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SUMMARY

The suite of buildings examined by the writer remains an enigmatic range of farm buildings. Access was heavily compromised by the dangerous condition of the buildings following forty years of neglect.

The farmstead layout appears to conform to a range of buildings attached in a line. Single storey Buildings 1-3 probably form the earliest range, subsequently extended northwards with the addition of Buildings 4-6 that were of two stories.

The laithe-house plan was a later 18th century innovation and could be applied to Buildings 4-6, although this form tended to have a uniform roof, two stories and erected as a single act.

As the range appears to divide into two structural phases, Buildings 1-3 may belong to a long-house derivative style and Buildings 4-6 consistent with the laithe-house style of the 18th century.

Building 3 appears to represent a two-unit house with a parlour/bedroom to the left and kitchen to the right with a stone spiral staircase in the outshut, presumably a later addition when a second floor was added and the loft space was formalised into bedrooms. Interestingly, there was no surviving evidence for first floor windows. The outshut also offered the opportunity for a pantry but accommodation remained basic.

Buildings 1-3 could date from the mid 17th century. The continuous-outshut house illustrates an unbroken roof and it is possible that this improvement occurred to the study building between 1730 and 1820.

Buildings 1 and 2 had been heavily modified. Building 2 was a small threshing barn and Building 1 once possessed first floor domestic accommodation, albeit no cooking facilities. The threshing barn probably extended up to a blocked door. The blocked door provided access into a secondary room. When the threshing barn was discontinued, a brick partition was constructed and the rooms were adopted as byres with a new door inserted.

Occupation appears to have been continuous, with a late 19th century improvement of the facade in cement render. Applied relief appears to imitate timber beams with a distinctive multiple V-shaped frieze. The decor (a panel with a "union jack" design) extended into a small extension adjacent to the cottage (Building 4) suggesting this building may have been acquired for domestic use before reverting to husbandry. A crude porch was also added to Building 3.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project origins

The proposed scheme of demolition advocated by the client (planning application 2021/2255) has the potential to affect the character and appearance of a suite of buildings that represents a non-designated historic asset of special architectural and historic interest; in this case the demolition of a range of stone cottages and barns. The project lies within the curtilage of a plot synonymous with 18th and 19th century buildings

Removal of a suite of buildings and the refurbishment will significantly alter the character and appearance of the buildings and as a result, a programme of archaeological building recording equivalent to Historic England's Level I and II has been initiated by the archaeological contractor, prior to the improvements taking place.

Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service has identified these buildings as a local designated heritage asset under the NPPF (2021) protocols and worthy as a heritage asset of local historical interest.

Condition 5 instruction was as follows:

Prior to the carrying out of any demolition work the existing buildings affected by the proposed development must be recorded in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Within 2 months of the commencement of construction works a digital copy of the resultant report must be furnished to the Local Planning Authority. The report must include a photographic record of the building's exterior and a sketch drawing of their east elevation as a minimum.

In an email from Jeremy Parsons (CCCHES) dated 1st July 2022, the parameters for the fieldwork were outlined, due to the unsafe nature of the study area. The level of recording for Hollowdyke Farm comprised:

- Photos of exterior (because the interior looks too dangerous to enter)
- Sketch drawing of the east elevation (which may have a window with wooden mullions in it) as existing shrubbery looks to prevent an adequate photo record of it to be made.
- A concise written description of building
- As this is not a level 1 or 2 survey, the wording of the condition requires the submission of a WSI for approval.
- The survey is an amalgam of a photographic record and a level 1 survey with the addition of a sketch drawing of the east elevation.

Old buildings have intrinsic conservation problems because of their age. Often they have been neglected; their function altered due to social or economic changes resulting in major structural failure or potential failure. Striking a balance between retaining the heritage asset as economically viable and their significance within a wider historic context requires compromise and understanding in order that the aims of a pragmatic conservation policy succeed.

To ascertain the historical and archaeological merits of the study building affected by this development, the archaeological contractor investigated known historical records through a rapid

desk-based assessment and the survival of extant buildings via a programme of building recording equivalent to Level 1 and 2 as described by Historic England: *Understanding Historic Buildings; A Guide to Good Recording Practice*, 2016.

The desk-based assessment included a visit to Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle.

The objective of this exercise was to collate sufficient detail to identify the issues and potential for academic research in order to provide a historical context for targeted enquiry regarding the buildings to be refurbished.



Figure 1. Location of the survey. (OS copyright licence no. 100044205).

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Project Design

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd proposed a project design in the form of a Working Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the archaeological recording of a suite of buildings at Hollowdyke Farm (figure 2). This proposal outlined the contractors' professional suitability, a brief historical summary of the study area, general objectives required of the project, the methodology and the resources needed for the successful implementation of this work.

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd was commissioned to undertake a rapid desk-based assessment and an archaeological building survey on behalf of the client, Nigel Kay.

The following report has been assembled to the relevant standards and protocols (IFA 2014) of the Institute of Archaeologists (now Chartered Institute for Archaeologists), combined with accepted best practice and in accordance with the brief prepared by the curatorial authority.

Fieldwork took place on July 9th 2022.

2.2 Desk-based assessment

In accordance with the brief, the rapid desk-based assessment investigated primary and secondary historical sources and maps and other literature in order to set the survey results into their past cultural, historical and topographic context.

The desk-based assessment comprised a search of three primary archival repositories.

- Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle was sought for details of landowners, occupiers and cartographic evidence.
- The Historic Environment Record, online, provided the Sites and Monuments Record describing previous archaeological reconnaissance and through electronic media showing the spatial distribution of these heritage assets.
- British Newspapers Archive online

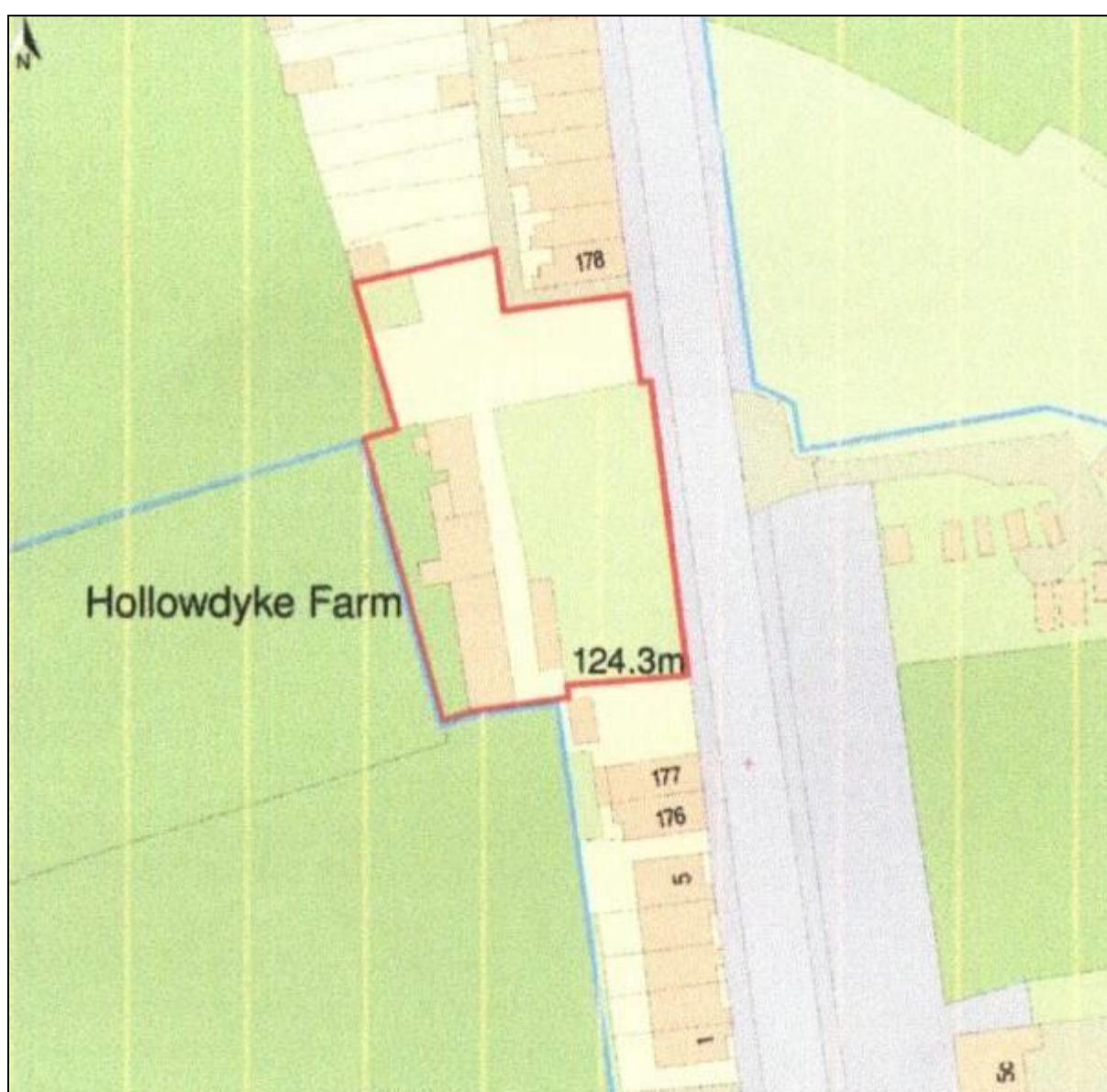


Figure 2. Location of the study buildings (OS copyright licence no. 100044205).

2.3 Archive

The archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design and the guidelines set out by Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991), Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015) and the Chartered Institute for Field Archaeologists protocols for a Building Survey (2014).

The archive will be deposited with an appropriate repository, Cumbria Archives, Carlisle and a copy of the report donated to the County Sites and Monuments Record, as is standard practice in Cumbria.

A copy of the report will be filed online with the *Oasis* electronic archive of grey archaeological literature.

2.4 Walk-over survey

The study buildings did not possess frontage onto Frizington Road (A5086) but yielded a stone boundary wall. Lying within its own curtilage, Hollowdyke Farm was a linear range of buildings with a close between the buildings and the road (figure 2). The study area measured 0.559 hectares in area.

Approached by a short drive, the property was heavily overgrown with hawthorn trees and the buildings in a very poor condition with collapsed roofs and unstable walls. Trip hazards littered the ground floor and access was denied to the first floor due to decayed floorboards and broken stairs.

A cobbled path accessed the eastern main frontage.

The report has adopted the nomenclature (Rooms 1-14).

The study area comprised of six spatial elements:

- Building 1, byre (NY 03410 16596)
- Building 2, threshing barn (NY 03410 16601)
- Building 3, two floor cottage with outshut (NY 03408 16608)
- Building 4, house extension (NY 03406 16617)
- Building 5, barn (NY 03404 16621)
- Building 6, barn extension (NY 03404 16623)

2.5 Development proposals

The proposed development includes the demolition of all six buildings in order to clear the ground for a bespoke dwelling.

