Archaeological evaluation trenching at Morrops Field, Gwithian Towans, Cornwall

Cornwall Archaeological Unit

Report No: 2017R071

Archaeological evaluation trenching at Morrops Field, Gwithian Towans, Cornwall

Archaeological Evaluation

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Acknowledgements

This study was commissioned by Mr Mark Coton and carried out by Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council.

The Project Manager was Adam Sharpe.

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

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.

Cornwall Archaeological Unit is a Registered Organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Cover illustration:

Looking north east across the site

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Abbreviations

CAU	Cornwall Archaeological Unit
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
CRO	Cornwall Record Office
EH	English Heritage
HER	Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record
MCO	Monument number in Cornwall HER
NGR	National Grid Reference
OD	Ordnance Datum – height above mean sea level at Newlyn
OS	Ordnance Survey
RIC	Royal Institution of Cornwall

1 Summary

Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU), Cornwall Council was commissioned by Mr Mark Coton to fulfil an archaeological condition placed upon Cornwall Council planning application PA16/09938 for the development of seventeen chalets at Morrops Field, Gwithian Towans, Cornwall. The site is centred at SW 58017 41261 (see Figures 1 & 2).

A Heritage Statement produced for this proposed development did not identify any archaeological sites within the immediate project area, and map regression has shown that the area has been enclosed as a field since at least the mid-nineteenth century (Gwithian Tithe Award mapping evidence, 1840). However, the surrounding area is rich in buried prehistoric and early medieval sites, which could potentially have survived below the surface. The calcareous sandy soils covering the area within the boundary of the site was thought to have had the potential to have preserved organic deposits, which do not normally survive in Cornwall's acidic soil conditions.

An archaeological condition (19th August 2017) was placed on the planning permission. The Senor Development Office (Historic Environment) (SDOHE) recommended that targeted archaeological recording should be carried out at or near the locations of the proposed sites of the seventeen chalets.

In response a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by Cornwall Archaeological Unit in August 2017 (Sharpe 2017) specifying the methodology for archaeological recording and reporting.

Seventeen trenches in total were excavated, four revealing ditches and one a possible pit; a single sherd of pottery dating to the late 15th to early 16th century was recovered.

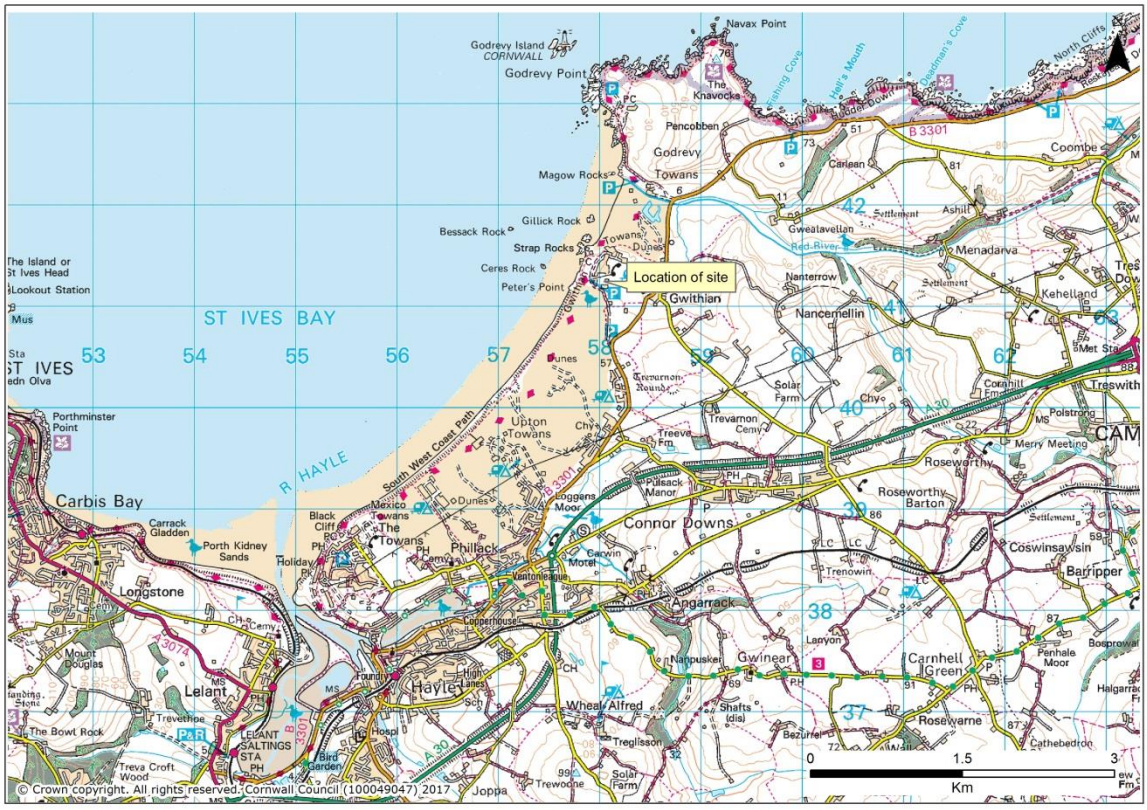

Figure 1: Location of site.

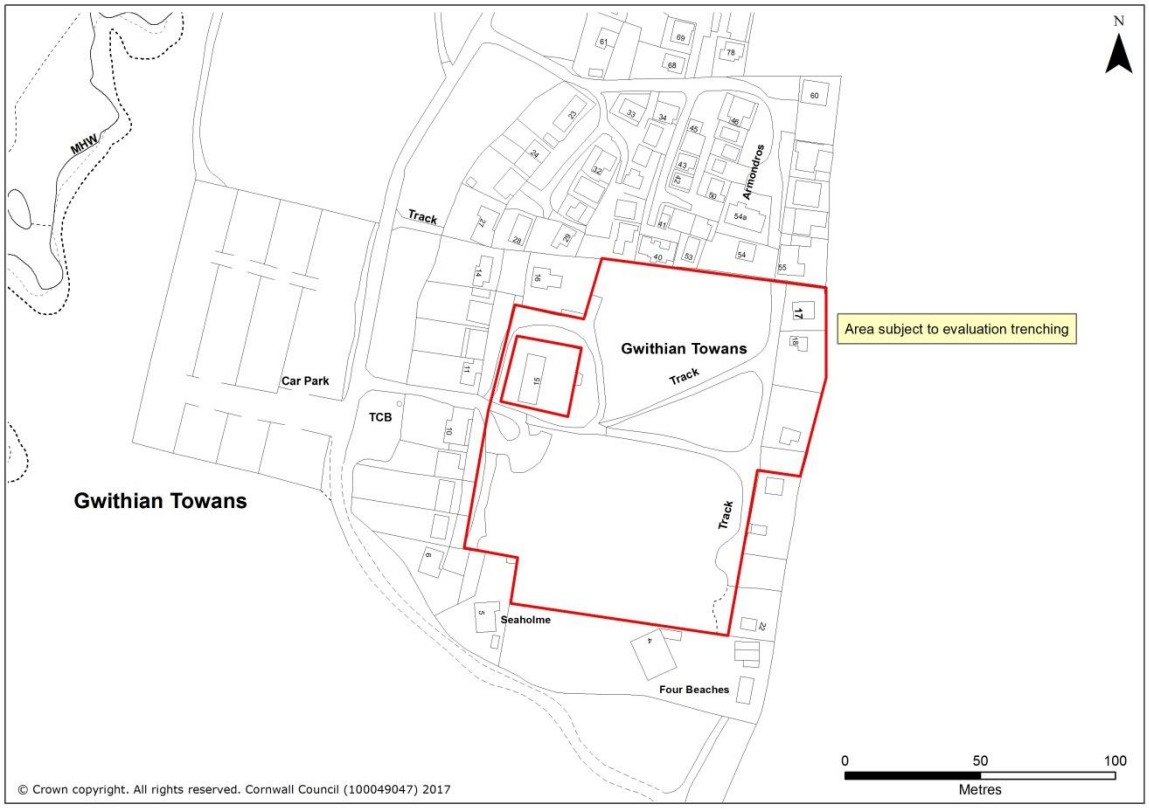

Figure 2: Extent of site.

2 Introduction

2.1 Project background

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CAU excavated 17 trenches across the site and recorded all features revealed during this process. This report details the results of the evaluation.

2.2 Aims

The principal aim of the study was to gain a better understanding of the archaeology of the development area in order to identify whether any further archaeological recording would be required during the development phase. The objectives were:

- To ensure that the site works associated with the development were informed by a better understanding of the nature and significance of any archaeological features underlying the development site through the consideration of the results of a programme of archaeological evaluation trenching;
- To record archaeological features and deposits within the areas to be investigated by evaluation trenching;
- To recover and record any artefacts revealed during the evaluative investigation;
- To disseminate the results of the investigation appropriately.

The key objective was:

- To investigate the potential for evidence for prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval settlement activity to survive within the area of the proposed development.

