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CROFTUFTY, SOLVA.  
S.A.M. PEMBS 395  
D.A.T. P.R.N. 8885

## REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

October 1993

Commissioned by:

Cadw

Report by:

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# **CROFTUFTY, SOLVA. S.A.M. PEMBS 395. P.R.N. 8885. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT, OCTOBER 1993.**

## **Summary**

A trial trench was excavated along the centre of the possible Medieval farmhouse, from the north gable end to the south side of the passage (Fig. 5). Apart from two small features, of unknown date, there was no archaeology below the relatively modern floor (which is approximately at the same level as the base of the wall of the building), and the make-up for it.

## **Purpose**

Croftufty Farmhouse is at present in ruinous condition, but has Scheduled Monument Consent and planning consent for restoration and reconstruction. The building consent does not provide for controlled archaeological clearance or investigation with funding, unless this can be obtained from Cadw. The purpose of this archaeological assessment was to seek for stratified deposits within the building, looking for their potential to relate to the phases of the standing structure; it was also hoped to find evidence of the earlier north wall of the house (Fig. 3), as postulated by The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments, Wales (Parkinson 1992). From the results of this assessment it could be ascertained whether more extensive investigations were desirable and, if so, what direction they should take. The assessment was funded by Cadw as part of an agreed programme of Trust work under the Rescue Archaeology Vote.

## **Location**

Croftufty Farmhouse is situated between the village of Solva and the city of St. David's in West Pembrokeshire. The ruins are to be found near some modern agricultural buildings, almost immediately to the south of St. David's Airfield (Fig. 1). The Ordnance Survey grid reference is SM 788252.

## **Site History**

The earliest date of Croftufty Farmhouse is unknown, and this is part of the reason for the interest in the site. Within the remaining ruins there can be seen a probable structural sequence; however, the dating of this can only be surmised on stylistic grounds, with the later phases being eighteenth or nineteenth century. The type of lateral fireplace with a round upper chimney stack (Fig. 2), often referred to as Flemish style (Barnwell 1862), would appear to date from the early Post-Medieval period, if not before (Allen 1902 and Smith 1988). It has been suggested that this style of chimney stack may be derived from such as those that survive at the Bishop's Palace, St. David's, or from other higher status buildings. The farmhouse was probably last occupied in the middle to later

1950's; its abandonment possibly came about due to the large amount of farmland, originally some 56 hectares (140 acres), being taken over for the construction of the Second World War airfield of St. David's. The farmhouse building became a Scheduled Ancient Monument, with a description of the ruinous state of the building in 1978. A further visit was undertaken by the Field Monument Warden for the area in 1986; the report specifically mentions the hold that vegetation had taken on the site (records from the Cadw file). However, no action was taken and the upper part of the chimney stack has now collapsed. A planning application was made to the National Park in May 1989, to convert the outbuildings into two holiday homes and the farmhouse into a residential dwelling, and was granted in August 1989. The application by the landowners for Scheduled Monument Consent was given in November 1991 subject to conditions. In January 1992 Cadw asked Dyfed Archaeological Trust for comments on the application. In March and April 1992 a report on the standing structure was made by Mr A Parkinson, of the RCAHMS (Figs. 3, 4 and 5).

## **Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this evaluation was to assess the archaeological potential to see if any stratified deposits survived and whether these could be related to the standing structure of the farmhouse, with the chance of providing a datable framework for the development of the building. Our objective at the conclusion of this evaluation was to be able to formulate a research design to ensure its preservation, at least in record form, in response to the development of the site, as the physical sequence and integrity of the historic fabric of the house will be lost in its rebuilding.

## **Methodologies and Results**

### **Positioning of the trial trench**

The site was inspected before the commencement of the evaluation to consider the most viable positions for the investigation trench.

Some parts of the farmhouse building are in a poor and dangerous condition, notably the main east wall from the northern entrance to the southern end of the main room, where the wall is bulging outwards, and at the north east corner of the central room added to the west side of the earlier building (Fig. 5). All of the site is overgrown with ivy and trees which are causing structural damage.

A trial trench was not excavated on the outside of the front (east side) of the farmhouse, as there are now a number of temporary dumps of modern debris. These, together with the dangerous condition of the northern part of the east wall, the fact that structural detail in the southern part is obscured by the hard cement render and the consideration that the front garden probably would have disturbed any shallower deposits, pointed to placing the trench elsewhere given the limited nature

of the investigation.

The west outside of the farmhouse was not trial trenched, as there are later additions on this side. A possible position where a trench could be placed is at the rear of the main fireplace; however, this was not considered to be a priority as there is a later oven inserted in the back of it.

The northern part of the farmhouse is of a later build, on the outside of which there are the remains of some outbuildings, now overgrown; a trench in this area was therefore considered unlikely to produce worthwhile results without major clearance.

