



# Tretherras School Cycle Track, Newquay, Cornwall

## Archaeological Watching Brief



**Historic Environment Projects**



# Tretherras School Cycle Track, Newquay, Cornwall

## Archaeological Watching Brief

<b>Client</b>	<b>CORMAC Consultancy</b>
<b>Report Number</b>	<b>2013R039</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>April 2013</b>
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Carl Thorpe</b>
<b>Checked by</b>	<b>Andy Jones</b>
<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Andrew Young</b>

Historic Environment Projects

Environment Directorate, Cornwall Council

Fal Building, County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 3AY

Tel: (01872) 323603

Email: [hes@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:hes@cornwall.gov.uk) Web: [www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

## **Acknowledgements**

This study was commissioned by Andy Cresswell, Senior Transport Planning Technician CORMAC Consultancy and carried out by Historic Environment Projects, Cornwall Council.

The Project Manager was Andy Jones.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of Historic Environment Projects and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

## **Freedom of Information Act**

As Cornwall Council is a public authority it is subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which came into effect from 1st January 2005.



Historic Environment, Cornwall Council is a Registered Organisation with the  
Institute for Archaeologists

## **Cover illustration**

View across Field 1, looking west towards Newquay

## **© Cornwall Council 2013**

No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior permission of the publisher.

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
2.1	Project background	1
2.2	Aims	1
2.3	Methods	2
<b>3</b>	<b>Location and setting</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Location and setting</b>	<b>3</b>
4.1	General	3
4.2	Field 1 (Figure 3).	3
4.2.1	Ditch [1]	3
4.2.2	Ditches [4] and [5]	3
4.3	Field 2 (Figure 4).	4
4.3.1	Linear stony Spread [17]	4
<b>5</b>	<b>Conclusions/discussion</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>References</b>	<b>5</b>
6.1	Primary sources	5
6.2	Publications	5
6.3	Websites	5
<b>7</b>	<b>Project archive</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Appendix 1. Finds</b>	<b>6</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Site location.

Figure 2. Detailed site location showing route of cycle track, and known archaeological sites

Figure 3. Plan of Field 1 showing location of recorded features and described soil profiles.

Figure 4. Plan of Field 1 showing location of recorded features and described soil profiles.

Figure 5. Ditch [1] looking west.

Figure 6. Ditches [4] and [5] looking west.

## **Abbreviations**

BGS	British Geological Survey
HER	Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record
HE	Historic Environment, Cornwall Council
MCO	Monument number in Cornwall HER
OD	Ordnance Datum – height above mean sea level at Newlyn
OS	Ordnance Survey

# 1 Summary

HE Projects was commissioned by Andy Cresswell, Senior Transport Planning Technician CORMAC Consultancy to undertake a programme of archaeological recording in advance of groundwork required for the construction of a cycle track circa 295m long across two fields immediately south of Tretherras School in Newquay. The route of the track starts just to the south of the Newquay Sports and Community Centre (SW 82621 61731) running roughly west, south-west to east, north-east to join with Trevenson Road at SW 82910 61765.

The site lies within 'Anciently Enclosed' Land in very close proximity to two Iron Age/Romano-British rounds, so there was a high potential for prehistoric and medieval sites to survive within the project area.

The earliest identified evidence for activity was the presence of prehistoric flints. None were diagnostic though some may be of Neolithic date. A single ditch was recorded that may form part of the field system associated with the Iron Age/Romano-British sub-rectangular ditched enclosure that lies to the south east. A pairing of ditches and a linear stony spread were identified as most likely representing post-medieval field boundaries, the paired ditches being typical of a removed Cornish hedge.

No other features of archaeological interest were seen over the site and it was found that the development had very little or no impact on any significant buried remains.

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Project background

HE Projects was commissioned by Andy Cresswell, Senior Transport Planning Technician CORMAC Consultancy to undertake a programme of archaeological recording in advance of groundwork required for the construction of a cycle track across two fields immediately south of Tretherras School in Newquay (Figs 1 and 2). The track *circa* 295m long ran from south of the Newquay Sports and Community Centre (SW 82621 61731) to join with Trevenson Road at SW 82910 61765. The area examined was approximately 0.56 Ha (Fig 2).

