



# **ST MARY'S CHURCH, TENBY, PEMBROKESHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF,  
FEBRUARY 2004**



Report No. 2004/47

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BARTOSCH AND STOKES



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**CAMBRIA**  
ARCHAEOLOGY

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PEMBROKESHIRE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

By

Duncan Schlee

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## **1.0 SUMMARY**

*Archaeological recording of a foundation trench for a new toilet block on the east side of the church hall, to the west of St. Mary's Church, Tenby, was undertaken by Cambria Archaeology. The foundation trench had already been excavated by the building contractors. Within the trench, mortared stone footings were revealed, and a series of laminated deposits. Unfortunately, because the trench had not been excavated under archaeological supervision, the sequence of deposition and the dates of the deposits could not be ascertained with certainty. It was also not possible to link the current excavation with the findings of the 1992 excavation within the church yard. It is strongly recommended that archaeological hand excavation is undertaken in any future work in the area.*

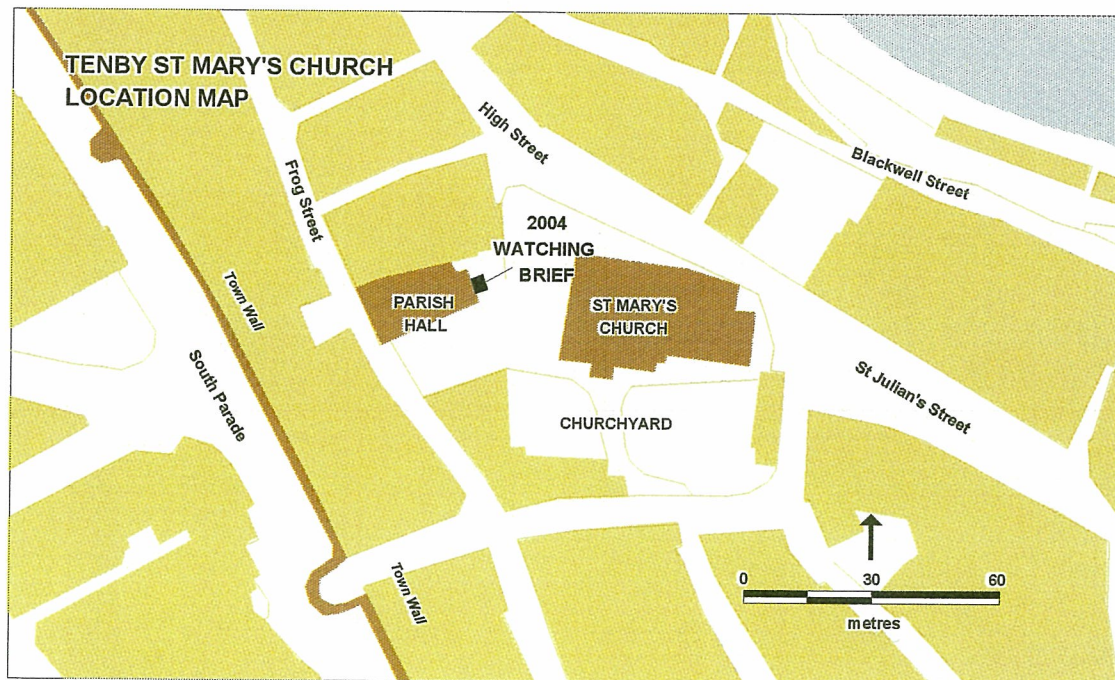
## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

The site lies at the centre of the town of Tenby, at NGR SN 1338 0045. It lies within the extensive open area around St Mary's parish church, which represents the remains of its large, medieval churchyard. The west side of this area is partly occupied by a building, the parish hall, which was built during the 1960s and lies 20m west of the church itself. In 2004, foundation trenches were dug against the west side of the parish hall for a new WC building.

This area was, during the medieval period, occupied by a building, PRN 3708, which was probably a college of chantry priests (Thomas 1966, 162), and the proposed WC lies within upstanding medieval walls thought to belong to this college.

