

THE OLD VICARAGE, ABERGWILI, CARMARTHENSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, SEPTEMBER 2005



Paratowyd gan Archaeoleg
Cambria
Ar gyfer Mr Collins
Prepared by Cambria
Archaeology
For Mr Collins



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Gan / By

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Swydd / Position: Project Manager

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date 16/09/2005

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Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw
sylwadau sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

*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*

VILLAGE STORE, ST FLORENCE, PEMBROKESHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, SEPTEMBER 2005

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1.0 SUMMARY

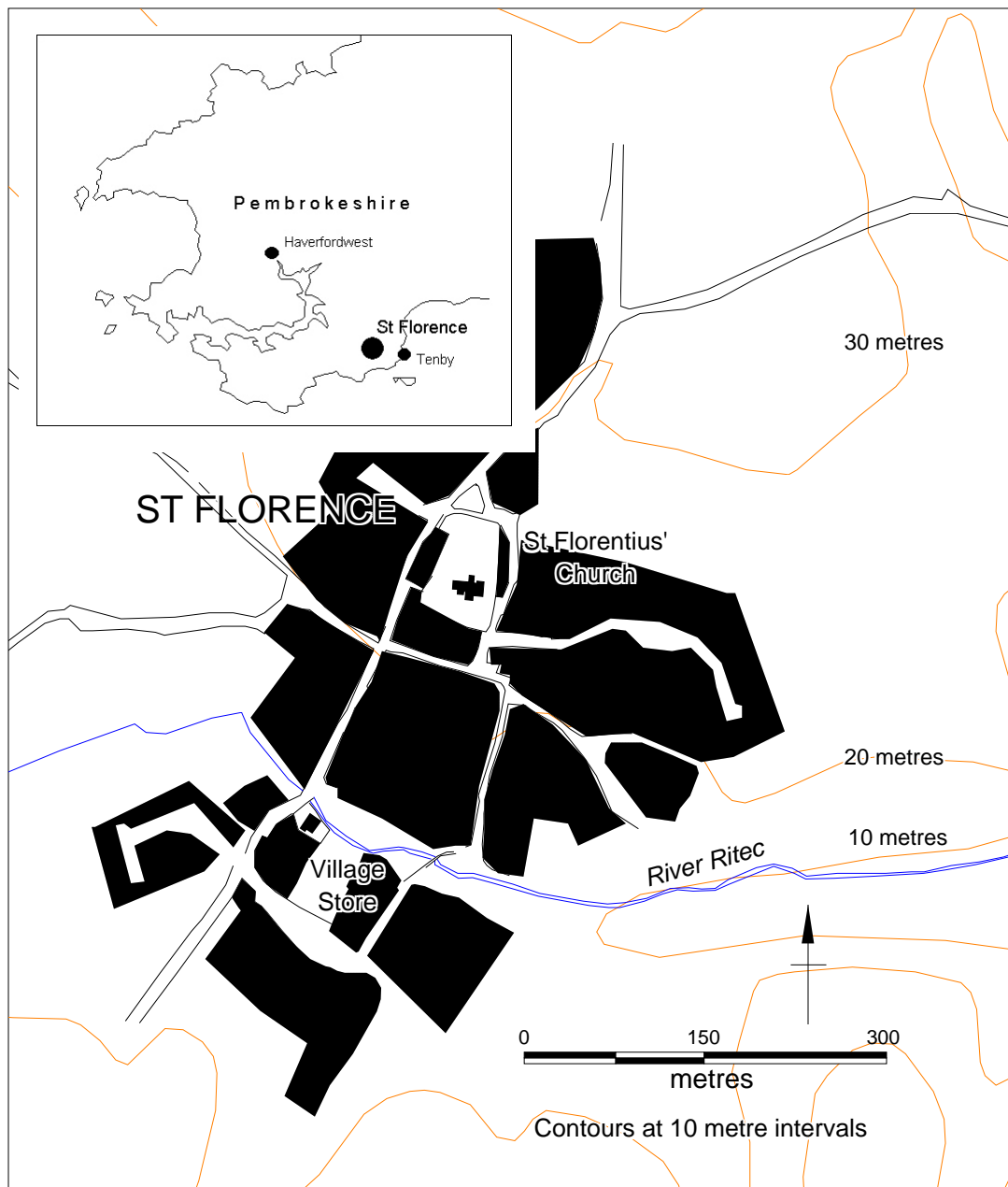
A watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches for an extension to the rear of the Village Store, St Florence, Pembrokeshire (NGR SN 0810 0096). St Florence is an Anglo-Norman planted village of the 12th century, retaining a planned layout which has been little affected by subsequent development. It was established at the head of the River Ritec, which was, until it became entirely choked with silt during the post-medieval period, a navigable channel as far as the village. It is now represented by a stream.

