

GARDENS TO THE REAR OF PROPERTIES ON HIGH STREET AND MARKET STREET, HAVERFORDWEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION



Prepared by
Cambria Archaeology
For
Pembrokeshire County Council



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ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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By

Cambria Archaeology Field Services

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have on the content or presentation of this report

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SUMMARY

Pembrokeshire County Council are progressing proposals to extend the car park at Foley House, Goat Street, Haverfordwest (SM 9533 1552). The proposals 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 an existing entrance on Goat Street.

The site is historically and archaeologically significant as it lies within the medieval core of Haverfordwest and part of it is currently occupied by Foley House, which was designed and built by the renowned architect John Nash in 1794. Given the sensitivity of the site a programme of archaeological works, culminating in this archaeological evaluation, have been carried out to assess the likely impacts of the proposals on the archaeological resource. Pembrokeshire County Council commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Operations to undertake this evaluation in December 2005.

The evaluation consisted of one trial trench in the car park behind Foley House and three trenches in the rear gardens of the High Street properties. The trench in the Foley house car park showed make up layers for the Nash designed garden terrace and the present car park. All of the trenches in the gardens of High Street revealed extensive and complex archaeological features, which dated from the late medieval or early post-medieval period. They indicate significant activity in the rear of the High Street burgage plots and may represent an intensification in the use of, or a re-ordering, of the space in the expanding Haverfordwest.

The presence of such extensive and complex archaeological remains has implications for the final design plans for the car park and may affect the construction methods employed.

INTRODUCTION

Project commission

There are proposals to provide new car parking spaces on land at the rear of High Street and Market Street, Haverfordwest. The scheme, which is part of wide-ranging effort to regenerate some of the properties of High Street, also includes alterations to the car park at Foley House (PRN 6501), Goat Street (SM 9533 1552), which is a Listed Building. An earlier desk-based assessment of the likely implications of the proposals on the historic and archaeological resource highlighted the potential of the area and recommended a programme of further archaeological monitoring and evaluation (Page 2004a).

The monitoring took place during the excavation of a series of geotechnical test pits (Page 2004b). The results from monitoring the hand dug test pits and the boreholes revealed substantial depths of garden soil overlying the sloping original ground surface. They also revealed that palaeosurfaces survive in some places across the site at depths ranging from 80cm to 2m. Therefore, it was concluded that an archaeological evaluation of the site was required to investigate the palaeosurfaces and to assess their archaeological potential. Pembrokeshire County Council commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Operations to carry out the evaluation in December 2005 and January 2006.

Scope of the project

This part of the project was intended to evaluate the archaeological resource through trial trenching. The results of this work have been used to assess the scope and content of any subsequent archaeological works required to further evaluate the site, or to mitigate the effects of the scheme.

Report outline

This report summarises the physical environment and the field evaluation results before a discussion places the results in their historical context. The likely impacts of the proposals on the archaeological resource are discussed and possible mitigation measures suggested.

Abbreviations used in this report

Sites recorded on the county Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

Archaeological features and contexts will be referred to using the continuous three-figure numbering system (e.g. 001; 010; 100) employed by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations.

THE SITE

Topography

The area proposed for redevelopment covers an area of c.0.3ha (c.0.8 acre) and is made up of the garden attached to the rear of Foley House (PRN 6501) and parts of the rear gardens of a number of the properties along High Street (Fig.1). Foley House garden is now a car park and the areas of High Street gardens included in the proposals have been largely neglected and are now very overgrown. Foley House garden is between 3m-5m higher than the rear gardens of the properties on High Street, which are in places up to c.8m higher than the level of High Street. There is an overall drop of approximately 10m-14m from Goat Street to High Street over a linear distance of roughly 100m

A series of terraces have been created to manage and utilise this sloping ground. Foley House garden occupies a large terrace, which drops to the rear of the gardens of the High Street properties that occupy a second terrace. Large masonry retaining walls support the terraces (Plate 1).

The masonry walls are thought to preserve the medieval and early post-medieval property boundaries. High Street had been developed into burgage plots by the 13th century, with Goat Street being developed slightly later during the 13th and 14th centuries.

