Wessex Archaeology

# Land at St. Breaca Close, Breage, Cornwall

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

Ref: 87270.03

Royal Cornwall Museum Accession Number: TRURI:2012.28

October 2012

# LAND AT ST. BREACA CLOSE, BREAGE, CORNWALL

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Report reference: 87270.03
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**October 2012**

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## QUALITY ASSURANCE

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| **SITE CODE** | **87270** | **ACCESSION CODE** | **TRURI:2012.28** | **CLIENT CODE** | |
| **PLANNING APPLICATION REF.** | **PA12/08337** | **NGR** | **162050 028319** | | |

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* I= Internal Draft E= External Draft F= Final

# LAND AT ST. BREACA CLOSE, BREAGE, CORNWALL

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

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# LAND AT ST. BREACA CLOSE, BREAGE, CORNWALL

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

## Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Devon and Cornwall Housing to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land at St Breaca Close, Breage, Cornwall (hereafter, 'the Site'), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 162050 028319. The construction ground works are to comprise the establishment of 24 domestic dwellings, associated access routes, service trenches and a foul water drainage area. This report outlines the results of the archaeological evaluation.

Following recommendations by the Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer, Cornwall Council, an archaeological evaluation was carried out to assess the potential for surviving below ground remains in order to inform the proposals and consequently any decision with regards to the future treatment of the archaeological resource.

The evaluation trenches were sited in strategic positions where the results of an archaeological desk-based assessment and geophysical survey suggested there was the potential for the survival of archaeological remains (Capstone Archaeology 2012).

No archaeological features were recorded during the course of the evaluation with the exception of two hedgerow ditches, and the geophysical anomalies were proven with the exception of the location of one of the hedgerow ditches, to be the result of variations in the underlying natural geology.

The results of the evaluation suggest that the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the Site is low and therefore would not preclude the granting of planning permission for the proposed development on archaeological grounds.

The fieldwork was conducted between the 15th and the 17th of October 2012.

# LAND AT ST. BREACA CLOSE, BREAGE, CORNWALL

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

## Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Devon and Cornwall Housing and Wessex Archaeology is grateful for the assistance of Lucie Sominka in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Phil Markham of Cornwall Council for his advice and monitoring during the fieldwork phase of the project.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Caroline Budd. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tom Wells, Darryl Freer and Jen Smith. This report was compiled by Tom Wells, and the Illustrations were prepared by Linda Coleman.

# LAND AT ST. BREACA CLOSE, BREAGE, CORNWALL

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Devon and Cornwall Housing (the Client) to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at St Breaca Close, Breage, Cornwall (hereafter, 'the Site'), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 162050 028319 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The archaeological works relate to a planning application (ref PA12/08337) submitted to Cornwall Council for the construction of a small housing development, which was accompanied by a Geophysical Survey Report (Capstone Archaeology 2012) undertaken for the Site. The proposed development works comprise the establishment of 24 domestic dwellings, associated access routes, service trenches and a foul water drainage area.

1.1.3 Following the geophysical survey and in consultation with Phil Markham, Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer, Cornwall Council (CC), it was agreed that the programme of archaeological evaluation was required in order to confirm the results of the geophysical survey. The evaluation is the second stage of archaeological works in support of the planning application and comprised:

- Mechanical excavation of seven 30m x 1.6m trenches targeted on anomalies identified by the geophysical survey in order to establish the presence/absence of any archaeological features/deposits, confidence in the results of the geophysical survey and the potential for the survival of archaeological remains within the proposed housing development site.

### 1.2 Site location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The Site is located on the south-eastern edge of the village of Breage, north-west of the town of Helston, Cornwall (**Figure 1**). It comprises the corner of a single arable field measuring approximately 1.7ha, bounded to the north by Sethnoe Way, to the west by St Breaca Close and on the east and south sides by farmland.

1.2.2 The Site lies at approximately 95m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and is relatively flat. The underlying geology of the Site is on a boundary between Mylor Slate Formation and Tregonning-Godolphin Granite with overlying Manod (loam) (BGS online).

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Site lies within an area characterised by the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record (HER) as Anciently Enclosed Land. This land therefore has the potential to contain archaeological remains.

2.1.2 The recent geophysical survey report (Capstone Archaeology 2012) identified a possible enclosure ditch which may date to either prehistoric or early-medieval settlement or stock enclosure which supports the landscape characterisation provided by the HER. The survey also identified a series of associated linear features and possible discrete features (**Figure 1**).

## 3 AIMS

### 3.1 Introduction and General Objectives

3.1.1 All works were conducted in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologist's Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (as amended 2008), excepting where they are superseded by the following statements.

