

November 1999

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**ASH GROVE COTTAGE**  
**NETHER KELLET**  
**LANCASHIRE**

**Interim Fabric Survey Report**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 In December 1998 Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) undertook an a level 1 fabric survey of the farmhouse and barn at Ash Grove Cottage, Nether Kellet, Lancashire (NGR SD 5074 6833), in advance of a proposed domestic conversion of the properties. The work was to be undertaken in conjunction with evaluation trenching on the site of two proposed new-build houses; however, the site of ones of these was stripped before it could be subject to an archaeological evaluation, and the other has yet to be trenched. A final report will be submitted following the completion of the evaluation trenching, and the present report is an interim statement to inform the planning process for the conversion of the barn and farmhouse.

### 1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 The study area lies in the village of Nether Kellet, Lancashire, on the south-east side of the main Skerton to Over Kellet road and is at the north-eastern end of the village.
- 1.2.2 The village of 'Kellet' is first documented within the Domesday Book (1086), when it was part of Earl Tostig's Halton fee, and was later incorporated within the honour of Lancaster when it was granted to Adam son of Orm (confirmed 1199). The original Nether Kellet was at the south-western end of the village, centred on the present St Mark's Church. Although Ash Grove Cottage is now at the north-eastern end of the village, the Ordnance first edition map (1846) shows that this was part of a separate hamlet centred on Ash Grove Farm at the junction with the Carnforth road. The site is therefore spatially removed from the site of medieval Nether Kellet.

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design was submitted by LUAU in response to a request from PBS Ltd for a fabric survey of the barn and farmhouse and an archaeological evaluation of two proposed new-build houses. The fabric survey work was undertaken as mitigation for the proposed development and was in accordance with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice. The evaluation has yet to be undertaken and this report presents the results of the photographic fabric survey only.

### 2.2 FABRIC SURVEY

- 2.2.1 The visual inspection and photographic survey were undertaken on 22nd December 1998.
- 2.2.2 **Photography:** the aim of the assessment was to produce an outline written and photographic record of both the interior and exterior of the building, and to establish the presence or absence of significant architectural features.
- 2.2.3 The photographic survey consisted of general oblique coverage of the site on 35mm black and white and colour print film. Photography was also undertaken using a digital camera. Additional photographs were taken of noteworthy architectural details and internal views of rooms where accessible.
- 2.2.4 **Analysis:** a visual inspection of the site was undertaken and a general descriptive record was maintained of the structure utilising appropriate LUAU *pro-forma* record sheets to the Royal Commission on Historic Buildings in England (RCHME) level 2 standard. It involved the internal and external examination of the extant fabric, where health and safety allowed, and resulted in a description and assessment of the period, character and development of the buildings.

### 2.3 ARCHIVE

- 2.3.1 A full archive of the desk-top study and the fabric survey has been produced in accordance with the current English Heritage guidelines (1991). The archive will be deposited with the LCRO and a copy of this report will also be deposited with the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record.

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### 3. BUILDING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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#### 3.1 THE BARN

- 3.1.2 The barn was a fairly typical Lancashire Barn (Brunskill 1987, 111), c 20m x 7m, comprising a three bay cow house with loft above in the western end, a central threshing floor, and a large open bay at the eastern end. The barn was set into a gentle bank, which was not steep enough to allow separate access levels to the barn and cow house. Slit ventilators were observed on all elevations, with small Owl holes on the gables as oppose to the more common upper pitching holes. Three string courses were observed on the southern elevation, and four on the eastern gable end.
- 3.1.3 Four entrances to the barn were observed. The main entrance, on the northern side, was a 2.5m wide arched and quoined doorway leading to the threshing floor; neither of the original double doors were present. A smaller standard stone doorway lead from the threshing floor out of the rear of the building. At the western end of the building were three stone doorways into the cowhouse, all with apparently original timber doors.
- 3.1.4 Externally the barn has had only limited alteration with the blocking of some of the slit ventilators, and the insertion of four windows, all with brick jambs. The northern pitch of the roof has been replaced with corrugated iron. A mortar wall scar was observed on the western elevation, showing that an additional structure had been attached to the end of the cowhouse at some time.
- 3.1.5 Internally the barn was little altered, except that the floor to the cowhouse had been concreted. The cowhouse comprised a central feeding passage with flanking manuring passages, each split into four double stalls (1.9m wide) with a central timber stanchion in each as well as tether rings on the stalls. The area above was used as a loft. The eastern part of the barn was a threshing barn with a flagstone threshing floor located across the centre of the barn.
- 3.1.6 **Roof Structure:** the barn had six trusses of varying styles. The western two trusses were of king post style, with braces on either side set into the tie beam. The next three trusses to the east were light collared tie beam trusses, whilst the easternmost truss was similar, but with supporting braces near either end.

