

SINDERHOPE SHIELD

ALLENDALE

AN HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT

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North-west view

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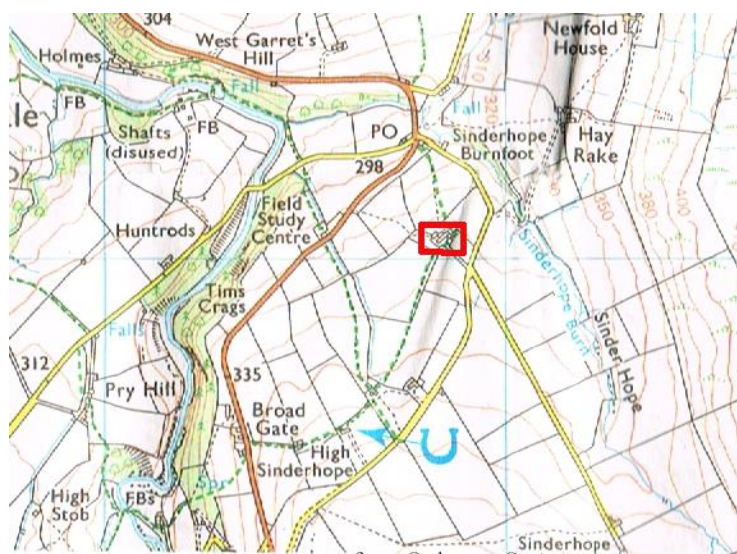
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Sinderhope Shield

The hamlet of Sinderhope is situated on the east side of the valley of the East Allen, 4 km to the south of Allendale Town. The farm of Sinderhope Shield (Low Sinderhope on some older maps) stands at a little over 330 m O.D., on the spur of land between the main valley and its tributary the Sinderhope Burn (NY 848517).



Location Map

from Ordnance Survey
1:25000 sheet OL 43
OS map licence 100045703

The principal buildings of the farm form a linear range facing south-east (hereafter referred to as south) and include work of a number of different periods. The farmhouse in the centre of the range is perhaps of late 18th century date (although much modernized) but the west part of the range consists of two older buildings, an almost square bastle and, linking it to the farmhouse, a later building here termed the bastle-derivative house (NGR NY 8484 5205); these two structures are now a Grade II listed building. Access to both structures at first floor level is from a stone platform of rough quadrant plan (now rather overgrown and ruinous). Both these structures are in use as farm outbuildings. East of the farmhouse is a modern house here termed 'The Annex', replacing an earlier farm building on the same footprint, with to the east of it, and projecting to the south, what is here termed the Eastern Barn. The other building included in this survey is the Northern Barn, a short distance to the north of the central part of the main range.

The Bastle

Exterior

The original bastle, which forms the west end of the range, measures c.7.0 by 6.7 m externally, with end walls measuring 1.4 m and side walls a little over 1.0 m in thickness at ground floor level. It may have originally been a two-storeyed structure but has been altered in the 18th or 19th century when the present second floor was created (and the upper c 1.2 m of the side walls either raised or

rebuilt, with the south wall being rebuilt above first-floor level). It is built of coursed roughly shaped stone, with massive alternating quoins, and some big blocks in the lower courses. The western part of the front elevation has a stone platform, curved to the south-west and c 2 m high, built up against it, which formerly had steps up to it, and gave access to the first floor doors of both the bastle and the bastle-derivate house to the east; there was formerly a wall dividing the platform into two parts. A ground floor window is now virtually concealed by the platform; c 0.50 m wide, this is probably an enlargement of a ground-floor loop, although clearly earlier than the platform. At first floor level the bastle has a boarded door in a recent opening with a stone lintel – replacing a door that collapsed perhaps in the mid-20th century - and to the west quite a large window with a slightly- splayed brown sandstone lintel (like those of the first-floor windows in the adjacent bastle-derivate house) and there is another



The range from the south, the Bastle on the far l., the Bastle-derivate House in the centre and the Farmhouse with its modern porch to the r,

similar lintel above and slightly to the east of the first-floor doorway. Above the first-floor window on the second floor is a smaller shortened sash window (3 panes above 6) with its head at eaves level. On the east the straight joint between the bastle and the later building steps westwards by c 0.40m, c 1.2 m below the eaves.

The west end of the bastle has massive quoins up to c 1.2 m below the present eaves, but no real sign of the original gable line. The only opening is a central slit vent, with above and slightly to the north of it, c 2 m above the ground, a roughly square opening that might just be a missing stone but has more the look of a quenching hole¹ although there is no evidence of any doorway here.

At the foot of the north wall of the bastle – where the ground falls to a slightly lower level – there is a course of boulders. Some of the quoins are massive; the fourth quoin from the base at the north-east corner has a sinking a little like a drilled ‘cup’. Around c 1.5 m from the north-west corner and 2 m above the boulder plinth is a stone with an opening c 100 mm square, perhaps a drain, cut into it.

