

5



20/06/9

DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD



TERRACED GARDEN SCHEME AT **HEN ARDD** THE ESPLANADE, CARMARTHEN CARMARTHENSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Project Record No. 32839

JUNE 1996

Commissioned by: Woodhams Landscape Ltd
60 Ledbury Road, London W11 2AJ
Report by: I.M.Darke
of

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd
The Shire Hall
Llandeilo
Carmarthenshire
SA19 6AF

Tel (01558) 823121
Fax (01558) 823133



HEN ARDD, THE ESPLANADE, CARMARTHEN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON THE EXCAVATION OF THE FOUNDATIONS FOR THE LOWER TERRACE WALL, STEPS AND URN BASE

DAT Project Record 32839

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary

1.2 Planning history

1.3 Content and scope of the watching brief

1.4 Purpose and methodologies of the watching brief

2.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

2.1 Site location

2.2 Site history

2.3 Observations

2.4 Conclusions

3.0 THE FINDS

4.0 REFERENCES

5.0 FIGURES

5.1 Roman Town looking NNW in 1985

5.2 Site location

5.3 Location of excavated areas

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary

The construction of a terrace wall, steps and an urn base disturbed the south-east line of the Roman Town defences of Moridunum. They lie within an area that has statutory protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Two areas were excavated and examined for any features of archaeological interest. In the deepest section of the larger excavated area the weathered remains of a clay bank of probable Roman date were discovered 1.3 metres below the current ground level.

1.2 Planning History

An application for scheduled monument consent was made to the Secretary of State on 30.3.96 by Woodhams Landscape Limited of 60 Ledbury Road, London, on behalf of their client Mr.P.M.Davies of Hen Ardd, Carmarthen, to construct a terrace wall and steps and a base for an urn. The proposed scheme is designed to complete the groundworks for a terraced garden, the majority of which has recently been constructed within the monument's scheduled area, without scheduled monument consent. Important archaeological remains in the area are likely to have been damaged by this previous groundworks, though it was considered sufficient remained for it to be essential that conditions should be attached to any consent issued for the provision of the wall, steps and urn base, to ensure comprehensive archaeological monitoring and thus minimise the prospect of any further disturbance to the monument. The Secretary of State was minded to grant scheduled monument consent subject to the conditions that Cadw was informed in advance of the commencement of works, and that the applicant arranged for an approved archaeological organisation to monitor all excavation works and to record any features of archaeological interest. It was agreed that an archaeologist from the Field Operations Section of Dyfed Archaeological Trust would visit the site to carry out a watching brief. The visit took place on 5.6.96.

1.3 Content and scope of the watching brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during an operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons - normally a development or other construction project - within a specified area where archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report. (Standard and guidance notes for archaeological watching briefs).

The watching brief will be intended to allow, subject to resources, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits in advance of their disturbance or destruction and to provide an opportunity, if necessary, for the watching archaeologist to alert all interested parties to the presence of an archaeological find for which the resources allocated to the watching brief are insufficient to support satisfactory treatment.

The watching brief is not intended as a substitute for contingent excavation.

The client will be supplied with 3 copies of an archaeological report of the results of the watching brief. The report will be fully representative of all the information recovered. Normally it will be read in conjunction with a desk-top assessment for the scheme which provides the historical framework for the watching brief. A copy of the report will also be deposited with Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record.

1.4 Purpose and methodologies of the watching brief

The purpose of the watching brief is to undertake as complete a record as possible of any archaeological features affected by the client's scheme of works. In the case of larger archaeological sites it will seldom be possible or necessary to undertake a record of the entire site; the record will be undertaken only on those areas of the site that may be affected.

The primary stage of the watching brief for any scheme normally involves consultation of the desk top assessment for the scheme and/or consultation of Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record, which is maintained by Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Heritage Management Section, for those sites affected by the scheme.

