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Tir Cwrt W/12/1822

Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report Call Out



Cwrt Farm c.1970

Report No. 2003/130

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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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9th December 2003

Tir Cwrt
Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report
Call Out

By

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Introduction

The call out visit at Tir Cwrt was undertaken at the request of the Countryside Council for Wales to provide advice on the maintenance and restoration of two traditional buildings, which survive as elements of the nineteenth century farmstead of Cwrt Farm. The larger of the two buildings, a cow shed is to be re-roofed as part of the Tir Gofal scheme. The landowners were also keen to discuss options for the future of an abutting lean-to, which has since been modified from its original construction.

The Call Out Report responds to management concerns regarding specific sites, it does not provide management advice for all known sites on the farm, for these recommendations please refer to the Historic Environment Report 1 (He1).

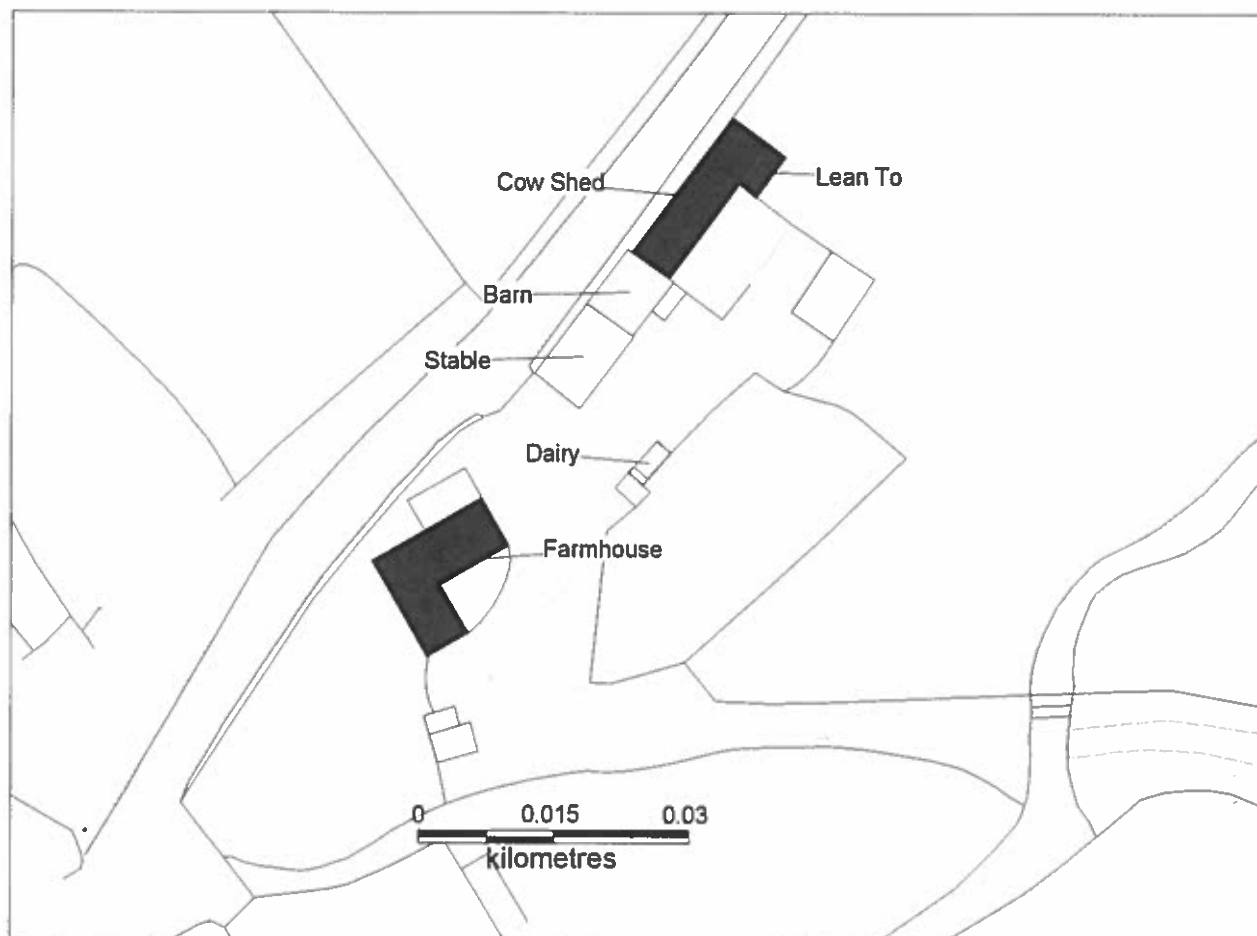
General Description of Farm

Tir Cwrt (SN50902464) is situated to the east of FelingwmUchaf in Carmarthenshire. Farmland here lies on a steep west facing slope above the Afon Cloidach, which bisects the western part of the holding. The farmstead (PRN 29722) occupies a roadside location in the west of the holding a short distance above the river.

The Cwrt element of the name suggests some connection with medieval or early post-medieval minor gentry. Existing buildings at Tir Cwrt date to no earlier than the mid nineteenth century, and we have no information about earlier buildings at this location. *Cwrt Houses and yard* are first mentioned on the tithe apportionment of 1839 and two rectangular buildings appear facing each other on the accompanying tithe map (1841?). The farmstead was remodelled during the later nineteenth century, and these buildings are absent from later map sources. The 1889, 25 inches to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map shows a long range flanking the road with an L-shaped building, the farmhouse, to the south. Two additional buildings are added to the east by the time of the 1907 Ordnance Survey map and a rectangular farmyard is clearly defined by this time. An aerial photograph taken around 1970 shows this arrangement largely intact and is a good record of the historic appearance of the farmstead. The intervening years have seen major alterations to the farmstead and few of the original buildings remain.

