

# Land west of Robeston Wathen House, Robeston Wathen Pembrokeshire Watching Brief



Report by: Trysor

For: Roland Rogers on behalf of Peter Griffiths

January 2014



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By

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Trysor

Trysor Project No. 2012/299

For: Roland Rogers on behalf of Peter Griffiths

January 2014

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*Cover photograph: Laying out the foundation trenches, looking south.*

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**RHIF YR ADRODDIAD - REPORT NUMBER:** Trysor 2012/299

**DYDDIAD** 10<sup>fed</sup> Ionawr 2014

**DATE** 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014

**Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan bartneriad Trysor. Mae wedi ei gael yn gywir ac yn derbyn ein sêl bendith.**

**This report was prepared by the Trysor partners. It has been checked and received our approval.**

**JENNY HALL MifA**

*Jenny Hall*

**PAUL SAMBROOK MifA**

*Paul Sambrook*

*Croesawn unrhyw sylwadau ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn.*

*We welcome any comments on the content or structure of this report.*

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Trysor is a Registered Organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists and both partners are Members of the Institute for Archaeologists, [www.archaeologists.net](http://www.archaeologists.net) .

Jenny Hall (BSc Joint Hons., Geology and Archaeology, MifA) had 12 years excavation experience, which included undertaking watching briefs prior to becoming the Sites and Monuments Record Manager for a Welsh Archaeological Trust for 10 years. She has been an independent archaeologist since 2004 undertaking a variety of work that includes upland survey, desk-based appraisals and assessments, and watching briefs.

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### 1. Summary

In May 2013, Trysor undertook a watching brief on a development site to the west of Robeston House at SN0846715783 in the village of Robeston Wathen, Pembrokeshire.

### 2. Copyright

Trysor hold the copyright of this report and of the paper and digital archive. Further paper copies may be made of this report without gaining permission to reproduce but it must be noted that Figure 2, 3, 4 & 5 include other copyright material and should not be copied.

### 3. Introduction

Roland Rogers of Hendy, Maiden Wells, Pembroke, SA71 5ES, on behalf of his client Mr Peter Griffiths, commissioned Trysor heritage consultants to undertake a watching brief write a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) on mitigation for the construction of a house in Robeston Wathen village: planning application 07/1501/PA, Pembrokeshire County Council, see Figure 1.