A trench on the outside of the south gable end could be a possibility at a later date, although near the base of the wall there is what would appear to be the slight offset of the footing stones and therefore the base of the wall may not go down much further than the present ground surface.

It was considered that the most worthwhile position for a trial trench, to produce stratified deposits that could be related to the structure, would be within the building. Therefore a trench was proposed down the centre of the length of the principal room, to also see if the postulated (Parkinson 1992) earlier north end of the farmhouse could be traced (Fig. 3), and whether there was a possibility of tracing an earlier central hearth.

### The Excavation

Work was undertaken by the author with two assistants and commenced on 27 September 1993; this was completed within three weeks, with only a small amount of time lost due to bad weather.

The undergrowth was first cleared from within the principal room and passage. (The southern room was later cleared although no other work was done there.) A plan was made of the principal room and the rubble within (archive no. 201), as some of this rubble had to be removed before the trial trench could be laid out. During the removal of the rubble in the north east corner of the building, a circular oven was found (Fig. 5), probably of 19th century date and not previously recorded, which was added to the main floor plan (archive no. 202).

The lintel of the north doorway and a small amount of stone work remaining above was photographed (archive no. 111), before removing to make safe.

Excavation within the trial trench commenced with the removal of the topsoil (2), including a deposit of disposable nappies (used); it would appear that this layer has built up or been disturbed within the last five years.

Below the topsoil (2) there were a few layers deriving from the collapse of the farmhouse down to the floor. These layers consisted of deposits of voided rubble (3) derived from the walls of the farmhouse. Below the rubble (3), there was a layer of collapsed roofing material (4), of grouted slate and plain red ridge tile with no raised rib. Below the roof layer (4),

there was a spread of broken plaster (5), probably from the ceilings. The floors lay directly below the plaster layer (5).

The northern floor (7) was mainly of cobbles but with a few re-used 1 foot (300mm) square tiles (probably originally designed for malting), and it is probable that this floor (7) is later than the floor in the southern part (6), as the step up to the floor (7) appears to be over the edge of the principal room's floor (6) to the south; this northern area of the farmhouse was probably the kitchen. The floor (6) covered the area from the south edge of the kitchen floor (7) to the north wall of the passage and is probably the floor of the principal room in the farmhouse. This main floor (6) is slightly lower than the kitchen floor (7) and slopes down to the south to the north passage wall; this floor was made up of large slate slabs, quarry tiles and some brick.

There was probably a dividing wall between the kitchen and the principal room area, although no trace of it could be found above the floor level; however there were the remains of a hearth (12), and hearth base (11) (which produced a china sherd of 19th to 20th century date), probably on the position of this dividing wall.

Below the probable kitchen floor (7) there was a small layer of floor make-up (13), containing pottery as late as 20th century, and below the make-up there was a subsoil, probably glacial. Below the southern floor (6) there was a thin layer of floor make-up (8), which did not produce any dating evidence, but probably dates from the laying of this last floor. This floor make-up (8) was directly over the subsoil, except for a slightly irregular shallow feature (10), with a fill (9) which did not produce any dating evidence, but is probably relatively modern.

When the main trench had been excavated two small trial trenches were extended to the west (Fig. 5).

The northern trial trench extension was excavated adjacent to the door to the dairy, and the blocked doorway in the west wall of the farmhouse. This doorway was blocked when the room was added to the centre of the west side of the farmhouse, and the north wall of the room was built into it (Figs. 3 and 4). The later doorway to the north gave access to the dairy, although it could pre-date it. This trial trench extension produced the same stratigraphic sequence as in the main part of the trench, except for the worn brick step up to the floor level (7) of the kitchen. Below this step the subsoil was a little higher (archive plan no. 203). The bottom of the walls and the door steps were on about the same level as the lower floor (6), and constructed directly onto the subsoil.

The southern trial trench extension was excavated 1.5 metres north of the passage north wall. The trench was not excavated against the passage wall as its structural stability was uncertain, especially if a trench had been placed against it. This internal wall was built on the same level as the floor (6), which was possibly just inserted below the edge of this wall. Therefore the trench was placed to the north side of the opening of the fireplace in order to examine the footings between the

straight joint of the fireplace and the (probable) later wall on the north side. The stratigraphic sequence was the same as found elsewhere. The bases of both walls, at the straight joint between the fireplace wall and the west wall, were on the same level, and at about the same depth as the top of the floor (6). The wall bases were directly on the subsoil, and above the depth of the make-up for the floor; there did not appear to be any separate footings.

