



# St Mawes Castle Interpretation Signage, Cornwall Archaeological Watching Brief





# **St Mawes Castle Interpretation Signage, Cornwall**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief**

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<b>Report author(s)</b>	<b>Carl Thorpe</b>
<b>Checked by</b>	<b>Charles Johns</b>
<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Andy Jones</b>
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### **Cornwall Archaeological Unit**

Cornwall Council

Fal Building, County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro, Cornwall, TR1 3AY

Tel: (01872) 323603

Email: [enquiries@cau.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cau.org.uk) Web: [www.cau.org.uk](http://www.cau.org.uk)

## **Acknowledgements**

This study was commissioned by Nick Collinson, Interpretation Assistant, English Heritage and carried out by Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council.

The Project Manager was Charles Johns.

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.

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## Abbreviations

CAU	Cornwall Archaeological Unit
CIfA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
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

## **1 Summary**

In July 2018 the Cornwall Archaeological Unit carried out an archaeological watching brief for English Heritage during the excavation of postholes for new signage at St Mawes Castle, Cornwall (NGR SW 84106 32756), in order to fulfil a condition of the Scheduled Monument Consent for the scheme.

St Mawes Castle is a Scheduled Monument No: SM 1013807 a fortified landscape with monuments dating from the sixteenth century through to the early twentieth century.

The main objectives of the archaeological recording were to document any archaeological features, and recover any artefacts that were revealed within the postholes.

A total of 6 different locations were examined during the course of this watching brief.

This involved the removal of three existing interpretation panels, and the installation of three new ones.

No archaeological features were recorded, and no artefacts recovered, demonstrating that this project had little or no impact on buried archaeology within the enceinte of the castle.

