

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING AT  
NORTH DRIVE AND  
SERVICES PIPELINE FOR HOME FARM  
DINEFWR PARK  
LLANDEILO CARMARTHENSHIRE**

MARCH 2006



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Prepared by: Cambria Archaeology  
For: The National Trust



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### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING AT NORTH DRIVE AND SERVICES PIPELINE FOR HOME FARM, DINEFWR PARK, LLANDEILO, CARMARTHENSHIRE**

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by Richard Ramsey

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## **DINEFWR NORTH DRIVE**

by Richard Ramsey

### **SUMMARY**

*During recent groundworks to re-establish the original route of the North Drive at Dinefwr Park a formally laid pitched stone surface was revealed crossing the metalled trackway. In addition, another metalled surface and a curvilinear configuration of shale flagstones were revealed in the area immediately to the west of the pitched stones.*

*A combination of time restriction and bad weather conditions did not allow full characterisation of all the revealed features and deposits. However, enough was observed to flag up the presence of important and substantial archaeological remains and the results will help to inform any further groundworks or archaeological projects that may be undertaken at that location in the future.*

## INTRODUCTION

In mid October 2005 Cambria Archaeology Field Operations were commissioned by Dr. Emma Plunkett-Dillon, National Trust archaeologist, to undertake the archaeological recording of features revealed during groundworks to re-establish the original route of the North Drive trackway in Dinefwr Park, Llandeilo at NGR SN61482270 (Fig. 1).

## THE GROUNDWORKS

The topsoil was machine stripped down to the original North Drive surface and during this work a pitched stone surface was revealed crossing the drive from west to east. In order to investigate its extent an area of topsoil approximately 3m wide by 5m long was also machine stripped immediately to the west of and adjacent to the pitched stone surface. A cast iron grilled drain cover was removed during this work but its exact location, and whether or not it was *in situ*, was not established. The pitched stone surface suffered some damage and destruction to its western edge during the topsoil strip but elsewhere to the east it remained undisturbed and intact, terminating at the eastern edge of the North Drive (pers. comm. Eynon Price, the machine contractor).

Due to time pressures and bad weather conditions the contractor was eager to press on with the work and laid down a geotextile cover over the exposed pitched stones and North Drive surface prior to laying down a stone sub-base along the whole route of the trackway. Unfortunately no photographs were taken and no other record was made prior to the laying of the sub-base, although all revealed features were preserved *in situ*. Only the western edge of the pitched stone surface and approximately 3m by 5m of the topsoil stripped area, further again to the west, remained open to allow for the archaeological recording.

## RESULTS

The western edge of the geotextile matting covering the pitched stones was folded back and the remaining topsoil in the stripped area to the west of the North Drive was hand cleaned to reveal the underlying features and deposits.

The revealed pitched stone surface is approximately 1.0m wide N-S with its long axis aligned E-W and continuing due east across the North Drive beneath the newly laid geotextile matting and stone sub-base make up. A length of the pitched stone surface (Photo. 1) measuring some 0.9m was all that was left visible at the time that the archaeological record was made and this represented all that remained of the western end of the feature. A certain amount of machine destruction had taken place during the topsoil strip that made it impossible to establish with any certainty the original extent of the pitched stones to the west. Damage had also occurred on the southwest side of the pitched stones but enough remained *in situ* to establish the approximate width of the feature. The stone surface was made up of formally arranged sub-angular pitched stones with longer stones pitched on their sides along both outside edges of the feature with a similar configuration set lengthways along the centre. These linearly set stones, whilst being aesthetically pleasing to the eye, are actually functional in that they act as retaining components within the structure of the feature.

The damage to the pitched stone surface at its western and southwest edges showed that they were set in a yellowish brown silty-clay matrix above which lay a coal- and ash-rich sub-base layer. On their north side the pitched stones were

securely interfaced with the metallised stone western edge of the North Drive which suggests that they were built contemporaneously. This assertion could not be corroborated for the southern side due to the damage to the pitched stones and the displacement of the North Drive metalling.