The main trench was extended on the same line across the passage to the south; this again produced the same sequence of stratification as within the principal room, except for the area which would have been under the stairs (these were painted green at some stage), where there were no floor tiles (archive plan no. 204). Part of a cut (21) with fill (22) was found (archive plan no. 206) below the floor tiles; this feature extended below the south passage wall and to the west of the trench, but there was no dating evidence found in the small part of this feature that was excavated. Other than this feature and fill this area was un-numbered, as it was so similar to the main trench.

The area excavated was 28% of the area of the main part of the farmhouse (south room, passage, principal room and the kitchen).

## Discussion

No debris was found between collapsed ceiling plaster layer (5) and the floors (6 and 7), indicating that the house was stripped and clean after it became unoccupied in the 1950's. All of the floors are very late and are probably on the same level or lower than any earlier floors. The cut (21) found below the floor in the passage pre-dates the wall to the south, although the date of this is unknown. An irregular shallow pit (10) was found below the make-up (8) for the floor (6) and although no dating evidence was found, the fill (9) gave the impression that it was not very old. The position of the hearth (12) and the rise in the subsoil below the brick step up to the kitchen floor (7), may indicate the position of the earlier north end of the farmhouse; however the base (11) of this hearth is very late in date. It appears that there are no foundation trenches for the footings of the building, with the base of the walls being built directly onto the subsoil, possibly after the topsoil had been removed from within the area of the building.

After the excavation a meeting was held with Mr A Parkinson of RCAHMS, to look at the results and the records of the site and to discuss the possible ways forward; the results of this discussion form the basis for the conclusion.

## Conclusion

The sequence and date of this building is unlikely to be sorted out below ground, given that there appears to be no amount of stratified deposits of any date within the building, and there would seem to be little chance of the survival of such deposits against the outside of the earlier walls. There are, however, one or two areas that may benefit from test hole excavation: one

place would be within the central west extension to see if there is any evidence of the line of the postulated wall running north from the back of the fireplace; and the other would be just inside the building to the south of the northern doorway, to see if there are any traces of the original north end of the farmhouse (Fig. 3).

There is a sequence of building visible in the remaining standing structure, although the interpretation will remain uncertain if more detailed recording work is not undertaken. The site would benefit from more detailed and accurate recording of the plan and elevations of the farmhouse, as the structural record and integrity will be lost in the rebuilding of the house.

There is the need for a watching brief during the dismantling to sort out a few points, such as the recess or window in the first floor on the west side. However, in preference to a watching brief, the dismantling of the walls around the fireplace area should be undertaken by suitably qualified personnel, making adequate records; of particular interest here is the relationship between the fireplace and the walls, and whether there was a rear entrance to the passage, possibly with a porch, as in a number of houses of this type in the area (Allen 1902). After dismantling of the walls to ground level a small excavation could give evidence for the sequence and earlier layout, if this cannot be seen during the dismantling. It is unlikely however that any datable material will be found.

We consider that this site is of importance and was worthy of being a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and therefore it is worth preserving its structure, at least in record.

## Acknowledgements

A Parkinson of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments, for his work and comments on the site, and permission to use their drawings in this report. Ian Darke and Hubert Wilson for their assistance with the excavation. Dee Brennan of DAT for the finds assesment report. Mr and Mrs B Morris, the landowners, for their cooperation and help.

## Archive Deposition

National Monument Record at RCAHMW, Crown Buildings, Plas Grug, Aberystwyth SY23 2HP.

## Bibliography

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|-----------------------|--|

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Third Series Vol. XIII.

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*Archaeologia Cambrensis*. Fifth Series  
Vol. XII

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Croftufty. File NA/PE/92/19

Smith P 1988 Houses in the Welsh Countryside.

## Appendices

Area of main part of Farmhouse (kitchen, principal room, passage and south room) is approx 85.1<sup>2</sup>m. Area excavated 23.6<sup>2</sup>m. Area of trench is 28% of area of main part of farmhouse.

### Site Sub-divisions

Sub-division 1: principal room and kitchen

Sub-division 2: passage

Sub-division 3: south room

Sub-division 10: the exterior of the whole site

### Record Numbers used

#### Context 1-22

Number	Site Subdiv	Type	Provisional Date
1	0	Unstrat.	-
2	1	Layer	Modern
3	1	Layer	Modern
4	1	Layer	Modern
5	1	Layer	Modern
6	1	Floor	19-20 C
7	1	Floor	19-20 C
8	1	Layer	19-20 C
9	1	Fill	19-20 C
10	1	Fill	19-20 C
11	1	Hearth Base	19-20 C
12	1	Hearth	18-19 C
13	1	Layer	19-20 C
14 to 20 not used			
21	2	Cut	Post Med ?
22	2	Fill	Post Med ?

#### Photo Records 101-132

#### Drawing Records 201-206 and 251

CROFTTUFTY 1993. PRN.8885

## THE FINDS:

CONTEXT: 8885/3

CATEGORY: Pottery

FORM: Bowl (of slop or sugar size)

DETAILS: 1 rim sherd.

