



Site Name: Landrake Church, Cornwall, Western Power, Archaeological Watching Brief. PL12 5ET.

Grid ref (10-fig): SX 37402 60505

Report Nos: 2017R091

Parish: Landrake and St Erney

PA & Condition No: N/A

Site Type: Churchyard

Period: Medieval

Form: Archaeological Watching Brief.

Description:

In November 2017 Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU), Cornwall Council was commissioned by David James of Western Power Distribution (South West) plc to undertake archaeological recording during groundworks associated with the replacement of two electricity poles within the churchyard at St Michael's Church, Landrake (SX 37402 60505) (Fig 1).

St Michael's Church lies close to the centre of the medieval settlement of Landrake which is first mentioned in 1018 AD (Gover 1948). It is within the ecclesiastical parish of Landrake and St Erney. The Church lies on the side of a small valley that connects with the River Tiddy, a tributary of the River Lynher which it joins at St Germans. The ground slopes to the northwest from a height of 99m OD to 97m OD. The two poles were located adjacent to the eastern churchyard boundary wall, Pit 1 at SX 37416 60516 within a small garden bed, and Pit 2 on the churchyard bank at SX 37418 60501 (Fig 2).

The underlying geology consists of Devonian mudstone, siltstone, and sandstone of the Torpoint Formation (BGS Sheet 348 Plymouth).

St Michael's Church was built in the Norman period (Beacham and Pevsner 2014, 266-7). The majority of the church is of 15th century date that underwent some restoration in the 19th century. However, the site is almost certainly of earlier, pre-Norman origin. The settlement of Landrake is first recorded in a charter of Cnut, when the name is spelt Lanhertun (Hooke 1994, 55-62). The place-name contains the Cornish place-name element lannergh, 'clearing' with Old English tūn, 'estate' (Padel 1988, 105). Despite the initial 'lan', the name is not Cornish lann, 'enclosed cemetery, church site'; nonetheless Landrake was the site of an Anglo-Saxon manor and as such will have had a manorial church. Like other churches in Cornwall identified by Preston-Jones (1994, 79-81) its partially rectilinear boundary retaining a high graveyard wall may represent the enclosure of the early church serving the Anglo-Saxon manor. As the pits were located close to the limits of the churchyard and were therefore possibly upon the early enclosure bank, it was considered that there was potential for medieval features to survive, along with the possibility that dating information could be recovered from the boundary.

Pit 1 was excavated by mini digger and by hand, while Pit 2 was hand-dug. The pits were inspected by an archaeologist in order to record any significant features onto an annotated Ordnance Survey map at a scale of 1:200 (Fig 2). Notes on the site stratigraphy were made and photographs were taken during the course of the work. The ground and displaced soil was also examined for artefacts.

Pit 1 measured 2m x 1m and reached a maximum depth of 1.93m (Fig 3). The recorded section (from top to bottom) consisted of 0.05m of black-brown organic topsoil overlying 0.15m of grey-brown clay loam that overlaid approximately 0.2m of yellow-brown clay with some stone fragments. This in turn was on top of a yellow, orange-brown clay and stone layer, the decayed natural bedrock that continued to the base of the trench.

Pit 2 was 0.3m in diameter and was excavated to a depth of 1.52m (Fig 4). The recorded section was found to consist of 0.05m of grass, roots and topsoil, overlying 0.1m of grey-brown clay loam, and 0.3m of pale grey-brown clay with stone fragments. This overlay a yellow, orange-brown clay layer with stone fragments, the decayed natural bedrock that continued to the base of the trench.

No archaeological features or artefacts were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

References

- Beacham, P and Pevsner, N, 2014. *The Buildings of England: Cornwall*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Hooke, D, 1994. *Pre-Conquest charters of Devon and Cornwall*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press.
Padel, O J, 1988. *A Popular dictionary of Cornish Place-Names*. Penzance: Alison Hodge
Preston-Jones, A, 1994. De-coding Cornish Churchyards, *Cornish Archaeology* 33, 71-9.5.

