

# THE DRIL HALL, PEMBROKE, PEMBROKESHIRE

## AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



Report No.  
2002/70

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PEMBROKE DESIGN LTD.



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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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THE DRILL HALL, PEMBROKE, PEMBROKESHIRE  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

By

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 *Development proposals***

Cambria Archaeology Field Operations was invited, by Pembroke Design Limited, to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the site of the Drill Hall, Pembroke (SM 9836 0159). No formal brief or specification for the project was prepared. The development consisted of the demolition of the existing Drill Hall and erection of a new, smaller building in the same location.

The proximity of the development site to the walls of Pembroke Castle and the probable medieval origins of the land parcel upon which the Drill Hall was situated, suggested a strong possibility that archaeological remains relating to the castle and/or buildings or other features associated with the medieval and post-medieval street frontage were likely to be encountered during the building works. In the light of this possibility, the development work was monitored by Duncan Schlee on behalf of Cambria Archaeology during demolition of the existing building and machine excavation of the foundation trenches for the new building.

### **1.2 *Project objectives***

The objectives of the project were as follows:

- 1.2.1 To assess the character, extent, significance and vulnerability of the archaeological resource within the proposed development area.
- 1.2.2 To identify new archaeological sites, features and deposits within the project area, and to assess their character, significance and vulnerability.
- 1.2.3 To identify sites, features and deposits that require further archaeological investigation to fully assess their character, extent, significance and vulnerability.
- 1.2.4 The preparation of a report fully representative of the information recovered during 1.2.1 - 1.2.3, which places the archaeological resource of the project area within its local, regional and national contexts.

### **1.3 *Project Methodology***

The project methodology included the following procedures:

- 1.3.1 A search of the County Sites and Monuments Record for information of known sites within and around the project area.
- 1.3.2 A search of cartographic sources held in the County Sites and Monuments Record.

1.3.3 Field visits during demolition of the existing building and excavation of foundation trenches for the new building, to review the condition of features identified during the documentary searches and to identify any new features of significance. In addition, to assess their vulnerability and to undertake rapid recording of features by photography, site notes and sketch plans where necessary.

1.3.4 The production of this report.

## **2.0 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE**

### ***2.1 A review of the sources***

This section is a brief description of the sources used, and an assessment of their usefulness and/or limitations.

#### ***2.1.1 Published and Unpublished Documents***

Neither the site of the Drill Hall, or the building itself has been previously identified in the Regional Sites and Monuments Record.

The Drill Hall building is listed in '*A Survey of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Military Buildings of Pembrokeshire*' (Thomas, R.J.C. 1994). But little detail is included.

Reference to the Drill Hall is made, and background on the historical development of Pembroke is given, in '*North and South Quay, Pembroke, An Archaeological Assessment*' (Ludlow, N. 1993) Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT) report PRN 32484, and '*Pembroke Town Walls, An Archaeological Assessment*' (Ludlow, N. 2001) DAT Report PRN 42678.

No other published or unpublished documents relating to the building were identified or consulted during this project.

#### ***2.1.2 Historic Maps Consulted***

NLW Vol. 3 g- Lovedon Map, 1787

Tithe Map of St Mary's Parish (Pembroke) 1839

Ordnance Survey 1:500 Town Map of Pembroke 1861

Ordnance Survey 25" First Edition. 1885. Sheet XL.5 (Pembrokeshire)

Ordnance Survey 25" Second Edition. 1908. Sheet XL.5 (Pembrokeshire)

The Tithe map for Pembroke (St. Mary's) of 1839 clearly shows the layout of the medieval burgage plots in Pembroke. The area containing the site of the Drill Hall, however, is not represented as being divided into plots. The existing layout of properties on the site, does suggest their origin was as medieval burgage plots. Their absence on the tithe map may be for reasons of land ownership.

The earliest map available for this report, showing occupation on the site is a 1:500 Ordnance Survey Town map (Pembrokeshire XL 9.8 Pembroke) dated 1861. By this date the property appears to consist of two burgage plots occupied by a single building on the street frontage, a courtyard with outbuildings behind and gardens running northwards to towards the Town Quay.

Other maps include the Ordnance Survey 1:25000 1885 edition (Pembrokeshire XL.9) and the Ordnance Survey 1:25000 1908 edition (Pembrokeshire XL.5). All these maps show essentially the same features as those on the map of 1861.

Other maps of Pembroke are represented in Dyfed Archaeological Trust reports listed as references, but are not reproduced within this report.

