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A Building at Steel, Hexhamshire, Northumberland

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The hamlet known as Steel (a name which recurs in both the adjacent parishes of Hexhamshire Middle Quarter and Slayley) lies on the low ridge between the valleys of Ham Beck and the Devil's Water, *c.* 6 km south of Hexham (NGR NY 9387 5838). The westernmost of the buildings in the hamlet, an elongate range (aligned south-west to north-east, hereafter referred to as west-east), is a former house or pair of houses, together with a barn, which have served as farm outbuildings for around half a century. In 1999/2000 the house was returned to domestic use, its poor structural condition necessitating extensive works, during which archaeological recording was carried out. The building is now known as 'Steel House'; the only local name for this building so far traced is 'The Tenement'.

The building is the product of a considerable number of structural phases, spanning four hundred years or more, and includes elements both typical and untypical of the vernacular architecture of the region.

DESCRIPTION (figs. 1–6)

The range is built of rubble, much of it heavily mortared; the western part had a roof of stone slates whilst the central and eastern parts were covered in asbestos sheeting. Straight joints and quoining made three successive constructional phases, starting at the east end, easily recognisable, as is apparent from the plans (figs. 1 and 2; see also figs. 3 and 7).

THE EAST END

In its most recent usage this had been a byre: at one stage this had a loft above, but in its final

period of agricultural use the floor had been removed. This part of the range measures *c.* 7.0 by 6.6 m externally, although these may not be the full dimensions of the Phase I building because the east wall is largely (if not entirely) of nineteenth-century date, and *c.* 0.60 m thick as opposed to the *c.* 0.90 m of the other three walls. The west end of this Phase I building is marked by large, quite elongate, quoins in both north and south walls, which only rise to a height of *c.* 2 m; above this, later masonry overlaps the thickness of the original west wall, and the upper set of quoins, displaced eastward by the thickness of the end wall of the Phase I structure, are those of the east end of the Phase II building. There are also quite large quoins, less regular in size and shape, at the east end; these are probably re-used material. This part of the range, and the central section, both have boulder plinths. The original building appears to have had a very low eaves, as confirmed by roof lines visible on the internal face of the west wall; the original roof was of 45° pitch, with its apex just below an eastward-facing window (B4) in the Phase II gable, raised on top of its westward-facing predecessor.

In the south wall (see fig. 3) is a doorway (A1), with a chamfered flat-pointed monolithic head, sixteenth/seventeenth century in style but apparently a re-used piece. To the west of it is a slit vent (A2), which may be original. Above is a long block forming the external sill of the former window (A3), which must have been carried up as a dormer; the remains of its *in-situ* wooden sill were found and recorded during the building works.¹ Set in the early nineteenth century (?) masonry of the upper section of the wall is the pitching door (A4).

The east end wall of the range, of regularly-coursed stone, is all of nineteenth-century date,

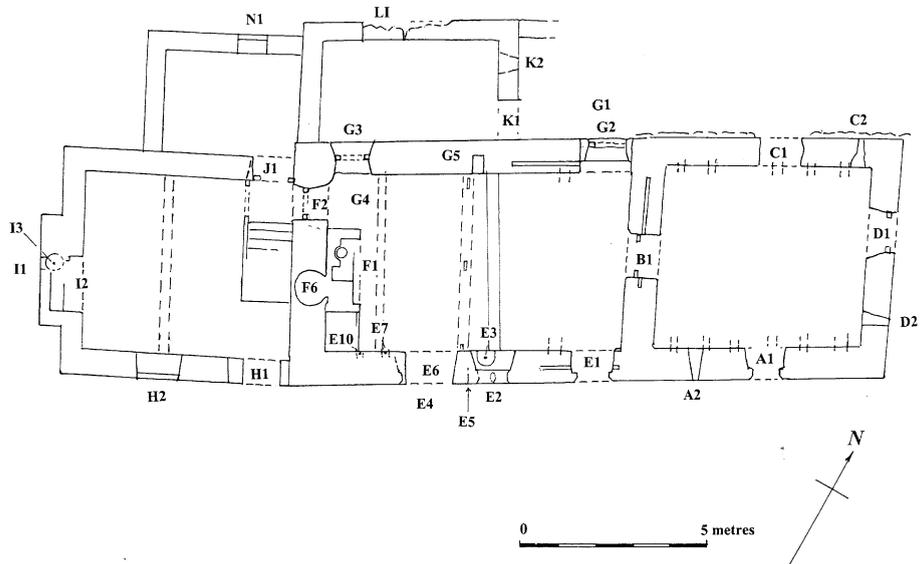


Fig. 1 Steel, 'The Tenement' Ground Floor Plan (1:200). P. F. Ryder, 1994/9. For key see text.