The County's Historic Environment Officer requested photographs of the inside of the buildings to ensure that no historical features would be lost during the demolition as the farm is marked on 18th Century maps. Comprehensive photographs were provided by the Applicant which showed that all of the buildings are in a very poor state of repair.

The majority of the slate roofing was removed approximately 40 years ago and replaced with corrugated sheeting and the external walls were lowered after a storm collapsed some of the buildings. The Historical Officer agreed that the buildings are in a very poor state and requested that the buildings be recorded prior to demolition, but externally only due to concerns regarding safety.

This would comprise a photographic record and a sketch drawing of the front elevation. The Officer requested that this information be secured by a suitably worded planning condition which required submission and approval prior to any demolition works being undertaken.

There will be dedicated provision for car parking and outdoor area. Finalised plans have not yet been submitted to the planning authority as only outline planning permission has been granted.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

Adjacent to the main road, the area was formerly dominated by heavy industry, notably mining of coal and quarrying of iron ore. The study area (NY 03410 16596) lies within a rolling landscape, abraded by river channels on the fringe of the Lake District National Park, approximately 124.00m OD in height.

The British Geological Survey [Geology of Britain viewer | British Geological Survey \(BGS\)](#) describes the solid and superficial geology as follows:

Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation - Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 310 to 318 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period. Local environment previously dominated by swamps, estuaries and deltas.

These sedimentary rocks are fluvial, palustrine and shallow-marine in origin formed in swamps, estuaries and deltas. They are detrital, forming deposits reflecting the channels, floodplains and deltas of a river in a coastal setting (with periodic inundation from the sea).

Superficial Deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period consisting of Till, Devensian - Diamicton. Local environment previously dominated by ice age conditions.

These superficial sedimentary deposits are glacial in origin. They are detrital, created by the action of ice and meltwater, they can form a wide range of deposits and geomorphologies associated with glacial and inter-glacial periods during the Quaternary.

The study area for the building survey is covered by the Cumbrian Historic Landscape Characterisation programme from which the following designation was taken (Cumbria CC, 2009):

32. Lamplugh and Ehen Valley

An area of rolling landscape rising towards the Lake District fells this character area straddles the Lake District National Park boundary to the east of Frizington. There is no obvious distinction in terms of historic landscape character between the areas within and without the park.

It is characterised primarily by the extensive area of ancient enclosure. Unlike the Whillimore and Dean Common character area to the west, the settlement pattern within the ancient enclosures does not only consist of discrete settlements but also includes small nucleations, such as Asby, Kirkland, Croasdale and Ennerdale Bridge.

Exactly two thirds of all the settlements pre-date 1770. Other than a few small areas of planned enclosure, the field pattern entirely consists of ancient enclosures with no former common arable fields.

Woodland is sparse but there are small patches of ancient gill woodland and small blocks of plantation in the north of the area. Overall the landscape appears to retain many pre 19th century characteristics.

Legacy: A clearly older and traditional landscape both with regard to settlement pattern and the nature of the fieldscape, strong legibility of landscape elements of medieval origin.

Landscape designation and status: Small parts of the eastern half of the character area are within the Lake District National Park.

4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Historical background

The Manor of Frizington was a fee of Beckermeth and was held by a family bearing the local name. It was sold to Sir John Leigh in the early 15th century and succeeded to the Williamson and Patrickson families before being acquired by Sir John Lowther and assimilated into the Lonsdale Estates.

Coal mining was established by the 1720's and there were ironworks at Frizington from 1839 onwards. Limestone quarrying was a very important industry between 1888 and the 1980's, whilst there was earlier lime-burning and tile-making from the mid 19th century. Historically, Frizington was a collection of isolated farms and houses but became a unified settlement as a result of mining opportunities based on a central road.

The lands were enclosed under an act of Parliament passed in 1805. The Whitehaven, Cleator, and Egremont Railway held a branch line to the iron mines in this township.

The Newcastle Courant records on Saturday 14th May 1743 the sale free rents of 24 freeholders by the owner John Williamson of Frizington.

No farms pertaining to variations of Hollow Dyke are listed in a search of British Newspapers Archives Online before 1849, the closest being a farm at Howgate situated to the north-west.

In 1860, the area of the township was 1,030 acres and its rateable value was £1,770 10s (Wellan 1860, 370-372).

An archaeological geophysical survey at land at Rheda during 2018 identified a square undated enclosure to the west of the study area (Bunning 2018, 4).

There are no entries on the Historic Environment Record within a 500m radius of the study area.

4.2 Cartography

The first edition Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1863 (figure 3) described the study area as High Dyke comprising a range of buildings forming a terrace that respected the main road. A map of 1860 (YBSC/21/2/15/1) describes the study building as Holly Dyke.

A series of rectangular fields lie adjacent to the main road and respect Lingla Beck to the west. The study buildings are within a narrow single field.



