



Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB  
CONDITION REPORT  
JULY 2022

## Introduction

The following report has been produced by Ross Anderson of Etch Architects on behalf of the current owners of Minmore House and Cottages, Glenlivet.

The purpose of this report is to record the existing condition of the former Mil building on the site, with the intention of informing the buildings future use and restoration.

## Contents

Introduction		
Context:	Location/Site/Context	03
	Property History	04
	Measured drawings	08
Appraisal:	Existing Condition Exterior	12
	Existing Condition Interior	22
Recommendations		25

### Context: Location/Site/Context

The former Mill Building at Minmore sits as part of a collection of Agricultural buildings in various states of disrepair within the bounds of Minmore House, Glenlivet.

The property sits bounded by a public Road to the East, semi-derelict buildings to the North, private garden ground to the West and the grounds of Glenlivet Distillery to the South.

Access to the building is available by both an existing shared vehicle access to the East of the Minmore House site and a lesser used gated access to the West.

Adjacent to the collection of farm buildings to the North are two short term let holiday cottages, developed by the current owner and the Minmore House Hotel.

The property sits within the boundary of the Cairngorm National Park.



Aerial Site Photo - June 2023

Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB

CONDITION REPORT

JULY 2022

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## Context: Property History

Records of the properties within the site primarily focus on Minmore House itself, as this is the prominent and historically significant property within the site. Mention of the Agricultural buildings within the site appear limited, typical of what would be considered 'low value' agricultural buildings.

There are no listed properties within the site, this includes Minmore House itself.

It is understood, from reviewing *The Canmore National Record of The Historic Environment*, that the farmhouse was purchased in 1840 along with the associated farm buildings by Captain George Smith, The founder of Glenlivet Distillery. Shortly after the purchase of the house Smith transferred distillery operations to the Minmore site.

Referring to Historical mapping the House and Farmstead at this time shows a rectangular building, set within a formal garden to the North and East and a large complex of buildings to the South of the site. A millpond and sluice with a supply to the South of this collection of buildings, is also apparent at this time. On review of later historic maps there appears to have been a number of additions and removals made, notably two larger detached structures to the West of the buildings appearing in the 1890 mapping, which are subsequently tied into the collection of buildings by the 1960's. At this time, the majority of the structures appear to have been physically connected, evidence of which can still be seen.

A historic Aerial Photograph from 1930 provides a clearer sense of the scale and appearance of these structures, a mix of stone, timber and metal clad agricultural sheds running on a North South axis, with the mill structure linking them on the East to West Axis. There were also a number of buildings across the road to the East and South at this period in time.

In the subsequent years, a number of the buildings have either collapsed or been demolished, leaving what remains today.

Current Aerial images clearly show what remains of this original collection of buildings, notably the East to West linking Mill building as a detached 'L' shaped plan and the remains of a stables/bullpen structure running North to South. The two cottages formed within the centre of the site have utilised some of the previously agricultural structures and their stonework. To the South (outside the bounds of the site) a residential property has been retained and all other ancillary structures have been removed.

Reworking of the drainage, undertaken by the Glenlivet distillery has retained the Mill Pond, but concealed the supply to the mill itself, which now flows below ground to the Mill.



1843-1883 Map extract showing Minmore House and Farm Buildings.



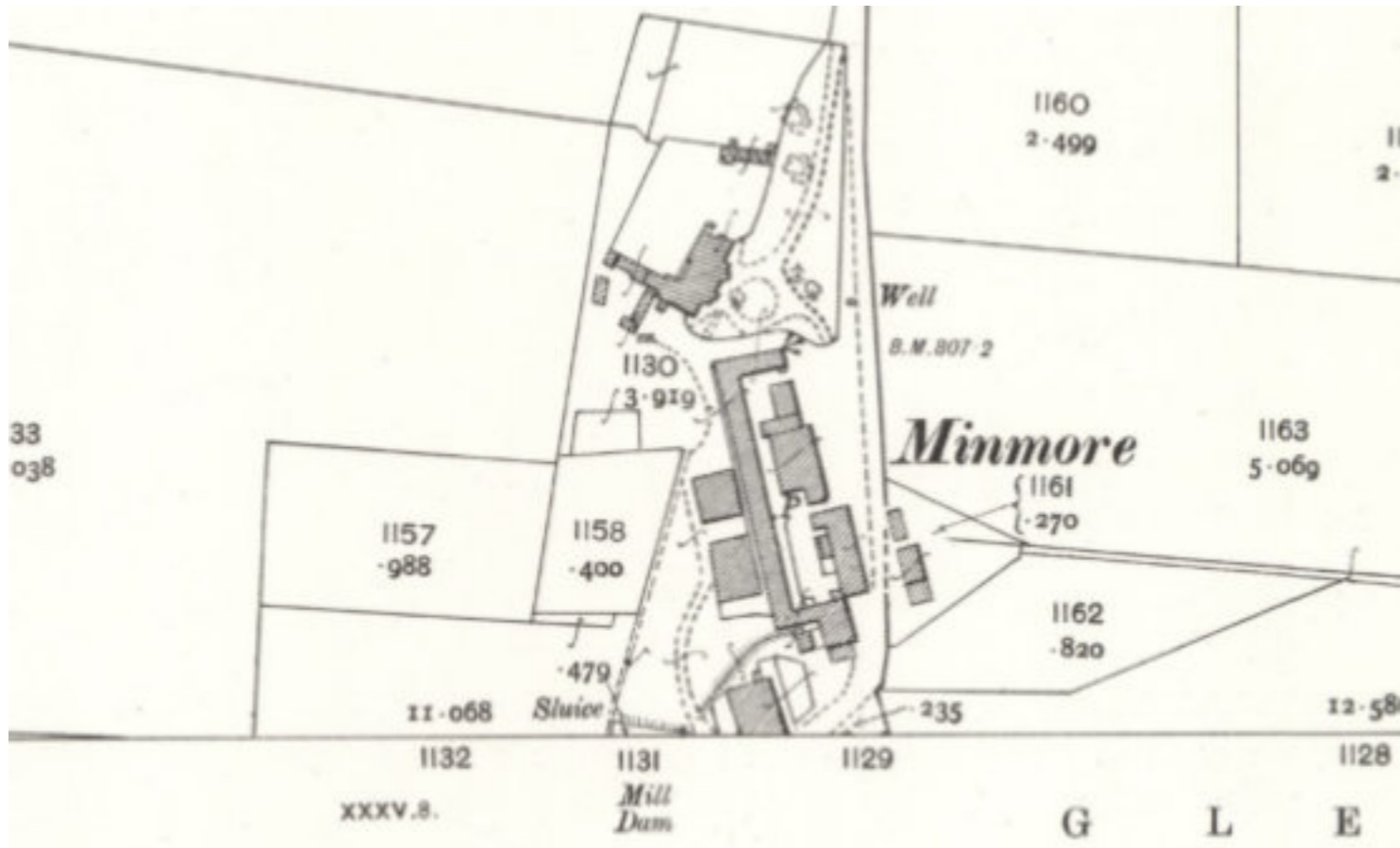
1855-1882 Map extract showing Minmore House and Farm Buildings.

