

Maes y Mynydd (PRN 1209)
St Davids
North Pembrokeshire

Building Recording Survey

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Maes Y Mynydd, St Davids, North Pembrokeshire

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1. Introduction

Maes y Mynydd is a relatively undisturbed historical settlement in St Davids, North Pembrokeshire. The settlement is in a derelict state, consisting of the remains of roofless structures, last having been used for human habitation sometime in the 1920's. It is hoped to begin a programme of consolidation of the structures. The purpose of this study is to record the features and identify areas of importance, thereby giving guidance on actions to be followed during the consolidation works.

The survey was carried out by David Maynard during February 2009. The survey was a Level 2 building survey as set out in the specification for the work *Maes y Mynydd 904s* and is archived as Landsker Archaeology Project number 904. Buildings and rooms are recorded using a record number shown here in brackets, numbers 1 to 23 were used in the course of the work. The survey of the site was greatly assisted by the National Park Archaeologist Polly Groom.

2. Description

The settlement lies at National Grid reference SM 7463 2840, on the east side of the col between Carn Llidi on the west and Carnedd Lleithr and Carn Perfedd to the east. The site lies in a fairly exposed position with the sea at Porth Gwyn some 300m to the north east. The site is in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. No designations for the structures were shown on the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park website database at the date of survey. Building 4 and the associated structures lies in National Trust property.

The site is a linear range of structures comprising two terraced cottages (1 & 2), a further cottage (3) with a well (18), a stone building range (4) and a structure set into the hillside (23). There is an associated field system with rectangular fields running west to east to the north of the settlement (centred on SM 7479 2853). There are also elements of other field systems on the slopes of Carnedd Lleithr and Carn Perfedd, which may be of much earlier date.

The buildings are described with a section suggesting how the farm may have developed. Dimensions are found in the record index table.

3. Methodology

The plan of the site was obtained by tracing over a Google Earth image and using this as the basis of a sketch plan to add the final detail. None of the original floor levels can be determined, because of collapsed wall and roof material and the growth of vegetation. The survey was undertaken in February, when the vegetation was at its minimum, but it appears that the fence that surrounds the building has encouraged unchecked growth by grass, bramble and annual weeds, which is starting to conceal many of the details.

The site elevations have been produced using an assumed level, placing each of the buildings and their component parts at the same height. This is misleading in that the levels rise from west to east by 2.5m.

4. Cottage (1)

Rectangular cottage with one apparent room (5) having a lean-to range (8) to the rear. There is an ingle-nook to the east and a fireplace and chimney in the west gable wall. Both gable walls survive to a considerable height, but many of the other walls can only be traced to a height of about one metre. The rear lean-to range is particularly a case in point (on all the buildings) where very few details can be seen and the walls are covered by grass. It is possible that the lean-to range was divided into two components by a wall, the joining stones of which are visible in the north wall of the main room.

There was presumably a door in the centre of the south wall and windows to either side, but no details can be made out in the collapsed stonework. There is a doorway through to the rear range, with a surviving timber lintel. The northwest wall to (5) has collapsed which may have held a door to the west end of the rear range.

The only visible windows are one in the east gable to the north of the ingle-nook and a further small one high in the west gable end, possibly to illuminate a crog-loft. This has been later filled in with stonework.

The only internal domestic features are two niches (6 & 7), both possibly ovens, set in the south west and south east corners of the building. The south east example lies in the ingle-nook and it is possible that a further one lies in the other corner of the nook, but that it is concealed by the collapsed material.



Figure 2 Cottage 1 Looking north



Figure 1 Cottage 1 Looking east



Figure 4 Cottage 2 East gable



Figure 3 Cottage 1 Interior looking east

5. Cottage (2)

This cottage was built onto the east gable of (1). It is also a rectangular structure (9) with a lean-to building(10) to the north. There is an ingle-nook fireplace built into the east gable wall. Nearly all of the chimney has collapsed as has most of the stone corbelling forming the fire hood.

