

BLAIRS ABERDEENSHIRE

Part 1: Historic Landscape Survey



Carried out March 2012
by
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2012-08
by
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BLAIRS
ABERDEENSHIRE
Part 1
Historic Landscape Survey

1. Background
 - 1.1 An historic landscape survey of the Blairs estate and a standing building survey of the college, old college, steading and outlying buildings, gardens and related structures was required for the estate and the former Catholic seminary at Blairs, Maryculter, Aberdeenshire, prior to the redevelopment of the buildings and estate as a hotel, residential development and golf course.
 - 1.2 The archaeological condition was applied in the context of planning legislation (PAN 2/2011, SPP, SHEP), which states that it is necessary for developers to arrange for archaeological work to take place prior to development, in appropriate circumstances. Planning Application Number: APP/2006/4973
 - 1.3 A Level 1/2 Standing Building Survey was required. A level 1 survey includes measured floor plans, a written account of building's plan, form, function, age and development sequence in addition to a photographic survey. Level 2 in addition includes a fully analytical record which will include detailed photographs of decorative and structural elements, a detailed written description and account of the building's origins, development, use and the evidence on which this has been based. Readily available historic documentation will be examined.
 - 1.4 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake the work by Axiom Project Services Ltd on behalf of Hermiston Securities Ltd.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 A search was carried out in the Sites and Monuments Record, Archaeology Service, Aberdeenshire Council and in the Sites and Monuments Records of the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments in Scotland (RCAHMS) through Canmore, Canmap and Pastmap.
- 2.2 The 1st, 2nd and 3rd edition Ordnance Survey maps were consulted.
- 2.3 All available estate maps were consulted both in the care of the Muir Group and of the Blairs Museum.
- 2.4 Archive photographs were consulted at the Blairs Museum, at the Scottish Catholic Archives in Edinburgh and on the Blairs website (www.blairsaberdeen.co.uk)
- 2.5 Archive documents including Rev Charles 'Priest' Gordon's *Memorial of Blairs* were consulted at the Scottish Catholic Archives in Edinburgh.
- 2.6 Oral history was collected by discussions with John Evans-Freke of the Muir Group, Ian Forbes, manager of the Blairs Museum- a former pupil and teacher at Blairs College, and Eric Strachan-a retired worker from the Blairs estate. Contributions from these sources are acknowledged by their initials in brackets through the text.
- 2.7 A walkover survey was undertaken of the estate in March, 2012. Photography and standing building surveys were undertaken of the college, steading and outlying buildings.
- 2.8 The report is in three sections:
Part 1: Historic Landscape Survey
Part 2: Standing Building Survey of the College Buildings, Gardens and Recreation grounds
Part 3: Standing Building Survey of the Steading
- 2.9 A full catalogue of photographs taken for the survey is in Appendix 1 of Part 3 of the report. A full set of photographs will be supplied on CD to the Aberdeenshire SMR in Aberdeen, to the NMRS and to Blairs Museum.

3. The Site

The Blairs estate comprised 1000 acres stretching S from the S side of the river Dee to higher ground to the S at Craiginbles Wood and Hill of Blairs. The present development only applies to the N part of the estate, between the Dee and the N edge

of the Craingles Wood. The S Deeside Road (B9077) runs through the N end of the property.

Parish: Maryculter

4 Brief Historical background

John Menzies of Pitfodels (1756-1843) was the posthumous child of John Menzies (1718-1756) and Marion Maxwell of Kirkconnell, near Dumfries. Both the Menzies and Maxwells were Catholic families and John had a Catholic education at the Scots College at Douai where he went on 31st July 1767 just before his 11th birthday (New Spalding Club 1906). He later attended university at Nancy and was there when his mother died in 1776 (Roberts 2005). John inherited Blairs as part of the Pitfodels estate from his grandfather William Menzies in 1780. Blairs had been looked after and improved by his uncle David Menzies, who moved from Blairs in 1780 (Roberts 2005). At some point at or after 1780, John Menzies moved to Blairs. He married Mary Westby in 1791 but she died in 1805 leaving no children.

In 1827 John Menzies donated the Blairs estate to the Scottish Catholic Church for a seminary. This was to replace the seminary at Aquhorties, near Inverurie, which had been in operation from 1799, replacing the 'secret' seminary at Scalan in Glenlivet which had provided Catholic education for priests in Scotland during much of the 18th century before the Act of Catholic Emancipation in 1793 allowed freedom of worship and religious education which had been denied to Catholics in Scotland since the Reformation of c. 1560. Further rights were restored by the Catholic Relief Act of 1829.

From 1827-1829 work was undertaken at Blairs to alter the Menzies Mansion for use as a seminary. The work was designed by the Aberdeen architect John Gall and was supervised by Rev Charles Gordon (commonly known as 'Priest' Gordon), who rode out to Blairs from his parish at St Peter's in Aberdeen on a Monday and back on a Friday. Some years later, Rev Charles 'Priest' Gordon wrote a 'Memorial' or summary of the trials and tribulations of the work (Gordon 1835). In it he recalls that *'Mr John Gall, then architect in Aberdeen was commissioned to make a survey of the*

house as it then stood and to give in a plan of such alterations and additions as would be required, taking care as much as possible to preserve the old buildings and to plan the necessary new buildings in such a way as both the old and the new might not only communicate with each other, but become as it were one and the same building' (Gordon 1835, 6).

The first students came to Blairs from Aquhorties in 1829, travelling by the canal from Inverurie to Aberdeen and then on to Blairs in carriages. The college continued at Blairs until it closed in 1986.

However this might not have been the case as from 1840 letters from Bishop Andrew Scott refer to discussions about selling Blairs and buying a new site in Inverleith (Scottish Catholic Archives DD1/10). The Church was concerned that Menzies' heirs would contest his gift of Blairs to the seminary. Scott writes, *'However healthy Mr Menzies may be at present, his life cannot be long depended upon, and whether we can get Blairs sold soon or not, some means, if it be possible, ought to be devised to secure that property for the seminary'*.

Discussion of the sale continued until 1850 (Scottish Catholic Archives CB 2/3/5) but after this the decision appears to have been taken to remain at Blairs and in 1854 an extension (the present Boiler House) was built to accommodate the growing number of students.

By the end of the century the college was again outgrowing the buildings and between 1898 and 1902 the New College was built just W of the existing buildings. The architects were Alexander Ellis and R G Wilson of Aberdeen. By 1906 a further extension was added to the W end of the building. At the same period in 1899 a New Chapel was built, designed by Robert Curran of Warrington and paid for by Mgr Lennon of Liverpool. Due to problems with dry rot the interior was redesigned and replaced in 1910-11 by C J Menart.

