



Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services

**Torhouse Mill, Wigtown, Newton Stewart
Wigtownshire, Dumfries & Galloway:
Archaeological Works**



**by Rebecca Shaw
18th March 2018**

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mark Davies for his kind provision of historical images and background information on Torhouse Mill and thanks also to Evans Rural Architecture for provision of site plans.

1 Introduction

This Data Structure Report presents the findings of historic building recording works undertaken at Torhouse Mill, Kirkcowan, Newton Stewart, Wigtownshire (NGR: NX 3958 5538) (Figure 1). The proposed works comprise: alteration, extensions and change of use of office / mill building to form dwellinghouse (planning application no. 17/1756/FUL) (Figure 2)

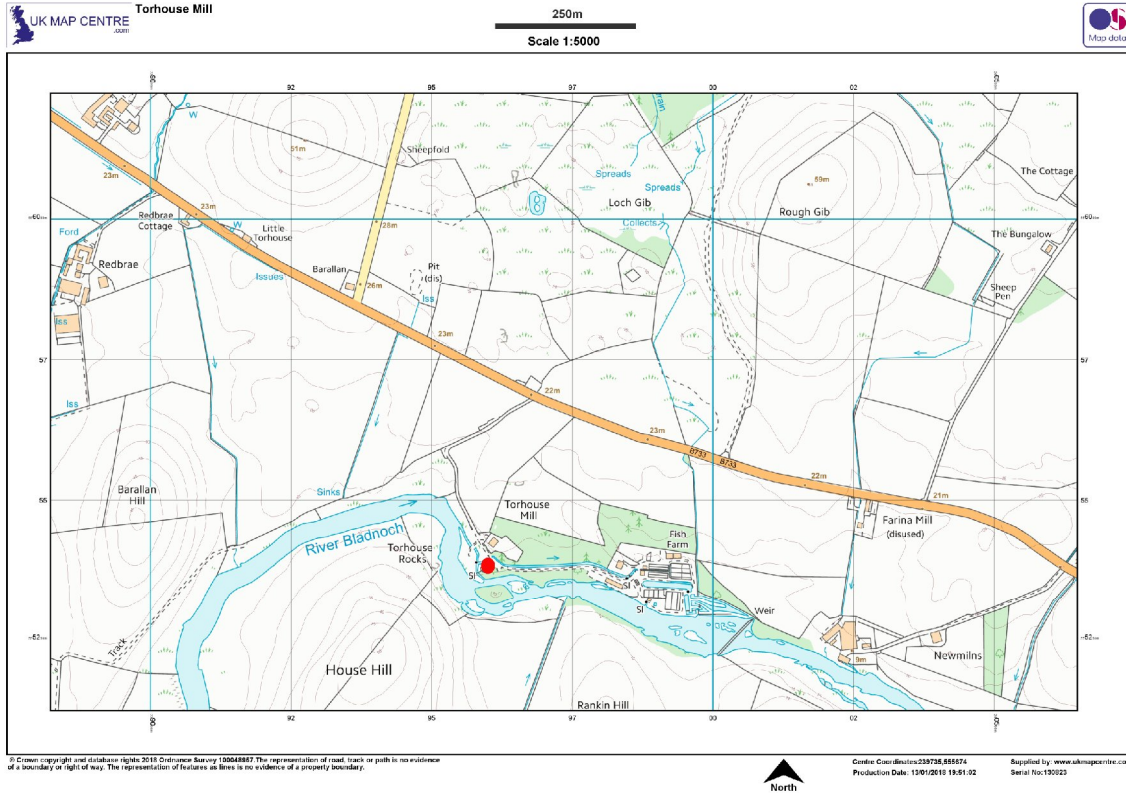


Figure 1 – location map

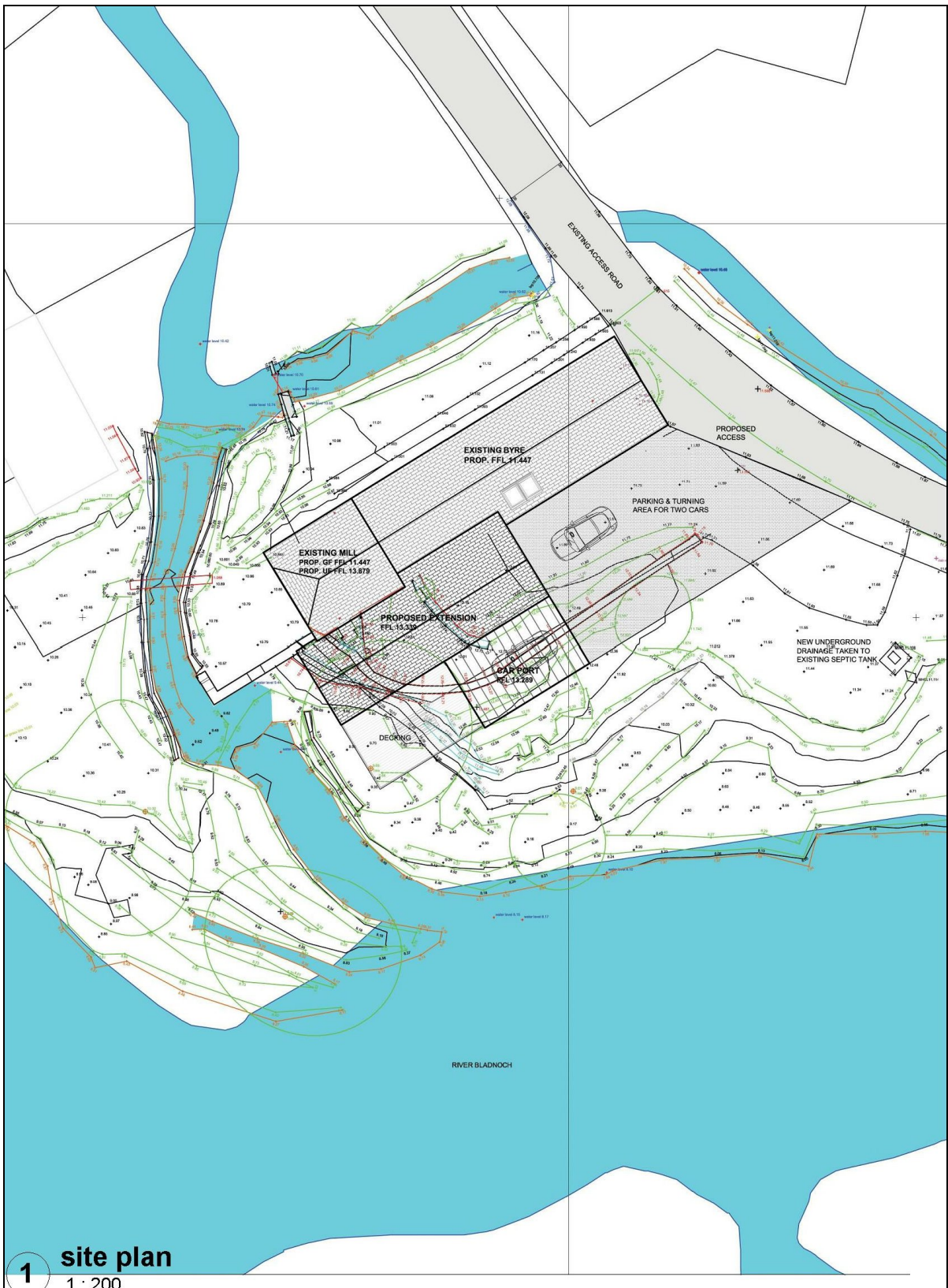
Torhouse Mill and its water management system are recorded in Dumfries & Galloway Council’s Historic Environment Record (ref. MDG2529) as being of historic interest. It is shown on Roy’s map of 1755 and on subsequent pre-Ordnance Survey maps by Ainslie (1782) and Thomson (1832).

As the proposal will involved some alteration to the standing structures, as well as a certain amount of down-cutting and sub-surface works Dumfries & Galloway Council asked for a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken as a requirement of the issued planning consent. Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeology Service, who advise Dumfries & Galloway Council on archaeological matters have provided guidance on the nature of archaeological works required.

The works required comprise: a basic survey of the building in its current form (as defined in the ALGAO HBR Guidance) to include a fully catalogued photographic record of the significant elevations, both internal and external, of the standing building and its setting.

In addition an archaeological watching brief was required to be undertaken during any down-cutting works. However, during the course of the HBR works, test pits were observed along the SSE elevation (in the location of the proposed new extension - figure 2) which indicated that this area comprised entirely made up ground / stone infill. Based on the results of the observation of the test pits Andy Nicholson at Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeology Service concluded that monitoring of down-cutting works was no longer required.

Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services was appointed to act with regard to the archaeological condition by Evans Rural Architecture on behalf of their client Mr Mark Davies.



1 site plan
1 : 200

Figure 2 – proposed development plan (kindly provided by Evans Rural Architecture)

2 Background

Cartographic

Torhouse Mill is depicted on sound mapping dating to the mid eighteenth century (Roy - Figure 3a-b) and on subsequent mapping by Ainslie (1782) (Figure 4a) and Thomson (1832) (Figure 4b).

On the first detailed mapping, the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map (1850), the mill is depicted as a number of attached buildings with two ranges set at right angles to each other (respectively aligned NE / SW and NW / SE). The section of the mill proposed for works under this application comprises the NE / SW range. The range comprised an L-shaped building, aligned NE / SW with a further small rectangular building, aligned NE / SW, which is attached to the NE end (Figure 4c) - named as Torhouse Mill (corn). The diversion of the river to (and from) the mill buildings is clearly depicted.

On the second edition mapping (1895) the building that was attached to the NE of the L-shaped building has been removed and a small extension has been added to the NW elevation (Figure 4d). It is still named as Torhouse Mill (corn). A sluice and route of the weir(s) are also depicted and named. The NW / SE range is still attached and depicted as roofed.

By 1908 (Figure 4e) the small extension that had been added to the NNW elevation is no longer depicted and the SW end of the 'L' building appears unroofed – it is named Torhouse Mill. The section that attaches the two ranges together is also depicted as unroofed – the building at the NW end of the range however, is still roofed.

1970's mapping depicts the NE / SW range as a roofed long rectangular structure subdivided into a square building (SW end) and rectangular building – it is named as Torhouse Mill (trout farm). The NW / SE range comprises a detached roofed structure(s) – both ranges have associated walling (remains of former buildings) mapped. The current Ordnance Survey map depicts little or no change to the NE / SW range to the previous mapping – no remains are mapped for the NW / SE range (Figure 4f).

Ordnance Survey Name Book (1845-49)

The Ordnance Survey Name Book records Torhouse Mill as – 'a corn mill on the river bladnoch worked by water and a small farm of tillage land containing 28 acres property of the heirs of the late Mr McCulloch' (Wigtownshire OS Name Books, 1845-1849, Vol 50, OS1/35/50/8).

