

DYFED POWYS POLICE AUTHORITY, FRIARS PARK, CARMARTHEN: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



Prepared
by
Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For
Wernick



ymddiriedolaeth archaeolegol



DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Dyfed Powys Police Authority, Friars Park, Carmarthen: Archaeological Watching Brief

By

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**DYFED POWYS POLICE AUTHORITY, FRIARS PARK, CARMARTHEN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

Summary

Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned by Wernick to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundwork operations associated with the installation of new office accommodation (Planning Application Number W/18211) at Dyfed Powys Police Authority, Friars Park, Carmarthen (NGR SN40821990).

The location for the new office accommodation lies immediately adjacent to, or within the Civil War defences of the town of Carmarthen known as The Bulwarks, which are a Scheduled Ancient Monument (PRN 76: SAM CM009). It is possible these defences extend into the application area. Therefore, it was recommended an archaeological watching brief be maintained during all major episodes of earth moving or ground breaking, such as topsoil stripping and deep cutting during the course of the proposed programme of development.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

Plans to install new office accommodation (Planning Application Number W/18211) at Dyfed Powys Police Authority, Friars Park, Carmarthen (NGR SN40821990) required an archaeological watching brief. Whilst no known archaeological sites are located within the application area the site is located immediately adjacent to or within the Scheduled Ancient Monument known as The Bulwarks (PRN 76: SAM CM009), the Civil War defences of the town of Carmarthen. As a result of this the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) archaeological advisors made the recommendation that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during all major episodes of earth moving or ground breaking, such as topsoil stripping and deep cutting during the proposed development¹

Wernick commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to undertake the archaeological watching brief in May 2008.

1.2 Scope of the Project

The project was designed to record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during major episodes of earth moving or ground breaking, such as topsoil stripping and deep cutting during the proposed development.

1.3 Report Outline

This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background (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 (HER²) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

¹ Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management made the recommendation in a letter to Carmarthenshire County Council Planning Department dated 6th February 2008.

² Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo.

2. THE SITE

2.1 Location

The proposed development site is located at NGR SN40821990, to the west of Carmarthen town centre. The site is currently occupied by the Dyfed Powys Police Authority complex, which is bounded to the west by Morfa Lane and to the east by Friars Park. To the south the boundary is formed by the A4242, whilst to the north it is bounded by a footpath. Topographically the site is broadly level.

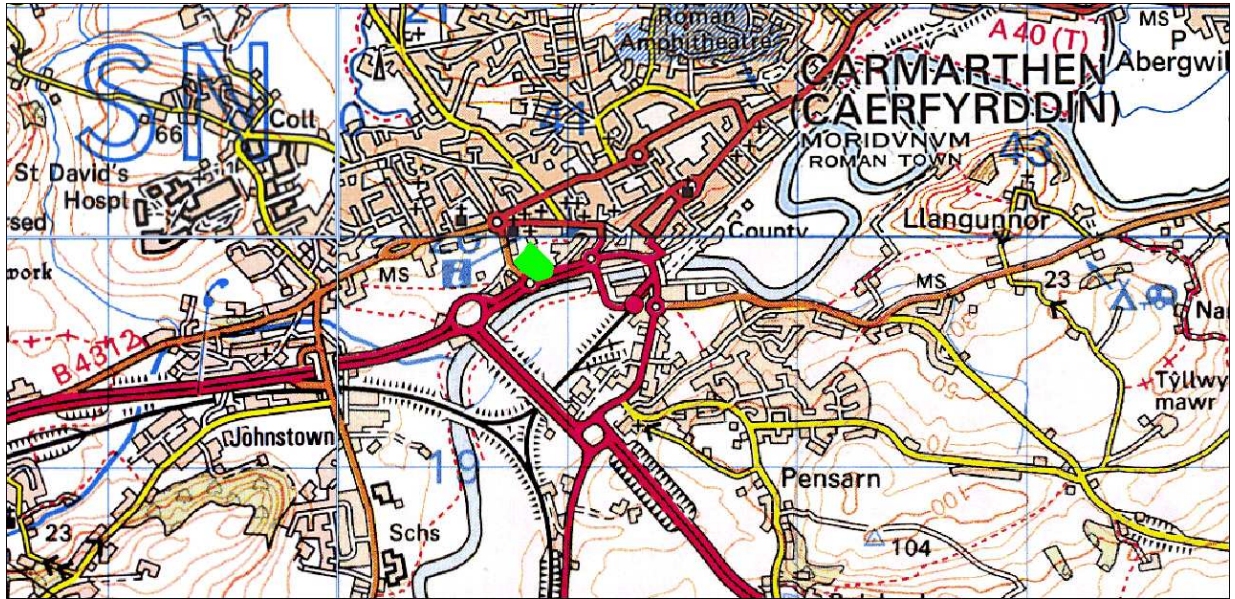


Figure 1: Location plan showing watching brief site (green shaded area).

