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SUMMARY

Trenching within the building complex associated with the Hall suggested that earlier archaeological deposits masked by later development did not exist, the stratigraphic sequence suggesting that the current buildings had been directly built onto sandstone bedrock.

Within the Mill, the wheel-pit was fully emptied and was observed to be a monumental structure consistent with a large waterwheel required for grinding and crushing raw materials required for dyes and chemicals.

Possible, subterranean facilities probably existed within the Mill that may have served as stores and cellars.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project origins

Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) was consulted by Copeland Council regarding a pre-planning application for the renovation of the former oil and dye mill and demolition of buildings at Weddicar Hall, Keekle, Whitehaven (NY 014 573), Planning Application Number 4/10/2066.

The scheme has the potential to affect the extant remains of standing walls and shells of nine farm buildings (HER 41688) and one mill (HER 12343) and as a result an assessment programme of archaeological building recording was required to inform upon a management plan.

A desk-based assessment was compiled by Gerry Martin Associates Ltd (GMA Report 43, 2008) followed by a detailed Building Survey by Peter Ryder (Ryder 2010). To conclude the archaeological investigation, a brief was issued by the Cumbria County Council (CCCHES) detailing further investigation through an archaeological evaluation within the Mill and Building 4 within the Hall complex.

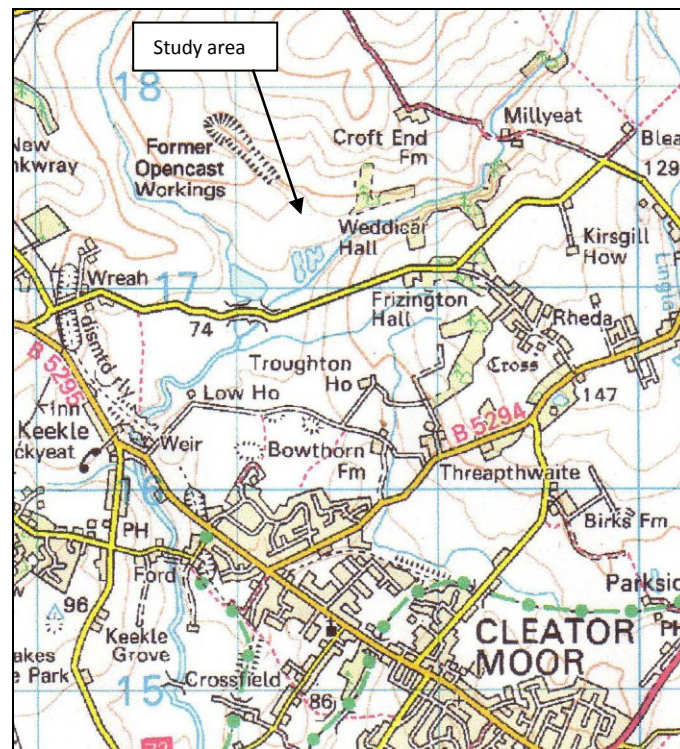


Figure 1. Location of Weddicar Hall

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2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Project Design

In response to a request by Cumbria County Council, Gerry Martin Associates Ltd submitted a project design for an archaeological evaluation. This document outlined the contractors' professional

suitability, historical background, general objectives required of the project, the methodology and the resources needed for the successful expedition of this work.

The project design on being accepted by the curatorial body, Gerry Martin Associates Ltd was commissioned to undertake the archaeological evaluation.

All projects are carried out in accordance with PPS 5 (2010), the guidelines and recommendations issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists and English Heritage and in accordance with the brief prepared by the curatorial authority. Gerry Martin has achieved the accreditation level of MIfA (Member) with the Institute of Archaeologists (IfA).

Fieldwork took place on November 22nd-24th 2010.

2.2 Archive

The archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design and the guidelines set out by English Heritage (1991, 2006) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994, 2008).

The archive will be deposited with an appropriate repository, Tullie House Museum, Carlisle and a copy of the report donated to the County Sites and Monuments Record, as requested by the curatorial authority.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

The study area (NY 014 573) lies within the parish of St Bees and is part of the township of Weddicar. It lies in hilly countryside approximately 100m OD, adjacent to former open cast workings and plantation woodland and the upper reaches of the Dub Beck. Two kilometres westwards, are the urban fringes of Whitehaven with Cleator Moor approximately 1.5 km southwards.

The farmland is used for pasture but the majority of this land has been reinstated following open cast quarrying.

Solid geology consists of sandstone but the locality is noted for its coal reserves relatively close to the surface.

4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Historical background

Weddicar Hall

Weddicar Hall is mentioned in 1613 as being owned by John Steele whose son Henry Steel married Agnes Williamson (Caine 1916, 48).

From 1652 to 1726, the owners of Weddicar Hall are the Ponsonby family who assume control from W.Patrickson, having lost the manor to John Ponsonby as a result of the Civil War (Aledale 1925,

128-143). Weddicar Hall remained disputed into the 1660s (Newman, Quartermanie and Tostevin 1997, 179) when the Ponsonby family finally won out.

In 1726, John Ponsonby sold the property to Sir James Lowther for £2,100. Further local acquisitions were those at Weddiker-Loscow (including 100 sheep) in 1730 from John Hudson for £500 and the Croft End tenement in 1754 from John Steel for £575 (Beckett 1975, 242-243).

