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*Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.*



**Plas Tirion Old House  
Interim Report**

**I.P. Brooks**

***EAS Client report 2018/01***

**Plas Tirion Old House, Llanwrst**  
**Building Recording and Building Recording, Interim**  
**Report**

**Project Commissioned**  
**by**  
**Ned and Sophie Schärer**  
**Fieldwork**  
**by**  
**I.P. Brooks**  
**Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.**

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**registered in England**

**No 2869678**

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## Introduction

<b>Grid Reference:</b>	<b>SH 81045 59120</b>
<b>Listed Building No.</b>	<b>Not listed as a separate building</b>
<b>NPRN</b>	<b>421689</b>
<b>PRN</b>	

## Location

The old house lies approximately 30 m south of the Grade II\* listed house of Plas Tirion, Llanrwst, Conwy. Both buildings are approximately 2.8 km SSE of the centre of Llanrwst (Figure 1).

## Background

It is intended to repair the “Old House” at Plas Tirion, Llanrwst, Conwy and convert it and its attached agricultural buildings to function as accommodation (Listed Building Planning Application NP4/26/LB156D). Although the Plas Tirion, itself, is listed (Listed Building Number 109), the old house escaped notice until recently.

The proposed development area (Figure 2) includes the somewhat delict remains of a probable hall house running at right angle to the natural slope of the land. This building has been truncated at least to the east and probably to the west, but retains a single heartwood cruck frame with some of its associated purlins within the western of the two rooms. The cruck frame appears to be submerged in the stone walls of the building suggesting that the stone built phase of the house is of a later date. Indeed, the western gable end window incorporates a slate slab with circular saw marks suggesting a late nineteenth century date for at least some of the stonework. The eastern room has a fireplace to the west, which is incorporated in a dividing wall which is clearly a later insertion. The eastern gable wall is also a late insertion, but has a truss with a collar and two raking struts above. To the south of the Old House is a complex of more modern agricultural buildings including a Byre and possible Calf House and to the west of the Calf House the remains of a slate partition incorporating a feeder, presumably from a pig sty.

As part of the North Wales Dendrochronology Project the structure of the old house was recorded (Brooks 2012) and eight dendrochronological samples taken from the cruck, purlins, cruck-tie and tie beams. Which suggested cut dates of (possibly Spring) AD1498 for the cruck and its associated purlins and Winter AD 1545/6 for the eastern tie beam (Miles and Bridge 2012).

In 2016 Cymdeithas Archaeoleg Bro Ffestiniog undertook archaeological excavations within and around the Old House (Jones and Jones 2016). The modern overburden was removed from the western room and the features and floor layers in this end of the building investigated. At the other end of the building more limited excavations were undertaken concentrating on the fireplace. Work was also undertaken outside the building to the east and west of the building. The excavations were cut short, partly because of adverse weather conditions, but largely on the advice of the Snowdonia National Park Archaeologist.

The current works have been undertaken as part of the conditions placed on the planning application (NP4/26/LB156D) and include the completion of the excavations within the house, the recording of the agricultural buildings attached to the southern side of the Old House and an archaeological watching brief on the groundworks and building modifications. This interim report details the results of the archaeological excavation within the building and initial notes on the building recording of the associated agricultural buildings.

## Summary

*The building recording of the associated buildings located re-used timbers used within the structure of the byre including a probable blade from a cruck. Some graffiti on the slate partition appears to be contemporary with a pencil graffiti within the western room of the old house. The underside of the loft in the western room of the old house was also recorded using photogrammetry.*

*The excavation recorded the features exposed by Cymdeithas Archaeoleg Bro Ffestiniog in the western room of the old house including the possible corn dyer, clay floor, platform and the drains crossing the room. In the eastern room the slate slab floor was lifted exposing a possible central hearth cut by a later partition.*

## Methodology

The other buildings within the complex were observed and significant feature recorded. The plan of the complex was drawn using direct measurement and photographs of significant features taken with a Nikon D5300 Digital SLR Camera at a resolution of 24.2 MP

In the western room of the old house the deposits exposed by the earlier excavation were cleaned, by hand, and the deposits recorded. In the eastern room, the existing floors were cleaned and recorded prior to the lifting of the slate slab floors. All contexts were recorded with the appropriate written, drawn and photographic record and the contexts defined are summarised in Appendix 1.

Overlapping digital photographs were taken and processed using Agisoft Photoscan to produce a three-dimensional model from which the photogrammetric plans (Figure 15) could be extracted.

## Results

### *Building Recording*

Only limited further recording took place within the old house itself. This consisted of the recording of the underside of the half loft in the western end of the west room (Figure 3) and the photography of some graffiti on the southern wall of the same room. The loft platform consists of a mixture of split staves and planking which supports a lime mortar surface. The staves and planking rests on a series of beams, one of which (near the eastern end of the loft) has a series of slots and holes cut into its lower surface suggesting the presence of a partition. The position of the two slots may also suggest the position of the doorway through the partition. It is also clear that although the majority of the beams are prepared timbers one beam is of only roughly prepared round wood and is a later repair.

On the southern wall the graffiti “R. Owen, P Tirion 1931” written in pencil on a stone block with a smooth surface. This presumably relates to one of the phases of repair or modification to the building.

The byre to the south of the Old House (Plate 2) consists of an open sided building with a wooden hay rack along its northern wall. This is a relatively modern appearance as when the old house was originally recorded in 2012 there was a corrugated iron extension aligned with the concrete platform in front of the building (Plate 3). This extension may have been constructed as late as 1989 as suggested by the date inscribed in the mortar of the southern wall of the extension (Plates 4 and 5). The open face of the byre, itself, has a lintel made of two re-used timbers supported by a cast iron prop. The southern section of the lintel is a large timber with a series of mortise slots on its upper surface (Plate 6, Figure 4) which was clearly, previously, a ceiling beam with coggled joists. The original position of this beam is unknown; however, one possibility is the ceiling of the kitchen in the main house. The northern section of the lintel (Plate 7, Figure 4) consists of two timbers, both of which are also re-used. The inner timber has a mortice cut into its surface, whilst the outer timber has both a mortise slot and a drilled hole suggesting it may have been either the head or foot rail for a

partition. The truss in this building (Plate 8, Figure 4) is also constructed of re-used timbers. The principle rafter is chamfered, whilst the brace is both chamfered and slightly curved. This brace would appear to be part of a cruck frame, adapted for its current use. The original position of this cruck frame is unknown, although it may have originally been part of the Old House.

Along the eastern wall of the Byre there is a hay rack (Plate 9) over a stone platform. There are also the remains of a wooden structure below the northern end of the hay rack which, at the time of this report, is obscure by timber stored within the building. Further recording will be undertaken as part of the watching brief.

The Calf Shed (Plate 10) to the west of the byre has been added at a later date than the byre. In 2012 the southern opening was partly blocked with breeze blocks (Plate 11), which presumably date to a similar time to the breeze blocks used to construct the northern end of the building including the northern gable end. Dividing the two rooms of the Calf Shed is a half partition constructed of four slate slabs below a simple truss (Plate 12) consisting of a straight principle rafter and a brace. The slate slabs have been cut with a circular saw demonstrating that they date from after 1850's (Gwyn 2015, 115). There is also part of a restraining chain mounted on the southern side of the partition, whilst a crude feeding trough, on the northern side of the partition (Plate 13), was made of a wooden box supported by breeze blocks. Resting on top of the wooden trough is a wooden ammunition box which has had several phases of use. Originally stencilled with "3 RKT BREAKDOWN" in white it has been over stencilled, in yellow, which is less clear but appears to include "4160—", "PROPF", "NF'S 164.848" and RNP—".

Attached to the south-eastern corner of the surviving portion of the Old House is the remains of a slate partition (Plate 15) which incorporates a feeder, typical of a type used for pig sties. It is constructed of large slate slabs with sawn ends, sawn with a circular saw (Plate 16), held together with iron clamps. One of these slabs has the initials "RO" punched into its surface, twice (Plate 17). This presumably is the same R Owen recorded in the graffiti in the west room of the old house.

