

NEWTON GREENS FARMHOUSE

NEWTON ON THE MOOR
NORTHUMBERLAND

*ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
JANUARY 2009*



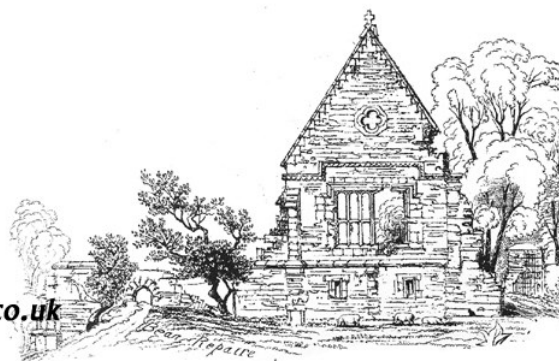
The newly-exposed window in the west gable

Planning Application no A/2007/267: NCCCT ref A30/3;7244:
OASIS ref peterfry2-40725: NGR NU 1606 0498

PETER F RYDER
B.A, M.Phil, F.S.A
HISTORIC BUILDINGS CONSULTANT

**1 Ford Terrace
Broomhaugh
RIDING MILL
Northumberland
NE44 6EJ**

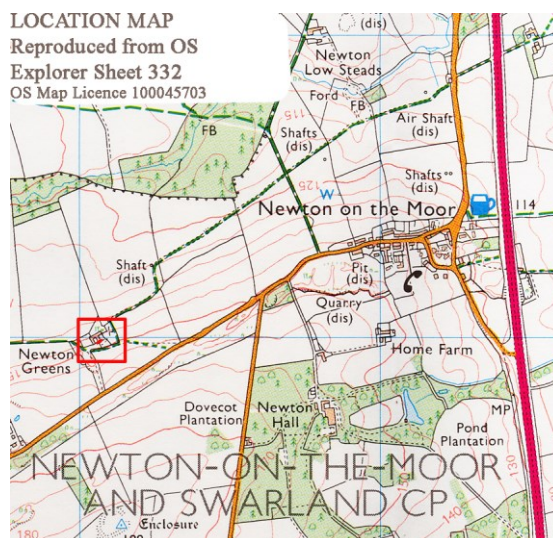
**Tel (01434) 682644
E mail: PFRyder@broomlee.demon.co.uk**



Newton Greens Farmhouse

Archaeological Watching Brief January 2009

Newton Greens is an isolated farm lying c 1 km to the south-west of the village of Newton-on-the-Moor, on a north-facing hillside on the south flank of the valley of the Newton Burn, and c 100 m south of the minor road that runs west from Newton-in-the-Moor towards Longframlington. The history of the building, shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 6" : 1 mile map as 'Greens Farm', has not been researched.



The house was the subject of a Standing Building Assessment in April 2008, when it was interpreted as a 17th century building, possibly a bastle, that had been remodelled on several occasions. A '1668' datestone might relate to an early remodelling; another took place in the late 18th or early 19th century and a further reworking – to which most of the features of the building belong – took place in 1889.

The New Doorway

The principal structural intervention made in the current works is at the west end of the building, where a new doorway was broken through the original west gable wall to allow direct access into a later outbuilding, a former wash house. Both faces of the wall, 0.95 m thick, are of roughly-coursed irregular pieces of sandstone, with smaller rubble in parts; the core proved to be of rubble, in a crumbly soft brownish mortar. The new opening, c 2.3 m high and 1.52 m wide, was made 1.15 m from the north-west angle.

Several small sockets were identified in the external face of the wall, within the former wash-house; one, 1.5 m south of the new opening and 1.03 m above the concrete floor of the wash-house, had been cut into a large stone and, together with a patch of small rubble above, looked as if it might possibly represent an infilled slit vent. However, no evidence of this could be seen in the internal wall face and it appears that, together with other small infilled cavities above and to the south, these may all be secondary and relate either to structures within the wash-house or perhaps some small structure that preceded it.

The internal face of the wall showed three 'levelling-up' courses, and one possible infilled socket (perhaps for a first-floor joist) a little below the present ceiling.

The First Floor Window

The removal of an old stack of engineering brick which rose adjacent to the south end of the wall, serving a boiler in the wash house, allowed a better examination of a small blocked window at first-floor level. This proved to be c 0.46 m square, with a narrow chamfered surround cut from four stones; the southern jamb was badly decayed. This window may well be an original feature of the house; its style would go with a late-17th or early-18th century date

