

**ROCHE COURT, BROADWAY,  
LAUGHARNE CARMARTHENSHIRE:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF  
(SN 29470 10212)**



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust  
For: Mr and Mrs Towyn Evans



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## DYFED ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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# ROCHE COURT, BROADWAY, LAUGHARNE, CARMARTHENSHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Gan / By

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## **ROCHE COURT, BROADWAY, LAUGHARNE, CARMARTHENSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

### **SUMMARY**

*Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services were commissioned by Mr and Mrs Towyn Evans, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of two new extensions to the property known as Roche Court, Broadway, Laugharne, Carmarthenshire.*

*The development site lies in the grounds of Roche Castle, a medieval fortified manor site of which some upstanding remains still exist. The existing bungalow at Roche Court was constructed during the early 1960s after a small scale archaeological excavation of the castle was conducted at the site. The new proposals will extend the bungalow in two areas to the north and east of the existing property.*

*The excavations revealed that structural elements possibly relating to the castle and later cottage boundaries survived within the development area. These were recorded in the northeastern extension area and comprised an insubstantial rubble stone wall of probably post-medieval date, and a larger faced stone wall. This wall may be associated with the castle. Although only a small amount of the wall was visible within the foundation trench, indications suggest it may be a corner, turning to the southwest. Neither of these walls was actually disturbed by the excavation of the footprint of the extension or its foundation trenches, suggesting it had been previously disturbed, perhaps when the bungalow was constructed. The walls will survive beneath the floor level of the new extension.*

*The footings for the bungalow were made of stone with cement bonding. It is presumed that these 1960s footings reused stone from the castle and former cottage. The ground level on the western side of the bungalow had seemingly been raised during its construction.*

*No finds of medieval date were recovered from the excavation areas with the majority of the material recovered dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These may relate to use of the site during this time, when it is known that a small cottage had been erected within the castle ruins. However, a single sherd of North Devon gravel tempered ware was also recovered. This form of pottery was produced from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards at Barnstaple and Bideford and was widely traded along the Welsh coast during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.*

*The archaeological remains revealed during the course of the watching brief are considered to be of regional significance. The potential for further hitherto unknown archaeological remains to be present within the vicinity of the development area remains high.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Commission**

1.1.1 A planning application was submitted to Carmarthenshire County Council by Mr and Mrs Towyn Evans (Planning ref W/25704) for the extension of an existing property known as Roche Court at Broadway near Laugharne, Carmarthenshire (NGR SN 29470 10212)

1.1.2 The development site lies within the site of the former Roche Castle, a medieval castle or fortified manor house (PRN 5070).

1.1.3 Given the archaeological and historic significance of the area, and to protect historic environment interests whilst enabling development, an archaeological condition was attached to planning permission for the development by the local planning authority, following advice from their archaeological advisors. The condition stated:

*'No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority'.*

1.1.4 It was confirmed that the written scheme of investigation required an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the development.

1.1.5 To comply with the planning condition Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services (DAT-FS) were commissioned by Mr and Mrs Towyn Evans, to undertake the archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the development.

1.1.6 A written scheme of investigation was prepared by DAT-FS and approved by the local planning authority prior to groundworks commencing, as required by the planning condition.

### **1.2 Scope of the Project**

1.2.1 The written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by DAT-FS, stated that the project objectives were:

- Provision of a written scheme of investigation to outline the methodology by which Dyfed Archaeological Trust will undertake the watching brief.
- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To appropriately investigate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

1.2.2 The overall aim of the work was to undertake archaeological attendance during the proposed groundworks at the site that had the potential to expose, damage or destroy archaeological remains, and undertake appropriate investigation and recording of any such remains if revealed.

### 1.3 Report Outline

1.3.1 This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background, and provides a summary and discussion of the results of the watching brief.

### 1.4 Abbreviations

1.4.1 Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record<sup>1</sup> (HER) are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR). Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI.

