



DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD



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LAWRENNY CASTLE & GARDENS

LAWRENNY, PEMBROKE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

FEBRUARY 1996

PROJECT RECORD No. 32570

Commissioned by: Ridgeway Environmental Managers

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SUMMARY

A pre-planning enquiry into the potential for development of the site of Lawrenny Castle, Pembrokeshire, required an archaeological desk-based assessment of the archaeological resource of the area and the vulnerability of that resource. Consequently Ridgeway Environmental Management, on behalf of the landowner, commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Operations to carry out the assessment.

The assessment revealed that the survey area corresponded to the boundary of the mid-19th century garden (PRN 32575; NGR SN 0150 0668) of Lawrenny Castle (PRN 20987; NGR SN 0150 0668) which was demolished during the 1950s. Lawrenny Castle replaced an early 18th century house (PRN 15212; NGR SN 0150 0668) and garden (PRN 32574) which formerly stood on the site. The layout of the 19th century gardens survives intact and in excellent condition; one part of the 18th century garden was incorporated into the later garden and so survives. Its condition makes the site of national importance, and worthy of scheduling, whereby the site would have statutory protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The site has been included on the Historic Parks and Gardens Register compiled by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, part of an ongoing survey of the historic gardens of Dyfed.

Many individual elements within the garden are considered worthy of statutory protection by them becoming listed buildings in their own right, namely the terrace (PRN 32576; NGR SN 0149 0664) and the walled garden (PRN 32573; NGR SN 0154 0695).

The site is now a picnic and viewing point operated by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared by N A Page, AIFA, Project Manager, Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Field Operations. The author is grateful to Mr. David Lort-Phillips for making available his family archive, the staff at the Pembrokeshire County Records Office, Haverfordwest for their assistance during the documentary searches and to Elizabeth Whittle, Cadw, for sharing her knowledge of the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project proposals and commission

As part of a pre-planning enquiry for potential development of the site and grounds of Lawrenny Castle an Environmental Impact Assessment required an archaeological desk-based assessment of the castle grounds to assess the possible impact of the scheme. Consequently Ridgeway Environmental Managers commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Operations to carry out the assessment.

1.2 Scope of the project

The project was designed to characterise the archaeological resource within the survey area, and to assess the extent, condition, significance and vulnerability of that resource and to produce a representative report on the results.

1.3 Report outline

This report describes the physical environment of the study area (Section 2) before summarising the archaeological resource (Section 3) and the likely impact of the proposed scheme on that resource (Section 4). Recommendations based on the results of Sections 3 and 4 are given in Section 5.

1.4 Abbreviations used in this report

All sites recorded on the county Sites and Monuments Record will be identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Any new sites will be assigned a PRN and located by their NGR. References to primary cartographic and documentary evidence and published sources will be given in brackets, full details will be found in the bibliography.

2. THE STUDY AREA

2.1 The site

The site of Lawrenny Castle and gardens lie on a peninsular at the confluence of the Daugleddau and Cresswell rivers. It occupies rising ground on a southeast facing slope and is currently used as a picnic and viewing point operated by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. From the site the ground slopes down to the south and southeast towards the foreshore of the River Cresswell, and it rises to the northwest up to the highest point in Lawrenny Park, some 10m higher than the castle site. To the northeast of the site the ground slopes down towards St. Caradoc's Church. Most of the survey area is wooded, with fairly modern planting and some older trees which are presumably from the 18th century or 19th century gardens.

Driveways up to a car parking space for the picnic site uses the drives and paths of the 19th century garden. Picnic tables are now set up on the former house site. From here there are wonderful views towards Black Mixen Rock and along the Cresswell and Carew rivers.

