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SUMMARY

A field survey was conducted to ascertain the cultural significance of a Grade II listed stone byre that collapsed during the winter of 2013-14.

The stone building possessed no obvious architectural embellishments or merit being a utilitarian structure associated with a small suite of agricultural buildings belonging to a two unit house that has become Skiddaw View.

The byre had been excavated into the side of a slight slope and left no foundation. There was no evidence for any earlier structure.

The significance of the byre as an agricultural building within this property is likely to be low as Skiddaw View was probably used for a residential purpose from the mid-19th century onwards although almost certainly the byre would have been used for a secondary purpose such as a store.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project origins

The study building, a listed Grade II building, has been subject to two previous planning applications in 2005 and 2012 for conversion from a byre into part of the main dwelling that forms Skiddaw View, Bothel.

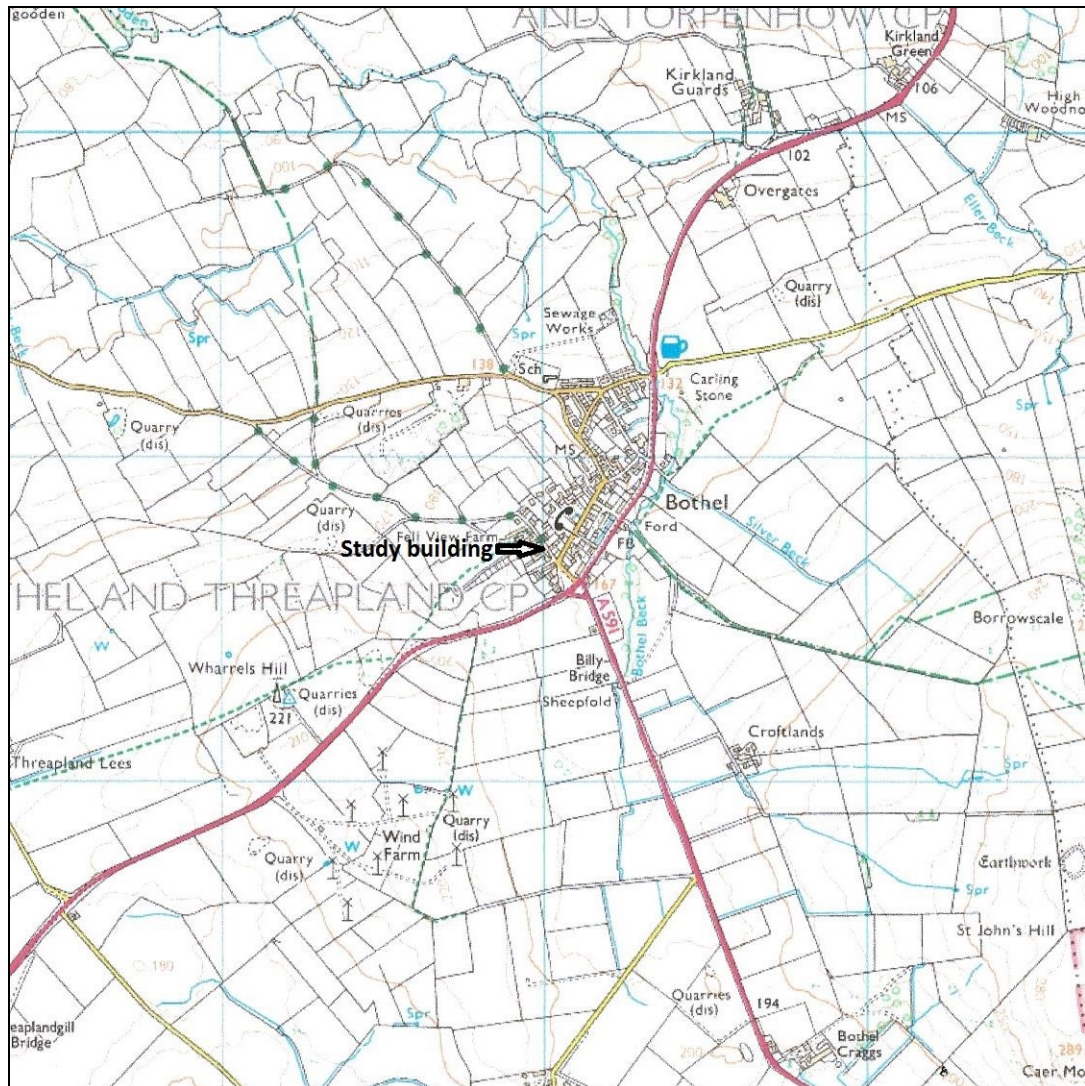


Figure 1. Location of survey. (OS copyright licence no. 100044205).

During the winter of 2013-14, due to unforeseen circumstances caused by inclement weather, the stone byre attached to the house collapsed.

Condition reports have been submitted regarding the inherent weaknesses within the structure and a heritage statement that sought approval for further works to form a larger kitchen with bedroom within the former footprint of the now collapsed byre.

As part of the remedial work required prior to any reconstruction, English Heritage have requested the compilation of a Heritage Statement that traces the cultural development of the site and addresses the significance of both the former buildings fabric and its heritage context.

The study building was located at NY17982 38739 and is part of planning application 2/2014/0597 and 2/2014/0598.

The building was listed on 3rd January 1986 and is recorded on the English Heritage database as List Entry 1137802.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Project Design

No formal project design was requested by English Heritage but the following protocols were formulated in association with Margaret Hardy of Taylor & Hardy Ltd (Chartered Town Planners) and accepted best practice stipulated by English Heritage and Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES).

The following report has adopted two elements to address the request for a Heritage Statement.