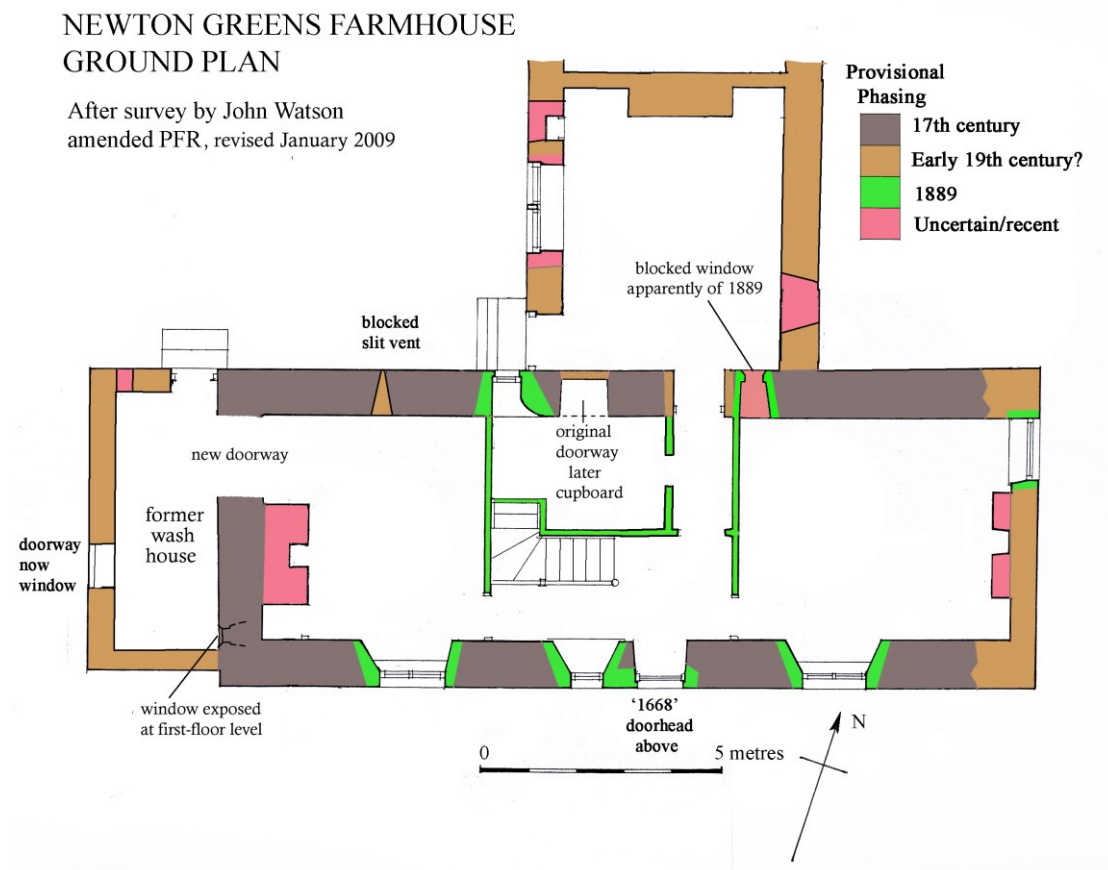
Features in the North Wall.

The removal of stoothing on the internal face of the north wall of the house revealed a hitherto-unsuspected recess formed in a former doorway opening, in the small understair room, midway between the present doorway into the kitchen within the rear wing, and the small window with a curious asymmetric internal splay that looks round the west side of the wing.

The recess, 1.02 m wide on the internal face of the wall, splaying slightly to 0.95 m at the face of the blocking 0.72 m back, was partly concealed by plaster, although large squared blocks in the internal west jamb appeared to course in with the walling. The recess had clearly been used as a cupboard prior to its concealment, and retained one wooden shelf; its internal lintel was an old timber, but beyond that were stone slabs.

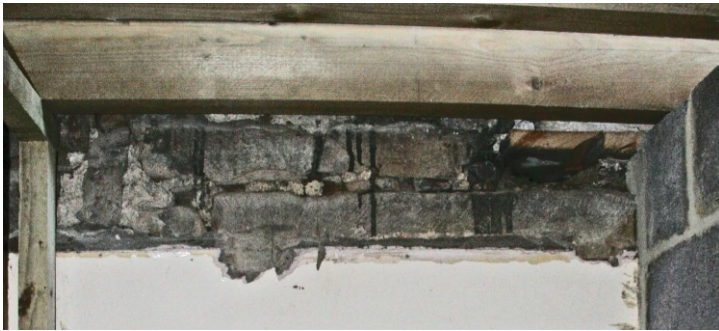
It seems likely that this opening represent an original north door contemporary with the house; it is set more or less opposite the apparent remains of a first-floor opening on the south (previously interpreted as a doorway). The present doorway is of 1889, with a '1668' doorhead re-set above it. Might there have originally been an opposed pair of doorways here, with the 'upper doorway' (or window) set directly above the southern?)

Immediately to the east of the present door into the wing, the head of a blocked window was exposed on the external face of the wall. This has been 0.5 m wide, and has had a narrow chamfer to the surround. The lintel (all that was seen) is of sandstone ashlar, with a light diagonal tooling apparently identical with that of the 1889 openings on the south elevation. However, it poses something of a puzzle as it opens inside the early-19th century wing.





Left and above. A newly-exposed recess, formerly a cupboard but originally the north door of the house.



century character, exposed in external face of north wall, but oddly within the early 19th century wing

Window head, of late 19th century



West gable end; new opening just visible (left) above wall of roofless Wash House; to right (outlined in red) is original first-floor window exposed by removal of stack (see front cover for enlarged view)