

**LAND EAST OF 14 MERLIN STREET,  
CARMARTHEN,  
CARMARTHESHIRE.**

**NGR: SN 4106 2045**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**June 2014**

**Report No. 975**

**Quality Assurance**

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with AMS's Quality Procedures (BS EN ISO 9001: 2008)

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## **SUMMARY**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for the development of office accommodation and the re-location of electrical supply infrastructure. The work was commissioned by AB Heritage on behalf of Carwyn Davies of Hacer Development in response to a requirement for archaeological monitoring by Carmarthenshire County Council.

Due to on-site constraints it was decided to excavate five test-pits across the study area. No archaeological finds or features were present within the test-pits.

No intact soils were present within the watched area, with Modern hardcore/levelling layers directly sealing the natural deposits. The site appeared to have been considerably reduced in comparison with the heights of the neighbouring properties.

## **GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

### *Archaeology*

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

### *CBM*

Ceramic Building Material.

### *Medieval*

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and circa AD 1500. However, in Wales the Medieval period can encompass the period from the end of the Roman period to the Norman period (AD410-1066), in which case it is described as the *Early Medieval* period.

### *Natural*

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

### *NGR*

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

### *OD*

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

### *OS*

Ordnance Survey

### *Post-medieval*

The period from circa AD 1500 onwards.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 On the 16th June 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for the development of office accommodation and the re-location of electrical supply infrastructure. The work was commissioned by AB Heritage on behalf of Carwyn Davies of Hacer Development in response to a requirement for archaeological monitoring by Carmarthenshire County Council.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by AB Heritage (2014), which conformed to the principles set out in Policies BE2 and BE3 of the Carmarthenshire Unitary Development Plan (Deposit Plan November 2002), the archaeological policies of Carmarthen County Council and the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological monitoring.

## **2 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Planning permission (Ref. W/28334) has been granted by Carmarthenshire County Council for the development of office accommodation and the relocation of electrical supply infrastructure at land to the east of 14 Merlin Street, Carmarthen.
- 2.2 The site is outside the historic core for the Roman and Medieval town of Carmarthen. No heritage assets are currently known within the boundary of the proposed development and the site has been extensively developed.
- 2.3 The study area therefore contained the potential for archaeological finds predominantly dating to the Roman, Medieval and Post-medieval period. This however did not prejudice the watching brief against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

## **3 AIMS**

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. This was intended to allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed works.

3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the objectives as stated below.

i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;

ii) to attempt to characterize the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;

iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

#### **4 METHODOLOGY**

4.1 All intrusive groundworks were to be monitored and recorded in order to identify archaeological finds and deposits and these groundworks were to be carried out under the constant monitoring of an archaeologist. However, due to on-site constraints, it was decided to excavate five test-pits across the study area.

4.2 Spoil tips were visually scanned for unstratified finds.

4.3 All excavation and recording was undertaken in accordance with Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual and the WSI.

#### **5 RESULTS**

5.1 Prior to arrival; the site had been cleared of *in-situ* concrete flooring and foundations.

5.2 The locations of the test-pits are marked on Figure 2 and were excavated to the following dimensions : Test-pit 1 - 1m by 0.6m, Test-pit 2 - 1m by 0.6m, Test-pit 3 – 1.2m by 0.6m, Test-pit 4 – 2.8m by 3m and Test-pit 5 – 2m by 2.4m. The natural substrates of dark grey clay were encountered at a height of between 0.8 and 1.2m below Modern ground level (approximately 21.50m AOD).

5.3 The stratigraphy was consistent across the observed area and comprised a natural dark grey clay, which was sealed by a layer of grey hardcore/stone (1002), between 0.2 to 1m thick. This was in turn sealed by an industrial backfill (1001), which was between 0.2m to 0.9m thick, this deposit contained concrete, brick and metal and ceramic pipe inclusions and was most likely produced during the previous demolition phase, prior to the commencement of the current groundworks.