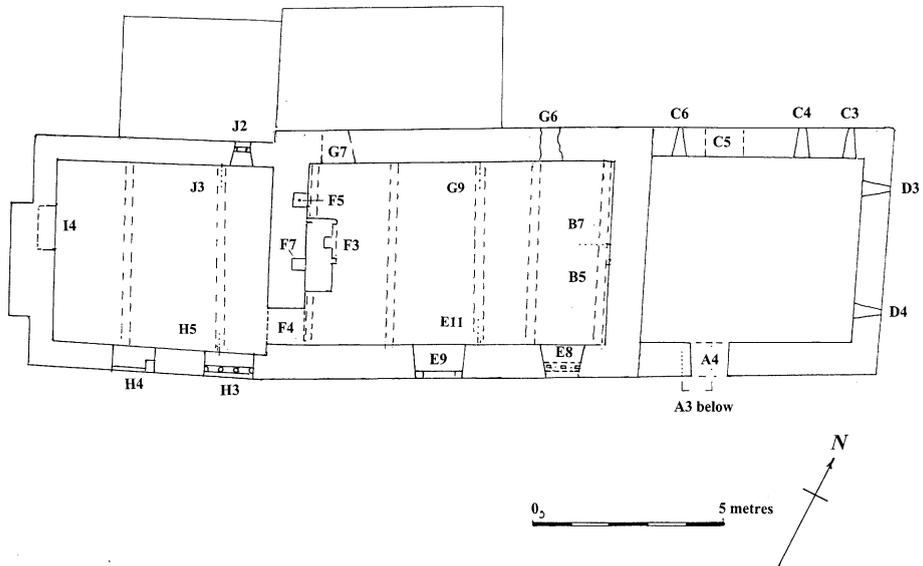


Fig. 2 Steel, 'The Tenement' First Floor Plan (1:200). P. F. Ryder, 1994/9. For key see text.

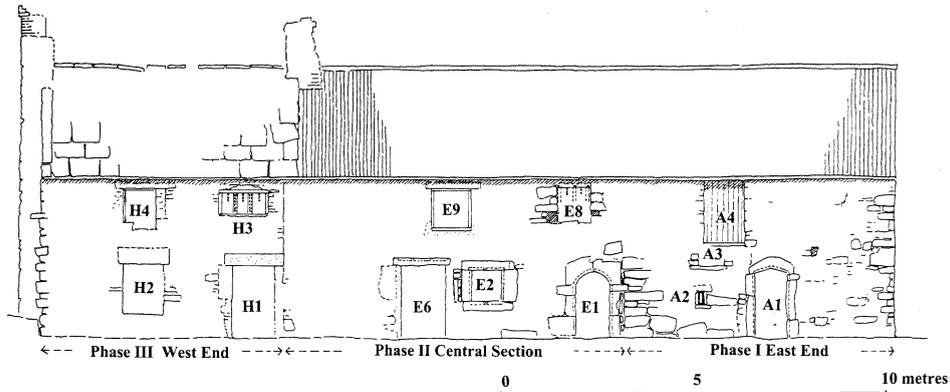


Fig. 3 Steel, 'The Tenement'. South Elevation (1:200; after a drawing by Gordon Currie Associates) For key see text.

although the doorway (D1) is clearly an insertion, probably replacing a slit vent; there is an extant slit vent (D2) to the south, and two more (D3 and D4) above. Directly over these vents is a course of projecting stone slates probably relating to the roof of a removed outbuilding. Above this is a fifth slit vent set centrally in the gable; the gable itself has only a rough edging, without coping stones, suggesting that it has been cut down in pitch.

On the north of the range all features relate to the late phase of agricultural usage: the inserted doorway (C1); the pitching door (C5); and a series of crudely-constructed ventilation slits (C2, 3, 4 and 6).

In the centre of the west wall of the Phase I building, now internal, is an extremely interesting doorway (B1), blocked for many years but now re-opened (see fig. 4). The opening has jambs of megalithic slabs, one at mid-height set horizontally with those above and below set upright (rather in the manner of Anglo-Saxon 'long-and-short' work); these jambs carry a series of timber lintels. The heavy oak door-frame is set midway through the wall, without any stone rebate, and is protected by a drawbar tunnel and socket on the east. The jambs have been mortised into a timber sill, only the ends of which survive. The door itself has been harr hung; a socket for the head of the harr-post is cut into the lintel but the base socket, perhaps cut into a stone block, has been lost.

Internally, clearance of an earth floor revealed a roughly-built central drainage channel, which presumably related to the phase of usage as a byre. The sawn-off stubs of the first floor timbers were of considerable scantling, suggesting that these probably pre-dated the nineteenth-century remodelling. The roof trusses were of twentieth-century date.

THE CENTRAL SECTION

The central part of the range measures 8.8 by 6.6 m externally, with walls between 0.85 and 1.0 m thick; its fabric and quoining are generally similar to those of the earlier part, and both have boulder plinths.

At the east end of the south wall is doorway (E1) with massive gritstone dressings and a hollow-chamfered arched head of segmental-pointed form, of very 'medieval' appearance. There is a drawbar tunnel in the west jamb. Some features of this doorway, notably the way in which the dressings of at least the east jamb seem to be thicker than the wall, suggest that it too is a re-used piece, although perhaps brought from elsewhere when this part of the house was built, rather than being inserted after construction. West of this was a blocked two-light mullioned window (E2) with a chamfered surround, of later seventeenth-century character (see fig. 5) and then a plain doorway (E6).

