

HER COPY

**Recording in the area of cellars
at the north end of the main range
Plas Coch, Llanedwen**



GAT Project No. 1973
prepared by
David Longley
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Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust
Craig Beuno, Ffordd y Garth, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2RT

Plas Coch cellars

The cellars are situated at the north and north-western end of the main range of buildings at Plas Coch. The late sixteenth century Elizabethan range stands just below the crest of a low rounded ridge on a north-south axis with its facade looking east in the direction of the Menai Straits. A kitchen wing of the late sixteenth century was attached perpendicular to the west wall at its northern end. The local topography slopes gently down towards what was the valley of a small stream and is now the location of an ornamental lake. With regard to this gradient, some considerable excavation into the slope must have been undertaken to secure the foundations of the westward projecting kitchen wing, so that the base of the west wall stood a full storey below the ground floor on the eastern side. A cellar was incorporated into this lower level of the kitchen wing with a wide door in the north wall opening onto the level of the reduced ground surface. Part of this cellar, where it abutted the main range, would have been underground. There are no cellars beneath the sixteenth-century main, north-south, range.

In the late 1830s and 1840s an extension was made at the northern end of the sixteenth-century house, on three storeys; the upper storey being a spacious attic. This extension overlaps the width of the sixteenth-century north gable and continues almost halfway along the north wall of the kitchen extension. The nineteenth-century extension comprises, at attic level, two bedrooms on the north side with an ante-chamber in a projecting wing on the north face; the northern end of the attic corridor with a cubby-hole against the north wall; a third bedroom in the north-west corner and a stair well between the north-west bedroom and the sixteenth-century kitchen wing.

When the 1830s - 1840s extension was built, further extensive excavation was necessary and this block, also, opened onto the same reduced ground surface, on its western side. Three vaulted, subterranean, basement rooms were inserted in almost the same configuration and size as the bedrooms in the attic space to the east of the attic corridor. A fourth basement room, partly subterranean but opening to the reduced ground surface to the west, occupied a space more or less commensurate with the western attic bedroom and its adjacent corridor. The remaining space took the stairwell down from the attic to basement level.

A plan attached shows the outline of the main building and the internal arrangements at attic level. Two further plans provide an interpretation, outlined in red, of the extent of the late-sixteenth-century main range and kitchen wing in relation to the cellars at the north end and the cellars in relation to the main house. The western wall of the cellar under the sixteenth century kitchen wing is aligned and commensurate with the upper storeys of that wing. The wall at cellar level extends eastward on the same alignment for a couple of metres and almost certainly maps the projection of the west gable of the sixteenth-century house. Beyond this the foundations, if there were any at this depth, were broached by the south end of the 1830s cellar. The limit of the cellar on the east side corresponds to an attic partition in the new 1830s wing where a change in thickness of the north wall would seem to indicate the junction between new and old at above ground level.

The Elizabethan cellar

This cellar space, unlike the 1830s cellars to the north-east, has incorporated several piers of various widths against the west and east wall in brick and stone which accommodate shelves and carry timber ceiling beams on a west-east alignment across the cellar. A very large part of the south-eastern corner of the cellar has been massively bricked-up with relatively modern bricks, to accommodate a safe. Otherwise, most of the below ground plan of the kitchen wing would have been taken up by the basement area.

The present door, on the north side, now opens into a Victorian corridor which communicated between the northern extension and the western range of buildings between the main range and the lake. The door has been partly blocked and narrowed to almost half its width. This may have been to take account of the installation of the northern extension and the stairwell, and external wall of the new block, overlapping the old kitchen wing.

There is a chamfered and stopped beam in place as a lintel above the door on its inside which runs the length of the original wider opening.

There is a long stretch of a roof-beam reused, between the wide piers on the west and east walls. The beam has sockets for joists on its south side but not on the north. The beam also has sockets on its underside, off-set to the south which once would have supported the studs of a timber screen. The underside is chamfered. This beam, with screen would have been a component of a ceiled room. The absence of joist sockets on the other side requires further interpretation.

A second truncated beam extends from the slighter pier, central to the west wall, to the massive brick construction which is the north wall of the safe.

