

Archaeological Standing Building Survey  
The Gables  
Arbroath Road  
FORFAR  
FF18



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL STANDING  
BUILDING SURVEY  
THE GABLES  
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1	<i>Background</i> .....	1
2	<i>Details of Work</i> .....	1
3	<i>Interpretation</i> .....	5
4	<i>Conclusions and Recommendations</i> .....	5
5	<i>Bibliography</i> .....	6
Appendix 1	<i>Photographic Register</i> .....	7
Appendix 2	<i>Discovery &amp; Excavation in Scotland Entry</i> .....	9

*Illustration 1: Site location plan*

*Illustration 2: Floor plan and suggested phase plan of cottage*

*Illustration 3: External elevations of cottage*

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***ABSTRACT***

*A stone cottage, the sole surviving remnant of a nineteenth century workhouse, was surveyed in advance of demolition. A Level 1 survey was conducted. The cottage, depicted on the First Edition OS Map (1861) was probably constructed in three main phases and possibly pre-dated the workhouse. The survey was conducted on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2021.*

# **1 Background**

## **1.1 Introduction**

JFS Architects, on behalf of Caledonia Housing Association, commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological standing building survey of a stone cottage within the grounds of a care home at 26 Arbroath Road, Forfar, in advance of demolition. The proposed development area comprises the home, cottage and grounds, centred on NGR NO 46356 50684. The work (site code FF18) was undertaken on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2021, in wet weather conditions. The requirement was to carry out a Level 1 survey, as per ALGAO guidelines.

The work was designed to satisfy the archaeological condition on development application reference 21/00460/FULL.

## **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

The main aim of this investigation was to create a permanent photographic, illustrated and narrative record of the building in advance of development, taking account of current setting and condition, form, function and fabric and noting features of interest and any phases of construction and use.

## **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 David Stephen of JFS Architects, David Moon at Caledonia Housing association and Jenny Kasprovicz at The Gables for their assistance and guidance throughout this project. Caledonia Housing Association funded this survey.

# **2 Details of Work**

## **2.1 The Site (Illus 1)**

The Gables care home occupies a plot on the SW side of Arbroath Road, close to its junction with East High Street, on the SE side of Forfar. It is bordered to the NW by the local fire station on Strang Street and to the SE by a park and playground. A former linen works lies close by to the W and blocks of housing lie to the S, E and N. The road slopes gently down from NW-SE, heading out of town towards Arbroath. The grounds of the care home are lightly wooded and the cottage at number 26, lying N of the main building and immediately alongside the road entrance, is in an overgrown area and currently disused.

## 2.2 Archaeological Potential

The Gables care home is a mid-20th Century construction of minimal archaeological interest. However, it stands within grounds which were formerly part of the site of a poorhouse complex, of which the stone cottage and gated entrance (Angus HER NO45SE0149) are a surviving remnant (the majority of the complex seems to have stood in the area now occupied by the fire station). As the cottage is to be demolished under the development proposal, a survey was required to create a permanent record.

## 2.3 Archaeological Method

A Level 1 Standing Building Survey was carried out to create a permanent record. This comprised: a full photographic record of the building in its current setting, with all main external and internal elevations and features of interest; annotated measured plan and elevation drawings of the building, together with location maps at appropriate scales; a narrative account, taking in the form, fabric, condition and function of the building, together with features of interest, measurements of key features and details of any evidence of phases of construction and use.

## 2.4 Results of Investigations

### *Map evidence*

A rapid study was made of online map evidence held by the National Library of Scotland. The cottage was depicted on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map next to the entrance to the Poorhouse, with an Infirmary to the N:



*OS First Edition (surveyed 1861)*

The cottage is depicted as a simple rectangular building aligned NW-SE. The area of The Gables care home is a garden, possibly for growing food, with a path. The poorhouse as a whole opened on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1861 (Angus Archives- source, [www.workhouses.org.uk](http://www.workhouses.org.uk)), although the cottage may have pre-dated the institution itself.



