

**ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL CLOSE
CLOSE WALL AND SITES OF
FORMER GATEWAYS
PEMBROKESHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ON A
WATER PIPE TRENCH**



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For
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CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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By
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Cover Plate South-eastern part of trench

SUMMARY

A new water pipe was installed in a trench running from just outside the road junction near the entrance to the Bishop's Palace northwestwards to just outside the Close Wall. This is an area of high archaeological potential and part of the route lies within a Scheduled Ancient Monument, therefore Cadw insisted on an archaeological watching brief as part of the Scheduled Monument Consent. Birt and Company, who were overseeing this project, commissioned the work. The west end was all dug into natural with no archaeological features. The eastern part of the trench was dug through post medieval deposits but did not appear to penetrate into any earlier material. Therefore it appears that no significant archaeological features were disturbed.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project commission

A replacement water supply was being installed for 1 and 2 Pen-porth-gwyn, St David's, Pembrokeshire (SM74993/35566). Birt and Company, Lock House, Tenby SA70 7AS, oversaw this project. The route for this proposed water pipe trench ran from just outside of the Bishop's Palace and through the Cathedral Close Wall or Gates (Scheduled Ancient Monument Number PE018). Therefore Cadw requested an archaeological watching brief as part of the Scheduled Monument Consent. Cambria Archaeology produced specifications for undertaking this work, which were accepted by Cadw and subsequently Birt and Company commissioned Cambria Archaeology Field Services to carry out the watching brief in December 2007.

1.2 Scope of the project

The project was designed to record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during excavation of the new water pipe trench.

1.3 Report outline

This report describes the physical environment of the site (Section 2) before summarising the watching brief results and the conclusions based on those results (Section 3).

1.4 Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

1.5 Archive deposition

Cambria HER will initially hold the archive.

2. THE SITE

2.1 Location

Pen-porth-gwyn lies to the northwest of St David's Cathedral and immediately outside the location of a gateway in the medieval close wall, hence the name. Little archaeological work has been undertaken in the immediate area except within the Bishops Palace and adjacent to St David's Cathedral. Due to the limited scope and results of this project it is not intended to produce a history of this part of St David's, other than to say that its beginnings go back into at least the early medieval period, before becoming the pre-eminent Celtic monastic site in Wales its importance continuing through the medieval period up to the present time.

The proposed route of the new water pipe trench was amended from running up the north fork of the lane and was kept to the west side (see plan below). It was observed from the opposite side of the road to Pen-porth-gwyn, SM750552592 to from just outside the Bishops Palace, SM 7499325552.

