

PENDLE HERITAGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

Wycoller Landscape Project



A Report on a Survey of Pepper Hill Barn, Wycoller

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Site

- Record No. AB02
- Location – Pepper Hill Barn, Wycoller
- NGR – 9325 3931
- Altitude – 215 m
- Orientation of barn doors – flush barn doors are placed in the east and west facing external walls
- Date of Survey – 9th March 2013

Description of the Building

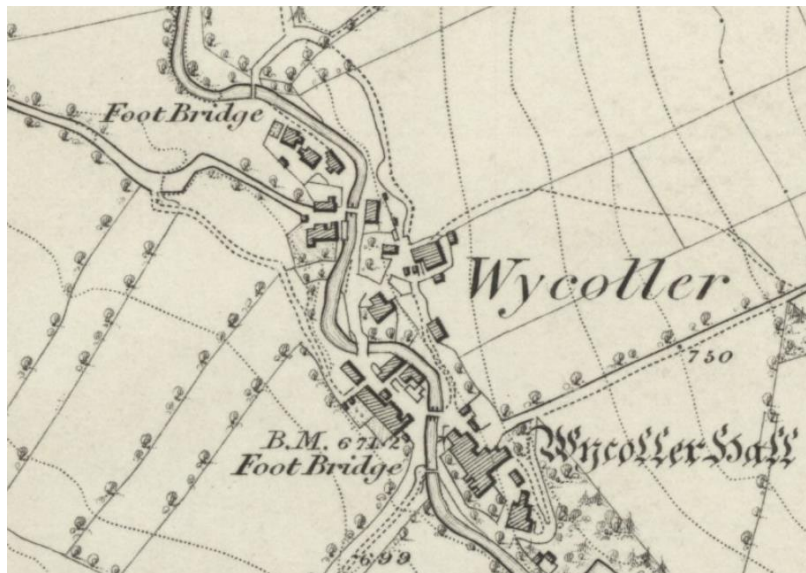
The extant three bay barn is built of coursed watershot stonework and the stone slated roof has recently been renewed. The southern portion of the building has been demolished or alternatively, may never have been completed. The building has been extensively refurbished and re-planned and is now used as a Study Centre for the Wycoller Country Park.

Historical Record

The Historical Record of Wycoller is presented elsewhere¹.

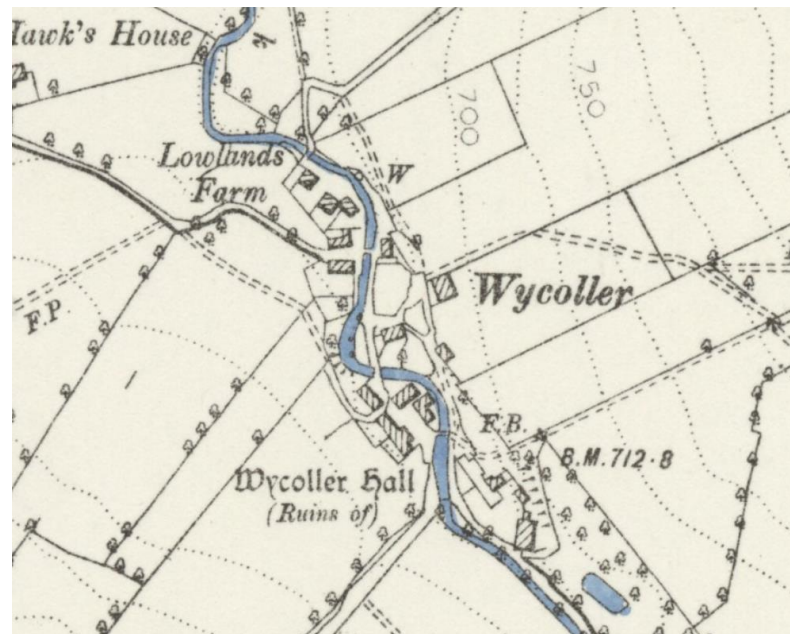
From map regression the following details can be established:

1st edition of map 1848, six inches to the mile. The outline of the barn is delineated as a similar size to the present day with the southern portion not shown. Access is shown from a track to the south, which leads onto the adjacent farm and outbuildings now demolished. An additional access appears to be from the west where a track runs to the north of a large barn now demolished.



