Melin Sguthan, Gaerwen Ynys Môn

Archaeological Building Record





Melin Sguthan, Gaerwen Ynys, Môn

Archaeological Building Recording

Project No. G2221

Report No. 998

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November 2011

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING AT MELIN SGUTHAN, GAERWEN, ANGLESEY (G2221)

Summary

An archaeological building record was carried out on Melin Sguthan, Gaerwen, Anglesey in advance of redevelopment. The mill, dating from the late 18th century, was shown to have been the property of the Marquis of Anglesey, and formed part of the property of Brynsynsyn. The mill went out of use in 1913, and was much damaged in a fire in 1917, started deliberately in order to recover scrap metal for the war effort. The building is currently in a dilapidated condition, although fragments of the turning cap survive. Some evidence of surviving internal features were noted, including floor joists and fixtures and fittings for the internal mill machinery. Some original lime render survived on the tower, particularly on the windward side, and window and door openings were noted, both open and also having been subsequently blocked.

1 INTRODUCTION

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust has been asked by John Gray to carry out an archaeological building record (Level 2/3) of a redundant corn mill in advance of redevelopment. The former windmill is located within Gaerwen, Ynys Môn, just off the A5 at the side of a minor road to Craig Fawr and Llangefni (located at NGR SH47827211). The windmill is located within an irregular shaped enclosed field and measures 6.70m in width and 8.60m in height (Fig. 1). The windmill has been known variously as Melin Sguthan, Union Mill and Gaerwen Mill, and is a Grade II Listed Building (Ref: 5493).

The windmill is currently in a dilapidated condition, but stands to original height, with remnants of the turning cap still extant. Blocked openings are visible within the masonry.

2 SPECIFICATION AND PROJECT DESIGN

Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS) has requested an archaeological building recording record Level 2/3, based on the categories given in English Heritage's *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2006), of the existing structure as a condition of the listed building planning consent for development. This was to include a plan of the site accompanied by a high quality, detailed photo record and also a limited desk top study. This involves a visit to the archive, map regression and some investigation of estate papers.

No mitigation brief has been prepared for this project by GAPS, but an archaeological building record has been requested, on behalf of Ynys Môn Council.

3 METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The significance, origins and development of the site are discussed with reference to the available historical sources. Basic plans were produced of the floor plan of the building at ground, first and third floor level, based on the architects' drawings, showing structural and architectural features of significance. The clients drawing of the elevations of the mill tower is included to assist with interpretation (Fig. 7).

A photographic record was made recording all features, room spaces and elevations. The report conforms to the requirements for a building record at level 2/3 as set down in English

Heritage's *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2006). Elevated access to view the turning cap was required, and the scaffolding put in place by the developer was used to achieve this.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Topography

The former windmill is located at the western end of Gaerwen, Ynys Môn, just off the A5 at the side of a minor road to Craig Fawr and Llangefni at NGR SH47827211, to the north of Gaerwen church. The surrounding area consists of gently undulating improved grassland. The majority of the area is under fairly well drained pasture on Gaerwen soils of the brown earth group (BGS 1983), overlying pre-Cambrian schists, which outcrop along the ridge (Smith and George 1961).

4.2 General Background

The general background to the mills and milling on Anglesey has been covered in detail in Barry Guise and George Lees' *Windmills of Anglesey* (1992, 2nd Edition 2001), and the general background given below draws heavily on their work, which also covers the general workings of the windmills in more detail.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth century nearly fifty corn mills were erected in Ynys Môn. The growing population, increasing acreage under grain and unreliability of water supplies provided incentives for the construction of windmills to meet the demands for additional grinding capacity. This was further encouraged by a rise in grain prices. The mills "most closely resembled each other in design and outward appearance" (*ibid.*: 15), and they were almost all of a very similar type, constructed from rough undressed stone and rendered at least on the windward side of the mill. They were of four stories in height, and encircling the base was a low platform of stone that enabled the miller to reach the sails, and had the added benefit of preventing animals from approaching too closely. The stone built tower was surmounted by a boat shaped cap with gabled ends, clinker built of horizontal weatherboarding over a wooden frame with a fringe protecting the rack on which the cap revolved. The four common sails were carried on a cast-iron windshaft projecting through the front of the cap. To bring the sails into the wind the miller pulled on an endless chain hanging from a large wooden chain wheel at the rear of the cap.

Internally, there was a series of gears that transmitted the energy from the sails to the main machinery below. Subsidiary machinery such as the sack hoist could also be run off this. From the second floor the grain was poured down a wooden chute to a hopper on the floor below. This floor was where the heart of the mill was, and there were usually three pairs of millstones, one of French burrstones and two pairs of Welsh stones. If wheat was being ground the harder French stones were used. The Welsh millstones were of local origin, and were quarried on Anglesey, particularly in the area around Penmon on the east of the island.

Decline in milling set in following the rapid fall in grain prices from the 1870s as a result of cheap imports, and processing of imported grain took place large industrial mills in places such as Liverpool as a result of improved communications. Most mills on Anglesey had ceased trading by the outbreak of the First World War (*ibid.*, 13).

4.3 Melin Sguthan

Melin Sguthan is one of two historical windmills located in Gaerwen; the other, Melin Maengwyn, is located c.750.0m to the southeast. The establishment date of Melin Sguthan is

unknown, but is thought to predate Melin Maengwyn, with a late eighteenth century origin (Guise and Lees 1992: 108). No evidence for its construction could be found in the Plas Newydd estate papers at Bangor University, despite the land having been in the hands of the estate from at least the late 18th century.

