

DWR CYMRU WELSH WATER: LLANFYNYDD – FFAIRFACH PHASE 2 WATER MAIN REFURBISHMENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



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DWR CYMRU WELSH WATER: LLANFYNYDD – FFAIRFACH PHASE 2 WATER MAIN REFURBISHMENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Gan / By

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**DŴR CYMRU WELSH WATER: LLANELLI – FELINFOEL PHASE 2 WATER
MAIN REFURBISHMENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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DŴR CYMRU WELSH WATER: LLANFYNYDD – FFAIRFACH PHASE 2 WATER MAIN REFURBISHMENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Summary

Laing O'Rourke, acting as contractors to Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, undertook Phase 2 of the Llanfynydd - Ffairfach water main refurbishment scheme. A section of the scheme ran through the historic town of Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire.

Given the potential for the presence of archaeological remains along the route of the refurbishment programme, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management recommended that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during all episodes of groundbreaking within the town of Llandeilo.

In order to comply with this recommendation, and to protect the area of archaeological interest, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services, to undertake an ongoing archaeological watching brief during this phase of the refurbishment works.

A cobbled road surface of probable post medieval date was recorded, no other archaeological features or deposits were visible in any of the trenches monitored.

INTRODUCTION

Project Background

A recommendation was made by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management¹ that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during all episodes of groundbreaking within the historic town of Llandeilo.

To comply with this recommendation, and protect the area of archaeological interest, Laing O'Rourke / Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services, to undertake an ongoing watching brief on all episodes of groundbreaking within the town of Llandeilo.

Methodology

The proposed methodology consisted of site visits being made to monitor all episodes of groundbreaking within the designated area of archaeological interest. It was envisaged that Laing O'Rourke, the contractors undertaking the water main refurbishment works on behalf of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, would contact Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to inform them when any groundbreaking operations were being undertaken within the designated area of archaeological interest.

Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record² (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

Illustrations

Photographic images are to be found at back of the report. Printed map extracts are not necessarily reproduced to their original scale and are illustrative only.

¹ Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management, acting as curatorial archaeological advisors to the Local Planning Authority and Dŵr Cymru made the recommendation in a letter to Laing O'Rourke dated 29th October 2007.

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

THE WATCHING BRIEF AREA

Location

The watching brief area was located within the historic town of Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire (NGR SN 6292 2265). The town occupies a hilltop at a height of 90m above Ordnance Datum, overlooking the River Towy that flows to the southeast (see figure 1 for location map).

The town is situated within the Llandeilo Historic Landscape Categorisation (HLC) Area 202 (reproduced in full as Appendix 1 at the back of the report) and is bounded to the west by Dinefwr Park HLC Area (Area 195). To the southeast the Ystrad Tywi: Llandeilo – Llangadog HLC area forms the boundary (Area 196).

WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

No communication was received from Laing O'Rourke that refurbishment works had commenced in the town of Llandeilo. However, communication was received from Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management that excavation work had commenced.

Following receipt of this communication, monitoring visits to the excavated trenches in the town were undertaken by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services staff. In the majority of the trenches all that was revealed were deposits previously disturbed during the laying of the original water main.

However, a trench at the junction of Carmarthen Street and Rhosmaen Street (NGR SN 6292 2233) was observed to contain a cobbled road surface and its associated sub-base at a depth of c.0.5m below the present road surface. Both are of probable post medieval date.

CONCLUSIONS

With the exception of the cobbled road surface, the refurbishment trenches monitored revealed no significant archaeological features or deposits. It appears that the groundworks for the scheme had a minimal impact on the archaeological resource.

