

JUNE 2003



# ROSEHILL, ABERARTH, CEREDIGION

LEVEL 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

JUNE 2003



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Report No. 2003/71

Report Prepared for:  
WYNTHOMASGORDONLEWIS

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

REPORT NO. 2003/70  
PROJECT RECORD NO. 48237

JUNE 2003

ROSEHILL, ABERARTH,  
CEREDIGION

LEVEL 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

By

Neil Ludlow

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ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA  
Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf  
Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo, Sir Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AF  
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121  
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131  
Ffacs: 01558 823133  
Ebost: cambria@acadat.com Gwefan: www.acadat.com

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY  
Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited  
The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF  
Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121  
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131  
Fax: 01558 823133  
Email: cambria@acadat.com Website: www.acadat.com

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**Contents**

<b>1.0</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY</b>
2.1	Introduction
2.2	Methodology
<b>3.0</b>	<b>MAP EVIDENCE</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY</b>
4.1	The Phase 1 main block
4.2	The Phase 2 lean-to
4.3	Discussion, inc. the interior, fixtures and fittings
4.4	The yard and outbuilding
<b>5.0</b>	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>ARCHIVE DEPOSITION</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS</b>

## **1.0 SUMMARY**

*Cambria Archaeology were requested by WynThomasGordonLewis Limited to undertake a Level 1 building record of the dwelling known as Rosehill, at Aberarth, Ceredigion (PRN 48236; NGR SN 4789 6375), in advance of its demolition as part of a road improvement scheme.*

*The dwelling is a two-storey, gabled house typical of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in West Wales. It was erected between 1843 and 1889, probably during the 1880s. A lean-to was added to the rear after 1905, probably in c.1910-20, when the entire dwelling was remodelled with new partition walls, and panel doors and 4-light sash windows, most of which are still present.*

*The yard was also established in its present form between 1843 and 1889, with a rubble boundary wall that is at least partly contemporary. The present outbuilding is from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

*The brief requested that the dwelling, yard and outbuilding be recorded photographically, the drawings being confined to annotations to the architect's drawings. However, the architect's drawings proved to be erroneous in many respects. The ground plan was entirely wrong, with incorrect measurements, and a number of important features. In the event, therefore, a number of new drawings were produced.*

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Introduction

The property known as Rosehill (PRN 48236 on the Sites and Monuments Record for West Wales) lies at NGR SN 4789 6375, in the village of Aberarth, in Ceredigion. It is a typical West Wales domestic dwelling from the very end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is of two storeys beneath a slate gabled roof, constructed from roughly coursed local rubble with yellow brick dressings. Overall, it measures 10m N-S by 9m E-W.

The dwelling occupies a walled yard of 515 square metres which mainly comprises a garden, with two fruit trees, and includes an outbuilding at the northwest corner (Fig. 1). The property lies on a slight northwesterly slope, in the narrow valley of the Afon Arth, 0.22 km east of its mouth on Cardigan Bay.

The southeast side of the property fronts onto the A487 trunk road, from which the dwelling is separated by a very small front garden. In addition, a narrow lane runs along the north side of the property and the dwelling, to join the A487(T).

### 2.2 Methodology

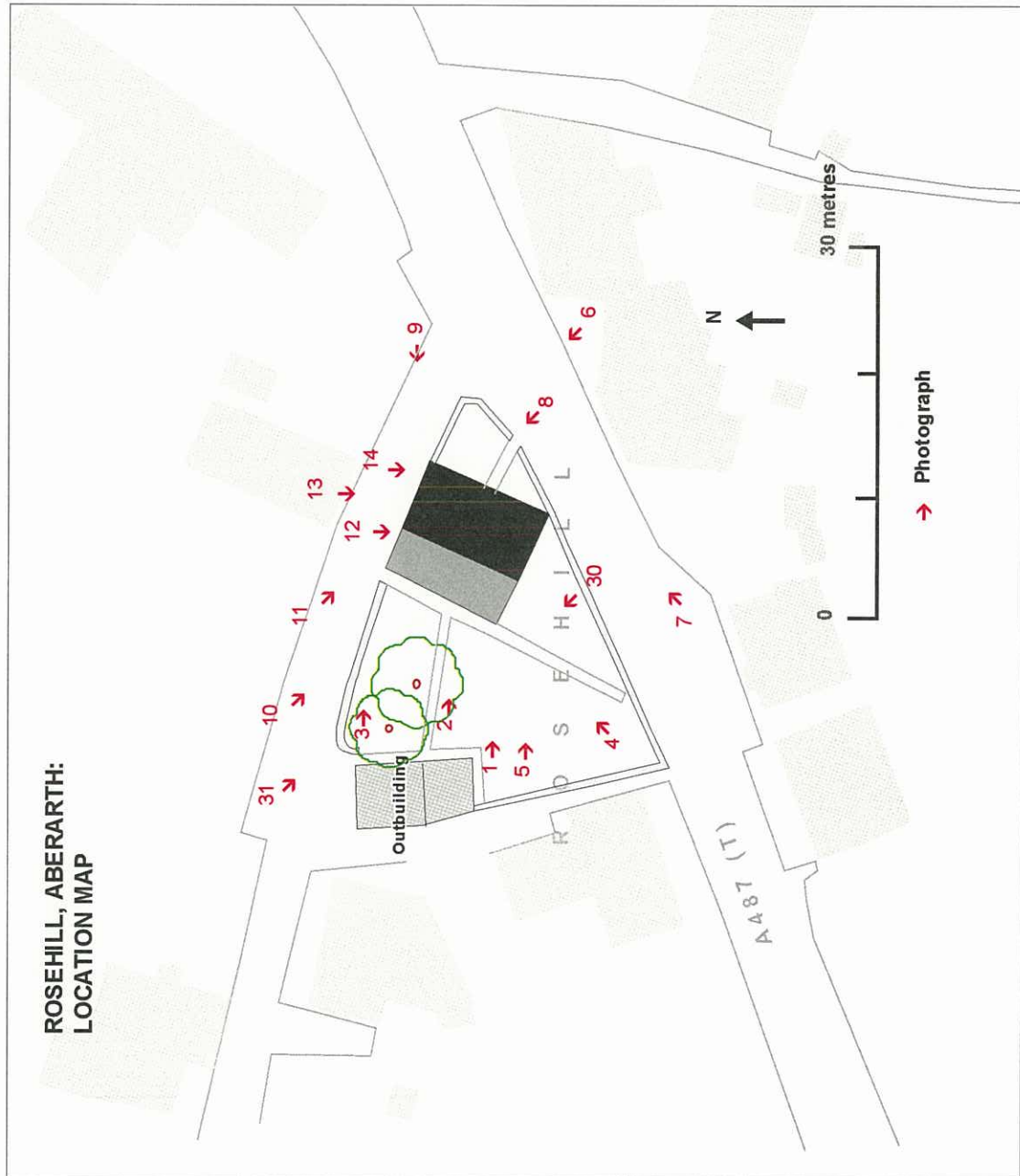
The property is to be demolished as part of the A487 Aberarth trunk road improvement works. Accordingly, the consultant to the improvement scheme, WynThomasGordonLewis Limited, commissioned an archaeological building record of the property and its yard.