A salvage excavation in 1992 (PRN 28334), undertaken during the laying of paths across the churchyard, had revealed significant structural remains associated with a probable medieval porch on the west side of the church (Williams 1994, 26-9). The circumstances of the work in 1992 did not, however, allow sufficient excavation to enable the complete sequence of structural relationships to be ascertained.

*Fig. 1: Location map of site*



## 2.1 Development proposals and brief

Due to the location of the proposed WC block, and in the light of the earlier discoveries, the responsible architects Bartosch and Stokes requested Cambria Archaeology Field Operations to quote for an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of the WC foundation trenches, on 13 August 2003. This was submitted on 14 August. Planning Permission and a Faculty were subsequently granted, and Cambria's quotation was accepted on 18 November 2003.

Despite previous disturbance in the area, including the construction of the parish hall itself in the 1960s, the possibility remained that significant archaeological deposits might be revealed that could add to the findings of the previous excavation.

## **2.2 Abbreviations used in this report**

Sites recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record for Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire (SMR) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).



### **3.0 METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS**

#### **3.1 Methodologies**

The WC foundation trenches were excavated by the contractor, and Cambria Archaeology Field Operations recorded the cut sections on 9 February 2004. A field drawing was made and photographs were taken in digital format.

#### **3.2 Observations and results**

On arrival at the site, a trench measuring 2.30m east-west and 3.50m north-south had already been excavated to a depth of 0.80m. Along the northern edge a deeper trench had been dug and backfilled with rubble (and could not therefore be investigated). This area appeared to have been disturbed previously as traces of red brick ?wall-footings were observed in the upper trench edges.

In the southeast corner, mortared rubble wall footings were observed in the bottom of the trench. These did not appear to have been truncated by the current works. The footings appeared to be approximately 1.60m long, aligned in a north-south direction. The west edge of these footings appeared to be intact, while the east side appeared to have been truncated by a probable pit. Slate fragments, and ceramic sherds (possibly 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> century?) were observed within the fill of this pit. The northern edge of the mortared rubble footings may also have been a true edge, but this was not ascertained with any certainty.

The eastern trench section indicated that a relatively complicated sequence of deposits had been truncated by the digging of the trench. Below 0.20m of topsoil was a layer of reddish brown clay with mortar and stone inclusions. This appeared to seal – and, in the south-east corner, possibly to cut – a series of laminated deposits overlying the mortared rubble foundations. Directly above these rubble foundations was what appeared to be a trampled surface. It could not be ascertained what this surface represented or was related to. The deposits overlying the trampled surface are presumed to be occupation, construction, or demolition deposits. Various finds had been put to one side by the workmen. These included animal bone, some probable human bone, post medieval ceramics and a copper-alloy token.

