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# North West Wales Dendrochronology Project Cymryd Isaf, Gyffin, Conwy



**EAS Client Report 2011/10  
June 2011**

**Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd  
Unit 2 Glanypwll Workshops  
Ffordd Tanygrisiau  
Blaenau Ffestiniog  
Gwynedd  
LL41 3NW**

**Registered in England N° 286978**



# **North West Wales Dendrochronology Project Cymryd Isaf, Gyffin, Conwy**

**EAS Client Report 2011/10**

**Commissioned by  
Margaret Dunn  
For  
North West Wales Dendrochronology Project**

**June 2011**

**By  
I.P. Brooks**

**Engineering Archaeological Services Ltd  
Unit 2 Glanypwll Workshops  
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# **North West Wales Dendrochronology Project**

## **Cymryd Isaf**

**SH 79228 75886**

**Listed Building Reference: 3159**

**NPRN 26390**

**PRN 12112**

### ***Introduction***

This report details the recording of the house Cymryd Isaf, Gyffin, Conwy, undertaken to compliment both the dendrochronological sampling, undertaken by Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory, and the documentary study undertaken by volunteers for the North Wales Dendrochronology Project. The fieldwork took place on 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

### ***Methodology***

The ground floor, first floor, and attic plans were made by direct measurement. The drawings of the timberwork were carried out by direct measurement at a scale of 1:20. Photographs were taken with a Nikon D80 digital SLR camera at a resolution of 10.2 mega pixels. Where practical all the photographs included a metric scale.

### ***Survey Report***

Cymryd Isaf is located at the end of a lane leading east from Barclaw Lane, approximately 2 km SSE of Conwy and 1.2 km west of Llansanffraid Glan Conwy at SH 7923 7589 (Figure 1). It occupies the lowest of the river terraces on a bend of the Afon Conwy leaving the property on a broad promontory. Somewhat isolated the nearest other farms are Cymryd Uchaf, some 500 m to the north west and Tyddyn Cynal a similar distance to the south west. The building is listed at II\* level. The antiquity of the house has been long recognised. It is discussed in Hughes and North (1908, 16-17), a discussion which is largely repeated in Peate (1940, 98). The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales included Cymryd Isaf in the Caernavonshire Inventory of 1956 (161 – 162). In 1973 the house and lands were transferred to The National Trust under a restricted covenant (D. Glynnne *pers comm.*) and an internal condition report was completed (Hughes 1984). The house was also described in Haslam *et al* 2009 (383). The house and land was finally transferred to The National Trust in 2007.

The house consists of four major elements (Figure 3). The original house was a single storey hall aligned approximately WNW – ESE, to this a cross wing was added at the western end (Plate 1). More recently, although before 1890 (Figure 2), a kitchen wing was added to the eastern end and in 1965 this kitchen wing was extended.

The original hall appears to have been a four bay open hall with a cross passage defined by post and plank partitions. The lateral chimney on the northern wall (Plate 2) is presumably added, allowing the addition of an upper floor to the hall. The hall is constructed of uncoursed stonework with some squared blocks defining the doors and windows, although in general the quoins are not particularly stressed. The lateral chimney is similarly constructed at its base, although the tall slender stack is of more regular stonework and is therefore probably a later replacement. There is also a concrete base to the stack where it has been underpinned in 1973 (D. Glynne *pers. comm.*). Originally the chimney little or no foundations, unlike the main wall of the hall, strengthening the view that it was a later addition (D. Glynne *pers. comm.*). The flue is protected by two stone slabs supporting a slate cap. The stack is surrounded by a slate roof, covering the shoulders of the lower stack and forming a gablet extending from the roof of the hall. Both the gablet and the main roof are covered by modern slates and have ceramic ridge pieces. The main roof also has stone copings. The re-roofing of the this wing took place about 1958 (D. Glynne *pers. comm.*). On the southern elevation of the hall, there is a gabled dormer (Plate 3) which is partly blocked by the kitchen wing. It is assumed that this feature originally held a window lighting the first floor of the hall. The doors and windows in the hall are of relatively modern design, however it is assumed that they may occupy original opening. The eastern gable end of the hall range is now obscured by vegetation (Plate 4), although a similar construction to the rest of this range was observed together with a small window opening thought to be of an earlier style than other windows in the house (D. Glynne *pers. comm.*).

The cross wing was added to the western end of the hall, probably removing the western bay of the original house in its construction (Plate 5). It is constructed of random stonework with some squared blocks defining the windows and the quoins (Plates 5 – 7). The roof is of modern slate with ceramic ridge pieces dating from the re-slating in 1975 (D. Glynne *pers. comm.*). The gables have stone kneelers and ridge coping. The windows vary between wooden and stone framed windows with the stone framed windows occupying the southern gable end. The ground floor stone window frames have the sockets for metal bars which presumably protected these windows (Plate 8). The doorway between the cross wing and the conservatory is thought to occupy the site of a previous window. There is an inscription on the northern gable wall of the cross wing (Plate 9) which reads:

LL  
HK DVW  
A DIGON  
1696

The initials are assumed to be those of Henry and Kathrine Lloyd (Royal commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales and Monmouthshire 1956, 162). It is not entirely clear whether this inscription documents the construction of the cross wing or marks either an important family occasion or a re-fit of the house. There is a single gable end chimney on the southern gable of the cross wing. This is constructed of roughly

squared stone and has water tabling on three sides and a similar protection to the flue as the lateral chimney of the hall.

The kitchen wing, at the eastern end of the property, is assumed to be eighteenth or nineteenth century in date; however, it was certainly constructed by 1890 as it appears on the First Edition Ordnance Map (Figure 2). The extension of this wing to the south was built in 1965 and has an inscription on its southern gable in a similar style to the 1696 inscription (Plate 10).

Internally, the ground floor of the hall (Figure 3) is divided into two rooms and a cross passage. The pantry at the eastern end of the hall is divided from the cross passage by a post and plank partition (Figure 5, Plate 11). This extends into the room above (Plate 12) demonstrating that it was in existence before the insertion of floor. Sitting directly below Truss 1 the partition is constructed of upright planks, approximately 0.24 m wide, supported by intervening posts 0.17 m wide (Plate 11). Both the post and the planks are also retained by rails at the top and bottom of the partition. Two doorways originally pierced the partition, although only one of these remains open. Both doorways have wooden door heads with depressed pointed heads which are grafted into posts within the partition (Plates 13 and 14). The northern door is still open (Plate 13), whilst the southern door has been blocked with similar post and planking and the rest of the partition (Plate 14). It is also noticeable that the southern (blocked) door head is set approximately 0.1 m below that of the northern head. The reason for two doorways is uncertain as there is no evidence for the pantry having been divided and it is possible that the northern doorway was only ever a dummy. Within the pantry, a trimmer joist marks the position of a hatchway which presumably allowed access to the room above. It is thought that a floor was inserted at this end of the hall at an early stage, but that this loft only extended partly across the length of the hall, a view which is supported by the step in the floor levels seen in the upper floor room between Trusses 1 and 2 and in the two levels of joists seen in the main room of the hall (Plate 15)

In front of the partition, within the cross passage, is a beam that supports the floor above. Both this (Plate 16) and the associated joists are chamfered and have stops that are stepped (Plate 17).

The main room of the hall has the lateral chimney in the north western corner (Plate 18). The angle of which contains sections of linen fold panelling which is reputed to have come from Maenan Abbey (Hughes 1984). Similar sections of linen fold panelling has also been used over the fireplace in the cross wing (Plate 19) which is also assumed to come from the same source. Family tradition suggest that the great-great-grandfather of the current occupant was Elias Jones of Gorswen was steward to Lord Newborough at Maenan Abbey and it is possible that this was the source of the linen fold panelling. (D. Glynne *pers. comm.*). The ceiling of the hall has a central beam which is chamfered and has simple run out stops (Plate 20). This supports the joists of floor above, as has been already discussed there is an overlap above the central beam giving rise to a step in the floor and suggesting that the insertion of the floor in the hall was a two phase operation.

At the western end of the hall there is a plank and post partition dividing the hall from the cross wing (Plate 21, Figure 8). This partition extends to divide the first floor room of the hall from the stairway. The partition on the ground floor, however, would appear to be of a slightly less refined nature. The lower partition consists of a series of upright posts, approximately 0.19 m wide supporting planks approximately 0.3m wide. Both the posts and planks are set in a sill with each of the posts being pegged into position. The head rail is somewhat twisted at its northern end requiring the insertion of a filler in order to level floor above. On the first floor the partition divides the room above the hall from the staircase. Although having relatively plain face in the room (Plate 22), on the staircase (Plate 23) the posts are chamfered (Plate 24) and finished to a higher standard. Each of the posts has carpenter's marks on the stair side of the partition. These consist of a series of gouge strikes (Plate 25) with the posts numbered, in order, from one to seven, from the southern end.

The stairs have splat balusters (Plate 26), a moulded handrail and a square cut newel with moulded capping (Plate 27). Carved or pieced flat balusters have been documented from the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but are more typical of Jacobean or baroque staircases (Callow, 2005, 35 and 66). Balusters of a similar form to those in Cymryd Isaf have been recorded from a dated context in Wiltshire where they dated from 1653 (Alcock and Hall 1994, 6).

The cross wing has been divided into two rooms, on the ground floor, together with the staircase. The larger room occupies the southern end of the cross wing. It has a fireplace in the southern gable wall (Plate 28) over which there is a mantle decoration incorporating sections of linen fold panelling reputed to have originally come from Maenan Abbey (Plate 19). The ceiling within this room has two beams supporting the joist. The beams are chamfered and have step stops (Plate 29) and the joists are also chamfered and have run-out stops (Plate 30). There are also a series of wooden pegs driven into the beam along the northern wall of the room (Plate 30) which may have originally held the partition below this beam. The partition between the southern and northern ground floor rooms is constructed of large planks which are well finished (Plate 31). Hughes (1984) states that this partition is a modern replacement. It is thought that this partition relates to a restoration of the property in the 1890's (D. Glynne *pers. comm.*).

The northern, ground floor, room of the cross wing is largely defined by the modern plank partitions between it and the southern room. The ceiling beam along the southern wall is chamfered and has a series of wooden pegs which do not appear to directly relate to the partition between the rooms, although they may relate to an earlier partition (Plate 32). This room also gives access to the space below the staircase (Plate 33)

On the first floor, the room above the hall has three trusses exposed. Truss 1 (Figure 5, Plate 34) has a simple collar and half lapped principal rafters. The purlins sit on top of the principal rafters and are pegged to keep them in position. The lower northern purlin also has a peg below the purlin supporting it and a packing piece between the principal rafter and the purlin. The space below the truss had a wattle and daub partition with an access hatch. There

are a series of sockets for the staves of the partition (Plate 35) both above and below the collar and larger sockets for timbers in the bottom of the collar and in the top of the head rail of the post and plank partition. This defines the position of the possible hatchway. One of the staves for the wattle and daub partition survives below the collar (Plate 36). The top of the head beam of the post and plank partition (which extends into the ground floor where it defined the eastern side of the cross passage) also has a groove to secure the lower portion of the missing partition (Plate 37).

Truss 2 is distinctive having cusped, splayed braces between the collar and the principal rafters (Figure 6, Plate 38). The principal rafters are half lapped at their peak with a ridge purlin running between the overlap. At their foot, however, they are grafted to timbers (Plates 39, 40) which are, either the remains of earlier principal rafters, or repairs of the current principals. The purlins are pegged to the principal rafters, although the lower purlins have packing pieces below them. The northern, lower, purlin also has a separate peg below, it giving it more support (Plate 41). There is also a short, re-used, timber running between the southern blade of the truss to the wall. This is pegged into the principal rafters and has two mortice holes in its width (Plate 42). There are a series of dowel holes below the collar which suggest that there was a wattle and daub partition below this truss at some point (Plate 43).

Truss 3 (Figure 7, Plate 44) has a high collar, allowing access to this room from the staircase. The purlins rest on to the principal rafters and are pegged through their width into the principals. The lower southern purlin also has a separate peg supporting its lower edge. The principal rafters are half lapped at their peak and the ridge purlin rest between the overlap. It is possible that this truss is later than Trusses 1 and 2, having been inserted to allow unimpeded access to the room above the hall.

The cross wing is divided into two bedrooms on the first floor. The southern bedroom has a fireplace on the southern gable wall (Plate 45). Within both of the bedrooms the ceiling is at the level of the lower purlins and thus the principal rafters of Trusses 4 and 5 extend into the bedrooms below (Plates 46 and 47). The nature of the wall between the two bedrooms is uncertain; however the partition between the staircase and the northern bedroom has a series of studs separated by wattle and daub panels (Plate 48). The nature of the wattling is shown in an exposed section on the staircase (Plate 49), it has horizontal staves and vertical withes. The door frames to the bedrooms have scroll stops on their uprights (Plates 50, 51).

In the attic of the cross wing there are two trusses (Figures 9 and 10, Plates 52, 53). Both of these trusses are relatively simple with collars which extend beyond the extent of the principal rafters. The principal rafters are joined by notched-lap joints which are pegged and the purlins are housed in shallow trenches. There would appear to have been some access to the attic as the upper purlins are chamfered and have run out stops where they meet the trusses. (Plate 54). Another possibility is that these purlins are re-used rafters from elsewhere.

