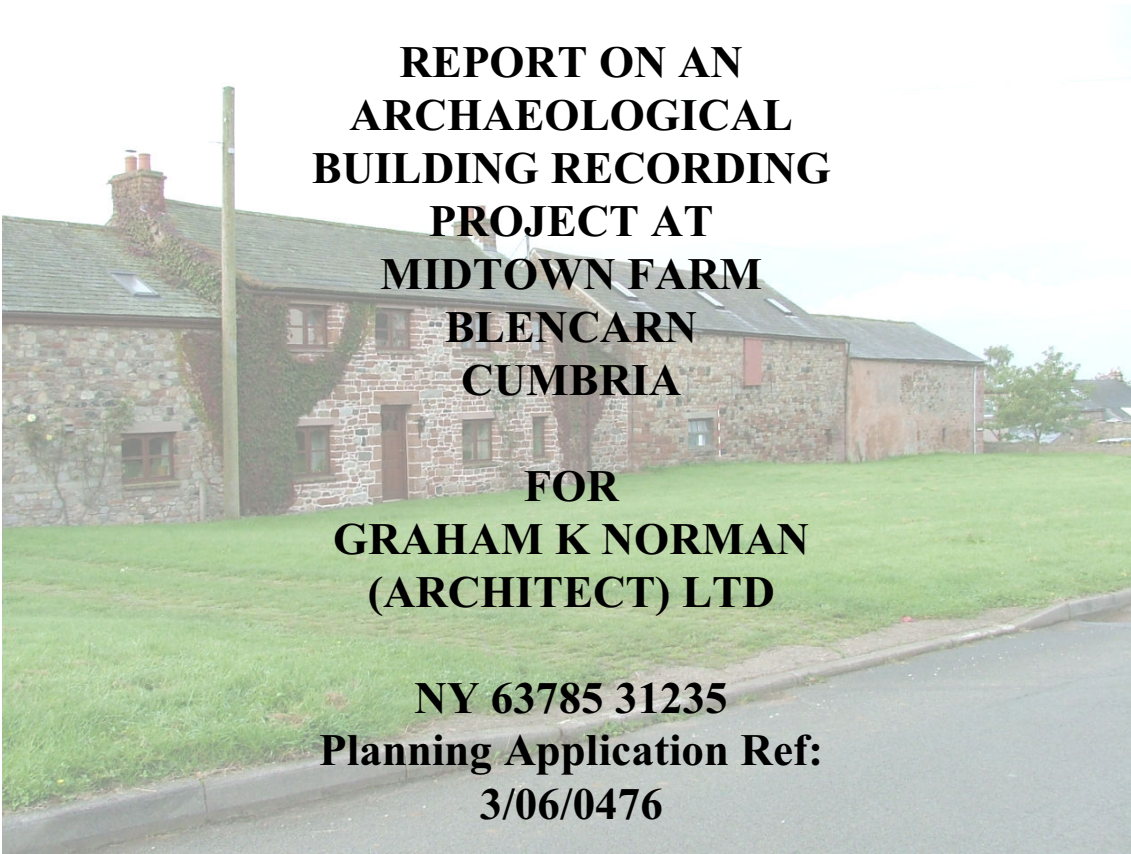

NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Client Report No. CP/383/06



**REPORT ON AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
BUILDING RECORDING
PROJECT AT
MIDTOWN FARM
BLENCARN
CUMBRIA**

**FOR
GRAHAM K NORMAN
(ARCHITECT) LTD**

**NY 63785 31235
Planning Application Ref:
3/06/0476**

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28 November 2006



CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
List of Illustrations and Plates.....	iii
Executive Summary	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
1. INTRODUCTION	11
1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT	11
1.2 SITE LOCATION.....	13
2. METHODOLOGY	15
2.1 THE BUILDING SURVEY	15
2.2 THE WRITTEN ACCOUNT	15
2.3 THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD	15
2.4 PROJECT ARCHIVE	15
3. PREVIOUS WORK	16
4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT.....	17
5. RESULTS.....	22
5.1 INTRODUCTION	22
5.2 BUILDING A.....	22
5.3 BUILDING A - INTERIOR	28
5.4 BUILDING B.....	29
5.5 BUILDING B - INTERIOR	32
5.6 BUILDING C.....	34
5.7 BUILDING C - INTERIOR	36
5.8 BUILDING D.....	38
5.9 BUILDING D - INTERIOR	39
5.10 BUILDING E	41
5.11 BUILDING E - INTERIOR	41
5.12 THE FARMHOUSE	43
5.13 HOUSE – INTERIOR	47

CONTENTS

5.14	ASSOCIATED FEATURES.....	54
6.	CONCLUSION.....	55
7.	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	57
8.	APPENDIX.....	58

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND PLATES

Page

FIGURES

FIGURE 1	SITE LOCATION	11
FIGURE 2	SITE LOCATION IN BLENCARN	13
FIGURE 3	HODSKINSON AND DONALD'S MAP OF 1774 (SURVEYED 1770)	16
FIGURE 4	TITHE MAP OF 1850.....	17
FIGURE 5	FIRST EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP OF C.1865	18
FIGURE 6	SECOND EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP OF 1900	18
FIGURE 7	SITE PLAN.....	19
FIGURE 8	NORTHERN ELEVATIONS OF BUILDING A AND B	21
FIGURE 9	WESTERN ELEVATIONS OF BUILDINGS A AND E	22
FIGURE 10	SOUTHERN ELEVATIONS OF BUILDINGS A, B AND E	24
FIGURE 11	GROUND PLANS OF BUILDINGS A, B AND E	25
FIGURE 12	EXAMPLE OF GROUND PLAN FOR AN OUTSHUT HOUSE.....	44
FIGURE 13	TYPICAL CROSS-SECTION OF AN OUTSHUT HOUSE	44

PLATES

PLATE 1	BLENCARN VILLAGE LOOKING NORTH-WEST.....	12
PLATE 2	NORTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING A	23
PLATE 3	SOUTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING A.....	23
PLATE 4	EASTERN GABLE END OF BUILDING A (INTERIOR).....	26
PLATE 5	DETAIL OF ROOF TRUSS, BUILDING A	27
PLATE 6	NORTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING B	28
PLATE 7	EASTERN END OF NORTH ELEVATION, BUILDING B.....	29
PLATE 8	SOUTHERN ELEVATIONS OF BUILDINGS A, B AND E	29
PLATE 9	INTERIOR OF STORE, BUILDING B	30
PLATE 10	LOCATION OF FORMER STALL DIVISIONS, BUILDING B.....	30
PLATE 11	INTERIOR OF BYRE, BUILDING B.....	31
PLATE 12	NORTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING B (INTERIOR)	32
PLATE 13	WESTERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING C.....	33
PLATE 14	EXTERNAL STAIRCASE, BUILDING C.....	33
PLATE 15	NICHE, INTERIOR OF CART SHED, BUILDING C.....	34
PLATE 16	ROOF DETAIL, INTERIOR OF BUILDING C.....	35
PLATE 17	ASSEMBLY MARKS, BUILDING C	35
PLATE 18	WESTERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING D	36
PLATE 19	INTERIOR OF BYRE, BUILDING D.....	37
PLATE 20	LARGE DOORWAY, BUILDING D	38
PLATE 21	NICHE AND IRONWORK, BUILDING D.....	38
PLATE 22	WESTERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING E.....	39
PLATE 23	INTERIOR OF BUILDING E	40
PLATE 24	SOUTH FACING ELEVATION OF FARMHOUSE	40
PLATE 25	NORTHERN ELEVATION OF FARMHOUSE.....	42

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND PLATES

PLATE 26	NORTH AND EASTERN ELEVATIONS OF FARMHOUSE.....	42
PLATE 27	EASTERN ELEVATION OF FARMHOUSE.....	43
PLATE 28	HALLWAY, FARMHOUSE.....	45
PLATE 29	SANDSTONE SHELVING, PANTRY IN FARMHOUSE.....	45
PLATE 30	VICTORIAN RANGE IN FARMHOUSE	46
PLATE 31	'SET-POT' IN FARMHOUSE	46
PLATE 32	SMALL WINDOW, STAIRCASE IN FARMHOUSE	47
PLATE 33	FIRST FLOOR LANDING, FARMHOUSE	47
PLATE 34	ROOF TIMBERS, FIRST FLOOR OF OUTSHUT.....	48
PLATE 35	FIREPLACE, FIRST FLOOR BEDROOM	49
PLATE 36	DETAIL OF GRATE	49
PLATE 37	FIREPLACE, FIRST FLOOR BEDROOM	50
PLATE 38	ROOF STRUCTURE, MAIN SECTION OF HOUSE	52
PLATE 39	DETAIL OF JOINT, PEG AND ASSEMBLY MARK, HOUSE ROOF.....	52

PHOTOGRAPHS ON CD-ROM

1. FARM BUILDINGS AT MIDTOWN FARM AS SEEN FROM THE NORTH-WEST
2. NORTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING A
3. NORTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING A
4. NORTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING A
5. WINDOW, NORTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING A
6. NORTHERN ELEVATIONS OF BUILDINGS A AND B
7. NORTHERN ELEVATIONS OF BUILDINGS A AND B
8. WINDOW, NORTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING B
9. NORTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING B
10. NORTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING B
11. BUILDINGS A AND B AS SEEN FROM THE NORTH-EAST
12. BUILDINGS A AND B AS SEEN FROM THE NORTH-EAST
13. BUILDINGS A AND B AS SEEN FROM THE EAST
14. NORTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING B
15. PART OF NORTHERN ELEVATION AND WESTERN GABLE END OF BUILDING A
16. SOUTH-FACING ELEVATION OF BUILDING A
17. SOUTH-FACING ELEVATION OF BUILDING A
18. LARGE DOORWAY , SOUTH FACING ELEVATION OF BUILDING A
19. SOUTH-FACING ELEVATIONS
20. SOUTH-FACING ELEVATIONS
21. WESTERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING E
22. INTERIOR OF BUILDING A
23. INTERIOR OF BUILDING A, WESTERN GABLE END
24. ROOF DETAIL, INTERIOR OF BUILDING A
25. INTERIOR OF BUILDING A, EASTERN GABLE END
26. ROOF TRUSS DETAIL, INTERIOR OF BUILDING A

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND PLATES

27. INTERIOR OF BUILDING A
28. INTERIOR OF BUILDING A
29. EASTERN GABLE END, INTERIOR OF BUILDING A
30. VENTILATION SLITS AND OWL HOLE, EASTERN GABLE END OF BUILDING A
31. DOORWAY, SOUTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING A (INTERIOR)
32. BEAM, EASTERN END OF BUILDING A
33. WESTERN GABLE END OF BUILDING A
34. ROOF STRUCTURE, BUILDING A
35. INITIALS 'A L', DOOR JAMB, BUILDING A
36. INITIALS 'J A', DOOR JAMB, BUILDING A
37. SOUTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING A, DOORWAY
38. INTERIOR OF BUILDING B, LOOKING SOUTH TO BUILDING E
39. INTERIOR OF STORE, BUILDING B
40. TWO OWL HOLES, DIVISION BETWEEN BUILDINGS A AND B
41. FLOOR DETAIL, STORE IN BUILDING B
42. LOCATION OF FORMER STALL DIVISIONS, STORE, BUILDING B
43. LOCATION OF FORMER STALL DIVISIONS, STORE, BUILDING B
44. PITCHING DOOR, NORTHERN ELEVATION OF BUILDING B
45. DETAIL OF HEIGHTENED GABLE END BETWEEN BUILDINGS A AND B
46. ROOF DETAIL, BUILDING B
47. EASTERN GABLE END, BUILDING B
48. BYRE, BUILDING B
49. BYRE, BUILDING B
50. INTERIOR VIEW OF VENTILATION PIPES, BUILDING B
51. INTERIOR OF BYRE, BUILDING B
52. INTERIOR OF BUILDING E
53. INTERIOR OF BUILDING E
54. INTERIOR OF BUILDING E
55. WEST FACING ELEVATION, BUILDING C
56. WEST FACING ELEVATION, BUILDING C
57. WEST FACING ELEVATION, BUILDING C
58. WEST FACING ELEVATION, BUILDING C
59. CONSTRUCTION BREAK BETWEEN BUILDINGS C AND D
60. WEST FACING ELEVATION OF BUILDING D
61. DOORWAYS, WEST ELEVATION BUILDING D
62. BYRE DOORWAY AND WINDOWS, BUILDING D
63. BYRE DOORWAY AND WINDOW, BUILDING D
64. LARGE DOORWAY, BUILDING D
65. WINDOW, BUILDING D
66. BYRE DOORWAY AND WINDOWS, BUILDING D
67. DETAIL OF QUOINS, BUILDING D
68. WEST FACING ELEVATIONS OF BUILDING C AND D
69. WEST FACING ELEVATION OF BUILDING D

