

## Case information

|                                 |                                     |                                    |   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Case ID</b>                  | 300017532                           |                                    |   |
| <b>File Reference</b>           | HGH/B/R/50                          |                                    |   |
| <b>Name of Site</b>             | Millhouse, Kirkwall Road, Stromness |                                    |   |
| <b>Local Authority</b>          | Orkney Islands Council              |                                    |   |
| <b>National Grid Reference</b>  | HY 26013 10705                      |                                    |   |
| <b>Designation No. (if any)</b> | LB 46156                            |                                    |   |
| <b>Designation Type</b>         | Listed Building                     | <b>Current Category of Listing</b> | C |
| <b>Case Type</b>                | Amendment                           |                                    |   |
| <b>Received/Start Date</b>      | 18/05/2015                          |                                    |   |
| <b>Decision Date</b>            | 04/02/2016                          |                                    |   |

## 1. Decision

In our current state of knowledge, Millhouse continues to meet the criteria for listing. The statutory listing address and the listed building record has been amended.

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Previous Statutory Address</b> | Kirkwall Road, Millhouse, Including Ancillary Structures [sic] and Boundary Walls  |
| <b>Amended Statutory address</b>  | Millhouse, including detached outbuilding to west and garden wall to east, and excluding outbuilding with extensions to the southwest, Kirkwall Road (A965), Stromness, Orkney |

## 2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

### 2.1 Designation Background

This building was listed at category C on 05/05/1999. Stromness Parish where this building is located was resurveyed in 1999. There is no known review of this building since the resurvey of Stromness Parish in 1999.

There are no other designations associated with this site.

## 2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

## 3. Assessment

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### 3.1 Assessment information

The site was visited on 19/06/2015. The exterior and interior of all buildings within the Millhouse grouping were seen.

### 3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

An assessment against the Listing criteria was carried out, see **Annex A**.

*The designation criteria are found in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), pp. 71-85. <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/shep-dec2011.pdf>*

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## Elizabeth McCrone

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## **ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Listing Criteria\***

**Millhouse, including detached outbuilding to west and garden wall to east, and excluding outbuilding with extensions to the southwest, Kirkwall Road (A965), Stromness**

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### **1. Description**

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Mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, single storey and attic, 3 bay, rectangular-plan, former millworkers house and associated outbuilding to the west (rear), prominently located on the Kirkwall Road, 1.5 kilometres north of Stromness. In accordance with Section 1 (4A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 the following are excluded from the listing: the roofless outbuilding with extensions to the southwest.

The house is of split-faced flagstone rubble with a cement render and raised, painted margins. The timber door to the centre has deep ingoes and a rectangular fanlight. Single sash and case windows flank the main door. There is a single sash and case window off centre to the right in the south gable. There is a lean-to porch to the rear. The building has large corniced gablehead end stacks, shouldered skewers, grey slated roofs and small roof-lights to each pitch. The timber sash and case windows have a 12-pane glazing pattern. There is a low garden wall to the front of the house.

The internal plan form, seen 2015, is typical of mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular houses in Orkney, with a hallway running perpendicular to the main entrance, leading to two principal rooms at either end. A staircase opposite the entrance leads to the attic. There is a recessed press cupboard in the south room gable wall. Timber doors to the upper floor are cut to follow the pitch of the roof.

A former byre/cart-shed outbuilding is located to the rear (west) of the house. This building is of exposed flagstone rubble on a long, narrow plan running east to west. It has a lean-to addition to the east gable and Caithness stone-slabs to roof. The roof pitch has been raised slightly.

### **2. Assessment Against the Listing Criteria (SHEP, 2011) pp74-75**

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Criteria for determining whether a building is of 'special architectural or historic interest' for listing under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 [[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/9/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/9/contents)]

*To be listed, a building need not meet all the listing criteria. The criteria provide a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions.*

#### **2.1 Age and Rarity**

Millhouse is first shown on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey Map (surveyed 1903) with a path running between it and the now disused Mill of Cairston, located 70 metres southwest of Millhouse. The long narrow outbuilding with the stone-slab roof

to the west (rear) of Millhouse and a portion of the other outbuilding (excluded from the listing) is shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey Map (surveyed 1880). These outbuildings are likely to have been constructed around the same time of Cairston Mill, which was built before 1870. The field boundaries in the current landscape (2015) appear to be largely consistent with that shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map.