3.1.2 The general aims and objectives of the archaeological works were to:

- clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the Site that may be disturbed by development;
- to confirm the results of the geophysical survey (Capstone Archaeology and Archaeophysica 2012);
- identify, within the constraints of the investigation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the Site;
- assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits; and
- produce a report which will present the results of the evaluation in sufficient detail to allow an informed decision to be made concerning the Site's archaeological potential.

## 4 METHODS

### 4.1 Fieldwork

4.1.1 The programme of evaluation comprised the excavation of seven evaluation trenches, each measuring 30m x 1.6m. The positioning of the trenches was informed by the results of the geophysical survey (Capstone Archaeology and Archaeophysica 2012), and the trenches were located as illustrated on **Figure 1**.

4.1.2 Prior to machine excavation, each trench was scanned using a Cable Avoidance Tool. The trenches were excavated using a JCB fitted with a toothless bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Mechanical excavation continued in spits through topsoil and subsoil down to either the

uppermost archaeological features or natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. Topsoil and subsoil were stored separately and the trenches were back-filled in stratigraphic order. The backfilled material was compacted intermittently to avoid air pockets and soft spots. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

4.1.3 The excavated spoil was scanned visually for artefacts and by metal detector. Within each trench a 1m representative section through the deposits, from ground surface to the top of the natural geology, were recorded. Trenches were photographed, planned, and where appropriate, cleaned by hand.

4.1.4 Trench 7 was shortened by approximately nine metres at its southern end following a query raised by the landowner over the position of Trenches 4 and 7. These trenches appeared to cross the south eastern edge of the application boundary. This highlighted a discrepancy in the location of the application boundary between the data supplied to Wessex Archaeology by the Client and the conveyance plan held by the landowner. **Figure 1** is based on the application boundary details as provided to Wessex Archaeology by the Client.

### 4.2 Recording

4.2.1 Archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system with unique numbers allocated for individual contexts. Archaeological features and deposits were hand-drawn at either 1:10 or 1:20, including both plans and sections, and these were referred to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels were calculated and this information is included on both the plans and sections. A representative section of each trench was recorded showing the depth of the overburden deposits.

4.2.2 A photographic record was kept utilising black and white film, colour slides and digital images. The record illustrates both the detail and the general context of the principal features and the Site as a whole.

4.2.3 The survey was carried out with a Leica Viva series GNSS unit using the OS National GPS Network through an RTK network with a 3D accuracy of 30mm or below. All survey data was recorded using the OSGB36 British National Grid coordinate system.

4.2.4 A unique site code **87270** was allocated to the Site, and was used on all records and finds.

### 4.3 Monitoring

4.3.1 Phil Markham, the Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer at Cornwall Council (CC) was informed prior to the commencement of the fieldwork and provision was made for an on-site monitoring meeting. During the fieldwork Cornwall Council were kept informed of the progress of the evaluation, given the lack of archaeological features revealed in the trenches it was agreed that a monitoring meeting was not required.

# 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

## 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The location of the evaluation areas is shown on **Figure 1** and descriptions of all deposits and feature are provided in **Appendix 1**.

5.1.2 No archaeological features were identified during the course of the evaluation, with the exception of two probable hedgerow ditches, located within Trenches 1 and 4. The targeted geophysical anomalies proved to be related to changes in the underlying geology rather than archaeological features, with the exception of the hedgerow ditch located in Trench 1.

## 5.2 Natural Soil Sequence

5.2.1 The natural soil sequence observed across the Site was consistent throughout (**Plate 1**). The topsoil was a 0.35m deep mid-dark brown silt clay loam predominantly covered with rough vegetation. At the southern extent of the proposed development area, Trenches 4 and 7 extended into a ploughed arable field. Traces of the incorporation of topsoil and subsoil, likely derived from the area of the recent housing development immediately to the north of the Site, were evident in Trenches 1, 2 and 3. Below the topsoil was a mid grey brown silty clay subsoil varying from 0.15m to 0.40m deep, which exhibited a very diffuse interface with the underlying natural geology. The underlying geology comprised a light yellow brown sandy silty clay with common poorly sorted sub-angular stone, often occurring in distinct outcrops. The natural geology appeared to be comprised of the weathered upper surface of underlying bedrock.

## 5.3 Archaeological features and geophysical anomalies

5.3.1 Within Trench 1 (**Plate 2**) a linear feature was identified. On excavation the feature proved to be the remnant of a former hedgerow. The feature was orientated north east – south west, measured 1.2m wide by 0.03m deep and was observed to extend beyond the bounds of the trench area. The feature had irregular sides and an irregular base, suggestive of root activity, and contained a single fill of mid grey-brown silty clay. This feature was located between two closely spaced, parallel, linear geophysical anomalies and is likely to correspond with them.

