

**MATHERN PALACE, CHEPSTOW,  
MONMOUTHSHIRE  
(ST 5228 1908)**

**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING**



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust  
For: Christopher Thomas Architects /  
Corus



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**MATHERN PALACE, CHEPSTOW,  
MONMOUTHSHIRE  
HISTORIC BUILDINGS RECORDING**

Gan / By

**JAMES MEEK**

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Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf  
Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo, Sir  
Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AF  
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121  
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131  
Ffacs: 01558 823133  
Ebost: [info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk](mailto:info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk)  
Gwefan: [www.archaeolegdyfed.org.uk](http://www.archaeolegdyfed.org.uk)

*Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited  
The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo,  
Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF  
Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121  
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131  
Fax: 01558 823133  
Email: [info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk](mailto:info@dyfedarchaeology.org.uk)  
Website: [www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk](http://www.dyfedarchaeology.org.uk)*

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## **MATHERN PALACE, CHEPSTOW, MONMOUTHSHIRE HISTORIC BUILDINGS RECORDING**

### **SUMMARY**

*An application for Listed Building consent was submitted to Monmouthshire County Council by Christopher Thomas Architects on behalf of Corus to undertake necessary fire safety measures following issue of an enforcement notice by South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (reference 2010/00459). Listed Building consent was granted, subject to conditions including one regarding the need for a programme of historic building recording to be implemented during the works. The proposals comprised a range of alterations and additions including the provision of new fire escapes and the lifting of internal floorboards in all first and second floor rooms to allow fire suppressant materials to be placed in sub-floor voids. Christopher Thomas Architects commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to undertake the historic building recording.*

*The work has demonstrated that there are four surviving main historic elements to the building, which include: The Northwest Wing; the Chapel Wing; the Central Section; and the Tower. Additional elements to the existing building include the Kitchens and Offices around the Chapel Wing, the Lounge and Dining Hall to the southwest, and the Chauffeur Wing to the north.*

*The Northwest Wing was evidently substantially renovated by Avray Tipping. The floors seem to have been entirely rebuilt at this time to create an exposed timber ceiling within the former 'oak parlour' designed by Tipping. Two stone corbels bearing carvings of the crests of the Diocese of Llandaff and the Tipping family were inserted during these renovations.*

*The Chapel Wing comprises the first floor Chapel that is thought to have been built during the early 16<sup>th</sup> century by Bishop Miles Salley. The floor contains reused fabric and some earlier floorboards. The doorway which was reopened as part of the fire safety works may formerly have been a window. The Central Section has a series of medieval beams and joists that formed an ornate decorated ceiling below.*

*The Tower comprises a three storey structure which contains a substantial amount of unaltered medieval fabric and visible architectural features, including stone mullioned windows, and intact floor frames at the second floor level. The remains of a garderobe chute were exposed on the second floor which dropped the entire height of the Tower. Beams in the ceiling of this floor indicate either a former third floor or an accessible roof area.*

*The layout of the building has been substantially altered over the year with additions of modern stud partition walls when the Palace was converted to guest accommodation, although layout alterations were also been carried out by Tipping in the 1890s.*

*The fire safety works have been successfully undertaken to cause minimal damage to the historic fabric of the building by Christopher Thomas Architects and the site contractors Midland Construction Ltd. Although the scope of the historic building work was limited, it has provided some interesting and significant information regarding the survival of historic fabric at Mathern Palace.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Background**

1.1.1 An application for Listed Building consent was submitted to Monmouthshire County Council by Christopher Thomas Architects on behalf of Corus to undertake necessary fire safety measures following issue of an enforcement notice by South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (reference 2010/00459). Listed Building consent was granted, subject to conditions including one regarding historic building recording, as placed on the consent by the archaeological advisors to the local planning authority, Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT). The condition stated:

*'No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the planning authority. Reason: To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource.'*

1.1.2 The condition was placed in order to ensure that any existing or exposed fabric affected by the necessary fire safety measures could be appropriately recorded. Any such information has the potential to inform understanding of the history and development of the building.

1.1.3 The proposals comprise a range of alterations and additions to the interior and exterior of the building, to improve fire safety. The measures requiring archaeological recording included the provision of new fire escapes and fire safety doors, involving some opening up of former blocked doorways and addition of fire surrounds and automatic closures to some internal doors.

1.1.4 The proposed fire safety measures also included the lifting of internal floorboards in all first and second floor rooms to allow fire suppressant materials to be placed in sub-floor voids.

1.1.5 The implementation of the proposed fire safety measures did not include any works requiring the disturbance of any sub-surface archaeological deposits or features.

1.1.6 Christopher Thomas Architects commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services (DAT-FS) to undertake the historic building recording, and the works were undertaken in September and October 2010.

1.1.7 An archaeological written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by DAT-FS and approved by GGAT in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the local planning authority prior to the historic building works commencing.

### **1.2 Site Location**

1.2.1 Mathern Palace is located at the southern end of the village of Mathern, some 2km to the southwest of Chepstow, Monmouthshire (NGR ST 5231 9080; Figure 1 and 2). It lies to the south of the M48 motorway and north of the Severn Estuary.

1.2.2 Mathern Palace is currently run as hospitality accommodation for Corus. It has a number of en-suite bedrooms with kitchens, dining hall, reception areas, lounges and gardens. It is a Grade I Listed Building. The gardens

are also listed on the register of parks and gardens. A number of ancillary buildings, garages and ruins are also present in the Palace grounds.

### **1.3 Scope of the Project**

1.3.1 The main scope for the historic building recording was:

- to fulfil the archaeological condition placed on the planning permission;
- to provide a record of the existing fabric of those parts of the building that are affected by the works, and to record any additional features that may be revealed during the work; and
- to produce a project archive and reports on the building recording;

### **1.4 Report Outline**

1.4.1 This report describes the location of the site along with its historical and archaeological background before summarising the results of the historic building recording and the conclusions based on those results.

### **1.5 Abbreviations**

1.5.1 Regional Historic Environment Record – HER; Primary Record Number – PRN; National Grid Reference – NGR; Scheduled Ancient Monument – SAM; Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust – GGAT; Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services – DAT-FS; Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI.

1.5.2 Due to the regular use of compass directions and locations the following are abbreviated: northeast – NE; southeast – SE; northwest – NW; southwest – SW; north-northeast – NNE; south-southeast – SSE; west-northwest – WNW etc.

### **1.6 Illustrations**

1.6.1 Record photographs are included throughout the text. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale and are illustrative only.

### **1.7 Acknowledgements**

1.7.1 The author would like to thank Christopher Thomas of Christopher Thomas Architects and Andrew Munro of Midland Conservation Ltd for their assistance and interest during the historic building recording project.



**Figure 1:** Location plan showing location of Mathern Palace, based on Ordnance Survey

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## 2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The following sources have been used to provide information regarding the historical background of Mathern Palace:
- Glamorgan Gwent Historic Environment Record;
  - Royal Commission on the Archaeological and Historic Monuments of Wales National Monuments Record (NMR);
  - Site visits; and
  - Other background material (various internet sources).
- 2.2 The historic building recording methodology followed that laid out in the WSI as approved by GGAT prior to the works commencing.
- 2.3 The building recording survey complied with the standards as defined in the *English Heritage Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good practice* 2006 publication. The work complied with the relevant standards and guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA).

### **Photographic Record**

- 2.4 A photographic record of the locations requiring archaeological intervention was made prior to commencement and during fire safety works. Photographs were not taken following completion of the fire safety works associated with the insertion of fire protection beneath the flooring by DAT-FS, although these have been taken by the on-site contractors Midland Conservation Ltd. Due to issues with the floorboards removed from the rooms it was necessary to replace them all with new floor boards (discussed further below), and it was not considered necessary to undertake a site visit purely to take high quality photographs of these replacement boards.

### **Scale Drawing Record**

- 2.5 The exposed floor plans of some rooms were hand drawn where historically significant fabric was revealed. Elevations were drawn of the locations of new doorways prior to them being opened up.

### **Written Record**

- 2.6 Written descriptions of the fabric of the building and features were carried out throughout the works.

### **Analysis of Results and Report Preparation**

- 2.8 All digital photographs have been indexed and manipulated into TIFF format. Photographs have been located on plans of the building. Hand drawings have been collated and digitised. Written descriptions have been collated.
- 2.14 This document provides a report on the results of the historic building works. It attempts to provide some chronological information regarding the development of the building, as can be ascertained from the works undertaken. Areas of original fabric or elements of other historically significant fabric are identified. Descriptions of significant features are included. The report is supported by relevant plans, photographs and illustrations.
- 2.15 All records will be collated into an archive using appropriate systems. The deposition of the archive is yet to be ascertained. It is likely that it will be with the National Monuments Record housed with the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monument for Wales in Aberystwyth. If this is so, then the archive will be prepared according to NMR guidelines.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Historical Background

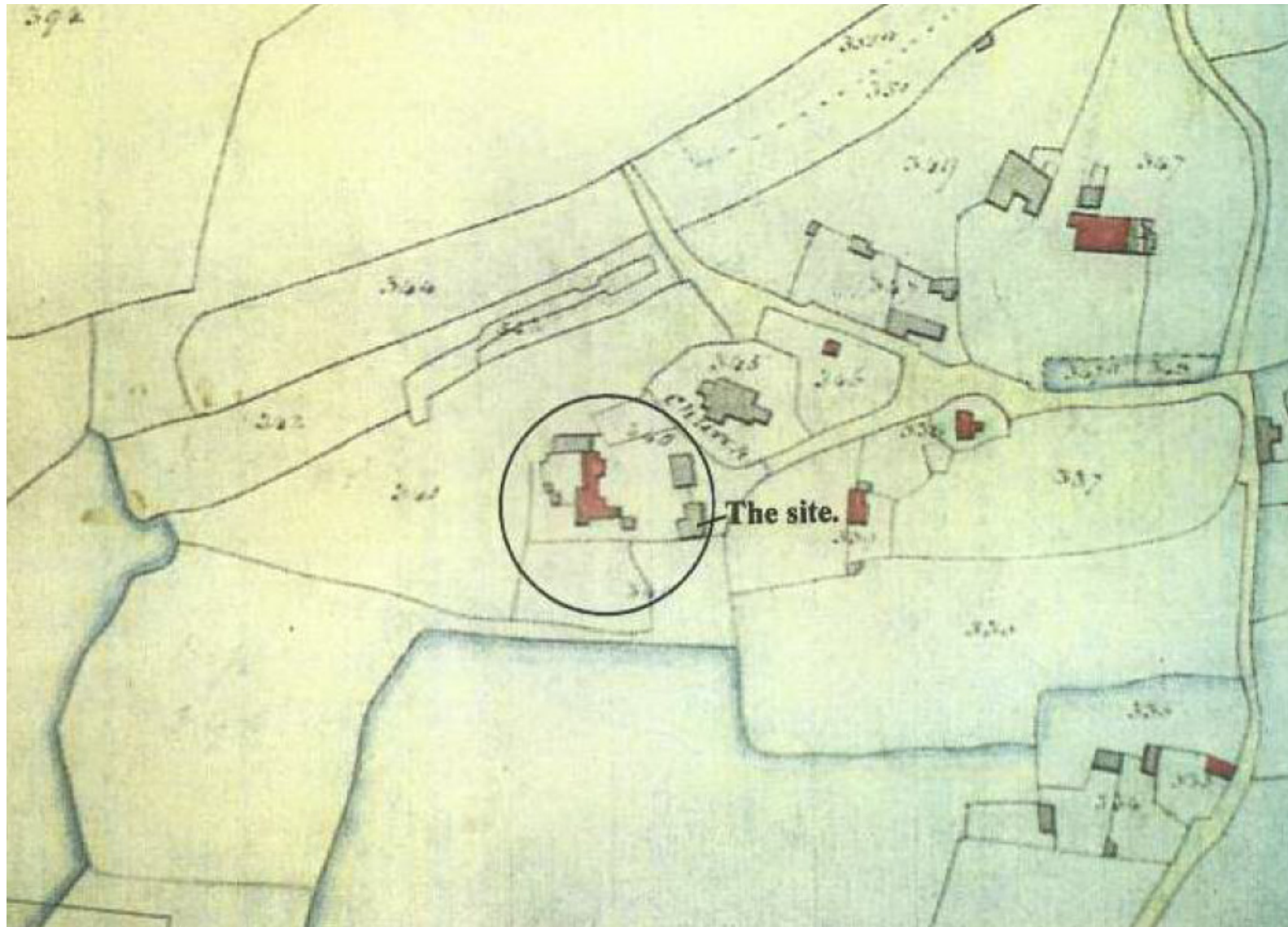
- 3.1.1 The following information comes from a range of sources, but relies heavily upon the historical assessment of Mathern Palace prepared by Christine Reynolds a former student at Newport University (and ex-Corus employee). The document can be found at:  
<http://www.newport.ac.uk/research/researchcentres/researchcentres/SWC/HIR/GCHA/Documents/Newsletter%20archive/Places/The%20Bishops%20Palace%20Mathern.pdf>.
- 3.1.2 From 1333 to 1705 Mathern Palace was the Episcopal manor and home to the Bishops of Llandaff, following the destruction and decay of their former residence in Llandaff during the Glyndwr uprising.
- 3.1.3 The place-name of Mathern is said to have derived from *Merthyr-Tewdrig*, or 'the burial place of Tewdric (King of Gwent and Glywysing)'. The name comes from the early medieval Welsh King Tewdric (or Tewdrig), who is said to have owned the land on which Mathern Palace and the adjacent church now stand. Following attacks into Wales by the Saxons, King Tewdric came out of retirement to resist the invaders. He had previously abdicated the throne in favour of his son Meurig ap Tewdrig to become a hermit. He was mortally wounded in battle at Ponytsaeson, and brought back to the site of a spring at Mathern where his wounds were cleansed. He later died and was buried near to the spring, now known as St Tewdrig's Well. King Tewdric was revered as a martyr and was sainted. King Meurig erected a church dedicated to his memory. The present church of St Tewdric is thought to be built on the same site. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century his burial place was reportedly found by Bishop Miles Salley and the remains were re-interred in front of the chancel of the present church. Following the death of Tewdric, 'grants of land and rights' were given to the Bishops of Llandaff by Meurig, and his grandson Brochmael in remembrance of Tewdric (Davies 1990, pp. 3-4). This series of events is contained in the Liber Landavensis, or Book of Llandaff, which was transcribed around 550 years 'after the events described in it' (Davies, 1990, p. 4), and thus the provenance of the references is uncertain. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century the place name had been shortened to *Mateyrn*, which translates roughly as 'place of a king' (Welsh meaning of *Ma* - Place) + *Teryn* - King (Osborne and Hobbs 1998, p. 66).
- 3.1.4 The Liber Landavensis contains further references to charters detailing land ownership, including one stating that 'Meurig gave King Tewdrics territorium to Bishop Euddogwy', although the place name of Mathern is not itself recorded, the described boundaries of the land would fit with those of Mathern (Davies 1982, pp 167-68).
- 3.1.5 It is unclear when the earliest buildings were constructed at Mathern. The historical assessment of the Palace by Reynolds provides a detailed account of the various references to building and rebuilding, highlighting contradictions in the various interpretations of the scant recorded evidence. Documents record that repairs were made to various 'dilapidations' at the 'Manor of Matherne' in 1382, which implies that a grand building was already in existence at Mathern at this time (Davies 1990, p18), although it cannot be definitively identified as Mathern Palace. The earliest parts of the existing Palace are said to have been constructed by Bishop John de La Zouche (1408 - 1423), although these may constitute a rebuild of earlier structures at the site. A number of arms and

date stones indicating the work of Bishop de La Zouche were formerly said to be present at the site, but were subsequently removed.

- 3.1.6 Other additions and alterations were made to the Palace during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, including possible works by de La Zouche's successor, John Marshall (1478 - 1496). Although there are no documented additions by him to the Palace, he is known to have added the tower of the church in 1483 (Davies 1990, pp 13-14). Bishop Miles Salley' (1500 - 1516) is said to have 'constructed a great part of the Palace, the chapel, the entrance hall, the refectory and its adjoining tower, and also the kitchen and its contiguous buildings' (Tipping 1929, p 32). It is also possible that he constructed the inner gatehouse range and chapel (Newman 2000, p.18). Tipping (1929, p33) states that Bishop Francis Godwin (1601-1617), was the last bishop to carry out any renovations and '...rebuilt what had probably been Zouche's kitchens, 'in the north wing'. Tipping also records that 'on a partition put up to divide the forty-foot space above the entrance hall [he] found under whitewash portions of a simple decorative scheme that had been frescoed on the plaster and had Godwin's arms'.
- 3.1.7 The Bishops of Llandaff followed the Anglican Church in Wales at the dissolution and Mathern Palace remained unaffected. Bishop Anthony Kitchin (1545 - 1563), a former Catholic Bishop, was in residence shortly after the dissolution and it is from this time that the Palace began to fall into debt and disrepair. An inventory of the Palace contents, which provides a thorough description of his meagre belongings, was prepared very shortly before his death in 1563. The document records the following rooms within the Palace (with the main document containing a description of all of the items therein), barn, parlour, high tower chamber, utter tower chamber, middle tower chamber, inner tower chamber, lower tower chamber over the parlour, my lord's chamber, my lord's study, chamber over the buttery, linen cloth, buttery, kitchen, larder, bakehouse and brewhouse (Inventory by Robert Cooke, Richard Pratt, Philip Lawrence and Watkin Lawrence of Mathern, 2 November 1563). A further document dated '24th June 1564', contains details of the Bishops estates, which indicates that the landholdings of the Palace had greatly reduced in size. It is unclear if Bishop Kitchin had sold off this land for his own gain, or to cope with the political and economic turmoil of that time.
- 3.1.8 The last Bishop of Llandaff to reside at the Palace was William Beaw. Following his death in 1707 Mathern Palace ceased to be an Episcopal Manor. The Palace fell into further decline and disrepair during the eighteenth century, and a number of visitors to the area are documented as remarking on its poor condition since its lease to a farmer and subsequent conversion into a farmhouse. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century a number of the Palace buildings were in such a bad state of repair that they had to be pulled down (Newman 2000, p. 384).
- 3.1.8 The Palace is still shown on the 1844 tithe map of Mathern, and The Bishop of Llandaff is still recorded as the owner, although occupied by a Mr James Jenkins Esquire. Ordnance Survey maps of the area from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries also show the Palace labelled as 'the remains of the Palace of the Bishops of Llandaff'. In the late nineteenth century, it was passed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners then sold in 1889 and again in 1894, to the historian, Mr H. Avray Tipping.
- 3.1.9 Tipping embarked on a programme of restoration of the buildings, which is well documented in a report to the British Archaeological Association (1910, p. 35). He states in the report that the finished building 'had to be a home such as a family could live' although 'there was no unnecessary

restoration of lost or ruined portions - needed changes were made to be unobtrusive as possible, and gardens, sympathetic to the picturesque old pile, were gradually developed around it'. The renovated Mathern Palace was vacated by Tipping in 1913, following which time it was used as temporary housing to Belgian and Flemish refugees.