As on the south, the straight joint between the bastle and the adjacent bastle-derivative house steps west by c 0.40 m at the earlier eaves level. East-of-centre is a doorway which is clearly a late insertion in the wall, and at first-floor level a small window with a timber lintel, but no cut dressings.

Interior

The basement of the bastle was originally only entered by a doorway in the centre of the east wall, now within the basement of the adjacent bastle-derivative house. This doorway has a chamfered surround with a shallow triangular head and massive blocks in the jambs, rebated internally for a door. The drawbar tunnel and its socket have been infilled; internally the opening has a series of decayed timber lintels.

¹ An opening sometimes found over bastle doors, through which water could be poured in the event of attackers kindling a fire against the woodwork of the door.

The upper and lower doorways of the Bastle-derivative House; notice slots of railings in the east jamb of the upper doorway, with remains of external platform and stair in the foreground.



The bastle basement is spanned by three north-south beams, one against the east wall, one central and one set c 0.50 m from the west wall. The window in the south wall is placed immediately west of the central beam, and has an internal opening about 0.60 m wide under timber lintels; the eastern jamb is splayed, suggesting that it might survive from an earlier loop. There are three stalls set against both east and west walls, on either side of a central concrete drain, and a raised area at the south-east corner.

The first floor of the bastle is gained by the doorway from the raised platform, which has a timber internal lintel; the walls are largely plastered and that on the south has clearly been rebuilt at some time, little more than half the thickness of the original, the stub of which remains on the east of the door adjacent to a

blocked doorway through the east wall into the bastle-derivative house. There is a large fireplace in the centre of the west wall which has a square head and a chamfered surround and is of earlier 18th century character. The ceiling beams are set north-south and have narrow chamfers, carrying boards of no great width.

A steep stair ascends against the east wall to the second floor which has plastered walls; an old fireplace on the west again has a square head and a chamfered surround. The roof is modern, with a single king-post truss.

The Bastle Derivative House

Exterior

This addition to the original bastle is c.10 m long by 6.5 m wide externally, and is built of thinner courses of flaggy stones, with fairly small quoins at the east end. Its walls are 0.75-0.8 m thick at basement level, and 0.6 m above. The entrance platform of the bastle overlaps the added house and provides access to the original first-floor door at the west end of the south wall, which has a square head and a chamfered surround of big roughly-alternating blocks; one near the top of the east jamb has the letters 'AI' incised, and two lower down have sockets for former railings on the east side of the entrance platform; directly above the lintel is a slightly narrower overlight, again with a chamfered surround.

Adjacent to the east side of the platform is the ground-floor doorway which has a monolithic semicircular arch (now cracked) and alternating blocks for its jambs; to the east are two slit vents, with a larger window between them.

The first floor has two larger windows, which have lost all their carpentry, without any cut dressings to their jambs; their sills are flagstone slabs and their lintels slightly splayed slabs of pink-brown sandstone. Built on to the east is the Farmhouse. The east gable end wall of the bastle-derivative house stands considerably taller than the present roof, suggesting that both the eaves and ridge of the present roof have been lowered.

On the north there is a second semicircular-headed doorway opposite that on the south, and very similar to it, except that its head remains unbroken, although the lowermost jamb stone on the west seems to have been removed and replaced by an upright timber. Further east is a blocked slit vent; the eastern part of the wall

is covered by a modern single-storeyed addition to the Farmhouse. At first-floor level towards the west end of the wall is a mullioned window, formerly of two lights but which has now lost its mullion. Another window directly above has no cut dressings, and there is a possible infilled opening further east. The eastern part of the wall at second floor level has two openings exposing the ends of the beams that carried the upper-cruck trusses, and lower down is a line of cut-off corrugated iron sheeting indicating the roof-line of a removed outbuilding.



The Bastle-derivative House, first floor looking east

Interior

Neither of the two opposed doorways of the bastle-derivative house has, despite their archaic appearance, any provision for draw bars. The two slit vents in the south wall now form recesses internally, as does one towards the east end of the north wall. At the east end are two big rough corbels supporting the first floor hearth, with a straight joint (not immediately easy to explain) below the outer edge of each. The floor above is of stone slabs carried on transverse beams which have rough small chamfers; further west the slabs are replaced by more

recent boarding. Latterly the basement has been used as a stable, and there is a concrete floor with raised platforms, and divisions forming two stalls on each side and three at the east end. West of the cross passage between the two opposed doorways are two further stalls, one on either side of the doorway into the bastle house.