The windmills measured up to four storeys in height and were constructed from rough, undressed stone and either rendered all over, or, more commonly, on the windward side only (*ibid*.). The mill tower was surmounted by a boat-shaped cap, with the four sails projecting through the front of the cap. To bring the sails into the prevailing wind, the miller pulled on an endless chain hanging from a large wooden chain wheel at the rear of the cap (*ibid*.).

Sguthan mill is shown on the tithe map of the parish of Llanfihangel Esciefog of 1850 (Fig.2), and the apportionment covering the mill and the surrounding area is given in the table below:

Landowner	Occupier	No on	Name and Description Quantities in		in	
		Plan	of Lands and Premesis Statute Measi		asure	
				A	R	P
Griffith Richard	William	42	Jericho	2	1	16
Tregaian Esq.	Jones					
Anglesey, The most	William	43	Shop Newydd	1	-	38
noble, the Marquis of	Owen					
Griffith Richard	Owen	44	Brynsynsyn	2	3	30
Tregaian Esq.	Williams					
Anglesey, The most	John Roberts	45	Tyn y Pwll	1	-	-
noble, the Marquis of						
	Owen Jones	46	Brynsynsyn	6	2	-
	6699	46a	Wind Mill Land	-	3	-
	Marquis of	47	Wood in Graig Fawr	5	-	14
	Anglesey					
	Thomas	51	Graig Fawr	77	2	37
	Owen					

It has been suggested that the mill passed into the hands of an association of Manchester people, and that is why it adopted the name of Union Mill, and there was possibly a link with trade associations in that city, and a Manchester trading badge once hung over the adjoining stables, which have since been demolished (*ibid*.108).

A late nineteenth century photograph of Melin Sguthan, with the miller Rowland Williams standing proudly in front of it, shows an enclosed stone platform and an external stairway providing access to an upper floor, along with a pigsty in front of the windmill (*ibid.*: 107-8; Fig. 4), all of which have since been demolished, although they are shown on an RAF aerial photograph of 1945 (Fig. 5). The photograph also shows a "Y-wheel" type of chain wheel for turning the cap; this had iron forks like Y-shaped pegs at intervals round the wheel's circumference, which were thought to give the endless chain a better grip (*ibid.*). Both the sails and the chain wheel have been removed but remnants of the cap are still extant atop the structure and are visible from the outside as protruding timber remains.

Melin Sguthan ceased working in 1913 and four years later was deliberately set on fire to "facilitate the recovery of its metalwork for the war effort", although this also seriously affected the structure of the tower and large cracks are now visible (*ibid.*: 108). The mill is shown highlighted on an early 20th century estate map, indicating its former importance (Bangor Archives, Plas Newydd MSS IX 5047). The land on which the now derelict mill stood and its adjacent cottage was sold in 1932 by the Plas Newydd Estate as lot 104 (Fig.3),

after a significant dispute between the Plas Newydd estate and the Williams family, the last millers (Bangor Archives, Plas Newydd VIII, 4279). At that time it was occupied by William Jones, at an annual rental of £6 10s 0d, and was considered to consist of *Valuable Accommodation Land with extensive road frontage, situate on the outskirts of the village of Gaerwen and including the Old Windmill, Cow House, 2 stores, with lofts over. Area 3 Acres 2 Roods, 5 Poles (or thereabouts) (Anglesey Archives, WF/28). The site was bought by Thomas Parry after the Second World War, and the mill itself, of no practical use, was allowed to deteriorate and became somewhat overgrown (Fig. 4) and the cow house and stores were demolished. It was sold again in 2009 (Guise and Lees 1992 (2nd edition), 120). Development work was being carried out on the building in November 2011 (Plate 21).*

The windmill is a Grade II listed building (ref.: 5493). It is recorded on the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) as site number 11,782.

5 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

5.1 External Description

The mill tower survives to full height as a stone shell, with some parts of the frame and ring gear remaining on top of the tower. The tower is built of local rubble stone, and tapers from bottom to top. It is 9.1m high and 6.7m external diameter at the base, and the wall is approximately 0.9m thick. The external diameter of the top of the tower is 5.1m (Fig. 7; Plates 1-5). There are two segmental headed doors opposite one another orientated approximately north-south, each 1.2m wide and 2.1m high with a shallow voussoired arch. The north doorway has been blocked to two-thirds of its height (Plate 6, 16). The mill has an angled chute at its north east, 1.2m wide and 1.6m high with a voussoired lintel, which probably formed an opening through which the sacks of grain were attached to the hoist to raise them to the milling floor (Plate 6-7).

There is a single window opening at first floor level to the south west 5.0m above ground level (Plate 2, 22). There is a smaller window above it with a stone lintel at third floor level that has since been blocked up (Plate 9). There is a single window at the north west of the mill tower at first floor level (Plate 1). Above the chute there is a blocked window to the north east with a slate cill at first floor level, and there is a plain stone lintelled window at third floor level above it (Plate 8).

There is evidence that the building was partially rendered, and substantial structural cracks are present in the building to the east and west (Plates 3, 23). Remnants of the former turning cap and associated metalwork also survive at the top of the tower.