### 1.5 Illustrations

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

### 1.6 Timeline

1.6.1 The following timeline is used within this report to give date ranges for the various archaeological periods that may be mentioned within the text (Table 1).

Period	Approximate date	
Palaeolithic –	c.450,000 – 10,000 BC	Prehistoric
Mesolithic –	c. 10,000 – 4400 BC	
Neolithic –	c.4400 – 2300 BC	
Bronze Age –	c.2300 – 700 BC	
Iron Age –	c.700 BC – AD 43	
Roman (Romano-British) Period –	AD 43 – c. AD 410	Historic
Post-Roman / Early Medieval Period –	c. AD 410 – AD 1066	
Medieval Period –	1066 – 1536	
Post-Medieval Period <sup>2</sup> –	1536 – 1750	
Industrial Period –	1750 – 1899	
Modern –	20th century onwards	

**Table 1:** Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales

<sup>1</sup> Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo SA19 6AF.

<sup>2</sup> The post-medieval and industrial periods are combined as the post-medieval period on the Regional Historic Environment Record as held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust



**Figure 1:** Site Location map of watching brief site from the Ordnance Survey

Reproduced from the 2003 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale 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

## **2. THE SITE**

### **2.1 Location**

2.1.1 The application area lies towards the rear of the Carpenters Arms public house Broadway (NGR SN 29740 10212) near Laugharne, Carmarthenshire and is accessed by a lane from the A4066.

2.1.2 The site lies within a broadly rectangular enclosure and within a sloping valley at the foot of the hill known as Hugden. A stream known as Mackerel Lake flows to the south east of the area.

2.1.3 Much of the site is now occupied by a modern bungalow known as Roch Court and its associated garden. The ivy clad remains of Roche Castle, the only surviving upstanding remains, lie immediately to the west of the bungalow.

### **2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background**

2.2.1 Roch Castle is thought to have been founded by members of the de Rupe family, who were also responsible for constructing Roch Castle in Pembrokeshire. They were descendants of Godebert the Fleming, the head of a wealthy family of Flemish settlers who migrated to the United Kingdom in the late 11<sup>th</sup> or early 12<sup>th</sup> century (following climatic changes resulting in the loss of considerable areas of farm land in the low lying parts of Flanders). The family were granted lands in west Pembrokeshire in the Cantref of Rhos, and established the settlement at Roch.

2.2.2 The family later took the surname of de Rupe / de la Roche due to the large outcrop of igneous rock on which Roch Castle, Pembrokeshire stands (Rupe is Latin and Roch(e) French for rock). The earliest elements of the surviving Roch Castle in Pembrokeshire are thought to date from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. By then the family owned sizable lands across Pembrokeshire as part of the Barony of Roch and Pill, and also acquired lands in Carmarthenshire. Roche Castle in Broadway was founded in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, probably by one of the siblings of Thomas de la Roche.

2.2.3 The site is marked as '*Macrels*' Rees's Map of South Wales and the Border in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Rees, 1932)