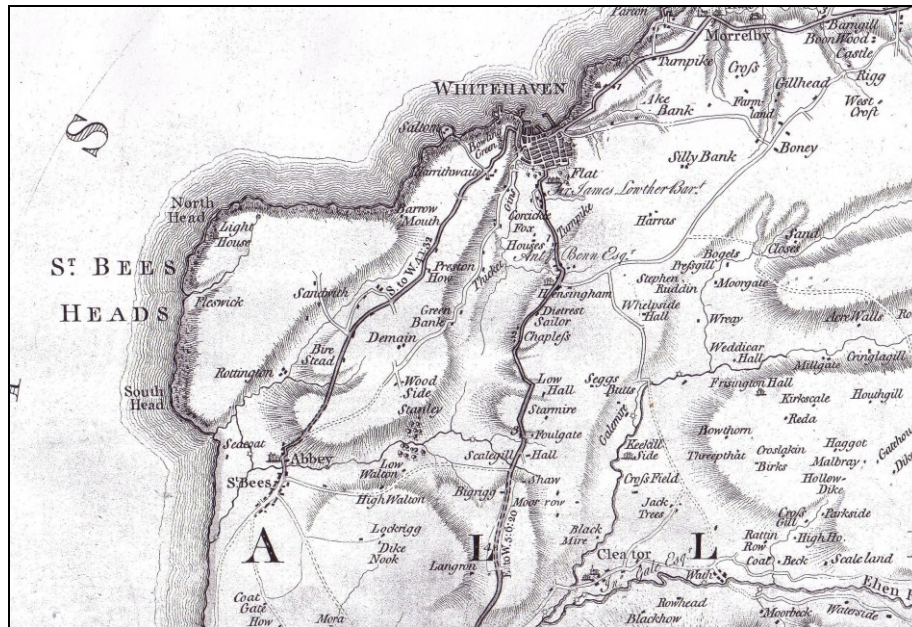


Figure 2. Hodkinson and Donald map of 1774

Sir James Lowther (1673-1755) like his father bought land systematically to consolidate his coal interests. The benefit of this action was to create a monopoly in coal rights, allowing reduced competition, eliminating the need for surface wayleaves and made possible an efficient system of drainage that included Weddicar (Wood 1998, 25).

In 1808, Enclosure Deeds award the common land bounding the north of Weddicar Hall to William, Earl of Lonsdale (the Lowther Family). This amounted to 510 acres, 10 perches and granted all royalties to the Earl.

The Mill

The chronology of an early mill at Weddicar can be traced through the papers of the Ponsonby Family of Haile Hall held in Whitehaven, reference D/BH/36.

A mill at Weddicar is referred to as early as 1547 with the sale of a water mill at Weddicar between Henry Gray, Third Marquess of Dorset and William Leigh of Frizington (ref 3/11/1).

In 1633 in a feoffment (conveyancing document), H. Patrickson and his son Henry sell to John Patrickson for a water corn mill known as Weddicar or Frizington Mill for £100 (ref 3/11/4).

In 1651, William Patrickson sells a corn mill known as Weddicar or Frizington Mill to Edward Pearson of Carlisle for £100 (ref 3/11/6).

In 1656, Edward Pearson of Carlisle a surgeon, sells the mill to Richard Williamson, gentleman of Hole Beck, Arlecdon for £140 (ref 3/11/9).

In 1680, a feoffment details that Joseph Williamson, yeoman of Arlecdon, sells a mill known as Weddicar or Frizington Mill for £93 to Thomas Bowman of Rheda, Arlecdon (ref 3/11/12).



Figure 3. Land Enclosure map of 1808 (QRE/1/10).

In 1681, Thomas Bowman, Mary his wife and John Williamson of Hole Beck sell to John Ponsonby a corn mill known as Weddicar for £125 (ref 3/11/18).

It is in the will of Joseph Williamson (ref 3/11/14) that finally the location of Weddicar Mill is established. The will states that Joseph Williamson “ hereby gives and bequeaths unto my dear and loving wife Debra all my interests and titles, that I have to our Corn Mill comonly (sic) called and known by the name of Weddicar Mill lyeing in the Parish of Arlecdon”.

The mill at the centre of our study lies within the parish of St Bees, thereby the mill described above cannot be the same mill as that at Weddicar Hall. The likeliest location for “Weddicar Mill” is at Millyeat, being in close vicinity to Frizington Hall and neighbouring the estate of Weddicar Hall, located on the opposite side of Dub Beck.

This mill is recorded once again in 1706 when John Ponsonby is charged 2d in every *purvey* (a tax unit of £100) for Weddicar Mill (ref 3/11/28). This was a form of local taxation that paid for the upkeep of bridges, roads and other items forming the parochial infrastructure. In 1797, the payment due for the parish of Arlecdon and Trisinton (Frizington) was nine shillings and six pence (Hutchinson 1974, 686).

In 1712 the mill is mentioned as part of a marriage settlement in favour of John Ponsonby and his wife Isabel Patrickson (ref 3/11/8) before the mill passes into the Lowther estate in 1726.

The Mill at Weddicar Hall was probably built by Rundleson & Forster between 1813 and 1820.

In 1808 William Rundleson opened a chemists shop at 6 Roper Street, Whitehaven and is listed as still being there in 1828 (Pigott 1828, 32). By 1811 the shop was titled "Rundleson & Foster" *sic* (Jollies 1811, 107), the partners being manufacturing chemists with the finance from this partnership providing the capital for the Oil and Paint Mill.

The Mill was purpose built with a very powerful headrace measuring 750 metres in length, powering twin water wheels. A sluice diverted water from Dub Beck with millponds storing the water approximately 350 metres from the Mill. A secondary water source appears to emerge from the northwest via two ponds and a culvert, as illustrated on the 1861 Ordnance Survey map. It appears unlikely that the Mill replaced an existing corn mill as two existed within a miles radius, whilst this current research discussed above, locates a "watermill at Weddicar" as being in the Parish of Arlecdon.

