

**Historic Building Record
Stars of Forneth
Forneth
Blairgowrie
Perthshire**



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Stars of Forneth
Historic Building Record 2017

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Abstract

Mr Patrick Birkbeck commissioned Hannay McLaren Architects to undertake an archaeological historic building Survey of the B listed farm steading at Stars of Forneth, Blairgowrie in advance of partial demolition and refurbishment of the property.

The proposed development is centred on NGR 310885 745069. The work was undertaken throughout 2017 during dry weather. The requirement was to create a permanent record of the steading prior to works commencing.

The house was erected after the 1750s and before 1786. The steadings were added after 1837 but before 1864. The whole was altered and extended after 1872.

The HB listing reference is 5853.

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1. Background

1.1 Introduction

Mr Patrick Birkbeck commissioned Hannay McLaren Architects to undertake an archaeological historic building Survey of the B listed farm steading at Stars of Forneth, Blairgowrie in advance of partial demolition and refurbishment of the property. The proposed development is centred on NGR 310885 745069. The work was undertaken throughout 2017 during dry weather. The requirement was to create a permanent record of the steading prior to works commencing.

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The record is intended to satisfy the archaeological condition no3 on Planning Consent ref 17/01485/FLL and listed Building Consent ref 17/01484/LBC, dated 28th November 2017.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this investigation was to provide a visual and descriptive record of the standing buildings prior to commencement of works. This was done using scale drawings, photographs and a narrative consideration of form, function, location and generic type. The development of the property over time and its relationship with the occupants has been briefly investigated using Archive documentation and maps together with their dating.

1.3 Reporting

The present document has been prepared as the final report on this survey. Copies will be sent to the Client, HES and Perth and Kinross Historic Environment Record.

1.4 Planning and Curatorial issues

This survey and record was designed to satisfy the outstanding Archaeological conditions on the Planning consents previously referred to.

2. Details of Work

2.1 Location

Stars of Forneth steading is sited against a rock outcrop on the exposed south facing hillside to the valley of the Lunan Burn which contains the route of the A923 road from Dunkeld to Blairgowrie.

The building is served by the original drive which approaches from the west then runs around the north of the building. The land immediately to the south of the central house portion contains the original garden area to the property which was recorded in outline on the 1866 25" OS map. Detached ancillary buildings are also recorded on the OS maps but have now disappeared with the exception of the current retaining wall to the south east of the property.



Figure 1 Location Plan

2.2 General Details

The building form comprises a series of south facing courtyards; open and covered; with the cart shed with fodder store over, stables and smiddy on the west; the house in the centre ; and the farm steading with cattle court on the east. The whole was roofed in slate from various sources as repairs dictated, with final repairs using profiled metal and asbestos sheeting. Walls were constructed from round field stone with fine/rough dressed masonry to openings and corners. The house and stables building were and still are lime harled to some degree. The house is of the 2 storey traditional vernacular type increasingly popular after the 1750's and the steading is typical in form of farm buildings erected as part of farm improvements after the 1840's.

2.3 Archaeological Potential

The house section of Stars of Forneth was built prior to 1786. The house style exemplifies that gaining popularity after the 1750s. The steading is typical of the type to be utilised in the 1840-60's when improving farming methods were introduced. The steading as a whole is listed category B.

2.4 Archaeological Method

The plans and principle elevations together with the existing windows and doors were surveyed and drawings produced. Photographs were taken of the elevations in part and the house interiors. An on line search was made for maps and OS plans of the site. An on line search was also made to establish the occupants of the property. A narrative account of the fabric of the building and its sequence of development was prepared from the above and visual inspection of the property.

2.5 Results of Investigations

The Stars of Forneth steading was developed over a series of phases which are recorded in maps, slight variations in construction and construction joints.

Phase 1

The 2 storey house and single storey pantry/ scullery were built before 1783 when they were recorded on John Stobie's county map as a simple linear form as opposed to the surrounding courtyard plans. The property was built against a rock outcrop in the landscape.

The roof was slated and still retains the local silvery green slates which have likely been re used. The walls were built of round field stone with the face split off which was given a lime harled finish. This is still present. The south facing openings were given dressed stone surrounds of a grey/ brown colour. The remains of the timber sash and case windows show evidence of lambs tongue astragals. The north elevations of the 1 and 2 storey parts were built continuously in the one style with an arrangement of small window openings in an asymmetrical arrangement of dissimilar sizes.

The house was occupied up to 1816 by a Mr John Peebles who was a distiller. It was owned until 1837 by a Mr John Billie who was a merchant in India. The property was therefore a country house at this point; owned by an absent landlord and possibly the site of a small still.



Figure 2 James Stobie map 1786

Results of Investigations (cnt)

The original house was approached from the west along a lengthy straight drive and entry would have been from the south.