At first floor level there is a blocked door with a timber lintel at the south end of the west wall, with evidence of a partition (presumably the north side of an entrance lobby) immediately beyond. The window at the west end of the north wall has a broad internal splay, and there is evidence of another partition below the first ceiling beam to the east of it. The windows in the south wall have timber internal lintels which have narrow stopped chamfers. At the east end is



an interesting original fireplace (above) with its lintel set forward on corbels, its surround moulded on both extrados and intrados, and its recess now infilled with brick. The ceiling has been carried on transverse beams, chamfered on their lower angles; some of the very broad old floor boards they carried survive

in places. Two beams survive at the east end, then two have fallen, the remaining six still being in position.

Access to the second floor was by an old stair, now in a state of collapse, rising north against the west wall; it has heavy stringers and treads that each have single boards as risers and treads. At second floor level there is a blocked window on the north, directly above that at first-floor level, and east of that the stubs of two sawn-off upper cruck trusses; just after the second is a possible blocked window. The front wall has been rebuilt at this level and the present roof structure, with king-post trusses, is quite modern.



The Bastle-Derivative House; interior of north wall with collapsing second-floor beams, stubs of two upper cruck trusses and recent roof

The Farmhouse

Exterior

This has been built onto the east end of the Bastle-Derivative House, and is of two quite wide bays and three storeys, and is built of coursed roughly-squared stone, heavily mortared, with quite substantial alternating quoins and a Welsh

slate roof. Two single-storey extensions – to the west a porch and to the east a brick outbuilding – partly cover the south elevation at ground floor level; there is a large modern window under a concrete lintel between them. The windows on the upper floors are modern casements in openings with flagstone lintels and sills; there is a stone stack capping the east gable end.

The rear (north) elevation of the house is partly concealed by a projecting two-storeyed wing, its eaves c 1.5 m lower than those of the main part. On the east of it are first and second floor windows, above a modern single-storeyed extension that overlaps with the bastle-derivate house to the west. The wing has a single window on the north, and a vertical pair on the east, to the north is a third on the ground floor which is clearly set in what was originally a doorway. All the windows are modern casements.

The eastern gable of the farmhouse stands above the roof of the adjacent outbuilding (now the Annex), and displays the only external evidence of any antiquity of this structure – below the northern slope of the gable some large triangular blocks are clearly the coping of a previous gable, rising from an eaves line c 0.40 m lower than at present.

Interior

The Farmhouse is entered through a modern porch, via a part-glazed door. The kitchen has an underdrawn ceiling, and the main living room to the east an old fireplace with a plain stone surround, perhaps of mid-19th century date, flanked by old cupboards, the northern with H-hinges. The ceiling is of roughly-shaped upright-section beams set north-south. An opening through the 0.60 m thick rear wall leads into the rear wing which has a single room with an underdrawn ceiling and to its south a stair rising west. On the first floor there is a lobby and bathroom at the north-west corner, a south-western bedroom with old upright-section ceiling joists and a stair to attic, and a larger eastern bedroom which has a chimney breast on the east. The attic has a three-bay roof with boxed-in collar-beam trusses (perhaps quite recent) ; at this level the smaller western bedroom has a cupboard at the south end of its west wall which might possibly have been a doorway through into the adjacent bastle-derivative house and the larger eastern room has had its chimney breast removed.

The Annex

This is a recent rebuilding of a section of farm building running between the Farmhouse and the Eastern Barn, and is now a house. Its southern wall seems to be a complete rebuild but on the north older fabric has been retained, with a central ground floor window set in the blocking of an earlier opening, its sill and west jamb remaining visible. There are old quoins at the north-east corner, the alternate ones removed.

The Eastern Barn

This is set north-south, forming an L-plan with the main range. In the west wall of the projecting southern part of this barn are two windows holding 20th-century metal-framed casements, and a pitching door at the north end. The south end has a window which looks like an insertion and a doorway with a sliding metal door, with two slit vents above; to the east is an addition in blockwork, within which the east wall of the barn has, from south to north, a metal-framed casement window, a boarded door, and two more similar windows. The north end has two windows and two slit vents higher up.

Internally the lower floor of the barn has concrete floors and a range of six stalls with passage behind against the west wall, all walls being rendered. The upper floor is carried on upright-section sawn softwood joists; access is by ladder. The roof, hipped at each end, has principal rafter trusses with collars, two levels of purlins and a double ridge.

The Northern Barn

This is built of coursed roughly-squared stone, with quite substantial alternating quoins, and a Welsh slate roof. In the south wall at the west end is a large opening with sliding door, then near the centre an old boarded door with a flagstone lintel and further east a vertical pair of slit vents. The east end of the barn has a window set centrally, quite high in the wall; to the north is the end of the large modern shed that covers the north elevation of the barn, with a sliding metal door. The low-pitched gable has a coping that seems to be of concrete?

On the north of the barn, inside the later shed, from east to west there are a vertical pair of slit vents, a single vent and then a window formed in the upper half of a blocked doorway which is rather oddly set at mid-height in the wall, west again are a boarded door and finally a pitching door. Continuing to the west is the surviving rear wall of an adjacent building (its south and west walls

now rebuilt in modern blockwork) which has no other features than a series of open holes or sockets at mid-height.

