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**MAES YR HENDRE, MAENAN
BUILDINGS ASSESSMENT**
for
Ieuan Hughes

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Govannon Report GC384

MAES YR HENDRE, MAENAN – BUILDINGS ASSESSMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

Govannon consultancy (Dr David Gwyn) has been commissioned by Mr Ieuan Hughes of Rhiwlas, Eglwysbach, Conwy to carry out a buildings assessment report to establish a baseline historical and archaeological record of a farmstead complex within a small and defined area of some potential archaeological sensitivity, at Maes yr Hendre, Maenan. The present document constitutes that report.

The document is sought in order to fulfil the requirements of Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Services in respect of listed building consent application 0/42693 and application 0/42692. It accompanies a photographic record of the farmstead complex, *Maes yr Hendre, Maenan – Photographic Survey*.

2 LOCATION

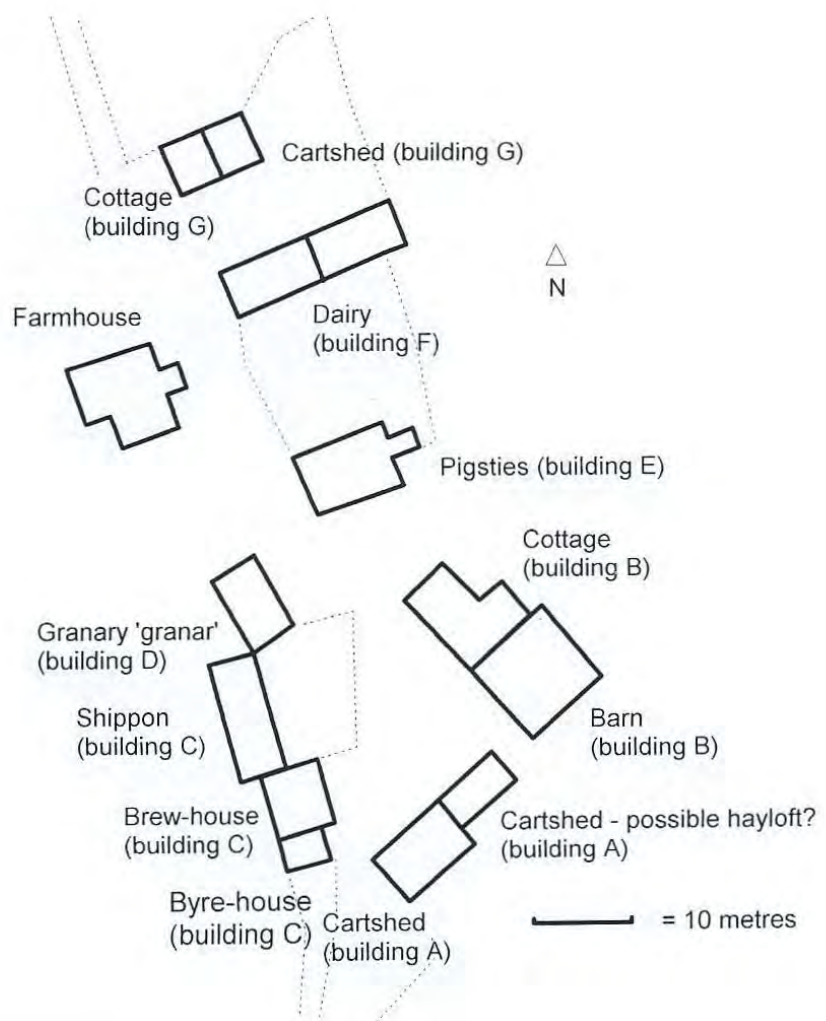
Maes yr Hendre is situated in the community of Llanddodged and Maenan in the county of Conwy (formerly the parish of Maenan in the commote of Arllechwedd Isaf in Caernarvonshire), at SH 79184 67492, at 145 metres above sea-level (**Map 1**).



Map 1

Location of Maes yr Hendre (inset)

Buildings at Maes yr Hendre farmstead complex (to right – references are to architects' plans and elevations; see *Maes yr Hendre, Maenan – Photographic Survey*)



3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology followed here is the standard for a building assessment; identified features are set against the known typology of farm buildings in Wales (Smith 1988) and elsewhere in the north-east Wales region (William 1982), as well as in upland areas of England (Barnwell and Giles 1997). The evidence is summarised in **7.2** below.

