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Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.

Field Barn - Isgaer, Llanfair Hall, Caernarfon

> I.P. Brooks EAS Client report 2019/04

Project Commissioned by Adrian Williamson on behalf of Robin and Anwen Jones

Fieldwork

by

I.P. Brooks

Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.

Field Barn - Isgaer, Llanfair Hall, Caernarfon

I.P. Brooks

EAS Client report 2019/04

registered in England No 2869678

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Introduction

PRN:	926
NPRN:	31394
Listed Building Ref:	18337, Grade II

Location (Figure 1)

Centre on: SH 50737 66067

The barn is situated on the summit of a knoll some 290 m south west of Llanfair Hall and some 565m E of the Church of Saint Mary at Llanfair-is-gaer. The closest building to the barn is Isgaer which is 106 m to the south west. Now within a pasture field this area was clearly part of the parkland which once surrounded Llanfair Hall.

The barn is at about 20 m OD on the Red Warf Limestone Formation (Carboniferous)

Background

It is intended to convert the barn approximately 106 m north east of Isgaer to holiday accommodation. The barn is a Listed Building (Listen Building Number 18337) at Grade II. Thus, conditions were added to the planning permission requiring that standing building recording to a level equivalent to Level 2 of English Heritage (2016) *Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice.*

Whilst the barn itself is not shown on the 1841 Tithe Map (Figure 2) Plot 234 is labelled as "Cae'r Ysgybor" (Barn Field) on the apportionment (https://places.library.wales/viewer/4546057#?cv =21&h=234&c=0&m=0&s=0&xywh=448%2C462%2C1800%2C621). The Early Ordnance Survey maps (Figure 3), however, illustrates the barn together with small enclosures to the west, north and east. These small pens possibly suggest the building may have been being used as a hammel at this stage.

The barn was listed in 1968 at Grade II as "A fine field barn of early date, incorporating a re-used medieval window" (https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang= en&id=18337)

SUMMARY

The barn approximately 290 m south west of Llanfair Hall was recorded on 15th March 2019 by Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.

Cofnodwyd yr ysgubor tua 290m i'r de-orllewin o Lanfair ar 15 Mawrth 2019 gan Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd.

Methodology:

The field barn, adjacent to Isgaer and within the parkland associated with Llanfair Hall were visited on the 15th March 2019 with recording taking place based on a Level 2 Survey of English Heritage *(2016) Understanding Historic Buildings*. A guide to good recording practice.

The plans and elevations of the building had already been drawn by WM Design and Architecture Ltd and these drawings were used as the basis of the survey. Photographs were taken with a Nikon D5300 DSLR camera at a resolution of 24.2 MP in RAW. These were subsequently converted to TIFF for archiving and for use in this report. Overlapping photographs of the outside of the building were also taken with a Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ70 which were processed using Agisoft Metashape Standard v. 1.5.1 to produce a 3D model from which photographic elevations could be extracted. In all 102 photographs were taken for this part of the project.

The trusses were surveyed using a Leica TS06 total station using reflectorless mode and the results were processed using NRG Engineering Surveying System for Windows 2016

Results

The barn occupies a locally dominant position on a knoll within what was the parkland surrounding Llanfair Hall, currently it sits alongside a fence line dividing the area into two fields, however this is clearly a modern division which does not appear on the historic mapping of the area (Figure 3). The majority of the building is constructed of randomly coursed, rough rubble; however, the south eastern elevation has a roughly coursed boulder-built wall (Plate 8). The roof is of slate with individual slates varying size between 160 x 480 mm and 470 x 650 mm (Queen) (Gwyn 2015, 32) with the majority of the slates being approximately 250 x 520 mm (Countess) in size and ceramic ridge tiles (Plates 2 and 8). There is rough stone coping at both ends of the roof.

Currently the main openings are on the north western elevation of the building (Plate 2, Figure 5) with two doorways within the northern half of this elevation. The southern doorway (Plate 3) has a wooden lintel and one surviving, wooden jamb. The northern doorway, however, (Plate 4) has a slightly arched wooden lintel on the outers face, although the rest of the opening has flat top with a series of wooden lintels supporting the wall. Both of these doors are set slightly above the surrounding landscape so that there is a step up of approximately 0.2 m into the building. There are a series of ventilation slits within this elevation which are set at two distinct levels. The lower slits are approximately 1.4 m above the local ground level, whilst the upper slits are set at a level of 2.4 m (Plate 5). Six of seven ventilation slits in this elevation are unusual in having a slate "baffle" (Plate 6) dividing the opening. These "baffles" only run back through approximately half of the thickness of the wall (Plate 7) whilst the general opening is typically splayed.