The land on which the oil and paint mill was built must have been leased from the Earl of Lonsdale from whom Rundleson & Forster bought the Mill and land in 1829 (the Mill was probably mortgaged to the Earl of Lonsdale). Between 1829 until at least 1847 neither partner lived at Weddicar Mill, Rundleson living at "Tivoli" and moving to Croft Hill, Moresby and Forster listed at Front Corkickle before moving to 3, Corkickle Place (Jackson 1992, 2).

In 1821 a Coroners' Inquest reported on the death of an eleven year old boy, accidentally crushed by a rendering stone used for grinding colours proving that the mill was in use by this date (Jackson 1992, 1).

An indenture of 1857 between the Earl of Lonsdale, William Rundleson and John Forster, describes the lease of land between the Mill and Weddicar Hall on which William Rundleson had built the two cottages at an earlier date (see figure 6). It would appear that Ralph Forster had died recently leaving his share of the business to William Rundleson upon which Forster's son John became a partner.

On February 16th 1867, William Rundleson died at Croft Hill, Moresby (Ramsden 1998, 100) his share of the business and the property in Roper St, Whitehaven were bequeathed to his daughter, Margaret, wife of G.W.Hartley of Rosehill, Moresby. Amongst the property associated with the business, the will records two freehold cottages at Weddicar Hall, but there is no mention of the Mill (Jackson 1992, 1).

The fact that no mention of the Mill is made in the will is explained in an Assignment of 1873. "G.W.Hartley & wife to Earl of Lonsdale of freehold and leasehold premises at Weddiker Mill to Earl of Lonsdale by Rundelson & Forster for £575". It appears therefore, that the Mill was sold to the Earl of Lonsdale before the death of Ralph Forster and whilst the business was still operating commercially.

On the death of William Rundleson it was agreed by the partnership of G.W.Hartley, his wife and John Forster (son of founder Ralph Forster) that it be dissolved after 31st December 1867. John

Forster was to leave all to Margaret the *executrix* for £1,000 and he would receive £200 for managing the business since the death of William Rundleson and to carry on for a further one year at £200 per annum.

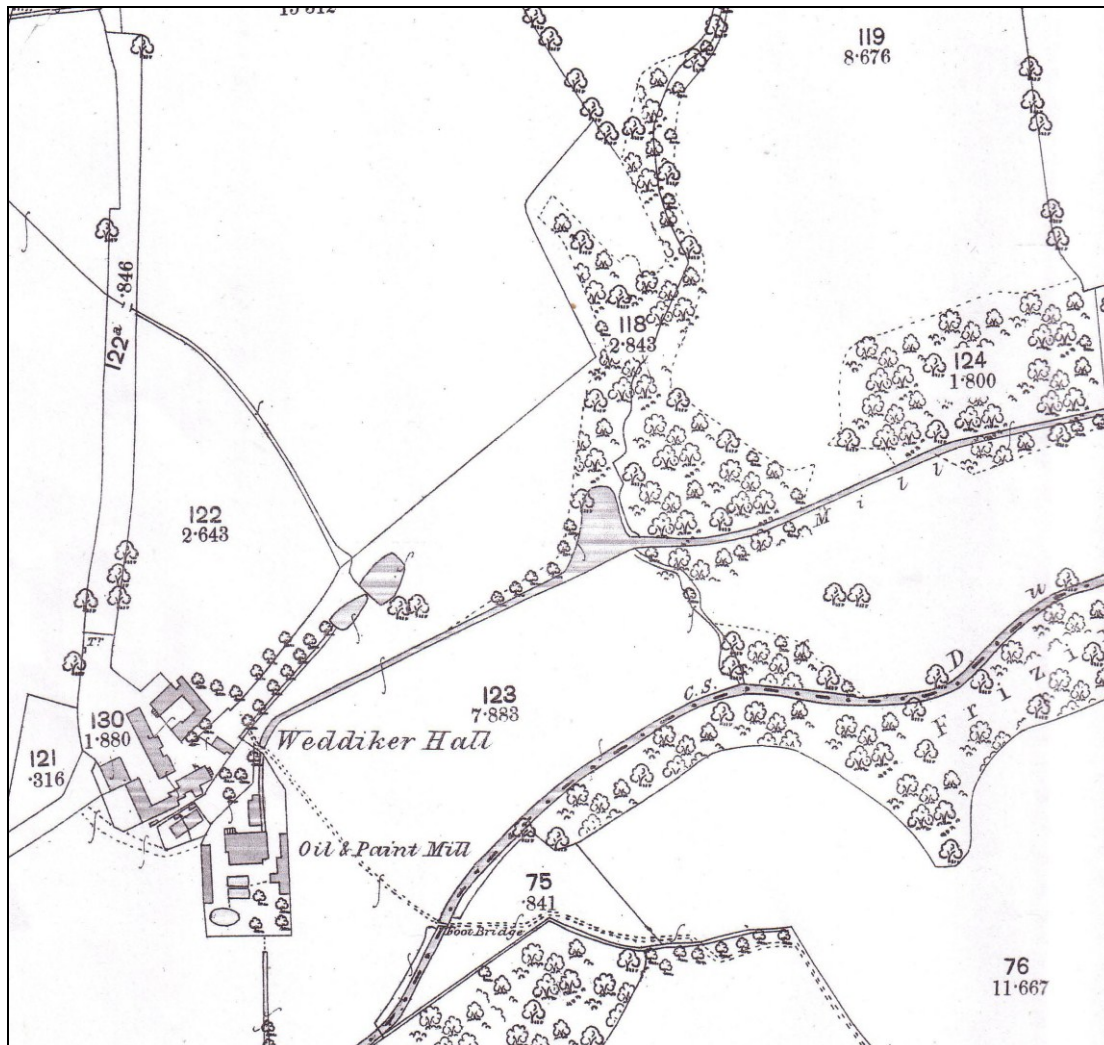


Figure 4. 1st Edition 1861 OS map

The Whitehaven Herald of 1870 carried the following advert indicating that the business had changed hands.

