



Heolddu W/12/3876

Tir Gofal Farm Visit Historic Environment Report Call Out



Heolddu farmstead viewed from the northeast

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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 issues regarding specific sites or features, 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

Heolddu Farm, Carmarthenshire lies within the community of Gorslas, centred on National Grid Reference SN53981518. The farm is located on the southwest side of the A48 and just over half a kilometre to the northwest of Foelgastell village.

The farm comprises just under 13 acres of land which lie on fairly a level terrace at the 160 metre contour. Incredibly this small farm contains five listed buildings within the farmstead and a ring cairn which is a scheduled ancient monument.

The farmstead is an incredible complex of 18th century farm buildings. It consists of two listed farmhouses and the farm buildings are arranged in a neat coherent group. The currently inhabited farmhouse (Listed Building Rec. No. 9753; Prn 6761) is dated 1748 and stands in a prominent position on the higher side of the farmyard, facing northeast. Behind it is the second farmhouse (Listed Building Rec. No. 9754; Prn 25587) which is currently unused and in a fairly derelict condition. It is a later construction than the current farmhouse with a datestone inscribed 1776. This building is constructed in a similar manner to the earlier farmhouse, lacking only the rear and side extensions. It appears to have been converted to an agricultural building at an early stage, with remains of a corn-drying kiln and a series of salting slabs introduced into the ground floor. It is hoped that this building, which is currently in a derelict condition, will be subject to a Cadw historic building grant to enable vital repair works to stabilise the structure.

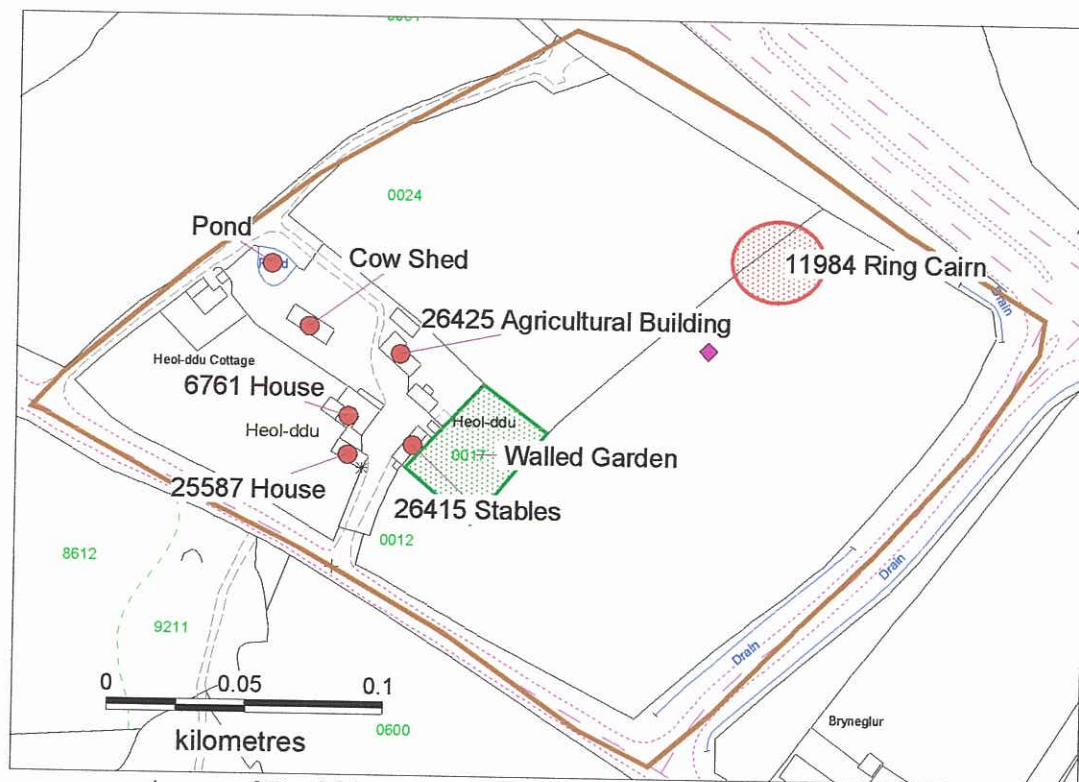
The farm buildings are arranged in a group around the farmhouse, to the southeast is a building listed as a stable (Listed Building Rec. No. 9755; Prn 26415) which is further described below. To the rear of the stable is a walled garden which is also listed (Rec No. 21303). Opposite the two farmhouses is an agricultural building (Listed Building Rec. No. 9756; Prn 26425), which may also be a stable, with a large loft and a drive shaft which suggests crop-processing. Between these two buildings is an unlisted former cow shed, now converted to residential use. The only building which stands away from the farmstead complex is a cow shed, which may be subject to building restoration through Tir Gofal and is discussed below.