5.3.2 Within Trench 4 (**Plate 3**) a shallow linear feature orientated west north west – east south east was excavated and recorded. On excavation the feature was interpreted as the remnant of a former hedgerow ditch. The feature had an irregular profile suggestive of root activity. It measured 0.42m wide by 0.12m deep and extended beyond the bounds of the trench area. The feature contained a single fill of mid grey brown silty clay.

5.3.3 In both cases the hedgerow ditches did not contain any datable material.

5.3.4 With the exception of the hedgerow located in Trench 1, the remaining targeted geophysical anomalies did not correspond to below ground

archaeological features, and are more likely the result of changes within the underlying geology.

### 5.4 Modern disturbance

5.4.1 Areas of modern disturbance were evident within the northern ends of Trenches 1, 2 and 3. This consisted of two parallel linear features clearly originating from wheel rutting in Trenches 1 and 2 (plates 2 and 4), in association with some mixing of the topsoil and subsoil observed during machining. Occasional fragments of modern pottery and ceramic building material were also noted in these locations. This disturbance is believed to have derived from incorporation of reworked topsoil and subsoil in conjunction with plant movement during ground works associated with the recent housing development immediately to the north of the Site.

## 6 ARTEFACTS

6.1.1 No artefacts of an earlier date than late twentieth century were observed or retained.

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL

7.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was demonstrated to be present within the excavated area.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1.1 The archaeological evaluation has achieved the aims set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WA 2012). No archaeological features were recorded during the course of the evaluation, with the exception of two undated hedgerows within Trenches 1 and 4, only the former of which may correspond with a geophysical anomaly. All other geophysical anomalies were confirmed to be the result of variations in the underlying geology.

8.1.2 The results of the evaluation suggest that the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the Site is low and therefore would not preclude the granting of planning permission for the proposed development on archaeological grounds.

## 9 ARCHIVE

### 9.1 Preparation of the archive and deposition

9.1.1 The archive will eventually be deposited with the Royal Cornwall Museum, under a unique accession code TRURI:2012.28. This accession code will be marked on all elements of the archive.

9.1.2 The primary archive, including copies of all photographs, will be deposited with the Royal Cornwall Museum or another suitable depository no later than six months after completion of all required fieldwork and post-excavation work.

9.1.3 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006), and the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990).

9.1.4 Details of the Site will be submitted online to the OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) database. A full archive of site photographs will also be submitted to the ADS.

## 10 REFERENCES

British Geological Survey
http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html

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## APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

**Bgl**: below ground level **aOD**: above Ordnance Datum

| **Trench 1** | **Dimensions :** | 31m x 1.6m x 0.5 | **Ground surface level:** | 95.08m aOD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Coordinates (NGR):** | 162023.20, 28344.28<br>162037.06, 28317.809 | | |

| **Context** | **Category** | **Description** | **Depth (bgl)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 101 | Layer | **Topsoil**: Mid-dark brown friable silty clay loam. Occasional sub-angular stone <0.02m. Common bioturbation. | 0 – 0.18m |
| 102 | Layer | **Subsoil**: Mid grey brown friable silty clay. Occasional sub-angular stone. Rare bioturbation. Very diffuse interface with underlying natural. | 0.18-0.33m |
| 103 | Layer | **Natural**: Light yellow brown moderately compact sandy silty clay. Common subangular stone < 0.15m. | 0.33m+ |
| 104 | Cut | **Hedgerow**: NE-SW orientated shallow linear feature with irregular sides and base. | 0.33-0.36m |
| 105 | Fill | **Bioturbation**: Mid grey brown friable silty clay. Occasional sub-angular stone <0.02m. Single fill of Hedgerow [104]. | 0.33-0.36m |

| **Trench 2** | **Dimensions :** | 29.7m x 1.6m x 0.56m | **Ground surface level:** | 94.77m aOD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Coordinates (NGR):** | 162048.92, 28339.75<br>162078.11, 28336.33 | | |

| **Context** | **Category** | **Description** | **Depth (bgl)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 201 | Layer | **Topsoil**: Mid-dark brown friable silty clay loam. Occasional sub-angular stone <0.02m. Common bioturbation. | 0 – 0.23m |
| 202 | Layer | **Subsoil**: Mid grey brown friable silty clay. Occasional sub-angular stone. Rare bioturbation. Very diffuse interface with underlying natural. | 0.23 – 0.41m |
| 203 | Layer | **Natural**: Light yellow brown moderately compact sandy silty clay. Common subangular stone < 0.25m. | 0.41m+ |

