

ABEREIDDI SLATE QUARRY COTTAGES PEMBROKESHIRE



Report prepared
by
Dyfed Archaeological Trust
for
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**ABEREIDDI SLATE QUARRY COTTAGES
PEMBROKESHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING**

by
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SUMMARY

Dyfed Archaeological Trust (Cambria Archaeology) Field Services were commissioned by the National Trust to undertake a programme of archaeological recording of a terrace of derelict cottages at the former Abereiddi Slate Quarry, Pembrokeshire (NGR SM79743138), ahead of consolidation work being carried out on the structures to make them safe for visitor access.

The programme of archaeological recording included a photographic survey of the surviving masonry of the structures, both externally and internally, along with scale drawings of the front elevation and east interior wall of Cottage 3. A scale plan of the layout of the cottages was also produced.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

The National Trust commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust (Cambria Archaeology) Field Services to carry out a programme of archaeological recording on a derelict terrace of quarry workers cottages at Abereiddi, Pembrokeshire (NGR SM79743138) ahead of consolidation work on the cottages.

1.2 Scope of the Project

The project was designed to compile a photographic survey of both the interiors and exteriors of the surviving cottages. Additionally the project was designed to produce a drawn record of the layout of the cottages and a section of the front elevation and an internal wall.

1.3 Report Outline

This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background (Section 2) before summarising the results of the archaeological recording programme (Section 3).

Scale drawings are included in the text and the photographic survey is included as Appendix 1.

1.4 Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER¹) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

¹ Held and managed by Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo

2. THE SITE

2.1 The Site Location

The derelict terrace of cottages, known as Aberiddi Row is located at NGR SM79743138 and forms part of the former Aberiddi Slate Quarry complex. The site is set at the end of a coastal valley at an altitude of approximately 10m above Ordnance Datum. The terrace is aligned roughly east-west.



Figure 1: Location map showing Aberiddi Row.

Reproduced from the 1980 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale Pathfinder Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A.

2.2 Historical Background

The southwest Wales slate industry, although much smaller than its counterpart in northwest Wales, operated for centuries and it is possible to tentatively suggest slate was being quarried in the region from at least the Roman period due to its presence at Caerleon, Monmouthshire (Roberts 1993, 138-139).

Aberiddi Slate Quarry was certainly in existence by 1838 when it was leased by W J Ward, W Williams and J Jones (Richards 1998, 37). Aberiddi Row does not appear on the Llanrhian parish tithe map of 1844. In 1841 the quarry was leased to Benjamin Hill, Robert Norman and John Barclay who had ambitious plans to expand the quarry. By 1849 it is known workers housing had been constructed as part of this expansion programme (ibid, 38). Such was the dynamic nature of the Aberiddi Quarry that it was attracting experienced slate quarrymen from northwest Wales with thirty one of the fifty eight slate workers listed as living in Llanrhian parish in the 1851 census having been born in north Wales (Roberts 1993, 149).

Aberiddi Row consists of the remains of a terrace of seven cottages, which appear to have been constructed in one operation and appear to be of identical layout. Entry to the cottages was via the south wall into a broadly square room each with a fireplace and niches, which were presumably for storage. Whilst production at Aberiddi ceased in the late 19th century (Richards, 38) the cottages continued to be inhabited. It is known a typhoid outbreak swept through

the cottages in the early 1920s whilst information received from local inhabitants during this study suggested that a baker in nearby St David's whom was referred to as 'Dai the Crust' was delivering bread to the cottages in the late 1930s indicating they were still occupied at this time.

