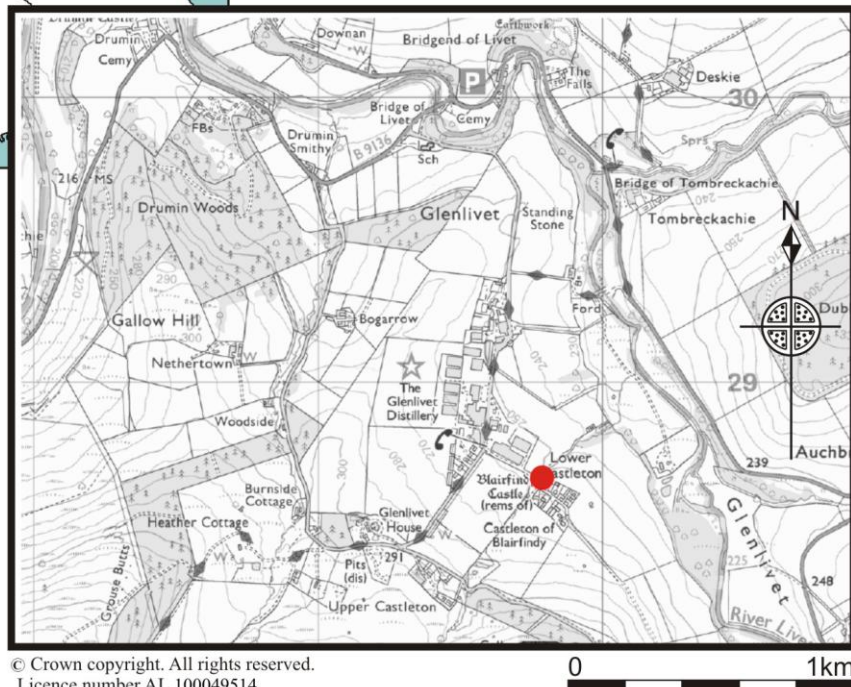
Malden, E, Malden, J and Scott, W G 2016 *An Ordinary of Scottish Arms from Original pre-1672 Manuscripts*. Edinburgh (Heraldry Society of Scotland).

Gordon of Ruthven, Patrick 1844 *A Short Abridgement of Britane's Distemper, from the yeare of God M.DC.XXXIX. to M.DC.XLIX* (ed Dunn, J). Aberdeen (Spalding Club).

SAS 1904 Macdonald, W R *Scottish Armorial Seals*. Edinburgh (William Green and Sons).

Illus 1

Blairfindy Castle, Moray
Site Location

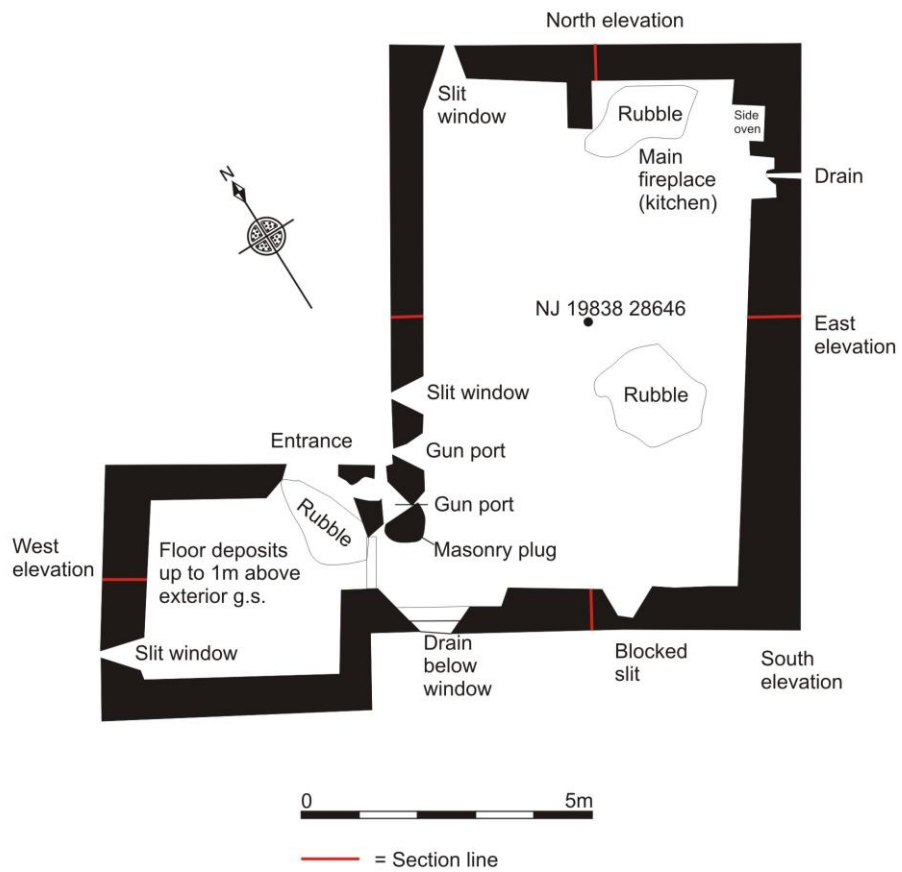


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GN02

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Illus 2 Ground Floor plan of Blairfindy Castle, June 2018