- A desk-based assessment has been conducted to ascertain the significance of the now lost heritage asset.
- A site visit equivalent to a Level I Building Survey (English Heritage 2006, 14).

The objective of this exercise was to collate sufficient detail to identify the issues and potential for academic research and provide a historical context for targeted archaeological enquiry.

Documentation regarding the planning application can be found at the following:

<http://planning.allerdale.gov.uk/portal>

All projects are carried out in accordance with PPS 5 (2010) and the guidelines and recommendations issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists and English Heritage.

2.2 Desk-based assessment

In accordance with the project design, the rapid desk-based assessment investigated primary and secondary historical sources, maps and other literature in order to set the survey results into their past cultural, historical and topographic context.

The desk-based assessment comprised a search of two primary archival repositories.

- Cumbria Record Office in Carlisle and Whitehaven.
- The local history sections of Carlisle Library and Whitehaven Library.

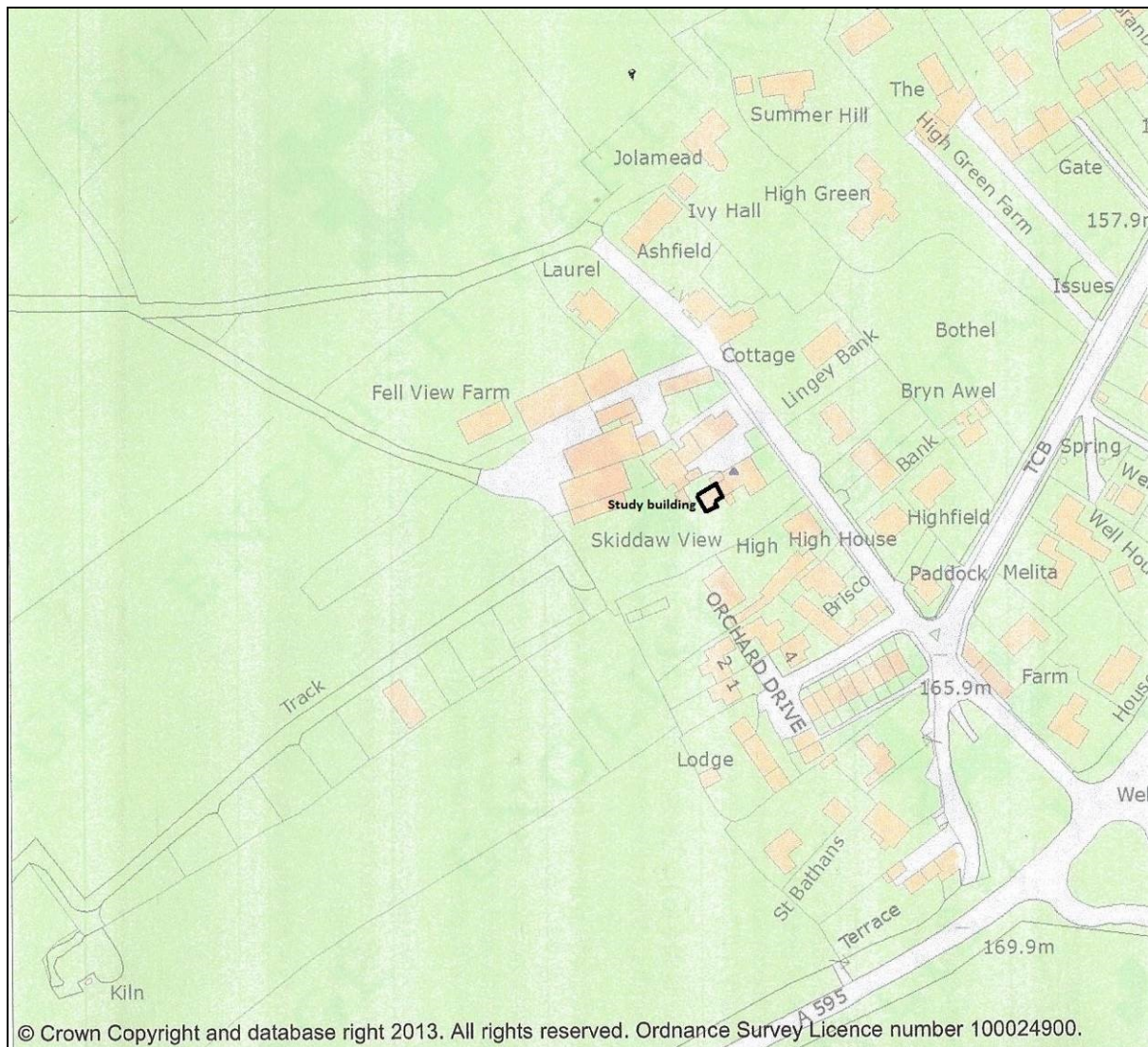


Figure 2. Location of the study building. (Reproduced courtesy of English Heritage)

2.3 Walk-over survey

A walkover of the study area on December 11th 2014 did not suggest any earlier buildings within the curtilage of Skiddaw View.



Figure 3. Looking westwards from the study area Figure 4. Looking north, adjacent farm buildings

The byre was located in a small hollow, the terrain rising westwards within a narrow property strip (figure 3) that resembled a medieval strip field.

Adjacent to the study area were a suite of stone agricultural buildings (figure 4) that appeared to be contemporary to the former stone study byre. These buildings belong to Fell View Farm.

2.4 Archive

The archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design and the guidelines set out by English Heritage (1991, 1996, 2006 and 2008) and the Institute of Archaeologists (2001).

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 a courtesy to the curatorial authority.

An electronic version of the archaeological report will also be deposited with the online archaeological resource *Oasis*.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

The study area (NY17982 38739) lies in generally undulating countryside, on the fringes of the Lake District farmed as pasture at a height of approximately 170m OD.

