

EASTGATE LEISURE QUARTER, LLANELLI, CAMARTHENSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF 2011



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: Britannia Construction Ltd



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EASTGATE LEISURE QUARTER, LLANELLI, CARMARTHENSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF 2011

Gan / By

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EASTGATE LEISURE QUARTER, LLANELLI, CARMARTHENSHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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EASTGATE LEISURE QUARTER, LLANELLI, CARMARTHENSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SUMMARY

A planning application (Planning Ref: S/21068) was submitted for the construction of Eastgate Leisure Quarter Development on land at Upper Park Street, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire (SN 5097 0045).

A previous archaeological desk-based assessment of the site area, undertaken by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services in August 2009 (Poucher 2009), revealed that the development site lies on the route of a probable medieval road with possible Roman origins. Sporadic medieval activity along the roadside including some previously un-located medieval mills, might survive within the development area. Known 18th and 19th century development is recorded in the area, including houses, cottages, chapels, a public house and a tollgate. The area was redeveloped in the late 20th century with the construction of a bus depot and car parking.

Due to the archaeological potential of the site a condition was placed upon planning permission requiring the attendance of an archaeologist to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks. Britannia Construction Ltd commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services (DAT-FS) to undertake the archaeological watching brief during June and September 2011.

The development involved the reduction of ground levels for the creation of a bus shelter, and the excavation of service trenches and foundations for the leisure complex.

A deposit of naturally occurring sandy-clay subsoil was recorded across the site, appearing to drop in levels to the north, towards the former line of Water Street and the river beyond. Nothing of archaeological note was recorded within these revealed subsoils.

Remnants of 19th century development were noted. These included the fragmentary remains of some brick and stone walling of 19th century terraced housing along both Park Lane and Stepney Place. Some floor surfaces of the terraced housing of Stepney Place also survived towards the eastern end of the site.

Late post-medieval development had clearly truncated underlying subsoil deposits, and this post-medieval development in turn appears to have largely been demolished and/or removed by more recent late 20th century redevelopment. Consequently little of archaeological note was recorded within the development area. Deposits underlying the Leisure Quarter development and car park areas should remain undisturbed.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Commission

- 1.1.1 A planning application (Planning Ref: S/21068) was submitted to Carmarthenshire County Council, by Britannia Construction Ltd, for the construction of Eastgate Leisure Quarter Development on land at Upper Park Street, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire (SN 5097 0045).
- 1.1.2 An archaeological desk-based assessment of the site area was undertaken by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services in August 2009 (Poucher 2009). This had been requested by the archaeological advisors¹ to Carmarthen County Council to support the planning application, as the development site was considered to have uncertain archaeological potential. The assessment revealed that the development site lies on the route of a probable medieval road with possible Roman origins. The survival within the development area of archaeological evidence of sporadic activity along the roadside and the remains of some un-located medieval mills was therefore considered possible. Known 18th and 19th century development is recorded in the area, including houses, cottages, chapels, a public house and a tollgate. The conclusions of the report suggested that the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief during groundworks would be an appropriate level of mitigation to record below ground deposits.
- 1.1.3 Planning permission was approved with the following condition, which states:
- "Prior to the commencement of each phase of the development as defined in the approved phasing plan (Dwg Nr SCP 9), the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, must secure 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 Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services (DAT-FS) were commissioned to undertake the archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the development which had the potential to expose, damage or destroy archaeological remains. An approved written scheme of investigation (WSI) was prepared by DAT-FS prior to works commencing on-site.
- 1.1.5 Several visits to the development area was undertaken in June 2011 during Phase 1 of the works, and again in September 2011 during phase 2 of the groundworks, involving foundation and service trench excavation, and reducing of levels to formation level.

1.2 Scope of the Project

- 1.2.1 The project objectives as stated within the WSI were:
- *To monitor groundworks in order 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 groundworks.*
 - *To appropriately investigate and record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the groundworks.*
 - *To produce an archive and report of any results.*

¹ Dyfed Archaeological Trust – Heritage Management.

1.3 Report Outline

- 1.3.1 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.

1.4 Abbreviations

- 1.4.1 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). Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services – DAT-FS; Written Scheme of Investigation – WSI. Desk-Based Assessment – DBA.

1.5 Illustrations

- 1.5.1 Record photographs are included at 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 –	1536 – 1899	
Modern –	20th century onwards	

Table 1: Archaeological and Historical Timeline for Wales

² Held and managed by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Shire Hall, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire, SA19 6AF.



