

Craigentarrie

Detailed Site Description by SRP Pentland Hills¹, 2008-2010

Introduction and summary

Craigentarrie farmstead lies about 3km SE of Currie and 400m SE of the junction of two historic paths across the Pentland range: the Clochmead, which links Harlaw with Glencorse and the Kirkgate road, which fords the Water of Leith at Currie Kirk and runs straight towards Craigentarrie. It is situated in a slight dip on the S side of an upland ridge which extends W towards Threipmuir reservoir and E, towards the steeper NW slopes of the Pentland Hill range. The ground rises slightly to the SE, forming a verdant grassy plateau about 300m wide which then drops steeply down to a valley alongside the Black Hill where springs feed into the Threipmuir Reservoir. The land N and W of the farmstead is rough peaty wet moorland but improved grassland to the S provides good quality grazing for cattle and sheep. Extensive rig and furrow cultivation covers the area and the farmstead and its stone walls appear to overly this.

The site comprises a rectangular stone-built farmstead, aligned E/W, with the partial remains of a rectangular stone-walled enclosure to its S (rear) and W. A small brick outhouse in the NW corner of the enclosure may have been an outside toilet, and 14m NE of the farmstead is a well, now covered by two large stones. A second large grassy enclosure measuring c 100m x c30m also lies to the NE, with an old rowan tree growing from one of its boundary walls.

The farmstead measures 22m x 9m overall and comprises a two-roomed house with a small brick-built kitchen extension on its N wall and an outshot to the W which is narrower than the house with a lower roofline. The house was built in at least two phases, the W half being the original building measuring 7m x 6m overall.

A date of 1787/8 can be suggested for the earliest part of the house if it was built following an Accounting of Enclosure document (GD41/333, 1787) relating to Craigentarrie assessing its value if enclosed by a stone dyke with an attached farm of arable and pasture. A small thatched house was probably constructed along with the field walls for the first tenant in 1788 (GD41/333). However the old steading of Craigentarrie referred to in the OS Namebook List of Names (1853) would still have been in existence in 1788 so a later construction date for the first house is possible, perhaps 1807 if there was a change of tenancy. However it must have decayed rapidly to become the “small

¹ Scotland's Rural Past (www.scotlandsruralpast.org.uk)

farmhouse one storey high thatched and in very indifferent <bad> repair” described by the OS Namebook in 1853. There is no evidence on the ground of any pre-existing house beneath the present farmhouse.

Subsequently the house was extended to the E and although the extension date is unknown the 1st ed OS 1853 map clearly depicts a rectangular rather than a square building so it could have been built to provide additional accommodation following the abandonment of the old steading of Craigentarrie. The stones are roughly shaped and coursed on the front (N) wall, but un-coursed on the back (S) wall. The corners have well cut quoins and the door and window surrounds are of cut/dressed stone, although many have been altered and some replaced or heavily patched with cement. A small stone quarry on the SW crest of the hill could have provided pink and white sandstone for house construction and a clamp kiln situated at NT 19608 64855 was probably for burning lime to make mortar.

At some point the house was re-roofed and the outshot constructed or extended to form a barn or cartshed in its final phase. Map evidence suggests its present form dates to the period 1853-1895 but it may previously have been a much shorter structure measuring about 5.50m in length with a small window in the front (N) wall and an aperture in the S wall. Rebuilding evident in the S wall might also conceal a blocked opening. The kitchen extension was added in the twentieth century in red brick with cement render. A wooden porch was attached to its W wall, but this was burned down in recent years and only the cement foundation remains. The house has two standing gables and the kitchen extension and E end of the house are still partly roofed in slate. There is a chimney stack in the E gable and a tall chimney in the NE corner of the kitchen extension. Access to the kitchen extension and E end of the house is limited by the partially-collapsed roof.

Detailed description (to be read in conjunction with the measured plan)

Structurally, the farmstead comprises four connecting units, numbered 1-4 on the measured plan. Units 1-3 are aligned along its long axis, while Unit 4 is a cement-harled brick built kitchen extension of 20th century date attached to the N wall of Units 1 and 2. Units 1, 2 and 4 were domestic buildings and Unit 3, agricultural.

Unit 1

UNIT 1 is the easternmost unit. It is butted on to the E wall of Unit 2 and measures 4.7m N/S by 4m W/E internally within walls 0.55m wide. The external face of the N wall is roughly coursed and

both gable corners have roughly dressed sandstone quoins. A doorway in the N wall is largely obscured by plaster and a wooden frame but the few stones that are visible indicate it formed the original doorway to Unit 1 and was incorporated into the later kitchen extension. There is a centrally placed window in the S wall measuring 1.15m high by 0.70cm wide externally and 1m wide internally, with a slight splay and no external stone window checks. The external face of the E gable wall shows considerable evidence of repair suggesting either subsidence or rebuilding. A large window is set into this gable wall 0.8m from the SE corner, however the internal splays have been cut away and it appears to have been enlarged in size. It currently measures 1.35m high by 0.8m wide externally and 1m internally, with external stone window checks.