The barn is divided internally by a cross-wall. The eastern division has a concrete floor, with three stalls to the north and is lit only by the window high in the east wall. On the north, and now opening into the adjacent shed, is the former doorway (later converted into a window) at mid-height in the wall and c 1m to the east of it what looks as if it may have been the west jamb of an earlier opening. The cross-wall on the west has a doorway at its south end and a central opening at loft level.

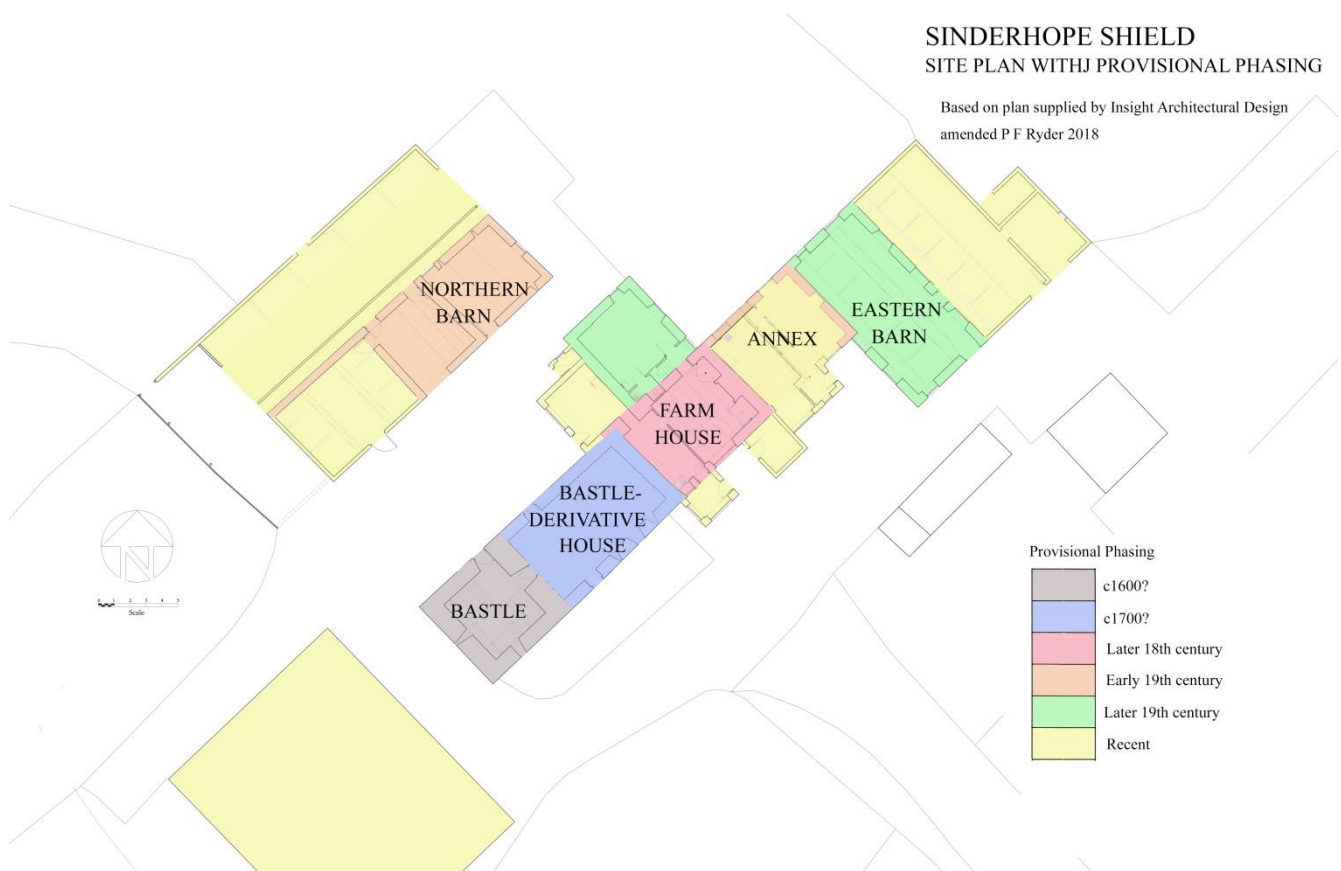
The western division has a loft over its eastern third, and a doorway into the adjacent building at the north end of its west wall. This adjacent building, with its south and west walls rebuilt in blockwork, has a concrete floor and three stalls, divided by concrete boskins, at both east and west ends.