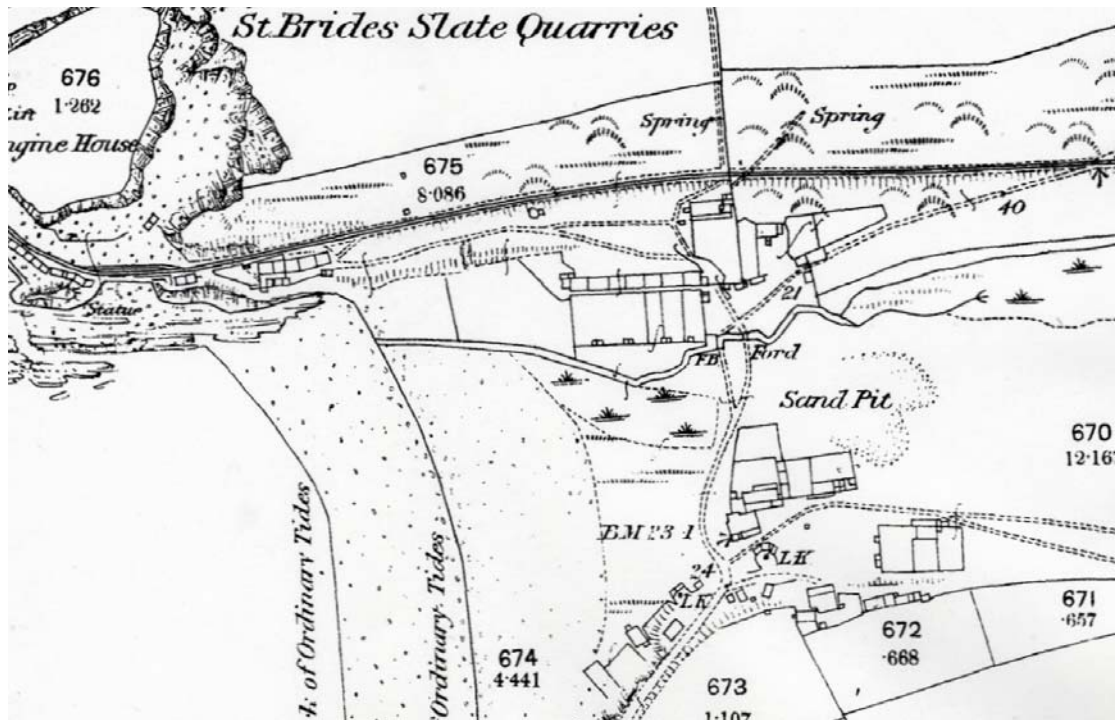


Figure 2: Extract of 1st edition 1:2500 OS map showing layout of cottages (1889).

