

LAND ADJ TO CHY-AN-GWENS MINIONS LINKINHORNE CORNWALL

Results of a Desk-Based Appraisal & Walkover Survey



South West Archaeology Ltd. report no. 171011



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Land Adjacent to Chy-An-Gwens, Minions, Cornwall

Results of a Desk-Based Appraisal & Walkover Survey

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Work undertaken by SWARCH for Alan Bolitho

SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a desk-based appraisal and walkover survey carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. at Land Adjacent to Chy-An-Gwens, Minions, Cornwall, in advance of an application for a proposed residential development.

The proposed site comprises part of a roughly L-shaped field which lies between the main road into Minions, Duchy Terrace, and the access road to the transmitter. The site lies towards the centre of the Caradon Mining District, within the Cornwall and West Devon Mining World Heritage site.

The proposed development would be located on rough ground within an enclosure which has been subdivided in the last 10 years in order to build a dwelling on the western side. Remains of the construction litter the site, which has since been used as a donkey paddock and is covered in long grass and rushes.

The desk-based assessment and walkover survey did not identify any structures or evidence of mining activity on the site. Nor could they rule out the possibility of shallow prospecting pits along the suspected lode lines along the northern end of the enclosure, beyond the proposed development site. Given that the settlement of Minions was established in the later 19th century and no evidence of intensive farming activity in the vicinity, there is the potential for the survival of features relating to prehistoric activity, although no earthworks were identified during the walkover survey.

*The impact of the development on the buried archaeological resource would be **permanent/irreversible**, although the chance of encountering any significant archaeological deposits appears to be low to medium.*



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

LOCATION:	LAND ADJACENT TO CHY-AN-GWENS; MINIONS
PARISH:	LINKINHORNE
COUNTY:	CORNWALL
NGR:	CENTRED ON SX 26239 71220
SWARCH REF:	LMC17

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

This report presents the results of a desk-based appraisal and walkover survey carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) on Land adjacent to Chy-An-Gwens, Minions, Cornwall (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Keith Rolfe (the Agent) on behalf of Alan Bolitho (the Client) in order to establish the historic background for the site and assess the potential impact of a proposed housing development on any below ground archaeology.

1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The proposed site comprises a roughly L-shaped field which lies between the main road into Minions, Duchy Terrace, and the access road to the transmitter. The site lies towards the centre of the Caradon Mining District, within the Cornwall and West Devon Mining World Heritage site at approximately 300m AOD. The soils of this area are the gritty, loamy, very acid soils with a wet peaty surface horizon and often thin ironpan of the Hexworthy Association (SSEW 1983), which overlie the igneous granite bedrock of the Bodmin Intrusion (BGS 2017).

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site is located within the parish of Linkinhorne on the south-eastern edge of Bodmin Moor. It is c.6km north of Liskeard and c.12km south-west of Launceston. A Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative (CISI) report carried out by the Cahill Partnership in 2004 notes that this area contains the greatest concentration of industrial sites and associated settlements on Bodmin Moor. Minions also lies within a prehistoric landscape, rich in assets, including the Hurlers, the Cheesewring and the cairns of Caradon Hill, along with numerous other cairns, hut circles and standing stones. An archaeological survey of the mining remains in the vicinity was carried out by Cornwall Archaeological Unit in 1993 (Sharpe).

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The desk-based appraisal follows the guidance as outlined in: *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (ClfA 2014; revised 2017) and *Understanding Place: historic area assessments in a planning and development context* (Historic England 2017).

