

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING AT THE ARMOURY, EGLWYSWRW PEMBROKESHIRE

SEPTEMBER 2005



Paratowyd gan Archaeoleg Cambria
Ar gyfer Mr and Mrs Day
Prepared by Cambria Archaeology
For Mr and Mrs Day



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING AT THE ARMOURY, EGLWYSWRW, PEMBROKESHIRE

Gan / By

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1.0 SUMMARY

Eglwysrw was an important economic centre during the sixteenth century, and the manor was responsible for levying the militias of the Hundreds of Cemais and Cilgerran. The musters were held near a specially constructed armoury, said to have stood next to the churchyard. 'The Armoury' is a Grade II listed former stables building associated with the Sergeants' Inn at Eglwysrw, located adjacent to the churchyard. The inn is said to date from 1650 but the 'Armoury', appears to be no earlier than the mid 18th century.

The earliest documentary reference to St Cristiolus' Church at Eglwysrw is from 1291. It is traditionally regarded as occupying a pre-Conquest Early Christian site, itself possibly located on the site of a prehistoric barrow cemetery. The present church is a post-medieval rebuild and nothing of the medieval fabric survives.

The entire extent of the medieval churchyard is not known. There is, however, a strong local tradition of cist burials having been discovered during building work elsewhere within the village. The churchyard may have shrunk. Alternatively it may be that the present graveyard occupied a small enclosure within a larger yard and cemetery.

In line with current planning guidance and in response to a planning application for conversion of the Armoury to a domestic dwelling, archaeological standing building recording of the existing structure and a watching brief on ground intrusive building works, was required, in order to ascertain if an earlier building stood on the same site or if burials were present in this area.

In March 2004 building recording was undertaken prior to the conversion of the property to a domestic dwelling, and to observe the digging of foundations for a shed. A second visit was made in August 2005 to undertake a watching brief on the digging of cuts for drainage and sewer pipes. In the event, however, no features of archaeological significance were identified.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING AT THE ARMOURY, EGLWYSRW, PEMBROKESHIRE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background history

The Armoury is situated on the south side of the A487 Fishguard to Cardigan road at Eglwysrw (NGR SN1417138512). The building is built up against the northwest boundary wall of the adjacent St Christolus's churchyard. The Armoury is Grade II listed, described as 'former stables to the Sergeants Inn'. The Sergeants' Inn is said to date from 1650 and may have origins as public buildings of the Manor of Eglwysrw, although the present structures, like the Pound (not listed) at the north end of the Armoury, appear to be no earlier than the mid 18th century (Cadw 1997, 1-5). The stables are not marked on the 1838 tithe map.

The solid geology of the area consists of Ordovician shales of the Ashgill Series, overlain by drift deposits of fine, orange fluvio-glacial gravels and localised boulder clays. Soils are brown podzolic soils of the Manod Mull phase (Bradley, 1976, 37).

Eglwysrw lay within the medieval Lordship of Cemais, established in the 12th century. The Anglo-Norman lordship appears to have perpetuated the boundaries of the pre-Conquest Cantref Cemais, one of the 'Seven Cantrefs of Dyfed' during the early medieval period. The church was a possession of the nearby Tironian abbey of St Dogmaels during the medieval period, a connection that may have had early origins.

Although the earliest documentary reference to St Cristiolus' Church is as the *Ecclesia de Clesserraw* in the *Taxatio* of 1291 (Lewis, 1972, 90) it is traditionally regarded as occupying a pre-Conquest Early Christian site, itself possibly located on the site of a prehistoric cemetery (Ludlow 1996). The present church is a post-medieval rebuild and nothing of the medieval fabric survives.

The entire extent of the medieval churchyard is not known. There is, however, a strong local tradition of cist burials having been discovered during building work elsewhere within the village. An unpublished history from 1875 states that 'as proof of this, it is said that many graves have been uncovered from time to time along the roads through the village'. And that the burial ground extended out into the surrounding fields (Pemb's R. O. HDX/803/82). The present churchyard is a fairly large sub-triangular enclosure, revetted by a wall of local slate manufacture. The churchyard may have shrunk. Alternatively it may be that the present graveyard occupied a small enclosure within a larger yard and cemetery.

