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ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY



# FRIAR'S PARK, CARMARTHEN

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON THE POLICE HQ CAR PARK EXTENSION, JULY 1999

Project Record No. 38285

Report prepared for Pembroke Design Limited/Dyfed Powys Police  
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**FRIAR'S PARK POLICE HQ CAR PARK,  
CARMARTHEN:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, JULY 1999**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by *Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology* Field Operations during turf-stripping and limited excavation for an extension to the car park at Friar's Park Police HQ, Carmarthen.

The site lies between, and to the west of, two large earthwork bastions with a connecting ditch, which were constructed during the Civil War of the 1640s and are now a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No. Carm. 09; PRN 76 in the Sites and Monuments Record for Carmarthenshire, Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire); one of the bastions has been obscured by subsequent deposition.

A triangular area to the south and south-west of the present Police HQ frontage, measuring 483 metres<sup>2</sup>, was stripped to a depth of 0.60 metres at the north end which diminished to 0.30 metres towards the south end. The deposition over the Civil War bastion was seen to extend over the entire area as made ground, presumably laid down when the Police HQ was constructed in the 1960s and effectively forming a platform lying 10 metres above Morfa Lane to the west.

### 1.2 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND BRIEF

*Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology* Field Operations were invited to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the excavation and groundworks for an extension to the car park of the Friar's Park Police HQ, Carmarthen, by Pembroke Design Limited, on behalf of Dyfed Powys Police, on 6 July 1999. Subject to the usual terms, Field Operations agreed to carry out the work.

The excavation and groundworks were undertaken by TRJ (contractors) on 7-8 July 1999, with a watching archaeologist from *Archaeoleg CAMBRIA Archaeology* making a number of site visits to monitor the work.

### 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 and ordered archive.

The watching brief is 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 archaeological excavation.

The client will be supplied with three copies of an archaeological report of the findings of the watching brief. This report will be fully representative of all the information recovered. A copy of the report will also be deposited with Dyfed Sites and Monuments Record.