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 Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Carmarthen Street, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire SA19 6AF. Licence No AL51842A

2. THE SITE

2.1 Location and Topography

- 2.1.1 The site is located in the centre of Llanelli (SN 5097 0045), bounded by commercial development around Park Street to the west, Zion Baptist Chapel to the north, the A484 to the east, and residential development along Stepney Road to the south.
- 2.1.2 Prior to the current development the site principally consisted of a public car park and bus interchange, a public house, office building and areas of rough ground. The streets of Upper Park Street, with its small offshoot of Zion Row, and Island Place cut through the area. Much of Island Place was formerly known as a continuation of Water Street with Island Place referring to a short stretch of street running to the north and south of Island House.
- 2.1.3 The core of Llanelli lies on the banks of Afon Lliedi on higher ground as it emerges onto relatively level lowland areas bordering the Loughor estuary, a tidal inlet of the Bristol Channel. The course of the river has been altered and runs underground through much of the town centre, and land reclamation has changed the profile of the coastline in this area allowing the town to expand southwards to the banks of the estuary. The development area itself lies c.50m to the south of the Afon Lliedi on fairly level land sloping slightly down northwards towards the river.
- 2.1.4 The underlying geology of the Llanelli area belongs mainly to the Pennant Series of shales with coal and sandstones of the Upper Carboniferous Coal Measures. This in turn is overlaid in places by drift deposits of boulder clay and alluvium. The coal measures have undergone much folding, faulting, uplifting, erosional and depositional processes over geological time which have resulted in the complex stratification and landforms seen today.

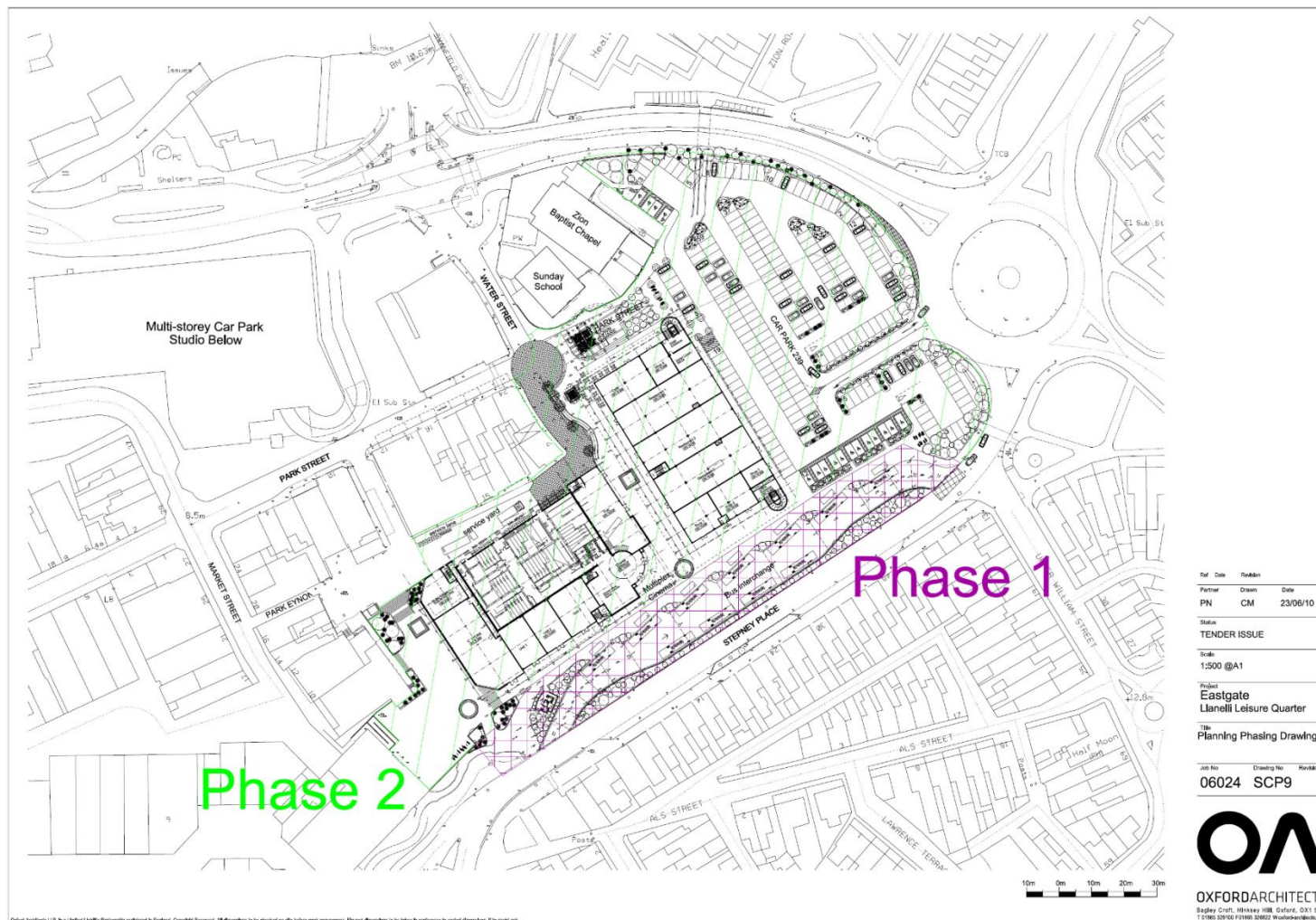


Figure 2. Plan of development site, created by Oxford Architects for Henry Davidson Developments, provided by Asbri Planning. Plan not to original scale.

