# 15 CASTLE STREET, KIDWELLY, CARMARTHENSHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF





Prepared by: DAT Archaeological Services For: Ms Clare Ludbey





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# 15 CASTLE STREET, KIDWELLY, CARMARTHENSHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Gan / By

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# 15 CASTLE STREET, KIDWELLY, CARMARTHENSHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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# 15 CASTLE STREET, KIDWELLY, CARMARTHENSHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

#### **SUMMARY**

This report has been prepared by DAT Archaeological Services in response to a request from Ms Clare Ludbey to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground works associated with a proposed new extension to a dwelling at 15, Castle Street, Kidwelly (Planning application number S/20217; centred at NGR SN 4082 0697).

The proposed development site is located to the south-west of Kidwelly Castle within the area of the medieval castle bailey. A number of other medieval sites are known in the vicinity of the development area. A pre-determination archaeological evaluation of the area was undertaken in 2009 and provided positive results identifying the presence of three rubbish pits of probable 13<sup>th</sup> century date containing large quantities of cockleshells, as well as fragments of animal bone and medieval pottery. Such features indicate medieval occupation of the bailey area around Kidwelly Castle, and the location of these two pits set back from the street may indicate the presence of a building that would have been located on the Castle Street frontage.

The 2014 archaeological watching brief recorded additional evidence for rubbish pits of potential medieval date as well as further evidence of one of the medieval rubbish pits identified during the 2009 evaluation. The medieval pits recorded within the proposed development area are considered to be of moderate archaeological importance, providing further evidence for occupation of the town during the medieval period.

No finds of medieval date were recovered during the watching brief but a number of industrial period ceramic sherds were recovered from the topsoil across the site.

Although no other archaeologically significant features or deposits were recorded, the potential for archaeological deposits to survive had been severely compromised by the number of hitherto modern service pipes and inspection chamber located within the footprint of the proposed extension, that were discovered during the period of the watching brief. However, the potential for unknown archaeological remains to be present within the vicinity of the extension still remains.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project Commission

- 1.1.1 This report has been prepared by DAT Archaeological Services in response to a request from Ms Clare Ludbey to provide an archaeological watching brief on ground works associated with a proposed extension (Planning application number S/20217) at 15 Castle Street, Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire (centred at NGR SN 4082 0697; Figures 1 and 2). The planning application is for the construction of a two storey extension on the eastern side of the existing dwelling.
- 1.1.2 The proposed development site is located to the south-west of Kidwelly Castle, within the area of the medieval walled town. The condition for an archaeological watching brief was placed on the application by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management in their role as archaeological advisors to Carmarthenshire County Council.

# 1.2 Scope of the Project

- 1.2.1 The project objectives were:
  - To monitor ground works in order to identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits;
  - To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works;
  - To appropriately investigate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works; and
  - To produce an archive and report of any results.

#### 1.3 Report Outline

1.3.1 This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background, summarises the potential impacts of the proposed development before providing a summary and discussion of the archaeological evaluation and its results.

## 1.4 Abbreviations

1.4.1 Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record<sup>1</sup> (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Sites recorded by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) are identified by their National Primary Record Number (NPRN).

#### 1.5 Illustrations

1.5.1 Photographic images are to be found at the back of the report. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo.

# 1.6 Timeline

1.6.1 The following timeline is used within this report to give date ranges for the various archaeological periods that may be mentioned within the text (Table 1).

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic -	c.450,000 - 10,000 BC	
Mesolithic –	c. 10,000 – 4400 BC	Pre
Neolithic –	c.4400 - 2300 BC	hist
Bronze Age –	c.2300 - 700 BC	Prehistoric
Iron Age –	c.700 BC - AD 43	n
Roman (Romano-British) Period –	AD 43 - c. AD 410	
Post-Roman / Early Medieval Period –	c. AD 410 – AD 1066	
Medieval Period –	1066 - 1536	Hist
Post-Medieval Period <sup>2</sup> –	1536 - 1750	Historic
Industrial Period –	1750 - 1899	n
Modern –	20th century onwards	