### ***2.1.3 Previous Geotechnical and Archaeological Work***

In addition to the Reports referred to above, a small archaeological investigation was undertaken at the Drill Hall in August 1995 by Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust ((Project No: A271, Site No: 304, Report No: 95/057). This work comprised the hand excavation of three test pits to identify the depth of the bedrock underlying the site. Although the purpose of the project was primarily geological in nature, some observations as to the archaeological significance of the deposits encountered were made within the report. Due to its primarily geotechnical objectives, this work was not considered a sufficient assessment or evaluation of the archaeological resource on the site

### ***2.1.4 Field Visits***

The project site was visited on three occasions during September 2002. The first site visit involved a brief photographic record of the standing remains of the Drill Hall building immediately before its demolition began. On the second visit the demolition of the Drill Hall had been completed and the foundation slab removed to reveal the underlying deposits. The development did not entail the further reduction of the ground levels over the whole site. Instead, further disturbance was limited to foundation trenches for the footprint of the new building. These were initially intended to be circa 0.85m wide and 1.80m deep. In the event the deposits were found to be unstable and trench edges were prone to collapse. In places, especially towards the south of the foundation trenches, the underlying bedrock also prevented the trenches being excavated to their full depth. The depth of the excavated trenches and the instability of their sides prevented detailed cleaning, examination and recording of the deposits exposed. The final site visit was made when the excavation of the foundation trenches was complete, shortly before they were due to be shuttered and filled with concrete.

### 3.0 RESULTS

#### 3.1. *Site Location, History and Development*

The Drill Hall site is contained within what was originally a medieval burgage plot, or possibly two combined. The burgage plots were probably laid out during the expansion of the town in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The plot runs from the street frontage of Castle Terrace north to the town wall overlooking the Town Quay.

The Buildings that now occupy the street frontage are no longer of medieval origin. Available maps (see Maps 2,3 and 4) indicate that the site was occupied by a substantial town house on the street front, with outbuildings and Gardens to the north. It is not known when this building was first built, but this too is no longer standing.

Immediately to the west of the development site, a single burgage plot runs between the Drill Hall and the outer walls of Pembroke Castle. Early maps and illustrations suggest that this plot may have originally been the location of the defensive ditch outside the castle walls. A map of 1787 (See Map 5) shows the same plot as being walled on both sides. It is marked as being Mrs Gwyther's house and garden with a passage to the river'. This passage presumably ran along the former defensive ditch. It is not known whether the wall dividing this property from the Drill Hall plot is the same as that existing today or whether it has been rebuilt.

The street frontage associated with the Drill Hall is occupied by an imposing structure built in a similar architectural style to military buildings in Pembroke dock (see Photo 1). It consists of a full centred semi-circular archway flanked on each side by a two storey, two bayed building, each with a doorway with a single-light segmental headed window above. The bays furthest away from the archway feature segmental headed double windows on each floor. The walls are of limestone rubble with dressed stone around the openings. Although the exact date of construction of the Drill Hall frontage is not certain it is thought to date from about 1910.

The Drill Hall itself is a detached steel framed building of brick and stone, with a low pitched slate roof supported by steel trusses. The gable ends contain circular lights. High rectangular windows are ranged down the west and east sides of the building. It is set back from the street front, situated in the open area behind the frontage and accessed through the archway.

#### 3.2 *Archaeological Deposits*

The land use history of the plot appears to have changed little over time. The street front buildings, however, have been rebuilt several times and foundations and other remains of these buildings may still survive below ground. The street front area of the plot that is likely to contain archaeological evidence of the previous buildings has not been affected by the present development and remains undisturbed.



The footings for the new building covered a smaller area than the previous Drill Hall. Ground works were restricted to the site of the Drill Hall itself and did not require disturbance of the area closer to the street frontage. Cartographic evidence suggests that the specific area affected by the present development has been garden space since at least 1787. Any earlier activity on the site is likely to be limited to pits dug during the medieval period for the disposal of rubbish.

A broad horizontal exposure of the deposits on the site has more chance of identifying archaeological features such as rubbish pits than linear trenches. The nature of the ground works for the new building, however, meant that the opportunity for archaeological investigation was limited to the foundation trenches.

The depth, and length of the foundation trenches, coupled with the fragility of the trench edges meant that it was impractical to clean the trench sections and record them in detail. Instead, the stratigraphic sequence that was observed in various parts of the trenches will be outlined to provide a general description of the deposits encountered.

During site clearance a deposit of 20<sup>th</sup> century rubbish was removed to reveal the edge of the outcrop upon which the castle is constructed. This rock face may be a remnant of the west edge of the defensive ditch of the castle (see Photo 8).

### ***3.2.1 The West Trench***

The western foundation trench followed the line of the former property boundary with the neighbouring plot to the west. This property boundary was marked with a substantial wall built of randomly coursed limestone with a lime mortar containing charcoal flecks. While this wall survived to a height of over two meters at the southern end, to the north it had been demolished, presumably when the Drill Hall was originally built. Although it follows a medieval property division, the wall did not appear to be of medieval origin, and probably dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. The wall footings that survived below ground level were removed along the entire length of the western foundation trench and were found to lie directly on the bedrock (see photo 7). To the north and south of the foundation trench, the wall and its footings remain intact. Deposits to the west and east of the wall, as represented in the sides of the foundation trench for the new building, are markedly different.

