

**CONTENTS**

<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Project origins	4
<b>2 METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Project design	5
2.2 Desk-based assessment	5
2.3 Walkover survey	5
2.4 Archive	6
<b>3 BACKGROUND</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Location, topography and geology	7
3.2 Development proposals	7
<b>4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1 Historical background	8
<b>5 DISCUSSION</b>	<b>9</b>
5.1 Academic merit	9
<b>6 RESULTS</b>	<b>9</b>
6.1 Methodology	9
6.2 Survey results: Garage	10
6.3 Survey results: Workshop	11
6.4 Survey results: Hall	16
6.5 Survey results: Utility room	17
6.6 Survey results: Toilet	19
6.7 Survey results: Store	19
6.8 Phasing	20
6.9 Discussion	20
<b>7 ARCHIVE</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>8 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>9 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>APPENDIX A</b>	<b>23</b>

## FIGURES

Figure 1	Location of study area	4
Figure 2	Location of study building in red outline	6
Figure 3	Proposed new building featured in the development	7
Figure 4	Ground plan of proposed development adjacent to Midcroft House	8
Figure 5	1 <sup>st</sup> Edition 1868 OS map	8
Figure 6	Location of rooms mentioned in the results section	10
Figure 7	Elevation showing garage doors	11
Figure 8	Elevation showing protruding garage	11
Figure 9	Roof trusses within Room 2 showing re-used timbers	11
Figure 10	Roof trusses within Room 2 showing re-used purlins	11
Figure 11	Elevation of east wall	12
Figure 12	Profile of Room 2, west wall	12
Figure 13	Western section of clay dabbin wall, north wall	12
Figure 14	Eastern section of clay dabbin wall, north wall	12
Figure 15	Detail of clay dabbin wall, north wall	13
Figure 16	Modern door, north wall	13
Figure 17	Elevation of northern wall	13
Figure 18	Elevation of southern wall	14
Figure 19	Eastern section of southern wall elevation	15
Figure 20	Western section of southern wall elevation	15
Figure 21	Filled window, south wall	15
Figure 22	Timber lintel above modern door, south wall	15
Figure 23	North elevation of study building showing garage, workshop and hall	16
Figure 24	Elevation of hidden clay dabbin wall behind western wall of hallway	16
Figure 25	Elevation of hidden clay dabbin wall behind western wall of hallway	16
Figure 26	Hallway looking north	17
Figure 27	Hallway looking south	17
Figure 28	North facing elevation involving Rooms 4 and 5	17
Figure 29	Eastern partition wall within Room 4	18
Figure 30	Western partition wall within Room 4	18
Figure 31	Window within utility room	18
Figure 32	Elevation of lean-to building (Rooms 4 and 5)	18
Figure 33	North facing elevation	19
Figure 34	Recess within clay dabbin wall	19
Figure 35	View of Room 5	19
Figure 36	Plan of Room 2 (workshop)	21
Figure 37	Plan of study building	22

## **SUMMARY**

The Level III building survey at Midcroft, Burgh-by-Sands confirmed that one east-west aligned clay dabbin wall existed within an extant building subject to redevelopment. The condition of the wall appeared to be excellent although 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century remediation had impacted upon the wall.

Another north-south aligned clay dabbin wall probably existed as the thickness between the hallway and the workshop measured approximately 1.50m. However, modern remedial work masked this putative wall and the field survey could not formally confirm its presence.

These two walls probably formed a barn that was probably no later than the late eighteenth century and may be considerably earlier.

All the other buildings and their various architectural embellishments observed during the survey were of recent construction of no obvious architectural merit and would not appear to be worthy of conservation

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project origins

Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) was consulted by Carlisle City Council regarding a planning application for the conversion of adjoining buildings at Midcroft, Burgh-by-Sands, Carlisle (NY 32295 59056). Planning Application No. 1/06/0657 and 1/06/0658 has been allocated to this brief.

The scheme has the potential to affect the character and appearance of a former clay dabbins constructed farmhouse listed in the Historic Environment Record (HER 41713) and as a result a programme of archaeological building recording is required to expedite this work.

In order to ascertain the historical and archaeological merits affected by this development, the brief issued by the curatorial authority requires investigation of known historical records through a rapid desk-based assessment and the survival of extant buildings via a programme of building recording equivalent to Level 3 as described by English Heritage *Understanding Historic Buildings A Guide to Good Recording Practice, 2006*.

The desk-based assessment included visits to Carlisle Library and The Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle. The objective of this exercise was to collate sufficient detail to identify the issues and potential for academic research, provide a series of questions for targeted archaeological enquiry and outline, if any, possible mitigation response.

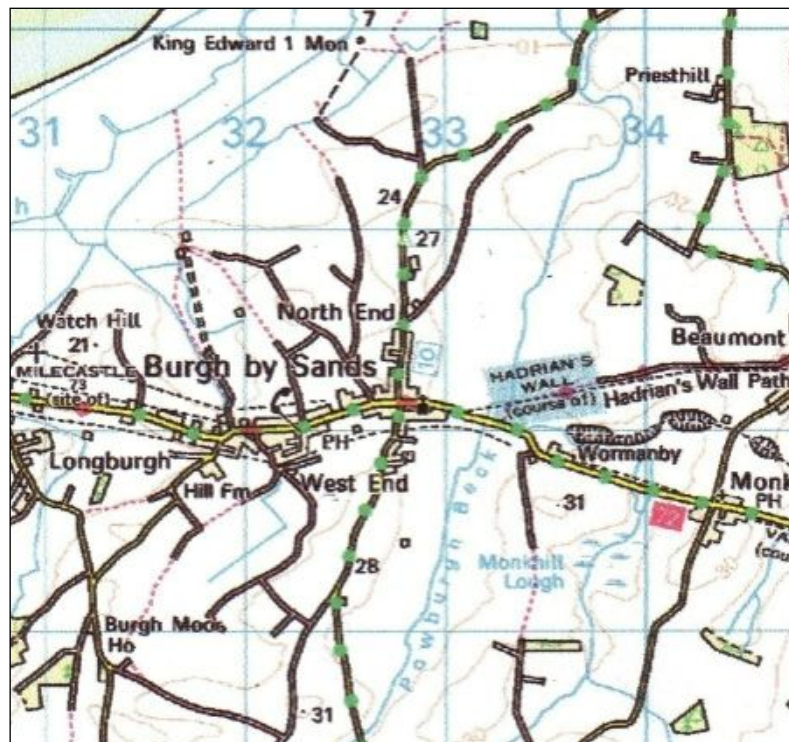


Figure 1. Location of study area

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Project Design**

In response to a request by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service, Gerry Martin Associates Ltd submitted a project design (Written Scheme of Investigation) for the archaeological recording of extant buildings. This document 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.

The project design on being accepted by the curatorial body, Gerry Martin Associates Ltd was commissioned to undertake the desk-based assessment and the archaeological survey by the client Mr Colin Jones.

The following report has been assembled to the relevant standards and protocols of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, combined with accepted best practice and in accordance with the brief prepared by the curatorial authority.

Fieldwork took place on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2009.

### **2.2 Desk-based assessment**

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

The physical study area centred on NY 32295 59056 comprising a 500m radius from the proposed development.

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

Carlisle Library provided sources for published works including newspaper articles, archaeological and antiquarian reports, photographs and journals.

Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle was sought for the earliest tithe map for the parish, details of landowners and occupiers and cartographic evidence.