## ***Dendrochronology Sampling***

A total of twenty four samples were taken, by Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory with the aim of sampling four major phases of construction. These phases were: Phase 1, the construction of the original open hall; Phase 2, the insertion of a floor above the pantry of the original hall; Phase 3: The construction of the cross-wing and Phase 4, the insertion of the floor above the rest of the hall. Unfortunately only four samples gave dates and even these were difficult to interpret (Bridge 2011)

## ***Conclusions***

Cymryd Isaf clearly has a long and potentially complex history with a number of distinct phases of development being determined including:

**Phase 1:** An open hall with post and plank partition at service end extending up to the height of the collar in Truss 1. Above this was probably a wattle and daub partition filling the space within the truss. It is likely that there was a further bay, at the upper end, possibly separated from the hall by a plank and post partition, the lower part of which may be still in position. The early date of 1474–88 from a joist in the hall (Bridge 2011) may be a reused joist from the upper end which was re-used when the hall was finally closed and the cross wing added.

There appears to have been a level of pretension to some of the work associated with Phase 1. The second doorway in the pantry partition was probably never open and there appears not to have been a division of the pantry. The central truss (Truss 2) has a level of refinement with its cusped, splayed braces, although the level of cusping seems somewhat restrained. Also the scarfed joints at the foot of this truss may be trying to hint at a more timbered building falsely suggesting the use of a cruck for this central hall truss.

**Phase 2:** A floor was inserted above the pantry. This involved the addition of a beam immediately to the east of the pantry partition to support the joists. Access to the upper storey was via a hatch in the corner of the pantry. It is not certain as to whether this phase or phase 3 also includes the addition of the lateral chimney

**Phase 3:** A floor inserted between Trusses 1 and 2, leaving the hall in front of the lateral chimney still open to roof height. Access to the first floor was still via the hatch in the pantry. An opening was also cut in the wattle and daub partition in Truss 1 to allow access to the newly closed section of the hall. This meant stepping over the collar of Truss 1 which is somewhat worn.

**Phase 4:** Addition of the cross wing and the closing of the hall. This involved the removal of the upper end of the hall and replacing Truss 3 in the hall with a truss with a high collar to allow access from the staircase in the cross wing. As part of this, a beam was inserted, below Truss 3 which cut into the bressumer of the lateral fireplace.

**Phase 5:** Refitting of the house in or around 1696 which included the staircase. The staircase would appear to date to the re-fitting of, the cross wing with the splat balusters and square newel post which have parallel with other staircases dated to the second half of the seventeenth century (Alcock and Hall (1994). It is likely that the inscription on the north gable wall of the cross wing would relate to this re-fit.

**Later phases:** It is possible that the stone fireplace in the modern kitchen may have been moved from the lateral fireplace in the hall. A slot in the front of the bressumer possibly marks the level of the top of the stone fire surround if one allows for a slightly raised floor in the hall when it was tiled

The possible development of the hall at Cymryd is shown on Figure 11

There is some evidence that the attic to the cross wing was much more heavily used as the purlins are chamfered and have run out stops, although where the access point to this space is unknown. The quality of the work on these purlins may also suggest that the space may have been used by a member of the family rather than servants.

Later phases include the construction of the kitchen wing, possibly in the eighteenth century, and the modern (1965) extension of the kitchen wing.

### **Acknowledgments**

The recording of this building was commissioned by Margaret Dunn for the North Wales Dendrochronology Project. Thanks are also due to the Miss Dilys Glynne for access to this building and to Dr Elizabeth Green of the National Trust for facilitating the survey and providing the unpublished National Trust Report on the building.

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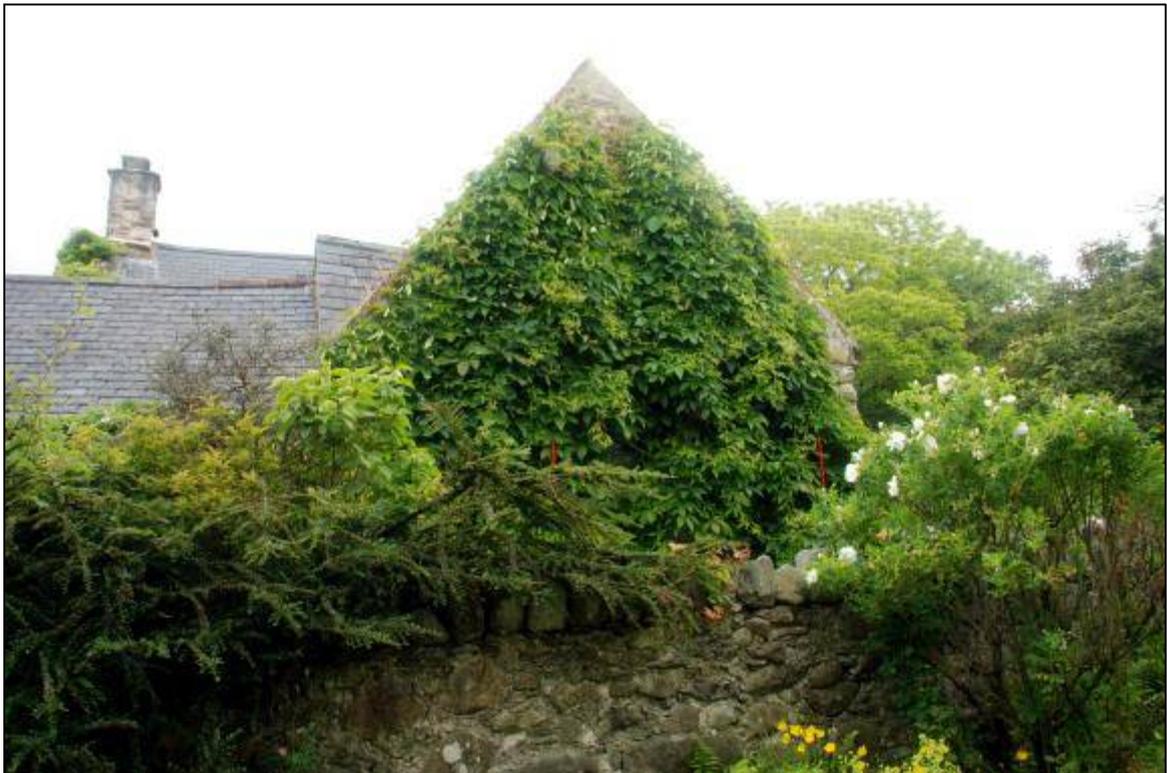
**Plate 1: Northern elevation**



**Plate 2: The lateral chimney**



**Plate 3: Southern elevation of the hall**



**Plate 4: Eastern gable end**



**Plate 5: Northern gable of the cross wing**



**Plate 6: Western elevation of the cross wing**



**Plate 7: The southern gable and eastern elevation of the cross wing**



**Plate 8: Stone window frame in the southern gable of the cross wing**



**Plate 9: Inscription on northern gable wall of the cross wing**



**Plate 10: Inscription on the southern gable wall of the 1965 extension**



**Plate 11: The partition between the pantry and the cross passage**



**Plate 12: Detail of the partition between the pantry and the cross passage in the first floor room above**



**Plate 13: The northern door head**



**Plate 14: The southern (blocked) door**



**Plate 15: Two level of joists in the hall**



**Plate 16: Chamfer and stop on the beam in the cross passage**



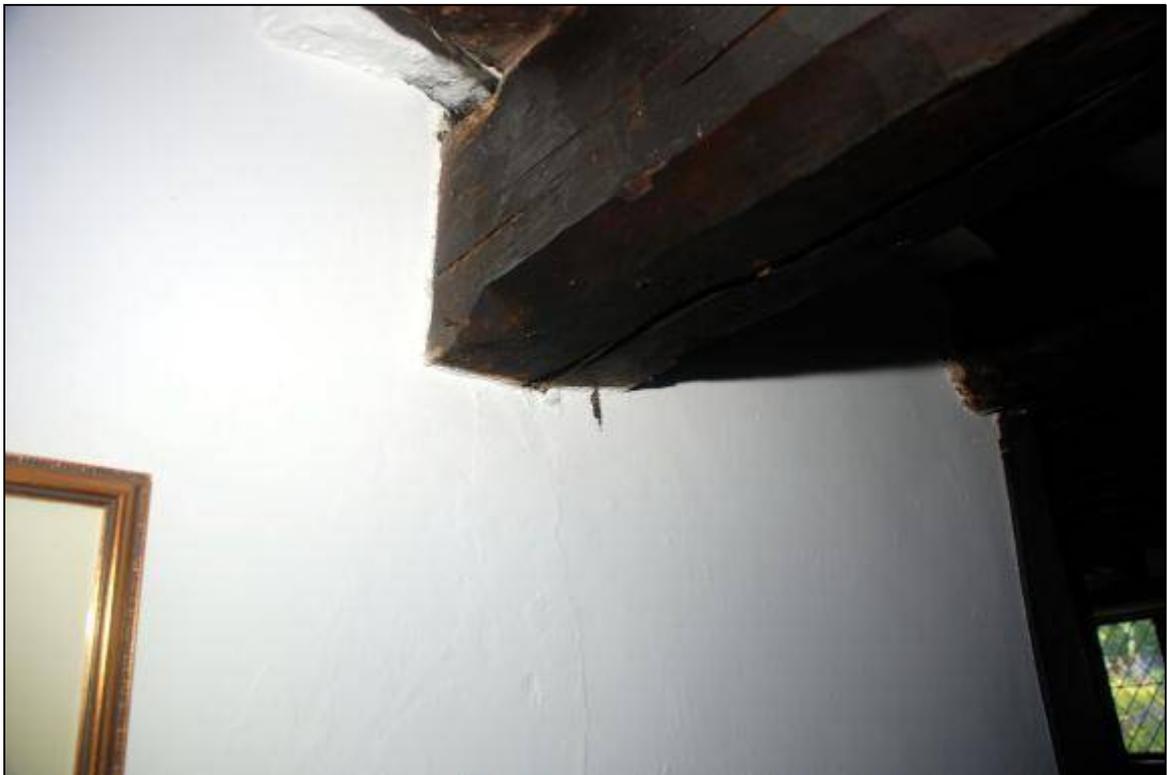
**Plate 17: Chamfer and stops on the joists in the cross passage**



**Plate 18: The lateral fireplace in the hall**



**Plate 19: Re-used linen fold panelling above the fireplace in the cross wing**



**Plate 20: The central ceiling beam in the hall**



**Plate 21: The western end of the hall**



**Plate 22: The partition between the first floor hall room and the staircase**



**Plate 23: The partition in the stairwell**



**Plate 24: Detail of the form of the posts of the staircase partition**



**Plate 25: Carpenters marks on the stair partition**



**Plate 26: Splat Balusters**



**Plate 27: The newel post**



**Plate 28: The fireplace in the cross wing**



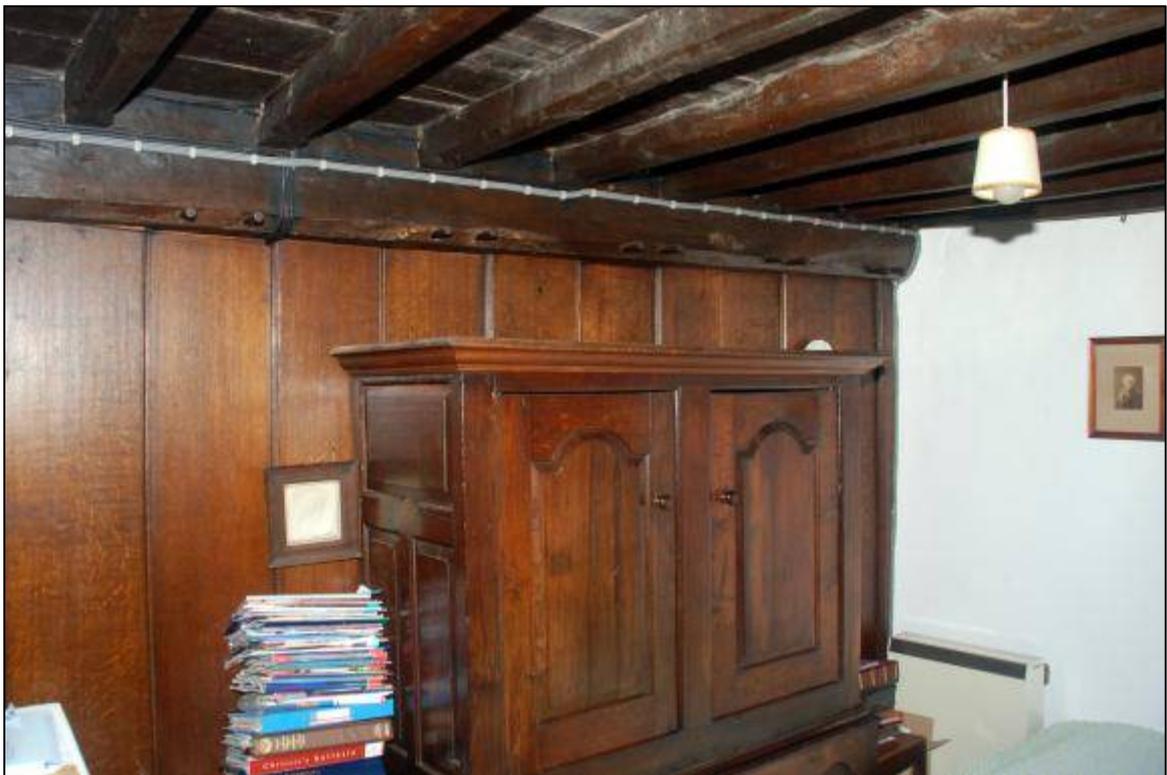
**Plate29: Step stop on ceiling beam in cross wing**