Torhouse Mill was converted into a trout farm in the 1970's and the current owner purchased the property in 1985.

3 Project Works

The historic building recording works were undertaken on 8th February 2018 - test pits were also observed on this date, the results of which concluded that monitoring of further down-cutting works was no longer required. All works complied with the Chartered Institute For Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct, and Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statements.

4 Findings:

The structure that was subject to HBR works (the NE / SW range) comprised a single storey rubble built rectangular building with a pitched roof of corrugated fibre cement sheets – five plastic skylights were visible along the SE pitch (Figures 5a-b). Attached to the SW end of the rectangular building was a 2-storey rubble built square building with a pitched slated roof (Figure 5c). At the very SW end of the structure, adjacent to the river, were the ruins of another 2-storey rubble built building which only survives as the SE elevation with a very slight wall stub to the SW (Figure 5c).

Single storey building (current storage)

The external NW elevation (Figure 6a) comprised four infilled (partially infilled) / blocked-in openings: from SW to NE the openings comprised: 1 – a large opening that had been infilled with stone (Figure 6c); 2 – an opening that has been infilled with block and made into small window (Figure 7b); 3 – a stone filled opening (Figure 7c) and 4 – an opening that has been infilled with block and made into a small window (Figure 7d). The internal NW elevation comprised three recesses: 2 – a partially block filled full height recess with a small window; 3

– a stone infilled full height recess with occasional quoin stones visible and 4 - a partially block filled full height recess with a small window. 1 – was difficult to observe as it had it had been painted with black paint. The interior comprised a fairly modern concrete floor (11a-b).

The external SE elevation of the single storey building was only visible for 0.80m (approx) below the roofline, due to the later (stone) made-up ground (Figure 8a). The only visible feature of note was a line of stones which protruded from the building at a depth of 0.60m from the roofline and measured 2.20m in length (Figures 9a-b). The internal SE elevation had 2 courses of red brick along the top of the stone wallhead and ventilation holes were visible inserted through the top of the wallhead & first bed brick layer (Figure 12a).

The NE gable of the single storey building comprised a large set of double doors (Figure 10b) the upper half of the gable was constructed from modern block, while the remainder was stone (rubble) built.

Two storey building (current office)

The external NW elevation abutted comprised an entrance on the ground floor (Figure 6b). The external SE elevation (Figure 14a) comprised a small window on the ground floor – the window had been inserted into the upper half of a red brick arch with the lower half being infilled (Figure 14a). The upper floor comprised an entrance with a red brick surround (Figure 8c). The external SW elevation comprised a large window on the lower floor and an equivalent window on the upper floor (Figure 10a) – both of these windows appear fairly modern. The interior of both the lower and upper floors have been modernised for current use as an office (Figures 12b-c).

Two storey building (ruin)

The external SE elevation of the 2-storey ruinous building comprised a small square opening on the ground floor; a window with a large stone lintel & quoin stones on the first floor and a further probable window (with red brick within surround) and a possible entrance on the upper floor (Figure 13b).

The internal SE elevation (Figure 13a) comprised a small flared square opening with a concrete lintel and red brick on the ground floor; a flared opening (window) with a fairly modern wooden lintel and red brick surround on the first floor and a flared opening (window) with a missing lintel and occasional red brick as well as a slightly flared opening (possible entrance) with a red brick down SW edge on upper floor. Two sets of beam slots were visible on the internal elevation: both were located at the uppermost height of each respective window on the first and upper floors.

The remains of the lade are still visible (Figure 18a) – although latter adaptations related to the trout farm have been undertaken (Figure 16a). The current lade / channel appears to empty into the river the approx location of the former tail race (Figure 18b).

5 Conclusions

A programme of historic building recording works were undertaken at Torhouse Mill, Kirkcowan, Newton Stewart, Wigtownshire (NGR: NX 3958 5538). The works were required to record the current mill structure prior to any alterations for change of use to form a dwelling house.

Sound mapping sources indicate that Torhouse Mill existed from at least the mid eighteenth century (Figures 3a-b). On this mapping the mill is depicted as a rectangular structure with associated enclosures located immediately adjacent to a diverted section of the river.

The first detailed mapping, which dates to the mid nineteenth century, depicts a number of attached buildings which form two ranges (set at right angles to each other) with diverted and manmade water systems clearly mapped (Figure 4c). The buildings are named as Torhouse Mill (corn). From the depicted route of the water courses it appears that there may have been two waterwheels: (I) a lade (channel) appears to lead to what would have been the NW elevation of the now ruinous 2-storey structure and (II) a mill race appears to divert off from

the main river connecting with the southwesternmost elevation of the NW / SE range of buildings (immediately adjacent to the River Bladnoch) with a tail race connecting back into the main river.

By this date that it is probable that some of the buildings are in use as farm buildings, such as the single storey structure (recorded as part of these works) as well as the small rectangular building depicted attached to the NE end (of which no traces remain). This theory is given credence by documentary sources which note that in the late 1840's Torhouse Mill is recorded as 'a corn mill on the river bladnoch worked by water and a small farm of tillage land containing 28 acres' (OS Name Book, 1845-49) and a Wikipedia article on the River Bladnoch also records Torhouse Mill as 'one of the early mills which, incorporating a farm steading, ground corn'.