2.3 Methods

All recording work was undertaken according to the WSI (see Appendix 1).

All recording work was undertaken according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording. Staff will follow 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.

2.3.1 Fieldwork

Between Tuesday 17th October and Thursday 19th October 2017, seventeen trenches measuring 1.6m wide and between 9m and 19m long were excavated under archaeological supervision by a wheeled mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. The trenches were surveyed in by the client at locations shown on a plan supplied by CAU and approved by the SDOHE (see Fig 3), each of the 17 trenches crossing the site of a proposed new chalet. All trench locations were checked with a CAT scanner to identify buried electrical cables. Where these were detected, or there were indications of sub-surface sewer pipes, the trenches were moved to nearby locations; where one of these traversed an active roadway and where another was crossed by a live hedge the trenches were slightly truncated. No services were documented for this site, and the mixture of electrical supply cables, water pipes and sewer lines detected on site seem to have been installed in an ad hoc fashion by its former occupants.

All trenches were excavated down to the natural and were backfilled immediately following recording on public safety grounds.

Site drawings (plans and sections) were made by pencil on drafting film; all plans were linked to the Ordnance Survey Landline (electronic map) using a GNSS high precision instrument; all drawings were either 1:10 or 1:20 scale. All contexts were sequentially numbered (Table 1).

Photographs were taken using a Pentax Digital SLR and a Canon single lens reflex camera using 400ASA B&W film.

3 Location and setting

The development site covers 1ha and is sited in an area whose ground surface consists of stabilised wind-blown sand covered by a thin sand/soil mix which incorporates modern material; the site adjoins Gwithian Sands and lies to the west of Gwithian Churchtown.

Landscape

The site is located within an area whose Historic Landscape Characterisation is recorded as 'Urban', though this area (the chalet park) should be considered to be 'Recently Enclosed Land' (land enclosed in the modern period), the fields at this location having been created on stabilised sand dunes during the early 20th century. The areas to the north and west are characterised as sand dunes. The Red River valley to the north and the sands on Gwithian Beach have been worked for alluvial tin carried down the watercourse from dressing floors around Camborne-Redruth (Countryside Commission 1996) and the area has also witnessed small-scale mining activity.

Known archaeological sites

No archaeological sites are recorded within the proposed development area, though this is situated within an area of high archaeological potential, which contains evidence for prehistoric, early medieval and medieval activity; small-scale post-medieval mining activity is also recorded in the areas to the north and north-west. Archaeological sites in the immediately surrounding area identified from the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record (HER) include:

- Early Bronze Age cist burial (MCO28560).
- Early Bronze Age barrow (MCO28560).
- The early medieval settlement of Connerton (MCO11135).
- Field systems of Romano-British date (MCO21007) and early medieval date (MCO33825).

- Post-medieval mining in the form of prospecting pits (MCO33823) and deep mining sites such as Wheal Emily (MCO12915).
- Prehistoric, Roman, earlier and later medieval artefacts including flint, worked stone and metalwork have been recovered from the surrounding area.
- Military and maritime sites such as Gwithian Battery (MCO42924, MCO33837), WW2 beach defences (MCO43380) and pillbox (MCO33824), together with the former Gwithian coastguard station (MCO28561).

4 Designations

4.1 National

None, though the site adjoins an area designated as a Site of Special Scientific interest (SSSI) to the west and south-west.

4.2 Regional/county

The site was recorded as lying within an Area of Great Scientific Value (AGSV) in the former Cornwall Structure Plan. Aras to the north, west and south of the chalet park were recorded as an Area of Great Historic Value (AGHV), whilst those immediately to its south were recorded as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in that document.

5 Archaeological results

Trench 1 SW 57991 41230 to SW 57989 41248

See Figures 3, 5, 6, 7 & 13.

Situated in the south-west corner of the site, Trench 1 was 19m long, 1.6m wide and 1.15m deep. It was moved from its originally proposed location owing to the detection of buried power cables by the CAT scanner which was used to check each location before mechanical excavation commenced.

The topsoil (1/1) was a 0.1m deep dark brown, almost black, organic deposit comprised of soils and decayed organic material, very loose and almost silty in composition. Several deposits of subsoil containing differing amounts of sand content were found beneath this:

(1/2) A 0.3m deep dark brown loose sandy silt containing sparse stone inclusions.

(1/3) A 0.1m deep mid to dark brown loose sand containing more sand than soil within its matrix.

Below these deposits was (1/4): a 0.2m deep dark yellowish-brown plastic clay silt incorporating the possible remains of an old ground surface; this deposit contained some quartz stone fragments <0.04m in size, these being angular and scattered. There were no indications of any sorting of this material.

The natural (1/5) was a mid-greyish-brown friable stony clay containing common inclusions of mudstone with some fragments of quartz.

The base of the trench revealed several features cut into the natural, as follows:

A linear ditch [1/7] incorporating a gully and associated shelf on one side. The ditch was 1.1m wide and 0.5m deep in total; the shelf to the north was 0.5m wide and 0.2m deep, and had a flat well-defined cut; the ditch to the south was steep-sided with a U-shaped base; its edge definition was good. The fill of the ditch was a dark reddish-brown plastic to friable silty clay; this varied in depth between 0.3 and 0.5m owing to the varying profile of the ditch.

A linear ditch [1/9], 0.6-0.9m wide and 0.2m deep, with a splay at one end; this was straight sided with a flat base, had good edge definition and was orientated east to west. The fill of the ditch (1/8) was a 0.2m deep mid-yellowish-red-brown friable silty

clay containing some larger stone inclusions, these mostly being mudstone and characteristically 0.05m to a side.

Trench 2 SW 57996 41248 to SW 58001 41263

See Figure 3.

Trench 2 was 16m long, 1.6m wide and 0.92m deep.

Situated in the south-western part of the site, the topsoil was (2/1), a 0.25m deep mid-reddish-brown loose silty clay, this incorporating some organic intrusions associated with roots. The subsoil (2/2) was a 0.4m deep mid-reddish-brown silty clay, this being only slightly different to (2/1); again bioturbation was found to be present. Below this was soil (2/3): a mid-reddish-brown plastic silty clay which contained stone inclusions consisting of small fragments of mudstone. This layer was 0.3m deep and overlaid the natural (2/4): a light yellowish-grey plastic sandy clay containing common stone inclusions, these predominantly being weathered fragments of mudstone.

No archaeological features were found in Trench 2.

Trench 3 SW 58022 41272 to SW58018 41288

See Figure 3.

Trench 3 was 16.4m long, 1.6m wide and 0.9m deep.

The topsoil (3/1) was a 0.26m deep mid-reddish-brown loose sandy clay with some organic intrusions deriving from roots; stone inclusions within the deposit consisted of fragmented mudstone and quartz. The subsoil (3/2) was a <0.3m deep mid-reddish-brown loose sandy silt containing higher concentrations of fragmented stone inclusions, and roots. This overlaid soil (3/3): a 0.06m deep mid-reddish-brown loose sandy silt which contained common stone inclusions; this in turn overlaid the natural (3/4): a light yellowish-grey compact sandy clay stone mix.

No archaeological features were found in Trench 3.

Trench 4 SW 58019 41294 to SW58023 41308

See Figures 3 & 4.

Trench 4 was 15m long, 1.6m wide and 0.95m deep.

The topsoil (4/1) was a 0.3m deep mid-reddish-brown loose sandy silt with some organic intrusion deriving from roots; some stone inclusions were found within the deposit, these consisting of fragmented mudstone and quartz. The subsoil (4/2) was a <0.3m deep mid-reddish-brown loose sandy silt containing sparse stone inclusions and occasional roots. This in turn overlaid soil (4/3), a 0.4m deep mid-reddish-brown loose sandy silt which contained common stone inclusions, and which overlaid the natural (4/4): a light yellowish-grey plastic sandy clay/stone mix.

The excavation of the trench revealed a single feature:

A ditch [4/5], 1.0m wide and 0.28m deep with concave sides having approximately 40 degree slopes and a U-shaped base; the ditch displayed moderate edge definition and was orientated east to west. The fill of the ditch (4/6) was a 0.28m deep mid-reddish brown friable sandy silt, with some stone inclusions.

Trench 5 SW 58028 41313 to SW58044 41312

See Figure 3.

Trench 5 was 16.5m long, 1.6m wide and 0.9m deep.

The topsoil (5/1) was a 0.33m deep mid-brown friable sandy silt, with occasional small stone inclusions and some roots and rubble. The subsoil (5/2) was a mid-reddish-yellow-brown loose friable silt. This covered (5/3) which appeared to be a buried soil layer, being a 0.1m deep mid-brownish-red plastic sandy clay containing occasional

fragments of shillet. This overlaid the natural (5/4): a greyish-yellow silty clay with a high stone content.

Found in the north-east part of the trench was part of a modern soakaway comprising a gravel drain typical of a modern soakaway.

No archaeological features were found in Trench 5.

Trench 6 SW 58060 41320 to SW 58058 41307

See Figure 3.

