

NETTLE HALL, GALLIGILL, ALSTON MOOR, CUMBRIA SURVEY, HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION

Lucy Jessop and Matthew Whitfield



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**NETTLE HALL
GALLIGILL, ALSTON MOOR
CUMBRIA**

SURVEY, HISTORY AND INTERPRETATION

Lucy Jessop
Matthew Whitfield

NGR: NY 75949 44702

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SUMMARY

Nettle Hall, situated on the north-facing slope of the Nent valley in the dispersed settlement of Galligill, illustrates many of the main evolutionary trends encountered in farmsteads in the parish of Alston Moor in the period between 1600 and the present day. The earliest part of the building is a bastle house, probably dating from the first half of the 17th century. An 18th-century agricultural range was added to the west and an extension to the north, principally domestic and incorporating a separate living unit, was added probably *circa* 1800. Nettle Hall was transformed by lead mining before the middle of the 19th century when the land to the south of the house and highway was exploited, possibly successively, by two firms, the Galligill Syke Mining Company and the Galligill Well Mining Company. By this time, the house had been doubled in size and split between several households, whilst a further building, probably a mineshop, was constructed close to the original farmhouse providing two storeys of accommodation over a ground floor probably devoted to mine-related activities. Multiple occupation at Nettle Hall persisted into the early 20th century; the settlement then reverted to being a single farmstead by the middle of the century, mirroring the local decline in lead mining. The house served a single family and the mineshop was converted into a hay barn and store, with stabling and garaging in two added ranges.

CONTRIBUTORS

Survey and investigation was carried out by Lucy Jessop, Adam Menuge and Matthew Whitfield, members of English Heritage's Architectural Investigation (North) team. Lucy Jessop and Matthew Whitfield also created the survey drawings and wrote this report. The photographs were taken by Bob Skingle unless stated otherwise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Robert and Jayne Burrough, the owners of Nettle Hall, for generously allowing the survey and investigation to take place and for access to their documents concerning the house: we are very grateful for all their continuing kindness and hospitality. All deeds cited in the text are in the owners' possession.

ARCHIVE LOCATION

National Monuments Record Centre, Swindon

DATE OF SURVEY AND INVESTIGATION

Nettle Hall was surveyed and investigated by Lucy Jessop, Adam Menuge and Matthew Whitfield in October 2009.

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Introduction

Nettle Hall (NGR: NY 75949 44702), is a small farmstead standing in open country at an altitude of about 400m (1300ft) immediately west of the Galligill Burn and just below the minor road which runs along the north-facing slope of the Nent valley linking the scattered settlement of Galligill. In the 19th century lead ore was mined and processed next to the burn on the south side of the road, where there are extensive earthworks and remains of water management. There are two principal buildings at Nettle Hall, flanking a short drive or track descending from the road, consisting of a farmstead (referred to here as the principal house) and a substantial detached structure now used as an outbuilding (referred to as the mineshop). A small privy lies to the east of the mineshop, in close proximity to the burn.



Fig. 1: modern OS map showing the location of Nettle Hall. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 100019088. 2010

The core of the farmstead is a bastle (see below for a brief discussion of the building type), extending from the east gable as far as the straight joint immediately to the west of the chimney stack, an area equating on the ground floor to the modern kitchen and sitting room. A two-storey building was added to the west in the 18th century and the farmstead was further extended to the north in the 19th century. The mineshop dates from the early 19th century. Neither structure is listed. The stone used throughout the Nettle Hall site and across Alston Moor in general is the local sandstone/limestone mix ranging in colour from green-greys into browns and reds.

This survey of Nettle Hall was carried out as part of Architectural Investigation's part in the Miner-Farmer Landscapes of the North Pennines AONB project. Designed by the Archaeological Survey and Investigation team of English Heritage at the request of the North Pennines AONB, the project aims to consider different approaches to survey and investigation of a large, complex, under-recorded upland landscape, its archaeology and its buildings. Architectural Investigation's contribution includes an Historic Area Assessment of the parish of Alston Moor and individual investigation and site reports for buildings of specific interest.

History of Nettle Hall

Nettle Hall forms part of the historic Upper Galligill tenement of the parish of Alston Moor, a parish of historic Cumberland which is now in modern Cumbria. In the early 17th century, much of the property of Henry Hilton, lord of the manor of Alston Moor, was split into parcels and let out by him on 1000-year leases dated 1611 (to commence in 1621); a small annual rental of 6 shillings was payable to the lord of the manor to maintain the lessees' rights to the 1000-year term. By 1724, the date of the first available conveyance of Nettle Hall, the property is described as a 'Moiety or Halph Message

