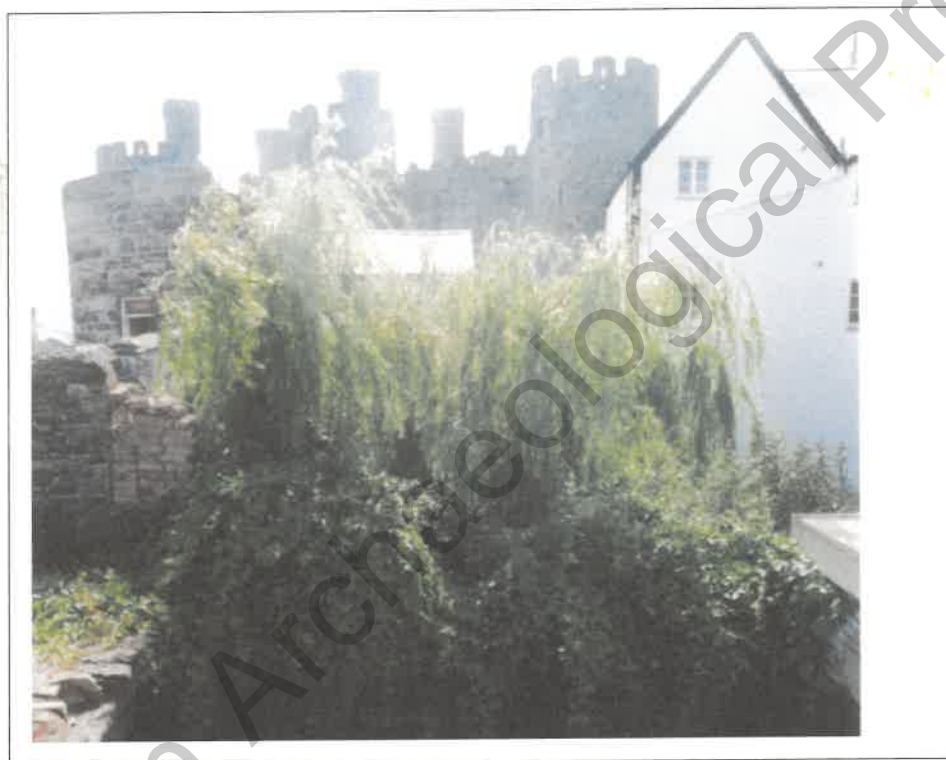


CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS LTD.

Wheel House, Castle Street Conwy

Archaeological Watching Brief



By
Andrew Petersen, PhD



CAP Report No. 294

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

**Wheel House, Castle Street
Conwy**

BY *Andrew Petersen M.A., M.Phil., PhD*

Prepared for:
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CAP Report No: 294

Project No.

Date: January 2004



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Non Technical Summary

This report results from work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd (CAP) for Hampson Lewis of Colwyn Bay on behalf of their client Mr Tunstall, the owner of the Wheelhouse, Castle Street Conwy. The report lists the results of a watching brief carried out in July to determine the extent of possible disturbance to archaeological deposits and historic building fabric. The watching brief detected minimal disturbance to the original fabric of the building although the presence of some early masonry indicates an earlier structure. It was also noted that the installation of a new drainage system to the rear of the property may disturb earlier archaeological deposits.

1 Introduction

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 In July 2003 Cambrian Archaeological Projects (CAP) carried out a watching brief at a proposed development site at the Wheelhouse, Castle Street, Conwy (Fig 1) for Hampson Lewis of Colwyn Bay, Conwy on behalf of their client Mr G. Tunstall, the landowner.
- 1.1.2 This was in respect of a planning application for development (O/26957) and a brief (GAPS D 737) set by, and an archaeological specification agreed with, Emily La Trobe-Bateman of the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service.
- 1.1.3 The development concerns the conversion of the said property from a restaurant to dwelling(s) (NGR 278298.)

1.2 Location

- 1.2.1 This building is located in the south-eastern quarter of the walled medieval town on the north side of Castle Street less than 150 metres from the castle. The rear of the property abuts the town wall (between the second and third tower on the east wall) overlooking the Afon Conwy. It is noticeable that the ground level within the building is considerably higher than the area outside the walls suggesting either a considerable build up of deposits or that the interior rests on a rock outcrop.



