

Cornwall & Scilly Historic Environment Record Site Recording form



Site Name: Greengates, West Polberro, St Agnes, Cornwall	
Grid ref (10-fig): SW 71331 51345	OS Map No: OSGB36
Parish: St Agnes	
Site Type: Groundworks associated with mining activity survey	
Period: Modern	Form: Monitoring and Recording event
<p>Description: Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Sarah Williams of Sarah Williams Architects (the Client) during groundworks associated with a mining inspection survey prior to proposed development of land at Greengates, West Polberro, St. Agnes, Cornwall, planning application number PA16/11249. The work was carried out by P. Webb between 6th and 7th of April 2017 in accordance with a WSI (Boyd 2017) drawn up in consultation with Charles Johns, Senior Development Officer (Historic Environment) (SDOHE), Cornwall Council; OASIS reference Southwes1-275062.</p> <p>The site is located in open scrub land on the north-western edge of St. Agnes, the southern end of the site currently being occupied by a modern bungalow and garage. It is situated within the area of the 18th century Polberro mine, part of the St Agnes Mining District of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site. The site is fairly level (at c.110m AOD), though to the north, cliffs drop to the Atlantic Coast. The soils of this area are the well drained gritty loamy soils of the Moretonhampstead Association (SSEW 1983); overlying the clay, silt, sand and gravel of the St. Agnes Formation; bordering mudstone and sandstone of the Porhtowan Formation (BGS 2017). The site lies on the border of broad zones designated under the Cornwall Historic Landscape Characterisation as Coastal Rough Ground; and Post-Medieval Enclosed Land developed from Medieval common lands. No archaeological work has been undertaken on the site itself, though the Polberro Mine has been subject to surveys associated with the mining landscape.</p> <p>The monitoring comprised the excavation of three areas orientated approximately east to west, measuring 32m×5-8m (Area 1), 19m×3m (Area 2), and 12m×4.5m (Area 3). Excavation was carried out by mechanical excavator using a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision to a depth of up to 1.45m, this being the depth of natural bedrock. The stratigraphy of the site comprised topsoil, dark brown soft-friable clay-silt c.0.14m thick; overlying re-deposited grey-brown and yellow-brown clays and clay-silts up to 0.80m thick; a buried soil, dark brown-black soft silt-clay 0.52m thick; and the natural bedrock.</p> <p>Six features associated with historic mining activities were identified, including: three shafts [007], [010], [037]; an extraction pit [035]; a seam mine working [030]; and an irregular feature [023]. The shafts were focused towards the eastern end of Areas 1 and 3 and measured 2m-5m in diameter and 3.95m+ deep with vertical sides. They had been filled with in-filled with brown-yellow silt-clays containing frequent angular stone. Extending c.5+m south-west from [007] was a c.1.7m high tunnel in-filled with brown-yellow silt-clay with frequent angular stone. Extraction pit [035], located in the north-east corner of Area 3, measured 3.5m diameter and 3m deep with steep sides and concave base. It was filled with mid brown soft silt-clay with frequent angular stone. In the north-west of Area 1 [023] was visible as an 'L'-shaped feature measuring 7.8+m east to west, 4.2+m wide and up to 2.3m deep with undefined sides. It had been filled by brown and pink-brown soft silt-clays with abundant angular stone. Seam mine working [030] was a linear feature encompassing Area 2 entirely, aligned approximately east to west and measuring 3m wide and up to 4m deep with moderate sloping sides. It had been filled with re-deposited mid pink-brown soft silt-clays with frequent shillet and sub-angular stone. Its position suggests that it may have been the main lode chase with feature [023] a resultant or earlier extension. Two modern service pipes, [013] and [015], were identified running north-east to south-west across Area 1 associated with the existing Greengates House.</p> <p>Summary: The archaeological monitoring identified a series of features associated with the former mining of the site. These included mine shafts, tunnels and seam workings, and all had been sealed by layers of mine waste which had raised it from the buried soil, and had been levelled across the site during the construction of the existing property.</p> <p>Bibliography Boyd, N. 2017: <i>Greengates, West Polberro, St. Agnes, Cornwall: Written Scheme of Investigation</i>. SWARCH Report No. AGG17WSIv1. British Geological Survey 2017. <i>Geology of Britain Viewer</i>. http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html [accessed 02.06.2017]. Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: <i>Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales</i>.</p>	