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND PLATES

70. SOUTHERN GABLE END OF BUILDING D
71. NICHE, BUILDING D
72. INTERIOR OF ROOM, SOUTHERN END OF BUILDING D
73. INTERIOR OF BUILDING D
74. INTERIOR OF BUILDING D
75. NICHE, FORMER CART SHED, BUILDING C
76. COBBLED FLOOR, FORMER CART SHED, BUILDING C
77. INITIALS 'K T', DOOR JAMB OF CART SHED, BUILDING C
78. DETAIL OF TOOLING, CART SHED DOOR SURROUND, BUILDING C
79. DOOR, NORTHERN END OF BUILDING C
80. FIRST FLOOR WINDOW, BUILDING C
81. INTERIOR OF CART SHED, BUILDING C
82. INTERIOR OF ROOM AT NORTHERN END OF BUILDING C
83. EXTERNAL STAIRS, BUILDING C
84. ROOF OF BUILDING E AS SEEN FROM TOP OF EXTERNAL STAIRS, BUILDING C
85. TOP OF PITCHING DOOR IN S ELEVATION OF BUILDING B
86. SOUTH ELEVATION OF BUILDING B
87. INTERIOR OF FORMER GRANARY, FIRST FLOOR BUILDING C
88. ROOF DETAIL OF GRANARY, BUILDING C
89. ASSEMBLY MARKS, GRANARY, BUILDING C
90. SOUTH FACING ELEVATION OF FARMHOUSE
91. SOUTH FACING ELEVATION OF FARMHOUSE
92. WEST FACING ELEVATIONS OF BUILDINGS C AND D AS SEEN FROM GARDEN
93. ENTRANCE TO FARM FROM BACK LANE TO THE SOUTH
94. ENTRANCE TO FARM FROM BACK LANE TO THE SOUTH
95. SOUTH FACING ELEVATION OF FARMHOUSE
96. FIELD OPPOSITE FARM TO THE SOUTH (FORMER STRIP FIELD)
97. EASTERN ELEVATION OF HOUSE
98. EASTERN ELEVATION OF HOUSE
99. WINDOW, INTERIOR OF PANTRY
100. SANDSTONE SHELVING, PANTRY
101. INTERIOR OF PANTRY
102. CENTRAL HALLWAY OF HOUSE
103. TIMBER LINTEL OVER MAIN ENTRANCE
104. SMALL WINDOW, STAIRCASE
105. DETAIL OF BEAM
106. FIRST FLOOR LANDING
107. SMALL INTERIOR WINDOW FROM CURRENT BATHROOM
108. WINDOW IN NORTHERN ELEVATION (CURRENT BATHROOM)
109. FIREPLACE, FIRST FLOOR OF HOUSE
110. DETAIL OF FIREPLACE
111. DETAIL OF ROOF STRUCTURE, BEDROOM AT BACK OF HOUSE
112. DETAIL OF ROOF STRUCTURE, BEDROOM AT BACK OF HOUSE

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND PLATES

- 113. DETAIL OF ROOF STRUCTURE, BEDROOM AT BACK OF HOUSE
- 114. DETAIL OF ROOF STRUCTURE, BEDROOM AT BACK OF HOUSE
- 115. ROOF STRUCTURE, LOFT
- 116. DETAIL OF WOODEN PEG AND JOINT, LOFT OF HOUSE
- 117. ROOF STRUCTURE, LOFT OF HOUSE
- 118. ROOF STRUCTURE, LOFT OF HOUSE
- 119. ROOF STRUCTURE, LOFT OF HOUSE
- 120. ASSEMBLY MARKS AND DETAIL OF JOINT, LOFT
- 121. WESTERN GABLE END OF HOUSE, INTERIOR
- 122. FIREPLACE, FIRST FLOOR BEDROOM
- 123. 'SET POT', OUTSHUT OF HOUSE
- 124. RANGE, OUTSHUT OF HOUSE
- 125. EXTRACT OF HODSKINSON AND DONALD'S MAP OF 1774
- 126. TITHE MAP OF 1850
- 127. FIRST EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP OF C.1865
- 128. SECOND EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP OF 1900

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2006, North Pennines Archaeology Limited were commissioned by Graham K Norman (Architect) Ltd on behalf of his client to undertake an archaeological building recording project of farm buildings at Midtown Farm, Blencarn, Penrith Cumbria (NY 63785 31235) in advance of their conversion to holiday accommodation.

The survey revealed that the buildings proposed for development consisted of a barn with byre and hayloft above in one building, and in the other were two further byres with first floor haylofts. These buildings are present on the Tithe Map of 1850.

A further range of farm buildings and the house were also surveyed. One part of the second range dates to between 1850 and 1865 and was constructed as a cart shed with granary above. This building was added to at some time between 1865 and 1900 to house more cattle and a possible dairy.

A milking parlour was added to the southern elevations of the older farm buildings in the mid-20th century.

The farmhouse has all the characteristics of a 'continuous outshut', consisting of two rooms to the front i.e. a former living room and parlour; a pantry, scullery and staircase to the rear and two large bedrooms at first floor level, with two former storerooms or servants bedrooms to the rear.

The buildings and documentary evidence show that this was a farm had a mixed economy of arable, beef and/or dairy cows and sheep. It is not known exactly when the farm ceased to function, but it was certainly by 1994.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Graham Norman for commissioning the project on behalf of his clients.

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would also like to extend their thanks to Mr and Mrs Hammond, Jeremy Parsons of Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES), Stephen White, Local Studies Librarian at Carlisle Library and all the staff at the Cumbria County Record Office in Carlisle for their help during this project.

The building survey was undertaken by Fiona Wooler. The report was written by Fiona Wooler. The project was managed by Matthew Town, Senior Project Officer for NPA Ltd. The report was edited by Matthew Town.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 In September 2006, North Pennines Archaeology Limited were commissioned by Graham K Norman (Architect) Ltd on behalf of his client to undertake an archaeological building recording project of some farm buildings at Midtown Farm, Blencarn, Penrith, Cumbria (NY 63785 31235) prior to their conversion to holiday accommodation (Planning Application No. 3/06/0476).
- 1.1.2 Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service produced a brief for a building recording project, which was to be undertaken prior to the commencement of building work. A 'Level 2' Building Survey was carried out as described in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*¹.
- 1.1.3 The farm buildings are present on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map and therefore date to at least the mid 19th century. The building is considered to be of archaeological interest and is recorded on the County Historic Environment Record (Reference 41721).
- 1.1.4 The brief issued by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service is concerned with one range of farm buildings proposed to be converted, however by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Hammond, another range of farm buildings and the farmhouse were surveyed to provide a more comprehensive account of the site.
- 1.1.5 The survey was carried out on 18th September 2006 by Fiona Wooler.

¹ Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice, 2006, English Heritage

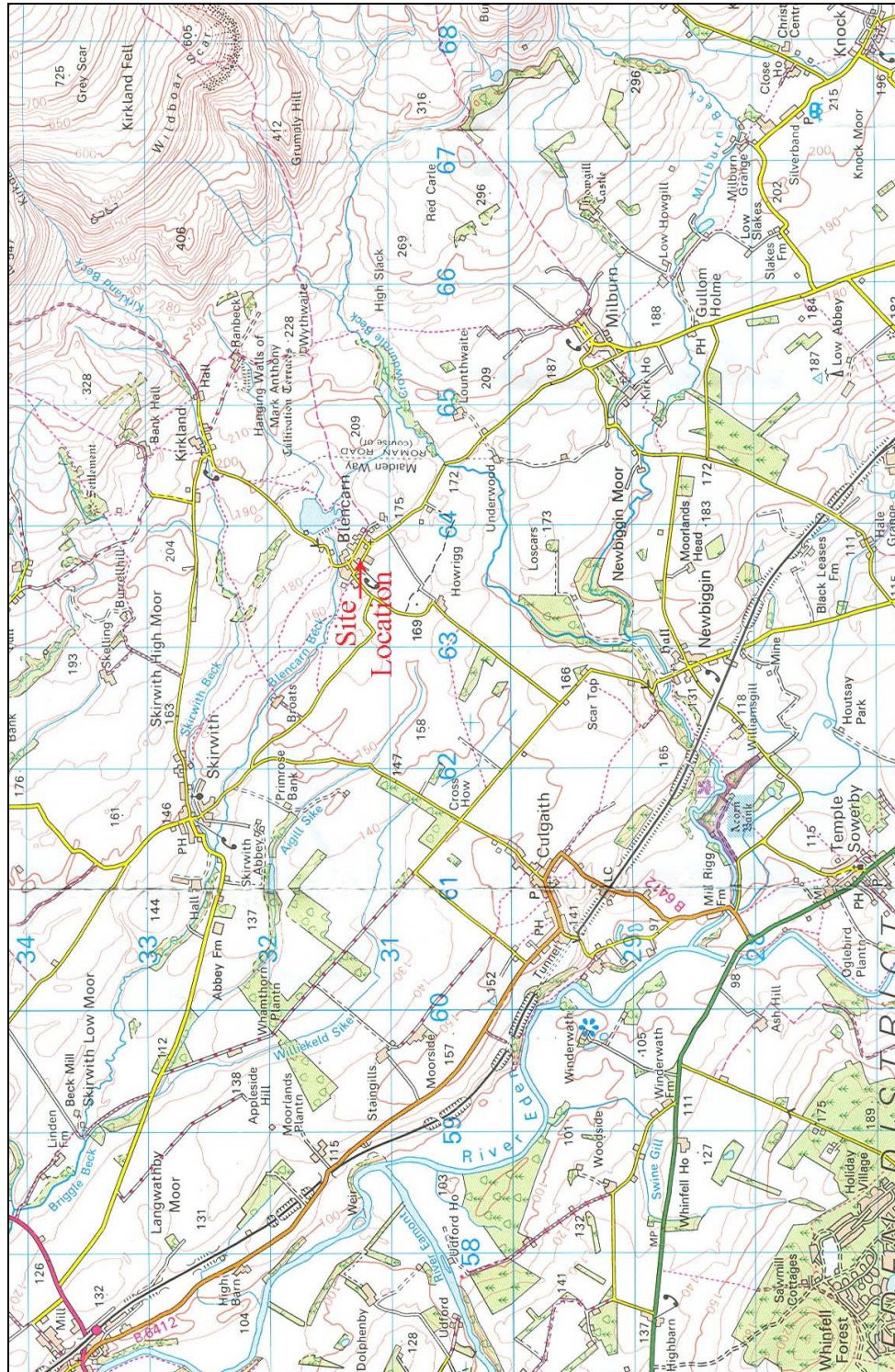


Figure 1 – Site Location

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1.2 SITE LOCATION

- 1.2.1 The village of Blencarn is located approximately three kilometres to the west of the north Pennines, close to the base of Kirkland Fell (Figure 1). It lies mid-way between the villages of Skirwith to the north-west and Milburn to the south-east. The market towns of Penrith (to the north-west) and Appleby (to the south) are approximately 15 kilometres and 11 kilometres from the village respectively.
- 1.2.2 Midtown Farm is located, as its name suggests, in the middle of Blencarn, on the southern side of the village green (Figure 2 and Plate 1). The farm buildings that are the subject of the present survey have their backs to the village green, whilst the house faces towards the Eden Valley. Access to the property is either via the track over the village green to the north, or from the back lane to the south (Figure 2).
- 1.2.3 There are several other sites in Blencarn which are regarded to be of historical and archaeological interest and are recorded on the County Historic Environment Record (HER). Just to the south-east of Midtown Farm is the former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, built in 1840, but now converted to residential use (HER 19569); to the north-west of the village was a large barn with cart-shed which originally formed part of Blencarn Hall Farm (HER 4116). This building was demolished and re-built in 2005/2006 and now forms part of a housing development. On the northern side of the village, and marked as ‘Tumulus’ on Figure 2, is the site of Blencarn Barrow (a burial mound), although there is no obvious trace of this earthwork on the ground (HER 994).