**Table 1:** Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales.

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 $<sup>^2</sup>$  The post-medieval and industrial periods are combined as the post-medieval period on the Regional Historic Environment Record as held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust

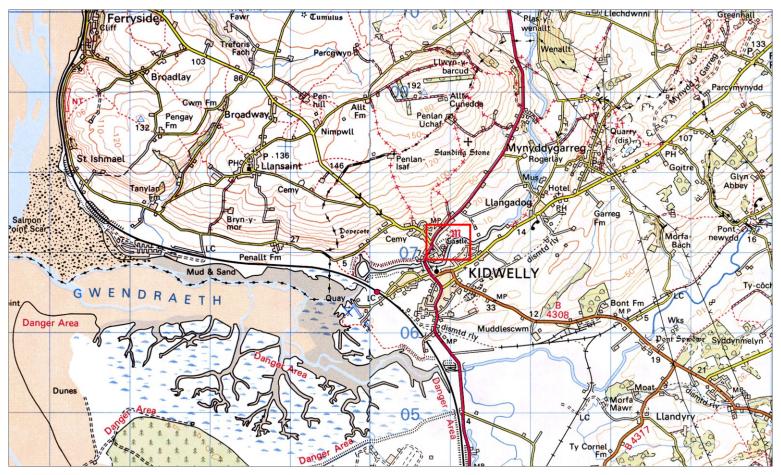


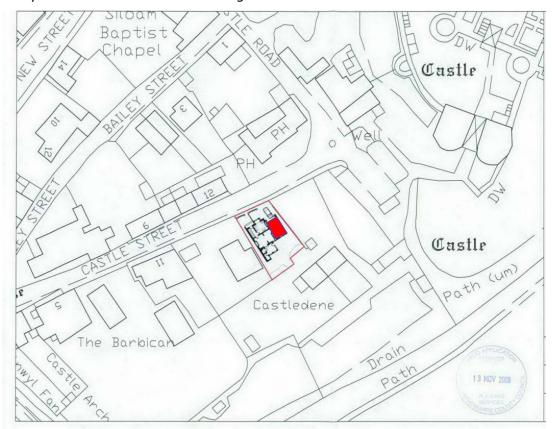
Figure 1: Location map based on the Ordnance Survey. Red boundary centred on 15 Castle Street.

Reproduced from the 2011 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger 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 100020930

#### 2. THE SITE

## 2.1 Location

- 2.1.1 15 Castle Street is located at NGR SN 4082 0697, in close proximity to the medieval Kidwelly castle within the area of the castle bailey (Figure 2).
- 2.1.2 The proposed extension to 15 Castle Street occupies a broadly rectangular level plot on the north-eastern side of the property and currently forms part of the garden. The area is roughly defined by the property to the west and a boundary wall to the east. To the north is a gravel car port bounded by shrubs and to the south is a grass lawn.



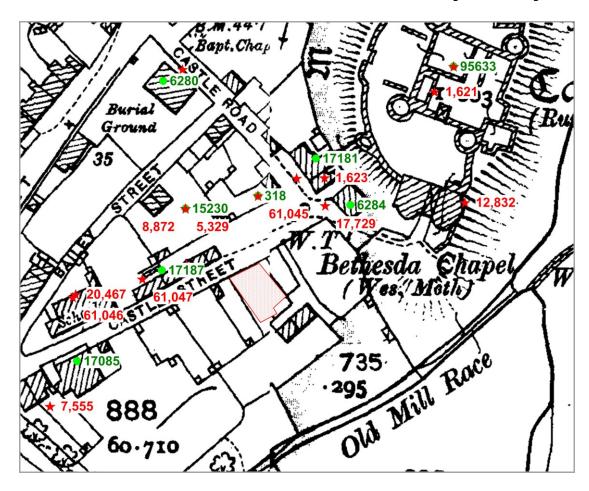
**Figure 2:** Location map showing the property boundary of 15 Castle Street outlined in red and the proposed extension area filled in red (plan supplied by client).