SOURCES

Map

Ordnance Survey 1886 1:10560 Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXIII SW

Ordnance Survey 1906 1:10560 Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXIII SW

Ordnance Survey 1997 1:50,000 Landranger

Unpublished Sources

Murphy, K & Ludlow, N 2000 *Towy Valley Historic Landscape Categorisation Area: Area 195 Dinefwr Park.*

Murphy, K & Ludlow, N 2000 *Towy Valley Historic Landscape Categorisation Area: Area 196 Ystrad Tywi Llandeilo – Llangadog.*

Murphy, K & Ludlow, N 2000 *Towy Valley Historic Landscape Categorisation Area:Area 202 Llandeilo.*



Photo 1: Cobbled road surface and associated sub-base revealed at the junction of Carmarthen Street and Rhosmaen Street, looking west.

*Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water: Llanfynydd – Ffairfach Phase 2 Water Main Refurbishment
Archaeological Watching Brief*

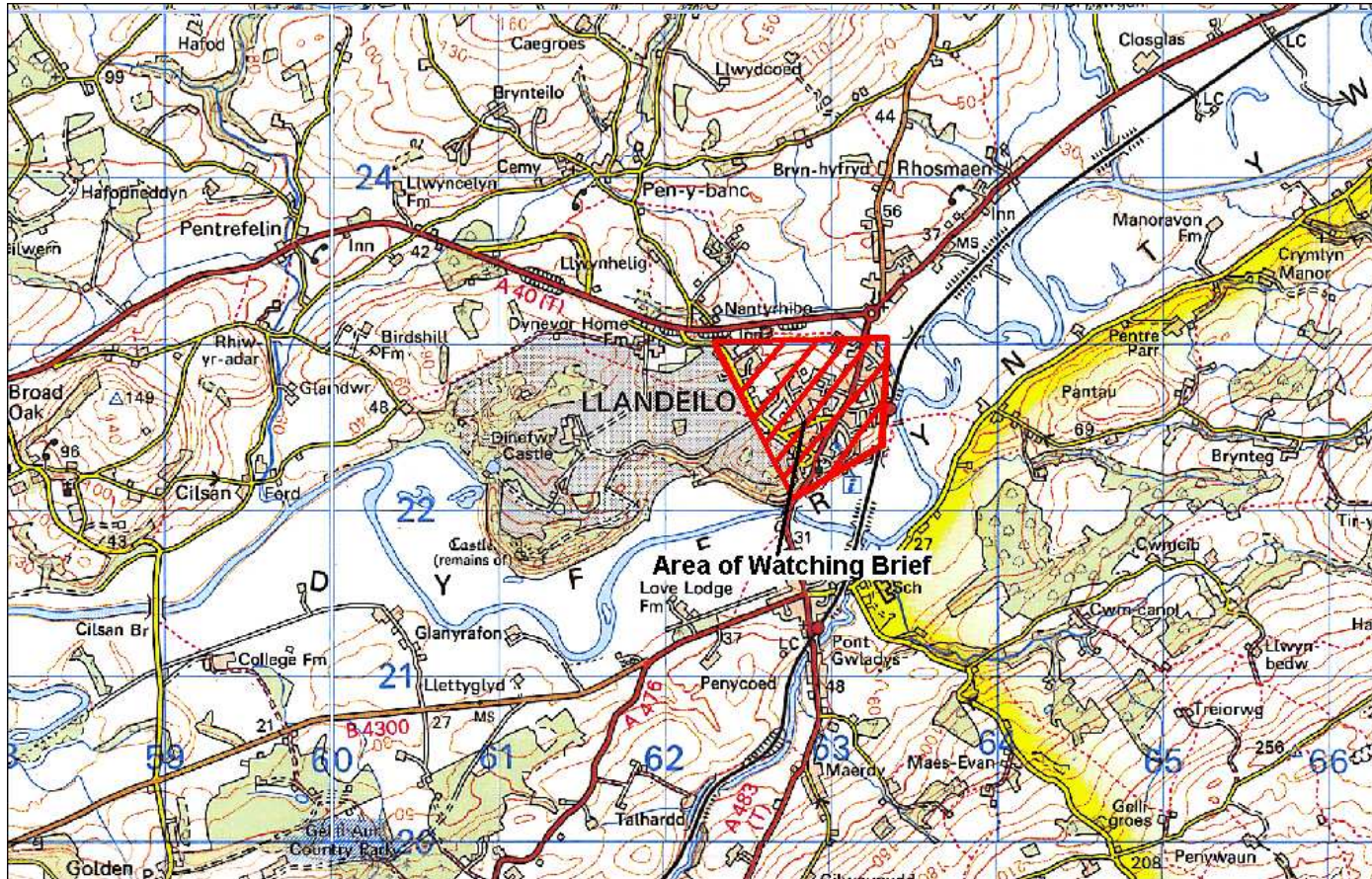


Figure 1: Location map of watching brief area based on the Ordnance Survey

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

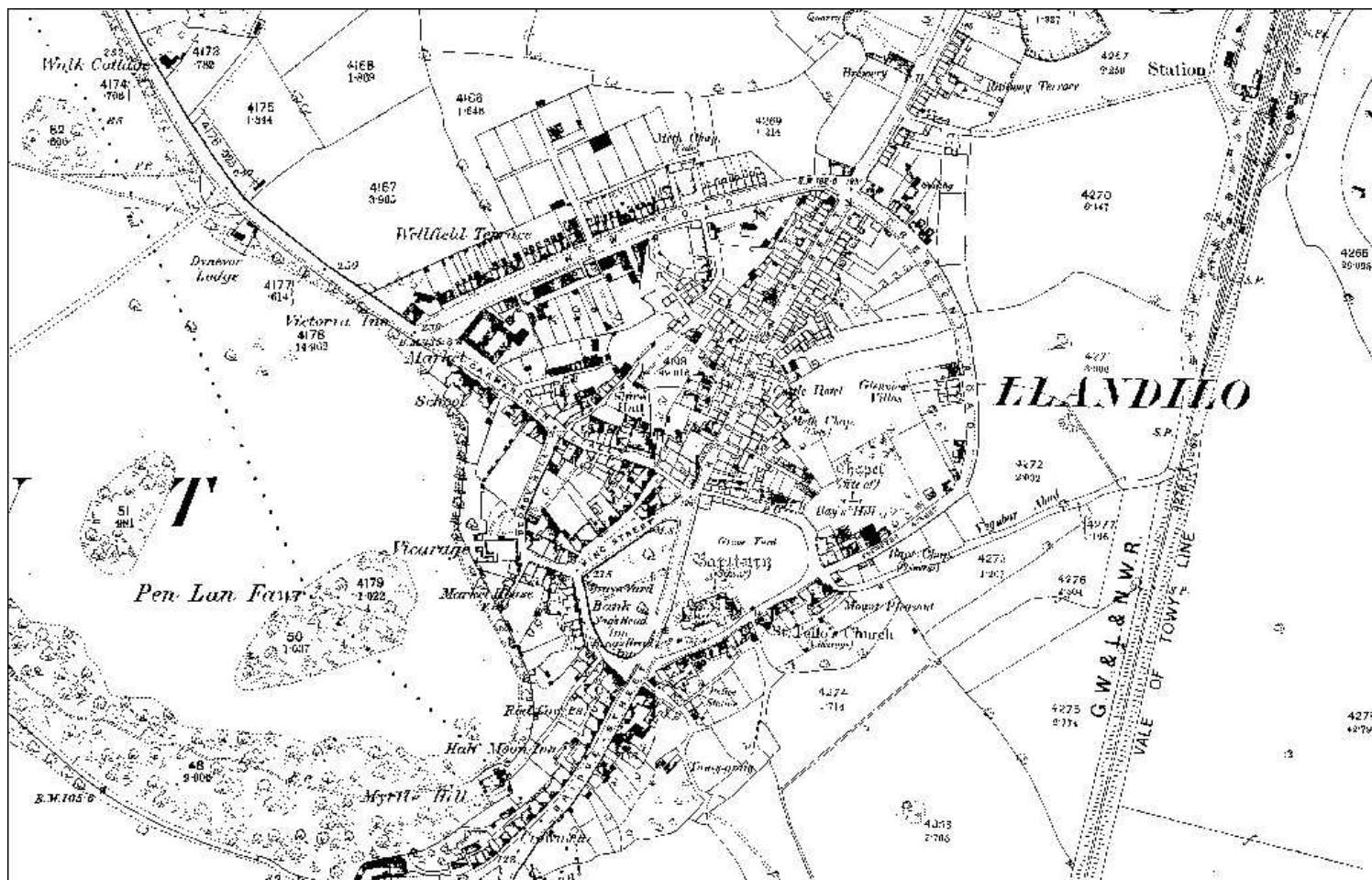


Figure 2: Extract of 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map (1886)

