

HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR LAND AT PENBRO FARM, BREAGE, CORNWALL

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by Duncan Isherwood of Sunderland Peacock and Associates (the Agent) on behalf of Jo Sharpe (the Client) to produce a heritage statement for land at Penbro Farm, Breage, Cornwall, in advance of the change of use for part of the site to a campsite with amenity building and access track. This rapid appraisal of existing documentary and cartographic sources, together with a short site visit and geophysical survey (summarised below), is intended to inform and guide the need for subsequent archaeological work on the site.

SITE LOCATION

The site is located in a field c.130m west of Roseladden Mill Farm and c.450m east of Penbro Farmhouse. The site would be accessed from the north by a new track crossing two further fields. The site is c.800m east-south-east of the parish church of Breage and c.3km west of Helston, between the A394 and Sethnoe Way. The site is on the east-facing slope of a spur of land bounded by spring-fed drains to its south, west and east. The spur opens out to a wide flat ridge towards Breage and the north-west, and has steep slopes to the east and south. The site is at a height of between c.50m and c.75m AOD.

SITE HISTORY

The site is located on agricultural land that has probably been in continuous use since the medieval period, given the medieval origins of Penbro Farm (HER No.30074) and many of the other farmsteads in the surrounding area. The site is located c.350m south of the Tregonning and Gwinear Mining District of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site.

The available cartographic evidence suggests relatively limited change over the period 1840-present. The only notable change since 1840 (see Figure 1) is the removal of two field boundaries along the route of the proposed access track.

The site is located within an area characterised as medieval or earlier farmland by the Cornwall Council Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC). The Cornwall Historic Environment Record (HER) records several heritage assets within 1km of the site. This includes two possible late Prehistoric or Romano-British settlements (rounds) (HER No.28972 and 28959) and barrows (HER No.28967); this is based on the tithe apportionment field names *Carvey Field*, *Park Creen* and *Burrow Field* at Penbro Farm and Roseladden Farm. Penbro is first recorded in 1219 as *Eglospenbroc*, Sithnoe in 1324 as *Shegthenou* (HER No.30078), Roseladden in 1284 as *Resledan* (HER No.30056) and Breage in 1140 as *Egglosbrec* (HER No.30064). There is a possible medieval, but undated, fieldsystem at Penbro (HER No.56281). The farmhouse at Sethnoe 17th century in origin and is Listed Grade II (List Entry No.1311696), and there is a post-medieval quarry (HER No.40157) and 19th century mine (HER No.56334) to the north-north-east of the site (Penbro Mine/South Wheal Fortune). There is another post-medieval mine, Wheal Rib (HER No.56278), located south-south-east of the site. The Grade I Listed church at Breage contains a Romano-British inscribed stone in its north aisle (HER No.28938.10) and stands within a sub-circular churchyard that is probably an early medieval *lann* (HER No.28938.20); the churchyard also contains an early inscribed cross. The HER also records the largely negative results of a geophysical survey followed by archaeological evaluation (ECO3719; Wells and Budd 2012) at St. Breaca Close on the edge of Breage village.



FIGURE 1: BREAGE TITHE MAP, 1839 (CRO). THE SITE LOCATION AND PROPOSED ACCESS ARE INDICATED IN RED.

WALKOVER SURVEY

The fields of the site were bounded by Cornish hedgebanks with relatively high managed bushes and shrubs and generally heavily overgrown. Occasional sections of wire fence were visible in the overgrowth. The north end of the site access was bounded by Sithnoe Way and the east boundary of the site fell away steeply to a valley and watercourse below. The ground was slightly undulating, indicating some probable spring lines running roughly perpendicular to the slope. The land sloped downwards to the east. The site had been ploughed roughly and allowed to grow over with weeds, wild flowers and what remained of a potato crop; this overgrowth and ploughing made the identification of subtle surface earthworks impossible. Where the ploughsoil was exposed frequent angular stone and pale weathered subsoil or natural could be seen, indicating heavy plough damage. Occasional sherds of 19th century industrial pottery wares were observed in the southern and middle fields. A single sherd of late medieval pottery was observed in the north field at the northernmost entrance to the site.

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

The results of the geophysical survey (Figure 2) would suggest that there are very few, if any, features of archaeological origin present within the area of the proposed development and access track. Of the two anomaly groups identified, one is of a probable modern pipe that should fall outside the footprint of the development, and the other is related to features associated with extant boundaries, trackways and ploughing activity.

Furthermore, the visible evidence of ploughing across the site and the shallow nature of topsoil makes it unlikely that any buried archaeological features have escaped extensive truncation.

