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A 'CLOM' COTTAGE AT LLWNDAFYDD, CEREDIGION

A STANDING BUILDING SURVEY

Report No. 2003/123

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By

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COTTAGE AT LLWNDAFYDD, CEREDIGION
STANDING BUILDING SURVEY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A planning application by Chris Davies Architectural Design to demolish a cottage at Lwndafydd, Ceredigion (SN3700 5542), required a programme of archaeological standing building survey. This survey was undertaken by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations on the 14th of October 2003. The cottage, of stone and 'clom' construction, is of a traditional design, typical of an area covering southern Ceredigion, northwest Carmarthenshire and north-east Pembrokeshire. Most recently the cottage was used as a store associated with the neighbouring post office (now closed). Buildings of this type of have been lost in large numbers through demolition and home improvements. The example at Llwndafydd, is represented on the Llandysiliogogo Parish Tithe map of 1843 and is thought likely to date from the later 18th century. The cottage was demolished on the 15th of October 2003.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The cottage was not included within the Sites and Monuments Record and the only other easily accessible documentary source consulted was cartographic evidence. The cottage is depicted on the tithe map of 1843, but is not listed in the apportionment.

A detailed drawn, descriptive, and photographic record of the fabric of the building was made, noting construction methods and any surviving internal fixtures and fittings. Scale drawings of all external and internal elevations were produced, noting alterations and repairs to the fabric of the building. The demolition of the building was observed in order to recover any dating evidence within the fabric of the building and to record construction details.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

The cottage at Llwyndafydd is a traditional domestic building constructed from 'clom' on stone footings. The cottage is constructed on a south-west / north-east alignment facing south-east, at the junction of three roads. Immediately to the south-east of the cottage is a former Post Office and village stores, constructed from wood. This building was not recorded in detail but photographs of the exterior are included in this report since it too was due to be demolished.

The footings of the cottage are up to 1.3m in height constructed from local stone bonded with an earth mortar, with no evidence of lime mortar. Above the footings the walls are constructed of 'clom'. There was about 1m of 'clom' above on the front and back walls with the gable ends rising to a height of 3.4m. The 'clom' was made from local silty clay with occasional stones and mixed with chopped cereal straw, hay, and other woodier

organic material, probably twigs, gorse, or heather (these were observed during demolition of the building). The 'clom' was applied in numerous layers approximately 5cm thick.

The original roof would have been supported on cruck frames resting upon the stone footings. Slots within the 'clom' walls mark the position of these cruck frames. The original roof timbers are no longer present and the cruck frame slots have either been destroyed, obscured by later alterations to the fabric, or have been blocked up with stones and earth. The existing roof is rather insubstantial, consisting of more recent roof timbers, supporting a corrugated iron roof. The original roofing material is likely to have been thatch. The fabric of the building has undergone considerable repair, rebuilding and alteration during its lifetime. At the time of recording the building had been abandoned for around fifteen years having most recently been used as a storeroom for the neighbouring Post Office and store. The structure was beginning to become ruinous with significant structural damage at both gable ends. The interior of the building was in a state of dereliction, having been vandalised, but some remnants of wooden tongue and groove panelling, wallpaper etc suggest the most recent decor. The floor is of level concrete, with no room division scars.

At the northern end of the cottage are the apparently quite recent footings of a shed or out-house. At the southern end there is evidence in the wall for a lean-to shed or shelter.

3.1 External Elevations

Each of the external elevations was significantly different in character, attesting to the extent of alteration to the fabric of the building.

3.1.1 Front elevation (facing south-east) (Photo 1, figure 2)

The majority of the front exterior elevation was covered in a white painted cement render. This was sufficiently intact to obscure the majority of the underlying wall fabric, but the areas where the render was removed suggested that this side of the building was entirely constructed from stone (at least on the exterior), bonded with an earth mortar. Either this was the case from when the building was first constructed, or it is as a consequence of alterations to the windows and doorway having been made. The larger window, with a slate sill at least is probably a later alteration. The small window may be original and has no sill.

The doorway shows signs of having been altered at least once. The present day door lintel is of concrete, but the existence of an earlier, lower lintel can be implied from an in-filled void, and from the fact that the door itself is lower than the existing doorway.

3.1.2 Back elevation (facing north-west) (Photo 2, figure 1)

The rear exterior elevation appears originally to have been of stone construction to a height of approximately 1.3 meters, with a 'clom' superstructure. This build survives at

the northern end only. It may also have survived until recently at the southern end, but this has since collapsed. The central stretch of the wall appears to have been faced in cement mortared stonework, presumably to prevent deterioration of the original 'clom'. It is possible that the central portion has been entirely rebuilt. The single window with a wooden lintel and no sill, has a metal frame and is probably not an original feature since its sill is below the top of the stone footings (see also interior elevation).