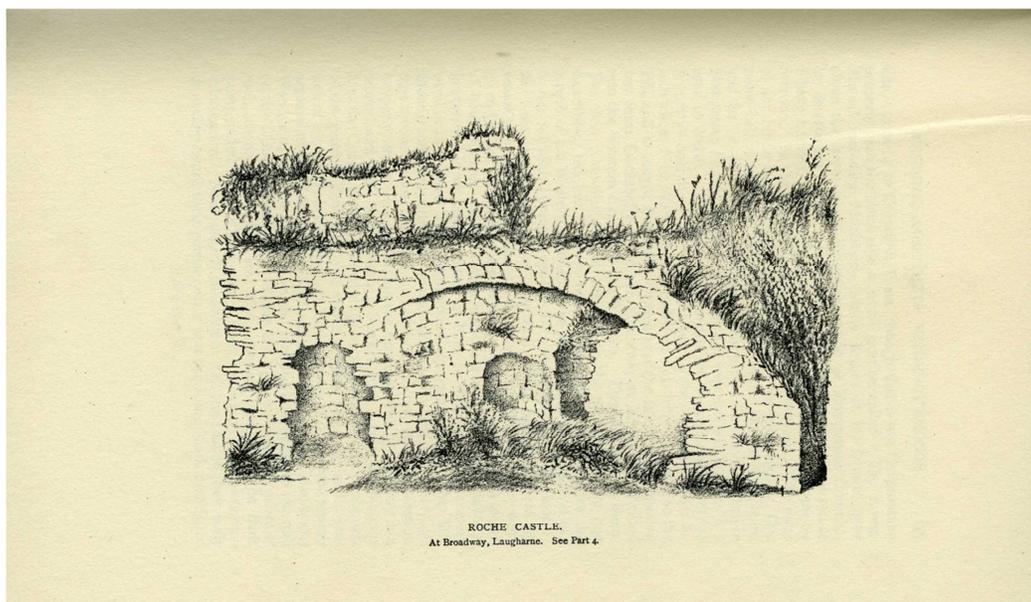
2.2.4 An undated document held in the Public Record Office in London records Roche as '*the manor of Egleswiskimen and Roches*', which along with an estate of 1000 acres was granted to William Reed by Griffith and Thomas Nicholas (Jones, 1980, 48). The Reed family are first recorded in Carmarthenshire during the reign of Edward III (1312 – 1327) and are known to have owned further residences at Green Castle, Pilroath, Laques and within Carmarthen town (*ibid*, 47). In 1530 Roch was owned by John and Thomas Reed, and in 1550 James Reed is described as owner of a '*mansion house called Roches alias Maccwells Walls at Laugharn*' (Jones, 1997, 174). By 1594 James Reed's grandson, also named James, was owner of Roch and is described as Steward of the Earl of Essex for the Royal Lordship. The Reed family remained at Roch until the end of the Tudor period (Jones, 1980, 48).

2.2.5 During the early 17<sup>th</sup> century Judge Sir John Powell constructed a mansion known as Broadway c. 900m to the southwest of Roch and material from Roch Castle was used in its construction (Jones, 1980, 14). There is also a tradition that later many of the houses in Broadway were constructed with stone removed from the castle (Tyler, 1925).

2.2.6 During the 19<sup>th</sup> century more of the structure of the castle survived than remains today. Mary Curtis, writing in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, relates in her description of the site that:

*'The wall enclosing the castle was in existence thirty or forty years ago, and the walls of the castle were up to the second floors, and the rooms and apertures of the windows remain; now there is only a piece of the wall of the ground floor which looks as if it had been an entrance to a court-yard. Twenty seven years ago a large round room existed with windows like castle windows – small bay ones – and several round rooms, without windows, close together, and a spiral staircase, and there was a tower'* (Curtis, 1880, 91).