2.2 Archaeological Background

2.2.1 The desk-based assessment, undertaken in 2009 (Poucher 2009), identified 18 possible sites of archaeological or historical interest within or close to the proposed development area. These are shown in Table 2 below:

PRN	Site Name	Grid Reference	Site Type	Period
3401	Via Julia Maritima	SN 50 05	Road	Roman
8429	Bres Pit	SN 5080 0020	Coal Mine	Post Medieval
12703	Llanelli	SN 51 00	Water Mill	Medieval
12949	Island Place	SN 508 005	Fulling Mill	Medieval
16212	Zion Baptist Chapel	SN 5093 0052	Chapel	Post Medieval
16229	Elim Chapel	SN 5102 0044	Chapel	Post Medieval
25784	Zion Baptist School	SN 5092 0050	Sunday School	Post Medieval
97362	Island House	SN 5102 0046	Public House	Post Medieval
97363	Upper Park Street	SN 5098 0049	Terrace	Post Medieval
97364	Water Street	SN 5096 0045	Terrace	Post Medieval
97365	Zion Row	SN 5096 0053	Terrace	Post Medieval
97366	Park Einion Lane	SN 5089 0041	Terrace	Post Medieval
97367	Stepney Place	SN 5096 0040	Terrace	Post Medieval
97368	Park Einion Lane	SN 5091 0042	Industrial Sheds/Warehouse	Post Medieval
97369	Park Street	SN 5093 0048	Tramway	Post Medieval
97370	Market Street	SN 5087 0037	School	Post Medieval
97371	Park Street	SN 5099 0053	School	Post Medieval
97372	Island Place	SN 5102 0046	Toll Gate	Post Medieval

Table 2: Historic Environment Record entries within the area of development

2.2.2 The historical development of the proposed development area is described in detail within that report, in summary the report states;

A Roman road is believed to pass through the Llanelli and may run through the area of proposed redevelopment. The town itself has its origins in the medieval period with a 12th century castle and church site on the north side of the Lliedi. The settlement itself remained small throughout the medieval period, concentrated to the north of the Lliedi, but of three mills recorded in the area during the medieval period it is possible one or two may have been sited within the study area. The availability of coal and proximity of the coast attracted large numbers of industries to the area from the 18th century onwards, leading to a rapid expansion of the settlement into a large town by the end of the 19th century. By the early 19th century some dispersed buildings are recorded within the study area, including a tollgate on the longstanding Water Street-Swansea Road route connecting Llanelli to Loughor and Swansea. The mid to late 19th century saw a rapid expansion of new streets and terraced housing across the study area. This new building also included schools, a public house and important chapel sites. This landscape remained virtually unchanged until redevelopment work in the later 20th century saw the creation of a nearby shopping precinct and the demolition of most of the terraced houses, schools and chapels throughout this area, replaced with a car park for the shopping centre, along with a bus depot and areas of rough ground. The Zion Baptist Chapel and school remained untouched, both Grade II listed structures. The Island House public house is now the only other remaining upstanding 19th century structure.

