

NORTH AYRSHIRE WATERMILL SURVEY

Name of mill: Bark Mill.

Date visited: 5.7.10.

Address: Willowyard, Beith

Surveyed by: Alastair Weir

Grid ref: NS334545

Present use:

Only the western gable of the building stands. Evidence of walls/foundations linked to the gable section and adjacent to.

Past use:

Notated on the 1st edition OS as a bark mill. See notes. Now ruinous.

Description of mill buildings:

Size: Length/breadth: Approx 8.0 in breadth. No other measurements taken.

Height: Not known. Appears to have had two storeys. Different stone work on the upper floor. Mill appears to have been split levelled.

Construction:

Walls: Randomly coursed stone. Dressed stone entrance surrounds and quoins. Presume lintels were also of dressed stone.

Roof: Most likely slate as there was evidence of slates lying around the site.

Description of machinery: No remains evident.

Machinery: No remains evident

Power: 1st edition OS shows what could be a dam or weir. Was unable to ascertain if anything remained of this 'structure' as it lay within the security fence of a whisky bond. Out with the security fence boundary there are traces of the lade. The line of the tail race could just about be envisaged but definite signs were difficult to determine. The building of the nearby Glasgow/Ayr railway line in 1840 would probably have caused alterations to the tail race.

Other buildings: None.

Photographs taken: Yes.

Notes: A bark mill was one used to crush bark; the end product being used in the tannery industry. It is known that there was at least one tannery in the nearby town of Beith. I have assumed that the bark used in the mill arose from waste produced by furniture makers, again in the town of Beith.

I was not able to identify access to this mill. It is, however, known from later OS editions that the mill was served by a short siding taken off the main Glasgow/Ayr railway line. An assumption could be that the nearby source of bark was not sufficient for the economic working of the mill and other sources were required. However what the mill was being used for at this time is not yet known.

I accessed the site through what I thought was a planned landscape, there being evidence of avenues of trees, uncommon tree species and ornamental gate posts.
