



# Darganfod Hen Dai Cymreig

## Discovering Old Welsh Houses

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North West Wales Dendrochronology Project  
**DATING OLD WELSH HOUSES**

**6 Palace Street, Caernarfon, Gwynedd**

**ARCHITECTURAL RECORD**

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*in partnership with*



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# North West Wales Dendrochronology Project

## 6 Palace Street, Caernarfon

### Introduction

This report contains the results of a survey undertaken to complement the proposed dating of timbers at 6 Palace Street, Caernarfon, as part of the North West Wales Dendrochronology Project. The survey was undertaken on 2 February 2010 by Adam Voelcker. Documentary research will be undertaken by volunteers to accompany this survey, and separate reports will be issued describing the results of the documentary survey and of the dendrochronology sampling.

### Site particulars

#### Site address

6 Palace Street, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 1RR

#### NGR

SH 24785 36278

#### NPRN

16637

#### Listing status

Grade II\*

### Methodology

The plan and cross-section have been drawn free-hand, with reference to site dimensions and photographs. The floor plan has been regularised, and does not take into account slight changes of angle, bulges and other irregularities observed on site.

## References

### Cadw listing description

Record No. 3909 (see Appendix)

### RCAHMMW Caernarvonshire Inventory

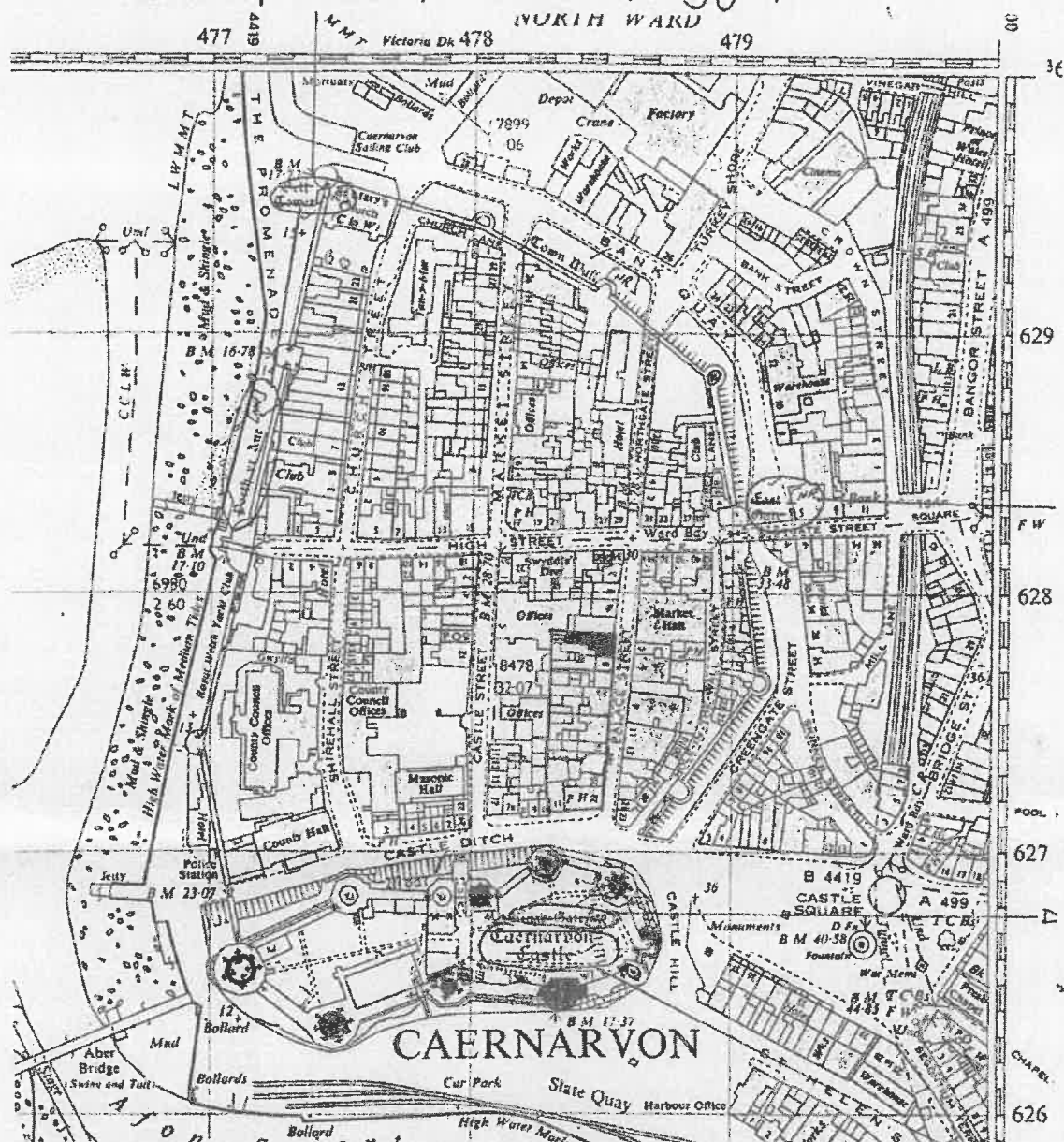
Vol.II. Entry no.1113 (p.157) (1949)

