

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

FELL HOUSE FARM
GARES LANE
NORTH WALBOTTLE
NEWCASTLE
NE5 1QL



DATE:
22ND NOVEMBER 2007

PREPARED FOR:
DERE STREET HOMES

PREPARED BY:
MR. J. G. NAIRN B.A.(Hons) B.Arch.(Hons) RIBA MaPS
NICHOLSON NAIRN ARCHITECTS
BISHOPS COURT
RECTORY LANE
WHICKHAM
NEWCASTLE
NE16 4PA
T: 0191 4203090
F: 0191 4200349
E: admin@nicholsonnairn.co.uk

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1.00 INTRODUCTION

1.01 Location of Building Group:

Fell House Farm ¹, Gares Lane ², North Walbottle, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE5 1QL.

1.02 National Grid Reference:

NZ172676

1.03 Name of Recorder:

Mr. James Garfield Nairn B.A.(Hons) B.Arch(Hons) R.I.B.A. MaPS

1.04 Summary Statement:

Fell House Farm consists of a collection of stonebuilt buildings representing a farmstead quite typical of this Northumberland ³ setting: There is the farmhouse, on this occasion standing separate to, the range of farm buildings that are arranged around a farmyard. The buildings, including the farmhouse, clearly show their continued development and alterations over many years to absorb technological and farming management improvements.

The earliest record available, from research to date shows the existence of a farm within this location of 1767 ⁴ (refer to Map 1). The farm buildings were occupied and in use until 2006.

1.05 Names of Architects, Builders, Patrons and Owners:

Fell House Farm was owned from at least 1767 by the Duke of Northumberland until the sale of the buildings in 2007. The last tenant of the farm, Mr. John Nixon (who continues to farm the surrounding land) has a family connection with Fell House Farm that stretches back three generations. Mr. Nixon has been able to provide information relating to the more recent alterations to the building.

Records have been discovered ⁵ that show at the time of the major improvements to this farm (refer to later section) in 1848, shows the owner to be His Grace the Duke of Northumberland with the occupiers being the Executors to William Hayes: The farm consisting of over 209 acres plus buildings and a rental value of £29:13s:7d (see Map 7). The present owners are Dere Street Homes Ltd.

1.06 Relationship of Fell House Farm to It's Setting:

Fell House Farm, as its name suggests, sits within an area of what was open 'fell' or common highground. Walbottle Fell was neighboured by Throckley (or Throcklaw ⁶) Fell, Callerton Fell and Whorlton Fell. Part of the land which until recently was

¹ Referred to as Walbottle Fell House on Greenwood Map 1828 (NRO)

² Only reference to this appears on undated Zan Bell 10/46 (SANT/BEQ/5/3/14/5) Map NRO

³ North Walbottle was until late twentieth century part of the county of Northumberland

⁴ NRO SANT/BEQ/9/1/1/24

⁵ NRO DT 468 M Walbottle Tithe 1848

⁶ Armstrong 1769 map (NRO)

controlled by Fell House Farm contains the headwaters of the Ouseburn, a water course that drains much of this area before turning north then east and finally south through East Newcastle, connecting with the Tyne at Byker.

Fell House is presently accessed via an unmade and gated track that continues west to Walbottle Dene. However, map progression shows how this road, Gares Lane, appears, during the eighteenth century, to have been an important and direct route between Stamfordham Road and Dewley to the north of Throckley. Even the later maps of Fryer (1820) (see Map 4) and Greenwood (1828) (see Map 5) give as much prominence to the road as they do to Stamfordham Road or Throckley Fell Road. The present major road that links what is now the B6528 (previous A69) with Stamfordham Road is shown within these maps as a simple link road between Gares Lane and Walbottle. What is now a sweeping bend in the road with Fell House Farm to the west was, until the late 19th century, indicated as a t-junction.

This area of Northumberland was an active mining area within the Northern Coalfield. Local coal mining continuing up until the late 1950's early 1960's.