Phase 2

Prior to 1864, the property was developed into a farm steading incorporating the house which acquired an l shaped wing to the west and a free standing steading around a cattle court to the east. This layout is recorded in the 1868 25'' OS survey sheet LXIII.1. Both additions have a matching construction style using red sandstone dressings to corners and openings. The roofs were slated and have been re slated over the years using welsh slate, asbestos sheeting and profiled metal. Butt joints in the slating and changes in slate source in the coursing suggest an economy in repairs.

The west wing contained a cart shed with fodder/grain loftover, stables and tack rooms. There is an evident change in masonry styles where the cart shed is built over the original west gable and as the old gable and stables west elevation meet at the cart shed the found stones become flush. Where the pantry wall abuts the 2 storey house there is a construction joint suggesting a phasing of construction. The east elevation of the stables contains a doorway surround matching the house. It is out of context as the opening continues above in a rough manner suggesting re use of an original feature. Above the pantry is signs of a floor suggesting some rudimentary accommodation.

The steading and cattle court to the east contained single storey calving sheds and a dairy to the east and north with a 2 storey fodder/grain shed to the east. This shed had a horse mill to the east and a projection into the cattle court. The cattle court had a drop in levels forming a feeding trough to the court at a lower level of aprox 600mm. The cattle court had a stone dyke with gate pillars to the south allowing access. The steading was located on a raised platform of rock aprox 1200 higher than the house.

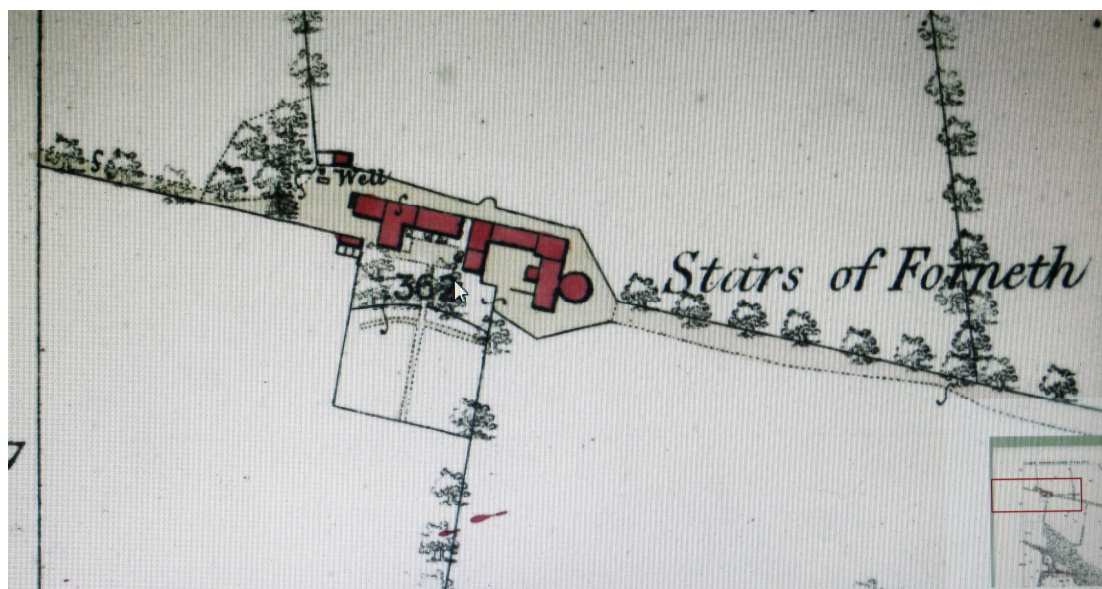


Figure 3 OS map 1864 sheet LXIII.1

Results of Investigations (cnt)

The property was inherited by James Speid, brother in law to Mr Binnie, in 1837. Mr Speid was a writer and former Provost of Brechin. The estate papers for Forneth reside in the AK Bell library. They cover the years 1807-1923 and are ref MS97. It is fair to say that the second phase was due to Mr Speid and therefore happened between 1837 and 1864.

The access around the property was changed at this time with the access going around the north of the buildings to the cattle court. A garden is shown on the OS with a lawn, trees and paths in the shelter of the west wing. This suggests a layout more elaborate than just a green. Outbuildings are also shown on the map with a cistern house at the well and a dog kennels or piggery to the west of the stables. Neither now exists.

Phase 3

Prior to 1899, the house was remodelled internally with treacle varnish finishes and heavy mouldings of the Victorian period. The first floor spans from the gables to the stair walls and this suggests that the first floor joists were raised at this time to give additional headroom. Chimneys were added to the pantry wing and stables where the east doorway was part infilled. A wooden porch was added to the scullery north elevation. The gap between the house and steading was infilled and the projecting building on the east of the cattle court was extended. Construction joints in the walls and butt joints in the roof finishes clearly mark this. The cattle court is shown covered over in the OS map. This layout is recorded in the 1899 6'' OS survey sheet LXIII 2nd edition.

