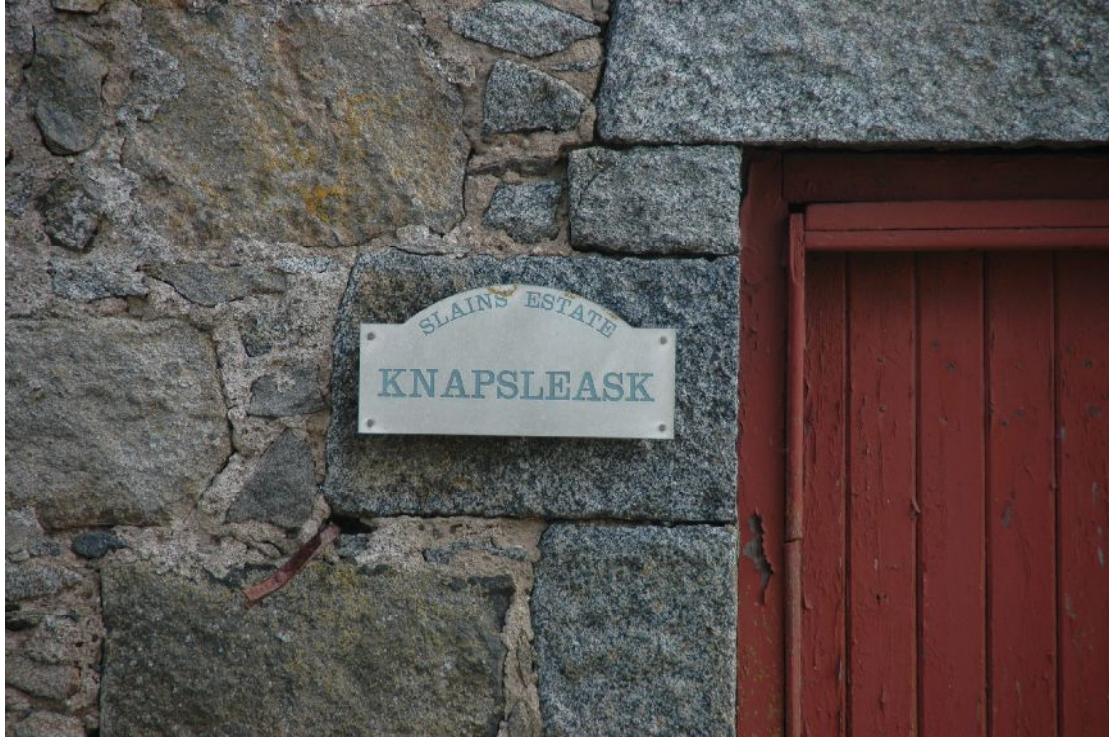


KNAPSLEASK STEADING
SLAINS
ABERDEENSHIRE

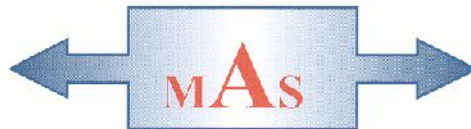


Standing Building Survey

Carried out 2nd July 2013

by

Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2013-20

by

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KNAPSLEASK STEADING
SLAINS
ABERDEENSHIRE

- Standing Building Survey -

1. Background

1.1 A standing building survey was required for the steading buildings at Knapsleask, Slains, Aberdeenshire, prior to their demolition for the construction of a new agricultural building.

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/2013/1645.

1.3 A Level 1 Standing Building Survey was required which includes measured floor plans, a written account of the 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 John Wink Design on behalf of his client David Stubbs. The site element of the survey was completed on the 2nd July 2013.

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 of the site were kindly supplied by John Wink Design and have been annotated and used as a basis for detailed plans of the observed areas.

3. The Site

3.1 The site lies at c.60m OD in open rolling countryside midway between the A90 Aberdeen to Peterhead road and the A975 coastal road. The farm was originally part of the Slains Estate. It is one of a group of properties surrounding Leask House (Mains of Leask, Mill of Leask, Milltown of Leask).

Parish: Slains

NGR NK 0311 3244

RCAHMS No: NK03SW 53



Illus 1 The site, general view from the NW

4. Documentary evidence

4.1 The Leask family appear to have owned land in the area from at least the 14th century. In 1341-1346 a *Charter of Confirmation of the Leask Lands of Leskgoroune* was granted by David II, son of Robert the Bruce, to William Lesk (<http://www.clan-leask.org.uk>).