The earliest map available to date (Map 1) showing the Lordship of Newburn, is a version of a map created from a survey by J. Thompson of 1767 with geological and mining information highlighted: There are numerous pit shafts indicated within this map. Perhaps just as important is the marked location of the Great Whinstone Dike, running immediately to the south of Fell House. This outcrops and was quarried immediately to the east of Fell House. This geological feature created an impenetrable barrier between coal measures to the north and those to the south of this igneous rock intrusion. Given that early mining consisted of Bell Pits being sunk at often sporadic intervals around shallow coals measures ⁷ it may be that those planning the siting of the farm building may have assumed it was safer to locate the buildings on the outcropping Whinstone than risk building over a hidden bell pit (perhaps Coally Hills to the east was similarly located for this reason). Whatever the reason, by 1767 Fell House Farm was in existence in a location which was slightly off set to the junction with the Walbottle road.

Fell House Farm, along with the neighbouring farms of Coaly Hill, Dewley, Butterlaw etc were presumably built to coincide with the enclosures of the common land of Walbottle, Callerton and Throckley Fell.

Later sections of this report will detail the actual development of Fell House Farm but it is worthwhile to mention at this point the historic background to farm development during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century: A concise analysis of this period is provided by the English Heritage publication "Agricultural Buildings Selection Guide" prepared by the Heritage Protection Department and dated March 2007. Section 3 History (page 3 of the document) states:

1750 - 1880

This is the internationally most important period of farm building development in England. Complete farmsteads and buildings pre-dating 1840 are rare.

The agricultural revolution of this period was underpinned by an increasing level of

⁷ Mr. Nixon recounts a tale of how his father was ploughing a field to the south east of the farm when the plough overturned a boulder that turned out to be part of the capping to such a Bell Pit. Housing now covers this field.

government interest and involvement, especially from the 1790's, and saw energetic exchanges of ideas, both at the local level of farmers' clubs and nationally via the Royal Agricultural Society of England, founded in 1837. This was accompanied by the reorganisation and enlargement of holdings, the final phase of the enclosure of open fields (mostly in the midland counties) and the wholesale enclosure of moors, heath and other 'waste' land (often by parliamentary Act). Underpinning all this were rising grain prices and increased demand from a growing urban population. The widespread adoption of improved grasses and winter feed-crops such as turnips, accompanied by the production of good manure by livestock wintered in yards or buildings, played a major role in boosting agricultural productivity.

This period witnessed major developments in farmstead plans and building types. After the 1790's, and especially from the 1840's, farm building design and layout were affected by a number of factors. Most important among these were the application of scientific principals to planning that led to the more rational use of buildings and communication between them (the use of multi-functional barn ranges and tram lines, for instance); the extension of mechanisation (horse, water, wind and - from the 1820's - steam power) for working threshing and other machinery; the import of fertilisers and feed such as oilcake; the accommodation and feeding of ever-increasing numbers of livestock in yards that facilitated the recycling of straw and manure to boost the fertility of the land; and the introduction (particularly from the 1840's) of new materials such as imported softwood, machine-made bricks, cast-iron fittings and mass concrete. In some areas, but not everywhere, this led to a dramatic break with earlier building traditions, a tendency that was further boosted by the emergence of a professional building trade, the rise of pattern books, and the frequent gentrification of the yeoman class.

1880 - 1940

These years saw a prolonged depression from which farming did not recover until the Second World War. Very little from this period fulfils the listing criteria. Buildings tended to be of the cheapest materials such as corrugated iron and many were prefabricated, such as Dutch barns. Only the wealthiest farmers and landowners continued to build model or experimental farms, which could be of some architectural sophistication. Where these survive they justify serious consideration.

1940 to the Present

The intensification and increased specialisation of farming in the post war period was accompanied by the introduction of wide-span multi-purpose sheds in concrete, steel and asbestos able to accommodate large machinery and the environmental control of livestock and on-farm production, particularly of milk. The exceptions are in the national parks (first established in the later 1940's) and in the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (a designation first assigned in 1956), where traditional materials have been more widely used.