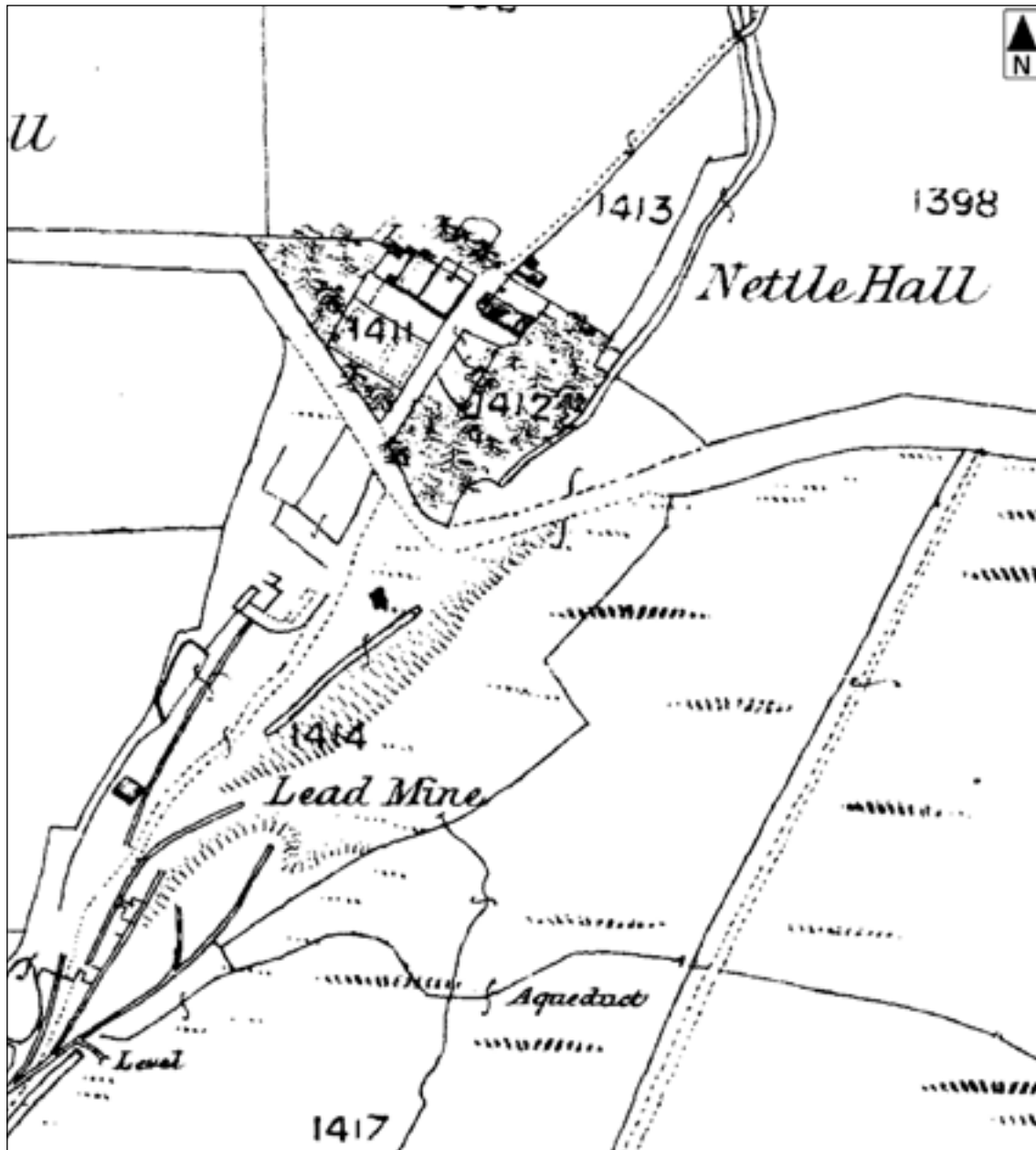


Fig. 2: Nettle Hall in 1859, 1st edition OS map. Cumberland Sheet 34.14, surveyed 1859, published 1861. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 100019088. 2010

or Tene^{mt} called Upper Galligill', that tenement having evidently been divided into two parts.¹ It mentions several parcels of ground and property, including what is described as 'the Low House of Galligill'; this may be an early name for Nettle Hall and it is certainly lower on the escarpment than Upper Galligill itself. Confusion is compounded firstly by the presence, by the early 19th century, of a farmstead named Lower Galligill (to the east of Nettle Hall), and secondly by the relatively modern usage of the name 'Nettle Hall', first found on the 1859 1st edition OS map but not occurring in the census until 1891. In 1728, only 4 years later, the purchaser John Norton sold the property on to James Bails, with the exception (for the term of his and his wife's life) of the house in which he lived, described as 'the Old Thatched House'.² Whether this is a description of the house now known as Nettle Hall or of another house on the half-tenement, it is indicative of the persistent use of heather thatch as a vernacular roofing material in Alston Moor and other parts of the Pennine uplands in the period. A few roof scars elsewhere in the parish, at Blagill for example, exhibit the classic steep pitch associated with a covering of heather thatch.

Nothing more is known of Nettle Hall until 1806, when the same half tenement of Upper Galligill was leased out; it consisted of 2 dwelling houses, some good outhouses and 3 meadows.³ This might suggest that the north addition to the original bastle house (see below) was a separately functioning house in its own right or that the mineshop was already constructed. In 1816, it was sold by Sarah Shield of Galligill, widow of John Shield, late mine agent and executor of Thomas Cowper of Nentsbury (the late owner); the property is described in the same fashion as in 1806 and was sold by Sarah Shield to a Betty Cowper of Alston.⁴ She remained the owner in 1820, at the time of the Enclosure award of Alston Moor Commons, and is referred to in a lease of Nettle Hall in 1857, when Nettle Hall was sold by John Cowper of Alston to Joseph Cowper Cain.⁵ John Cowper was a highly successful mineral dealer and proprietor of mines, who lived in Front St, Alston, with his mother Sarah in 1851, moved to near Hexham by the time of the 1871 census and who died in 1875 possessing an estate of nearly £10,000.⁶

The 1857 sale states that the land to the south of the house and the highway was 'now or formerly used for the depositing and dressing Lead Ore by the Galligill Syke Mining Company or the Galligill Well Mining Company or either of them', the first clear mention of organised lead-mining activity in the immediate area in the first half of the 19th century. The two mining companies, the Galligill Syke and Galligill Well mining companies, may have exploited the mine near Nettle Hall in succession. The Galligill Well Mining Company was active in the 1830s and 40s, when it was mentioned as being the defendant in an arbitration case over mines in Alston Moor.⁷ The Galligill Syke Mining Company appears in the 1873 Post Office Directory.⁸ However, mining was already happening on the vein by 1829, when John Cain of Galligill, Alston, was named in a directory as 'Lead Mine Agent (to Galligill Syke West Vein)'.⁹

At this date, and in the subsequent conveyance by Joseph Cowper Cain (of Weardale House, Stanhope, Co. Durham) to Joseph Spark of Browngill in 1876, the property is described as 'Four dwellinghouses formerly two dwelling houses with outhouses'.¹⁰ The situation described in the 1857 lease is nearly contemporary with that depicted