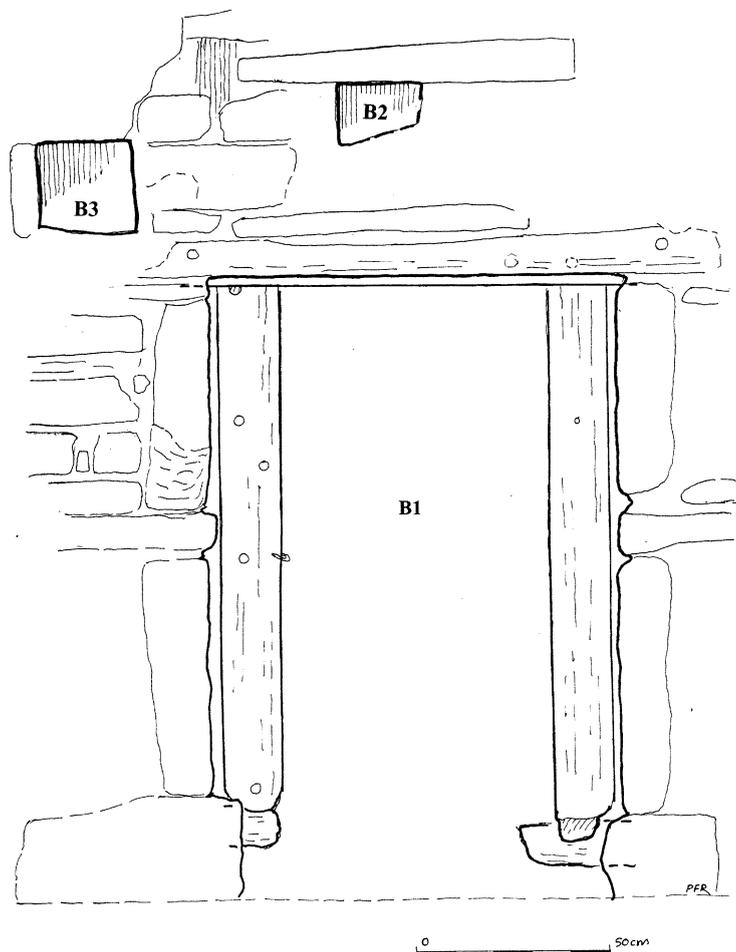


Fig. 4 Steel, 'The Tenement'. External Elevation of Doorway (B1) (1:20).

Its west jamb and internal splay were of twentieth-century brickwork; its lintel was that of an earlier three-light window (E4), turned upside down. Just beyond the brick west jamb of the doorway the west jamb of the window survived *in situ*. Internally a single beam formed the lintels of both the two and three-light windows. In the internal sill of the two-light window is a round-ended recess (E3), 0.25 m wide and 0.20 m deep, cut into a single block of sandstone, perhaps to hold a water-butt.²

At the east end of the north wall of this section, and opposite doorway (E1) in the front

wall, is a second early doorway (G1), later partially blocked and converted to a window (G2). The doorway had been very like (B1); its east jamb was formed by the north-western angle-quoins of the Phase I building, whilst its western was of megalithic slabs, set upright, with a long drawbar tunnel. The opening was spanned by a series of timber lintels, one with sockets for the jamb posts. In the internal face of the wall, a metre or so above the lintel of the doorway, is a rough square opening (G8) which appeared to communicate with a vertical shaft in the wall-opening above or between the

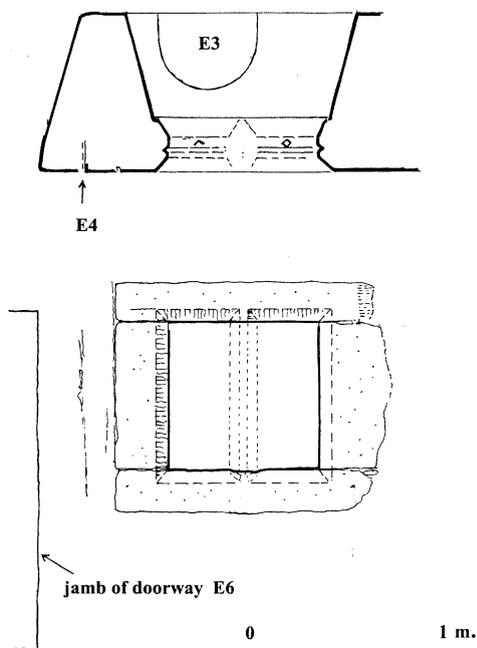


Fig. 5 Steel, 'The Tenement'. Details of Window (E2) and associated features (1:40).

irregular timber lintels. This would seem to have been a crude version of a 'quenching hole', designed to pour water down if a fire were kindled against the door.³ The window (G2), a later insertion in the doorway opening, was timber-framed and of four narrow lights, the two intermediate mullions later removed; it appears to have been made up of re-used timbers from some other feature.

The western two-thirds of the north wall of this part of the range was covered externally by an outshut, access to which was through the inserted doorway (G3) at the west end of the wall. This retained remains of a frame with lamb's tongue stops to its chamfers on both jambs and head. Midway along the internal face of the wall the removal of plaster exposed the sawn-off end of a heavy cruck blade (G5); its lower end remained concealed within the wall, but would appear to have extended down to little above ground level. The remainder of the truss must have been taken out at a relatively early date, as windows (E2) and (E4)

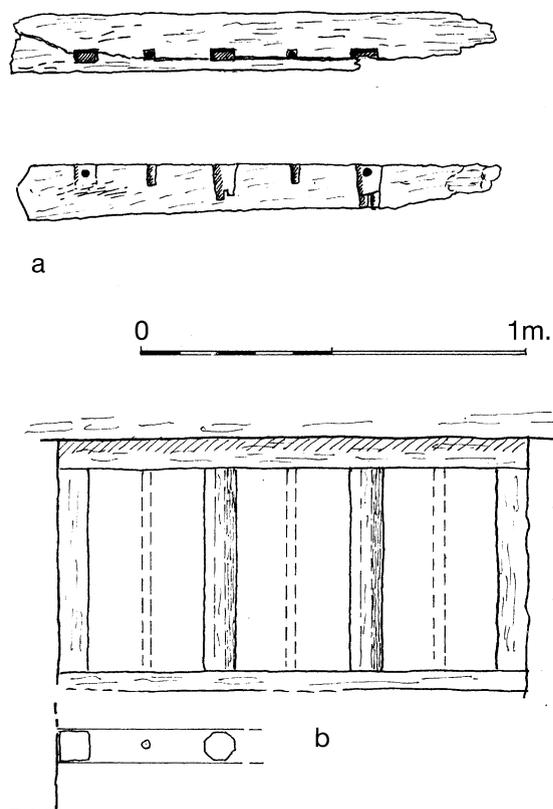


Fig. 6 Steel, 'The Tenement'. Details of timber windows (1:20).

a. Sill of window (A3) (Phase I) Plan/Section
b. Window (H3) (Phase III). Elevation/Part Plan

must post-date the removal of the southern blade.