FABRIC: Glazed white earthenware.

DECORATION: Underglaze blue sponged floral pattern around rim on both surfaces.

SOURCE: Unsourced, but possibly Llanelli.

Date: 19th cent. (Discarded).

CATEGORY: Pottery

FORM: Bowl.

DETAILS: 2 joining rim sherds.

FABRIC: Glazed white earthenware.

DECORATION: Hand-painted underglaze floral decoration of reddish-brown Fresia type flowers.

SOURCE: Unsourced, but possibly Llanelli. This type of decoration is found on pink lustre ware.

Date: 19th cent, c.1830's. (Discarded).

CATEGORY: Pottery

FORM: Dinner plate.

DETAILS: 3 joining rim and body sherds.

FABRIC: Glazed white earthenware.

DECORATION: Underglaze blue banded decoration around rim.

SOURCE: Bristol. Transfer-printed factory name 'POUNTNEY & Co LTD. BRISTOL. ENGLAND' and registered pattern number '2818 1883'.

DATE: 20th cent. (Discarded).

CATEGORY: Pottery

FORM: Plate.

DETAILS: 9 rim, 4 body and 1 base sherd.

FABRIC: Glazed white earthenware.

DECORATION: Underglaze brown floral transfer-print around rim with infill painted underglaze colours of yellow, blue and red.

SOURCE: England. Factory name '[ ]RDHURST [ ] IN ENGLAND' fabric '[IR]ONSTONE' and other details 'HANDPAINTED UNDERGLAZE DETERGENT PROOF' etc printed on base.

DATE: 20th cent, modern. (Discarded).

CATEGORY: Pottery.

FORM: Tea-cup or jug.

DETAILS: 1 handle sherd.

FABRIC: Plain glazed white earthenware.

SOURCE: Unsourced.

DATE: 19th or 20th cent. (Discarded).

CATEGORY: Pottery.

FORM: Parts of 2 vessels, not determined.

DETAILS: 3 small body sherds.

FABRIC: Bone china.

SOURCE: Unsourced.

DATE: 20th cent. (Discarded).

CONTEXT: 8885/3 cont.

CATEGORY: Brick.

DETAILS: 1 incomplete but large fragment of brick. Cf. the type used in breweries/malt houses.

FABRIC: Unglazed red earthenware.

DATE: Uncertain 19th/20th cent. (Kept).

CONTEXT: 8885/7

CATEGORY: Pottery.

FORM: Bowl.

DETAILS: 1 rim sherd.

FABRIC: Glazed white earthenware.

DECORATION: Underglaze green sponged floral pattern around rim on both surfaces.

SOURCE: Unsourced, but possibly Llanelli.

DATE: 19th cent. (Discarded).

CATEGORY: Pottery.

FORM: (?) Jug.

DETAILS: 1 body sherd.

FABRIC: Glazed white earthenware.

DECORATION: Blue banded decoration on white ground externally.

SOURCE: Unsourced.

DATE: 20th cent. (Discarded).

CATEGORY: Pottery.

FORM: Plate.

DETAILS: 1 rim sherd.

FABRIC: Glazed white earthenware.

DECORATION: Underglaze blue transfer-printed floral pattern.

SOURCE: Unsourced.

DATE: Late 19th or 20th cent. (Discarded).

CATEGORY: Pottery.

FORM: Plate.

DETAILS: 1 rim sherd.

FABRIC: Glazed white earthenware.

DECORATION: Underglaze brown transfer-printed floral pattern.

SOURCE: Unsourced.

DATE: Late 19th but more likely 20th cent. (Discarded).

CONTEXT: 8885/11

CATEGORY: Pottery.

FORM: Plate.

DETAILS: 1 rim sherd.

FABRIC: Glazed white earthenware.

DECORATION: Underglaze blue transfer-printed border pattern. The standard 'Willow pattern' border.

SOURCE: Unsourced. Very many factories produced this pattern and attribution to any one maker is impossible.

DATE: 19th or 20th cent. Not closely dateable without a makers mark.

CONTEXT: 8885/13

CATEGORY: Pottery.

FORM: (?) Jug.

DETAILS: 1 body sherd.

FABRIC: Glazed white earthenware.

DECORATION: Blue band on white ground externally.

SOURCE: Unsourced.

DATE: 20th cent. (Discarded).

CATEGORY: Pottery.

FORM: Plate.

DETAILS: 1 body sherd.

FABRIC: Glazed white earthenware.

DECORATION: Underglaze brown floral transfer-print.

SOURCE: Unsourced.

DATE: 19th or 20th cent. (Discarded).

