



# **Nans Avallon, Constantine, Cornwall Archaeological Watching Brief**





Report No

2015R034

Report Name

Nans Avallon, Constantine, Cornwall.  
Archaeological Watching Brief

Report Author

Carl Thorpe

Event Type

Watching Brief

Client Organisation

Private individual

Client Contact

Mr Simon Richard Ainge

Monuments (MonUID)

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Fieldwork dates (From)  
Date)

24/03/15

(To)

02/04/15

(Created By)

CT

(Create

26/03/15

Location (postal address; or general location and parish)

Nans Avallon, Brillwater Road

(Town – for urban sites)  
(Postcode)

Constantine

TR115AJ

(Easting) X co-ord

SW 72786

(Northing) Y co-ord

29166



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## 1 Introduction

Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council (CAU) was commissioned by Mr Simon Richard Ainge to undertake a programme of archaeological recording during ground works required ahead of the construction of three residential dwellings at Nans Avallon, Constantine (SW 72786 29166). The area of the development covered approximately 0.2 HA (Figs 1, 2, and 6).

The development was the subject of a planning condition (PA11/02976), which required that archaeological recording took place ahead of construction (Appendix 1).

Phil Copleston (Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment), Cornwall Council) was consulted over the requirements for the archaeological recording (email dated 19/01/15). A written scheme of investigation, outlining the methodology for archaeological recording was produced (21/01/15) by Dr Andy Jones (Archaeologist Team Leader CAU) guided by Phil Copleston's requirements (Appendix 1).

This report presents the results of the archaeological watching brief carried out in March and April 2015.

## 2 Location and archaeological background

The development area is located to the south of Brillwater and to the northwest of Constantine, within the Parish of Constantine (Figs 1 and 2).

The development area lies at the bottom of a steep sided valley that forms the northern bank of a stream that enters the Helford River via Polpenwith Creek. The plot of land slopes steeply to the south-east dropping from 86m OD in the north-west to *circa* 81m in the south-east.

The south-east corner of the plot appeared to suffer from waterlogging, the ground being affected by a high water table (next to stream) and natural springs (Fig 6). Mature trees lined the boundaries and were also present in the garden (Fig 7).

The underlying geology consists of granite of the Carnmenellis Intrusion belonging to the Carboniferous and Permian Periods (BGS sheet 352).

There were no known sites within the project area. Ordnance survey maps of 1880 and 1908 depict this plot (Figs 3 and 4) as being an open field with the property boundaries not changing. More recently the plot had been occupied by a bungalow (demolished prior to the archaeological fieldwork commencing) constructed in the 1950s and related gardens.

The settlement at Constantine is, however, of medieval origin. It was first recorded in AD 1086 when it is spelt *Sanctus Constantinus*. The name is that of a saint, who was also potentially a sixth century king of Devon and Cornwall, referred to by Gildas as the 'tyrannical cub of the filthy lioness of Dumnonia' (Gover 1948, 72).

The development was also situated within an area which contains a number of archaeological sites, which include:

- An Iron Age/Romano-British enclosed settlement or 'round' to the west of the development area (MCO49900).
- A prehistoric flint axe was found in the vicinity of the development area, although its precise find-spot is unknown.

It was therefore possible that below-ground remains associated with buried archaeological sites might extend into the project area.

### **3 Aims and objectives**

The aims of the watching brief were to:

- Ensure that the site works are carried out in such a way as to allow recording as set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation.
- Record archaeological features and deposits affected by the scheme.
- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered.
- Establish the nature of the activity on the site.
- Provide further information on the archaeology of the area from any archaeological remains encountered.
- Recover and record artefacts uncovered by the works.
- Deposit the archive (including any finds) with the relevant museum and disseminate the results of discoveries as a concise archive report and, if merited, wider publication.

#### **3.1 Key objectives were:**

- To locate and identify and record prehistoric, medieval settlement activity and/or post-medieval industrial activity in the area of the development.
- To report on the findings of the excavations.
- To complete an entry within the OASIS/ADS-Online database.

### **4 Working methods**

The site soil strip was carried out under archaeological supervision using a machine fitted with a toothless bucket. The soil was stripped cleanly (where possible, ground conditions allowing) to a level at which archaeological features or layers were expected to be revealed, in this case the top of the natural geology (Fig 5). The area was then inspected by the archaeologist. Some problems were encountered in the south east part of the site as waterlogging of the ground made the churning and smearing of the ground inevitable. In addition, the area where the original bungalow had stood was heavily disturbed due to the actions of machines demolishing the existing building prior to the commencement of the archaeological watching brief. This disturbance is likely to have removed any potential archaeological deposits which had been present on this part of the site.

Investigated features and the locations of the recorded soil profiles were plotted onto a site plan at a scale of 1:200. They were measured in from fixed points on the ground, which are shown on the OS survey mapping, together with compass bearings. Sample sections (noting the nature of soil depths, layers present, etc) were also recorded across the site (Fig 6).

