

OGBP/02



OLD GWERNYFED, VELINDRE, BRECON, POWYS

Historic Building Recording, Trial Trenching
and Documentary Research

commissioned by Iain Burgess

September 2015

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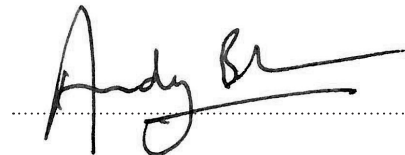
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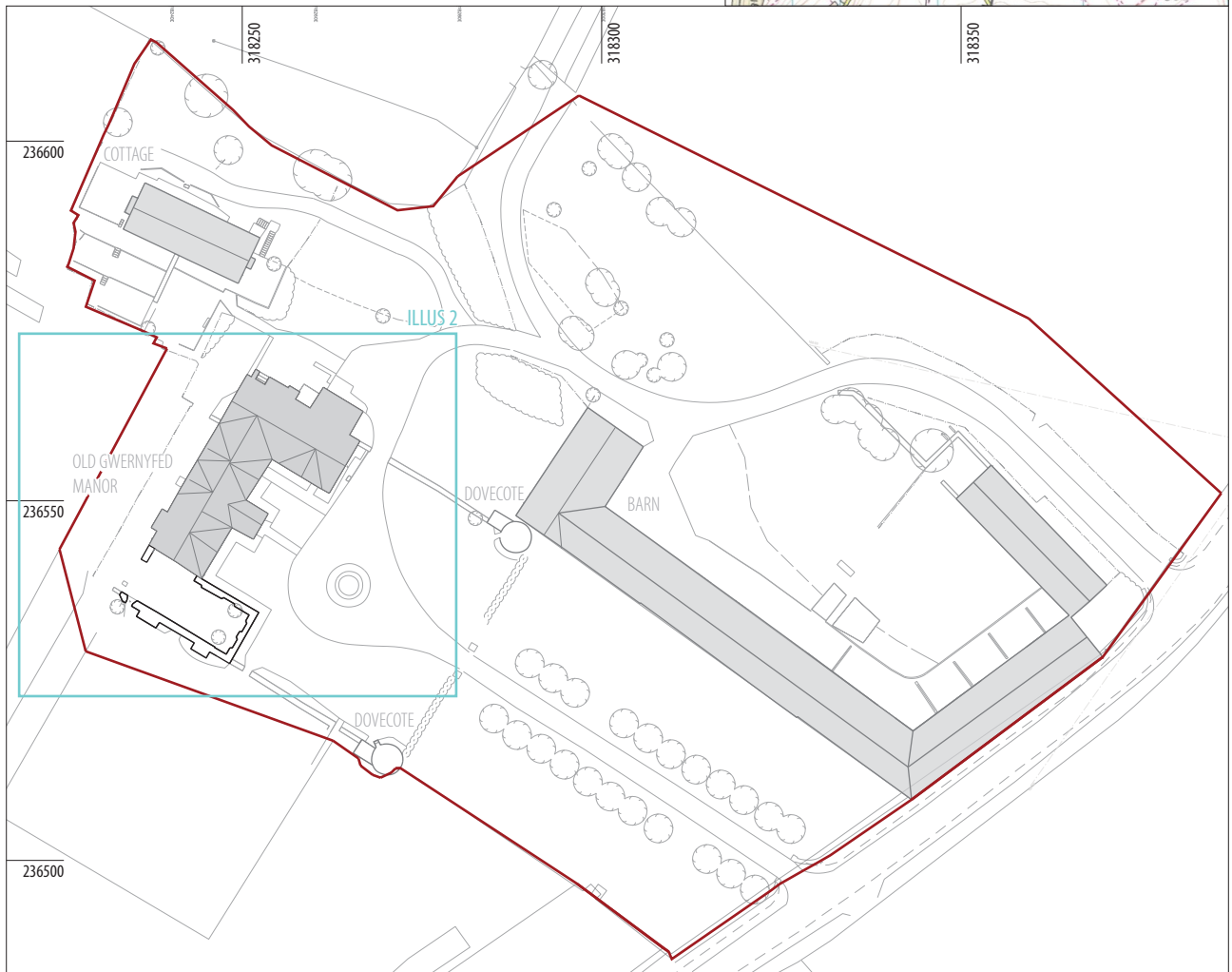
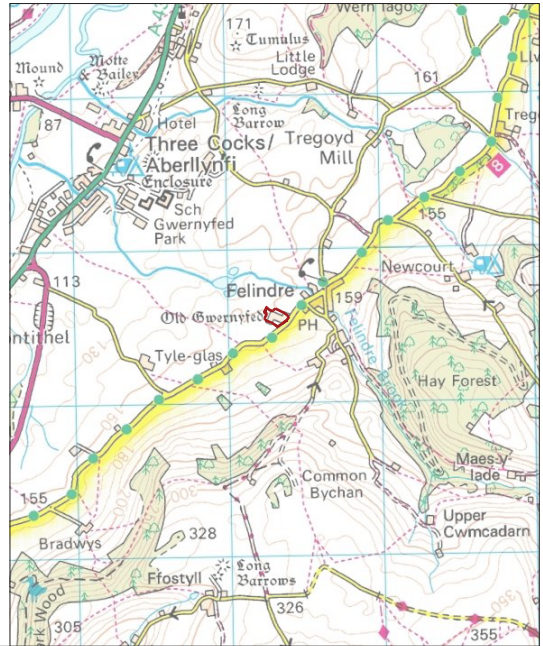
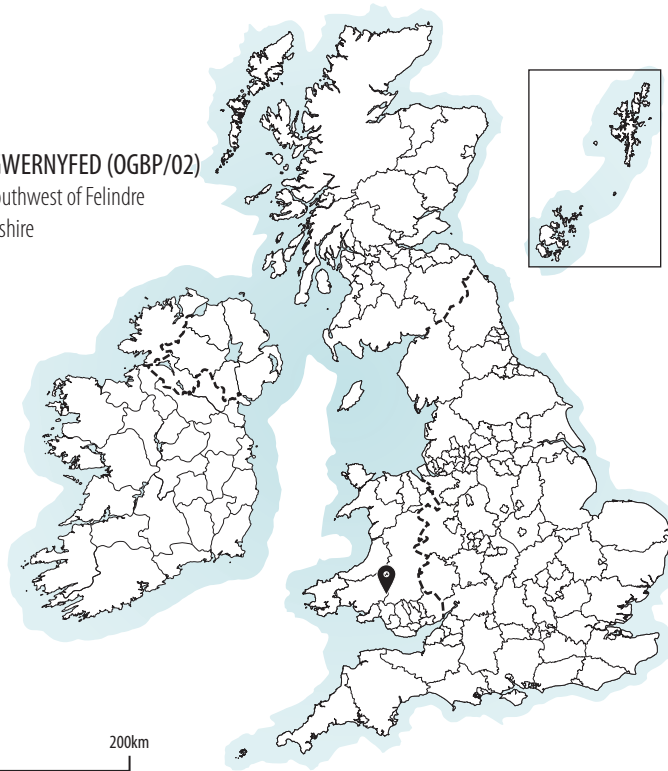
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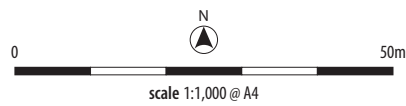
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OLD GWERNYFED (OGBP/02)

land southwest of Felindre
Breconshire
Powys



- KEY**
- development boundary
 - area of historic building recording



ILLUS 1
Site location



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OLD GWERNYFED, VELINDRE, BRECON, POWYS

Historic Building Recording, Trial Trenching and Documentary Research

Headland Archaeology conducted a program of historic building recording, trial trenching and desktop study at Old Gwernyfed Manor near Glasbury, Powys. The manor is known to date from the early 17th century, and was constructed by Sir David Williams, the MP for Brecon. As it currently stands, the house is 'E' shaped in plan, with the main range running north-south. The main range and the northern wing (oriented east-west) are currently occupied, while the southern wing has been preserved as a standing ruin, having burned down around 1780.

It would appear that the south wing may be an early phase of the development of the manor, although it has been subsequently much altered prior to its gutting by fire in 1780. Many of the elements from its various phases of development still survive and any plan to bring it back into use will not only assist with its preservation but provide a valuable opportunity to further understand the story of its development.

1 INTRODUCTION

Planning Permission and listed building consent are being sought for the restoration of the south wing of Old Gwernyfed Manor, near Glasbury, Powys. As part of this process Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd were commissioned by Hook Mason (the Architect) to undertake a program of archaeological desktop study, historic building recording and trial trenching on behalf of Mr Burgess (The Client). This report synthesises the results from all three phases of work, and draws conclusions in order to inform decisions to be made on planning and listed building consent. The outline of this report and the methodology and objectives of this project were agreed in principle with the Local Archaeology Officer (AO) acting on behalf of Powys County Council. Specific requirements were set out in a design brief for archaeological evaluation (CPAT EVB 848). Headland archaeology provided a written scheme of investigation in response to the brief, which was then approved by the AO.

2 SITE LOCATION

2.1 LOCATION

Old Gwernyfed is located on the edge of Velindre, a small village in Glasbury Parish, situated between the high ground of the Brecon Beacons to the south-east and the floodplain of the River Wye to the

north-west. The house sits within the bounds of the old Gwernyfed Estate which is now dominated by Gwernyfed Park, a Victorian country house which was constructed in 1880 to replace the old house. The site is located on a natural geological break. The high ground to the south and east is formed from argillaceous rocks and sandstone of the St Maughan's formation, while the lower ground of the Wye valley is dominated by earlier deposits of siltstone and mudstone, sealed by superficial deposits of glacial till (www.bgs.ac.uk).

2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A small-scale plan produced by the RCAHMW, dating to 1910 was the first attempt to phase the building (NA/BR/10/c). This represented the earliest comprehensive record of the building available during the archive visit. The south wing was interpreted as part of a single phase 'E' plan manor house, an interpretation followed by Haslam in *Buildings of Wales* (1979). Students from the Welsh School of Architecture visited the manor in order to record its condition in 1963, and produced a series of elevation drawings, and larger scale illustrations of architectural detail (WSA/H4/01-15). The replacement of the wall across the south end of the main wing is the only major structural alteration recorded on the Commission's plan, which otherwise records minor changes such as blocked fireplaces and windows. A fireplace in the north wing carrying the date 1680 was interpreted as evidence of alterations, rather than fresh construction.



Previous investigations were carried out by the City of Hereford Archaeological Unit on the farm buildings associated with Old Gwernyfed Manor (NA/GEN/2007/058e). A combination of historic building recording and trial trenching revealed that the ancillary buildings had developed in-line with the manor until, in the late 19th century, modifications were made to develop the site as a cattle farm.

3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the building recording were to record elements of the standing structures, analyse the information from this alongside supporting documentary information.