### ***Excavation***

Previously archaeological excavation has taken place within the Old House (Jones and Jones 2016). This has largely removed much of the archaeological record within the West Room, leaving only a few features. However, the level of excavation in the East Room was far less extensive, concentrating on the hearth area of the room together with limited trenching along the western wall of the room. In this phase of work, the floor of the East Room was cleaned, by hand, revealing at least two phases of slate slab flooring (Figure 5 and 8). The earliest form of this floor (Context 13, Plate 18) consisted of naturally shaped slate slabs laid in a roughly regular pattern. Remnants of this floor were also found below the slate floor surviving in the north-eastern and eastern sections of the room (Context 12). This floor was made of thinner (up to 30 mm) squared slate slabs up to 1.40 x 0.70 m in size. The slabs in this floor are also aligned on a different alignment to Context 13 and extend beneath the current eastern gable wall of the room. There was a thin layer of soil accumulation (Context 19) below the slabs of Context 12 which also laps over the worn areas of Context 13, presumably representing the accumulation of soils on the floor before the rectangular slabs were used to repair the floor. A similar accumulation of soils occurred below the natural slabs of Context 13 (Context 20). This layer contained a few sherds of nineteenth century ceramics including a further fragment of a "transfer printed Asiatic pheasant rim plate" found in dark soil in a lower level of the fireplace (Jones and Jones 2016, Fig. 40, and p.40).

A possible drain (Context 14) was defined running roughly parallel with the alignment of the slabs of Context 12, however, this feature proved to be a modern feature dug in 2016 to divert water running through the building after heavy rain (Ned Schärer *pers. comm.*)

The lifting of the slate floors revealed a number of features which appear to relate to earlier phases of activity in this end of the building (Figure 6). Crossing in front of the current hearth is a series of features which defines the line of a partition dividing the building (Plate 19). The northern side of this partition is defined by two post-holes (Contexts 22 and 23) linked by a shallow linear feature or gully (Context 23). Possibly Context 24 marks the position of a door post marking one side of a doorway through this partition. The southern side of the partition consists of a slot (Context 26) which leads to a possible post-hole (Context 27). The form of Context 26 is of particular interest as it appears to define a series of planks, between 280 and 380 mm wide set upright to form this side of the partition.

Both sides of the partition cut an area of burnt clay (Context 25, Plate 22) which appears to represent the position of a disturbed hearth. The location of this feature, below the ridge piece of the room and within the assumed upper room of the original hall house suggests this may represent the original position of the hearth for the Old House. If so it is probable that this feature is contemporary with the cruck frame dated to 1498 by dendrochronology (Miles and Bridge 2012)

Along the northern wall of the East Room the footing of a wider wall was recorded (Context 33, Plate 23). The southern side of this feature aligns with a break in the stonework of the western gable wall and a wider section of walling seen outside the building to the east. It also aligns with the northern side of the fireplace; however, this may be coincidental. Only the base of the footings survives; however, the eastern end retains some of the lime mortar bonding. This area also has a straight edge suggesting the position of a doorway in this part of the wall.

In the West Room, (Figures 6 and 8) the excavation by Cymdeithas Archaeoleg Bro Ffestiniog had removed much of the floor deposits which had survived in this end of the building. The most striking feature to survive is a brick built structure (Context 1, Plates 24 and 25) in the eastern end of the room. The structure consists of an apsidal ended brick structure 1.10 x 0.70 m in size defined by brick walls 112 mm thick made of soft, handmade bricks with a pale lime mortar. The complete bricks are 254 x 114 x 60 mm in size suggesting possible eighteenth-century affinities. There is a 0.50 m long passage leading to a roughly circular chamber 0.4 m in diameter. There are also two flanking walls on the southern side which extend from the passage. The function of this feature is not entirely clear, its form would suggest an oven or corn dryer; however, there is no evidence for extensive heating and little or no burnt material, such as charcoal, was recovered by either of the excavations. It is still possible that structure was part of a corn dryer, but if so any fire used in this structure was small and provided only a gentle heat. It was assumed that Context 1 was contemporary with the stone floored platform (Context 3) as it aligns with the southern edge of Context 3. However, there is a thin layer of very dark grey/brown soil (Context 2) below the brickwork suggesting that the possible corn dryer was constructed on a pre-existing platform.

The platform (Context 3) is bounded on its western side, by a band of lime mortar 0.3 m wide which is considered to be the remains of a wall (Context 4, Plate 26) and to the west of this feature is the remains of a rammed clay floor (Context 5). It is not certain how the discoloured northern wall of the room, to the east of Context 4 (Plate 27) relates to the features at this end of the room. Whilst it is possible that this discolouration may relate to a possible corn dryer (Context 1) it does not extend along the eastern wall of the room and may therefore possibly relate to whatever structure is defined by Context 4.

Although largely excavated by Cymdeithas Archaeoleg Bro Ffestiniog there were two drains in the southern half of the West Room. The best preserved consisted of a series of pitched slates closely packed within a shallow cut (Context 6, Plate 28). Although not now clear, the original drain emerged from under the dividing wall between the two rooms before turning to the south and exiting below the southern wall of the building as Context 8. The original line of the drain is taken up by Context 7 which runs roughly parallel with the southern wall of building. Although partly removed by the previous excavation the line of Context 7 is taken up by Context 10, a group of stones arranged



together to form a linear group. The floor levels above these drains has been removed, however, a rough pitched stone floor was observed during a visit to the previous excavations in 2016. Jones (Jones and Jones 2016) claims that there was the footing of a gable wall crossing the building, running from the eastern side of the doorway, however, there is little or no evidence that this was more than a concentration of slightly larger cobbles within the pitched stone floor. The location of this assumed wall makes no practical sense, relating to none of the other features of the building including the surviving timberwork.

At the foot of the western gable wall is the remains of a plinth or footing course (Context 34) which although it runs parallel with the upstanding wall over much of its course becomes much thicker at its northern end possibly suggesting it may be related to an earlier phase.

There is some evidence that the stone walls of the current building are secondary features. There is a cut for a slight foundation trench along the southern wall of the building (Context 9) and although heavily disturbed by animal burrows the possibility of a similar feature along the northern wall bounded by the northern edge of the clay floor (Context 5). If this is so it would suggest that the stone walls post-dated the clay floor and presumably pre-dated the pitched stone floor that has been removed by Cymdeithas Archaeoleg Bro Ffestiniog.

## Discussion

The results of the current and recent work on the Old House at Plas Tirion has shown that the main building, of this complex, has a long and complex history. The earliest phase would appear have been a sub-medieval building, probably a hall house, set at right angles to the hillslope incorporating the cruck frame and probably the hearth (Context 25) recorded in this phase of study. Dendrochronology would suggest this phase took place soon after Spring AD 1498. It is probable that the beam below the cruck truss marks the position of a partition also associated with this phase. The position of the hearth would suggest that the hall was in the upslope end of the building and that there was at least one more bay to the east of the surviving remains. Given the difference in levels between the two ends of the surviving building (approximately 600 mm) it is suggested that the floors of this and subsequent phases was stepped down the slope.

There would appear to have been at least one other timber framed phase of the building as is demonstrated by the slot for the partition (Contexts 22, 23, 24, 26 and 27) which cuts the central hearth (Context 25). It is tempting to relate this phase of activity to the inserted beam with a dendrochronological date of AD 1545/6, however, this may be a gross simplification of the data. The partition would appear to be related to a rammed clay floor (Contexts 28 and 29), although it is not certain whether these fragments relate to well laid rammed clay floor (Context 5) in the West Room of the building.

The interpretation of the work undertaken in the West Room by Cymdeithas Archaeoleg Bro Ffestiniog is difficult with the stratigraphic sequence obscure. The drains recorded in the southern half of this room would appear to relate to at least two phases. The earliest drain is the pitched slate filled drain (Contexts 6 and 8) which appears to run below both the dividing wall and the southern wall of the building. The date of this feature is unknown, but a coin of William and Mary (AD 1694) was found below the pitched stone floor covering this drain (W.T. Jones *pers. comm.*). The second drain (Contexts 7 and 10) would appear to have been inserted at a later date and was much cruder in its construction.

