

**OLD SAWMILL,
CAMBUS O'MAY
BALLATER
ABERDEENSHIRE**



Standing Building Survey

Carried out July 5th, 2012

by

Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2012-21

by

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- Standing Building Survey -

1. Background
 - 1.1 A standing building survey was required for the Old Sawmill at Cambus O'May, Ballater, prior to its conversion into a dwelling house and garage.
 - 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/2008/3741
 - 1.3 A Level 1 Standing Building Survey was required which includes measured floor plans, a written account of building's plan, form, function, age and development sequence in addition to a photographic survey.
 - 1.4 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake the work by Gerry Robb, Architectural Design Services, and the site element of the survey was completed on 5th July 2012.
2. Desk-top survey
 - 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 and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps were consulted.
- 2.3 Site plans and elevations of the site were kindly supplied by Gerry Robb, Architectural Design Services and have been annotated and used as a basis for detailed plans of the observed areas.

3. The Site

The site lies on the N bank of the River Dee, between the river and the A93 Aberdeen to Ballater road, some 2 miles E of Ballater. The buildings are tucked into a steep slope up from the river (Illus 1), with the Culsten Burn to the NW.

Parish: Glenmuick, Tullich and Glencairn

NGR: NO 4059 9794

RCAHMS No: NO49NW36 . Aberdeenshire SMR NO49NW0030

(Turnerhall, Cambus O'May)



