



BUILDING RECORDING AT  
**FLIMSTON FARMHOUSE,**  
CASTLEMARTIN RANGE, PEMBROKESHIRE

DECEMBER 2004



Paratowyd gan Archaeoleg Cambria  
Ar gyfer Castlemartin ATE: Defence  
Estates  
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## BUILDING RECORDING AT FLIMSTON FARMHOUSE CASTLEMARTIN RANGE, PEMBROKESHIRE DECEMBER 2004

Gan / By

Duncan Schlee

*Archaeolog Cambria yw enw marchnata Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyfyngedig.  
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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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## **1.0 SUMMARY**

A small amount of building recording was undertaken at Flimston Farmhouse (on the Castlemartin Range) Pembrokeshire, in order to record and interpret the existing masonry fabric in advance of consolidation works. Elevation drawings, photographs, descriptive and interpretive texts are included in this report. During the preparation of concrete footings for a prop, a small area was hand excavated and the stratigraphy revealed in the section was recorded.



## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

Flimston is mentioned in the rentals of the Earl of Pembroke in 1246, but is not well documented until the 18<sup>th</sup> century when it was part of the Stackpole estate. The site of Flimston farmhouse (PRN6452) is an originally late medieval house that has undergone considerable later development and extension. It is located at NGR SR9241295635 within the Castlemartin practice firing range in Pembrokeshire. The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM PE447).

The earliest phase consisted of a small 'tower-house' consisting of a first floor hall with a triangular headed door and corbelled round 'Pembrokeshire' chimney, above vaulted service rooms. The phasing of the existing building is complex but is considered to be of late medieval origin with early post-medieval (and later) modifications.

One such modification included the removal of most of the southern wall of the original structure. Part of this wall however, survives at the west end in association with a stone vaulted undercroft. The east wall of this undercroft has however been suggested to be of post-medieval origin. Damage to the structure of this wall is threatening the stability of the vault, necessitating consolidation work to prevent further deterioration. This consolidation work will consist of replacing existing props supporting the chimney structure and repairs to masonry to prevent further deterioration to the surviving undercroft vaulting.

The building recording undertaken during this project was undertaken in order to record and interpret the surviving building fabric of the undercroft wall before the remedial work. Scale elevation drawings were made of both faces of the internal wall supporting the undercroft vaulting. In addition a cross section through the damaged part of the wall was drawn. A section was also drawn to record deposits encountered while digging footings for a prop against the fireplace/chimney.

A full archaeological record and interpretation of the phasing has not yet been undertaken. The interpretations offered here are therefore only preliminary musings and may need to be revised following a more detailed programme of survey, recording and interpretation.

### 3.0 RESULTS

#### 3.1 The internal elevation (figure 3)

The wall is constructed from random coursed limestone rubble. Much of the wall face is covered in mortar and multiple layers of limewash which may to some extent mask additional features in the fabric of the wall. The main feature is a blocked up (A) arched opening (B) (see photo 1). This archway runs right through the wall, suggesting it may have been a doorway associated with an earlier (lower) floor level. It may have been blocked when the floor level was raised. The existing doorway (C) may also have been constructed at this time.

At some time after, a niche or window light (D) 0.50m wide, 0.65m high, was knocked through the wall, removing some of the arch stones in the process (see photo 2). The springing points of the arch are however, still discernable. The creation of this opening also necessitated the removal of some of the stone vaulting in the vicinity. The sides of the opening were constructed at this time using smaller stones (E).

For the majority of its length, the vault (F) is sprung from the line (G) indicated to the left of the blocked arch. To the right of (A) however, the vault (I) is sprung from a higher point (H) and is of noticeably different construction. This may suggest that this part of the vault (and the wall) was rebuilt at a higher level when doorway (C) was constructed, for ease of access.

#### 3.2 The external elevation (figure 4)

This exterior elevation is more complex than the interior. The arched opening (A) and its blocking (B) are visible as vertical joints. The springers for the arch are still discernable but the majority of the arch stones have been lost in subsequent rebuilding events. The masonry on either side of the arch appears to be original as high as point (C) on the right hand side. Traces of limewash adhere to the wall face. The extent of original masonry to the left is less certain due to subsequent alterations.