Land Use (Area): Settlement	Land Use (Site): Domestic Property
Date of Site Visit: 06-07/04/17	
Recorder's name, address and phone number: P.Webb, South West Archaeology Ltd., Hacche Lane Business Park, Pathfields Business Park, South Molton, Devon, EX36 3LH	

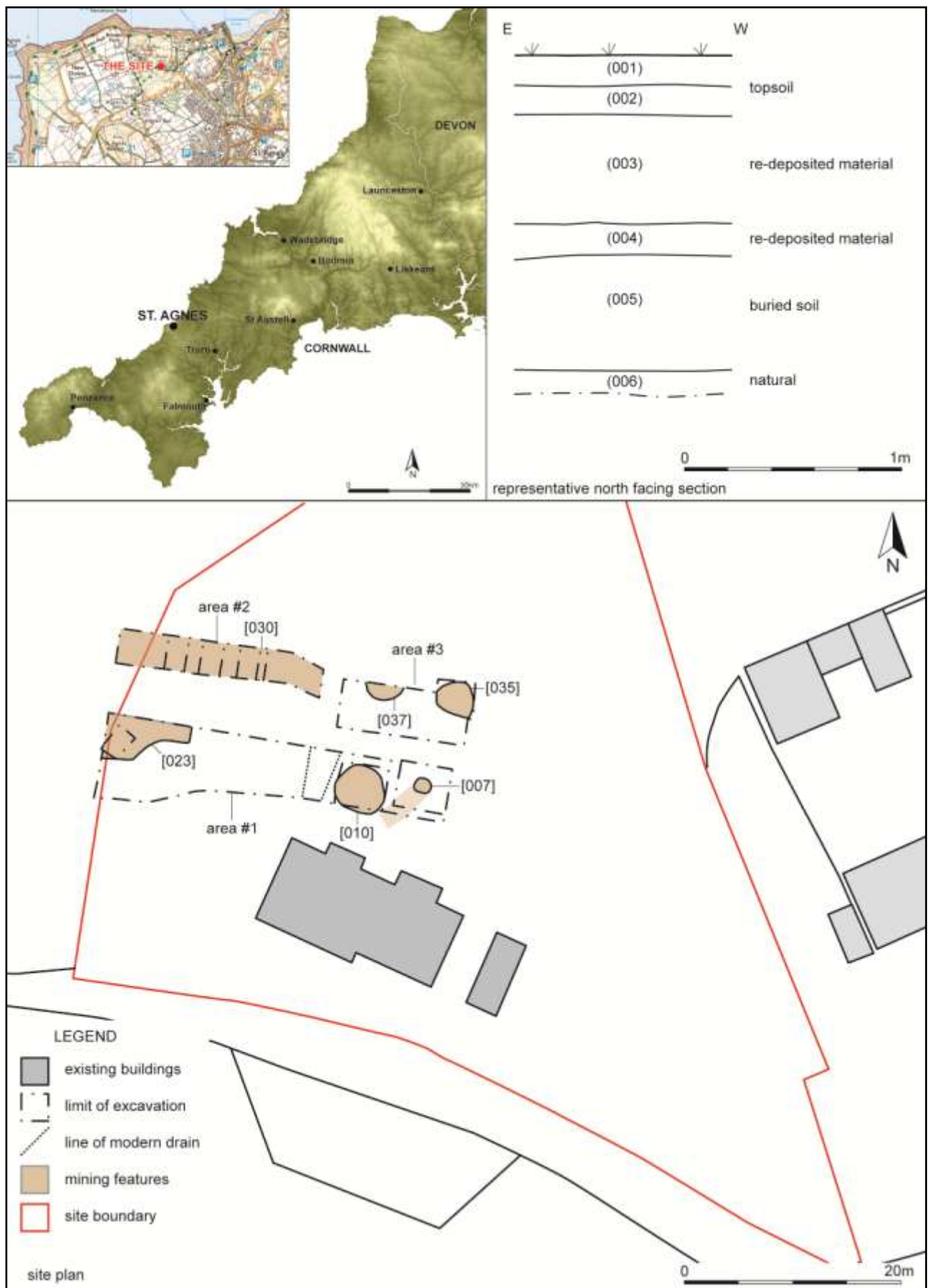


Figure 1: Site location and plan.

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Figure 2: Area 1, detail showing tunnel extending from shaft [007], post-excavation; viewed from the north (no scale).



Figure 3: Area 3, post-excavation, showing buried soil; viewed from the west (1m & 2m scales).