## 5 Results

No archaeological features were encountered except for a modern rubbish pit containing plastic sheeting, and modern ceramics (mostly flowerpot). The finds from this pit were not retained. In addition several tree boles were uncovered. This was unsurprising as an aerial view taken in 2005 of the site shows some mature tree plantings within the garden (Fig 7).

Eighteen soil profiles were recorded across the site five of which are presented here to illustrate the nature of the ground encountered (Fig 6). Details of the remaining sections can be found in the project archive.

### Section 1

Depth	Thickness	Description	Interpretation	Context
0m – 0.05m	0.05m	Grass, roots and topsoil.	Topsoil	(1)
0.05m – 0.10m	0.05m	Black-brown clay loam	Plough soil	(2)
0.10m – 0.15m	0.05m	Grey-brown clay.	Subsoil	(3)
0.15m – 0.16m	0.01m	Orange-brown clay.	Weathered natural	(4)
At base of trench.	-	Yellow, grey-brown sugar textured clay with larger granite blocks. Decayed rab, very rotten granite bedrock.	Degraded natural bedrock.	(5)

### Section 2

Depth	Thickness	Description	Interpretation	Context
0m – 0.05m	0.05m	Grass, roots and topsoil.	Topsoil	(1)
0.05m – 0.10m	0.05m	Black-brown clay loam.	Plough soil	(2)
0.10m – 0.2m	0.10m	Grey-brown clay.	Subsoil	(3)
0.2m – 0.22m	0.02m	Orange-brown clay.	Weathered natural	(4)
At base of trench.	-	Yellow, grey-brown 'sugar textured' clay with larger granite blocks. Decayed rab, very rotten granite bedrock.	Degraded natural bedrock.	(5)

### Section 3

Depth	Thickness	Description	Interpretation	Context
0m – 0.05m	0.05m	Grass, roots and topsoil.	Topsoil	(1)
0.05m – 0.15m	0.10m	Black-brown clay loam.	Plough soil	(2)
0.15m – 0.35m	0.20m	Grey-brown clay.	Subsoil	(3)
0.35m – 0.4m	0.05m	Orange-brown clay.	Weathered natural	(4)
At base of trench.	-	Yellow, grey-brown 'sugar textured' clay with larger granite blocks. Decayed rab, very rotten granite bedrock.	Degraded natural bedrock.	(5)

**Section 9**

Depth	Thickness	Description	Interpretation	Context
0m – 0.05m	0.05m	Grass, roots and topsoil	Topsoil	(1)
0.05m – 0.2m	0.15m	Black-brown clay loam.	Plough soil	(2)
0.2m – 0.3m	0.10m	Grey-brown clay.	Subsoil	(3)
0.3m – 0.31m	0.01m	Orange-brown clay	Weathered natural	(4)
At base of trench.	-	Yellow, grey-brown 'sugar textured' clay with larger granite blocks. Decayed rab, very rotten granite bedrock.	Degraded natural bedrock.	(5)

**Section 13**

Depth	Thickness	Description	Interpretation	Context
0m – 0.05m	0.05m	Grass, roots and topsoil	Topsoil	(1)
0.05m – 0.2m	0.15m	Black-brown clay loam	Plough soil	(2)
0.2m – 0.3m	0.10m	Grey-brown clay.	Subsoil	(3)
0.3m – 0.35m	0.05m	Orange, black-brown clay.	Manganese rich layer. Iron panning?	(6)
0.35m – 0.37m	0.02m	White-yellow, orange-brown clay.	Weathered natural	(4)
At base of trench.	-	Yellow, grey-brown 'sugar textured' clay with larger granite blocks. Decayed rab, very rotten granite bedrock.	Degraded natural bedrock.	(5)

It can be seen from the recorded sections that the soil profile did not vary greatly across the development area, although the greatest depth of soil was found at the top of slope within Sections 3 and 13. This is not what was expected; indeed the reverse should be true with gravity carrying material down slope to gather in the valley bottom. This may suggest that there has possibly been a fair amount of landscaping within the plot of land probably associated with the building of Nans Avallon and its attendant gardens in the 1950s.

**6 Discussion**

The project has demonstrated that there was no surviving evidence of activity on site prior to the construction of Nans Avallon in the 1950s. The bedrock (consisting of rotten granitic rab) proved to be close to the surface. No archaeology, apart from the modern features described above, was recorded, and no artefacts were recovered.

The only features encountered were tree boles, and a modern rubbish pit associated development of the house and garden. The relatively shallow nature of topsoil on the valley bottom may also be the result of landscaping. Indeed, the construction of the house in the 1950s along with tree planting and landscaping may have removed any surviving traces of earlier activity on the site.

The current development work therefore made no impact on any buried archaeological remains.