Reproduced from the 1997 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale Landranger Map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright Cambria Archaeology, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A.

2.2 Archaeological Background

A search of the HER revealed one known archaeological site adjacent to or just within the proposed development area. The Civil War defences, known as the Bulwarks (PRN 76. SAM CM009), occupy the northeast portion of the site. These defences consist of a ditch and bank, which would possibly have been topped with a palisade. To the northwest of the site is a surviving bastion, which although on first impression would seem to have been used for artillery, was more likely to have been used by musketmen

It has been stated the Bulwarks at Carmarthen are the finest preserved such defences surviving in the UK (RCAHMW 1916, 260). Although known as The Bulwarks, this may be a relatively recent name for the defences as in 1879 it is known the name Bulwarks referred to the raised embankment on the south bank of the River Towy which 'extends from Carmarthen Bridge to the South Wales Railway Bridge' (Spurrell 1995, 70). The South Wales Railway Bridge being replaced by the bascule bridge known as the White Bridge in 1911.

It is likely the Civil War defences were constructed in around 1644 by the Royalist garrison of the town. However, it is known they were not a success as the town was captured without much resistance by Parliamentary forces under the

leadership of General Laugarne in April 1644 (Lodwick and Lodwick 1994, 118-119; Rees 2006, 64-65).

In the modern period it would appear the site was used for agricultural purposes as a photograph taken by the photographer J F Lloyd during the early 1900s and held at Carmarthenshire County Museum depicts a haymaking scene on the site (Item reference: 1989:0008 (602)). Additional images from the collection also indicate the site was also used for social events in the form of hot air balloon displays which attracted substantial numbers of people (Item reference: 1989.8 (571)). It is also likely the site was the location of the first manned hot air balloon flight in Wales which occurred in 1908.

3. SUMMARY OF WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

3.1 Methodology

The watching brief methodology consisted of two site visits being undertaken to monitor groundworks being undertaken.

3.2 Results

The stratigraphical sequence revealed by topsoil stripping was broadly the same across the site with a dark grey brown silty clay 0.36m in depth, of moderate compaction, containing c.15% small subangular stones overlying a mid reddish brown clay silt of moderate compaction containing 15% medium subangular stones that was visible for a maximum depth of 0.10m to the base of the excavation.

The only finds recovered came from the topsoil and comprised of brick and coal fragments along with clay pipe stems. A small quantity of floor tiling of possible medieval/post-medieval date were recovered.

The only archaeological features noted during the course of the watching brief were four concrete bases and a drain. These were of modern date and not deemed to be significant.

3.3 Conclusions

Despite the site being located in a potentially sensitive area no significant archaeological features or deposits were noted during the course of the watching brief.

