

STEADING
UPPER MIDDLETON OF BALQUHAIN
INVERURIE
ABERDEENSHIRE



Standing Building Survey

Carried out 21st February 2018

by

Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2018-05

by

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INVERURIE
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- Standing Building Survey -

1. Background

1.1 A standing building survey was required for a farm steading at Upper Middleton of Balquhain, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire, prior to its demolition and replacement by two houses.

1.2 The archaeological condition (Condition 4) was applied in the context of planning legislation (PAN 2/2011, SPP, HESPS), 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/2015/0647

1.3 A Level 1 Standing Building Survey of the extant buildings and structures 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 Lippe Architects and Planners for their client Mr Ewan Smith. The site element of the survey was completed on the 21st February 2018.

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, now HES) through Canmore and Pastmap.

2.2 The 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps were consulted.

2.3 The British Newspaper archive was searched. www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk



Illus 1 Detail of OS map. Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright (2015) All rights reserved. Licence number (100049810). Site indicated by red circle.

3 Methodology

3.1 The ground plan (Illus 11) and the only significant (S facing) elevation (Illus 24) have been drawn by MAS Ltd and annotated to show details which may help in understanding the development and history of the building.

3.2 The areas recorded were photographed. The full set of photographs will be supplied for the archive and a table and an annotated plan in the present report (illus 23) indicates the position of each.

4. The Site

- 4.1 The steading lies W of Inverurie, on a private track, S of a minor road that runs through the former Balquhain estate. It is in open agricultural land with wide views W to Bennachie.
- 4.2 The steading was in poor condition with few original features surviving.
- 4.3 The farmhouse, which is separately owned, is not part of the present survey. It appears to have been extensively modernised but is identifiable as the farmhouse shown on the 1899 OS map.

Parish: Inverurie

NGR: NJ 7291 2193

GPS 372919, 821941 (centre of court)

