

**PROPOSED STAIR ACCESS TO
SOLAR, PEMBROKE CASTLE,
PEMBROKESHIRE:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
2015**

(NGR SM 98177 01647)



Prepared by DAT Archaeological Services
For: Pembroke Castle Trust /
Acanthus Holden Architects



DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Gan / By

Ed Davies

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SUMMARY

DAT Archaeological Services were commissioned by Acanthus Holden Architects on behalf of Pembroke Castle Trust to undertake an archaeological evaluation for a proposed stair access to the Solar in the Long Hall (aka Old Hall and Norman Hall), Pembroke Castle (NGR SM 98177 01647). The evaluation was required to provide information regarding the character and significance of the archaeological remains within the area in advance of an application to Cadw for Scheduled Monument Consent for a larger programme of works at the Castle to reinstate public access to the Solar adjacent to the Long Hall.

Scheduled Monument Consent was granted by Cadw for the evaluation, which set out to provide information on any archaeological deposits or features within the area of supports for the proposed stair to the Solar, where groundworks could impact on underlying archaeological remains. The information gained will inform the forthcoming application for Scheduled Monument Consent and help determine the scope of any further archaeological works that may or may not be required in advance of the proposed development.

The proposed stair support lies within the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Pembroke Castle (PE005), a medieval castle. The peninsula on which the castle sits and its surrounding area are also rich in archaeological remains, ranging in date from Palaeolithic to the present day.

The archaeological evaluation involved the hand excavation of a pit measuring 2m x 1.4m covering the area of the concrete supports for the proposed new stairs. No archaeologically significant remains were encountered during the excavation, only modern deposits with some possible residual medieval or post medieval pottery within it. Bedrock was encountered across the whole trench between 0.1m and 0.35m below the existing floor surface and parts of it may show evidence of having been levelled and used as a rough surface at some point.

Although no significant surviving archaeological evidence was recorded within the evaluation trench, the potential for highly significant remains to be present in the areas immediately around the trench cannot be discounted. Further archaeological mitigation may be required for any further ground-works that have the potential to expose, damage or even destroy archaeological remains, for example if the location of or the construction methodology for the stairs is changed .

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

- 1.1.1 DAT Archaeological Services was commissioned by Acanthus Holden Architects on behalf of Pembroke Castle Trust to undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site of a proposed new stair access to the Solar at the south end of the Long Hall in Pembroke Castle, Pembrokeshire.
- 1.1.2 The work was required by Cadw in advance of an application for Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) for improvements in an around the Solar area. The evaluation was required as the proposed works could potentially expose, damage or destroy significant archaeological remains, specifically within the area of proposed groundworks for concrete supports for a new stair. A separate SMC was given specifically for the evaluation trench by Cadw prior to the works commencing.
- 1.1.3 The trial trench evaluation aimed to provide information on any archaeological deposits or features within the area of the groundworks for the proposed stairs. The results of the evaluation will be used to provide further information for the forthcoming SMC application for the main works proposed at the site. They would also inform the scope of any further archaeological works that may or may not be required in advance of the main works.
- 1.1.4 The evaluation trench was located in the south eastern corner of the undercroft of the Long Hall (also known as Old Hall or Norman Hall), at Pembroke Castle, Pembrokeshire (Figure 1 and 2; SM 98177 01647).
- 1.1.5 A written scheme of investigation was prepared by DAT Archaeological Services providing information on the methodology of the evaluation and submitted to Cadw as part of the application for SMC for the evaluation.

1.2 Scope of Project

- 1.2.1 The WSI detailed that the following tasks which would be completed for the evaluation:
 - Provision of a written scheme of investigation to outline the methodology for the intrusive trial trench evaluation which DAT Archaeological Services will undertake;
 - To establish the depth below ground level at which archaeological deposits survive;
 - To ascertain the state of preservation, character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits identified;
 - To use the information to design a future mitigation strategy at the site which will enable any identified remains to be appropriately investigated and recorded where they will be affected by the proposed development;
 - The information will be used to support an application for Scheduled Monument Consent for the wider suite of works proposed at the site, but specifically the construction of the new stairway up to the Solar;
 - Production of a report on and an archive of the results.
- 1.2.2 The overall objective of the evaluation was summarised as: *The implementation of an archaeological evaluation through hand excavated trial trenches within the site of the proposed new stairway in the southeastern corner of the Long Hall, Pembroke Castle. A report shall be*

prepared on the results of the evaluation, and an archive created of all finds, records, photographs and plans created. Further mitigation may possibly need to be implemented where significant archaeological remains are identified, the scope of which will be determined following the results of the evaluation.

1.3 Report Outline

- 1.3.1 This report provides a summary and discussion of the archaeological evaluation and its results, in its regional and wider national setting.

1.4 Abbreviations

- 1.4.1 Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record¹ (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). ; Scheduled Ancient Monument – SAM; Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI; SMC – Scheduled Monument Consent.

1.5 Illustrations

- 1.5.1 Printed map extracts are not necessarily produced to their original scale.

1.6 Timeline

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

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic –	c.450,000 – 10,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic –	c. 10,000 – 4400 BC	
Neolithic –	c.4400 – 2300 BC	
Bronze Age –	c.2300 – 700 BC	
Iron Age –	c.700 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) Period –	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic
Post-Roman / Early Medieval Period –	c. AD 410 – AD 1086	
Medieval Period –	1086 – 1536	
Post Medieval Period ² –	1536 – 1750	
Industrial Period –	1750 – 1899	
Modern –	20 th century onwards	

Table 1: Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales.