The purpose of the trial trench was to locate and characterise the nature of below-ground archaeological deposits and to analyse this information in light of the supporting information from desktop and historic building recording.

Overriding aims were to define the history, character, date, function, phasing, significance and techniques of construction of the building alongside identifying and recording any below ground archaeology exposed during the groundwork and incorporate this information into the final report

4 METHOD

All archaeological works were undertaken by a suitably experienced archaeologist operating to the relevant Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) standard and guidance and the requirements of the WSI. The building recording also adhered to the relevant levels as detailed in the Historic England guidance 'Understanding historic buildings. A guide to good recording practice' (2006).

4.1 DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

A desktop study of all readily available primary and secondary documentary, cartographic, pictorial, aerial/ground photographic and other sources was undertaken in order to provide a historical framework for any surviving archaeological remains. The following sources were consulted:

- Regional Historic Environment Record, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust;
- National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth;
- National Monuments Record, Royal Commission on Ancient & Historical Monuments in Wales, Crown Buildings, Plas Crug, Aberystwyth;
- Powys County Archives, Shire Hall, Llandrindod Wells;
- Regional and Local Archaeological/Historical Journals.

4.2 HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAMMETRY

The south wing and gable end abutting were recorded to English Heritage level 2/3 standard. No other buildings on the site were

to be affected by the proposed scheme of works, and were not recorded (with the exception of the gable end of the north wing which was recorded for comparison). The level of detail of recording for the gable end of the north wing was broadly in line with level 2 (a descriptive record accompanied by detailed survey and photography); alongside this, a more detailed analytic (level 3) interpretation was undertaken for the standing walls of the south wing. The gables from each of the wings were compared.

Stereoscopic photogrammetry has been used for many years by national cultural heritage organisations to produce accurate face on elevations of historic buildings and commonly applied to the production of repair schedules. Whilst the introduction of laser scanning has overtaken this with the multi-point laser imagery forming a virtual 3D surface of the structure, it is difficult to obtain elevated capture positions with the technology and the resulting data sets can be affected by errors in the location of the equipment. Other issues were that the data sets remained fairly unmanageable and presentation of the results was difficult without draping photographs across the finished surfaces. With advances in digital photo processing software it has become possible to take multiple overlapping photographs and using image matching routines iteratively calculate to a very high precision (effectively the resolution of the image) the position of the camera with respect to a given object or wall and the location of individual points on the surface of said target. A key advantage is that the internal accuracy of the overall final product is very high because the position of the data capture device (ie the camera) is resolved to the same resolution as the survey. The other advantages are that it is very easy to render any elevation face on, produce plans where data capture is high enough to do this, and also locate the whole survey in real space using targets attached to the structure.

4.3 TRIAL TRENCHING

A single trench was excavated inside the footprint of the south wing; machine excavation ceased at the first significant archaeological horizon. Investigation and recording included the location, cleaning, photography and excavation of archaeological features and deposits. All areas of monitoring were recorded using "trench" recording sheets. The archaeologically significant features were individually recorded on context sheets and plans and sections were produced. Photographic records, and samples were be collected where appropriate. The footprint of the trial trench, along with the location and depth of features within the trench were also recorded with rectified photogrammetry.

5 DOCUMENTARY RESEARCH

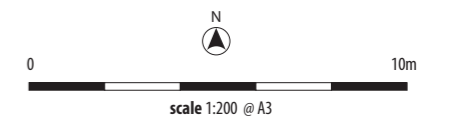
5.1 MAP PROGRESSION

The estate plan of 1755 (**Illus 3**) depicts the frontage of the house with the south wing roofed and intact, surrounded by a series of outbuildings. A range of cottages is situated to the north west of the main house, with the barn and coach house closer to the main road between Velindre-Talgarth. The estate is enclosed to the north of the house, along the line of the road. The land around the house has been depicted as orchards and pasture, with no trace of the landscape gardens (SAM B193) to the west of the main house.



KEY

- PHASE 1 early 17th century
- PHASE 2 early 17th century
- PHASE 4 weather sealing house 1780 (post fire)
- direction and number of HBR photographs



ILLUS 2
Annotated architect's plans

ILLUS 3
 Plan of Old Gwernyfed Estate (1755)



ILLUS 4
 Glasbury Parish Tithe Map (1844)



ILLUS 5
 Plan of Tyle-Glas and Pen Coed (mid-19th century)

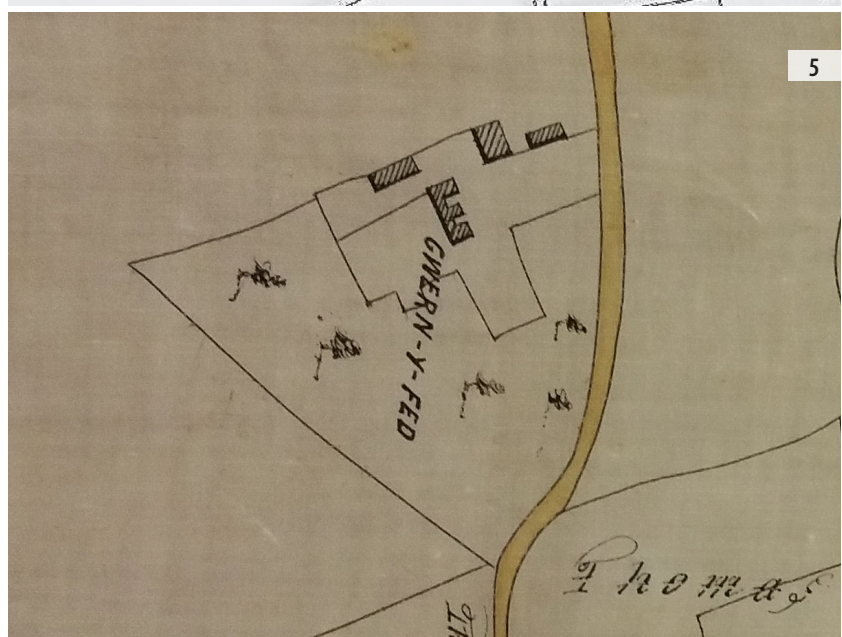
The tithe map for Glasbury parish (**Illus 4**) dated 1844, shows little change in the arrangement of buildings on the estate. Two buildings are situated to the south east of the main house, adjacent to the road, with the cottages still standing to the north. The two parcels of land to the north east of the main house remain as orchard. The gardens to the west of the house are depicted with a surrounding enclosure.

The mid-19th century plan of Tyle-Glas and Pen Coed (**Illus 5**) is an excerpt from the tithe, and relates to the property of Thomas Wood, although it is unclear whether this refers to the father, son or grandson who owned Gwernyfed between 1804 and 1933. The plan shows the area to the south of Gwernyfed, its main purpose was to set out the boundaries between the property of Thomas Wood and the farms at Little Tyle-Glas and Penn Coed.



The six inch Ordnance Survey of 1888 (**Illus 6**) shows the situation of Old Gwernyfed in relation to the new estate at Gwernyfed Park. The farm buildings to the east of the house have been extended, and the south wing is depicted as un-roofed, this first time this distinction has been explicitly made. The gardens to the east of the house are clearly marked as earthworks, incorporated into the designed landscape around the new house. A walkway connects the new and old houses, running across a dam at the head of the former fish-pond, approaching the old house from the east, before turning away to the north. This would suggest that the old house and the ruined gateway continued to serve as an eye-catching folly, having been abandoned as a domestic building.

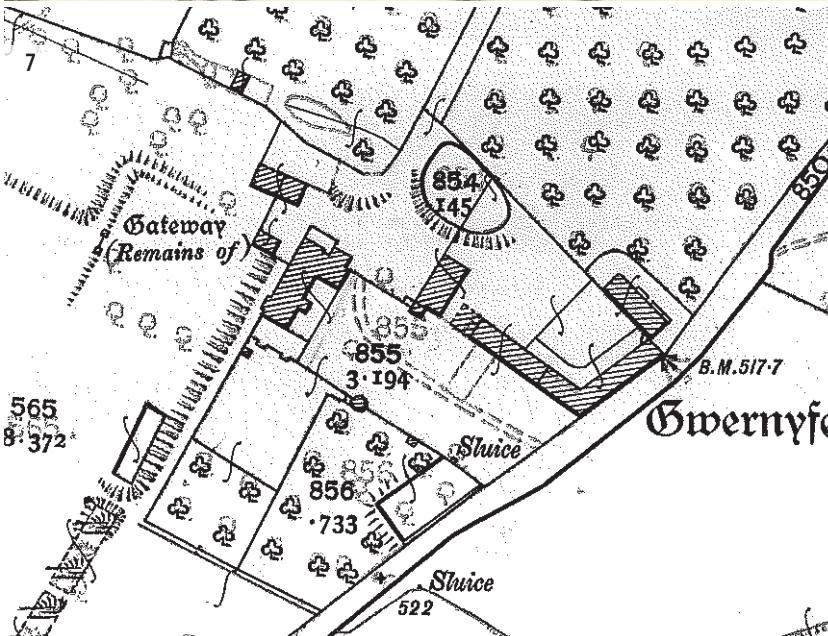
The twenty five inch Ordnance Survey dated 1905 (**Illus 7**) shows the same arrangement of buildings and remnants of the old gardens, suggesting that little development of the site happened after the 1880s. This map and the 1953 six inch survey (**Illus 8**) annotate the position of the gateway, otherwise the plan of the buildings appears to survive unaltered into the 21st century.





ILLUS 6

6in Ordnance Survey map (1888)



ILLUS 7

25in Ordnance Survey map (1905)



ILLUS 8

6in Ordnance Survey map (1953)

5.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Gwernyfed is likely to have been the location of a high status house since at least the eleventh century when it was mentioned in a grant from Bernard Newmarch to Sir Peter Gunter. The parish church in Velindre was described as containing a decorated Norman arch, which was appropriated and re-set at Old Gwernyfed in the 18th century (Lloyd, 1903). In the mid fifteenth century it was noted as the seat of local knight Gryffydd Gunter Vychan who supported the rebellion of Owain Glyndŵr, and was executed in 1447. In the mid-16th century the house belonged to Lewis Gwyn, the High Sheriff of Breconshire, followed by Thomas Powell ap John (Jones, 1909: 182). Thomas died in 1585 leaving 'Gwenffrwd' (sic) to his children with David Williams, a local judge, acting as guardian along with another man Richard Price.

David Williams from Ystalfera near Swansea came into ownership of the house around 1600, beginning a dynasty which lasted until the beginning of the 19th century. David Williams's purchase of the house appears to be the catalyst for a major development. Haslam's description in *Buildings of Powys* makes a comparison between Gwernyfed and St Fagan's Castle, Cardiff, suggesting an origin for the E shaped plan of the house. Williams also enhanced the situation of Old Gwernyfed with the purchase of a large deer park to the north west of the house, south of Aberllynfi. David Williams' son supported the King during the Civil War, and gave the king sanctuary at Gwernyfed in August 1645 (Lloyd, 1903).

