



St Clare, Penzance, Cornwall – proposed Health Centre Heritage Impact Assessment

Cornwall Archaeological Unit

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St Clare, Penzance, Cornwall

Heritage Impact Assessment

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Acknowledgements

This study was commissioned by Charlie James of Bilfinger GVA and carried out by Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council.

The Project Manager was Jo Sturgess.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of Cornwall Archaeological Unit and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

Freedom of Information Act

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Cover illustration

Looking west across the assessment area to the south western corner of the Quadrangle Building with the rear of York House to the far right.

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Abbreviations

CAU	Cornwall Archaeological Unit
CRO	Cornwall Record Office
HER	Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record
HIA	Heritage Impact Assessment
OS	Ordnance Survey

1 Introduction

1.1 Project background

This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) was commissioned by Bilfinger GVA property advisors in advance of the proposed development of a new health centre at St Clare, Penzance (centred SW 46694 30741).

The assessment area covers 0.8 ha of land and is located within Cornwall Council's 'St Clare's Offices' land holding which includes The Council's 'One Stop Shop' and local offices (Fig 1). The broader holding includes York House, a Grade II Listed Building (Designation ID 1210312). This was formerly the site of West Cornwall School for Girls but from 1974 to 2009, the offices of Penwith District Council.

In December 2015, in advance of potential redevelopment, an archaeological assessment was undertaken for Cornwall Council's St Clare's holding (offices and nursery). This outlined the site's historic development and identified surviving and potentially buried heritage assets and structures (Sturgess 2015).

The heritage assets and structures identified by Sturgess (2015) are used within this report with those in bold located within this assessment area. Full descriptions of each of the sites which may be affected by the proposed development within the assessment area can be found in the site inventory (Section 10 at the rear of this report).

The new health centre is proposed to be built in the lawn area to the south east of the Quadrangle Building (site **20**) extending to the footprint of the swimming pool building (site **48**). It will be two storeys in height and L-shaped. Car parks will be built to the north and west of the new building, their location including the footprint of the Quadrangle Building (site **20**). The Quadrangle Building adjoins and therefore is part of the Grade II listed York House, and is due for demolition as part of the proposed scheme. The proposal also includes the retention of the present plantation (Fig 1).

1.2 Aims and methods

This HIA focusses on the proposed new health centre site and builds on the findings of the 2015 archaeological assessment.

The aim of the work is to identify and assess the impact of the proposed developed and, where possible, to suggest measures to mitigate any negative effects.

A rapid site visit was undertaken on Wednesday 30th March 2016, and a visual record was made using digital SLR photography.

2 Designations

(Adapted from Sturgess 2015)

York House and its curtilage is a Grade II Listed Building. The Listed Building description is as follows:

Early C19. Coursed granite. Moulded cornice and embattled parapet. 2 storeys. 2 2-storey splayed bay windows of 3 sashes, ground floor with intersecting glazing bars. Between is open granite porch with Tuscan columns and entablature with battlemented parapet, semi-circular fanlight with tracery. String course. Extensive C20 additions at rear.

It should be noted that all buildings adjoining the original structure are deemed part of the Listed Building. This, therefore, includes the Quadrangle Building (site **20**) within the assessment area (see Fig 1). However, the modern blocks associated with West Cornwall School for Girls and Penwith District Council, post-dating the mid-20th century, are not as significant; these include building **48**, the swimming pool built as part of West Cornwall School for Girls.

The landscaped grounds surrounding York House within the assessment area are part of the curtilage of the Listed Building.

There are no other heritage designations within the assessment area.

3 Historical background

(Adapted from Sturgess 2015; for site locations see Fig 1).

The assessment area lies in an area of known prehistoric settlement activity. During recent redevelopment work at Penwith College, which lies to the north, Iron Age and Romano-British settlement and burial remains were identified. Previous work in this area has also identified Late Iron Age or Romano-British settlement within a 'round' or prehistoric enclosure on the site of the cricket ground immediately to the north. There is also documentary evidence of the discovery of Bronze Age urns and Roman coins found during Penzance cemetery extension to the north-west in the late 19th century (see Fig 1 for location).