The development of Fell House Farm in terms of what can be gleaned from map progression and evidence of site survey follows almost precisely what has been highlighted by the English Heritage publication.

A research paper, entitled 'Slowly Came the Farming Revolution' by Susanna Wade Martins (Appendix I), a research associate at the University of East Anglia (who is

working on a survey of planned and model farms throughout England for English Heritage) sheds further light onto the development of farms during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Reference will be made during the later sections of this report to Fell House Farm falling into the category of a 'planned' or 'model' farm.

The farm house, whilst not being of any real architectural significance or significance in terms of purpose, form, construction or design, nevertheless does present what would have been, an imposing frontage. The rather elongated plan form of this Georgian Northumbrian farmhouse, coupled with a relatively high standard of materials and workmanship to parts of the farm buildings correlates with the points raised by Susanna Wade Martins.

1.07 Location of Consultative Documents

i) Northumberland Archives at Woodhorn, Ashington. Date of visits: 8th November 2007 and 21st November 2007.

ii) Tyne and Wear Archives, Blandford House, Newcastle upon Tyne. Date of visit: 7th November 2007.

iii) Newcastle City Library, Local Studies Section, Civic Centre. Date of visit: 31st October 2007.

iv) Durham University Library, Archives and Special Collections. No visit made, telephone call confirmed nothing relating to Fell House Farm available.

v) National Monuments Record, Kemble Drive, Swindon. No visit made, telephone call confirmed nothing relating to Fell House Farm available.

vi) Duke of Northumberland Architect, Alnwick. Refer to Appendix II. No information available.

1.08 Recording Methodology:

A physical linear (tape measured) survey to all parts of the buildings to create existing plans, main sections and elevations.

An electronic topographical survey prepared using a 'Total Station'. This picking up the external outline to all the buildings and allowing for an accurate inter-relationship drawing to be prepared for all the buildings.

A photographic record using a 35mm SLR camera utilising artificial lighting and flash where required.

2.0 THE OVERALL FORM AND AGE OF THE BUILDINGS AND SUCCESSIONAL PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

Refer to map development progression - Map 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10

2.01 Pre 1848:

(i) The Development:

Lordship of Newburn map of 1767 (Map 1 & 2) indicates Fell House as a 'u' shaped building (Map 2 has this 'u' broken to the east along the south frontage). The long south frontage of the building appears hard up against the north verge of Gares Lane. Compare this to the Wallbottle (sic) Tithe Map of 1848 and it can be determined that the buildings of that date show the 'u' plan form reversed through 180° and a central north wing added. The smaller scale plans of both Fryer (1820) and Greenwood (1828) offer no clue as to the development within the intervening period. The issue is further confused by the indication of a circular gin gang to the opposite side of the north wing to that more accurately plotted within the First Edition OS Plan. Both the 1848 Tithe Plan and First Edition OS Plan show the arrival of both the Farmhouse and northern range of outbuildings.

Although it is difficult to accurately compare the Lordship Plan, Tithe map and OS Plan to plot the relative location of the initial (1767) 'u' plan (from the relative position of the road and field boundaries) it is clear that those buildings of the 1767 plan did not survive. By 1848 there had been a complete redevelopment of the site. This indicates a general re-ordering of the site. Certainly the overall plan of the site at 1848 with ranges around a fold or farmyard is typical of the wave of agricultural improvements that swept the country during the latter stages of the 18th century (referred to within the previous section). Given that the buildings identified as what we shall call pre-1848, are of quite a high standard of material and detail this may even suggest a slightly later perhaps early 19th century planned or model form.

Photographs 31, 32, 33 and 34 show the internal farmyard elevations of the pre-1848 redevelopment. Squared random rubble sandstone built to courses provides the general walling material with dressed and chamfered jamb stones and projecting, chamfered eaves string course, present a quality of build that is missing to some of the later additions and alterations to the buildings. The chamfered eaves string course, which provides the background to what remains of the lead lined timber gutter, continues along the east facing side wall but stops at the north east corner. The north facing elevation has general walling materials continued up to the junction with the slates.