The study building is now within a residential area on the leeward side of a hill that leads towards the summit of Wharrels Hill, the highest point in the locality at 221m OD.

Reference to the geological map of the area indicates that the underlying geology of the area comprises Permian and Triassic sandstones, overlain by boulder clay and morainic drift deposits.

4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Historical background

Bothel remains a township in Torpenhow (Wellan 1860, 257), now entitled as the parish of Bothel and Threapland.

The name Bothel is derived from the Norse word for hut and the Saxon word for hill.

The first mention of the locality was in 1285 as "Bothil", followed in 1289 as "Bothel" and in 1303 as "Botelain".

The Manor of Bothel was granted by Walthulf, Lord of Allerdale to Gamel son of Brun during the reign of Henry I (1100-1125) and continued in the same family for over two hundred years. As no male heir could inherit the Manor, the estate was divided into three parts each allocated to the surviving daughters. The husbands of the daughters, Nicholas Harrington, William Curwen and

Thomas Bowett acquired legal ownership, the lands passing successively through these families (News & Star, 30/5/1997).

In 1807 the Manor was once more unified under the Charlton family who claimed sole tenure as Lord of the Manor.

A mortgage document dated 19th November 1599 stated that Thomas Ellys of Bothel, a gentleman, mortgaged for £20 Bothel water cornmill, dams, damheads, water races with power to extend the mills to Francis Highmore of Harbybrowe, also a gentlemen (DHGB/1/187).

The 1801 census lists the population as being 313, rising steadily during the first half of the 19th century to 302 in 1811, 384 in 1821, 405 in 1831, 455 in 1841 and 495 in 1851 (Wellan 1860, 257).

Principal landowners include John Smithson and Thomas Falcon and William Brisco, who appear as land owners in close proximity on the Enclosure map and Tithe maps of 1811 and 1841. Influential female landowners were Miss Pearson, Elizabeth Hodgson and Mrs Spratt, but Mary Fisher who was a former owner of the study property is not mentioned (Ibid, 258).

These families appear to have been permanent members of the local gentry as recorded in probate documents.

A Lancelot Smithson is recorded in 1583 (PROB/1583/WIN VX144), followed by the will and inventory of Richard Smithson in 1607 (PROB/1607/WIN VX136), a John Smythson in 1670 (DLAW/3/5/7) whilst John Smithson had an estate map drawn in 1748 (DWM/1/26).

Probate material is also recorded for William Brisco in 1792 (PROB/1792/W553) and John Falcon in 1793 (PROB/1793/W67).

4.2 Map regression

The earliest extant map that portrays the study area was the Bothel Enclosure Map (QRE/1/69) that dates to 1811 (figure 5). This map identifies the study area as probably being Plot 97 belonging to Mary Fisher and being seven perches in area (177.05 sq m). The adjacent allotment Plot 90 is also credited to Mary Fisher.

Unfortunately, the study building (red square, figure 5) and the suite of properties west of the narrow lane on the Enclosure Map were not subject to the Act and only the frontage of these buildings is depicted. The Map although difficult to read suggests a long narrow building within Plot 96 (sic) that may be the subject building, whilst Plot 97 is believed to be vacant. There does therefore appear to be a cartographic or transcription error. The rears of these properties were not illustrated and it is not possible to attest whether the subject byre was extant at this juncture.

Most probably, the land to the west of Skiddaw View was not subject to enclosure perhaps belonging to the Manor of Bothel. However, on the 1868 Ordnance Survey map (figure 7) each

property respected a narrow strip field, the only remnant by that date of probably surviving medieval farm practice.

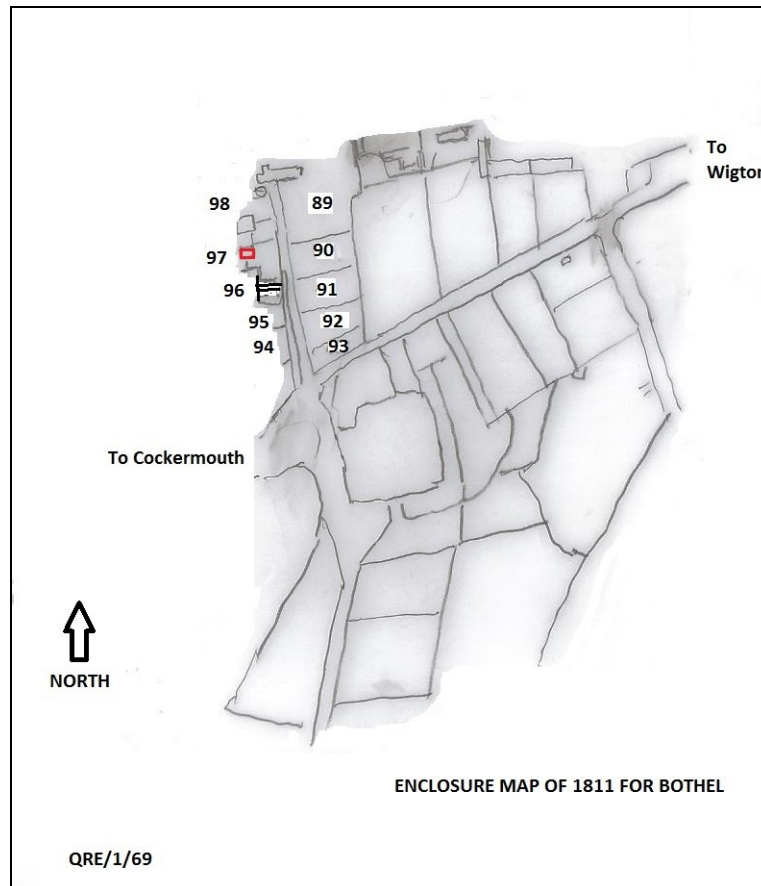


Figure 5. Enclosure map of 1811

The houses immediately around Skiddaw View appear to have supported people of some social standing.