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**CONDITION REPORT**

**JULY 2022**

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1892-1949 Map extract showing Minmore House and Farm Buildings.



1972 Map extract showing Minmore House and Farm Buildings.



1960 Map extract showing Minmore House and Farm Buildings.

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**CONDITION REPORT**  
**JULY 2022**

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1930 Aerial photograph looking North

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**CONDITION REPORT**

**JULY 2022**

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1930 Aerial photograph looking South

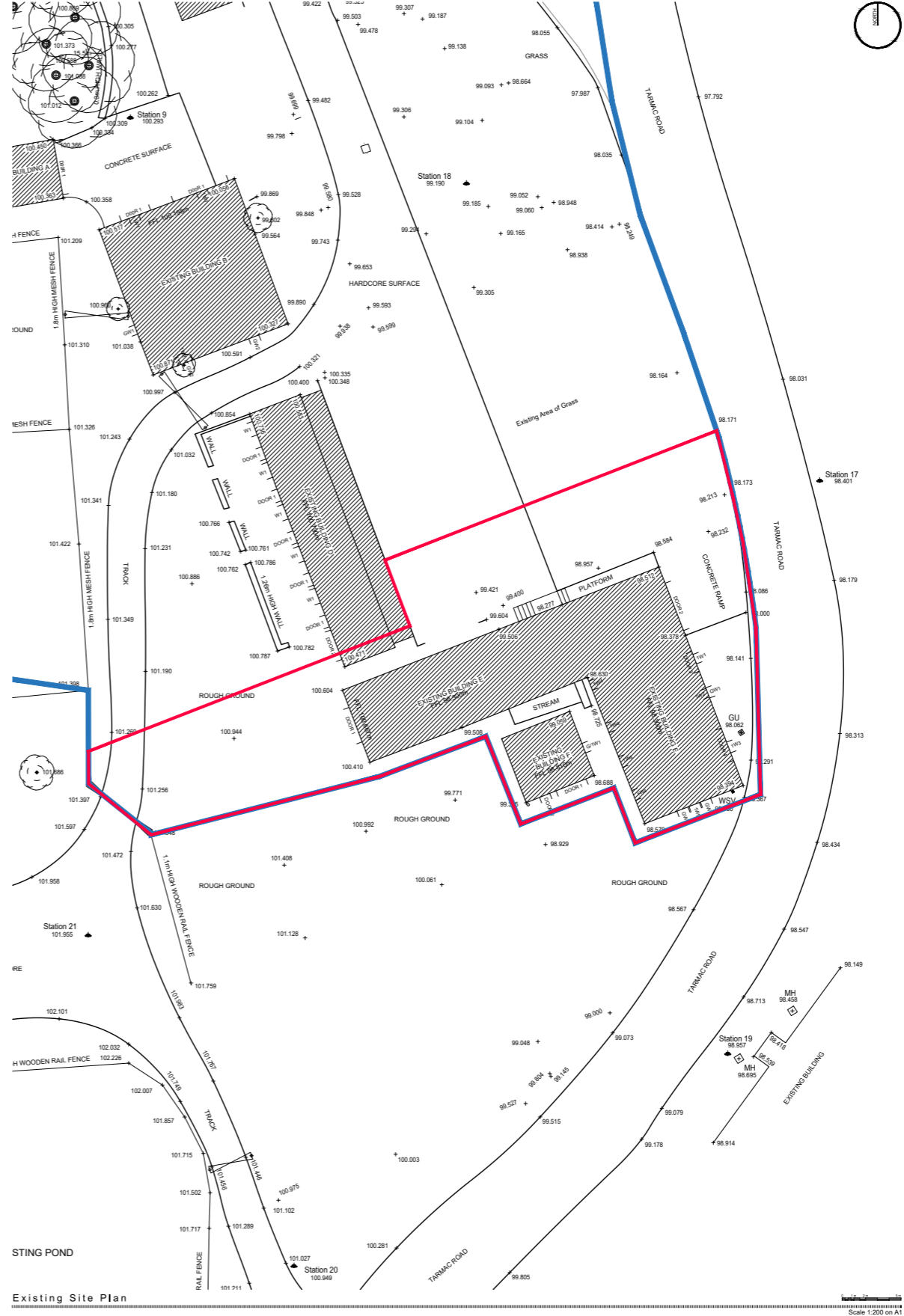
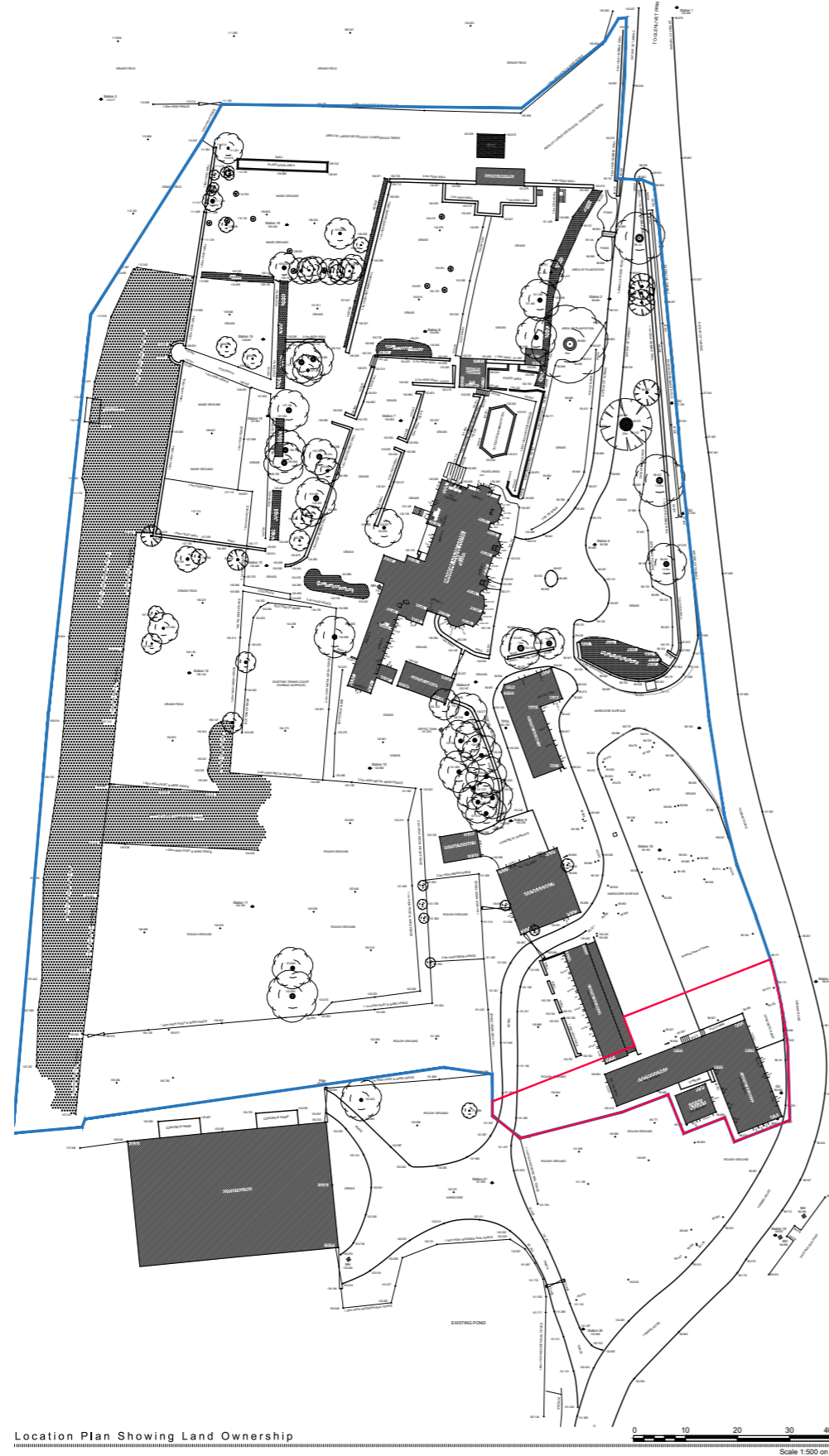
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**CONDITION REPORT**