# Croftufty, Solva. Site Location

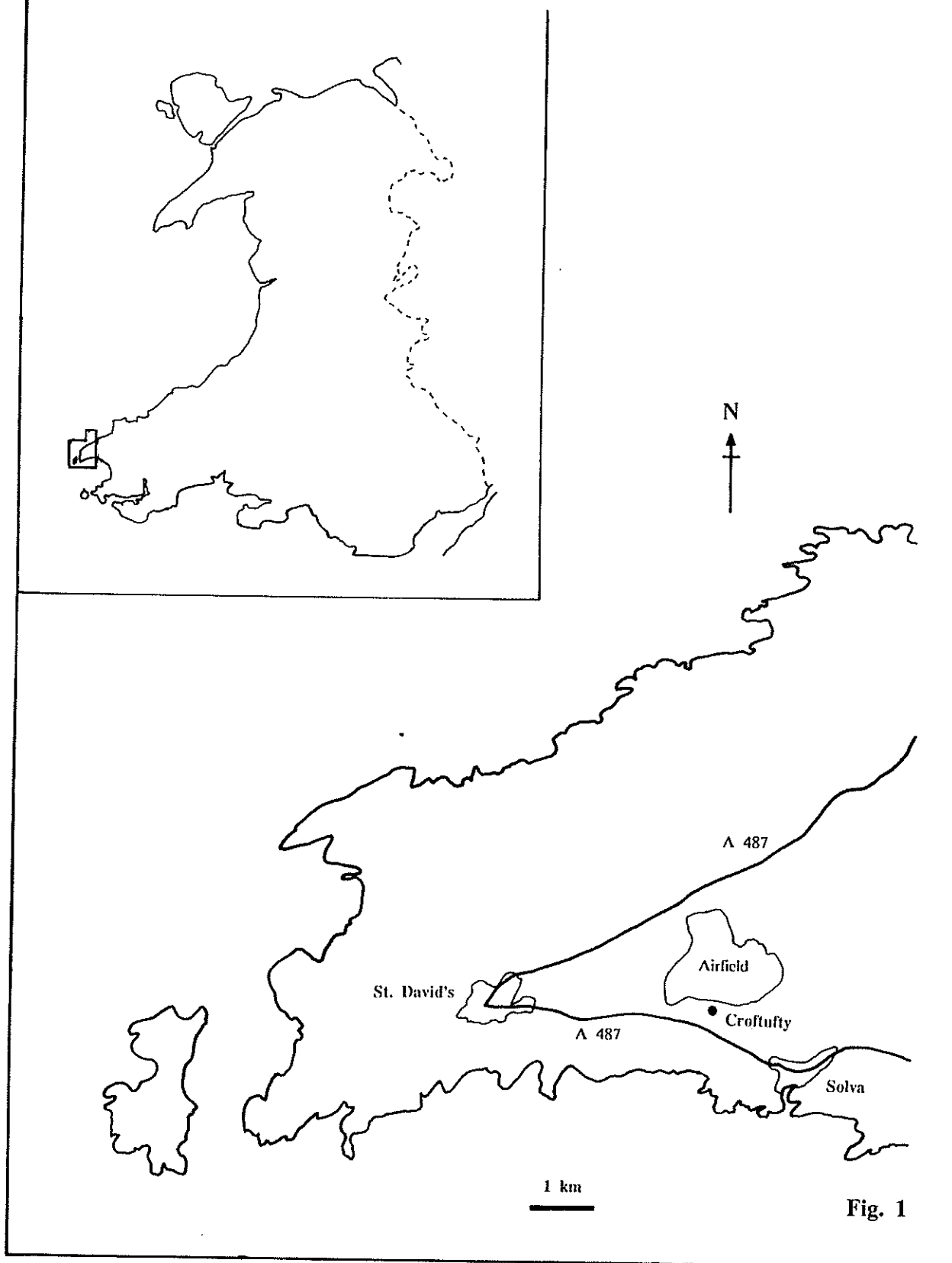


Fig. 1

# Croftufty Chimney from RCAHMMW

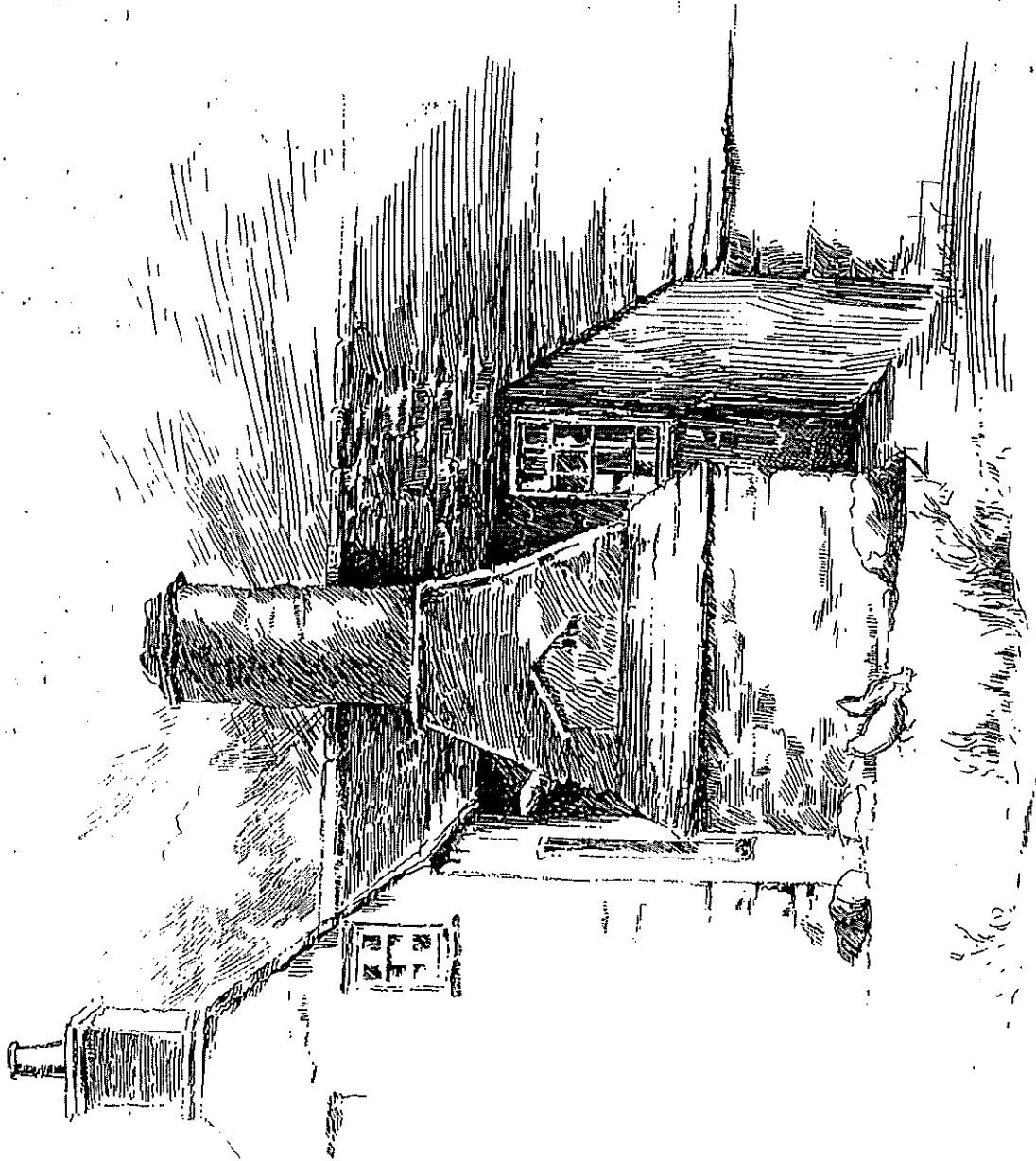


