

Castell Bach, Aberwheeler was originally recorded c. 1974 by P Smith, RCAHMW, plan illustrated in HWC, fig 103, page 196. It is a late-16th century, stone-built, three-unit, storeyed house, set down the slope, with a hearth-passage entry, and cross-passage, below the hall chimney, at the lower end. It has dressed stone doorways, and a tall stone chimney, and originally consisted of a hall between inner-rooms, and outer rooms at the lower end.

The house has been divided into two, and only the lower unit with cross-passage was inspected at this visit. Its cross-passage hearth-entry is blocked, and the timber-framed two-door partition has been blocked in seventeenth century brick. The lower unit is now one room entered from an addition to the north through a former mullioned window opening. This room has a central transverse ceiling-beam with flat section chamfered joists of late-16th century date, similar to those in the hall ceiling. The earlier photos show a window in the south wall but none in the gable-end. The north entrance formerly had an approx. one metre square timber-framed, three mullioned window, probably once with an internal shutter. At first-floor a large fireplace with a stone corbels and chamfered timber lintel backs onto the hall chimney. The fireplace flue is narrow, indicating a 17th century improvement to provide a principal-chamber. The room has been modernised, but c.1970s photos, indicate an early blocked south window and a smaller gable-end window. There is an original timber joist trimmer for a winding stair, angled between the cross-passage partition and the north wall. This stair was rebuilt c.1800 and where it passes the central transverse ceiling-beam there are no joist mortices, indicating its original site. Here, two auger holes may indicate former hinge pinions for a trap door. The bearer timbers used to build the present stair have mortices possibly reused from an earlier straight flight stair. The reason for the large block of masonry alongside the timber partition under the stair is unclear, unless it was once part of a later stone stair.

A photo taken from the outer room loft shows a morticed collar-truss on the front of the hall chimney, which appears smoke blackened, and may suggest it formerly had a smoke-bay, or framed chimney.

The site was visited at the request of Phil Ebrill, Denbigh Conservation officer. Recorded, Geoff Ward & Ross Cook, 10/10/2013.