Trench 6 was 15m long, 1.6m wide and 0.5m deep.

The topsoil (6/1) was a 0.2m deep dark brown friable sandy silt, overlying subsoil (6/2), which comprised a 0.23m deep mid-reddish-brown plastic sandy silt containing sparse stone inclusions. This in turn overlaid the natural, which at this location was a pale grey loose stone/clay mix containing heavily weathered shillet fragments.

No archaeological features were found in Trench 6.

Trench 7 SW 58054 41302 to SW58052 41288

See Figure 3.

Trench 7 was 15m long, 1.6m wide and 0.85m deep.

The topsoil (7/1) comprised a 0.33m deep dark brown loose sandy silt; this contained sparse stone inclusions and some roots. This overlaid subsoil (7/2): a 0.52m deep mid-reddish-brown loose sandy silt containing sparse stone inclusions. The natural was a mid-grey fragmented shillet with some clay.

A possible utility trench filled with gravel was located in the area close to a manhole at the north-eastern end of the trench.

No archaeological features were found in Trench 7.

Trench 8 SW 58055 41277 to SW58039 41281

See Figures 3 & 4.

Trench 8 was 16.4m long, 1.6m wide and 0.85m deep.

The topsoil (8/1) comprised a 0.2m deep dark brown loose sandy silt containing sparse stone inclusions. The subsoil (8/2) was a 0.3m deep mid-brown loose sandy silt containing sparse stone inclusions; in turn this sat on what appeared to be an old ground surface (8/3) comprising a 0.3m deep mid-reddish-brown loose sandy silt with more common fragmented stone inclusions. This covered the natural: a mid-grey weathered stone.

The trench revealed several features:

A linear ditch [8/5], 0.5m wide and 0.5m deep, with straight sides displaying a 40 degree slope, and a concave base; the ditch had good edge definition and was orientated north to south. It contained a single fill (8/6): a 0.5m deep mid-reddish-brown plastic/compact silty clay containing sparse stone inclusions.

A circular pit [8/7] with shallow concave sides measuring 1.0m in diameter and 0.39m deep, having moderate edge definition and containing a single fill (8/8): a 0.39m deep mid-reddish-brown friable silty clay containing common stone inclusions.

Trench 9 SW 58045 41269 to SW58043 41262

See Figure 3.

Trench 9 was 9.0m long, 1.6m wide and 0.55m deep; this trench was shortened from its original length given that it crossed a track across the site which was still being used by the occupants of the remaining chalets.

The topsoil (9/1) was a 0.1m deep dark brown loose silt. This sat on the subsoil (9/2): a 0.4m deep mid-reddish-brown loose sandy silt containing sparse stone inclusions. The natural (9/3) was a pale grey, very fragmented stone layer.

No archaeological features were found in Trench 9.

Trench 10 SW 58031 41244 to SW58026 41229

See Figure 3.

Trench 10 was 15m long, 1.6m wide and 0.9m deep.

The topsoil (10/1) was a 0.1m deep organic dark brown loose sandy silt containing sparse stone inclusions. This overlaid three layers of subsoil (10/2): a 0.2m deep dark brown loose sandy silt with a very sandy content and sparse stone inclusions; (10/3): a 0.2m deep dark reddish-brown loose sandy silt with some stone inclusions whilst (10/4) was a 0.3m deep dark reddish-brown loose stony sandy silt containing larger stone inclusions. The natural (10/5) was a pale grey compact to fractured stony clay mix.

No archaeological features were found in Trench 10.

Trench 11 SW 57993 41219 to SW58007 41214

See Figure 3.

Trench 11 was 15m long, 1.6m wide and 1.5m deep.

The material in the upper part of the trench comprised (11/1): a 0.6m deep light greenish-yellow loose clay; this appeared to be re-deposited natural deriving from close proximity to the trench. This sat on top of the original modern ground surface (11/2): a 0.3m deep dark reddish-brown loose sandy silt containing modern plastic material. The subsoil (11/3) was a 0.4m deep dark reddish-brown loose sand. This covered (11/4): a 0.3m deep, light yellow loose sand which contained a single pot sherd (Figs 10 & 11) which has provisionally been dated as having been produced between the 15th and 16th centuries, a Cornish late medieval coarse ware. The natural was a light greenish-yellow sandy clay. Also present within the lower depths of the trench were lenses of very clean and often very dry yellow sand; the sand at the southern end of the trench appeared to be damper.

Trench 12 SW 58013 41207 to SW58026 41203

See Figures 3, 5, 12 & 13.

Trench 12 was 13m long, 1.6m wide and 0.7m deep.

The topsoil (12/1) was a 0.1m deep dark brown loose silt containing sparse stone inclusions. Two subsoils were present: (12/2), a 0.3m deep dark reddish brown loose sandy silt containing sparse stone inclusions whilst (12/3): a 0.2m deep dark brown friable clay/silt containing some larger fragments of stone and quartz. The natural was a pale grey stone/clay mix of weathered fragmented stone.

The trench revealed several features:

A 0.5m wide and 0.35m deep linear ditch [12/6] (Figs 8 and 9), with straight and almost vertical sides and a flat base with good edge definition; it was orientated north to south. Its fill (12/5) was a 0.35m deep dark brown loose silty clay containing common stone inclusions, including some quartz fragments.

A 0.42m wide and 0.25m deep linear ditch [12/8] running parallel to [12/6] with almost vertical straight sides, a flat base and exhibiting good edge definition. It was orientated north to south and contained a single fill: (12/7), a 0.25m deep dark brown loose silty clay containing common stone inclusions including quartz.

Trench 13 SW 58038 41196 to SW58043 41210

See Figure 3.

Trench 13 was 15m long, 1.6m wide and 0.83m deep.

The topsoil (13/1) was a 0.3m deep mid-brown firm sandy loam containing occasional stone inclusions and roots. The subsoil (13/2) was a 0.53m deep mid-reddish-yellow-brown silty sand containing occasional quartz stones, some flecks of charcoal and roots. This overlaid the natural: a light greenish-yellow friable sandy clay containing some quartz inclusions and larger quartz stones.

No archaeological features were found in Trench 13.

Trench 14 SW 58047 41228 to SW 58061 41222

See Figure 3.

Trench 14 was 16m long, 1.6m wide and 0.84m deep.

The topsoil (14/1) was a 0.3m deep mid-brown loose sandy silt containing occasional quartz inclusions, some roots and modern rubble. The subsoil (14/2) was a 0.24m deep mid-reddish-brown loose silty sand with sparse stone inclusions; some roots were present. The natural (14/3) was a pale greenish-yellow firm silty clay containing some quartz inclusions and larger quartz stones.

No archaeological features were found in Trench 14.

Trench 15 SW 58070 41260 to SW58072 41274

See Figure 3.

Trench 15 was 15m long, 1.6m wide and 0.6m deep. This trench was relocated from its planned position in front of the nearby chalet owing to the presence of buried power cables located by the CAT scanner.

The topsoil (15/1) was a 0.15m deep dark brown loose silt containing sparse stone inclusions, whilst the subsoil (15/2) was a 0.45m deep mid-brown loose sandy silt which included some mudstone fragments near the base of the trench; the natural (15/3) was a mid-grey fragmented stone clay.

No archaeological features were found in Trench 15.

Trench 16 SW 58086 41283 to SW58086 41284

See Figure 3.

Trench 16 was 9m long, 1.6m wide and 0.5m deep. This trench was truncated owing to its proximity to a hedge; indications of buried power cables were also revealed in the immediate area by the CAT scanner.

The topsoil (16/1) was a 0.25m deep mid-brown firm sandy silt containing occasional small stone inclusions, roots and a thin plastic (water) pipe. The subsoil (16/2) was a 0.25m deep mid-brown loose silty sand which included some small stone fragments. The natural (16/3) was a pale reddish-grey silty clay containing mudstone.

No archaeological features were found in Trench 16.

Trench 17 SW 58079 41307 to SW 58065 41309

See Figures 3 & 4.

Trench 17 was 14m long, 1.6m wide and 0.73m deep; this trench was moved given its proximity to overhead power lines.

The topsoil (17/1) was a 0.33m deep mid-brown firm sandy silt containing occasional fragments of stone, roots and modern refuse. The subsoil (17/2) was a 0.4m deep mid-reddish-brown friable silty sand containing some stone fragments and some root

intrusions. The natural (17/3) was a pale pinkish-grey compact silty clay with shillet fragments.

This trench revealed a single feature:

A linear ditch 0.6m wide, 0.24m deep, having concave sides, a U-shaped base and moderate edge definition; it was orientated north to south. It contained a single fill (17/4), this being a 0.24m deep mid-reddish-brown plastic sandy clay containing what appeared to be modern gravel. It was possibly part of a nearby modern soakaway.

