

BERRY COTTAGE, TOWER HILL FISHGUARD

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No 2008/107



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: Mr P Kedward



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Berry Hill, Tower Hill, Fishgurard Archaeological Watching Brief

Gan / By

Pete Crane BA Hons MIFA

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Cover Photo.: Location of development prior to start. View SE

SUMMARY

A short watching brief was undertaken on a small detached building on the east site of Berry Cottage, Tower Hill, Upper Fishguard. No archaeological features were observed.

INTRODUCTION

Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT) Field Services were asked by Mr Kevin Siggins, agent to Mr P Kenwood to provide specifications and costs to fulfil a Grampian condition on a planning application, Local Planning Authority (LPA) number 07/1648/PA, for a detached building in part of the garden of Berry Cottage, Tower Hill Fishguard (NGR SM9611370). DAT produced specifications for a watching brief that was accepted by the LPA and then commissioned by Mr P Kenwood.

The site lies in a prominent elevated position overlooking Lower Fishguard Harbour (Fig. 1). It is about 40m below the crest of the Tower Hill, near an ancient cemetery (Primary Record Number (PRN) 2559) first recorded in 1811 (Fenton, 318), *"The graves..., when discovered, had a remarkable appearance; they were cut out of the solid rab, mostly of the parallelogram figure, though some of the smallest were very shallow oval excavations; the bones in all were burnt, and in most of the larger ones were small urns of various shapes, though unornamented, and of much better unglazed pottery than any of those found in the tumuli or Carneddau which are invariably coarse, half baked and always ornamented. These vessels generally lay in one corner of the grave, in which likewise found several pieces of iron of a pointed form, varying in size from that of a common spike nail to one of about three or four inches long... Among the ashes were several small wrought stones of different shapes and sizes, particularly one of a softer texture, circular with a hole in the middle..."* Given the description of the grave goods and the iron objects a Bronze Age date can be ruled out, for those graves at least. Therefore it is likely that these graves are either: very late Iron Age, early Roman, or pagan post Roman.

This cemetery has also been postulated as the site of a medieval chapel, PRN 2514, Capel y Drindod, but some consider this very doubtful (DAT HER internal records).

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The watching brief was undertaken on the morning of 20 November 2008. The weather was fine but cool, with broken cloud. The building plot was in the southeast corner of the garden (cover photo. and Fig. 2). The footprint cleared was 4.8m out from the rear garden wall and 7.2m long.

A small 360° tracked digger using a toothless bucket removed most of the topsoil down to just above, the almost level, orange-brown shale bedrock (known locally as rab) with some orange-brown clay in a few places. The topsoil was a very dark grey silty-loam, with a few small pebbles and angular flakes of stone, typical good garden soil, and was from 0.15m deep at the rear of the plot to about 0.25 deep at the front. Below this topsoil, and immediately on the bedrock, there was a thin layer of Tarmac in the middle of the eastern end of the development: probably an old path. There was also a thin grey soil deposit with slate fragments towards the northwestern corner: possibly a garden feature or backfilled hole.

The machined then reduced entire top of the bedrock by 0.1m to 0.2m, using a toothed bucket, to make certain that no archaeological features were cut into it (Photo. 1). As there were no features the watching brief was curtailed and the contractor was left to excavated the footprint of the building to the depth required.

CONCLUSION

The surface of the bedrock only sloped very slightly and it appeared that the natural hill-slope has been considerably terraced, leaving little chance of archaeological survival at this location.

ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

DAT HER will initially hold the archive.

SOURCES

Fenton R 1811. A Historical Tour Through Pembrokeshire, 2nd edition 1903, facsimile edition by Dyfed County Council Cultural Services Department 1994.



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Figure 1: Location of Berry Cottage

Berry Cottage, Tower Hill, Fishguard
Archaeological Watching Brief

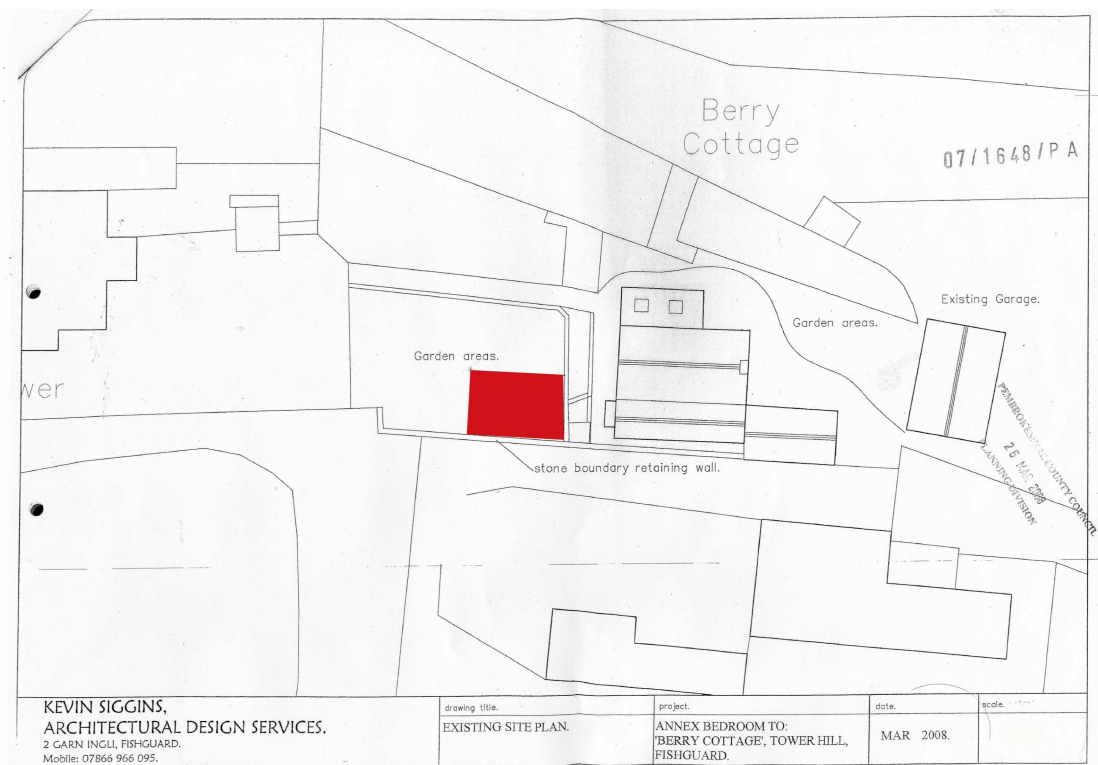


Figure 2: Location of development. Plan provided by Kevin Siggins.



Photo. 1: Site after checking the top of bedrock for any features. View W