3.1.3 North end (facing north-east) (Photo 4, figure 4)

The northern external gable end elevation has been altered to give access between the cottage and the shed that stood at the northern end the exposed faces of stonework where the footings have been removed have been roughly pointed with cement. There is no surviving evidence of any door or window openings in this elevation. The wall has not been cement rendered, but still retains evidence of a considerable thickness of limewash laminations. A possible horizontal scar in the 'clom' 2.5m above ground level (also indicated by a change in the colours of limewash), may suggest a lean-to shed once stood here but there is no evidence of associated structural framework. The corner with the front is of 'clom' superstructure further suggesting the front elevation has been rebuilt. There is possible indication that the roofline on the right hand side has been raised, possibly when the chimneystack was constructed or the building was re-roofed.

3.1.4 South end (facing south-west) (Photo 3, figure 3)

The southern gable end most clearly demonstrates the original construction of the cottage. Apart from some recent collapse, the original fabric remains largely unaltered. Within the 'clom' portion of the wall are three slots, infilled with 'clom', but which would originally have held roof timbers for a lean-to. Due to weathering there is no surviving evidence of limewash or render on the wall face. There is a small area of stone and cement repair work on the right hand side of the elevation.

3.2 Interior Elevations

Some of the wall coverings, such as cement render, have been excluded from the elevations to clarify the underlying wall fabric. Wall surfaces are described in the text and can be seen in the photographic record.

3.2.1 Front wall (facing north-east) (figure 6)

To the left of the doorway the wall fabric is of cement mortared stonework, replacing or masking any original, or earlier fabric or features. Surviving panelling suggests that the left end of the cottage was partitioned off immediately left of the doorway. To the right of the doorway the wall fabric has been covered with a rough cement skim, possibly intended to be plastered over. Where missing, the upper portion of the wall is revealed to be of 'clom' construction, except above the window, again suggesting it is a later insertion. A single cruck frame slot survives within the 'clom' and is partially blocked with stones.

3.2.2 Back wall (facing south-east) (figure 5)

The back wall appears to be the most complicated elevation, suggesting considerable alterations have been made to the original building. The north end appears little altered, being of 'clom' construction above stone footings, there are traces of limewash on the wall face. Immediately to the right of the window recess is a blocked up cruck frame slot for the original roof. Another probable slot survives at the far northern end of the wall. Another portion of original 'clom' construction survives at the southern end of the wall, part of which has recently collapsed. The straight joint between the 'clom' and stonework here, may be the remnant of another cruck frame slot or a window opening, insufficient survives to be certain. The central portion of the elevation appears to consist of a stone and earth mortar superstructure above stone footings. While this may be a repair, it is less recent than the exterior stonework shell. On top of this section of wall three layers of 'clom' can be discerned, separated by limewash. These layers are presumed to be infill between the tops of the wall and the roof. They may suggest the number of times the roof has been replaced. The window recess also appears to have undergone a series of repairs and alterations. The large recess has a light iron lintel supporting the stonework above. This recess may originally have been a doorway that was later converted to a window recess.

3.2.3 North end (facing south-west) (figure 7)

The north gable end interior elevation has been partially demolished on the right hand side, presumably to create a doorway to the adjoining shed, of which only the footings now remain. The rest of the elevation appears largely unaltered, with the exception of the fireplace. This was probably a later insertion. It is also possible however that the fireplace is an original feature but that that it has been altered. A cruck frame slot survives on the left side corner.

3.2.4 South end (facing north-east) (figure 8)

The southern end interior elevation is mostly rendered on the right hand side, but due to recent collapse is revealed to be of 'clom' construction over stone footings. An iron cooking pot has been set into the wall, presumably to act as a 'cubby hole'. It was later filled in with stones and earth mortar and rendered over. The left hand side of this elevation has lost its render. A possible blocked up cruck frame slot is discernable in the left corner of this elevation. The central fireplace is a relatively modern brick built feature that appears to be contemporary with the wooden fire hood. The chimney recess set into the 'clom' may be a remnant from an original fireplace and hood.