**JULY 2022**

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Context: Measured Drawings



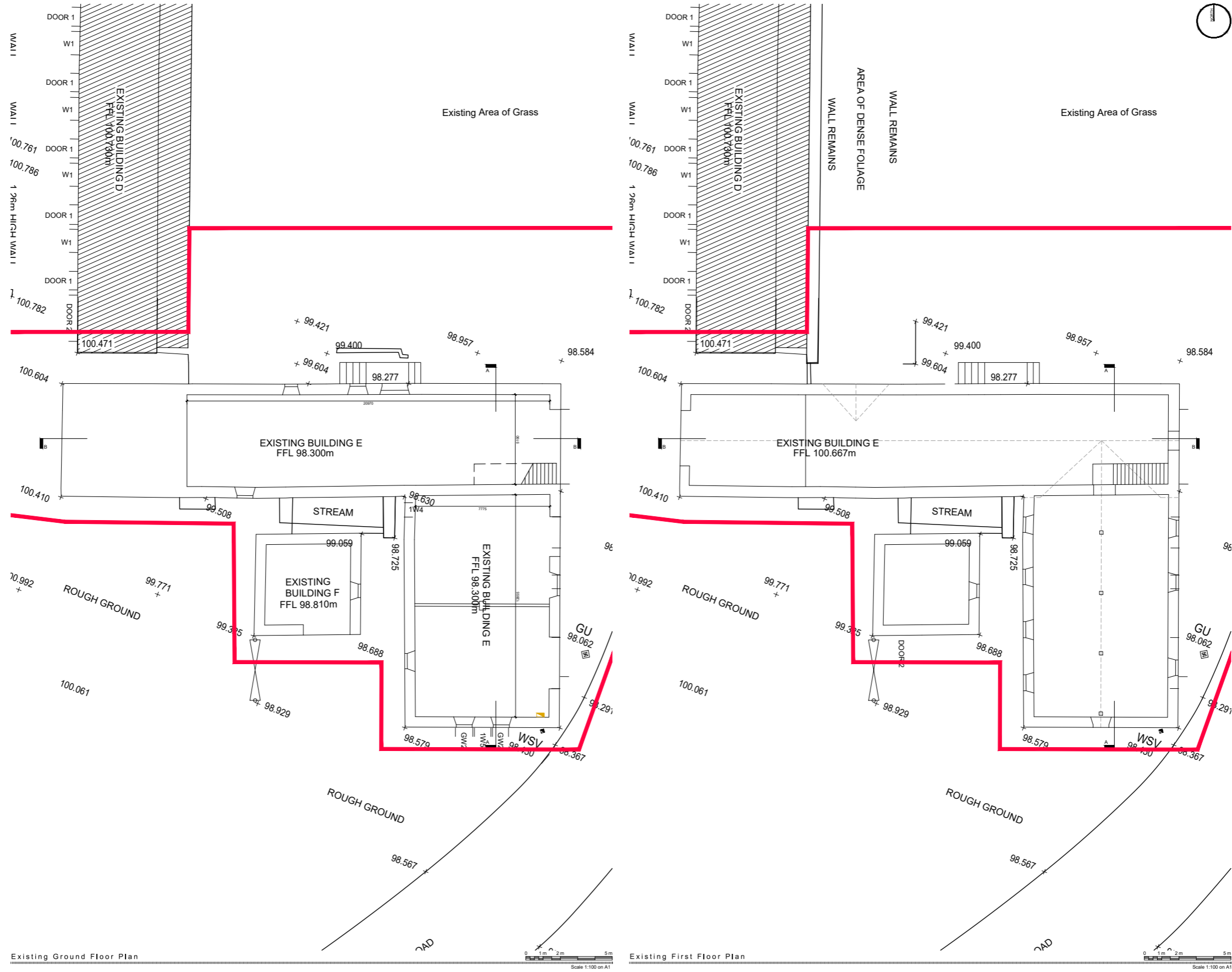
Existing Location and Site Plan

Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB  
CONDITION REPORT  
JULY 2022