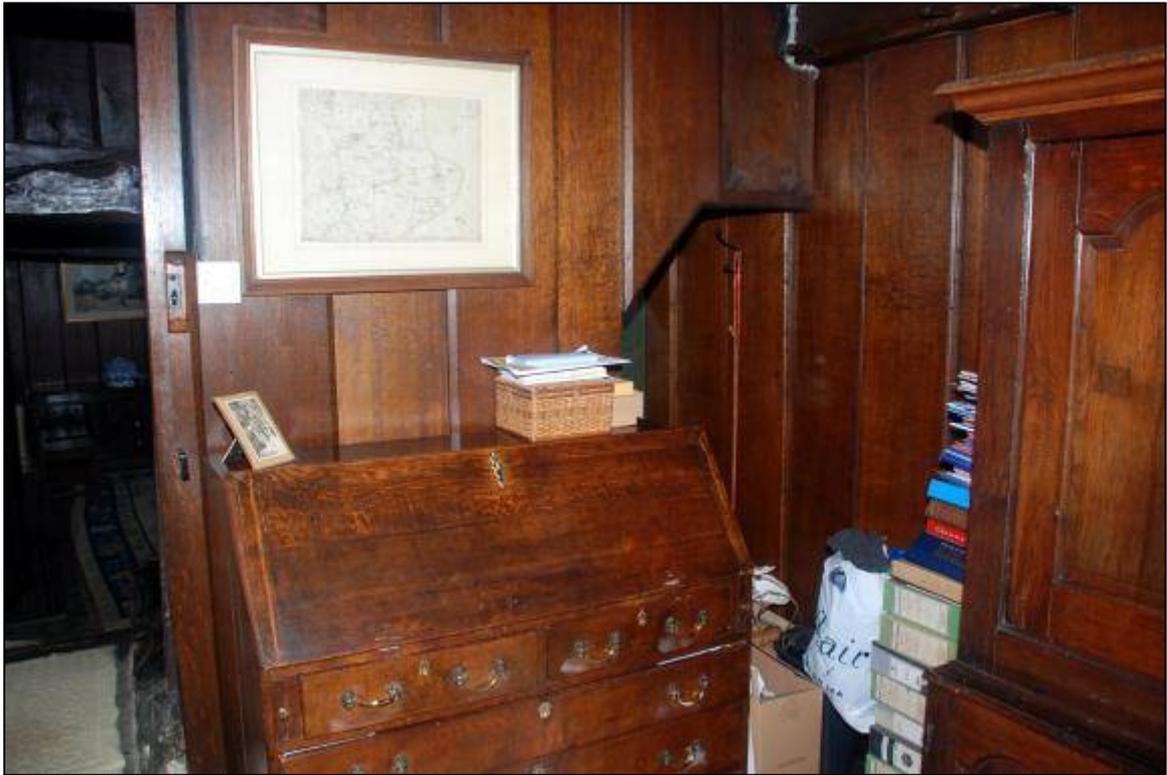
**Plate 30: The joists in the southern, ground floor, room of the cross wing**



**Plate 31: The partition between the two ground floor rooms in the cross wing**



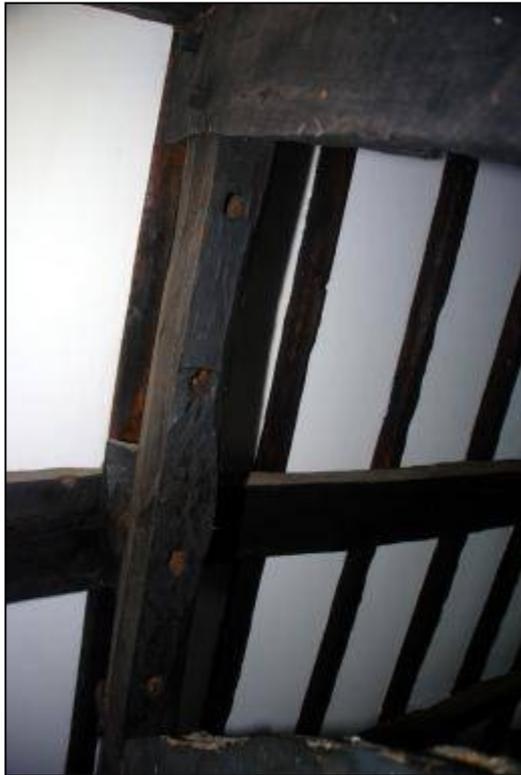
**Plate 32: The partition between the ground floor rooms, looking SW**



**Plate 33: the access to the under stair space**



**Plate 34: Truss 1, looking east**



**Plate 35: The sockets for staves below Truss 1**



**Plate 36: The surviving stave, Truss 1**



**Plate 37: Groove in top of head beam below Truss 1`**



**Plate 38: Truss 2, looking east**



**Plate 39: Joint at base of northern side of Truss 2**



**Plate 40: Joint at base of southern side of Truss 2**



**Plate 41: Relationship between the principal rafter and the lower northern purlin, Truss 2**



**Plate 42: Re-used timber bracing the southern side of Truss 2**



**Plate 43: Dowel holes below Truss 2**



**Plate 44: Truss 3, looking west**



**Plate 45: The fireplace in the southern bedroom of the cross wing**



**Plate 46: Foot of Truss 4 in the southern bedroom of cross wing**



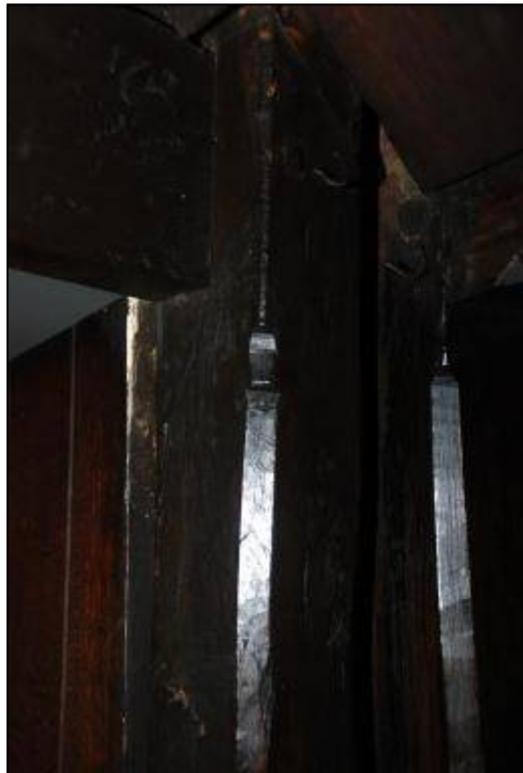
**Plate 47: Foot of Truss 5 in southern bedroom of cross wing**



**Plate 48: Studs in wall between the northern bedroom and the staircase**



**Plate 49: Detail of wattling**



**Plate 50: Scroll stop on door frame to bedroom**



**Plate 51: Scroll stop on bedroom doorframe**



**Plate 52: Truss 4, looking south**



**Plate 53: Truss 5, looking north**



**Plate 54: Detail of upper purlin in the cross wing**

## **Appendix 1: Sources**

### **Cadw Listing Information**

[http://jura.rcahms.gov.uk/cadw/cadw\\_eng.php?id=3159](http://jura.rcahms.gov.uk/cadw/cadw_eng.php?id=3159)

#### **Cymryd**

Street Name and Number: ,	
Listed Building Reference:	3159
Grade:	II*
Date Listed:	17/03/1953
Date Amended:	28/12/1995
Co-ordinates:	279228,375886
Locality:	Cymryd
Community:	Henryd
Council:	Conwy
National Park:	No

#### **Location**

Strikingly sited on low-lying land on the W bank of the Conwy estuary, at the E boundary of the community; accessed via a long track leading E from Brynseiri Road.

#### **History**

#### **Interior**

#### **Exterior**

History: Small late-Medieval hall of c.1500 with additions or alterations of the late C16, c.1696, c.1890 and c.1965. The primary hall range retains its service partition screen and lateral chimney, though the parlour bay was replaced early-on. The present parlour range is a storied and gabled cross-wing dated 1696 and with the initials of the then owners David and Katherine Lloyd. Whilst internal alterations, such as the stair, clearly relate to this intervention, the nature and detailing of the parlour ceiling, and its relationship with the stair allow one to question a late C17 construction date; more probably the parlour wing is a late C16 addition, cosmetically overhauled in 1696. This would then account for the otherwise peculiar anachronisms (for such a date and context) in the construction and detailing. In addition, the ceiling-over of the hall was clearly done in two phases, testifying, again to two periods; the earlier of these, nearest the service partition, closely relates to the parlour ceiling and is therefore probably contemporary (ie. late C16), whilst the remainder is of late C17 character. Exterior: The primary (E) range is single-storey, of rubble and with a steeply-pitched slate roof. Off-centre entrance to cross-passage with timber lintel and part-glazed c.1890 door; 2-light leaded window to the L, of similar date, though perhaps in an original opening. To the R of the entrance, a wide, gabled lateral chimney, apparently original, though the upper section rebuilt. 3-light window as before to the S (courtyard) side, with the opposing entry contained within an attached C19 single-storey service wing; tall, plain

chimney to its S gable and further, similar openings. The parlour wing adjoins the hall to the W; 2-storeys plus attic. Construction as before, though with some re-used (apparently Medieval) sandstone ashlar blocks incorporated. Coped parapet gables with simply-decorated kneelers and, on the S gable, a chimney as before. Leaded windows as before to N and W sides, some to primary openings. Between the ground and first-floor windows of the N gable, a sandstone date plaque (1696) with the inscribed initials: LL/H.K DVW/A.DIGON. On the S gable, two 2-light stone mullioned windows with chamfered jambs. Modern stone extensions (c.1965) attached to SE; single-storey and in vernacular style. Adjoining the parlour wing to the E and extruded in the angle between it and the hall range, an early C20 conservatory. Interior: Cross-passage arrangement to hall with original post-and-panel service partition screen to E; this has two contemporary Tudor-arched openings. Stopped-chamfered ceiling 10 joists with evidence for former ladder access to upper loft/chamber. The inner screen to the cross-passage is a copy of c.1890. Large inglenook fireplace with bressummer and modern grate; modern seating within with re-set linenfold panelling of 1530-40, not original to the house. Fragmentary dividing screen between hall and parlour at former dais end; post-and-panel type, probably late C16 though possibly in part original. 3-bay roof, the E truss of simple collar type and formerly an infilled partition; the principal truss is (curiously for the region) of jointed crucks and has a collar beam with cusped raking struts. The parlour wing has a wide, single-flight oak stair belonging to the 1696 phase; simple geometric newel posts, flat, shaped balusters and original treads and risers. A post-and-panel partition wall divides the upper hall from the parlour; random width oak floorboards. The parlour has been subdivided during the late Victorian alterations, creating a small bedroom; this is divided from the remaining parlour space by a contemporary post-and-panel partition screen. Good stopped-chamfered joists to crossbeam parlour ceiling; some ogee stops. Included at Grade II\* as a late Medieval house with sub-Medieval alterations and additions and retaining much of its interior character. Reference: RCAHMW, Caernarvonshire, Vol.1,East, 161-2 (583).

### **Reason for Listing**

Cymryd was first listed on the 17/03/1953, it was later scheduled on the 13/10/1966.

### **References**

## Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales

<http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/site/26390/details/CYMRYD-ISAF/>

### CYMRYD-ISAF

#### Site Details

-  [Site Details](#)
-  [Associated Collection Records \(5\)](#)

<b>NPRN</b>	26390
<b>Map Reference</b>	SH77NE
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SH79237588
<b>Unitary (Local) Authority</b>	Conwy
<b>Old County</b>	Caernarfonshire
<b>Community</b>	Henryd
<b>Type of Site</b>	HOUSE
<b>Broad Class</b>	Domestic
<b>Period</b>	Post Medieval?

#### Site Description

Circa 15th century (east) and 16th century (west) restorations. Stone, slated, 2 storey (west), 1 storey (east). Inscribed stone in N.W. gable. Int. joists.

**Gwynedd Archaeological Trust  
Regional Historic Environment Record**

[http://www.cofiadurcahcymru.org.uk/arch/gat/english/gat\\_interface.html](http://www.cofiadurcahcymru.org.uk/arch/gat/english/gat_interface.html)

**Cymryd-isaf**

<b>Primary Reference Number (PRN) :</b>	12112
<b>Trust :</b>	Gwynedd
<b>Site Type :</b>	BUILDING
<b>Period :</b>	Post-Medieval
<b>Community :</b>	Henryd
<b>NGR :</b>	SH79237588
<b>Legal Protection :</b>	Listed Building

**Description :**

Circa 15th century (east) and 16th century (west) restorations. Stone, slated, 2 storey (west), 1 storey (east). Inscribed stone in N.W. gable. Int. joists. <1>

**Sources :**

Rc Buildings Records , Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments , , <1>

PRN 12112 , Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments , , <2>

**Events :**

**Related PRNs :**

Haslam, R., Orbach, J. and Voelcker, A. 2009. *The Buildings of Wales. Gwynedd*. Yale University Press, London

**CYMRYD**, 1 m. ESE, close to the Conwy. Small hall-house of c. 1500, the w parlour bay later replaced by a two-storey wing at right angles, dated 1696 but possibly much earlier. C18 (?) S wing altered c. 1890 and extended c. 1965. Post-and-panel partition with two Tudor-head doorways at E end of the old house. Projecting N lateral fireplace, its stack rebuilt, with re-set linenfold panelling in the ingle. Central truss (hidden by the later attic floor) of jointed cruck principals, cusped struts and wind-braces. w wing staircase of 1696, steep, with flat shaped balusters and wattle-and-daub partition. L-plan Tudor-style STABLE RANGE, s, dated 1826. Mid-C19 BARN, E, with two rows of ventilation slits on each side.