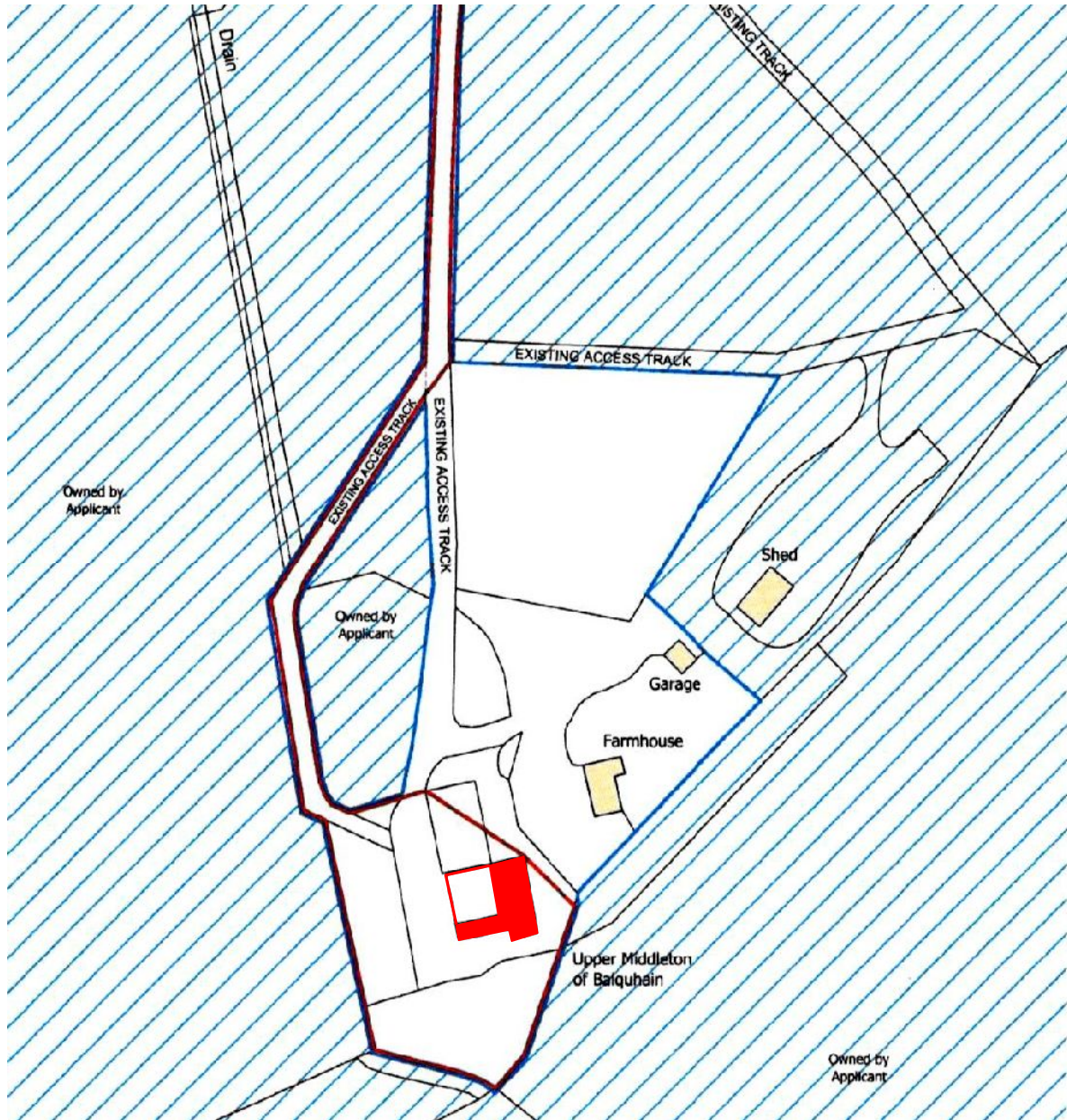
Aberdeenshire SMR: NJ72SW0082

HES: NJ72SW72

Canmore id: 118167



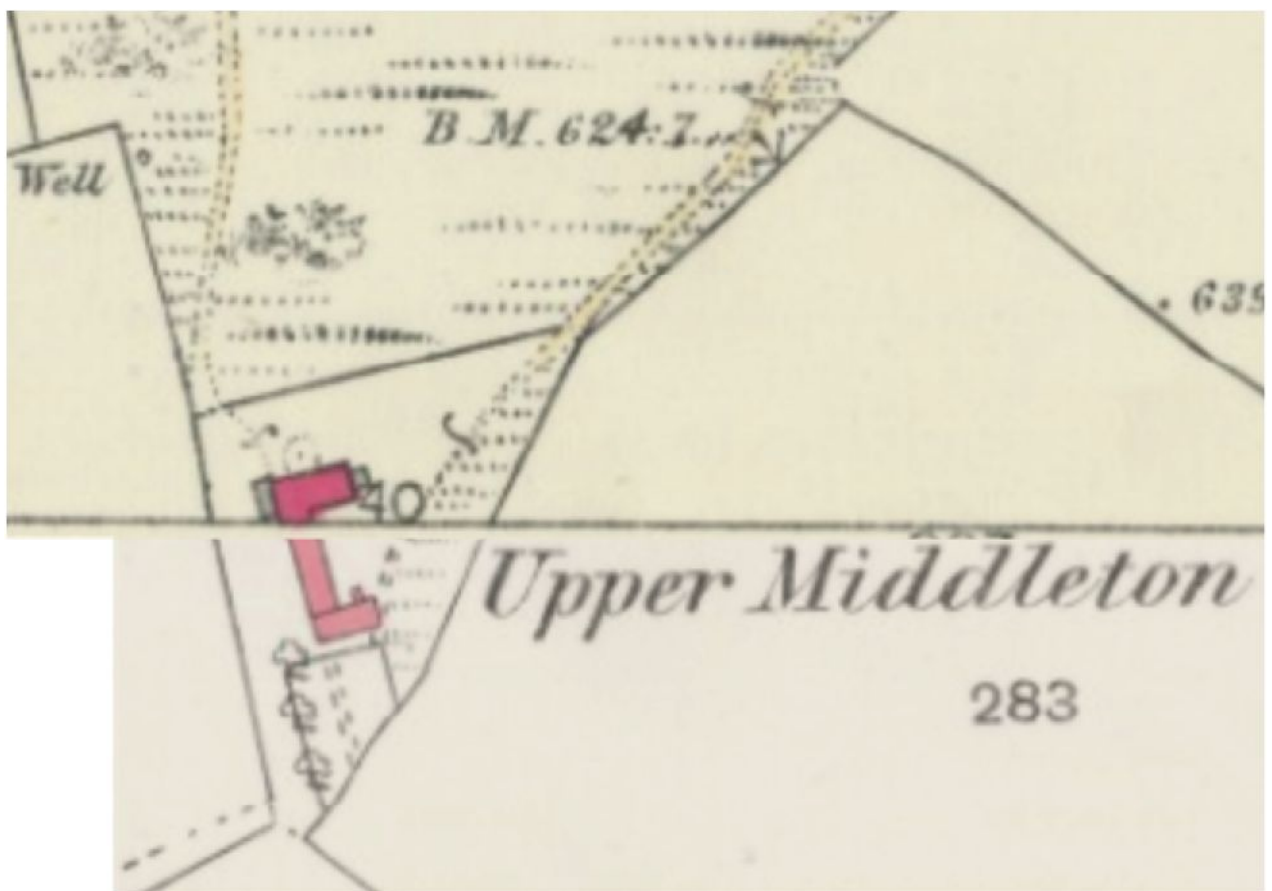
Illus 2 The steading from the S with the gable of the farmhouse visible at extreme right.