The quality of stonework to the rear (north elevation), and to some extent the east elevation, is of inferior quality being less squared and more random in face size. Similarly the Farmhouse appears to have been constructed with the higher quality materials and detail to the main front elevation, the remaining elevations being more utilitarian and lacking in detail and quality. Photographs 4, 5 and 6 reveal the front elevation of the Farmhouse to be constructed of squared, unequal coursed sandstone. Some residue of tooling remains although much of the face has been lost to spalling. The quoins and jamb

stones are accurately squared with thin bed joints, a tooled finish with margin.

Although the gable and rear walls have received a render finish with mock imprinted coursing, it is clear from the areas where this render has spalled, the underlying stone is of a far poorer quality than that used to the front elevation. It is likely that the render was applied to protect perished stonework.

In line with most planned or model farms of this period, Fell House Farm was provided with a power source in the form of a gin gang (Maps 6 & 7 & OS 1st Edition). As mentioned within the text above the Tithe Plans indicate this as being on the east side of the north wing: The OS 1st Edition shows it correctly located to the west. This entire north wing and gin gang was demolished approximately thirty years ago⁸. Later development of concrete yard areas and steel framed buildings has completely obliterated all evidence as to the actual extent of this building. However, examination of the north facing elevation provides all of the clues necessary to establish the alignment of this north wing. Photographs 36 and 37 show a split longitudinal elevation. There are two high level doors either side of a large central door opening: Internal photographs 93 and 95 show the inside configuration of the west doorway with the outline of internal steps leading to the first floor. Photograph 99 shows an internal ground floor view of the steps to the east doorway. Turning to Map 6 and 8 (OS 1st Edition), there are external steps clearly indicated to either side of the north wing towards the abutment of the perpendicular building. Given the relative position and height of the remaining doors it is reasonable to assume the external steps lined through with these doors, thereby locating the north wing directly between these two doors.

Usage and designation of areas within the pre-1848 buildings:

- (ii) Given that this farmstead had been redeveloped it would have followed a planned format or layout. The gin gang provided the power to the unit. It was likely that a threshing machine would have been included within a farm of this age. (The threshing machine had been invented in 1785⁹.) This north wing was likely to have been a split-level mixing barn; Incorporating the threshing floor and animal housing / storage. There is, unfortunately, no remains of either building or machinery to confirm this assumption.

The high level doors referred to above lead to two first floor loft areas. Photographs 89, 90 and 91 provide internal views to the west area loft.

Photograph 91 faces east and shows the external (high level) door to the far left of the photograph. This area has a simple raised tie truss, with purlin and rafter construction. The trusses and squared ridge purlin appear original given the uneven nature of the timbers. Square edge purlins and rafters suggest some re-roofing.

The walls to this area have a rendered finish and chamfered wall to floor junction. Such a construction detail was synonymous with the requirements of a granary or grain drying area: Indeed this area continued to be used as a granary as witnessed by the grain husks and timber chute within photograph

⁸ Verbal information provided by Mr. John Nixon

⁹ The Distribution of Wheelhouses In the British Isles - Kenneth Hutton

91.

Below this floor the arched lintels, incorporating dressed chamfered voussoirs, pillars and jamb stones, provided access to the cattle shelter shed or byre (planned farms provided for these byres to open into the yard for over wintering and the collection of manure within the yard area for later spreading on the fields to increase fertilisation of the land).

Much of the arched stonework to the west byre has been altered and in filled during later 'improvements'. Photographs 28 and 29 show however, this entire south elevation to the building was apparently symmetrical and photograph 31 provides a better indication of what both sides of this building would have looked like. Photographs 100, 101 and 108 show internal details of this byre ceiling. Given the obvious age and profile to the first floor joists it is probable that this is the original construction.

