



# Higher Trencreek, Newquay, Cornwall

## Archaeological Watching brief





Report No

2011R077

Report Name

Higher Tren creek, Newquay, Cornwall.

Report Author

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Event Type

Archaeological  
Watching Brief

Client Organisation

Galliford Try Partnerships South West

Client Contact

Mr J Crowle

Monuments (MonUID)

-

Fieldwork dates (From) (To)

22/6/2011

22/6/2011

(Created By)

Anna Lawson-Jones

(Create Date)

June 2011

Location (postal address; or general location and parish)

Land off Tren creek Lane, Newquay, TR8 4NN.  
St Columb Minor parish

(Town - for urban sites)

TR8 4NS

(Postcode)

-

(Easting) X co-ord

SW 8297

(Northing) Y co-ord

6079

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## Project background

Historic Environment Projects, Cornwall Council were commissioned by Mr J Crowle on behalf of Galliford Try Partnerships South West to undertake archaeological monitoring, which had been requested by Dan Ratcliffe (Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer, Cornwall Council) during construction work at Higher Tren creek, near Newquay (Fig 1). The development was the subject of a planning condition (09/01460), which required archaeological recording.

Two areas were examined: one at the southern end, which had been disturbed during initial site works and the establishment of a compound, (which was dismissed as being unsuitable for further archaeological work); and one at the northern end which underwent an archaeological watching brief and recording exercise (Fig 4). This work was organised by Andy Jones (Senior Archaeologist, Historic Environment). Construction work in the intervening area prevented further recording.

## Site background

The site is located within land located on the south-eastern side of Tren creek, on the eastern side of Newquay (see Fig 1). The southern and eastern edges of the study area run along field boundaries not constructed until after the 1930s (see Fig 2). The Historic Landscape Character of the site has as a result been classified as Modern Enclosed Land (see Fig 3), although it lies within land that prior to this was Anciently Enclosed and of Medieval Farmland type (Cornwall County Council 1996). The western side is marked by Tren creek Lane, which is shown on all historic maps consulted and is of medieval date, given the early origins of Tren creek settlement (see below).

Prior to development the field was open pasture land. The underlying bedrock is composed of Denbigh 2 palaeozoic slaty mudstone and siltstone, while the soils are described as fine, well drained loam (HBSMR Physical Geography layers). Topographically the site gently slopes down from 50m above sea level in the south to approximately 42m above sea level in the north.

The northern edge of the site is defined by the railway line, which runs along the line of Trefry's horse drawn tramway (Fig 2, MCO55075). Built in the mid to late 1840s Trefry's tramway was subsequently incorporated within the later c1872 steam railway – the precursor to today's rail line. The line followed the same course as an east to west aligned field boundary shown on the 1840 St Columb Minor Tithe map, which separated Lower Beef Field (north of the study area) from Higher Beef Field, which forms the bulk of the study area.

Tren creek settlement (MCO17574) is first recorded in 1216 as 'Tren cruc', a Cornish place-name containing the elements 'Tre' meaning estate or farmstead (suggestive of an early medieval origin) and 'Cruc' meaning barrow or hillock (Padel 1985). The 'Cruc' element of Tren creek's place-name has an associated 'site of' number within the HBSMR (MCO3723), although no remains have been located. The settlement is surrounded by the enclosed strips of an open medieval field system. These can be seen to the south (see Fig 2) and a further medieval strip field system to the north (Lawson-Jones 2007). Running north to south through the western centre of the development area is the site of a removed boundary – **boundary ditches (4)**, shown on the 1840 Tithe map (and on Figs 2, 3 and 5). This long thin strip field (now sliced through by the railway) was called Pryers Field. It forms the western part of the study area.

## Objectives

The purpose of this archaeological watching brief was:

- To record any archaeological remains located along an approximately 6m wide strip positioned at the northern end of the site, running parallel to the railway line.
- To ascertain the need for any further topsoil stripping or trenching in the southern, topographically higher part of the site – a small area located between

the compound/car park, a large spoil dump and already concrete filled footings for buildings.