The south eastern elevation (Plate 8, Figure 6) is distinctly better built, of roughly coursed boulders many of which appear to have been roughly squares. There is a centrally placed doorway, now blocked, with stone voussoirs forming a segmental arch (Plate 9). This opening has been blocked with at least two phases of blocking being evident. The majority of the blocking is of rough, mortared, stonework whilst there is a later, brick blocking in the upper left corner of the opening. These bricks are relatively modern, machine made, bricks with a cementous mortar. On either side of the door are two ventilation slits which are well made with stone block, jambs (Plate 10). These are longer than those in the northern elevation being 1.23 m long whereas those in the north western elevation are typically 0.56 m high.

The south western gable (Plate 11, Figure 7) has no distinct features except for a brick patch (Plate 12) which appears to have been made with, possibly re-used, hand made bricks. The north eastern gable, (Plate 13) however, has a tracery window frame placed high in the gable with a rectilinear

stone hood above (Plate 14). This is blind window with a backing of hand-made bricks and timber rails. The window is of pointed form with flowing ogee tracery which is also found within the 14th century on Anglesey (Haslam *et al* 2009, 441). Inside the barn there is only a small blocking (Plate 15) suggesting there may have been a ventilation slit in this gable and that the tracery "window" is only a surface decoration.

Internally the building is divided into two "rooms" by a low wall, approximately 2.4 m high which is clearly a late modification as it has straight joints with the walls at both ends (Plate 16). This wall is probably contemporary with the beams crossing the building which are assumed to have supported two raised platforms. The south eastern platform occupied all of the south eastern "room" and is clearly a later insertion the beams having their north western ends lodged in the splayed openings of the ventilation slots (Plate 17). Similarly, the beams for the second platform are also lodged in the splays of the ventilation slots on the north western side (Plate 18). All of the beams are set in the south eastern wall of the barn.

The north eastern room (Plate 19) retains two features related to its use for animals. In the northern corner is a rough feeder (Plate 20) consisting of a "T" shape of timbers set in the corner of the room with a metal grill above. In the opposite side of this room, adjacent to the doorway is an iron bar running down part of the wall with the socket for a timber below (Plate 21). The iron bar has a series of drill holes along its length and it is probable that it originally ran at right angles to the wall, supporting some sort of shelf. The socket, below the iron bar, would appear to have originally held a timber, however the original function of this feature is unknown.

Other than the floor beams, the south western room (Plate 22) retains no features relating to its use as an animal house, however the blocked doorway (Plate 23) is evident with a similar segmental arch defined by stone voussoirs. The opposing doorway has an inner lintel which is chamfered and has straight cut stops (Plate 24).

There are four trusses supporting the roof (Figures 9 - 12) which fall into two broad types. The two outer trusses (Trusses 1 and 4, Figures 9 and 12, Plates 25 and 26) are relatively simple trusses with slightly cambered tie beams which have pegged, half lap, joints (Plate 27). The peak of both of these trusses also have half lap joints which are also pegged. Truss 1, however has an additional wooden plate nailed on the surface of the truss which extends above the truss and has a slot in its top to hold the ridge piece. This would suggest either; a re-roofing of the barn with the addition of this plate to level out the ridge of the roof, or that this truss is re-used and needed to be modified to make it fit into the roof. Truss 4 also has an additional timber trenched into the end of the south eastern principal rafter (Plate 28) modifying the position of the ridge piece at this point. In general, the purlins on these trusses rest on the top of the principal rafters, however some of them have been supported with wooden cleats.

The middle trusses (Trusses 2 and 3, Figures 10 and 11, Plates 29 and 30) also have slightly canted tie beams, however, these have simple lap joints which were originally pegged, but later were reinforced with metal bolts. The tie beams replaced an earlier tie beams which had been morticed into the principal rafters and pegged in place (Plate 31). The peak of both of these trusses have half lap joints which are pegged. Truss 3, however also has a similar wooden plate nailed to its surface and supported by two short timbers attached to the top surface of the truss. Once again, the majority of the purlins rest on the principal rafters, however, on both trusses the lower eastern purlin has been slightly trenched into the principal rafters.

All of the trusses have been strengthened, probably at a later date, with the addition of a collar, bolted in position near to the top of the trusses. The shape of the collar on Truss 2 and the slots in Truss 1 would suggest that these collars may be from re-used timbers. The inside of the roof is torched and lime washed, as are the trusses.

Between Trusses 2 and 3, and above the south western door is a timber resting on to of the truss and held in place by short structs between the principal rafters and the tie beams. There is the remains of rope attached to this beam, possibly suggesting that this beam was the support for winch.