## 7 References

Gover, JEB, 1948. *Place-Names of Cornwall* (manuscript at RCM, Truro)

## 8 Project archive

The CAU project number is **146478**

The project's documentary, digital, photographic and drawn archive is maintained by Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council, Fal Building, County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro, TR1 3AY. The contents of this archive are as listed below:

1. Projects file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration (**146478**).
2. Field plans and copies of historic maps stored in an A2-size plastic envelope (GRE 835/1-2).
3. Digital photographs stored in the directory: R:\Historic Environment (Images)\SITES.A-D\Constantine Nans Avallon WB. HEXQPR146478
4. English Heritage/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2- 210070
5. This report text is held in digital form as: G:\TWE\Waste & Env\Strat Waste & Land\Historic Environment\Projects\Sites\Sites C\Constantine Nans Avallon WB 2015. HEXQPR 146478\2015\Report

No artefacts were recovered in the course of this project.

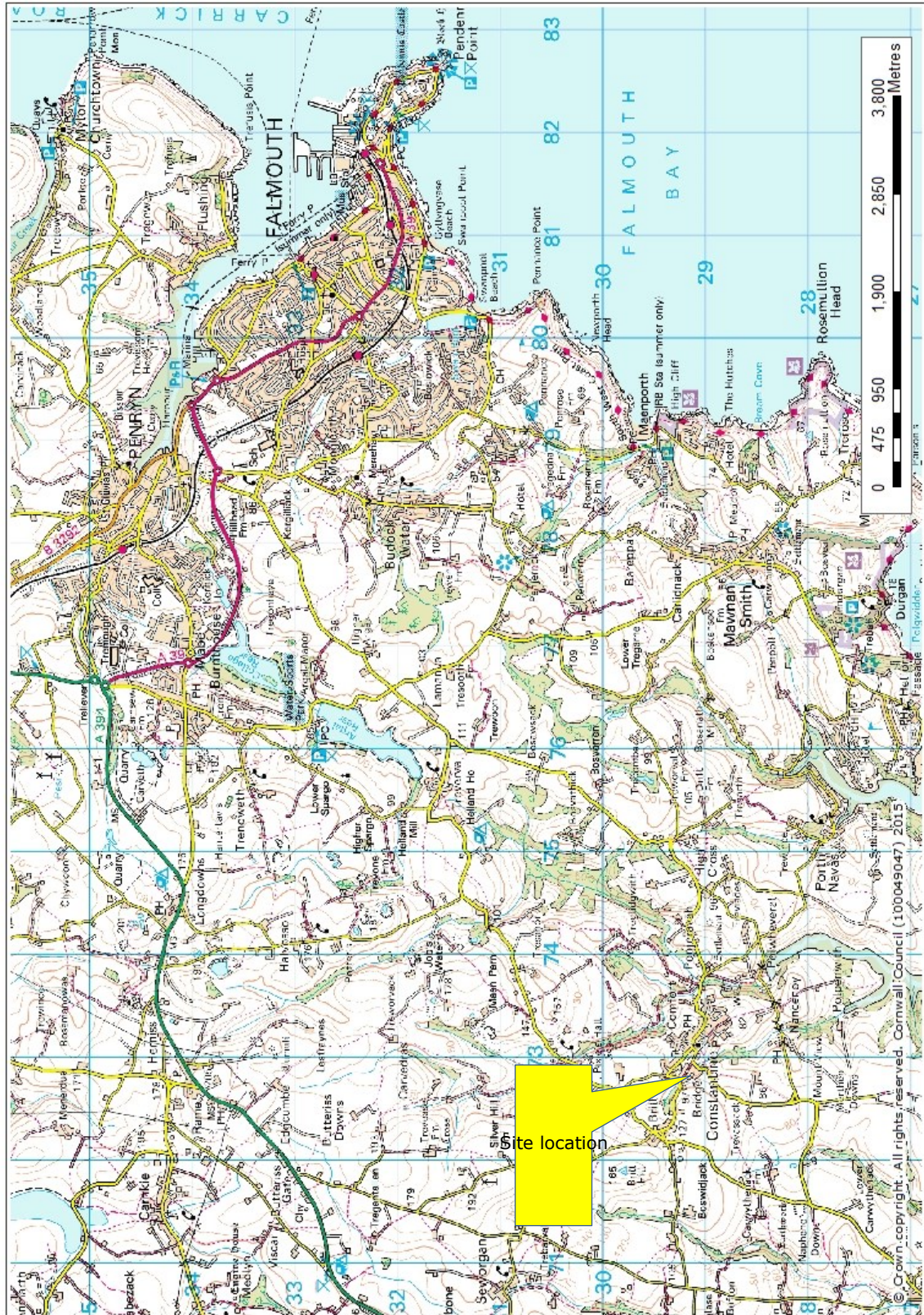


Figure 1. Site location.