“Joseph Barnes & Co. (Late Rundleson & Forster) Wholesale Druggists & Manufacturing Chemists 5, 6 & 7 Roper St. Agricultural Suppliers, Manufacturers, Seed Crushers, Oil Refiners, Paint Oils, Colours, Varnishes, Grease & Cement” (Jackson 1992, 2).

In 1914, the inhabitants of Weddickar Hall are listed as Mrs Mary Higgins and John Boodle (Kelly 1914, 176) amongst a population of 44 for the township.

4.2 Recent fieldwork

A desk-based assessment and level I building survey was initially undertaken by Gerry Martin Associates Ltd during 2008 in order to ascertain the historical merit and feasibility of undertaking fieldwork at Weddickar Hall.

The report highlighted the following details:

- The field survey and documentary research associated with Weddicar Hall suggested that the physical origins for this study area existed before 1650, perhaps stretching back to the late Medieval period.
- Buildings 2, 4 and 5 may have represented a Post-Medieval hall, tower and barn that developed into a larger complex of farm buildings during the 18th and early 19th Century and remained largely extant until the late 20th Century.
- Weddicar Mill was probably constructed between 1813 and 1820 producing dyes and chemicals.
- The mill was operating for approximately fifty years before closing in the mid 19th Century.

Based on the recommendations of this survey, a detailed building recording was undertaken at Weddicar Hall by Peter Ryder in July 2010.

The areas subject to archaeological evaluation are summarised by the surveyor below.

Building 4. The 'Tower'

This is an intriguing structure; roughly 6 m square (externally) it appears to have been free-standing in its original form, and certainly pre-dates Building 5/6 to the west. Its walls are of coursed roughly-shaped stones, with substantial quoins at the southern angles (the south-western now visible within the adjacent barn); the north-eastern quoin is rather different (with redder stone), perhaps suggesting a rebuild, and anything that remains of the south-eastern is buried in debris. The walls are a little thicker (c 0.60-0.70 m) than those of the other building, although hardly of the thickness one might expect in a medieval tower. The south wall stands to a full three storeys in height, but is devoid of features other than a recent window at basement level, and traces of a blocked one at the east end of the wall on the floor above. In the south-west angle is a projecting block of masonry of uncertain function, continued up (but at a reduced size) at first-floor level. The west wall has traces of a possible door on the ground floor (its rough relieving arch is visible on the east face of the wall, but there seems no sign of it on the west), and remains of a secondary one (with brick in its south jamb) above.

The 1960s aerial photograph of the buildings seems to show the pitched roof of the southern limb of Building 5/6 continuing above Building 4.

Weddicar Mill

Standing c 200m south-east of the main group of buildings, and at a rather lower level, this is a rectangular two-storeyed building 17.7 by 9.5 m externally, over walls of roughly-coursed rubble 0.60-0.70 m thick, with cut quoins and raised parallel-tooled sandstone surrounds to most of its openings. The shell of the building stands more or less intact, except for the central sections of both end walls which have been reduced to around first-floor level. The Mill is thought to have been built between 1813 and 1820 and its architectural features, which are similar to those of Building 8 (the former farmhouse) bear this out.

The building is entered by a wide central opening in the west end, with old raised jambs but what appears a more recent girder lintel. Above and set towards each end of the wall are remains of two windows, blocked in brick; in the internal face of the wall there is a blocked opening on the ground floor which does not show externally.

The side walls of the building each have a doorway - that on the south set centrally, that on the north towards the east end - and a number of windows, as well as a first-floor doorway, originally accessed by a flight of stone steps, towards the west end of the north wall. There is also a broad full-height opening, under a timber lintel, at the east end of the south wall. Most of the doors and windows have shallow rear arches made of roughly-shaped voussoirs; all the openings, except for one ground-floor window on the north, are now blocked up; some of the upper windows have pipe vents inserted in their blockings. A slight off-set on the internal wall face marks the level of the (removed) first floor; a surviving fragment of the west gable shows sockets for the joists of a loft or attic floor.

At ground-floor level in the east end wall are two blocked round arches, each c 1.5 m wide and 1.2 m high, without cut dressings, which appear to relate to a pair of former waterwheels placed in line inside the end of the building. Other more minor features are detailed on the sketch elevations.

The 1st and 2nds edition OS maps show a considerable number of other buildings around the Mill, but these have now all gone, bar some remains of the enclosure wall. The Assessment provides further details.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Evaluation methodology

A total of three trenches were requested by the curatorial authority in order to understand the physical development of the Mill and the presumed earliest structural stages of Weddicar Hall.

Trench 1 (figure 5) measured six metres in length and two metres in width and investigated the interior of Building 4 within the Hall complex.

On Monday 8th November 2010 a walkover of the site demonstrated that Building 4 was still in a perilous state, the floor covered in rubble whilst the eastern elevation appeared to be bowing.

