

LDN Architects

Mains of Crommey - Planning Submission

March 2022

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Revisions:	Issue	
	<i>Draft</i>	2022.02.
	<i>v.01</i>	2022.04.01

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1.0

Introduction

Mains of Crommey is located on an unclassified road just north of Old Crombie, which is located between Huntly and Banff. Mains of Crommey was acquired by our client in January 2016 and prior to this there is no record of it being owned by the Innes family.

Crommey Castle was built by our client's ancestors in c.1542. In the 17 Century, Crommey Castle passed into Duff and Gordon ownership before returning, including Crommey Steading, to the Innes family in the 1930s. Crommey Castle is Category A listed and although Crommey Steading is unlisted, it is considered to be within the curtilage of a listed building. Mains of Crommey is not considered to form part of this curtilage due to historical ownership and for the reason that it is annexed from the site by the road.

The detailing of Crommey Steading is distinct from the Mains of Crommey, which has historically been subjected to numerous alterations much to the detriment of the character of the building.



LDN Architects was appointed, as Conservation Accredited Architects, in 2021 to assess the condition of Crommey Steading and the Mains of Crommey and also look at options for a Masterplan for the site to preserve it and safeguard it for future generations.

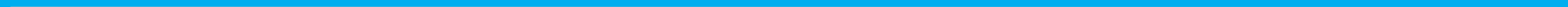
As part of this exercise, David Narro Associates, were also appointed to carry out a structural condition assessment.

The purpose of this initial planning application is to address a later addition to the Mains of Crommey (dating to 20th Century) due to concern about the poor condition of the building and the potential health and safety risk that it currently poses.



2.0

The Buildings



The mill building would appear to be one of the earliest structures on the site with the south and north wings added after its construction. There is a distinct risband joint where the south wing meets the mill. The later period of construction is also suggest by the awkward nature of the roof junctions and the close proximity of the pit for the wheel.

Mains of Crommey has been heavily altered over time - the mill building was historically converted to a grain store which involved alterations to the roof structure and the eastern walls are now of concrete blockwork. There are also concrete blockwork internal cross walls. Access to the mill building is not currently permitted due to the dangerous condition of the roof structure.

The north wing has an uncomfortable connection to the mill - the western gable overlaps the corner of the mill. Each of these alterations have had an impact on the original character, and special interest, of the mill building.

To conclude the u-shaped plan that incorporates the mill building, there is a final wing to the east a 20th Century Cottage which has been split into two units (one at ground floor and one at first floor). To the north there is a store.

The building is of rubble construction with concrete dressings around the openings. The building has been pointed with cement and is in a poor condition. It has been redundant for a significant period of time.

The ground floor apartment has been stripped out and relined within the last 50 years - none of the original features remain. The ground floor windows are timber casement and the doors are boarded (all of a modern joinery style).

The remainder of the ground floor is openly accessible with the intermediate floor / ties removed. Part of inner skin of the west elevation has also been replaced in concrete blockwork. The condition of this section is poor and the interventions have exacerbated the deterioration and affected the structural integrity.

The separating masonry wall between Store C and Store D has been removed and replaced with blockwork. The roof above this has failed - it has dropped and is racking to the west.