The site, which lies beyond the planned medieval settlement, is only 2 metres southwest of the present channel of the Ritec. The foundation trenches were observed to be cut through deposits which entirely related to the silting of the river channel, with the exception of a small concentration of building debris, probably belonging to the 20th century – the site was still an empty field in the late 19th century.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The owners of the Village Store, in St Florence, Pembrokeshire, intended to construct a small extension to the rear of the store. The site lies just to the south of the planted medieval settlement of St Florence, established by the Anglo-Normans during the 12th century. St Florence retains a planned medieval layout which has been little affected by subsequent development. It was also a port during the medieval period, lying on the northern bank of the River Ritec, which flows out to the sea just south of Tenby, 4.7 kilometres to the east.

Fig. 1 Site location map



During the medieval period, the Ritec was navigable as far upstream as St Florence. However, the formation of a sandbar at its mouth during the post-medieval period led to its channel becoming silted and it is now entirely choked with silt throughout its course, being represented only by a narrow stream.

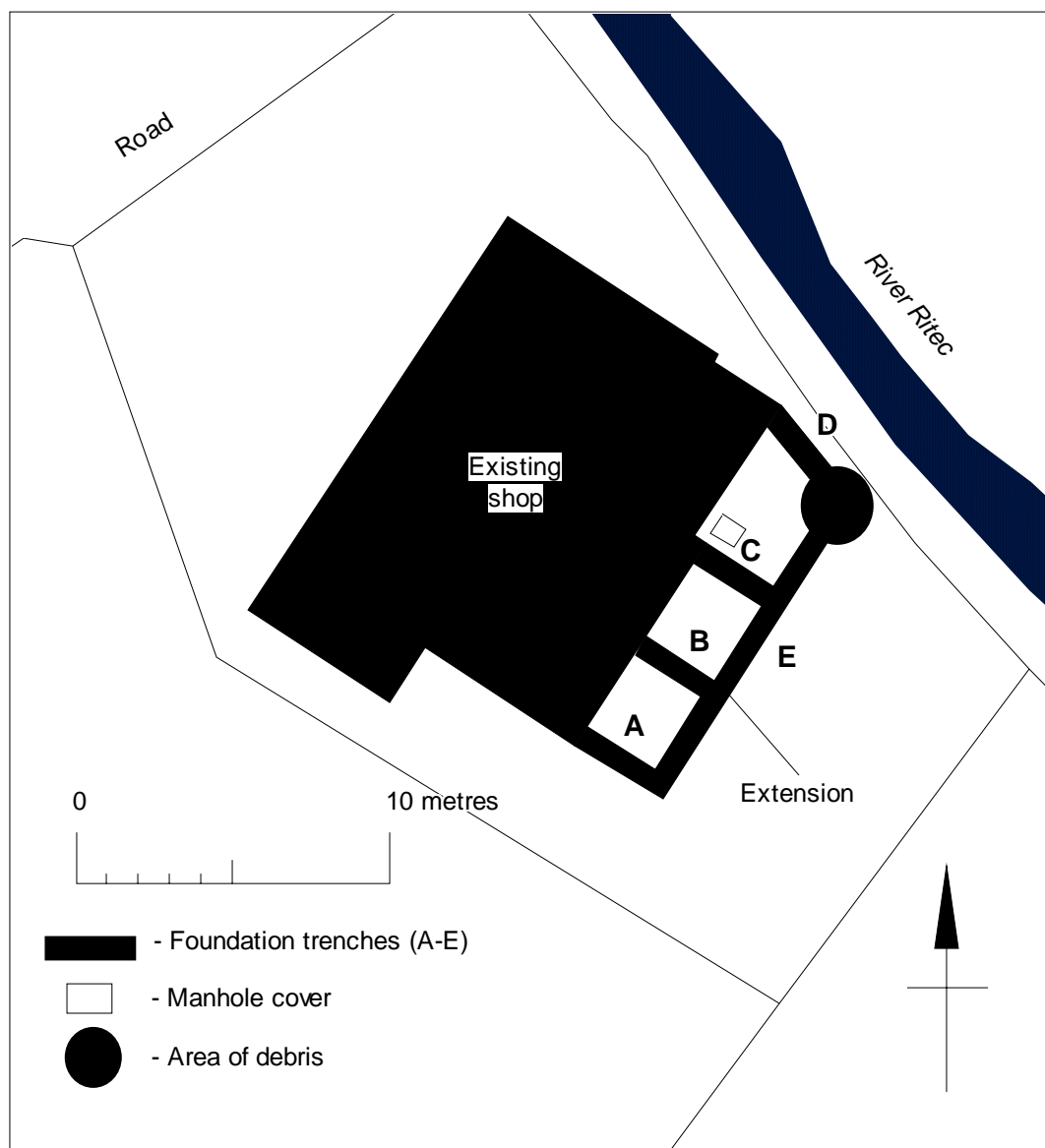
The Village Store lies at NGR SN 0810 0096, immediately south of the present course of the Ritec, and beyond the area of the medieval planted village. However, it lies within the basin of the river and was found to occupy its silted channel. The Village Store is a 20th century building and its site is shown as empty, representing part of a field, on 19th century Ordnance Survey maps. Nevertheless, due to the historic sensitivity of the settlement of St Florence, a watching brief was recommended by the regional archaeological curator.