5.2 Internal Description

The internal surfaces of the tower walls were rendered, although much of this is now lost and there is much evidence for structural damage to the walls (Plate 18). Holes in the internal walls held pairs of beams, fragments of which survive, supporting floors at 3.05m, 6.05m and 8.1m above ground level (Fig. 6; Plate 11-15). At first floor level there was a small cupboard on the south east side of the mill (Plate 19). Extra beams supported the main shaft and great spur wheel, driving two pairs of stones on the second floor (Plate 14). An iron bearing journal in a wooden frame denoted the position of the horizontal shaft which drove the sack hoist (Plate 20), and recesses in the internal walls probably showed the positions of grain cleaning and flour dressing machinery. The main frame and other parts of the base cap are still in position (Plates 15, 23-28), as is most of the cast iron toothed ring which topped the stone tower. The cast iron ring was constructed in sections, jointed and pinned to a wooden wall plate (Plates 27-28). The wall plate forming a wooden circle at the top of the tower consists of

jointed lengths of timber, up to 2m long and held together by bolts and bands. Remnants of the skeleton of the turning cap frames survive in the form of a rectangular jointed box, and all the woodwork is now much weathered and separated from the cast iron ring. The iron band which once encircled the brake wheel still hangs precariously from the cap frame (Plate 28).

A broken millstone sits on the floor of the mill, which is fractured in such a manner as to suggest that it fell from its position in the mill on to the ground during the fire of 1917 (Plate 10), along with fragments of a second stone. There is further evidence of this fire having taken place in the form of charred ground and timber fragments. Horseshoes and domestic debris present indicate that some casual later occupation has taken place.

6 CONCLUSION

A desk-based assessment and photographic survey have been undertaken at Melin Sguthan. The mill was built in the late 18th century, and is one of some 30 similar tower mills to survive in Anglesey. The majority are now only stone shells, though one (Melin Llynon), has been fully renovated and is run by the Local Authority as a tourist attraction, whilst another (Kingsland Mill, Holyhead), retains all its internal machinery though no sails. The tapering stone towers so typical of the Anglesey mills are relatively rare elsewhere in the country, and their distribution is predominantly found in Anglesey. In addition to windmills, there were a large number of water corn mills on Anglesey, often operating close-to and in co-operation with windmills.

The mill was owned by the Plas Newydd estate, and lay on the holding known as Brynsynsyn. The estate also initially owned the adjacent windmill at Melin Maengwyn, though that mill appears to have been sold c. 1860 to a firm of Liverpool bakers. A third mill tower lay to the west, associated with two nearby water corn mills – the complex known as 'Berw Mills'.

Melin Sguthan is representative, therefore, of an increase in windmill building which occurred in Anglesey in the 18th century to accompany the rise in population and food production which marked the agricultural and industrial revolutions. It was the latter, with the evolution of steam-driven corn mills in the late 19th century, which caused the decline of the windmills. Melin Sguthan went out of use in 1913, and was much damaged in a fire in 1917, started deliberately in order to recover scrap metal for the war effort. The mill was sold by the Plas Newydd estate in 1932, by then of no practical use. The building is currently in a dilapidated condition, although fragments of the turning cap survive. Some evidence of surviving internal features within the tower were noted, including remains of floor joists and fixtures and fittings for the internal mill machinery. Some original lime render survived on the tower, particularly on the windward side.

7 REFERENCES

Primary Sources

Anglesey Archives

Tithe Map of the Parish of Llanfihangel Esciefog 1850

WF/28 Sale Catalogue of the Plas Newydd Estate, Llanfairpwll and Surrounding District 1932

Bangor University Archives

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MELIN SGUTHAN, GAERWEN, YNYS MÔN

PROJECT DESIGN FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING (G2221)

Prepared for

JOHN GRAY

September 2011

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

MELIN SGUTHAN, GAERWEN PROJECT DESIGN FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING (G2221)

Prepared for John Gray, September 2011

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MELIN SGUTHAN, GAERWEN PROJECT DESIGN FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING (G2221)

Prepared for John Gray, September 2011

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust has been asked by John Gray to provide a cost and project design for carrying out an archaeological building record (Level 2/3) of a redundant corn mill in advance of redevelopment. The former windmill is located within Gaerwen, Ynys Môn, just off the A5 at the side of a minor road to Craig Fawr and Llangefni (located at NGR SH47827211). The windmill is located within an irregular shaped enclosed field and measures 6.70m in width and 8.60m in height. The windmill is a Grade II listed building (ref.: **5493**). It is recorded on the regional Historic Environment Record (HER) as site number **11,782**. The windmill is known variously as Melin Sguthan, Union Mill and Gaerwen Mill.

The windmill is currently in a dilapidated condition, but stands to original height, with remnants of the turning cap still extant. Blocked openings are visible within the masonry.

No mitigation brief has been prepared for this project by Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service (GAPS), but an archaeological record (Level 2/3) has been requested, on behalf of the local council and as a condition of the listed building planning consent.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Melin Sguthan is one of two historical windmills located in Gaerwen; the other, Melin Maengwyn, is located *c.*750.0m to the southeast. The establishment date of Melin Sguthan is unknown, but is thought to predate Melin Maengwyn, with a late eighteenth century origin (Guise and Lees 1992: 108). During the eighteenth and nineteenth century nearly fifty corn mills were erected in Ynys Môn and "most closely resembled each other in design and outward appearance" (*ibid.*: 15).

The windmills measured up to four storeys in height and were constructed from rough, undressed stone and either rendered all over, or, more commonly, on the windward side only (*ibid.*). The mil tower was surmounted by a boat-shaped cap, with the four sails projecting through the front of the cap. To bring the sails into the prevailing wind, the miller pulled on an endless chain hanging from a large wooden chain wheel at the rear of the cap (*ibid.*).

