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**TIR GOFAL MANAGEMENT PLAN:  
HERITAGE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION  
(Call Out)**

**Prepared for:  
Llwyncelyn (Dolebolion)  
Tir Gofal Reference No: W/11/5742**



**Project Record Number: 55981  
Report Number: 2009/21**

**Prepared by  
Mike Ings**

## **Call Out Visit**

The farm was visited on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009 at the request of the Tir Gofal Project Officer to address specific management issues, in particular the possible restoration and maintenance of a 19<sup>th</sup> century threshing barn. The report does not provide management advice for all known sites on the farm, for these recommendations please refer to the Historic Environment Report 1 (HE1).

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.

## Introduction

Llwyncelyn farmstead is centred on NGR SN60382394, near Llandeilo in the community of Llangathen, Carmarthenshire.

It lies within Historic Landscape Character Area (HLCA) 191: Nantgaredig – Derwen Fawr (Murphy & Ludlow, 2000). These areas are intended to define places where local land-use patterns have left particularly strong or distinctive evidence in the landscape. The enclosure pattern in this area consists of medium-large, irregular fields with a settlement pattern of dispersed farmsteads and cottages. The irregular nature of the field systems is characteristic of the gradual enclosure of farmland, possibly developing from the earlier post-medieval period onwards. The current boundaries were in place by the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887, although some of the smaller fields have been amalgamated into larger enclosures during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The settlement pattern appears to have been in place by the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the Llwyncelyn farmstead includes an 18<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse.

A building is recorded at Llwyncelyn on the 1831 Ordnance Survey *Old Series* 1 inch to 1 mile scale map. The original farmhouse with attached cow shed is shown on the 1839 tithe map for Llangathen, together with a further associated farm building to the south. This is possibly the threshing barn.

The tithe map is fairly schematic in its aim to record settlements and it is difficult to determine whether or not the range of buildings that include the pigsty and possible brewhouse and stable are contemporary. They are certainly recorded on the 1887 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map. A circular feature shown adjacent to the threshing barn represents a probable horse-engine, used for powering farm machinery (threshing, winnowing, chaffing etc.) before the arrival of oil or diesel engines. This is no longer shown on the 1906 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS map and, whereas the other farm buildings are shaded, the threshing barn is left blank, suggesting that it was unroofed at that time.

A new farmhouse was built in 1936, since when the old house has not been inhabited, becoming Grade II listed in 2003 as a 'rare surviving small farmhouse of the type that characterised Carmarthenshire before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.' Further buildings and extensions have been added to the complex since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but the original layout is preserved at the centre of the farmstead.

## Description

The focus of the call-out to Llwyncelyn farm was the threshing barn, which dates to at least 1839. It is gable-ended, constructed from dressed stone blocks and now roofed with corrugated-iron, presumably fitted after 1906.



*The façade of the threshing barn*

The double door entrances within the façade now have sliding metal doors covering them, with runners affixed to the outer wall just below the eaves. The corrugated-iron has been trimmed in places to accommodate this. Redbrick dressing on the inner wall edges possibly represent consolidation of the masonry after the original wood-plank doors were removed. A pitching hole is inserted into the rear wall, covered by a split, wood plank shutter that has a remnant of red paint.



*(Left) rear of the barn showing pitching hole and (right) south-facing gable*

There is an area of differing masonry within the south-facing gable, comprising rounded river-worn stones. It may represent patching for failed stonework or the infilling of an aperture such as external access to a former granary loft. A corrugated-



iron and wooden lean-to is attached to this wall. It stands on a mortared stone and redbrick plinth, the base to which may once have formed part of external steps. A gable-ended, concrete rendered, corrugated-iron roofed building abuts the opposite, northern gable.