2.1.3 The proposed development is for the construction of a two storey extension to the existing property.

# 2.2 Archaeological Background.

- 2.2.1 The regional Historic Environment Record and RCAHMW NMR record 17 known archaeological sites within close proximity of the proposed development area. These are shown on Figure 3 and listed in Table 2 below.
- 2.2.2 No archaeological features are known to exist within the bounds of the proposed development area. However, the site lies within close proximity to Kidwelly Castle (PRN 12832 and 1622; Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) CM002) and a number of other known archaeological sites of importance. The castle is the most easterly of the three major coastal castles of Carmarthenshire (along with Llanstephan and Laugharne) and is sited at the mouth of the Gwendreath River (Avent 1991, p167-188).

- 2.2.3 The original castle was constructed following the colonisation of the area by Henry I in 1106. It comprised a large earthwork motte (PRN 1621) with timber structures. The castle was later granted to Roger Bishop of Salisbury by Henry I. The reconstruction of the castle in stone commenced in 1275 (Hughes, 1999, 23-24).
- 2.2.4 The early town (PRN5329) was established close to the castle on its southwestern side, but it expanded further to the south-west over time. The growth of the town can be attributed to Flemish settlers who were renowned for there expertise in the cloth trade, the town benefitting from the trade opportunities given by the navigable river and port. Records provide some evidence for an emerging merchant and ship owning industry trading with England and France (Hughes, 1999; p13). The town defences (PRN 1623; SAM CM183B), comprising town walls and town gates on the major roads had been established by the 14<sup>th</sup> century (although an exact date for their construction is not known). The proposed development area lies on Castle Street, which was one of the two main thoroughfares leading from Kidwelly Castle. Castle Street led to the South Gate of the town (PRN7555, SAM CM183A). The site of the medieval fulling mill 'Caldecot Mill' lay to the south of the town on the river floodplain.
- 2.2.5 In 1403 the Welsh forces of Owain Glyndwr overran the town's defences and set fire to the town. Although Glyndwr's forces destroyed the town they did not manage to breach the castle walls. The town was left in a decayed state after this attack and in 1444 is described as being 'waste and desolate'. Later development appears to have happened in the new town on the south side of the river, whereas the old town failed to be rebuilt (Soulsby, 1983, 152-154). The proposed development area is situated in the old town. Other than the castle, and gatehouse, the only other medieval building surviving in the town is a dwelling on Bailey Street (PRN 8872; SAM CM209A).
- 2.2.6 A number of post-medieval buildings are present along Castle Street (mostly located on the northern side) including The Old Moat House Restaurant (PRN 61045), Nos. 6-10 (PRN 61047, PRN8188), Castle School and Schoolhouse (PRN 20467, PRN 61046) and Castle Crafts (PRN 8189). These structures represent later development in the old town (most of which are Grade II Listed Buildings). Later chapel sites are also recorded on the HER, which would be of later 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century date, including a chapel at the northern end of Bailey Street (PRN 17169) and a chapel located at the northern end of Castle Street which was demolished in the 1960s (PRN 17729).



**Figure 3:** Map of Castle Street, Kidwelly showing the location of archaeologically significant sites based upon an extract of the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition (1905) 1:2500 map. The development area is outlined in red.

The sites shown are listed in Table 2 below.

Site (PRN)	RCAHMW (NPRN)	Site Type	Description	NGR	Period
1621		Kidwelly Motte	Kidwelly castle Motte.  SAM CM002	SN 4089 0704	Medieval
1622	79038 95633	Kidwelly Castle	Kidwelly Castle is an imposing ruin, situated on a scarp above the upper tidal limit of the Gwendraeth Fach Estuary. It was built for Roger, Bishop of Salisbury (1102-1139).  SAM CM002  Grade I listed building no 11876	SN 4089 0704	Medieval
1623		Kidwelly Town Defences	The outer curtain wall was rebuilt at around 1300, with only part of the central section retained. The remains of this run from the tower closest to the great gatehouse to the north gate and the adjacent (collapsed) tower, where it meets the inner ward's north tower.	SN 4085 0701	Medieval