There is a door set in the middle of the south wall, which survives to less than one metre in height, with no evidence of window openings. To the side of this door, the wall becomes slightly thicker, creating a possible porch structure (11). The north wall contains a doorway opening into the lean-to structure (10), which has been filled with roughly laid stones to block it at a later date. As there is only one door opening, then it is unlikely that the lean-to structure was sub-divided.

There is no evidence of any window, except for that opening into the building from (1). There is also no fireplace other than the main ingle-nook.



Figure 5 Cottage 2 Looking north



Figure 6 Cottage 2 Rear range looking west

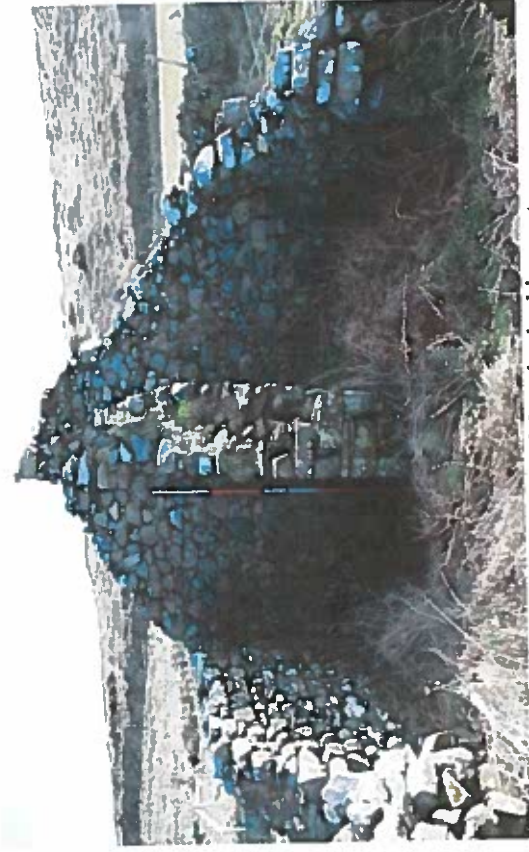


Figure 7 Cottage 2 Interior looking east



Figure 8 Cottage 3 East gable

6. Cottage (3)

Rectangular cottage set at the base of the slope from Carn Perfedd. This contains elements that are better preserved than the other cottages, which can be used to aid the interpretation of parts of their structure, although there is also considerable damage to this cottage. Within some of the sheltered interior parts of this cottage are the vestiges of a lime wash rendering. How extensive this was is difficult to state, although it is possible that originally all the buildings were coated with this covering.

This is a one room unit (12) with an ingle-nook fireplace to the east and a fire and chimney in the west gable. There is a lean-to structure (13 & 14) to the north which has largely collapsed. The building as a whole is better preserved than the others, although it also has areas of major collapse. The gable ends survive almost to the full original height, and elements of the south facing wall can be firmly established. There is a large hawthorn tree at the south east external corner of the building, which has helped shelter some of the features of the building, but possibly caused additional damage to the ingle-nook structure.

The south wall contains a central door and two windows to either side. The wall survives to a height of over 1.5m, so the east window retains its cill and lintel and allows details of the splayed window construction to be observed. The window is set in an embrasure with only the upper part open to the outside. The window appears to be intimately connected with the porch structure covering the doorway. The porch (15) contains a plinth around its base that would have acted as a seat around a small sheltered yard onto which the window opened. The porch may have had a sloping roof.

The east gable contains the ingle-nook chimney that rises to its full original height on the north side. Slate is set into the north chimney wall to act as a flashing to cast water off the wall/roof junction. The fire hood of the ingle-nook has collapsed bringing down the south side of the chimney. A large pile of stone and slate form the remains of the fire hood which hides any evidence of a niche or oven set into the wall. There is one large piece of wood protruding from the debris which may be the evidence of the supporting beam for the fire hood, although it is rather slender. One curious fact about this is that it is pierced by a series of large circular winding tubes, which may be the result of teredo worms boring through underwater timber. If this is so, then it represents one example of what is claimed to be common in Welsh 18th and 19th century cottages, namely the re-use of timber from ships.

