

FARM STEADING
MEIKLE ARDO
METHLICK
ABERDEENSHIRE



Standing Building Survey

Carried out 22nd September 2014

by

Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2014-38

by

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- Standing Building Survey -

1. Background
 - 1.1 A standing building survey was required for the steading buildings at Meikle Ardo, Methlick, Aberdeenshire, prior to their partial demolition and conversion for dwellings.
 - 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 Numbers: APP/2014/1572, Condition 2; APP/2014/1575, Condition 6.
 - 1.3 A Level 1 Standing Building Survey was required which includes measured plans and elevations, a written account of the building's plan, form, function, age and development sequence in addition to a photographic survey of the interior and exterior of the building.
 - 1.4 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned to undertake the work by Mr and Mrs Learmouth. The site element of the survey was completed on the 22nd September 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 and Pastmap.

- 2.2 The 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps were consulted.
- 2.3 Plans and elevations were kindly supplied by Colin Thompson, Chartered Architect and these have been annotated as necessary.

3. The Site

- 3.1 The site lies on a private farm road c. 4km N of Methlick, between the B9170 Methlick- New Deer road and the B9005 Methlick to Fyvie road. It is on the higher ground above the Ythan valley.

Parish: Methlick

NGR NJ 8479 3976

Aberdeenshire SMR No: NJ83NW0057

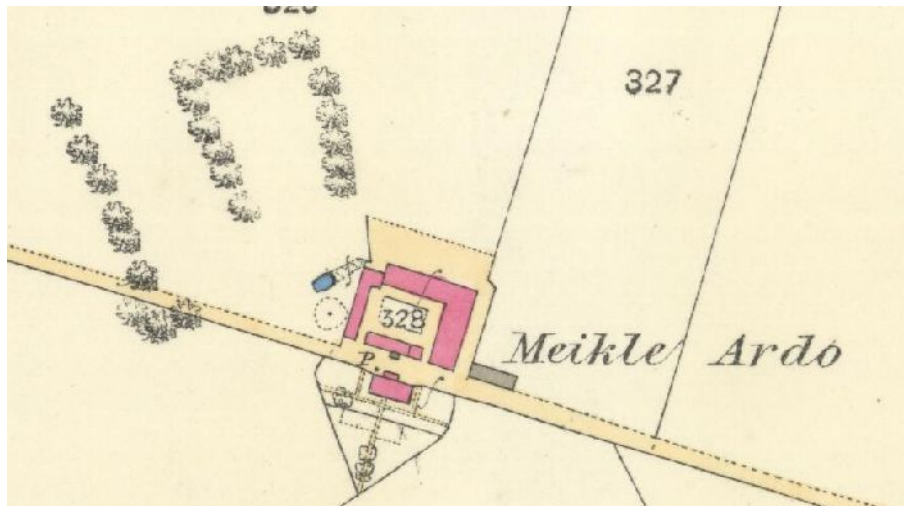
4. Documentary evidence

- 4.1 **Roy's Military map of Scotland 1747-55** shows two buildings at Muckle Ardo (*sic*) one rectangular, the other L-plan. The area S of the buildings is shown as rig and furrow but to the N is unimproved ground.



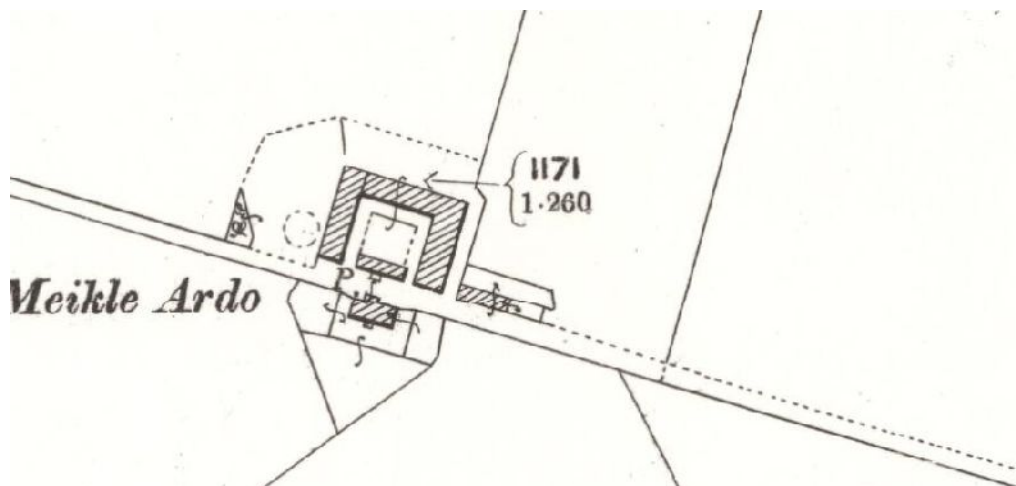
Illus 1 Roy's Military map of 1747-55 www.nls.ac.uk

