

FOLEY HOUSE GOAT STREET HAVERFORDWEST

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT



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HAVERFORDWEST
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By

Nigel Page

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REPORT NUMBER 2004/86

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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

FOLEY HOUSE, GOAT STREET, HAVERFORDWEST

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FOLEY HOUSE, GOAT STREET, HAVERFORDWEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY

Proposals to extend the car park at Foley House, Goat Street, Haverfordwest (SM 9533 1552) include the creation of a new parking area on part of the present rear gardens of the properties along High Street, which is to be accessed via the existing entrance from Goat Street. The site is historically and archaeologically significant as it lies within the medieval core of Haverfordwest and is currently occupied by Foley House, which was designed by the renowned architect John Nash. Given the sensitivity of the site an archaeological assessment was required to determine, as far as possible, the likely implications of the proposals on the historic and archaeological resource. Atkins commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Operations to undertake this assessment in September 2004.

Goat Street was developed during the 13th and 14th centuries and although there is no direct evidence it is possible that the Foley House site could have contained up to 6-8 burgage plots. The properties on High Street are thought to occupy the original medieval burgage plots.

This assessment has highlighted several areas of archaeological interest, most notably along the street front area of Goat Street and the gardens on High Street, which may contain evidence of medieval or later occupation. A programme of further works including evaluation and recording has been suggested.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT PROPOSALS AND COMMISSION

There are proposals to extend the car park at Foley House, Goat Street, Haverfordwest, (SM 9533 1552). The proposals include the creation of a new car park on part of the present rear gardens of the properties along High Street, which will be accessed via the existing entrance from Goat Street. The site is historically and archaeologically significant as it lies within the medieval core of Haverfordwest and is currently occupied by Foley House, designed by the architect John Nash. Given the sensitivity of the site an archaeological assessment was required to determine, as far as is possible, the likely implications of the proposals on the historic and archaeological resource. Atkins commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Operations to undertake this assessment in September 2004.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

This part of the project was aimed at collating existing information regarding the historic development of the site and its past use in order to inform the future stages of the proposals. The results of this assessment have been used to outline a suggested programme of further archaeological works.

1.3 REPORT OUTLINE

This report describes the physical environment of the study area (Section 2) before summarising the archaeological resource (Section 3) and the likely impact of the proposed scheme on that resource (Section 4). Recommendations based on the results of Sections 3 and 4 are given in Section 5.

1.4 ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

All sites recorded on the county Sites and Monuments Record are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) used in the regional Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). References to primary cartographic and documentary evidence and published sources will be given in brackets, full details will be found in the bibliography.

2. THE ASSESSMENT AREA

2.1 FOLEY HOUSE AND GARDEN

The assessment covers an area of c.0.3ha (c.0.8 acre) and is made up of Foley House (PRN 6501) and its garden and parts of the rear gardens of a number of the properties along High Street. Foley House was most recently used as the Magistrates Clerks Office, although it is now empty, and much of the former garden is now a car park. The site fronts onto Goat Street and is bounded on its other sides by existing property boundaries. A large split-level garden occupies the rear of the property. Foley House sits on a level terrace in the southwest corner of the site; this steps down to a large terrace, currently used as the car park, which in turn steps down to the lowest point of the garden along the north and northeast sides. Foley House was designed by John Nash and built sometime around 1790 for Richard Foley (Suggett 1995, 117; Suggett 1999, 142). The terracing is probably part of the original garden laid out at the time the house was built or shortly afterwards.

Foley House garden is c.5m-6m higher than the rear gardens of the properties on High Street. There is an overall drop of approximately 10m-15m from Goat Street to High Street over a linear distance of c.100m

Foley House and the sections of stone walls flanking the car park entrance are Grade II listed buildings.