The CAU project number is **146748**

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 (146748).
2. Field plans stored in an A2-size plastic envelope (GRE 896/1-2).
3. Digital photographs stored in the directory: CAU\Live Projects\Landrake Church. Western Power 2017 WB. 146748\Data\Images\Watching brief 7th December 2017
4. This report text is held in digital form as: CAU\Live Projects\Landrake Church. Western Power 2017 WB. 146748\Report

Land Use (Area): Churchyard

Land Use (Site): Garden flower bed. Churchyard

OASIS No. cornwall2-304174

Date of Site Visit: 07/12/2017

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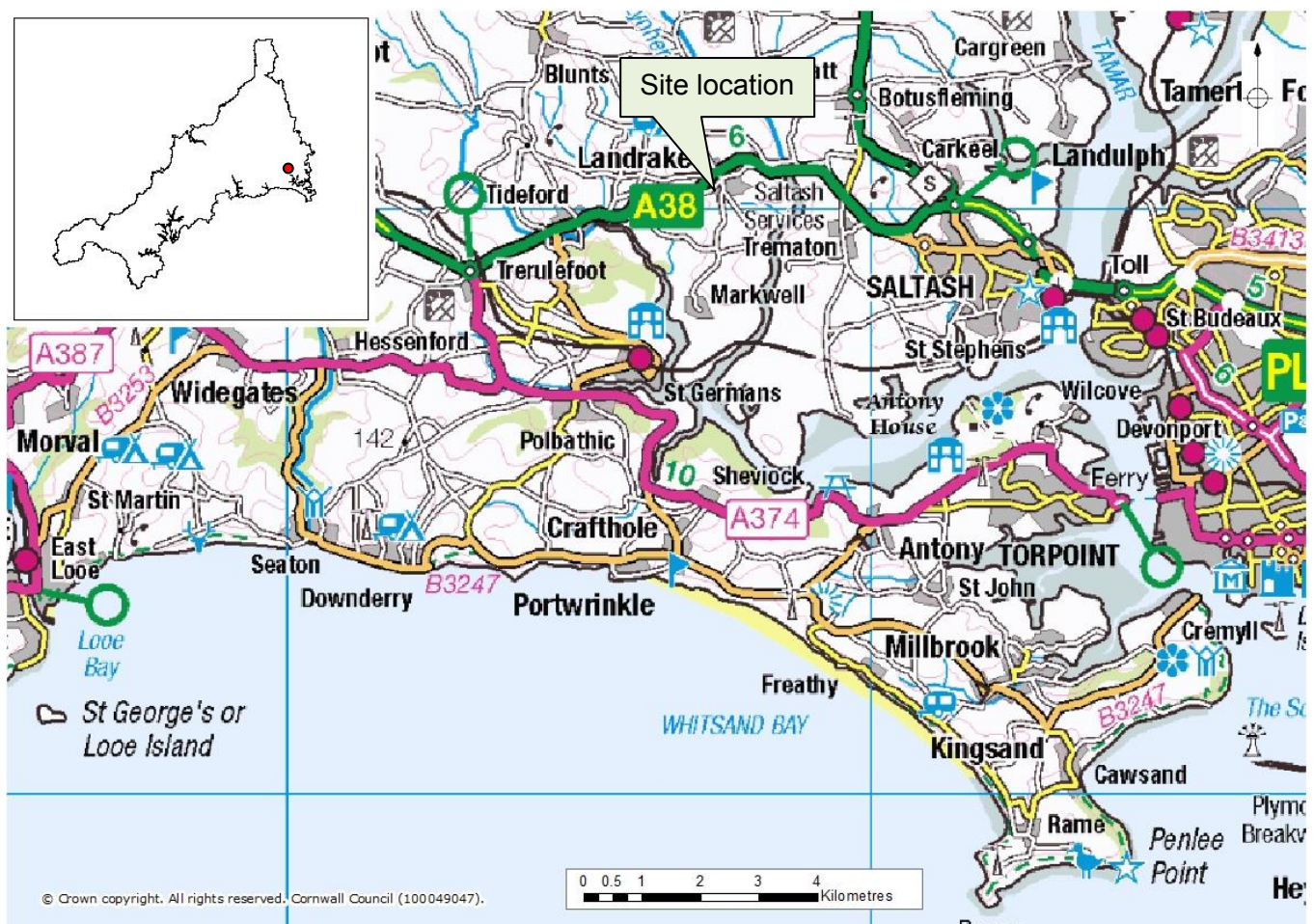


