

Berthlwyd W/12/2842

Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report Call Out



The east gable end of Berthlwyd barn

Report No. 2003/40

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Countryside Council for Wales

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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September 2002

Berthlwyd
Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report

By

Alice Pyper

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CALL OUT VISIT

Following a site visit by the Tir Gofal project officer to the farmstead of Berthlwyd, a follow up visit by Cambria Archaeology was requested in order to establish the condition of a barn, with a view to the potential repair and restoration of the building.

This call out report is intended to provide a condition statement of the building and offers advice on the appropriate restoration of the structure. It should not be viewed as a survey of the structural integrity of the building.

The farmstead of Berthlwyd occupies a high vantage point above the A40 west of Carmarthen. It is recorded on the 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps (1891 & 1907) and appears little changed in layout, although a building to the north of the farmstead has been demolished. The barn which is subject to restoration work, is a typical stone built barn of the 19th century and survives almost intact, although later corrugated iron lean-tos have been added to either side.

Description

The barn is constructed in rubble stone with a pitched slated roof orientated across the slope, on a east-west axis. At the lower, east end the barn is constructed on a stone offset plinth which appears to form the foundation. To the north is a large double width doorway opposed to the south by a smaller doorway which has been subjected to various rebuilds. To the west of the doorways are opposing ventilation slits. The roof is supported on four collar trusses fixed with iron staples. The barn has been lime washed internally and externally in the past, although much of the external finish has been lost due to weathering.

The barn is currently suffering from two massive structural cracks in the east gable wall, on either side of the apex. The cracks extend from the wall tops to very nearly plinth level. Therefore the centre section of the east gable end has lost its bonding with the stone quoins to either side and appears to have moved out of plumb.

The roof is also in a poor condition at this gable end with the wall tops exposed to the elements. No doubt the weathering of the wall tops, with water percolating through the walls and washing out the bonding matrix, has had some part in causing the structural instability in the gable wall. It also appears that the plinth has become unstable and some of the stone is loose, due to weathering of the bonding mortar.

Other areas of the roof are also beginning to suffer from decay, most notably at the west gable end. Here the bargeboards are also beginning to rot. Occasional roof slates have also become dislodged in places.

Recommendations

The owner, Mr. Adams, hopes to repair and restore this barn within the Tir Gofal scheme. This proposal is to be welcomed. Due to the severity of the cracks, Mr Adams has proposed that the central section of the gable wall is taken down and that a concrete raft is inserted at ground level, underpinning the gable end. The gable end will then be rebuilt in traditional materials to tie in with the existing masonry to either side.

It is almost always preferable that traditional building materials are used throughout the restoration process of a building. In this case, the use of concrete underpinning should only be used if it ensures the long-term structural stability of the building. The rebuilding of the gable wall and the stone plinth should use stone with lime mortar bonding to match that existing, in order to retain the historic character of the building as far as possible.

The roof will also require repairs to ensure that further damage is not caused to the structure by water ingress. The slates appear to be generally intact, however some have dislodged and general weathering has taken its toll on the roof timbers in places, particularly at the gable ends and on the bargeboards. Where possible the existing timber work should be retained and repaired. However it is acceptable to replace battens and bargeboards where necessary. The structural timbers, the trusses, should be repaired if necessary.

Repointing should be carried out where the pointing has eroded back to a depth equivalent to the joint width or is very loose. It would be appropriate for a surface finish of limewash to be applied to the stonework for additional protection.

Please see attached list of contacts for advice with traditional building restoration.

Prior to the works being undertaken a photographic record should be carried out, some guidelines are attached. It would also be advisable for further photographs to be taken during the repair and restoration programme. A photographic record will also help to inform the restoration process.

Berthlwyd W/12/2842

REPORT NUMBER 2003/40

September 2002

This report has been prepared by Alice Pyper

Position: Archaeologist (Tir Gofal)

Signature Date

This report has been checked and approved by Louise Austin on behalf of Cambria Archaeology,
Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Position: Principal Archaeologist (Curatorial)

Signature Date.....

As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you may
have on the content or presentation of this report

Tir Gofal Traditional Buildings

Requirements for General Photographic Surveys of Buildings

The purpose of the survey is to produce a photographic record of the building prior to any demolition, alterations or renovation being started, as well as recording any fixtures, fittings or features which come to light during the works. This survey may be the only record of the original form of the building available for future reference. The survey will then be referenced within the Regional Site and Monuments Record for Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion (held and managed by Cambria Archaeology), and deposited with the National Monument Record in order that the information is publicly available for study and reference.

Photographs should be taken using 35mm format colour print film (preferably Kodak or Fuji). ASA 200 film is a good standard for most light conditions but ASA 400 should be used where light conditions are poor. 36 exposure film should be used in all cases and at least one whole film must be exposed. Alternatively, a digital camera may be used. Please contact Cambria Archaeology for further information on the quality of digital image required.