At the west end of the ground floor was an early nineteenth-century fireplace; the stone south, and brick north, jambs and the way in which the timber lintel oddly overhung the south jamb all suggested that it had been remodelled at some time. On the north of the central fireplace and grate was an ashlar half-domed recess⁴ containing a set-pot (a re-used three-legged cauldron) and on the south a cast-iron horizontal bread oven, oval in section and with two shelves. Its door, when cleaned, revealed a central figure of Nelson, facing left, surrounded by a star-burst; around its circumference was the inscription 'England expects

every man to do his duty'. It also bore the stamp of the foundry of John Whinfield in Pipewellgate, Gateshead, which closed in 1817 (*pers. comm.* Matthew Hutchinson). When the stack, which had suffered serious structural failure, was dismantled, re-used stones found in its side walls included two corbels, one of very 'medieval' appearance. On the north of the stack was an inserted doorway into the Phase III west end of the range; all that was retained of its frame was the stop-chamfered lintel.

The dismantling of the stack revealed evidences of the preceding fire hood. This had been carried on a bressumer, sockets for which were traceable in both side walls (E7 on the south, G4 on the north); an additional socket, roughly infilled with brickwork, (G10), might relate to an earlier phase of bressumer, or possibly a beam supporting the hearth of a first-floor fireplace (see below p. 150). The hood rose to a cantilever stack capping the gable, supported by a pair of corbels (F8). At the rear of the hearth was an opening, 0.55 m wide, into a domed brick bread oven (F6), 0.90m in diameter and 0.51 m high at the apex.

In the wall above, within the hood, was a stone wall-locker, set at a little above first-floor level, 0.25 m wide and 0.33 m deep. It was formed from flat slabs at top, bottom and back, but its jambs were simply walling stone. One possible function is that this might have been a secret hiding place for valuables, but all it contained when re-opened was a small fragment of leather; an alternative interpretation (see Discussion below) is that it relates to an earlier hearth at first-floor level.

In its latest phase the ground floor of this section of the range was sub-divided by a brick wall, built over an earlier stone slab floor that extended as far as the cobbled 'cross passage' between the opposed doorways (E1) and (G1). The first floor was carried on three transverse beams; the central one was halved against the west face of the cruck blade, and contained mortises for three uprights, one close to each wall and one near the centre. A stud partition on this line would have fallen between the two- and three-light windows in the south wall.

No evidence of any stair position survived in this section of the range. At first-floor level the large room over the main living room was lit by a window (E9) which appeared to be of nineteenth-century date, but may have been an enlargement of an earlier opening. At the west end of the north wall was evidence of a blocked opening (G7); its dimensions remained uncertain but it may have been a window pre-dating the addition of the outshut. The room was heated by fireplace (F3), set into the tapering brick stack that replaced the earlier hood; this had a plain stone surround and an old grate. In the wall to the north of the stack the removal of plaster exposed an infilled stone wall-locker (F5), 0.30 m wide, 0.20 m wide and 0.35 m deep, of the usual 'stone box' construction.

Evidence of partitions enclosing a pair of small bedrooms further east was visible in the plaster on the north and east walls. The southern was lit by a small window on the south (E8), which retained the head of its original timber two-light mullioned window, showing that there was a central circular-section iron bar to each light. The northern room had a tiny window on the north (G6), no more than a ragged opening in the wall, perhaps a widening of an even smaller loop.

Some sort of attic above these rooms was lit by a window (B4) in the apex of the east gable, looking out above the roof of the adjacent Phase I building, before this was heightened. This window had been of the same type as (E8), but retained its frame complete, having lost only its mullion and bars.

All that remained of the original roof structure of this part were five old tie-beams (two set against the end walls) with crude chamfers, unrelated to the present three-bay roof with its simple principal rafter pairs, which is probably of twentieth-century date.

THE WEST END

The western third of the range, set at a slightly skew angle to the remainder, is clearly a later addition. It is *c.* 6 m. square externally, over walls that are only 0.65 m thick; it has a projecting stack on the west gable, diminishing in

width by a number of slopes and set-backs. The coping of the gable is formed by the diagonally-cut ends of elongated walling stones. Tusking at the south-west corner shows that it was intended from the first to extend the range further west, and there are slight indications on the face of the stack of the roof timbers of an adjacent lower building. The *c.* 1860 Ordnance Survey 25":1 mile map shows a small additional structure at this end of the range.

In its original form the block was simply an extension to the earlier house, and seems to have had no external doorways. The doorway from the main living room opened onto a lobby from which a stair, set on a rectangular foundation of large blocks with pitched cobbles between, ascended south. In the latest phase of use this lobby was sealed off from the ground-floor room, which could only be entered by doorway (H1). At first-floor level there was additional access to the upper room from the earlier building through the doorway (F4) to the south of the stack.

The south wall of the extension originally had two similar windows to each floor. One, the eastern at first floor level (H3), survived intact behind a later brick skin. Set back under an outer timber lintel, it was a three-light timber-mullioned window with octagonal mullions and circular bar holes, and was of unpegged construction (see fig. 6). There were only fragmentary remains of the three other similar windows. On the ground floor the eastern window had been replaced by doorway (H1), which had a concrete lintel, and seemed of no great age. The western window at this level (H2) had been enlarged in the nineteenth century and in its latest form held a four-pane sash, under a cut ashlar lintel; the western first-floor window (H4) had also been enlarged, but still retained its old outer and inner lintels.

