

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol
Dyfed
Neuadd y Sir
Stryd Caerfyrddin
Llandeilo
Sir Gaerfyrddin
SA19 6AF



Dyfed Archaeological Trust
The Shire Hall
Carmarthen Street
Llandeilo
Carmarthenshire
SA19 6AF

Ffon 01558 823131
Ffacs 01558 823133
Eboost: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk

Telephone 01558 823131
Fax 01558 823133
Email: info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk

**TIR GOFAL MANAGEMENT PLAN:
HERITAGE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION
(Call Out)**

**Prepared for:
Plas Cefn Gwyn
Tir Gofal Reference No: W/11/3738**



**Project Record Number: 47843
Report Number: 2008/104**

**Prepared by
Mike Ings**

Call Out Visit

The farm was visited on the 05th November 2008 at the request of the Tir Gofal Project Officer to address specific management issues, in particular the possible restoration and maintenance of a historic boundary. The report does not provide management advice for all known sites on the farm, for these recommendations please refer to the Historic Environment Report 1 (HE1).

The aim of this report is to make an assessment of these issues in order to provide management recommendations to be incorporated into the Tir Gofal Management Plan. This report is not intended to assess the structural condition or stability of any given site.

Introduction

Plas Cefn Gwyn is centred on NGR SN68018693, on the eastern side of the Afon Leri Valley in Ceredigion.

The farm lies within Historic Landscape Character Area (HLCA) 75: Bont-Goch. These areas are intended to define places where local land-use patterns have left particularly strong or distinctive evidence in the landscape (Murphy & Ludlow, 2000). Much of this landscape remained unenclosed up until two centuries ago and it was the metal mining industry that provided the stimulus for settlement during the 19th century and the land was enclosed. Field patterning is of small irregular enclosures divided by earth and stony banks although this pattern is beginning to decay, with most fields now divided by wire fences and the pasture in some areas has reverted to rough, rushy ground.

Plas Cefn Gwyn is depicted on the 1887 1st edition Ordnance Survey map as being under a pattern of small-medium fields with mixed woodland on the valley slopes of the western boundary and stands of deciduous and mixed woodland to the south and north of the house. The late Georgian country house (PRN 35364), with original interiors, is a Grade II listed building (LB 16738) built in c.1820. The associated garden is recorded by the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments, Wales as a country house garden (Nprn 86760), depicted on the 1905 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map as including woodland, a carriage drive, kitchen garden, river and a walk. The woodland either side of the house has largely been removed since the end of the 19th century.

Description

The historic boundary is located within the field to the east of the house, running along the western and northern boundaries. For most of its length it comprises a stone-faced bank, standing to a maximum height of 0.80 metres and approximately 1 metre wide, with an associated ditch, again generally 1 metre wide. The stones on the bank are under a thick coat of coarse grasses and moss and a few large stones have become dislodged and lie away from the feature. Some areas of the bank have been damaged, possibly by livestock movement, which has spread or even flattened it in places. A post and wire fence has been erected along the line of the bank, on its western side.

The ditch varies from a shallow depression in the south to a more distinct, cut channel in the north. Its function is to drain water from the field, which slopes up to the east, down to the stream that borders the northern field boundary. Silting, overgrowth and sporadic damage to the earthwork appear to have prevented effective drainage and the northwestern area of the field is now waterlogged



(Left), looking northwest, bank and ditch at southern end of field. (Right), looking north, bank and ditch at northern end of field

The section of earthwork that crosses in front of the house differs in character to the rest and has many of the attributes of a 'ha-ha' with the east-facing side of the ditch being vertical and stone-faced, with only a slight bank behind it. The drystone revetment stands approximately 0.60 metres high and the ditch is 1.50 metres wide.

Typically a ha-ha, a sunken stone wall with a deep ditch on the far side, formed a boundary between an estate's gardens and its grounds, constructed so as to be invisible from the house and ensuring a clear view across the estate. It appears that such an unobstructed view was conceived at Plas Cefn Gwyn as the 1887 1st edition

OS map shows a cleared gap through the woods to the east, in the direct line of the house. This area is wooded over by the time of the 1905 2nd edition OS map. This section of the earthwork is very waterlogged and the ditch is overgrown with reeds or, in the area immediately in front of the house, been planted with aquatic plants. The stone-facing is also very overgrown with coarse grasses and ferns.