Plot 98 is declared as belonging to the heirs of the Reverend John Falcon, Plot 96 John Smith(son?), Plot 95 William Brisco probable heir to another William Brisco whilst Plot 94 is credited to Mary Fisher but remains vacant.

John Smith(son?) may have belonged to an established local landowning family traceable to the 16th century and who in the 19th century produced an estate map (DWM/1/26) of their properties. Unfortunately, this map does not appear to illustrate the study area or the dwelling now known as High House.

The 1841 Tithe Map (D/W/M1/27) is far clearer regarding the disposition of properties within the study area (figure 6).

It lists the inhabitants as being T.Hodgs(on) now Fell View Farm, Falcon (Plot 98 descendent of the Rev. John Falcon, Mary Fisher (Plot 97 as in 1811), Smithson (Plot 96 probably same as 1811) and Brisco (Plot 95 as in 1811).

As Brisco House is still known by that title, High House (next door to the left) is likely to have belonged to the Smithson family and that the house now known as Skiddaw View was in the possession of Mary Fisher from 1811 to 1841 and probably until 1851 as she appears in the 1851 Census being 66 years of age born in 1785.

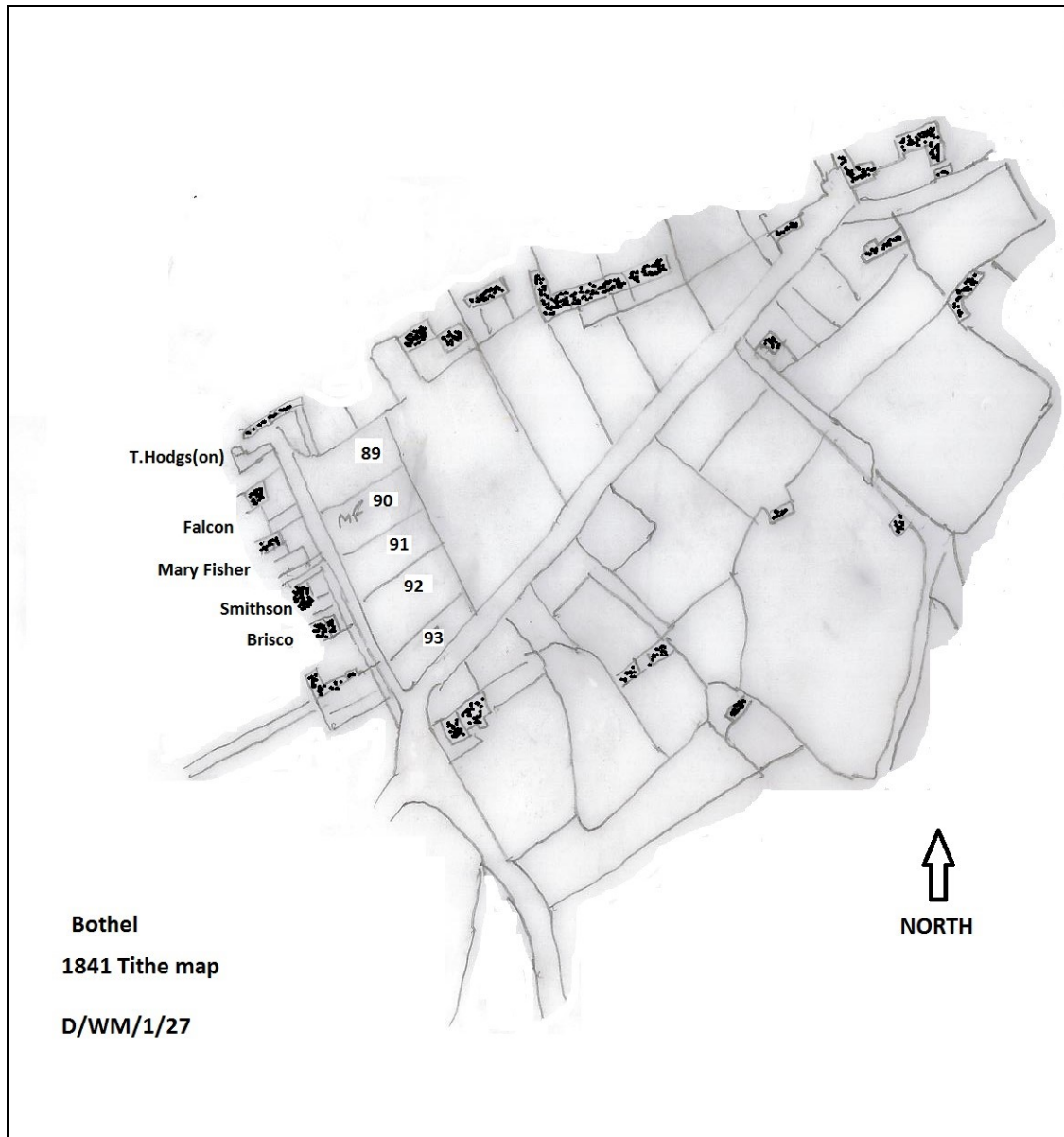


Figure 6. Tithe map of 1841

The first edition Ordnance Survey map compiled in 1868 (figure 7) illustrates quite clearly, the recent footprint for the listed building. It depicts the main body of the house parallel to the lane with a narrow adjunct at right-angles to the main building that incorporated a byre. Other small structures that included a wash-house are also evident (figure 8). Fell View Farm, High House and Brisco House were all established.