To the north of the ingle-nook wall is a window opening to the east, which has been blocked with stone at a later date. The cause of this blocking must be to do with the rise in the soil level on the gable end of the house. There are many signs of down slope movement of soil against physical barriers on the site, forming lynchets. The floor of the cottage is approximately 1.5m below the present outside ground level, with two cills to the window at 0.80m and 1.23m above this, implying a soil rise of at least 0.3m and probably more since the original construction. There is a trackway running north along a field boundary and by the gable end of the house, with steep ground to the east.

The lean-to structure (13 & 14) to the north is not very visible due to the growth of vegetation. There remains the cill of a splayed window opening in the east gable wall. In the centre of the lean-to is a cross wall dividing it into two portions, accessed by a door. There was potentially a door in the collapsed section of wall in the northwest corner of the structure. The lean-to was built as a secondary feature to the



Figure 9 Cottage 3 Window and porch looking north



Figure 11 Cottage 3 West gable



Figure 10 Cottage 3 Interior looking south



Figure 12 Cottage 3 Interior looking east

7. Building (4)

This is a rectangular building that is the most prominent of a group of structures running north to south along the base of Carn Perfedd and uphill of the trackway that runs inside of the field boundary. The structures are all set into the hillside and appear to be crudely constructed compared with the other structures in the settlement, and so possibly had an agricultural purpose.

The largest structure (4) is a rectangular room set with its axis along the slope, but with the rear wall nearly entirely 1.8m deep into the ground while the front (west) wall is free standing. The west wall contains evidence of a splayed window opening to the north with a possible door opening in the centre, although the wall is very collapsed here. There is also a splayed window opening south of this, with a doorway at the corner of the building.

The interior of the south gable wall contains three niches (19), each approximately 0.25m by 0.3m high and about 0.7m above floor level. The gable above eaves height is set back from the wall by about 0.1m, possibly to support a wooden upper floor, perhaps of crog-loft type.

There appears to be a difference in the style of construction across this building, the east, south and west walls are largely built of large undressed boulders in a megalithic style, the south wall is more carefully worked with smaller stones, (more in the style of buildings 1-3). The other structures in this area, although heavily damaged and covered by undergrowth appear to be built in this large stone style. There is a suggestion that structure (4) has been rebuilt with parts of the west wall and the south gable wall remodelled from an existing structure, although it is hard to be sure without substantial cleaning of vegetation and recording.

Room (20) is rectangular, but difficult to observe with many tumbled stones and heavy vegetation growth. There is a central door opening to the west.

Room (21) is sub-rectangular again with heavy vegetation growth and much disturbance. There is an animal hole in this area, possibly fox or badger. There is an opening to the northwest where the wall opens out around the corner of room (20).

Room (22) lies to the east and uphill of (4). It is fenced off and covered by a thick growth of brambles making it difficult to see or measure. Some walling is visible. There would presumably not have been internal access from (4) to (22), but it is difficult to see what form this structure took as a lean-to form of building could not easily have been applied.

Room (23) is a rectangular structure set into the hillside some 10m east of (4). This is sunk into the hillside and appears open ended at the west with walls of large stone and earth. To the north of (3), there is a similar looking area formed of the junction of field boundaries. This has been filled recently with cleared boulders, but it is possible that this is a similar structure.



Figure 13 Structure 18 Well looking south



Figure 14 Structure 4 Looking south



Figure 15 Structure 4 Interior looking south



Figure 16 Structure 4 & 20 Looking east



Figure 17 Structure 21 Looking south east



Figure 18 Structure 23 Looking east



Figure 19 Structure 23 with 4 in background Looking south

8. Development of the Site

The sequence of buildings around (4) appear to be the most primitive form of construction and could therefore be the oldest, although if they were only intended as agricultural, then a poorer form of building may have sufficed.