Some of the original college buildings were adapted for other purposes, the 1854 extension being turned into a Boiler House and another building becoming an almost industrial Laundry. However, dry rot caused dilapidation of the E part of the Menzies House and this was demolished in c.1920. The W part of the Menzies House, the Menzies Apartments and the Old Chapel may have been empty for a period but c. 1950 the Old Chapel was converted into a well-equipped theatre for the school and the remaining parts of the House converted to common rooms for the different classes (IF).

Since the closure of the College in 1986, the property was sold to the Muir Group in 1994 and the present plans for development as a hotel and residential complex have been produced. In the meantime, parts of the New College have been rented for use as offices, the Blairs Museum has been set up in the sacristy and parts of the steading have been rented for workshops and storage areas.

5. Map evidence

The available map evidence includes three estate maps dating prior to the 1st OS and traces the development of the estate from early and pre- Improvement agriculture to the fully Improved landscape and the changes necessitated by the demands of the large College population.

The maps are summarised here. Individual properties are listed in table form in the Gazetteer (Appendix 1 and section 6 below). The overall changes to the estate are discussed in section 7 and the details of the mansion and college buildings in Part 2 of the report and of the Steading buildings in Part 3.

5.1 *Timothy Pont's map of Lower Deeside 1580s/1590s* (www.nls.ac.uk)

Pont shows and names a mansion at Blairs. Although there is no detail it is depicted as considerably smaller than Kincausey.

5.2 *Roy's Military Map of 1747/55* (www.nls.ac.uk)

Roy depicts Blair (sic) as a small cluster of buildings with a single line of trees around (possible enclosure) in the centre of cultivated rig and furrow. It is in marked contrast to neighbouring improved enclosures at Kincausey.

5.3 *Undated Estate map- late 18th Century. (Blairs Museum : T6270 BLRBM)*

This map is not dated but the internal evidence would suggest that it is likely to date to between c. 1760 and 1780. It is an extraordinary glimpse of the process of Improvement as there is an underlying map of the pre-Improvement landscape in black ink and drawn onto it the Improvement landscape partially in red ink and partially in pencil. As the main phase of Improvement was undertaken by John Menzies' uncle, David Menzies (Roberts, 2005) it is likely to have been undertaken

between the death of John's father in 1756 (before John was born) and 1780 when John inherited the estate from his grandfather when his uncle moved to Concraig.

5.4 *Estate map dated 1830. (Blairs Museum : T6589 BLRBM)*

This coloured estate map may have been drawn up from surveys done in 1829 as a rough draft dated 1829 survives of the S half of the estate (outwith the limits of the present discussion) which appears to be the template for that section of the 1830 map. This then reflects the next major change to the estate after John Menzies had given the estate to the Scottish Catholic Church for a college and the necessary alterations had been undertaken in 1827-29 under the supervision of Rev Charles 'Priest' Gordon. It shows the estate at a point when the basic grid layout of the Improved landscape had been in place for some 50 years. The changes are primarily to the domestic accommodation and to the steading and the gardens – changing them from a family home to the needs of an institution.

5.5 *Blairs Estate map of 1842. Title: Rude Draught of the Estate of Blairs by David Gordon. 1842. (Muir Group)*

This very detailed map may have been drawn up in anticipation of the Church selling the estate. From 1840 until 1850 letters from Bishop Andrew Scott (Scottish Catholic Archives, DD1/10/12; DD1/12/12; CB2/3/3) discuss the possibility of the church selling Blairs and there were attempts to sell the estate in 1843 and 1844.

This map reflects the estate after 15 years of development of the college. Although substantially similar to the 1830 map, there are significant changes and greater details of the gardens and college environs and some of the outlying crofts.

5.6 *1st edition Ordnance Survey 25"/mile maps (www.nls.ac.uk)*

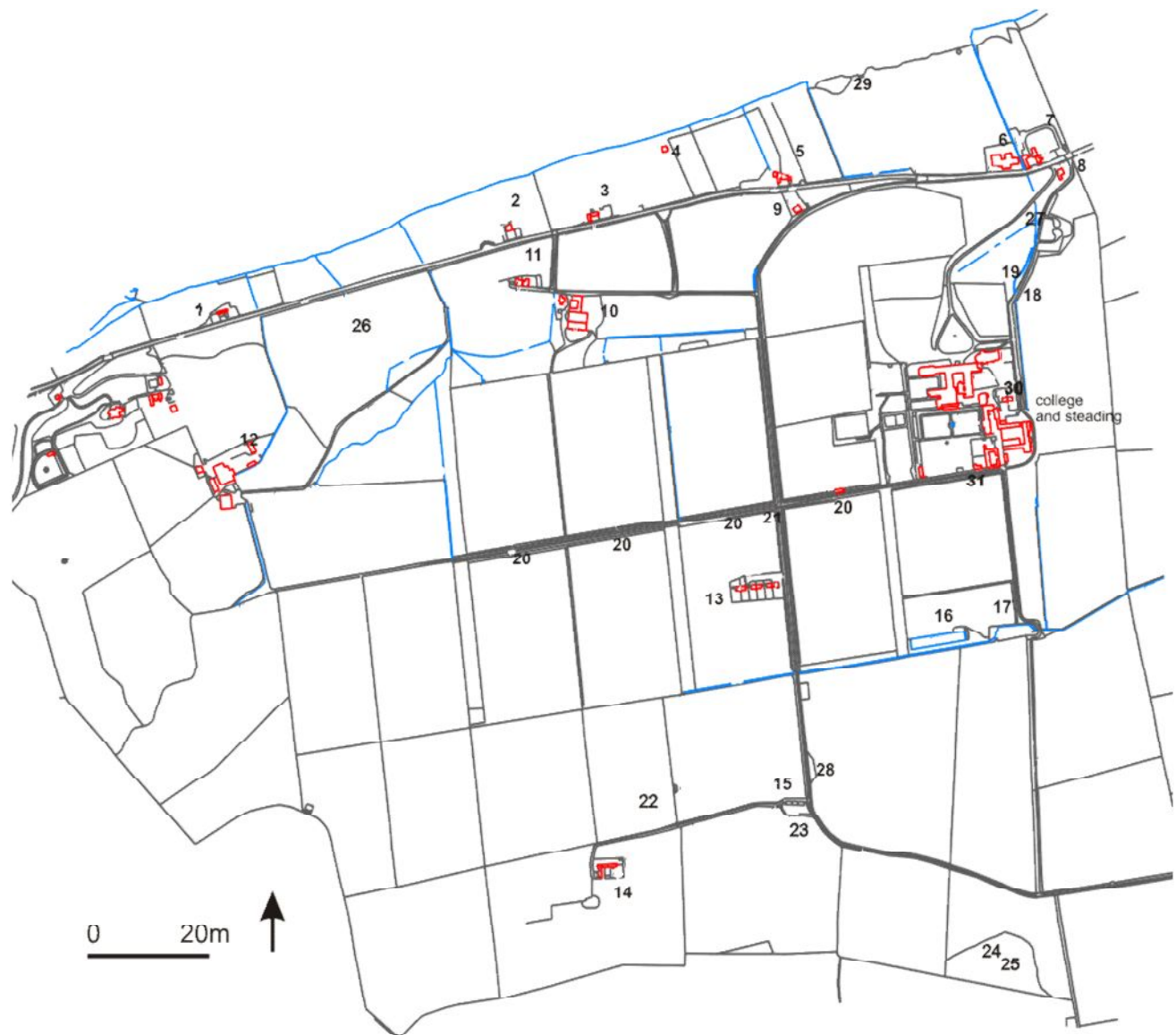
Sheets: Kincardine sheet III.12; Kincardine sheet III.16; Aberdeen sheet LXXXV.8; Aberdeen sheet LXXXV.12. Surveyed 1865, published 1868-1869.