The relationships between the rammed clay floor (Context 5), wall (Context 4) and stone topped platform (Context 3) is not certain, but these contexts appear to be contemporary. Whether they relate to one of the timber phases or a phase when the stone wall had been constructed is uncertain, however the discolouration on the northern wall would suggest that whatever activity took place on the

platform continued (at least) into the stone phases of the building. It is possible that the platform held a predecessor of the possible corn dryer (Context 1) which was later built on the platform. Although Context 1 has the form of an oven or corn dryer it is curious that there is little sign of excessive heat, nor of ash, suggesting that if this was a corn dryer only a limited fire was used and that the area was kept clean. The dividing wall, with its associated fireplace, is probably later than the construction of the pitched slate drain (Context 6) and possibly later than the platform (Context 3) as it does not have the discolouration shown on the northern wall of the building.

The other buildings in the complex reflect the development of the agricultural use of the site. The Byre was added to the southern side of the existing building, probably in the nineteenth century. The use of re-used timber would suggest this was contemporary with, or shortly after, a phase of modernisation of the farm and possibly Plas Tirion itself. The Calf Shed was then added to the eastern side of the Byre with the use of sawn slate slabs suggesting this took place after the AD 1850's (Gwyn 2015, 115). The slab partition to the east of the Calf Shed also dates from after the AD 1850's and marks the western end of a pig sty as it incorporates a feeder within its run.

## Acknowledgments

This work has been commissioned by Ned and Sophie Schärer, who's help and support is gratefully acknowledge. The project is monitored, for the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service, by Jenny Emmett. Thanks, are also due to W. T. (Bill) Jones for discussing his previous excavation within the old house and providing copies of his excavation report and photographs.

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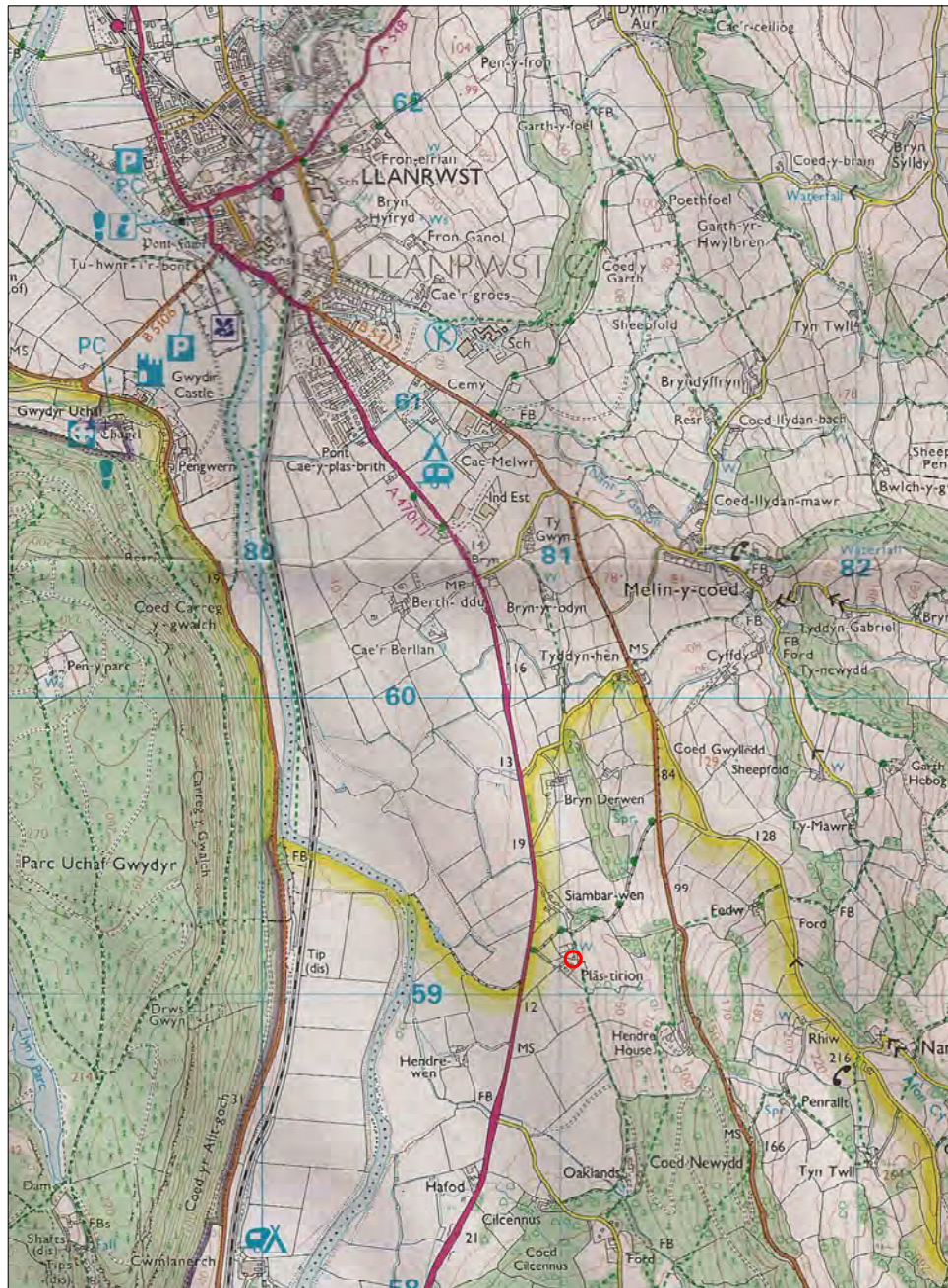


Figure 1: Location  
Scale 1:25,000

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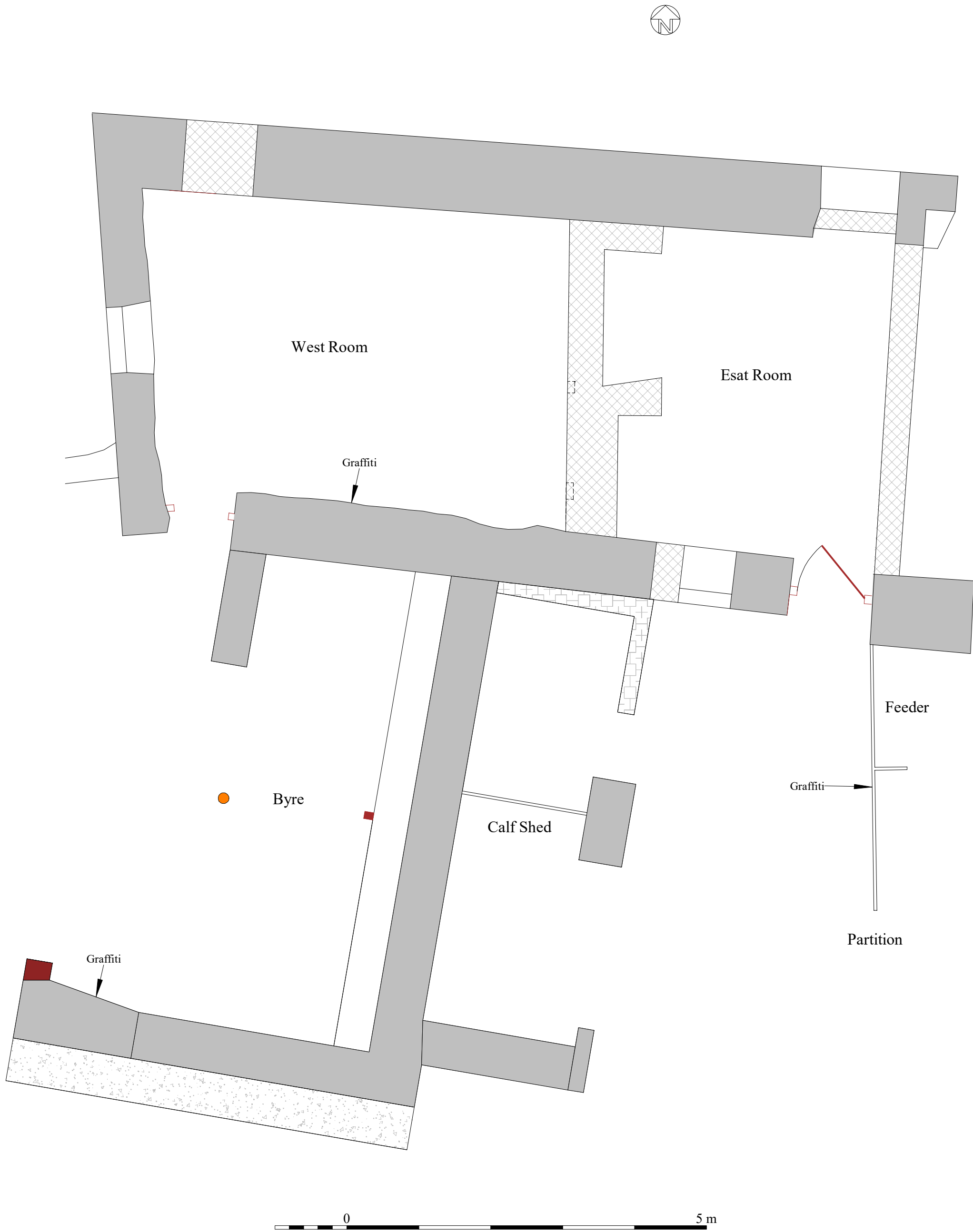
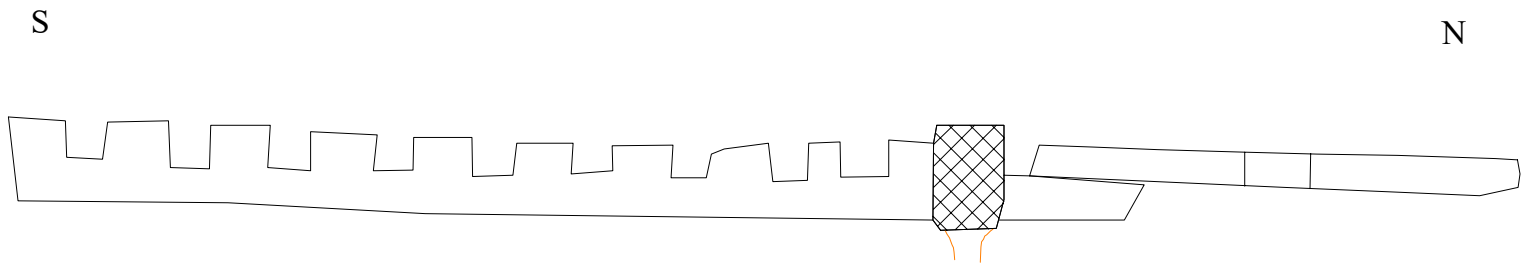