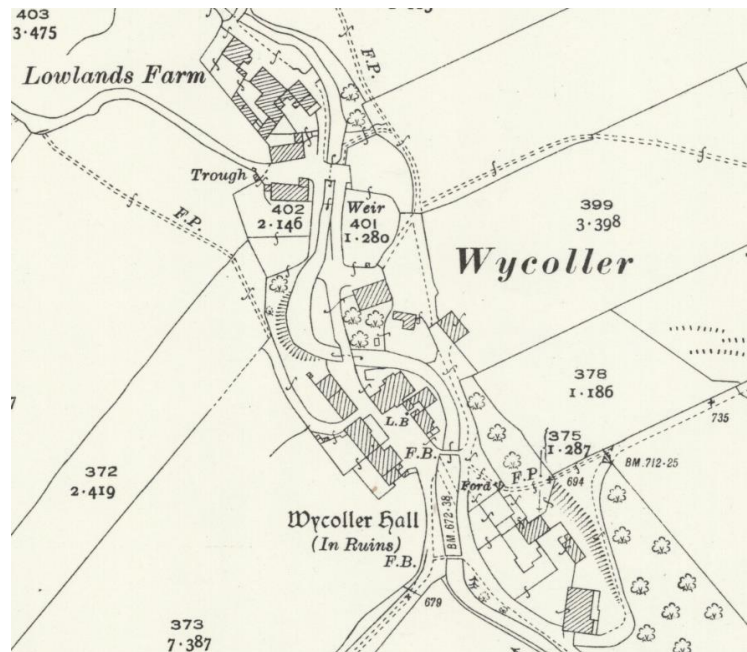
OS Map 1895, scale 1:2500.

The barn is shown to be a similar size as the present day. Access is as shown on the 1848 map. The farm building to the north of Pepper Hill is shown as a smaller size. The barn to the north-west is shown without a projecting doorway



OS Map 1932, scale 1:2500.

The barn is shown to be a similar size to that of previous maps. There is now no access from the west. A house has been built between the barn to the north-west and Pepper Hill.



Setting (Pl. 1, 3, 5)

The barn is set at high level to the east of the hamlet. It overlooks the settlement and faces Nether Wycoller vaccary to the west. The present access road leading to the Study Centre from the unclassified road is modern and a new entry point has been created opposite the bridge into the village. The line of this road is in part on the course of the track running past the barn to the north leading to the former laithe farm and the adjoining fields and then on to Wycoller Hall. Historically the barn would almost certainly have had an access by means of a track running past the former large barn to the west leading to the road through the hamlet. A new dwelling has been built on the site of this barn. The barn is built into the hillside and wagon access is only likely to have been available from the west. At the present time there is a steep gradient between the postulated original floor level of the barn and the track. In view of this it is likely that the present levels of the track in front of the building have been adjusted.

Plan, Accommodation (Fig. 1)

The barn has been extensively remodelled in plan form and refurbished to form a Study Centre comprising Meeting Rooms, Offices, Toilets, Kitchen and stores. The present car park and boundary walls are modern. The internal stone wing wall to the side of the east door is modern.

The original accommodation probably provided ten cattle stalls to the north, entered by a door positioned in the north elevation. The width of these could have been approximately 800mm². From an early photograph it can be seen that an upstand with substantial kerbs was formed to the edge of the stalls.

Adjacent to the stalls, accessed by doors in the east and west elevations, was a hay barn with storage provision over the cattle stalls to the north. The original difference in floor levels across the barn at the two large external doors was probably a little less than 700mm, leading to a considerable cross fall (Fig. 2). Evidence of the original floor level can be seen outside the west door in the form of pivot blocks. Due to the existing levels of the hillside, access to the barn door to the east would have been restricted. A blocked doorway with splayed head and jambs to both sides is positioned in the south gable wall towards its western end (Pl. 6). The clear internal span is 8.410m and the overall internal length is 6.730m.