To the west of the wall, beneath the topsoil (approximately 0.25m thick) was a layer of loose stone rubble and mortar up to 0.50m thick (see photos 4 and 6). This is presumably derived from the earlier demolition of the property boundary and other features. A mixture of modern, 19<sup>th</sup> century and possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century ceramics were observed within this rubble. This deposit presumably fills in the former passageway (or defensive ditch of the castle) leading to the quay. Below the rubble was a natural layer of coarse stone rubble in a mid red-brown clay-silt matrix, approximately 0.30m thick. This lay directly above solid limestone bedrock. The bed rock slopes downwards towards the north.

The east side of the trench consisted of a topsoil layer approximately 0.40m thick overlying a 0.30m thick layer of mid red-brown clay-silt and limestone rubble mixed with mortar dust and fragments. This deposit may derive from the demolition of one of the earlier buildings on the site. Below this layer was an approximately 0.45m thick natural deposit of Limestone rubble in a mid red-brown clay-silt matrix on top of solid limestone bedrock.

### ***3.2.2 The East Trench***

The eastern trench consisted of a truncated layer of soil and demolition debris up to 0.30m thick overlying a layer of homogenised dark grey-brown silty loam containing charcoal flecks, mortar fragments and occasional tile fragments etc. This deposit was up to 0.60m thick and is consistent with a cultivated garden soil. Below this was a layer of natural limestone rubble in a mid red-brown clay-silt matrix overlying limestone bedrock. The depth of the clay silt layer varied according to the depth of the underlying bedrock which was seen to rise up towards the south.

### ***3.2.3 The North Trench***

The stratigraphy within this trench was essentially similar to that of the eastern trench except that it contained a cross section through the wall at its west end (see photo 7). Immediately to the east of the wall is a deposit of burnt coke or coal, presumably waste from a fireplace. This deposit appears to be within a linear cut feature, either a foundation cut for the construction of the wall, or the remnants of a cut for an earlier property boundary on a similar alignment. The deposit was not present at the southern end of the foundation trench and does not appear to be of medieval origin.

## **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

Given the position of the Drill Hall site in relation to the Castle, and the land use history of the area, there was a good possibility of finding archaeological features associated with the early history of Pembroke in the medieval period within the development area. In the event, however, the present development was located in an area that map evidence suggests has been garden since before 1787. The possibility of finding medieval features on the site was limited by the character of the foundation trenches, and no features or deposits that can be reliably dated to the medieval period were encountered.