The Northern Barn from the south

Structural History

The bastle is clearly the earliest building on the site, and the bastle-derivative house the second; as discussed below, they may date to c 1600 and c1700 respectively. Then comes the farmhouse, possibly originally an upper-floor house but heavily altered; it could be of later 18th century date. What is now the Annex originated as a farm building, perhaps of the early 19th century, and the Northern Barn may be of roughly the same date. The last two elements of the group, the rear wing of the house and the Eastern Barn, both come in the later 19th century – they are not shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 6": 1 mile map of c1860 but are on the mid 1890s. 2nd edition 25":1 mile sheet. During the 20th century the western part of the Northern Barn has been largely rebuilt and a large shed added on its north side, and a second smaller shed has been built on the east side of the Eastern Barn; most recently the farm building east of the Farmhouse has been converted into domestic accommodation (the Annex).



Discussion

The historical interest at Sinderhope Shield centres on the two earliest elements of the group of buildings, the bastle and the adjacent bastle-derivative house; both retain important original features although both have been altered, especially their upper parts

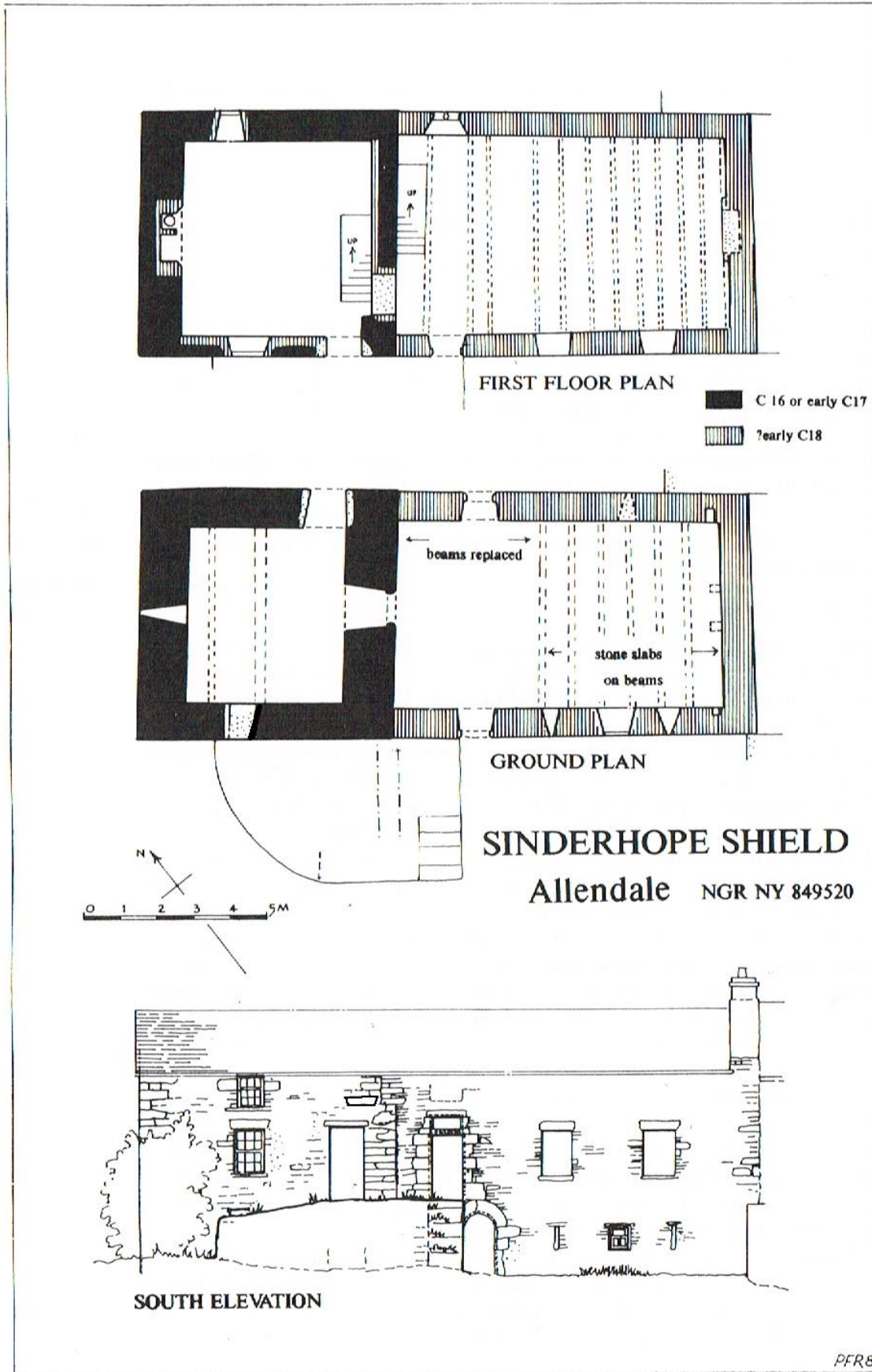
The bastle and bastle-derivative house have been described and discussed in some detail². Bastles are often lumped together with towers, but really the two classes of building are quite distinct; towers are usually built by landowners, and in Northumberland are mostly of 14th to early 16th century date, whilst bastles are post-medieval vernacular buildings, erected by tenant farmers; they burst upon the landscape, in considerable numbers, in the early 17th century although can be seen as modelled on earlier more ‘polite’ defensible strong houses such as Baal Hill House at Wolsingham in Weardale or Pockerley near Beamish. The handful of dated bastles in the county cluster tightly in the first decade of the 17th century, although there is some evidence that the bastle-building tradition persisted much longer in South Western Northumberland, in particular around Alston. The only dated example in the Allendales is Furnace House (Mohope) in West Allendale, which is of 1639.