Cottage (3) would appear to be the earliest of the three main buildings as it occupies the most sheltered location. The lean-to to the rear (13 & 14) is later, but this may only be a short interval. With the addition of the well (18) and the building (17) it would appear that there would be sufficient buildings for a small farm set in its field system.

The next building in the sequence would be cottage (1), this was built prior to (2) and is almost directly a mirror image of (3) set in the corner of a garden paddock, although at a slightly different east-west axis to (3). The last building in the sequence was cottage (2), which was slightly different to (1) and (3) in that it was slightly smaller, having only one chimney and no crog-loft window. The interval in the construction of (1) and (2) may not have been long, although when (1) was designed with a window in the east gable end, there may not have been the intention to build (2) immediately. Possibly when (2) was built with no window in its east gable, there was the intention to build yet another cottage to the east which never materialised.

9. Recommendations

The aim of the survey is to identify areas of importance to be protected during the planned consolidation programme. The details of what this may entail are not known at present, but there are several aspects of management of the site that need to be observed.

1. The main elements of the site have been fenced off with a three strand wire fence in the recent past to prevent damage to the standing structures by farm animals sheltering close to the walls. This has achieved its initial objective, but has resulted in a vigorous growth of grass and other annual weeds and a consequent increase in bramble as well. In time this growth will also damage the standing structures, so an effective long term management strategy will need to be devised. This will be particularly so, if badgers (which are present in the area) start to use this secluded haven.
2. A major element of the site is the large field boundaries running beside the buildings. Because cattle are crossing the site along established routes, they are breaking down parts of the bank, spreading soil and stones outward. Where they are fenced, there is no problem, beyond the tidying up of individual fallen stones. The bank running east to west to the south of the buildings should be fenced to prevent this damage and the existing breaks made good.
3. There are parts of the site where large boulders have been dumped during agricultural field clearance, particularly west of (1) and in the corner of the garden plot north of (1). Ideally these should be removed to another location as they break up the line of the historic features.
4. All the features identified in this report should be identified and protected by the builders to prevent inadvertent damage.
5. During consolidation works there should be an archaeological watching brief that will seek to record additional features, such as doors or windows and flooring, exposed by the consolidation works.

6. Possible areas for reconstruction works are some of the niches which are present only in a fragmentary state and the well cover (18), which could be rebuilt as a means of making this feature safer.
7. Where there are hollows in the stone walls, such as niches and chimneys, there are areas of weakness and risk of future collapse. This is particularly so with chimneys where the effects of acid in the smoke have eaten away at the mortar. This has resulted in several places in holes through the walls (especially in the west gable wall of (1 and 3) and could result in the major loss of a gable wall. A priority for work should be in these areas, possibly with thought being given to strengthening the chimney areas by filling them.
8. The clearance of areas of collapsed stone within the buildings should be thought about. If the intention is to restore the cottages to the original floor levels, then a large quantity of material will have to be removed, mostly under archaeological supervision and a substantial programme of consequential recording will be needed. If the bulk of the material is left in place with only consolidation of visible walls, then the scope of the work will be reduced.
9. The structures are a good habitat for wildlife. Evidence of badgers in the vicinity has been noted, and there are perching points for birds on the tops of the gables. The stonework will also be a good habitat for lizards and other reptiles. Although there may be some short term dislocation during consolidation works, the surrounding area is rich in suitable alternative sites and the site will return to its normal state following the work. The builders should be aware of their responsibilities for the preservation of any wildlife they encounter.