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire 1956 *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Caernarvonshire. Volume 1: East. The Cantref of Arllechwedd and the Commote of Creuddyn.*

(583) CYMRYD...ISAF (Figure 153. plates 66. 84). ,A rectangular eastern block, of one storey with inserted attics, was built ca. 1500; it probably extended further W., covering part of the space occupied by the added cross wing of two storeys with attics; this has an inscription with the date 1696 and the initials LL. H.. K. (for (?) Henry and Kathrine Lloyd; see Gyffin church (No. 300), memorial no. (iv)).

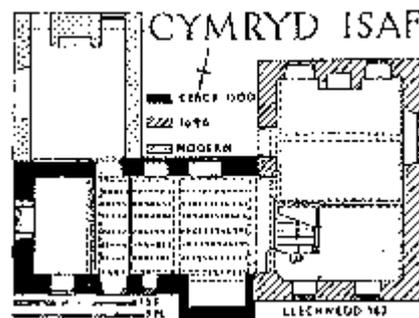
The walls are of rubble with modern copings in the gable of the earlier house and original copings, kneelers and dressings of grit in the added wing. All windows are modern. mostly in original openings. The slate roofs are modern.

The main elevation of the older block faces N.; it has a gabled projecting chimney with a tall rebuilt stack on the W. and small rectangular windows of one and two lights in original openings Banking the door. The E. gable has a modern window in the centre of the ground floor. The S. elevation is partly masked by a modern building entered through a S. door; beyond are windows of two and three lights, probably in original openings. The N. gable of the added wing has two two-light windows on the ground floor, two on the first floor and a central one to the attic; all openings are old with some jamb stones remaining; in the wall is set a stone with an inscription in four lines: LL/H.K.DVW/A. DIGON/1696. The W. elevation has a large four-light window on the ground floor and two two-light windows above, all modernised. The S. gable has a central chimney stack with two flanking windows, each of two lights, on the ground floor; these have original chamfered jambs and mullions of stone.

Architectural Description (Plate 66).- The house of ca, 1500 is of three bays, the two on the W. forming the hall and the third a separate room; the house was probably completed by a fourth bay to the W. forming the solar. The partition between the passage and the E. room is original; it has plain posts 7 ins. wide, separated by 9 inch panels, and framed in an oak sill and head. The doorways have depressed pointed heads; that on the S. is certainly, the other possibly, original. The partition between the passage and the hall is modern and there is no trace of an original screen. The E. room has an original N. and an inserted E. window; there is no trace of a partition corresponding to the two doors. The room is ceiled with stop-chamfered joists. resting at one end on corbels inserted in the E. wall and at the other on a cross-beam set against the partition 2 ft. below its head; the opening for a trap door to the attic, now filled, is visible in the N.E corner. The hall has a large fireplace with a flat oak lintel and modern grate on the N., and modernised windows, probably in original openings, on N. and S. The hall was ceiled in two stages, the E. half being the earlier; the joists are like those of the small room and rest on stop-chamfered cross-beams. The attics have a skylight on the S. side. The E. truss is of simple collar-beam type, the head of the partition acting as a tie-beam and the space above originally filled with wattle and daub. The hall roof,

originally open, has a central truss of collar-beam type with cusped raking struts and curved wall braces and wind braces.

The partition between the earlier house and the added wing has chamfered posts and panels framed in an oak sill and head; it probably represents the original partition between the hall and the solar; there are doors at each end; on the N. the head has been enlarged: the S. opening is later. The ground floor of the added wing is in three bays, two forming a large room to the S., the third divided into a small room and a space for the stair; the partitions are modern. The cross-beams are chamfered with tongue-shaped stops, the joists chamfered. The stair (Plate 84) is of 1696 with shaped strip balusters, moulded handrail and a square newel with moulded capping. A wood-framed partition with wattle and daub filling remains on the upper floor. The roof is in three bays with simple trusses of collar-beam type.



Old Cottages, 16--19.

1 Griffith, Ped., p. 154

Condition: good, modernised.

SH 79237588      1947 5S.W

Peate, I.C. 2004 *The Welsh House. A study in folk culture*. Llanerch Press, Lampeter, p.98. (Originally published in 1940)

Hughes and North<sup>1</sup> describe a two-roomed house, Cymryd near Aberconwy, the earliest part of which, they state, dates 'from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century'. This consists of a 'hall' about 18 ft. by 12½ ft. and a chamber about 7 ft. by 12½ ft. They think that the 'very small size of the latter seems to point to the fact of the comparatively recent introduction of a second room at that date'. Both rooms were originally open to the roof, 'but very soon after the house was built a loft was added above the chamber only, approached from the latter by a ladder and trap-door in the floor, the hall remaining open to the roof. At a later period the hall was half covered by a loft and [later] was taken completely across'. Here therefore is an early example of a *crogloff* (approached this time from the bedroom). Hughes and North refer also to some other examples.

<sup>1</sup> Hughes, H.H and North, H.L. 1908 *The Old Cottages of Snowdonia*. pp 16 - 17

## National Trust Report

**PROPERTY:** Cymryd Isaf. : **BUILDING:** House.  
**ESTATE** : **CATEGORY:** Domestic. Covenant  
**PARISH:** Llechwedd. **LISTED:** II\*  
**N.G.R.:** 7925 7587 SH 77 NE. **DATE:** c. 1500, 1696 and later  
**ASPECT:** Originally SSE.. **DATED FEATURES:** LL!HK  
DVW!A.DIGON/1696  
**SURVEYED:** W.R.Hughes. 27-11-84. **CODE:** 001

### INTRODUCTION.

This II\* listed building dates in its earliest part from c. 1500, and has subsequently undergone considerable change and expansion. The original four bay house was shortened by one bay and a three bay cross wing added in 1696. A two-phased modern extension completes the present V-shaped plan of the house.

A loft has been inserted in the original section, and the cross wing is of two storeys with a loft. The modern wing is single storey, and lower than the original house.

The house is free standing, yet in close proximity to the agricultural buildings, and the boundary walls are stone or hedges.

### RECOMMENDATIONS.

The present owner is sympathetic to the historic and architectural merits of the house. If in the future covenants are retained over the house, great care must be taken to ensure that they are comprehensive and strictly adhered to. They would need to cover both the interior and exterior and prevent anything damaging occurring to this important property.

### DESCRIPTION.

#### Walls.

The house is built of random masonry laid slightly to courses in some places. This varies from being the most noticeable on the south elevation of the cross wing, to un coursed on the modern extension.

The masonry is compact but uneven, with thick joints and a fair face, and is a local material. The quoins on the cross wing are stressed in so much as they are composed of slightly larger blocks, but otherwise this is not a feature.

#### Roof.

All sections of the roof are gabled, with a steeper pitch on the older parts. The roofs are new, and have thin slates laid to regular courses. They have close verges and plain close eaves, and the older buildings have square cut raking gable copings, and on the cross wing stone kneelers.

The ridges are of V-shaped stone, and the valleys are lead lined. The rainwater goods are of iron.

The west truss of the original house is no longer visible in its original form since the house was truncated at this point to allow for the addition of the cross wing. However, it is likely that it was similar to that at the east end, which is a fairly ordinary collar and tie beam truss. Notches for uprights may be seen in this truss which formerly supported a wattle and daub infill.

The central truss remained exposed to view in the hall even when the east end was ceiled over, and as such was more decorative. It is of jointed cruck construction to allow for greater apparent height, and has cusped struts. The wall and wind braces are arched.

In the cross wing the purlins and tie beams of the two trusses are chamfered, but there is no trace of any partitions in the loft space.

### **Chimneys .**

The original house has a single tall, narrow chimney stack. This is constructed of quite regular masonry, and appears to be a later alteration to the chimney breast itself, which is of more random build. This is of large proportions, and projects bodily from the long north wall.

There is a gablet behind the stack, and the asymmetric shoulders are slate covered. Vertical stones with a slate cap protect the flue, and there is a simple slate oversailing course around the cap.

The remaining chimney stacks are of similar construction, but not so tall, and are likely all 19th century alterations. They have a plain slate oversailing course, and some attempt at water tabling around the base of the stacks. These too have a slate cap over the flue.

### **Doors.**

The original back door of the cross passage is replaced by an arts and crafts type door of early 20th century date. This is in the spirit of the original but not an accurate representation. The original would not have contained windows, even of leaded glass, and would have been of broad planks without a surround. The door frame itself should have been of more substantial construction.

### **Windows.**

The windows are all 20th century replacements, though set mainly in original openings. They are mainly two light though with some variations, and a mixture of wooden casements and two-light stone mullioned windows. The

former have sidehung iron casements with rectangular lead comes, and the latter diamond leaded comes. All have deep stone sills, with deep stone lintels or shallower timber lintels. The mullions are flush with the wall face, and splayed.

### **Dormers.**

The only dormer is a curious feature sandwiched between the original wing and the modern extension. Whether it formerly contained a window is unclear, although seems unlikely since the woodwork of the roof continues behind without a break. Also, this first floor area was adequately lit by a window in the gable.

It may merely have been a decorative feature to emphasise the main entry, perhaps added in the 17th century. This would always have been the front door, the chimney always being at the rear and the largest window at the front of the hall.

It is possible that this feature was constructed only at the time of the new roof being put on and the extension being added, but it's function remains unclear.

### **Internal.**

The partition between the east room and the hall in the earliest building is original. It is constructed of plain posts framed in an oak sill and head.

The two doorways have depressed pointed heads. There is no trace of a partition in the east room to correspond with the two doors in the screen. The room is ceiled with stop chamfered joists resting on corbels in the east wall. There is a trap door to what was originally the only attic partitioned off from the open hall by a plastered wattle screen.

Linenfold panelling inside the ingle supposedly comes from Maenan Abbey, which was demolished in the 19th century. This source is not unlikely since there was an early 17th century manor house on the site.

The post and panel partition between the 1696 house and the hall is chamfered but only one is stopped. At first floor level there are a series of crescents from one to seven on each of the posts running north to south on the stairwell side.

The truss here probably dates from the hall, but the partitions are late 17th century. The tie beam has been cut into to allow for a door at the north end. This doorway has a chamfer and stop, partly destroyed due to the door being fitted. It seems that originally there was no door here, although one has certainly been present for some time. The stops are plainer at the bottom than the top, one of each surviving.



The doorway to the main bedroom appears to be in its original position since it has a chamfer and stop on the partition to the right of the doorway, the left side being modern. The other posts in the partition have no such detail, and there would not appear to be another logical position for the door.

The fireplace in the main room is probably 19th century in date, with re-used linenfold above it set in a 19th century framework. The back and sides of the window seat appear original but not the seat itself. The main beams are chamfered and stopped, and the joists are chamfered with simple stops.

The door to the conservatory may be a cut, perhaps replacing a window. The beam now exposed over it is keyed for plaster, as is the chamfer on it, indicating that the chamfer is not secondary. Other window lintels may prove to be the same if they were similarly exposed.

The partition between this room and the one other downstairs room is modern but replaces an earlier one. The peg holes would give no indication of there once having been a door head, and the beam has no chamfer.

The staircase is original with shaped balusters moulded handrail and a square cut newel with moulded capping.

To the right of the stair is a wattle and daub partition framed in wood with the wattle laid horizontally in the gaps. The wattle screen carried on over the door to the second bedroom, evidenced by the groove in the top of the door head and doorposts. The timber that went across the top has been sawn to allow for steps to the attic to be inserted. The doorway is chamfered and simply stopped.

The doorway to the main bedroom has more elaborate stops at the top of the doorposts. The in and out panelling would have carried on over the door. The main bedroom is divided off by an in and out panel, representative of what was replaced downstairs, and is heated. The present fireplace and window seat however are 19th century. The exposed timbers are keyed for, and once plastered. This probably dates from the 18th century. Both these rooms were re-ceiled in the 19th century. They may once have been open to the roof, or possibly there was a loft lit by the window in the north gable. Access to the loft would probably have been by ladder originally.

The modern extension to the hall probably dates from the 19th century. The four light window has a machined dressed sill of the same stone as used for the fireplace inside, which is quite elaborate. The other window has a red sandstone sill and may be a more recent cut, dating room about 1900.

Internally the floor is lower than that of the adjacent hall, whose foundation course forms a small shelf. The roof timbers are quite crude and of pegged A-frame construction. They may be of some age since they are re-used from elsewhere.

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ANALYSIS.

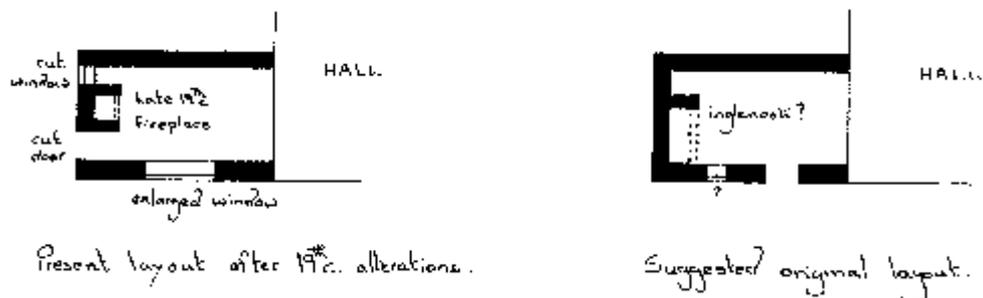
The hall may be late medieval in origin, and this could explain the lack of any foundations for the lateral chimney. This could be a 16th century addition to a hall of c. 1500. The house is classified as a "Group A (lateral chimney) type."

The hall probably had a room at the west end, and perhaps a solar. Later, 'a small gable fireplace may have been inserted. Alternatively, there may have been a pair of unheated service rooms.

The front door is altered but not a cut, since the cross passage was a feature of such halls. The doors opened directly into the hall, and had a screen to one side. There is no evidence that the late 19th century screen is on the site of an earlier one.