5.4 No archaeological finds or deposits were present within the watched areas.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 No archaeological deposits or artefactual material were present within the watched areas.
- 6.2 No intact soils were present within the watched area, with Modern hardcore/levelling layers directly sealing the natural deposits. The site appeared to have been considerably reduced in comparison with the heights of the neighbouring properties.
- 6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the local museum. An OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

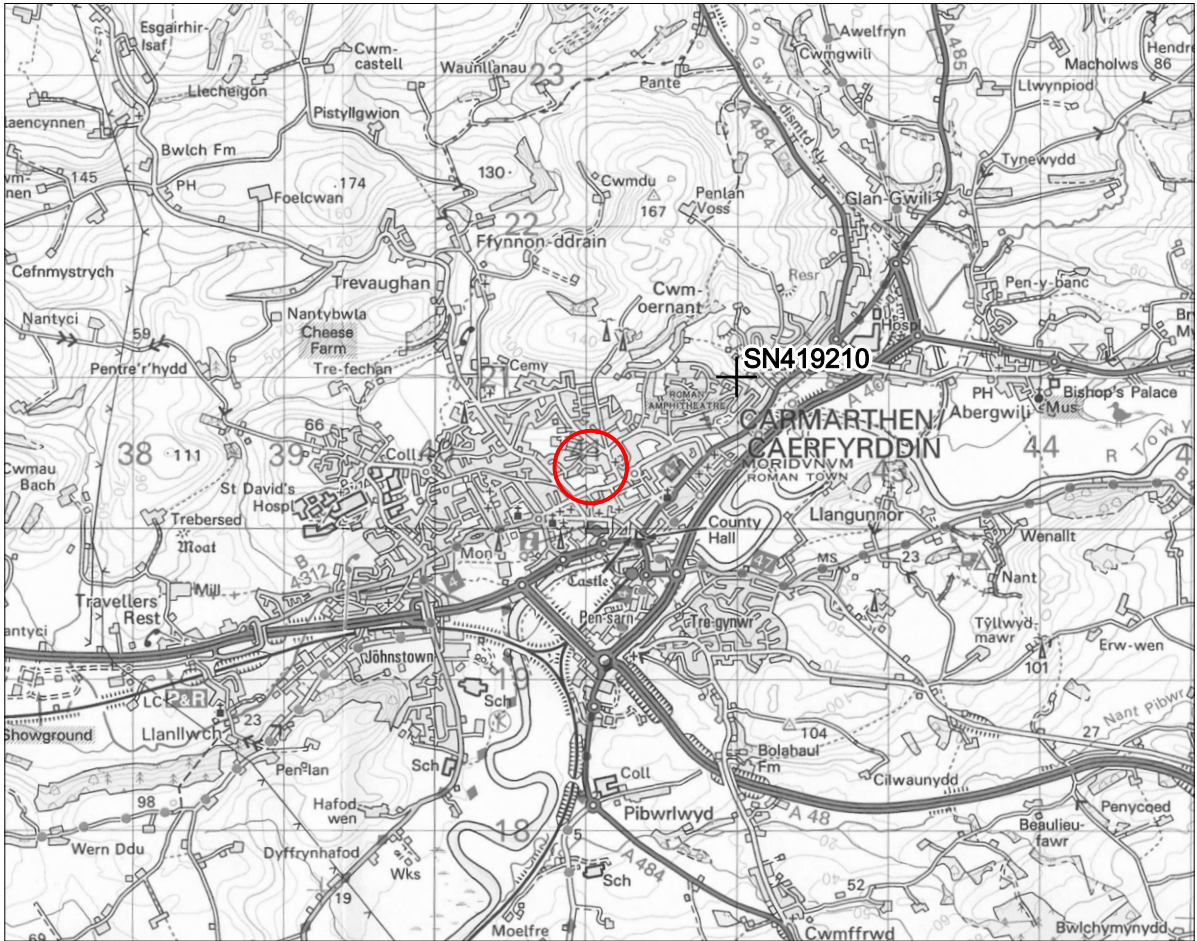
AB Heritage, 2014 *Land East of 14 Merlin Street, Carmarthen. Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished.

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IfA, 2008, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, Institute for Archaeologists, Reading.

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Glenn Rose of AB Heritage and the on-site ground workers for their help during the course of this project.