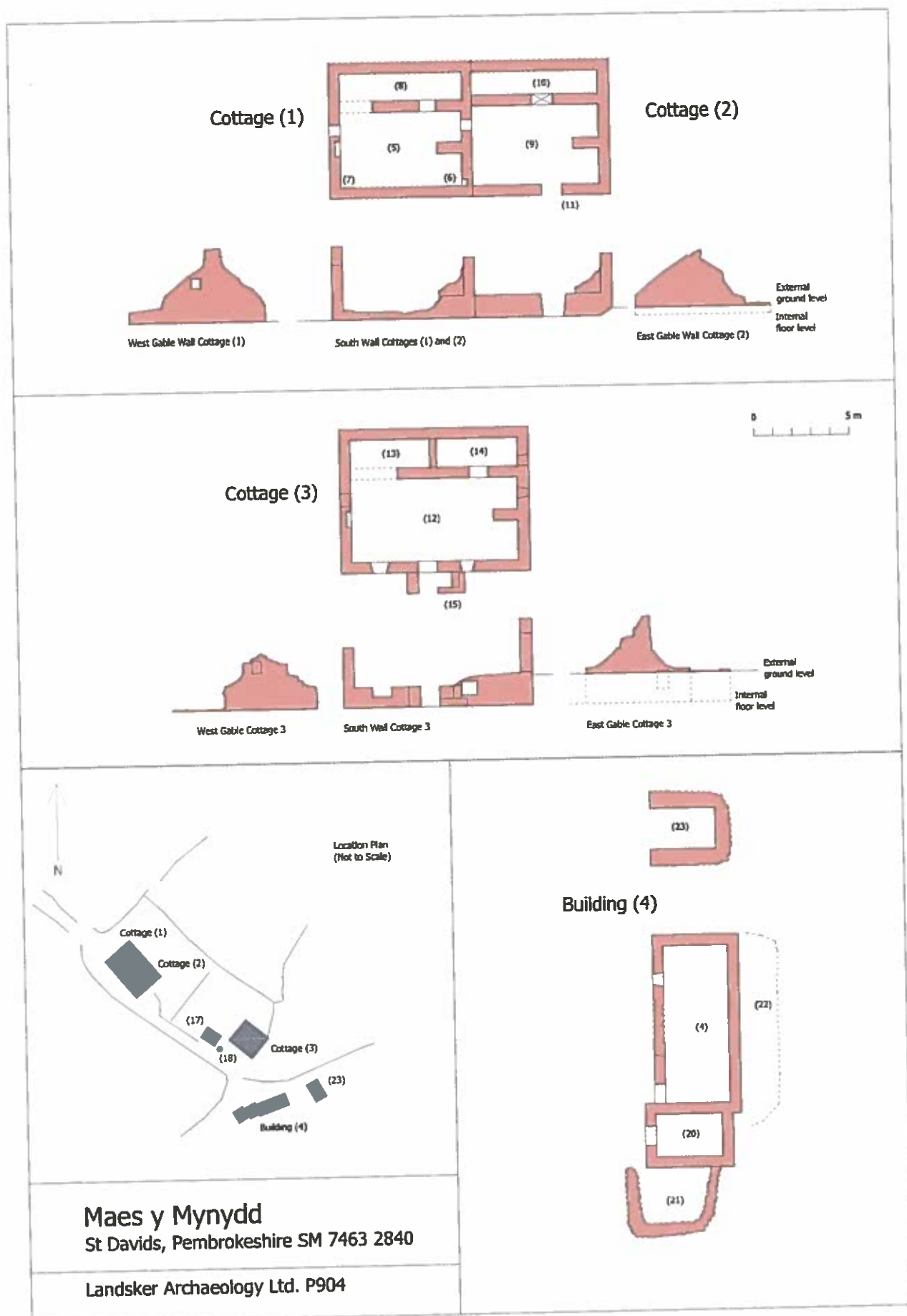


Figure 20 Maes y Mynydd Building Plans

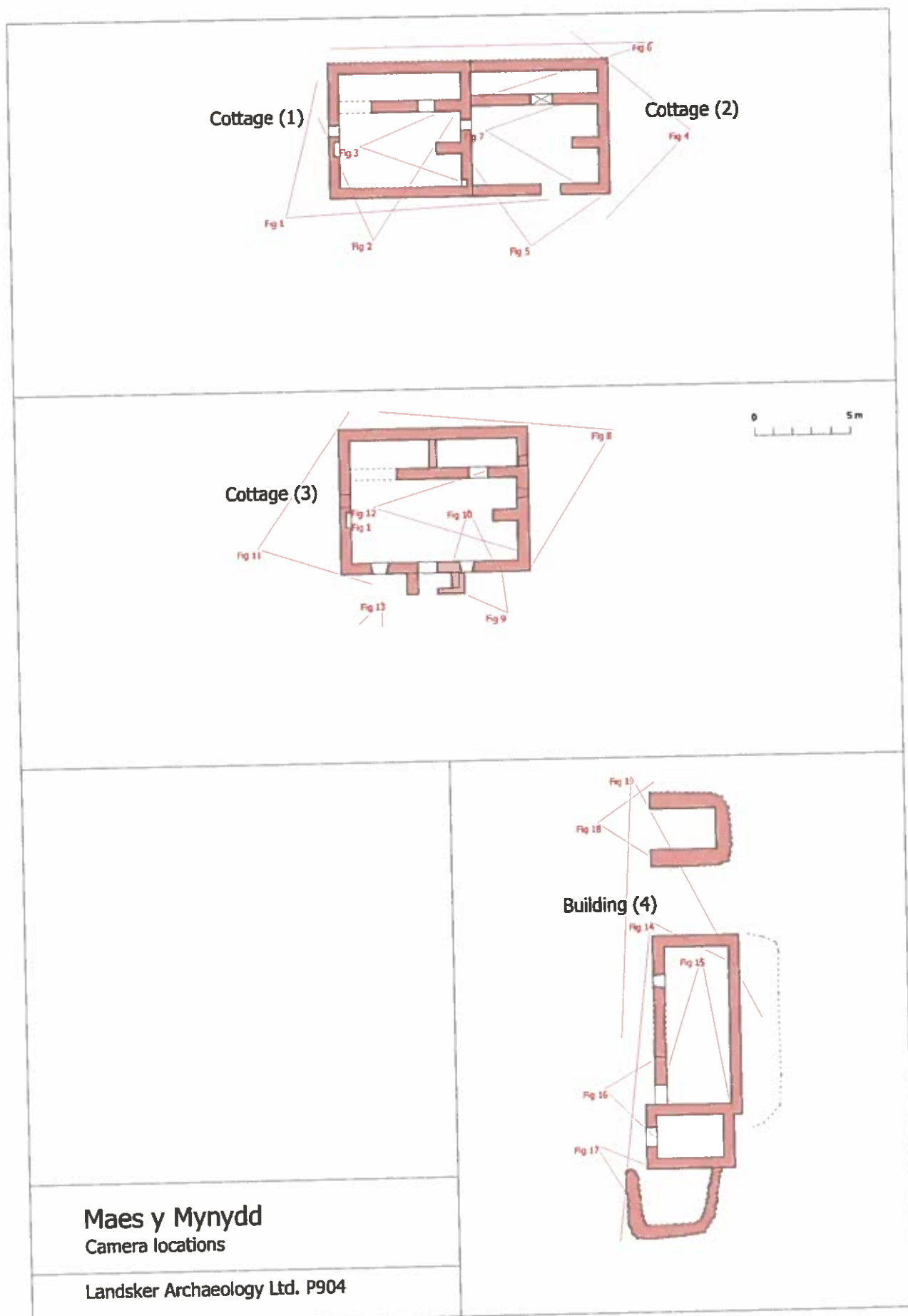


Figure 21 Maes y Mynydd Camera Locations

10. P904 Record Index

No.	Description	Interpretation
1	Building includes 5, 6, 7, 8, external dimension 7.18m by 7.54m long	House
2	Building 9, 10, 11, external dimension 7.18m by 7.23m long	House
3	Building 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, external dimension 7.63m by 9.97m long	House
4	Building includes 18, 20, 21, 22, external dimension 4.55m by 15.9m long	House
5	Room 3.93m by 6.34m long with Ingle-nook to east, 1.3m by 1.7m wide Chimney to west, 0.76m wide Door to north, 0.85m wide Window to east, 0.55m by 0.55m wide Window to west, 0.4m by 0.5m wide	Part of 1
6	Niche in corner of ingle-nook, 0.3m by 0.3m wide	Part of 1, oven?
7	Niche largely collapsed, 0.3m by 0.3m wide	Part of 1, oven?
