

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT CHURCH HOUSE, ROBESTON WATHEN, NARBERTH, PEMBROKESHIRE

2009



Prepared by Dyfed Archaeological Trust
For: Mr and Mrs P Nicholas



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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT CHURCH HOUSE, ROBESTON WATHEN, NARBERTH, PEMBROKESHIRE

Gan / By

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SUMMARY

A planning application (08/0034/PA) was submitted by Mr and Mrs P Nicholas to build an extension to the existing building at Church House, Robeston Wathen, Narberth, Pembrokeshire (NGR SN 208430 215710). The site lies a short distance to the south-west of the church of St Aidan, which is known to be medieval in date and possibly within the medieval core of Robeston Wathen. Given the potential for archaeological remains and deposits to be present on the site planning permission was granted for the development, with a condition that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during all major episodes of earth moving or ground breaking, such as topsoil stripping and deep cutting.

The watching brief condition placed on the application for the site, following a recommendation by the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) archaeological advisors at the Dyfed Archaeological Trust Heritage Management Services.

In order to comply with this planning condition Mr and Mrs Nicholas, commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust Field Services to carry out the watching brief in February 2009.

During the watching brief the burial of a pig was discovered. The burial is not considered to be of archaeological significance. No other features or finds of archaeological significance were revealed during the watching brief.

INTRODUCTION

A planning application (08/0034/PA) was submitted by Mr and Mrs P Nicholas to build an extension to the existing building at Church House, Robeston Wathen, Narberth, Pembrokeshire (NGR SN 208430 215710). The construction area does not contain any known archaeological features or deposits, however, due to the close proximity of the Medieval church and the Medieval core of Robeston Wathen the development area is considered to have a relatively high archaeological potential. Given this high potential an archaeological watching brief condition was placed on the planning permission on the recommendation of the Local Planning Authority (LPAs) Archaeological Advisors.

Mr and Mrs P Nicholas commissioned Dyfed Archaeological Trust field services to carry out the watching brief in line with the planning condition. The watching brief was undertaken in February 2009.

Scope of the Project

The project was designed to record any archaeological features or deposits exposed by topsoil stripping across the site.

Report Outline

This report describes the location of the site along with its archaeological background before summarising the watching brief results and the conclusions based on those results.

Abbreviations

Sites recorded on the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER) held and managed at The Dyfed Archaeological Trust, The Shire Hall, Llandeilo, are identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

THE SITE

Location

The site is located at NGR SN 208430 215710 and consists of a broadly square plot fronting on to an unclassified road to the south west of the Church of St Aidan's. Topographically the site is situated on a plateau at a height of c.80m above Ordnance Datum.

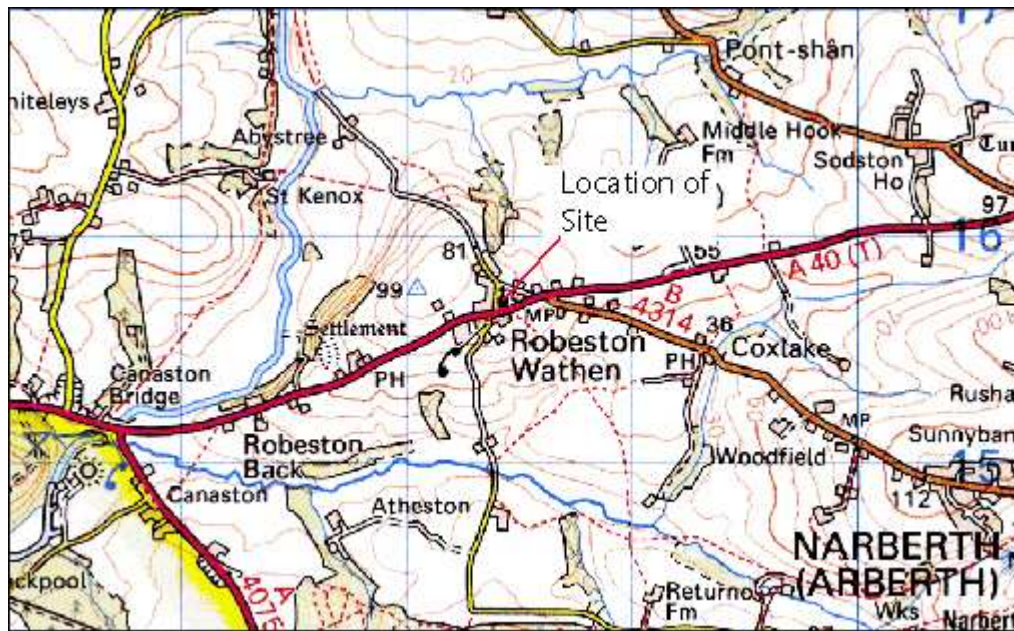


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

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Historic landscape development

