



Pendennis Castle Sign, May 2016.
Archaeological Watching Brief.

Cornwall Archaeological Unit

Report No: 2016R036

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2016R036

Report Name

Pendennis Castle Sign, Cornwall. May 2016.
Archaeological Watching Brief.

Report Author

C. M. Thorpe

Event Type

Watching Brief.

Client Organisation

English Heritage

Client Contact

Tristan Faith

Monuments (MonUID)

SM 10552

MCO25055

Fieldwork dates (From)

19/05/16

(To)

19/05/16

(Created By)

CMT

(Create Date)

May 2016

Location (postal address; or general location and parish)

Pendennis Castle.

(Town – for urban sites)

(Postcode)

Falmouth

TR11 4LP

(Easting) X co-ord

SW 82293

(Northing) Y co-ord

31948



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1 Project background

Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) was commissioned by Tristan Faith, Maintenance Manager, English Heritage to undertake archaeological recording during the excavation of a posthole required for a signpost within Smithwick's Bastion at Pendennis Castle (SW 82293 31948; Figs 1,2, and 3).

The work was carried out according to a method statement (12/02/2016) prepared by Charles Johns, Archaeology Projects Officer, CAU (Appendix 1).

This short report covers the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on the 19th May 2016.

2 Location and background

Pendennis Castle and its twin, St Mawes Castle, were built between 1539 and 1543 as part of Henry VIII's national defence policy. The castles were utilitarian artillery towers reinforced by the waterline blockhouses at Little Dennis and St Mawes, their purpose was to protect the mile-wide inlet of Carrick Roads (Johns *et al* 1992).

Between 1597 and 1599, following a review of the defences by Sir Walter Raleigh during the hostilities with Spain, the Henrician keep was strengthened by the addition of the Italianate bastioned enceinte designed by the military engineer Paul Ivey.

The defences and armaments at Pendennis were periodically upgraded in time of war. By the time of World War 1 the main long range defences of Pendennis were at Half Moon Battery, first constructed *c* 1793, situated south of the Castle, facing seawards and working in tandem with the long-range battery at St Anthony Head.

In 1956 coastal defence was abandoned and the Castle given to the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works (now English Heritage). Pendennis Castle is part of Scheduled Monument Area, Pendennis Peninsula Fortifications 10552. The Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record Number is 18709.

Potential for buried archaeology

Given that the site is within the enceinte of the castle (Figs 2 and 3) there was potential for post-medieval and possibly earlier sites to survive within the project area and for the survival of unrecorded buried archaeological remains and artefacts of all periods.

Site description

The sign (Fig 6) warning of a 'Sheer drop' was erected on the top of the grass slope within of the interior of the sixteenth century Smithwick's Bastion at the crest of the rampart (Figs 3 and 4). This was to prevent people stumbling across and falling down the stone exterior face of the bastion (Fig 7) into the moat as at this point there was no breastwork to prevent this from happening.

The site is at a height of about 59m OD. The underlying geology consists of Devonian interbedded sandstones, and argillaceous rocks of the Portscatho Formation (BGS sheet 352).

3 Aims and objectives

The aims of the project were:

- To ensure that the site works were undertaken in such a way as to allow archaeological recording as set out in the method statement.
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains and record archaeological features and deposits affected by the work.

- To 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.
- To deposit the archive (including any finds) with the relevant museum and to disseminate the results of discoveries as a concise archive report and, if merited, wider publication.

Key objectives were:

- To locate and identify and record in the area of Smithwick's Bastion thereby providing further information on the archaeology of the castle.

4 Working methods

An archaeologist was present during the excavation of the posthole. This was spade-dug by hand. The sides and base of the hole were inspected for any archaeological features or artefacts and a photographic record was made. Notes were made of the soil profile encountered. The spoil was also examined for any artefacts.

The post location was plotted onto a site plan at a scale of 1:200 based on an Ordnance Survey map of the same scale, being measured in from fixed locatable points on the ground marked on the map (Fig 3).

5 Results

The posthole was roughly square in shape measuring 0.3m x 0.3m. It reached a maximum depth of 0.6m (Fig 5). No archaeological features were recorded in the course of the work, and no artefacts were recovered.

The profile recorded within the posthole consisted of 0.05m of grass, roots, and humic topsoil overlying 0.1m of grey-brown clay with a few stone fragments, and 0.45m of grey-brown clay with numerous stone fragments. This latter deposit was not bottomed.

