

# **PLOT 1, THE OLD GRAMMAR SCHOOL, THE ESPLANADE, CARMARTHEN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**SEPTEMBER 2009**



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RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NO. 2009/68  
RHIF Y PROSIECT / PROJECT RECORD NO. 97373

Medi 2009  
September 2009

# PLOT 1, THE OLD GRAMMAR SCHOOL, THE ESPLANADE, CARMARTHEN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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*Paratowyd yr adroddiad yma at ddefnydd y cwsmer yn unig. Ni dderbynnir cyfrifoldeb gan Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf am ei ddefnyddio gan unrhyw berson na phersonau eraill a fydd yn ei ddarllen neu ddibynnu ar y gwybodaeth y mae'n ei gynnwys*

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## **PLOT 1, THE OLD GRAMMAR SCHOOL, THE ESPLANADE, CARMARTHEN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

### **SUMMARY**

*The construction of a dwelling adjacent to the Old Grammar School on The Esplanade, Carmarthen (planning application No. W/13473, NGR SN 4189 2038) required an archaeological watching brief on the groundworks as a condition on planning permission. This was deemed necessary due to the site's location within a medieval Priory precinct, close to the Roman town of Moridunum and adjacent to the Grade II listed Old Grammar School building. Previous archaeological work (Ramsey 2004) also identified the remains of a possible medieval wall on the site.*

*The developer, Mr Tristan Smith, commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to undertake the watching brief in May 2009, the groundworks were undertaken in August 2009.*

*The remains of three walls were revealed and recorded during the groundworks, as were a series of later post medieval and modern soil horizons and pits.*

*One wall (Wall 14) appeared to correspond with a wall revealed during previous archaeological investigations at the site in 2004, interpreted at that time as a possible medieval precinct boundary wall, but shown during these groundworks to be the northern corner of a slate-floored building. The fragmentary remains of a further wall (Wall 12) to the northwest would appear to be related, and presumably contemporary to, Wall 14. The walls were both of unknown date, although the evidence suggests they could date to any period from the medieval through to the later 18<sup>th</sup> century. The eastern extent of the walls may have been removed during the construction of the adjacent Old Grammar School in 1846.*

*A third wall (Wall 10) of simple construction located in the northwestern corner of the plot was of a markedly different structure and alignment and although also undated it may represent an earlier wall of unknown function.*

*Both Wall 12 and Wall 14 were revealed at the lowest level of the ground clearance works and will remain undisturbed in their current state below the construction raft for the dwelling. Wall 10 was revealed in the western and northern sections of the building plot continuing beyond the limits of this development area.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Project Commission**

The construction of a new dwelling adjacent to the Old Grammar School on the Esplanade, Carmarthen (Planning application No. W/13473, NGR SN 4189 2038; Figure 1 and 4) required an archaeological watching brief on the groundworks, as a condition of planning permission. The site is located within a medieval Priory precinct, close to the Roman town of Moridunum and adjacent to the Grade II listed Old Grammar School building (Figure 2).

Previous archaeological work (Ramsey 2004; Figure 2 and 4) identified the remains of a possible medieval wall on the site. Given the site's location it was considered that further archaeological material associated with these sites may exist in the development area and may be adversely affected by the proposed development. Therefore, the archaeological advisors<sup>1</sup> to the Local Planning Authority (Carmarthenshire County Council) recommended that an archaeological watching brief be carried out on any ground disturbance during the proposed development that had the potential to expose, damage or destroy archaeological remains. Mr Tristan Smith commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to carry out the archaeological watching brief in May 2009.

### **Scope of the Project**

The project was designed to record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during episodes of topsoil clearance and ground breaking activity associated with the construction of retaining walls and a building raft. The new building had been designed to be constructed on a raft foundation, in an attempt to minimise the impacts to any below ground archaeological remains.

### **Report Outline**

This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background before summarising the watching brief results and the conclusions based on those results.

### **Abbreviations**

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER<sup>2</sup>) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM).

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<sup>1</sup> Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management

<sup>2</sup> Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Shire Hall, Llandeilo.

## THE SITE

### Location (Figures 1 – 4)

The building plot lies adjacent to the southwest end of the Old Grammar School, a Grade II listed building (PRN 129) built in 1846 (Lodwick 1972, 222), at the northeast end of the Esplanade in the town of Carmarthen at NGR SN 4190 2038. The site lies within the precinct of the medieval St. John's Priory, large sections of which are now a Scheduled Ancient Monument although the building plot lies outside the Scheduled area. The Roman town of Moridunum lies to the west and the line of the Roman town defences are located close to the west side of the site (James & James 2004, 194-195).

The outstanding archaeological potential of this part of Carmarthen has been highlighted in a study undertaken for Carmarthenshire County Council and Cadw (James & James 2004). The report states:

*"it is Cambria Archaeology's view that this whole site is one of the most archaeologically significant in Wales, not only for the medieval Priory but also for the Dark Age and Roman periods. Consideration should be given to extending scheduling to protect as much of the site as practicable"* (James & James 2004, 20).