Discussion

The field barn, adjacent to Isgaer has clearly developed over time with at least three, possibly four, major phases of adaptation. The earliest building would appear to have been a single roomed with opposed, centrally placed doorways, possibly dating from the 17th century based on the form of the central trusses (RCAHMWM 1960, 201). The Royal Commission also assert that the south eastern wall of the building, together with its centrally placed doorway, are from the 18th century together with the outer of the two trusses. The difference in the building techniques between the south eastern wall and the rest of the building is striking with a much higher finish to the south eastern elevation. Whilst this may be temporally defined, it is more likely a function of the orientation of the building with this elevation facing onto the drive to Llanfair Hall.

The date at which the tracery was inserted into the north eastern gable is uncertain, however the church of St Mary's at Llanfair-is-gaer was said to have been partially rebuilt by J. Griffiths of Llanfair Hall in AD1821 and was fully restored by Sir G. Gilbert Scott (https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=en&id= 18336) in AD1865 and it is probable that the tracery was originally was part of this church. Its form is comparable with a series windows in churches on Anglesey (Llandrygarn, Llanbabo, Rhodogeidio and Tregaian) which have been dated to the 14th century (Haslam *et al* 2009, 441). A similar motif also occurs in a window lighting the book store in the chapter house at Valle Crucis Abbey. (RCAMWM 1937 cxxiv and Plate 44). The Royal Commission have speculated as to whether these windows, at least on Anglesey, may be the work of a single craftsman. It is noticeable that tracery window is positioned to face towards Llanfair Hall and therefore may be an attempt to turn a functional building into a form of folly.

Sometime in the nineteenth century it is likely that the function of the building changed to that of an animal house with the division of the building into two "rooms" and the cutting of the northern door in the north western elevation. The dating of this event is not known, but it is likely to have happened before 1888, because the Ordnance Survey map of that date (Figure 3) shows two small enclosures on the northern side of the building at this point. These enclosures probably suggest the building was being used as a hammel at this point. It is not known whether the two platforms were added at this time, however, storage area at a first-floor level are not unusual in cow shed of the period. It is also likely that the high collars were also added to the trusses, in order to strengthen them, at this point.

Acknowledgments

This project was commissioned by Adrian Williamson of WM Design and Architecture Ltd on behalf of Robin and Anwen Jones. He also supplied digital copies of the survey of the building. The project was monitored by Jenney Emmett for the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service.

References

English Heritage (2016) Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice.

- Gwyn, D. 2015. *Welsh Slate. Archaeology and History of an Industry.* Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. Aberystwyth.
- Haslam, R. Orbach, J and Voelcker, A. 2009. *The Buildings of Wales. Gwynedd, Anglesey, Caernarvonshire and Merioneth.* Yale University Press, London. p. 441

- Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire. 1937 An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Anglesey. HMSO London
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Figure 1: Location Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 2: Extract from the 1841 Tithe Map Not to scale



1888 Anglesey XXIII.SW



1917 Caernarvonshire XI.9

Figure 3: Extract from the Historic Ordnance Survey Maps Re-scaled to 1:5,000 (approx.)





Figure 4: Plan Scale 1:50

Based on Drawing A-02-01 by WM Design and Architecture Ltd Dated 05/03/2018



Extracted from Drawing A-02-01 by WM Design and Architecture Ltd Dated 05/03/2018



<u>5 m</u> 0

Figure 5: North Western Elevation Scale 1:100



Extracted from Drawing A-02-01 by WM Design and Architecture Ltd Dated 05/03/2018



5 m 0

Figure 6: South Eastern Elevation Scale 1:100



Extracted from Drawing A-02-01 by WM Design and Architecture Ltd Dated 05/03/2018





Figure 7: South Western Elevation Scale 1:100



Extracted from Drawing A-02-01 by WM Design and Architecture Ltd Dated 05/03/2018



<u>5 m</u> 0

Figure 8: North Eastern Elevation Scale 1:100





Figure 9: Truss 1 Scale 1:50





Figure 10: Truss 2 Scale 1:50



0		5 m
0		<u></u> III



Figure 12: Truss 4 Scale 1:50



Figure 13: Location of the Photographs Scale 1:100



Plate 1: The barn in its setting



Plate 2: Northern elevation



Plate 3: The western doorway in the northern elevation



Plate 4: The eastern doorway in the northern elevation



Plate 5: Ventilation slits at the western end of the northern elevation



Plate 6: Detail one of the ventilation slits with its slate baffle



Plate 7: Internal view of one of the ventilation slits



Plate 8: Southern elevation



Plate 9: Blocked doorway in the southern elevation



Plate 10: Ventilation slit in the southern elevation



Plate 11: Western gable



Plate 12: Detail of the brick repair to the western gable



Plate 13: The eastern gable



Plate 14: Detail of the tracery in the eastern gable



Plate 15: Blocking inside the western gable



Plate 16: Dividing wall within the barn, looking NE.