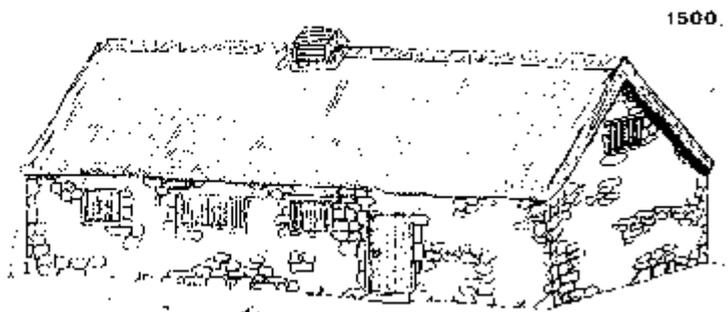
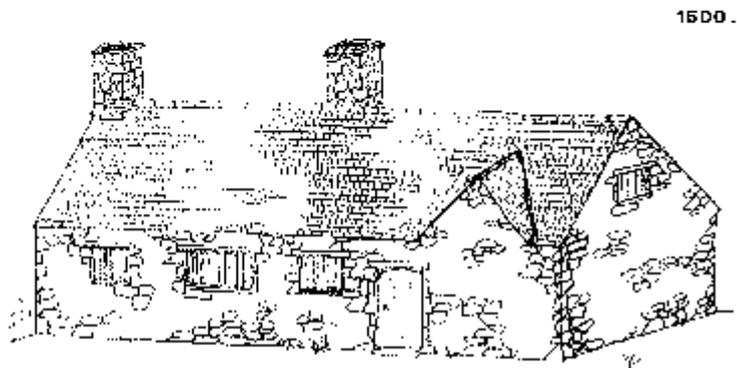
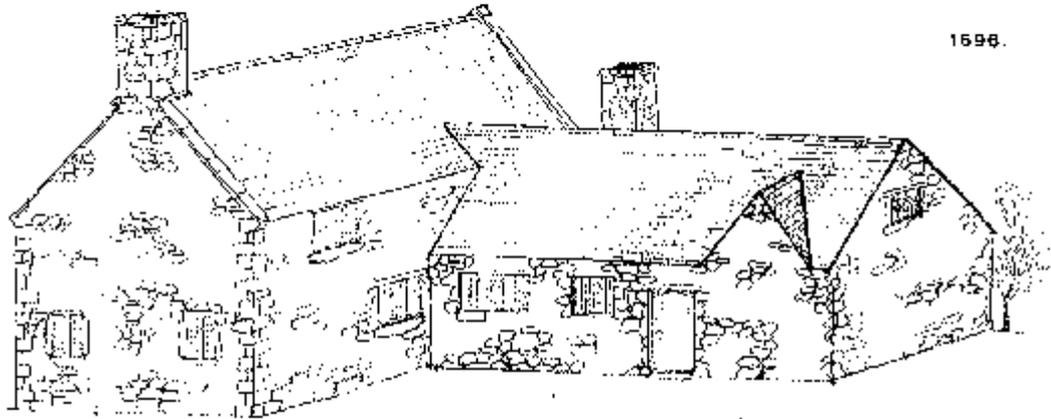
Gradually the hall became ceiled over, beginning with the eastern half. Joists like those of the small east room rest on a stop chamfered beam.

The cross wing was added in 1696, and during the 19th century a further extension to the hall. The stack on the chimney is of late 19th century date. Previously it was of somewhat squat appearance, reminiscent of 18th century cottage chimneys, as evidenced by a sketch in the possession of Miss Glynne, the owner. The doorway has also been moved, and used to be at one end of the present four light window. It is possible that there was originally an inglenook, and a small window on the front.



# CYMRYD ISAF.

Reconstruction Sketches.



What was built as an extension in a later and cruder style appears to have been restyled in the late 19th century in order to blend better with the 17th century features of the earlier wings.

## WRITTEN SOURCES.

RCHM 1956

A rectangular eastern block, of one storey with inserted attics, was built ca. 1500; it probably extended further W., covering part of the space occupied by the added cross wing of two storeys with attics; this has an inscription with the date 1696 and the initials LL.H.K. (for(?) Henry and Kathrine Lloyd).

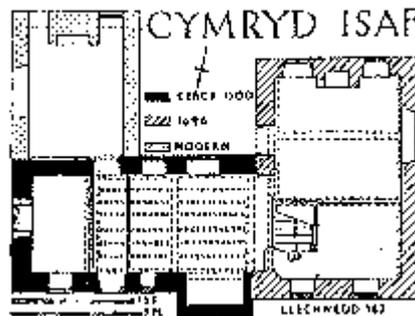
The walls are of rubble with modern copings in the gable of the earlier house and original copings, kneelers and dressings of grit in the added wing. All windows are modern, mostly in original openings. The slate roofs are modern.

The main elevation of the older block faces N.; it has a gabled projecting chimney with a tall rebuilt stack on the W. and small rectangular windows of one and two lights in original openings flanking the door. The E. gable has a modern window in the centre of the ground floor. The S. elevation is partly masked by a modern building entered through a S. door; beyond are windows of two or three lights, probably in original openings. The N. gable of the added wing has two two-light windows on the ground floor, two on the first floor and a central one to the attic; all openings are old with some jamb stones remaining; in the wall is set a stone with an inscription in four lines: LL/H.K.DVW/A. DIGON/1696. The W. elevation has a large four-light window on the ground floor and two two-light windows above, all modernised. The S gable has a central chimney stack with two flanking windows, each of two lights, on the ground floor; these have original chamfered jambs and mullions of stone.

Architectural Description - The house of ca. 1500 is of three bays, the two on the W. forming the hall and the third a separate room; the house was probably completed by a fourth bay to the W. forming the solar. The partition between the passage and the E. room is original; it has plain posts 7 ins. wide, separated by 9-inch panels, and framed in an oak sill and head. The doorways have depressed pointed heads; that on the S. is certainly, the other possibly original. The partition between the passage and the hall is modern and there is no trace of an original screen. The E. room has an original N. and an inserted E. window; there is no trace of a partition corresponding to the two doors. The room is ceiled with stop-chamfered joists, resting at one end on corbels inserted in the E. wall and at the other on a cross-beam set against the partition 2 ft. below its head; the opening for a trap door to the attic, now filled, is visible in the N.E. corner. The hall has a large fireplace with a flat oak lintel and modern grate on the N., and modernised windows, probably in original openings, on N. and S. The hall was ceiled in two stages, the E. half being the earlier; the joists are like those of the small room and rest on stop-chamfered cross-beams. The attics have a skylight on the S. side. The E. truss is of simple collar-beam type, the head of the partition acting as a tie-beam and the space above originally filled with wattle and daub.

The hall roof, originally open, has a central truss of collar-beam type with cusped raking struts and curved wall braces and wind braces.

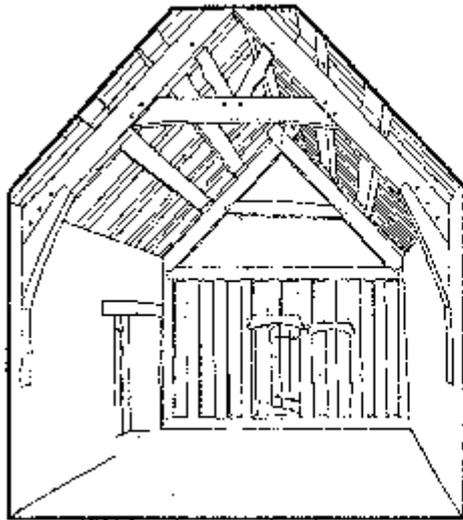
The partition between the earlier house and the added wing has chamfered posts and panels framed in an oak sill and head; it probably represents the original partition between the hall and the solar; there are doors at each end; on the N. the head has been enlarged; the S. opening is later. The ground floor of the added wing is in three bays, two forming a large room to the S., the third divided into a small room and a space for the stair; the partitions are modern. The cross-beams are chamfered with tongue-shaped stops, the joists chamfered. The stair is of 1696 with shaped strip balusters, moulded handrail and a square newel with moulded capping. A wood-framed partition with wattle and daub filling remains on the upper floor. The roof is in three bays with simple trusses of collar-beam type.



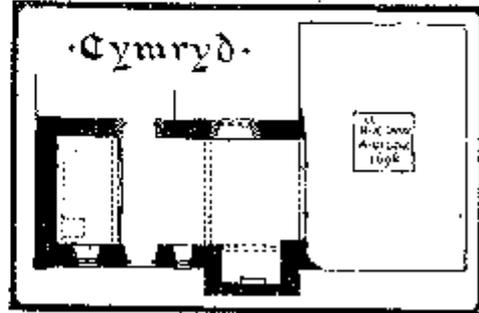
### **The Old Cottages of Snowdonia: H. Hughes and H. North 1908**

Cymryd, near Aber Conwy, consists of 3 portions built at different periods. The earliest part dates from the late 15th or early 16th century. It consists of a hall originally about 18 feet in length up to the inglenook, and 12'6" in width; and a chamber about 7'0" x 12'6". The very small size of the latter seems to point to the fact of the comparatively recent introduction of a second room at that date. The inglenook was removed when the house was enlarged in 1696, the present side wall being then added

Both hall and chamber were originally open to the roof, but, very soon after the house was built, a loft was added above the chamber only, approached from the latter by a ladder and trap door in the floor, the hall remaining open to the roof. At a later period the hall was half covered by a loft, and when the extension was added to the old house the loft was taken completely across, as we now see it.



CYMRYD, near Aber Gwynn.  
 In this case the principal is in oak - in the case of 3 feet to an inch.



On the right is a free \_ of P. in the case of 2 1/2 in. in 200 in the late stage.

The partition which divides the chamber from the hall is the original one, and is very interesting. It consists of a cill-piece now almost buried in the floor, from which spring pieces of oak 7 inches by 4 inches in size and about 8 inches apart, with a panel board, about an inch thick, slipped in between them. There are 2 doors in this screen, one of which was blocked up at an early date, but, as the chamber does not appear to have been divided in any way it is difficult to say what purpose they served. Above the lower tie beam of the principal, into which the partition is framed, the filling was formed of wattle interwoven round vertical pieces, about 1½ inches square, wedged into holes along the sides of the principal and the underside of the upper tie, by being driven along grooves on the upper side of the 2 ties. The whole was then plastered with clay. This filling has now been removed, but one of the vertical pieces remains in position. This seems to have been the usual method of making plaster partitions in this district.

The roof over the hall has an interesting principal, such as might be found in one of the local churches - for these latter had now abandoned close-couple roofing and were roofed with principals and purlins - except that near the foot of the principal on each side a wall-piece is tongued in, which continues down behind the modern plaster to within a few feet from the floor.

Cymryd MSS (NLW).

1618 David Lloyd ap Thomas of Kymryd, gent.

1623 Margaret verch Edmond his wife.

Harry ap David son and heir.

1673 David Lloyd of Cymryd gent. Henry Lloyd of same, gent.; his son an heir and having verch David of Caerhyn widow.

Marriage between Henry Lloyd and Katherine Lloyd his wife.

1700 Henry Lloyd of Cymryd. Griffith Lloyd - son and heir.



Figure 1: Cymryd Isaf, Location  
Scale 1:25,000

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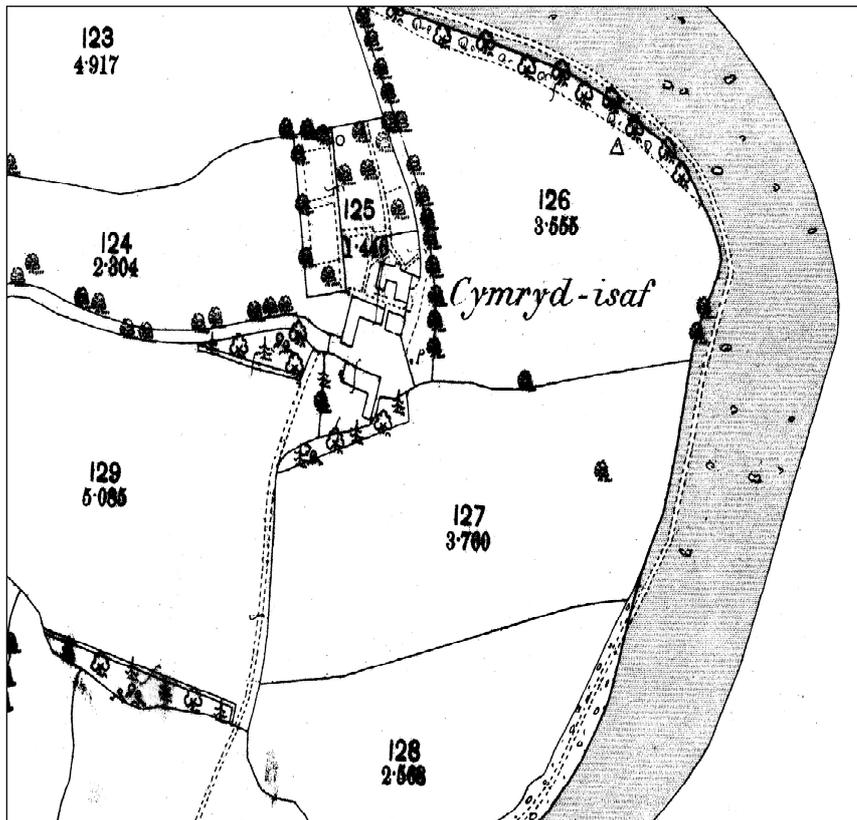


