

FARNHILL HALL

by Alison Armstrong

The Hall is well known as one of the more southerly of the medieval “fortified” or tower houses and is included in a number of publications. Bolling Hall in Bradford, Nappa Hall at Askrigg, and Hellifield peel are other such houses which include a hall range with stone tower attached.

Farnhill Hall has a typical medieval plan with an open hall in the centre entered through a cross passage, and with a solar tower wing at the upper (west) end and a service block at the lower (east) end (Fig 1).

Whilst the low end has been much rebuilt, the solar tower retains blocked pointed arched windows of 14thC date (see Fig 2 elevations). The hall range has been heightened to make a later two-storey house but retains its cross passage with doorheads. Also of 14thC date are the trefoil cusped window heads, but the windows have been lengthened as the roof has been heightened later. Windows remain on the south side too. There are also some round-headed windows although these could be 14th or 15thC. There is no sign of a 14thC fireplace so it is likely that the hall had an open fire and a louvre in the roof for smoke, but no fireplace. The present stone arch fireplace looks 16th or 17thC and is inserted with its back to the old cross passage. A new front door (now blocked) seems to have been put in at that time making it into a lobby-entry plan which is a common 16/17thC plan. Perhaps the cross passage door then served the service wing. A datestone of “EE 1560 AE”, commemorating Edward Eltoft and his wife, was once seen in an outbuilding, but may also date the stone fireplace and that phase of rebuilding.

The deep, well-coursed, dressed boulder stonework is 14thC and readily recognised. Later stonework is more rubbly and poorly coursed. The deep coursing includes the lower part of the low end block.

The turrets on the solar tower seem to be original and may have had stairs, garderobes or strongrooms. The turrets on the low end however appear to be added with entrances cut through the old wall to reach the stone newel stairs. The tiny windows in the turrets are reminiscent of some at Kildwick Grange. The turrets have all clearly been heightened probably in the 19thC.

A look in the roof space for re-used timber may find pieces of decorative timber from the medieval roof which may have been of crown post or kingpost form. Huge tie beams probably from a lead roof survive in the solar. The hall would have had other buildings and gardens which may remain as earthworks. Field names will also give clues.

Nappa Hall is very similar in plan but is dated 1459 and has a lateral stack. Like Farnhill its lower end has been much rebuilt but its hall range is of similar width at about 9m.

The drawings on the following pages were sketched during the visit. They may help interpretation of the development of Farnhill Hall.