The Williams held the Gwernyfed estate, although the house was let as a tenanted farm from 1730 onwards, until the beginning of the 19th century when it was passed by marriage into the wood family. The south wing of the house is thought to have burnt down in 1780 while the building was tenanted, other sources would seem to suggest that the fire was earlier, and occurred while the family were in residence. Thomas Wood was elected MP for Brecon, while his son and grandson took commissions in the army. A new house was constructed at Gwernyfed Park, using the former deer park as its grounds, between 1877 and 1880. The estate was finally sold off in 1922.

6 RESULTS

6.1 SETTING OF BUILDINGS

Landscape and position

The current setting of the building is dominated by the partially restored gardens to the south and east. The pasture to the west of the house remains in use, while the farm buildings beside the Velindre-Talgarth road are now part of a biofuels business. The village (CPAT15954) is thought to have been the site of a Norman chapel (CPAT523), whose arch was removed to Old Gwernyfed at some point during the mid-18th century. The village's non-conformist chapel, constructed in 1862 survives today, although substantially modified and used as a house. Gwernyfed Park (CPAT32940) was constructed to replace Old Gwernyfed. The new house is situated within the old deer park, which is thought to be 18th century in origin; the late 19th century designed landscape now dominates the area to the west of Old Gwernyfed.

Curtilage and grounds

The area immediately surrounding the house is separated into two areas. The main frontage, which faces east towards the Black Mountains, overlooks a gravel drive and a large gate with circular piers. A large turning circle in front of the main door has a circular stone cider press at its centre. The ruined south wing overlooks a sunken garden to the south while, to the west, the house overlooks the remains of the 17th century gardens which are now protected as a scheduled ancient monument.

General form

The south wing survives as three standing walls. No roof or internal structures survive and were, apparently, gutted by fire around 1780 (see **Illus 2**). The northern wall appears to abut the structure of the main north-south range of the manor house suggesting two separate phases of construction, at least on the frontage. The style of construction comprises rough shaped sandstone rubble which, at some time in the past, was covered with a lime-mortar render. Repairs to the structure are characterised by the use of modern machine-pressed and frogged engineering brick, at least two of which carry the Ebbw Vale stamps. Stone mullion windows are visible on all three elevations. A fragment of one of the mullion windows has been used to prop the breast-stone of one of the large fireplaces at the east end of the building.

To aid a clear explanation, the north, east and south walls have each been given a description for their exterior and interior elevations.

6.2 THE NORTH WALL

The north wall comprises a section of bonded masonry measuring c 9m long by 7m in height. It appears to survive to wall plate level and contains features at both ground and first floor level.

Exterior elevation of the north wall (**Illus 9 and 10**)

A three light mullioned window measuring 1.44 metres wide and 1.17 metres tall, survives on the first-floor exterior elevation of the north wall. The window frames are chamfered, bearing a strong resemblance to the style of cavetto moulding, which would suggest a late 16th century date. Inserts for window frames were visible on the inside surface, suggesting that they were of a similar style to the examples on the surviving portions of Old Gwernyfed. The load of the wall and roof above the window frame is supported by a relieving arch of rubble construction, while there is an extra reinforcing lintel sitting over the upper portion of the window frame.

The exterior of the north wall shows signs of modification, which suggests that Old Gwernyfed Manor was constructed in two distinct phases. At the top right hand side of the elevation (**Illus 9**) remnants of a blocked-in window, partially obscured by the construction of the main north-south wing, are visible. The window frame bears a simpler design, lacking the elaborate chamfer around the edges visible elsewhere. The position of a window on this part of the elevation suggests that it was once the exterior wall of a structure pre dating the main range of the building as it now stands. A ground floor window has also been blocked in, with the blocking stones covered by traces of lime-mortar render, suggesting that the modification happened when the building was still in use. Removal of a window on the ground floor may have reflected changes in the internal design of the house.

Interior elevation of the north wall (**Illus 11 and 12**)

The interior elevation of the north wall shows evidence of stabilisation work in the early 1980s. The lintel over the ground floor window has been replaced with concrete. The insertion of new lintels involved the partial demolition and reconstruction of portions of the wall above, the new stonework has been re-pointed with a concrete render. Loose stonework, identified on the 1982 dyeline plans above the first floor window and along the head of the wall has also been restored and re-pointed.

A scarcement ledge is visible separating the ground and first floors. The internal stonework shows no sign of dowling to fix wood panelling, suggesting that the interior walls probably had a simple plaster render over the stonework. Some traces of lath and plaster are visible inside window frames and cupboards elsewhere on the internal elevations. The ground and first floor windows are both recessed into the wall, with a pronounced taper inwards.

It was probably following the fire in the south wing that a new exterior wall was constructed across the southern end of the main range, to close the fire damaged end off. The new wall was built slightly to the north of the north wall of the original wing. The damage caused immediately after the fire is obvious higher up on the now ruined west facing elevation of the main range where it projects south from the end of this structure. Here the collapse of the wall reached a first-floor window which has been blocked with some of the larger rubble corner stones backed into the area formerly occupied by the window bay. The base of this wall has been preserved as a stub, showing the presence of a ground floor window overlooking the terrace and the formal garden. A door jamb carrying a potted palm frond decoration (see photos 1–4), and decorative moulding, is preserved on the inside



face of the stub wall. This is similar in form to the door accessing the cellar and north wing on the house frontage. Significantly, the decoration, which on the north wing example faces outwards, in this case faces north suggesting a formal entrance into the south wing pre-dating the rest of the house.

6.3 THE EAST GABLE END

The east gable end no longer survives to its full height, the apex having partially collapsed. This measured c 8m long by 9.5m in height.

Exterior elevation of the east wall (Illus 13 and 14)

Three windows are visible on the exterior elevation of the east wall, two of which remain as openings, a fourth is obscured by ivy. The first floor window, measuring 2.01 metres wide and 1.31 metres tall, consists of three lights separated by two cavetto moulded mullions, and lacks a relieving arch similar to the other examples, notably the first floor window in the north wing gable. It probably originally had a central mullion too, since lost.

The ground floor would originally have had two, two light mullion windows set evenly across gable frontage one of which survives, and the other is obscured by ivy and has been blocked in. The position of these windows is not matched by those in the gable end of the north wing, although these latter windows appear to be modern replacements.

The attic window has been filled in with sandstone rubble and mortar to preserve the integrity of the eastern gable. The rubble infill also supports the remains of the upper window frame, which would have included three lights divided by two mullions. This matches the example in the gable end of the north wing.

Interior elevation of the east wall (Illus 15 and 16)

The interior elevation of the eastern wall is divided between the three floors by an upper scarcement supporting the attic floor, and a recessed slot in the stonework for the timber frame of the first floor (see photo 8). The interior of the first floor window shows alterations from the stabilisation work, with the insertion of a concrete lintel. The stonework of the upper gable has been repaired, most likely during the remedial works in the early 1980s. The rubble stonework has been re-pointed with a cement mix. The window is recessed into the wall with a pronounced inwards taper, the surfaces of which are still covered with patches of wall plaster.

The two ground floor windows, one of which has been completely blocked, have timber lintels which are both in an advanced state of decay. In the blocked window, the original wall plaster has been preserved behind the blocking stonework, with some laths visible also.

6.4 THE SOUTH WALL

This is the most complex of the surviving elevations as it contains all the flues and chimneys as well as cellar openings, windows and doors in various stages of blocking or propping. The surviving portion measures c 17m in length by 7.4m to wall plate level. The

chimneys are c 14m in height. A low garden wall abuts the external southeast corner of the structure.

Exterior elevation of the south wall (Illus 17 and 18)

Five blocked in windows are visible on the south elevation, all constructed the same way as the examples on the northern and eastern elevations. A three light and a two light mullion window are visible on the first floor, both of which have been infilled with sandstone rubble and covered in a lime mortar render. On the ground floor three windows have been blocked in a similar fashion. The window at the eastern end of the elevation was noted as a particular issue during the 1982 works, and was highlighted on the dyeline elevation drawings as an area which was in the process of collapse. The blocking material appears to have been replaced with patches of engineering brick which lie underneath the lime render.

A large void was visible spanning the half the height of the ground and first floors, measuring 1.55 metres wide by 2.88 metres tall, which may indicate the position of a large window associated with a staircase. No traces of the window frame remain, suggesting the possibility that it may have been constructed from timber, and would appear to belong to a phase of alterations later than the stone mullions. One of the stone windows, situated directly below this possible stair window, has obviously been moved from its position on the ground floor, and lowered so that the bottom of the frame rests at ground level. This was thought to indicate the presence of a cellar underneath the south wing.

Two chimneys protrude from the south elevation, both of which are connected to hearths on all three floors. The easternmost chimney is a rectangular construction, measuring 2.45 metres across at the base, and projecting 0.60 metres from the wall. The total height of the chimney is 13.04 metres, including the stacks which are 2.07 metres tall. The chimney tapered two thirds from the top with a single step-in, and culminated in three diamond-shaped chimney stacks. This form is mirrored in the construction of the north wing, where the stacks are also arranged in a diamond pattern.

A second, larger chimney survives at the western end of the elevation, also rectangular at the base, measuring 3.10m across, and protruding 0.71 metres from the outer wall of the building. The height including the stacks is 14.01 metres, while the stacks alone measure 2.45 metres. The chimney tapers slightly from the base to its top, where it measures 2.89 metres wide. Three tall stacks protrude arranged in parallel squares. The north wing has a smaller chimney at its west end, however the stacks are short and squat at the top.