5.7 *2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25"/mile maps (www.nls.ac.uk)*

Sheets: Aberdeenshire sheet 086.05 (=Kincardineshire sheet 007.05); Aberdeenshire sheet 085.08; Aberdeenshire 085.12 (=Kincardineshire 006.12). Surveyed 1899, published 1900-1901
Kincardineshire 007.09. Surveyed 1901, published 1903.

6 Gazetteer and details of specified sites

All the sites in the Gazetteer are fully described in Appendix 1 at the end of this report, with tabulated reference to the changes on each of the maps consulted. A small number of sites where there is significant surviving evidence are described further in this section. Site numbers refer to the Site Nos in the Gazetteer in Appendix 1 and on the map Illus 1.

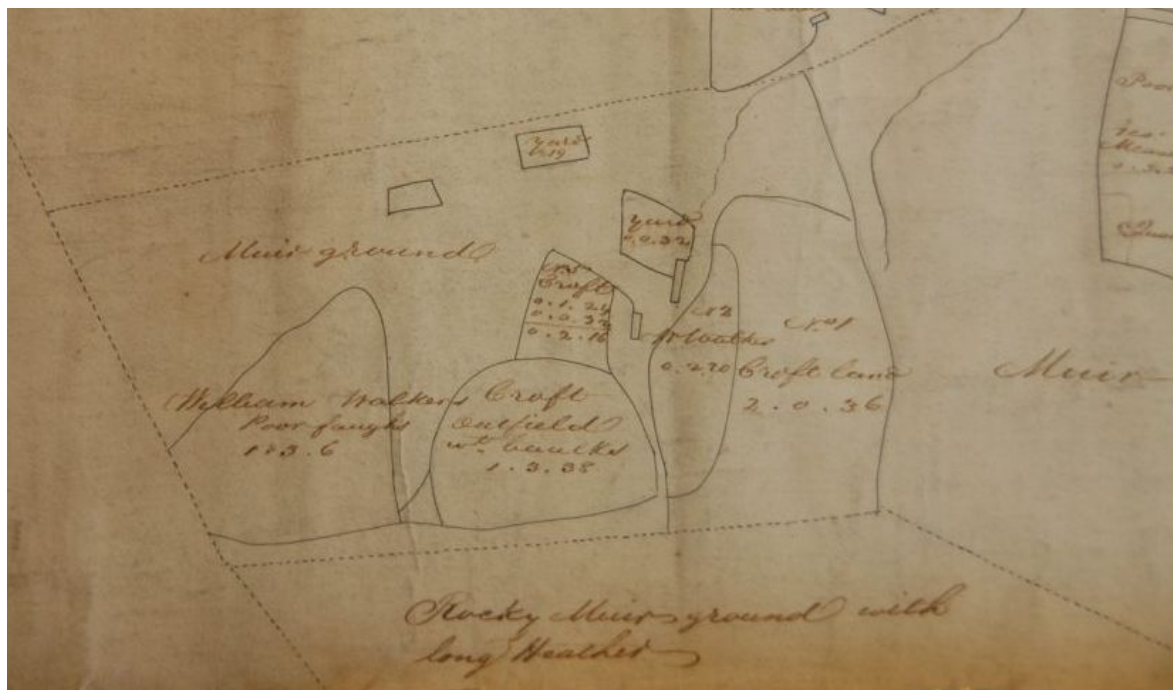


Illus 1 Sites in the Gazetteer Based on OS. Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data, © Crown Copyright, All rights reserved. 2012. License No 0100031673)

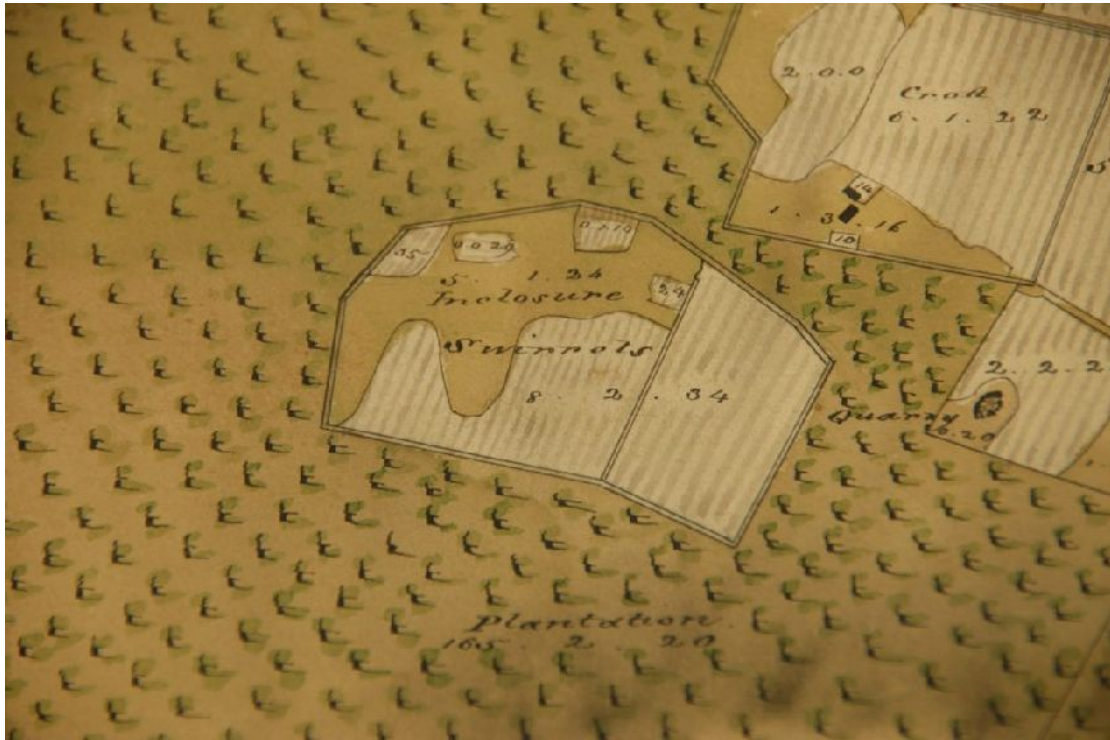
Swirls (Gazetteer No 14)