*Interior of the threshing barn*

Internally the barn is divided to the height of the wall tops by timber panelling and the whole building is open to the roof timbers. This wooden framework sits on the level wall tops and looks to have been replaced at the time of the building's re-roofing, showing little sign of deterioration. The southern end of the building may originally have been lofted for grain storage, accessed via the possible external steps, although no internal evidence for this was noted. There are flagstones on the thresholds of the two entrances and the remaining floor space appeared to be concreted. No original internal features were noted during the call-out, although both sides of the barn were full of stored items.



*Looking southwest*

## Tir Gofal management recommendations

*The original farmhouse is Grade II Listed (LB 80853) and its associated farm buildings lie within the listing curtilage and should be treated as if they themselves are listed. Any work that affects the character of a listed building requires listed building consent. Like-for-like repair is normally permitted, but because interpretations of what exactly is meant by like-for-like may vary, it is advisable to seek the advice of the local planning authority's conservation officer. Contact details for the local authority's conservation officers are provided below.*

The management priority is to return the threshing barn to a stable and weatherproof condition using historically appropriate materials and methods of construction. Repairs should be undertaken on a like for like basis, modelled on the originals using similar materials and methods of construction.

The owners of Llwynceilyn have expressed a wish to replace the leaking corrugated-iron roof with slates. While such a move would not be detrimental to the character of the farmstead as a whole, there are a number of issues that require consideration. Above all, changing the roofing material on a building that is in effect listed would necessitate obtaining listed building consent.

The threshing barn, cowshed and old farmhouse are the earliest buildings in the farmstead but none are currently roofed in slate, two being covered in corrugated-iron and one in red clay tile. These were not likely to be the original roofing materials, however; the pitch of the roof of the early farmhouse suggests that it was formerly thatched. Evidence for earlier roofing materials on the threshing barn and cowshed have not yet been identified.

The range of buildings, including a possible brewhouse and stable, may also be contemporary as they appear on the 1887 OS map. These include another red-clay tile roof and one in slate. Although having slate elsewhere on the farmstead could lend weight to an argument in favour of re-roofing the threshing-barn in slate, it is not known whether it is the original roof. The red-clay tiles are likely to date to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century but are of interest in that they may represent links to the Dinefwr estate, where several other buildings are similarly roofed.



*(Left) the original farmhouse and cow shed and (right) the possible stable, brewhouse and pigsty.*

There is nothing in the pitch of the threshing barn roof or in the levelness of the walls to suggest that the building wasn't once under slate. However, the roof has already been replaced in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century and some modifications may have been conducted then.

In conclusion, although slate would seem to be in keeping with the age and character of the building and the wider farmstead it is problematic in this case to state with any certainty that this is the correct material with which to replace the roof. **As the building falls within listed building curtilage the final decision on this matter will rest with the local conservation officer.**

## **Repair**

As a general rule remedial work should be guided by the need to ensure long-term survival, whilst maintaining the character of the building.

- Repair is always preferable to replacement, keeping as much of the original fabric of the building in place as possible. Replacement is only to be carried out where necessary.

