

Old Hall Farm A0243

Site Type	bastle – within farmstead
Site Name	Old Hall Farm
Other Name(s)	Thorneyburn Old Hall
Ownership	Old Hall Farm, Tarset, Hexham NE48 1AW
Related Sites	

LOCATION

National Grid Reference	NY 7630 8635	Km Square	NY 7686
TAG 2006 Atlas : Map	L2	Air Photo. No	Run-E--OS/74062--072

Modern Parish	Tarset
Historic Parish & Township	Thorneyburn -- Thorneyburn

LISTINGS

Scheduled Ancient Monument	x	Listed	x
National Monument Record	78 NE 25	English Heritage Pastscape	1388082
Historic Environment Record	7007	HVA	x
Grundy	TAR 45	Tarset & Greystead Books	MM-34 LX-32

EVIDENCE

Farmstead extant. Internal evidence for bastle remains.

DESCRIPTION

A standard two-storey three-bay house with a boarded door and renewed 4-pane sash windows all in original openings. The front (facing south) is coursed roughly dressed stone with ashlar dressings. The rear is random rubble. Welsh slate roof (renewed c.2012) The rear and left end walls are c.40 inches thick and clearly represent the remains of a bastle house. They contain large irregular boulders and much galleting. [After Grundy 1987]

Recent renovations of the house c.2008 have revealed a complete bastle doorway in the left end wall (behind the fireplace) and also wide foundations under the right-hand front window. A ground plan was made in March 2010 by P.F. Ryder showing that the end wall was aligned with the adjacent outbuildings and not with the present house. There are also projecting footings at the north-west corner.

Peter Ryder reported as follows: -

... the greater part of the west end wall, between the house and the adjacent range of farm buildings, is clearly the west end of a bastle. Only visible from within the outbuilding and set at a markedly skew angle to the remainder of the house, it is a good 1.5m thick and built of typical bastle fabric. Centrally set is a square-headed doorway with a 'Scottish' roll-moulded surround (cf. Falstone Farmhouse A0083, South Gatehouse A0002, and Ridge End A0079), Harr sockets in sill and lintel against the south jamb, and drawbar tunnels, [in one of which a glazed pot was found]. Above it is what looked like a quenching hole a square opening (now infilled) framed by four larger

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stones, then above that a bastle window, an upright rectangle with a single large block as each jamb. The outer part of the doorway now forms an open recess, with a thick stone shelf clearly a later secondary insertion; the inner part is blocked forming the back wall of the fireplace to the main living room in the house.

The southern third of the wall is thinner, (1.0m) and may have been rebuilt. It contains a second doorway, blocked, with a timber lintel. It is also possible that bastle fabric may survive in the western half of the north wall of the house, which is slightly thicker than the other walls (0.80m) as against c0.65m and has some large irregular blocks in it (beneath a wide c20th window. To the left (west) an L-shaped range of outbuildings described by Grundy as of two different builds, those nearest the house being older than the present facade. The outbuildings include a room, possibly a former dairy with a fireplace (opposite the bastle door) with finely carved jambs. There is also a cow shed or stable with original and much-worn timber stalls.

The single storey range of outbuildings to the west of the house is of considerable interest. Its walls are c0.65-0.70m thick, of roughly coursed rubble with large and irregular but well-squared quoins. It is divided into two compartments; the western has clearly been a byre, with a pair of opposed doorways and slit vents; the eastern has a plan doorway on the south and no windows at all, yet in the centre of its west wall has a sophisticated fireplace which poses quite a puzzler. Set within a square outer frame of parallel tooled ashlar, the inner frame is chamfered and its jambs carved with foliage in relief.; the grate is set within neatly shaped cheeks. Is it a late 18th century or early 19th century piece and what is it doing here in a farm building? it looks far more like the sort of fireplace that would grace the parlour of a small but relatively polite house. The remainder of the range, extending a little further west and then turning south is clearly of 19th century date, its southern block only appears on the 2nd edition (c.1895) O.S. 1:2500 plan. A small, detached block, (now a garage) to the south of it has rough rubble walls, albeit of no great thickness) and looks quite ancient, although it preserves no old features; it seems to have been part of a longer north-south range shown on the 1st edition map (1862) but is completely omitted from the 2nd edition (surely an error), reappearing on the 3rd of 1922.

IMAGES

TAG holds copies of a number of plans of this farmstead.

NOTES

Previous investigators, including PFR had expressed doubts about the bastle origin of this site, but recent evidence has dispelled these doubts. This site is worthy of more detailed study, which, ideally should be carried out before any further alterations are made.

REFERENCES

	Grundy, J. (1987). <i>The Historic Buildings of the Northumberland National Park</i> .	
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