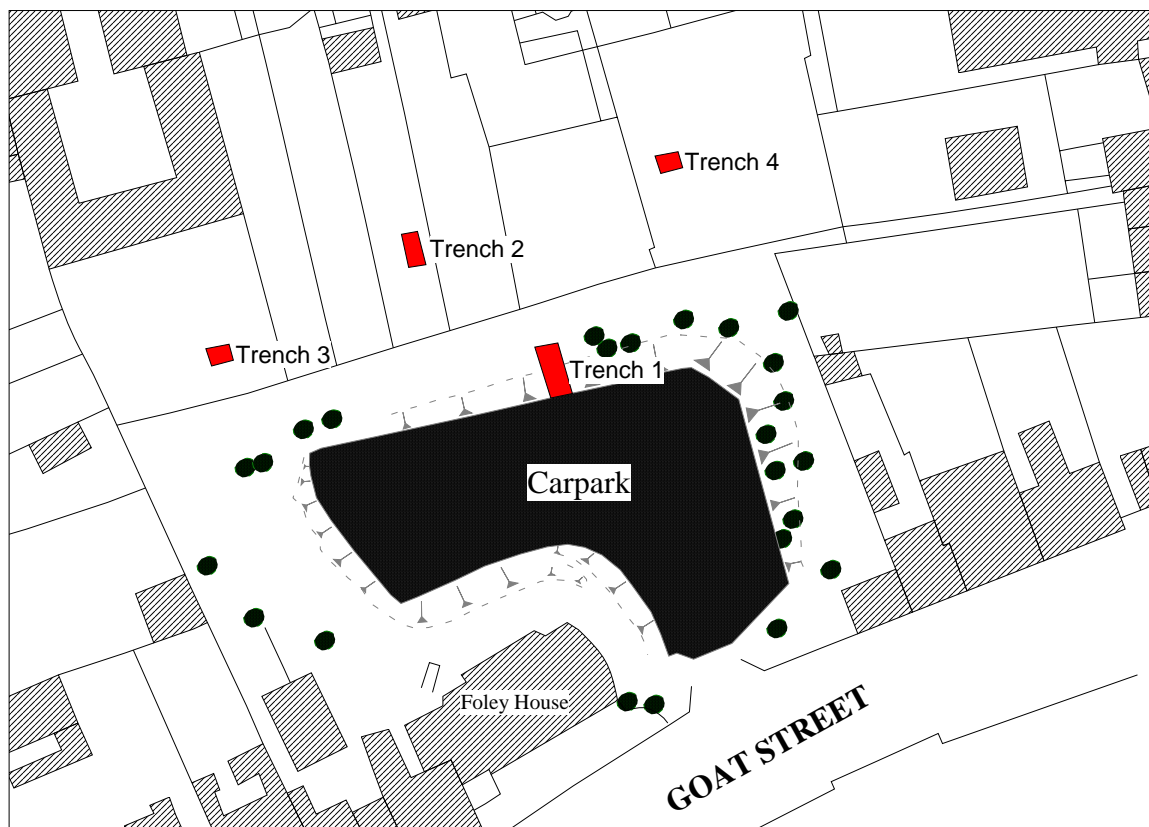


Figure 1: Location showing evaluation trenches (T1-T4).

THE EVALUATION

Methodology

The evaluation consisted of four hand dug evaluation trenches (Trenches 1 – 4, see Fig. 1) positioned to investigate specific aspects of the site and excavated in two stages.

The original evaluation consisted of Trenches 1 and 2. The complex nature of the archaeological remains in Trench 2 gave an indication of the archaeological potential of the site and raised questions regarding the impact of the proposed development. It was agreed that two further trial areas would be opened (Trenches 3 and 4) to provide additional information on the extent of the archaeological remains and their relative depths in order to assess whether the proposed car park could be constructed in such a way as to retain the archaeological remains *in situ*.



Plate 1: General view west-northwest across the High Street gardens.

Results

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located on the northern edge of the modern car park of Foley House approximately 2.45m from the boundary wall, its purpose being to assess the make up and age of terrace on which the car park stands. The placement of this trench and its dimensions were determined largely by the close proximity of standing trees and spread of modern concrete on the edge of the terrace. This trench measured 1.5m east-west and 3.32m north-south and was excavated to a maximum depth of 2m although it had to be stepped for health and safety reasons due to the steepness of the terrace slope.