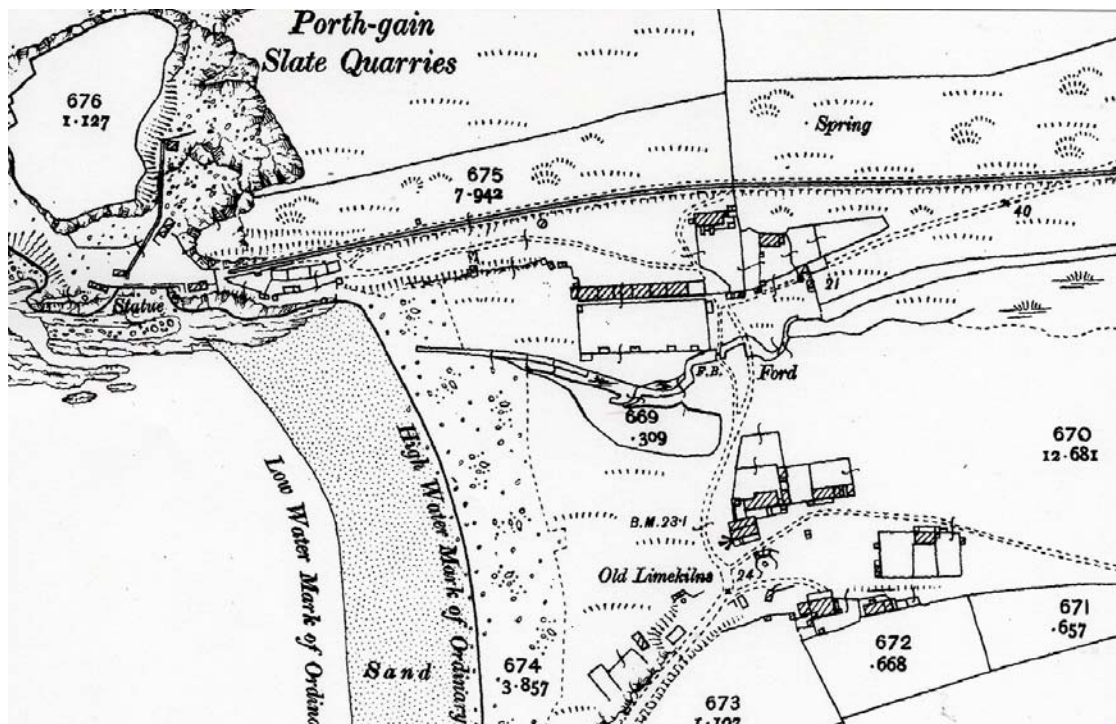


Figure 3: Extract of 2nd edition 1:2500 OS map showing layout of cottages (1907).

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE COTTAGES

The surviving masonry of the cottages is reasonably stable, although, the interior wall between 5 and 6 is leaning at the top and may collapse. The cottages are numbered from east to west (Figure 4).

3.1 Cottage 1

Much of the west gable, east and north walls have been destroyed. However, it is possible to determine their former positions from the presence of grassed over spreads of rubble. These spreads of rubble are highly likely to mask and protect surviving masonry.

3.2 Cottage 2

The north wall survives to almost full height, but the south wall survives only as a grassed spread of rubble. The east gable wall has survived but is in relatively poor condition with the northern end being much degraded. The southern end has survived in a better condition and contains a niche which would have probably been used for storage. As with cottage 1 rubble spreads are present across much of the interior, which have the potential to mask and protect any surviving masonry or floor surfaces.

3.3 Cottage 3

As with cottage 2 much of the south wall has been lost and is now marked by grassed over rubble spread. The north wall survives to full height and is in relatively good condition. The central section of the east wall has collapsed, however, its southern end has survived in good condition. It is possible to identify the position of a fireplace along with its associated chimney flue and a storage niche in the surviving sections (see Figs 5 and 6).

3.4 Cottage 4

Much of the mid section of the south wall has been lost and the line survives as a line of grassed over rubble. The east gable wall is almost gone and any surviving masonry is masked by substantial spreads of grassed over rubble throughout the whole of the interior of the cottage giving it a bowl like appearance. As in the case of cottage 3 the north wall appears to survive to full height. A possible fireplace is present in the western gable wall, which shares a chimney with the fireplace in the eastern gable of cottage 3.

3.5 Cottage 5

This cottage as with cottage 4 contains substantial spreads of grassed over rubble throughout its interior. The east gable wall survives almost to full height on its southern end and contains a niche, the northern end has collapsed. The south wall has almost gone with only a short length of the west end remaining. The north wall has fared better and survives almost to full height.

3.6 Cottage 6

Much of the upstanding masonry of this cottage has been lost with both the east gable wall and south wall being almost completely lost but marked by grassed over rubble spreads. The north wall survives to almost full height.

3.7 Cottage 7

As with cottage 6 much of the structure has been lost and is now evidenced by spreads of grassed over rubble, which may mask some surviving masonry. However, the north wall survives, but in a much damaged condition. A small possible extension added to the eastern end of the cottage survives only to the lower courses. It is possible that this extension may once have had a communal function as privies or a wash house.

