

Introduction and Overview of Chirk Home Farm and Associated Buildings.

Essentially a mid C18th designed model farm structure added onto an existing building (Johnson's Cottage) which was itself probably built about a century or so earlier. The Estate map of 1751 shows the whole structure completed and it is assumed to have been built shortly before this date. The layout is of a square of mainly single story buildings, except for Johnson's cottage and the low lofted area over the south range and part of the west range. This south range was the corn barn and threshing floor, entirely superseded by new mid – late C19th century advances in agricultural technology and re-utilised and rendered inoperable by additional buildings to its south. There is a yard at the centre with access by means of wide gap to the north and a vaulted archway at the east, probably the whole and its cobbled surface unaltered since use in conjunction with the threshing floor in the south range. The earliest part of the whole - Johnson's cottage is stone built as is the Stable at the NE. All the other buildings conform to a faux Elizabethan style of stone base up to the window top, topped by timber framed superstructure with brick infill. This brick infill is in either Flemish bond or herringbone, mainly alternating. The rear (S) of the Corn barn/ Threshing Floor area was altered and the timber framing removed to accommodate additional buildings at its rear – probably mid – late C19th.

Various additions have taken place over the years, notably in the late C19th / early C20th. There is a theory that some major remodelling of the whole using the various timbers, bricks and stonework took place to reinforce and give the whole the feel of a "Tudor" style timber-framed building. However the writer feels this unlikely after more detailed investigation and that the timber framing "Tudor" appearance grafted onto an earlier structure is in fact the original intended form.

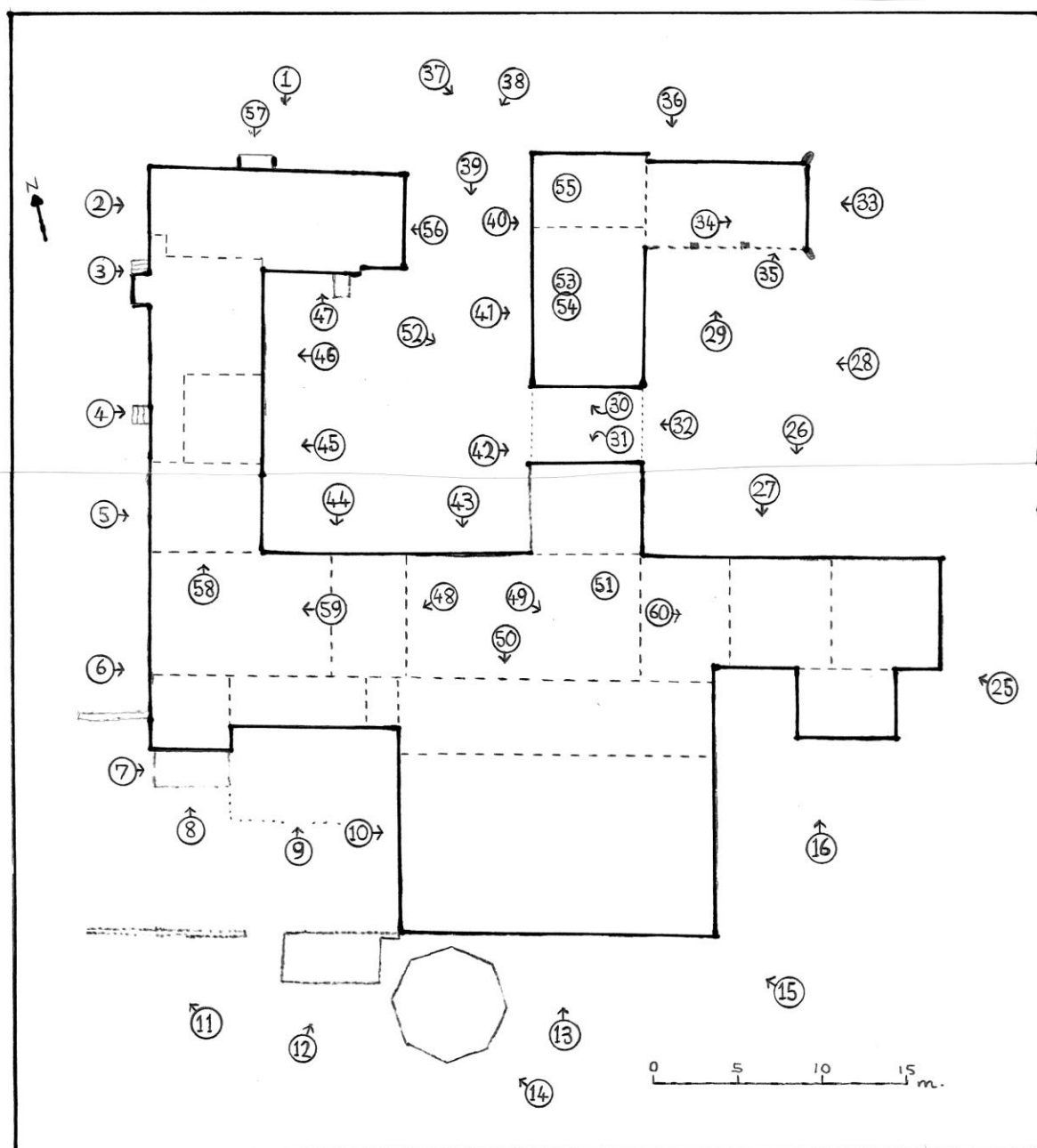
All the dating of the structure is based on its style and evident development. No forensic investigation, such as the dendro-dating of timbers, has been carried out.