Some knowledge about the study area during the medieval period does exist. It is clear that the site fronts the main medieval route between Penzance and Madron (St Clare Street and Nancealverne) and that the place name St Clare derives from a medieval chapel which once stood here. The earliest reference to this chapel is in a lease dated 1584 which mentions "...a certain chapel situate below the high road between Pensance and Madderne". In the early part of the 19th century the foundations of a building, said to be the St Clare's chapel, were discovered located in the southern part of the present cricket ground.

It seems that during the early post-medieval period there was at least one house in St Clare. The evidence for this is given in a rental agreement dating to 1584. It reads: 'one waste parcel of land adjoining a certain chapel situated within the high road between Penzance and Madderne, at the annual rent of 4d.; and a garden at the same place, called the Hemp Garden, adjoining the house of one John Beachym, gent, now or lately in the occupation of Thomas Clies, at the annual rent of 6d., lately parts of the lands of Henry, Earl of Rutland'.

It seems likely that this house was St Clare Cottage which was also known as Chapel St Clare and York Cottage (site 46). This building stood until the late 20th century on the site of the present fire station (Fig 1).

The construction of York House (site 35) began in 1825 for Henry Pope. The Rev. C. V. Le Grice named this house "The Vatican" (Courtney 1878). Henry Pope was a business man who had emigrated to New York, made his fortune there and then returned to Penzance. On his return he bought the land on which York House stands and commissioned its construction. Unfortunately Henry died in 1828 before the completion of his new house, leaving it to his nephew, John Pope Vibert, who was responsible for completing the building work (Courtney 1878). The original architect, responsible for designing York House is currently unknown; however, the inheritor, who completed the building work, John Pope Vibert, was active in Penzance in building works, and was certainly competent enough to have undertaken the original design for his uncle. Building works in Penzance which John Pope Vibert had undertaken included supervising the building of the Market House, much of the harbour, and paving the streets.

It is not known if John Pope Vibert ever lived at York House after its completion but it is clear from the Tithe Apportionment that he was living in St Clare Cottage (on the site of the present fire station by 1840). York House itself appears to have been rented out to a Mrs Rogers, widow of John Rogers, Esq., of Penrose during the early 19th century until 1844 when it was occupied by Charles Hancock. During the late 19th century the house changed hands several times and various extensions were added and alterations made. Further studies on the history of the house and its landscape use during the 19th century have been carried out by Nick Cahill (Sturgess 2015).

The c1840 Tithe map recorded York House (site 35) with its gardens (sites **18**, **21**, **23**, **27**) (Fig 2). The main entrance drive at this date led to the house from the north-east (site **24**).

The c1880 OS map of recorded the landscape of the assessment area in considerable detail (Fig 3). It shows the encircling shelterbelt bounded by boundaries **18** and **23** and a surviving part of the walled gardens (**27**). The western side of the assessment area formed part of a larger orchard (site 15; see Fig 1 for location) and the eastern side, a lawn or garden (site **21**). A small rectangular outbuilding is also recorded (site **26**).

The Second Edition OS map of c1907 records a number of changes to the assessment area (Fig 4). A range of buildings were added to the north side of York House creating a new open service yard (all part of site 35), and a new service drive (sites **16** and **17**) was cut through the walled gardens and orchard to the north of it. The gardens within the assessment area were again revised: the orchard created in c1880 was enclosed and a greenhouse and shed (site **19**) added to the north.

In 1929 York House and St Clare Cottage were purchased by West Cornwall College. This later became known as West Cornwall School for Girls which had moved here from earlier premises on Chapel Street. The site was occupied by the school until 1969. During this time many of the present buildings on the site were added including the Quadrangle Building (site **20**; built as new classrooms and an assembly hall in 1938 and opened in 1939 - CRO AD2128/7) and site **48** (a swimming pool built in the 1950s or 60s). The pool was initially built as an open air pool but later roofed over.

The 1946 RAF aerial photograph shows the newly completed Quadrangle Building (site **20**). The garden outbuildings (sites **19**, **26**) had been removed and the garden boundaries revised (sites **21**, **27**) (Fig 5).