Plate 1 – Blencarn village looking north-west. The buildings that are the subject of the present survey are located in the centre of the photograph at the end of the row of buildings

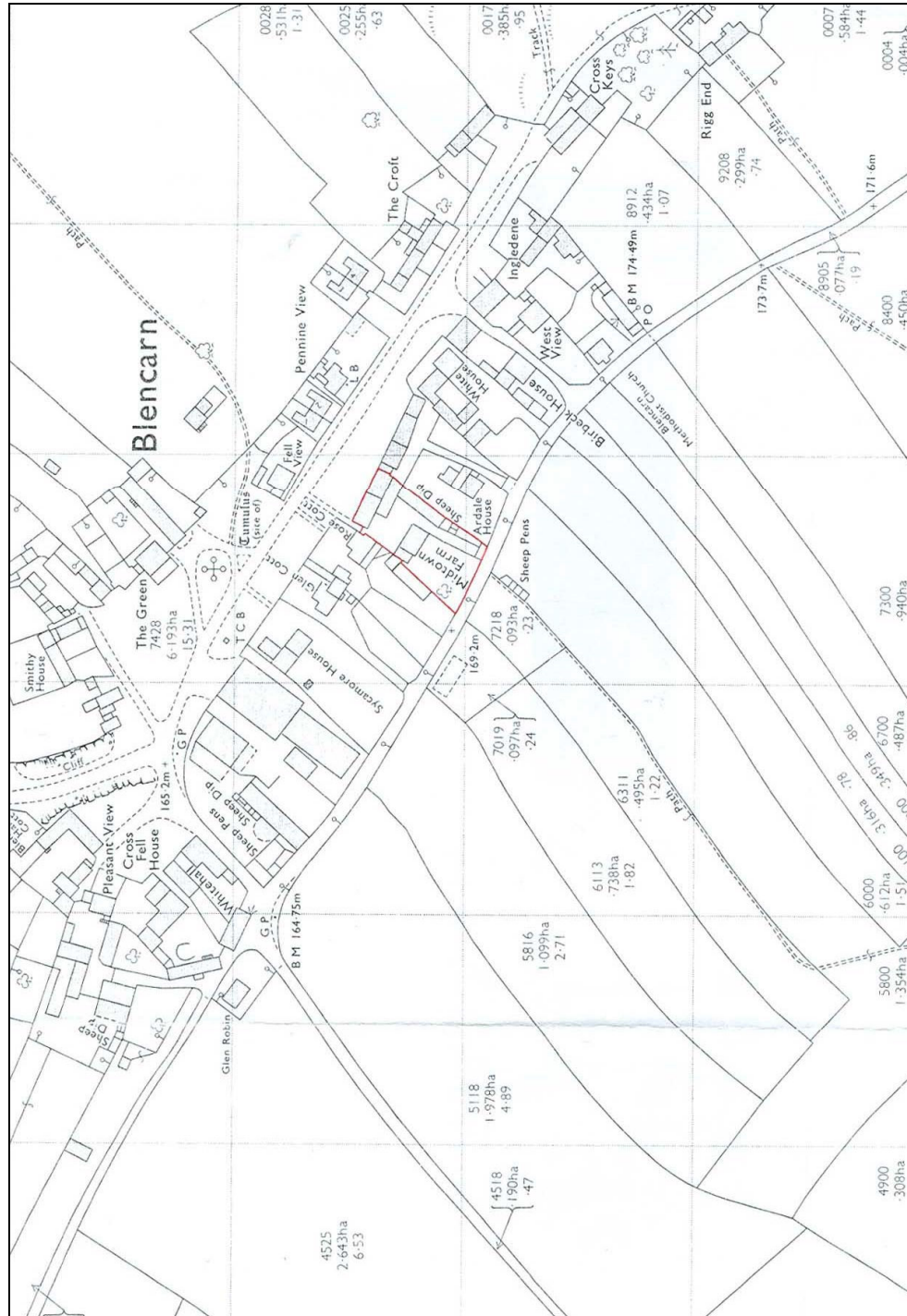


Figure 2 – Site location (Source = Ordnance Survey map 1971, Scale 1:2500)

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 THE BUILDING SURVEY

2.1.1 The survey consists of three basic elements:

- A written account, which includes information derived from documentary research.
- A measured survey with accompanying architects drawings.
- A photographic record.

2.2 THE WRITTEN ACCOUNT

2.2.1 The written account is included in this document together with a selection of photographs, plans and appendix of documentary information.

2.3 THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

2.3.1 The photographic archive consists of the following:

- A series of 35mm colour prints showing general views of the exterior of the buildings and their setting.
- A series of digital views of the exteriors of the buildings, the interior of the buildings and specific internal details (e.g. roof structure) supplied on CD-Rom.

2.4 PROJECT ARCHIVE

2.4.1 The full archive of the desk-based assessment and Level 2 building survey has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with the current English Heritage guidelines set out in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP 2nd Edition 1991). The archive will be deposited within the County Record Office and a copy of the report given to the County Historic Environment Record, where viewing will be available on request.

3. PREVIOUS WORK

- 3.1 No previous archaeological work has been undertaken on the site.

4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 4.1 The village of Blencarn (in Kirkland Parish) is believed to be at least medieval in origin and it still displays features of that period. The houses of the village are situated either side of a village green, to the south of the village is a 'back lane' and many of the properties, especially on the southern side, still have evidence for strip fields. A member of staff from Cumbria County Council visited the village in 1997 and observed broad ridge and furrow to the west of the settlement (HER 6792) (NY 6346 3124). Back lanes are thought to have developed from *'the link up of old cart-roads and drove-roads leading from the ancient common fields and pastures to the outbuildings of the farmsteads'*².
- 4.2 Blencarn itself did not have a church; parishioners would have had to travel to Kirkland (St Lawrence's). The village did, however, have a corn mill and a smithy (north of the village), a school and a public house; the Cross Keys which was located at the south eastern end of the village. There were several farmsteads located within the village itself; Blencarn Hall Farm, Midtown Farm, Pleasant View, Rigglands, Cross Keys, South View are just some of the farmsteads listed in 19th century trade directories (See Appendix). Writing in 1860, Whellan notes that the population of Blencarn are *'entirely agricultural'*³
- 4.3 The name 'Blencarn' is believed to derive from the Celtic *blaen* and *carn*, meaning hill with a cairn⁴.
- 4.4 The earliest map found to show the village of Blencarn during the rapid desk-based survey of available sources was Hodgkinson and Donald's map of 1774 (surveyed 1770) (Figure 3). This map shows the corn mill to the north (shown as a circular symbol) and the general layout of the village. Although it does not necessarily show each individual property, it does show a building roughly in the position of Midtown Farm; however the accuracy of this map needs to be taken into consideration.
- 4.5 There was no Enclosure map of early 19th century date at Carlisle Record Office that shows the village of Blencarn.
- 4.6 The Tithe Map of 1850 clearly shows the properties in the village at this date (Figure 4). Tithe maps were produced following the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836. Generally, they record details of ownership, occupation, field names, acreage, state of cultivation and the tithe amount payable. The Tithe Map for Blencarn shows Midtown Farm as Plot 193, the landowner of which is listed as Robert Clark, the occupier as John Westmoreland, the state of cultivation as a mix of arable, pasture and meadow, and the acreage of the farm as 107 acres, 0 roods, 30 perches (CRO Ref DRC 8/177).
- 4.7 The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1865 (Figure 5) shows the farmhouse, the farm buildings that are the subject of the present survey and two further separate buildings to the south-east.

² Hoskins, W.G, 1985, Page 61

³ Whellan, W, 1860, Page 566

⁴ Lee, J, 1998, Page 10

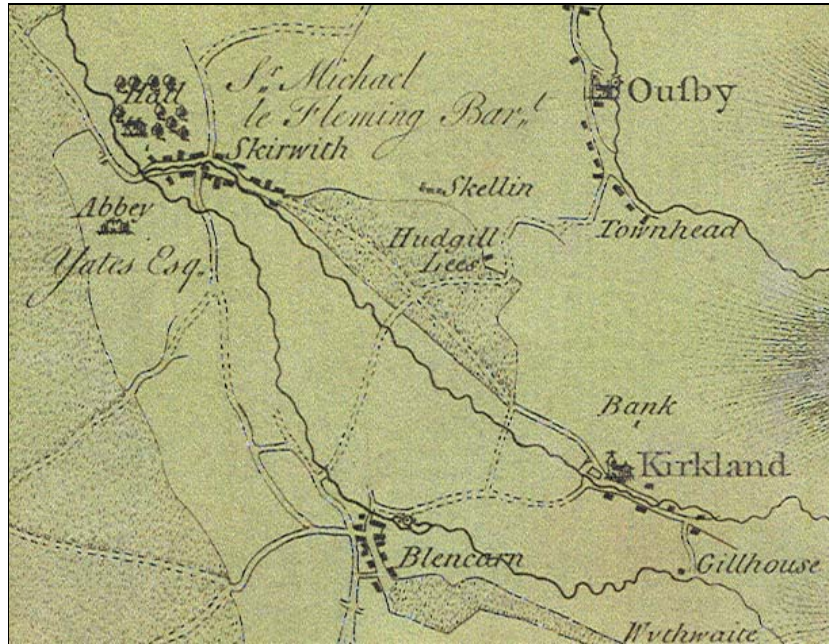


Figure 3 – Hodgkinson and Donald's map of 1774 (surveyed 1770)

- 4.8 The Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1900 (Figure 6) shows that the buildings on the south-eastern side of the site have either been added to or rebuilt, as a long continuous range is now shown.
- 4.9 Several trade directories of the 19th and early 20th century were sampled for entries for Midtown Farm. For many villages, where several farms existed within the village itself, many of these farms were not named. Blencarn is no exception; the only farms to be named in the earliest of these directories, Parson and White 1829⁵, are outside the village at Broats, Ranbeck and Flosh. The remainder of the farmers are simply listed by name and in some cases marked as being a yeoman. Midtown Farm is only named in the Cumberland Directory of 1954, when Thomas Wales was occupier.
- 4.10 Like many of the villages and farmsteads close to open areas of rough grazing, some of the inhabitants of Blencarn held common rights for grazing sheep and/or cattle and horses on the nearby common land. There are two areas of Registered Common Land in the vicinity of the village; The Rigg and Blencarn Fell, both to the south-east. The Registers listing those with rights, and the nature of those rights, were compiled following the Commons Registration Act of 1965, and they are held by Cumbria County Council. Entries in the register for The Rigg show that the owner of Midtown Farm in 1969 was Arthur Lancaster of Edenhall, Penrith and the tenant of the farm was Thomas Wales. Mr Wales had the right of common for 300 ewes with their followers (lambs), 200 hogs, 30 ponies and 15 head of cattle, as well as the right to cut bracken (presumably for bedding for the animals).
- 4.11 Midtown Farm has not been a working farm since at least 1994.

⁵ A History, Gazetteer and Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland, Parson and White, 1829

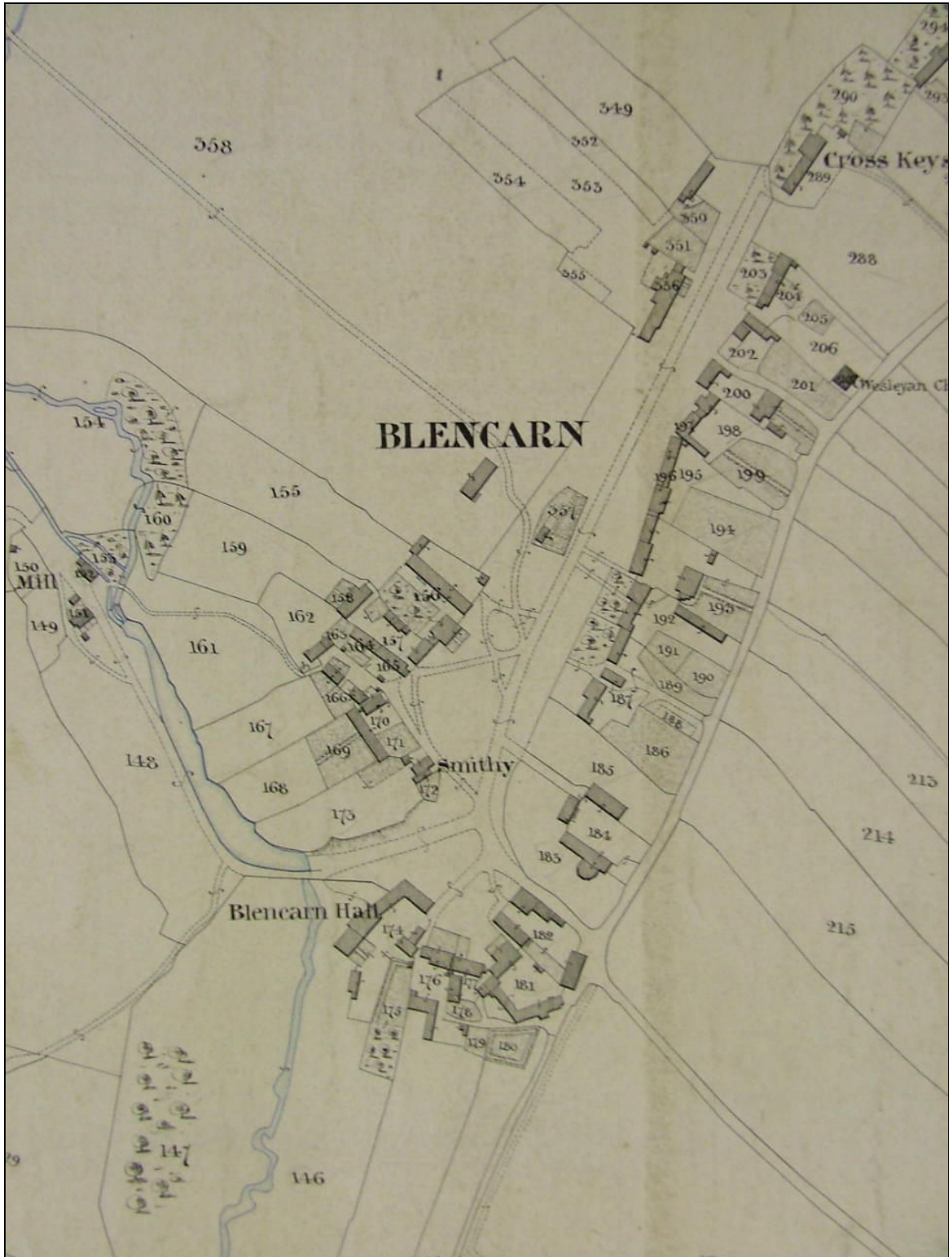


Figure 4 – Tithe Map of 1850 (CRO Ref DRC 8/177)