Topographically the site is low lying, standing below the 15m above Ordnance Datum contour, and situated just above the flood plain of the river Towy from which it is now separated by the relatively recently built East Carmarthen bypass, and historically by the former railway line. The ground to the west rises quite steeply becoming an elevated plateau upon which the Roman town was established. Geologically this raised plateau is the result of glacial drift deposits that are in part overlain by fluvio-glacial sands and gravels, which continue downslope and were encountered on the site during the previous archaeological investigations and current groundworks. The solid geology of the area is represented by Ordovician shales.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The history of Carmarthen is described in more detail elsewhere (e.g. James 1980, James & James 2004, Austin et al 2005), below is a brief summary of the relevant sections.

The first settlement in Carmarthen was a Roman fort, established sometime around 75 AD in the King Street/Spilman Street area. A new Roman road linked this fort with another in Llandeilo, the current A40/Priory Street is believed to follow the line of this road. A small settlement, called a vicus, is likely to have built up outside the fort alongside this road. In Carmarthen this early settlement appears to have been concentrated around a temple at the western end of Priory Street but by the AD150s streets and buildings were being laid out along Priory Street as the Roman town of Moridunum was established. The densest period of occupation appears to have been through the years AD150 – 200, noted in excavations on the site of Richmond Park primary school and St Peter's Car Park, where many of the Roman buildings were of earth and timber construction, including numerous shops and workshops. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century more elaborate stone houses were being constructed. By this time the town defences were well established, and remained a prominent feature of the town throughout the medieval period, even being re-used during the 17<sup>th</sup> century Civil War and still visible in the layout of the current town. The line of Richmond Terrace, Old Oak Lane, The Esplanade and Parade, Parade Road and Little Water Street perpetuates the line of these defences. Excavations at Church Street showed that the defences were substantial – comprising a clay bank fronted by ditches. The bank was later remodelled to take a stone facing.

A common feature of Roman towns is that burial took place outside the town walls, often located alongside a road leading from the city gates. Such a cemetery might well continue in use for early Christian burials and may even have then developed into a medieval religious foundation. The ideal candidate in Carmarthen's case is the site of the medieval Priory east of the Roman town, itself built on the site of the early medieval *clas* of Llandeulyddog. Stone coffins, possibly of Roman date, from the vicinity of the Old Grammar School are known from antiquarian records. Another 'extra-mural' roadside site was the Amphitheatre. In 2001 a small-scale excavation uncovered early Roman cremation burials on the sloping ground just west of the Amphitheatre. In Roman times the Amphitheatre was probably used for a variety of purposes, games, parades, even religious festivals and served as a focus for the region around Carmarthen as well as the town itself.

The early medieval *clas* of Llandeulyddog appears to be mentioned in the Welsh Laws, believed to be 8<sup>th</sup> century in date (possibly also referring to earlier 6<sup>th</sup> century events), which includes a list entitled 'The Seven Bishop Houses of Dyfed'. These were small monasteries, one of which was *Llan Teulydauc*, which is likely to have been on the site that was later occupied by the medieval Priory of St John and St Teulyddog. Remains of this medieval Priory were uncovered during excavations in 1979 that also uncovered short stretches of three ditches, two of which produced 8<sup>th</sup> century radio-carbon dates, perhaps indicating that these were part of a bank and ditch enclosure around the early medieval site. These excavations also revealed part of the medieval Priory Church, giving an indication of the position of the church, some claustral buildings, including the Prior's House, and part of the cemetery. It is evident that the greater part of the Priory remains unexplored, and that more survives below ground within the precinct boundary. 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century map evidence also gives a good idea of the extent of the precinct around the medieval Priory. This Priory became one of the richest in Wales, noted for its almsgiving and hospitality to travellers as well as its learning. This may also have been the place where the famous Black Book of Carmarthen was written.



In the early 12<sup>th</sup> century the new Anglo-Norman lords built a castle and laid out a small defended town in front of the castle gates. The castle was established on the site of the present Guildhall, with the early town concentrated around the Guildhall/Notts Square and Quay Street area. The defences were later extended to incorporate development along King Street and Spilman Street with further undefended medieval development along Lammas Street. This town was however known as 'New Carmarthen', as an existing settlement, controlled by the *clas*, was spread out along Priory Street. It is unclear when this settlement was established, it may be one of the few sites in Britain to show a continuity of settlement following the collapse of Roman administration in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. The Anglo-Normans attempted to assert their control by establishing a Benedictine Priory at Llandeulyddog but 'Old Carmarthen' remained a separate settlement throughout much of the medieval period, being granted a charter by Henry II and exercising its own market rights. This market is likely to have been located at the junction of Priory Street and Old Oak lane.

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries Henry VIII amalgamated the two towns in 1546 incorporating the Borough with a Mayor and common council. With the closure of the Priory, land in the borough was freed up for redevelopment. The Priory became a secular residence, recorded as the mansion house of Lady Joyce Gamage, or Griffith Leyston, the archdeacon and then sheriff of Carmarthenshire in c.1587.