*OS Second Edition (revised 1901)*

By the time of the second edition, the cottage is L-shaped, with the linen works occupying the corner of South Street and Strang Street (formerly Nursery Feus). The garden area is still shown.

### *Survey*

#### Exterior

Number 26, Arbroath Road was a single storey (plus loft space), L-shaped building aligned NW-SE. It was constructed of snecked, mostly stugged stone rubble with lime bonding. Quoins and the casing of doorways and windows were of ashlar or sub-ashlar sandstone, mainly local pink Angus stone. The newer NE-SW “foot” of the L (see map evidence, above) was constructed of the same mix of materials in very similar style, with no obvious joins. The roof was of grey slate with lead ridge and gully flashing, probably a replacement but the evidence of wear indicated this was not recent. The “foot” had gables at each end, each featuring a single pot chimney stack. The NW-SE building measured 6.00m wide and 15.00m long to the junction with the NE-SW foot; the foot measured 11.00m long x 6.00m wide. All ground floor windows measured 1.30m tall x 0.75m wide and featured moulded stone sills and single block lintels.

#### *SE elevation*

This was a gable end with a rectangular central window at attic height, 1.00m tall x 0.55m wide, boarded at the time of the survey. A flight of four concrete steps led to a concrete landing accessing a door (the fire escape) at the SW side of the ground floor. The doorway was 2.20m tall x 0.80m wide and was occupied by a modern fire door. The NW end of the elevation adjoined the stone boundary wall, which curved from SW-NE to NW-SE along Arbroath Road and also formed the N side of the gated entrance to The Gables, previously the entrance to the Poorhouse and visible on the

First Edition map (see above). This featured a 2.20m tall x 1.30m wide gateway, now blocked with concrete bricks, at the corner of the wall where it turned along Arbroath Road.

#### *NE elevation*

This was screened from the road by the boundary wall and thickly overgrown at the time of the survey. The NE elevation of the “foot” building was a gable end, blank apart from the stone chimney stack. The gable projected 2.00m from the remainder of the elevation, which comprised the original cottage. The latter was fronted by a low (0.30m tall) retaining wall and featured a total of six windows, unevenly spaced along the frontage and all now boarded, apart from the example at the SE end, which was blocked with concrete bricks. There was no trace, either in the boundary wall or on the ground, of the entrance from the road shown on the First and Second Edition maps (see above), although the undergrowth may have obscured any such remains.

#### *NW elevation*

This featured two windows (boarded, as elsewhere) at either end, illuminating the NW end room within (see below). The centre of the elevation had been re-pointed, but this did not appear to indicate any major rebuilding.

#### *SW elevation*

This included the main entrance to the building, located at the NW end of the original building and level with the exterior ground surface (floored with concrete along the base of the elevation) rather than featuring a step. Three windows were spaced along the original building to the SE of the doorway but stopping short of the SE end room (see interior), possibly indicating that this had been built onto the earliest core of the building. Much of this elevation had been fairly recently repointed, with thick mortar. The SW gable end of the “foot” featured a ground floor window located at the SE side; it also featured a stone chimney stack and was otherwise blank.

#### *Interior*

Throughout, the interior had been refitted with modern office furnishings and lino floor and was painted, which may have obscured original features. It was, however, noted that all windows were set into embrasures with wood panelling and were wooden framed sashes with brass fittings. These may have been installed early in the building’s life, but were probably not original, as they were uniform throughout both the earlier cottage and later “foot”. Many also featured clearly modern glass. The rooms were a uniform height of 2.49m, lino floor to flock wallpaper ceiling.

#### *Entrance hall and storeroom*

The hall opened from the entrance, measured 1.74m x 1.63m and connected to the NW end room and central rooms. The storeroom (2.45m x 1.48m) opened from its NE side and featured a small sash window with dappled glass, suggesting it was at some stage a W.C. It also featured wooden plank wainscoting on the NE elevation, below the window, certainly an early decoration, if not original.

