

**Comisiwn Brenhinol Henebion Cymru**

**Royal Commission**

**on the**

**Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales**



**Tal-y-fedw, Llantrisant**

**County:** Glamorgan

**Community:** Llantrisant

**NGR:** ST04708533

**NPRN:** [20026](#)

**Date of Survey:** February 2014

**Surveyed by:** Ross Cook

**Report Author:** Ross Cook

**Illustrations:** Ross Cook

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Royal Commission Photograph of Tal-y-fedw.  
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## Tal-y-fedw, Llantrisant, Glamorgan

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### **Summary**

*One of the oldest dwellings in Llantrisant, the house of Tal-y-fedw is an early-mid-17<sup>th</sup> century direct-entry house with floored hall and later 17<sup>th</sup> century parlour unit addition, constructed on an earlier downhill stone base. Its development over a three hundred year period takes the house from a house of a yeoman of good standing to a 19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse, complete with barn complex behind.*

*As Tal-y-fedw is not listed the Royal Commission were invited to create a record of the building prior to its demolition in early 2014 as part of planning recommendations as set out by local planning committee that overturned an original refusal for demolition.*

*The following report provides a lasting record of the form, function and development of a Glamorgan farmhouse. Tal-y-fedw has been published twice before by the Royal Commission in *Houses of the Welsh Countryside* (1988) and in *Glamorgan Farmhouses & Cottages* (1988), with impending demolition works new access to the building has allowed for further structural analysis. With digital survey technology in the use of total station, an accurate plan and section may help to advance our understanding of this form of dwelling.*



## Historical Background

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The first reference to Tal-y-fedw comes in 1699 on the birth certificate of Zorobabel Thomas (d. 1802 aged 103), which states it as the place of his birth; ‘Talyfedw, Llantrisant, Glamorgan’. Although no reference for Tal-y-fedw can be found before this date, the Lordship of Glynrhondda records for ‘Lists Of Resiants And Freeholders and of persons fit to serve as petty constable’ (NLW: 1607 (M13/25), 1737-1817 (M13/26-152), 1826-54 (M13/199-214), name several Thomas’, by the names of Morgan and Evan, through the 17<sup>th</sup> century as residing in Castellau, a hamlet to the north of Llantrisant to which Tal-y-fedw. However, no dates or house names are provided, which leaves this link as tenuous. The Glamorgan Hearth Tax Assessments of 1670 note an Evan Thomas as being taxed for two hearths in Kastle (Castellau) (Parkinson 1994: 77), although no properties are named, the Thomas family have several generations that are named Evan Thomas, namely the son and grandson of Zorobabel, so may be of the same lineage. Into the 18<sup>th</sup> century Talyfedw is stated on the birth certificates of Evan Thomas (b. 1751 – d. 1811) and a family member (?niece) by the name Ann Sarah Thomas (b. 1778 – d. 1865), when the Thomas family are farming cattle and growing corn on land adjacent to Llantrisant Common. In 1810 ‘Evan Thomas of Talyfedw’ writes his last will and testament, where at under his ownership are ‘Worldly Goods personal Estate Hay Corn Cattle and Chattles’ (NLW: (WIAbNL)3650005) then later naming the estate as ‘Talyfedw farm’. Evan Thomas leaves the farm to his youngest son Benjamin Thomas, his only child living at Talyfedw, along with items that are assumed to be in Tal-y-fedw; ‘bequeath unto Benjamin Thomas my youngest Son one Bed and Bed Cloaths on Square Table Chest and Corner Cupboard, And Lastly all the Rest, Residue, and Remainder of my Goods, Effects Cattle and Chattles’ (ibid). From 1810 Tal-y-fedw farm appears to be in the hands of Benjamin Thomas, but by 1844 the farm is auctioned, with a John Jones being in residence at this point in time. The sales listing describes Tal-y-fedw as

### LOT 8

Comprises 113a.3r.27p of excellent Arable, Meadow, and Pasture Land, with Homestead attached, called “THE TALEVEDU FARM”, in the occupation of JOHN JONES, situated as above’

In the same year the family records of the Talbot[s] of Hensol Castle, record a lease to Philip Edmunds, a yeoman aged 55, as leasing ‘Land called Gwain Talevedu; Llantrisant’, it is unclear whether this includes the house of Tal-y-fedw or just land surrounding as John Jones may still be in residence. Through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, expansion at Tal-y-fedw farm adds a cow house, further pigstys, carthouse and a further barn, which continued in use through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These additions were undertaken by 1875, as shown by the Ordnance Survey 25 inch map (see Appendix A1). In the 1990’s Tal-y-fedw (house) was sold and the adjoining barn converted into a dwelling, with an additional barn to its rear being granted consent for conversion in 2008. In 2011 plans were submitted for a new house to be built at the entrance to Tal-y-fedw, with condition that the original house be demolished.



## Wales's earliest Mormons\*

Ann Sarah Thomas, the daughter of a Reese Thomas, marries an Evan Thomas in c. 1800, with whom she has four children, Margaret A. Thomas (b. 1809 – d. 1895), Sarah Thomas (b. 1810 – d. 1891), Daniel Zorobabel Thomas (b. 1819 – d. 1880) and Francis Thomas (b. 1821 – d. ?). The family move around Monmouthshire, presumed for economic reasons, before settling in Rhymney, where they met William Henshaw, who by this time had started to introduce the Restored Gospel of The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints. Evan Thomas is reportedly the first to be baptised by Henshaw in Rhymney, taking place on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1843, with his wife and children following soon after at the end of August and the start of September in the same year. By 1848 Evan had heeded a call and emigrated to the United States, where he had planned to earn enough money to send for his wife and family. Before the plan could come to fruition Evan became ill and died aged 71 in August 1849. It was another 7 years before Ann, Margaret and Daniel would make the crossing in 1856 on the S.S. Curling from Liverpool, and after their arrival in the US, they would make their way to Salt Lake City, Utah. In the same year they were sent to Centerville, Utah, where they met by Samuel Parish. Parish, already once a widower and remarried, was sealed to Margaret Thomas as a plural wife. Ann was included into Parish' household and on the same day as Margaret (20<sup>th</sup> March 1857), Ann was sealed to her husband of over 50 years in the Endowment House by Brigham Young. Later Parish would also be sealed to Ann's daughter Sarah and her four daughters. Ann died in Springville on July 6<sup>th</sup> 1865 at the age of 87, with her obituary being included in the Deseret News (12<sup>th</sup> October 1865)