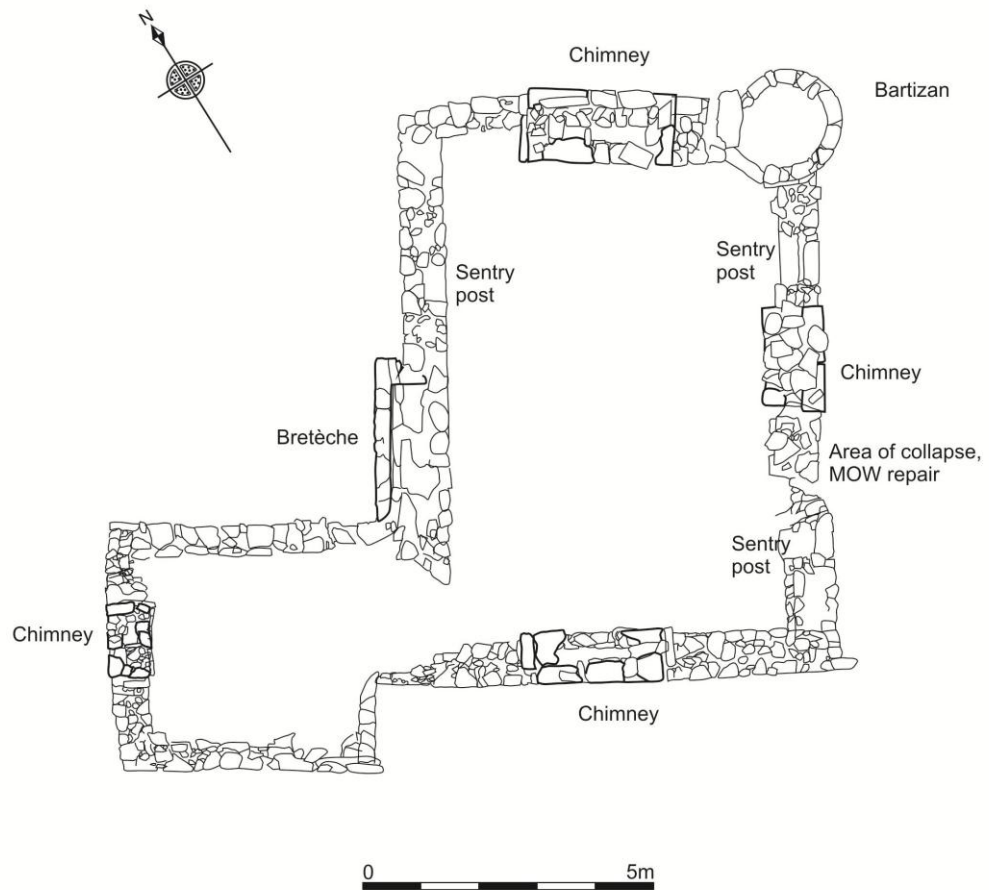


NB- although the castle is not truly aligned N-S, but rather NE-SW, this survey follows previous work in referring to elevations by cardinal points (eg, exterior North elevation etc)

GN02

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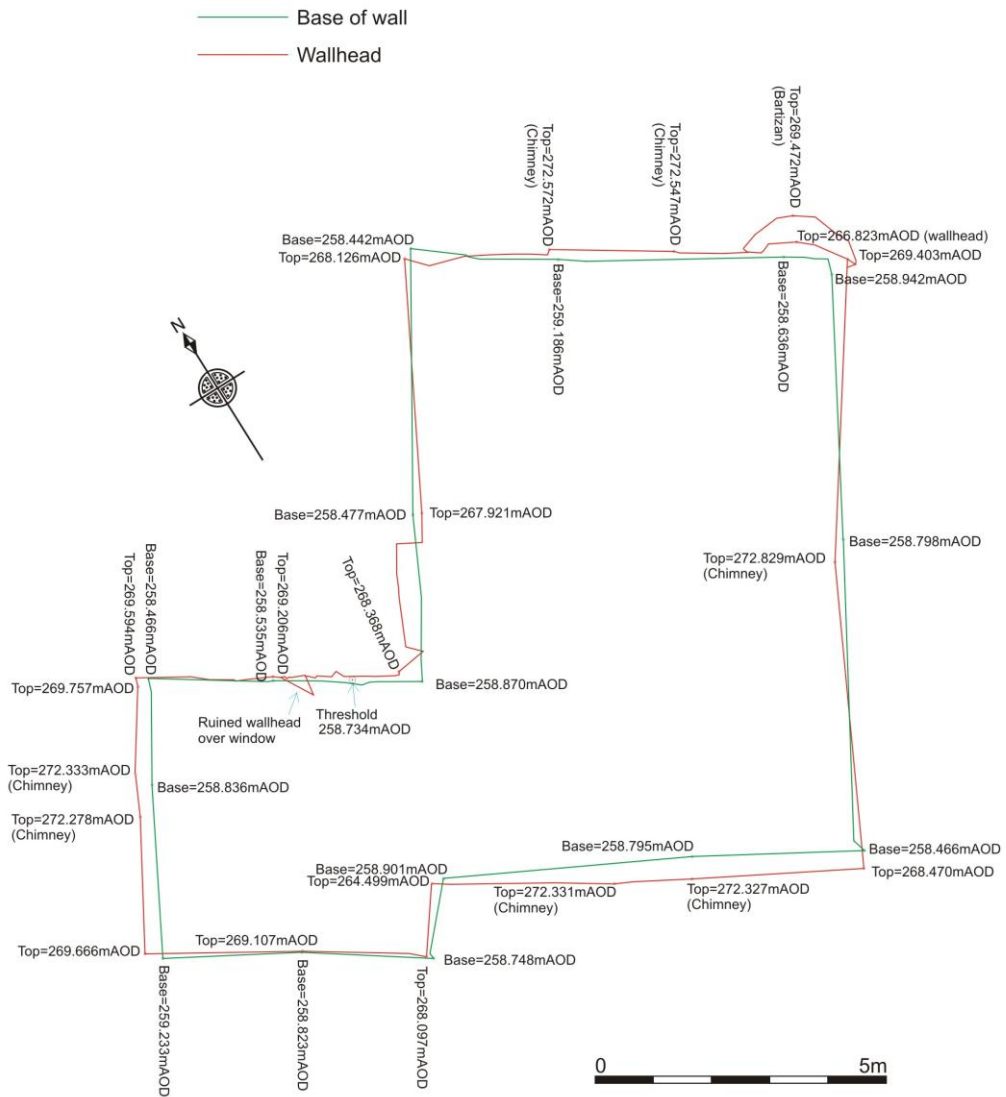
Illus 3 Wallhead plan of Blairfindy Castle, June 2018