Following an inspection of the site, a decision was made on site that no further watching brief work in the southern part of the site was likely to be useful, given the fact that the whole area had already been topsoil stripped, and was largely compacted and wheel rutted in the limited space available for the machine to carry out further monitored excavation (Fig 4).

## Methodology

The watching brief took place on the morning of June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2011. An approximately 6m wide 100m long area was stripped of topsoil, using a toothless grading bucket down to the top of the pale brown underlying clayey subsoil. The topsoil depth and character was recorded.

All features were located on to a prepared base map with additional annotation describing size and surface fills. Two spreads or scatters were identified. The decision was taken in the field not to excavate any of the features identified on the basis of their obvious late date.

A series of digital colour photographs were taken as a record of these works.

## Results

All watching brief recorded features are shown on Figure 3.

- **Topsoil** – recorded as a mid brown slightly clayey loam mixed plough soil with occasional shillet (slate) and quartz inclusions. The depth varied across the topsoil stripped part of the site from 0.25m in the west – in the area formerly known as Pryers Field, to 0.4m deep to the east of boundary ditches (4). At the eastern end the topsoil became shallower, reaching a maximum depth of 0.3m.
- **Building debris deposit (1)** – recorded as a pocket of modern building debris, including loose breeze blocks and occasional bits of concrete, etc. It lay within a previously topsoil stripped area at the western end of the stripped area, extending up to 6m east of the extant boundary marking the edge of the site. The debris appeared to have been covered by topsoil partially as a result of past ploughing.
- **Deposit/truncated pit (2)** – recorded as a near circular c1.5m diameter pocket of 30% topsoil and 70% partially crushed shillet rubble (up to 0.1m in size). It was found to contain 2 dark brown glass bottle fragments on its surface. Maximum depth of 0.15m.
- **Disturbance (3)** - recorded as an amorphous, up to 10m long area of shallow disturbance (c0.05m to 0.1m deep). It consisted of a thin spread of shillet, minimal burning and occasional roots, and may be evidence for a tree bole or past tree clearance, perhaps with animal disturbance around its roots.
- **Boundary ditches (4)** - recorded as a double ditched boundary spanning a 4-5m width, which ran north to south across the 6m width of the watching brief area. It was clearly visible as a dark band, orientated north to south (Fig 5). The flanking ditches were not excavated, but they did not exceed 0.2m in depth. No finds were recovered. Running along the central 1.5m area would have been the probable stone-faced or earth and stone bank of the boundary itself. No evidence was seen for the presence of a stone element.
- **c1840 butchery spread (5)** - recorded as a distinct scatter of very large animal bones, some with butchery marks, and all apparently the result of the slaughter

of mature cattle. This would link well with the 1840 Tithe apportions, which record this area as the southern end of Higher Beef Field.

- **Deposit/truncated pit (6)** - recorded as a near circular c1.8m diameter pocket of 50% topsoil and 50% shillet rubble (up to 0.1m in size). A lump of probable decayed lime was seen on its surface. Maximum depth of 0.10m.

In chronological order, the following features or contexts were recorded within the area of the watching brief; removed field boundary shown on the 1840 Tithe map to the immediate east of Trencreek and forming part of a larger medieval field pattern – **boundary ditches (4)**; a possible **c1840 butchery spread (5)**; a series of late (probable post-1840) pits running closely parallel to the former tramway/railway track – **deposits/truncated pits (2) and (6)**; undated, shallow possible tree bole disturbance – **disturbance (3)**; and a pocket of modern building debris – **building debris deposit (1)**, presumably associated with the modern structure to the immediate west-north-west of the study area (adjacent to the line).

None of the finds from the archaeological monitoring were retained.