To the east of the main building area is a range of pigsties in a double row with the sties to the south and a service cum storage range opposite to the north in similar style of stone and with brick superstructure all initially thought to have been built about 1760. Just to the north of these is another range of buildings now in a semi-ruinous state. One with a kind of stepped gable of stone with brick fill in some of the window opening. Original purpose is unclear but the range was utilised as a gasworks and two circular structures are shown to have existed within (OS map evidence) – almost certainly these were retorts for small scale gas production for the castle. Probably late C19th but gone entirely by the 1930's.

Key to Photograph shots showing direction of view and number as shown below actual photographs in Bold.

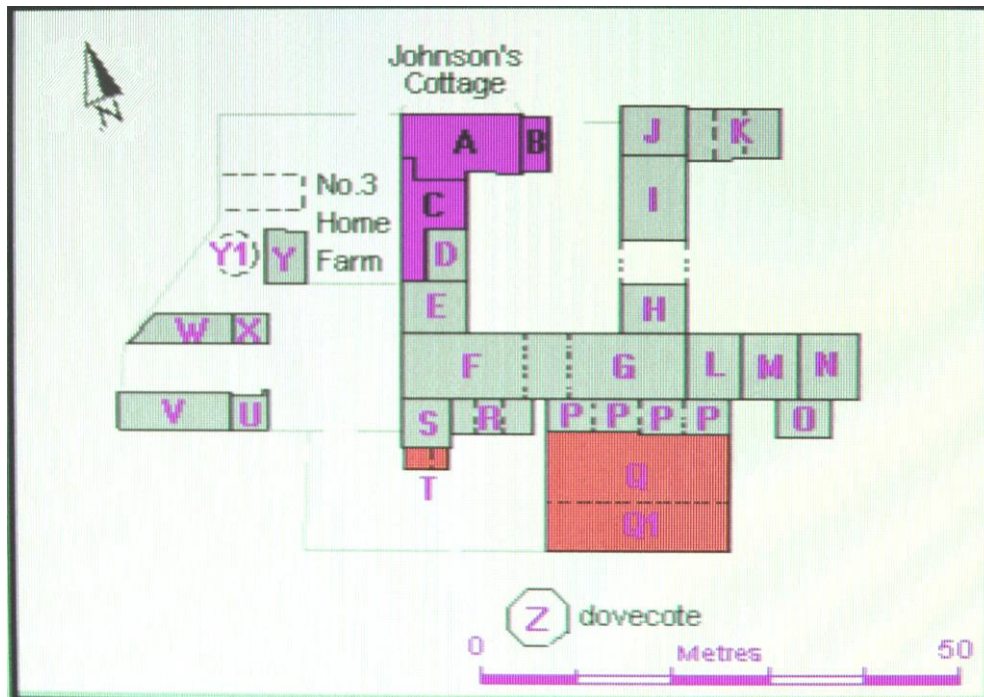
1 = Photograph Shot number on plan below with direction of view

PM **A** = Peter Muckle Plan of Home Farm



From Peter Muckle Database: Home Farm Layout with key used in record below

55656



Summary of Muckle Plan above:

D – T in Muckle Plan. D – store; E cowhouse; F – cowhouse; G – corn barn; H – stable; J – stable; K – cartshed; L – dairy; M – cartshed; N – estate offices; O – office; P – hammel; Q – hammel yard; Q1 – portal frame building; R – calf shed; S – water tank room; T – pump room;

Additional:

Dovecote – Z; Cartshed or Gasworks – Y & Y1; U V W X - Pigsty Range.



