



Lower Hugus, Kenwyn, Cornwall Archaeological Watching Brief



Cornwall Archaeological Unit

Report No

2015R043

Report Name

Lower Hugus, Kenwyn, Cornwall.
Archaeological Watching Brief

Report Author

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Event Type

Watching Brief

Client Organisation

Kier Living

Client Contact

Tim Lewis

Monuments (MonUID)

None

Fieldwork dates (From)

27/05/2015

(To)

29/05/2015

(Created By)

Hayley Goacher

(Create Date)

10/06/2015

Location (postal address; or general location and parish)

Lower Hugus, Kenwyn

(Town – for urban sites)

(Postcode)

TR4 9NY

(Easting) X co-ord

SW

(Northing) Y co-ord

77734

44544



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List of Figures

- Fig 1 The location of the Lower Hugus development.
- Fig 2 The location of the development site on the south-western edge of Threemilestone.
- Fig 3 An extract from the OS First Edition One Inch Map c1803 showing adjacent post-medieval settlements and surviving downland at the approximate location of the site.
- Fig 4 Long Field at Lower Hugus as depicted on the 1840 Tithe map for Kenwyn.
- Fig 5 The location of pit [3] within the development area.
- Fig 6 The completed topsoil strip of the development area at Lower Hugus.
- Fig 7 A plan view of the shallow sub-oval pit [3] in the northwest quadrant of the development area.
- Fig 8 The section through the brown-grey, soft silty-clay deposit (4) found within pit [3]. Note the shallow, concave shape of the cut of the pit.

1 Project background

Cornwall Archaeological Unit was commissioned by Kier Living to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for a development at Lower Hugus, Kenwyn (Figs 1 and 2). A new small housing development at this location was granted planning permission (ref: PA14/07266) subject to a number of conditions, including Condition 3:

No development shall take place until the applicant/developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological recording based on a written scheme of investigation which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that provision is made to record finds of archaeological interest in accordance with the aims and intentions of saved Policy 4T of the Carrick District Wide Local Plan 1998 and paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

Prior to the planning application, an archaeological assessment had been prepared for the client for this site in 2014 by Cornwall Archaeological Unit (Goacher 2014) to ascertain the likely archaeological implications of the development.

The prehistoric evidence from the landscape surrounding the site at Lower Hugus is substantial and varied. The earliest recorded evidence seems to date from the Early Bronze Age and includes at least five known or suggested sites of barrows. There is substantial evidence for the occupation of this area during the Iron Age and Romano-British periods: rounds (enclosed farmsteads of the period) being sited at Polstain, Penventinnie and Little Gloweth. Bosvisack hillfort is nearby to the north, whilst at Mount Pleasant to the northeast is the site of another round and an open settlement of Iron Age roundhouses.

Much of the adjacent land was open downland during the medieval period, though some elements of medieval and post-medieval field systems have been recorded on the fringes of this area (Fig 3). Streamworks are likely to have been developed in the nearby valley bottoms during the medieval period to recover alluvial tin.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the substantial development of the mining economy of the area between Truro and Redruth led to much of the area being enclosed for smallholdings rented by miners, this process clearly affecting the parcellation and use of land on the fringes of what is now Threemilestone (Fig 4). The land proposed for development at Lower Hugus formed part of one of these smallholdings carved out of the former downland.

No historic assets were identified as being located within the site during the 2014 assessment but its historically rural location and the sites recorded in the surrounding area meant that the survival of subsurface archaeology was a possibility.

The development site covers an area of 0.62 Ha of a field on the south-western periphery of Threemilestone (Figs 1 and 2). It is located at approximately 85m OD at OS grid reference SW 77734 44544, 4.8km west of Truro and between Threemilestone and the hamlet of Hugus in the civil parish of Kenwyn. Topographically the site is situated to the southeast of the crest of a small hill on a south facing slope and was rough grassland prior to the development.

2 Aims and objectives

The overall aim of the project was to provide further information on the archaeology of the landscape to the south of Threemilestone from any archaeological remains encountered.

The site specific aims are to:

- Establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains.
- 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 identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of the site.

The project objective was to produce a report setting out the results of the archaeological watching brief, placing them in their historical and landscape context and disseminating the results appropriately.

3 Working methods

All recording work was undertaken according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording. Staff followed the CIfA Code of Conduct and Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Archaeology. The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists is the professional body for archaeologists working in the UK.

Watching Brief

The groundworks consisted of topsoil stripping using a machine fitted with a toothless bucket, this being carried out under archaeological supervision. Recording of the deposits uncovered was by means of drawings and digital photography, contexts being described using a continuous numbering sequence.