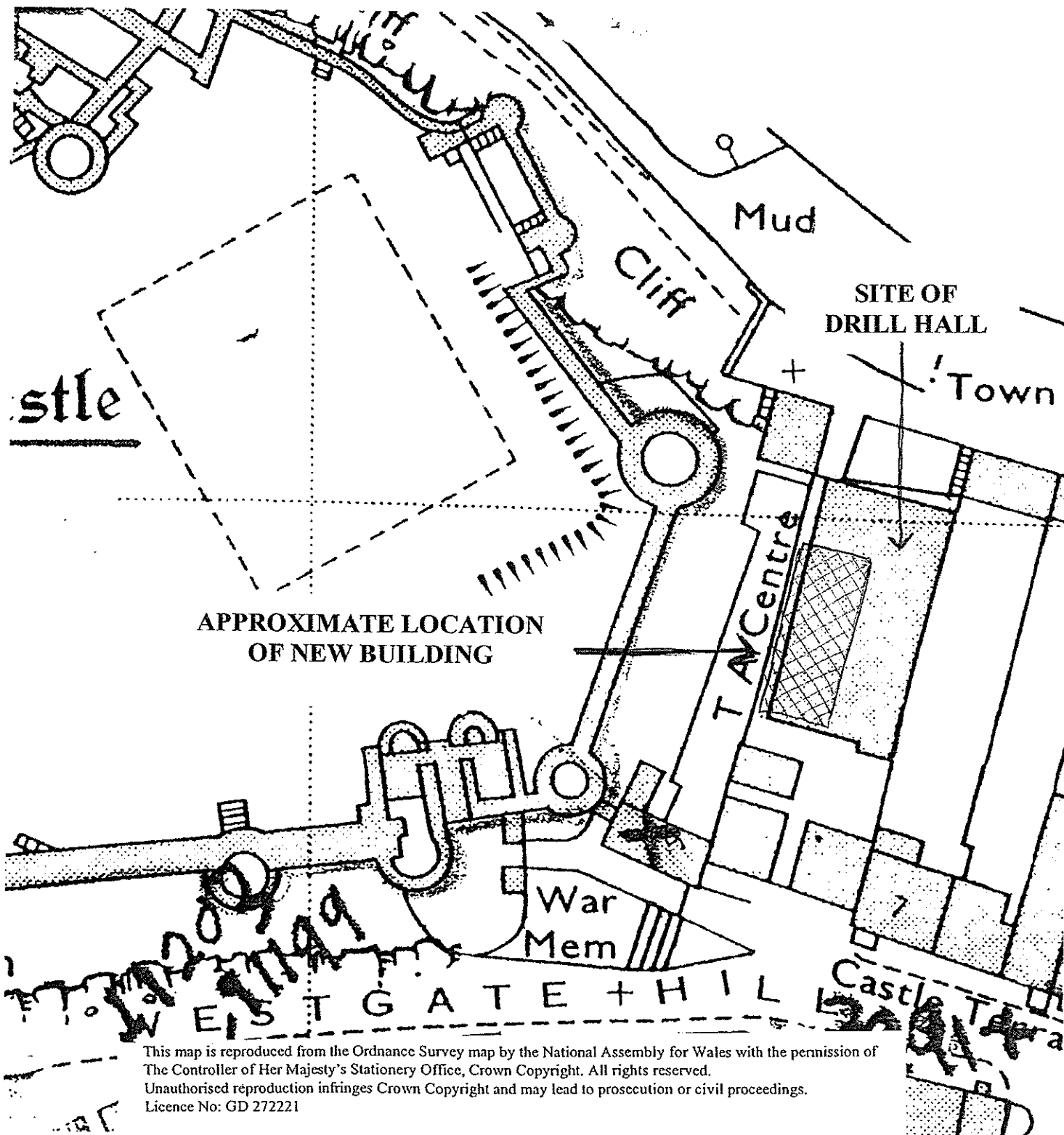


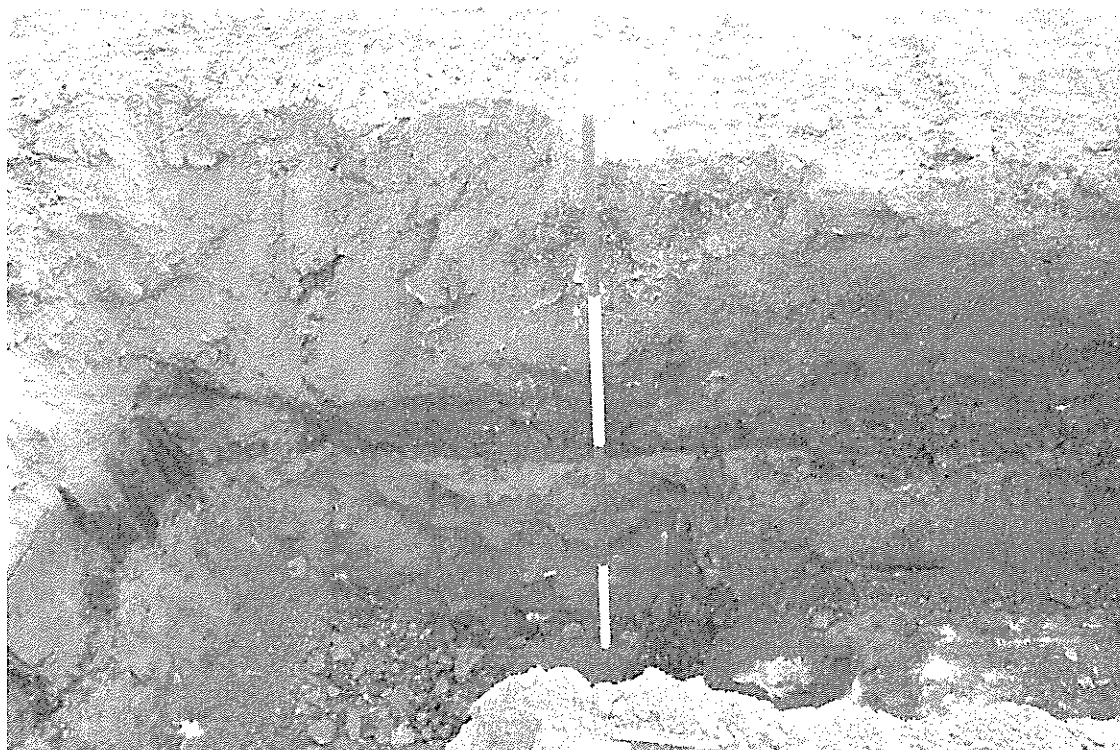
Figure 1: Site location Plan



**Photo 1:** The Street Frontage of the Drill Hall Site.