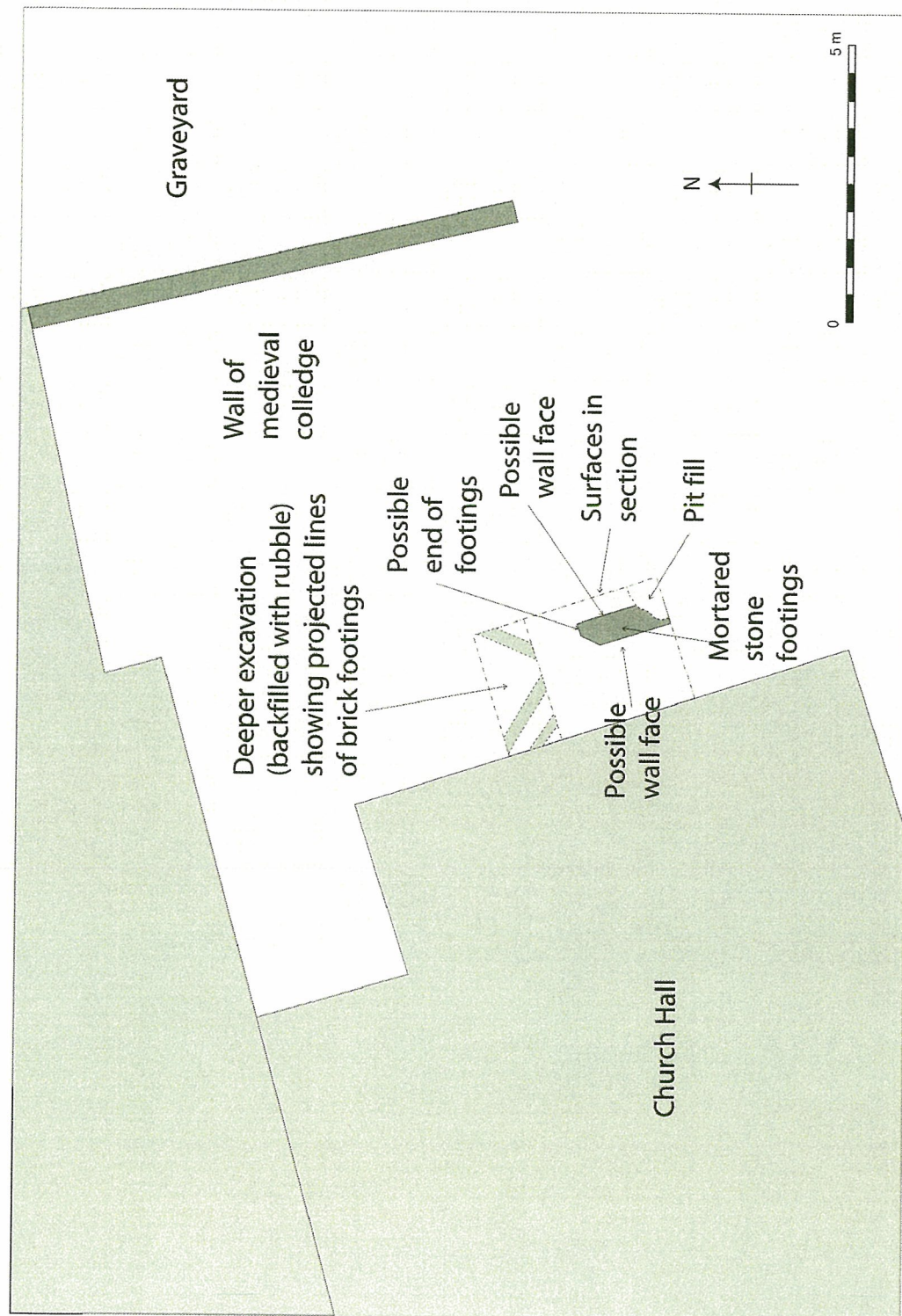


Fig. : Plan of excavated area



### **3.3 Conclusion and recommendations**

Although it does not appear that any significant deposits associated with the medieval college were disturbed, this is by no means certain and in any case was more due to luck than design. Controlled excavation would have enabled a better understanding of the deposition and post-deposition processes, and the age of the deposits. This information could have maximised the data recovered from the excavation and allowed it to better inform any future excavation in this locality, as well as adding to the findings of the previous excavation.

It is strongly recommended that hand excavation is undertaken in any future work in the area.

#### **4.0 THE FINDS**

No stratified artefactual material was recovered from sealed contexts during the watching brief.

#### **5.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION**

The archive, which will be indexed according to the National Monuments Record (NMR) material categories, is held by Cambria Archaeology, Llandeilo, and contains the following:-

- A. Copy of the final report and disk
- B. Field notes
- C. Copies of planning specifications
- G. List of references
- J. Final drawings
- L. General administrative notes
- M. Project correspondence

There is no material for classes **D, E, F, H, I, K** and **N**.

#### **6.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

#### **7.0 REFERENCES**

Thomas, W G, 1966 'The architectural history of St Mary's Church, Tenby', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 115, 134-165.

Williams, G and Brennan, D, 1994 'Excavations outside St Mary's Church, Tenby', *Archaeology in Wales* 34, 26-29.





**Photo 1:** *Looking north, showing the north section, the backfilled trench, and red brick ?footings.*



**Photo 2:** *Detail (looking east) showing sequence of laminated deposits above stone footings (left) and possible pit cut (right).*





**Photo 3:** *South east corner of the trench showing partly exposed mortared footings in base of trench.*

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PEMBROKESHIRE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF,**

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**FEBRUARY 2004**

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