The layers cut through appear to be man-made fills, deposited behind the rampart possibly when the nineteenth century magazine was constructed within the bastion, though there is the possibility that they could be of more recent date.

Given that no archaeological features were identified it is evident that this posthole had no discernible impact on any buried archaeological remains.

6 References

British Geological Survey 1974, 1:50000 map Sheet 352 Falmouth.

Johns, C, Johnson, N, and Sharpe, A, 1992. *Pendennis Headland Historical Credential, Current Condition and Future Potential of the defences 1540-1956*. CAU report 1992R012.

7 Project archive

The CAU project number is **146552**

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 listed below:

1. Projects file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration (146552).
2. Field plans stored in an A2-size plastic envelope (GRE 858/1).
3. Digital photographs stored in the directory: R:\Historic Environment (Images)\SITES.M-P\PENDENNIS\Pendennis Castle Sign 2016 HEXQPR146552\19th July 2016
4. English Heritage/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2-252151
5. This report text is held in digital form as: G:\TWE\Waste & Env\Strat Waste & Land\Historic Environment\Projects\Sites\Sites P\PENDENNIS CASTLE\Pendennis Castle sign WB 146552\Report
6. No artefacts were recovered in the course of the project.

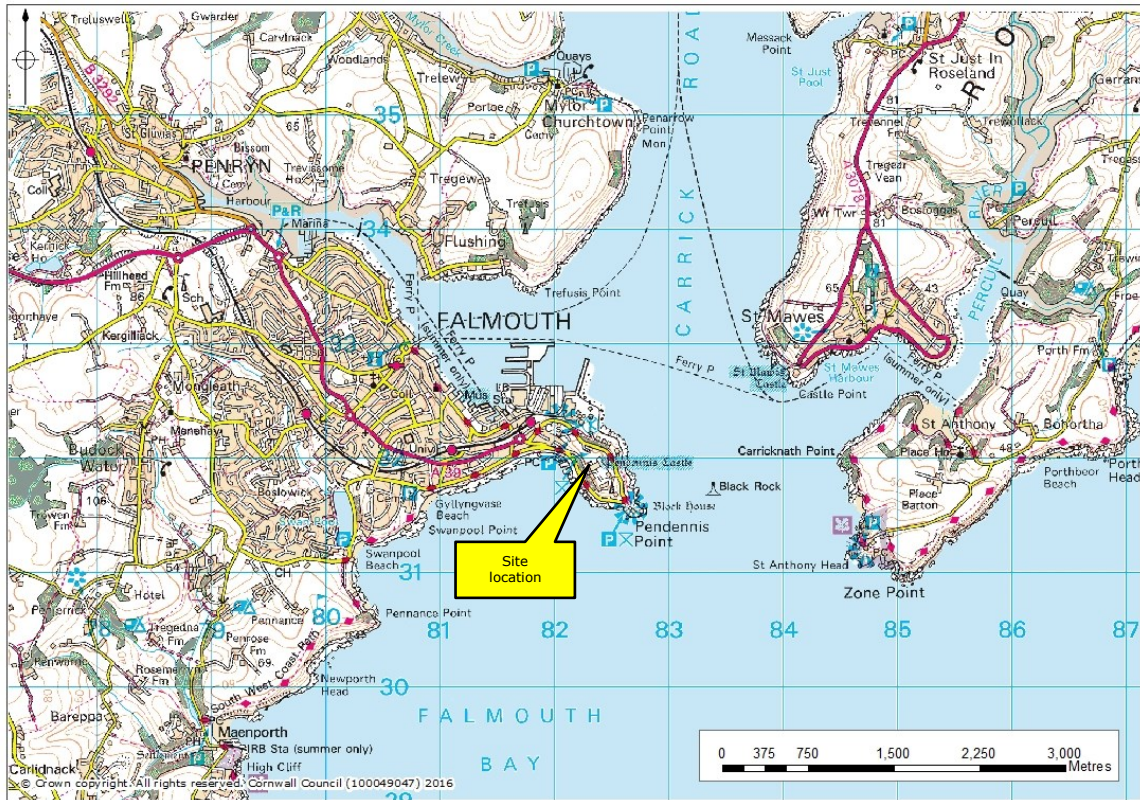


Figure 1. General site location map.