The photograph shows the long roadside range comprising three separate buildings; a cow shed to the north, a central barn with attached engine house and a lofted stable and cart shed? to the south. This arrangement is typical of the organised farmsteads, which appeared in west Wales from the mid-nineteenth century onwards (William, E 1986, 73). The primary function of the barn was the storage of unthreshed corn, threshing it and storing the resulting straw. Siting the barn in between the cow shed and stable would have enabled some ease in the provision of straw to the livestock housed on either side. A small rectangular building opposite was apparently a dairy. All farm buildings are whitewashed at this time giving the farmstead an appearance of cleanliness and unity. Today, the cow house and an abutting lean to are the only surviving elements of the original farmstead. These buildings form the focus of the present enquiry.

Farm Map



(produced from Ordnance Survey, Licence number: GD272825G)

Cow Shed

This cow shed, together with an abutting lean to, are the only surviving elements of the long building range which once defined the western side of the farmyard at Tir Cwrt. It is first seen on the 1889, 25 inches to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map and is of a mid-late nineteenth century date. It is typical of the cow houses common from about the middle of the nineteenth century in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and South Cardiganshire (Wiliam, E 1986, 95). It is now redundant and roofless, the slates having been stripped in advance of re-roofing.

It is a one and a half storey building and measures approximately 6m E-W by 18m N-S. It is of stone rubble construction with roughly squared quoins and a pitched roof. The front (east) wall faces onto the farmyard. It is pierced by three evenly spaced narrow doors. The rear elevation faces onto the road and is blind. A narrow splayed window pierces the north gable end at loft level. The original appearance of the south gable end, which formerly abutted a barn, is not known and it has been rebuilt recently. All faces of the building, both inside and out, were originally whitewashed. Doorways are characterised by stone lintels, which have been painted giving the appearance of red brick. None of the original doors survive, and the central doorway has been partially blocked to form a window. The historic internal arrangements have been lost, although sawn off joist slots indicate that the building was originally lofted. Cow houses of this type typically saw cattle tethered in a single row facing across the building, often with a feeding passage flanking one of the lateral walls. Modern cattle stalls currently occupy the interior and may replicate something of the original arrangement. The building is currently roofless, although the original trusses and purlins survive.