The level of recording required corresponds to Level 1 as defined by RCHME (1990), which is *'essentially a visual record, supplemented by the minimum information needed to identify the building's location, age and type... generally of exteriors only, though the interior of a building may sometimes be seen in order to make a superficial inspection and to note significant features. Only if circumstances and objectives allow it will a sketch plan be drawn...'*

It was initially intended that the record be largely confined to a photographic record and outline text description of the external and internal features of the house at Rosehill, and its garden including boundaries. All features were to be clearly marked up on the architect's drawings provided by (but not drawn by) WynThomasGordonLewis Limited. If significant features are noted they were to be recorded to a higher level following consultation with WynThomasGordonLewis Limited and the client. A short report was to be produced including text, photographs and copies of the annotated drawings.

In the event the level of recording overall was significantly higher, corresponding to RCHME Level 2-3. This was necessary because the architect's drawings proved to be erroneous in many respects. The ground plan was entirely wrong, lending the building a parallelogram plan-form that appears to have resulted from incorrect measurement. A number of important features, including a chimney stack, were missing. In addition, the north point on the location plan pointed in the wrong direction.

A draft copy of this report will be circulated to WynThomasGordonLewis Limited prior to the production of the final report. Five copies of the final report will be sent to the client for dissemination to all relevant parties. Two more copies will be presented to the regional Sites and Monuments Record.

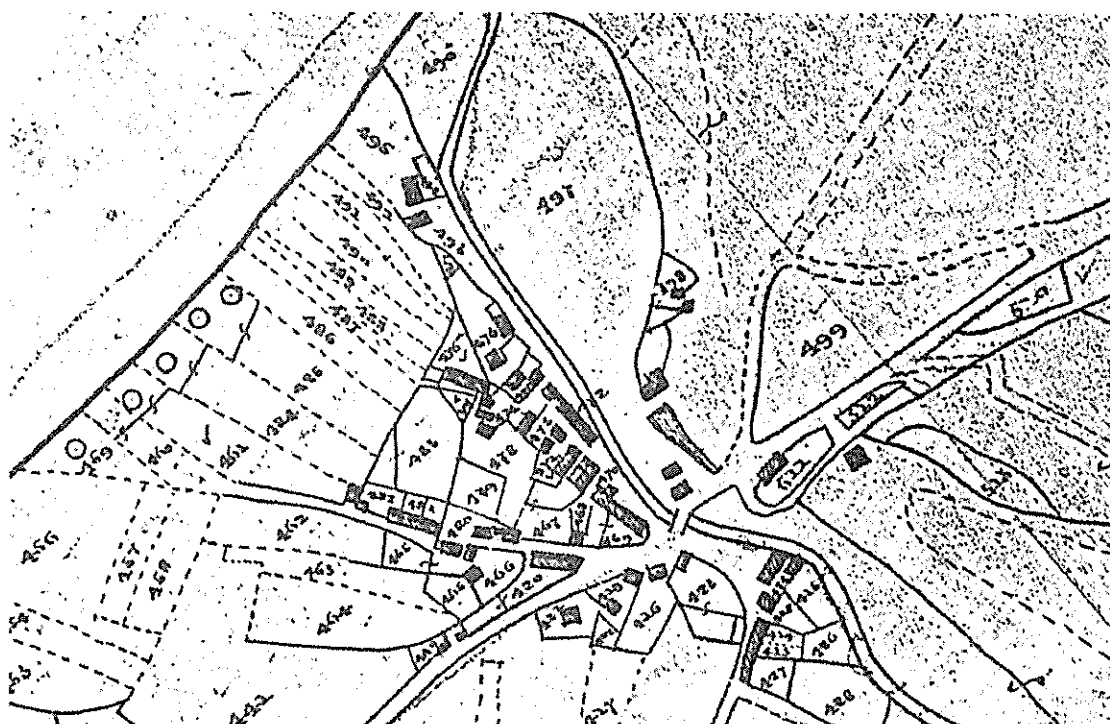


### 3.0 MAP EVIDENCE

The dwelling Rosehill, in its present form, was built in two phases (Fig. 1; Figs. 5 & 6). Map evidence demonstrates that the main block, fronting the street, was built sometime between 1843 and 1889, when the present yard was also laid out, and that the lean-to annexe to the rear of the house was added soon after 1905.

