

# **Llwynfedw W/11/4056**

## **Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report Call Out**



Report No. 2004/20

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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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Llwynfedw  
Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report  
Call Out

By

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### **Introduction**

A farm visit was undertaken at the request of the Countryside Council for Wales to address specific management issues on this farm. 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.

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**

This call-out visit was undertaken to make a photographic record of a clom building at Llwynfedw, and to provide advice relating to its proposed restoration. A simple plan of the building was also produced, and this forms part of the archive for the project, stored at the Cambria Archaeology offices in Llandeilo. Further photographs and field notes are also in the archive.

Llwynfedw lies at grid reference SN43305885, in the community of Llanarth. It was visited by Cambria Archaeology on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

The property is not seen on the 1839 tithe map (Llanarth parish), but it is depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1891, suggesting that it was constructed between these dates. On the opposite side of the road, the tithe map shows a few small buildings which disappear before 1891. The land surrounding Llwynfedw was all part of Bargoed farm (a short distance to the east) and the name 'Blaen Bargoed Cottages' is recorded on the 1891 map for the row of houses. It is possible that Llwynfedw also originated as a cottage belonging to Bargoed. Currently, Llwynfedw comprises the house itself, the clom outbuilding and a modern garage and sheds.

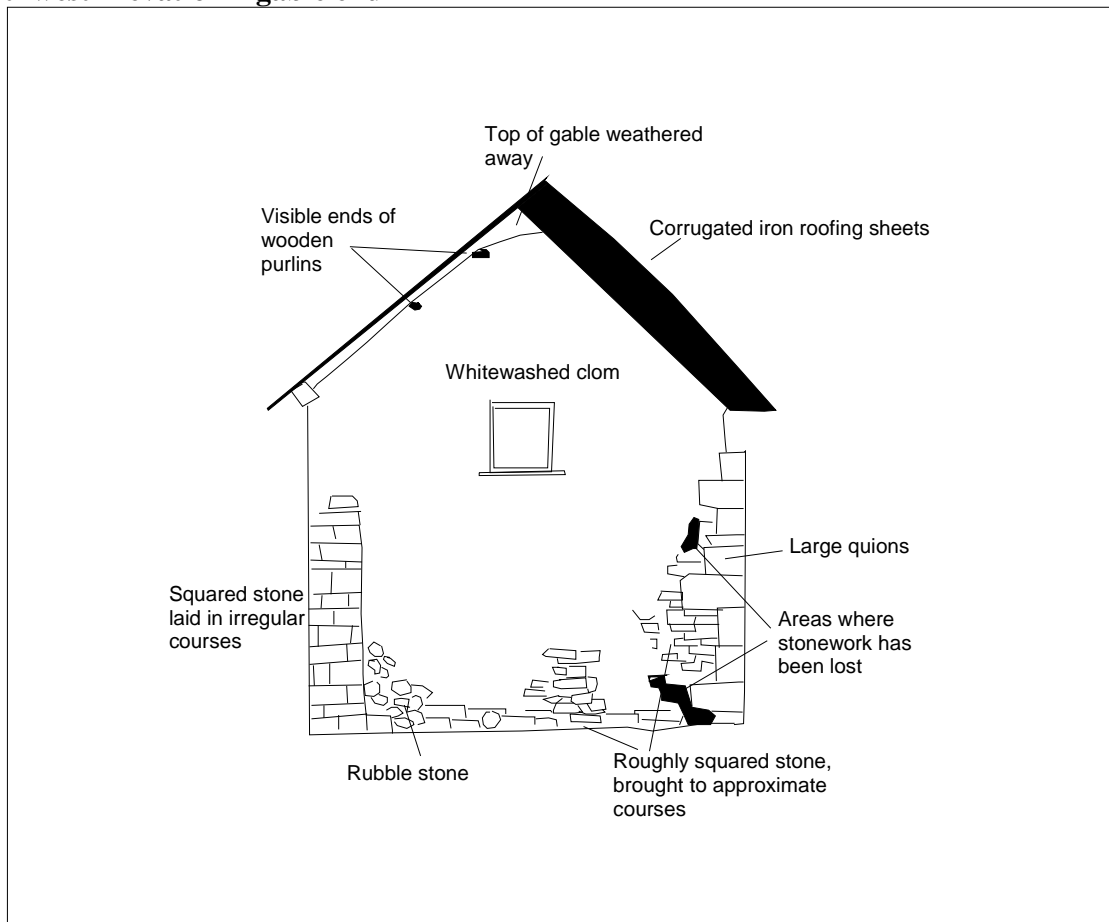
## **Statement of Condition**

The building in question lies just northeast of the farmhouse and the landowner believes it was constructed as a stable. The basic construction is the same throughout the building – clom, resting on stone footings – but details of the stonework differ. The internal roof structure suggests that the original roof was thatched, but no trace of thatch is still seen.