Figure 3. Ordnance Survey map of 1863

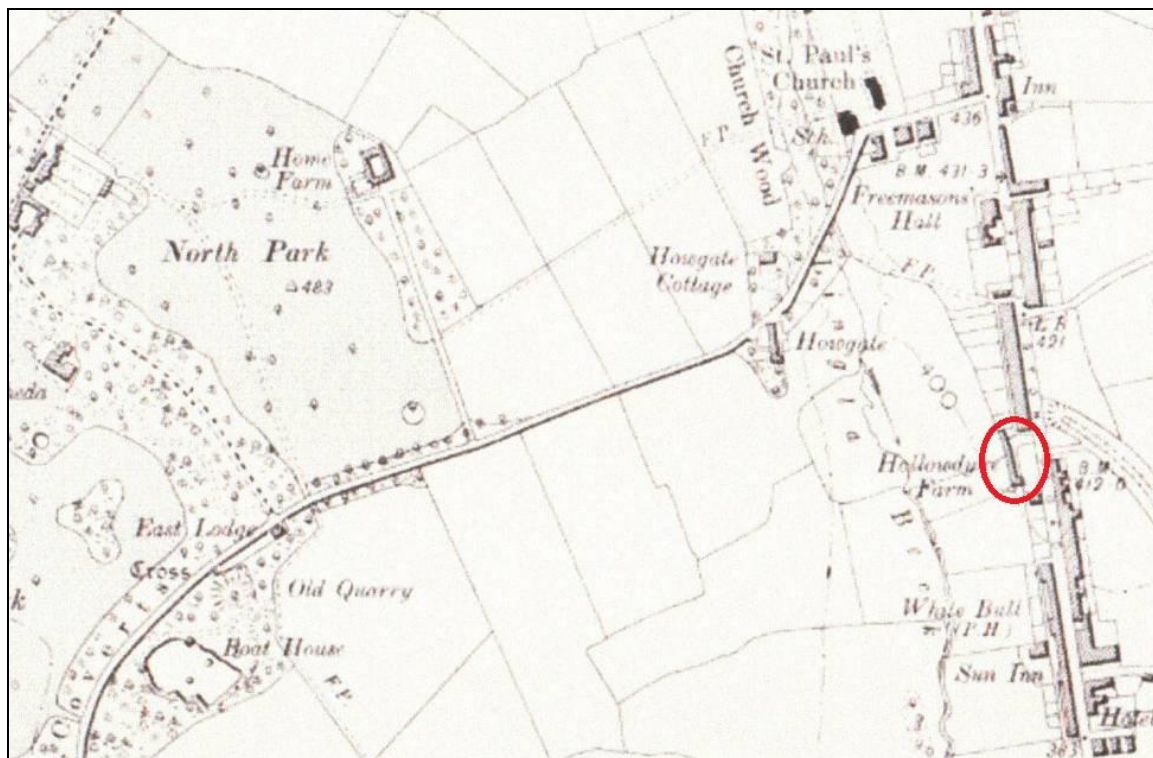


Figure 4. Ordnance Survey map of 1901

By 1901, the second edition Ordnance Survey map titles the farm Hollowdyke Farm (figure 4).

5 SURVEY RESULTS

5.1 Methodology

The buildings in the study area were surveyed on July 9th 2022 by Gerry Martin with the use of tapes, a Laser Distance Measurement device and hand-held GPS equipment. The day was hot and bright.

The study buildings were in a very poor state of preservation and structurally dangerous. Access was in places precarious, meaning that detailed observations could not all be undertaken.

No scaled drawings for the existing buildings were available.

The buildings had limited accessibility and natural light was restricted within the study buildings, requiring flash photography. Normally, a survey comprised of scaled photographic recording of the interior and elevations of the study building, with detailed photography of any worthy architectural elements but due to inherent dangers this action was severely restricted.

Notations were undertaken regarding the characteristics of this building, including metrical data, thresholds, materials and building techniques employed.

The corpus of the report was formed from these notes and photographs.

5.2 Building 1: Byre

Building 1 represented a stone byre with overhead accommodation and comprised two rooms (Rooms 1 and 2). The eastern elevation measured 3.10m in height to the north falling to 3.47m in height to the south and 11.78 in length. It was flanked by stone quoins (0.60m x 0.25m) at each end (twelve to the south, ten to the north), exposing random rubbles-stone courses of red sandstone (figure 5). Roughcast cement on the southern gable end measuring 5.33m in width masked any possible detail (figure 6). The slate roof was surmounted by a red sandstone ridge.



Figure 5. Eastern elevation of Building 1



Figure 6. Southern gable end of Building 1

A number of architectural elements were observed.

- A central door formed from a stone lintel measuring 1.52m x 0.18m with stone jambs and measuring 1.07m in width and 1.87m in height.

- Two rectangular first floor windows, not accessible.

Building 1 (figure 7) represented a byre (Room 1) that formerly had two floors but the upper storey was removed when converted to a modern byre. The upper floor represented living accommodation illuminated by two eastern windows and accessed by a probable ladder, through a hatch.

