

**FARM STEADING
FORRESTERHILL FARM
OLDMELDRUM
ABERDEENSHIRE**



Standing Building Survey

Carried out 31st July 2015

by

Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2015-25

by

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- Standing Building Survey -

1. Background
 - 1.1 A standing building survey was required for the steading buildings at Forresterhill* Farm, Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire, prior to their demolition before the construction of three new dwellings. * Also known on some maps as Foresterhill, and Frosterhill. In this report the spelling Forresterhill is used as this is the name as it appears on the planning applications.
 - 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/2014/0641; APP/2014/4156; APP/2014/4155
 - 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 George Douglas Architects on behalf of their clients Mr Lloyd Duncan. The site element of the survey was completed on the 31st July 2015.
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.

3. The Site

3.1 The site lies on the E side of the B9170 Methlick to Oldmeldrum Road some 2km N of Oldmeldrum. The Raxton burn lies to the E.

Parish: Meldrum

NGR NJ 8264 2963 GPS (centre of yard: 382632, 829632)

RCAHMS No: NJ82NW174

Canmore id: 191800

Aberdeenshire SMR No: None

4. Documentary evidence

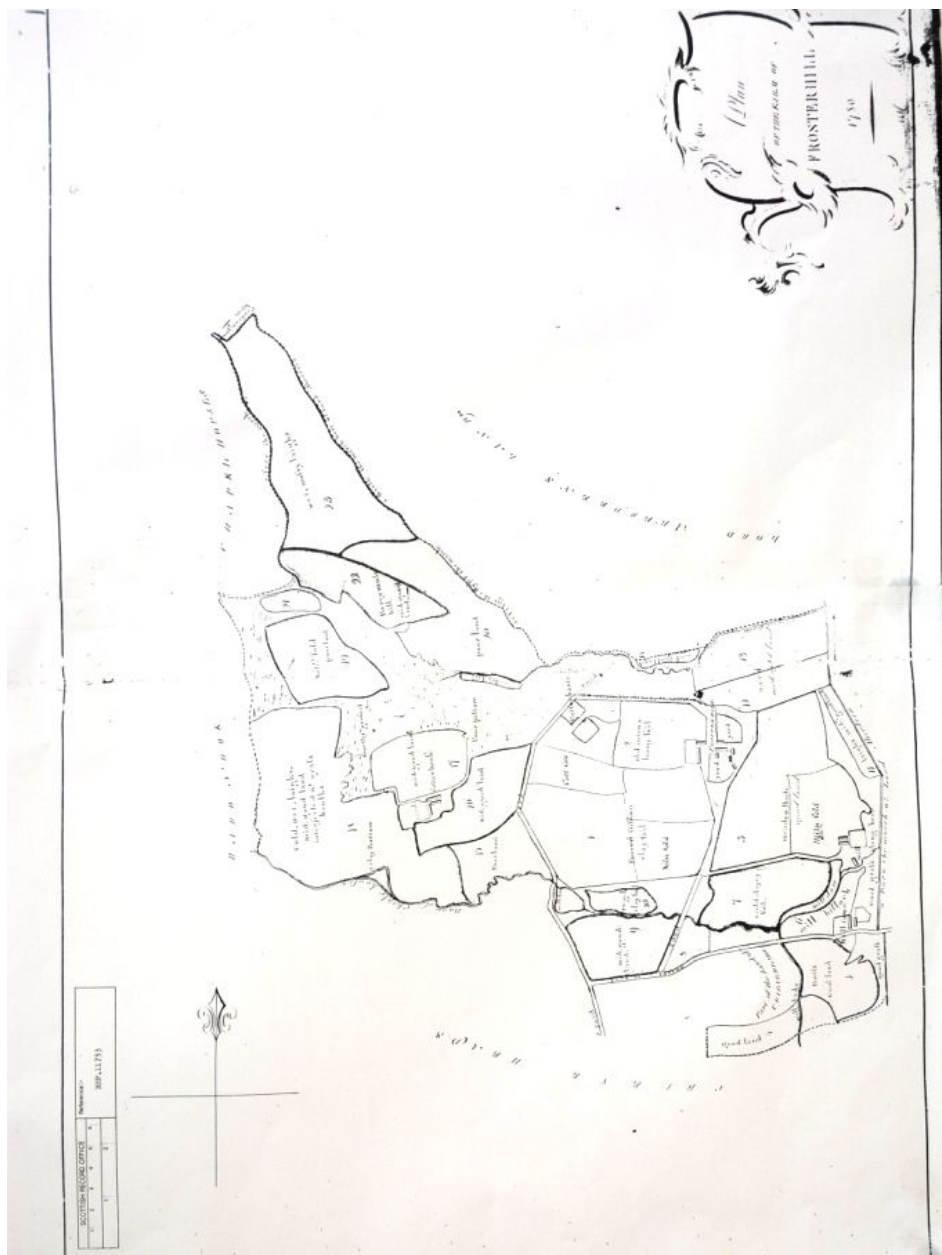
4.1 **Roy's Military map of 1747-55** shows a cluster of buildings and cultivated ground in the correct position, W of the Raxton burn and NE of Meldrum Mains, but neither Forresterhill, nor the mill of Forresterhill are named.