The earliest large-scale accurate map of Aberarth village is the tithe map, of 1843 (National Library of Wales, Llanddewi Aberarth tithe map, 1843, and apportionment of 1839). This shows the plot that is now occupied by Rosehill with some clarity (Fig. 2). The line of the A487(T) has been established as a major route, and the lane to the north of the property is also shown. However, neither Rosehill dwelling nor its yard are shown in their present form. Instead, the property is shown occupied by a long, rectangular building, within an yard that took in what is now a separate property to the southwest, called 'Dewi Villa'.

Fig. 2: Detail from Llanddewi Aberarth tithe map, 1843



The next available detailed map of Aberarth is the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 First Edition map of 1889 (Cardiganshire Sheet XIX.9). A building corresponding closely in shape and size to the main street-frontage block is clearly shown on the map, as is the present yard (Fig. 3). However, the lean-to annexe had clearly not been built. Neither had the present outbuilding. Instead, a row of two smaller buildings are shown leading away westwards from the dwelling, and a very small detached building is shown at the northwest corner of the property. All evidence for these buildings has now gone and in addition to the lean-to and outbuilding, the area is largely occupied by the fruit trees, which were clearly planted after 1889.



Fig. 3: Detail from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 First Edition, Cardiganshire Sheet XIX.9, 1889

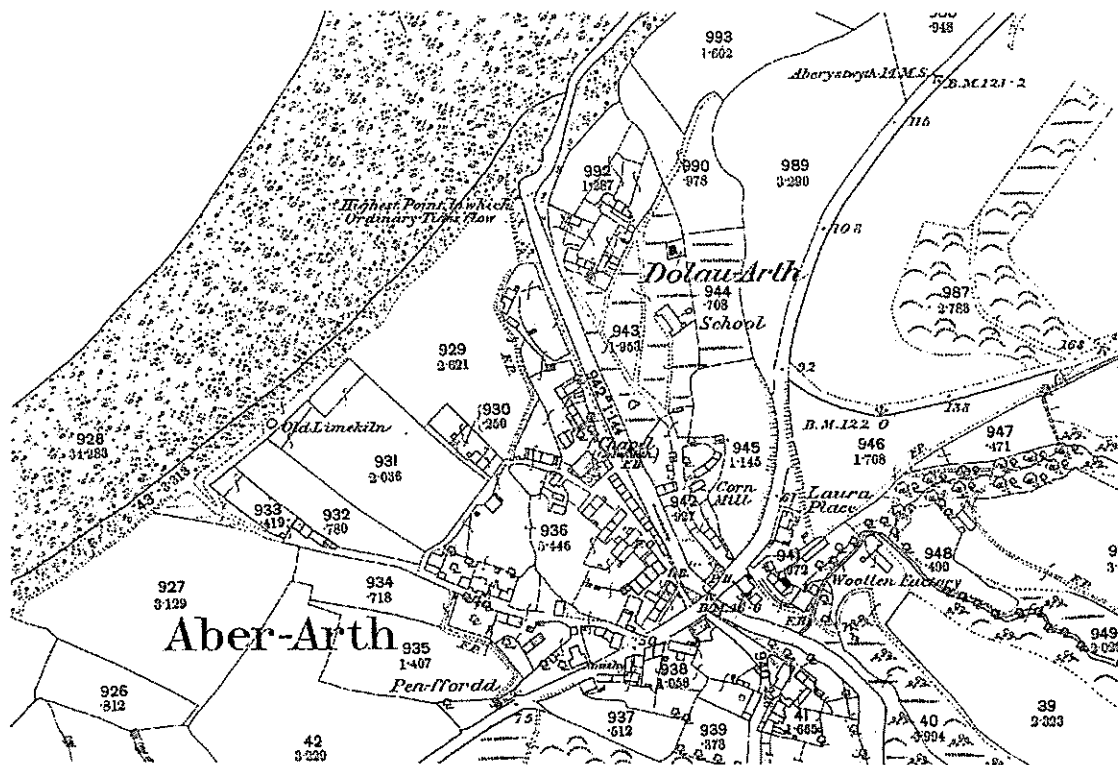
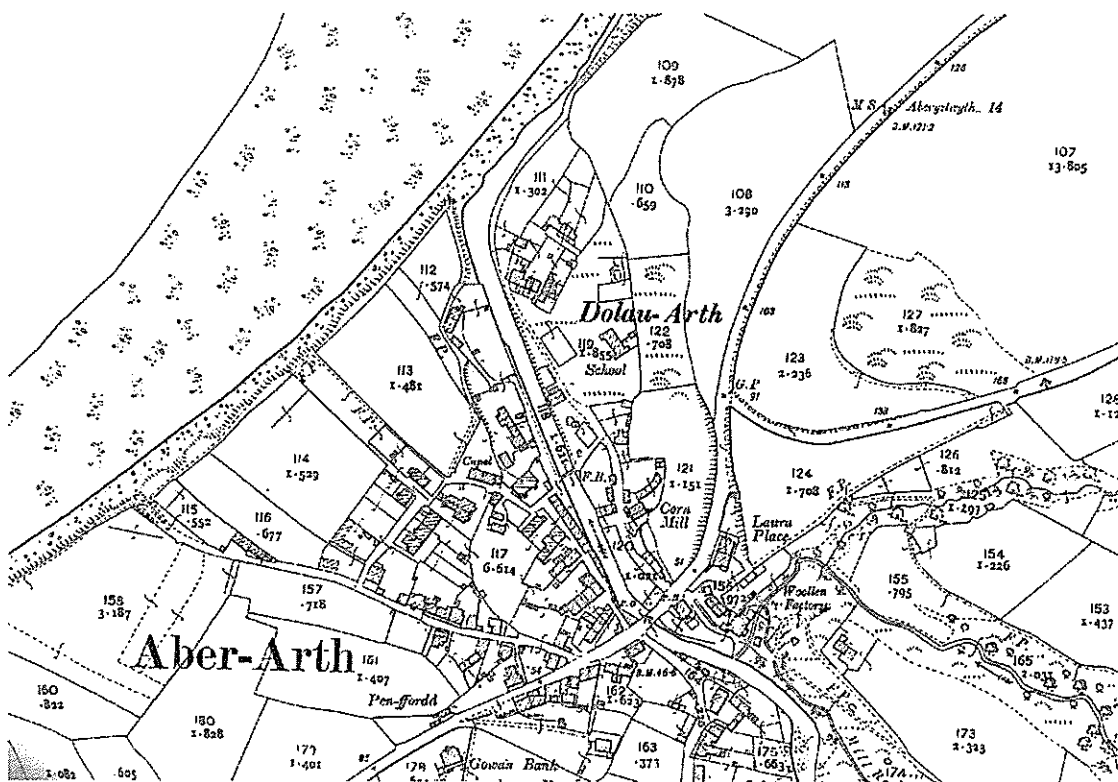