External Walls

The external walls are built of stonework. The external leaf is of coursed watershot rubble and the inner leaf is of random rubble, both bedded in lime mortar. `Through` stones are evident which project into the building. The external doorway to the north has a splayed head and jambs as has the blocked door in the south wall (Pl. 2 and 6). The wagon door to the west is formed with voussoirs set form a shallow arch (Pl. 1). A flat head is formed over the internal opening with reused timber supporting the wall over. The narrower door to the east has a semi-circular head over the opening made up of voussoirs both internally and externally (Pl. 5). Single vents are extant in the east and south walls. It is likely that two further vents were present in the north wall but these have been enlarged to form windows. A single small window has been formed in the west wall. Two modern windows have been inserted at high level in the east elevation. Projecting small corbel blocks are set into the external walls at high level to support the gutter.

The Roof

The early roof to the barn has been replaced with a modern form comprising steel trusses, timber purlins and blue slates. The original roof was almost certainly a king post in form in view of the span of 8.410m forming three bays. The truss to the bay adjacent to the wagon door rested on two leaves of stonework projecting into the building.

Discussion

The barn has been much altered and it is not possible to record much of the original detail such as the roof and floor finishes. From the extant structure it would appear that the southerly part has been demolished or probably not constructed as the present size of the barn is shown on the first edition of the OS map. This conclusion is reached as the external walls to either side of the gable wall project and are `toothed` reflecting an incomplete build of the masonry (Pl. 4). An examination of the boundary wall to the south of the building

exposed the foundation course of the barn. This showed that the original barn was intended to extend for some 7.400m to the south of the west facing barn door. The corresponding dimension to the north was 7.870m showing that the barn door was intended to be placed centrally.

The planning arrangements are unusual in that access to the eastern rear door to the barn is very restricted due to the slopping hillside close to the rear of the barn. The south wall appears to be original together with the doorway formed within it. It is probable that the intention was to build a barn symmetrical in plan with central barn doors. In the event this was not completed and a smaller asymmetrical barn completed with a `temporary` wall built to close off the barn to the south. It is significant that the clear span of the barn at 8.410m is almost identical to that of Bracken Hill Barn at 8.400m and Pepper Hill barn at 8.390m.

The external coursed watershot masonry is of good quality and this high quality is reflected in the use of voussoirs to the arched openings. The earliest date for the use of this technique locally is 1670³. However, it is likely that the barn is significantly later than this and probably dates to the last quarter of the 18th century – a similar date to Bank House Barn. This date supported by the use of corbel blocks to support a gutter.

The location of the barn suggests that it was of secondary use in the same ownership as the large barn to the west, in view of the road layout shown on the 1895 map. The size and location of the barns would indicate that they were the property of a substantial landowner, possibly that of Wycoller Hall. As the barns were built at a time when mixed farming was practised, it could be, in view of its orientation and opposing barn doors, that its use was to store and winnow grain. The decision not to complete the barn to the original design could reflect the economic conditions at the time which was when agriculture was in decline.

Notes

1. Bentley, John, 1975, *Portrait of Wycoller*, Nelson; Folley, E. W., 2004, *Romantic Wycoller*, Nelson.
2. The cattle stalls at the aisled barn at Wycoller, from the evidence of the existing floor surface, measure approximately 800mm wide by 2m in depth.
3. Smith, W. John and Kit, 2009, *An Architectural History of Towneley Hall, Burnley*. Nelson, 52-53. Watershot coursing is a technique in which the outer leaf of stonework is laid at an angle of around 5 deg. to the horizontal. This was intended to assist the evaporation of moisture in the wall.

Acknowledgements

The help and assistance of Peter Short the warden of Wycoller Country Park must be gratefully acknowledged together with members of the group whose names are not mentioned.



