

Cornwall & Scilly Historic Environment Record

Site Recording form



Site Name: Merthen Manor, Constantine, Cornwall	
Grid ref (10-fig): SW 72697 26430	OS Map No: OSGB36
Parish: Constantine	
Site Type: Ground works for an extension	
Period: Modern	Form: Monitoring and Recording event
<p>Description: Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Grenville Tresidder of RTP Surveyors (the Agent) during groundworks associated with an extension to Merthen Manor in Constantine, Cornwall. The work was carried out by J Bampton on 12th June 2017 in accordance with a WSI drawn up in consultation with Sean Taylor, Senior Development Officer, Historic Environment, (SDOHE), Cornwall Council. The planning application number is PA16/12033 & PA16/12034 (LBC) and the OASIS record number for this project is southwes1-283716.</p> <p>Merthen Manor is a Grade II* Listed manor house located within the modern civil parish of Constantine, in the historic Deanery and Hundred of Kerrier. The current house is dated 1575 due to the presence of the arms of Ralph Reskymer and his wife Grace over the entrance, although a document of 1545 depicts a large, castellated house with four round towers on the site, suggesting the 1575 date may be one of remodelling. The Reskymers had acquired Merthen in the early 15th century. When John and Grace Reskymer died in the early 17th century, Merthen was sold to Sir Francis Vyvyan of Trelowarren. In the 11th century it formed part of the manor of Winnianton, which was held by the crown. The house was altered in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The house is shown as an enclosed courtyard on the c.1840 Tithe Map, occupied by John Tyacke, with the description as "House, Offices &C.". The site is within 2km east of Gweek and 3km south of Constantine, atop the north bank of the Helford River, at a height of c.50m AOD. The soils on the site are the well drained fine loamy or fine silty soils of the Manod Association, overlying the sandstone and argillaceous rocks of the Portscatho Formation. The Cornwall Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) of the site is that of Medieval farmland. The Historic Environment Record (HER) lists various potential prehistoric cropmarks and enclosures near to the site, along the Helford River.</p> <p>A rectangular area of concrete paving, (c.4m×6m) was excavated to the rear of the existing kitchen with a footing trench approximately 14m long, 0.60m wide and 0.55m deep excavated along three sides of its perimeter. A small area of turf (c.3m×6m) on the north-west side of the trench was also removed. Within the footprint of the proposed extension, c.0.15m of concrete overlaid c.<0.13m of made-ground, which overlaid natural; a light red-yellow, compact weathered shillet in silty-clay. The made ground was occasionally non-existent across the area and slightly deeper towards the south-west side of the excavated area: it was predominantly disturbed natural and the spread of material/fill, from multiple service trenches, that blended into this patchy layer. Six service pipes and trenches associated with water and sewer drainage cut across the site: 2 deeper 6" ceramic pipes; 2 slightly higher 6" ceramic pipes, of which the one running from the corner of the kitchen block terminated where it presumably once joined the other and the other had a plastic repair pipe at its east end; a shallow more narrow ceramic pipe aligned approximately east-west; and a plastic pipe running west from the drain in the north corner of the site. The turf and topsoil that was removed was a dark brown-grey, friable sandy-silt, 0.10-0.20m thick with a sandy horizon to a dirty natural. At some point this ground had been stripped down to the natural, perhaps having had a rough cobble surface as seen elsewhere on the site, and turf re-laid in the early 20th century (see Figures 1-3). The turf contained modern pottery (white refined earthenware), modern glass, wires, coal and sawn animal bone. It also contained one 18th-19th century fragment of bottle glass and a single large sherd (97g) of a 16th-17th century Cornish ware jug handle. All the finds were discarded. Early 20th century house plans show the kitchen block was used as a coal store, scullery; and had a toilet that aligns with the central, north-south aligned, sewer pipe.</p> <p>No significant archaeological features were identified on the site, the only remains relating to 19th and 20th century service pipes (water waste and sewage).</p>	
Land Use (Area): Agricultural	Land Use (Site): Domestic Property
Date of Site Visit: 12/06/17	
Recorder's name, address and phone number: J. Bampton, South West Archaeology Ltd., Hacche Lane Business Park, Pathfields Business Park, South Molton, Devon, EX36 3LH	

Please post or email completed forms to:
Strategic Historic Environment Service,
Cornwall Council
Pydar House, Pydar Street, Truro TR1 1XU
her@cornwall.gov.uk