Fig. 4: Detail from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Second Edition, Cardiganshire Sheet XIX.9, 1905





The property had again been altered by 1905 when the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Second Edition map (Cardiganshire Sheet XIX.9) was published (Fig. 4). The row of buildings to the rear of the property had gone. However, the present lean-to is still not shown. Instead, a much smaller lean-to is shown, only occupying the northern two-thirds of the present building. No evidence for this earlier lean-to survives in the present building which is all of a single phase. The map also makes it clear that the present outbuilding had yet to be built in 1905. – however, its place was occupied by a larger building than was shown in 1889.

It is clear from Rosehill's detail and fabric that the main, street-frontage block was built at the latter end of the 1843-1889 period. In fact, the use of yellow brick in the chimney-stacks, and the proportions of the openings, are more typical of dwellings erected in c.1900-1910. However, there is no reason to suppose that they result from any alteration of the structure shown in 1889. The rear lean-to cannot greatly post-date 1905 – it is a rather crude construction, with simple openings, and the internal fittings suggest a date between 1910 and 1920. Its method of construction suggests that the outbuilding is later still, from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 4.0 DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

This description of the dwelling will attempt to date the various components using the map evidence as a guide. Fixtures and fittings, where *in situ*, are also used. However, only the staircase is normally a reliable indicator – door, window and cupboard timberwork can easily be re-used and/or moved, as may have happened at Rosehill. It is also clear that the interior has undergone at least one major re-order, and that the partition walls do not necessarily reflect the original arrangement.

### 4.1 The Phase 1 main block

The main street frontage block (facing southeast) is of two storeys beneath a slate gabled roof. It measures 10m NE-SW by 5.5m NW-SE, and is more-or-less a regular rectangle in plan, with walls averaging 0.5m thick (see the architect's drawings for incorrect values for all these dimensions). The southeast and southwest walls are rendered, but the masonry of the northeast and northwest walls is exposed demonstrating that they are in roughly coursed local rubble, without proper quoins. At either gable end is a large chimney. These are in snecked rubble, with yellow brick quoins and cornice bands, but there is no evidence that they are additions to the main fabric.

The block faces southeast, onto the A487(T), and is approached via a short path in encaustic tiles, from c.1880-1900. The rendered façade comprises the typical three bays, with a central door flanked by a window on both sides, and three windows at first floor level. All have raised external surrounds, in render, which probably conceal segmental brick heads.

