

# STANLEY'S TRAMROAD EMBANKMENT, PEMBREY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
Project Record No. PRN 35379

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**Commissioned by:**

**Westbury Homes (Holdings) Ltd.  
South Wales Region**

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A R C H A E O L E G  
**CAMBRIA**  
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## **SUMMARY**

*In October 1997, staff from Archaeolog **CAMBRIA** Archaeology were involved in an archaeological watching brief on works conducted on a section of the 750m long 'Stanley's Tramroad embankment', Pembrey, Cefn Sidan, Carmarthenshire. The early 19th century embankment is one of three elements belonging to a horse-drawn tramroad which operated from 1819 to the mid 1860s. The monument is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (CM271).*

*The proposed works, involving the insertion of a flight of steps into the western slope of the embankment, would have caused some degree of disturbance to significant archaeological deposits and 'in situ' features belong to the tramway and Scheduled Monument Consent was subsequently granted on condition that a watching brief was conducted during those works*

*The proposed works had a minimal effect on the monument. The original core of the embankment's structure was only penetrated to a depth of 0.20m, the greater bulk of material being removed consisting of topsoil. The structure of the embankment may have consisted of a clay core built-up with dump deposits of clay and clinker/coke waste, although the very limited area of the works makes this observation far from certain.*

*No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were noted or recovered during the limited works.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT BRIEF**

### **1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 In October 1997, staff from Archaeolog **CAMBRIA** Archaeology were involved in an archaeological watching brief on works conducted on a section of the 750m long 'Stanley's Tramroad embankment', Pembrey, Cefn Sidan, Carmarthenshire, located at NGR SN 4332 0105. The early 19th century embankment is an element of a horse-drawn tramroad, protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (CM271).

1.1.2 The proposed construction of a flight of steps linking with an existing public footpath at the top of the embankment was associated with a proposed new residential development within the northern-most section of the monument's scheduled area. Since the proposed works would have involved cutting into the profile of the embankment, with the possibility of disturbance to significant archaeological deposits, Scheduled Monument Consent was applied for, and subsequently granted (CAM 1/2/6631/1) on condition that a watching brief was conducted during those works. Archaeolog **CAMBRIA** Archaeology was commissioned by Westbury Homes (Holdings) Ltd to carry out the required archaeological watching brief.

1.1.4 This report presents the results of the archaeological watching brief, with a very limited summary of the historical background to the monument, together with the Archive index (Appendix A).

### **1.2 The study area: location, geology and topography**

1.2.1 The watching brief was conducted at works on the northern-most section of Stanley's tramroad embankment, situated within a residential development on the south-eastern limits of Pembury town. The study area lay approximately 700m south of the main A 484 road, running between Kidwelly and Burry Port.

1.2.2 The embankment slopes were heavily overgrown with scrub and small oak trees. A small stream was situated at the foot of the eastern slope, while a modern French drain ran parallel with the base of the western embankment slope. The underlying geology of the study area is complex, but appeared to consist of sandstone and boulder clay, belonging to the Lower Pennant measures, an element of the Upper Coal Measures (Geological Survey 1967).

### **1.3 Project brief and objectives**

1.3.1 The main objective of the archaeological watching brief was to record the exposed profile of the embankment and to establish if the remains of any associated finds, such as tramplates, sleeper blocks or pins could be located in the area of the works.

1.3.2 If identified, the purpose of the brief was to record these features or finds in sufficient depth as to provide mitigation for any damage caused by the works.

## **1.4 Methodology**

1.4.1 The 2m wide excavation and grading of the embankment's profile prior to the insertion of the proposed steps was undertaken by machine under archaeological supervision. The excavated section of the embankment was then recorded using methods and guidelines expressed in the site recording manual used by Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology. All definable layers were given an unique number (context number) by which they can be identified in a written record.

1.4.2 To supplement the written record, a photographic record, consisting of monochrome and colour slide film, and a drawn profile at a scale of 1:20 were kept of the works and the observed stratigraphy.

1.4.3 The full contents of the site archive are listed in Appendix C, and will be deposited with the regional SMR held by the Curatorial Section of Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology, Llandeilo, under Project Record Number 35379

## **2. STUDY AREA: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **2.1 Historical background**

2.2.1 Stanley's tramroad was constructed in 1819 to transport coal from the colliery owned by Mr Stanley to the harbour complex, approximately 1.4 km to the south, and continued to be used for this purpose until the early 1860s, when flooding finally closed the pit (SMR 1996). The harbour itself had been only fully completed two years before in 1817 (Hughes 1984).

2.2.2. The tramway appears to have been horse-drawn, using gravity to send the full waggons down the even gradient to the harbour and then using horse power to return the waggons to the pit.

2.2.3 Today, the tramway embankment survives in three main sections, totalling approximately 640m in length and running from close to the original pit to the edge of a modern golf course, 450m NW from its original termination point at the harbour. The top of the embankment is presently used as a public footpath. The tramway embankment was afforded Scheduled Monument status in 1996.

### **3. WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS**

3.1 A careful examination was made of the 2m wide cutting made into the western slope of the embankment during the insertion of the step foundations. The basic sequence of deposits observed within the body of the embankment consisted of: a orange-brown clay containing a small percentage of sandstone (5%) (104) which appeared to form the core of the embankment.

3.2 This was overlaid by a thin lens of dark grey/black clay containing small rounded natural pebbles and traces of coke (103), 0.18m in depth. This was partly sealed, at the top of the slope by a dump deposit of dark brown sandy clay with a high percentage (50%) of clinker/coke waste (102), 0.22m in depth and extending approximately 2.60m from the top of the embankment slope. Both (103) and (102) were sealed by a thick blanket of dark brown/black sandy clay loam topsoil (101), up to 0.92m in depth. Running parallel with the western edge of the embankment is a recently placed French drain.

3.3 No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were noted or recovered during the limited works.

### **4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

4.1 The proposed works had a minimal effect on the monument. The main deposits forming the bulk of the embankment's structure were only penetrated to a depth of 0.20m. The majority of material removed consisted of the topsoil, which covered the embankment's slopes. The structure of the embankment may have consisted of a clay core built-up with dump deposits of clay and clinker/coke waste, although the very limited area of the works makes this conclusion far from certain.

## **5. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES**

Geological survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), 1967, Solid and drift geology - Sheet 229 '*Carmarthen*' 1:50 000

Hughes, G, 1984, '*A Llanelli Chronicle*', Llanelli Borough Council

SMR, 1996, SMR file for CM 271, held in the Dyfed regional SMR, Llandeilo.

## **6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeolog CAMBRIA Archaeology would like to thank the following for their assistance in the course of this project:

Mr. Neil Jones (Site manager) and staff of Westbury Homes (Holdings) Ltd.

### **Archaeolog CAMBRIA Archaeology staff involvement:**

Contract Management:	Ken Murphy
Fieldwork:	Andy Manning
Text and Illustrations:	Andy Manning



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Archive index**

The project archive has been indexed and catalogued according to National Monument Record (NMR) categories and contains the following:

#### **A. Report**

A1. Copy of final report

#### **B. Site Written Data**

B1. Context records-paper

B4. Survey notes

B5. Survey data-paper

#### **C. Non Publication Drawings**

C2. Site drawing

#### **G Documentary data**

G1 List of references

G2 Correspondence on archaeological matters

#### **J Publication drawings**

J1 Final publication drawing

There is no material for classes **D, E, F, H, I, K, L, M and N**