The masonry above (C) is of a different build (F), with no traces of limewash. This build also appears to have removed the majority of arch (A). The straight joint (E) above the right hand side of the arched opening is of uncertain origin and may or may not be significant.

The creation of window opening (D) has further destroyed evidence of arch (A) and subsequent collapse has caused core work of the wall to be revealed (G). To the left of the arch, the wall appears to have been truncated and repaired at least once (H and I) with brick and stone. Brickwork (J) may block a doorway or window (see photo 5).

At the right hand end, masonry (K) is of different build and materials to (C) and (F). It also seems to be associated with brickwork patch (L). Traces of plaster around the edge of (L) suggest the bricks are blocking a niche or opening (of which there is no trace on the other side of the wall). It is thought that this may be a blocked up bread oven and that (K) is a chimney lining, the rest of the fireplace and chimney having been demolished in subsequent building phases (see photo 4).

### 3.3 The window opening (figures 5 and 6)

The rectangular opening is an interesting modification, but its original character is uncertain. On the whole it is thought most likely to have been a window light. Its construction required the removal of parts of the arch, blocking and the vault. This has been the initial cause of subsequent collapse of the masonry surrounding the opening. The original feature may however, have been less of a botch job than it appears now. The base of the opening is lined with a piece of slate, but little if any of the other facets survive undamaged. Above the slate are the remains of a layer of plaster that originally may have lined the whole window opening (see photo 3). There is an impression in the surface of the plaster that appears to have held a plank of wood that was found in the opening during cleaning. This butts up against a sill that may have supported a window frame.

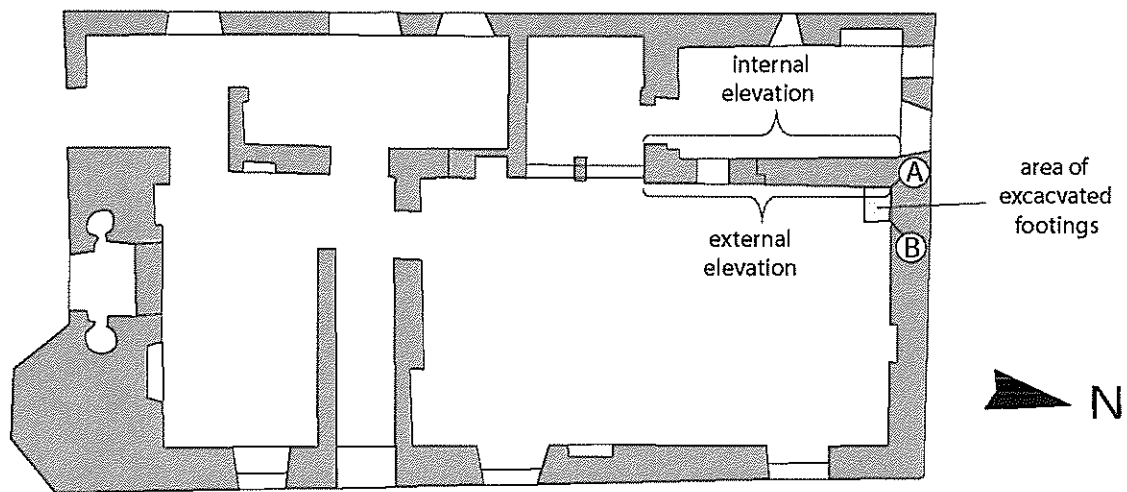
### 3.4 Footings excavation (figure 2)

The excavation of a small trench 0.50m long, 0.40m wide and 0.50m deep, for a concrete footing for a prop against the north wall of the building, revealed a sequence of deposits (figure 2). These are difficult to interpret due to the restricted size of the hole and its location (figure 1). Dwarf walls, capped with slate and built against the earlier masonry to support later plank floors, made it difficult to ascertain the stratigraphic relationships between the deposits and the masonry. The most significant deposit was at the bottom of the excavation where a clay layer containing plentiful charcoal fragments was encountered (see photo 6). This deposit may represent the floor level of the original building, although further excavation would be required to confirm this.

