



**Archaeological Programme of Work undertaken at Priors  
Street Hospital, Carmarthen - Area C**

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## CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	GEOLOGY	4
3.	METHODOLOGY	4
4.	ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROGRAMME OF WORK	5
5.	SUMMARY	6
6.	COPYRIGHT	6
	FIGURE 1 SITE LOCATION (AREA A,B,C)	7
	FIGURE 2 FEATURE 14	8
	PLATE 1 FEATURE 14 AND REAR SECTION OF THE HOSPITAL	9
	PLATE 2 DETAIL OF FEATURE 14 - LOOKING SOUTH	9

Cover Photograph: FEATURE 14, looking south

## **Watching Brief /Top Soil Stripping Programme at Priory Street Infirmary, Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire - AREA C.**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Border Archaeology was commissioned by E.N.S.D. Ltd (Carmarthen) to conduct an archaeological watching brief and top soil strip on land formally the Priory Street Infirmary (NGR SN 4170 2027). The agents for the programme of works were Keith R. Pearce Chartered Quantity Surveyors. Due to health and safety incursions on site, the recording of Area C was conducted later, after the initial recording of the site. A brief outlining a programme of archaeological works was issued by Cambria Archaeology on 22nd October 2001.
- 1.2 During the first phase of work, Border Archaeology cleaned back an Areas A and B. These areas, which included uncovering 14 features/structures, were recorded and assessed. Within Area C, a section of the top soils to include contexts (001) and (002) had revealed one feature; forming part of a cobblestone surface. This surface, labelled Feature 14 was exposed and finally recorded on the 19th December 2001.
- 1.3 The purpose of this limited programme was to assess the nature of any archaeological remains and to indicate any mitigation requirements. It is believed that this area will be landscaped by E.N.S.D. Ltd. and no further impact to underlying deposits will take place. As a result, E.N.S.D. Ltd. will be preserving *in situ* any underlying deposits, features or structures.
- 1.4 This limited archaeological programme required stringent on-site procedures that complied with present Health and Safety standards set by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- 1.5 A copy of this report will be submitted to E.N.S.D. Ltd. and Cambria Archaeology. Further copies will be deposited with the Regional Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). This part of the programme (Area C), so designated as a watching brief/top soil stripping programme, was completed to the 19th November 2001.

## 2.1 GEOLOGY

- 2.2 The drift geology in the southern and eastern parts of Carmarthen relates to riverine deposition, what the SSE&W (1983) refer to as a TEME 561b. Generally, these soils consist of light, yellow-brown, deep, stoneless, permeable silty soils. Some soils are variably affected by ground water. Naturally deposited gravely subsoils provide a sub-base for urban deposits.
- 2.3 Concerning the soils exposed in a number of recently excavated water utility trenches (along The Esplanade), many show evidence of severe disturbance, mainly due to previous pipe-laying and maintenance activity. Despite the disturbance, the profiles expose mainly gravely soil that contains small rounded stones, indicative of riverine terracing or periglacially laid deposits. Due to the fact that the Afon Tywi flows within 30m of the north-eastern section of The Esplanade, it is more than probable that the gravels relate to post-glacial riverine activity and/or are the result of earlier glacial till deposition (forming a moraine plateau).
- 2.4 Identical soil profiles recognised by Border Archaeology were also recorded in a bore-hole survey undertaken by Integral Geotechnique Ltd (Bristol). This survey (in 1996) undertook four bore holes which were located across the rear of the site. Bore hole depths extended to approximately 3.5m below the (then) existing level. In Bore hole 1, four contrasting deposits were recorded. For the sake of this report these will be referred to as BH 001 - BH 004. Located close to Feature 14 was Bore hole 2. The bore hole stratigraphy consisted of up to five contexts. The uppermost deposit consisted of 'fill'; comprising of 'soft compressible moderately to very organic grey black very gravelly silt/clay including fine black and slate fragments, medium coal and brick and gravel to cobble size mudstones, grading to brown moderately gravelly clayey silt'. This deposit measured approximately 1m in thickness and possibly represents Border Archaeology's context (001). Border Archaeology's context (004) is represented as colluvium<sup>1</sup>, which lies approximately 1m below the (then) existing level. The survey report describes this (significant) deposit as a soft-to-loose, brown-to-yellow, gravelly silty clay or sandy-silt.
- 2.5 Underlying the 'fill' and the 'colluvium', and extending a further 2m below the existing ground level, are extensive 'sand and gravels' (located between 12m and 14.5m AOD). These deposits form part of the glacial terraces which run through most of Old Carmarthen.