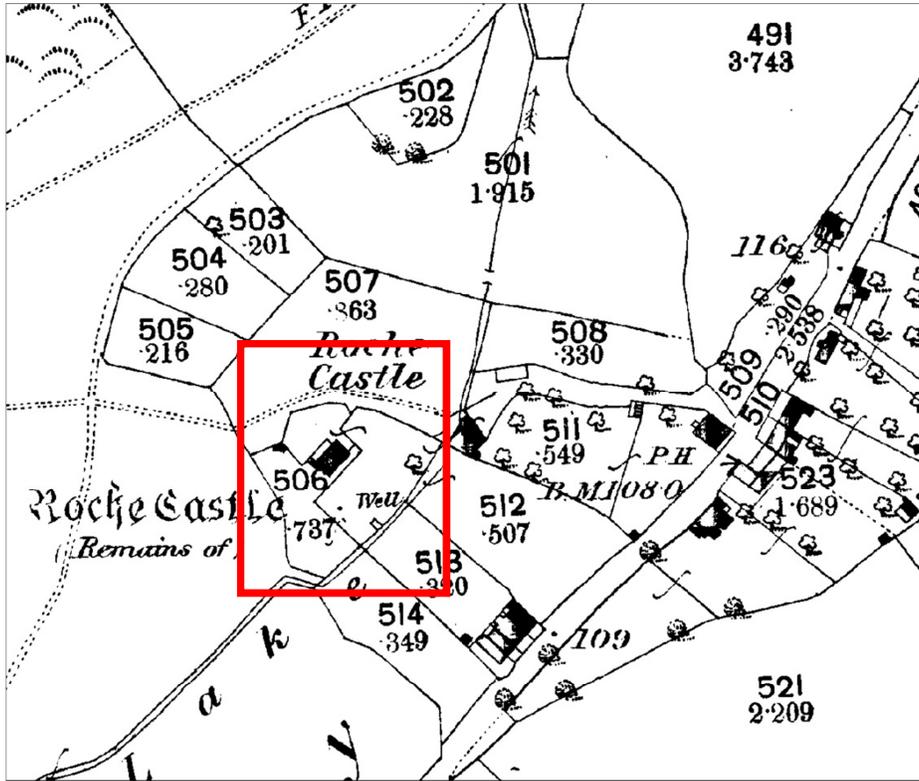
2.2.7 An etching of the remains of the castle during the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is included with Mary Curtis' account (Figure 2). Curtis also alludes to the fact that a dovecote was once located *'at the side of that house just before the ruins of the castle'* and that the holes of the dovecote were still visible at the gable end of the house in 1878 (*ibid*).



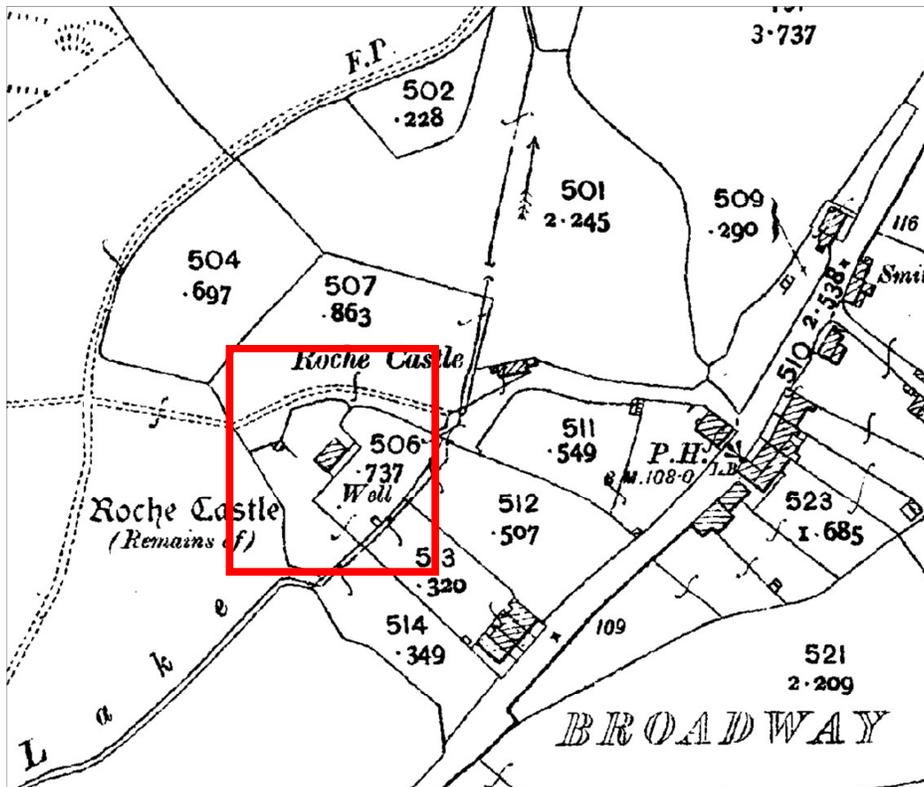
**Figure 2:** Etching of Roch Castle remains c.1880 (Curtis 1880)

2.2.5 By the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a cottage had been constructed on the site, but Curtis makes no reference to this, although it is shown on late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century mapping of the area (Figures 3 & 4). The cottage is believed to have been constructed from material from the remains of the castle. It was demolished in 1959. In 1960 further clearance work was undertaken on the site when a vault located to the northeast of the remaining tower was demolished (Butler, 10).