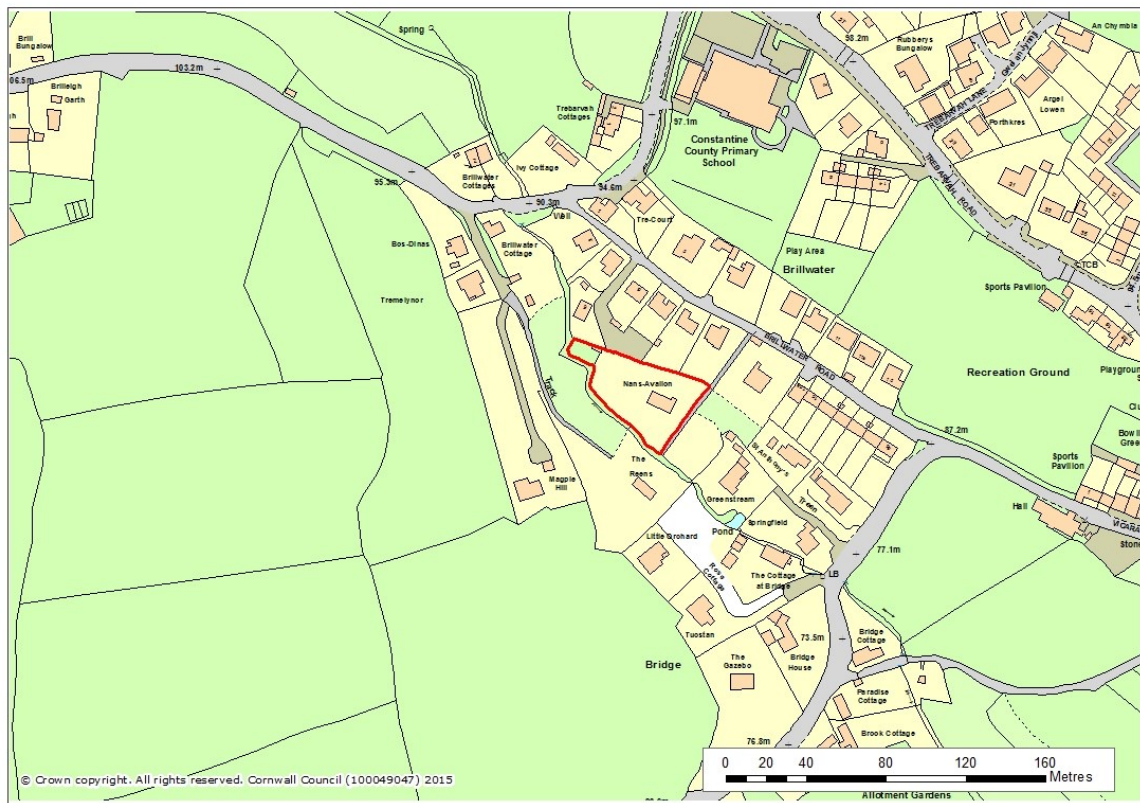


Figure 2. Detailed site location (highlighted in red).