The Historic Environment Record, online, provided the Sites and Monuments Record describing previous archaeological observations and electronic media showing the spatial distribution of these findings

### **2.3 Walk-over survey**

A walkover of the immediate vicinity of Midcroft House on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2009 did not suggest any upstanding monuments such as derelict buildings, walls or tofts existed. The garden at the rear of the house had been landscaped, creating a gradient that was lower to the south where the building footprint had considerably truncated any potential archaeological horizon.

The study building was inspected and the following observations were made of the interior:

- The fabric of the outbuilding was greatly altered being primarily of mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century date

*Archaeological Building Survey (Level III) for Midcroft, Burgh-by-Sands, Carlisle*

- The back wall was of clay dabbin and would appear to be of some antiquity albeit reduced in height and altered
- A side wall appeared also to be also of clay dabbin but was enclosed by later fabric, the fabric obscuring close inspection
- Roof joists appeared to be of traditional design but removed from their original provenance

It was understood from the client that the clay walls will be incorporated into the new development and will not be removed.

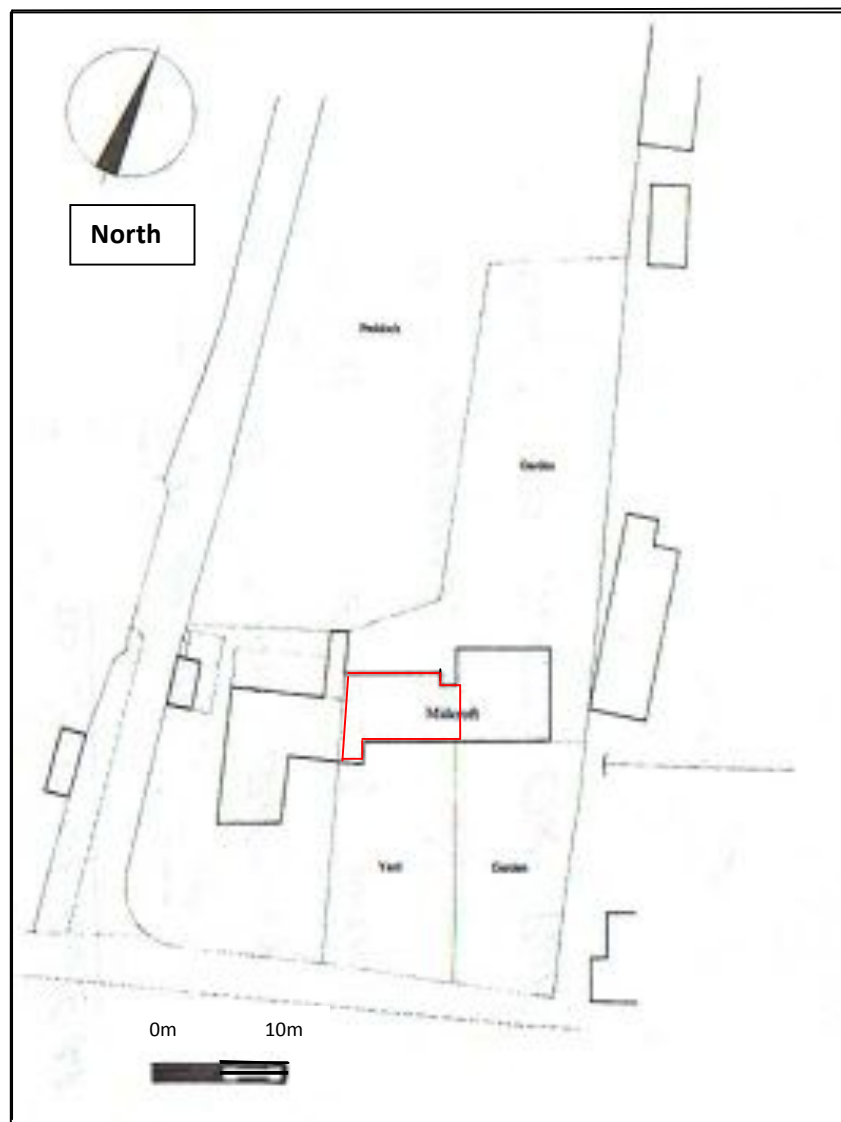


Figure 2. Location of study building in red outline

## 2.4 Archive

The archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design and the guidelines set out by English Heritage (1991) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994, 2007 and 2008).

The archive will be deposited with an appropriate repository and a copy of the report donated to the County Sites and Monuments Record, as requested by the curatorial authority.

### 3 BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Location, topography and geology

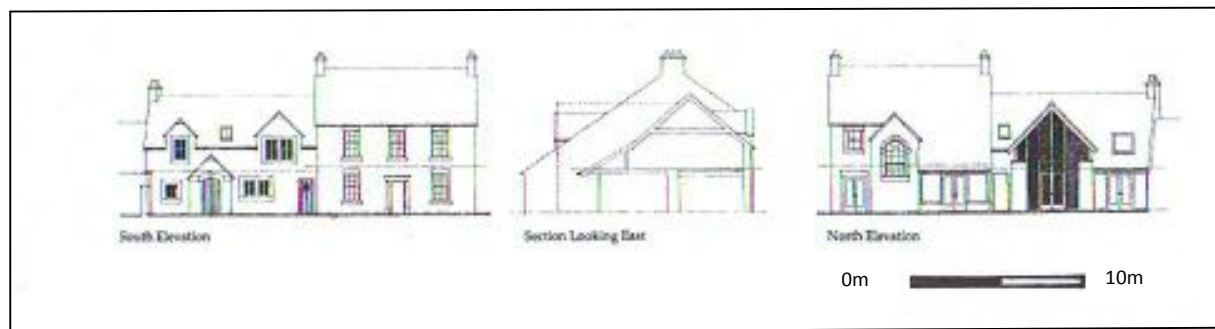
The study area NY 32295 59056 lies at a height of approximately 15.00m OD within the historic core of Burgh-by-Sands, a village noted for farmhouses fronting onto a main single street and stone buildings dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

The land to the north of Burgh-by-Sands forms Burgh Marsh whilst elsewhere pastoral farming is maintained.

The drift geology comprises pink Boulder Clay and yellow sands, the outwash from glacial activity between 2,000,000 and 10,000 years ago.

Solid geology is formed from Red Sandstone.

#### 3.2 Development proposals



*Figure 3. Proposed new building featured in the development.*

The development entails the extension of the existing building to the rear whilst maintaining virtually the same frontage onto the road.

The main alterations proposed that impact upon the potential archaeological record are

- Removal of a garage that protrudes forwards by 2.12m
- Reconstruction of the south elevation to facilitate extra light
- Removal of a modern store, toilet and utility room
- The construction in place of the above rooms with a dining room, utility and living room thereby doubling the accommodation area

To be retained within the development are two thick walls, believed to be of clay dabbin construction outlined in red on figure 4.

On completion of the development the building elevations will conform to figure 3 and the ground plan will adhere to figure 4.