### DIED

In Springville, July 26, ANN THOMAS,  
Wife of Evan Thomas, Talyfedw Plantrisant [sic]  
Parish, South Wales, Great Britain, age 87  
Years, 2 months and 26 days.  
She was of the family that first received the  
welsh Branch into their house, and proved  
Faithful as a mother in Israel.

*Anwyl Chwaer a mam yn Israel  
Gadd gan angau ei thori lawr  
I briddellau oer y dyffryn  
Yno i lechu enyd awr.  
Ond drwy ffydd mi welaf foreu  
Daw o rwymau'r angeu'n rhydd,  
Pryd adunir hi a'i phriod,  
I fwynhau tragwyddol ddydd.*

GWILYM DDU

*Dear Sister and mother in Israel  
She was by death cut down  
To the cold earths of the valley  
There to shelter awhile.  
But through faith I see a morning [= Day of Judgement]  
She will come free from the bonds of death,  
When she will be reunited with her husband,  
To enjoy eternal life.*

GWILYM DDU

\* Mr. R. Bitters family history research.

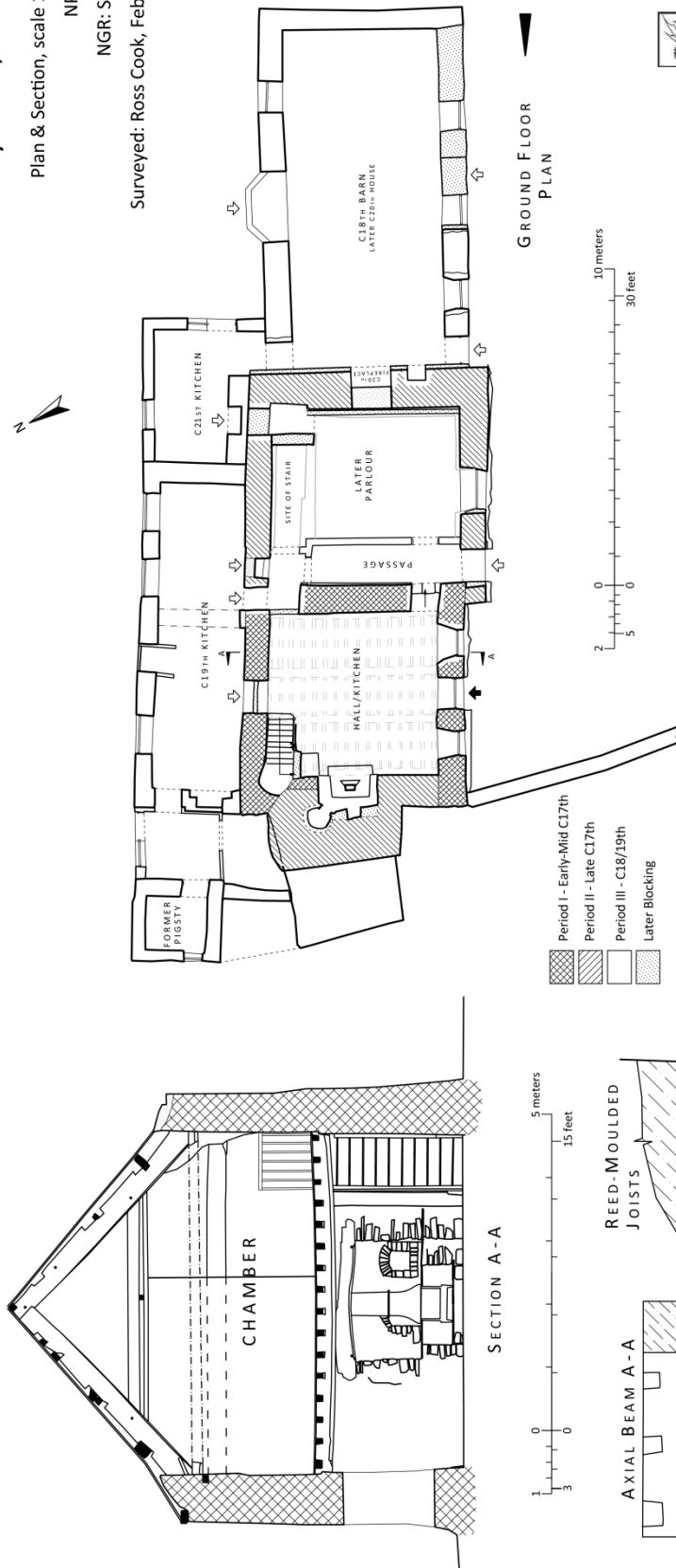
# Tal-y-fedw, Llantrisant

Plan & Section, scale 1:200 at A4

NPRN: 20026

NGR: ST04708533

Surveyed: Ross Cook, February 2014



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## Site Description

Tal-y-fedw sits on a small ridge of land between the northern edge of Llantrisant Common and the Nant Castellau, a tributary of the Nant Muchudd. Access is provided by a small track that leads from a single track road across the common, which is shown as an informal track or bridal way on an early Ordnance Survey map of 1811. The site and ground working of the site suggest a Tal-y-fedw is a later house on an earlier down-hill platform, with several consecutive phases of additions and alterations from a direct-entry house of an early-mid-17<sup>th</sup> century date to a 19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse with attached barn. Previously recorded as a gable-entry 'H' type house ([RCAHMW Glamorgan IV Part II](#) pp. 436), a recent survey and investigation has indicated that it has a lateral direct-entry entry.