The east wing of the farm building has received significant and relatively recent alterations, large doorways have been inserted to the south and north. West facing doorways have been in filled. Concrete cattle stalls have been added.

The roof construction to this 'wing' (photographs 106 & 107) consist of raised tie trusses with purlins and rafters similar to the construction over the 'granary'. Close inspection of the timber used to create this construction reveals a mixture of roughly shaped principal rafters and ties with neatly squared purlins, rafters and a dragon beam to the hip area. This would suggest possible re-roofing / repair to this area of roof.

There is evidence (refer to photograph 110) of an horizontal wallplate running along both north and south walls at a level approximately 2.1m above floor level. This is a similar detail to the wall plate shown in photograph 101 of the junction to the first floor / byre ceiling in the immediately adjacent byre. Further examination of the east wing reveals obvious and regular infill above the wallplate equating to previous joist pockets. In addition there are high level openings to east and west elevations of this wing: It is safe therefore to assume this 'wing' had a first floor, possibly hay storage with barn storage to the ground floor: Given that there are only two 1m wide doorways (presently blocked up) leading into the farmyard (photographs 32 & 34).

The 1st Edition OS Plan shows the building to have had two equal wings, the west wing projecting only as far to the south as the east wing. The present situation is different to this: The two storey west wing (photograph 28) projects substantially more than the east wing and presents an awkward upstand junction with the lower east-west area of the building. In addition the two storey west wing terminates with a hip rather than a gable as that to the east wing. As such it is considered that this part of the building is later in construction than the remainder of the pre-1848 build. This will be addressed in the following section.

The Farmhouse:

We have the benefit of first hand information from the previous tenant of the farm: Mr. Nixon has explained that prior to the alterations that resulted in the rear flat roofed first floor extension, the house was divided longitudinally into two:

There were four front rooms, two downstairs and two upstairs with a central staircase.

The rear area housed the kitchen / scullery on the ground floor, a separate staircase within the kitchen leading to bedrooms within the 'teefall' roof area. Mr. Nixon described this as the servant accommodation.

Much of the original fabric of the building has been either destroyed or lost during the 1960's 'improvements'. All walls have been replastered, ceiling replaced throughout and services provided to all areas. However, a few features remain.

Photograph 54 shows the internal elevation of the existing back door: A simple four board width ledge and battened door with original wrought iron strap and hook hinges and face fixed rim lock and thumb latch.

Photographs 57, 60 and 61 show the original open well staircase to the farmhouse with simple square spindles, cut or open strings. Then hardwood handrail terminating with a scroll at ground floor level.

Fire places to the ground floor have been altered and any original feature removed. At first floor the original fireplaces have been overboarded. Photograph 63 shows the cast iron fire place with dressed stone surround behind a more recent overboarding. Photograph 64 shows the similar situation to the opposite room fireplace.

To the rear of the farmhouse is a block of single storey outbuildings that are evident with the 1848 Tithe Map and OS 1st Edition Plan. Now in a ruinous and dangerous condition this building, having doors facing into the farmhouse yard, would have provided storage specific to the farmhouse. It is likely that one of the outbuildings would have housed an ashpit toilet.

Before leaving the pre-1848 situation it is worthwhile to note the comparative position of the farmhouse and buildings to the road and the relative depth of front garden to the farmhouse.

2.02 1848 – 1920

(i) Development:

By the time of the recording of the 1898 Second Edition OS (Map 9) there had been significant expansion of the farm buildings. The only Second Edition OS available to date is a small scale, however, this is sufficient to appreciate the addition of a number of buildings. Viewing the Third Edition 1920 OS allows a clearer understanding of the development since 1848.

There had been rationalisation of the route of the roadway (Gares Lane) between 1848 and 1898. The road appears to have been reduced in width: Perhaps an indication of a better surface having been added. The exact alignment has been moved towards the southern field boundary creating a greater depth of front garden to the farmhouse.