In the furthest northwest region of the farmyard is a pond, now largely silted up. It is hoped that this will also be part of the on-going restoration of the farmyard. A cottage, currently occupied, is situated to the west of the farm complex and presumably was built to provide workers accommodation.

The current owners of Heolddu bought the farm early in the year 2002. They have undertaken a great deal of historical research into the history of the farm and its inhabitants. The earliest of the known inhabitants is Philip Lloyd who is named in the deeds of 1712 and 1736 (Jones, 1987; p94). It appears that this figure was instrumental in constructing much of what can be seen today. The two farmhouses constructed with datestones, 1748 & 1773 are each inscribed with his initials "PL" and two other farm buildings also have datestones which lie within this date range, suggesting his hand in their construction.

The farmstead is significant because of the survival of so many near contemporaneous buildings of the 18th century.

An archaeological call out visit was requested in order to address the future management of the ring cairn, a scheduled ancient monument (SAM Cm 230) and also to look at potential building restoration within the farmstead. The Cadw Ancient Monuments Inspector, Kate Roberts, was called on to advise regarding the management of the SAM, and in order to make an informed decision about the management of the farmstead and priorities over the use of Tir Gofal capital works funds, the Cadw Listed Buildings Inspector, Judith Alfrey was also consulted.



A map of Heolddu Farm showing historic buildings and features

Proposed Works

Prn 11984 – Ring Cairn, Scheduled Ancient Monument Cm 230

Approximately 100 metres to the east of the farmstead, situated on an area of level ground is a prehistoric ring cairn. A trial excavation by the Dyfed Archaeological Trust in 1984 revealed a cairn, 30 metres in diameter composed of a 6 metre wide bank of limestone boulders and stones surrounding a central circular area with a limestone pavement.

A ring cairn is usually defined as a ritual monument, often with burials or charcoal filled pits in the centre, which dates from the early to middle bronze age (1700 to 1000 years BC). It is thought that rituals concerned with the celebration of the dead took place at these monuments.

The ring cairn is visible as a roughly circular earthwork bank, although the break of slope is so gentle it is difficult to pinpoint the outer extent of the feature. The ring cairn is no longer hollow in the centre but appears to have been filled at some point resulting in a raised platform. A hedgeline of hawthorn and hazel overlies the monument, which is more visible on the eastern side of the hedge. The hedge sits upon a small earth and stone bank, and has not been laid for several years; many of the hedgerow trees are grown out forming large dense stools. Apparently the hedge has not been stock proof for some time and supplementary wire netting has been attached to the larger hedgerow trees.

Management Recommendations

It has been proposed through the Tir Gofal scheme to restore the hedgeline to a stockproof boundary, this will allow greater flexibility in the management of the farm. In order to achieve this the hedge will be laid and will involve the introduction of two new lines of fence posts to either side of the hedge. As the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument Cadw were consulted on the proposals. It was concluded that the restoration of the boundary would not have a significant negative impact on the monument, but would be a positive step in the improved management of the site and its environs. In carrying out the fencing efforts should be made to reduce the number of fence posts which are introduced onto the site, and straining posts should not be placed within the scheduled area. The fence posts should be driven rather than dug into position. The laying of the hedge should not include the introduction of standard trees within the scheduled area, as these will encourage stock to congregate on the monument to find shelter and may cause pockets of erosion or poaching.