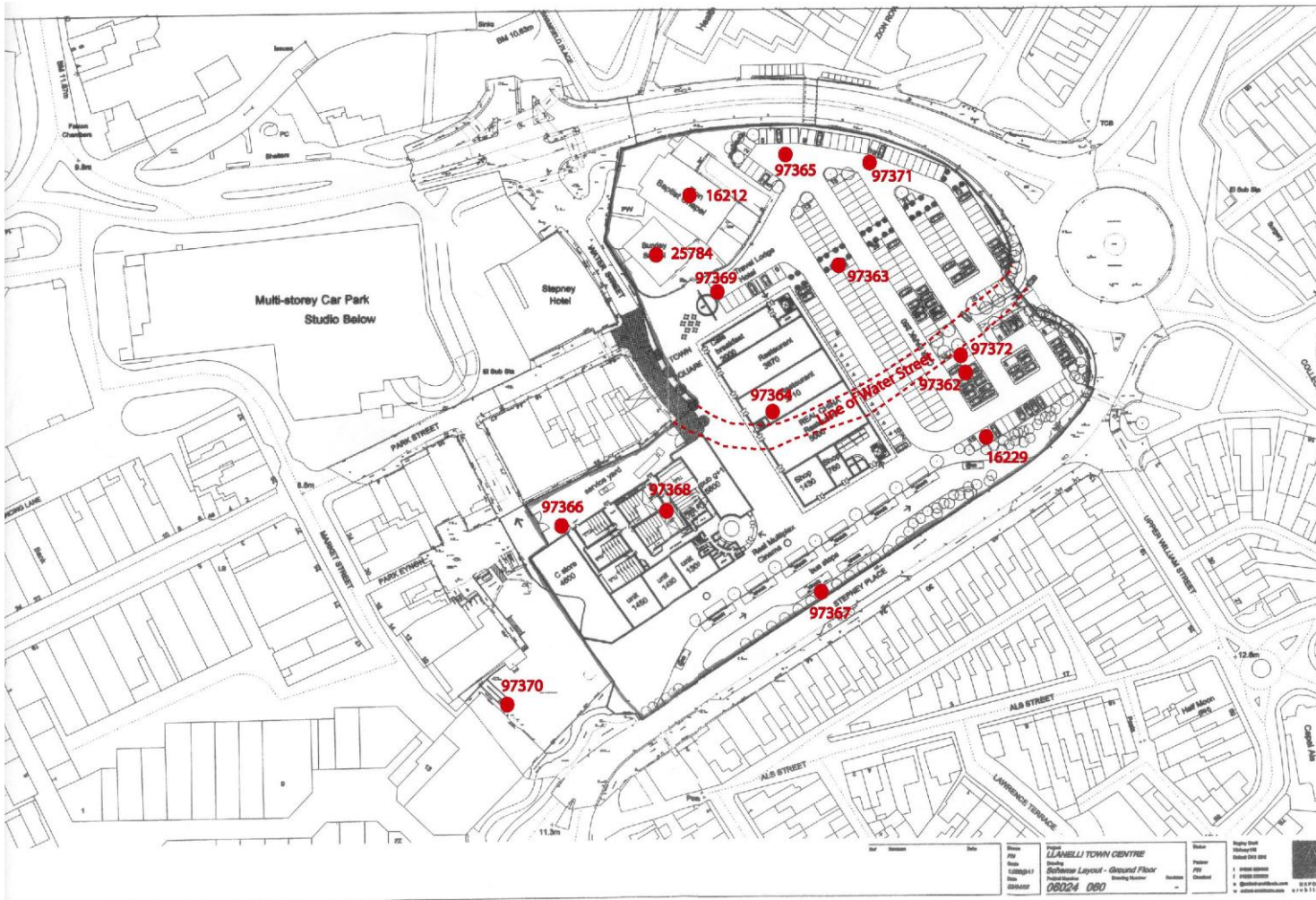


Figure 3. Plan of development site overlaid with locations of archaeological sites (in red). Plan created by Oxford Architects for Henry Davidson Developments, provided by Asbri Planning. Plan not to original scale.