1 Johnson's cottage / PM **A** / Late C16th early C17th origins but massively altered with modernised interior.



2 Johnson's cottage / PM **A** / largely unaltered facade.



3 The Bothy / PM **C** early to mid C18th (pre 1751)



4 The Bothy to the left and entrance to Home Farm Cottage no. 3 / PM **C** early to mid C18th (pre 1751). Accommodation for farm workers probably created mid C19th.



5 Home Farm Cottage No 3 (left), Cowhouse (right) PM **E** the cowhouse is lofted – see View 58 (below).



6 Former Cattle stalls now Exhibition Space cum presentation area. PM **F**, early / mid C18th, loft over – see view **59**



7 Tank Room (left) PM **S** / Pump Room (right) PM **T**. Tank room late C18th, Pump room late C19th.



8 Pump Room (former) now used for storage. PM **T**, late C19th.



9 Former Calf sheds late C19th. Also the partially hidden rear of the Corn Barn and threshing floor - ?early-mid C18th. PM **R**. .



10 Portal Frame Building PM **Q** and Hammel **P** (obscured) within. Portal Frame Building 1960's, Hammel early to mid C19th.



13 (alternate) Portal Frame Building PM **Q** and Hammel **P** (obscured) within. Portal Frame Building 1960's, Hammel early to mid C19th.



11 Part of Formal Garden wall, part of glasshouse mid – late C19th.



12 Remains of “store” and garden wall mid – late C19th.



16 “Office” (early C20th) PM **O** with rear of former cartshed at left PM **M** and Farm Office at right PM **N** (both mid C18th).



25 Farm Office gable end on PM **N** (mid C18th) with Farm Office to left.



26 l – r Farm Office, former Cartshed (with doors), Dairy, (all mid C18th) PM **N M L**. Note window on left formerly larger (modified late C19th).



27 former Cartshed doors (detail) PM **M**



28 Lofted stable, early – mid C18th (left), covered passage (1771 date on timber) and lofted stable, late C18th (right). PM **H I**. NB C19th destroyed structure approx where the two timber stalls now stand.



32 Covered Passage (see above)



31 Covered Passage roof interior (a)



32 Covered Passage roof interior (b)



29 Open fronted Cart or Implement Shed – early C20th with feeding trough and cobbled floor. PM **K**



34 Cart or Implement Shed interior. PM **K**



33 Open fronted Cart or Implement Shed – early C20th with feeding trough and cobbled floor. PM **K**. Note curious cylindrical corner reinforcement – purpose unclear.



36 Open fronted Cart or Implement shed (left) Gable end of partial lofted Stable (right). PM **K J**



37 Oblique view of Stable, lofted with hay loading eye to upper floor storage area. ?late C18th. PM **J I**



38 Oblique view of end of Johnson's Cottage (?C16th) PM **A**.



39 Home Farm Courtyards – view of cobbled yard rough hewn random paving)
Unknown date.



40 Byre on left), Stable (on right) – both lofted ?late C18th. PM **J I**



41 Lofted Stable ?mid C18th PM **I**



53 Byre Interior PM **J I**



54 Byre Interior PM **J I**



42 Covered Passage and Lofted Stable (now toilets) ?early-mid C18th. PM **H**



43 Corn Barn (east end of – converted into storage space) Inserted Loft (date uncertain) Building ?early-mid C18th. PM **G**



44 Corn barn showing the threshing floor area (hidden by doors) and part of the barn. Used as shop and exhibition / presentation space. Inserted Loft with sawn and chamfered roof trusses (splayed queen post style). PM ref **G F**



45 Lofted Cowhouse (left), former coal-shed and privy (right). early-mid C18th. PM **E D** Note blocked door between door and window (C19th modification)



46 Part of the coal-shed (see previous) and the Bothy (right). Note break in masonry between the two. Both early-mid C18th – possible the Bothy was formerly an annexe of Johnson’s cottage before Home Farm complex was built. PM **D C**



47 Rear of Johnson’s Cottage with part of The Both (left)). Late C16th – early C17th origin. Johnson’s Cottage has been completely modernised internally. PM **A**. Note the blocked door on left, probably a mid/late C19th change.