8	Lean-to room to north, 1.45m by 6.39m long	Part of 1, pantry/
9	Room 4.47m by 6.63m long Ingle-nook to east, 1.37m by 1.84m wide Door to south (no dims) Door to north, blocked, 1.1m wide	Part of 2
10	Lean-to room to north, 1.21m by 6.63m long	Part of 2
11	Porch, wall thickened by 0.4m around doorway	Part of 2
12	Room 4.35m by 8.72m long Ingle-nook to east 1.3m by 2.06m wide Chimney to west, 0.79m wide Door to south, 1.0m wide Door to north, 0.95m Window to south, 0.65m by 0.48m wide Window to south, 0.48m wide Window to east, 0.46m by 0.4m wide Window to west, 0.5m by 0.25m wide	Part of 3
13	Lean-to room to north, 1.48m by 4.15m long	Part of 3
14	Lean-to room to north, window to east, 1.48m by 4.22m long	Part of 3
15	Porch, external dimensions 1.1m by 2.9m wide	Part of 3
16	Niche in south west corner of (12) 0.3m by 0.3m wide	Part of 3
17	Building, 2.4m by 4.2m long	Part of 3
18	Well, c. 1.5m diameter	Part of 3
19	Niches, 0.25m by 0.26m tall, 0.27m by 0.29m tall, 0.27m by 0.33m tall	Part of 4
20	Room 2.22m by 3.44m long Door to south 1m wide	Part of 4
21	Room, 2.91m by 2.53m long Door to north west, c. 1m wide	Part of 4
22	Lean-to room to east, c. 2m wide	Part of 4
23	Building, 2.13m by 3.45m long, walling is 2m wide and the floor slopes outward by c. 1.4m	Part of 4

Contents of DVD

Maes y Mynydd Report (Full).doc	Full Report in Word format
Maes y Mynydd Report (Draft) doc	Draft Report in Word format
Maes y Mynydd Report (Full).pdf	Full Report in PDF format
Maes y Mynydd Report (Draft) pdf	Draft Report in PDF format
11mar09.dwg	GPS survey of site
11mar09.pdf	GPS survey of site
Mym Plans.dwg	Building drawings
Mym Plans.pdf	Building drawings
Cottage 1 Folder	27 images
Cottage 2 Folder	35 images
Cottage 3 Folder	51 images
Building 4 Folder	22 images
Incidental Folder	31 images taken in the vicinity of the site