Figure 7. Location of the study building on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map 1868

In 1972, major structural alterations to Skiddaw View (figure 8) were given planning consent (SRDC/3/8178).

The alterations did not directly affect the byre but a chimney breast was removed from the wall forming the eastern gable end whilst the remaining area was converted into a kitchen.

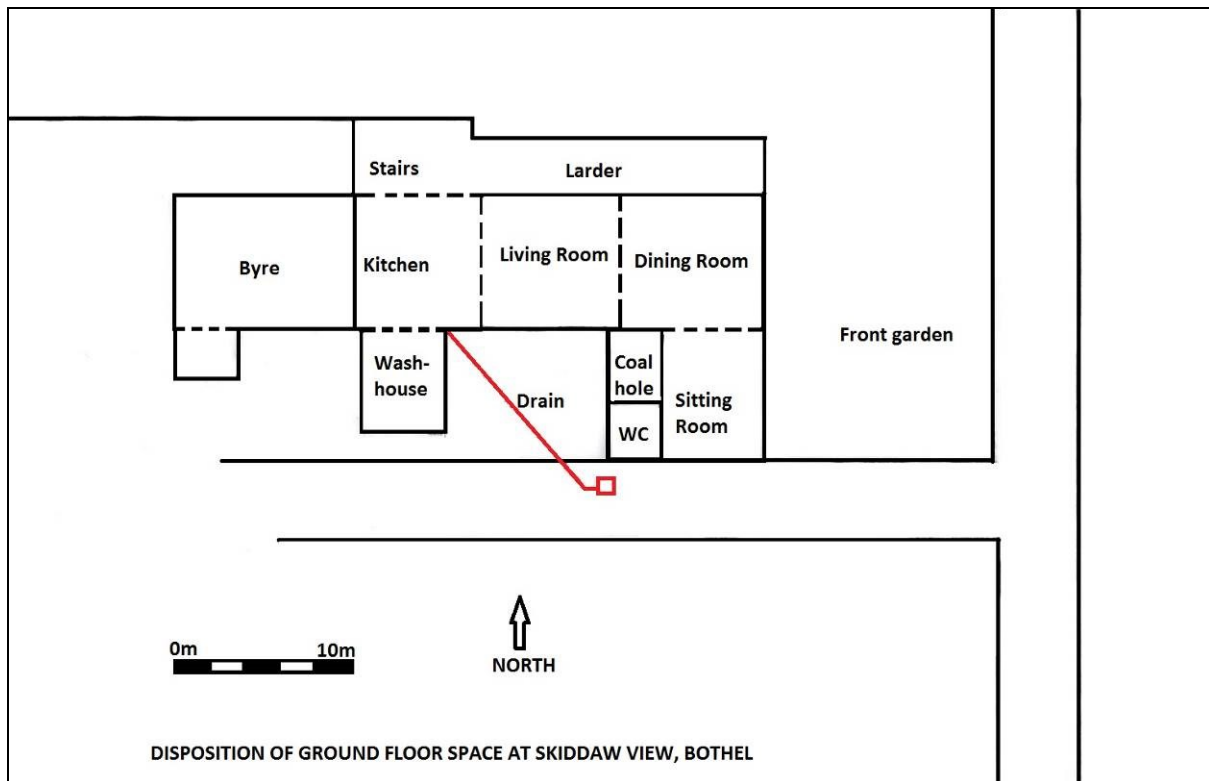


Figure 8. Spatial organisation of Skiddaw View after 1972

4.3 Building status

Skiddaw View has the following description for its English Heritage listing No. 1137802.

House. Early C19. Painted incised stucco with eaves cornice and V-jointed quoins on chamfered plinth. Welsh slate roof with yellow brick chimney stacks. 2 storeys, 2 bays. C20 door under radial fanlight in pilastered surround. Sash windows with glazing bars in painted stone surrounds. Listed partly for group value with High House.

The listing does not mention the significance of the byre whilst stressing the importance of the group value with High House. Group value is also a significant factor in the listing of Brisco House (1144469) described below:

Farmhouse. Late C18 with early C19 extension. Painted incised stucco, with eaves cornice and v-jointed quoins, on chamfered plinth. C20 tile roof with brick and sandstone chimney stacks. 2 storeys, 3 bays with lower single-bay extension to left. Top-glazed 6-panel door in stone architrave under pediment. Sash windows in painted stone architraves. Extension under graduated greenslate roof has sash windows with glazing bars in painted stone surrounds. Listed partly for group value with High House.

The listing for High House (1327242) was as follows:

House. Late C18 or early C19. Painted incised stucco with eaves cornice and angle pilasters on chamfered plinth. Graduated greenslate roof with cement rendered chimney stacks. 2 storeys, 3

bays. 6-panel door under radial fanlight in open-pedimented Tuscan doorcase. Sash windows with glazing bars in painted stone surrounds.

These three entries form the only suite of buildings with group value in Bothel. Skiddaw View is the least embellished and architecturally is very modest both stylistically and in terms of space.

The front of the house conforms to a “Two-unit house” that was organised around two principal spaces; a general living room invariably known as the house and a second smaller room often called a parlour or bower. Above would be the sleeping quarters.

This housing form was current between 1650 and 1810, especially prevalent in southern and western Cumbria (Brunskill 2002, 65-67).

Skiddaw View would be a late version of this style as the stairwell was probably internal and the bedrooms were dedicated spaces rather than a conversion of a continuous loft.



