

# **AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT SUNNYSIDE FARM, ROBESTON WATHEN, PEMBROKESHIRE**

September 2006



Paratowyd gan Archaeoleg Cambria  
Ar gyfer Cresswell Associates  
Prepared by Cambria Archaeology  
For Cresswell Associates



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### **AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT SUNNYSIDE FARM, ROBESTON WATHEN PEMBROKESHIRE**

Gan / By

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**Figure 2:** Trench location plan

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**Photo 1:** Trench 2 looking north. Stone spread before excavation

**Photo 2:** Trench 2 North facing section after excavation of stone spread

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**SUMMARY**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at Sunnyside Farm, Robeston Wathen Pembrokeshire, to evaluate the potential impact of road improvements to the A40 upon any archaeological features or deposits identified at the site. Two trenches were machine excavated in order to characterise possible archaeological features identified from a geophysical survey undertaken along the route of the road improvements. Although evidence was identified that can account for the geophysical anomalies, little if any evidence was recovered to suggest that these were the remains of a built structure.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Following a magnetometer survey of two fields to the south of Robeston Wathen (undertaken by Archaeological Surveys Ltd.) geophysical anomalies interpreted as being of possible archaeological significance were identified at NGR SN08221538. The geophysics survey was undertaken as part of an environmental impact assessment for improvements to the A40 at Robeston Wathen. It was intended to ascertain the presence or absence of settlement or other features relating to the early history of Robeston Wathen. Cambria Archaeology (Field Services) was commissioned by Cresswell Associates to undertake the archaeological evaluation of the site in order to characterise and assess the potential impact of the scheme upon any archaeological deposits encountered.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The evaluation process aimed to evaluate the proposed development area, in order to ascertain the presence, absence, character, distribution and relative importance of archaeological features or deposits. This information will be used to inform any archaeological mitigation that might be required as part of the road scheme.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Two trenches (together forming a 'T' shape) were cut using a JCB with a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were cut with the intention of characterising what appeared from the results of the geophysical survey, to be a roughly square building with a smaller square annex on its northern side. The trenches were located from the geophysics report, by measuring from field boundaries. The trenches were hand cleaned to ascertain the presence or absence of any archaeological features, which were then partly excavated to ascertain their character. The trenches were recorded in plan and section where warranted, and their locations were surveyed.

## **RESULTS**

### **Trench 1**

This trench was cut to a length of 19.50m on a roughly north-south alignment. Apparently natural geological deposits were encountered directly below the plough soil. The natural geology consisted of areas of shale bedrock, clay silts and gravels. Several possible features were investigated but found to be nothing more than variations in the natural.

After cutting trench two, trench one was re-visited to attempt to identify what may have accounted for the anomalies identified in the geophysical survey. Two areas of increased stoniness were identified in section, lying at the interface between the plough soil and natural deposits. These were not at the time, considered to be of archaeological origin. Once the trench locations were superimposed on the geophysical survey results these were indeed found to correspond with the anomalies.

### **Trench 2**

This trench was cut at right angles to Trench 1 to a length of 16.50m. Two areas of possible archaeological significance were identified in the eastern half of the trench. These were both characterised by concentrations of stones, some of which appeared to be placed. These were thought to perhaps suggest stone wall footings but this proved difficult to ascertain within the limits of the evaluation trench).

Both concentrations of stones were partially excavated. Both were found to lie within a clay silt matrix, directly above the natural geology and to be sealed by the plough soil. Excavation of the clay silt matrix and stones revealed a clear, possibly compacted horizon. The stones were not contained within foundation cuts. There was no mortar associated with the stones. No dating evidence was recovered from the excavated deposits although occasional fragments of burnt coal or slag were observed.

The stones consisted mainly of apparently naturally fractured subrectangular blocks of shale, sandstone or sang and pebble conglomerate, with average dimensions of about 10 x 15 x 20cm.

## **DISCUSSION**

Although the anomalies identified in the geophysical survey were found to correspond with concentrations of stones, these were sufficiently ephemeral and un-structured to be questionable as the remains of a built structure.

The stones were relatively small for a construction, were not stacked or coursed, and were not mortared or contained within a foundation cut. On the other hand, the geophysics does suggest they form a regular rectangular shape, and there is a suggestion of a possible compacted surface sealed by the stones. The stones themselves do not appear to be derived from the immediate vicinity, suggesting that they may have been intentionally brought to this location from elsewhere.