Most of the site had been cleared of superfluous rubble and fallen masonry but Building 4 still required this action to be completed, an action accomplished when the formal evaluation took place a fortnight later.

Walls in close proximity were reduced to a height that would not compromise the safety of the archaeological investigators.

Trenches 2 and 3 (figure 8) were located within the interior of the Mill.

Trench 2 investigated the wheel pit beside the eastern elevation of the Mill. This trench sought to understand where the water source accessed the Mill.

Within the northern mill elevation it was noted that there was a blocked doorway that may be key to the interaction between the wheel-pit and the spatial organisation of the rest of the Mill.

It was hoped that a trench measuring 5m x 2m (Trench 3) leading from Trench 2 would capture this relationship.

5.2 Results

Trench 1

Trench 1 (figure 5) measured 6m x 2.10m and was excavated to a depth of 1.60m in depth.

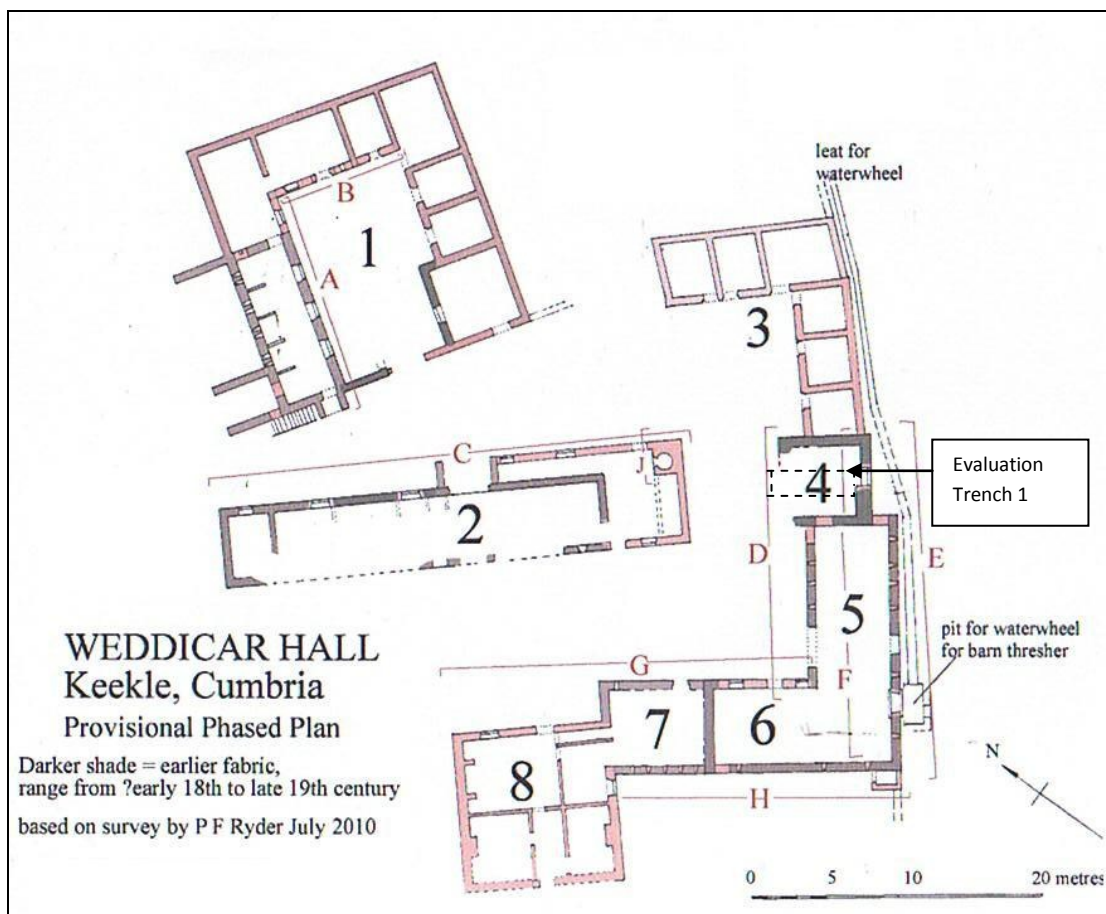


Figure 5. Location of Trench 1 within Building 4. Copyright Peter Ryder

The principal area covered by Trench 1 comprised of a raft of concrete 0.20m in depth, resting above a bed of brown-grey gritty ash 0.20m in depth, overlying a mid-brown gritty ash 0.10m in thickness.

The concrete raft also appeared to replace a yellow brick horizon 0.10m in thickness, resting above a grouting bed of yellow sand 0.10m in thickness, lying above a spread of mid-brown gritty ash also 0.10m in thickness (figure 6).

The insertion of a brick and concrete surface had totally truncated any putative earlier features, the modern floor and its attendant core, resting above natural red sandstone bedrock (figure 7) reduced to a depth of 1.10m.



Figure 6. Trench 1 showing modern deposits



Figure 7. Trench 1 showing natural bedrock

Trench 2

Trench 2 (figure 8) was widened to 7m in length and 3.25m in order to reveal the wheel-pit and provide safe working conditions.

The trench revealed a massive wheel-pit measuring 5.80m x 1.70m and 4.50m in depth.

Construction

The wheel-pit was contemporary with the construction of the Mill superstructure and resided in a rectangular plan cut 1 measuring 7.00m x 3.25m and 4.00m in depth that penetrated yellow clay (natural drift geology).