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century Carmarthen was still the largest town in Wales, although it was soon to be eclipsed by the new industrial boroughs to the east. The medieval mills of the old Priory had a blast furnace established near them in 1747 and tin mills were added in 1761. Many of the former Priory buildings were demolished shortly after 1760 when a leadworks was established on the site, no doubt making use of the availability of water that had originally been provided to the Priory. East Carmarthen thus took on a more industrial character. Demolition of the Priory buildings was completed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the arrival of the railway across the southern edge of the area. By this time the leadworks had already closed down (c.1800) and cottages had been established around the former gatehouse. A school building was built in the grounds in 1846-7, becoming the grammar school in 1857. There is a tradition that subterranean vaults were discovered during its construction. A former resident also claimed that a large wall painting of a knight in armour was uncovered on an interior wall, subsequently covered by modern decoration. The grammar school was relocated to Richmond Terrace in 1884, with the former grammar school converted into four private dwellings. By this time a row of cottages (Priory Row) was established nearby. The 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen the establishment of a sports field and allotments over much of this area.

## **Previous Archaeological Studies**

There have been several studies of the history and archaeology of Carmarthen but three comprehensive studies (James 1980, James & James 2004, Austin et al 2005) have examined the history and development of the town alongside the historical and archaeological evidence and potential for further discoveries. These studies also go into more detail about the development and potential archaeology within this area around this proposed building site.

There have also been numerous archaeological excavations, surveys and watching briefs undertaken throughout the town, with four in the near vicinity of this site.

In 1976 excavations were undertaken c.80m to the northeast of this development site, covering an area of c.610 square metres (James 1985). These excavations uncovered the layout of some of the medieval Priory buildings, burials and some early medieval ditches. This revealed important information about the scale and construction of the Priory site, allowing further conjectures to be made about the more extensive layout of cloisters and other features but also demonstrated large areas of the precinct contained the potential for further important remains.

In 1996 Dyfed Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological watching brief on works in the garden of Hen Ardd, the property that borders the current development site to the west (Darke 1996). In a small area located c.30m to the northwest of the current development site the watching brief revealed evidence of two ditches aligned NW-SE and a clay bank. These were interpreted as the remains of part of the Roman town defences that therefore appear to run between the footpath to Church Yard and the driveway of Hen Ardd, making use of the natural topography of this area before it drops away to lower ground occupied by the allotments and the current development site.

In 2001 Border Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on a series of pits excavated by Laing Utilities for Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water along Dan-y-Banc, The Esplanade, North Parade, The Parade, Penuel Street and King Street (Border Archaeology 2001). This included the line of The Esplanade running in front of the current development. A series of late post medieval deposits and finds were recorded in several of the pits but little of archaeological significance was noted.

In 2004 Cambria Archaeology (now Dyfed Archaeological Trust) undertook an archaeological evaluation on the current development site (Ramsey 2004). Three trenches were excavated across the site. The earliest feature recorded was a linear gully or ditch running diagonally across the site, cut into the natural fluvio-glacial deposits. This was interpreted as a possible Roman feature of unknown function. This was overlain by a 0.55m thick post medieval deposit, possibly representing a buried garden soil.

Towards the southern end of the main evaluation trench the remains of a substantial mortared stone wall were revealed at a level of c.10.50m OD. The wall measured 1.5m high and 1m wide, running roughly NE-SW across the site. It was built of regularly coursed mortar-bonded stone rubble with levelling shale slabs. This was interpreted as the medieval Priory precinct boundary wall, although remnants of a mortar render on the walls southern face also suggested it may have formed the outer wall of a building. Building demolition debris was built up against the southern face of this wall. Post medieval demolition debris was also noted against the north side of the wall, over which lay a stiff brown silty clay layer, interpreted as a buried soil layer that may have been laid down during post medieval landscaping in this area, possibly during the 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the Esplanade or the Old Grammar School. A post medieval/modern dark garden/topsoil deposit overlay all other deposits.

Two small post medieval or modern pits were recorded in a small trench at the southern end of the development plot, whilst to the north a further trench investigated the nature of the existing garden terrace, concluding that the identified deposits represented episodes of post medieval garden soil deposition reflecting the various phases of terracing and landscaping in the garden to the west of the Old Grammar School.

## **WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS**

### **Methodology**

The watching brief methodology consisted of three site visits being made to monitor the excavation of material along the western bank prior to the construction of a retaining wall, the removal of topsoil and reduction of levels prior to the creation of the building raft, and the excavation of a small trench along the eastern boundary prior to the construction of a boundary wall. The excavation work was undertaken by a mechanical excavator (360° 13ton) using a toothed bucket for excavation along the western bank, but a toothless grading bucket for topsoil clearance and level reductions. The excess spoil was removed from site by truck. This work was undertaken on the 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> August, the weather was a mixture of bright sunny days and wet overcast days.

### **Results of the Watching Brief** (Figure 4, photos 1 – 10)

The excavation into the western bank revealed a large amount of loose material, with root disturbance caused by large trees to the rear of the plot. As this was cleared away and the edge straightened up to allow the construction of a retaining wall a succession of thick soil layers were revealed in the section along with the fragmentary remains of two walls and a series of contemporaneous pits. The topsoil strip and level reduction revealed a continuation of these soil deposits across the site, overlying the fragmentary remains of two walls with associated surfaces.