- 3.1.10 In 1923, a Colonel and Mrs McNabb purchased the Palace, and they lived there until it was sold in 1957 to Richard, Thomas & Baldwins Limited (formerly British Steel Corporation, now Corus UK Limited). It has subsequently been used as a residential guesthouse and as such has undergone further episodes of decoration and refurbishment to modernise the interior.
- 3.1.11 The historical and architectural significance of Mathern Palace is recognised in its designation as a Grade I Listed Building.
- 3.1.12 Mathern Palace is recorded on the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record (GGAT HER) (PRN 01211g), describing it as 'Built by John de La Zouche, bishop of Llandaff from 1408-1423 and remains to a great extent unaltered in style. Additions are believed to have been made by John Marshall, bishop 1478-1496. In private hands after being partially dismantled between 1769-82. Chapel in southeast wing. Part of building which still stands contains many Tudor doorways and windows. In the west wing is an early 17th century type ovalo mullioned window, though other windows in this wing modern. Ruinous remains of another wing to southwest.'
- 3.1.14 It is also recorded by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) on the National Monuments Records (NPRN 36468). The summary description is as follows: '15th century stone tower, oriel windows. 16th century chapel. For 200 years main home of the Bishops of Llandaff. In 1890 home of Avray Tipping- first historian of country houses. A stone, two and three storey house, 15th c. and later, partly ruinous.'
- 3.1.13 The Gardens of Mathern Palace were designed by Tipping and are recorded on the Register of Parks and Gardens in Wales, in recognition of their historical significance (reference Gwent/1994/01Pm). They are also recorded on the GGAT HER (PRN 06110g), described as 'Garden designed by H Avray Tipping around medieval bishop's Palace. Well preserved structure and structural planting. They are also recorded by the RCAHMW (NPRN 266065), and described as follows: 'Mathern Palace is an Arts-and-Crafts garden designed by H. Avray Tipping around a medieval bishops' Palace. Well preserved structure and structural planting; immaculately maintained. An original walled kitchen garden survives, though without original glasshouses. This garden is depicted on the Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map of Monmouthshire XXXI, sheet 5 (1901). Its main elements on that map include rockery, pavilion, terrace walls, sunken garden, woodland, possible summerhouse, kitchen garden, pump, orchard, greenhouses and carriage drive. Gardens depicted on OS County series (Monmouth. XXXI.5 1881), including a series of ponds to the west and northwest.'



**Figure 2:** Extract of c.1844 Tithe Map showing Mathern Palace (taken from Christopher Thomas Architects Report)

## 4 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

### 4.1 Basic Layout

4.1.1 Floor plans of Mathern Palace have been prepared by Christopher Thomas Architects and these have been used, with permission, to illustrate the layout of the buildings (Figures 3 & 4). Room numbers assigned by the architects have been used for all room descriptions, with the tables below indicating the corresponding room names, where applicable, as currently assigned by Corus. For the basement and ground floor few fire safety works were proposed (or only minor works such as installation of smoke/heat detectors with no requirement for archaeological observation), and in general these rooms were not recorded although photographs were occasionally taken if access was possible or where they contained significant historic fabric relating to rooms above.

#### ***Basement***

<b>Room No.</b>	<b>Room name / description</b>	<b>Major Works required</b>	<b>Photo</b>
B001	Boiler Room in basement below sitting room 024 in S part	None	No
B002	Boiler Room in basement below King Meurig bedroom 007, bathroom 009 and chauffeur 034, with attached storeroom – of which external photo taken of window openings	None	No

#### ***Ground Floor***

<b>Room No.</b>	<b>Room name / description</b>	<b>Major Works required</b>	<b>Photo</b>
001	Bathroom for King Tewdric Bedroom (004)	None	No
002	Hall	None	No
003	Room	None	No
004	King Tewdric Bedroom	None	No
005	Hall	None	Yes
006	Snooker Room	None	Yes
007	King Meurig Bedroom	None	No
008	Lobby for King Meurig Bedroom (007)	None	No
009	Bathroom for King Meurig Bedroom (007)	None	No
010	Room 010, closet for King Meurig Bedroom (007)	None	No
011	Room, cupboard	None	No
012	Room in ground floor of tower	None	Yes
013	Room in ground floor of tower, with attached cupboard	None	Yes
014	Entrance Lobby in ground floor of tower, main entrance	None	Yes
015	Lounge with exposed decorated medieval beams	None	Yes
016	Hall with surviving stone framed doorway	None	Yes

017	Hall, with doorway	None	Yes
018	WC	None	No
019	Hall	None	No
020	Dining Hall	None	Yes
021	China Pantry (part of kitchen block)	None	Yes
022	Kitchen (part of kitchen block)	None	Yes
023	Kitchen (part of kitchen block)	None	No
024	Sitting Room	None	No
025	Drawing Room	None	No
026	Lobby	None	No
027	WC	None	No
028	WC	None	No
029	Hall	None	No
030	Larder	None	No
031	Hall	None	No
032	Hall	None	No
033	Office (with a number of stores, courtyard and garage to SE)	None	No
034	Chauffeur	None	No
035	Room on NE side of main entrance in base of tower	None	Yes
036	Spiral stone stairway in tower (below 123 and 206)	None	Yes

### ***First Floor***

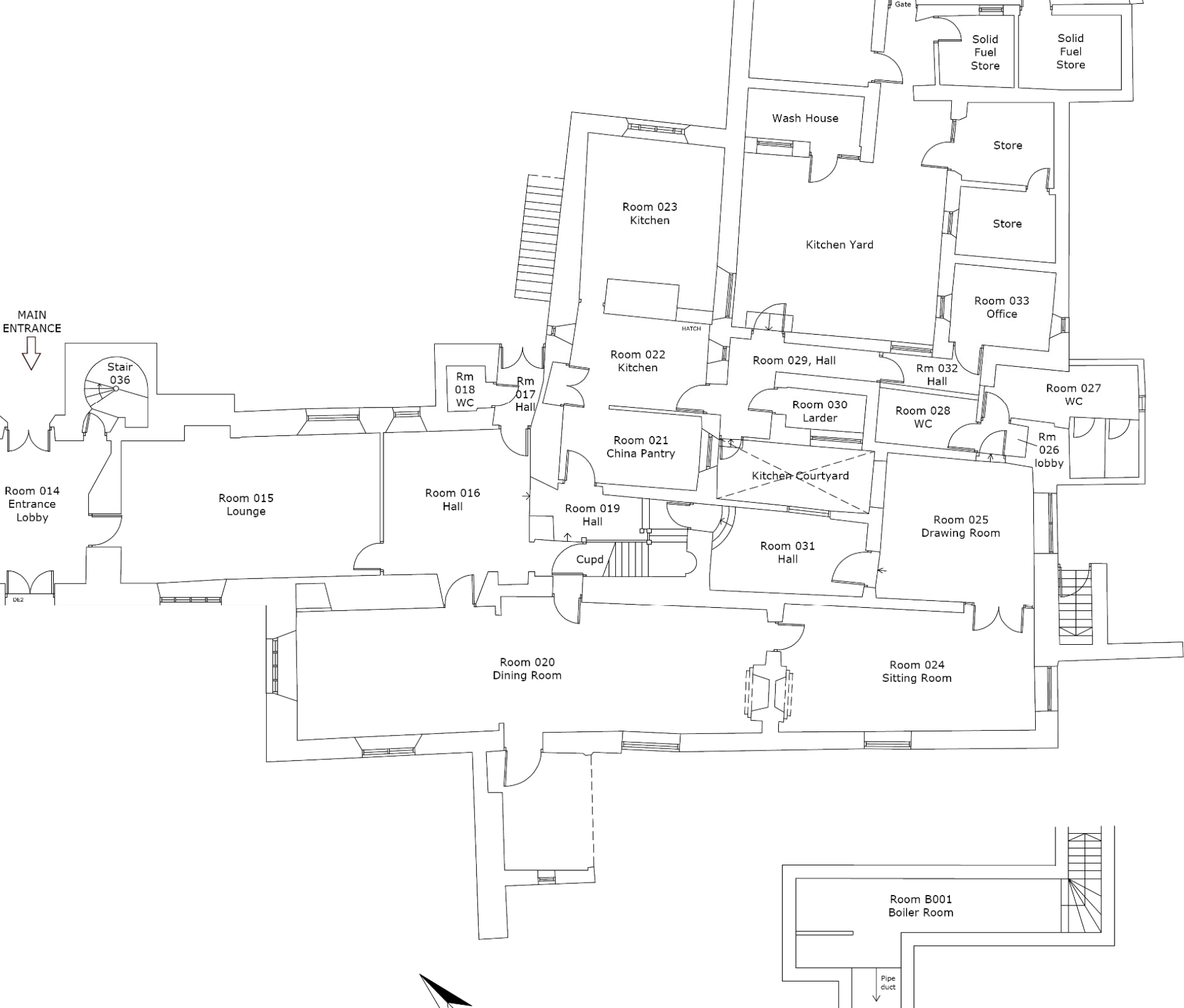
<b>Room No.</b>	<b>Room name / description</b>	<b>Major Works required</b>	<b>Photo</b>
101	The Gazebo Lounge	Floor	Yes
102	Corridor	Floor	Yes
103	William Burgess Bedroom	Floor	Yes
104	Bathroom for William Burgess Bedroom 103	Floor	Yes
105	Avray Tipping Bedroom	Floor	Yes
106	Lobby for Avray Tipping Bedroom 105	Floor	Yes
107	Bathroom for Avray Tipping Bedroom 105	Floor	Yes
108	Stair	Floor	Yes
109	Bishop de La Zouche Bedroom in first floor of tower	Floor, ceiling, doorway	Yes
110	Store attached to Bishop de La Zouche Bedroom 109	Floor	Yes
111	Bishop de La Zouche Lounge	Floor	Yes
112	Bathroom for Bishop de La Zouche suite	Floor	Yes

113	Corridor, aligned NW to SE with NE extension leading to stairway 123	Floor	Yes
114	Bishop Miles Salley Bedroom	Floor	Yes
115	Bathroom for Bishop Miles Salley Bedroom 114	Floor	Yes
116	Bishop Miles Godwin Bedroom	Floor	Yes
117	Shower room for Bishop Miles Godwin Bedroom 116	Floor	Yes
118	Stair	Floor	No
119	Corridor	Floor	Yes
120	Bathroom for Chapel Bedroom 122	Floor	Yes
121	The Chapel Lounge	Floor, doorway	Yes
122	The Chapel Bedroom	Floor	Yes
123	Spiral stone stairway in tower (over 036, below 206)	None	Yes

***Second Floor (in tower)***

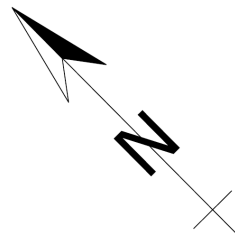
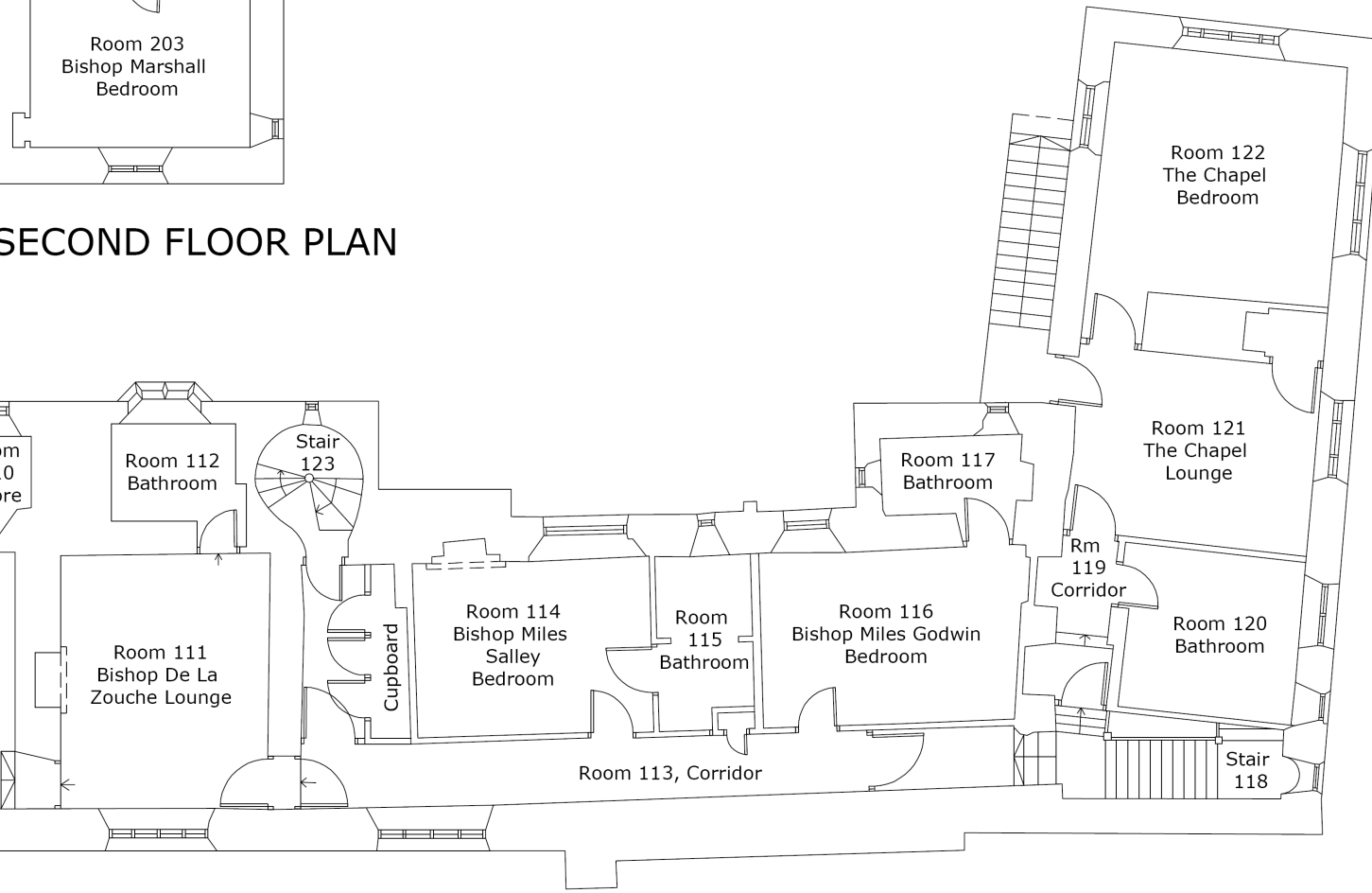
<b>Room No.</b>	<b>Room name / description</b>	<b>Major Works required</b>	<b>Photo</b>
201	Bishop Morgan Bedroom	Floor	Yes
202	Bathroom for Bishop Morgan Bedroom 201	Floor	Yes
203	Bishop Marshall Bedroom	Floor	Yes
204	Bathroom for Bishop Marshall Bedroom 203	Floor	Yes
205	Corridor	Floor, partial wall replaster	Yes
206	Spiral stone stairway in tower (over 123 and 136)	None	Yes





Room 203  
Bishop Marshall  
Bedroom

## SECOND FLOOR PLAN



0 1 5 10m

- 4.1.2 The basic layout containing the earliest elements of Mathern Palace comprises a two-storey Northwest wing aligned SW to NE attached to the three-storey Tower, which contains the main entrance. To the SE of the tower is a further two-storey block, the Central Section, aligned NW to SE, with the two-storey Chapel Wing aligned SW to NE at its southern end. The four basic earlier historic elements are shown on Figure 5.
- 4.1.3 The ground floor layout contains the many additions made by Avray Tipping and later developments including the single storey kitchen, stores and offices added around a courtyard on the SE side of the kitchens below the Chapel suite.
- 4.1.4 The Dining Hall 020, Sitting Room 024, Hall 031 and Drawing Room 025 on the SW side of the chapel are also later additions possibly comprising ruined fabric from the earlier Palace.
- 4.1.5 The small extension on the northern end of the Palace comprising Lobby 008, Bathroom 009 and Chauffeur Room 034 and basement beneath, have been significantly altered in more recent times but may well comprise earlier fabric.
- 4.1.6 Ruins of other early elements of the Palace survive in the gardens.



Photo 1: Main NE elevation of Mathern Palace from SE



**Figure 5:** Main Elements of Mathern Palace as discussed in text

#### **4.2 Northwest Wing – External** (Photos 2 & 3; Figure 5)

- 4.2.1 The wing is of two storeys, although the roof line drops considerably for the Gazebo Lounge area at its SW end, with the ground floor rooms at a slightly lower level with lower ceilings. The North-west wing comprises the Snooker Room 006, Hall 005, King Tewdric Bedroom 004 and Rooms 003, 002 and 001 at ground floor level; with the Gazebo Lounge 101, Corridor 102, William Burgess Bedroom 103, Bathroom 104, Avray Tipping Bedroom 105, Lobby 106 and Bathroom 107.



Photo 2: Mathern Palace NW elevation of NW wing showing the Gazebo Lounge to right



Photo 3: SW elevation of NW wing

#### **4.3 The Tower** (Photos 4, 5 & 6; Figure 5)

- 4.3.1 The tower is of three storeys and comprises the main entrance into the building as it is today. This entrance utilises a former cart entrance that runs through the base of the tower, with large doorways on either side.
- 4.3.2 The rooms are accessed from a spiral stone stair leading from the main entrance hallway. The stair-well projects above the second floor and suggests that the tower originally had another floor that has since been removed (this projection is also shown on earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century prints of the Palace).
- 4.3.3 The Tower comprises Entrance Lobby 014, Rooms 013 and 014, Room 035 and stair 036 at ground floor; Bedroom 109, Store 110, Bishop de La Zouche Bedroom 111, Bathroom 112 and stair 123 at first floor; and Bishop Morgan Bedroom 201, Bathroom 202, Bishop Marshall Bedroom 203, Bathroom 204, Corridor 205 and stair 206 at second floor level.