2.2.6 During the early 1960s Roche Court bungalow was constructed. Archaeological excavations were undertaken ahead of construction works and revealed a series of buried wall foundations relating to the former Roche Castle. Further excavation works on the bungalow to the north of the castle revealed evidence for further wall footings. A quantity of unstratified medieval pottery ranging in date from the later 13<sup>th</sup> century up to the late medieval/ Tudor period was also recovered from the excavation area. In addition to the pottery finds a late medieval small bronze bell, interpreted as a sacring bell which would have been rung when the Host was raised during celebration of Mass, was recovered from the southern end of the western bungalow excavations (Butler 1962, 12).



**Figure 3:** Extract of 1889 1:2500 OS Map development area show in red



**Figure 4:** Extract of 1906 1:2500 OS Map development area show in red

### **3. WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY**

The detailed methodology for the watching brief was laid out within the WSI. The relevant methodology can be summarised as follows.

#### **3.1 Fieldwork**

3.1.1 A 'watching brief' was undertaken at the commencement of groundworks at the site that had the potential to expose, damage or destroy underlying archaeological remains. This required the presence of an archaeologist during the excavation of the footprints of the two proposed extensions to Roche Court, one at the northeastern end of the property and the other at the southwestern end.

3.1.2 An archaeologist supervised the excavation of the footprints of the proposed extension areas to the formation level of the new floors of the extensions. A further visit was undertaken during the excavation of footing trenches for the new excavations, as it had not been possible to excavate the ground level to the top of archaeological deposits during the first visit, due to the construction methodology for the extensions.

3.1.3 All archaeological deposits revealed during the groundworks were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.

3.1.4 Recording of all archaeological features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual<sup>3</sup> used by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services.

#### **3.2 Post-Fieldwork Reporting and Archiving**

3.2.1 All data recovered during the fieldwork will be collated into a site archive structured in accordance with the specifications in *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Brown 2007), and the procedures recommended by the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.

3.2.2 The results of the fieldwork have been assessed in local, regional and wider contexts.

3.2.3 This report is fully representative of the results of the fieldwork.

#### **3.3 Timetabling of Fieldwork**

3.2.7 The watching brief methodology involved monitoring of the topsoil stripping and footings excavations ahead of the construction of two new extensions to Roch Court. The watching brief was undertaken on 26 January and 30<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

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<sup>3</sup> Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services have adopted the Recording Manual developed by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology. A copy will be available on-site for inspection if required.

#### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

4.1 The initial visit to the site was made during the initial ground level reduction works within the footprints of the two proposed extension areas. Excavations were undertaken with a tracked excavator using a toothless grading bucket. The resulting spoil was removed from site using a dumper and stored along the western boundary of the property.

##### **Eastern Extension Area**

4.2 An area 5 x 4.1m was stripped to a maximum depth of 0.85m adjacent to the east gable of Roch Court bungalow and revealed a stratigraphic sequence of garden soil overlying shattered old red sandstone bedrock.

4.3 The footing of the existing bungalow was revealed on the western side of the excavated area. This was constructed of coursed stone with concrete capping. The bonding material was modern cement (Photo 1).

4.4 Also on the western side of the excavated area was a modern raised tarmac pathway that crossed in front of the bungalow gable end. This path had been set on rubble infill (Photo 2). The ground level around this end of the bungalow was significantly lower than the tarmac path, and a steep drop in the ground level was visible (Photo 2).

4.5 No evidence for any surviving archaeological remains were identified within the footprint of the eastern extension. Bedrock was exposed across its footprint.