The upper fill of the trench was made up from a recent build up of soil (001) up to 0.5m in depth and fairly contaminated by modern materials. The removal of this deposit revealed a 0.8m deep band of building rubble on the southern side of the trench. This rubble contained two layers, the uppermost (002) consisting of a

0.6m deep band of buff coloured lime-mortar containing small to medium sized angular stones and hand made bricks. The lower layer (003) contained a similar assemblage of stone and brick but within a greyish brown silty clay matrix approximately 0.2m deep. Under this building rubble was an approximately 0.6m deep layer of redeposited dark brown silty clay with small to medium angular shale inclusions and thin lenses of mortar and coal cinders. Beneath this layer were further alternating bands of mortar (006) (005), silty clay (008) and fragmented shale (007) all of which showed a noticeable north to south slope.

This evidence would suggest that the terrace on which the car park stands was created by banking building rubble along the edge of Foley House grounds spilling up against the pre-existing boundary wall. Pottery sherds recovered from these contexts would suggest that this occurred around the time or prior to the building of Foley House. It is therefore possible that the rubble originates from buildings demolished in Goat Street prior to the construction of Foley House.



Plate 2: Trench 1 after excavation.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was placed at the southern end of the garden of no 23 High Street approximately 2.75m from the boundary wall and slightly to the west of centre. This trench measured 1.6m east-west and 2.8m north-south and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.9m. The upper fill of this trench was a dark loose garden loam (009) up to 0.5m in depth; this contained a number of discernable features most of which turned out to contain the remains of domestic pets. Under this soil was a thin band of lime mortar with occasional fragments of brick (010) that ran the length of the trench on the south and west sections. This layer had been cut by a large posthole in the southwest corner of the trench that had once held a fairly substantial post 0.15m in diameter and dug to a depth of 0.65m. Beneath this spread of mortar lay an earlier thin buried soil layer (020) that was no more than 0.1m deep in the south of the trench but up to 0.40m in depth at the northern end. Under this buried soil was the subsoil (015) that over lay the natural geology of the site up to a depth of 0.2m.



Plate 3: South end of west-facing section in Trench 2 showing features 015, 016 and 019 and layers 001, 015, 017, 018 and 020.

There were two earlier features within the trench that were sealed by the buried soil layer (020). Both features were cut through the subsoil (015) and into the underlying rock. The latest feature was a shallow north-south gully that ran the length of the west side of the trench and extended under the west, north and south section (014). Gully 014 was filled with dark brown clay silt that contained frequent fragments of roofing slate, degraded mortar and animal bone (013). It also contained sherds of late medieval or early post-medieval pottery and part of a copper object, possibly a belt or shoe buckle.

Gully 014 cut the west side of a small, shallow pit (012) that contained a single deposit of dark brown clay silt containing frequent fragments of slate roof tiles, angular stone, mortar and charcoal (011). This fill material was very similar to that (013) filling gully 012 and they may have been deposited within a fairly short time scale.