Photo 4: NE facade of the three-storey Tower from east

- 4.3.3 The tower projects from the facade of the Palace in its south-eastern part before recessing back again on its northern side before connecting with the northern wing (Photo 5).



Photo 5: NE facade of the three-storey Tower from the north



Photo 6: SW facade of three storey Tower from SW

#### **4.4 Central Section** (Photos 7 & 8; Figure 5)

- 4.4.1 The central section comprises those rooms to the southeast of the Tower. The northeastern facade is quite easily visible, being only slightly obscured by part of the stair for the tower. The southwestern facade is partially obscured by the probably later addition of the Dining Hall 020.



4.4.2 The Central Section comprises Lounge 015, Hall 016 and WC 018 at ground floor; with a series of cupboards at its northern end, Corridor 113, Bishop Miles Salley Bedroom 114, Bathroom 115, Bishop Miles Godwin Bedroom 116 and Bathroom 117 at first floor.



Photo 7: NE facade of central section from NE



Photo 8: SW facade of central section of building from west, showing Lounge addition on right hand side of photo

**4.5 The Chapel Wing** (Photos 9 & 10; Figure 5)

- 4.5.1 The southeast wing comprises the part of the building known as the Chapel. It is clearly visible from the north and east, but is obscured by the later additions of kitchens and offices etc that were added by Tipping.
- 4.5.2 The Chapel Wing (excluding the later kitchen extensions etc) comprises China Pantry 021, and Kitchens 022 and 023 at ground floor; with Bathroom 120, The Chapel Lounge 121 and the Chapel Bedroom 122. The doorway at the top of the stairs visible in photo 9 was reopened as part of the fire safety works.



Photo 9: NE facade of SE wing (with Central Section on right hand side of photograph)



Photo 10: SE facade of SE wing showing original mullioned windows of chapel

## **5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION OF DOORWAY REOPENING**

### **5.1 Doorway D130 from Chapel Lounge Room 121 (Figure 6)**

- 5.1.1 This opening is located on the first floor of the SE wing containing the Chapel. Prior to the current alterations, this was a window opening containing a wooden casement window (Photos 11 & 12), but before that it had been a doorway giving access to and from the flight of stone steps built against the exterior of the wing. As part of the fire safety alterations, the existing window and blocking stonework was removed in order to convert the opening back into a doorway for use as a fire escape.



Photo 11: Window opening and blocked doorway before commencement of works

- 5.1.2 Also in the same elevation (Photo 11) is another window to the SE with stone mullions. This also appears to be a later modification to a larger (now blocked) opening, as evidenced by straight joints in the stone work below the window. It is most likely that the easternmost opening would have been a tall window providing light into the chapel itself (on the inside of the wall a recess suggests it started at floor level). Possibly Doorway D130 may have also originally been a tall window for the chapel area. The stairs are likely to be a later addition.



Photo 12: Detail of blocked doorway before opening



Photo 13: Detail of doorway during reopening, showing exposed remains of former timber doorframe and tar paper

- 5.1.3 Removal of the stone blocking beneath the window revealed that it was a thin 'veneer' of exterior facing stonework, separated from internal brickwork by a layer of tar paper (Photo 13). Internally, the single stone thick blocking formed the back of a cupboard in the recess below the window. Prior to the insertion of the window, the opening had contained a wooden door-frame (Photo 13). The bottom half of this was partially removed when the blocking stonework was constructed. The upper half of the door-frame was, however, left *in situ* to hold the window frame.
- 5.1.4 Although the south (right hand) side of the original opening was clearly defined by well dressed stonework, on the left side, only a few such stones survived, adjacent to the window. Below these, the stonework suggested two possible phases of rebuilding or alteration prior to the insertion of the window (Figure 6).

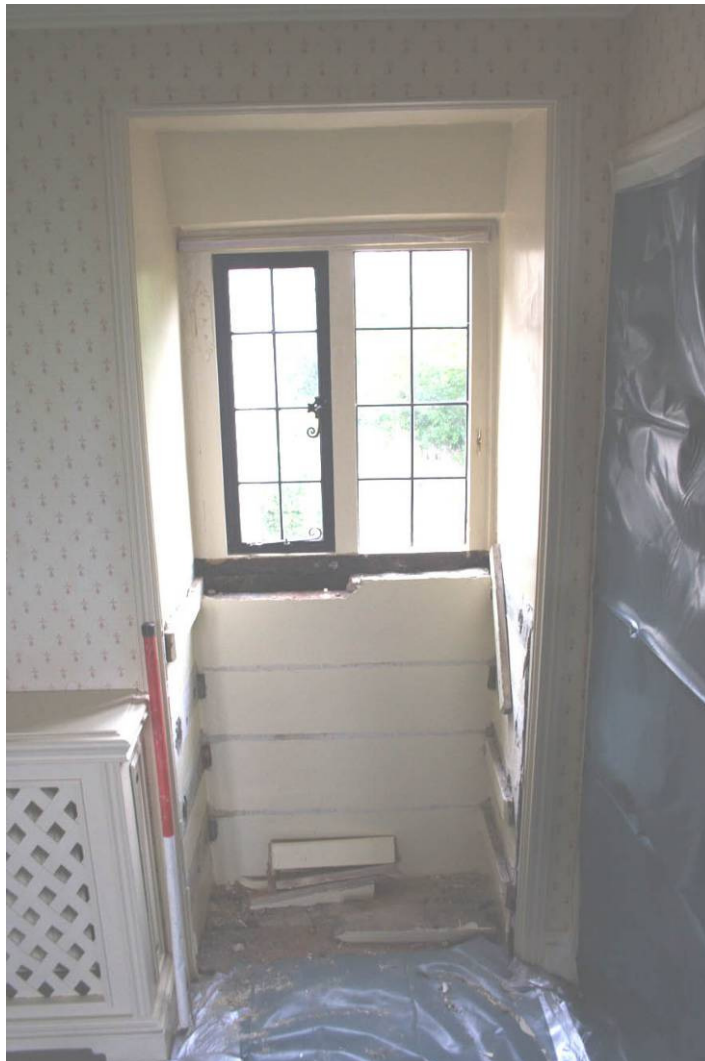


Photo 14: Interior, showing blocked door recess with removed cupboard



**Figure 6:** Doorway D130 prior to unblocking

## **5.2 Doorway D005 from Room 003 (Figure 7)**

- 5.2.1 This opening was on the west side of the building (Photo 15), and would provide a fire escape access to Room 003, and the other rooms on the ground floor of the northwest wing. This part of the building appears to be a later addition to the Palace, lying directly below the Gazebo Lounge, although may have been a rebuild of a former element of the building. More recently the doorway was blocked and converted to a window.
- 5.2.2 The door surround and portico are made of well dressed Bath stone. On removal of the modern blocking stonework and the heavy oak window frame, the sides of the door jambs were revealed (Photos 16 & 18). Evidence of a variety of round and square holes cut into the dressed stone suggests that the doorway may have been moved from elsewhere, possibly reused from earlier elements of the Palace. Areas of missing dressed stone have been in-filled with brickwork.
- 5.2.3 A variety of marks were carved into the stones. Some of these are probably masons marks, or marks made to facilitate construction of the doorway added by the stone mason. There was also a variety of graffiti visible, some more legible than others, but generally consisting of initials (Photo 17), with one full name: Anthony Charles (?dale?).





Photo 15: Doorway D005 prior to unblocking



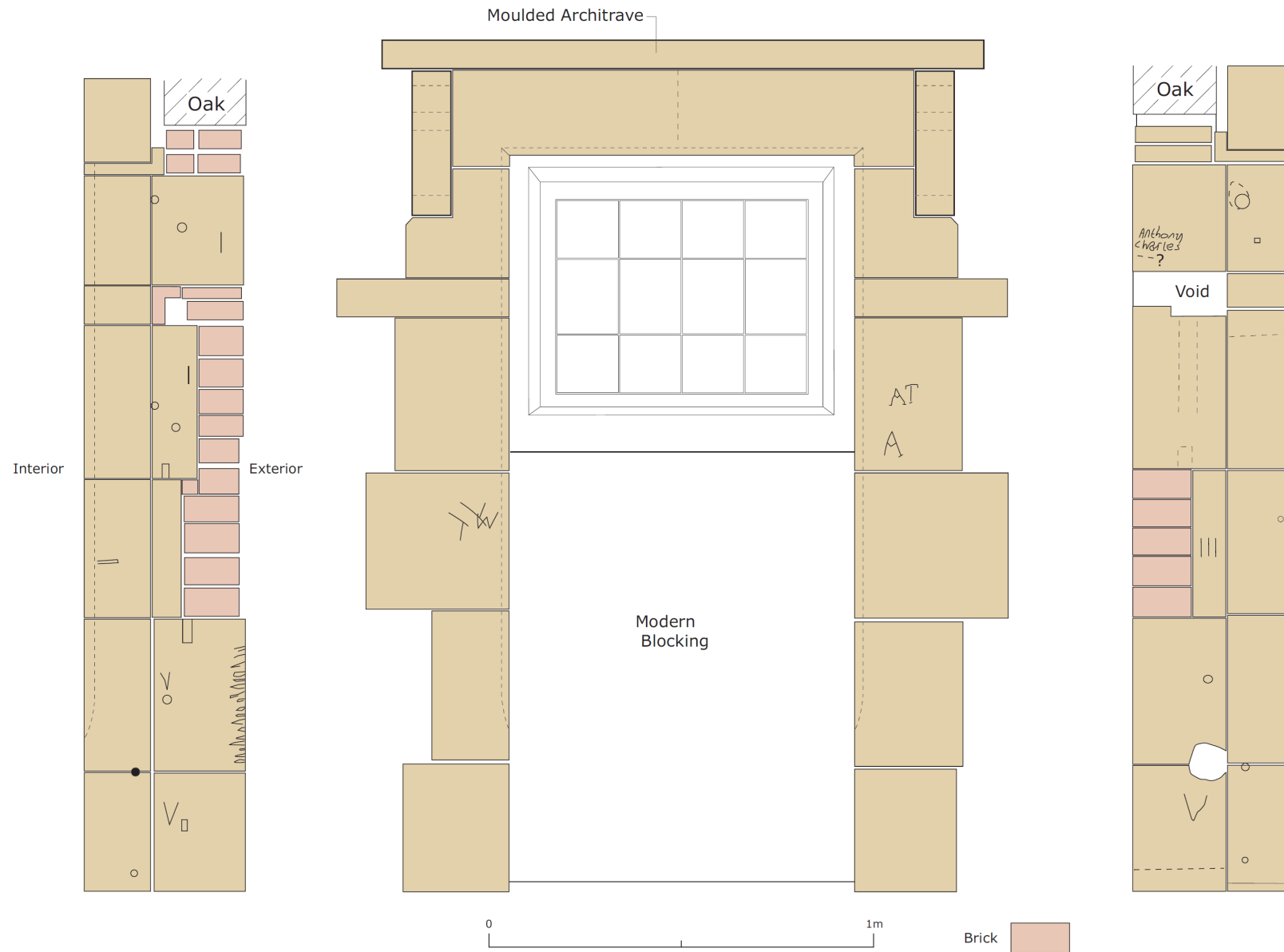
Photo 16: Left side of the internal door frame



Photo 17: Graffiti on right hand side of doorway



Photo 18: Right side of the internal door frame



**Figure 7:** Doorway D005 showing exterior prior to removal and insides of door frame

**6. NORTHWEST WING** (Figures 3, 4, 5 & 8)

**6.1 The Gazebo Lounge – Room 101**

- 6.1.1 The Gazebo Lounge would appear to be either a more recent addition to the Palace or a substantially rebuilt element, which would have occurred during the renovation undertaken by Tipping at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 6.1.2 The flooring is supported on a series of joists (200mm x 50mm) which were secured at either end into the rebuilt stone walls. Three smaller wooden beams were present at either side and through the centre of the room onto which the joists also sat, and to which boarding had been attached for the ceilings in the rooms below.
- 6.1.3 As with all of the rooms, a series of modern cables and pipes had been laid below the floorboards which had included areas of removal of the supporting beams and joists.
- 6.1.4 The floor level of the Gazebo Lounge is significantly lower than that of the adjacent rooms and corridor



Photo 19: The Gazebo Lounge 101, floorboards prior to removal



Photo 20: The Gazebo Lounge 101, following removal of floorboards



Photo 21: The Gazebo Lounge 101, visible stone walling with joists secured within on southern side of room

## **6.2 Corridor – Room 102**

- 6.2.1 Corridor 102 contained floorboards (photo 22) overlying a flooring of earlier wooden slats which were used as the ceiling for the rooms below within this wing (Rooms 004, 005 and 006; photo 23). The same slats are present in Rooms 103, 104 and 105. The underside of the slats had been varnished or stained the same colour as the exposed joists and beams below. They are likely to be an addition by Tipping in the 1890s. The floorboards that were removed measured 165 – 170mm x 18mm.
- 6.2.2 The upper side of the slats were not stained or varnished and would not have been exposed as the floor. The slats, measuring roughly 8mm x 105mm, are insubstantial and would not have formed a strong enough floor surface.
- 6.2.3 Joists had been laid above these wooden slats, and tongue and groove floorboards laid on top of these. These upper joists were insubstantial, using the strength of the wider joists and beams below.
- 6.2.4 The underlying joists measured 110mm x 130mm and were aligned northeast to southwest. The beams were mostly covered by the slats, but a few were visible through holes that had previously been cut through the floor for cabling and pipe-work. A modern plasterboard ceiling had been attached to the underside of the joists. The underlying beams were aligned perpendicular to the joists, with two present beneath the corridor, measuring 230mm wide by at least 0.13m deep (but projecting further below the ceiling).



Photo 22: Corridor 102, viewing SW towards from Stair 108, floorboards prior to removal

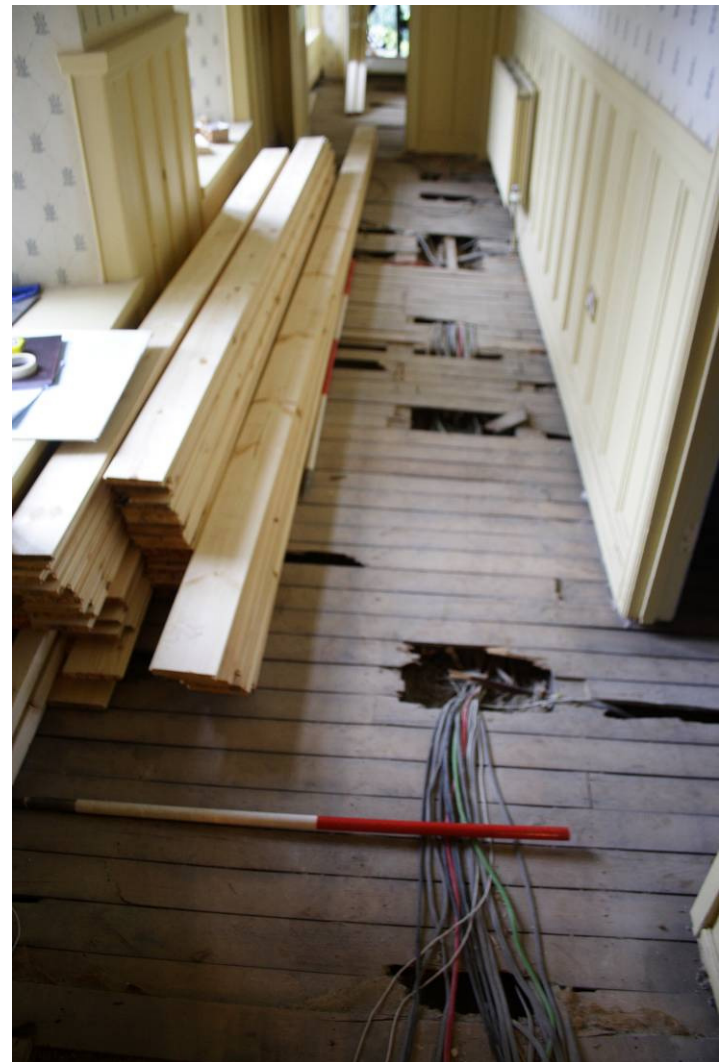


Photo 23: Corridor 102, viewing SW from Stair 108, with underlying wooden slats exposed

### **6.3 William Burgess Bedroom and Bathroom (Rooms 103 and 104)**

- 6.3.1 The William Burgess Bedroom initially had the same floorboards as seen within Corridor 102 (Photo 24) aligned NE to SW. Following their removal, the continuation of the wooden slats were revealed (Photo 25) on the same alignment as the floorboards.
- 6.3.2 As with Corridor 102, it was possible to ascertain the layout of the beams and joists below through holes previously cut through the floor for cabling and pipe-work.
- 6.3.3 The floorboards and underlying wooden slats were aligned NW to SE, perpendicular to those in the adjacent room 203 and corridor 202. A large underlying beam was exposed across the doorway into the bathroom, which marked the point where the alignment of the wooden slats changed (Photo 26). Marks on the floor indicate that the underlying joists were also aligned perpendicular to the others at this point.



Photo 24: Room 103 before floorboards were removed





Photo 25: Room 103 looking NE following removal of floorboards and exposure of underlying wooden slats



Photo 26: Bathroom 104 looking NW, following removal of floorboards indicating that the wooden slats extend across entire floor area of the Northwest wing

#### **6.4 Avray Tipping Suite - Bedroom 105, Lobby 106 and Bathroom 107**

- 6.4.1 The Avray Tipping Bedroom 105 had floorboards aligned NE to SW (as seen in corridor 102 and room 103) in the southern half of the room, and aligned NW to SE in the northern part (as seen in bathroom 104) (Photo 27). The floorboards were the same dimensions as those seen in corridor 102, although a few more recent additions had been inserted, presumably as repairs, using wider pine boards.
- 6.4.2 Following their removal, the same wooden slats were seen mirroring the alignment of the floorboards seen above (Photo 28). Across the centre of the room a NE to SW aligned beam was visible where the change in alignment occurred (which is the same beam as that seen in Bathroom 104), on top of which were a series of irregular and badly placed fragments of the same wooden slats. These had obviously been placed on the beam to ensure a regularity of the floor level for the joists above and did not need to be neatly placed as they would not be visible from below.
- 6.4.3 Lobby 106 to the NE of bedroom 105 had wider floorboards to those seen in the bedroom aligned NE to SW (Photo 29), measuring c.155mm in width. Below these boards a very patchy and altered series of joists were visible, of modern date. Plasterboard was noted below forming the ceiling below, except near to the doorway itself where a drop to almost the entire depth of the floor below was noted. This was partially stone lined but also contained modern materials (Photo 30). It is unclear if this was a former garderobe chute or a blocked alcove or cupboard below.
- 6.4.4 Bathroom 107 to the north of Lobby 206 had a modern chipboard floor (Photo 31). Below this were a series of modern joists overlying an earlier set of floorboards (Photo 32). The floorboards were narrower than elsewhere and were not tongue and grooved.