In the medieval period Allendale was a parochial chapelry of Hexham, and part of estates which had been under the private jurisdiction of the Archbishop of York since the 11th century. Misgovernment and corruption by the archbishop’s bailiffs created a situation of constant suspicion and unrest, and the tenants provided almost ungovernable. The 1970 Royal Commission report³ linked bastle building to copyhold tenancies, in which rents had not increased for generations and allowed tenants to build defensible houses, which the social conditions – petty lawlessness and cattle theft being endemic - necessitated. Whilst elsewhere such tenancies were dying out by the early 17th century, those in Allendale ‘enjoyed an exceptional vitality’⁴, so a close dating of the Sinderhope bastle is not easy. Its exceptionally thick walls and almost square plan suggest that it might have been carried up further than the usual two stories as a ‘poor man’s tower’ (there is rather more evidence that this may have been the case with one of the range of bastles at Monk in West Allendale); there are

² Ryder (1992) ‘Bastles and Bastle-like Buildings in Allendale, Northumberland’. *Archaeological Journal* 149, 367-369

³ Ramm, H.G., McDowell R.W. and Mercer, E. (1970) *Shielings and Bastles*. Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, London H.M.S.O./

⁴ *Northumberland County History* (1897) IV, 59

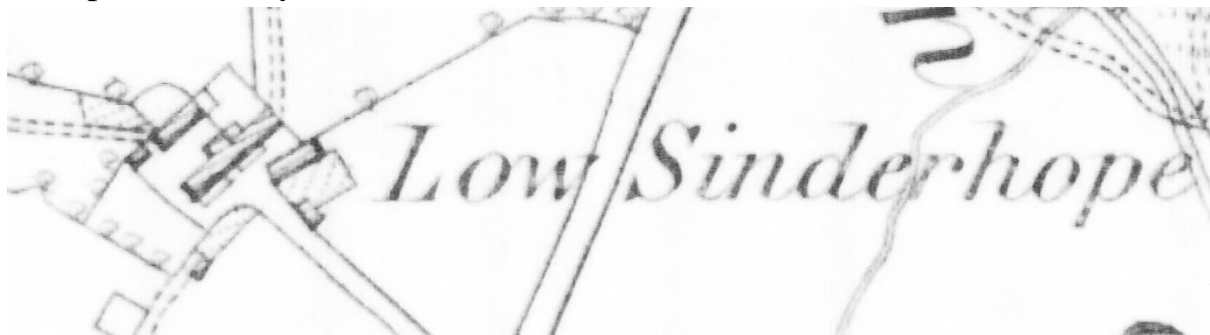


Illus. 13. Allendale Bastles: Sinderhope Shield, plans

Plans and Elevation of the Bastle and Bastle-derivative House (Ryder 1990)

other near-square bastles in the area (Low Bishopside and Moorhouses in Allendale, High Lovelady Shield near Alston) but most are so ruinous that their original elevations cannot be reconstructed. These more tower-like buildings may come relatively early in bastle building, perhaps c1600 or even a little before.

The Bastle-derivative House comes considerably later; there are quite a number of parallels, especially around Alston where upper-floor houses displaying some characteristics of bastles, such as stone slab floors carried on close-spaced transverse beams, were still being built into the later 18th century. The one at Sinderhope Shield is clearly not a defensible building – its doors are not equipped with drawbar tunnels – and it has a cross passage with a pair of opposed doors, a plan feature that occurs in this position in several houses where an original bastle has been extended (eg Clarghyll Hall and Whitlow, both near Alston). Cross passages were also a feature of earlier pre-bastle longhouses, surviving examples of which are rare although there is a good example at Wooley in Allendale.



Low Sinderhope from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 6":1 mile map of c1860. Note that there are offshuts to the rear of the Farmhouse, but no rear wing. What is now the Annex is present, but probably as a farm building; the Eastern barn has not been built. The Northern Barn (and its western extension) are present, as are other buildings, now demolished, to the south-east of the main range.