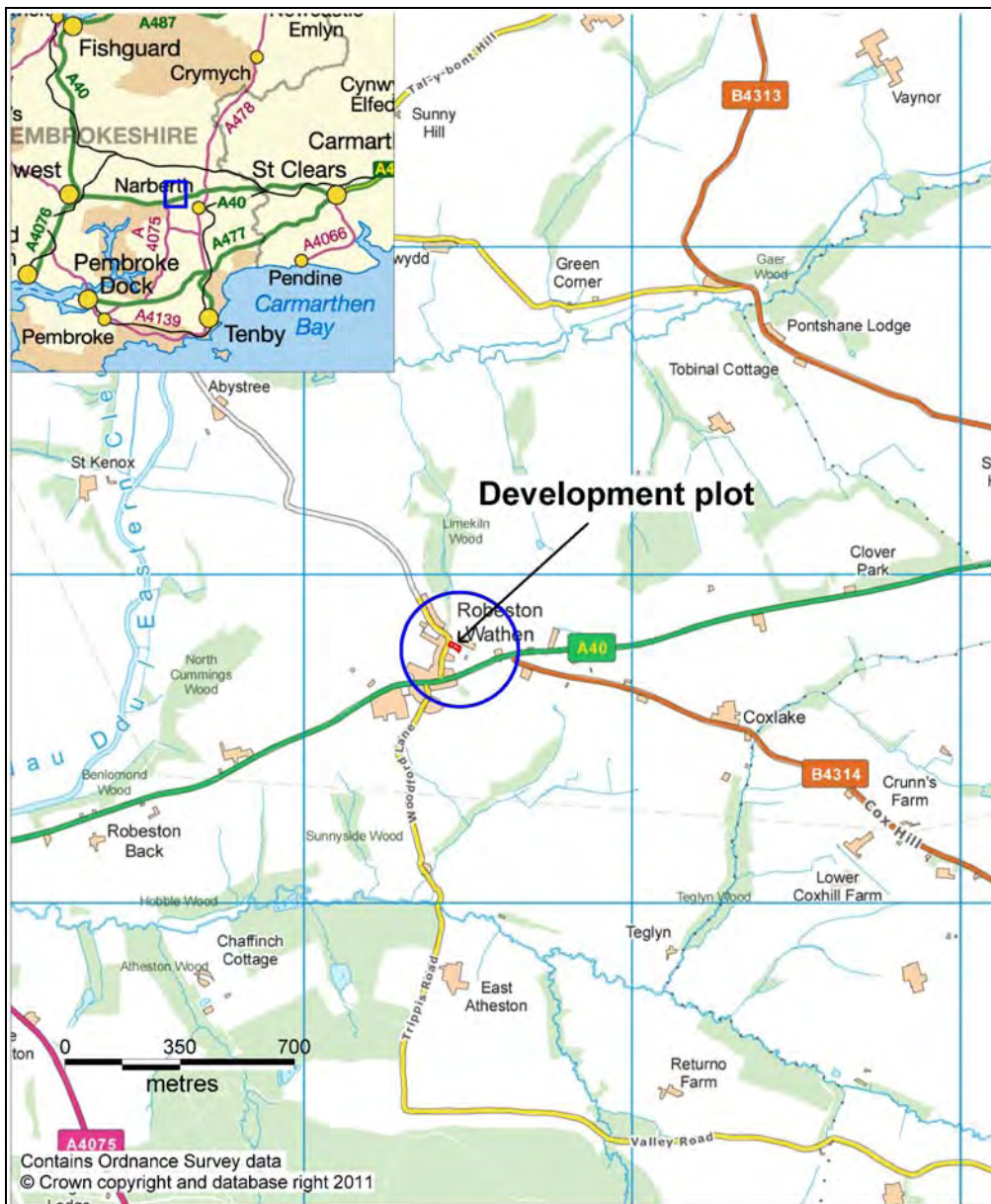
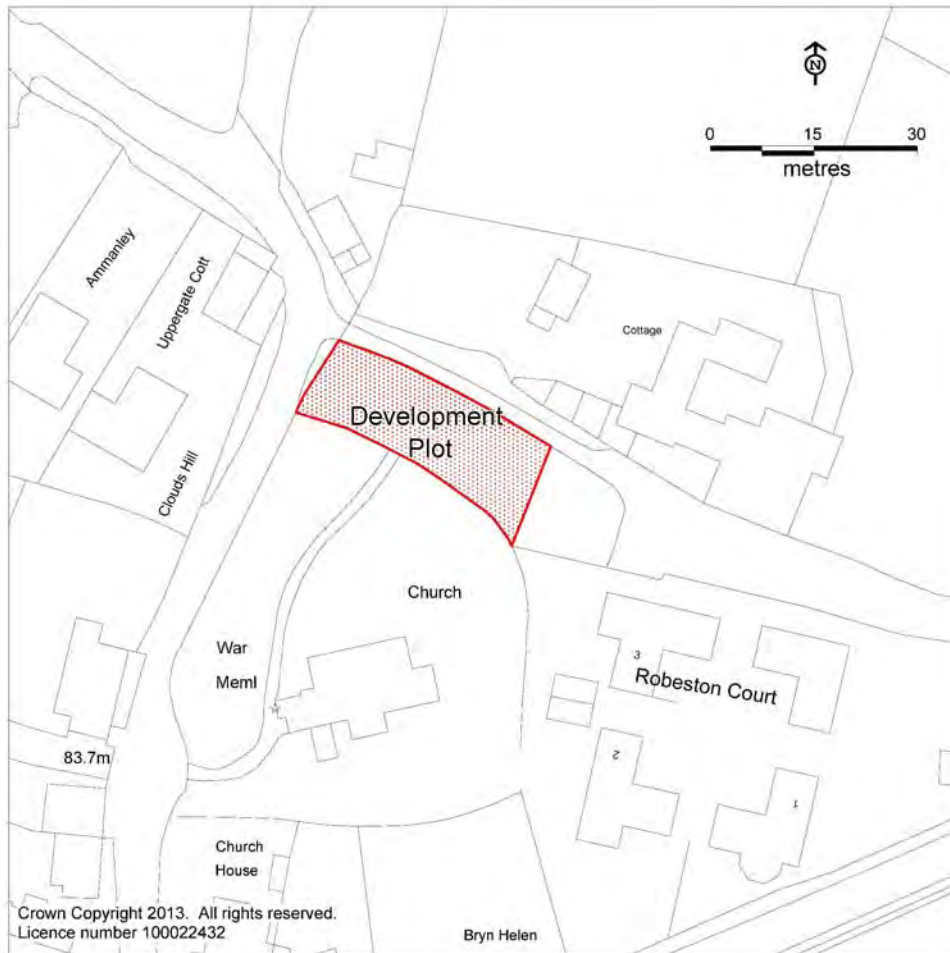


Figure 1: Location of the watching brief.

#### **4. The development**

The development consisted of a new build of a dwelling in a currently empty plot between Robeston Wathen church and Robeston House. The location of the development plot was at SN0846715783, see Figure 2. The ground surface had been cleared previously and new vegetation was growing on it.



*Figure 2: The development plot within Robeston Wathen.*

#### **5. Conditions on the consent**

In granting approval for the application, the Local Planning Authority imposed conditions on the outline consent; one condition specifies the actions necessary to protect historic environment interests whilst enabling development;

*No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.* Dyfed Archaeological Trust, 2008

#### **6. Specification**

Trysor prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which concluded that a watching brief would be appropriate mitigation, see Appendix A. The WSI included the methodology for undertaking the watching brief which was approved by Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management section.

## 7. Historical and Archaeological Overview

A more detailed discussion of the previously recorded archaeology in the area is given in Appendix A, sections 4 & 5, but the location of the development plot being to the north of the Robeston Wathen church was the main reason for the watching brief.

## 8. Methodology

On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2013, the southern trench of the house, see Figure 3, was excavated by machine with a toothed bucket and observed by Trysor. The trench was 5 metres long, 0.60m wide and 0.50 metres deep.