56 Johnson's Cottage, outshot with catslide roof, possibly a late addition, built at time of Open fronted Implement Shed PM K (see view 33 above). Early C20th. PM **A**



58 Loft over Cowhouse PM **B**



59 Loft over west end of Corn-Barn looking West PM **F**



60 Loft over West end of Corn-Barn looking East



50 Corn Barn view looking South showing narrowed door, formerly open threshing area (see view **44**). PM **G**



50 Room beneath East end of lofted area of Corn-Barn. PM **L**



Wind tower / Lantern over passage on East side Courtyard Entrance.



Johnson's cottage Front entrance



17 Squash Court from East. Built *ca* 1936.



18 Squash Court, front entrance (from South-east).



19 Squash Court, entrance detail.



20 Squash Court upper front detail



21 Squash Court from South-west.



22 Squash Court (rear) from North-west.



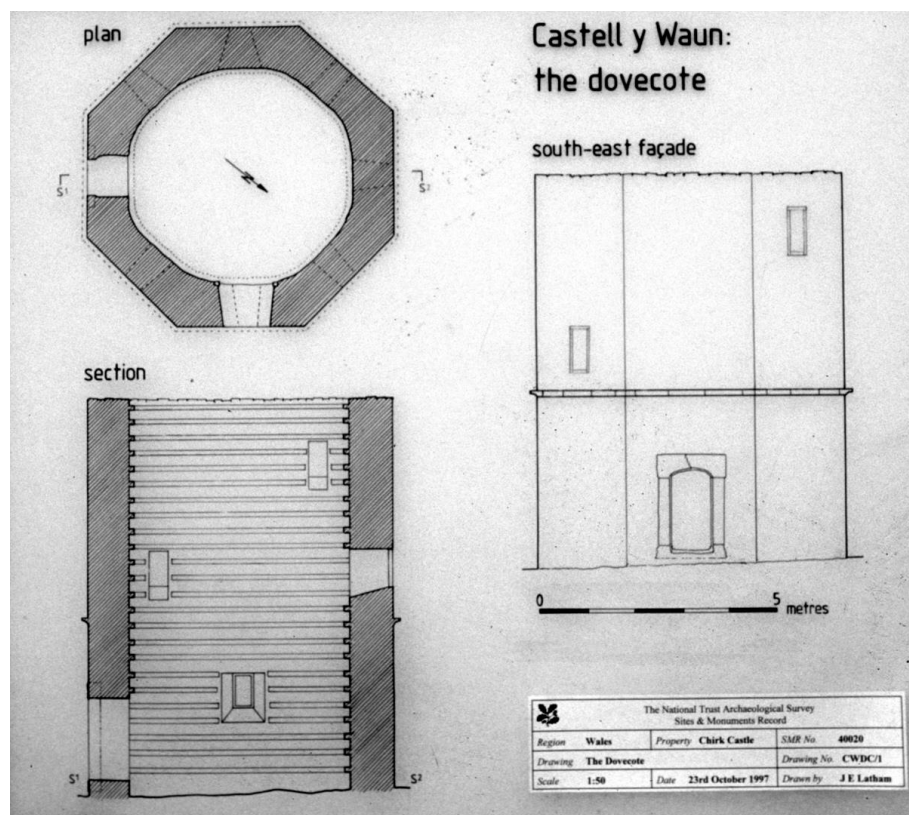
Dovecote Entrance (photo taken 1997).