4.2 **A plan of the farm of Frosterhill 1780. Surveyed by William Urquhart.**

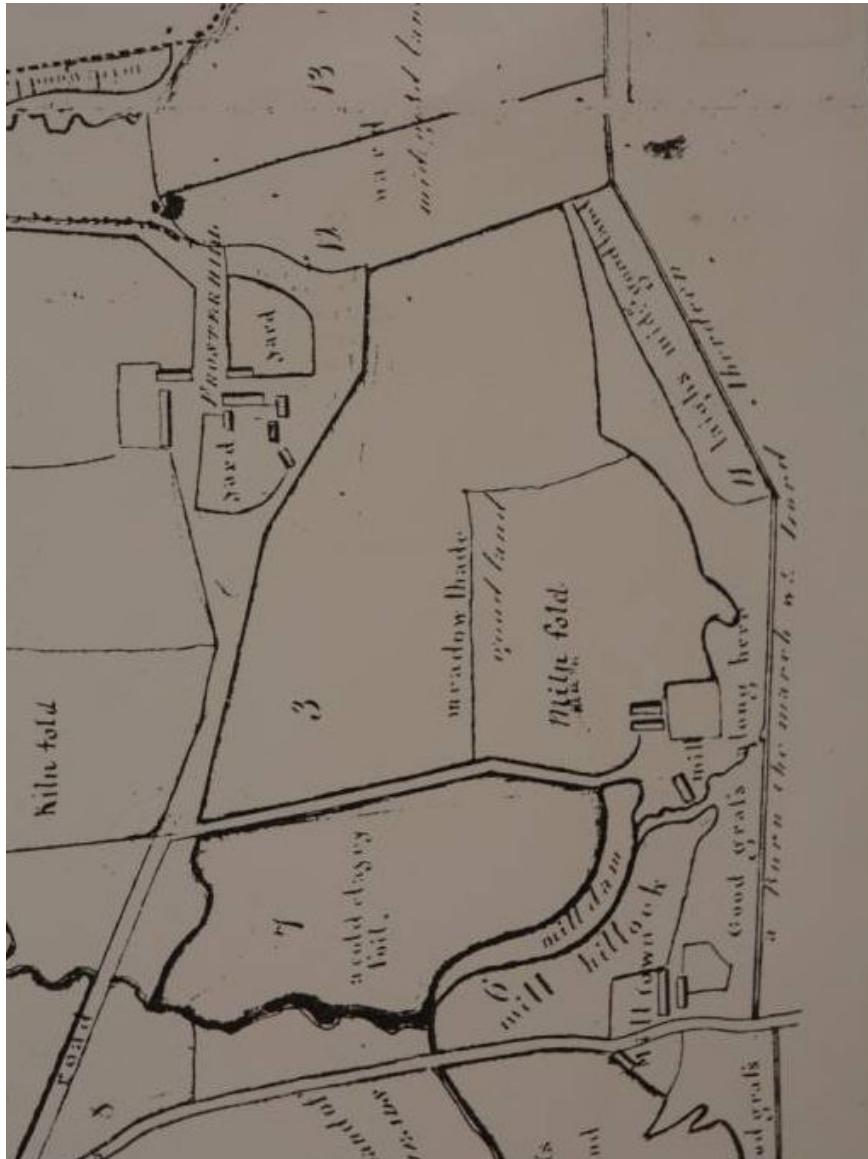
National Archives of Scotland have a photostat copy of this map (ref: RHP.11733). In their catalogue it notes that at the time of deposition the original (which appears to be one of a series of estate maps) was in the possession of Mr Robin Duff, then owner of Meldrum House. These would therefore appear to be estate maps relating to the Meldrum House estate. The present authors are grateful to Mr Lloyd Duncan, the present owner of Forresterhill Farm, for access to his photostat copy of the map and permission to photograph it for the purpose of this report.

This shows the farm buildings, its lands and the buildings of the Mill of Forresterhill, which appears to have been part of the same property.

The farm buildings cluster in an almost triangular area. At the S end is a yard with a large building on/near the footprint of the present house and 4 small buildings in what is now the garden. The N yard, on the site of the present steading has one small building on the S edge and 2 to the SW.



Illus 1 A plan of the farm of Frosterhill 1780. Surveyed by William Urquhart. Photograph of photostat of the map courtesy of Mr Lloyd Duncan.



Illus 2 Detail of the plan of the farm of Frosterhill 1780. Surveyed by William Urquhart. Photograph of photostat of the map courtesy of Mr Lloyd Duncan. (The map has been rotated to have N to top)

4.3 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25"/mile Aberdeen Sheet XLVI.2 (Meldrum)

