

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



ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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Gan / By

Neil Ludlow

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Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date 16/09/2005

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sylwadau sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

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Contents

1.0	Summary	2
2.0	Introduction	3
3.0	Methodologies and results	4
3.1	Methodologies	5
3.2	Results	6
4.0	Finds	7
5.0	Conclusion	7
6.0	Archive deposition	7

Figures

Fig. 1	Site location map	3
Fig. 2	General site plan	4
Fig. 3	View of the site looking northeast towards the rear of the property	5
Fig. 4	View from the backyard looking northwest along the revetment	5
Fig. 5	Southwest corner of the construction trench, from the northwest	6

1.0 SUMMARY

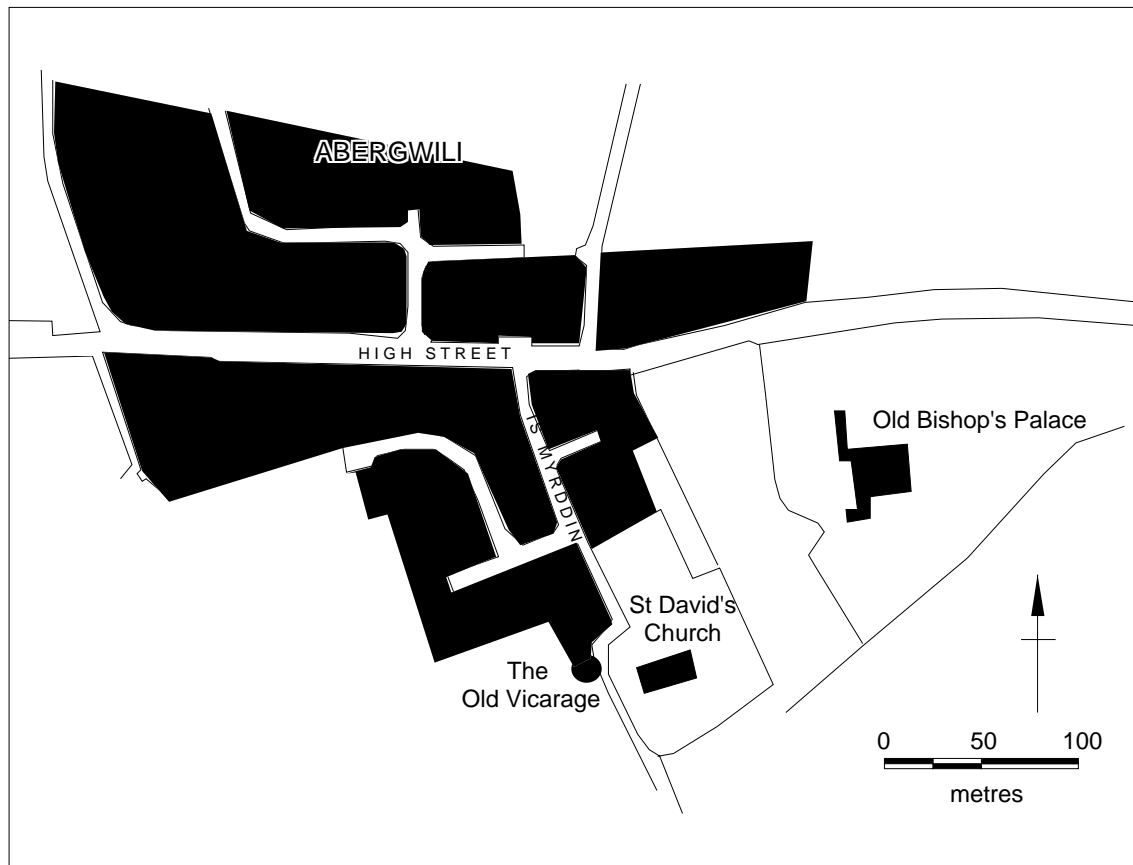
A watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of foundation trenches for an extension to the rear of the Old Vicarage, Abergwili, Carmarthenshire (NGR SN 4394 2087; PRN 22268). Abergwili is a planted borough, established by the Bishops of St Davids during the 13th century and associated with the Bishop's Palace towards the east end of the settlement. The churchyard of St David's parish church, also a possession of the bishops, lies immediately east of the site, which was formerly the vicarage.

The foundation trenches were observed to be cut through fluvio-glacial gravels representing a low glacial terrace of the River Tywi, within whose floodplain Abergwili lies. This appears to have been enhanced and levelled with the addition of made ground represented by a black soil. No archaeological features were observed in the trenches.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Old Vicarage (Nos. 2-3 Is Myrddin), lies at NGR SN 4394 2087 on the south side of Abergwili, Carmarthenshire. Abergwili was a planted borough established by the Bishops of St Davids, probably in the 13th century, when a collegiate church was founded in the town. This may have occupied the site that was later to become the Bishop's Palace, on the east side of Abergwili. It may, however, have occupied the site of the parish church of St David, to the south. otherwise, Abergwili has little recorded history during the medieval period.

Fig. 1 Site location map



The Old Vicarage (PRN 22268) lies just west of St Davids churchyard. It was formerly the residence of the Vicars of Abergwili. It had become 'dilapidated' by 1846 when it was replaced by a new vicarage (PRN 16462), and was turned into cottages. The property is currently undergoing extensive renovation including partial rebuilding, and the construction of a small extension to the rear of the property, between two pre-existing extensions. Due to the historic sensitivity of the settlement of Abergwili, a watching brief was recommended by the regional archaeological curator.

