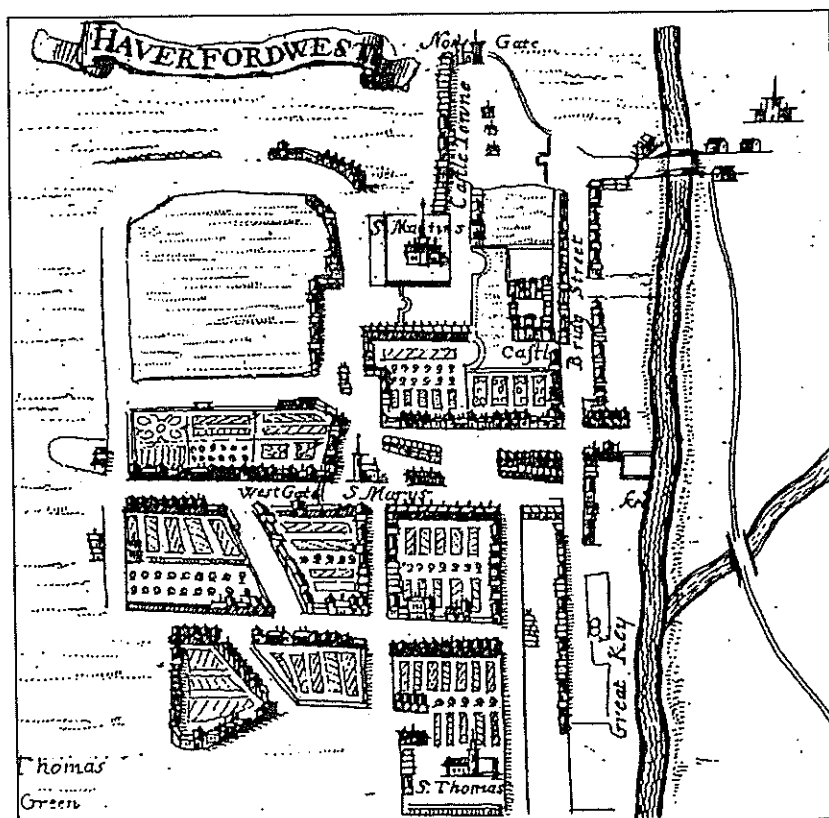


# ST THOMAS A BECKET'S CHURCH HAVERFORDWEST PEMBROKESHIRE

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON FLOOD LIGHTING SCHEME



Haverfordwest in 1690 (Peter Lea)



Report No. 2002/38

Report Prepared for:  
REV. D EVANS, CHURCH IN WALES

A R C H A E O L O G

CAMBRIA

A R C H A E O L O G Y

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

REPORT NO. 2002/38  
PROJECT RECORD NO. 44487

APRIL 2002

ST THOMAS A BECKET'S CHURCH, HAVERFORDWEST, PEMBROKESHIRE.  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
ON FLOOD LIGHTING SCHEME

By

Pete Crane BA Hons MIFA

*Cambria Archaeology is the marketing name of the Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited.*

*The report has been prepared for the specific use of the client. The Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd can accept no responsibility for its use by any other person or persons who may read it or rely on the information it contains.*

ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA  
Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf  
Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo, Sir Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AF  
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121  
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131  
Ffacs: 01558 823133  
Epost: cambria@acadat.com Gwefan: www.acadat.com

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY  
Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited  
The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF  
Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121  
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131  
Fax: 01558 823133  
Email: cambria@acadat.com Website: www.acadat.com

*The Trust is both a Limited Company (No. 1198990) and a Registered Charity (No. 504616)*  
CADEIRYDD CHAIRMAN: B.C.BURNHAM, MA PHD FSA MIFA. CYFARWYDDWR DIRECTOR: E G HUGHES BA MIFA

## **SUMMARY**

*A very short watching brief was undertaken during flood lighting installation for St Thomas a Becket's Church, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. Nothing of any antiquity was observed.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The provision of an archaeological watching brief was the condition of the faculty for installation of the flood lighting at Thomas a Becket's Church, Haverfordwest. Cambria Archaeology were requested by Derek Evans, the vicar, to undertake this watching brief. The Church is located in the higher part of Haverfordwest town, to the south of its centre. The church has a commanding view over the surrounding area and particularly over the Western Cleddau River. The Ordnance Survey grid reference is SM 9537 1589. The underlying geology is mudstones.