4.2 Roy's Military Map of 1747/55 shows five settlement clusters at Leask; Lish house (*sic*), Cott of Lish (*sic*), Mill of Lisk (*sic*), Newton of Lisk (*sic*) and Nether Lisk (*sic*). Knapsleask is not named but may be represented by a series of buildings shown to the S of Leask House. Leask House is shown as a single large house within a large tree-surrounded enclosure. The area around all the Leask properties is shown as rig and furrow cultivation.

4.3 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25" map, surveyed in 1867 (published 1871. Aberdeen Sheet XXIX.11. (Slains)) shows the Improved steading. A U-shaped steading open to the S lies on the N side of the road. A freestanding building blocks part of the S open side of the court. A further E/W linear range of buildings, probably including the house, with a formal garden behind, lay opposite the steading on the S side of the road. It should be noted that this plan with a road running through the steading was also in use at the same period at Nether Leask, (Murray and Murray 2012), also then part of the Slains estate.

4.4 By the 2nd edition 6"/mile Ordnance Survey of 1899 (published 1901. Aberdeenshire Sheet XXXIX. SW) the additional buildings to the S of the road have been removed and replaced by a larger freestanding house. To the N of the road the U-shaped steading appears to have been partially (or possibly wholly) rebuilt being truncated on the S side with a wider area of road between the steading and the house. At the same time it would appear that the steading may have been extended further W.

4.5 In the 3rd edition 1"/mile Ordnance Survey map of 1907 (published 1910. Peterhead. Sheet 87), the main steading block appears to have been unchanged but a small freestanding building, possibly the bothy that still exists, has been added to the W of the steading, on the N side of the road. Again a similar development happened within the same time frame at Nether Leask suggesting estate policy.

4.6 *Illustrated Particulars of Slains Estate: for sale by auction. 1964* (www.scran.ac.uk Scran ref: COLART0016). The sale details for the Slains estate in 1964 give precise details of the steading at that date when it was tenanted by Messrs Chas. Esson and Sons and amounted to 187.197 acres. An aerial photograph of the steading in the particulars shows it much as it stands today but with the addition of

two freestanding buildings to the N which can be identified with the piggery in the schedule. The roof line shows an additional long building beside the N wall of the N range.

5 Methodology

- 5.1 The ground plans 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.
- 5.2 The areas recorded were photographed. The full set of photographs will be supplied for the archive and an annotated plan in the present report (Illus 11) indicates the position of each.

6 The Buildings

6.1 *The House*

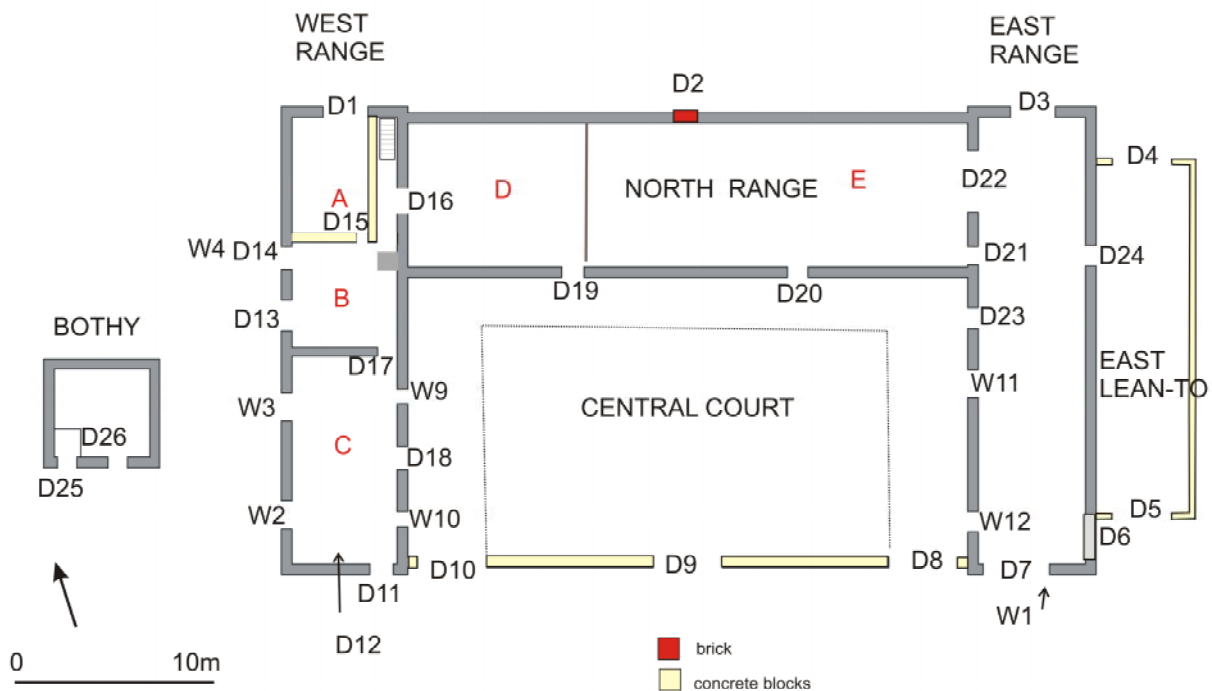
The farmhouse was not part of the present survey. It appears to be substantially in its present form by 1900.