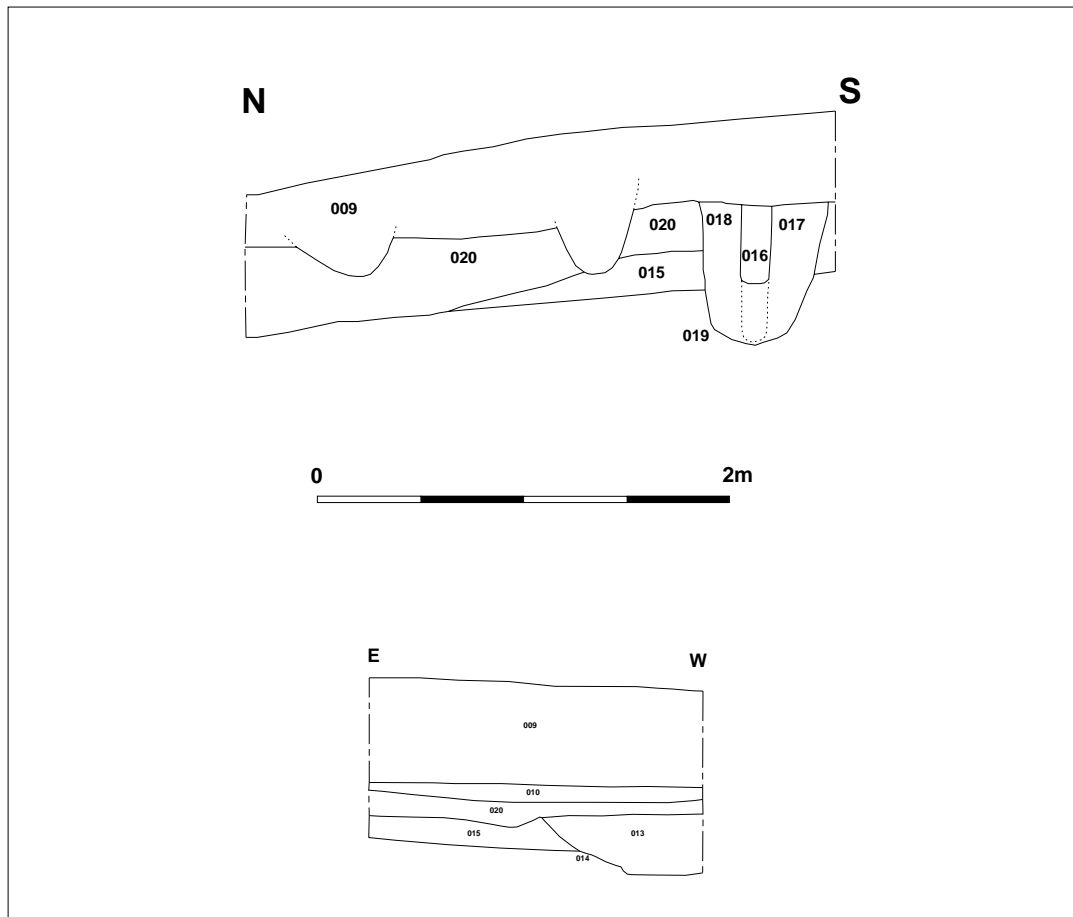


Figure 2: West and North facing sections of Trench 2.



Plate 4: View west of Trench 2 during excavation of gully 014. Pit 012 is visible as the dark area in the centre of the trench.

Trench 3

Trench 3 measured 2m x 2m and it was located in the southern end of the garden of 17 High Street. It was the westernmost of the trial trenches and it was intended to investigate whether the underlying natural topography of site sloped up towards the southwest. At its deepest point the trench was c.1.4m deep to the base of a pit (308). There was 0.5m of loose garden soil (301 and 302) overlying a layer of grey/brown silty clay that contained mortar and charcoal flecks (304). Layer 304 was cut by a pit (308) and an east-west gully or ditch (312). Pit 308 contained four fills (303, 305; 306; 307) and appears to have been a rubbish pit. The earliest fill was a layer of clay and angular stone (307) that appeared to be disturbed or re-deposited subsoil. This was overlain by a layer of dark brown silty clay containing a few mortar and charcoal flecks, fragments of roof slate and clay patches (306). Above 306 was a layer of mid grey/brown clay silt (305) that had similar inclusion to layer 307 below, but in greater quantities. The upper fill of the pit was a layer of dark brown silty clay (303) very similar to layer 306, with the type and level of inclusions.

Gully/ditch 312 was steep-sided and filled with a mixed fill of large angular stones, clay, fragments of roofing slate, coal and mortar (313). Its function is uncertain, but it may have been a small boundary ditch, or part of a foundation trench for a now demolished building, with the building debris being deposited during the demolition.



Plate 5: View north of trench 3 showing pit 308 and feature 316 (in the centre of the trench). The north side of feature 310 is visible in the bottom right hand corner of the trench.