In plan, the building is very simple. The only door is at the northern end of the southwest elevation, and the only window is in the northwest gable. There are no signs of any internal divisions.

### **External Elevations:**

#### **Northwest Elevation – gable end**



*Rough sketch of the northwest gable highlighting main features. Not to scale.*

This gable shows the different materials and techniques which have been used in the building. The sketch shows where different types of stonework are clearly visible under the whitewash, and highlights how variable the height of the stone support in this gable is. The area of rubble stone particularly stands out, and may be a later repair to the wall.

The stonework on the left side of the picture is comparatively regular and an effort has clearly been made to ensure that the stone is all squared off and laid to courses. This column of stone is the end of the northeast wall, and is not keyed in with the stones in the rest of the gable – the two walls butt against each other at this point. The large quoins on the right hand side form the jamb for the building's only door, into the southwest elevation. The window is off-centre, set to the left. It is a small, wooden framed window with a slate sill and it no longer contains any glass.

This gable is generally in fair condition. There are two places where some stonework has been lost, and part of the top of the wall has weathered away.

## Northeast Elevation

This wall is noticeably different from the other three walls of the building. It comprises stonework to about two thirds of its height, topped with clom. The stones are all squared, and laid to courses of irregular heights.

The structure of this wall is unusual for a clom building – normally the clom only rests on a low stone ‘plinth’. Also, it appears that the stonework of the gable end is not keyed in with this wall, but that the two butt against each other. It is possible that the stonework came from an earlier wall which was incorporated into this building.

This wall is in good condition. A modern lean-to style shed is against part of it. The only area of concern is at the north end, where water has been running down the wall face. It has brought off some of the whitewash and will soon start to erode the clom if the problem is not addressed.



*Above left: Interior of the northeast elevation, showing the regular stonework supporting the clom.*

*Above right: Exterior of the building showing the northwest gable butting against the regular stonework of the northeast elevation. Note the staining where water is running down the face of the wall.*

### **Southeast Elevation – gable end**

The exterior of this gable is hidden by a modern garage, and therefore was not photographed. The top of the gable is seen above the modern buildings, and it appears to be similar to the one at the northwest of the building.

### **Southwest Elevation**

A modern shed rests against part of this elevation.

At the north end of this wall is the only doorway into the building. This is edged with large, squared quoins and has a wooden lintel over it – the lintel rests directly onto the stones and has clom built up above it. The structure of this wall is similar to that of the northwest gable, with roughly squared stone blocks forming a low plinth. However, about halfway along the length of the wall is a substantial gap in the clom, almost down to the stonework. This has been formed by water run-off from an insufficient roof overhang, which has penetrated the wall core and eroded the earth structure.



*Part of the clom in the southwest elevation has been worn away by water run-off. This view is from the interior of the building, looking through the wall into the modern shed next to it.*



### **Internal Elevations:**

For the most part the interior elevations of the building shows the same features as are highlighted in the descriptions of the external walls. There are no visible traces of internal divisions, nor does there appear to be a fireplace. However the limewash has mostly been lost from the interior so the colour and texture of the clom is easier to see. Some vegetation is included in the earth mix – mostly straw, though other small organic fragments are clearly visible. Where part of the wall has been lost on the southwest side, the wall core can be seen. As well as vegetation, it includes a few small stone inclusions.

An additional feature was noted on the inside of the southeast gable. A piece of wood, similar to a lintel, has been incorporated into the wall – it runs at an angle, almost as though it were the line of a lean-to shed.

A small gap in the clom next to the wood has been partially infilled with rubble.



*Sloping piece of wood, almost like the line of a lean-to addition, incorporated into the southeast gable wall.*



The building is currently lofted at its southeast end, with the loft being supported on large timbers bedded into the tops of the walls. It appears that the entire length of the building was originally lofted – there are two sawn-off timbers at the northwest end (one above the door and one directly opposite) which would have supported the loft.



*View of the loft inside the building. The timber supporting the loft is visible in the foreground. Note also the rough form of the purlins and the distance between rafters. These imply that the building was not slated but thatched.*

### **Roof Structure**

The building is now roofed with corrugated iron sheeting. However, the internal structure implies that it was originally thatched, although no traces of thatch remain.

The purlins are formed of whole branches with bark left on, and are bedded into the tops of the walls. The rafters are small, complete branches, set far apart from each other. At the north end, the ridge is supported by a form of improvised king-pin. The roof structure appears to be sound.



*Improvised 'king-pin' supporting the ridge of the roof. This is constructed of a naturally forked branch slotted into a rough tie beam.*

## **Proposed Works**

The landowner wishes to re-roof the building –ideally in thatch, or otherwise in corrugated iron. He also wishes to mend the hole in the southwest wall, and re-build that section of wall to its full height. Finally, the landowner intends to remove the modern shed which leans against the southwest elevation of the building.