# References

## Primary sources

Ordnance Survey, c1875. *25 Inch Map* First Edition – licensed digital copy at HE  
Ordnance Survey, c1907. *25 Inch Map* Second Edition – licensed digital copy at HE  
Ordnance Survey, 2007. Mastermap Digital Mapping

## Secondary sources

Cornwall County Council, 1996. *Cornwall Landscape Assessment 1994*, Cornwall County Council: Truro  
Lawson-Jones, A, 2007. *Trencreek, Newquay, Cornwall. An Archaeological Assessment*. Cornwall County Council, Truro  
Padell, OJ, 1985. *Cornish place-names*, English Place-Name Society, Nottingham

# Project archive

The HE project number is **2011058**

The project's documentary, photographic and drawn archive is housed at the offices of Historic Environment, Cornwall Council, Kennall Building, Old County Hall, Station Road, Truro, TR1 3AY. The contents of this archive are as listed below:

1. A project file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration.
2. Digital photographs stored in the directory as: R:\Historic Environment (Images)\SITES.M-P\Newquay-Higher Trencreek 2011058
3. English Heritage/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2-104505

This report text is held in digital form as: G:\Historic Environment (Documents)\HE Projects\Sites\Sites N\Newquay Higher Trencreek WB\Higher Trencreek-Newquay-short report1-2011058.doc



Figure 1 Map showing site location.