3.0

Fabric Condition

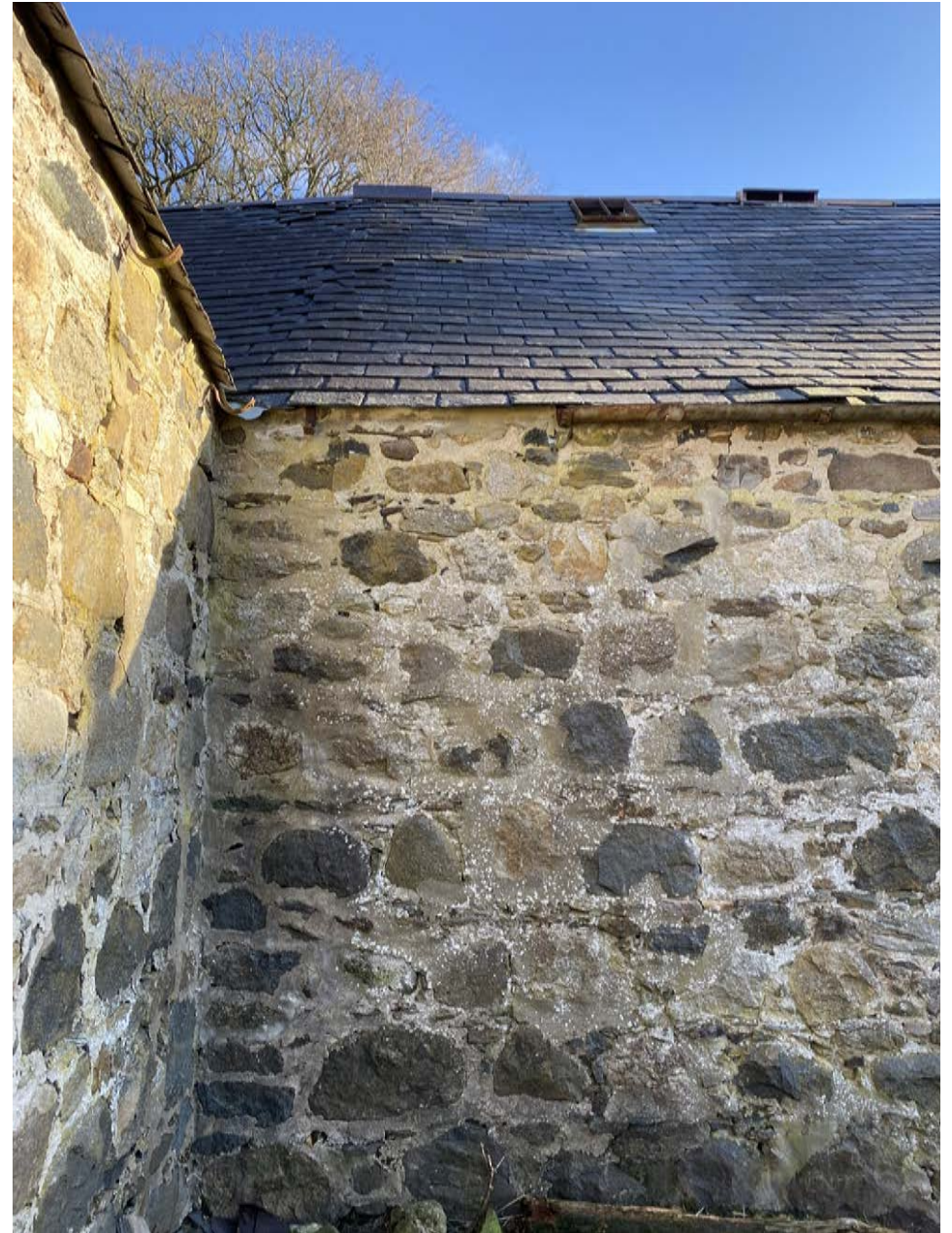
Roof:

The roof of the steading range, to be retained, is racking to the east with heavy undulation through the ridge. This has resulted in disruption to the slates (Welsh) and caused cast iron rooflights to fall into the building. This movement has also resulted in heavy water ingress which is exacerbating the decay (areas of rot with some ties fallen in). The roof requires stabilisation as soon as practicable to prevent collapse.

There is undulation across the ridge of the Cottage which is demonstrative of movement within this structure too. The ridge has failed in places. Where it remains the bed (to the mixed clay ridge) has failed. The movement and undulation has caused disruption to the slates (Welsh) allowing water ingress. The four pane cast iron rooflight has sunk in reflection of the movement. The two pane rooflight has a broken pane.

Chimneys:

The chimneys are unremarkable. There are hungry joints in the copes allowing water ingress. Cracking was recorded in the gable stack. Cement repairs have been carried out to both chimneys and the pots are capped.



Rainwater Goods:

There is a mix of sizes of cast iron rainwater goods which affects performance and most sections are in poor condition with areas of heavy vegetation. There are also a number of missing sections which is exacerbating the decay to the fabric.

Dormers:

These are of modern form with a single ply membrane to the the flat roof covering. The timber fascias and windows have generally deteriorated.

Skews:

The skews on the gable of the steading range have been replaced in cast concrete and this has heavily deteriorated.

The stone skews remain on the cottage gable but there is some deterioration to the cement mortar fillets.



Walls:

The walls are a mix of heavy 'stuck' cement pointing, numerous periods of cement repairs and some areas of original lime. In places the cement is heavily coated in biological growths which is an indication as to the level of moisture that is being retained within the walls.

There is extensive cracking running down through each of the elevations - an indication of movement and the level of deterioration (due to the high level of retained moisture within the fabric, a result of the level of deterioration).

Dressings:

All of the openings have cast concrete dressings with the exception of the large window adjacent to the east gable which has exposed concrete blockwork.