² 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

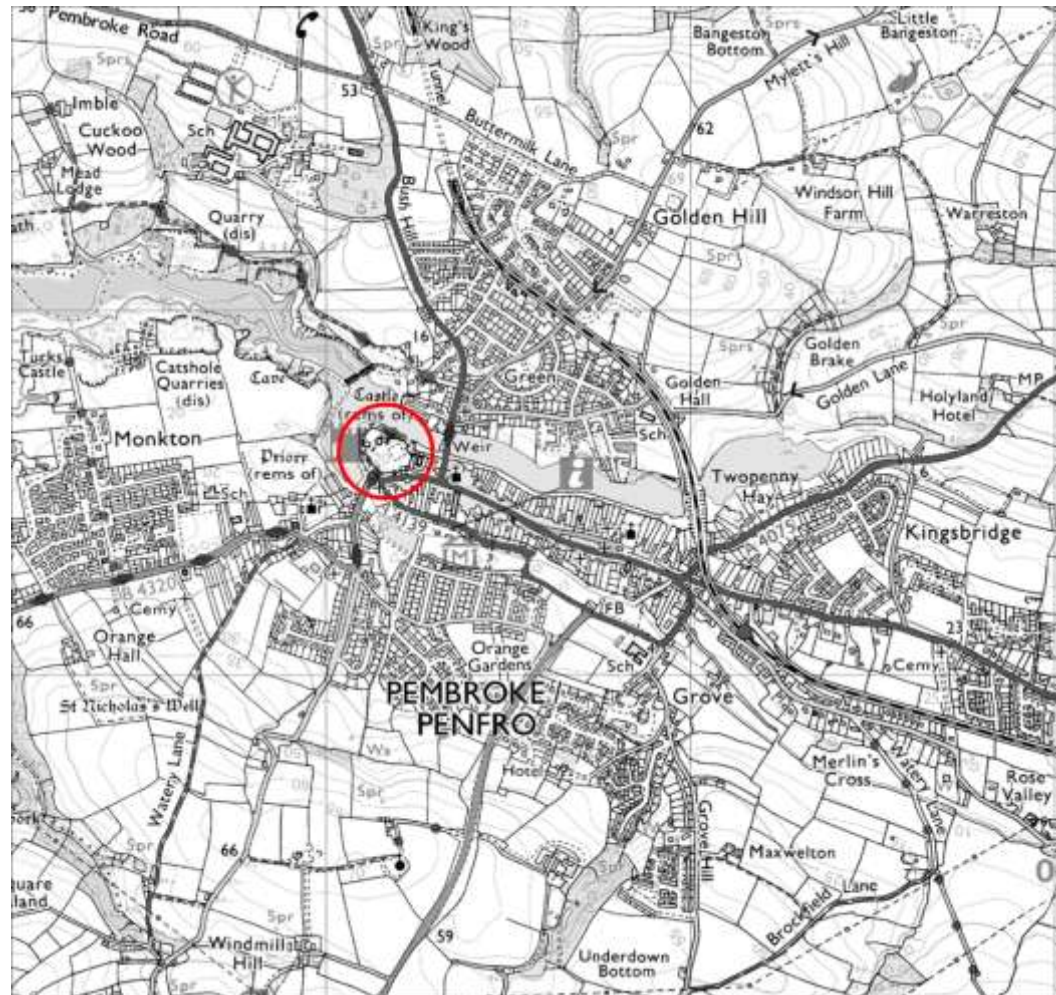


Figure 1: Location of Pembroke Castle highlighted by red circle.

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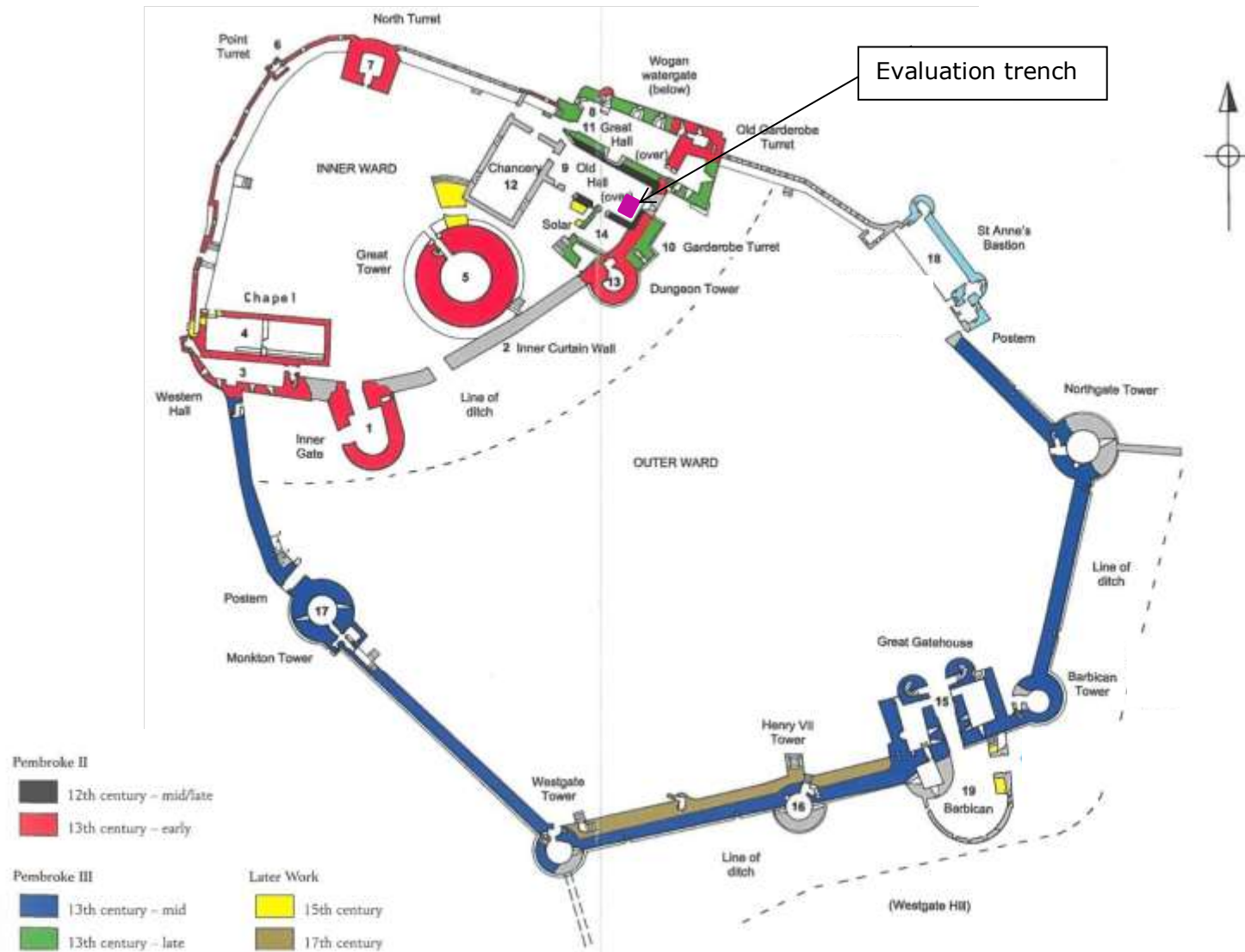