The wheel-pit consisted of large, rectangular dressed red sandstone blocks up to 1.40m x 0.40m in size, lain in tight courses without mortar bonding forming a rectangular plan wheel-pit. Masonry walls existed on the eastern, western and northern sides but the south elevation remained open.

The eastern wall 3 (figures 9 and 11) measured 5.60m in length and was 4.00m in height. It possessed no architectural embellishments, although the superstructure above yielded two blocked apertures that formerly maintained the water wheels.

The northern wall 4 (figure 10) measured 1.70m in length and survived to a height of 2.60m. It possessed a rectangular plan aperture measuring 0.40m x 0.40m, 1.35m above the base of the wheel-pit.

Behind the dressed sandstone wall was a core of stone blocks and broken sandstone (figure 11) within a creamy lime bonding. Possibly, this may have been an earlier wall or structure but it would have been built above the leet leading to the wheel-pit. The likelier interpretation is that this

material was either backfill to the construction pit, a temporary rubble core wall used during construction or a crude membrane to water-proof the unit.

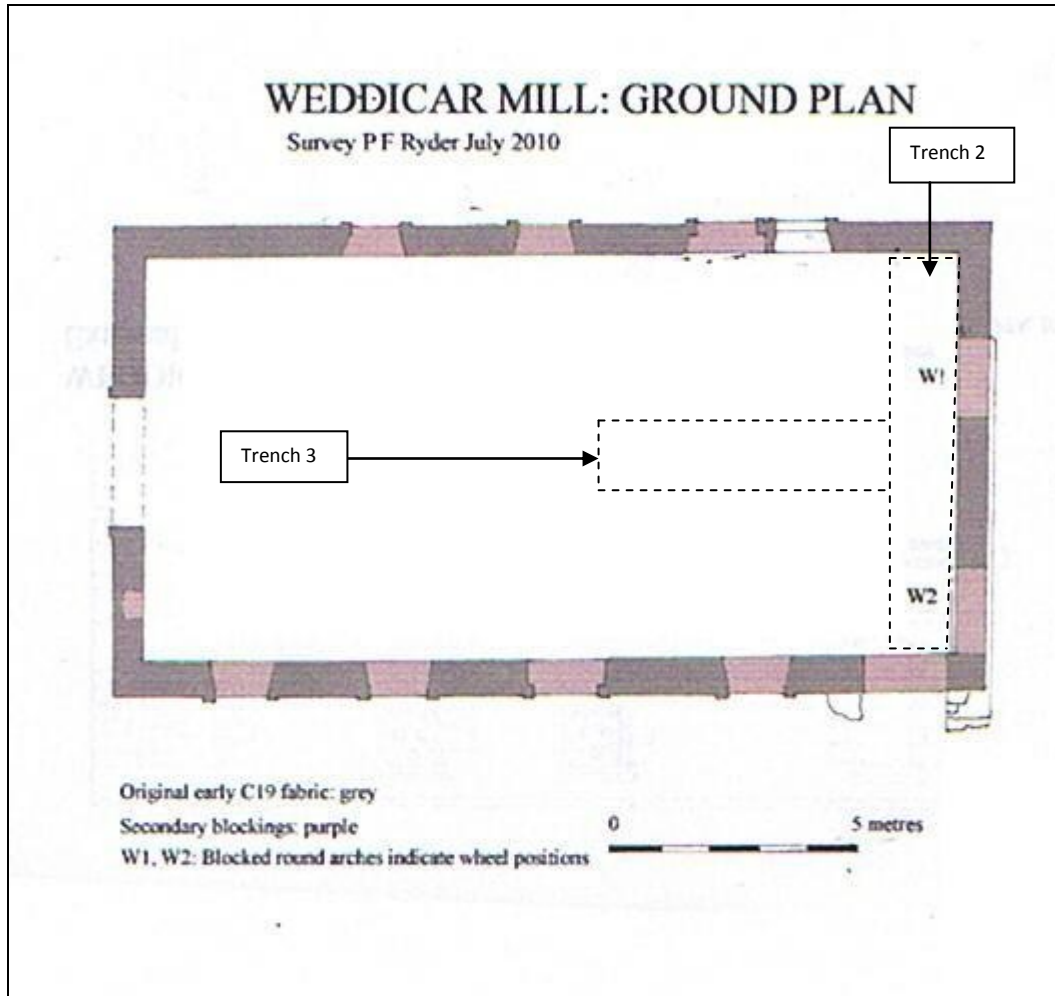


Figure 8. Trench configuration, Weddicar Hall

The western wall 5 (figure 12) also measured 5.60m in length and was 4.00m in height. It possessed no architectural embellishments and could not be formerly recorded.