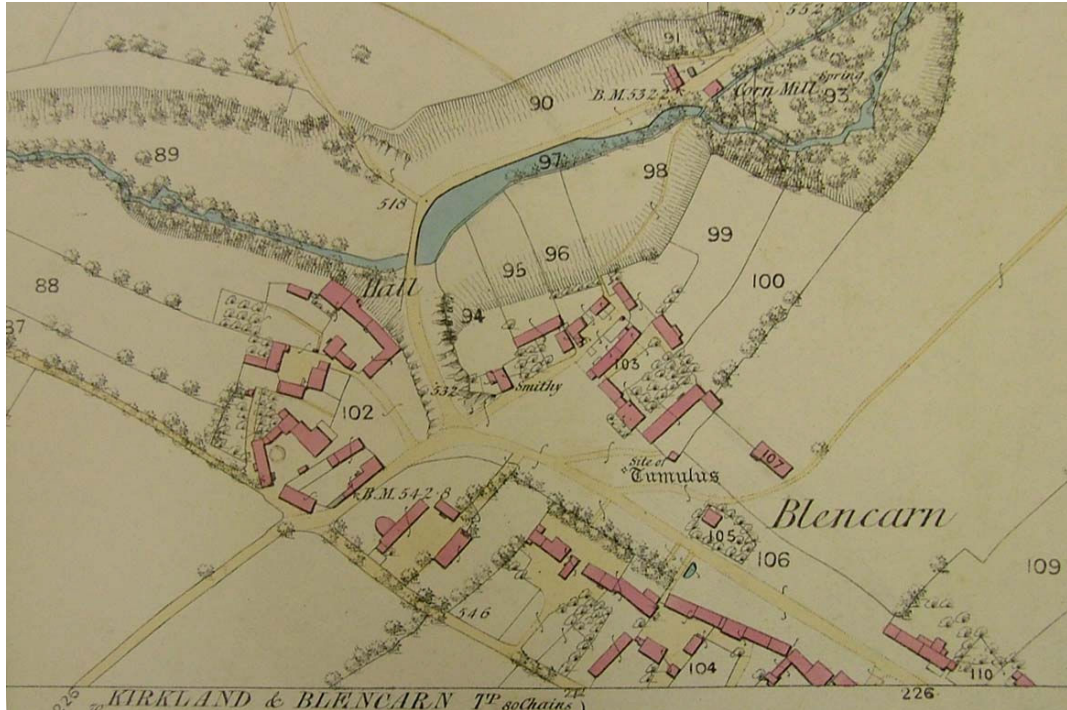


Figure 5 – First Edition Ordnance Survey map of c. 1865 (25” to 1 mile)

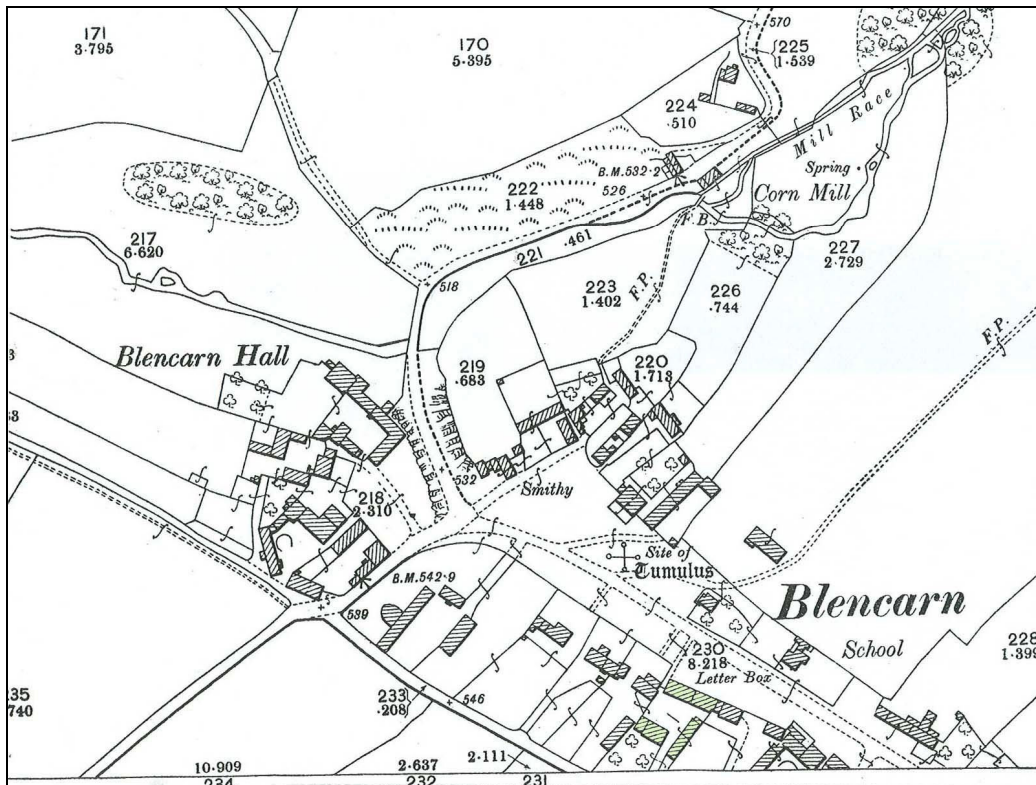


Figure 6 – Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1900 (25” to 1 mile)

(The buildings of Midtown Farm are shown coloured green)

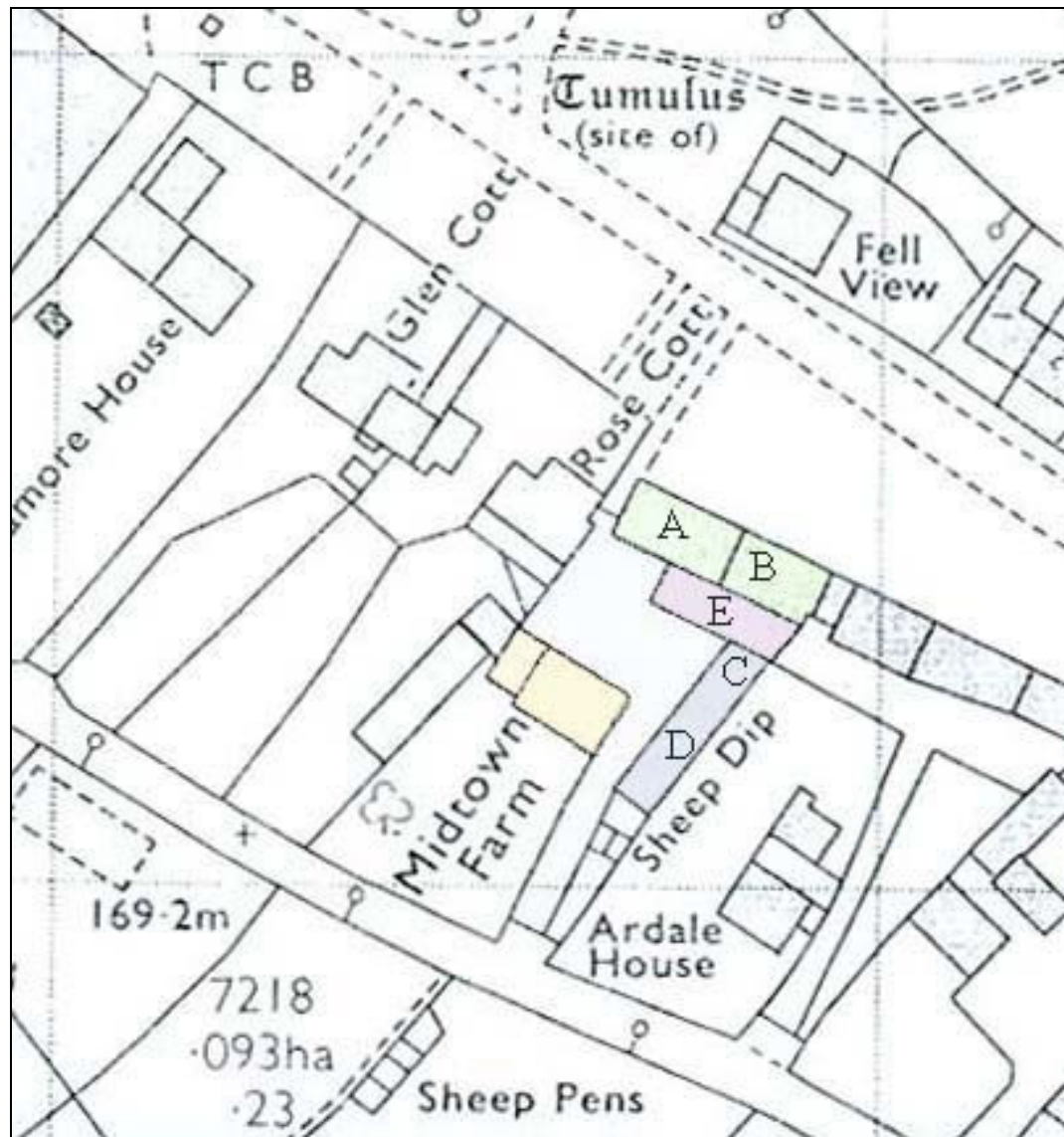


Figure 7 – Site plan (Source = OS Map 1971, Scale 1:2500). Buildings A and B are coloured green, House is yellow, Buildings C and D are blue and Building E is pink

5. RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 The buildings which are the subject of the present survey form a linear range to the north-east of the site (Figure 7). For the purposes of this report they will be referred to as Building A and Building B. A further range of buildings is located to the south-east side of the site, as there are two obvious construction phases, these will be referred to as Building C and Building D, the modern dairy against the southern elevations of Buildings A and B, will be referred to as Building E.

5.2 BUILDING A

- 5.2.1 Building A, along with Building B, forms the northern side of the site. Building A measures *c.*14.0 metres in length by *c.*6.80 metres wide externally and is constructed of a mixture of uncoursed red and yellow sandstone with some, what appears to be, lumps of grey granite (Plate 2). The quoins on the western gable end are of alternating blocks of dressed sandstone. Interestingly, the southern elevation of Building A is constructed of more regular red sandstone masonry; generally the better quality masonry faces the road or village, as was observed at Westlands Farm, Crosby⁶. It may be, however, that the northern elevation may originally have been intended to be limewashed, in which case the quality of the stonework may not have been as important. There are patches of a dark pink paint still visible along this elevation, which are presumably modern. Coloured limewashes however were not unusual on vernacular buildings, pinks and reds were common, the colour being obtained from soft red ironstone known as red ruddle or raddle⁷.
- 5.2.2 The roof of Building A is constructed of Welsh slate with ridge tiles, three of which are slightly raised to provide ventilation.
- 5.2.3 Along the northern elevation (Figure 8) there were three ventilation slits and a small window at ground level, and two ventilation slits at first floor level, one totally blocked and the other partially. A third ventilation slit existed to correspond to the one below, however due to the render on part of this elevation it was not visible. According to Brunskill, ventilation was only necessary to a limited extent where cereals were being stored dry; the storage of hay required much more ventilation⁸. Animals required draught-free ventilation: wind speed needed to be reduced and air currents deflected⁹. This may explain why many ventilation slits are wider internally than externally.
- 5.2.6 At the top of the western gable end is an owl hole, included in traditional farm buildings to allow owls to access the barn to control vermin.