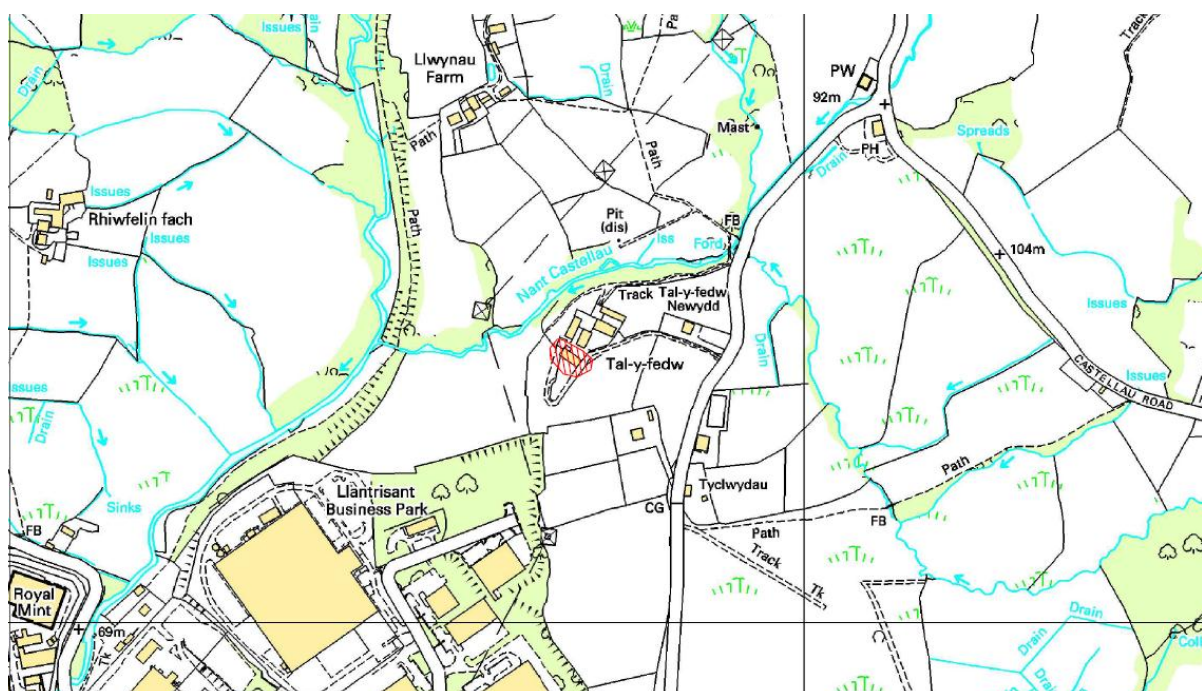


Figure 1 - Tal-y-fedw location. Ordnance Survey Mapping. Crown Copyright RCAHMW 2014. Licence Number: 100022206.

## Exterior

Tal-y-fedw (13.93 x 7.49m) is built on a downhill slope of neatly coursed limestone with a loose clay and lime mortar mix in its first two phases of construction, with finely built flat-arched window heads, which leads to the suggestion that Tal-y-fedw was not rendered when first built. The walls to both units of the house are battered and rise into shallow eaves with oak wall-plate visible from ground level, before continuing into a slated roof. The south façade has three windows at ground floor level (central being the original door), with one large window and a second smaller window to first floor; the later unit has a single doorway and window at ground floor and two gabled dormer windows at first floor. The western gable is home to the impressively large stone stack of the fireplace, measuring 2.88 x 4.2m, which has been reduced in height and capped. The rear of the building is made up of three gables to the 19<sup>th</sup> century kitchen additions and a small lean-to (former





pigsty), and has three windows to both ground and first floor and a single doorway to the lean-to. The barn (11.55 x 4.86m) extends eastwards from the east gable of Tal-y-fedw and is constructed of coursed limestone with lime mortar, and large patches of later concrete block repair work. The barn was converted during the 1990's to become a separate dwelling and as such, has very little evidence remaining of its former use. To the south façade it has three windows and a door to the ground floor and three gabled dormer windows at first floor. The rear of the barn has a small extension that laps onto the house, itself with a single gabled dormer window and catslide roof. The last elevation is the east gable of the barn, which has double doors to first floor level only.

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## Interior

The interior of Tal-y-fedw (house) is divided into three main units; the hall (5.17 x 5.17m), later parlour (5.55 x 5.98m) and C19th kitchen (9.64 x 2.77m). The hall unit has three windows at ground floor level and two at first floor, a single doorway from the passage and a corner stair to the first floor. The ceiling to the parlour is richly finished with chamfered beams, reed moulded joists and chambered into ogee stopped berssummer, all of oak (fig. 2). The large fireplace houses a bread oven and a later log burner. At first floor there is a single large room (chamber with measurement of 4.84m floor to apex) with two oak trusses and a large oak beam is inset into the gable. The parlour unit has been divided to create a passage into which you enter from through the front door and also grants access to the rear into the kitchen unit, the later parlour is entered from the hall by a single doorway off the hall and has one large window. To the far end of the passage from the front door is a small blocked window, formerly service a pantry. At first floor the parlour unit has two windows and is entered through a door from the aforementioned first floor. The kitchen unit can be entered from both the passage and an external entrance. Although not able to date to an exact period in time, at first floor level both units have a rippled white lime plaster/wash, which can be seen beneath the modern plaster and extends from floor level to gable apex; a probable date being within the second or third phase of construction as defined in the next section.