Illus 3 Site plan courtesy of Lippe Architects and Planners, annotated by MAS Ltd. Footprint of steading shown in red.

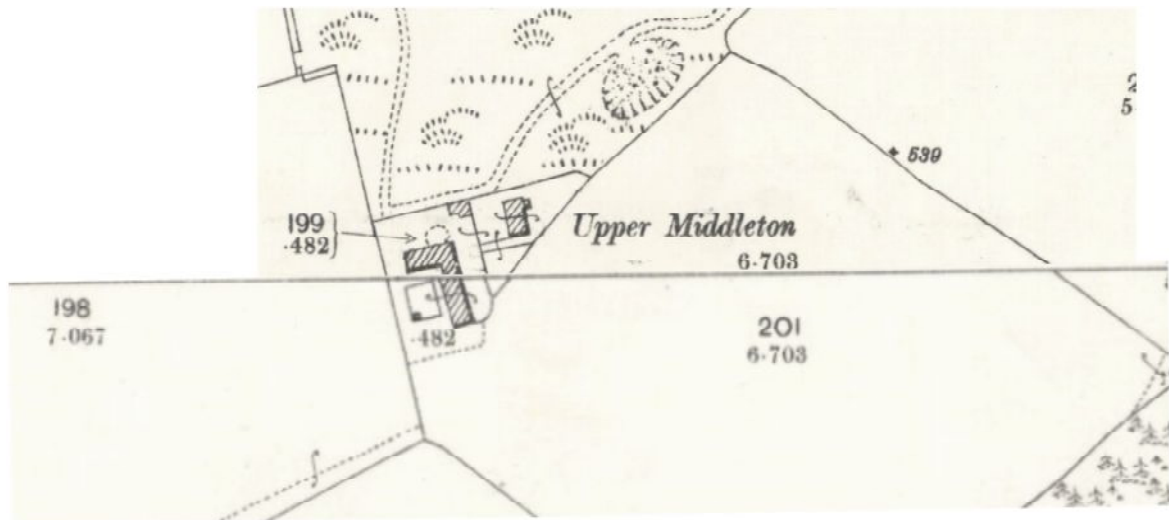
5 Documentary evidence

1867 The 25"/mile OS map Aberdeen sheets LIV.2 and LIV.6 1867 (published 1869) shows a U-shaped steading open to the E. A horse mill is shown about midway along the N wall of the N range. Small timber structures are shown at the E and W gables of the structure.



Illus 4 The 25"/mile OS map Aberdeen sheets LIV.2 and LIV.6 1867 (published 1869) www.nls.ac.uk

1899 The 25"/mile. OS map Aberdeenshire 054.02 and 054.06 of 1899 (published 1900) shows the steading apparently rebuilt, being an L-plan with an open court facing W. The N range may have incorporated all or most of the original N range as the horse mill appears to be in the same position. A separate farmhouse (the present house) is shown to the E. A small building is shown beside the track, N of the steading.