6.2 *The Steading*

Dimensions U-shaped steading around open dung court. Total width: N-S ext: 23.5m
Maximum length E-W ext: 40.9m.

Original Use A rectangular steading around open dung court with entry from S. Cattle in N range. W range included mill, granary, cart sheds and loose boxes. E range included threshing barn.

Present/recent use Derelict at time of survey. Central court roof collapsed and area unsafe. Stair and loft floor unsafe. These areas could not be surveyed in detail.



Illus 2 Main plan with numbering used in text (Annotated from plan by John Wink Design)

Description

W RANGE

Dimensions Width ext: 6.4m Length ext: 23.5m

Walls Large squared rubble stone blocks with strong horizontal coursing. Where rybats survive at gables and openings they are all of grey granite .

Roof Pitched roof clad with slate over sarking. Ceramic ridge tiles. Metal skylights.

Doors and windows

W wall (external)

D13 W: 2.2m H: 2.35m. Grey granite lintel and rybats. Not blocked. Internal sliding wooden doors (secondary)

D14 W: 2.2m H: 2.35m. Grey granite lintel, sill and jambs. Concrete blocked with W4 set into the blocking.

W2 W: 1.15m H: 0.95m. Secondary knock-through with concrete sill and lintel.

W3 W: 1.15m H: 0.95m. Secondary knock-through with concrete sill and lintel.

W4 W: 1.15m H: 0.95m. Secondary knock-through with concrete sill and lintel.

W5 Not measured. Grey granite lintel, sill and jambs. Brick blocked internally.
Traces of wooden vent/shuttering externally.

W6 W: Not measured. Grey granite lintel, sill and jambs. Brick blocked internally.
Traces of wooden vent/shuttering externally

W7 Not measured. Grey granite lintel, sill and jambs. Brick blocked internally.
Traces of wooden vent/shuttering externally

W8 Not measured. Grey granite lintel, sill and jambs. Brick blocked internally.
Traces of wooden vent/shuttering externally.

D16 W: 1.24m H:2.10m. Grey granite lintel and rybats. From W range to N range.
On the N side, there is a wooden shutter with an iron counter weight above this door.
This appears to have allowed opening of a hatch from loft above for fodder from loft.



Illus 3 Door D16 with wooden shutter from loft above and metal counter-weight to LHS of door

D18 W: 1.22m H: 2.30m. Grey granite lintel and rybats. Wooden door.

W9 W: 770mm H:1.38m. Splays to interior. Grey granite lintel, sill and rybats.
Wooden frame window.

W10 W: 770mm H:1.38m. Splays to interior. Grey granite lintel, sill and rybats.
Wooden frame window.

D1 W: 2.2m. H: 2.4m. Grey granite lintel, sill and rybats. Extra granite stretcher above lintel. Door on sliding runner.

D11 W: 1.22m H: 2.42m. Grey granite lintel, sill and rybats. Wooden hinged door.

D12 Loft door. Not measured. Grey granite lintel, sill and rybats. Wooden hinged door.

Interior At time of survey the interior was in three areas (A, B, C).

Areas A and B were originally a single space but had been subdivided by a concrete wall. This had also cut off a narrow passage (W: 1.25m) which gave access to the loft stair on the NE corner of the range.

Area A was concrete lined. No detail.

Area B. Originally the two cart bays (D13, D14: Illus 5) opened into this area. By the E wall a stone-built block (0.93 x 1.03 and 520mm high) had originally held a grain bruiser; the bolts for attaching the bruiser survived as did a wooden hopper chute from the grain loft above. A small hole in the wall to N may be associated (W: 210mm H: 350mm. Not through thickness of wall).



Illus 4 Looking N in Area B. Bruiser base with hopper above. Stair to loft behind.