GN02

2018 Alder Archaeology Ltd

Illus 4 Blairfindy Castle, plan of vertical wall alignments August 2018

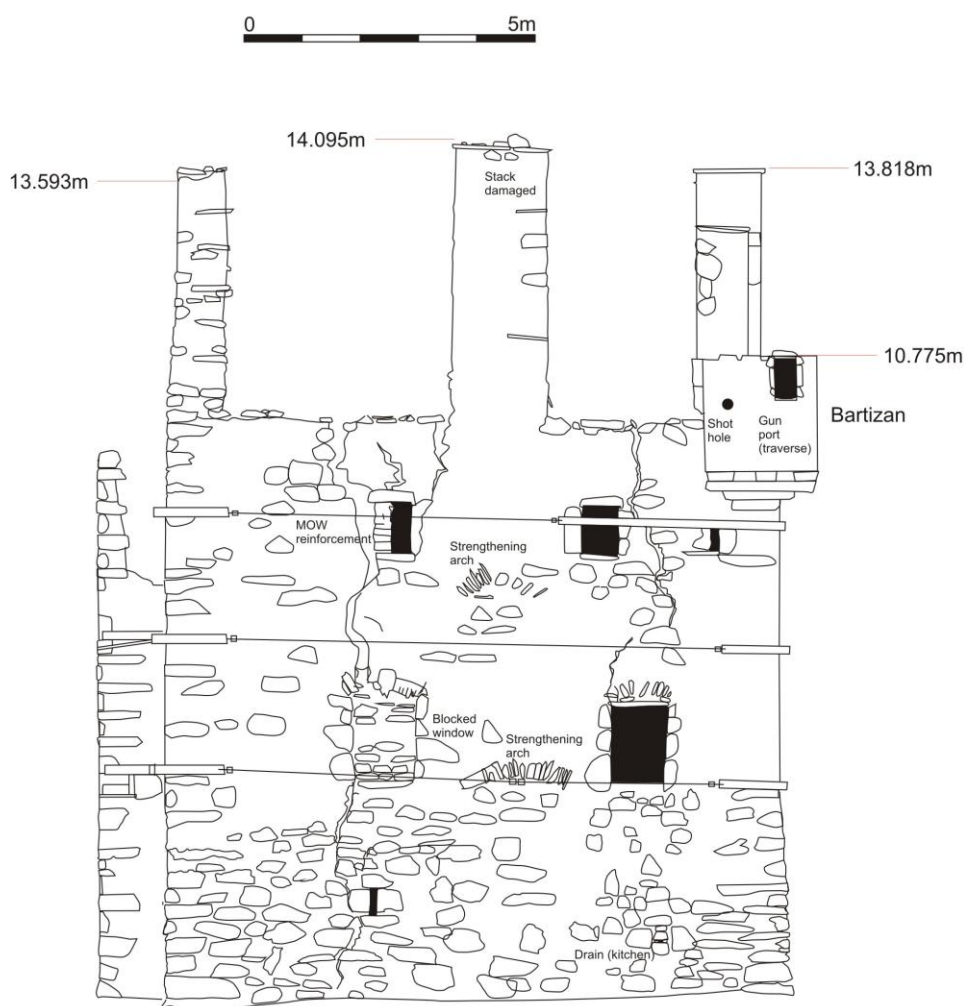


GN02

2018 Alder Archaeology Ltd

Illus 5 Exterior East Elevation

(Spot heights are above the threshold stone, entrance, 258.734m AOD)