6 Summary of results

Trench 1

Located in the south west corner of the site, this trench was sited at one of the lowest areas of the plot and was also one of the closest trenches to the beach and associated dunes. The ditches cut into the natural at this location were not dateable and no finds were recovered from either feature. They do, however, give a good indication of activity on the site before it was inundated by the stabilised sand dunes which now cover this area. The associated trench to the north (Trench 2) did not reveal any archaeological features.

Trench 4

Located in the north-western part of the site, this revealed a single ditch orientated east to west. This ditch was located on the western edge of the site and was slightly upslope to those found in Trench 1. The profile of the ditch differed from those in the other trenches and like them could not be dated, as no associated artefacts were recovered from the feature.

Trenches 5, 6 & 17

These trenches were in close proximity to former chalets and all appeared to contain the remains of modern soakaways. The trenches in the northern edge of the site all revealed sections of modern drains; two manhole covers were found in this general area, suggesting a partly-formalised sewerage system associated with some of the former chalets.

Trench 8

This contained a pit and ditch; neither produced any dateable material.

Trench 11

Located in the south-west corner of the site, this trench did not reveal any features of an archaeological nature, but did give a good indication of the depth of the sand covering this area of the site. Multiple layers of this material were recorded, whilst a single sherd of pottery (Figs 10 & 11) recovered from the basal layer suggested human activity within this area between the late 15th and the early 16th century. This trench is in relatively close proximity to the dunes to the south.

Trench 12

This contained two parallel ditches; the trench was in the middle of the slope running down to the west. Although continuations of these two ditches were not recorded in any of the other evaluation trenches they seem likely to represent elements of a wider system of former field boundaries of unknown date.

7 Summary

Although only a small number of sections of linear boundaries were found and a single fragment of late medieval pottery was retrieved from these evaluation trenches, the recording work threw some light onto the development of the dune system at Gwithian and the nature and date of some of the human activity that preceded the inundation of this area by blown sand. The ditched remains of former field boundaries could not be dated by artefactual material, and could have been created at any point between the Bronze Age and the medieval period. However, the late medieval potsherd recovered from a ground surface subsequently covered by sand indicates that the dune inundation at this location must have begun after the late 15th century.

In places the sand depths were considerable (they reduced in depth from the base to the top of the slope); no still-stand episodes were identified which would indicate that topsoils had temporarily developed prior to further sand inundation. Although the area prior to the sand inundation had been suitable for agriculture, once the dunes began to migrate across this site this was no longer possible until perhaps the early 19th century when the stabilised dunes were enclosed; these later fields are likely to have been used for light grazing rather than the growing of crops, given the almost pure sand found in many places beneath the shallow topsoil cover. Norden (1728) mentions how agricultural activities around Gwithian were often compromised by sand inundations: *Gwithian … is a parish standing nere St Ives baye, much annoyed with the sea sande, which lyeth at a low water with the winde out of the choaked hauen into the Lande, swallowing vp muche of the lande of the inhabitants, to their great impouerishment.'*

Likewise, Lysons (1814) mentioned a sand inundation in about 1720 which was so sudden and large-scale that the occupants of Upton Farm only escaped being buried alive by climbing out of their upstairs windows. The farmhouse was subsequently completely buried by sand and had to be abandoned.

The archaeological evaluation of this area was restricted to sample trenches across the footprints of the proposed 17 new chalets. Trenches 1, 4, 8 and 12 revealed shallow, narrow ditches which seem to represent elements of one or more early field systems, whose extent appears to be confined to the lower slopes of the plot. Further elements of these early boundary features are likely to survive elsewhere within the development site.

That only one artefact was found during the evaluation trenching is perhaps not surprising given the long marginality of this area of stabilised dunes near the coast.

8 References

8.1 Primary sources

Ordnance Survey, MasterMap Topography

8.2 Publications

Lysons, Rev. D. 1814, *A topographical and historical account of the County of Cornwall*

Norden, J. 1728, *Speculi Britanni Pars: a topographical and historical description of Cornwall, Google Books ebook*

Nowakowski, J.N., Quinnell, H., Sturgess, J. Thomas, C. and Thorpe, C., 2007, Return to Gwithian: shifting the sands of time', *Corn. Arch* **46***, 13-90*

Sharpe, A 2017. *Morrops Field, Gwithian Towans, Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological recording*, Cornwall Council

Walker, T.M, forthcoming, *Molluscs and archaeology on coastal sand dunes*, British Archaeological Reports

8.3 Websites

http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/ Online database of Sites and Monuments Records, and Listed Buildings

9 Project archive

The CAU project number is **146718**

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.

Electronic data is stored in the following locations:

Project admin: \\Sites\Sites G\Gwithian Morrops Field WB Haldons

Digital photographs: \\Historic Environment (Images)\Sites E-H\Sites G\Gwithian Morrops Field 2017

Black & white photos: GBP 2408

Drawings: GRE 888

Electronic drawings: \\Historic Environment (CAD)\CAD Archive\Sites G\Gwithian Morrops Field 2017

Historic England/ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2-300845

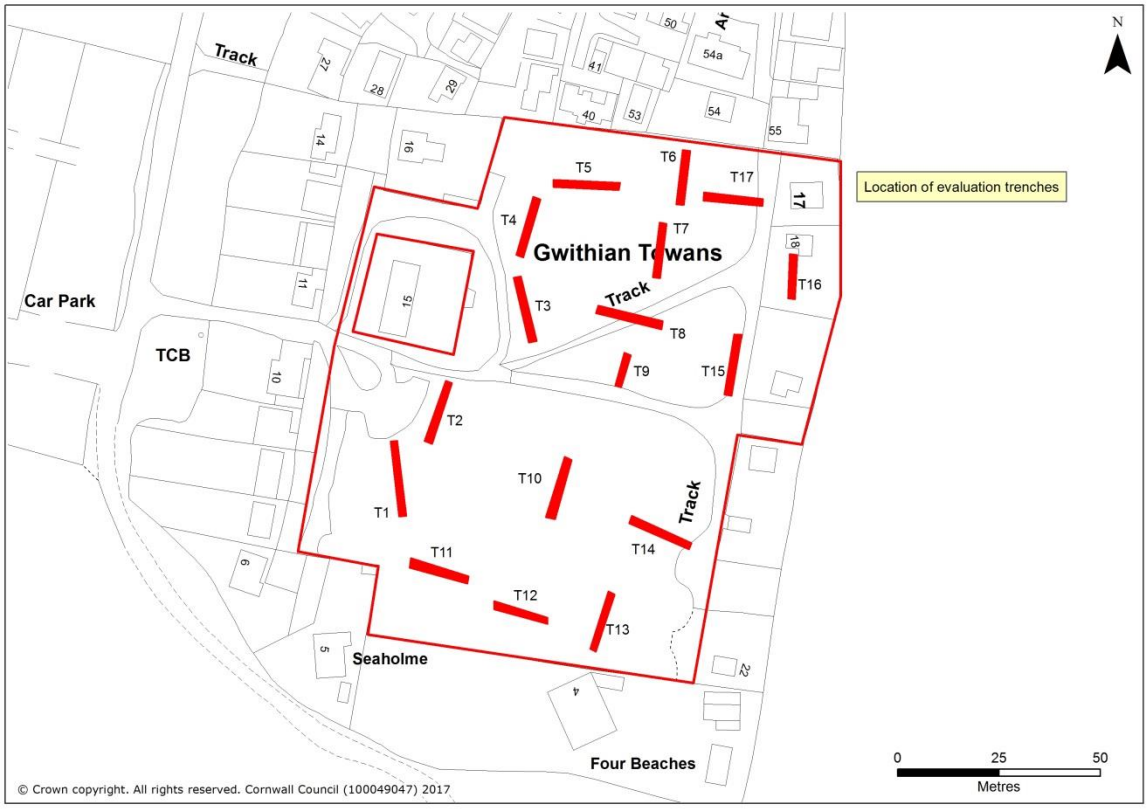

Figure 3: Location of trenches excavated.