Millhouse was built as part of improvement works to the Cairston estate, north of Stromness, carried out during the mid-to-late 19th century. The National Gazetteer of 1868 records that Cairston House (now called Garson House and listed at category B) was the 'principal residence of Stromness parish' and 'seat of Pollexfen, the chief heritor'. Fenton notes that 'by the 1870s there was an excellent meal-mill on the Cairston estate' (Fenton p.400). Groome's *Gazetteer of Scotland, 1882-1885* entry for Stromness Parish states that 'much has been done on the Cairston estate in the way of draining, building, and other improvements'.

19<sup>th</sup> century farm houses and estate workers cottages are part of the historic character and grain of the built environment of the Orkney Islands. Meal mills and millworker housing are perhaps most commonly associated with the northeast of Scotland and the northern isles, usually as a result of a prominent landowner wishing to encourage manufacturing or trade to their area. Fenton in his book, *The Northern Isles: Orkney and Shetland*, notes that there were 'eight watermills in Stromness Parish alone by 1790' (Fenton, p.399). 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century watermills with horizontal or over-shot wheels are a distinctive building found across the mainland Orkney landscape with examples including Tankerness Meal Mill (LB18567); the Mill of Ireland (LB18605); Mill of Tormiston (LB18603) and the New Barony Meal Mill (LB6177), all of which are listed at category B and some of which still remain operational.

The outbuilding to the southwest of Millhouse has substantial extensions to the west and south, the south wall has been rebuilt in concrete blockwork and it has lost its slate roof. Because of these substantial changes it is not considered to be of interest in listing terms at the time of this review and is excluded from the listing.

19<sup>th</sup> century cottages and houses are found across Orkney and are not a rare building type. The mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Garth Farmhouse in North Breck, Orkney is listed at category C (LB46155) and is stylistically similar to Millhouse. What sets Millhouse apart from much of the surviving architecture of this type and date on Orkney is the lack of significant exterior alteration, the largely intact internal plan form, the survival of traditional construction methods which are also of regional significance and the relatively unaltered setting that has changed little since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (see Architectural or Historic Interest below). Little altered examples without later alterations, large additions or adjacent redevelopment, are increasingly uncommon.

## **2.2 Architectural or Historic Interest**

### ***Interior***

There are few 19<sup>th</sup> century surviving interior fixtures or fittings at Millhouse and its associated outbuilding. However, exceptional interior decoration is not normally expected in this building type. The recessed press cupboard in the south room gable wall is likely to be an interior feature that dates to the construction of the house.

### **Plan form**

Millhouse is notable for its largely intact plan form with a hallway running perpendicular to the main entrance leading to rooms at either end and a central staircase. The plan is typical for small farmhouses and workers cottages in Orkney throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Technological excellence or innovation, material or design quality**

The openings and roof line of Millhouse appears not to have been changed since it was built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The traditional construction of the building is also of interest and this is considered further under the Regional variations section below.

### **Setting**

Millhouse is prominently located on an exposed site within agricultural land, with its principal 3-bay elevation facing the main Stromness to Kirkwall road, and with scenic views southward across the bay towards Graemsay and the mountains of Hoy.

Millhouse was built to house the millworker and is inter-visible with the former unlisted Cairston Mill, located on lower ground approximately 70 metres to the northwest. The setting of Millhouse appears largely unchanged since the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey, adding to its interest against this criteria.

### **Regional variations**

Constructed of flagstone rubble, both Millhouse and its associated outbuilding evidence vernacular or local building methods and materials commonly used during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Orkney. The substantial, broad end stacks and deeply recessed doorway are characteristic of rural Orkney house building of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Naismith in his book '*Buildings of the Scottish Countryside*' notes that the 12-pane glazing pattern, evident at Millhouse, is also characteristic of Stromness buildings, with 4-pane glazing traditionally favoured over most of the Orkney mainland (Naismith, p.205)

## **2.3 Close Historical Associations**

None known at present.