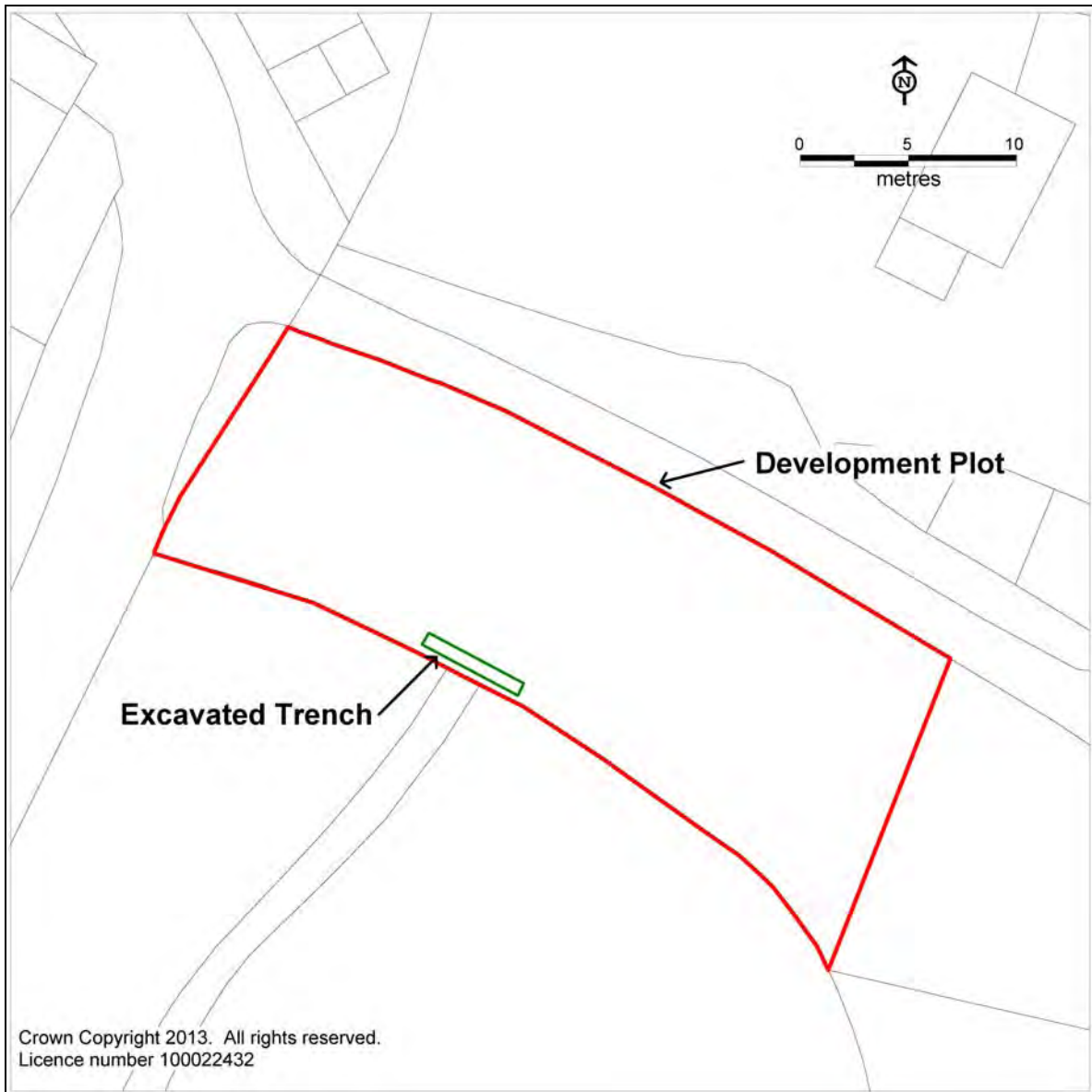


Figure 3: Location of the trench in the development plot

## 9. Site Stratigraphy

The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (Institute for Archaeologists, 2008). The mechanical excavation of the foundation trenches was watched by Trysor and the stratigraphy of the site recorded.



### 9.1 Context Catalogue

Context Number	Depth	Description	Interpretation
001	Up to 0.20m	10YR3/2 Very dark grayish brown loam	Topsoil
002	-	10YR5/8 Yellowish brown	Subsoil
003			Modern drainage pipe cut
004		10YR3/2	Fill of drainage pipe, loam similar to topsoil and plastic pipe

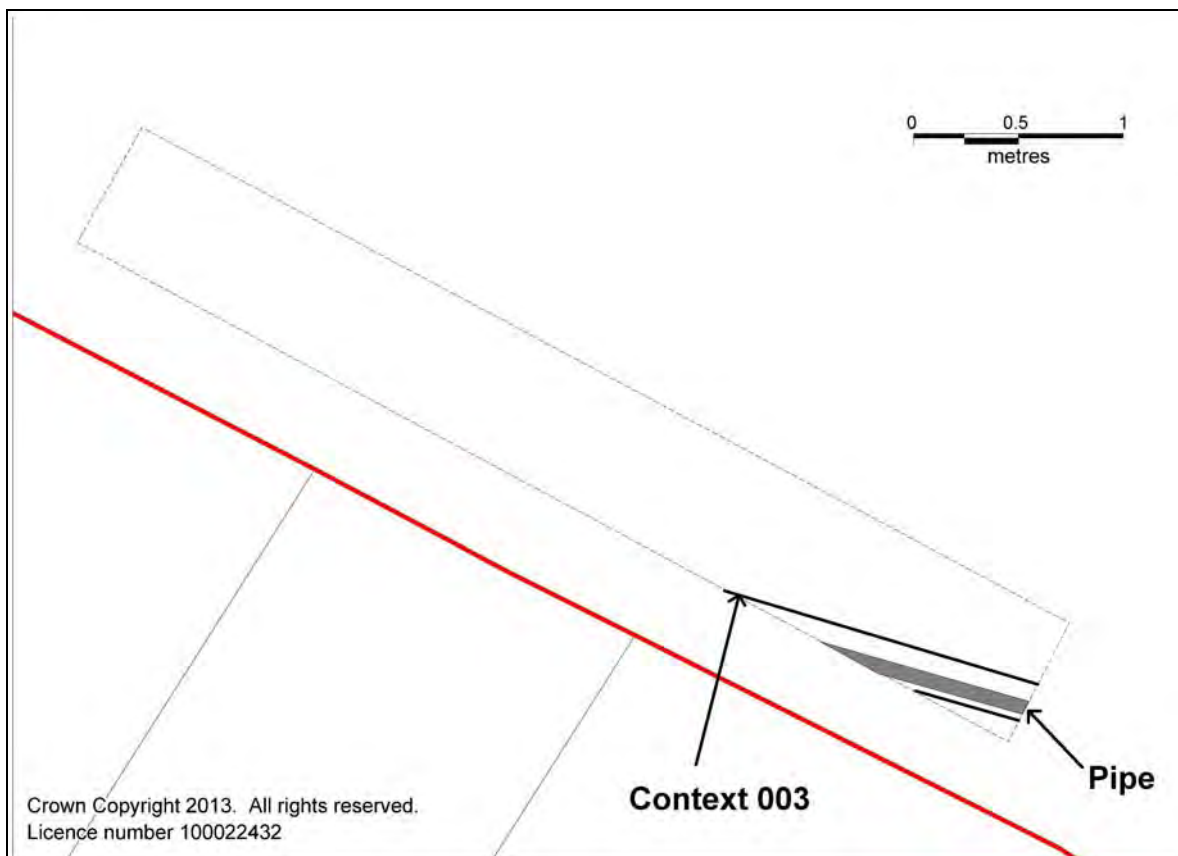
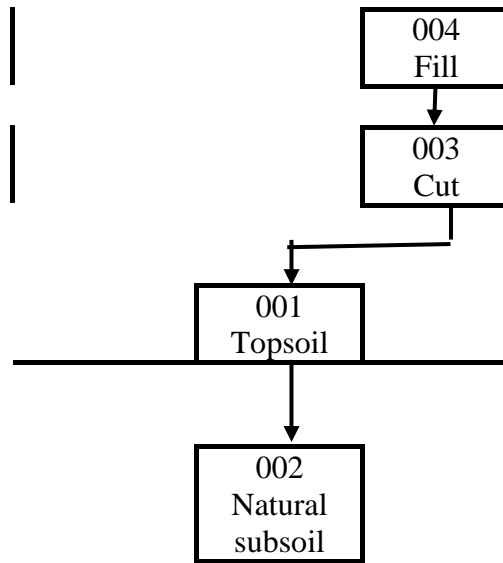