Pl. 1 West elevation



Pl. 2 North elevation



Pl. 3 South elevation showing boundary wall



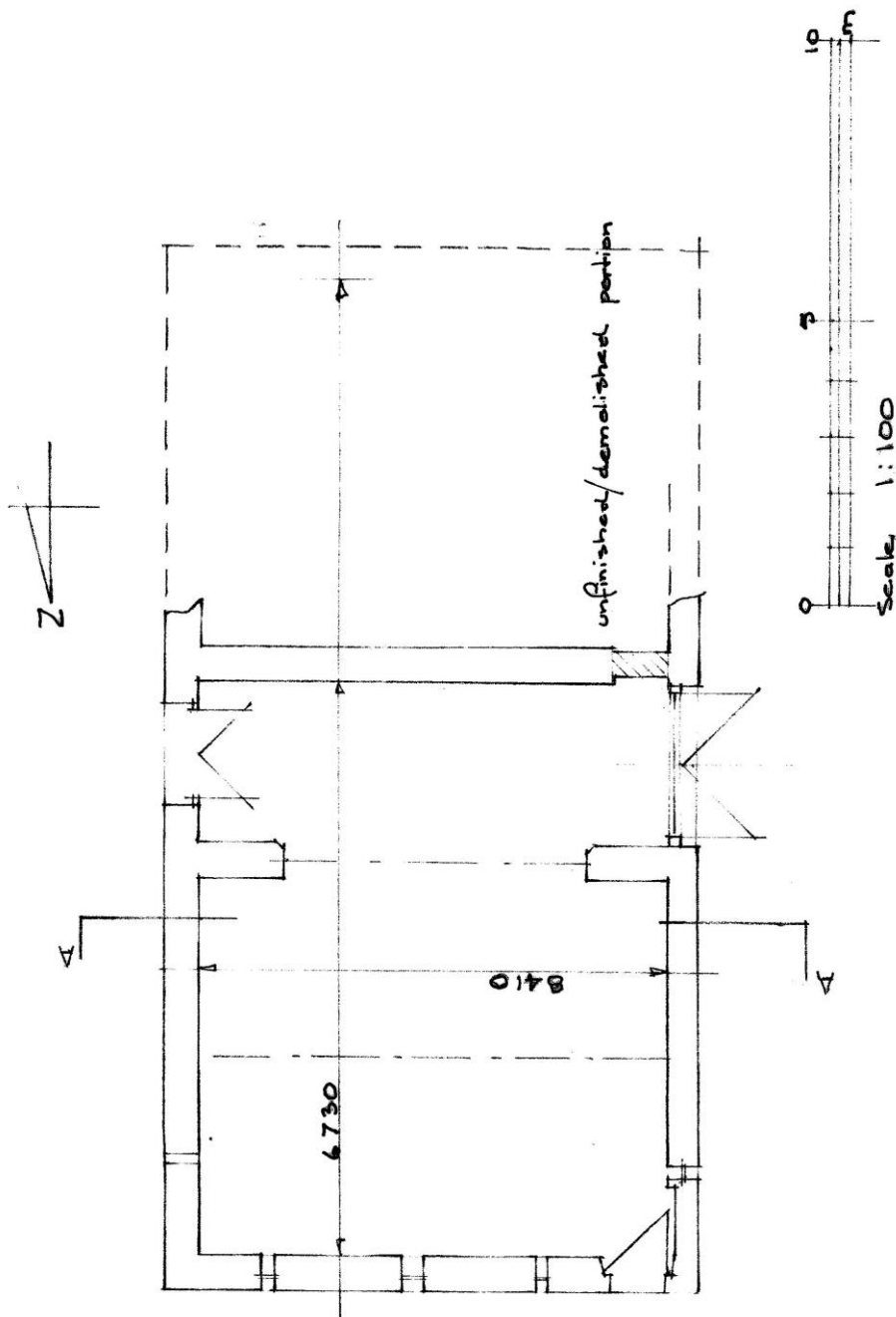
Pl. 4 South elevation showing tooththing to external walls