A late nineteenth century photograph of Melin Sguthan shows an external stairway providing access to an upper floor, along with a pigsty in front of the windmill (*ibid*.: 107-8); both of which have since been demolished. The photograph also shows a "Y-wheel" type of chain wheel for turning the cap; this had iron forks like Y-shaped pegs at intervals round the wheel's circumference, which were thought to give the endless chain a better grip (*ibid*.). Both the sails and the chain wheel have been removed but remnants of the cap are still extant atop the structure and are visible from the outside as protruding timber remains.

Melin Sguthan ceased working in 1913 and four years later was deliberately set on fire to "facilitate the recovery of its metalwork for the war effort" (*ibid.*: 108).

3.0 REQUIREMENTS

The requirements are for an archaeological building record for Melin Sguthan prior to development. GAPS, on behalf of the Cyngor Ynys Môn Council, have requested that the building record be roughly commensurate with the English Heritage 'Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice' (2006) Level 2/3 and should include the following elements:

- written account 1-3, 5-8, 22;
- drawings 2, 7-9;
- photographs 1-9.

4.0 METHOD STATEMENT

4.1 Written Account

The written account will utilise a range of available resources and discuss the structure's significance, origins, development and use. Local archive sources will be used to identify the history of the site and its evolution.

4.2 Site Drawings

The **drawings** will include plans of the existing internal spaces and a record of the form and location of architectural/structural features of historic significance (internal and external). Particular attention will be paid to the construction of the remnant turning cap. <u>Elevated access will be required to fully document this structural feature</u>; arrangement must be made with the client for scaffold access.

4.3 Photographs

Photographs will be detailed and record all features, room spaces and elevations to illustrate the building's appearance and structure and to support an historical analysis. Each print will be clearly labeled with the subject, orientation and the date taken, and cross-referenced to its negative and or digital file. Digital images will be presented in the report as a hard copy and a CD-ROM will be included as an archive to accompany the report. Particular attention will be paid to the construction of the remnant turning cap. Elevated access will be required to fully document this structural feature; arrangement has been made with the client for scaffold access.

A Digital SLR will be used throughout.

4.4 Processing data, illustration, report and archiving

Following completion of the record as outlined above, a report will be produced incorporating the following:

- Non-technical summary
- Introduction
- Specification and Project Design
- Methods and techniques
- Archaeological Background

- Description of structure, including: a agreed specification, a location plan, a plan illustrating the location and direction of any photographs or drawings, full dimensional and descriptive detail
- Summary and conclusions
- Bibliography of sources consulted
- An archive compact disc

Illustrations, including plans and photographs, will be incorporated within the report.

4.5 Archive

A full archive including plans, photographs, written material and any other material resulting from the project will be prepared. All plans, photographs and descriptions will be labelled and cross-referenced, and lodged in an appropriate place (to be decided in consultation with the regional Historic Environment Record) within six months of the completion of the project. A CD-ROM copy will also be produced.

5. 0 STAFF

The project will be supervised by John Roberts, Acting Head of Contracts at the Trust. The work will be carried out by fully trained Project Archaeologists who are experienced in building survey. (Full CV's are available upon request).

6.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Trust subscribes to the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers) Health and Safety Policy as defined in **Health and Safety in Field Archaeology** (1999).

7.0 INSURANCE

Liability Insurance - Aviva Policy 24765101CHC/00045

- Employers' Liability: Limit of Indemnity £10m in any one occurrence
- Public Liability: Limit of Indemnity £5m in any one occurrence
- Hire-in Plant Insurance: £50,000.00 any one item; £250,000.00 any one claim