By the 2nd edition OS mapping in 1895, the buildings are still named as Torhouse Mill (corn). The small building attached to the NE end of the single storey range has been removed and a small extension has been added to the NW elevation of this building (Figure 4d), indicating a possible change of use. The lade / channel is still mapped and a sluice is noted at the NNW end, the route now appears to head for a narrow rectangular feature which is indicative of a wheel pit. The mill race and tail race are still clearly depicted running to and from the southwesternmost elevation of the NW / SE range of buildings but no wheel pit is mapped in this location. The inference therefore is that there are two waterwheels at Torhouse Mill both of which were horizontal undershot wheels: one wheel was set within a wheel pit and was operated using a lade with a sluice gate and the other was located on the end of a building and set directly within a mill race. It is possible that at times when the river was low that the wheel associated with the mill race would not a strong enough force of water to operate but the lade associated wheel could still be used as water was held back using the sluice gate.

On successive map, which dates to 1908 (Figure 4e), the buildings are still named at Torhouse Mill but no longer noted as 'corn'. The two buildings which had waterwheels associated with them are now both depicted as unroofed and the section of the mill race that ran adjacent to the building and the tail race are no longer depicted. The route of the lade and wheel pit however, are both still mapped although the sluice gate is no longer noted. The small extension that had been added NW elevation of the single storey structure has been removed and it is probable that the single storey had changed use again at this point. Therefore although the buildings were still called Torhouse Mill at this time, it seems unlikely that the mill wheels were still in operation or that it was being used as a corn mill. It is more probable that at this time the mill buildings were being utilised for farming purposes and this may have been when the single story building was heightened and turned into a byre.

In the 1970's Torhouse Mill was converted into a trout farm; the current owner purchased the trout farm in 1985 at which time the buildings were used derelict / storage. The SE / NW range (which is under different ownership) was demolished in 1994 (although remains are still visible). The 2-storey building was converted to offices in 2002.

In conclusion it would appear that a corn mill existed at the proposed development site from at least the mid eighteenth century, when it was depicted as a fairly small complex. The mill had grown considerably in size by the mid nineteenth century and by this date it is known from documentary sources that it incorporated a farmstead. Mapping indicates that by 1895 there may have been two waterwheels, one operated by a race diverted directly of the River Bladnoch and one operated via a lade with a sluice. The respective buildings to which the two mill wheels were attached (one placed directly on the river and one within a wheel pit) were depicted as unroofed by 1908 and it is therefore likely that the mill was no longer utilised as a corn mill. The remaining buildings however, probably continued in use for farming purposes until the mid 1970s approx.



Figure 3a – Roys Military Survey Map of Scotland (1747-55)



Figure 3b – zoomed in detail of Roys Military Survey Map of Scotland (1747-55)



Figure 4a – John Ainslie (1782)



Figure 4b – John Thompson (1832)



Figure 4c – 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1850) © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission (748378375)

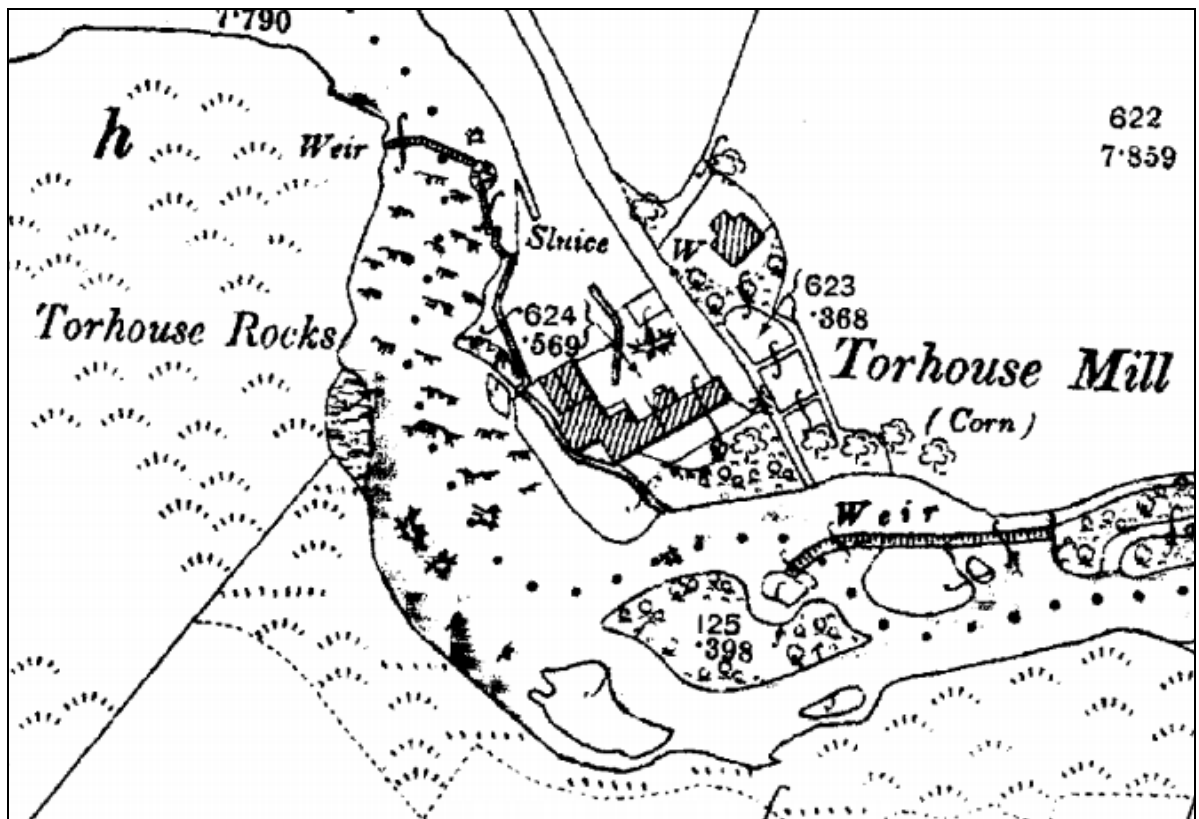


Figure 4d – 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1895) © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission (748378375)