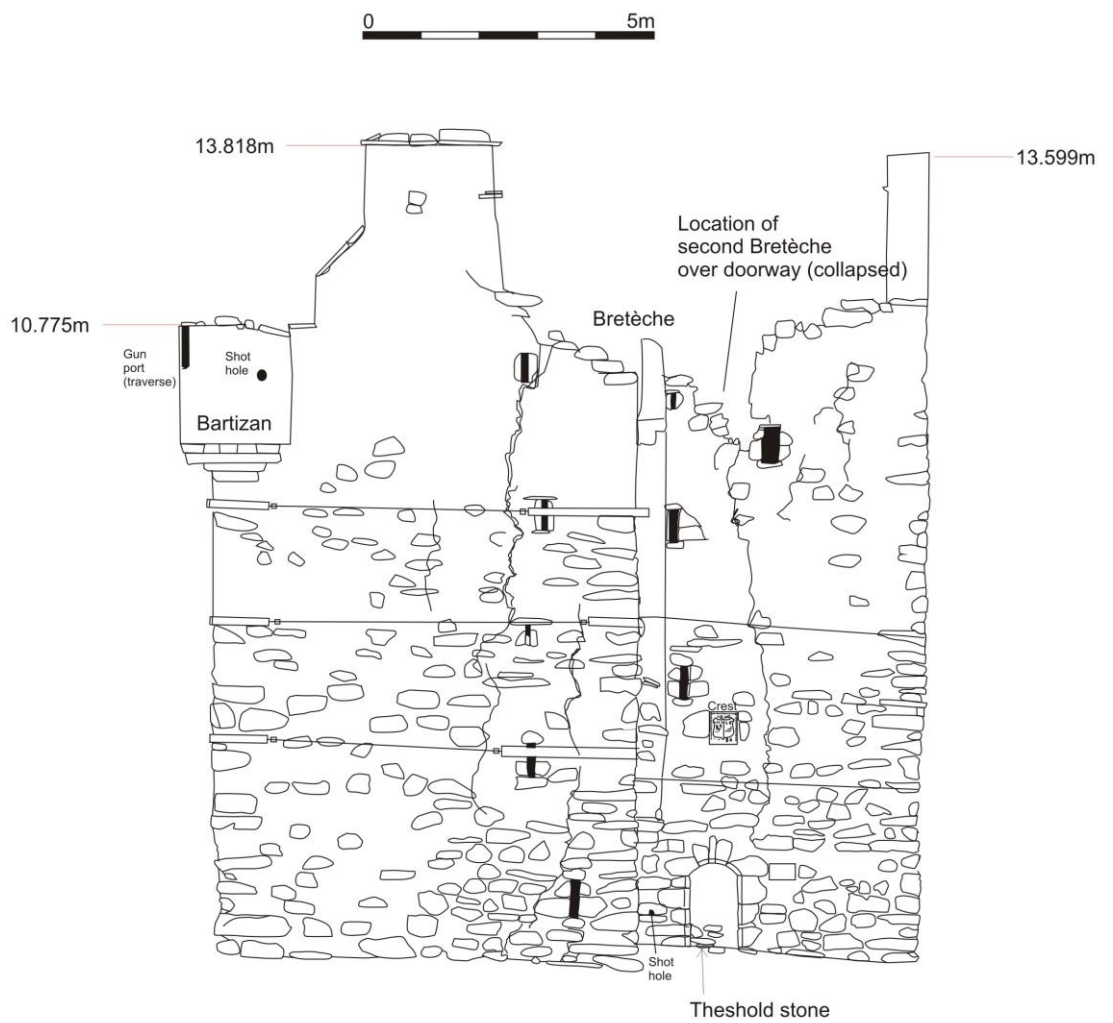


GN02

2018 Alder Archaeology Ltd

Illus 6 Exterior North Elevation

(Spot heights are above the threshold stone, entrance, 258.734m AOD)