Figure 2 - Floored Hall; Tal-y-fedw  
DS2014\_112\_011 (Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)

The 18<sup>th</sup> century barn (10.85 x 4.86m) has been subdivided to create an office, living room, bathroom and hallway at ground floor and living room and two bedrooms at first floor.

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## Phasing and Interpretation

### Phase I

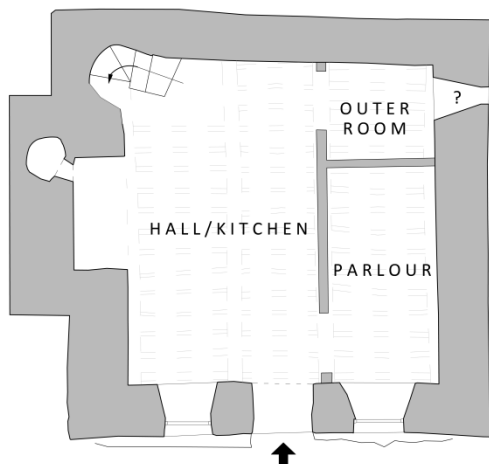


Figure 3 - Phase I Plan



Figure 4 - Front Elevation. DS2014\_285\_001  
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A single unit direct-entry house of the early-mid-17<sup>th</sup> century with floored hall and, although not evident, possibly a small parlour and outer room at ground floor, with chamber above. Chimney stair to the side of a stone stack, with stone treads still remaining under later wood staircase (fig. 2). Built on a rubble stone base running downhill, this suggests Tal-y-fedw is a rebuilding of an earlier house, with battered walls (flaring) suggesting the idea of strength (fig. 4). Tal-y-fedw compares nicely with the early 17<sup>th</sup> century direct-entry houses of Llwyn-y-brain-bach, Pen-tyrch (NPRN: [19233](#)) and Tŷ'r-eglwys, St. Mary Hill (NPRN: [18321](#)), and the late 17<sup>th</sup> century Ffynnon Deilo, Pendeulwyn (NPRN: [414306](#)) and Carpenters' Arms, Pen-marc. The hall ceiling (fig. 2 and 5) is comprised of four deep chamfered axial beams with stepped hollow stops and sixteen runs of reed-moulded joists (fig. 5), all of which support a mid-17<sup>th</sup> century construction date.



Figure 5 – Reed Moulded Joists to floored hall  
DS2014\_112\_014 (Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)



## Phase II

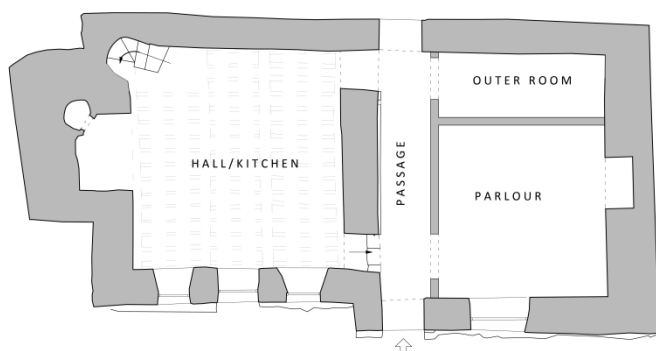


Figure 6 - Phase II Plan



Figure 7 - Front Elevation Phase I and II  
DS2014\_112\_009(Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)

Addition of a second deeper unit formed the later parlour and outer room with chamber above in the late-17<sup>th</sup>. The form and fabrication of all four roof trusses are the same; run-out chamfers, single peg at the apex, chamfered tie-beams and no collar (fig. 10, 11 and 12); suggesting that Tal-y-fedw was completely reroofed during this phase or phase II was added shortly after the original house had been completed. Peg holes and shadowing on the purlins (fig. 9) reveals what would have been a fine roof, of heavy construction. Jointing in the lower gable demonstrates alterations to the chimney and in conjunction with the shallow chamfer into ogee stop of the bressummer (fig. 8) helps to identify a late-17<sup>th</sup> century date ([RCAHMW Glamorgan IV Part II](#) pp. 147). It is probably that it was at this time the entrance was moved to its current location and a passage created, with doorways created through the gable to allow access between the two units. Comparable developments in date and form can be found in early 17<sup>th</sup> century single unit houses with late 17<sup>th</sup> parlour additions, such as those at Pentre, Llantrithyd (NPRN: ??) and Gellifendigaid, Llanwynno (NPRN: [18735](#)).



Figure 8 - Chamfer and Ogee stop to bressummer  
DS2014\_112\_013 (Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)



Figure 9 - Peg holes and shadowing for pegged rafters  
DS2014\_285\_020 (Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)



Figure 10 - Pegged apex to roof truss in chamber  
DS2014\_112\_024 (Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)

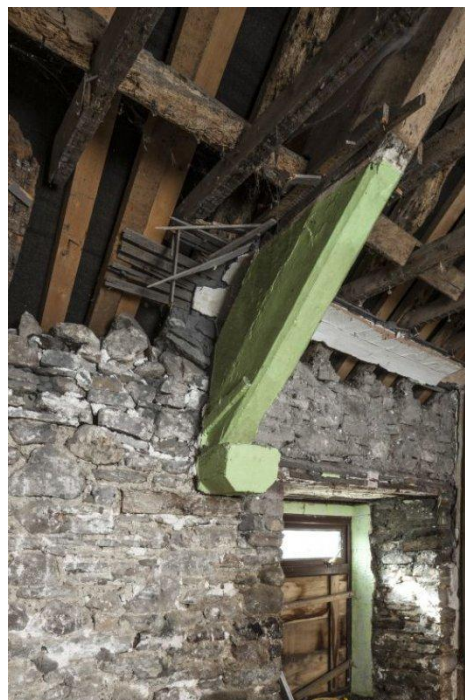


Figure 11 - Base of truss and cut tie beam showing chamfer.  
DS2014\_112\_022 (Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)