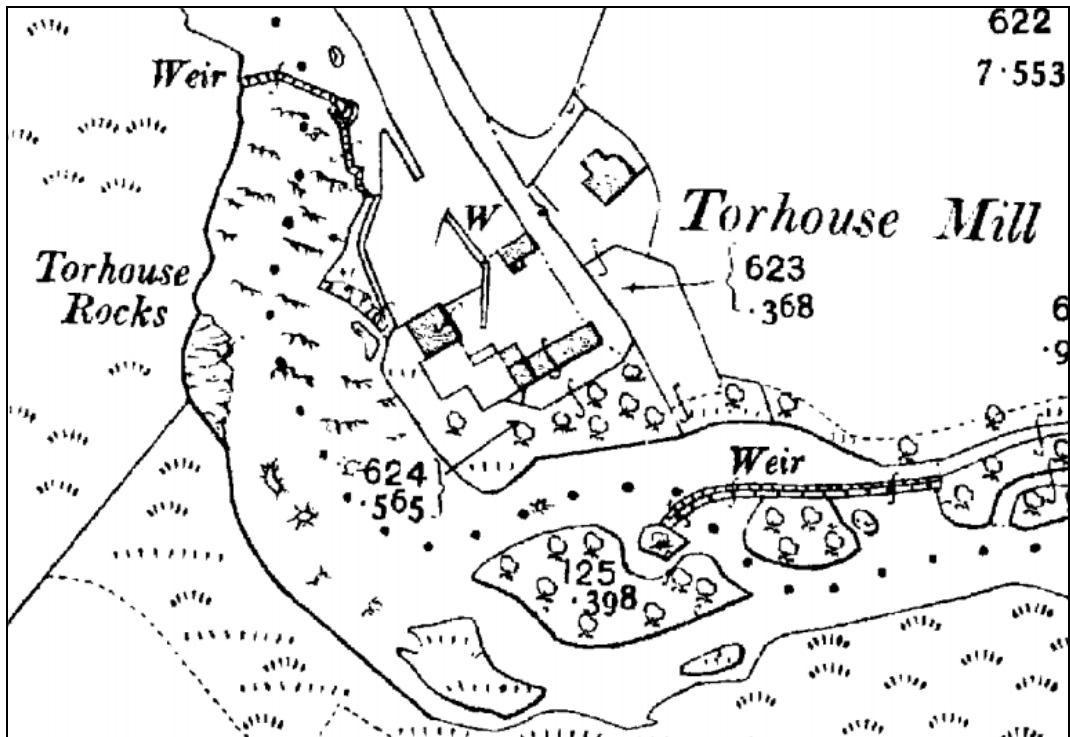


Figure 4e – Ordnance Survey Map (1908) © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission (748378375)

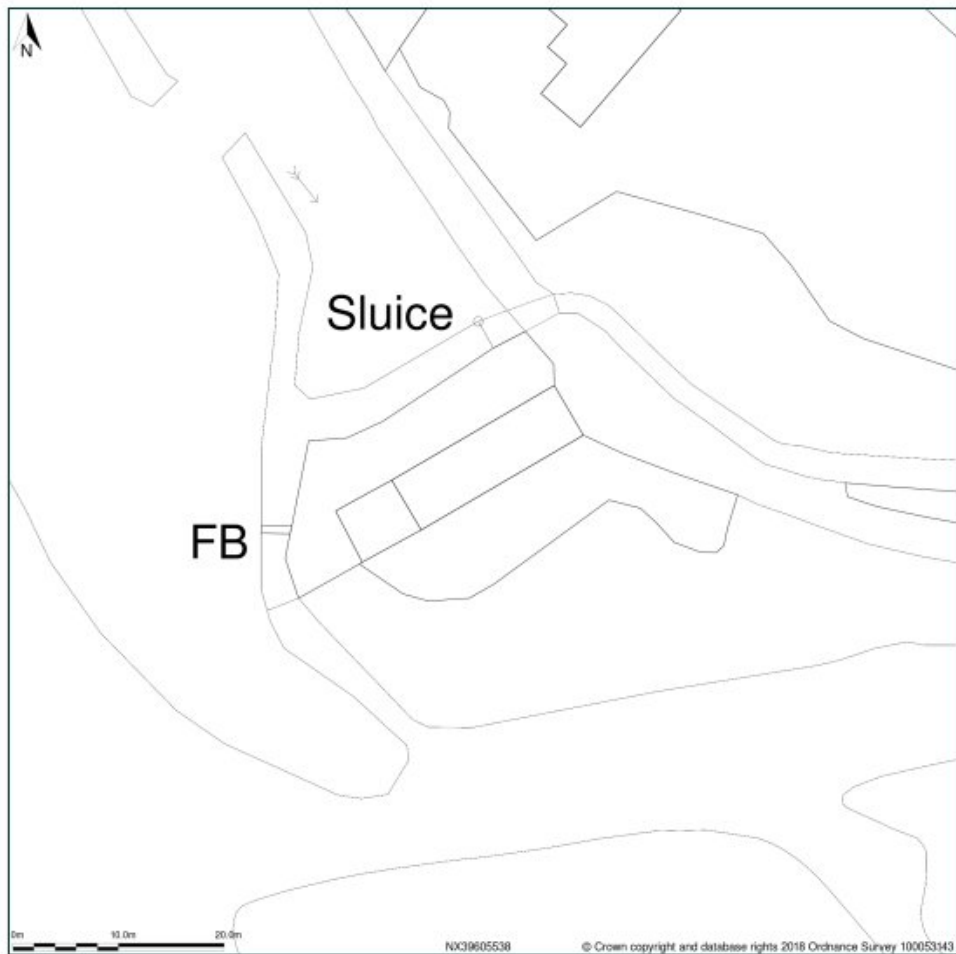


Figure 4f – Current Ordnance Survey Map
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References

Documentary

Ordnance Survey 1845-49 Ordnance Survey Name Book, Wigtownshire
Vol 50, OS1/35/50/8.