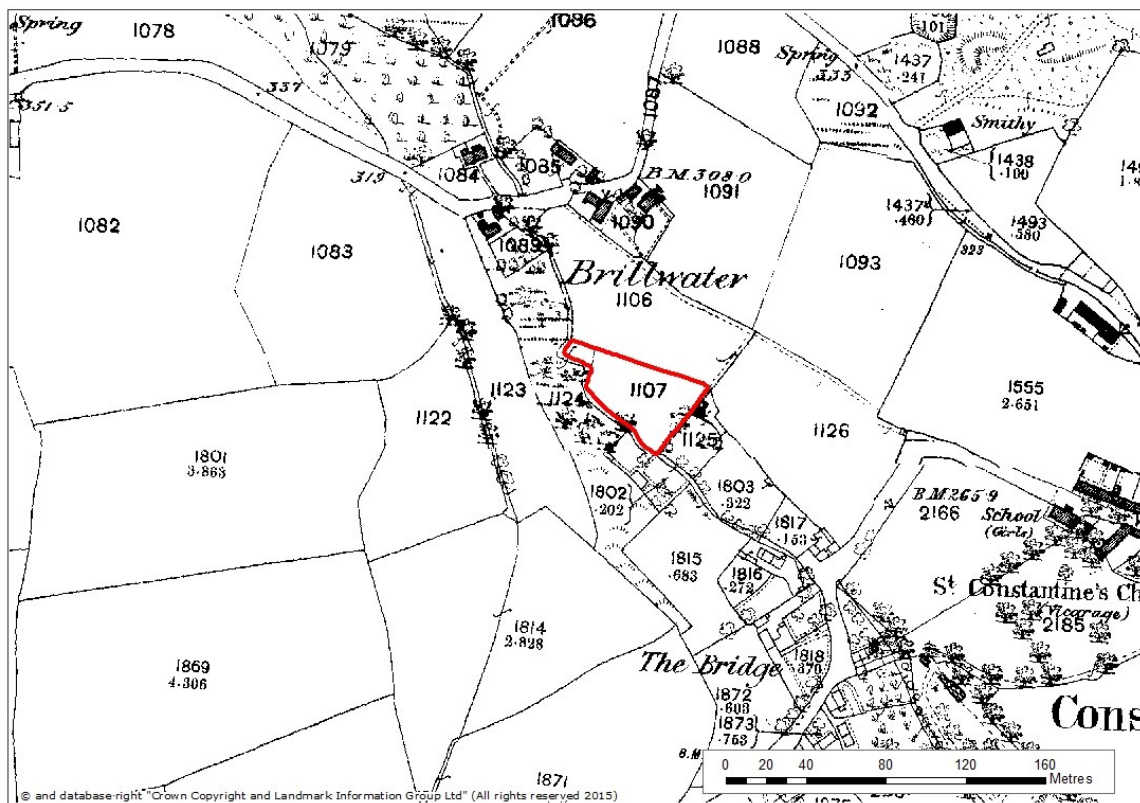


Figure 3. 1880 OS map (site highlighted in red).

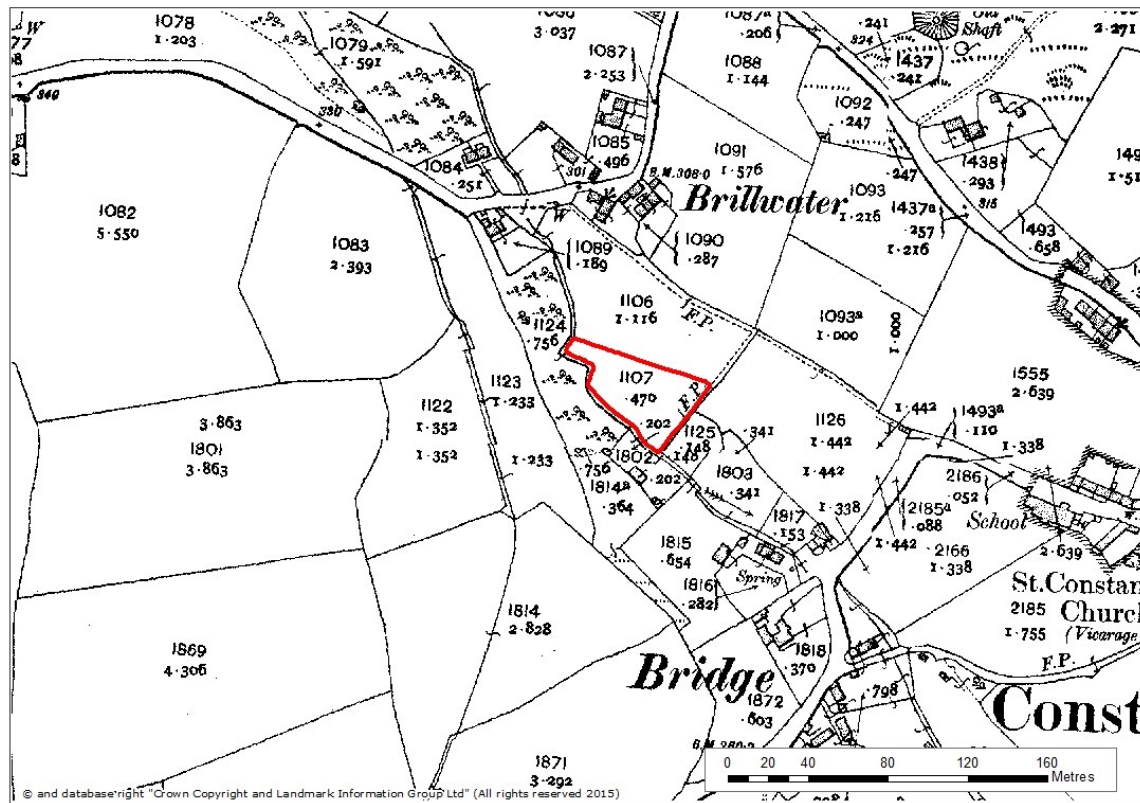


Figure 4. 1908 OS map (site highlighted in red).



Figure 5. General view across sections 1 and 2 showing the nature of the ground encountered. Tree boles lie in front of ranging rod.