Figure 2.1: 1890 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map

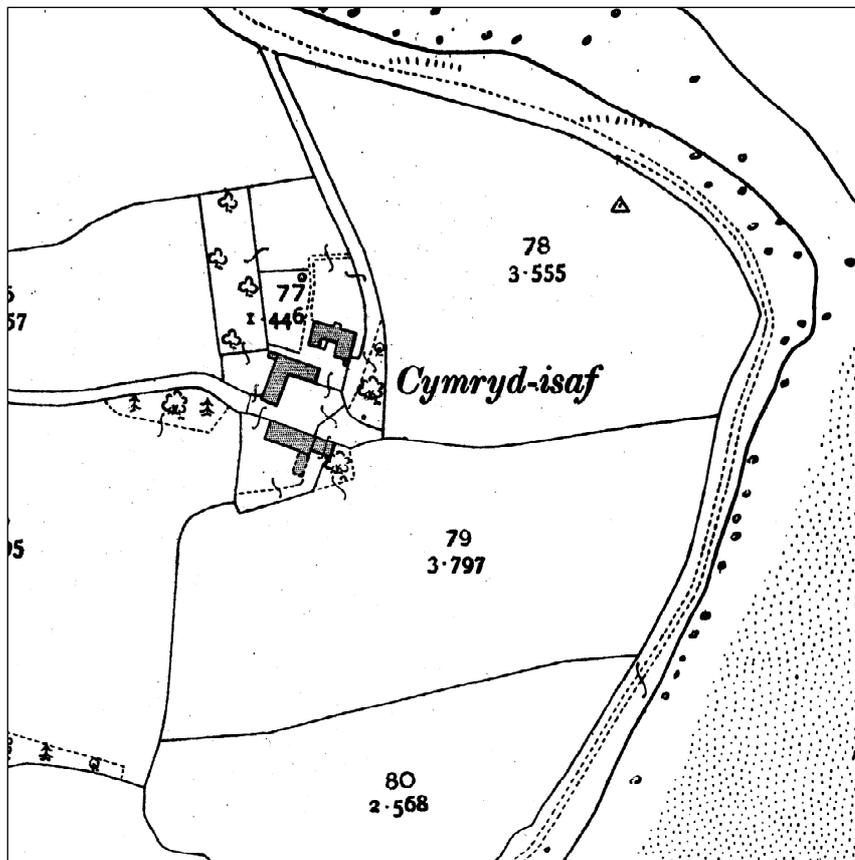


Figure 2.2: 1913 Ordnance Survey Map

Figure 2: Extracts from Ordnance Survey Caernarvonshire V.13 Maps

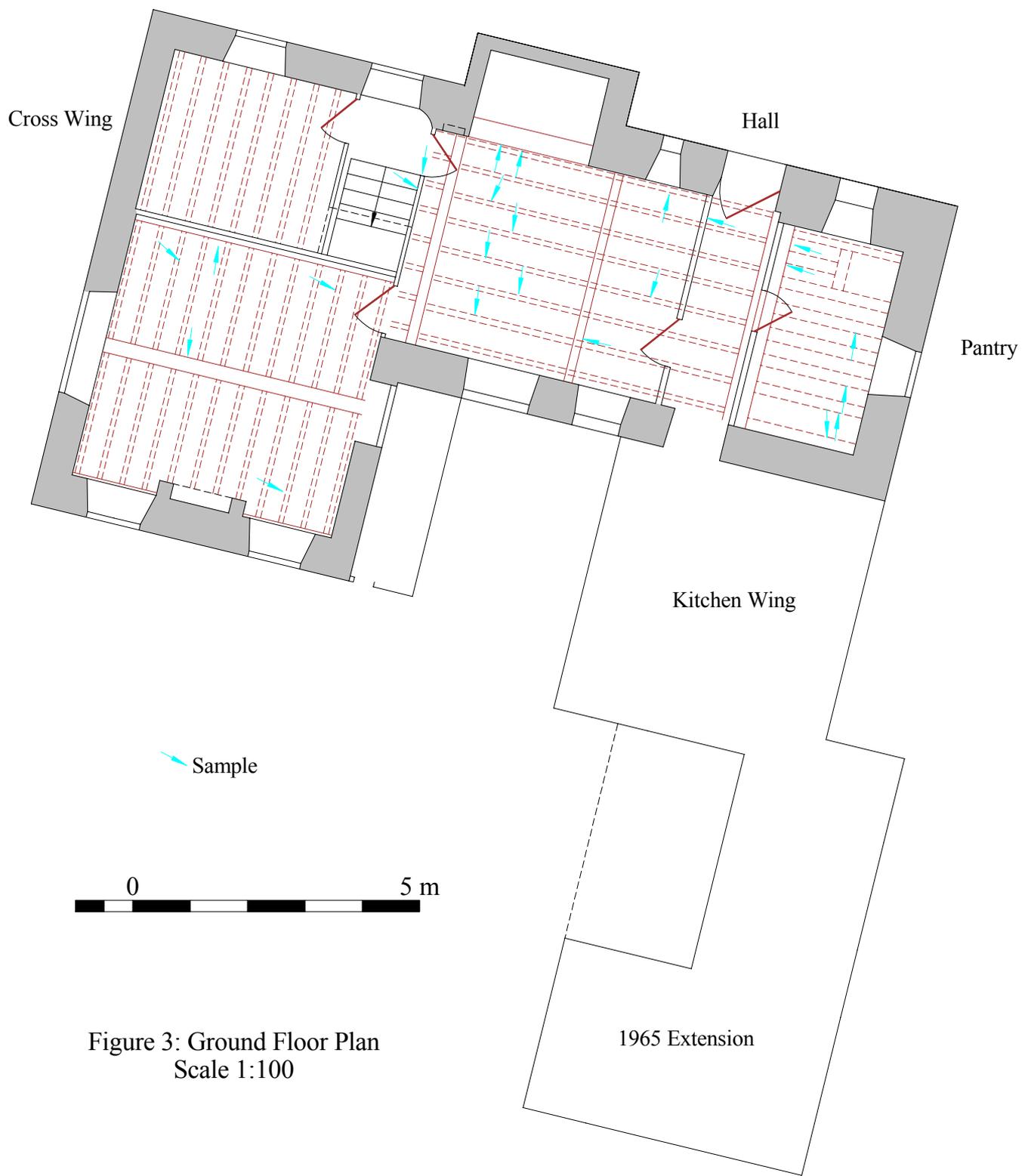


Figure 3: Ground Floor Plan  
Scale 1:100

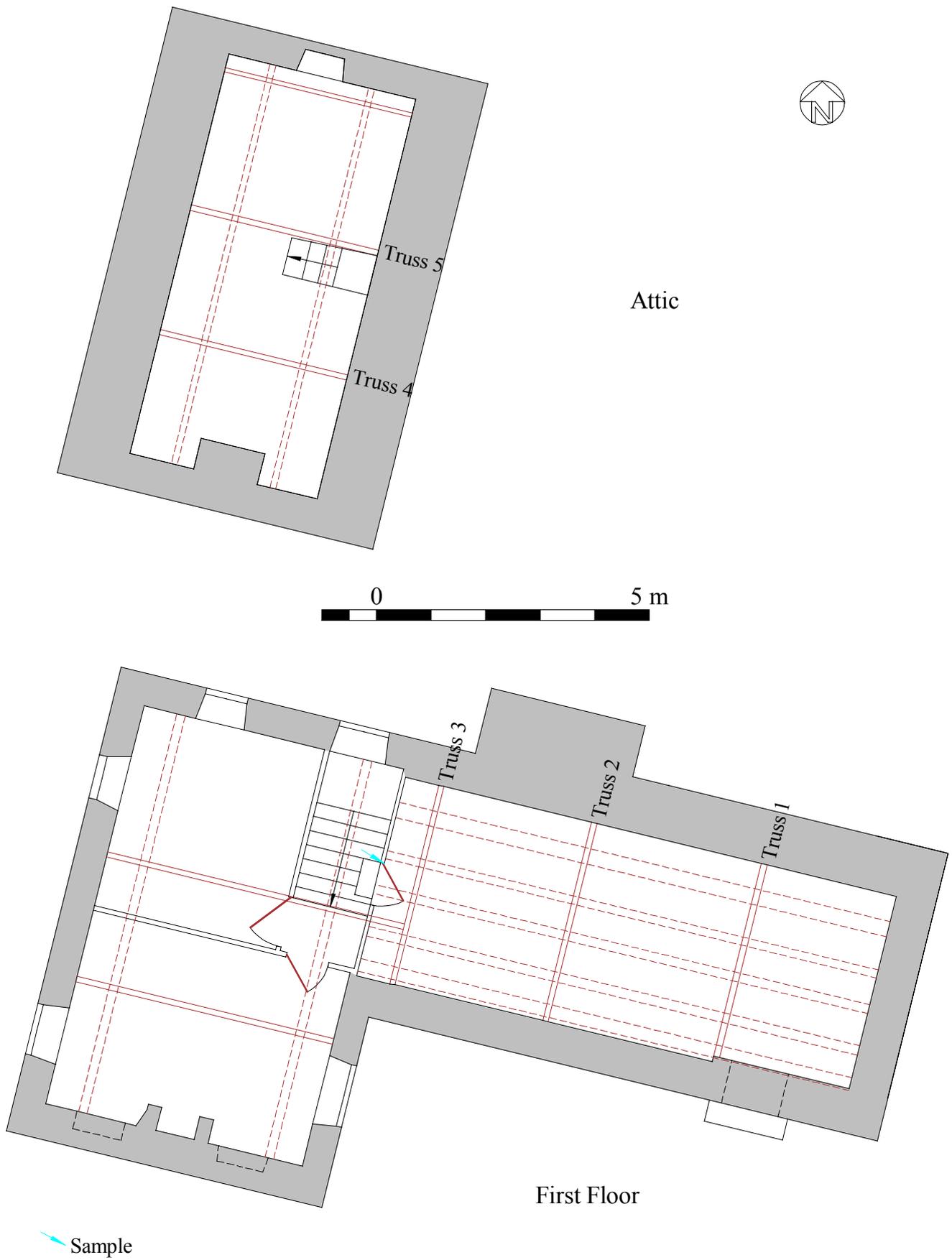


Figure 4: First Floor and Attic Plans  
Scale 1:100

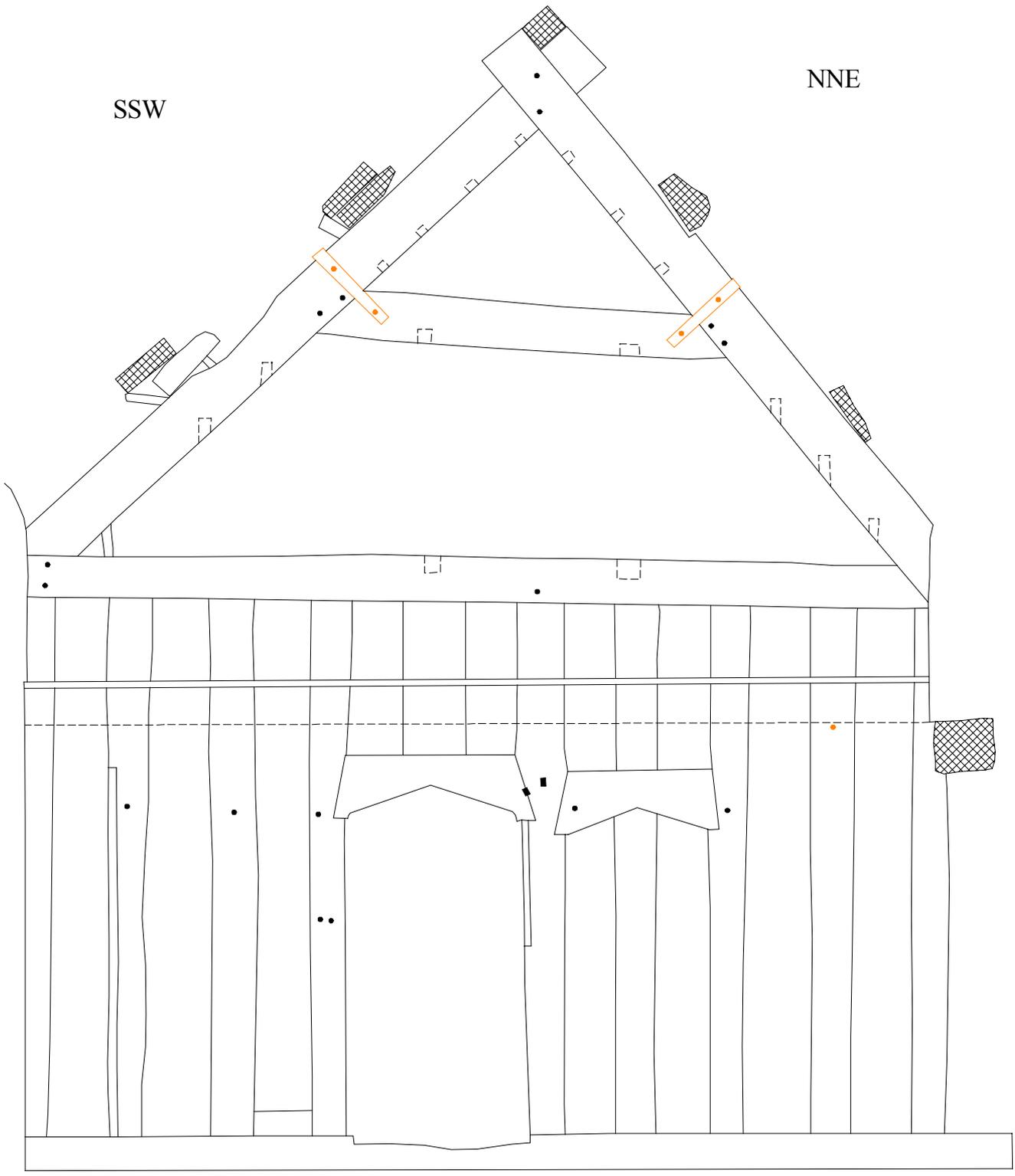


Figure 5: Truss 1  