3.0 METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS

3.1 Methodologies

Five foundation trenches (labelled A – E in Fig. 2) were excavated immediately to the rear of the present Village Store, within its backyard, defining an area measuring 12 metres from north-south and 3 metres from east-west. The area had, until recently, been occupied by a concrete surface. The trenches were machine-excavated by a 360 mini-digger, using a 30" toothed bucket. Each trench was 0.75 metres wide, and due to the soft nature of the ground, all were 1.10 metres deep. The site was visited on 7 September 2005, during trench excavation, when a sketch plan was drawn, each trench photographed in digital format, and field notes were taken.

Fig. 2 General site plan



3.2 Results

All five trenches were cut through silt, belonging to the post-medieval silting of the River Ritec. They were represented by terrigenous Old Red Sandstone silts derived from slopewash off of the surrounding hillslopes, and from tributaries. Some differentiation was visible within the deposits, suggesting episodic silting, but they were in the main unstructured. The silts were present through the full depth of all trenches, and were visible in their bottoms.

There were only two exceptions. In the northeast corner of the plot, at the junction of Trenches D and E, building debris was observed in the trench sections (Figs. 2 and 3). It occupied a localised area, measuring approximately 2 metres east-west, and comprised smallish rubble and slate within a black, humic soil matrix. This area, which lay hard up against the northern boundary of the property, between it and the River Ritec, was much disturbed by root-action from trees along the boundary. Nevertheless, the characteristics of the debris suggest that it is late, probably 20th century – no buildings are shown here on 19th century Ordnance Survey maps.

Fig. 3 Northeast corner of Trenches D and E, from southwest



In addition, a line of stoney material was visible halfway down Trench C (Figs. 2 and 4). This may represent material deposited on the interface between two successive silting episodes. However, it is more likely that it relates to the fill of a drain represented by the adjacent manhole (Fig. 2), partly exposed in the trench section – the adjacent section of Trench E was unexcavated during the site visit and it is possible that the drain crossed the line of this trench.

Fig. 4 North side of Trench C, from southwest



Fig. 5 General view of site, from southwest



4.0 FINDS

No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The site lay beyond the planned medieval settlement of St Florence, only 2 metres southwest of the present channel of the Ritec. The foundation trenches were observed to be cut through deposits which entirely related to the silting of the river channel, with the exception of a small concentration of building debris, probably belonging to the 20th century – the site was still an empty field in the late 19th century.

6.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

The archive, indexed according to the National Monuments Record (NMR) material categories, will be deposited with the NMR which is curated by RCAHMS, Crown Buildings, Plas Crug, Aberystwyth SY23 1NJ. It contains the following:-

- A.1.** Copy of the final report
- A.4.** Disk copy of report
- C.2.** Site drawings
- D.1.** Catalogue of site photographs
- G.1.** Source documentation
- I.4.** Final report - disk
- M.1.** Non-archaeological correspondence

There is no material for classes **B, E, F, H, J, K** and **N**.