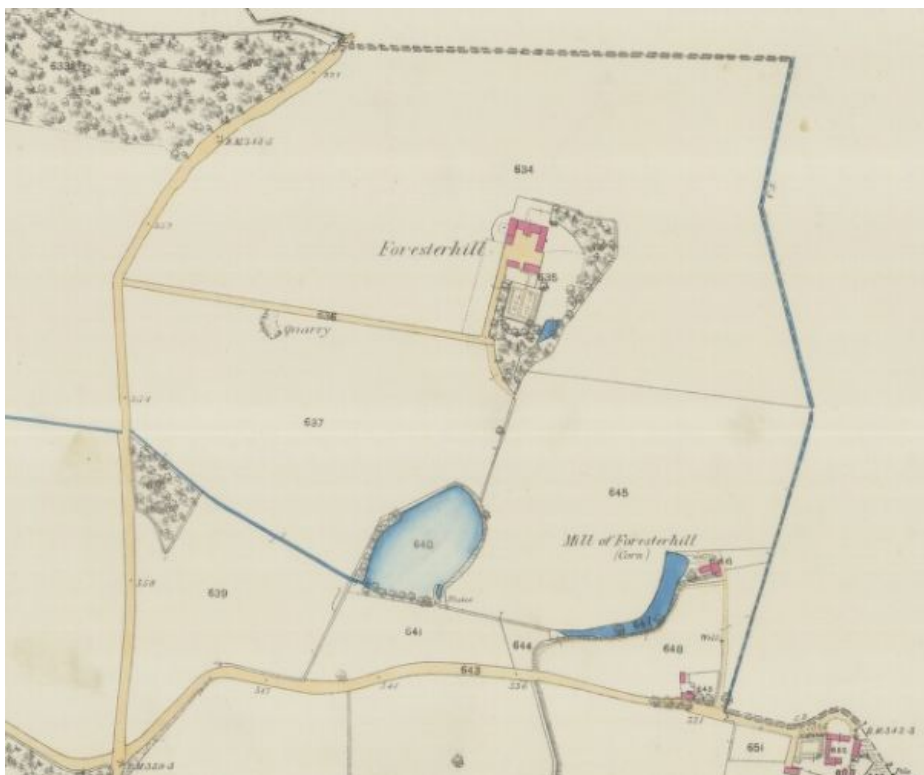
surveyed in 1867, published in 1870 shows a U- shaped steading around a yard open to the S. A horse mill is marked on the W face of the W range. The N range has a projecting central structure on the S wall.

The house and a smaller building in line with it are shown S of the yard with a surprisingly formal garden layout to the S in the area of the former S yard.



Illus 3 Detail of the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25" map, surveyed in 1867 (published 1870).
Aberdeen sheet XLVI.2 (Meldrum) www.nls.ac.uk

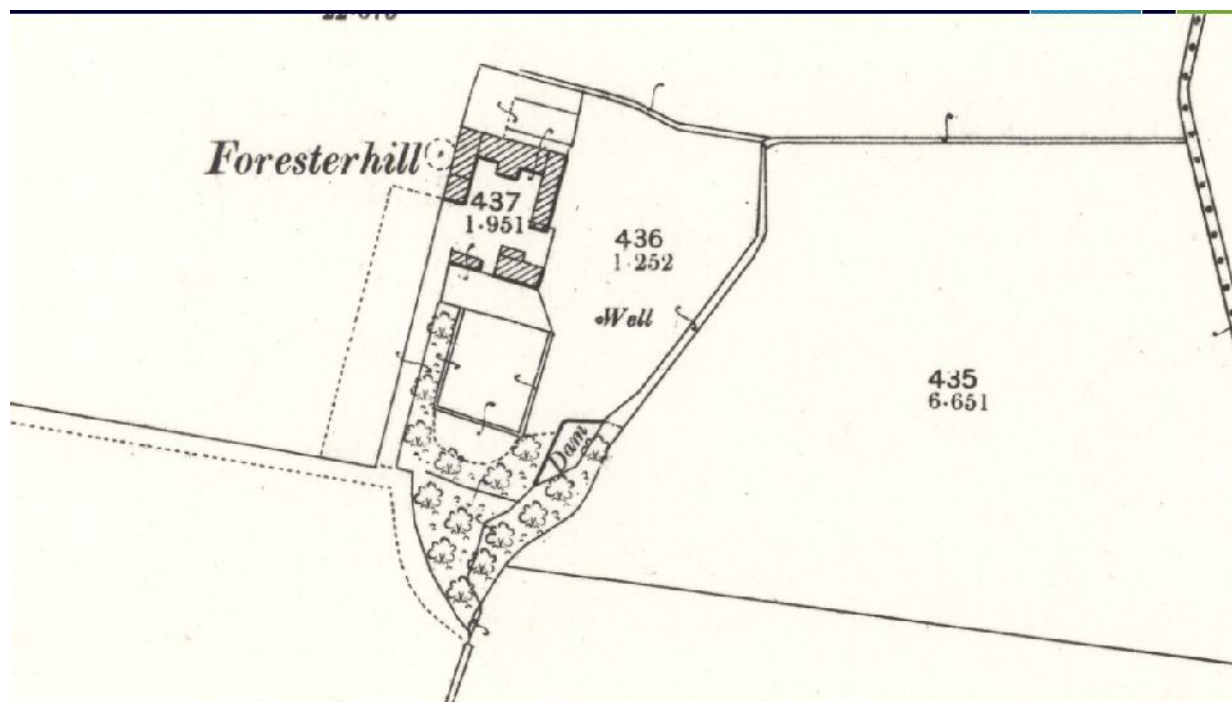
Comparison of the larger area of the 1867 OS map (illus 4) shows that the overall layout of the track and rather triangular area around the steading buildings have not changed to any great extent since the plan of 1780. In large part this may have been dictated by the position of the mill lades etc associated with the Mill of Foresterhill.



Illus 4 Detail of the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 25" map, surveyed in 1867 (published 1870).
Aberdeen sheet XLVI.2 (Meldrum) www.nls.ac.uk. Note the similarity of the layout with the 1780 plan.