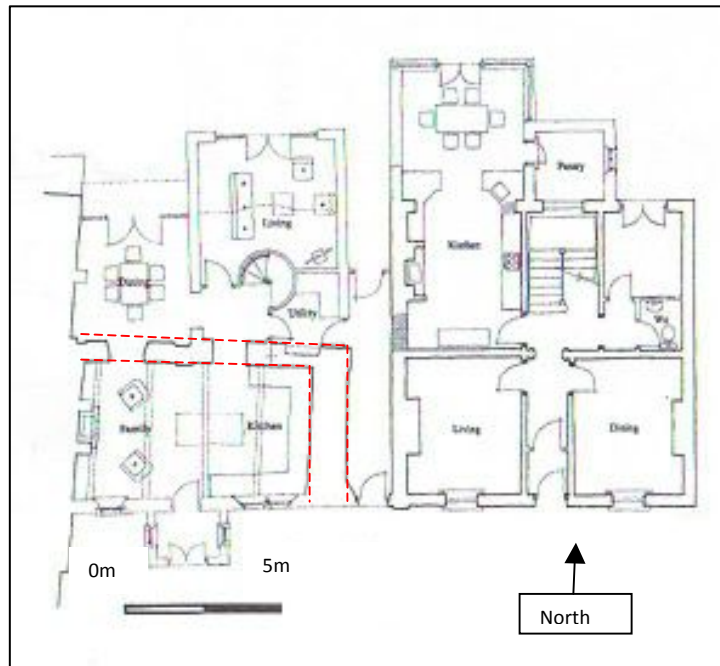


Figure 4. Ground plan of proposed development adjacent to Midcroft House

#### 4 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

##### 4.1 Historical background

Located in the midst of the modern village of Burgh-by-Sands, the study area NY 32295 59056 is sandwiched between the Vallum (Scheduled Monument 26119) to the south and the course of Hadrian's Wall (Scheduled Monument 26120) to the north.

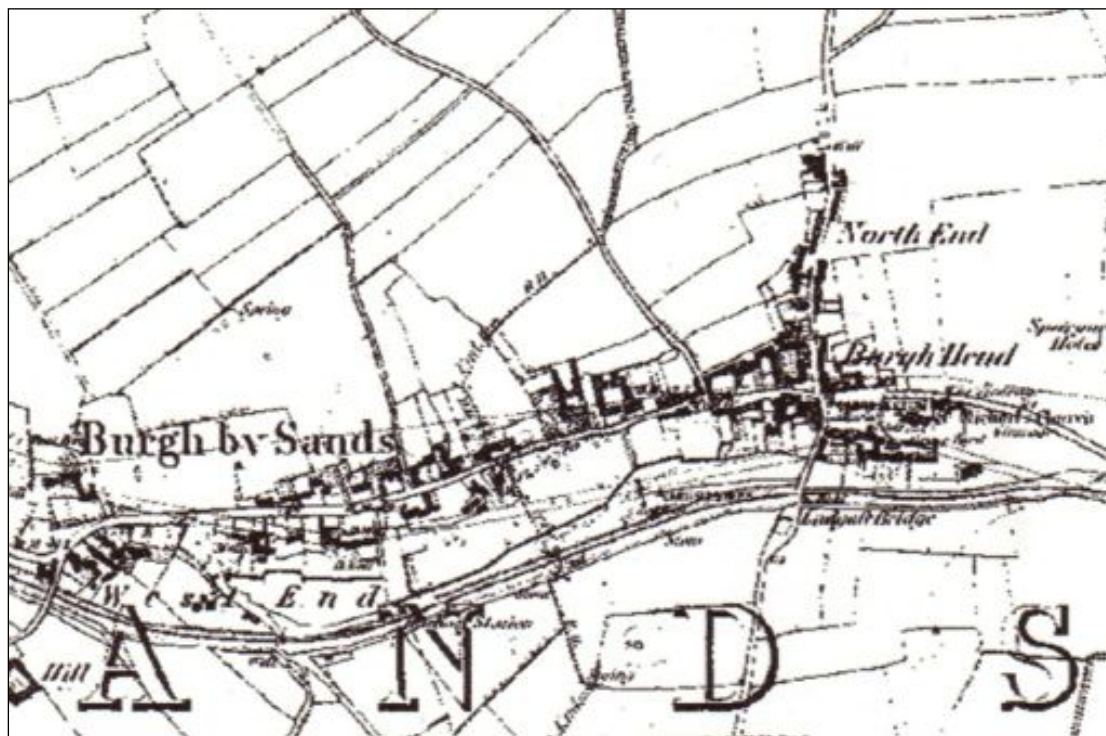


Figure 5. First Edition Ordnance Survey map from 1868



The study area lies outside of the Roman fort *Aballava* (HER 415), that formed part of a significant Roman settlement dating from the Hadrianic period which included a Severan *vicus* (HER 428), an area of industrial production (HER 41775) and Roman field systems (HER 41827 and 41828).

Midcroft House is illustrated on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1868 as a clay building.

Although not mentioned in Nina Jennings seminal work on clay dabbins (Jennings 2003), the study building forms part of an assemblage of clay-built structures that are traditional to the Solway Plain and congregate in the district of Burgh-by-Sands.

Jennings has suggested that this form of building dates from the fifteenth century constructed from a cruck-frame possibly continuing an earlier Viking or Scottish tradition (Jennings 2002, 24). A typical clay-built structure according to Jennings stands on a cobble plinth 0.40m in height with outside dimensions of approximately 15m x 6m. The walls are formed from pebbles and sand (80% aggregate) with a clay binder (20% of the total) strengthened with straw and stand to 2.3m in height with a ridge (apex of the roof) 5.3m in height (Jennings 2002, 20).

These buildings were simple in form and easy to construct utilising local materials and built with non-specialist tools. A description during the late eighteenth century detailing the construction method and its concomitant organisation suggests that building these structures was a communal affair utilising 20 to 30 people who would undertake the work as a favour within one to two days and then celebrate their effort with festivities provided by the client (Jennings 2002, 23).

## **5 DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 Academic merit**

Past cultural settlement in Cumbria has been predominantly rural, where farming has been the main economic driver and product. Increasingly, those features associated with past farming technique have been lost or converted for domestic or tourist use.

Documentary sources tend to neglect clay-built buildings as they were often later employed as out-buildings or barns or became dwellings for the poor who could not afford homes built in brick or stone.

A challenge to historians and researchers is to compile a record of those rural buildings that indicate past agricultural practice and social conditions before their industrial, agricultural and social context is lost.

## **6 RESULTS**

### **6.1 Methodology**

The buildings in the study area were surveyed on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2009 by Gerry Martin using a Disto measuring device and hand-held GPS equipment.

The buildings were fully accessible although natural light was restricted within the study buildings requiring flash photography.

The survey comprised of scaled photographic recording of the interiors and elevations of all the buildings, with detailed photography of any worthy architectural elements.

Using the architectural plans, notations were undertaken regarding the characteristics of these farm buildings, including metrical data, thresholds, materials and building techniques employed.