Scale 1:25

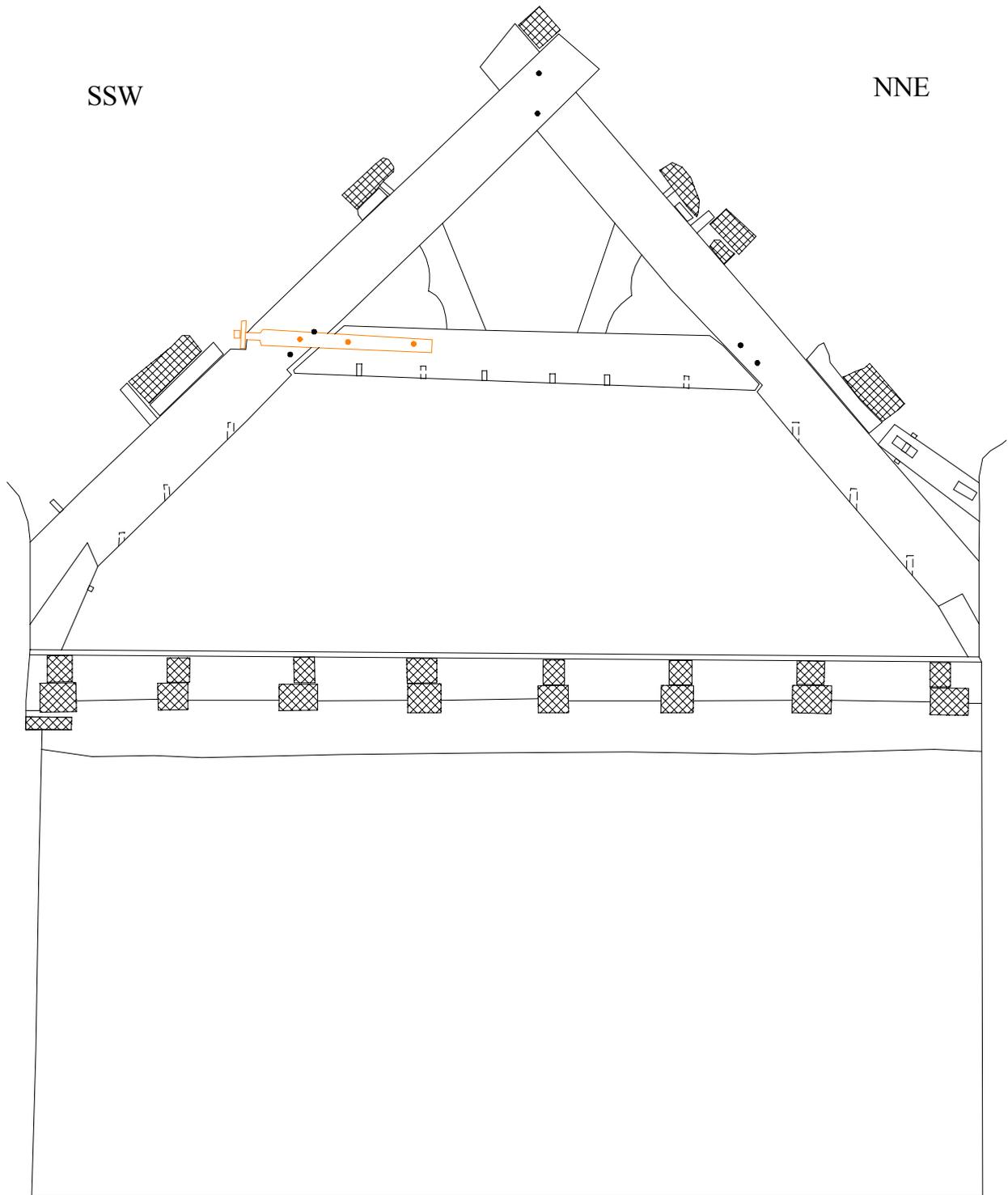


Figure 6: Truss 2  
Scale 1:25

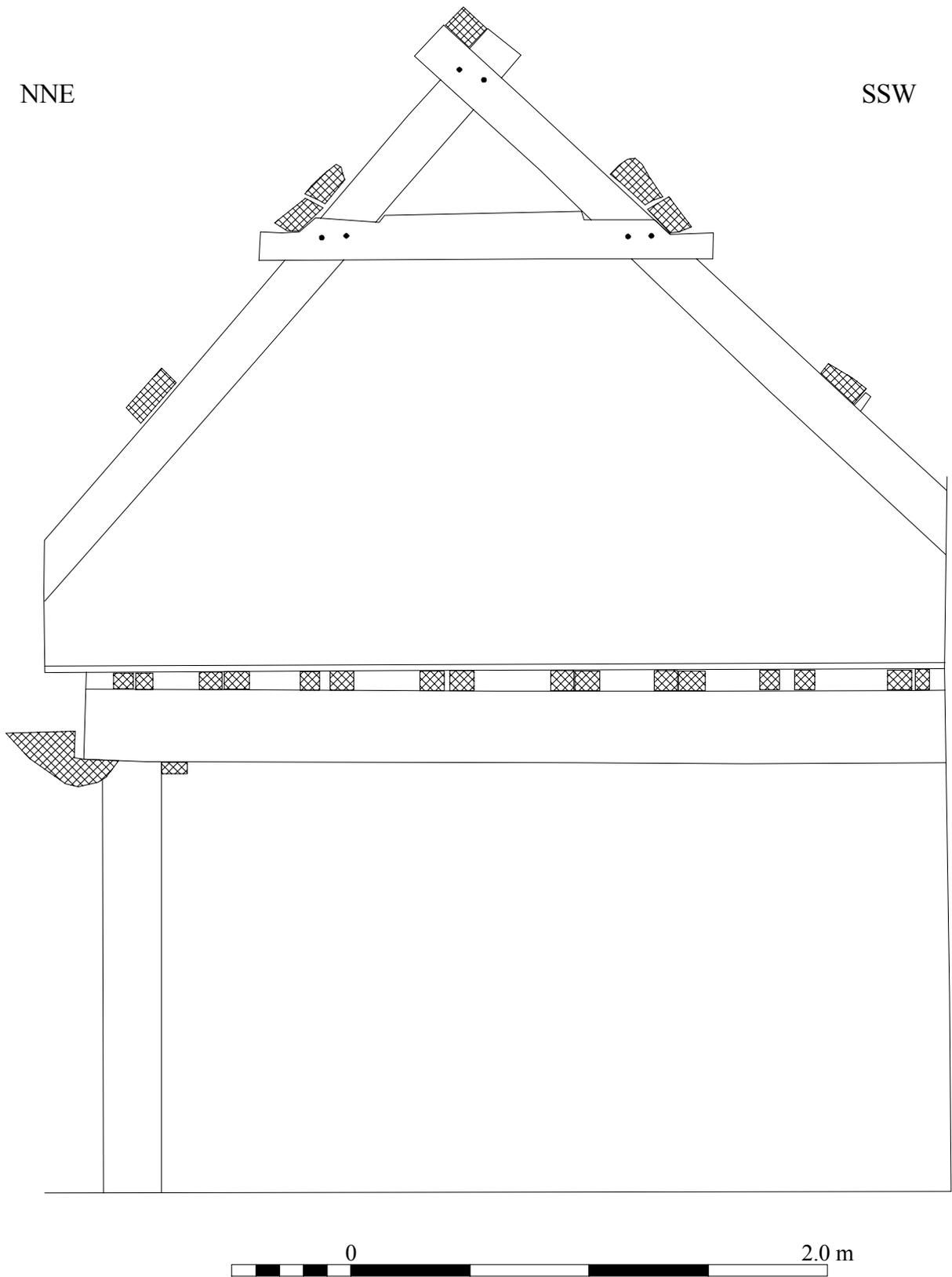


Figure 7: Truss 3  
Scale 1:25

SSW

NNE

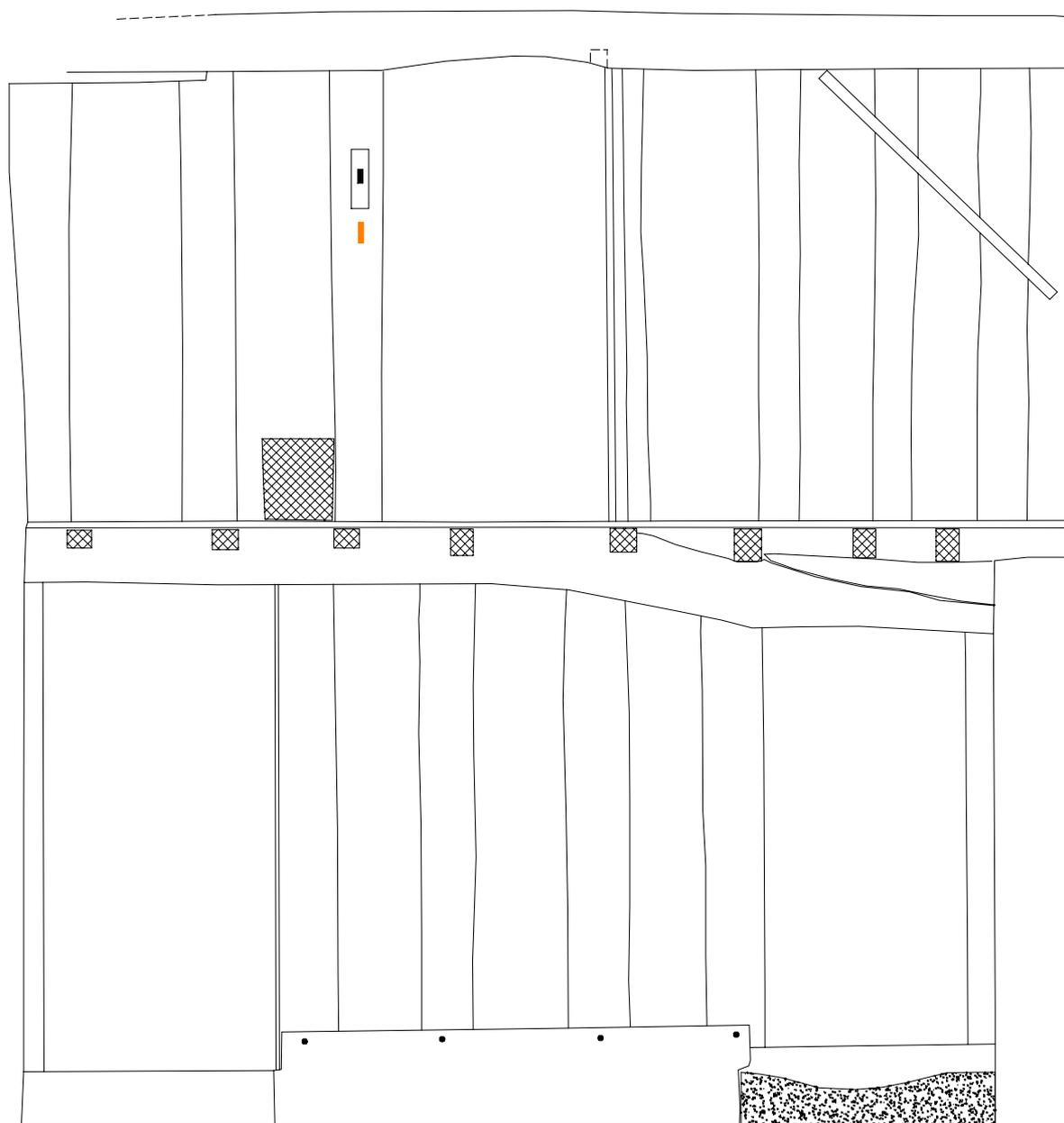


Figure 8: Partition between the Hall and Staircase  
Scale 1:25

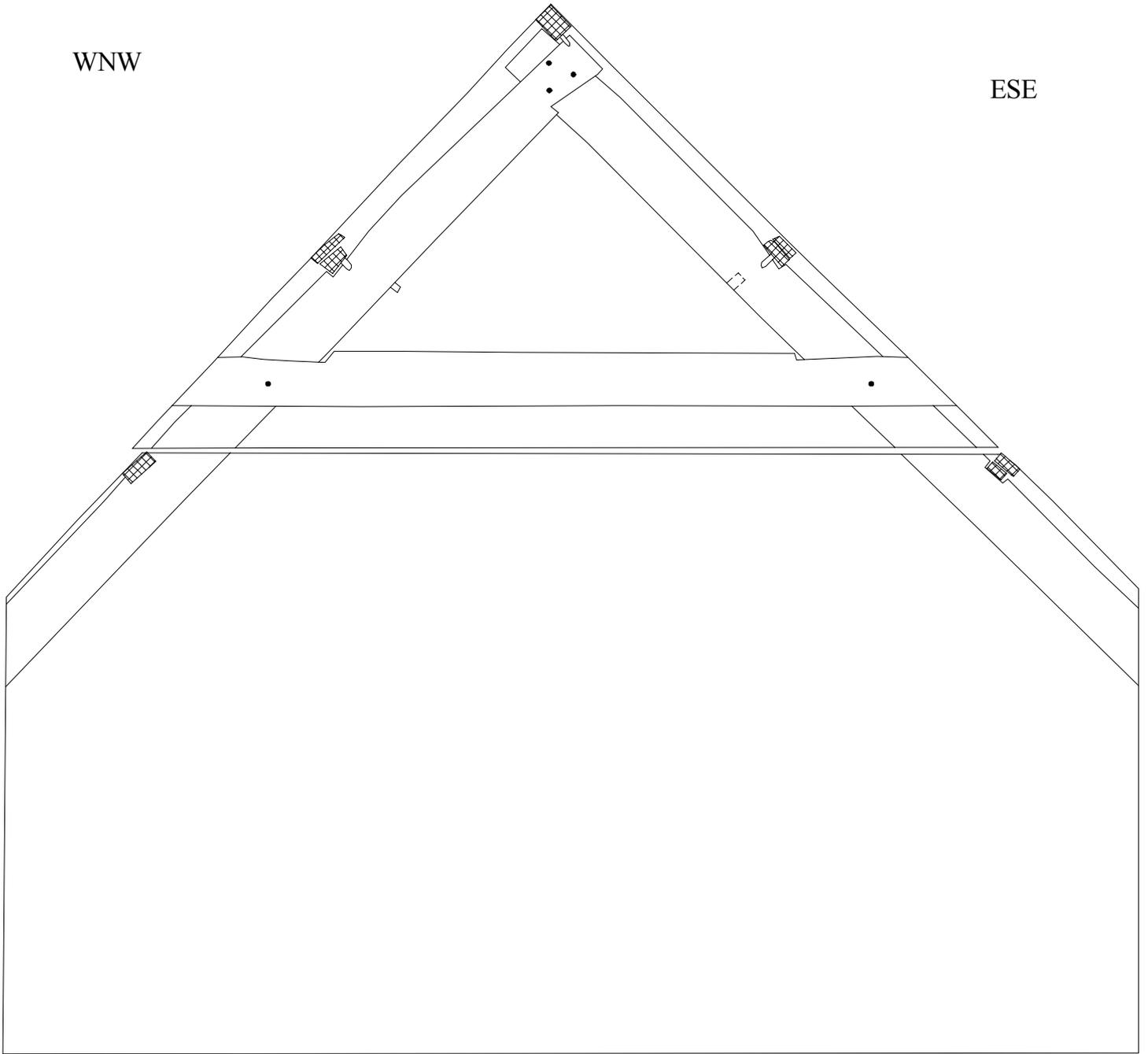
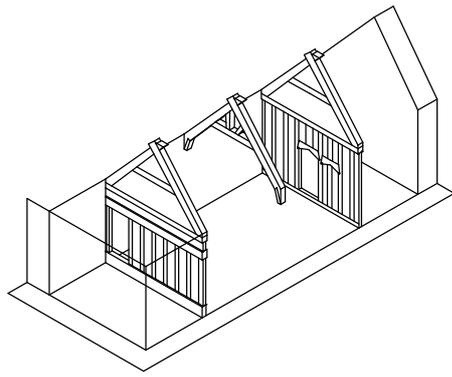
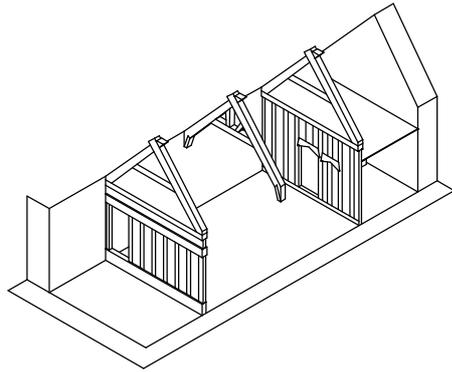


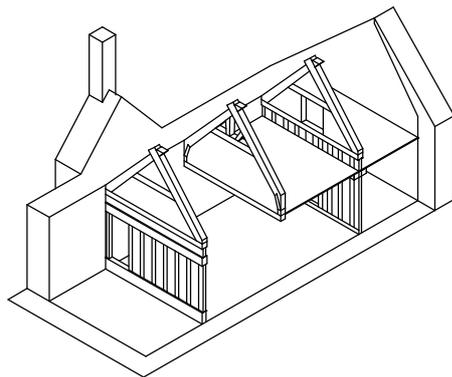
Figure 9: Truss 4  
Scale 1:25