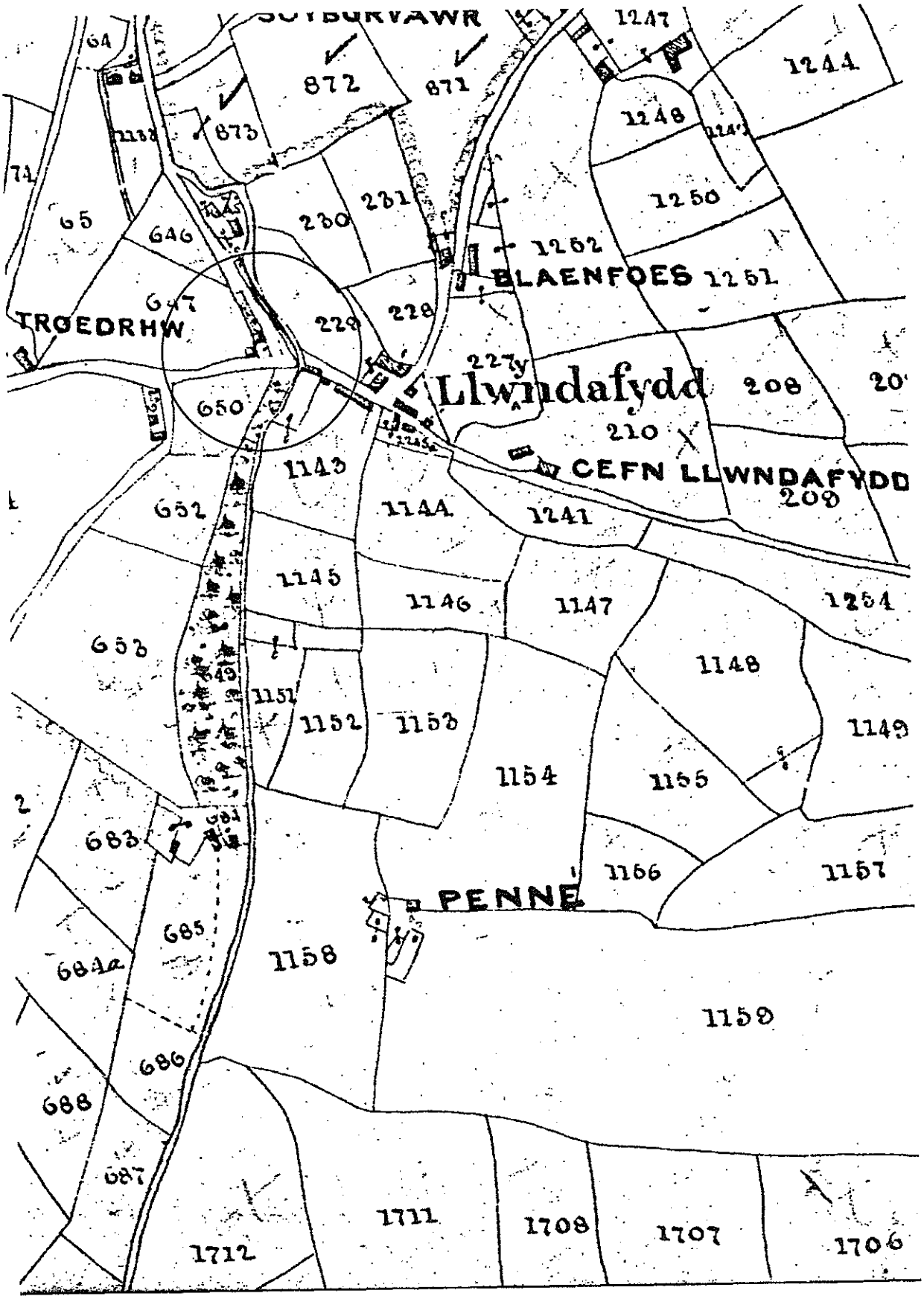
3.3 Additional observations

Adjacent, and situated at right angles to the cottage is a timber building that was the village Post Office and stores in the recent past. No recording of this building was specified as part of this project, but since it too was shortly to be demolished, a photographic record of the exterior was made and is included in this report (Photos 15,

16, 27, 18). In addition, the remains of a stone built barn (?) were observed behind the Post Office, and aligned parallel to it.

4.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

Drawn external and internal elevations and some photographs are included in this report. Original drawings, additional photographs and miscellaneous correspondence, form part of the archive for this project within the SMR as PRN49738.