Illus 1 The site, general view looking W

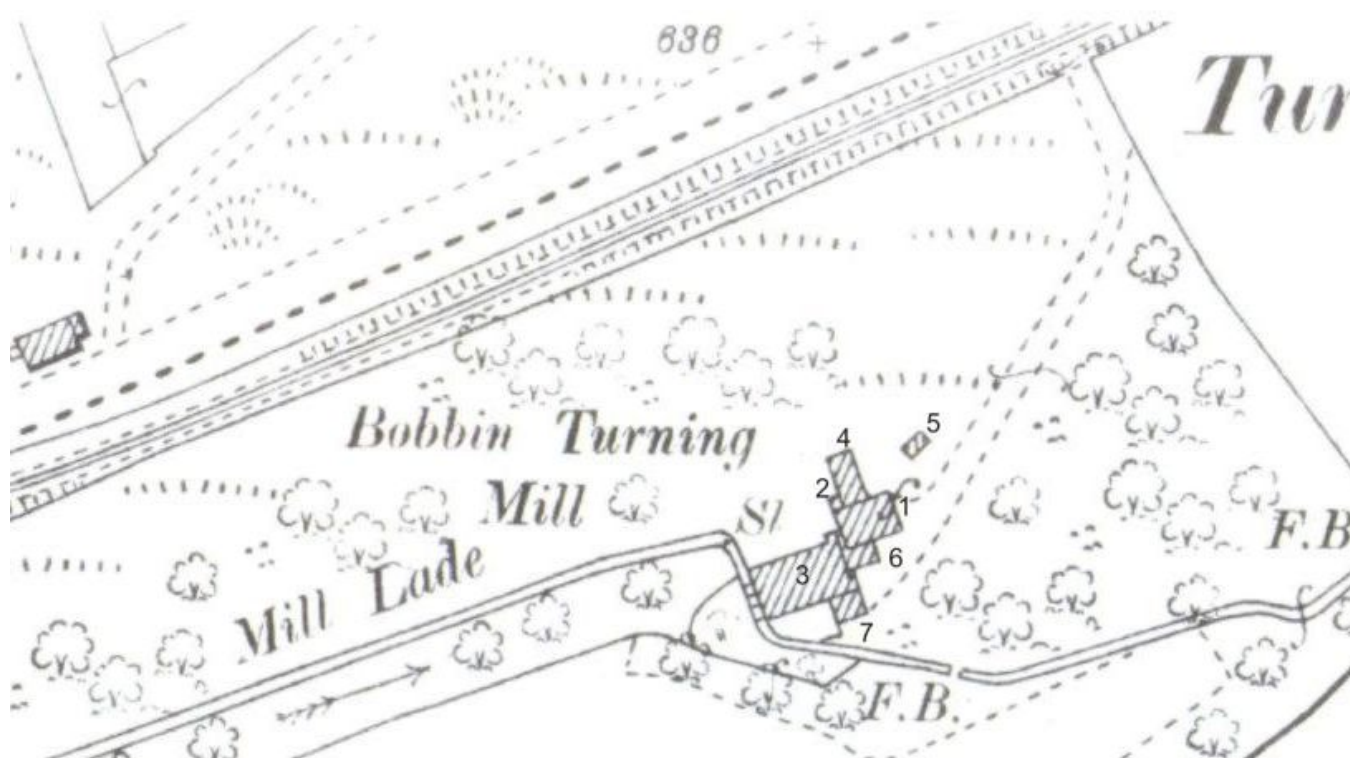
4. Documentary evidence

4.1 Roy's Military Map of 1747/55 shows a settlement cluster Style of Tullich between the river and the road to the E of the Burn of Coldstone (sic). This would appear to be around the area of the later sawmill.

4.2 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25"/mile map, surveyed in 1867 (published 1869. Aberdeen Sheet XCII.1 (Glenmuick, Tullich and Glencairn)) shows the mill, named as 'Saw Mill'. At this stage there is a small, almost square E building (1) with the chimney (?) at the NW corner (2). Attached to and slightly overlapping the SW corner of this building is a larger rectangular block (3) that lies at right angles to a lade shown coming from a sluice on the N side of the road, past the W end of the building and running SE to flow into the River Dee.



Illus 2 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (25"/mile) surveyed 1867, published 1869
(www.nls.ac.uk) Overlay shows site numbers



Illus 3 2nd edition 6^{''}/mile Ordnance Survey map of 1900 (pub 1902) (www.nls.ac.uk). Overlay shows site numbers

4.3 By the 2nd edition 6^{''}/mile Ordnance Survey of 1900 (published 1902. Aberdeenshire Sheet 092.01), Building 1 and the chimney (2) remain with an additional building abutting the N side of Building 1 at right angles (4) and a small freestanding building to the NE (5). Building 3 remains but the E side appears to have been foreshortened although Building 6 shown as a separate structure on the E side of Building 3 may be part of what was shown on the 1st OS map. A small structure (7) was built abutting the E end of the S wall of Building 3. The mill lade is shown on the same line although a sluice is now marked at the corner of the section leading past the mill.

5 Methodology

5.1 At the time of survey the site was very overgrown and some of the vegetation was scythed to allow access. Much of the interior was unsafe due to roof collapse and was not entered.

- 5.2 The ground plans and elevations have been annotated to show details and to indicate differences in the building materials which may help in understanding the development and history of the building (Illus 16, 17).
- 5.3 The areas recorded were photographed. The full set of photographs will be supplied on CD for the archive and an annotated plan in the present report indicates the position of each (Illus 15).

6 The Buildings

Of the buildings shown on the 1900 OS map, Building 1 has been extended to the E and the chimney (2) remains standing. Part of the wall of Building 3 remains – a pig shed having been built on the footprint of Buildings 3 and 7. Building 4 has totally collapsed and is visible as a sunken area of rubble. There are a number of small later additional freestanding structures and the remains of a wooden shed (?) linking Buildings 1 and 3.

6.1 Building 1 and chimney (2)

Plan Illus 16, Elevations Illus 17

Dimensions Original building c. 5m E/W x 6.5m N/S. Extended to the E by 1900 to existing length of 10.95m E/W. The W end of the building (the original part) is dug into the slope, having a fire-flue at ground level, boiler at 1st floor and loft above.

Original Use As the chimney is shown from the 1867 map onwards it would appear that the W end of Building 1 has been a boiler house from this date. The E addition may have been a wood store or possibly a workshop.

Present/recent use At present derelict. The E addition appears to have been used for livestock as there are rough timber trevises made of timber backs and the remains of a hay hake/manger at the W wall.

Description

Walls The walls are c.500mm thick of horizontal coursed, almost squared pinkish-buff granite blocks. Some smaller stones are used in the back (N) wall. The join where the E extension abuts the original building is very clear in both N and S walls.

Roofs The boiler house has a pitched roof over A-frame couples. It is clad with corrugated tin over wooden sarking. The E extension roof is largely collapsed but

appears to have been a single-pitch lean-to sloping down to the E. It was also clad in corrugated tin.