A search of the regional HER revealed no known archaeological sites within the area covered by the watching brief. However, a number of archaeological sites are known to exist within the vicinity of the development plot which suggests the potential for hitherto unknown archaeological features or deposits being present within the proposed development area is high.

Robeston Wathen is first recorded as being in existence in 1282 AD and is listed as being called 'Villa Roberti' (Charles 1992).

To the north-east of the development site is the location of the parish church of St Aidan (PRN 3587; NGR SN08451574). The church of St Aidan is described as having a 14th or 15th century stone tower which was rebuilt in 1841-3 by a Joseph Jenkins and later added to by a Mr T. G. Jackson in 1876. To the immediate west is the location of Sunnyside Iron Age defended enclosure (PRN 3585; NGR SN08021573). Another Iron Age defended enclosure Bush Inn Camp (PRN 3586; NGR SN07641555) lies c800 metres to the south west of the development site. There are also a number of standing stones in the immediate area, which could possibly be of a Bronze Age origin, these being the Longstone standing stone (PRN 4435; NGR SN0816) situated to the north-west, the Abystree standing stone situated to the north-west (PRN 5687; NGR SN08131629), and another standing stone also named Longstone is situated to the north-east of the

development (PRN 12141; NGR SN08801632). The presence of these types of sites indicates a long period of human activity within the vicinity of the development site and further demonstrates the archaeological potential of the site area.

Cartographic evidence

Through studying past maps of the location of a development site, valuable information can be obtained about archaeological and historical features which may be discovered during a watching brief. The Historic Environment resource at Llandeilo provided maps of the area.

The tithe map of the Robeston Wathen area of 1843 shows the site of the development within field number 323, which is listed as being a garden under the ownership of a Mr William Webb. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1891 shows that a house has been erected on the plot and a boundary running east/west placed across the middle of this plot. The later second edition map illustrates that this middle boundary had been removed prior to 1907 and the plot becomes one again and has remained as such until the present day.