The north-western, lower ground floor room of the 1830s-1840s extension is accessed from the corridor and stair well, through a door frame (door missing) with very similar flat arched head and characteristic moulding to the architraves in the attic corridor doorways and, more elaborately, the architraves in the first floor rooms. The dado rail in the north-western room is not dissimilar to that in the attic. This room has clearly been re-plastered after the doorway fittings were installed as the plaster masks the edges of the architrave in places.

The door to the small group of vaulted cellars to the north-east is closer to a four-centred arch at its head, most clearly seen from the rear. The moulding on the front of the architrave is simple, with a small bead on the front inside edge and an applied three-quarters round bead, 25mm diameter, carried up the architrave and along the curve of the head.

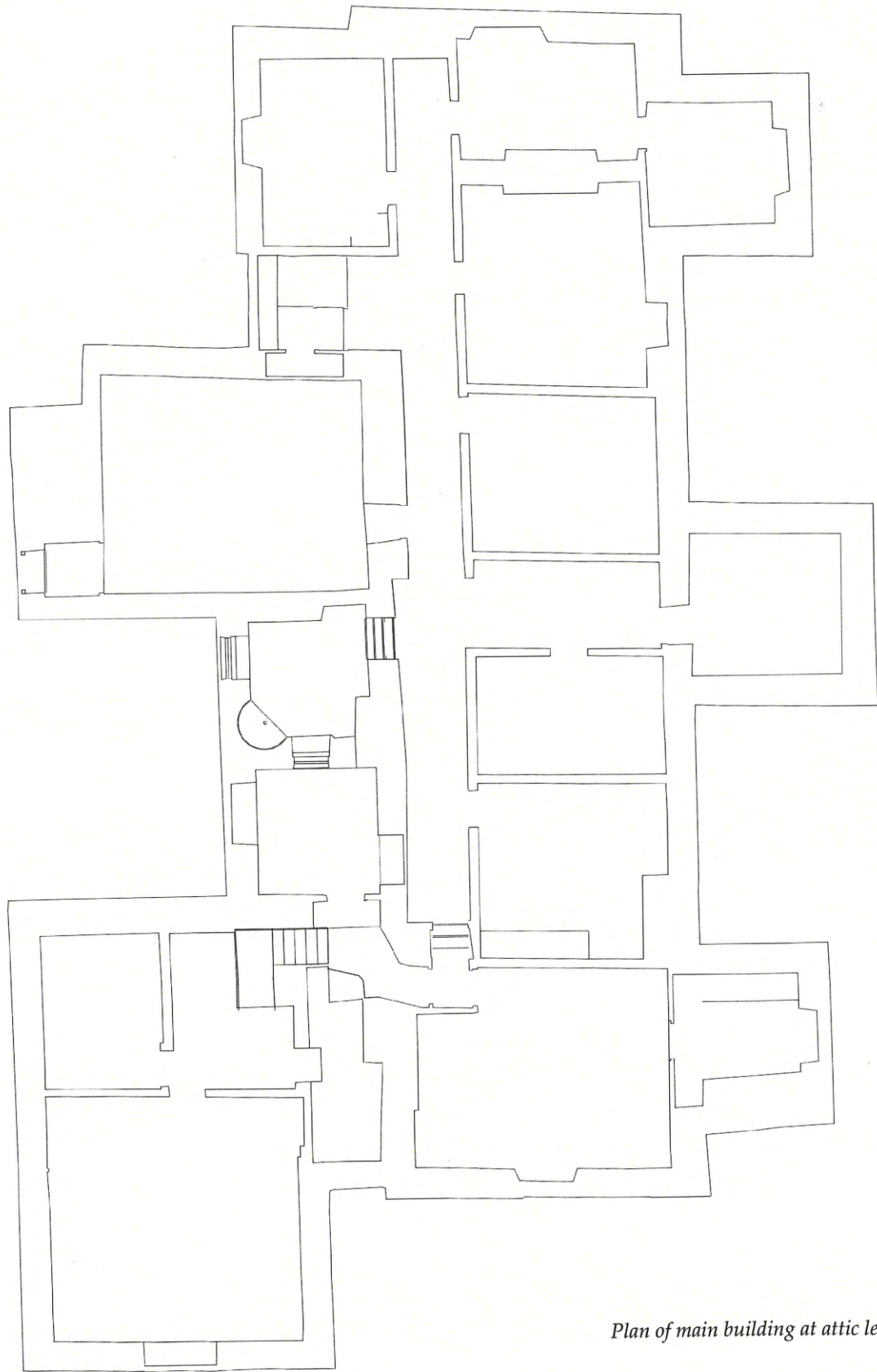
Both these doorways and their basement, or lower ground floor level, rooms are part of the 1830s - 1840s extension. The cellar under the western projecting kitchen wing is contemporary with the late sixteenth century house.