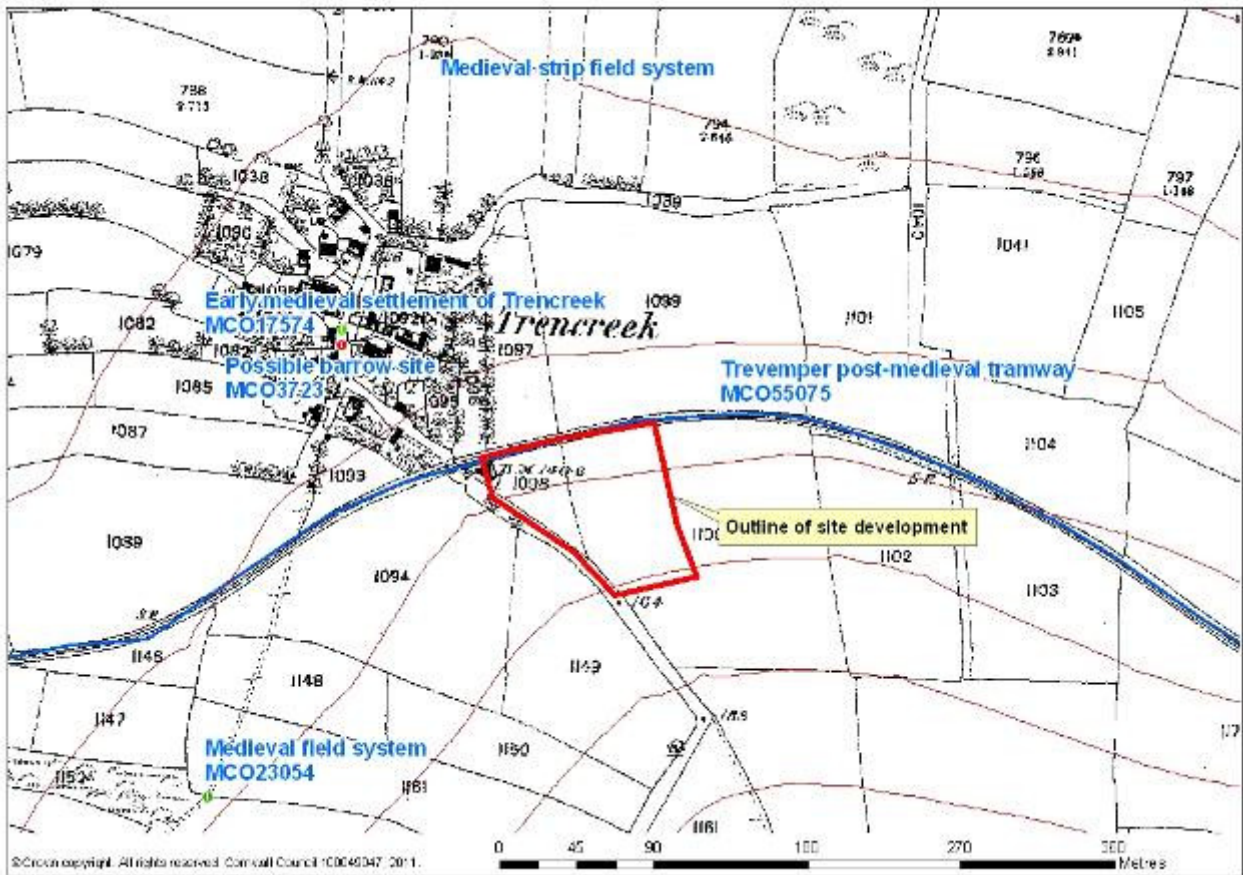


Figure 2 Ordnance Survey, c1880. 25 Inch Map First Edition showing closest known sites to study area and contour lines.

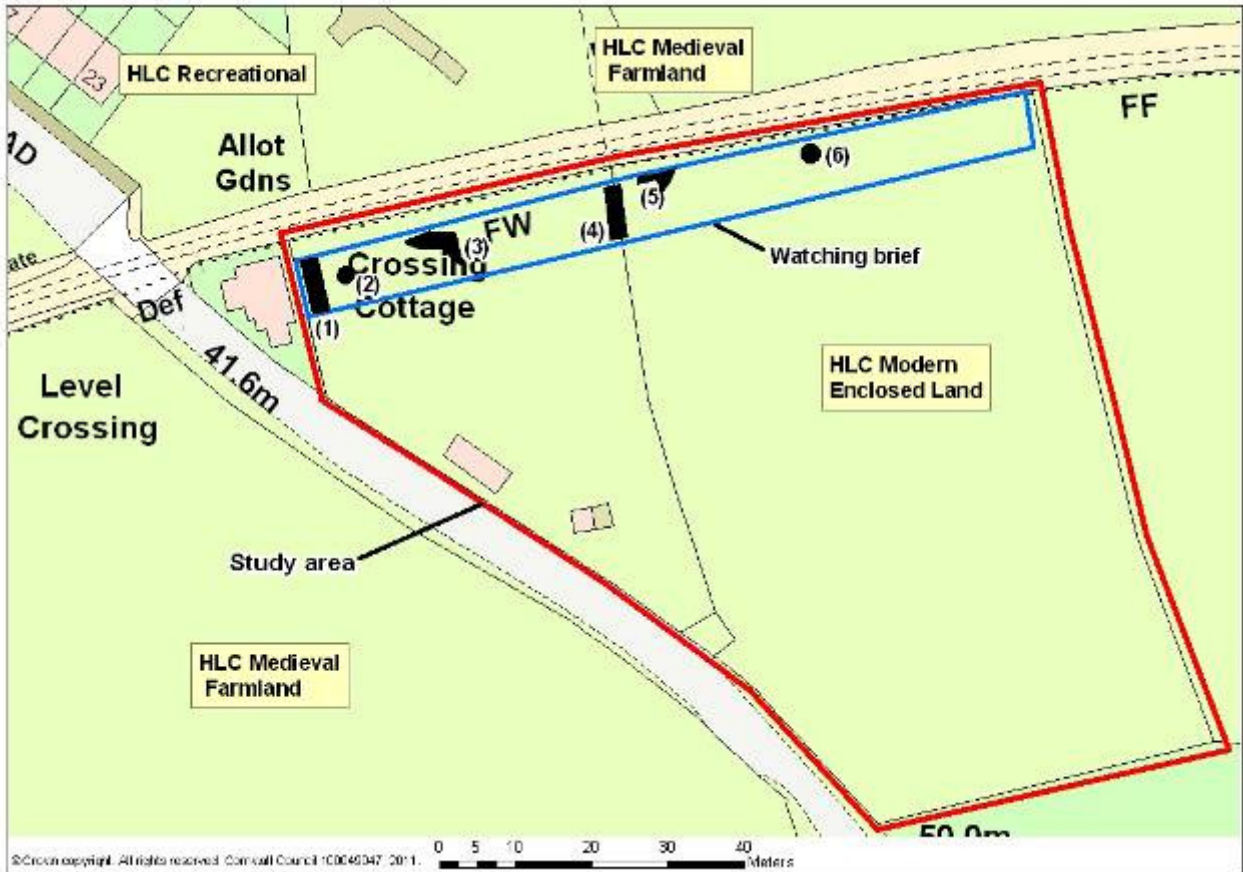


Figure 3 Map showing study area, Historic Landscape Characterisation, watching brief area (defined in blue rectangle) with numbered feature contexts.