Figure 2: Site Layout  
Scale :50

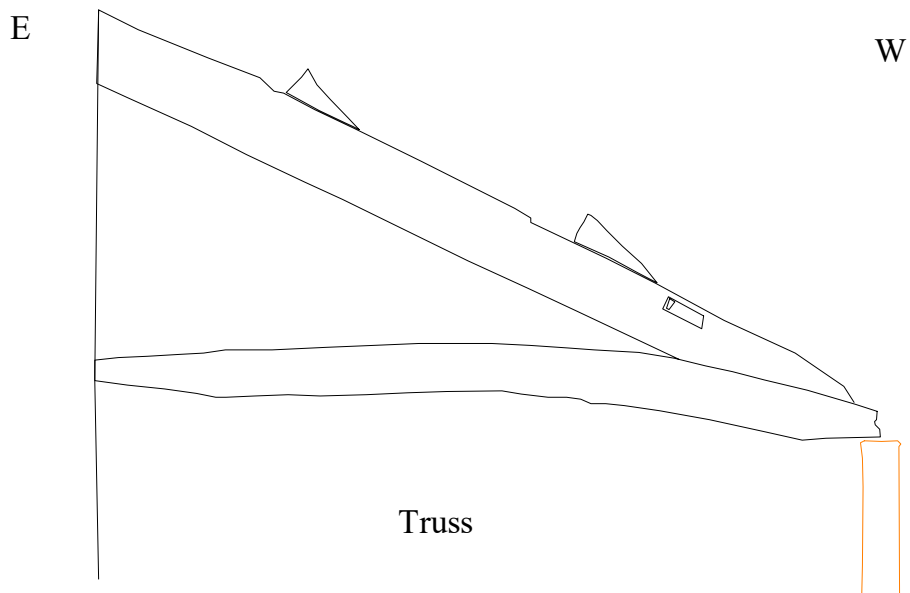




Figure 3: Photogrammetric plan of the underside of the loft  
Scale 1:25



Lintel



Truss



Figure 4: Reused timbers in the Byre  
Scale 1:25

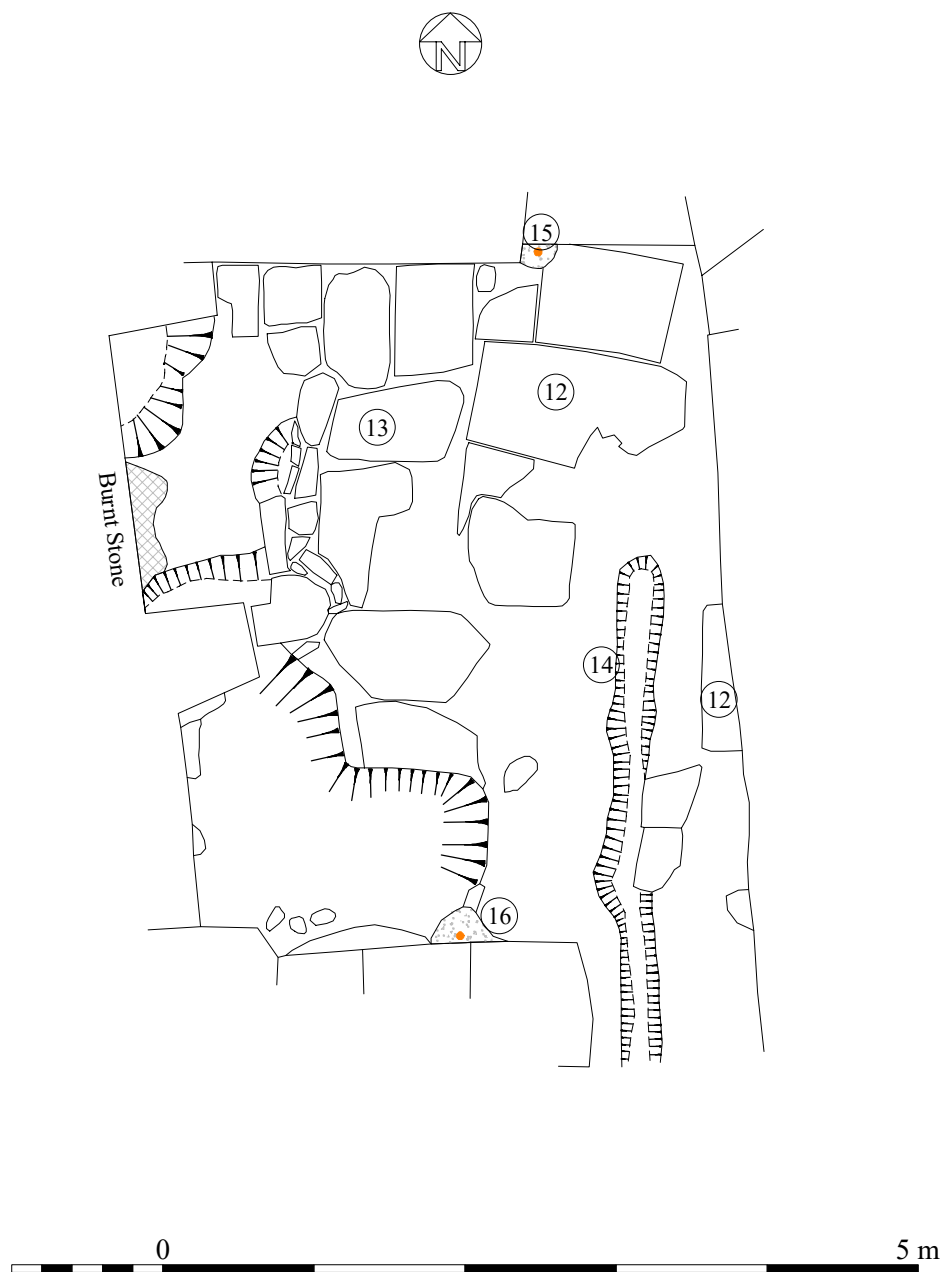


Figure 5: Plan of Eastern Room  
Scale 1:50



Figure 6: Excavation Plan  
Scale 1:50



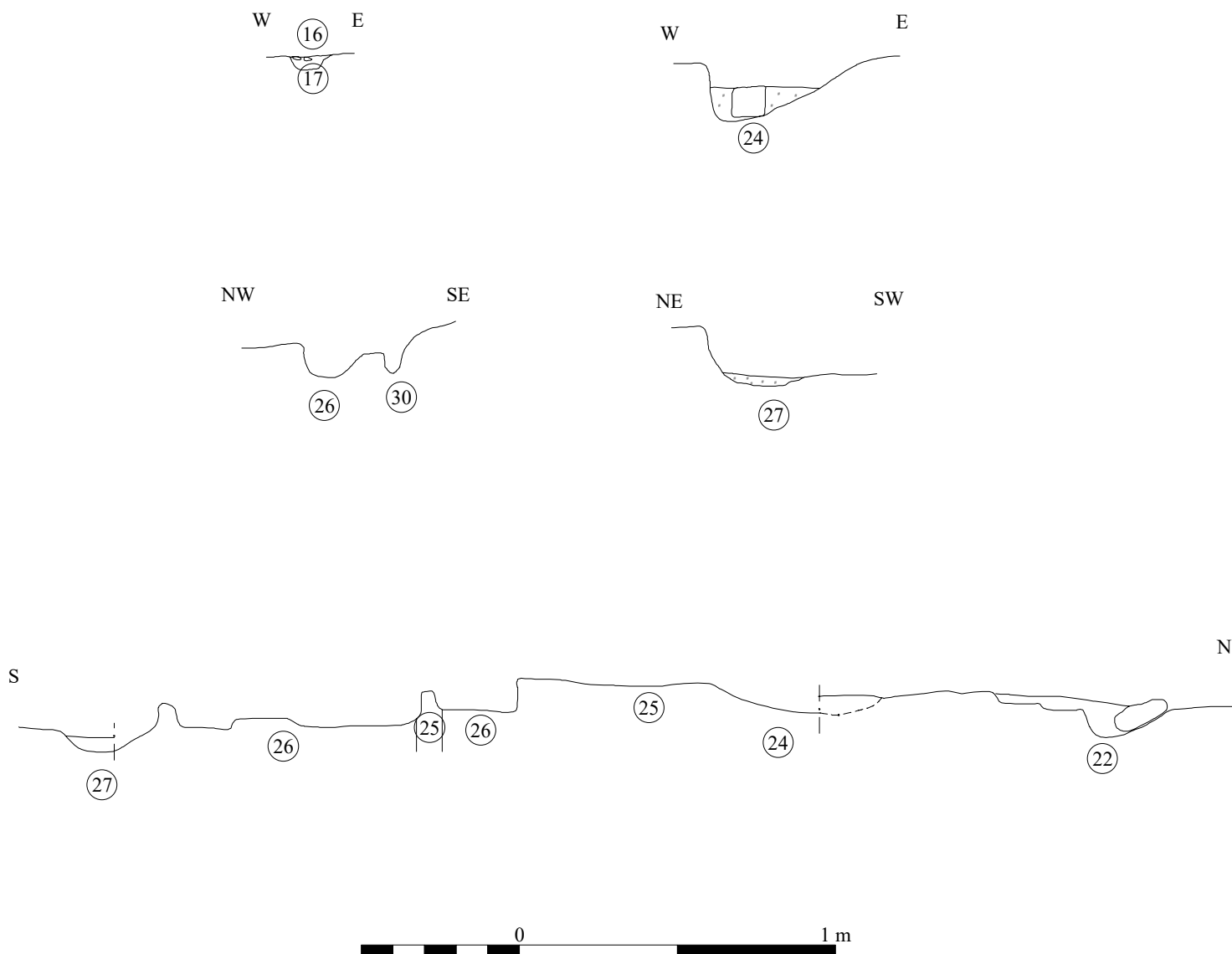