4.4 The 2nd edition 25"/mile Ordnance Survey of 1899 (published 1900. Aberdeenshire Sheet 064.03)

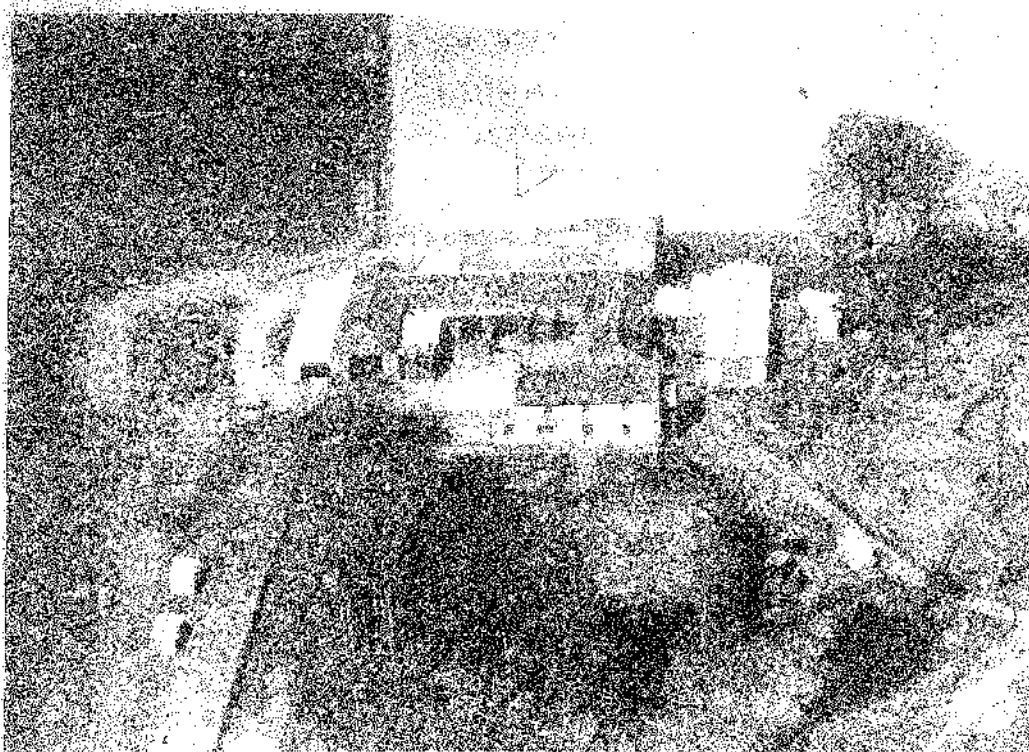
By 1899, layout of the steading is unchanged although there is a N extension to the dwelling house.



Illus 5 Detail of the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey 25" map, surveyed in 1899 (published 1900).
Aberdeenshire 046.02 (includes Meldrum) www.nls.ac.uk

4.5 1952 Aerial photograph

An aerial photograph of the farm dated on the back '1952' (pers.comm Lloyd Duncan) shows the 19th century steading with the S gable of the E range showing a chimney, suggesting this was or had been a bothy. Part of the open yard was filled in with buildings abutting part of the S wall of the N range and the E wall of the W range; roofs of these are flat or low-pitched, lean-to against the main building. An additional building (Illus 8:B1) is abutting the W wall of the W range, It has a shallow single pitched roof. A freestanding building (Illus 8: B6) Lies E of the E range, with part of the N end of the gap between it and the E range filled in with lean-to buildings/pass between the buildings. Other small sheds lie to the E and a corrugated iron Dutch Barn stands N of the existing steading (This is no longer there but the concrete floor survives).



Illus 6 1952 Aerial photograph of the farm. Courtesy of Mr Lloyd Duncan.

5 Methodology

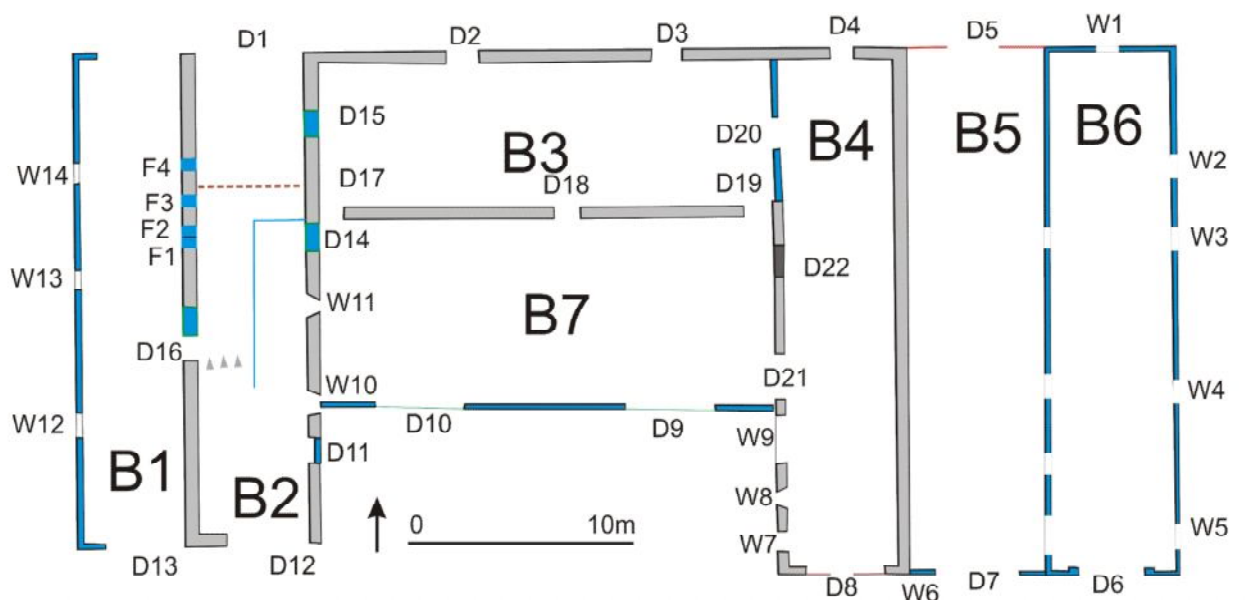
- 5.1 The ground plan (Illus 8) and relevant elevations (Illus 25) have been drawn and annotated to show details and to indicate differences in the building materials which may help in understanding the development and history of the building.