4 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOIL FORMATION

Maes yr Hendre is built on Devensian till over rocks of the Denbigh grits formation on the eastern side of the Conwy valley on a east-facing slope. It overlooks the Nant Maes y Groes, a tributary stream of the Conwy river, and as such forms part of the agricultural landscape of north-east Wales, rather than of the Snowdonian massif.

5 STATUTORY DESIGNATION

Listing

Four of the structures are listed grade II. These are the farmhouse, the cottage, the brew-house and the cart-shed range. The descriptions are given in Appendix 1.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

6.1 Prehistoric

Possible Prehistoric occupation of the immediate area may have centred on Caer Oleu/Pen y Castell, a small fortress on a narrow ridge with precipitous sides, about 0.5 km to the south. Access from the North is prevented by a ditch about 1.5m deep cut across the ridge. South of this is a D-shaped enclosure with a strong wall, dry-built and still standing in places. South of this enclosure the edges of the ridge are reinforced in the less precipitous places with stone walling. The enclosed area is divided into three sections by natural crags.

6.2 Romano-British

No evidence has been identified for Romano-British activity in the immediate area. The Roman road from Conovium southwards passed on the western side of the Conwy valley.

6.3 Medieval

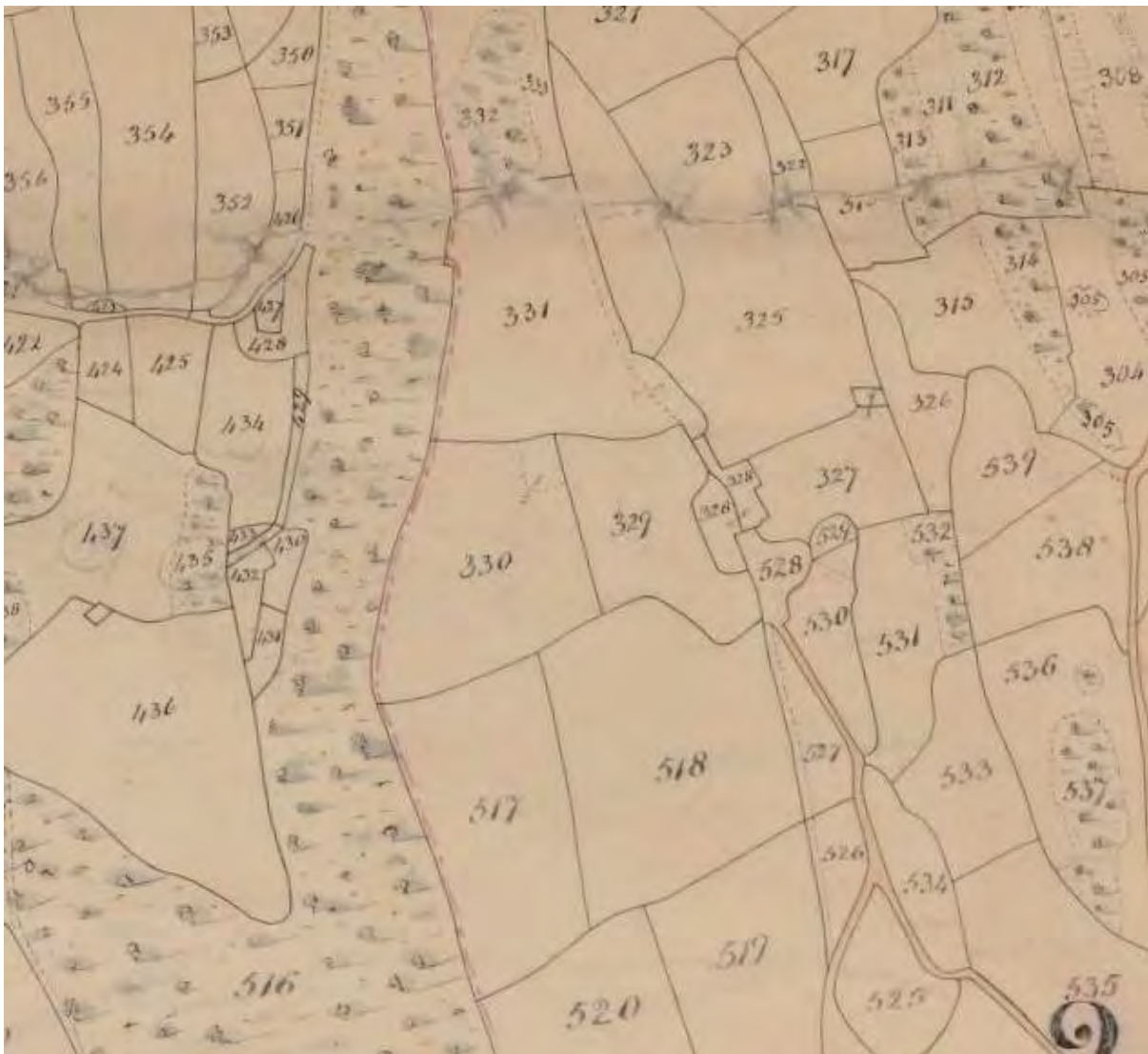
It has been suggested that the Caer Oleu may have been the site of a motte and bailey in the Medieval period (RCAHMW).