- 4.2 **Aberdeen Sheet XXIX.7 (Methlick) 1869 (pub 1873)** shows a U- shaped steading open to the S with a narrow S range (outwith the present survey) across the open end. The house (outwith the present survey) lies to the S of the farm road. The main steading buildings are shown as a wider N and E range, abutted by/abutting a narrower W range with a horse mill attached to the outer W wall near to its S end. An unroofed building lies to the E of the main steading.



Illus 2 Detail of the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25" map, surveyed in 1869 (published 1873. Sheet xxix (Methlick) www.nls.ac.uk

- 4.3 By the 2nd edition 25"/mile Ordnance Survey of 1899 (published 1901. **Aberdeenshire Sheet 029.07**) the W range appears to have been widened on its E side into the court and the NW corner rebuilt to be in line with the N range. The S range appears to have been foreshortened.



Illus 3 Detail of the 2nd edition 25"/mile Ordnance Survey of 1899 (published 1901. Aberdeenshire Sheet 029.07) www.nls.ac.uk

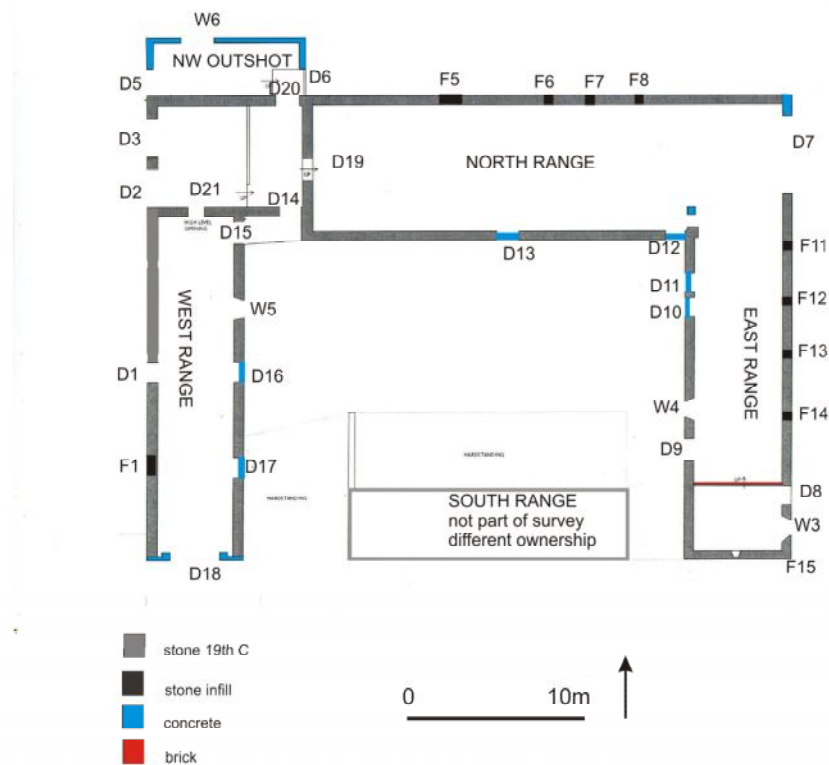
5 Methodology

- 5.1 The ground plans (illus 4, 18) and elevations (illus 17) 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 19) indicates the position of each.

