

**BRATHENS HILL CROFT STEADING**  
**GLASSEL**  
**BANCHORY**  
**ABERDEENSHIRE**



**Standing Building Survey**

Carried out 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018

by

**Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2018-22**

by

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**- Standing Building Survey -**

1. Background

1.1 A standing building survey was required for a small farm steading at Brathens Croft (Brathens Hill Croft), Banchory, Aberdeenshire, prior to its demolition and replacement by a new dwelling.

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//2018/1359

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 Mrs Donna and Mr George Anderson. The site element of the survey was completed on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 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 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey maps were consulted. The Ordnance Survey Name Book was consulted on-line at <https://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books>
- 2.3 The British Newspaper archive was searched for references to the property. [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)
- 2.4 Census details and Valuation Rolls were consulted on-line at [www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk) . (Accessed September 2018).



**Illus 1** Detail of OS map. Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright (2002) All rights reserved. Licence number (100049810). Site indicated by red circle.

### 3 Methodology

- 3.1 The ground plan has been surveyed by MAS Ltd (Illus 8) and the elevations (Illus 19) have been supplied courtesy of Colin Thompson, Architect and annotated by MAS Ltd to show details which may help in understanding the development and history of the building.
- 3.2 The building recorded was photographed. The full set of photographs will be supplied for the archive and a table and an annotated plan in the present report (Illus 18) indicates the position of each.

### 4. The Site

- 4.1 The steading lies NW of Banchory just N of the road leading W from the A980 through Brathens Wood. It is near the now dismantled railway track.
- 4.3 The farmhouse is not part of the present survey. It has been extensively modernised but is identifiable as the farmhouse shown on the 1865 and 1901 OS maps (Illus 2, 3).
- Parish: Banchory Ternan  
NGR: NO 67576, 98268  
GPS in front of steading: 367576,798268  
Aberdeenshire SMR: NO69NE0074 (Named as Brathens)

### 5 Documentary evidence

No settlement is shown here on Roy's Military Map of 1747-55 ([www.nls.ac.uk](http://www.nls.ac.uk))

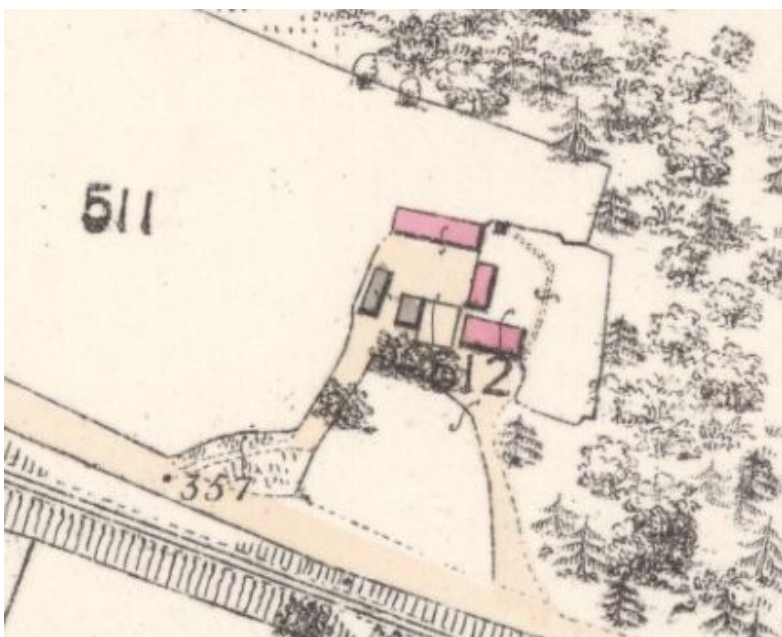
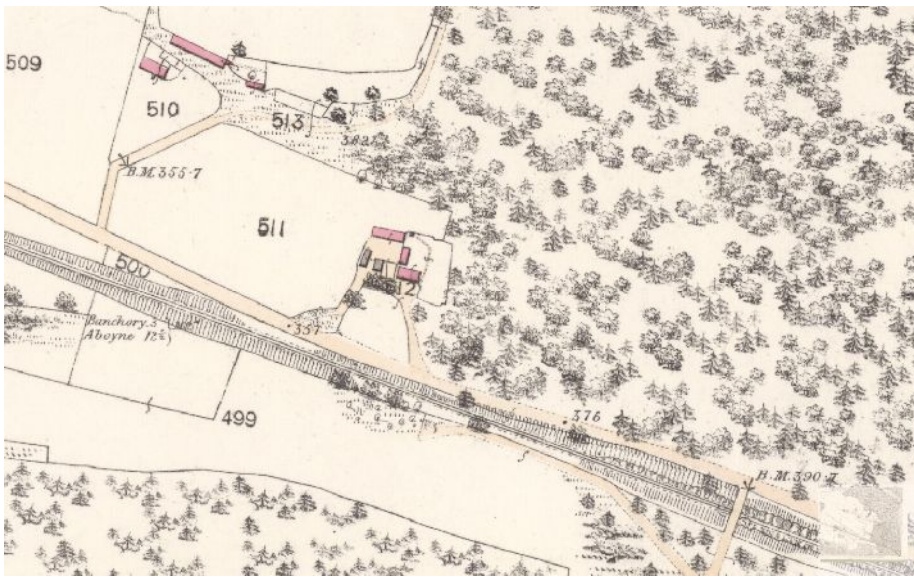
The documentary evidence indicates that Hill Croft Brathens was originally a tenancy leased from the Leys Estate owned by the Burnett family. There is some difficulty in tracing it as there appear to have been several crofts that may have been loosely named Brathens Croft.