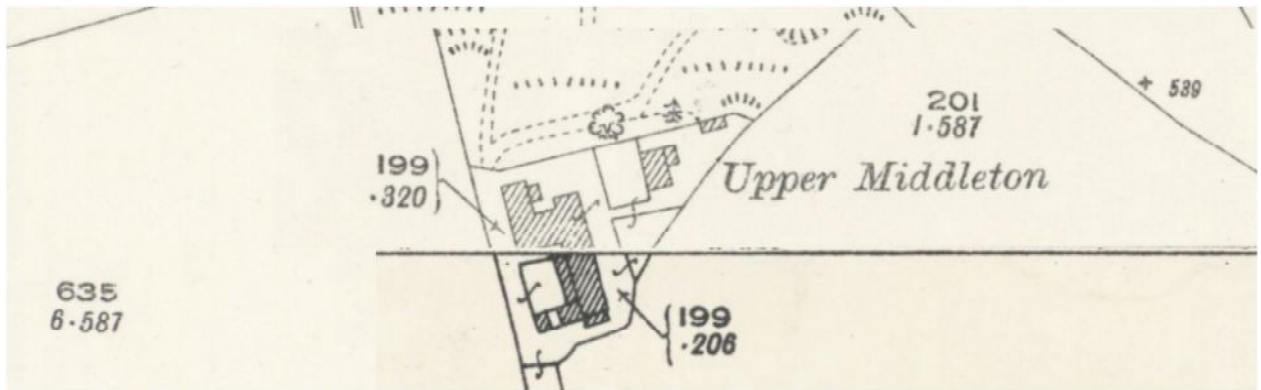


Illus 5 The 25"/mile. OS map Aberdeenshire 054.02 and 054.06 of 1899 (published 1900)
www.nls.ac.uk

1909 An advertisement in the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* (28th May 1909) invited estimates, 'Mason, Carpenter and Slater works proposed to be executed in making alterations on the small offices at Upper Middleton of Balquhain (Mitchell), Balquhain Estate. (*Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 28th May 1909)

www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

1924 The 25"/mile. OS map Aberdeenshire 054.02 and 054.06 of 1924 (published 1926) shows the L-plan augmented by a S range to form the present U-plan open to the W. Both the present pig shed and the lean-to at the E end of the S wall are built. Within the court there is a narrow structure alongside the W wall of the E range. There are two new structures on the N side of the N Range. The one to the E, on the site of the former horse mill, is likely to have been an engine house.



Illus 6 The 25"/mile. OS map Aberdeenshire 054.02 and 054.06 of 1924 (published 1926)

1932 The HES archive (Canmore 118167: HES No: NJ72SW72) quotes a sales brochure of 1932 which details the steading at that time as including a stable for 3 horses, a barn with men's room above, two byres for a total of twenty-five cattle, a turnip house, two pig-stys, an engine house and a fowl house.

1935 Valuation Rolls (Scotlandspeople). Proprietor = Bondholders through agent MJ Brown Son & Co in Edinburgh. Tenant and occupier of farm and house is Alexander Murray. www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

1936 Advertisement of farms to let on Balquhain Estate. Farm at Upper Middleton 'presently tenanted by Alexander Murray'. The farm then comprised 94 acres of arable ground and 10 acres of rough pasture. (*Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 10th January 1936) www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

1937 Situations vacant advertisement 'Man or Halflin wanted. Apply Thomson, Upper Middleton, Balquhain, Inverurie'. (*Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 10th March 1937) www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

1943 Displenish Sale at Upper Middleton for Mr George Paterson (*Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 11th May 1943 and 15th May 1943) www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)



Illus 7 Extract from *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 11th May 1943)

www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)

6 The Buildings

The surviving buildings are a remnant of a U plan steading with an open court facing W onto the track. They appear to comprise the S part of the steading shown on the 1924 OS map. Rubble and flooring to the N indicates the location of the former N end of the steading; insufficient remained for survey (Illus 21).