#### **Topsoil 01**

This deep deposit consisted of a dark grey-brown friable clayey-silt loam up to 1.1m thick in places. Individual layers were visible within this deposit towards the southern end of the site but they are all described together as a modern topsoil deposit. Modern pottery, glass and metal objects were visible within this layer. This deposit was at its thickest to the west, but spread across the entire development area following the pre-development contours and was still visible along the eastern end of the site after the levels had been reduced (photos 1 & 2).

#### **Layer 02**

Immediately below the topsoil deposit was a thick band of light brown, friable, sandy-clay with frequent medium-large sub-angular stone inclusions. This deposit could be seen extending across the full width of the building plot, following the falling slope east-west across the site. This deposit was also up to 1.1m thick in places, and contained a mixture of finds including 20<sup>th</sup> century porcelain and glassware, 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and clay pipes, medieval glazed wares and Roman pottery and ceramic building materials.

This deposit would appear to be a large dump or leveling layer of relatively recent (20<sup>th</sup> century) origin, possibly from construction works in the vicinity (photos 1 & 2).

#### **Layer 03**

Immediately below Layer02 was a similar deposit of mid grey-brown, friable, sandy-clay with moderate medium to large sub-rounded stone inclusions, these stones generally got smaller and more concentrated towards the base of this deposit. This deposit became visible roughly halfway up (northward) the building plot, and reached a maximum thickness of 0.7m, but also spread east-west across the site.

This deposit also contained a mixture of finds, including some mortar and building debris, with a broad date range from the Roman period to 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century material. No 20<sup>th</sup> century material was apparent, suggesting this deposit,

although possibly also a dump or leveling deposit, dates from the later post medieval period and may therefore have come from the construction of the adjacent mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Grammar School or nearby mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings of Priory Row and The Esplanade (photos 1 & 2).

Across much of the plot this deposit appeared to directly overlie natural subsoil and fluvio-glacial deposits, but also overlay Walls 12 and 14.

#### **Layer 04**

At the northwestern corner of the site was a layer of dark grey-brown, loose, clayey-silt with c.30% large to very-large sub-angular stone inclusions. This layer was at most 0.45m thick, and extended for c.5m southwards into the plot, underlying Layer03, but overlaying Wall 10. The deposit thinned as it spread to the south. The high content of stone within this deposit would suggest it is demolition layer, presumably from the wall above which it lies. The deposit did contain some ceramic building material (cbm), but due to health and safety constraints this deposit was not examined closely and the date of this cbm could not be ascertained (photos 1 & 4).

#### **Natural 05**

Underlying Layers 03 and 04 was a series of naturally deposited fluvio-glacial deposits, consisting of a mix of sandy-clays and gravels. These deposits were revealed at a depth of between 2m to 2.6m below the current ground surface in the deep western section of the site, but were only partially revealed across the cleared ground surface of the site, indicating the natural ground level fell quite sharply to the east (photos 1 & 2).

#### **Wall 06**

Located 15.4m northwards from the southern end of the building plot, and only visible in the deep western section, was a fragment of modern walling lying within a cut (Cut 07). The wall consisted of cemented bricks and breezeblocks, surrounded by a loose dark silty-loam with 20<sup>th</sup> century porcelain and glass finds. The visible breezeblocks appeared to be one side of a gatepost and it was unclear if these represented in situ or demolished wall remains. The wall remains were covered by the topsoil Layer01 but cut into Layer02. They were clearly modern in date, and may relate to either a former entrance to the adjacent driveway of Ty Ardd or a small structure depicted on later 20<sup>th</sup> century Ordnance Survey maps within this building plot.

### ***Pits 09***

Located 31m northwards from the southern end of the building plot, and also only visible in the western section was a series of three adjoining U-shaped pits or trenches containing a single fill (Fill 08). The northernmost pit/trench measured 0.4m wide and 0.3m deep, adjoining a central pit/trench 0.6m wide and 0.65m deep in turn adjoining the southernmost pit/trench measuring 0.8m wide and 0.55m deep. It appeared the cut of this feature may also have continued as a flat bottomed and straight sided cut extending 1.2m further south, picked out in the section by a 0.08m thick deposit of friable fine cement lying on the base of the cut. All these features were filled with the same deposit (Fill 08) of dark grey-brown sandy-silt with frequent small-medium sub-angular stone inclusions, indicating all the pits/trenches were backfilled at the same time. These features were identifiable during the ground clearance works so their extent east-west was not ascertained. This feature was covered by Layer02 but cut into Layer03. No finds were recovered from this deposit but the occurrence of the cement would suggest a fairly recent date (photo 3).

