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DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD

REPORT ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF UNDERTAKEN ON THE NEW
JOB CENTRE, QUAY STREET, HAVERFORDWEST, JUNE 1994

Client: H & W Developments
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, NEW JOB CENTRE, QUAY STREET,
HAVERFORDWEST, JUNE 1994

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Fig. 1 Part of the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 3rd Ed. Map
Pembrokeshire XXVII.8 (1937).

Fig. 2 Photocopy of 'View of Haverfordwest' (c 1840) by
Newman and Co. in *Fortune's Frolic*.

Fig. 3 Plan showing location of foundation trenches.

Fig. 4 Section of part of Trench 1.

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1. SUMMARY

Archaeological evidence obtained indicated that down to the 18th century the site of the new job centre was open ground and probably subject to tidal flooding. A quay may have lain along the E edge of Quay Street. Sometime during the 18th century soil and other material was dumped on the site in order to raise the ground surface to something comparable to modern levels; this was almost certainly linked with the construction of a new quay along the line of the present-day river bank.

2. SITE LOCATION

The site lies in Quay Street in the centre of Haverfordwest. It is bounded on the W by the Western Cleddau and on the E by Quay Street (Fig. 1). Stone buildings lie immediately to the S and a small car park to the N. At the time of the watching brief the site presented a fairly level surface having been cleared of all buildings.

3. PLANNING BACKGROUND

The planning history of the site is long and complicated. Developments pertinent to this report are: outline planning consent granted by Preseli Pembrokeshire District Council for a new job centre in June 1992, acceptance by the District Council in December 1993 for a programme of archaeological recording following guidelines laid down in PPG 16 (Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning, 1991). Construction work began in May 1994 and the archaeological watching brief was carried out over three days in June 1994.

4. CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

Initially, the site was cleared of existing structures. these consisted of a single-storey building, formerly a small shopping centre. Piled foundations were then constructed and over these trenches excavated to accommodate ground beams. A two-storey steel framed building will be erected on these foundations.

It was only during the excavation of the foundation trenches that the archaeological watching brief was carried out.

5. SITE HISTORY

Haverfordwest was established in the early 12th century and from this date was dependent on its sea trade. Few records survive concerning the early port; those that do indicate a thriving industry. Between 1318 and 1320 22 shipments of hides and wool left the quay for various destinations in Britain and Europe. In the same period Haverfordwest was listed as one of S Wales' principal herring ports. In the 16th century surviving documents list wool, leather, cheese, beef, linen, cloth, wine and many other commodities exported and imported to and from Bristol, N Devon, France, Portugal and Spain. In 1833, sea trade was still important to Haverfordwest with agricultural produce comprising the chief export and manufactured goods and coal the main imports. Ships up to 250 tons could reach the town. The arrival of the railway in 1853 led to the decline in the port: it was virtually dormant by the early years of the 20th century.

The earliest quay probably lay between what is now Old Bridge and New Bridge. It is likely, however, that the further quays were soon constructed downstream of these in the area of the watching brief. Certainly, by 1563 Quay Street was firmly established. A drawing of Haverfordwest of circa 1840 (Fig. 2) shows warehouses on the quay but with the site of the new job centre apparently vacant, apart from, perhaps, a low shed-like building. By the time of the first large scale Ordnance Survey map of Haverfordwest in 1889 this area was built over with structures extending from Quay Street down to the river. This situation had not changed much by 1937 when this map was revised (Fig. 1). The buildings shown on the 1937 map were apparently demolished 20-30 years ago to make way for a small shopping centre - the building that was cleared prior to construction of the job centre.

6. THE WATCHING BRIEF

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the digging of the deepest foundation trenches (Trenches 1 and 3, Fig. 3). In the light of the results obtained from these it was deemed unnecessary to watch the excavation of the shallower trenches.

No evidence was obtained for buildings or building foundations older than the 20th century. There was no structural evidence for quays and associated structures was seen.

Part of the section of the foundation trench excavated closest to and parallel to the river (labelled Trench 1 on Fig. 3) was drawn and is reproduced here (Fig. 4). It was not considered necessary to draw other sections of the foundation trenches as they show no substantive differences from the one shown in Fig. 4.

Trench 1 was dug down to about 3.5m OD, approximately 1.4m below the height of the riverside walkway. Massive concrete foundations were cut into earlier deposits, but no other evidence of buildings was noted in the trench. Apart from very modern deposits, four general layers were recognised in the drawn section:

1. Mixed layer comprising a silty loam dark brown soil with mortar fragments, shattered brick and small stones. This deposit was probably laid down prior to building the former shopping centre 20-30 years ago.
2. Layer of dark brown silty loam soil mixed with bands of coarse sand.
3. Layer of coarse sand and beach gravels/cobbles. This seems to be a deliberate dump layer designed to raise the ground surface.
4. Compacted, very dark brown silty loam soil mixed with mortar, stone and roofing slate fragments. Some small sherds of 18th century pottery and bottle glass were visible in the upper levels of this layer.

