

# HAVERFORDWEST CSO SCHEME

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AUTUMN 2001



Report No. 2002/8

Report Prepared for:  
Department of Highways  
Technical and Property Services  
City and County of Swansea



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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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By

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## SUMMARY

*A limited watching brief was undertaken on a scheme to upgrade the storm water and sewage system in parts of Haverfordwest. The areas with the greatest archaeological potential were either tunnelled or earlier works were replaced without further expansion of previous excavations. Consequently, no features of archaeological significance were observed.*

## INTRODUCTION

Cambria Archaeology Field Operations were commissioned by the Department of Highways, Technical and Property Services, City and County of Swansea in October 2001 to undertake an archaeological watching brief at archaeologically sensitive locations at Perrot's Road (SN 95141572) and Union Hill in the vicinity of the former Augustinian Priory (SN 95621525) Haverfordwest (figure 1). The watching brief was undertaken during a programme of works to upgrade the storm water and sewage system and followed a request by the Archaeological Development Control Officer (Cambria Archaeology Heritage Management).

## SITE HISTORY

Haverfordwest was one of the largest medieval towns in Wales, with a substantial and complex development (figure 2). A brief summary of the historic background for Haverfordwest has recently been produced by Cambria as part of the Historic Landscape Characterisation of the Milford Haven Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest (Appendix 1). A summary of the town's history has also recently been published (Miles 1999).

Although Haverfordwest was such an important town in the medieval period relatively little archaeological work has been undertaken. An exception has been the major archaeological excavation undertaken on the Augustinian Priory ruins (Rees 1999). This Priory was founded c.1200 and was dissolved in 1536 (Knowles and Hadcock 1953). During this time a small secular settlement, Haverfordwest Parva, became established around the Priory. After the dissolution of the Priory, the area appears to have been used for boat repairs, with a small smithy established within the nave and poor habitation elsewhere within and against the walls of the church.

A limited archaeological evaluation and watching brief were undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects in 2000 on the area of the Lidl supermarket site on the west side of Perrot's Road (figure 3) although nothing of significance was recorded. However, there are records of potential medieval plague pits further south towards City Road. Perrot's Road lies just outside the line of the west town wall and it is likely that this route was established outside the North Gate, which was first recorded in 1374 (James 1999).

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim and objective of this project was to record and interpret any archaeological material revealed during the watching brief.



## METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS

*Perrot's Road* - A good proportion of the Perrot's Road storm drain scheme had already been excavated and backfilled prior to the watching brief. A length of pipe had been installed by open cutting opposite the Lidl supermarket and to the north of this the pipe had been installed by tunnelling. South of the Lidl store the pipe was again to be installed by tunnelling and clearly no useful watching brief could be done on this section. However, an open access was cut opposite Spring Garden Lane and this was observed in early October (figure 3).

The excavated trench measured c.8m by 4m (photo front cover). Prior to recording, the trench had been partly backfilled. However, it was possible to record the stratigraphic sequence from the exposed sections. A probable natural geological layer of grey brown clay with shaly stones was encountered at 0.9m below the road surface. This was overlain by 0.2m of mixed rubble of indeterminate nature or date. This was in turn, overlain by mixed deposits containing roof slate fragments and ashy mortar. These were clearly of post-medieval or later date. The upper 0.4m comprised make-up for the present road surface. Along the eastern side of the trench were three service pipes and trenches, one of which was an old gas pipe and this was removed. The resulting trench was observed down to a depth of 1.5m. However, below this depth shoring was installed and no further observation was viable.

The contractors reported a deposit of large cobbles at a depth of c. 1m in a test pit 2.5m south of the access trench. A further trench, between the boundary wall and the west wall of the Baptist Chapel, was inspected by the Archaeological Development Control Officer in January. This appeared to be cut through made-up ground.