Fig. 2

Arch. Cambria vol. 6, p. 12, p. 1

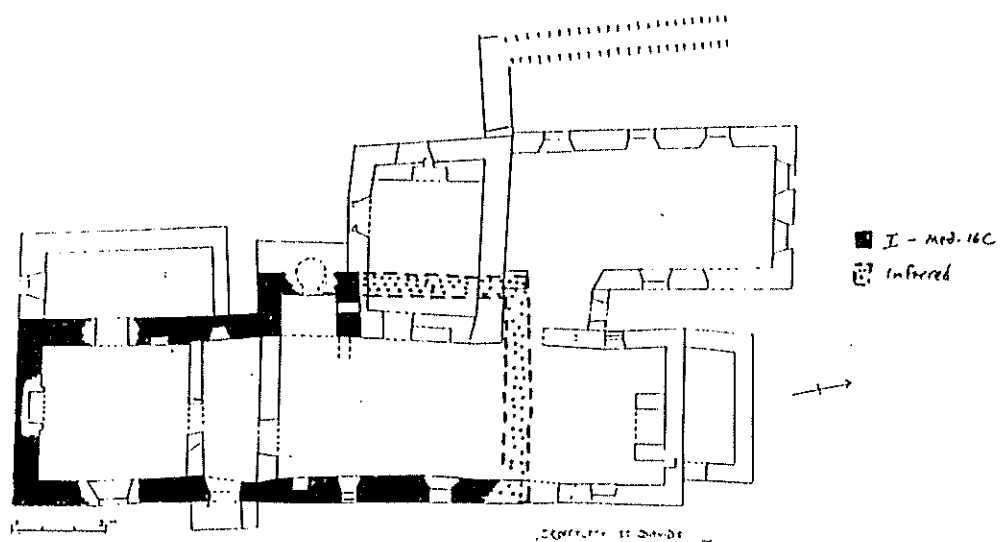
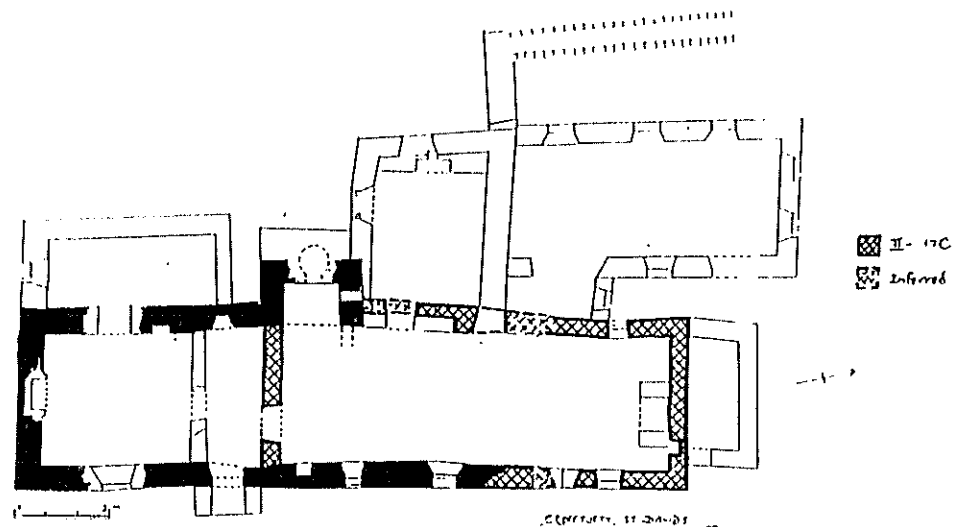


SEVED

# Croftufty Provisional