Figure 7: Section  
Scale 1:20



Figure 8: Photogrammetric Plan  
Scale 1:50



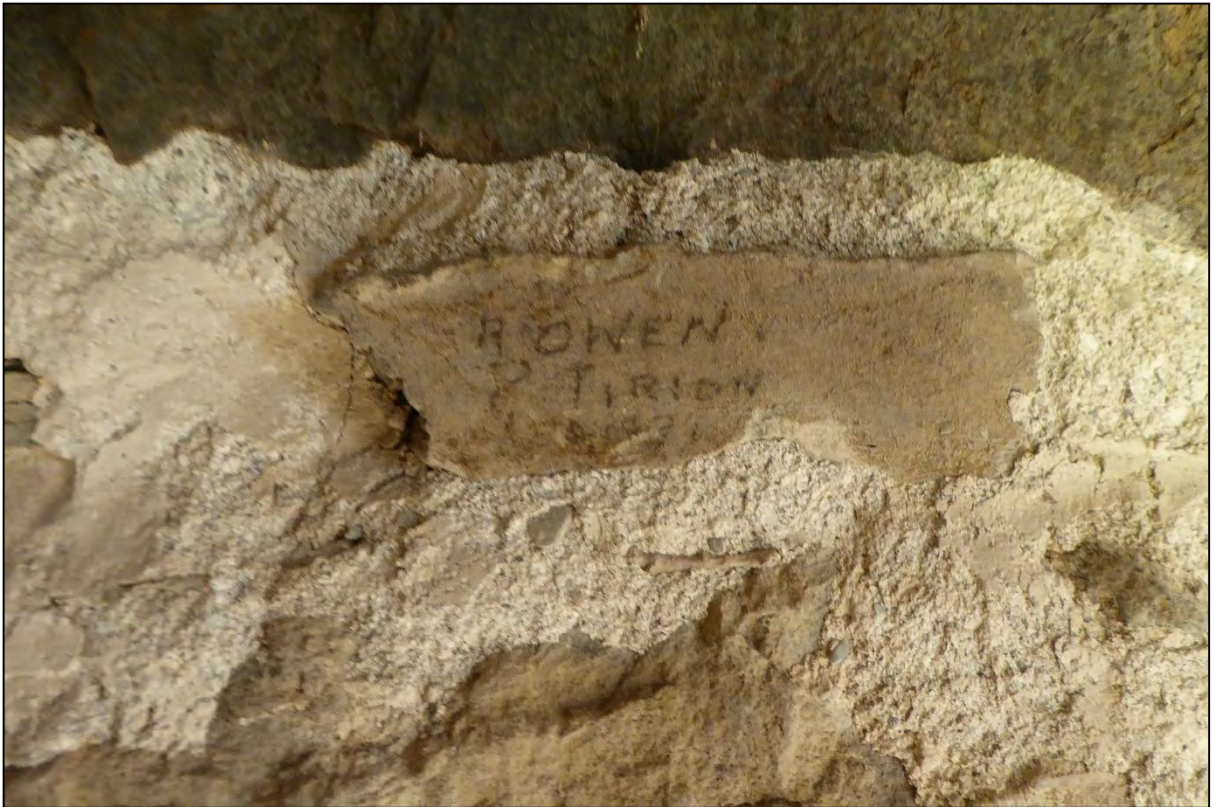


Plate 1: Graffiti on the southern wall of the West Room



Plate 2: The byre looking west





Plate 3: Byre in 2012, looking NE.



Plate 4: Location of the date on the extension to the byre





Plate 5: Date on the extension to the byre



Plate 6: Southern lintel to the byre.