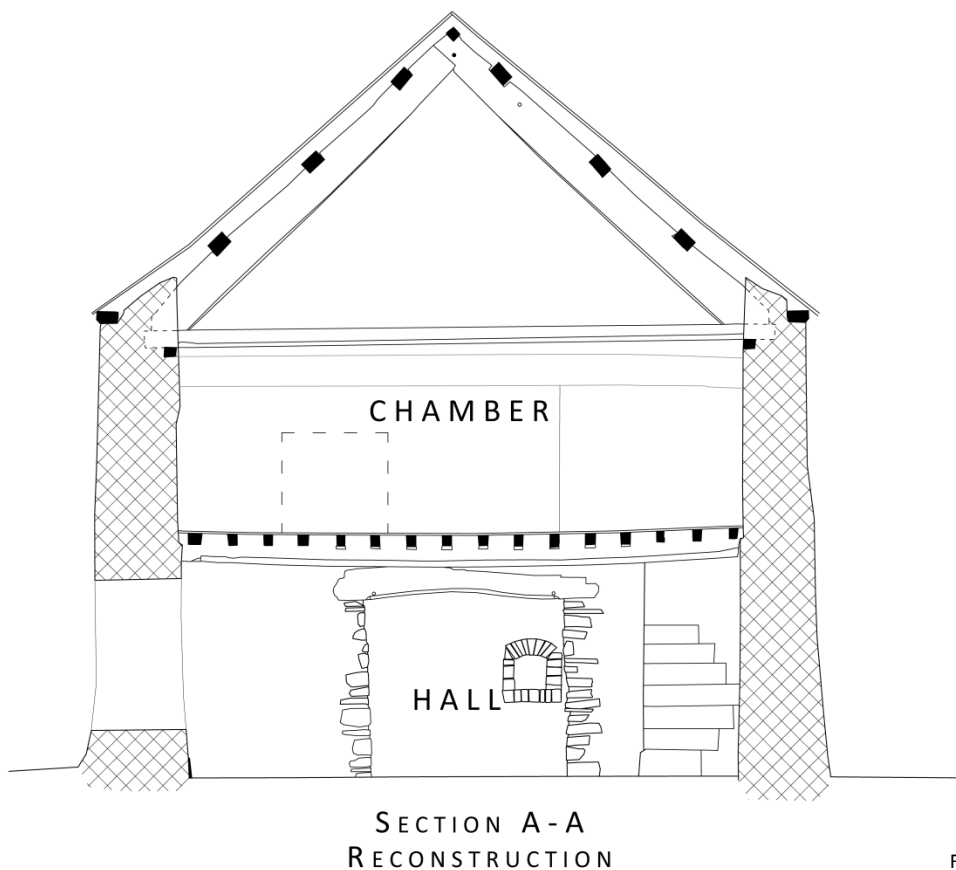


Figure 12  
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### Phase III

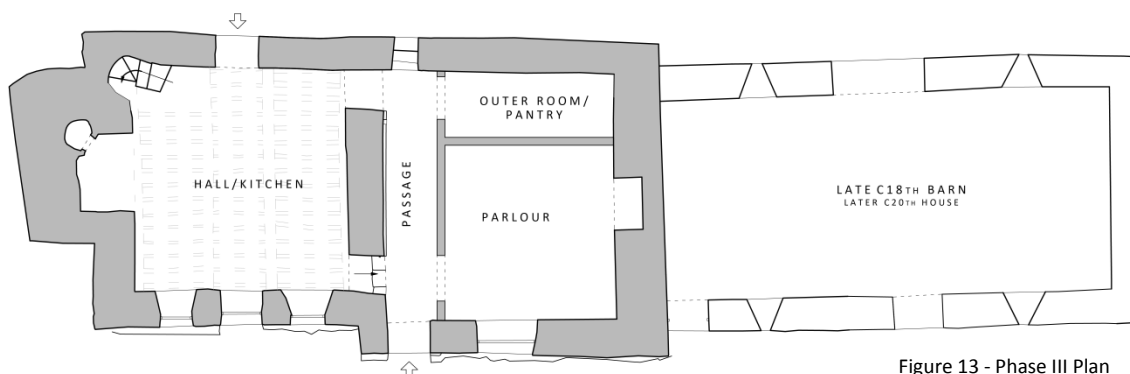


Figure 13 - Phase III Plan

Construction of the adjoined barn and addition of gabled dormer windows to later chamber during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. At this time it appears that the rear door to the passage was blocked in and a pantry created, evident from doorway blocking and creation of a small stepped window, with a new entry directly into the hall/kitchen.