			SAM CM183B		
5329	15230 33065	Kidwelly Medieval Town	The walled borough, immediately south-west of the castle, is part of the modern Kidwelly town. The small borough, measuring some 1.5ha, was established in the south-west section of the D shaped ringwork delineating the outer enclosure of Kidwelly Castle. The castle gardens occupied its north-east section, which, with the castle itself, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.	SN 408 070	Medieval
7555		Castle Street Town Gate	This gatehouse was one of the three gates of the medieval borough of Kidwelly (NPRN 33065), and is part of the Kidwelly Town, Gate and Defences Scheduled Ancient Monument. It was the borough's main gateway, leading from a bridge over the Gwendraeth Fach.  SAM CM183A	SN 4075 0693	Medieval
8188	17187	Castle Street Nos 6-10; dwellings	17th Century house with later attached cottages.	SN 4080 0698	Post-medieval
8189		Castle Crafts; building	Post-medieval building	SN 4084 0701	Post-medieval
8872		Bailey Street; dwelling	Possible former medieval building SAM CM209A	SN 408 070	Medieval
12832		Kidwelly castle – finds from midden	Note of medieval pottery sherds found in 1931 from a cooking pot, jug and other vessels. Probable midden site	SN 409 070	Medieval
17169	6280	Chapel, Bailey Street	Siloam Chapel was built in 1821 and rebuilt in 1892, in Romanesque style of the gable entry type, to the design of architect George Morgan of Carmarthen	SN 4080 0705	Post-medieval
17729	6284	Bethesda Chapel (demolished)	Bethesda Chapel was built in 1816 and rebuilt in 1832 and 1895.	SN 4085 0700	Post-medieval
20467		Castle School	Same as PRN 61046	SN 4076 0697	Post-medieval
61045	318	The Old Moat House	Grade II listed building no 20187	SN 4082 0700	Post-medieval
61046		Castle School	Same as PRN 20467 Grade II listed building no 20188	SN 4075 0696	Post-medieval
61047		No 6, Castle Street	Grade II listed building no 20189	SN 4078 0697	Post-medieval
	17085	The Barbican; dwelling	Georgian town-house, altered circa 1900	SN 4076 0694	Post-medieval?
	17181	Castle Crafts; dwelling	17th Century stone house with prominent gable chimney	SN 4084 0701	Post-medieval?

**Table 2**: Regional HER and RCAHMW NMR records within close proximity to the development area

- 2.2.7 Map evidence demonstrates that in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century the southern side of Castle Street was sparsely occupied, with few structures shown, although plot boundaries are still indicated (from Ordnance Survey 1889 first edition map, Figure 5). It is possible that the plot boundaries relate to earlier property divisions, fossilised following abandonment, presumably remaining in different ownerships and perhaps used as allotments or gardens. 15 Castle Street is indicated as occupying two house plots although no structures are shown in either. The second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1906 shows no change in the layout of the site area (Figure 6). The existing dwelling at the site dates from the 1920s.
- 2.2.8 A pre-determination archaeological evaluation of the area was undertaken in 2009 (Meek, 2009) and identified the presence of three rubbish pits of probable 13th century date containing large quantities of cockleshells, as well as fragments of animal bone and medieval pottery. Such features indicate medieval occupation of the bailey area around Kidwelly Castle, and the location of these two pits set back from the Castle Street frontage may indicate the presence of a building between them and the street front.