Illus 5 Blocked cart bays (D13, D14) in W wall of W range

Area C. Internally concrete floor and concrete troughs to form 2 pens with wooden hay hakes at each end. Probably used for calves. The two windows and central door suggest this was the two loose boxes referred to in 1964 sale details (see discussion). In its earlier form there may have been trevises to divide the space into stalls for 4 horses.

D15 W: 840mm H: to ceiling. Opening in secondary concrete wall.

D17 W: 0.97m H: to ceiling Grey granite lintel and rybats. Sliding wooden door.

Loft The loft could not be entered as stair and floor unsafe. Hatch above D16. Central trapdoor above W range area B

N RANGE

Dimensions Width ext: 8.3m Length ext: 28m

Walls Large squared rubble stone blocks with strong horizontal coursing. Inner faces of walls built of smaller rubble. Where rybats survive they are of grey granite. On top of the outer side of N wall, three courses of concrete blocks indicate the position of a former building parallel to the N range (visible on 1964 photograph: See below).

Roof Pitched roof clad with slate over sarking. A-framed with king posts. Ceramic ridge tiles with pot ridge ventilators. Metal skylights.

Doors and windows

N wall (to outside.)

D2 W:1.22m H: 1.8m. Wooden half doors, blocked internally with concrete blocks. In 1964 this would have led into parallel building.

D19 W: 1.2m. H: 2.10m. Original drain from byre to dung pit runs through doorway.

D20 W: 1.25mm. H: 2.10m but base concrete. Blocked. Present H: 1.23m. Original drain from byre to dung pit runs through doorway.

Interior

Divided by wooden partition into a smaller W area (Area D to door D19) and a larger E area (E)

Area D. Original fodder bay? Wooden shutter above D16 opens access to loft above W range- presumably for straw/hay to be forked down (Illus 4).

Cobbled floor with central concrete path and trough at N wall suggests recent use for loose cattle.

Area E. Cobbled floor with central concrete path. Raised feed pass along inside of S wall (partly blocked D20) shows recent use for loose cattle. Raggles on concrete render of inside of N wall indicates former tied cow stalls (see 1964 description below and Illus 6).



Illus 6 Looking E along N range

E RANGE

Dimensions Width ext: 6.4m Length ext: 23.5m

Walls

Large squared rubble stone blocks with strong horizontal coursing.

Roof

Sarked. Grey slate cladding with ceramic ridge tiles and metal-framed skylights.

A-framed.

Doors and windows

D3 W: 2.22m H: 2.45m. Grey granite lintel, sill and rybats. Extra granite stretcher above lintel. Wooden sliding door internally.

S wall

D7 W: 3.3m H: 3.6m. Steel lintel; height raised with concrete blocks. Metal sliding doors

W1 Not measured. Above D7 into loft. Granite lintel but sides and base altered.

Concrete infill blocking.

D24 W: 1.08m H: 2.3m. Grey granite lintel, sill and rybats. Wooden doors (originally to exterior).

D6 W: 2.26m H: 2.45m. Grey granite lintel, sill and rybats. S side doorway rybats chamfered. Stone blocked prior to construction of lean-to.

D22 Original opening raised and widened with steel lintel.

D21 W: 900mm H: 2.25m. full height but due to step to feed pass partly blocked to 1.9m height. Concrete surround. Secondary door inserted when feed pass built.

D23 W: 1.07m H: 2.3m. Grey granite lintel, sill and rybats. Wooden half doors.

D25 Not measured. At loft level gave access to open court.

W11 W: 940mm H: 1.35m. Grey granite lintel, sill and rybats. Splays internally. 6-pane glass over wooden panel.

W12 W: 800mm H: 1.35m. Grey granite lintel, sill and rybats.

Interior

Concrete render at loft level suggests loft/hay loft from S gable to approx D23. N end possibly no loft.

E RANGE LEAN-TO

Dimensions 18 x 5m

Lean- to built of concrete blocks with corrugated asbestos roof.

D4 W: 3.2m H: 2.28m double metal doors

D5 W: 3.5m H: 2.43m double metal doors

CENTRAL COURT

The central court was approx. 15 x 28m with a central low level with a walkway around 3 sides where there was some cobbling remaining (Illus 7).

At some point, probably *c.* 1950-60, the central court was covered by a corrugated asbestos roof with corrugated plastic roof lights and used as an open cattle court. This was very unsafe area and was not entered.