At the east end of the north wall of this part of the building there was a smaller window, later converted into a doorway (J1), giving access to the later outshut; both the cut stone of the upper part of its internal west splay and the stopped chamfer of its lintel relate to the earlier window. Above is a small window (J2) with an old frame⁵ and a drain or slop-stone

beneath, partly concealed by the roof of the outshut, which clearly post-dated it. Both these openings had inordinately long internal lintels.

The ground floor room was heated by fireplace (I2) which had a stone lintel; instead of cut dressings its jambs had upright blocks simulated in render. The removal of a later range revealed the remains of another bread oven (I3) behind, accommodated in the stack projection; access to the oven would appear to have been external. Above both this fireplace and the one at first-floor level were large curved strainer beams that may have been re-used pieces of cruck blade.

The first-floor fireplace (I4) was also of considerable interest; in the latest phase of the use of the building it had been walled up. The large block re-used as its lintel was part of a former hearth stone, with a raised moulding at the edge. The hearth stone itself was formed by a smaller but similar slab, except that in this case there was a thin groove in the vertical edge; its rear angles were damaged and did not quite fit the fireplace, pointing to it being another example of re-use.

A steep stair to the attic rose from a small lobby at the north-east corner of the bedroom; the attic was lit by two small windows (I5 and I6), one on each side of the stack. Both had been blocked up; on the removal of the blocking, (I5) was found to retain remains of its old frame, which like (J2) had a socket for a central diagonally-set bar. This part of the building alone retained an old roof, probably contemporary with its construction. This was of pegged oak construction, having principal rafter trusses with collars; differences in detail and finish between the two trusses suggest that, once again, older material was being re-used.

THE OUTSHUTS

The two outshuts were roofless and ruinous when recorded. The eastern was clearly an addition to the central section of the range; its rough fabric suggested an eighteenth-century date; it could have been contemporary with the Phase III extension, or was perhaps a little later (mid-eighteenth century?). None of its features – the

remains of doorway (L1) on the north, and a small window (K2) and inserted doorway (K1) in the east end, offered any real clue to date. The outshut to the west end of the range clearly post-dated its counterpart to the east; its only feature was a window (N1) in the north wall.

DISCUSSION: THE DATE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUILDING (figs. 7–12)

From an early date Steel seems to have been the site of a major farm belonging to Hexham Priory. In 1226 Archbishop Gray of York granted the Priory 64 acres of land between Dotland Park and 'Tirsterl' (?The Steel) and, during the reign of Henry III, Gilbert de Slaley granted the house pasturage at The Steel for 260 sheep; in 1479 the Priory owned a sheepfold at 'Le Stele' 1 acre in extent, as well as pasturage for 300 sheep.⁶ A documentary search for specific references to the building described in this article has, however, proved fruitless (*pers. comm.* Barbara Harbottle); although there is a

local tradition that it was associated with Hexham Priory, this could simply have arisen from the general 'medieval' appearance of some of its architectural features.

The earliest part of the range represents a small but intriguing structure (figs. 7, 9). The doorway with its draw-bar tunnel implies that it was a domestic building, but its low eaves show it was not a conventional two-storeyed bastle, of which there are a number in this area.⁷ It may have been a defensible house, of two low storeys, of a type seen at Tow House, Bardon Mill, and again at Whitlees near Elsdon (fig. 8). Both of these seem to be buildings of the 'bastle period' (i.e. late sixteenth or more probably early-seventeenth century) but to have had domestic accommodation on the ground floor. They were clearly defensible structures, but it is difficult to know what to call them. One shrinks from adding another term to the already-confused nomenclature of defensible structures in the area to cover structures like this. 'Strong Houses' might be appropriate, except that its recent applications seem to have primarily been to larger buildings built

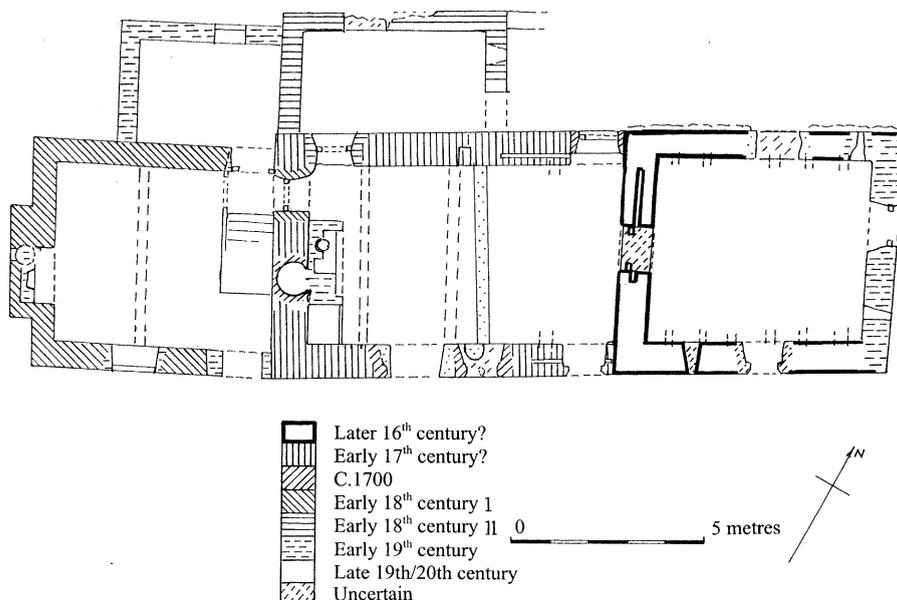


Fig. 7 Steel, 'The Tenement'. Provisional Phased Ground Plan (1:200).