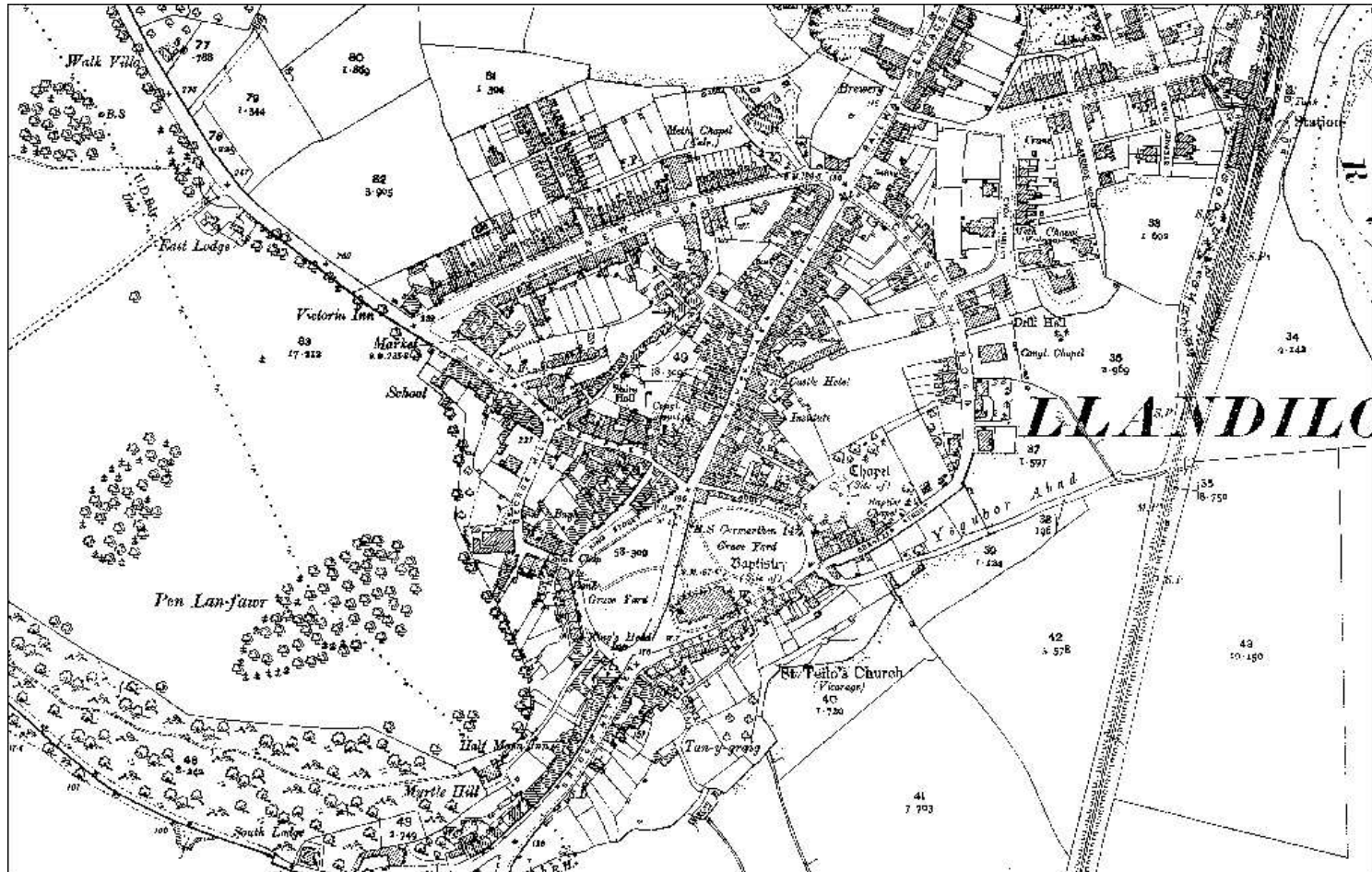


Figure 3: Extract of 2nd edition Ordnance Survey Map (1906)