### *NW end room*

This accounted for the entirety of the “foot” and was 8.84m NE-SW x 4.30m transverse. The NW elevation featured wooden plank wainscoting, as in the storeroom, while the SE, NE and SW elevations were tiled to the same height (1.20m). The NW elevation also featured the two windows noted on the exterior (see above), partially obscured by metal shelves but with wooden sashes visible (reglazed with toughened glass or damaged). There was no internal evidence of the ground floor window in the SW elevation (see above), which was partially obscured by furniture.

### *Central room*

This was the core of the building and featured equally-spaced windows in the NE and SW elevations. The SW elevation also featured wooden plank wainscoting, but this was obscured by filing cabinets along the NE elevation. The room measured 5.78m NW-SE x 4.38m transverse.

### *Corridor, office, W.C.*

A short corridor, 2.26m long x 1.03m wide, led between the central and SE end rooms. It featured a hatch to the loft space, but this was not accessible. To the SW was a small office or store, 2.28m x 1.87m with a centrally-placed window in the SW elevation, while to the NE was a W.C., also with a central window and measuring 2.22m x 1.34m.

### *SE end room*

This featured the fire escape door noted on the exterior (see above) in the SE elevation. The same elevation and also the NE had wooden plank wainscoting, with the other walls blank, painted plaster. The NE elevation also featured two closely-spaced windows; the SE example was blocked on the outside with concrete (see Exterior, above), but this was not apparent on the interior, which was boarded.

## **3 Interpretation**

Although almost entirely modernised internally, the exterior of the cottage retained the appearance it projected as part of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century Poorhouse. It was probably built in three main phases and was essentially complete by 1901. Its exact function in the institution is unknown, but it probably served much as it did for the present care home, ie, as an ancillary building for staff, possibly as some form of reception centre and additional office space.

## **4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **4.1 Recommendations for Further Work**

Alder Archaeology consider the building survey to have been conducted 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 archaeology in Angus.

## **5 Bibliography**

Ordnance Survey, *Forfarshire, Sheet XXXVIII*, Survey date: 1861, Publication date: 1865 (six inches to a mile, First Edition)

Ordnance Survey, *Forfarshire, Sheet XXXVIII.NE*, Date revised: 1901, Date published: 1903 (six inches to a mile, Second Edition)

[www.workhouses.org.uk/Forfar](http://www.workhouses.org.uk/Forfar) (website, accessed 28/11/2021)

## Appendix 1 Photographic Register

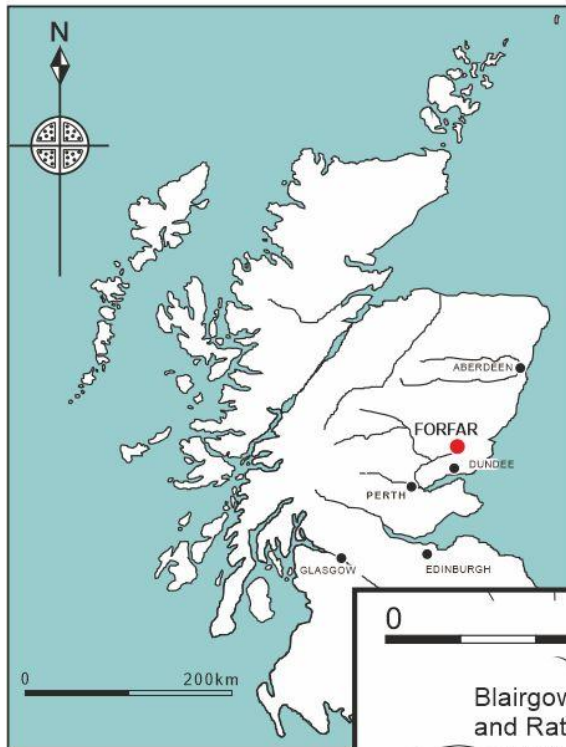
<i>Image No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>View</i>
1-3	Location shots, cottage from Arbroath Rd entrance to The Gables	W
4-7	Location shots, No.24 in front of No.26, on Arbroath Rd	SE
8-9	Location shots, cottage from opposite entrance to The Gables	SW
10-12	Location shots, cottage from outside care home	N
13-15	Exterior, SE elevation of cottage	NW
16-17	Exterior, detail, boarded window in SE gable of cottage	NW
18	Exterior, NW side of entrance to Gables	SW
19-21	Exterior, NW side of entrance, with cottage and boundary wall, oblique	W
22-28	Exterior, SE side of entrance	SW
29-32	Exterior, detail, blocked gateway in boundary wall to E of cottage	NW
33-34	Exterior, SW elevation of cottage, oblique	N
35-40	Exterior, SE end of SW elevation of cottage	NE
41-43	Exterior, SE elevation of cottage at SW projection (NW end of building)	NW
44-45	Exterior, detail, main entrance into cottage in SW elevation	NE
46-49	Exterior, NW end of SW elevation (gable end)	NE
50-55	Exterior, NW end of NE elevation (gable end), oblique	S, W
56-57	Exterior, detail, gap between cottage and boundary wall at NW end	NW
58-61	Exterior, SE end of NE elevation	SW
62-63	Exterior, NE end of NW elevation	SE
64	Exterior, detail, chimney at NE gable end, NW end of building	E
65-68	Exterior, SW end of NW elevation, oblique	SW, E
69-70	Interior, entrance hall	NE
71	Interior, store cupboard, end of entrance corridor	NE
72-74	Interior, NE elevation of NW end room	NE
75-78	Interior, detail, windows in NW elevation, NW end room	NW