2.2 GOAT STREET

Goat Street began to develop during the later 13th century, when it may have been laid out as part of a planned system of streets (James 1991, 65; James 1999, 28), but the first mention of 'Gotestrete' was slightly later, in the middle of the 14th century (Charles 1992, 645). Surviving deeds from the 13th century include some for properties in Goat Street (James 1999, 26)

The first cartographic evidence of Goat Street is the schematic map of the town by Peter Lea, 1690, which shows the street fully developed along its south side, but with intermittent development along its north side (cited in James 1999, 23 – Fig. 4). It is not clear from the map if the north side of Goat Street, including the Foley House site, was ever fully developed or if some of the planned medieval burghage plots were left empty, or abandoned. Late 15th century records show that there had been some abandonment of plots in Goat Street, amongst many others, following the Black Death over a century earlier (James 1999, 32). Further, though fairly small-scale, abandonment of tenements in the town occurred during the mid-17th century following a period of crippling taxation after the Civil War and an outbreak of the plague in 1652, although there is no specific mention of Goat Street (Howells 1995, 418; Howells 1999, 198).

Foley House occupies a prominent position roughly midway along the north side of Goat Street and covers an area that may have originally been occupied by anything up to 8 medieval burghage plots.

*Foley House, Goat Street, Haverfordwest
archaeological desk-based assessment*



Figure 1: Location plan showing Foley House and its existing car park.



Plate 1: Front, south, elevation of Foley House on Goat Street.

3. SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Foley House occupies an archaeologically sensitive location within the medieval town of Haverfordwest on a site possibly developed since the 13th century. However, it is also important to remember that the garden area due for development is also significant, being part of a house designed by the celebrated and renowned architect John Nash.

3.2 MEDIEVAL

There is great potential for medieval deposits associated with the development of burgrave plots along Goat Street in the 13th and 14th centuries to survive within the site, particularly along the street frontage. Although there is no direct evidence for the topography and layout of medieval Goat Street, it does appear that the site was fairly steeply sloping from front to back (south - north) until the late 18th century. When Nash designed Foley House he used the sloping land to accommodate the basement offices and kitchens, whilst allowing the family and visitors to enter the front of the house at ground floor level, as was increasingly the fashion (Suggett 1995, 47). Therefore, it is possible that the construction of the house and the terracing of the gardens have protected any buried features and deposits that may have been present on the site. Furthermore the site has not been affected by redevelopment since at least the end of the 18th century.

The High Street properties appear to occupy the original medieval burgrave plots developed in the 13th century (see 3.5 below).

There have been no previous archaeological works in this area of Haverfordwest, so there is no existing data regarding the likely extent, depth, or even the presence of archaeological deposits on the site.

3.3 POST-MEDIEVAL DEVELOPMENT

It has been already been noted (see 2.2 above) that the earliest depiction of the site, Peter Lea's schematic map of Haverfordwest (1690), shows Goat Street fully developed along its south side, but only intermittently developed along the north side. Whatever the reasons for the empty plots along the north side, it was possibly this availability of land that allowed the construction of Foley House, sometime around 1790.

There is currently no evidence to indicate whether Foley House was constructed on a new site or on a brownfield site consisting of several abandoned or empty burgrave plots.

3.4 FOLEY HOUSE AND GARDEN

Constructed sometime around 1790, Foley House is considered to be 'the most complete of John Nash's early pre-picturesque houses' (Suggett 1999, 143). The house and garden, which are important survivals of the architect's work, were

probably planned as one, with the garden being designed to make the most of the topography and to compliment, if not showcase, the house.

The garden is currently laid out with a tarmac car park covering the central area. The car park occupies a terrace, c.1.5m high at its northeast corner, which has been dug into the original slope at its southwest corner and along its west side (Plate 2) and made up along its north and east sides. It seems likely that any below ground archaeological deposits will have been affected by the terracing around the southwest and west sides of the car park, but they may survive in better condition along the north and east sides.



Plate 2: A general view west across the car park, showing the terrace for the house of the left and the original sloping ground at the far end of the tarmac.

