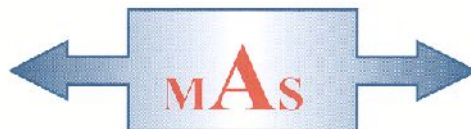


**ARDGATHEN
ALFORD
ABERDEENSHIRE**



Standing Building Survey
Carried out 17th November 2014
by
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2014-45
by
H K Murray and J C Murray

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ABERDEENSHIRE**

- Standing Building Survey -

1. Background
 - 1.1 A standing building survey was required for buildings at Ardgathen, Alford, Aberdeenshire, prior to their demolition and the erection of a replacement dwelling house,
 - 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/2013/3629.
 - 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 Neil Tyrrell. The site element of the survey was completed on the 17th November 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 courtesy of Gerry Robb Architects have been annotated as necessary.

3. The Site

- 3.1 The site lies on a private farm road to the E of the road running through the cluster of houses at Ardgathen, just S of the junction between the A980 Alford to Banchory road and the A944 road between Alford and Bridge of Alford.
- Parish: Alford NGR NJ 5634 1631

4. Documentary evidence

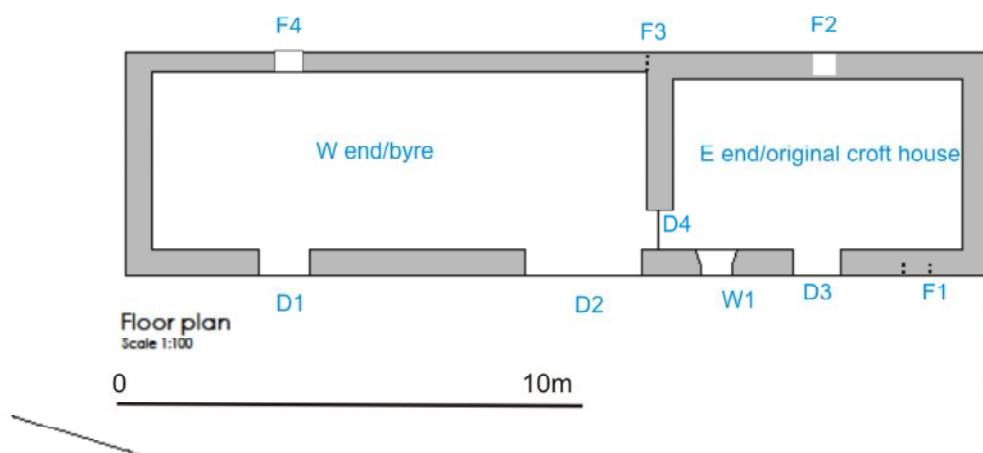
- 4.1 **Aberdeen Sheet LXII.3 (Alford) 1867 (pub 1869)** shows two properties in the survey area. To the W, a long narrow building lying approximately E/W and divided into two parts, the E part being slightly smaller. A small outshot is attached to the W gable. A garden plot lies to the N of the E part but an apparently unfenced triangle of land to the N of the W part of the building. A small unroofed structure lies in the adjacent plot to the E.



Illus 1 Detail of the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25" map, surveyed in 1867 (published 1869) Sheet lxii.3 (Alford) www.nls.ac.uk

5 Methodology

- 5.1 The ground plans (illus 4, 17) and elevations (illus 17) have been annotated to show details 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 18) indicates the position of each.



Illus 4 Plan annotated from drawing by Gerry Robb, Architectural Design Services.

6 The Byre

The W building, now named as the byre, is substantially the structure shown on the 1867 OS map. The E building, which did not appear until the 1899 OS map, is the existing house; this has been very substantially added to and converted during the last 50 years. It has few recognisable original features and has as a result not been recorded in detail. It was not entered.



Illus 5 S wall of building looking W

6.1 BYRE (WEST BUILDING)

The E end of this building was earlier with the longer W end abutting it.



Illus 6 Detail of N wall (F3) showing the original NW corner of the E building to LHS of ranging rod.

Dimensions 18.5m E/W x 4.8m N/S externally

Present/recent use Derelict

Original use The W part appears always to have been used for livestock. The E part has most recently been used for poultry and as a workshop/shed. It may originally have been a dwelling.