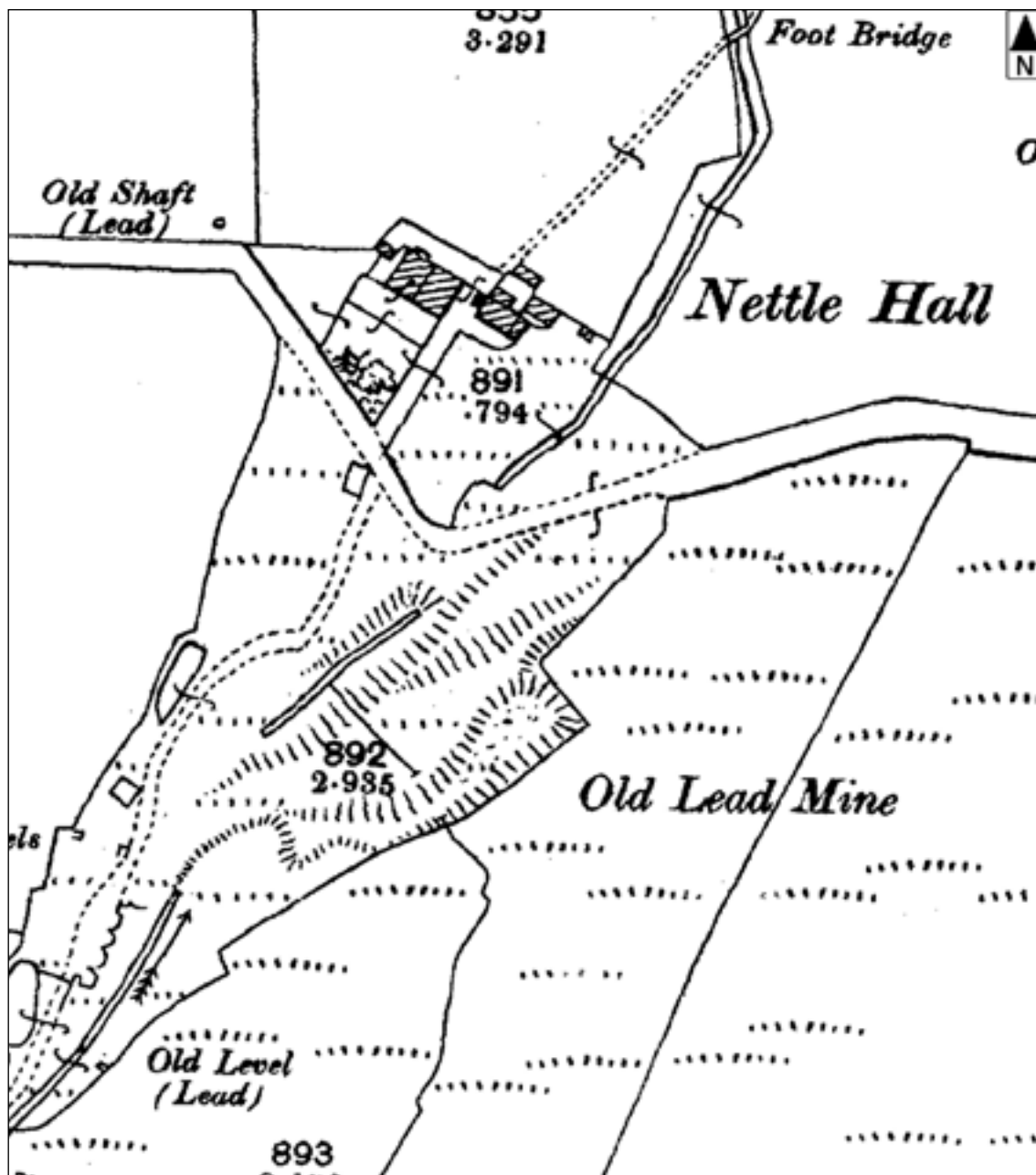


Fig. 3: Nettle Hall in 1895, 2nd edition OS map. Cumberland Sheet 34.14, surveyed 1895, published 1896. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. English Heritage 100019088. 2010

on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map, surveyed in 1859. This shows the house (named Nettle Hall) and the building interpreted below as a mineshop. The house appears at its present extent (with the exception of the porch), divided into what appear to be two occupancies: the western part contained the first-floor room in the NW corner with its external access, and all the spaces below and to the south of it; the eastern part, with ground-floor access, contained the bastle and the northern extension with the present kitchen and pantry, with a small yard to the north. The mineshop

appears to be a single dwelling at this date, although it is possible that any division was horizontal rather than vertical. The same subdivision of the main house is evident from the 1895 second edition Ordnance Survey map; the mineshop had gained two small additions, since removed.

The multiple occupation of Nettle Hall is consistent with the rapid rise in population of Alston Moor in the early to mid-19th century, due to the greater exploitation of the parish's lead mines by the London Lead Company and other smaller concerns, such as the two Galligill-based companies mentioned above. The census of 1861, though a little opaque on precise locations, seems to describe five separate households in Galligill Syke (the name Nettle Hall does not appear at all), one of which is that of Ann Cain, retired farmer, mother of Joseph Cowper Cain. In 1871, the recurrence of the name Nenthall in the midst of the Galligills (and where the modern Nent Hall in the Nent valley has a quite separate entry elsewhere in the census) suggests this as an alternative name (or mistake) for Nettle Hall. At this date, eleven separate households lived in the immediate area, mostly supported by lead and coal mining. Some coal was extracted in this period by the Galligill Syke Lead Mine, so a number of these census entries may well refer to Nettle Hall.¹¹ In 1881, Joseph Spark, the purchaser of Nettle Hall in 1876, was a farmer of 18 acres living alone with one female servant in 'Middle Galligill'. Ten years later, in 1891, Nettle Hall continued to be occupied by Spark, by profession a contractor and lead miner, alongside his wife Mary and their small son Joseph; they had a live-in female servant. Two other houses at Nettle Hall, possibly in the mineshop, were unoccupied, and the 1895 OS map confirms that the lead workings had been abandoned by this date. So, confusingly, Nettle Hall is known in the census as follows: Middle Galligill (1841), Galligill (1851), Galligill Syke (1861), Middle Galligill (1871 & 1881), Nettle Hall (1891) and High Galligill (1901).

Spark and his family continued to occupy Nettle Hall at the time of the 1901 census, living in 4 rooms, but by 1905, it had reverted to two houses, being described in its conveyance from Adamson Pickering to Thomas Allison Teasdale as that 'dwellinghouse with the Cottage thereto adjoining lately consisting of four dwellinghouses and formerly of two dwellinghouses'.¹² In the 1901 census, Pickering was a 30-year old butcher in Garrigill (and also a farmer), living at home with his parents at Garrigill House. Teasdale was living with his wife, children and a number of lead workers at the Horse and Waggon public house, Nentsberry; he was the principal contractor for team labour for mine workers (in modern parlance, a gang master). In 1901, a separate household lived at or close to Nettle Hall, the young family of Thomas Lee (27, lead miner) – a likely candidate, perhaps, for renting a smaller property, such as the smaller, western portion of Nettle Hall. However, in 1937, an insurance schedule taken out by Thomas Allison Teasdale of 'Nettlehall' (the first occurrence of the present name in the deeds) mentions that the property consisted of 'four Private Dwelling Houses' and domestic offices.¹³ It was owned by the Teasdales until 1972; the present owners have been in residence since 1991.

An introduction to the bastle house and its evolution

The bastle is a building type found on both sides of the Anglo-Scottish border, constructed between the late 16th century and the early decades of the 17th centuries. It is generally thought to be a response to the insecurity of the area, where reiving (the thieving of livestock, particularly cattle) was rife. The typical form of a bastle consisted of an unheated ground floor with little or no natural light, in which cattle could be overwintered or housed at times of insecurity; this byre was entered through a doorway, usually in one gable end, with a stout door which could be barred and defended. Access to the heated living accommodation above was generally external, via a ladder (or later, a permanent masonry stair) to a first-floor doorway. The first floor consisted of either a single heated space or a larger heated room divided from a smaller unheated room or rooms. Heat was provided by a smoke-hooded fireplace on one gable wall. Natural light was provided by small, usually single-light, windows with chamfered stone surrounds; similar chamfering was applied to the byre and first-floor doorways.