Context: Measured Drawings



Existing Floor Plans

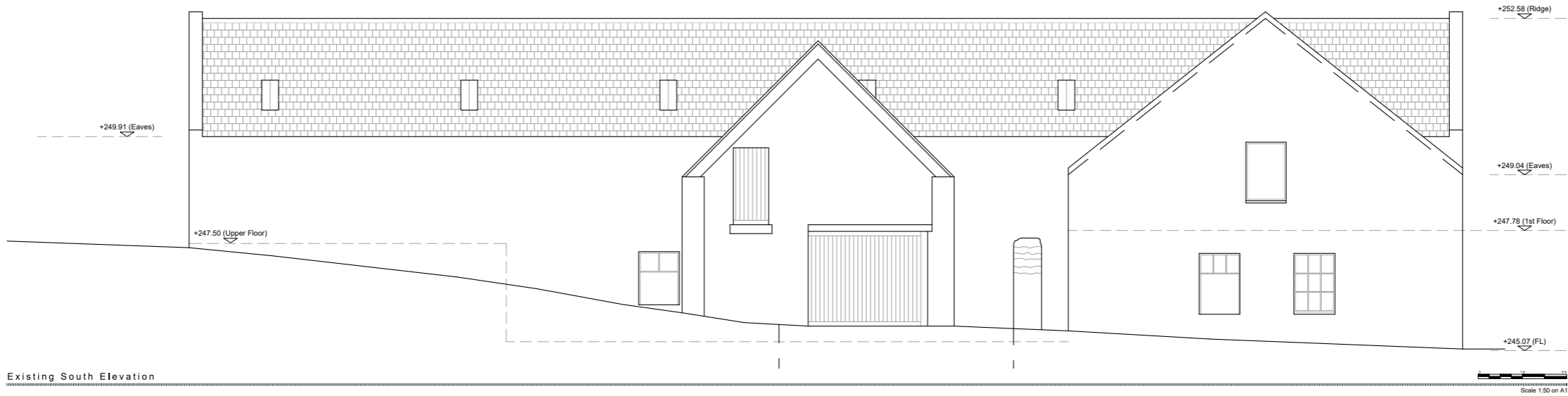
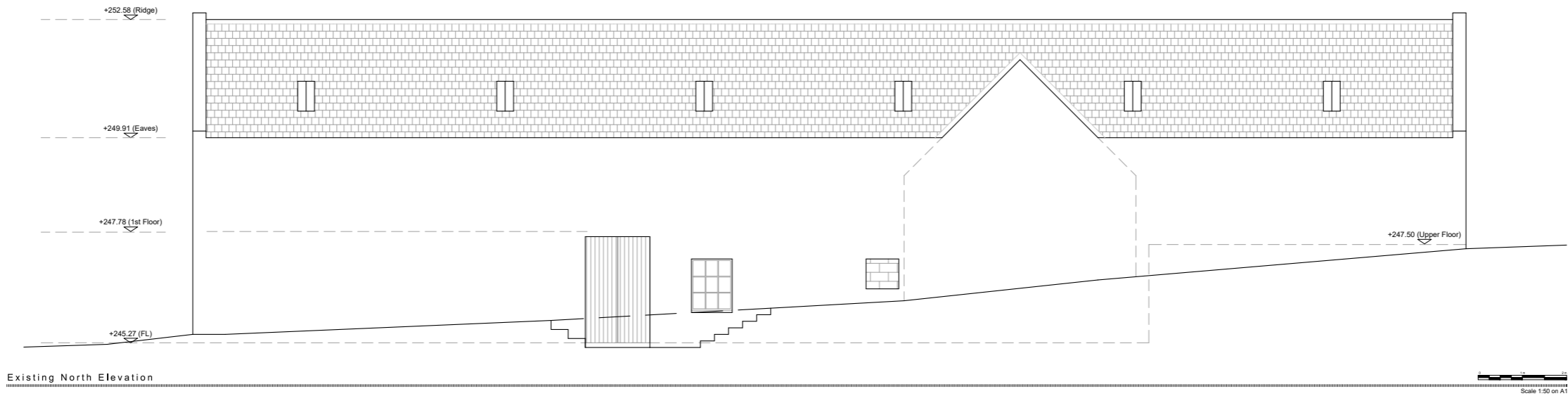
Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB

CONDITION REPORT

JULY 2022

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Context: Measured Drawings

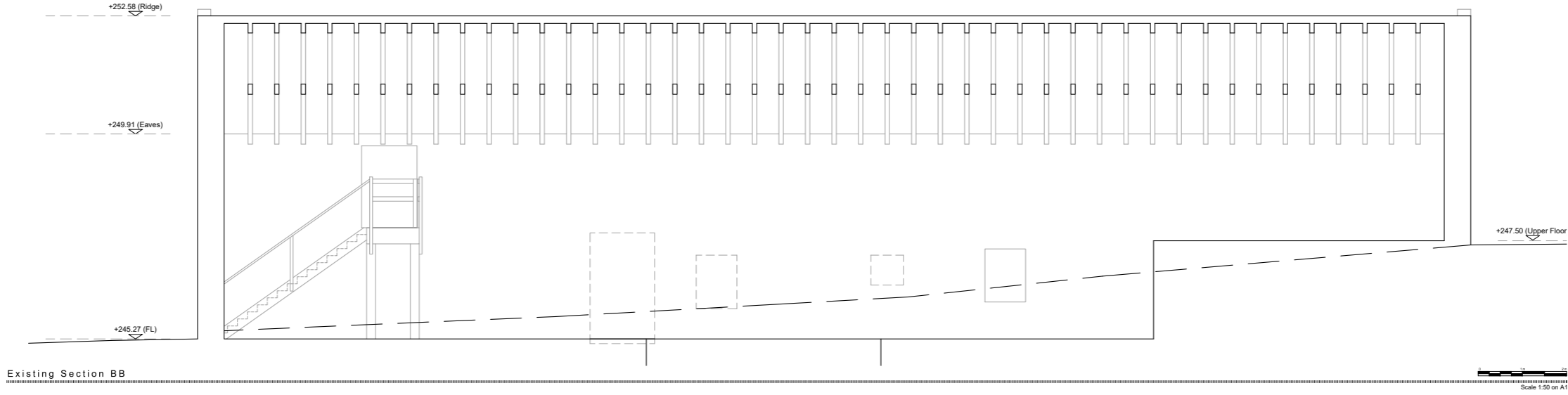
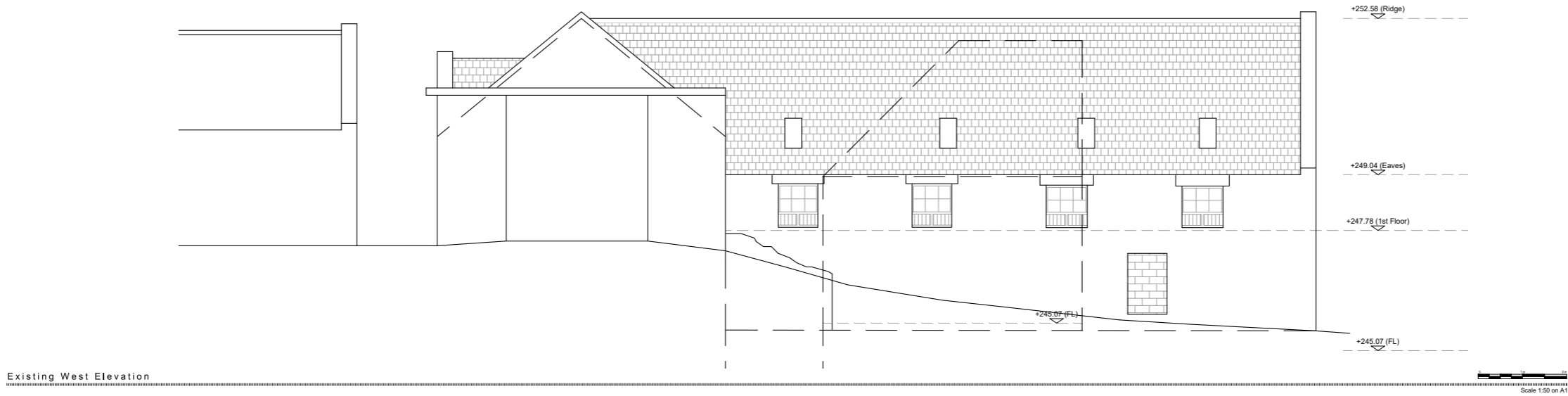
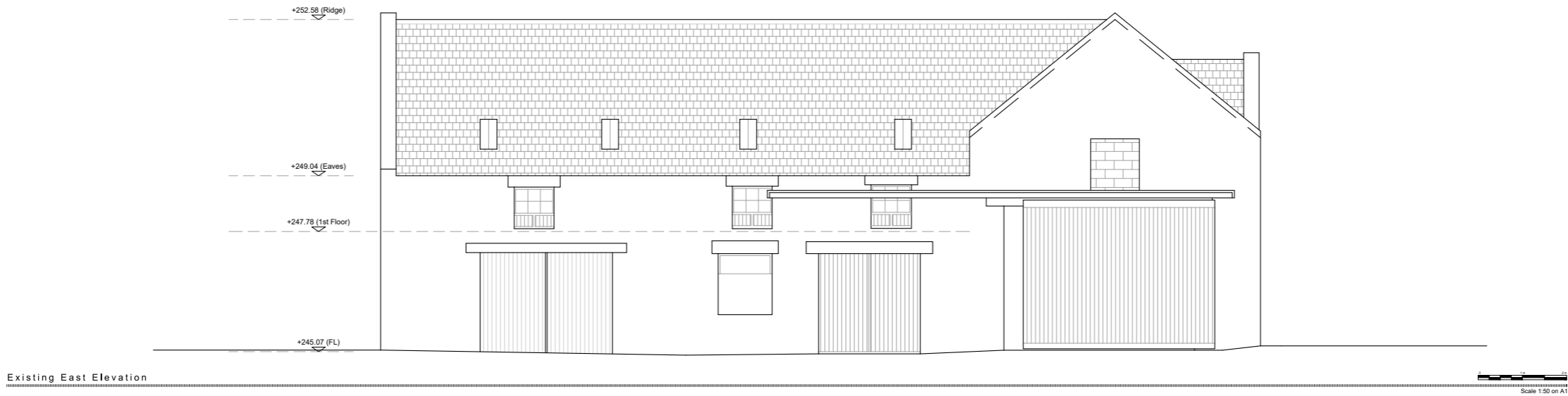


Existing Sections and Elevations - Note drawings represent building prior to collapse

Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB  
CONDITION REPORT  
JULY 2022



Context: Measured Drawings



Existing Sections and Elevations - Note drawings represent building prior to collapse

Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB  
CONDITION REPORT  
JULY 2022



## Appraisal: Exterior Condition

The remaining mill building has been constructed with solid masonry walls formed in random rubble, the majority of which appears to have been rendered with a lime-based render externally. The render in the majority of areas has fallen off over time, exposing the pointing and stonework below. There are some areas where cement pointing repairs have been made, but these are minimal, clearly historic and assumed to have been undertaken in excess of 20 years ago.

The external walls to the original 'L' shaped mill building appear to remain intact and albeit in a poor state of repair show limited evidence of structural movement or cracking.

The external masonry walls to the detached square planned ancillary building do have evidence of cracking and damage, assume to have been caused by ongoing vegetation growth within the walls that has not been addressed.

The existing roof of the original mill building has experienced a significant collapse to the Northeastern corner, which appears to have also removed an element of the East gable ruing the collapse. What remains of the roof shows thick cut and large format Scottish slate laid with diminishing sizes.

The smaller detached ancillary building to the South of the mill appears to have a more contemporary thinner and regular sized slate to its roof, presumed slated more recently that the original mill.

In both instances the slates have been laid on sarking boards, supported by timber raised tie truss. Both truss and sarking have evidence of significant wood worm damage throughout and would be considered beyond repair or retention.

There is evidence externally of timber, stone and concrete lintols. It appears that the timber and stone lintols are part of the original fabric of the building, with concrete lintols installed when new openings have been formed through the history of the building.

A number of the existing timber lintols have failed and are in varying levels of collapse.