Planning application for this was approved with a condition that an archaeological watching brief was carried out.

A request for the costs for this watching brief issued (28/06/2011) by Andy Cresswell, Senior Transport Planning Technician CORMAC Consultancy was received by Historic Environment Projects and an estimate was produced (29/06/2011) by Andy Jones Archaeologist Team Leader Historic Environment Projects. This was accepted and HE (Projects) was commissioned to undertake the work on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

### 2.2 Aims

The aims of the project were:

- To establish the absence/presence of buried archaeological remains.
- To record archaeological features, layers and finds affected by the works.
- To establish the extent, condition, significance and character of the archaeological resource.
- To identify any artefacts relating to the occupation of the site.
- To gain further information about the archaeological potential of the area, through the recording of buried archaeological remains.
- The dissemination and publication of the results.
- The long-term conservation of the project archive in appropriate conditions.

## 2.3 Methods

The site soil strip was carried out under archaeological supervision using a machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket. The soil was stripped cleanly to a level at which archaeological features or layers were expected to be revealed, in this case the top of the natural geology. The area was then inspected by the archaeologist.

The area investigated was plotted onto a site plan at a scale of 1:1000 based on an Ordnance Survey map of the same scale, being measured in from fixed locatable points on the ground marked on the map and compass bearings. Sample sections (nature of soil depth, layers present, etc) were recorded along the length of the track (Figs 3 and 4).

## 3 Location and setting

The site area is located within land that falls into an historic character zone which has been classified as 'Anciently Enclosed Land' (Cornwall County Council 1996) 'Anciently Enclosed Land' (farmland medieval) is land which has been settled since at least the medieval period and which often contains archaeological remains dating to prehistoric and medieval times. There was thus the high potential for the preservation of buried archaeological material to survive in the project area.

### *Identified archaeological sites*

A number of sites in the vicinity of the study area were identified from the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record (Fig 2). They included:

- A sub-circular ditched enclosure identified by geophysical survey in 1994 and dated to the Iron Age/Romano-British date by an evaluation excavation in 2002 (MCO49004) lies *circa* 50m to the south of the site within the same field.
- A sub-rectangular ditched enclosure identified by a sewer pipe cutting its enclosure ditch in 1956, and a geophysical survey (MCO8798) lies *circa* 148m to the south of the site within the same field. Finds indicate an Iron Age/Romano-British date.
- A crop-mark enclosure of probable Iron Age/Romano-British date (MCO33183) lies 410m to the north of the site.
- A base for a medieval cross (MCO6126) lies 30m to the south of the site alongside Trevenson Road.
- Tretherras Farm some 380m to the SW of the site is a medieval settlement first recorded in 1284 when it is spelt "Tretheyris". This contains the Cornish place-name elements meaning 'the farm by the two fords' (MCO17764).

- 

### *Potential sites*

In addition there was potential for buried prehistoric and medieval sites to survive within the project area, and there was scope for the survival of previously unrecorded archaeological sites, organic remains, and artefacts of all periods.

### *Site description*

The route of the cycle track passes over the crest of a rounded hill at a height of *circa* 48m OD before gently dropping to a height of 40m OD. The hill slope is south facing and forms the northern valley side of the Trenance Stream, a tributary of the River Gannel. The site lies to the northeast of the settlement of Tretherras, on the eastern side of Newquay within the ecclesiastical parish of St Columb Minor (Figs 1 and 2). The



field is currently grass covered and a couple of allotment plots have also been recently established. The underlying geology consists of Devonian interbedded slates and sandstones, of the Meadfoot Group (BGS 346 Newquay).

## **4 Location and setting**

### **4.1 General**

Sixteen sections were recorded across the site along the length of the cycle track, eight in Field 1 and nine in Field 2 (Figs 3 and 4). Details of these can be found within the site archive.