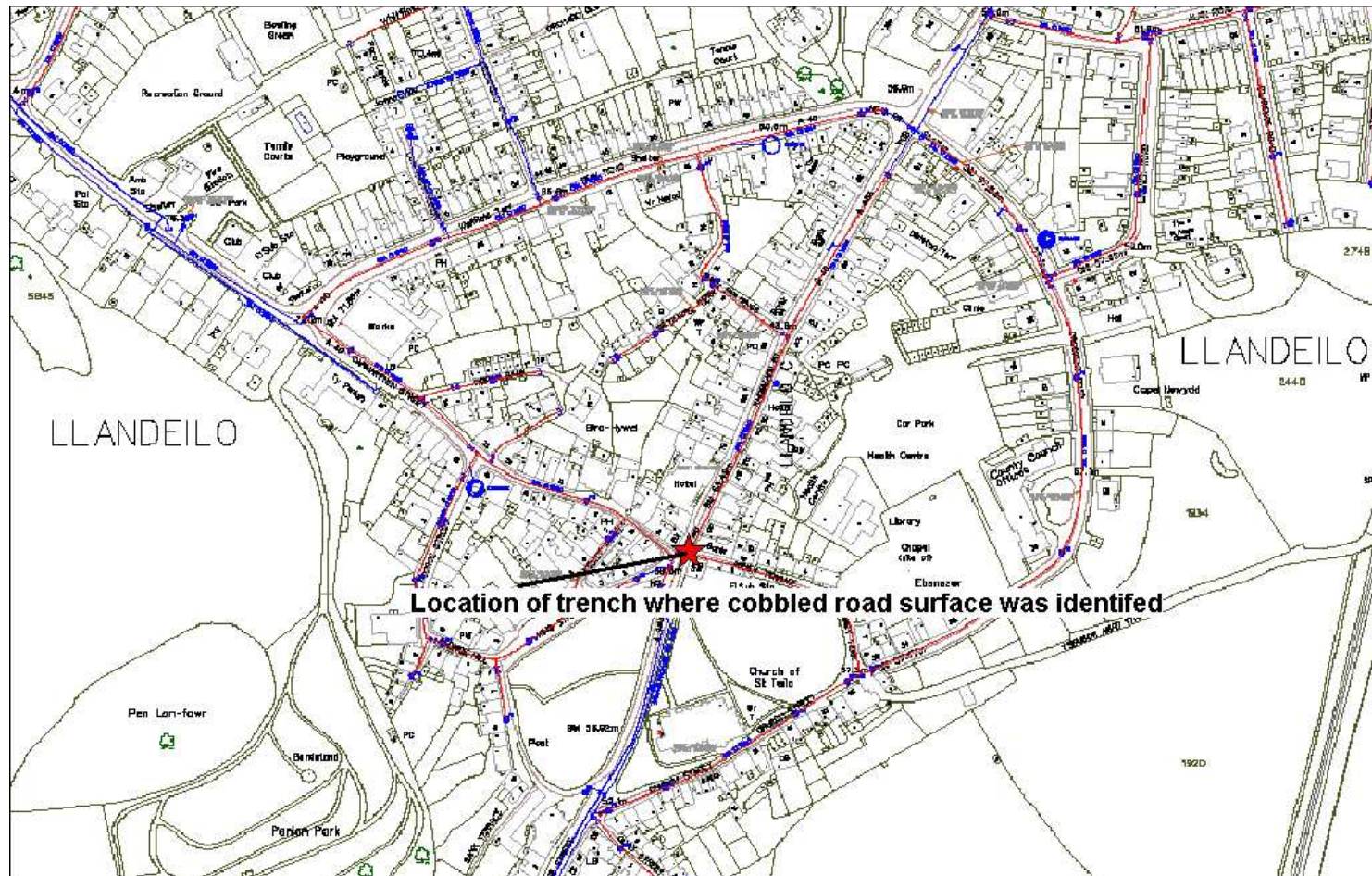


Figure 4: Detail of map supplied by Laing O'Rourke showing location of cobbled road surface.

APPENDIX 1:

**LLANDEILO HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CATEGORISATION AREA
(AREA 202)**

LLANDEILO HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CATEGORISATION AREA

Historic Background

Llandeilo occupies a central position within the Tywi valley, once part of the lordship of Cantref Mawr which remained independent of Anglo-Norman rule until the establishment of the county of Carmarthen in 1284. However, settlement within the character area has earlier origins. The town stands astride the Llandovery (Alabum) -Carmarthen (Moridunum) Roman road, possibly at a junction with a further Roman road running south towards Loughor (Leucarum) suggesting that a bridge over the Tywi was present. A Roman fort midway between Carmarthen and Llandovery is to be expected in the area of the town and was found to be located within Dinefwr Park and not at a possible site in the vicinity of Rhosmaen that had previously been proposed. Settlement does appear to pre-date that at neighbouring Dinefwr (Area 195) in the form of the church of St Teilo (later the parish church of Llandeilo Fawr), supposed to have been established in the 6th century, and mentioned in the pre-Conquest Lichfield Gospels. By the 9th century Llandeilo Fawr was the most influential of the ecclesiastical communities in the district, possessing two (formerly three) ECMs, and a spring in the large churchyard. It was appropriated to the Premonstratensian Abbey at Talley by Rhys Grŵg in c.1215. The town is believed to have its origins within this small ecclesiastical community. It had certainly been established by 1213 when the 'town' was attacked and 'completely burned', but its growth appears to have been encouraged by the Bishops of St Davids who acquired the town and patria in the late 13th century, and by 1306 it contained 30 burgesses and 11 other tenants. The town was granted a weekly market and three annual