Figure 9. Frontage of Skiddaw View illustrating the two-unit form

The arrangement of buildings behind the street frontage is reminiscent of a laithe-house plan, typical of small farms of the 18th century. In Cumbria, the normal arrangement would comprise farmhouse, barn with a threshing floor, a stable with loft-over and byre standing to two stories and unified by common roof running over the whole range. Although superficially similar to a longhouse, the spatial arrangement is fundamentally different and is unlikely to date from earlier than the 18th century (Brunskill 2002, 100).

Without an outshut to the two-unit house, (a common trait as prosperity increased and private space became more desirable), it appears possible that the rear, predominantly agricultural buildings may pre-date the frontage and that the two-unit house was added later perhaps replacing a crude cottage that was no longer suitable for purpose.

4.4 The byre

The byre collapsed during the winter of 2013-14. The western end endured a catastrophic failure (figure 10) whilst the slate roof fell into the building (figure 11).

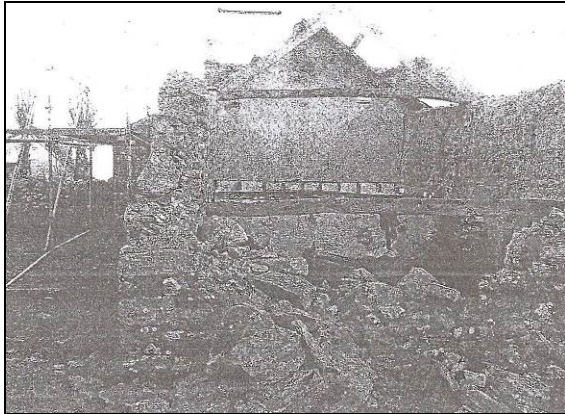


Figure 10. Gable end following collapse

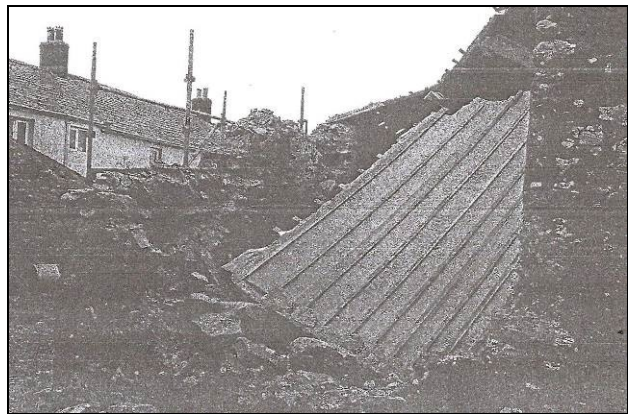


Figure 11. Collapsed southern wall

In order to secure and maintain the safety of the site, the remaining unsafe masonry and timbers were cleared and organised into two separate piles.

The stone from which the byre was constructed consisted of primarily rubble-stone, some large stones or orthostats (0.50m x 0.30m) with occasional pieces of hand-finished red sandstone blocks. There did not appear to be any fragments of masonry bearing architectural merit or interest.

The timber fabric within the building comprised structural joists and roof timbers. These were often damaged by woodworm but uniformly possessed tenons, secured by wooden dowels. The timbers were hand-made but left crudely finished, consistent with utilitarian practice.

Fortunately, a photographic record had been made prior to the collapse of the byre.

The southern elevation illustrates that the byre was finished in cement render or a form of stucco painted white and possessed a Welsh slate roof with a stone ridge (figure 12). This maintained the white finish to the rest of the house.

A small outshut of unknown function was applied to the western gable and the byre was accessed through two “tongue-and-groove” wooden doors.



Figure 12. Southern side of the former byre



Figure 13. Western gable of the former byre



Figure 14. Northern side of the former byre



Figure 15. Eastern side of the byre with internal roof timbers

The western gable end was not finished in render and left as a rough stone finish formed from uncoursed rubble-stone. A single, central wooden door allowed access to an upper floor probably a former hayloft. A small, ground floor, filled window with red sandstone sill is just visible to the right of the hayloft door (figure 13).

The northern elevation (figure 14) consisted of a plain rubble-stone wall with four ventilation slits on the first floor. A ground floor window appears to be boarded over.

The byre appears to sit within a foundation cut, the elevation being shorter than the internal headroom.

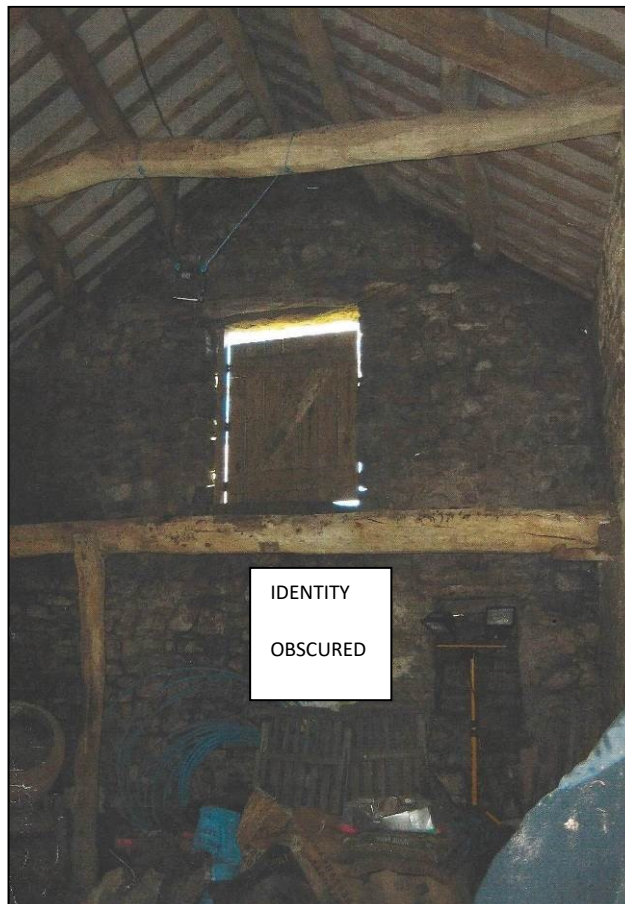


Figure 16. Internal area within byre

The eastern gable end appears to have been finished in plaster applied to a rough-faced rubble-stone wall.