Additional buildings were also added across the front (south) of the farmyard

with a closure of the west 'wing'.

The recent electronic topographical survey confirms that the 19th century southern byre extension is not constructed parallel and perpendicular to the previous building. This suggests the building was built hard up against the settled roadside boundary in effect maximising the amount shed and enclosed farmyard.

The west 'wing' alteration is not as straightforward as it may at first appear: When viewing both the 2nd and 3rd Edition OS Maps it appears that the pre-1848 alterations simply added an extension onto the previous south gable of the west wing. Indeed the 3rd Edition indicates a line continuing what was the farmyard enclosure. The building fabric tells a different tale.

The position at which this line passes through west wing equates to the south jamb of the ground floor door shown on photograph 25. This sits more or less at midpoint of the first floor door. There is no surviving remains or detail within this wall that would suggest the existence of any pre-1848 gable wall.

The present configuration of cross walls to the west wing does not offer any further clue as to the alignment of this gable wall.

Photograph 40 showing the west elevation of the west 'wing'. The position of the line of the pre-1848 gable fell to the far side of the central ground floor doorway. Again there is no evidence of any such gable.

Photographs 28 and 29 highlight the clumsy intersection of the west wing with the perpendicular east / west building. Photograph 38 shows the north elevation of this junction which clearly indicates not only an obvious change in level but a less obvious variation of pitch between the two roofs.

Turning back to photograph 29, the neat eaves detail of the dressed, chamfered string course stops at the abutment with the taller west wing. The general random rubble walling to the west wing is of a poorer quality than the pre-1848 building fronting onto the farmyard.

Ground floor openings to both the east and west elevations of the west wing have squared edge random size jamb stones compared to the regular deep chamfered and dressed equivalents within the pre-1848 farmyard frontage.

Photographs 26 and 39. High level clay ventilation pipes appear to be original features of the walling to the ground floor (photograph 26).

There is no discernable line representing any vertical extension to an existing ground floor structure. However, the windows to the first floor area are formed by good quality dressed, chamfered, tooled and margined jamb stones of regular size with similar dressed cills and lintols. The cills are laid flush with the outer face of the random rubble walling with pronounced stooling compared to overhanging and almost flat weathering cills of the pre-1848 building.

Given the evidence of what presently exists it is likely that the west wing of the pre-1848 building was at least partially demolished and rebuilt to accommodate specifically sized room areas, necessary to cope with improved

farming techniques (see below). The height of the first floor being raised for similar reasons. It is likely that window and door surrounds were re-used where possible within the ground floor. Given the use of the first floor (see below) there would have been a specific requirement for ventilation. This required the introduction of rhythmic fenestration where new good quality dressed stone surrounds were provided.

The single storey byre forming the south wing (photographs 16, 19 and 21) is a simple building with five remaining flat arched openings with dressed stone columns between. These arches have a slightly larger rise, deeper voussoir than the pre-1848 byres, complete with springings of similar dressed stone to the arch and supports. The roof structure is simple truss, purlin and rafter construction (photograph 65 & 67).

The single storey link between the byre and the west 'wing' has been significantly altered during the twentieth century. Photographs 40 and 41 show both elevations of the junction between the single storey building and the two storey granary: Both photographs indicate large quoins commencing at eaves level with poor quality random 'quoins' below that level. This suggests that the present through passage doorways are later additions to the west wing. It is probable that the ground floor wall of the single storey building was continuous with the two storey building.

There still remains sections of the farmyard walls, clearly evident in photograph 28. These walls are indicated within the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Edition OS Plans.

The 1898 2nd Edition shows the developments of the most northerly building of the farmstead (photograph 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51 & 52). Mr. Nixon refers to this as the Byre although perhaps the term Hemmell may be equally appropriate. There is a small enclosed yard in front of this, visible on both the 2nd and 3rd Editions OS. Internal photographs 66 and 113, certainly show equipment consistent with this use. Why this building should be so far away from the main farm buildings and byres is unusual. Twentieth century alterations have removed any evidence of the form of original openings of the south facing elevation.