Figure 4: Location of modern features recorded after removal of topsoil.

## 10. Photographs

Colour digital photographs were taken of topsoil stripping and excavation of trenches using a 16M pixel camera. The following table describes the content of each photograph included in the project archive and their locations are provided in the following map, see Figure 5. The photographs are included in Appendix B at the end of the report.

<b>Photo Number</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date Taken</b>	<b>Direction</b>
RWH2013_101	Robeston Wathen church from inside the churchyard	13/05/2013	Looking south southeast.
RWH2013_102	The entrance into the garden of Robeston House with the house beyond on the left, edge of development site on the right.	29/05/2013	Looking east.
RWH2013_103	Gateway into the lane to Robeston House, edge of development site on the right.	13/05/2013	Looking east southeast.
RWH2013_104	Wall along the north northwest side of the plot and churchyard.	13/05/2013	Looking south
RWH2013_105	View from within the churchyard, person in the photo is standing on the path that led to the gateway through to the development plot.	13/05/2013	Looking northeast.
RWH2013_106	End of the pathway leading to the gate into the development plot, gate covered in vegetation.	13/05/2013	Looking northeast.
RWH2013_107	Gateway between churchyard and development plot from the development plot.	13/05/2013	Looking south.
RWH2013_108	Development plot from the lane to Robeston Wathen house.	13/05/2013	Looking southeast.
RWH2013_109	Development plot from the southeastern end.	13/05/2013	Looking northwest.
RWH2013_110	Marking out trench on development plot.	29/05/2013	Looking southeast.
RWH2013_111	Beginning excavating the trench along the boundary wall between the development plot and the churchyard.	29/05/2013	Looking southeast.
RWH2013_112	Southeastern end of the trench showing the modern pipe running across the side of it.	29/05/2013	Looking west.
RWH2013_113	Excavated trench showing cut for modern pipe and subsoil.	29/05/2013	Looking west.
RWH2013_114	Location of trench near boundary wall between development plot and churchyard.	29/05/2013	Looking south southeast.