## **SITE HISTORY**

Given the limited amount of work and results it is not intended here to give a full account of the church's background. An extract from the Welsh Historic Churches Project written by Neil Ludlow of Cambria Archaeology for Cadw is included in Appendix 1.

There is no evidence for a pre-conquest church on this site; it is likely that a church was founded some time in the 12th century. It probably served an extra mural settlement to Haverfordwest that lay outside the defended area of the town. The church was granted c. 1200 to the Augustinian Priory that lay a short distance to the south and was overlooked by the church.

During the Dissolution in the 1530s the church, together with Haverfordwest Priory, passed to the king. The priory was dismantled but the church has continued to function and burials have taken place in the churchyard up to the present.

The nave and possibly the chancel are medieval in date although both were probably rebuilt in the 1800s. The tower was added in the very late medieval period. Some restoration or rebuilding took place in the later 1600s and the church was heavily restored in the mid 1800s. In the surrounding churchyard there are a large number of gravestones and monuments, many of them in good condition. There is evidence to indicate a number of further graves that have no markings.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim was to record any archaeological features encountered, to interpret these and provide a brief report.

## **METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS**

As the trenches for floodlights and cabling were shallow it was not deemed necessary to be in attendance while the trenches were excavated.

The site was visited on 8th March 2002. Four trenches, the total number, were then open. Each consisted of a cable trench from c.2.85m to 5m long, c.0.2m wide and up

## **APPENDIX 1: Extract from Welsh Historic Churches Project**

### **ST THOMAS, HAVERFORDWEST, PEMBROKESHIRE**

**Dyfed PRN 3327**

**RB No. 3265**

**NGR SM 9537 1539**

**Listed Building No. 12038**

**Grade B listed (1998)**

#### **SUMMARY**

Medieval church; 20% pre-19th century core fabric.

A 5-cell church, medium-large sized. Consists of west tower, 3 storeys, medieval. Chancel, 2 bays; nave, 7 bays (formerly 5 bays), earlier 19th century?; North porch, 1853-4. North aisle, 5 bays; vestry (north of chancel), 1 bay; 1880-81. External heating chamber, early 20th century?. Former west porch, earlier 19th century?. Construction is of limestone rubble. Internal walls rendered/plastered. Slated gable roofs; north aisle roof is a slated lean-to with gablets; west tower roof not seen. Medieval tower with medieval arch, vault, spiral stair turret, incised rood-stone and rebuilt door; medieval crenellations and corbel table; all tower openings medieval, rebuilt to a greater or lesser degree. Tower buttresses, later 17th century?. All other openings and detail, 1853-4, or 1880-81, and include the chancel arch (1880-1), the north aisle arcade and vestry arches (1880-81), windows and doors. (Recess in nave south wall, 1853-4, contains 14th century memorial, not in situ).

Roofs and floors: 1853-1881. Finishes: 1853-1881.

Condition - good.

Archaeological potential - very good. External platform beneath ?50% of church. External cutting around 40% of church, primary; no evidence for floor level changes; suspended floors and underfloor void; external heating chamber beyond 15% of church; no internal crypt/vault evident; good evidence for former component beyond 5% of church; memorials significantly close to 80% of church.

Structural value (pre-19th century) - fair. Largely rebuilt in 19th century, 20% pre-19th century core fabric; medieval tower with vault, arch, and stair turret, openings, parapet and rood-stone; memorial slab, not in situ.

Group value - high. Landmark church with medieval tower; hilltop location, within medieval borough; urban amenity value.

The north porch was new built in 1853-4. It has low, side wall buttresses, a single light in each side wall and a moulded 2-centred door surround. The softwood roof and tiled floor are contemporary.