**Photo 2:** The Drill Hall During Demolition.

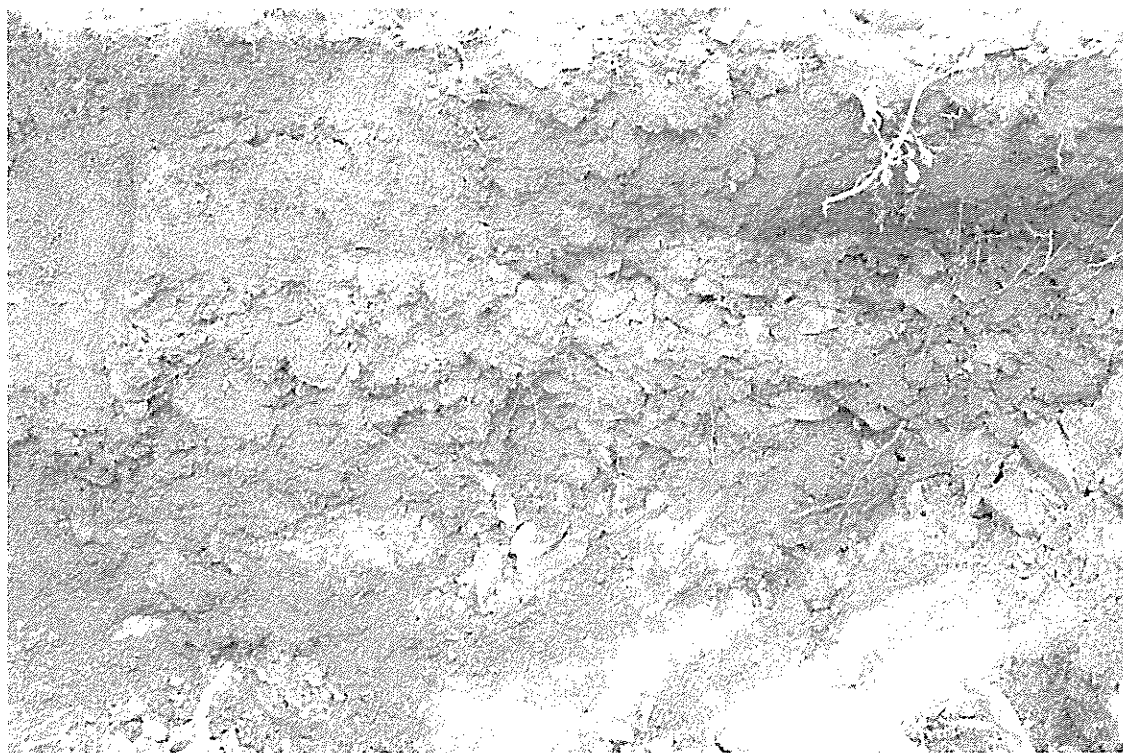


**Photo 3:** Stratigraphy of the Eastern Foundation Trench (west Facing Section).

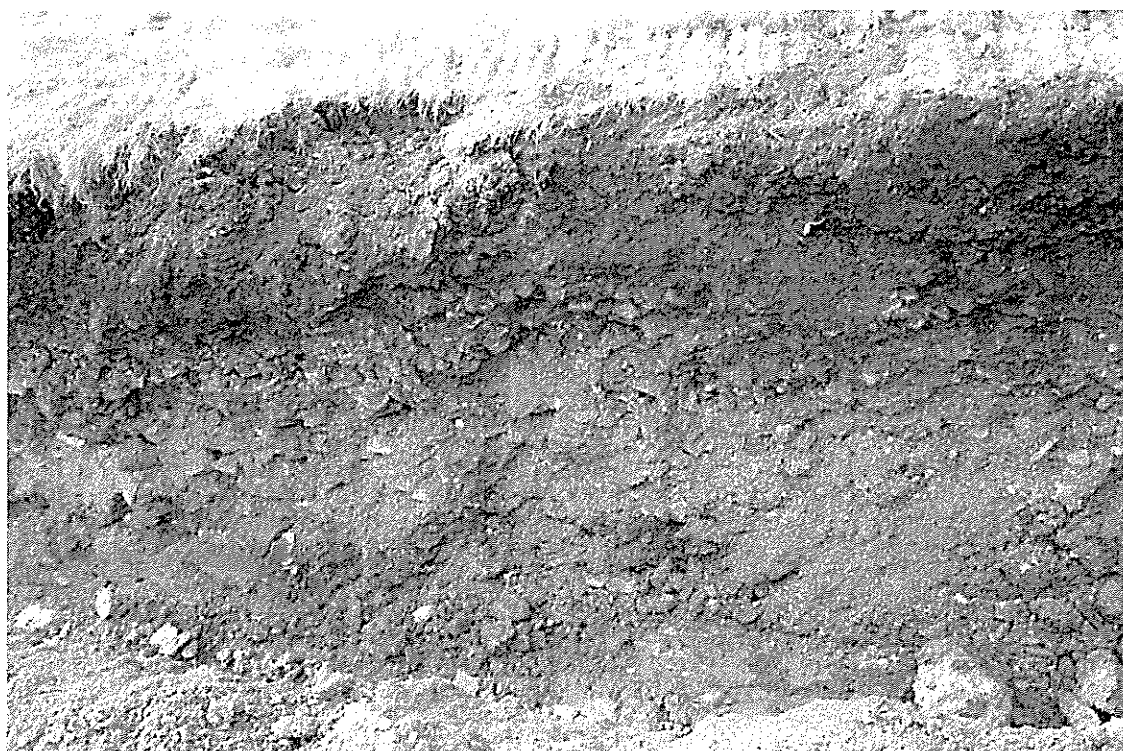