The current period expires 21/06/12

Professional Indemnity Insurance – RSA Insurance Plc P8531NAECE/1028

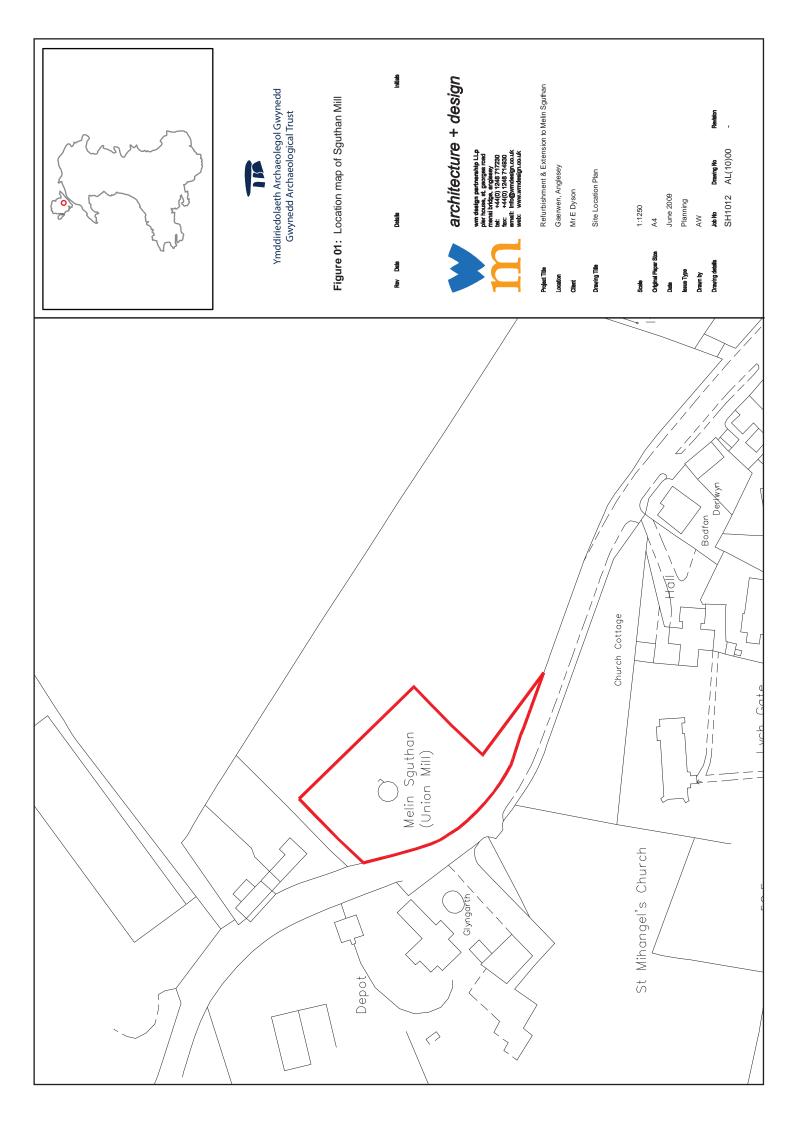
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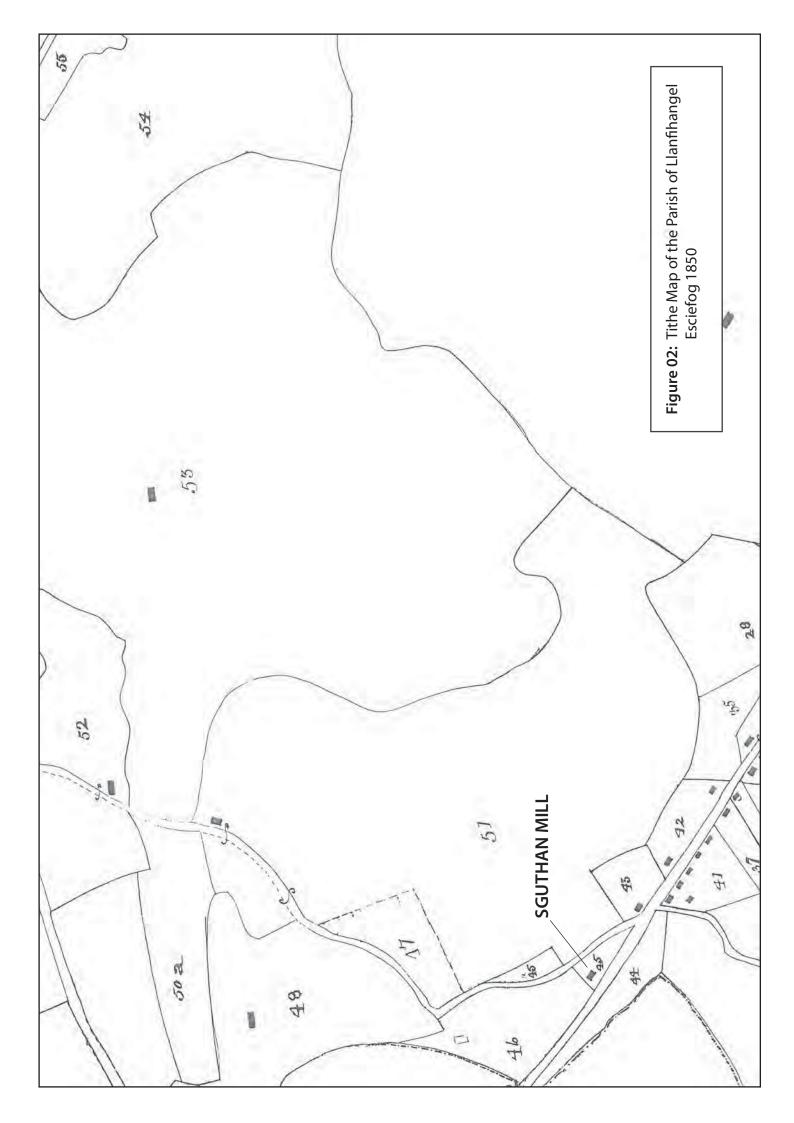