Swirls is now in ruins but was occupied as a working croft until the 1960s (ES). It lies above the 100m contour on a terrace of glacial boulders, with the lower edge partially built as a revetment. Although there has been some dilapidation as a result of being used as a livestock shelter, considerable detail remains. The map evidence shows that in the late 18th century there were two rectangular long houses lying N/S within an area of irregular cultivation. By 1830 the cultivated area was isolated within tree plantations and no house remained. However, by 1842 there was a new single long narrow building (Building 1) lying E/W with a small yard behind. By 1899 this building has been extended slightly to the W. By 1865 a second building (Building 2) had been added, lying N/S on the W side of the yard.

Both of these buildings remain albeit in ruins, with an infill building between the two.



Illus 2 Swirls on late 18th century estate map (Blairs Museum T6270 BLRBM).



Illus 3 Swirls (Swirrols) on 1830 estate map (Blairs Museum T6589 BLRBM)



Illus 4 Swirls on 1842 estate map (Muir Group)



Illus 5 Swirls: annotated plan



Illus 6 Swirls seen from the NW, Building 1.



Illus 7 Swirls seen from the higher ground to S with Building 2 (red roof) to LHS and Building 1 behind.

Building 1

Dimensions 23.8 x 5.3m total externally

Original Use Dwelling to E, byres to W

Description

Walls Rubble stone, partially harled at E end.

Roof Corrugated asbestos.

Interior

This building appears to have developed in three stages. The E comprised a dwelling to the E and byre to the W. Before 1842 this had been extended to the W by a second byre and between 1865 and 1899 it had been extended further to the W to its present length.

The E dwelling end is now a single open area with only the chimney stack and raggles on the N and S walls indicating that it had originally been a main dwelling to the E and a separate room for a single worker to the W with both ends having separate doors in the S wall into the garden and yard respectively.

The main dwelling area has an oven in the E gable and a fire at the missing W wall. The oven was secondary built in with bricks below the original granite lintel, it was the same as those at Braeside Cottages and may have been an estate improvement.

The door was central in the S wall, flanked by two windows. A porch is a late addition. There were two windows in the N wall, one opposite the door, one further W. Traces of plaster were coloured deep green and deep red.



Illus 8 Inside Building 1, looking E from room 2 to room 1

The W room had a door into the yard and a fireplace in the W wall with a cupboard (possibly originally a window) to the LHS. This end had been reroofed and had a roof-light.



Illus 9 Inside Building 1, looking W from room 1 to room 2. The scar of the intervening wall can be seen to the RHS of the remains of the chimney in centre.

The three byres to the W within Building 1 retained no original features. Byre 1 had a door into the yard and two doors- one clearly a later break-through- in the N wall. A blocked vent in the W wall of this byre remains from when it was the original end to the building. The second byre added before 1842 has a window and door in the S wall and may have been a stable. The end byre, added between 1865 and 1899 was ruinous and no details remain.

Building 2



Illus 10 Building 2, looking W

Dimensions 10.35 x 5.10m externally. This is divided by a wall to head height into two equal compartments, each with a door in the E wall into the yard. The S compartment had a window facing W, the N compartment had a window to the E. There were blocked air vents in both gables.

Original Use Cattle byre

Description

Walls Rubble stone with roughly squared rybats.

Roof Corrugated iron with metal skylights and vents.

Interior The S compartment had floor level troughs along the N and S walls with timber hay hakes above. Fixings for cow neck chains remained and on the N side a timber trevis survived. Traces of a matching trevis at the S remained as scars on the floor. The floor was cobbled. This would have held 8 tied cows.



Illus 11 Detail of byre in Building 2, S compartment showing trevis with standing for two cows either side

The N compartment had a trough along the W wall with fittings for a hay hake. There was no evidence of trevises and this may have been for calves or young stock.

Other features

The area between Buildings 1 and 2 had been infilled after c.1900 and a number of small structures, possibly a toilet and pig sheds had been built against the W and S sides of Building 2. Only fragments of walls remain.

The yard had been enclosed with the stackyard c. 50m SSW up the hill (centred at 387696, 800017). Five stack bases 3.5-4m in diameter and c. 300-500mm high were identified; others may remain under the dense gorse.

To the W of the stackyard there are remaining traces of an irregular system of drystone walls (centred at 387602, 799978). While these are shown on the 1865 OS map and are dotted on the 1842 map, they appear by 1842 to have been largely replaced by the Improvement layout that survives today. They would appear to be the last vestiges of the pre-Improvement field system shown on the late 18th century estate map (Illus 2).

Directly to the N of the E end of Building 1 there was the well (now a concrete ring construction but on the location marked from 1865). Beside this a small tin-roofed

timber lean-to, 3.6 x 2.8m, with a brick-built fireplace can probably be identified as the wash house. Stone rubble suggests this had replaced a slightly larger stone walled structure.