## **Historic enhancement**

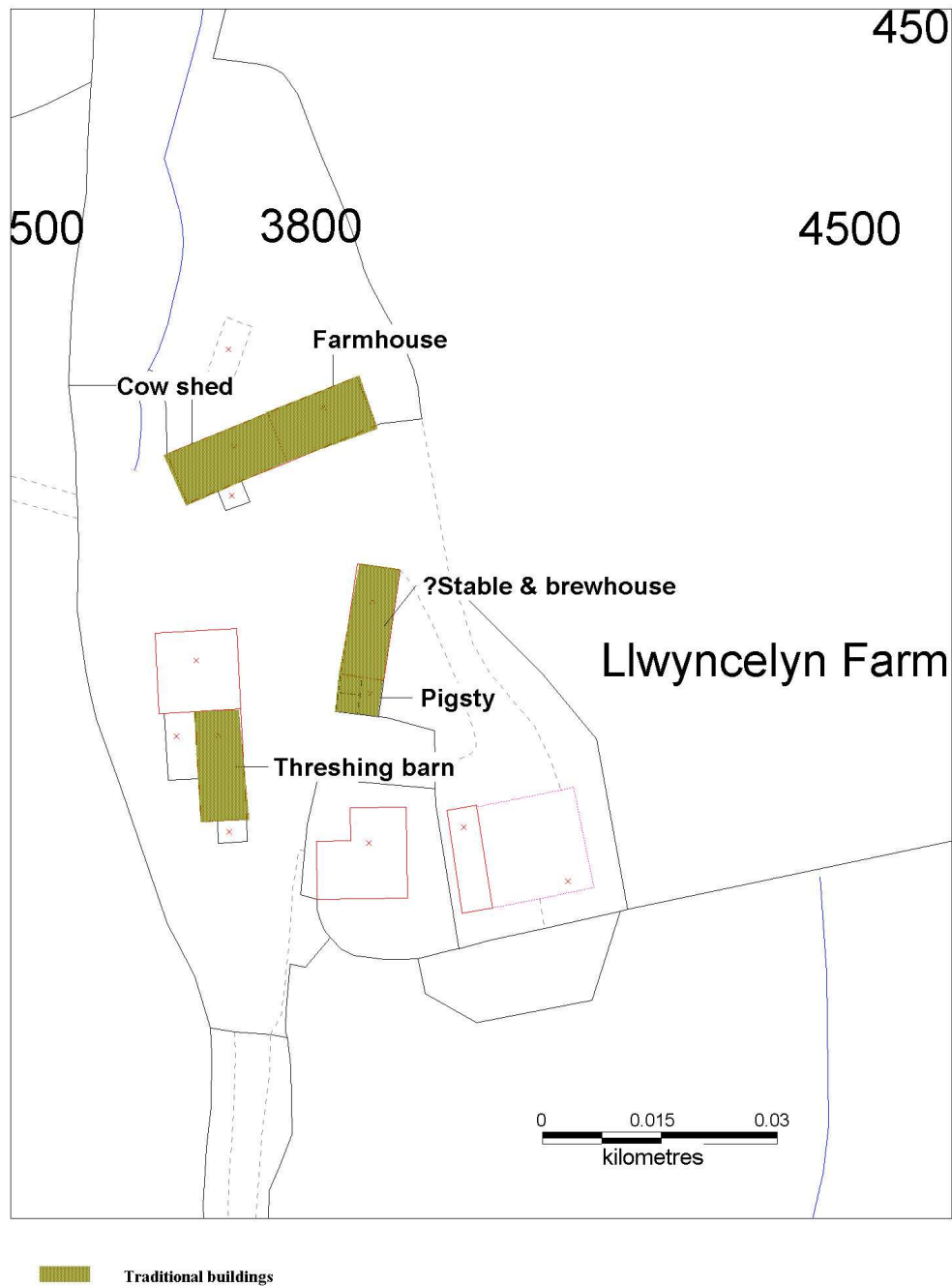
A secondary aim if funding is available is to enhance the historic external character of the buildings by repairing or reinstating historic doors or windows and painting joinery.

- Reinstall joinery elements (doors, windows) to traditional specifications. Inappropriate doors and windows can significantly impair the character of a historic building. As the character of the original doors and windows are not always known it may be necessary to choose replacements based on comparison with examples from similar buildings. Contact the Dyfed Archaeological Trust for further advice if necessary.
- A correct historic finish in this region would favour the use of an estate paint colour. The paint remnant on the pitching hole shutter suggests that red paint (known locally as 'ox blood red') would be appropriate. Stained or varnished finishes are not appropriate.
- Ideally the metal sliding doors would be removed and the entrance consolidated, with traditional solid wooden plank doors reinstated, in keeping with the style and age of the building. Contact the Dyfed Archaeological Trust for further information if necessary.

## **Preventative maintenance**

The following is recommended if extensive repairs are not made to the building in order to slow down the process of decay.

- Cut back vegetation on the walls, leaving the roots in situ. Spot treat to prevent re-growth.