Dovecote in January 2006



14 Dovecote. ?early 18th taken down and rebuilt present site 1765.

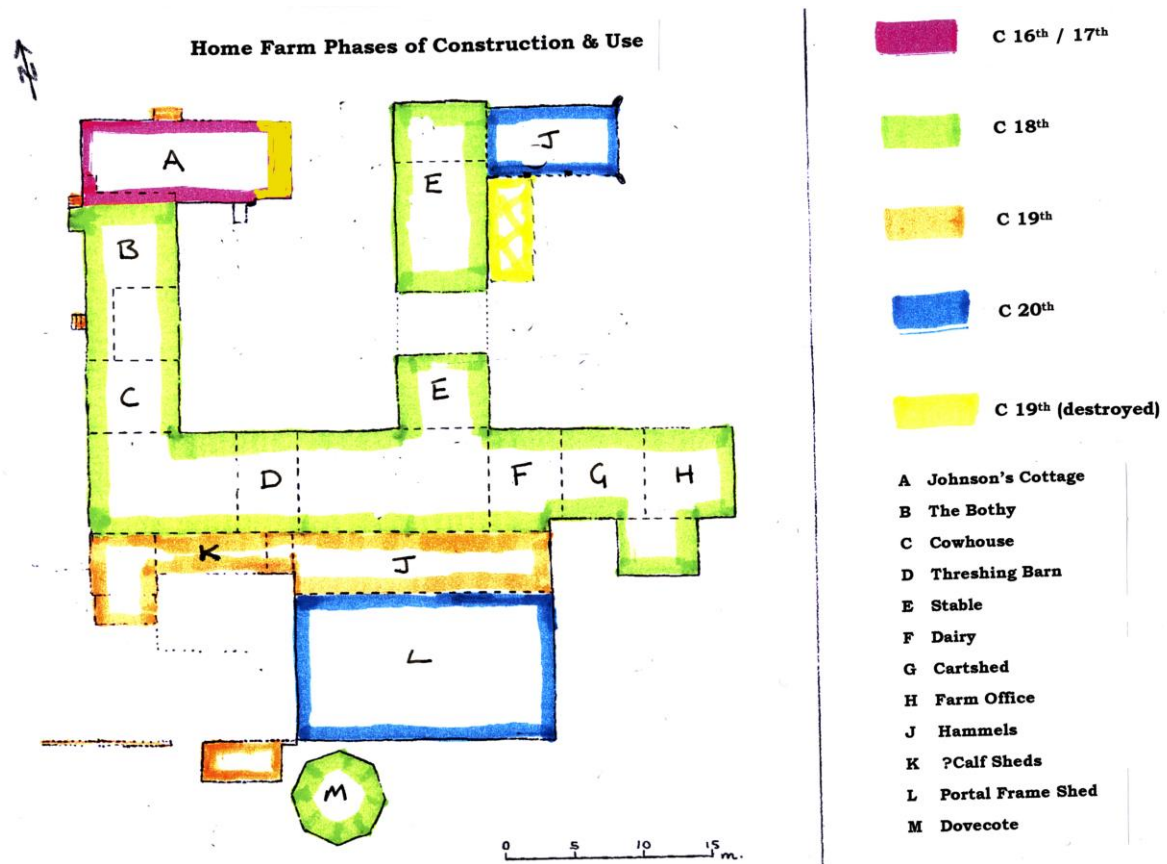


Plan, Section and Elevation (front) of Dovecote 1997 Survey (JEL).

1. Land Use & Maps

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2. Historic Development of Home Farm