Plate 7: Northern lintel to the byre



Plate 8: Truss in the byre, looking north





Plate 9: Hay rack along the eastern wall of the byre



Plate 10: The calf shed, looking NW





Plate 11: The calf shed in 2012



Plate 12: Slate partition in the calf shed





Plate 13: Trough on the northern side of the partition in the calf shed



Plate 14: Detail of the stencilling on the ammunition box





Plate 15: Slate partition and feeder



Plate 16: Sawn end of one of the slate slabs used for the slate partition to the east of the calf shed





Plate 17: Graffiti on one of the slabs of the slate partition

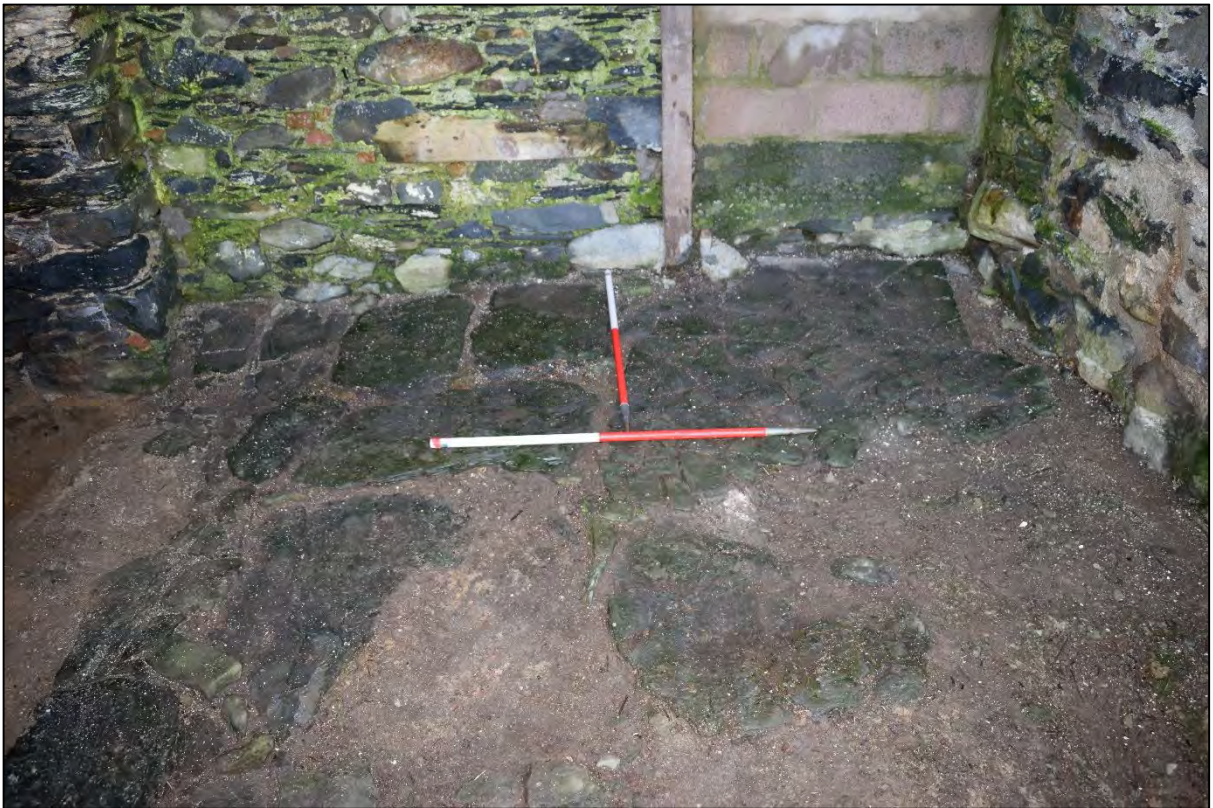


Plate 18: Slate floors, Contexts 12 and 13, looking north





Plate 19: Partition, Contexts 22, 23, 24, 26, 27 and 30)





Plate 20: Northern end of the partition, Contexts 22, 23 and 24



Plate 21: Southern end of the partition, Contexts 26, 27 and 30





Plate 22: Hearth, Context 25



Plate 23: Wall footing, Context 33





Plate 24: Brick structure, Context 1



Plate 25: The relationship between Contexts 1, 3, 4 and 5





Plate 26: Context 4



Plate 27: Discolouration on the north-eastern wall





Plate 28: Pitched stone drain (Context 6)



Plate 29: Drain, Context 8



Plate 30: Drain, Context 10 and footings of the western gable wall



## Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Location	Relationships	Description
1	West Room	Above 2	Possible oven/corn dryer. Apsidal ended brick structure 1.10 x 0.70 m in size defined by brick walls 112 mm thick made of soft, handmade bricks with a pale lime mortar. There is a 0.50 m long passage leading to a roughly circular chamber 0.4 m in diameter. There are also two flanking walls on the southern side which extend from the passage. There is little evidence for high heat within this structure and no fill survives within the passage or chamber.
2	West Room	Below 2 Above 3	Thin layer of very dark grey/brown clayey soil between the bricks of Context 1 and the stone platform below. Layer is less than 10 mm thick
3	West Room	Below 2 Abuts 4	1.5 x 1.3 m in size below the possible oven/corn dryer. Layer surface of stone slabs up to 450 x 200 mm in size only roughly arranged except for the western edge which form a rough line abutting Context 4. On the eastern side the platform can be shown to be only one course deep
4	West Room	Abuts 4 and 5	Band of lime mortar 0.3 m wide forming the western side of the platform (Context 3). The band is wider to the north; however, this end is heavily disturbed by rat runs.
5	West Room	Abuts 4	Remnant of a rammed clay floor at least 1.3 x 1.4 m in size abutting Context 4 and presumably contemporary with it. Pale grey clay 70 mm thick. The northern side is disturbed by a rat burrow.
6	West Room	Within 8	Surviving fragment of pitched stone slabs within the drain (Context 7). Closely packed slate slabs typically 150 mm long and 20 mm wide set on edge to provide a drain running roughly east-west along the building.
7	West Room	Probably equivalent to 10	Drain running east-west along the length of the western room. Typically, 400 mm wide and up to 200 mm deep with a “U” shaped section. The relationship with Context 8 is unknown, but they are probably contemporary. At the western end the line of this feature is taken up by a group of stones (Context 10).
8	West Room	Contains 6	Drain running roughly north-south from the southern wall and joining Context 7. 220 mm wide and 200 mm deep the eastern side of this feature has a few surviving pitched stones. There appears to be a hole below the wall suggesting that the drain lead to the outside at this point. The relationship to Context 7 is unknown, but they are probably contemporary.
9	West Room		Surviving fragment of stone slab floor, just inside, and slightly to the east of, the door. One large slab 970 x 440 x 100 mm and four smaller blocks, typically 300 x 200 x 100 mm forming a surface.

Context	Location	Relationships	Description
10	West Room	Probably equivalent to 7	Group of six stones forming a linear group 900 x 250mm in size extending the line of Context 7 and thus they probably mark the continuation of the drain running roughly east-west. There is a mixture of lithologies including one slate block and three glacial boulders. The stones are typically 300 x 100 x 60 mm in size.
11	West Room		Possible cut along the southern wall, possibly suggesting the stone walls are later than the remaking floor surfaces. 100 mm wide, but only 50 mm deep this possible feature has also been used as a rat run, although possibly taking advantage of the softer soils
12	East Room	Above 19 Cut by 14 and 15	Slate slab floor on the eastern side of the eastern room consisting of the remains of rectangular slate slabs up to 1.40 x 0.70 m in size, laid at a slight angle to the room. Now cracked and crazed and missing in places, this appears to be a later phase of flooring which runs roughly parallel to the possible drain (Context 14). This flooring predates, however, the truncation of the eastern side of the building as part of the slabs run below the wall.
13	East Room	Below 19 Above 20	Floor of slate slabs up to 0.90 x 0.50 m in size of natural slabs with slightly rounded forms. The slabs tend to be smaller in front of the hearth. Their alignment fits the shape of the building better than Context 12. Concentrating in the northern side of the building, they are heavily worn/damaged or missing from much of the floor.
14	East Room	Cuts 12	Modern drain running roughly north-south and out through the current doorway. 200 mm wide, but only 80 mm deep this feature runs for at least 3.20 m out through the door. it is parallel with the slabs of Context 12.
15	East Room	Cuts 12	Galvanised metal pole fragment 50 mm in diameter set in a block of concrete 200 mm in diameter. Probably contemporary with Context 16. Set in the rebate of the northern blocked door, this feature probably relates to the use of the building after it was truncated.
16	East Room		Metal post, 50 mm in diameter set in a block of concrete roughly 250 mm in diameter and 200 mm deep. Siting at the eastern side of the southern blocked doorway, this feature is probably contemporary with Context 15
17	East Room	Below 19 Contains 18	Possible post hole below the ridge line of the eastern room, but towards the eastern wall. 110 mm in diameter and 60 mm deep. This feature has steeply sloping sides and a rounded base.
18	East Room	Within 17	Dark grey/brown silty loam with the occasional angular slate fragment up to 40 mm in size.