Photo 27: Room 105 viewing SW prior to removal of floorboards, showing change in floorboard direction



Photo 28: Room 105 viewing SW following removal of floorboards, showing change in floorboard direction and irregular slats over central beam



Photo 29: Lobby 106 viewing NE prior to removal of floorboards



Photo 30: Lobby 106 following removal of floorboards showing hole in floor below earlier flooring



Photo 31: Bathroom 107 showing chipboard flooring



Photo 32: Bathroom 107 following removal of floorboards

## **6.5 Snooker Room 006**

- 6.5.1 The ceiling of the Snooker Room in the ground floor of the Northwest Wing provides further information on the layout of the floors above. Presently large beams are visible crossing in the centre of the room, corresponding with the bases of the beams seen within bathroom 104, the NE end of bedroom 103 and the Avray Tipping Bedroom 105 (Photo 33).
- 6.5.2 The larger beam, crossing the room from NE to SW is held on two stone corbels projecting from the walls of the Snooker Room (Photos 34 & 35). The corbels have carved decoration, the southwestern one bears the arms of the Diocese of Llandaff (comprising a pair of crossed croziers and three mitres above); the northeastern corbel bears what appears to be the Tipping family coat of arms (a diagonal banner with three pheons or spearheads upon it). This would indicate that the first floors for this part of Mathern Palace were inserted by Tipping presumably in the late 1890s.

## **6.6 Northwest Wing Summary**

- 6.6.1 From the evidence of the wooden slats seen below the floorboards of the first floor rooms, it appears that the King Tewdric Bedroom 004, the Snooker Room 006 and Corridor 005 would have had exposed beams, joists and wooden slats, all stained or varnished a dark brown colour.
- 6.6.2 Photographs taken in 1910 by Country Life Magazine of the Palace to show the work done by Tipping, include photographs of the 'oak parlour' (Image number 895498 on the Country Life Picture Library website). The 'oak parlour' is evidently the ground floor of the northwest wing which then comprised a single room with exposed ceiling beams, joists and wooden slats throughout. Evidently the King Tewdric Bedroom 004, Snooker Room 006 and Hall 005 have been created with modern partition walls, presumably when the building was converted to guest house accommodation in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- 6.6.3 The photograph is taken from the SW end of the room viewing NE and shows the beam resting on the carved corbel. The photograph shows that the joists to the NW of the main beam resting on the corbels are aligned perpendicular as is suggested by the layout of the wooden slats above. The stairs up to Room 011 can be seen, as can the dark wood cupboards and alcoves that are still present on the SE wall of corridor 005.
- 6.1.21 The fire safety improvements have removed the former floorboards at first floor level which had been coated in a flammable glue and they will be replaced with new tongue and grooved floorboards of the same dimensions. The underlying wooden slats, beams and joists have been left in-situ, in recognition of the fact that they are an important part of the historical fabric of the building relating to the important renovation work by Avray Tipping. The new floor will be raised and supported on new joists to create a suspended floor above the wooden slats. The new joists will follow the lines of those beneath.



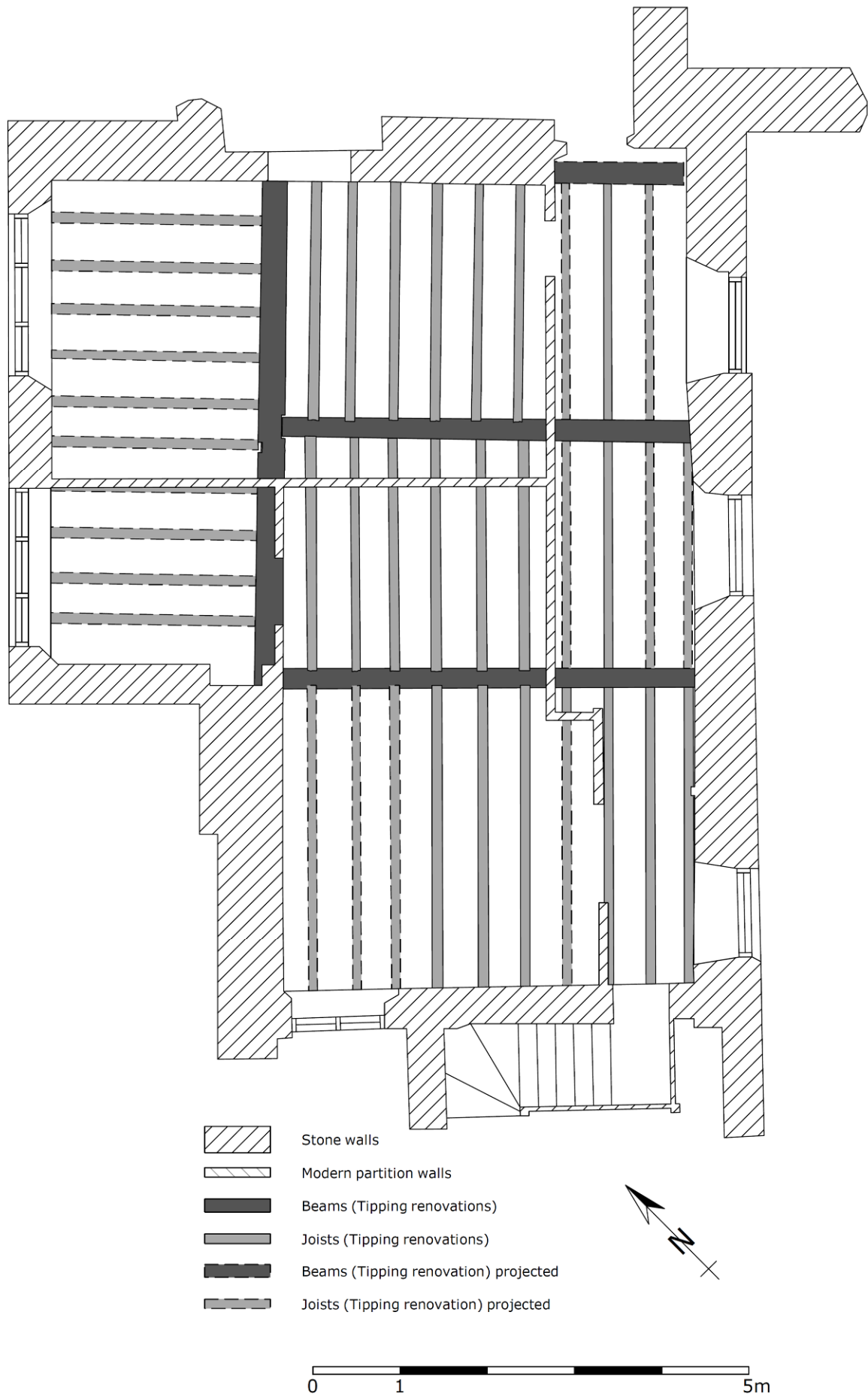
Photo 33: Ceiling of Snooker Room 006 showing exposed crossing beams



Photo 34: Southwestern corbel holding main beam above Snooker Room, showing the arms of the Diocese of Llandaff



Photo 35: Northeastern corbel holding main beam above Snooker Room, showing the Tipping family crest



**Figure 8:** Floor Plan of first floor of Northwest Wing



## **7. THE CHAPEL WING (Figures 3, 4, 5 & 9)**

### **7.1 The Chapel Bedroom 120**

- 7.1.1 The flooring of the Chapel Bedroom 120 comprised modern floorboards (roughly 180mm x 22mm) (Photo 36). These had been suspended on an array of modern joists above an earlier flooring level to create a level floor for the guest accommodation (covering the uneven floor below).
- 7.1.2 The earlier flooring comprised a mix of older split elm planks of between 220mm and 260mm in width and roughly 20mm deep (Photos 37 & 38). Eleven rows of planks were visible mostly covering the SE end of the room. The remainder of the room was covered in tongue and groove boards c. 165 - 170mm x 18mm (Photo 38).
- 7.1.3 Parts of a few of the older boards in the northern corner of the room had previously been removed. This exposed underlying joists, (which measured 115mm x 90mm), the ends of which were revealed. These joists had been turned on their side revealing diminished haunch ended tenons. The tenons had not been inserted into a mortice hole, but were attached directly to the top of an underlying timber wall plate sitting on the stone wall below, which narrowed above for the first floor walls.
- 7.1.4 The evidence would suggest that the flooring of Room 122 had been constructed from re-used timber joists and floorboards, perhaps salvaged from another part of the Palace. The floors and joists are most likely to date from the renovations by Tipping in the late 1890s, as it is known that he rebuilt much of this area. The Chapel had formerly been used as a barn prior to his ownership of the property.
- 7.1.5 The Chapel Bedroom 122 is divided from the Chapel Lounge 121 by a wide stone wall with a doorway. This room is recorded as originally being a chapel with an ornate four light window at the SE end and probable former tall window on the NE elevation. A modern brick plinth in front of the dividing wall suggested that a fireplace had been present behind, but had more recently been blocked up. The brick plinth measured 1000mm x 400mm x 95mm (Photo 38). A chimney is still present above this wall. A larger opening in this same wall (now used as a cupboard) in the Chapel Lounge 121, is also likely to have been a former fireplace. It is unclear if the two fireplaces are contemporary, or if the Chapel fireplace is a later addition. The Chapel could have originally been open to roof height, and a first floor added at a later date, and at that point would not have had a fireplace at first floor level.



Photo 36: Chapel Bedroom 122 prior to removal of floorboards, viewing east from doorway to Room 121



Photo 37: Southeastern end of Chapel Bedroom 122 showing earlier wide floorboards used in this part of the room



Photo 38: Northwestern end of Chapel Bedroom 122 showing earlier wide floorboards in bottom of photo with tongue and groove boards above, and brick plinth in front of presumed location of former fireplace

## **7.2 The Chapel Lounge 121**

- 7.2.1 The Chapel Lounge was initially boarded with a mix of older and newer floorboards (Photo 39). These were very level and are most likely 20<sup>th</sup> century work.
- 7.2.2 Following the removal of these boards a series of underlying beams and joists was revealed (Photo 40). The removed floorboards sat upon a series of joists attached to the top part of the NW to SE aligned cross beams. The joists were simple square cut timbers (measuring roughly 50mm x 100mm) attached to a batten nailed to the side of the beam (Photo 40). Along the top of the cross-beam were a number of unused mortice holes that would have taken fitted diminished haunch ended tenons (measuring 120mm in width, 200mm in height and at least 40mm at their deepest). Former peg holes to secure the tenons were visible in the top of the beam.
- 7.2.3 A second series of joists were present at the base of the cross-beam (Photo 41). These were c.100mm x 100mm in size and attached to the beam by tenons (possibly haunch ended) in mortice holes (Photo 40). The plasterboard ceiling below was attached to the undersides of these joists.
- 7.2.4 The main cross-beams were of a substantial size, measuring roughly 280mm x 280mm. The presence of two series of mortice holes at the top and bottom may indicate they are reused from elsewhere, or that the floor always had top and lower joists, although the reason for this is unclear. The beams were held in place within the stone outer walls of the building, presumably using original beam holes.



Photo 39: The Chapel Lounge 121 prior to total removal of floorboards



Photo 40: The Chapel Lounge 121 following removal of floorboards, showing underlying joist arrangement



Photo 41: The Chapel Lounge 121 showing joist attachments to cross-beam

### **7.3 The Chapel Suite Bathroom 120**

- 7.3.1 The Bathroom in the Chapel Wing, forming part of the Chapel Suite, was floored in chipboard (Photo 42).
- 7.3.2 Following the removal of the boarding a similar arrangement of joists was visible to that seen in the Chapel Lounge 121 (Photo 43). A large cross-beam aligned NE to SW was present, and on the SE side a series of joists were attached at the top, resting on a batten nailed to the side of the beam. A second set of joists was present attached to the base of the beam, which had a lath and plaster ceiling attached to the underside.
- 7.3.3 On the NW side of the room insubstantial joists were attached to the top of the cross-beam, on which the flooring had been secured. These joists were attached to a wooden beam secured to the wall at the far side of the room. Beneath these joists, at a lower level, was a series of other supports attached to a lower area of floorboards (Photo 44). The lower floorboards were well made and of a similar 650 – 700mm width as seen elsewhere. They lay around 350mm below the top of the upper joists.
- 7.3.4 It is presumed that this is a former floor level that was altered in more recent times when the Palace was adapted to guest accommodation. The beam crossing the centre of the room was presumably formerly the end of room, and the modern bathroom partition wall a later addition. The beam is secured into the outer stone wall to the SE. The lower area of flooring may have been a former landing at the top of the stair 118, which was incorporated into the new bathroom arrangement.
- 7.3.5 The size of the lower floorboards would suggest they were added by Tipping, and the modern raised floor is a later 20<sup>th</sup> century addition.



Photo 42: The Chapel Suite Bathroom 120, before removal of flooring



Photo 43: Bathroom 121 following removal of flooring showing joists, beam and lower area of floorboards



Photo 44: Bathroom 121 showing area of lower floorboards

#### **7.4 Corridor 119**

- 7.4.1 Bathroom 120 is accessed via a short corridor beyond the Chapel Lounge 121. Two steps then lead down from this level to Stair 118 and Corridor 113 in the Central Section. The floorboards along the corridor were a mix of Tipping era additions and modern repairs and replacements (Photo 45).
- 7.4.2 The first step in the corridor corresponds with the continuation of the cross-beam seen in Bathroom 120. The drop of the two steps would correspond with the lower floor level seen in the SW part of the bathroom, again indicating a former landing area at the top of Stair 118.



Photo 45: Corridor 119, showing start of stairs prior to floorboard removal

## **7.5 The Chapel Wing Summary**

- 7.5.1 The Southwestern or Chapel Wing is said to have been used as a barn before the Palace was bought and renovated by Tipping. The evidence suggests that Tipping remodelled the floors, using a mix of new and recycled beams, joists and floorboards.
- 7.5.2 The floorboards and underlying joists in the NE part of the Chapel Bedroom 122 are obviously of some antiquity, but have been reused from elsewhere. The beams are fixed to the stone outer walls in purpose built beam holes which are probably original features. The date of the beams is uncertain. They were mostly obscured by additions and alterations, and although what could be seen suggest they were not original, they could be of some antiquity and could well pre-date Tipping's renovations.
- 7.5.3 The wing at first floor level is likely to have originally comprised two rooms, the Chapel at the SE and a large room to the NW, which ran from the stone wall at the NW end of the chapel, to the SW outer stone wall of the main structure (on SW side of Stair 118). No evidence for a further medieval partition dividing the stairway from the room could be seen. As suggested above, the stairway leading up to the doorway to the Chapel Lounge (Doorway D130) may be, a later addition to the Chapel area (possibly added when this part of the building was used as a barn), or alternatively was added to provide direct access to the Chapel area.
- 7.5.4 The renovations by Tipping in the late 1890s added a further partition which would have bisected the bathroom as it exists today, and along the beam at the top of the first step in Corridor 119, where the doorway would have been. At that time, a small landing area was present at the top of Stair 118. In the later 20<sup>th</sup> century the present room arrangement was created.





**Figure 9:** Floor Plan of first floor of Chapel Wing

**8. CENTRAL SECTION** (Figures 3, 4, 5 & 10)

**8.1 Bishop Miles Godwin Bedroom 116**

8.1.1 The floorboards removed from the Bishop Miles Godwin Bedroom 116 measured 155mm in width and approximately 22mm in depth (photo 46). These were attached to a series of modern joists which had been nailed to a series of older, underlying beams and joists (Photos 47 & 48). The modern joists measured 50mm in width and 80mm in depth. The modern joists had been raised to create a level floor across the entire area of the Central Section of Mathern Palace, although there was a slight step down into this room from the adjacent Corridor 113.

8.1.2 The older, underlying joists were more substantial, measuring 80 – 100mm x 110mm. These were attached in mortice holes to a large beam which crossed NE to SW approximately 1/3 of the way across the room from the NW side. The shape of the tenons was not visible. The beam measured c.280mm in width and at least 200mm in depth (they also project substantially below the underlying ceiling).



Photo 46: Bishop Miles Godwin Bedroom 116 prior to full removal of floorboards, viewing NW



Photo 47: Bishop Miles Godwin Bedroom 116 following removal of floorboards, viewing NW



Photo 48: Bishop Miles Godwin Bedroom 116 following removal of floorboards, viewing SE

8.1.3 The underlying joists measured almost 2.20m in length to the SE of the main beam, leading from a second timber beam which was present below the SE end wall of the room. These were attached to this end joist in mortice holes, with a few fixing peg holes visible. The end beam did not lie square with the extant end wall, and projected out from below the wall by around 200mm at its eastern end.

- 8.1.4 Both the older joists and the beams had the appearance of being of some antiquity as no obvious saw marks were present, and the surfaces were slightly uneven.

## **8.2 Bathroom 117**

- 8.2.1 The floorboards within bathroom 117 were the same as those in the adjacent Bedroom 116, although slightly offset (Photo 49). Following their removal a set of incomplete modern joists could be seen, resting upon a series of earlier floorboards (Photo 50). Part of the underlying stone wall was possibly visible on the SW side of the room, onto which the shaped modern joists had rested. The bathroom floor level had evidently been raised in recent years to meet the same level as the main bedroom. The underlying floorboards were of 19<sup>th</sup> century date, presumably associated with the Tipping renovations.