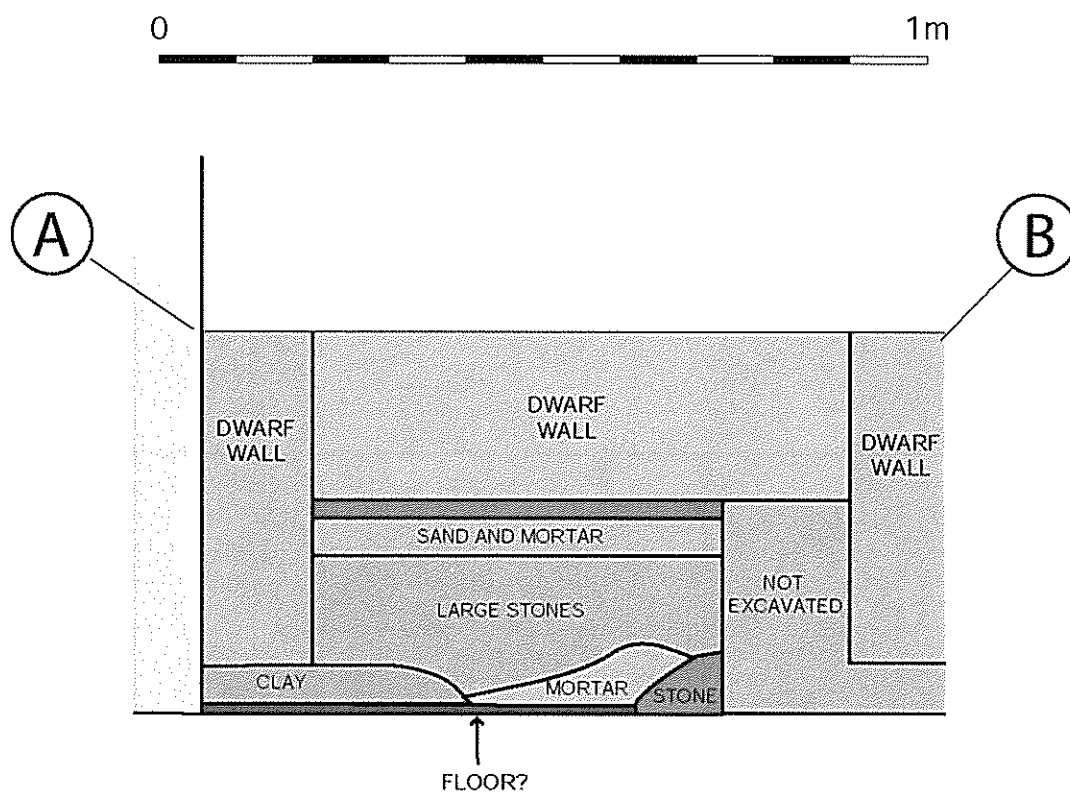
## 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the farmhouse exhibits a complex sequence of construction phases. The main problem being the construction date of the interior wall supporting the undercroft. It has been suggested that this wall is of post-medieval construction. If so then the majority of the stone vault may also be of post-medieval date. Although this project has identified several features of significance in clarifying the sequence of construction events for this wall, further investigation is needed to clarify how this fits in with the rest of the building.

It is recommended that the currently damaged probable window opening is reconstructed as a window from the surviving structural evidence. It is important to ensure that the sequence of repairs alterations and additions that have been made to the surviving masonry over the years remains 'readable' after the current repairs have been made. It is recommended that no additional reconstruction or re-pointing of masonry is undertaken until full archaeological building recording and phasing of the structure has been undertaken. Some excavation might be useful in order to clarify details of construction that are now masked or buried.