All buildings appear to have had cast iron rainwater goods, the majority of which have fallen from the building or been removed completely.

All windows and doors to the buildings appear to have been timber, with multiple panes of single glazing. There are a number of openings where windows have been removed completely and, in some instances, blocked up with concrete blockwork. The remaining timber windows have all suffered considerable damage and rot to their framing and cills and are in all cases considered beyond viable repair.



South gable of mill building



Existing North Elevation



Existing East Elevation

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CONDITION REPORT  
JULY 2022

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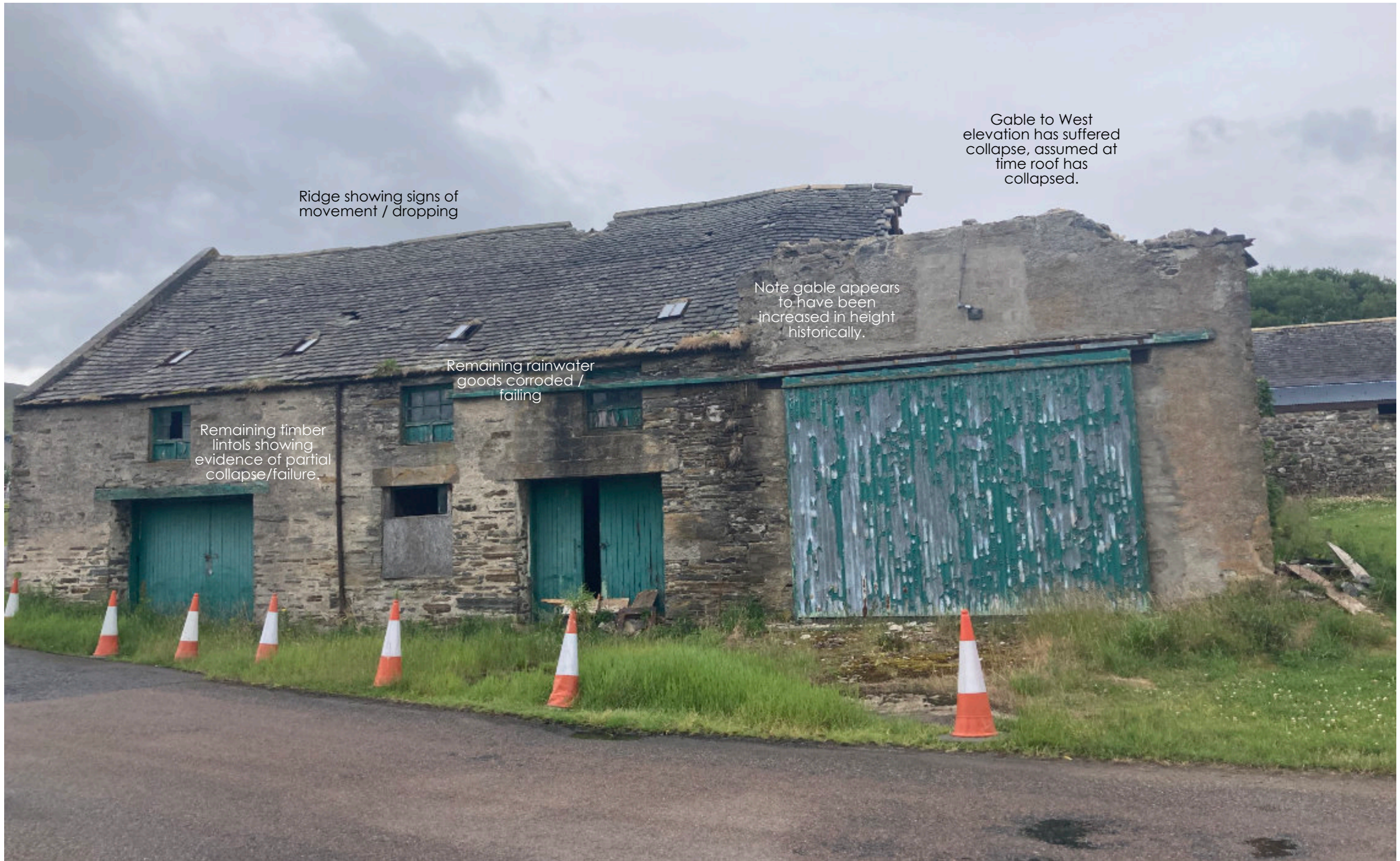
Existing South Elevation



Existing West Elevation

Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB  
CONDITION REPORT  
JULY 2022

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Ridge showing signs of movement / dropping

Gable to West elevation has suffered collapse, assumed at time roof has collapsed.

Note gable appears to have been increased in height historically.

Remaining rainwater goods corroded / failing

Remaining timber lintols showing evidence of partial collapse/failure.

Existing West Elevation - Annotated

Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB

CONDITION REPORT

JULY 2022



Timber lintol to East elevation showing signs of failure. Internal lintols have completely failed.



Timber framing to windows have widespread rot damage



Existing cast iron rainwater goods appear to have corroded beyond repair



External elevation appears to have been lime rendered/limewashed historically

**Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB**

**CONDITION REPORT**

**JULY 2022**

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Extent of roof collapse  
viewed from North  
Elevation

Roof slated with a  
diminishing size of  
slate

Remaining cement  
pointing shows  
evidence of a roof  
junction historically at  
this point. Historic  
plans shows there was  
a large shed structure  
here.