Figure 2: Approximate location of evaluation trench within Pembroke Castle indicated by purple square.
Phase plan by N. Ludlow, taken from 'Pembroke Castle, Birthplace of a Tudor Dynasty', Pembroke Castle Trust .

2. THE SITE

2.1 Location

- 2.2.1 The proposed area of ground works associated with the new stair is located in the southeastern corner of the Long Hall of Pembroke Castle, Pembrokeshire, centered on NGR SM 98177 01647 (Figure 1 and 2).
- 2.2.2 The area of the Long Hall is very flat, the present ground surface having been levelled with fine gravels to provide access to visitors to the monument.
- 2.2.3 The underlying solid geology of the site is composed of Pembroke Limestone Group rocks of the Lower Carboniferous, although nearby in other areas of the peninsula there are also patches of Breccia of the Triassic period.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Brief History of Pembroke Castle (From Ramsey 2010, Rev 2011)

- 2.2.1 Pembroke Castle (PRN4518, PE005) is situated at the west end of a precipitous (c.20m above Ordnance Datum) Carboniferous Limestone ridge flanked by two, formerly tidal, creeks of the Milford Haven waterway (Figure 1). The castle occupies the most westerly part of the historic town of Pembroke whose medieval town walls projected from two of its southeastern towers.
- 2.2.2 Wogan's Cave lies on the north side of the peninsula, below the castle walls, from which evidence for human activity from the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic has been recorded, while nearby caves also evidence Bronze Age activity.
- 2.2.3 Given the situation of the peninsula as an easily defended location, it is considered likely that the site had previously been used as an Iron Age promontory fort, many examples of which are to be found in the surrounding area. Roman coins were recovered from Wogan's cave and also the locality, suggesting the site may have been occupied during the Roman period also.
- 2.2.4 There is also the possibility that occupation occurred during the early medieval period
- 2.2.5 A full description and discussion of the history and phasing of the castle by D. J. Cathcart King has been undertaken elsewhere (King 1978), and a brief outline is included below.
- 2.2.6 The castle originated as an 'earth-and-timber' structure founded in 1093 by Roger of Montgomery during the Norman penetration into west Wales after the death of Rhys ap Tewdwr. In the late 12th century it came into the ownership of William Marshal who from 1204 commenced the rebuilding of the fortification in stone and over the next thirty years or so the great round keep, the inner ward curtain wall, chapel, inner gate and turrets were constructed.
- 2.2.7 Throughout the Middle Ages, and later, the castle continued to be enlarged with the addition of a stone curtain wall for the outer ward and numerous other buildings including, probably in the early 14th century by Aymer de Valence, St. Anne's Bastion. Sporadic periods of neglect followed but additional defensive works were constructed during the Civil War years of the 17th century. In 1648 Oliver Cromwell slighted the castle by blowing up four towers of the outer ward and after the Civil War it was abandoned and allowed to fall into ruin. At the time of the publication of the Tithe Map and Apportionment of the Parish of St. Mary in 1842 the outer ward of the castle was described as being under pasture and rented to one Joshua Paynter by its owner Edward Price Lovedon, but there is no indication that any of the buildings were inhabited at this time.
- 2.2.8 In the late 1870s to the early 1880s Joseph Richard Cobb, the antiquarian, leased the castle from its owners and undertook some clearance work which led to the discovery of the Horseshoe Gate in the inner ward. He also carried out restoration work around the castle gateway, on the wall enclosing the Barbican and on the Bygate Tower (Cobb 1883).
- 2.2.9 In 1915 the castle was scheduled, one of the first privately-owned castles to be afforded such protection, and in 1928 it was acquired by Sir Ivor Phillips who commenced the first restoration, consolidation and rebuilding programme since that undertaken by Cobb, but on a much larger scale. The castle that we experience today is a direct result of this extensive

work, which was completed by May 1940. The stairs and roof of the Keep (Great Tower) were restored, as were the Northgate, Westgate and Henry VII towers; extensive consolidation of the outer curtain wall, restoration of the inner curtain, and restoration of the Western Hall was also undertaken.