Phase Plan



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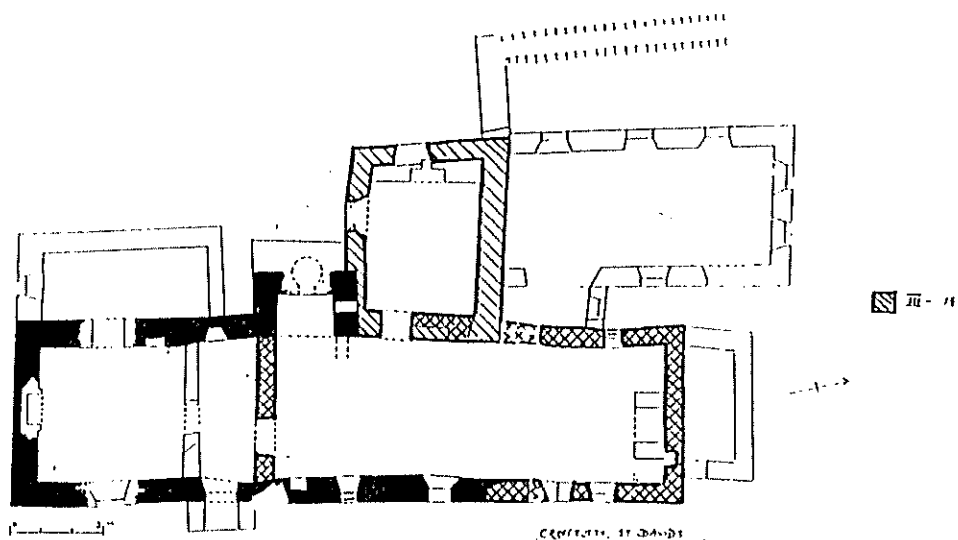
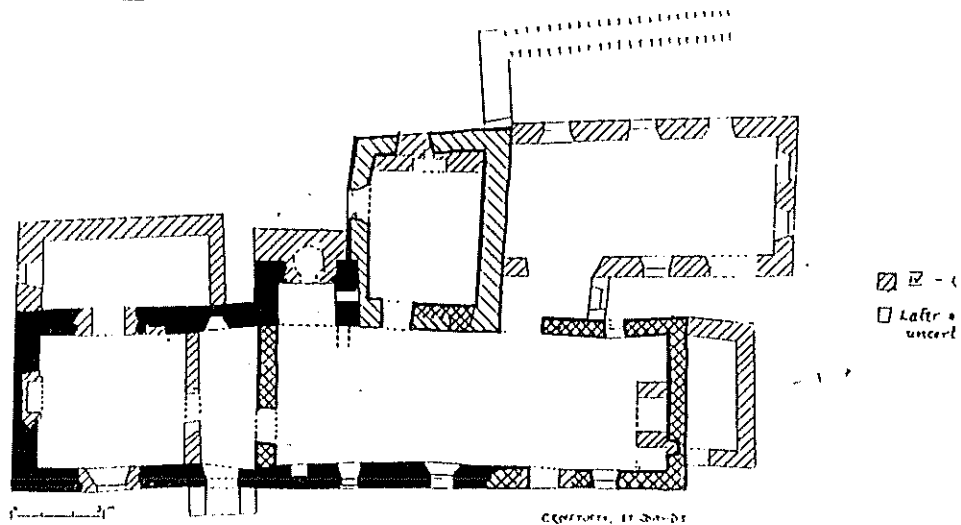
NA/PE/92/19