79-80	Interior, SE elevation of central room	SE
81	Interior, NW elevation of central room	NW
82-83	Interior, detail, window in SW elevation of central room	SW
84-85	Interior, SW elevation of central room, oblique	W
86-87	Interior, NE elevation of central room, oblique	N
88-89	Interior, detail, window in NE elevation of central room	NE
90	Interior, NE elevation of central room, oblique	E
91	Interior, detail, ceiling in central room	-
92-94	Interior, corridor between central and SE end rooms	SE
95-98	Interior, SW elevation of office/store	SW, S, W
99-101	Interior, W.C., oblique	E
102-104	Interior, SE elevation of SE end room, oblique	S
105	Interior, detail, fire escape door in SE end room	SE
106-107	Interior, NE elevation of SE end room	NE

## Appendix 2 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Angus
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	The Gables, Arbroath Road, Forfar
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	FF18
<b>PARISH:</b>	Forfar
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	C Fyles
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Alder Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Standing Building Survey
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	-
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Cottage; workhouse
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)</b>	NO 46356 50684
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2021
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> November, 2021
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)</b>	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	A stone cottage, the sole surviving remnant of a nineteenth century workhouse, was surveyed in advance of demolition. A Level 1 survey was conducted. The cottage, depicted on the First Edition OS Map (1861) was probably constructed in three main phases and possibly pre-dated the workhouse.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	-
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Caledonia Housing Association
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	<a href="mailto:director@alderarchaeology.co.uk">director@alderarchaeology.co.uk</a>
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended/deposited)	HES (intended)