In 1970 Penzance Borough Council acquired the property and in 1974 it became the offices of Penwith District Council. In 2009 the District Council was subsumed as part of Cornwall Council under the new unitary authority.

4 Assessment Area Description

The assessment area is currently used as part of Cornwall Council's St Clare's offices with a large part of it occupied by the Quadrangle Building (site **20**; Figs 1, 6, 7, 8 and 9).

Enclosing the northern, eastern and southern sides of the assessment area is the historic plantation created as part of the original landscaping surrounding York House, when it was built in the 19th century (Figs 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9). The plantation has a mixture of old and young trees including small sycamore and mature beech trees with, in places, a shrub layer formed by evergreen shrubs (rhododendron, laurel) and bamboo, especially in the south west corner of the assessment area (Figs 9, 11, 12, 13).

To the east of the Quadrangle Building and enclosed by the plantation is a large level area given over to lawn. The southern edge of the lawn is dotted with ornamental cherry trees, probably planted by Penwith District Council (Fig 6, 10, 15). In the south eastern corner of the assessment area is the swimming pool building (site **48**), now much overgrown with ivy (Fig 15). A rectangular arrangement of stone walls at the rear north eastern corner of the building is probably associated with the service end of the swimming pool but could incorporate earlier garden walling (site **27**) (Fig 1 for location).

Forming the northern boundary of the plantation fronting on to Nancealverne road is a Cornish hedge (site **18**). A revetment bank faced by granite blocks forms the eastern edge of the assessment area (site **23**) but the southern boundary is formed by the edge of the driveway (site **24**) leading to York House. To the west of gateway **25**, the edge of the assessment area crosses the plantation towards the Quadrangle building

(site **20**). The western edge of the assessment area is formed by the 'One Stop Shop' and the driveway leading to it (site **16**) from gateway **17** (Fig 1).

Gateposts associated with sites **17**, **22** and **25** are located on the edge of the assessment area (Figs 1, 9, 13, 14).

5 Statement of significance

(Adapted from Sturgess 2015)

The sites of greatest heritage significance within the assessment area are those relating to York House during its period of use as a house and its later adaptation as a school.

The Quadrangle Building (site **20**), which was built in 1938 as part of West Cornwall School, is a good example of a pre-WWII Modernist school building and makes an important statement in its own right. Whilst it has seen alteration with the addition of modern uPVC windows and knocking through to join a later block it also retains some of its original fixtures and fittings. As it is attached to the earlier York House it is included as part of the listed building. The swimming pool building (site **48**) is of local importance to the later history of West Cornwall School for Girls and lies within the Listed Building curtilage of York House as do the gardens and plantation within the assessment area.

Those who appreciate the complexity of Penzance's history will particularly value the survival of York House together with its historic landscaped setting including its enclosing plantation and boundaries (sites **18**, **23**), driveways (sites **17**, **24**) and its gateways and gate posts (sites **17**, **22**, **25**). These sites are also part of the Grade II Listed Building and its curtilage.

York House together with its landscaped gardens and parkland is not only significant in its own right but also as part of a group of 19th century villas encircling the outskirts of Penzance during this period.

Within the assessment area there is high potential for the presence of below-ground remains associated with prehistoric sites. Complex Iron Age/Romano British settlement (both enclosed and unenclosed) is known to exist immediately north of the site, and Bronze Age activity has also been recorded. Although disturbance has clearly occurred within the footprint of the buildings on the site and some landscaping has occurred, much of the area has seen little ground disturbance and as such the potential the survival of below-ground remains is high.

6 Impact of development proposals

The following assessment is based upon the proposed development presented in the proposed site layout and elevations (Figs 16-18 inclusive). The footprint of the development largely fits within the existing shelterbelts to preserve much of the presently found trees and ornamental landscaping.

The construction phase will have a **negative/substantial** effect on buildings **20** and **48** as they will be demolished completely to make way for the new development. There is also the potential for the development to have a **negative/minor** effect upon any buried archaeological evidence associated with the former garden (**21**), walled garden (**27**) and outbuildings (**26**). The groundworks associated with the development will have a **negative/substantial** effect on any surviving below-ground prehistoric, Romano-British or medieval archaeological features.