Interior elevation of the south wall (Illus 19 and 20)

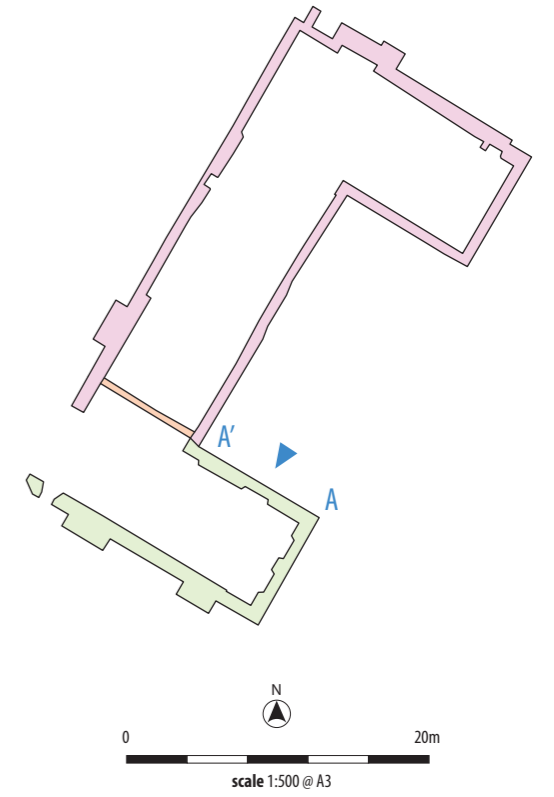
The first floor windows have been blocked in with sandstone rubble, bonded by lime mortar. The ground floor windows have also been blocked in. The window at the eastern end of the wall, is obscured by un-bonded sandstone rubble, while the central window has been blocked in and the recess re-used as a press-cupboard. The timber frame, plaster and laths which provided the internal structure of the cupboard still survive, with traces of graffiti showing mathematical calculations. The blocking of this window is thought to date to the 1980s remedial works to the structure. The large stair

9

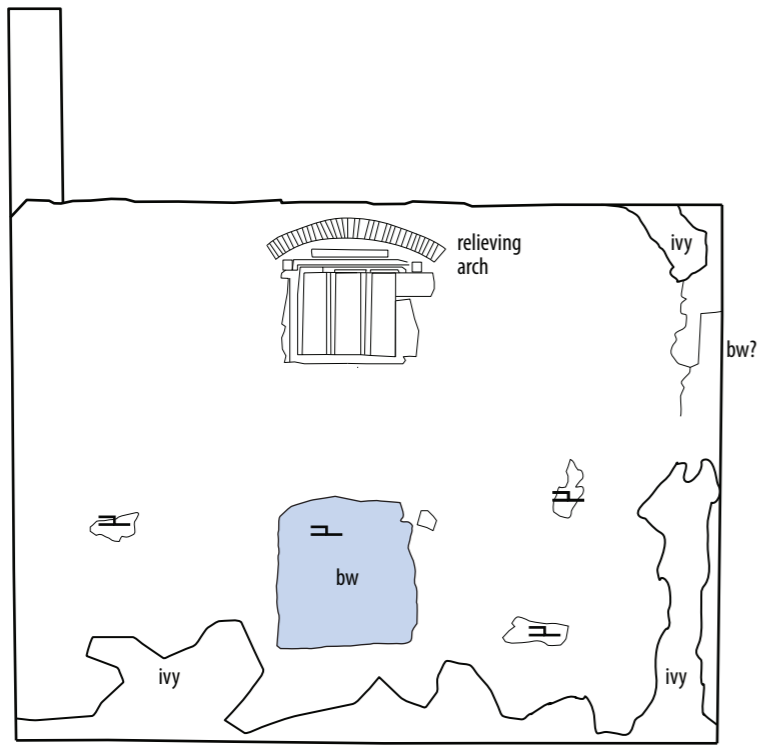


A

A'



10

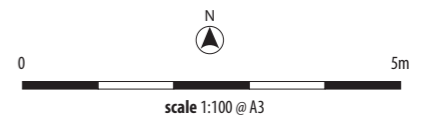


A

PHASING

A'

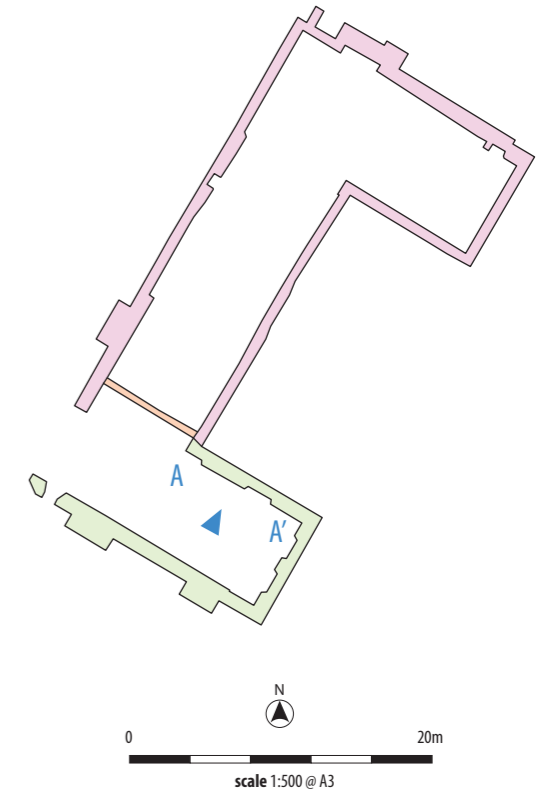
- KEY
- PHASE 1 early 17th century
 - PHASE 2 early 17th century
 - PHASE 3 blocking and modifications pre 1780
 - PHASE 4 weather sealing house 1780 (post fire)
 - PHASE 5 1982 remedial works
 - render remains
 - bw blocked window



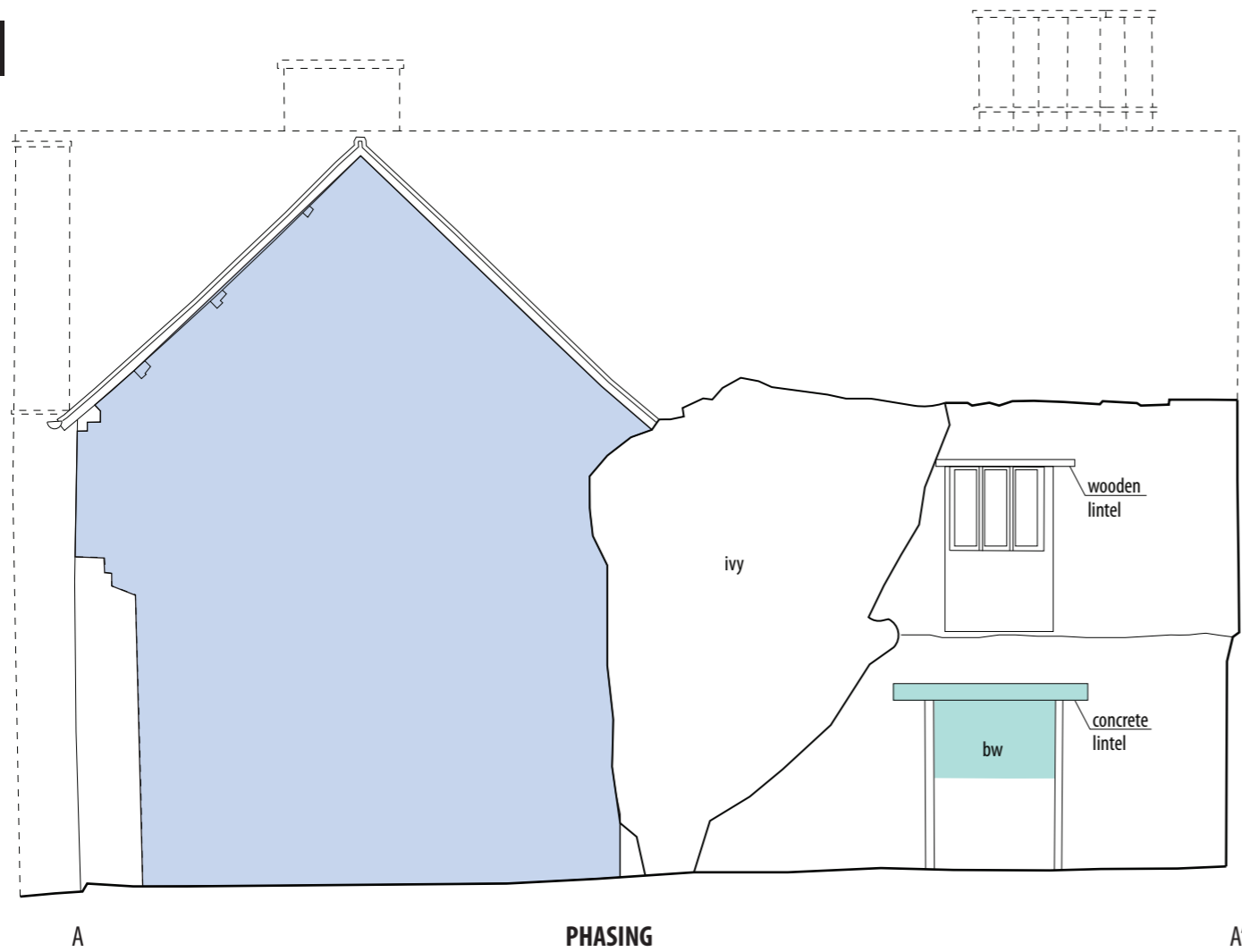
ILLUS 9
Exterior elevation of north wall

ILLUS 10
Exterior elevation of north wall showing phasing

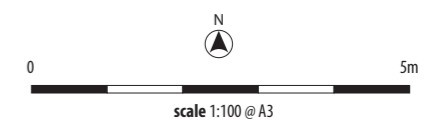
11



12



- KEY
- PHASE 1 early 17th century
 - PHASE 2 early 17th century
 - PHASE 3 blocking and modifications pre 1780
 - PHASE 4 weather sealing house 1780 (post fire)
 - PHASE 5 1982 remedial works
 - bw** blocked window