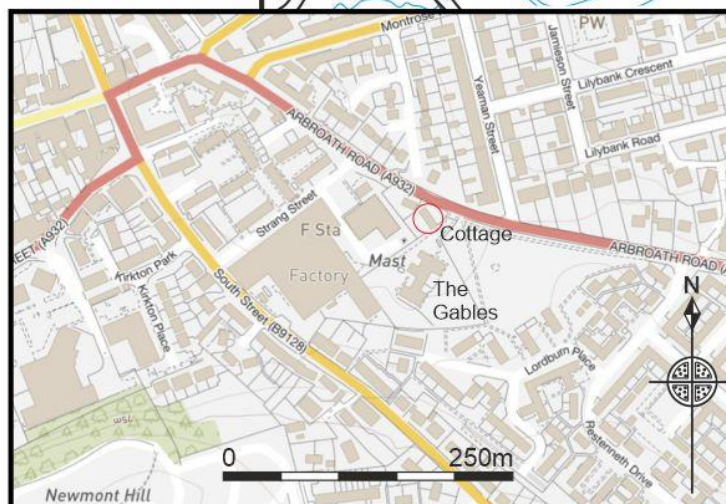
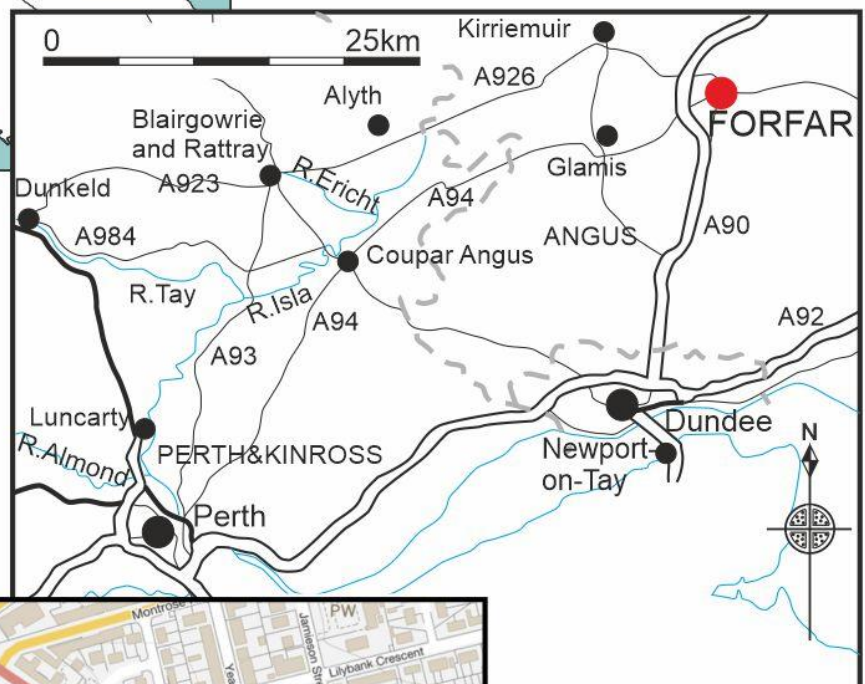
Illus1