The client will normally advise Dyfed Archaeological Trust's Field Operations Section of any changes in the proposed works resulting from their consultation of the desk top assessment, and of any sites which may still be affected by the scheme. The client will also provide the Field Operations Section with a proposed schedule of works in order that a full field study may be performed on any affected site prior to the commencement of the works.

Work on or around those affected sites will be subject to the watching brief. The work will be closely observed by an archaeologist from the Field Operations Section who will also undertake a full drawn, written and photographic record of any archaeological features which may be disturbed by the scheme, and any artefact or find exposed during the works. Recording will be carried out where necessary and when convenient: it is the Field Operations Section's aim to minimise any disruption to the client's schedule. However, if archaeological features may be lost during the scheme, it may be necessary for the Field Operations Section to request a postponement of the works in order that the archaeology may be recorded. Larger areas affected may require fuller excavation and/or survey.

2.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

2.1 Site location

The area of the proposed works lies within the garden alongside the property known as Hen Ardd, The Esplanade, Carmarthen.

A 1.5m square area was machined at the southern end of the site, and a larger irregular area was machined in a more central location adjacent to the south-western boundary (Figure 5.3). This area's maximum dimensions being 11m south-west to north-east, and 3.5m south-east to north-west. The excavated areas were then cleaned and examined for archaeological evidence.

2.2 Site history

All knowledge of Roman Town defences rely heavily on previous excavations and publications and are dealt with thoroughly in the following references James (1980), James (1993) and Wachter (1975).

The site has been until recently two long narrow gardens to the rear of no. 25 and 25a, b and c Priory street. They have now become incorporated within the new property known as Hen Ardd (Figure 5.2). The site consists of two fairly broad terraces on the eastern side of the footpath linking Priory street to the Esplanade known as Llwbr yr Ardd. There is quite a marked break of slope between the easternmost terrace and the allotments beyond. The change in level preserved by the two garden terraces reflect a natural break of slope, which has been utilised and accentuated by the construction of the Roman town defences, the course of which is now well known through recent archaeological research. Observations made during the construction of the new property, Hen Ardd, revealed, partly in section and partly as soil marks in the levelled forecourt area of the house, two ditches aligned north-west to south-east. These are two of the probable three Phase 1 defence ditches to the Roman town. In addition thick deposits of yellow clay were sliced through as the hedgebank between no. 25 and 25a was cut back. This represents the remains of the rampart. These gardens lie directly on the southern quarter of the eastern line of the circuit of Roman town defences, and represent the only remaining open, unbuilt stretch of the defences (Figure 5.1).

2.3 Observations

The two excavated areas were examined in detail for archaeological features.

The small square area was a shallow excavation 0.4m deep through recently deposited material and produced no archaeology.

The majority of the larger area was excavated to a depth of 0.5m through 0.2m of recently deposited material mixed with topsoil, and 0.3m of compacted silty clay loam. Again no archaeology was encountered. The exception lay at the north western end of the area where the excavated depth reached 1.3m through a deep layer of building debris mixed with a loose silty clay loam, from which numerous finds were recovered. Immediately below this layer, at the base of the excavation was a weathered layer of yellow clay flecked with charcoal.

2.4 Conclusions

The only archaeological feature encountered was in the deepest area of excavation in a part of the site which has been subject to substantial disturbance. This area was adjacent to an access track crossing the site and close to a concrete standing. It is extremely likely that the charcoal flecked clay deposits at the base of this area of excavation are the remains of the Roman town defences.

3.0 THE FINDS

Numerous fragments of modern pot (19/20th century), and several sherds of pot and clay pipe (post medieval) were recovered from the layer of building debris.