Illus 7 Central court. Cobbles of original walkway visible around edges

S wall

Concrete block wall across open end of original court. Part built of vertical wooden slats for ventilation.

D8 W: 3.05m H: 2.8m metal sliding door

D9 W: 3.63m H: open to roof. Gate blocking.

D10 W: 3.05m H: 2.8m

BOTHY

Dimensions Width (N/S) ext: 4.75m Length (E/W) ext: 5.85m

Walls Pink granite blocks *c.* 500mm thick.

Roof Hipped. Grey slate with metal along ridges. Tall brick chimney in centre of N wall. Tall ceramic pot.

Doors and Windows

D25 W:1.07m H: 1.93m with external step. Pink granite lintel and sill

W13 W:920mm H:1.45m blocked with corrugated plastic. Pink granite lintel and sill

Interior

Interior lined with pitched pine. Small lobby between external door D25 and internal door D26. Stone fireplace in centre of N wall, concrete blocked with a cast iron pipe inserted through the blocking. Possible bed alcove along W wall between lobby and fireplace (Illus 9).

D26 Not measured.



Illus 8 Bothy external view of S elevation



Illus 9 Bothy internal view looking NW into bed alcove. Fireplace visible behind stacked windows on RHS

7 Discussion

Knapsleask is a fairly typical Aberdeenshire improvement steading, probably dating from *c.* 1800 with development throughout the 19th century (RCAHMS 2007, 208. Glendinning and Wade Martins 2008, 119-120).

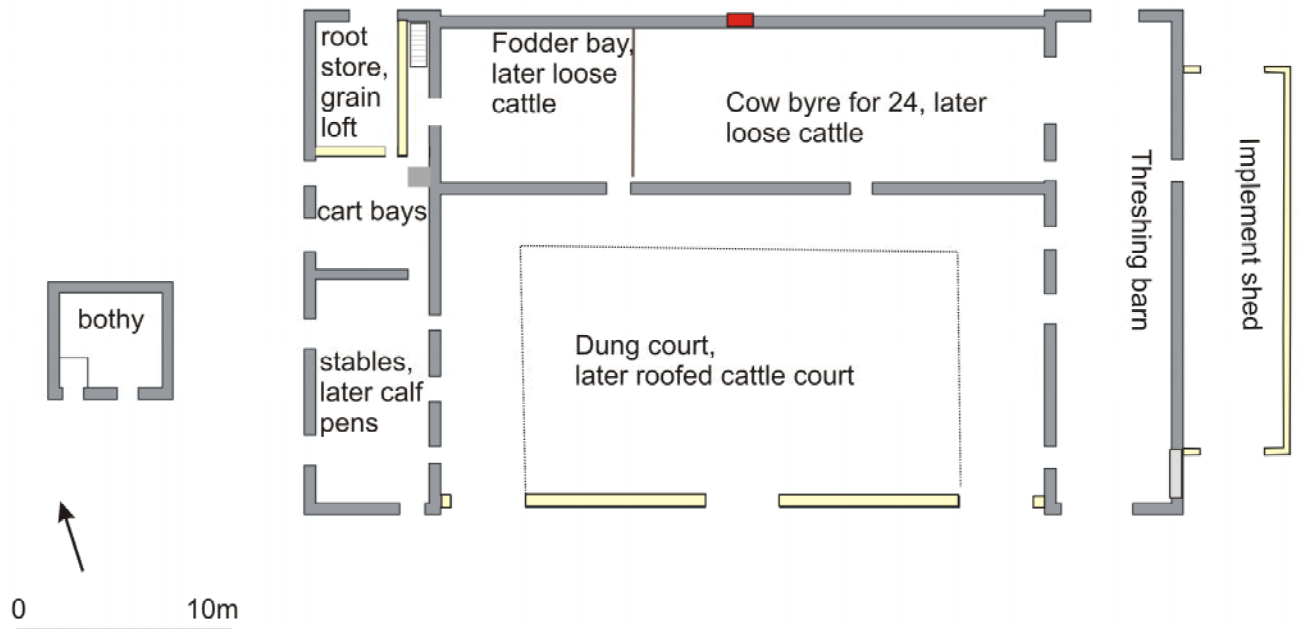
Comparison with Nether Leask (Murray and Murray 2012), also on the Slains Estate, suggests that estate policy developed the farms at very similar times. In 1867 both farms had a U shaped steading with a separate block on the open side but separated by the road running between. Between 1900 and 1907 both farms had the addition of a freestanding bothy.

At some point between *c.* 1907 and 1964 the central court was roofed and a number of secondary structures added.