The Gables, 26 Arbroath Rd,  
Forfar, Angus

Site Location

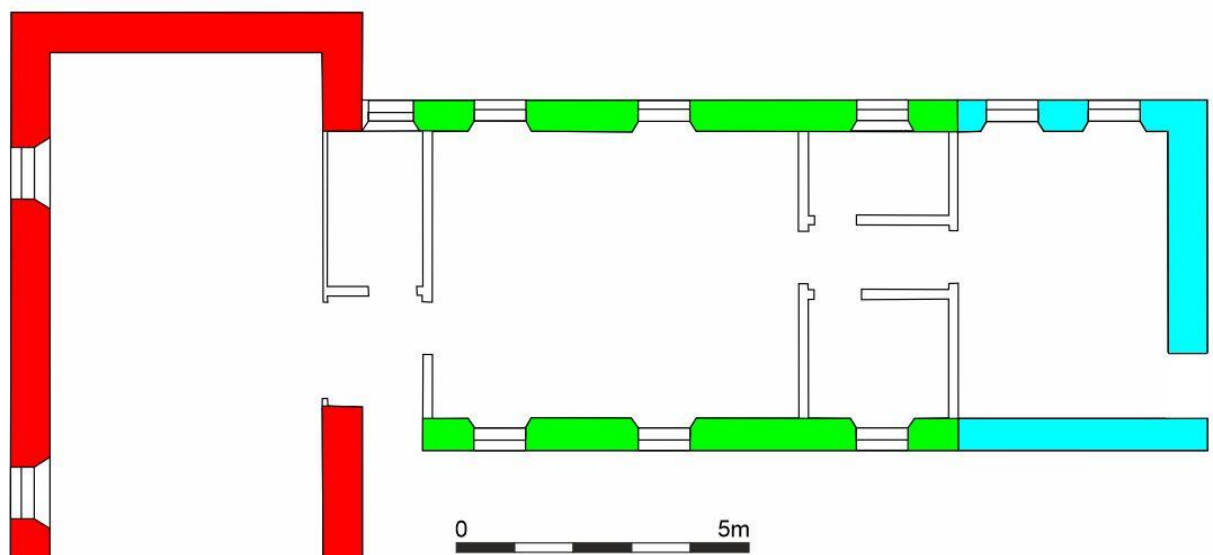
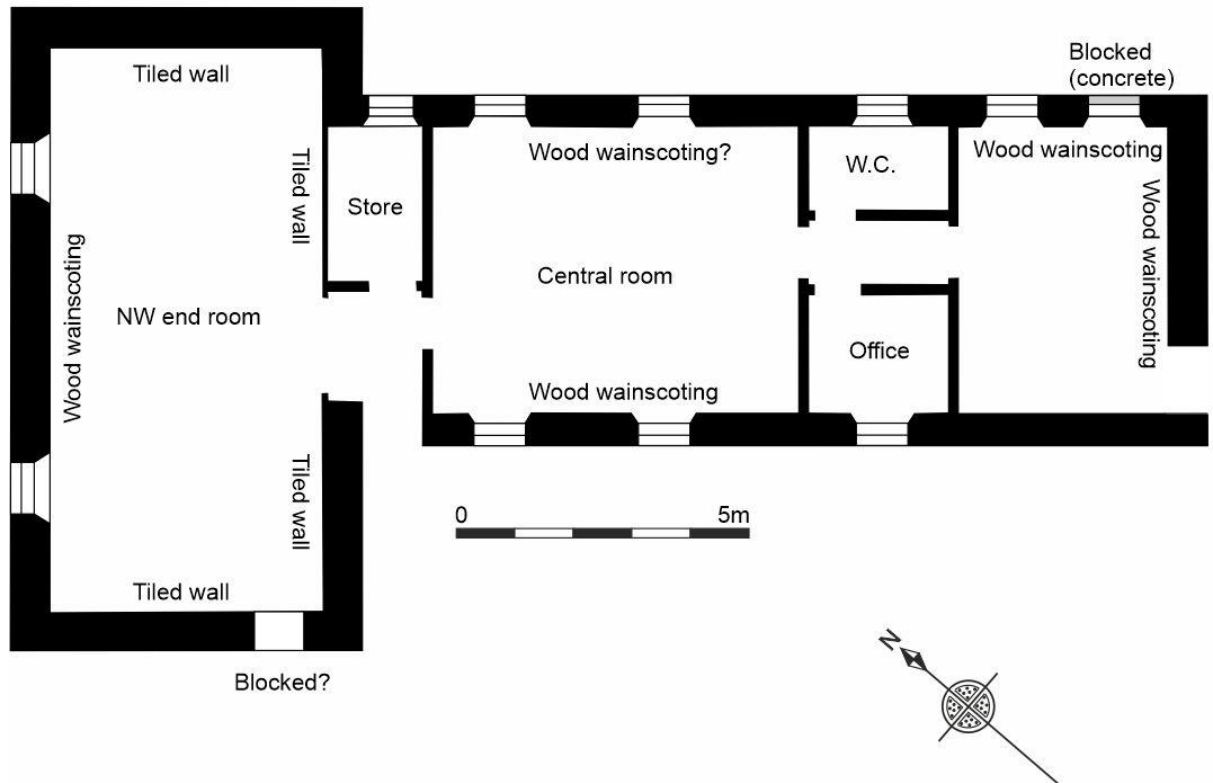
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Illus 2 Floor plan and suggested phase plan of cottage