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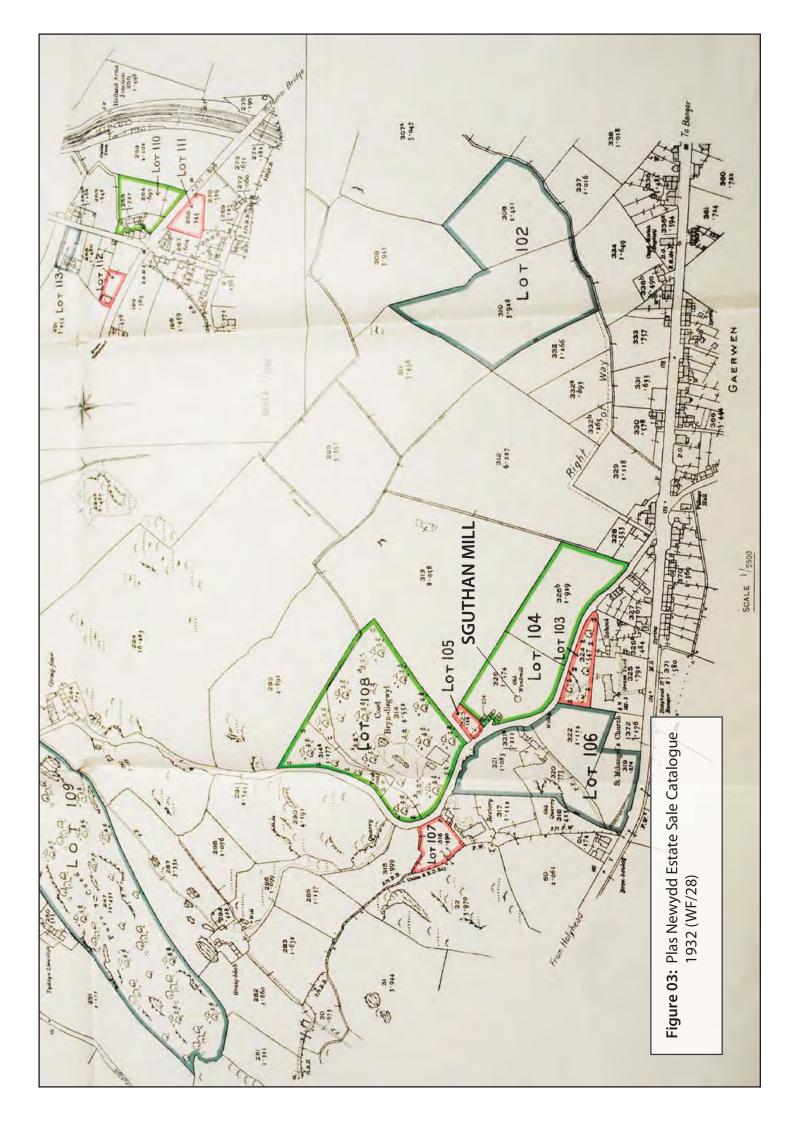
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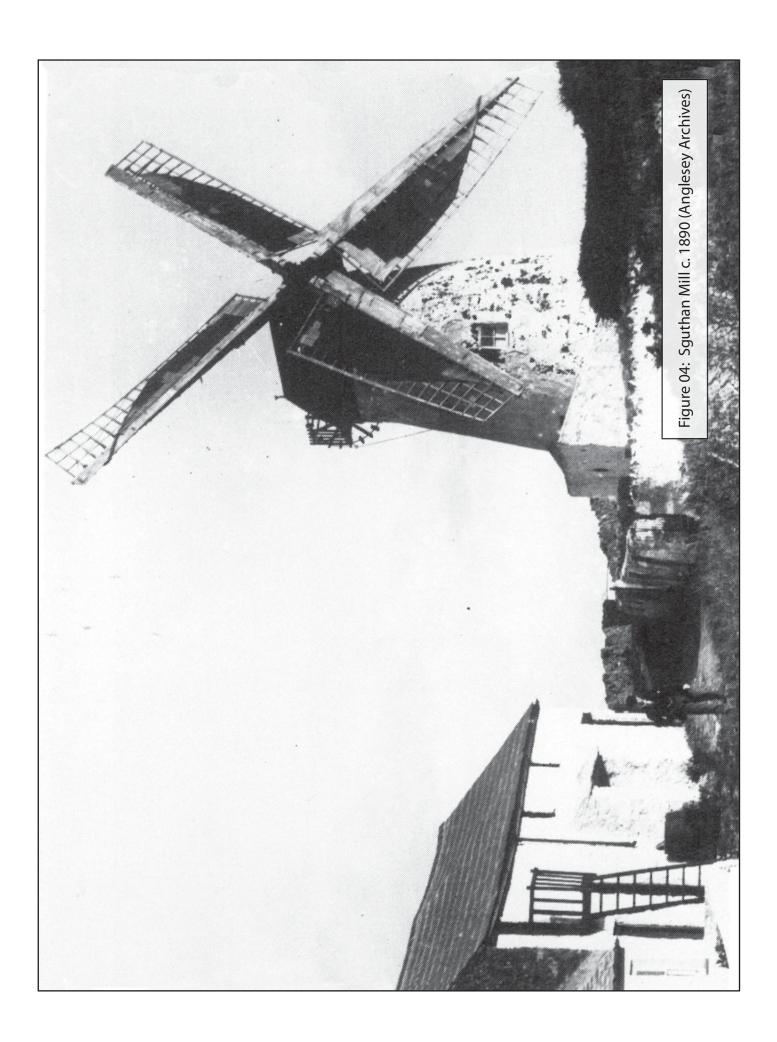
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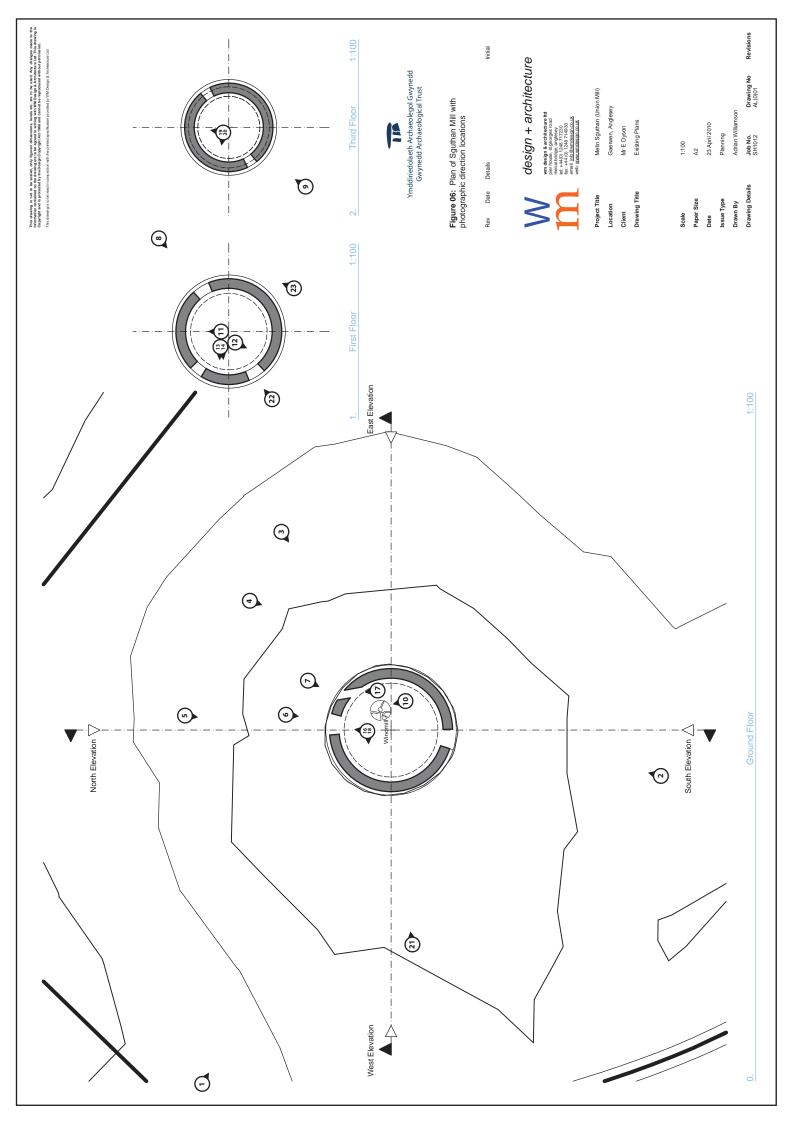