If the stones do represent the remains of a structure it must have been of a rudimentary construction. Alternatively it could have been constructed from clom. The ploughsoil is shallow in this location and any structure that may have existed will have been mostly ploughed away.

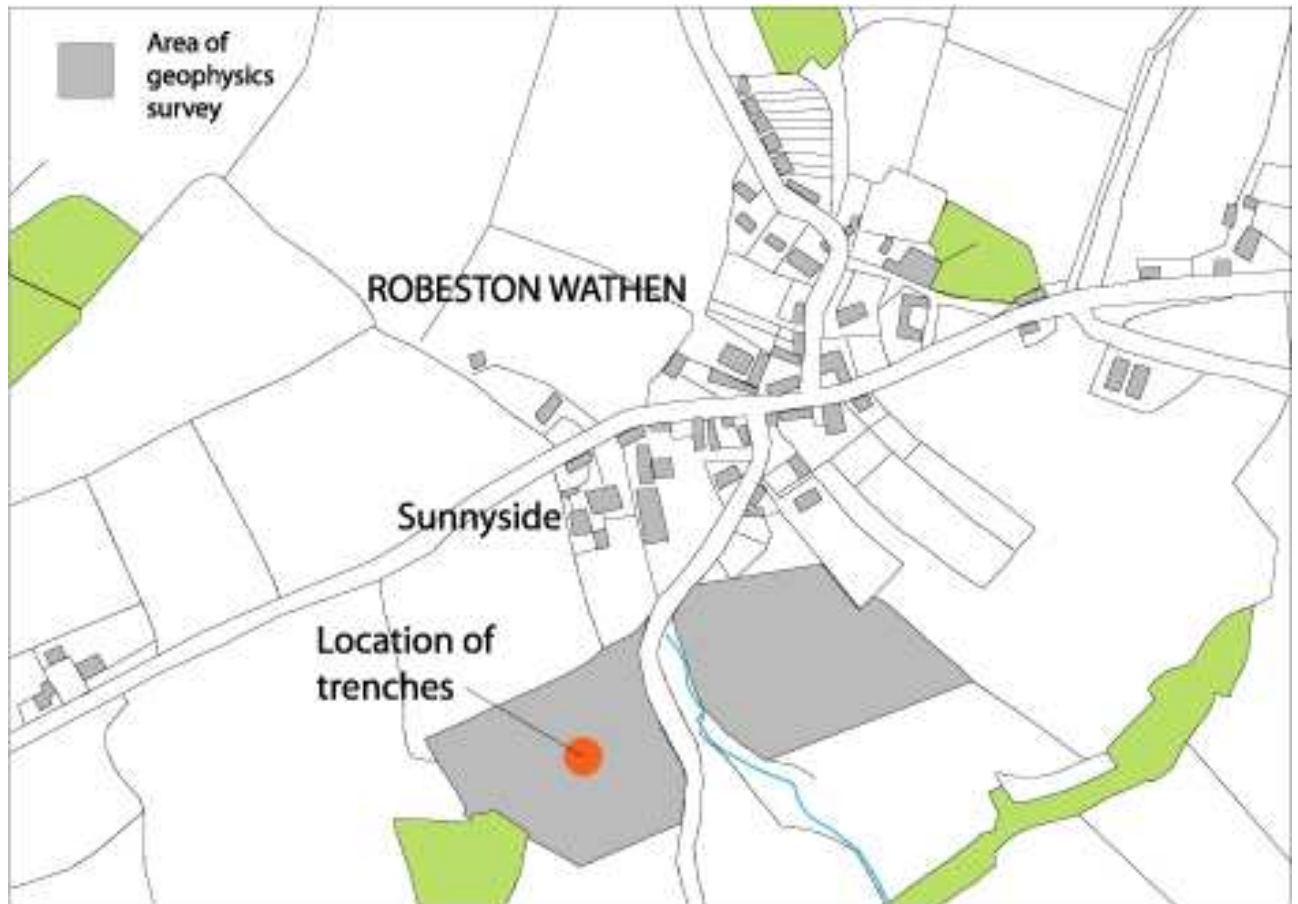
No evidence of floor deposits was observed, although any such evidence is likely to have been ploughed away.