It is assumed that the construction phase will not impact upon the gateways and gateposts within the assessment area (sites **17**, **22**, **25**).

It is likely that the long-term visual impact to the Grade II Listed York House and its historically significant later additions will be **neutral** due to the maintenance of the existing green landscaping. However, this also relies on the continued maintenance of

the historic plantation to the east of York House, immediately outside the present development site and in the ownership of Cornwall Council. If this plantation is not maintained by Cornwall Council the long term visual effect to York House will increase to **minor adverse**.

7 Recommendations for mitigation

If buildings **20** and **48** are to be demolished, historic building recording should be undertaken prior to the construction phase. The level of recording should be equivalent to Historic England's Level 2-3 survey (English Heritage 2006). This will help to reduce the negative/substantial effect to **negative/moderate** for the Quadrangle Building (site **20**) and **negative/minor** for the swimming pool (site **48**).

Where substantial ground disturbance is necessary in the lawn area archaeological recording work during all groundworks will reduce the adverse effects from negative/minor or negative/substantial to **neutral**. It is likely that this would take the form of archaeological controlled area strips and/or watching briefs to record any archaeological remains uncovered during the ground disturbance as part of the construction work (this is where an archaeologist checks for and records archaeological sites and features during groundworks associated with the development).

Any future planting scheme surrounding the new development should seek to complement the existing ornamental landscape surrounding York House and where necessary, be planted to enhance the landscape setting of the Listed Building.

To maintain the **neutral** residual visual effect of the proposed development on York House, Cornwall Council will need to maintain the existing plantation, including that immediately to the southwest of the assessment area.

The works undertaken as part of the construction phase should be designed to have minimal or no effect on the existing landscape features associated with York House including the gate posts (sites **17, 22, 25**), the garden boundary bank (**23**) and drive (**24**). If the gateway associated with site **17** is to be widened to allow for construction traffic and, in the long-term, easier vehicular access then the gateposts could be moved temporarily during construction but be carefully repositioned when the new entrance is completed.

8 References

8.1 Primary sources

Cornwall Records Office AD2128/7: Order of Proceedings for opening of new school buildings March 28th 1939

Ordnance Survey, c1809 First Edition One Inch Map

Ordnance Survey, c1880. 25 Inch Map First Edition (licensed digital copy at CAU)

Ordnance Survey, c1907. 25 Inch Map Second Edition (licensed digital copy at CAU)

Ordnance Survey, c1935. 25 Inch Map (licensed digital copy at CAU)

Ordnance Survey, 2007. Mastermap Digital Mapping

Tithe Map and Apportionment, c1840. Parish of Penzance (licensed digital copy at CRO)

8.2 Publications

Courtney, L, 1878. *Half a Century in Penzance (1825-1875)* taken from www.west-penwith.org.uk/pz1.htm

English Heritage, 2006. *Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice*, English Heritage, Swindon

Sturgess, J, 2015. *St Claire, Penzance, Cornwall – Heritage Assessment*, Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council (Report 2015R076)

8.3 Websites

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

9 Project archive

The CAU project number is **146580**

The project’s documentary, digital, photographic and drawn archive is maintained by Cornwall Archaeological Unit

Electronic data is stored in the following locations:

Project admin: G:\TWE\Waste & Env\Strat Waste & Land\Historic Environment\Projects\Sites\Sites P\PENZANCE\Penzance St Clare's site heritage assessment 2015\Health centre site 146580

Digital photographs: R:\Historic Environment (Images)\SITES.M-P\Sites P\Penzance_St_Claire_146580

Electronic GIS mapping: L:\Historic Environment (Data)\HE_Projects\Sites_P\Penzance_St_Claire_146580

Historic England/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2-247089



Fig 1 Site location. Shown with the boundary of the assessment area (in red) and the sites identified by Sturgess (2015).