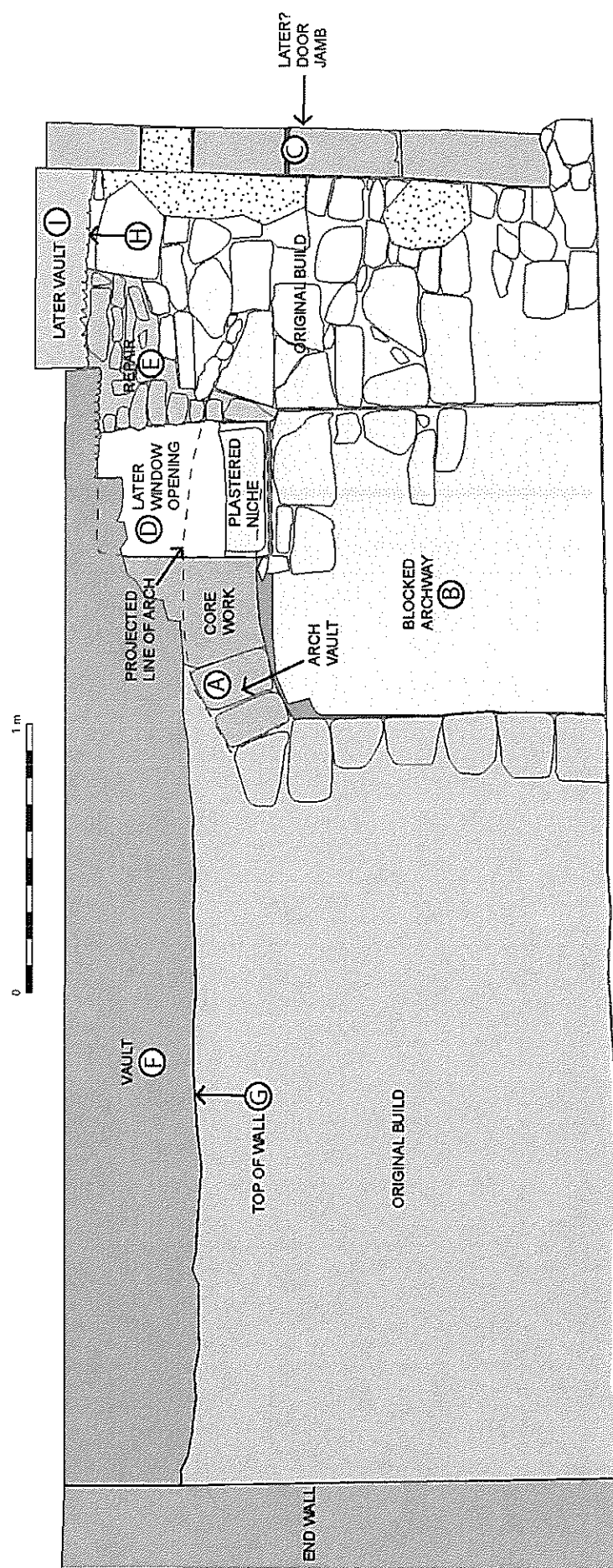


**Figure 1 :** Plan of Flimston Farmhouse showing location of excavation and elevations

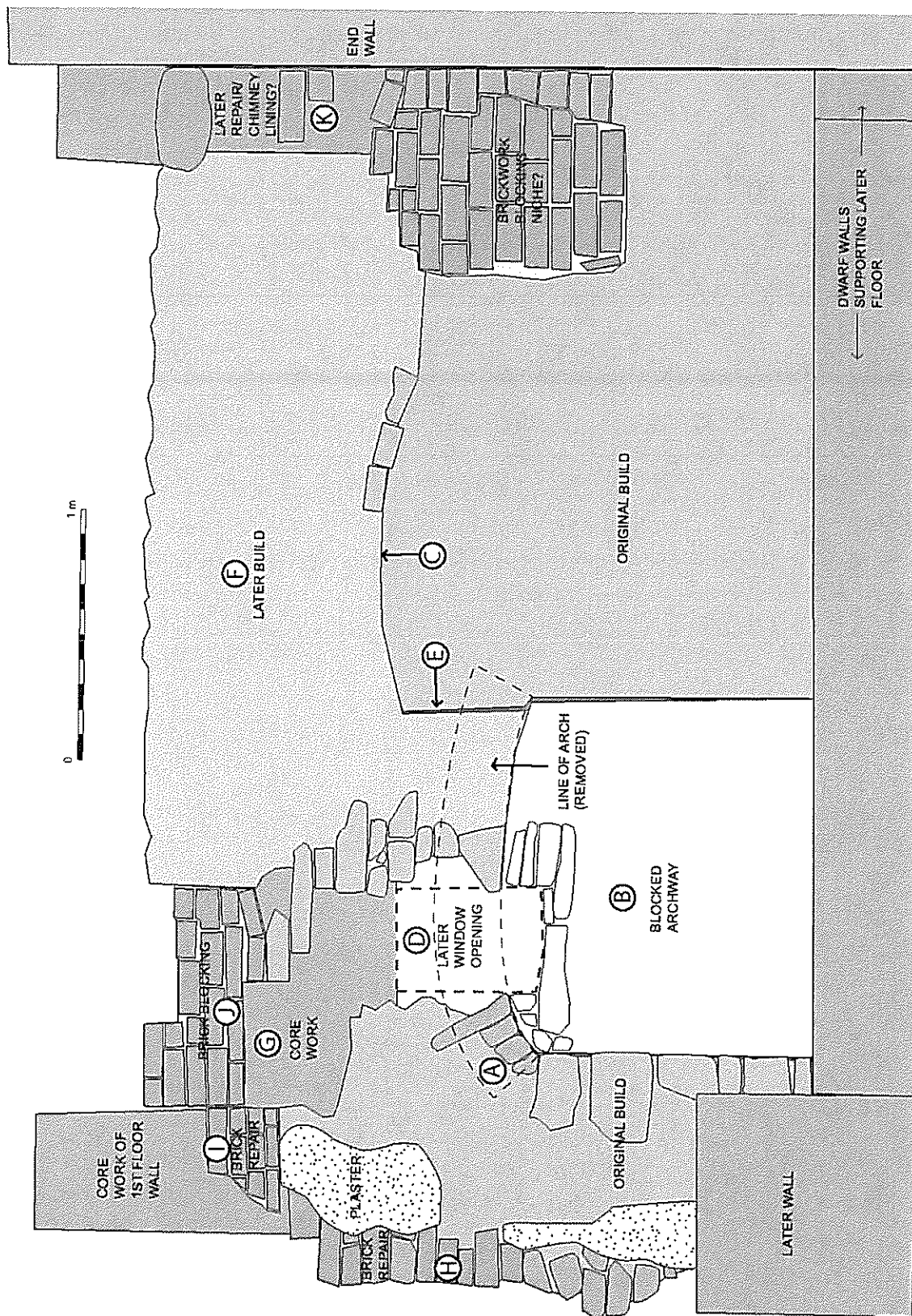


**Figure 2:** Schematic section drawing showing excavated deposits

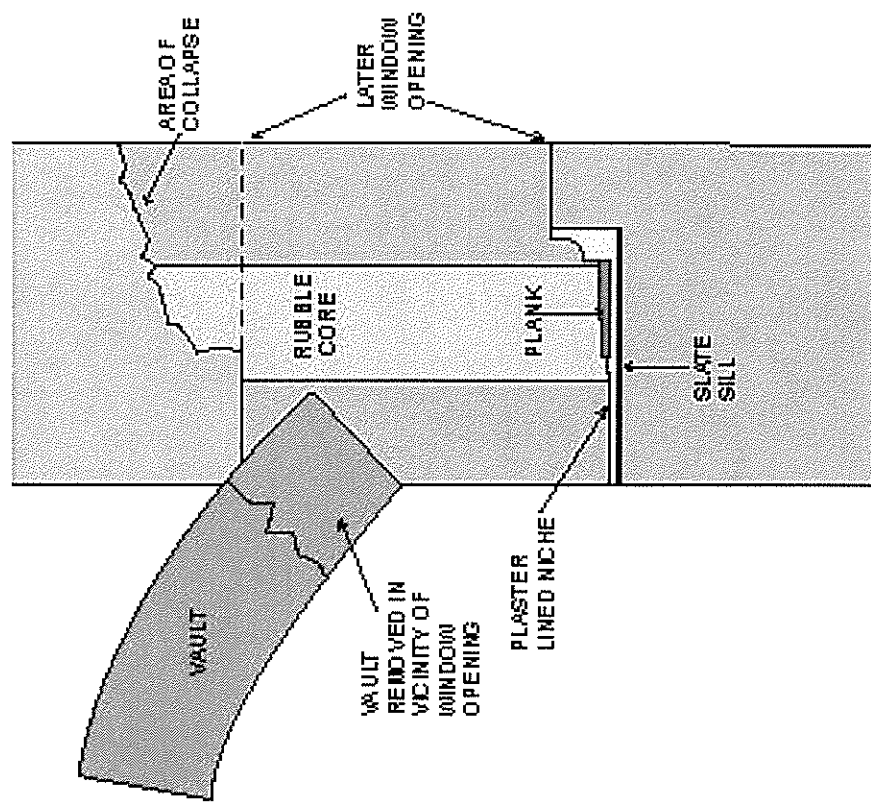




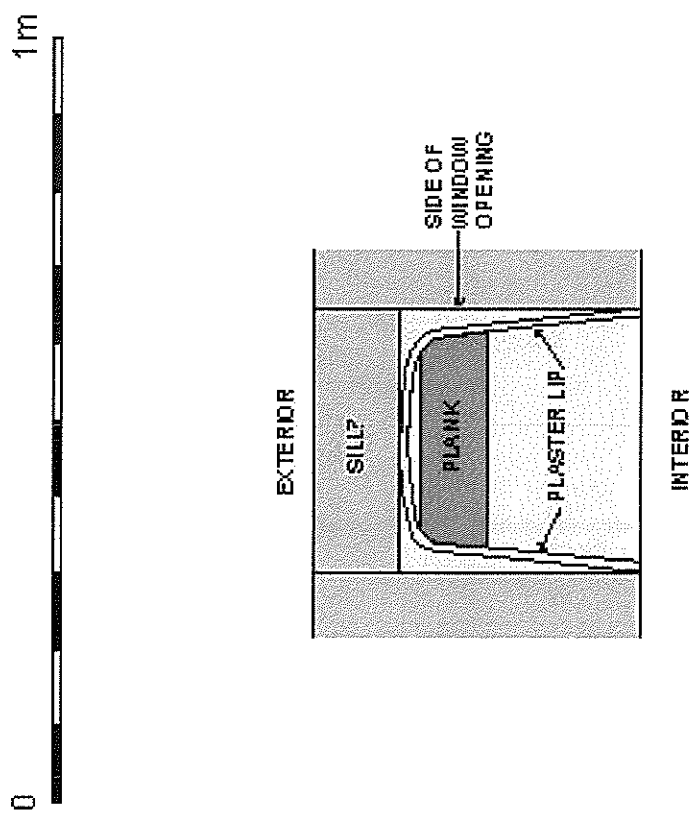
**Figure 3:** West facing internal elevation of undercroft wall



**Figure 4:** East facing external elevation of undercroft wall



**Figure 5:** Schematic cross section through wall  
 In location of 'window' feature (facing north)



**Figure 6:** 'Window' feature in plan





**Photo 1:** Blocked archway in interior face of undercroft wall



**Photo 2:** Photo showing 'window' opening cutting through arch (looking east)





**Photo 3:** Detail showing plaster lining of 'window' (looking east)



**Photo 4:** Shot of east facing elevation of undercroft wall showing various masonry builds





**Photo 5:** Detail of masonry in exterior face of undercroft wall in the vicinity of the 'window' opening



**Photo 6:** Shot of charcoal and clay 'floor' in foundation cut (looking north)



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Swydd / Position: Archaeologist

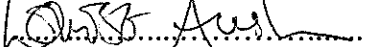
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Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith  
This report has been checked and approved by

Louise Austin

ar ran Archaeoleg Cambria, Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.  
on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: Principal Archaeologist-Heritage Management

Llofnod / Signature  ..... Dyddiad / Date 10/01/2005

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