

# TREGEIRIOG HOUSE, LLANGOVAN, MONMOUTHSHIRE NP25 4BU

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**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT &  
HERITAGE STATEMENT  
FOR RESTORATION AND ALTERATION WORKS**

**FOR**

**DR & MRS J WESTLAKE**



**Tregeiriog House (January 2012)**

## **LOCATION:**

Tregeiriog House is situated approximately 6.5 miles south south west of Monmouth, a mile to the south of the village of Llangovan and about 1.5 miles west north west of Llanishen. The site slopes down from west to east and the house sits parallel to the road and therefore perpendicular to the contours, on the north side of an unclassified country lane. A formal front garden with a central path separates the house from the lane and a vehicular access is located to the east side of the building. The former farmyard is located uphill immediately to the west of Tregeiriog House.

The surrounding countryside consists of rolling farmland and scattered buildings with woodland to the higher hills to the east, where the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty begins.

## **EXISTING SITE:**

Tregeiriog House is a grade II\* listed building (for CADW Detail Report see Appendix 1). Possibly originally built in about 1560 there have been several phases of major alteration and extension, the last being probably in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since then only repairs or replacements have taken place with little ongoing general maintenance being apparent.

The house consists of a main two storey stone range with extensive cellars and attic rooms under a welsh slate roof; a parallel stone range to the north west; a two storey plus attic timber-framed wing to the north. The whole sits in the southwest corner of a plot of just over two acres (0.8ha). There is a range of brick built pig styes plus a timber lean-to shed just to the north of the house and a small brick shed to the east but otherwise the plot is laid to garden with mature trees and hedging.



**Rear of Tregeiriog House showing timber north wing and west parallel wing (right)**

Pedestrian access to the centrally placed front door is via a gate and path set into the stone boundary wall onto the lane. Vehicular access from the lane is currently via an informal break in the boundary hedge to the east of the house, though previously it was via a gateway in a similar position but now inaccessible due to overgrown conifers and a grass verge.

## **DESIGNATIONS:**

There are three formal designations attached to Tregeiriog House, one relating to the built environment and two relating to the natural environment. In addition the site is located just to the west of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

As stated above, Tregeiriog House is a grade II\* listed building which puts it in a group of about 5% of buildings nationally recognised as being of particular interest for their architectural and historic values. The site is therefore protected under national legislation (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). In this case the elements of particular note, in the listing schedule are the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century interior and the cellars.

The extensive cellars are also designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to the presence of Lesser Horseshoe bats. This is a national designation but the cellars are also designated as an SAC (Special Area of Conservation), a European designation.

## **PROJECT:**

Tregeiriog House has had little maintenance and investment in recent years and is now in a state of extensive decay largely due to water ingress in the centre and rear of the house. Listed Building Consent was granted for extensive restoration works, mainly to the roof and attic level, in the late 1990s but unfortunately the work was not carried out. It was recently purchased at auction with the intention of restoring it to provide a comfortable family home once again. With this in mind a comprehensive programme of repair and restoration is now proposed, alongside some relatively minor internal alterations, to enable its rejuvenation and use as a 21<sup>st</sup> century home. It is proposed to integrate various currently separate rooms more fully into the body of the house thus increasing the useable domestic floor area but without an increased building footprint.

There are two main areas of repair, both resulting from substantial water ingress over several years: the valley gutter between the front range and the parallel range to the north which has completely failed and has been a major source of water penetration for some considerable time; the timber framed wing to the north which has suffered from beetle attack and water ingress behind the inappropriate flat cement sheet cladding.

The lack of maintenance has resulted in the four remaining chimneys becoming unstable due to eroded pointing and a fifth chimney on the parallel range has already been truncated at some stage in the past. The windows are mostly 20<sup>th</sup> century small-paned, storm-proofed casements with broken glazing bars and/or areas of rot and are beyond repair. The cement render to most of the elevations will not be allowing the stone structure to breathe and is retaining moisture which is detrimental to the historic fabric and to the internal environment. There are areas of floorboards that need replacement due to beetle attack and rot and lath and plaster ceilings that need repair.

The proposed alterations involve the insertion of strategically and discreetly located rooflights to enable better use to be made of the large attics in the front range and to provide natural light to the narrow spiral staircases and the rear porch. A reinstated dormer window is proposed in the timber-framed wing to match the existing dormer, taking advantage of the view to the east and increasing light levels in Bedroom 6. The steep, awkward bottom steps of the existing mast stair in the timber-framed wing are clearly not part of the original staircase and will be replaced by steps in their historic position, thus re-establishing the historic circulation pattern. It is proposed improve the connection of the north wing ground floor room to the front range by opening a doorway into the staircase hall. It is also proposed to lower the ground floor level in the north wing to enable the re-opening and use of an original fireplace and to restore the original proportions of the room.