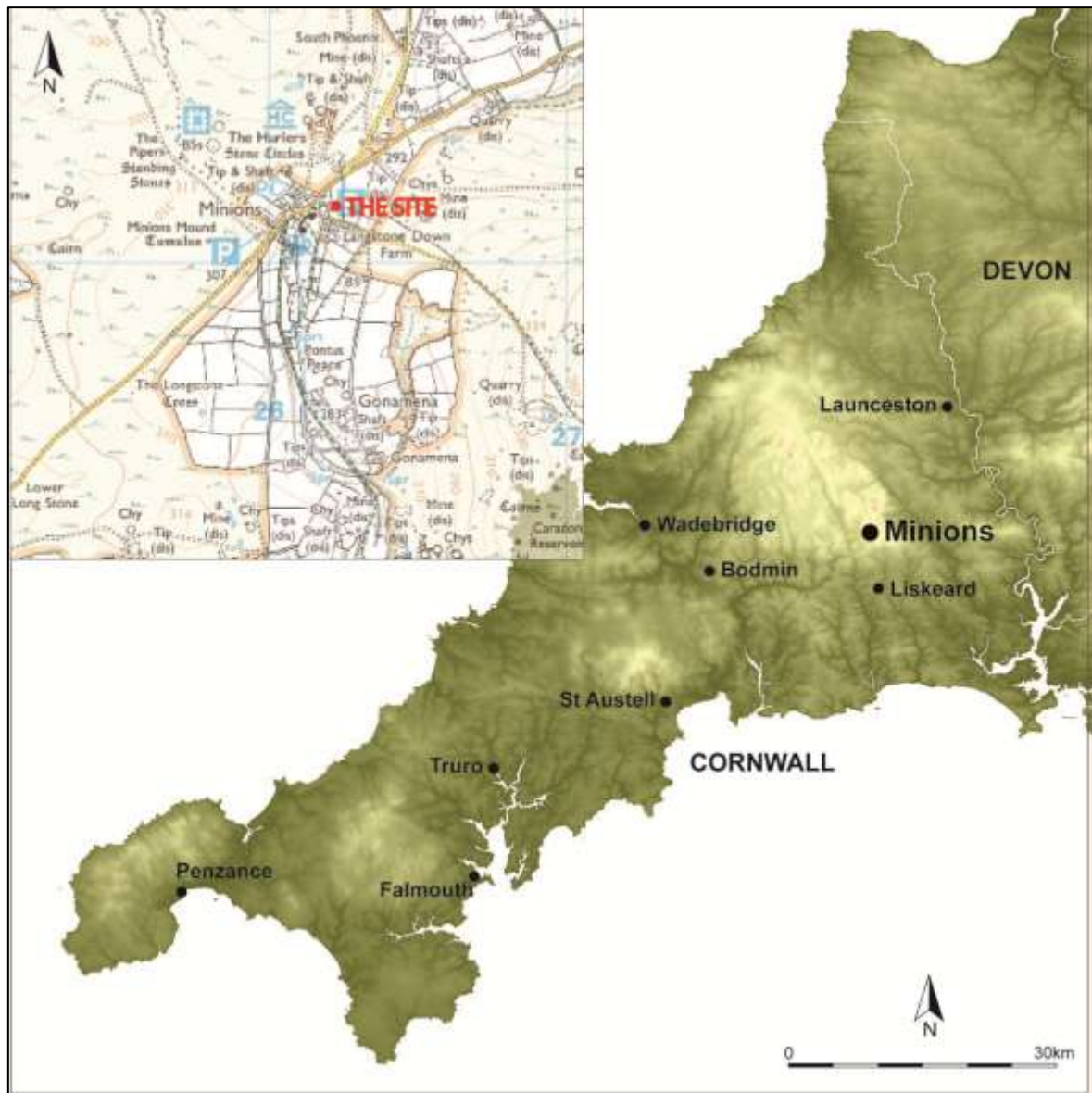


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION (THE PROPOSED SITE IS INDICATED).

2.0 DESK-BASED APPRAISAL AND CARTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

2.1 DOCUMENTARY HISTORY

The site is located on the north-eastern edge of Minions, immediately north of the access road to Caradon Hill and immediately south of Duchy Terrace. The village of Minions was constructed almost entirely between 1863 and 1880, in direct association with the booming mining industry in the local area. Investment, prospecting and the establishment of mines and setts in the Minions area, predominately for tin until the discovery of copper in 1836, had been ongoing throughout the 19th century. The 2004 CISI report notes that temporary camps and residences were used, but have left no identified physical traces. The extension of the railway in the 1850s with a tramway up to Minions prompted the establishment of the permanent settlement, which grew with the increased activity at Phoenix United between 1863 and 1881.