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

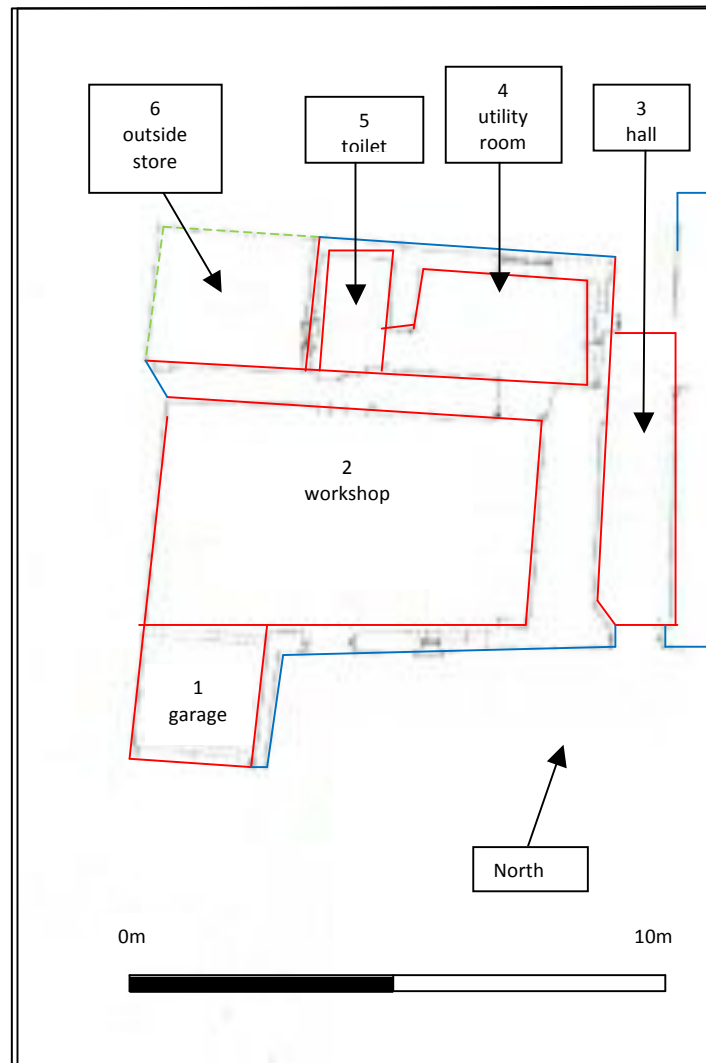


Figure 6. Location of rooms mentioned in the results section

## 6.2 Survey results; Room 1 (garage)

Room 1, a garage, comprises a rectangular ground plan 2.30m x 2.26m with a height of 2.18m rising to 2.82m.

The garage forms a small forward protruding modern annex built from red brick with a thickness of 0.23m to the east and a double thickness to the west where it forms a party wall. The walls were finished in pebble dash with a double door constructed in timber tongue and groove providing the main exit.

The roof was constructed in slate with iron guttering the floor was concrete.



Figures 7 and 8. Elevation showing garage doors and protruding annex

### **6.3 Survey results; Room 2 (workshop)**

Room 2 covered a rectangular ground plan measuring 6.99m x 3.78m that comprised of a concrete floor.

The roof consisted of two triangular timber roof trusses supported on brick columns. There was no indication of soot or blackening of the timbers or purlins suggesting despite the trusses being pinned by wooden dowels these timbers had been salvaged from another source.

The rafters within the roof were modern, the slates pinned to a modern felt membrane.

The roof stood to a height of 4.56m.



Figures 9 and 10. Roof trusses within Room 2 showing re-used timbers and purlins

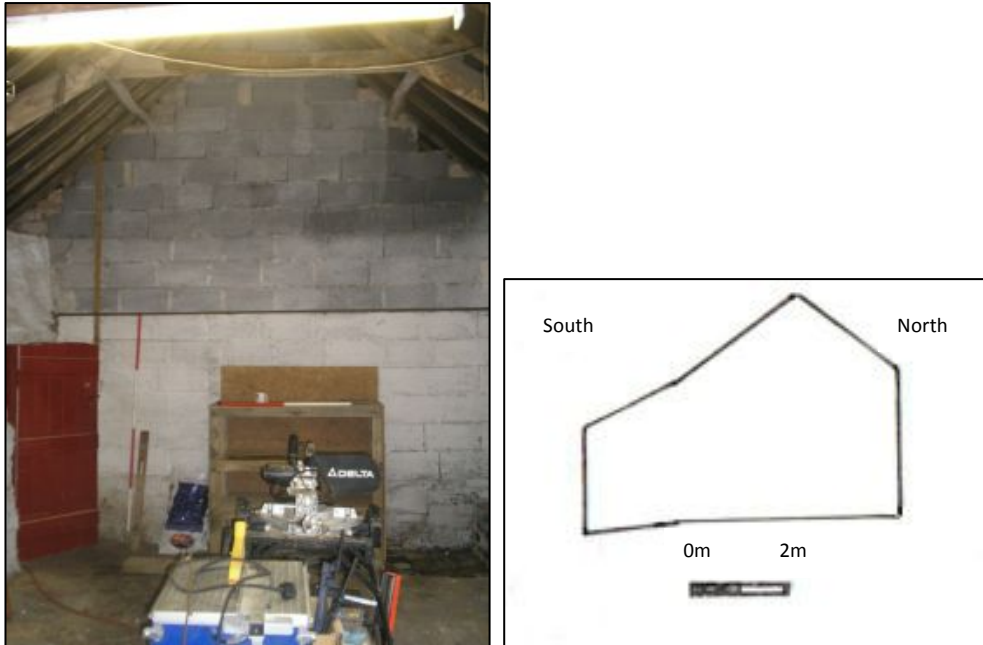
#### Internal elevations

##### *West wall*

This measured 6.33m in length and comprised whitewashed red brick (0.22m x 0.08m x 0.11m) laid in five courses of standard bond followed by a course of headers. The southern part of the wall rose from 2.00m to 2.78m in height before changing in pitch to a height of 4.50m before descending to a height of 2.99m.

*East wall*

The elevation comprised of nineteen courses of breeze blocks measuring 0.45m x 0.24m and formed a wall 3.77m in length standing to a height of 4.56m. The breeze blocks were whitewashed to a height of 1.96m and masked a probable daub wall sealed between the breeze blocks and plaster board observed in Room 3 that formed a partition up to 1.50m in thickness.



Figures 11 and 12. Elevation of east wall and profile of Room 2, western wall

*North wall*

The elevation measured 7.00m in length standing to a maximum height of 3.12m where the roof intervened.

The wall has been considerably altered in order to support the original clay dabbins wall (4). This wall occupied the upper part of the elevation measuring 7.00m in length and 1.35m in height and a thickness of 0.77m.



Figures 13 and 14. Western and eastern sections of clay dabbin wall, northern wall

At the western end of the elevation, the pale yellow clay dabbin was roughly finished and pock-marked. Straw was visible but a plaster finish or lime wash was negligible. Two iron hooks had been driven into the dabbin wall at a height of approximately 2.10m above the floor



Figures 15 and 16. Detail of clay dabbin wall and modern door, north wall

Stone or cobble was partially visible at the centre of the elevation the dabbin wall being covered in a thin white cement render whilst the eastern end had been finished with a smooth cement render. As no cross-section was available, the wall's construction could not be ascertained

Possibly, the dabbin wall was supported upon a stone plinth or dwarf wall comprising roughly hewn squared sandstone blocks painted white (2) towards the west but this relationship was lost or obscured by the insertion of a red brick wall (1) that was covered in white emulsion paint.

A timber door constructed using tongue and groove planks within a timber door jamb appeared to be a recent amendment although the overlying timber lintel may possess some antiquity.