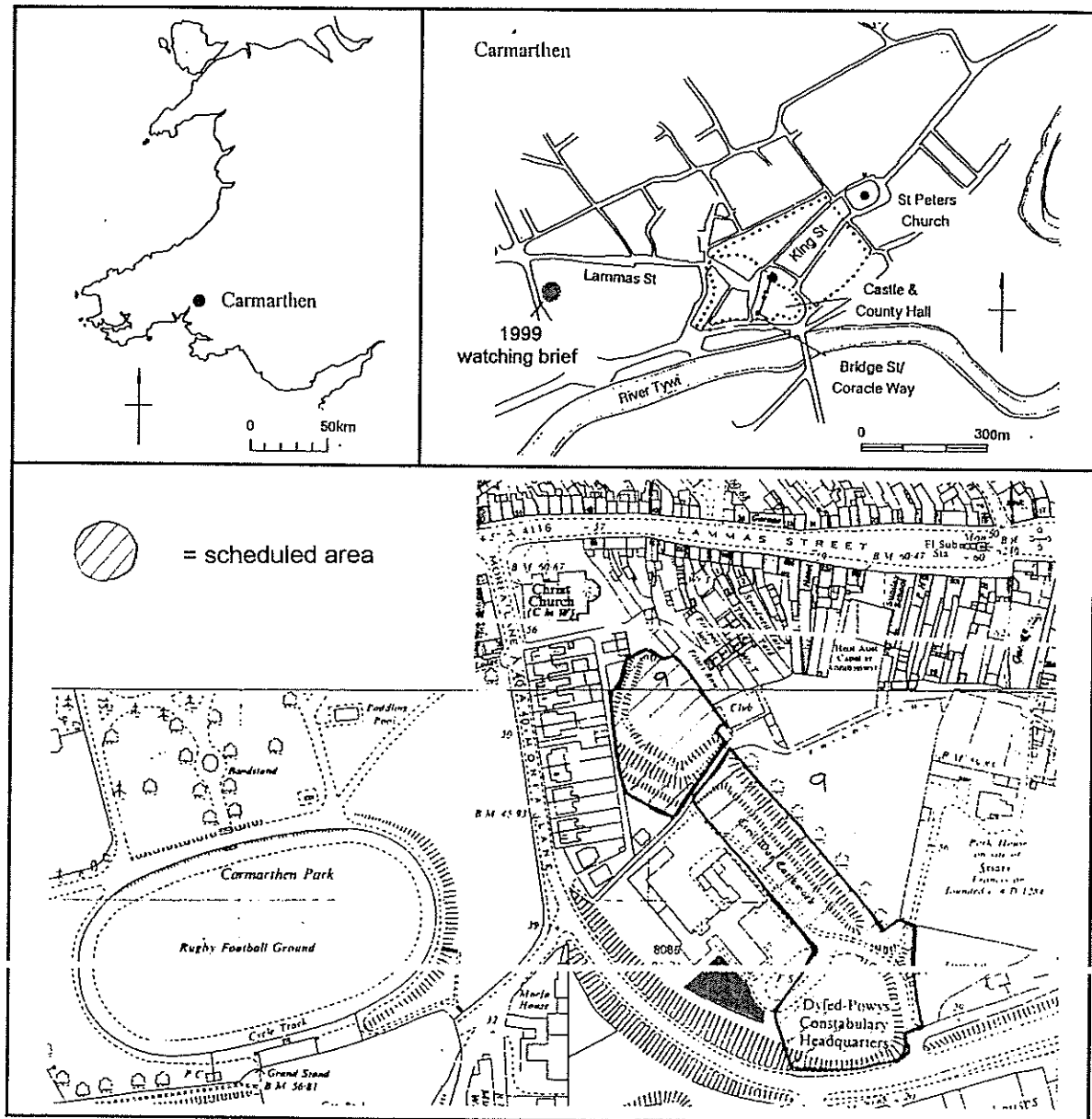
## 2.0 THE SITE

### 2.1 SITE LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site lies at the west end of the town of Carmarthen, at NGR SN 4083 1994. It lies south/south-west of the Dyfed Powys Police Headquarters (Friar's Park) building in a level, lawned area, to the west of the existing police car park and access drive.

The Police HQ and car park were established during the 1960s when, as was demonstrated in the watching brief, the entire area was levelled with imported soil to form a terrace at 25 metres OD, 10 metres above the level of Morfa Lane to the west (see Section 3.2). Prior to this date, the ground followed a north-east - south-west downhill slope from Friar's Park to Morfa Lane and the River Towy.

Fig. 1 - Site location showing scheduled area



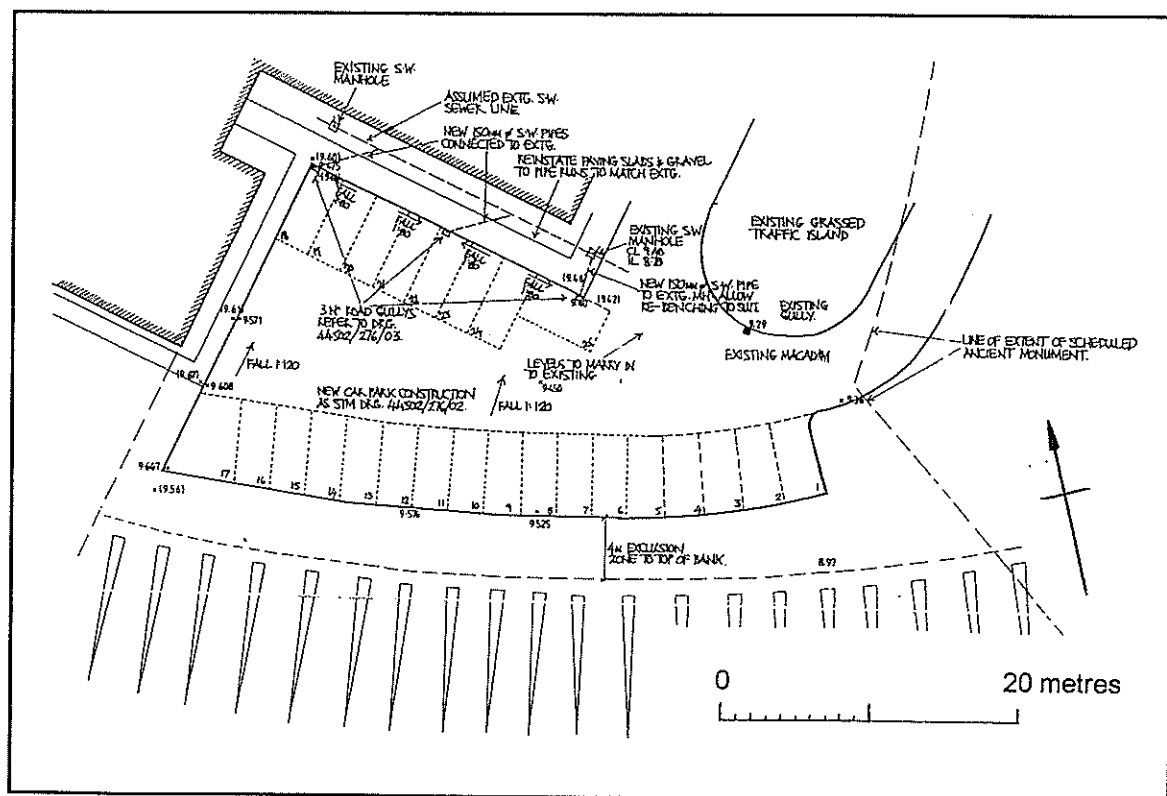
### 3.0 METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS

#### 3.1. DESCRIPTION OF GROUNDWORKS (FIG. 3)

The car park extension site was a roughly triangular area south of the Police HQ building and west of its car park and driveway, lying on a level platform with a steep, 10 metre drop down to Morfa Lane immediately south-west of the site. It lay immediately north of the scheduled area in the region of the infilled southern Civil War demi-bastion.