St Mawes Castle Interpretation Signage: Cornwall: Archaeological Watching Brief

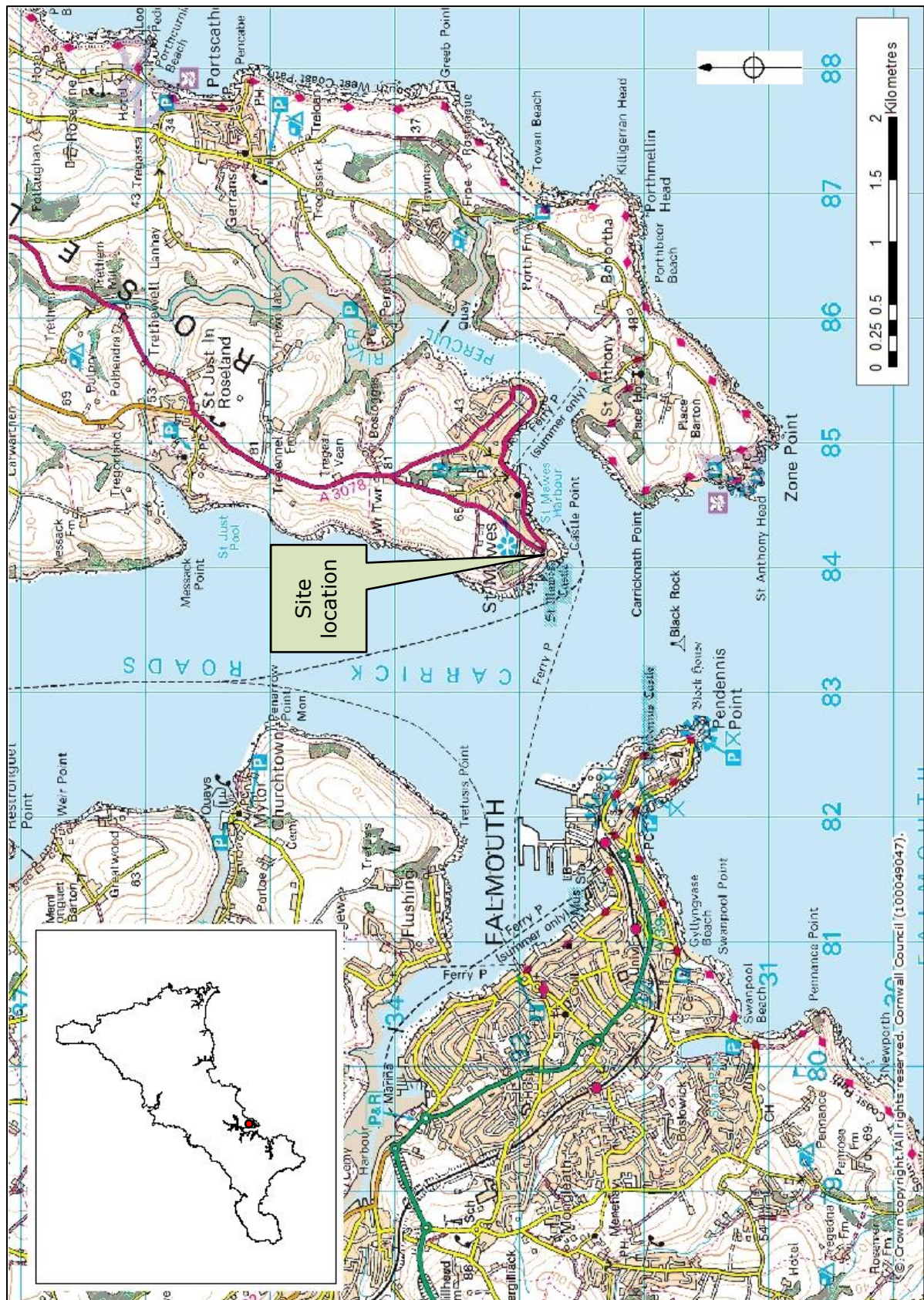


Figure 1. Location map.

