

XI.—1. MELKRIDGE BASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND.

By T. L. JONES, M.A.

A rectangular building of two storeys and attic, of local rubble with ashlar dressings and stone slate roof. Late medieval in style, although some of the ornament (e.g. the cable moulding) has a Renaissance feeling—16th century might be a suitable period for the building.

There is separate access from outside to both ground and first floors through original doorways in the S. wall, the upper floor doorway being reached by a stone staircase, which is a later addition, but probably replaced an original stair of stone and timber (plate V, fig. 1).

The ground floor is lit by two round loops in splayed apertures in the N. wall, while the upper floor has two, and the attic floor three small square headed windows. The remaining openings are later insertions.

There is a large fireplace on the first floor in the west wall with a segmental stone arch chamfered on the edge. Two small recesses in the west wall were probably cupboards. The floor beams are roughly chamfered, and in one or two instances forked timbers are used.

A small rectangular watch tower is mounted on the peak of the E. gable, corbelled out on both sides from the thickness of the wall. Small rectangular apertures, surrounded by cable moulding, in the N., E., and S. sides are provided for the look-out. A fourth opening, now blocked, in the west side probably served as an access to the turret, by means of a ladder. The watch tower apparently had a gabled roof, which has now disappeared.



FIG. 2. MELKRIDGE BASTLE FIRST FLOOR.

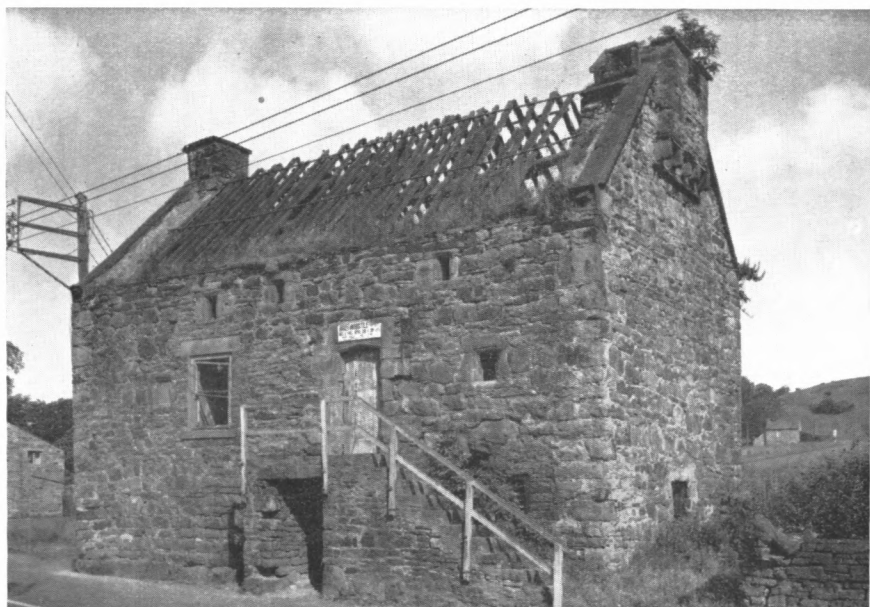


FIG. 1. MELKRIDGE BASTLE.

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2. ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY REPORT.

By C. W. FIELD, L.R.I.B.A.

LOCATION.

On the main Carlisle-Newcastle road, about two miles east of Haltwhistle and a similar distance south of the line of the Roman Wall, and built on level ground.

TYPE OF BUILDING.

Small fortified house, about 38' by 24' wide.

NUMBER OF FLOORS.

Ground, first, and a kind of attic formed about 4' below the main tie beams.

ACCESS.

Doors to ground floor on north and east elevations, with an external stone staircase to the sole entrance on first floor.

CONSTRUCTION.

Walls.

Roughly coursed rubble approximately 4' thick on ground floor in local stone with generally larger stones at quoins with rough stone plinth on part of west elevation and south up to projection of external staircase. There are some signs of old plaster on walls on first floor, but that on east end appears modern.

The two gable walls on east and west elevations have dressed stone copings with cabling ornament, while there is a curious little mask carved on the lower kneeler of coping on the south-west corner on south front, and some remains of another on the south-east corner.

The single chimney stack on west gable containing two flues has a plain stone coping.

Windows.

While some comparatively modern types have been inserted on north and south elevations, the originals have roughly dressed stone jambs chamfered on external angles and splayed internally. The main entrance door opening on first floor has dressed stone surrounds with flat pointed arch. On each side of the jambs to this opening there are signs of square sockets, presumably to bar the door from the inside as an additional precaution. One of the original small windows on south elevation has been blocked up.

Floors.

Ground floor appears to be earth.

First floor roughly hewn oak beams with chamfered lower edges and an average scantling of 11" by 10" and 9" by 9" to attic. In two cases, one in north corner of attic floor and the other towards middle of first floor the branch of the original tree used as a beam has actually been left on the main length and forms part of the floor.

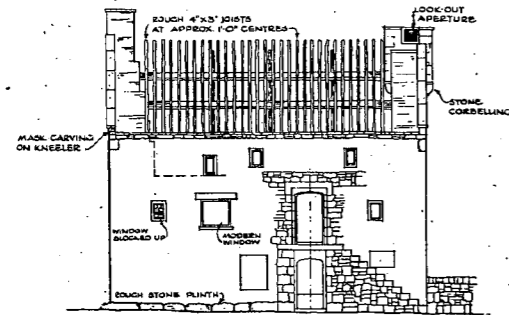
The boarding appears to be modern but is completely rotten and covered with vegetation. Thickness of boarding 1".

There are no ceilings.