Cartographic

Roy 1747-55 Roys Military Survey Map of Scotland

Ainslie J 1782 A Map of the County of Wigton

Thompson J 1832 John Thompson's Atlas of Scotland

Ordnance Survey 1850 1st Edition Ordnance Survey, Wigtownshire

Ordnance Survey 1895 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey, Wigtownshire

Ordnance Survey 2018 Current Ordnance Survey, Wigtownshire



Figure 5a – general of SE elevation



Figure 5b – general of NW elevation



Figure 5c – general of existing mill buildings (from W)



Figure 6a – general of NW elevation of single storey & 2-storey buildings (from WNW)



Figure 6b – NW elevation of 2-storey building showing entrance (from NNW)



Figure 6c – infilled opening (I) in NW elevation of single storey building (from NW)

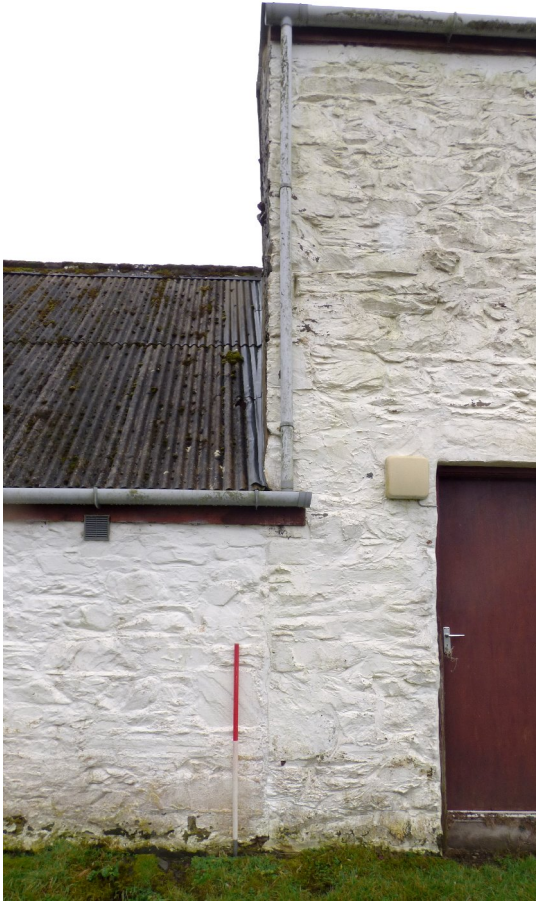


Figure 7a – where single storey & 2-storey buildings abutt (from NW)



Figure 7b – partially blocked-in opening (II) in NW elevation of single storey (from NW)



Figure 7c – infilled opening (III) in NW elevation of single storey (from NW)



Figure 7d – partially blocked-in opening (IV) in NW elevation of single storey (from NW)



Figure 8a – SE elevation of single storey building (from ESE)



Figure 8b – SW gable of 2-storey building (from ESE)



Figure 8c – partially blocked-in opening in SE elevation of 2-storey (from SE)



Figure 9a – showing stone protrusions in SE elevation of single storey building (from SE)



Figure 9b – showing stone protrusions in SE elevation of single storey building (from NE)



Figure 10a – SW elevation of 2-storey building & SE wall of ruinous building (from SW)



Figure 10b – NE gable of single storey building (from NE)



Figure 11a – general of single storey building (from SW)



Figure 11b – general of single storey building (from NE)



Figure 12a – single storey building (later byre) showing ventilation holes and later brickwork on top of existing stone walls to heighten roof (from NW)



Figure 12b – general of ground floor of 2-storey building (office)



Figure 12c – general of upper floor of 2-storey building (office / tearoom)



Figure 13a – general of internal SE elevation of 2-storey ruinous building (from NW)



Figure 13b – external SE elevation end of 2-storey ruinous structure (from S)



Figure 14a – SE elevation of 2-storey building & 2-storey ruinous building (from ESE)



Figure 14b – entrances in upper floors (SE elevation) of 2-storey building and 2-storey ruinous building (from ESE)



Figure 15a – remains of stub (SW) wall of 2-storey ruinous building (from NNE)

