

CARMARTHEN - JACKSON'S LANE III

Real 60 KING STREET
-62

DAT PRN ²⁷⁹⁵¹~~44750~~ (Plann. Applic. D4/22312)

PRN 27951

WATCHING BRIEF JUNE-AUGUST 1993

A watching brief was maintained on the construction trenches for the office/shop units being built in the SW corner of the Jackson's Lane development area. Site owner - David Crane; Contractors - Sharp Bros., Meidrim.

1 - Three site visits were made over the three days 30/6/93-2/7/93. The 4 NS trenches were seen to cut through a considerable thickness of overburden. The site foreman explained that the ground here was so soft that the trenches had to be of sufficient depth to provide a firm foundation.

By 2 July the 2 eastern trenches had been cut to a depth of 1.5m; all that was visible in section were dark/ black modern deposits with brick, coal etc. and lenses of lighter, mixed material. Despite their depth these deposits did not appear to be slumping into anything, all stratification being horizontal.

The 2 western trenches were cut through more stable material although the bulk of it still appeared to be post-med.; lighter coloured ?medieval deposits only occurring in the bottom of the trenches and even there they were disturbed. The easternmost trench lay hard up to the property boundary and the disturbance was particularly marked. A light-coloured soil profile at the S end of this trench may represent a Roman deposit, but was much disturbed and no features were visible within it.

The S trench - the only EW trench so far excavated - cut through similar late material and a C19th brick-lined cellar at the W end.

Nowhere was natural seen.

Trench excavation was said to be complete 2/7/93.

2 - The site was again visited 13/7/93 in response to a telephone call from the site foreman.

The 2 western trenches - Trenches A & B (see Fig.) - had not been excavated to any greater depth, the levels already achieved, at a depth averaging 1.5m, having been deemed sufficiently stable. However, the 2 western trenches C & D had been taken down to a considerable depth.

TRENCH A (See Fig.)

Trench A was not recorded. Depth averaged 1.5m. Post-medieval/modern deposits present throughout (with the exceptions

noted above) and these were similar or the same as those seen in the other 3 trenches. Much cellar disturbance, cutting through the lower deposits in the trench (= (4) in Trench D). A large assemblage of pottery was recovered from the cellars, all of it dating from a period ending c.1820 providing a T.P.Q. for cellar construction. Deposits cut by them are therefore pre-19th century.

TRENCH B

Not recorded. The description of Trench A above suffices for Trench B.

TRENCH C

TRENCH D (See Fig. & Profile)

The westernmost construction trench - Trench D - had been excavated to a depth of 1.6-1.9m, punctuated by a series of 4 square pits, the deepest of which was 3.4m. The pits averaged 1.2m square (but were later enlarged), and their excavation was necessary in order to provide a solid foundation in what was still, even at this depth, extremely soft and unstable material.

The western section of the trench and pits was examined and recorded (Fig.), the eastern section being more-or-less a mirror image. The deposits within appeared to be entirely post-medieval and very mixed. Stratification was more-or-less horizontal with neither tip-lines nor slumping, save a downhill slope to the N reflecting the former topography (a slope that is today substantially less marked).

1:- The lowest deposit was a considerable thickness (1.7m of which was visible) of a rather loose, wet mid-brown silt loam containing a high percentage of crushed shale fragments, with some river pebbles and small O.R.S. chunks. Throughout the deposit was intermixed a fine off-white mortar. No dateable finds were seen but some bone, largely undecayed, was present. The deposit is plainly post-medieval, but may be fairly early.

The deposit appeared in the bottom of all 4 pits increasing in depth to the N. The W sections of the 2 middle pits - Pits 6 & 7 - displayed very large blocks of O.R.S. (extremely large in Pit 6 - up to 0.5m) some faces of which displayed in situ off-white/grey-white mortar. Similar stonework occurs on the bottom of Pit 7 and the northernmost pit (Pit 8) where the mortar is considerable. This masonry has the appearance of collapse rather than of being in situ and indeed the latter would be unlikely given the nature of the surrounding deposit. However, is the collapse in situ or has it come from somewhere else?

The whole has the appearance of a fill, probably not a natural silting, and probably also not primary, of a very large feature - presumably running N-S.

2:- Above (1), in Pits 6 & 7, lay up to 0.6m of a loose, wet

loamy soil, generally dark brown/black in colour but very dirty and mixed. Pieces of black slate, quartzite fragments, some brick, animal bone, coal, charcoal and mortar lenses were all represented and one large rim sherd, with handle, of Gravel-tempered Ware. Post-medieval.