⁶ Wooler, F, 2005

⁷ Denyer, S, 1991, Page 189

⁸ Brunskill, R.W, 1999, Page 43

⁹ Weller, J, 1982, Page 182

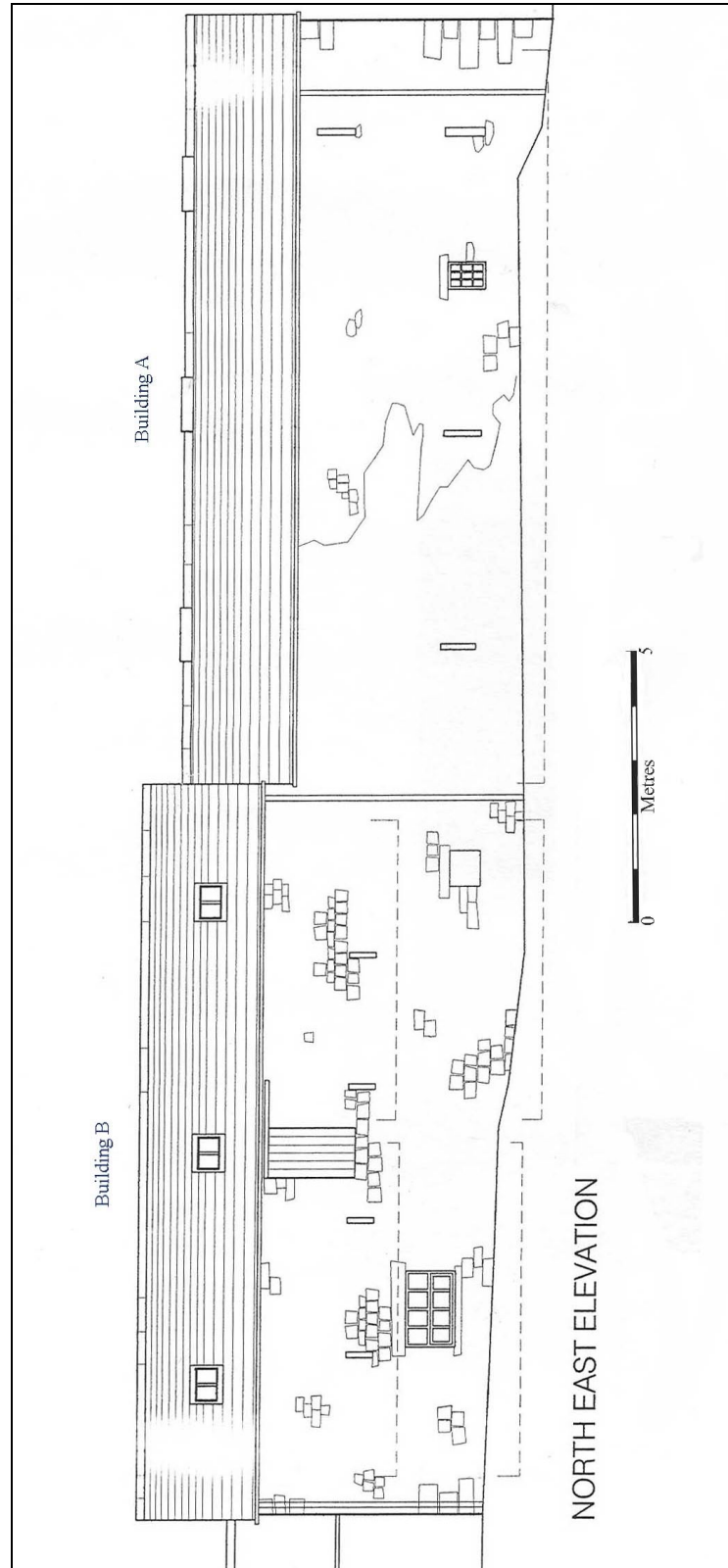


Figure 8 - Northern elevations of Buildings A and B

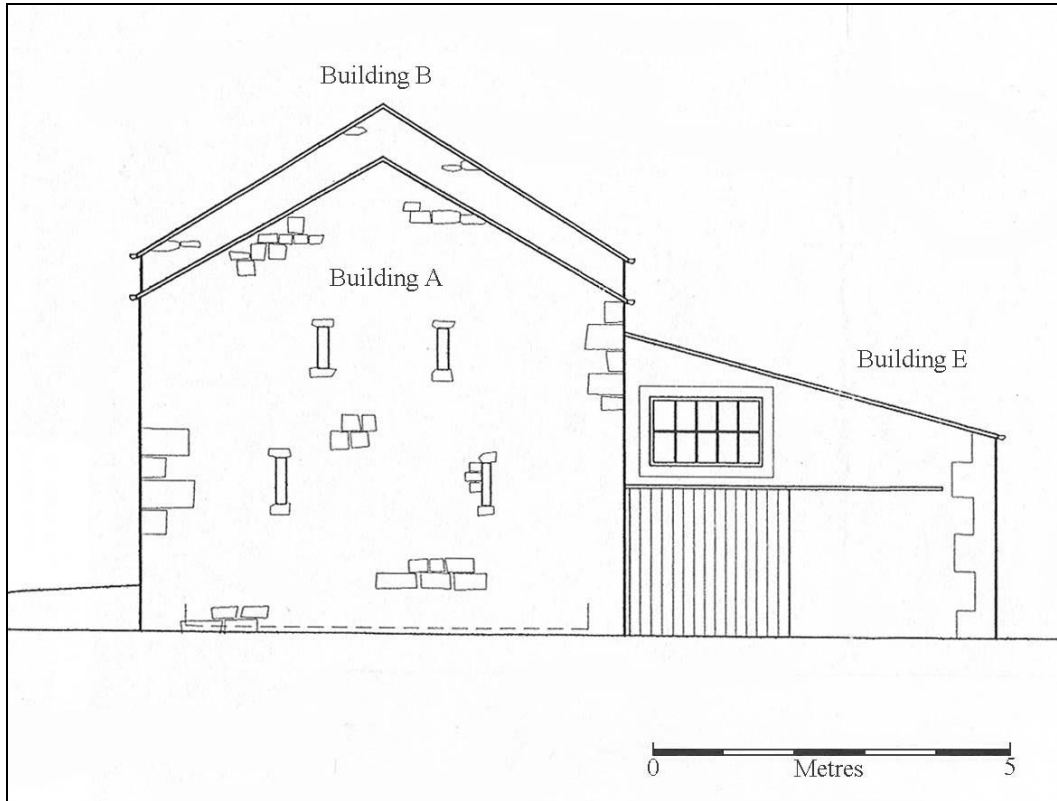


Figure 9 – Western elevations of Buildings A and E

- 5.2.7 The southern elevation of Building A faces the house and farmyard. There is a large double doorway set off-centre, and two modern windows (Plate 3). The large doorway has well-dressed red sandstone voussoirs (13) making up the arched head, and the jambs are constructed of alternating blocks of dressed sandstone. The doorway is rebated externally, therefore the original doors would have opened outwards. This is slightly unusual as at most recently recorded farmsteads the rebates for the large doors have been internal, indicating that the doors opened inwards. Having the large doors opening outwards would have allowed for more space to hand-thresh the corn, or for storage.
- 5.2.8 Most of the southern elevation has been obscured by the addition of Building E (Figure 10); however there is a further standard doorway to the right of the large entrance (Figure 11).