#### 3.2 THE HOUSE

- 3.2.1 The house comprised a four-storey structure with a contemporary outshut at the rear (east). The location of the house, stepped into the hillside to the west of the courtyard, required a slightly unusual layout of the building, making it rather unique. The lowest floor of the building comprised two cells, with rough stone internal walls, each used as cart sheds and had quoined and arched doorways leading onto the courtyard to the west.
- 3.2.2 The next storey of the building was effectively the ground floor, and was entered on the northern side by one of two doorways. The western ('front') door accessed into an 'L'-shaped corridor leading to the staircase at the western end. Two large rooms were situated on either side of the staircase, both containing fireplaces. The outshut, which could be entered from the main corridor into the kitchen, or from the eastern external door on the north elevation, comprised a passage, alongside the wall of the main house, with four small cells on the eastern side (probably originally pantries etc.), leading to the kitchen at the southern end. A window was located in the western ('front') elevation at the level of the

mid-floor landing, and an additional window had been inserted at ground floor level behind the staircase.

- 3.2.3 The 'first' floor originally comprised four cells with doorways onto a small landing situated by the stairs. However, a significant proportion of these original stud walls had been removed, leaving only scars on the exposed floors and walls. The layout corresponds almost exactly with that of the first floor of a Double-pile house (Brunskill 1978, 62), although orientated with the stairs at the visual 'front' of the house, rather than at the rear. A small window had also been added in the eastern elevation, after the removal of the centrally positioned stud wall.
- 3.2.4 The attic comprised a single room, with four windows at the top of the front and rear elevations. The entire roof had been replaced at sometime during the twentieth century, probably at the time of the structural collapse of the upper two storey window lintels, but both king posts had been reused and the position of the trusses, on either side of the central staircase, remained the same. The roof sat directly on the wall tops without the use of timber wall plates. Both king posts had ornamental, but crude, chamfers, mimicking the earlier tradition of attaching the braces to the king post, though neither were socketed. It is probable that the original trusses had offset braces, as seen in the barn.
- 3.2.5 Externally, the house was quoined on all corners, with all original windows having stone lintels, sills and jambs. The southern elevation and part of the eastern elevation and outshut were rendered, and, although the quoin stones on the eastern elevation were continuous with the eastern elevation of the barn, there was a possibility of a rebuild *c* 1m to the south, suggesting that the barn may predate the main house. A mortar wall scar was also observed on the northern elevation of the house, suggesting that there was, at some point, a small structure attached to the lowest storey to the west of the main door.
- 3.2.6 To the immediate south-east of the barn was an approximately oval, concrete lined, trough *c*4.5m x 3m. The eastern side was flush with the hillside, whilst the western, downslope, side was levelled by a stone wall up to 0.3m high.

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## 4. DISCUSSION

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- 4.1 The house is an unusual building, as is the spatial arrangement of the farm. However, the barn conforms with a building style common between around 1750 and 1850 (Brunskill 1978, 113) and the standard elements of the house conform to a similar period (Brunskill 1978, 62). It would appear that the mixing of styles in the house date it to the mid nineteenth century and the barn may be slightly earlier, although both are shown on the First Edition OS map of 1846 as are the outbuildings.
- 4.2 The position of the house is unusual in that it is cut into the slope of the hillside, which created a space saving way of building a cart shed, but added complications to the layout of the house plan. The entrance through the north elevation, leading into an 'L' shaped corridor, basically shifts the internal layout of the house back to front, and so the stairs are positioned at the 'front'. The layout of the house appears to be based on a 'double pile' arrangement (Brunskill 1978, 62), with the original layout of the 'first' floor corresponding to such a plan (although backwards). The ground floor required an L-shaped corridor to reach the staircase, thus drastically reducing the area available for rooms. It would appear for this reason that the front outshut was constructed to house the kitchen, and allow for the main part of the house to have two large parlours at this level. The kitchen also had its own entrance and several pantries.
- 4.3 By raising the height of the walls the attic became a viable large room. No partitions were observed and it would appear to have been intended as a single room. The four windows would have made it light, but no fireplace was observed, although it may have been heated by heat rising from the rest of the house.
- 4.4 The relative positions of the house and barn are also unusual. The arrangement of the house and barn to form a courtyard with other outbuildings is common, although the two main structures do not usually overlap. This means that the north pitch of the barn butts up to the gable end of the house, and if the drainage were poor, or blocked, this would lead to serious damp in the main building. This also suggests that the house maybe slightly later than the barn,
- 4.5 The house is much larger than most farmhouses of its period, and is also the tallest building in the former hamlet of Ash Grove. Although no direct evidence was observed, it is possible that the complex also had some form of small scale industrial function which required it to be so unusually large.