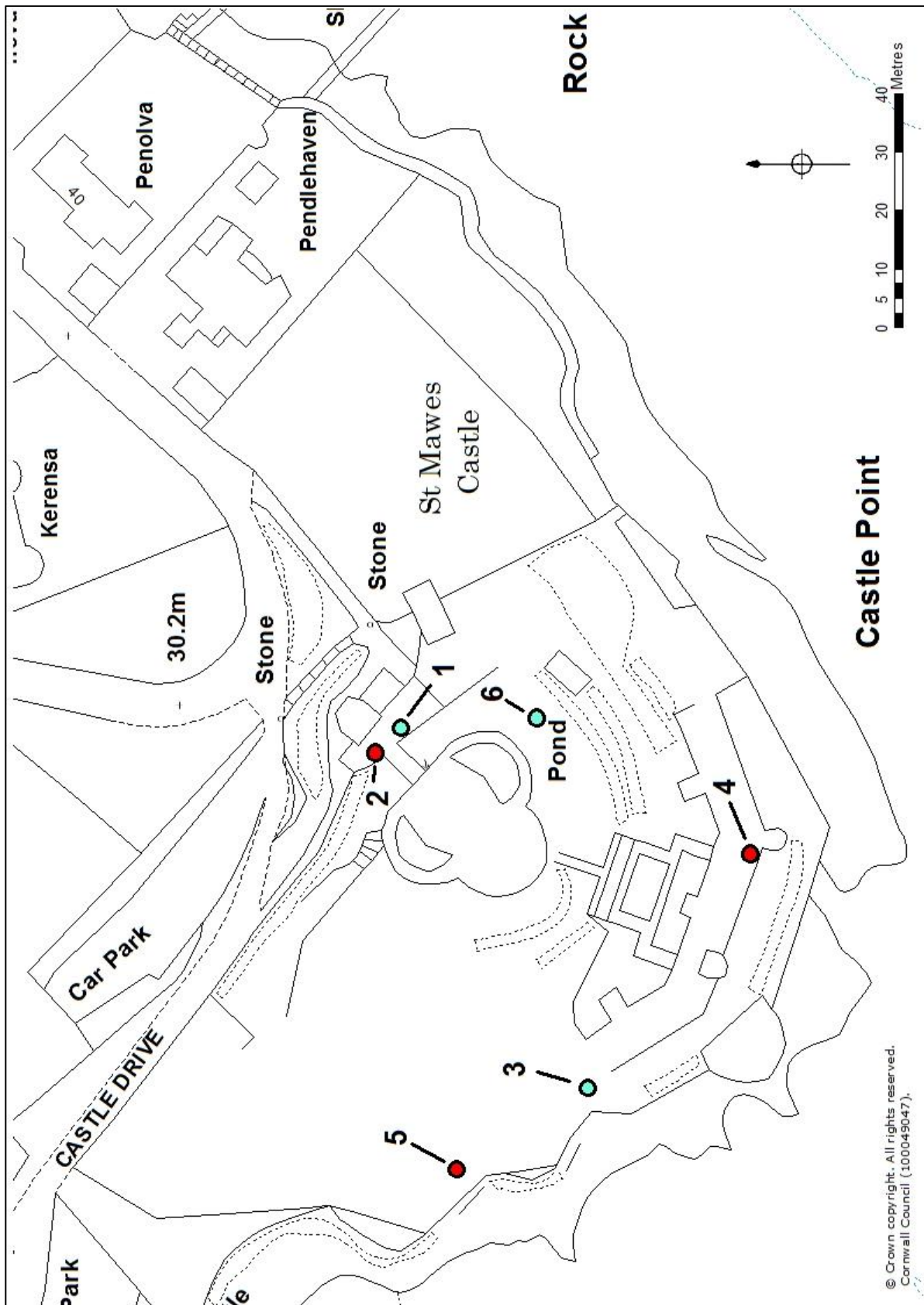


Figure 2. Site plan showing the location of panels. Panels removed (red dots), New panels (blue dots).



## 2 Project background

In June 2018, Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council (CAU) was commissioned by Nick Collinson, Interpretation Assistant, English Heritage, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the removal of some old interpretation boards and the excavation of postholes for new signage at St Mawes Castle (NGR SW 84106 32756), Cornwall (Figs 1 and 2).

St Mawes Castle is a Scheduled Monument No: SM 1013807 a fortified landscape with monuments dating from the sixteenth century through to the early twentieth century.

The watching brief was undertaken by CAU according to a Written Scheme of Investigation (Appendix 1) in order to fulfil the requirements of Scheduled Monument Consent for the works dated 18 October 2017;

(e) No ground works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work before and during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by Historic England.

(l) Any ground disturbance to which this consent relates shall be carried out under the archaeological supervision of [to be confirmed at a later date] who shall be given at least [4] weeks' notice (or such shorter period as may be agreed) in writing of the commencement of work. No works shall commence until [to be confirmed at a later date] has confirmed in writing to Historic England that they are willing and able to undertake the agreed supervision.

(n) A report on the archaeological recording shall be sent to the County Sites and Monuments Record / Historic Environment Record and to Nick Russell at Historic England within 3 months of the completion of the works (or such other period as may be mutually agreed).

(o) The contractor shall complete and submit an entry on OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations - <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>) prior to project completion, and shall deposit any digital project report with the Archaeology Data Service, via the OASIS form, upon completion.

This report covers the results of the watching brief which was carried out on the 10 July 2018.

### 2.1 Aims and objectives

The site specific aims and objectives were:

- To identify and record the presence/absence of archaeological remains.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To establish the nature of activity on the site.
- To identify any artefacts relating to the occupation of the castle.
- To provide further information on the archaeological history of the castle.

### 2.2 Methods

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

### 2.2.1 Fieldwork

The fieldwork was undertaken according to the methodology set out in the WSI (Appendix 1).

### 2.2.2 Post-fieldwork

During this phase, the results of the fieldwork were collated for archiving and the results drawn together in this report.

## 3 Location and site history

St Mawes Castle (centred at SW 84106 32756) lies on the south western side of the town of St Mawes within the parish of St Just in Roseland (Fig 1). It is situated on a broad headland at the mouth of the River Fal, on the south coast of Cornwall.

The ground upon which the Castle is located forms part of the coastal slope that dips steeply southward towards the sea varying in height between 26m to 4m OD. The underlying geology consists of Devonian interbedded sandstones, and argillaceous rocks of the Portscatho Formation (BGS sheet 352).

St Mawes Castle and its twin, Pendennis Castle, on the opposite side of the Carrick Roads, 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 (Fig 1).

The siting of this artillery castle and its nearby blockhouse, together with their complementary association with surviving contemporary defence works at Pendennis show well the defensive strategies and capabilities deployed in the earlier 16th century with the intended aim to deny harbours and anchorages to the enemy.

The defences and armaments at St Mawes were periodically upgraded in time of war the final additions being during the Second World War, which included the addition of a twin 6-pounder guns built on the shoreline north west of the castle at roughly SW 84001 32827 to compliment the larger batteries at Half Moon Battery at Pendennis, and that at St Anthony Head (Linzey 2000).

In 1956 coastal defence was abandoned and the Castle given to the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works (now English Heritage). St Mawes castle is a Scheduled Monument SM 1013807, and a Grade I Listed Building 1136705. The Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record Number is MCO 250050.

## 4 Archaeological results

The archaeological watching brief covered the removal of three old interpretive panels and the installation of three new ones (Fig 2). This involved the archaeological examination of postholes dug to accommodate the new interpretive panels around the castle and any ground disturbance associated with the removal of the old panels.