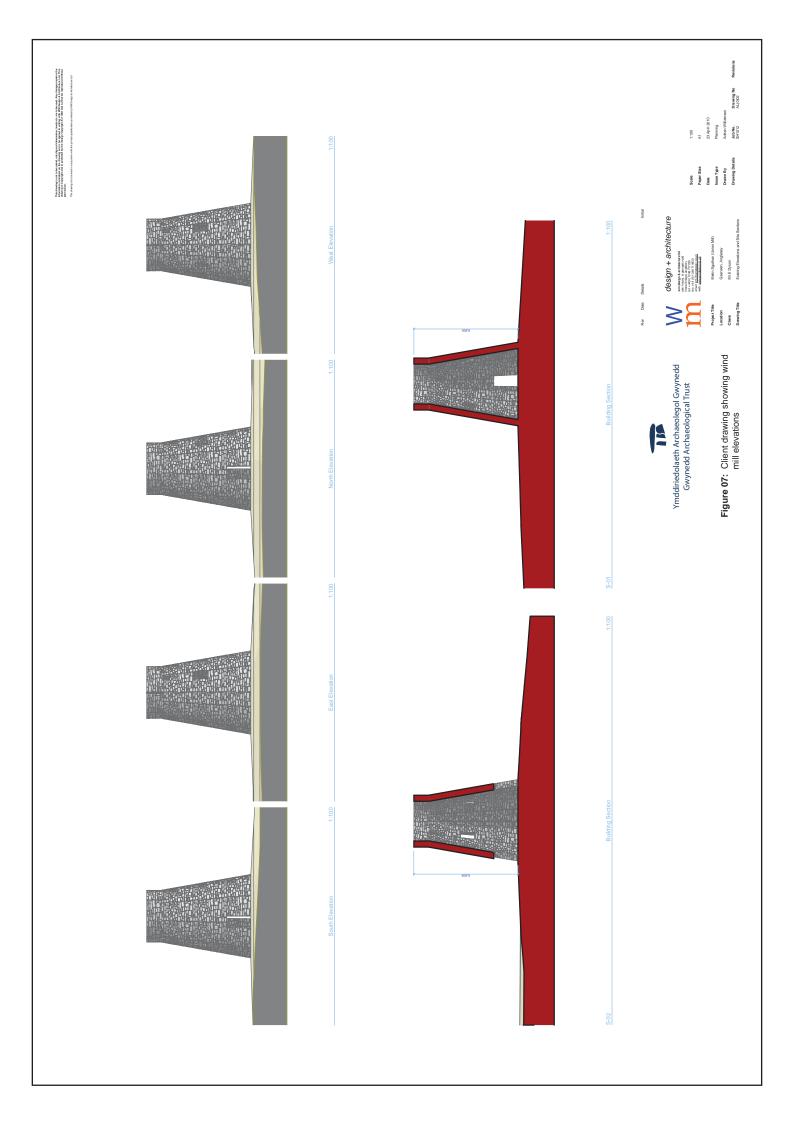




Plate 01: General view of Sguthan Mill as visited on 6th October 2011. Photograph taken from the west



Plate 02: General shot of Sguthan Mill. Photograph taken from the south



Plate 03: General view of Sguthan Mill. Photograph taken from the north east



Plate 04: General shot of Sguthan Mill with Gaerwen church in background. Photograph taken from the north east



Plate 05: General view of Sguthan Mill. Photograph taken from the north east



Plate 06: Shot detailing partially blocked doorway & sack hoist chute entrance to the left. Photograph taken from the north