6 The Steading

The buildings shown in 1899 are substantially intact, although altered internally. However, at the time of the survey some roofs were in a state of collapse and some had been removed. The interior had been modernised in most areas, with concrete render in some areas obscuring some internal details of blockings.

Loft areas in the N end of the W range could not be accessed safely.



Illus 4 Main plan. Annotated from drawing courtesy of Colin Thompson, Chartered Architect Services. (Larger scale version of plan in Illus 18)

6.1 EAST RANGE

Dimensions 26 x 6m externally

Present/recent use Steading

Walls Rubble stone with exception of NE corner which had been rebuilt in concrete blocks to enlarge D 7.

Roof Slate. Metal skylights.

Chimneys rectangular of dressed granite blocks with plain table. Ceramic pot.

Skewputts Notched skewputts at F9 and at F15

Doors and windows

E wall

F10 Seven vents in top of wall; each c 80mm high x 220mm wide, formed of two notched stones set one over the other to form an upward slanting vent.

F11-F14 Blocked rectangular openings near base of wall. 450x450mm to 500 x500mm. Stone blocking.

D8 W:1.07m H: 2.07m, dressed granite lintel and rybats

W3 W:0.92m H: 1.24m, dressed granite lintel and rybats

W wall

D9 W 1.23m H:2.15m, dressed granite lintel and rybats

W4 W:0.92m H: 1.23m, dressed granite lintel, sill and rybats

D10 W1.10m H: 2.07m, dressed granite lintel and rybats

D11 W1.10m H: 2.07m, dressed granite lintel and rybats and column between D10 and D11. D10 and D11 blocked with concrete.

Internal

The S end of this range with door D8 and window W3 had been a bothy with a small fireplace remaining in the gable. The partition wall had been removed but the base of a brick foundation was visible.



Illus 5 Door and window of bothy



Illus 6 Chimney of bothy



Illus 7 Fireplace of bothy

Most internal features had been stripped or obscured but there were the remains of the vertical timbers of trevis partitions set into the inner face of the E wall.



Illus 8 Remains of trevis partitions on E wall of E range

6.2 NORTH RANGE

Dimensions 27.5 x 8m externally

Present/recent use Steading

Walls Rubble stone.

Roof Slate, partially removed prior to survey. Ceramic ventilation tiles on ridge. Metal skylights. A-frame couples with sarking.

Doors and windows

N wall

F5 Blocked doorway with stone lintel and rubble stone rybats W:1.2m H: 1,70m. Stone blocked. (illus 9)

F4 Ten vents in top of wall; each c 80mm high x 220mm wide, formed of two notched stones set one over the other to form an upward slanting vent (illus 10)

F6-F8 Blocked rectangular openings near base of wall. 450x450mm to 500 x500mm. Stone blocking with ceramic pipes built in for ventilation.

E wall

This gable had been rebuilt in concrete blocks to allow an enlarged doorway. The S side of the doorway had the dressed granite rybats of original door.

D7 W: 4.35m H: incomplete

F9 Notched skewputt.



Illus 9 N wall N range. Blocking F5 to LHS of ranging rod. Vents F4 above



Illus 10 N wall N range. Blockings F4 and F6

S wall

F16 Nine slit vents in top of wall as F4 - each c 80mm high x 220mm wide, formed of two notched stones set one over the other to form an upward slanting vent.

D12 W: 1.10m H: 2m, dressed granite lintel and rybats. Concrete blocked.

D13 W: 1.22m H: 2.2m, dressed granite lintel and rybats. Concrete blocked.

F17 Skewputt. Notched granite.

F18 Raggle of corrugated iron roof extending E of D14.

Interior Concrete floor with drain.

D19 Wooden sliding doors with wooden lintel. W:1.22m, H:1.96m

6.3 WEST RANGE

Dimensions main block 19.5 x 5.4m externally; with the NW end with the cart bays D2 and D3 the length is 26m. This NW section is wider at 6.5m.