In Alston Moor, the two storeys of a bastle were generally divided by substantial floor joists overlaid with large flagstones, unlike many of the well-known Northumberland bastles, such as Hole and The Raw, where stone barrel vaulting was used. This enabled t



Fig. 4: Bastle at The Raw, Hepple, Northumberland, demonstrating the basic rectangular form of the bastle, with its later external stair to the first-floor door and the limited fenestration of both storeys. The upper storey has been largely rebuilt. [DPI35346]

the circulation of warm air from the animals in the byre in the winter months into the living accommodation above, providing a primitive version of under-floor heating to supplement the warmth provided by the hearth. Examples of bastles found in Alston Moor suggest a concentration of major openings and heating in one gable wall of the structure; the byre door is frequently found in a central position in the gable wall underneath the smoke hood, with the first-floor door to one side. The living accommodation generally consisted of one heated storey on the first floor, sometimes with a loft above used for sleeping or storage. In the parish of Alston Moor, the construction of bastles or bastle-like farmsteads carried on much longer than in Northumberland, with the practice of living on the first floor above one's stock continuing well into the 18th century.

Alston Moor's bastles were eminently adaptable to the needs of their owners with their expanding and extended families: additions could be easily made, in particular to one or both of its gable walls in linear fashion, leading to the formation of bastle terraces where each unit was either internally linked or maintained as separate dwellings. Where a bastle was expanded in this way to create a larger, single house, its gable-end first-floor doorway often became used for internal, rather than external, communication and necessitated the construction of a new, first-floor entrance, usually on one of the longer side walls. Linear additions often followed the storey divisions of the original bastle, with byre beneath and living accommodation above; however, towards the end of the 18th and into the 19th century they became increasingly agricultural rather than residential in purpose.



Fig. 5: The stone barrel-vaulted ground-floor byre of the bastle at The Raw, Hepple, Northumberland, showing the central, gable-entry byre doorway. [DPI35347]

The evolution of Nettle Hall

The oldest surviving part of Nettle Hall occupies the south-east quadrant of the house. Its pre-1700 form can be seen in its basic outline, extending from the east gable as far as the straight joint to the west of the chimney stack, an area equating on the ground floor to the modern kitchen and sitting room. Features belonging to this phase include the rough rubble footings and quoining, random rubble walls, a small chamfered window with iron bar visible on the upper storey close to the west end of the south elevation, and the faint but unmistakable indications of a blocked ground-floor entrance in the middle of the east gable wall. Subsequent refenestration, the raising of the upper portion of the east gable wall and the rebuilding of the adjoining part of the south wall have obscured much of the form of the house. Internal investigation revealed a further small chamfered first-floor window towards the east end of the north wall with a narrower splayed recess beneath it on the ground floor indicating a former slit-vent or loop, now hidden externally by the north extension.



Fig. 6: The south elevation of Nettle Hall, showing the straight joint following a line from the left of the present chimney stack. The bastle core of the house lies to the east of the masonry break, with a small fire window evident on the first floor. To the west is the first addition to the farmstead: this linear addition is probably an agricultural range of the 18th century. [DP072080].

