

PENDLE ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

Wycoller Landscape project



A Report on a survey of the barn at Bank House, Wycoller, Trawden

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Site

- Record No. - AB.05
- Location – Bank House, Wycoller
- NGR – SD 9370 3858
- Altitude – 825 feet contour (251m)
- Orientation of barn door – single door facing north-west
- Date of survey – 10th July 2019

Description of Building

The barn is made up of three bays with external walls of coursed watershot stonework. The roof is covered in grey slate set on purlins and two oak queen post trusses forming three bays. Byres were positioned at each side of the inset barn door entered only from the north-west. Galleries were formed over each byre extending as far as the truss line. The floor surface opposite the barn doors extending to its width is paved. The quality of the building is high and it probably dates to around 1775.

The barn was erected in a restricted site between an earlier cottage of probable 17th century date and a two storied outbuilding which is almost certainly contemporary with the barn. It is likely that there was an earlier smaller now demolished barn on part of the site. An outbuilding is sited adjacent.

Historical Record

Map regression gives the following evidence:

1844. 6 inch



The site is described as Bank`s House¹.

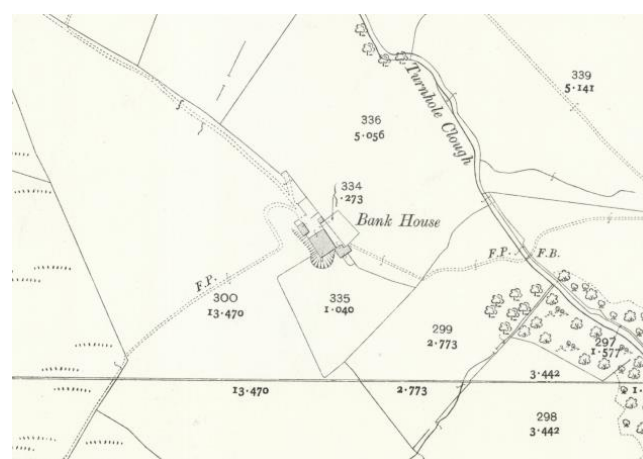
A trackway is shown up to the site crossing Wycoller Beck by the Clam Bridge and rising up the hillside across two fields to join a trackway running to the farm. An enclosure is shown to the south of the building identified as the barn. To the north is another building, probably a barn, alongside the eastern field boundary. Within the enclosure is a large cottage with a small garden adjoining a small building, which from its size it is unlikely to be a dwelling. The changes in level to the west and south of the barn are not shown.

1893. 1:2500



The barn is identified as before but seems to be in slightly different position with a much smaller building to the north. The cottage is shown to be different in size with a garden to the south-east. The large building to the north is not shown, nor are the change of levels adjoining the barn.

1888-1913. 1:2500



The site is described as Bank House.

Access is as before but a trackway with a loop, is shown to the west. This barn (shaded) is shown but at different proportions to the earlier map, which does not represent its present dimensions. The barn is shown incorrectly attached to the cottage, which now has an

extension to the east. The two storied outbuilding is now shown together with the small building to the north. An enclosed area of land is described to the east of the barn. The change in ground levels to the east and south of the barn are indicated.

1932. 1:250

The map is similar to the previous one except that the enclosed land to the east of the barn is omitted.

1963. 1:2500

The map is similar to that of 1932.

The recent maps do not reflect the proportion and siting of the barn in relation to the adjoining cottage.

Setting

The building is part of a group of buildings forming the farm Bank House and is situated in the township of Wycoller. The original farmhouse, now ruinous, is probably 17th century in date and likely to have had a loom shop on its first floor. A further two storied building to the north-west of the site provides accommodation on the ground floor for a two stall stable and a piggery with an outer enclosure. On the first floor there was probably a poultry house with pigeon loft (pl. 10). The present barn occupies the space between and is probably on the site of an earlier barn and farm yard. In practical terms the size of the barn is too great for the site.

The buildings are set on a platform cut into the hillside with access to the first floor poultry house entered at ground level. Access to the barn is restricted to the north-west and there is limited space at the rear. The cottage is sited close to the rear wall and is not attached as shown on some OS maps (Pl.9).