Present/recent use Steading

Walls Rubble stone

Roof Slate. Ridge of main block lower than the NW corner which appears to be secondary and has its roof in the line of the N range, lying E/W.

Doors and windows

E wall

D15 W:1.25m H: 1.90m. Granite lintel, rough dressed rubble stone rybats

D16 W:1.02m H: 1.83m Stone lintel (not granite) and rubble stone rybats.
Concrete blocked.

D17 W: 1.06m H: 1.80m Stone lintel (not granite) and rubble stone rybats.
Concrete blocked.

W5 W: 1.04m H:0.80m, splays internally.

W wall

F1 W:1.14m H: 1.47m. Former opening. Stone blocked.

F2 Horizontal timber 1.15m long x 100mm. At 1.32m above ground level.

F1 and F2 (illus 11) coincide with the position of the horse mill shown on the
1st and 2nd edition OS maps; they are probably related to the mill fittings.



Illus 11 W wall W range. Blocking F1 and timber F2; possibly associated with the horse mill

- D1 W:1.06m H:1.78m. Rough stone lintel (not granite). Plank door.
- D2 & D3 Cart bays with arches W: 2.17m H to apex : 2.25m. Granite arch stones. Central pillar rough dressed rybats.
- D4 Loft door above cart bays. Not measured. Stone (not granite) lintel and sill. Two rings below sill probably for ladder attachment.



Illus 12 Cart bays in N end of W range with loft door above

S wall

D18 Modern metal sliding doors. W:2.76m H:2.95m

6.4 NORTH WEST OUTSHOT

A concrete addition abutts the N end of the W range. It appears to have been built to house a thresher with a loading opening on the N wall which is since

used as placement for a fuel tank.



Illus 13 View of thresher inside NW outshott

Dimensions 8.5m x 3.29m externally.

Walls concrete blocks

Roof Corrugated asbestos.

Doors and windows

E wall

D5 W:1.52m H: 2.25m

N wall

Opening to upper level blocked by tank

W wall

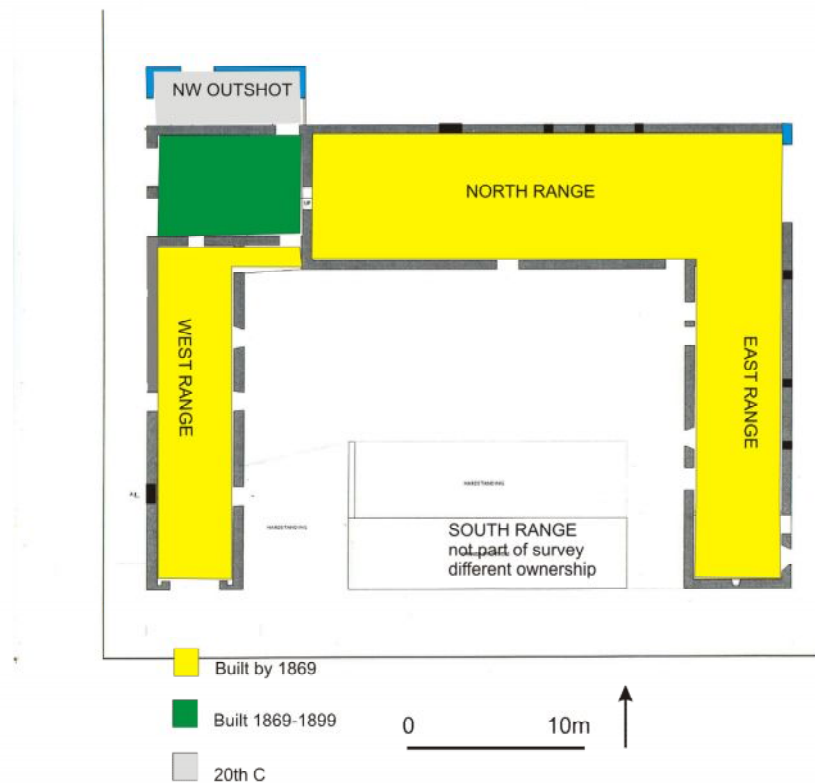
D6 W:1.53m H: 2.4m

Interior

D20 W: 1.25m H: 2.20m

7 Discussion

Meikle Ardo is a fairly typical Aberdeenshire improvement steading (Glendinning and Wade Martins 2008, 119-120), probably dating from between *c.* 1800 and 1869 when it was depicted on the OS map.