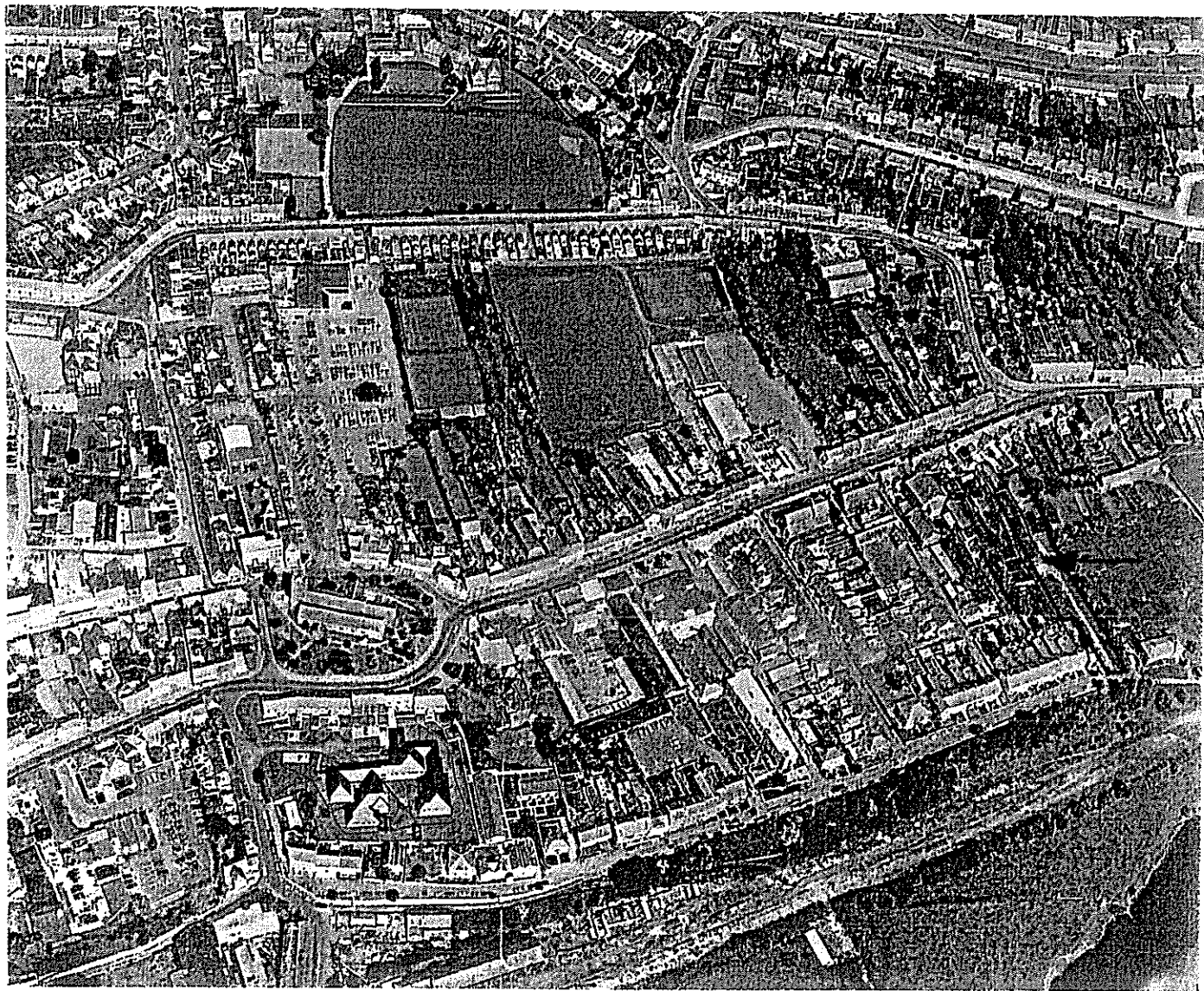
4.0 REFERENCES

Dyfed Sites and Monuments Records, housed with Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

James, T., 1980 Carmarthen: an Archaeological and Topographical Survey.