### **SITE HISTORY:**

John (Jones) appears to be the first recorded person to be described as being “of Tre-Geiriog”. He was born in about 1500 with his son, John ap John (born about 1530), succeeding him. John ap John was described as a Gentleman and had an estate of 200l. per annum to leave to his second son, William Jones, in around 1598.

“Tre-Geiriog” continues in the Jones family until the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century when William Tregose is born at “Tre-Geiriog” in about 1683. As with the Jones family, William is described as a Gentleman and he passes “Tregirog” to his son Daniel Tregose in about 1749 shortly after which Daniel Tregose becomes High Sheriff of Monmouth for the year 1756. Following his death in 1800 “Tregirog” passes to his niece, Mrs Crause as his own daughter has already died.

This time frame seems to cover the main periods of building works at Tregeiriog, though there are several differing theories as to the sequence of the extensions and upgrading. Due to the current condition of the house it has been possible to gain new information on the transformations that have occurred in the past four and a half centuries as missing wall plaster and collapsed ceilings have revealed details of the construction previously hidden.

### **EXISTING BUILDING AND CHRONOLOGY:**

There are two main reports that set out possible but different chronologies for the building of Tregeiriog House as it is seen today: the CADW listing report and the Heritage Statement that accompanied the 1990s application for Listed Building Consent by Alan Poulter Associates.

The CADW listing report suggests that the sequence of building at Tregeiriog House has been firstly the west end of the front range (late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century), then the east end of the front range in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (though this part may have been built in two stages, central and then east end) followed by the timber-framed rear wing in the later 17<sup>th</sup> century and lastly the parallel range to the north in the 18<sup>th</sup> century along with the cellars being dug out beneath the existing house.

In contrast late 1990's report suggests two possible sequences. The first timeline sees the rear timber-framed structure being built in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century followed by the east end of the front range in about 1630, after which the west end of the front range is added in about 1760 with the parallel range at the rear constructed in 1810 or thereabouts. The second timeline also starts with the construction of the timber-framed building in about 1570 but this is followed by the construction of the parallel range in about 1630 and then in about 1710 the east end of the front range is added with the west end being

the last addition in about 1760.

As both of these reports were written in the 1990s they would not have had the benefit of some of the elements that have come to light due to failed plaster work on the walls and laths on the ceilings. The partial collapse of the central ground floor room (drawing room) ceiling has revealed that the room used to display not only chamfered beams but chamfered first floor joists as well. This detail and the relatively low ceiling height on the ground floor are consistent with a date of about 1550-1570 and suggests that the east end of the front range is the oldest part of the current house. The current plain lath and plaster ceiling has laths of a size consistent with the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is therefore probably part of Daniel Tregose's remodeling works of 1758.

The large fireplace in the west end of this original building would appear to have had the main entrance door to the south in the gable wall rather than in its current position in the south elevation. There are believed to be several other instances of this layout, all dating from the same period.

As there was clearly a first floor at the 1560 date the question arises as to the location of the staircase. Currently there is a narrow staircase to the north of the fireplace but this is accessed from the room to the west rather than from within the original building footprint. However there is a cupboard to the side of the staircase, beneath the stair rising from the first to second floors, which may originally have been the position of the ground to first floor spiral stair, directly beneath the mast staircase to the attic floor. It has to be noted that the current staircase does have an unsatisfactory line, being neither entirely straight nor a spiral. It is possible that there was a staircase tower to the north of this initial building but the remnants of a stone building visible currently are located over a blocked window, now visible due to the removal of decayed wall plaster.



**East end roof truss showing empty mortices with peg holes for removed raking struts**

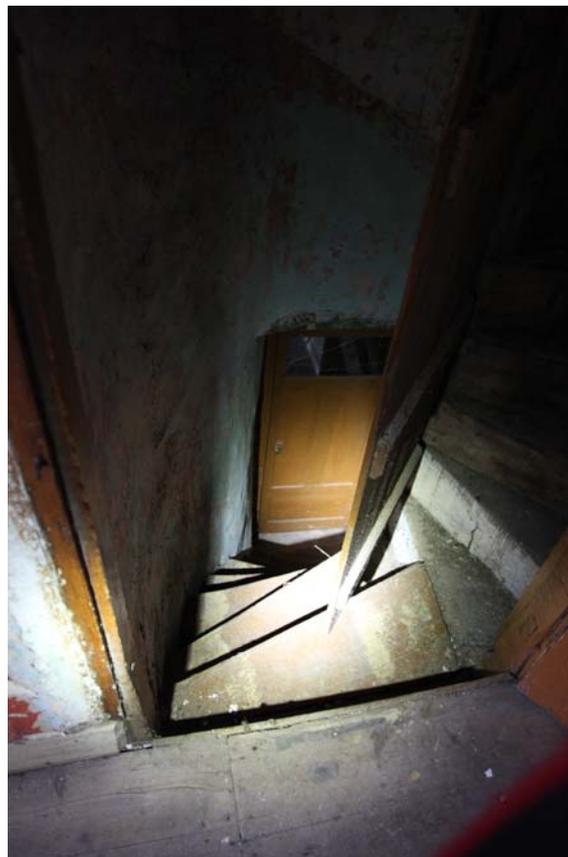
There is evidence in the attic that the roof trusses have been altered though no evidence that the roof height and profile has changed. There are mortice holes for raking struts in the principle rafters with inserted vertical posts acting as props onto the tie beam instead (See photograph above). This