**Panel 1.** A large table top, castle orientation board located at SW 84119 32766.

This was a large irregular shaped table-like board approximately 1.8m x 1.4m supported on a trapezoidal shaped plate 1m x 0.5m. It was originally planned to bury the plate some 50mm below the ground surface, but instead due to the hard nature of the ground it was decided to rest the plate directly on the existing ground surface, fixing it in place using six corkscrew shaped bolts. As a result, ground disturbance was minimal and no archaeological features or finds were recorded (Figs 2, 3 and 4).

**Panel 2.** 'Interpretive board describing the castle entrance' located at SW 84116 32769.

This existing board was to be removed. It was supported on a single metal post that had been cemented into the ground. Rather than digging everything out, the post was cut off at ground level and covered in soil and gravel. There was no ground disturbance. As a result no archaeology was recorded (Figs 2, 5 and 6).

**Panel 3.** 'Interpretive board entitled 'Partner in Defence' located at SW 84061 32733.

Four postholes were dug to support this panel; each had a diameter of 0.2m and was 0.3m deep.

The recorded soil profile consisted of 0.05m of grass, roots and topsoil that overlay 0.05m of grey-brown clay loam, and 0.2m of grey-brown clay with stone rubble, which was not bottomed. No archaeological features or finds were recorded (Figs 2, 7 and 8).

**Panel 4.** 'Interpretive board describing the 'Grand Battery' located at SW 84100 32704.

This existing board was to be removed. It was supported on a single metal post that had been cemented into the ground. Again the post was cut off at ground level and covered in soil and turf. There was no ground disturbance. As a result no archaeology was recorded.

**Panel 5.** 'Interpretive board describing 'St Mawes Castle and the Second World War' located at SW 84046 32752.

This existing board was to be removed. It was supported on a single metal post that had been cemented into the ground. This was cut off at ground level and covered in soil and turf. There was no ground disturbance. As a result no archaeology was recorded.

**Panel 6.** 'Interpretive board entitled 'My Son, Duke of Cornwall' located at SW 84122 32741.

Four postholes were dug to support this panel; each had a diameter of 0.2m and was 0.3m deep.

The recorded soil profile consisted of 0.05m of grass, roots and topsoil that overlay 0.05m of grey-brown clay loam, and 0.2m of grey-brown clay with stone rubble, which was not bottomed. No archaeological features or finds were recorded (Figs 2, 9, 10 and 11).

## 5 Conclusions/discussion

A total of 6 different locations were examined in the course of this project of only two of which (Panels 3 and 6) involved significant ground disturbance. No archaeological features were recorded, and no artefacts recovered. The archaeological watching brief was able to demonstrate that none of the work undertaken during the course of this project had any impact on buried archaeology within the enceinte of the castle.

## 6 References

### 6.1 Primary sources

Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1840. Parish of St Just in Roseland (licensed digital copy at CRO)

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, MasterMap Topography

British Geological Survey 1990. Map sheet 352. Falmouth

### 6.2 Publications

Linzey, R, 2000. *Fortress Falmouth: A conservation plan for the historic defences of Falmouth Haven* (2 Vols), English Heritage, Swindon

### 6.3 Websites

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

## 7 Project archive

The CAU project number is **146815**

The project's documentary, digital, photographic and drawn archive is maintained by Cornwall Archaeological Unit. The contents of this archive are as listed below:

1. A project and information file containing site records and notes, project correspondence and administration (file no: 146815).
2. Field plans and copies of historic maps stored in an A2-size plastic envelope (GRE 912/1-2).
3. Electronic data is stored in the following location: \\CAU\Archive\Sites\S\St Mawes Castle Signage Watching Brief 146815
4. Historic England /ADS OASIS online reference: cornwall2-322437

No artefacts were recovered in the course of this project.



*Figure 3. Panel 1. Corkscrew fixture bolts in position to hold support plate for panel showing minimal ground disturbance.*



*Figure 4. Panel 1. The new interpretive panel in position showing its location.*



*Figure 5. Panel 2. Old interpretive panel to be removed.*



*Figure 6. Panel 2. Location after the removal of the post.*



Figure 7. Panel 3. Postholes for the new panel

Figure 8. Panel 3. The new panel in position.