Fig 01: Site Location Map

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The Regional Sites and Monuments Record demonstrated that the proposed development lay within the historic core of Conwy which is an archaeological site of international importance. The importance of the site has been recognized by its designation as a World Heritage Site by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The site lies on a known medieval street frontage that according to archaeological and historical records has been continuously occupied since the eighteenth century and probably considerably earlier.
- 1.3.2 The town has been described as the finest walled town in the country (Soulsby 1983, 110) because its circuit of walls and gates remain virtually complete. The borough was founded in 1283 twenty years after the earlier English foundation of Deganwy had been destroyed. The town was divided into a number of *burgage* plots which by 1312 had reached 124.
- 1.3.3 Conwy is not built on an orthogonal grid pattern but its streets do form an approximate grid with the main roads laid out parallel to the walls. Castle Street lies parallel to the east wall and is the main street within the town.
- 1.3.4 The earliest cartographic reference to a building on this site is the Holland Estate Map of 1776. A building of similar outline is also shown on the Bodlondeb Easte Map of 1865 where it is marked as Lot 187. In later nineteenth century maps and during the twentieth century the building on the site was in use as a Masonic hall.

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Watching Brief

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area paying particular attention to any medieval structures.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features
- 2.1.4 To appraise the likely impact of the proposal on any surviving archaeological deposits and if appropriate to make suggestions for a mitigation strategy or, where areas contain archaeology of national importance, for preservation *in situ*.