alteration would have enabled ease of access within the attic space and may date from the construction of the second phase which added the west portion of the front range. The roof height however leaves a very high ceiling height at first floor level, in comparison with the ground floor rooms and there doesn't appear to have been an upper fireplace within the main original chimney, though there may be evidence beneath the existing plaster.

What are still in evidence are the timber lined window seats in the earliest part of the house. The north-facing windows retain these seats but the south-facing windows have had them blocked in with stone to raise the wall to cill level.

The second phase possibly dates from the change in ownership in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century after William Jones inherited Tregeiriog House in about 1598. This phase added the west section of the front range with its large gable end chimney and high ceiling levels. The stone lintel over the fireplace has DT 1758 carved into it but the stone does not appear to have been inserted later and the carving is crisp with no indication of having been an external datestone that has weathered and then been brought inside. It is possible that the carving therefore was carried out on an already in situ fireplace during Daniel Tregose's remodeling works of 1758.

With the addition to the west the original location of the front entrance door, on the west gable, was moved to the south elevation with a resultant baffle entry layout. To the north side of the original chimney, the staircase was probably reorientated at this time so that it came down into the new, more prestigious room. This would account for the unusual line of the staircase (See photograph below).



**Straightened "spiral" stair from ground to first floor with doors top and bottom plus spiral stair from first to second floor behind a further door.**

The roof over the west of the front range has not been altered substantially but does match the revised form of the east end roof. It is likely therefore that the east end was altered when the west end was added and that the rooms created were to be fully utilised for domestic accommodation, albeit for servants. However at the south west corner of the attic a hole has been discovered in the floor giving access to the volume to the south of the chimney breast in the master bedroom below. This volume is not apparent in the bedroom and the partition wall was evidently constructed to provide a clean straight wall, either when first built or possibly as part of the 1758 remodeling and “modernizing”. After carefully cleaning out the space no archaeology was discovered nor were there any indication that it had been used to keep anything hidden. The space did not appear to have previously had any covering though it is presumed that a trap door or, more likely, floorboards used to be present.

The third phase of major building work occurred in the later 17<sup>th</sup> century with the addition of the timber-framed, two-storey north wing consisting of a bay and a half plus a large stone chimney with diagonally set stacks at the north end. This east wall of the extension conflicts with a blocked up window in the rear wall of the front range and therefore must be of a later date, contrary to the 1990s application report mentioned above. However the timber frame does show some anomalies: there is a section of storey-height stone wall which projects from the front range and round which the timber frame has been constructed (see photograph below); the height of the plinth on the east and west walls is significantly different with the sole plate on the west wall almost sitting at mid-rail height and that of the east wall being at ground floor level. Though the significance of these items has not yet been explained it may suggest that there was an earlier stone building on the footprint of the timber-frame building.



**Timber frame external wall incorporating remnant of stone wall (right of window) projecting out from front range.**

The half bay in the timber north wing sits between the front range and the north wing rooms forming a generous lobby at each level. The doorway giving access into the original part of the house from this lobby is particularly decorative in its architrave and door detailing, possibly denoting its use by important members of the household or visitors rather than purely servant access. This is also the location of the mast stair that rises from ground to first to attic level with a landing at each level including the attic. The lowest three steps are clearly a later alteration as they are straight rather than winding and they are set at a much steeper pitch due to the available space in the hallway and the need to access the doorway (see photograph below) . However it is possible to see the line of the original stairs in the rear wall of the front range and this confirms that the staircase original continued to spiral down to ground floor level round the central mast.



**Base of mast staircase in inner hall with cracks providing evidence of original line of stairs in battered front range wall. Door to left provides access to drawing room and front range.**

The mast stair gave access to a luxury bedroom on the first floor with reeded moulding to the three sections of the ceiling and a fireplace that indicates the use of a hob grate, though this is no longer present (see photograph below). The attic room was separated from the landing with a partition utilizing the roof truss. Though there is now a dormer window to the west, and evidence of another to the east, these were only inserted after the west roof pitch was increased in height, possibly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century though possibly earlier. It is therefore not clear whether the attic spaces had any natural light when originally constructed.