Figure 9. Eastern wall of wheel-pit



Figure 10. North wall of wheel-pit

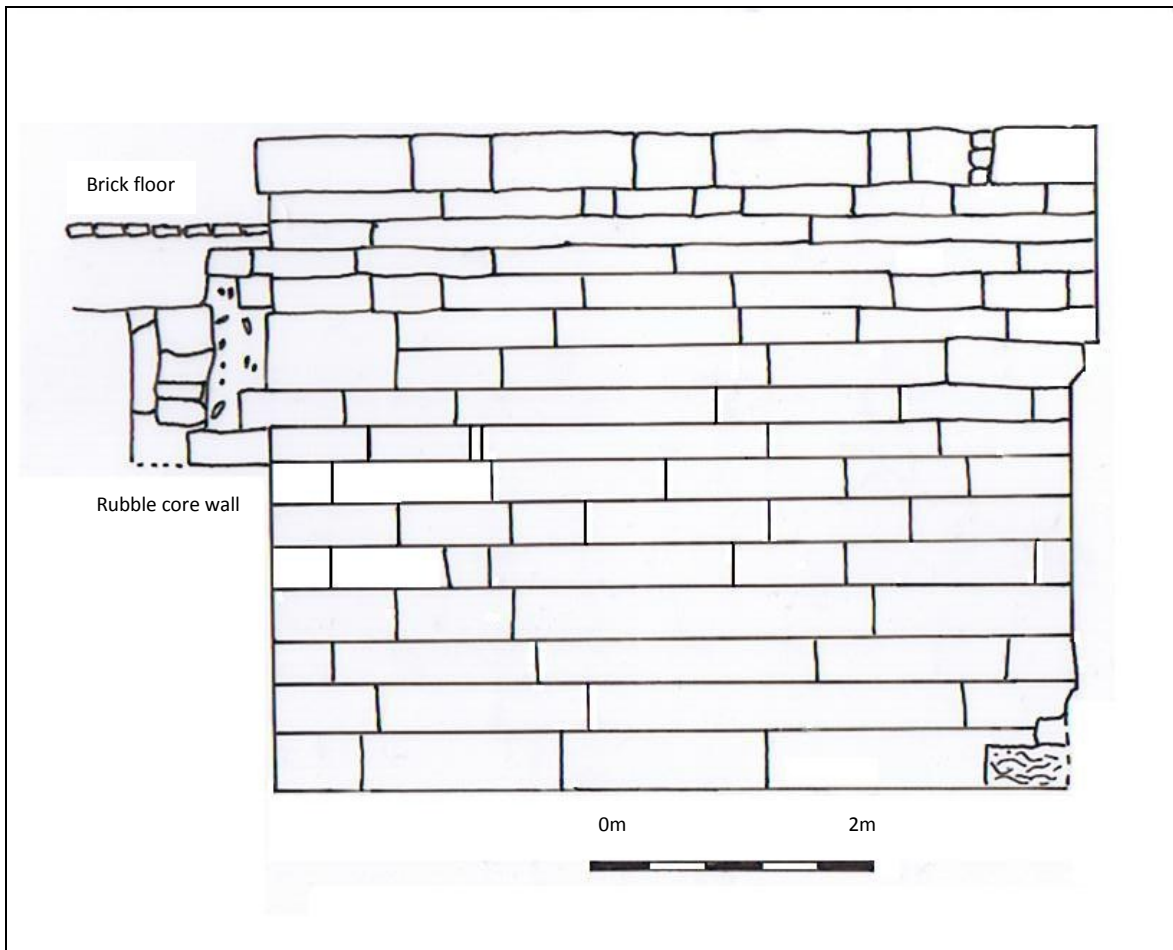


Figure 11. Eastern stone elevation 3 belonging to the wheel-pit

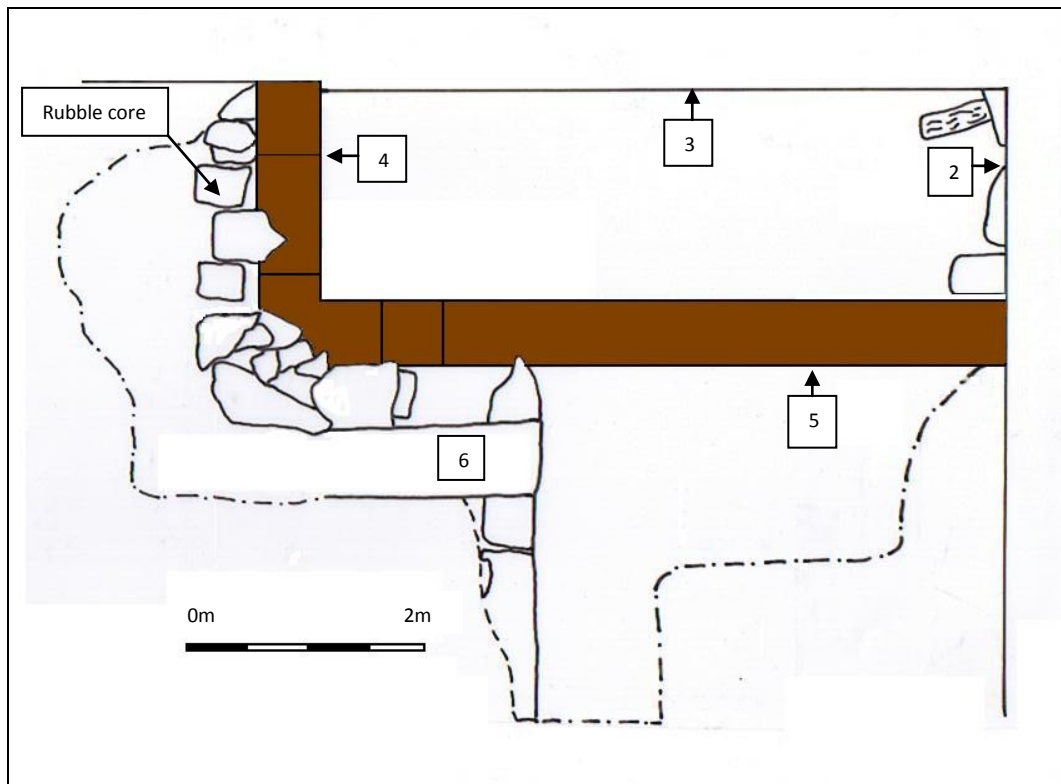


Figure 12. Plan of the wheel-pit 1

The base of the wheel-pit was not clearly observed due to issuing water but consisted of a hard flat surface comprising flags of dressed red sandstone.