The roof, as it served a large, open space was supported by hand finished timber purlins with a simple tie-beam truss (figure 15), common in the 18th and 19th century (Brunskill 2002, 152-153). No kingpost was present or a wrought iron central vertical tension bar, which suggests that the roof was constructed before the late 19th century.

The internal walls had been left untreated, the coarse face of the rubble-stone clearly visible.

A first floor had been present as a remnant timber frame was still extant, although the floor boards had been removed. This floor was accessible via a loft door on the western gable (figure 16).

The building no longer served as a byre but was used as a store.

5. SURVEY RESULTS

5.1 Methodology

The former building within the study area was surveyed on December 11th 2014 by Gerry Martin with the use of tapes, a Laser Distance Measurement device (Disto) and hand-held GPS equipment.

Where possible, the survey comprised of scaled photographic recording of the interiors and elevations of the study buildings, with detailed photography of any architectural elements.

Using surviving plans and where accessibility allowed, notations were undertaken regarding the characteristics of these buildings, including metrical data, thresholds, materials and building techniques employed.

Notations were undertaken regarding the characteristics of the byre, including metrical data, thresholds, materials and building techniques employed.

The corpus of the report is formed from these field notes and photographs.



Figure 17. Gable end of former byre

5.2 Results

The former stone byre comprising of walls, roof and floor was almost totally lost by the time of the field survey. A small part of the eastern gable end was still extant although remedial conservation meant that the stone face was not visible (figure 17).

The floor plan of the former byre measured 10.00m in length and 4.30m in width with the walls standing to a height of 3.90m with the ridge line at a height of 5.63m (figure 18).

Very little empirical evidence could be captured from this visit regarding the once standing building but the following synthesis provides a faithful account of the stone byre.

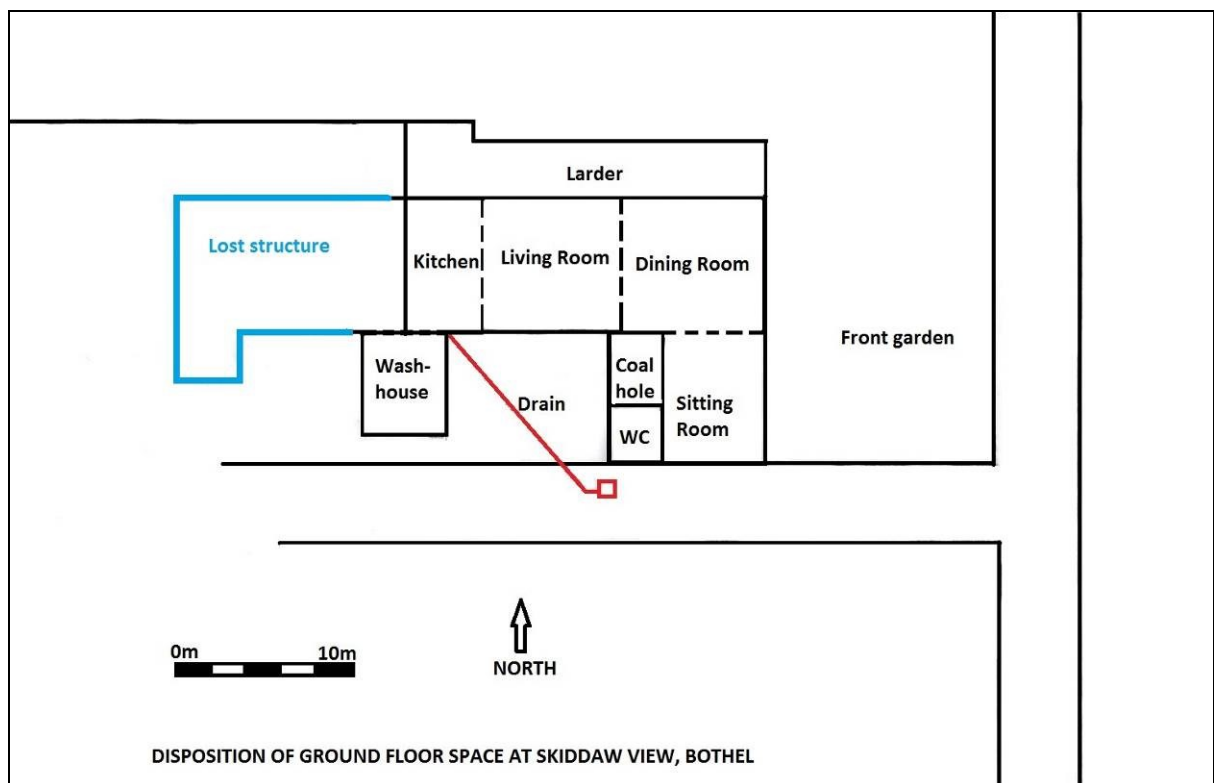


Figure 18. Plan showing the area of the former byre

The southern wall (figure 19) was 0.52m in thickness and comprised of two faces of uncoursed rubbles-stone bound by occasional stone “throughs”.

The core of the wall made from rubble and lime mortar was supplemented by modern cement repairs.

The northern wall (figure 20) was 0.48m in thickness and comprised of two faces of uncoursed rubbles-stone bound by occasional stone “throughs”, the core of the wall made from rubble and lime mortar.