Some 1.2m or so due west of the pitched stone surface a curvilinear configuration of shale flagstones (Photo. 2) was revealed at a depth of 0.45m below the present ground surface. This feature extended for 2.8m in a northeast to southwest alignment with an average width of 0.6m and sloped gently down to the southwest. It is possible that this feature extends further to the southwest but this was not determined during the archaeological recording due to time and weather constraints, the *prima facie* evidence, however, is that it does not. To either side of this feature there was what appeared to be a distinct foundation cut approximately 0.20m wide filled with a mixed friable reddish brown soil containing 30% small angular stone fragments. No attempt was made to remove the shale flagstones or to excavate their potential foundation trench, although the more north-easterly shale slab was lifted slightly to investigate what underlay it but there was no evidence of any silted up drain cut or upright side stones. The area immediately to the east of this flagstone appeared to have been truncated by the machine destruction between it and the pitched stone surface (Fig. 2) and it is possible that the iron grid cover came from this area, but no evidence for its former presence was identified.

A possible hard standing or metallised surface comprising very compacted shale fragments was observed at the western edge of the site just beyond, and partially surrounding, the southwestern end of the flagstones. The approximate depth below the present ground surface of this layer was 0.40m.

No finds were observed during this work.

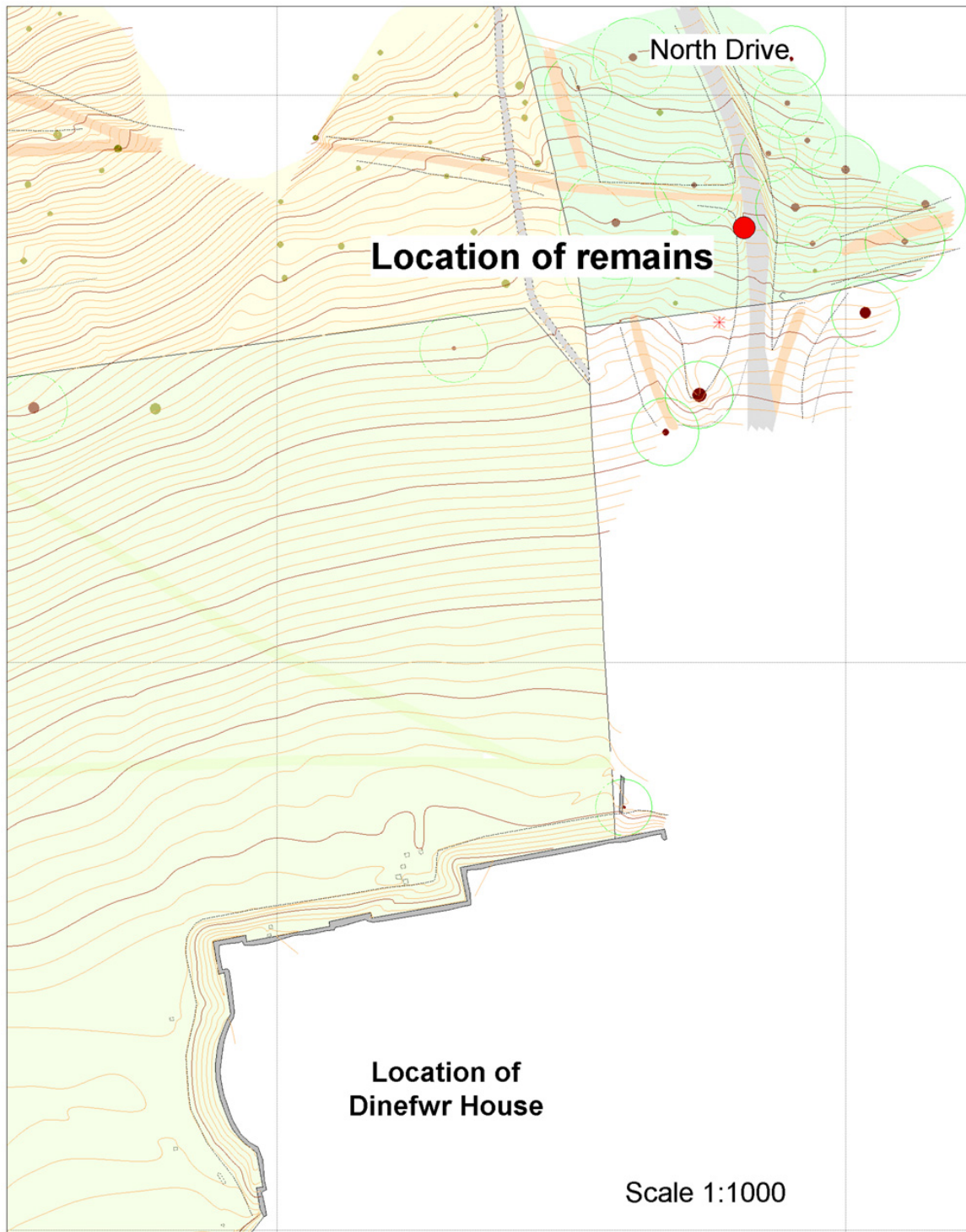
## CONCLUSIONS

The limited extent of the pitched stone surface crossing the North Drive and the fact that it quite clearly does not extend very far beyond either the east or west side of the drive suggests that it was not a trackway intended as a crossing point. The evidence suggests that it was an integral part of the original North Drive construction and probably served in a drainage or water runoff capacity, given also the circumstantial evidence of the cast iron grid drain cover. The curvilinear configuration of the gently sloping flagstones and