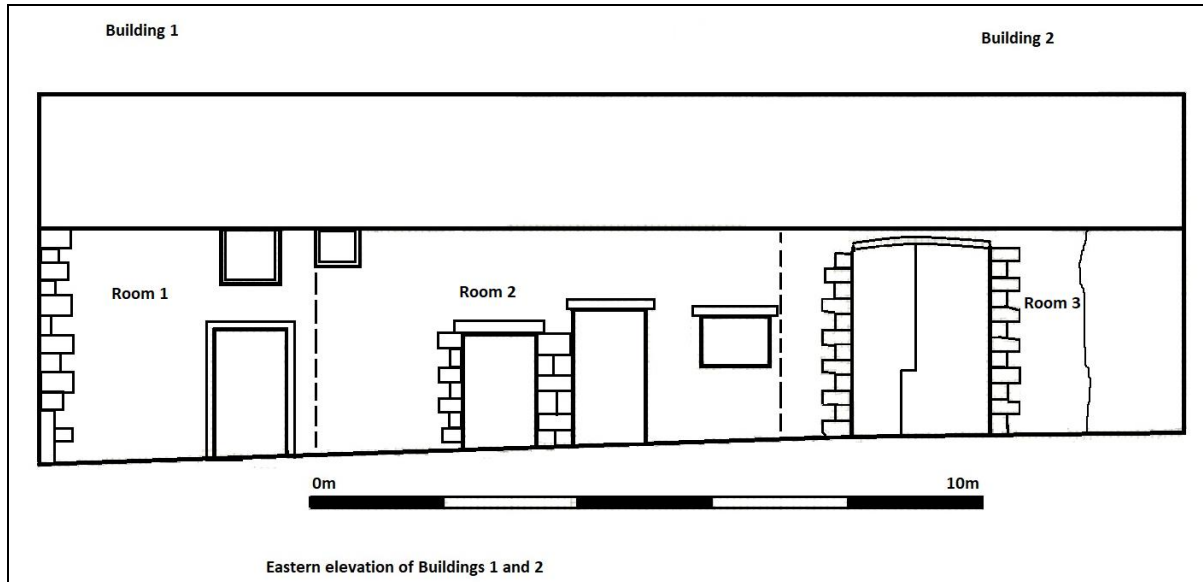


Figure 7. Eastern elevation of Buildings 1 and 2



Figure 8. Room 1, Building 1



Figure 9. Cement stalls in the byre

Room 1 measured 4.14m x 3.07m and stood to a height of 4.87m. The roof was formed from hand-made rafters and purlins with a slate covering, partly replaced by corrugated metal sheet (figure 8).

There existed a later ground floor rear window measuring 0.86m in height and 0.83m in width. This action probably occurred with the later conversion to a byre. Two cement constructed stalls measuring 1.45m in height and 2.15m in width were present on the southern flank of Room 1 (figure 9). A trough was present within each stall (figure 10). The floor was formed from concrete.



Figure 10. Trough in Room 1



Figure 11. Stone plinth on northern wall

Beneath the northern wall were three rounded boulders forming a plinth or pedestal to Room 2. This may represent an earlier phase of building similar to the base of a clay dabbins structure, albeit distant from the Solway Plain where this typology is common (figure 11).

Room 2 has probably been remodelled and overlaps Buildings 1 and 2. In its later use, it served as a byre measuring 7.11m x 4.24m and 4.32m in height. The elevation identified the following architectural elements (figure 12):

- A stone-filled doorway measuring 1.12m in width and 1.85m in height formed from red sandstone quoins.
- A brick-outlined doorway, measuring 1.12m in width and 2.16m in height.
- A window with a brick surround, measuring 0.78m in width and 0.66m in height.



Figure 12. Elevation to Room 2



Figure 13. Interior to Room 2 looking north

The northern end wall with Room 3 was made of brick and had encroached into Building 2. The roof was formed from hand-made rafters and purlins with a slate covering, partly replaced by corrugated metal sheet. There existed two trusses lacking king posts (figure 13).

A first floor window probably indicated a lost first floor. The room was white-washed with a cement render to the lower part of the wall fabric. The byre yielded two sets of cement-made stalls measuring 1.24m in height, 2.07m in width and a depth of 2.09m (figure 14). The floor was formed from concrete.



Figure 14. Southern end of Room 2, Building 1



Figure 15. Entry to the threshing barn, Building 2

5.3 Building 2: Threshing Barn

Building 2, a threshing barn was not immediately obvious as the central doorway had been partially infilled with brick (figure 15). The large central doorway measuring 2.83m in height and 2.14m in width and possessing a wooden lintel, yielded no jutting porch. Formed from ten dressed stone quoins, it was 2.40m south of Building 3 and it was a probable similar distance from Building 1, the partition now subsequently lost (figure 7). The eastern elevation measured at least 5.23m in length, most probably, approximately 7.63m in length. The roof was supported by a single truss.

Room 3 measuring 5.34m in length, 4.18m in width and 4.19m in height represented a later byre finished in white-wash. On the northern flank, two cement-built stalls had been inserted measuring 2.13m in width, 1.36m in height and 2.12m in depth (figure 16). The southern brick wall was plain with a door measuring 1.03m in width and 1.63m in height providing a backdraught for the former threshing barn. The floor was formed from concrete (figure 17).



Figure 16. Northern end of Room 3, Building 2



Figure 17. Southern end of Room 3, Building 2

5.4 Building 3: Cottage

Building 3 represented a two-unit cottage with outshot spread over two floors (Rooms 4-9). The roof was replaced with asbestos corrugated sheet. The elevation measured 6.87m in length (figure 18).

The red sandstone fabric was finished in roughcast with faux timber painted black cement relief.

The elevation identified the following architectural elements (figure 19):

- A porch with sides 0.11m in thickness surrounding a main door measuring 1.04m in width and 1.84m in height.
- A window measuring 0.90m in width and 0.77m in height.
- A window measuring 1.04m in width and 0.87m in height.