Figure 19. Southern wall of byre

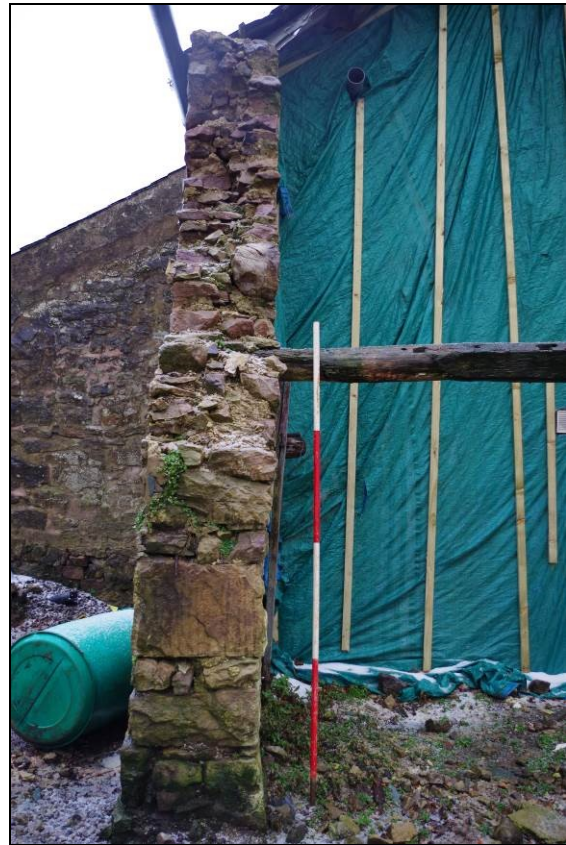


Figure 20. Northern wall of byre

The only internal timber fixture surviving was a horizontal joist (figure 21) that formed a floor space within the building. The timber was hand-finished measuring 4.30m in length, 0.16m in height and 0.14m in width, resting 1.80m above the ground.

Eight tenons were visible on the upper face of the joist at intervals approximately 0.35m apart with perhaps a cut-down king post in the centre. Possibly, a partition existed that had been removed in antiquity or that the joist was a re-used timber.

The roof had been repaired towards the eastern end as the battens to which the slates were applied appeared modern whereas the purlins were hand produced.

The upper floor had been left as a rough stone face whilst the ground floor was white-washed with a thin plaster render. The floor proper was made from cement and had been removed. Most probably it originally consisted of exposed stone as the byre possessed no formal foundation, built directly onto a natural stone slab. Vestiges of the wall line for the footprint of the byre were just perceptible but there was no evidence for foundation trenches (figure 22).



Figure 21. Surviving joist



Figure 22. Footprint of former byre

The byre had been constructed into the side of a hill reducing the external ground level on the northern side by between 0.70 and 1.00m (figure 23).



Figure 23. Construction cut for the former byre

6. *DISCUSSION*

6.1 Academic merit

Past cultural settlement in Cumbria has been primarily rural, where agriculture has been the main economic driver and product. Increasingly, those features associated with past farming technique have been lost or converted for domestic use or for local tourism. Moreover, neglect has also contributed to a loss of building stock.

A challenge to historians, archaeologists and other researchers is to compile a record of those rural buildings and customs that reflected past agricultural practice and social conditions before their economic, agricultural and historic context is lost.

6.2 Discussion

The study building possessed few architectural embellishments, primarily constructed for an agricultural purpose and probably serving as a byre with a hayloft.

The stone building was illustrated on the 1841 Tithe Survey and the 1868 Ordnance Survey map.

The lack of any chimney or hearths precludes use as a permanent dwelling, albeit the upper storey could have served seasonal, itinerant and casual labour.

Although the loss of any historical asset is regrettable, the byre intrinsically has no great architectural merit being a utilitarian structure with no apparent embellishment and probably dates to the late 18th or early 19th century.

The date when Skiddaw View no longer served as a working farm but became ostensibly a country residence remains unclear.

It would appear to be a small-holding, perhaps less than thirty acres in size, coping with a small quantity of livestock. This appears to fit the model of the yeoman farmer that flourished in Cumbria during the period 1550 to 1750 when the rural landscape was a patchwork of narrow, arable fields, meadows, closes and pasture, with undivided fell stretching over hill crests between townships.

From the period 1750-1880, the organisation of agriculture changed. Following enclosure, rationalisation and capital investment, larger farm units allied to the introduction of mechanisation and scientific improvements produced greater yields. A rising urban population created greater demand and farm incomes rose often articulated in grander house design and conspicuous architectural embellishments.

Fell View Farm had probably become the dominant agricultural unit in this vicinity by around 1800 and that the other principal residences Brisco House, High House and Skiddaw View had either become minor farmsteads or houses for a prosperous middle class, albeit with agricultural ties through family or property.

The most lavish dwelling appears to have been High House which was a double pile house, fashionable between 1770 and 1850 complete with Palladian and Italianate doorways. Either side were two modest buildings but with architectural pretensions that articulated social standing within the local community and aspiration.

Although speculative, the ownership of High House by members of the Smithson family who were prominent local landowners may have drawn either kin or relations by marriage to live nearby and that the occupants of Skiddaw View such as Mary Fisher may have had some form of kin tie.

7 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Margaret Hardy of Taylor & Hardy Ltd for her assistance regarding the project status, outlining the needs of the client and for commissioning the work.

I would like to thank the various unknown members of staff at Carlisle Library and Whitehaven Library with my research into the local history of the area and the staff of Cumbria Record Office in both Carlisle and Whitehaven with the map regression and documentary material.

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