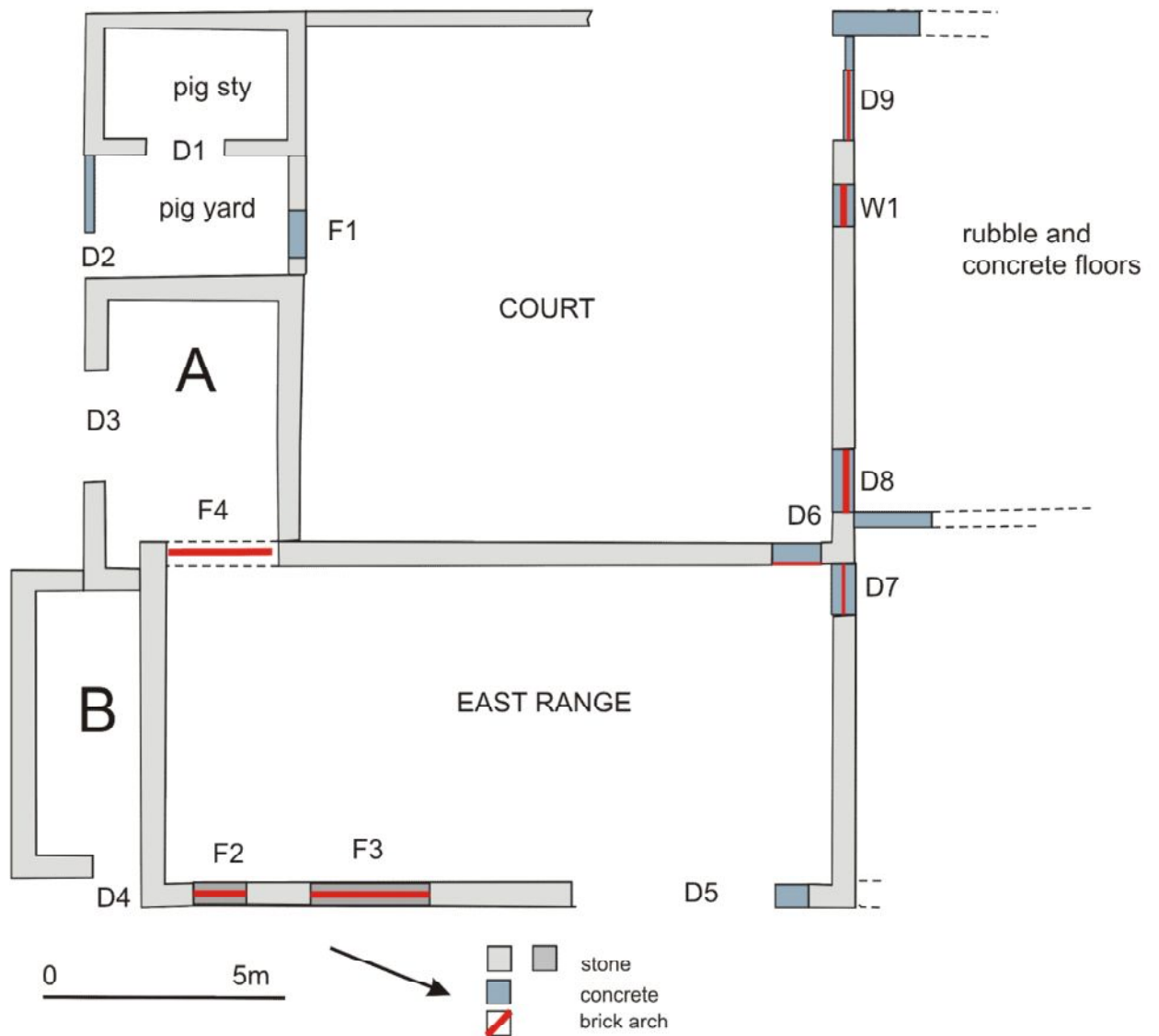
Illus 8 General view of the steading - E elevation looking N



Illus 9 General view of the steading - S elevation



Illus 10 General view of steading looking W into Court



Illus 11 Plan . MAS Ltd

The East Range

Dimensions c.15 x 7.5m externally.

Present/recent use Workshop/storage

Former use Cattle

Walls R

Honey coloured rubble stone, c500mm thick. Granite quoins and skews (Illus 12).

Roof Pitched roof. Corrugated iron..



Illus 12 Granite skeuputt at SE corner of East Range.

Doors and windows

E wall

D5 Modern break-through with raised height for tractor access.

F2 W: 1.08m H:2.0m. Granite lintel and rybats. Blocked with rubble stonework. Brick arch internally.

F3 W: 2.47m . Granite rybats. Blocked with rubble stonework. Brick arch internally.

Ventilation Clay pipes had been set through the wall at intervals to provide ventilation for livestock; one of these was set through the blocking of F3, indicating that these were secondary.

N wall

D7 W: 1.24m H:: 1.95m. Granite lintel and rybats. Blocked with concrete blocks. Brick arch internally.

W wall

D6 W: 1.22m H: 1.95m. Granite lintel and rybats into court (Illus 20). Brick arch internally. Blocked with concrete blocks.

F4 The wall between Building A and the E Range has been knocked through at some stage, with a brick arch inserted.

Interior The interior floor level has at some stage been raised, with the result that there was a ramp down to doors D6 and D7. This later concrete floor has some appearance of a central drain. The inner faces of the walls have been plastered, after the insertion of the pipe ventilation (Illus 14), with vertical scars indicating former pens/divisions.



Illus 13 Interior of E Range, looking N



Illus 14 Interior of E Range, detail of inside of E wall, blocking of F3, plastering, ventilation pipe and scar of former partition (L of ranging rod).

The South Range: Pig sty and yard



Illus 15 Pig sty and yard, looking NW.

Dimensions Sty 3 x 4.6m externally (approx 2x 3.5m internally. Yard 2 x 4m.

Present/recent use Derelict

Former use Pig sty (The size would be reasonable for two pens).

Walls Rubble stone, c400mm thick.