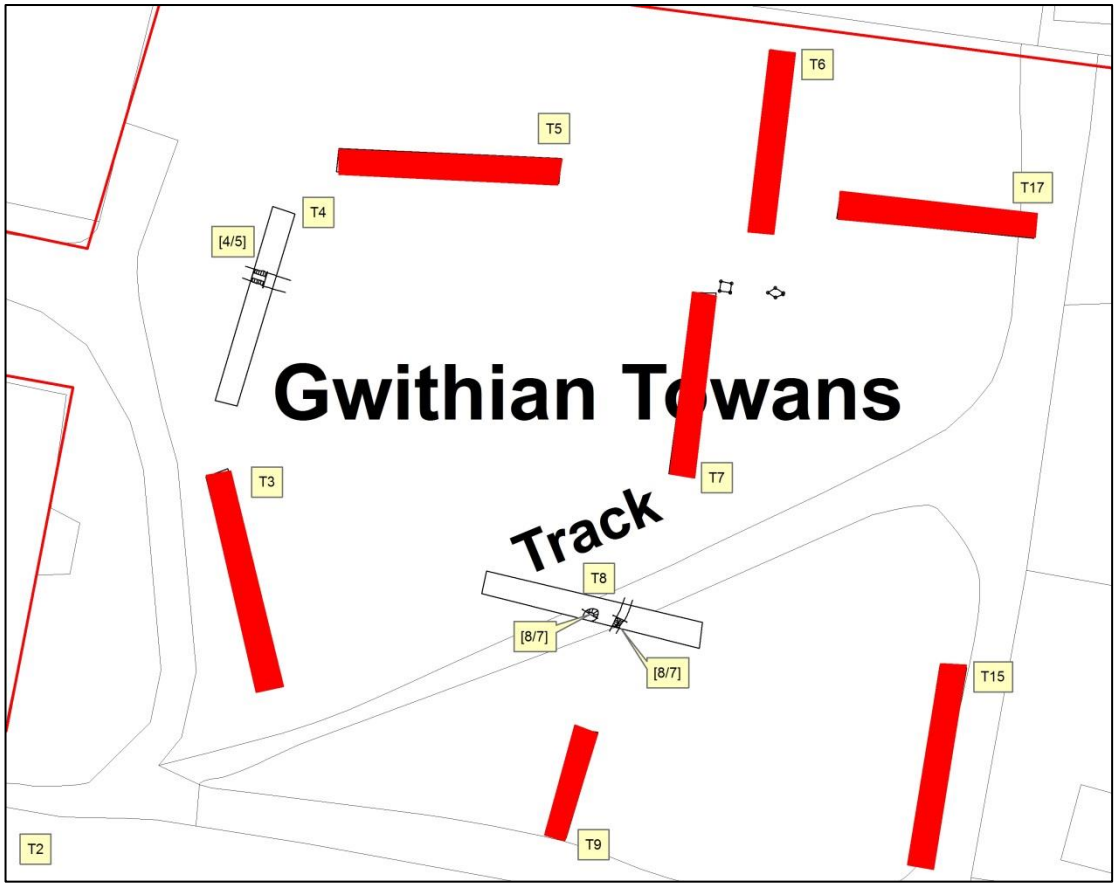

Figure 4: North end of site showing trenches with features and projected paths of ditches (Trenches 4 & 8).

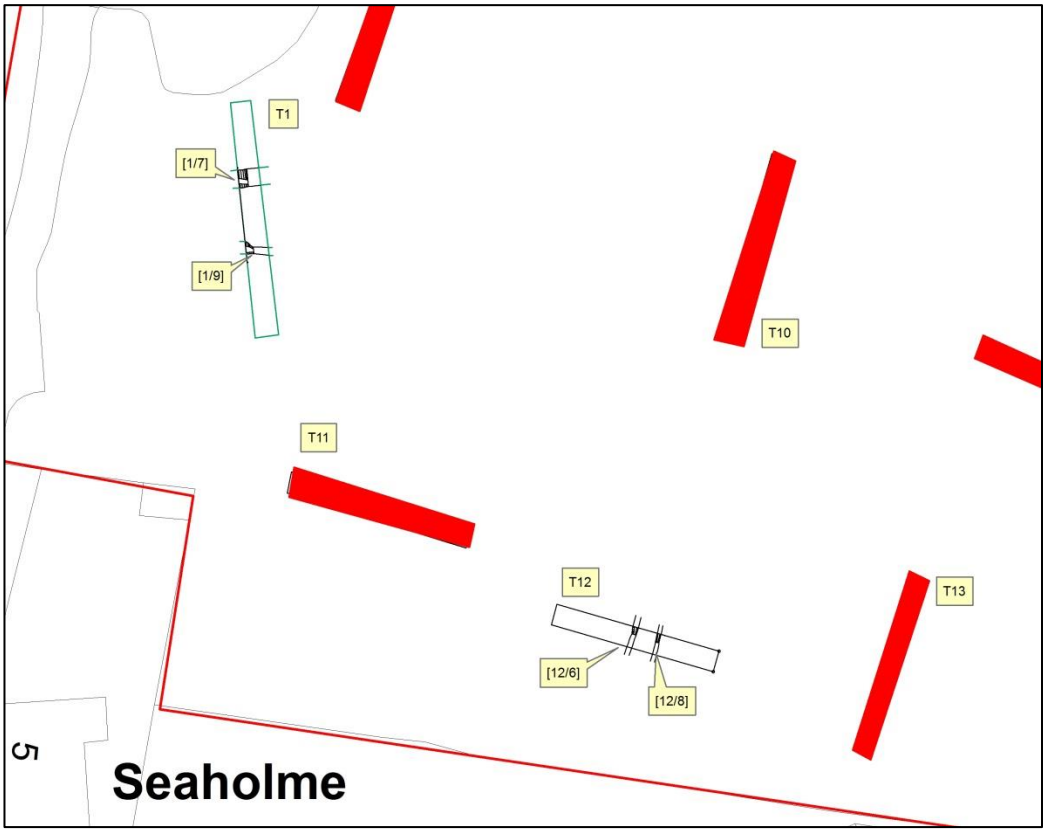

Figure 5: South end of site showing trenches with features and projected paths of ditches (Trenches 1 & 12).

Figure 6: Post excavation image of ditch [1/7] in trench 1.

Figure 8: Post excavation image showing plan of ditch [1/9] and continuation of fill (1/8) in trench 1.

Figure 7: Post excavation image of ditch [12/6] in trench 12.

Figure 9: Section image of ditch [12/6] in trench 12 showing fill (12/5) and upper sandy silt layer.

Figure 10: Front view of sherd recovered from trench 11 context (11/4).

Figure 11: Base view of sherd recovered from trench 11 (11/4).

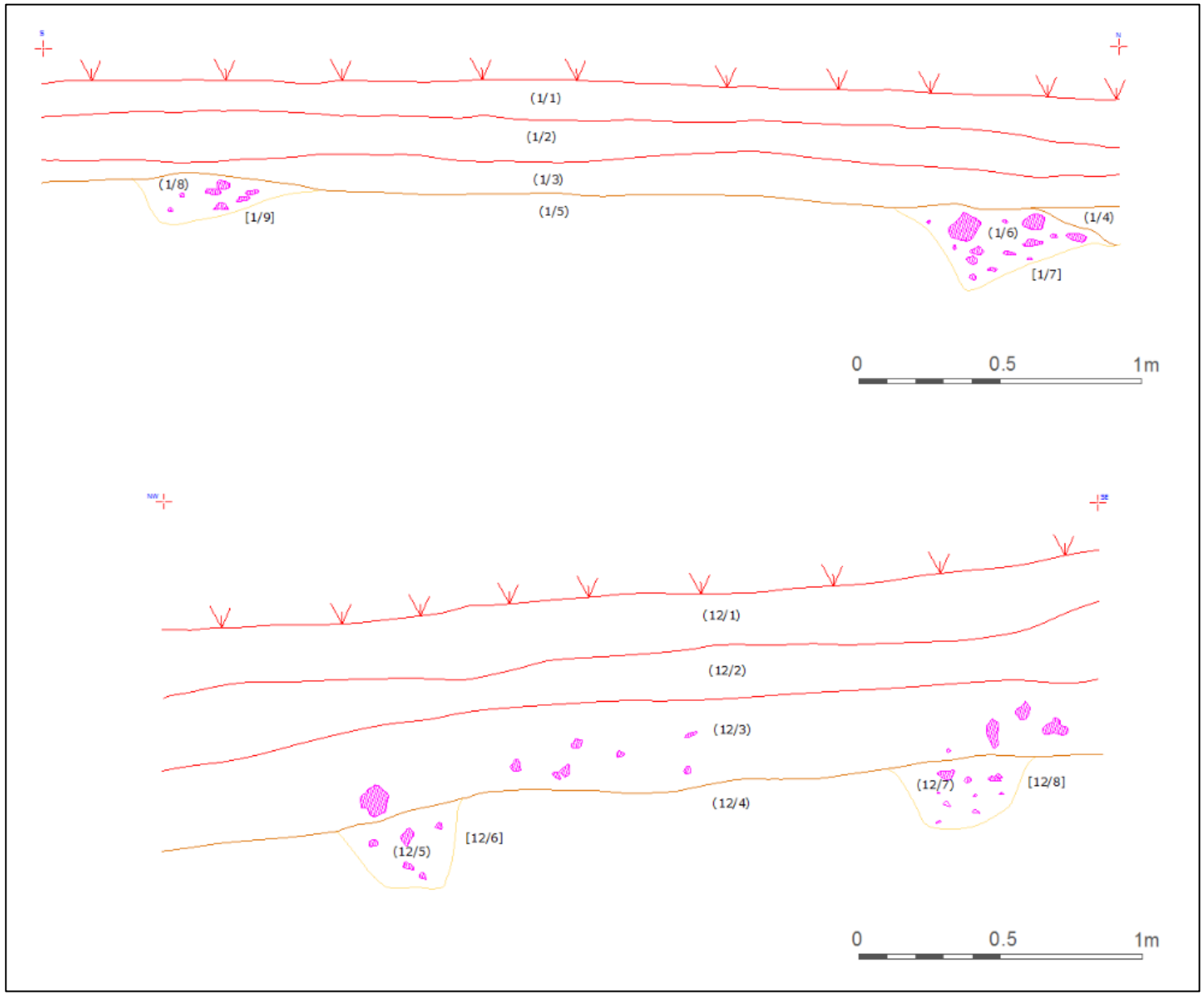

Figure 12: Section drawings for trench 1 (top) and trench 12 (below).