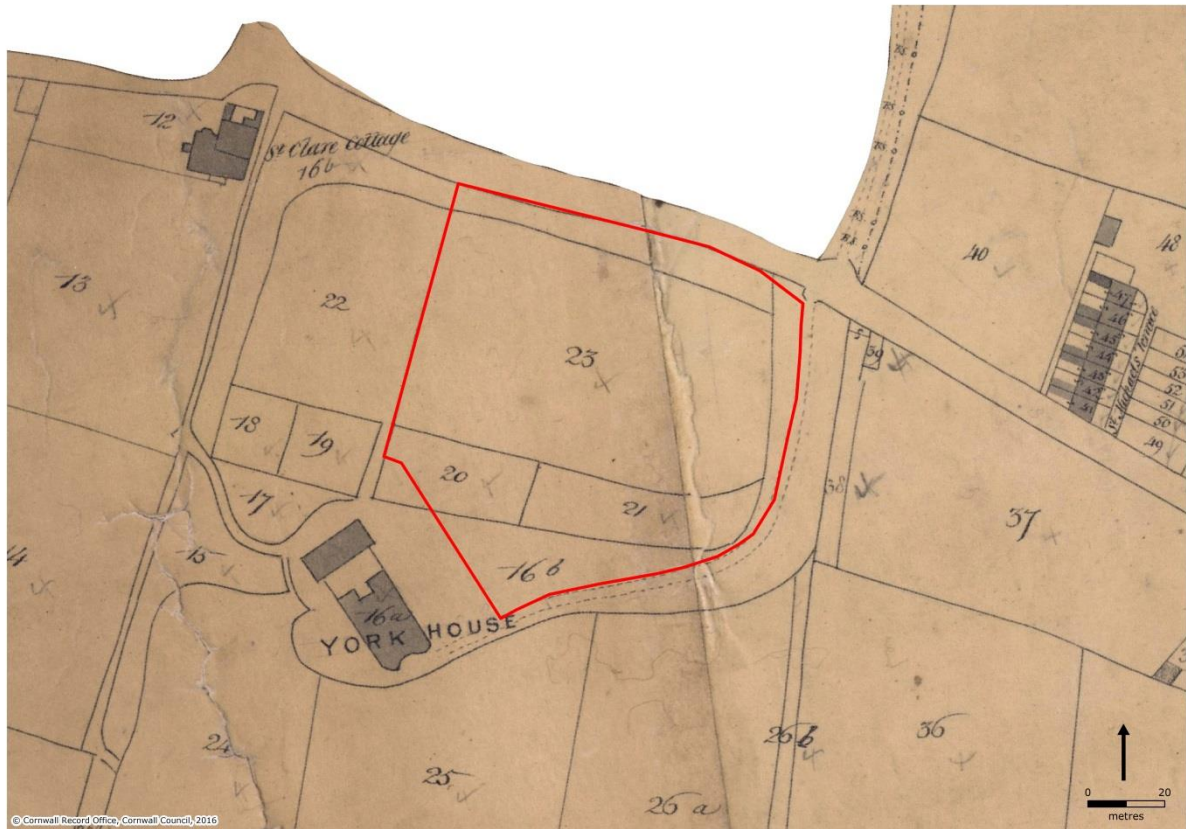


Fig 2 c1840 Tithe Survey (Cornwall Records Office TM/179). Assessment area approximate.