Context	Location	Relationships	Description
19	East Room	Below 12 Above 13	Thin layer, up to 50 mm thick of mid grey/brown silty loam with the occasional slate fragment up to 100 mm and rare fleck of charcoal. Soil accumulation before the slabs of Context 12 were laid
20	East Room	Below 13 Above 22, 23, 24, 25, 28	Thin layer, up to 50 mm thick of dark grey/brown silty loam with the occasional slate fragment up to 100 mm in size and rare fleck of charcoal. Soil accumulation prior to the laying of Context 13
21	East Room	Below 20 Including 22, 23 and 24	Complex of two post holes and a shallow slot forming the northern half of a partition crossing the building. The feature includes 22, 23 and 24
22	East Room	Below 20 Contains 31	Post hole at north of 21. Roughly circular feature 300 mm in diameter and 200 mm deep with sloping side and a rounded base. Possible supporting post for the partition.
23	East Room	Below 20	Slot part of 21. Slot 250 mm wide and 700 mm long linking 22 and 24. The slot is a maximum of 100 mm deep.
24	East Room	Below 20 Contains 32	Post hole south end of 21. Approximately 0.50 m in diameter and 200 mm deep, this post hole forms the southern end of the northern section of the partition. Possible door post??
25	East Room	Below 20 Cut by 24 and 26	Probable hearth. Area of compacted burnt clay at least 900 x 150 mm in size. This feature is directly below the ridge of the roof and is cut by the partition suggesting it is an early feature. Possible original central hearth.
26	East Room	Cuts 25	East slot running north-south forming the southern section of the partition. The feature is 160 mm wide and 1.20 m long running from the probable hearth (Context 25) to a post hole (Context 27). The feature appears to be made up of a series of "planks" each one being between 280 and 380 mm long
27	East Room		Remnant of a possible post hole at the southern end of the partition 300 mm in diameter and 200 mm deep with steep sloping sides to the east and a rounded base
28	East Room	Below 20 Abuts 22 and 23	Patch of rammed grey clay, possible floor surface 400 x 600 mm in size. The feature abuts 23 to which it may be contemporary
29	East Room	Abuts 26	Patch of rammed grey clay 500 x 250 mm in size, probable floor remnant associated with the partition
30	East Room		Post/stake hole probably associated with the partition. 10 mm in diameter and at least 80 mm deep
31	East Room	Below 20 Within 22	Fill of 22. Mid grey/brown silty loam with a single large 260 x 200 x 100 mm rounded stone, possible packing

Context	Location	Relationships	Description
32	East Room	Below 20 Within 24	Fill of 24. Mid to dark grey/brown silty loam with a moderate number of charcoal flecks. There is also a single, sub-rounded stone block 150 x 80 x 80 mm in size.
33	East Room		Last vestiges of a wall footing running parallel with the northern wall of the eastern wall. Protruding from the existing wall by 350 mm. At its eastern end it retains some white line mortar, although for most of its run it consists of slate fragments up to 200 mm in size, closely packed with a mid-grey, slightly clayey matrix. The feature aligns with a break in the masonry of the eastern gable wall and with the northern side of the fireplace. There is a clear break at the eastern end of the feature suggesting the position of a doorway.
34	West Room		Possible footing for the current western gable wall, although it runs parallel to the upstanding structure it becomes wider to the north.

## **Appendix 2: Specification**

### **Specification for the Archaeological Investigation and recording of Plas Tirion Old House,**

Specification written by I.P. Brooks 27/11/17

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1. It is intended to restore and convert the Old House at Plas Tirion, Llanwrst, Conwy for modern use. As part of these works it is intended to reduce the floor levels within the building, by approximately 300 mm, to allow the insertion of more thermally efficient flooring. Other ground works will also take place outside the main building and within the attached agricultural buildings.
- 1.2. The old house lies approximately 30 m south of the Grade II\* listed house of Plas Tirion, Llanwrst, Conwy (Figure 1), although the building itself is not listed. It consists of a two-room single storeyed building, partly obscured by more recent agricultural buildings attached to its southern side. The core building contains an unusual heartwood truss of cruck frame of Alcock type "A" form within its western room which also contains an unusual platform/attic with a plastered floor.
- 1.3. The building was previously described by Brooks (2012) as part of the North West Wales Dendrochronology Project. As part of this project dendrochronological dates were gained for the cruck frame (1498) and timbers from the platform (1545/6) by Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory.
- 1.4. More recently an amateur archaeological excavation was carried out within the building revealing a brick built structure which is possibly a drying kiln/malting oven which had a surrounding pitched stone floor with associated drains. Unfortunately, the interpretation put on these excavations by the excavator is somewhat idiosyncratic.
- 1.5. This specification is based on: discussion with the owners, a site visit made on 20/11/2017 and a telephone conversation with Jenny Emmett, Senior Development Control Archaeologist, Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Archaeologist.

#### **2. Aims**

- 2.1. To record any archaeological or architectural features disturbed by the proposed works.
- 2.2. To re-interpret, if possible the results of the amateur excavation.
- 2.3. To reassess the interpretation of the building and its history based on the previous and current surveys.

#### **3. Programme of Works**

- 3.1. The previous excavation in the western end of the main building will be cleaned and recorded in an attempt to recover the archaeological sequence in this part of the building
- 3.2. The floor in the eastern half of the main building will be cleaned and recorded, the previous excavations, emptied and recorded. The existing stone slab floors will then be lifted and the deposits below evaluated, if necessary excavating down to a depth of 300 mm.
- 3.3. The underside of the platform in the western half of the building will be recorded in more detail using photogrammetry.
- 3.4. The architectural features of the agricultural buildings attached to the main building will be recorded.
- 3.5. An archaeological watching brief will be carried out on all groundworks and any works which will alter the structure of the building.
- 3.6. Analysis and Report preparation
- 3.7. Archive preparation

#### **4. Methodology**

- 4.1. The excavations within the main building will be carried out by hand
- 4.2. All features or archaeologically significant deposits revealed by the ground works or the modifications to the building will be fully recorded including:
  - 4.2.1. A written description of deposit: type, components etc.
  - 4.2.2. Drawn plans and sections at suitable scales
  - 4.2.3. Photographs will be taken with Nikon D5300 Digital SLR Camera at a resolution of 24.2 MP
  - 4.2.4. Plan drawing showing extent of deposit.
  - 4.2.5. Section drawing of any feature recorded to record vertical stratigraphy
  - 4.2.6. The Gwynedd Archaeological Planning service will be notified immediately if significant archaeological deposits, features or artefacts are located.
  - 4.2.7. The photographs will include metric scales
  - 4.2.8. The site will be planned by hand and as a composite photographic image.
- 4.3. All artefacts and ecofacts will be recorded by context.
- 4.4. Each deposit, feature or layer will be identified by a unique context number to which all other records will be related
- 4.5. Where possible, features will be sampled to obtain dating and functional evidence.
- 4.6. Where possible, elevation drawings of feature half sections to record vertical stratigraphy.
- 4.7. Where appropriate, deposits will be sampled for environmental, dating or technological evidence. Samples will be fully recorded and packed appropriately for future analysis.
  - 4.7.1. Sampling will be carried out in accordance with the procedures outlined in English Heritage, 2011. Environmental Archaeology. A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation.
- 4.8. A series of overlapping photographs will be taken with a Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ60 camera for the photogrammetry which will be processed using Agisoft Photoscan v1.3.4
- 4.9. If human remains are encountered all works will stop until the appropriate permissions have been obtained.
- 4.10. Finds
  - 4.10.1. Post medieval finds will be recorded by M. Jones of CR Archaeology.
  - 4.10.2. If any other finds are recovered they will be studied by an appropriate specialist. The selection of the specialist will be made in consultation with the client and the Development Control Archaeologist
  - 4.10.3. Any metal or other special finds will be studied by an appropriate specialist to be agreed in consultation with the client and the Development Control Archaeologist
  - 4.10.4. All ceramic, bone and stone artefacts will be cleaned and processed immediately following the watching brief.
  - 4.10.5. Metal artefacts will be stored and managed on site according to the UK Institute of Conservation Guidelines.
  - 4.10.6. Any samples taken for environmental analysis will be assessed and studied by an appropriate specialist to be agreed in consultation with the client and the Development Control Archaeologist.
  - 4.10.7. All finds will be bagged by context with the exception of closely datable or “special” finds which will be recorded with a 3 D position and will be bagged separately
  - 4.10.8. The requirement for specialist archaeological reports will be discussed with the client and the Development Control Archaeologist. The extent and cost of any such report will



be discussed with the client and a suitable level of response formulated in discussion between the Archaeologist, the client and the Curatorial Archaeologist.