Trench 2 lay alongside the boundary on the N side of the site. The trench was only dug down to 0.6 - 0.7m below the existing ground level; its base at about 4.2m OD. Layers 1-4 (above) were recognised in this trench. Layer 4 gently sloped up from W to E, presumably reflecting underlying ground trends. The stone footings of the N boundary wall of the site were partly exposed in this trench. It would seem, though this could not be confirmed, that layers 1-3 were built up against these footings. The relationship of layer 4 to them was not obtained.

Trench 3 was the deepest area of foundation, approximately 1.7m deep, the base at 3.2m OD. Layers 1-4 were examined in this trench. The full depth of layer 4 was exposed; its rather disturbed upper horizon containing shattered mortar, stone and slate gave way to a purer, relatively undisturbed black loamy soil. Pieces of coal and small sherds of 17th century pottery were noted in this soil. The soil overlay a blue-grey silty clay river deposit - undoubtedly the same layer encountered at 1.6 - 2.0m in the geotechnical investigation.

None of the finds recorded during the watching brief was deemed worthy of retention.

7. CONCLUSIONS

No evidence was obtained for buildings other than those of 20th century date; it is therefore assumed that all foundations, floors and other details of the buildings shown on earlier maps and drawings were erased during the building of the shopping centre 20-30 years ago.

Layer 4 is an important deposit in helping to explain the early topography of the site. It is clearly an *in situ* soil formed over river deposits. Pottery and other finds from overlying deposits suggests that this soil was not covered until the 18th century, perhaps when a quay on the present-day riverside was constructed. The pre-18th century quay, at least in the vicinity the new job centre, may have been directly alongside Quay Street.

8. REFERENCES

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Lewis, S, 1833 *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, London.

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Newman and Co., c1840 'View of Haverfordwest', in *Fortune's Frolic*, copy in National Library of Wales.



THE MARS
Sports Ground
2.852

WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
Lady Well

FIG. 1

BM. 52.07

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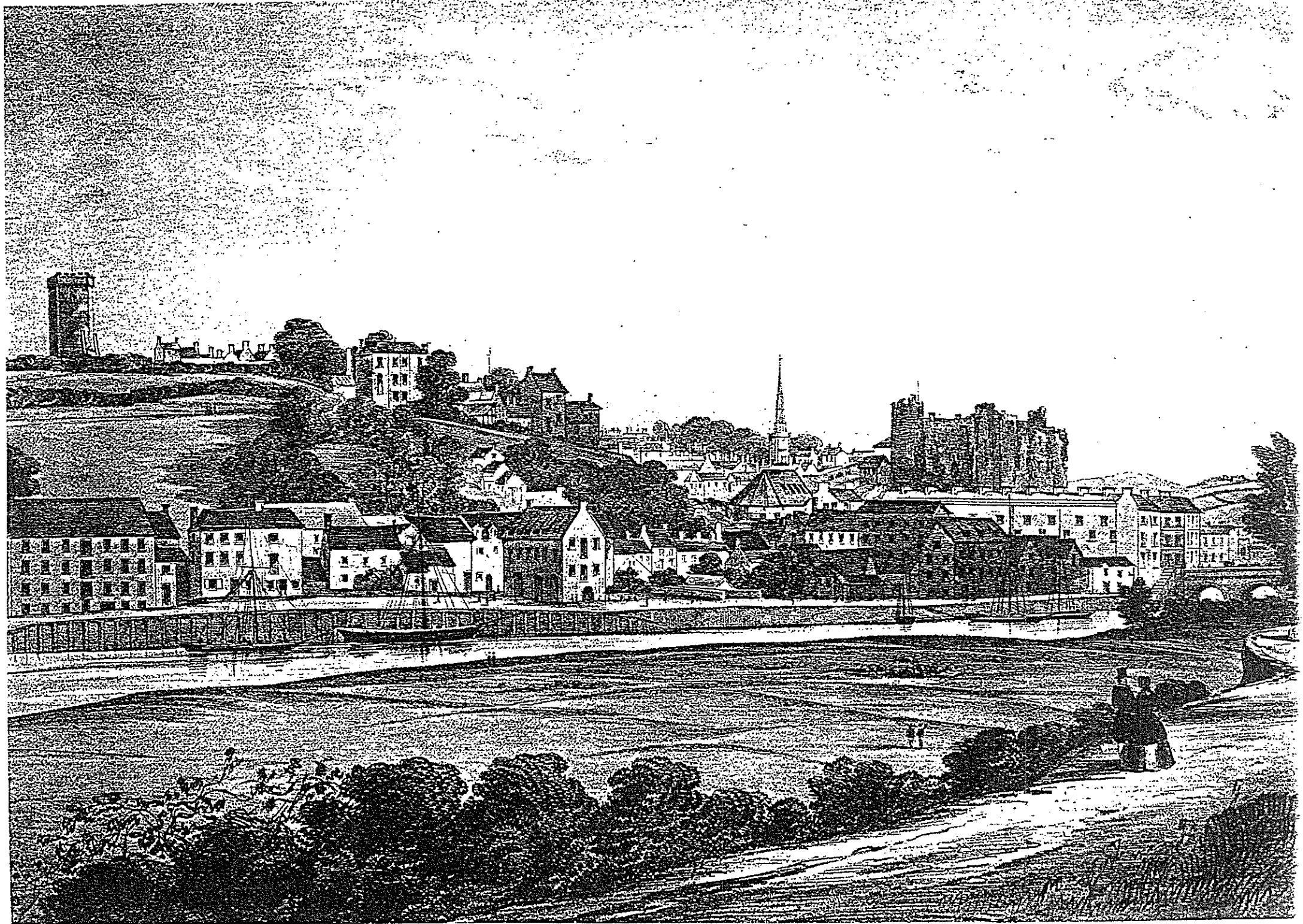


