

ROBINSON RETAIL PREMISES REAR EXTENSION PEMBROKE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



Prepared by Cambria Archaeology
For Mr Robinson



ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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Gan / By

PETE CRANE BA MIFA

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ARCHAEOLEG CAMBRIA
Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf
Neuadd y Sir, Stryd Caerfyrddin, Llandeilo, Sir
Gaerfyrddin SA19 6AF
Ffon: Ymholiadau Cyffredinol 01558 823121
Adran Rheoli Treftadaeth 01558 823131
Ffacs: 01558 823133
Ebost: cambria@cambria.org.uk
Gwefan: www.cambria.org.uk

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY
Dyfed Archaeological Trust Limited
The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo,
Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF
Tel: General Enquiries 01558 823121
Heritage Management Section 01558 823131
Fax: 01558 823133
Email: cambria@cambria.org.uk
Website: www.cambria.org.uk

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Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by Pete Crane

Swydd / Position: Senior Archaeologist

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith
This report has been checked and approved by Nigel Page

ar ran Archaeoleg Cambria, Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: Contract Manager

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

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SUMMARY

An application to extend the Robinson Retail premises in East End Square, Pembroke (NGR SM 98960123). Because the site lay close to the line of the medieval town walls the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) archaeological advisors recommended a watching brief condition if the application was approved. This advice was accepted by the LPA and the owner of the premises Mr. Peter Robinson commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Services to undertake the watching brief in September 2007.

One visit was made after digging out the foundation trenches for the extension to the rear of the premises in order to record any revealed archaeological deposits.

No archaeological features were present.

INTRODUCTION

Cambria Archaeology-Heritage Management, as advisors to Pembrokeshire County Council Planning Department, identified potential impacts on the archaeological resource of a proposed club extension at the rear of the Robinson Retail premises, No 3 East End Square, Pembroke, Pembrokeshire (NGR SM98960123, planning application no 05/0297/PA)(Fig. 1).

The site itself lies at the east end of the main road running through the centre of the town and on the south side of East End Square (Fig 1). This site is in a narrow strip of land typical of a medieval burgrave plot, normally containing a dwelling, possibly including a shop at the street frontage, while the area behind may have held outbuildings for storage or manufacture. Often there were cesspits, which also accumulated other rubbish that may indicate the trade, wealth and health of the owners. However, in this case this plot of land is outside the town walls, which ran along the west side of Goose Lane to one of the town gates, presumably situated on the west side of East End Square, and it may occupy a previously undeveloped burgrave plot.

Because of the limited size and results of this project, no detailed history of the immediate area and Pembroke Town has been included. The most recent work on Pembroke is the Pembrokeshire Town Walls Project (Pembroke Design Limited/Cambria Archaeology 2004); this report contains a bibliography for earlier works and has been used for the summary below.

There is some evidence of prehistoric activity within Pembroke going back to the last ice age, c.12000 years ago, as indicated by the finds from Wogan's Cavern beneath the Castle. This cave was used intermittently in the Mesolithic Period (10000-4400BC). It has been suggested that the castle stood on the site of an Iron Age fort (Ludlow 2001) and a few coins of Roman date found within the castle suggest that the fort's usage continued into the Romano-British period at least. The ridge on which Pembroke stands, with marsh or water on all but the western end would have been attractive whenever an element of defence was required. It was probably this strategic location that led the Normans to establish the castle here in 1093 AD.

The town grew up around the castle in the early 1100s. The dates of the town defences are far from certain. It is likely that there was a timber defence around the town possibly as early as the earlier half of the 1200s, but certainly in place by the 1280s. The replacement by a masonry town wall was most likely completed between 1295-1324.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the watching brief were to characterise and record the extent, chronology and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits identified during the groundworks.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

A mini tracked digger had been used to excavate the footing trenches and all of these had been completed before archaeological inspection, which took place on the morning of 10th September 2007.

The sides and bases of the footing trenches were all quite clean and ready for pouring the concrete foundations. There were three trenches for the base of the extension walls (Plate 1), extending 7.5m from the rear of the building and with a total width of 4.2m. Each trench was 0.6m wide and up to 0.5m deep. The only feature seen was a footing trench running east-west across the area (Plates 2 and 3). This footing appeared to have been robbed and in-filled with chippings, but these chippings may just be the base for a light structure. This footing appeared to be modern and probably for the rear patio or possibly an earlier outhouse or extension.

About 15m back from the rear of the building the ground drops steeply to the flood plain. This slope is part of the southern side of the ridge that the town utilised for its natural defence and later for its town wall. As this site is outside the town defences it is likely to have been developed after their construction. The linear nature of this property may be the result of topographical constraints or copying the form of the burgage plots within the town and a medieval date cannot be certain.

DISCUSSION

Nothing of archaeological interest was encountered by this project, possibly because of the shallow depth of the footing trenches necessary and the deep recent topsoil, but more probably because this site lies outside the town wall. Whether this property was a medieval burgage plot must be in some doubt due to this location outside the town walls.

CONCLUSIONS

Pembroke Town has an incredible potential of archaeological information to give but, to date, little has been done except on the castle or the town walls. The small amount of archaeological work undertaken just outside the town walls has produced inconclusive results (Crane 2002, Crane 2006 and Schlee 2006).

SOURCES

Crane P 2002 Pembroke Flood Alleviation Scheme North Quay: Archaeological Watching Brief. Unpublished report for Pembrokeshire County Council. Copy held at Cambria Archaeology HER

Crane P 2006 Pembroke Commons, Flood Alleviation Scheme. Unpublished report for Pembrokeshire County Council. Copy held at Cambria Archaeology HER

Ludlow N 2001 Pembroke Castle guidebook

Pembroke Design Limited in Association with Cambria Archaeology 2004 Pembroke Town Walls Project and Condition Survey. Unpublished report for Pembrokeshire County Council. Copy held at Cambria Archaeology HER

Schlee D 2006 Flood Alleviation works at Monkton Bridge, Pembroke: A watching brief. Unpublished report for Pembrokeshire County Council. Copy held at Cambria Archaeology HER



Figure 1: Location of the Robinson Retail Site. (Numbers on plan are archaeological sites on the Historical Environment Record)

This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office

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Plate 1: Foundation trenches as dug. Viewed to north.



Plate 2: West trench with probable modern footing. Viewed to west



Plate 3: East trench with probable footing. Viewed to east