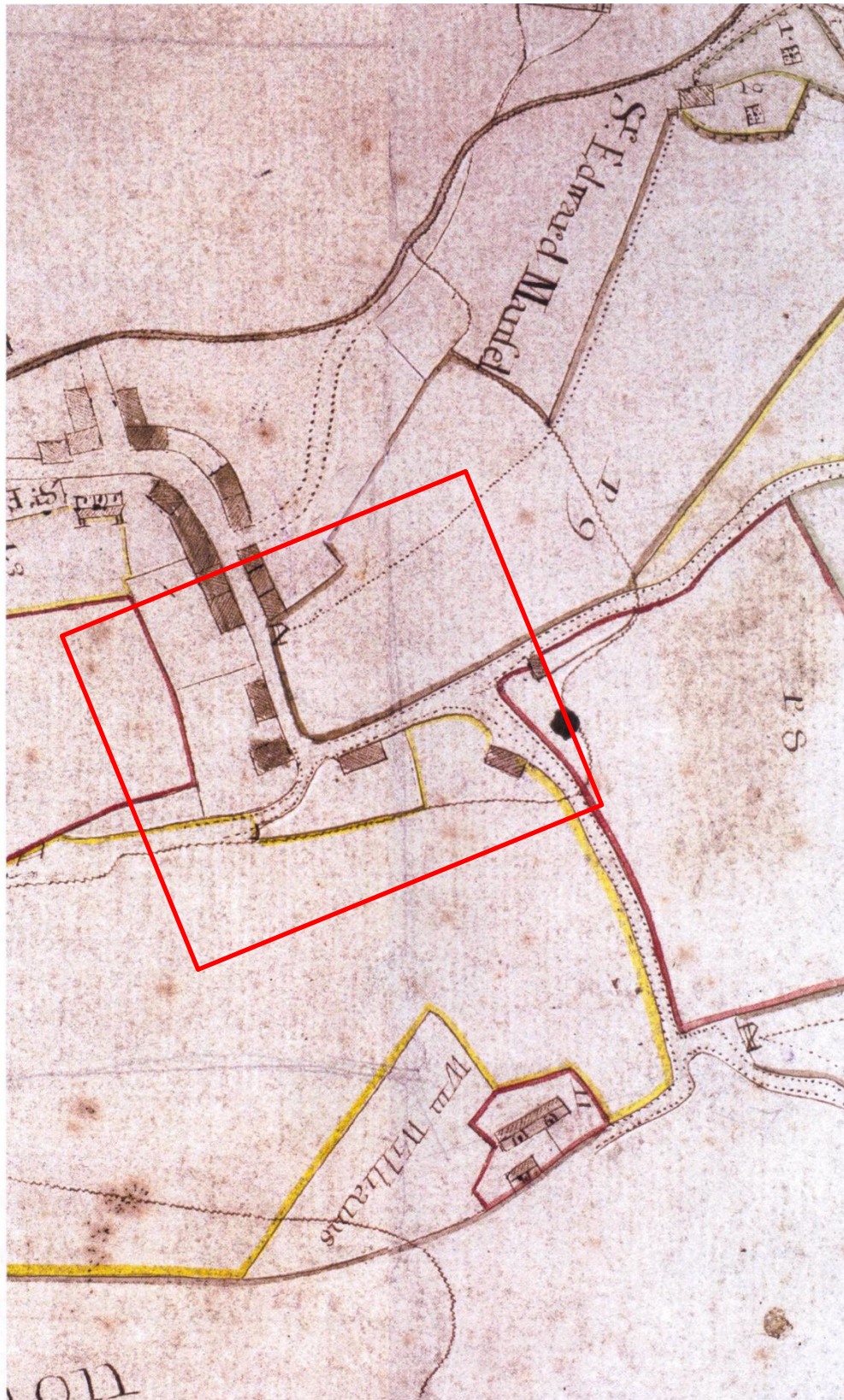


Figure 4. Extract from the Chambers Map Book of 1761 showing an approximation of the development area outlined in red. Map provided by Carmarthenshire Record Office.



Figure 5. Extract from the Cholmondeley map of Llanelli in 1814 showing an approximation of the development area outlined in red. Map provided by Carmarthenshire Record Office.

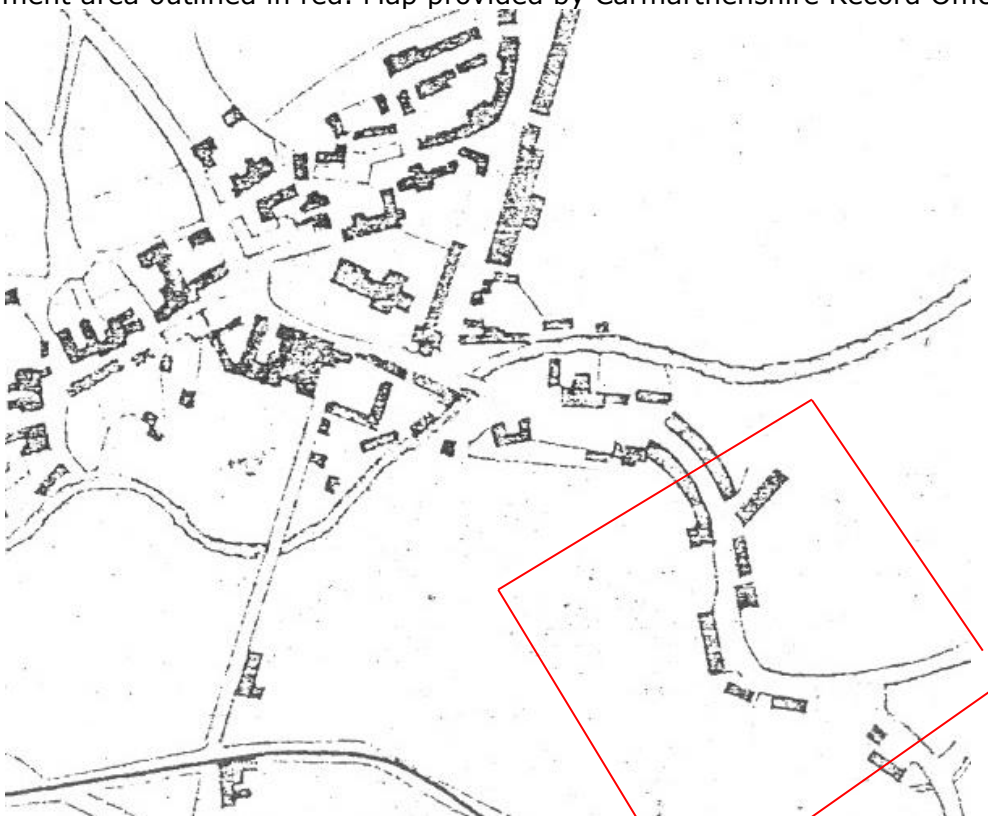


Figure 6. Extract from the Llanelli Parish tithe map of 1842 showing an approximation of the development area outlined in red.