Given this was a dairy farm, this building may have been used to house bulls or calves.

The 2nd Edition OS Plan shows the farmhouse to have been extended to the west. Mr. Nixon has confirmed that this extension was the washhouse. It was removed when the 1960's 'improvements' were carried out.

The 3rd Edition OS shows this washroom extension more clearly along with the rear porch (photograph 8) and the east side extension (photograph 3). The front porch, however, does not appear even on the 1920 3rd Edition OS.

The cottage, now the residence of Mr. Nixon, and the subject of recent alterations and extension appears on the 3rd Edition OS. This building received the approval of Newburn Urban District Council for application to be built in

May 1901 ¹⁰.

(ii) Use:

As previously mentioned the growth of farming technology advanced significantly throughout the 19th century. Fell House Farm stands testament to this development. The redevelopment of the west wing created specific areas on the ground floor for cattle stalls and fodder stores and first floor for an improved and enlarged granary.

Larger and airier granaries meant greater loads on the floor structure below: Photograph 80 shows the original floor timber sparing below the northwest corner of the granary and photographs 70 & 73 show the intermediate steel beams added later to cater for increased loading.

The single storey byre building indicates an increase in animal numbers which would have been commensurate with the increase in grain storage and processing.

It is likely that the south west corner of the byre (photograph 65) was possibly a cart shed. What was eventually to become the modern dairy building by the middle of the twentieth century may well have served a similar purpose during the late 19th and early 20th century.

Numerous troughs and stall dividers from this time exist (see photograph 72) although damaged and absorbed into an alternative use.

2.03 1920 to Present Day

Development & Use:

'Improvement' rather than demolition and rebuilding appears to have been undertaken during the interwar years. Mr. Nixon has provided information to add definitive knowledge as to what may otherwise have been supposition.

Hygiene regulations brought into existence during the interwar period resulted in new forms of cow house and dairy ¹¹: The south west corner building linking the two storey granary building and the south range of byres shows obvious signs of significant alterations during this interwar period. Photographs 23 and 24 show external elevations to this link. Spalling render reveals red brick walling. In addition, steel framed window frames and corrugated asbestos cement sheet roofing are consistent with interwar redevelopment. Photographs 63 and 69 show internal images of the same building.

Rendered internal walls, trusses faced with asbestos cement sheeting, sloped internal window cills and smooth concrete floors are evidence that this farm building had been specifically altered to accommodate a dairy. It is clear that the Hygiene Regulations referred to above resulted in the adoption of 'modern' building practices of the time. The use of corrugated asbestos cement sheets

¹⁰ T & W Archives UD/Nb/44/1 Item 325 Mr. J. Apperley of Manor Office Tynemouth applied for permission to erect this cottage on behalf of His Grace the Duke of Northumberland. May 1901.

¹¹ English Heritage Publication 'The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A Guide to Good Practice' Pages 4 & 5

extended across the majority of the single storey byre. Photographs 19 and 20 clearly show the asbestos sheeting fixed over the slaters laths. What remains of the slating appears to be in reasonable condition, it is possible that this slating may have been removed for use elsewhere within the farm buildings; There is clear evidence of farm mechanisation change from this time: Concrete milking stalls (photographs 72 & 79 - west wing; 78 - centre building; 106 - east wing) were added to areas which had previously provided byre accommodation. This represents both an increase in milk output as well as an indication that cattle were overwintered in the larger sheds that were constructed to the west and north of the farmstead. An increase in the size of herd meant a greater demand for feed.

Examination of the first floor construction of the west 'wing' granary (photographs 70, 73 & 76) shows the introduction of deep 'I' section mild steel cross beams carrying perpendicular floor beams. Compare this construction to the earlier, simple, joisted floor to the north part of the granary floor (photograph 80) and this provides evidence that the load carrying capacity of this floor had been increased. What had been a window to the east facing elevation of the granary was rather crudely converted into a doorway (photograph 26) incorporating a sloped concrete thresh.