With the front range being built in entirely in stone it is perhaps unusual to find a later addition constructed from timber-frame. A possible explanation may be that the requirement for extra rooms of luxury, grandeur and space was a matter of some urgency that did not allow for the timescales involved in constructing stone buildings. If there was a predecessor to the existing building, it was

possibly in a state of ruin but had a substantial decorative chimney that could be reused and therefore provided a useful basis for a rapid rebuild, albeit using a lighter weight construction method.

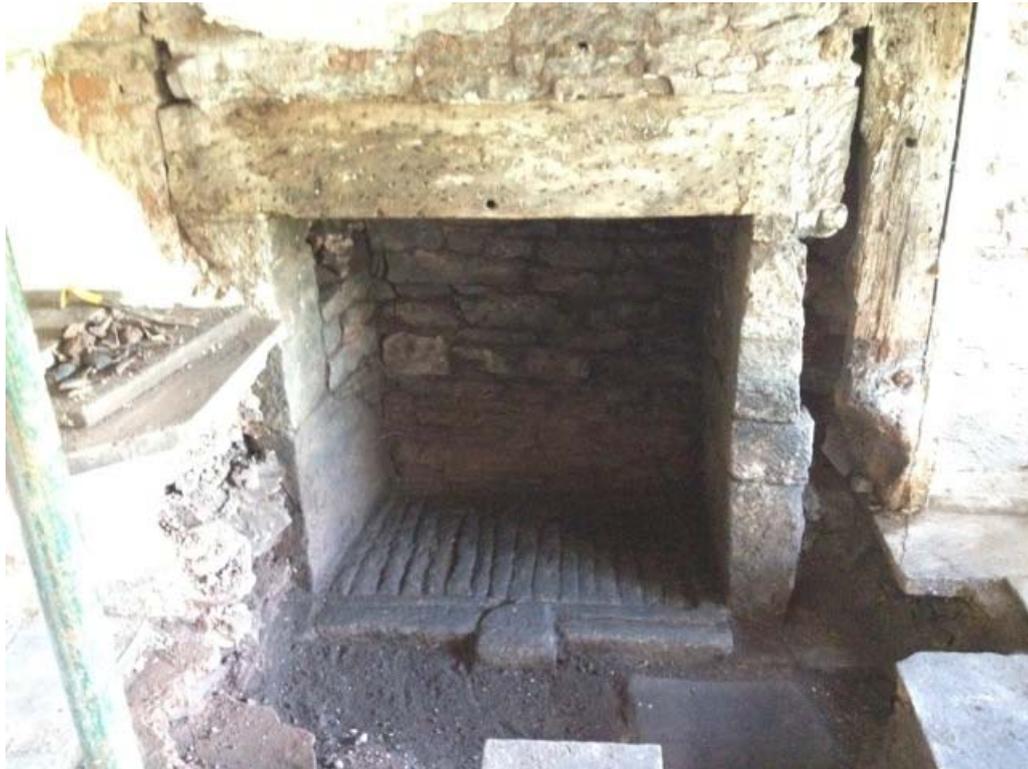


**First floor bedroom showing hob grate fireplace and reeded moulding to ceiling**

The ground floor room has been the subject of change both in volume and use. The dairy as it has been known, has a particularly low ceiling height, though the floor level is consistent with the adjacent rooms. The reason for this becomes clear after the discovery, behind some decayed wall plaster, of a hidden fireplace in the north wall. This fireplace is of roughly the same dimensions as the first floor fireplace and has a hearth at a level about 300mm lower than the existing ground floor level. It was clearly constructed as an open fire with a cobbled hearth and a simple timber bressumer beam (See photograph below).