### ***Wall 10***

Located in the very northwestern corner of the plot and beneath Layer04 were the possible remains of a simply-constructed wall. Set within a straight sided cut (Cut 11), of which a 0.8m depth was revealed but not bottomed, was a series of large to very-large rounded boulders, roughly coursed and surrounded by compacted clay. A segment 2.15m long was visible in the western section, with 0.8m visible in the northern section suggesting, if the wall continued in a straight line, a NNW-SSE orientation. Stratigraphically this appeared to be an early feature, the construction trench was cut directly into natural deposits but no finds were visible in the wall structure and no dating evidence discernable. The wall construction and alignment was markedly different from other wall remnants discovered within the building plot (Wall 12 & Wall 14) suggesting it was not part of the same period of construction. No further evidence of this feature could be discerned extending further north into the area of allotments but the lower courses may still survive below the current ground level in that area (photos 4 & 5).

### ***Wall 12 & Surface 13***

Located c.31.5m northwards from the southern end of the building plot was a fragment of mortared stone wall (Wall 12) with an associated slate surface (Surface 13). The wall measured 2.1m long, 0.7m wide and was constructed of local sub-angular rubble stone with slate leveling courses visible, set within a pale creamy-yellow fine mortar. The wall was orientated NE-SW (50°) and was revealed below Layer03 but the groundworks did not extend deep enough to reveal any further construction details or which deposits it may have been cut into. The southeastern edge presented a flat face whilst the northwestern edge was uneven and slightly curved in places. This uneven edge may be accounted for by root action.

An adjoining slate surface was partially uncovered around the southwestern end of the wall, suggesting the visible southwesterly extent of the wall was in fact the terminus of this segment of walling. The surface consisted of some intact, but mainly broken and disintegrating slates covering an area of at least 0.6m wide (NE-SW) and 1.5m long (SE-NW). The full extent of the surface was not revealed, as it extended underneath Layer03.

It was unclear if the wall extended further to the northeast, due to the constraints of the groundworks. No continuation was visible at the reduced ground level, and no evidence for its continuation was visible in the 0.8m deep section that was cut 6m to the northeast to accommodate the new boundary wall. It is possible that

any continuation may have been demolished to a significantly lower level during the construction of the Old Grammar School and associated garden landscaping.

The build, composition and orientation of the wall, and the adjacent slate surface, is very similar to that of Wall 14 and Surface 15 to the southeast (see below), suggesting the two are likely to be contemporary (photos 6 & 7).

### **Wall 14 & Surface 15**

Located 12.5m northwards from the southern end of the building plot was another fragment of mortared stone wall (Wall 14), enclosing an associated slate surface (Surface 15). The wall measured 5.1m long, 0.55m wide and ran in a NE-SW (55°) direction from the current eastern boundary of the building plot, before returning SE for at least another 3m, extending beyond the area revealed by the level reduction within the building plot. The wall was of one continuous build, constructed of local sub-angular rubble stone with slate leveling courses visible, set within a pale creamy-yellow fine mortar. This wall was revealed below Layer03 but excavation did not go down far enough to reveal any further construction details or which deposits it may have been cut into.

Adjoining this wall to the southeast, and in places mortared onto the wall, were remnants of a slate surface. This consisted of very large slate slabs, measuring up to 0.6m by 0.5m and 0.05m thick, set on top of a very rough surface (Fill 16) of partly loose and partly roughly coursed mortared stone rubble. In places the slate was disintegrating and was not fully revealed, but would appear to represent an internal original ground surface within a building.

Some post medieval (possibly 19<sup>th</sup> century) brick fragments were revealed amongst the disintegrating slate surface within the building remains, but it is possible that later deposits could easily have become mixed with the disintegrating slate and lower rubble infill as this area was machine cleaned and this brick could not be used to conclusively date the structure.

The location of the NE-SW section of this wall, and its construction, would appear to tie in closely with the section of wall revealed during the 2004 evaluation (the outline of the 2004 evaluation trench was revealed during the ground works (**Figure 4**). The wall revealed in 2004 was 1.2m high and 1m wide with an external batter on its northern face and possible render on its southern face. The wall revealed during the current groundworks was not fully excavated and the nature of the rubble infill not fully investigated, it is possible further excavation would reveal a greater thickness to the wall at lower levels, as suggesting by the description of the wall revealed in the 2004 evaluation.

The wall itself was on a slightly different alignment to, and appeared to continue under, the adjacent Old Grammar School building (built in 1846), suggesting an earlier structure. No building is marked in this location on either the tithe map of 1842, Wood's map of 1834 or Lewis's map of 1786 which would suggest the building may predate 1786 at least, and was already demolished a long time before the construction of the Grammar School.

## CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological watching brief recorded a series of deep later post medieval and modern deposits across the site that appeared to consist of a mix of levelling deposits and construction debris, possibly from nearby construction works at the Old Grammar School and along The Esplanade. Within this were some relatively modern features, such as Wall 06 and Pits 09, but these features and deposits were of low archaeological significance, although they did contain a range of finds including a small amount of Roman and medieval pottery.

Below these deposits were revealed the fragmentary remains of three walls that were of significant archaeological interest.