- 1865** The 25"/mile OS map Kincardineshire v.3 (Banchory Ternan) 1865 (published 1866) shows the existing croft house and the steading described in this report, with



a small stone building at right angles to both lying between them. Two smaller rectangular timber structures are shown to the SW. (Note: This differs from the description in the Aberdeenshire SMR)

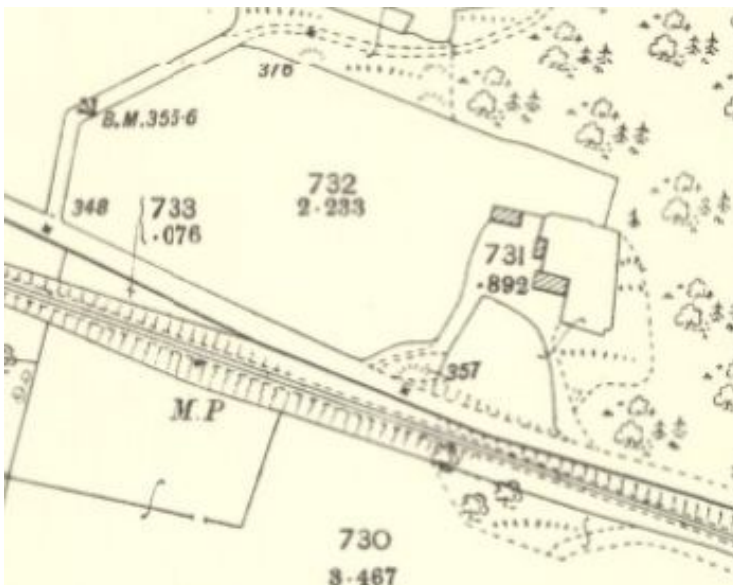
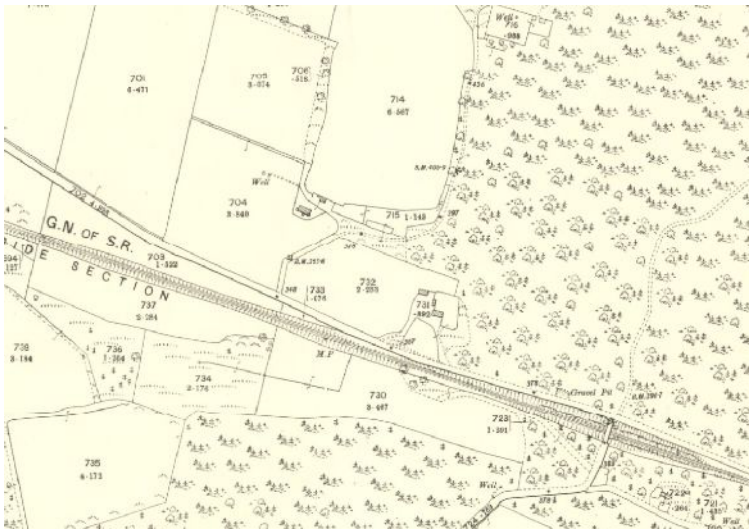
**1866** The Ordnance Survey Name Book, Kincardineshire Volume 03 (OS1/19/3/45: [www.scotlandsplaces.gov.uk](http://www.scotlandsplaces.gov.uk) ) describes Brathens as, ‘ *A district comprising several farmhouses, cottages etc the property of Sir J. Burnett, Crathes*’. The croft itself is marked but not named.



