

**SILLYFLATT FARM  
(HALLGREEN CASTLE STABLES)  
INVERBERVIE  
ABERDEENSHIRE**



**Standing Building Survey**

Carried out 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014

by

**Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2014-20**

by

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**- Standing Building Survey -**

1. Background
  - 1.1 A standing building survey was required for a derelict building at Sillyflatt Farm, Inverbervie, Aberdeenshire, prior to its demolition for development.
  - 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/2014/0437.
  - 1.3 A Level 1 Standing Building Survey was required which includes measured 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 Mr and Mrs Angus Reid. The site element of the survey was completed on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014.
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 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey maps were consulted.

2.3 Plans and elevations were provided courtesy of William Cowie Chartered Architect, and have been adapted following additional surveying on site by MAS Ltd.

### 3. The Site

3.1 The site lies above the shoreline, just S of Inverbervie village and some 200m S of Hallgreen castle.

Parish: Bervie

NGR NO 8322 7195

RCAHMS No: No reference for the stable. Hallgreen Castle: NO87SW8

### 4. Documentary evidence

4.1 The structure was originally the stable of Hallgreen Castle, a late 16<sup>th</sup> century tower house with considerable later additions. Since the sale and modernisation of the castle, the stable has become divorced from it.

4.2 The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey 25" map, surveyed in 1864 (published 1868. Kincardine Sheet xxv.6 shows the stable on its present plan, but without the walled yard to the E. A small unroofed structure is shown roughly central against the back (W) wall. A carriageway leads between the stable and Hallgreen Castle.

4.3 On the Ordnance Survey 25" map, surveyed in 1902 (published 1903. Kincardineshire Sheet 025.15) and the Ordnance Survey 25" map, surveyed in 1923 (published 1924 Kincardineshire Sheet 025.15), the building is shown with the walled yard on the E and with two small structures abutting the back (W) wall, one at either end.