ILLUS 11
Interior elevation of north wall

ILLUS 12
Interior elevation of north wall showing phasing

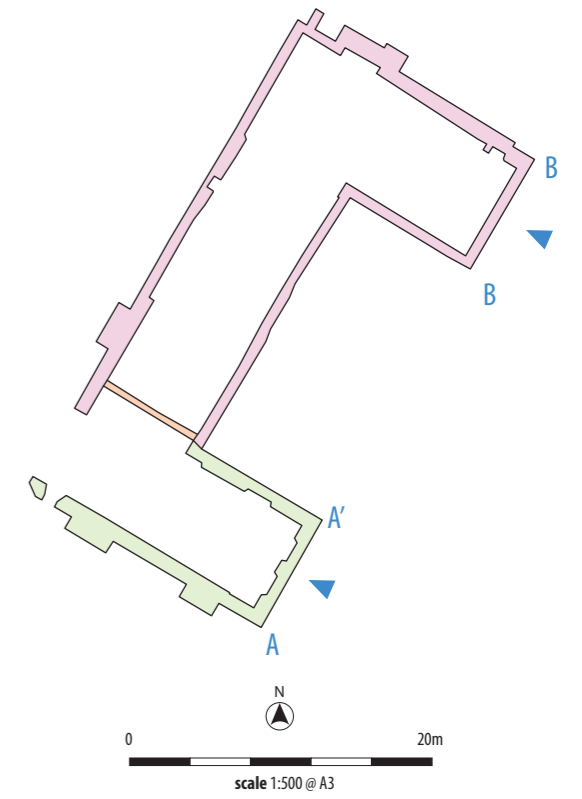
13



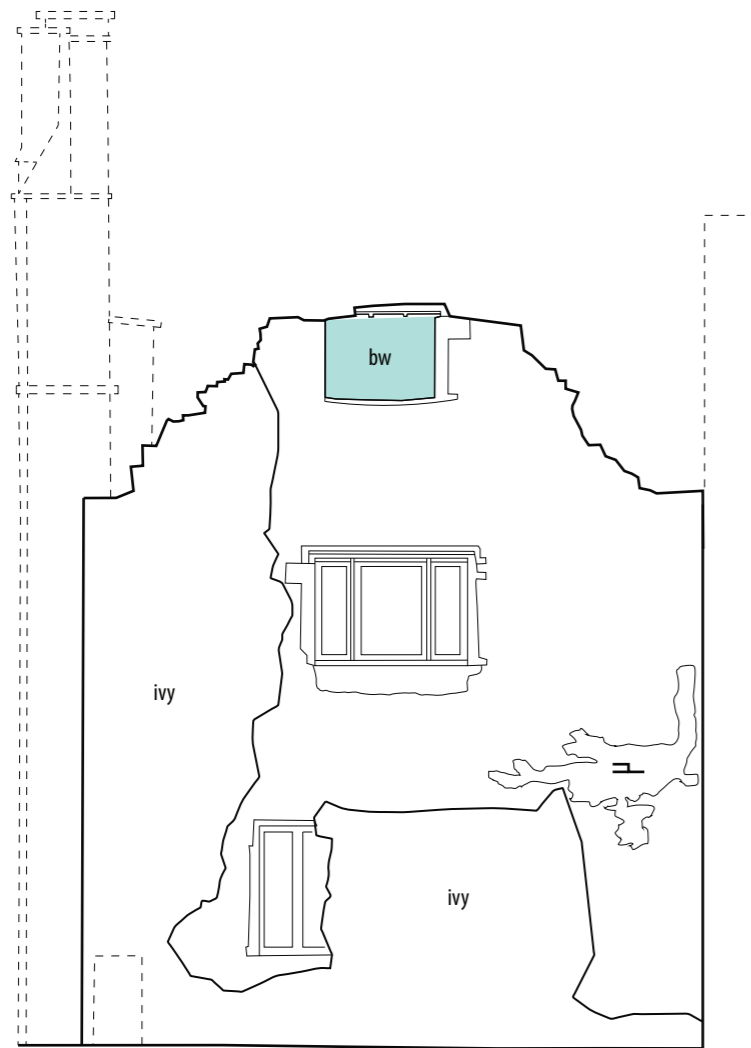
A A'



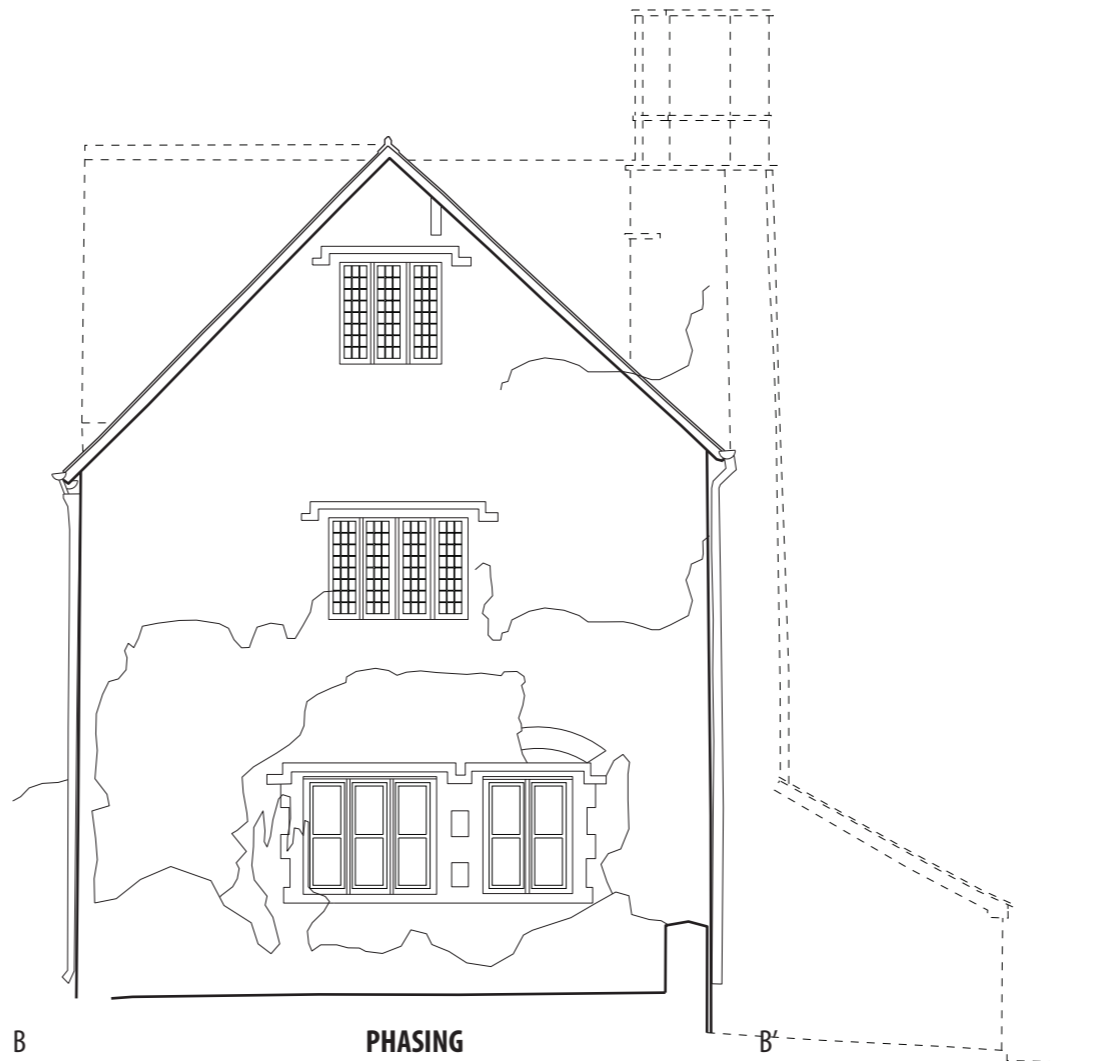
B B'



14

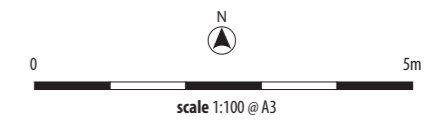


A PHASING A'



B PHASING B'

- KEY
- PHASE 1 early 17th century
 - PHASE 2 early 17th century
 - PHASE 3 blocking and modifications pre 1780
 - PHASE 4 weather sealing house 1780 (post fire)
 - PHASE 5 1982 remedial works
 - render remains



ILLUS 13

Exterior elevation of east wall from both wings

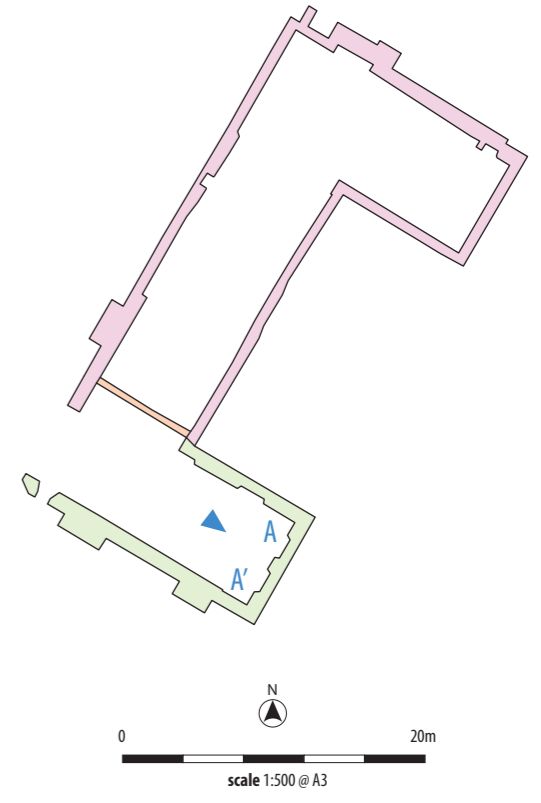
ILLUS 14

Exterior elevation of east wall showing phasing and comparing wings

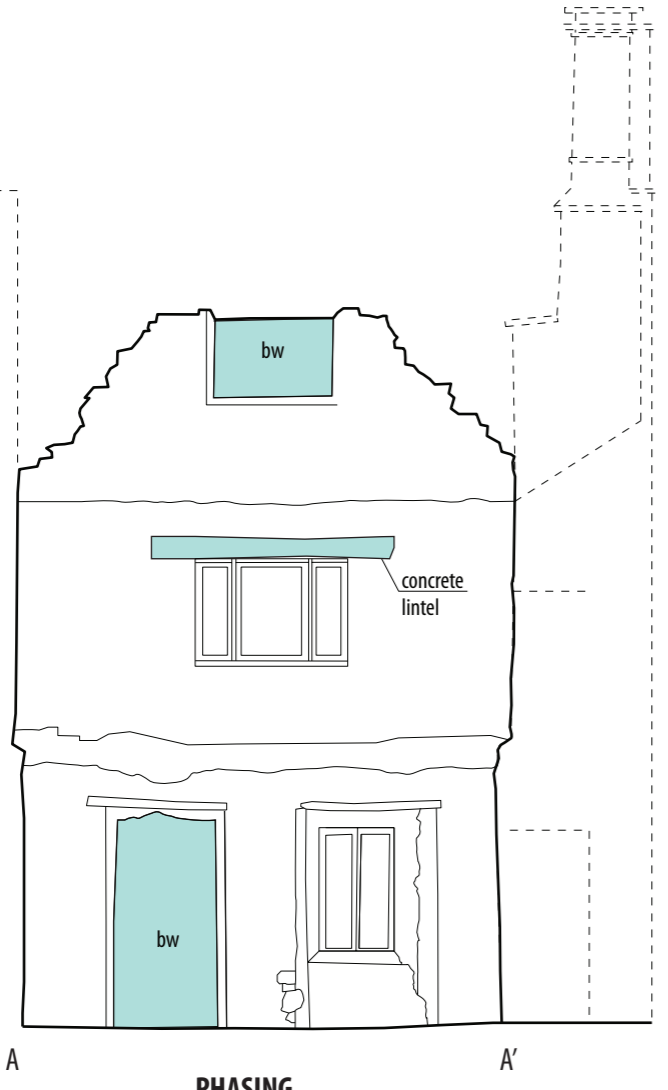
15



A A'



16



A A'