The churchyard had assumed its present form by 1838 (LNW, Eglwysrw Tithe Map), when routeways had been established along the lines of the A487 (T) and B4332. The former is shown on the Ordnance Survey original survey of c.1811 and must have been in existence by the mid 18th century, when the Armoury and Inn were built, but is said to have superseded a routeway along the course of the Nant Hafren, to the northwest. It is a strongly held local belief that the medieval cemetery extended up to this routeway. However, there are no known local parallels for the irregular form of the possible Eglwysrw enclosure, other examples of which are normally curvilinear.

Eglwysrw was an important economic centre during the sixteenth century, and continued as an administrative centre beyond that time. The manor was responsible for levying the militias of the Hundreds of Cemais and Cilgerran. The musters were held near a specially constructed armoury which is said to have stood next to the churchyard (Charles 1947-8, 279). This function is preserved in the names of the 'Sergeants' inn' and the 'Armoury'. However, none of the fabric within the present buildings can be dated to any period earlier than the mid 18th century when they appear to have been constructed as an assemblage along with the pound, and the 'drying barn' and pigsties.

2.2 Project Commission and objectives

In line with current planning guidance and in response to a planning application for conversion of the Armoury to a domestic dwelling, archaeological standing building recording of the existing structure and a watching brief on ground intrusive building works, was required as a condition of permission by Cambria Archaeology (Development Control), in their role as archaeological advisors to the Local Authority.

Cambria Archaeology (Field Services) was commissioned by the owners (Mr and Mrs Day) to undertake the required work.

2.3 Methodology

In March 2004, a visit to the property was made to undertake building recording and to observe the digging of foundations for a shed. A second visit was made in August 2005 to undertake a watching brief on the digging of cuts for drainage and sewer pipes within the building.

Architects drawings of the front and rear elevations and of the proposed interior were provided by the owner. These were annotated to record any surviving architectural features, fixtures and fittings surviving within the building. A photographic record of the building was made and notes and observations on the service trench excavations were made.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Shed foundations

The shed foundations were excavated to the north of the pound. Beneath a considerable thickness of tarmac (c.0.30m) the foundation trench cut into a further 0.10m (approx) of natural yellow orange shale/silt. No traces of cut features or buried stratigraphy were observed within the foundation trenches.

3.2 The Armoury exterior elevations

The building is of whitewashed rubble stone construction with a close-eaved slate roof. It consists of a ground floor and a loft. The northwest front elevation has five openings with black painted Cilgerran slate voussoires: a window and a door to left, window door and window to right. The windows are of nine-pane construction with slate sills. The exterior northwest corner of the building (at the road junction) is chamfered. The south gable end has a single window opening at the apex, of similar construction to the windows of the front elevation. The north gable end has a door opening for access to the loft by external steps of slate with the Platform outside the doorway remade in concrete. In an alcove beneath the steps is a small square-ish opening in the wall. No structural alterations to the fabric of the walls were visible (the walls were whitewashed) and none seem likely. No evidence of alteration to door or window openings were evident. The window in the southern gable end appeared never to have been glazed. There is a gap between the back wall and the graveyard wall.

3.3 Interior

The floor was cobbled throughout, but appeared to be damaged in places, more so at the northern end. Traces of a gutter constructed as part of the floor from cobbles was located at the southern end of the floor. It was not clear how far north it ran.

The interior walls were rendered and whitewashed. The scar of a partition on front wall between east door and central window was visible. A similar scar was present on the opposite wall but was less clear. No other scars or evidence for stabling survived. Internal window sills were originally of wood.

22 sawn timber floor joists were 4.30m long, 0.075m wide, and 0.17 thick, spaced 0.55m apart. Floorboards were replaced on the east half and along most of south side of the floor. Replacement timbers were 0.14m wide, original planks were up to 0.40m wide.

The loft was not accessible due to rotten floorboards. No fittings or features visible, save for plank division on the second joist from the north, which may originally have continued across the width of the loft.

The roof structure consisted of five A-frames with bolted cross-pieces, and single pegs at the apex.