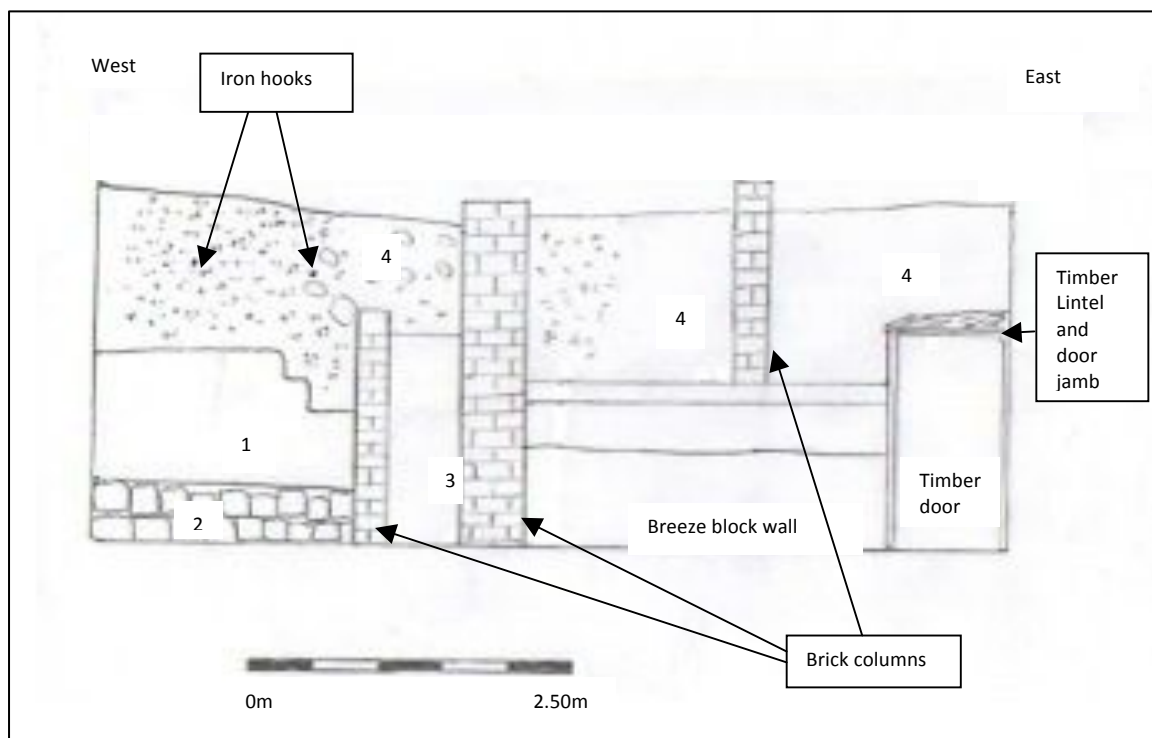


Figure 17. Elevation of north wall

Three brick columns were constructed of which the two tallest supported later roof trusses. This activity may have coincided with the insertion of a low modern breeze-block wall painted white that extended from the central column to the door jamb. The gap (3) between the western and central brick columns was filled with cement

### *South wall*

The elevation of the southern wall was also heavily altered but displayed no surviving evidence for a clay dabbin wall.

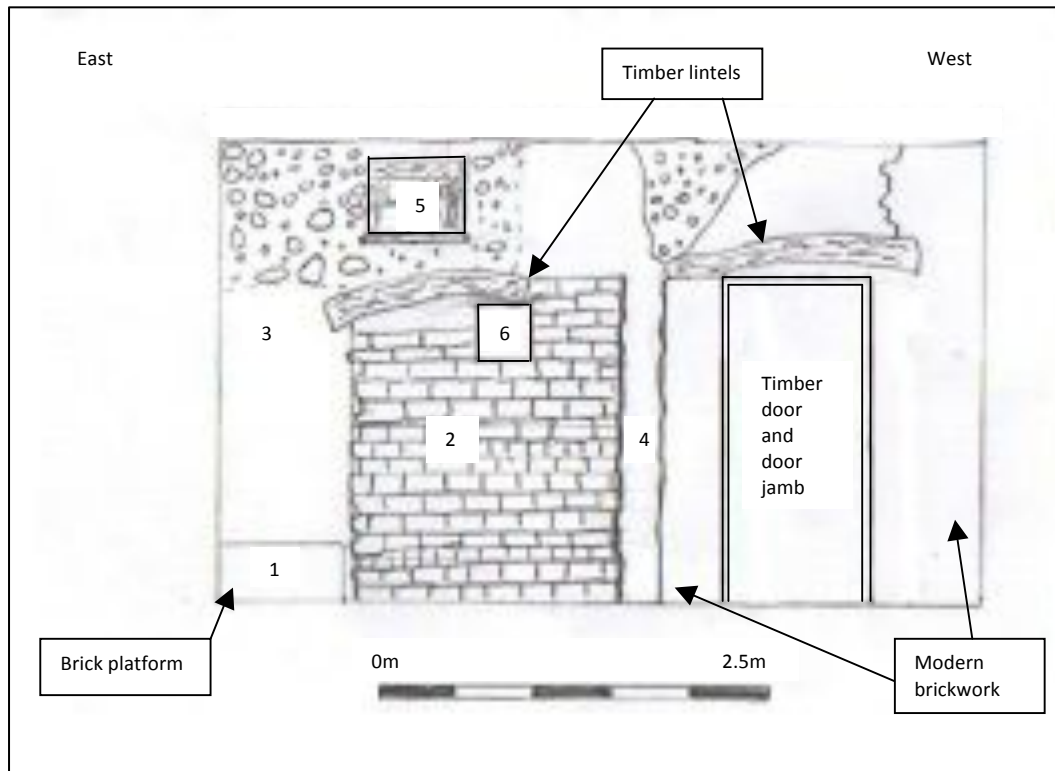


Figure 18. Elevation of southern wall

The earliest fabric within the elevation of the south wall was a cobble wall (3) standing to a height of 2.89m and approximately 4.10m in length. It comprised of large rounded stone cobbles circa 0.15m-0.20m in size and occasional dressed sandstone blocks coated in limewash with occasional spreads of extant plaster.

A possible lost northern return or partition was indicated by a short stub of stone wall (4) that measured 0.23m in thickness.

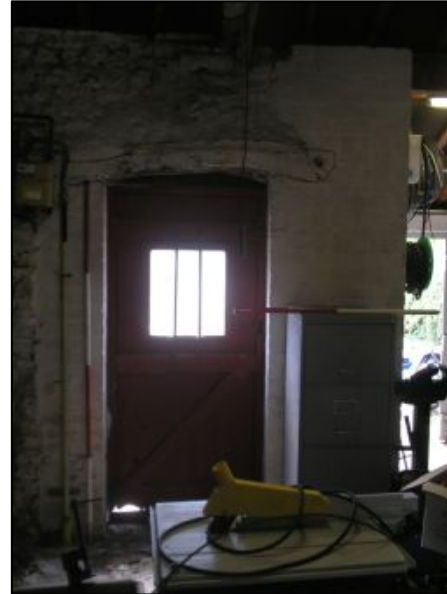
Within the elevation were a number of architectural features that had subsequently been filled with brickwork when they became redundant.

A window (5) measured 0.65m x 0.58m and possessed a plain wooden surround (no chamfering of the frame or embellishment) possessing possible wooden shutters. The window was unglazed, filled with brick and not visible from the outside.

A timber lintel (1.16m x 0.18m) indicated a lost entrance measuring 1.40m in width and 1.90m in height that had subsequently been filled with red bricks (2) painted white probably initiated during

the nineteenth century. A small glazed window (6) measuring 0.33m x 0.30m bearing a small wooden lintel was left within the additional brickwork.

A small brick plinth or platform (1) measuring 0.77m x 0.26m and 0.38m in height was constructed butting wall (3).



Figures 19 and 20. Eastern and western sections of southern wall elevation

The western side of the elevation had been considerably rebuilt probably when the garage was added. The wall was refurbished in red brick as a doorway with a timber tongue and groove planked door measuring 2.07m x 0.94m the central element beneath a timber lintel measuring 1.60m x 0.18m that may bear some antiquity.