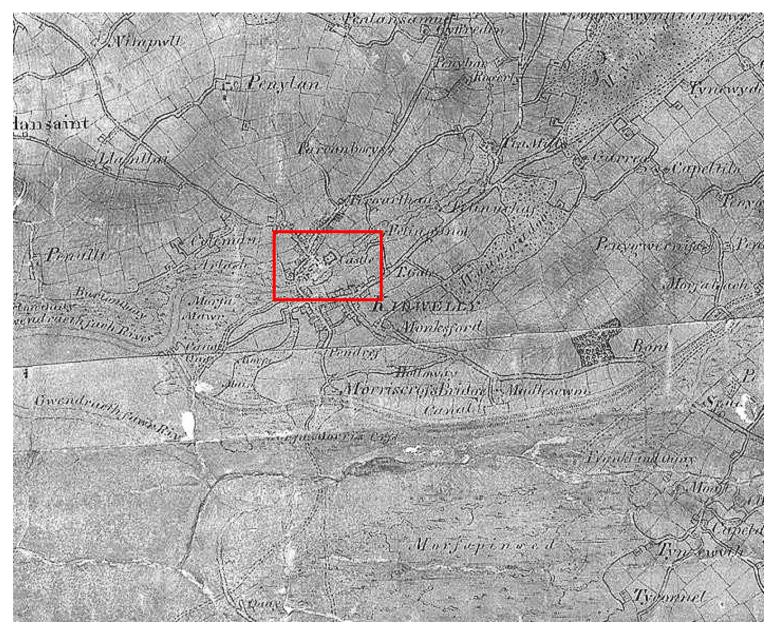
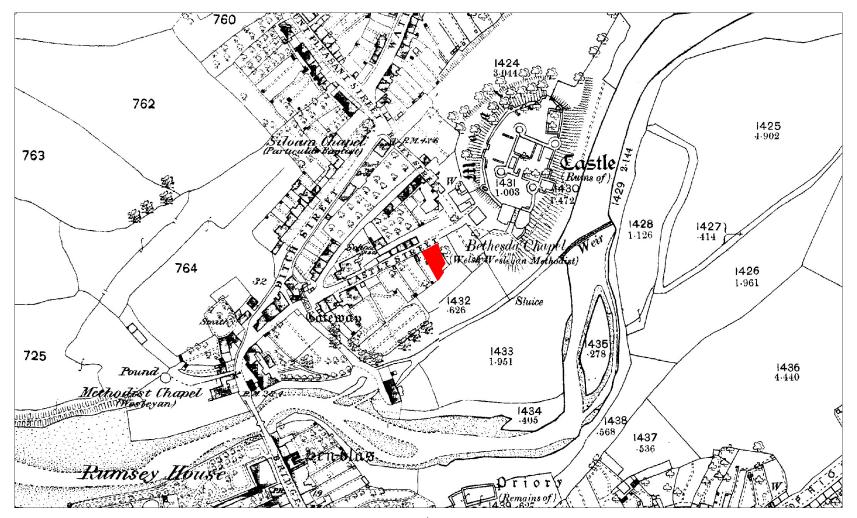


Figure 4: Extract of Original Ordnance Surveyors Drawings 1813. Red boundary centred on Kidwelly Castle.



**Figure 5:** Extract from 1:2500 scale 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1889.



**Figure 6:** Extract of 1:2500 scale 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1906.

#### 3. METHODOLOGY

The watching brief methodology can be summarised as follows:

#### 3.1 Fieldwork

- 3.1.1 A 'watching brief' was undertaken during ground level reduction works at the site which had the potential to expose, damage or destroy underlying archaeological remains.
- 3.1.2 All archaeological deposits revealed during the ground works were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.
- 3.1.3 Recording of all archaeological features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual used by DAT Archaeological Services.
- 3.1.4 Archaeological features or deposits are identified by a unique context number; given in brackets after each description within the report text. A full context and description list is included in Table 3 at the end of the report.

## 3.2 Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving

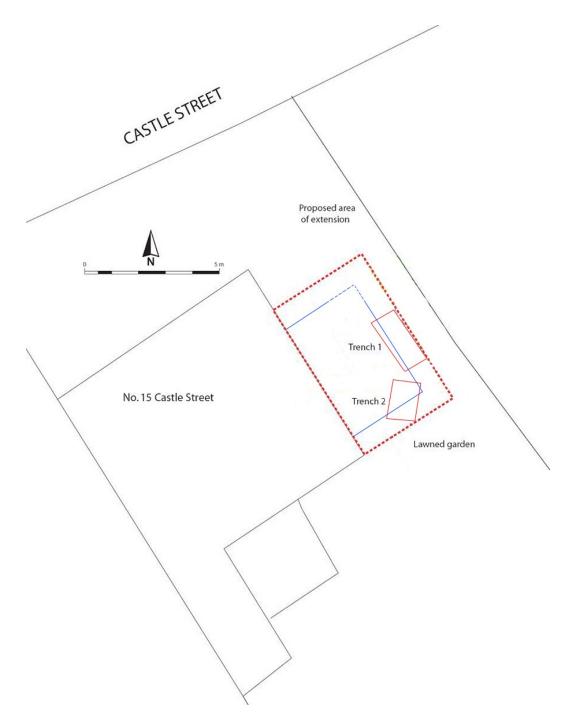
- 3.2.1 All data recovered during the fieldwork will be collated into a site archive structured in accordance with the specifications in Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation (Brown 2007), and the procedures recommended by the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.
- 3.2.2 The results of the fieldwork have been assessed in local, regional and wider contexts.
- 3.2.3 This report is fully representative of the results of the fieldwork.