Map 1: Enlargement from the Llandysiliogogo Tithe Map of 1843

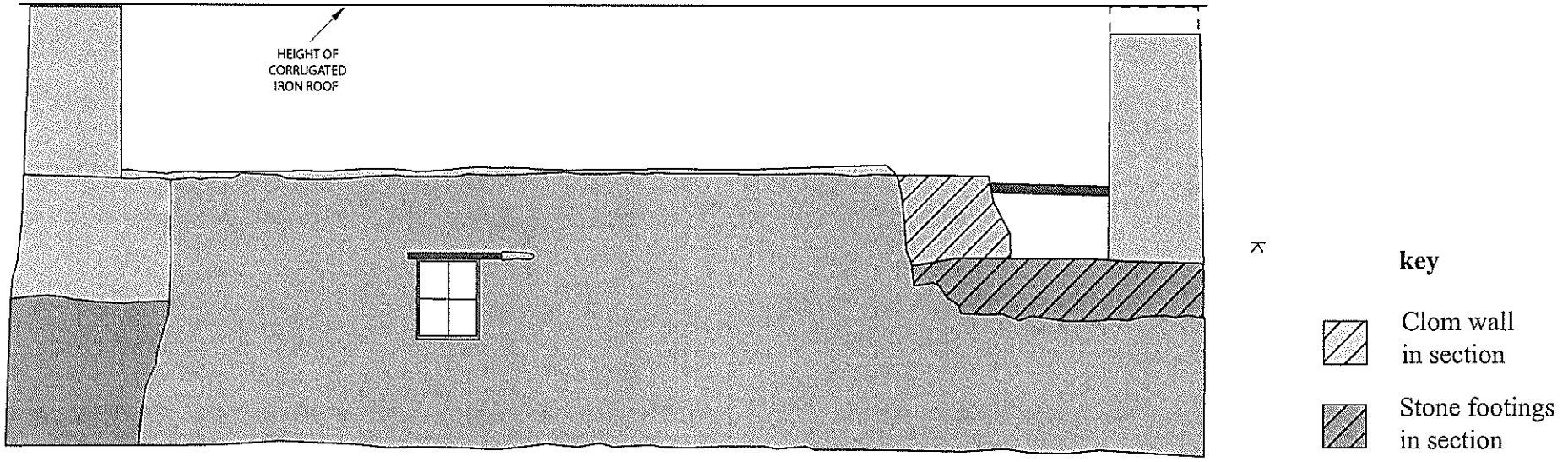


Figure 1: Exterior elevation of back wall (facing north-west)

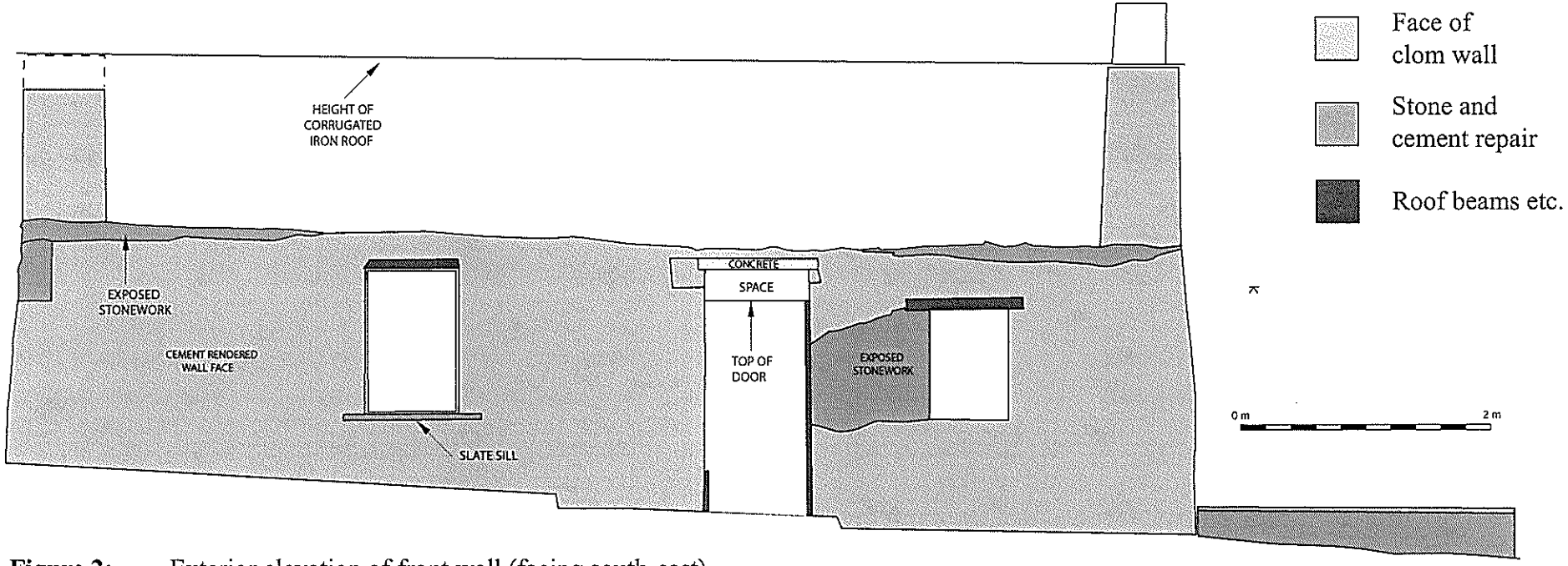


Figure 2: Exterior elevation of front wall (facing south-east)