fairs, held in the large marketplace northwest of the church. A mill was also present and at least one subordinate chapel lay within the character area, but the Medieval town appears to have been confined to the area around the churchyard, the marketplace, Bridge Street, and the lower part of Rhosmaen Street. A bridge is mentioned in 1289 but the present structure was erected in 1848 by W Williams of Llandeilo replacing an earlier bridge downstream. Ffairfach developed as a settlement in the shadow of the town, south of the bridge, and was recorded as the site of an annual fair by George Owen in 1601. East of Ffairfach but within Area 202 lies the site of Tregyb, a former mansion established by the 16th century on the site of a 14th century vill which may have had its own market. A nearby 'maerdy' place-name, derived from a reeve or maer, may be associated with the monastic holding in Area 190 or the Tregyb estate. Subsequent urban development was slow and probably did not occur until the 18th century. However, by 1841 the town had expanded to the north and west while the town was considered important enough to be the site for the County Midsummer Quarter Sessions. It was also a stage on the Mail Road which followed the course of the Roman road (and modern A40). It was turnpiked in 1763-71 and was driven through the churchyard in the 1840s. Rhosmaen grew as ribbon development either side of the road with, by the end of the 19th century, a chapel and industry including a tannery. The former LNWR main West Wales railway line, which was opened as the 'Vale of Towy Line' in 1858 established a railway station in the town, encouraging growth to the north towards Rhosmaen. A further station was established in Ffairfach at the junction with the Llandeilo-Llanelli line, which had been laid down in the 1840s. Expansion to the west is effectively limited by Dynevor Park (Area 195) but the 20th century has seen council development north of the park and the establishment, near its entrance, of both a fire station and a police station.