- 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 24) indicates the position of each.



Illus 7 General view of steading from S (B1 on LHS)

6 The Steading



Illus 8 Plan of buildings

6.1 BUILDING 1

Dimensions 4.8m x 22m externally

Original use unknown/livestock

Present/recent use Roofless

Walls Concrete blocks, E wall is W wall of B2.

Roof Shallow lean-to. At present roofless.



Illus 9 N end of B1 (RHS) and B2

Doors and windows

W wall

W12- W14 H: 1.12m W: 0.97m .

S wall

D13 H: 2.25m. W: 3.05m. Metal doors.

6.2 BUILDING 2

Dimensions 6.2m x 22m externally

Original use Mill with grain loft

Present/recent use Storage

Walls Rubble stone with dressed rubble rybats. c.550mm thick.

Roof Pitched, hipped at S end. Slate with ceramic ridge. 3 skylights to W, 2 skylights to E. A-frame with sarking

Doors and windows

E wall

D11 H: 2.10m W: 1.09m. Concrete blocked.

D14 H: 1.72m (to concrete floor of B7) W: 1.22m. Granite lintel on E.

D15 H: 2.38m W: 1.15m Granite lintel on E. Concrete blocked.

W10 H: 0.93m W: 0.84m. Recess below. Splays internally. Granite lintel and sill. Partially blocked

W11 H: 0.93m W: 0.75m. Splays internally. Concrete blocked. Granite lintel and sill

W wall

D16 (Opening) H: 2.90m W: 2.45m Metal door and small window in concrete blocked opening with stone rybats to this height suggesting a cart opening.

F1 H: 0.85m W: 0.43m Stone lintel. Concrete blocked.

F2 H: 0.33m W: 0.40m Stone lintel. Concrete blocked.

F3 H: 0.70m W: 0.60m. Stone sill. No surviving lintel. Concrete blocked.

F4 H: 0.54m W: 0.48m Stone sill and lintel. Not blocked

F5 (only visible internally, hidden by roof externally) c. 0.40m square.
Concrete blocked.



Illus 10 Outside of W wall of B2 (from inside B1). Openings associated with mill from LHS to RHS: F4, F3, F2 and above F1.



Illus 11 Inside of W wall of B2. Openings associated with mill From LHS to RHS: F5 (at top- not visible externally), F1, F2, F3, F4 (with light through).

N wall

D1 H: 3m W: 4.9m. Any original opening raised and widened with concrete blocks at sides and concrete lintel. Metal sliding door.

S wall

D12 H: 2.8m W: 3.7m Metal sliding door. Stone rybats to W side of door. Probably raised and widened.

Interior

Loft (not accessible) above N end, with (broken) wooden stair on S. A secondary concrete floor on E side forms a raised (c 0.50m at N) loading area (?) with concrete wall at the S end of it to N and W.

To the W of this, the floor slopes down gently to below loft.



Illus 12 B2 internally looking N. Blocked D11 to RHS



Illus 13 B2 Loft above N end

6.3 BUILDING 3

B3 is secondary to B2 at not only do N and S walls abut the exterior of part of E wall of B2, but also the door (D15) in the B2 wall at this point has external granite lintel on the E side, unlike all the other doors into B3 which have

wooden lintels on the inside into B3, but stone lintels on outside.



Illus 14 B3. Blocked door D17 showing wooden lintel to interior of B3.

Dimensions 7.2m x 20m externally, abuts B2. Was originally open to B4, but now blocked.

Original use Tied cattle

Present/recent use Derelict

Walls N and S walls rubble stone c. 5550mm thick. W wall uses E wall of B2.

Roof Roofless. Shown on 1952 photograph as pitched slate roof.



Illus 15 B3 interior looking W to wall of B2. Note scars of tied cow stalls on wall to LHS

Doors and windows

N wall

D2 H: 2.37m W:1.37m Re-used stone lintel.

D3 H: 2.37m W: 1.37m Re-used stone lintel.



Illus 16 Detail of re-used stone in lintel of door D2

S wall

D17 H: 2m W: 1.10m. granite lintel to S (outside). Concrete blocked.

D18 H: 2.0m W: 1.20m Original stone rybats. Concrete lintel. Wooden door.

D19 H: 2.25m W: 1.2m. Rybats at W side. Raised with I-bar metal lintel.

Metal blocking.

W wall

D20 H: 2.3m W: 1.37m Modern wooden door in modern concrete blocking wall.

Interior

Although the interior is gutted, the walls show the scars of c. 8 double tied cow pens on each side and are concrete rendered to 1.65m height. Ceramic pipes set through wall have been put in as air vents. Unusually there does not appear to be a drain in the floor.

6.4 BUILDING 4

B4 is the original E Range but has been gutted internally and partially lined.

The S gable appears to have been rebuilt.