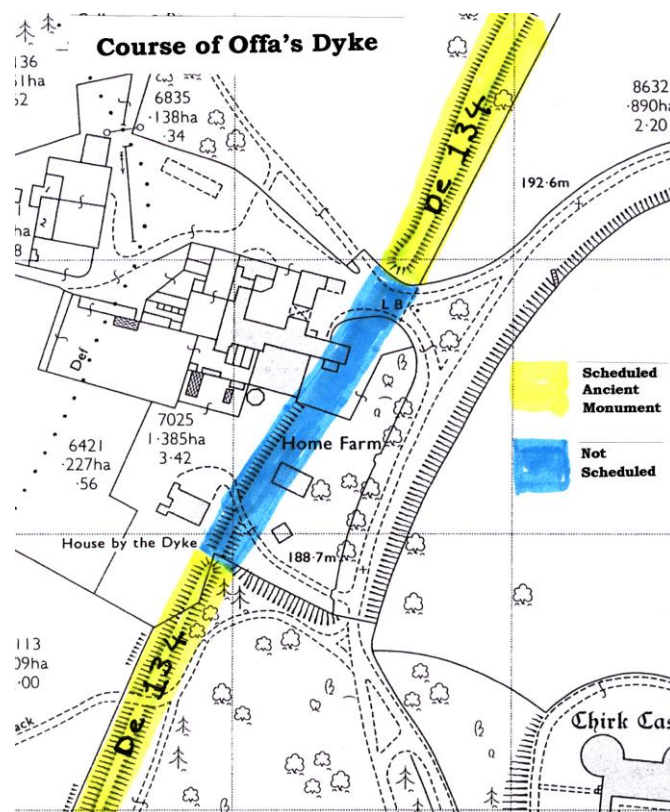
As previously stated, the earliest structure on the site is Johnson's Cottage (A) thought to have been built late C16th to early C17th. The Catslide "addition" at right of main structure just visible at point on plan above by break in wall line. This just might be later (?C19th). No detailed analysis is to hand however – the interior is largely modernised and the evidence for its development is concealed. The inserted cottage the Bothy (B) might have, at least in part, been a small rear annex to Johnson's cottage given various masonry breaks – see view 46. The Home Farm proper built as a model range of farm buildings for the estate was largely constructed in the midC18th in a kind of Tudor revival style. The main elements were a Threshing Barn with large opening doors on the north and south sides (visibly survives on the north side), a dairy, cow house and stables were constructed around a semi-enclosed yard, cobbled over. At some time in the C19th with changes in agricultural practices this barn was no longer needed and various hammels and sheds were added on to the south and east and the uses of various elements of the C18th building were changed. It has been suggested (Peter Muckle, pers comm.) that C19th changes might have sparked off a more general refurbishment of the whole Home Farm range and the timber-framing and the infill might have been restored or repaired. Also at some time during the C19th a structure shown only on a map was built at the east – possibly a hammel or maybe

a temporary timber shed. Early in the C20th this shed was demolished and another hammel was built to the east side of the stable on the north-east corner. This open-fronted structure retains some internal features. The last addition was the prefabricated portal-frame building to the south which was built probably *ca* 1955.

3. Offa's Dyke (De 134)

The course of the Dyke passes though the Park at Chirk and essentially divides Home Farm from the Castle. However, the dyke in this area is badly eroded or entirely missing and when the Dyke was re-evaluated by Cadw in the early 1990's by Lesley McInnes the then inspector, she decided only to schedule the dyke to the immediate north and south of the Home farm area, and not the area subject to this report. Therefore there is no legal restriction on disturbance of the area. None the less it might in future be worth being aware of the significance of the Dyke when carrying out groundwork and to notify both Cadw and the Trust's archaeological staff.

Offa was king of Mercia from AD757 to his death in July 796. The Monk Asser in his Biography of Alfred the Great mentions the building of the dyke and attributes it to Offa. The reasons for its construction appear to lie in the politics of the time and disputes and rivalries with the Kingdom of Powys. The parallel earthwork approximately 5 miles east known as Wat's dyke is now thought to represent some kind of retreat and has recently been dated to the time of the successors of Offa, Coenwulf (died AD821) who succeeded Offa's son Ecgfrith (who reigned for just 5 months) and Ceolwulf I who reigned AD821 – 823.



4. The Gasworks

The buildings that accommodated the gasworks are now roofless ruined structures used as part of the garden of The Bothy. From the map evidence there were originally two retorts (labelled on the map as Gasometers) where the raw coal was heated to drive off the gas. This was then collected in some kind of gasholder before being piped to the castle. The earliest map of 1899 shows three actual circular sites. The two within the now ruined building were probably the retorts and the other circular feature shown on the map being the gasholder. This latter site is where the squash court was built – so no trace whatever is left. In fact there is equally no trace of the retorts either and one has to assume total removal and disposal at some stage (probably early C20th). Gasworks at country houses were relatively common and survive in some form or other at (for instance) Tyntesfield, Owlpen Manor, Culzean Castle and possibly also at Battlesden House. Gas lighting was common and gasoliers survive at Chirk.