Plate17: Floor beams in the eastern end of the barn, lodged in the ventilation slits



Plate 18: Floor beams in the western end of the barn, lodged in the ventilation slits



Plate 19: The eastern room looking SE



Plate 20: Feeder in the northern corner of the barn



Plate 21: Iron bar and socket in the north-eastern corner of the eastern room



Plate 22: The western room looking south



Plate 23: The blocked doorway, looking SE



Plate 24: Chamfer and stop on the inner lintel of the western door



Plate 25: Truss 1, looking SW



Plate 26: Truss 4, looking NE



Plate 27: Half lapped joint between the principal rafter and the tie beam on Truss 4



Plate 28: Top of Truss 4



Plate 29: Truss 2, looking SW



Plate 30: Truss 3, looking SW



Plate 31: Mortice and broken peg hole in Truss 2



Plate 32: Possible winch support between Trusses 2 and 3

File	Direction	Subject
	(looking)	
001	NE	SW gable end
002	NE	Brick patch in SW gable end
003	SE	NW elevation
004	SE	SW end of NW elevation
005	SE	Detail of lower ventilation slit
006	SE	Southern doorway in NW elevation
007	SE	Southern doorway in NW elevation
008	SE	Detail of lower ventilation slit between the doorways
009	SE	NE end of NW elevation
010	SE	Upper ventilation slits in NW elevation
011	SE	Upper ventilation slits in NW elevation
012	SE	Northern door in NW elevation
013	SW	NE gable
014	SW	Tracery in NE gable, shot from ground level
015	NW	SE elevation
016	NW	SE elevation
017	NW	Ventilation slit (1) in NW elevation
018	NW	Ventilation slit (2) in NW elevation
019	NW	Blocked doorway
020	NW	Ventilation slit (3) in NW elevation
021	NW	Ventilation slit (4) in NW elevation
022	SE	General view of northern room
023	Ν	Feeder in corner of northern room
024	NW	Support for the northern platform lodged in the upper ventilation
		slits of the northern room
025	Ν	Detail of end of beam lodging into a ventilation slit
026	W	Detail of end of beam lodging into a ventilation slit
027	W	Detail of end of beam lodging into a ventilation slit
028	SE	Wall plate supporting Truss 4
029	SW	General view of trusses 1, 2 and 3
030	S	General view of southern room
031	SE	Blocked doorway (internal)
032	Ν	Beam for southern platform embedded in SE wall
033	SW	Truss 1
034	NE	Trusses 3 and 4
035	NW	Inside of ventilation slit
036	SE	End of beam for southern platform in southern corner of the barn
037	NW	Beam for southern platform
038	NW	Internal door head to the southern door in the NW elevation
039	Ν	Detail of the chamfer and stop on the internal lintel to the
		southern door in the NW elevation
040	NE	Trusses 3 and 4
041	E	Joint between the tie beam and the principal rafter of Truss 4
042	Ν	Joint between the tie beam and the principal rafter of Truss 4
043	NE	Head of Truss 4

Appendix 1: List of Photographs in the Archive

File	Direction	Subject
	(looking)	
044	SW	Truss 1
045	SE	Mortice below Truss 3
046	NW	Mortice below Truss 3
047	NW	Possible winch support
048	NE	Top of Truss 4
049	N	Joint between the tie beam and principal rafter of Truss 4
050	Е	Joint between the tie beam and principal rafter of Truss 4
051	SW	Trusses 3, 2 and 1
052	W	Joint between the tie beam and the principal rafter of Truss 3
053	S	Joint between the tie beam and the principal rafter of Truss 3
054	S	Eastern side of Trusses 3, 2 and 1
055	W	Western side of Trusses 3, 2 and 1
056	WSW	Beam for possible winch in relation to Truss 3
057	ESE	Straight joint between the dividing wall and the south east side
		of the building
058	NE	Dividing wall
059	SW	Iron bar embedded in the dividing wall and socket for a beam
060	SW	Iron bar embedded in the dividing wall
061	SW	Socket for beam in dividing wall
062	SW	Detail of tracery in NE gable, from 5 m pole
063	SW	Detail of tracery in NE gable, from 5 m pole
064	SE	Mortice below Truss 3
065	NW	Mortice below Truss 3
066	NW	Mortice below Truss 2
067	SE	Mortice below Truss 2
068	SW	Truss 1
069	NE	Trusses 3 and 4
070	SW	Trusses 3, 2 and 1
071	W	General view of the roof structure
072	N	Feeder in the northern room
073	NW	General view of the building
074	NW	General view of the building
075	WNW	General view of the building