Significance

Without doubt the Bastle and the Bastle-Derivative House, the two listed structures, are the two buildings in the group with the greatest architectural and historical significance and have features that merit careful conservation and preservation, although this may be difficult in the case of the decayed floors and staircases etc. The section of the first floor of the Bastle-Derivative House which retains stone slabs is a rare survival, and should be retained if possible whilst the surviving broad boards of the upper floor are probably original, but in poor condition. The prime features of interest are the original doorway of the bastle, now opening into the Bastle-Derivative House, the two round-arched doorways of the bastle-Derivative House, and the the upper floor fireplaces in both buildings; the external platform which gave access to both is also an early feature which deserves repair and retention. The roof structure of both structures is recent and not of particular interest. The other structures are all of lesser importance. The Farmhouse is the third oldest of these but has been heavily altered, whilst the adjacent Annex is an almost total recent rebuild. The Eastern Barn is a late-19th century structure of a very standard type, considerably altered in the later 20th century but of some minor significance in that it retains its original form and most of its external features, ignoring the late-20th shed built onto and obscuring its east elevation. The detached Northern Barn is rather older (early 19th century?), but of minor significance compared to the listed structures, whilst the modern sheds added to its north side and the building adjacent to it on the west, mostly rebuilt in blockwork, are of negligible interest.

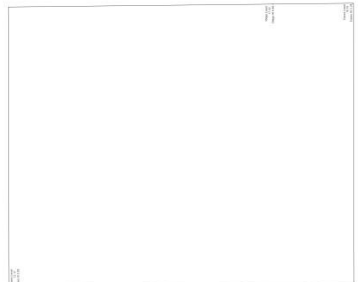
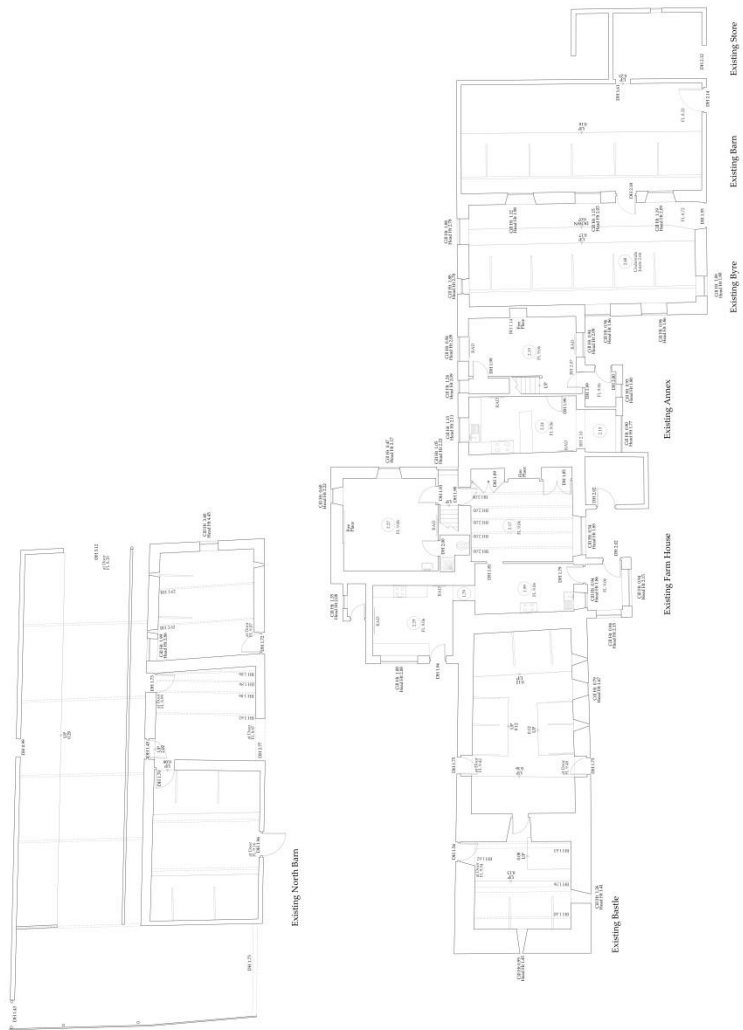
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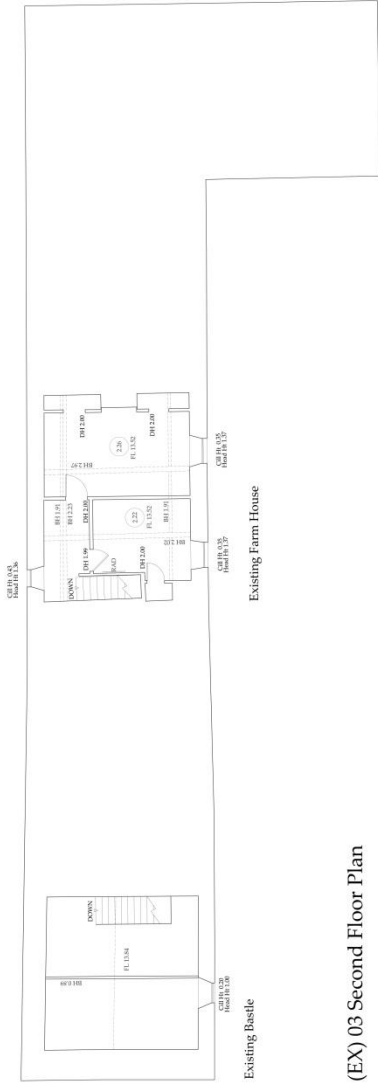
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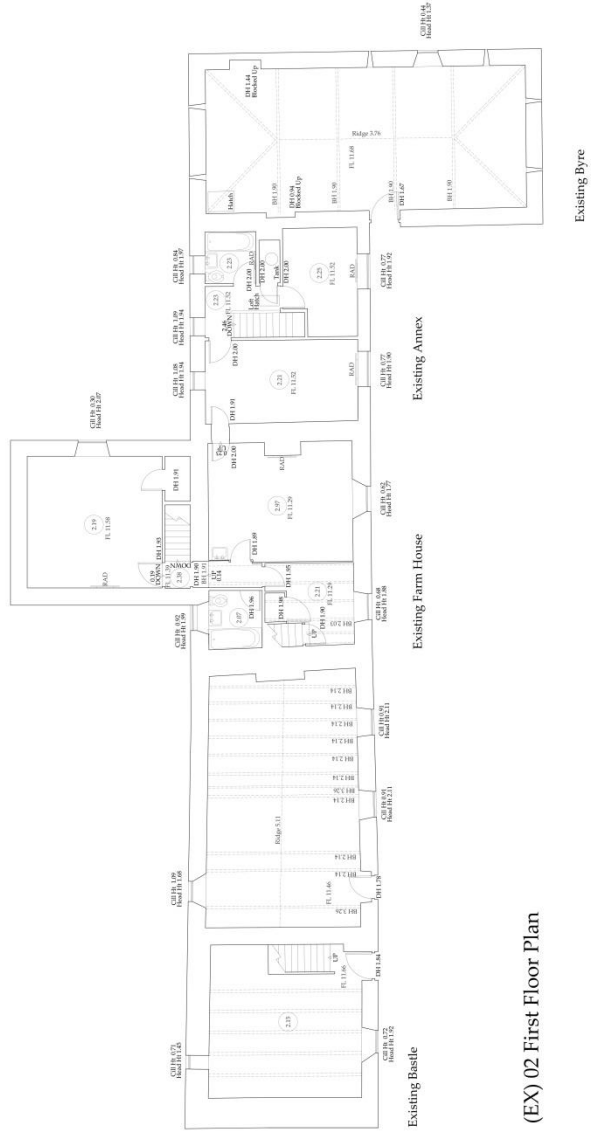
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Existing Steel Frame Barn