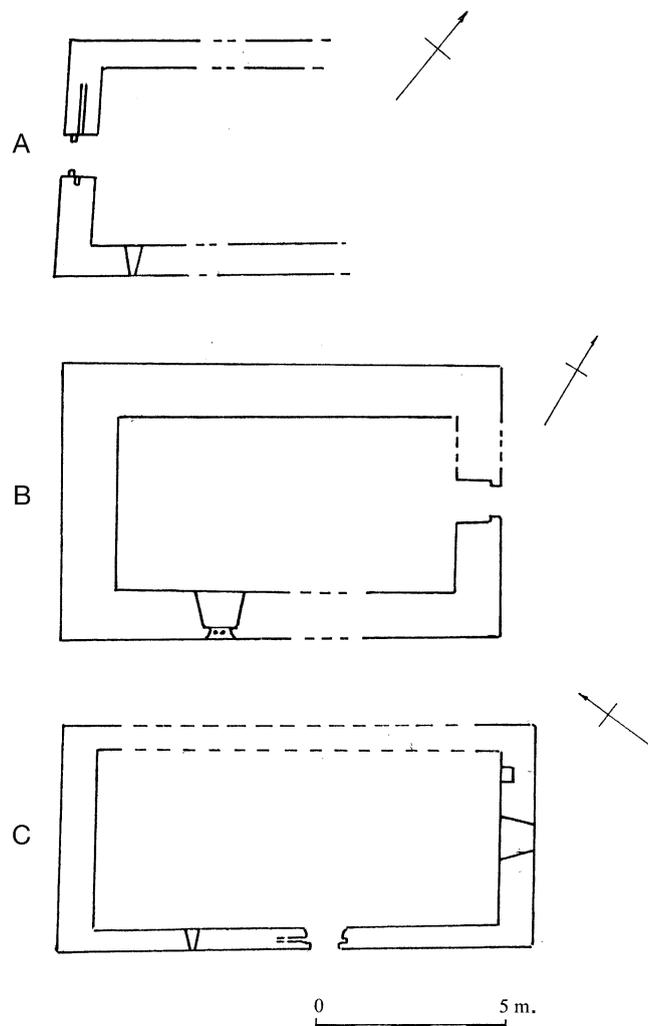


Fig. 8 Comparative Plans of Three Defensible Single-Storey Houses

A. 'The Tenement'. Steel. Phase I

B. Whitlees (Elsdon). In the heart of bastle country, a thicker-walled house. The principal evidence of its form is the grilled window on the south, in contrast to the smaller slits of the loft/floor above.

C. The Old Workshop (Tow House). Survey 1990 by Tynedale Vernacular Buildings Study Group. A three-bay cruck building of two low storeys; small windows with stout oak frames and a door provided with a drawbar tunnel shows that there was still some intention of defensibility.

by a higher social class, such as Witton Shields and Stanton Hall.⁸

The doorway of this Phase I building at Steel is of interest in that it differs considerably from those of the majority of bastles in having no cut stone dressings, but a very substantial oak

frame, set centrally within the wall. A doorway of precisely this form was uncovered at Stable End, Broomhaugh (NZ 002616) some years ago; set centrally in the end wall, it survived complete with its harr-hung door; unfortunately the side-walls at Broomhaugh are

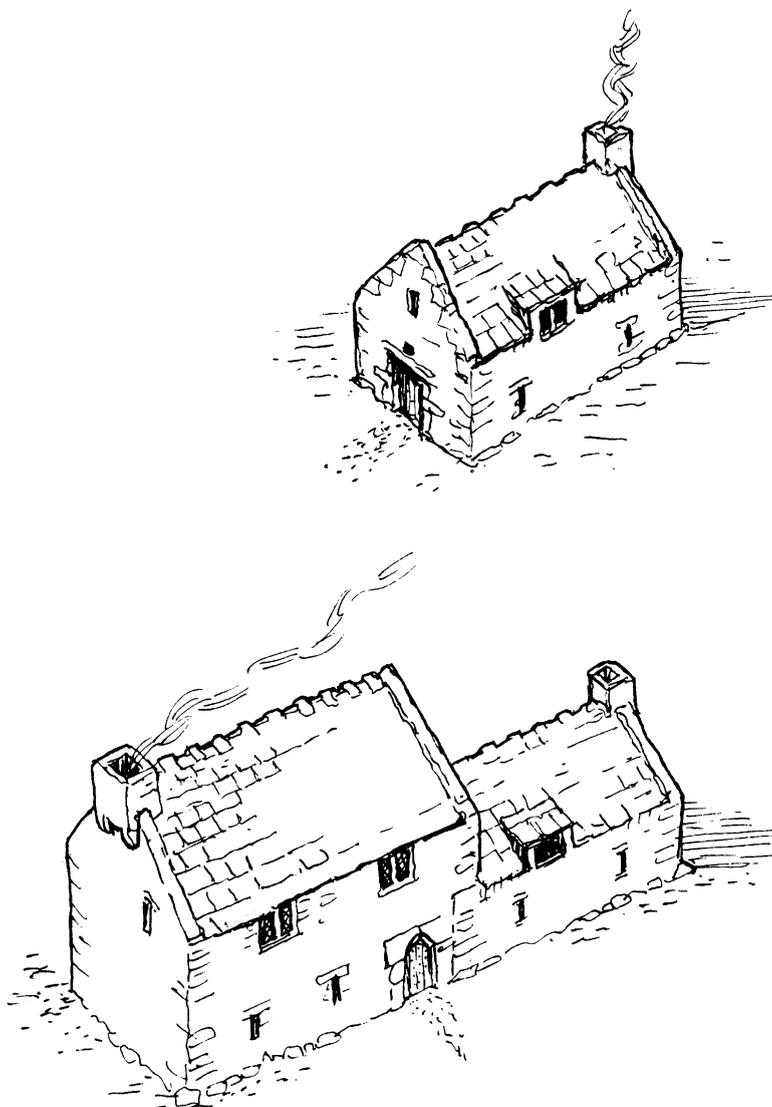


Fig. 9 Steel, 'The Tenement'. Reconstruction of defensible house, Phases I & II. (upper) Phase I. Late Sixteenth Century? (lower) Phase II. Early Seventeenth Century.