**Photo 4:** Stratigraphy of the Western Foundation Trench (east Facing Section).





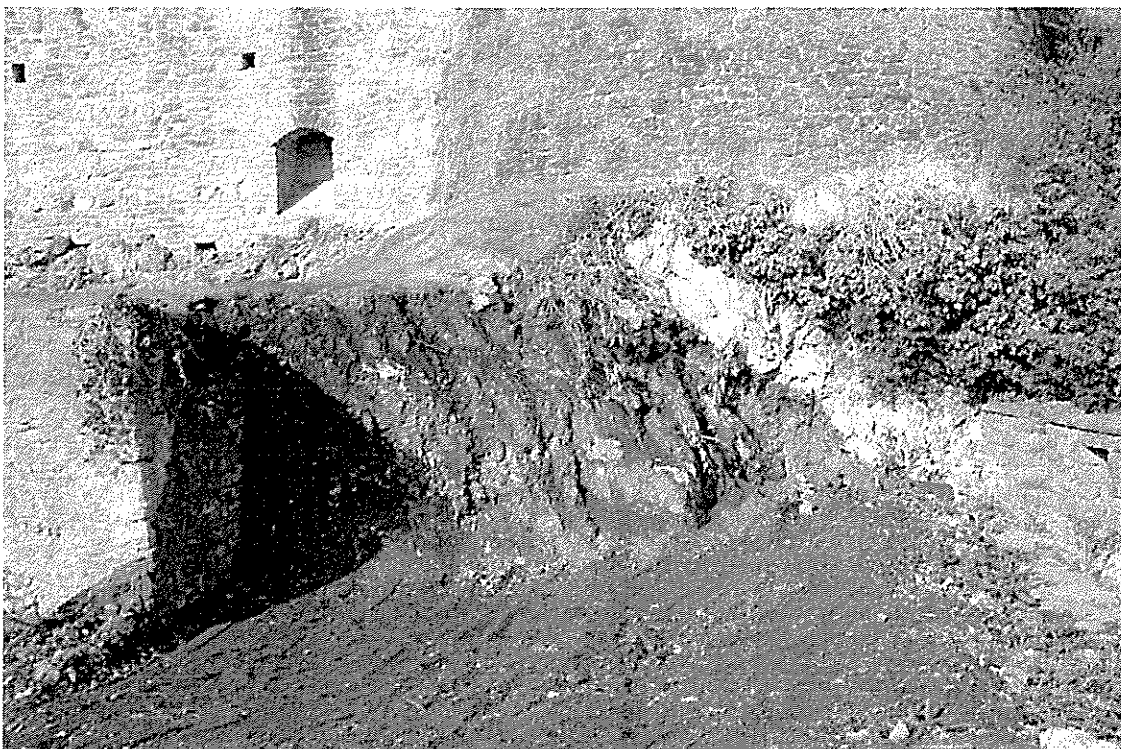
**Photo 5:** Stratigraphy of