- 2.2.10 The castle currently lies within the Pembroke Historic Landscape Character Area (see Appendix I) and is a Grade I listed building.

The Long Hall

- 2.2.11 The proposed stair is located within the upstanding remains of the oldest stone building of Pembroke Castle, namely the Long Hall, also known as Norman Hall or Old Hall (Figure 2). Much renovation work was undertaken during the early 20th century to preserve the site for future generations by Major-General Phillips, although the amount of below-ground work in the area is unknown.
- 2.2.12 According to Ludlow (2001) the Long Hall is typical of 12th century halls with access to the building gained from the first floor via an external staircase, with access to the undercroft being via trapdoor and ladder or stairs. The usage of these two spaces is very different with the first floor serving the main domestic and residential area until later buildings made it more of a private room; while the undercroft served as a storeroom. Later additions and renovations during the medieval period and since, inserted the ground floor openings seen today and therefore its function as a storeroom may have changed.
- 2.2.13 There is therefore the potential for archaeological remains relating to the daily activities of a medieval castle, in the form of floor surfaces and occupation layers to be present within the building.
- 2.2.14 Given the long periods of human activity on the site, any excavation of the site has the potential to uncover archaeological remains relating to any of them, although with a higher likelihood of encountering medieval remains.

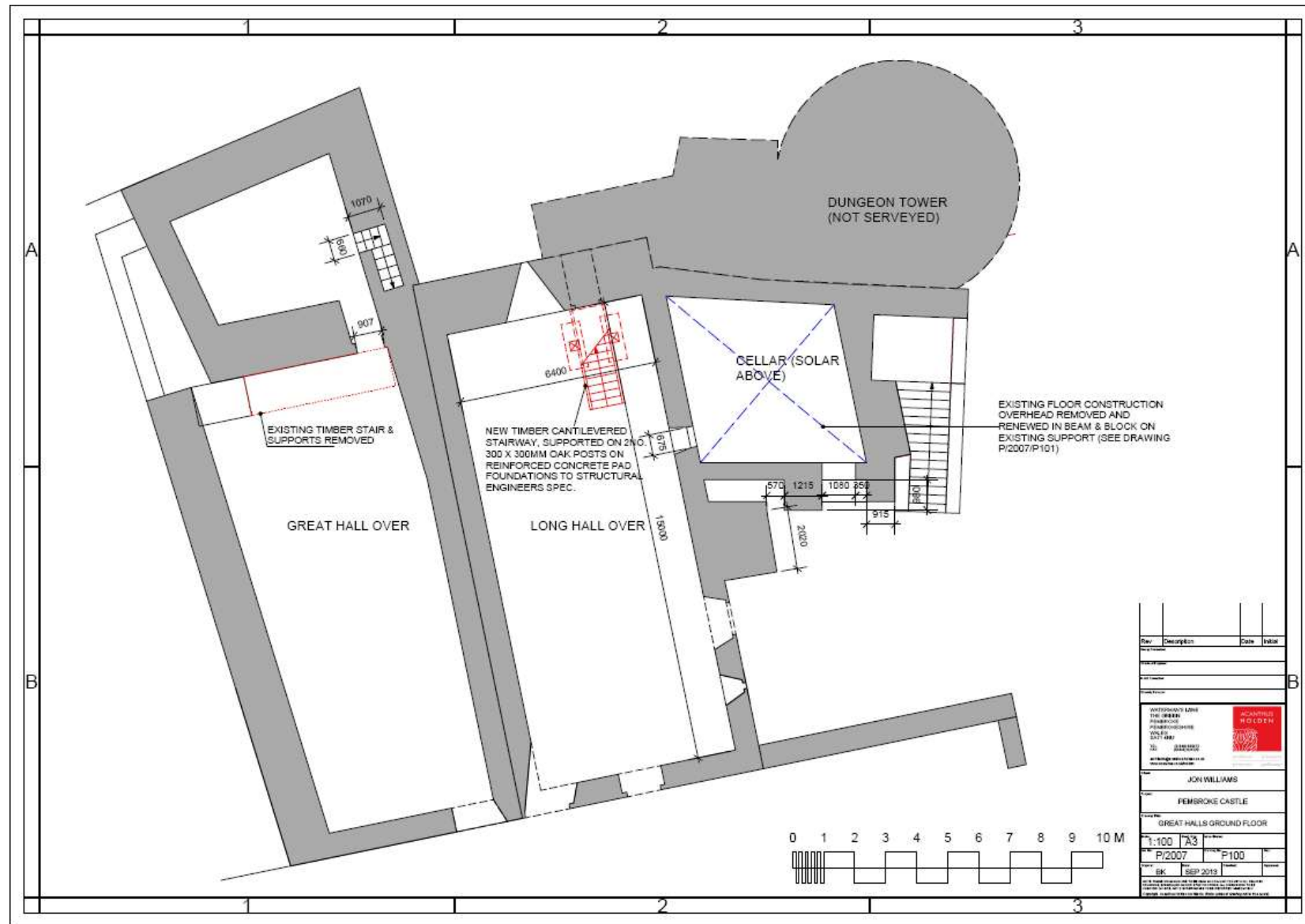


Figure 3: Plan of proposed stairs to solar (in red).
Drawing provided by Acanthus Holden Architects