The farm is situated at the limit of the enclosed pasture to the west of the valley. A progression of field enclosure would have followed after the establishment of Copy House Farm to the north-west. The fields adjoining the farm are steep in many places but level out to the north-west.

Plan (Fig. 1)

The plan of the barn is a true rectangle measuring 11.140m (36.53ft) by 9.300m (30.51ft) internally. A wagon entrance is formed within the width of the central bay with internal flanking walls and inset doors facing north-west. A doorway is placed in the wall opposite to the barn doors

Cattle stalls were set out in the two outer bays with entrances set in the north-west elevation only (pl. 6 and 7). Unusually, a change in level of some 550mm occurred between the north

east bay and the two bays to the south west. Three risers have been formed adjacent to the south-east wall at the change in level. A dwarf wall with a rounded stone capping was built on the floor to the central bay at this point. A slot is cut in the wall adjacent to the barn doors. Hay lofts were formed over the cattle stalls to both end bays.

The central bay is paved with fine stone flags and a doorway was formed in this bay opposite the barn doors.

Two recesses are formed in the north east gable wall either side of a window, together with one in the south-west gable wall. These could have provided a shelf on which to place a lantern.

The outbuilding, described above, is entered from the yard in front of the barn with doorways in the both gable walls.

External Walling (Pl. 1, 2, 3 and 4)

The four external walls are built of coursed watershot stone to a high standard. The inner face of the walling is of random stonework. All masonry is constructed with lime mortar. The external quoins are in dressed stone. The heads and jambs to the doorways are in dressed stone and stone thresholds are formed. Vents are placed at high level in the gable walls.

Other vents are placed in the side wall and gable walls. Evidence of recent damage has occurred to the south-east wall in six regular places where attempts have been used to remove masonry, probably surrounding the vents.

The masonry to the north-east gable walls is stepped twice at its lower courses. It was not possible to see if the south-west wall was constructed in a similar manner.

An oak beam is positioned over the barn doors with pivot holes evident to each leaf (Pl.8).

The Roof (Pl. 5)

The roof is constructed of grey stone slates with a stone ridge set on sawn spars and purlins bearing on two equally spaced queen post trusses. Many of the purlins appear to have been reused, especially to the two south-west bays along with some rectangular sawn members. The trusses are of oak and made up of timbers of a substantial size. These timbers would not have been available locally and this would have required a considerable amount of effort in transporting them to site. Timber gutters are fixed at eaves level supported on curved wrought iron brackets to both elevations.

The span of the roof trusses at 9.300m compares with the span of the king post trusses at Bracken Hill and Parson Lee farms at some 8.400m. This greater span necessitated the use of a queen post truss.

Discussion

The barn is one of the finest in the Wycoller township and was built around 1775, probably by Henry Owen Cunliffe, who inherited the Wycoller estate in 1773. The location is somewhat surprising as it is built on a restricted site with only one access from the north-west, which faces the barn doors. It is also built at one of the least accessible and highest altitude farms in the valley.

The barn is still in its original condition and does not appear to have been altered in any way. The adjoining building of several uses has no present parallel in the valley and is in its original condition. .Due to its size and location the barn and outbuilding could only have formed part of a larger estate. Their condition is good although the barn has received some damage due to the removal of stone for reuse.

It is recommended that the building be submitted for Statuary Listing.

Notes

- 1 The group of buildings where the farm is located is called Bank`s House. It is likely that the genitive case is used as it refers to the name of the family occupying the farm. The same instance occurs at the adjacent properties of Raven`s Rock and Foster`s Leap.

Acknowledgements

Plates 3 and 4 are reproduced with acknowledgement to D R Morris.