Photo 49: Bathroom 117 prior to removal of floorboards, viewing NE



Photo 50: Bathroom 117 following removal of floorboards, viewing NE

### **8.3 Bishop Miles Salley Bedroom 114 and Bathroom 115**

- 8.3.1 The floorboards within the Bishop Miles Salley Bedroom 114 and adjacent Bathroom 114 were, as with the adjacent rooms, 155mm in width and approximately 22mm in depth (Photos 51 & 52). These were attached to a series of modern joists measuring 50mm x 80mm sat upon supports and cross joists (measuring 80mm x 100mm). These were attached to underlying earlier beams and joists. The floors across this room had been substantially raised, to create the level floor across the entire area of the Central Section, and would suggest fairly large displacement and slope of the underlying earlier ceiling.
- 8.3.2 The underlying joists measured 110mm x 110mm, and were noted as being in very good condition and displaying some possible saw marks. The joists were joined to two main beams, which crossed the width of the room NE to SW, with haunch ended tenons into mortice holes in the main beams (Photo 53). The main beams measured 290mm in width and at least 200mm in depth, and protruded through the ceiling below.
- 8.3.3 A further beam was also visible, lying centrally along the full width of the Central Section of the building. This beam was in three parts on either side of, and between the main crossing beams. These measured 260mm in width (and at least 200mm depth), being joined via tenons into the main beams, and each secured with two neat wooden peg holes. Along the NE side of the room was a further set of timber beams which were attached to the main cross beams (Photo 54), again attached with pegged tenon joints.
- 8.3.4 The underlying ceiling could be seen to be constructed of laths attached to the joists, and plastered.



Photo 51: Bishop Miles Salley Bedroom 114 prior to removal of floorboards, viewing NW, with stone grate of fireplace visible on right hand side of photo

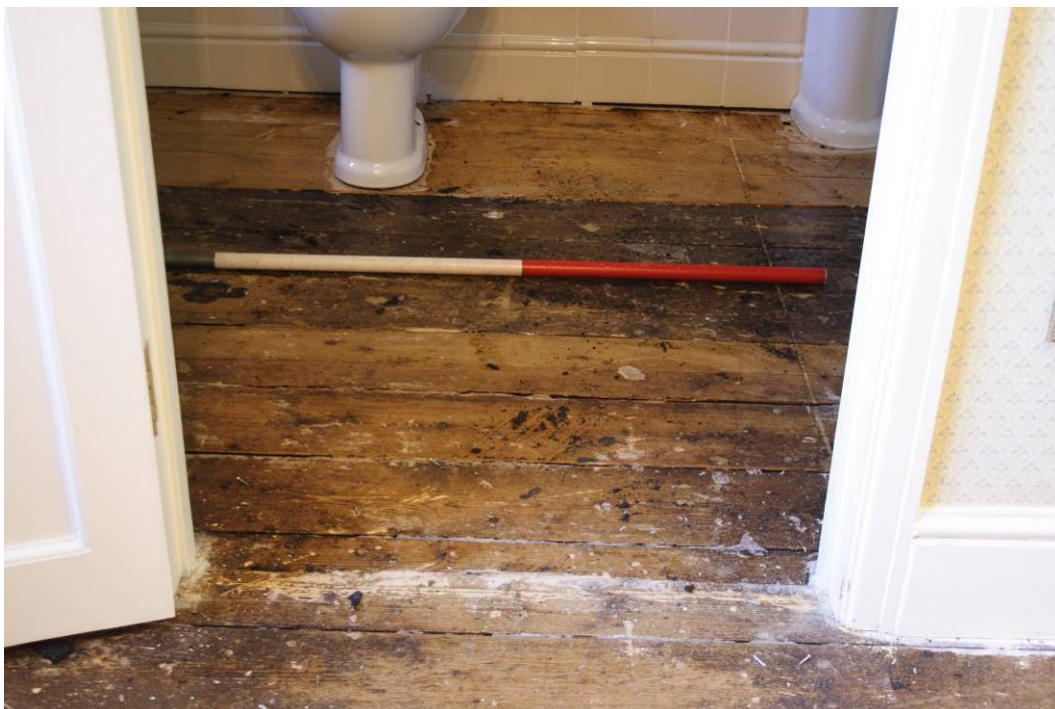


Photo 52: Bathroom 115 prior to removal of floorboards, viewing SE



Photo 53: Bishop Miles Salley Bedroom 114 following the removal of floorboards, viewing NW, with stone grate of fireplace visible on right hand side of photo



Photo 54: Bishop Miles Salley Bedroom 114 following the removal of floorboards, viewing eastern corner of room with main cross beam and wall beam



Photo 55: Bathroom 115 following removal of floorboards, viewing SE, showing underlying joists and large beams

- 8.3.5 The floor joists and beam arrangement was identical in the adjacent Bathroom 114 (Photo 55), showing the continuation of the central beams to a third main cross beam in the bathroom, attached with peg holes. The central beam was not present to the SE of this main cross-beam.
- 8.3.6 In the northern corner of the room was a large fireplace and stone edged grate which projected into the room c.0.37m, and was c.1.38m in length. The grate covered the underlying joists and part of one of the main cross beams and a wall beam. The fireplace was set into the outer wall of Mathern Palace and measured c.0.58m to the back of the opening.

#### **8.4 Corridor 113 and Cupboard Area**

- 8.4.1 Corridor 113 runs the entire length of the Central Section of the Palace. The floorboards were the same as those seen in the other rooms, and the corridor best illustrated the levelled modern floor across this part of the Palace (Photo 56).
- 8.4.2 Once the floorboards were removed, a series of walkway boards were secured to the underlying joists to create safe access around the buildings for the workers. Although this did obscure the underlying beams and joists (Photo 57), it was possible to determine that the layout of beams and joists clearly followed that seen in the adjacent rooms 114, 115 and 116. The three main cross beams were clearly visible joining the SW wall. A further beam along this wall was also visible, matching that seen along the NE wall, secured by peg holes.
- 8.4.3 Corridor 113 turned to the NE at its northern end (leading to Stairs 123 of the tower), and contained a series of built-in cupboards which covered much of the floor space. It was possible to see not only the continuation of joists and central beam within the area, but also an end beam along the northern stone wall (Photo 58).





Photo 56: Corridor 113 prior to removal of floorboards, viewing NW

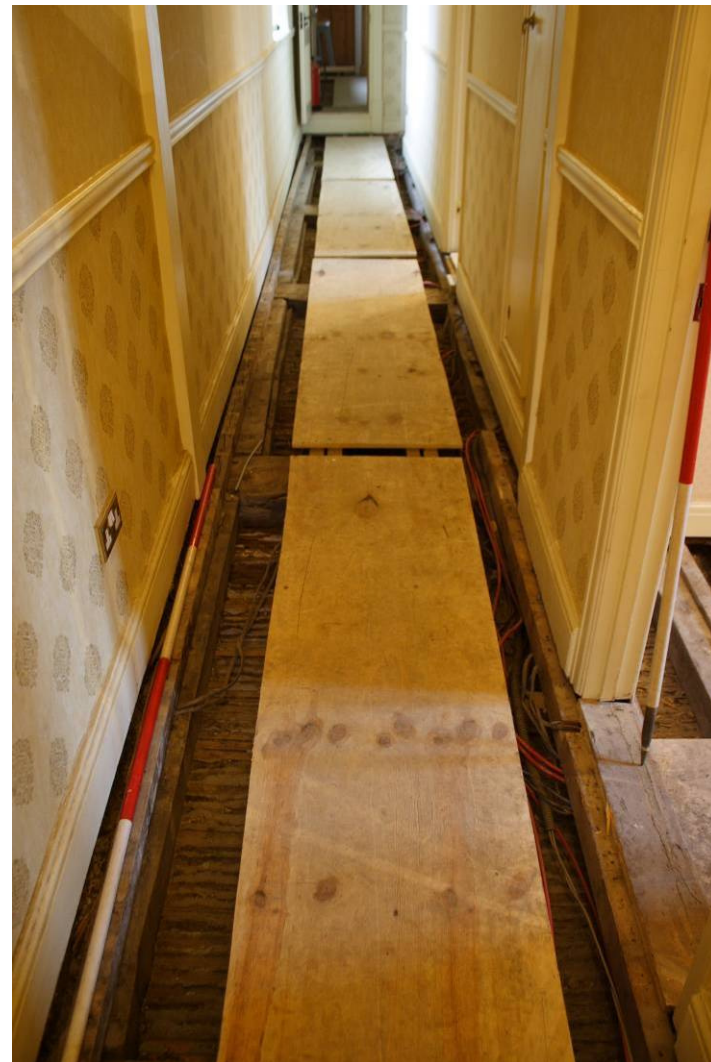


Photo 57: Corridor 113 following removal of floorboards, viewing NW, showing beams visible running under the fixed walkway boards



Photo 58: Corridor 113 (NE to SW section adjacent to cupboards showing beams visible running under the fixed walkway boards

## **8.5 Central Section Summary**

- 8.5.1 The ceiling of the Lounge 015 on the ground floor has a series of exposed beams with decorated mouldings (Photos 59, 60, 61 & 62). The ceiling comprises a series of 8 plain ceiling panels (lath and plastered) between the beams, which comprise the three main cross beams seen in the rooms above lying across the width of the building. The panels at the northern end of the room are much narrower than the other six, which are all the same size, measuring an average of 1.86m square. The end panels are 0.8m x 1.80m.
- 8.5.2 The main cross beams are obscured by plaster on either side of the room, although projecting wooden corbels below the beams are visible (Photo 62). It is unclear if the beams are also secured into the stone wall.
- 8.5.3 A series of exposed beams are also present between the main cross beams, and decorated in the same fashion. These are attached to the main cross beams (mortice and tenoned and secured with pegs – as visible in Bedroom 114, Bathroom 115 and Corridor 113 above). No corresponding beam is visible at the northern end of the Central Section in the first floor (end of Corridor 113 in the NE to SW aligned section).

- 8.5.4 The mouldings of the beams and the way the central beams have been inserted can be seen in Photo 61. It is presumed that Lounge 015 corresponds closely with the original layout of the medieval building, and that the exposed beams are quite likely to be original and indicate that it was quite an ornate room. As noted in the sections above, the joists between the original beams may well be a mix of original medieval beams and a number of replacements which may date to the Tipping renovations in the 1890s (as indicated in Bedroom 114).
- 8.5.5 The ceiling of Hall 016 contains a single plain exposed beam, and corresponds with the plainer beam and joist arrangement seen in the Bishop Miles Godwin Bedroom 116 above. These earlier beams and joists could also potentially be of original medieval date.
- 8.5.6 The fire safety improvements have removed the former floorboards at first floor level which had been coated in flammable glue and they will be replaced with new floorboards. The underlying beams and joists have been left in-situ, as have the modern joists that were inserted to create a level floor across this section of the building. The ceiling in Lounge 015 has been carefully dealt with during the works and remains completely unaltered and is still exposed.



Photo 59: Ceiling of Lounge 015, viewing NW, showing ornate beams



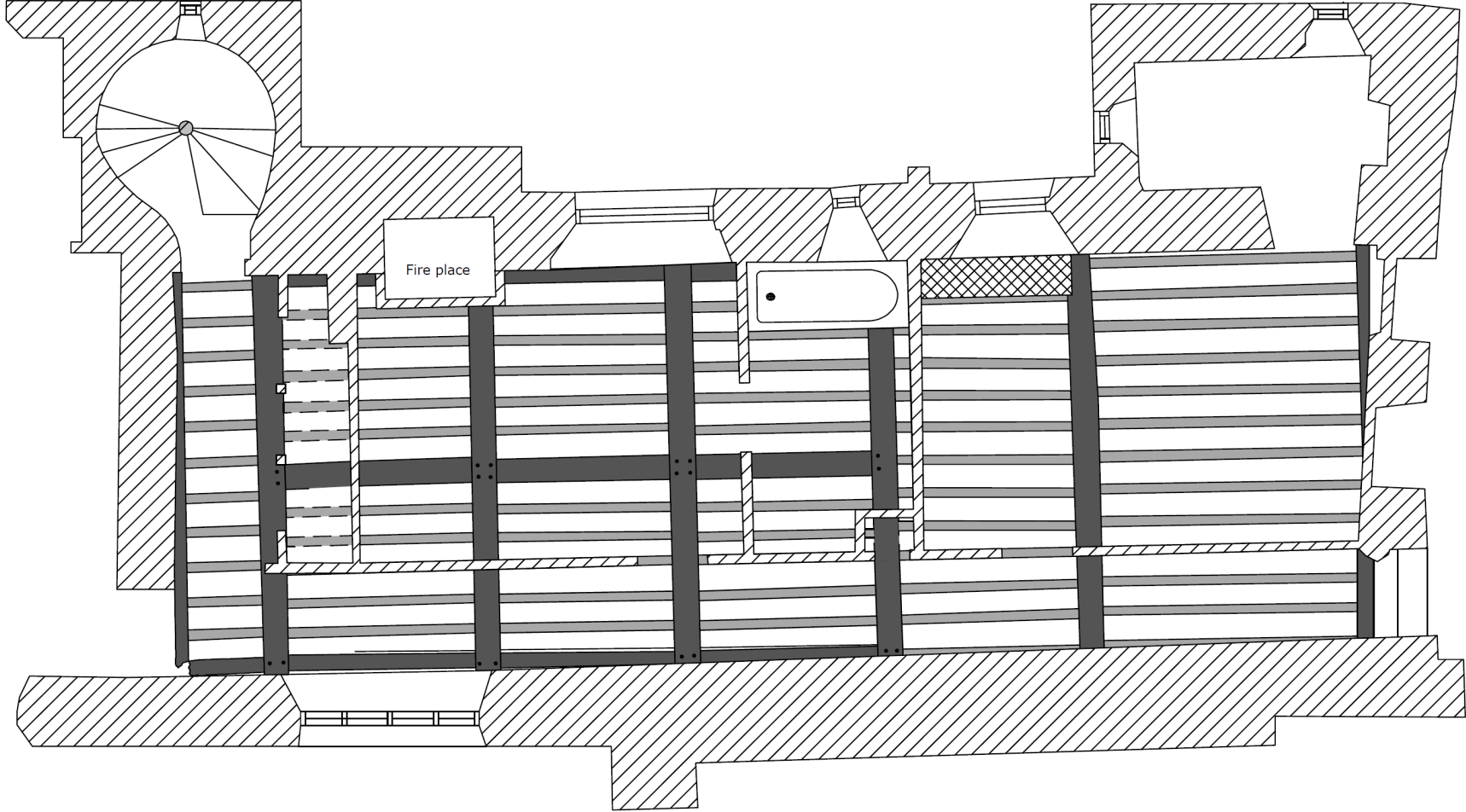
Photo 60: Ceiling of Lounge 015, viewing SE, showing ornate beams









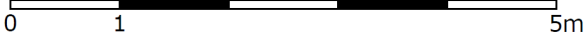
Photo 61: Detail of beams in ceiling of Lounge 015, showing ornate moulding



Photo 62: Detail of beams and timber corbel on NE wall of Lounge 015



-  Stone walls
-  Modern partition walls
-  Beams (Medieval?)
-  Joists (Medieval?)
-  Beams (Medieval?) projected
-  Joists (Medieval?) projected



**Figure 10:** Floor plan of First Floor of Central Section

## **9. THE TOWER (Figures 3, 4, 5 & 11)**

To understand the floor arrangements of the Tower it is best to consider the three floors in turn from the ground floor upwards.

### ***Ground Floor***

#### **9.1 Ground Floor – Entrance Lobby 014 and Room 035**

- 9.1.1 An original cart entrance at ground floor level is accessed from the NE side of the building. It has a neat moulded stone archway with corbelled roof (Photo 63). A doorway within the cart entrance, has a moulded stone surround, but is presumed to be a later addition as it substantially narrows the access way and would restrict cart access through the (Photos 63 & 64).
- 9.1.2 The ceiling of the Entrance Lobby comprises a vaulted roof which has been plastered, but is presumed to continue the stone corbelling seen in the external entrance way (Photos 64 & 65).
- 9.1.3 The opposing doorway through Entrance Lobby 014 would also appear to have been remodelled and narrowed with the insertion of a more recent doorway (Photo 65).
- 9.1.4 Three other doorways lead from the inside of Entrance Lobby 014: one leading to Stair 036 accessing the first floor of the Palace (Photo 66); one leading into Lounge 015 in the Central Section (Photo 65); and a third doorway leading to a curving passage through to Room 012 also within the ground floor of the Tower (Photo 67).
- 9.1.5 A further doorway providing access into a small room (035) is present on the NW side of the exterior covered passage outside Lobby 014 (Photo 68). The small room has a plaster-boarded roof obscuring any further information regarding the original ceiling of the room. It is evident on the SE side of the room that the existing doorway has breached through the wall, so it is unclear what the original entrance would have been, or if any was originally present (Photo 69). The room is presently used as the wine cellar.



Photo 63: Composite photo to show the full height and ceiling within the main cart entrance through the Tower, and doorway to Room 035 visible on right hand side of photograph





Photo 64: Main doorway from the inside of Entrance Lobby 014



Photo 65: Opposing doorway on inside of Entrance Lobby 014, with doorway to Lounge 015 visible on left hand side of photo



Photo 66: Doorway to Stair 035 in ground floor of Tower and adjacent recess



Photo 67: Doorway and curving passage to Room 012 in ground floor of Tower



Photo 68: Doorway in exterior passage to Room 035



Photo 69: Inside of doorway accessing exterior passage from Room 035, showing breach in wall

## **9.2 Ground Floor – Rooms 012, 013 and Cupboards**

- 9.2.1 The original layout of the ground floor of the Tower had two rooms, the Entrance Lobby 014 and a second room which has recently been divided into two small rooms (012 & 013) and a series of cupboards.
- 9.2.2 A doorway in the SE leads from the curving passageway accessing Entrance Lobby 014 (Photo 71). A further doorway is present directly opposite, accessing the NW wing of the Palace, Room 011.
- 9.2.3 A series of exposed beams are visible in the ceiling of Room 012 (Photo 70).

## **9.3 Ground Floor – Stair 036**

- 9.3.1 Stair 036 leads from Entrance Lobby 014 to provide access to the upper floors of the Tower (Photo 66). It comprises a spiral stone stair (Photo 72).
- 9.3.2 A recess in the wall between the two rooms suggests a blocked doorway that may have provided access into the Lounge 015.
- 9.3.3 At first floor level the stair does not directly access the Tower rooms but leads into Corridor 113 of the Central Section.