Illus 14 Phasing of the buildings. Plan annotated from drawing courtesy of Colin Thompson, Chartered Architect

Although both the N and E ranges and the narrower W range appear on the 1869 map, they are clearly built at different times as the W range doorways have rougher stone lintels and rybats (illus 15) as opposed to the dressed granite of the N and E ranges (illus 16). It is tempting to suggest that the W range, which as the OS maps show had a horse mill outside the W wall, may have been earlier but this is speculative. Indeed the apparent widening of this range on the 2nd OS map might indicate that the rougher lintels were secondary. The N end of the W range, filling in the odd gap at the corner, was built between 1869 and 1899 according to the map evidence. Some dressed granite was used in the arch construction (illus 12) of the cart bays.



Illus 15 D17 in the W range with stone lintel and rough rybats



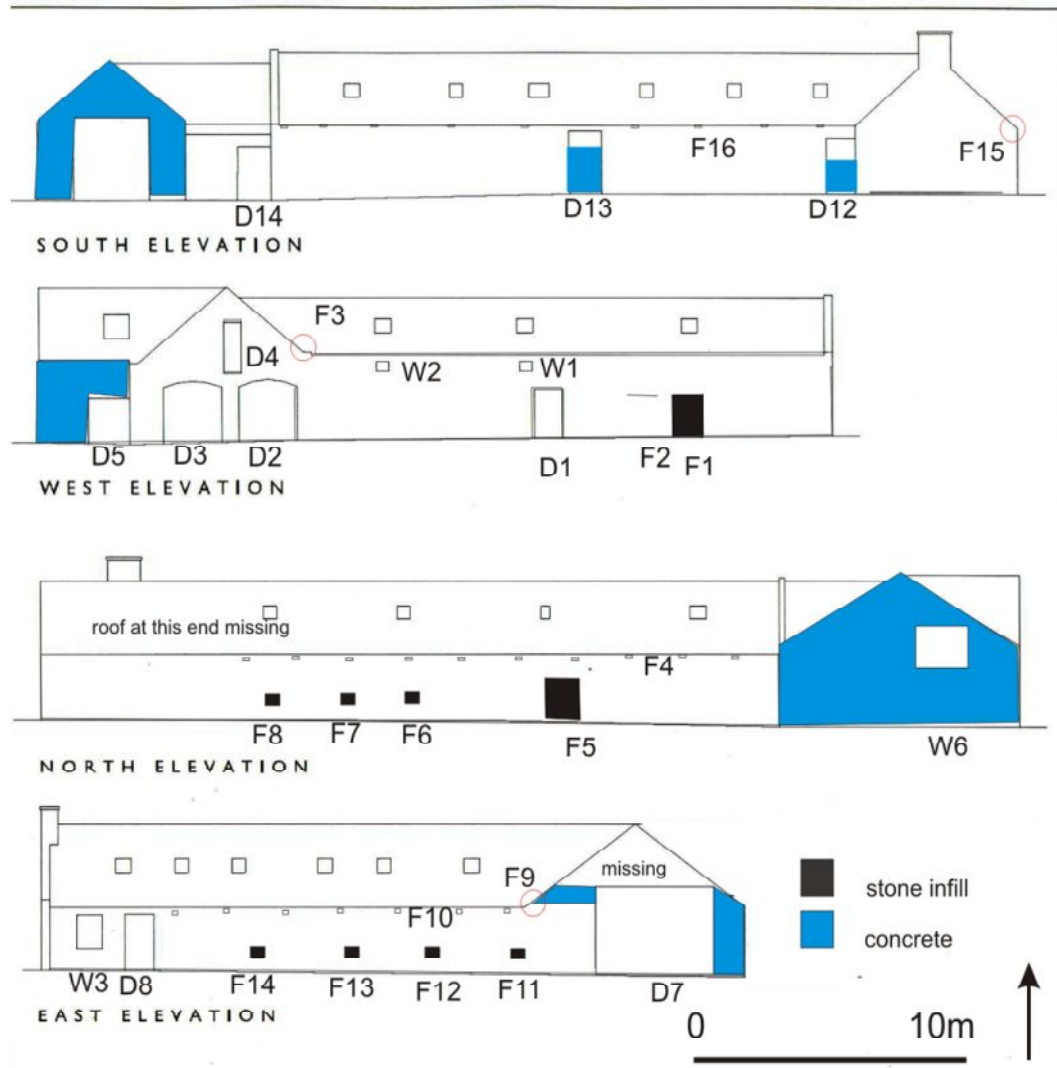
Illus 16 D9 and W4 in the E range with dressed granite lintel and rybats.