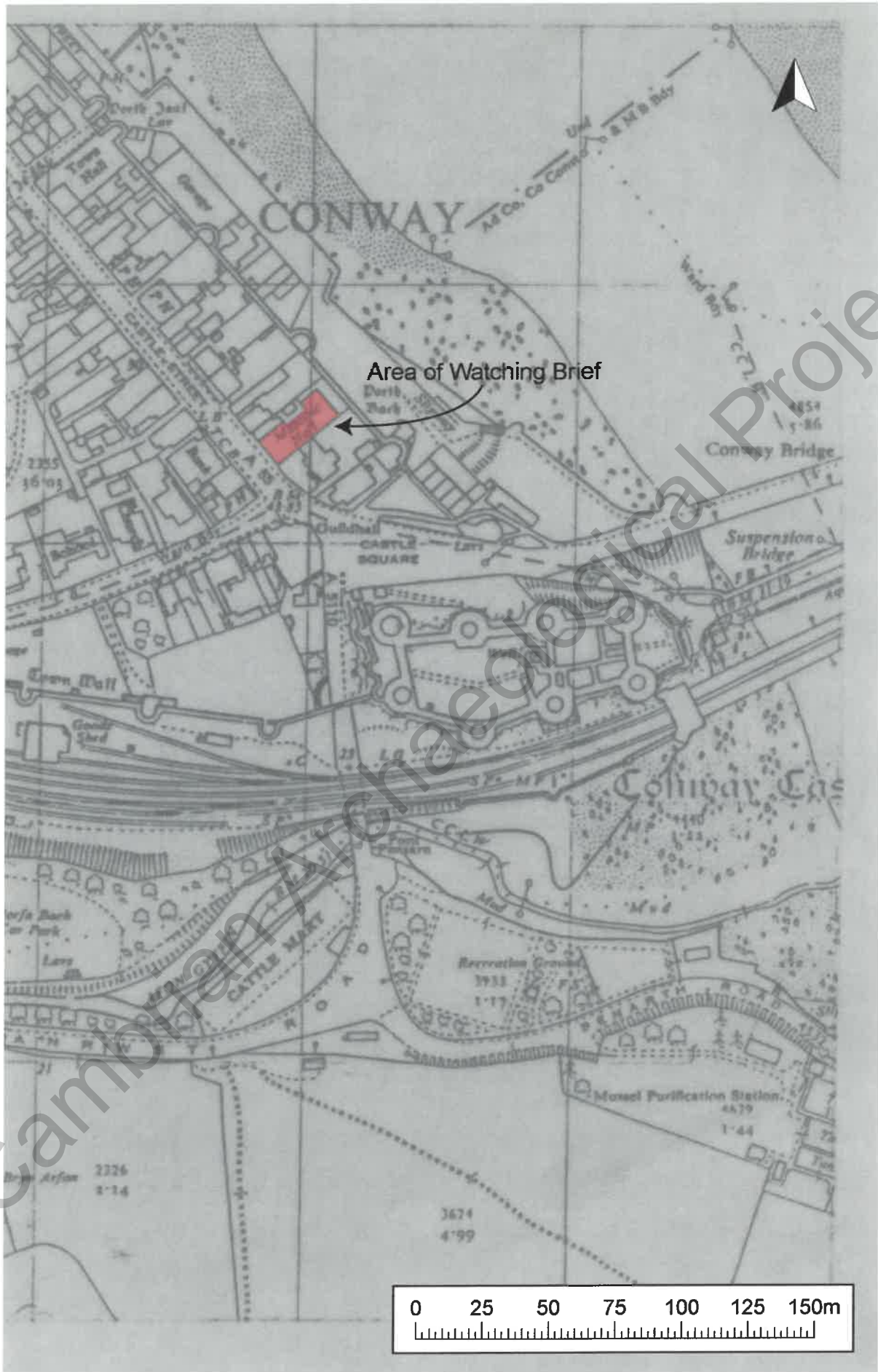


Fig 02: Map showing area of watching brief

3 Results

3.1 Existing Arrangement

At present the interior of the building is divided into three main blocks. Facing the street there is a two storey block (Block 1) with a single square room on each floor connected by a staircase abutting the south wall. To the rear of the two storey block there is a second block (Block 2) comprising a very large rectangular room (20.40m. x 7.50m.) with French windows at the east end opening onto a small paved courtyard. The third block (Block 3) comprising the kitchen and toilets is a single storey structure abutting the north side of the large room.

3.2 Proposed Arrangement

The development proposal entails the division of Blocks 1 and 2 into smaller units by single layer partition walls. The ground floor of Block 1 would be divided into two (parlour and hall) and the upper floor into a large bedroom and bathroom. Block 2 is to be divided into five rooms with thin partition walls. The two toilets of Block 3 are to be converted into a single bedroom and the rest of this block is to retain the existing divisions.

3.3 Areas of Archaeological Sensitivity

Block 1 is the oldest part of the structure though in its present form it is unlikely to date from earlier than the nineteenth century. This building is made of red bricks (75 x 105 x 235mm) and covered with a pitched slate roof. The proposed development will not adversely effect this structure and does not pose a threat to any archaeologically significant part of the structure.

Block 2 is also a late 20th century construction though it does abut an earlier wall to the south (see below for detailed discussion).

Block 3 is an entirely late 20th century construction and as such there are no archaeological implications to its development.

3.4 Courtyard and other open areas to the rear of the building.

Although there will be little alteration to this area above ground it is notable that new drains are to be installed. This may well involve excavation of archaeologically sensitive areas and may require further monitoring.

4 Detailed Discussion of South Wall of the Property

The re-development of the property has meant that render on the south wall of the property has been removed to expose the original masonry. The exposed wall, which extends from the street frontage to the courtyard at the rear of the property (a distance of over 30m) comprises a number of distinct phases.