The present transeptal vestry/organ chamber was enlarged from a smaller vestry in 1880-81; its 2 light, traceried north wall window in a 2-centred surround is from 1880-81, but replicating the style of the 1853-4 windows. The softwood gable roof, suspended board floor, the fireplace with a plain oolite chimney at the north-east corner, and the coped north wall corner buttresses, are all contemporary. the screen into the chancel is from 1880-81.

The vestry/organ chamber opens via a 2-centred oolite arch into the north aisle, with a louvered partition, added to the church in 1880-81 between the existing north porch and the vestry. Two of its 5 bays are gablets in an otherwise lean-to roof, with 3-light traceried windows also replicating the style of the 1853-4 windows. The aisle was roofed and floored, similarly following the earlier pattern.

The 3-storeyed west tower is from c.1500. It is not typical of the region, being, in the words of Freeman, 'a cross between a Pembrokeshire steeple (sic) and one of ordinary Perpendicular character' (Freeman, 1852, 171). It has good ashlar quoins, and is tapered throughout but lacks the basal batter and string-course typical of the towers of c.1500 in the region. The spiral stair turret projecting from the north-east corner is polygonal and finished with a coped vault at parapet level; it retains some of its slit-lights unaltered, with their unusual, internally trefoiled heads. There is an external string course at the junction of the ground and second storeys, and shallow, gabled angle buttresses on the west wall of the ground floor; the latter have traditionally been thought to be original features but their ashlar construction, and stylistic aspects, suggest a later date - 17th century? (see below). The ground floor is vaulted with a 2-centred barrel-vault of c.1500 and is floored as the nave (see below). It is entered from the nave through a full-width plain 2-centred arch, c.1500, and from the exterior through a 2-centred west door rebuilt, with an oolite surround, in 1853-4; the 2-light window above is an 1853-4 rebuild of an original Perpendicular window (Freeman, 1852, 171). The remainder of the openings are similarly rebuilds of originals from c.1500, and include single cusped lights in the second stage, and large, 2-light louvered openings into the belfry, with quatrefoil pierced spandrels; their oolite surrounds are, in the main, original (Freeman, 1852, 171). The west wall of the second storey features an external, incised oolite rood-stone with a weathered crucifix and 2 figures (Mary and Martha?), also c.1500. The crenellated parapet lies on a corbel table more typical of the region.

An earthwork platform lies beneath the church, evident particularly to the east and south; primary?. A shallow-medium depth earth-cut cutting runs along the west wall, and most of the north and south walls; predominantly primary, ie. cut through yard build-up, it contains no drain. There is no evidence for floor level changes. Suspended floors are present, with an underfloor void. There is an external below-ground heating chamber north of the chancel; no internal crypt/vault is evident. There is good evidence for a former component beyond the present church (west porch). Many memorials lie significantly close to the church, particularly to the north and east.

and suspended floors, but the chancel black-&-white floor tiling mentioned in the Faculty may already have been present; the chancel was later refloored. Replastering was also presumably undertaken. The chancel fittings had been altered to reflect the arrangements now present, as had the nave seating and pulpit.

The church was enlarged in 1880, when the north aisle was added and the present vestry/organ chamber built (NLW, SD/F/193). The specifications were drawn up by E. H. Lingen Barker, and the work cost £580. It was proposed that the north side of the churchyard where the yard build-up is deep, and an area immediately south of the church, were to be levelled preparatory to the work, but this was not done. The bulk of the nave north wall, and the vestry, were demolished. The chancel arch was rebuilt into its present form. The church was presumably again replastered. The chancel was refloored with the present tile floor, but without altering the stalls, the font was moved to its present position, and the pulpit was lowered; all other internal arrangements were unchanged.

There has been some further work. A large heating chamber lies externally, between the chancel east bay north wall and the vestry east wall. It is entirely below ground, with a flat roof at yard surface level, and reached by an external flight of steps. The flue from heating apparatus was presumably ducted into the vestry chimney. The chamber was probably added at the beginning of the 20th century.