A mining survey (Cornish Mines & Property Surveys 2008) conducted for the property Chy-An-Gwens, which occupies the west of the enclosure that includes the proposal site notes that the property lies within the lease area for the South Wheal Phoenix mining sett, with Wheal Jenkin to the east. The mines in the Minions area were worked for copper and subsequently tin until the late 19th century. A subsequent attempt to reopen the Minions tin mines in the early 20th century was unsuccessful. The survey indicates that two suspected lodes pass through the northern end of the enclosure, beyond the proposed development area. No shafts or wells are indicated, but it is unclear whether any shallow prospecting pits were dug along these lode lines.

2.2 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES



FIGURE 2: EXTRACT FROM THE 1841 LINKINHORNE TITHE MAP. THE APPROXIMATE SITE LOCATION IS INDICATED.

The Linkinhorne Tithe Map shows that Minions was not developed in 1841. There are one or two small buildings or farmsteads in the vicinity, but on the whole the land is unenclosed. The Hurlers are clearly depicted. There does not appear to be any record of mining activity.

By the publication of the First Edition OS map in 1883, the settlement of Minions had been established. By this date the railway and road system had been constructed and mining activity is clearly depicted. Prospecting pits, engine houses and small buildings, possibly associated with storage, can be seen. A Methodist Chapel has been constructed at the north-eastern end of the settlement. The proposed site appears to be depicted as enclosed rough ground and shows no sign of any structures or mining activity.