the Western Foundation Trench (west Facing section).



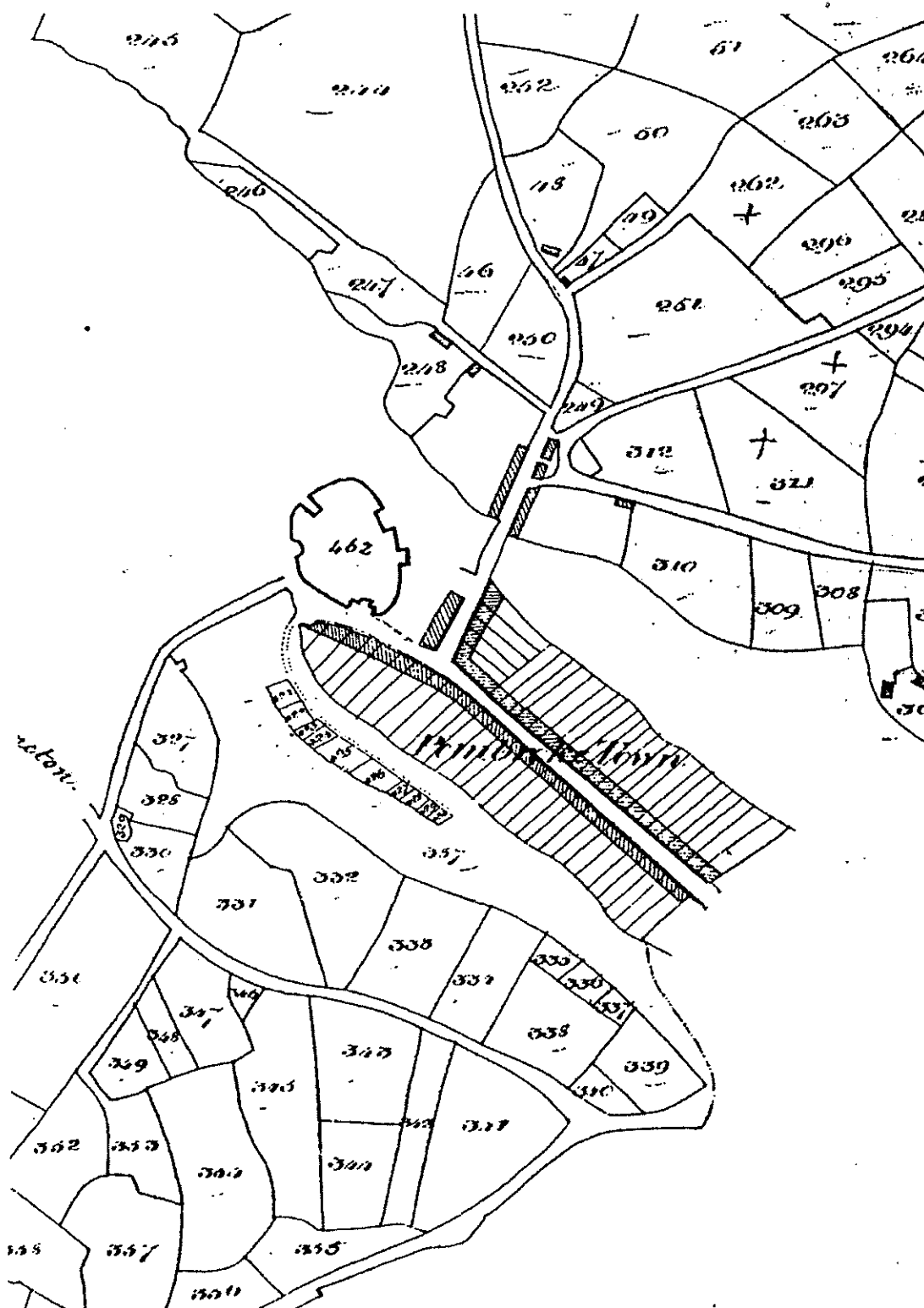
**Photo 6:** Stratigraphy of the Western Foundation Trench (east Facing Section).