The font is 19th century (pre-1847, see above)

The monumental slab in the nave south wall recess is of 14th century date (Anon., 1856, 282; RCAHM, 1925, 113). It bears a floriated cross, and a possible head in relief; the inscription reads '+ : RICARD : LE PAVMER : GIT : ICI : DEV : DE SAALME ET MERCI : +'. It displays signs of 'interference' (ibid.).

The church was Grade B listed in 1998.

## **SITE HISTORY**

There no evidence for any pre-conquest religious use of the site.

St Thomas, Haverfordwest, was a parish church in the post-conquest period (Rees, 1932), of the medieval Deanery of Rhos. It was probably the last of the three Haverfordwest churches to be established, lying outside and to the south of the (?)defended area and serving an apparent extra-mural suburb (Soulsby, 1983, 140-41).

However, the church may pre-date the suburb, having been granted to Haverfordwest Priory, by Robert FitzRichard (grandson of Tancard) of Haverfordwest (Green, 1912, 196), in around 1200. It was not subject to a separate valuation in the 'Taxatio' of 1291, but in 1536 it was assessed, along with Haroldston St Issells, at £11 (ibid.).

At the dissolution, Haverfordwest Priory and its appurtenances fell to the king, including the patronage of Haverfordwest St Thomas. However, in c.1553 the

**Parish Records, Pembrokeshire Record Office, Haverfordwest**

HPR/83 - Haverfordwest St Thomas:-

HPR/83/25 - Churchwardens' Accounts, 1916-47.

HPR/83/26 - Vestry Minute Book, 1864-1945.

**Printed Accounts**

A. Gordon Partnership, 1993, Redundant Religious Buildings in West Wales.

Anon., 1856, 'Miscellanea', Archaeol. Cambrensis, Vol. VII, Second Series.

Anon., 1864, 'Haverfordwest Meeting', Archaeol. Cambrensis, Vol. X, Third Series.

Anon., 1898, 'Haverfordwest Meeting', Archaeol. Cambrensis, Vol. XV, Fifth Series.

Anon., 1900, 'Notes & Queries', Archaeol. Cambrensis, Vol. XVII, Fifth Series.

Barnwell, E. L., 1866, 'Notes on the History of the Perrott Family: Part II', Archaeol. Cambrensis, Vol. XII, Third Series.

Crossley, F. H., and Ridgway, M. H., 1957, 'Screens, Lofts and Stalls situated in Wales and Monmouthshire: Part 8', Archaeol. Cambrensis, Vol. CVI.

Fenton, R., 1903 edn., A Historical Tour through Pembrokeshire.

Freeman, E. A., 1852, 'Architectural Antiquities of South Pembrokeshire', Archaeol. Cambrensis, Vol. III, Second Series.

Glynne, S. R., 1885, 'Notes on the Older Churches in the Four Welsh Dioceses', Archaeol. Cambrensis, Vol. II, Fifth Series.

Green, F., 1912, 'Pembrokeshire Parsons', West Wales Historical Records Vol. II.

Phillips, J., 1898, 'Haverfordwest', Archaeol. Cambrensis, Vol. XV, Fifth Series.

Lewis, S., 1833, A Topographical Dictionary of Wales.