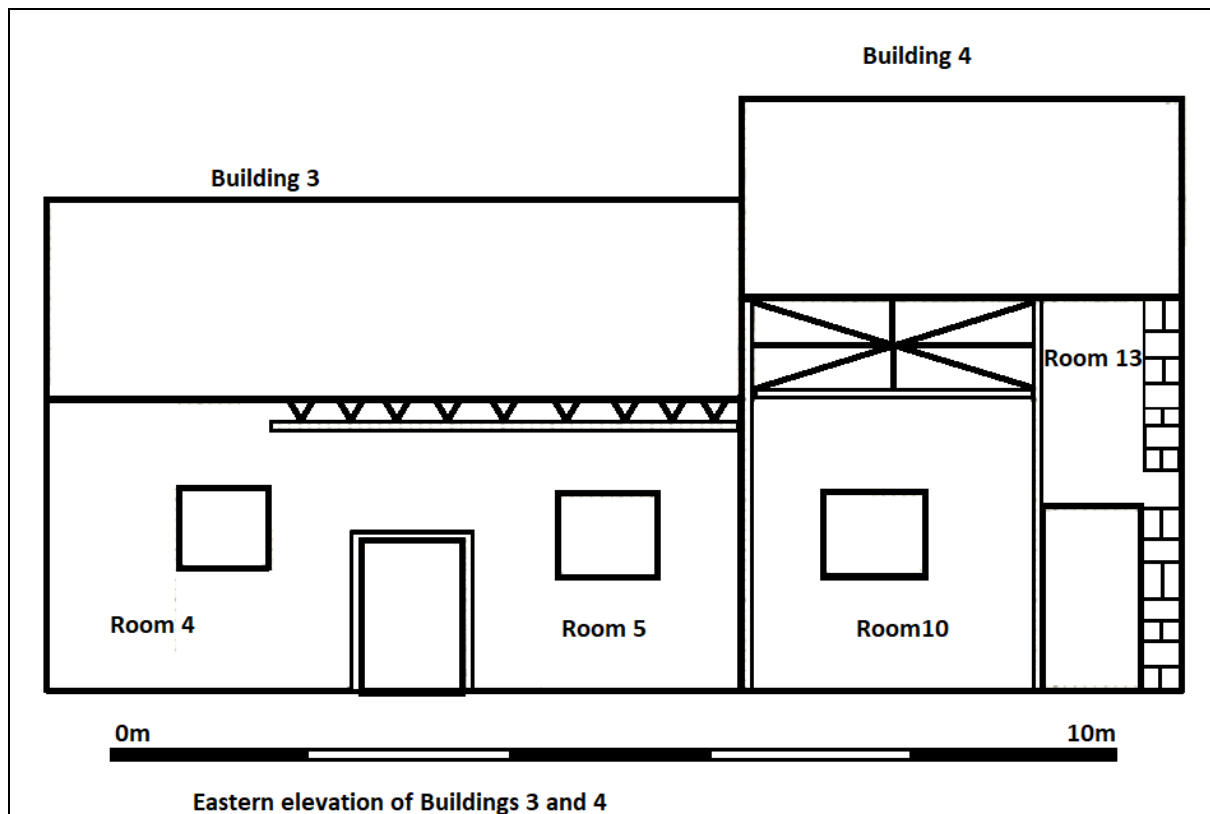


Figure 18. Eastern elevation of Buildings 3 and 4



Figure 19. Facade of Building 3

Room 4 measuring 3.78m in length, 2.47m in width and 2.17m in height represented a parlour (figure 20). To the left off a cross passage behind a stone partition wall, the room was entered by a doorway measuring 1.01m in width and 1.83m in height (figure 21). The room was finished in white lime plaster and possessed a flagstone floor with a wooden ceiling. Illuminated by a single eastern window, there were no other remnant architectural features.



Figure 20. Room 4, the parlour, Building 3



Figure 21. Ingress to the parlour

Room 5 measuring 4.11m in length, 3.68m in width and 2.24m in height represented a kitchen (figure 22). A range now removed would have filled a recess measuring 2.11m in width, 1.48m in height and 0.50m in depth and included a later bread oven. The room was finished in white lime plaster and possessed a flagstone floor with a wooden rafted ceiling. Illuminated by a single eastern window with a flanged rebate, there were no other remnant architectural features.



Figure 22. Room 5, the kitchen, Building 3

Room 6 measuring 2.14m in length, 2.02m in width and 1.91m in height represented a stairwell within a later outshut with a wall thickness of 0.50m that possessed a slate, cat-slide roof (figure 23). An extant spiral staircase possessed ten worn stone steps (figure 24) and was lit by a single window

measuring 0.58m in width and 0.89m in height in which two iron bars had formerly been held forming a grille.



Figure 23. Outshut to Building 3



Figure 24. Spiral staircase, Room 6, Building 4

Room 7 measuring 3.01m in length, 1.76m in width and 2.00m in height represented a pantry, partly constructed in brick within a later outshut that was lit by a rear window, lacking a grille and measuring 0.47m in width and 0.77m in height. The outshut also possessed a back door measuring 0.88m in width and 1.94m in height (figure 23) and a flagstone floor



Figure 25. Room 7, a pantry, Building 3



Figure 26. Room 8, a bedroom, Building 3

Room 8 was inaccessible and structurally dangerous. Formerly Room 8 had represented two separate bedrooms, seemingly lacking windows, although the corrugated roof was a relatively recent addition probably added following wall collapse (figure 26).

Room 9 was inaccessible and structurally dangerous. Formerly Room 9 had represented a single bedroom within the upper reaches of an outshut, seemingly lacking windows.

5.5 Building 4: House extension

Building 4 represented a two storey extension to the cottage spread over two floors (Rooms 10 and 13). The roof was replaced with asbestos cement corrugated sheet. The elevation measured 4.30m in length (figure 18) and was framed by fourteen stone quoins on its northern gable end.

The red sandstone fabric was partly finished in roughcast with faux timber painted black cement relief forming a “union jack” pattern.



Figure 27. Elevation of Building 4



Figure 28. Room 10, a store, Building 4

The elevation identified the following architectural elements (figure 27):

- A door measuring 0.89m in width and 1.84m in height with a sandstone lintel measuring 1.01m in length and 0.18m in thickness.

- A window measuring 0.96m in width and 0.89m in height.

Room 10 represented a store measuring 3.75m in length, 3.04m in width and 2.09m in height. It possessed cement rendered walls and a concrete floor (figure 28) and was surmounted by a hayloft above.