## 3.3 Timetabling of Fieldwork

- 3.3.1 The watching brief methodology involved monitoring of ground level reduction works and the excavation of foundation trenches for the proposed new extension.
- 3.3.2 The watching brief was undertaken on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March and Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

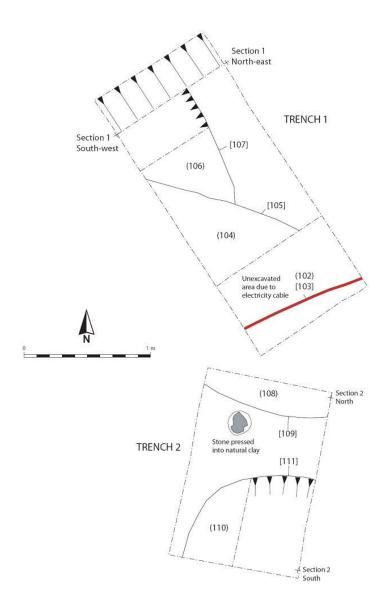
#### 4. RESULTS

- 4.1.1 Site visits were made on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March and Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2014 to monitor the ground works for the proposed new extension.
- 4.1.2 The area for the proposed extension measured approximately 6.4m x 3.9m (Figure 7). The foundation trenches for the extension were excavated within the perimeter of this area using a tracked excavator (Photo 1) to a maximum depth of 1.1m and 0.7m wide. The ground level within the remainder of the extension area was reduced by 0.45m (Photo 2).

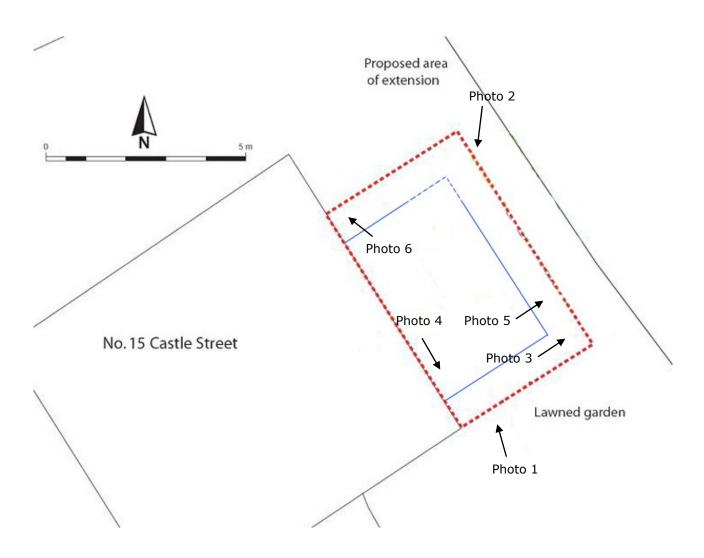


**Figure 7**: Plan showing the proposed extension area (dashed red line), the inner edge of the foundation trench (blue line) and the position of the trenches excavated during the 2009 evaluation (solid red line).