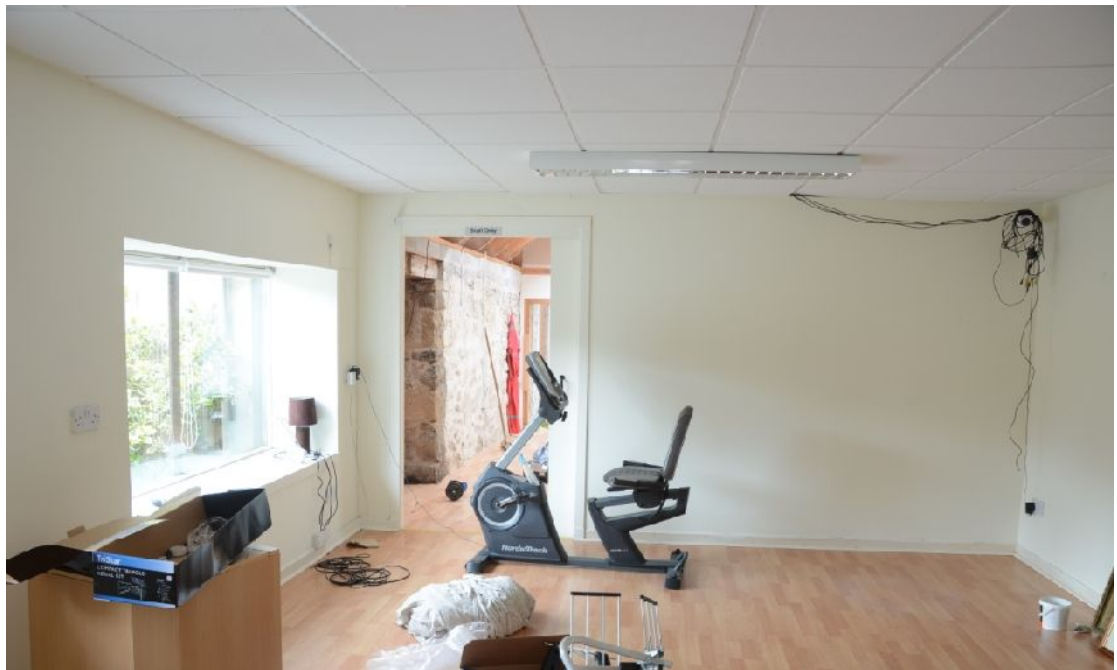
Dimensions 6m x 22m externally

Original use Cart bays and livestock. Former chimney suggests there was a bothy or chaumer at this end.

Present/recent use Now storage. Had been a pottery-painting workshop.

Walls Rubble stone c. 550mm thick. S gable partially rebuilt with weatherboarding. Weatherboarding also used to fill in cart bay at W9.

Roof Sectional steel with perspex roof lights. Pitched. Shown on 1952 photograph as slate with chimney (now missing) at S gable.



Illus 17 Interior of S end of B4. The wide window (W9) marks one cart bay, doorway beyond partition indicates the other cart bay (D21)



Illus 18 W side of B4 W9-W7 (LHS to RHS)

Doors and windows

N wall

D4 H: 2.43m W: 0.93m. Re-used dressed stone lintel. Wooden blocking.

S wall

D8 H: 2.04m W: 0.80m. Modern wooden door

W wall

D21 H: 2m W: 2.3m Modern door set in original cart bay.

D22 H: 2.06m W: 1.20m Stone blocking.

W7 H: 1.08m W: 0.77m Modern wooden windows. Dressed stone lintels, rybats and sills (Possibly rebuilt?)

W8 H: 1.08m W: 0.77m Modern wooden windows. Dressed stone lintels, rybats and sills (Possibly rebuilt?)

W9 H: 1.95m W: 2.30m Modern wide wooden window over weatherboarding, filling apparently original cart bay with granite lintel.

Interior Divided into kitchen, toilet and gallery in the S end.



Illus 19 S gables of B4, B5, B6 (LHS to RHS)

6.5 BUILDING 5

Dimensions 6m x 22m externally

Original use Unknown

Present/recent use Storage

Walls Roofed area between B4 and B6. N wall tin. S wall concrete blocks and weatherboarding to match B4 and B6.

Roof Sectional steel.

Doors and windows

N wall

D5 H: 2.18m W: 2.48m. Sliding metal door.

S wall

D7 H: 3m W: 3.6m

Interior No detail

6.6 BUILDING 6

Dimensions 6m x 22m externally

Original use Unknown

Present/recent use Storage/garage

Walls Concrete blocks. S wall concrete blocks and weatherboarding to match B4 and B6.

Roof Corrugated asbestos on metal framework.

Doors and windows

N wall

W1 H: 1.22m. W: 1m. Modern plastic window.

E wall

W2- W5 H: 1.22m. W: 1m. Modern plastic windows.

S wall

D6 H: 2.48m W: 3.02m. Wooden door.

W wall

Windows which were originally external: Not numbered on plan. Door (not numbered on plan: break through to give access to B5.

Interior No details



Illus 20 B6 Interior looking N



Illus 21 B6 E wall

6.7 BUILDING 7

Dimensions 8.4m x 20m externally

Original use Unknown, probably machine store

Present/recent use Storage

Walls Concrete blocks on S side, uses walls of earlier buildings to N, E and W.

Roof Pitched corrugated iron roof with perspex lights

Doors and windows

S wall

D9 H: 3.10m W: 4m Sliding metal door.

D10 H: 3.10m W: 4m Sliding metal door

Interior No details



Illus 22 B7 S wall.