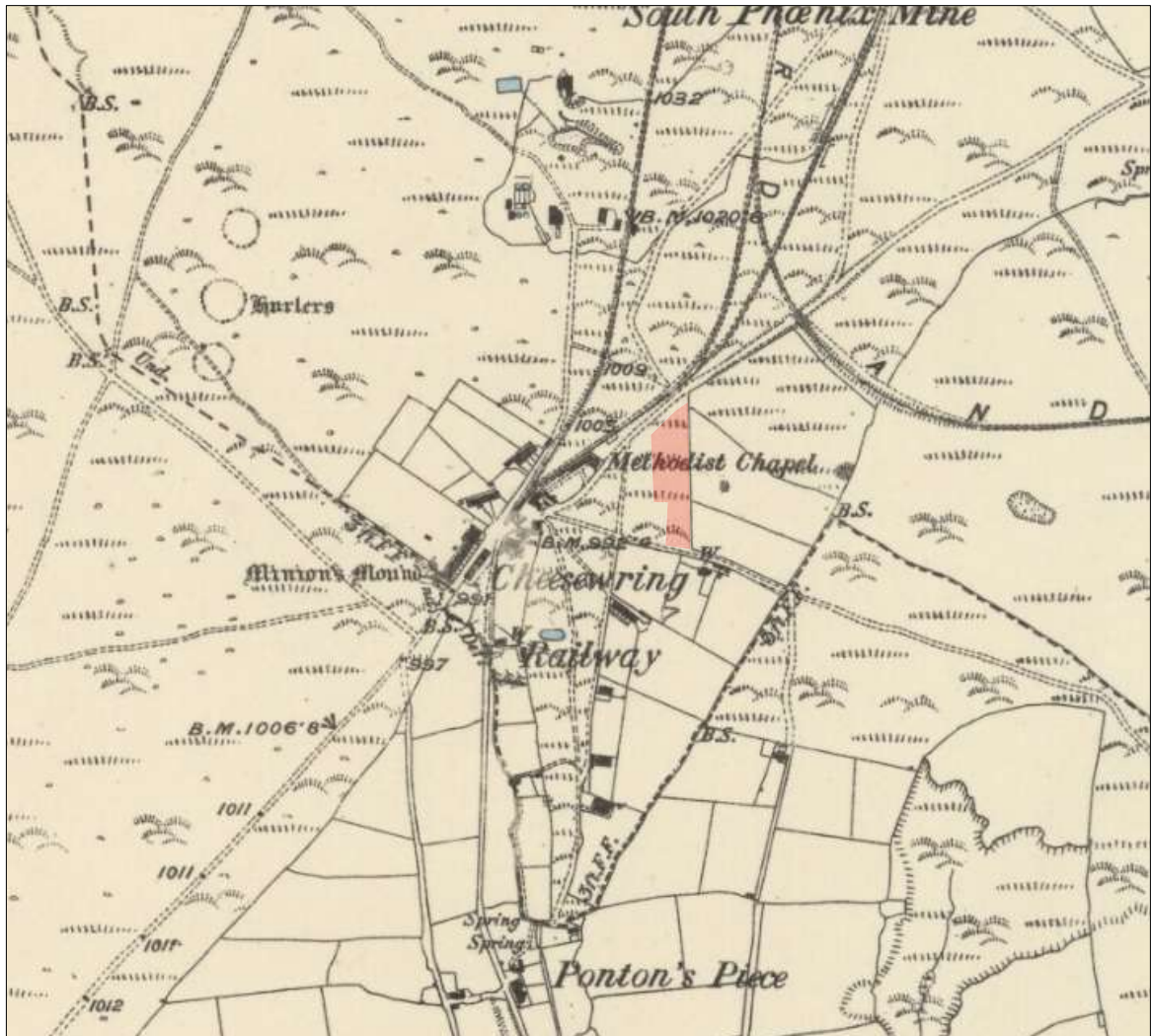


FIGURE 3: EXTRACT FROM THE FIRST EDITION 6 INCH OS MAP, 1883; THE SITE IS INDICATED (CRO).

The 25 inch Second Edition OS map of 1906 shows the settlement in more detail. A few more buildings have been added around the village, but on the whole, the layout and density of settlement appears to have remained fairly constant since 1883. The garden plots at the north-western edge of the settlement seem to have been opened up into five larger enclosures. A second Methodist Chapel has been constructed in the west end of the village and the Cheeswring Hotel is now labelled. The Site is still recorded as rough ground, with no sign of structures or mining activity, although prospecting pits shown on the First Edition OS Map do not appear to be represented in their own right on the Second Edition, but are included as rough ground.



FIGURE 4: EXTRACT FROM THE SECOND EDITION 6 INCH OS MAP, 1906; THE SITE IS INDICATED (CRO).

3.0 WALKOVER SURVEY

The Site was visited on 10th October 2017. The proposed location of the development lies in an enclosure of rough ground, currently used as a donkey paddock on the eastern limit of the village of Minions. The weather was overcast with some showers.

The Site occupies the eastern part of a formerly larger enclosure, the western half is occupied by a house and garden constructed approximately 10 years ago. The site is accessed via a gate in the south-east, opening onto the access road for the Caradon Hill transmitter. The site is covered in clumps of long grass and soft rush and is very uneven underfoot. Collapsed fencing within the field appears to relate to the recent use of the site as a donkey paddock. Just north of the centre of the field is a large mound of peaty earth, between 1.5 and 2m high. This appears to be fairly recent in date, likely associated with the construction of the adjacent house, Chy-An-Gwens. There are a couple patches of concreted ground in the field and small piles of large stones, again, likely associated with the adjacent build when this part of the field was presumably used as the site compound and store. Also noted on site was evidence of recent bonfires.

A ditch runs along the eastern boundary of the site alongside a Cornish hedgebank with a post and wire fence on top. The ditch is overgrown, with bracken, ferns and long grass. It is particularly waterlogged approximately halfway along its length. The northern boundary is a Cornish hedgebank topped with a modern post and wire fence, beyond is Duchy Terrace. The western boundary is a modern post and wire fence, with a secondary leylandii boundary to the garden of Bracken Heath, a property constructed in the 1990s. The southern boundary, between the site and the Caradon Hill Road, appears to be a Cornish hedgebank, although lower than the others bounding the field, again with a post and wire fence on top. In general, the site boundaries are in fairly good condition, with only a few slight tumbles along the northern boundary, which appear to have occurred some time ago as they are grassed over.