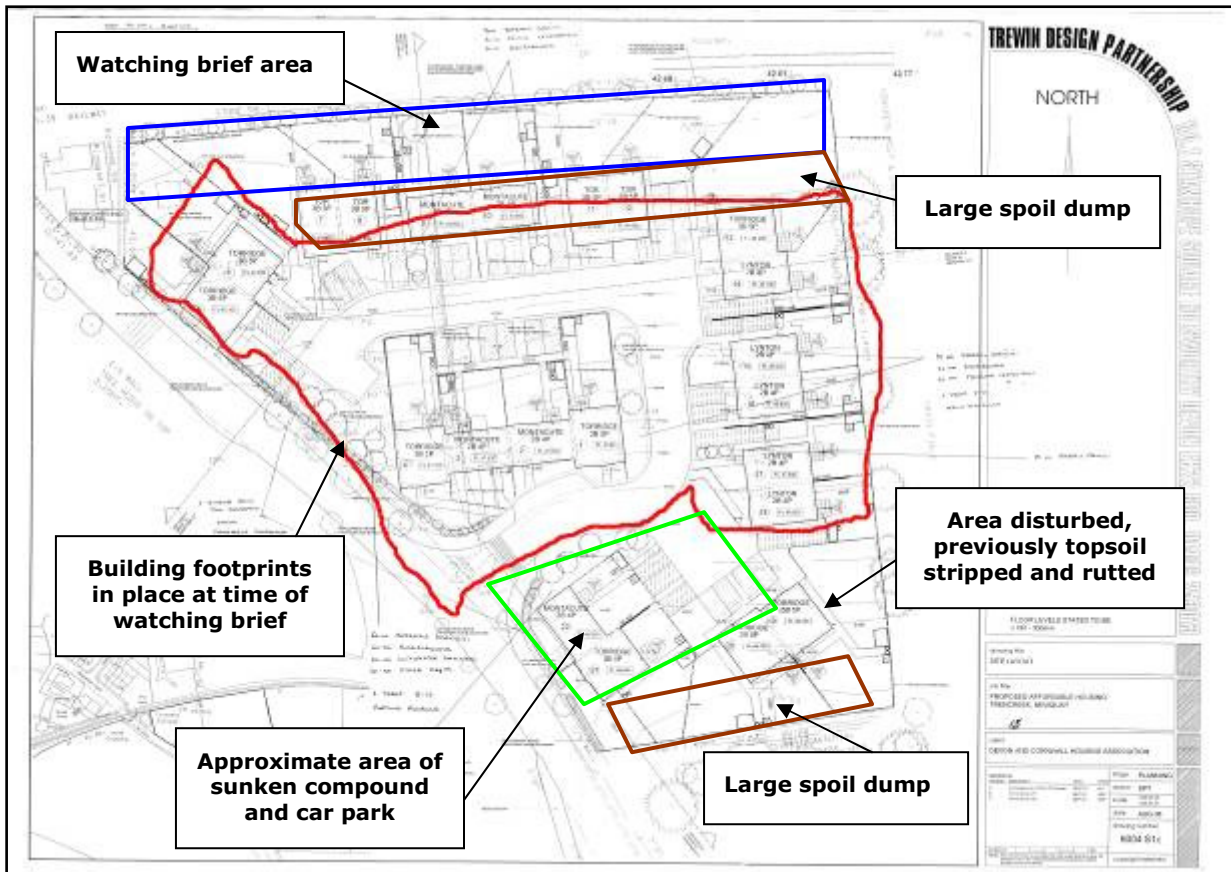


Figure 4 Detailed plan of the development, with relevant annotation at time of watching brief.



Figure 5 Looking west along the watching brief area, showing former boundary ditches – (4) as a dark line. On the right is the fenced railway line.