Inside, a fireplace is built into the E wall, with a large red-brown sandstone mantle set flush with the wall face. The centre of this wall has a mix of stones and a split or joint running vertically up the whole height of the wall indicating that rebuilding of this chimney has probably taken place on more than one occasion.

The W wall was originally an outer gable wall for Unit 2 and a blocked window is set into the S end of this gable 0.7m from the internal SW corner. This window is 0.9m high by 0.5m wide with chamfered white sandstone surrounds, and has been blocked with a mix of small stones and pink mortar. An inserted doorway in the N corner of this wall may have been created to provide access to Unit 1 after Unit 4 was built across the original entrance. The W wall is also marked by discontinuity up the central line with several large yellow/brown sandstone blocks in the lower section. This is probably related to the insertion of a metal stove on the other side of the wall inside Unit 2.

Unit 2

Unit 2 is the oldest structure on site and all of the other units are butted against it. It measures 6m x 5m internally, within walls 0.6m wide. It presently comprises three rooms: an internal brick subdivision (now reduced to floor level) forms one large room on the E, measuring 4m by 5m (Unit 2A), and two small rooms on the W, measuring 3m by 2m (Unit 2B) and 1.5m by 2m (Unit 2C), respectively. A centrally placed metal range has been inserted into the internal E wall of Unit 2A, probably replacing an earlier fireplace. The wall face above the range shows that extensive reconstruction of the chimney stack has taken place and the walls on either side of the stove have been in-filled with red and yellow brickwork and clay firebricks. The wall face on the S side of the stove has been cut back to the blocked window face to create a recess for a full height cupboard. Some of the internal walls of Units 2A and 2B are plastered and where the plaster has worn away,

pegs with vertical batons attached remain. Unit 2C is completely cut off from the other compartments by brick subdivisions and may have been a store in its final phase.

The front (N) wall is roughly coursed and heavily cement rendered while the back (S) wall comprises a mix of un-coursed sandstone and whinstone rubble. Large squared yellow/brown sandstone quoins at its SW and SE rear corners are un-broached but may possibly have been stugged. The quoins at the NW front corner comprise pink and yellow/brown sandstone, smooth edged at the lower levels and sharp edged higher up. The gable faces are largely obscured by plaster but the upper third of the outer face of the W gable is more neatly constructed than the lower section and indicates the replacement of the 1853 (OS Namebook) thatched roof by a slate or tiled roof, probably in the later 19th century. Some of the door and window openings appear to be contemporary with the original building, but all have been modified to some degree and most presently have cement lintels, facings and sills.

There is a doorway and two windows in the front (N) wall. The W side of the doorway is well built with neatly dressed squared sandstones. The E side is covered by cement render and was probably rebuilt when a small window was inserted. This window is approximately 0.6m E of the door and set high in the wall. It measures 0.95m high by 0.45m wide with cement lintels and facings.

The second window measures 1.4m high by 0.9m wide, externally, and 1.2m wide, internally. It has stone checks and appears to have been rebuilt or enlarged because the inner splay has been cut back and its E side comprises small stones that clearly acted as fillers.

There are two small, splayed windows about 1m square in the back (S) wall. The first (W) window measures 1.3m high by 0.8m wide externally and 1.0m wide internally, with window checks and an internal splay. The E side of the window is entirely brick built while the top half of the W side has also been built up with bricks. The second (E) window has stone checks and finely crafted stugged yellow and grey sandstone surrounds. It measures 1.4m high by 0.75m wide, externally, and is 1.1m wide, internally. This window has also been enlarged from an original height of 0.9m but its internal splay has been retained.

Unit 3

UNIT 3 is a barn or cartshed butted on to the W wall of Unit 2. It measures 4.5m N/S by 9m W/E internally, within walls 0.60m wide. It is aligned with Units 1 and 2, but its front (N) and back (S) walls are inset by 0.25m from them.

It is internally subdivided by a rubble wall, 0.3m wide, forming a narrow unit at the E end (Unit 3A) measuring 4.5m N/S by 2m W/E and a larger western unit (Unit 3B). A gap at the N end of the dividing wall was probably an internal connecting door between the two. A door in the N front wall provided external access into Unit 3A and stones on the E side of this doorframe have smoothed or well weathered edges. The topmost stone seems to show wide curved broaching similar to stones seen at Redford Farm (built by 1772). The upper door lintel has been deeply inserted into the NW gable end of Unit 2. It is not known what the original function of Unit 3A was but it may initially have been built as a small byre or stable with the dividing wall inserted at a later date. The internal walls are plastered to wall head height and a large ceramic soil pipe is set into the rear S wall alongside a ventilator grill, suggesting its later use as an external WC for the farm house.

