

Cornwall County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Bodmin, North Cornwall	National Grid Reference SX 0738 6645	Number:
Subject: Archaeological watching brief at Pencarron House, 70, St Nicholas Street, Bodmin		Photo attached?
Planning Application no: 2007/00819	Recipient museum: N/A	
OASIS ID: 61062	Museum Accession no:	
Contractor's reference number/code: EA 6377	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 24/04/08 – 24/09/08	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p>Archaeological recording was undertaken by Exeter Archaeology on behalf of Home Group developments Ltd. during works on the renovation and extension of Pencarron House, St Nicholas Street, Bodmin. The work comprised of the recording of archaeological features exposed during ground reduction and enabling works for proposed new development which comprised the demolition of ancillary extensions to Pencarron House followed by a proposed new extension.</p> <p>The standing Pencarron House is dated to the second half of the 19th century and it is shown on the OS map of 1881 where it appears to be a later construction than the building shown on the same plot in the 1845 tithe map or, more likely, a Victorian extension was made to the earlier 19th century building. Pencarron House may occupy the site of the medieval chapel of St Nicholas from whence the local street name derives. A chapel known to have been located in the immediate area was described in 1778 as <i>'...the decayed chapel of St Nicholas'</i> (Chapels Index, Cornwall Record Office). A number of medieval architectural pieces including columns, capitals and window tracery have been re-used and incorporated into features and an arch within the garden of Pencarron House but these architectural fragments are elaborate and are more likely to have been re-used from the nearby site of Bodmin Priory, still marked as <i>Priory Grounds</i> on modern mapping (Fig 1), and are less likely to derive from the chapel (John Allen EA <i>pers. comm.</i>). The architectural fragments are to be retained in the new development and a basic photographic record only was made which will be lodged with the site archive.</p> <p>Results</p> <p>Observations on service trench works to the southeast of Pencarron House produced the following stratigraphic sequence:</p> <p>0 - 0.10m below surface: much disturbed topsoil of silty clay loam with building rubble. 0.10 - 0.77m light reddish silty clay with small sub-angular shillet fragments.</p> <p>Trenches for new services dug to the east of Pencarron House produced the following stratigraphic sequence:</p> <p>0 - 0.30m below surface: topsoil 0.30 – 0.60m natural mid-yellow/brown clay with angular shillet inclusions.</p> <p>With the exception of one undated wall (see below) features exposed in the trenching works were associated with 19th century drainage and water supply for Pencarron House (Fig.2). These included a disused drain or manhole on the southeast side of the house and a well of local shillet construction capped with a granite slab and concrete blocks; it was rectangular (1.45m by 0.85m) and at least 11.60m deep. The well may originally have served within the kitchen area of the early 19th century house but it was capped (with granite slab shown dislodged on Fig 2) probably in the later 19th century with further capping with concrete taking place in the 20th century.</p> <p>No conclusive evidence for the Chapel of St Nicholas was recorded. The corner of a wall constructed of large pieces of local shillet was located in a service trench on the west side of the house (Fig.2) closer to the line of St Nicholas Street than Pencarron House but this may represent a boundary wall of which there is some indication shown on the mid 19th century Tithe map.</p>		

Observations and recording by P. Clarke, C. Smart and C. Hooper

Recorder:

John P. Salvatore Exeter Archaeology

Date sent to HER: 15/07/09

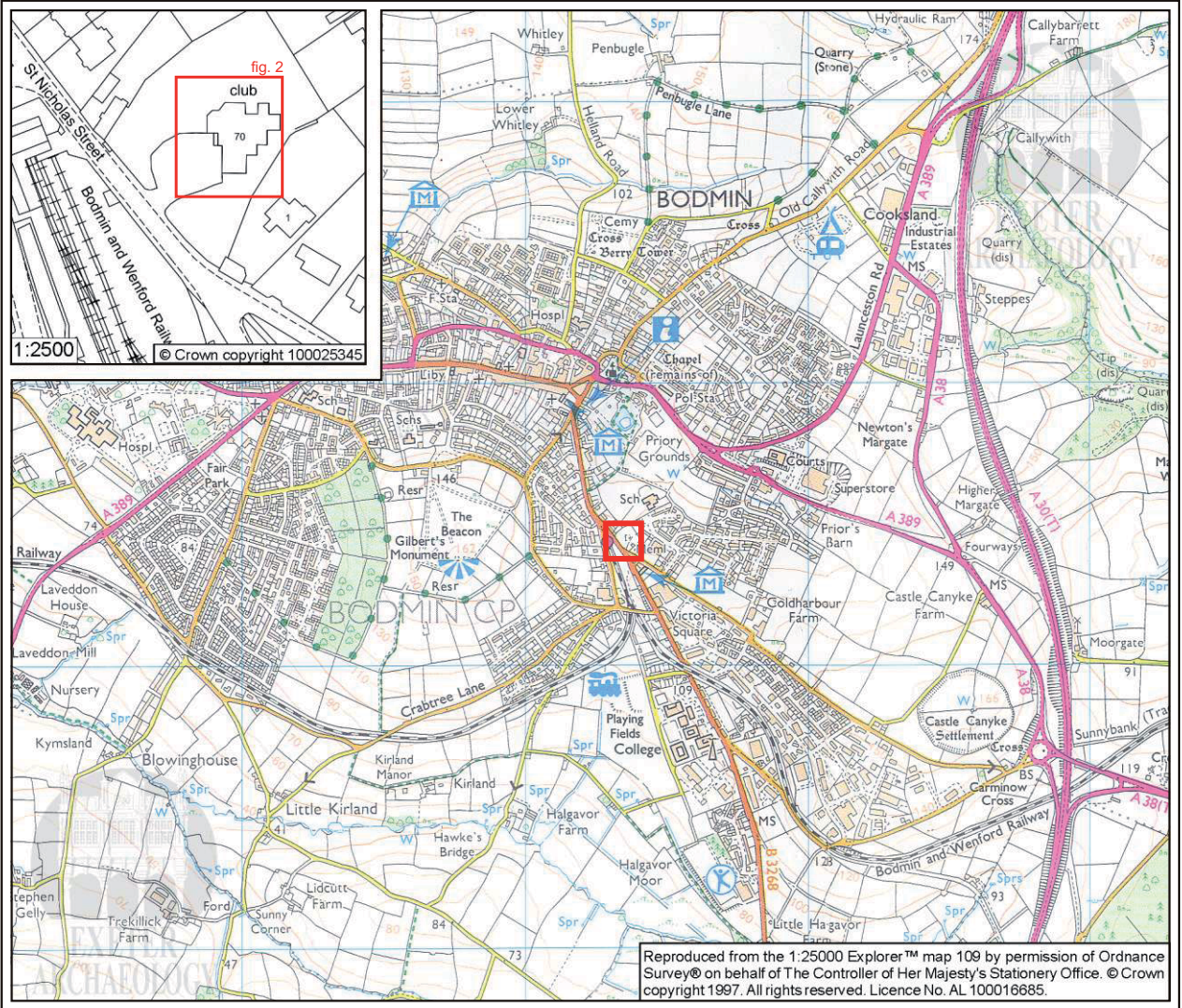


Fig. 1 Location of site.

Plan

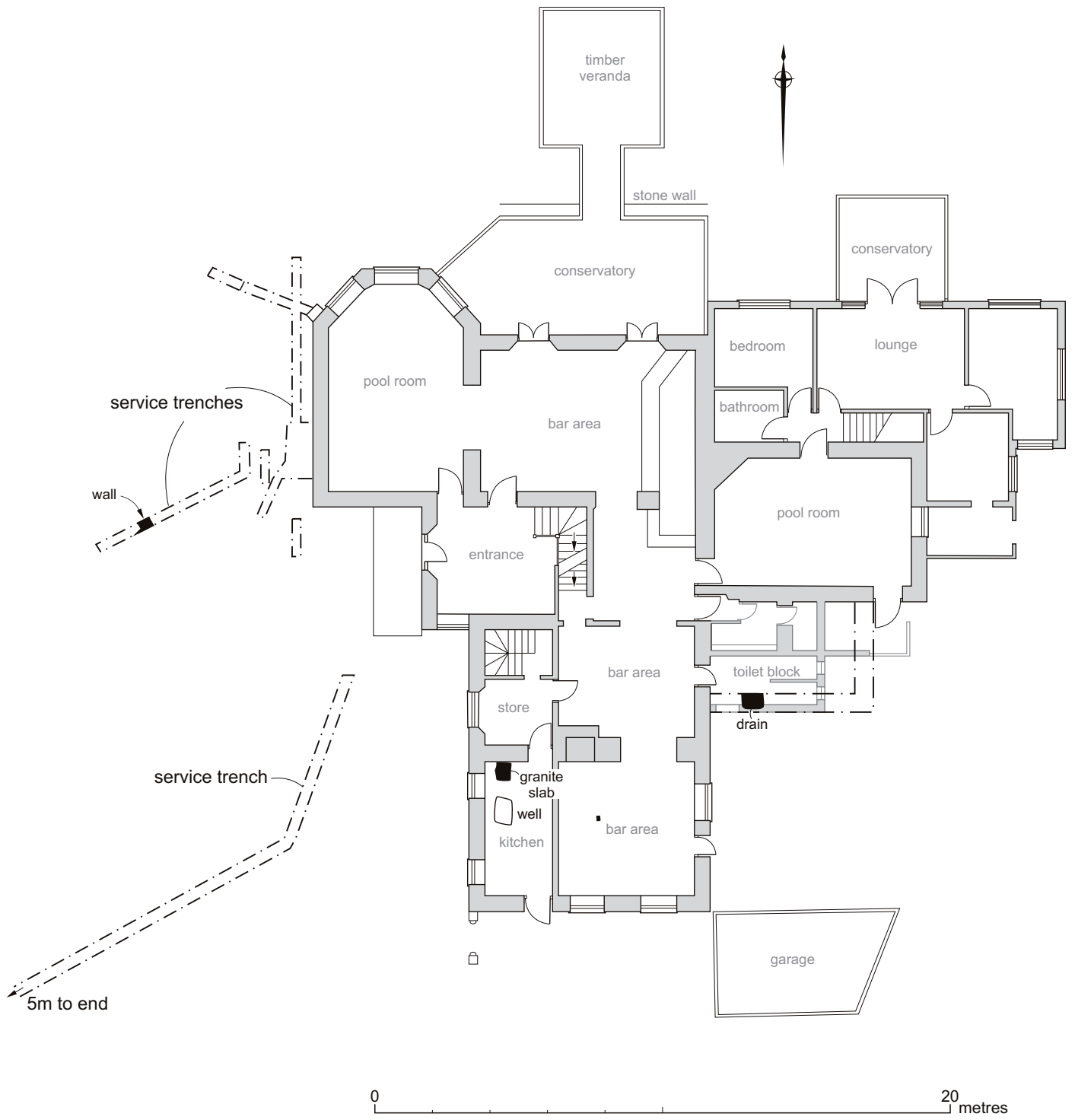


Fig. 2 Location of archaeological features (Based on plan supplied by Rogers and Haynes Architects).