Figure 14 - Full elevation of Tal-y-fedw and Barn DS2014 112 007 (Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)

### Phase IV

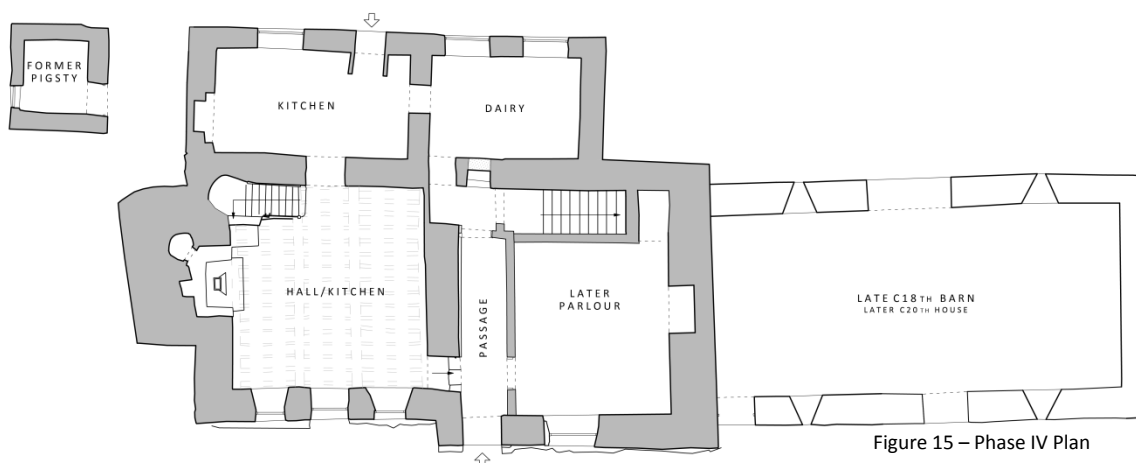


Figure 15 – Phase IV Plan

Most recent substantial additions to Tal-y-fedw come in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, made evident by jointing in the stonework. This includes the building of the dairy, pigsty (fig. 17) and later addition of the kitchen (fig. 16), all of which typify the development of rural farmhouses in this period. Initially the kitchen/dairy addition was single storey, which created a catslide roof from the main house (fig. 20). During this phase the house was altered to the current layout, with the removal of the pantry,



creation of rear doorways and the insertion of a straight flight stair in the later parlour to provide access to the chamber above. It is also likely that it was during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the fireplace was altered to a similar arrangement that remains today. Alterations to the first floor appear to be minimal during this phase, with the only clear change being the insertion of a ceiling, which comes with the addition of bolted collars to help support this.



Figure 16 - 19th century kitchen and dairy. N.B. wall stub to left of photo. DS2014\_285\_026  
(Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)



Figure 17 – Pigsty, now WC. DC2014\_285\_027  
(Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)

## Phase V – Modern works

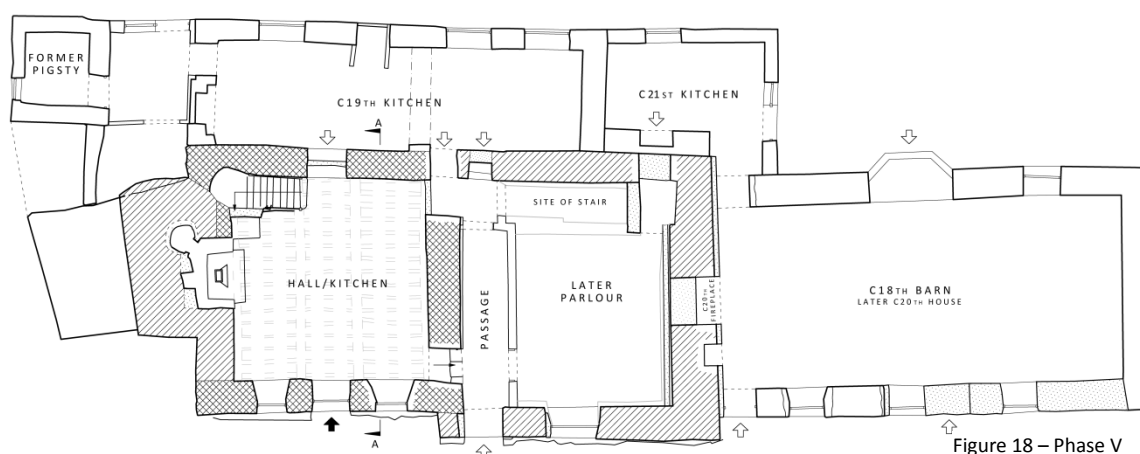


Figure 18 – Phase V

Modern work added a first floor to the kitchen, converted the barn into a house and added a further small kitchen extension (for use of barn conversion) (fig. 19). During development of the barn to a dwelling a fireplace was created in the gable, which tapped into an older chimney flue, rendering the earlier fireplace unusable. The dividing wall between the kitchen and dairy was removed to



create a single large kitchen area, with the entrance also being moved to the western end of the kitchen. By this point the pigsty was no longer in use and undergoes conversion into a WC, with the area between this and the kitchen being roofed and walled to create a cloak room, with boiler room attached.



Figure 19 – Rear elevation of Tal-y-fedw and barn.  
DS2014\_112\_001 (Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)



Figure 20 - Rear bedroom showing original line of catslide roof  
DS2014\_285\_025 (Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)

## ***Significance***

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Tal-y-fedw is a prime example of the development of a house of the yeomanry class of the 17<sup>th</sup> century into functional 19<sup>th</sup> century tennanted farm with associated buildings. The successive development seen at Tal-y-fedw provide an insight into the changing use of the house, with new additions simply being added onto the existing with little or no alteration to the earlier fabric. Its battered walls and richly moulded hall ceiling demonstrate both fine and rare examples of the craftsmanship of this period, alluding to the individual's social and economic standing at the time of its construction.

## ***Acknowledgements***

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With thanks to Peter Murphy for inviting the Commission to record Tal-y-fedw and allowing unimpeded access.

Iain Wright for undertaking a high quality photographic survey to record the building for the National Monuments Record.



## **Methodology**

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**Historic Building Record** – This comprised of an interior and exterior examination of Tal-y-fedw, with photographic, written and measured records being produced:

*Measured Survey* - A digital metric survey was undertaken by Ross Cook in February 2014 using a Leica TCR407 Power Total Station, TheoLT and AutoCAD. Digital survey data was captured at 1:1 in scale and saved in an AutoCAD DWG format.