Fig. 5: Rosehill, Aberarth, plan at ground floor level

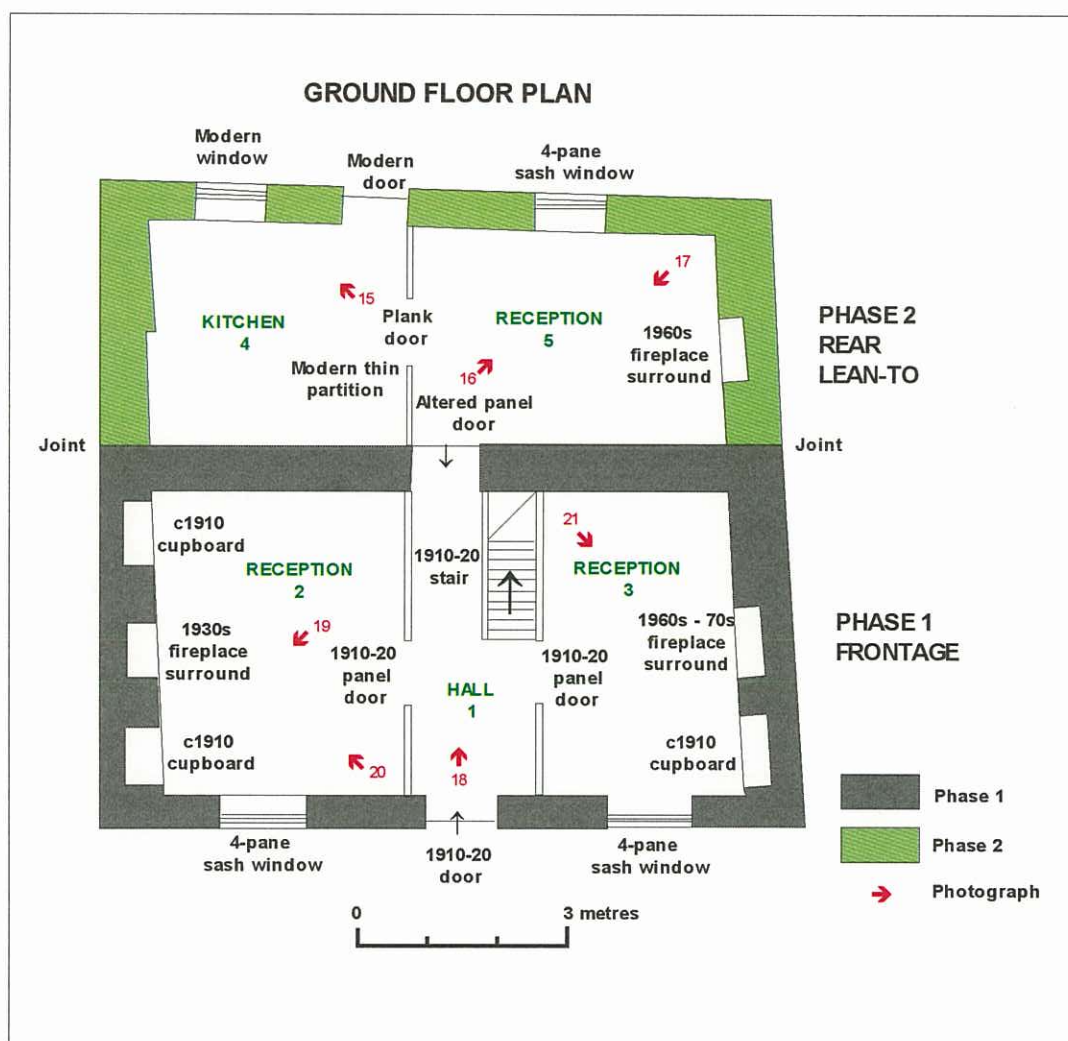
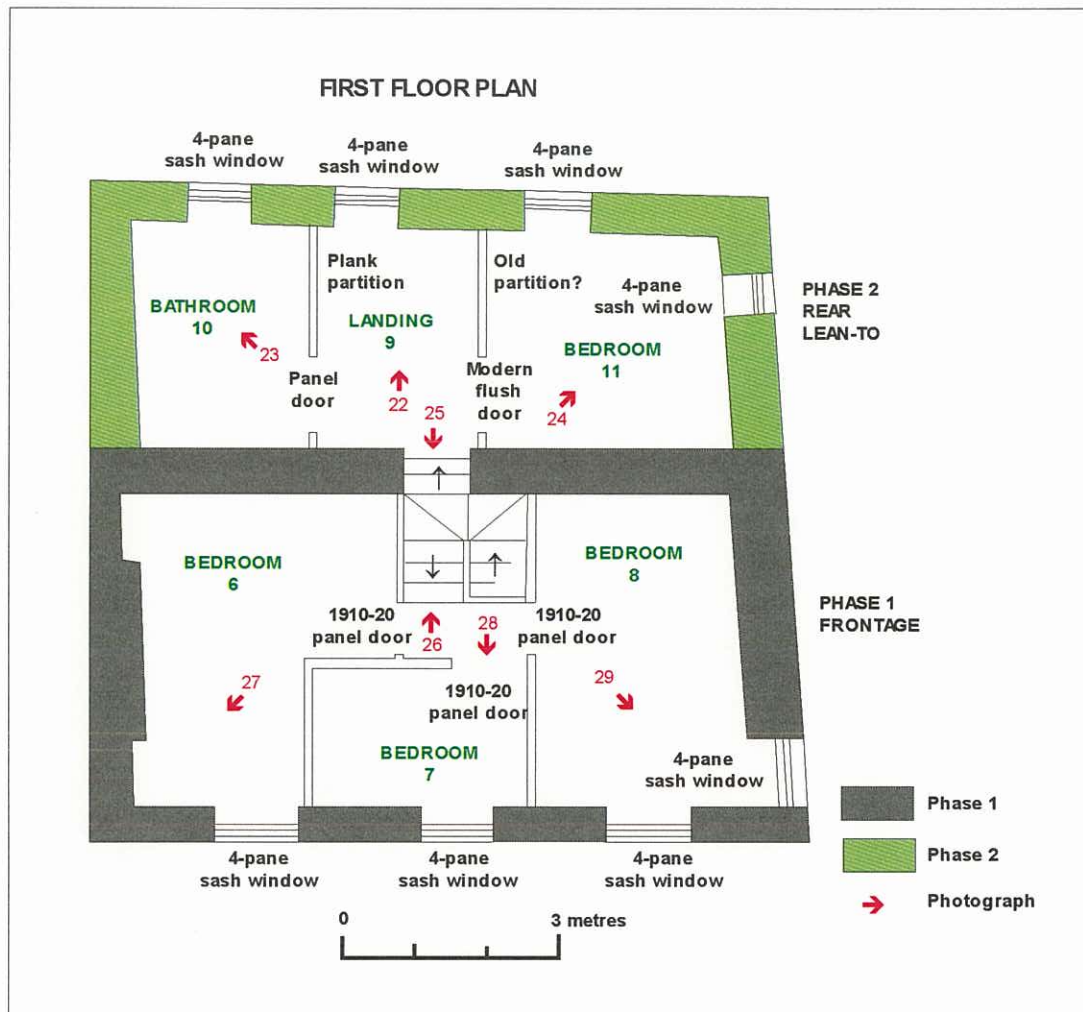


Fig. 6: Rosehill, Aberarth, plan at first floor level



The northwest wall, which lies alongside the lane, is not rendered. This wall is pierced by a window at first floor level, which is probably a secondary insertion (blind end wall being the norm, at this date, in West Wales). However, it lies beneath a segmental brick head (as suspected on the façade wall), while its 4-light sash window is identical to those on the façade wall. It may be that all the sashes belong to a refenestration in 1910-20 – when the doors may also have been replaced (see 4.3 below)

The rendered southwest wall is blind, while the northwest wall is now shared with the annexe with which it communicates at both storeys. The Phase 1 windows which would have been present in this wall are blocked. However, the ground floor doorway may be an original Phase 1 back door.