Illus 2 The 25"/mile OS map Kincardineshire v.3 1865 (published 1866) [www.nls.ac.uk](http://www.nls.ac.uk) with detail.

**1884** Death of Jane Smart widow of Alexander Stephenson aged 89 years on 27<sup>th</sup> March at Brathens Croft, Banchory ( *Aberdeen Peoples Journal*. 5<sup>th</sup> April 1884 [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) ). It was not possible to trace Alexander Stephenson through Census records.

**1901** The 25<sup>th</sup>/mile. OS map Kincardineshire iv.16 (Banchory-Ternon) (published 1903) shows the basic layout unchanged, although both the present steading and the byre appear to have been reduced in size. The wooden buildings to the SW have been removed.



Illus 3 The 25<sup>th</sup>/mile OS map The 25<sup>th</sup>/mile OS map Kincardineshire iv.16 (Banchory-Ternon) 1901 (published 1903) [www.nls.ac.uk](http://www.nls.ac.uk) with detail.

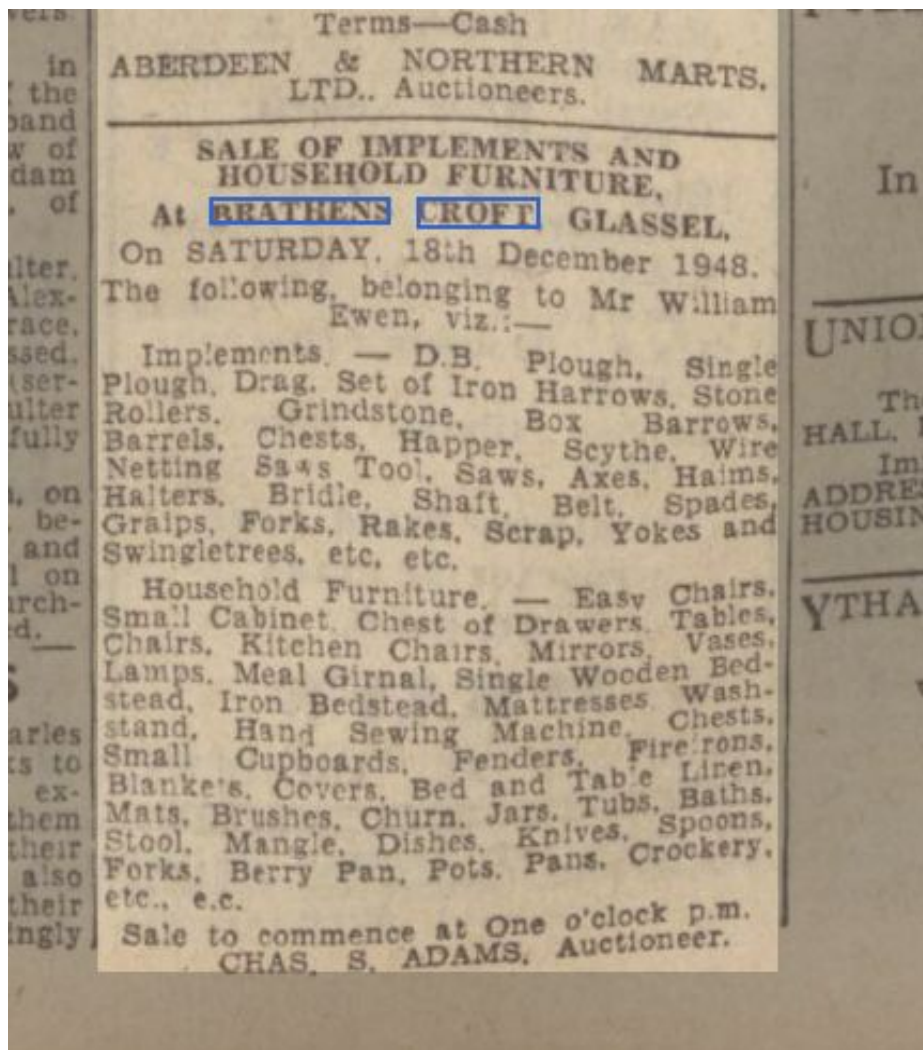
**1934-35** Records of prices for fat pigs sold at Kittybrewster mart refer to fat pigs sold from Brathens Croft Glassel (*Aberdeen Press and Journal* 3 Feb 1934, 7<sup>th</sup> July 1934, 21<sup>st</sup> Sept 1935 – with prices from £3.17s to £4. 5s [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) ).

**1938** Death of William Edward Ewen son of Mr and Mrs Ewen at Brathens Croft. (*Aberdeen Press and Journal* 4<sup>th</sup> May 1938. [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) ).

**1938** Bull calf for sale. Ewen, Brathens Croft, Glassel (*Aberdeen Press and Journal* 17th May 1938. [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) ).