Roof Lean-to slate roof with 2 metal skylights.

Doors

D1 W: 1.61m H:2.0m. Granite lintel and rybats. Opened into open pig yard.

D2 W: 0.96m Gate from pig yard to outside. Pivots of gate.

F1 W: 0.91m H: 1.2m. Blocked with concrete blocks. The wall on this side of the pig yard had also been raised with concrete blocks over the original stone wall.

This opened into dung court. A granite lintel rebuilt into wall may have been moved from its original position as lintel of a pig 'gate' into dung court. (Illus

16)



Illus 16 N wall of pig yard seen from inside dung court. Dotted line marks the blocked opening. The original , now displaced, lintel is marked with arrow.

The South Range: Building A

Dimensions 6 x 4.5m externally.

Present/recent use Storage

Former use Possible turnip store, or small implement shed.

Walls Rubble stone, c500mm thick. Abuts the E Range.

Roof Hipped roof. Slate with metal skylight.



Illus 17 S elevation showing Buildings A and B.

Doors

D3 W: 2.45m H:2.6m. Granite rybats. No original lintel. The top of opening has been raised, with a fairly rough lifting of a section of the roof. Modern plank doors.

F4 The wall between Building A and the E Range has been knocked through at some stage, with a brick arch inserted.

Interior

No details survive



Illus 18 Looking into Building A through brick arch F4

The South Range: Lean-to, Building B

Dimensions c.6.5 x 2.5m

Present/recent use Derelict

Former use No physical indication but may be the 'fowl house' noted in 1932.

Walls Rubble stone. Abuts both Building A and the E Range.

Roof Lean-to corrugated iron with plastic roof lights.

Doors and windows

D4 W: 1.06m H: 1.80m. Granite lintel butted into gable of E Range.

The Dung Court

Dimensions 10.5 x 11m internally.

Present/recent use Derelict

Former use Open Dung court, later roofed, probably in the mid-late 20th century



Illus 19 S face of the N wall of the Dung Court with the gable of the secondary N building built on it. The red circles mark timber slots associated with a roofing of the Court. The dotted line below them appeared to be tar or felt, presumably also associated with the Court roof.

Doors and windows

D8 W: 1.23m H: 1.80m. Granite lintel and granite and rubble rybats. Blocked with concrete and brick. Brick arch on N side (inside former N Range).

D9 W: 1.24m H: 1.88m. Granite lintel and stone rybats on E. The lintel appears to have been broken at W side, so this may have been a wider opening. Reduced to present width with concrete blocks on W side. Brick arch on N side (inside former N Range).

D6 Opens into E Range. Granite lintel and rybats into court (Illus 20).

W1 W: 0.92m H: 1.37m. Granite lintel, sill and rybats. Blocked with concrete blocks. Brick arch on N side (inside former N Range).



Illus 20 Detail of D8 (LHS) and D6 (RHS) from inside court

The North Range

To the N of the Dung Court there was an area of concrete flooring and traces of concrete walling which appear to have been the remnant of a 20th-century building on the original site of the N Range. The S gable of this later building survived, built in concrete blocks on the wall head of the N wall of the Court (Illus 21).

Some indication of the original N range is given by the surviving doors and window in the N wall of the court (D8, D9, W1).



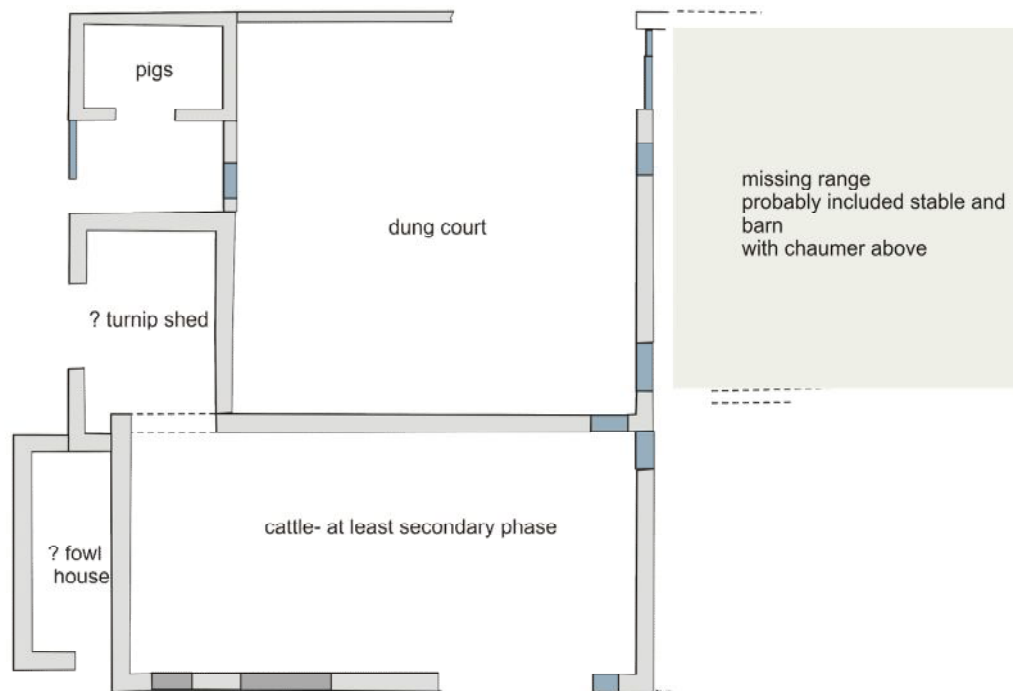
Illus 21 View looking N of the rubble of N Range and its surviving S gable