*'VAYNOL ARMS, PALACE STREET has a 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>-century gable end to the road with one original window opening. An addition to the S. contains a late 18<sup>th</sup>-century door and ceiling cornice.*

### Sources of information at the NMRW, Aberystwyth

- photographic survey by Olwen Jenkins, 1997 (catalogue no. 431313)
- architect's dyeline drawings, 1995 (425442)
- sketch section, 1991 (1657)
- photo survey, 1995 (3516)
- additional notes by G A Ward and O M Jenkins, 1995 (3848)
- pencil drawings by G A Ward, 1995 (3849)
- annotations by O M Jenkins on plans by A J Parkinson, 1993 (3850)
- photo survey by O M Jenkins, 1995 (3851)

Location of site and presumed lines of baggage plots.





Authority	Gwynedd	Record No	3909
		Date Listed	31/03/1983
Community	Caernarfon	Date Amended	03/05/2002
Locality	Walled town	Grid Ref	247850 362780
Postcode	LL55 1RR	Grade	II*

Name	Days Gone By Antiques
Street No, Name	6-6a Palace Street
Street Side	W

#### Location

In a row of frontages midway along the street.

#### History

A late medieval building partly timber-framed but subsequently rebuilt in stone. Its present external appearance is C18 when its front was remodelled in conjunction with an added 2-bay house (6A). Later in the C18 it was acquired by the Assheton-Smith family as part of the Vaynol Estate. It was the Vaynol Arms by 1844. By 1957, when it was sold by the Vaynol Estate, it was a shop.

#### Exterior

The original building is 2-storey with its gable end facing the street. It is adjoined on the L side by a single-bay 3-storey house. Both are of scribed stucco walls and slate roofs concealed behind coped gable to No 6 and parapet to 6A, with a reduced stack to the rear gable end. No 6 has a shop front with panelled door and overlight to the R, 2-light window with central fluted mullion, and bracketed fascia. Above is a 3-light small-pane casement window in an earlier opening. No 6A has a panelled door to the R, to the L of which is a full-height canted bay window incorporating renewed small-pane sashes.

#### Interior

In the R side wall of No 6 the second of its 4 bays has exposed box-framing of large panels and wattle and daub infill. No 6 retains a 4-bay crown-post roof with cambered tie beams and collars which respects the exposed framing but rests on corbels on the opposite wall, suggesting that the building was only partly timber-framed. In the lower storey most of the original joist-beam ceiling is retained, with simple run-out stops. The upper storey has a fireplace in its rear wall with timber lintel.

#### Listed

Listed grade II\* as one of the few surviving building in the walled town retaining substantial vernacular detail from before the substantial redevelopment of Caernarfon beginning in the late C18, and for its contribution to the historic integrity of the walled town.

#### Reference

Gwynedd Record Office, XM maps 1398/1, plan of Caernarfon, 1810;  
Particulars and Conditions of Sale of Freehold Properties ... in Caernarvon, 1957, p 15;  
Ordnance Survey, Carnarvon town sheet XV.4.13, 1888, scale 1:500;  
Pigot & Slater, A Directory of North Wales, 1844, p 19;  
Wood, John, Plan of the Town of Caernarvon, 1834.

