

Tarset Castle A0004

Site Type	fortified house
Site Name	Tarset Castle
Other Name(s)	
Ownership	Tarset Hall, Tarset, Hexham, NE48 1JY
Related Sites	

LOCATION

National Grid Reference	NY 7885 8545	Km Square	NY 7885
TAG 2006 Atlas: Map	M1	Air Photo. No	Run F--OS/74062--107

Modern Parish	Tarset
Historic Parish & Township	Bellingham -- Charlton West

LISTINGS

Scheduled Ancient Monument	1015528	Listed Grade II* NHLE	1156449
National Monument Record	78 NE 07	English Heritage Pastscape	15682
Historic Environment Record	6995	Tarset & Greenhaugh HVA	4
Grundy	TAR 58	Tarset & Greystead Books	LX-40

EVIDENCE

Remains extant. See also Historic Environment Record for more details.
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DESCRIPTION

<p>The monument includes the remains of the fortified residence known as Tarset Castle, situated upon a steep sided promontory commanding the valley of the Tarset Burn to the north and the North Tyne to the west, south and east. The promontory is surrounded by a substantial artificially dug ditch on the east and south sides 20m wide and on average 5m deep. The remaining two sides are bounded by steep banks which have the appearance of having been artificially scarped for added defence. The fortified house occupies the eastern half of the promontory and is largely visible as the grassed over remains of a rectangular structure, oriented north to south. Standing masonry is visible to a maximum height of 1.5m at the north east and the south east corners of the structure standing upon the uncovered remains of a stone plinth. This masonry is thought to represent two of the four square corner turrets known to exist at Tarset Castle. A sketch of the house in 1773 shows it to be a long narrow rectangular building with square turrets at each of the four corners surrounded by a stone wall of the same shape.</p> <p>The monument was partly explored by excavation in 1888 but no records of the findings were left. It is thought that there is a timber palisade on the inner edge of the ditch and that there must have been a bridge across the ditch to give access to the house. [NHLE]</p>
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TARSET ARCHIVE GROUP SITE RECORD
IMAGES



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NOTES

The fortified house has a long-documented history: John Comyn was given licence to crenellate his residence here with a stone wall and a ditch in 1267, the earliest surviving licence to do so in Northumberland. It was clearly a site of some importance, situated as it is above the North Tyne and the Tasset fords and hence also commanding traffic on two old routeways. In 1523 the fortified house was occupied by Sir Ralph Fenwick and 80 men but was taken and burnt in 1525. [NHLE].

Active landslipping of the North slope above the Tasset Burn poses a threat to the castle mound and the remnants of the building. In 2007 the site owner with the support of the Tasset Archive Group advised English Heritage of the deteriorating condition of the site. In 2009 English Heritage awarded funding for surveys and ground investigations which were carried out during the summer by White Young Green. Further investigations and designs for possible remedial works were carried out by Patrick Parsons Ltd. in 2013. TAG hold copies of the reports of these investigations and various site appraisals.

Trial excavations of the site were carried out in 2015 by Durham Archaeological Services.

Remedial works to the left bank of the Tasset burn are being carried out in 2015 by the Tyne Rivers Trust.

REFERENCES

	<p>Hope-Dodds, M. (1940). <i>A History of Northumberland (Simonburn, Rothbury, Alwinton)</i>. 15. Newcastle upon Tyne. [NCH XV]</p> <p>Mackenzie, E. 1825, <i>An Historical, Topographical and Descriptive View of the County of Northumberland...</i> Newcastle upon Tyne.</p> <p>The following documents have been found recently in the Northumberland Archives:</p> <p>SANT/BEQ/2/1/1/20D <i>In Album of drawings by Robert Blair, presented to SANT August 1923. Ruins of Tasset Castle</i></p> <p>SANT/BEQ/12/1/145B An ink drawing of a broken key, as shown on the TAG display board.. Possibly the original of an illustration in <i>Archaeologia Aeliana</i>.</p> <p>SANT/PLA/3/2/7 <i>Underground Passage at Tasset Hall.[rough plan]</i></p>	
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