From 1284 to 1538, the study area formed part of the territories of the Cistercian abbey of Aberconwy. The lands west of the Conwy river had been granted to the abbey upon its foundation before 1198, and the Maenan lands were granted to it when it became necessary to move the abbey church from its original position near the mouth of the estuary in order to allow King Edward I to build the borough town of Conwy on its site. Butler 1982 outlines the evidence for the extent of the monastic lands in the period 1284-1538 and subsequently. He points out that five existing landholders were compensated when the abbey was relocated to Maenan, one of whom lost lands worth £10, two £5 17s 8d, one 10s and another 15s. He suggests that while these landholdings could correspond to the later Tre Ganol, Tre Bach and Abbey, 'it is more likely that the basic division lay

Following on from the dissolution, the manor of Maenan and the tenements thereon passed through junior branches of the Wynnes of Gwydir until 1667 when it passed to the Wynnes of Wynnstay, the greatest landowning family in North Wales. The earliest reference so far identified is in 1775, in the Land Tax records, when it was occupied by Owen Jones and assessed at 5/1d. In 1793 the owner is given for the first time, Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, Baronet, of Wynnstay, the principal owner in the township, at which time it was tenanted by John Kyffin, and assessed at 7/-. The following year it was tenanted by John Kyffin and partner, and assessed at 14/-. From 1795 until the record ceases in 1810 it is in joint occupancy, John Hughes and John Kyffin until 1797, Edward Thomas and Thomas Hughes in 1810 (CRO: XQA/LT/3/5).

In 1829 the rentals records the buildings of a barn and a pig sty at Maes yr Hendre and records a payment of £52 a year for what may be the house at Maes yr Hendre in a mortgage to Lord Glenharvie, suggesting that the farmhouse was possibly altered or built that year (NLW: Wynnstay rentals R85). A map of Maenan dated 1843 (**Map 2**) shows that most of the surviving buildings were then in existence, arranged to the east and the west of the lane leading through the farm:

These details are corroborated by a map of 1857 in the National Library of Wales (RMA 125), which cannot be reproduced.



Map 3: tithe map of 1847

At the time of the tithe map (**Map 3**) apportionment of 1847 the following are indicated:

<i>Owner</i>	<i>Occupier</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Cultivation</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Sir William Watkin Wynn, Baronet	John Hughes	327	Cae dan ty	Pasture	7/1/24
	John Hughes	328	Homestead	Pasture	1/0/0
	John Hughes	329	Cae ty ucha'r ty	Arable	3/3/28
	Robert Kyffin	518	Cae twll ganol	Arable	7/3/10
	Robert Kyffin	527	Cae twll isa	Pasture	1/1/38
	Robert Kyffin	528	Homestead	/	0/3/4
	Robert Kyffin	529	Garden	/	0/0/36
	Robert Kyffin	530	Cae gadlas	Arable	1/3/0
	John Hughes	531	Wern	Arable	2/1/0



Map 3a: detail of 1847 tithe map

The Wynnstay rentals record payment for masons' work at Maes yr Hendre on 19 July 1850 (13s 9d) and on 25 July (10s and 17s) (NLW: Wynnstay rentals R105).