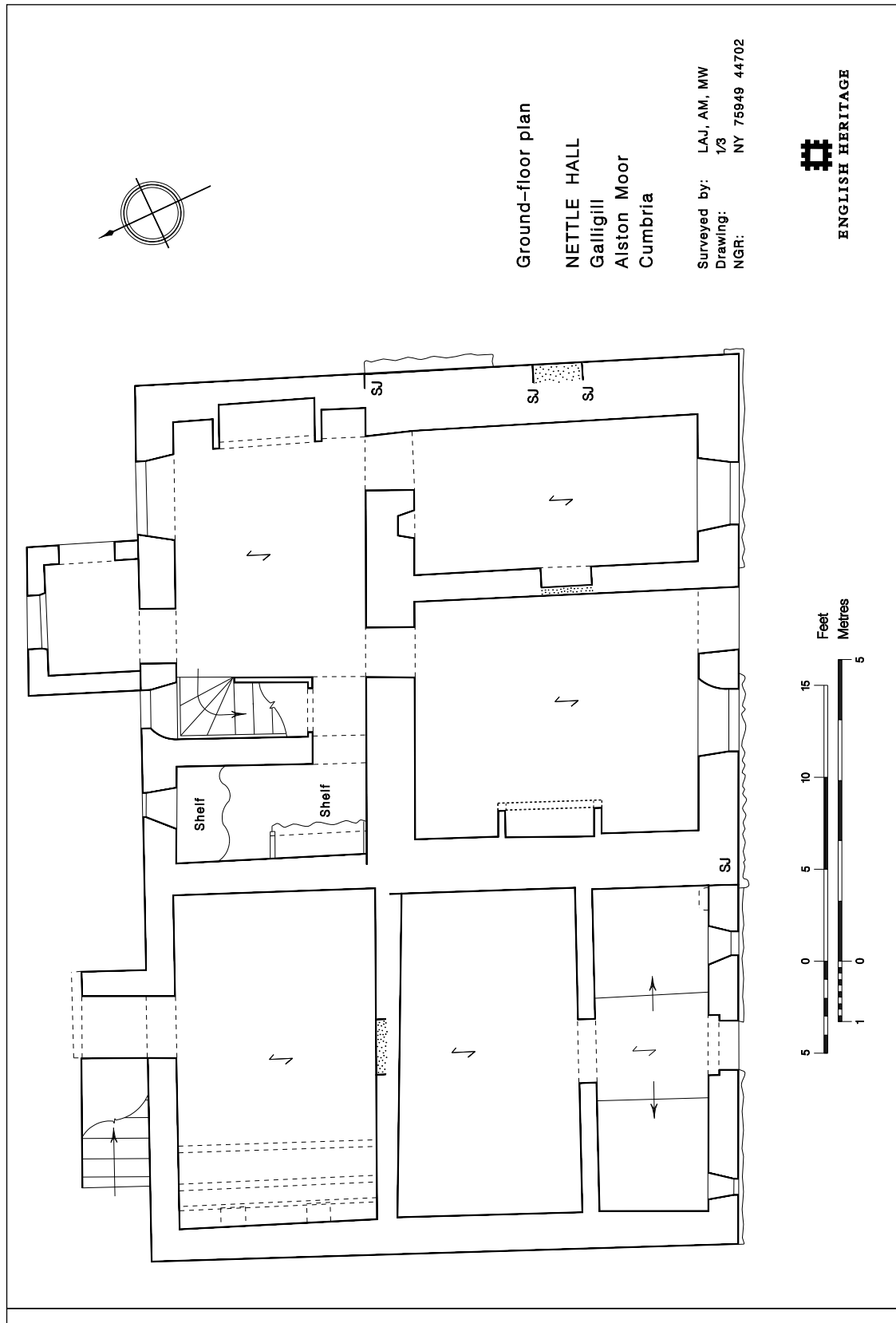


Fig. 7: Ground-floor plan of Nettle Hall

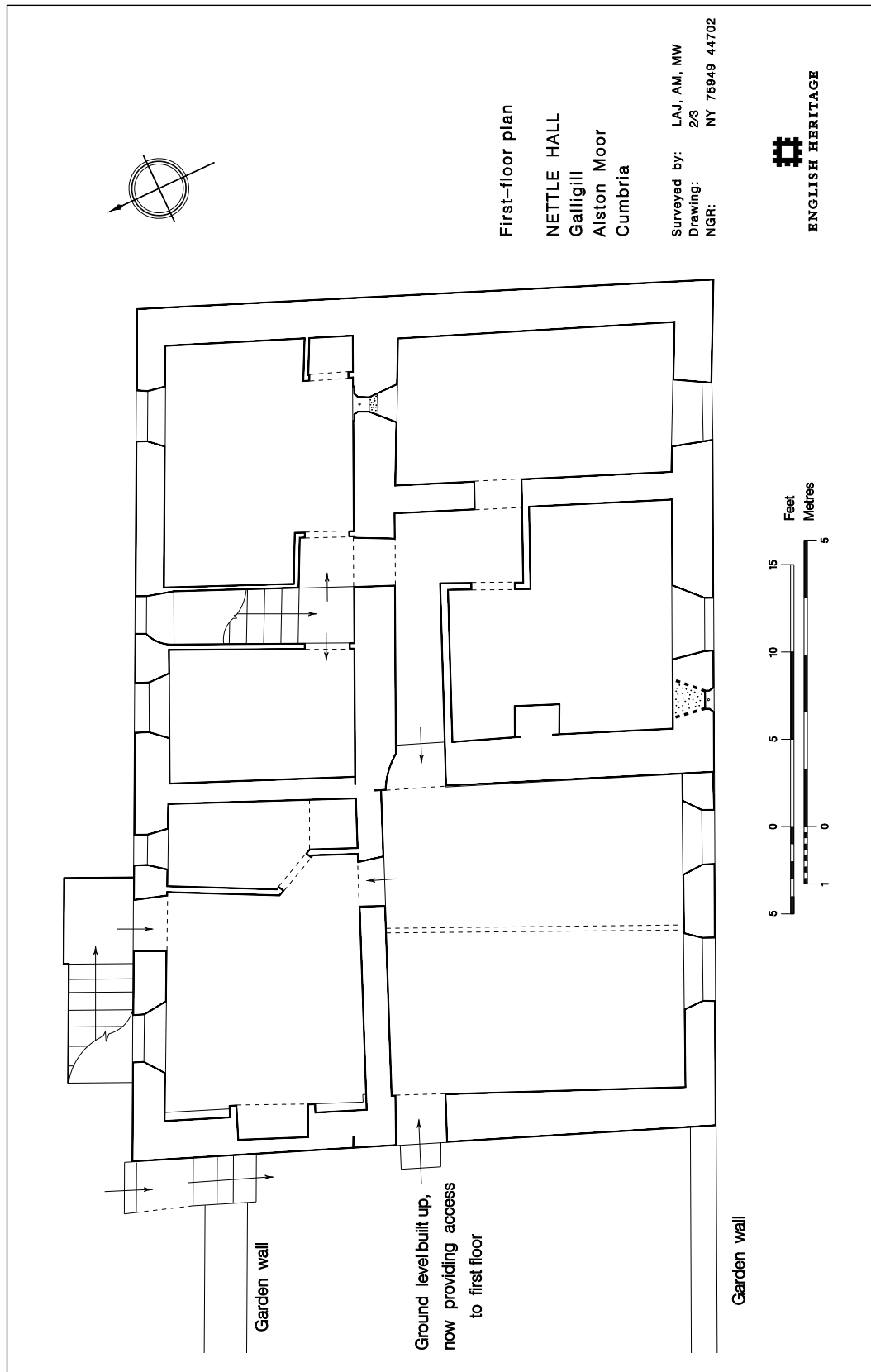


Fig. 8: First-floor plan of Nettle Hall



Fig. 9 : detail of the fire window on the first floor of the south elevation. [DP072082]



Fig. 10: detail of the chamfered window on the first floor of the north wall of the bastle, blocked when the northern addition was built. [DP072099]



Fig. 11: the blocked byre doorway in the east gable wall of the bastle. [DP072097]

The thickness of the walls (varying between 68cm on the front wall and 82cm on the east gable wall), the position of the ground-floor gable entrance, the lack of evidence for original heating on the ground floor and the minimal fenestration throughout (but especially on the ground floor) suggest that the core of Nettle Hall was built in the tradition of the defensible bastle, with the living accommodation placed over a ground-floor byre, as is typical for 17th-century houses in Alston Moor. There is no evidence at Nettle Hall for a first-floor doorway, as would be usual for the period and building type; this is probably due to the refenestration and partial rebuilding of the south wall, where such a doorway is most likely to have been placed. Any external stair would probably have been redundant once the north extension, with its internal stair, was built.

The position of the exposed chamfered window on the southern elevation of Nettle Hall and its proximity to the west gable wall suggests that it served as a fire window, lighting the fire area under a smoke hood. Traces of a smoke hood can be seen in the roof, on the east face of the gable wall, where a steeply diagonal plaster scar, slightly lipped, can



Fig. 12: view within the roof towards the west. The diagonal plaster scar to either side of the modern stack shows the form and position of the removed smoke hood. [DP072104]

be seen on either side of the present chimney, indicating where the projecting hood has been removed; some smoke blackening can also be seen on the inner face of the west gable within the former smokehood. The smoke hood tapered to a stone chimney, which pierced the roof and was supported on stone corbels near the top of the west gable, one of which can be seen inside the modern galleried bedroom created in the first-floor room of the west extension. The smoke hood would have taken up much of the western bay of the building, defined by the surviving oak roof truss of the period (the position of which suggests a three-bay roof structure, as now); the curved feet of its principal rafters can be seen in the first-floor rooms below. Redundant pegged lap-joints indicate that the truss was originally collared, but the collar has been renewed and the pitch of the roof reduced. At a steeper pitch, heather thatch would have been a likely roofing material, as mentioned in the 1728 document cited above. The other roof timbers are modern.

All floors, ceilings and joists belonging to the first phase have been renewed, but the lowness of the surviving first-floor windows suggests that the upper floor level may have originally been a little lower than now. It is unlikely that the full-height dividing wall is primary. At ground-floor level the communicating doorway between the two spaces has been turned into a cupboard and exhibits no historic features; in the roof the wall shows no sign of a change of pitch, suggesting that it post-dates the original building phase, perhaps replacing another roof truss.