## 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 15) indicates the position of each.

## 6 The Stables

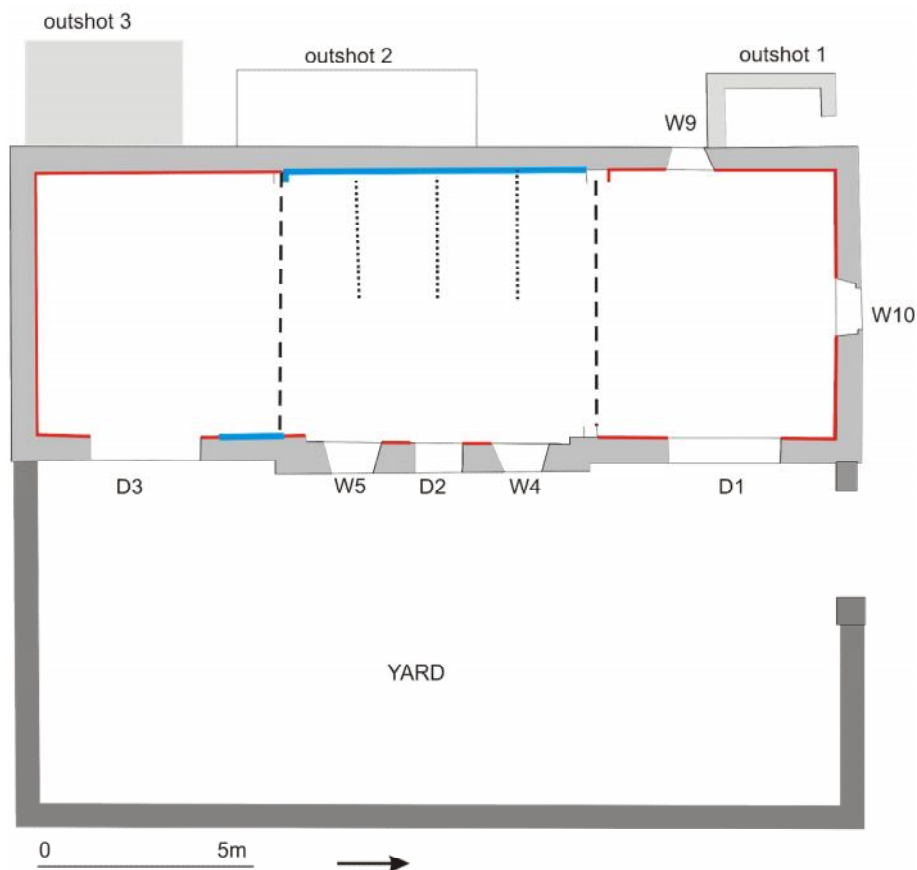
### 6.1 *Building A*

Present/recent use At the time of survey the building is roofless and derelict. A modern water trough inserted into one of the window openings suggests it has been used for livestock at some point since its use as a stable ceased.

Plan Rectangular with a gablet projecting 0.30m in the centre of the front (E) elevation above a central door flanked by windows. The central door was tall, allowing access for horses. Arched cart/ carriage entries flanked the central gablet.



**Illus 1 East elevation**



**Illus 2 Main plan annotated from drawings courtesy of William Cowie, architect. (Red denotes plaster. Blue denotes timber fixings)**

Dimensions 18.55 x 6.2m internally. 20 x 8m externally.

Walls External faces of the walls are of dressed ashlar blocks with stacks of small pinnings. Dressed sandstone detailing. Internal faces of the walls of rubble stone. Width: 0.55m



**Illus 3 Detail of wall structure in E facade**



Internally the walls of the N and S 'rooms' were plastered (red on plan illus 2) but the inside of the W wall of the central 'room' had three horizontal timbers inserted into the wall at 0.69-0.75m spacings; these would have held timber lining for the horse stalls. A small area of similar timber in the E wall of the S 'room' may have been for fixing a cupboard, pegs for harness, or some other similar fitting.

Raggles on the internal wall facings (illus 4) show the position of partition walls (dashed lines on illus 2) dividing the interior into three 'rooms'.



**Illus 4** Detail of inside of W wall in central 'room' showing fixings for timber lining and ventilation holes D-F. The raggles of the former internal partitions can be seen on either side of the picture.

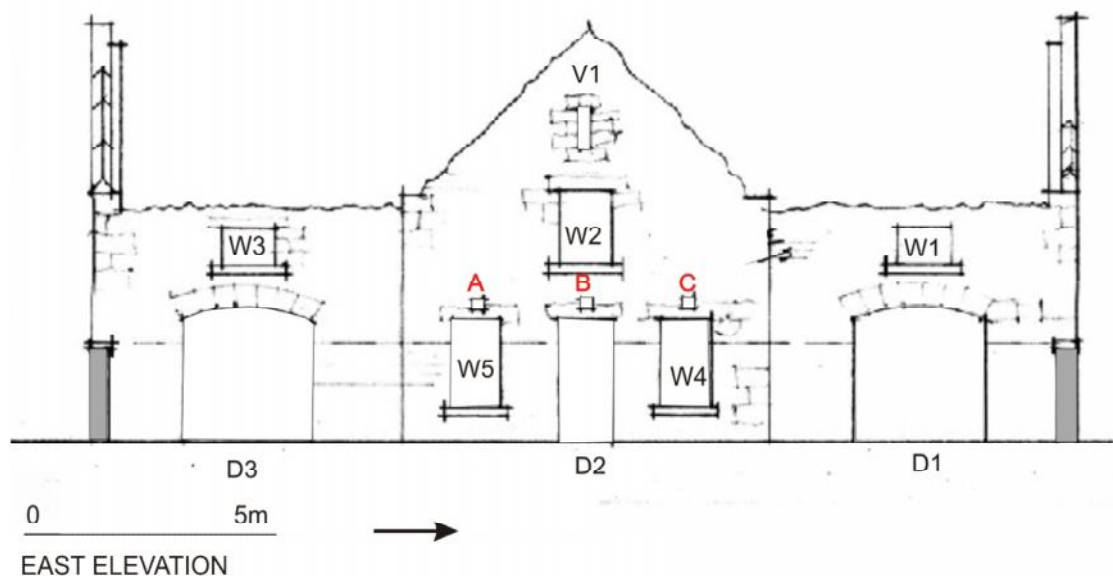
Roof The roof had collapsed but slate debris on the floor indicates it had been slated. The skewputts were gently curved, with a skew cope above. Internally, joist holes show the presence of an attic floor, with an additional low 'attic' at the top of the E gablet.