Wall 14 would appear to be the wall revealed during the 2004 archaeological evaluation. A greater extent of this wall was uncovered during the current groundworks, revealing it to represent the northwest corner of a building with an internal slate floor, and not the Priory precinct boundary wall previously suggested as a possibility (Ramsey 2004). The date of this building could not be ascertained. Some possible 19<sup>th</sup> century bricks appeared amongst the internal rubble fill but these could have been introduced from a later deposit during the current machine clearance of this site. The building appears to be an earlier structure and unrelated to the adjacent Old Grammar School (built 1846), and map evidence suggests at least a pre-1786 date. The wall is aligned to the direction of The Esplanade and the conjectured line of the Priory precinct wall which would also suggest a medieval or post medieval date, but as it is not aligned east-west it is unlikely to be directly associated with the complex of Priory buildings uncovered during the 1979 excavations to the northeast (James 1985).

A small fragment of wall (Wall 12) and slate surfacing 11.5m to the northwest would appear to be from the same building, or complex, due to strong similarities in construction and alignment. No return or continuation of this fragment of wall was revealed, and the associated slate surface would appear to be an external surface here so therefore it could not be ascertained if this wall represented another building or a boundary wall. Rising natural deposits to the west indicated this is likely to be the westernmost extent of any related complex of buildings, and further remains are likely to have been heavily disturbed or destroyed during levelling works associated with the construction of the Old Grammar School and its rear gardens.

Both these walls were revealed at the lowest level of reduced ground required for the construction works and are therefore likely to remain intact below the raft foundation of the current development.

In the northwest corner of the building plot a third, possibly older wall was revealed. Wall 10 ran in a NNW-SSE direction, consisting of coursed clay-bonded river boulders. No dating evidence was recovered, although it was cut directly into the natural fluvio-glacial deposits and of a simpler construction and different alignment to Walls 12 & 14, suggesting an earlier structure. As only a small section of this wall was revealed in the sections of the building plot its function as a building, boundary or enclosure wall could not be ascertained. There is a strong possibility that the continuation of this wall remains preserved below ground both to the south under the driveway to Hen Ardd, and to the north under the adjacent allotments.

The possible Roman gully revealed during the 2004 evaluation was not revealed during this stage of works and remains undisturbed below this development.



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### Maps

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Anon, 1842, Carmarthen St Peters Parish Tithe Map

