



Cornwall & Scilly Historic Environment Record

Site Recording form



Site Name: Magpie Hill, Brillwater, Constantine, Cornwall

Grid ref (10-fig): SW 72710 29181

OS Map No: OSGB36

Parish: Constantine

Site Type: Groundworks in advance of residential development

Oasis no. southwes1-172670

Period: Modern

Form: Monitoring and Recording event

Description: Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of a private client during groundworks associated with a residential development of land formerly part of the garden of Magpie Hill, Brillwater, Constantine, Cornwall. The work was carried out by J. Bampton on 19th February 2020 in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Boyd 2014) drawn up in consultation with Cornwall Council Historic Environment Service.

Constantine is a village and parish in the hundred and deanery of Kirrier, between Falmouth and Helston (Lysons 1814). It was a Domesday Manor, recorded in 1086 as *Sanctus Constantinus* (MCO14085). The site is at the western edge of the settlement at *Brillwater*, north-west of the Constantine Conservation Area (DCO19) and east-south-east of Brill, which was first recorded in 1300 as *Brehelg* (MCO13598). The Historic Environment Record (HER) lists: flint findspots within Constantine (MCO493; MCO494); a potential Iron Age 'round' c.100m west of the site, identified from cropmark- and fieldname evidence (MCO49900; MCO7674); three Roman coins found at Constantine church (MCO492); and a 19th century water shoot just north of the site.

The site is located in the garden of Magpie Hill on a very steep east facing slope, overlooking a stream and the village, at a height of between c.86m and 96m AOD. Access tracks along the slopes eastern edge and for Magpie Hill have been cut into the slope (see Figure 1). Ordnance Survey mapping indicates that Magpie Hill and its access were built between 1962 and 1975. Earlier mapping shows that a track once ran along the western edge of the property/field, outside of the area subject to groundworks. The soils of this area are the well-drained humose gritty loamy soils of the Moor Gate Association (SSEW 1983), overlying the granite of the Carnmenellis Formation (BGS 2020). No archaeological work has been undertaken on the site itself but monitoring and recording at *Nans Avallon* immediately to the east by Cornwall Archaeology Unit in 2015 revealed no archaeological features or deposits (ECO4418). Monitoring has also been conducted during drainage works at the church (ECO1166); and a geophysical survey conducted c.250m west of the site (ECO3363).

A trench c.6.5x1.8m was excavated across the footprint of the proposed building footprint (Figure 2); with an area c.6x5m also excavated along the proposed new access track (Figure 3). In the trench (located on the sloped garden) 0.16m of dark grey-brown, friable sandy-silt topsoil, (100), overlaid c.0.26m of mid-dark grey-brown, friable sandy-silt subsoil, (101). Subsoil (101) overlaid a light brown-yellow, soft gritty sandy-clay natural, (102), a weathered natural (almost 'sugar granite') with occasional-moderate angular medium granite stones. No finds were recovered from the trench. At the western (top) end of the trench the soils were <0.40m deep; at the eastern (lower) end of the trench they were <0.60m deep.

The area excavated for the new access track revealed a substantial depth of made ground that made the eastern edge of the site level with the extant access track to Magpie Hill. This material was partially retained with a wall and plantation of trees and shrubs. East of the extant access track 0.10m of topsoil/turf, (200), overlaid Made-ground (205), which contained frequent amounts of modern debris (Fe objects, brick, cement and kitchen tile, 19th-20th century industrial wares, 19th century clay pipe stems, melted plastics) mixed with re-deposited topsoil/subsoil. Made-ground (205) overlaid a further made-ground of redeposited natural, (201), which became deeper to the east and contained x3 sherds (29g) of White Refined Earthen Ware with 1960s style motifs. Made-ground (201) overlaid a made-ground of redeposited top/subsoil, (202), which in-turn overlaid a buried topsoil, (203). Buried topsoil (203) overlaid Natural (204), which was the same as (103). The slope of the garden can be extrapolated across the terraced access track to meet the buried topsoil (203).

No significant archaeological features or deposits were present. Ostensibly in the 1960s/70s, the existing access track had been terraced into a slope and the ground made-up and levelled along the eastern boundary of the site/Magpie Hill property. All finds were discarded.

Bibliography:

Boyd, N. 2014: *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording at Magpie Hill, Brillwater, Constantine, Cornwall.*

British Geological Survey 2020: *Geology of Britain Viewer.* http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html

Cornwall Council Interactive Map 2016: *Historic Environment Record (HER) and Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC).*

<https://map.cornwall.gov.uk>

Lysons, D. and Lysons, S. 1814: *Magna Britannia: Volume 3, Cornwall.* T. Cadell & W. Davies, London.

Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales.*

Land Use (Area): Settlement

Land Use (Site): Domestic Property

Date of Site Visit: 19/02/20

Recorder's name: J. Bampton, South West Archaeology Ltd.,

Recorder's address: South West Archaeology Ltd., The Old Dairy, Hacche Lane Business Park, Pathfields, South Molton, Devon, EX36 3LH
phone number: 01769 573555 **email:** mail@swarch.net

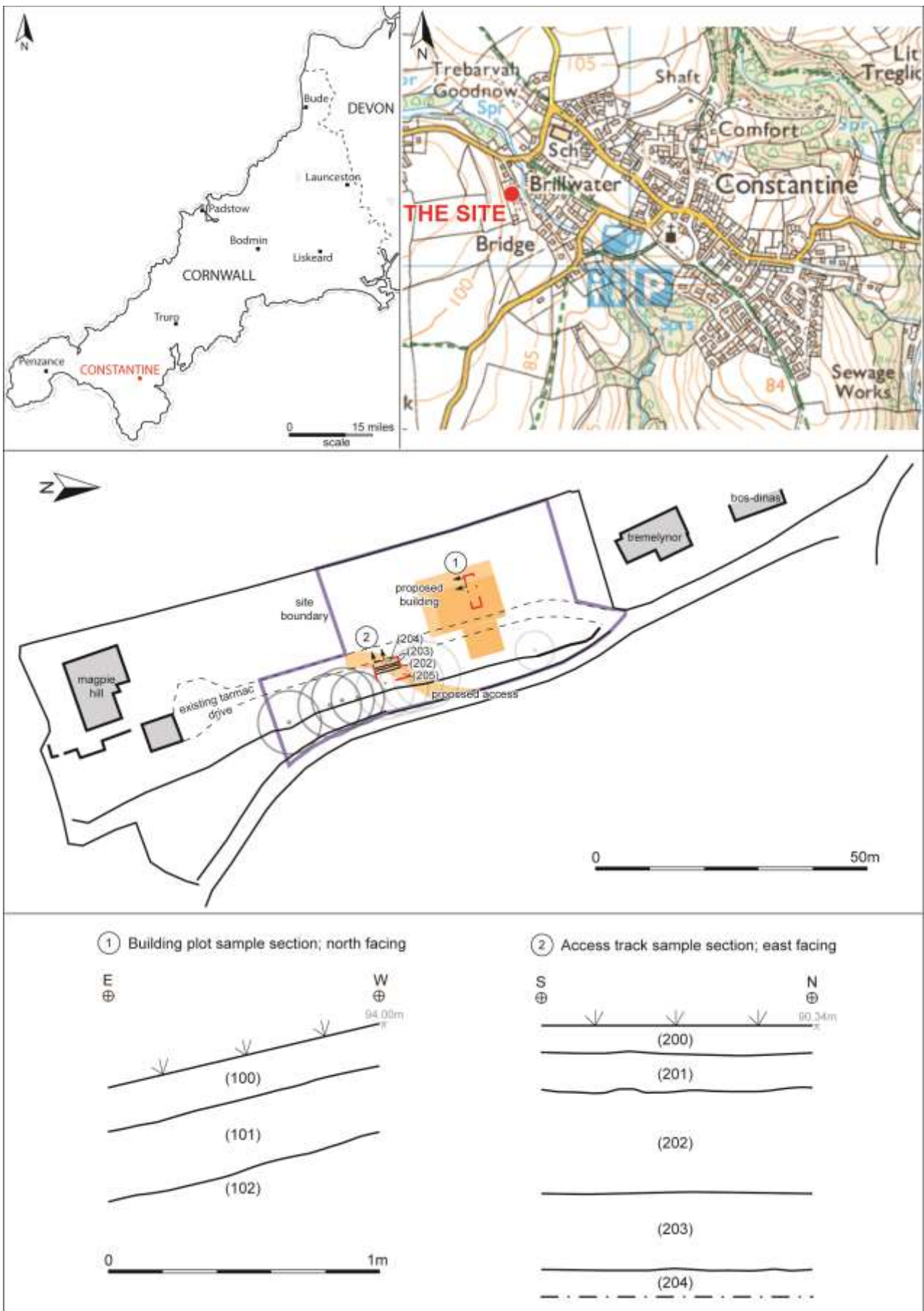


FIGURE 1: (TOP) SITE LOCATION; (MIDDLE) SITE PLAN; (BOTTOM) SAMPLE SECTION DRAWINGS.



FIGURE 2: TRENCH ACROSS PROPOSED BUILDING PLOT, POST-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE WEST (1M SCALE).



FIGURE 3: AREA OF PROPOSED NEW ACCESS TRACK, MID-EXCAVATION; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (1M SCALE).