3:- A very similar deposit to (2), probably the same context but more brown and with fewer coarse components, occurred in place of (2) for 0.7m in Pit 8. Likewise post-medieval.

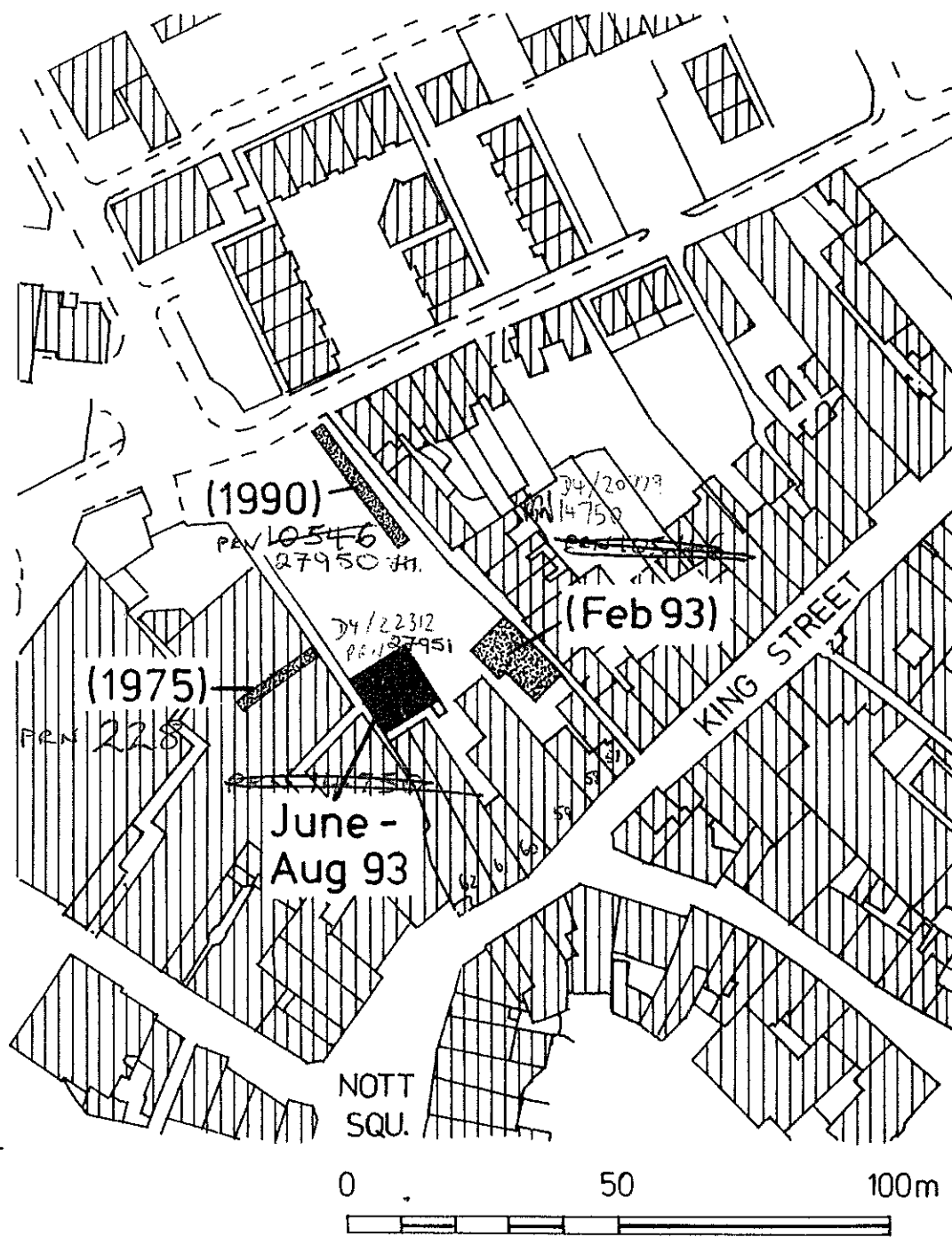
4:- Was again similar to (2) but with markedly fewer coarse components. It lay directly on (1) in Pit 5 and on (2) or (3) in the others. Up to 0.9m thick.

5:- Throughout the trench a very modern looking dirty mixed gravel layer in a mid-brown matrix lay above (4). Up to 0.4m thick.

6:- Was very recent black overburden, with evidence of stratification but with crisp packets, soft drink cans etc. in the upper levels. 0.6m thick in Pit 5, increasing to 1m in Pit 8.

DISCUSSION

1: Site Location



3: Profiles of Trenches C & D Sketch