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1.1 The evaluation entailed the hand excavation of a single trench, 2m x 1.4m in size and no more than 0.5m deep. The size of the trench covered the area of the proposed concrete footings for the stairway and the depth would cover the maximum estimated for the ground works.
- 3.1.2 All excavation was undertaken by hand using appropriate hand tools. All non-archaeologically significant overburden was removed and the trench was excavated to a depth down onto natural or archaeological levels.
- 3.1.3 Following removal of modern floor surface deposits potential areas of archaeology were hand cleaned using trowels to expose the character, distribution and extent of the archaeological remains.
- 3.1.4 All deposits were recorded by archaeological context record sheet, scale drawing and photographs. All individual deposits were numbered using the open-ended numbering system in accordance with DAT Archaeological Services Recording Manual³. The trench plan was recorded by means of measured drawings and sketches. A photographic record was maintained using digital cameras.
- 3.1.5 The trench was located in relation to nearby walls using measuring tapes.
- 3.1.6 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the 28th and 29th of October 2015.

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 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. The report includes a desk-based research element to ensure that the site is placed within its wider archaeological context.

³ Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services use the Recording Manual developed by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology. A copy will be available for inspection if required.

4. RESULTS OF EVALUATION

- 4.1 A 2m x 1.4m trench was opened in the area of the footprint of proposed footings for the stairs to the Solar within the Long Hall (Figure 3). Once the excavation was complete a detailed scaled plan (Figure 4) of what was exposed was drawn as well as the four sections (Figures 5 and 6).
- 4.2 Bedrock was encountered across the trench at a maximum depth of 0.35m and a minimum depth of 0.1m. The bedrock was deepest in the north-eastern end of the trench.
- 4.3 The strata encountered during the excavation were as follows (Figure 5 & 6):

Context	Summary Description
001	The current floor surface. A pale, orangey-brown, crushed stone sand of 0.06m-0.07m thickness.
002	A substrate layer. A grey, crushed stone sand of similar consistency to (001) of 0.04m thickness.
003	A dark greyish-brown clay-silt layer. Inclusions of mortar flecks and small-medium stone. All recovered finds came from this layer including metal, broken glass, iron nails, pottery, bone, roofing slate. The deposit was between 0.12m – 0.24m thick.
004	A dark greyish-brown silt-clay layer at the southern end of the trench. Very few inclusions. The layer was between 0.12m and 0.16m thick.
005	A mixed layer immediately overlying the bedrock. A dark brown silty-clay with large patches of clayey-sand, mortar, stone between 0.02m and 0.35m thick.

- 4.4 The upper gravel layers (001 & 002) were removed using mattocks and shovels and were stored separately so that they could be reinstated on the surface at the end of the works. The underlying layer 003 was then hand cleaned to assess its character and date. The layer contained numerous modern finds, including plastic sweet wrappers, ring pulls, pottery and other detritus. Some residual medieval or post-medieval pottery was encountered mixed up with modern material in layer 003 but these fragments were small and not definitive evidence of medieval activity. A few fragments of roofing slate, two with nail holes within, were also found within layer 003, which could potentially have been medieval.
- 4.5 Layer 003 was then removed. Layer 004 was also removed at this time as it was of a very similar colour and texture to 003 but had far fewer inclusions or finds within it. The layer was most obvious in section (Figures 5 & 6). The underlying layer (005) was then hand cleaned before being removed on two sides of the trench, leaving a baulk in the middle (Photo 1 & 2).
- 4.6 The mixed nature of deposit (005) could represent occupation layers but this cannot be certain, and no date could be attributed to it during this evaluation. It is possible that some of the inclusions within this layer, such as the patches of clayey sand could represent former floor surface material.
- 4.7 The patch of exposed bedrock in the western corner was markedly finer and less peaked than in the rest of the trench. This may have served as a floor surface during the past, or perhaps had been worn down flatter through use, but a larger area would need to be exposed to confirm this.



Photo 1: The excavated trench after topsoil stripping viewing south. The natural limestone bedrock is visible. Note the central baulk left in place is not an archaeological feature – but represents the remains of (005) left in-situ. 2m x 1m scale.



Photo 2: Plan view of the excavated trench. Note the exposed bedrock visible across the trench, with flatter area to top left. 2m x 1m scale