No dating evidence was recovered from the excavated deposits. Pottery fragments recovered from the plough soil in the locality of the evaluation trenches were of 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

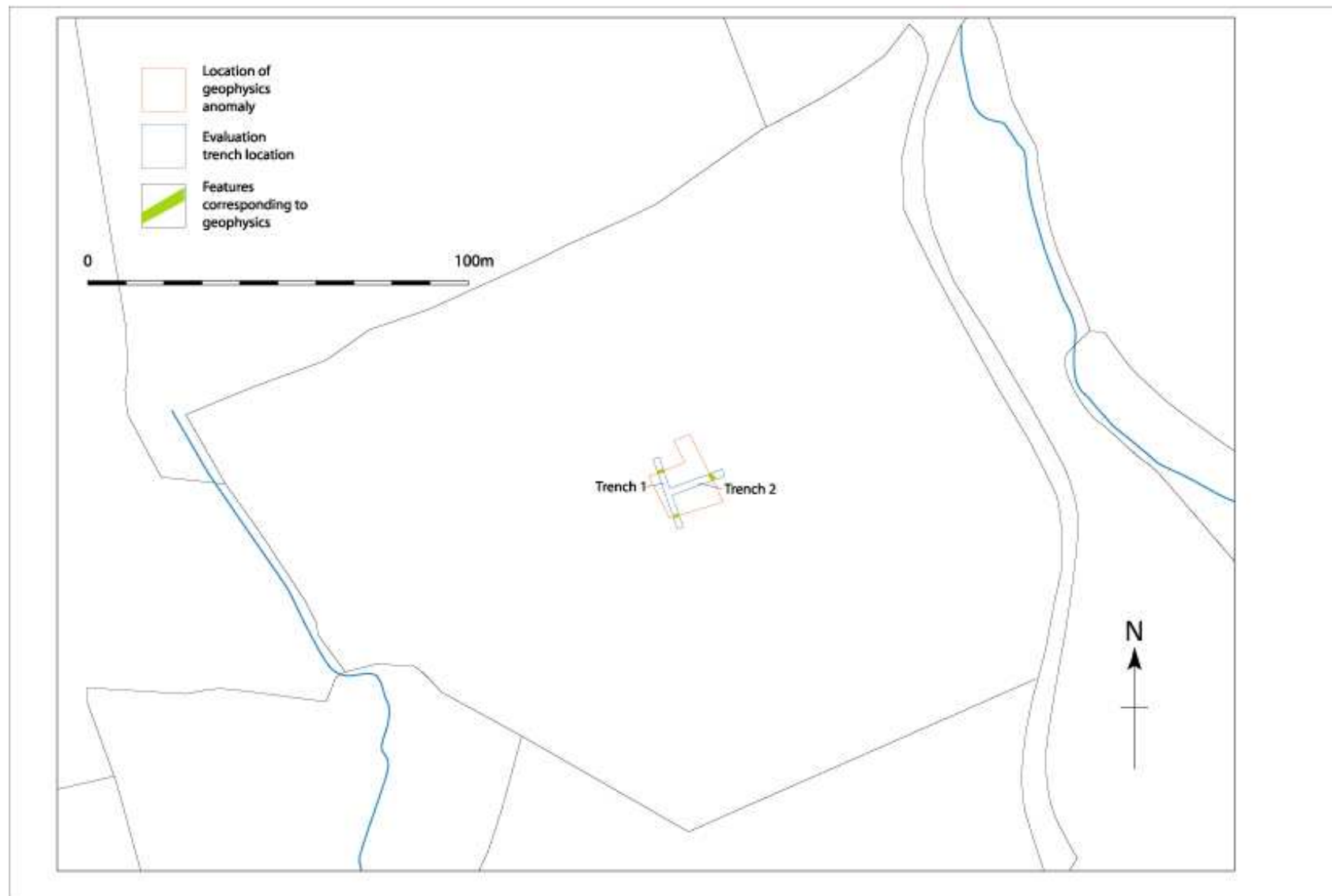
On balance then, it is possible that there was once a building or structure of rudimentary construction in this location, but that little evidence of its character has survived. It is perhaps most likely to have had an agricultural function.