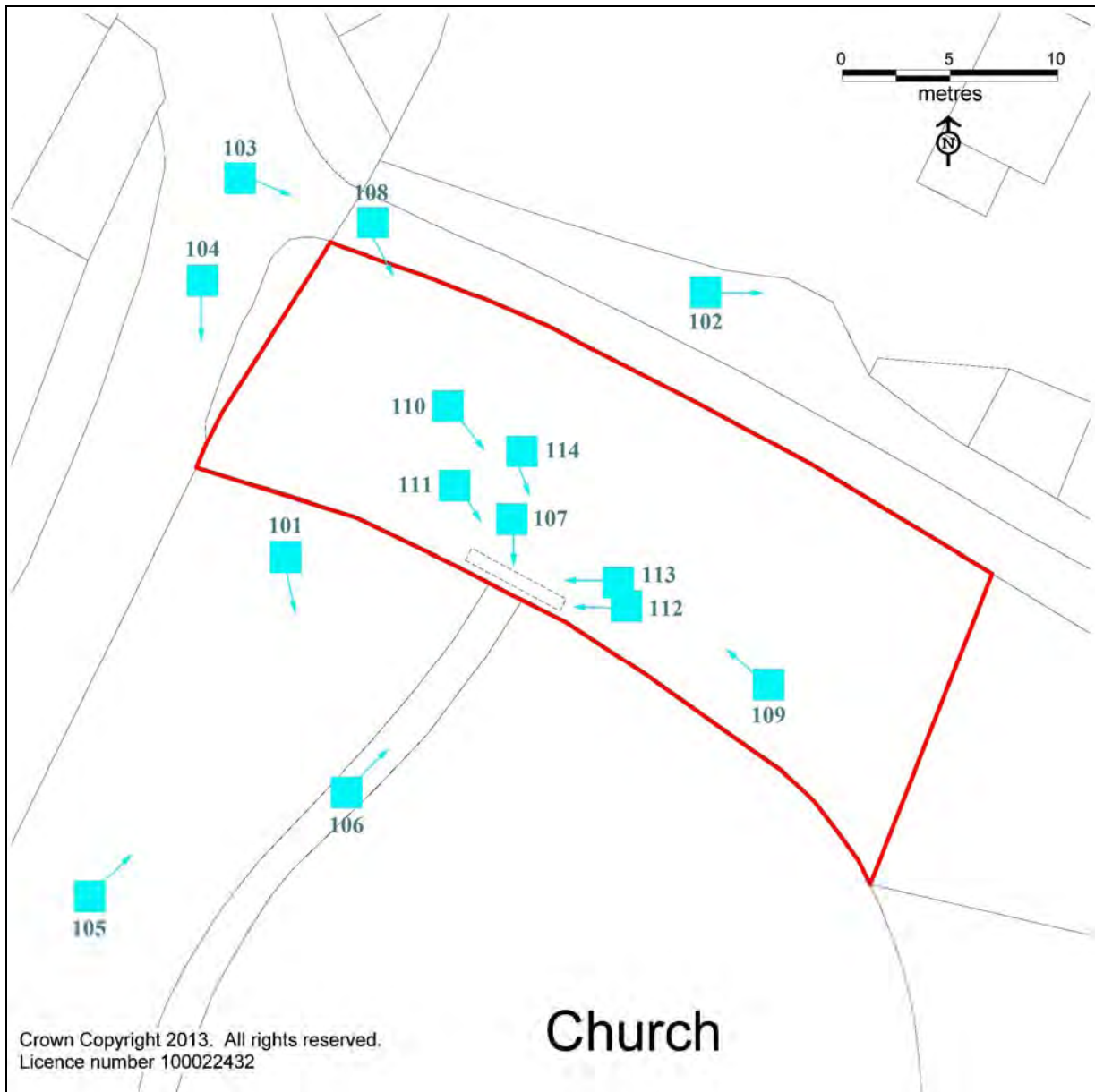


Figure 5: Location and direction of photographs

### **11. Conclusion**

The excavation of the southernmost trench of the proposed development was watched by Trysor. The only feature encountered was of a recent date: a plastic pipe trench, contexts 003 and 004. A small quantity of late post medieval pottery was encountered across the surface of the development but none within the excavated trench.

### **12. Archive**

The archive and a copy of the report and photographs will be deposited with the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth. Photographs are in TIFF format, following the standard required by the RCAHMW.

Further copies of the report have also been supplied to Mr Rogers, and the Historic Environment Record at Dyfed Archaeological Trust, Llandeilo.

### **13. Sources**

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008 (revised), Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief, available online from the IfA website, [www.archaeologists.net](http://www.archaeologists.net)

**APPENDIX A – Watching Brief Specification written by Trysor and approved by Dyfed Heritage Management section in May 2013**

**LAND WEST OF ROBESTON HOUSE, ROBESTEN WATHEN,  
PEMBROKESHIRE  
WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION**