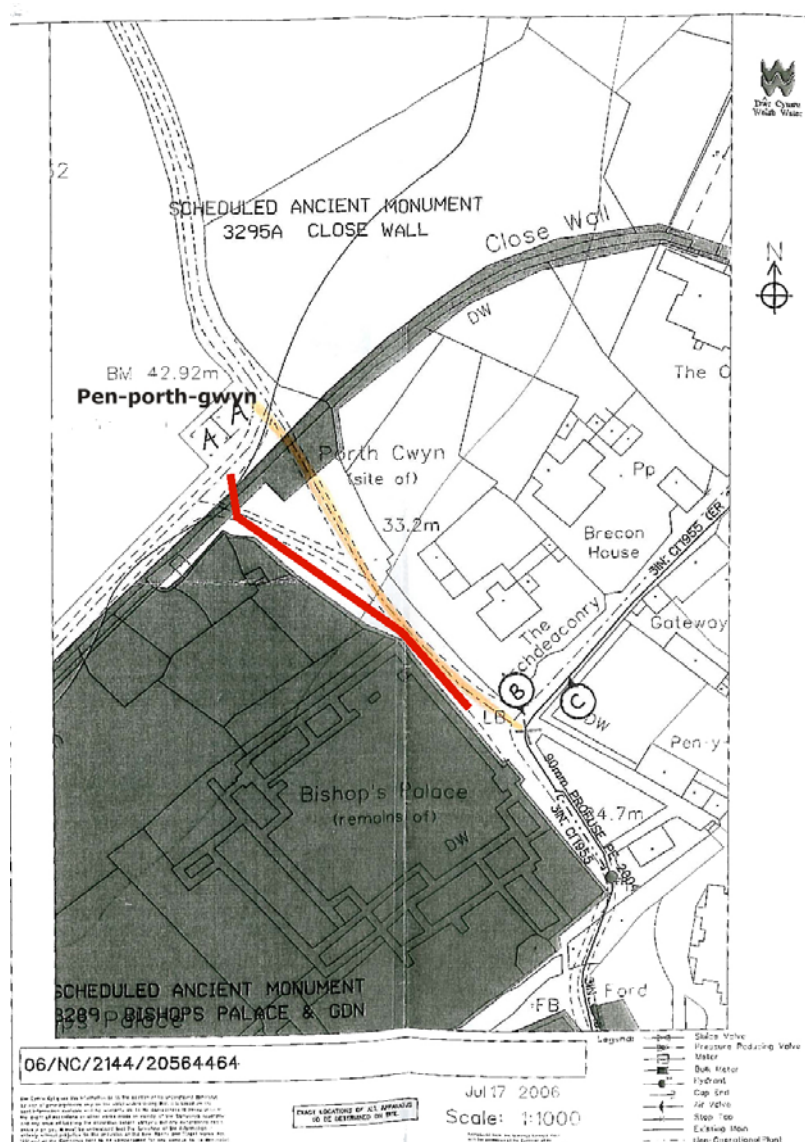


Figure 1: Location of proposed route yellow, and actual route red. Plan supplied by client

3. SUMMARY OF WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

3.1 Methodology

The watching brief on the water pipe trench was undertaken in two halves on the mornings of 11 and 12 December 2007. A JCB-type machine using its backhoe with a toothed bucket excavated the trench. This trench was nominally 0.3m wide by 0.7m deep except for the south-eastern part which was cut up to 0.9m deep. In general it should be noted that a trench as narrow and deep as this makes archaeological observation difficult. The total length of trench observed was in the region of 85m. Neither of the ends of the trench were observed where the connection was made under the road to Pen-porth-gwyn or by the Bishop's Palace where the Welsh Water cut across the road.

3.2 Results

The north-western end of the trench was cut into the natural subsoil, of very light brown clay with a lot of angular stones, varying in size from small to large and with a few massive ones (Plate 1).



Plate 1: North-western part of the trench. View SE

In the south-eastern half of the trench (Front cover plate), adjacent to the Bishop's Palace, natural subsoil was only seen at the bottom of the trench in a few places, mostly towards the middle of this half. Near the north corner of the Palace a very dark grey almost black layer, of charcoal rich soil, at approximately 0.6m to 0.7m down was encountered (SM 7503825510) (Plates 2 and 3). The full depth of this layer was not ascertained; neither did it produce any artefacts.



**Plate 2: Very dark deposit in the bottom of the trench. View W.
Scales 0.5m and 1m**



**Plate 3: Very dark deposit in the bottom of the trench. View SE.
Scales 0.5m and 1m**

Further north west of the very dark deposit there was a layer of possible buried topsoil. Overlying both this possible buried soil and the very dark deposit there was a soil and rubble layer, that although varying in form appeared to be the same deposit, or deposits, extending to the south east end of the trench. A sherd

of black glazed Buckley type ware of 19th or early 20th century date probably came from this rubbly layer.

On the top of this rubble layer again towards the south-eastern end there was a lens of lime mortar or layer with mortar flecks in, possibly from modern consolidation of the adjacent Bishop's Palace Wall. Above all of this there was modern topsoil and turf.

4. CONCLUSION

Even though there was likely potential for archaeological features or deposits to be present within all of the length of this trench, nothing was seen in the north-western half. This maybe because the trackway had eroded any such deposits, but it does appear that there are no cut archaeological features in this sector. The very dark deposit could not be dated, but it is likely to be medieval or early post medieval. The rubble and soil layer probably derives its stone from the adjacent Bishop's Palace wall and this deposit may start in the post medieval period, but has at least more modern disturbance given the late post medieval pottery. What is evident from this project is that no significant archaeological deposits were disturbed, but this does not rule out the probability of such deposits nearby.

No archaeological features or deposits were present in the areas of the site affected by the construction works.

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January 2008

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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