Fig. 13: The surviving truss, viewed towards the east, with its wavy principal rafters and replaced collar. [DP072102]



Fig. 14: The lower part of the northern principal rafter of the truss, showing the start of the curve of its foot. The marking on the principal denotes it as truss II. [DP072103]



Fig. 15: The curved foot of the northern principal rafter of the truss, emerging into the corridor below. [DPI35348]



Fig. 16: The 2-storey western addition to the bastle, entirely refenestrated in the 19th century. [DP072081]

The first addition to the bastle house came in the 18th century, when an agricultural range of two unheated storeys was built onto its western gable wall. This phase, unlike the later northern extension, has a rubble plinth in the manner of that of the bastle house, although it is not as pronounced. It has walls of random rubble, some pieces of which are particularly thin. It was refenestrated, along with the rest of the house, in the 19th century. Its northern wall may also have been rebuilt at the upper level at that date, as shown by the stub of external wall seen in the first-floor room added to the north in the early 19th century. The form of the lower storey, with its outer and inner rooms, suggests the presence of a blocked window in the north wall, traces of which are discernible today in the centre of the wall; it is most likely to have been used for animal accommodation. There is no sign of original communication between the storeys. The room above may have been used as a barn or for other storage, but no original openings survive to aid interpretation. Doorways have been cut through to allow the upper floor to communicate with that of the bastle house and a later addition to the north although the date of these is unclear; the present external doorway in the upper storey may have once served as a first-floor doorway before the ground was built up to its current level. The western addition was reroofed in the 19th century, as demonstrated by the bolted softwood roof truss; this was carried out across the linear farmstead, including the bastle house, as the pattern of roof slates suggest.



Fig. 17: The two-storeyed northern extension, providing additional accommodation for the bastle and creating a new, one-room first-floor dwelling. [DP072085]

In the later 18th and early 19th century, with the rapid expansion of the lead industry across the parish, the seam to the south of Nettle Hall was exploited; this contributed to a doubling in size of the house and to its occupation by multiple households. A lease of 1806 mentions two dwelling houses, good outhouses and three meadows at Nettle Hall; the second dwelling house may either be the large addition built onto the north of the bastle or, less likely, the structure built to the east of the house, referred to here as the mineshop and discussed in a subsequent section of this report.¹⁴ The OS map of 1859 shows a clear division between the east and west halves of the main building, and this probably represents the situation described – and perhaps not long built – in 1806. By 1857, two companies, the Galligill Syke and the Galligill Well Mining Companies, were active at Nettle Hall.

In the first half of the 19th century, then, a large range was built of more finely-coursed rubble (now lime-washed) onto the north side of the house, running the full length of the bastle and its 18th-century extension beneath a separate gabled roof. It contained two different types of accommodation: to the east, on the ground floor it provided a back kitchen, stair and pantry with two rooms over; to the west was a separate entity, with an unheated room for animals or storage beneath and a large heated room above it, reached only by an external stair, and served by a substantial fireplace with monolithic jambs. The upper room was thus self-sufficient, containing a space which could be



Fig. 18 The early 19th-century back kitchen with its monolithic-jambed fireplace, located at the eastern end of the northern addition. The addition now communicates with both rooms in the ground floor of the bastle, although the date at which they were connected is unknown. [DP072092]



Fig. 19: The western half of the two-storeyed northern addition, showing the external stair to the 1st-floor dwelling. [DP072087]

separately entered, occupied, and let out – the living and sleeping space may have been in one room, but that was not unusual in Alston Moor at this date. It would have represented a useful source of income, and, to its occupier, would have been a well-lit and well-heated space with its generous fireplace and lighting. The principal, eastern part of this addition, with its internal stair, could also have supported a separate household at this date but is more likely to represent an expansion of the bastle house. The ground floor of the bastle house may or may not have been converted to domestic use around



Fig. 20: The monolithic-jambed fireplace in the self-contained first-floor dwelling, situated at the western end of the early 19th-century northern addition. [DP072100]

this date (and it is quite likely that it would not have been) – the new extension may not have communicated with it at all on either level until much later on, perhaps around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries when the house was returned to single occupation.

The rubble walling and casement windows of some of the older areas of the building were replaced in the 19th century, with the rebuilding of substantial portions of the east gable and the south elevation and a near-complete refenestration using sash windows, with the exception of the small chamfered window on the south wall (that in the northern wall was covered up in the building of the new north range). The extent of this rebuilding is denoted by an absence of limewash in the affected areas, unlike the treatment of the rest of the external walls. The windows replaced at this time have distinctive sills of horizontal grain and a worked, rubble-like surface, similar to those in the 19th-century north range. Large fireplaces with monolithic jambs can be found in this phase of the house, again typical for the area in the later 18th and early- to mid-19th century. The pantry is fitted with stone slate shelves and the original wooden partition screens the stair from the back kitchen. This addition represents a considerable investment and improvement in living conditions in the early 19th century, a time when the population of Alston Moor was dramatically expanding to feed the lead-mining industry. Nettle Hall was no longer a farmstead with some small-scale local mining possibilities: it was now the heart of a medium-scale mining enterprise and was altered and extended to serve a much larger population than ever before.

In the course of the 20th century, Nettle Hall gradually reverted to occupation by a single household and was adapted to produce the present circulation pattern. On the upper floor, doorways were cut through to provide communication between all parts of the building. The ground floor of the bastle house was converted to a kitchen and living room which communicated with the 19th-century rear range, with a new chimney stack and fireplace to heat the living room. A porch was added on the north side of the house to shelter the entrance to the back kitchen. The house was subsequently renovated by the present owners during the 1990s.

The mineshop

To the east of the house lies a separate two-and-a-half-storey building which today is used as a hay-barn and for general storage but once contained heated first-floor accommodation. Attached to it are two later structures, currently used as a garage and a stable, discussed at the end of this section. The original building is unlikely to be one of the two dwelling houses mentioned in the deed of 1806 (see above), but it was present by the time of the 1859 OS map, which shows what may have been a small garden plot (now built over) against the north side. Evidence from both the census and the property deeds do not confirm that this building was permanently inhabited during the 19th century, although the number of households appearing in the census might suggest that it was, especially at the time when Galligill Syke was being exploited for lead extraction. The rooms provided would have been of a suitable size and nature for long-term occupation, but would have been equally practical as more temporary accommodation



Fig. 21: The mineshop from the south-west. [DP072083]