Illus 12 Stack bases S of Swirls

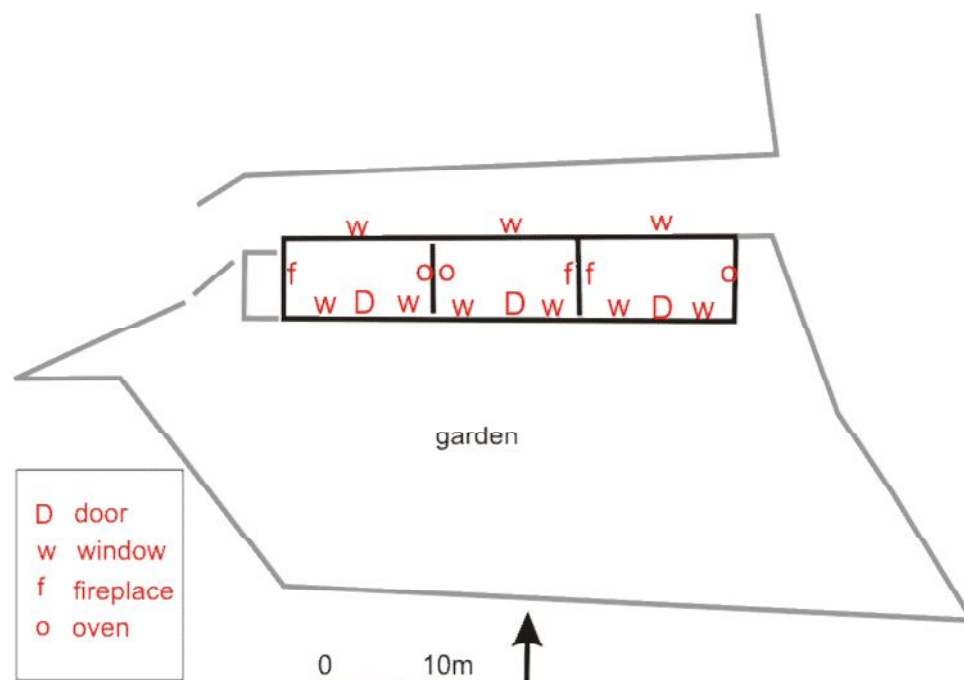


Illus 13 Wash house at Swirls

Braeside Cottages (Gazetteer No 15)

In the late 18th century the estate map shows a cluster of five buildings at Braeside surrounded by irregular areas of croft cultivation. The later map evidence shows that the existing building was on the site by 1830 and apart from the addition of a small structure at the W end by 1901, it remained unchanged. Now roofless this line of cottages was in use for accommodation of single workers until the 1960s/early 70s (ES). The track however was moved from the S of the building to its present position N of the building by 1901.

The building lies E/W with frontages facing S into a small garden. Overall it is a single structure 30m long and 5.6m wide externally. It is divided into three equal sized and virtually identical units each c. 10m long.



Illus 14 Plan of Braeside



Illus 15 Braeside looking S.



Illus 16 Braeside looking N at S frontage

The walls are of rubble stone with rybats, lintels and sills roughly dressed. Collapsed slate suggests the last roof was of slate, although it may originally have been thatched. The three surviving chimneys were of granite of same design (Illus 17) as those on the Menzies House and related buildings (see Part 2).

Each unit had a central door in the S face, flanked by two windows. A third window faced the door in the N wall. There were chimneys at each gable and in the dividing walls and each unit had a fireplace at one end and a cast iron oven at the other, with a cupboard alcove to one side. No internal wooden walls survived but the arrangement suggests a division into a bed room with a fireplace and a kitchen/living room with an oven, both opening off a central lobby, possibly with a cupboard/ small room with the central N window.



Illus 17 Braeside. Above: detail of chimney stack



**Illus 18 Braeside. Right: interior showing oven and cupboard
oven and cupboard.**

Curling Pond (Gazetteer No 16)

An artificial pond built c. 1900 to the W of the Mill Pond and using the same burn. It is oval in shape, c. 90 x 16m (388250, 800448) enclosed by stone and earth banks c. 2m high.

Mill Pond and Lade (Gazetteer No 17)



Illus 19 Mill pond and lade. 1830 (Blairs Museum T6589 BLRBM)

The mill pond is now overgrown with willows. Some fragments of stonework remain at the inlet sluice from the Kiln Burn (388345, 800451) and there is a granite lintelled culvert below the bend in the road to the E (388413, 800467). From this point the burn continued E and a N/S lade ran down towards the mill at the SE corner of the steading. The line of the lade is now very overgrown and it is not possible to see if it is revetted. On the late 18th century map a field is marked to have the dam but the mill system had not then been built. The 1830 and 1842 estate maps and the 1865 OS map

show the mill pond and lade and a secondary pond at the corner of the Stack yard, with a sluice to release water to the mill. The section between this second pond and the mill is named on the 2nd OS as an aqueduct, indicating the probability that this was a wooden water channel to an overshot wheel. No traces of this survive as it would have been removed when the road was extended around the E side of the steading c 1900. A finely dressed stone in the remnant of the stack yard may have been related. The mill was Steading Building 7 (Part 3) and the position of the wheel can be seen by the section of fine ashlar on its E wall at the N end.

Field gateways (Gazetteer No 20)

Most of the original field gateways from the main E/W stock road survive in good condition; these are clearly shown from the 1842 map onwards. All are of fine drystone construction with elegantly rounded corners allowing smooth movement of livestock. The internal gap is 3m (10 foot).



Illus 20 Rounded dyke at field gateway

Water supply (Gazetteer No 28, 29)

Initially water for the college was supplied from springs on the hill piped down to the college. However as the college grew water became a problem. In the reorganisation around 1900 when the New College was built, a second supply was built, with Dee water being pumped up from the pump house (Gazetteer 29) to a reservoir near

Braeside (Gazetteer 28). This Dee water was used for toilets etc while the spring water was used for drinking. (J E-F).

Smaller properties had individual wells.

7 Discussion of the development of the estate

This discussion only includes the area of the Blairs estate which is included in the proposed development. The higher ground to the S is not discussed.

Before Improvement c. 1756

The underlying map of the estate before the late 18th century Improvements shows a series of quite small rectilinear infields on a NNE/SSW axis directly around the mansion. These are variously labelled as ‘*good infield*’, ‘*fine infield*’ and ‘*pretty good infield*’. Further to the S there are another series of more or less rectangular fields to the E of the Braeside crofts, labelled ‘*All these enclosure are called the Braeside parks*’; they include outfield and good infield with patches of pasture marked within them and one park labelled ‘*has been ploughed*’. The mansion and steading are approached by a wide avenue from the N and by a stock road from the SW. A garden and ‘new garden’ and cornyards are marked.

Further away from the mansion there are a series of clusters of very irregular areas of cultivation with small rectangular buildings. These are labelled as crofts, generally with the names of the tenants. On the higher ground S and W of Swirls the ground is described as ‘muir’ and ‘rocky muir with long heather’.