Walls Field stone, with rather larger, better coursed stone used in the E part of the building. Thickness: 500mm.

Roof A frames with sarking and Welsh slate. Metal framed skylight to W, opening for skylight to E.



Illus 7 E gable. Note large well placed stones at apex and slight raising of wall height with secondary concrete and stone skews



Illus 8 W gable. Note rougher stonework than in E gable

Doors and windows

S wall

D1 W: 1.10m H: 2.00m Rough stone lintel

D2 W: 2.52m H: 1.90m Granite lintel. Fallen sliding wooden door

W1 W: 630mm H: 800mm Widens internally. Rough stone lintel. Sill obscured by concrete. 2-pane window.

D3 W:1.02m H: 1.83m (to concrete floor)

F1 W: c. 700mm Possible blocked window between c. 1.3m and 2.03m E of door D3. Stones irregular and different mortar.



Illus 9 Detail of D1



Illus 10 Detail of D2 and W1

E wall Gable. No features. The gable slightly raised when roof slated?

W wall Gable. No features.

N wall

F2 470 x 500mm break-through at base of wall. Sliding hatch on inside.

Appears to have been used for poultry.

F3 Vertical line in wall- this is the original W end of the E part of the building, with the rougher stonework of W part abutting it.

F4 Double rectangular break-through in wall. Base: 600 x 500mm loosely blocked with 3 concrete blocks. Top: 400 x 420mm. These were obscured on the inside by a stack of pallets.



Illus 11 N wall. Break-through F4



Illus 12 N wall break-through F2

Interior

W part: c. 10.5m long. Cobbled floor remaining. No other original features.

E part: c. 6.2m long. Remains of small pen in NW corner. Differences in render suggest it was at some point divided into two rooms/areas.

Floor c. 250mm higher than W end. Concrete. Step between the two areas at D4: W:800mm H: 2.20m (to floor of lower W end) Wooden lintel.



Illus 13 Cobbles in W end of building



Illus 14 NW interior of E part of building. Note small pen in corner and render suggesting former division into two rooms/ areas.

6.2 HOUSE (EAST BUILDING)

The house faces S. Gables have been raised to insert square slated dormers.

Rectangular outshot at S for bathroom and lobby.

Rectangular outshot at N for kitchen.

Dimensions c. 5.5m x 11.4m externally

Present/recent use Dwelling

Original use Dwelling

Walls The original parts of walls stone. Additions harled- probably concrete blockwork.

Roof Slate. Metal skylights to N and S.

Chimneys Rectangular granite with plain table. Ceramic pots.

Windows and doors All windows and doors were modern replacements. Not detailed.



Illus 15 South and West walls of house, showing raised walls and gable, modern windows, dormers and outshot.



Illus 16 North wall of house showing raised wall, modern window and modern outshot.

7 Discussion

The building known as the byre is of early 19th-century date and is a survival of a single-storey croft house and byre (*cf* Murray 2008, 45; Fenton and Walker 1981, 187, 191). It has clearly been built in two stages with the E part being earlier. This would appear to have been a small croft house with a central door to the S flanked by two small windows of which one remains. It is probable that the original roof was thatched and that there may have been a timber chimney or a hanging chimney, removed when the roof was slated. The 1st OS map indicates that the croft had a narrow strip of enclosed garden ground to the N.

The W part of the building was built after the croft house and abuts it, the floor being a lower level (even allowing for the later concrete in the E part.). The small building attached to the W gable in 1867 may have been the privy. The W building with its lower cobbled floor and lack of windows appears to have been a byre. The wide doorway (D2) with a dressed granite lintel is secondary and possibly replaced a second doorway similar to D1.