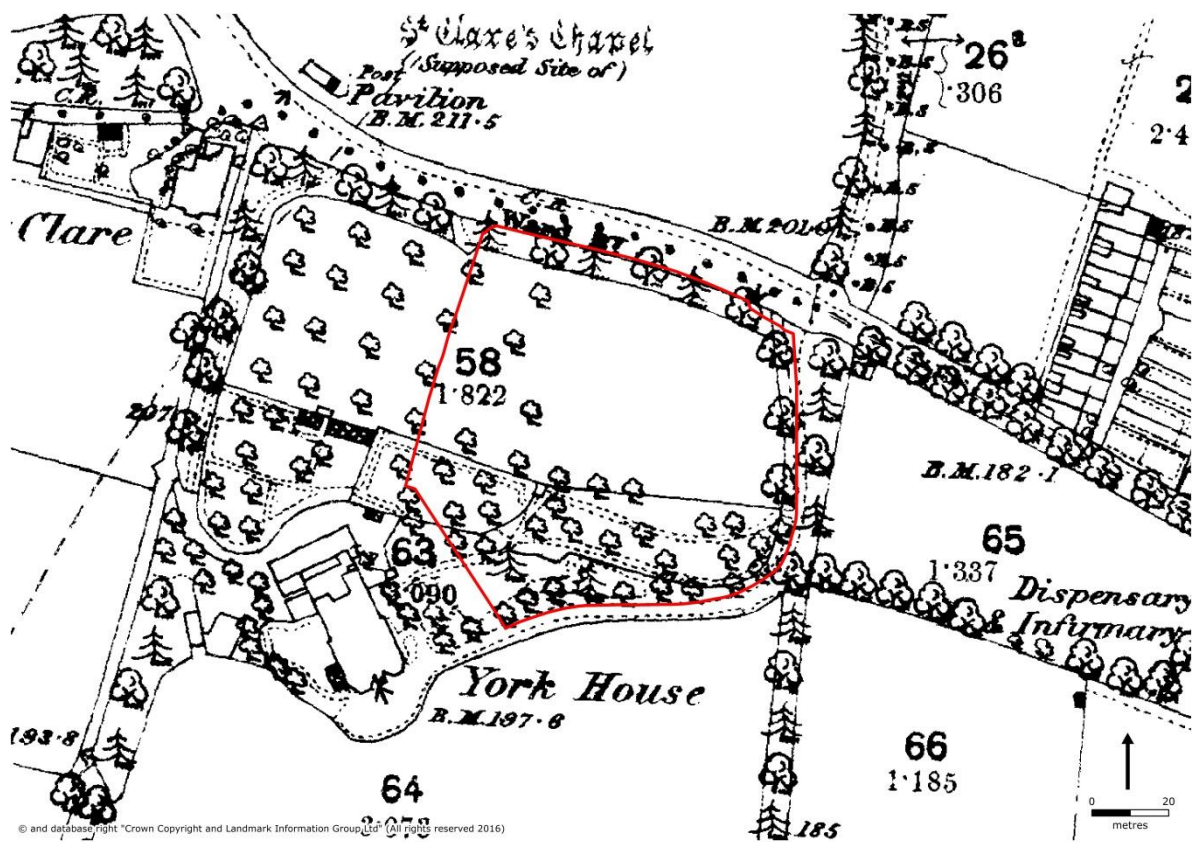


Fig 3 Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map, c1880.