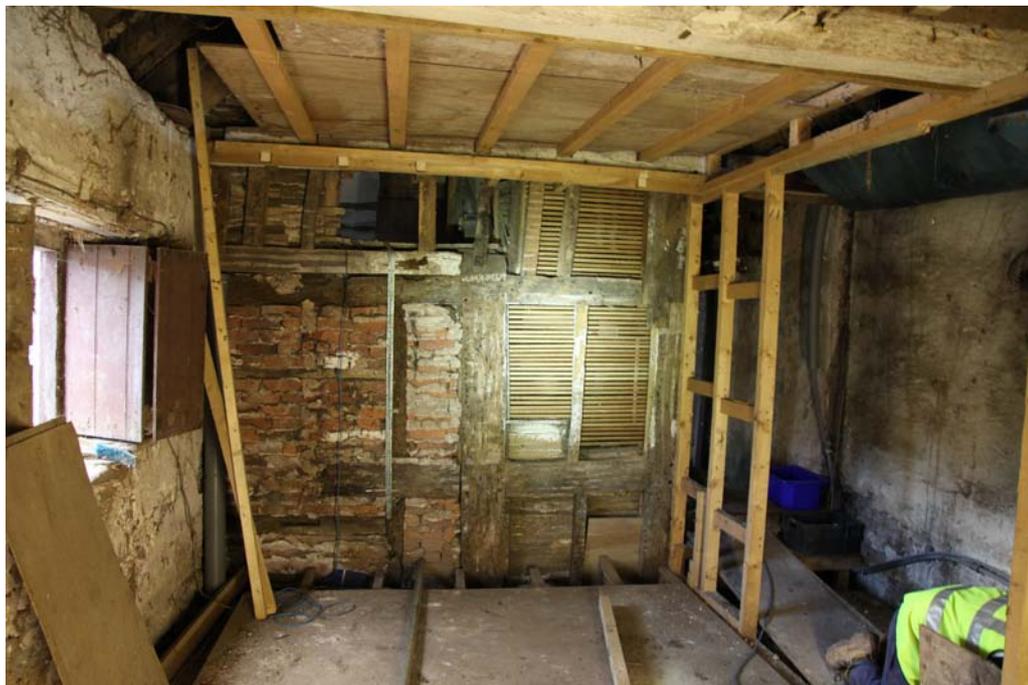
Later in its history, and possibly when the parallel range was built, the floor level was raised to match the level in the rest of the house though the ceiling level had to remain the same. This has consequences for the health of the lower parts of the timber frame as the floor level is now higher than the sole plate causing it to rot. At this stage stone shelves were arranged round the walls for dairy or food storage purposes. One of the shelves was put in front of the fireplace and it became lost behind the plaster.

The internal partition wall between the inner hallway and the former dairy is now brickwork and is single storey, but it is assumed that it was originally a timber framed wall as on the upper floors, with or without a doorway providing access into the rest of the ground floor. Without removing part of the partition it is not possible to investigate this further. It has been discovered however that the brick partition is built on top of one of the stone shelves and that this shelf is built off the original floor level. The partition therefore post-dates the change in ground floor level in the dairy.



**Dairy fireplace showing cobbled hearth and difference in floor levels – stone shelf to left.**

The fourth major addition to Tregeiriog House was the rear parallel range to the west of the north wing. This was added after the west roof pitch had been raised on the timber frame wing, as evidenced by the wall separating the two structures (see photograph below). This was clearly built as a service wing with the kitchen on the ground floor, a granary to the first floor and attic rooms.



**Separating wall between parallel and north ranges showing increase in height of timber-framed wall and recent access from mast stair to the right. Valley gutter runs along wall to right.**

This is probably part of the remodeling exercise carried out by Daniel Tregose in 1758 as it removes the service elements of the house to one area out of the more prestigious front range. It may have been at this point that the brickwork wall with no doorway was inserted in the dairy, thus denying direct access from the front of the house.

The kitchen has several layers of fireplaces and ovens the history of which has not so far been unpicked (see photograph below). The large chimney may have two flues within though it latterly only had one and even this has been truncated and fallen out of service. If the chimney originally had two flues they may have served both the ground and first floors or provided for two fires at ground floor level.



**Kitchen showing several layers of fireplaces and ovens**

Though the ground and attic levels of the parallel range were connected to the main house internally, the first floor was only accessible via a flight of external steps at the west end of the north elevation. The CADW listing report terms the first floor as a granary and it was certainly not in domestic use given its access arrangements. In the later 20<sup>th</sup> century a doorway has been formed off the mast stair giving access to the first floor, though the design of this area is rather crude and awkward.

The attic space was accessed internally from the attic room of the timber-framed wing, though this is now only evident by the curving of plasterwork in the earlier attic and hints of steps. As with the west attic there remains a small window with a timber shutter and no glazing in the gable wall to admit light and air.

The other 1758 remodeling works carried out involved the insertion of the front gable to add emphasis to the entrance door and window above. This required a degree of alteration to the roof of the original building which had already been altered during the second phase of work. The timbers used to form the gable are not of the same quality and detail as the original construction, but their purpose was for external appearance rather than internal.

The external appearance of Tregeriog was transformed at this stage by the application of lined stucco to most if not all elevations of the house including the timber framed wing. It is likely that the walls had

previously been either left as natural stone or limewashed, however this would give a rather rustic appearance not in line with the Georgian preferences. Areas of the original finish have been found on the rear and side elevations but the front elevation, which would have been more weathered, has been rendered with a roughcast cement render giving a grey appearance to the house rather than the cream colour of the stucco.