### **4.2 Field 1 (Figure 3).**

The soil profile recorded within this field consisted of 0.05m of grass, roots and topsoil overlying 0.15m of grey-brown clay loam, 0.2m of dark red, grey-brown clay, and 0.05m of yellow, grey-brown clay with numerous shillet fragments. The decayed natural shillet bedrock lay at the base of the trench. The soil profile, though consistent in nature throughout the field varied in thickness from 0.25m to 0.5m, the greatest depth being recorded at the base of the slope, with the least being seen at the crest, a reflection of soil movement due to plough action in the past.

A few artefacts were found within the topsoil. Apart from a couple of sherds of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century Modern china (not collected), six flints of prehistoric origin were recovered. Only two were tools (a blade and shaft scraper), but neither was diagnostic date wise. The presence of black nodular flint amongst the waste flakes hints at a possible Neolithic date (*circa* 4000 – 2500BC) as that is when nodular flint is known to have been exchanged. A single post-medieval gun flint was also recovered.

#### **4.2.1 Ditch [1]**

The first major feature uncovered on the site was Ditch [1]. This linear feature ran from roughly northwest to southeast, and was traced for a length of approximately 20m (Figs 3 and 5). The ditch varied between 2.1m and 2.5m in width and was cut into the shillet bedrock. It was infilled with a dark brown clay with flecks of charcoal and some larger shillet blocks. The ditch was not investigated further as its depth was below that required for the cycle track. No dating evidence was obtained for Ditch [1] though some heavily abraded sherds of prehistoric gabbroic pottery were recovered from the surface of the fill. These sherds were unfortunately undiagnostic and undateable. This ditch was picked up by the geophysical survey (Stratascan 1994) and interpreted as probably part of a field system associated with the enclosures within the field.

#### **4.2.2 Ditches [4] and [5]**

Roughly 30 metres east of Ditch [1] was the second major feature that had also been identified by the geophysical survey (Stratascan 1994). This was a line of paired ditches, Ditches [4] and [5]. These two ditches set approximately 1.8m apart ran in a WNW to ESE direction and were traced for a distance of *circa* 10m. They were separated by a band of weathered natural shillet *circa* 1.5m wide (Figs 3 and 6).

The westernmost ditch [4] varied from 1.8m to 3m in width and was infilled with dark grey-brown clay with flecks of charcoal. A single prehistoric flint fabricator, possibly Neolithic in date, was recovered from the fill of the ditch, though it was evident that this was redeposited. The easternmost ditch [5] varied from 2.5m to 3m in width and was infilled with red, grey-brown clay with some charcoal flecks. A redeposited flint flake came from the fill of the ditch.

These ditches were not investigated further as their depth was below that required for the track way.

No other features of archaeological interest were recorded within Field 1.

### **4.3 Field 2 (Figure 4).**

The soil profile recorded within this field consisted of 0.05m of grass, roots and topsoil overlying 0.15m of grey-brown clay loam, 0.2m of dark red, grey-brown clay, and 0.05m of yellow, grey-brown clay with numerous shillet fragments. The decayed natural shillet bedrock lay at the base of the trench. Between sections 11 and 15 a layer of redeposited light grey-brown clay with numerous shillet fragments and containing plastic sheeting was recorded overlying the lower dark red-brown clays at a depth averaging 0.25m below the current ground level. This suggests that some landscaping or modern earth moving had occurred in this area in recent times.

A few artefacts were found within the topsoil. Apart from three sherds of Cornish Medieval Coarseware dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, six flints of prehistoric origin were recovered though unfortunately none were diagnostic date wise.

#### **4.3.1 Linear stony Spread [17]**

The only feature uncovered within Field 2 was a linear spread of stones [17]. This linear feature ran from roughly from WNW to ESE and was traced for a distance of *circa* 25m (Figure 4). It was *circa* 1m wide and consisted of large shillet blocks and stony rubble. There was no evidence for any mortar. No dating evidence for this feature was obtained. This feature was not investigated further as its level lay below that required for the cycle track.

## **5 Conclusions/discussion**

The earliest evidence for activity within the area was the prehistoric flints that occurred across both fields. Though all were undiagnostic, the presence of nodular flint hints that some may be of Neolithic date.