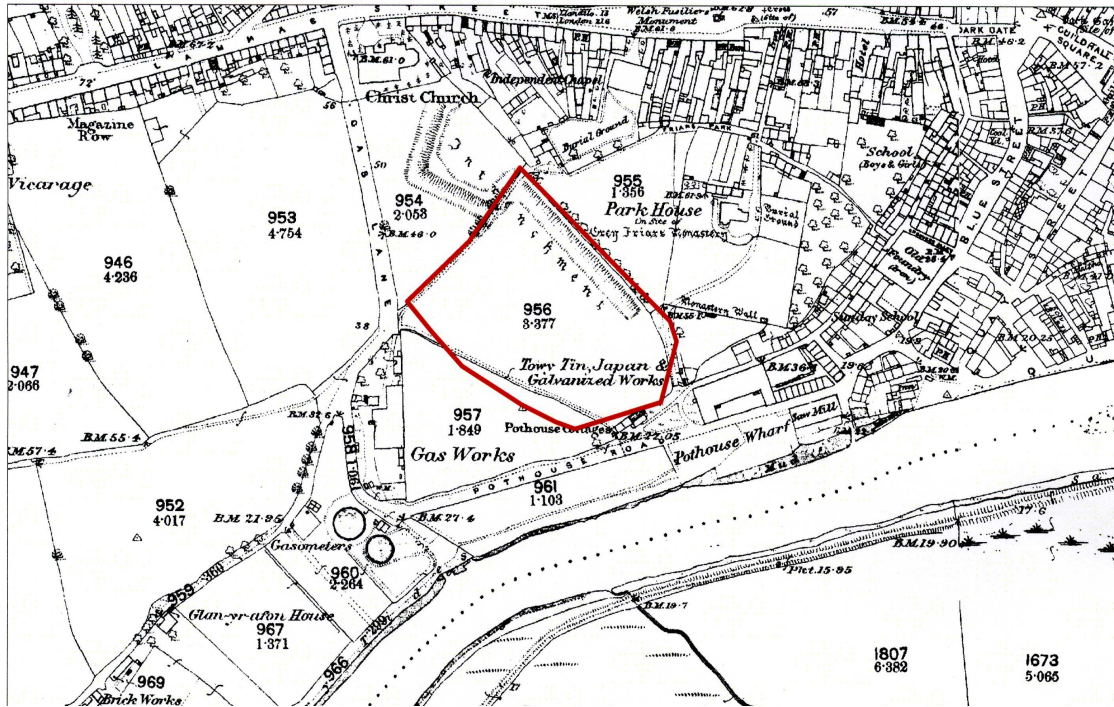


Figure 2: Extract of 1st edition Ordnance Survey map showing the development area bounded in red.

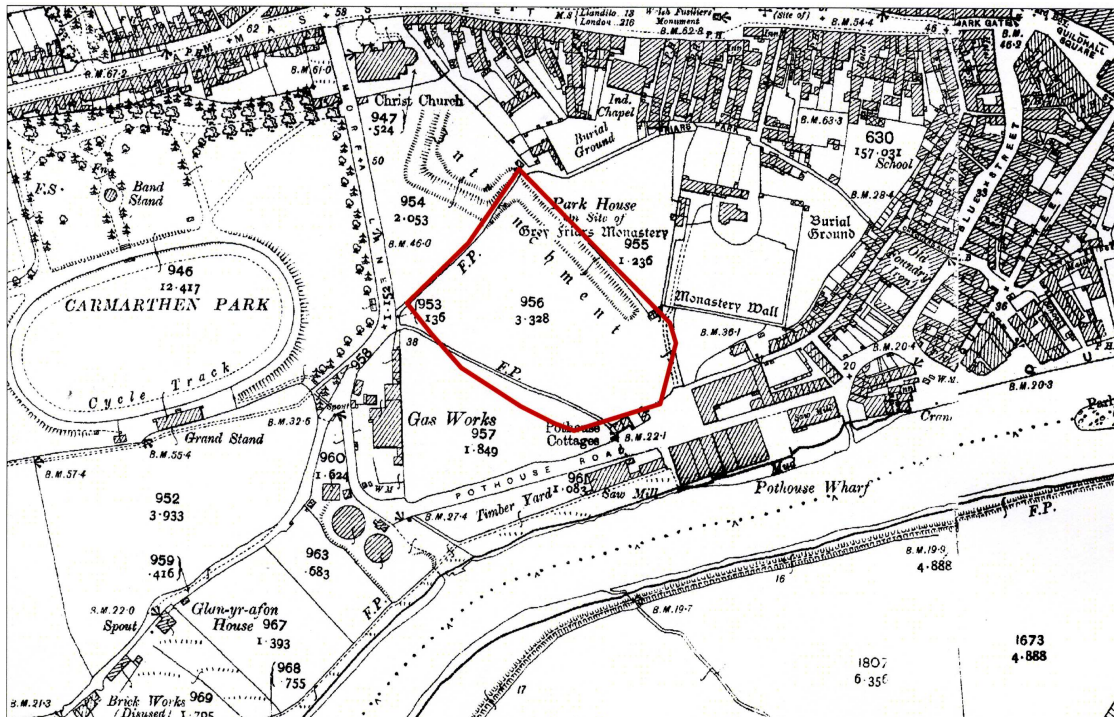


Figure 3: Extract of 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map showing the development area bounded in red.



Plate 1: East facing shot of surviving Civil War bank and ditch.



Plate 2: North east facing shot of site.



Plate 3: Detail of south facing section.



Plate 4: Overall view of site from the south following stripping.

SOURCES

Maps

Ordnance Survey 1890 1:2500 Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXIX

Ordnance Survey 1906 1:2500 Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXIX

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Carmarthen Police Headquarters Archaeological Watching Brief

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have on the content or presentation of this report