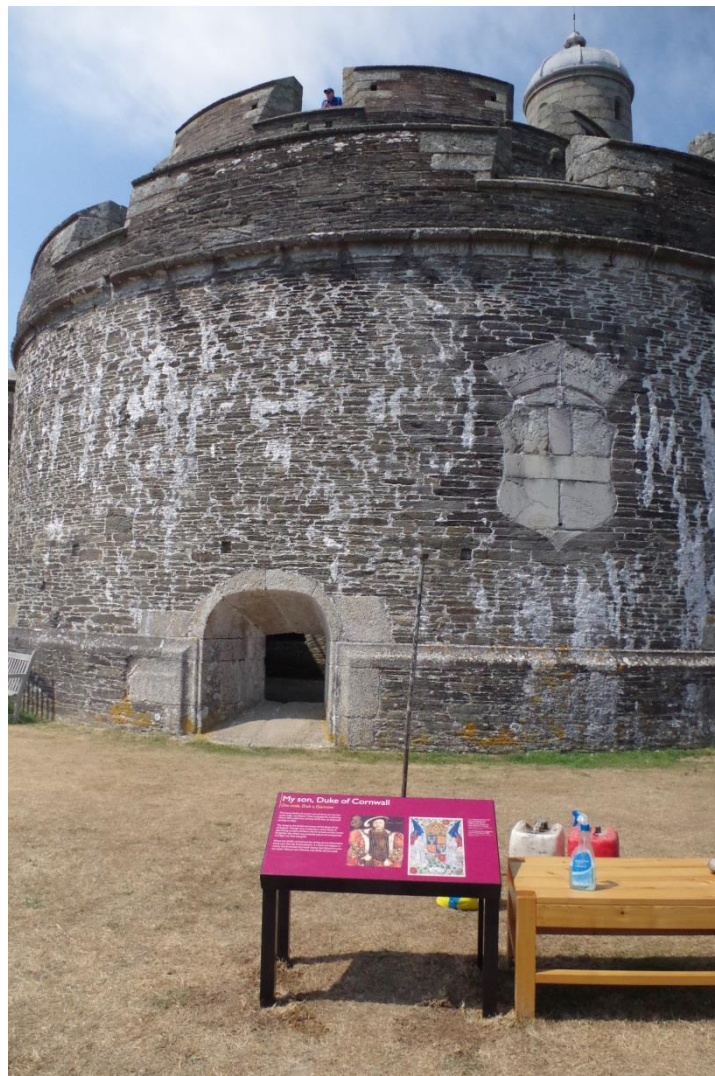


*Figure 9. Panel 6. Location showing the nature of the ground.*



*Figure 10. Panel 6. Postholes for the new panel.*





*Figure 11. Panel 6. The new panel in position.*

## **Appendix 1: Written Scheme of Investigation**

### **ST MAWES CASTLE**

**Scheduled Monument No: SM 105420, HA 1013807**

### **Signage Removal and Installation Watching Brief**

Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological recording

Client: English Heritage

### **Project background**

Nick Collinson, Interpretation Assistant, English Heritage has commissioned Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council (CAU) to carry out a watching brief during the removal of existing ground mounted graphic panels and the installation of new ones at St Mawes Castle SM 10552, HA 1012134). This document sets out a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) by CAU for the archaeological watching brief in order to satisfy the following conditions of Scheduled Monument Consent dated 18 October 2018.

- (hh) The contractor shall complete and submit an entry on OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>) prior to project completion, and shall deposit any digital project report with the Archaeology Data Service, via the OASIS form, upon completion.
- (ii) The works shall be in accordance with the written scheme submitted.

### **Site history**

St Mawes Castle stands on a broad headland at the mouth of the River Fal, on the south coast of Cornwall (SW 84103274).

St Mawes Castle and its twin, Pendennis 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.

The Castle survives well, retaining a number of original features rarely preserved such as the carved wooden door heads. The castle is also unusual in its degree of decorative embellishment, a feature which has set this monument apart in major reviews of this fortification phase. The siting of this artillery castle and its nearby blockhouse, together with their complementary association with surviving contemporary defence works at Pendennis show well the defensive strategies and capabilities deployed in the earlier 16th century. They nicely demonstrate the intended aim of the overall defence policy under which they were constructed, to deny harbours and anchorages to the enemy. The development of fortification methods throughout the post-medieval period in the light of increasing efficiency and range of armaments is clearly shown by the successive modifications made within the monument. Again these are given a wider context by their association with the surviving defences at Pendennis and, for later periods, St Anthony's Head. The monument is also well-documented throughout its development, providing both the broad historical context and the detailed background to its successive phases.

