

UPPER FLOOR



North Gatehouse interior roof modern but some old timbers have been re-used

Original features

Few of Tasset's bastles retain original masonry on the upper floor. Most have been extensively or partially rebuilt to provide more and larger windows, or have been robbed of stone. Additional doorways have also been inserted.

Two of the Tasset bastles, Black Middens 1 and North Gatehouse, are an exception. They have original masonry to the full height of their walls and retain most of their original features.

Access to upper floor

The upper floor of bastles was accessed either by a ladder or internal stairway from the byre. External stone stairways were added later.

Both Black Middens and North Gatehouse retain doorways on the upper floor which may have been reached by a retractable timber ladder or stair. The later stone steps are not bonded into the main structure.

The upper room

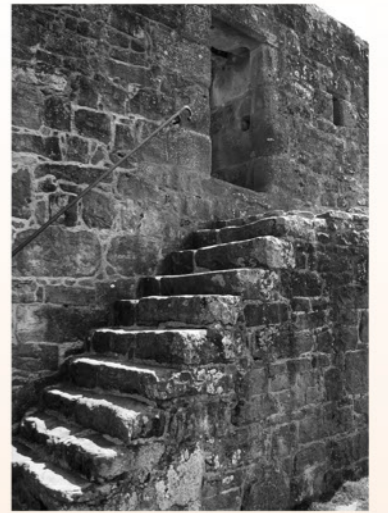
The upper floor consists of a single living space, although the presence of some wall recesses and ventilation slits at a high level suggests there may have been loft spaces as well.

The small windows, in the front walls only, give very limited light, view and field of fire. They would have been little use for keeping watch or for defence.

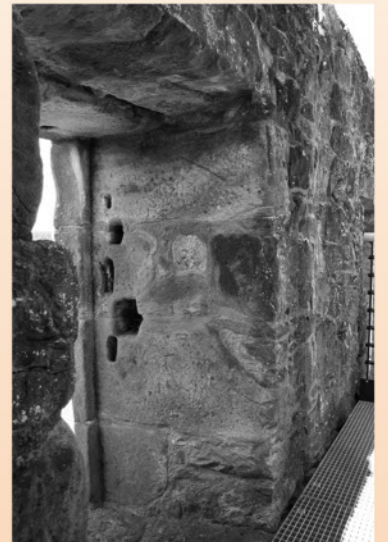
Bastles are often described as fortified farmhouses, but in reality seem more suitable as places of refuge to store valuables or sit out an attack - like a modern air-raid shelter.



Black Middens 1 interior side walls set back to accommodate floor joists; a surviving roof timber on right; recesses in walls for storage at various levels



Black Middens 1 external steps and upper doorway; inner hinge side of door visible, with single drawbar tunnel; sockets for bars in lintel



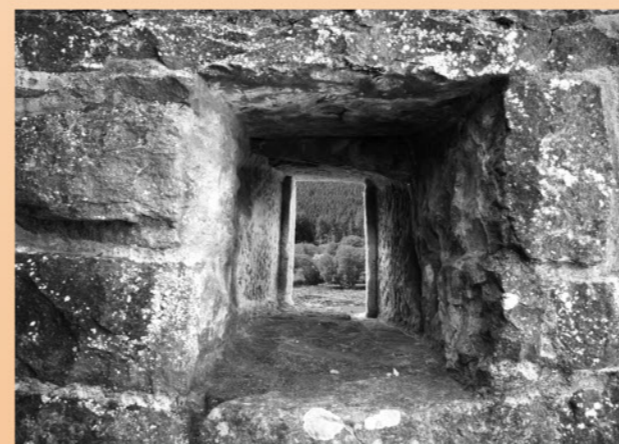
Black Middens 1 close-up of other side of same doorway showing drawbar socket and cutouts for later locks; massive stones in door jamb



North Gatehouse window possibly re-used from another building



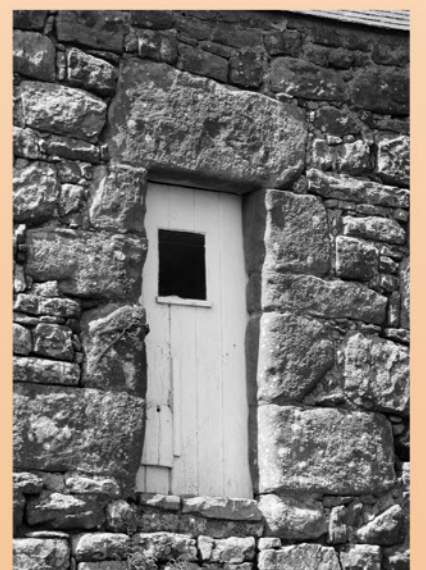
North Gatehouse window and ventilation slit



Black Middens 1 window showing limited external view



North Gatehouse steps built in two stages; first forming rectangular platform below doorway; lower section added later



North Gatehouse doorway with particularly heavy lintel