Photo 70: Exposed beams in ceiling of Room 012 in ground floor of Tower



Photo 71: Doorway and curving passage to Entrance Lobby 014 from Room 012 in ground floor of Tower



Photo 72: Spiral stone stairs in Stair 036

**First Floor**

**9.4 First Floor – Bishop de La Zouche Lounge 111**

- 9.4.1 The Bishop de La Zouche Lounge 111 was floored with ply-board sheets as opposed to floorboards (Photo 73).



Photo 73: Bishop de La Zouche Lounge 111, ply-board sheet flooring



Photo 74: Bishop de La Zouche Lounge 111, following removal of ply-board sheeting, showing modern timber frame beneath sitting on sand



Photo 75: Stone framed doorway to Bedroom 109

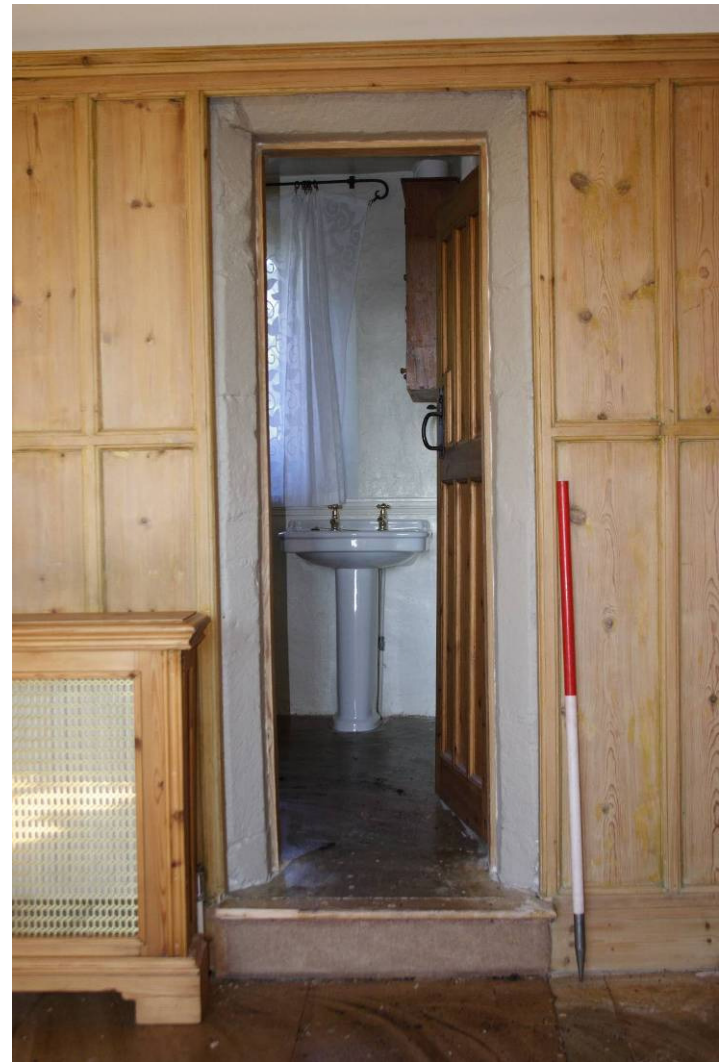


Photo 76: Stone framed doorway to Bathroom 112

- 9.4.2 Beneath the ply-board sheets were a series of modern timber joists creating the frame for the flooring above (Photo 74). The frame was sitting upon a bed of sand, which is presumed to be material that was laid on top of the underlying stone vaulted roof for Lobby 014 to create weight and pressure to stabilise the ceiling, and possibly to provide sound proofing. No evidence for original flooring was seen within this room.
- 9.4.3 The room had been panelled in timber, which was in good condition and would appear to be of relatively modern date (later than the Tipping renovations).
- 9.4.4 Stone framed doorways lead through the stone walls to Bedroom 109 in the Tower to the NW (Photo 75) and Bathroom 112 to the NE (Photo 76). Wooden panelling obscures the doorway through to Corridor 113.
- 9.4.5 A fireplace with a stone surround is present in the central wall of the Tower opening into the room. It is unclear if the surround is original or a later replacement (photo 77). A presumed original beam is exposed in the ceiling (Photo 77), aligned NW to SE.
- 9.4.6 A single window is present in the room on the SW wall. It comprises four lights in a simply decorated stone mullioned frame (Photo 78). It is possible that this is a medieval window.



Photo 77: Fireplace in Bishop de La Zouche Lounge





Photo 78: Stone mullioned window in SW wall of Lounge 111

## **9.5 First Floor – Bathroom 112**

9.5.1 Bathroom 112 was floored with ply-board sheets (Photo 79). The flooring was unfortunately not removed during the watching brief and the underlying floor joists were not seen. A single window is present in the NE wall of the bathroom, a bayed four light stone mullioned window. It is simply decorated in the same style as the window in Bedroom 111 (Photo 80).



Photo 79: Ply-board flooring in Bathroom 112



Photo 80: Stone mullioned window in NE wall of Bathroom 112

## **9.6 First Floor – Bishop de La Zouche Bedroom 109**

- 9.6.1 Bedroom 109 was floored with narrow boards (Photo 81). The room was wooden panelled in a similar style to the adjacent Lounge 111.
- 9.6.2 A small opening through the floorboards allowed an indication of the underlying floor layout to be made. The floorboards sat on a series of modern joists measuring 50mm x 110mm. These joists appeared to have been laid on top of earlier joists which were just visible in the openings. The stone wall along the SW wall of the room could be seen projecting into the room, as it was evidently far wider below (Photo 82). It is presumed that wider beams crossed the room NW to SE corresponding to those seen in the ceiling of Room 012 below, and these would have been laid upon or held in place in the projecting stone wall.
- 9.6.3 During the works the ceiling above partially collapsed, and as part of the repairs scaffolding was erected across the floor in order to undertake the repair. This obscured the main floor area following the removal of the floorboards and it was not possible to determine the full layout of the floor plan, although areas around the edges of the room were visible.
- 9.6.4 Three doorways led from the room, one leading to Lounge 111, a second to Store 110 and the third to Stair 108 in the SW wing.
- 9.6.5 Room 109 had two windows, one in the NE wall (Photo 83), and the second in the SW wall (Photo 84). They were both of near identical styles, comprising two lights set in a stone mullioned frame. The decoration matched that of those seen in Lounge 111 and Bathroom 112.



Photo 81: Bedroom 109, floorboards prior to removal



Photo 82: Bedroom 109, small opening through floorboards showing stone wall and modern joists resting on earlier joists



Photo 83: Window in NE wall of Bedroom 109



Photo 84: Window in SW wall of Bedroom 109

## **9.7 First Floor – Store 110**

9.7.1 Room 110 was a small store room connected to Bedroom 109. The room was floored in ply-board sheets. Unfortunately it was not possible to see beneath these boards as the room was inaccessible during the repairs to the ceiling of Room 109.

- 9.7.2 The room had two small window openings, both splayed openings to single light. The window to the NE had even splays (Photo 85) whilst the window in the NW wall had a far slighter splay on its northern side (Photo 86).



Photo 85: Window in NE wall of Store 110



Photo 86: Window in NW wall of Store 110

**Second Floor** (Figure 10)

**9.8 Second Floor – Bishop Morgan Bedroom 201**

- 9.8.1 The floorboards of the Bishop Morgan Bedroom were of relatively modern date (again covered in the flammable glue), and attached via a series of thin wooden joists to the underlying earlier beams and joists to create a level floor (Photo 87).
- 9.8.2 The underlying joists and beams for this room were clearly visible and comprised probable medieval timber work (Photo 88). The joists were quite substantial measuring 150mm in width and 110mm in depth. They were connected to the main cross beam, which was aligned NW to SE and measured c.280mm x 280mm. It projected below the ceiling of Bedroom 109 below.
- 9.8.3 Two wall plates were visible along the NE and SW walls of the room, presumably sitting on the width of the wall beneath. The one along the NE wall was well preserved, but that along the SW wall was in a bad state of repair, having substantially rotted, as had the joists that would have formerly attached to it (Photo 89). Repairs had been carried out attaching the surviving joists to a series of newer timbers that were fastened directly to the underlying projecting wall and additional timber supports along the wall edge (Photo 89).
- 9.8.4 Bedroom 201 had two doorways, one leading to Corridor 205 which had a timber surrounded door frame and the second was a stone framed doorway leading to Bathroom 202 (Photo 90).
- 9.8.5 The room had three windows. The ones on the SW (Photo 91) and NE (Photo 92) walls were almost identical, comprising two lights in a stone mullioned frame. The frames had the same simple decoration as seen in the windows of the floor below. The window on the NW wall was a smaller slightly splayed opening to a single light window (Photo 93).



Photo 87: Bishop Morgan Bedroom 201 prior to removal of floorboards



Photo 88: Floor of Bishop Morgan Bedroom 201 following removal of floorboards, with collapsed ceiling showing Bedroom 109 below



Photo 89: Wall plate along SW stone wall of Bishop Morgan Bedroom, showing decayed timbers and joists, and more recent repairs (as well as lath and plaster ceiling to Room 109 below)



Photo 90: Stone framed doorway to Bathroom 202





Photo 91: Window in SW wall of Bedroom 201

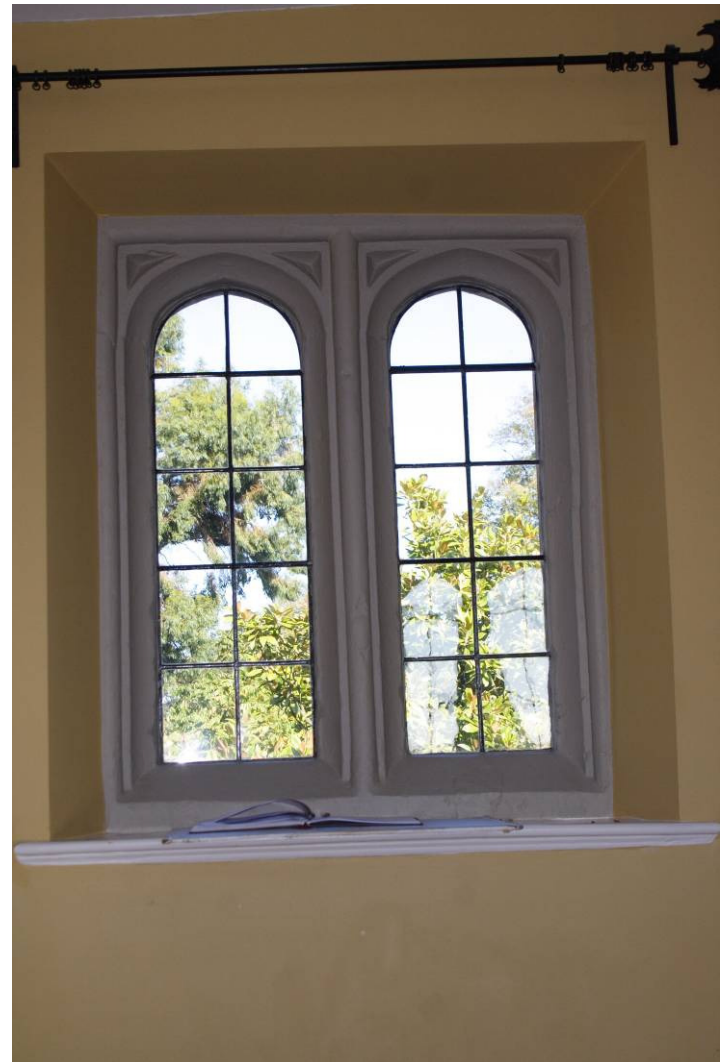


Photo 92: Window in NE wall of Bedroom 201



Photo 93: Window in NW wall of Bedroom 201

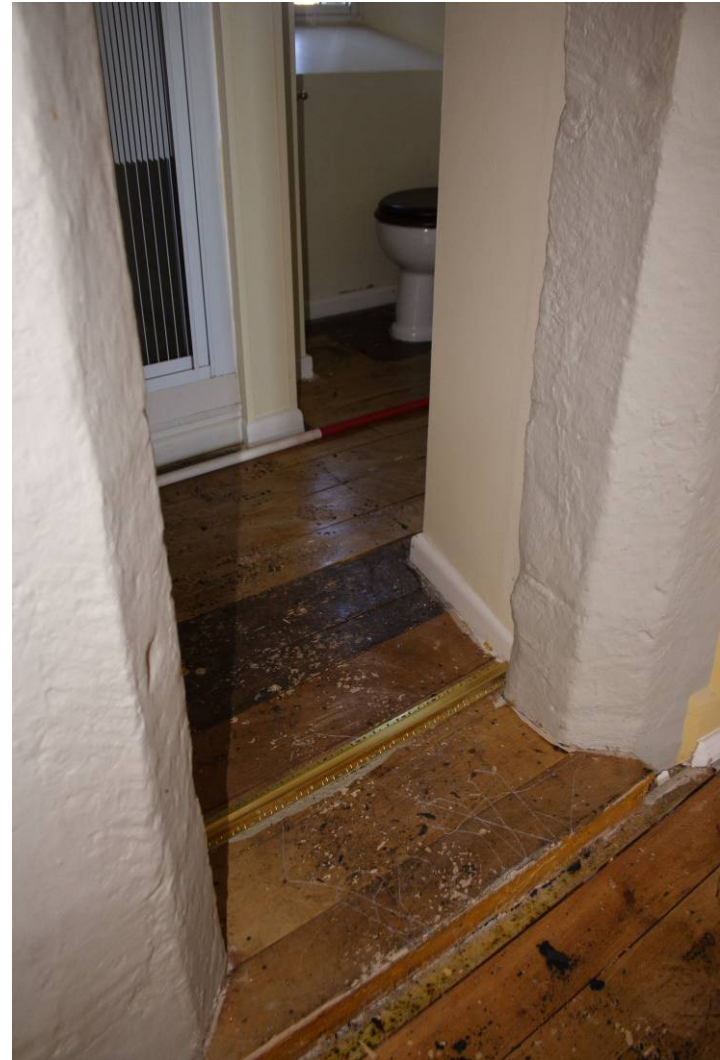


Photo 94: Bathroom 202 prior to removal of floorboards



Photo 95: Window in NE wall of Bathroom 202



Photo 96: Bathroom 202 following removal of most of the modern floorboards showing underlying stonewalls and probable garderobe chute

## **9.9 Second Floor - Bathroom 202**

- 9.9.1 The small Bathroom 202 was floored in the same floorboards as seen in the adjacent Bedroom 201 (Photo 94). The room had a single window on the NE wall, a splayed opening to a quite wide single light window (Photo 95). The plans indicate a further window on the NW wall although this was covered by a modern shower enclosure.
- 9.9.2 Following removal of the floorboards a series of modern joists of varying sizes were visible which were attached to a timber beam along the SE wall and also lay on two areas of stone work which were present (Photo 96). This stone work lined a vertical shaft which passed down through the wall between Store 110 and Bathroom 112 of the first floor and down to the top of the ceiling for Room 035 on the ground floor. It is assumed that the shaft is the remains of a former garderobe chute which must have been channelled away from the building within or beneath Room 035 (Photo 97).



Photo 97: Probable garderobe chute within Bathroom 202 showing stone work

## **9.10 Second Floor – Corridor 205**

- 9.10.1 The Corridor 205 provided access from the Stair 206 to Bedroom 201, Bedroom 203 and Bathroom 204, and similar floorboards to those seen in the adjacent Bedroom 201 (Photo 98).
- 9.10.2 Beneath was a series of more recent joists that rested upon earlier floorboards. These earlier boards were around 400mm wide on average, and are thought to be split elm planks (Photo 99). A stone framed doorway was present to Bathroom 204 (Photo 100).
- 9.10.3 During re-plastering of the southern end of Corridor 205 an area of brick blocking was revealed and recorded by Christopher Thomas Architects (Photo 101). This blocking did not infill a doorway or window, but seemed to be a brickwork skin filling a recess in the wall. This recess would have been similar to that seen on the ground floor adjacent to Stair 036 (Photo 66). This would imply the doorway to the stair has been slightly narrowed.