## **CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS**

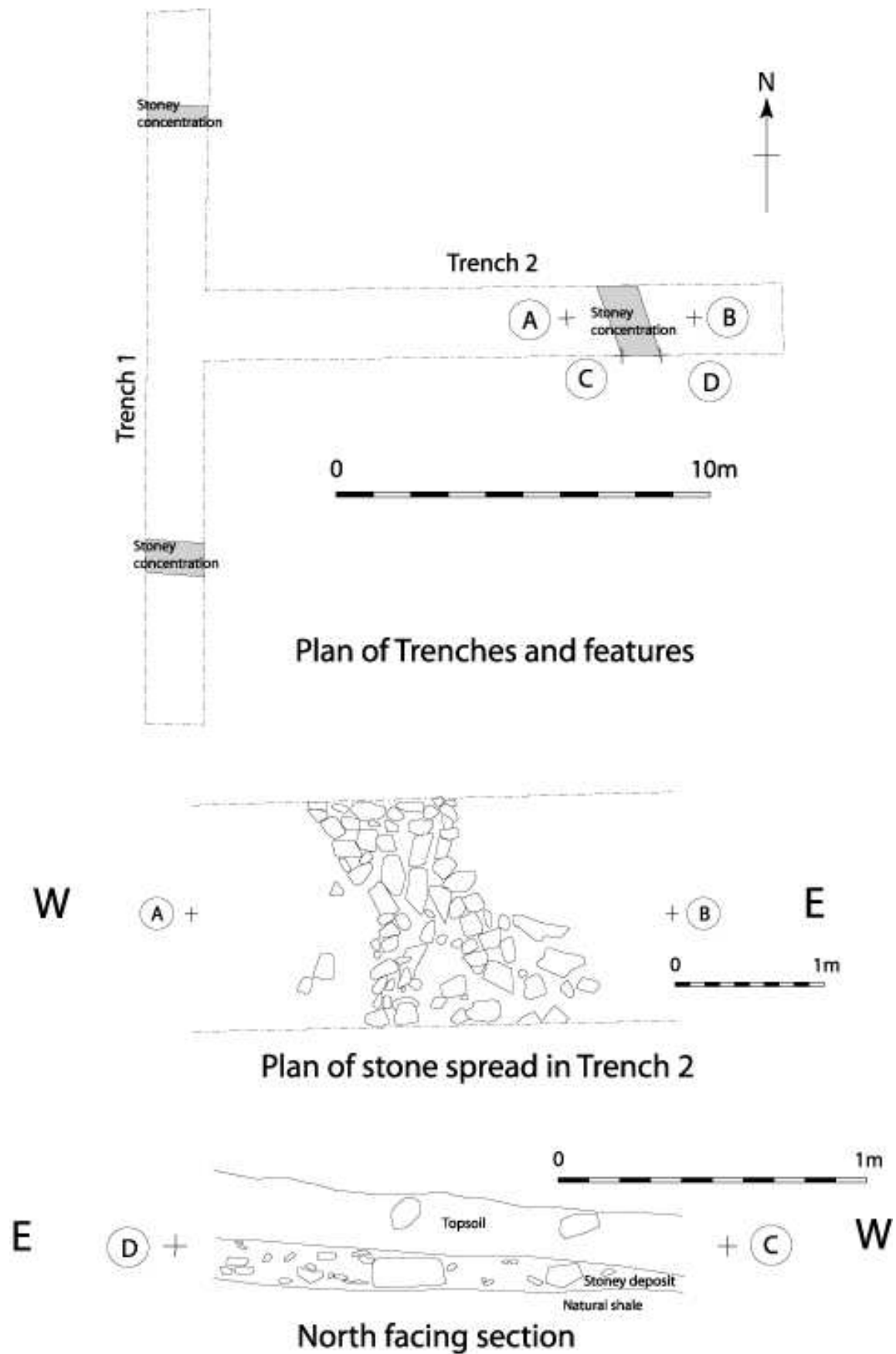
Although there may have been a structure in the evaluated location, it has been shown to be very ephemeral and/ or largely destroyed. The evaluation has not identified any characteristics of the site that might suggest it warranted any further archaeological action other than that which will occur as part of the watching brief during the road construction phase.



**Figure 1:** Site location plan



**Figure 2:** Trench location plan



**Figure 3:** Trench plans and elevation



**Photo 1:** Stone spread before excavation (see fig 3)



**Photo 2:** North facing section in Trench 2 after excavation of stone spread (see fig.3)

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on behalf of Cambria Archaeology, Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

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