

5. Syde Mill

John Macdonald

The site of the ruined grain mill is situated on the West bank of the Killoch Water just beside a waterfall. Its N.G.R. is NS 4638 5821.

The remains of the building which is rectangular lie with the long axis at right angles to the burn. Its dimensions are 8m by 4m, the height of the walls rises to a maximum of 0.6m, measured from the inside of the building and 0.7m on the outside.

There is no obvious internal structure, the centre of the building being composed of extensive tumble.

Where the main walls remain intact it can be seen that they are composed of rubble masonry with little attempt at coursing. There are remains of mortar visible in a few places.

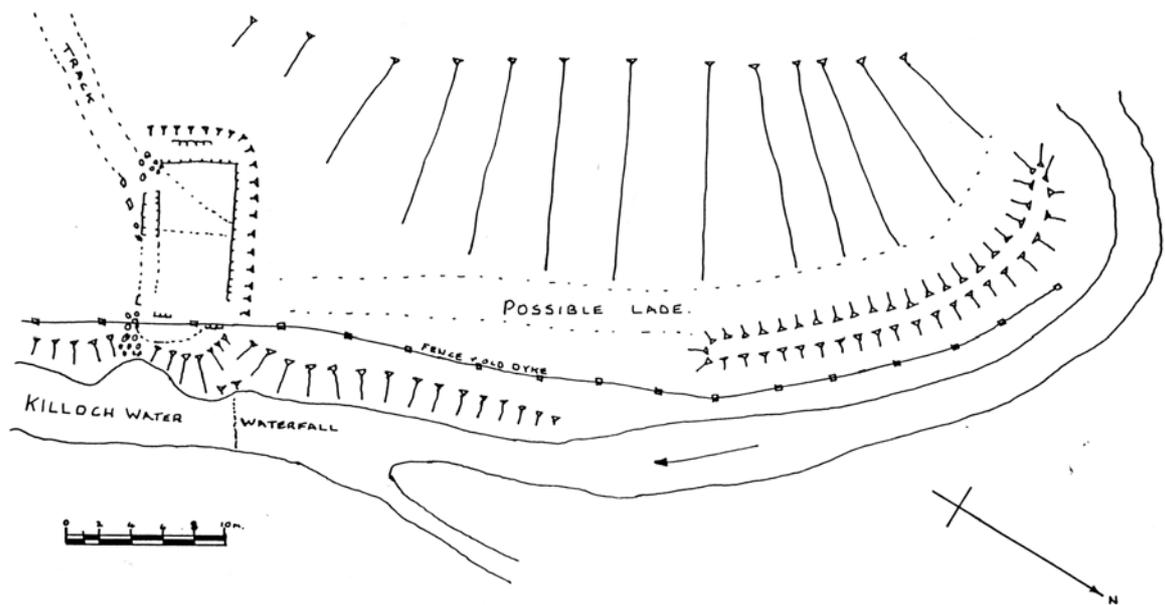
Some of the larger stones appear to have been worked and squared off on 3 or 4 sides. There are several such stones tumbled at the SE corner suggesting possibly the position of a doorway. The largest square stone still in situ is on the inside of the NE corner. It measures 0.5 x 0.3 x 0.15m. There is probably a doorway at this point also. It is not clear if the end wall of the building nearest the burn is on the line of the present stone wall or 0.75m to the E of it.

The whole site is one morass caused by cattle taking shelter in the small valley in which the mill is situated. This made it impossible to determine any internal features in the mill building and to establish the true nature of the hydraulics associated with the mill.

There are two possible ways in which the mill could have functioned. Firstly the mill wall at its NE end is in a very ruinous condition and it was not possible to determine if it projected further towards the burn. If this were the case then the water-wheel could have been situated at this end of the mill directly in the burn. This would have been of the undershot type. Secondly there appears to have been a lade running to the mill from a weir about 60m upstream and the course of the lade and its retaining bank on the burn's W side are distinct for the first half of the route from the weir to the mill. This bank reaches a maximum height of 1.8m and measures 4m across at its broadest point. The retaining bank comes to an end some 30m from the mill's NW wall. From this point the lade appears to continue on as a shallow depression until it ends on the top of a bank some 3m short of the N wall and was presumably continued into the mill on a wooden trough. The water-wheel in this case would have been of the overshot type.

There is some evidence of a track curving round the side of the hill to the W of the mill and stopping at its SE corner. The track appears to have been metalled and is revetted on its downslope side.

SYDE MILL



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