4.6 The footing trenches were excavated a further 0.45m in depth from the formation level into the bedrock (Photo 3).

##### **Northern Extension Area**

4.7 The footprint of the extension on the northern side of the bungalow measured 7m x 4m. Initial stripping to formation level was quite shallow and revealed a spread of rubble containing 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century ceramic material (Photo 4). It was determined that the ground surface comprised areas of both exposed natural bedrock and areas of stone rubble.

4.8 Following discussions with the archaeological advisor to the planning authority it was decided that a further visit should be made to the site to observe the excavation of foundation trenches through the rubble areas. The footings were excavated to a further maximum depth of 1m with the base of the trenches all cutting into the underlying shattered red sandstone bedrock. It could be seen that the bungalow footings on this side of the house were also sat upon a cement bonded stone wall, although here the wall was much shallower, presumably as bedrock was reached at a higher level than to the east.

4.9 As excavations progressed the truncated ends of stone walls were revealed on the inside of the foundation trench. The walls were only visible in the southern section of the foundation trench and all appeared to continue under the footprint of the proposed extension and the bungalow. Archaeological excavations undertaken in the 1960s on the site indicate that a northwest – southeast aligned wall footing was identified in a very similar location (Figure 4), but the interpretation and date of the wall was unclear. Further hand cleaning of the wall demonstrated it was formed by two abutting walls identifiable through differences in the mortar and stone (Walls 100 and 101; Photo 5).

4.10 Wall (100) measured 0.33m in height with a width of 0.5m and was constructed of non-faced rubble, bonded with a very white lime mortar suggesting a high lime content. The wall did not look very substantial.

4.11 Wall (101) survived to a height of 0.63m with a visible width of 0.6m. This wall appeared to be of a much more substantial nature than (100) and was

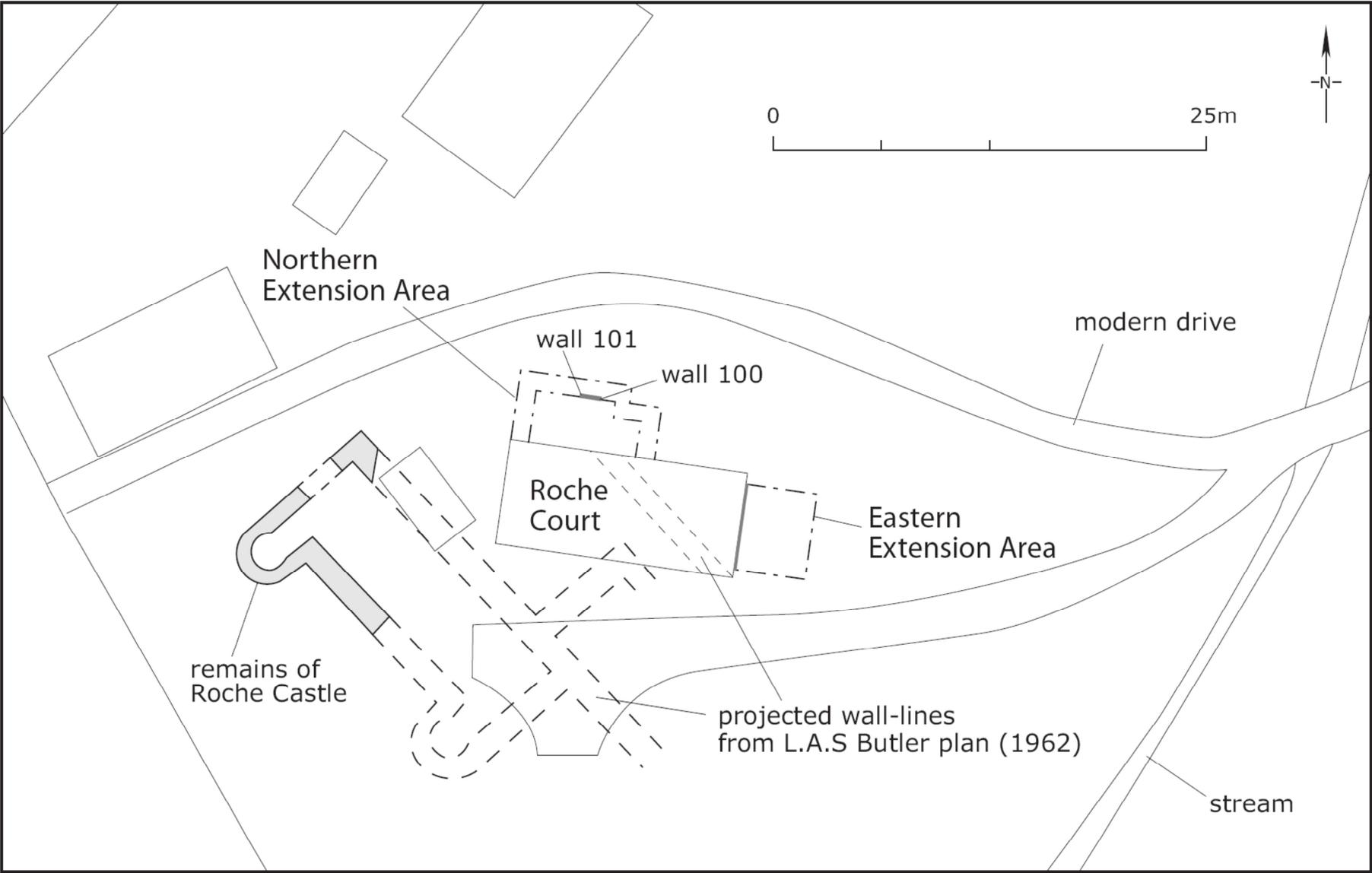
faced with roughly dressed stone, bonded with a darker mortar with much lower lime content than (100). It is possible that wall (101) represents a corner of a wall, turning from a northwest – southeast alignment to a northeast – southwest alignment. This was implied by possible facing stones seen on the western side of the wall.