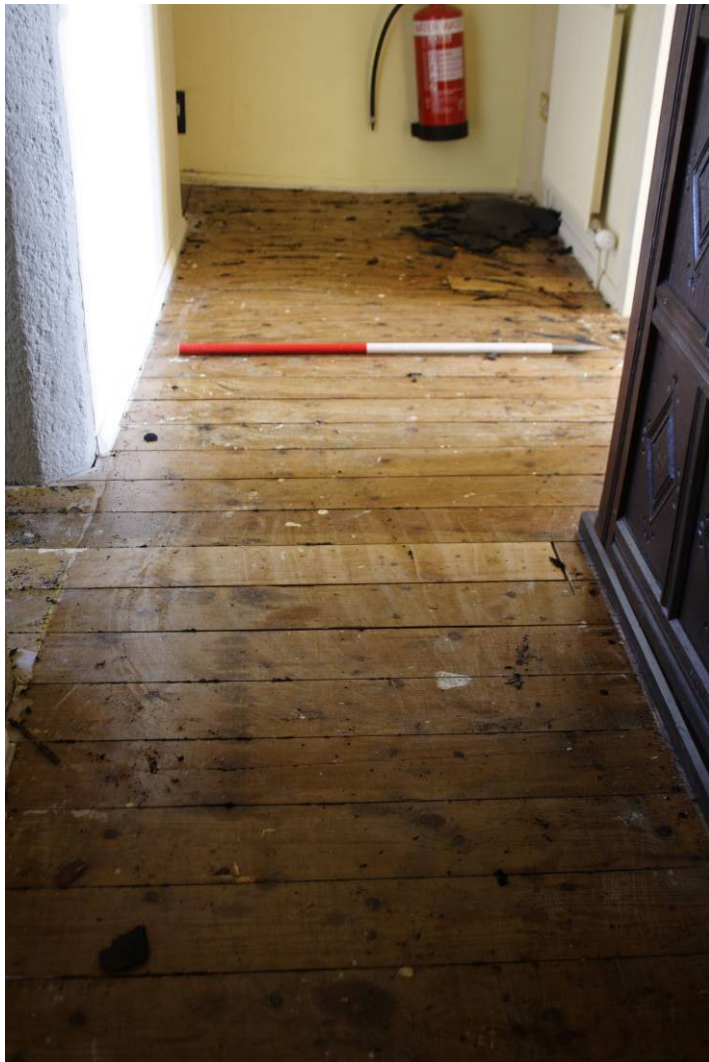


Photo 98: Corridor 205 prior to removal of floorboards  
viewing SE

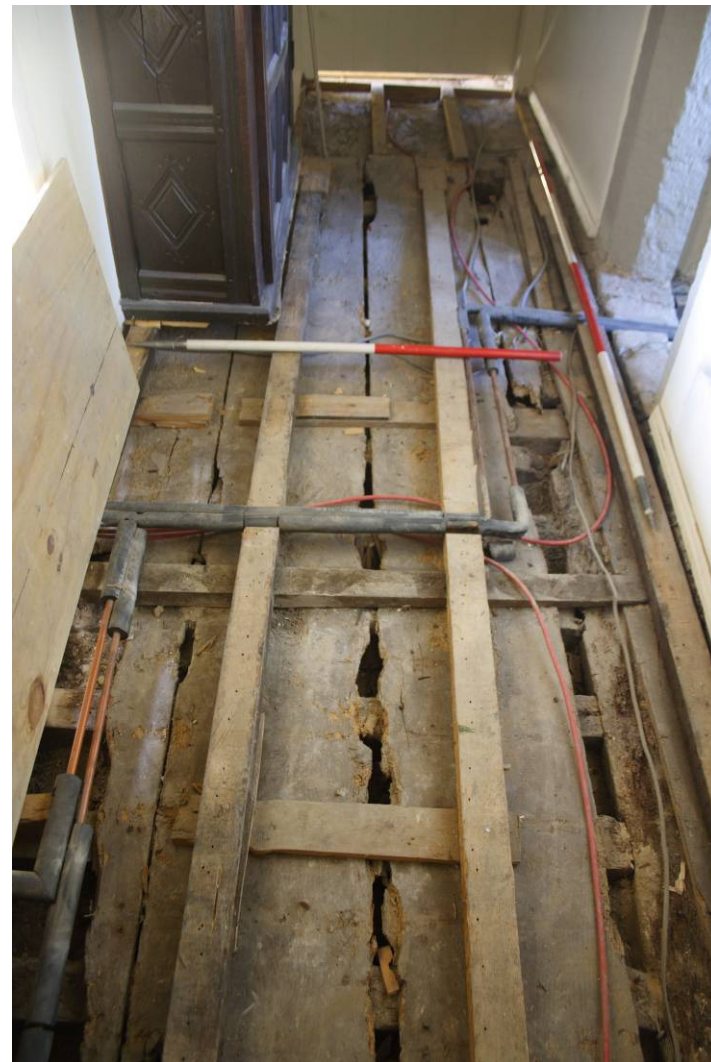


Photo 99: Corridor 205 following removal of floorboards showing  
underlying medieval floorboards, viewing NW



Photo 100: Corridor 205 looking towards Bathroom 205 showing stone framed doorway

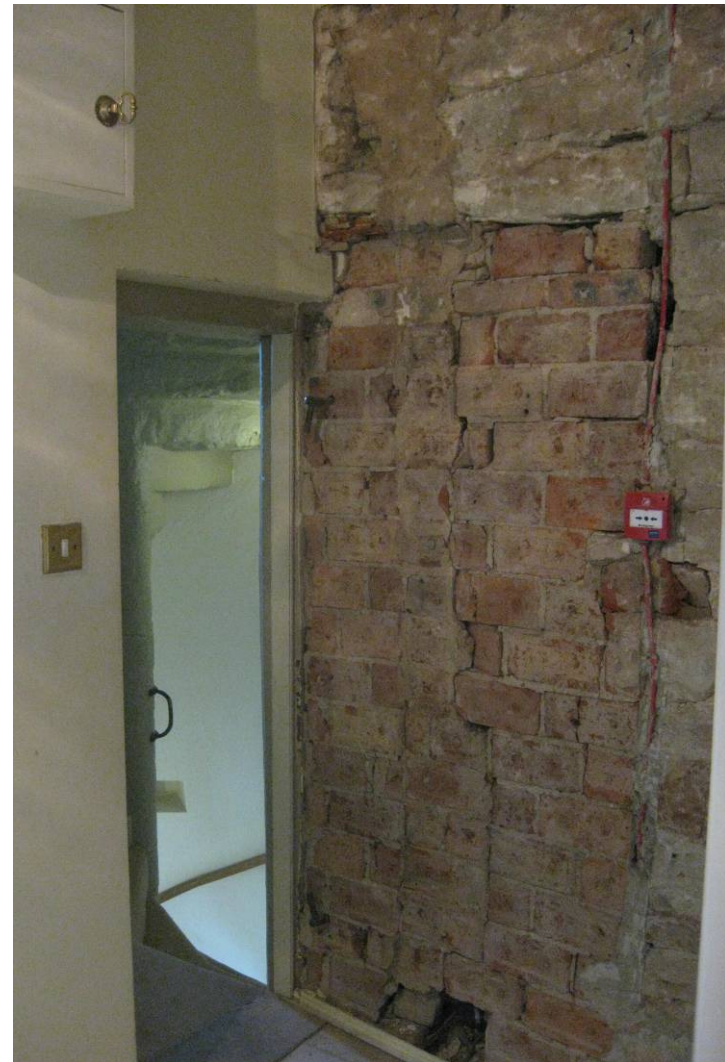


Photo 101: Brick blocking at southern end of Corridor 205, and possibly narrowed doorway to Stair 206

### **9.11 Second Floor – Bishop Marshall Bedroom 203**

- 9.11.1 The Bishop Marshall Bedroom 203 had been separated from Corridor 205 in recent years by the addition of a modern stud wall. The floorboards prior to removal were of the same sort seen in the Corridor 205 and Bedroom 201 (Photo 102).
- 9.11.2 Following their removal a series of split elm floorboards were exposed in the SW half of the room, which were the continuation of those seen in Corridor 205 (Photo 103).
- 9.11.3 In the NE part of the room earlier joists and beams were exposed (Photo 104). In comparison to Bedroom 201 these joists and beams were in a poor state of preservation having decayed badly in a number of areas. The joists and beams were of the same size as seen in Bedroom 201, but did not seem as regular or neat in their layout, perhaps suggesting an earlier phase of repairs.
- 9.11.4 The main beam crossing the Bedroom from NW to SE had suffered considerable amount of decay, with no remains of it above the point where the joists were joined to it (Photo 105). A wall plate beam was also present along the SW wall of the room which had a series of notches into which the joists were inserted (Photo 106).
- 9.11.5 The room had two windows. The main opening was on the SW wall and comprised a two light stone mullioned window, with simple decoration as seen in other rooms of the Tower (Photo 107). The second window was a small aperture high up on the SE wall comprising a splayed single light opening (Photo 108).
- 9.11.6 A stone surround for a former doorway was also present in the NW wall of the room, which would have formerly given access into Bedroom 201, but which is now blocked (Photo 109).

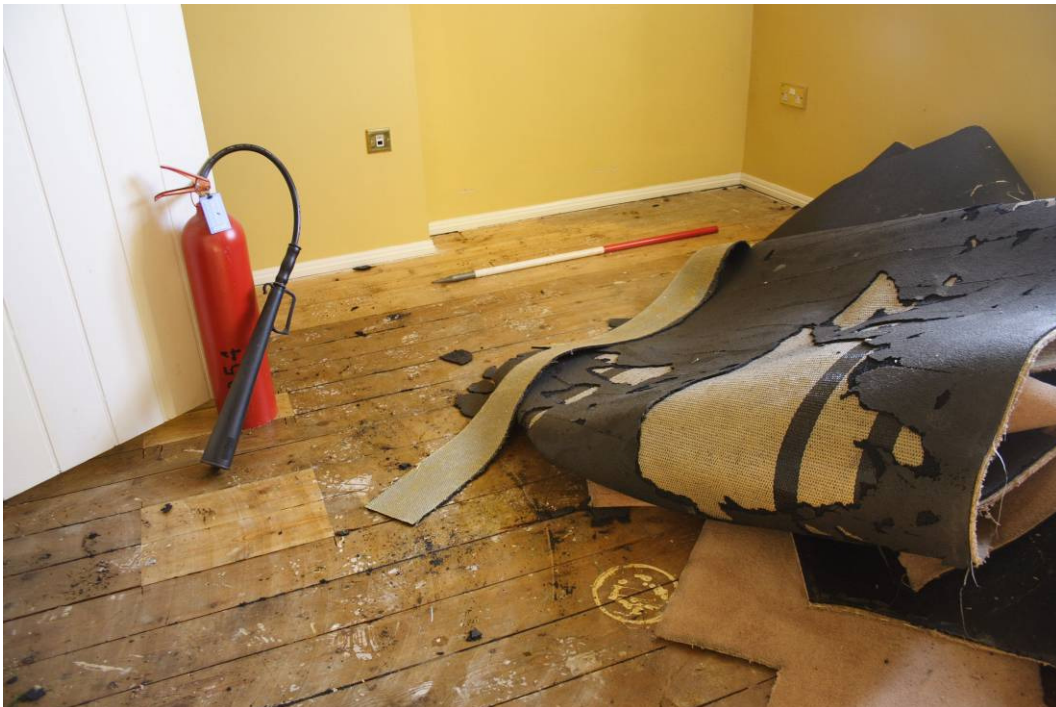


Photo 102: Bedroom 203 prior to removal of floorboards



Photo 103: Bedroom 203 following removal of modern floorboards and exposure of underlying elm boards



Photo 104: Bedroom 203 following removal of modern floorboards and exposure of underlying elm boards and beams and joists in NW half of room





Photo 105: Decayed beam across floor of Bedroom 203 showing joists resting on top of the surviving part



Photo 106: Wall plate beam on SW wall of room showing notches for joists



Photo 107: Window in SW wall of Bedroom 203



Photo 108: Window in SE wall of Bedroom 203



Photo 109: Stone surround doorway, now blocked,  
between Bedrooms 203 and 201

## **9.12 Second Floor – Bathroom 204**

- 9.12.1 Bathroom 204 initially had floorboards of the same type as seen across the upper floor of the Tower (Photo 110). Once these were removed a series of joists were exposed that did not seem of particular age, although could well be associated with the renovations by Tipping (Photo 111). Possible wall plates were present along the external stone walls to the SW and NE.
- 9.12.2 The window in the bathroom was very similar to that in Bathroom 112 below, comprising a bayed four light stone mullioned window (Photo 112). The window had the same decoration as seen on other windows in the first and second floors of the tower.



Photo 110: Bathroom 204 prior to removal of floorboards

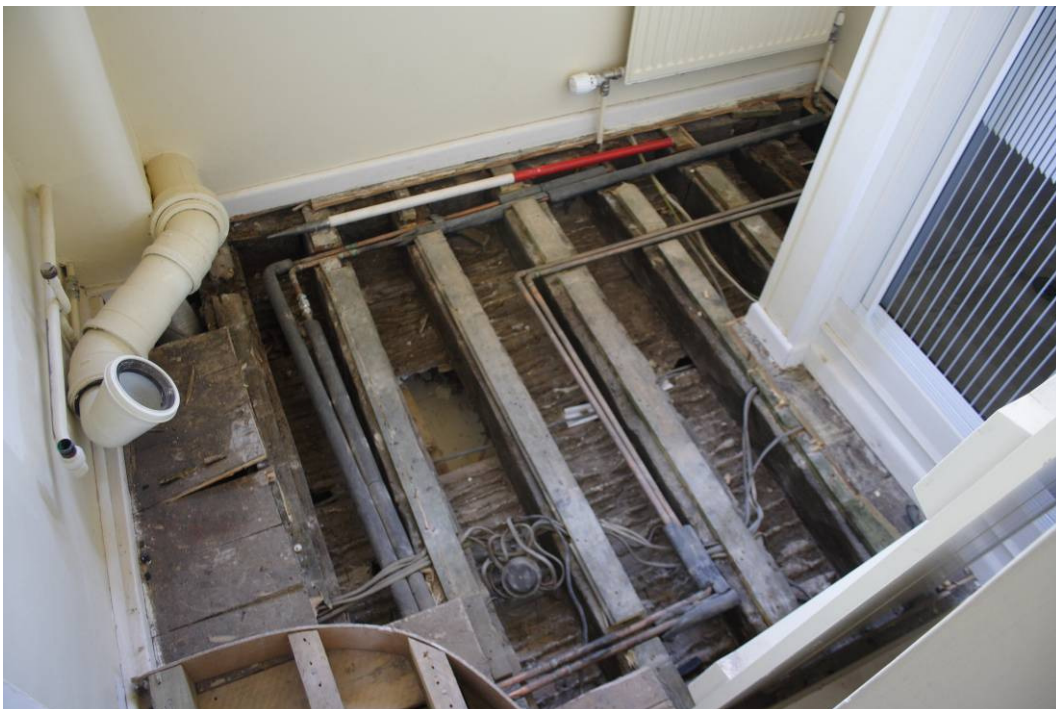


Photo 111: Bathroom 204 following removal of floorboards showing underlying joists and lath and plaster ceiling



Photo 112: Four light, bayed window in Bathroom 204

### ***Third Floor***

#### **9.13 Third Floor or Roof Structure of the Tower**

- 9.13.1 There are a few indications that suggest there may have been a third floor to the tower which has since been removed. Alternatively the indications may be evidence that the roof area was accessible.
- 9.13.2 The spiral stair that leads from adjacent to the Entrance Lobby 014 in the ground floor of the Tower continues beyond the second floor, which may have accessed a former third storey or roof structure.
- 9.13.3 In the ceilings of Bedrooms 201 and 203 are large beams which have simple chamfered decoration and stops. In Bedroom 203 two beams are present aligned NW to SE (Photos 113 & 114). The NE beam is presently partly obscured by the underlying modern partition wall (Photo 114). In Bedroom 201 a further pair of beams are present on the opposing side of the dividing stone wall (almost identically aligned) are visible (Photo 115). These beams would suggest that the ceiling would have been able to carry a significant load, either floors for rooms in a third storey, or a substantial and accessible flat roof structure.



Photo 113: SW beam in ceiling of Bedroom 203,  
with more recent support beneath



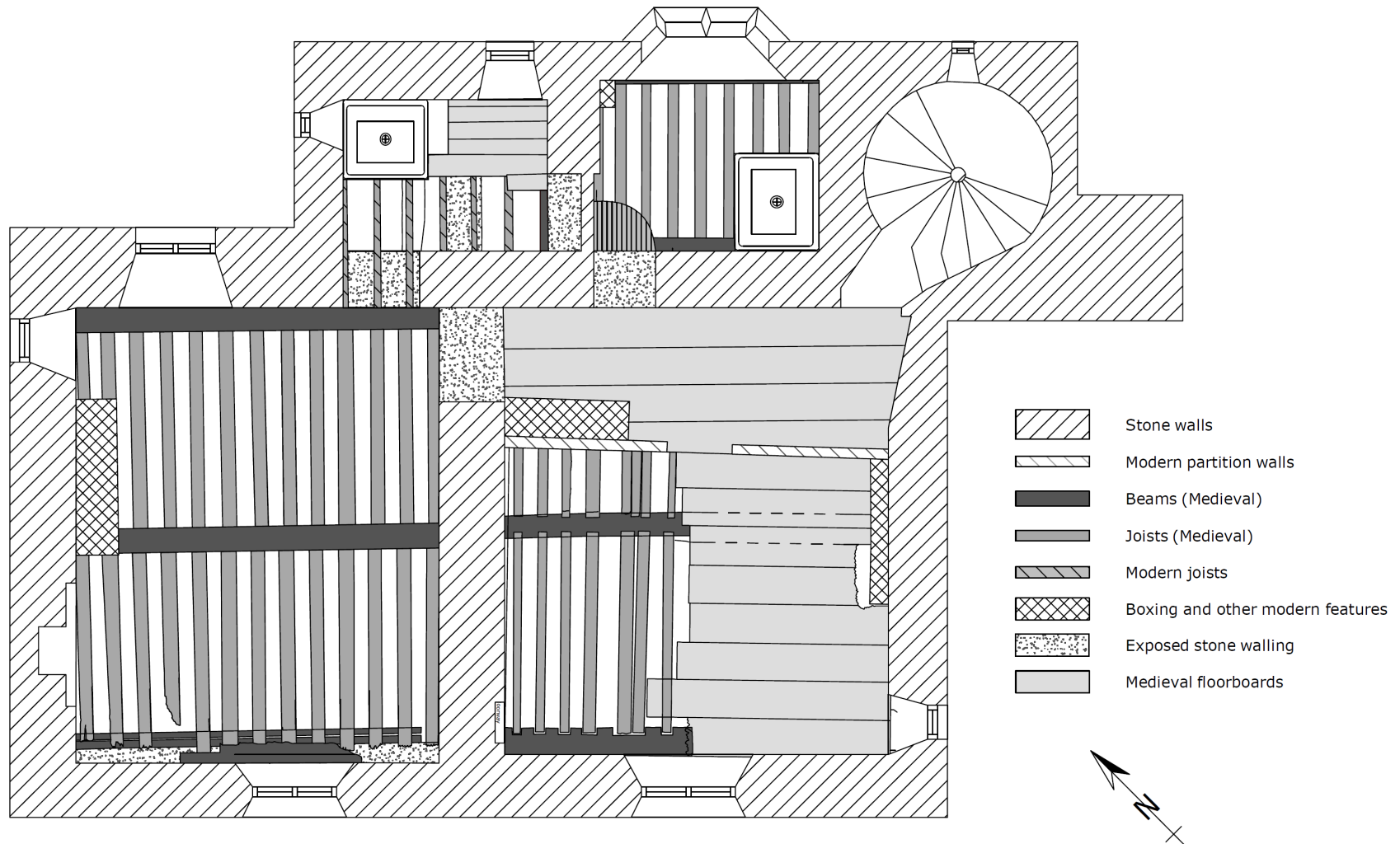
Photo 114: NE beam in ceiling of Bedroom 203, showing  
underlying partition wall



Photo 115: The two beams in the ceiling of Bedroom 201

#### **9.14 The Tower Summary**

- 9.14.1 The Tower would appear to contain a substantial amount of medieval fabric, including almost complete floor joists and beams at second floor level, and stone framed windows and doorways. The ceiling of the Entrance Lobby comprises stone corbelling which is likely to be original.
- 9.14.2 The layout of the Tower has also remained substantially intact, with few more recent alterations and partition additions.
- 9.14.3 The fire safety works will leave all of the historic fabric of the building intact. Although areas have needed to be replastered, such as the ceiling in Bedroom 109 and the wall at the end of Corridor 205, these have been done sympathetically using traditional methods.