- 4.1.3 During the excavation of the foundation trenches five hitherto unknown service pipes and a red brick inspection chamber were revealed within the area which hampered progress and indicated that the area had been subjected to modern disturbance (Photo 2). However, it was possible to identify a similar sequence of soils to those identified in the 2009 evaluation. Generally topsoil (200) comprising c.0.25-0.50 m deep dark grey brown friable sandy silty clay overlay a much more compact subsoil deposit (201) c.0.15-0.25m deep. Deposit (201) comprised dark grey brown sandy silty clay and contained occasional small sub-angular stones and numerous cockle shell fragments. Below deposit (201) lay a midyellow brown clay (202) containing few stones that would appear to be the natural subsoil (Photo 3). A number of industrial period ceramic finds were recovered from the topsoil (Photo 7).
- 4.1.4 Two archaeological features were revealed during the course of the ground works which are interpreted as possible pits. Both were revealed in the sections of the foundation trenches. The first pit [203] was revealed in the north facing section of the foundation trench at the western end of the trench near the wall of the property and was cut into natural clay (Photo 4). The pit as seen in section measured 0.84m in width with a depth of 0.34m. The fill of the pit (204) comprised dark grey brown silty clay of moderate compaction continuing frequent cockle shell fragments, charcoal flecks and some angular stone. No dating material was recovered from the pit. This pit is considered to be an extension of pit [111] (Figure 8) identified in the 2009 evaluation of the site.
- 4.1.5 The second pit was identified within the west facing side of the foundation trench at the southern end of the trench (Photo 5). The second pit [205] had a width of 1.5m with a depth of 0.8m. The full extent of the pit was unclear as it had been disturbed by a modern service trench that equates to cut [105] within Trench 1 of the 2009 evaluation (Figure 8). The pit fill (206) comprised dark grey brown sandy clay silt continuing medium angular stones and numerous cockle shell fragments. No dating material was recovered from the pit.
- 4.1.6 Due to the disturbance from modern service pipes in both sections it was not clear whether the pits had been sealed by deposit (201) as was recorded during the 2009 evaluation.
- 4.1.7 The depth of topsoil (200) and subsoil (201) was greater within the southern part of the proposed extension area than in the northern part (Photo 6). This may indicate an original slight slope upwards to the north, which over time has levelled out with cultivation activity and soil accumulation.
- 4.1.8 No further archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the course of the archaeological watching brief.



**Figure 8:** Plan of the trenches excavated during the 2009 archaeological evaluation (Meek, 2009).



**Figure 9:** Plan of the development area showing the location of photographs used within this report.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The archaeological watching brief undertaken during the ground works for the proposed extension at 15 Castle Street, Kidwelly revealed two archaeological features of probable medieval date in the form of two 'rubbish' pits that cut into the natural subsoil, one of which had been identified during an archaeological evaluation of the site in 2009.
- 5.1.2 Although no datable finds were recovered from the pits during the machining of the foundation trenches, the fills were very similar to those seen in the pits recorded during the 2009 evaluation with their numerous broken cockle shells and angular stones. Therefore, it is probable that the rubbish pits recorded in section during the watching brief are of similar medieval date.
- 5.1.3 The location of the pits set back from the Castle Street frontage may indicate the presence of a related property on the street front. Families had to get rid of their own rubbish and often dumped it in their own back yards, at no great distance from where they were living. By today's standards, hygiene in medieval Britain was terrible, with debris and waste building up in and out of houses and on the streets.
- 5.1.4 Unfortunately we have no supporting map or written evidence of a medieval or later medieval property at this location. The earliest map evidence shows the site as being unoccupied on the first edition ordnance survey map of the late 19th century, which is why it is so important to record archaeological information in areas of known medieval occupation when the opportunity allows, as this is often forms the only source of evidence for the early history of so many medieval towns and villages.
- 5.1.5 The presence of cockle shells indicates an important local food source centred around the Gwendreath, Taf and Towy estuaries with former major centres at the Burry Inlet; Ferryside; Laugharne and Llansteffan. During the medieval period consumption of game, vension and certain fish was closely regulated but shellfish such as cockles were not so closely regulated and therefore formed part of the diets of the lower classes as well as the higher ones (Adamson, 2004, 44).
- 5.1.6 Ceramic pottery fragments of industrial period date were recovered from the overlying topsoil.
- 5.1.7 During the machining hitherto unknown modern service pipes and an associated inspection chamber were uncovered within the development area. These features have compromised the potential for archaeological features and deposits to survive within the central area of the proposed extension which was only partially stripped of topsoil during these works.
- 5.1.8 The medieval pits recorded within the proposed development area are considered to be of moderate archaeological importance, providing further evidence for occupation of the town during the medieval period. The cockleshells highlight the significance of a locally readily available food source during the medieval period in Kidwelly.
- 5.1.9 No further archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the course of the archaeological watching brief.
- 5.1.10 Given the limited nature of the ground works associated with the extension it is considered possible that further archaeological features and deposits may be present within the vicinity of the extension site.