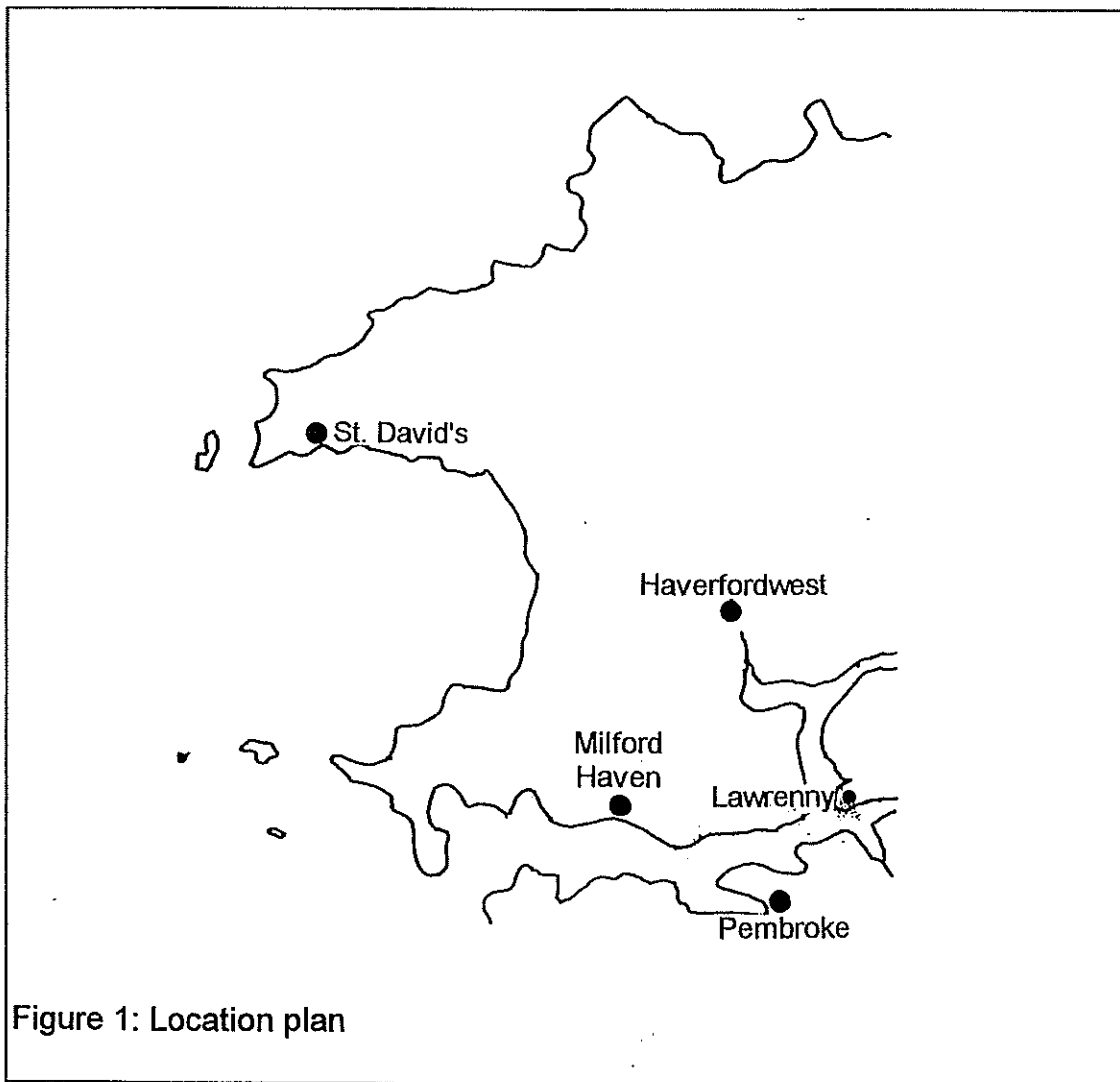


Figure 1: Location plan

3. SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

3.1 Medieval foundations?

The first recorded use of the name Lewrenni was c.1200 (Charles 1992, 505), and a small fortified site is indicated on William Rees' map of South Wales and the Borders in the Fourteenth Century (1932). At present there is no evidence for a medieval castle or settlement on the site.

3.2 The first known house (Figure 2)

The first known house on the site dates from the 18th century (PRN ~~20987~~) and is shown on a plan of Lawrenny dating from 1762 (Pembrokeshire Records Office ref: HDX/969/1). In 1762 the house was surrounded by 7 outbuildings, some of which appear to have been quite large, in groundplan at least.