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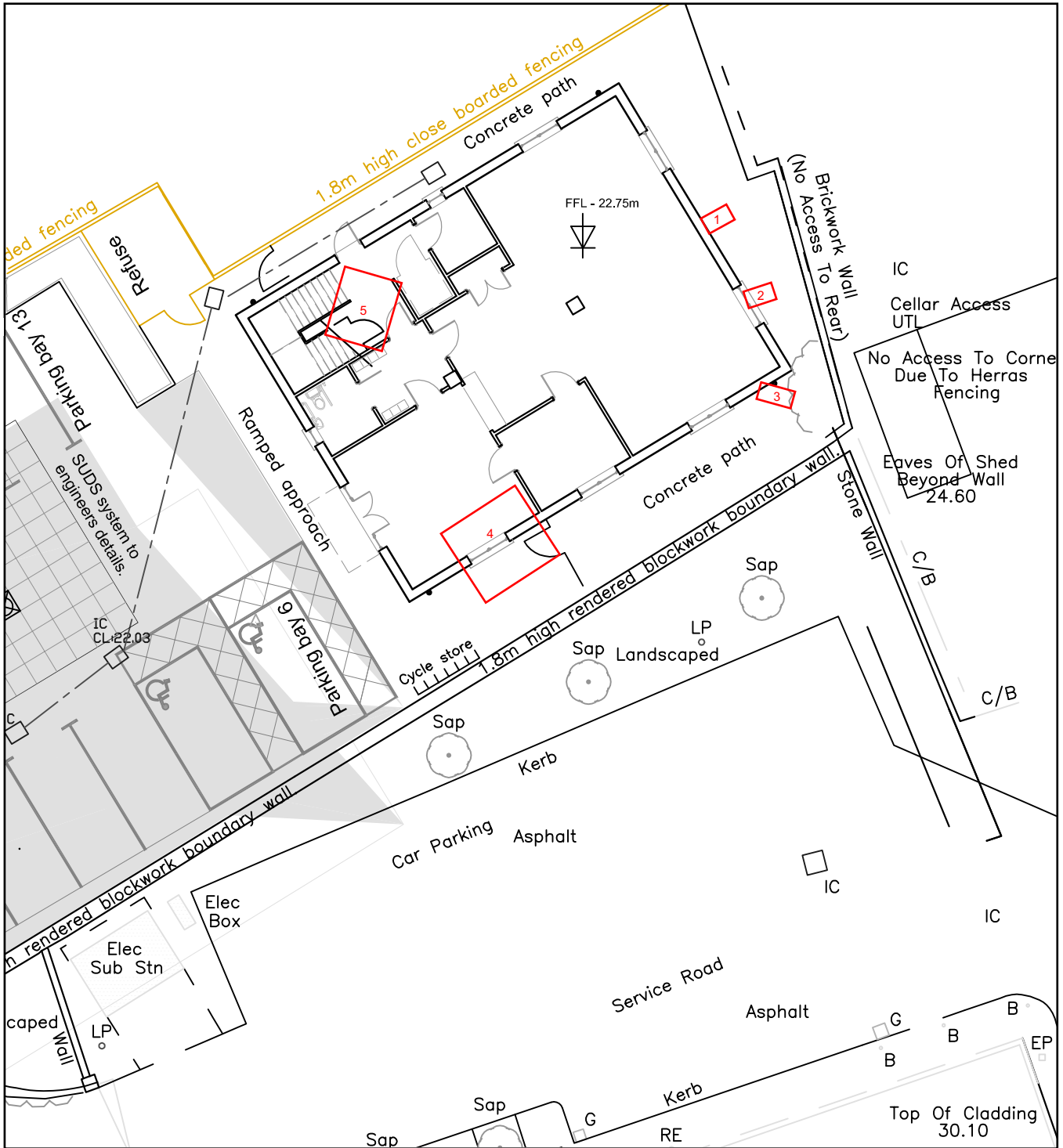
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**FIGURE 1: Site Location**

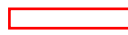





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 LOCATION OF TEST PITS



1:200

**FIGURE 2: Test-pit Locations**