#### 4.2 The Phase 2 lean-to

The Phase 2 annexe adjoins the northwest wall of the main block and is also of two storeys, although much of the upper storey lies within the lean-to roof space. It averages 9.5m NE-SW by 4.5m NW-SE, and is an irregular rectangle in plan (but is not the parallelogram depicted in the architect's drawings). It is built of similar roughly coursed local rubble, similarly without quoins, but is much less 'formal' in execution than the main block. The vertical butt-joint with the Phase 1 main annexe can be clearly seen on the northeast side.



Fig. 7: Rosehill, elevation of main façade

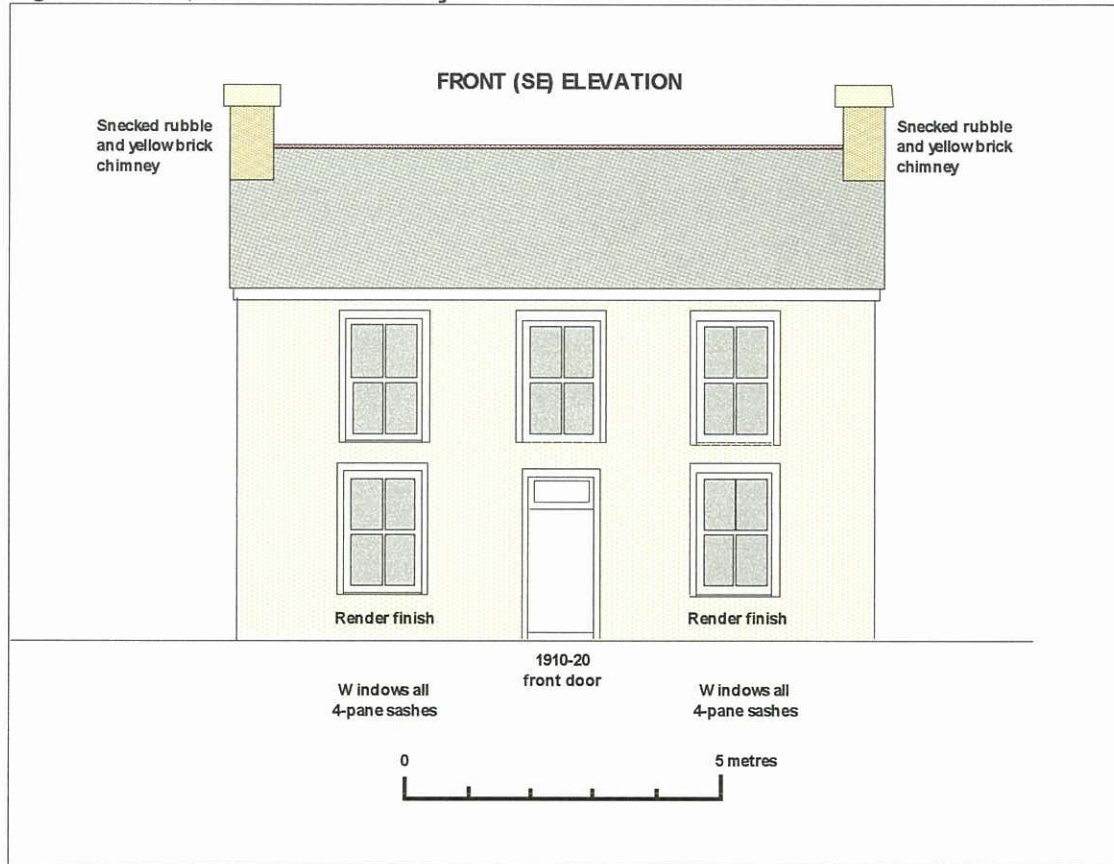


Fig. 8: Rosehill, elevation of lean-to façade

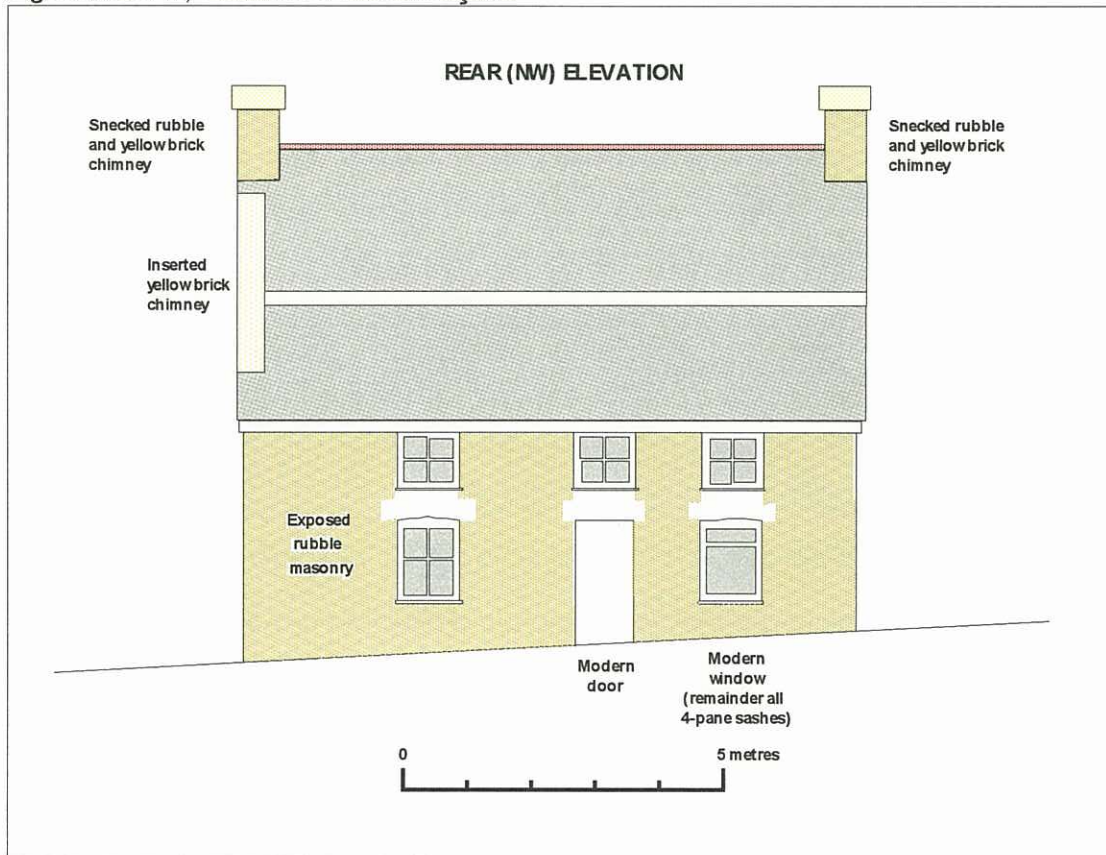
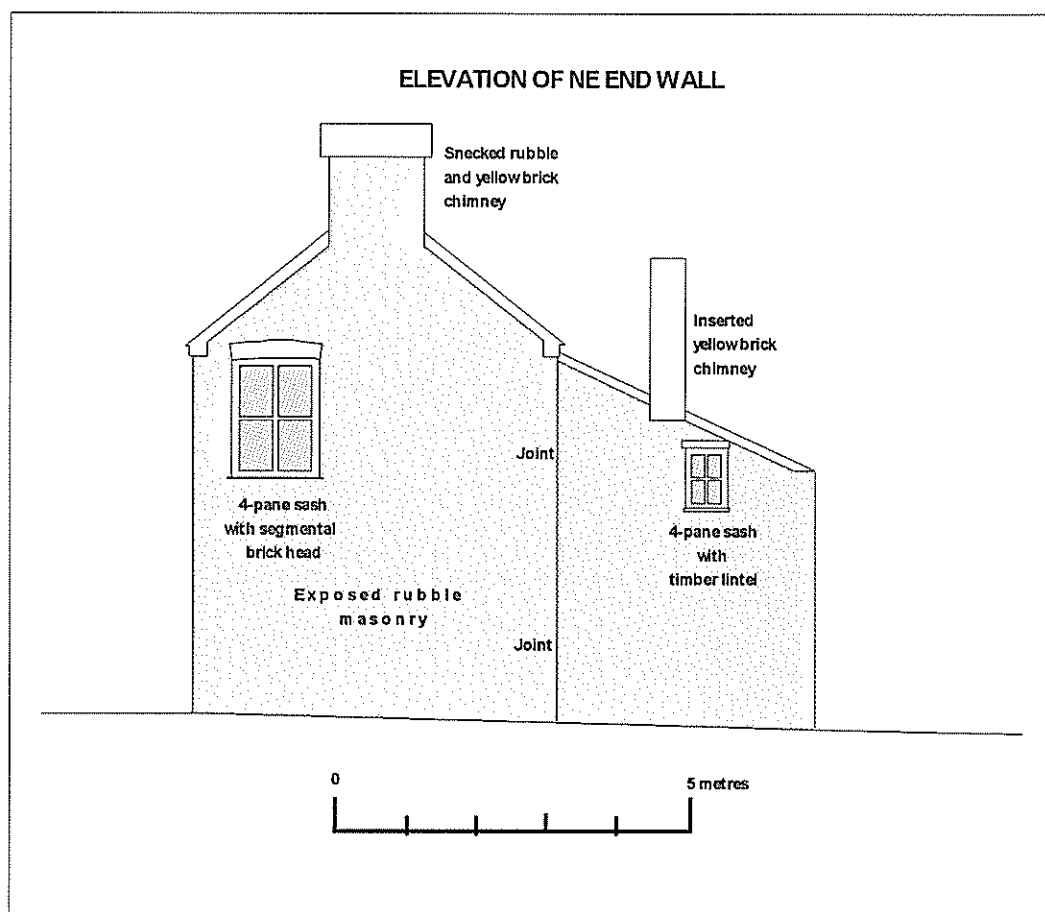


Fig. 9: Rosehill, elevation of NE end wall



The long rear wall, facing the garden to the northwest, is in three bays but is asymmetrical. It features a doorway lying north of centre, with a plain lintel and without a surround, flanked by two windows whose lintels have been shaped to resemble segmental heads. The upper floor is pierced by three, smaller windows with heads at eaves level, above the ground floor openings.

The northeast wall is pierced by a window at first floor level, beneath a timber lintel. This appears to be original. However, the tall, narrow yellow brick chimney-stack in the same wall appears to be an insertion, around which can be seen a masonry infill. This stack is missing from the architect's drawings.