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15212.*

This early house was described by Fenton during his tour of Pembrokeshire in the early 19th century as being "of that unpicturesque species of building peculiar to this country....a tall cube, and its external as to form not much entitled to admiration" (Fenton 1903, 137). However, he attested to its internal elegance and splendour; it was that internal splendour which prompted the tourist Skrine (1798) to describe it as the finest house in the country (Lloyd 1986, 73; Whittle 1992, 44). By 1833 the house was in ruins (Lewis 1833) and it was finally demolished in 1849.

3.3 The 19th century house (Figure 3)

The original house was replaced in 1856 by a large "Victorian Fortress" (PRN ~~15212~~) (Lloyd 1986, 73) apparently built on the same site. This house lasted for less than 100 years before being its demolition in 1954: a photograph (Pembrokeshire Records Office ref: D/Law/125) taken during the demolition shows much of the wood from the house, including a large staircase piled in front of the house, presumably ready to be taken away and reused. It is assumed that when the house was demolished the cellars, which were extensive, were filled with masonry and rubble, and then covered. Some intact masonry is now beginning to show through the turf of the picnic site. This is possibly the tops of the cellar walls, and foundations and lower courses of other walls not totally demolished in 1954. There are also remains of some outbuildings to the northeast of the house; these are now overgrown but some walls survive to a height of c.1m.

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3.4 The gardens

3.4.1 The 18th century gardens (Figure 2)

A surviving plan of Lawrenny dating from 1762 (Pembrokeshire Record Office ref: HDX/969/1) provides the earliest known evidence for the layout of the gardens (PRN ~~32573~~). It shows a layout of parkland, formal gardens. The most striking feature is a large avenue of trees (PRN 32577; NGR c.SN 0146 0670 - c. SN 0105 0695) which ran northwest from the house towards the Daugleddau river. The avenue, known as the Long Walk, was planted sometime during the mid 18th century (Whittle 1992, 26)

32574

when formal avenues and walks were popular. An enclosure to the north of the house was called The Garden in 1762; this became the walled garden of the 19th century garden. The 18th century layout survived into the middle of the 19th century and was clearly shown on the parish tithe map of 1842, but was apparently destroyed when the 19th century house was built. By the time of the first Ordnance Survey coverage the new house had been built and there was no indication of the early garden (except for the site of the walled garden).

3.4.2 The 19th century garden (Figure 3)

The garden (PRN 32575) associated with the house of 1856 completely disregarded the existing garden. The new garden had a wall and outer ditch (PRN 32572; NGR SN 0147 0687 - SN 0138 0676 - SN 0147 0662) running from the southwest corner of the walled garden to the southern end of the terrace. Although partially overgrown, the wall and ditch survive in excellent condition; in places the wall stands to a height of 1.3m. From a large terrace (PRN 32576; NGR SN 0149 0664) on the southeast of the house there are wonderful views towards Black Mixen Rock and the Cresswell and Carew rivers. The terrace also survives in good condition. To the south of the house was a semi-walled lawn. In the surviving wall is an alcove, which was possibly a seating point with a clear view down to the rivers. The walled garden (PRN 32573; NGR SN 0154 0695) survives, and even though the internal grid-pattern of paths and beds has been lost there is a chance that it may be present as a sub-surface feature.

The layout of paths into and through the rest of the garden is traceable, some of it has been incorporated into the car parking space for the picnic site.

3.5 Conclusions

Since the only real evidence for occupation of the site begins with the 18th century house it must be said that the site has had a short but dynamic history with two splendid houses and associated gardens built, and demolished, in little over 250 years. Of the early house, outbuildings and gardens there is now little or no trace above ground. It seems that the 19th century house occupied the same site as the 18th century house, making it possible that all traces of the earlier house have been removed. However, there may be some buried remains of the range of outbuildings associated with the 18th century house.