Larger doorways, presumably to allow cattle access into the various remodeled milking areas were inserted to all areas of the farm buildings. External sliding doors were added to these large openings (photographs 28, 30, 36 & 40).

Various areas of the buildings assumed a different use to accommodate farming methods and change: In addition to the dairy building highlighted above, the adjacent byre had significant and rather crude alterations to create a workshop or store: Continuing the idea of masonry infill with render covering (refer to photographs 22 & 23). On the opposite side of the stackyard the western arches of the south facing byres (photographs 27) were infilled with rendered masonry and crudely altered to form a larger squared opening complete with sliding door.

Fitted farming equipment survives from this time in the form of milking equipment (photographs 72 & 79). Associated with this was the installation of drinking troughs (photographs 75 & 78).

There is no surviving indication of any steam engine development within this farm, steam being the direct replacement for the horsepower provided by the gin gang. Given the relatively small size of operation the steam engines used within Fell House Farm may well have been portable.

Photograph 83 shows mechanised plant within the roof timber of the west wing granary. An electric motor provides the power to this equipment: Given the unusual method of support to this motor and actual location this may well have been a subsequent alteration to a previous method of traction for this equipment.

Post second world war development of the farm buildings continued up until the recent sale of the farm: In line with most farming enterprises the form of farm buildings, needed to cope with 'modern' farming techniques, changed quite significantly. The tractor, the combine harvester, increased yields from

crops and intensified animal husbandry resulted in large format prefabricated buildings being constructed. Steel framed, steel clad barns were the first industrial buildings to be constructed followed by the ATCOST type concrete frame buildings with asbestos cement / corrugated steel sheet cladding. The traditional farmstead buildings were often sacrificed in the name of progress. Fell House is no exception here: The north wing and gin gang were demolished during the 1960's to make way for a modern industrial shed and concrete yard area. Photographs 36 and 37 show the current situation where the modern building has itself been removed leaving the scars of the demolition of the north wing quite clearly visible on the north elevation. There is no finesse or care shown by this work. Simple utilitarian alterations carried out to obtain the quickest and cheapest result that would fulfill the farmers need for change.

The barns and byres became stores and workshops for man and machine. The granary remained operational right up until the point of sale but other areas show clear signs of neglect and dereliction all too common in farm buildings throughout the country. The north byre building in particular suffered the ravages of dereliction over what is a relatively short period of time.

The Farmhouse:

Mr. Nixon has provided an account of the 'improvements' made to the farmhouse. The catslide north facing roof has been lost and replaced with a very utilitarian first floor, flat roofed, extension. This provided modern living accommodation with the introduction of an internal toilet, bathroom and kitchen commensurate with the 1960's and 70's.

Much of the internal fabric of the building was removed and replaced with contemporary finishes. The staircase and first floor bedroom fireplaces being the only features of note remaining. Any skirting boards, cornices, plaster detail have been lost. Existing windows have been removed and replaced with poor quality upvc. The stonework to the gables and north wall has been rendered. The roof finish has been replaced with concrete tiles and one chimney appears to have been rebuilt with artificial 'bradstone' type material.

The cottage has recently undergone more sympathetic alterations, improvements and extension (photograph 53) ensuring the continual existence of that part of the farm steading.

3.0 POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION OR DOCUMENTARY WORK, AND OF THE POTENTIAL SURVIVAL OF BELOW-GROUND EVIDENCE FOR THE HISTORY OF THE BUILDING AND ITS SITE

Given that the earliest recorded building on this site lay in the area of the nineteenth century south byre wing, it is unlikely that any thing remains of this building.

Regarding the north wing and gin gang, Mr. Nixon can recall that all walls were removed. It may be likely that footings remain beneath the concrete slab. I would therefore suggest that care is exercised during the breaking up and lifting of the slabs to allow inspection and recording of any evidence of foundations.