*Union Hill* – The site was visited prior to the commencement of work at the bottom of Union Hill just in the modern entrance to the Priory ruins (approximate location in indicated on figure 1). The scheme had finalised on the reconstruction and slight enlargement of an existing large manhole. The site drawings were inspected along with the location. However, the manhole was only to be extended in the area of the large outlet pipe and there was considerable sewerage within this area. Consequently, following consultation with the Archaeological Development Control Officer, it was decided that there was little chance of archaeological features being revealed and no further observations were made.

## DISCUSSION

*Perrot's Road* - It was hoped that the watching brief might allow an opportunity to establish the nature of the early route around the town prior to the existence of the modern Perrot's Road. This area was immediately outside the town wall and was probably in the area of a defensive ditch. This ditch or area is likely to have accumulated medieval rubbish before the route around the town wall became established. However, no useful information was provided by the trench opposite Spring Garden Lane. This area had clearly been heavily disturbed prior to the watching brief by service trenches. The cobbles reported by the machine driver to the south of the trench were probably the remains of an earlier road surface. After this it appears that there were considerable deposits of make-up prior to the current road surface being laid. It would appear that this make-up is post medieval or possibly





modern (within the last 100 years), as it has raised the level of the road above that of the entrance to the Baptist Chapel. The trench inspected in January between the boundary wall and the west wall of the chapel appears to indicate that the adjacent area had been artificially raised by c.1m, possibly near contemporary with the chapel's construction in 1789 or its rebuilds in 1816 and 1878 (Scourfield 1999).

*Union Hill* - The manhole at the base of Union Hill, in the entrance of the Priory ruins, is in an area of great archaeological potential. During the excavation of the priory ruins (Rees 1999), work was undertaken under the supervision of the author of this report on the retaining wall immediately to the east and on a small trench under the stile by the modern gate to the ruins. This indicated a significant change in ground levels, suggesting the location of part of the Priory Precinct Wall and possibly also that of the gateway or gatehouse.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ken Murphy for the draft of historic landscape character of Haverfordwest.

## ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

This will be deposited with the Sites and Monuments Record held at Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street. Llandeilo.

## REFERENCES

James T 1999 *The Origins and Topography of Haverford*, in Miles 1999

Knowles D and Hadcock R N 1953 *Medieval Religious Houses of England and Wales*, London: Longmans, Green and Co

Miles D (ed) 1999 *A History of the Town and County of Haverfordwest*, Llandysul: Gomer Press

Murphy K 2001 *Historic Landscape Characterisation*, unpublished Cambria Archaeological report commissioned by Cadw

Rees S 1999 *The Augustinian Priory*, in Miles 1999

Scourfield R 1999 *The Churches and Chapel*, in Miles 1999

### *Other Sources*

Charles BG 1992 *The Place-names of Pembrokeshire*, Aberystwyth: The National Library of Wales

James D W 1981 *St Davids and Dewisland: Social History*, Cardiff: University Of Wales Press

Ludlow N D 1998 *'The Welsh Historic Churches Project: Presli Churches*, unpublished Cambria Archaeological report commissioned by Cadw

Soulsby I 1993 *The Towns of Medieval Wales*, Chichester: The Camelot Press



## **APPENDIX 1: HAVERFORDWEST**

### **HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION**

*Ken Murphy (slightly edited)*

#### **Historic Background**

Haverfordwest is the county town of Pembrokeshire and was one of the largest towns in Medieval Wales, in which the medieval street-plan and boundaries still largely survive, if not the buildings. There is no archaeological evidence for any activity on the site of the town prior to the Anglo-Norman conquest and the establishment of the castle by 'Tancred the Fleming' in 1100-1110. It occupies the lowest bridging point of the Western Cleddau, the strategic and economic value of which were factors in the choice of site and its subsequent development. The castle became the centre of an Anglo-Norman lordship, Rhos or Haverford, which nominally, at least, was a member of the Earldom of Pembroke. Around the castle developed a small settlement, known as the 'Castleton', which contained the parish church of St Martin and was eventually walled, but there is no record of a charter until 1207 when the town had already developed to a considerable size. The charter granted market and fair privileges to the lord Robert Fitz Tancred, and there is evidence that cloth manufacture was undertaken during this early period, in addition to mercantile activity at the town quay. An Augustinian priory had been founded before 1210, and the additional parish churches of St Mary and St Thomas. The church at Prendergast, though not lying within the Medieval borough, is earlier, having been established during the early 12<sup>th</sup> century.