Archive

On completion of the fieldwork, the paper records were collated and digitised where necessary and all photographs were archived. An archive report outlining the results for the project was also produced (this report).

4 Results

Topsoil stripping was undertaken across the entire development area defined by the existing surrounding Cornish hedge field boundaries (Fig 6). These were stone-faced earth banks approximately 1m high with substantial and mature mixed vegetation extending upwards a further 2-5m.

The topsoil (1) was a grey-brown friable clayey-silt with occasional slate-shale and quartz fragments. It was approximately 0.2-0.3m deep across the site. The natural subsoil (2) below was a brown-orange compact clayey-silt with frequent and irregular slate-shale fragments and occasionally larger (up to 0.2m diameter) quartz fragments.

A single pit [3] was identified in the north-western quadrant of the development area (Figs 5, 7 and 8). This was located 16m to the north-east of the south-western boundary and 36m south-east of the north-western boundary (Fig 5). The cut of the pit [3] was sub-oval in plan, being 1.08m along its long axis and having a smooth concave base at a depth of 0.16m and very gently sloping sides. The only deposit (4) within the pit was a brown-grey soft silty-clay with very occasional fine slate-shale gravel inclusions and a lens of orange-brown clay 0.03m in depth near its centre (Figs 7 and 8).

No artefacts were recovered from the stripped area or from the deposit (4), the fill of pit [3].

5 Discussion

The sub-oval shape and shallow concave cut of pit [3] is suggestive of a pit of an earlier prehistoric to medieval date. However, as pit [3] was the only archaeological feature found on the site and was not accompanied by any artefacts, few if any conclusions can be drawn about its function or origin. It is possible that pit [3] had a non-archaeological origin such as a tree bole, or it may have been associated with as yet unrecorded archaeological features outside the boundaries of this development site.

Although the known archaeology of this area, particularly the prehistoric sites to the north and east, suggested that this site had archaeological potential, no diagnostic or

substantial features were identified. This is likely to be due to multiple factors including the long agricultural use of the plot that may have disturbed or removed features and the relatively steep slope downhill from the hill-crest that would have made the site less suitable for habitation activities than other more level favourable areas. The slope of the development area would also have promoted soil erosion and loss of artefactual material during cultivation. The area investigated was also small-scale.

6 References

Primary Sources

Ordnance Survey, 1809, 1 inch mapping First Edition (licensed digital copy at HE)

Ordnance Survey, 2007. Mastermap Digital Mapping

Tithe Map c1840 and Apportionment, c1840. Parish of Kenwyn (digital copy available from CRO)

Publications

Goacher, H. 2014, *Lower Hugus, Kenwyn, Cornwall. Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Report No. 2014R058

7 Project archive

The CAU project number is **146487**

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.

English Heritage/ADS OASIS online reference: [cornwall2-213668](#)



Fig 1 The location of the Lower Hugus development.