plastered over, so it cannot be seen if the same type of megalithic upright slabs were used as at Steel.⁹ Such a doorway would not have had the strength of a normal bastle door, which would have been protected by a stone rebate.¹⁰

Small defensible houses like this were clearly built by the same class of persons (tenant farmers) who were building and occupying bastles; the question remains as to whether they are contemporary with the bastles or whether



Fig. 10 Steel, 'The Tenement'. Reconstruction of the house as it might have appeared c. 1720.

the slight differences in the design of the doorway here imply a different, perhaps slightly earlier, date. One might perhaps place the structure, very tentatively, into the second half of the sixteenth century.

There is similarly little stylistic evidence to date the second phase of construction, when the central section of the range was built (figs. 7, 9). The great similarity between doorways (B1) of Phase I and (G1) of the Phase II suggests that no great time interval elapsed between the two. The south doorway (E1) looks 'late medieval' in character, but almost certainly is a re-used piece, although it should be noted that a variety of arched door types do persist well into the seventeenth century hereabouts, as seen in local bastles.

What is more unusual is the fact that the doorway (E1) is one of an opposed pair, implying the existence of a cross-passage, the sort of one feature one might find in a long house. Despite the impressive draw-bar tunnels, the presence of a ground-floor doorway on each side of a house would clearly diminish its

defensive capabilities. There are several cases in Allendale and the upper South Tyne valley of seventeenth-century additions made to bastles, in which such a cross-passage is set against the end of the earlier building; Sinderhope Shield (Allendale) and Clarghyll Hall (Alston) are good examples.¹¹ Nothing survives to demonstrate the original use of the ground floor of the Phase II building at Steel; the only contemporary windows to survive are at first-floor level.

The other unusual—and perhaps unique—feature is the cruck. Upper cruck trusses, springing from beams at an upper floor level, are quite common in the area, often in a later seventeenth or early eighteenth-century context (e.g. several properties in Back Street, Hexham). They are found over a few bastles (e.g. Hope Head in Allendale) but here they are usually secondary, and seem to be associated with heather-thatched roofs. The Steel example, however, has undeniably been a full cruck, and of quite substantial scantling; set midway along the length of this part of the building, its main function was presumably to carry the roof,



Fig. 11 Steel, 'The Tenement'. Reconstruction of the house as it might have appeared c. 1820.

which was probably of stone slates. Change to a heather-thatched roof presumably came after the cruck was removed which, to judge from windows (E2) and (E4) post-dating the removal of its southern blade, can have taken place no later than c. 1700.

It is difficult to reconstruct the living arrangements in the Phase II building. If the parallel of Sinderhope Shield is followed, the cross-passage would go with a non-domestic ground floor and bastle-like first-floor accommodation. One clue here might be the remains of a large hearth stone, with moulded edges, re-used in the first-floor fireplace of the Phase III extension. Might this have come from a first-floor fireplace in the central part of the range?¹¹ In this case the ground-floor hearth and fire-hood, and bread oven (F6), would be associated with a late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century remodelling when the family 'came downstairs to live', the cruck truss was removed and mullioned windows (E4) and (E6) inserted. The addition of the rear outshut came at, or after,

this time. It might be surmised that, following the removal of the full cruck, and a relaxation of concerns regarding security and incendiary visitors, the house was re-roofed in heather thatch. It would seem probable that the Phase I and II parts of the range retained a heather-thatched roof into the earlier twentieth century since a late nineteenth-century account of Steel refers to it as being 'a hamlet of four grey-slatted or heather-thatched farm houses'.¹³ Such a roof would have been taller and more steeply-pitched than the present one; its removal would be consistent with the rough cut-down appearance of the east gable, and the relatively modern roof trusses over these parts of the range.

It is a little difficult to date the Phase III extension (figs. 7, 10) in relation to this remodelling of the centre section of the range, as here rather more vernacular timber mullioned windows are being used, although the roof was of sandstone flags. It could have taken place twenty or thirty years later, possibly into the