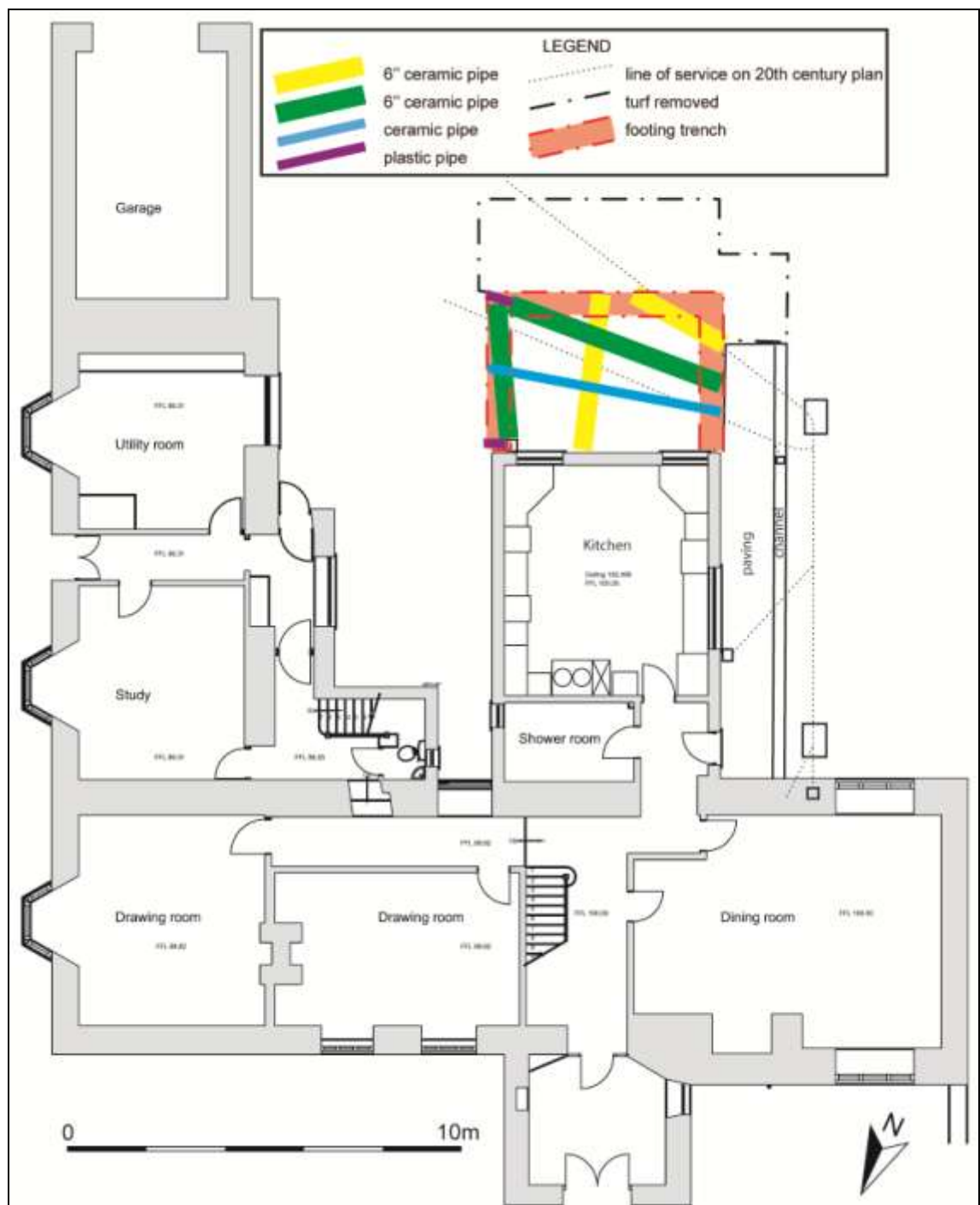


Figure 1: Site plan showing excavated areas, water pipes and water pipes marked on early 20th century plan.

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Figure 2: North-west end of footing trench, showing ceramic pipe; viewed from the south-east (1m scale).

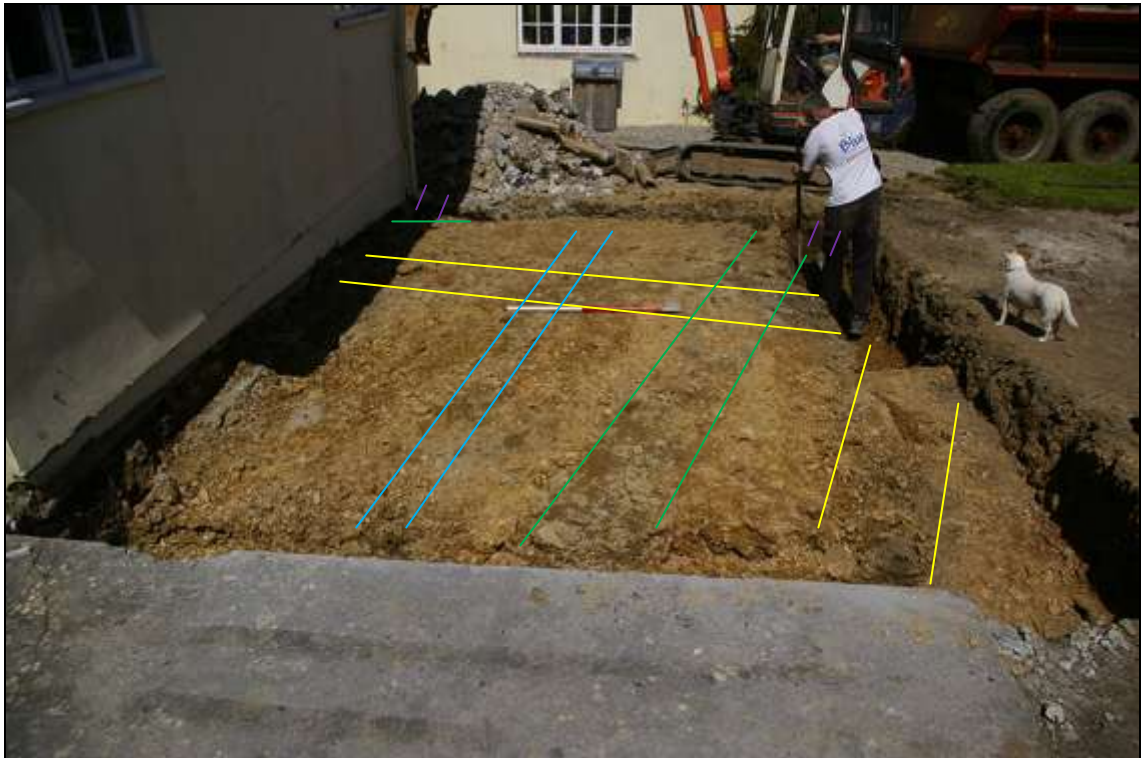


Figure 3: Fully excavated footprint of proposed extension and footing trench, approximate line of service trenches are indicated and colour-coded as on Figure 1; viewed from the north-west (1m scale).

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