Initial Improvement c. 1756-1780

The main late 18th century Improvements drawn in red ink and pencil on the late 18th century map, show the grid pattern of enclosed fields extending E/W from the mansion and steading, with the stock road realigned to approach the steading from the S. The mill system has not been developed but is planned as one park is marked to have the dam. Several changes to the steading are marked in pencil.



Illus 21 New grid pattern (red) superimposed on earlier field system. Late 18th century estate map. (Blairs Museum T6270 BLRBM)

The college and estate from 1830 to 1865

The 1830 and 1842 estate maps (Illus 22, 23, annotation on modern map Illus 24) show the designed landscape of the Home Farm developed from the plans on the 18th century map. They also show the extended buildings of the college for the first time, with the enlarged steading required for the larger establishment (For details of the buildings see Report Parts 2 and 3).

The field layout has a grid of five rectilinear enclosures (Illus 24:1-5, 7-10) on either side of an approximately E/W road. The NE enclosure (Illus 24:6) is taken up by the mansion/college and steadings.

Two roads ran N/S, one from the Aberdeen road near the Lodge to the mansion/college and through the E range of steading buildings, continuing between the stack yard and enclosure and on to the higher ground. At this period, the Porter's lodge (Gazetteer No 27) was set back from the main road, with the avenue dividing into a Y, meeting the road at two points. The other N/S estate road ran from the Aberdeen road up between the enclosures and on to the higher ground and the crofts at Swirls and Braeside.

All the enclosures were surrounded by good quality drystone dykes with the roads flanked by revetted ditches, with hedging between the roadside dyke and the field

dyke. The E/W road was designed as a stock road with each enclosure having a well constructed curved drystone gateway in the centre of the field edge.

Tree belts, which survive, ran N/S between pairs of enclosures. The W two are predominantly of pine, with beech and other broadleaved trees in the belts nearest the steading.

Although much of this Improvement had taken place prior to the establishment of the college, Rev Charles 'Priest' Gordon in his *Memorial of Blairs* (Gordon 1835) relates that John Menzies carried on the farm expenses and *'to render the place more and more valuable he was pleased to direct that the extensive improvements which had been planned out previous to his grant to the Right Revd Dr Paterson- should not only not be abandoned, but should be prosecuted with increased vigour. These improvements consisted in the trenching of rough ground;- in the blowing of rocks and large stones;- in the draining of wet ground;- in the building of stone dykes;- in the liming and dunging of fields'*.

The regular layout of the Home Farm is in contrast to the more irregular pattern of the outlying fields and those relating to the crofts. There are relatively few changes between 1830 and 1842; Braeside has an additional building by 1842, while Strypeside has one less. Swirls has no building in 1830 but has one again by 1842.



Illus 22 1830 estate map (Blairs Museum T6589 BLRBM)



Illus 23 1842 estate map (Muir Group)

The crofts beside the Dee, not shown on the 18th century map, remain little changed throughout the 19th century. They could be part of the 19th century trend to rebuild tenant's houses and steadings in stone (RCAHMS, 2007, 221).

The other major change between the late 18th century and the 1830 estate was the large number of plantations, especially on the former muir lands on the higher ground to the S and to the W of Swirls. Again this was a common trend in the early 19th century in Aberdeenshire (RCAHMS, 2007, 224).

Four crofts are shown N of the Aberdeen road alongside the river: Newlands (Netherlands, Gazetteer No 1), Salmon Croft (Gazetteer No 2), Burnside Croft (Gazetteer No 5) and the Smithy (Gazetteer No 7). To the S of the Aberdeen road there were three: Maidenfold (Gazetteer No 10, 11), Kintoulin (Gazetteer No 12) and Strypeside (Gazetteer No 26).

A further four crofts lay to the S of the Home Farm on the higher ground: three at Braeside (Gazetteer Nos 15, 22, 23) and Swirls (Gazetteer No 14).

During the period 1842 to 1865 two of the crofts are upgraded to sizable farms with a U-shaped steading at Maidenfold (Gazetteer No 10/11) and a U-shaped steading and new house at Kintoulin (Gazetteer No 12). The crofts by the Aberdeen road remained

unchanged. Of the higher ground crofts, Swirls (Gazetteer No 14) had an additional building but one of the Braeside crofts had disappeared.

The New College and the estate 1899/1901 to c 1925

The major changes at the end of the 19th/beginning of the 20th century relate to the building of the New College and the practical impacts of the increased population of Blairs. The details of the college and steading buildings are discussed elsewhere (Report: Parts 2 and 3).

Water was an increased problem and by 1901 a water reservoir is shown to the S (Gazetteer No 28) with the pump house (Gazetteer No 29) to pump Dee water for the college shown on the 1923 map.

The 1854 extension of the old college was converted to a boiler house with a large freestanding external chimney. Two plans dated 1925 show a progression from an existing (possibly c. 1900) engine room with twin boilers, coal store and suction plant to a new larger boiler housed in a new building attached to the E side of the original 1854 structure.

Another steading building was converted c. 1900 to a laundry with large drum washing machines run on a belt system from an engine. The crofts by the Dee housed the Smithy for the farm and the homes and workshops for people working for the college such as a cobbler and a tailor. The tailor lived at Burnside and in 1893 the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal* (Wednesday June 21. 1893. Issue 7589) records the death of Donald Davidson of Burnside, tailor to the college for 55 years. (We are grateful to IF for this reference).

The construction of the New College also necessitated a new approach avenue from the Aberdeen road. This followed the line of the E side of the Y of the original avenue, then curving W and then N to approach the front façade of the college in a divided carriageway on either side of a tear-drop shaped lawn. At the same time the old porter's lodge (Gazetteer No 27) was removed and a new Porter's Lodge (Gazetteer No 8) built beside the Aberdeen road on the front avenue. A photograph shows smart wrought iron gates, now missing.

A second more functional approach to the steading and the more mundane parts of the college ran along the E boundary of the site, followed part of the original road to the steading and then continued along the outer E side of the farm buildings and across the stack yard to join the existing roads system to the S of the college buildings. As

this new route would have cut across the line of the mill aqueduct it is possible that the mill was run on an engine from this time.



Illus 24 Estate showing the late 18th century grid layout. Grey shading denotes land in plantations for most of the 19th century but in cultivation by 1899. Based on OS. Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data, © Crown Copyright, All rights reserved. 2012. License No 0100031673)

By 1899 further land has been brought into cultivation in areas near Swirls and Braeside shown earlier as plantations (grey on Illus 24) and at the same time the former irregular field pattern in this area has been changed to a more or less rectilinear layout. The farm at Maidenfold shows additional improvements with a new house and an additional steading building erected. Only minor changes are shown to the other crofts.