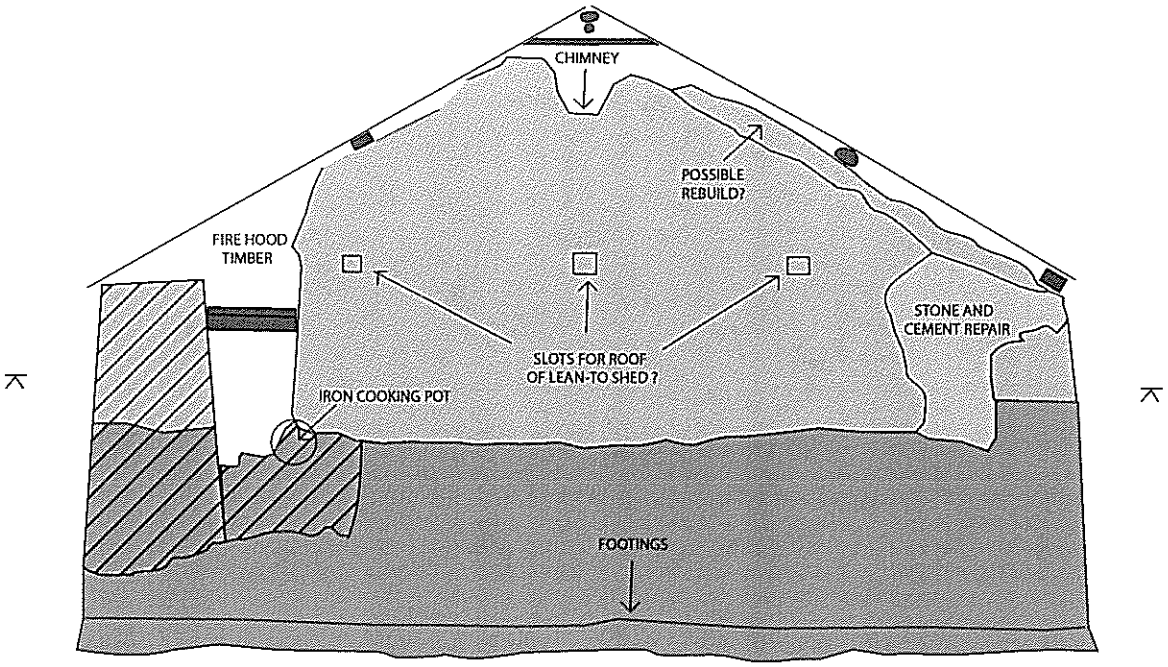


Figure 3: Southern external elevation

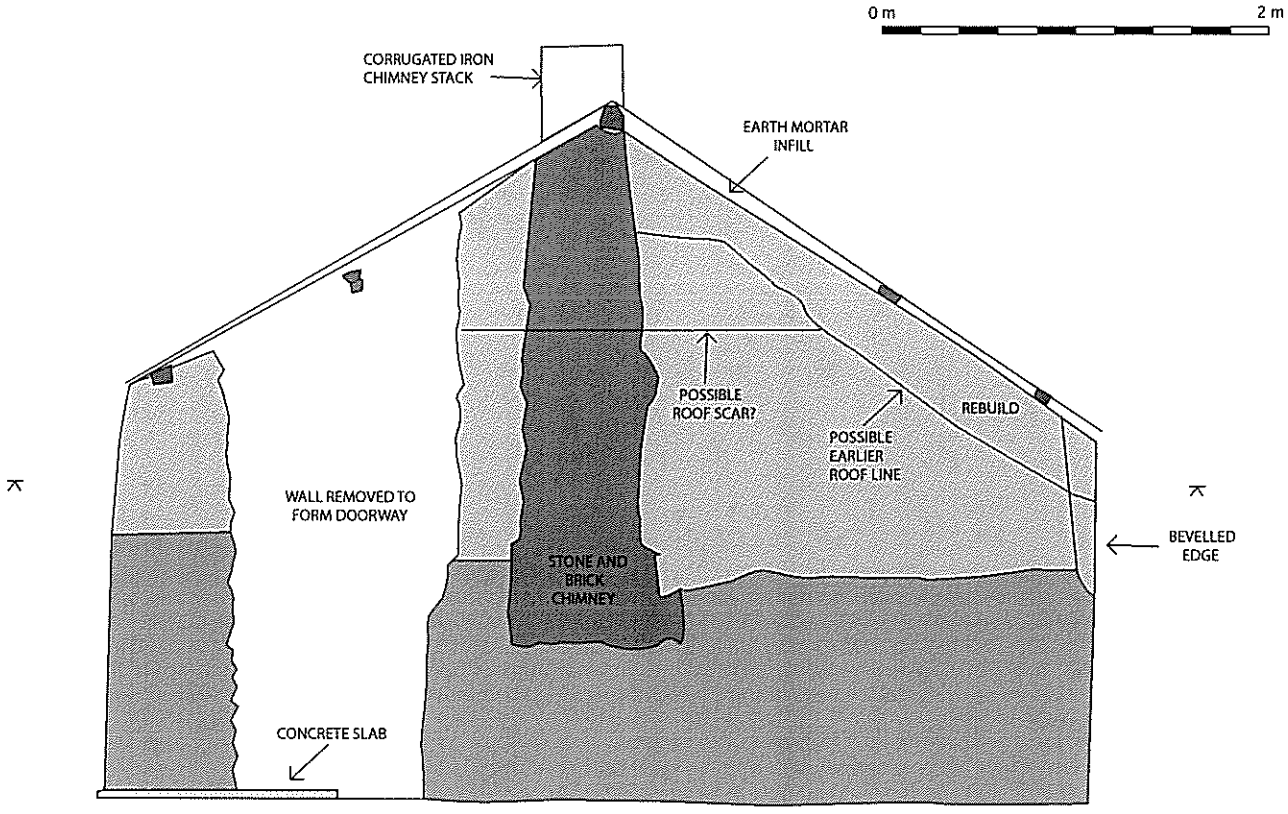


Figure 4: Northern exterior elevation

key

Clom wall in section	Face of stone footings	Roof beams etc.
Stone footings in section	Face of clom wall	Stone and Brick