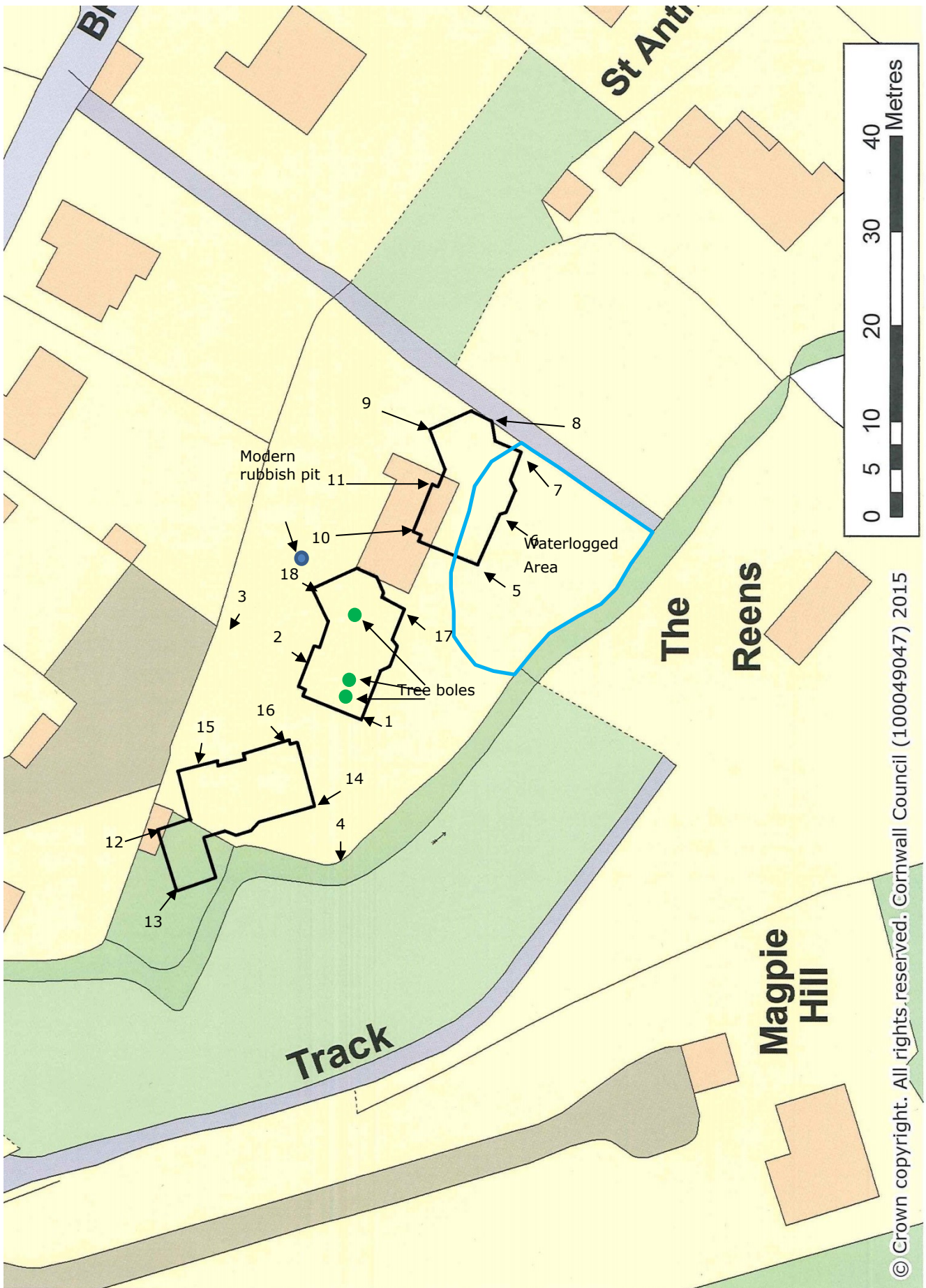


Figure 6. Site plan showing outlines of proposed new houses (black outline), features encountered, and location of recorded soil profiles.



*Figure 7. Aerial view of site taken in 2005 showing numerous trees within garden and on property boundaries.*

# 7 Appendix 1. Written Scheme of investigation for Archaeological Mitigation at Nans Avallon, Constantine

## 1. Introduction

### • 1.1 Background

Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU), Cornwall Council have been requested by Mr Mark Stott (Barlow Stott Architects) to provide a project design and estimate for a programme of archaeological recording ahead of the construction of three residential dwellings at Nans Avallon, Constantine. The development will cover an area of approximately 0.2 HA.

The site lies within the historic settlement of Constantine and is in an area designated as an Area of Great Landscape value.

The development is subject to a planning condition (PA11/02976). Condition 5 states:

*No development shall take place within the site until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title has secured and implemented a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation to be submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This agreed written scheme of investigation shall be implemented in full.*

Phil Copleston (Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment), Cornwall Council) has commented on the requirements for archaeological recording (email dated 19/01/15) and his requirements for archaeological recording have guided this project design and estimate.