Prior to the construction of the car park, the garden appears to have been a sloping lawned area with planting around the edges. The edges of the garden are now very overgrown, but there are visible traces of some of the original features and planting. Several surviving large trees and the stumps of other large trees that had either fallen or been felled in the past presumably represent planting from the original garden layout. Similarly, a number of now neglected shrubs, particularly in the northeast corner of the garden, may also be survivals from the original garden design.

Ordnance Survey maps of the site show a number of buildings to the southeast of the house, which formerly included stables and other service buildings. These are no longer part of the Foley house holdings, but they are still accessible through original gateways in the boundary wall. A small irregular building was also shown alongside the rear external stairs to the basement at the northwest corner of the house. This building has been partially demolished, but survives as a low rubble and vegetation covered mound (Plate 3). Other buildings shown on maps included two glasshouses,

one built against the west boundary wall and another built against the western end of the north boundary wall. Traces of both are visible as building scars on the boundary walls (Plate 4). A stone building occupies the southeast corner of the garden.



Plate 3: The overgrown remains of a small building close to the northwest corner of Foley House.



Plate 4: The site of a former glasshouse built against the north boundary wall. The brickwork visible to the right of the scale may mark the wall line of the glasshouse.

As well as the buildings the garden would originally have included features such as seating areas and possibly raised and formal beds. A triangular feature shown on

Ordnance Survey maps in the northeast corner of the garden and approached along a path may have been a seating area, as it would have afforded a fine view of the house (Plate 5).



Plate 5: The view of Foley House from the northeast corner of the garden. Even though this shot was taken from the corner of the present car park, as the garden edge is now overgrown, it is the view that would have been available from the possible seating area in the corner. The possible seating area is c.1m below the level of the car park and therefore more of the basement area would have been deliberately obscured from view so as not to distract from the main house.

When viewed from the front, south elevation Foley House sits on a raised terrace, which at the west end is over 2m above the surface of Goat Street (Plate 6). The terrace was created to provide a level entry to the house when approached from the street. The house itself sits approximately 6m back from the road with the paved terrace in front. The entrance to the car park is directly from Goat Street and the original ground surface does not appear to have been significantly altered (see Plate 6).

It is possible that the creation of the terrace in front of the house may have protected any surviving below ground remains or deposits associated with the medieval street front properties. Further street front deposits may survive in the area of the entrance to the car park.



Plate 6: The west end of the built up terrace created to provide a level entry for Foley House.

3.5 THE REAR GARDENS OF THE HIGH STREET PROPERTIES

The proposals also include the intake of some of the long rear gardens of the properties along High Street. High Street was fully developed during the medieval period and the present property boundaries are thought to maintain the original boundaries of the medieval burgage plots. A typical medieval burgage plot would have consisted of a building fronting onto the street with the rear gardens used for horticulture and keeping animals, often pigs and chickens. The rear gardens were also used for the disposal of rubbish, in pits usually dug towards the rear of the gardens, and they often contained cesspits and wells.

There has been some amalgamation of properties along High Street, which has resulted in the removal of some boundary walls, but for the most part the boundaries remain. The surviving boundaries are substantial mortared stone walls (Plate 7), generally with stone or concrete capping.

The High Street gardens are in some places c.5m-6m lower than the garden of Foley House, whilst they themselves are in some places 3m-4m above the backs of the High Street properties. The northern boundary wall of the Foley House garden also acts as a retaining wall between it and the High Street gardens (Plate 8). All of the gardens are fairly overgrown at their southern (Foley House), ends and dumping appears to have raised the ground level towards the base of the retaining wall.

It is not known if there are any buried features or deposits in the gardens associated with the medieval or post-medieval occupation of High Street.



Plate 7: A typical property boundary wall, thought to be on the line of the original medieval burgage plot boundaries. A partially removed section of the north boundary wall of Foley House is visible in the left foreground.



Plate 8: The retaining wall between the gardens of Foley House (on the left) and the properties along High Street.