Although no direct dating evidence was found for any of the features encountered, the geophysical survey shows that Ditch [1] may form part of the field system associated with the sub-rectangular ditched enclosure (MCO8798) that lies to the south east, finds from which indicated a Iron Age/Romano-British date. The heavily abraded prehistoric sherds from the top fill of this ditch may support this, though they are undiagnostic.

The pairing of ditches [4] and [5] is typical evidence for a Cornish hedge type field boundary. This feature was investigated by Trench 1 of the evaluation excavations carried out in 2002 which came to the conclusion that this boundary was most likely of post-medieval origin (Craze, et al, 2002). Certainly this boundary was in existence prior to the Tithe Map for the parish of St Columb Minor which was compiled in 1839 and was removed post 1939 as it is depicted on both these maps.

The stony linear feature [17] also appears to be a removed field boundary. Though no direct dating evidence was obtained, it is also most likely to be post-medieval in origin though it does not appear on the 1839 Tithe Map. This suggests it was probably removed at some time prior to this.

It was found that there was evidence of modern landscaping on the northern side of Field 2, however, this appears to have affected a depth of soil that was too shallow to impinge on any archaeological features.

No other features of archaeological interest were seen over the area of the site and it was observed that the development had very little or no impact on any significant buried remains apart from those noted above.

## 6 References

### 6.1 Primary sources

Ordnance Survey, c1880. *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*

Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1839. *Parish of St Columb Minor* (licensed digital copy at HE)

### 6.2 Publications

Craze, N, Gossip, J, and Johns, C, 2002. *Tretherras School, Newquay, Cornwall, Archaeological Evaluation*. HES/CCC archive report 2002R076.

Stratascan, 1994. *Geophysical survey carried out at Tretherras School, Newquay*.

### 6.3 Websites

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/> English Heritage's online database of Sites and Monuments Records, and Listed Buildings

## 7 Project archive

The HE project number is **HEXQPR 146247**

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

1. A project and information file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration (file no HEXQPR146247).
2. An information file containing copies of documentary/cartographic source material (file no HEXQPR 146247).
3. Field plans and copies of historic maps stored in an A2-size plastic envelope (GRE791/1-2).
4. Digital photographs stored in the directory: R:\Historic Environment (Images)\SITES.M-P\Newquay Tretherras School cycle track WB April 2013
5. English Heritage/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2- 152740
6. This report text is held in digital form as: G:\TWE\Waste & Env\Strat Waste & Land\Historic Environment\Projects\Sites\Sites N\Newquay Tretherras School Cycle Track WB\Report

Artefacts and environmental material retrieved during the project are temporarily stored at the Historic Environment Finds Archive store. With the consent of the landowner they will be eventually be deposited at the Royal Cornwall Museum, River Street, Truro. The site code is TRSC13.

## **8 Appendix 1. Finds**

### **Field 1. Unstratified.**

- 3 water rounded pebbles (1 white quartz)
- 1 flint pebble. Prehistoric
- 1 retouched flint blade, and shaft scraper (broken). Prehistoric
- 1 retouched flint blade (broken). Prehistoric
- 1 large flint flake. Black nodular flint. Prehistoric (Neolithic?)
- 1 waste flint flake. Black nodular flint. Prehistoric (Neolithic?)
- 1 waste flint flake (burnt). Prehistoric
- 1 gun flint. Post-medieval.

### **Field 1. Ditch [1].**

- 3 very small abraded sherds Prehistoric pottery (Gabbroic?)

### **Field 1. Ditch [4].**

- 1 retouched flint fabricator. Black nodular flint. Prehistoric (Neolithic?)

### **Field 1. Ditch [5].**

- 1 flint flake (utilised). Prehistoric

### **Field 2. Unstratified.**

- 2 water rounded white quartz pebbles
- 1 flint pebble. Prehistoric
- 1 flint pebble core. Prehistoric
- 1 retouched flint end scraper. Prehistoric
- 1 retouched flint blade (burnt). Prehistoric
- 2 waste flint flakes. Prehistoric
- 3 small undiagnostic abraded sherds (1 neck, 1 basal angle) Cornish Medieval Coarseware . 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries.