FARNHILL HALL

0 2 4 6 8 m. approx. scale 1/200



ACA 20. 8. 2012

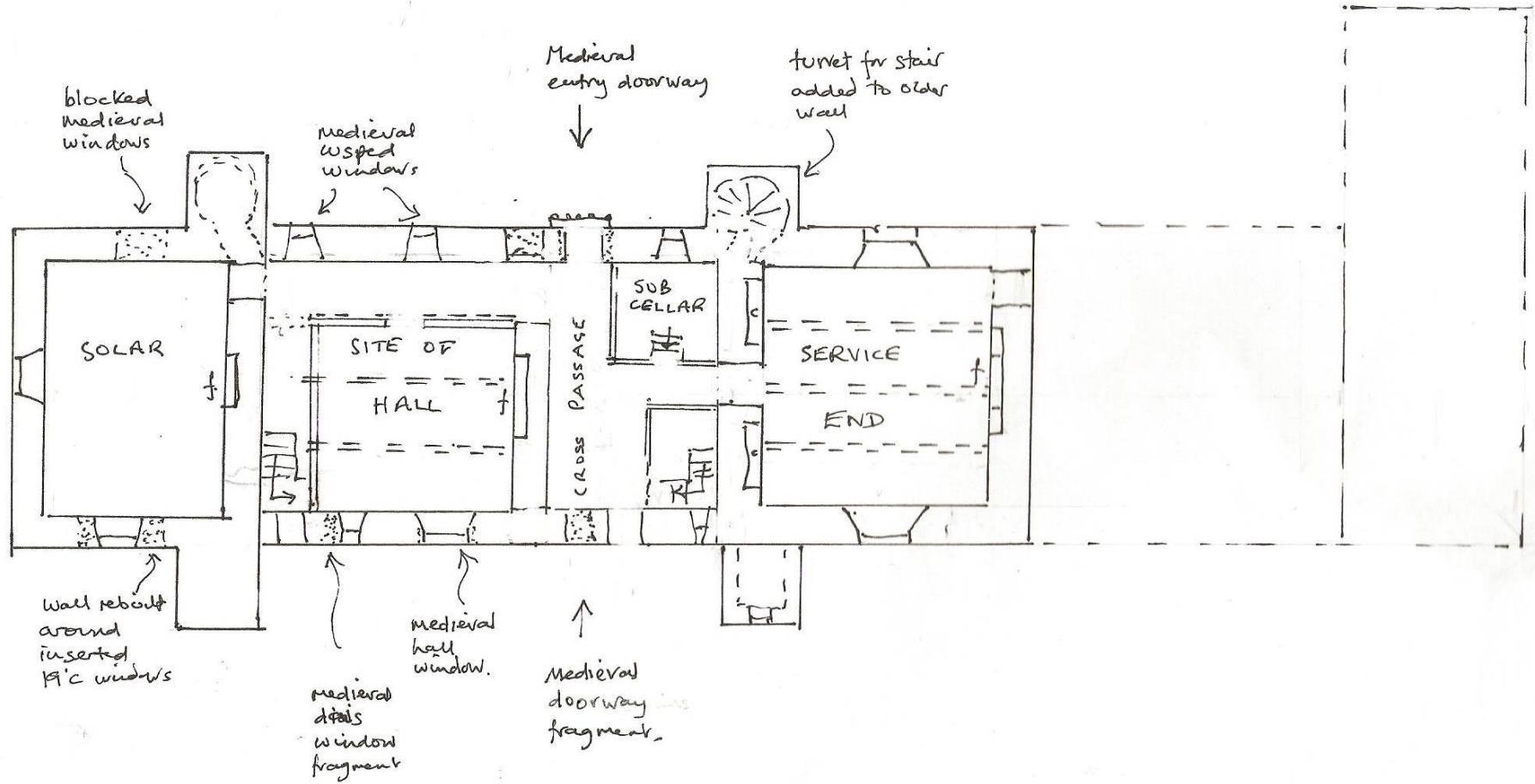


Fig. 1 - Plan of Farnhill Hall

FARNHILL HALL.

Elevation sketches with historical analysis of fabric

1/200 approx

ACA 20.8.2012.

