

68 MAIN STREET, PEMBROKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



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68 MAIN STREET, PEMBROKE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SUMMARY

Renovation and extension works at 68 Main Street, Pembroke, required the demolition of an existing lean-to type extension and alterations to the ground levels at the rear of the house. The house occupies the front of a medieval burgage plot within the historic core of Pembroke. Therefore, an archaeological watching brief was required to record any structures or features exposed by the works. The owners commissioned Cambria Archaeology to carry out the watching brief in the summer of 2005.

The watching brief recorded part of a brick and stone drain that was capped with slate flags. The drain was possibly 18th century and did not appear to have been part of the present drainage system.



Plate 1: General view across the watching brief area.

INTRODUCTION

Project background

The owners of 68 Main Street, Pembroke, proposed extensive renovation and extension works at the property. The works included the demolition of an existing lean-to type extension and alterations to the ground levels at the rear of the house. The location of the house, within a medieval burgage plot, meant that an archaeological watching brief was required to record any structures or features exposed by the works. The owners commissioned Cambria Archaeology to carry out the watching brief in the summer of 2005.

The watching brief methodology and scope of the report

The excavations to reduce the ground levels at the rear of the house were monitored and all deposits and structures exposed recorded. This report outlines the main watching brief results before discussing the overall impact of the works based on the on-site observations and the known archaeological potential of the area.

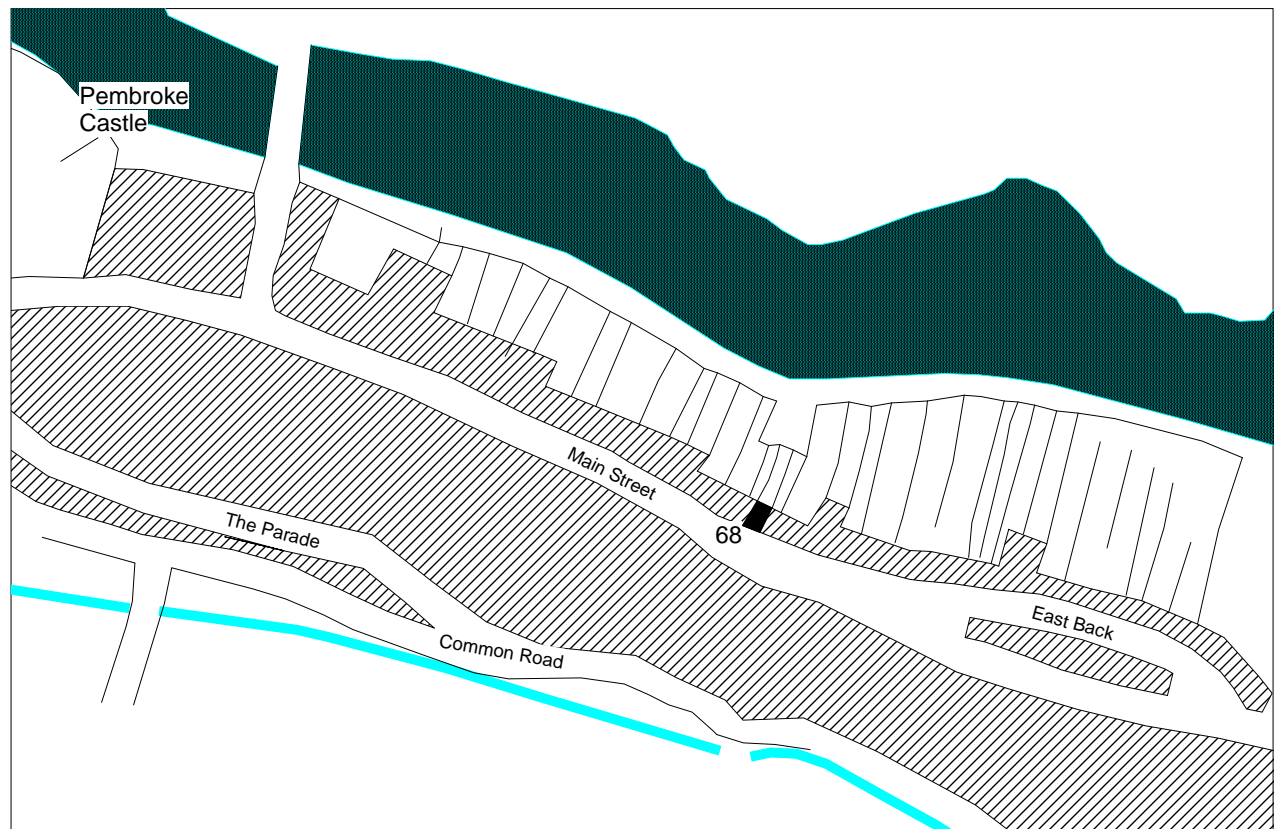


Figure 1 Location plan showing the location of 68 Main Street and the medieval burgage plots.

WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

Visits were made during the demolition of a small lean-to structure on the rear of the property. The lean-to occupied a small area of level ground that had been formed by terracing into the bedrock (Plate 2).



Plate 2: The bedrock exposed in the side of the terrace for the former lean-to, The rear wall of the lean-to is visible on the left of the photograph.

Once the lean-to had been demolished the area behind it was lowered. This area consisted of garden soil that contained rubble, presumably from the construction of the lean-to extension.

Removal of this material revealed a brick and stone drain capped with slate flags running across the site (Plate 3). Water was visible in the base of the drain, but it did not appear to have been part of the active drainage system.



Plate 3: slate covered drain.

DISCUSSION

Summary of the development of the town (by Neil Ludlow)

Pembroke has a linear plan-form, settlement having been established along a single street - Main Street - which leads eastwards from the castle before dividing, at the east end of the town, into routes to Carmarthen and Tenby. Original cross streets are limited to Northgate Street, which connects Main Street with a bridge over Pembroke River, and Westgate Hill, which is more-or-less a continuation of Main Street leading to a bridge over Monkton Pill at the west end of the town. Superficially, the settlement is thus unifocal, being based on the castle gatehouse, but is more developmentally complex. The town was established between 1100 and 1135, and appears to have developed in at least three stages - an initial defended settlement outside the castle gates (Lawler 2001; Ludlow 1991, 27), an extension eastwards to include St Mary's Church in c.1200 - 1245, and the establishment of St Michael's Church and market as an extra-mural suburb (Aston and Bond 1976, 83; Hindle 1979), which was finally walled in stone c.1290-1324 (Ludlow 1991, 27). Burgage plots were thus added through time; its location suggests that No. 68 Main Street may belong to the c.1200-1245 expansion.

Either side of the street lie properties whose backyards are mostly long and narrow, following the line of the 220-30 'burgage plots' into which the town was divided by the 14th century (Beresford 1988, 68, 569 *et al.*). Pembroke is notable for the remarkable survival of both the burgage divisions, which approximately conform to the 14th century number, and the actual boundaries themselves, which are represented by limestone rubble walls in various states of completeness, many of which may contain medieval fabric.

Watching brief results

The groundworks associated with the construction works revealed that the former lean-to had been built on a small terraced area cut into an outcrop of bedrock.

The only archaeological structure or feature exposed by the works was part of a brick and stone drain capped by slate flags. This did not appear to be part of the existing drainage system. Its construction and form suggested a late post-medieval, possibly 18th century, date.

Despite the sensitive location of the site, the works to the rear of 68 Main Street had very little archaeological impact.

SOURCES

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