4.12 Both walls lie outside the former cottage site, but it is possible that wall (100) may represent a boundary associated with the cottage.

4.13 Wall (101) is considered to pre-date wall (100). It could potentially be the remnants of an original castle wall, and possibly the saem asthat seen in the 1960s excavations. Due to the limitations of the excavation area, it was not possible to confirm this. No medieval finds were recovered from the area.

4.14 Quantities of 19<sup>th</sup> transfer printed ceramic material were recovered from the soil around the walls during cleaning. In addition, a large sherd of unglazed coarse red earthenware was recovered. This was later identified as North Devon gravel tempered ware (Murphy pers comm). This form of ceramic was produced in potteries located at Barnstaple and Bideford from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The industry declined during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but production continued at some sites until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. North Devon gravel tempered ware was widely traded along the English and Welsh coasts and during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries the pottery was being exported as far afield as Ireland and America. No further archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the course of the watching brief within the area of the northern extension.

4.15 No medieval or earlier finds were recovered from the depth of groundworks within the whole development site.



**Figure 4:** Overall site plan showing archaeological features revealed overlain on Butler's plan.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

6.1 The archaeological watching brief undertaken Roche Court development area has revealed a series of archaeological features.

6.2 The wall footing exposed on the eastern gable end of the existing bungalow of Roche Court was seen to be constructed of random coursed stone. The footings could relate to the reuse of an earlier stone wall, but this is very unlikely as the wall alignments are different to anything known about the alignment of the castle and later cottage on the site. The increased depth of the footings on this side of the building compared to that to the north was quite substantial, but presumably relates to the reduction in ground level to the east. The wall footings to the north were also of stone and cement, but in this area they were much shallower and sat directly upon bedrock. It is very likely that wall footings were contemporary with the 1960s bungalow, but were made using stone taken from the castle.

6.3 The eastern extension was located in an area where the ground level had already been significantly altered. The ground naturally drops to the west and to compensate for this drop, the ground level had been previously raised using rubble. A tarmac path had then been constructed on top of this raised ground adjacent to the bungalow. The ground level may also have been previously reduced when the bungalow was built.