their resemblance to a typical drainage arrangement also lends weight to that argument. Unfortunately, any evidence physically connecting the two features was lost either during the topsoil strip or earlier. The lack of evidence for a drain beneath the raised flagstone does not help the drainage hypothesis, but further investigation is required before that negation can be accepted as conclusive.

Finally, the North Drive does slope down steadily from north to south becoming somewhat less steep in the vicinity of the pitched stone surface before it again becomes steeper on its way down towards Newton House. Perhaps, then, water used to accumulate in that location prior to the construction of the drive and this would have been good reason to construct arrangements to facilitate better drainage there.

The re-establishment of the route of the North Drive has allowed a glimpse at several archaeological features and flagged up not only their presence but also their usefulness and importance in trying to better understand the history of Dinefwr Park.





**Fig. 1:** Location plan





**Photo 1:** Pitched stone surface, direction of view west



**Photo 2:** Curvilinear configuration of shale flagstones, looking southwest





**Photo 3:** General view of the site in relation to North Drive, looking northeast



# SERVICES PIPELINE FOR HOME FARM

by Nikki Cook

## INTRODUCTION

In June 2004 a narrow continuous trench was dug by machine between Home Farm and Newton House for the laying of a services pipeline connecting the two properties. On 13th June 2005 whilst digging an area to the front of Newton House at approximately SN6149522605, the digger driver noticed that he had struck some loose stony material and rubble. Cambria Archaeology were notified by the National Trust and requested to conduct a rapid recording of the archaeological remains as presented within the excavated area.

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The area in question consisted of a small and narrow north-south running trench, approximately 16m in length, located in meadowland, c.8m east of an iron fence running parallel to the front of Newton House. The trench measured c.0.5m in width and extended to a depth of 0.75m.