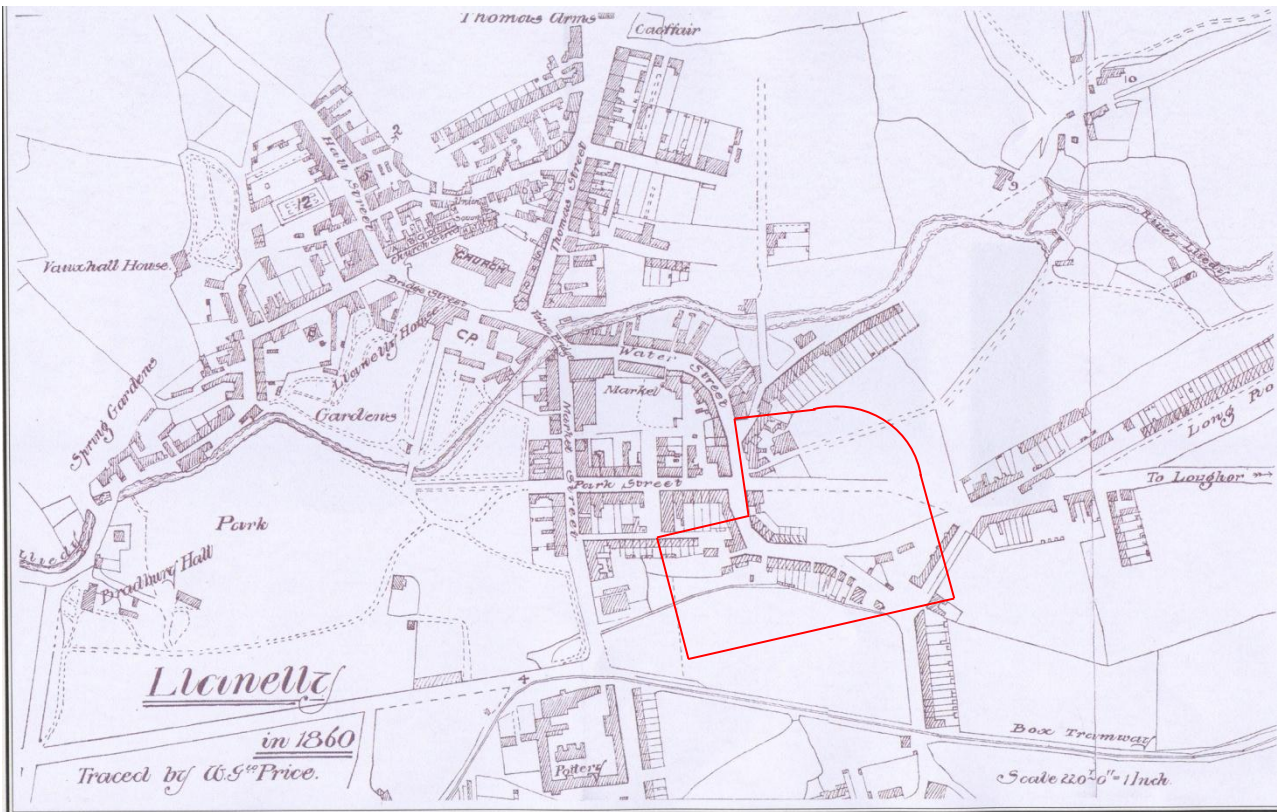


Figure 7. Map of Llanelli in 1860, reproduced in Innes 1902, showing an approximation of the development area in red. Map provided by the Carmarthenshire Record Office.



Figure 8. Extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 1;500 map of 1880 showing an approximation of the development area in red.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The detailed methodology for the watching brief was laid out within the WSI. The relevant methodology can be summarised as follows:
- 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.
 - All archaeological deposits revealed during the groundworks were examined and recorded to an appropriate level.
 - Recording of all archaeological features or deposits conformed to best current professional practice and was carried out in accordance with the Recording Manual³ used by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services.
- 3.2 The development was undertaken in two phases (Figure 2). Initially Phase 1 involved the development of land south of Water Street, including the cutting of new service trenches and the removal of deposits along a strip c.10m wide adjacent to Stepney Terrace down to formation level. These works were observed on the 10th, 14th and 15th of June 2011.
- 3.3 The Phase 1 excavations were undertaken using a large 360 degree tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. It was possible to monitor the excavation of the initial cutting of the service trench, subsequent cuttings re-excavated the same line. It was also possible to monitor the stripping of ground level along Stepney Terrace up to a point where it became clear that further stripping would not go below the make-up deposits of the previous car park.
- 3.4 Phase 2 involved the development of the remainder of the area including the cutting of new service trenches and foundations trenches for the upstanding leisure complex structures throughout much of the western and central parts of the development area. These works were observed in September 2011.
- 3.5 The phase 2 excavations were similarly undertaken using a large 360 degree tracked excavator. The excavation of trenches rather than stripping areas revealed less detail than was observed in phase 1, and it did not prove possible to observe all trench excavations during this stage.

³ Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services have adopted the Recording Manual developed by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

4.1 Stage 1

- 4.1.1 Prior to the development this area was occupied by a car park (photo 1). The DBA had identified a row of 19th century terrace housing, including a chapel site, within this area.
- 4.1.2 Initially service trenches and test pits were excavated to examine subsurface deposits all along the north-western edge of the area covered by Phase 1 (Figure 2). A large strip, c.10m wide, was subsequently excavated down to formation level along the long south-eastern edge of the area. This excavation removed modern development levels and cut into naturally occurring subsoil deposits below.
- 4.1.3 The service trench and test pits revealed a substantial deposit of imported stone and building demolition debris underlying the car park surface (photos 4–6). In patches there also appeared to be some imported silty-clay deposits, or possibly redeposited subsoil deposits forming part of the make-up layers.
- 4.1.4 The strip excavation reduced ground levels to c.0.6m below the surface level of the car park, c.1.8m below the surface level of the adjacent Stepney Place. For most of this area the car park deposits consisted of tarmac overlying mid to dark grey stony make-up deposits, directly overlying undisturbed subsoil deposits (photo 7). Towards the east changes in underlying ground levels meant the formation level cut down into modern make-up deposits only.
- 4.1.5 Fragmentary remains of two walls were recorded just below the car park surface in the service trench that ran along the north-western edge of the area covered by the Phase 1 works. The first wall (photo 8) consisted of a thin (0.25m to 0.3m wide) mortared masonry wall incorporating brick fragments, presumably of 19th century date. The shallow foundations and narrow width may indicate an internal wall or superficial structure, presumably associated with the outhouses visible at the back of the rear garden plots of the 19th century terraced houses that formerly lined the north side of Stepney Place (Figure 8).
- 4.1.6 The second wall (photo 9) was only partially revealed in the section of newly cut services, and remained otherwise undisturbed. It consisted of a short stretch of large dressed mortared masonry, with an attached rougher mortared masonry wall. The location and alignment may suggest this wall formed part of the boundary wall to the rear of 19th century terraced houses lining Stepney Place (Figure 8).
- 4.1.7 At the eastern end of the strip excavation, at a depth of c.0.8m below current ground level, were the fragmentary remains of a concrete surface (photos 11–14). The surface measured c.4m by c.3m and had fragmentary pieces of lino attached to it. Presumably the remains of an internal floor surface to one of the terraced buildings of Stepney Place (the lino suggesting a kitchen area). The surface was already truncated by previous service trenches, but largely left intact during current development.
- 4.1.8 Across the area revealed by the strip excavation naturally occurring subsoil deposits were recorded under the modern make-up layers, consisting of light yellow-brown to mid orange-brown sandy-clays with large to very-large rounded boulders, an apparent fluvio-glacial deposit (photos 4–7).
- 4.1.9 Roughly midway along the south-eastern edge of the area covered in the Phase 1 works a band of softer yellow-orange sandy-clay became apparent, widening as it headed eastwards, edged in places by patches of brown clayey-sand. This may be an indication of a former tidal water channel. This indicates a natural slope in the subsoil deposits from south to north, draining down towards the line of Water Street. These ground contours were presumably flattened with the creation of the 19th century terracing around Stepney Place, and then further reduced when the car park was created.

- 4.1.10 The lack of any building debris or features within the underlying subsoil deposits indicate they are undisturbed, therefore below the levels reached by any previous 19th century terracing on Stepney Place. This also clearly indicates those buildings were not cellared. 19th century features have clearly been largely removed by the late 20th century development on site.