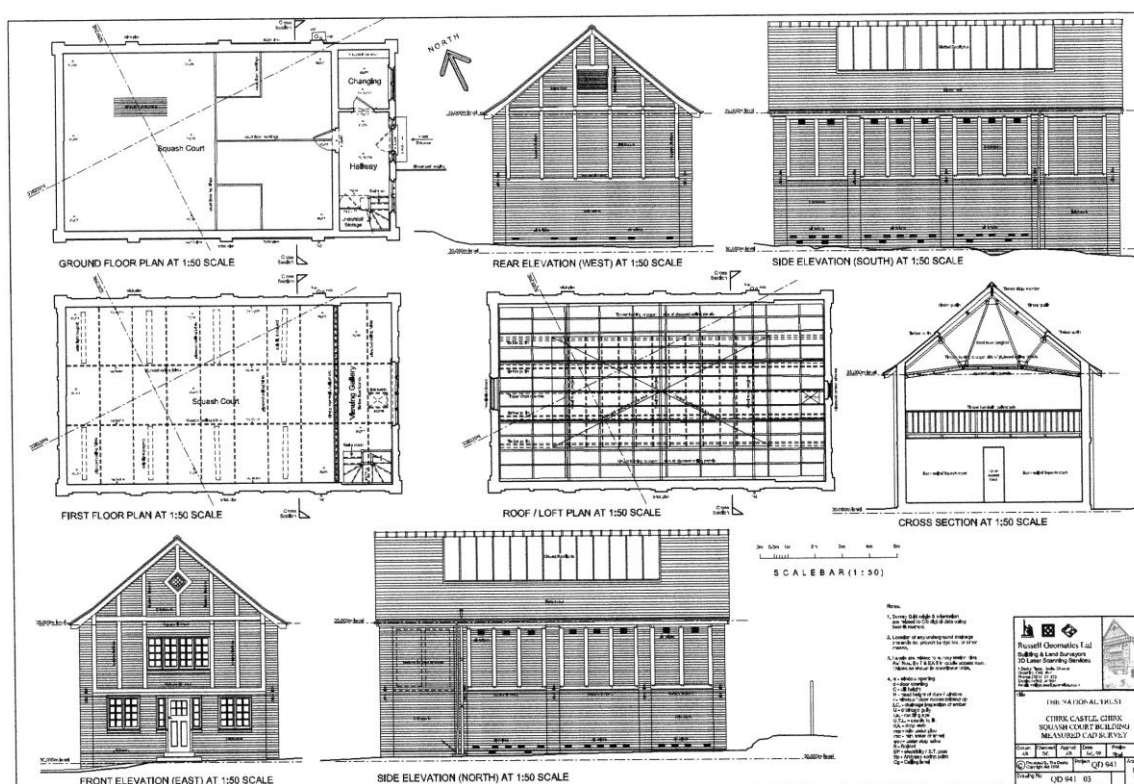
5. Dovecote

This fine structure is shown on one side of the formal garden in a drawing in a 1740 engraving by Thomas Badeslade. However for some reason it was demolished and rebuilt on its present site in the later C18th (1765). Octagonal in plan, 6.5m in diameter. Ashlar and rubble stone built with decorative ledge at one third height. There is stone moulding around the entrance and the “window” embrasures, The stone work part of the structure is about 8m high and was probably about 12m to the top the now vanished pagoda style roof. It is lined with brick and fitted out inside with brick ledges for the pigeons to nest on. The roof was probably removed in the 1960 when the site was derelict. The complete structure is shown on an aerial photograph of the mid—1950's (below). Surveyed in 1997 (see p31 above).



6. The Squash Court

Built on the site of one of the so called Gasometers in 1936. Architecturally the Squash court has the merit of being a handsome and well designed structure for its intended purpose. In vaguely mock-Tudor style (sort of late Arts & Crafts) in brick and timber. It is ca 12.5m x 7.5m in plan and about 10m to the apex of its pitched roof. (see survey below). Essentially a box with a small entrance at the east. Internally a narrow hall runs north – south across the front with a staircase to the south leading to a gallery above the back of the squash court proper. The roof has two large glass roof-lights. The structural detail is clearly shown on the survey (below). Almost certainly built for by Thomas Evelyn Scott-Ellis, 8th Baron Howard de Walden who lived at Chirk until the 1940's. Not Listed at time of writing (June 2010).



Russell Geomatics Survey July 2009

7. House by the Dyke

A pleasant looking Bungalow with a fine outlook towards the Ceriog Valley. Built on a new site sometime in the 1920's by the Howard de Waldens and possibly slightly altered and modernised in the 1930's when the squash court was built. No particular architectural merit and not listed.