**Illus 5 Skewputt at SE corner of the stables**

Doors and windows

*E wall*



**Illus 6 E elevation annotated from drawings courtesy of William Cowie, architect.**

D1: Arched cart/carriage door with sandstone surround. W: 2.6m. H (to centre of arch): 2.6m. Iron pivots on either side indicate former position of two doors.

D2: W: 1.08m H:2.5m. Iron strap hinge survives on N side.

D3: Arched cart/carriage door with sandstone surround. W: 2.6m. H (to centre of arch): 2.6m. Iron pivots on either side indicate former position of two doors.

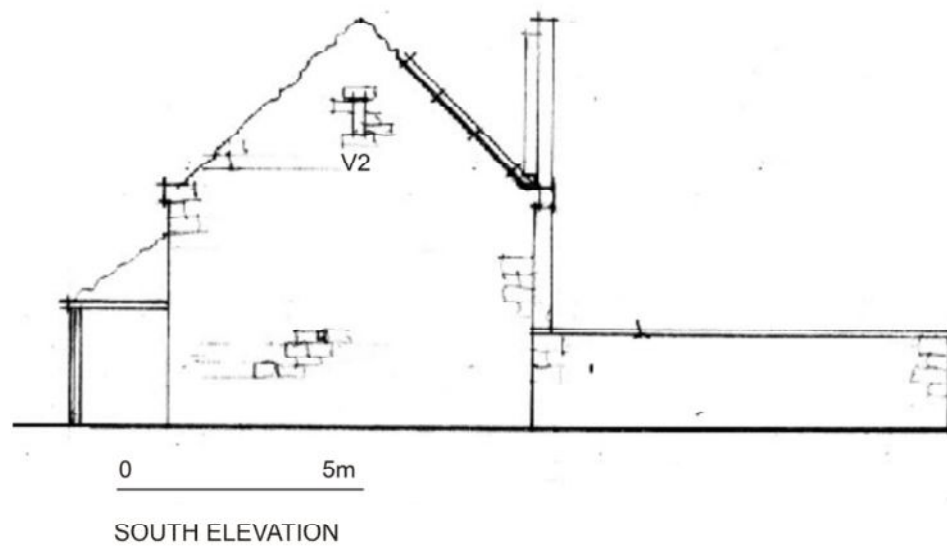
W4 and W5: W: 0.98m ext, splay internally. H: 1.94m. ext. 0.60m above floor level.

W1- W3 : Not measured.

V1: Slit vent in E gablet. Not measured.

A-C : Small square ventilation holes, c 150mm square, with well dressed sandstone surrounds were set above W4, W5 and D2. These were matched by ventilation holes in the W wall and would have allowed clean air above the horses without creating draughts.

### *S wall*



**Illus 7 S elevation annotated from drawings courtesy of William Cowie, architect.**

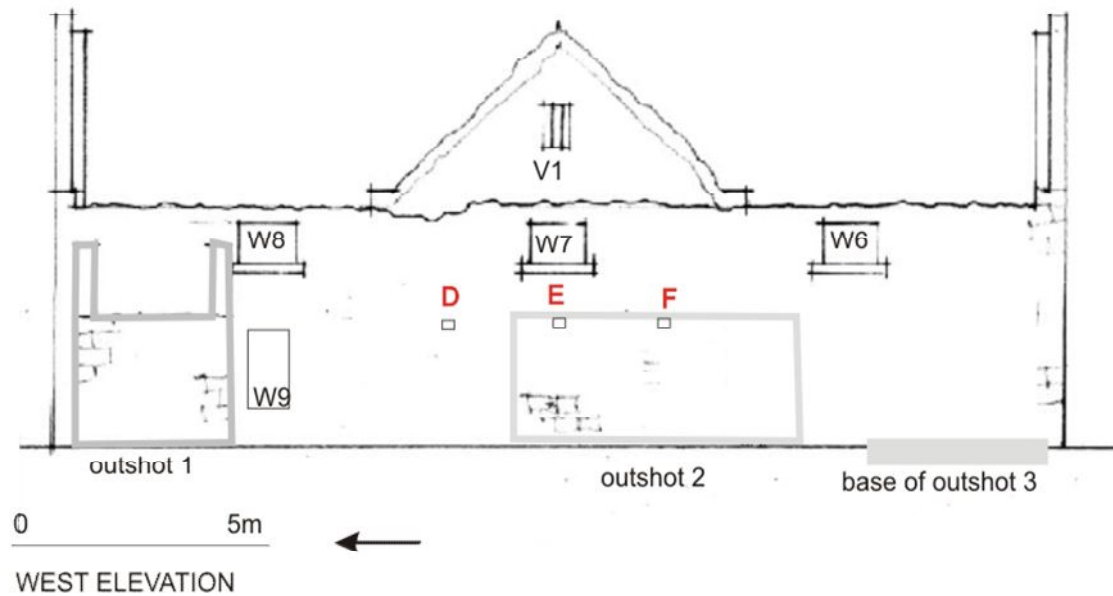
V2: Slit vent in S gable. Not measured.