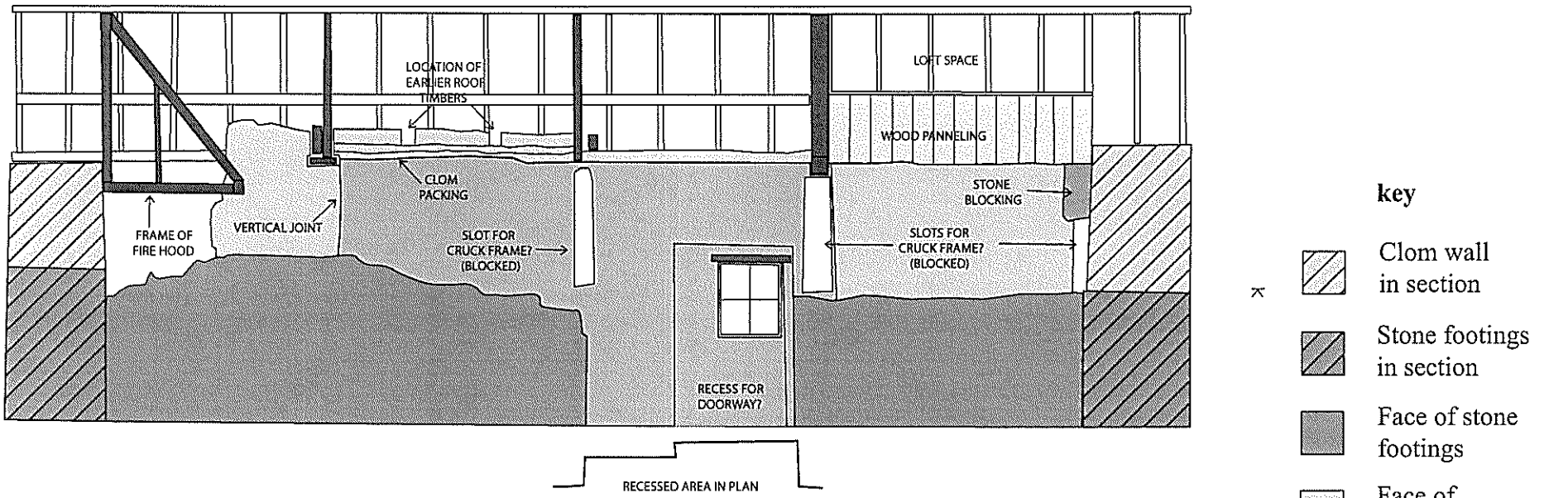


Figure 5: Back wall interior elevation

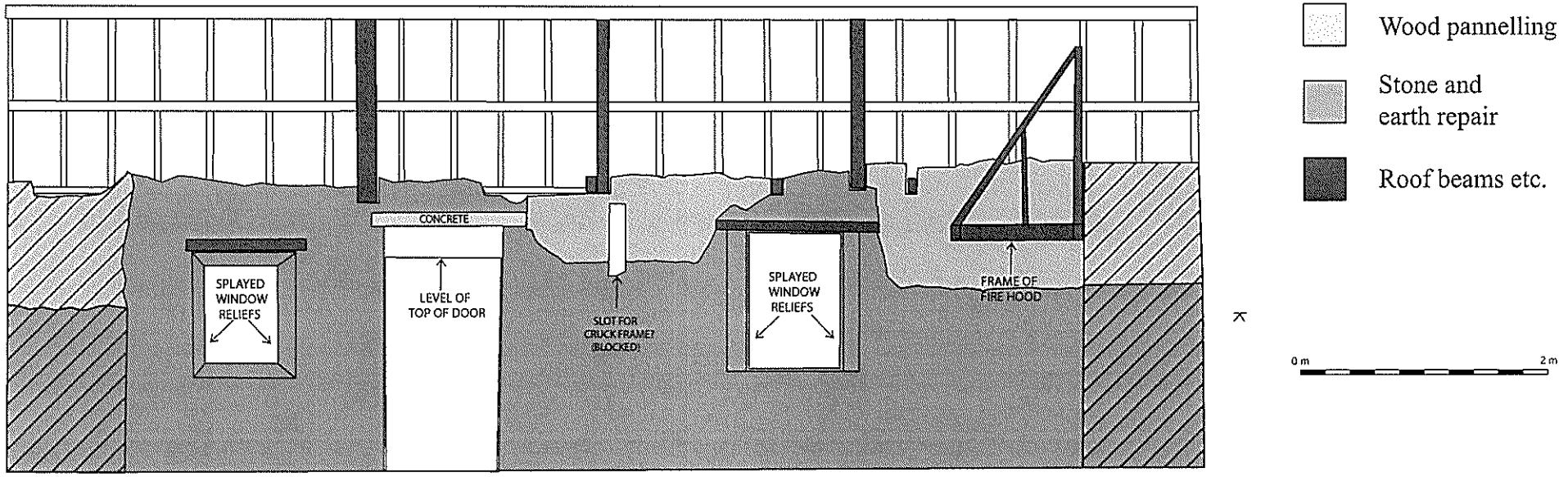


Figure 6: Front wall interior elevation

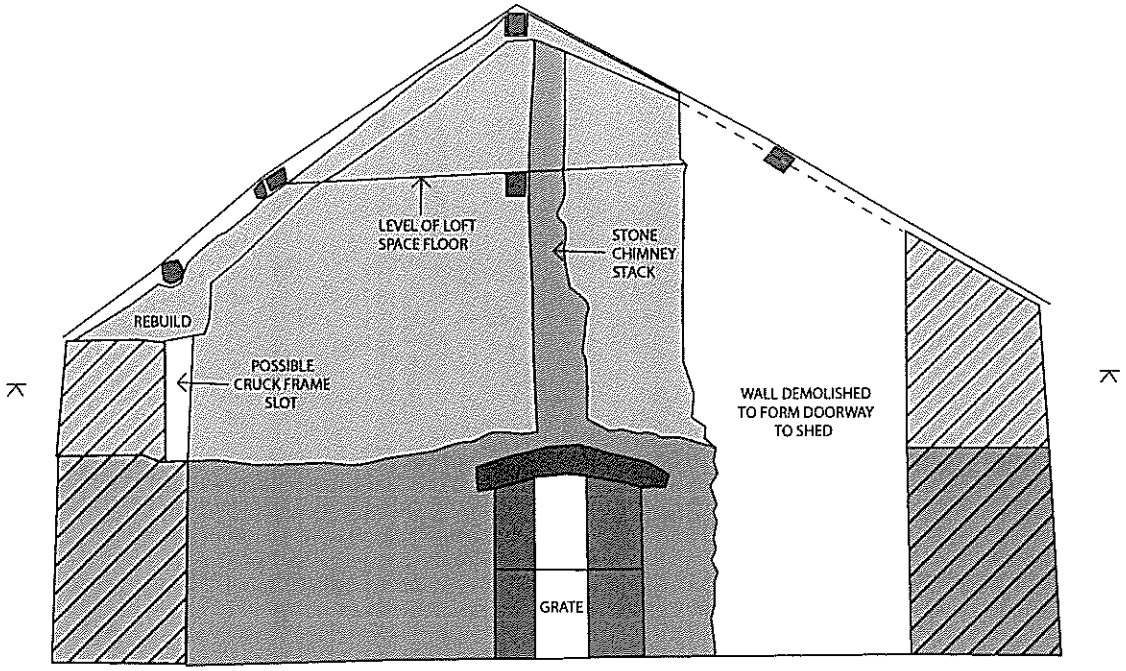


Figure 7: Interior elevation of northern wall

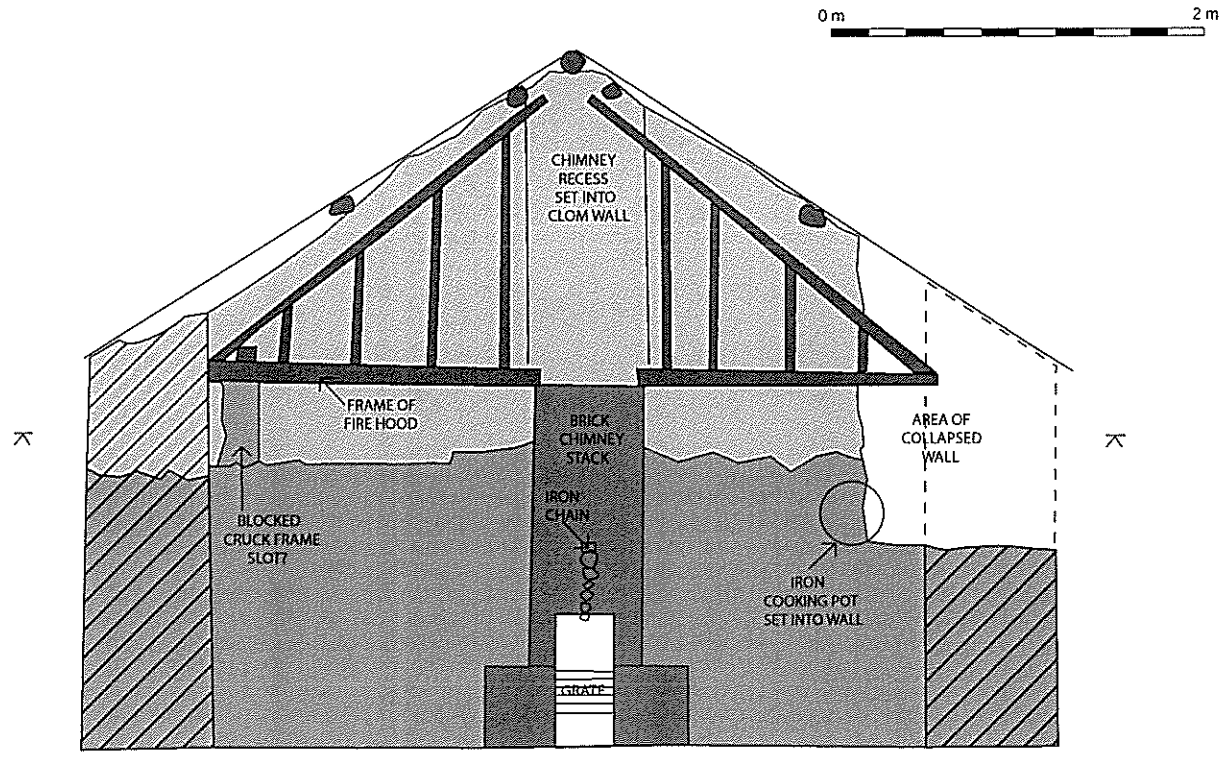


Figure 8: Interior elevation of southern wall

key

Clom wall in section	Face of stone footings	Roof beams etc.
Stone footings in section	Face of clom wall	Brick

Photo 1: Front external south-east facing elevation (looking west).

Photo 2: Rear external north-west facing elevation (looking east)

Photo 3: External south-west facing elevation (looking north)

Photo 4: External north-east facing elevation (looking south)

Photo 5: Cross section through wall showing cooking pot.

Photo 6: Ceiling Panels at north end (looking north west)

Photo 7: Chimney recess in clom wall (south end)

Photo 8: Fireplace and smoke hood (looking south)

Photo 9: North end of cottage interior

Photo 10: Detail of smoke hood (south end, looking west)

Photo 11: Possible cruck frame slot (north-west corner)

Photo 12: Detail of window recess (interior back wall)

Photo 13: Southern end fireplace

Photo 14: Northern end fireplace

Photo 15: Post Office (north-east facing elevation)

Photo 16: Post Office (north-west facing elevation)

Photo 17: Post Office (south-west facing elevation)

Photo 18: Post Office (south-east facing elevation)

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This report has been prepared by Duncan Schlee

Position :Archaeologist

Signature ..... Date 14/11/03

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

Position

Signature ..... Date 14/11/03

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