References

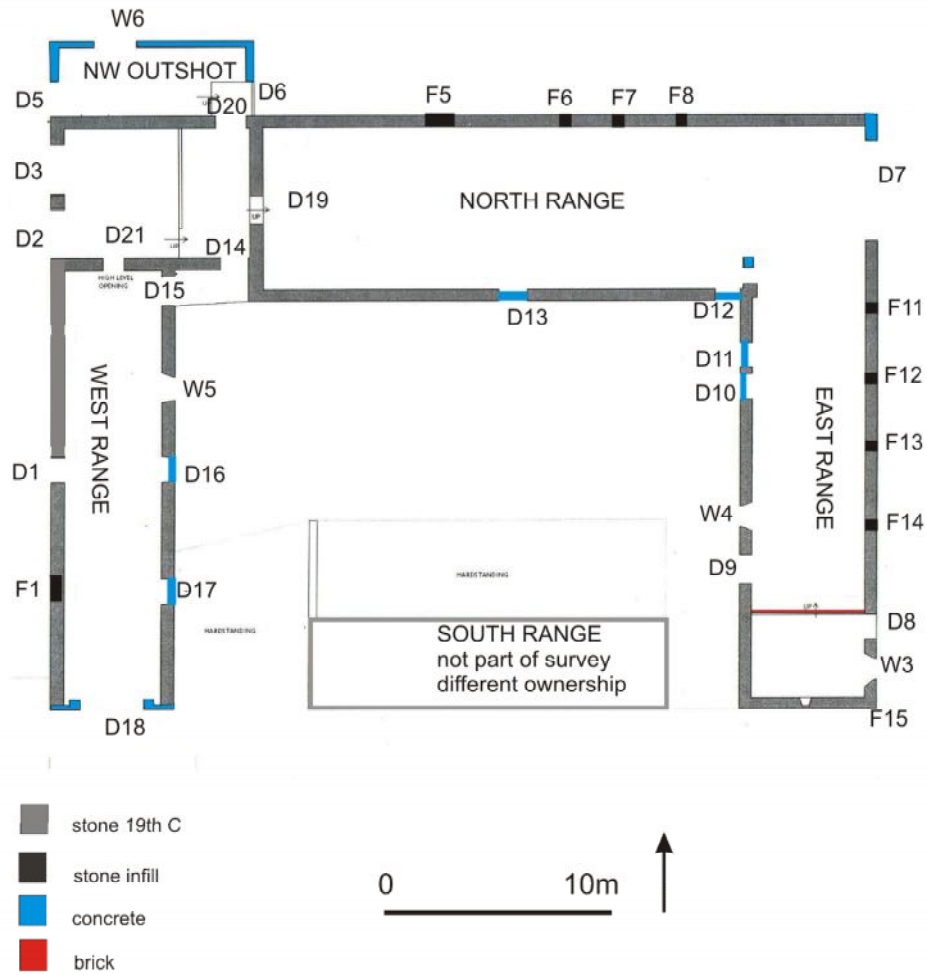
Glendinning, M and Wade Martins, S 2008 Buildings of the Land: Scotland's Farms 1750-2000 Edinburgh: RCAHMS.