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OLD	CO	NEW	CLASS	NGR				US CU SERIES	NRN	NRN
<del>CR</del>			10C	47	85	62	78		16637	
COPYRIGHT RESERVED										

6 PALACE STREET, CAERNARFON, CAERNS. (SH 4785 6278)

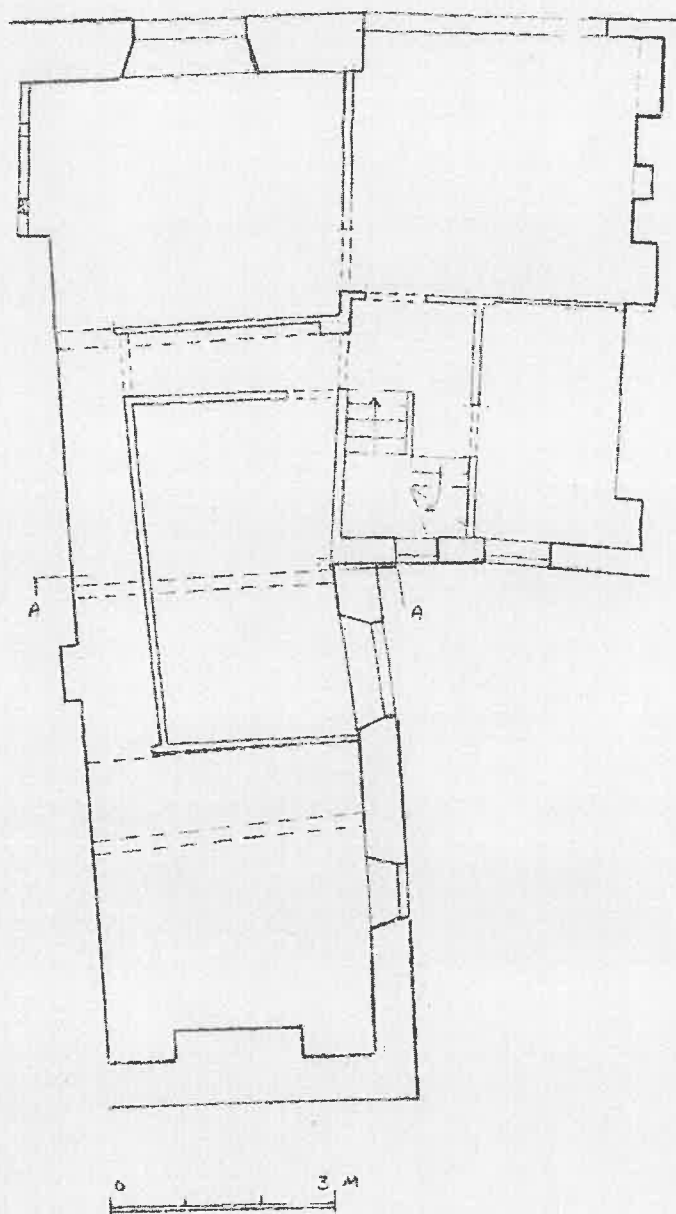
A thoroughly altered town-house, originally timber-framed and probably of 16th C date.

The exterior walls are now of masonry. The street front is rendered, with twin gables. There is a modern shop-front, and a collapsed bay window (possibly 18th C). The rear elevations are of painted rubble masonry, and there is an old gable chimney stack with dripstones. The windows are all casements or horizontal sliding sashes.

The interior is on two floors with an attic, and a cellar under one half. The cellar has small cupboard recesses in the walls and two openings to the street. There are two ceiling beams, one roughly chamfered, the other chamfered with broach stops are mortices for flat joists. The ground floor has been much altered for a shop and stores. The old beams have been cased, but seem to have been chamfered, with flat joists having simple chamfer-stops. The first floor has modern partitions and modern stairs: one 18th C door and architrave remains. The fireplaces are 19th C. The beams (the tie-beams of the trusses) were cased; the central beam has wattle-holes for a partition, one of the others is open. Modern joists replace flat joists. One section of timber-framed walling survives, with storey-height posts between a wall-plate and sole-plate and with mortices for a mid-rail; the continuation of the wall-plate suggests that the framing extended to the street. The gable window has a chamfered lintel. There are three trusses in the attic, all similar (see drawing): all were closed above the tie. The original ridge does not extend between the second and third truss from the road (it is not clear whether it ran beyond the third truss), but there are two pegs just below the apex of these trusses which suggest two high-level short purlins, as if for a ventilator or louvre; however, although the trusses are dirty they do not seem to be actually smoke-blackened.

The building is of considerable importance, since it is one of the few recognised examples left in Caernarfon town of a timber-framed town-house. The timber-framed section is a two-storeyed cross-wing, perhaps formerly with an attached 'hall' along the street. A straight joint in the side-wall suggests that the two parts were rebuilt in stone at different periods, perhaps the cross-wing in the 17th C and the hall in the 18th C when the street-front buildings were altered. The ridge-ventilator suggests that the first floor (which contained at least two rooms) may have been heated - although it is not clear how: a similar problem appears at 13a Broad Street, Welshpool. The heavy timber-work and the broach stops to the cellar beam suggest a date in the 16th century.