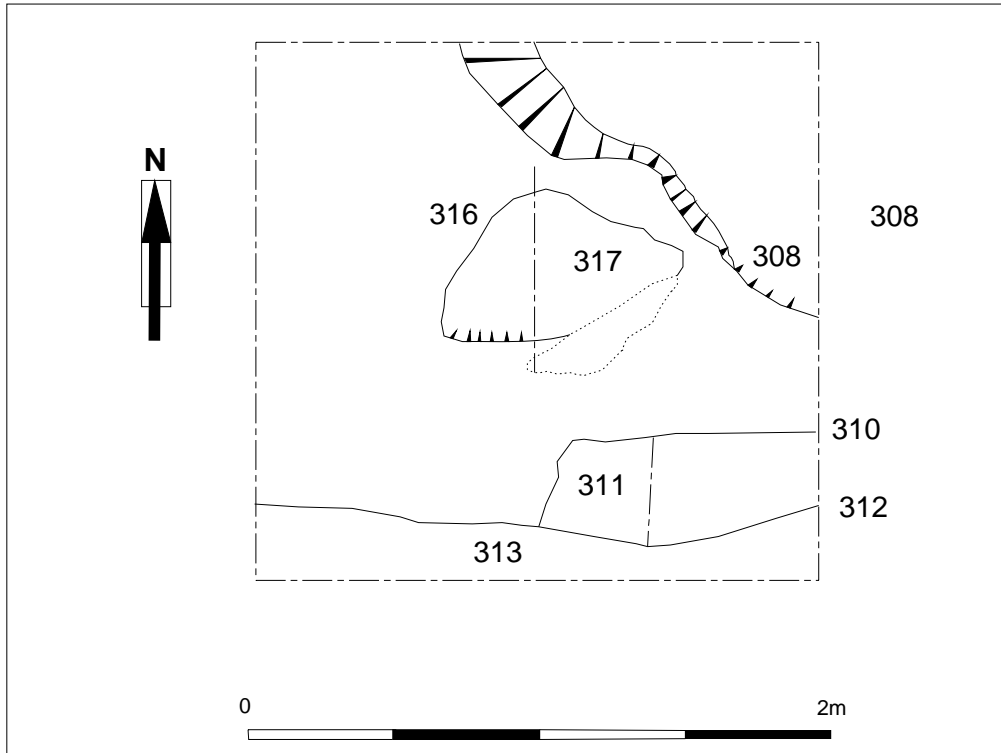


Figure 3: Plan of features in Trench 3.

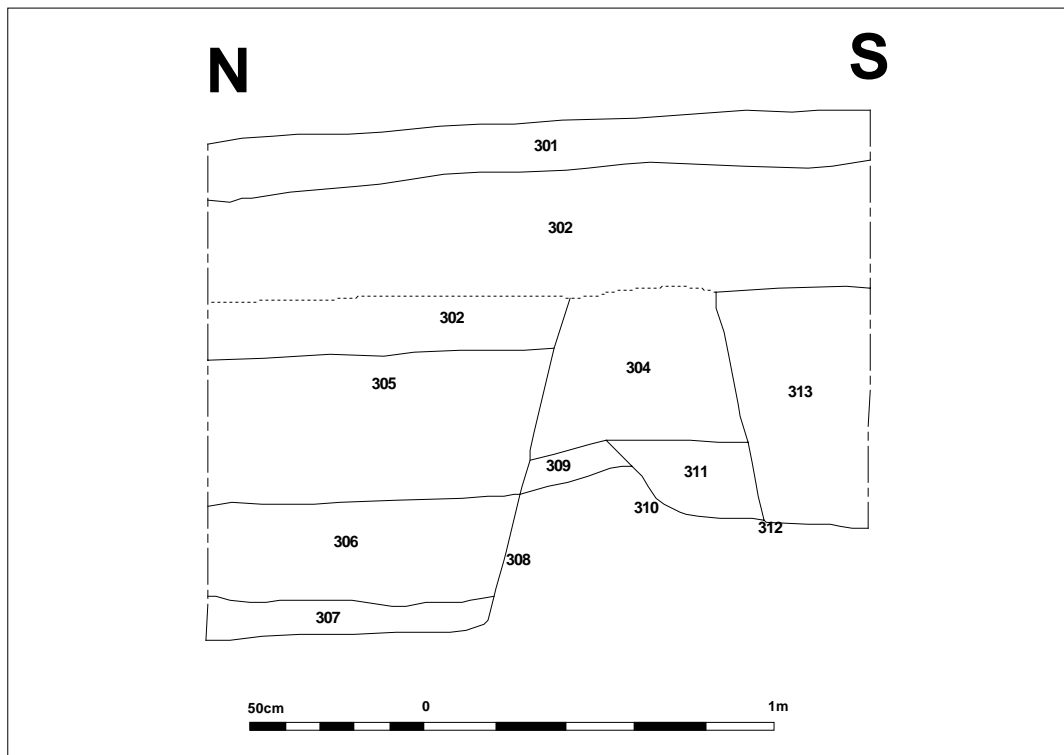


Figure 4: West facing section of Trench 3.

Whatever its function, 312 was cut through and, therefore, truncated the south side of an earlier feature (310). The excavated portion of feature 301 measured c.1m east-west x 0.4m north-south x 0.2m deep. It had a sloping north side and a flat bottom and it was filled with a single layer of mid brown clay (311). The north edge of 310 was fairly straight, suggesting that it was originally part of a square pit or linear feature that extended beyond the east edge of the trench.