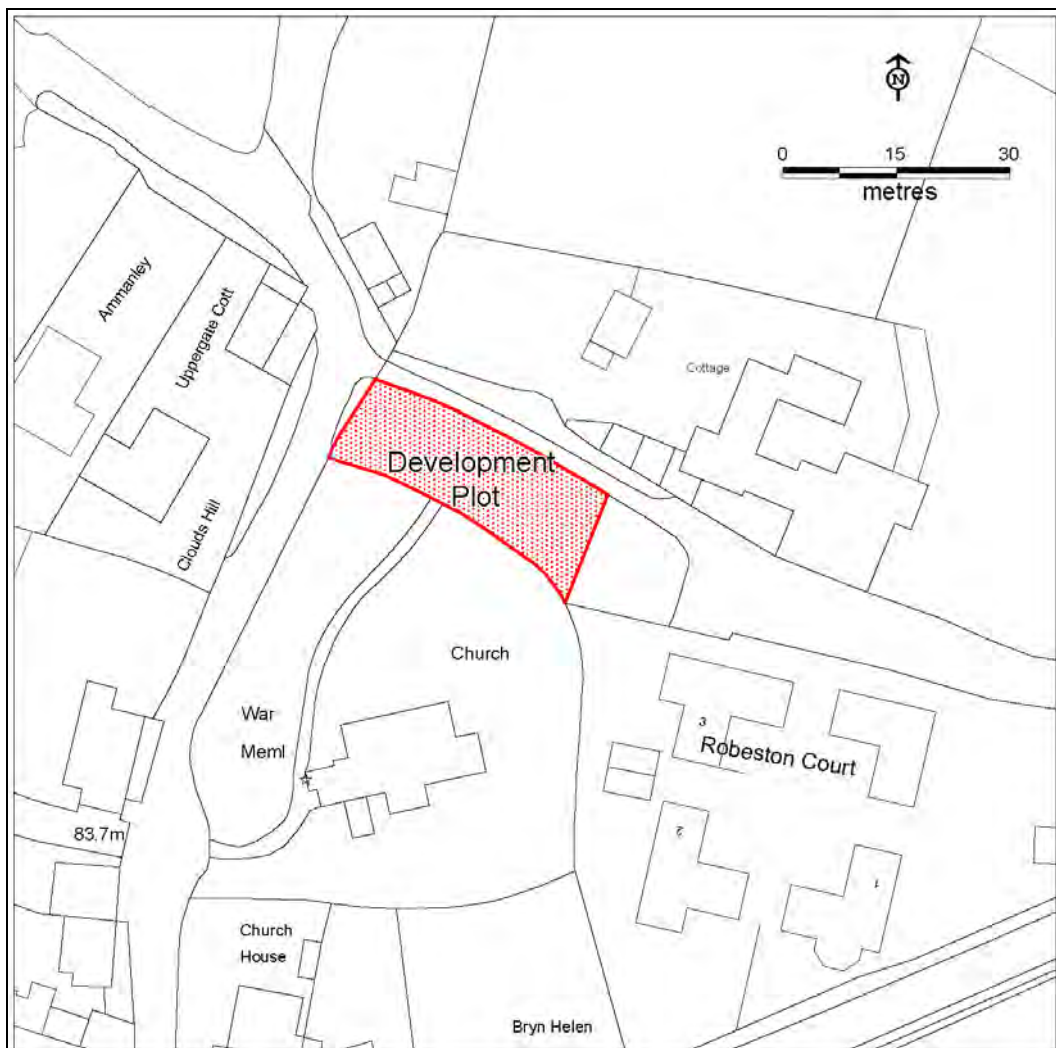
Planning application – 07/1501/PA

**1. Introduction**

Roland Rogers of Hendy, Maiden Wells, Pembroke, SA71 5ES, on behalf of his client Mr Peter Griffiths, has commissioned Trysor heritage consultants to write a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) on mitigation for the construction of a house in Robeston Wathen village: planning application 07/1501/PA, Pembrokeshire County Council.

**2. The development**

The development consists of a new build of a dwelling in a currently empty plot between Robeston Wathen church and Robeston House. The location of the development plot is at SN0846715783.



*Figure 1: The proposed development site in the village of Robeston Wathen.*

### **3. Conditions on the consent**

In granting approval for the application, the Local Planning Authority imposed conditions on the outline consent; one condition specifies the actions necessary to protect historic environment interests whilst enabling development;

*No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.* Dyfed Archaeological Trust, 2008

### **4. Nature of the archaeological resource**

In order to prepare the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), Trydor has reviewed the information in the Historic Environment Record (HER) held by Dyfed Archaeological Trust, and other sources. A field visit was also undertaken on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013, to define more precisely the nature of the potential archaeological resource.

#### ***4.1 Historical overview***

There are a number of sites of prehistoric date in the wider landscape around Robeston Wathen. These include three putative Bronze Age standing stones, recorded in the regional HER and potentially dating to the period between 2,500BC – 700BC. PRN 12141 and PRN 4435 are both records for Longstone placenames, which have been suggested as possible sites for Bronze Age standing stones. Both however are noted in the RCAHMW's Pembrokeshire Inventory as sites where the "surface-view of the fields affords no clue to the origin of the names." (RCAHMW, 1925). Clearly if there ever were standing stones at these locations they had been moved and long forgotten by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The third record, PRN 5687, is for a standing stone near Abystree, to the northwest of the village. A stone is shown at this location on mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century Ordnance Survey maps but not on earlier versions and must be suspected as a possible post-medieval rubbing stone. The stone had been removed by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

There is firmer evidence for activity within close proximity to the village during the Iron Age (700BC – AD43). Some 400 metres to the west-southwest of the development site is the denuded Sunnyhill enclosure (PRN 3585). A further 450 metres in the same direction lies a second enclosure, Bush (NPRN 3586). Both enclosures are thought to be Iron Age defended settlement sites, situated on high ground in prominent, defensible positions. They are typical of the settlement sites of the period in this part of Wales, and demonstrate that the landscape around Robeston Wathen is likely to have been well-settled and farmed over 2,000 years ago.

There is a significant gap in the archaeological record between the Iron Age and medieval period. We know that a Roman road, PRN14277, running east to west, passes some 2.8km to the north of Robeston Wathen, but have no evidence of Roman activity around the village itself (AD43-AD410).

There is also no evidence of Early Medieval activity in the area (AD410 – AD1100), according to Ludlow in the Cadw grant-aided project to identify possible Early Medieval ecclesiastical sites (Ludlow, 2002). The Welsh name of the church, *Llan Wathyn*, may indicate that a pre-Norman church was indeed present here, although there is currently no archaeological evidence to support this.

It is not until the post-Norman conquest period that physical evidence of activity can be detected at Robeston Wathen. The first mention of the place dates to 1282, when it was documented as *villa Roberti*. In Ministers' Accounts of 1357, it was recorded as *Roberdeston* (Slebech Estate Papers, NLW).

Both names imply that it originated as a manorial settlement originally held by one Robert. Medieval and early post-medieval records show the existence of a Manor of Robeston Wathen, within the Lordship of Narberth, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The manor was administered by a reeve into post medieval times. It is interesting to note that the 1357 Ministers Accounts name the reeve of *Roberdeston* as one John Atha, but also name one Phillip Hogge as reeve for *Lanwaythan*. This implies that in the 14<sup>th</sup> century they were two separate settlements or holdings.

The church, which is found at the heart of the village, has a stone tower which is thought to be of 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century date. This is the only known physical survival of the medieval settlement, as the rest of the church was rebuilt during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

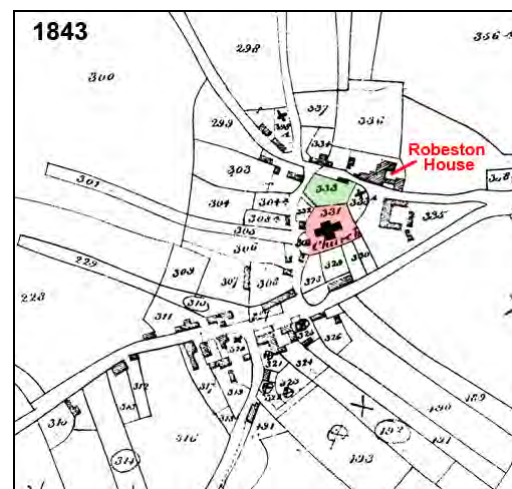
There is now little in the modern landscape around the village to show that Robeston Wathen was a medieval settlement. Both the parish tithe map (1843) and later 19<sup>th</sup> century Ordnance Survey maps show what appear to be fossilised traces of a strip field system to the west and south of the village. These appeared in the form of long, narrow field parcels, which were all amalgamated into larger fields during the 20th century, with their boundary banks ploughed out.