**Figure 11:** Floor Plan of second floor of Tower



## **10. CONCLUSIONS**

- 10.1 The work was undertaken as part of the necessary fire safety improvements for the guest accommodation, which included the provision of new fire escapes and fire safety doors, involving some opening up of two former blocked external doorways and addition of fire surrounds and automatic closures to some internal doors. The works also included the lifting of internal floorboards in all first and second floor rooms to allow fire suppressant materials to be placed in sub-floor voids. Even given its limited nature, the historic building recording at Mathern Palace has provided a considerable amount of information regarding the development of the building.
- 10.2 Due to the previous use of flammable glue to adhere all of the carpets to the previous upper floor levels of the Palace, all floorboards and ply-board sheeted floors had to be removed and replaced. It is evident that the majority of these floorboards were of recent date, although some, especially within the NW wing of the Palace, may have dated from the renovations by Tipping in the 1890s, and although unfortunate, it was necessary. The replacement floorboards used were of a comparable size and form to those removed.
- 10.3 The fire safety works were designed by Christopher Thomas Architects, and carried out by Midland Conservation Limited, both parties being experienced in dealing with historically significant buildings. The works have been successfully undertaken, preserving as much of the historic fabric of the building as possible (very little other than floorboards being lost), minimising the visual impact of any works on the historic structure and protecting the structure for the future.
- 10.4 Mathern Palace comprises four main older historic elements to the building, which include:
- The Northwest Wing;
  - The Southeast/Chapel Wing;
  - The Central Section; and
  - The Tower.
- 10.5 Additional elements to the existing building include the Kitchens and Offices around the Chapel Wing, the Lounge and Dining Hall to the southwest, and the chauffeur wing to the north. All of these elements may well have incorporated earlier fabric, although this was not discernible during this scheme of works. The majority of this layout would appear to have been undertaken during the renovations by Tipping in the 1890s.
- 10.6 The Northwest Wing was evidently substantially renovated by Avray Tipping. The beams and joists of the first floor appear to be almost entirely of 1890s date, providing the ceiling for the 'oak parlour' as referred to in the 1911 Country Life Magazine article. The presence of the two corbels on which the main cross beam rests are also of 1890s date and are carved with the crest of the Diocese of Llandaff and also the family crest of Avray Tipping. The ceiling comprised exposed oak beams and joists infilled with wooden slats, all stained or varnished a dark brown colour. The layout of the rooms on both the ground floor and first floor level has been substantially altered with a number of stud wall partitions. The Gazebo Lounge on the SW end of the wing is likely to be a substantial rebuild of earlier dilapidated elements of the Palace to create a timber

framed and glazed, gallery styled room. It is unclear what the original function of this part of the building was during the medieval period, or when it was constructed.

- 10.7 The Chapel Wing comprises the first floor Chapel that is thought to have been built during the early 16<sup>th</sup> century by Bishop Miles Salley. The wing had evidently been in a poor state of repair when Tipping undertook his renovations, supposedly being latterly used for barns. The floors have been substantially altered, with the reuse of several joists and floorboards. The stone mullioned window in the NE end of the wing in the Chapel is original, but it is likely that the NW facing window is smaller than the original. The re-opened doorway that leads into the Chapel Lounge may have originally been a matching window to that in the chapel (possibly both tall windows), but was subsequently turned into a doorway and accessed by an external staircase. This may have been built during its use as a barn. It is also possible that the chapel was originally open to roof height from ground floor level. The original room layout is uncertain, but has been altered at ground floor level through the use of stud partition walls. At first floor level the Chapel and Chapel Lounge rooms have their original floor plan as evidenced by the presence of the large stone walls. The Chapel Lounge has been altered and subdivided in recent years, after the renovations by Tipping.
- 10.8 The Central Section of the building is quite unassuming externally. It comprises large stone outer walls and two rooms at ground floor level. The layout of the upper floor has been substantially altered to create bedrooms and bathrooms for guest accommodation. The removal of the floorboards exposed a series of beams and joists which would appear to be substantially medieval in date and may be original. The northern half of the Central Section has an ornate ceiling with decorative mouldings on the beams, although it does not cover the entire ceiling of this section and may thus indicate earlier subdividing partitions of which little evidence now survives.
- 10.9 The Tower comprises a three storey structure comprising two main rooms on each floor, with smaller rooms on the NE side and a spiral stair on its eastern corner. The stair is considered to be contemporary with the tower, although as it does not appear to have accessed the first floor, but instead leads into the Central Section of the building. This may indicate that the Tower was a later addition. The ground floor of the Tower has a cart entrance which would have run directly through the Tower providing access to the rear of the Palace. This has been enclosed in more recent phases of development of the Palace (possibly with Tipping's renovations in the 1890s). The significance of the curving passageway through to the Northwest Wing is uncertain, but may have been used to restrict access to this part of the Palace. The cart entrance has a vaulted ceiling constructed of stone on to which the floor of the room above was constructed. No evidence of medieval flooring survives within this room at first floor level (the stone corbelling for the vault being levelled with a depth of sand of uncertain date. The adjacent room at first floor level was obscured with scaffolding and it was not possible to obtain any clear evidence for the date of the underlying beams and joists in this room. The rooms below this do have large beams visible in the ceiling which may indicate medieval fabric survives.
- 10.10 The second floor of the tower contains an almost complete series of medieval beams and joists for the two main bedrooms. These are mostly well preserved. In Bathroom 202 the remains of a garderobe chute were exposed, which dropped the full height of the tower to the small Room 035

on the ground floor. Evidence for how waste was dealt with in this room is unclear, but the layout of the building would suggest a garderobe was present on each floor, and thus it is surmised that a drain is likely to have been present leading from Room 035 away from the Palace.

- 10.11 The beams in the ceiling of the second floor rooms of the Tower may suggest either a third floor was formerly present, or that it had an accessible roof (accessed via the spiral stair, which rises above the level of the second floor).
- 10.12 In general the tower contains the best preserved medieval fabric of the entire Palace, including stone mullioned windows, timber work and a largely intact original layout. The first floor of the Central Section also contains a substantial amount of medieval material, although the room layouts have evidently changed. Both the Northwest and Chapel Wings have been substantially altered during the renovations by Tipping, with the rebuilding of the first floors. A number of reused timbers and floorboards are present in the Chapel Wing, whereas the Northwest Wing may have had entirely new floors inserted.
- 10.13 The watching brief has provided significant information on the surviving elements of Mathern Palace, although due to the nature of the work numerous questions regarding phasing remain unanswered. The fire safety works have involved a minimal amount of opening up (except for floors) or removal of plasterwork etc, which would provide better evidence for the phasing of the structure. The original layout of the Palace would have included further ranges of buildings of which now either a few standing ruins (adapted as garden features) or only below ground evidence now survives.
- 10.14 From the available evidence it is suggested that the earliest part of the surviving structure would be the Central Section, with its decorated medieval ceiling. This may have been an ornate hall. The Tower then seems to have been the next addition, as evidenced by the entranceway into the first floor of the Central Section. The form of the Tower has similarities to a Medieval Tower House, which could suggest this is a very early element of the Palace. The Northwest and Chapel Wings were added at a later date. Numerous additions and adaptations of earlier fabric were then constructed by Tipping in the 1890s, including the kitchens and offices around the Chapel Wing.

## **11. SOURCES**

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## **APPENDIX 1: REGISTER OF PARKS AND GARDENS DESCRIPTION**

**Site Name: Mathern Palace**

**Ref. No. PGW (Gt) 35**

**OS MAP 162 GRID REF. ST 524908**

### **Designations:**

**Listed Building: Bishop's Palace Grade I;**

**Gardens: Grade II\***

Primary reasons for grading: Garden designed by H. Avray Tipping around medieval bishops' Palace. Well preserved structure and structural planting; immaculately maintained

### **Type of Site**

Arts-and-Crafts garden

### **Main Phases of Construction**

1894-1914

### **House Name: Mathern Palace**

Grid ref: ST 524908

**Date/style:** mainly early 16th century; late 19th century/Tudor; Tudor vernacular

### **Brief description**

Mathern Palace is a rambling stone building which stands to the S of the churchyard in Mathern village. Throughout the medieval period it was one of the residences of the bishops of Llandaff. The oldest part of the fabric is 15th century, built by Bishop de La Zouche, who also built the gatehouse to the outer court (now gone) in 1419. In the early 16th century bishop Miles Salley made some additions (probably the chapel, later turned into a farm dairy and granary, the refectory (most gone), possibly the kitchens (later rebuilt by bishop Godwin in the late 16th-early 17th century, and when Tipping arrived reduced to cart-horse stable). Further building was carried out by Bishop Godwin at the end of the 16th century-beginning of the 17th century, and the Palace entered a long phase of decline. After c. 1700 bishops no longer used it, and the Palace declined into a farmhouse.

In 1894 H. Avray Tipping bought the Palace, and began extensive renovation, rebuilding and additions. The NE entrance side, with its tall tower next to the entrance hall, was left alone, except for minor repairs. No attempt was made to restore the destroyed parts of the quadrangle to the SW, ruined parts of which he incorporated into the garden (refectory). The kitchen wing (W wing) was rebuilt as it was more or less ruinous. The inside was extensively refurbished. Avray Tipping lived here until 1914, when he moved to Mounton House.

### **Outbuildings**

Name: Various

Grid ref: ST 524908

Date/style, and brief description

Various stone buildings, mostly utilitarian but including a small cottage, on the E side of the Palace, arranged irregularly within the walled precinct.

### **The Pleasure Garden**

Grid ref: ST 524908

Date/style: 1894-c.1900/Robinsonian (formal structure/natural)

### **General Description, History and Layout**

The gardens of Mathern Palace lie to the NW, SE and SW of the house, with a small forecourt and entrance to the NE. They are the creation of H. Avray Tipping, who made them from 1894 to c. 1900. When he arrived there was only 'the sordid untidiness of a hopelessly ill contrived and unrepaired farmstead', and the medieval fishponds in the valley bottom to the NW of the house. Avray Tipping laid out terraces on the SW-facing slope, simply walled with local limestone. Level lawns, the kitchen garden and a sunken rose garden were made to the SE, and the whole structure was linked by paved paths and grass walks flanked by clipped yew and topiary hedges. Clipped yew hedges also formed the boundaries between garden compartments. The steeper slope on the NW side, which led down to the fishponds, was made into a rockery, which is now a grass slope, and mature trees in this area were incorporated. The two fishponds, linear ponds on a NE-SW axis, were also brought in to the scheme. The lower, larger one (SW) has recently (1990) been dredged and widened, giving it an irregular outline, and it now leaks. Planting in the garden was originally very rich and varied, with borders along the yew hedges, the sunken rose garden with a rose pergola across the central path, climbers, yew topiary, and formal beds on the upper terrace. Much of this planting has gone or has been simplified, but the structural planting (yew hedging) remains, as does a large circular yew arbour on the highest terrace SW of the house. Some trees remain, and original shrubs include lilacs and magnolias, and original climbers include wisteria and double Banksian roses on the house and a Hoya on the ruins.

### **Structural Components**

To the NE of the house (entrance side) are a gravel drive and forecourt, with a tarmacked parking area. To the SW of the house are a series of terraces bounded by low limestone dry-stone walls. Next to the house on this side are two level terraces. The northernmost one is bounded by the NW wing of the house on its NW side and by ruined buildings on its SE side, with a further free-standing ruined building incorporated into the SW side. A concrete-paved path runs NE-SW across the terrace from a door in the house. To the SE is a further terrace, reached through a doorway in the ruined building. There are similar straight concrete-paved paths, and a concrete-paved area bounded by a low wall immediately in front of the house, next to the loggia.

The next compartment to the SE is the sunken rose garden, reached on the NW side through a stone arch (modern). This is a rectangular area divided into two slightly sunken rectangular areas, with a narrow terrace all around, and a wide central grass walk orientated NE-SW.

The sunken areas are reveted with dry-stone walls. In the sunken areas are diagonal paths of isolated concrete paving stones and small central beds edged with concrete paving.

There are two further rectangular terraces to the SW of the house, below the northernmost upper terrace. The middle one is bounded on the NE side by a low revetment wall. The lower one is bounded on its NE side by a higher revetment wall (c. 1 m. high), with central dividing steps (rebuilt). Its SW side forms the boundary of the garden, and is revetted to ground level with a stone wall.

To the NW of the house is a steep natural slope, down which winds a gravel path. At the foot of the slope are the two ponds. These are orientated NE-SW, have an outlet at the SW end, and are linked by a shallow bar at the W end of the upper pond. The westernmost pond is long and narrow, widest at the W end, and of irregular outline (of recent making, when pond dredged). The easternmost pond

is subrectangular and slightly wider, with a shallow bar at its E end. The garden is bounded on this side (NW) by a ditch.

### **Built Components**

At the entrance to the Palace, on the NE side, is a gateway flanked by stone gate piers, with high stone walls along the boundary on either side. Further stone walls flank the drive and bound the garden of the small cottage on this side.

The upper terraces on the SW side are bounded on their outer sides partly by ruined medieval/Tudor buildings and partly by low stone walls. In the N corner of the southernmost one, tucked into the angle between the house and the ruined wall between the two terraces, is a small pent-roofed loggia, open to the S, with a tiled roof, simple wooded supports on the open side, and a concrete-paved floor. In front of it is a paved area bounded by a low stone wall.

In the rose garden shallow flights of stone steps descend to the sunken parts in the middle of all sides except those flanking the central grass walk, where there are stone benches set into the sides instead.

There are two flights of steps down from the upper to the middle terrace, in the N corner of which is a small stone shelter (modern).

Around the central millstone and sundial is some stone flag paving.

In the centre of the NE side of the lower terrace are dividing steps up to the middle terrace (recently rebuilt).

On the SW boundary of the garden, near the W corner, and at the end of the main NE-SW axis through the sunken rose garden, is a simple stone pavilion, made on the N end of a small stone barn. It is open to the NE and NW, where it looks out over the field outside the garden.

To the SE of the house the garden compartment at the northern end of the garden is the kitchen garden. This is bounded by a high stone wall at its NE end, against which glass-houses formerly stood (whitewashing on wall, and roof-line visible). One projected from the wall, and its back wall still stands, at right-angles to the wall. There is one (modern) ruined glass-house.

### **Architectural Ornaments**

In the centre of the middle terrace, on the main NW-SE axis of the garden on this side (formed by the grass walk flanked by yew hedges), is a sundial pillar set in the middle of a large circular millstone, with stone flag paving around it. The pillar is wooden, squared, with four geometric carved motifs on each side.

### **Planted Components**

The gardens are largely laid out to lawns, with some ornamental tree planting, clipped yew hedging flanking paths and defining garden compartments, and some yew topiary.

To the NE of the house, in the courtyard in front of the house, are a small lawn, and some shrub/herbaceous borders at the foot of the walls. Notable mature plants are a *Magnolia grandiflora* to the NE of the front door, and nearby lilacs and magnolias.

The northernmost upper terrace is laid out to lawn, with peripheral borders and climbing plants on the house and ruined buildings. Notable mature plants are all climbers: wisteria and a double Banksian rose on the house, and a *Hoya* on the ruined building.

The southernmost upper terrace is also laid out mainly to lawn, in the centre of which is a circle of eight yew trees, clipped to form a 'house' with a curving 'roof'

and eight cylindrical 'supports'. (This was formerly clipped, in Tipping's day, to form doorways and windows.)

To the SE of the house, the kitchen garden is cultivated, and is bounded on its SW side by a high clipped yew hedge. On the wall of the stables, at the NW end of the garden, is an old espalier peach. To the SW is a large level lawn bounded on all sides by clipped yew hedges.

In the middle of the NE side is a rectangular recess or alcove in the hedge. There are three openings in the hedge on the SW side. A former path along the SE side has been converted into a flowerbed.

The sunken rose garden to the SW has a wide central grass walk orientated NE-SW, with slightly raised borders on either side. The two sunken gardens are grassed. The garden is surrounded by clipped yew hedges, with openings at the ends of the grass walk. On the SW side this is flanked by large topiary shapes (formerly peacocks). The roses of the former 'rose' garden have gone.

The grass walk axis in the sunken garden is continued southwards as a grass walk, with a clipped yew hedge on its SE side (formerly with topiary foxes on top). At right-angles to this, running SE-NW along the SW boundary of the sunken garden, and continuing on NW for a short distance, is a long grass walk flanked by clipped yew hedges.

To the SW is an area of rough grass, mature trees, including poplar and sycamore, and shrubs, including lilac. There is a yew hedge along the SE boundary.

The middle and lower terraces are both laid out to lawn, with narrow peripheral borders. At the NW end of the lower terrace are two yews clipped into 'mushroom' shapes.

The NW slope is rough grass with a few mixed trees, including two clumps of old yew trees. The NW boundary of the garden, next to the ponds, is planted with willows. Along the SE side of the upper pond are three fir trees.

Reconstructions of original planted features: None

Special collections of garden plants: None

Documented living plants: Old photographs (1910) of yew arbour, yew topiary and yew hedging.

Other (including elements of nature conservation interest): None known

### **Essential Setting and Views Beyond The Site**

Essential setting: pasture field to SW of garden, pasture fields to NW of garden, and churchyard to NE.

Views: SW from house and terraces over pasture fields

### **Any Special Features**

None

### **Survival of Individual Components**

Structural components: most

Built components: all

Architectural ornaments: most

Planted components: some

### **SOURCES**



1914 Sale Particulars: Gwent Record Office (D25.I407)

H. Avray Tipping, 'The Old Palace at Mathern and its gardens I.', *The Garden*, 27 January 1900, pp. 57-9.

H. Avray Tipping, 'The Old Palace at Mathern and its gardens 2.', *The Garden*, 3 February 1900, pp. 77-8.

H. Avray Tipping, *Country Life* 19 November 1910.

R. Haslam, 'The Houses of H. Avray Tipping I', *Country Life* 6 December 1979, pp. 2154-57.

**MATHERN PALACE, CHEPSTOW,  
MONMOUTHSHIRE  
HISTORIC BUILDINGS RECORDING**

**RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2010/64**

**Chwefror 2011  
February 2011**

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by

James Meek

Swydd / Position: Head of Field Services

Llofnod / Signature .....  ..... Date

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith  
This report has been checked and approved by

Duncan Schlee

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.  
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: Project Manager

Llofnod / Signature .....  ..... Date

*Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau  
sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn*

*As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any  
comments you may have on the content or presentation of this report*