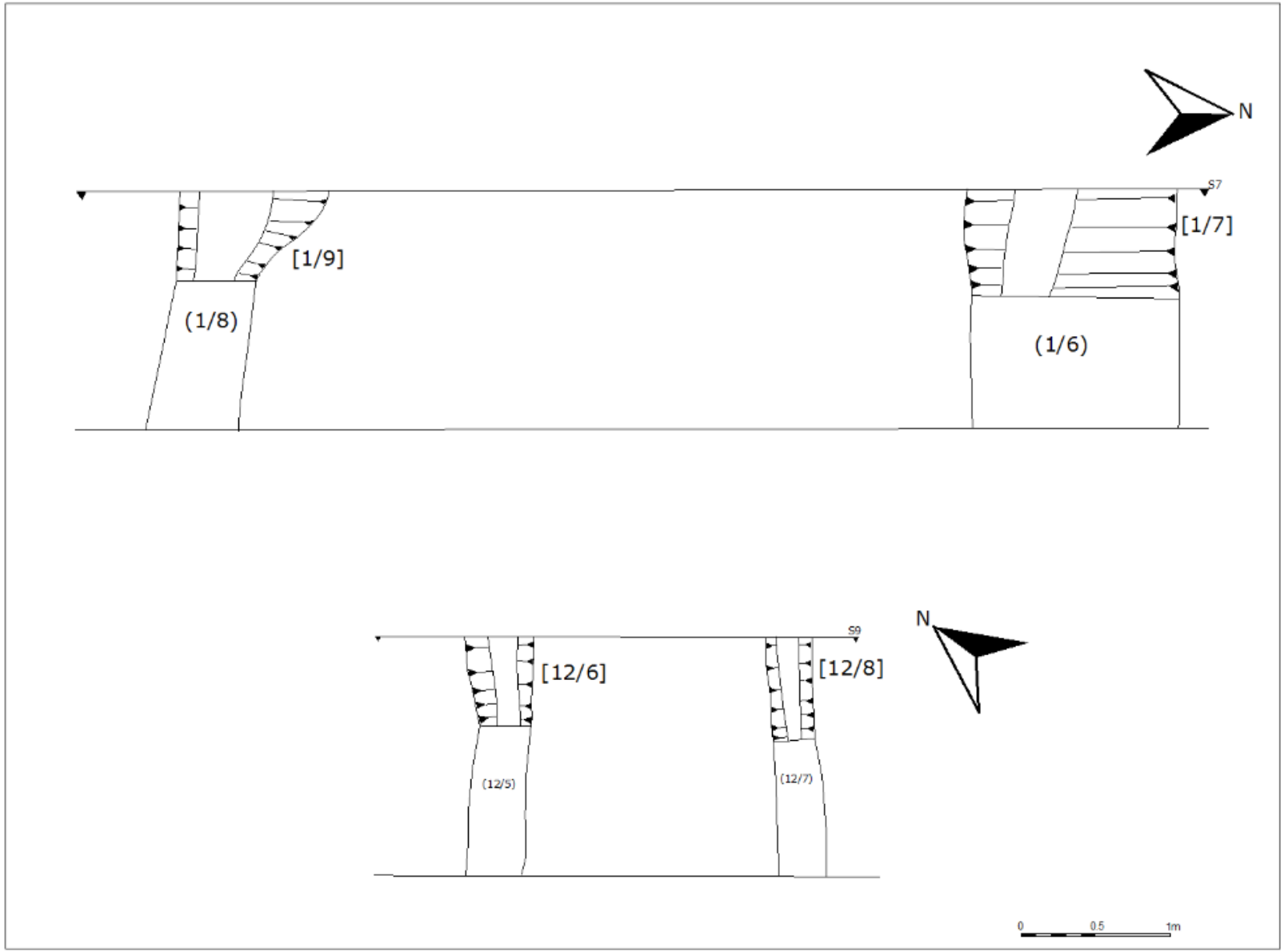

Figure 13: Post excavation plans of trench 1 and trench 12 showing ditches [1/9], [1/7], [12/6] & [12/8].

Context No	Context type	**D**eposit or **C**ut	Description
1/1	Topsoil	D	A dark brown almost black organic deposit of decayed organic material, 0.1m in depth, loose almost silty.
1/2	Subsoil	D	A dark brown loose sandy silt, 0.3m in depth, sparse stone inclusions.
1/3	Subsoil	D	A mid to dark brown loose sand, less soil than (1/2), 0.1m in depth.
1/4	Subsoil	D	A dark yellowish brown plastic clay silt, 0.2m in depth, some quartz stone, appears to be an old ground surface.
1/5	Natural	D	A mid greyish brown friable stony clay, common stone inclusions.
1/6	Fill	D	Fill of ditch [1/7], a dark reddish brown plastic/friable silty clay, varying depth between 0.3-0.5m. Common large stone inclusions. No sand within the deposit.
1/7	Ditch	C	Cut of a ditch, measuring 1.1m wide at the top and 0.35m at the base; the ditch comprised a deeper gulley to the south with a shallow shelf 0.5m wide to its north. The shelf was 0.5m wide and had a steeply-rising side 0.2m high. The side of the deeper part of the ditch was 0.5m high; it had a flattish base. All features were cut into the natural. The ditch was orientated north-west to south-east, and had well defined edges.
1/8	Fill	D	Fill of ditch [1/9], a mid-yellowish-red-brown friable silty clay, 0.2m deep. Contained some larger stone inclusions <0.05m in size.
1/9	Ditch	C	Linear feature, straight sided, flat base, 0.6-0.9m wide, splayed at one end, 0.2m in depth. East to west orientation with good edge definition.
2/1	Topsoil	D	A mid reddish-brown loose silty clay, 0.25m deep, some organic intrusion with roots.
2/2	Subsoil	D	A mid reddish-brown loose silty clay, 0.4m deep, some organic intrusion with roots.
2/3	Subsoil	D	A mid reddish- brown plastic sandy clay, containing stone inclusions, 0.3m deep.
2/4	Natural	D	A light yellowish grey plastic sandy clay, common stone inclusions, weathered fragments of mudstone.
3/1	Topsoil	D	A mid reddish-brown loose silty clay, 0.2m deep, some organic intrusion with roots.

Context No	Context type	**D**eposit or **C**ut	Description
3/2	Subsoil	D	A mid reddish-brown plastic sandy clay, containing stone inclusions, 0.3m deep.
3/3	Subsoil	D	A mid reddish-brown loose silty clay, 0.45m deep,
3/4	Natural	D	A light yellowish-grey plastic sandy clay, common stone inclusions, weathered mudstone fragments.
4/1	Topsoil	D	A mid reddish-brown loose silty clay, 0.3m deep, <2% small stone inclusions, mudstone and some quartz fragments, organic intrusion with roots.
4/2	Subsoil	D	A mid reddish-brown loose sandy silt, 0.3m deep.
4/3	Subsoil	D	A mid reddish-brown loose sandy silt, 0.4m deep, common stone inclusions, occasional root inclusions.
4/4	Natural	D	A light yellowish-grey plastic sandy clay, common stone inclusions, weathered stone fragments mudstone.
4/5	Ditch	C	Cut of a linear feature, ditch, concave sides, concave base, east to west orientation, 1.0m wide, 0.28m deep. Moderate edge definition.
4/6	Fill	D	A mid reddish-brown friable sandy silt, 0.38m deep, containing stone inclusions.
5/1	Topsoil	D	A mid brown friable sandy silt, 0.33m deep, occasional small stone inclusions, some root intrusion.
5/2	Subsoil	D	A mid reddish-yellowish-brown friable silty sand, occasional small stone inclusions, occasional roots, 0.47m deep.
5/3	Subsoil	D	A mid brownish-red plastic silty sand, 0.1m deep, occasional fragments of shillet, possibly a buried soil.
5/4	Natural	D	A mid grey shillet, common stone inclusions with silty clay.
5/5	Soakaway	D	A dark grey gravel relating to a modern sewage system. 100% stone.
6/1	Topsoil	D	A dark brown friable sandy silt, 0.2m deep, sparse stone inclusions.
6/2	Subsoil	D	Mid reddish-brown plastic sandy silt, 0.23m deep, sparse stone inclusions.
6/3	Natural	D	Pale grey loose stone clay mix, weathered mudstone.
7/1	Topsoil	D	A dark brown loose sandy silt, 0.33m deep, some root intrusions.