A roughly triangular area measuring 42 metres from north-west to south-east and 23 metres from north-east to south-west across the base of the triangle, enclosing an area of 483 metres<sup>2</sup>, was machine-excavated using a 360° excavator with a 2 metre wide grading bucket (Fig. 3). Throughout most of the area, excavation was to a depth of 0.60 metres diminishing to 0.45 metres to the south-west; towards the south-east, however, the depth diminished to 0.30 metres.

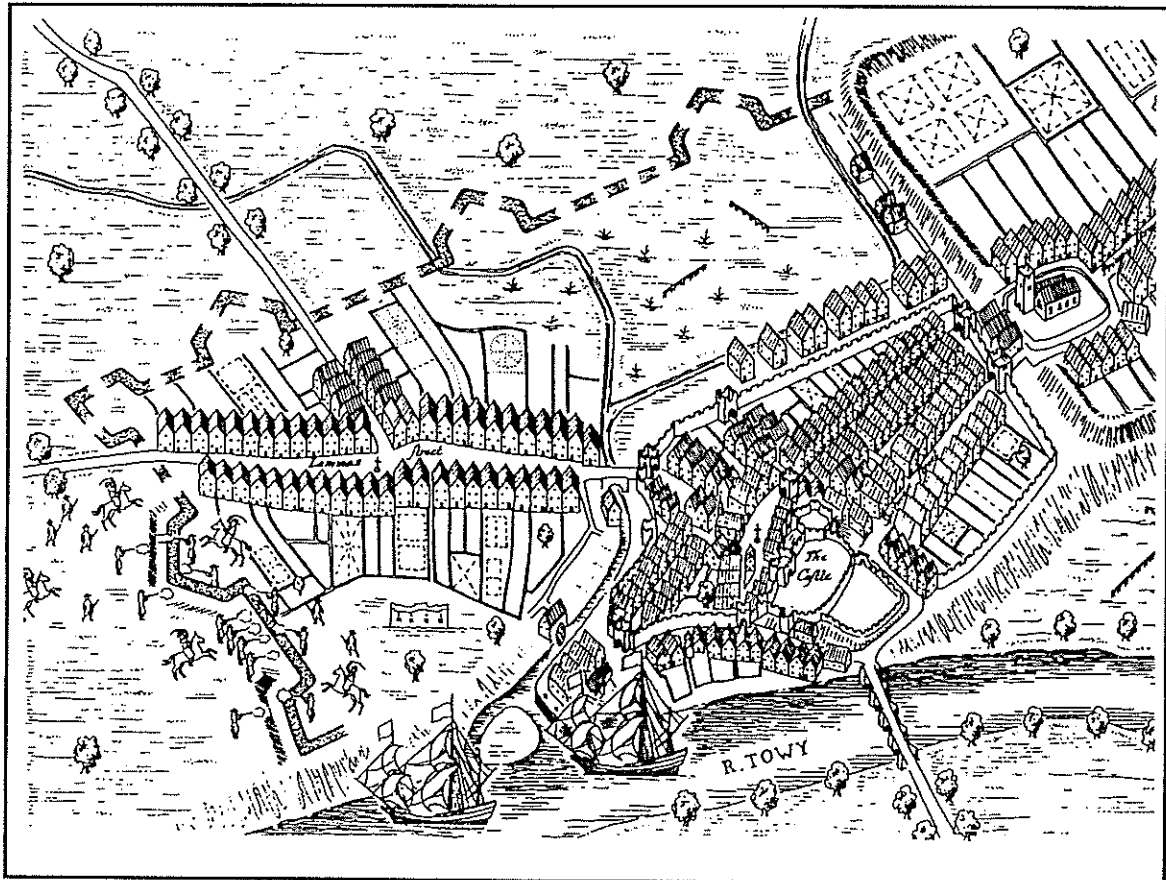
Fig. 3 - site plan showing excavated area



## 4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The site lies between, and to the west of, two large former earthwork bastions with a connecting ditch, the final phase of the Civil War defences of Carmarthen and constructed from June 1644. Excavation revealed a pure, homogenous clay loam soil at a depth of 0.30 - 0.60 metres across the site which, it is suggested, represents entirely made ground, made up and levelled with imported natural soil when the Police HQ was established in the 1960s.

It is also suggested that the southern demi-bastion, which was visible in 1938, was infilled and obscured at the same time and with the same imported soil. The northern bastion and ditch are still visible.



*Fig. 5 - Artist's impression of the probable layout and extent of the final phase of Civil War defences at Carmarthen. 'The Bulwarks' is shown as a solid line; the projected defence and bastions are shown as a broken line.*

*(reproduced from James, 1991; drawing by N D Ludlow)*