Figures 21 and 22. Filled window and timber lintel above modern door, south wall

#### Southern elevation

The southern elevation measured 7.50m in length, 2.80m in height and 0.37m in thickness. The slate roof stood to a height of 4.48m and possessed stone ridge along the apex of the roof. The following elements were observed within the cement rendered elevation:

- A single window measuring 0.32m x 0.29m resting upon a stone lintel measuring 0.52m x 0.10m, 1.42m above the ground

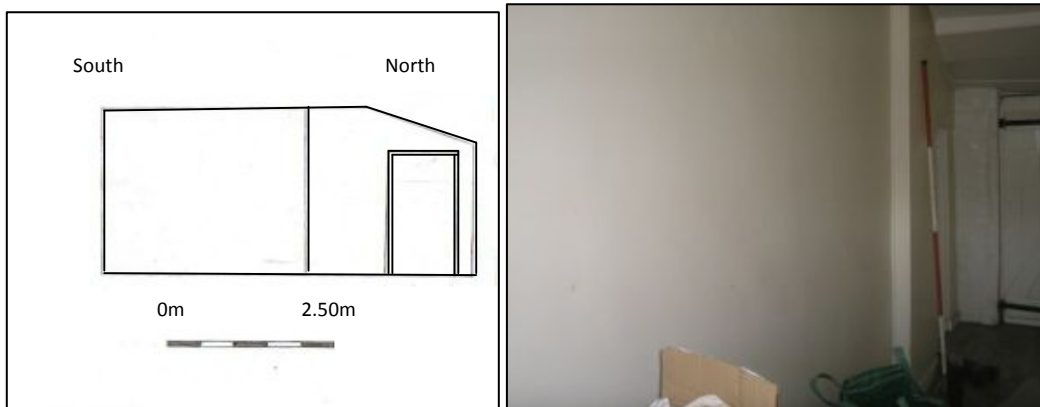
- An eastern door measuring 0.90m x 1.84m within a stone jamb 0.15m in thickness and surmounted by a stone lintel 0.18m in thickness. The timber door consisted of timber tongue and groove planks with two symmetrical 0.30m x 0.30m windows near the top of the door. Below the door were two stone steps, the bottom step measuring 1.32m x 0.14m the upper step 0.90m x 0.16m.
- A western timber door measuring 1.94m x 0.94m containing a central rectangular window 0.45m x 0.52m, 1.60m above the ground. The door was formed from timber tongue and grooved planks but was not within a formal door jamb



Figure 23. North elevation of study building showing garage, workshop and hall (Rooms 1-3)

#### 6.4 Survey results; Room 3 (hall)

A north-south hallway measured 5.45m in length and 1.46m in width adjoining Midcroft House with the main study area. At each end were two timber doors formed from tongue and groove planks.



Figures 24 and 25. Elevation of hidden clay dabbin wall behind western wall of hallway



The western wall was boxed in with plywood and painted white, the clay dabbin wall not being available for examination. Within this elevation was a stone door jamb measuring 1.02m in width and 1.88m in height containing a wooden tongue and groove door.



Figures 26 and 27. Hallway looking northwards and southwards

#### 6.5 Survey results; Room 4 (utility room)

The utility room (Room 4) measured 3.32m x 1.85m with a height between 1.54m and 2.03m. All the walls (thickness 0.42m-0.44m) within this structure were constructed from red brick finished in limewash and emulsion including the southern wall (24 courses high) that abutted onto a clay dabbin wall.

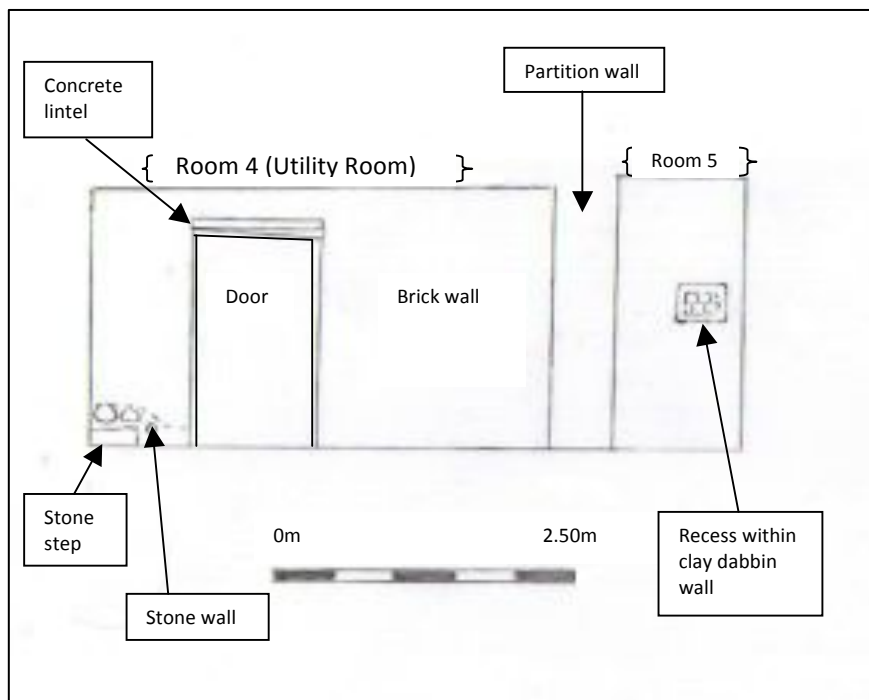
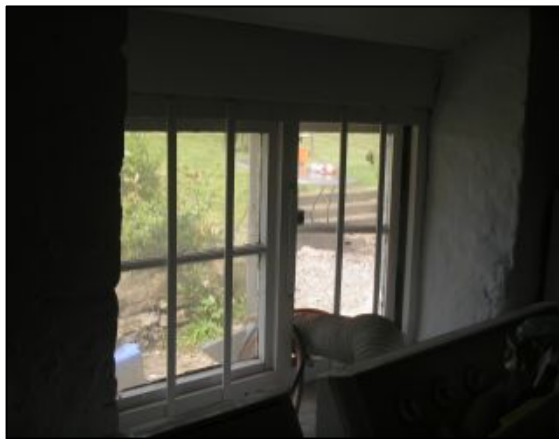


Figure 28. North facing elevation involving Rooms 4 and 5



Figures 29 and 30. Eastern and western partition walls within Room 4

A single stone step led into the utility room that contained a sink. The room possessed a modern double window measuring 1.05m x 0.82m facing north.



Figures 31 and 32. Window within utility room and elevation of lean-to building (Rooms 4 and 5)

#### North elevation

The northern elevation displayed the exit from Room 3 (hallway), Room 4 (utility room) and Room 5 a toilet.

Rooms 4 and 5 formed an outbuilding that abutted Room 2 (workshop) to the north measuring 5.75m in length and 2.25m in width. The outbuilding possessed an asbestos roof with a height varying between 1.50m and 1.80m rising to 2.45m where it adjoined the main building.

The outbuilding was constructed from a mixture of stone and red brickwork with red brick quoins obscured by white limewash and paint. The facade had been repointed and was of relatively modern date.