As this work will involve ground intrusive activities into the scheduled area, scheduled monument consent will be required from Cadw. Please contact Kate Roberts for a consent form
<mailto:Kathryn.Roberts@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK>

The management regime intended for the site is one in which the fields are lightly grazed during the summer with a staggered cutting of the two fields for hay, and left ungrazed over winter.



Prn 11984 - the ring cairn is visible as a low turf covered bank

Cow Shed

A cow shed is situated to the northwest of the farmstead and slightly distanced from the other agricultural buildings. Unlike the other buildings there is no datestone, however the type of construction and use of materials would suggest that, in common with the other farm buildings, it originates from the latter part of the 18th century. It appears to be a little altered example of a classic Carmarthenshire cow shed, a type of building which is becoming increasingly rare, particularly with cow stalls and fittings surviving.

The cow shed is rubble stone built, with wooden lintels over a series of five, evenly spaced doorways along the northeast facing wall. These openings originally appear to have been mirrored on the opposite long wall however, most of these have subsequently been blocked. The cow shed appears to have been lofted originally, suggested by the external steps and doorway at the southeast gable end and the internal joists which held the loft boards, now missing.

The roof is slate on the northeast side and corrugated iron to the southwest. The roof structure does not appear to be original, although original elements may have been reused – the collars are held with iron staples and the batons on the slated side appear recent.

At the northwest end the cowshed appears to have been extended to incorporate a cart shed, and onto this a ty bach was constructed against the gable wall of the cart shed.

Internally the cow shed retains much of its internal fixtures and fittings, wooden partitions define the alternate feed and manure passages, with beasts tethered across the building.

The condition of the building is mixed. When the current owners took over the farm, in the early part of 2002, the cow shed was very overgrown with ivy, and substantial trees had grown up in close proximity to the building. The current owners have removed all of this vegetation, and it is clear that the extensive ivy growth and years of neglect have left this building in a poor state of preservation. The corrugated iron roof is largely intact although in places this has corroded and holes are appearing in the sheeting. The slates are largely in a reasonable condition except where the ivy had evidently grown beneath the slates and dislodged them at either end of the building.

The masonry is also in a mixed condition, the lateral walls appear largely stable. However, there are several areas of concern. In a number places the masonry has collapsed. The outer skin of masonry above the gable end doorway has fallen away and also above the surviving doorway in the southeast facing wall. Perhaps the most extensive collapse includes the cart shed extension at the northwest end of the building. Here a large part of the southeast facing wall has completely collapsed, taking with it a section of the gable end. The ty bach at this end also lacks a roof.

Management Recommendations

The conservation and restoration of this building is a priority. It forms a crucial part of the farm complex and its deterioration would be a loss to the unity of the farmstead. Luckily the farmstead now lies in the hands of sympathetic owners, who in a short time at the farm have already done much to allay further decay and deterioration of all the farm structures. In particular the owners

have removed the weight of ivy and tree growth which would have undoubtedly accelerated the ruin of this cow shed.

With the vegetation removed it is necessary to consolidate this building urgently. The priority is to make the building watertight and stable. It is hoped that through Tir Gofal the roof covering can be entirely repaired and reslated. This would be a very worthwhile undertaking. It is also of utmost urgency to repair the areas of masonry collapse, as the structural stability of the walls is in jeopardy as long as the wall core is exposed.

Although this building is not currently listed in its own right, it does fall within the curtilage of other listed structures and therefore should be treated as a listed building. It would be advisable therefore, to keep the local authority conservation officer informed of any works to the building. As with any restoration projects involving listed buildings the works should be based on an ethos of repair rather than replacement, in order to retain as much of the historic fabric as possible and where necessary to replace materials on a like for like basis.