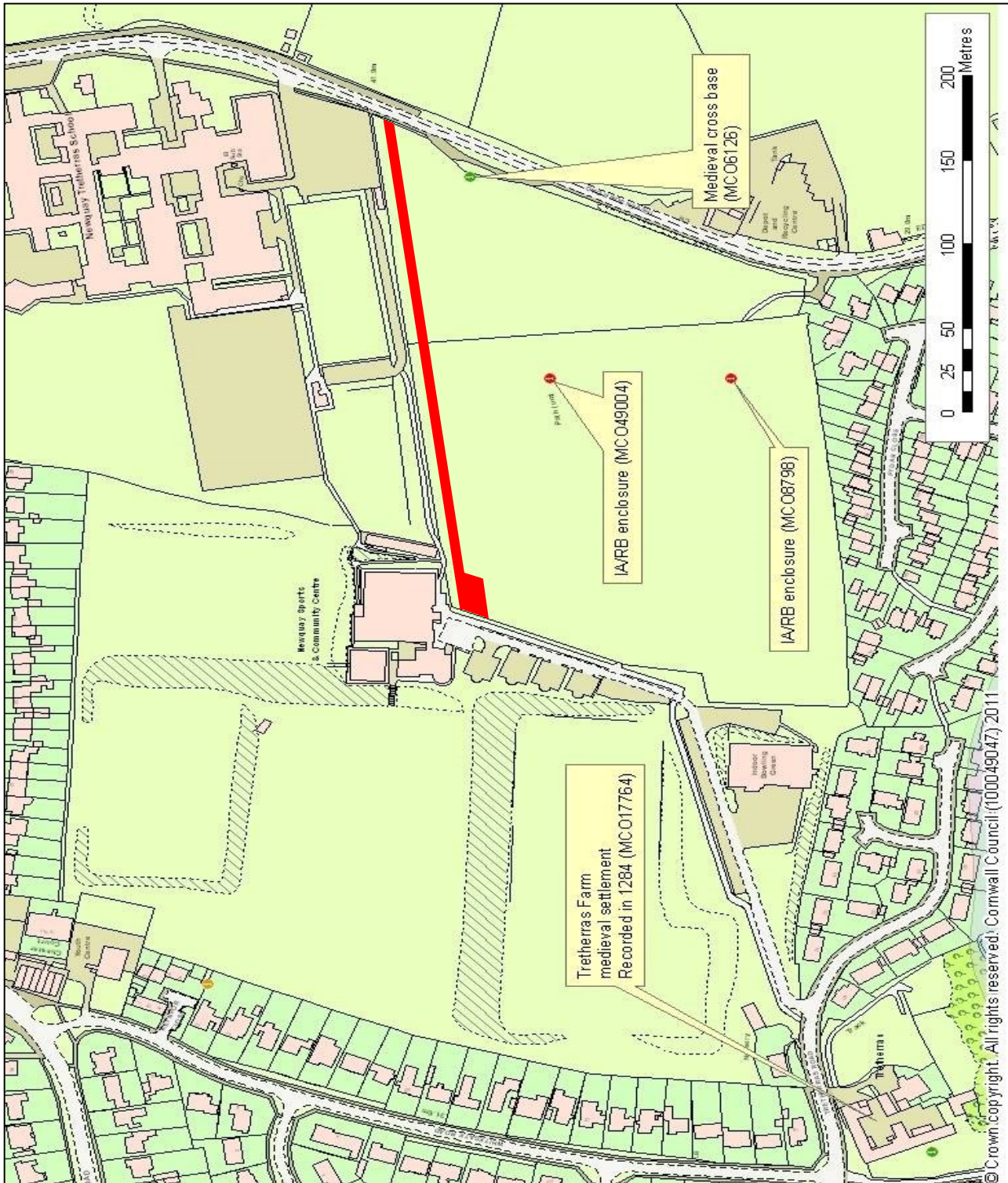


Figure 2. Detailed site location showing route of cycle track and association with known archaeological sites.