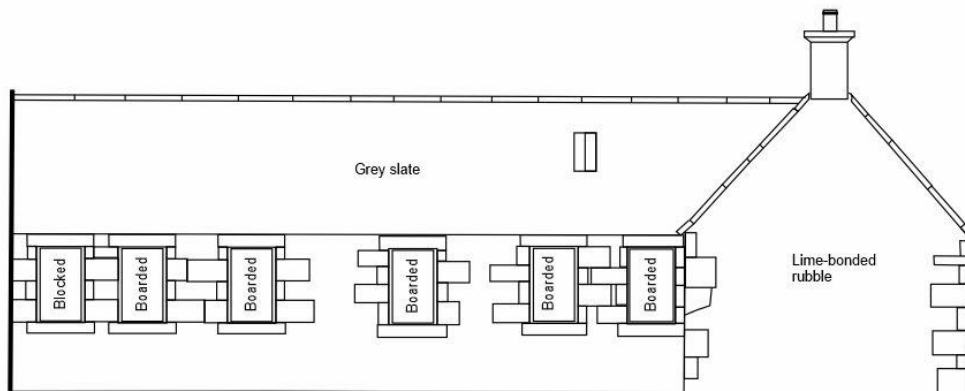
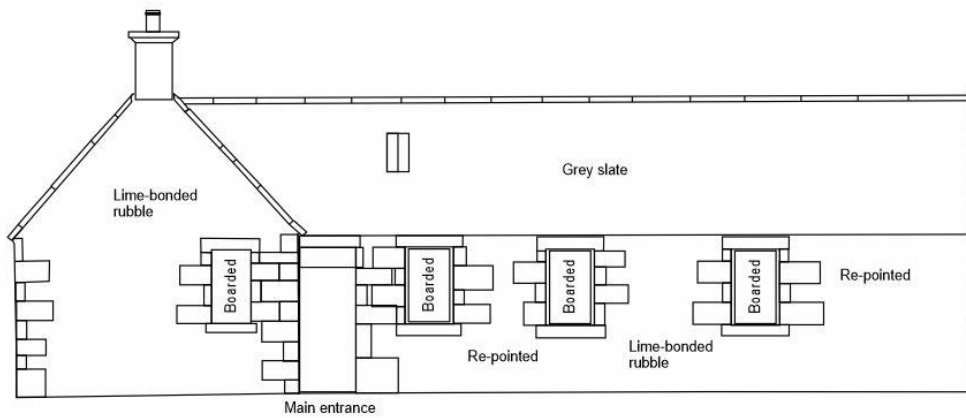
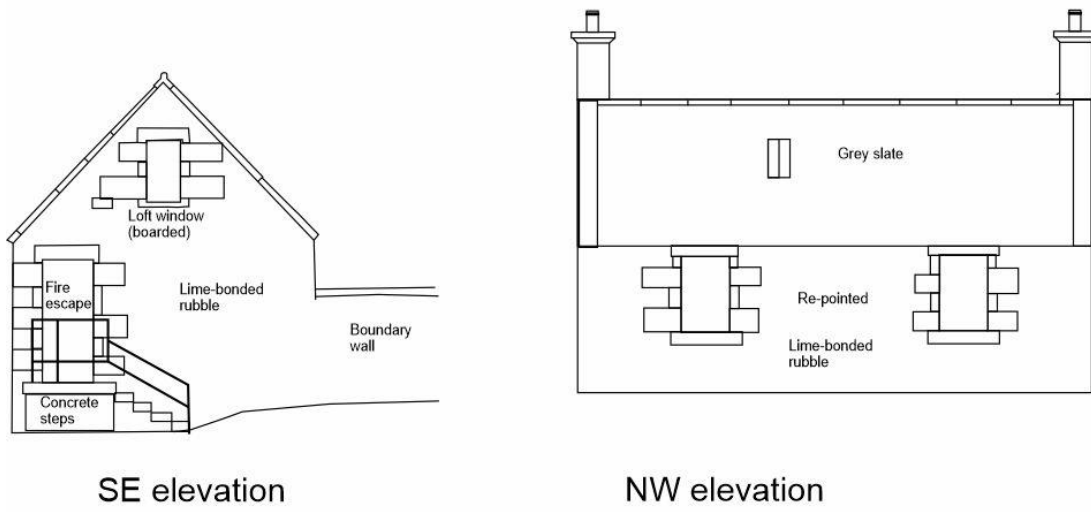
- =Phase 1, early 19th C
- =Phase 2, pre-1861
- =Phase 3, 1861-1901

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External elevations of cottage



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