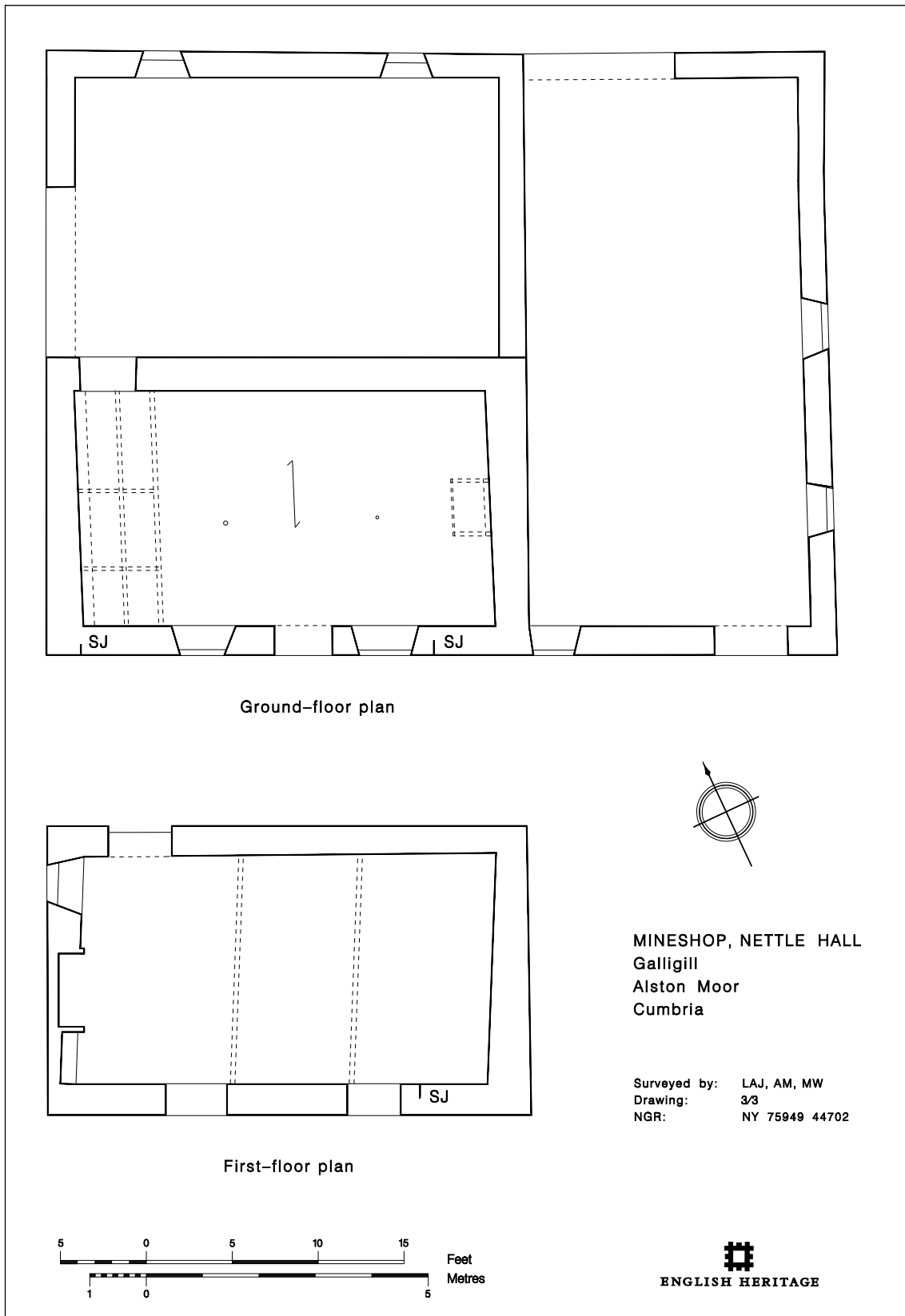


Fig. 22: Plans of the mineshop at Nettle Hall.

for miners. Mineshops in the North Pennines lay close to the mines, generally consisting of a ground-floor space, used as a forge or for general storage (typically for mining implements) and sometimes as stabling for the horses which pulled the wagons both within and outside the mines. The heated accommodation above was occupied by mine-workers, often only during the week as they would return to their permanent homes at the weekend. Examples can be seen at the Killhope Mining Museum in Weardale and at the Nenthead Mining Centre in Nenthead, close to Nettle Hall.

The building, which is currently without internal subdivision, has a simple rectangular plan, gabled east-west, with stacks on both gables. It is constructed of sandstone rubble, the original pattern of which is best observed on the two gable ends of the building; much of the front (south) elevation has been recently rebuilt (as discussed below) and its original finish cannot be easily ascertained. The masonry, which has been lime-washed in the past, incorporates large squared quoins from a different source than the rubble walling and slender lintels and sills. The original form of the front elevation is largely lost, but two former door jambs indicate ground-floor entrances at each end of the elevation. Higher up, the present symmetrical pattern of openings approximates to the



Fig. 23: The south-western corner of the mineshop, showing the straight joint denoting one of the original ground-floor doorways. [DPI35350]

original arrangement, with the likely exception of the central doorway. This is based on information from the current owners. There are no original window openings in the other three walls.

Currently used intensively for storage, the ground floor does not provide any obvious evidence of its original use. The absence of fireplaces at either end of the room suggests that this was not intended to be domestic accommodation. However, the thick, irregular application of render on the eastern wall may obscure the former existence of a fireplace, with further evidence for this derived from the position of the former doorway at this end of the south wall; this is located sufficiently far from the gable end (further than the corresponding doorway at the other end of the wall) to suggest that it respects the position of an internal feature such as a fireplace. There is no evidence in the pattern of the ceiling joists (where visible) of a former stair trap to the upper floors but trimmers adjacent to the front doorway form a small trapdoor, probably a recent insertion.



Fig. 24: The blocked first-floor doorway, now a window, in the west gable wall of the mineshop, [DPI35349]

Two doorway positions are evident at first-floor level, indicating, along with other evidence, the separate use of the upper-level accommodation. On the west gable end, facing the main house, a first-floor doorway has been truncated by rubble infill in its lower half and left-hand side to form a modern window. Although a stair against the gable wall is atypical for Alston Moor (where it more commonly occurs along one of the long elevations) fabric evidence suggests that the opening is original and the OS maps of 1859 and 1895 indicate the presence of an external stair, now lost, which would have served it. A second first-floor doorway is situated immediately alongside in the north wall (now visible within the garage outshot). There is no physical or cartographic evidence for a stair in this position, and it is likely that the opening was inserted following the addition of the lean-to, perhaps coinciding with the removal of the external stair against the west gable wall. Access to the second floor must have been by a conventional internal stair; there being no evidence

for an external doorway at this level. Today, the principal means of access to the first floor and above is via the large openings in the south elevation, achievable by means of ladders.

Although no partitions survive on the first floor, the evidence of fireplaces on both gable walls indicates the probability that the space was originally divided. The fireplace at the west end is set into a chimney breast and constructed of three plain dressed stones in the straightforward style seen in domestic settings throughout Alston Moor in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, an example of which survives in the neighbouring house. The position of the fireplace (also visible in the ground-floor ceiling in the form of a



Fig. 25: The first-floor fireplace, with monolithic jambs and lintel, at the west end of the mineshop. [DPI35351]



Fig. 26: View into the roofspace of the mineshop, showing one of the softwood trusses and traces of plaster on the east gable. [DPI35352]

hearth stone and trimmers) is offset towards the south wall, respecting the entrance position at the northern end of the gable wall. Hay storage probably obscured the position of a fireplace on the opposite wall from being seen, but the evidence of the hearth stone and trimmers visible in the ground-floor ceiling confirms its existence. It was smaller than the west fireplace and was placed centrally on the gable wall. These differences suggest that the west fireplace served as a cooking hearth and that it may have been screened off from the entrance and possibly a stair up to the second floor. The east fireplace heated a room occupying the full depth of the building.