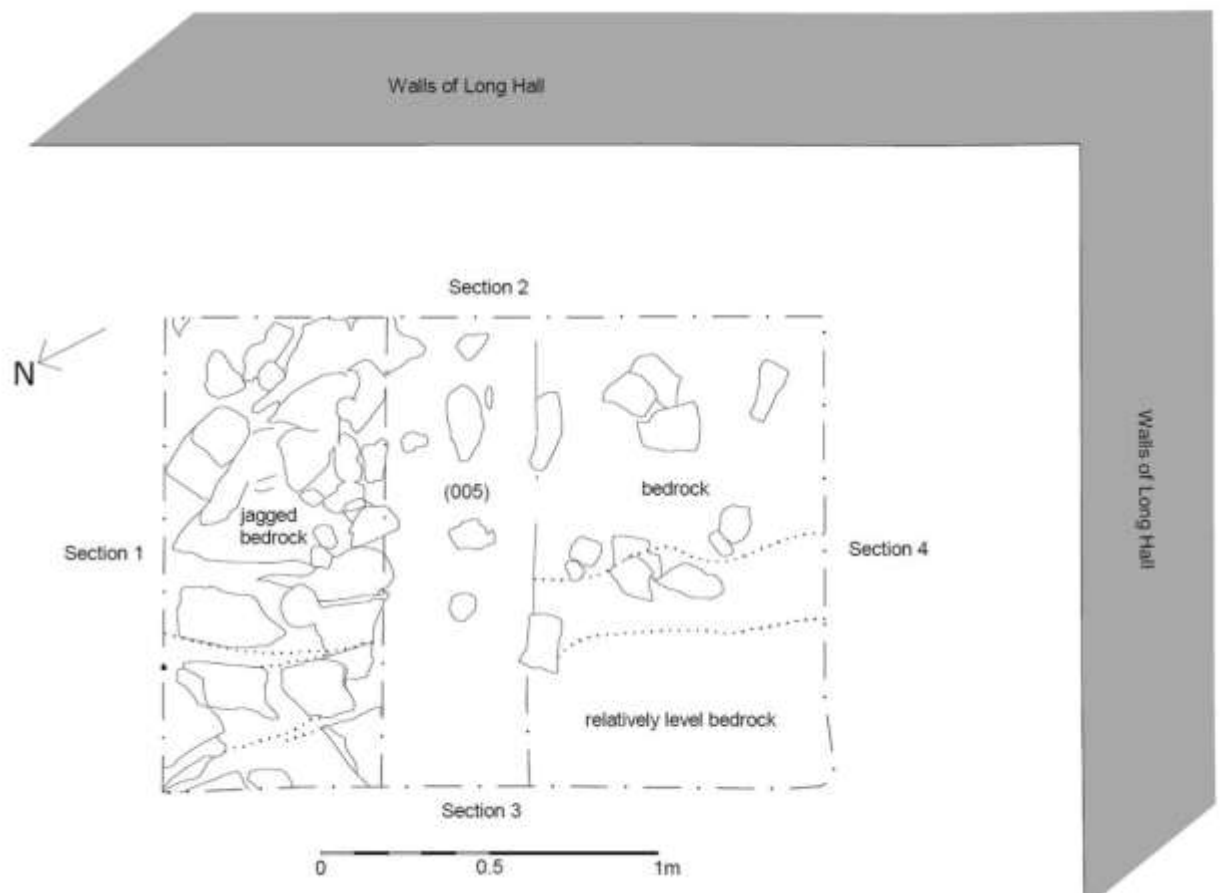


Figure 4: Location plan of trench in relation to the walls of the Long Hall.

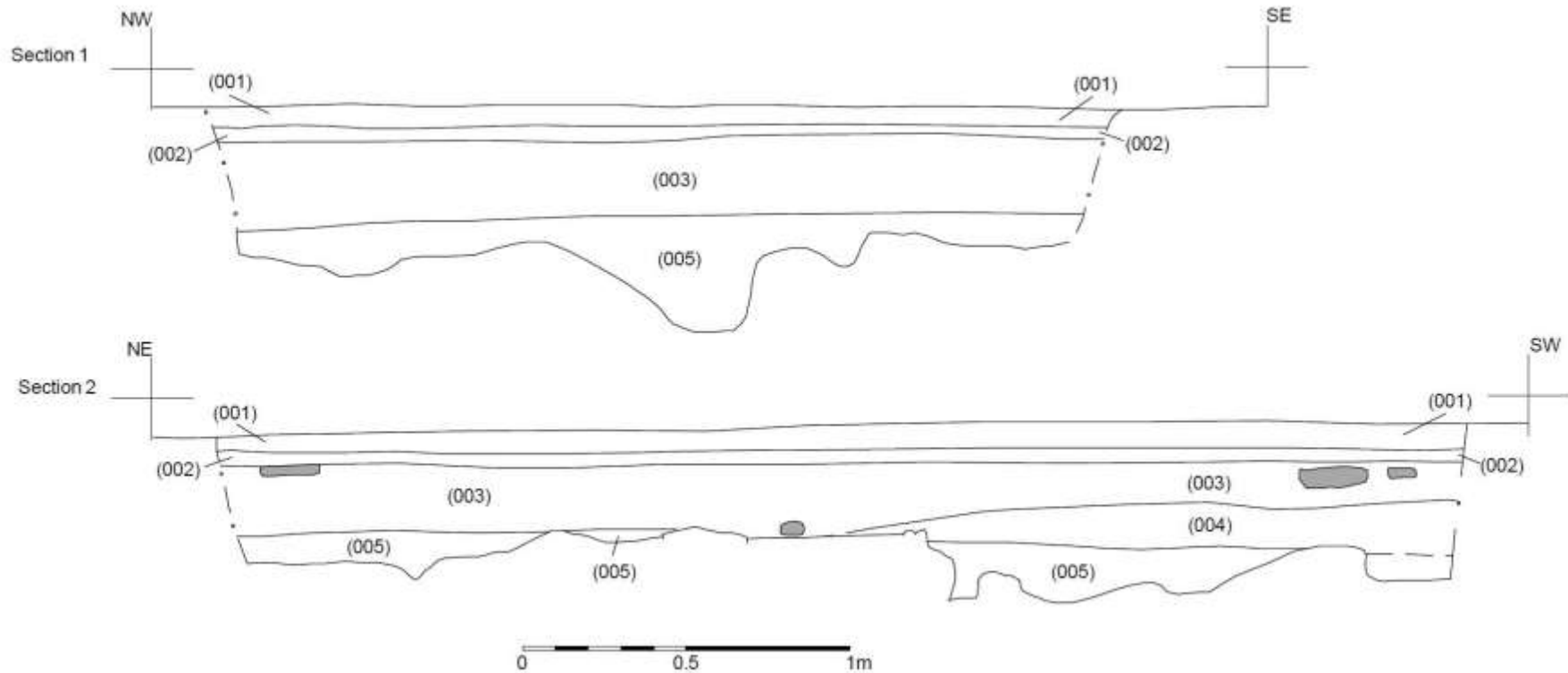


Figure 5: Sections 1 (southwest facing) and 2 (northwest facing) of trench.