Chimney The chimney is c. 8.5m high and 1.38m square externally over a base c. 1.60m square. It is built of squared pinkish granite blocks with a projecting stone band just below the top. The SW corner of the chimney clearly abuts the end of the W wall of Building 1 (illus 11); however the SE corner of the chimney (internal and external) is abutted *by* the N wall of Building 1 (illus 12).



Illus 4 General view S wall Building 1

Doors and windows

S WALL

D1 W: 1.22m H: 2.4m. Grey granite lintel. Wooden door. Opens into the E 'store'

D2 W: 840mm H: 1.8m. Grey granite lintel, pinkish granite threshold at 1.66m above ground level. Wooden door. Opens into the 1st floor of the building, beside the boiler.

Opening 3 W: 870mm H: 1.22m. Arched stoke hole with iron doors of stoke hole and ash rake out below. This is a secondary break-through with bricks built around it.

W5 W: c. 900mm H: c. 600mm. Opens into loft floor .



Illus 5 General view E wall Building 1

E WALL

W6 W: 450mm H: 450mm. Internal splay. Granite lintel and sill.

W7 W: 1.22m H: 1.69m. Internal splay. Granite lintel and sill.



Illus 6 General view N wall Building 1

N WALL

D13 W: c. 950mm H: c.1.8m (From elevation drawn 2008- this has since dilapidated considerably.) This appears to have given access from the loft to the now collapsed building to the N.



Illus 7 General view W wall Building 1

W WALL

W9 W: 750mm H: 920mm

W10 W: 760mm H: 930mm. Some remnants of glazing.

W11 W: 500mm H: 470mm. Some remnants of glazing.

Opening 12 Irregular break-through for steam pipes.

6.2 Building 3 (Piggery)

Plan Illus 16, Elevations Illus 17

Dimensions L-shaped. Long arm 15.4 x 6.5m. Shorter arm projecting S at E end : 5.7 x c. 5m.

Original Use Comparison with 1900 OS map suggests the footprint of this building is the original water mill but only two wall fragments remain.

Present/recent use At present derelict. Formerly a pig shed.

Description

Walls The walls are of concrete blocks with the exception of a short section of the wall at the E end (illus 8) and the base of the wall at the W end (illus 9); these are of coursed granite and appear to be part of the original 19th century building. The wall fragment at the W end extends down to the base of the mill lade and this may have been the original wall where a water wheel was fixed- there is however no surviving evidence of the wheel fixings.

Roofs Corrugated iron.



Illus 8 Building 3 E wall, showing fragment of original stone wall



Illus 9 Building 3 SW corner showing fragment of original wall and mill lade

7 Discussion

This would appear to be an interesting example of a water-driven sawmill that has been adapted to use a steam-powered engine. The mill lade, shown on the 1st and later OS maps would indicate that the water wheel was at the W end of the original Building 3- only a wall fragment of which survives incorporated into the recent piggery.

Building 1 and the chimney are shown from the 1st OS map of 1867, which suggests that already by this date, the mill was using a steam-powered engine to run the sawmill. This fits well with the increasing use of steam engines on large farms to run threshing machines and grain mills from c. 1850-1870 onwards (Glendenning and Wade Martins 2008, 75, 100, 111). A site such as this with plentiful water and plentiful wood as fuel would have been ideal for using steam power- which would have given a more reliable year-round source of power- unlike the more seasonal use of the water mill.



Illus 10 Detail of the chimney



Illus 11 Chimney abutting W wall of Building 1



Illus 12 Chimney abutted by N wall Building 1



Illus 13 Stoke hole and ash pit (3) in S wall Building 1



Illus 14 Horizontal boiler running full length of Building 1 1st floor. Seen through window W9
The brick- built flue and ash pit in the S wall of Building 1 indicate a secondary break-through, as do the smaller break-throughs for the iron steam pipes. This would indicate that Building 1 (W end) may have pre-dated the use of steam power and been adapted in the mid-19th century. The SW corner of the chimney abuts Building 1 W

wall which supports this argument- but there appears to have been re-structuring of the N wall of Building 1 where the chimney has been incorporated.