By 1300 the town was of a considerable size, with over 300 burgages (larger than any of the castle-boroughs of North Wales), an additional marketplace at St Mary's and settlement both here and around St Thomas'. There is no evidence, however, that this development was ever enclosed within town walls. An indication of the town's importance is that it lies at the nodal point of 13 route-ways. Haverfordwest declined after the Black Death in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century and areas of settlement were abandoned. However, it was granted a charter of incorporation in 1479 and during the 16<sup>th</sup> century took over the role of county town from Pembroke. The castle, which was 'utterly decayed', became the county gaol, which was rebuilt in 1866 but closed in 1878.

By the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century Haverfordwest could be described as 'the best built, the most civil and quickest occupied town in South Wales'. Further expansion was checked by plague that, in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, claimed a fifth of the population. The silting of the Cleddau, and the establishment of a port at Milford Haven in the 1790s, ended its role as a port, acting as further impediments to growth although its status as county town and local market centre has continued, assisted by its incorporation into the railway network in 1854. The greatest expansion has in fact occurred during the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the establishment of sizeable suburbs at Merlin's Bridge, Albert Town, around the railway station and the earlier church at Prendergast, near which a modern hospital was established.

#### **Description and essential historic landscape components**

The historic core of the town retains many of its historic components, notably in its street-plan, burgage-plots and churches. It includes the castle, which was established on a bluff overlooking the west bank of the Cleddau. The initial walled settlement or 'Castleton' lies immediately west and north of the castle, around the church of St



Martin, within which is an informal arrangement of streets. Neither the town wall nor gates survive. The main town bridge was, until the construction of New Bridge in 1835, located 200 metres upstream of the present structure. The church of St Mary was established within a triangular marketplace, separated from 'the Castleton' by the steep valley of a now-culverted stream called 'Shitters' Brook', giving an indication of its original function. A semi-grid pattern of streets leads west and south from St Mary's. Within one of these 'grids' lies St Thomas' church, but there is no evidence that St Thomas Green was originally an open space. The priory ruins lie on the west bank of the Cleddau immediately south of the town while the Dominican Friary established, in 1256, on a more cramped site between the castle and the river, has gone. Post-Medieval rebuilding within the town includes 18<sup>th</sup>-and 19<sup>th</sup>-century buildings with town houses in the Georgian tradition. These can be of good quality and there are 245 listed buildings within the historic town. The castle and 19<sup>th</sup> century county gaol buildings, and a number of warehouses associated with the former quay, also survive. Subsequent development is Post-Medieval and suburban in nature, and most of it late. Albert Town and Prendergast comprise mostly 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces, with later schools and sports grounds at Albert Town. Merlin's Bridge is a council estate established after World War 2, divided from the town by a green space either side of Merlin's Brook, through which runs the railway line and the A40 Haverfordwest bypass. Other 20<sup>th</sup> century developments include the hospital to the north of the town, the late 20<sup>th</sup> century county hall next to the priory ruins, and some limited alterations to the road system within the historic town.

**Sources:**

Charles 1992; James 1981; Ludlow 1998; Miles 1999; Soulsby 1983;



## APPENDIX 2: 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.
- B. Site records, including context record sheets and site notebook.
- C. Drawing catalogue and site drawings.
- D. Site photographs - digital.
- I. Archive report and draft copies of final report.
- J. Publication drawings.
- M. Miscellaneous correspondence.

There is no material in categories E, G, F, H, K, L and N.

The archive is currently held by **Cambria** Archaeology Field Operations, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, as project number 44315.