7 Discussion

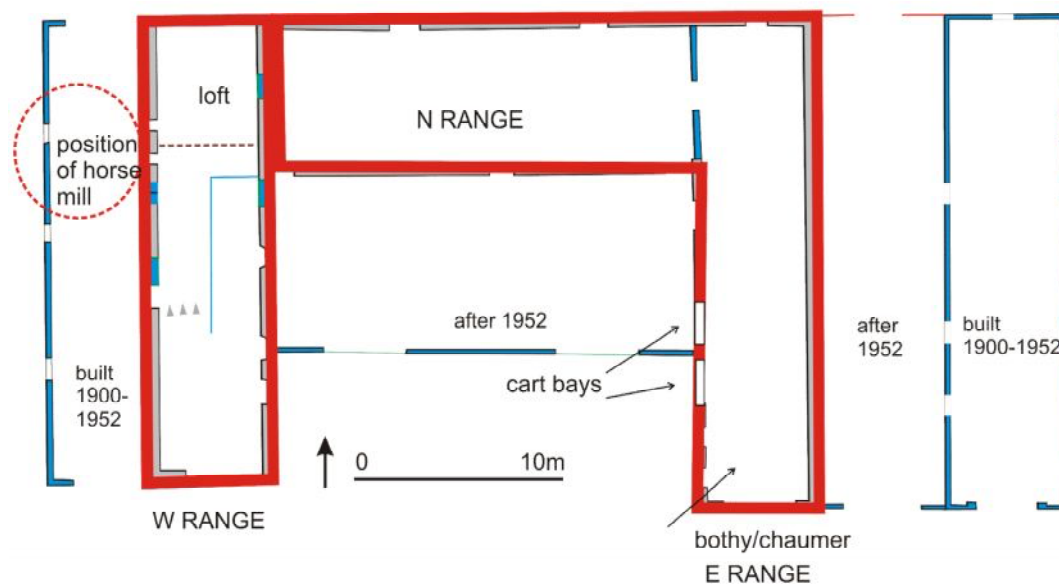
Forresterhill is a fairly typical medium-sized Aberdeenshire improvement steading (Glendinning and Wade Martins 2008, 119-120). However, given the large, fairly imposing farmhouse (photograph on cover), it is perhaps surprising that the steading does not show more elaborate stonework.

The 1780 map would appear to indicate that Forresterhill was part of the Meldrum House estate and that the (corn) mill of Forresterhill was part of the same property.

While buildings are shown on the 1780 plan there is nothing to indicate that any of the existing buildings in the steading predate the 19th century. B2, the W range appears to have been built first, with the N and W ranges added afterwards (although possibly this was just a sequence of building. The whole U-steading existed by the OS map of 1867 and remained unchanged in plan to at least 1900.

Building 2 had clearly had a horse mill for threshing as shown on the OS maps; openings F1-F5 in the N end of the W wall are associated with the mill shafts etc.

Little remained of the original features of the other buildings in the 19th – century steading. However, two blocked entries in B4 appear to have been cart bays, with a chimney on the S gable of B4 as shown in the 1952 photograph, suggesting that there had been a bothy, or a loft chaumer in the S gable of this building.



Illus 23 Interpretative plan. 19th-century features shown in red.

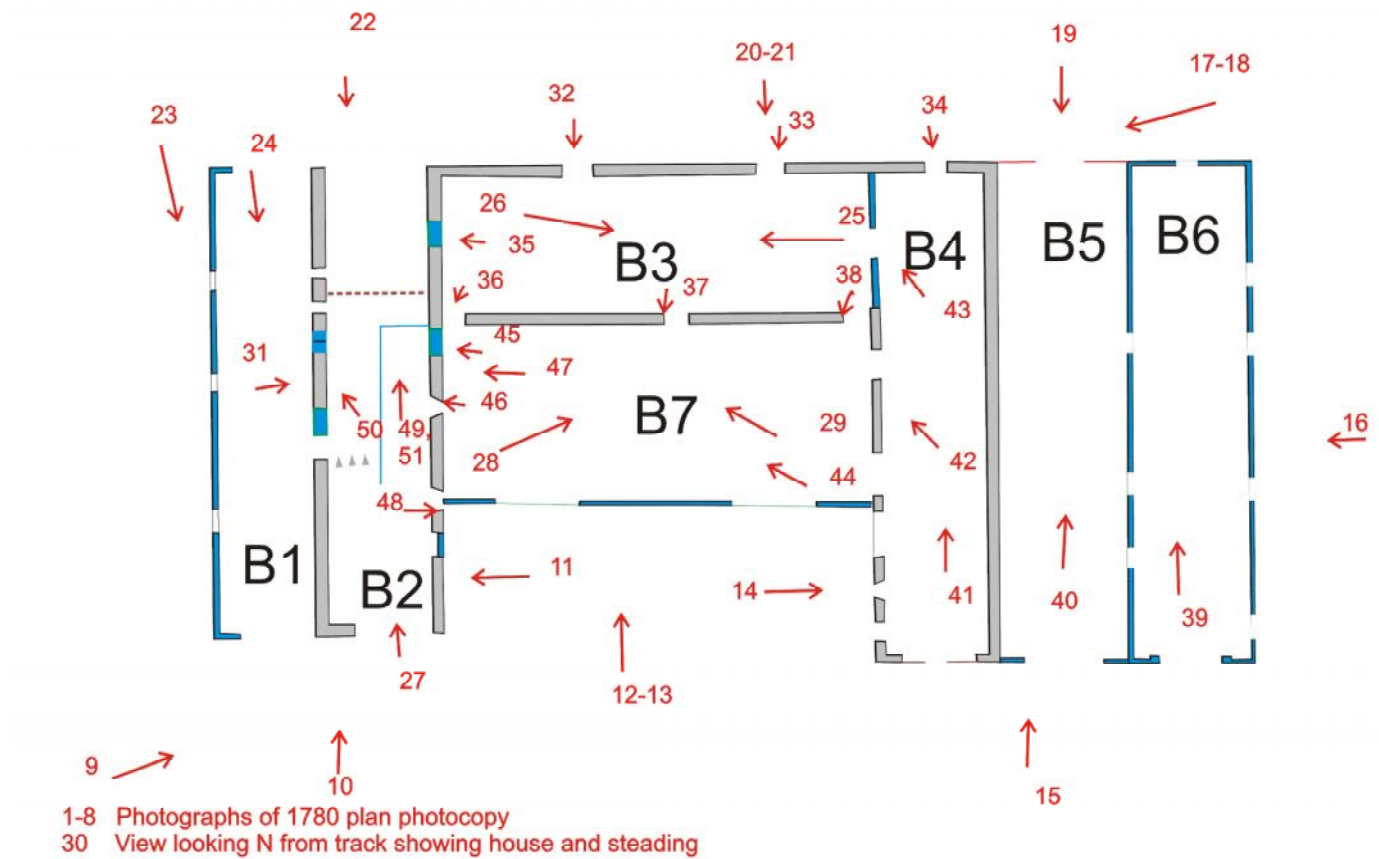
Other buildings were added and infilled throughout the 20th century, to allow accommodation for greater numbers of livestock and larger machinery.