Photographs should be taken of all exterior and interior wall elevations which are affected by the proposed works together with photographs of the interior roof detail where this is altered. Features of particular interest (e.g. obvious differences in wall makeup, windows and doors whether blocked up or not, fireplaces, timber framing) should also be fully photographed. If available a scale, of noted measurement, should be placed within any detailed shots but this is not essential.

A plan of the building is also required to record the direction in which each of the photographs has been taken. Architectural drawings can be used where available or a sketch plan can be produced. Location reference numbers on the plans should be copied onto the backs of the prints together with brief descriptive details of the location. If using a digital camera this information should be used to name the photographs.

A copy of the survey should be provided to Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 6HU either directly or via the Countryside Council for Wales Tir Gofal Project Officer.

Tir Gofal list of contact numbers for building restoration

The following organisations may be able to provide further information or advice to assist with the conservation and restoration of buildings of historic interest:

CADW - provide information and advice about the restoration of traditional buildings.

Contact: Judith Alfrey, tel.(02920) 500200 (general enquiries) or e-mail Judith.Alfrey@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK

St Fagans, Welsh Rural Life Museum - can provide up to date information and advice about contractors and suppliers that deal with traditional buildings and materials.

Contact: Gerallt Nash, tel. (02920) 573445

Ty Mawr Lime Ltd. - suppliers and manufacturers of traditional and natural building materials as well as providing advice, support and training about the use of lime products and other natural building materials for mortars, plasters, renders and paints.

Contact: Nigel and Joyce Gervis, Ty Mawr Lime Limited, Ty Mawr Farm, Llangasty, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7PJ, tel. (01874) 658249, e-mail: tymawr@lime.org.uk

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings - a nationwide organisation providing publications and advice about architectural conservation.

Contact: 37 Spital Square, London E1 6DY
tel. (0207) 377164 or e-mail: info@spab.org.uk

South Pembrokeshire partnership for Action in Rural Communities (SPARC) - provide advice about the restoration of historic farm buildings and information about local building contractors that specialise in traditional methods of restoration.

Contact: Richard Tree (Heritage Officer), tel. (01834) 860965

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) - provide detailed archaeological and architectural advice about buildings and other features of historic interest in Wales.

Contact: Crown Building, Plas Crug, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, SY23 1NJ
tel. (01437) 720861, www.rcahmw.org.uk/wms

Local Authority Buildings Conservation Officers - provide advice and information about buildings of historic interest, in particular Listed Buildings.

Carmarthenshire (01267) 234567

Contact: David Priest (Head of Conservation), John Llewelyn, Adrian Griffiths

Pembrokeshire (01437) 764551 ext no. 5720

Contact: Ian Bartlet

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (01437) 764636

Contact: Rob Scourfield

Melin (Welsh Mills Society) - offers information sheets and practical advice about the recording and conservation of mills.

Contact: Hilary Malaws, Y Felin, Tynygraig, Ystrad Meurig, Ceredigion, Wales, SY25 6AE, tel. (01437) 720861, www.rcahmw.org.uk/wms

Association of Energy Conscious Builders

Contact: Keith Hall tel. (10559) 370908

Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth - provide advice about organisations that specialise in the restoration of historic mills. They also provide their own consultancy service.

Tel. (01654) 705989

British Hydropower Association, Cheshire - services include consultancy, feasibility studies, refurbishment and repairs of watermills.

tel.(0161) 4409196, www.brit-hydro.cwc.net

Dorothea Relations, Bristol - specialise in the refurbishment of watermills and run a nationwide service.

Contact: G.J.O Wallis, Unit 6, Riverside Business Park, St Annes Road, Bristol BS4 2ED, tel. (01179) 715337, www.dorothearest.co.uk

Heritage Engineering, Glasgow - specialise in the recovery, restoration and/or replication of water-powered machinery.

Contact: J.S. Mitchell, 22 Carmyle Avenue, Glasgow G32 8HJ, tel (01417) 630007

Capel (The Chapels Heritage Society) - offers information sheets and practical advice about the recording and conservation of chapels that are no longer required for their original purpose.

Contact: Penny Icke, RCAHMW, tel. (01970) 621210, www.rcahmw.org.uk/wms

The Welsh Mines Preservation Trust

Contact: David Bick, Denefield, 111 Barn Lane, Golborne, Warrington WA3 3PR

Building material specialists - provide advice about specific traditional building materials.

Slating Consultant - Contact: Terry Hughes tel. (01286) 650402

Timber Consultant - Contact: Bob Childs tel (02920) 573245

Architect specialising in Timber Frames - Contact: Nick Joyce tel. (01905) 726307

Lead Sheet Association - tel (01892) 822773