FIG. 3 LOCATION OF FOUNDATION TRENCHES

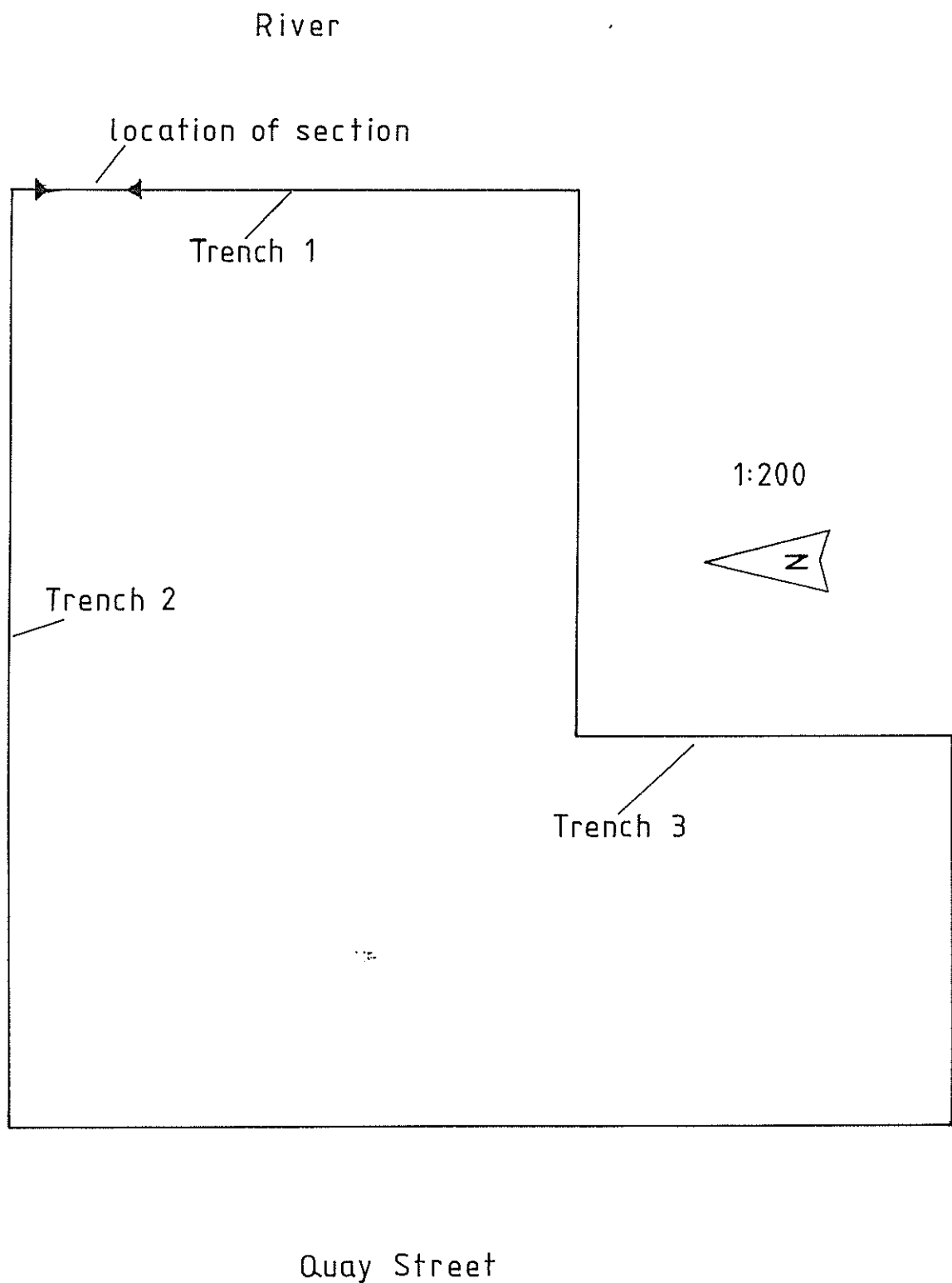


FIG. 4 SECTION OF PART OF TRENCH 1