7 Discussion

A farm existed at Upper Middleton from at least the mid 19th century. The buildings shown on the 1867 OS map appear relatively narrow and probably included a cottage style farmhouse within the steading range. They were very substantially rebuilt by the end of the century, with a separate farmhouse built by 1899.

A second stage of development appears to have occurred in the early 20th century, possibly the work advertised in 1909 when the Balquhain estate was seeking masons, carpenters and slaters for work on the steading.

By 1924 the steading was essentially on the present footprint, although the considerable N Range is now missing. It is noteworthy that at this stage the horse mill had been replaced by a mechanical engine and a small engine house added at the NE corner of the N Range. The loss of horses in WW1 and the increasing use of mechanisation make this a common development at this period.



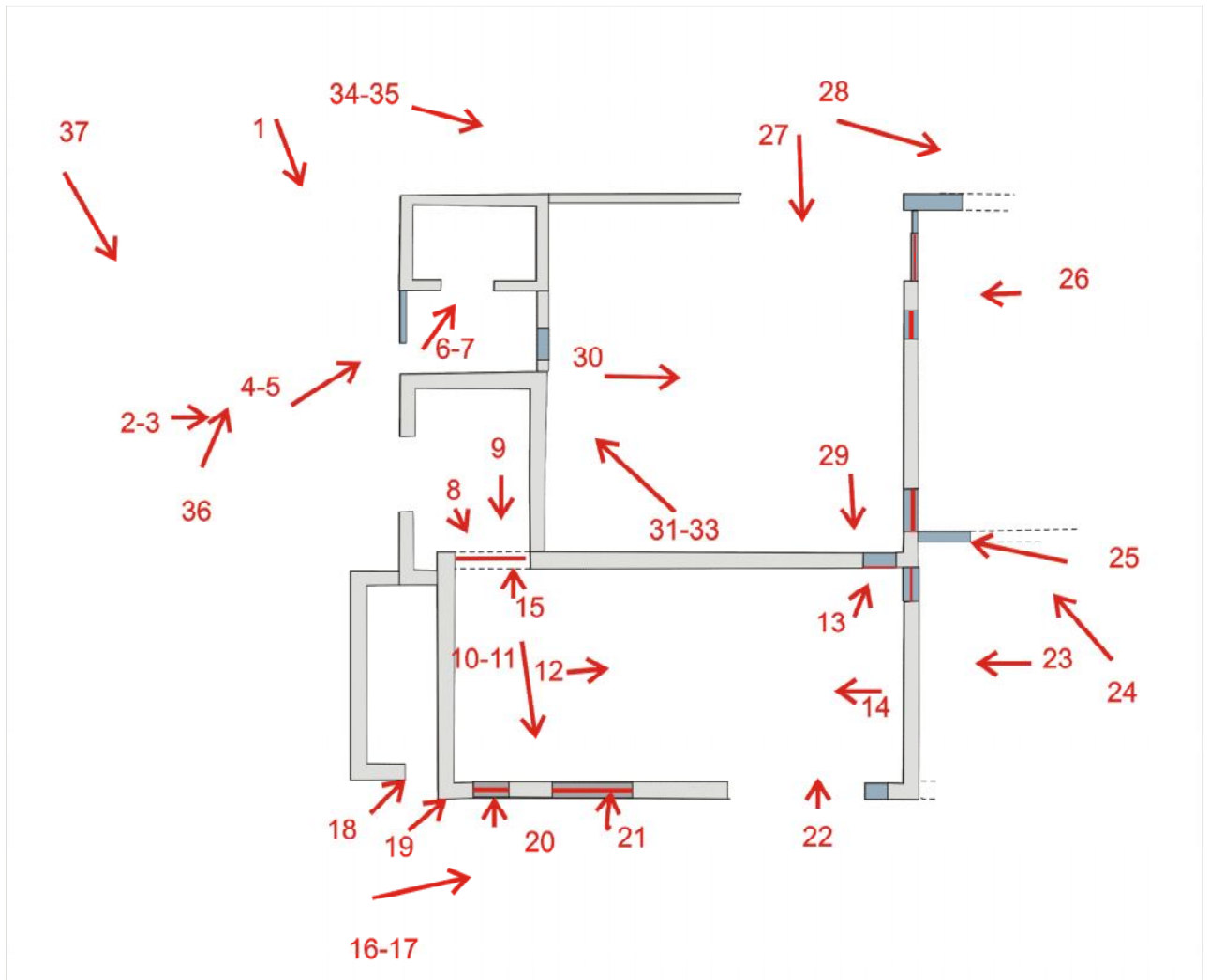
Illus 22 Interpretation of plan

The 1932 sale brochure lists a stable for 3 horses, a barn with men's room above, two byres for a total of twenty-five cattle, a turnip house, two pig-stys, an engine house and a fowl house. The pig-stys, turnip shed and fowl house can be identified in the surviving S Range. The E Range would have been one of the cattle buildings. The position of the horse mill on the historic maps shows that the barn and mill were in the N Range and the window in the surviving wall of this range (in the N side of the Court) suggests that the stable and chaumer were at the W end of the N Range.