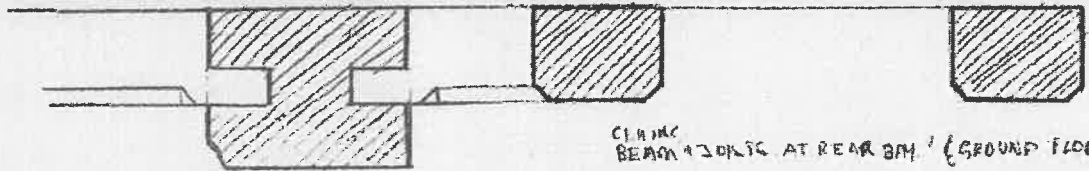
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6 PALACE ST. CAERNARFON  
First floor plan

AJP. 16-10-91

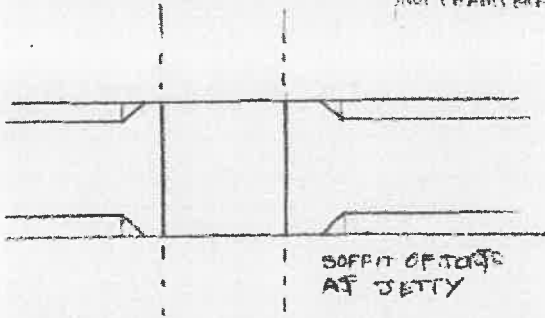




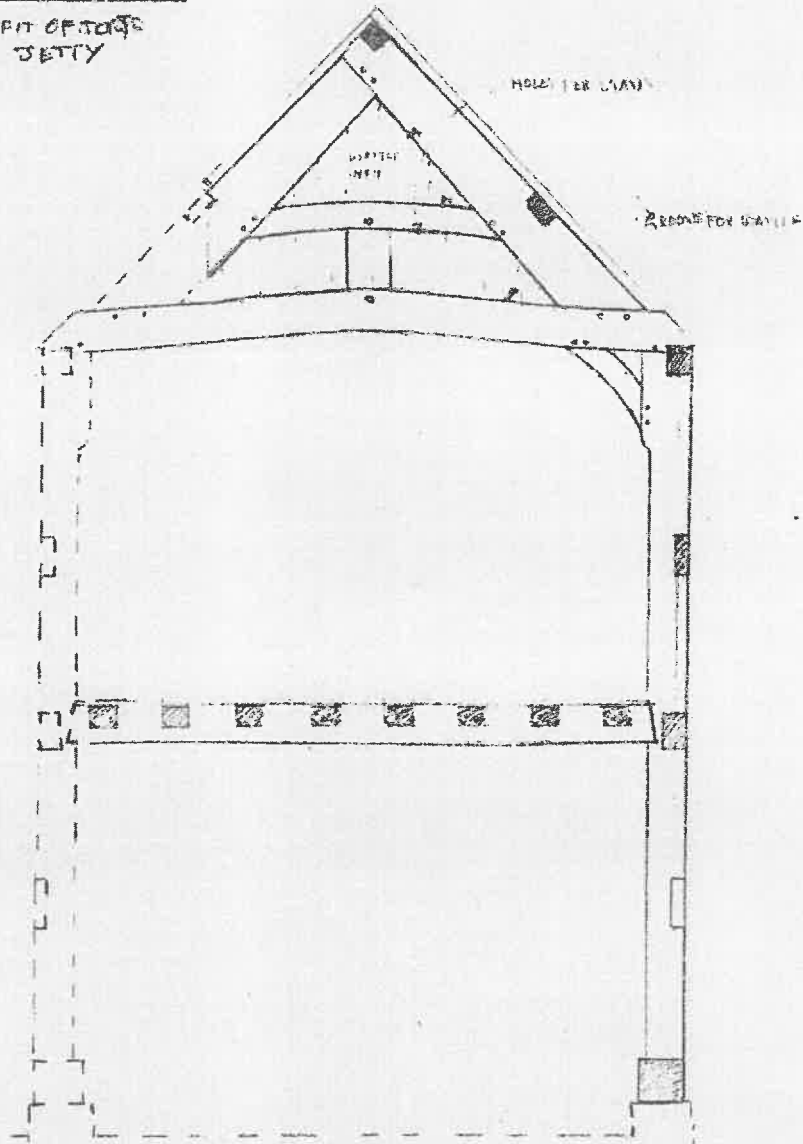
CLARK BEAM 430K16 AT REAR BAY (GROUND FLOOR)