The timbers forming the second floor have been removed, allowing more room for hay storage. There are very few distinguishing features at this level and no obvious indication that it was ever heated, though both stacks are wide enough to accommodate two flues. It was plastered (like the first floor), open to the roof, and probably lit by small windows beneath the eaves, now replicated in the recent rebuilding of the south elevation, circumstances which made it suitable for storage or sleeping accommodation but unsuitable for everyday tasks. The two softwood roof trusses consist of principal rafters and a bolted collar, and support three sets of staggered trenched purlins and a square-set ridge.

The question of the internal subdivision and function of the building is troublesome. The straight joints of the south elevation suggest that there were once two doorways giving access at either end of the ground floor, suggesting that the accommodation at this level was once divided into two; on the first floor, however, there is an original doorway at the western end but no corresponding opening at the eastern end of the building, and the first-floor fireplaces are similarly varied. The building cannot, therefore, have provided identical accommodation on either side of a vertical division; instead, multiple access and internal subdivision are an indication that the building accommodated a range of functions.

The apparent lack of heating rules out the typical function of the ground-floor accommodation of a North Pennines mineshop; that is, a forge for tool repairs. However, there is anecdotal evidence that the ground floor of the adjacent bastle house was used as a forge in the early 20th century and thus such a function may have been unnecessary in this particular building.¹⁵ This might suggest storage (for mining or agricultural equipment), stabling or cattle housing – or (given the evidence for two entrances) a combination of such functions. However, the byres on the ground floor of the nearby farmhouse were still in use during the 19th century, and this building has none of the expected physical traces of use as a byre, lacking suitable flooring or stall divisions. The probability is that, based on the date of the building's construction and the existence of a mining concern on the Nettle Hall site throughout the 19th century, this ground-floor accommodation was conceived as a purpose-built workshop or storage area for various mining tools and other associated equipment. Further evidence for former internal divisions may be hidden.

The greater part of the south elevation was rebuilt in the 1990s by the present owners to prevent the possible failure from bowing of the original structure. The new masonry is in a similar style and reproduces approximately the original pattern of openings, with the exception of the ground floor, as discussed below. The surviving extent of the original wall is indicated by the presence of straight joints towards each gable wall, leaving two unequally wide sections of original wall flanking the rebuilt masonry. The stone appears to have been largely recycled from the fabric of the original wall. The residue of lime wash and render is similarly visible on the stone of the repaired wall as elsewhere, for instance, and the generally smaller stone size matches the pattern visible on the north wall within the garage range.

Alongside the principal building are two additional ranges, a single-storey lean-to to the east used as a stable and the other, used as a garage and roofed as a tall, single-storey outshot, to the north. Both have mono-pitch corrugated metal roofs. Each replaces smaller, earlier buildings in similar positions, one at the east end shown on the 1859 map, and both present in 1895. The existing structures are therefore likely to date from the 20th century, though it is possible that the lean-to retains some masonry from the earlier building. The walling materials used are consistent with those found on the main building, albeit arranged in a more irregular manner. On the stable, there are the same traces of render seen on the main building, whilst the nature of the coursing in the stone suggests that it is closer to the build date of the main structure than the garage. The stable has a large sliding door to the rear and sufficient light and ventilation for livestock. It contains



Fig. 27: View of the mineshop from the south east, showing the redundant eastern stack and the stable added to the east wall. [DPI35353]

loose boxes for livestock, whilst the graded and channelled stone floor is adapted for drainage. The much taller garage range is relatively crudely built and is probably the later of the two. Entrance is via a large sliding door in the west gable and the interior is lit by two small windows in the north wall. Both structures still fulfil their roles of vehicle storage and animal housing, though it is probable that these functions would have had a more agricultural emphasis in the past, involving saleable livestock and farm machinery.

A small detached privy lies to the north-east of the mineshop, in close proximity to the burn. It is walled with rubble. It was probably built in the first half of the 19th century and it appears on the 1859 1st edition OS map.

ENDNOTES

Abbreviations:

CRO - Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle

TNA - The National Archives, Kew, London

Unless otherwise stated, all documents are in the possession of the owners.

- 1 11 May 1724, conveyance between Richard Wallace of Lowbyre and John Norton of Galligill in Aldston Moor, for £118.
- 2 7 December 1728, conveyance between John Norton of Upper Galligill and James Bails of Upper Galligill, for £120.
- 3 1 May 1806, lease of the half tenement of Upper Galligill.
- 4 1 May 1816, indenture of sale between Sarah Shield of Galligill, widow of John Shield late Mine Agent of the same place and executor of Thomas Cowper of Nentsbury, and Betty Cowper of Alston.
- 5 CRO QRE/1/108 – enclosure award of Alston Moor Commons, 27 April 1820. 8 May 1857, lease from John Cowper of Alston to Joseph Cowper Cain.
- 6 1851 census of Alston, Cumberland, enumeration district 1b; 1871 census of West Acomb, near Hexham, Northumberland, enumeration district 1; National Probate Calendar, died 25 November 1875, probate granted 11 March 1876.
- 7 <http://www.cultrans.com/carlisle-patriot/sept-20-1844/III-lead-mines-at-alston-moor>: an article in the *Carlisle Patriot*, 20 September 1844 states that 'An important arbitration case respecting some extensive lead mines at Alston Moor, involving property to the extent of £50,000 has been in progress during the week at the Coffee House, before Mr. ARMSTRONG, the barrister. The Hudgillburn company are the plaintiffs, and the Galligill Well company the defendants, and as there are a great number of witnesses on both side the case will probably occupy a considerable time.' This dispute had been carrying on for many years: it is also mentioned in a letter held at University College London dated 19 February 1833 [Brougham HM/J258] from George Eden, earl of Auckland to James Brougham, where the company's name was given as the Galligill Well North Vein mining company.
- 8 <http://www.cumberlandarchives.co.uk/content/view/194/37/>: the 1873 Cumberland Post Office Directory mentions the Galligill Syke mine, managed by John Peart of Alston.

- 9 <http://www.btinternet.com/~grigg/1829All6042006.pdf>: transcription of the Principal Inhabitants of Cumberland and Westmorland, from Parson and White's Directory of 1829. The Walton family also held shares in a mine at Galligill Syke, dated 1836, TNA D WAL 34.
- 10 4 February 1876, conveyance from Joseph Cowper Cain of Weardale House, Stanhope, to Joseph Spark of Browngill, Alston.
- 11 http://www.dmm2.org.uk/borings/sup_010.htm: 1878 guide to borings and sinkings in the Durham Mining Museum.
- 12 24 June 1905, conveyance from Adamson Pickering to Allison Teasdale for £465.
- 13 28 October 1937, insurance schedule of the British Law Insurance Company Ltd for Thomas Allison Teasdale of 'Nettlehall', for £400.
- 14 1 May 1806, lease of the half tenement of Upper Galligill.
- 15 Information provided by the owners.



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