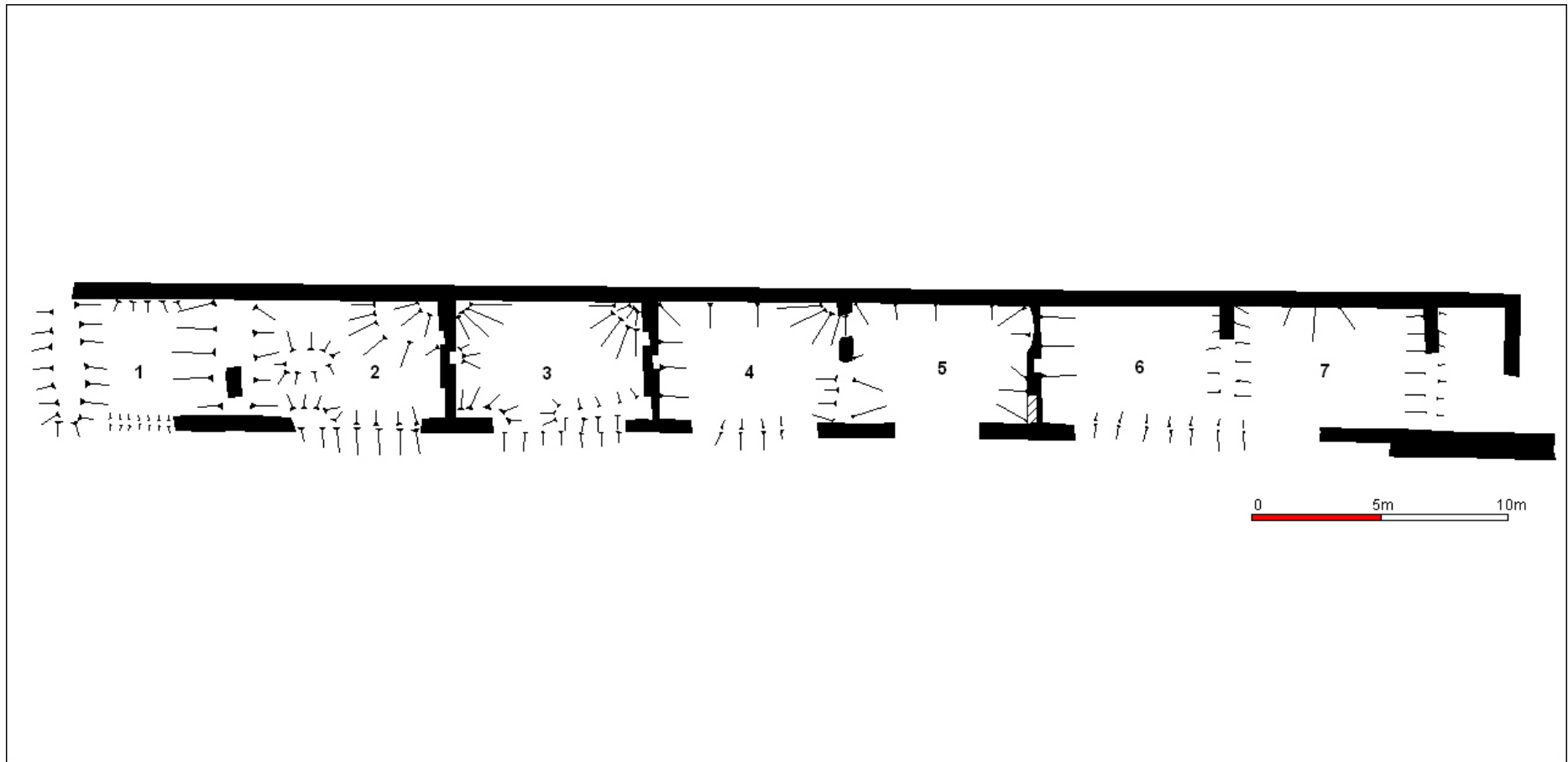


Figure 4: Ground plan of Abereiddi Cottages.



Figure 5: East wall interior of Cottage 3.

