

**Report of Archaeological Observation on works undertaken at
Roman Road, Llangunnor, Pensarn, Carmarthen**

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	3
3. GEOLOGY	3
4. METHODOLOGY	4
5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION	4
6. SUMMARY	5
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY	5
8. COPYRIGHT	5
FIGURE SITE LOCATION	6

Cover: Roman Road, Carmarthen, looking east

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Border Archaeology was commissioned by Roger Casey Associates, 7 Conduit Lane, Carmarthen SA31 1LD on behalf of Anglo Define Ltd to carry out an archaeological observation of two test trenches in Roman Road, Llangunnor, Pensarn, near Carmarthen, Carmarthenshire. A method statement outlining a programme of work was prepared prior to commencement of the archaeological observation and submitted to Cambria Archaeology.
- 1.2 The trenches were excavated in order to assess the potential for Roman material within Roman Road prior to a mains drainage system being laid for a residential development at Brynhyfryd, Llangunnor, Carmarthenshire.
- 1.3 The report herein described emanates from a decision of Cambria Archaeology, in its role as monitoring authority, to require prior excavation.
- 1.4 The archaeological observation followed usual on-site procedures that complied with standards set by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
- 1.5 A copy of this report will be submitted to Roger Casey Associates and Cambria Archaeology.
- 1.6 The programme of archaeological observation was carried out on September 3rd 2002. The provision of archaeological services was managed by Neil Shurety and the on-site archaeological observation undertaken by Nicola Hancox (Staff Project Archaeologist)

2.0 BRIEF HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Carmarthen (or *Moridunum*)¹ is regarded as one of the oldest Roman settlements in Wales, as well as being one of two *civitas* capitals (James 2000:41). The later Medieval settlement of the town, located west of the Roman town and fort, is regarded as important to the historical framework of the area. Place-name evidence suggests that the Medieval settlement began around the 12th century (referred to as *kaer wyrthin*).
- 2.2 The site is located to the south-east of Carmarthen, in the Pensarn area. The road was in use in the Post-Medieval period and is regarded as a pre-turnpike road. The hill part of the road was cobbled until 1947.
- 2.3 The area forms part of the 19th century expansion of Carmarthen. The railway station and line were constructed during the mid to late 19th century. As a result, the area expanded, with the spread of industrial workshops and units to the south and east. Prior to the railway, the eastern banks of the Afon Twyi were utilised as docks and wharves for river and sea traffic. These remained in use until the mid 20th century.

3.0 GEOLOGY

- 3.1 The site lies close to the south-eastern edge of an unsurveyed urban area. The neighbouring soil associations are a DENBIGH 1 541j and a TANVATS 811e.

¹ for place-name evidence, see Rivet & Smith (1979) and Nicolaisson et al. (1986)

- 3.2 The DENBIGH1 541j soil association consists of well-drained, fine loamy and fine silty soils over rock. There are some similar soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Shallow soils and some bare rock occur locally. The underlying geology consists of Palaeozoic slaty mudstone and siltstone.
- 3.3 TANVATS 811e is characterised by deep, stoneless, fine and stony silty and clayey silts on flat land. Groundwater levels are controlled by ditches and pumps. The geology comprises a marine alluvium.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The aim of the archaeological observation was to locate and record any archaeological remains revealed during the course of the excavations.
- 4.2 After an initial inspection of the site, two open-cut trenches were excavated by a mechanical digger (JCB), using an 18-inch bucket. The trenches ran north/south across the narrow lane of Roman Road at two separate locations.
- 4.3 Trench 1 was excavated approximately 76.0m east of the residential/farm property known as 'Brynheulog', and approximately 43.0m west of where the lane bends sharply north to join Bryhyfryd road.
- 4.4 Trench 2 was excavated a further 54.0m (approx.) west from Trench 1 and approximately 6.00m east of the residential property known as 'Philsima'.
- 4.5 The excavations were carried out under strict archaeological supervision.
- 4.6 All spoil was scanned for artefacts, recorded as unstratified.
- 4.7 As no features or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified during the groundworks, no additional records were considered necessary. However a series of photographs will form part of the archive.

5.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION

- 5.1 ROMAN ROAD TRENCH 1 (NGR: SN41702 18971) was located to the east of 'Brynheulog'. The trench measured 2.70m x 0.84m x 1.0m and was excavated to undisturbed natural stratigraphy.
- 5.2 Five contexts were identified. At the present ground level and to a depth of 0.07m was a tarmacadam road surface (001). Underlying (001) to a depth of 0.20m was a loosely compacted, fine, black, gravelly/tarmacadam sub-base (002). Underlying (002) to a depth of 0.37m was a tightly compacted, grey, stony-clay soil (003) with occasional, medium rounded and sub-angular stone inclusions and occasional small, slate inclusions. Underlying (003), and extending to the base of the trench, was a tightly compacted, yellow-brown, sandy-clay (004) with occasional small and medium, rounded and sub-angular stone inclusions.
- 5.3 The stratigraphy appeared in all sections, but where the east- and west-facing sections had tarmacadam and sub-base deposits, the north- and south-facing sections had a dark-brown, sandy topsoil and grass (005). It should also be noted that, in the south-facing section, a large drainage pipe, running east/west, became visible at a depth of approximately 0.25m.

- 5.4 On the east-facing section only (at the southern end of the trench), in context (003), two small 20th century brick fragments were recovered. No other finds were identified.
- 5.5 ROMAN ROAD TRENCH 2 (NGR: SN41526 19081) was located to the east of 'Philsima'. The trench measured 3.10m x 0.60m-0.73m x 0.85m and was excavated to undisturbed natural stratigraphy.
- 5.6 Five contexts were identified. At the present ground level was a tarmacadam road surface (001) to a depth of 0.08m. Underlying (001) was a tarmacadam sub-base (002) to a depth of 0.17m. Underlying (002) to a depth of 0.49m was a moderately compacted, grey, stony clay soil (003) with occasional, medium, rounded and sub-angular stone inclusions. Underlying (003) to the base of the trench was a moderately compacted, orange-brown, sandy-clay soil (004) with occasional medium rounded and sub-angular stones.
- 5.7 The stratigraphy appeared in all sections, but where the east- and west-facing sections had tarmacadam and sub-base deposits, the north and south-facing sections had a dark-brown, sandy topsoil and grass (005).
- 5.8 On the east and west-facing sections in context (003), several small 19th century glazed pottery sherds were recovered. One very small terracotta fragment was unglazed. Two fragments of 19th century ceramic building material (CBM) were also recovered from the spoil. Context (003) contained moderate-frequent amounts of small CBM fragments and flecks, especially within the east-facing section. The west-facing section revealed only occasional sherds towards the southern end. No other finds were identified.

6.0 SUMMARY

- 6.1 The two trenches excavated in Roman Road, Pensarn revealed no significant archaeological remains. The few artefacts from trench 1 were recorded but not retained. The finds recovered from trench 2 were meagre and consisted mainly of 19th and early 20th century material, including four glazed earthenware sherds and a fragment of CBM. These finds will be placed within the site archive.

7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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8.0 COPYRIGHT

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FIGURE 1 SITE LOCATION (PLAN SUPPLIED BY ROGER CASEY ASSOCIATES - DRAWING NO 10384/13)