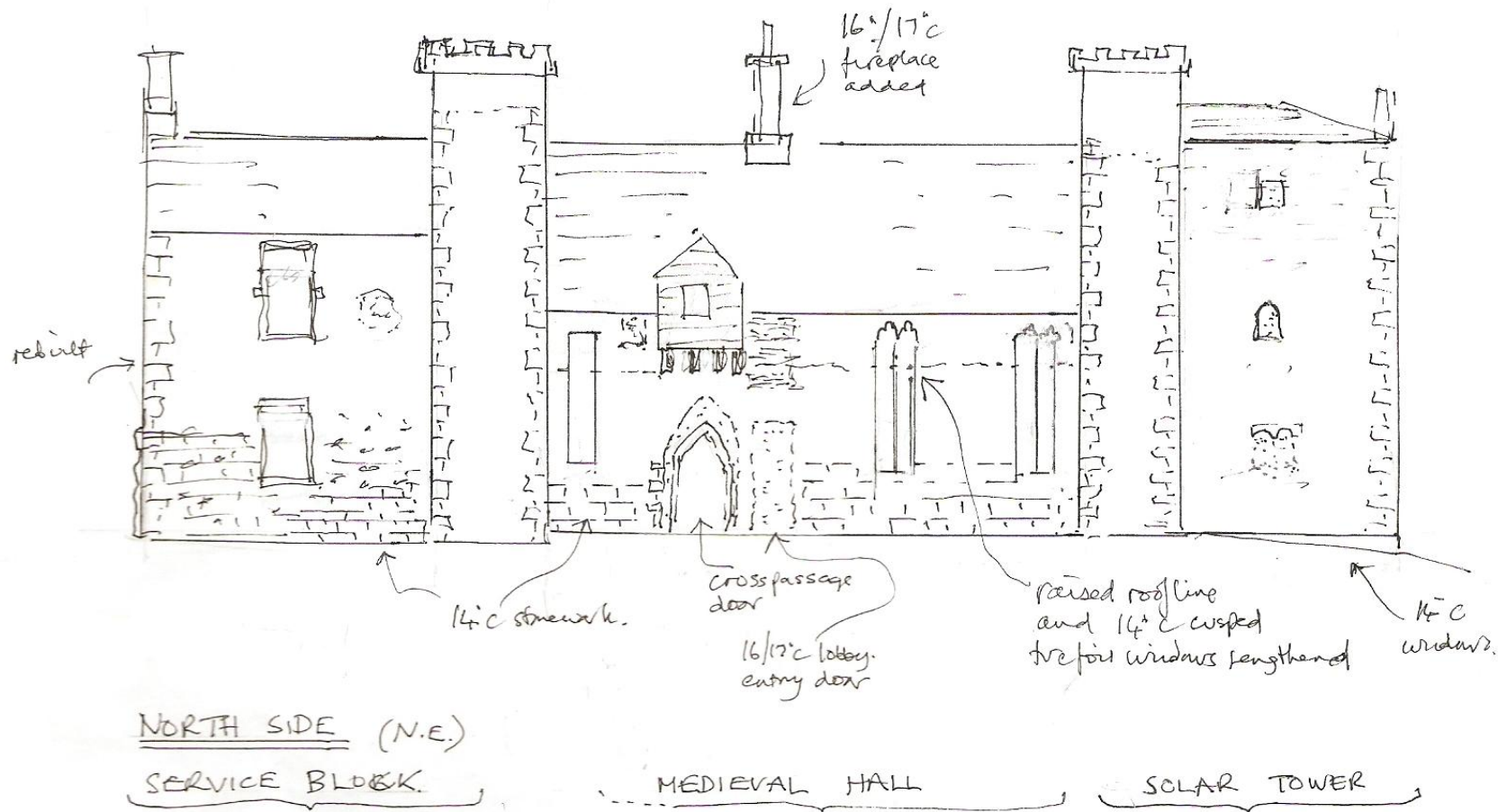


Fig 2a - Elevation sketch, North frontage

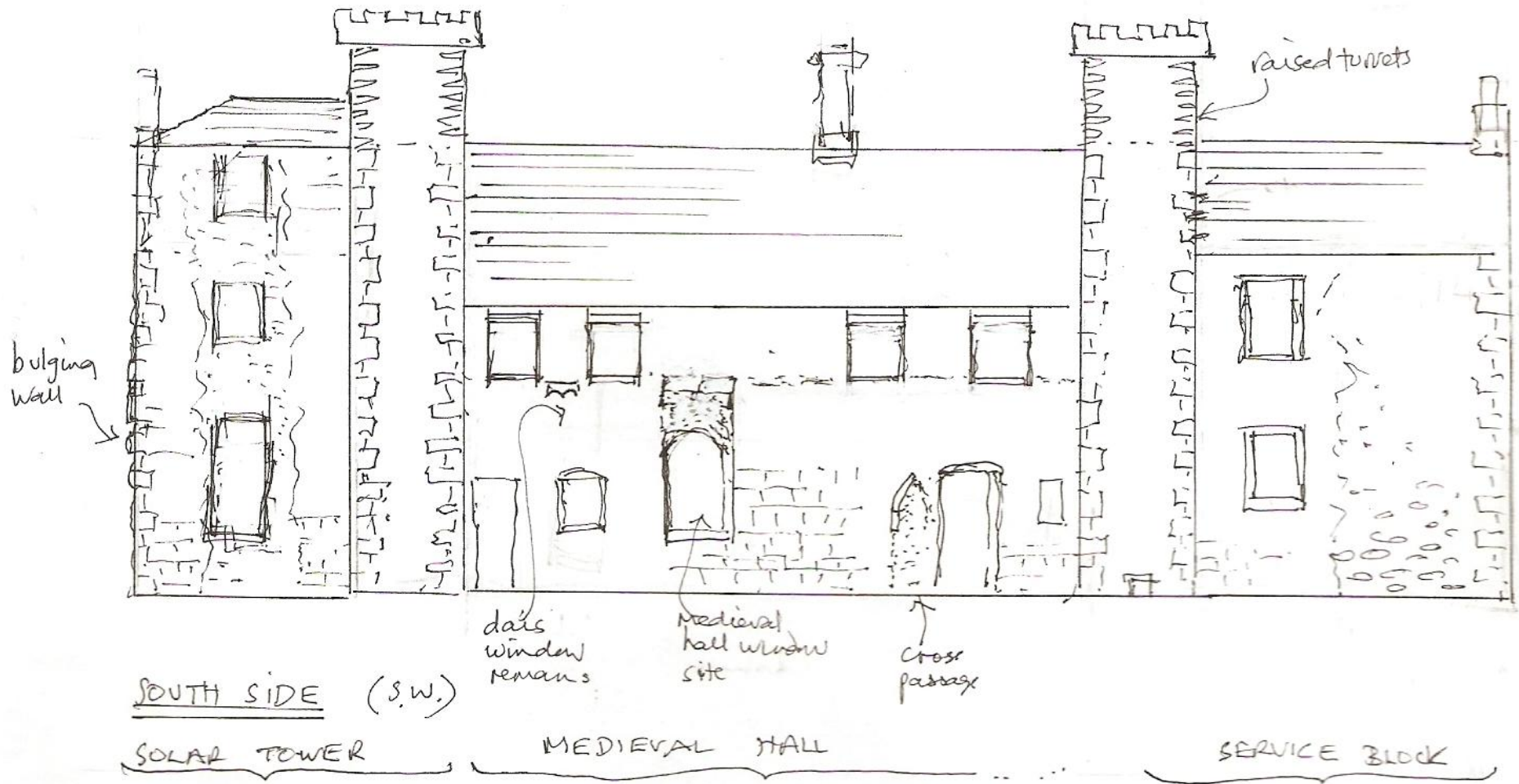


Fig 2b – Elevation sketch, South frontage

turrets of one build
with solar tower

heightened
modern
roofline

possible crown post
roof? (14c)
or king post (15c
replacement?)