11. GPS Topographic Survey

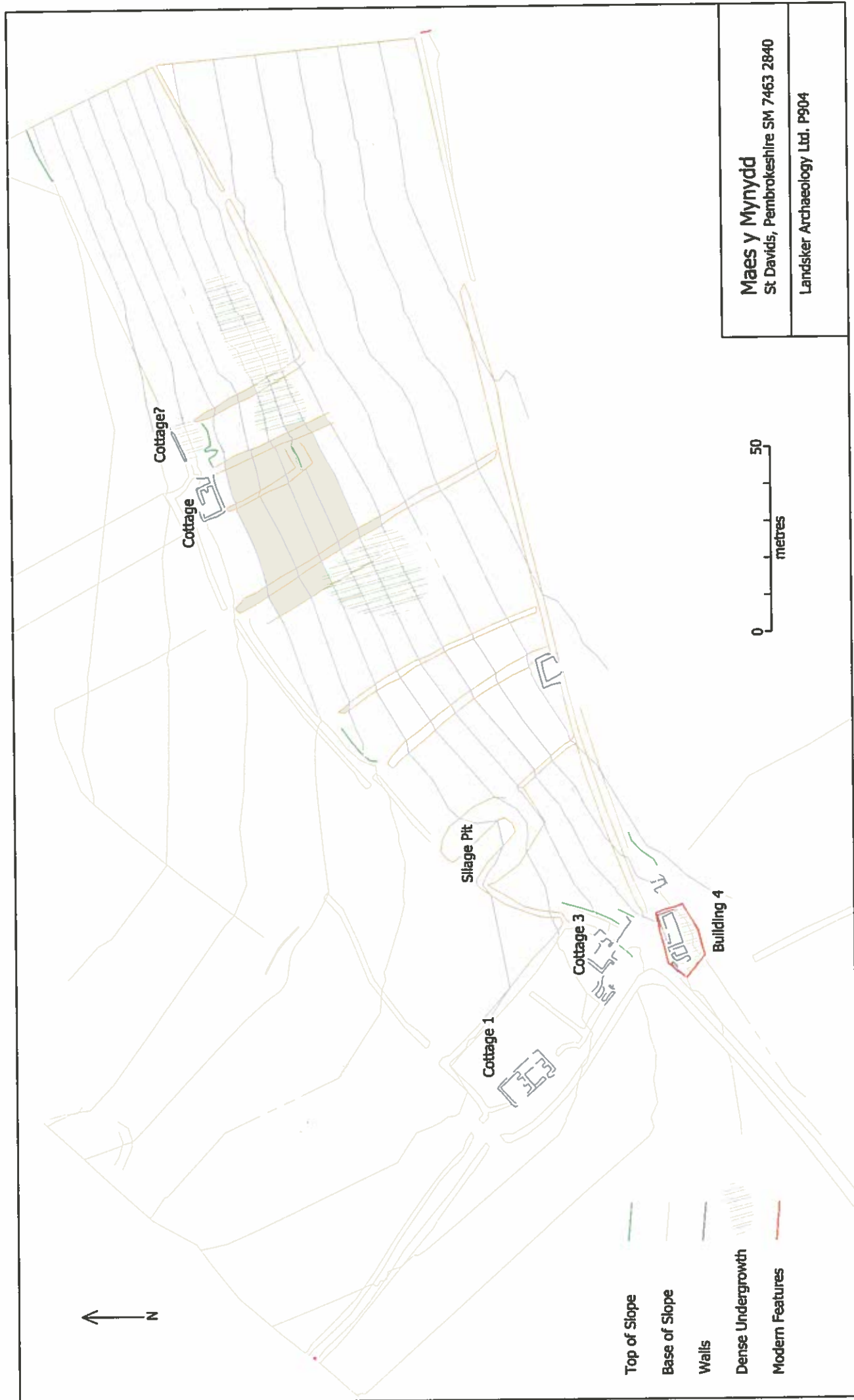
After the main programme of work was completed, an additional survey was conducted on the area using a survey grade GPS unit, kindly loaned by Leica Geosystems Ltd. The equipment is capable of recording points to an accuracy of one cm horizontally and two cm vertically, which can then be down loaded to computer and various drawing programmes.

The survey was carried out on 11th March 2009, during a day of moderate drizzle. Approximately 1000 points were collected, which included all the standing buildings and the surrounding field banks. Time did not allow for the survey of the features to the south of the site (the unenclosed land) which would need a substantial element of reconnaissance, to ensure that the features were properly identified.

The equipment allowed the whole area to be surveyed in one day in detail and with data to create a digital terrain model (DTM) for the site that allowed contours to be created showing the location of the settlement within it.

The survey concentrated on recording the field divisions on the slope leading east of the main settlement. These run downhill forming narrow strips, which also appeared to continue northwards across the more level land, which have now been largely removed for agricultural purposes. Further research on historic map sources would detail this.

An additional pair of cottages was identified 150m east of the main settlement. One at SM 7477 2853 was a rectangular structure set in to the base of the hill slope with an angle nook fireplace and opened towards the north. Soil appeared to have built up against the structure during its use. The other cottage at SM 7479 2854, could only be seen as the northern wall, with the interior lost in dense undergrowth. Both cottages were backed by rectangular garden plots running up hill, these also show evidence of hill slope movement of soil, with lynchets formed around boundaries.



Maes y Mynydd

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