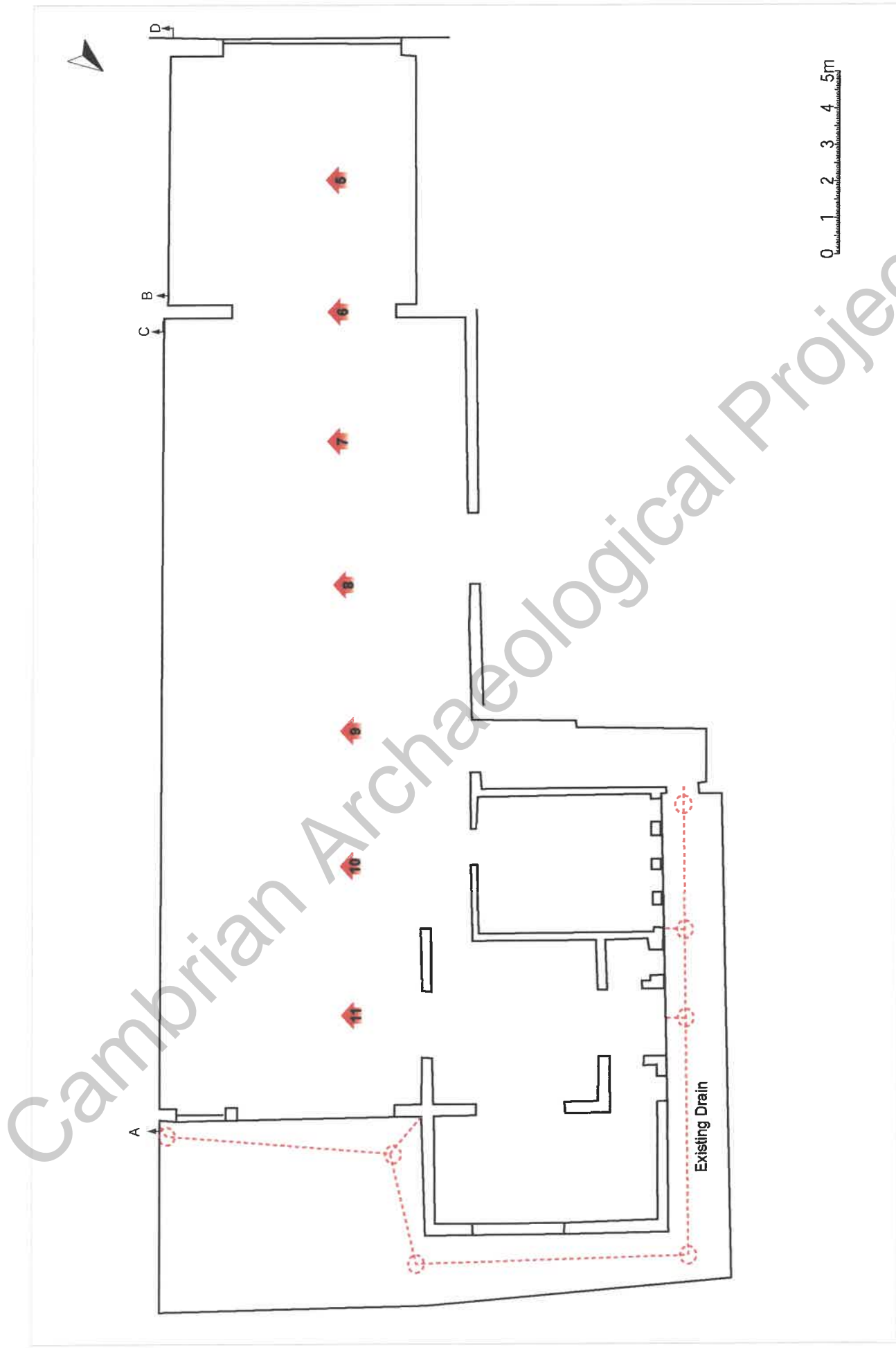


Fig 03: Plan of watching brief area showing location of elevations and direction of photographs

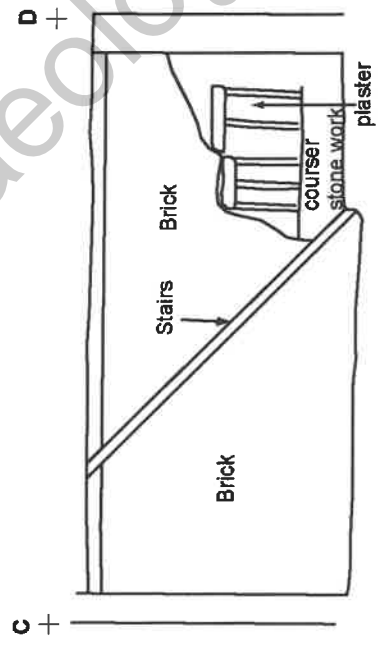
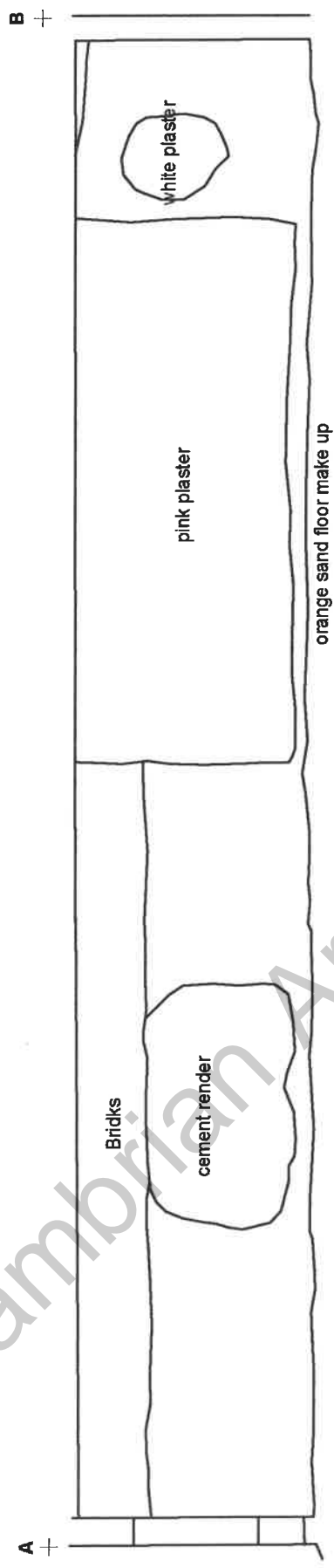