BEAM  
DETAIL 1/10

A  
LOADING BEAMS  
NOT CHAMFERED



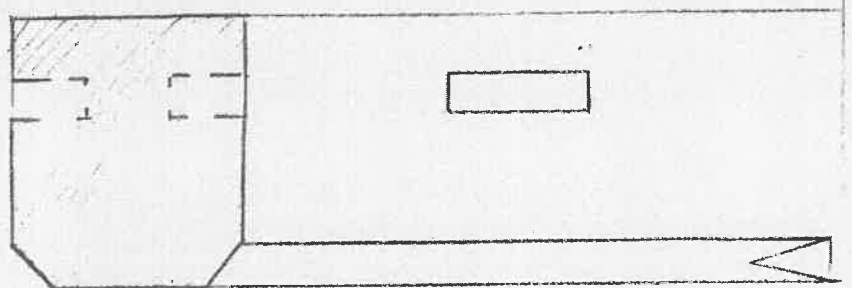
SOFFIT OF JOISTS  
AT JETTY



HOLE FOR CLAY

BRIDGE FOR STAIRS

SECTION BB  
SCALE 1/50



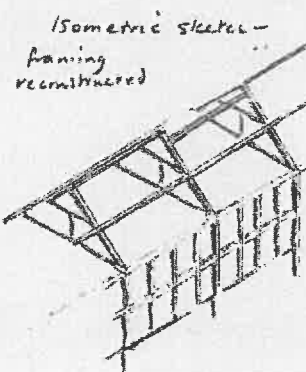
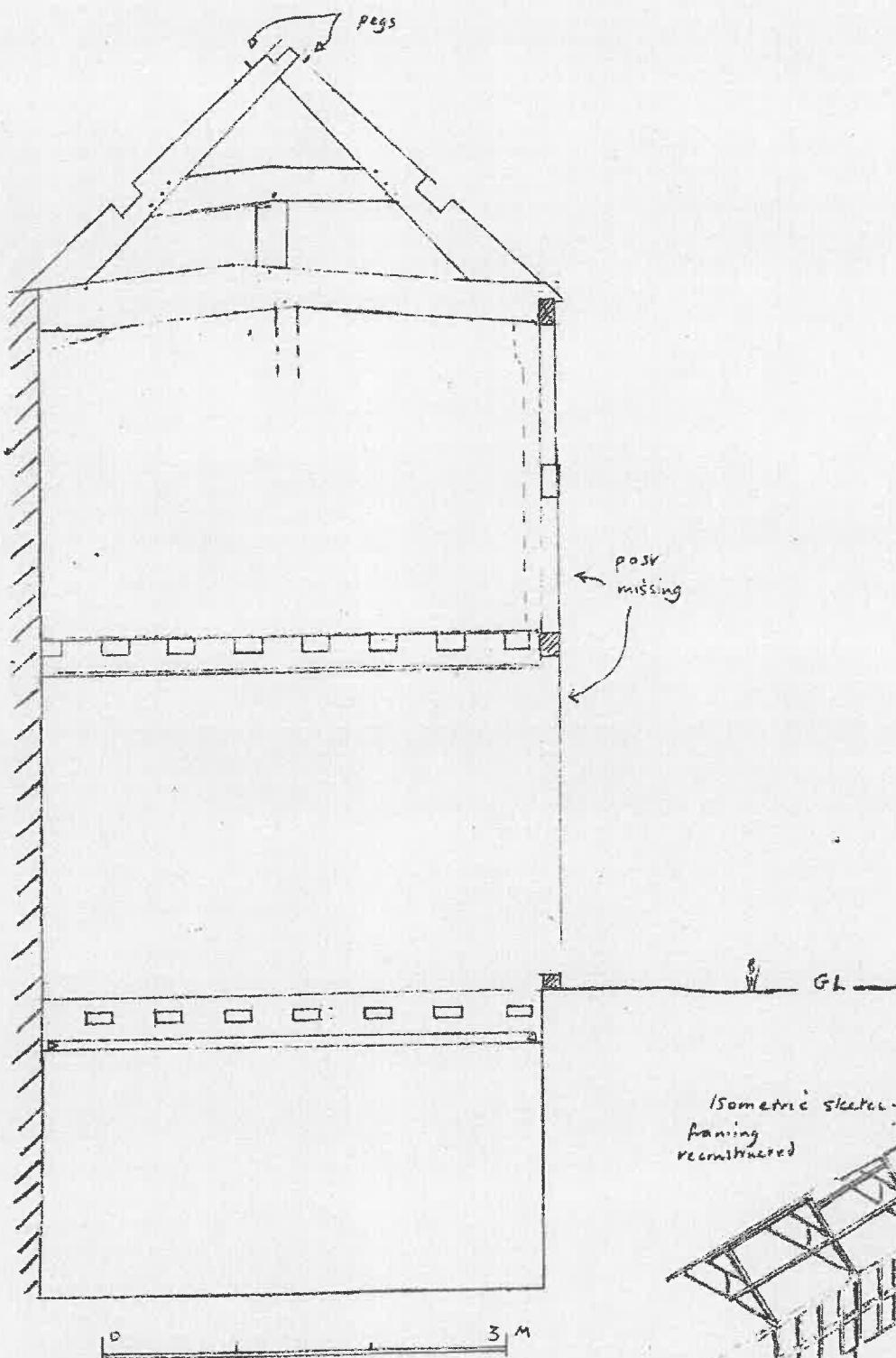
CELLAR BEAM  
SCALE 1/10