(Left), looking west, possible ha-ha running across the front of the house. (Right) section of walling on east-facing side of ditch.

To the north of the house a further earthwork bank branches off from the main bank and ditch, curving around to form the northeastern field boundary. This bank forms the edge of the area that is depicted as being under woodland on the 1887 and 1905 maps and several mature trees still grow along its length. Several large, exposed boulders sit on the boundary bank.



Looking northeast, section of field boundary bank.

Tir Gofal management recommendations

Two options for management of the historic features have been outlined below.

Option 1 provides guidelines for the reinstatement of the field boundaries and ha-ha, by repair and reconstruction of the field banks and re-cutting the ditch.

Option 2 provides guidelines for cutting the ditch whilst retaining the field banks in their current condition.

When restoring any historic features it is preferable to retain as much of the original fabric as possible, carrying out repairs where necessary. In this instance any works to the historic boundaries must be carried out with care in order to ensure that their historic character is retained.

Management Recommendations

Option 1: restoration

Consider restoring the boundary bank and ditch to its original specifications. The bank varies along its length from a relatively high, stone-faced feature to the south to a low, rounded, predominantly earth bank to the north.

- Reform the earth and stone bank in the areas where it has suffered damage. In some sections the bank has been flattened and spread, requiring reconstruction and re-consolidation, using traditional methods.
- Clear vegetation from the stone-facing and ha-ha revetment. The roots should be left in situ and spot treated to prevent re-growth.
- Restore the stone-facing where necessary, using original stones where possible or replacing like-for-like.
- It is probable that the mature trees that grow on the woodland boundary bank represent the remnant of an original hedgeline and, as such, should ideally be retained. However, any restoration of the bank may require some tree removal.
- Remove vegetation from the ditch. The section in front of the house is particularly thick with reeds and the ha-ha has been planted as a water garden.
- Re-cut the ditch, following the existing course, with a sufficient gradient to carry the excess water to the stream that runs along the northern field boundary. The resulting spoil should be used in the reconsolidation of the bank.
-