Context No	Context type	**D**eposit or **C**ut	Description
7/2	Subsoil	D	A mid reddish-brown loose sandy silt, 0.52m deep.
7/3	Natural	D	A mid grey loose stone, friable weathered mudstone fragmented mixed sizes.
8/1	Topsoil	D	A dark brown loose sandy silt, 0.2m deep.
8/2	Subsoil	D	A mid brown loose sandy silt, 0.1m deep.
8/3	Subsoil	D	A mid reddish-brown loose sandy soil, 0.1m deep, some stone inclusions, possible an old topsoil.
8/4	Natural	D	Mid grey shillet, very weathered and fractured.
8/5	Ditch	C	A linear feature, straight sided, concave base, 0.5m wide, 0.5m deep, 1.0m long, good edge definition, north to south orientation.
8/6	Fill	D	A mid reddish- brown plastic/compact silty clay, 0.5m deep, sparse stone inclusions,.
8/7	Ditch	C	A circular linear feature, concave profile, concave shallow sides with a concave base, 1.0m in diameter, 0.39m deep.
8/8	Fill	D	A mid reddish- brown friable silty clay, common mudstone inclusions, 0.39m deep.
9/1	Topsoil	D	A dark brown loose silt, 0.1m deep.
9/2	Sub soil	D	A mid reddish-brown loose sandy silt, 0.4m deep, sparse stone inclusions.
9/3	Natural	D	A pale grey compacted broken and weathered shillet, fragmented pieces of mudstone.
10/1	Topsoil	D	A dark organic brown loose sandy silt, sparse stone inclusions, 0.1m deep.
10/2	Subsoil	D	A dark brown loose sandy silt, 0.2m deep, very sandy content.
10/3	Subsoil	D	A dark reddish-brown loose sandy silt, 0.2m deep, some smaller stone inclusions, mudstone.
10/4	Subsoil	D	A dark brown loose stony/sandy silt with larger stone inclusions, 0.3m deep.
10/5	Natural	D	Pale grey loose stone/clay mix, weathered mudstone.
11/1	Redeposited natural	D	A light greenish-yellow friable stony clay, 0.6m deep, redeposited natural from an excavation nearby.

Context No	Context type	**D**eposit or **C**ut	Description
11/2	Buried topsoil	D	A dark reddish-brown loose sandy silt, 0.3m deep, contained modern rubbish fragments including plastic bags.
11/3	Subsoil	D	A dark reddish-brown loose sand, 0.4m deep.
11/4	Subsoil	D	A light yellowish loose sand, 0.3m deep, piece of probably medieval pot recovered from this context.
11/5	Natural	D	A light greenish -yellow friable sandy clay.
11/6	Sand	D	Above (11/5), lenses of clean yellowish very loose and dry beach sand, not consistent in layering or location.
12/1	Topsoil	D	A dark brown loose silt, 0.1m deep, sparse stone inclusions.
12/2	Subsoil	D	A dark reddish-brown loose sandy silt, 0.3m deep, sparse stone inclusions.
12/3	Subsoil	D	A dark brown friable clay silt, <5% stone inclusions, larger pieces of weathered mudstone and some quartz fragments, 0.2m deep.
12/4	Natural	D	A pale grey compact stone/clay mix, weathered mudstone fragments of varying sizes.
12/5	Fill	D	A dark brown loose silty clay, <5% stone inclusions, containing larger piece of mudstone and some quartz, 0.35m deep.
12/6	Ditch	C	Cut of linear feature, 1.6m long, 0.5m wide, 0.3m deep, U-shaped profile, straight sides, flat base, good edge definition, north to south orientation.
12/7	Fill	D	A dark brown loose silty clay, common (5%) stone inclusions, quartz and mudstone fragments, 0.25m deep.
12/8	Ditch	C	A linear feature, straight sided, flat base, 1.6m long, 0.42m wide, 0.3m deep. Good edge definition, north to south orientation.
13/1	Topsoil	D	A mid brown firm sandy loam, occasional small stones, some roots and remnants of a field drain, 0.3m deep.
13/2	Subsoil	D	A mid reddish-yellow-brown friable silty sand, occasional fragments of quartz, some occasional flecks of charcoal, roots, 0.23m deep.
13/3	Natural	D	A light greenish yellow friable sandy clay, large pieces of quartz included.
14/1	Topsoil	D	A mid brown loose sandy silt, 0.3m deep, occasional fragments of quartz, frequent roots, some modern rubble.

Context No	Context type	**D**eposit or **C**ut	Description
14/2	Subsoil	D	A mid reddish-brown loose sandy silt, 0.24m deep, containing occasional roots.
14/3	Natural	D	A pale greenish-yellow firm silty clay, with larger fragments of quartz.
15/1	Topsoil	D	A dark brown loose silt organic mix, sparse stone inclusions, 0.15m deep.
15/2	Sub soil	D	A mid brown loose sandy silt, 0.45m deep in places, lower part contained larger pieces of mudstone.
15/3	Natural	D	A mid grey broken stone/clay mix, weathered stone fragments.
16/1	Topsoil	D	A mid brown firm sandy silt, 0.25m deep, occasional stone inclusions, grass roots and a modern pipe within the deposit.
16/2	Subsoil	D	A mid brown silty sand mix, 0.25m deep, occasional fragments of mudstone.
16/3	Natural	D	A pale grey silty clay mudstone fragments.
17/1	Topsoil	D	A mid brown firm sandy silt loam mix, 0.33m deep, occasional stone inclusions, roots and modern refuse.
17/2	Sub soil	D	A mid reddish-brown friable silty clay, occasional fragments of slate 0.4m deep, some bioturbation present.
17/3	Natural	D	A pale pinkish-grey compact silty clay, shillet fragments.
17/4	Fill	D	A mid reddish-brown plastic sand clay mixed with modern aggregate, 0.24m deep.
17/5	Ditch	C	A linear ditch, concave sides, concave base, 0.24m deep, moderate edge definition, north to south orientation.

Table 1: List of contexts.

Appendix 1: Written Scheme of Investigation for Morrops field, Gwithian Towans.

Project background

Cornwall Archaeological Unit were requested by Mr Mark Coton to provide a project design and cost estimate for archaeological recording to be undertaken ahead of the construction of 17 new holiday chalets at Morrops Field, Gwithian (centred at SW 58017 41261, Fig 1). The development will cover an area of approximately 11 Ha and is sited in an area whose ground surface consists of stabilised wind-blown sand and a sand/soil mix; the site adjoins Gwithian Sands to the west of Gwithian Churchtown and currently sites a chalet park.

A Heritage Statement produced for this proposed development did not identify any archaeological sites in the immediate project area, and map regression has shown that the area had been enclosed as a field since at least the mid-nineteenth century (Gwithian Tithe Award mapping evidence). However, the surrounding area is rich in buried prehistoric and early medieval sites, which may survive below ground. The calcareous sandy soils that cover the area to be occupied by the site also have the potential to preserve organic deposits, such as bone, which do not normally survive in Cornwall's acidic soil conditions.

These investigations are required as a condition attached to planning application PA16/09938. This states that:

A) No demolition/development shall take place/commence until a programme of archaeological work including a Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions, and: 1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording, 2. The programme for post investigation assessment, 3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording, 4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation, 5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation, and 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation. B) No demolition/development shall take place other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A). C) The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (A) and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured. D) The archaeological recording condition will normally only be discharged when all elements of the WSI including on site works, analysis, report, publication (where applicable) and archive work has been completed.

Reason: To ensure that provision is made to record finds of archaeological interest in accordance with the aims and intentions of paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

The SDOHE recommended that the development area should be subject to an archaeological watching brief and has been consulted in the preparation of this project design. In the event evaluation trenching was substituted for the watching brief at this stage of the development.

Aims and objectives

The principal aim of the study is to gain a better understanding of the development area. The objectives are to:

- To ensure that the site works associated with the development are carried out in such a way as to allow adequate recording.
- To record archaeological features and deposits affected by the scheme.
- To recover and record artefacts uncovered by the works.
- To disseminate the results of discoveries appropriately.

The development area has the potential to contain important buried archaeological sites. The archaeological investigation of this area therefore provides an opportunity to better understand the character and potential of this resource by recording sites and features affected by it.

Key objectives are:

- To locate and record prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval settlement activity within the area of the proposed development.

Working methods

All recording work will be undertaken according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording.* Staff will follow 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.

Fieldwork: evaluation trenching

A programme of evaluation trenching will be undertaken comprising 17 trenches. The work will be guided by CIfA's guidance on undertaking field evaluation (CIfA 2014a).

Trenches will be laid out to British National Grid coordinates using a Leica GNSS device. Prior to excavation trenches will be scanned by a suitably trained operative with a CAT scanner to identify buried services. Adjustment of trench locations that may subsequently be necessary will be confirmed with the SDOHE prior to excavation.