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The aim of the programme of archaeological work was to locate and record any archaeological remains revealed during the course of the ground works phase of the development (Area C). It was considered that this area of the site required a programme of work in order to assess and locate deposits, features and structures which had been impacted by the developer.
- 3.2 All the archaeology in Area C was recorded, including those features and structures which had been partially or wholly damaged by the developer during archaeologically unsupervised ground works (the excavation and laying of footings).

*- Not correct - Area A = footings*

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<sup>1</sup> weathered material, in this case periglacial in form - transported by gravity (i.e. slope material).

- 3.3 All spoil was scanned for artefacts, which were recorded and will later be archived.
- 3.4 The depth and complexity of deposits across the whole site was assessed. Written and photographic records of all machine-excavated areas were made in accordance with best archaeological practice. Records included an overall plan of the site (**Figure 1**) and a detail plan of Feature 14 (**Figure 2**).

#### **4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROGRAMME OF WORK**

- 4.1 A series of significant archaeological deposits, features and structures were located within area A, B, and C during a top soil stripping and recording programme in November 2001. Only one feature was recorded in Area C (**Plate 1**). Due to health and safety implications, Feature 14 could not be fully recorded by the 16th November 2001 when due to financial constraints, all archaeological investigations ceased. The recording of this feature, therefore took place on the 19th November 2001.
- 4.2 Within Area C, Feature 14 was located 10.05m north-east of the southern boundary wall and 23.5m from the south-east wall (adjacent to The Parade). This feature, described as a cobblestone surface measured roughly 2.1m [NW-SE] x 1.15m (**Plate 2**).
- 4.3 The feature, including overlying soils consisted of five contexts. Context (001) consisted of a coarse 20th century rubble spread. This deposit formed part of the recent demolition of infirmary buildings and included within this spread was an extensive concrete rubble, modern ceramic building material and occasional Post-Medieval pottery. Underlying [001] was a loosely compacted dark brown to black humic [garden] soil [002] (2.5Y/3). This deposit extended across Area C. It was within Area C, close to the cobblestone surface that a single Medieval galena green glazed pottery sherd was recovered. However, due to later material being found within underlying deposit, one can consider this sherd as being residual in context. Underlying context [002] was a cobblestone surface. This feature lie immediately above context (004) and is located at 19.09 AOD. Context [004], also found in Areas A and B, consisted as tightly compacted orange to brown silty clay (10YR/6).<sup>2</sup> The cobbles which appear to be incorporated into (004) measure roughly up to 0.10m.
- 4.4 Located within the central area of this feature were found [insitu] two unbraded sherds of Roman black burnished ware which date from the 1st century (Corney pers. com.). The two sherds, forming a cooking pot, appear to be hand-thrown and may be associated with the military presence of the town.
- 4.5 It should be noted that this feature was not fully exposed and that a further cobblestone surface may exist immediately north of the exposure (extending towards Priory Street). A road surface was identified a few metres north of the cobblestone surface in 1923; later reproduced within the Royal Commission's Inventory of 1925.<sup>3</sup> The road running through the site appears to be continuous, aligned south-west/north-east, approximately 50m parallel to the Esplanade.

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<sup>2</sup> also numbered in Areas A and B in previous reports as (004).

<sup>3</sup> following research by George Eyre Evans.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

- 5.1 The partially-machined excavated Area C contained one feature - a loosely set cobblestone surface - Feature 14. This surface appears to immediately overlie context (004) and dates from the Roman period. Two BB1 (black burnished) sherds were located on top of the cobblestone surface. No later finds were recorded. Similar to other features and structures in Areas A and B, this feature can be considered archaeologically significant. This cobblestone surface may represent a courtyard or pavement surface which is associated with the course of a nearby Roman road. It is this road, summarised by Heather James (forthcoming) that bisects the site (roughly between Areas B, C and D).
- 5.2 Following the recording of this feature, Area C was covered over with top soil. It should be stressed that prior to, and after the recording of Feature 14, no impact to soils north of the cobblestone surface was witnessed. Thus suggesting that archaeological remains (if any) remain *insitu* between the cobblestone surface and the probable Roman street which was observed in 1923.