Description and essential historic landscape components

The historic town is situated on the north bank of the River Tywi, occupying a river terrace which slopes downhill from west to east between 40 m and 80 m. It is dominated by the 16th century church tower which overlooks the bridge. Ffairfach lies on the south bank and the character area includes ribbon development either side of the A40(T) to the north. The town comprises an axial main street, Bridge/Rhosmaen Street, running northeast from the bridge, originally to bifurcate around the large churchyard. Rhosmaen Street formed part of the Carmarthen-Llandovery turnpike and later the A40(T). The subrectangular churchyard, which was the primary nucleus, is now bisected by this street but is still a large, open green space. Bridge Street leads uphill from the graceful, single-span bridge and is characterised by attractive colourwashed earlier 19th century dwellings of 2-3 storeys, behind and to the west of which rises the wooded hill of Penlan Park (Area 195). The marketplace northwest of the church is now occupied by infill; Carmarthen Street, leading uphill west from the marketplace, is occupied by a number of good quality buildings including the square, stone-built provision market of 1838. Rhosmaen Street largely features 19th-20th century development. In 1800 it was occupied by 'straw-thatched houses of the poorest description' but now features the town's main coaching inn, the Cawdor Arms, from c.1845 and built around a courtyard, and a number of good-quality civic buildings from later in the 19th century - banks, former Post Office etc. New Road was constructed between Rhosmaen Street and Carmarthen Street in the later 19th century to avoid the constricted roads around the churchyard. A feature of the townscape are a number of alleys and informal courtyards, not properly accessible to wheeled traffic but featuring 19th century buildings, often from early in the century and of good quality. A number of later 19th century terraces are concentrated on the northern fringe of the town around the railway station. Both Ffairfach and Rhosmaen are linear, ribbon developments of the later 19th-20th century with their own chapels. Twentieth century development has largely occurred west of the historic core and north of Dynevor Park (Area 195) and is characterised by council-built housing. Llandeilo is free from satellite development and there is no retail or business developments outside the town, despite the completion of the northern bypass in 1994 which took east-west traffic away from the town centre; north-south traffic still passes through. Tregyb House was demolished in 1974 and the park is now largely occupied by the town Secondary School and grounds. However, the house platform and terraces survive - the former is the site of the Gorsedd stone circle from the 1996 National Eisteddfod - while the park retains much of its character including many distinctive trees.

Recorded archaeology comprises features from the Medieval - Modern periods which have been largely discussed but includes Roman findspots and the two ECMs from the 10th-11th centuries.

There are a large number of listed buildings - c.75 in this landscape area - which are mainly town houses and civic buildings. Also included are the church which was largely rebuilt in 1848-51 to the designs of Sir George Gilbert Scott, and the spring (both Grade II listed), the road bridge (Grade II* listed), the present rail bridge from 1898, the old provision market from 1838 and the Cawdor Arms (all Grade II listed), as well as several chapels.

(Murphy and Ludlow, 2000)

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RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NUMBER 94872

**Mawrth 2009
March 2009**

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

Simon Ratty

Swydd / Position: 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

Richard Ramsey

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Swydd / Position: Project Manager

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw sylwadau
sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

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

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