The profiles of the architraves have been taken and are shown in figs 4 and 5.

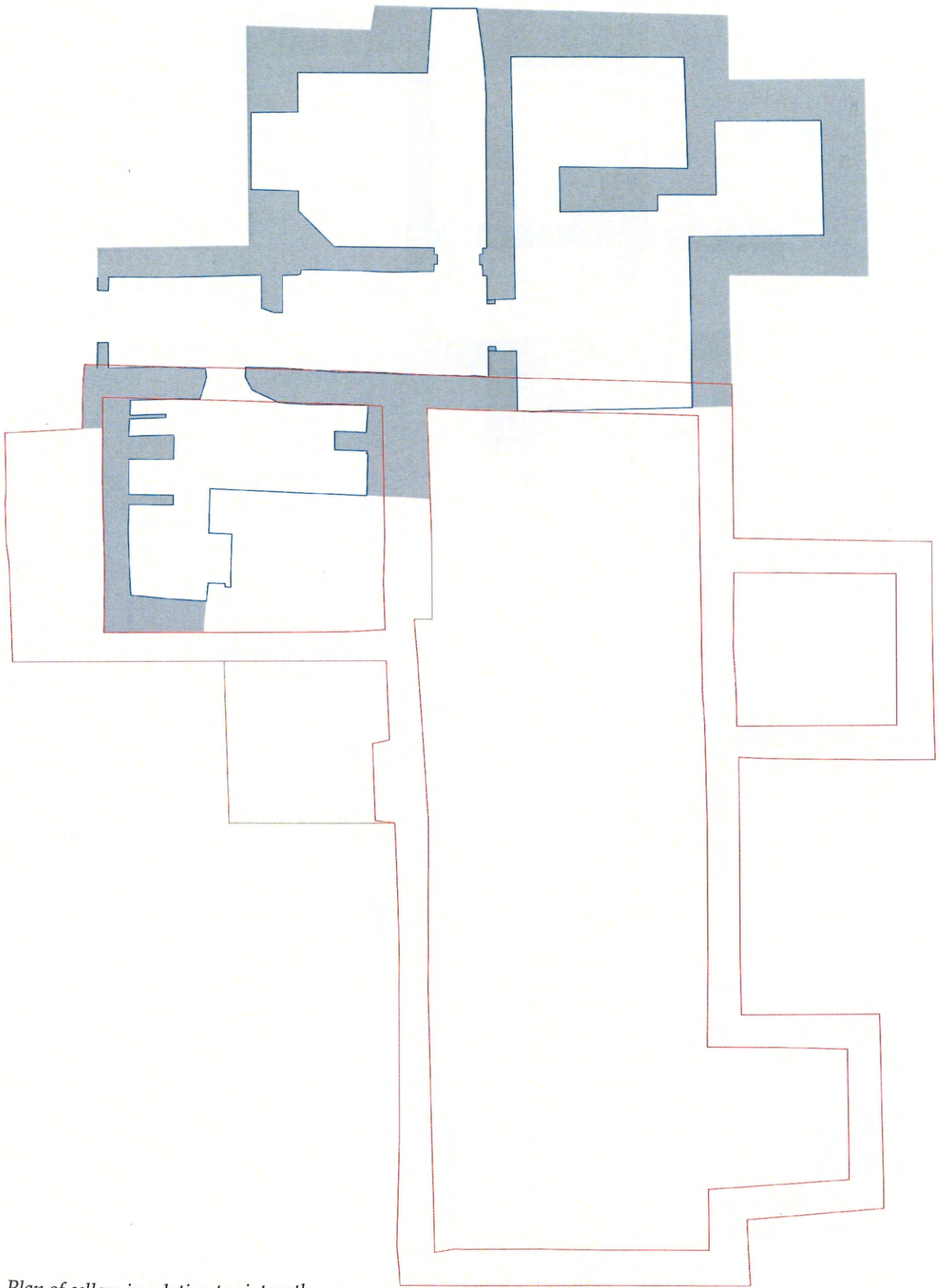
The door to the north-western room is 884mm between the jambs (narrowest) and 2019 high at underside of the head. The ceiling is 2408mm high.