*Drawn Record* - Plan and section were produced from the survey data using AutoCAD 2011, remaining at a scale of 1:1, but with recommended print scales of; Section 1:50 at A4; Plan 1:100 at A4. Both are saved in an AutoCAD DWG and DXF format for archiving, with .pdf being made available for Coflein. Photo interpretations were created using Adobe Illustrator CS3.

*Photographic Survey* – A photographic survey was completed by Iain Wright in February 2014, with further photographic recording by Ross Cook also in February 2014. Equipment comprises of a series of high resolution digital exterior and interior photographs taken using a Canon Eos 450D 12.2MP SLR. Photographs includes both general and detailed. All photographs have been submitted for archived with the RCAHMMW, detailing view, angle and photographer.

*Written Record* – The written record has been produced to accompany the Drawn Record and Photographic Survey, to interpret the data and provide an understanding of Tal-y-fedw through its phases and development.

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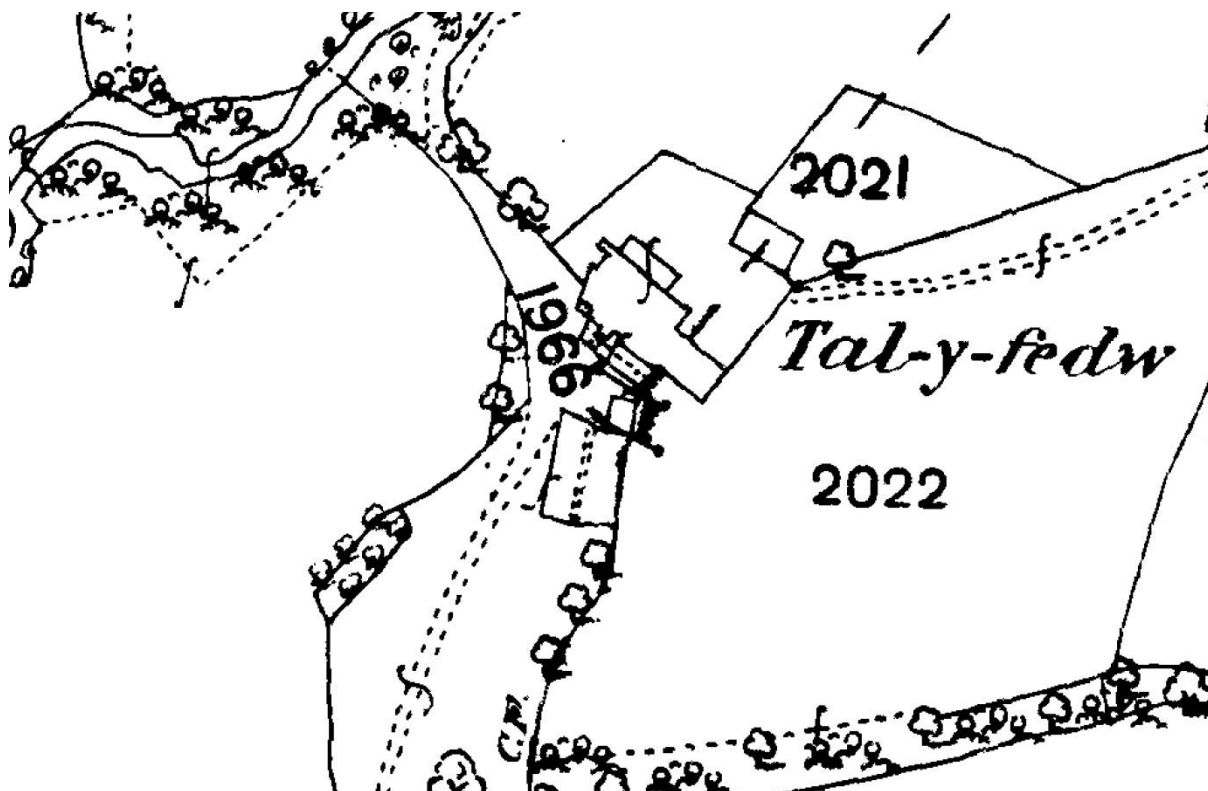
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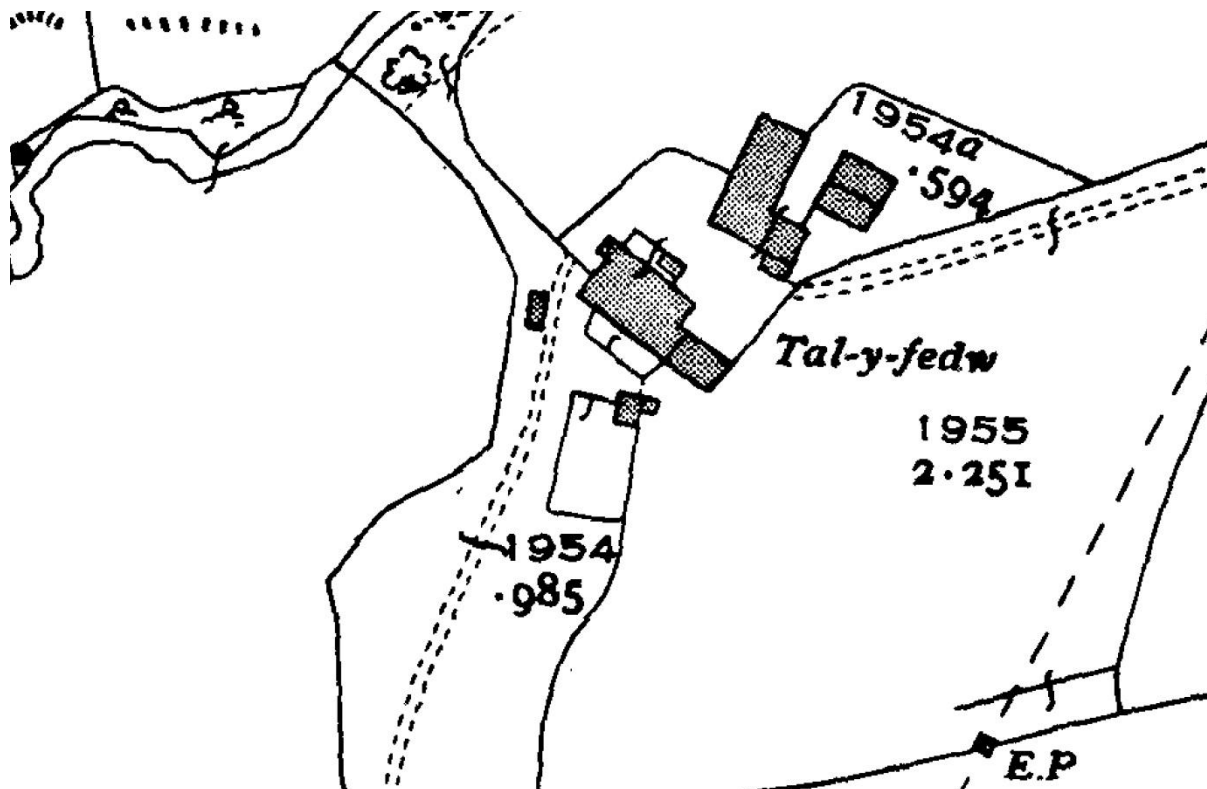
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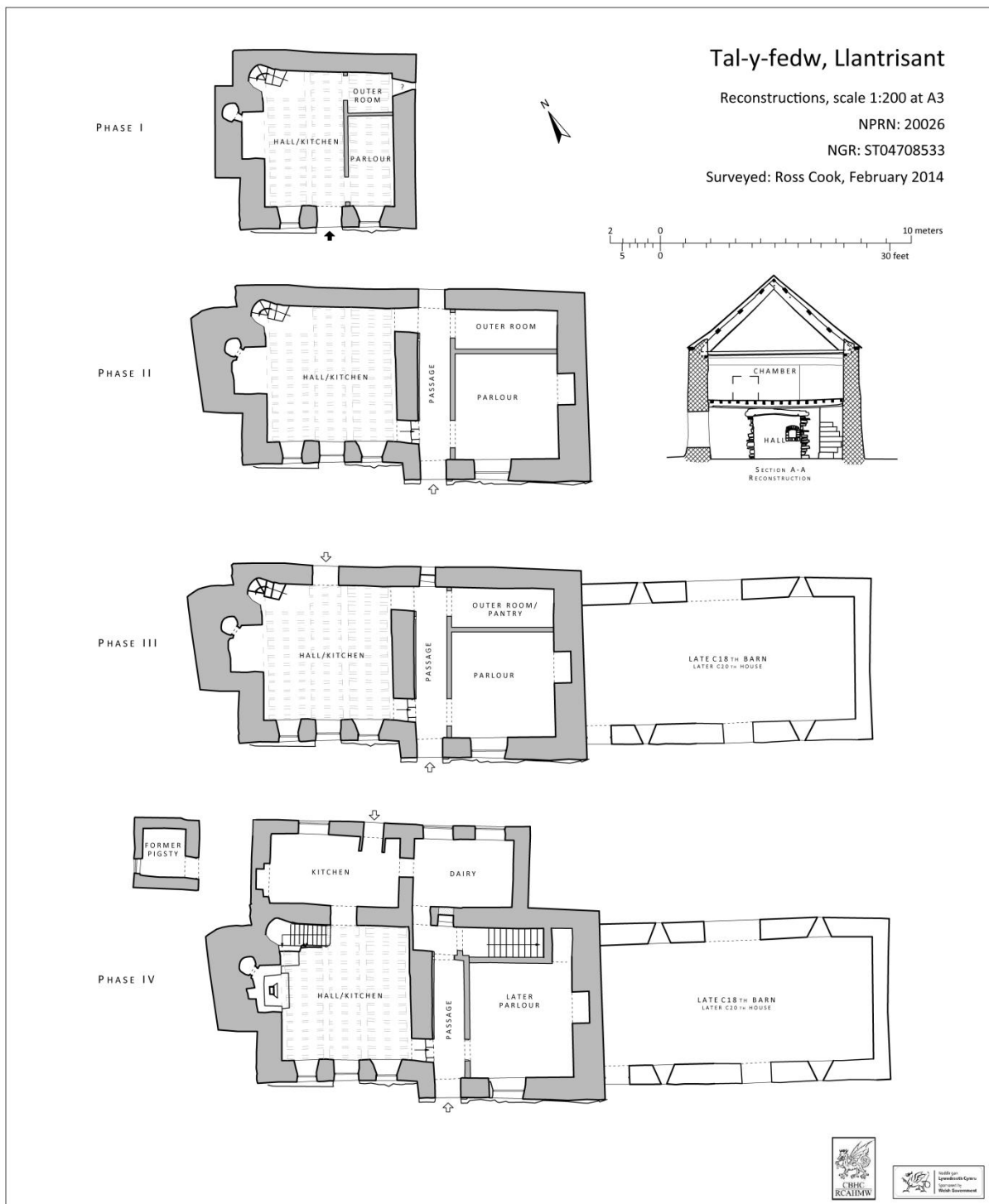
Appendix



A1 – Ordnance Survey 25 inch Map, 1875  
Licence Number: 100022206(Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)



A2 – Ordnance Survey 25 inch Map, 1940  
Licence Number: 100022206(Crown Copyright. All rights reserved)



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**A3 – Reconstructed plans and section of Tal-y-fedw  
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