5.6 Building 5: Barn

Building 5 represented a two storey barn spread over two floors (Rooms 11, 12 and 13) formed from red sandstone rubble-stone. The roof was replaced with modern tiles and encompassed Building 6. The elevation measured 5.04m in length (figure 29).

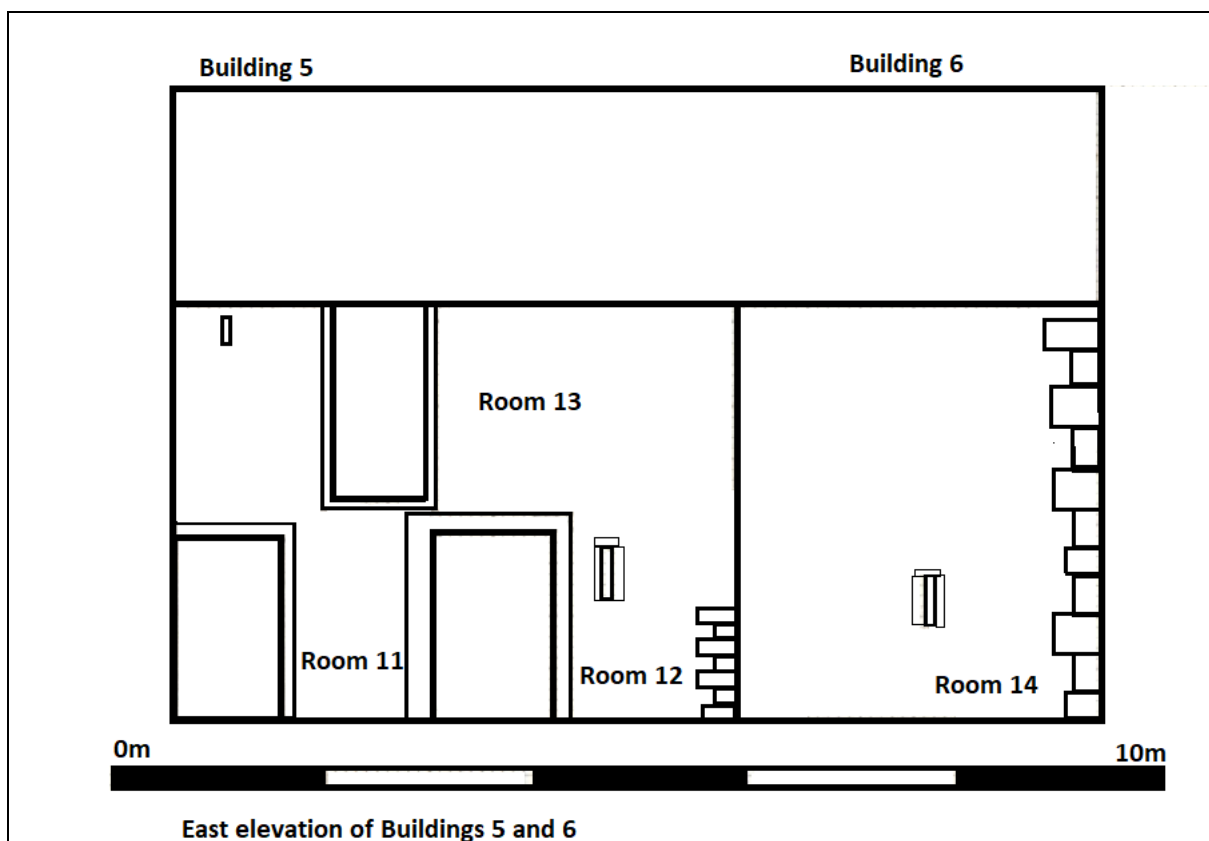


Figure 29. Eastern elevation of Buildings 5 and 6

The elevation identified the following architectural elements (figure 29):

- A door measuring 0.96m in width and 1.73m in height replete with a stone lintel measuring 1.20m in length and 0.15m in thickness and door jambs measuring 1.73m in height and 0.18m in thickness.
- A hayloft door window measuring 0.83m in width and 1.75m in height.
- A door measuring 0.94m in width and 1.82m in height with door jambs measuring 0.24m in thickness.
- An air vent measuring 0.22m in width and 0.55m in height formed from red sandstone slabs.

Room 11 represented a store measuring 4.12m in length, 1.95m in width and 1.96m in height. It possessed white-washed walls and a concrete floor (figure 30) and was surmounted by a hayloft above.

Room 12 represented a store measuring 5.31m in length, 2.26m in width and 1.86m in height. It possessed white-washed walls and a concrete floor (figure 31) and was surmounted by a hayloft above. A door measuring 0.90m in width and 1.77m in height provided access into Room 14. Room 12 possessed a small outshut at the rear.



Figure 30. Room 11, a store, Building 5



Figure 31. Room 12, a store, Building 5

Room 13 represented a hayloft that was not accessible. It surmounted Rooms 10-12.

5.7 Building 6: Barn extension

Building 6 represented a two storey barn extension spread over two floors (Rooms 13 and 14) formed from red sandstone rubble-stone. The roof was replaced with modern tiles. The elevation measured 3.73m in length (figure 29) and was framed by eleven stone quoins measuring 0.60m x 0.32m bonded by a white chalky mortar on its northern gable end (figure 33).



Figure 32. Elevation of Building 6



Figure 33. Northern gable end of Building 6

The elevation identified the following architectural elements (figure 32):

- An air vent measuring 0.13m in width and 0.50m in height formed from red sandstone slabs.

Room 14 represented a stable, measuring 5.11m in length, 3.30m in width and 1.94m in height. It possessed white-washed walls, a brick floor and two sets of wooden stalls on a raised dias (figure 34). Room 14 was illuminated by a single window measuring 0.68m in width and 0.53m in height.