The larger Unit 3B measures 4.5m N/S by 7m W/E internally and has a single splayed aperture slit in the south wall immediately to the W of the partition wall. The only external access to this unit is a centrally placed door 1.5m wide in the W gable end. The stones forming the door surrounds are finely shaped square grey stugged sandstone and above the top lintel pink and grey sandstone boulders have been shaped and placed on end to give the appearance of an arch. The gable wall comprises a mix of large roughly shaped light/dark pink and un-coursed grey sandstone boulders. Some of these boulders show evidence of wide broaching and may be reused from an earlier structure. The corner quoin stones are very weathered but show signs of stugging. The upper NE edge of the gable is particularly ruinous and its shape suggests a possible high level access or opening at this point. It is not possible to be certain of this but a void in the internal N wall face at the W end could indicate where supports for an internal stair were inserted. A pile of slates on the ground inside Unit 3B might indicate that part of this Unit was slate roofed in the latter stages of its use but it is also possible the slates were simply piled here after the collapse of roofs covering Units 1 or 2.

The construction of both the front (N) and rear (S) walls of Unit 3 show structural discontinuity, with rounded large boulders at the W end and more angular pink/white sandstones at the E, and it is possible that the building was extended westwards at some date. Two large square white sandstone blocks visible in the external face of the N wall 4m from the NW gable corner are matched in the S wall by a similar large white squared sandstone block also 4m from the SW gable corner and these could be original quoin stones for a shorter structure. A possible blocked aperture or window is discernable on the internal face of the north wall about 6.00m from the NW gable end measuring approx 0.60m in height by 0.50m wide. The variety of stonework on the internal S wall suggests blocking or rebuilding activity here as well.

Unit 4

UNIT 4, the kitchen extension, is butted against the N walls of Units 1 and 2, and measures 2.6m N/S by 3m W/E internally, within brick walls 0.3m wide. The internal space is divided into a large kitchen area to the N, with a small store cupboard or larder, measuring 0.6m x 0.65m, in the SW corner, and an internal toilet measuring 1m by 0.8m in the SE corner. Inside the kitchen area, two deep ceramic sinks are set centrally against the N wall and a cooker might have been set in the junction between the N and E walls. A chimney stack in the NE corner protrudes about 0.2m into the interior of the kitchen. Surprisingly there is no fireplace or opening into the chimney from inside the kitchen so either this has been bricked up or there is a vent or pipe leading to it inside the brick wall. Internal access between Unit 4 and the rest of the house is through the doorway in the N wall of Unit 1.

External access to Unit 4 is gained by a door in the W wall. Immediately S of the doorway is a small two-paned window, measuring 0.65m high x 0.3m wide, which provided ventilation for the larder. This window is fixed but hinged to open internally. A boarded up window centrally placed in the N wall measures 0.9m high by 0.8m wide; inside, the ceramic sinks are set below this window. There are two windows in the E wall. The first is a small window for the internal toilet, its wooden case frame has fallen into the building and the exterior is boarded up. A larger window about 0.5m further N along this wall measures 1.1m high by 1m wide; it has a lower sill but no top sill and its wooden sliding case frame has also fallen into the house.

Enclosures, outhouse and well

There is an enclosure or garden area behind the farmstead, measuring approx 15m N/S by 30m W/E surrounded on the E and S sides by a stone wall. A small brick outhouse in the NW corner of the enclosure, close to the farmstead, may also have been an outside toilet. The E wall of the enclosure has collapsed forming a rubble spread about 1m wide but facing stones are still visible suggesting that this side of the garden was terraced into the hill. The garden is level until about 10m W of the E wall at which point the terrace slopes sharply down about 0.50m in height. This break of slope coincides with the W gable end wall of Unit 2, suggesting that garden and house were contemporary up to this point. Beyond this the ground slopes gently W for about 10m before dropping steeply down into a small burn. The S wall of the enclosure is a field boundary that extends down slope in a W direction to Threipmuir and uphill to the E past the lime kiln to meet another field wall.

A large green area about 100m x 30m lies NE of the house. This was possibly a small cultivation plot related to the house and a very elderly rowan tree stands part way along the field boundary wall. Aerial photographs show that a possible boundary ditch lay slightly south of this field wall and also reveals that the house, boundary, garden and cultivation plot overlie, and have removed, lines of rig 6m-8m wide. These lines run roughly N/S on both sides of the farm and must predate the steading layout. A well which is situated about 14m NE of the NE corner of the kitchen extension is now covered by two large stones.