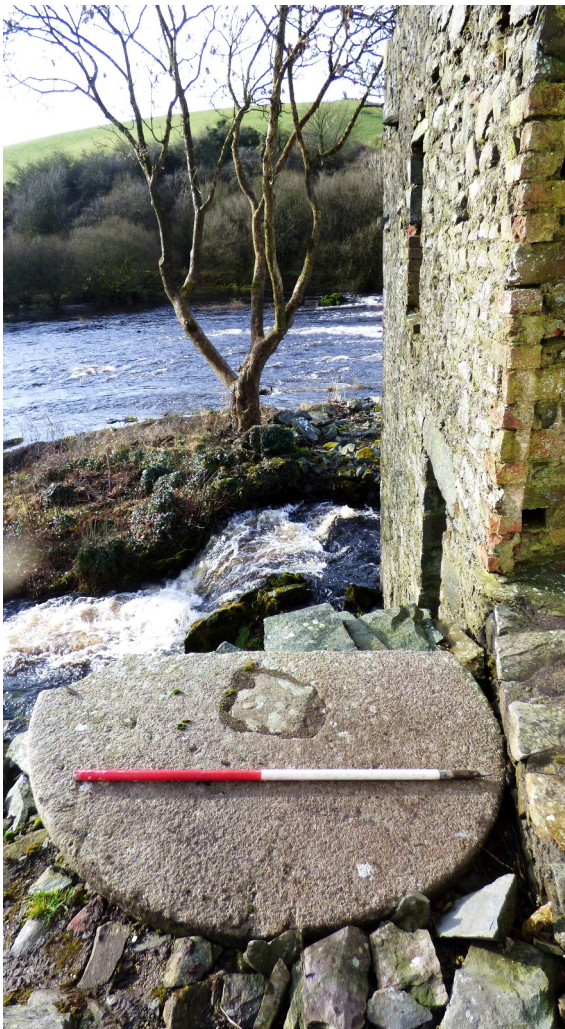


Figure 15b – mill stone



Figure 15c – location of hinges? in entrance of upper storey of ruinous building (from E)



Figure 16a – looking WNW showing river, lade / channel and the demolished remains of the NW / SE range of mill buildings (from ESE)



Figure 16b – showing where current lade / channel enters the river (tail race?) (from N)



Figure 17a – southern corner of 2-storey ruinous building & revetment (from SW)
© Mark Davies (2012)



Figure 17b – ruinous 2-storey building; SW elevation of 2-storey building & revetment wall
(from SW) © Mark Davies (2012)



Figure 18a – aerial view of NW elevation of Torhouse Mill © Mark Davies (2012)



Figure 18b – aerial view of SE elevation of Torhouse Mill © Mark Davies (2012)



Figure 19a – aerial view of SE elevations & NE gables of Torhouse Mill © Mark Davies (2012)



Figure 19b – general aerial view of Torhouse Mill (circa 1986) provided by Mark Davies



PIT 1



PIT 2



PIT 3

Figure 20 – site investigation pits

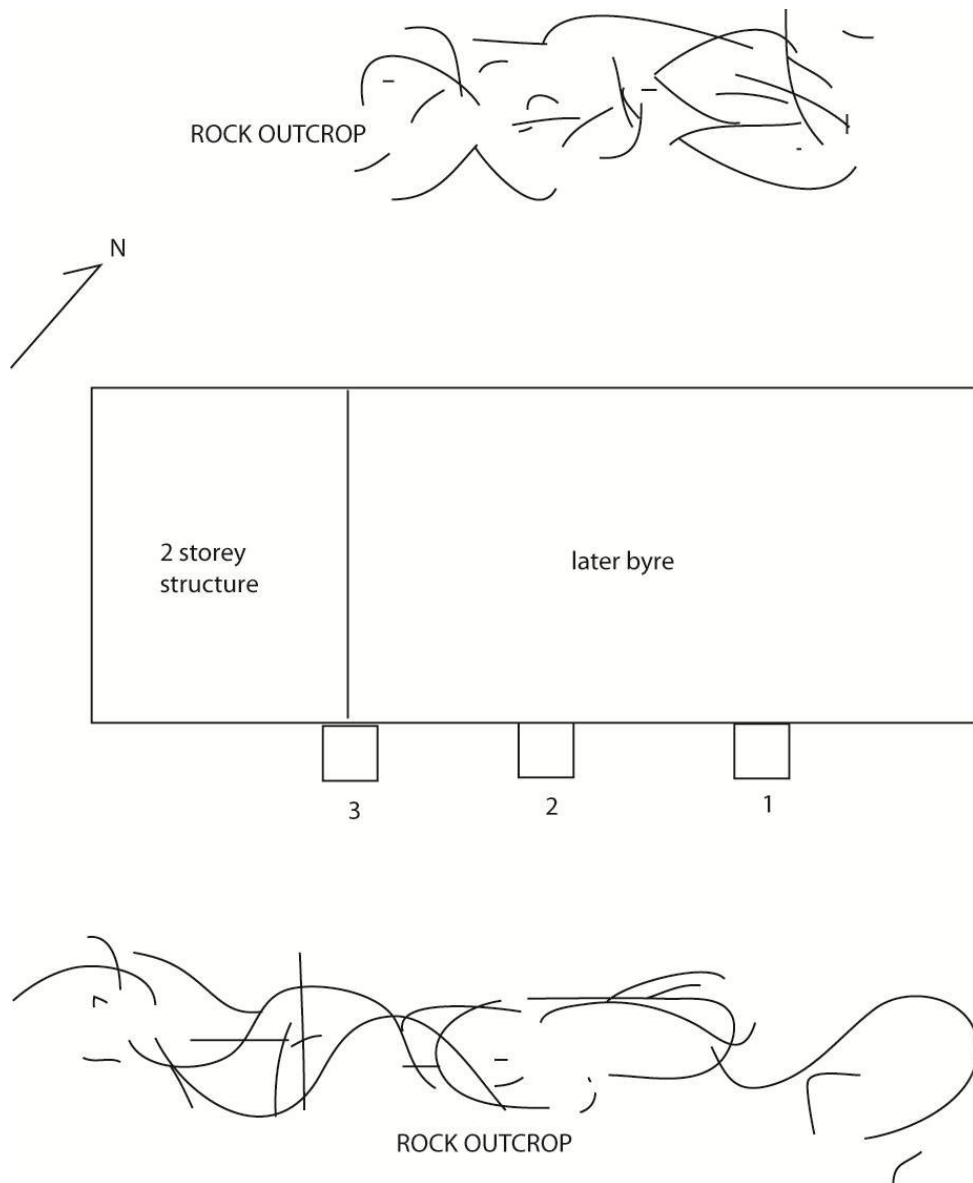


Figure 21 - sketch showing approx locations of test pits and rock outcrops (not too scale)