There was no evidence of original fixtures and fittings, or of alterations to the interior of the building.

3.4 Service trench excavation

Following removal of the cobbled floor trenches were cut for services. These revealed natural gravels, but no evidence of any earlier floors to the existing, or any earlier building. No evidence of graves was revealed.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The 'Armoury' appears to be an agricultural building of 19th century origin. No evidence of original fixtures and fittings survives. There is also no evidence of significant alteration to the structure or fabric of the building, or of an earlier building being incorporated into the present structure.

No evidence of burials or any other archaeological features was encountered in the service trenches or shed foundations.

5.0 SOURCES

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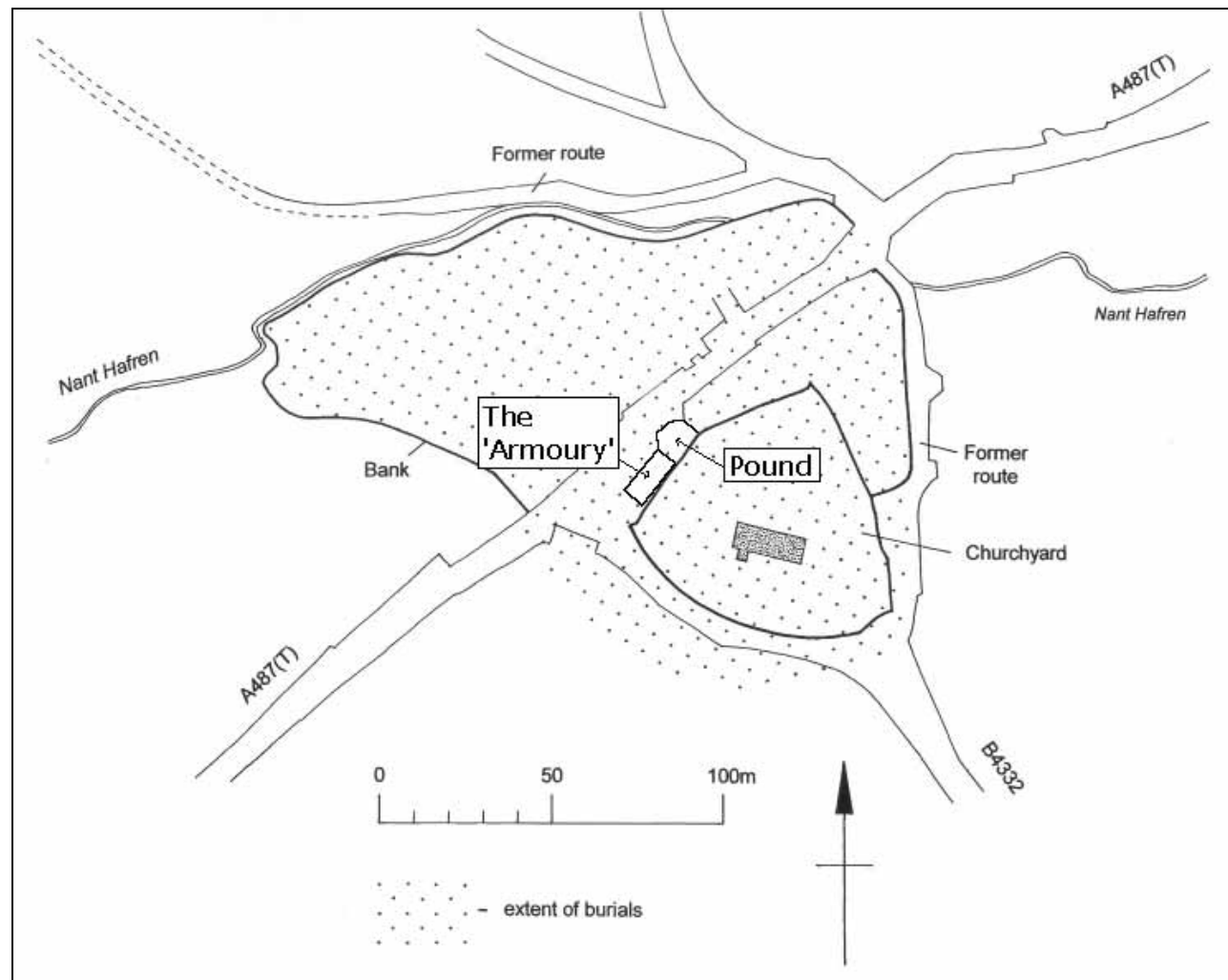