The present dwelling is shown on the 1899 OS map when it appears to relate to a separate plot of garden ground- however this is not totally clear as there seems to be a rather awkward access for the building further E (not part of the

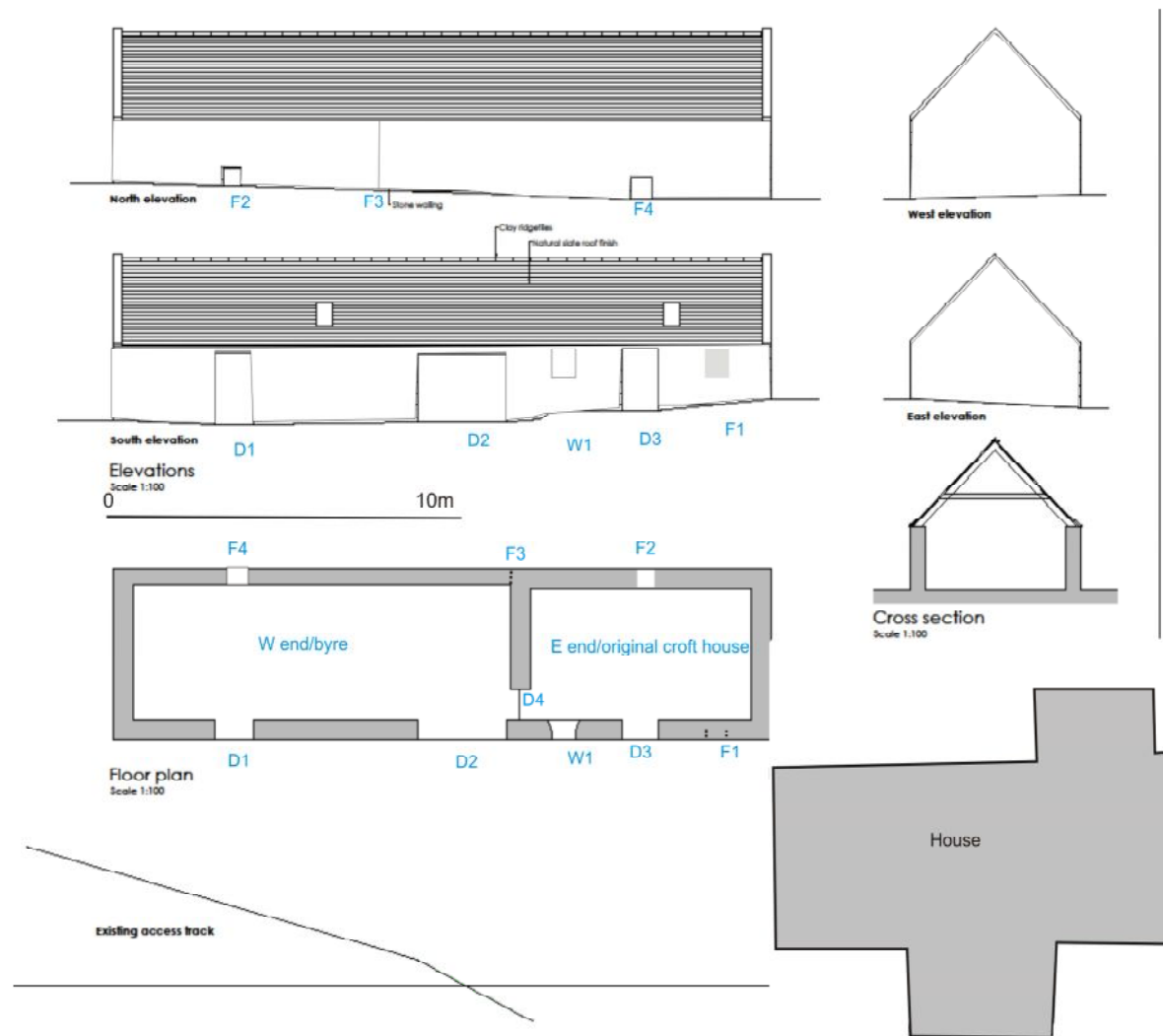
present survey). At some point both of the properties appear to have come under one ownership, with the E house replacing the E end of the byre/croft as the dwelling.