## **Project scope**

Existing exterior interpretive signs at the Castle will be removed and new ones installed on 10 July 2018 as shown in the Interpretation design drawing set for SMC application dates 29/09/1027 by Simon Leach Design. The watching brief will cover the removal of ground mounted graphic panels at three locations (shown on drawing SM12\_EGP) and the installation of two new curved benches with adjacent ground mounted graphics and new round mounted graphics panel near the entrance.

## **Aims and objectives**

The site specific aims and objectives are:

- To identify and record the presence/absence of archaeological remains.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To establish the nature of activity on the site.
- To identify any artefacts relating to the occupation of the castle.
- To provide further information on the archaeological history of the castle.

## **Working methods**

All recording work will be undertaken according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) guidance (CIfA 2014a; 2017). Staff will follow the CIfA *Code of Conduct* (2014). The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists is the professional body for archaeologists working in the UK.

## **Desk-based assessment**

A rapid desk-based assessment will be carried out to inform the fieldwork stage. This will comprise a brief consultation of published sources, in particular the Fortress Falmouth Conservation Plan (Linzey 2000).

## **Watching brief**

Any ground disturbance will be carried out by the contractor using hand-tools under the archaeological supervision of 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 Landline (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. Any historic graffiti revealed will be drawn at 1:1 and decorative schemes will be drawn at a suitable scale.
- All archaeological contexts will be described to a standard format linked to a continuous numbering sequence.
- Photography: monochrome photography will be used as the main record medium, with colour digital images used more selectively and for illustrative purposes. This will include both general and site specific photographs. Photographs should have a scale and detailed ones should include a north arrow.
- Drawings and photographs will be recorded in a register giving details of feature number and location.
- Sealed/undisturbed archaeological contexts in the form of buried soils, layers or deposits within significant archaeological features will be sampled for environmental evidence and dating material. In the event that significant organic remains are encountered, advice may be needed from the South West Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science.

- It is unlikely that any human remains will be encountered. If any are, they will initially be left *in situ* and reported to English Heritage and the appropriate authorities. If removal is necessary this will comply with the relevant Government regulations. If burials are encountered their legal status will be ascertained and recording and/or removal will comply with the legal guidelines.

### **Creation of site archive**

To include:

- Digital colour photographs (stored according to Historic Environment Record (HER) guidelines and copies of images made available to English Heritage).
- A detailed site/building description.
- Preparation of finished drawings.
- Completion of the Historic England/ADS OASIS online archive index and deposition of a digital project report with the Archaeology Data Service, via the OASIS form.

### **Archive report**

A written report will include:

- Summary
- Project background
- Aims and objectives
- Methodology
- Location and setting
- Designations
- Site history
- Archaeological results
- Discussion
- References
- Project archive index
- Colour digital images taken as part of the site archive will be either converted from colour to black and white negative film and added to the site archive, or deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).
- Supporting illustrations: location map, historic maps, plans, elevations/sections, photographs

A paper copy and a digital (PDF) copy of the report will be sent to the Cornwall & Scilly HER and to Nick Russell at Historic England. Paper copies of the report will also be distributed to local archives and national archaeological record centres.

### **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 watching brief will be carried out on 10 July 2018.

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 Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England (IAM). Where the IAM is satisfied with the archive report and the deposition of the archive written discharge of the planning condition will be expected.

1. The IAM will monitor the work and should be kept regularly informed of progress.
2. Notification of the start of work shall be given preferably in writing to the IAM at least one week in advance of its commencement.
3. Any variations to the WSI will be agreed with the IAM, in writing, prior to them being carried out.
4. If significant detail is discovered, all works must cease and a meeting convened with the client and the IAM 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

CIfA, 2014. *Code of Conduct*, CIfA, Reading

CIfA, 2014a. *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, CIfA, Reading

CIfA, 2017. *Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment*, CIfA, Reading

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

Linzey, R, 2000. *Fortress Falmouth: A conservation plan for the historic defences of Falmouth Haven* (2 Vols), English Heritage, Swindon

*Charlie Johns*  
*Archaeology Projects Officer*  
*25/06/2018*

***Cornwall Archaeological Unit***

*Cornwall Council*  
*Fal Building, County Hall,*  
*Treyew Road,*  
*Truro, Cornwall. TR1 3AY*  
*Tel: 01872 322056*  
*Email: [chjohns@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:chjohns@cornwall.gov.uk)*



## **Cornwall Archaeological Unit**

Fal Building, County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro,  
Cornwall  
TR1 3AY



(01872) 323603  
[enquiries@cau.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cau.org.uk)  
[www.cau.org.uk](http://www.cau.org.uk)