4. IMPACT OF PROPOSED SCHEME ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

4.1 POTENTIAL MEDIEVAL DEPOSITS

There is great potential for encountering surviving medieval features and deposits almost anywhere within the assessment area. The High Street properties have probably been in existence, although redeveloped, since the 13th century, with parts of Goat Street also dating from the same period.

Groundworks and the lowering of ground levels around the current car park entrance may impact on any surviving features or deposits of the medieval, or later, street front buildings that may have stood along Goat Street. Similarly, the construction of a new access to the lower car park level may disturb or remove any features or deposits that may be present within the rear garden areas of any former burgage plots that may have occupied the Foley House site.

4.2 FOLEY HOUSE AND GARDEN

The proposals for a second, lower, level car park behind Foley House will have an effect on the setting of the house and its former garden. At present, although the garden area is currently laid out as a tarmac car park edged with overgrown planting, an impression of the original garden layout has been retained. The car park occupies the central area of the garden, which was formerly a grassed area so the overall balance of the garden has, to a certain extent at least, been maintained with a large open central space framed by planting.

This could be compromised by the creation of a new access to the lower level, which may involve the removal of some planted areas and the grading down of the existing ground levels from the car park entrance.

Clearance works in Foley House garden may expose and or remove traces of former garden features, such as buildings, seating areas and raised or formal planting beds.

4.3 THE REAR GARDENS OF THE HIGH STREET PROPERTIES

Creation of a car park in the rear of the High Street gardens will probably require the removal of the existing property boundary walls and may necessitate the removal of the ground surface and the levelling of the area. This may have an impact on any below ground evidence for the original medieval burgage plot boundaries – which may have been ditched or fenced – and any features or deposits in the medieval burgage plot gardens, such as rubbish pits, cesspits or wells.

5. SUGGESTED PROGRAMME OF FURTHER WORKS

5.1 THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

This suggested programme of further archaeological works is designed to provide additional information to allow an adequate assessment of the likely impact of the proposals on the archaeological resource.

The information will be gained through a programme of archaeological recording and evaluation to assess, where present, the extent, nature, chronology and depth of any surviving archaeological features and deposits on the site. The resultant information should be used to inform the final design plans for the development site and to allow a full programme of mitigation measures to be drawn up.

5.2 RECORDING

It is currently proposed that geotechnical test pitting, boring and coring will be carried out across much of the site in the near future.

The test pits will be hand dug by the geotechnical contractor and they should be monitored by an archaeologist to record the nature and depth of the deposits exposed in the pit sides.

After completion of the site work the core and borehole log sheets should be made available to an archaeologist to assess the nature and depth of the deposits encountered.

The information gained from monitoring the geotechnical excavations should be used to identify archaeologically sensitive areas that may require further investigation through archaeological evaluation.

5.3 EVALUATION

Further assessment should be executed through the excavation of a number of archaeological evaluation trenches in those areas identified by this study or the geotechnical investigations as potentially archaeologically sensitive.

An archaeological evaluation trench should be excavated close to the current car park entrance to investigate the presence or otherwise of any features or deposits associated with medieval or later occupation along Goat Street.

The locations of other evaluation trenches should be decided once the geotechnical investigations have been completed.

APPENDIX ONE: HISTORY OF THE SITE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOAT STREET

Goat Street was developed during the 13th century, possibly as part of a planned layout (James 1991, 65; James 1999, 28). Surviving deeds from the 13th century include some for properties in Goat Street (James 1999, 26), although it has been recorded that the first mention of 'Gotestrete' (Charles 1992, 645) was slightly later, in the middle of the 14th century. Either way, it is clear that Goat Street developed early in the history of Haverfordwest.

