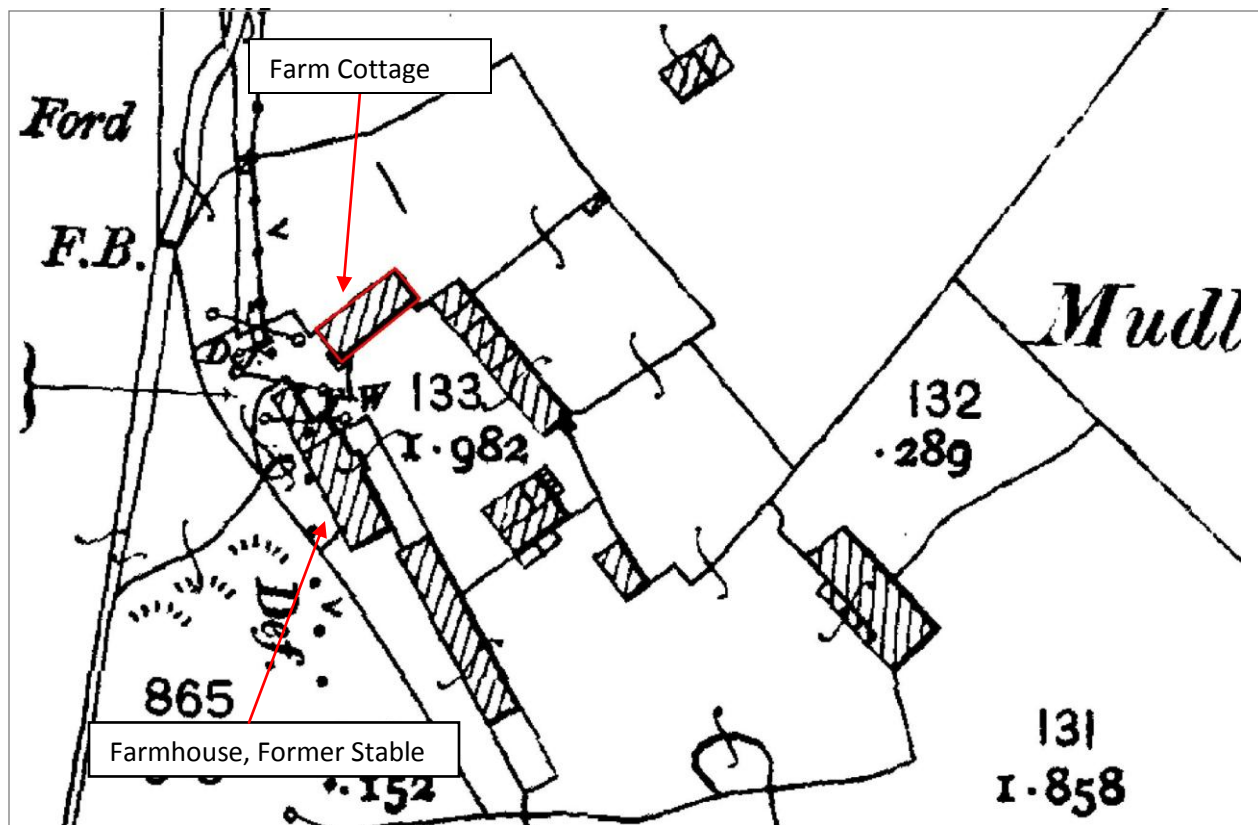


## Muddlescwm Farm Cottage( A domestic service building), NPRN410786



Location map showing Muddlescwm farm, Ordnance Survey Second Edition, 1899.

Muddlescwm Farm Cottage is a stone-built 2 ½ storey, domestic service building, with kitchen/ services on the ground-floor and servants accommodation to first-floor with loft storage above. It originally served the former medieval mansion, which was demolished in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A documentary reference state that the manor of 'Modelyscwm' in 1393 was owned by minor gentry, and a William

Morgan of Muddlescwm served as High Sheriff in 1542 (Francis Jones, *Historic Carmarthen Homes and Their Families*, Carmarthen Antiquaries, 1987, p 134).