**Illus 8 S gable**



*W wall*



**Illus 9** W elevation annotated from drawings courtesy of William Cowie, architect.

W6-W8: Not measured

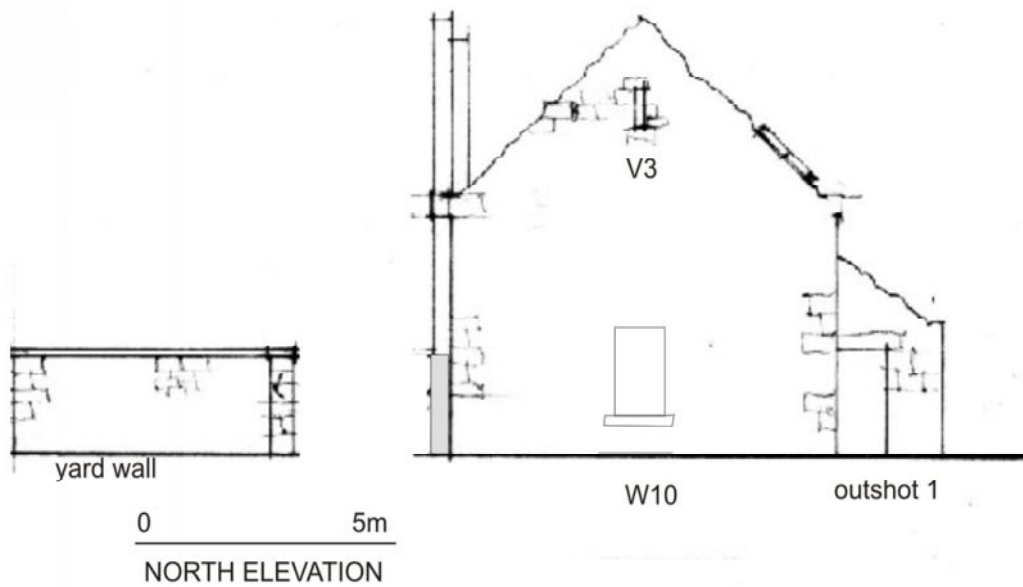
W9: W: 0.80m ext splaying to 1.07m int. H: 1.50m. 0.80m above floor.

D-F: Small square ventilation holes, c 150mm square, with well dressed sandstone surround. External iron grids survive on two.



**Illus 10** W elevation. Vent F

*N wall*



**Illus 11 N elevation annotated from drawings courtesy of William Cowie, architect.**

W10: W: 0.97m ext, splaying to 1.30m int. H: 1.93m. Base 0.45m above floor.

V3: Slit vent in S gable. Not measured.



**Illus 12 N gable**

*Outshots*

There was evidence of three small outshot structures abutting the back of the W wall.

Outshot 1 was of stone with dressed stone at the doorway and can be identified as the

N outshot shown on the 1903 OS map. It was 2.15 x 1.6m with walls 380mm thick. It had had a lean-to roof abutting the main building. Outshot 3 only survived as a stone foundation but is probably the remains of the S outshot shown on the same map.