The door to the north-eastern room is 914 between the jambs and 1619mm to the underside of the head. The base of the door at the junction with the corridor is slightly lower than the interior ground surface. The height of the vaulted ceiling is 2118mm.

The digital cad version of the plans and drawings were made at 1:1 scale.



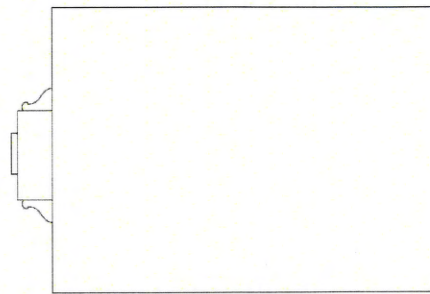
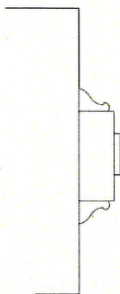
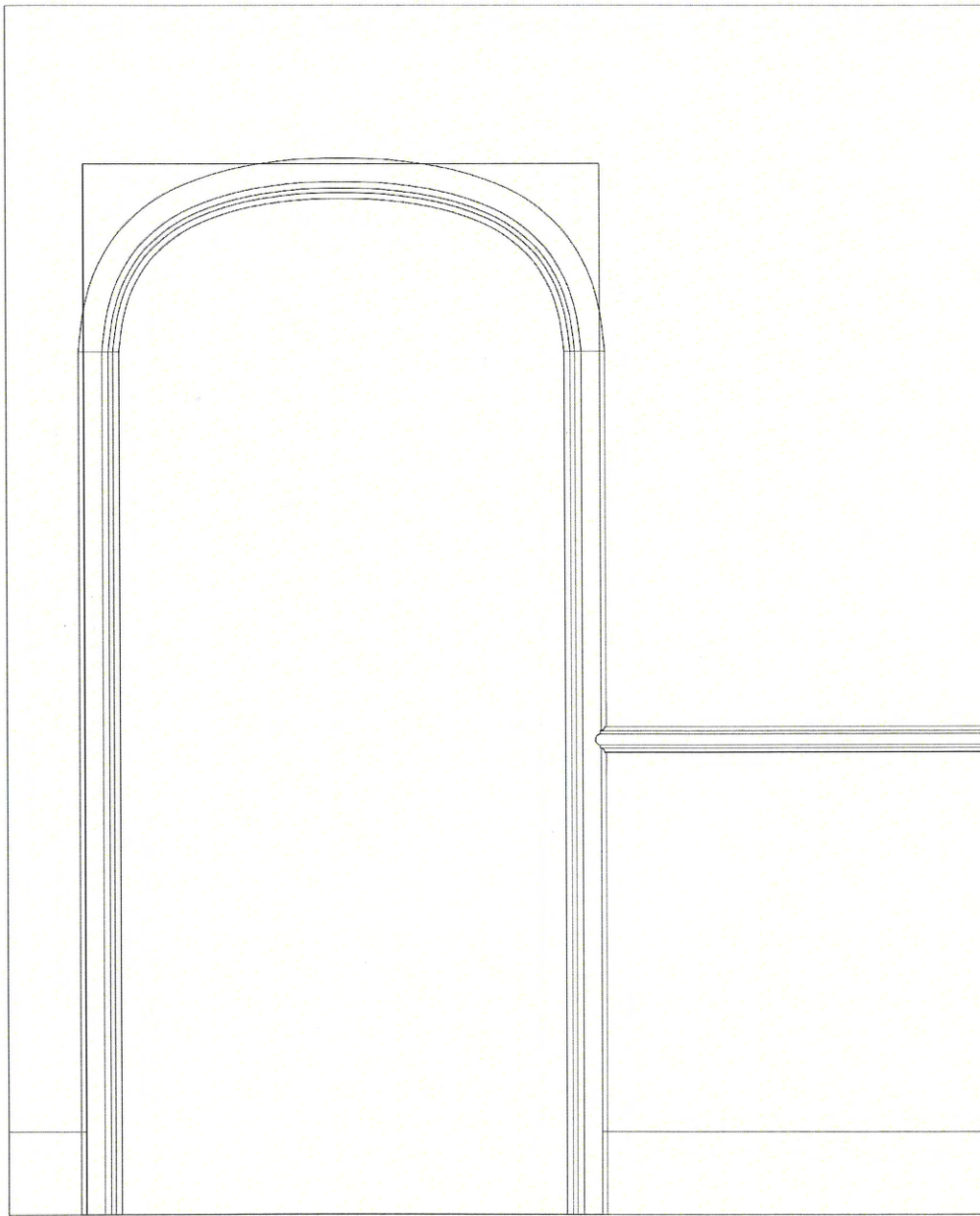
Plan of main building at attic level