All trenching will be undertaken under professional archaeological supervision and the machine in use will be fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Each trench will be excavated cleanly down to a level at which archaeological features or layers can be expected to be revealed (for instance, the top of the 'natural'). The trench will then be inspected by an archaeologist and any archaeological features or layers exposed within it will be carefully excavated by hand and archaeologically recorded by written description, plan, section, and photographic record as appropriate by a CAU archaeologist. Spoil will be examined for artefacts visually.

In the case of trenches containing no archaeologically significant features and deposits a *pro-forma* CAU trench record sheet will be filled in, which will include descriptions of soil horizons, measurements, and a sketch section. A record photo of the trench, to include at least one long section, will be taken.

In the case of trenches containing archaeologically significant features and deposits a record will be made as for negative trenches plus further excavation and recording as follows:

- Features will be excavated only as much as is necessary to evaluate their significance and phasing. In the case of small discrete features (postholes, pits, etc. <1m in diameter) as many of these as is necessary to evaluate them will be fully excavated (excepting large numbers of very small features such as stakeholes which will be subject to a lower sampling frequency).
- Larger discrete features (pits >1m) will be half-sectioned.
- Linear/curvilinear features will have 1m wide sections excavated, where practical, in sufficient quantity to evaluate the feature.
- Human remains will not be excavated.

During the archaeological recording the archaeologist will:

- Identify and record any archaeological features that are revealed; 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 will 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 uncovered during the groundworks. The significance of the remains will be agreed between the client, the Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment) and CAU.

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 MasterMap (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 photography will be used as the main record medium. This will include both general and site specific photographs. Photographs should have a scale and detailed ones should include a north arrow. A photographic register will be kept, giving feature number, location and direction of shot.
- 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 the Historic England Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science.

Fieldwork: photographic recording

Photographic recording will include colour photography using a digital SLR camera (with a resolution of 10 million pixels or higher) and/or black and white film photography with a SLR camera.

CAU follows Historic England guidance on digital image capture and file storage (2015).

The photo record will comprise:

- General views.
- Examples of structural and architectural detail.

Methodology for the archive standard photography is set out as follows:

- Photographs of details will be taken with lenses of appropriate focal length.
- A tripod will be used to take advantage of natural light and slower exposures.
- Difficulties of back-lighting will be dealt with where necessary by balancing natural lighting by the use of flash.
- A metric scale will be included in all views, except where health and safety considerations make this impractical.

Creation of site archive

To include:

- Any black and white negative film will be catalogued and deposited with the site archive.
- Colour digital images taken as part of the site archive will either be converted from colour to black and white negative film and added to the site archive, or will be deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).
- A detailed site description.
- Preparation of finished drawings.
- Completion of the Historic England/ADS OASIS online archive index.

Archive report

A written report will include:

- Summary
- Project background
- Aims and objectives
- Methodology
- Location and setting
- Designations
- Site history
- Archaeological results
- Chronology/dating evidence
- Conclusions
- References
- Project archive index
- Supporting illustrations: location map, historic maps, plans, elevations/sections, photographs

A digital (PDF) copy of the report, illustrations and any other files will be deposited with the Cornwall Historic Environment Record (HER). Paper copies of the report will be distributed to the client, to local archives and national archaeological record centres.

Assessment and analysis

In the event of significant archaeological sites, artefacts or paleoarchaeological material being revealed and requiring excavation, there will be a requirement for the assessment and analysis of material recovered during the fieldwork phase, and for specialist reports to be produced on the results of these analyses. A separate WSI will be produced covering the methodologies to be employed during such a post-fieldwork stage, should it be required.

Publication in a national journal

In the event that significant features or artefacts are revealed during the excavation progress, the Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment) may require reporting in a national journal such as *Cornish Archaeology*. Should such an eventuality arise, the scope of any such reporting would be agreed with the SDO(HE) in writing.

Archive deposition

An index to the site archive will be created and the archive contents prepared for long term storage, in accordance with CAU standards.

The archiving will comprise the following:

1. All correspondence relating to the project, the WSI, a single paper copy of the report together with an electronic copy on CD, stored in an archive standard (acid-free) documentation box.
2. A2 drawn archive storage (plastic wallets for the annotated record drawings).
3. The project archive will be deposited initially at ReStore PLC, Liskeard and in due course (when space permits) at Cornwall Record Office.
4. Digital data will be stored on the Cornwall Council network which is regularly and frequently backed up.

CAU uses the following file formats for stored digital data:

DOCX	Word processed documents
XLSX	Spreadsheets
PDF	Exports of completed documents/reports/graphics
JPG	Site graphics and scanned information
DNG or TIF	Digital photographs
DWG	AutoCAD drawings, measured surveys
MXD	ArcView GIS (electronic mapping) data
AI	Adobe Illustrator graphics

Timetable

The study is anticipated to be commenced in September 2017. CAU will require at least three weeks' notice before commencement of work, in order to allocate field staff and arrange other logistics.

The archive report will be completed within 3 months of the end of the fieldwork. The deposition of the archive will be completed within 3 months of the completion of the archive report.

Monitoring and Signing Off Condition

Monitoring of the project will be carried out by the Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment). Where the SDO(HE) is satisfied with the archive report and the deposition of the archive written discharge of the planning condition will be expected.

1. The SDO(HE) will monitor the work and will be kept regularly informed of progress.
2. Notification of the start of work will be given (preferably in writing) to the SDO(HE) at least one week in advance of its commencement.
3. Any variations to the WSI must be agreed with the SDO(HE), in writing, prior to them being carried out.

4. If significant detail is discovered, all works must cease within the affected area and a meeting convened with the client and the SDO(HE) to discuss the most appropriate way forward.

Monitoring points during the study will include:

- Approval of the WSI
- Completion of fieldwork
- Completion of archive report
- Deposition of the archive

References

Historic England 2007. *Understanding the Archaeology of Landscapes: A guide to good recording practice. Historic England*, Swindon

Historic England 2015. *Guidance note on Digital Image Capture and File Storage. Historic England*, Swindon

Adam Sharpe
Projects Archaeologist
3rd July 2017

Cornwall Archaeological Unit
[redacted]

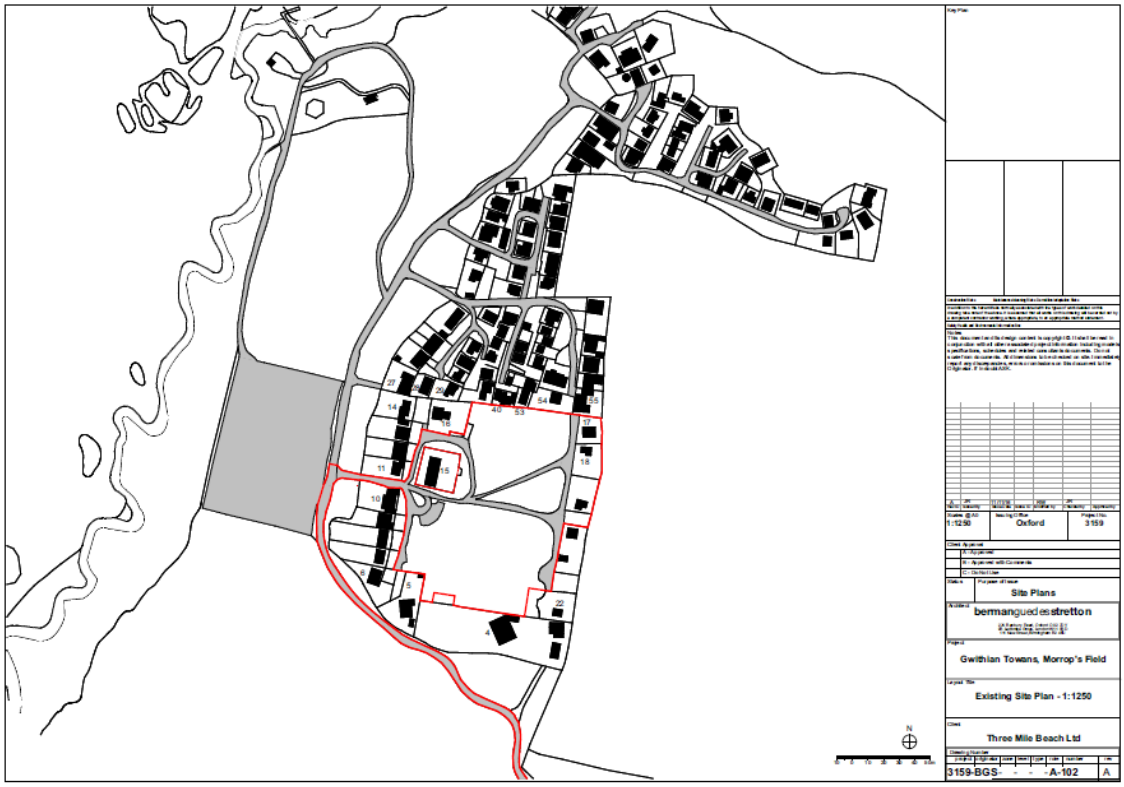

Fig. Location of site.

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