References

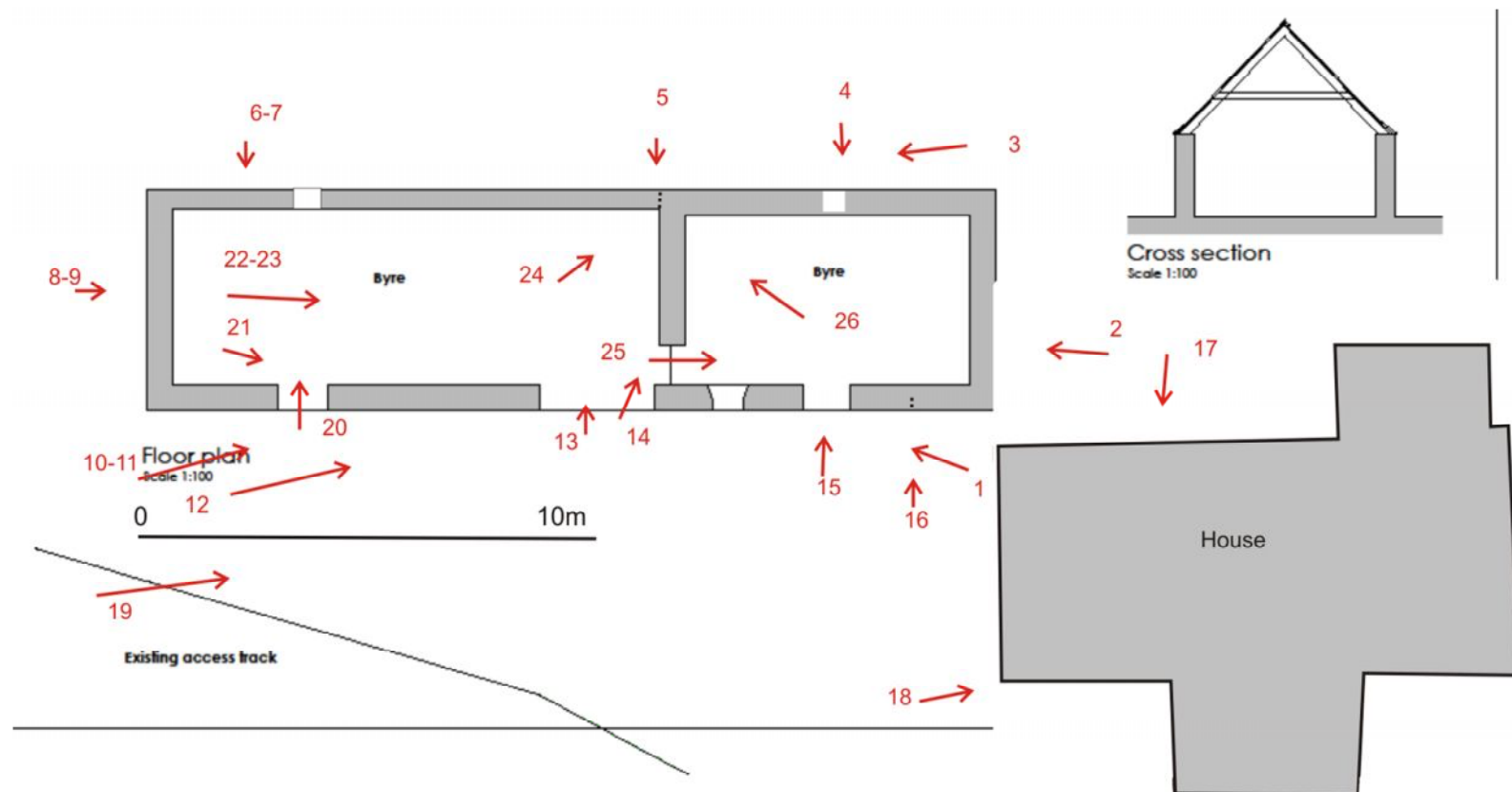
- Fenton, A and Walker, B 1981 *The Rural Architecture of Scotland*. John Donald: Edinburgh.
- Murray, H K 2008 'Clay and Bool Construction near Urquhart, Morayshire', *Vernacular Buildings* 31, 41-52.

8 Archive

A full set of photographs with the photo location plan (Illus 18) will be supplied to the Aberdeenshire SMR in Aberdeen and to the NMRS.



Illus 17 Plan and elevations annotated from drawing by Gerry Robb, Architectural Design Services



Illus 18 Photo locations. Plan annotated from plan by Gerry Robb, Architectural Design Services