There are clear views to Houseman's Engine House to the north-west, which houses the Minions Heritage Centre. Views to the south are of the houses across the road to the south and south-east and of roofs of bungalows to the south-west. There are views of other houses in the village to the west, although there is screening provided by Chy-An-Gwens and the leylandii hedge of Bracken Heath. To the east, views are partially screen by the tall hedgebank, but consist of the open landscape and mining remains beyond.

As the ground is covered in thick grass and rush along with the remains of the construction of the adjacent building, it is difficult to say whether there are any archaeological earthworks present. The piles of earth and stone clearly relate to the construction of the neighbouring house, and the concrete patches are modern and likely also related. There are no earthworks of an obvious archaeological nature and no prospecting pits, shafts or features relating to mining activity were observed. There is no evidence of any buildings or structures having previously occupied the site.

It would appear that the site has not been subject to any significant levels of disturbance or landscaping, and as such it must be considered that there is potential for the survival of below ground archaeological deposits and features.

There are no overhead cables obstructing access to the site. The western boundary is electrified. No services are known to cross the site.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed development would be located on rough ground within an enclosure which has been subdivided in the last 10 years in order to build a dwelling on the western side. Remains of the construction debris were visible on the site, which has been most recently used as a donkey paddock and is covered in long grass and rushes.

The desk-based assessment and walkover survey did not identify any structures or evidence of mining activity on the site. Neither could rule out the possibility of shallow prospecting pits along the suspected lode lines along the northern end of the enclosure, beyond the proposed development site. The settlement of Minions was established in the later 19th century and there is no evidence of intensive farming activity in the vicinity, so there is the potential for the survival of archaeological deposits relating to prehistoric activity, although no earthworks were identified during the walkover survey.

The impact of the development on the buried archaeological resource would be **permanent/irreversible**, although the chance of encountering any significant archaeological deposits appears to be low to medium.

5.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY & REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1: SUPPORTING PHOTOGRAPHS



VIEW ACROSS THE SITE FROM THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER.



VIEW ALONG THE EASTERN BOUNDARY SHOWING THE OVERGROWTH AND THE DITCH; FROM THE SOUTH.



COLLAPSED FENCE AND CONCRETED PATCH IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THE SITE; FROM THE EAST-SOUTH-EAST.



SPOIL HEAPS AND STONE PILE IN THE CENTRE OF THE SITE; FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.