The 1900 OS map marks the site as 'Bobbin turning mill' rather than simply 'saw mill'. At the height of the Scottish cotton industry between the late 18th century and the outbreak of WW1, bobbins and other tools for the textile industry would have been in considerable demand. As birch wood was the traditional wood for bobbins, this saw mill, with easy access to plentiful birch would have been ideal for bobbin making. Photographs of a bobbin mill in Dundee in the period 1900-1920 show huge stock piles of rough outs for bobbins being seasoned (SCARN 000.000.557.654C) and give an indication of the level of demand.

8. References

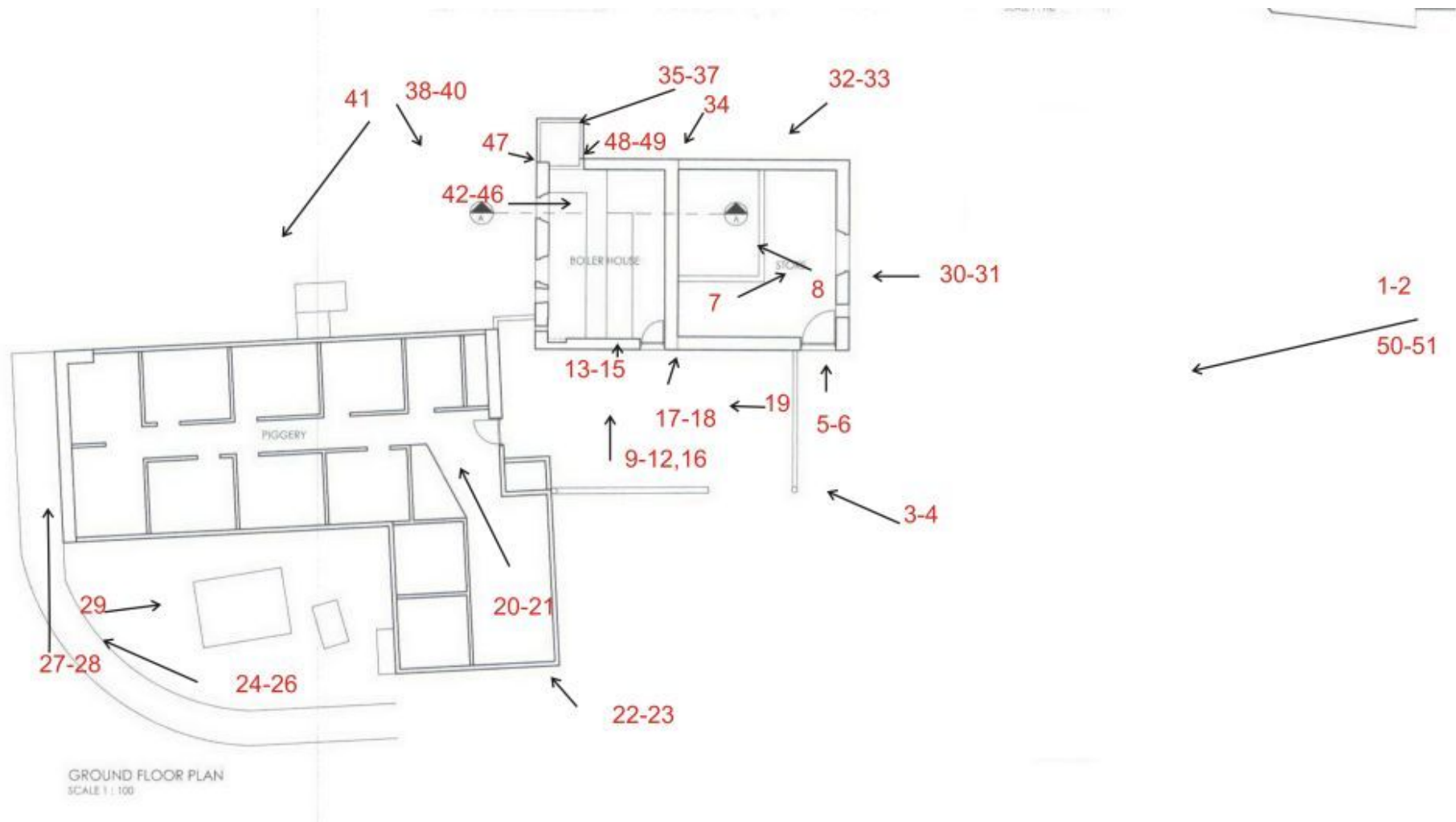
Glendinning, M and Wade Martins, S 2008 Buildings of the Land: Scotland's Farms 1750-2000 Edinburgh: RCAHMS.