Much detail in the identification of the building functions has been derived from a description in the *Illustrated Particulars of Slains Estate: for sale by auction. 1964* (www.scran.ac.uk Scran ref: COLART0016). An aerial photograph in the same source shows the buildings demolished between 1964 and 2013.

The buildings identified in 1964 comprise:

1964 Description <i>Illustrated Particulars of Slains Estate: for sale by auction. 1964</i> (www.scran.ac.uk Scran ref: COLART0016)	2013
<i>Large threshing barn</i>	E range
<i>Implement shed built of concrete blocks with a corrugated asbestos roof</i>	Lean to at E.
<i>Covered cattle court with a corrugated asbestos roof</i>	Derelict court
<i>Cow byre with standings for 24 and fodder bay</i>	N range
<i>Garage and Five pig sties built of concrete blocks with a partly corrugated iron and partly corrugated asbestos roof</i>	Not standing
<i>Cow byre with standings for 24</i>	1964 photograph appears to show an E/W range parallel with and beside the N wall of N range. This appears to be only building of suitable size and adjacent to root store/ fodder bay etc. Not standing. This does fit with cobbled area outside door D2 (which would have given access between the two cow byres)
<i>Root House with granary over</i>	N end W range (A,B). Now subdivided by a concrete wall
<i>Two loose boxes</i>	S end W range (C). More recently appear to have been used as two large calf pens.
<i>Old Bothy now used as a chicken house</i>	Bothy



Illus 10 Building functions

The changes to the buildings since 1964 represent the increasing mechanization and size of equipment with the opening up and raising of doorways for mucking out, bedding and feeding livestock. The changes in animal husbandry are reflected by the move from tied cow stalls to open cattle courts with feed passes along the walls. After demolition, the building is to be replaced by a grain store and all purpose shed, with additional vehicle turning room beside the road. This reflects the still increasing size of machinery and the general move from livestock to arable farming in the area.

8. References

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

Murray HK and Murray JC 2012 *Nether Leask Steading: Standing Building Survey*.

Grey Literature report. In Aberdeenshire SMR, RCAHMS and on line @

<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/greylit>

RCAHMS 2007 *In the shadow of Bennachie: A Field Archaeology of Donside, Aberdeenshire*. Edinburgh: RCAHMS.

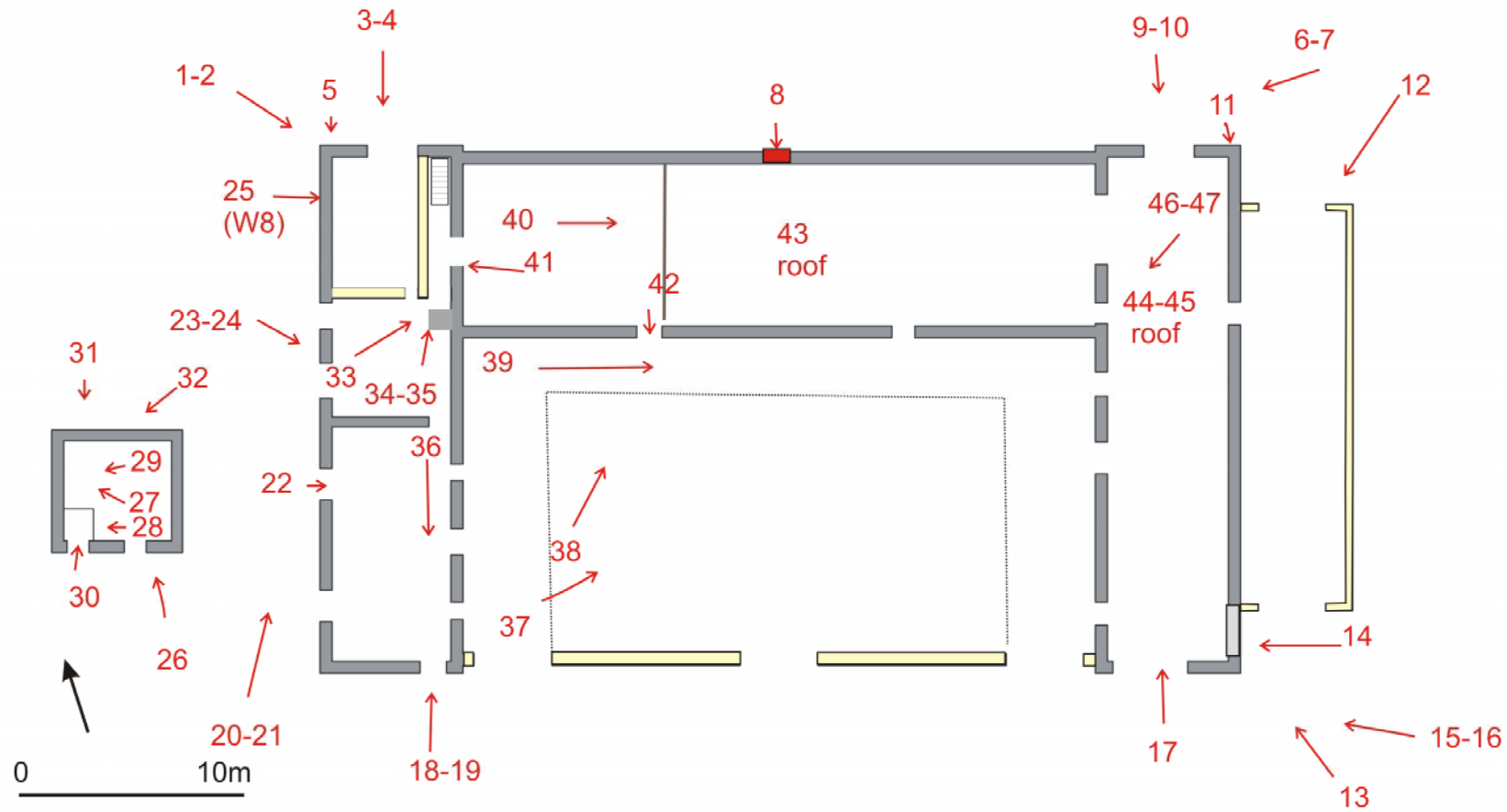
Roy. Military Map of 1747-55 on line at <http://www.nls.uk/maps>