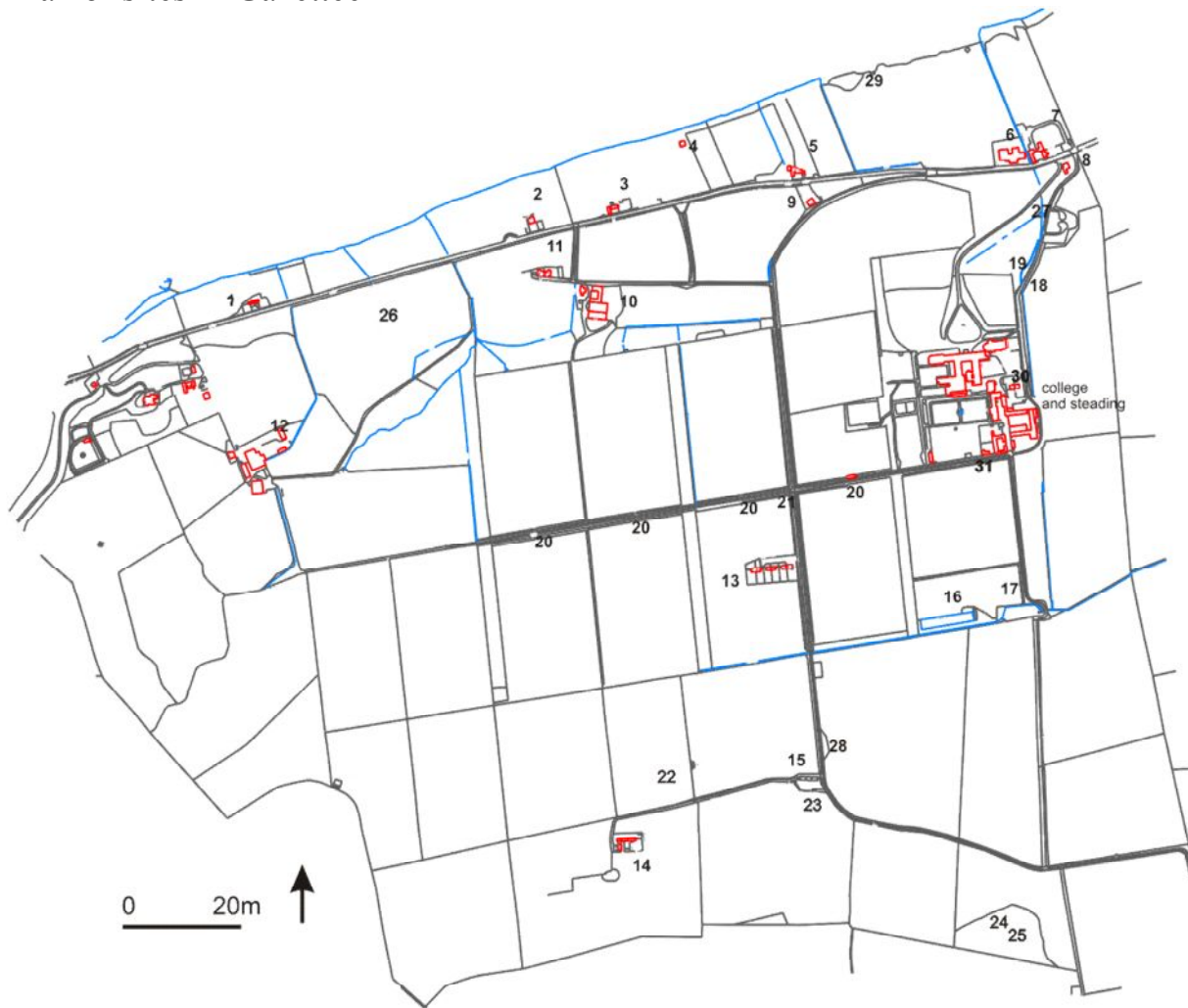
Later 20th century to 1986

Although the estate layout changed little from c. 1900, there were a number of small changes. Two sets of houses for estate workers/staff were erected by the steading on the site of the former E part of the Menzies mansion in 1958 (Gazetteer No 30) and at Marybrae (Gazetteer No 13) in c.1960 (J E-F).

References

- Gordon, Rev Charles 1835 *Memorial of Blairs*. Mss copy. Scottish Catholic Archives, CB 1/3/2.
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- RCAHMS 2007 *In the shadow of Bennachie: A Field Archaeology of Donside, Aberdeenshire*. Edinburgh: RCAHMS.
- Roberts, A 2005 'John Menzies Marriage' *Aberdeen Civic Society Letter to editor* September 2005.

Appendix 1
Plan of sites in Gazetteer



Gazetteer of Sites

No	Name (Earlier names or spellings in brackets)	GPS	Late 18 th Century c.1760-80 estate map	1830 estate map	1842 estate map Roman numerals refer to properties as identified on 1842 map	1 st OS 1865 pub 1868-1869. Kincardine sheet III.12; Kincardine sheet III.16; Aberdeen sheet LXXXV.8; Aberdeen sheet LXXXV.12	2 nd OS 1899 pub 1900-1901 Aberdeenshire sheet 086.05 (=Kincardineshire sheet 007.05); Aberdeenshire sheet 085.08; Aberdeenshire 085.12 (=Kincardineshire 006.12) 1901 pub 1903 Kincardineshire 007.09	OS revision. 1923 (pub 1925) Some areas only	Survey 2012
1	Netherlands (Newlands/ Newlands croft)	387085, 800979		2 buildings at right angles as 1842	X. 2 rectangular buildings at right angles (red)	Newlands Croft. As 1842. Both buildings roofed.	Netherlands Croft. 1 new rectangular E/W building parallel and to rear of original E/W building		Both 1842 buildings survive. W building (house) 1 ½ storeys with stone walls, slate roof. Stone chimneys. Dormer windows. Wooden building parallel to N. E building (byre or workshop?) single storey. Stone wall, slate roof. Brick chimney to S.
2	Binghill Cottage	387559, 801114							E/W stone building with slate roof beside road (post 1900), large modern glass and wood extensions to N.
3	Salmon Croft	387687, 801142		2 buildings at right angles as 1842	VI.1 rectangular building N/S at right angle to road (red). 1 at right angle to yard (black)	Salmon Croft. As 1842.	As 1842		Two original buildings joined as modern house with extensions. Stone walls, slate roof. Modern windows.
4	Fishing bothy	387805, 801254							Wooden building. c.2000
5	Burnside Cottages (Burnside Croft)	387999, 801200		2 buildings at right angles as 1842	V.2 rectangular buildings at right angles & yard	Burnside Croft. Buildings (roofed) similar to 1842 but E building has been replaced further N.	Additional small buildings to NW and E	As 1899	Two original buildings joined as modern house with extensions. Part stone, part harled stone. Modern windows..This was the tailor's house in 19 th century
6	Garage	388361, 801229							Modern garage buildings. Concrete and steel.
7	Smithy Old Post Office	388405, 801240		3 buildings as 1842	III. long rectangular building N/S at W	Buildings as 1842, shown roofed. saw	Smithy Small building possibly over saw pit.	As 1842 Structure over ? saw pit gone..	Both smithy and Post Office converted to modern houses.