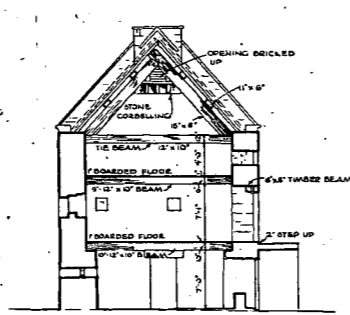
Roof.

There are three rough hewn oak roof trusses with main tie beams about 12" deep by 10" wide, at approximately 7' centres and principal rafters 1' 3" by 5". These are notched unevenly together at their apex (see section on Drawing No. $\frac{644}{333}$) with 11" by 6" oak purlins at an average of 4' centres notched about 1" into main rafters, two on each slope.

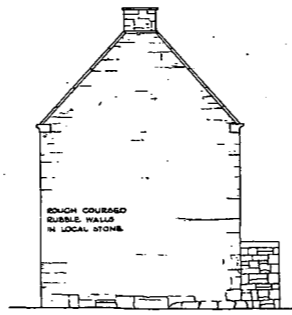
The probable timber roof ridge has now disappeared and the common rafters here again are of roughly hewn oak of 4" by 3" scantling at approximately 12" centres. The roof covering was taken away some years ago, prior to World War II (1939-1945), when the house was then used as a reading room. According to a photograph of the building



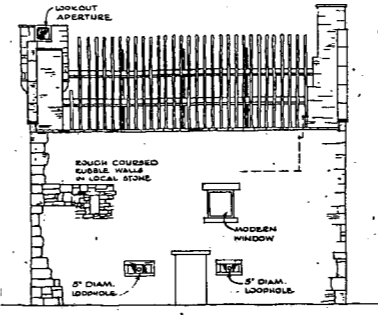
SOUTH ELEVATION



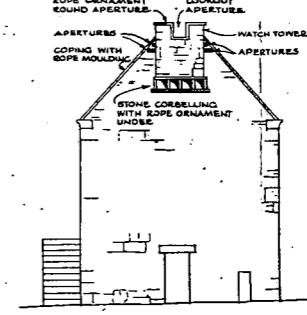
SECTION A-A



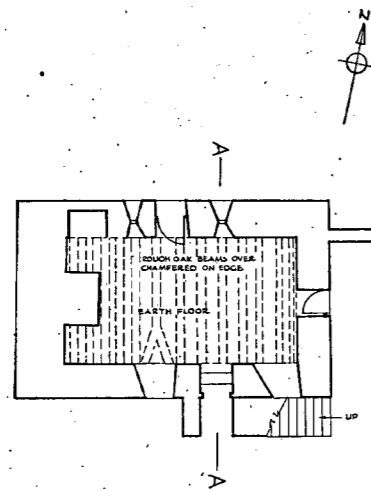
WEST ELEVATION



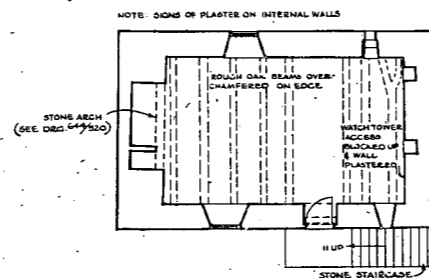
NORTH ELEVATION



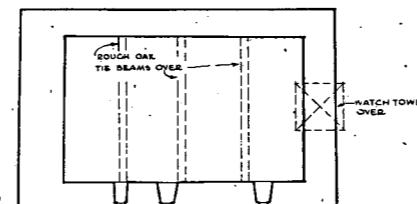
EAST ELEVATION



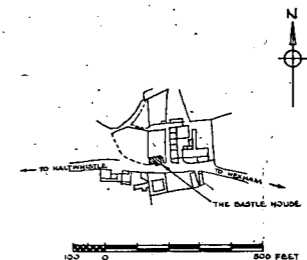
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



ATTIC FLOOR



SITE PLAN

BASTLE HOUSE MELKRIDGE, NORTHUMBERLAND

SURVEY AS EXISTING AUGUST 1954

SCALE: EIGHT FEET TO ONE INCH

MINISTRY OF WORKS
ANCIENT MONUMENTS BRANCH
LAMBETH BRIDGE HOUSE LONDON S.E.1.

644
333

in Nathaniel Lloyd's *History of the English House*, the building appears to have been covered with thin stone slabs.

Fireplaces.

The two fireplaces on the west wall are of roughly dressed stone, but that on the first floor has been severely mutilated. The original arch has been completely cut away, and a later segmental arch, apparently of different stone with voussoirs of varying sizes has been inserted into and between the haunches of the original. The ground floor fireplace projects well into the room, is of stone, with segmental arch. Jambs and soffits of arch have a single, fairly large chamfer, as have the jambs on the first floor.

SPECIAL FEATURES.

A watchtower is incorporated in the thickness of the gable wall at the east end of the building at high level, and corbelled out on both sides, with three small look-out apertures just above roof level, giving vistas across the north, south and east directions. The cabling ornament previously mentioned is again used here, round the apertures, under the stone corbels, and as a capping to top of tower. Access to this would appear to have been internally by means of some kind of step ladder, as there is a small opening about 2' 6" high and 2' wide, at present bricked up, at the presumed floor level of tower immediately above stone corbelling.

On the north elevation on the ground floor there are situated two small loopholed openings each side of the central doorway and about 4' above floor level. These holes are splayed internally and externally so as to give a field of fire covering the entire northern side. The actual firing apertures consist of a circular hole about 5" in diameter.

GENERAL.

References: *A History of the English House*, by Nathaniel Lloyd. *Northumberland* (The Little Guides), by J. E. Morris, M.A.