# 6. PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1: North facing view showing machining of foundation trench in progress.



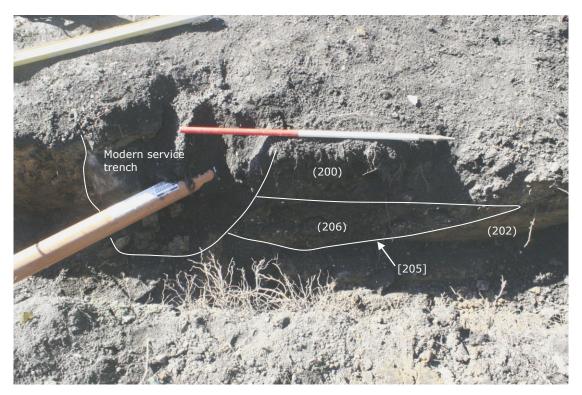
**Photo 2:** Southwest facing view of development area showing the foundation trench excavated for the footings of the extension.



**Photo 3:** West facing representative section showing the sequence of soils within the foundation trench.



**Photo 4:** North facing section of the foundation trench showing a possible pit [203], filled by (204). This is probably a continuation of pit [111] recorded during the 2009 evaluation.



**Photo 5:** West facing section of southern end of east side of foundation trench showing a possible shallow pit [205] that has been truncated by the modern service trench.



**Photo 6:** South facing section of northern side of foundation trench where it meets the wall of the property showing the shallow depth of topsoil (200) and subsoil (201) above the natural clay (202).



**Photo 7:** The pottery sherds recovered from topsoil (200).

Context No	Description
Layer (200)	Topsoil: c.0.25-0.50m deep dark grey brown friable sandy clay silt.
Layer (201)	Subsoil: c.0.10-0.15m deep dark grey brown sandy clay silt containing occasional small sub-angular stones and numerous cockle shell fragments.
Layer (202)	Natural subsoil: mid-yellow brown clay containing occasional small and medium stones.
Cut [203]	Cut of pit: A U-shaped cut with sloping sides. The cut as identified in section measures 0.84m wide and has a maximum depth of 0.34m.
Fill (204)	Fill of pit [203]: Dark grey brown silty clay containing of moderate compaction containing frequent cockle shell fragments, charcoal flecks and some angular stone.
Cut [205]	Cut of pit: A shallow flattened U-shaped cut with gently sloping sides. The pit as seen in section measures 0.84m in width with a maximum depth of 0.34m.
Fill (206)	Fill of pit [205]: Dark greyish brown silty clay containing abundant cockleshells and occasional charcoal flecks, some angular stone.

**Table 3:** Context and soil descriptions.

#### 7. SOURCES

## 7.1 Database

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record.

RCAHMW Coflein Database <a href="http://www.coflein.gov.uk/">http://www.coflein.gov.uk/</a>

# 7.2 Map

Original Ordnance Surveyors Drawings 1813

Ordnance Survey 1880 1:2500 Carmarthenshire

Ordnance Survey 1905 1:2500 Carmarthenshire

# 7.3 Unpublished

Meek, J, 2009, 15 Castle Street, Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire: Archaeological Evaluation. DAT Report No 2009/70.

#### 7.4 Published

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# 15 Castle Street, Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire: Archaeological Watching Brief

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Mai 2014 May 2014

Paratowyd	l yr adrodd	iad hwn	gan /	
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Llofnod / Signature pp...... Dyddiad / Date 01.09.14

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith /

This report has been checked and approved by: **Frances Murphy** ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf. / on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: **Project Manager** 

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