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## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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### 7.1 PUBLISHED CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

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### 7.2 SECONDARY SOURCES

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## PLATES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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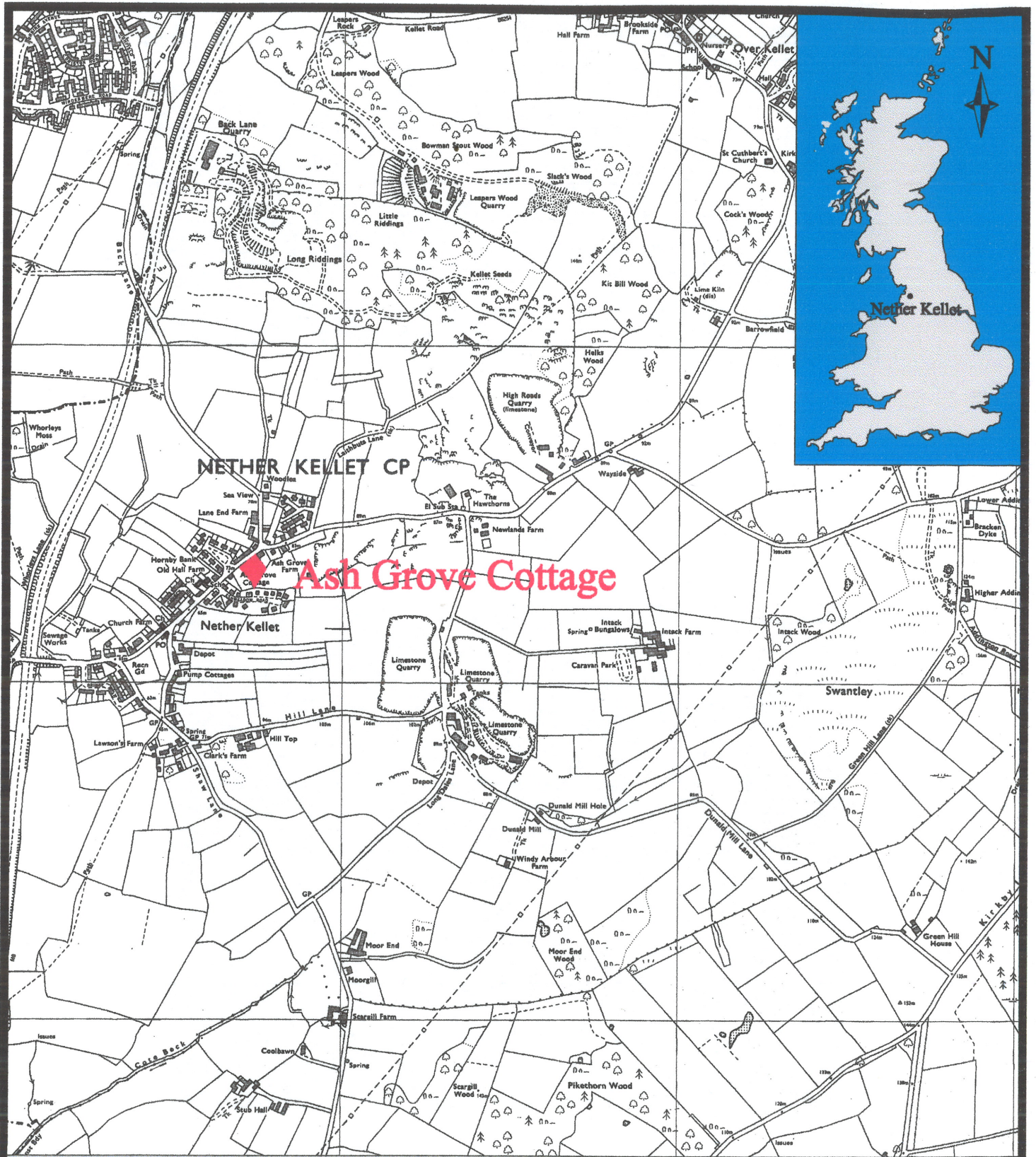
### ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig 1 Ash Grove Cottage, Nether Kellet, Lancashire, Location Map

### PLATES

- Plate 1 Cottage and Barn looking north-west
- Plate 2 Cattle stalls within the western end of the barn
- Plate 3 Eastern interior of the barn
- Plate 4 Western external elevation of the farmhouse
- Plate 5 Northern external gable wall of the farmhouse
- Plate 6 Kingpost truss within the farmhouse





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Fig 1: Ash Grove Cottage, Nether Kellet, Lancashire Location Map



Plate 1 Cottage and Barn exteriors looking north-west



Plate 2 Cattle stalls within the western end of the barn



Plate 3 Eastern interior of the barn



Plate 4 Western external elevation of the farmhouse



Plate 5 Northern external gable elevation of the farmhouse



Plate 6 Kingpost truss within the farmhouse