The site is peripheral to the medieval borough, lying on its south side and on the floodplain of the River Tywi. A level area to the rear of the property, occupied by its back garden, lies above the level of the floodplain and terminates to the west as a revetment wall (Figs. 2 and 4). The area appeared to represent a natural, glacial river terrace, enhanced through landscaping in order to raise the property above the flood limit.

3.0 METHODOLOGIES AND RESULTS

3.1 Methodologies

Two foundation trenches were excavated immediately to the rear of the Old Vicarage, within its back garden, defining an area measuring 3.90 metres north-south and 2.20 metres east-west (Figs. 2 and 3). The trenches were machine-excavated by a 360° mini-digger, using a 30" toothed bucket. Each trench was 0.75 metres wide, and all were 0.95 metres deep. The site was visited on 15 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

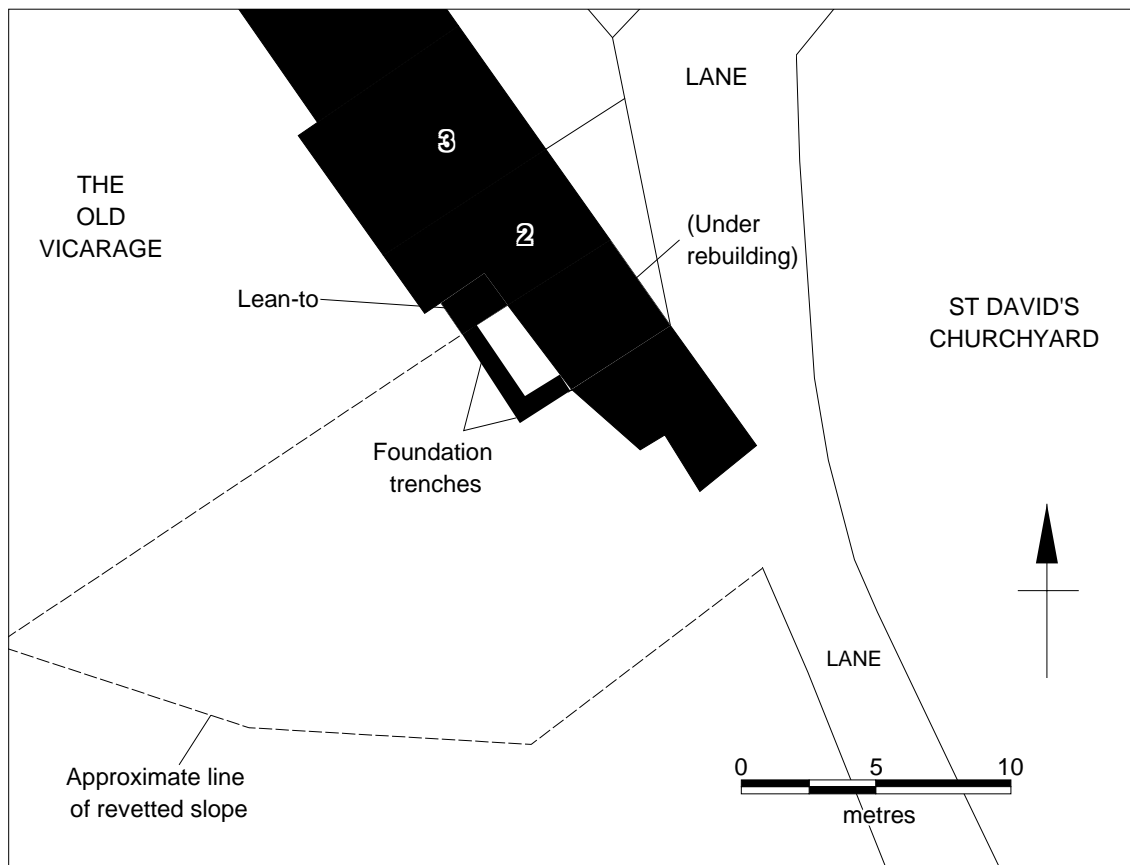


Fig. 3 View of the site looking northeast towards the rear of the property



Fig. 4 View from the backyard looking northwest along the revetment



3.2 Results

Both trenches revealed a deposit of fluvio-glacial gravel, occupying the lower half of each. This deposit, which comprised mainly rounded, and some subangular medium-sized stones, well-sorted, in a fine gravel matrix, was archaeologically sterile (Fig. 5). It was entirely natural and confirmed that the level area to the rear of the property was natural in origin. It was overlain by a 0.40 metre depth of blackish soil, containing fragments of modern brick and tile. This appears to represent a 20th century dump layer, presumably as levelling prior to the laying out of the present back garden lawn and the construction of the revetment wall along its west side.

Fig. 5 Southwest corner of the construction trench, from the northwest



4.0 FINDS

No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The foundation trenches were observed to be cut through fluvio-glacial gravels representing a low glacial terrace of the River Tywi, within whose floodplain Abergwili lies. This appears to have been enhanced and levelled with the addition of made ground represented by a black soil. No archaeological features were observed in the trenches.

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**.