James, H., 1993 Excavations in Roman Carmarthen 1978-1990

Wacher, J., 1975 The Towns of Roman Britain



Roman Town looking NNW in 1985

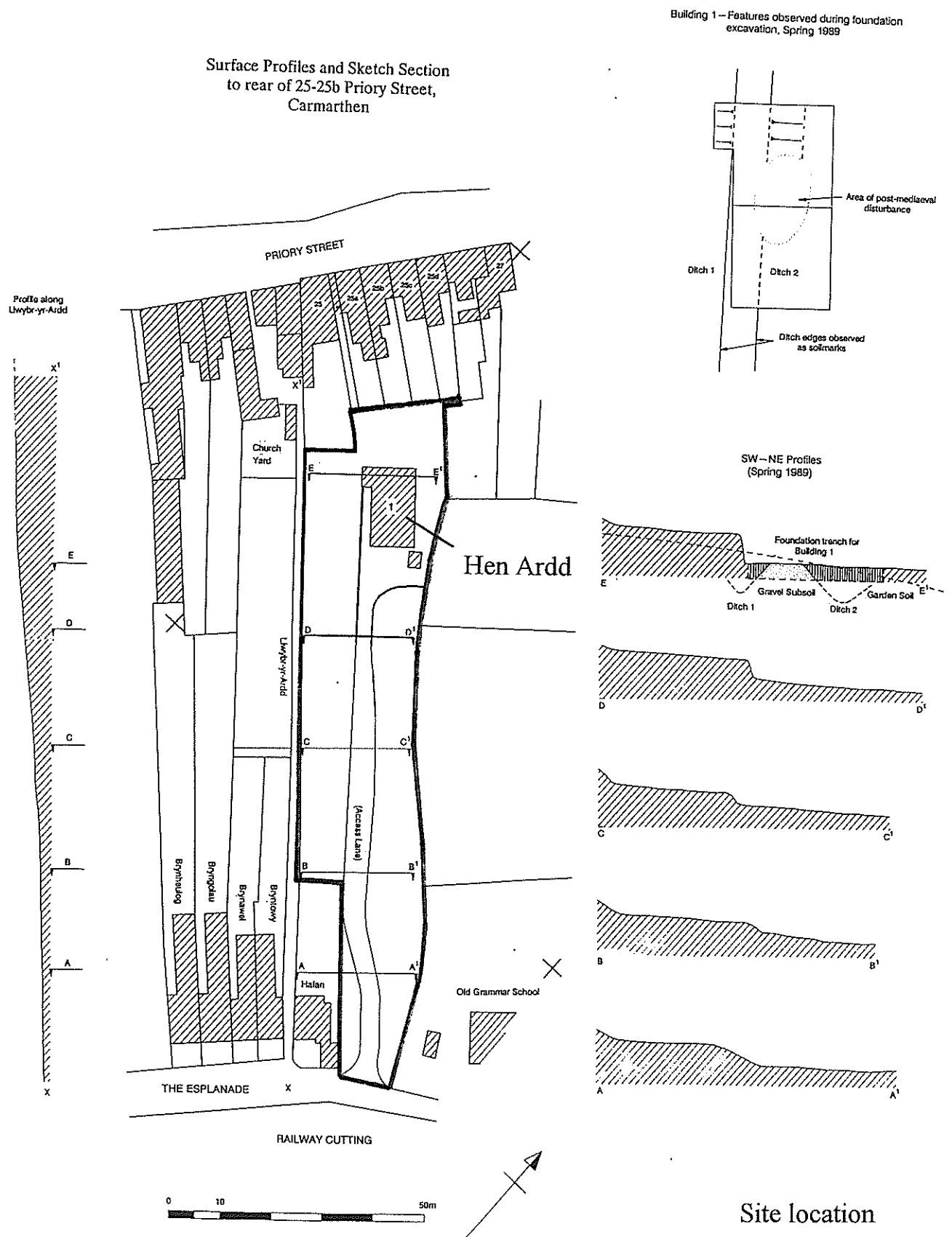


Figure 5.2