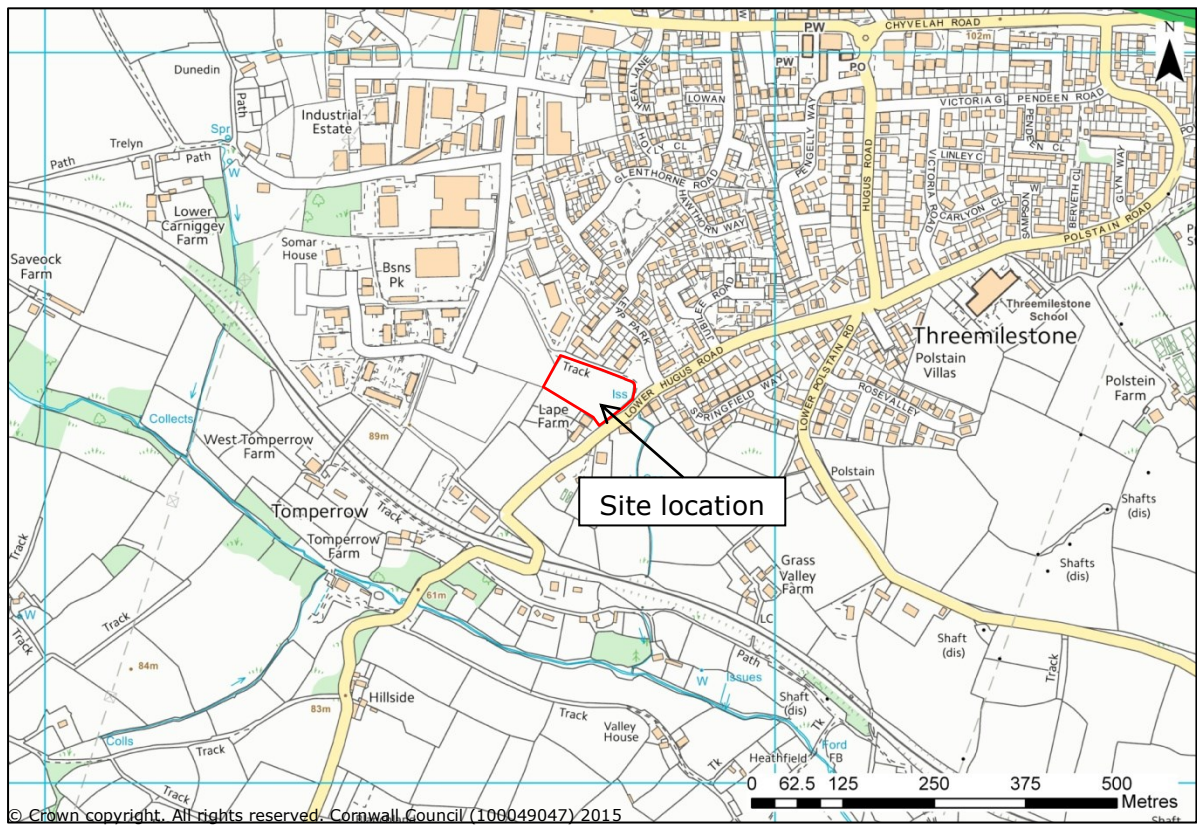


Fig 2 The location of the development site on the south-western edge of Threemilestone.



Fig 3 An extract from the OS First Edition One Inch Map c1803 showing adjacent post-medieval settlements and surviving downland at the approximate location of the site.