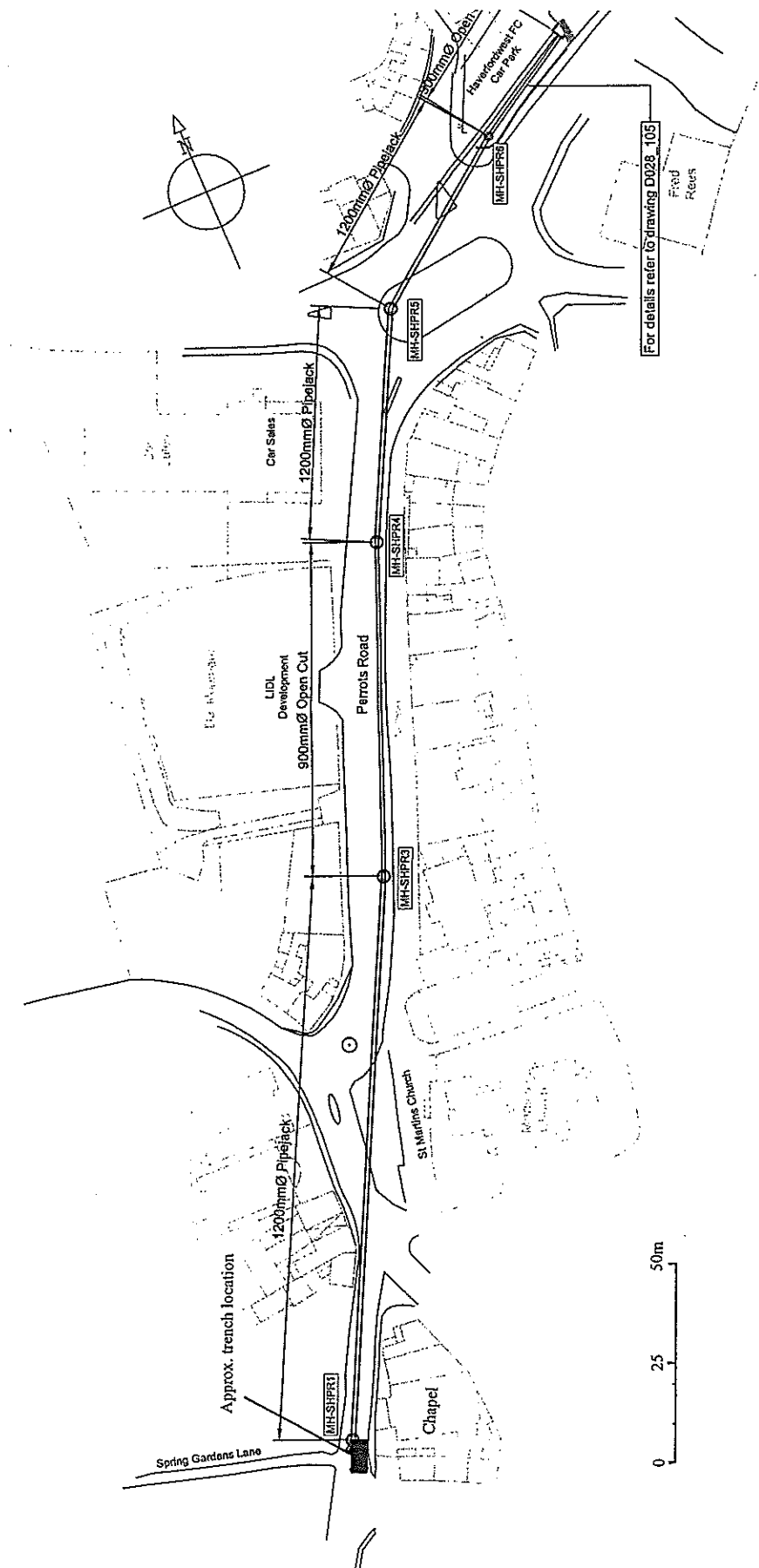








**FIGURE 3: PERROT'S ROAD**






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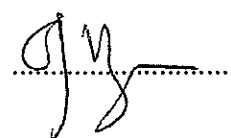
This report has been prepared by Pete Crane

Position Senior Archaeologist

Signature  Date 19/02/2002

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

Position Trust Director

Signature  Date 19/02/02

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