PHASING

KEY

- PHASE 1 early 17th century
- PHASE 2 early 17th century
- PHASE 3 blocking and modifications pre 1780
- PHASE 4 weather sealing house 1780 (post fire)
- PHASE 5 1982 remedial works

bw blocked window
bd blocked door

ILLUS 15
Interior elevation of east wall

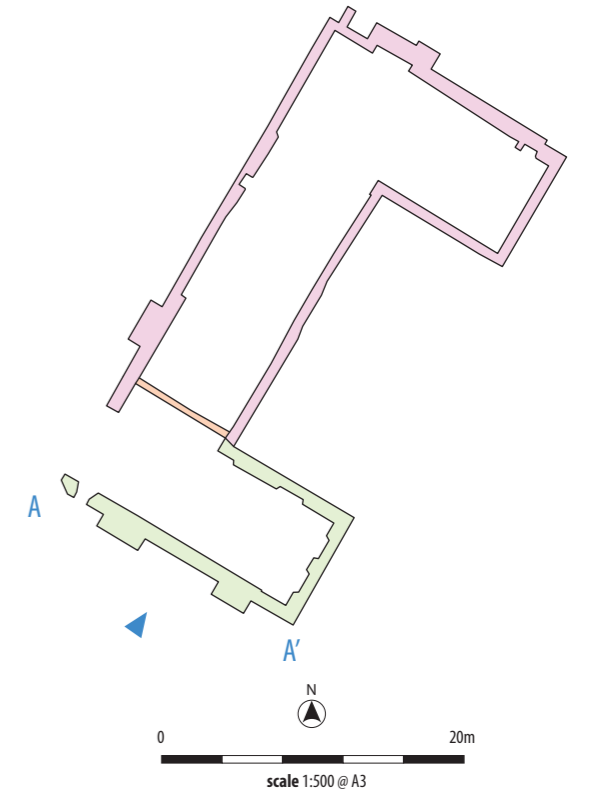
ILLUS 16
Interior elevation of east wall showing phasing

17



A

A'



18

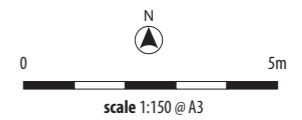


A

PHASING

A'

- KEY
- PHASE 1 early 17th century
 - PHASE 2 early 17th century
 - PHASE 3 blocking and modifications pre 1780
 - PHASE 4 weather sealing house 1780 (post fire)
 - PHASE 5 1982 remedial works
 - render remains
 - bw blocked window
 - bd blocked door



ILLUS 17

Exterior elevation of south wall

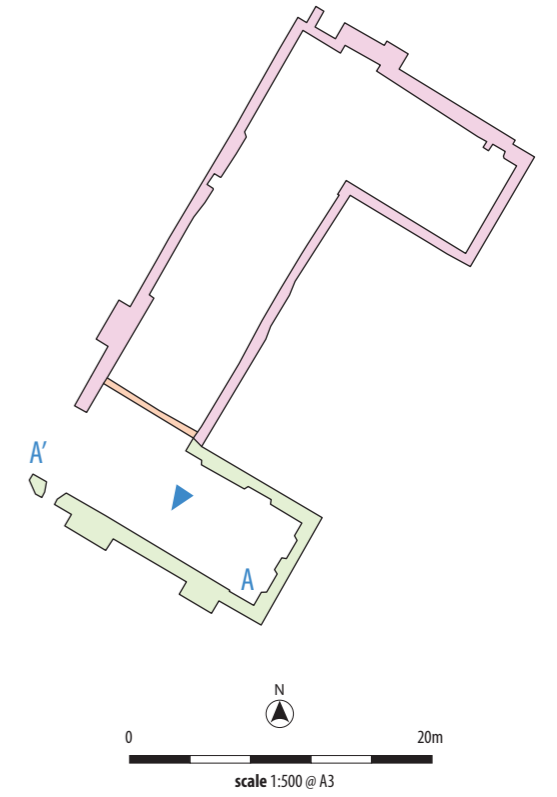
ILLUS 18

Exterior elevation of south wall showing phasing

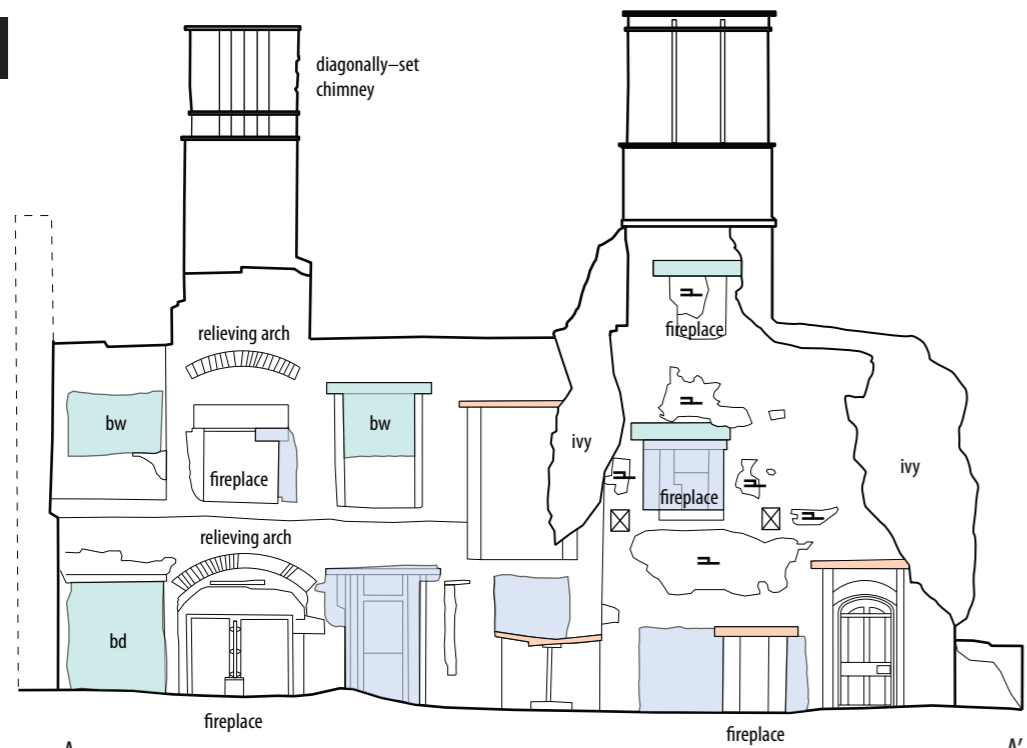
19



A A'

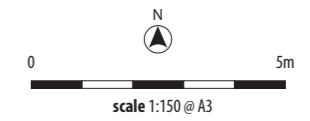


20



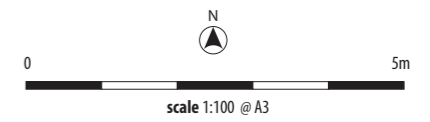
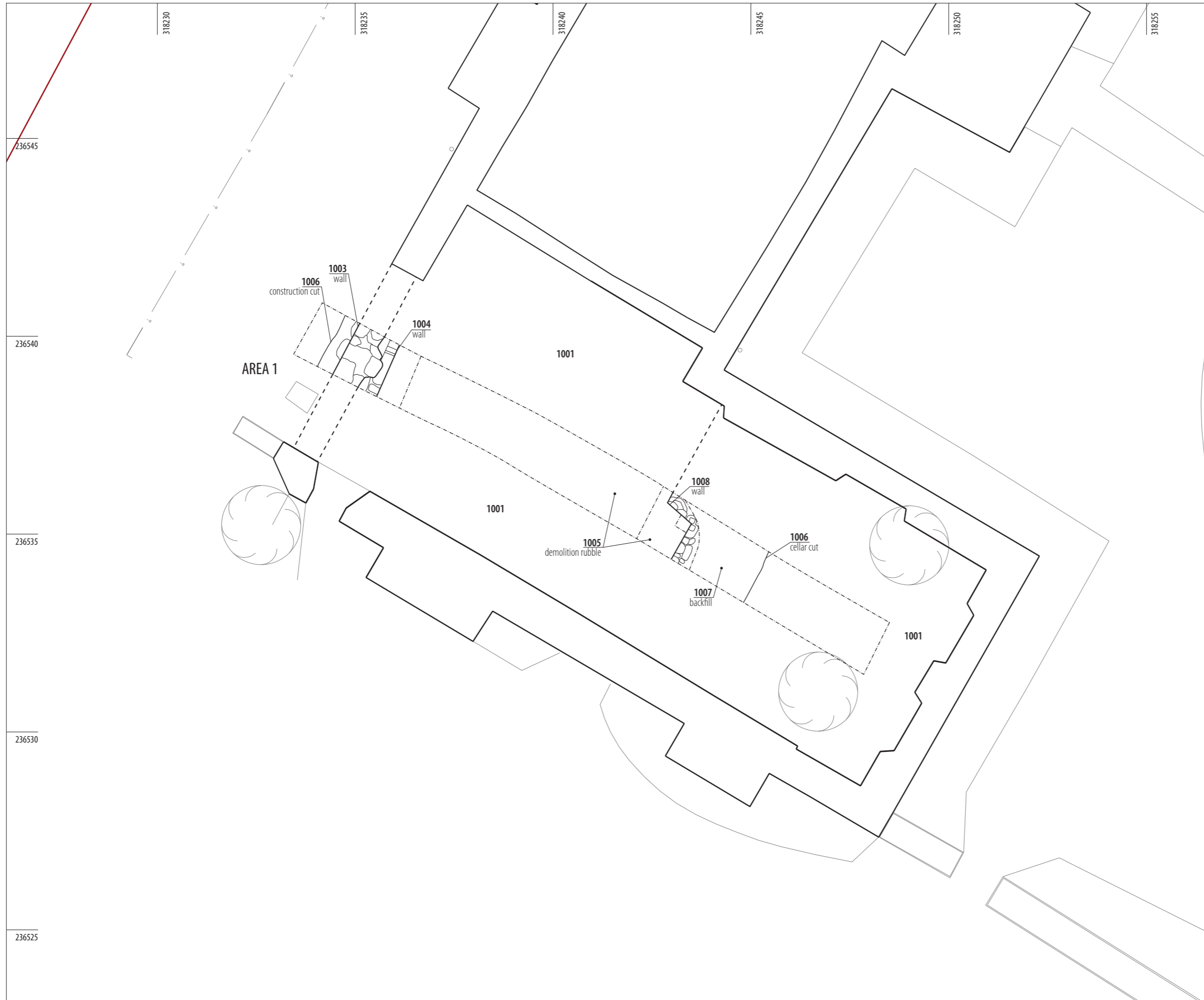
PHASING

- KEY
- PHASE 1 early 17th century
 - PHASE 2 early 17th century
 - PHASE 3 blocking and modifications pre 1780
 - PHASE 4 weather sealing house 1780 (post fire)
 - PHASE 5 1982 remedial works
 - ⊠ removed beam
 - ≡ render remains
 - bw blocked window
 - bd blocked door



ILLUS 19
Interior elevation of south wall

ILLUS 20
Interior elevation of south wall showing phasing



window is also recessed into the wall and while on the vertical sides there is a pronounced taper, the sill and lintel are set horizontally and flush with the inner face of the wall. There are no internal traces of windows at the western end of the elevation although, like the outer elevation, there is a large concentration of ivy obscuring this area.