**1941** Death of Jane Adam , aged 87,wife of William Ewen on 15<sup>th</sup> November at Brathens Croft. (*Aberdeen Weekly Journal* 20<sup>th</sup> November 1941 [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) ).

**1948** Displenish sale of implements etc by William Ewen at Brathens Croft (*Aberdeen Press and Journal* 16<sup>th</sup> December 1948. [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) ).



Illus 4 *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 16<sup>th</sup> December 1948. [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) ).



**1949** Mr and Mrs J Edmonstone thank friends at Kincardine O Neil for presents on leaving district. (*Aberdeen Press and Journal* 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1949. ) [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) ). Their address is given as Brathens Croft Glassel.

Although the timing of the sale of William Ewen's effects is a month later, this appears to be when the Edmonstone family moved to Brathens.

John Edmonstone (Jake) worked on the nearby railway as well as farming the croft. (pers. comm George Anderson).

**1979** Death of John Edmonstone's wife Annabella Crawford, mother of Ian, George and the late Walter. (*Aberdeen Press and Journal* 11<sup>th</sup> August 1979. ) [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) ).

Ian Edmonstone inherited from his father. Mrs Anderson is his niece. (pers. comm George Anderson).

## 6 The Buildings

### 6.1 The Farmhouse

The farmhouse was not part of the present survey and has been extensively renovated. It lies slightly SE of the steading, also facing S. Although modernised, the original single-storey and attic rectangular plan cottage is still evident.. It has been extended with harled blockwork at the E gable.