Ordnance Survey, 1888, 1;500 map Carmarthenshire Sheet XXXIX.3

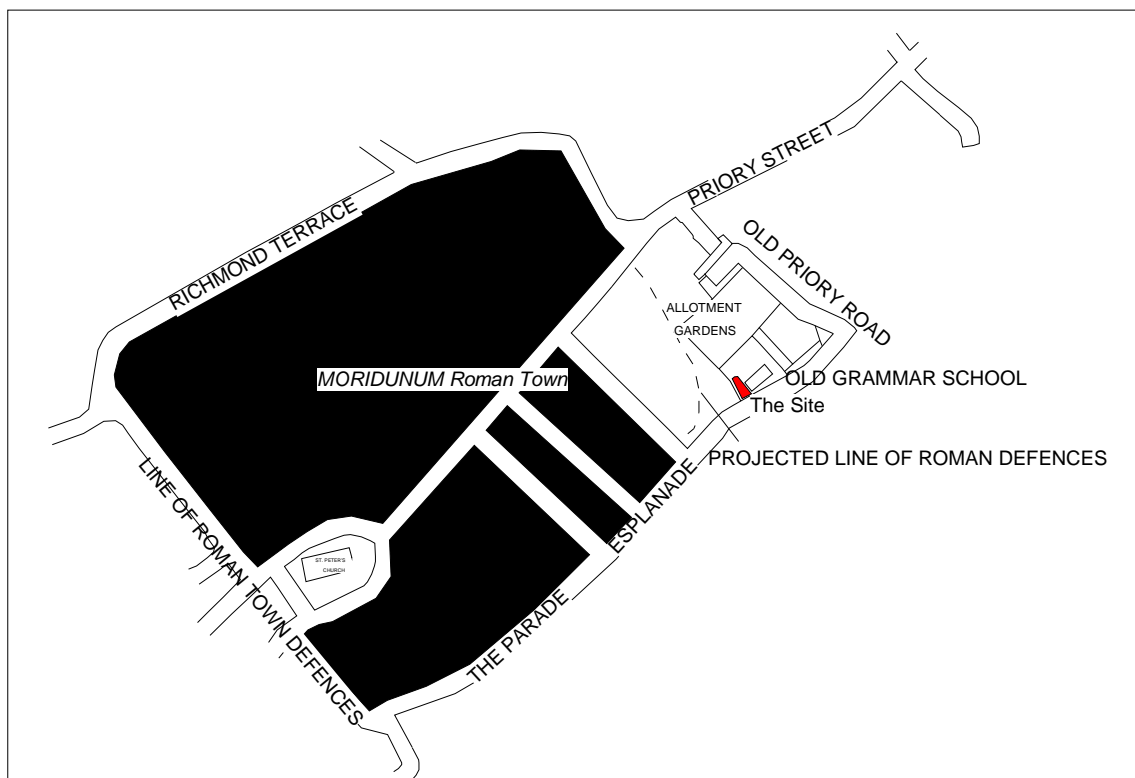




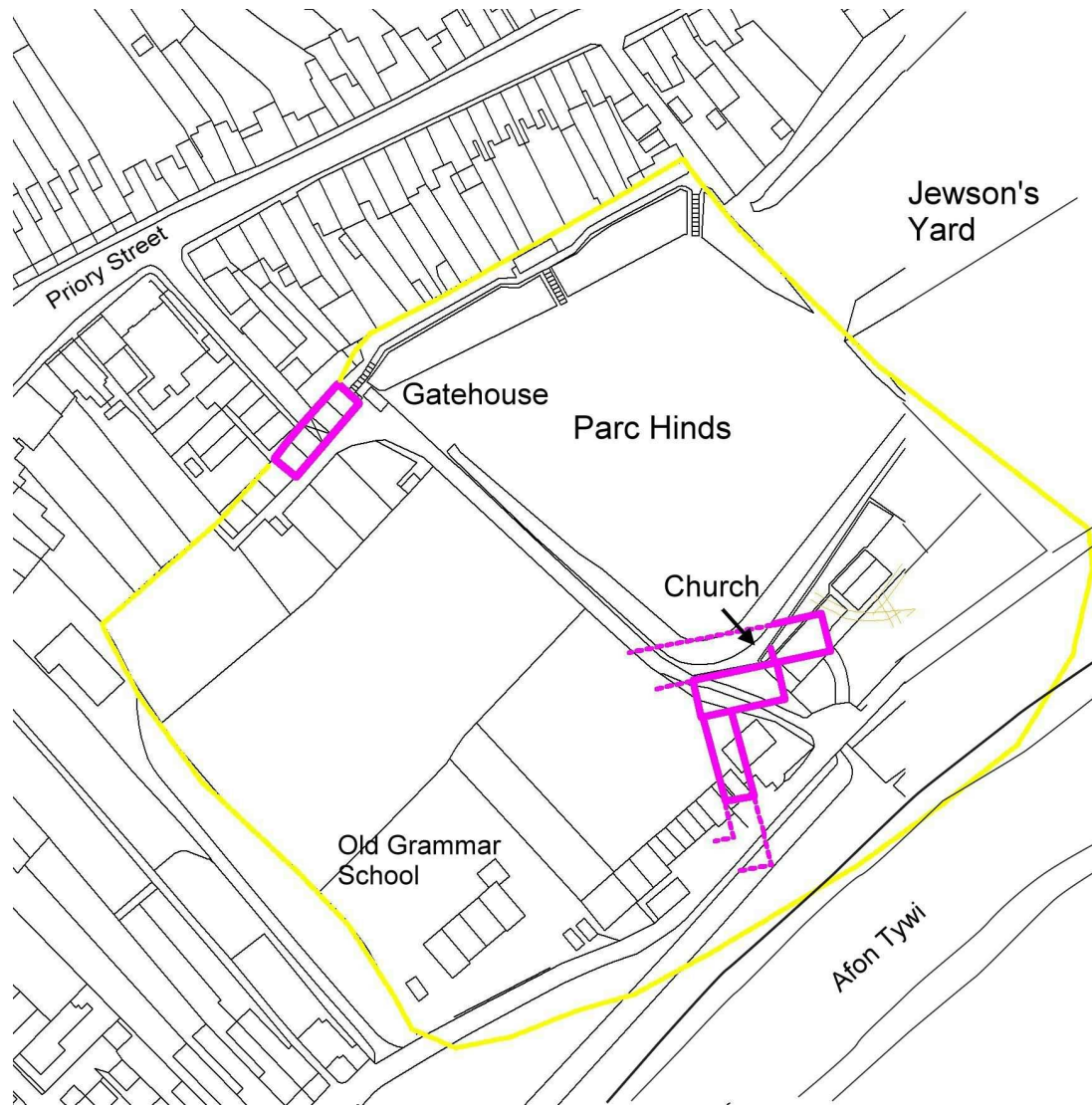
**Figure 1:** Location map, based on the Ordnance Survey.

