

THE OLD RECTORY, NOLTON HAVERFORDWEST PEMBROKESHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

APRIL 2004



Report No. 2004/45

Report Prepared for:
Mr. John Owen



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By

Duncan Schlee

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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
Eboost: 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

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**THE OLD RECTORY,
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The Old Rectory at Nolton (SM86071813) is a grade II* listed building (PRN6996), on account of the 16th century vaulted ceilings on the ground floor, which are exceptionally rare in a Welsh domestic context. The house has been considerably altered and extended, to the extent that the outward appearance of the building is of a 2-bay Georgian house. The building was refaced and raised in the early 19th century, and a cross-wing was added in 1886. Many of the original features of the building, however survive.

In view of the importance of the building, an archaeological watching brief was required as a condition of planning permission for the construction of a new extension to the rear of the building. Cambria Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the watching brief on behalf of the owner, Mr. John Owen. The new development required the demolition of the existing rear extension that probably dated from 1886, and entailed considerable ground works. It was considered that significant deposits or features associated with the medieval origins of the building might be revealed during this work.

A visit to the site was made on 25/02/04 to inspect ground preparation and foundation trenches cut for the construction of the new kitchen extension to the rear of the property. The previous extension had been demolished and the majority of the ground works completed by the time of the visit. This demolition partially exposed stonework of the rear elevation belonging to the older main body of the house.

No cut features or archaeological deposits were observed within the excavated area. The exposed material at the base of the excavated area was essentially natural bedrock. No features were visible in the sides of the excavation. Examination of the footings of the original building indicated that alterations made in the early 19th century, and again in 1886, involved the reduction of ground levels around the entire house. As a result, the base of the medieval wall footings, which were constructed when the ground level was higher, now float 0.95m above the current ground surface, and the 19th century floor levels are 0.65m below the base of the medieval footings. Between the base of the medieval footings and the 19th century floor level, the walls are constructed from 'pillars' of natural silt and shale, along the wall line, which have been faced with stone rubble and rendered. As a consequence of the alteration in ground levels, all traces of any additional medieval walls outside those of the existing building have been lost. Likewise, any surfaces associated with the upstanding medieval structures have also been removed in the past. Visible in the wall scars of the elevation exposed by the current demolition are two areas of faced stonework on the ground and first floors of the west side. These may be the remains of small windows.

Immediately to the west of the rear extension there is a stone-lined well, reputed to be over 30ft deep, and assumed to be of medieval origin. The well has been backfilled and the level of the stone lining was reduced, presumably when the 19th century extension was constructed. The current ground works do not therefore appear to have had any further impact upon the structure. The cutting of the new foundation trench closest to the well was observed, but no stonework associated with the well was observed.

To summarise, all evidence of floors or ground surfaces associated with the medieval portions of the building appear to have been removed when alterations to the building were made in the 19th century. It is unlikely that significant additional medieval deposits associated with the known structures have survived.

The distance to which the 19th century ground works extended from the house is not known. This leaves the possibility that medieval deposits might survive associated with any ancillary buildings that might have existed further from the house, beyond the extent of the 19th century ground works.



Photo 1: General shot of the rear of the building after demolition of the Extension.

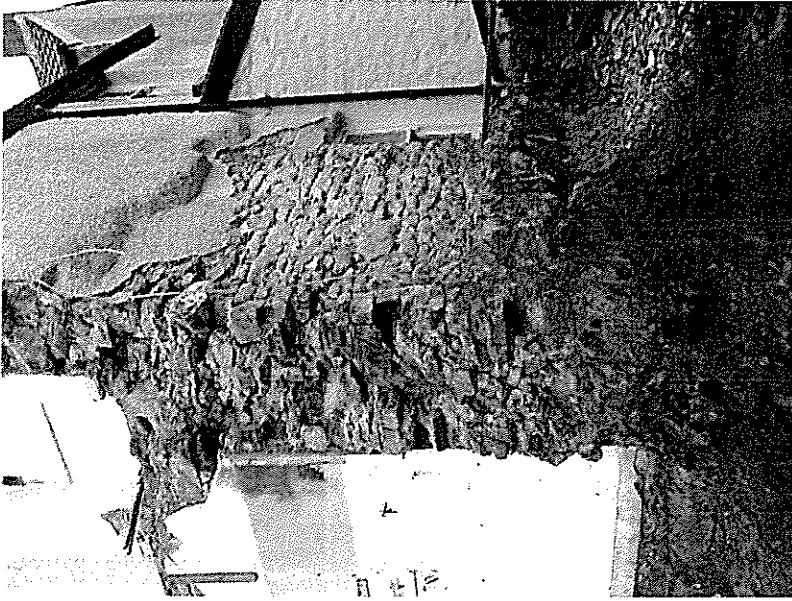


Photo 2: Truncated wall remnant showing 'pillar' of natural between 19th century floor levels (left) and base of stone wall footings.



Photo 3: Truncated wall remnant showing 'pillar' of natural below stone footings, faced with rendered stone rubble. Note faced stonework of vertical window jamb.



Photo 4: Showing faced stonework of vertical window jamb in truncated wall end.

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This report has been prepared by : Duncan Schlee

Position : Archaeologist

Signature Date

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

Position : Principal Archaeologist (Field Services)

Signature Date.....

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