## **3. Working with the Principles of Listing (SHEP 2011, p76)**

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In choosing buildings within the above broad headings particular attention is paid to:

- a. *special value within building types*
- b. *contribution to an architecturally or historically interesting group*
- c. *the impact of vernacular buildings*
- d. *authenticity*

When working with the principles of listing Millhouse has interest under b, c and d.

b . Millhouse is inter-visible with the disused and unlisted Cairnston Mill, on slightly lower ground to the south. The roofed outbuilding to the immediate west of Millhouse survives, adding to the group interest. These buildings provide tangible evidence of

19<sup>th</sup> century estate improvements in a relatively unchanged agricultural setting to the north of the historically important Orkney fishing and trading town of Stromness.

c. Surviving examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century dwelling houses on the Orkney mainland using local vernacular building techniques, that have not been significantly altered, are increasingly uncommon and add to the case for listing.

d. Millhouse survives largely unaltered externally and internally the plan form largely remains.

#### **4. Summary of Assessment Against the Listing Criteria\*\***

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Millhouse was built as the millworker's house for the nearby Cairnston Mill and is surviving evidence of 19<sup>th</sup> century estate improvement architecture near the significant Orkney fishing and trading town of Stromness.

What sets Millhouse and its associated outbuilding apart from much of the surviving vernacular architecture of this building type on Orkney is a combination of its largely unaltered exterior (particularly the principal elevation of the house) and the internal plan form of the house which have changed little since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The little-altered setting, and the local, traditional building methods and materials, in both the house and the outbuilding are also of interest. Millhouse is prominently set on elevated ground with its principal elevation facing the main Stromness to Kirkwall Road with views southward across the bay towards Graemsay and the mountains of Hoy. Surviving examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular dwelling houses on the Orkney mainland that have not been significantly altered externally or in plan form, and are located within a largely unchanged setting, are increasingly rare.

The long, stone-slab roofed outbuilding to the immediate west of the house is likely to have had a variety of uses connected with the Cairnston millworkers during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and its survival adds to the interest of the house. Both the house and the outbuilding are constructed of split-face flagstone rubble, evidencing local, traditional building methods and materials commonly used during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Orkney.

In our current state of knowledge Millhouse continues to meet the criteria for listing.

The roofless outbuilding with extensions to the southwest is not considered to be of special interest in listing terms.

#### **5. Category of Listing**

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**Categories of listing are non-statutory and buildings are assigned a category (A, B or C) according to their relative importance following the assessment against the criteria for listing.**

Category definitions are found at: [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/heritage/historicandlistedbuildings/listing](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/heritage/historicandlistedbuildings/listing)

Category C denotes buildings of local importance, lesser examples of any period, style or building type as originally constructed or moderately altered.

Millhouse and its associated outbuilding is a good example of a small former millworker's house and outbuilding, which has not been significantly altered. Its interest is of local importance and category C remains the appropriate category of listing.

## 6. Other Information

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N/A

## 7. References

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Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland:  
<http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore.html> CANMORE ID: 229070.

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1880, published 1882) Orkney, Sheet CVI.3 (Stromness). 25 inches to the mile. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. London: Ordnance Survey.

Ordnance Survey (revised 1900, published 1902) Orkney, Sheet 106.03 (Stromness). 25 inches to the mile. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Ordnance Survey.

Imperial Gazetteer of Scotland (1868), Volume 2, Stromness, p.769:  
<http://digital.nls.uk/gazetteers-of-scotland-1803-1901/pageturner.cfm?id=97480674&mode=transcription> [accessed 20/08/2015].

*The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland* (1868)  
<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/sct/OKI/Stromness/Gaz1868.html> [accessed 20/08/2015].

Orkney Ordnance Survey Name Books (1879-1880) Orkney, Volume 22.

Groome F. H. (1882 and 1885) *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland: A Survey of Scottish Topography, Statistical, Biographical and Historical – Parish of Stromness*. Edinburgh: Thomas C. Jack, Grange Publishing Works - <http://www.scottish-places.info/parishes/parhistory86.html#sthash.A41Gu7Pt.dpuf> [accessed 20/08/2015].

Fenton A. (1978) *The Northern Isles: Orkney and Shetland*. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers. pp.397-400.

Naismith R. J. (1989) *Buildings of the Scottish Countryside*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd. p.203-206.

\* This assessment is based on our current state of knowledge and has been prepared for the purpose of consultation or to provide a view on the special interest of a building. This assessment is a consultation document and will form the basis of any new or updated listed building record should the structure be listed. The content of this assessment may change to take into account further information received as a result of the consultation process.

\*\* A building may be found to meet the listing criteria but in some circumstances may not be added to the list. See 'When might Historic Scotland list a building' at [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/historicandlistedbuildings/whatwelist](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/historicandlistedbuildings/whatwelist)