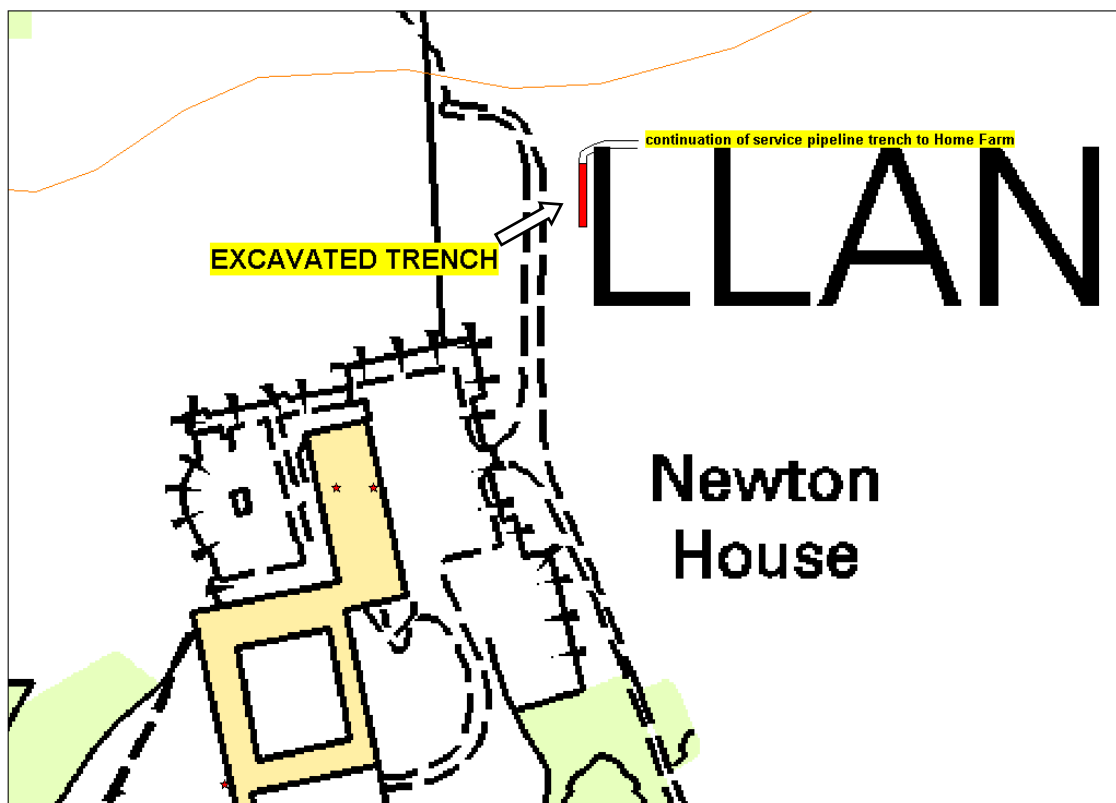


Figure 1. Location map of excavated trench

Photo 1 below shows the trench as first seen. The digger driver described how he first noticed the bucket going through some loose material, with the material towards the southern end of the trench becoming noticeably harder. A large



stone, c.0.4m long, was encountered and dumped outside the trench at its southern end (see Photo. 2). At this point works ceased until the features were assessed and recorded by Cambria Archaeology on behalf of the National Trust.



Photo 1. Looking north along the excavated trench





Photo 2. Large stone dumped outside the southern end of the excavated trench

## RESULTS

Two distinct areas of rubble material were recorded at separate points along the length of the 16m long trench.

*Area 1* consisted of a deposit of loose stones and rubble at a depth of 0.25m below the ground surface. The deposit extended for a maximum length of c.1.15m and was c.0.35m deep. This feature was encountered 5.6m in from the northern end of the trench, and was more clearly noticeable on its eastern side. The material, which was chalky in appearance, was clearly distinct from the more clayey, clean material visible on either side of the feature. This feature is illustrated in Photo. 3.

*Area 2* was characterised by a large block of stone, 0.25m long x 0.10m deep, located c.0.18m below the ground surface and overlying an area of burning and other stones, 0.23m deep (see Photo. 4). Beneath this layer of material there was another deposit of burnt material, c.0.20m deep, which extends to the bottom of the trench. This stone and charcoal mix was encountered 12.85m in from the northern end of the trench, i.e. 6.1m south of Area 1, and measured c.0.9m in length. The feature was visible on both sides of the 0.5m wide trench, which extended to a depth of 0.71m at this point. The stones in this section were far more solid and more closely packed than those seen in Area 1.





Photo 3. Area 1, looking east



Photo 4. Area 2, looking east

## **CONCLUSIONS**

It would appear that Areas 1 and 2 within the excavated trench possibly represent the remains of two parallel walls, both approximately 1m wide and set c.6m apart from each other, running in a roughly east-west alignment. The most southerly wall is the more solid of the two, but neither of them appear to be very deep, both extending to a depth of only 0.35m at most.

It is possible that these potential walls in the excavated trench may represent the slight remains of part of what were once the formal gardens at Newton House, which date approximately to the late 17th / early 18th centuries. These gardens were in place before the landscape was rearranged during the late 18th century into the 'picturesque' estate as seen today, at which time the formal gardens were removed.

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**March 2006  
Mawrth 2006**

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Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith  
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ar ran Archaeoleg Cambria, Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.  
on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

Yn unol â'n nôd i roddi gwasanaeth o ansawdd uchel, croesawn unrhyw  
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