By the late 17th century, when the first cartographic evidence for Goat Street appears in a schematic map of the town by Peter Lea (1690), the street appears to have been fully developed along its south side, but with intermittent development along its north side (cited in James 1999, 23 – Fig. 4). It is not clear at present if the north side of Goat Street, including the Foley House site, was ever fully developed during either the medieval or post-medieval periods, or if some of the planned burgage plots were left empty, or became abandoned. Late 15th century records show that Goat Street, amongst many others in the town, experienced some abandonment of plots following the Black Death in the mid-14th century (James 1999, 32). Further, though fairly small-scale, abandonment of tenements in the town occurred during the mid-17th century following a period of crippling taxation after the Civil War and an outbreak of the plague in 1652 (Howells 1995, 418; Howells 1999, 198). Even though there was no specific mention of Goat Street it is possible that this setback prevented Goat Street from either being totally developed in the first place, or from fully recovering to its former extent.

Foley House and its garden occupies a prominent position roughly midway along the north side of Goat Street and covers an area that may have originally been occupied by between 6-8 medieval burgage plots.

FOLEY HOUSE AND GARDEN

Foley House was designed by John Nash for Richard Foley and constructed in or just before 1790 (Suggett 1995, 117). It has been mistakenly recorded that the house was constructed for Admiral Thomas Foley, Richard's brother, who served with Nelson at Cape St. Vincent (Jones 1996, 67). A stable adjacent to the house, bearing a date of 1794 (Suggett 1995, 117), seems to be a later, but possibly always planned, addition. It seems that this date may have influenced many of the records regarding the house, which frequently list it as being designed and constructed in 1794 (James 1957, 60; Welsh Office 1974, 33; John 1979, 22; Jones 1996, 67). However, Richard Foley, an attorney and part of the Foley family of Ridgeway, was until 1790 listed in family estate papers as being 'of Ridgeway' (NLW index of the Foley of Ridgeway Estate Papers), but from 1790 until his death in 1803 he was listed as 'of Haverfordwest' suggesting that he had by then moved into Foley House.

The house was built to conform to the increasing fashion for the main entry to be at ground level, whilst retaining basement service areas. Nash overcame this problem at Foley house by using the topography of the site, which slopes from front to back across the site, to construct the basement on the falling ground, thereby

accommodating the service area and enabling a ground floor entry from Goat Street (Suggett 1995, 47).

The topography of the site also dictated the layout and use of the garden, which consists of terraces stepping down to the lowest part of the site along the north and northwest edges. Early Ordnance Survey mapping of the site showed a number of large mature trees planted around the north and east sides of the garden, as well as areas of shrubs and what appeared to be flowerbeds. Some of the large trees and overgrown shrubs that line the edge of the garden today are probably part of the original planting scheme (Plate 9).



Plate 9: The overgrown northeast corner of the Foley House garden, which may have originally been laid out as a seating area to provide a view across the garden to the house (see Plate 5).

Garden buildings and features

Late 19th century Ordnance Survey maps of Foley House and its garden show several buildings at the southeast end of Foley House. These were probably the original service buildings for Foley House, and even though they are now outside the property boundary gateways in the boundary wall still lead to the buildings. Other buildings included glasshouses against the west and north boundary walls and a small irregular building constructed against the external steps to the basement at the northwest corner of the house (see Plates 3 and 4). A circular path around the outside of the garden linked the various buildings and seating areas around the garden.

A triangular area marked on late 19th century Ordnance Survey map in the northeast corner of the garden may have been a seating area positioned to afford a fine view across the garden to the rear and side of the house (see Plates 5 and 9). From this position, which was c.2.5m below the level of the house, the basement service area

would have been deliberately obscured so as not to detract from the splendour of the house.

APPENDIX TWO: CATALOGUE OF RESEARCH ARCHIVE

The project archive has been indexed and catalogued according to National Monuments Record of Wales (NMR), Aberystwyth, categories and contains the following:

- A.** Copy of the report.
- B.** Notes from site visits.
- D.** Site photographs - catalogue, colour slides, B/W contact sheets.
- G.** Documentary data, including primary and published sources.
- I.** Draft copies of report.
- J.** Publication drawings.
- M.** Miscellaneous correspondence

There is no material for classes **C, E, F, H, K, L** and **N**.

The project archive is currently held by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, as project number 52112.

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