Pits 1 & 2 measured between 800mm to 1m in depth and comprised gravel (300mm / 400mm in depth) above broken rock (500mm / 600mm in depth). The broken rock has been used to build up the ground in this location and was in place by at least the mid 1980s.

Rock outcrops are visible on either side of the current mill / byre buildings (see sketch) and it is probable that either the rock was quarried away in this location (possibly to build the original mill) or that the rock dipped here.

Appendix 1: Photographic Record

Photographic Record

No.	Disc No.	Image No.	Description	From	Date
1	1	1	SW elevation of 2-storey building & 2-storey ruinous building	SW	8/02/18
2	1	2	General of existing mill structure & river	W	8/02/18
3	1	3	SE elevation (internal) of 2-storey ruinous building	NW	8/02/18
4	1	4	SE elevation (external) of 2-storey ruinous building	S	8/02/18
5	1	5	Detail of SE elevation (internal) of 2-storey ruinous building	N	8/02/18
6	1	6	Showing partial (small stub) of SW elevation of ruinous building	N	8/02/18
7	1	7	NW elevation of 2-storey building	NW	8/02/18
8	1	8	Where single storey building & 2-storey building abutt	NW	8/02/18
9	1	9	General of NW elevation Where single storey building & 2-storey building	W	8/02/18
10	1	10	Infilled opening (I) in NW elevation of single storey building	NW	8/02/18
11	1	11	Partially blocked-in opening (II) in NW elevation of single storey building	NW	8/02/18
12	1	12	Infilled opening (III) in NW elevation of single storey building	NW	8/02/18
13	1	13	Partially blocked-in opening (IV) in NW elevation of single storey building	NW	8/02/18
14	1	14	NE gable of single storey building	NE	8/02/18
15	1	15	SE elevation of single storey building	E	8/02/18
16	1	16	NE gable of two-storey building	E	8/02/18
17	1	17	General of two-storey building	E	8/02/18
18	1	18	Partially blocked-in birck opening in SE elevation of 2-storey building	SE	8/02/18
19	1	19	Pit 3 post-ex (from above)	SW	8/02/18
20	1	20	General of SE elevation of 2-storey building and 2-storey ruinous building	ESE	8/02/18
21	1	21	Entrances on upper floors of 2-storey building and 2-storey ruinous building	SE	8/02/18
22	1	22	Mill stone	-	8/02/18
23	1	23	Hinge location of entrance on upper floor of 2-storey ruinous building	E	8/02/18
24	1	24	Looking upstream and showing lade / channel as well as remains of demolished SE / NW range	ENE	8/02/18
25	1	25	Looking downstream showing where tail race (approx) rejoined river	N	8/02/18
26	1	26	Pit 2 post-ex	SE	8/02/18

27	1	27	Post 3 –post-ex	SE	8/02/18
28	1	28	Stones protruding from SE elevation of single storey structure	SE	8/02/18
29	1	29	Stones protruding from SE elevation of single storey structure	NE	8/02/18
30	1	30	General of interior of ground floor of 2-storey building	NNE	8/02/18
31	1	31	General of interior of upper floor of 2-storey building	NNE	8/02/18
32	1	32	General of interior of single storey structure	SW	8/02/18
33	1	33	General of interior of single storey structure	NE	8/02/18
34	1	34	Ventilation holes in interior of SE elevation of single storey structure	NW	8/02/18
35	1	35	General of mill structure	E	8/02/18
36	1	36	General of mill structure	WNW	8/02/18

Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Dumfries & Galloway Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Torhouse Mill, Kirkcowan
PARISH:	Wigtown
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Rebecca Shaw
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Standing Building Survey
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Standing Building
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NX 3958 5538
START DATE (this season)	8 th February 2018
END DATE (this season)	8 th February 2018
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
DESCRIPTION:	<p>A programme of archaeological historic building recording works was undertaken on the 8th February 2018 as a condition of the issued planning consent.</p> <p>In general it would appear that a corn mill existed at the proposed development site from at least the mid eighteenth century, when it was depicted as a fairly small complex. The mill had grown considerably in size by the mid nineteenth century and by this date it is known from documentary sources that it incorporated a farmstead. Mapping indicates that by 1895 there may have been two waterwheels, one operated by a race diverted directly of the River Bladnoch and one operated via a lade with a sluice. The respective buildings to which the two mill wheels were attached (one placed directly on the river and one within a wheel pit) were depicted as unroofed by 1908 and it is therefore likely that the mill was no longer utilised as a corn mill. The remaining buildings however, probably continued in use for</p>

Data Structure Report - Torhouse Mill, Kirkcowan

	farming purposes until the mid 1970s approx.
PROJECT CODE:	017039
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr Mark Davies
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	9 Earl Place; Ranfurly; Bridge of Weir, PA11 3HA
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	Report to Dumfries & Galloway Historic Environment Record and archive to HES Collections

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