Number of windows  
and door openings  
have been partially  
filled with blockwork

Not the remains of  
gable. Assumed to  
have been internal  
where building tied  
into the mill structure.  
Stone work shows  
evidence of this  
having been  
constructed at a later  
date to the original  
mill

Existing North Elevation - Annotated

Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB

CONDITION REPORT

JULY 2022

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Existing West Elevation - Annotated

Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB

CONDITION REPORT

JULY 2022

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Detached stone/  
metal clad structure  
appears to have been  
modified significantly  
over time.

Building is showing  
signs of structural  
movement in external  
walls.

Location of former mill  
wheel behind this  
structure

West gable of former  
mill has existing  
window openings.

Some on the lower  
level blocked up.

Existing gable appears  
stable.

Windows have been  
partially removed.

Existing South Elevation - Annotated

Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB

CONDITION REPORT

JULY 2022



Area between mill and detached structure.

Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB

CONDITION REPORT

JULY 2022



Historic mill wheel opening

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Mill wheel  
would have  
sat in this  
location.

Area between mill and detached structure. - West Elevations - Note level of damage to external wall at right hand of image

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CONDITION REPORT

JULY 2022

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## Appraisal: Interior Condition

Appraisal of the interior of the building was undertaken in a limited capacity as safe access is currently limited to the upper level at the West access and the Lower ground level of the South (via a removed window). There is no safe access to the upper level of the North-South element of the building.

Internally the masonry walls generally appear to be in good condition, showing some evidence of having been lime washed or rendered historically. The walls to the existing 'L' shaped mill appear to be in relatively stable condition, with the exception of the collapsed gable to the West (assumed to have been pulled down by the roof).

Internally the walls to the freestanding square planned building show evidence of significant cracking and movement.

It appears that at some point historically the first-floor joists have been cut and removed to the original mill building, assumed to have been undertaken by a previous farmer owner to get larger vehicles into the building. It may be the case that this removal of structure resulted in the subsequent partial collapse of the roof and gable.

As a result of the collapsed roof and subsequent exposure to the elements for a prolonged period of time there appear to be no salvageable elements within the interior, with the majority of any remaining fixtures suffering significant decay.

In the areas that have retained an element of roof structure, that were safe to access, there appeared to be no significant evidence of damp within the walls internally, algae on walls etc, however due to the nature of the site and its exposure it is assumed much of the exposed walls will be sitting with a significant level of moisture within them.



Interior of mill from West access, upper level, looking East.



Evidence of external wall adjustment - this relates to exposed gable on North elevation



Condition of sarking/existing timbers to remaining roof.



Internal walls lime washed/rendered



**Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB**

**CONDITION REPORT**

**JULY 2022**

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Interior of area where roof has collapsed - note all timbers beyond retention

Minmore Mill, Minmore House, Glenlivet, Ballindalloch, AB37 9DB

CONDITION REPORT

JULY 2022



Ground floor accessed at South elevation. Note stone appears to have been exposed

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## Recommendations

On surveying the existing building and recommending proposed works there are two principal factors to be considered, structural stability and the associated health and safety risks and the opportunity to preserve architectural heritage.

Priority in the instance of this property, which is unlisted and has been subject to significant unregulated works is health and safety and securing the stability of the building.

Initial priority is to remove what remains of the existing roof structure and slating. As a section of the roof has suffered partial collapse and effectively 'filled' the interior of the lower section of the building with timber and rubble it is advised works to demolish the roof are undertaken externally only. It may be possible that the upper levels of the roof can be accessed by a scaffold/mobile platform where slates can be removed manually and retained for future use, the extent of this would require to be determined by a specialist contractor.

Once safely removing the roof it would be advised to remove the large door to the West Gable and carefully removing the remains of the lintol and gable above this opening. This would then provide a clear and safe access to the property to remove the debris from within the building, directly to the roadside for safe disposal.

Some slates within this debris may be suitable for reuse, as such they should be manually removed from the debris where possible and set aside for potential reuse, however it should be expected that a considerable proportion have been destroyed by the impact of the roof collapse.

All internal timber from the building should be removed and disposed, as the extent of woodworm and rot is significant and widespread and there would be limited value in attempting to retain any of these timbers. This applies also to the existing doors and windows.

The freestanding structure to the South of the building has signs of significant cracking and movement, which would require this building to be at least partially demolished to ensure it remains safe.

The existing masonry walls to the mill building appear to be suitable for retention and reuse, this would require to be assessed further on safe access being available to the building.

Assuming these walls are suitable to be retained they should be picked of any loose mortar and render and prepared for repointing with a hydraulic lime-based mortar.

The walls are assumed to have no damp proofing and as such it is recommended that a tanking system is installed to the lower sections of the walls internally, as part of works to redevelop this building. In addition to this ground level externally should be reviewed to assess where possible to assess where it is possible to reduce these/remove damp ground from the building exterior. A 300mm well-draining gravel margin should be considered.

As it is not possible to retain all elements of the existing building careful consideration should be given to the viability of its restoration.

It is proposed that there is value in considering a respectful 'reinvention' of the building. Retaining or reintroducing key elements will help define the character and sense of the original building whilst allowing the opportunity to create a building that provides a quality sustainable place to live.