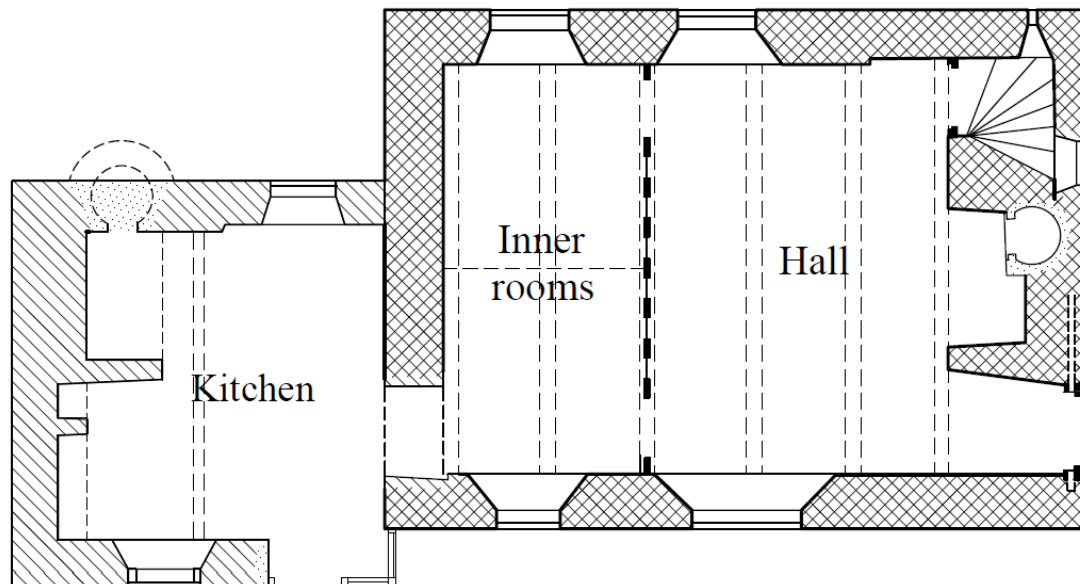


Name: Ty-asch (Tir-bach)

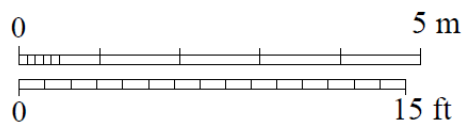
OS grid ref: SO 299 035




Parish / Location: Mamhilad



Ty Asch

Revised from earlier RCAHMW plans



-  Phase 1 (c.1600)
-  Phase 2 (later 17 C)
-  Later & modern

Description: A remarkably little altered house located on gently sloping land at the foot of Mynydd Garn-wen, about 500m west of Mamhilad village. The house had been abandoned as a dwelling around 1930, and was thereafter used as a cowshed, hence the preservation of so many original features. It was 'rediscovered' in 2001 when it was Listed, and a full survey was subsequently carried out by the RCAHMW. However, since that time, the derelict house has been sensitively renovated and some of the missing features (notably the unglazed windows and post-&-panel screen) have been accurately restored.

The site consists of three buildings; an original dwelling house of hearth-passage plan, a small kitchen or bakehouse added to the upper end and, on the south side of the yard, a small square outbuilding, presumably a stable. The 1839 tithe map (extract right) shows an additional building to the east, and a northwards extension to the house; both had been removed by the time of the 1904 OS map.

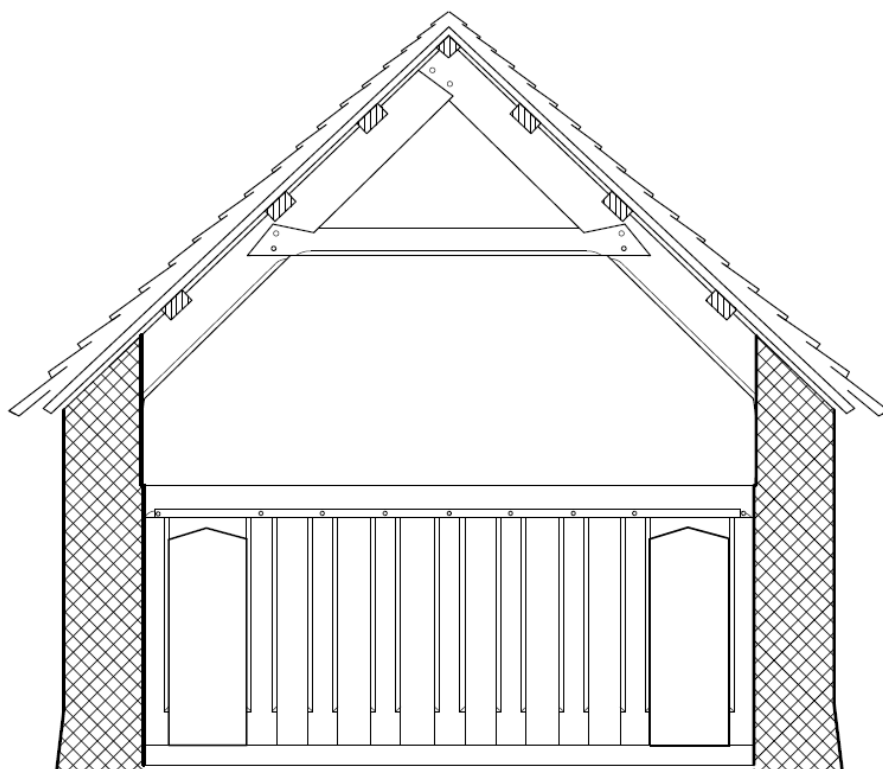
The original house consists of a stone rubble range with restored stone tiled roofs, aligned downhill, with an east-facing doorway in the gable wall. This has a fine Tudor-arch wooden frame with chamfered edges and plain stops (the door itself is a modern replica). The frame retains the holes for a drawbar. The passage leads into the **hall**, with its impressive post-&-panel partition at the upper