References

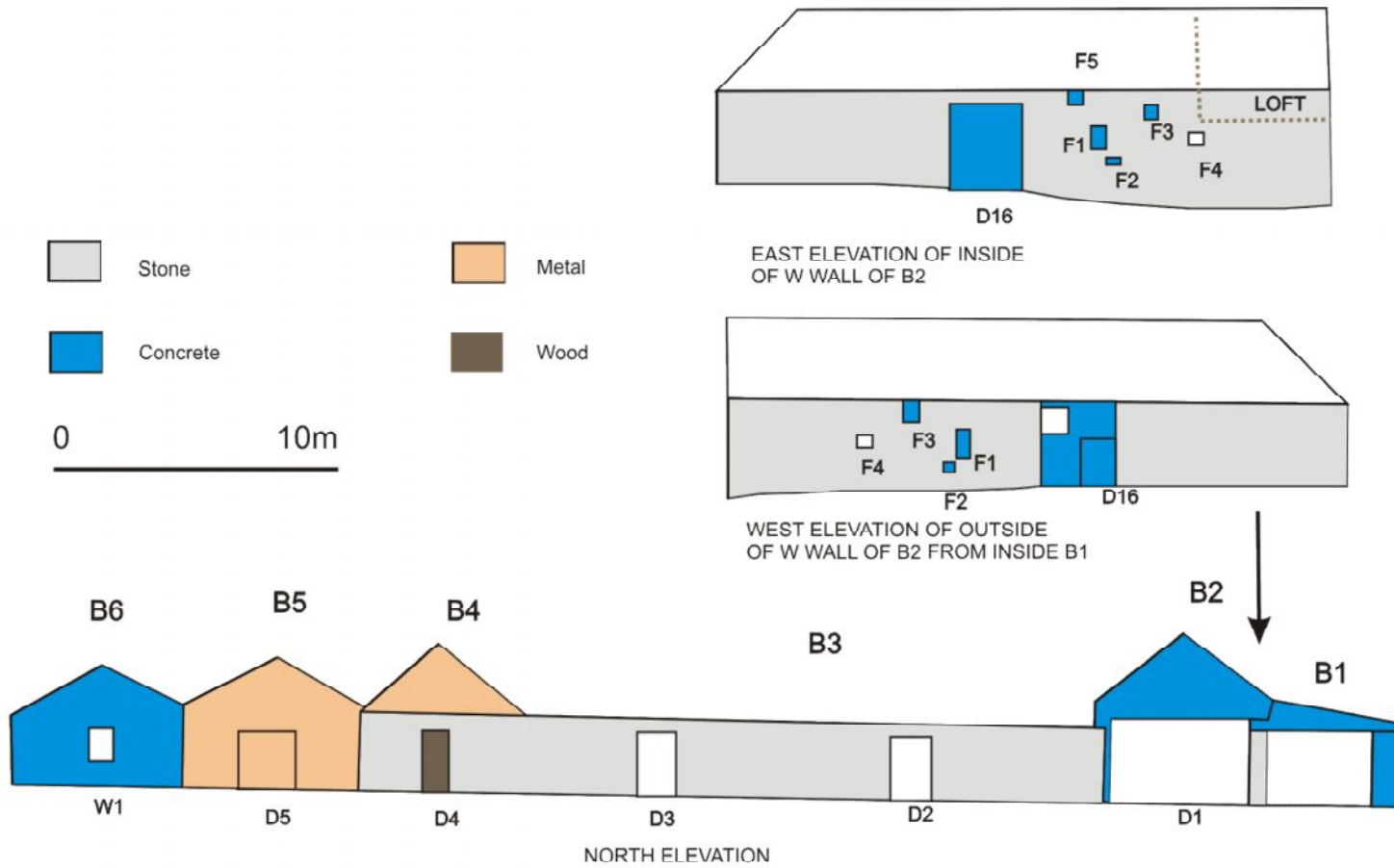
Glendinning, M and Wade Martins, S 2008 Buildings of the Land: Scotland's Farms 1750-2000 Edinburgh: RCAHMS.

Archive

A full set of photographs with the photo location plan (Illus 24) will be supplied to the Aberdeenshire SMR in Aberdeen and to the NMRS.



Illus 24 Photographic references



Illus 25 Elevations of 19th-century part of steading. Note B3 is roofless.