9 Archive

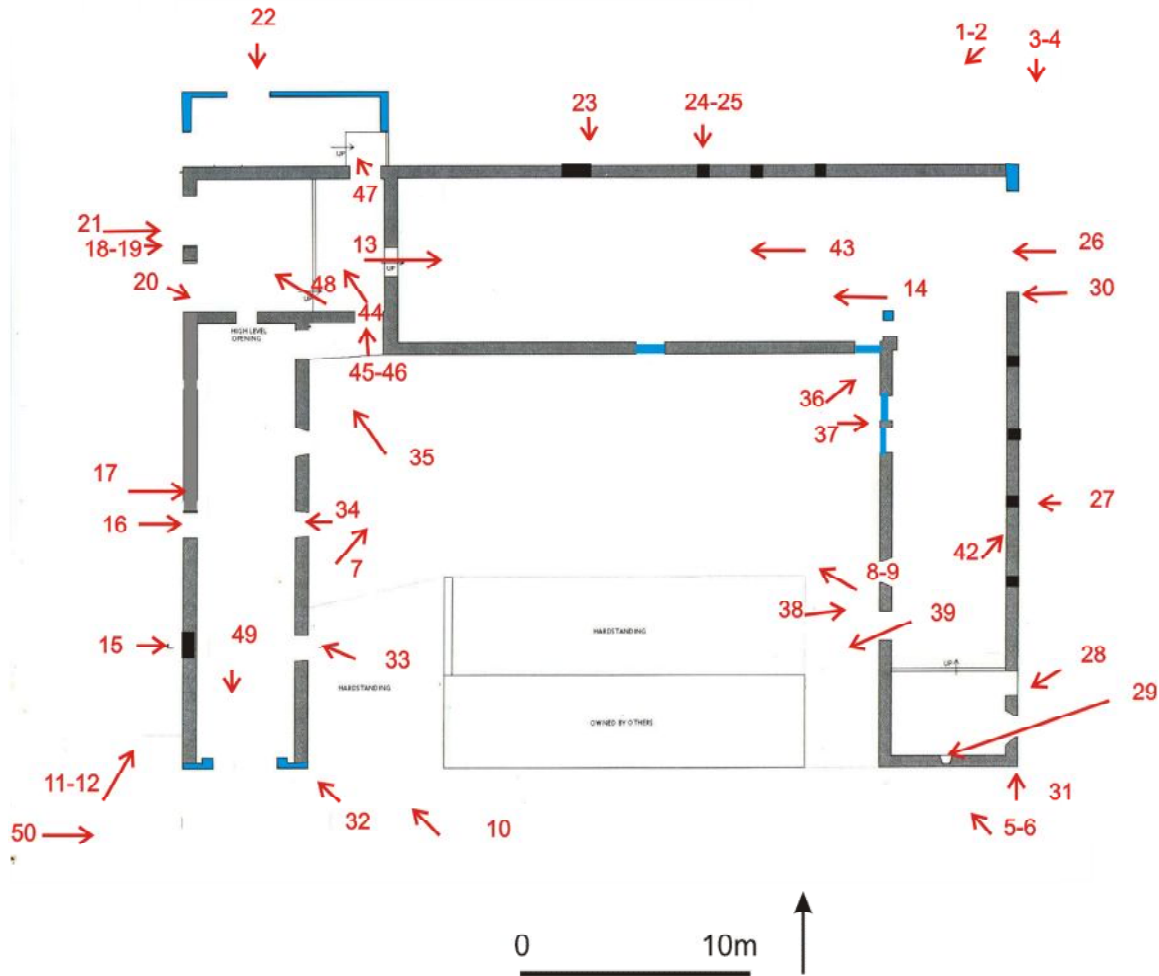
A full set of photographs with the photo location plan (Illus 19) will be supplied to the Aberdeenshire SMR in Aberdeen and to the NMRS.



Illus 17 Elevations. Annotated from drawing courtesy of Colin Thompson, Chartered Architect



Illus 18 Main plan. Annotated from drawing courtesy of Colin Thompson, Chartered Architect



Illus 19 Photographic references. Plan annotated from drawing courtesy of Colin Thompson, Chartered Architect.