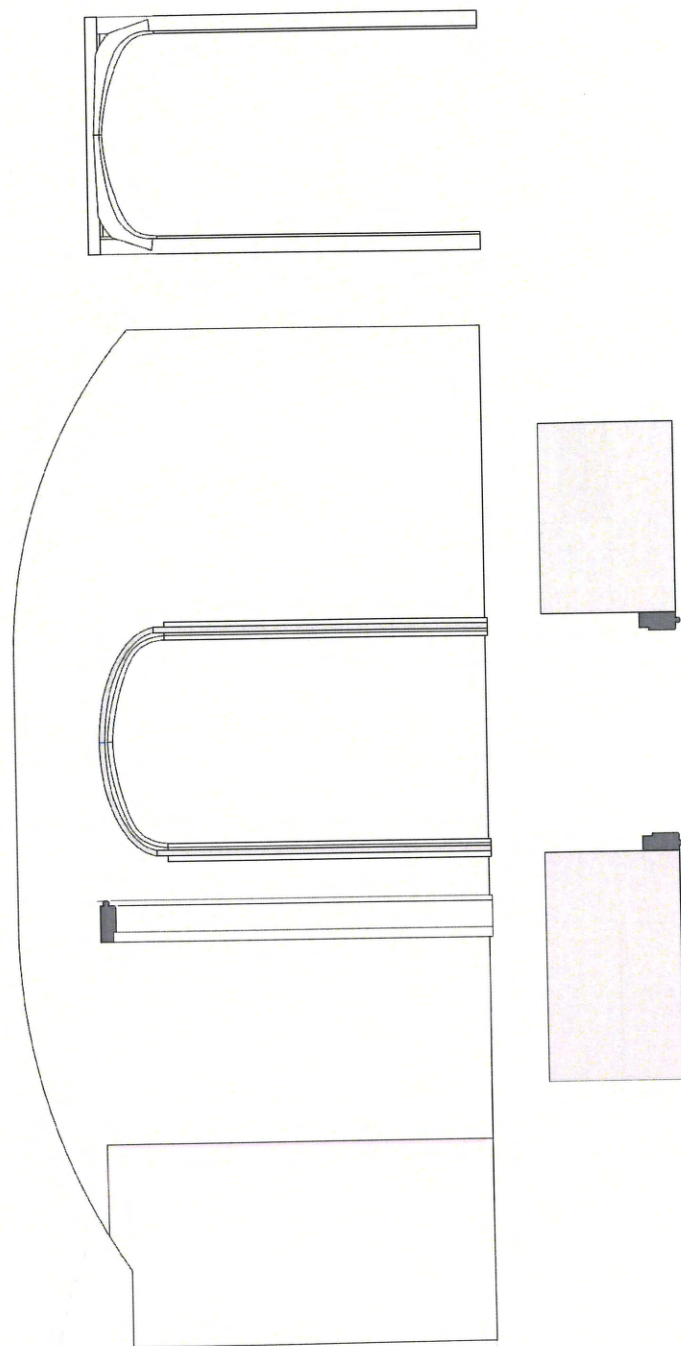
Plan of cellars in relation to sixteenth century house