| **Trench 3** | **Dimensions :** | 30.4m x 1.6m x 0.82m | **Ground surface level:** | 94.34m aOD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Coordinates (NGR):** | 162106.14, 28367.74<br>162121.71, 28341.28 | | |

| **Context** | **Category** | **Description** | **Depth (bgl)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 301 | Layer | **Topsoil**: Mid-dark brown friable silty clay loam. Occasional sub-angular stone <0.02m. Common bioturbation. | 0 – 0.29m |
| 302 | Layer | **Subsoil**: Mid grey brown friable silty clay. Occasional sub-angular stone. Rare bioturbation. Very diffuse interface with underlying natural. | 0.29 – 0.67m |
| 303 | Layer | **Natural**: Light-mid yellow brown friable silty clay. Rare sub-angular stone <0.03m. Probable diffuse interface between subsoil and natural. | 0.67 – 0.77m |
| 304 | Layer | **Natural**: Light yellow brown moderately compact sandy silty clay. Common subangular stone < 0.25m. | 0.77m+ |

| **Trench 4** | **Dimensions :** | 31m x 1.6m x 0.56m | **Ground surface level:** | 94.23m aOD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Coordinates (NGR):** | 162109.36, 28313.20<br>162101.16, 28282.89 | | |

| **Context** | **Category** | **Description** | **Depth (bgl)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 401 | Layer | **Topsoil**: Mid-dark brown friable silty clay loam. Occasional sub-angular stone <0.02m. Common bioturbation. | 0 – 0.35m |
| 402 | Layer | **Subsoil**: Mid grey brown friable silty clay. Occasional sub-angular stone. Rare bioturbation. Very diffuse interface with underlying natural. | 0.35– 0.50m |
| 403 | Layer | **Natural**: Light yellow brown moderately compact sandy silty clay. Common subangular stone < 0.25m. | 0.50m+ |
| 404 | Cut | **Hedgerow**: WNW-ESE orientated shallow linear feature with irregular sides and base. | 0.44 – 0.56m |
| 405 | Fill | **Bioturbation**: Mid grey brown friable silty clay. Occasional sub-angular stone <0.02m. Single fill of Hedgerow [404]. | 0.44 – 0.56m |

| **Trench 5** | **Dimensions :** | 30m x 1.6m x 0.54m | **Ground surface level:** | 94.77m aOD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Coordinates (NGR):** | 162054.45, 28320.44<br>162061.85, 28291.27 | | |