Fig 04: South Elevations

- 1) The earliest phase is at the west end of the wall where there is a small section at the foot of the existing stairs where there is coursed rubble masonry and two stone lintels set into the wall and currently supported by wooden battens.
- 2) The second phase is represented by the un-coursed rubble stone which forms the majority of the south wall in Block 2. The stones are set in lime mortar and appear to have originally been covered in lime plaster which in most places has been removed.
- 3) The third phase is represented by the use of orange red bricks and comprises most of the south wall of Block 1 and the upper part of the wall in Block 2.

5 Discussion And Interpretation

5.1 Interpretation

It appears that an early, possibly medieval, building existed on the site until the nineteenth century when it was substantially demolished to make way for a two storey red brick building. In the twentieth century the building was extended to the rear and the southern boundary wall was increased in height to form the south room of a large hall.

5.2 Significance

The watching brief revealed the proposed development is unlikely to disturb archaeological deposits or historic building fabric because an inner skin is to be placed against the south wall of the property so that the original boundary wall will remain in tact. The only area where there is archaeological potential is at the west end of the wall in Block 1.

6 Acknowledgements

- 6.1.1 Thanks to; Kevin Blockley and Ifan Edwards for their help and advice during the compilation of this report.

7 Bibliography and references

- Hughes, H.H. 1938 'The Edwardian Castle and Town Defences at Conwy'
Archaeologia Cambrensis: The Journal of the Cambrian Archaeological Association 793 (1) 75-92.
- RCHMW, 1956 Caernarfonshire I: 56-7
- Soulsby, I. 1983 *The Towns of Medieval Wales: a study of their history, archaeology and early topography* Sussex, Philimore
- University of Wales, Bangor. U.C.N.W., Bangor. General MS No. 2383, Holland Estate, *Map of Conway*, 1776.

Other sources consulted

CADW listing database, 2003



Plate 01: Wheel house, Castle street frontage



Plate 02: Rear of building with roof



Plate 03: Interior with older masonry visible



Plate 04; Interior with detail of stone lintel



Plate 05: Interior with staircase looking south



Plate 06: Dividing wall looking south



Plate 07: Interior south wall



Plate 08: Interior, south wall



Plate 09: Interior, south wall



Plate 10: Interior, south wall



Plate 11: Interior, south wall



Plate 12: Exterior courtyard, south wall



APPENDIX I:
Archive Cover Sheet

Cambrian Archaeological Projects

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Site and museum

Site Name: Wheel House, Conwy
Site Code: WHC/03/WB

PRN:

NPRN :

SAM:

Other Ref No:

NGR: 278298

Site Type:

Project Type: Watching Brief/ Building recording

Project Officer: Andrew Petersen

Project Dates: July 2003

Categories Present:

Location of Original Archive: GAT

Location of duplicate Archives:

Number of Finds Boxes:

Location of Finds:

Museum Reference:

Copyright:

Restrictions to access:



APPENDIX II:

Design Brief for Watching Brief & Specification for Building Recording

Cambrian Archaeological Projects

DESIGN BRIEF FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service

Site: The Wheelhouse, Castle Street, Conwy

Applicant/Company: Conwy County Borough Council

Date: 19 June 2003

National Grid Reference: 278298 377547

Planning reference: 0/26957

This design brief is only valid for six months after the above date. After this period Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service should be contacted.

It is recommended that the contractor appointed to carry out the archaeological assessment visits the site of the proposed development and consults the Regional Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for north-west Wales before completing their specification. Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service cannot guarantee the inclusion of all relevant information in the design brief.

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. For the purposes of this brief the site comprises The Wheelhouse, Castle Street, Conwy and the plot associated with the building. This property lies within the south-eastern quarter of the original medieval town area and its curtilage abuts part of the north-east town wall.