## **Management Recommendations**

The proposed restoration works are all very welcome, and will ensure the future survival of this building. Once typical, thatched clom farm buildings are becoming increasingly rare, and it is important that remaining examples are preserved and maintained.

The roof timbers appear to be sound, and are of considerable interest. They should be disturbed as little as possible during any works on the building. Where necessary, they should be repaired and retained but if replacement is unavoidable, the replacement should be in the same style. If the roof is replaced with corrugated iron, it should be ensured that the overhang on the roof is large enough to prevent any water from running down the exterior of the walls. It is beyond the scope of this report to give detailed advice on thatching, but a list of contacts has been provided in the appendix, and more advice may be available from them.

The repair of the clom walling should also be undertaken with care. The large gap in the southwest wall should be patched with a clom mixture – further advice may be available from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings technical advice line (see appendix for details). Other, smaller gaps in the walls should also be infilled. Once the walls are sound, then consideration should be given to their finishing and protection from the elements. Externally, limewash is the most appropriate. Traces of limewash also survive on the inside, and suggest that this finishing should be applied internally too.

The removal of the modern shed on the southwest side of the building is also very welcome, since it will allow the building to be seen much more easily. Great care should be taken that none of the clom is damaged during these works. It is also important that the re-roofing of the clom building and the repairs to the wall are carried out immediately after the shed is removed – at present the modern shed is all that is preventing the exposed wall core from the weather.

In general, whilst restoration works are very welcome they should be kept as low-key as possible. The interest in this building stems from its unchanged nature – the irregularity of the walls and the rough roof timbers all give good evidence for the building’s construction. Anything which conceals these features should be avoided in order to retain the vernacular character of the building.



## Photographs - Exterior



*Northwest gable (above)  
Southeast gable (below) showing  
above the modern roofs.*



*Northeast elevation (above)  
Southwest elevation (below)*

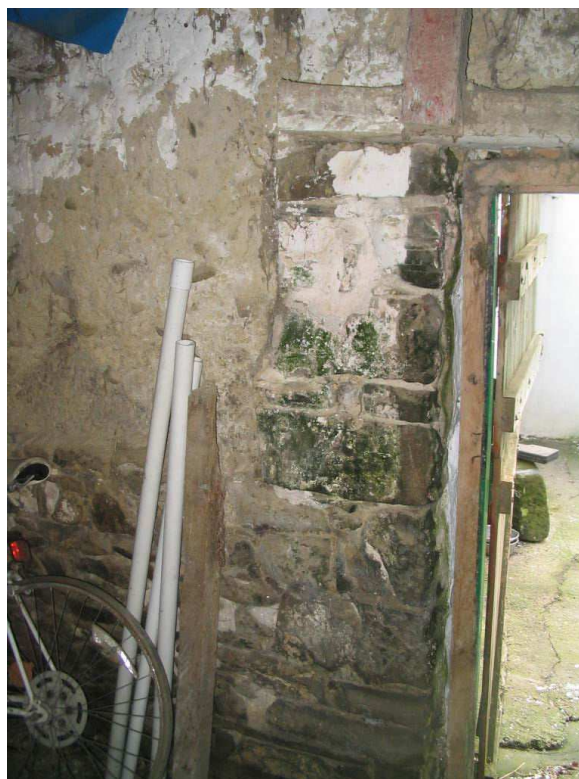




## Photographs - Interior



*Above left: Joint between the northeast wall (right of picture) and northwest gable (left of picture).*



*Above right: The large quoins around the door in the southwest wall.*

*Below: Southeast gable*





*Above: Detail of the improvised 'king-pin' roof structure.*

*Below: Roof structure showing purlins made of whole branches set into the top of the wall. The rafters are spaced wide apart, originally to support thatch rather than slates.*





## **References**

Ordnance Survey 1891 Cardiganshire XXIV.NE  
Ordnance Survey 1906 Cardiganshire XXIV.NE  
Tithe map 1839? Llanarth Parish  
Tithe apportionment 1837 Llanarth Parish

## **Appendix – sources of further information**

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings  
37 Spital Square, London, E1 6DY, Tel: 020 73771644  
SPAB technical advice line:  
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday – 0207 4560916, Friday – 01524 251293  
[www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

The Sustainable Building Directory (copy enclosed).

St Fagan's Museum of Welsh Life – Historic Buildings Unit  
St Fagan's, Cardiff, CF5 6XB. Tel: 02920 573445

Calch Ty-Mawr Lime Ltd.  
Ty-Mawr, Llangasty, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7PJ. Tel: 01874 658249  
[www.lime.org.uk](http://www.lime.org.uk)

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Position: Archaeologist (Tir Gofal)

Signature ..... Date .....

This report has been checked and approved by Louise Austin on behalf of Cambria Archaeology,  
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Position: Principal Archaeologist (Curatorial)

Signature ..... Date.....

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