An irregular and shallow feature (316) was recorded in the centre of the trench cutting into what appeared to be bedrock. It was shallow, only c.0.08m deep at its deepest point and filled with a single layer of mixed stiff brown and orange clay containing a few small angular stones and some charcoal flecks (317). Pottery from this trench indicates a late medieval or early post-medieval date for the bulk of the features.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was positioned at the southern end of the garden of 31 High Street. The trench measured 2m x 2m. It was excavated to a depth of c.0.7m, the upper 20cm of which was a dark brown/black loose garden soil (401). This overlay a similar, though slightly sandier, layer containing flecks of coal, mortar and charcoal (402). Layer 402 was cut by a post hole (403), 0.4m diameter x 0.40cm deep. The posthole had a rounded base and roughly vertical sides. It was filled by dark brown black silty clay that contained fragments of brick and stone, some with lime mortar adhering (404). A post-pipe was evident within fill 404. The post-pipe was filled with loose brown/black clay silt (400) that was very similar to the garden soil 401.

The base of post hole 403 cut the surface of a layer of mid grey/brown silty, clayey sand (406) that contained roofing slate and fragments of building stone, some of which had a lime mortar adhering. This layer filled a pit (405) that had been cut into the bedrock. Pit 405 measured 1.4m x 1m x 0.35m deep and it extended beyond the east and south sections of the trench. The north edge of 405 cut the southern edge of another wide shallow pit (409). Pit 409 was filled by two layers (407 and 408). The main fill (408) was layer of loose black silty clay containing a significant amount of building debris, consisting of fragments of roof slates and angular stones. The upper fill of pit 409 was a thin layer of re-deposited clay subsoil that effectively capped and sealed the pit and fill 408. Although, no evidence for a function of pit 409 was recovered it appeared to be a rubbish pit, one of several intercutting pits.

Pit 409 cut the east edge of a smaller pit 411 (Plate 5).



Plate 6: South-facing section of Trench 4 showing pits 409 and 411.

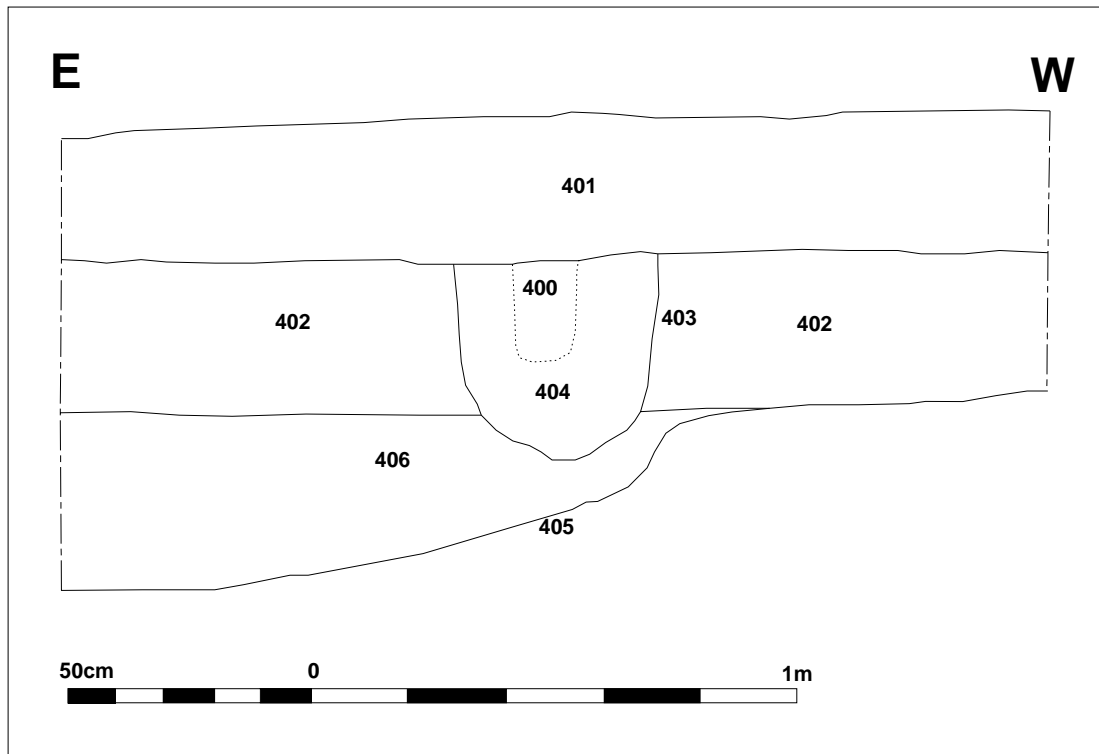


Figure 5: North facing section of Trench 4.