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***Sources consulted:***

Historic Environment Record for Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.  
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Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1887 Carmarthenshire Sheet 33.10,25"  
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**CARMARTHENSHERE: TYWI VALLEY**

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**HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA:  
191 NANTGAREDIG - DERWEN FAWR**

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**GRID REFERENCE: SN 535233**  
**AREA IN HECTARES: 2789.00**

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**Historic Background**

This is a very large character area lying on the northern side of the Tywi valley and stretching from Nantgaredig in the west to beyond Llandeilo in the east. The valley was the major historic route corridor into West Wales and the Roman road from Carmarthen to Llandovery followed the interface between the alluvium and the solid geology on the north side of the Tywi, whose course is now more-or-less followed by the modern A40(T). During the historic period most of the area lay within the southern half of the commotes, and later hundreds, of Cetheiniog and Maenordeilo (Rees 1932). The two commotes were held of the independent Welsh lordship of Cantref Mawr until the establishment of the county of Carmarthen in 1284. The relative homogeneity of the present landscape may represent a historical unity of land-use. Ridge and furrow cultivation has been recorded in the Tywi floodplain but this northern margin may always have been largely pasture, and north of Llanegwad lay an area of waste or common called 'Killardun Forest' (Rees 1932). Enclosure within the area, furthermore, may have been of relatively late date, the majority of the fields being medium-sized and regular. Llanegwad is the only early nucleation within the area. It may represent a pre-Conquest church and settlement with a radial system of boundaries possibly perpetuating an infield-outfield system (Sambrook 1995, 59). It is the site of a parish church, a motte and later - under the patronage of the Bishops of St Davids - a small borough, now a village. To the north at Allt-y-ferin is a second motte which belonged to the Lordship of Carmarthen to the east (Area 183), and may be the site of the 'Dinweilir' taken by the Welsh and recaptured in 1159 (Jones 1952, 61). It was associated with a former chapel. The remainder of the area is divided between the parishes of Llangathen and Llandeilo Fawr. At the confluence of the rivers Cothi and Tywi lay the core of Maenor Brunus, mentioned in the 12th century Llandaff Charters but probably pre-Conquest in origin (Richards 1974, 119), with a chapel at Llandeilo Rwnws on the banks of the Tywi and another near Pontargothi. The significance of the location was such that it was named (as 'Ystrad Brwnws') as the site of a battle between the Normans and the Welsh in 1116 (ibid.);

the use of the Tywi Valley as a routeway led to its being the site of a further battle, near Derwen Fawr, in 1257 (Rees 1932). Maenor Brwnws was granted, at an unknown date but probably during the late 12th century, to the Premonstratensians at Talley (ibid.). The post-dissolution grange was represented by the gentry houses of Wythfawr and Ystradwrallt, which had been established by the 1540s (Jones 1987, 199); the latter may retain the 'Ystrad' element from Ystrad Brwnws. Penllwynau also lay in Llandeilo Rwnws estate and was later a gentry home (Jones 1987, 150). Cilsaen near Llangathen is a late Medieval house that became part of the Golden Grove estate in the 17th century (Jones 1987, 32) but its origins are earlier, being associated with the later princes of Deheubarth and termed 'manor' in early Post-Medieval documentation. Court Henry has 16th century origins and is associated with a small area of 19th century parkland and a *de novo* 19th century church (Lloyd 1991, 37-46), while a second area of parkland at Allt-y-ferin is contemporary with the house of 1869 (Jones 1987, 6). The establishment of modern communications also influenced the settlement pattern. A turnpike, established in 1763-71 (Lewis, 1971, 43) more-or-less followed the line of the Roman road. The straight courses through Pontargothi and Derwen Fawr were however constructed under Thomas Telford in the 1820s (Carms Record office, Cawdor Maps 172) with the subsequent development of the two villages, and Felindre. The area is also crossed by the former LNWR main West Wales railway line which was opened, as the 'Vale of Towy Line', by the Llanelli Railway and Dock Company in 1858 (Gabb, 1977, 76). The present settlement of Nantgaredig is entirely modern and developed around the railway station.