Plate 2 – Northern elevation of Building A



Plate 3 – Southern elevation of Building A

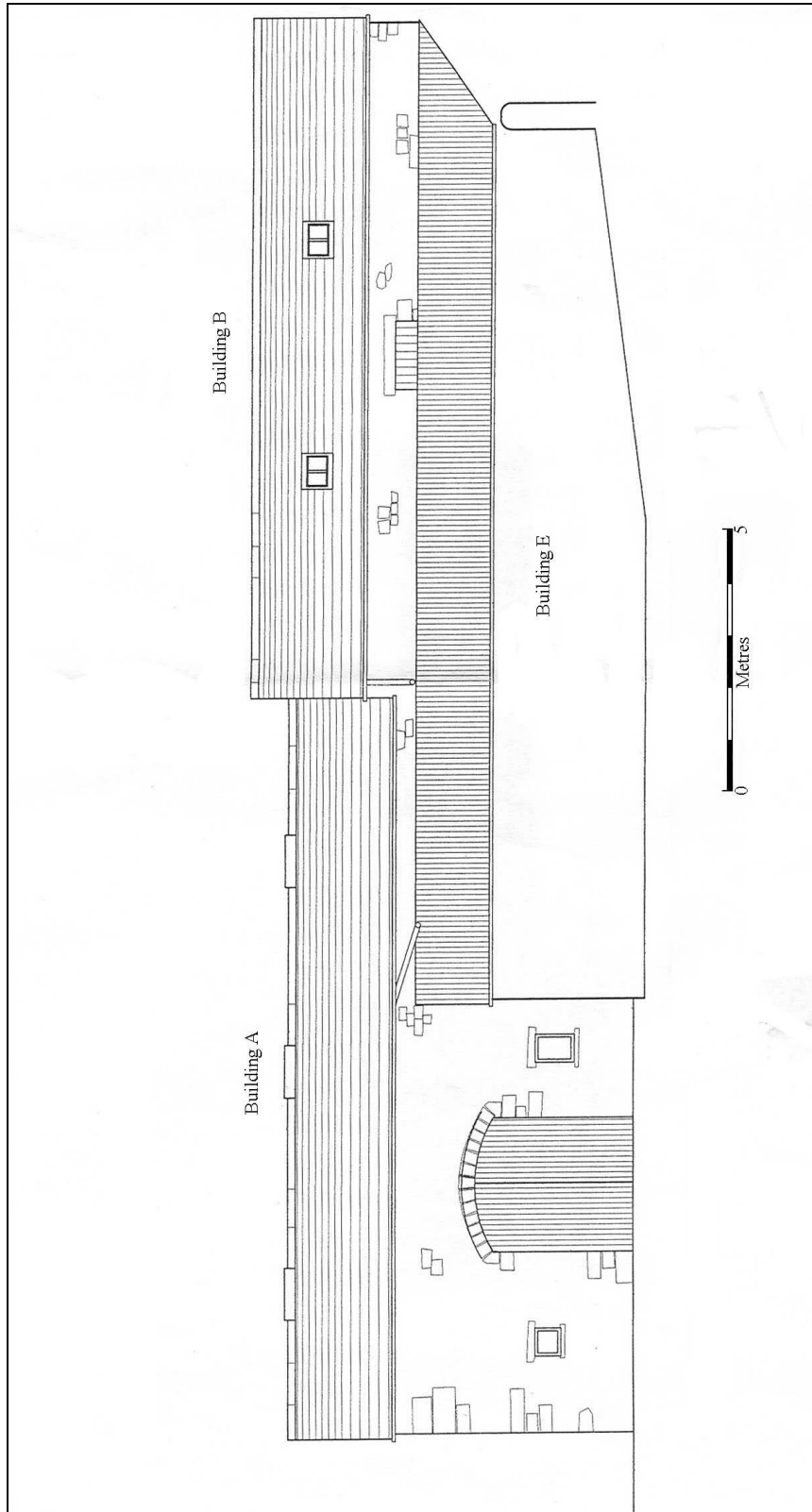


Figure 10 – Southern elevations of Buildings A, B and E

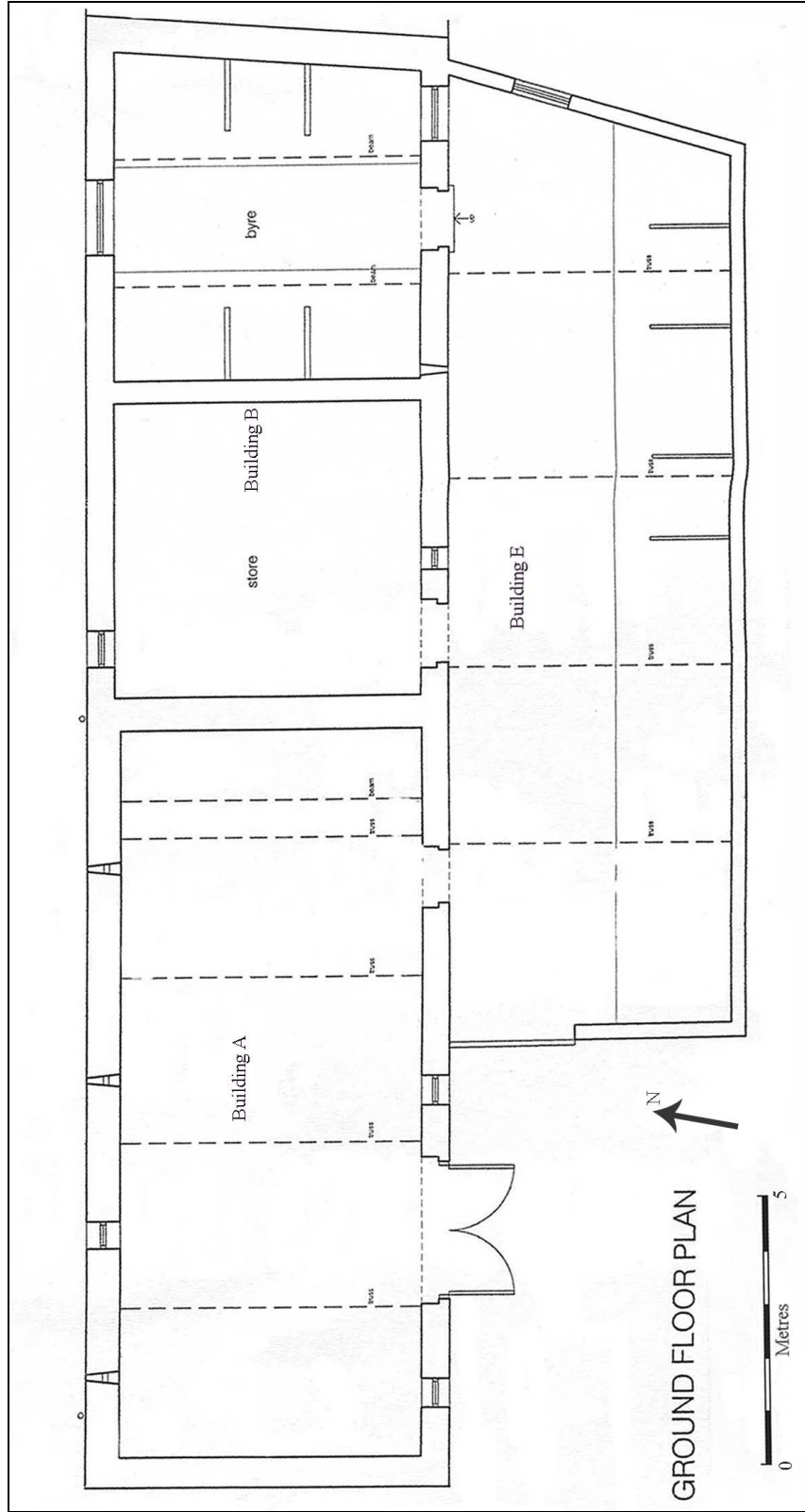


Figure 11 - Ground plans of Buildings A, B and E

5.3 BUILDING A - INTERIOR

- 5.3.1 The interior of Building A could be accessed via the large doorway or the standard-sized doorway on the southern elevation (Figure 11). Internally, this building is now all open to the roof with no divisions; however it was observed that the eastern end had at some point been either a byre or stable as there were joist holes visible along the eastern, northern and southern elevations. There were traces of limewash on the ground floor walls hinting at the former presence of animals (Plate 4). Traditionally, limewash was used as a coating for walls; it acted as a disinfectant and absorbed water allowing walls to breathe, it was also used on external walls. A large timber remains *in-situ*, this beam provided support for the first floor. Byres (cowhouse) and stables generally had a hayloft above them which provided insulation for the animals through the winter months.
- 5.3.2 The eastern gable end has an owl hole close to the apex as well as two ventilation slits (Plate 4). This possibly suggests that Building A was constructed before Building B, although owl holes within internal gables are not unusual, as they would have allowed owls to access all of the buildings.
- 5.3.3 The roof structure consists of four roof trusses of hand-cut timber making up five bays (Plate 4). The trusses are tie beams with trenched purlins. One of the trusses has a collar which was held to the rafters with wooden pegs (Plate 5). There were no assembly (or carpenters) marks observed due to the height of the roof.



Plate 4 – Eastern gable end of Building A. Remains of limewash and rafter holes can be seen providing evidence for a former first floor



Plate 5 – Detail of roof truss with collar showing wooden pegs

5.4 BUILDING B

- 5.4.1 Building B is connected to Building A at its western gable end. The ridge of Building B is slightly higher than that of Building A, another possible indication that it is of a separate construction phase. Due to the modern render on the northern elevation and the presence of Building E on the southern elevation, it was not possible however, to observe a definite vertical construction break between these two buildings. There is however a very obvious construction break between Building B and the next property to the east.
- 5.4.2 Building B measures *c.*13.40 metres in length by *c.*6.80 metres wide externally. This building is also constructed of red and yellow sandstone with some granite (?), however it has a cleaner and more regular appearance than the north elevation of Building A, but this may be due to the lack of render and cement mortar.



Plate 6 – Northern elevation of Building B

- 5.4.3 Along the northern elevation there is window at ground floor level, which is probably a later insertion as shown by the brickwork and concrete lintel. There are four ventilation slits, which, unusually, are located at mid-height, rather than at ground floor or first floor level. Sections of ceramic pipe have also been used to create ventilation; four pieces of pipe have been set in a diamond shape and there are four sets along the elevation at ground floor level and six sets just below the eaves (Plate 6). There is a pitching door at first floor level which would have been used to transfer hay and/or straw from a cart to the first floor of the building. A smaller window is located to the western end of this elevation.
- 5.4.4 The roof is of Welsh slate with three skylights in the north facing side and two in the south facing; according to Mr Hammond the roof was replaced about six years ago.



Plate 7 – Eastern end of the north elevation of Building B

- 5.4.5 The southern elevation is largely obscured by Building E, a later addition. It was possible to note the top of a pitching door at first floor level, which has a sandstone lintel and alternating blocks making up the jambs.



Plate 8 – Southern elevations of Building A, B and E with Building C to right of photograph

5.5 BUILDING B - INTERIOR

- 5.5.1 The interior of Building B could be accessed via either of two standard sized doorways in the southern elevation (Figure 11). At ground floor level, this building is divided into two rooms, both of fairly equal dimensions. The first room (marked as 'store' on Figure 11) has a cobbled floor which slopes down towards the centre, presumably to act as a manure channel (Plate 9). Although no stall divisions remained, there was evidence for at least two against the eastern wall (Plate 10). Joists and a beam for a former first floor remain *in-situ*. Limewash on the walls indicates that this room housed animals in the past; therefore it was probably either a byre or stable.



Plate 9 – Interior of store in Building B



Plate 10 – Location of former stall divisions

- 5.5.2 The next room at ground level in Building B, which is divided from the store by a ground floor masonry cross wall, was also originally used as either a byre or stable. A single sandstone stall division remains, although the floor is of concrete so it was presumably reused when the new floor was laid, as often concrete stall divisions replace earlier sandstone or timber versions. As with the previous room, the joists and beams for a former first floor remain. The walls in this room have been plastered to a height of approximately 1.30 metres from the floor of the stalls. This is a common feature of byres which have been concreted; therefore plaster must have been regarded as more hygienic than the traditional limewash, although whitewash remains on the walls (Plate 11). Concrete floors, proper manure channels and easily-cleaned surfaces were required following regulations such as the *Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Order of 1885* intended to secure *'the health and good condition of the cattle therein, the cleanliness of milk vessels therein and the protection of the milk therein against*

*infection*¹⁰. The feeding and water troughs, which are often seen still *in-situ*, have been removed. This byre has a central manure passage, this would have allowed for the animals to remain relatively clean and aided in ‘mucking-out’.

- 5.5.3 The floor boards of the upper floor have been removed, but it is likely that this was used as a hayloft. Storing hay over animal stalls was common practice as it, firstly kept the hay dry, and secondly provided insulation for the animals during the winter.
- 5.5.4 The roof structure of this building consists of four roof trusses of machine-sawn timber, creating five bays. Just below the eaves, holes were noted which presumably once held beams from an earlier roof structure (Plate 12). The location of the joists for the first floor was below the position of the ventilation slits observed on the northern elevation (See 5.4.3).
- 5.5.5 The ventilation slits and owl hole of the eastern gable end of Building A were noted. The eastern gable end of Building B has through or bonding stones projecting at various levels. These stones would probably run through the thickness of the wall to give the structure more stability.
- 5.5.6 Evidence for Building B being constructed after Building A should have been shown by an obvious addition to the gable end of Building A to raise the height for Building B. This change was not completely obvious due to the top of the wall being heavily mortared. There are, however, two owl holes, one above the other, which may suggest two different construction phases.



Plate 11 – Byre, Building B

¹⁰ Harvey, N, 1970, Page 178



Plate 12 – Northern elevation of Building B, ventilation slits and pitching door

5.6 BUILDING C

- 5.6.1 Building C forms the northern part of the south-eastern range (Figure 7). As these buildings are not due to be converted at the moment, there are no architect's drawings to include within this report. Rough measurements were, however, taken for the archive. An obvious construction break between Building C and Building D shows that they are of different phases.
- 5.6.2 Building C is two storeys high, measures approximately 9.0 metres in length by 5.0 metres wide and is constructed of roughly coursed and squared red sandstone masonry (Plate 13). The quoins consist of dressed alternating sandstone blocks. The roof is laid in Welsh slate and a modern skylight has been inserted in the west facing side. Along the western elevation there are two large cart shed doors with arched heads of well-dressed sandstone, and a further standard-sized doorway at the northern end. Against the northern gable end are a set of sandstone stairs leading to a door at first floor level (Plate 14). There is a window at first floor level with rectangular blocks of sandstone making up the surround. It was not possible to note any features along the eastern elevation as this faces into the garden of the property next door, however there was no evidence internally for any windows or doors.



Plate 13 – West facing elevation of Building C



Plate 14 –Stairs, northern gable end of Building C

5.7 BUILDING C - INTERIOR

- 5.7.1 Internally, Building C is divided into three rooms at ground level, although a division between the two cart sheds is modern (block wall). At the northern end is a small room with a cobbled floor. There were no windows observed in this room therefore it is possible it was used for the storage of tack or even as a root store.
- 5.7.2 The floors of the cart sheds were also cobbled and a niche was observed in the southern of the two cart sheds, which may have been used to hold a candle or oil light (Plate 15). Fixed into the floor below this niche were some iron bolts which may have related to some equipment for the dairy (room next door).



Plate 15 - Niche, interior of cart shed, Building C

- 5.7.3 The first floor of Building C was accessed via the stone stairs on the northern elevation (Plate 14). The first floor consists of a single room over the two car sheds and small room below. There are two roof trusses of hand-cut timbers with trenched purlins (one row either side) (Plate 16). At the end of each timber making up the trusses are assembly (or carpenters) marks, one truss has the mark 'I' and the other 'II' (Plate 17). The roof trusses rest on the top of the wall. Apart from the trusses and the purlins the rest of the roof is modern.
- 5.7.4 It is likely that this first floor room was originally used as a granary for storing grain. Brunskill notes how granaries on farmsteads in Cumbria were always on the first floor, often had external staircases and domestic sized windows¹¹.

¹¹ Brunskill, R.W, 2002, Page 98



Plate 16 – Roof detail, first floor of Building C



Plate 17 – Assembly mark 'II', roof truss first floor of Building C

5.8 BUILDING D

5.8.1 Building D is attached to the southern end of Building C to create a long range at the south-eastern side of the site (Figure 7). It measures approximately 12.50 metres in length by 5.0 metres wide externally and the walls are c.0.50 metres thick. It is constructed of a roughly coursed mixture of red and sandstone and possible granite masonry. The quoins, door jambs and lintels are all of dressed blocks of red sandstone. Along the western elevation there are two standard sized doorways, a large doorway and three windows at ground floor level. At first floor level there is a pitching door (Plate 18). Ventilation slits are located at both ground floor and first floor level on the western and southern elevations, and observations in the interior of the building confirm that some exist on the eastern elevation facing the garden of the property next door. Located just below the eaves along the western elevation are seven circular holes, presumably sections of pipe, which have also been inserted for ventilation.



Plate 18 – Building D, western elevation

5.9 BUILDING D - INTERIOR

- 5.9.1 Internally, Building D is divided into three. At the northern end of the range is a room which may have been the dairy where milk from the milking parlour (Building E) was collected, although no pipe work remains. The presence of a large window suggests that this was a room designed for humans to work in rather than for housing animals.
- 5.9.2 Beside the dairy is a room that appears to have been originally used as either a stable or byre. The floor is of concrete and the walls have been plastered to a height of c.1.50 metres, although the limewashed walls are visible behind (Plate 19). Joists and beams for the former first floor remain. In the right-hand corner as you enter this room there is an iron fitting which Mr Hammond believes may have been where a bull was tethered.



Plate 19 – Interior of byre, Building D

- 5.9.3 At the southern end of Building D is a room which has a large entrance with a wooden lintel and is open to the roof (Plate 20). This large aperture had no evidence of having had a door. In one of the walls there is a niche, set quite low down, with some ironwork attached to the wall beneath. This ironwork appears to correspond to that noted in the byre next door.
- 5.9.4 The purpose of this room is not shown for certain. It does not appear to have been used to house animals, so its purpose may have been to house tools or machinery such as a threshing machine.