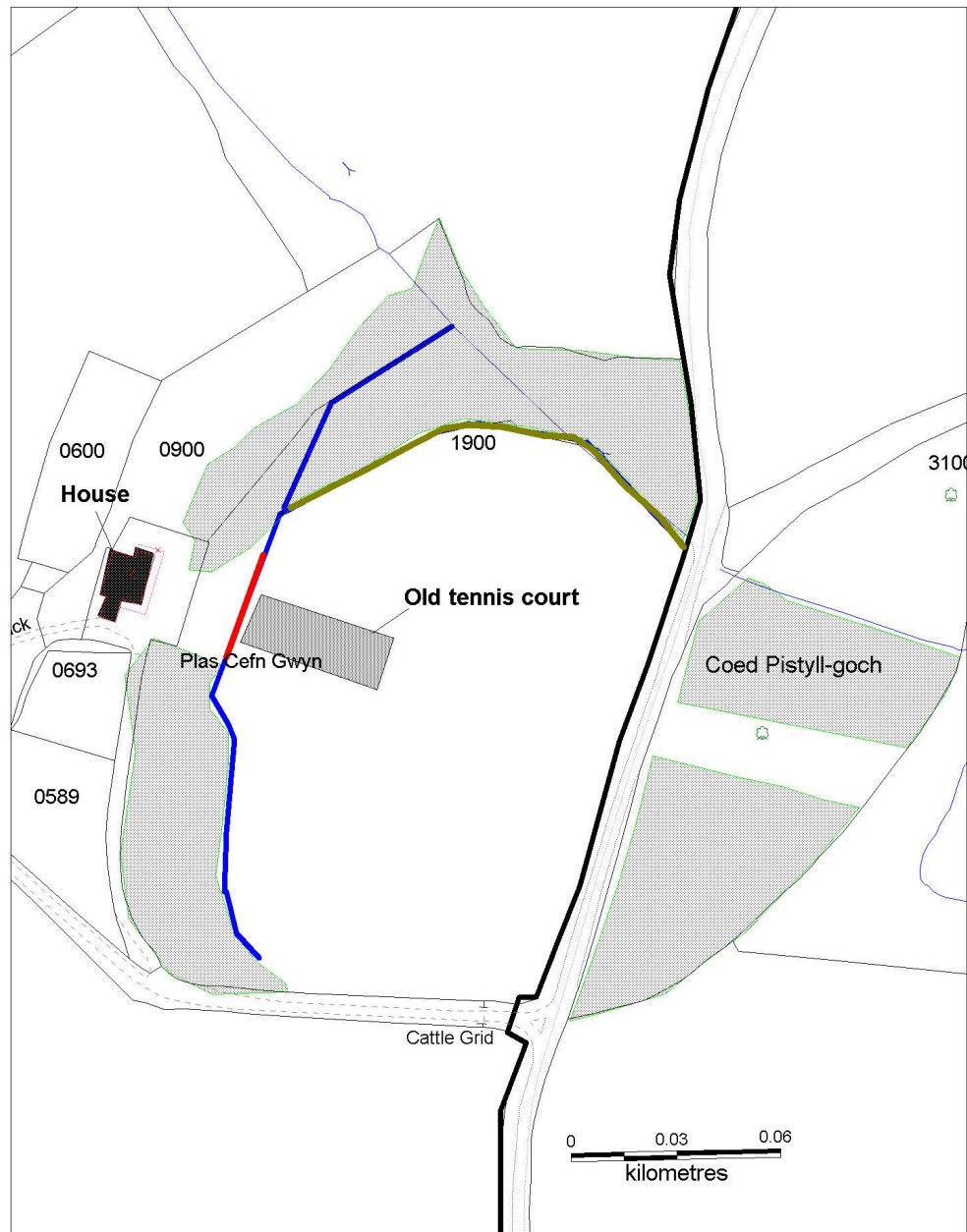
Option 2: maintenance






Where the field boundaries survive in a stable condition they should be left undisturbed. The banks are under a cover of grass, there is no immediate threat to the structures from animal activity or erosion and the southern end of the field is not affected by drainage issues so there is no practical need here to re-open the ditch. The modern post and wire fence replaces the function of the bank as a line of enclosure.

The boundary that marks the edge of the woodland in the north of the field has a number of mature trees growing upon it, the probable relict of the old hedgeline. Their

removal would be detrimental to the historic nature of the landscape but they require monitoring to ensure that they do not pose a threat to the archaeology.

- Monitor the trees that grow on top of the boundary banks and remove any that are in danger of windthrow.
- Remove the silting and vegetation from the ditch, particularly within the area north of the ha-ha to allow excess surface water to drain to the stream. The existing course of the ditch should be followed and the silt accumulation should be removed away from the earthwork so as to maintain as much of the original boundary bank profile as possible.
- If the drainage to the north is rectified then the ha-ha should once again become a 'dry' feature and any accumulated silt can be removed from the ditch, to the level of the original cut.
- Cut back the vegetation within the ha-ha, particularly on the drystone revetment, where the roots should be left in situ and spot treated to prevent re-growth



- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|---|
|  | Farm Boundary |  | Woodland recorded on 1887 1st ed OS map |
|  | Field bank and ditch |  | Section of 'ha ha' |
|  | Field bank | | |

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office© Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Welsh Assembly Government. License Number: 100017916. 2007.

Sources consulted:

Historic Environment Record for Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire

Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1887 Ceredigion Sheet 04.13, 25"

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1905 Ceredigion Sheet 04.13, 25"

Murphy,K & Ludlow,N 2000 Carmarthenshire Historic Landscape Characterisation - Volume 1

Cambria Archaeology, 2003, Tir Gofal Historic Environment HE1: Plas Cefn Gwyn

RCAHMW. Coflein Online Database