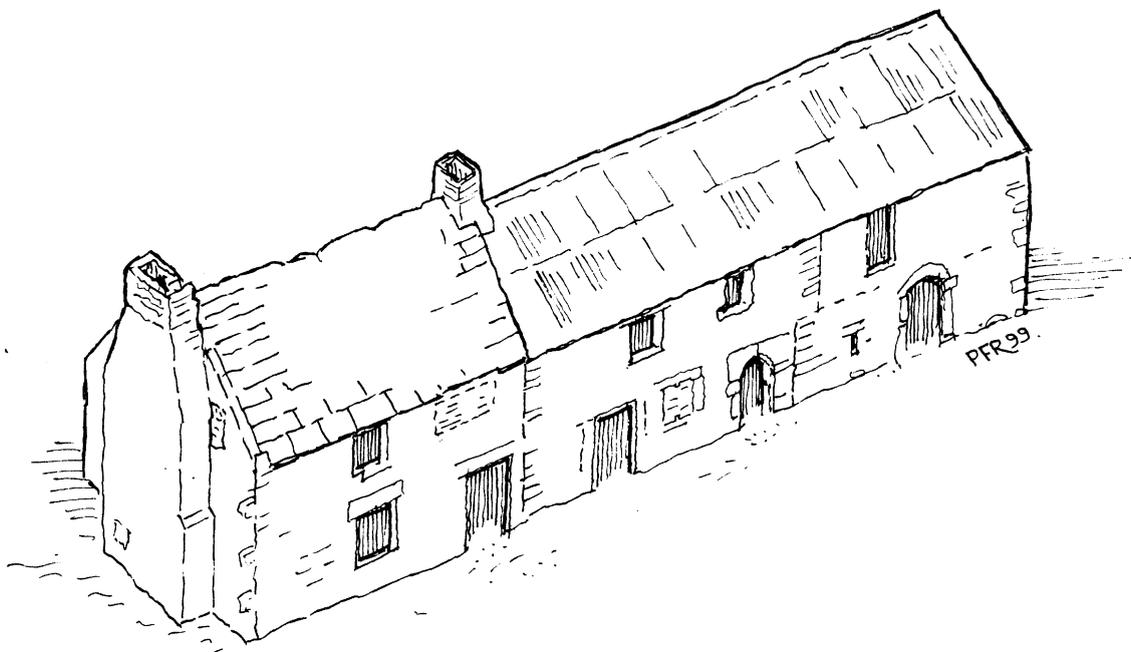


Fig. 12 Steel, 'The Tenement'. The range before restoration.

second quarter of the eighteenth century; later still this section received its own rear outshut. This section of the building would seem to have been built as an extension to the existing house, as it apparently had no doorway (at least in its front wall) when first constructed; it probably provided a parlour on the ground floor and a bedroom above, possibly with a servants' room above that in the attic.

Up to this point it is likely that the whole range formed a single dwelling unit, although it is possible that the Phase I east end was abandoned to agricultural use at quite an early date; earlier evidences however were lost when this end of the range was remodelled and its end wall rebuilt, probably in the early nineteenth century (figs. 7, 11). The cut-down appearance of the east gable suggests a steeper roof, presumably for heather thatch; use of this would seem unlikely after *c.* 1840, when the development of the railways had brought widespread use of Welsh slate.

At around the same time the domestic section of the range was sub-divided. The first outline

plan of the building so far traced, that on the 1st edition O.S. 25":1 mile map of *c.* 1860, shows the range divided into two parts (and presumably two separate houses), the division coming between the Phase II and Phase III sections. This would imply the creation of door (H1), and the blocking off of internal doorways (F2) and (F4); the western outshut may only have been added at this time. The second edition 25":1 mile map of 1896 revises this plan, and shows a division in line with the east end of the outshut of the Phase II section (*i.e.* immediately west of the cross passage), suggesting a single dwelling with an agricultural building – which presumably incorporated the cross passage – to its east. The change in floor from stone slab to cobbling may reflect this partition; the brick wall a little further west may reflect twentieth-century changes when the whole building was in agricultural use.

The domestic accommodation was abandoned, apparently before World War II. During a subsequent phase of agricultural use the brick transverse wall west of the cross passage

was inserted, and the asbestos sheet roof of the eastern and central parts replaced thatch. Over the last twenty years or so the building had been abandoned, and was in very poor structural condition (fig. 12) before the recent refurbishment returned the whole range to domestic use. Historic fabric was retained wherever possible, although sections of walling (including much of the front elevation of the eastern and central parts, above first-floor level) had to be taken down and rebuilt. The three-light mulled window (E4) and the original fenestration of the west part of the range have been reinstated. The rear outshuts have been completely rebuilt and extended, doorway (G1) being re-opened to give access to them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Despite its being afforded the statutory protection of a Grade II listed building *c.* 1985, the range was sold in the late 1990s with a planning permission that took no cognisance of the historic nature of the fabric; it is only due to the interest of the new owner Alan Clark (who, following discussion with his archaeologist-neighbour Jim Crow, commissioned the initial archaeological recording) and his architect Gordon Currie that plans were amended to retain many of the historic features of the structure. Further research and the preparation of this article were funded by a generous grant from the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle. I should also like to thank Stan Beckensall for

his lively interest in the building, and his deciphering of the inscription of the oven door.

NOTES

¹ This had split in two lengthwise; its section demonstrated the manner in which drill holes were enlarged by chisel to produce mortises (see fig. 6).

² This is not a feature previously recognised in Northumberland houses; it is a common one in Orkney where such a recess is termed a 'sae bink'.

³ There is a good example over the byre doorway at the bastle at Boghead, Tarsset.

⁴ The recess was shown to be an insertion, set again the plastered cheek of the fireplace.

⁵ With a socket for a central bar, in this case set diagonally.

⁶ J. C. Hodgson. *History of Northumberland*, VI, Newcastle (1897), 39–46.

⁷ High Holms (NY 921572), 2.2 km to the west, is a well-preserved example.

⁸ N. Pevsner *et al.* *Northumberland (Buildings of England series)*, 2nd ed., Harmondsworth (1992), 63–4

⁹ The much-altered Stable End might have been another ground-level defensible house, as may others in the area initially interpreted as a bastles.

¹⁰ The owner, Alan Clark, has pointed out that damage to the base of the outer eastern jamb of doorway (H1) could have been caused by an attempt to lever the door jamb away from the wall, and that there are similar but slighter traces on the north jamb of doorway (B1).

¹¹ P. F. Ryder, 'Bastles and Bastle-Like Buildings in Allendale, Northumberland', *AJ*, 149 (1992), 375.

¹² A firehood for a first-floor fireplace would make the wall locker (F7) a little less puzzling; did it hold a salt-box?

¹³ J. C. Hodgson, *Northumberland*, VI, 46.