The central outshot (2) was a modern structure of corrugated iron.



**Illus 13 View of NW corner with outshot 1.**

### *Yard*

A yard, 18m x 8m internally, was surrounded by a well-built stone wall, 0.45m thick and 2.30m high with a cope. A gateway at the N end opened to the former carriageway to Hallgreen Castle. This was built between 1864 and 1902 and would have provided much needed shelter from on-shore winds.



**Illus 14 Looking N across the yard towards Hallgreen castle.**

## 7 Discussion

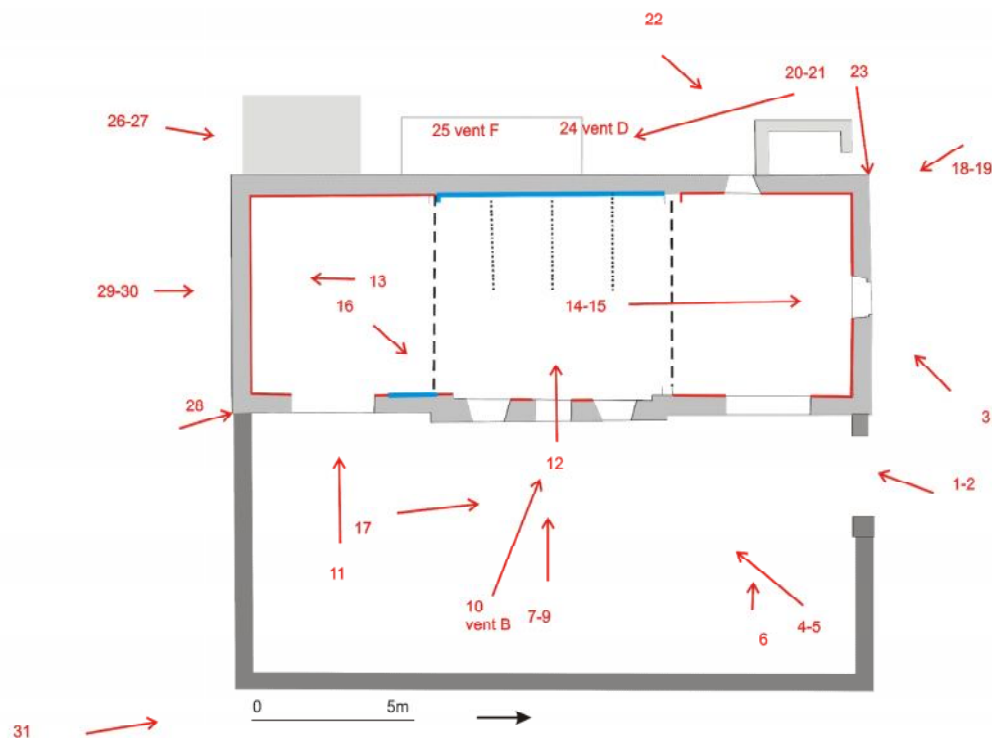
This is an interesting example of a freestanding stable block associated with a castle/mansion. It was solely intended for the riding and carriage horses, as the farm horses would have been stabled in the steading at Mains of Hallgreen at some distance

from the castle. The stable was in its present form, although without the yard, by 1864, and was probably built between 1800 and 1850.

Internally the ground floor appears to have been in three 'rooms'. The central area seems to have had timber lining for the stalls on the W wall. Although no sign of the trevise survive, the width suggests four stalls (illus 2: dotted lines), each some 1.8m wide. The small ventilation holes (A-F) provided fresh air for the horses. The tall central doorway (D2) is fairly typical of stable doors which required the additional height. The N and S 'rooms' would have provided space for one or possibly two carriages, harness etc. The loft area would have given space for the storage of hay. There is no indication of accommodation for a groom as there is no evidence of a chimney. The small outshots at the back- a central one on the 1864 OS map and two, one at either end, on the 1903 map ( of which the N outshot survives) – may have been kennels.

## 8 Archive

A full set of photographs with the photo location plan (illus 15) will be supplied to the Aberdeenshire SMR in Aberdeen and to the NMRS.



**Illus 15 Photographic references**