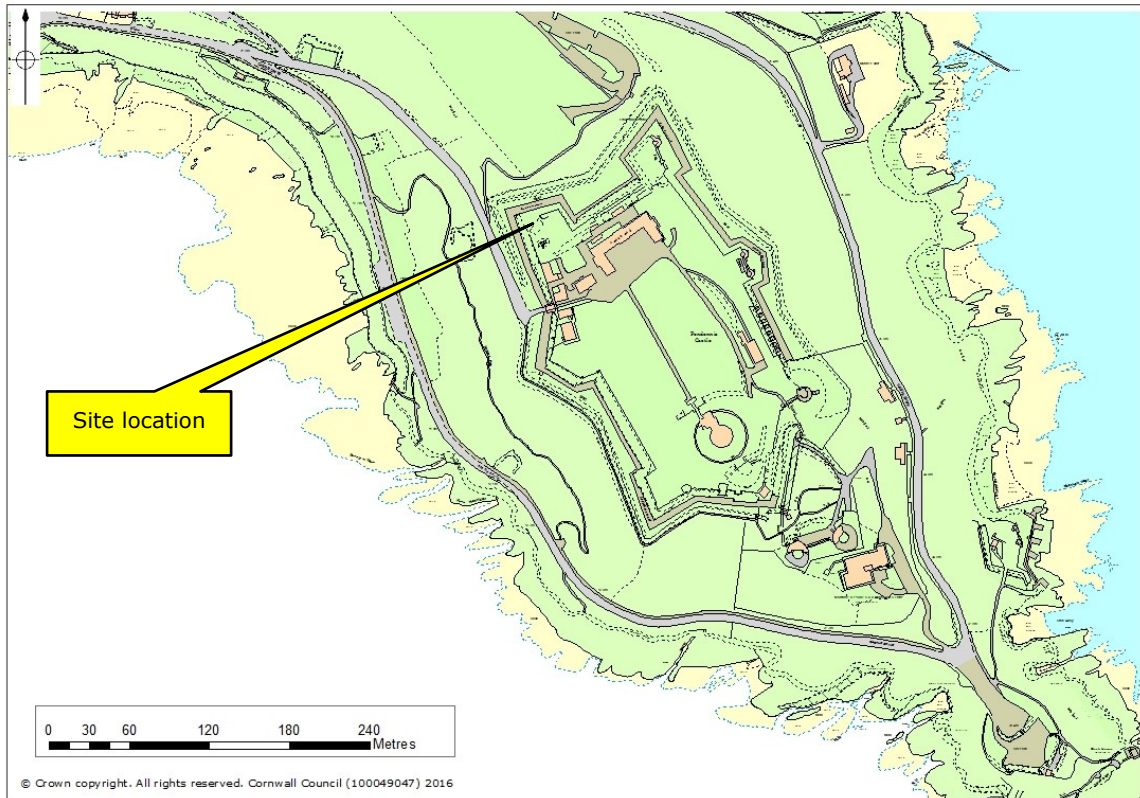


Figure 2. Site location map showing position of Smithwick's Bastion.