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CA			10C		47	85	62	78	16637	
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6 PALACE ST, CAERNARFON

Section A-A

AJP 16.10.91



6 Palace Street, Caernarfon, some additional notes of 15/6/94

NA/CA/96/008

The right hand gable of the front elevation has been built up on the left hand; part of the early roof outline is discernible in the right hand return, with the hipped roof of ?ca. 1800 rising behind it. Below the right hand gable, there is a three-light casement at first floor, and a 19th-century shop front below. The shop front has a window of two lights with shaped heads, with a door to right hand, both window and door set in a framework of panelled pilasters and fascia with modillion cornice. Almost immediately to the left hand there is a fielded panel door, with the bottom two panels missing, but with a good knocker and metal number plate.

The rendered rear elevation has pinky-red brickwork exposed at ground level; there is a two-light horizontally sliding sash window above and below to right hand. The rear pitch of the roof is of cemented slates with red tiles to the ridge and north hip; there is a pinky-red brick stack of ca. 1800 at the junction between nos 6 and 8.

The cross-wing at right angles has a large stone stack to the far gable, built up high ?ca. 1900 (so as to enable smoke to draw on account of the tall Corn Market next door ?). The wall of the cross-wing to the yard is of whitened rubble, while the far gable end is of stone rubble. On the first floor, there is a sash window to the right hand and a two-light casement to the left hand. The brick lean-to addition in the east corner (before the cellar steps and before the wood stairs to first floor) has virtually collapsed. Against the west gable end of the cross-wing there is a lean-to addition, with a whitened stone wall facing the yard.

In the front part of the ground floor, wide joists are now visible on the north; of the two massive ceiling beams, the western one has collapsed at its north end. The remains of timber framing may survive at the east end of the north wall. In the westernmost room in the cross-wing, there is a 19th-century "marbled" slate or stone fireplace. Two steps lead up to the lean-to addition at the west end where a wainscot partition of ca. projects inward from the yard doorway; the walls have a painted brown dado, and are painted in cream above.

On the first floor landing, there is a small balustrade with square balusters and newel of ca. 1800. The north front room has a four-panel door to the north corridor and a six-panel door to the south room, the latter framed in a partition below a large tie beam. This partition in the south room has a brick pier abutting the front wall, where there is also red brick. Here, the tie beam and two other walls are decorated with a cornice of 18th- or early 19th-century and a chair rail; the fireplace appears to be of early 20th century. The rear room on the south has a four-panel door and a blocked wide arch with semi-elliptical head.

On the second floor there are contiguous doorframes of apparently ca. 1800 on the landing. The south front room has a small fireplace surround of ca. 1800, a chair rail and two five-panel doors. An early door of massive planks leads into the north front room where is visible the easternmost of three roof trusses of probably 16th-century date, this easternmost truss truncated by the above-mentioned doorway.

In the rear yard there was stabling at the far west end, probably for the Vaynol Arms. This outbuilding has a door and window in a stone front wall to the yard, and a collapsed roof. At right angles, and built against the south boundary wall, there is an outbuilding with stone walls and lean-to slate roof with 19th-century roof trusses. There are a door and window with stone dressings to the westernmost room which has a slate floor. The middle doorway (to a W.C.) has a slate step, as has the easternmost doorway.

O.M.J.  
15/6/94; visit of 14/6.