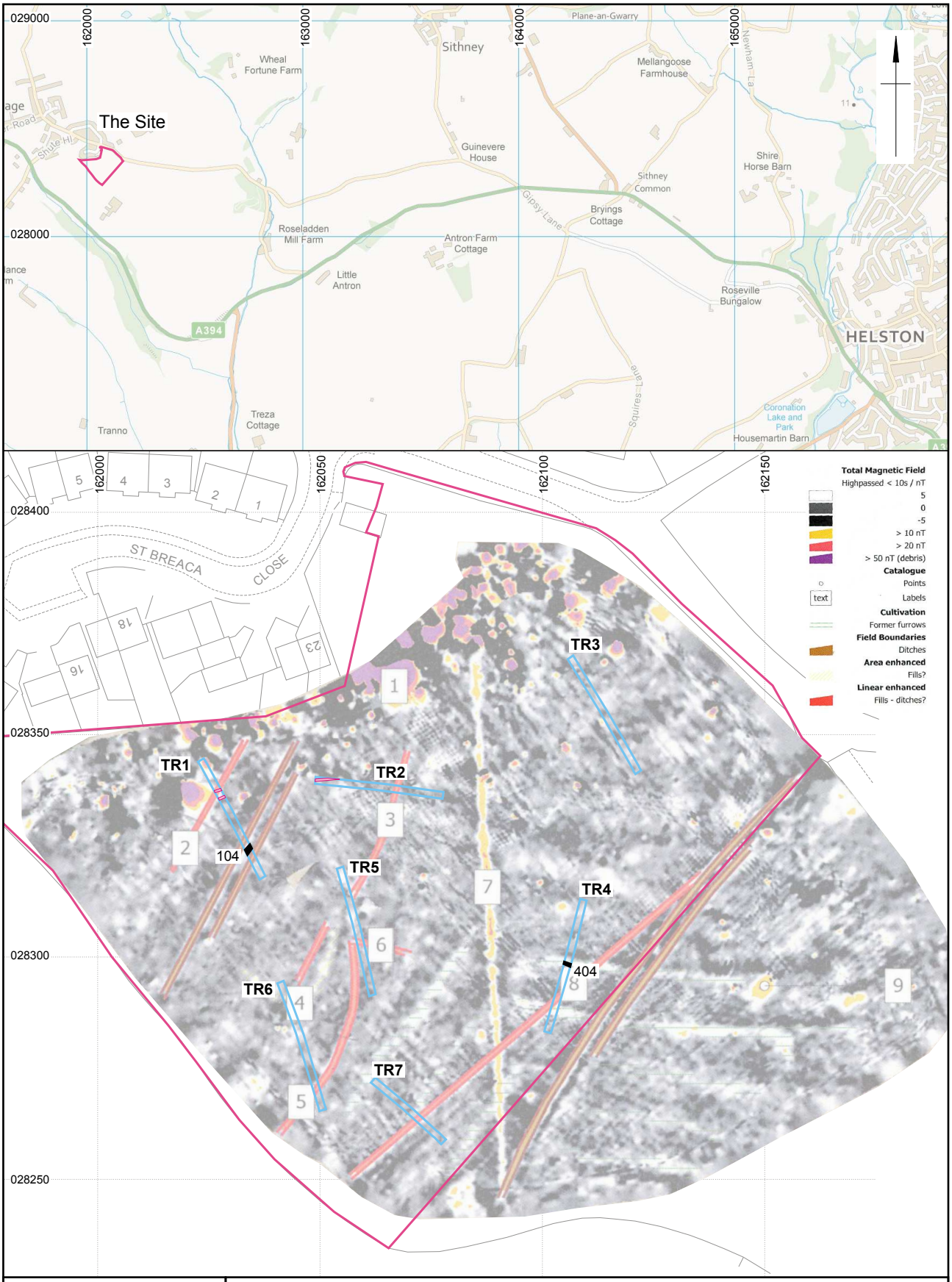
| **Context** | **Category** | **Description** | **Depth (bgl)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 501 | Layer | **Topsoil**: Mid-dark brown friable silty clay loam. Occasional sub-angular stone <0.03m. Common bioturbation. | 0 – 0.21m |
| 502 | Layer | **Subsoil**: Mid grey brown friable silty clay. Occasional sub-angular stone. Rare bioturbation. Very diffuse interface with underlying natural. | 0.21 – 0.42m |
| 503 | Layer | **Natural**: Light yellow brown moderately compact sandy silty clay. Common subangular stone < 0.25m. | 0.42m+ |

| **Trench 6** | **Dimensions :** | 30.6m x 1.6m x 0.43m | **Ground surface level:** | 94.28m aOD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Coordinates (NGR):** | 162041.01, 28294.64<br>162050.70, 28265.46 | | |

| **Context** | **Category** | **Description** | **Depth (bgl)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 601 | Layer | **Topsoil**: Mid-dark brown friable silty clay loam. Occasional sub-angular stone <0.03m. Common bioturbation. | 0 – 0.17m |
| 602 | Layer | **Subsoil**: Mid grey brown friable silty clay. Occasional sub-angular stone. Rare bioturbation. Very diffuse interface with underlying natural. | 0.17 – 0.34m |
| 603 | Layer | **Natural**: Light yellow brown moderately compact sandy silty clay. Common subangular stone < 0.25m. | 0.34m+ |

| **Trench 7** | **Dimensions :** | 21.4m x 1.6m x 0.48m | **Ground surface level:** | 94.37m aOD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Coordinates (NGR):** | 162061.82, 28272.52<br>162077.97, 28258.35 | | |

| **Context** | **Category** | **Description** | **Depth (bgl)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 701 | Layer | **Topsoil**: Mid-dark brown friable silty clay loam. Occasional sub-angular stone <0.03m. Common bioturbation. | 0 – 0.21m |
| 702 | Layer | **Subsoil**: Mid grey brown friable silty clay. Occasional sub-angular stone. Rare bioturbation. Very diffuse interface with underlying natural. | 0.21 – 0.33m |
| 703 | Layer | **Natural**: Light yellow brown moderately compact sandy silty clay. Common subangular stone < 0.25m. | 0.33m+ |




The Site
Evaluation trench
Modern disturbance
Archaeological feature

Wessex Archaeology

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Site and trench location plan showing geophysical survey

Figure 1

Plate 1: Northeast facing representative section of Trench 1

Plate 2: View of Trench 1 from the west showing hedgerow 104 and modern disturbance

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Plate 3: Representative section of Trench 4 showing hedgerow 404

Plate 4: View of Trench 2 from west-northwest showing wheel rutting

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