Turning to the internal remodeling, oak paneling was introduced to divide the original ground floor room into three rooms. The drawing room acquired one wall of paneling whilst the south east room became a paneled study with a fireplace. To the north of the study and accessed from both the study and the drawing room a small back room was formed that was clearly not to be seen by visitors as it exhibits only the rough back of the oak panels and the partition framework, however it did house the access to the east cellar staircase. A timber floor has since been laid over this access without provision of a trap door.

In all these rooms the chamfered joists were covered by a lath and plaster ceiling which would have given a more fashionable appearance to match the paneling. It is not clear whether the same alteration was carried out in the west end of the front range as this room sports a relatively recent first floor with an unfinished plasterboard ceiling, however it is likely that any visible floor joists would have been shunned, as in the rest of the house.

Many of the doors belong to this 1758 phase and exhibit raised and fielded paneling with paint effect wood graining mimicking quartered veneers. Other doors are of 17<sup>th</sup> century origin though the front door with its paneled "fanlight" may be of 16<sup>th</sup> century date having been moved from its original location on the first west gable (see photograph below).



**Substantial boarded entrance door showing paneled "fanlight" part obscured by later canopy porch.**

There is only one item of fitted furniture and that is a “keeping cupboard” located to the south of the west gable chimney. There is evidence of several shelves in the deep recess and hinge points on the frame but the doors and shelves have gone, though possibly not long ago considering the shelf lines have not been painted over. At the top of the frame within the arch there is a formal pattern of ventilation holes. During the lifetime of the cupboard some of these holes have been rather crudely linked to look like slits, thus giving increased ventilation. This may have been part of the second phase of work at Tregeiriog but may belong to the remodeling.

The last area for consideration is the cellar. This sits beneath the front range and consists of two large stone vaulted spaces linked by a central vaulted passage and accessed in several ways. At both the east and west ends there are spiral staircases in stone giving access from the ground floor but here is also a north passage that enables access from outside. The design and details of the cellar seem to suggest that it was constructed in one phase rather than being built as each phase of the above ground house was constructed. This would lead to the conclusion that they were constructed after the building of the parallel range since the external access is via steps along the north wall of this addition. However the north passage and external access may have been added when the parallel range was built at a much later date. The cellar may have been constructed during Daniel Tregose’s remodeling works of 1758 as he sought to aggrandise his home and certainly barrel-vaulted cellarage with wells, drainage channels alcoves for wine and two access stairs would have fitted well within that remit. Due to the presence of the Lower Horseshoe bat colony in the west staircase it has not been possible to see the detail of the stairwell and consider whether it was constructed at the same time as the above ground structure or whether it was retro-fitted. Clearly if it was retro-fitted then the likely date of cellar construction is around 1758 but otherwise the cellar may have been part of the second phase of building work with the area under the original building being dug out. This may account for the suspended timber floor in the original ground floor rooms rather than the stone flag floor of the second phase.

## **REPAIR INTERVENTIONS**

The main two areas requiring major repair are the long valley gutter between the front and parallel ranges and the timber framed north wing, both of which are suffering from severe water ingress and extensive decay.

The valley gutter and the associated roof trusses will have the decayed sections of timber removed and new oak spliced in to match the dimensions and details of the original. The tie beam to truss T7 will need to be replaced entirely due to the level of deterioration at both ends, the extent of insect attack and the weakening caused by deep notches cut out to take ceiling joists. The gutter itself will be reformed with Code 6 lead and steps all in accordance with Lead Sheet Association details.

The timber frame wing has been covered in cement sheets for decades and this has led to severe degradation of the timbers beneath both from water and insect damage. The intention is to retain as much historic fabric as possible whilst ensuring that the frame has structural integrity. Having removed the detrimental sheets to inspect the condition of the timbers it is apparent that the two northern jowl posts can be repaired with some splicing of new oak, particularly at the base; the timbers that now form a party wall with the parallel range remain intact; the south east jowl post may be able to be repaired; the east wall plate needs to be replaced at both end but the central section can be retained and the gable end timbers are generally in need of only minor repair and slicing in of new oak. Apart from these main elements the cross-sectional size of the intermediate posts and rails mean that

the decay has affected too high a percentage of the timber and they will need to be replaced on a like-for-like basis. Dimensions will be taken to ensure that the frame is carefully replicated. Whilst this major repair is carried out the first floor moulded ceiling will be fully supported to ensure its stability.

In addition to the renewal of the frame the stone plinth will be repaired with matching stone and lime mortar and, where necessary, a foundation provided in accordance with the structural engineer's recommendations. The different heights of the stone plinth on the west and east elevations will be retained and the sole plates positioned at their original levels.

Once the frame has been repaired and stabilized the first floor moulded ceiling will be repaired with lath and plaster and new moulding to match will be carried round where this has been lost. Generally where lath and plaster ceilings have failed due to water ingress or nail corrosion, they will be repaired with split lath and lime plaster.