Map 4: 25" ordnance survey of 1889

The Wynnstay estate was by far the largest landed estate in north-east Wales; in 1873 its rateable acreage was 87,919, vastly more than its nearest rivals (Hughes of Kinmel at 15,177, and Wynne-Finch of Voelas at 13,591 – Wiliam 1982, 291-292).

By 1890 it was being offered for sale as part of the effects of Joseph Evans esq. of Haydock in Lancashire. An attempt to put it on the market was unsuccessful and was repeated the following year (CRO: XSC/69; XSC 861).

7 FINDINGS OF THE ASSESSMENT

(Refer to Map 1)

7.1 Description

Cart shed (building A) SH 7921 6744



A single-bay cart shed located on the south-eastern perimeter of the yard, orientated south-west to north-east. It may be of early 19th century construction with an adjoining, later 19th century structure (see below). It is of rubble construction with a slate roof. It is a rectangular storeyed block with a wide, a depressed-arched cart opening at R; the voussoirs are slate ashlar below a narrow arch ring. To the left of this is a small window with modern glazing and beyond, a plain entrance with boarded door. There are two further, plain windows to the upper floor, under the eaves. External slab-stepped access to upper boarded entrance at rear and in the south-west facing gable; this first floor area is likely to have been a granary. A cart-shed (*hofel* or *hofel droliau*) is a common feature on farms in north-east Wales, though the splendid voussoirs at Maes yr Hendre are very unusual. They reflect the growing adoption of wheeled farm vehicles in the area in the late 18th century, and the use of carts for transporting hay and peat. The earliest dated cart-shed in North-east Wales was built in 1816 (Wiliam 1982, 236).

Cart shed, possible hayloft (building A) SH 7922 6745



This building is located on the south-eastern perimeter of the yard and is orientated south-west to north-east. It adjoins the cart shed and is stepped down from it. It is a single-storey building of rubble construction with a roof of thick torched slates. Facing the yard is a plain central cart entrance which originally had a further entrance to the right and a wider opening to the left; these are now blocked. It is suggested that this building may have functioned as hayloft at one stage.

Maes yr Hendre cottage (building B) SH 7922 6747



Maes yr Hendre cottage (so called) is located on the eastern perimeter of the yard and is orientated north-west to south-east. It is a two-window two-storey end-chimney farmhouse, probably of early 18th construction, restored externally under a grant scheme in 2012, built of rubble with a recent replacement slate roof; weather-coursing and simple corncicing to chimneys, that to the right formerly projecting.

The front doorway is a near-central entrance, with a slab lintel. The door is boarded and studded door (the bottom section replaced) and pegged wooden frame. The window frames are modern replacements that replicate the pattern of earlier windows. Small 9-pane slightly-recessed sash windows to left and right of entrance and on upper floor, under the eaves; windows with modern frames of historical pattern to rear, and single-storey 19th century rubble lean-to with (restored) slate mono-pitch roof.

The interior has not been restored. The principal features are the hearth with timber lintel in the centre of the north-west gable and an adjacent oven of stone and brick construction. The ceiling joists are rotten. The roof is supported on possibly original rafters secured by collars. Internal divisions are timber. The ground floor room to the right of the main door retains an ornamented Victorian fireplace.

The cottage is of earlier construction than the 19th century farmhouse on the same site (see below) and the contrast between the vernacular character of the one and the estate-sponsored character of the other is instructive in showing the more 'hands-on' approach to the estate's provision of accommodation for tenants.

Barn (building B) SH 7923 6746



The barn is located on the eastern perimeter of the yard and is orientated north-west to south-east. It adjoins flush to the cottage but is of later construction, perhaps dating from the early to mid 19th century. It is rubble-built, with some brick-work in the south-east facing gable; continuous roof of Ordovician slate, with a sky-light, supported by V-strut trusses. There is a segmental-arched entrance with boarded door and pegged frame to the left, large modern sliding barn door to right. A 20th century corrugated iron extension adjoins to the rear.

Brew-house (building C) SH 7920 6745



Orientated north to south on the west side of the yard; a vernacular single-storey structure, possibly adapted from an earlier dwelling, with a two-bay interior with pegged oak queen strut and tie-beam truss. Wide fireplace to right, with bread oven inserted to left.