The Ordnance Survey made their first maps of the area in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Original Surveyors Drawing, dating to 1809, shows Robeston Wathen village as being essentially similar in layout and extent to the modern village.

Robeston House (PRN 59599) dominates the northern side of the village. Little is known of its early history, but it is known to have been built around 1815, (Nicholas, 1872) possibly replacing an earlier property shown on the 1809 Ordnance Survey Original Surveyors Drawing.

During the 1840s, the Reverend James Williams James and his family lived at Robeston House. The parish tithe map clearly shows the house and its gardens, as well as the arrangement of outbuildings to the south of house. These include what appears to have been a stable block to the east of the church and a single building which falls within the area of the proposed development site. It stood within parcel number 333 on the tithe map, which was described as being owned and occupied by the Rev. James Williams James. It seems therefore that it was part and parcel of the building complex

associated with Robeston House, indeed, it was located within the western gate into the property. This building had disappeared by the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map of 1889, which instead shows a pathway cutting through the parcel from a gate



leading out of the churchyard and running in the direction of Robeston House. The building maybe a dwelling or an outbuilding.

The loss of the structure in the tithe field parcel 333 may have been associated with changes made to the form of the adjoining churchyard during the 1870s. The tithe map shows the churchyard as a much smaller parcel than appears on the 1889 Ordnance Survey, for at some point in the intervening years the churchyard was extended northwards and incorporated the southern side of field parcel 333. A new wall was built at this side of the churchyard to define its new boundary, which included the above-mentioned gateway leading out in the direction of Robeston House.



Dating this extension of the churchyard is not easy, but observation within the modern churchyard makes it possible to make out the outline of the earlier boundary in a change of ground level within the churchyard. Within the line of this change in level there are gravestones of the 1860s and 1870s, whilst outside the line are monuments dating to the 1880s. This suggests the extension was made during the 1870s, quite possibly around 1876, when the church itself underwent considerable rebuilding.



*Plate 1: The proposed development site looking south towards the church, May 2013.*



## **5. Effect of development on the archaeological resource**

5.1 It is known that Robeston Wathen was settled during medieval times, although no evidence now exists of that settlement other than the church tower and some slight traces of a possible strip-field system to the west and southeast of the village. It is not possible to say whether any medieval settlement existed north of the church but a recent archaeological watching brief to the south of the church (Shobbrook, 2009) found no evidence of such settlement.

5.2 It seems unlikely that medieval or earlier Christian burials might lie outside the church boundary at the development site. There is no evidence of a pre-Norman church here and it is known that the churchyard was only extended northwards to its present extent as recently as the 1870s.

5.3 Historic map evidence makes it clear that a building stood within the proposed development area at the time of the parish tithe survey c.1843. Nothing is known of the purpose or character of this building. There was no evidence of this building when the site was visited. A number of stones along the road edge were thought to be possible indicators of this building, but they appeared only to be scattered debris rather than definite structural evidence. As no evidence exists for the purpose or character of the building, it cannot be known if it had any foundations or whether it was in fact a stone structure. It remains possible that some evidence of the building still remains buried on site, however.

5.4 It is known that the site had become tree-covered by the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. It seems that a deep layer of leaf mould had accumulated across the site while it was wooded. When visited in 2013, it was found that the layer of leaf mould and, apparently, the top soil had been scraped off in the past, apart from at the western end of the plot, where a narrow strip survived against the western boundary wall. It was not clear whether the revealed surface was the natural sub-soil or an overlying B-horizon. Some post-medieval pottery was picked up off the surface of this layer but again it was not clear whether it was in-situ or had been disturbed from the overlying soil layers when they were removed from the site.

## **6. Proposed archaeological intervention**

There are two separate considerations relating to the proposed development;

6.1 The foundation trenches of the new dwelling will be cut close to, or across, the site of the building shown on the parish tithe map. It is proposed that a watching brief should be take place under the direction of an archaeologist when the foundation trenches are cut and any archaeological contexts recorded. A toothless grading bucket should be used by the excavator.

6.2 To the west of the new dwelling, a new driveway is proposed which may require the reduction of the present ground surface. If such a reduction occurs the work should be undertaken with a toothless grading bucket and under the direction of an archaeologist, removing a 10 cm spit at a time until the required level is achieved or the natural sub-soil reached, whichever is encountered first. Any archaeological contexts will be recorded.

## 7. Field methodology

7.1 The watching briefs will be carried out in accordance with Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IfA, 2008a)

According to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological 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 a site.”*

7.2 A two-person team will direct and watch the mechanical excavation of foundations and removal of material. They will examine the exposed stratigraphy of the groundworks undertaken in association with the development. All trenches will be examined and features of archaeological interest recorded. Excavation of any features will be limited to that necessary to establish their extent and character, unless their excavation is required to allow the development to proceed.

## 8. Recording

A plan of the groundworks, and representative sections if appropriate, will be drawn, at an appropriate scale, recording all features of archaeological interest. The plan will be based on the applicants' survey drawings of the development area.