The scarcement visible on the interior elevation of the northern wall runs is matched by another on the interior elevation of the southern wall up to the point where the possible stair window has been inserted (a total length of 7.50 metres). Two recessed beam slots are visible beyond this point, measuring 0.35 x 0.50 metres, with the top surface of the beam level with the scarcement ledge. These two forms of support for the first floor, marked would appear to reflect a change in the design of the internal structure of the house.

The two chimneys are incorporated into the interior elevation of the south wall, remaining flush with the face of the wall. The ground floor hearth on the eastern chimney has remained open, although the lintel has cracked down the centre and is now supported with one of the stone window sills (see photo 9). The hearth measures 1.9 metres in width. A sandstone rubble relieving arch sits above the lintel stone. The surround to the fireplace is decorated with chamfered moulding along the outside edge, with a potted palm frond carved in relief visible at each side. The first floor hearth has also remained unaltered apart from a modification to the right hand side of the fire surround which has been removed and re-built in red sandstone rubble. It is formed from a large lintel stone, which is reinforced by a further relieving arch of sandstone rubble. This hearth is smaller than the opening below, measuring 1.5 metres in width.

The western chimney provides three flues. On the ground floor a substantial open hearth measuring 3.45 metres in width has been filled in, and replaced by a much smaller fireplace measuring 1.26 metres wide. On the first floor, a similar procedure has been followed, apparently in two stages, whereby the open hearth has been filled in to the dimensions of the new fireplace, which has then been lined with red bricks, producing an opening only 0.70 metres wide, while above the red-brick construction a wooden supporting lintel has been inserted underneath the old lintel. An attic fireplace also survives unaltered, measuring 1.05 metres wide. This change in hearth style may represent a change in the fuel being burned at Old Gwernyfed, possibly a move away from wood to coal. The decrease in the size of the hearths in the south wing certainly suggests that large hearths were no longer economically viable, and this may have been associated with a change in occupants. A hearth-stone supported the fire surround

Substantial modifications to the south wall are likely to provide evidence for the insertion of a stair window into the structure. A window has been lowered from the ground floor to sit level with the interior floor surface, making space for the stair window which spans between the ground floor and the first floor. The void left by the re-positioned window has been infilled with unevenly courses sandstone rubble, supported by a timber lintel. There is no evidence of the staircase being tied into the stonework.

The remains of an interior wall stub can be identified in the centre of the elevation. This would appear to be roughly aligned with

features discussed below in the trial trenching section, and with modifications to the interior elevation of the north wall.

A door, set within a recess, accesses the formal gardens on the south side of the building. The door itself is a modern replacement. A sandstone rubble arch spreads the load of the wall over the door frame on the external face, while the other side is supported by a timber lintel.

6.5 TRIAL TRENCHING

Archaeological structures and deposits

A single trench was excavated down the long axis of the south wing exposing the undisturbed surface of the mudstone bedrock at the eastern end, while the footings of the western wall and clear ground outside the house were exposed at the western end of the trench. A thin layer of turf (1001) lay over a deposit of burnt material and degraded wall plaster containing coarse animal hair (1002). Concentrations of ceramic fragments, suggesting that the interior of the south wing had been used as a midden, were recovered from both these layers, along with farm waste, including a shovel blade and an iron plough share.

Further evidence for a cellar inside the south wing was recorded. The structure of the cellar consisted of a construction cut [1006] inside which a clay bonded stone wall [1008] had been constructed running perpendicular to the long axis of the south wing. [1008] was constructed from clay bonded sandstone rubble. Its southern end is aligned with the setting of the possible interior wall on the elevation of the south wall, running perpendicular to the alignment of the south wing for half the width of the building before turning twice through 90 degrees inside the width of the trial trench. These two 90 degree turns mirror a change in the alignment of the interior face of the north wall – suggesting the cellar stair might have been situated in the centre of the wing. The void behind the wall, where it sat inside the cut had been backfilled with rammed clay (1007). At the western end the cellar backfill material appeared to overly the western wall of the south wing suggesting that the cellar had run from [1008], all the way to the end of the building. The western wall of the south wing [1003] was recorded in the trial trench, constructed from clay bonded sandstone rubble which, like the rest of the south wing structure had been faced with neatly arranged courses. [1003] lay over thicker wall with a neat rubble courses facing inwards, forming the inside wall of the cellar.

The cellar had been backfilled with a deposit of rubble, interspersed with a mortar fragments and sand (1005). The rubble was removed by hand in two sondages dug across the trench and measuring 1 metre wide, the maximum safe depth for hand excavation, in this case 1.2 metres, was reached before the cellar floor was encountered. (1005) contained large fragments of lime mortar bonded sandstone rubble wall, fragments of slate and further fragments of late 18th and early 19th century domestic ceramics.



Context	Context Notes	Pottery	Glass	Clay Pipe	Brick	Plaster	Dating
1001	Topsoil and turf	65	7	–	–	–	Mixed 19th and 20th century
1005	Deposit over wall [1003] demolition rubble	31	30	1	1	4	L.19th-m.20th
1007	Backfill over cellar wall [1008]	–	–	–	–	1	18th-m.20th

TABLE 1

Basic quantification and dating of finds

6.6 FINDS ASSESSMENT

JULIE FRANKLIN

The finds assemblage is small and all of modern date. Basic quantifications and dating are given below. No finds could be demonstrably dated before c1800. The bulk of the finds are likely to be late 19th to mid 20th century with a few earlier finds. A brick is marked Ebbw Vale, a centre of industrial brick production, approximately 30km to the south of the site. The finds represent typical domestic and structural waste and are of no further archaeological value.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 PHASE 1 – CONSTRUCTION OF THE SOUTH WING 1450

The first phase at Old Gwernyfed consists of the south wing constructed as a free standing structure, the exterior elevation of the north wall (see illustration 9) clearly shows the presence of a blocked in window, which has been half covered at the join between the south wing and the main range of the house. Unfortunately, at the time of the visit the interior face of the north wall was obscured by ivy, it was not therefore possible to ascertain how much of the window recess and the associated structure survived, and to see precisely how the join between the two structures was constructed. The presence of the door jamb set into the remaining portion of the west wall also suggests the presence of a formal entrance into the south wing pre-dating the construction of the main wing. The structure appears to have included a cellar at its western end, with the cellar wall incorporated into the main outer walls of the south wing. The early structure could well have been the seat of Gryffydd Gunter Vychan.

7.2 PHASE 2 – CONSTRUCTION OF THE MAIN AND NORTH WINGS 1600–1613

The main and north wings would appear to have been constructed after the south wing, obscuring portions of the north elevation, and producing a building following the same 'E' shape layout at St Fagan's Castle in Cardiff. The extension of the house appears to be associated with the acquisition of Old Gwernyfed by the Williams family of Ystalyfera. The uniformity of the fenestration across the three wings would suggest that, even though the placement of the windows is not symmetrical, they are likely to belong to this phase of construction. The use of cavetto moulding on the later set of windows is comparable those on the northern elevation of Boverton

Place, Glamorgan: dating to the late sixteenth century (RCAHMMW, 1976: 127). For the older frames from the original building, a possible example survives around the blocked opening on the north wall.

7.3 PHASE 3 – MODIFICATION OF THE FIREPLACES PRIOR TO 1780

Several of the fireplaces have been reduced in size on the western chimney within the south wing, the area identified as the parlour. A parlour was a social space which carried with it an element of social status in the late 17th and 18th centuries, and as the setting for the family's public life a large open hearth would have been justified as a sign of wealth and opulence. Around the same time, a large stair window appears to have been inserted into the south wall, requiring the lowering of one of the mullion windows to ground level.

The decision to reduce the hearth in the parlour to a fifth of its original size must therefore have had a specific purpose. The sale of the house in the early 18th century may have provided the impetus, since the family were no longer resident in the house. The tenant farmers who were the next inhabitants may have seen a hearth 3.5 metres wide as an unaffordable extravagance, and decided to reduce its size in order to improve its efficiency. This process has been repeated on the first floor, where modern bricks have also been added to the fire surround. The addition of a brickwork might suggest that a change in fuels took place. It is also possible that if a stair well was inserted here the rooms became much smaller either side and therefore needed smaller fireplaces to heat them.

7.4 PHASE 4 – POST-FIRE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE MAIN WING GABLE AND PORTIONS OF THE SOUTH WING 1780

The next phase of modification to the south wing involved the stabilisation of the structure following the fire in 1780. No evidence for a corbelled or vaulted ceiling was visible in the cellar, suggesting that the ground floor was supported on a frame of timber joists. This frame is likely to have been substantially weakened during or after the fire, and its collapse would have resulted in a large void at the western end of the south wing. Large fragments of mortar bonded sandstone wall observed in the backfill of the cellar suggest that the western, and potentially the northern walls of the south wing may have collapsed or been demolished inwards, into the void left by the cellar. The collapse of the western wall affected the south west corner of the main range, where a window frame has been partially removed and blocked in with large rubble quoins.

The gable across the end of the main wing also appears to have collapsed, as the join between the main range and south wings

appears to have been re-built. On the frontage and the interior of the house, the two wings appear to abutt one another, suggesting that, following the collapse the join between the two buildings had been reconstructed with a clean break, separating the ruin from the main house. The most likely explanation for this would be to stop any further collapse of the ruin from affecting the rest of the house.

Alterations made to the structure after the fire include blocking in all but three of the mullion windows, perhaps in an effort to stabilise the structure and spread the load of the walls. Buttresses may also have been added to the south wall at this time.

None of the finds from the material sealing wall footings or filling the cellar predates 1800 indicating these deposits do in fact derive from after the fire, but also that there was continued tipping here for over a century afterwards.

7.5 PHASE 5 – STABILISATION WORKS 1980

In 1982, due to its advanced state of decay, the ruin was added to the list of threatened buildings. The dyeline elevations of the ruin showed substantial vertical cracks at the western end of the south wall, suggesting that, no longer supported by the west wall, it had begun to subside. The remedial work was visible at the time of recording, mainly consisting of the replacement of rotten timber joists with new timber and concrete. Portions of the walls above the replaced lintels, and areas of stonework around the wall-heads have been re-built and pointed using a concrete-based render.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Survey, trial trenching and documentary evidence imply that Old Gwernyfed was constructed in two major phases: a single east-west oriented range dating to the end of the fifteenth century and a larger 'E' shaped manor house, incorporating the earlier building as a south wing. Documentary research has suggested dates between 1600 and 1633 for the construction of the 'E' plan house, however the style of the windows suggests that this might be pushed back to the turn of the century, around the time of David Williams purchase in 1600. Following the main structural alterations, modifications were made to the chimneys, and the south wing was enhanced with the addition of a large stair window which spanned the ground and first floors. This phase may be associated with the date mark "1680" over the fireplace in the north wing, and would seem to reflect the rising good fortune of the Williams family between the restoration in 1660, and the revolution of 1688.