### • 1.2 Historical background

The settlement at Constantine is of medieval origin. It was first recorded in AD 1086 when it is spelt *Sanctus Constantinus*. The name contains a Cornish saint's name. The development is situated on the western side of the village not far from an enclosed prehistoric settlement, which lies in farmland to the west. It is possible that associated below-ground remains extend into the project area

A number of sites have been identified in the vicinity of the development from the Historic Buildings Sites and Monuments Record (HBSMR). They include:

- An Iron Age/Romano-British enclosed settlement or 'round' lies to the west of the development area (MCO49900).
- A prehistoric flint axe was found in the vicinity of the development area, although its precise find-spot is unknown.

#### *Potential sites*

There is potential for buried archaeological sites to survive within the project area and there is the scope for the survival of previously unrecorded archaeological remains and artefacts of all periods.

## 2. Aims and objectives

- To ensure that the site works are carried out in such a way as to allow recording as set out in this Written Scheme of Investigation.
- To record archaeological features and deposits affected by the scheme.
- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered.

- To establish the nature of the activity on the site.
- To provide further information on the archaeology of the area from any archaeological remains encountered.
- To recover and record artefacts uncovered by the works.
- To deposit the archive (including any finds) with the relevant museum and disseminate the results of discoveries as a concise archive report and, if merited, wider publication.
- **2.1 Key objectives are:**
- To locate and identify and record prehistoric, medieval settlement activity and/or post-medieval industrial activity in the area of the development.

### 3. Methodology

The archaeological programme will follow five stages: desk-based assessment; fieldwork; archiving; assessment; analysis; final publication.

- **3.1 Fieldwork**

- **3.1.1 Archaeological Recording**

- The soil strip should be carried out under archaeological supervision using a machine fitted with a toothless bucket. The soil will be stripped cleanly to a level at which archaeological features or layers can be expected to be revealed (ie, top of the "natural"). Machines will not run over the stripped area until the archaeological works are complete. The area will then be inspected by an archaeologist and any archaeological features or layers exposed in the stripped area will be carefully excavated by hand and archaeologically recorded by written description, plan and section and photographic record as appropriate by a CAU archaeologist.

During the archaeological recording the archaeologist will:

- Identify and record any archaeological features that are revealed in the stripped area; the level of recording will be appropriate to the character/importance of the archaeological remains.

If complex and/or significant archaeological deposits are encountered then the archaeological requirements should be reviewed by the client, the Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment) and CAU. **In the event that remains cannot be preserved *in situ* then full-scale excavation may be required.** A contingency should be allowed to record any significant archaeological remains which are uncovered during the stripping. The significance of the remains should be agreed between the client, the Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment) and CAU.

Where necessary the detailed archaeological recording may include:

- Excavation of archaeological features exposed in the stripped area and plotting them onto a base map.
- Production of plans and section drawings of the excavated features and recording of features using a continuous numbering system.
- Retrieval of artefacts.

#### *Recording - general*

- Site drawings (plans, sections, locations of finds) will be made by pencil (4H) on drafting film; all plans will be linked to the Ordnance Survey Landline (electronic) map; all drawings will include standard information: site details, personnel, date, scale, north-point.
- All features and finds will be accurately located at an appropriate scale. Sections will normally be drawn at 1:10 and plans at 1:20.



- All archaeological contexts will be described to a standard format linked to a continuous numbering sequence.
- Photography: scaled monochrome photography will be used as the main record medium, with colour digital images used more selectively and for illustrative purposes. This will include both general and site specific photographs. Photographs should have a scale and detailed ones should include a north arrow.
- Drawings and photographs will be recorded in a register giving details of feature number and location.
- Sealed/undisturbed archaeological contexts in the form of buried soils, layers or deposits within significant archaeological features (ditches and pits, etc) will be sampled for environmental evidence and dating material. In the event that significant organic remains are encountered, advice may be needed from Vanessa Straker (Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science).
- If human remains are discovered on the site the Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment) and the Ministry of Justice will be informed. All recording will conform to best practice and legal requirements.
- If human remains are uncovered, which require excavation, they will be will be excavated with due reverence. The site will be adequately screened from public view. Once excavated, human remains must not be exposed to public view.
- If human remains are not to be removed their physical security will be ensured, by back filling as soon as possible after recording.

- **3.2 Treatment of finds**

The archaeological fieldwork may produce artefactual material.

- All finds in significant stratified contexts predating 1800 AD (eg, settlement features) should be collected by context and described. Post medieval or modern finds may be disposed of at the cataloguing stage. This process will be reviewed ahead of its implementation.
- All finds will be collected in sealable plastic bags which will be labelled immediately with the context number or other identifier.

- **3.3 Archiving**

Following review with the CAU Project Manager the results from the fieldwork will be collated as an archive. This will involve washing and cataloguing of finds, the indexing and cross-referencing of photographs, drawings and context records.

All finds, etc will be stored in a proper manner (being clearly labelled and marked and stored according to CAU guidelines).