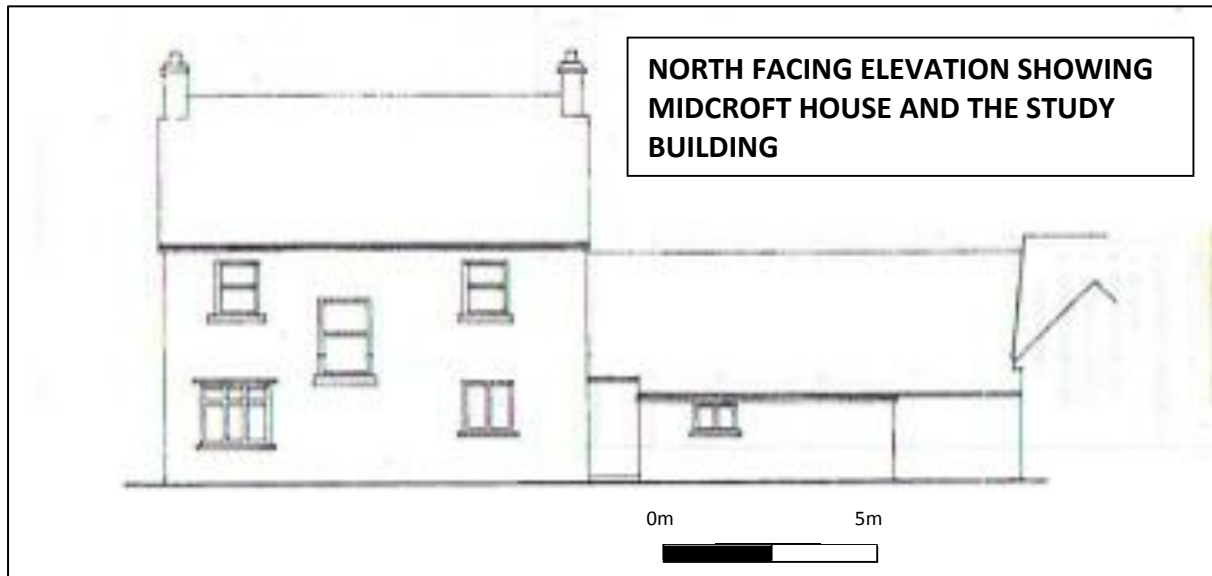


Figure 33. North facing elevation

#### 6.6 Survey results; Room 5 (toilet)

Room 5 measured 2.22m x 1.60m and stood to a height of between 1.76m and 2.14m containing a toilet, the western wall measuring 0.22m in thickness. The room was accessed through a doorway (no door present) measuring 0.67m in width and 1.95m in height

On the southern side of Room 5, a clay dabbin wall was heavily limewashed and exhibited a small square recess measuring 0.43m x 0.35m that had been filled in with brick.

On the northern side of Room 5, the stone wall was painted white.



Figures 34 and 35. Recess within clay dabbin wall and view of Room 5

#### 6.7 Survey results; Room 6 (outside store)

A lean-to at the rear of the study building comprised of an unsupported and dilapidated asbestos roof forming an extension of the slate roof that covered room 2. Brick walls from Room 5 and Room 2 and the party wall with the neighbouring building formed the three sides for this modern adjunct.

## **6.8 Phasing**

The assemblage of study buildings probably conform to six broad structural phases. These are summarised as follows:

1. A rectangular plan clay dabbins building, Room 2
2. The addition or replacement of the above building with a southern stone facade, Room 2
3. Nineteenth Century refurbishment and alterations, Room 2
4. Connection to Midcroft House, Room 3
5. Construction of outbuildings to the rear, Rooms 4, 5 and 6
6. Addition of a garage, Room 1

These structural phases are discussed below.

## **6.9 Discussion**

### *Phase 1*

The original building was a clay dabbins structure that now only survives as two walls; a northern and eastern wall enclosing an area at least 7.00m x 3.77m. The condition of the wall based on a partially obscured survey appears to be reasonable although the effects of remedial brickwork and other alterations may have compromised its integrity

No temporal date could be assigned to this structure although comparative study would suggest that the building was no later than the late eighteenth century. Its temporal relationship with Midcroft House is unclear but it would appear quite possible that it pre-dates the Midcroft House as the later construction of a rustic structure so close to a prestigious building maybe incongruous. Moreover, the slightly askew alignment with Midcroft House may infer an earlier establishment.

### *Phase 2*

Possibly contemporary with the construction of Midcroft House, the clay dabbin building was given a facelift with a stone facade replacing the southern elevation of the clay building and being architecturally in keeping with Midcroft House.

This probably was a two storied building with the roof space being utilised as an upper floor serving almost certainly as a barn with an entrance within the re-built southern elevation

### *Phase 3*

During the nineteenth century, the entrance and a window in the southern elevation were blocked with brick and become redundant. A small window that was also blocked, (located in the northern wall of Room 2) may also be associated with this action.

### *Phase 4*

The barn was formally connected to Midcroft House via a hallway. The conjoining structure was constructed from red brick probably during the twentieth century.

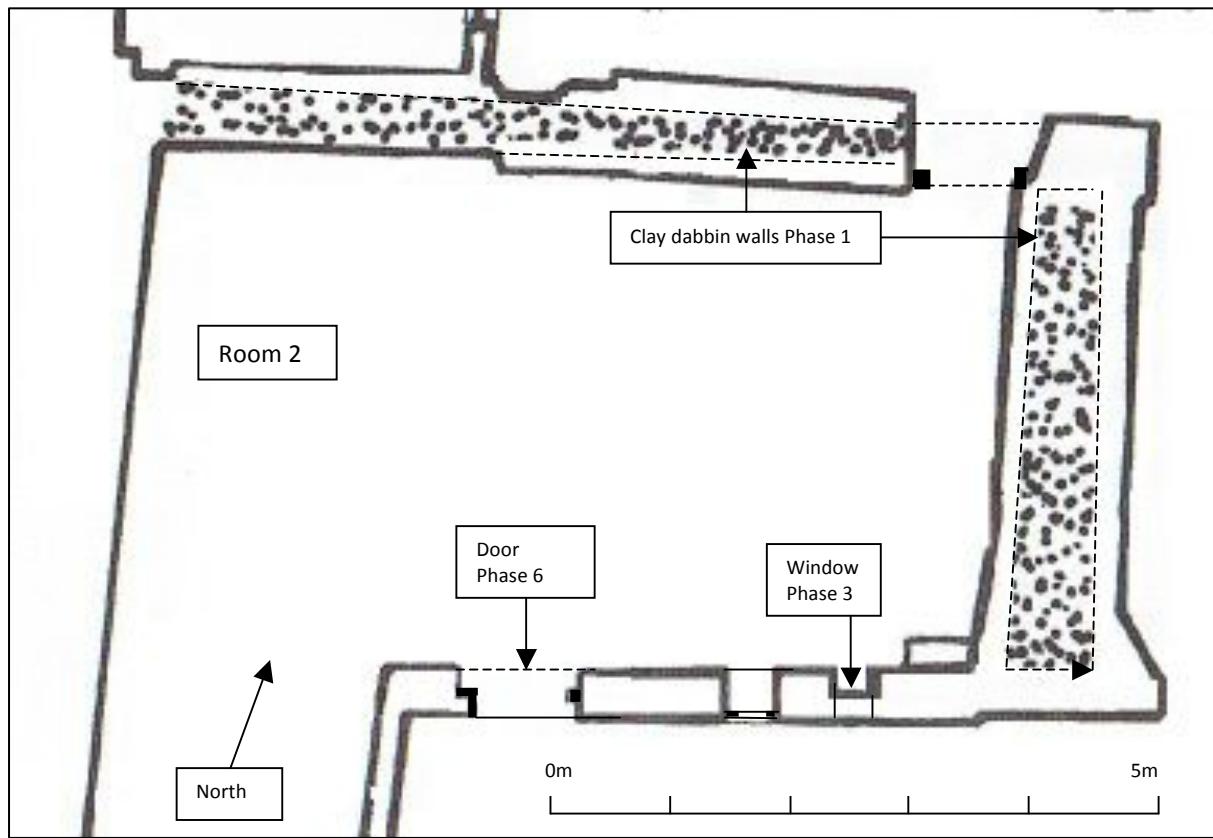


Figure 36. Plan of Room 2 (workshop)

#### Phase 5

A range of lean-to buildings (Rooms 4-6) were added to the north of Room 2. The utility room and toilet were built in modern or recycled materials probably during the early to mid twentieth century.