Though it has been suggested (listed building description) that this is of 18th century construction and was possibly originally domestic, it does not seem to be shown on the map of 1843. It is of rubble construction with slate roof and tiled ridge; reduced chimney in the northern gable. Off-centre entrance (L); the pegged oak framed and original boarded door, fragmentary at the time of the listing description, has now gone (June 2016). Flanking the entrance are small 2-light wooden windows from which the wooden boarded shutters referred to in the listing description have now been removed.

A *briws* (brew-house) was not a common feature on farms in the region, and few seem ever to have been of the scale of this example, with its double-fronted facade.

Byre block (building C) SH 7920 6744



Orientated north to south on the west side of the yard; stepped-down and adjoining the brew-house to its north, a small 19th century adjoining building of rubble construction with a part-surviving slate roof; now (June 2016) ruinous. Described as a byre block (listed building description), but it is not clear what its function was.

Shippon (building C) SH 7919 6746



Orientated north to south on the west side of the yard; a late-19th century three-door *côr* (shippon, cow-house), apparently not marked on the 1843 plan; stone-built, with some structural brick elements and pine roof timbers; there is evidence of 20th-century reconstruction and rebuilding, including the graffito 'John Hughes 1967' (father of Mr Ieuan Hughes, and the then owner of Maes yr Hendre). Substantially built and in good condition, it indicates the levels of investment in the farm by the Wynnstay estate in the later 19th and 20th centuries.

Granary 'granar' (building D) SH 7920 6747



Orientated north-west to south-east on the west side of the yard; a substantial rubble-built double-fronted structure, two storeys high; the slate roof has been removed, revealing the pine rafters. No evidence of chimneys was observed.

The existence of a granary, a storehouse for threshed grain, on such a scale – almost industrial – is an indication of the fertility of the area in which Maes yr Hendre is situated. It appears to have been constructed between 1843 and 1889. It is unusual in regional terms in that it is a dedicated structure, rather than a room above a cart-shed or (less commonly) a stable or a cow-house, and may have been built when the putative granary above building A became too small.

Pigsties (building E) SH 7921 6748



A three-bay set of pigsties, with iron doors on each sty made by the Pont y Gath smithy in Maenan (pers. comm., Ieuan Hughes). The roof slates have been removed.

Pigsties do not appear to have been particularly common features on farms in the region. The examples at Maes yr Hendre are substantial, and unusual in that they have a pitched roof. They are, however, typical as self-contained 'inlet-outlet' types.

Dairy (building F) SH 7920 6751



A two-unit dairy building, orientated east-west; rubble construction and slate roof, now in poor condition. It was in existence by 1843. Dairies were where the cows were milked and the milk left to cool. They are an unusual feature of farms in the region.

Milking bays survive internally in building F, along with electric light fittings, indicating that lactuals remained an important part of the farm's economy for well over a century.

Cottage (building G) SH 7919 6751



A one-unit building, possibly a small cottage, orientated east-west, with a chimney in the west-facing gable. It is rubble-built with a slate roof, which is now collapsing.

In existence by 1843, and possibly accommodation for a *gwas*, a landless labourer working on the farm, indicating both the level of provision for labourers and the fact that they did not reside in the farmhouse itself.

Cart shed (building G)SH 7920 6752



A cart-shed contiguous with the cottage, orientated east-west; the cart opening is supported by a timber lintel on a vertical-positioned slab support. It is now heavily overgrown. It was in existence by 1843; as noted (building A), cart-sheds reflect the growing use of wheeled vehicles from the late 18th century in the area. It is possible that the existence of two cart-sheds reflects the joint tenancy of the farm.

Maes yr Hendre farmhouse SH 7918 6750



Maes yr Hendre farmhouse is a two-storey double-fronted east-facing structure of probably 19th century date, typical in scale and design of estate-built Conwy valley farmhouses of the period. It is of lime-washed rubble construction with a slate roof, stone end chimney stacks, with modern casement windows and is east-facing. The upper windows rise through the eaves. The gabled porch is a later addition. There is a modern extension to the rear.

7.2 Discussion

The majority of buildings on the site were in existence before 1843, and reflect the practice of the Wynnstay estate. A puzzling aspect of the 1843 map, if it can be relied upon, is that it suggests that neither the 'granar' nor the brew-house and its associated byre block were then in existence, and that there was a building on the site of the shippon. The map of 1857 in the National Library of Wales, too large for reproduction, shows no change. It is entirely possible that the brew-house, the byre block and the granar are mid-19th century, though opinion has tended to suggest that they are earlier (see listed building description below).

