

SEPT 2001 (1)



# LAND ADJACENT TO HOWARTH CLOSE MILFORD HAVEN

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



Report No. 2001/49

Report Prepared for:  
MR GEORGE JAMES



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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

REPORT NO. 2001/49  
PROJECT RECORD NO. 43520

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LAND ADJACENT TO HOWARTH CLOSE, MILFORD HAVEN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

By

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## SUMMARY

*Proposals to construct a single dwelling on a plot of land adjacent to Howarth Close, Milford Haven resulted in a requirement for an archaeological watching brief as the site lay immediately outside the earthwork remains of an Iron Age hillslope enclosure, Priory Rath. Priory Rath is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the development site lies just outside the enclosure entrance, an area where intense archaeological activity might be expected. However, during the watching brief, which comprised monitoring the topsoil stripping and a limited amount of deeper excavation (maximum depth 0.3m), no archaeological features were revealed. It appears likely that ploughing or weathering has destroyed any archaeological features or deposits which may have previously existed within the development area.*



**Plate 1:** View looking south-east, showing the north-east side of the building plot after removal of topsoil to a depth of 0.2m. Howarth Close is in the background.

## **PROJECT COMMISSION**

Outline planning consent (planning application 01/211/PA) for the construction of a single dwelling on land adjacent to Howarth Close, Milford Haven (NGR SM9048807028) stipulated that the development should be subject to an archaeological watching brief. The watching brief was deemed necessary because the proposed development site lay just beyond the south-west edge of a scheduled ancient monument, Priory Rath (PRN 3173; SAM PE186). Mr George James, the current owner of the land, commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Operations to carry out the work.

## **SCOPE OF PROJECT**

The watching brief was carried out during topsoil stripping to record any archaeological features that were exposed. During the course of the works three trenches were excavated to depth of 0.3m to test the underlying deposits and to assess the likelihood of archaeological features surviving at these lower levels. This report details the results of the watching brief.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

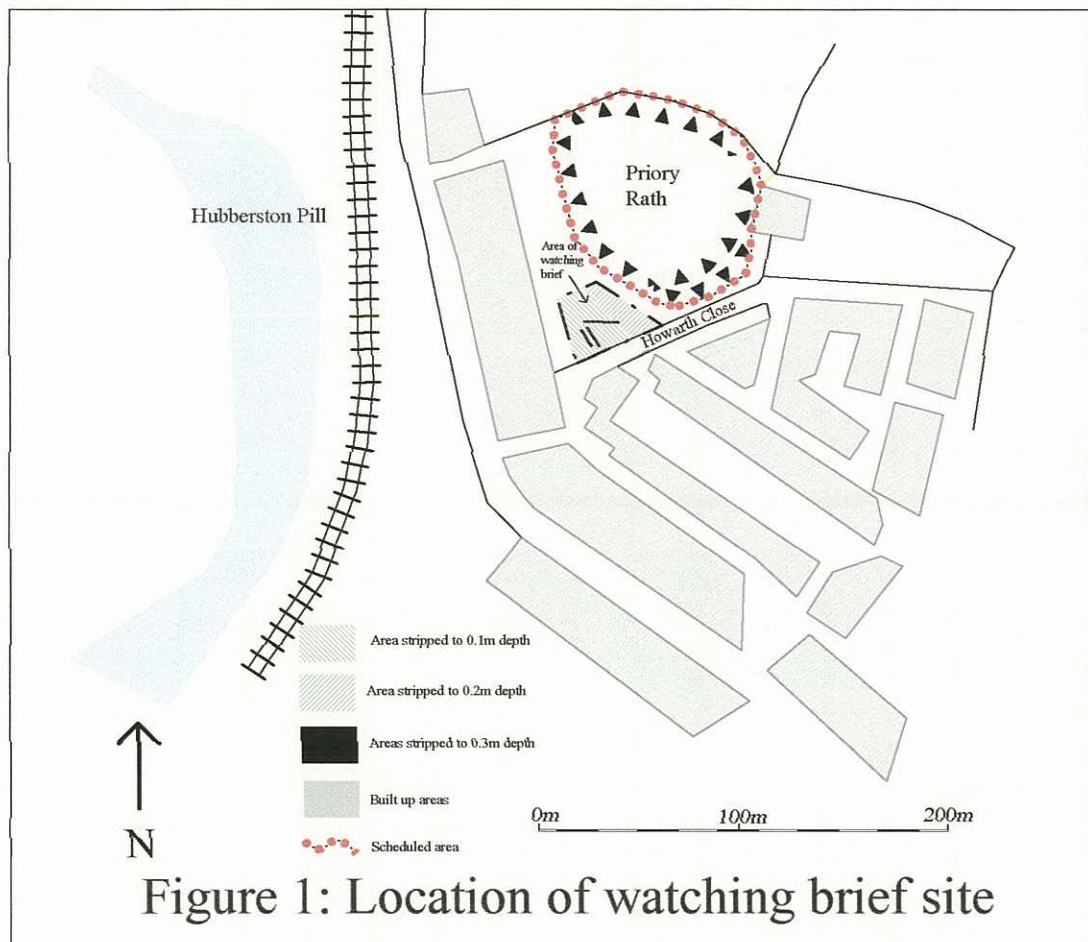
Sites recorded on the county Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) are identified throughout the report by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).