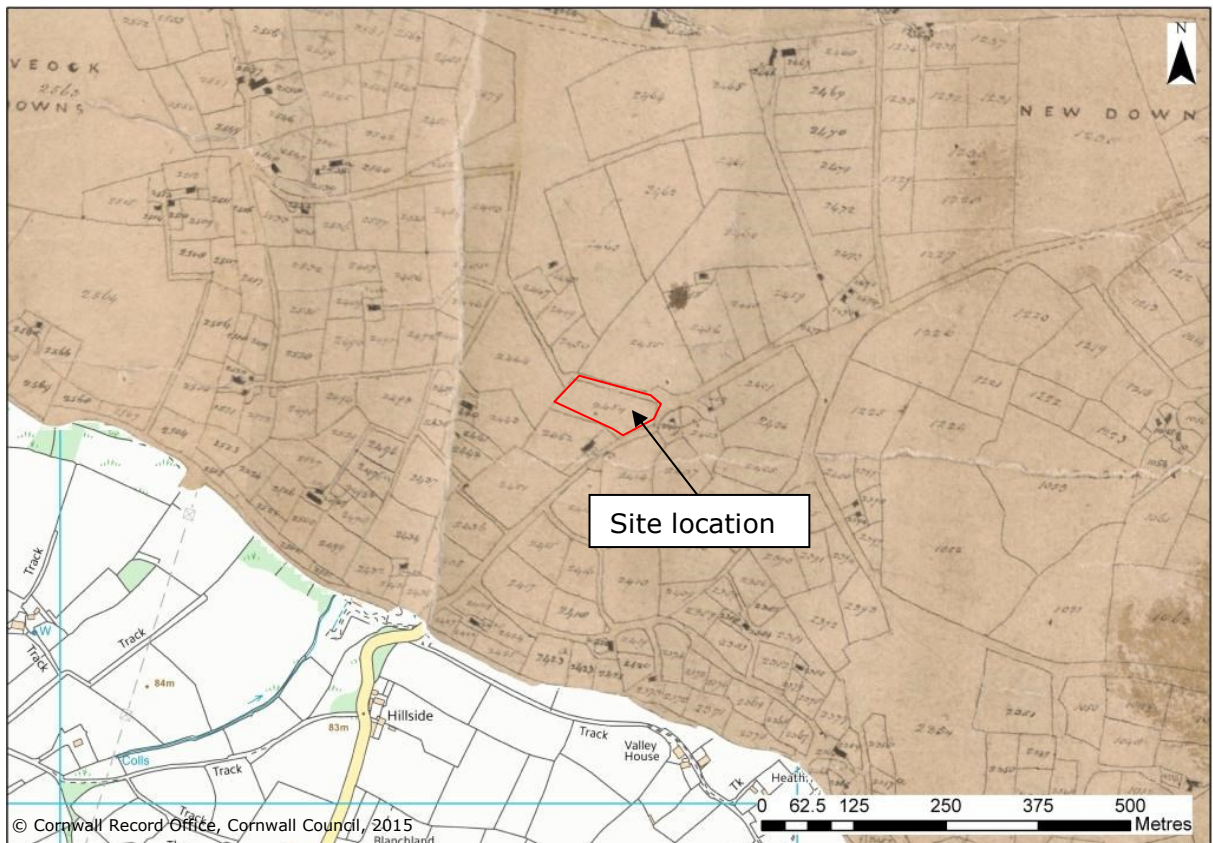


Fig 4 Long Field at Lower Hugus as depicted on the 1840 Tithe map for Kenwyn.

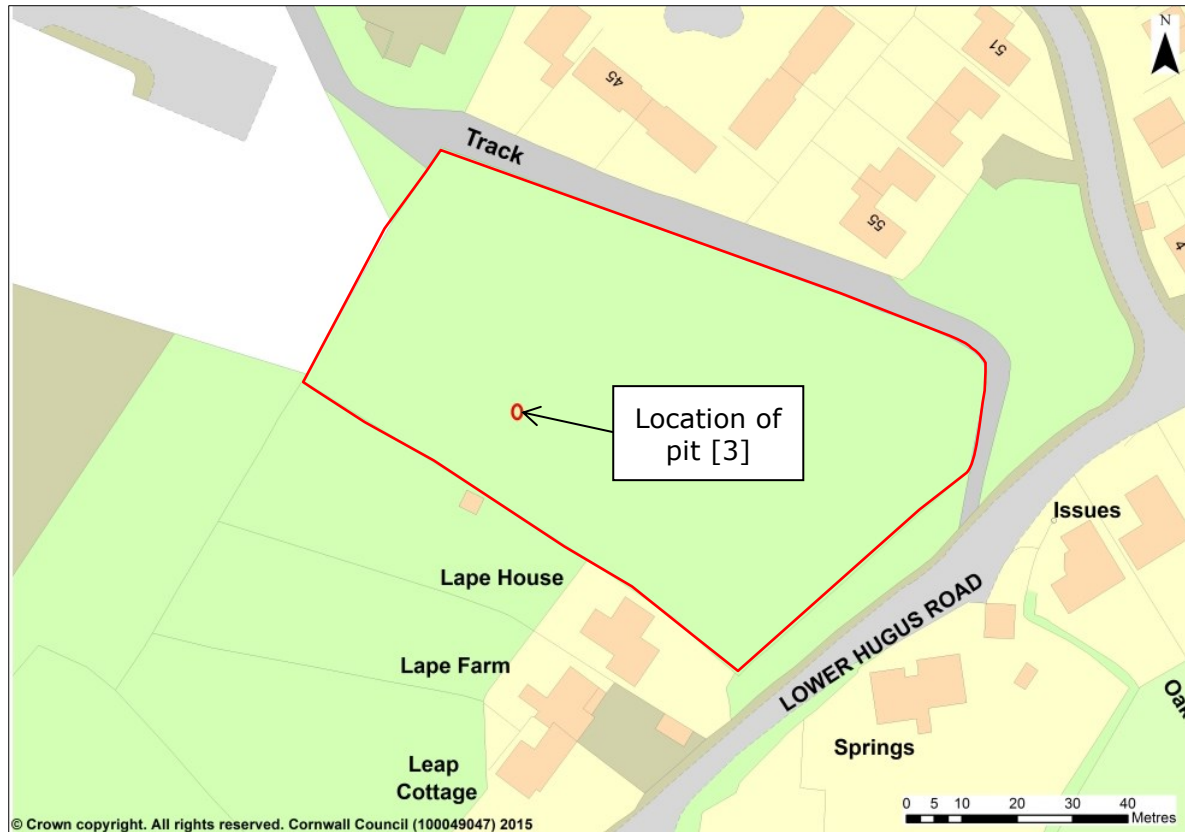


Fig 5 The location of pit [3] within the development area.



Fig 6 The completed topsoil strip of the development area at Lower Hugus.



Fig 7 A plan view of the shallow sub-oval pit [3] in the northwest quadrant of the development area. One metre scale.



Fig 8 The section through the brown-grey, soft silty-clay deposit (4) found within pit [3]. Note the shallow, concave shape of the cut of the pit.