A written record of all activity will be kept in a project specific notebook. If archaeological contexts are encountered they will be recorded following the *Central Excavation Unit Manual: Part 2: Recording*, 1986, using a consecutive numbering system.

Any artefacts will be dealt with in accordance with the guidance provided in the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*. Any artefacts will be retained, cleaned and stored. Following reporting they will be returned to the applicant.

Should any human remains be encountered, the Coroner and Regional Archaeological Trust will be immediately informed and the remains left *in situ*.

Colour digital photographs will be taken, as appropriate, using a 14M pixel camera. A written record will be made on site of the photographs taken. Appropriate photographic scales will be used.

### **9. Contingency arrangements if archaeological features are discovered**

In the event that archaeological remains are encountered, where appropriate investigation falls outside the scope of this watching brief specification, a meeting between Trysor, the applicant, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management Section and the Local Planning Authority case officer will be convened in order to agree a course of action. The applicant will be responsible for paying for any further work necessary.

### **10. Health & Safety**

Trysor will undertake a risk assessment in accordance with their health and safety policy.

### **11. Reporting**

A report on the surveys will be prepared which will include a measured plan of the building and photographic survey of external and internal surfaces and features. Copies of the report will be provided to the client, the Regional Historic Environment Record and the National Monuments Record.

### **12. Dissemination and Archiving**

The paper archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record, including a copy of the final report. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken. Photographs will be supplied in TIFF format in a file size greater than 11MB, following the standard required by the RCAHMW.

### **13. Resources to be used**

Two members of staff will undertake the survey. They will be equipped with standard field equipment, including digital cameras, GPS and first aid kits.

Trysor have access to the computer hardware and software required to deliver the completed final report and archive to a professional standard.

### **14. Qualification of personnel**

Trysor is a Registered Organisation with the Institute for Archaeologists and both partners are Members of the Institute for Archaeologists, [www.archeologists.net](http://www.archeologists.net).

Jenny Hall (BSc Joint Hons., Geology and Archaeology, MifA) had 12 years excavation experience, which included undertaking watching briefs prior to becoming the Sites and Monuments Record Manager for a Welsh Archaeological Trust for 10 years. She has been an independent archaeologist since 2004 undertaking a variety of work that includes upland survey, desktop assessments and watching briefs.

Paul Sambrook (BA Joint Hons., Archaeology and Welsh, MifA, PGCE) has extensive experience as a fieldworker in Wales. He was involved with Cadw's pan-Wales Deserted Rural Settlements Project for 7 years. He also undertook Tir Gofal field survey work and watching briefs. He has been an independent archaeologist since 2004 undertaking a variety of work that includes upland survey, desktop assessments and watching briefs.

## **15. Insurance & Professional indemnity**

Trysor has Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance.

## **16. Project identification**

The project has been designated Trysor Project No. 2013/296

## **17. Sources**

### ***17.1 Published Sources***

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008a, *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008b *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*

RCAHMW, 1925, *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire: VII - County of Pembroke*, No.895, p.308.

Nicholas, T, 1872, *Annals and Antiquities of the Counties and County Families of Wales*

### ***17.2 Unpublished sources***

English Heritage, 1986, *Central Excavation Unit Manual: Part 2: Recording*,

Ludlow, N, 2002, *Cadw Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Sites Project, Part 1* ,

Shobbrook, A., 2009, *An archaeological watching brief at Church House, Robeston Wathen, Narberth, Pembrokeshire*. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Report 2009/23

Slebech estate papers deposited at the National Library of Wales, NRA 34660 De Rutzen

Trethowan, M., 1997, *A40(T) Robeston Wathen Bypass Preferred Route: An Archaeological Stage 3 Investigation*. Dyfed Archaeological Trust Report

### ***17.3 Ordnance Survey maps***

Budgen, T, 1809, Original Surveyors Drawings 2" to a mile

Ordnance Survey, 1819, 1" to 1 mile

Ordnance Survey, 1889, 1:2500

### ***17.4 Online resources***

Historic Wales website – [www.historicwales.gov.uk](http://www.historicwales.gov.uk)

Vision of Britain – [www.visionofbritain.org.uk](http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk)

British Library (Original Surveyor' Drawings) -

[www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/](http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/)

Jenny Hall & Paul Sambrook

Trysor

May 2013

**APPENDIX B**



*Plate 1: RWH2013\_101 Robeston Wathen church from inside the churchyard, looking south southeast.*



*Plate 2: RWH2013\_102 The entrance into the garden of Robeston House with the house beyond on the left, edge of development site on the right, looking east.*



*Plate 3:RWH2013\_103 Gateway into the lane to Robeston House, looking east southeast.*



*Plate 4: RWH2013\_104 Wall along the north northwest side of the plot and churchyard, looking south.*



*Plate 5: RWH2013\_105 View from within the churchyard, looking northeast.*



*Plate 6: RWH2013\_106 Pathway leading to the gate into the development plot, looking northeast.*



*Plate 7: RWH2013\_107 Gateway between churchyard and development plot, looking south.*



*Plate 8: RWH2013\_108 Development plot from the lane to Robeston Wathen house, looking southeast.*





*Plate 9: RWH2013\_109 Development plot from the southeastern end, looking northwest.*



*Plate 10: RWH2013\_110 Marking out trench on development plot, looking southeast.*



*Plate 11: RWH2013\_111 Beginning excavation of the trench, looking southeast.*



*Plate 12: RWH2013\_112 Southeastern end of the trench showing the modern pipe running across the side of it, looking west.*



*Plate 13: RWH2013\_113 Excavated trench showing cut for modern pipe and subsoil, looking west.*



*Plate 14: RWH2013\_114 Location of trench near boundary wall between development plot and churchyard, looking south southeast.*