**Photo 7:** stratigraphy in the North Foundation Trench (south Facing Section)

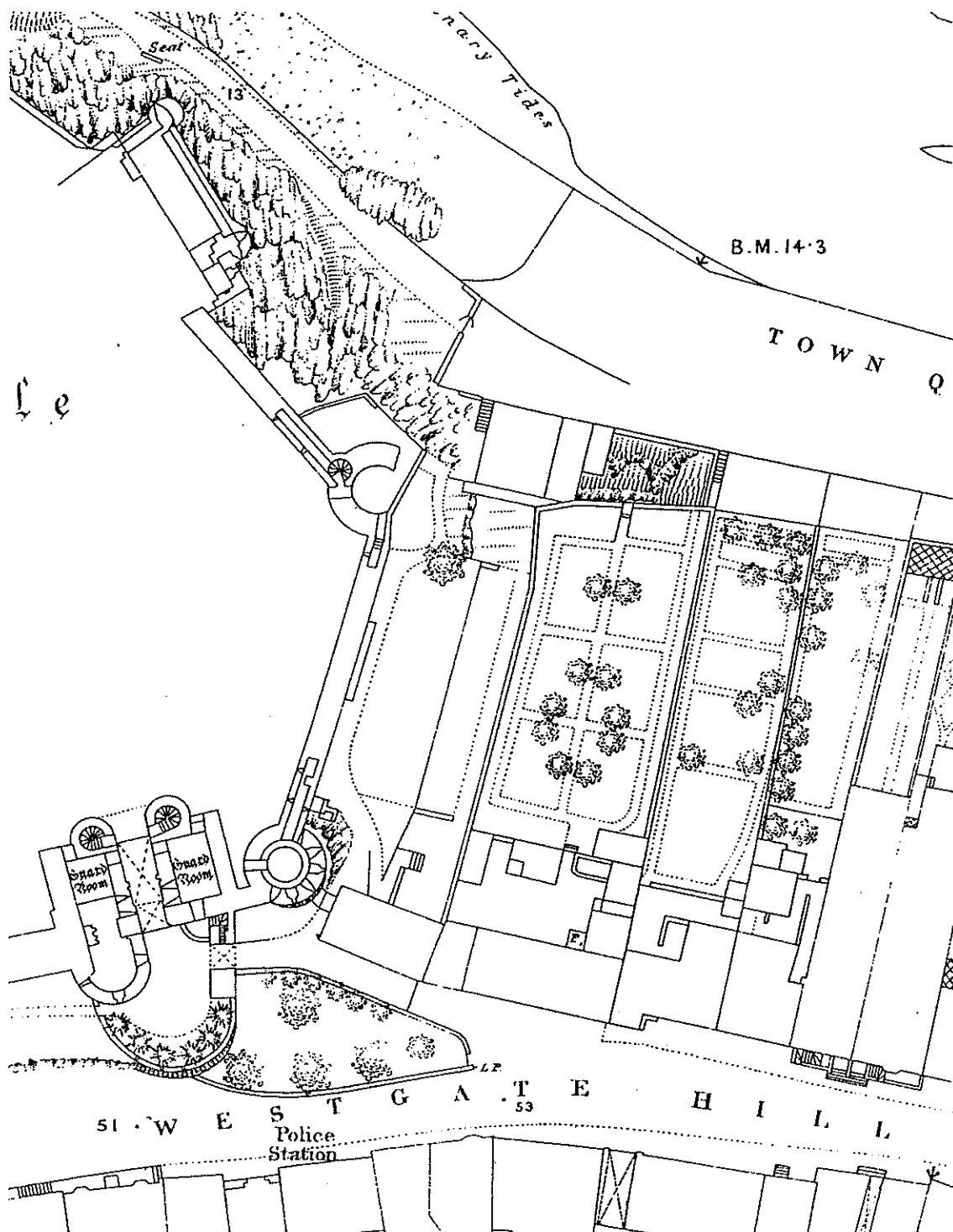


**Photo 8:** Possible edge of defensive ditch of the castle (Looking west).



Map 1: Tithe Map of St Mary's Parish (Pembroke) 1839



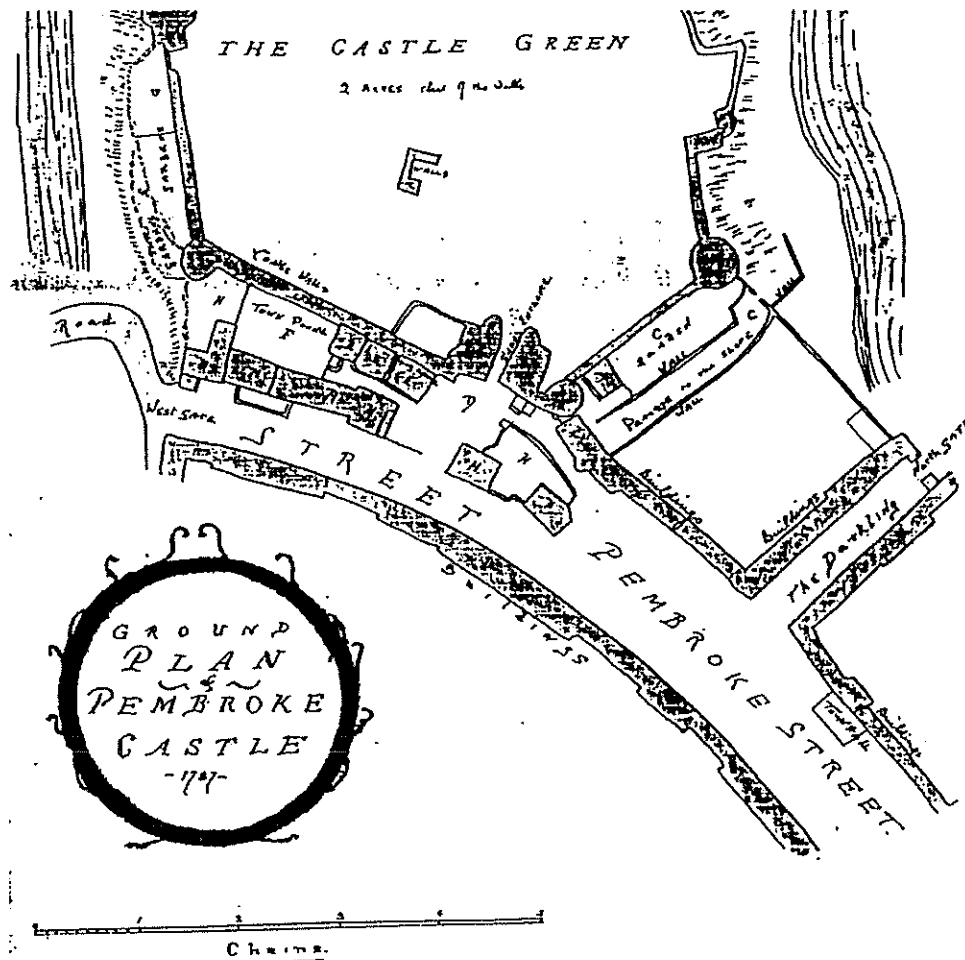


Map 2: Ordnance Survey Sheet XL 9.8 (Pembroke) 1861. Scale 1:500





Map 4: Ordnance Survey Map Sheet XL.9 (Pembrokeshire) 1885. Scale 1:25,000



### Reference to PEMBROKE Castle

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | The Castle Greens, clear of the Walls                                   | A | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| a | The Round Tower   |   |   |   |   |
| b | Entrance into the Wogan a circular Cave 73 ft diameter about 20 ft high |   |   |   |   |
| c | M <sup>rs</sup> Gwyther's house and garden with a passage to the river  |   |   |   |   |
| d | The Castle Hill and Outbuildings  |   |   |   |   |
| e | Stable Yard Dog Kennel. &c occupied by M <sup>r</sup> Adams             |   |   |   |   |
| f | The Town Pound  |   |   |   |   |
| g | Gardens   |   |   |   |   |

~ All the above allowed to be the Castle property ~

H<sup>y</sup> Several Houses and Gardens supposed to appertain to the Castle Liberties but now possessed by the Corporation.

Map 5: Detail From a map of 1787.

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This report has been checked and approved by  on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed  
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