A much altered town house, part of which was originally a four bay, timber-framed, storied wing with an end-jetty to the street, probably of C16th date.

The part to the south may represent the extent of a former adjoining hall, now replaced by the existing C18/19th brick and stone structure.

#### Storied Wing

The external walling has been considerably replaced by stone and brick. Originally the north wall consisted of four-tier timber-framed panels of horizontal rectangular shape with wattle and daub in-fill (see drawing of long-section).

Each bay on each floor was divided into four panels by a vertical stud and short mid-rails. These studs were tenoned to wall-plate and girding-beam and from girding-beam to sole-plate. The principal-posts formed the sides of the bays, running from sole-plate to wall-plate and had a transverse ceiling-beam tenoned to each of them.

The surviving principal-post at section BB is jowled and has a short arch-brace mortised to the tie-beam. Evidence of further mortices for arch-braces in the three surviving tie-beams was not visible, some being damaged, others covered over.

All the spaces between tie-beam, collar and trusses have evidence of wattle in fill, although they are open below the tie-beam, except at section AA5, where there are holes for a former wattle in-fill partition. A rebate and peg whole in this tie-beam may represent the site of a half-jointed central stud, added later, for strengthening.

The first-floor seems likely to have been divided by the partition at section AA into two equal units and open to the roof timbers. Access to these rooms is unclear as no evidence for stairways was visible. There is a later window in the street front gable end of stone and a later blocked fireplace with timber lintel at the rear stone gable.

The ground-floor has three transverse ceiling-beams which are roughly chamfered and has flat sectioned narrow chamfered joists with straight cut stops. These joists at the street front have stops either side of a slight rebate which marks the position of a former framed wall. The joists continue into the later stone front and indicate a formerly jettied timber-framed front.

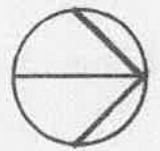
Internal divisions are lacking, although in the rear room a ceiling-beam has a brick and plaster partition under, which may be obscuring evidence of an original partition. This room has a blocked kitchen fireplace with timber bressummer and is part of the later stone end wall.

Some of the ground-floor north wall framing has later vertical wattle and daub panels.

The cellar may be later although it contains two transverse ceiling-beams, one with broach stops and mortices for flat joists.

This building is important in the context of being one of very few surviving timber-framed late mediaeval town houses in Caernarfon. Further evidence of framing may be uncovered as the builders remove stonework and casings.

FIREPLACE



0 1 2

A

TRUSS 1

A.

TRUSS 2

STAIR  
(MODERN)

WATTLE & DAUB

POST

TRUSS 3

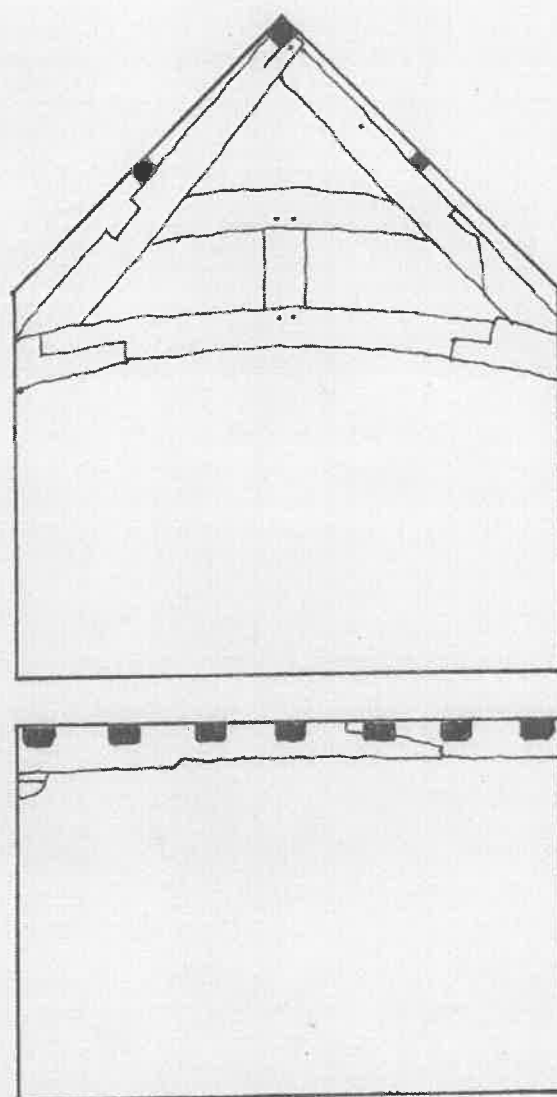
6 PALACE STREET  
CAERNARFON

UPPER FLOOR PLAN

1:50

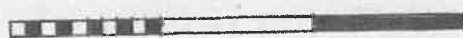
11





1:50 SECTION AA (TRUSS 1)