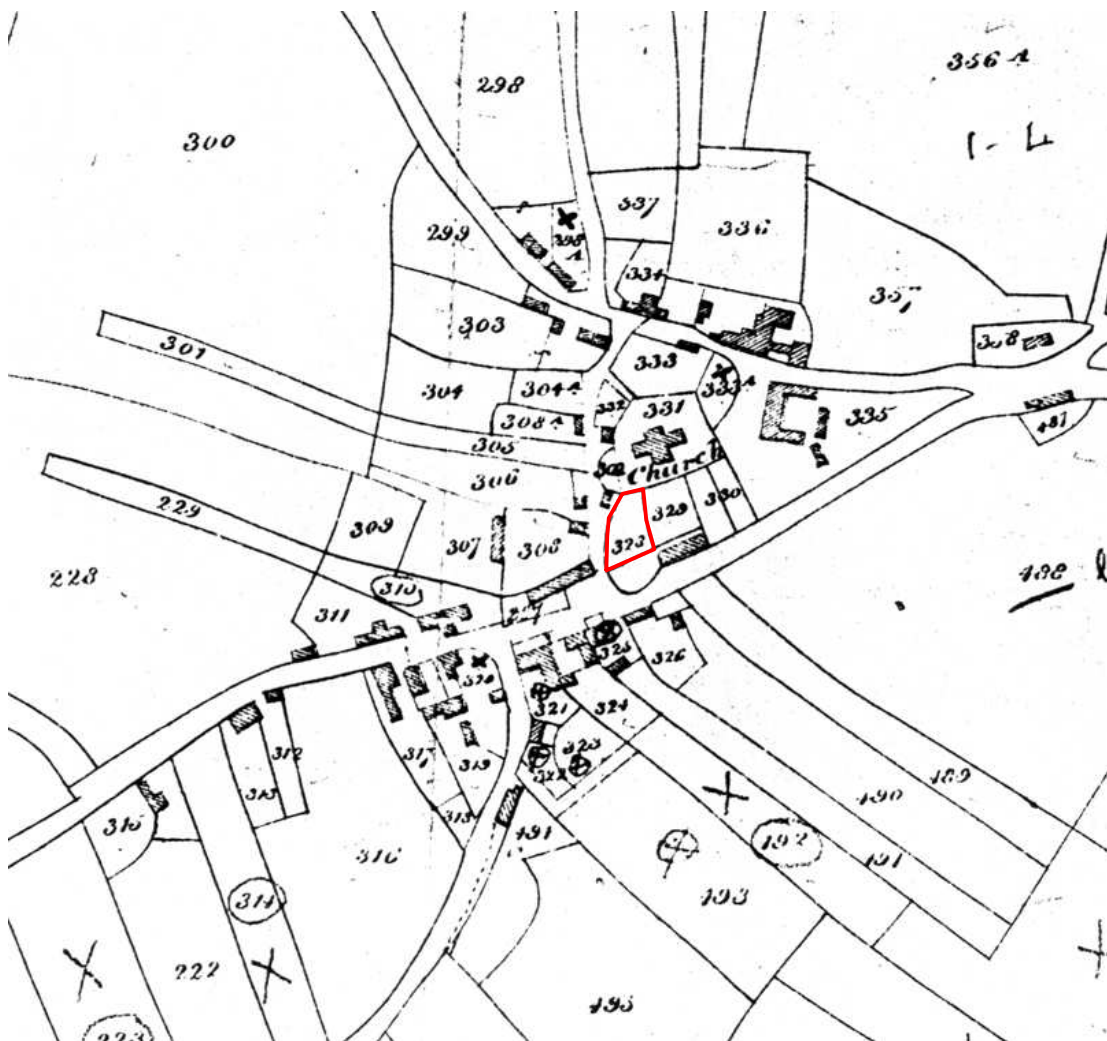


Figure 2: Extract from tithe map of 1843 showing the development area labelled number 323.



Figure 3: Extract from Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1:2500 map showing area of watching brief.



Figure 4: Extract from Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1:2500 map showing area of watching brief.

SUMMARY OF WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

Methodology

The watching brief consisted of a site visit by an archaeologist to oversee the excavation of a 7m by 4.70m plot of land. The excavation was carried out by a machine using a toothless grading bucket, and was undertaken to assess the presence of archaeological features and deposits within the proposed development site. All archaeologically significant features and deposits were recorded and photographed.

Results

The machine strip initially removed a hardcore make up and gravel surface across the entire 7m by 4.70m area.

When the acquired depth was achieved the process of digging the foundation trenches for the building began. Through observing the section cut for these foundations it could be seen that the hardcore makeup measured c.0.47 metres in depth and overlaid a thin layer of dark brown silty clay that had a depth of c.0.06 metres and contained inclusions of brick and mortar. Below this a layer of mid-orangey brown silty clay was encountered that continued to a visible depth of c.0.36 metres and contained inclusions of small sub angular stones.

Whilst digging the western end of the foundations for the building a pit was discovered that contained the remains of a pig.