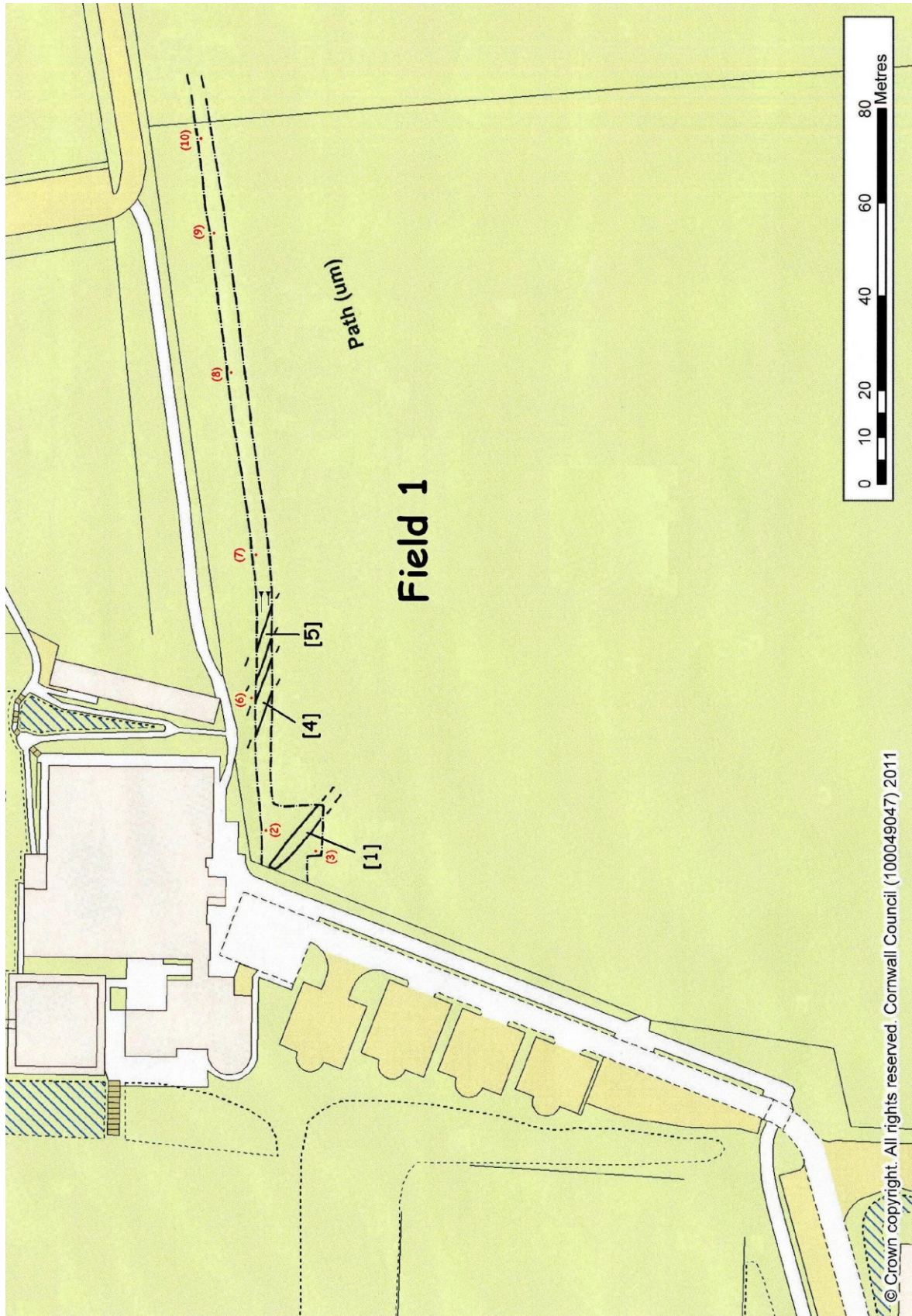


Figure 3. Plan of Field 1 showing location of recorded features and described soil profiles (in red).