The cow shed is a rare example of a once common Carmarthenshire building

Prn 26415

The Stable - Listed Building Rec. No. 9755 (Grade II)

Positioned to the east of the farmhouses and orientated at 90° to them is a two storey range in rubble stone wall construction and roofed with corrugated iron sheeting. The front elevation, facing northwest, has two wide doorways at either ends of the elevation. A wide central doorway has been narrowed to create an off centre doorway. Window openings to either side of this doorway have been inserted. The upper floor has a series of ventilation slits along the front elevation. The northeast gable end has external steps leading to a first floor doorway. A similar opening is visible in the southwest gable at first floor level, although apparently never accessed by steps, and a modern lean-to has been erected against the ground floor. The rear of the building backs onto a walled garden. There is evidence in this elevation for a blocked, central, doorway and a series of small square openings, which either may have originally been open through the width of the building providing ventilation into the ground floor, or perhaps were sockets to support a further structure to the rear of the building.

The roof timbers appear to have largely been renewed in the 19th century.

The building was apparently most recently used as a dairy, and the ground floor has been lined with a cement skin which obscures the interior. It has been listed as a stable, however it is possible that it may have originally functioned as a cow house.

The condition of the building is poor, the corrugated iron roof is severely corroded, and has become quite perforated. In addition the roof does not extend adequately at eaves level and rainwater is evidently pouring down the wall face, particularly on the front (northwest) elevation which bulges outwards to some extent. The owners have discussed this problem with people who have known the farmstead for a long time and apparently this bulge in the front wall is of some antiquity and does not appear to have increased to any great extent in the recent past. However there is a danger, with rainwater no longer being sufficiently deflected from the wall tops and wall surface, that the bonding mortar will become eroded and that the wall will lose its structural stability. In addition an inscribed datestone in the centre of this elevation, just below the eaves, is becoming quite eroded and the inscription is gradually being lost. The interior of the roof was not fully looked into since the safety of the floor is questionable, however it was observed that one of the collars to a truss was broken.

The rear of the building is somewhat overgrown, although the owners have made great inroads removing most of the severely damaging vegetation.

Management Recommendations

This listed building is in dire need of attention to the roof. It is of great concern that the roof no longer appears to be adequately watertight. The ingress of water will undoubtedly affect the stability of this structure in the long term. Indeed, although the bulge in the front wall is of some antiquity, water percolating through the fabric of the wall could cause the vital bonding in the wall to fail.

Ideally the roof covering should be replaced in slate with a sufficient overhang at the eaves to deflect rainwater away from the wall face. If the reroofing of the building in slate is too costly to achieve quickly, it maybe appropriate to replace the roof with corrugated sheeting which would at least afford protection to the building in the short term and would be light enough to carry out without major structural works to the roof structure. Any works to the building should be carried out in full consultation with the local authority conservation officer.

Conservation Priorities

It is acknowledged that funds for building restoration within Tir Gofal are limited and therefore works will have to be prioritised. In consultation with Cadw it is advised that works to the cow shed are given precedence. Although this building is not listed it is at least of equal significance to the other listed buildings in the farmstead; it a classic example of a building which, once common, is now rapidly diminishing. In addition it remains largely unaltered with internal fittings surviving. It is in a perilous condition as the external masonry has already begun to collapse in places and this will rapidly deteriorate with each winter that the wall core is left exposed.

The stable is also a very worthy candidate for restoration, forming an integral part of a cohesive farm group. The current condition of the roof on this building is a grave cause for concern, and it is likely to deteriorate if left unchecked. It is proposed that in the short term some form of temporary cover is put onto the roof to prevent deterioration to the structural stability of the building.

A factor that should be taken into consideration with all restoration works on traditional buildings is the provision of an archaeological record. All areas which are to be affected by consolidation works should be photographed, both internally and externally. Please see the attached photographic guidelines.

Any works carried out to structures within the farmstead should be carried out in consultation with the local planning authority conservation officer.



Prm 26415 – the listed stable is an integral part of the farm complex

References

Jones, F. 1987. *Historic Carmarthenshire Homes and their Families*

**Heolddu
W/12/3876**

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This report has been prepared by Alice Pyper]

Position: Heritage Management Archaeologist (Tir Gofal)

Signature Alice Pyper Date 6th Nov 2003

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

Position: Principal Archaeologist (Curatorial)

Signature Louise Austin Date 12/11/03

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

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.