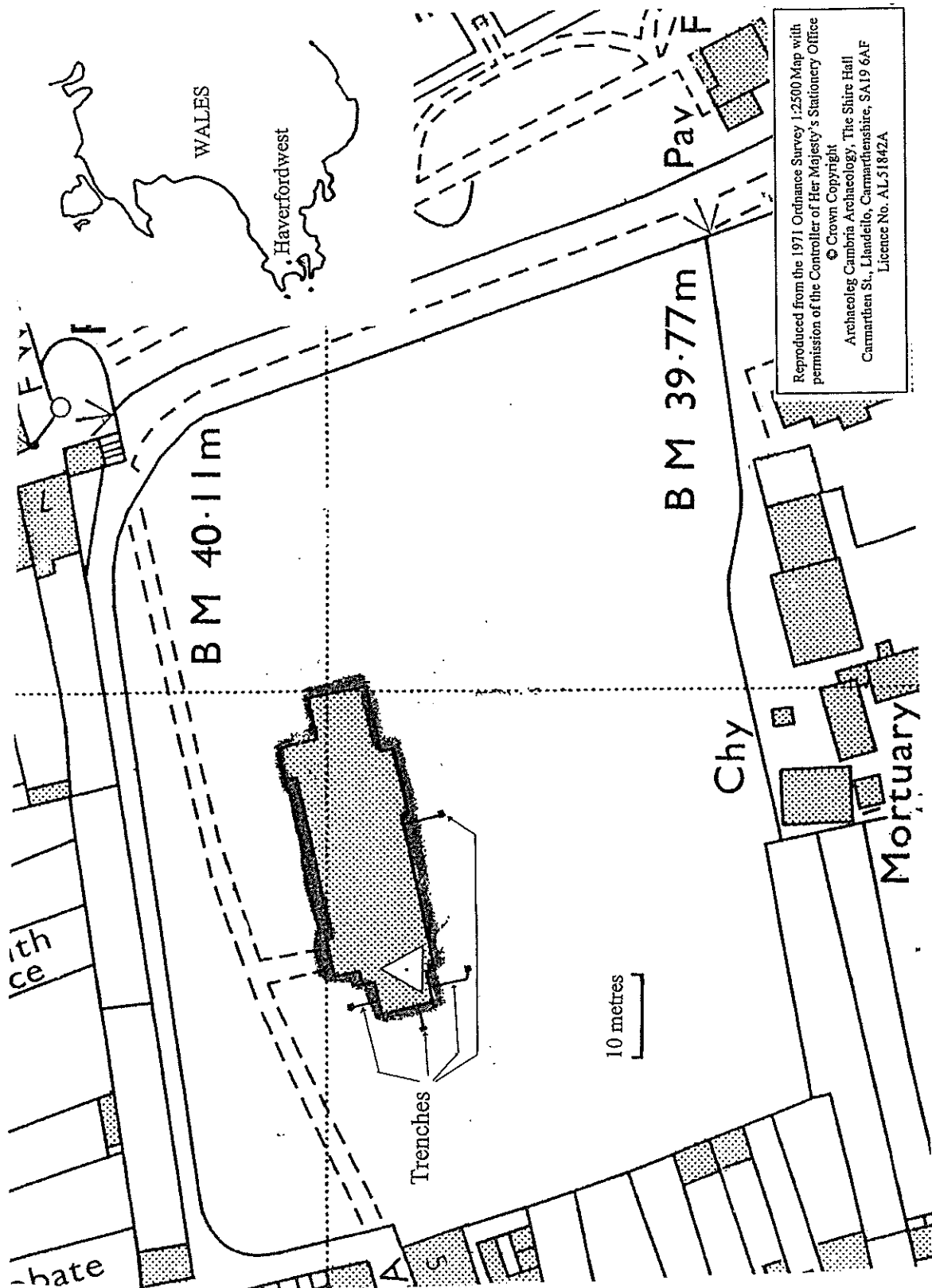
RCAHM, 1925, Inventory: Pembrokeshire.

Salter, M., 1994, The Old Parish Churches of South West Wales.

Soulsby, I., 1983, The Towns of Medieval Wales.

Welsh Office, 1974, Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (Haverfordwest).

**FIGURE 1: Location of floodlight trenches at St Thomas a Becket's Church, Haverfordwest**






**ST THOMAS A BECKET'S CHURCH, HAVERFORDWEST, PEMBROKESHIRE.  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
ON FLOOD LIGHTING SCHEME**

**REPORT NUMBER 2002/38**

**APRIL 2002**

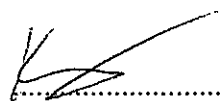
This report has been prepared by Pete Crane

Position Project manager

Signature ..... Date *24 April*.....

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

Position Contract manager

Signature ..... Date *24.04.02*.....

As part of our desire to provide a quality service we would welcome any comments you may have  
on the content or presentation of this report