Adaptation

Unlike stone walls 3, 4 and 5 (the east, west and northern elevations), the southern stone elevation 2 (figure 13) was not keyed into the other walls.

The southern elevation (figure 14) measuring 1.70m in length and over 3.40m in height comprised a crude stone square aperture formed from two stone pile surmounted by a timber lintel allowing water to discharge from the wheel-pit.

Resting above, were well-dressed, tightly coursed, sandstone blocks bonded by cream lime mortar lain to a height of 1.10m. A course of chamfered stone surmounted this wall, the remaining space filled by a random rubble wall consisting of roughly hewn brown sandstone blocks bonded by a white lime mortar.



Figure 13. South elevation 2 of wheel-pit

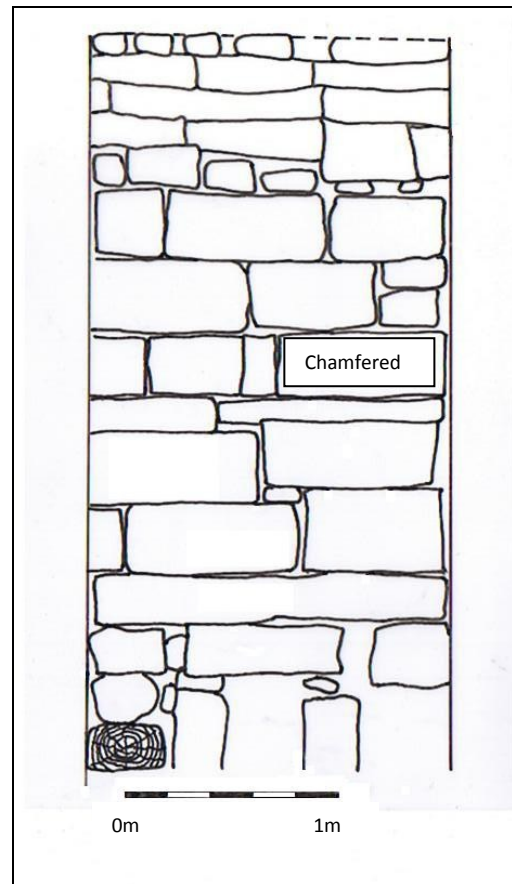


Figure 14. Drawn southern elevation 2

An *ad hoc* drain was constructed adjacent to the northern egress 4 from where the water supply issued. This drain was square in plan, formed from unmortared dressed sandstone blocks but the hazardous working conditions prohibited closer inspection.

Disuse

The pit was filled with some broken brick and cream mortar but primarily broken dressed red sandstone blocks and discarded stone of which two pieces appeared to be stone rollers or millstones (figure 15). Possibly, some of the internal building fabric and fittings ended in the wheel-pit when the Mill changed use.

The fill of the pit had been capped with yellow clay and coarse brown sand 0.60m in depth and bearing an uneven brick floor.

Trench 3

Due to the mass of material removed from the wheel-pit (Trench 2), space was constricted elsewhere on site but a trench measuring 5m x 2m was inserted. It was excavated to 1.20m in depth when it was deemed too deep for safe working practice.

The trench uncovered overburden comprising mixed grey and pink sandy clay, red sandstone masonry and general building debris. This appeared to be systematic filling of either a large hole or storage or cellars within the mill.

Beside the northern elevation was a stone podium 6 (figure 16). It consisted of red sandstone masonry formed from dressed blocks bearing a flagstone surface grouted into a hard lime mortar.

Two square apertures were present that may suggest a subterranean room or facility. The feature was directly in line with a blocked northern doorway, the association probably being significant albeit unknown based on current fieldwork.



Figure 15. Millstone found in wheel-pit



Figure 16. Podium 6 in Trench 3

Observations made during site demolition

In Building 4, the voussoir stones within a truncated stone arch (figure 17) were revealed following demolition. This architectural embellishment may reflect an earlier architectural style subsequently lost when a modern window was inserted.



Figure 17. Stone voussoir in Building 4

5.3 Discussion

Trench 1 was archaeologically sterile suggesting that earlier stratified deposits either did not exist or had been removed by later truncation.

The complex of buildings forming the Hall had been built directly onto sandstone bedrock, the bedrock obviating the need for foundations.

Trench 2 emptied the wheel-pit revealing a monumental feature that housed two water wheels. The depth of the pit suggests that these wheels possessed a large diameter, necessary for driving the powerful grinding and crushing machinery housed in the Mill.

The wheel-pit was of no great antiquity conforming to the 1813-1820 period assigned to the Mill.

The adaptation of the wheel-pit by blocking the southern elevation probably occurred when the Mill was in use possibly when a number of doors and windows were filled elsewhere on site.

The Mill was finally used for another purpose as a crude brick floor was inserted above the filled wheel-pit.

Trench 3 suggested that store-rooms and cellars may have existed beyond the wheel-pit but little definitive evidence could be ascertained for spatial organisation due to onsite impediments.

6. ARCHIVE

The archive for this project will be deposited with the appropriate archaeological curator. This archive has been assembled in accordance within the protocols of Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2).

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Mr P.Cartmell and for his assistance with the fieldwork and answering my questions regarding the history of Weddicar Hall. I would also like to thank Jo MacIntosh for her help and guidance with the Historic Environment Record in Kendal, Jeremy Parsons for his guidance on the survey, the staff of Carlisle Library with my research into the local history of the area and the staff of Cumbria Record Office, Whitehaven and Carlisle with the map regression and documentary material.

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