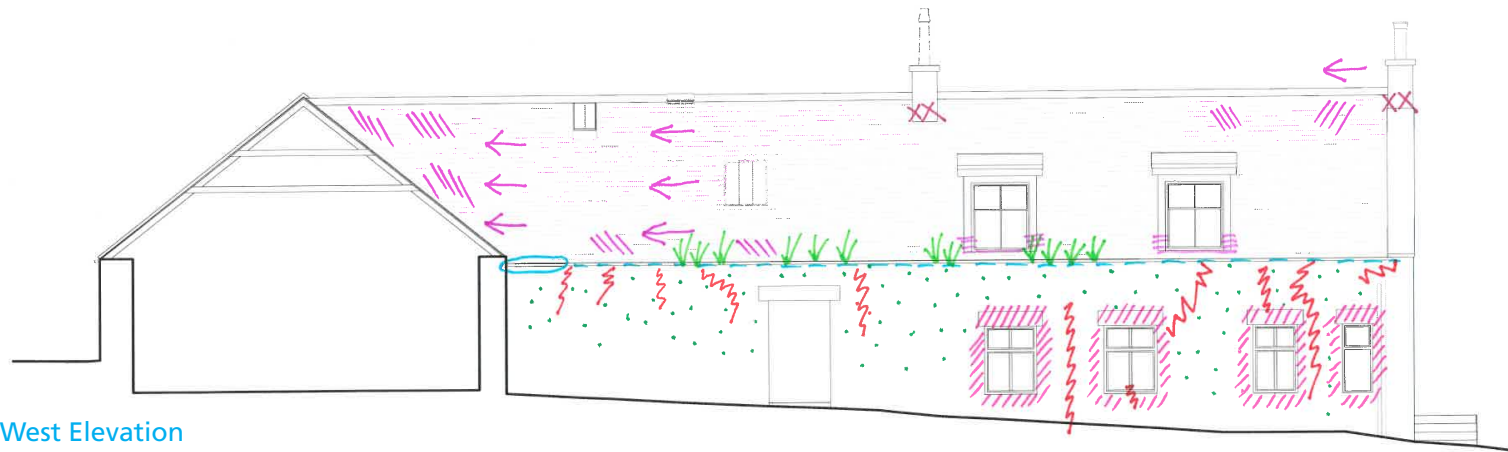
External Joinery:

Other than the dormer windows, all of the external joinery is modern and in varying levels of deteriorated condition.





East Elevation



West Elevation



South Elevation

KEY

-  Movement
-  Cracking
-  Vegetation
-  Cast concrete copes
-  Areas of failure
-  Biological growths
-  Cast concrete dressings
-  Areas of roof failure
-  Undulation - failure of roof structure
-  Missing RWGs
-  General failure to RWGs
-  Decay to timber dormers

fabric drawings

4.0

Structural Assessment


The structural assessment shown below has been provided by David Narro Associates. The key points of note in regard to the 20th Century Cottage are -

- North corner - *Detachment at corner of masonry wall. Masonry around corner could be strapped or rebuilding of corner to be considered*
- West elevation - *Wall bulges inwards and outwards along full length - possible lack of tying from first floor and roof structure - rotten timber ends likely cause. Reinstatement of tying required and possible rebuilding of external wall. May require large sections of duntaking to enable the remedial works to be carried out*
- South gable, adjacent to the unclassified road - *Wall appears to lean outwards at the head and there is widespread cracking to the masonry and chimney stack.*
- Roof replacement to be considered



Structural Inspection Notes - Noted as (A) on plan.

- A - Washout of mortar to wall, lack of guttering to roof likely cause. Overhaul of rainwater goods to be carried out to ensure walls do not become saturated.
- B - Gable heavily pointed in cement, small voids noted to high level. Masonry repairs and picking & pointing in time required.
- C - Outward lean of gable noted, causing some vertical cracking to each side wall. Tying of gable wall back into roof structure and intermediate floors would suitably restrain gable.
- D - Very damp/ soft ground at base of masonry wall. Wall Overhaul of rainwater goods to be carried out to alleviate this issue and removal of ground away from masonry walls will improve this situation. New drainage system to new rainwater downpipes.
- E - Widespread cracking to wall. Masonry repairs and picking & pointing in time required. Area appears quite serious so caution to be exercised when working in this area.
- F - Pointing Roof ridge and slopes undulates along full length of steading range. Sagging in between trusses, generally caused by defective rooflights and prolonged water ingress. Roof replacement required to steading range.
- G - Roof in very poor condition in this area. Roof replacement to be considered.
- H - Lintel Gable wall in very poor condition with widespread cracking and an outward lean evident. Potential duntaking and rebuilding of this gable required.
- I - Detachment at corner of masonry wall. Masonry around corner could be strapped or rebuilding of corner to be considered.
- J - Roof in very poor condition around valley and over storage area. Roof replacement to be considered.
- K - General comment to entire farmhouse - Widespread cement repairs to masonry walls. Masonry repairs and picking & pointing in time required.
- L - Wall bulges inwards and outwards along full length - possible lack of tying from first floor and roof structure - rotten timber ends likely cause. Reinstatement of tying required and possible rebuilding of external wall. May require large sections of duntaking to enable the remedial works to be carried out.
- M - Wall bulges inwards and outwards along full length - possible lack of tying from cross wall which have Ribband joints defective/ sagging roof structure. Reinstatement of tying required and possible rebuilding of external wall. May require large sections of duntaking to enable the remedial works to be carried out.
- N - Wall appears to lean outwards at the head and there is widespread cracking to the masonry and chimney stack. Gable will require to be tied back into main structure with steel straps. Investigations into the ground conditions and foundation of the building will be required also. Depending on the findings, underpinning may be required.
- O - Gutters and downpipes discharge onto ground. This may be affecting the masonry walls and foundation with the softening of the subsoil. Full overhaul of rainwater goods required with new drainage system to convey the flows away from the building.
- P - Steading range general in fair to poor condition. Cross walls appear to have Ribband joints with some lack of tying to external side walls. Downstand beams supports first floor which is in a fair condition with minimal bounce. Some loose masonry and loss of mortar pointing. General overhaul of masonry required and tying of walls together with steel straps. Some cracks stitching required to south gable where vertical cracks are present.