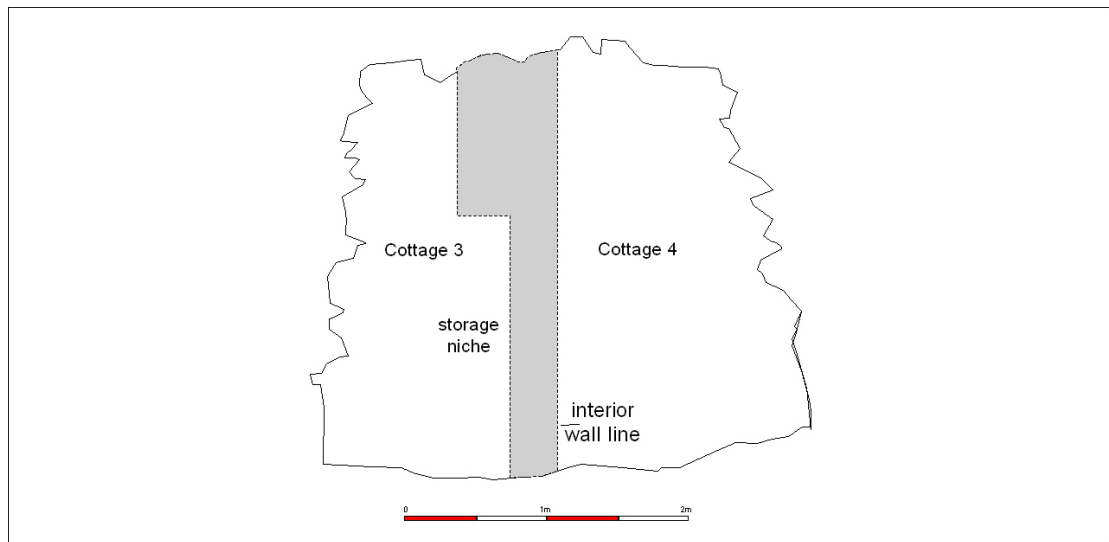


Figure 6: Surviving front elevation between Cottages 3 and 4.

SOURCES

Map

Ordnance Survey (1889) 1:2500 Pembrokeshire sheet XV NW
Ordnance Survey (1907) 1:2500 Pembrokeshire sheet XV NW
Ordnance Survey

Published Sources

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**APPENDIX 1
THE PHOTOGRAPHS**



Plate 1: Cottage 1 front elevation



Plate 2: Cottage 1 north wall interior



Plate 3: Cottage 1 east wall interior



Plate 4: Cottage 1 south wall interior



Plate 5: Cottage 1 west wall interior



Plate 6: Cottage 1 north wall exterior



Plate 7: Cottage 2 front elevation



Plate 8: Cottage 2 north wall interior



Plate 9: Cottage 2 east wall interior



Plate 10: Cottage 2 east wall interior – detail of storage niche



Plate 11: Cottage 2 west wall interior



Plate 12: Cottage 3 front elevation



Plate 13: Cottage 3 north wall interior



Plate 14: Cottage 3 east wall interior



Plate 15: Cottage 3 east wall interior – detail of storage niche



Plate 16: Cottage 3 west wall interior



Plate 17: Cottage 4 front elevation



Plate 18: Cottage 4 north wall interior



Plate 19: Cottage 4 east wall interior



Plate 20: Cottage 4 west wall interior



Plate 21: Cottage 4 west wall interior – detail of fireplace



Plate 22: Cottage 5 front elevation



Plate 23: Cottage 5 north wall interior



Plate 24: Cottage 5 east wall interior



Plate 25: Cottage 5 west wall interior



Plate 26: Cottage 6 front elevation



Plate 27: Cottage 6 north wall interior



Plate 28: Cottage 6 east wall interior



Plate 29: Cottage 6 south wall interior



Plate 30: Cottage 6 west wall interior



Plate 31: Cottage 7 front elevation



Plate 32: Cottage 7 north wall interior



Plate 33: Cottage 7 east wall interior



Plate 34: Cottage 7 west wall interior



Plate 35: Cottage 7 extension north wall interior



Plate 36: Detail of shared chimney between Cottages 5 and 6.



Plate 37: View south of cottages taken from high ground to the north



Plate 38: View southeast of cottages taken from high ground to the north



Plate 39: View northeast of cottages taken from adjacent car park