The crosses used to mark the string heights of each end of the sections is the same height for each section in Figures 5 & 6

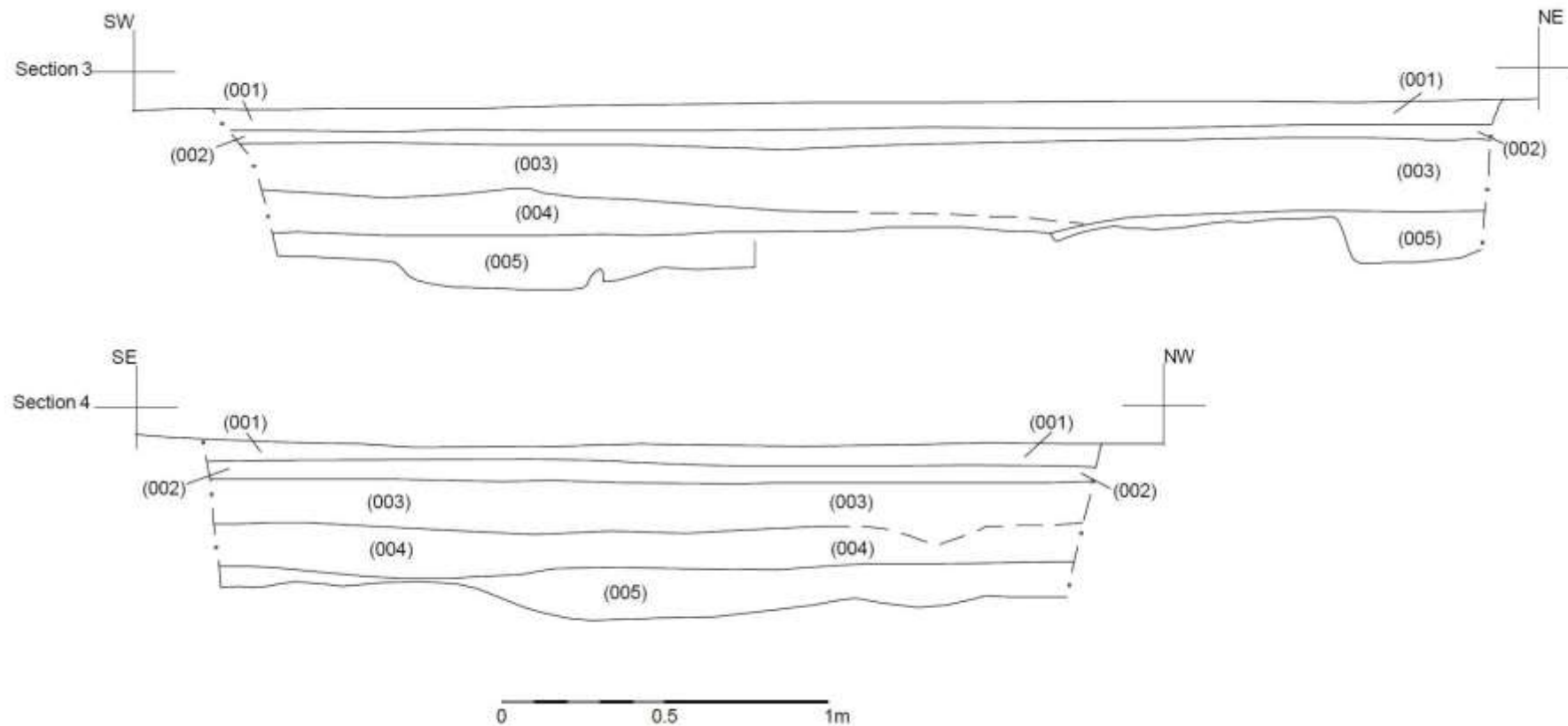


Figure 6: Sections 3 (southeast facing) and 4 (northeast facing) of trench.

The crosses used to mark the string heights of each end of the sections is the same height for each section in Figures 5 & 6

CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This evaluation has not found any evidence for the presence of in-situ archaeological remains within the footprint of the footings for the proposed stair.
- 5.2 Layers (001) and (002) were likely to have been lain down together as a surface to facilitate visitor access, with (002) acting as a base layer or foundation for the main surface of (001). These are likely to have been laid in more recent years, but potentially could have been put down at any point during the development of the Castle as a visitor attraction during the latter part of the 20th century onwards. Another possibility is that (002) was a former surface that (001) replaced and it was simply covered over by the new surface.
- 5.3 The deposit below the gravel surfaces (003) was visible across the whole excavation area, comprising a very dark silty-clay soil matrix with numerous inclusions including a large number and variety of finds (see section 4.4 above). The nature of these finds is such that it can only have been deposited during the 20th century as it contained discarded rubbish including plastic wrappers, metal ring-pulls and broken glass. One of the plastic wrappers still had legible branding and text on it, which indicated that its initial value was "3d" or 3 pence prior to decimalisation on 15th February 1971.
- 5.4 The interface between (003) and (002) was very clean and level. As (002) and (001) were put down to permit public access to the site, it is considered likely that care was taken to prepare the ground in advance of that work. This work could have included levelling of the site with base material being introduced, removed and/or moved around the site to produce a level and flat surface for the gravel layers above. Given the mixed nature of the finds within the deposit and its relative firmness, it is likely that layer (003) was spread across the site and roughly compacted in advance of the introduction of the graveled surfaces.
- 5.5 The interface between (003) and (004) was not easily visible during excavation but could be felt by trowel and observed by the marked lack of inclusions. The change was more visible in section but where the interface lay closer to the underlying bedrock, this difference became blurred.
- 5.6 Layer (004) was a very dark silty-clay, presumably a humic/organic rich soil. Such a layer is likely to have formed during periods of disuse of the castle, possibly after the Civil War. The usage of the castle is recorded as pasture at the time of the tithe map and apportionment of 1842. Due to the similarity of the basic soil matrix that constitute (003) and (004), layer (003) could thus constitute similar material which may have been present in and around other areas of the castle, but which was moved about and used as levelling material in the latter part of the 20th century with the finds (detritus) left in or introduced as a means of adding bulk to the deposit.
- 5.7 It is also worth noting that (004) was only observed on one side of the trench and gives the impression of a deposit formed in the edges and corners of the building. This might suggest the adjacent window and central area of the hall was being utilised in some way during this period of soil formation. It may merely indicate visitor access into the hall, with the main areas of visitor movement running along the centre of the hall and leading up to the large window in its southern wall.
- 5.8 Layer (005) was very mixed and contained areas of orangey clay-sand within it. This has been interpreted as a possible occupation deposit, with

the clay-sand deposits representing the remains of possible former floor surfaces. The mixed nature of the deposit and how it formed a broadly level surface (see Figures 5 and 6) with the outcropping bedrock from below, led to the interpretation as a possible occupation layer. The orangey inclusions within it were interpreted as being the remains of possible floor surface as the composition was markedly different from that observed in the other deposits.

- 5.9 As the room function within the building during the Medieval period was as a storeroom to the Castle and Hall above, we can expect the undercroft to have rougher floor surfaces, made of beaten earth, clay or exposed bedrock, and more rarely of rough cobbling or flagging. Therefore it is reasonable to interpret the clay-sand material found within layer (005), as possibly the remains of a former floor surface or simple levelling material pushed into the cracks in the bedrock to form a rough, but usable floor surface. Without further evidence this can only be a possible interpretation.
- 5.10 Given that context (005) sat on top of bedrock, the overall height of the room cannot have been lower than that between the bedrock and the top of the corbels visible in the surrounding walls, a height of around 1.8m. The potential room height from the top of (005) would allow an average person plenty of head height to walk around, only having to duck slightly underneath the floor beams in the ceiling above.
- 5.11 The exposed bedrock at the south east end of the trench was less peaked and had the appearance of being more worn than that surrounding it. This appearance may be due to it being used as a surface but could also relate to earlier activity on the peninsula, and may simply be the remains of weathering. A larger area would need to be exposed to be certain.
- 5.12 The bedrock is particularly high in this area, which is of little surprise as it provides the strong foundations a castle builder would require to make a stronghold. However bedrock is subject to quite drastic changes in small spaces, and while the depth of soil in this area is shallower than expected, it may well be much deeper in in close proximity within the Long Hall.
- 5.13 Although no significant archaeological remains were encountered during this evaluation, with the evidence suggesting a lack of any real depth of surviving archaeological material within the Long Hall, this does not mean this will be the case throughout the rest of the building. This is because it is not possible to know, without further investigation, the nature or form of the bedrock below, and therefore the depth of deposition above it.
- 5.14 The evaluation has shown that the proposed stair footings will be placed directly onto bedrock with no significant archaeological remains being affected by these proposals. Therefore this element of the proposals will cause no serious issue and no further archaeological work is anticipated as being required relating to the foundation of the stairs. However should the proposals change this may need to be reassessed and further work may be required.
- 5.15 The evaluation provided lots of opportunity for public engagement and attracted a lot of interest from visitors to the castle of all ages.
- 5.16 The trench was backfilled and the gravel surfaces reinstated at the end of the works. Due to overnight rain, the backfill material was wet and the trench a little spongy after backfilling and so barriers were left around the trench until it stabilized.

6. SOURCES

6.1 Publications

Brown, D.H., 2007. *Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. Institute of Field Archaeologists.

Ludlow, N, 2001. *Pembroke Castle: Birthplace of the Tudor Dynasty*, Pembroke Castle Trust

6.2 Database

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record, housed with Dyfed Archaeological Trust in The Shire Hall, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 6AF

RCAHMW Coflein Database <http://www.coflein.gov.uk/>

6.3 Map

Ordnance Survey 2003 1:25 000 scale map of Pembrokeshire.

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RHIF Y DIGWYDDIAD / EVENT RECORD NO. 108786

TACHWEDD 2015
NOVEMBER 2015

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

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Swydd / Position: **Archaeologist DAT Archaeological Services**

Llofnod / Signature  Dyddiad / Date 19/11/2015

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

JAMES MEEK

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Swydd / Position: **Head of DAT Archaeological Services**

Llofnod / Signature  Dyddiad / Date 19/11/2015

*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*