There are settlement cracks within the south elevation originating at the east end. These will be investigated by the structural engineer and an appropriate remedy applied that does not harm the character of the building. Various structural repairs are necessary as a result of movement in the south elevation, being especially apparent at the east end of the elevation and at first floor level where stone arches over the windows have dropped or failed entirely. These will be rebuilt with the original stones and with lime mortar and they will include the provision of pre-stressed concrete lintels above the arches, in accordance with the structural engineer's advice, to spread the load of the wall and roof. It was decided to use concrete within the wall rather than timber or steel for two reasons: to minimise future damage due to decay or corrosion resulting from vapour within the stone wall; to minimise the loss of historic fabric by keeping the dimensions of the introduced fabric as small as possible.

In addition to the lintels several stainless steel restraint straps will be inserted between the first floor and the south elevation and also between the walls of Bedroom 2 and the south elevation. These will be covered either by floorboards or by lime plaster so will not affect the appearance of the rooms in question.

Several floor beams have decay in the end and are no longer sufficiently supported by the walls. This is exacerbated by the bowed south wall and these beams need to be provided with extra length to regain a stable bearing. The beams will be repaired by the insertion of a steel plate into the end of the beam held in position by four bolts, all in accordance with the structural engineer's details. This solution will result in a negligible loss of timber and only the bolt heads will be visible, thus causing no harm to the character and historic integrity of the rooms.

Generally repairs will be needed to various floor joists and floor boards due to insect attack. The floor joists will be strengthened if only partially decayed, in accordance with the structural engineer's recommendations, though a few will need to be completely replaced on a like-for-like basis. The area worst affected is in the front attic where it is proposed to remove the few remaining boards in good condition and use them to repair areas of failure on the ground and first floors providing they match the existing. The attic floor would then be laid with simple sheet flooring for use with carpet.

One purlin on the south east end of the front range has decayed to the extent that replacement is necessary and the degree of movement in this corner means that it is no longer of sufficient length to connect with the gable wall. The new oak, though longer, will be matched to the existing in dimensions and details.

The level of moisture within the walls due to the cement render externally has resulted in some of the timber lintels to the windows decaying to a degree that requires replacement. Generally these will be replaced on a like-for-like basis though the two lintels over a window in the former granary have been replaced with one timber lintel to minimise the possible twisting of the timber and the consequent disruption of the small amount of stone wall above it. The appearance to the inside and outside remains the same as the original.

Other areas of repair are the areas of failed wall plaster and the minor repairs necessary to doors and door frames, timber window seats, the two canopy porches and the oak paneling. All of these elements will be repaired on a like-for-like basis with traditional materials and methods.

## **PROPOSED ALTERATIONS**

The main alterations proposed involve the timber-framed north wing and the parallel range, but it is also proposed to replace all of the modern storm-proofed softwood windows and the rear windows due to the high level of decay. However two oak windows in the granary are in good condition and can be repaired and reused with minor alteration to install an opening casement. The other windows will be replaced with traditional, painted timber, small-paned flush casements, similar to the existing, or, to the rear windows, traditional, painted timber, flush casements with one or two glazing bars. These windows will be double glazed with slim double glazed units to enable thin glazing bars to form part of the window frame.

Having discovered evidence that the north wing attic room has had two dormer windows in the past, one to each roof pitch, rather than the current single west-facing dormer, it is proposed to reinstate the east-facing dormer. This will improve the natural light into the bedroom and make the most of the views to the east and the Wye Valley AONB. The reinstated dormer will match the existing in terms of height and size and design.

Currently the last few steps of the mast stair are precipitous and are poorly constructed. It is proposed to re-establish the original form of these last few steps to provide an improved and safer access to and from the upper floors. This will involve the loss of the door at the bottom of the flight giving access into the rear hall, though it is proposed to retain part of the opening as a window to give increased light onto the staircase and into the hall. The doorway was clearly a later insertion and alteration that compromised the safe use of the staircase and it is therefore believed that the loss of access is justifiable.

A further consequence of reinstating the base of the mast stair is that the connectivity of the upper floors to all areas of the ground floor would be reduced. It is therefore proposed to open a new doorway from the inner hall to the former dairy (now sitting room) which then enables access to be gained to the rear porch and the kitchen. As postulated earlier, it is entirely possible that there was originally a doorway in this partition wall when it was of timber frame but that this was lost when the timber was replaced with brick. Therefore this new doorway may actually be reinstating an historic linkage between the north wing and the front range.

Within the half bay occupied by the mast stair and inner hall it is proposed to install a small cloakroom to the east end. The house currently does not have a cloakroom on the ground floor and after much discussion, the only logical place that could accommodate it would be this hallway. There is evidence of pipework already in this position, though no partition or sanitaryware, so there would be minimal

disruption to the area except for the introduction of a partition with an obscure-glazed door to allow indirect light into the hallway. It is not considered that this would have a detrimental effect on the character of the space whereas any other position would compromise the rooms severely.