The pigsties and the shippon would appear to have been constructed between 1857 and 1889. The pigsties are unlikely to be those recorded as having been built in the 1820s; Mr Hughes suggests that these were at SH 7923 6743, where he recalls being told that the remains of pigsties were cleared to build a modern corrugated iron shed.

The siting of the buildings – facing each other around a laneway to form a rudimentary yard – is a common type of layout in the Conwy valley and elsewhere in north-east Wales, particularly among upland farms. As such, it contrasts both with simpler arrangements, such as where the buildings are arranged along one side of the lane, and other, more formal planned locations which rise to the grandeur of a formal courtyard (William 1982, 36-42, Smith 1998, 147). Whilst courtyard farms are

common in lowland parts of North Wales, they are rarely encountered in farms on higher ground such as Maes yr Hendre, and informal arrangements such as those identified here are typical. It is worthy of note that at Maes yr Hendre, the 'cottage', the earlier farmhouse, faces the yard, whereas the later farmhouse does not, and seems to have been constructed in a location that gives it a view over the valley, even though it is channelled between two functional buildings (cf Smith 1988, 147).

Wiliam observes that the order in which farm buildings were constructed might vary, citing Ystrad Fawr, Llangwm where the barn was rebuilt in 1834, the cow-house shortly after, a cart-shed/granary between 1834 and 1842, and calf-pens and a brew-house at a later date, and Ty Newydd, Gwytherin, where a stable was added to the house in 1845, the barn rebuilt in 1853, and a new cow-house erected in 1860 (Wiliam 1982, 260).

The brew-house is commonly found on farms in Dyffryn Conwy. It was not only where beer might be made but was where clothes might be boiled, potatoes and other foodstuffs prepared for the pigs, and bread baked (Wiliam 1982, 247-249).

Cart-sheds are introduced on farm in north-east Wales from the first quarter of the 19th century onwards (Wiliam 1982, 228-239). Mr Hughes suggests that the finely wrought voussoir arch in the cart shed range might have come from an earlier building in the locality; the Maes yr Hendre example is unusual in this respect.

Maes yr Hendre constitutes an attractive example of a Conwy valley farm complex with elements dating from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and with examples of structures that have been adapted over time.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Ieuan Hughes of Rhiwlas for commissioning the report, for sharing documents and for historical information, to Mark Roberts, planning consultant, and to Dr Marian Gwyn for photographic recording and advice.

9 SOURCES

9.1 Secondary sources

Barnwell PS and C Giles 1997, *English Farmsteads 1750-1914* (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of England)

Butler LAS 1981, 'The Boundaries of the Abbey of Aberconway at Maenan', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 130, 19-35.

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales 1956, *Inventory of Caernarvonshire: East* (London: HMSO), 168

Smith P 1988, *House of the Welsh Countryside* (London: HMSO)

E Wiliam E 1982, *Traditional Farm Buildings in North-East Wales* (National Museum of Wales)

9.2 Archival sources

Caernarfon Record Office

XQA/LT/3/5 – land tax assessments for Maenan, 1746-1810

XM/Maps/683/2 – map of 1843

Tithe map and apportionment, 1847

XSC/69 – sale catalogue, 1890
XSC/861 – sale catalogue, 1891

National Library of Wales, Abersyswyth

RMA 125, map of estate, 1857
Wynnstay estate rentals

National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth

C554637 – includes photograph of farmhouse and brief written description

9.3 On-line resources

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales ‘coflein’
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust ‘archwilio’

APPENDIX 1: LISTED BUILDINGS DESCRIPTIONS

Maes yr Hendre farmhouse: Cadw ID - 3216

History: (none)

Interior: (none)

Exterior: 18th century with modern alterations. 2 storeys, the upper windows of which rise through the eaves. 2-window limewashed rubble front with slate roof and stone end chimney stacks; modern casement windows. Added gabled porch to offset entrance. Extension to the rear.

Reason for Listing: Included for group value with other listed items at Maes-yr-Hendre farm.

