

1076 E002566

1076
201/03

CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS LTD.

Chepstow Castle, Chepstow

Archaeological Watching Brief



By

Ian Halfpenney, BA(Hons.), AIFA



CAP Report No. 164

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

**Chepstow Castle,
Chepstow**

BY IAN HALFPENNEY, BA(Hons.), AIFA

Prepared for:
R.C. Turner
Cadw
Cathays park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

CAP Report No: 164

Date: 23rd January 2001



Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd
Wael Old Farmhouse
Llidiartywaen
Llanidloes
Powys SY18 6JT

Telephone/Fax: 01686 413857
e-mail: cambarch@ukf.net

Contents

i) LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ii) IFA STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

| | |
|--|---------|
| NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY | Page 01 |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | Page 01 |
| 2. OBJECTIVES | Page 01 |
| 3. METHODOLOGY | Page 01 |
| 4. RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF | Page 02 |
| 5. CONCLUSIONS | Page 03 |
| 6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | Page 03 |

Copyright Notice:

Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. retain copyright of this report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, and have granted a licence to Cadw to use and reproduce the material contained within.

The Ordnance Survey has granted Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd a Copyright Licence (No. AL 52163A0001) to reproduce map information; Copyright remains otherwise with the Ordnance Survey.

i) List of Illustrations

Figures

Fig 01: Plan Showing Watching Brief Trench in relation to the Porch

Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd

ii) IFA Standards and Guidance

THE INSTITUTE OF FIELD ARCHAEOLOGISTS (IFA)

Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief

The Standard

An archaeological watching brief will record the archaeological resource during development within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims of the project, and comply with the *Code of conduct, Code of approved practice for the regulation of contractual arrangements in field archaeology*, and other relevant by-laws of the IFA.

Definition of an archaeological watching brief

The definition of an archaeological watching brief is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive.

This definition and *Standard* do not cover chance observations, which should lead to an appropriate archaeological project being designed and implemented, nor do they apply to monitoring for preservation of remains *in situ*.

Purpose of a watching brief

The purpose of a watching brief is:

- ◆ to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- ◆ to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

A watching brief is not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

The objective of a watching brief is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

The Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief was formally adopted as IFA approved practice at the Annual General Meeting of the Institute held on 14th October 1994.

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The following report details the results of a watching brief undertaken at Chepstow Castle by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. on behalf of Cadw. The work was required as part of a new footpath scheme currently being constructed within the castle. The area deemed to be archaeologically sensitive was located adjacent to The Great Hall Porch. No archaeological deposits were exposed during the removal of topsoil adjacent to the Porch.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This archaeological watching brief relates to work undertaken at Chepstow Castle by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. on behalf of Cadw.
- 1.2 The development involves the construction of a new footpath which runs east – west within the interior castle grounds.
- 1.3 According to the brief one stretch of the footpath runs up to the medieval porch entrance to the Great Hall. It was felt that this part of development lay within an area of archaeological sensitivity.
- 1.4 It was therefore assumed that any preserved and previously unrecorded archaeological deposits could be partially damaged or destroyed by the intended development. As a consequence, Cadw recommended that an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken, during those works which involve ground disturbance in the area adjacent to the Porch.
- 1.5 In January 2001, Mr. R.C. Turner (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Cadw) asked Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. to undertake the archaeological watching brief in accordance with the brief. This work was carried out on Friday 19th January 2001.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 In accordance with IFA's *Standards and Guidance*, the primary objective of this assessment was to ensure that any previously unrecorded archaeological features and deposits exposed during the ground disturbance works and subsequent development of the site are adequately protected, recorded and interpreted.

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 A mechanical excavator with a 3ft. wide ditching bucket was used for the removal of the topsoil, down to the required depth.
- 3.2 The archaeological contractor then examined this area recovering any datable material which was evident, either in the topsoil or the underlying deposits.

3.3 Cleaning and recording of the trench was then undertaken by the archaeological contractor.

3.4 Recording of the trench was in three formats:

Photographic record shots were taken in 35mm. colour slide, colour print and black and white formats.

Drawn records were produced at scales of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 on drafting film.

Written records were produced using a continuous numbering sequence for all contexts.

3.5 Where necessary limited excavation and cleaning of the trench was undertaken in order to ascertain that no archaeological features were present.

3.6 An environmental sampling and processing strategy was in place should the archaeological deposits warrant it. However, in this instance it was not felt that the deposits encountered required sampling.

3.7 All works were conducted whilst adhering to current Health and Safety regulations.

3.8 All works were undertaken in accordance with The Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

4 RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF (Fig. 1)

4.1 Numbers in brackets in the following section refer to context numbers allocated during the watching brief.

4.2 The overall dimensions of the watching brief area were: 2m. (north-east/south-west) by 3m. (north-west/south-east).

4.3 The topsoil (1) was a good quality, well developed 'A' horizon, described as a dark brown silty loam with occasional stone inclusions and a well developed crumb structure. The area covered by the watching brief was maintained as a grass sward. Depth 0.2m. (max).

4.4 The underlying subsoil (2) was described as a loose pea grit/gravel deposit. These stone inclusions were rounded and sub-rounded indicating that they probably originated from fluvial deposits. Clearly context 2 has been redeposited possibly to assist in the drainage and upkeep of the overlying grass. The depth of this deposit is unknown.