(EX) 03 Second Floor Plan



(EX) 02 First Floor Plan

Revision	Description	Date

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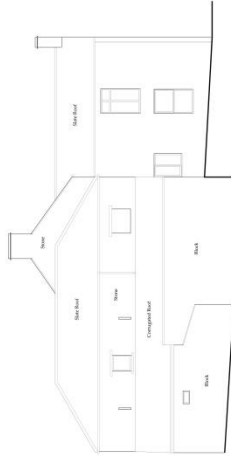
(EX) 22 South West Elevation

Drawn: 1/20/20



(EX) 21 North East Elevation

Drawn: 1/20/20



(EX) 24 North East Elevation

Drawn: 1/20/20



(EX) 23 North East Internal Elevation

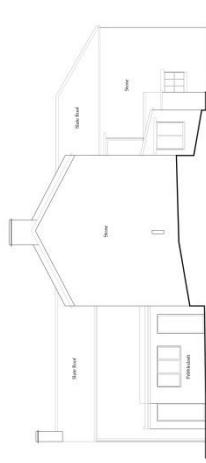
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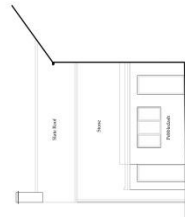
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North West Elevation
(EX) 25



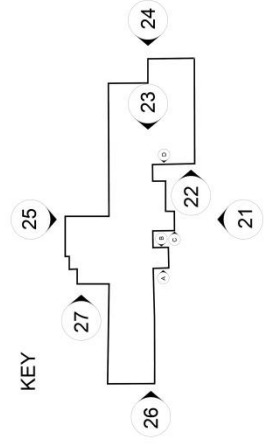
(EX) 26 South West Elevation

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(EX) 27 South West Elevation

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KEY



(EX) D
North East Elevation

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(EX) C
South West Elevation

Drawn: 1/20/20



(EX) B
North East Elevation

Drawn: 1/20/20



(EX) A
South West Elevation

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