The present landscape is essentially the mid-19th century garden layout with its boundary wall and ditch, walls, terracing, pathways, driveways and walled garden intact. Of the 19th century house, some walls, possibly the tops of the cellar walls, are beginning to show through the turf, and some walls of the outbuildings survive above ground; some still stand to c.1m in height. If, as seems likely, the cellars were infilled during the demolition of the house in 1954 they should survive in good condition.

The condition of the 19th century garden and the potential for buried remains of buildings and further garden features and deposits makes this a significant archaeological and historical site. As it stands it is a wonderful survival of a mid 19th century garden from one of the major Pembrokeshire houses. The site meets several

criteria* used for assessing the national importance of a site, as defined in Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning, Annex 3 (issued by the Welsh Office, 1991) and could be considered worthy of statutory protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

*Criteria as defined for assessment of scheduling:

(iii) Documentation: the significance of a monument may be enhanced by the existence of records of previous investigation, or in the case of more recent monuments, by the supporting evidence of contemporary written records.

(iv) Group Value: the value of a single monument (in this case the individual elements of the garden) may be greatly enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments....In some cases it is preferable to protect the complete group of monuments, including associated and adjacent land, rather than to protect isolated monuments within the group.

(v) Survival/Condition: the survival of a monument's archaeological potential both above and below ground is a particularly important consideration and should be assessed in relation to its present condition and surviving features.

3. SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

3.1 Medieval foundations?

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3.2 The first known house (Figure 2)

The first known house on the site dates from the 18th century (PRN 20987) and was shown on a plan of Lawrenny dating from 1762 (Pembrokeshire Records Office ref: HDX/969/1). In 1762 the house was surrounded by 7 outbuildings, some of which appear to have been quite large, in groundplan at least.

This early house was described by Fenton during his tour of Pembrokeshire in the early 19th century as being "*of that unpicturesque species of building peculiar to this country....a tall cube, and its external as to form not much entitled to admiration*" (Fenton 1903, 137). However, he did attest to its internal elegance and splendour, it was that internal splendour which prompted the tourist Skrine (1798) to say it was the finest house in the country (Lloyd 1986, 73; Whittle 1992, 44). By 1833 the house was in ruins (Lewis 1833) and it was finally demolished in 1849.

3.3 The 19th century house (Figure 3)

The original house was replaced in 1856 by a large "Victorian Fortress" (PRN 15212) ²⁰⁹⁸⁷ (Lloyd 1986, 73) which was built on what appears to have been the same site. This house lasted for less than 100 years before being demolished in 1954: a photograph (Pembrokeshire Records Office ref: D/Law/125) taken during the demolition shows much of the wood from the house, including a large staircase piled in front of the house, presumably ready to be taken away and reused. It is assumed that when the house was demolished the cellars, which were extensive, were filled with masonry and rubble, and then covered. Some intact masonry is now beginning to show through the turf of the picnic site. This is possibly the tops of the cellar walls, and foundations and lower courses of other walls not totally demolished in 1954. There are also remains of some outbuildings to the northeast of the house; these are now overgrown but some walls survive to a height of c. 1m.

3.4 The gardens

Both houses had extensive gardens and parkland attached to them, although little of the earlier garden is now visible.

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large avenue of trees (PRN 32577; NGR c.SN 0146 0670 - c. SN 0105 0695) which ran northwest from the house towards the Daugleddau river. The avenue, known as the Long Walk, was planted sometime during the mid 18th century (Whittle 1992, 26) when formal avenues and walks were popular elements of large gardens. An enclosure to the north of the house was called The Garden in 1762; this became the walled garden of the 19th century garden. The 18th century layout survived into the middle of the 19th century and was clearly shown on the parish tithe plan of 1842, but was apparently destroyed when the 19th century house was built. By the time of the first Ordnance Survey coverage the new house had been built and there was no indication of the early garden (except the site of the walled garden).

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With the only real evidence for occupation of the site beginning with the 18th century house it must be said that the site has had a short but dynamic history with two splendid houses and associated gardens built, and demolished, in little over 250 years. Of the early house, outbuildings and gardens there is now little or no trace above ground. It seems that the 19th century house occupied the same site as the 18th century house making it likely that all traces of the earlier house were removed. However, there may be some buried remains of the range of outbuildings associated with the 18th century house.