Plate 20 – Large doorway, southern end of Building D



Plate 21 – Niche and ironwork, Southern room of Building D

5.10 BUILDING E

- 5.10.1 Building E is single-storey and has been constructed against the southern elevations of Buildings A and B (Figure 10 and Plate 8). This structure has been built from brick and has a profile sheet roof. On the south-western corner of the building, cement has been used to create mock quoins (Plate 22). On the western elevation there is a large doorway with sliding door and a window above (Figure 9). There is a further window in the eastern elevation, facing the garden of the property next door.



Plate 22 – Western elevation of Building E

5.11 BUILDING E - INTERIOR

- 5.11.1 The interior of Building E could be accessed via the large doorway in the western elevation (Plate 22). The floor of the building is of concrete and the walls (originally the external walls for Buildings A and B) have been plastered and painted white. Along the length of the southern elevation there are six remaining concrete stall divisions.
- 5.11.2 This building was presumably constructed to house animals; it may have been a specially-built milking parlour. Portable electric milking machines were available from the around the 1950s, fixed electrical equipment from around the 1960s, so gradually milking parlours replaced bucket milking in the byre¹².

¹² Weller, J, 1982, Page 176



Plate 23 – Interior of Building E looking west



Plate 24 – South facing elevation of house

5.12 THE FARMHOUSE

- 5.12.1 The house does not form part of the proposed development, however by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Hammond; it has been included within this report as it is an integral part of the farmstead. The house was renovated by the previous owner who bought the property in 1994 (*pers.comm.* Mrs Hammond). Because the house has undergone some renovation work, it was necessary to be cautious about features which may or may not be original.
- 5.12.2 The house is located on the western side of the site, with its garden extending southwards to the back lane (Figure 7) (Plate 24). It is good example of a ‘Continuous-outshut’ house, the outshut being the rear of the house (northern side) which has a continuation of the main roof often referred to as a ‘catslide’, or in Cumbria as a ‘toofall’¹³ (Plate 25). The elevation facing the back lane is of coursed, well-dressed red sandstone masonry, with alternating blocks making up the quoins. Rectangular blocks of sandstone make up the window surrounds and lintels. The windows of the right-hand side of the main central doorway are larger than those on the left and are split into two by a vertical stone mullion (Plate 24). This means that this important elevation is not entirely symmetrical.
- 5.12.3 The roof is laid in Westmorland slate with a single course of sandstone tiles at eaves level on the southern elevation and, on the northern side, two courses at eaves level; this is a common feature on vernacular buildings. It is believed they were used in this way to reduce the risk of wind damage to the roof. There are two stone-built chimneys, one on either end of the ridge line.
- 5.12.4 The eastern and northern elevations were noticeably different in construction to the regular coursing of the southern elevation; the side which could easily be seen from the road to the south. The remainder of the house is constructed of uncoursed red sandstone masonry which has been roughly squared.
- 5.12.5 The northern elevation is also notably different from the southern in that the windows are much smaller, the doorway is set off-centre and an arched window is present where the staircase is located (Plate 25).
- 5.12.6 The eastern elevation, upon first observation, has what appears to be a vertical construction break indicating that there are least two phases of building. This, however, does not necessarily make sense when the pitch of the roof for, what may have been the earlier house to the rear (northern elevation – Plate 25), is duplicated to the other side of the ridge line; this would have created a wide house with a shallow pitched roof (creating a very large area of roof space). Upon further examination it appears that what originally appears to be a vertical joint is in fact misleading. The chimney is obviously not original as shown by the difference in stonework and sections of the wall are heavily mortared, creating a ‘false’ vertical joint. When the stonework for both sides of this ‘joint’ is examined, it can be observed that it is the same mix of red and yellow roughly square masonry, and in some places the horizontal courses carry on into both sides. The western gable end has a building against so it was not possible to note if a similar construction break existed there.

¹³ Brunskill, R.W, 2002, Page 77



Plate 25 – Northern elevation of house



Plate 26 – North and eastern elevations of house



Plate 27 – Eastern elevation of house

5.12.7 Against the western elevation of the house there was a small outbuilding which was undergoing renovation at the time of survey. One interesting feature of note was a series of small niches set into the western internal wall not far above ground level. If this had been an external wall they would have resembled ‘bee-boles’; apertures used to house small straw-built bee hives on the farmstead¹⁴. One possible explanation for these holes may be that this outbuilding was used as a privy (toilet), as they were located out of the main house. Holes similar to those observed at Midtown Farm have been observed in Cumbrian privies and were believed to have been used for holding candles or oil lights, as well as for holding cut-up sheets of newspaper (before the introduction of toilet roll!)¹⁵.

¹⁴ Denyer, S, 1991, Page 110

¹⁵ Dawson, J, 1997, Page 55

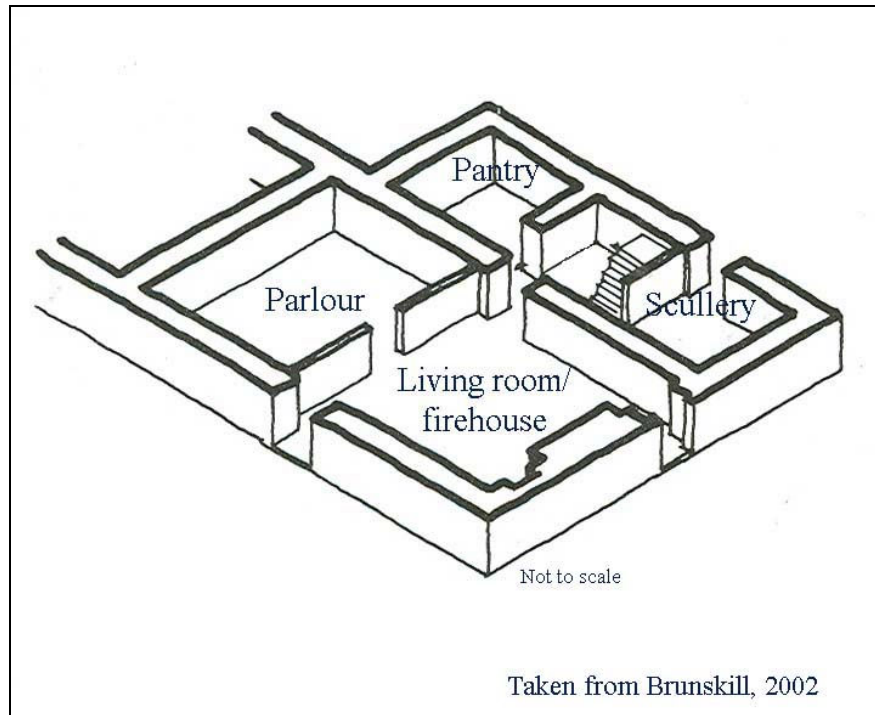


Figure 12 - Example of a ground plan for an outshut house.

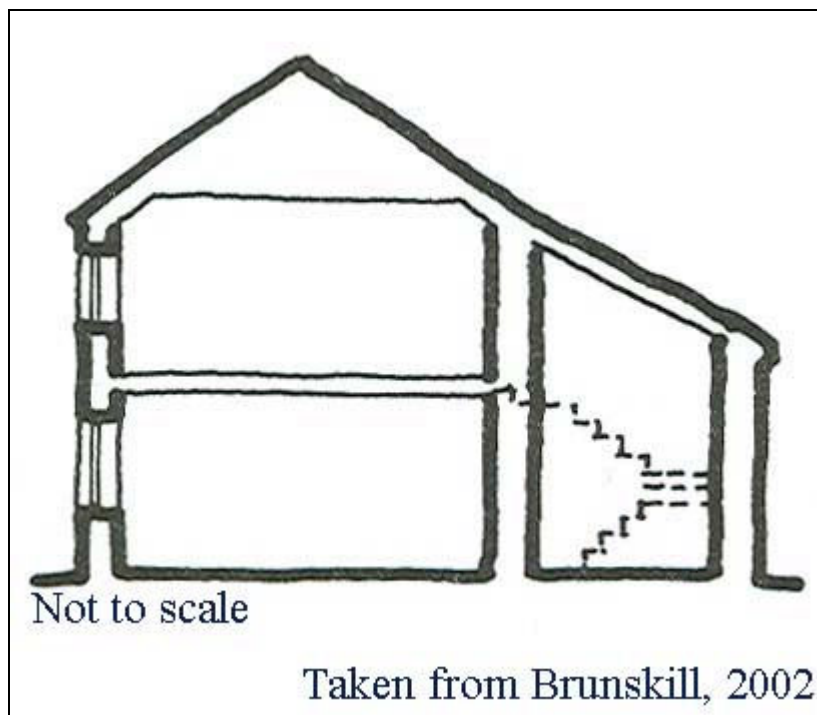


Figure 13 - Typical cross-section of an outshut house

5.13 HOUSE – INTERIOR

5.13.1 Internally the current ground plan consists of a hallway accessed from the outside by the central doorway on the southern elevation (Plate 28). Either side of this hallway is a room (one currently the kitchen and the other a living room). At the back of the house, located within the outshut, is a central dog-leg staircase, with a former pantry on the left and former kitchen or scullery on the right (Figure 12). The pantry (or buttery), which is now used for storage, still retains its sandstone shelving which is a nice survival, although they have been moved around (Plate 29). The pantry was where food and eating utensils would have been stored. The sandstone shelves would have been used to salt meats and for storing milk, butter and cheese, presumably because they retained moisture and remained chilled throughout the year. In some instances, a shelf with a shallow recess exists which would have prevented the spillage of salt, as was the case at Tottergill Farm near Castle Carrock¹⁶. The small window in the north facing wall would have prevented too much sunlight warming up the room.



Plate 28 – Hallway of house looking north



Plate 29 – Sandstone shelving in pantry

5.13.2 In what would have formerly been the scullery (now used as an office) there remains a range and a probable set-pot (or washtub) in the eastern wall (Plates 30 and 31). The range is set into an alcove with a stone lintel and a right-hand vertical stone support which has a carved circular top. This vertical support has probably survived from a period before the range was inserted, and may have held up a mantle over an open fire. To the right of the range is a semi-circular recess with a wooden lintel and cupboard below. This was a possible set-pot which was used for washing clothes and bedding. A fire at the base would have heated up water in a cauldron and the washing would be boiled, scrubbed, blued and starched; oral history records that a certain day of the week would be set aside for this task¹⁷.

¹⁶ Cracknell, P.M, 2004

¹⁷ Jennings, N, 2003, Page 20

**Plate 30** – Victorian range, outshut**Plate 31** – Set-pot (or wash tub), outshut

- 5.13.3 At present, the house is divided into two ground floor rooms by a central hallway, however originally there may only have been one wall as shown on Figure 12 separating the parlour from the living room or often referred to as the firehouse. Consequently, the living room would have been accessed directly from outside. According to Denyer, the living room (firehouse) was the main downstairs room where most of the daytime activities were undertaken, and was often the only heated room in the house¹⁸. The parlour was the name given to the room which adjoins the pantry (or buttery) and was originally used during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as the best bedroom, which was often unheated. During the 19th century a fireplace was often inserted to convert the parlour into a second living room¹⁹.
- 5.13.4 The first floor is accessed via the central dog-leg staircase located at the back of the house within the outshut. At the top of the first flight of stairs, the staircase turns back on itself to head towards the small landing at first floor level. A window with arched head is located at the first landed and this provides plenty of light for the staircase. Halfway up the second flight of stairs is a small window (Plate 32). The presence of this window at first suggests that this was originally an external wall, and that at some point the outshut was extended either eastward or westward. There was, however, no evidence for this on the exterior wall of the northern elevation (Plate 25), and it may therefore have been inserted in this internal wall deliberately when the outshut was lofted and the roof space used for storage or extra bedrooms (See 5.13.5 below).

¹⁸ Denyer, S, 1991, Page 19

¹⁹ *Ibid*, Page 49



Plate 32 – Small window as seen from staircase



Plate 33 – First floor landing showing steps up to two front bedrooms

- 5.13.5 At the top of the stairs there are four doorways. The door to the right provides access to, what is now the bathroom, but it may originally have been a store room. Brunskill notes that as house plans developed, the open space over the scullery and pantry was lofted to provide store rooms or servants bedrooms which could be accessed from the top of the stairs²⁰. The small window mentioned in 5.13.4 would have provided extra light for this room, and it is likely that the two small first floor windows located just below the eaves on the northern elevation (Plate 25) were also inserted at this time. Bathrooms were not a feature of vernacular houses built before the 19th century after which time water could be piped into individual houses and sewage could be dealt with efficiently. Toilets or privies were located outside, often at the bottom of the garden, and baths were had, quite publicly, in the living room²¹.
- 5.13.6 Opposite the door to the present bathroom is a room now used as a bedroom, which is located over the former scullery (where the range and set-pot are situated). The timbers for the roof structure are exposed in this room, and at least one of the oak rafters shows that some of the timbers have been re-used (Plate 34). There are two rows of trenched purlins. The rafter is bonded into one of the main load-bearing walls.