#### 4.3 Discussion, inc. the interior, fixtures and fittings

The basic 3-bay arrangement in the Phase I block undoubtedly represents the original arrangement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century house. However, internally each floor only comprises two main rooms, one each side of a hall/passage. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century norm is for four downstairs rooms, again either side of a hall/passage, and the present arrangement clearly represents a secondary re-ordering - which appears to be contemporary with the addition of the Phase 2 lean-to, ie. c.1910-20.

The present partition walls are all equipped with panel doors which can be broadly dated to c.1910-20 at the latest (and at least some may be re-used late 19<sup>th</sup> century doors). The hall/passage is now occupied by a staircase that only really fits in with the existing arrangements - ie. it is too large to fit around four original downstairs doors. However, again it can be broadly dated, on stylistic grounds, to c.1910-20 at the latest.

All the windows – with the exception of the southern downstairs window in the lean-to – are 4-pane sashes, which stylistically must be more-or-less contemporary with the Phase 2 lean-to, and indicate a refenestration of the Phase 1 block in c.1910-20. This is also when the window was inserted in the main block side wall.

The fireplaces that lie centrally in each of the end walls in the Phase 1 block must also be insertions – each room (and one or more the upstairs rooms) would have originally been heated. They are flanked by glazed cupboards which again are consistent with a remodelling between c.1910 and 1920. The fireplace surround in southern Room 2 may be contemporary (but possibly 1930s); that in northern Room 3 is from the 1960s-70s.