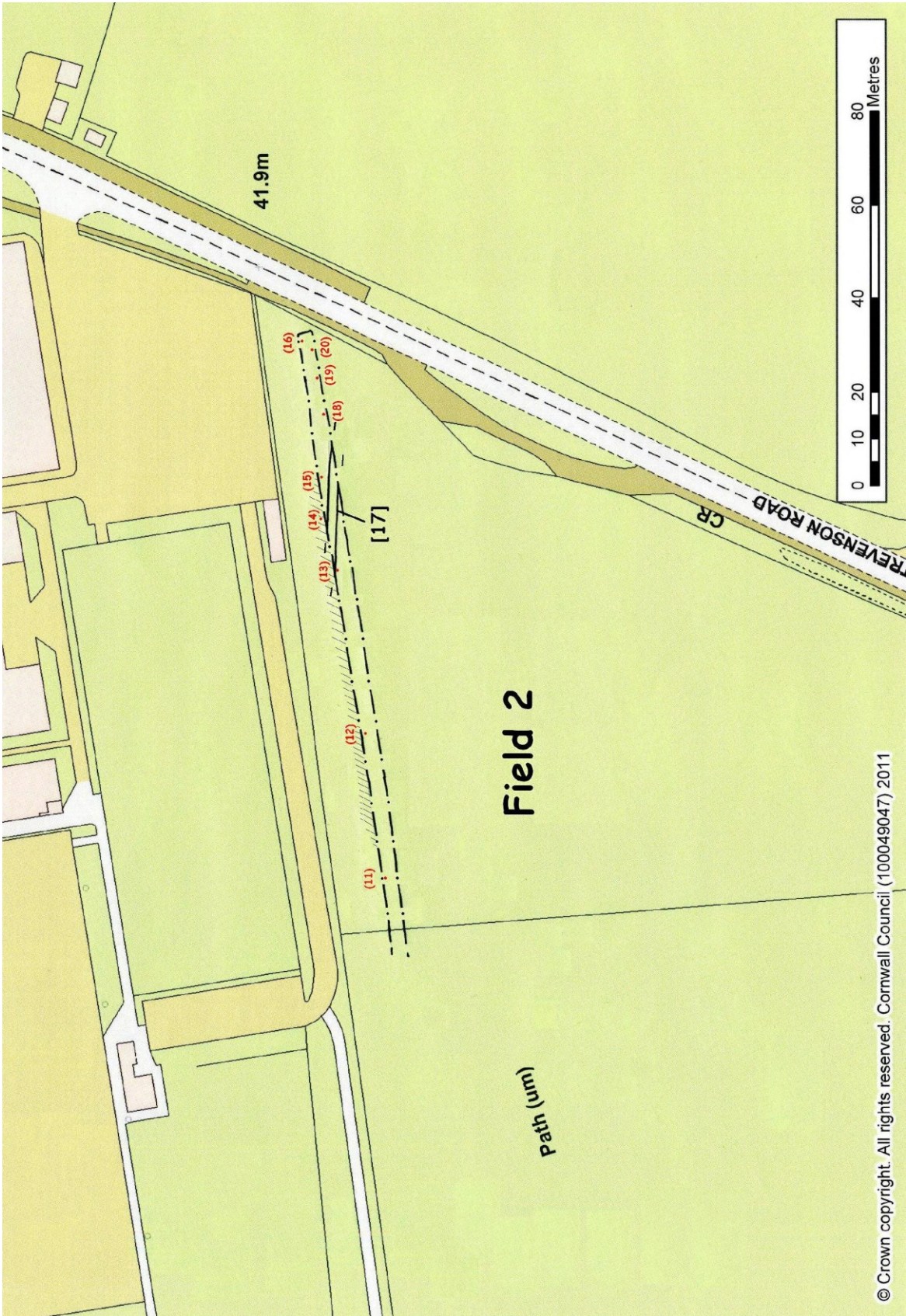


Figure 4. Plan of Field 1 showing location of recorded features and described soil profiles (in red).





Figure 5. Ditch [1] looking west.



Figure 6. Ditches [4] and [5] looking west.