Plate 34 – Roof timbers, back bedroom over former scullery

²⁰ Brunskill, R.W, 2002, Page 77

²¹ Quiney, A, 1989, Page 181

5.13.7 At the front at first floor level there are two double bedrooms accessed up two steps from the main landing. According to Brunskill a common feature of the outshut being lofted was a difference in floor level between the rear rooms (in outshut) and the front rooms²² (Plate 33). Both rooms have period fireplaces (Plates 35 and 37). Plates 35 and 36 show a cast-iron fireplace and grate set within a simple stone surround with a wooden mantel. Plate 37 shows the fireplace in the other bedroom. This also has a simple stone surround with wooden mantel. The fireplace itself is different in that it has decorative tiles lining the cast-iron gate. Because the house has been renovated only ten years ago, it is necessary to consider the possibility that these two fireplaces have been brought in from elsewhere; however the stone surrounds and mantels are similar. Dating these types of fireplaces in vernacular buildings can be difficult because fashions took some time to disseminate into rural areas therefore further research may be necessary, however Quiney includes similar examples in his section on ‘Victorian and Edwardian Houses’²³.



Plate 35 – Fireplace, first floor bedroom



Plate 36 – Detail of grate, first floor bedroom

²² Brunskill, R.W, 2000, Page 82

²³ Quiney, A, 1989, Page 172



Plate 37 – Fireplace with decorative tiles, first floor bedroom

- 5.13.8 During the survey it was possible to access the loft to note the roof structure of the house. The roof is made up of two hand-cut roof trusses which create three bays. The trusses consist of principal rafters with collars, which are fixed to the rafters with wooden pegs. The ends of the rafters are bonded into the top of the walls, rather than resting on them (Plate 38). On either side of the roof are two rows of trenced purlins. Assembly marks were observed on one of the trusses as 'II' (Plate 39). The underside of the roof itself shows that it has been replaced fairly recently in local slate.



Plate 38 – Roof structure, main section of house



Plate 39 – Detail of joint, peg and assembly mark on roof truss

5.14 ASSOCIATED FEATURES

- 5.14.1 On the 1971 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 7) a sheep dip is shown at the southern end of Building D and sheep pens are shown in the field opposite the farm, across the back lane to the south; neither of these features remain.
- 5.14.2 Graffiti is often observed on traditional farm buildings, whether it be simply initials carved into the soft sandstone that make up door jambs, or pencils sketches on the limewashed walls. Several sets of initials were noted during the survey of the farm buildings and photographs of these are included on the CD-Rom.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The farm buildings at Midtown Farm, Blencarn are good examples of the structures found on farmsteads of around 100 acres. The buildings present on the site include the farmhouse, a barn for the threshing and storage of cereals, byres, haylofts, cart sheds and a granary.
- 6.2 Farm buildings are very difficult to date when documentary evidence is scarce. The farm buildings that are the subject of the present survey (Buildings A and B) and the house appear to all be shown on the Tithe Map of 1850 (Figure 4). A small building to the east of the house no longer exists, however it may have been a privy.
- 6.3 It would appear from the difference in the height of the ridge lines of Buildings A and B that they are two separate structures, built at different times. There was, however, no obvious vertical construction break between the two observed, mainly due to the presence of cement rendering and mortar. It is possible that the two buildings are contemporary and that the difference in height is due to a decrease in ground level. This was certainly the case at Low Allenwood Farm, Heads Nook, where the ridge line of the building reduced in height half way along the elevation²⁴.
- 6.4 Providing an approximate date of construction for these buildings is difficult in the absence of documentary evidence. Brunskill notes that a wave of investment in farm buildings lasted for around a hundred years from the end of the 18th century to around the 1880s²⁵.
- 6.5 By the publication of the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of c.1865 (Figure 5), the cart shed with granary above was constructed (Building C), therefore it can be deduced that this building was constructed between 1850 and 1865. The reason for its construction may have been the mechanisation of the threshing process. Mr and Mrs Hammond mentioned the former existence of a circular path at the northern side of Building A, where the tree is currently located. This may have been a horse-trod for an external horse-engine; a piece of machinery which was introduced around the middle of the 19th century²⁶, and which left little in the way of archaeological evidence apart from a hole through the wall for the axle. If this is the case, the construction of Building C may have been in response to an increase in cereal processing, considering it would have been much quicker and efficient with the new machinery.
- 6.6 Cartographic evidence shows that Building D was constructed some time between the publication of the First and Second Edition Ordnance Survey maps (Figures 5 and 6), i.e. some time between 1865 and 1900. This may have been in response to regulations requiring more hygienic housing for beef and/or dairy cows, or in the increase of stock being kept on the farm due to the introduction of purchased concentrates for fattening cattle, which according to Harvey *'increased the incentive to provide stock with conditions which encouraged the efficient conversion of feed to meat'*²⁷.

²⁴ Wooler, F, 2006

²⁵ Brunskill, R.W, 2002, Page 95

²⁶ Brunskill, R.W, 1999, Page 55

²⁷ Harvey, N, 1970, Page 129

- 6.7 What the farm buildings do not show is that sheep would have formed an important part of the economy of Midtown Farm. As sheep were grazed on the commons through the summer months, and kept in enclosures close to the farm during the winter, the farm buildings were not used for housing them, although activities such as shearing may have been undertaken in the barn. The Commons Register (See 4.10) provides evidence that sheep were kept by the tenant in the 1970s, Thomas Wales, although the numbers of stock given in the register are the 'rights' held and do not necessarily provide an indication as to the exact number of animals kept by the farm at that time. The sheep dip and pens shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1971 (Figure 7) also confirm that sheep were an important part of the farmstead.
- 6.8 The farmhouse appears to contain all the characteristics of a 'continuous-outshut' as described by Brunskill²⁸. These types of house were constructed over a broad date range, from around 1730 to 1820. The continuous-outshut was a house with two rooms to the front of the house, a living room and a parlour, with a scullery, staircase and pantry to the rear contained within the outshut. Originally, the scullery and pantry were open to the rafters of the catslide roof, however Brunskill describes how it was customary to insert a ceiling *'which also acted as the floor to a couple of cramped little store rooms or servants' bedrooms on the first floor*. The two small windows on the northern elevation just below the eaves and the small window present in the wall on the staircase may have been inserted when this development occurred. It is difficult to assess the development of a house when it is not seen 'stripped back to its bare bones', further work in the future may provide clearer evidence. It does appear, however, that the house was constructed as a continuous out-shut in one building phase.
- 6.9 Many farmsteads have large modern pre-fabricated sheds which have replaced the traditional building on the site. No modern building apart from the milking parlour is present at Midtown Farm and it is possible that its location in the middle of the village sandwiched between two roads may have prevented this from happening, should it have been necessary.

²⁸ Brunskill, R.W, 2000, Pages 80-82

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8. APPENDIX

CRO = Carlisle Record Office

CL = Carlisle Library

Maps

Hodgkinson and Donald Map of 1774 (Surveyed 1771) (CL)

Tithe Map of 1850, CRO Ref DRC 8/177

First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of c.1865 (CRO)

Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1900 (CRO)

1971 Ordnance Survey Map Scale 1:2500 (CL)

Histories and Trade Directories

A History, Gazetteer and Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1829 – Parson & White

'Blencarn is a village and manor, forming a township with Kirkland, and situated 9 miles east of Penrith. This manor was part of the large barony of Adam, son of Sweine, but it afterwards came to Edw. Boyville, who sold it to John, brother of Hercla, Earl of Carlisle, after whose attainder, Edward II granted it to one English, whose daughter conveyed it in marriage to the Restwol family, who sold it to Lough, ancestor of the late Lough Carleton, Esq., who by his will in 1792, enfranchised all the tenants. Near the village is a spring, the water of which is powerfully astrigent. At Blencarn Gate is the free school which was erected in 1775 and endowed with 100 acres of land by the Commissioners appointed under an Act of Parliament, obtained in 1773, for enclosing Culgaith common. The land is now let for £42 per annum, for which the master (Rev J Chapelhow) teaches all the children of Culgaith and Blencarn without further charge'.

Farmers listed at Blencarn (those marked * are yeomen): -

John Atkinson	John Cannon*
Thomas Clark*	Robert Clark
William Hunter	John Lightburn
Margaret Nicholson	Robert Pearson*
John Richardson	Isaac Sowerby
John Sowerby*	Andrew Turner*

Mannix & Whellan Cumberland Directory 1847

Farmers listed at Blencarn (those marked * are yeomen): -

Hannah Atkinson*	John Atkinson*
John Cannon*	Thomas Cannon*
Thomas Hall	James Laycock
Margaret Nicholson	John Richardson
John Pattinson	William Wadeson
John Westmoreland	

History and Topography of Cumberland and Westmorland – W Whellan 1860

Kirkland Parish: -

'This parish is bounded on the north by Ousby and Addingham, on the west by the river Eden and Langwathby parish, on the south by Crowdundale Beck, which divides the counties of Cumberland and Westmorland, and on the east by Cross Fell and the manor of Tyne Head. The soil in Kirkland and Culgaith is deep and fertile, at Skirwith light and sandy and at Blencarn a strong clay. Coal and lead are found in the parish. Cross Fell is 2900 feet above the level of the sea, and is said to have been originally designated Fiend's Fell, from the common belief that evil spirits had their haunt upon it, until St Paulinus erected a cross and built an altar on the summit, where he celebrated mass, and thus drove away the demons. Since that time it has borne the name of Cross Fell, and the people in the neighbourhood style a heap of stones lying there, The Altar upon Cross Fell. The population, who are entirely agricultural, reside chiefly in the villages of Blencarn and Kirkland, and are, generally speaking, educated and cleanly. The parish comprise the townships of Kirkland and Blencarn, Skirwith and the chapelry of Culgaith. Penrith is the market usually attended. The area of the parish is 6361 acres'.

Slater's Directory of Cumberland 1876

Farmers listed at Blencarn: -

John Atkinson	George Brown, Blencarn Hall
John Cannon	William Sowerby

T Bulmer & Co History, Topography and Directory of Cumberland 1901

Farmers listed at Blencarn: -

Thomas Brown	Robert Brunskill & Son (John)
John Cannon (yeoman)	William Cannon, Cross Keys
Richard Cannon, Rigglands, yeoman and overseer	
John Carrick (yeoman)	William Gillespie
Robert Gow, Pleasant view	James Laycock & Son (yeoman), South view
Wm Slack, Blencarn hall	William Sowerby, New House (yeoman)

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1914

Farmers listed: -

John Atkinson, Yeoman	Richard Atkinson, farmer and assistant overseer
Thomas Brown	John Brunskill
John Carrick	William Gillespie
Thomas Hutchinson, Wythwaite	Goulding Roburn
William Watson, Broats	John Thompson
John Simpson, Rigglands	William Sowerby, yeoman

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1929

Farmers listed at Blencarn: -

Thos Arnison, Wythwaite	Wm Blas, Rigglands
Rbt & Wm Brunskill, Blencarn Hall [listed as farm over 150 acres]	
John Carrick	Edward Carruthers
Arth & Wm Elwood	Jsph Furness
Joseph Robinson	William Sowerby, yeoman
Geo Milburn & Jn, farmers and blacksmiths	
William Watson, yeoman, Broats [listed as farm over 150 acres]	

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1934

Rbt & Wm Brunskill, Blencarn Hall [over 150 acres]	
John Carrick	Edward Carruthers
Wm Collins	Arthur & Wm Elwood
Harold Howe, Rigglands	Geo & Jacob Milburn, farmers and blacksmiths

Wm J Pearson, Wythwaite
Wm Sowerby, yeoman

Joseph Robinson
Edward Watson, yeoman, Broats [over 150 acres]

Kelly's Directory of Cumberland and Westmorland 1938

Thos Arnison, The Green
Rbt & Wm Brunskill, Blencarn Hall [over 150 acres]
Edwd Carruthers [over 150 acres] Rt Cowperthwaite
Jn Davis, Wythwaite Wm Leggett, Rigglands
Jn Sowerby Edwd Watson, yeoman, Broats
Geo & Jacob Milburn, farmers and blacksmiths
Rd Oreston, Pleasant View

Cumberland Directory 1954

Thomas Wales, farmer, Midtown Farm