The lean-to is now divided into two rooms and the off-centre doorway suggests that only two rooms were ever present. The northern Room 5 is heated by a fireplace in the north wall whose chimney, we have seen, is an insertion – but still probably early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The present fireplace surround is a replacement from the 1960s. The southern Room 4 is now a kitchen. Its original function is unknown – it may have been a scullery, but it does not appear ever to have been a kitchen as there is no visible evidence that a fireplace was ever present.

On the upper floor, the main Phase 1 block is now divided into three bedrooms around a narrow landing. This may reflect the original arrangement, although four rooms would be more likely in a 19<sup>th</sup> century context. All three doors are panel doors from c.1910-20 which may indicate the present division (although they may, of course, have been re-used at an even later date). Any fireplace(s) have been blocked.

The upper floor of the lean-to is divided into three rooms by plank partitions which may be contemporary with its construction in c.1910-20, along with the plank ceiling. The central Room 9 is a landing cum-bedroom, northern Room 11 is a bedroom and southern Room 10 is now a bathroom.

The only fully modern fixtures in the building are the ground-floor door to the lean-to and the window to the south (in kitchen Room 4), and the flush door to Room 11 all of which were replaced during the last 20 years. However, the kitchen and bathroom have a suite of entirely new superficial fittings within the last few years.

#### **4.3 The yard and outbuilding**

##### *The yard and boundary walls*

The house occupies one corner of a triangular yard measuring 30m by 20m, enclosing 465 square metres. It lies close to, but not on, the eastern apex of the yard, where a low wall butts against the northeast facade of the house to enclose a small, triangular front garden. The wall rises from 0.3m to 1m in height, and appears to be constructed from rounded pebbles, including the coping, and lies beneath a thick render finish. It clearly post-dates the house, but is probably not much later and contemporary with the encaustic tile path to the front door.

This wall continues southwestwards as a taller wall, averaging 1.3m in height, of roughly coursed local rubble masonry with concrete coping. Despite the different construction, the wall appears to be contemporary with the front garden wall.

It turns to the northwest at the southern corner of the property, where it is a slightly different construction. Here the wall is again from 1.3m high to 2m high, but the local rubble masonry is uncoursed and random. The internal face features at least seven sockets, low down, possibly representing drainage holes. The wall is partly beneath the outbuilding (see below). It may be contemporary with the construction of the present house.

Neither end of the northwest wall of the yard connects with a building, being separated from the house and outbuilding by full-height entries. The wall, which is 2m high, is in random local rubble, of more informal construction than the others, bulging outwards slightly. It may pre-date the house, and/or may represent the northwest wall of the line of buildings shown on the 1889 Ordnance Survey map (fig. 3). However, it appears to be all of one build, while any

evidence for attached buildings on the internal face is now obscured by ivy. The summit now has cock-&-hen coping, again largely obscured by ivy.

#### *The outbuilding*

The outbuilding lies against the north half of the southwest yard wall. It is a long, low single storey building measuring 9m by 4m, beneath a flat, corrugated sheet-metal roof. It is divided into three spaces, a garage to the north (entered from the lane), and a row of two rooms to the south, each with a door to the yard. All windows and doorways are late 20th century, probably from the 1970s-1980s. The building lies beneath a thick render finish, but it appears that, in its present form at least, it is contemporary with its openings and roof, ie. late 20th century.



## **5.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The fieldwork and reporting were undertaken by Neil Ludlow of Cambria Archaeology. Thanks to Dai Evans of Ceredigion County Council for arranging access to the building.

## **6.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION**

The archive, indexed according to the National Monuments Record (NMR) material categories, will be deposited with the Sites and Monuments Record for Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, curated by *Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology*, Shire Hall, 8 Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire. It contains the following:-

**A.1.** Copy of the final report

**A.4.** Disk copy of report

**B.4.** Field notebooks

**D.1.** Catalogue of site photographs

**D.2.** Digital photographs (disk)

**G.1.** Source documentation

**I.4.** Final report - typescript

**I.4.** Final report - disk

**L.1.** Project research design/specification

**L.4.** General admin.

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

## 7.0 SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS

*Fig. 10: Rosehill, frontage from the southeast, also showing southeast yard wall (Photo 6)*



*Fig. 11: Rosehill, rear and lean-to from the west (Photo 1)*





*Fig. 12: Rosehill, lean-to from the northwest (Photo 2)*



*Fig. 13: Rosehill, from the southwest, also showing southeast yard wall (Photo 1)*





*Fig. 14: Rosehill, from the northeast (Photo 9)*



*Fig. 15: Rosehill, from the northwest (Photo 11)*



Fig. 16: Rosehill, Room 2 from the north (Photo 19)



Fig. 17: Rosehill, Room 3 from the west (Photo 21)





*Fig. 18: Rosehill, Hall Room 1 and staircase southeast (Photo 18)*



*Fig. 19: Rosehill, staircase and Room 9 from the west (Photo 26)*



*Fig.20: Rosehill, Room 6 from the north (Photo 27)*



*Fig. 21: Rosehill, Room 11 from the south (Photo 24)*





*Fig. 22: Rosehill, the outbuilding from the south (Photo 30)*



*Fig. 22: Rosehill, the northwest yard wall from the west (Photo 31)*



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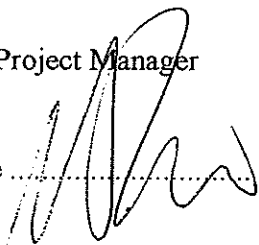
**REPORT NUMBER 200370**

**JUNE 2003**

This report has been prepared by Neil Ludlow

Position Project Manager

Signature



Date

16 June 2003

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

Position Deputy Director

Signature



Date

16.06.03

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