- All records (context sheets, photographs, etc) will be ordered, catalogued and stored in an appropriate manner (according to CAU guidelines).
- The site archive and finds will initially be stored at CAU premises and transferred to the Royal Cornwall Museum and the RCM conditions for archives will be followed. The RCM will be notified of the commencement of the project and included in discussions for sampling and disposal as appropriate.
- In the event that there are no finds or they are retained by the owner documentary archive in due course shall be deposited with the Cornwall Record Office, but in the medium term will be stored at ReStore. All digital records will be filed on the Cornwall Council network.

### • **3.4 Archive report**

The results from the fieldwork will be presented in a concise report. Copies of the report will be distributed to the Client, the Historic Environment Record and the local and main archaeological record libraries. A PDF copy of the report will be produced.

This will involve:

- producing a descriptive text;
- producing maps and line drawings;
- selecting photographs;
- report design;
- report editing;
- dissemination of the finished report;
- deposition of archive and finds in the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro.

The report will have the following contents:

- Summary - Concise non-technical summary.
- Introduction - Background, objectives, aims and methods.
- Results - Factual description of the results of the various aspects of the project, with separate sections as necessary for discussion/interpretation and potential for further analysis.
- Discussion - Discussion of the interpretation of the results, highlighting information gained on a chronological or thematic basis  
Recommendations for further analysis and publication.
- Archive - A brief summary and index to the project archive.
- Appendix - A copy of the project brief.  
- A copy of the WSI
- Illustrations - General location plan.  
- Detailed location plans to link fieldwork results to OS map.  
- Selected plans and section drawings (as appropriate).  
- Finds drawings (if appropriate).  
- Photographs (if appropriate).

An English Heritage/ADS online access to the index of archaeological investigations (OASIS) record will be made.

### • **3.5 Assessment/analysis**

The structural and stratigraphic data and artefactual material will be assessed to establish whether further analyses and reporting is appropriate. The outline of final report, and the work required to produce it will be determined in an updated project design.

In the event of significant remains being recovered (eg, prehistoric or medieval artefacts) it may be appropriate to:

- Liaise with specialists (eg, artefacts) to arrange for assessment of the potential for further analysis and reporting.
- Arrange for specialist analyses, where appropriate.

- Consult with the Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment) over the requirements for assessment, analysis and reporting.

- **3.6 Analyses and final publication**

In the event of significant remains being recorded the scope and final form of the report will be reviewed; for example in addition to an archive report the results should be published in an academic journal (eg, *Cornish Archaeology*).

#### **4. Monitoring**

- This written scheme of investigation will need to be approved by the Planning authority.
- The recording exercise will be monitored. The Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment) should be informed 1 week in advance of the intention to start the recording.
- CAU will liaise with the Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment) to advise on the programme and progress of work, and agree site meetings as required.
- A summary of the results will be presented to the Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment) within 1 month of the completion of the fieldwork.
- In the event that significant remains are encountered an updated project design will be agreed with the Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment).

#### **5. Project Staff**

An experienced archaeologist employed by CAU will carry out the archaeological fieldwork.

The report will be compiled by experienced archaeologist(s) employed by CAU.

Relevant experienced and qualified specialists will be employed to undertake appropriate tasks during the assessment and analysis stages of the project.

The project will be managed by a manager who is a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, who will:

- Take responsibility for the overall direction of the project.
- Discuss and agree the objectives and programme of each stage of the project with project staff, including arrangements for Health and Safety.
- Monitor progress and results for each stage.
- Edit the project report.

#### **6. Timetable**

The archiving and archive report will be completed within 12 months of the ending of the excavations. The timetable for further stages of assessment, analyses and publication will be agreed with the Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment) in the light of the results of the excavations.

#### **7. Health and safety during the fieldwork**

- **7.1 Health and safety statement**

- Cornwall Archaeological Unit is within the Economy, Enterprise and Environment Directorate of Cornwall Council. CAU team follows Cornwall Council's *Statement of Safety Policy*.

**Prior to carrying out any fieldwork CAU will carry out a risk assessment**

## **8. Insurance**

As part of Cornwall Council, CAU is covered by Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance.

## **9. Standards**

CAU follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Code of Conduct and is a Registered Archaeological Organization.

## **10. Copyright**

Copyright of all material gathered as a result of the project will be reserved to the Cornwall Archaeological Unit. Existing copyrights of external sources will be acknowledged where required.

This project design and estimate is the copyright of Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council.

Use of the material will be granted to the client.

## **11. Freedom of Information**

All information gathered during the implementation of the project will be subject to the rules and regulations of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

### **• Notes**

- It is assumed that the client will supply the mechanical excavator. The cost is not included in the attached estimate.
- The client will be responsible for the Health and Safety arrangements onsite (including fencing, etc), and it is assumed that welfare facilities will be made available.
- In the event that human remains are uncovered the client will ensure that appropriate screening is put in place.
- The post excavation programme (assessment, analysis and reporting) will need to be reviewed in the light of the fieldwork.

Dr Andy Jones 21/01/15

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