Plan of cellars in relation to main house



Architrave in north-western room



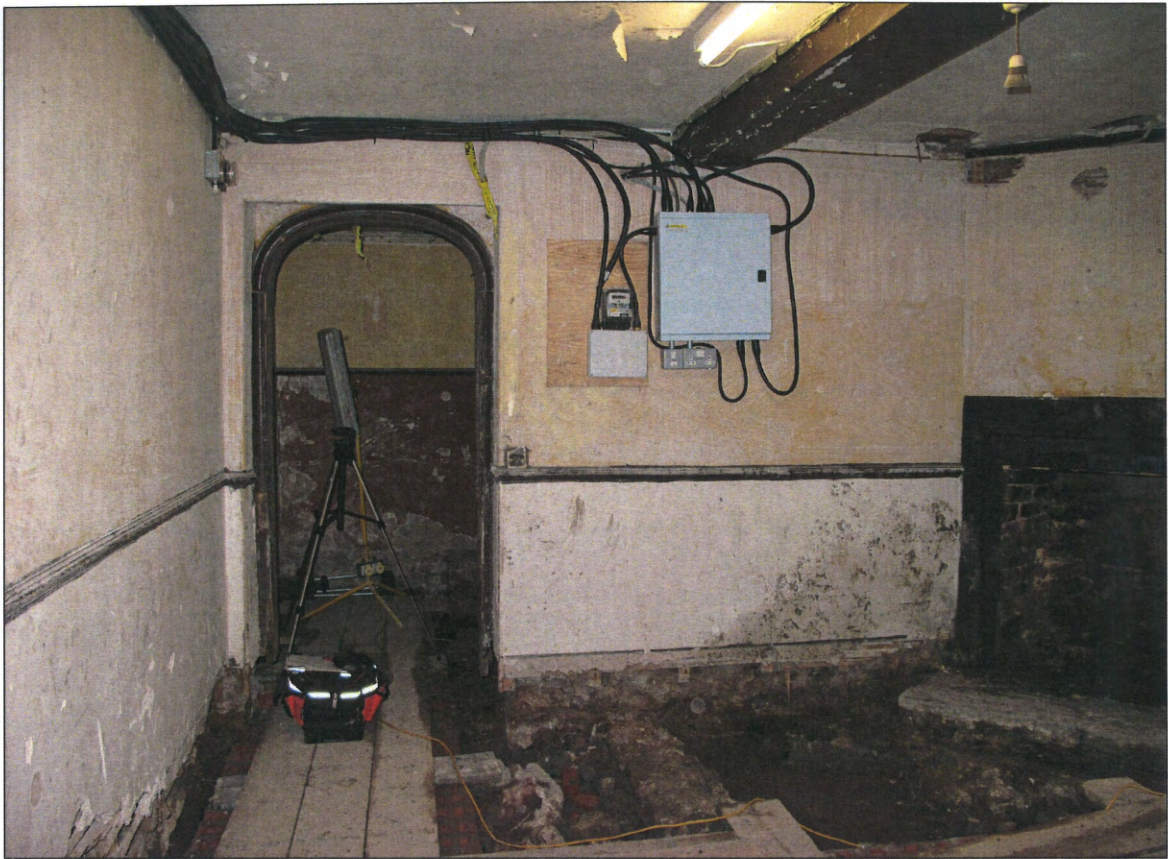
Architrave in north-eastern cellar



Blocked door and lintel at entrance to sixteenth century cellar, victorian corridor beyond.



Re-used beam in cellar with sockets for joists and sockets for stud panelling.



North-western basement/cellar room



The smaller of the two vaulted cellars in the north-eastern rooms