Appendix 2: Specification for the Archaeological Recording of the Field Barn near Isgaer, Llanfair Hall, Caernarfon LL55 1TT

Specification written by I.P. Brooks 27/2/2019

1. Background

- 1.1. It is intended to convert the field barn near to the property of Isgaer, Llanfair Hall, Caernarfon into a two-bedroom holiday let.
- 1.2. The barn (PRN 926) is a listed building, Listed building Ref. 18337 at Grade II.
- 1.3. As part of the planning process it has been recommended that the building be recorded at a level equivalent to a Level 2 Survey of English Heritage (2016) Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice
- 1.4. This specification is based on an email from Adrian Williamson of WM Design and Architecture Ltd; a telephone conversation with Jenny Emmett of the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service and a site visit made on 25/02/2019.

2. Aims

2.1. To record the barn to a level equivalent to a Level 2 Survey of English Heritage (2016) Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice.

3. Assessment Programme

- 3.1. The recording of the building will include:
 - 3.1.1. Photographic recording of the building
 - 3.1.2. Drawing of the trusses
 - 3.1.3. Written description
 - 3.1.4. Archive and report preparation

4. Standing Building Recording

- 4.1. The barn will be record to a level equivalent to a Level 2 Survey of English Heritage (2016) Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice
- 4.2. This will include a photographic, drawn and written record
- 4.3. The photographic record will include:
 - 4.3.1. A general view or views of the building in its wider setting or landscape.
 - 4.3.2. The building's external appearance.
 - 4.3.3. The overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation areas.
 - 4.3.4. Photographs will be taken with Nikon D5300 Digital SLR Camera at a resolution of 24.2 MP in RAW, subsequently converted to TIFF and JPEG for archiving and presentation.
 - 4.3.5. If practical the photographs will include a suitable metric scale.
 - 4.3.6. Where practical photogrammetric elevations will be produced using Agisoft Metashape Standard v. 1.5.1
- 4.4. The drawn record will include:
 - 4.4.1. A location plan.
 - 4.4.2. The existing plans and elevations prepared for the planning application by WM Design and Architecture Ltd.
- 4.4.3. Measured drawings of the four trusses that cross the building.
- 4.5. The written record will include:
 - 4.5.1. The precise location of the building as an address and in the form of a National Grid reference.
 - 4.5.2. A note of any statutory designation.

- 4.5.3. The date when the record was made, the name(s) of the recorder(s) and the location of any archive material.
- 4.5.4. A description of the building that will include a summary the building's form, function, date and sequence of development

5. Archive preparation

- 5.1. An archive of the photographs, drawings and written descriptions for this report will be prepared and deposited with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.
- 5.2. This will be consistent with the RCAHMW Guidelines for Digital Archives (https://rcahmw.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/RCAHMW-Guidelines-for-Digital-Archives.pdf)
- 5.3. A copy of the archive will be provided to the Gwynedd Historical Environment Record

6. Reporting

- 6.1. A summary report on the findings of the investigations will be prepared and completed within one month from completion of the project. This will summarise the results of the project including;
 - 6.1.1. Results of the Standing Building Survey
- 6.2. The preparation of the report will conform to the Welsh Archaeological Trusts 2018 "Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs)"

7. General

- 7.1. IFA Code of Conduct
 - 7.1.1. All staff will abide by, and all procedures be carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct.
- 7.2. Health and Safety
 - 7.2.1. 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.
 - 7.2.2. A risk assessment will be carried out prior to any fieldwork
- 7.3. Staff
 - 7.3.1. The project will be directed by Dr I.P. Brooks MIFA
 - 7.3.2. Project Staff will include Dr I.P. Brooks MIFA
- 7.4. Timetable
 - 7.4.1. Standing Building Survey:- 1 day
 - 7.4.2. Report and archive preparation:- 2 days
 - 7.4.3. If appointed this fieldwork could be undertaken in March 2019.
- 7.5. Insurance
 - 7.5.1. EAS Ltd carries all necessary Public and Employee Liability Insurances.
 - 7.5.2. EAS Ltd carries Professional Indemnity Insurance.



Figure 1: Location. Not to Scale.

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