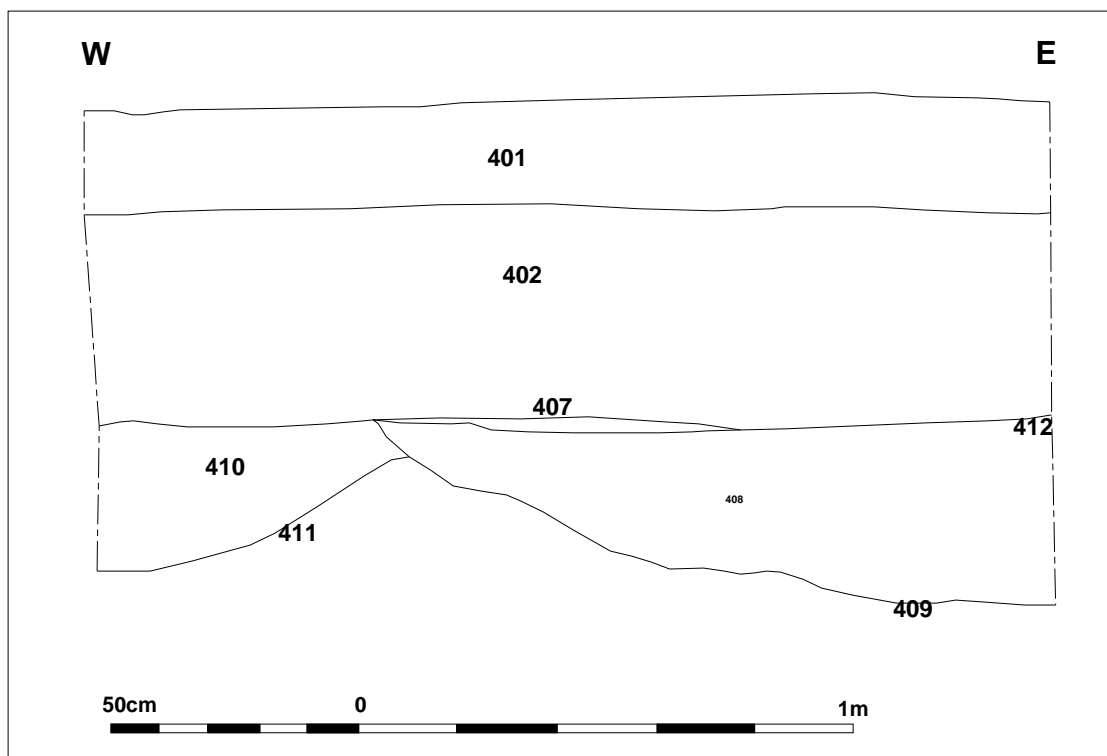


Figure 6: South facing section of Trench 4.

DISCUSSION

The evaluation trenches have revealed a surprising density of archaeological features and deposits across the site. The full extent and nature of the features and the activity they represent is at present uncertain, although it is clear that the rear of the High Street burgage plots were being extensively used. Domestic rubbish and building rubble were being deposited into the features, so they may have been part of a re-organisation of space, or the use of space in the later medieval period. Episodes of terracing were evident, which were presumably carried out to combat the original sloping topography of the site and make the area more usable.

Finds

Initial assessment of the artefact assemblage from the trial trenches shows a collection of domestic pottery and food refuse typical of an urban site. The pottery was from table, cooking and storage vessels and ranged in date from the late medieval period through to the 19th and 20th centuries.

The later pottery was recovered from the garden soils, whilst the earlier material, much of it centring on the 16th and 17th centuries, was recovered from the archaeological features. This was a time of transition from the fairly unsettled nature of much of the medieval period to a time of stable economic growth and expansion of the town. It is very likely that as expansion and growth placed increasing demands on the available space within the town the rear of the gardens of the properties on High Street would have been more heavily utilised than before. This is reflected in the intercutting features that were recorded in Trenches 2, 3 and 4.

The pottery assemblage has been stored as part of the archive and will be fully analysed as part of any further archaeological works.

Depth of the in situ archaeological features

The evaluation has provided important information regarding the depth of material overlying the archaeological features, which will be crucial when drawing up the final design plans for the car park. There is between 0.4m and 0.6m of loose garden soils overlying the archaeological horizons. It is possible that this loose humic material is not suitable for construction and it seems very likely that it will have to be removed or consolidated in some way.