2.0 Archaeological Background

- 2.1 The origins of Conwy in its present form date back to the conquest of Wales by Edward I in 1283. Conwy Castle was one of three castles with associated boroughs established in Gwynedd at that time (the others being Caernarfon and Harlech).
- 2.2 The status of Conwy as a site of international importance has been formally recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in its designation as a World Heritage Site. The town walls are protected as a nationally important monument by their designation as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) CO14.
- 2.3 The shape of the area enclosed by the town walls meant that the street plan could not be a strictly rectangular grid, but its main streets are roughly parallel to the north and east stretches of the wall. The Wheelhouse lies on the north side of the eastern street, Castle Street. A third principle road led from Porth Uchaf (western gate) through the market-place (now Lancaster Square) to Porth Isaf.
- 2.4 The town was divided into plots, *burgages*, which fronted these streets and for which tenants paid rent to the Crown. The Wheelhouse lies on one of the original burgrave plots.
- 2.5 The Regional Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) contains very little information relating to the Wheelhouse, Conwy. The earliest reference to a

building on this plot is on the Holland Estate map of 1776. The building is shown in much the same arrangement on the Bodlondeb Estate map of 1865, where it is recorded as Lot 187. Later maps mark the plot as the location of a masonic hall. It is difficult to tell whether the building shown on the map of 1776 is the same as that which currently occupies the plot but it is likely that the frontage of the present building retains features that are of 18th century date.

- 2.6 A number of medieval buildings (sixteenth century and earlier) survive in Conwy and it is possible that the Wheelhouse also comprises an important survival from the original medieval walled town.

2.7 Documentation:

University of Wales, Bangor. U.C.N.W., Bangor. General MS. No. 2383.
Holland Estate, Map of Conway, 1776

Hughes, H.H. 1938. The Edwardian Castle and Town Defences at Conwy.
Archaeologia Cambrensis: The Journal of the Cambrian Archaeological Association 793 (1): 75-92

Kelly, R. 1977. *Conwy's Past in Future: A Survey of Archaeological Deposits in Conwy, Gwynedd*. Bangor: Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments 1956.
Caernarfonshire I: 56-7

Soulsby, I. 1983. *The Towns of Medieval Wales: a study of their history, archaeology and early topography*. 110-115. Sussex: Phillimore.

Taylor, A.J. 1970. The Walls of Conwy. *Archaeologia Cambrensis: The Journal of the Cambrian Archaeological Association* 109: 1-10

3.0 **The nature of the development and archaeological requirements**

- 3.1 The proposed development comprises plans to carry out external alterations and a change of use from a restaurant and accommodation to a dwelling.
- 3.2 This is a *design brief* for an **archaeological watching brief** to be undertaken following planning consent, according to guidelines set out in Welsh national planning guidance (*Planning Policy Guidance Wales 1996*) and Welsh Office Circular 60/96 (*Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology*).
- 3.3 The object of this programme of archaeological works is to create an archive record of any archaeological deposits or structures that may be revealed through on-site construction activity.
- 3.4 This *design brief* should be used by the archaeological contractor as the basis for the preparation of a detailed written archaeological *specification*. The specification must be submitted to the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service for approval before the work commences.
- 3.5 The *specification* should contain, as a minimum, the following elements:
- Non-technical summary.
 - Details of the proposed works as precisely as is reasonably possible, indicating clearly on a plan their location and extent.
 - A research design which sets out the site-specific objectives of the archaeological works.

- Reference to the relevant legislation.
- Health and Safety considerations.
- Monitoring procedures.
- Field methodology.
- Methods of recording, including the collection and disposal strategy for artefacts and ecofacts.
- Arrangement for immediate conservation of artefacts.
- Post-fieldwork methodology.
- The level and grade of all key project staff.
- Details of all specialists.
- A timetable for the proposed works including contingency costs (if appropriate).
- The intended method of publication.
- Archive deposition.

4.0 Watching brief detail

4.1 The watching brief will consist of the following:

- Monitoring of all works to the original building fabric, including the removal of render, plaster, and roofing.
- A drawn, written and photographic record of any archaeological structures and deposits that may be revealed.
- Preparation of full archive report.

4.2 The monitoring of works is to be undertaken in a manner that allows for the immediate cessation of development for the recording of archaeological evidence. Agreement must be reached between the archaeologist and developer in order that this is achieved.