Maes yr Hendre cottage: Cadw ID - 18235

History: (none)

Interior: The interior was not available for inspection at time of survey (July 96).

Exterior: First-half C18 storeyed, 2-window end-chimney farmhouse; of rubble with old slate roof; weather-coursing and simple corncicing to chimneys, that to the R formerly projecting. Near-central entrance with old boarded and studded door (the bottom section replaced) and pegged wooden frame. Small 9 pane slightly-recessed sash window to R of entrance with an 8-pane sash in reduced opening at L; 9-pane square sashes to upper floor, under the eaves, with the lower glazing bars removed. Blocked window to rear and single-storey C19 rubble and slate lean-to. Adjoining flush to the R is an early or second quarter C19 barn addition; rubble with continuous slate roof. Segmental-arched entrance with boarded door and pegged frame to L; large modern sliding barn door to R. A C20 corrugated iron extension adjoins to the rear.

Reason for Listing: An C18 vernacular storeyed farmhouse with well-preserved exterior character.

References: (none)

Former brewhouse at Maes yr Hendre cottage: Cadw ID - 18237

History: (none)

Interior: 2-bay interior with pegged oak queen strut and tie-beam truss. Wide fireplace to R with bread oven inserted to L.

Exterior: Vernacular single-storey brewhouse, perhaps second-half C18 and possibly originally domestic. Rubble construction with slate roof and tiled ridge; reduced chimney to R. Off-centre entrance (L) with pegged oak framed and original boarded door, now fragmentary (July 1996). Flanking the entrance are small 2-light wooden windows with wooden boarded shutters. Stepped-down and set back to the L a small C19 adjoining byre block with construction as before.

Reason for Listing: Included for group value with Maes-yr-Hendre Cottage and the Carthouse and Cartsheds at Maes-yr-Hendre Cottage.

References: (none)

Former carthouse range at Maes yr Hendre cottage: Cadw ID - 18236

History: (none)

Interior: (none)

Exterior: Early C19 carthouse block with adjoining, later C19 cart sheds of rubble construction with slate roofs. The carthouse section (to the R) is a rectangular storeyed block with wide, depressed-arched cart opening at R; slate ashlar voussoirs below narrow arch ring. To the L of this is a small window with modern glazing and beyond, a plain entrance with boarded door. 2 further, plain windows to the upper floor, under the eaves. External slate stepped access to upper boarded entrance at rear. The adjoining cartshed section (to the L) is single storey and is stepped down. Plain central cart entrance with, originally, a further cart entrance to the R and a stable opening to the L; these are now blocked.

Reason for Listing: Included for group value with Maes-yr-Hendre Cottage and Former Brewhouse at Maes-yr-Hendre Cottage.

References: (none)

APPENDIX 2 ROYAL COMMISSION COFLEIN DESCRIPTION

An eighteenth century house, part of a group of eighteenth-nineteenth century farm buildings. It has limewashed stone walls and a slate gabled roof framed by end chimney stacks. The house faces east, where it shows two half dormers on the upper storey. On the ground floor the offset doorway has an added gabled porch. There is an extension to the rear. Internally there is a wide fireplace and original ceiling beams.

At Maesyrendre there are two adjacent farmsteads: Maesyrendre-isaf and Maesyrendre-uchaf. These farmsteads were farmed separately until (say) the later C19th. There is accordingly duplication of farmhouses, bakehouses, barns, cowhouses, carthouses and other ranges, all broadly dating from the late C18th - mid C19th. A substantial barn and stable seem to belong to the period when the

farms were united. Both farmhouses were briefly noted in the *Caernarvonshire Inventory, Vol. I: East*, p. 160 (mon. no. 603). The following buildings are listed:

Maes-yr-hendre Farmhouse (3216) = Maesyrendre-isaf

Maes-yr-hendre Cottage (18235) = Maesyrendre-uchaf

Brewhouse at Maes-yr-hendre Cottage (18237) = Bakehouse/Brewhouse at Maesyrendre-uchaf

Carthouse Range at Maes-yr-hendre Cottage (18236) = Carthouse range at Maesyrendre-uchaf

The mid-C19th farmbuildings at Maesyrendre-uchaf are not listed. They form two parallel ranges [] of the farmhouse: (1) bakehouse/brewhouse with cartshed and granary in range with (2) cowhouse and former two-bay barn.

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