Reproduced from the 1995 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

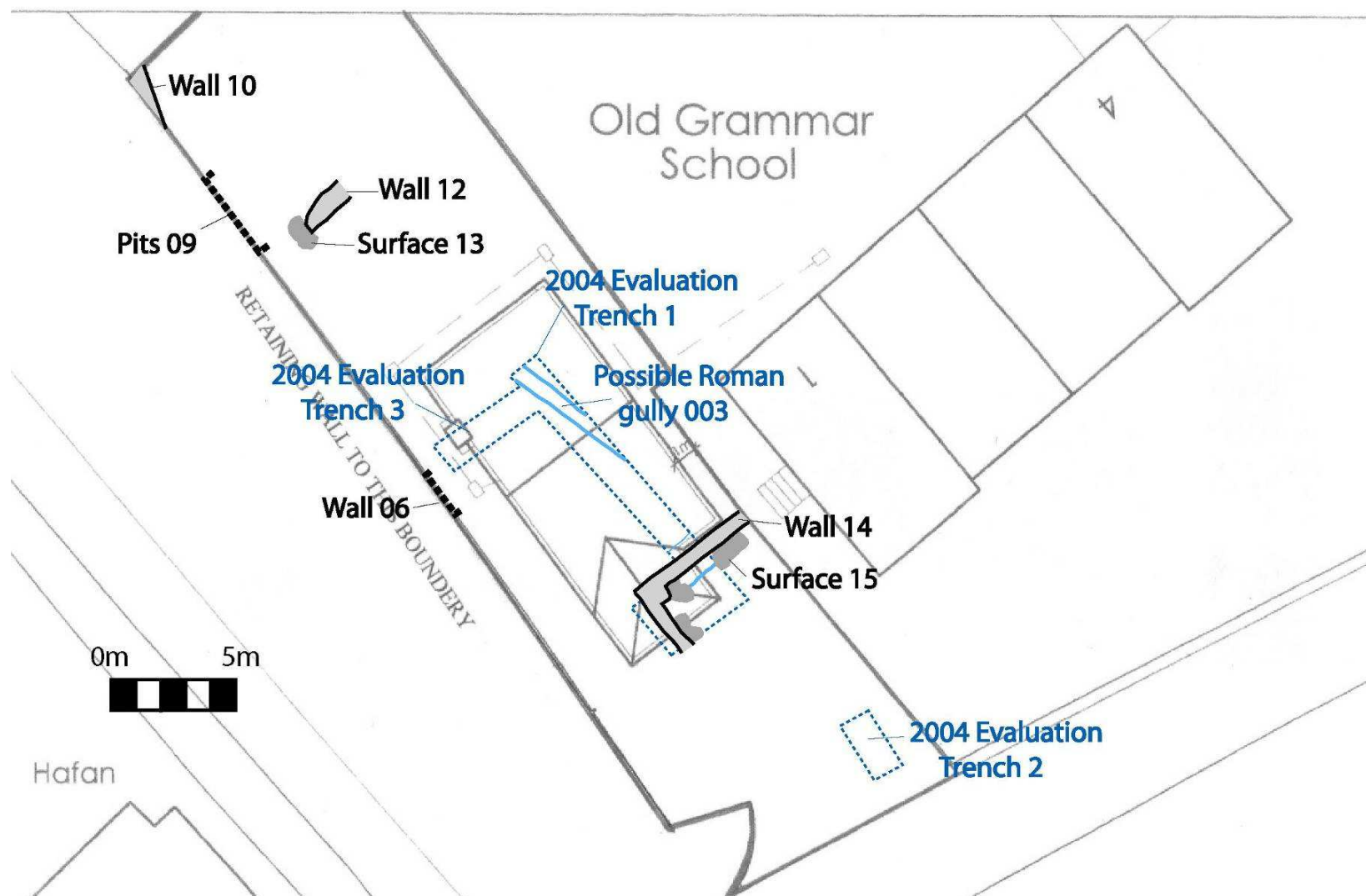




**Figure 2:** The location map in relation to the Roman town of Moridunum.  
Taken from Ramsey 2004.



**Figure 3:** The layout of the recorded remains of the medieval Priory (purple) with the conjectured line of the precinct wall (in yellow), overlain on the modern plan of Carmarthen. Taken from Austin et al 2005.



**Figure 4:** Site plan showing the building plot, proposed development and adjacent Old Grammar School. Overlaid in blue are the trenches and features identified during the 2004 evaluation (Ramsey 2004), overlaid in black and grey are the features identified during the current works. Site plan provided by the client, Tristan Smith.





Photo 1: Looking SSE at the deep western section, showing the build-up of layers overlying the orange fluvio-glacial deposits. A fragment of Wall 10 is visible at the base of the section. 2m scale.



Photo 2. Plan view, looking NE, of the building plot as the levels were being reduced. Natural fluvio-glacial deposits are visible at the bottom of the photo with the succession of layers above showing the naturally falling ground levels.





Photo 3. Pits 09 visible in the section, with the pale grey cement deposit clearly visible on the left. 2m scale.



Photo 4. SW facing shot of Wall 10 with layers 01-04 above it. 2m scale.





Photo 5. NW facing shot of Wall 10 in the northern section of the building plot, more clearly showing the roughly coursed river boulders. Scale in 0.5m segments.



Photo 6. NE facing shot of Wall 12, with the fragmentary remains of Surface 13 visible at the bottom end of the wall. 2 x 1m scales.





Photo 7. NE facing shot of Wall 12 after the levels had been reduced. The undisturbed fluvio-glacial deposits are visible at the bottom, whilst topsoil 01 deposits still remain at the top. 2x1m scale.



Photo 8. NE facing shot of Wall 14 after levels had been reduced. The return in the wall is clearly visible. 2 x 1m scale.





Photo 9. Close-up of the remains of Surface 15 showing the rubble fill (fill 16) below which was a mixture of roughly coursed rubble, shown here, and more random loose rubble. This also shows the surface mortared onto the remains of Wall 14 on the left. Scale in 0.5m segments.



Photo 10. NE facing shot Wall 14 in relation to the Old Grammar School. 2 x 1m scale.

## **Plot 1, The Old Grammar School, The Esplanade, Carmarthen: Archaeological Watching Brief**

RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NUMBER 2009/68

Medi 2009  
September 2009

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*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*