## **SITE LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY (Figure 1)**

The site lies adjacent to and north of Howarth Close, Milford Haven at NGR SM 90480703 and forms an approximately triangular piece of land to the immediate south-west of Priory Rath. The site slopes fairly steeply from east to west and was, prior to the topsoil stripping, rough pasture.

Priory Rath is an Iron Age defended settlement dating from the late 1st millennium BC. It is a 'hillslope' enclosure and encompasses an area of c.0.8ha (2.2 acres) on an east to west slope. The defences on the north, east and south sides were provided by a bank and ditch, which survive in places to a height of 3.3m. On the west side the natural slope appears to have been slightly scarped to improve its defensive capabilities. A combination of natural weathering and plough erosion have all but removed the defences on the west and north sides. The enclosure had only one entrance and this lay on the south side of the monument, some 12m north of what will be a garden area within the proposed building plot.



## **THE WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS**

The watching brief oversaw the clearance of accumulated rubbish and vegetation undergrowth from the site by a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket prior to the removal of the remaining turf. The exact location of the proposed building was not yet decided but the developers wished to use the stripped vegetation, turf, and any removed topsoil to build up the road and trackside boundaries into banks for future hedge growth.

An approximately 9.0m wide strip of dark reddish brown silty clay loam topsoil was stripped from the north-east side of the plot to a depth of 0.20m. The soil was well sorted, humic, and contained occasional small angular fragments of old red sandstone (ORS). At that depth it overlay a more compact and reddish differentiated topsoil/subsoil characterised by a greater presence of shattered fragments of ORS. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

The topsoil on the remainder of the plot was removed to a depth of approximately 0.10m revealing no archaeological features and no differentiated soils.

Three 1.55m wide trial trenches were then excavated in the area where the building footings are most likely to be positioned (fig 1). The trenches were excavated to an average depth of 0.30m to reveal the underlying undisturbed subsoil which consisted of a compact reddish brown soil containing c.60% small and medium sized fragments of shattered ORS. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

Frequent sherds of modern ceramics were noted from across the site. The assemblage was that of a typical unstructured topsoil/ploughsoil, and probably derived from past manuring of the fields. No finds were identified that could be associated with the Iron Age occupation of the rath.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

There were no archaeological features or deposits visible on the site at the depths of the topsoil strip, or within the three slightly deeper trial trenches. This was somewhat surprising given the site's location immediately outside the entrance to the rath, and a number of possibilities why this should be can be suggested.

Perhaps archaeological features do survive on the site, but at greater depths than those explored here. However, given the undisturbed nature of the natural subsoil revealed in the three trial trenches this seems unlikely, at least in that area of the site. Another possibility is that ploughing or weathering, or both, have resulted in the destruction of all traces of archaeological activity on the site.

## **APPENDIX ONE: CATALOGUE OF WATCHING BRIEF ARCHIVE**

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

- A.** Copy of final report.
- D.** Site photographs.
- G.** References, including primary and secondary sources.
- I.** Archive report and draft copies of final report.
- M.** Miscellaneous correspondence.

There is no material in categories **B, C, E, F, H, J, K, L** and **N**.

The archive is currently held by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire as project number 43520.

## REFERENCES

### CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:10560, sheet Pembrokeshire XXXIII.SW (1887)

Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> edition 1:10560, sheet Pembrokeshire XXXIII.SW (1908)

Ordnance Survey revision 1:2500, sheet Pembrokeshire XXXIII (1937)

Ordnance Survey 1:10560, sheet SN90NW (1964)

### PHOTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Oblique aerial photographs held in the SMR, Llandeilo.

SM9007 – date 06/07/89 – neg ref: AP89-X5

SM9007 – date 08/01/93 – neg ref: AP93-1.13

### PUBLISHED SOURCES

Rees S 1992 *A Guide to Ancient and Historic Wales: Dyfed*. Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments. Cardiff

### OTHER SOURCES

Information contained in the SRF, DRF and scheduled monument files held in the SMR. Llandeilo.



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**REPORT NUMBER 2001/49**

**SEPTEMBER 2001**

This report has been prepared by Richard Ramsey

Position Archaeologist

Signature R. S. Ramsey Date 19/7/01

This report has been checked and approved by Gwilym Hughes on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Position Director

Signature G. Hughes Date 19/9/01

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