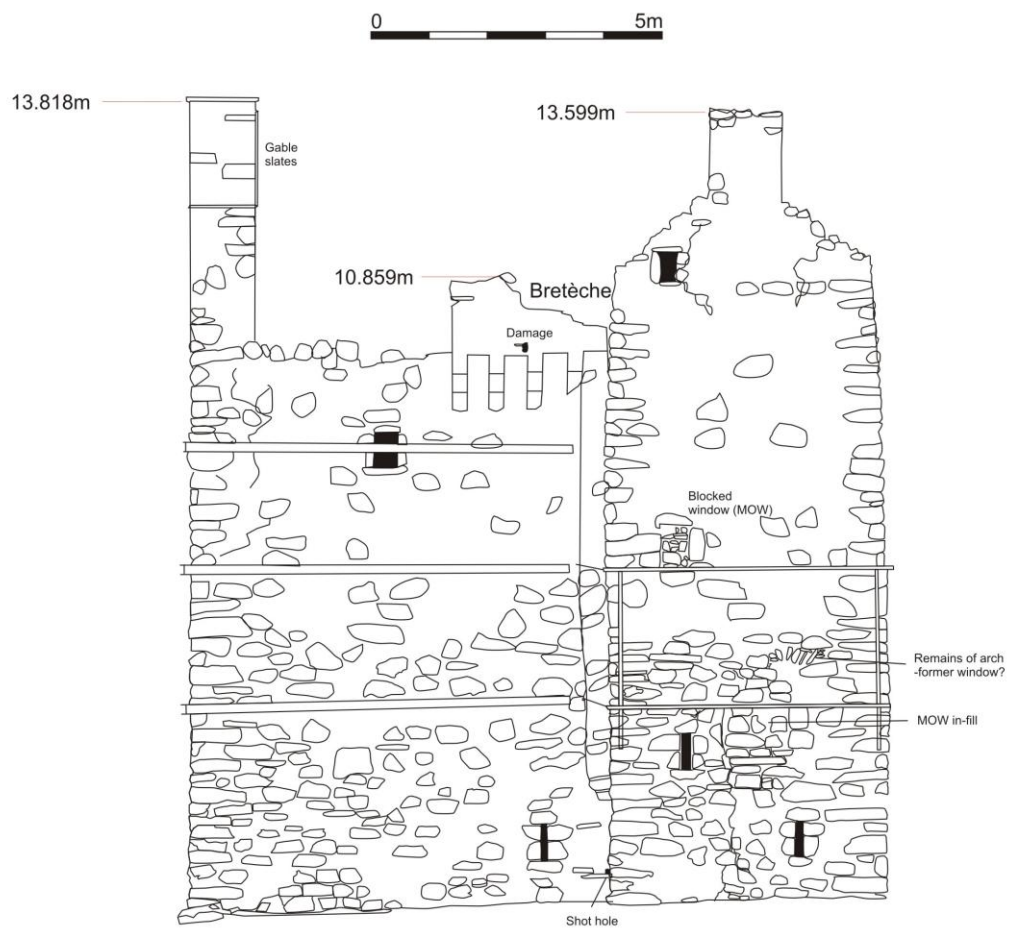


GN02

2018 Alder Archaeology Ltd

Illus 7 Exterior West Elevation

(Spot heights are above the threshold stone, entrance, 258.734m AOD)