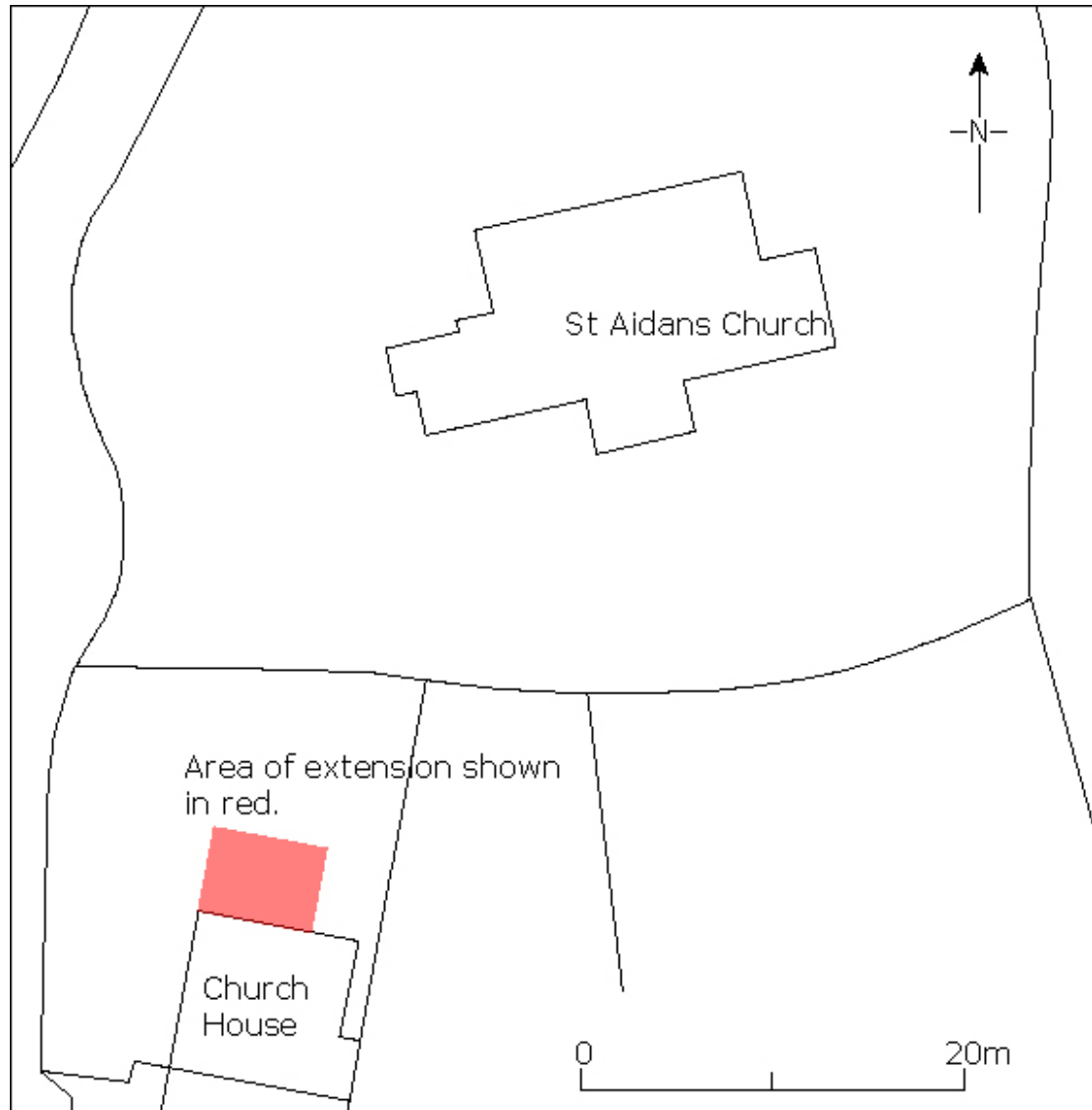


Figure 5: Plan showing area excavated for proposed extension.

Conclusions

The results of the watching brief have indicated that no evidence for medieval settlement or ecclesiastical use of the site was present within the development area.

One undated pit was discovered at the western edge of the development, which contained the remains of a pig. The animal burial is not considered to be of archaeological significance.

No other significant archaeological features or finds were discovered within the development area.

SOURCES

Published sources

Charles, B, 1992, *The Place-Names of Pembrokeshire*. Volume 2. P 545. The National Library of Wales.

Lloyd, T, Orbach, J, Scourfield, R. 2004. *The Buildings of Wales Pembrokeshire*.p375. Yale University Press New Haven and London.

Maps

Robeston Wathen Parish Tithe Map and Apportionment 1843

Ordnance Survey 1891 Pembrokeshire sheet XXIX NW 1st edition 1:2500

Ordnance Survey 1907 Pembrokeshire sheet XXIX NW 2nd edition 1:2500

Photographs



Plate 1: Photograph of foundation section showing made up ground



Plate 2: Photograph showing trench being excavated



Plate 3: Photograph south showing pig remains

A Watching Brief at Church House Robeston Wathen, Narbeth, Pembrokeshire

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**Mawrth 2009
March 2009**

Paratowyd yr adroddiad hwn gan / This report has been prepared by

Swydd / Position:

Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

Mae'r adroddiad hwn wedi ei gael yn gywir a derbyn sêl bendith
This report has been checked and approved by

ar ran Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Dyfed Cyf.
on behalf of Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd.

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Llofnod / Signature Dyddiad / Date

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sydd gennych ar gynnwys neu strwythur yr adroddiad hwn

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