14c window
(blocked)

quoined stonework
as no ashlar

stair turret?

14c ground floor hall.

door from
hall to solar?

stair
turret.

RECONSTRUCTING
THE MEDIEVAL
HALL

Fig 3 – Sketch reconstruction of the medieval Farnhill Hall (1)

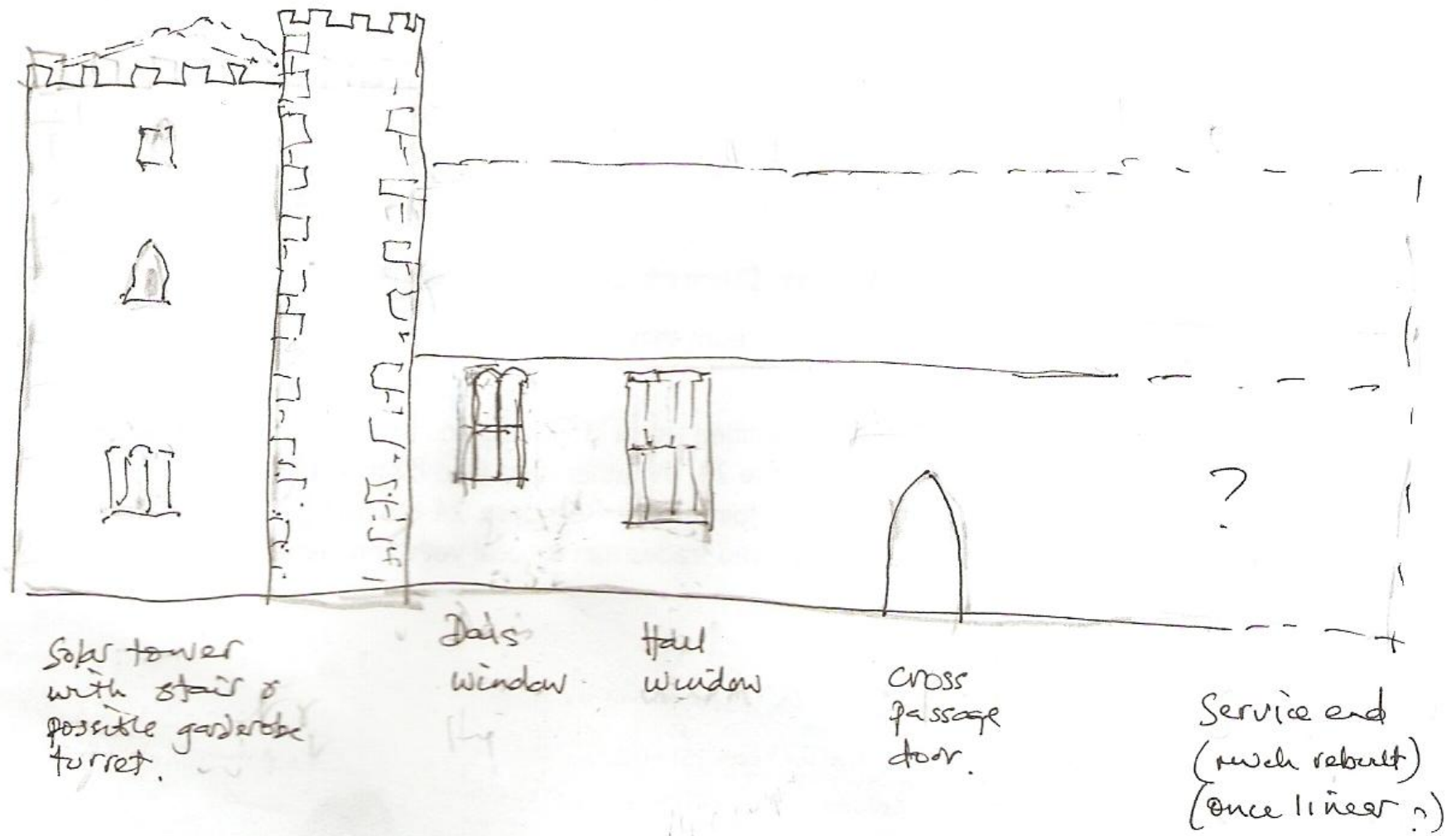


Fig 4 – Sketch reconstruction of the medieval Farnhill Hall (2)