James Speid senior died in 1872 and his daughters inherited the Forneth Estate. Their nephew, also James Speid, inherited the steading. He was a keen farmer and bred highland cattle. He died in 1937.

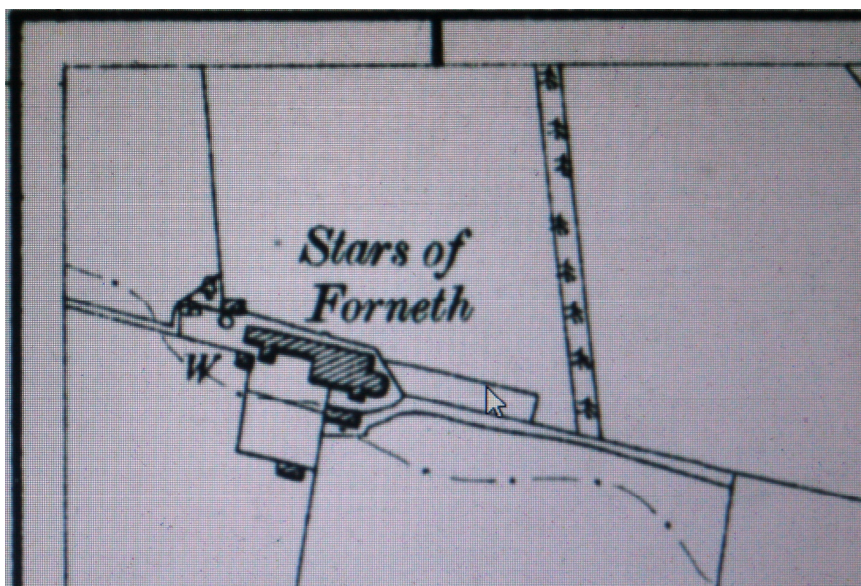


Figure 4 OS map 1899 sheet LXIII 2nd edit

Results of Investigations (cnt)

The surrounding landscape shows additional surrounding buildings. There is now a building at the foot of the garden, in the small wood to the west and immediately to the south east of the steading.

Phase 4

In the 20th century, the pantry window was widened using bricks and cement render. The pantry and scullery floor was cement screeded and the walls lined. The finishings were changed in the 1960s. Large openings were formed in the gables of the east wing of the steading to accommodate tractors and their bogies. In the 1960/70s the floor of the fodder/grain building was removed and the walls lined with rendered blockwork to form a silage pit. To allow tractor access, the ground was made up around the south east corner of the steading and the ancillary building here was used as a retaining wall.

3.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Hannay McLaren consider that the Historic Building Record has been compiled according to the requirements of the archaeological condition on the Planning Consent and Listed Building Consent referred to above. No further work is recommended in connection with the proposed development although the final decision lies with Perth and Kinross Council.



Figure 5 Stars of Forneth looking west

Appendix 1 photographic Register

Image Nos	Description	View
001 to 5	Cart Shed	North, West, South and interior
006 to 9 and 14	Pantry	North and South
010 to 12	Stables	West, South and East
015 to 18	House	South and North
019 to 27	Steading	SW, South, North and Interior
030 to 38	House Interior	various

Appendix 2 Drawing Register

Drawing No	Description	Scale
E02 at A3	Location Plan	1:2,500 at A3
E03b at A1	Plans as Existing	1:100 at A1
E04b at A1	Site Sections as Existing	1:100 at A1
E05 at A1	Cattle Court Elevations as Existing	1:100 at A1
P08a at A1	Windows and doors as Existing	1:10 at A1
P14 at A0	Site plan as Existing	1:200 and 500 at A0

Appendix 3 Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY	Perth and Kinross
PROJECT TITLE	Stars of Forneth Steading
DESCRIPTION	<p>The building is a B listed farm steading at Stars of Forneth, Blairgowrie.</p> <p>The requirement was to create a permanent record of the steading prior to partial demolition and refurbishment of the buildings.</p> <p>The house was erected after the 1750s and before 1786.</p> <p>The steadings were added after 1837 but before 1864. The whole was altered and extended after 1872.</p> <p>The HB listing reference is 5853.</p>
PARISH	Clunie
CONTRIBUTOR	J Hannay
ORGANISATION	Hannay McLaren Architects
TYPE OF PROJECT	HBR
NMRS NO	NO14NW90
SITE TYPE	Farm Steading
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None
NGR	310885 745069
START DATE	2017
END DATE	2017
PREVIOUS WORK	None
PROPOSED FUTURE WORKS	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY	Mr Patrick Birkbeck
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR	1 Glasdale Cottages, Comrie, Crieff, PH6 2JX