Illustrated Particulars of Slains Estate: for sale by auction. 1964 (www.scran.ac.uk)

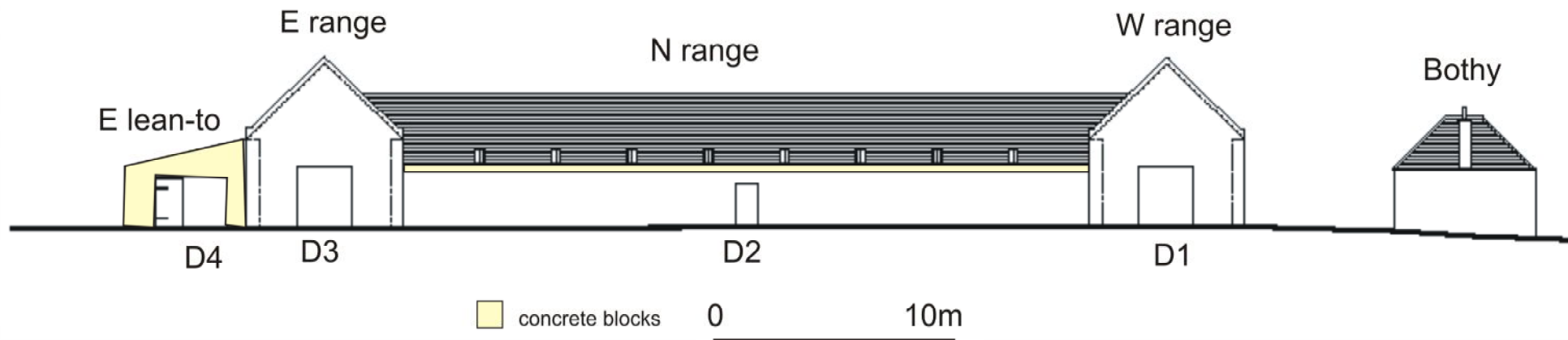
Scran ref: COLART0016

9 Archive

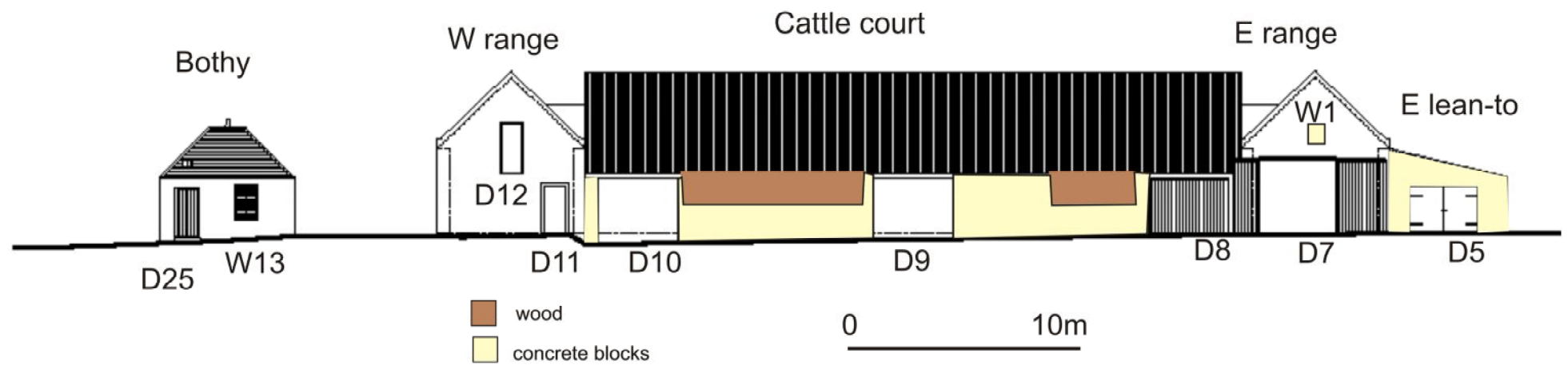
A full set of photographs with the photo location plan (Illus 11) will be supplied to the Aberdeenshire SMR in Aberdeen and to the NMRS.