Figure 1: Site location plan

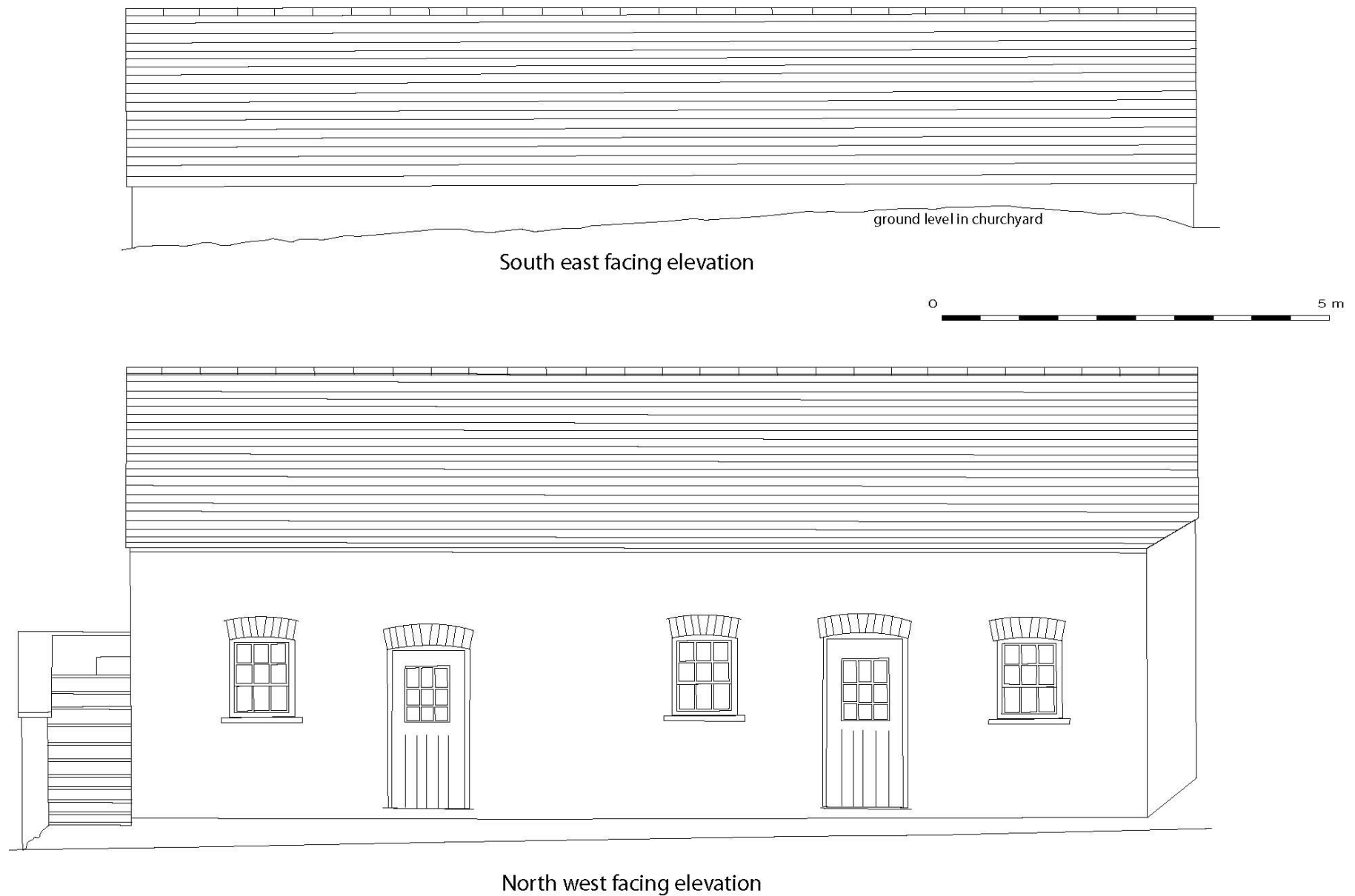


Figure 2: Exterior elevations

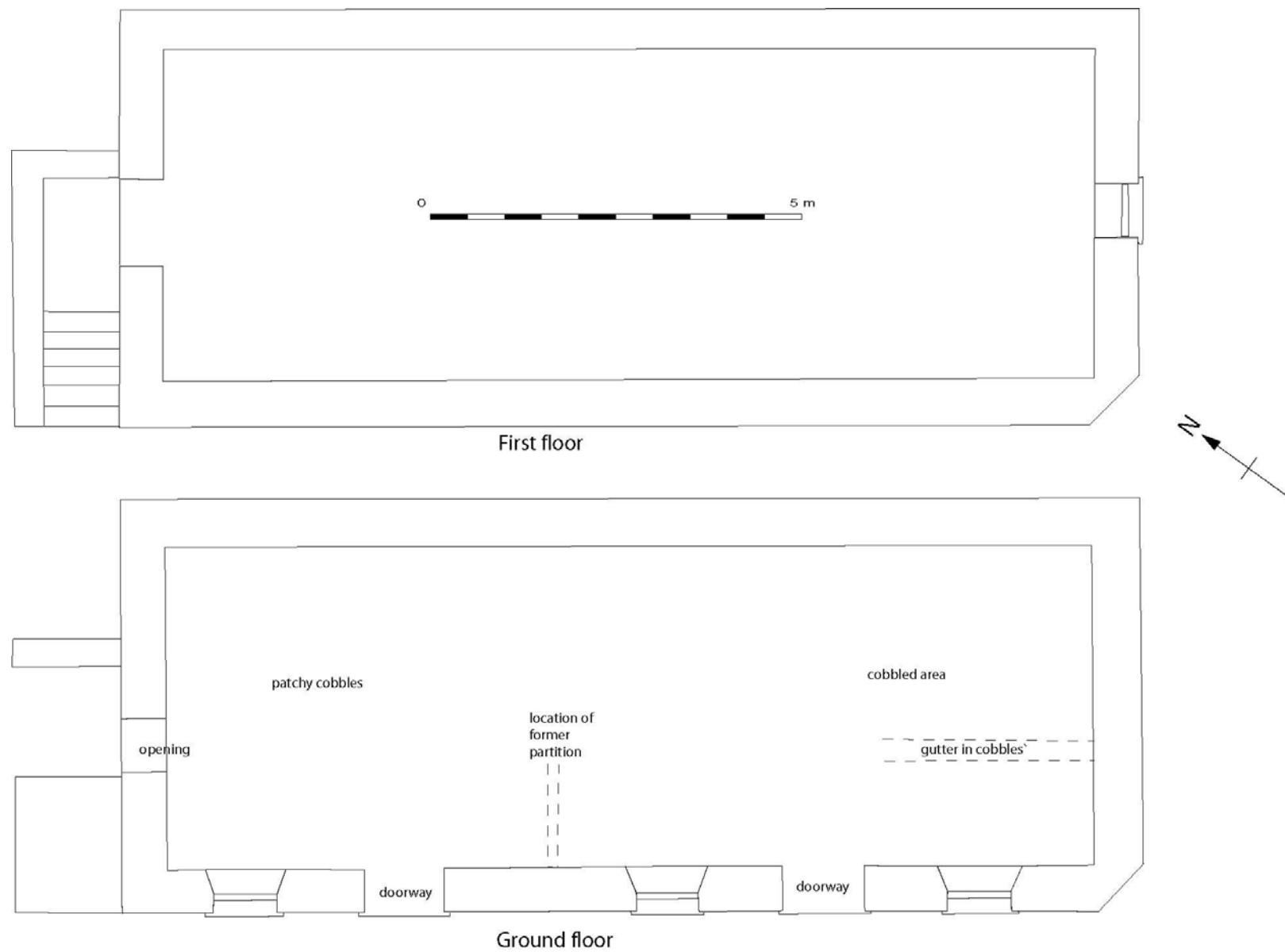
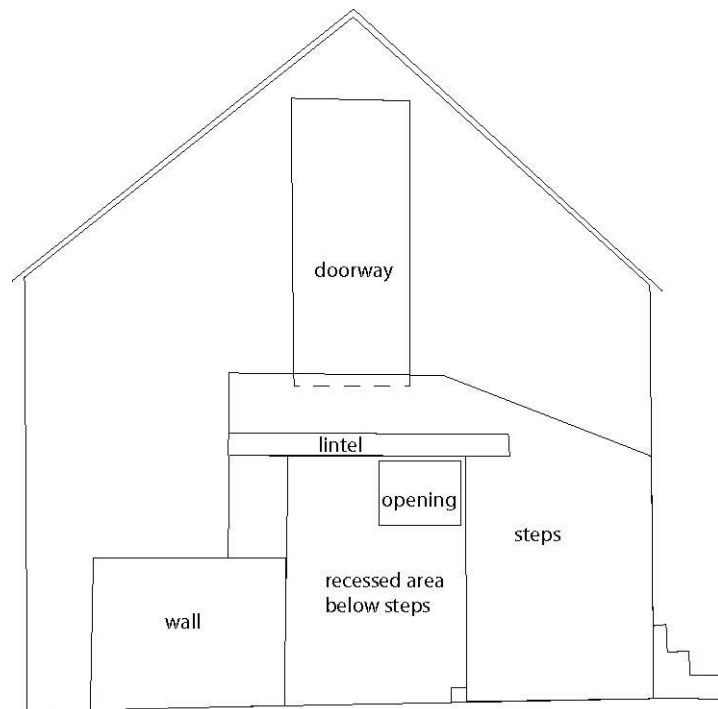
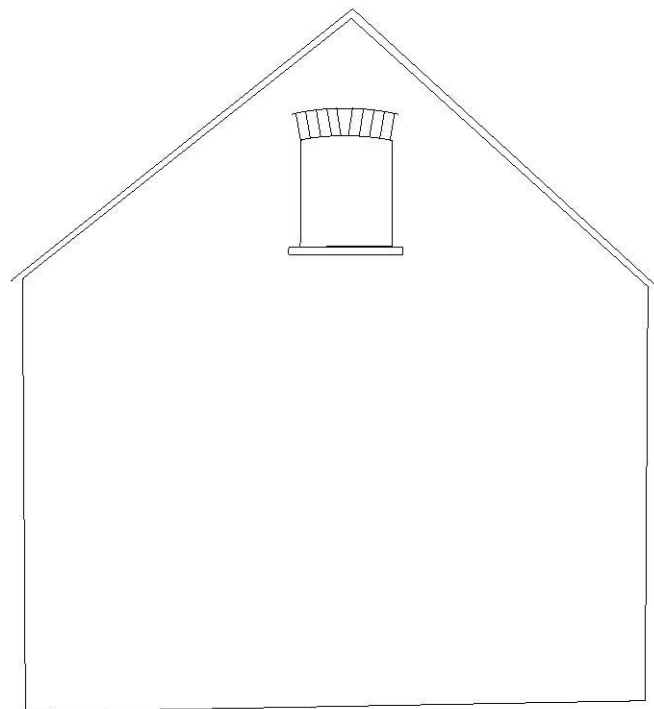


Figure 3: Interior floor plans



North east facing elevation (scale approximate)



South west facing elevation (scale approximate)

Figure 4: Exterior gable-end elevations



Photo 1: Loft space and interior of southern gable end



Photo 2: Detail of roof construction



Photo3: Lintel above doorway to loft in northern gable end



Photo 4: Exterior of southern gable end



Photo 5: Service trench in alcove below exterior stairs



Photo 6: Service trenches within property



Photo 7: Ground floor interior looking south



Photo 8: Ground floor interior looking west (north end)



Photo 9: Exterior looking east (south end)



Photo 10: Exterior looking east (north end)



Photo 11: Steps against north gable end



Photo 12: Opening in wall in alcove below stairs



Photo 13: North gable end

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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

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Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date 21/09/2005

Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau
sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

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