The present landscape is essentially the mid-19th century garden layout with its boundary wall and ditch, walls, terracing, pathways, driveways and walled garden intact, which is why it has been included on the Historic Parks and Gardens Register. Of the 19th century house some walls, possibly the tops of the cellar walls, are beginning to show through the turf, and some walls of the outbuildings survive above ground, some still stand to c. 1m in height. If, as seems likely, the cellars were infilled during the demolition of the house in 1954 they should survive in good condition.

The condition of the 19th century garden and the potential for buried remains of buildings and further garden features and deposits makes this a significant archaeological and historical site. As it stands it is a wonderful survival of a mid 19th century garden from one of the major Pembrokeshire houses. The site meets several criteria used for assessing the national importance of a site, as defined in Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning (issued by the Welsh Office, 1991) and is considered worthy of statutory protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

4. IMPACT OF PROPOSED SCHEME ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

4.1 General

Without knowing the full extent or exact nature of any proposals for development of the site it is impossible to be specific regarding the full impact on the archaeological resource. Therefore this section will discuss in general terms the vulnerability of the archaeological resource. What is clear is that with the garden surviving in such excellent condition any development, however small, will have some archaeological implications.

4.2 Vulnerability of the archaeological resource

Within the survey area there are varying levels of vulnerability amongst the individual elements of the archaeological resource. With most of the surviving above ground features, and some of the buried features, being substantial stone-built walls they are not as vulnerable to accidental damage as the potential buried features and deposits such as, flower beds, tree planting holes and paths, in the walled garden for example. However, in this case the archaeological significance of the site comes from the survival of the whole garden, so the site is as vulnerable as its most vulnerable element.

4.2.1 Present use

With the present use of the site as a picnic and viewing point there is little or no pressure on the surviving archaeological features other than natural degradation and decay. But an increase in visitor numbers will inevitably lead to increased pressure on the site with the need for more car parking space, maybe wider roads to the car park etc. which will begin to impact on the archaeological features.

4.2.2 Development of the site

Any development of the site will impact on the archaeological resource. However, that impact could be minimised by ensuring that any schemes were sympathetic to the character of the site. The excellent condition of the site should preclude any development that would remove, or alter the character of the site or any individual elements within it.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The main consideration of this report is to discuss ways to ensure adequate protection and management of the archaeological resource. With sites considered to be of national importance there is a presumption in favour of them being retained in situ. So any proposals for the site would have to have consideration of that. Unless the Secretary of State for Wales designates the site a Scheduled Ancient Monument site preservation does not necessarily preclude development.

5.1 Preservation in situ

This is always the favoured option, and in this case there are two ways in which it could be achieved. The site could be left as it is, or the remaining garden features, or some of them, could be uncovered, consolidated and incorporated more into the picnic and viewing point. Any features to be uncovered should be uncovered and recorded by qualified archaeological staff. Consolidation should be carried out under archaeological supervision.

5.2 Preservation by record

If preservation in situ is not possible then preservation by record would result in a permanent archaeological record of the site.

5.3 General recommendations

With the site being on the Historic Parks and Gardens Register and situated within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park it is of paramount importance that any proposals be sensitive to the site's historical significance and location. There is great scope for renovation of the gardens and promoting the site, and all schemes should have the overall aim of keeping the site as intact as possible. That means that all standing remains and the known and potential buried features and deposits must be considered during the preparation of any proposals.

APPENDIX ONE: CATALOGUE OF RESEARCH ARCHIVE

The project archive has been indexed and catalogued according to National Monument Record (NMR) categories and contains the following:

- A.** Copy of the report.
- B.** Notes from site visits.
- D.** Site photographs - catalogue, colour slides, B/W contact sheets.
- G.** Documentary data, including primary and published sources.
- I.** Draft copies of report.
- J.** Publication drawings.
- M.** Miscellaneous correspondence

There is no material for classes **C**, **E**, **F**, **H**, **K**, **L** and **N**.