9 Archive

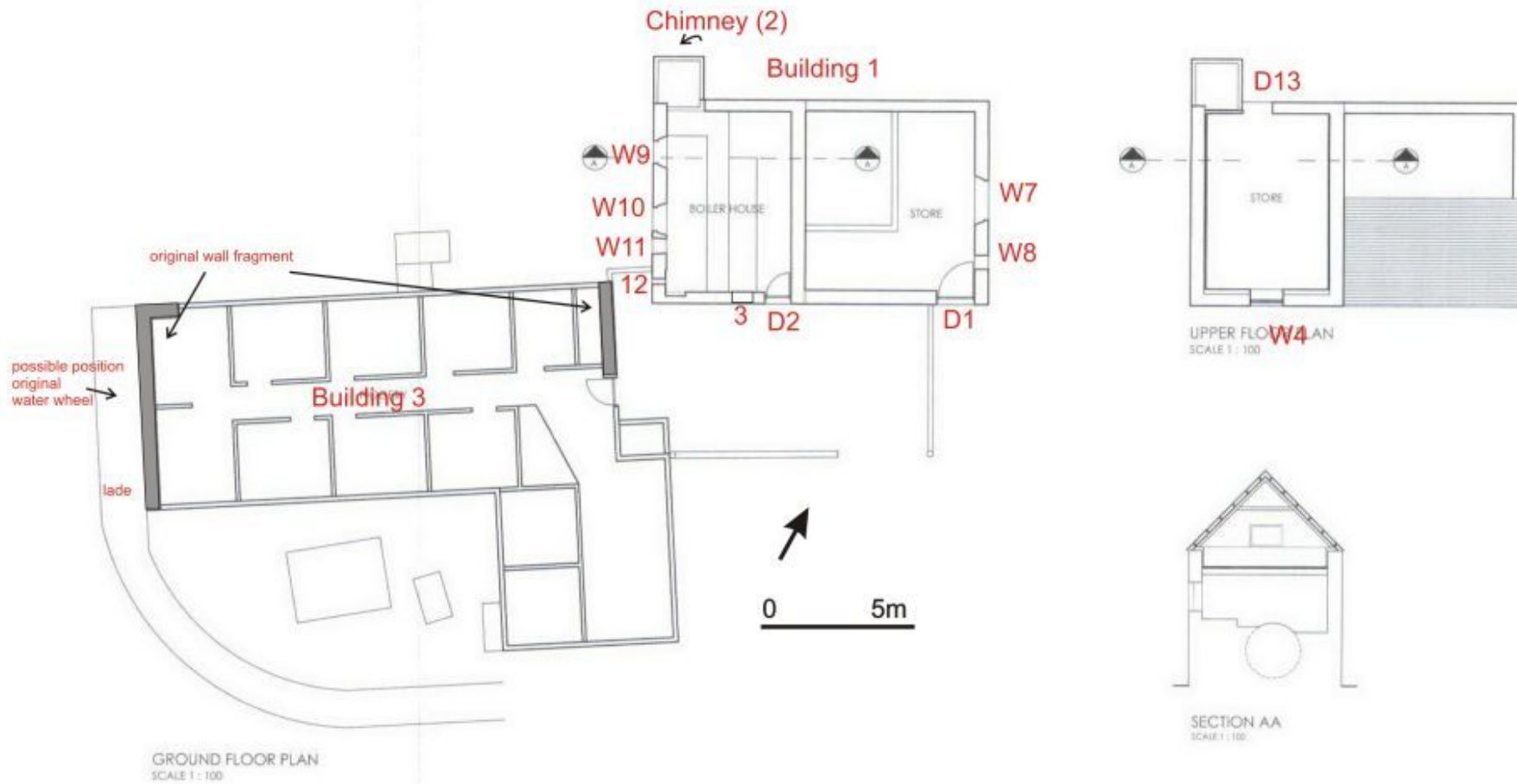
A full set of photographs with the photo location plan will be supplied on CD to the Aberdeenshire SMR in Aberdeen and to the NMRS.