4.2 Stage 2

- 4.2.1 Prior to the development this area consisted of a bus station, rough ground and Island Place street. The DBA identified an area of late post-medieval residential development, with some possible late 19th and early 20th century semi-industrial development. The line of Island Place, formerly Water Street, may however have its origins in the medieval period or earlier.
- 4.2.2 Foundation trenches were excavated under the footprint of the two large buildings in the western half of this area, as indicated in Figure 2. Services trenches were also excavated across the area.
- 4.2.3 The trench excavations under the footprint of the westernmost building revealed a make-up deposit c.1m in depth. This consisted of an upper c.0.4m of tarmac and underlying sand make-up deposits. Below this the remaining c.0.6m consisted of mixed stone, cement and soil deposits that appeared to be demolition material (photo 16). This demolition material reduced in thickness to the east. This was presumably from the demolition of the 19th century terraces that were formerly prevalent in this area.
- 4.2.4 Remnants of stone and brick walling were revealed within one of the main services trenches (photo 18) that ran along the southern edge of the westernmost building in Figure 2. The trench ran roughly WSW – ENE, with the walling remnants appearing to run roughly north – south towards the western end of the trench. This appears to line up with mid-19th century terraced housing along the former line of Park Lane. No further building remains were recorded within this demolition deposit.
- 4.2.5 Underlying deposits were intermittently revealed, where they did become apparent they appeared to show a continuation of the yellow-brown sandy-clay subsoils that had been observed in Stage 1 (photo 17). They were more clearly revealed to the east, around the area of what was formerly Water Street, presumably as the 19th century development lessened in this area resulting in a thinner demolition deposit. These subsoil deposits had clearly been truncated by late post-medieval and modern activity and as such it was not possible to gauge any natural underlying changes in levels. Nothing of archaeological significance was noted within this subsoil.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of Eastgate Leisure Quarter Development on land at Upper Park Street, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire (SN 5097 0045). The development involved the reduction of ground levels for the creation of a bus shelter, and the excavation of service trenches and foundations for the leisure complex.
- 5.2 A previous Desk-Based Assessment had identified this area as containing mixed late post-medieval development but alongside a roadway that has early origins with potential medieval development in its vicinity. The area had been redeveloped in the late 20th century with the construction of a bus depot and car parking.
- 5.3 A deposit of naturally occurring sandy-clay subsoil was recorded across the site, appearing to drop in levels to the north, towards the former line of Water Street and the river beyond. Nothing of archaeological note was recorded within these revealed subsoils.
- 5.4 Remnants of 19th century development were noted. These included the fragmentary remains of some brick and stone walling associated with 19th century terraced housing along both Park Lane and Stepney Place. Some floor surfaces of the terraced housing of Stepney Place also survived towards the eastern end of the site.
- 5.5 Late post-medieval development had clearly truncated underlying subsoil deposits, and this post-medieval development in turn appears to have largely been demolished and/or removed by more recent late 20th century redevelopment. Consequently little of archaeological note was recorded within the development area. Underlying deposits should remain undisturbed between the foundations of the Leisure Quarter development and car park areas.

6. SOURCES

6.1 Maps

Chamber	1761	<i>Chambers Map Book</i>
Cholmondeley	1814	<i>Map of Llanelli</i>
Ordnance Survey	1880	<i>1st edition 1;500 Carmarthenshire LVIII.7/8</i>
Price, W.G.	1902	<i>Llanelly in 1860 (Tracing by W.G.Price of unknown original)</i>
Unknown	1842	<i>Llanelly Parish Tithe Map.</i>

6.2 Unpublished

Poucher, P 2009 *Upper Park Street, Llanelli: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Report 2009/61

PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1: The development area prior to development. Photo taken in 2009.



Photo 2: The development area after removal of car park surface. The terraced buildings visible line the southern side of Stepney Place.



Photo 3: The southern edge of the development area during phase 1 ground reduction to formation levels.



Photo 4: Section through one of the phase 1 test-pits, showing make-up deposits overlying natural subsoils.



Photo 5: Section through one of the phase 1 test-pits, showing make-up deposits overlying natural subsoils.



Photo 6: Section through one of the phase 1 service trenches, showing make-up deposits overlying natural subsoils.



Photo 7: Typical section through deposits revealed along the southern edge fo the development area.



Photo 8: Remains of a mortared masonry and brick built wall revealed during phase 1 clearance works. 1m and 0.5m scales.



Photo 9: Remains of a mortared masonry wall revealed in the section of a phase 1 service trench.



Photo 10: Former wall remains towards the southeastern corner of the development area. Appears to have formed part of the late 20th century car park enclosure, but may also be associated with the 19th century terraces.



Photo 11: Internal surface of one of the former terrace houses of Stepney Place revealed in the southeastern corner of the development area.



Photo 12: Remains of lino attached to the internal surface.



Photo 13: Concrete floor level of the internal surface.



Photo 14: General 20th century demolition rubble overlain by topsoil in the southeastern corner of the development area.



Photo 15: General shot looking west towards the town centre during initial stage of phase 2 excavations.



Photo 16: Typical section at the western end of the site, showing make-up deposits overlying demolition material. 1m scale.



Photo 17: One of the stage 2 trenches, showing the natural underlying subsoils becoming more apparent towards the centre of site, closer to the former line of Water Street. 1m scales.



Photo 18: Stone and brick walling amongst the demolition rubble in one of the stage 2 trenches. These remains appear to form part of the former 19th century terracing along Park Lane. 1m scales.

EASTGATE LEISURE QUARTER, LLANELLI, CARMARTHENSHIRE: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF 2011

RHIF YR ADRODDIAD / REPORT NUMBER 2012/4

Ionawr 2012
January 2012

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

Philip Poucher

Swydd / Position: Archaeologist

Llofnod / Signature



..... Dyddiad / Date 12/01/12

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

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

Swydd / Position:

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

ymddiriedolaeth archaeolegol



archaeological trust