Therefore, even though the archaeological horizons are currently protected they are vulnerable to the proposed construction of the car park.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE SCHEME ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

There is no doubt that the evaluation has discovered extensive and potentially very significant archaeological remains on the site. Even though the evaluation has not established the nature of the remains it has revealed that it extends across the width of the High Street gardens and that it dates from the late medieval and early post-medieval periods. It has already been stated (see above) that the loose garden soils may not be suitable for construction and may have to be removed. If that is the case, their removal has immediate and obvious implications and it is considered very likely that the construction of the car park will impact on and damage the buried archaeological features across the site.

The damage will be caused by a number of factors. The removal of the garden soils, which vary in depth between 0.4m and 0.6m, will inevitably lead to damage of some of the upper levels of the buried features. Even if a covering of soil was left overlying the buried features, the reduced thickness would lead to compression damage caused by the movement of machinery across the site. Furthermore, stripping the site of the garden soils will potentially expose large areas containing complex archaeological features that will require recording to an appropriate standard, which will include extensive excavation and post-excavation analysis. The number of features and the size of the artefact assemblage from the trial trenches give an indication of the potential scale of any excavation and resulting post-excavation analysis.

POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES

The extent and apparent survival of the archaeological remains on the site makes some form of mitigation essential. This can be either an engineered solution that leaves the archaeological remains intact and undisturbed, or a programme of archaeological intervention to record the remains.

Possible engineered solutions and the archaeological response

Retaining the archaeological deposits in situ

By establishing the depths of the archaeological features the evaluation has provided an opportunity to engineer a solution that protects the buried archaeological resource *in situ*. This assumes that the soft, loose garden soils can be consolidated in some way and that their removal is not a prerequisite. It also assumes that the finished car park does not have to be level across its whole area and that it can slope from the southeast to match the existing topography.

The favoured option would be to maintain or raise the current ground surface levels to avoid the archaeological deposits completely. This would still involve site clearance works and inevitably some ground disturbance, although this should be superficial and confined to the upper levels of the garden soils.

This approach requires the lowest level of archaeological intervention and would consist of a general watching brief on the site clearance and any earth moving operations. The watching brief would be required to record any archaeological features or deposits exposed by the site works. It is likely that the watching brief would only be required during the initial phases of construction, because the importing of material to raise or consolidate the levels would obscure and protect the archaeological horizons. A report and some post-excavation analysis will be required on the artefacts and samples recovered during the watching brief.

Retaining some archaeological deposits in situ and archaeological recording

If it is not possible to maintain or raise the ground levels across the whole site some removal of material may be necessary, which potentially could result in damage to some archaeological features and deposits. Therefore, a compromise or 'semi-engineered solution' might be appropriate. This would involve maintaining or raising the surface levels wherever possible and recording of any exposed archaeological deposits in those areas that require stripping or the surface levels lowering.

This solution would require a targeted archaeological watching brief with some limited excavation of any archaeological features exposed in those areas of the site where surface levels had to be lowered. The watching brief must be structured in such a way that it allows the watching archaeologist adequate time to excavate and record any exposed features to an appropriate standard. Post-excavation analysis and reporting will be required on features exposed and on any artefacts and samples recovered during the watching brief.

Any excavation would also include an appropriate level of post-excavation analysis and reporting. The large assemblage of artefacts recovered during the evaluation is a good indication of the volume of material that would be retrieved during an excavation.

Archaeological solutions

If it is not possible to engineer a design for the car park that leaves the archaeological features undisturbed, or at least relatively undisturbed, for instance if the loose garden soils are unsuitable for construction or the ground surface levels need to be lowered, the mitigation will have to be preservation by record. This will involve the stripping of the garden soils under archaeological control and full excavation of the features and deposits exposed across the site.

Any excavation would also include an appropriate level of post-excavation analysis and reporting. The large assemblage of artefacts recovered during the evaluation is a good indication of the volume of material that would be retrieved during an excavation.

SOURCES

- Page N 2004a *Foley House, Goat Street, Haverfordwest: archaeological desk-based assessment*. Llandeilo. Cambria Archaeology report number 2004.86.
- Page N 2004b *Foley House, Goat Street, Haverfordwest: archaeological Watching brief*. Llandeilo. Cambria Archaeology report number 2004.94.