Previous interpretations of old Gwernyfed have been hampered by climbing plants and the obstruction of important areas of the building, this phase of work was no exception. The site's listing states that most of the house dates from 1600, with a fifteenth century structure forming its basis. The Royal Commission's plan of the house, dated 1910, interpreted the house as a single phase construction, while the Welsh School of Architecture's students also could not find any trace of the original 15th century building.

The trial trenching revealed the presence of a cellar at the western end of the south wing. This appears to have been filled up by the collapse of the north and south walls of the west wing, followed by intentional backfilling, using more demolished material, to level up the interior of the building. The cellar floor was not revealed during excavation to 1.2 metres below the current ground level, therefore it is assumed that the structure represents a full height cellar rather than a sunken floor. The nature of the backfill inside the cellar structure suggests an intact late medieval cellar structure, filled by demolition material.

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10 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 REGISTER OF ARCHIVE DOCUMENTS

Title	Reference	Location	Description
Glasbury Parish Tithe Map	PX/9/5/20	LL	Tithe map of Glasbury parish, showing the Gwernyfed estate
Plan of Tyle Glas and Pen Coed	B/D/JGW/7/8	LL	Tithe map - updated excerpt showing Tyle-Glas and Penn Coed
Particulars of Sale, Gwernyfed	B/D/JGW/33	LL	Particulars of sale for outlying farms on the estate, 1933
Gwernyfed Estate Journal	GB/0210/GWFED/69-1	NLW	Journal of the estate manager 1835-39
Map of Commons	GB/0210/GWFED/69-2	NLW	Map of the Commons of Glasbury Parish 1750
Estate Map	GB/0210/GWFED/69-3	NLW	A Map of Sir Edward Williams Lordship of Felindre 1760(?)
Gwernyfed Papers	GB/0210/GWFED/66	NLW	Papers relating to the Williams' estates near Newmarket, Suffolk
Gwernyfed Estate Map, 1755	MAP 7037 134/1/4/	RCAHMW	Estate Map
HAU Evaluation Report	NA/GEN/2007/058e	RCAHMW	Trial trenching and HBR report by Hereford Archaeology Unit, 1993
CADW WB Report	NA/BR/2004/003e	RCAHMW	CADW watching brief on cable trench at Old Gwernyfed Manor
Oblique Aerial Photographs	2003/CS/1840-1843	RCAHMW	Oblique aerial photography of Old Gwernyfed Manor
WSA archive drawings	WSA/H4/01-15	RCAHMW	Welsh School of Architecture elevation drawings, 1963
Listed Building Case officers drawings	M/DES/B/BR/92/09	RCAHMW	Architects drawings, listed building consent on modifications to the farm buildings 1992
Threatened Buildings Drawings	M/DES/B/BR/83/07	RCAHMW	File of dyeline copies of architect's drawings, dated 1982, of Old Gwernyfed House. Received through RCAHMW's threatened buildings recording work, and removed from case file.
Gwernyfed SMR record	GC/BR/013	RCAHMW	Sites and monuments record folder for Old Gwernyfed Manor
Gwernyfed Ancient Monuments Record form	NA/GEN/2004/029e	RCAHMW	Ancient monuments record form and collated data from royal commission surveys
Ancient Monuments Report Form, CS BRIGGS	NA/GEN/89/48e	RCAHMW	Report by CS Briggs on Old Gwernyfed Manor
Royal Commission Survey	NA/BR/10/c	RCAHMW	Plan of the ground floor of Old Gwernyfed Manor showing phasing and interpretation
Royal Commission Survey	NA/BR/99/002e	RCAHMW	Earthwork survey of the gardens attached to Old Gwernyfed Manor

APPENDIX 2 SITE REGISTERS

Appendix 2.1 Context register

Context	Area	Description
1001	1	Topsoil and Turf
1002	1	Layer of plaster and burnt material
1003	1	Structure - Wall
1004	1	Structure - Wall
1005	1	Deposit over [1003] demolition rubble
1006	1	Cut for S wing cellar
1007	1	backfill over cellar wall [1008]
1008	1	Structure - Wall

Appendix 2.2 Photographic register

Photo	Direction	Description
Historic Building Recording photos		
1	NW	Detail of door jamb
2	NW	Detail of door jamb
3	NW	Door Jamb
4	NW	Door Jamb
5	N	Remnants of wall dowling points NW wall
6	N	Remnants of wall dowling points NW wall
7	NE	Interior of S wing showing windows and first floor scarcement
8	NE	Interior of S wing showing scarcement at eastern end
9	S	Fireplace and lintel supported by re-used window frame
10	S	Fireplace and lintel supported by re-used window frame
11	S	Detail of window frame re-used in fireplace
12	S	Ground floor window on S elevation blocked in and re-used as cupboard
13	S	Extensively modified portion of the S Elevation showing pervious location of staircase
14	S	Brick construction used for first floor fireplace
15	S	Ground floor fireplace showing large portion filled in with masonry
16	S	Exterior N elevation of S wing showing filled in window
17	W	Detail of window frame
18	W	Detail of window frame
19	N	Blocked in window, exterior of S elevation
20	S	Graffiti located in plasterwork inside cupboard

Photo	Direction	Description
21	S	Graffiti located in plasterwork inside cupboard
22	E	Graffiti located in plasterwork inside cupboard
23	E	Graffiti located in plasterwork inside cupboard
24	S	Graffiti located in plasterwork inside cupboard
25	S	Graffiti located in plasterwork inside cupboard
26	E	Setting shot - inside of S wing
27	S	Setting shot - inside of S wing
28	S	Setting shot - inside of S wing
29	W	Setting shot - exterior of S Wing
30	W	Setting - building frontage
31	W	Setting - building frontage
32	W	Setting - building frontage
33	W	Setting - S Elevation of S wing
34	E	Setting - W Elevation of Manor House
35	E	Setting - W Elevation of Manor House
36		Setting - W Elevation of Manor House
37	E	Setting - W Elevation of Manor House
38	E	Setting - W Elevation of Manor House Showing alignment of gate with ruin
39	E	Setting - W Elevation of Manor House Showing alignment of gate with ruin
40	S	Setting - North Elevation

Trial Trenching photos		
41	S	Post-Excavation shot of [1004]
42	W	Post-Excavation shot of [1004]
43	N	Post-Excavation shot of [1008]
44	N	Post-Excavation shot of [1008]
45	N	Post-Excavation shot of [1008]
46	N	Post-Excavation shot of [1008]
47	E	Post-Excavation shot of [1008]
48	E	Post-Excavation shot of [1008]
49	W	Post-Excavation shot of [1008]
50	N	Post-Excavation shot of [1008]
51	E	Post-Excavation shot of [1008]
52	W	Trench Shot
53	W	Trench Shot
54	E	Trench Shot
55	N	Post-Excavation shot of [1008]



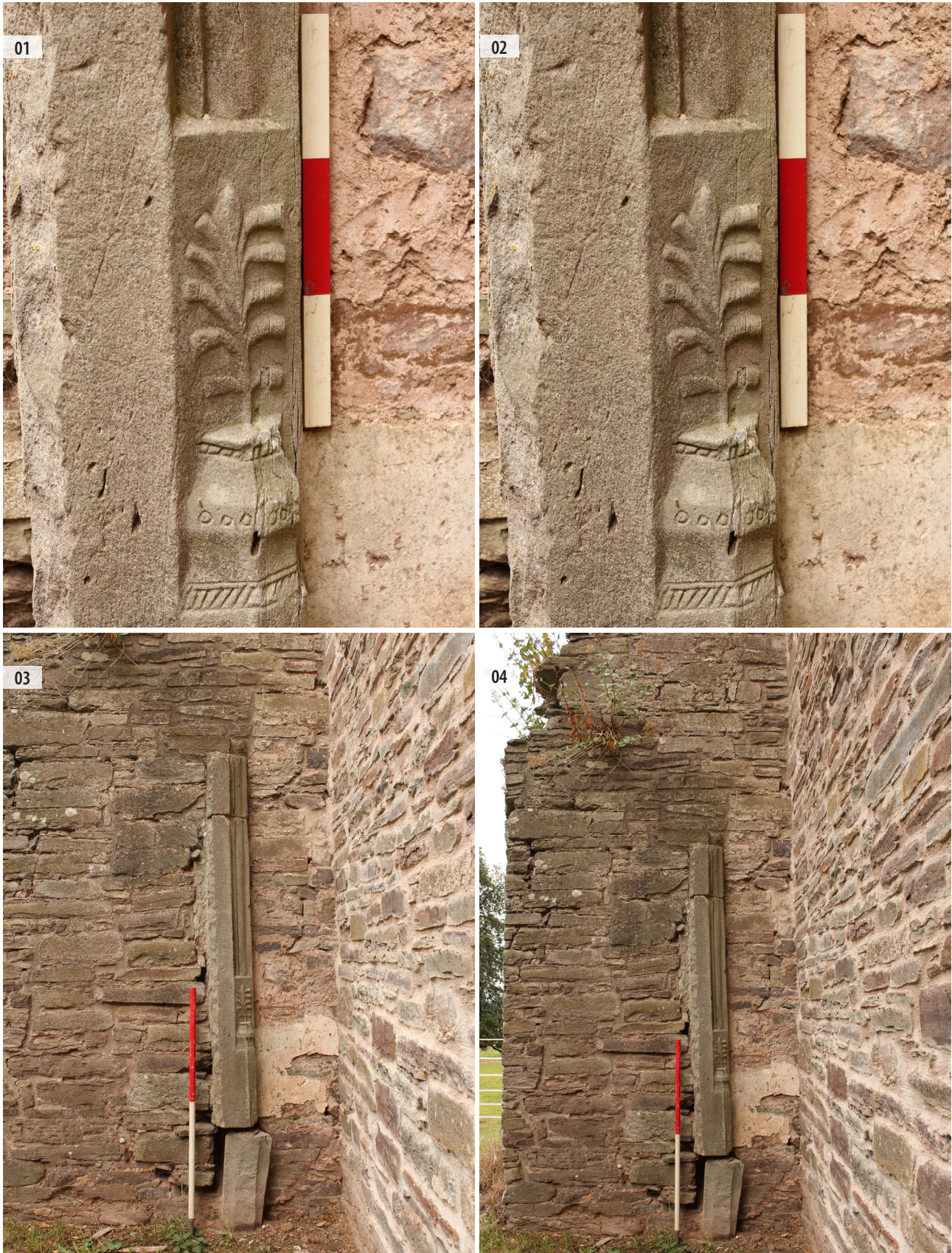
Appendix 2.3 Drawing register

Drw	Plan	Section	Description
1	Y	–	1:50 plan of trench and excavated features
2	–	Y	1:50 section of trial trench

APPENDIX 3 GAZETTEERS

For a full photo description please see the Photo register in Appendix 2.2.

Appendix 3.1 Historic Building Recording













Appendix 3.2 Trial trenching









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