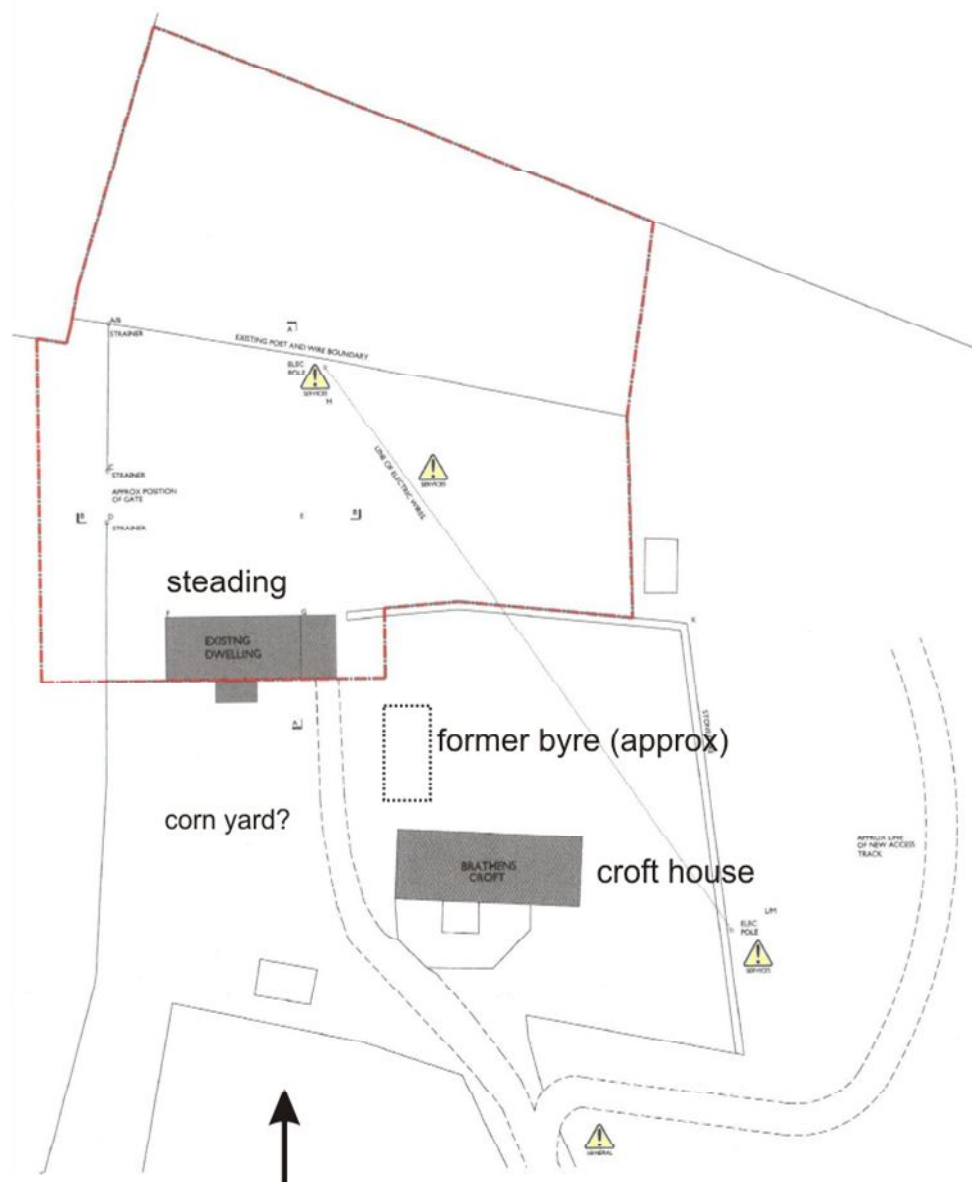


**Illus 5** The croft house. The harled extension does not show in the photograph.



## 6.2 The Steading

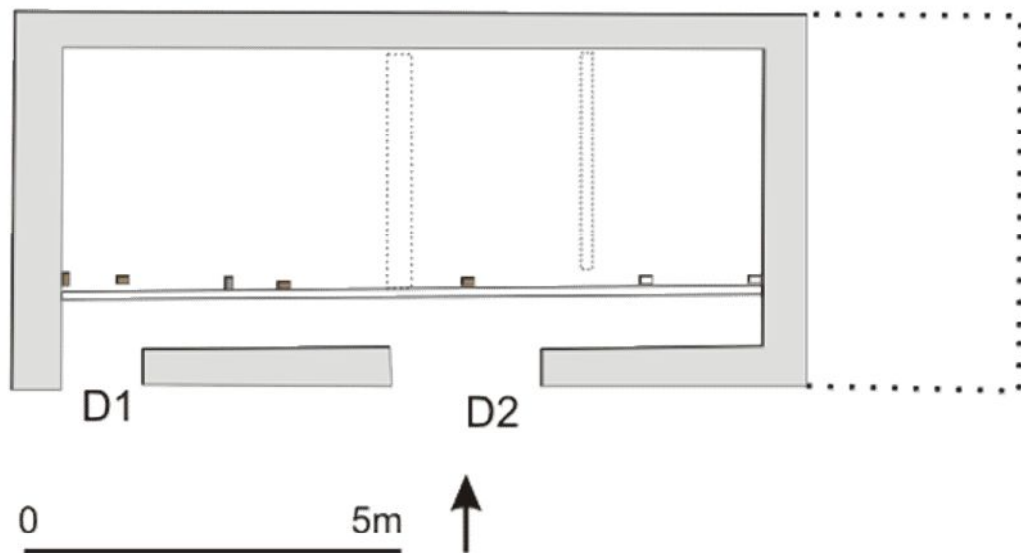
The steading comprises a single small building. A byre had originally lain to the E of the present building at right angles to the house- as in the OS map of 1901 (Illus 6). This was demolished c. 40 years ago (pers. comm. George Anderson). The corn yard is thought to have been in the open ground between the present building and the former byre (pers. comm. George Anderson).



Illus 6 Layout. Based on drawing courtesy of Colin Thompson Architect



Illus 7 The steading in relation to the croft house.



Illus 8 Ground plan by MAS Ltd.

Plan Rectangular, with traces of a collapsed extension at the E gable (dotted on plan).





**Illus 9 E gable and collapsed wooden structure**

Dimensions 4.95 x 10.5m externally. The footprint of a collapsed timber extension c 3m x 4.95m lay at the E gable.



**Illus 10 S elevation**





**Illus 11 W elevation**



**Illus 12 N elevation**

Present/recent use Derelict. A modern lean-to structure has been removed from the S facade in front of door D2. It is shown on the elevations but had been removed prior to the survey.



Former use Small farm steading.

Walls Rubble stone

Roof Hipped roof. Slates over sarking. The cross braces of the underlying couples have been sawn off at the E end of the building. Two metal skylights in S side of roof gave light to the interior.



**Illus 13 Interior of roof at E end showing sawn off cross braces**

### Doors and windows

There were only two openings, both in the S wall.

#### *S wall*

**D1** W: 1.07m. H: 2.08mm Rybats a mixture of pink granite and field stone. rybats. Pink granite external lintel, internal wooden lintel. Modern plank door.



**Illus 14 Door D1**

**D2** W: 1.96mm. H: 2.13m Original pink granite and fieldstone rybats on W side, E side rebuilt with cement blocks. The replacement lintel over this widened door is a timber railway sleeper.

The original lintel height appears to have been c. 1.85m, based on the surviving rybats on the W side. Modern plank and glass



door



**Illus 15 Door D2**

Interior

The only surviving internal partition was of corrugated iron and planks and appears modern (Illus 17).

The concrete floor retains an E-W drain 200-220mm wide some 700-780mm from the inner face of the S wall. Stubs of wooden uprights (130 x 80mm to 100 x 120mm) and scars in the concrete indicate some 4-6 livestock pens in front of the drain, extending to the N wall (Illus 18).