4.5 Following the removal of the topsoil and limited amounts of subsoil the archaeological contractor 'field walked' the exposed area to recover any datable material. This exposed area produced a very small amount of 19th and early 20th century pottery sherds, in addition to glass fragments which are post medieval but not closely datable.

- 4.6 The archaeological contractor was then able to undertake limited cleaning and recording of the trench to ensure no archaeological features were present.
- 4.7 No archaeological features or deposits were located during the watching brief. The only feature uncovered within the trench was an active electricity cable running in a north-west/south-east direction across the trench.
- 4.8 However, it is worth noting that a number of larger limestone fragments were also present in the deposit underlying the topsoil. These fragments may represent the remains of building waste fragments, although it is not possible to ascertain which construction works they were associated with.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 No archaeological deposits or features were located during the course of this watching brief.
- 5.2 The watching brief involved the stripping of a relatively small area. The shallow depth of material which was removed meant that no archaeological deposits were disturbed or damaged.

6 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 6.1 Thanks to Kevin Blockley for his help and advice during the compilation of this report and thanks also to: Cadw and the staff at Chepstow Castle.

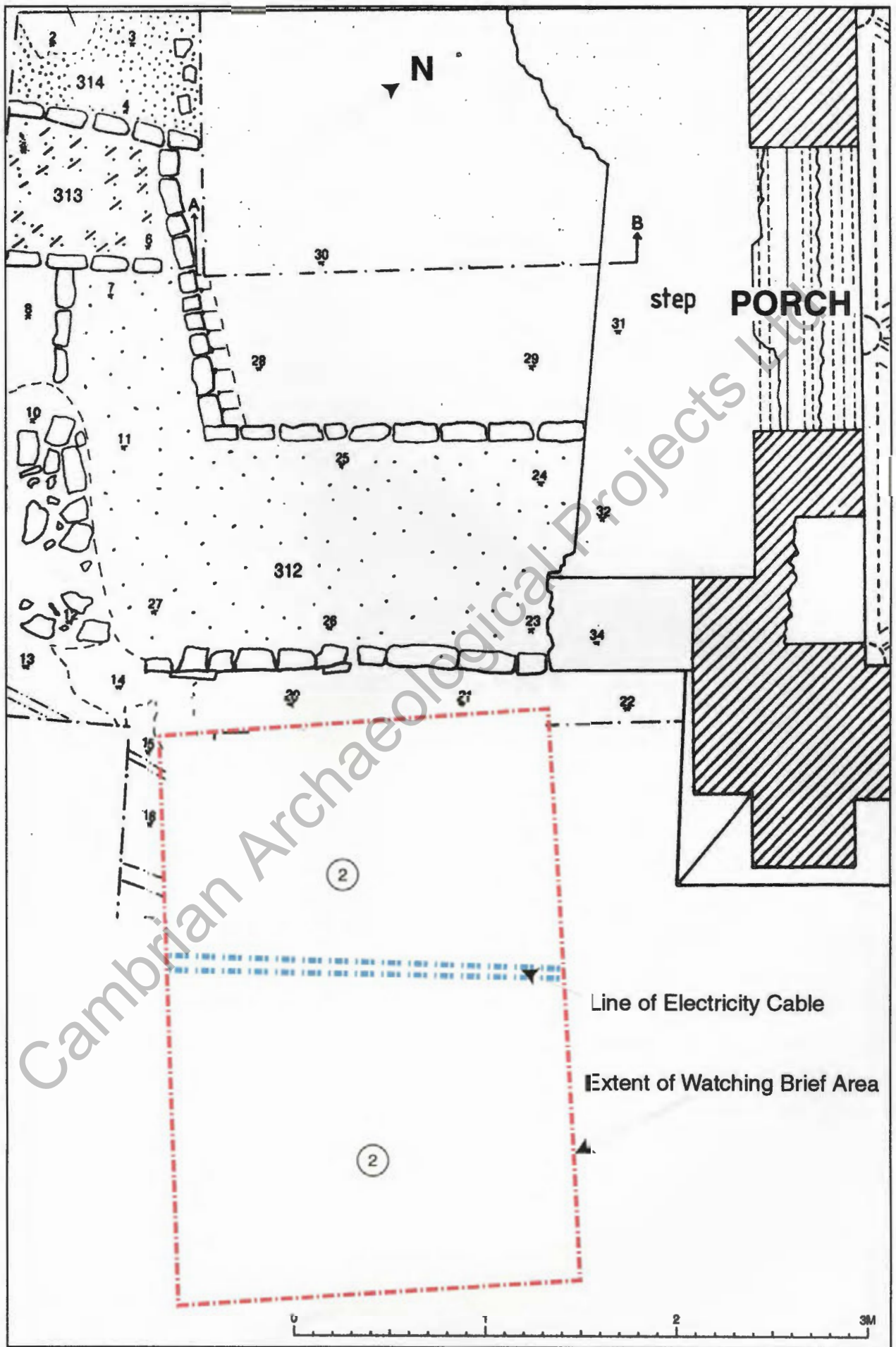


Fig. 01 : Plan showing Watching Brief Trench in relation to the Porch.