Fig. 3

# Croftufty Provisional Phase Plan



CONTENT RESERVED



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NA/PE/92/19

Fig. 4

# Croftufty. RCAHMW Plan with Excavation Trench

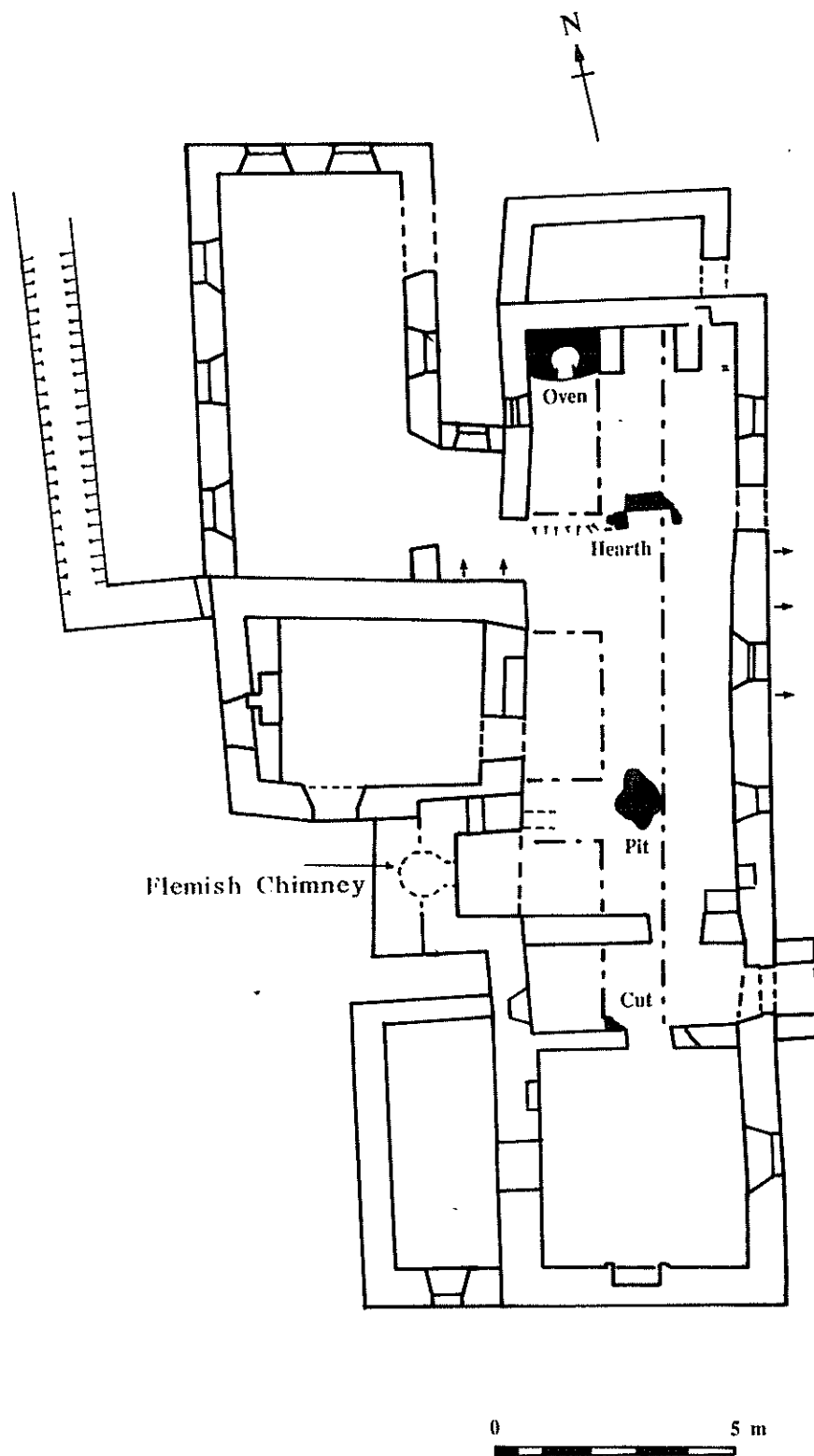


Fig. 5