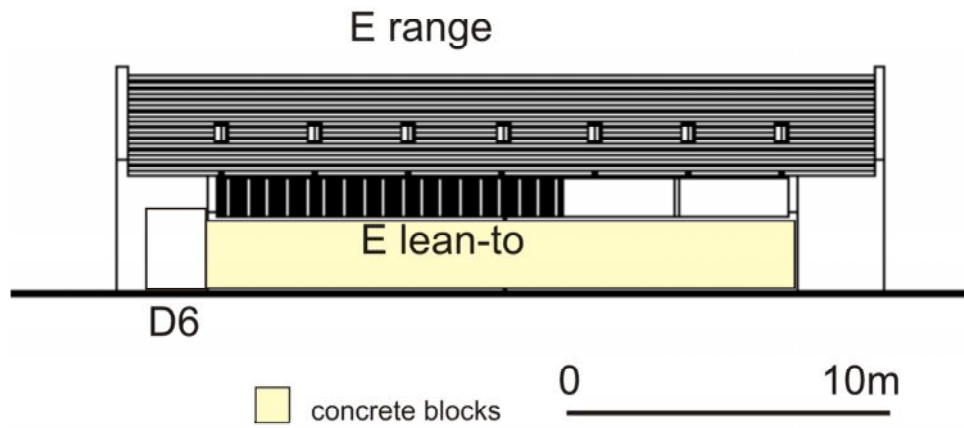
Illus 11 Photographic references



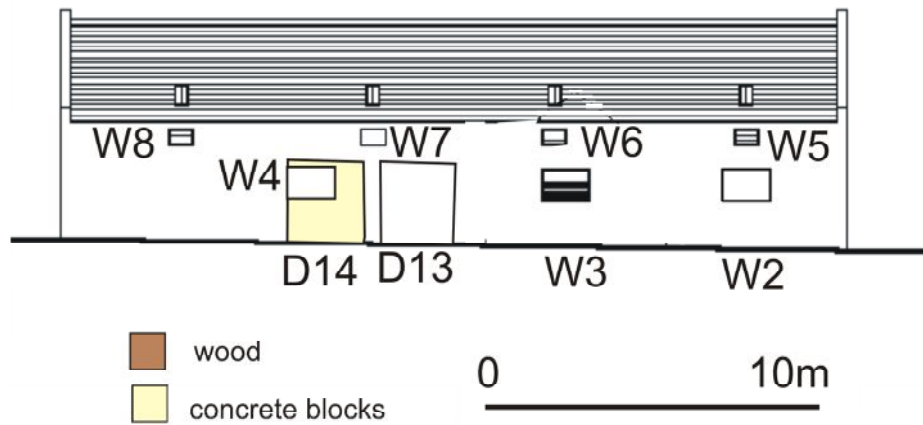
Illus 12 N elevation (Annotated from plan by John Wink Design)



Illus 13 S elevation (Annotated from plan by John Wink Design)



Illus 14 E elevation (Annotated from plan by John Wink Design)



Illus 15 W elevation (Annotated from plan by John Wink Design)