D J A Taylor & D R Morris



Pl.1 The barn and outbuilding from the north-west



Pl. 2 The north-east gable wall



Pl. 3 The barn and outbuilding from the south-west



Pl. 4 The barn and cottage from the south-east



Pl. 5 The roof structure



Pl.6 The interior showing cattle stalls and change in floor level
looking towards the south-east internal wall



Pl. 7 The interior of the north-east gable wall, showing bearings for the hayloft over the cattle stalls and wall recesses



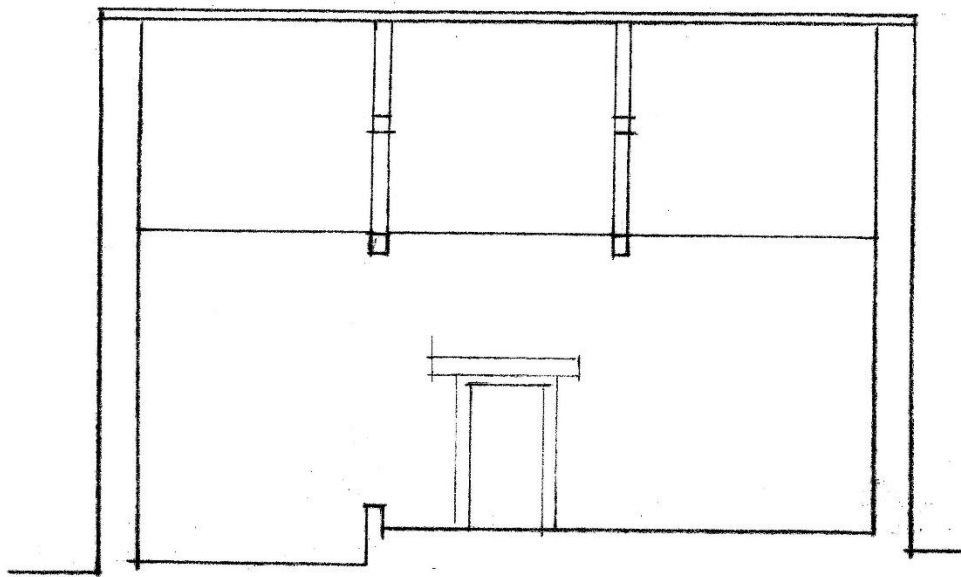
Pl. 8 Beam over barn doors showing socket for pivot



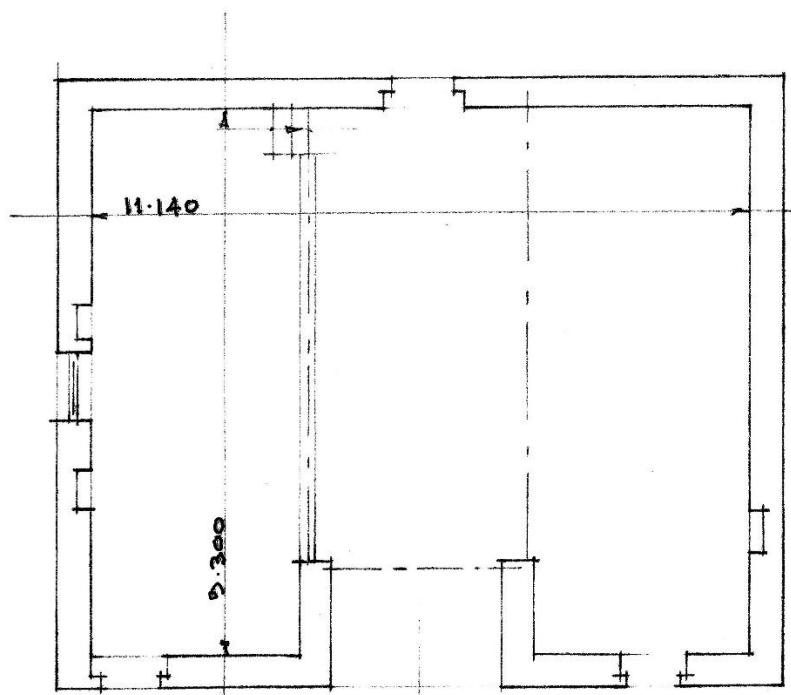
Pl. 9 The cottage to the east of the barn. Note that there is a gap of several metres between the buildings



Pl.10 Detail of the entry to the pigeon loft to the outbuilding



Section through the barn looking to the east



Plan

Scale 1:100

Fig. 1 Plan and section through the barn