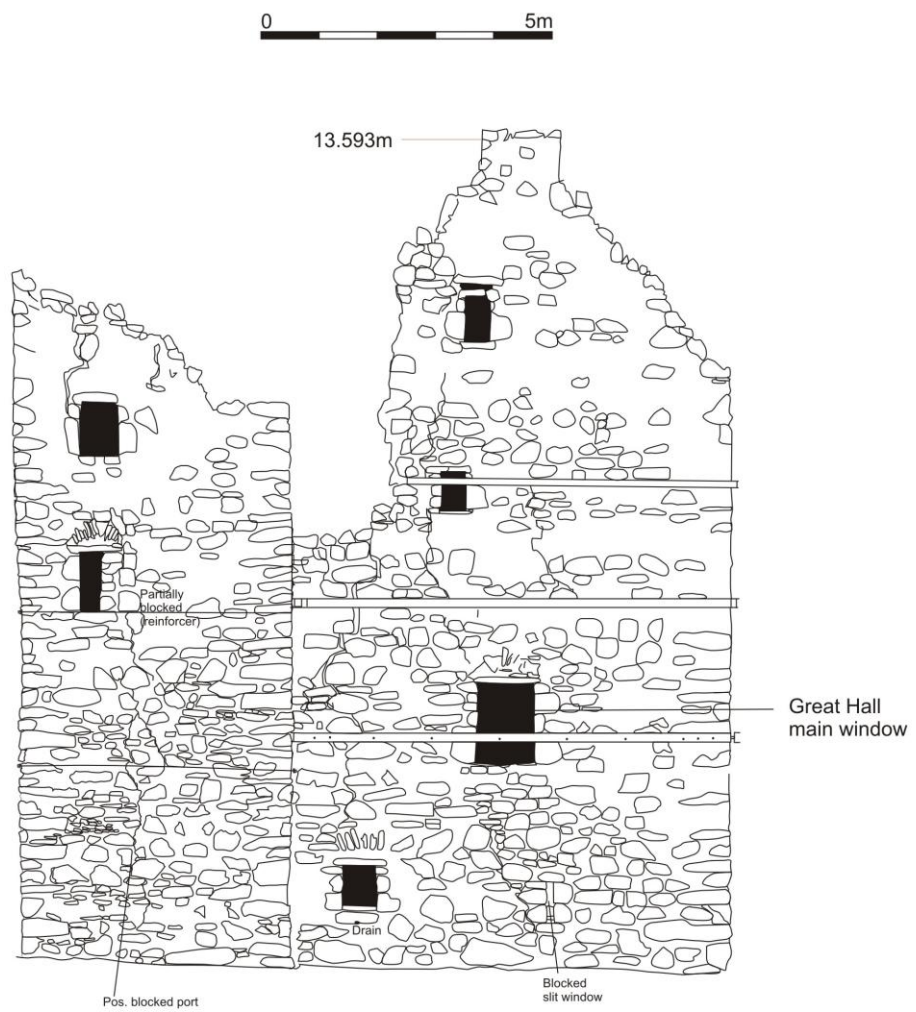


GN02

2018 Alder Archaeology Ltd

Illus 8 Exterior South Elevation

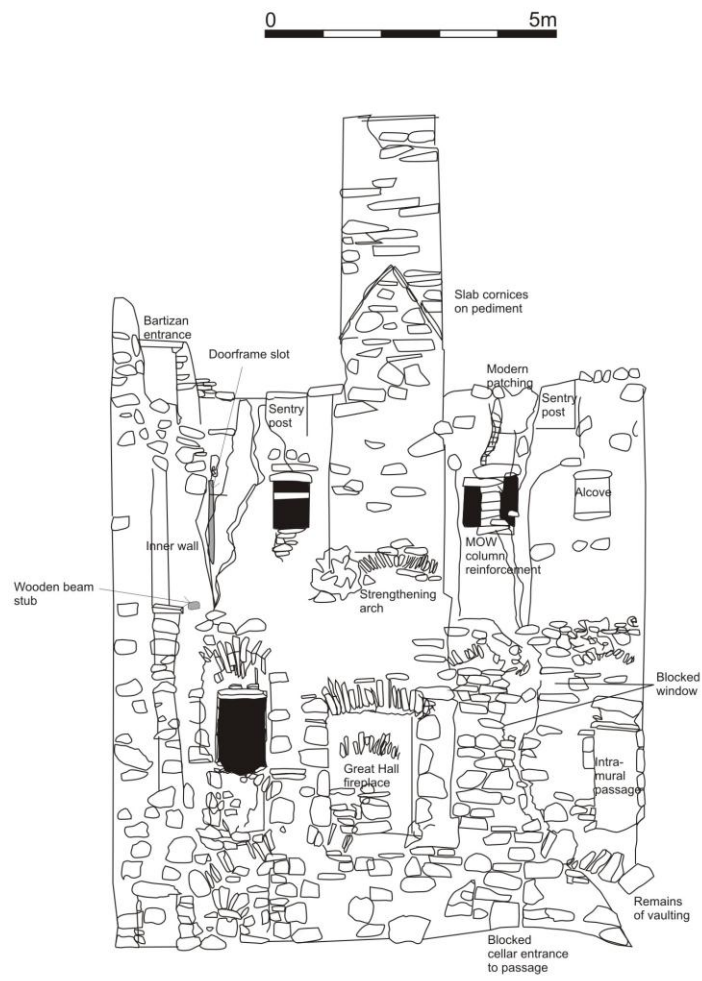
(Spot heights are above the threshold stone, entrance, 258.734m AOD)



GN02

2018 Alder Archaeology Ltd

Illus 9 Interior East elevation, main building

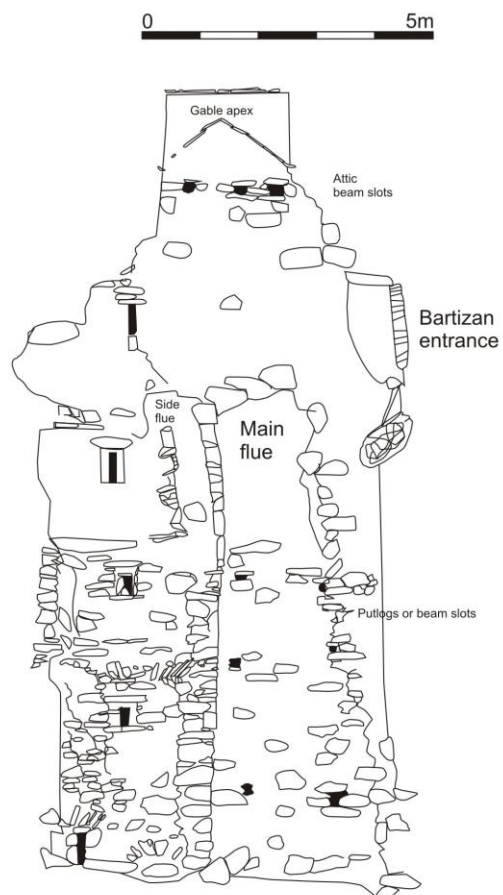


GN02

2018 Alder Archaeology Ltd

Illus 10

Interior North elevation, main building

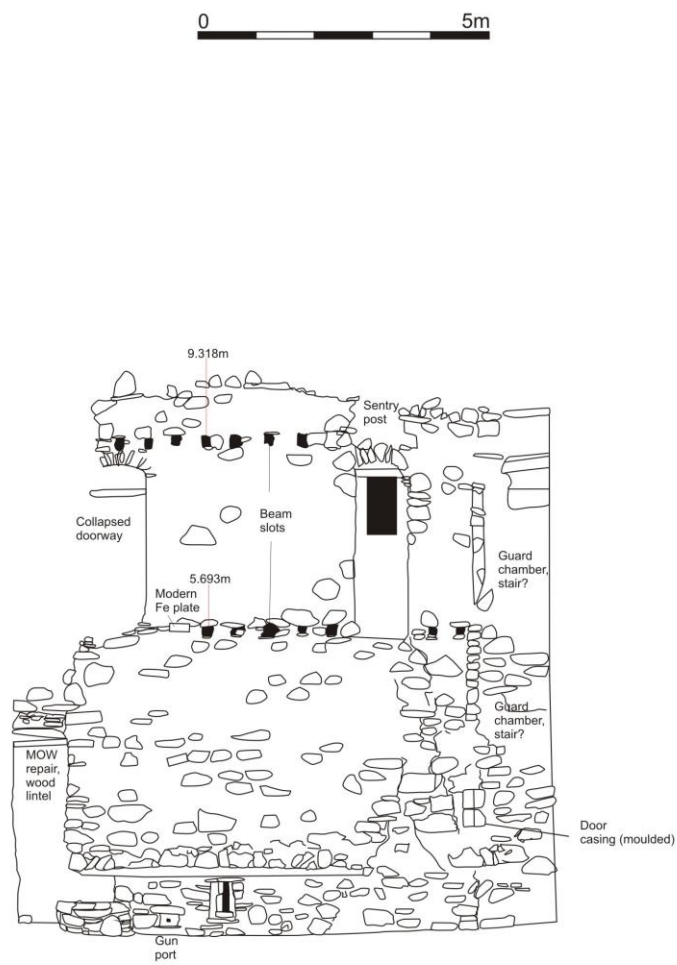


GN02

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Illus 11 Interior West elevation, main building