**Illus 16 Interior looking W**



**Illus 17 Detail of floor looking W**



## 7 Discussion

Hill Croft Brathens was part of the Leys estate and extended to a total of just some 6 acres (pers. comm. George Anderson). It is shown on the 1865 OS map and is probably of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup>-century date. It has been farmed by the Edmonstone family since about 1949 and probably by the Ewen family from the 1930s until 1948. It may have been farmed by an Alexander Stephenson in the 1880s.

It is a fairly typical small croft steading for this area of Aberdeenshire (Fenton and Walker 1981). Few internal features survive but the traces of pens and drainage indicate it was used for livestock- possibly in the 1930s it may have housed the pigs that were sold from the farm. The sale of a bull calf in 1938 may indicate a small number of cattle kept but is equally likely to have been the unwanted calf of the croft's milk cow.

## 8 References

Fenton, A and Walker, B 1981 *The Rural Architecture of Scotland*. John Donald:  
Edinburgh

## Acknowledgements

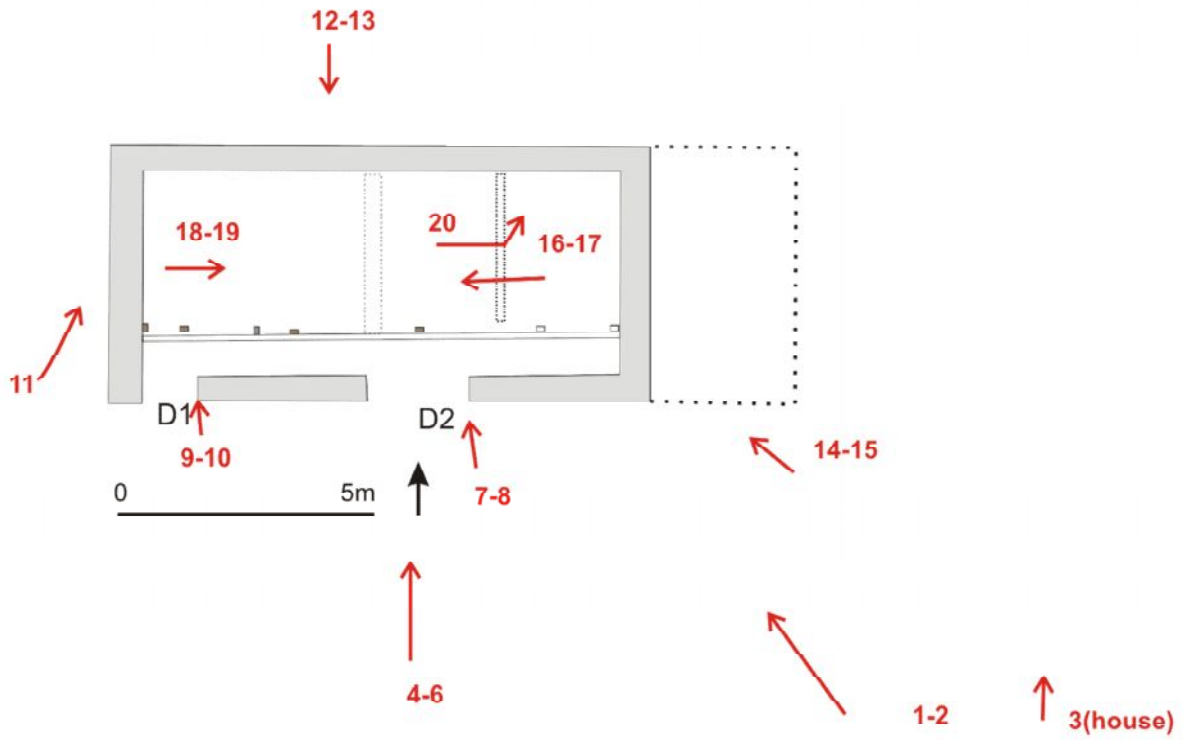
Murray Archaeological Services wish to thank George Anderson for his help.