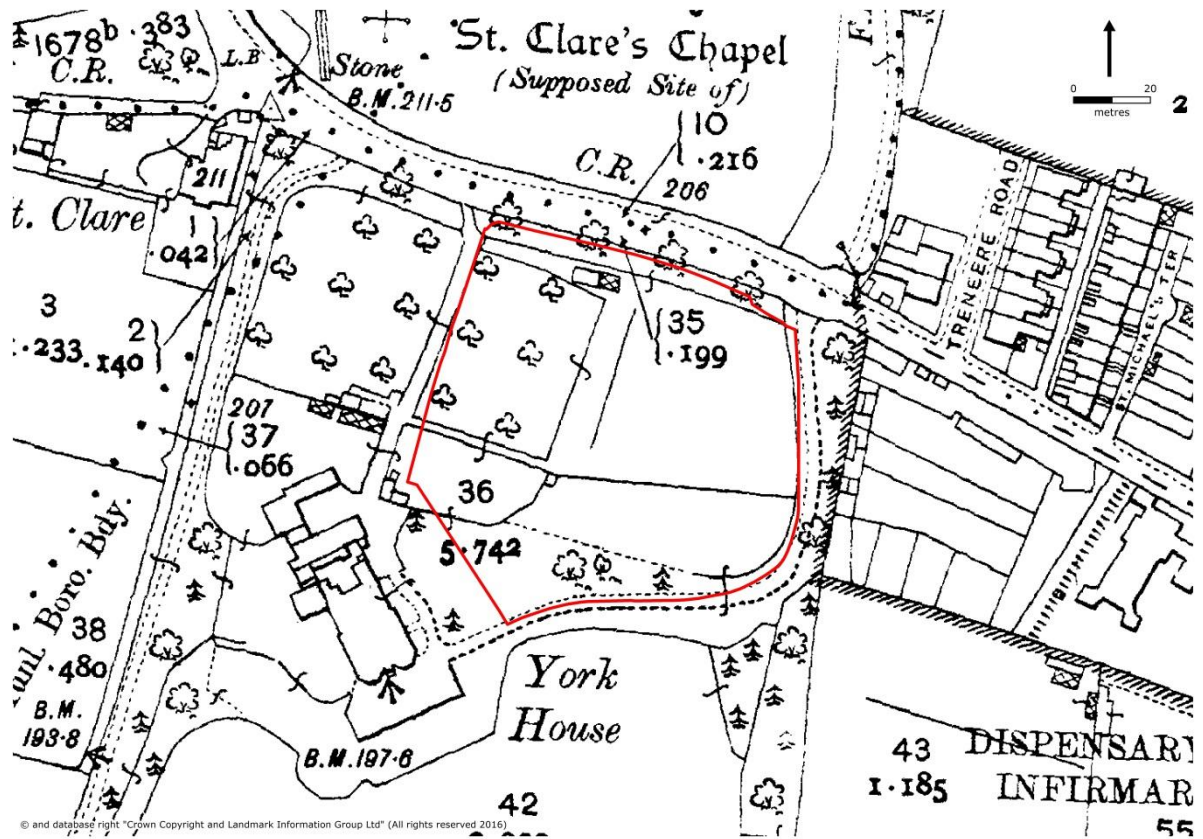


Fig 4 Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25 Inch Map, c1907.



Fig 5 RAF vertical photograph, 1946 (held by Cornwall Council)



Fig 6 The Quadrangle Building (site 20) looking across the lawn area from the south east.



Fig 10 Looking west from the location of the proposed health centre to the rear of York House.



Fig 7 The entrance to the Quadrangle Building (site 20).



Fig 11 Looking south west to York House from near to the south west corner of the proposed health centre.



Fig 8 The north eastern corner of the Quadrangle Building (site 20) with the plantation to the right.



Fig 12 Looking from the south eastern corner of York House towards the proposed health centre.



Fig 9 A mature beech tree in the plantation to the east of gateway 17 which leads on to Nancealverne Road.



Fig 13 Looking along drive 24 and gateway 25 to the south east corner of York House.



*Fig 14 Gate pier associated with site **22** at the north eastern corner of the assessment area.*



*Fig 15 Looking south from the public footpath to the swimming pool building (site **48**).*



Fig 16 Proposed site layout - 07B308582 004 (dated to 02/09/2015).



Fig 17 Proposed North and West Elevations - 07B308582 008 (dated to 02/03/2016).



Fig 18 Proposed East and South Elevations - 07B308582 009 (dated to 02/03/2016).

10 Inventory of identified sites

(Taken from Sturgess 2015)

The following sites are located within or immediately border the assessment area.

The grades listed are those used by the Cornwall HER and have been used to guide this report:

- S Scheduled Monument (none identified within the project area)
- L Listed Building
- A Site of National Importance
- B Site of Regional Importance
- C Site of Local Importance
- D Non-antiquity
- A (L) Site of National Importance within Listed Building curtilage
- B (L) Site of Regional Importance within Listed Building curtilage
- C (L) Site of Local Importance within Listed Building curtilage