					side (red) 2 smaller buildings to E (black) & yard	pit to N	E range =PO with extension and yard to E	E range =PO	Stone walls, part harled. Slate roofs. Modern windows. New house behind Post Office.
8	Porter's Lodge and gate pillars	388453, 801214			Different site. See No 27	Different site. See No 27	Different site. See No 27	Lodge. New square plan lodge by main road. Road to college entrance changed. Old Lodge gone.	Extended since 1923 C listed HBNUM 19228 Single storey L plan. granite ashlar with timber porch. Slate roof. A photograph shows wrought iron gates now missing.
9	Blairhilly	388025, 801152			Track shown but no building	Small enclosed area N of track, no building	Apparently unroofed rectangular structure in plot to N of track	As 1899	Almost square plan with harled walls, slate roof. Conservatory to W. Chimney of estate style.
10	Maidenfold	387649, 800997		2 N/S rectangular buildings. As 1842	VII. 2 long rectangular buildings (red) & yard	E range of 1842 Steading enlarged to U with the W range across open end	E range of steading has new parallel range. W range. New house (?) to NW of steading.		House remains U-steading infilled and new steading to S
11	Maidenfold Cottages	387571, 801030		2 buildings at right angles as 1842	VIII Cannycreich 2 buildings at right angles	As 1842	As 1842		
12	Kintewline (Kintoulin)	387103 800719		2 rectangular buildings at right angles as 1842	XI. 2 rectangular buildings at right angles and yard (black)	U- plan steading and 1 rectangular building. House.	Kintewline. As 1865. Possible porch to house. Small lean-to on N side N range. Yard layout unchanged. Sluice ditto.		Kintewline. House appears enlarged. Steading infilled or replaced. Kintewline Cottage. New since c. 1900.
13	Marybrae cottages	387957, 800543							c. 1960
14	Swirls – ruins (Swirrols)	387716, 800071	2 N/S rectangular buildings, yard	Irregular enclosure but no buildings	XV. long narrow rectangular building (red) & yard	E/W building from 1842 remains. A N/S building added. (Roofed). Tracks have changed.	As 1865. E/W building extended to W. Track moved to W side of yard.		See 6.14
15	Braeside Cottages- ruins	388019, 800184	Cluster 5 buildings over area of Nos 15 and 23	At angle of road and N of road. 1 long narrow rectangular building As 1842	XIII. At angle of road and N of road. 1 long narrow rectangular building (red)	As 1842. (Roofed)	Small extension at W end. Small building to S. Track has been moved to S of buildings and garden.	As 1901.	See 6.15
16	Curling pond	388250, 800451					Pond shown for first time. Rectangular.		See 6.16
17	Mill pond and lade	388375,	Dam written	Pond,	Pond, secondary	As 1842	As 1842		See 6.17

		800466	as part of improvement intended but not yet done	secondary pond and lade shown.	pond and lade shown.				
18	Lade from mill below road	388420, 800463							Stream outflow from lade culverted here below the c. 1900 E road
19	Old Avenue	From 388370,80 0994 to 388270,80 0104	Road on line of avenue as seen in 1842 E part of Y	Road from mansion and steading to lodge divided curved W through wood to Old Lodge (See No 27), dividing in Y to meet main road at two points. As 1842	Road from mansion and steading to lodge divided curved W through wood to Old Lodge (See No 27), dividing in Y to meet main road at two points	As 1842	As 1842	New road and lodge	Curve through woods still visible as grassy track but no sign of W arm of Y
20	Field gateways	387560,80 05953877 28,800623 387907,80 06543880 82,800681 388271,80 0713			Stock gates through dykes from E/W stock road all drawn	As 1842	As 1842		See 6:20
21	Culvert	387986, 800665							Culverted water flow below dyke
22	Braeside	387795, 800166	2 buildings, alignment different from 1830	2 buildings at right angles	XII. 2 buildings in line, 1 at right angle & yard (black)	Braeside. As 1842 (roofed)	3 S buildings gone. N building remains		Nothing visible
23		Approx 388031, 800132	Cluster 5 buildings over area of Nos 15 and 23	2 rectangular buildings at right angles. S of road. As 1842	XIV. 2 rectangular buildings at right angles. S of road (red)	no trace 1865			Nothing visible
24	Site of Chapel	Approx 38830, 79991				Marked as site of chapel (Chapel demolished 1858 by	Marked as site of chapel		RCAHMS No: NO 89NE 2 No trace on ground

						procurator Blairs College (OS Name Book 1864)			
25	Swirls cairnfield	3883, 7999							RCAHMS No: NO 89NE 29. RCAHMS 1983 recorded c. 12 cairns and linear stone heaps. 4 and linear stone heap noted 2012
26	Strypeside	Approx 387430, 800976		2 buildings at right angles	IX.1 long narrow N/S rectangular building	Strypesides. Buildings appear as 1842. Track change with access direct to road	As 1865		Nothing visible
27	Site of Porter's lodge			E side of track, back from road. 1 rectangular building as 1842	II.E side of track, back from road. 1 rectangular building	Lodge Croft. As 1842. small building at S end garden.	Moved see No 8		Nothing visible
28	Water reservoir	388044, 800238					Shown for first time 1901 (1903)		See 6.28
29	Pump House	388129, 801374						Shown for first time	See 6.29 Stone building, corrugated iron roof.
30	Loretto & Clovelly	388366, 800845							1958
31	Stockman's Cottage	388318, 800732				Shown as rectangular building parallel to road	Extension on N side		2 storey rubble stone cottage, slate roof