#### Phase 6

A garage was added at the front of the building during the mid twentieth century. This necessitated the partial reconstruction in brick of the southern elevation with a protruding salient that could accommodate a motor car.

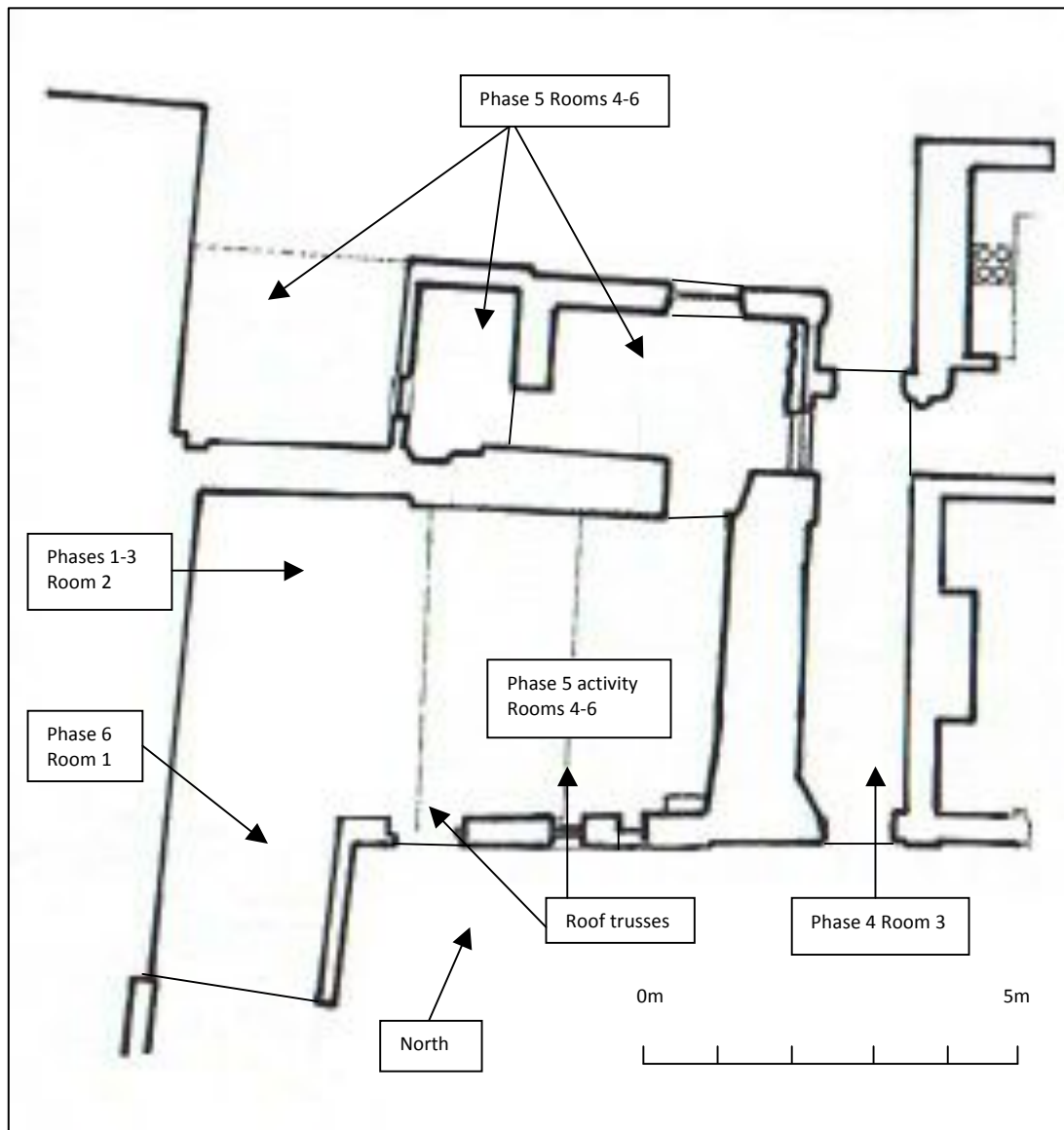


Figure 37. Plan of study buildings

## 7 ARCHIVE

The archive for this project will be deposited with the appropriate archaeological curator, Tullie House, Carlisle. This archive has been assembled in accordance within the protocols of Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2).

## 8 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Mr Colin Jones for his assistance with the fieldwork and commissioning the work. I would also like to thank Jeremy Parsons for his help and guidance with the archaeological brief, 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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**APPENDIX A**

**Check list of task required for a Level 3 Building Survey**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Task (written)</b>	<b>Located in section</b>
1	Location of building NGR and address	1.1
2	Any statutory designation or listing	1.1
3	Date record made, name of recorders	6.1
5*	Table of contents and illustrations	Pages 1-2
6	A summary of form, function, date and development	6.2-6.8
7	An introduction setting out the circumstances and limitations of the project	2.1
8	Acknowledgments to all involved	8
9	A discussion of published sources and a critical evaluation of previous records	4.1
11	An account of the building's overall form and its successive development	6.2-6.8
12	An account of past and present uses of the building and its parts	3.2
13	Any evidence of the existence of demolished structures	n/a
14*	Summary of any specialist reports	n/a
16*	An assessment of the potential for further research	6.8
18*	Any historic maps or illustrations	4.1
19*	Copies of other records concerning the building	n/a
20*	Any further information from documentary sources	n/a
22	Full bibliographic and other references and sources	9
23*	A glossary of architectural or other terms	n/a
	<b>Task (drawing)</b>	-
2	Measured plans to scale	2.1, 6.2-6.4, 6.6
3*	Measured drawings recording the form or location of other significant structural detail	n/a
4*	Measured cross-sections, long-sections or elevational sections within the building	n/a
5*	Measured drawings showing the form of any architectural decoration	n/a
6*	Measured elevations	6.2-6.4
7*	A site plan relating the buildings to other structures	6.6
8*	A plan identifying the direction of photography	n/a
9*	Copies of earlier historical drawings	n/a
10*	Three-dimensional projections	n/a
11*	Reconstruction and phased drawings	6.2-6.4
12*	Flow diagrams interpreting movement or segregation	n/a
	<b>Tasks (photographic)</b>	-
1	A general view of the buildings	6.2-6.4
2	The buildings external appearance	6.2-6.4
3	Views of the building that may express its original use	n/a
4	Pictures of rooms and transit areas	6.3
5	Detailed views of architectural or decorative features	n/a
6	Any machinery or plant	n/a
7	Any dates or inscriptions	n/a
8	Any building content or ephemera that characterise its use	n/a
9	Copies of maps, drawings or pictures within the building	n/a

\* optional dependent on relevance to the study subject

n/a = not applicable