Plate 07: Shot of partially blocked sack hoist chute. Photograph taken from the north east



Plate 08: Shot looking upwards showing one blocked window on the 2nd floor & open window on the 3rd floor & significant surviving original lime render. Photograph taken from the north east



Plate 09: Shot of blocked window on 3rd floor & remnants of turning cap above. Photograph taken from the south



Plate 10: Shot of broken mill stone. Photograph taken from the south east



Plate 11: Shot looking upwards showing remnants of roof joist and other wooden structural elements. Photograph taken from the south



Plate 12: Shot looking upwards showing open window on the 2nd, and blocked window on 3rd floor, as well as roof joist holes. Photograph taken from the south



Plate 13: Shot looking upwards showing 2 open windows on the 2nd floor, blocked window on 3rd floor & remnants of roof joists and roof joist holes. Photograph taken from the east



Plate 14: Shot looking upwards showing 2 open windows on the 2nd floor & roof joist holes. Photograph taken from the east



Plate 15: Shot looking directly upwards showing remnants of roof joists & turning cap



Plate 16: Shot of partially blocked doorway. Photograph taken from the south





Plate 18: Shot detailing evidence of wall damage & wall render on undamaged surface. Photograph taken from the east



Plate 19: Detailed shot of small opening on the 2nd floor



Plate 20: Detail of remnants of wooden structure on the 2nd floor. Photograph taken from the south



Plate 21: General view of Sguthan Mill with evidence of building work in progress. Visited on November 14th 2011. Photograph taken from the south west

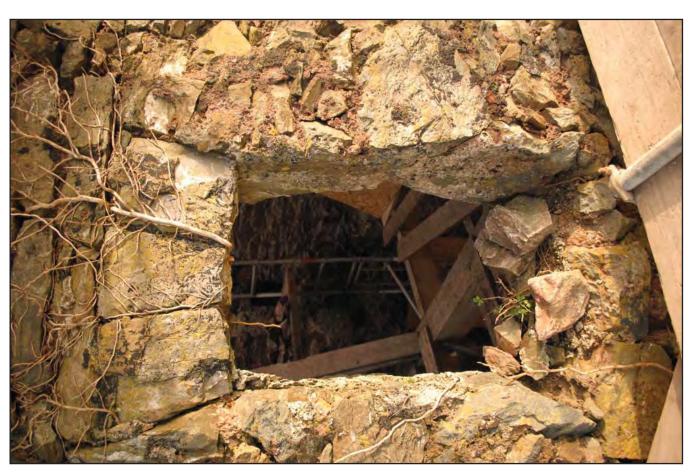


Plate 22: 2nd storey window detailing stone voussoirs. Photograph taken from the south east

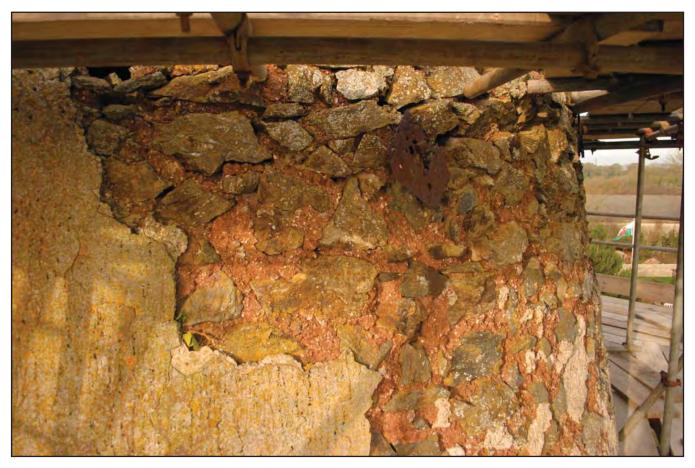


Plate 23: Detailed shot showing original lime render & metal tie plate on the 2nd floor. Photograph taken from the south west



Plate 24: General shot of turning cap. Photograph taken from the west



Plate 25: General view of turning cap. Photograph taken from the north east



Plate 26: Detailed shot of turning cap revealing serious decay of both wooden and metal elements. Photograph taken from the east



Plate 27: General view of turning cap detailing unstable upper wall & also revealing displaced cog wheel in segments. Photograph taken from the south

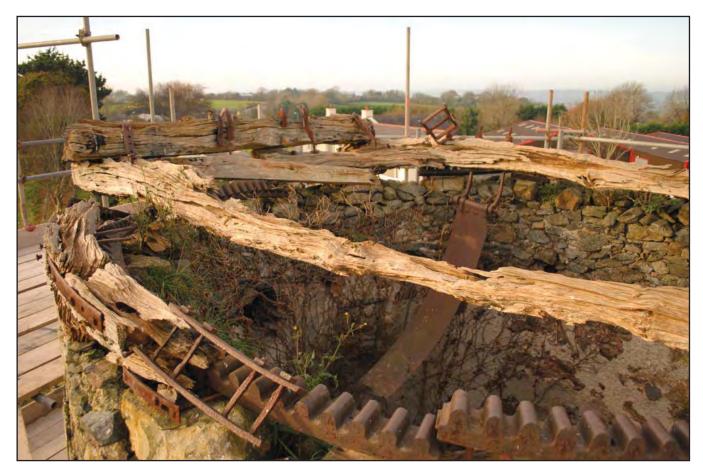


Plate 28: Shot of turning cap showing metal brackets attached to wooden elements of turning cap. Note the iron band which once encircled the brake wheel. Photograph taken from the north west