## **6.0 COPYRIGHT**

- 6.1 Border Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of the report by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.

FIGURE 1 SITE LOCATION (AREA A,B,C)

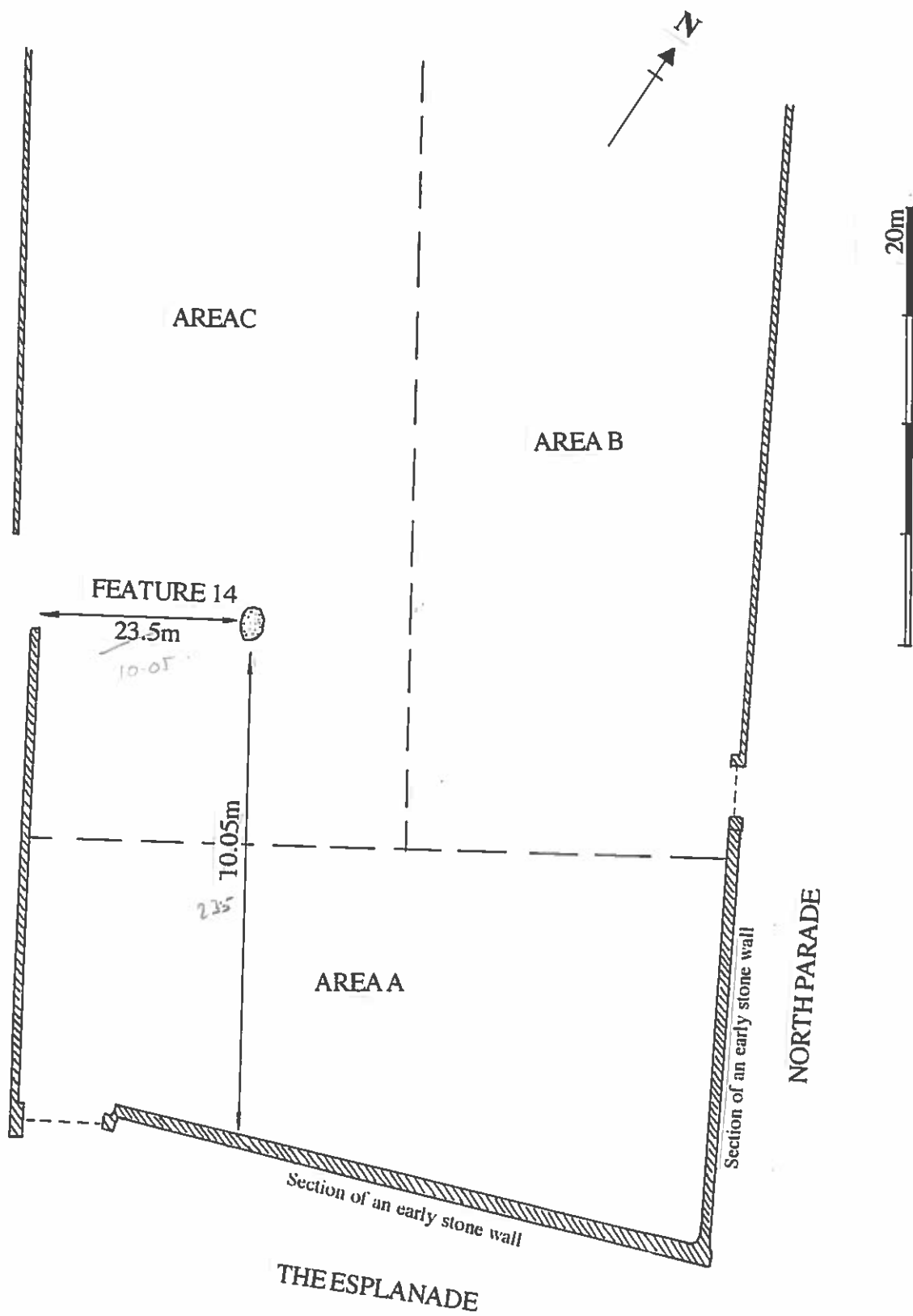
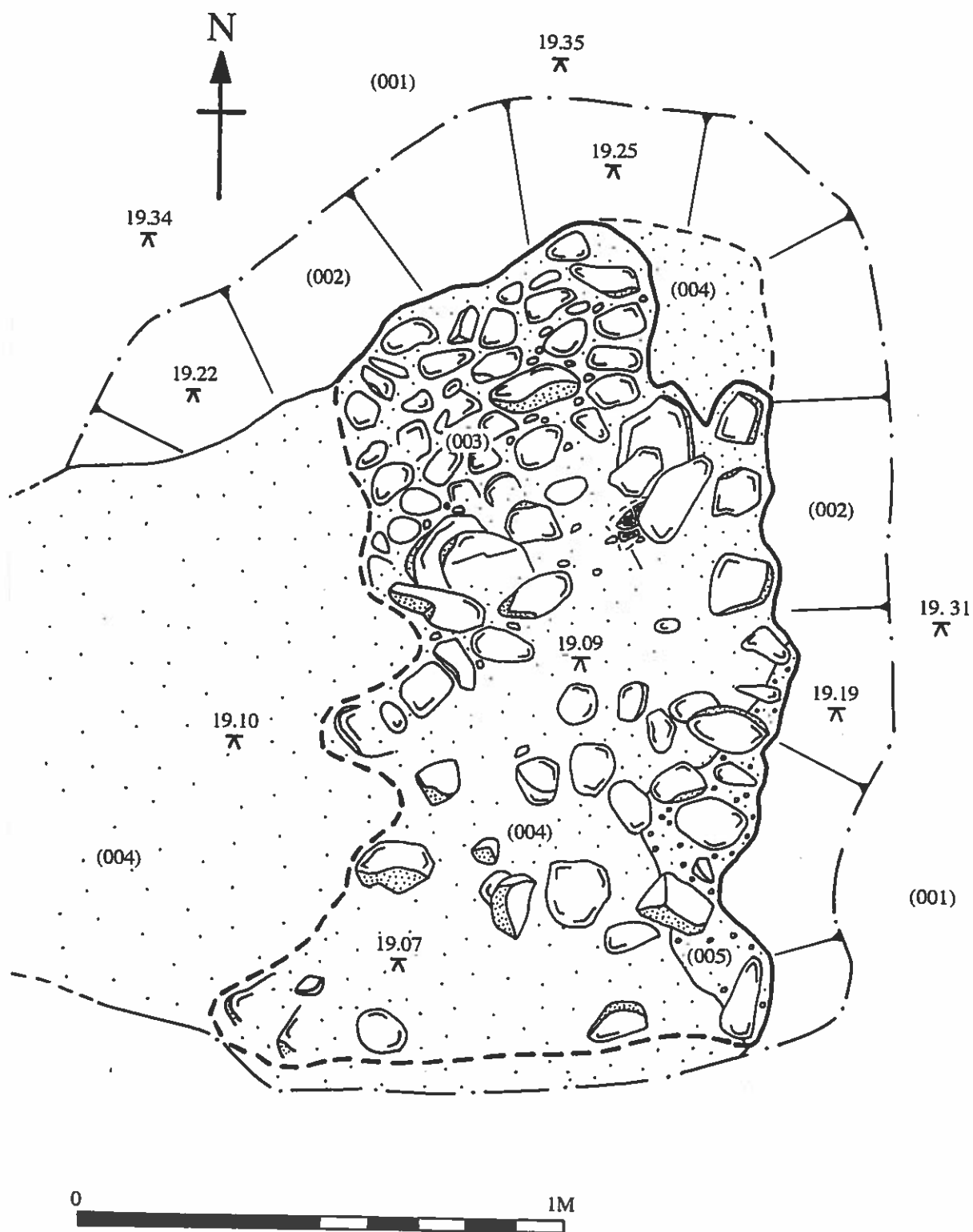


FIGURE 2 DETAILED PLAN OF FEATURE 14





**PLATE 1 FEATURE 14 AND REAR SECTION OF THE HOSPITAL**



**PLATE 2 DETAIL OF FEATURE 14 - LOOKING SOUTH**