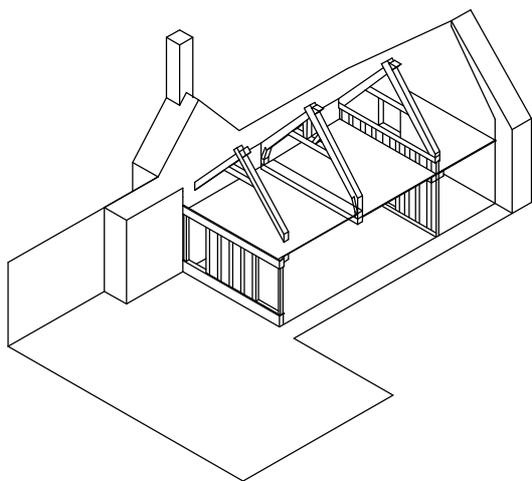
Phase 1



Phase 2



Phase 3



Phase 4

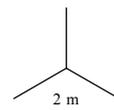


Figure 11: Possible Development of the Hall  
Scale 1:250

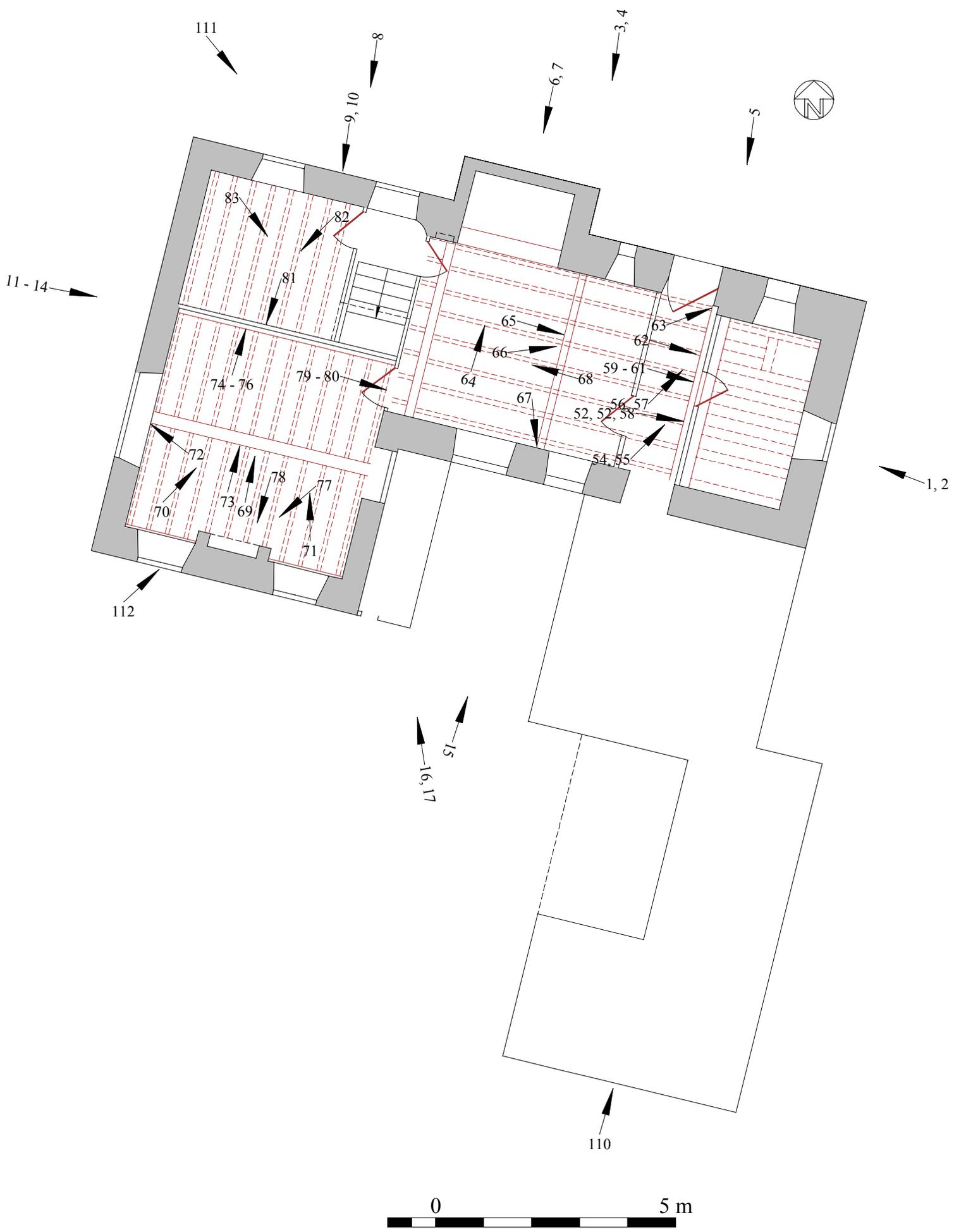
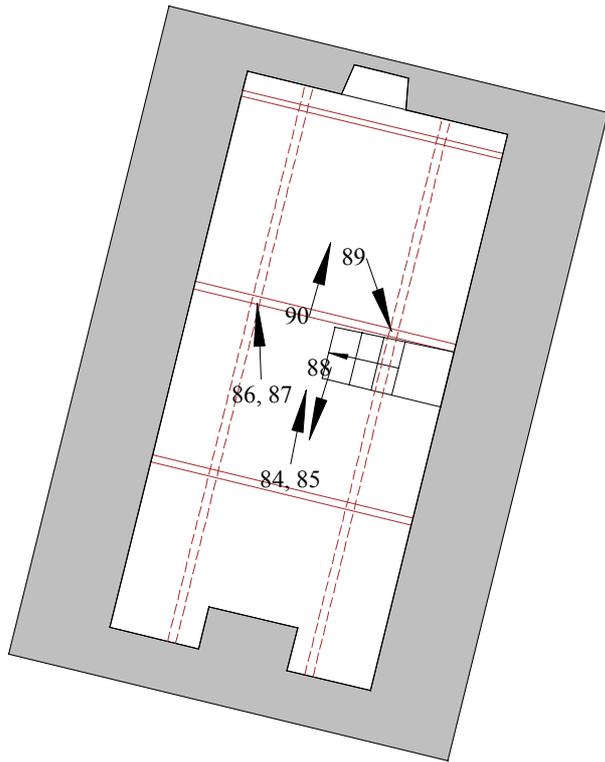
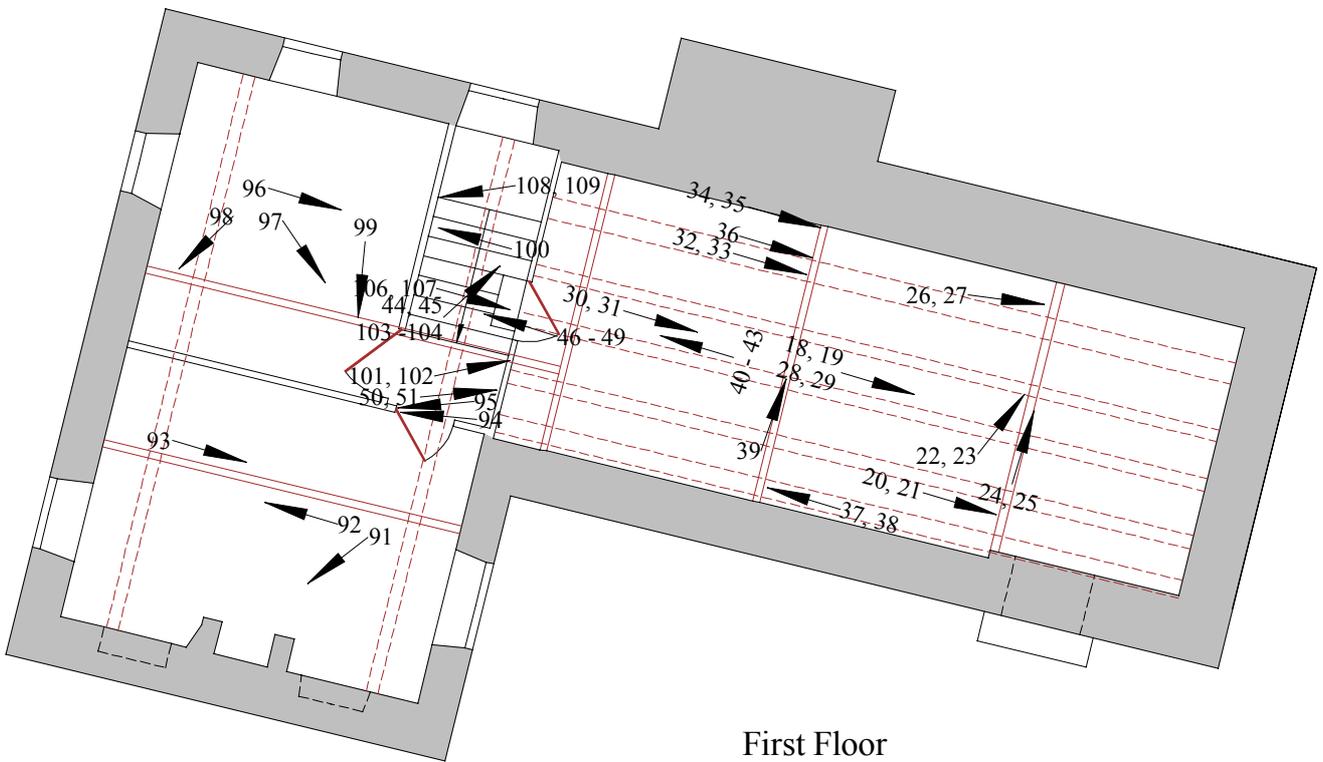


Figure 12: Location of the Photographs in the Archive  
Scale 1:100



Attic



First Floor

Figure 13: Location of the Photographs in the Archive  
Scale 1:100