#### 4.11. Archive Preparation and Report Preparation

- 4.11.1. On completion of fieldwork an archive of the results will be prepared.
- 4.11.2. The digital records will be archived with the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales
- 4.11.3. The digital archive will be prepared in line with Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales. 2015. Guidelines for digital archives
- 4.11.4. The deposition of any find with a local museum will be discussed with Cadw and the development control archaeologist with a strong recommendation that any finds are deposited in a suitable local museum.

#### 4.12. A summary report on the findings of the investigations will be prepared and completed within four weeks from completion of the project. This will summarise the results of the project including;

- 4.12.1. A site location plan
  - 4.12.2. A plan of the site locating any features or archaeological deposits located.
  - 4.12.3. An outline methodology
  - 4.12.4. The results excavations.
  - 4.12.5. The results of the building recording
  - 4.12.6. The results of the watching brief
  - 4.12.7. A full bibliography
  - 4.12.8. A copy the agreed specification
  - 4.12.9. An assessment of the potential for further archaeological investigation
  - 4.12.10. Digital copies of the report will be provided.
  - 4.12.11. Hard copies can be provided on request.
  - 4.12.12. A digital copy of the report will be supplied to the Gwynedd Historic Environment Record
  - 4.12.13. A digital copy of the report will be supplied to Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service
- 4.13. A report will be prepared for publication. This will most likely take place in Archaeology in Wales

### 5. Personnel

- 5.1. The project will be directed by Dr I.P. Brooks MCIfA FSA

### 6. General

#### 6.1. IFA Code of Conduct

- 6.1.1. All staff will abide by, and all procedures be carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct.

#### 6.2. Health and Safety

- 6.2.1. EAS Ltd adopt and adhere to safe working practices at all times. A copy of the company's general statement of policy is available on request.

#### 6.4. Liaison

6.4.1. The Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service will be informed in advance of the works being carried out.

6.4.2. Procedures will be put in place for the monitoring of the project by the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service.

#### 6.5. Insurance

6.5.1. EAS Ltd carries all necessary Public and Employee Liability Insurances.

6.5.2. EAS Ltd carries Professional Indemnity Insurance.

#### 6.6. Copyright

6.6.1. EAS Ltd shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documentation, under the Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved: excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive license to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.

6.6.2. EAS Ltd is prepared to assign copyright at the request of the client.

### 7. Timetable

7.1. It is intended to carry out the excavation and building recording sections of this project in January 2018

7.2. Cleaning area of previous excavation in the western end of the building and recording: 2 man days.

7.3. Cleaning and recording east end of the main building: 1 man day

7.4. Excavation of the floor levels in the eastern end of the building: 2 man days

7.5. Recording of standing buildings: 1 man day

7.6. Report and archive preparation: 3 man days.

7.7. The watching brief is impossible to timetable as it is dependent on the main construction programme. A suitably qualified archaeologist will be made available when required

### 8. References

Brooks, I.P. 2012. *North West Wales Dendrochronology Project, Plas Tirion Old House, Llanwrst, Conwy*. EAS Client report 2012/03

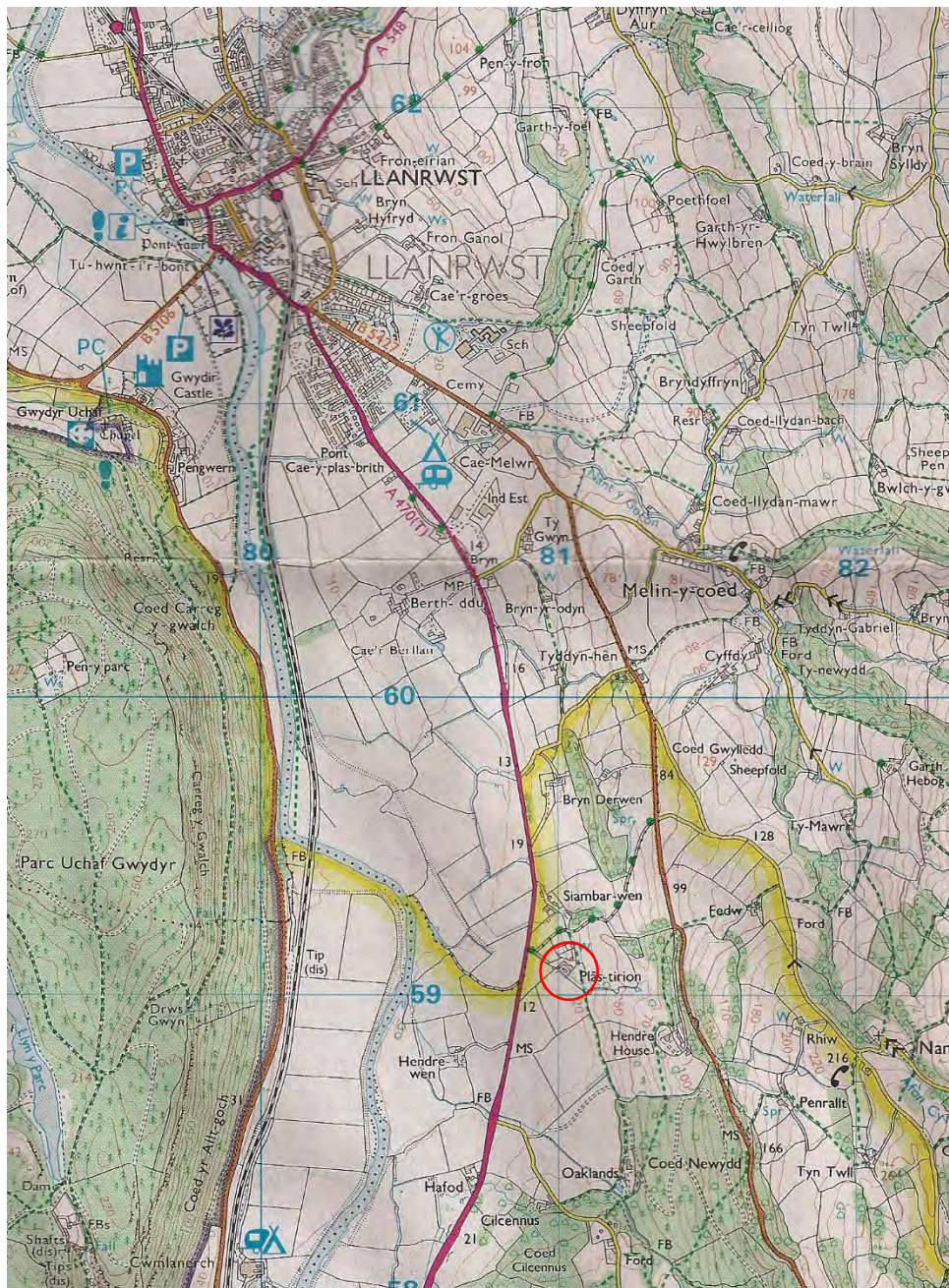


Figure 1: Location.