Site	Easting SW	Northing	Monument Type	Date of construction	Form	Description	Condition	Recommendations	Grade
18	46687	30783	Boundary	medieval-c1840	Extant	This boundary comprises a stone faced earth bank approximately 1m high. A boundary is shown on map in this position from c1840 onwards although the boundary may have much earlier origins.	Survives intact.	This boundary forms the northern extent of the site and should be retained wherever possible.	C (L)
19	46690	30773	Glasshouse	c1880-c1907	Map evidence	This is the site of a glasshouse/hothouse first shown on the c1907 OS map as being built to the north of a walled garden. The glasshouse was removed probably when the Quadrangle was built; (site 20) was built in 1938.	Removed.	It is recommended that any future groundworks in this area are subjected to a programme of archaeological work.	C (L)
20	46682	30745	School building	1938	Extant	This Modernist building, built around a quadrangle, was constructed in 1938 and opened in 1939 as part of West Cornwall School. The architect was Mr G E Withers. The building remains <i>in situ</i> with many of its original fixtures and fittings intact, however, alterations have been made including modern fenestration (uPVC double glazing) and the knocking through to join a later block built in the 1960s/70s.	Survives intact.	This pre-WWII building is a good example of a Modernist school building of this date. It is recommended that ways should be sought to retain the building. In the event that this is not possible a full historic building record is recommended prior to alterations/ demolition.	L
21	46720	30744	Garden/orchard	c1825-c1840	Map evidence	This area is listed as a garden in the c1840 Tithe Apportionment. It is shown as part of the grounds of York House on the c1880 OS map. During the early 20th century the Quadrangle building was constructed on the western part and the area to the east, laid to lawn.	Partially survives to the east.	It is recommended that any future groundworks in this area are subjected to a programme of archaeological work. There has been little ground disturbance to the east of the Quadrangle building (site 20) which indicates high potential for the survival of archaeological features here.	C (L)
22	46743	30762	Gateposts	c1825-c1840	Extant	A pair of square-section, granite gateposts lie either side of what is now the road to the Leisure Centre. This road was originally the main entrance to York House. The eastern post has been repositioned at some point to allow wider access but the western post remains <i>in situ</i> .	Survives intact.	The gateposts should be retained <i>in situ</i> .	C (L)
23	46740	30755	Bank and park fence	19th century	Extant	A short length of iron park fencing remains <i>in situ</i> on top of a low earth bank forming a	Survives intact.	If possible the bank and fence should be retained <i>in situ</i> .	C (L)

Site	Easting SW	Northing	Monument Type	Date of construction	Form	Description	Condition	Recommendations	Grade
						garden boundary just to the west of the original main entrance (site 22) to York House. These features are likely to be part of the original designed gardens of York House.			
24	46743	30706	Driveway	c1825-c1840	Extant	This is the original main driveway to York House leading from Nancealverne heading south and then sweeping round to the west to the front of the house. It is part of the original landscape design. Along its western edge the ground is raised to create terraced gardens beyond and the edges are retained by a single course of granite blocks.	Survives intact.	The driveway and its associated features should be retained as an early landscape feature associated with York House.	C (L)
25	46699	30690	Gateposts and gate	19th century	Extant	A pair of square-section, granite gateposts with iron gate, lie either side of the original main drive to York House, just to the south-west of the swimming pool (site 47). These posts are not in their original position and may well have been moved here from an earlier location just to the east of the house adjacent to the remains of the summer house (site 32) as shown on the c1880 OS map. It is unclear when the gateposts and gate were moved.	Survives, but not <i>in situ</i> .	The gateposts and gate should be retained <i>in situ</i> .	C (L)
26	46679	30721	Outbuilding	c1840-c1880	Map evidence	This is the site of a small outbuilding shown on the c1880 OS map as being built against the north-west corner of one of the walled gardens shown on the same map (site 27). This building was removed in 1938 during the construction of the Quadrangle building (site 20).	Removed.	It is recommended that any future groundworks in this area are subjected to a programme of archaeological work.	C (L)
27	46664	30718	Walled gardens	c1825-c1840	Map evidence	This is the site of a group of walled gardens built as part of the original landscape design in c1825. There are four walled gardens shown on the c1840 Tithe map arranged in a row from east to west at the rear of York House, stretching from the lane (site 9) eastwards to the main entrance drive (site 24). A short section of one of the walls survives (site 11), but no other walls survive.	Removed.	It is recommended that any future groundworks in this area are subjected to a programme of archaeological work.	C (L)
48	46722	30708	Swimming pool	1946-1969	Extant	This swimming pool was built as an addition to the school. The pool itself pre-dates the building it is in.	Survives intact.	It is recommended that a photographic survey of this building is undertaken if demolition is required.	C (L)

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