(Spot heights are above the threshold stone, entrance, 258.734m AOD)

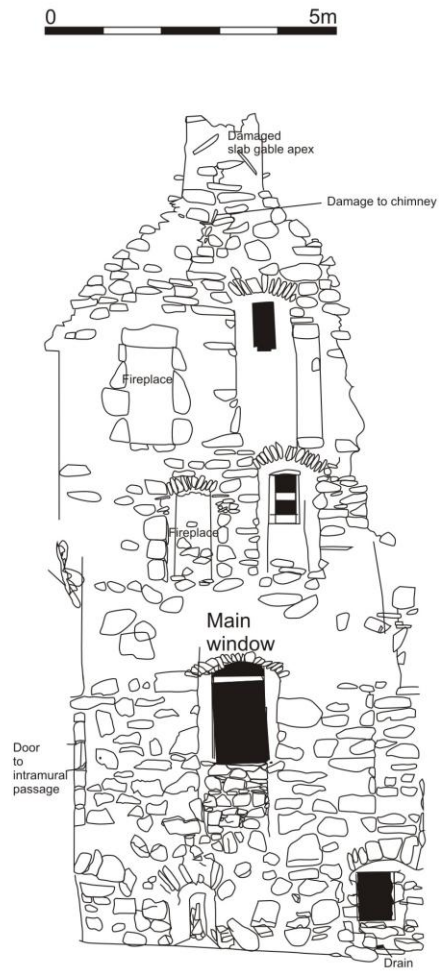


GN02

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Illus 12

Interior South elevation, main building

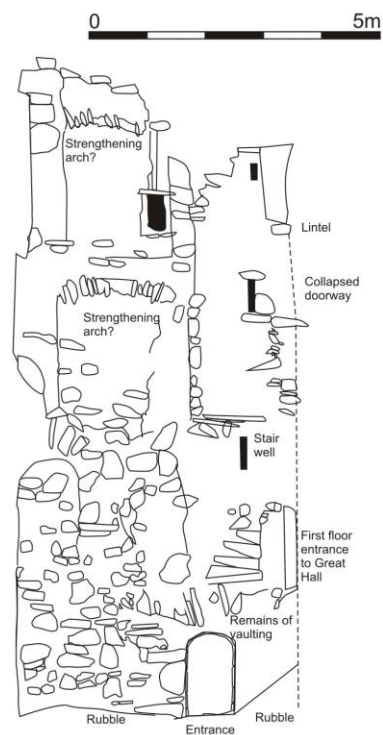


GN02

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Illus13

Interior North elevation, wing

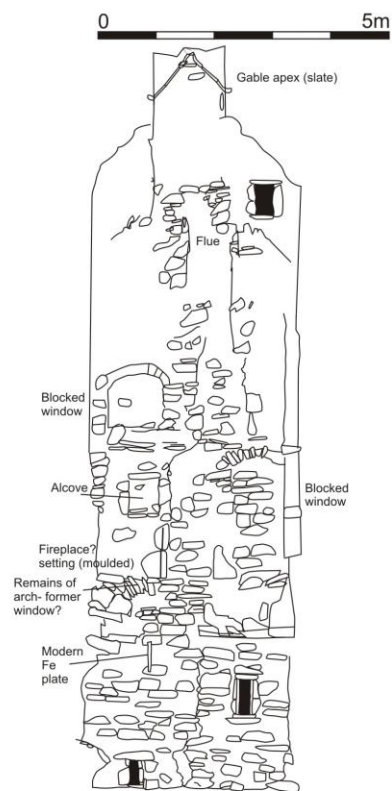


GN02

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Illus 14

Interior West elevation, wing

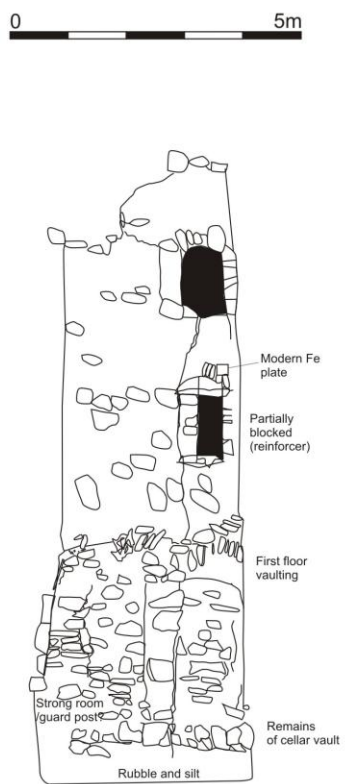


GN02