 David Narro Associates	
Civil & Structural Engineers	
Job Title: Crommey Castle steadings	
Job Number: 21.0062	
Title: North Steading Inspection Notes	
Initials: DT	Date 20/01/22

5.0

A proposal



The fabric and structural assessments were carried out in May 2021. The recent storms has seen the condition of the Mains of Crommey deteriorate further. The racking through the roof to the east has worsened with the the sliding timber door at one of the cross walls now distinctively adrift. The gable of the roofless concrete shed to the North has also collapsed. The vertical cracking down through the walls of the Cottage has also increased. There are areas in and around the building that are no longer considered safe due to the risk of dislodging material and / or potential for areas of collapse within the site and adjacent to the unclassified road.

Taking the above into account, alongside the value of the 20th Century Cottage which is considered low, in relation to the more significant areas of the site such as the mill building, it is proposed that this wing is carefully dismantled with the east end of the southern range stabilised.

Whilst this will result in the loss of part of the Mains of Crommey, it is critical in regard to the economic viability of preserving the more significant areas of the site. All traditional material - slate and stone - that is found to be in a salvageable condition will be retained to carry out repairs on the remainder of the site.

Although the building is not listed, if it was to be assessed in accordance with Historic Environment Scotland's guidance, 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment Demolition of Listed Buildings', the following points would be noted.

1. *Is the building no longer of special interest ?*

The 20th Century Cottage is considered to be low value compared to the east side of the site, the mill building. It has been heavily altered since its construction and there are limited areas of original fabric. As noted under section 4.0, if the building was to be repaired then it would result in extensive duntaking and rebuilding which would affect the authenticity of the fabric.

2. *Is the building incapable of meaningful repair ?*

Generally with traditional buildings, there are always options to repair however these can have varying levels of complexity and intervention, all of which can impact on the value. In order to repair the Cottage there would need to be extensive interventions and this would have an impact on the site as per the following point.

3. *Is the demolition of the building essential to delivering significant benefits to the economic growth or the wider community ?*

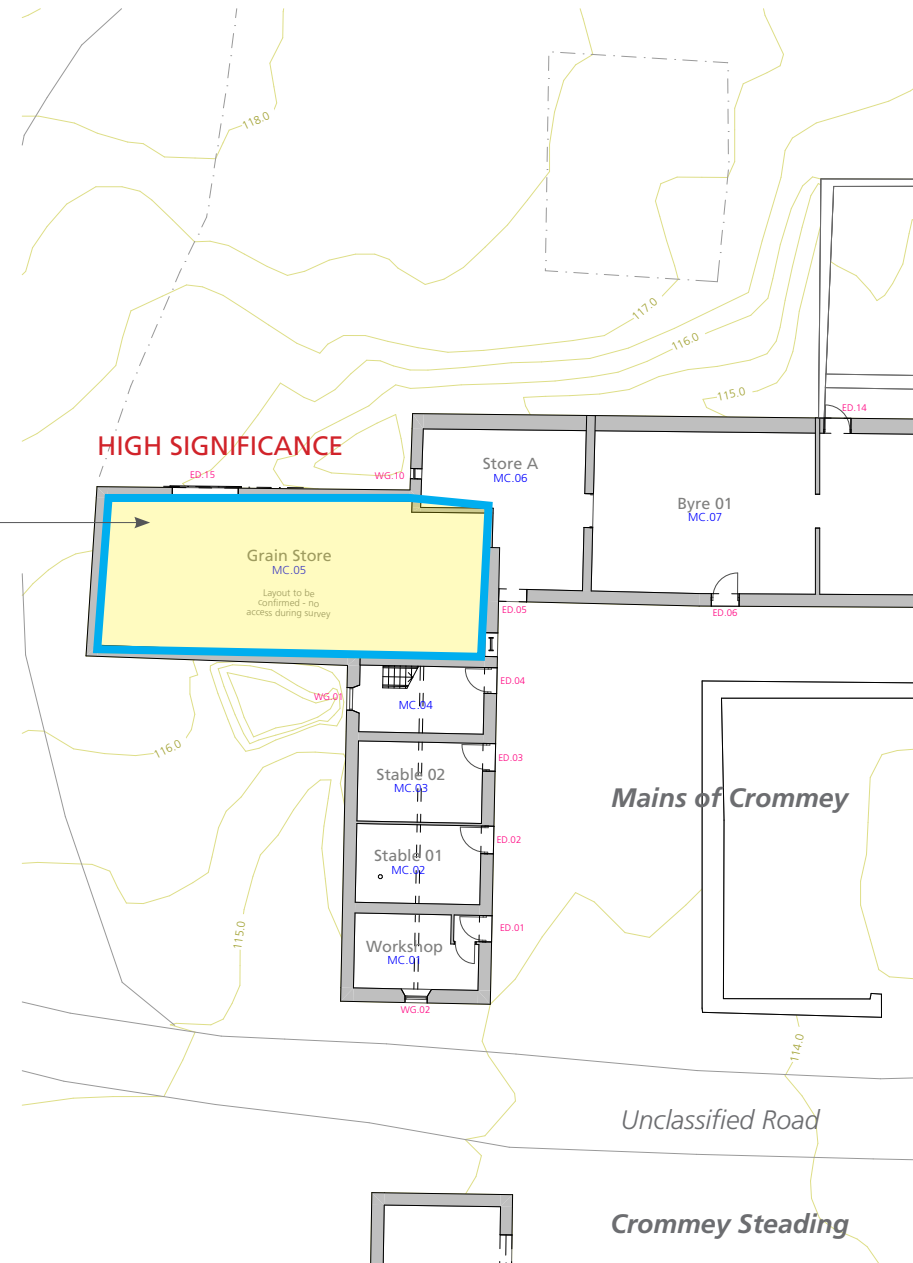
Whilst this point is not specifically associated to a project of this nature, the benefit to the community would be the preservation of a historical site that has been neglected for a prolonged period of time and therefore safeguarding it for future generations.