### **Description and essential historic landscape components**

A very large character area on the north side of the Tywi Valley and including part of the lower Cothi valley. It rises from the flood plain of the Tywi at 20 m OD in a series of low rounded hills that achieve a maximum height of over 120 m. The whole area is enclosed by medium-sized fields which are under pasture, nearly all of which is improved - there is very little rough or rushy ground. The fields are divided by earth banks topped with hedges. Hedges are generally well maintained and in good condition. Many possess distinctive trees. There are numerous small stands of deciduous woodland, particularly on steep valley sides where it may be ancient, with conifer plantations on the very steep valley sides of the Cothi. Dispersed farms provide the dominant settlement pattern. Older survivors, such as Llethr Cadfan provide time-depth to the settlement pattern not readily obvious in the extant buildings. Superimposed on to this ancient pattern of dispersed farms is a more recent nucleated settlement pattern. Llanegwad village has Medieval origins but surviving buildings indicate that its development belongs to the 18th- and 19th-century, with rapid expansion in the 20th-century. Felindre is a loose cluster of 19th- and 20th-century dwellings, but other nucleated, clustered and linear villages such as Nantgaredig, Pontargothi and Derwen Fawr, while having a small core of 19th-century buildings, are now essentially late 20th-century developments. The area has, like much of the Tywi Valley, a parkland feel and small areas of 19th century emparking surround Allt-y-ferin House and Court Henry. The low accessible hills to the north of the flood plain allowed for the development of an important east-west routeway along the Tywi valley, from the Roman to the modern period, represented by the present A40(T). The modern settlements described above, except for Nantgaredig which developed around a railway station, tend to be located along this road.

The recorded archaeology of such a large landscape area includes a range of sites from all periods. The majority of archaeological features relate to agricultural land-use but there are also two motte castles, of which Allt-y-ferin was added to an Iron Age inland promontory fort, Bronze Age standing stones and a henge monument at Nantgaredig.

The parish church of Llanegwad was rebuilt in the 1840s and like the 19th century church at Court Henry is unlisted. The Grade II listed Llethr Cadfan farmhouse and its Grade II\* listed granary are both 17th century, and the early 19th-century Llwynhelig House and stable-block are also both Grade II listed. The area otherwise has a relative lack of distinctive buildings but the largely 18th- and 19th-century Court Henry, which is Grade II\* listed, preserves an earlier core and the home farm has good quality masonry buildings. Farmhouses are generally of 18th- and 19th-century date, stone built with slate roofs. Most are of two storeys and three bays, in the Georgian tradition, but larger examples are present. Associated with the larger farmhouses are large assemblages of farm buildings, these are often arranged in a semi-formal basis reflecting the higher status of the holdings. Farmhouses in the vernacular tradition are present, but in a lesser number than those in a polite style. Smaller farmhouses and those in the vernacular tradition tend to have a more limited and smaller collection of farm buildings, often compacted into a single range.

The boundaries of this area are not clear cut as most of the neighbouring areas share similar historic landscape components. Part of the boundary to the south lies against the flood plain of the Tywi (Area 182), Dinefwr Park (Area 195) and Llandeilo town (Area 202); these provide reasonably clear definition. Elsewhere to the south, and to the west and east there is no hard-edged border between this area and Areas 183, 192 and 201, but rather a zone of change.

**Conservation priorities**

Most of the historic landscape components in this character area are in a good state of preservation. However, some consideration should be given to the maintenance of hedgerows and to the management of old deciduous woodland. Historic farm buildings form an important component in this landscape. Although most are in use and in a good state of repair, some consideration may have to be given as to how they can be best used/reused and maintained for future generations. Llanegwad village is a proposed Conservation Area. Development here should respect this proposal.

**Ground photograph:** 57

**Aerial photographs:** 35, 37