Figure 34. Room 14, a stable, Building 6



Figure 35. Stone outbuilding

5.8 Outbuilding

A rectangular plan stone hut measuring 3.83m in length, 2.97m in width and 1.82m in height possessed a slate roof and a slighted chimney with a fireplace. Illuminated by a small window measuring 0.58m x 0.58m there was no access to the interior of the building (figure 35).

5.9 Western elevations

The western elevation illustrated the full range of the six study buildings. Buildings 1 and 2 appeared to possess a uniform roof-line replaced with corrugated metal sheet (figure 36). A cement render had been applied to Buildings 1 to 3. It is possible that originally Buildings 1-3 were part of a longhouse tradition whereby human habitation occurred at one end with animals kept within the same range.



Figure 36. Western elevation Buildings 1 and 2



Figure 37. Western elevation Buildings 3 to 5

The western elevation depicted an outshut jutting out of Building 3. Inaccessible to the surveyor, and measuring around 2.50m x 3.00m and standing to a height of 1.80m, the outshut contained a window measuring 0.50m in width and 0.70m in height (figure 37).

The remaining western elevation had been left unrendered, the red sandstone exposed. A small brick annex was attached to Building 4.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Academic merit

A challenge to social historians, archaeologists and other researchers is to compile a record of those historic rural dwellings and customs that reflected past cultural practice and social conditions before their economic, agricultural and historical context is lost.

The function of external agricultural buildings has altered dramatically; no longer fit for purpose, as these farmhouses have increasingly since 1945 been transferred to people who have little economic or social connection to the land. Conservative use of space has developed into larger communal areas in keeping with leisure and socially mobile lifestyles. The study building in this instance will be demolished in favour of a modern dwelling.

Hollowdyke Farm was one of a suite of largely agricultural buildings, the probable home of tenant farmers who earned relatively modest incomes whose household extended to the immediate family with hired labour required at harvest time.

The earlier origin of the subject buildings is opaque, especially as there remains a paucity of documentary sources and some uncertainty as to the nomenclature of the property.

6.2 Discussion

The suite of buildings examined by the writer remains an enigmatic range of farm buildings. Access was heavily compromised by the dangerous condition of the buildings following forty years of neglect.

The farmstead layout appears to conform to a range of buildings attached in a line; cowhouse, barn and stable extending from the farmhouse. Single storey Buildings 1-3 probably form the earliest range, subsequently extended northwards with the addition of Buildings 4-6, that were of two stories. This configuration is described as a long-house derivative and equates with a range of farm buildings later than the farmhouse, a tall substantial range of barn and byre dominating a small, low-ridged house (Brunskill 2002, 99-100).

Projecting the origins of the long-house tradition into the medieval period is problematic due to a lack of stratigraphic security and the constant changes in taste and style during the longevity of the building. A boulder plinth, as in Building 1 implies that the farm buildings were short and in size appropriate to the few cattle, the small amount of grain and the single ox or horse synonymous with a Cumbrian small-holding.

Interestingly, the building range was set back from the main road, perhaps suggestive of a close at the front of the settlement when access to the road was unimportant.

The laithe-house plan was a later 18th century innovation and could be applied to this study range. In Cumbria, such a farmstead was associated with small farms up to thirty acres (12.15 hectares) consisting of a farmhouse, a barn with threshing floor and a stable with loft over that could accommodate perhaps two horses and around ten cattle. However, this form tended to have a uniform roof, two stories and was erected as a single act (Ibid, 100).

As the range appears to divide into two structural phases, Buildings 1-3 may belong to a long-house derivative style and Buildings 4-6 consistent with the laithe-house style of the 18th century.

Building 3 appears to represent a two-unit house with a parlour/bedroom to the left and kitchen to the right and stone spiral staircase in the outshut, presumably a later addition when a second floor was added and the loft space was formalised into bedrooms, rather than sleeping quarters entered by a ladder. The outshut also offered the opportunity for a pantry but accommodation remained basic.

Interestingly there was no surviving evidence for first floor windows although this may be attributable to wall collapse in the late 20th century.

Construction could date from the mid 17th century. The continuous-outshut house illustrates an unbroken roof (figure 23) and it is possible that this improvement occurred to the study building between 1730 and 1820 (Ibid 78-79).

Buildings 1 and 2 had been heavily modified. Building 2 was a small threshing barn and Building 1 once possessed first floor domestic accommodation, albeit no cooking or heating facilities. The threshing barn probably extended up to a blocked door (figure 7). The blocked door provided access into a secondary room. When the threshing barn was discontinued, a brick partition was constructed and the rooms were adopted as byres with a new door inserted.

Occupation appears to have been continuous, with a late 19th century improvement of the facade in cement render. Applied relief appears to imitate timber beams with a distinctive multiple V-shaped frieze. The decor (a panel with a “union jack” design) extended into a small extension adjacent to the cottage (Building 4) suggesting this building may have been acquired for domestic use before reverting to husbandry (figure 18). A crude porch was also added to Building 3.

A small stone hut (figure 35) had no obvious function other than accommodation for workmen.

7 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Nigel Kay, the owner for his assistance in allowing me access to the study buildings. His personal anecdotes were useful in setting the context of the project especially regarding the history of the range of buildings. Glen Beattie commissioned the project on behalf of the owner. Jeremy Parsons of Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) assisted the author regarding the scope of the survey as it did not conform to the protocols of an English Heritage Building Survey.

I would also like to thank the staff of Carlisle Library with my research into the local history of the area and the staff of Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle with the map regression and other documentary research.

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