It regard to an economic consideration to preserve Mains of Crommey to its full extent, taking account of the current condition, would require significant investment and whilst this does not form justification for the dismantling of the building it is very unlikely to viable thereby creating a conservation deficit.

Although the dismantling of the 20th Century Cottage will result in loss of fabric, to repair it would see the same occur but at the risk of the preservation of the remainder of the site, which is consider to be of a much higher historical value. To remove it, would allow opportunity to be brought to the areas of special interest and this balance would bring benefit to the overall site.

During this phase of works it is also proposed that the inappropriate interventions to the Mill Building - blockwork walls, grain machinery and roof penetration - are carefully removed to enable safe access to carry out an inspection of the historical fabric.

Grain store interventions - blockwork walls, redundant machinery and roof penetration to be carefully removed to enable safe access to inspect the condition of the traditional building fabric / structure



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Job Title:
Mains of Crommey

Drawing Title:
EXISTING
Ground Floor Plan

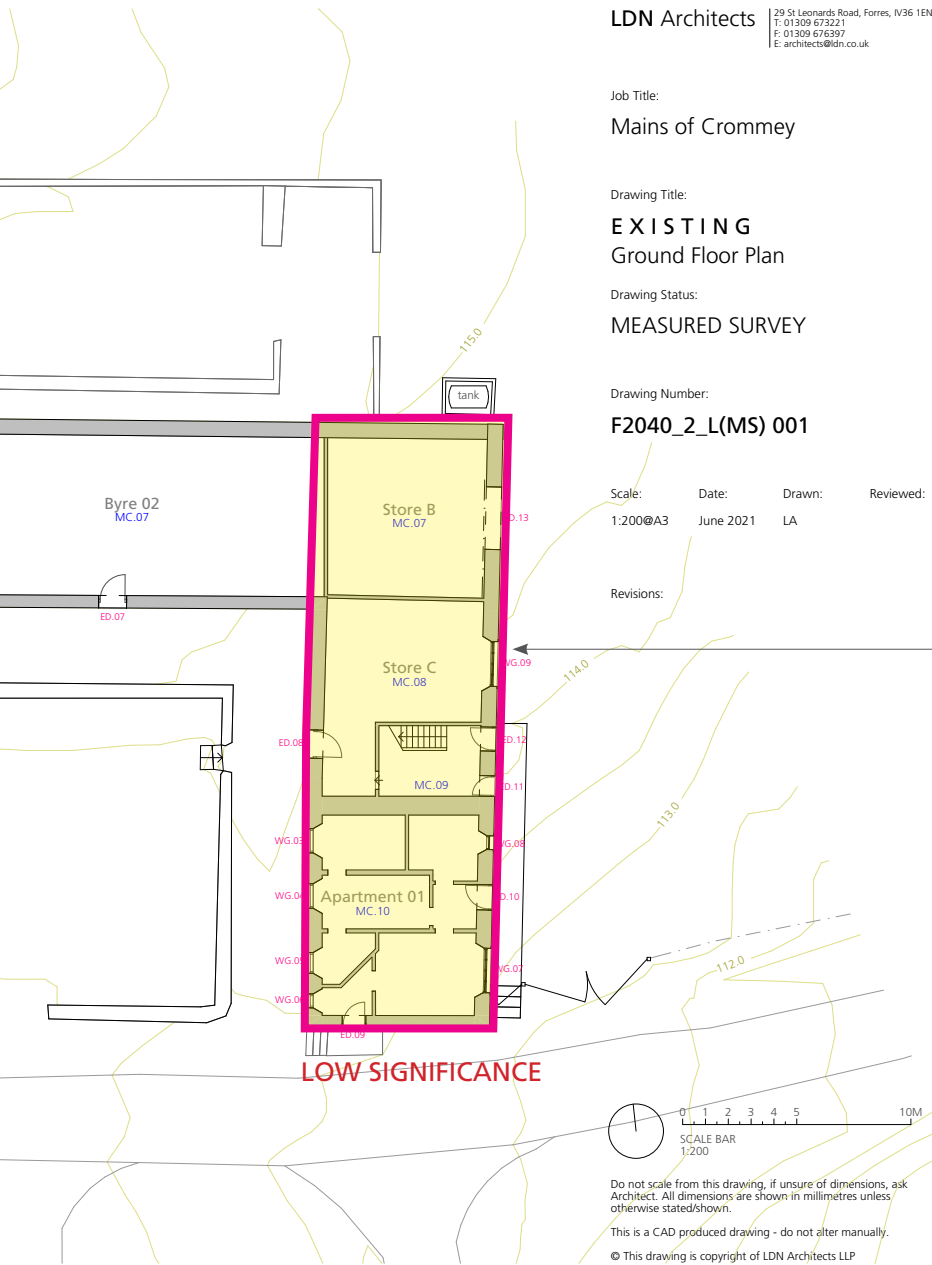
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Drawing Number:
F2040_2_L(MS) 001