Appendix 1: Photographic archive

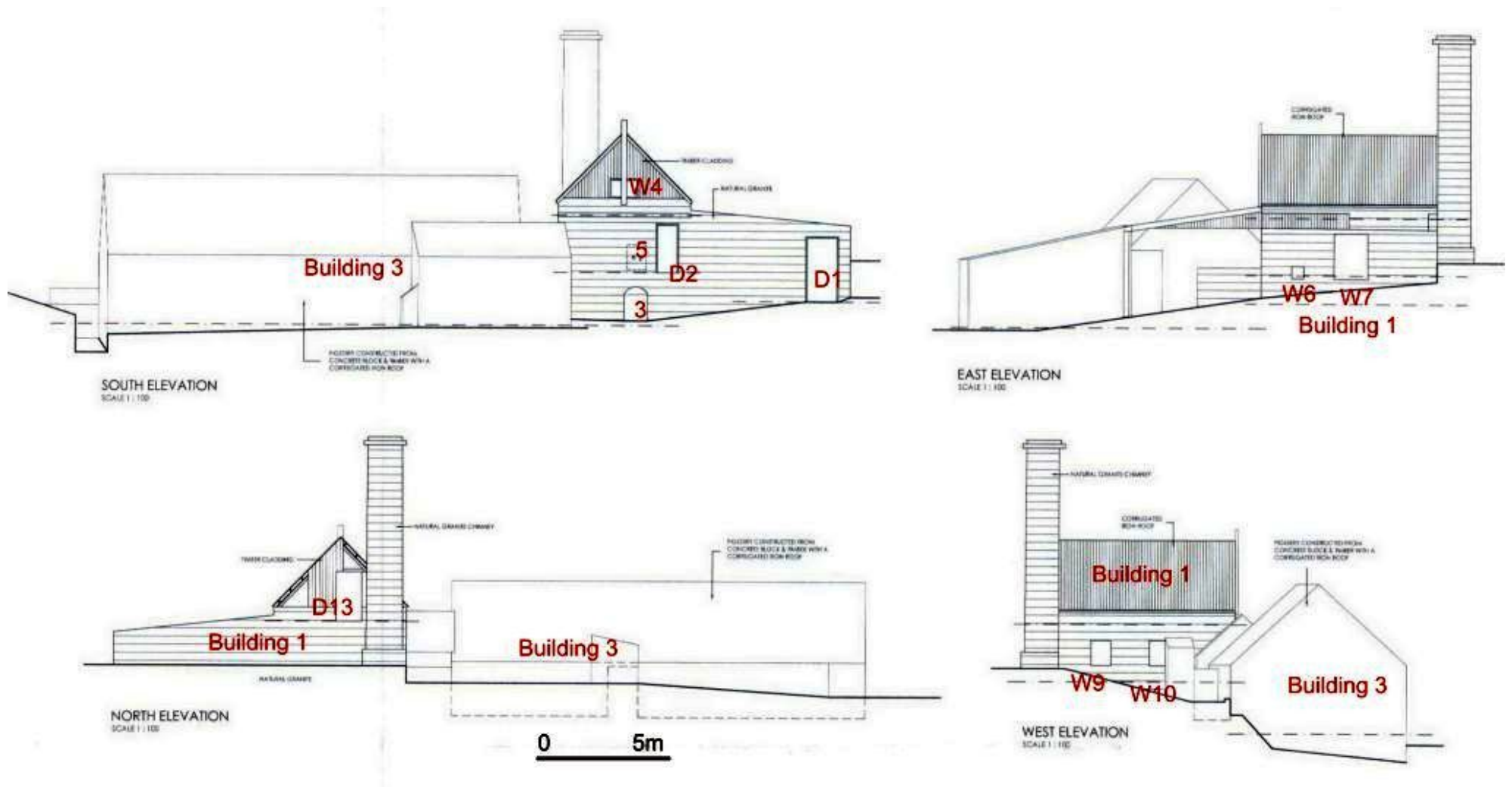
The positions of all photographs are indicated on Illus 15.



Illus 15 Key to photographs (Plan adapted from Gerry Robb, Architectural Design Services)



Illus 16 Plans (Annotated from drawing by Gerry Robb, Architectural Design Services).



Illus 17 Elevations (Annotated from drawing by Gerry Robb, Architectural Design Services)