Pl. 5 East elevation



Pl. 6 Door in south wall



PEPPER HILL BARN WYCOLLER

FIG 1

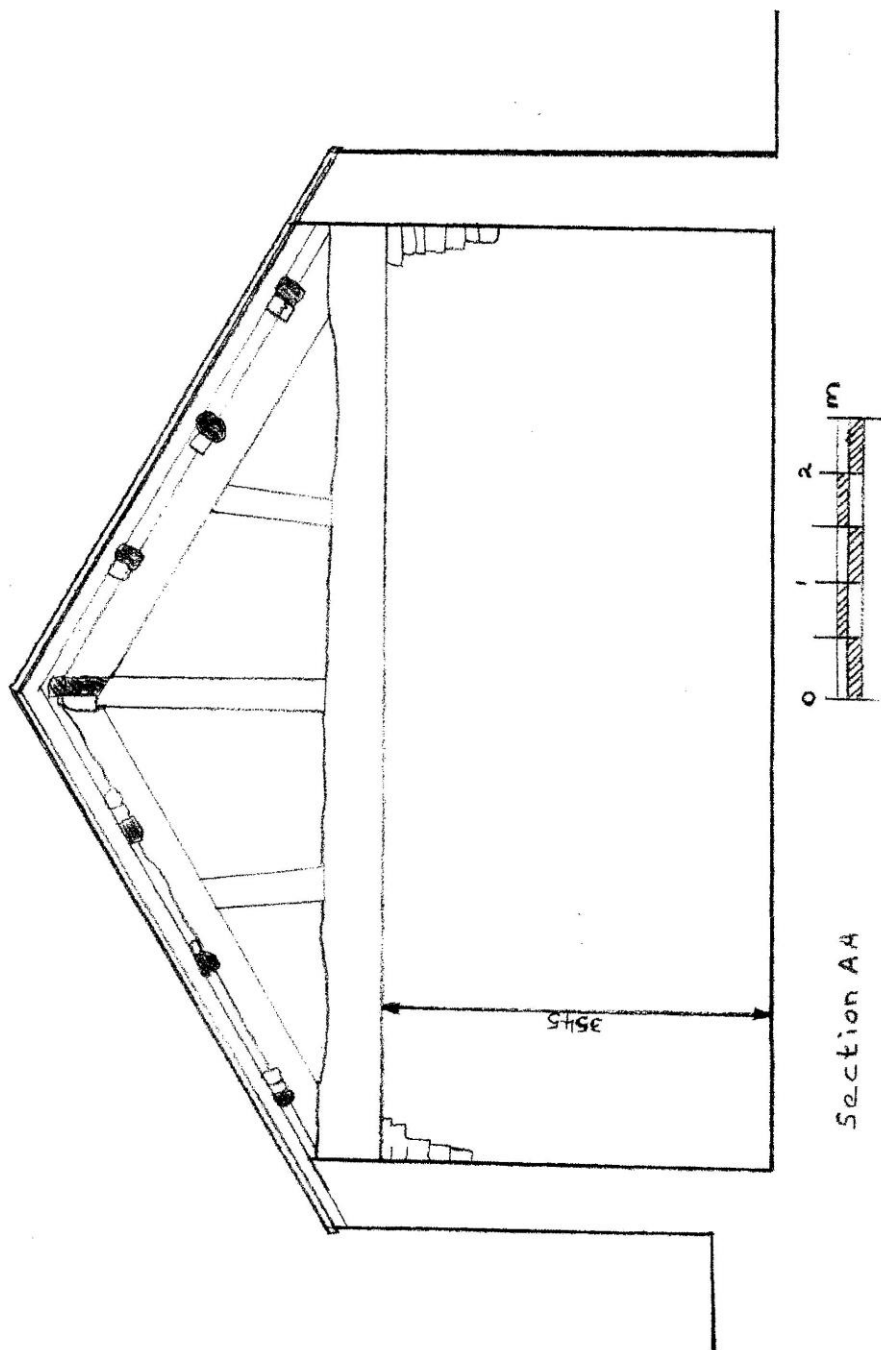


Fig. 2

Bracken Hill Barn Wyckoller Scale 1:50