Scale: Date: Drawn: Reviewed:
1:200@A3 June 2021 LA

Revisions:

← Extent of proposed demolition



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6.0

Summary



Mains of Crommey is vastly underused due to its current condition. With no use, it has, and will continue, to deteriorate. The aims of the masterplan at Mains of Crommey and Crommey and Steading are as follows -

- to rejuvenate what is currently a delapidated site with areas that poses a risk to health and safety
- to conserve, and enhance, the traditional fabric as far as is reasonably practicable
- convert the buildings through sensitive adaptation to safeguard the historical site for future generations

In order to achieve this, the significance of the site needs to be taken into consideration. As previously noted, due to the scale of the site it would not be economically viable to preserve each of the buildings due to their current state. A recent planning application was approved for the conversion of Mains of Crommey but it was likely not realised due to the cost involved. It therefore has continued to deteriorate.

Whilst the careful dismantling of the 20th Century Cottage will see the loss of historical fabric, it is deemed to be of such a low value that if it facilitates the restoration of the remainder of the buildings then it will bring benefit to the historical site.



7.0 Appendices

Job Title:
Mains of Crommey

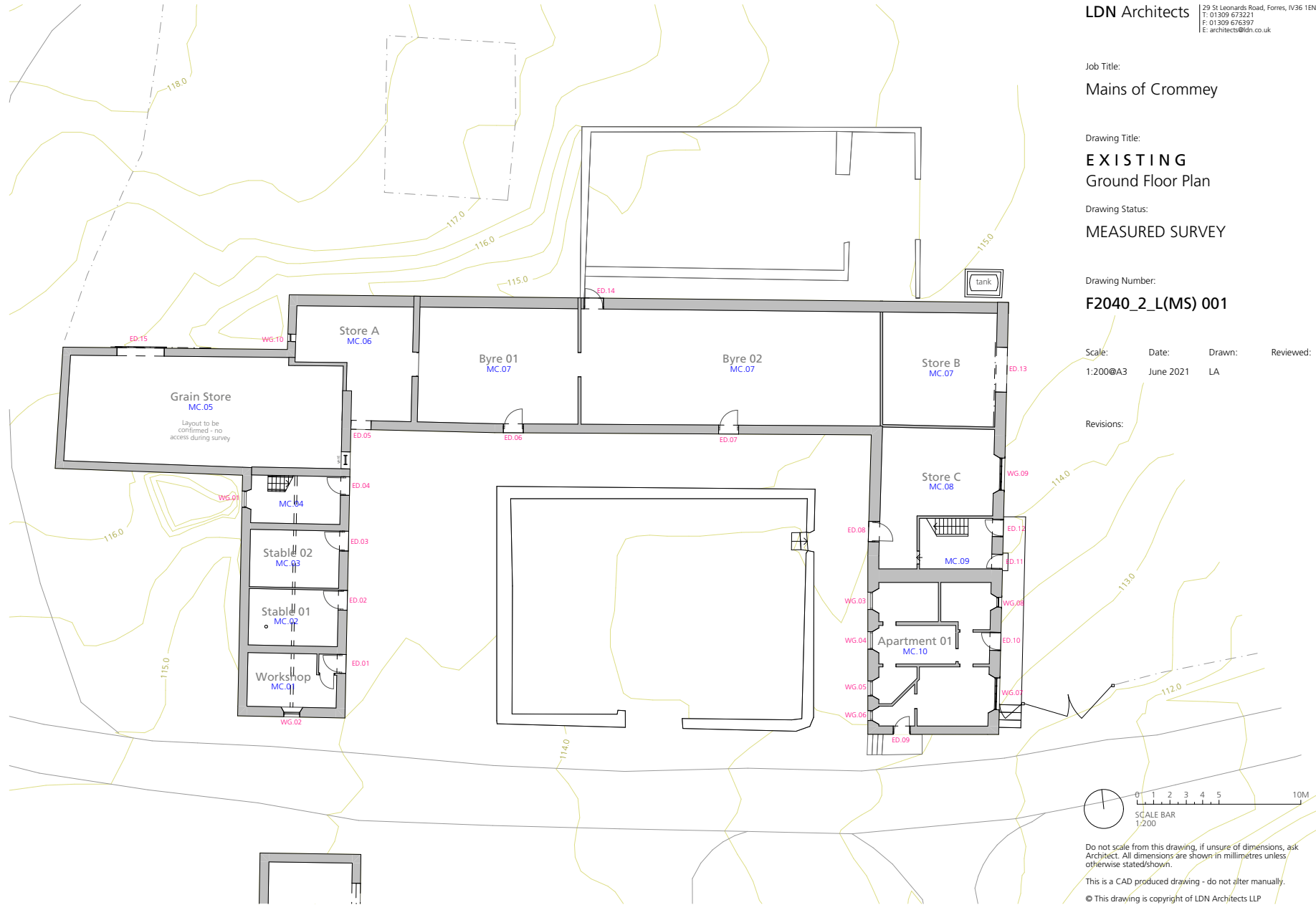
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Revisions:



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Mains of Crommey

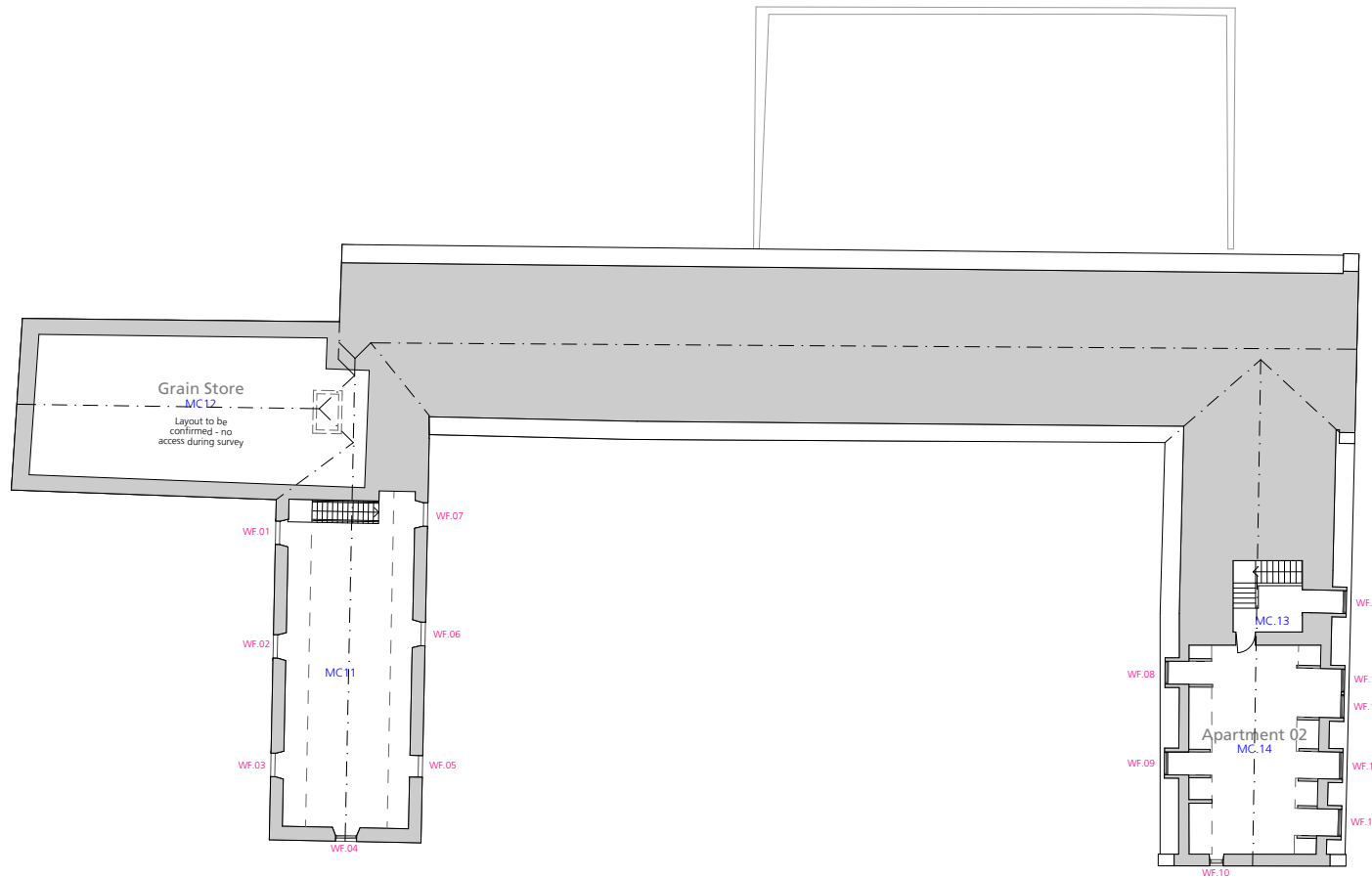
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Revisions:



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Job Title:
Mains of Crommey

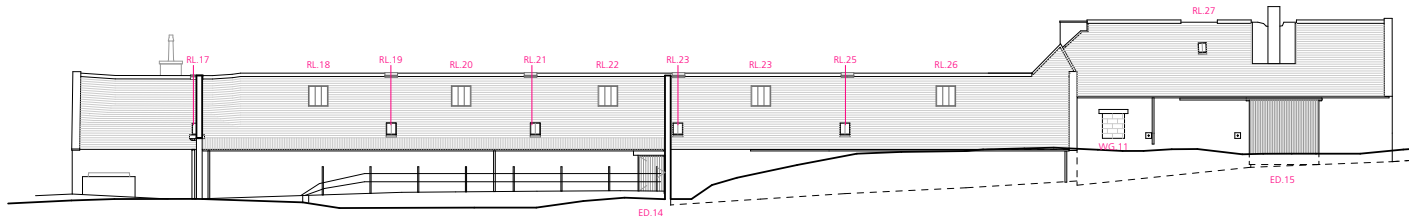
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EXISTING Elevations

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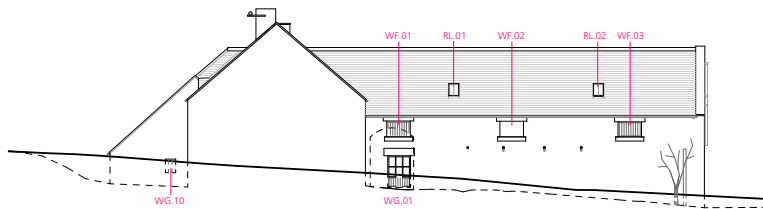
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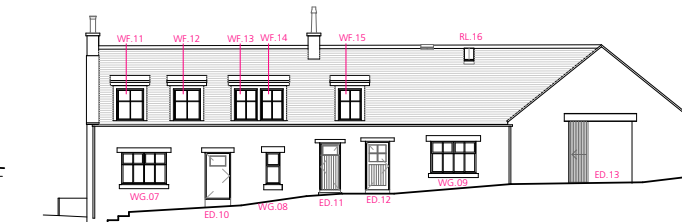
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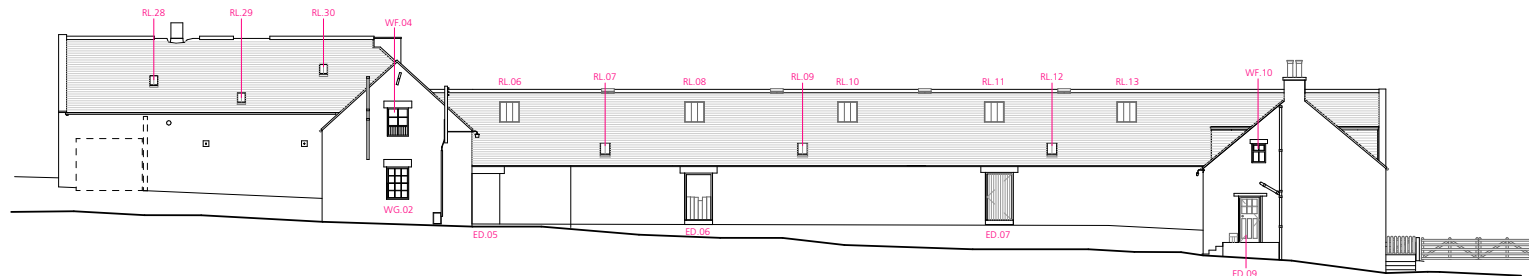
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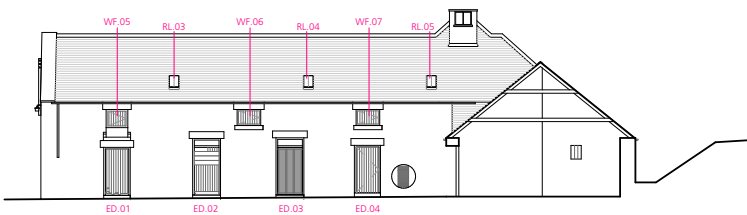
West



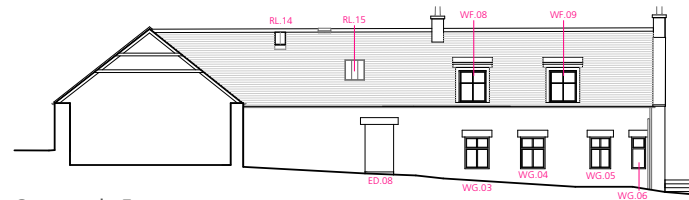
East



South



Courtyard - West



Courtyard - East

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