4.3 Recording methodology should be in accordance with Institute of Field Archaeologists guidance (see general requirements below). Recording will comprise appropriate plans, elevation and photographs.

4.4 The different forms and levels of historic building recording are defined in **Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification** (RCHME 1996 third edition). The level of recording for different aspects of the site should be agreed in writing before work begins.

4.5 The archaeological contractor will ensure that sufficient resource is made available for a post-excavation programme to result in an archive report.

4.6 The report should specifically include the following.

- a) a copy of the design brief and agreed specification,
- b) a location plan,
- c) all located sites plotted on an appropriately scaled plan of the development.

- d) a gazetteer of all located sites, including full dimensional and descriptive detail.
- e) a full bibliography of sources consulted.

5.0 General requirements

- 5.1 The archaeological watching brief must be undertaken by an appropriately qualified individual or organisation, fully experienced in work of this character.
- 5.2 Details, including the name, qualifications and experience of the project director and all other key project personnel (including specialist staff) should be communicated to the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service and all written work attributed to an author(s).
- 5.3 Contractors and subcontractors are expected to conform to standard professional guidelines. The following are of particular relevance in this instance:-
 - English Heritage's 1991 Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2).
 - The Institute of Field Archaeologists 1985 (revised 1997) Code of Conduct.
 - The Institute of Field Archaeologists 1990 (revised 1997) Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology.
 - The Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994 (revised 1999) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.
 - The Institute of Field Archaeologists 1996 (revised 1999) Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures.
 - The Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999 Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials.
 - Museum and Galleries Commission 1994 Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections.
 - United Kingdom Institute for Conservation 1990 Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for long-term storage.
- 5.4 Many people in North Wales speak Welsh as their first language, and many of the archive and documentary references are in Welsh. Contractors should therefore give due consideration to their ability to understand and converse in Welsh.
- 5.5 Care must taken in the siting of offices and other support structures in order to minimise the impact on the environment. Extreme care must also be taken in the structure and maintenance of spoil heaps for the same reasons and to facilitate a high quality reinstatement. This is particularly important in relation to pasture land.
- 5.6 The archaeological contractor must satisfy themselves that all constraints to groundworks have been identified, including the siting of live services, Tree Preservation Orders and public footpaths. Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service bears no responsibility for the inclusion or exclusion of such information within this brief.

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GWYNEDD ARCHAEOLOGICAL PLANNING SERVICE

5

- 5.7 Any changes to the specifications that the archaeological contractor may wish to make after approval by this office should be communicated to Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service and approved.
- 5.8 Care must be taken in dealing with human remains and the appropriate environmental health regulations followed. Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service and the local Coroner must be informed immediately human remains are discovered.
- 5.9 Arrangements for the long-term storage and deposition of all artefacts must be agreed with the landowner and Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service before the commencement of investigation.
- 5.10 The involvement of Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service should be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.
- 5.11 A full archive including plans, photographs, written material and any other material resulting from the project should be prepared in accordance with standard guidance. All plans, photographs and descriptions should be labelled, cross-referenced and lodged in an appropriate place (to be agreed with Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service) within six months of the completion of the project.
- 5.12 Two copies of the bound report must be sent to the address below, one copy marked for the attention of the Development Control Archaeologist, the other for attention of the SMR Officer, who will deposit the copy in the SMR.
- 6.0 Curatorial monitoring**
- 6.1 The project will be monitored by the development control archaeologist at Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service to ensure the fulfilment of the brief and specifications. The development control archaeologist will normally inspect site works and review the progress of excavation reports and archive preparation. The archaeological contractor must inform Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service in writing of the proposed start dates for the project.
- 7.0 Glossary of terms**
- 7.1 *Archaeological Contractor*
A professionally qualified individual or an organisation containing professionally qualified archaeological staff, able to offer an appropriate and satisfactory treatment of the archaeological resource, retained by the developer to carry out archaeological work either prior to the submission of a planning application or as a requirement of the planning process.
- 7.2 *Archaeological Curator*
A person, or organisation, responsible for the conservation and management of archaeological evidence by virtue of official or statutory duties. In north-west Wales the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authorities is the development control archaeologist, who works to the Welsh Archaeological Trust's Curators' Code of Practice.
- 7.3 *Archive*
An ordered collection of all documents and artefacts from an archaeological

project, which at the conclusion of the work should be deposited at a public repository, such as the local museum.