6 PALACE ST, CAERNARFON



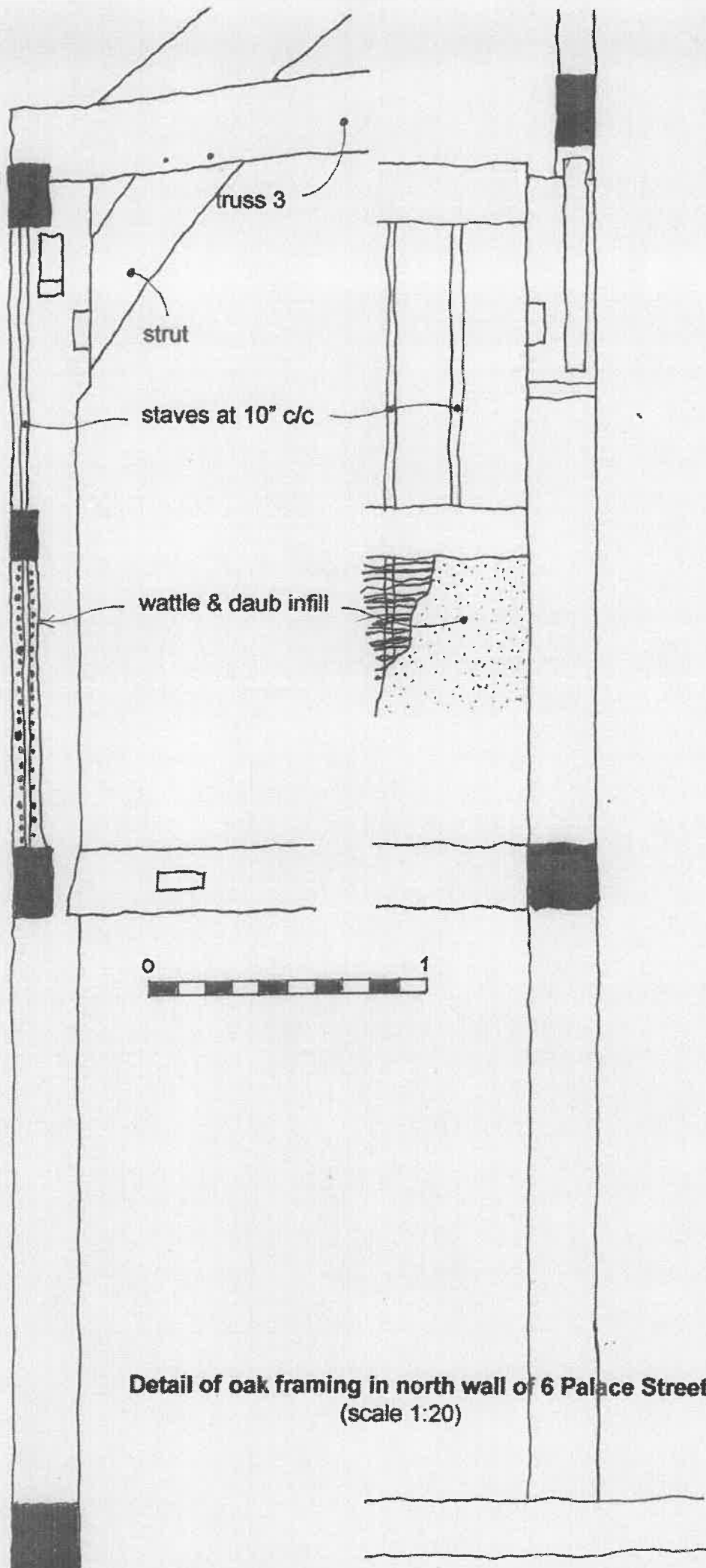




Plate 1 Trusses 1 & 2, viewed from front (Palace Street)



Plate 2 Trusses 2 & 3, viewed from rear



Plate 3 Truss 3 (viewed from rear)



Plate 4 Truss 3 (viewed from front)





Plate 5 Truss 1 (viewed from front)



Plate 6 Ceiling to ground floor, beams below Trusses 1 & 2





Plate 7 Oak framed wall on north side (with wattle & daub infill)