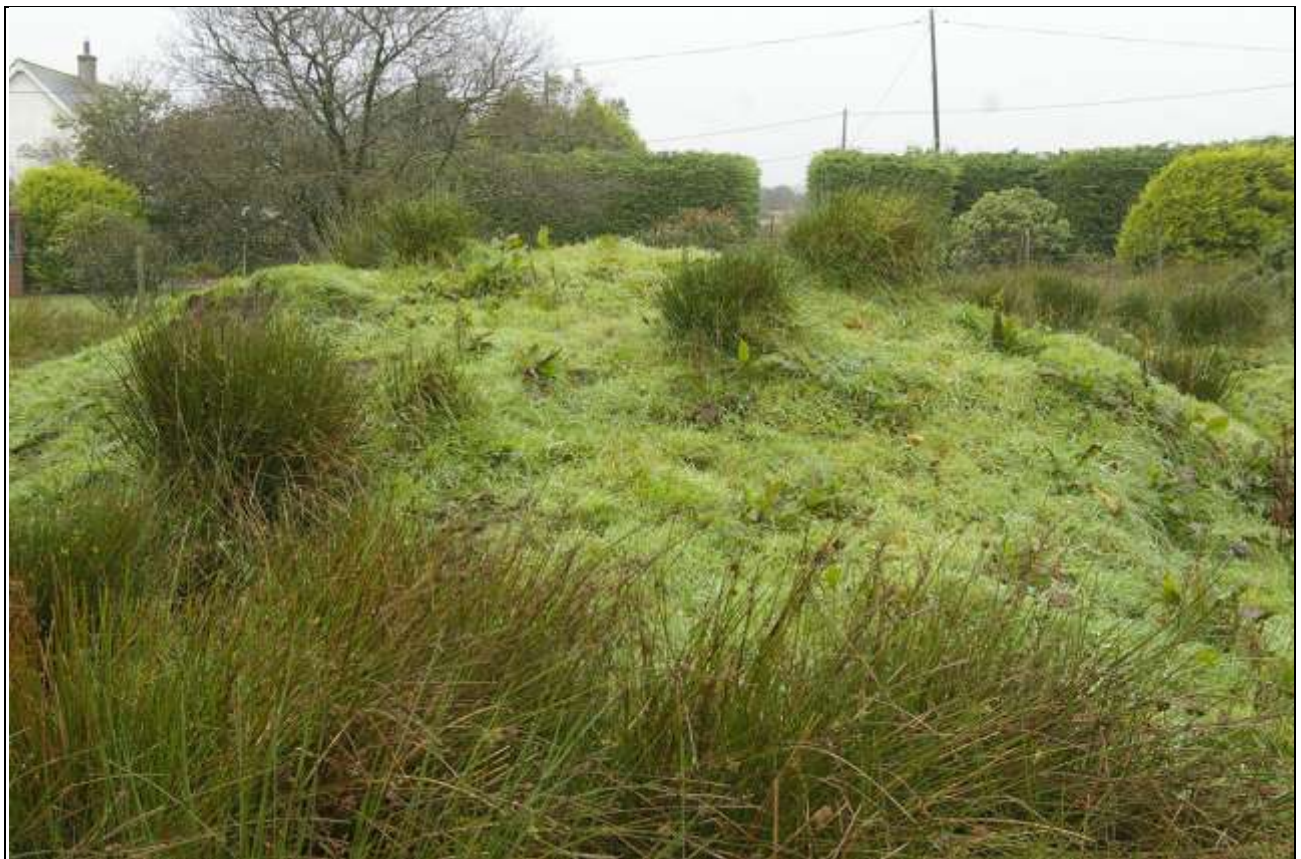
DETAIL OF THE STONE PILE; FROM THE SOUTH.



VIEW SOUTH, SHOWING THE UNEVEN GROUND, RUSHES AND COLLAPSED FENCES; FROM THE NORTH-EAST OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AREA.



VIEW SOUTH-WEST FROM THE NORTH-EAST CORNER OF THE PROPOSED SITE.



THE LARGE SPOIL HEAP CREATED WHEN CHY-AN-GWENS WAS CONSTRUCTED, IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE ENCLOSURE; FROM THE EAST.



VIEW NORTH FROM THE SPOIL HEAP, SHOWING THE LEYLANDII BORDER, AND HOUSEMAN'S ENGINE HOUSE BEYOND; FROM THE SOUTH.



VIEW SOUTH-EAST FROM THE CORNER OF THE CHY-AN-GWENS PLOT; FROM THE NORTH-WEST.



THE CHY-AN-GWENS PLOT, WITHIN THE ENCLOSURE; FROM THE NORTH.



ANOTHER SPOIL DUMP ASSOCIATED WITH MODERN DEVELOPMENT; FROM THE SOUTH.



VIEW NORTH-EAST FROM THE BOUNDARY WITH CHY-AN-GWENS; FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.