Later developments appear to have included covering part or all of the court and building a large concrete block building in place of the original N Range.

8 Archive

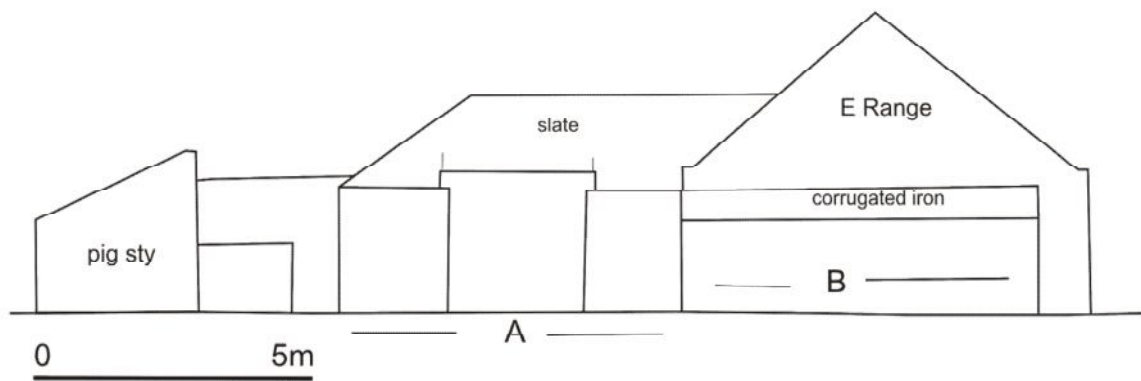
A full set of photographs with the photo location plans (Illus 23) will be supplied to the Aberdeenshire SMR and to the HES archive.



Illus 23 Location of photographs

Photo number	Content
Upper Middleton, Balquhain	
1	General view of S & W elevations looking N
2-3	S elevation
4-5	Pig sty
6-7	Pig sty from D2
8-9	Looking into E Range from Building A, through F4
10-11	E Range interior of E wall, F4
12	E Range interior looking N
13	E Range detail of D6 & D7
14	E Range interior looking S
15	Looking into Building A from E Range through F4
16-17	E elevation looking N
18	Building B, E wall and D4
19	Skeuputt at SE corner of E Range
20	E Range, E wall, F2
21	E Range, E wall, F2 & F3
22	E Range E wall D5
23	N wall of E Range
24	Looking W along surviving S wall of N Range
25	S wall of N Range, D7, D8

26	S wall of N Range, W1, D9
27	From track looking E into court
28	From track looking N towards rubble of N Range
29	Inside court, D6, D8
30	Inside court, N wall, D9, W1, D8
31-33	Inside court, S wall, F1
34-35	General view of W elevation, looking N
36	Looking W along S wall towards Bennachie
37	Looking NE, standing with farmhouse in background RHS.



Illus 24 S facing elevation