Figure 1. Site location

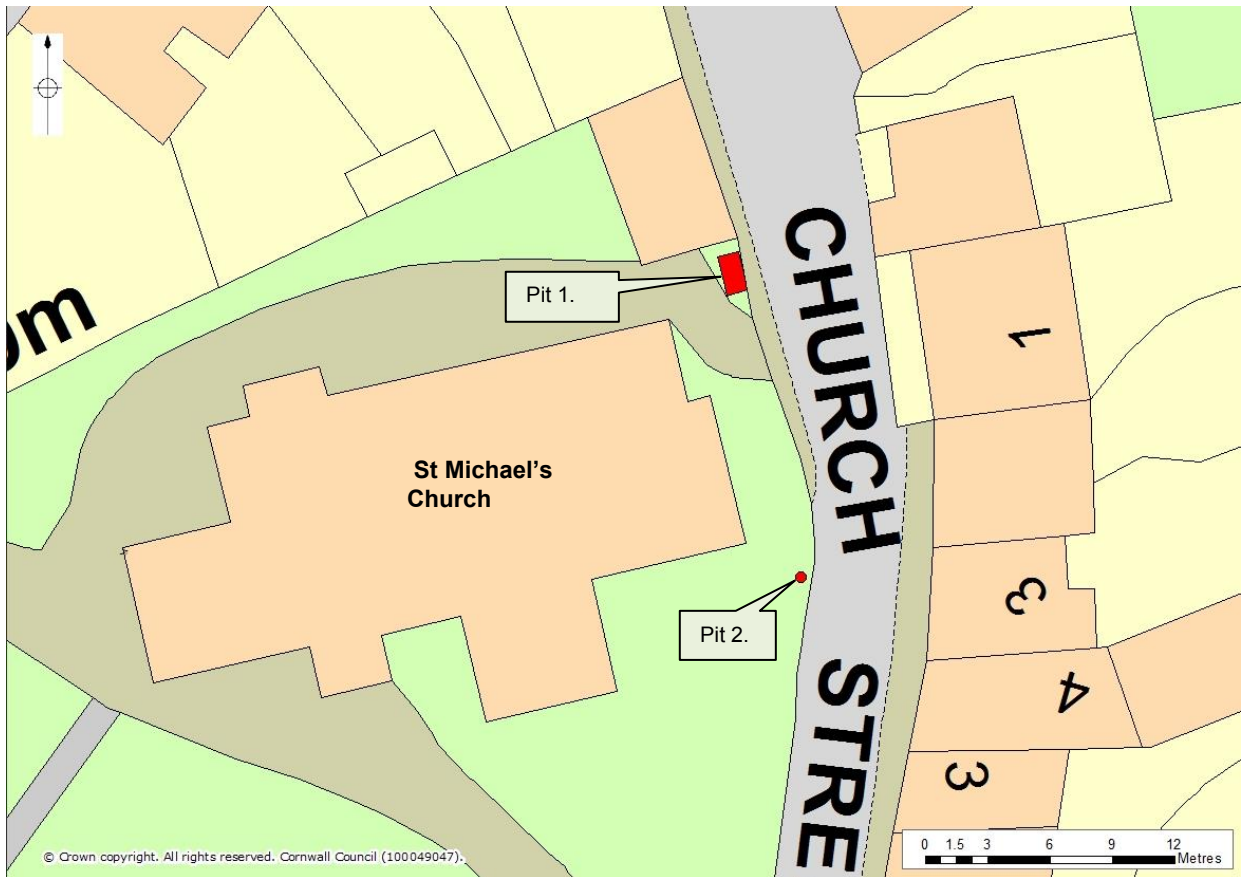


Figure 2. Site plan showing location of pits investigated archaeologically (in red).



Figure 3. Pit 1 showing excavated section.



Figure 4. Pit 2 showing the excavated section.