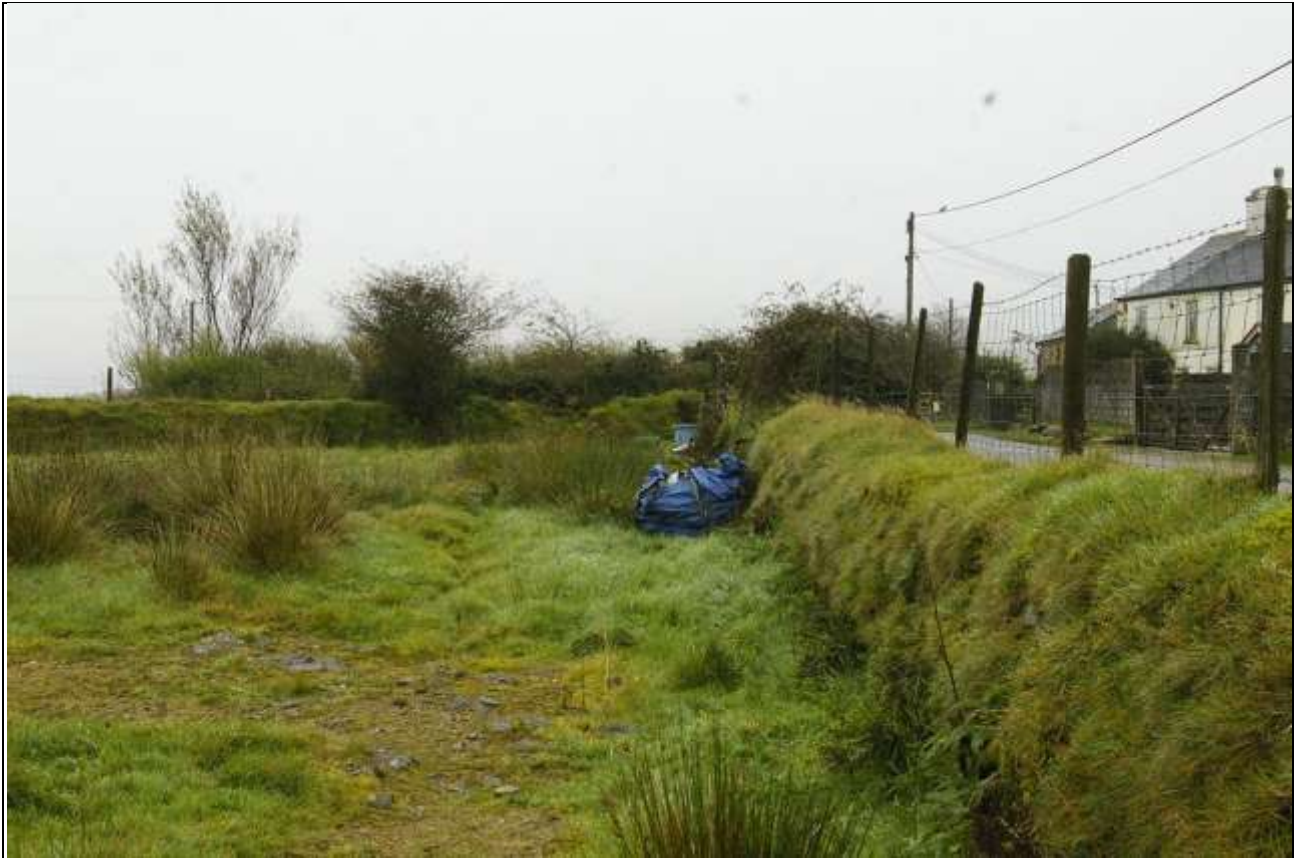
VIEW TO THE EAST, WITH OPEN LANDSCAPE AND MINING REMAINS VISIBLE BEYOND THE SITE BOUNDARY; FROM THE WEST.



EVIDENCE OF RECENT BONFIRES/BURNING ON THE SITE.



CONCRETED PATCH ADJACENT TO THE CHY-AN-GWENS PLOT; FROM THE NORTH-EAST.



VIEW ALONG THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY OF THE SITE; FROM THE WEST.



VIEW ACROSS THE SITE FROM THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER.



VIEW NORTH ALONG THE BOUNDARY WITH CHY-AN-GWENS.



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