It is proposed to reinstate the fireplace in the former dairy/sitting room and as a consequence reduce the floor level to the room. This will mean the loss of most of the stone shelves but the benefits to the building are that the proportions of the room are restored and the relationship between the floor level, plinth and sole plate are such that the sole plate will be able to dry out rather than acting as a retaining structure to damp soil as at present, which is causing extensive decay. The stone shelf which underpins the brick partition wall will be retained as it does not compromise the space and was evidently built off the reduced floor level originally, unlike the shelves to the north and west walls. It will also be necessary to provide two steps up to each of the three doors into the sitting room.

In addition to reducing the floor level in the sitting room it is proposed to increase the windows in the east elevation from one to two, thus taking advantage of the increased light levels and the views to the Wye Valley AONB. The window will occupy the area of one panel within the timber frame and sit adjacent to the existing window, which it will match.

There was originally no internal access between the granary and the main house; however this leaves the space with severely reduced use possibilities. It is therefore proposed to provide a landing off the main stair giving access to a new bathroom within half of the first floor space. This will serve the majority of the bedrooms on the first floor plus the north wing attic bedroom. Currently the bathroom occupies part of the first floor landing in the north wing and is very cramped and in need of updating. To relocate the bathroom would enable the landing to be restored to its original spacious character, whilst providing a much improved family bathroom with storage space that is lacking elsewhere in the house.

The other half of the granary is proposed to be utilised partly as a plant room cum utility with access from the existing granary steps and partly as an en suite bathroom for the master bedroom in the front range. A bat loft, in full accordance with the Ecology report, will extend above both spaces and will utilise the existing gable opening as the entry point.

Linking the en suite to the master bedroom will require a new doorway to be formed in the thick separating wall. This wall was of course originally external and has only been punctured in three places. The additional doorway would not have a detrimental effect on the character of the master bedroom nor the en suite, however it would enable the beneficial use of the granary space. The fact that the wall was originally external would be more apparent since the doorway would show the thickness.

In recognition of the need to improve thermal efficiency in buildings it is proposed to fully insulate the roofs and ground floors and to use double-glazing in the replacement windows plus full draught-proofing measures. In addition it is proposed to install solar thermal panels to the south facing pitch of the parallel range roof. This roof is largely hidden from view and therefore the installation would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of Tregeiriog House.

Currently the front range attics are lit by three small gable openings and the window in the central gable on the south elevation. These give a relatively small amount of light considering the floor area

of the attics. It is therefore proposed to install modest-sized rooflights to provide natural light to the three attic rooms; one to the bathroom, one to the central sitting room and two to the bedroom. All the rooflights to the front range would be installed on the north-facing roof pitch with the result that only the two at the east end would be visible, the other being hidden within the central valley.

As the upper flight of attic staircase is so steep and dark it is also proposed to install the smallest available rooflight over this flight to improve safety and in a similar manner the upper flight of the mast stair is dark and users would benefit from a small rooflight, as would the rear porch which is otherwise only lit by a small pane in the door. The rear porch rooflight would be visible but would not compromise the character of the building and the mast stair rooflight would face into the valley gutter and therefore not be generally visible.

Also facing into the valley gutter would be two rooflights giving improved light into the bathroom but given their position they will not be visible.

### **ACCESS:**

The existing pedestrian and vehicular accesses to the site are to be retained.

The three entrances into Tregeiriog House are to be retained and all will provide level access. The ground floor of the house is level apart from one room of the north wing ground floor where the proposed reduction in levels to allow the uncovering of an original fireplace will result in two steps being required at each of three doors into the room.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The construction history of Tregeiriog House is complex in nature and though there are many questions still to be answered, much had already been gleaned from the evidence held within the physical form and within the social archives. Some of the dating queries could be resolved by dendrodating some of the timbers particularly from within the front range, but what is clear is that Tregeiriog House has adapted well over the centuries to changes in family requirements, different ways of living and changes in architectural fashion. Each phase may have seen large building elements added but the linkages between the old and new have been relatively simple and generally successful.

The proposals within this application seek to restore Tregeiriog House to good condition and to enable its further evolution. The scheme aims to respect the historic fabric and avoid or minimise any loss of significant fabric; to make small alterations to accommodate current ways of living without compromising the character of the internal environment or the external appearance; to introduce up-to-date technologies to enable Tregeiriog House to function efficiently and comfortably in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

# APPENDIX 1

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## CADW DETAIL REPORT OF GRADE II\* LISTING

# APPENDIX 2

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## STRUCTURAL ENGINEER'S RECOMMENDATIONS