## 10 Archive

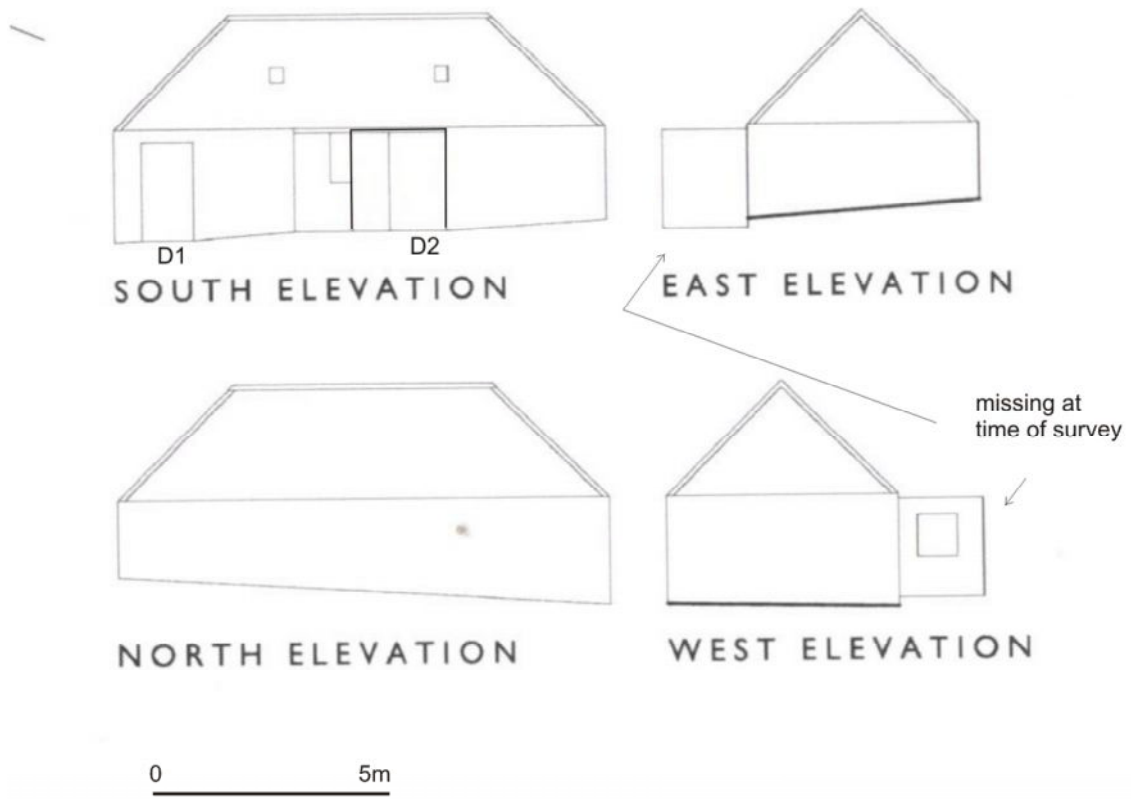
A full set of photographs with the photo location plans (Illus 18) will be supplied to the Aberdeenshire SMR and to the HES archive.

Photo number	Content
Brathens, Aberdeenshire	
001-002	Looking NW house and steading
003	House S elevation
004-006	Steading S elevation
007-008	Door D2
009-010	Door D1
011	W gable
012-013	N elevation
014-015	E elevation
016	Interior looking W
017	Interior of floor looking W
018	Interior looking E
019	Detail of floor W end
020	Detail of roof structure E end





Illus 18 Photo location plan.



Illus 19 Elevations courtesy of Colin Thompson Architect, annotated by MAS Ltd.