

LLANFAES  
SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS  
(PHASE I)  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING  
AND RECORDING

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*Report 110*

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Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd  
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

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(PHASE I)  
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Summary Statement  
prepared for  
Dŵr Cymru - Welsh Water

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June 1994

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Report No. 110 (GAT No. 1162)

**LLANFAES SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS**  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING: (Phase 1 - G1162)**

**SUMMARY STATEMENT - June 1994**  
(Full report to incorporate Phases II & III when completed)

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Improvements by Welsh Water to existing sewage treatment works at Llanfaes commenced in mid-November 1993, with the installation of services at Beaumaris (Phase 1). Subsequent to the preparation of an archaeological brief for the work by the Development Control Section, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (Contracts section) (GAT) was requested by Welsh Water to carry out a watching brief during ground disturbance.

## **2. PROJECT BRIEF**

The project brief identified the archaeological potential of the project as centring on the possibility of exposing remains of the towns' medieval defences during disturbances opposite Green Edge. Archaeological potential was also identified as likely within the town during excavation of the thrust bore pit and pipe trench near to the White Lion Public House. The recovery of environmental information during the excavation of the large Mountfield thrust pit was also identified as a possibility.

A Grade 1 Watching Brief involving continuous monitoring of ground disturbance during the construction work was recommended, with provision for adjusting the level of response once the nature of any archaeological remains was established.

## **3. WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme identified four work stages within phase 1 of the project:

- 1) Limited documentary search
- 2) Watching Brief during excavation of the Mountfield thrust pit
- 3) Watching Brief during excavation of thrust pits opposite the White Lion PH car park and at Green Edge
- 4) Watching brief during excavation of a pipe trench behind the White Lion PH (and other works including excavation for the diversion of existing services, and installation of temporary services)

## **4. RESULTS**

### **1) Documentary Search**

Examination of available maps of Beaumaris between 1610 and the present day concluded three specific points of interest of direct relevance to the proposed work. These are:

- a) that the street pattern within the old walled town has remained substantially unchanged since at least 1610.
- b) the line of the town's medieval defences is strongly suggested as passing in a north westerly

direction directly behind the White Lion public house. However, as is the case with the castle, not all of the town defences may actually have been completed.

c) the Green has been extended with the improvement of sea defences since the early 19th century and appears to have been unoccupied and free from development since at least 1610.

The information gained from the documentary search implied that work in the vicinity of the White Lion might reveal the substantial wall footings of the former town wall.

The street pattern appears to have remained unchanged within the area of the proposed work certainly since 1610. This would suggest the pattern probably dates from the establishment of the town in the late 1200's AD, indicating that excavation within the area is likely to reveal sealed deposits relating to earlier road surfaces and/or early services.

The Green would appear to contain the least potential for revealing remains of the archaeological past of Beaumaris, although the recovery of environmental information on the nature of the previous land use and/or previous sea levels remained a possibility in this area.

## **2) Mountfield Thrust Pit**

Archaeological monitoring of a large thrust pit at Mountfield including the clearance and levelling of the surrounding area revealed a variable depth of agricultural topsoil overlying a mixed horizon of varying coloured silts and sands, both of which contained modern and 19th century pottery sherds. The remaining depth of excavation to a maximum of c.10.0m below the present ground surface comprised 3-4m of sterile sandy gravel overlying a compacted grey clay. The trench stratigraphy was therefore predominantly alluvial in nature represented by the deep gravelly layer. No features or deposits of an archaeological nature were present. Deposits deserving sampling for environmental investigation were absent.

## **3) Thrust pits opposite the County Hall and on the Green**

a) Archaeological monitoring of a 4m diameter thrust pit at the junction of Castle Street and Mona Street opposite the County Hall produced no evidence of surviving archaeological deposits relating to the town's occupation prior to the 19th century. A deep (c.3.5m) deposit of orange brown gravel was overlain by 1.3m of recently disturbed ground containing various inclusions of 19th and 20th century building refuse and redundant pipework. The thrust pit was dug to a depth of 5m below the present road surface.

b) Archaeological monitoring of a 4m diameter thrust pit on the green opposite Green Edge produced no results indicative of occupational deposits within this area. The stratigraphy comprised c.1.5m of recent made ground containing inclusions of modern building waste dating to the last century overlying a deposit of clean orange brown gravel to the maximum depth of the hole at 6.5m.

## **4) Pipe Trench behind the White Lion (and other works)**

Results of the archaeological monitoring of ground disturbance associated with deviation works and the installation of temporary services were similarly of a low yield. In general a large number of modern services had disturbed deposits underlying the present road surface to a maximum observed depth of 2m, and no intact stratigraphy relating to successive occupation levels remained.

A single archaeological feature was revealed in temporary service trench A (see main figure).

Trench A was hand and machine excavated from manhole B in a north westerly direction towards the castle for a total length of c. 18m. The trench was 1.0m wide and excavated to a depth of 2m below the road surface. At a point 1.5m from the southern end of the trench, a

short length of mortared stonework was disturbed by the excavating machine. Inspection of the feature revealed a 2m length of much disturbed wall facing appearing to be orientated approximately NW/SE, and remaining to a height of 1.0m. The feature, which was not observed elsewhere in the trench, appeared to extend below the excavated base of the trench into a deposit of clean brown gravel. Overlying the feature was a large storm drain c.1.0m in diameter and its associated modern backfill deposits. The stone was noted to be of an imported variety and not of the local quarried limestone.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The absence of evidence relating to the location of the town's medieval defences can perhaps be explained by the limited depth of excavation of intrusions near to the White Lion PH, which appear to have been wholly within recently disturbed contexts. The question of the survival or existence of this feature within this area therefore remains unanswered.

Stonework revealed within trench A (report section 4.4) was of unknown date and it was not possible to identify the nature of the feature. The possibility of it relating to a building or other structural feature associated with the medieval period seems doubtful considering the use of imported stone. The local Penmon limestone was known to have been in prolific use during construction of the medieval town and castle.

A deep deposit of orange brown gravel and sand was revealed underlying surface deposits at an average depth of 1.0m within all ground disturbance monitored during the course of the work. This seemingly ubiquitous layer was interpreted initially as a probable ground reclamation deposit designed to raise ground levels within the town beyond flood levels. However the great depth of the deposit observed in two of the thrust pits in Castle Street and at Green Edge indicates that it is more likely of natural deposition.

## ADDENDUM

Subsequent to the work described above, the Trust was requested by Welsh Water to carry out a further watching brief from the 14th to the 28th of February 1994. This work involved monitoring the emergency excavation of a trench to retrieve the tunnelling machine which had become stuck while boring beneath The Green (see main figure).

The recovery trench measured 10.7m by 3.0m, and reached an overall depth of 5.81m. The stratigraphy revealed comprised a mid brown clay with grey lenses at the base of the trench some 0.28m thick, sealed by various sand and gravel layers up to the turf of the present ground surface.

The mixture of sand and gravel layers would suggest that these are natural beach deposits or landfill made up of redeposited beach material. In either case there were no archaeological features in evidence.

A further trench was subsequently excavated by contractors adjacent to the White Lion public house and the County Hall (main figure: small pipe trench) for a pipe connecting the main sewer pipe to the rising main. This trench was excavated to a depth of 1.5m revealing a cobble surface of indeterminate date immediately below the present tarmac.