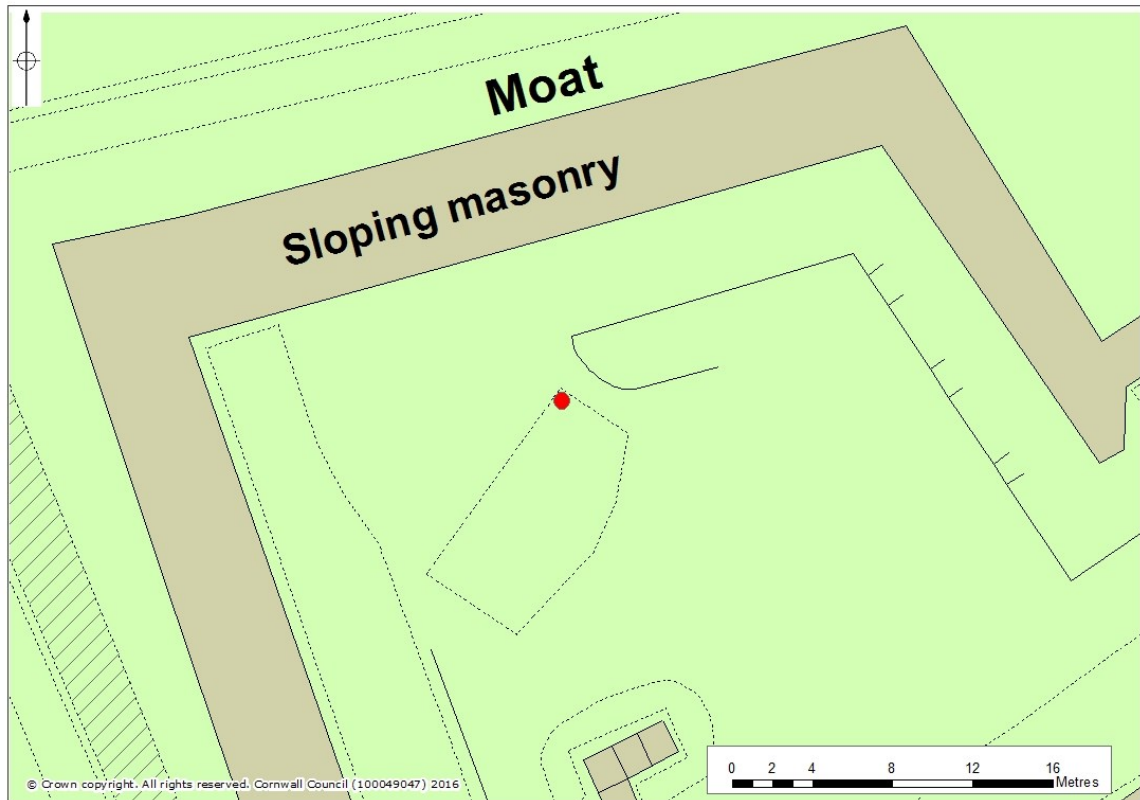


Figure 3. Site plan showing location of new posthole (in red).



Figure 4. Position of new sign (arrowed) within Smithwick's Bastion.



Figure 6. Sign post after installation.



Figure 5. Detail of posthole



Figure 7. External face of Smithwick's Bastion showing the nature of the slope.

8 Appendix 1. Pendennis Castle, Cornwall: Method Statement for an Archaeological Watching Brief during signage installation, February 2016

Client: English Heritage
Client contact: Tristan Faith
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Client e-mail: Tristan.Faith@english-heritage.org.uk

Project Background

Tristan Faith, Property Maintenance Manager, English Heritage, has commissioned Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a posthole for a post fixing for an interpretation signs at Pendennis Castle.

Methodology

An archaeologist will be present during the excavation of the posthole. Any archaeological features and deposits that may be revealed will be recorded. Excavated spoil will be carefully inspected for artefacts. A written/scaled drawing/photographic record will be made as appropriate. The methodology for recording, archiving and reporting will be similar to that described in full in the Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief during drainage works at St Mawes Castle submitted by CAU (then Historic Environment Projects) to EH in August 2005 (Johns 2005).

The results will be presented as a watching brief report and will be submitted within six months of the completion of the fieldwork, with copies supplied to English Heritage (two), Cornwall Council Historic Environment Record and the Royal Cornwall Museum. A draft will initially be submitted to the Property Maintenance Manager for comment.

The project will be managed by Charlie Johns (BA, MCIfA) and the fieldwork will be carried out by Carl Thorpe (BSc) who has extensive experience of carrying out archaeological watching briefs at castles in Cornwall.

Standards



CAU is a Registered Organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and follows their Standards and Code of Conduct. <http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>

Health and safety statement

CAU follows Cornwall Council's *Statement of Safety Policy*.

Prior to carrying out on-site work CAU will carry out a Risk Assessment.

Copyright

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

Use of the material will be granted to the client.

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.

CAU will ensure that all information arising from the project shall be held in strict confidence to the extent permitted under the Act. However, the Act permits information to be released under a public right of access (a "Request"). If such a Request is received CAU may need to disclose any information it holds, unless it is excluded from disclosure under the Act.

Insurance

CAU is covered by Cornwall Council's Public and Employers Liability Insurance, with a policy value of £50m. The Council also has Professional Negligence insurance with a policy value of £10m.

References

Johns, C, 2005. *St Mawes Castle, Cornwall: Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief during proposed drainage works*, Truro, HES Projects

Charles Johns

Archaeology Projects Officer

12/2/2016

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