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Illus 15

Interior South elevation, wing

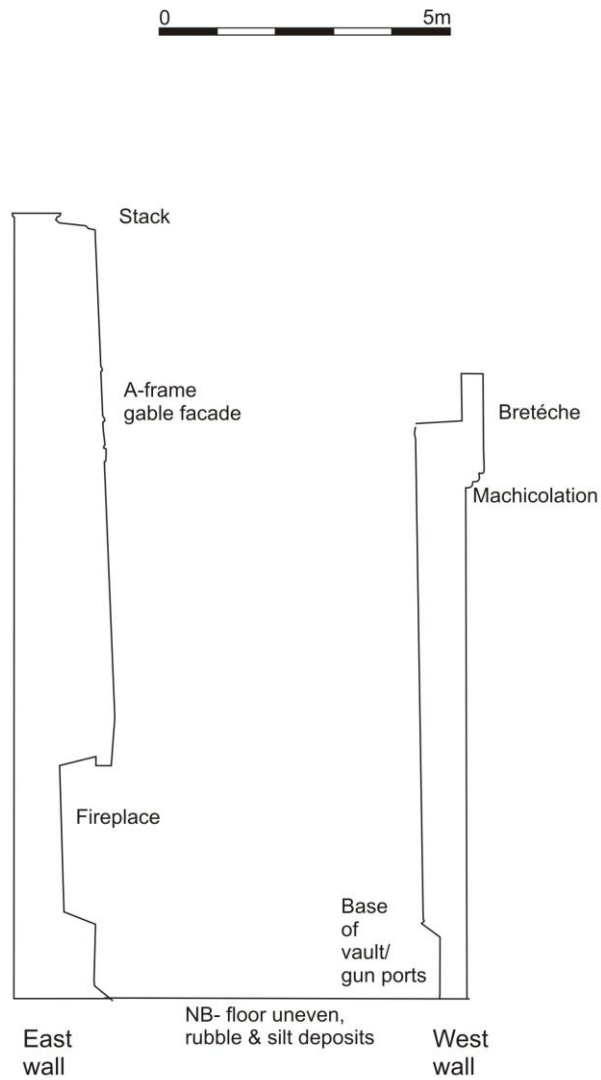


GN02

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Illus 16

East and West walls
cross-sections, main building

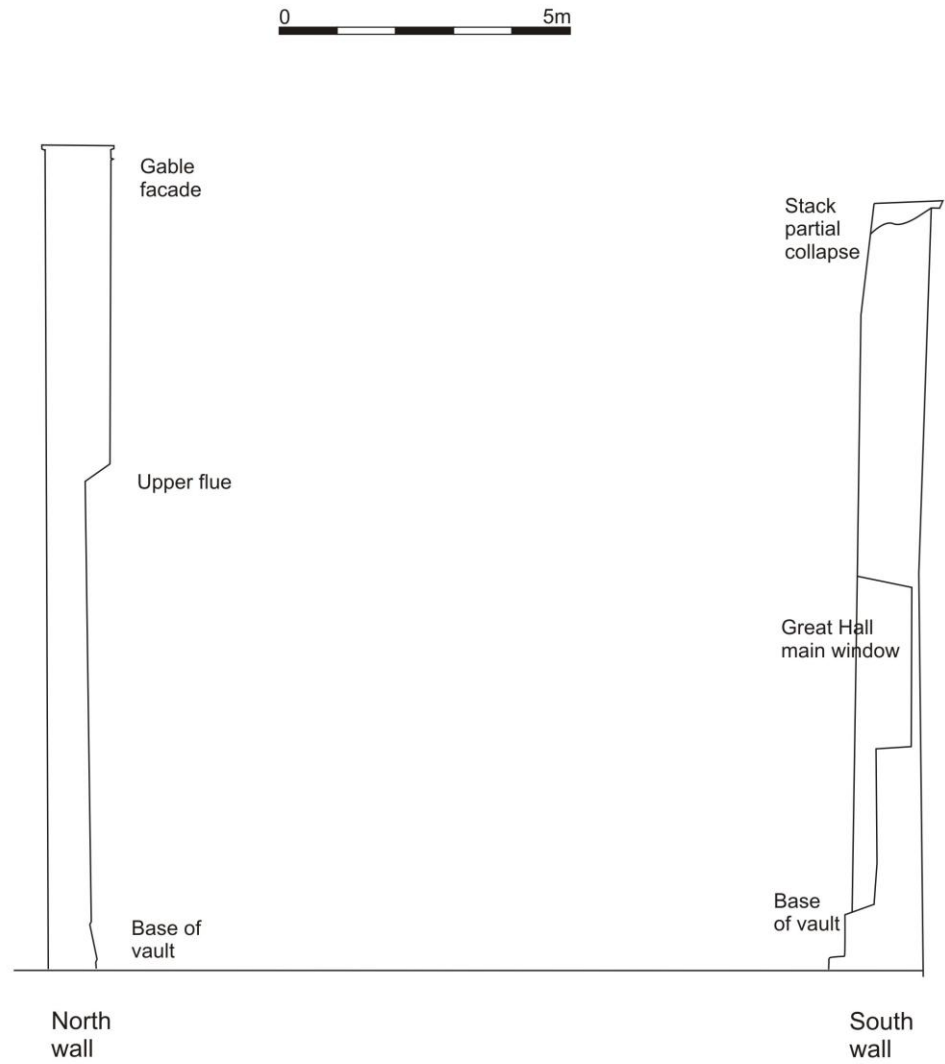


GN02

2018 Alder Archaeology Ltd

Illus 17

North and South walls
cross-sections, main building

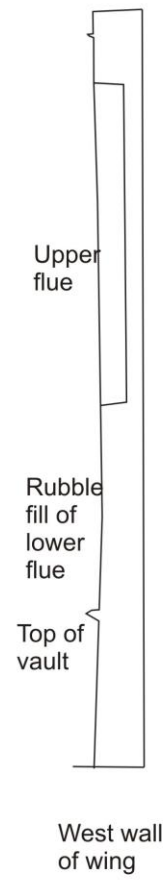


GN02

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Illus 18

West wall
cross-section, wing



GN02

2018 Alder Archaeology Ltd