Despite the internal modifications and the rebuilding of the south gable end, the cow house remains a reasonably well preserved example of its type and the decision to re-roof it is to be welcomed. Its importance is further enhanced by its status as one of few surviving elements of the original nineteenth century farmstead at Cwrt Farm. It remains in a reasonable condition, although ivy is smothering much of the rear wall. The roof trusses are on the whole in a good condition, although some are displaying early signs of rot.



Plate 1- looking south towards the cow shed from the road to FelingwmUchaf.



Plate 2- interior of the cow shed looking north

Management Recommendations

The building is to be re-roofed with slate. This is to be welcomed. Care should be taken to retain the original timbers as far as is practically possible.

The ivy growth is damaging to masonry bonds and a potential source of building instability. The ivy should be cut off at the roots, allowed to die and then removed. Stumps should be spot treated in order to prevent re-growth. Where necessary, this should be followed up by a programme of re-pointing in areas, where masonry bonds have been weakened by intrusive vegetation growth. Materials and techniques used should be compatible with those of the original construction. Following restoration works, whitewashing the building could be considered to restore it to its original historic appearance.

Lean To

This lean to, together with the cow shed which it abuts, are the only surviving elements of the long building range which formerly defined the western side of the farmyard at Tir Cwrt. It is first seen on the 25 inches to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map of 1889 and is of a mid-late nineteenth century date. It is currently used for storage.

It is a small building, of a simple build and measures approximately 5m N-S by 3m E-W. It is of stone rubble construction with a single pitch corrugated asbestos roof. The west wall forms a vertical butt joint with the adjacent cow shed, and it is a later addition to the range. It is pierced by a single narrow door opening in the south wall. Like other buildings here, it was originally whitewashed.

Some areas have been re-built following the partial collapse of the east and south walls. Engineering bricks now complete the walls, and have altered the historic appearance of the building. The original doorway has also been modified. A concrete lintel and red brick dressings have been added during the rebuild. None of the historic internal arrangements survive and the original function of the building is not known. None of the original roofing materials or timbers

survive, and the building is now roofed with corrugated asbestos. This roof covering was already in place on the aerial photograph c. 1970 and the original appearance of the roof is not known. It could either have been of corrugated iron or slate construction.

Despite some modifications to its original appearance, the lean to retains good historic character. It is currently in a stable condition, although lime mortar bonds are washed out of the walls in places.



Plate 3- east elevation of the lean to

Management Recommendations

The landowner who is keen to enhance the historic appearance of the farmstead is unsure whether to retain the lean to or remove it altogether. There is a presumption in favour of retaining traditional agricultural buildings within the Tir Gofal scheme. Despite some modifications, the lean to retains much of its historic fabric and continues to make an important contribution to the historic appearance of the farmstead. It remains in a usable condition and should be retained in its present condition. Unstable areas of masonry should be re-pointed using a traditional lime mortar mix. Whitewashing the lean to would enhance its historic appearance and should also be considered.

Any future restoration works should be undertaken using materials and techniques, which are faithful to those of its original construction.

References

Ordnance Survey Old Series 1831 Carmarthenshire Sheet 41 SW, 1"

Ordnance Survey 1889 Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXII SW, 25"

Ordnance Survey 1891 Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXII SE, 6"

Ordnance Survey 1906 Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXII SW, 25"

Ordnance Survey 1907 Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXII SE, 6"

Tithe Apportionment 1839 Llanegwad Parish

Tithe Map 1841? Llanegwad Parish

Wiliam, E 1986 The Historic Farm Buildings of Wales John Donald Publishers Ltd., Edinburgh

Tir Cwrt

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This report has been prepared by William Steele

Position: Heritage Management Archaeologist

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This report has been checked and approved by Louise Austin on behalf of Cambria Archaeology,
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Signature Louise Austin Date 16/12/03

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