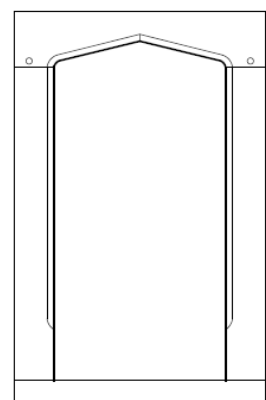
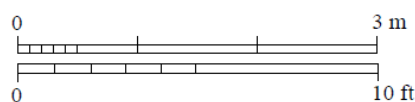
end. It is modern, but has been recreated from surviving fragments, and each post has chamfered edges with diagonal stops at the bottom. Twin doorways (with restored boarded heads) lead into paired **inner rooms**. Both rooms have splayed windows in the side walls, now with restored unglazed timber mullions. At some point the southern room was given a plaster ceiling, and was probably used as a small parlour (later a doorway was cut through into the added kitchen). The north-facing room was, as usual in these upland houses, a dairy.

Back in the hall, there is a large gable fireplace with a huge timber bressummer stopped dead against the jambs. Into the LH side has been cut a pentagonal salt niche, while a brick and stone oven has been inserted into the back of the hearth. The ceiling is formed of joist-beams with medium chamfers and the common hollow-&-fillet stop. The two windows have been filled with replica mullioned frames and wooden shutters. Interestingly, the main south-facing window has a much wider splayed opening than all the others, plus a chamfered timber lintel stopped dead against the jambs (were the other windows been altered at a subsequent date, or was the south window itself a later insertion?).

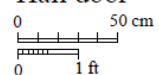
Beside the fireplace there is the usual stone winding stair, which is entered through a square sectioned Tudor-arch frame, with an outwardly opening door. The stairs are of timber treads on stone, set in a squared recess; there is a tiny splayed opening for light, and a larger inserted window part way up. The **first floor** has been modernised and divided up into several rooms. In the upper gable there is a wide and deeply splayed window opening with an original timber frame with four diamond mullions and hinges for wooden shutters (on which the modern replicas have been based). There are two square windows on either side of the chimney stack in the downhill gable, although these are likely to be later insertions (windows in this end are rarely encountered in house of this type and size



Cross section of hall



Hall door



in the Gwent uplands). The roof is supported on two upper crucks with angled feet and dovetail-jointed collars, both chamfered and stopped on the undersides, and there are three rows of trenched purlins.

The **kitchen / bakehouse** was in a semi-ruinous state before rebuilding, and some features (such as a projecting bake oven) have not been restored. It consists of a small and low chamber with a large stone fireplace at the upper end, with stone shelves alongside. There was a doorway and a 4-light mullioned window in the south wall, and another window in the north wall. Another doorway had also been cut through the gable wall into the original house. The roof is supported on two plain trusses with collars, set on tie-beams, and the presence of another mullioned window in the upper gable suggests there was a loft at one time.

The detached **stable** is a small square building with a stone tiled roof. The interior is a single chamber with a half-loft and a single late-looking roof truss, with a collar pegged to the side. Most of the timberwork here is modern.

Development. Clearly the house is the oldest part here, the shape and size of the door suggesting a late-sixteenth century date, but the thin ceiling beams and squared (rather than rounded) stairwell point to a slightly later period. Therefore a date around c.1600 would be a reasonable inference. The kitchen is clearly an addition, probably of the later-seventeenth century, while the detached stable appears to have been added in the eighteenth century.