7.4 Brief

The Association of County Archaeological Officers (1993) defines a *brief* as an outline framework of the planning and archaeological situation which has to be addressed, together with an indication of the scope of works that will be required.

7.5 Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)

A documentary record of known sites in a given area. In north-west Wales the SMR is curated by the curatorial division of the Gwynedd Archaeological Trust.

7.6 Specification

The Association of County Archaeological Officers (1993) defines a *specification* as a schedule of works outlined in sufficient detail to be quantifiable, implemented and monitored.

7.7 Watching brief

A formal programme of observation during non-archaeological excavation works in order to identify, investigate and record any Archaeological Remains which may be present, in accordance with the Archaeological Standards.

8.0 Further information

8.1 This document outlines best practice expected of an archaeological assessment but cannot fully anticipate the conditions that will be encountered as work progresses. If requirements of the brief cannot be met they should only be excluded or altered after gaining written approval of the Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service.

8.2 Further details or clarification of any aspects of the brief may be obtained from the Development Control Archaeologist at the address below.

Emily La Trobe-Bateman
Development Control Archaeologist

Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service
Craig Beuno
Ffordd Y Garth
Bangor
Gwynedd LL57 2RT

Telephone: 01248 370926
Fax: 01248 351867

CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS Ltd.

**SPECIFICATION FOR
BUILDING RECORDING**

**AT
THE WHEELHOUSE**

CASTLE STREET

CONWY

Prepared for:
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Apartment 1
Verdre Hall
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Date: 26 August 2003

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NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This specification details the proposals for archaeological building recording of The Wheelhouse, Castle Street, Conwy.

1. Introduction

Mr Tunstall has requested this specification in response to a brief for an archaeological watching brief on the above site. The site is situated at NGR 278298 377547 and has been granted planning permission (ref: 0/26957).

The brief from Emily Le Trobe-Bateman, Development Control Officer, Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Services was dated 19 June 2003 (ref: D737). The brief requested an archaeological watching brief and recording of features located.

After an inspection visit to the site in July it was established that the internal walls had been stripped of render and the internal surfaces were clearly visible. No significant old features were evident and the roof structure (much of it was flat roofed) and front elevation were considered to be modern.

Since no further work that was being undertaken would reveal any further features it was agreed (by telephone), with Emily Le Trobe-Bateman, that a phase of building recording would be adequate.

This Specification sets out the methodology for the archaeological work required to undertake the building recording work.

All works will be undertaken in accordance with the IFA's *Standards and guidance* and within current Health and Safety Guidelines.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aim of the building recording was to ensure that any archaeological features were adequately recorded.

The objectives will be as follows:

- To record the archaeological features and phasing of the walls of the building
- To assess the survival, quality, condition and significance of any archaeological features
- To record specific standing structures to RCAHM Level 2.

3. Methods statement

Standing Building Recording

A survey will be undertaken of building and will comprise written, photographic and drawn records to RCAHM Level 2 specification.

Site archive

The site archive will be prepared in accordance with MAP 2, Appendix 3 (English Heritage

1991). It will comprise all the data recovered during the fieldwork and shall be quantified, ordered and indexed and will be internally consistent. The archive will be deposited at a recognised local museum.

Final reporting

A full report of the results of the archaeological work will be prepared within 4 weeks of the end of the fieldwork.

The report will contain, as a minimum, the following elements:

- A concise non-technical summary of the project results
- Location plans of all drawn and photographic records in relation to the site, and trench layout
- A phased plan of the building
- Description of the building
- Narrative history of building
- Description and interpretation of features recorded
- A statement of the local and regional context of the remains
- Conclusions
- Bibliography

Two copies of the report will be sent to Mr Tunstall and two copies to Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (one copy for their Archaeological Planning Services and the other for the Regional Sites and Monuments Record).

A summary report will be submitted to the editor of the CBA's *Archaeology in Wales*, for inclusion in the annual Archaeological Notes section.

4. Resources and programming

Programming

The archaeological work will be undertaken by Andrew Petersen at a time convenient to the client.

Equipment

The project will use existing Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd equipment.

Insurance

Cambrian Archaeological Projects is an affiliated member of the CBA, and holds Insurance through the CBA insurance service.

Health and safety

All members of staff will adhere to the requirements of the *Health & Safety at Work Act*, 1974, and the Health and Safety Policy Statement of Cambrian Archaeological Projects.

Kevin Blockley
Cambrian Archaeological Projects
26 August 2003



Cambrian Archaeological Projects