6.4 The two abutting walls revealed within the footings excavations undertaken on the north side of Roch Court are of earlier date. Wall (100) may relate to a former boundary associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> century cottage, but it has not been possible to substantiate this. The wall was roughly coursed and used a very lime rich mortar. The wall appeared to be aligned northwest to southeast, but was not visible in the northern face of the foundation trench.

6.5 Wall (101) appears to predate (100) and retains some of its dressed facing stones. It was also aligned northwest to southeast as far as could be ascertained. The wall was only seen in the north facing side of the foundation trench. It is possible that the wall formed a corner turning 90 degrees to a northeast to southwest alignment. Possible facing stones on this perpendicular stretch of wall may just have been visible in the section. If the wall did turn here, it would explain its absence in the opposing section of the trench. The wall may potentially relate to the castle, but given the limited nature of the excavations it was not possible to confirm this. It is possible that the northwest to southeast part of this wall aligns with the wall footing identified during excavations undertaken ahead of the construction of Roch Court in the 1960s.

6.6 The probable walls identified within the footprint of the northern extension have been previously disturbed as they were only visible in the very edge of the southern side of the foundation trench. The remains of the possible corner had also been previously removed (assuming the interpretation of the corner is correct). It is likely that the walls continue beneath the footprint of the northern extension and will remain preserved under the floor surface. The walls were not visible in the foundation trench on the eastern side of the northern extension. The walls would have been previously removed or damaged by the 1960s extension.

6.6 No finds of medieval date were recovered from the development area during the course of the archaeological watching brief. The earliest material recovered as a sherd of North Devon gravel tempered ware that could date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

6.7 The archaeological remains revealed during the course of the watching brief are considered to be of regional importance. The potential for further hitherto unknown archaeological remains of medieval date to be present within the vicinity of the development area remains high.

## **7. SOURCES**

### **Map**

Ordnance Survey 1889 1:2500 Carmarthenshire Sheet XLV.10

Ordnance Survey 1906 1:2500 Carmarthenshire Sheet XLV.10

Speed's Map of Carmarthenshire 1610

Wood's Map of Carmarthen 1834.

### **Published and Unpublished**

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Curtis M 1880 *The Antiquities of Laugharne, Pendine and their Neighbourhoods*. London. Clay, Sons & Taylor

Jones F 1980 'Laques and its Families' in *The Carmarthenshire Historian Vol XVII*. Carmarthen. Dyfed Rural Council.

Jones F 1997 *Historic Carmarthenshire Homes and Their Families*. Newport. Brawdy Books.

Tyler R 1925 *Laugharne Local History and Folk Lore*. Reprinted by Gomer Press on behalf of R A Tucker.

## PHOTOGRAPHS



**Photo 1:** Eastern extension area following machining.  
Note the stone wall used as footing for bungalow.



**Photo 2:** Rubble infill beneath path on southern side of eastern extension area.  
Note the sharp change in ground level to east.



**Photo 3:** Eastern extension area following excavation of footings



**Photo 4:** Northern area of extension after initial machining to formation level. Note the rubble spread and stone footings for bungalow to the south.



**Photo 5:** Walls (100) and (101).



**Photo 6:** Northern area following excavation.

# ROCHE COURT, BROADWAY, LAUGHARNE CARMARTHENSHERE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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RHIF Y PROSIECT / PROJECT RECORD NO. 102739

Chwefror 2012  
February 2012

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

**SIMON RATTY**

Swydd / Position: **ARCHAEOLOGIST**

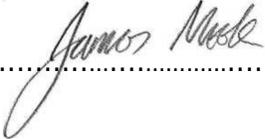
Llofnod / Signature ..... Date

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith  
This report has been checked and approved by

**JAMES MEEK**

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

Swydd / Position: **HEAD OF FIELD SERVICES**

Llofnod / Signature .....  ..... Date 12/03/2012

*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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