The project archive is currently held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Operations, Llandeilo, Dyfed as Project Record Number 32570.

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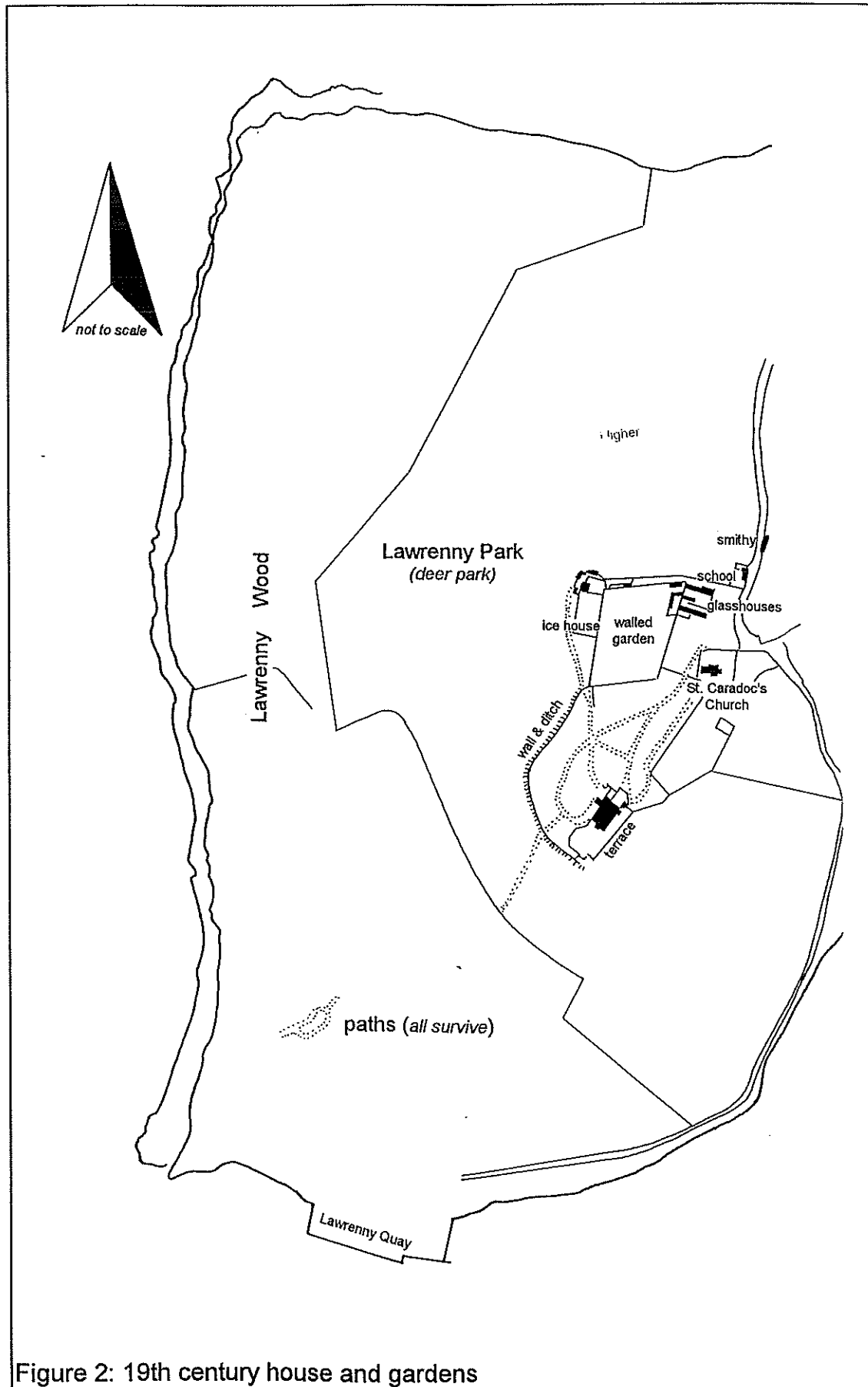


Figure 2: 19th century house and gardens