The former stables became the principal domestic building, once the mansion was demolished, while the cottage continued as a domestic service building. The details in the building indicate a late-17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century date, with remnants of an earlier core. The evidence for an earlier phase relates to a low blocked voussoir arch opening, at first-floor, in the north-west wall. Similarly, the south-east wall reduces in size at first-floor, and the ceiling-beam corbels are for much lower rooms at the first-floor. The few remnants of ceiling-beams that survive are narrow chamfered with an angle stop and square-section joists, of late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century date. They are set about 30cm above the stone corbels of the earlier floor ceiling-beams. The present house is undergoing refurbishment with repairs to the walls and new roof-trusses placed in position. Exterior. The north-west elevation, at first-floor, has 3 symmetrically placed, small, narrow, splayed windows, with internal timber lintels. The south-east elevation first-floor has 3 wider, square, splayed windows, which are oddly spaced, with a first-floor entry at its lower end (shown in an aerial photo of ca 1950). At the upper end there is a possible short length of dove nesting openings. The entry is reached by a wrap round stone stair (now removed, see aerial photo), formerly rising against the gable-end. The first-floor windows have brick arches and internal timber lintels. There are the remains of a 2-light, framed window with rebated square mullion section and a timber diamond mullion for tying leaded glass. The blocked lower inside of these window openings extend to floor level suggesting, either they have been raised up or they formerly had recessed window seats in them. As this wall is narrower at first-floor it may suggest the brick window arches are of c1800, have been heightened, and are in earlier openings. The timber framed window remains could just be late 17<sup>th</sup>/early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The lower south-west gable-end has a projecting chimney which extends from the ground to the gable, where it is corbelled to a central stack that has collapsed. The projecting chimney may have served an original, smaller fireplace at ground-floor replaced by the present one. The upper-end's north-east, gable-end wall has a corbelled first-floor chimney projection to its first-floor fireplace (blocked), and it also has a corbelled stack .

There is a ground floor window under the chimney and flanking narrow windows at first-floor. The right hand window may have been an internal cupboard that was recently made into a window, as it has a recess in one splay, rather like a cupboard. Interior . The ground-floor is divided by a cross-wall with central doorway accessing, a kitchen and dairy, with entrances in the south-east side. The kitchen has a large brick arched fireplace with adjacent brick arched recess, probably for a copper. It probably had a window in the north-west wall, where there is a damaged opening. The dairy room has a large slate table in the centre of the room and is well lit by opposing splayed windows and a similar gable-end window. A kitchen fireplace has been inserted in one half of the ground-floor probably of c1800 with adjacent copper. An earlier first-floor fireplace with timber lintel is blocked by its later fireplace chimney. Similarly, there is a blocked first-floor fireplace in the opposite gable-end, above the dairy, which has a chamfered timber lintel with an angled stop. The small flue of the kitchen chimney is from a former, narrower fireplace opening at ground-floor. A central ceiling-beam was supported on stone corbels in the kitchen and there are two sets of corbels for ceiling-beams in the dairy. Although the timber floors have mostly collapsed, parts remains against the gable-ends and the corbels have stonework above them for this floor. The first-floor was formerly reached by an external stair and the internal space may have been divided into three rooms with heated end rooms and an unheated? central room, unless the blocked vousoir arch to centre was a former fireplace opening. There must have been a stair access to a an attic storage area. The oak roof timbers found on site have trusses set on a tie-beam with high arched collars (for attic use) and purlins, all morticed and pegged (see drawing). Visited,

Conclusion. The wider south-east wall at ground-floor, the vousoir arch at first-floor in the north-west wall, and the lower level corbel stones certainly suggest a rebuild in the late-17<sup>th</sup>/ early-18<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps when the original service-wing was heightened and improved. Geoff Ward, 19/05/2010.