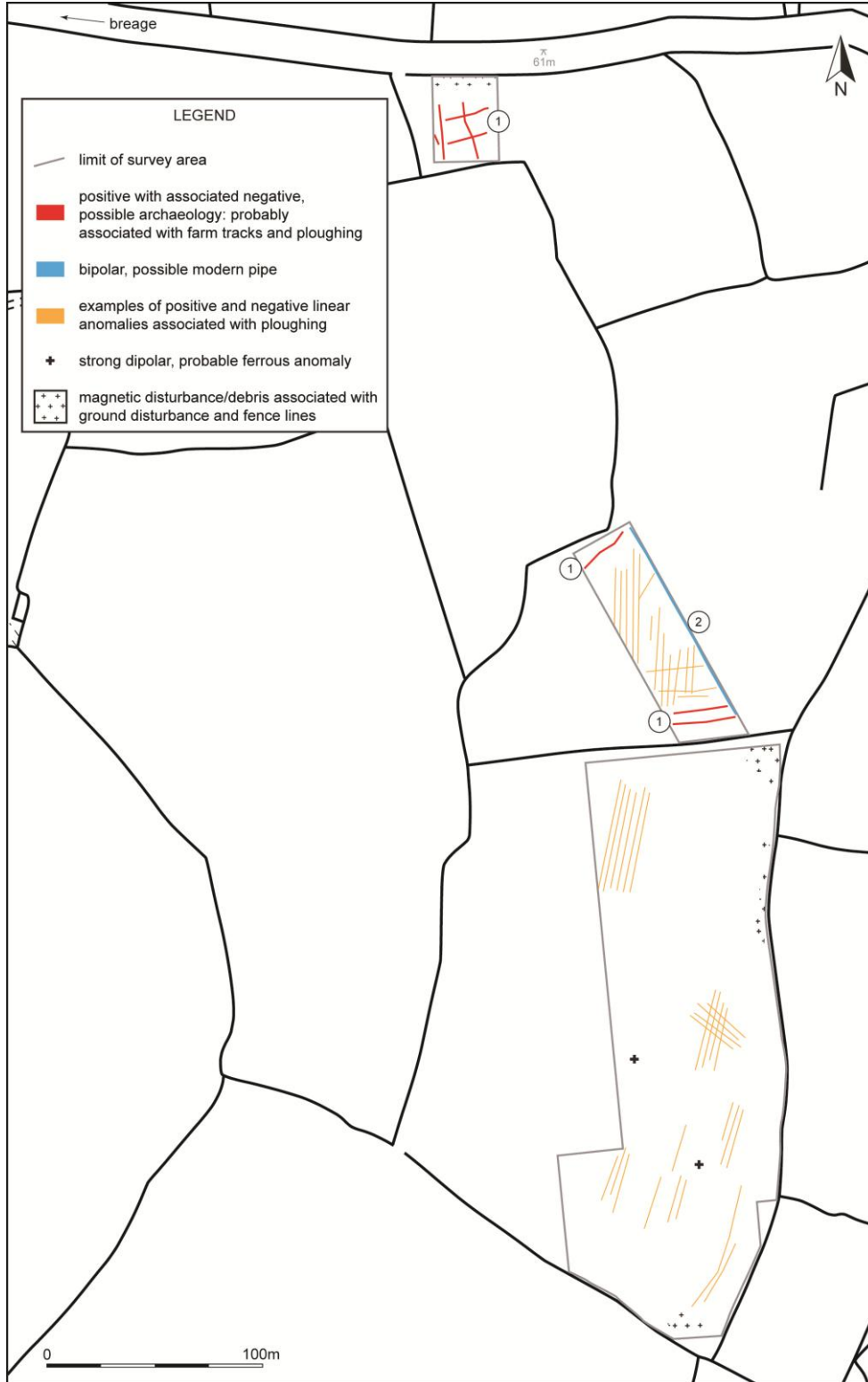


FIGURE 2: INTERPRETATION OF GRADIOMETER SURVEY DATA.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The location of the proposed development on largely east-facing slopes and at a slight distance from the most sensitive heritage assets in the immediate area (the World Heritage Site, the Conservation Area at Breage, and the various Listed buildings within that village) means that there is unlikely to be a significant impact on the settings of these assets. Designated heritage assets to the west and south are at such a distance that any views of the proposed development are unlikely to have any significant impact upon their setting.

It is recommended that careful consideration is made of the entrance to the site – the amenity building and signage – as these are the aspects that are most likely to have an effect on the setting of the World Heritage Site, due to their proximity.

CONCLUSION

Based on current evidence, development of the site is unlikely to encounter or disturb significant archaeological deposits. Only agricultural features of essentially modern origin were noted during the geophysical survey, and nothing further of note was identified during the desk-based appraisal and walkover. However, the hedgebanks here are likely to be considered important under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations (Schedule 1, pt2, 5(a) 'integral part of a field system pre-dating the Inclosure Acts'), and some provision for recording breaches should be made.

REFERENCES

Bampton, J. 2016: *Land at Penbro Farm, Breage, Cornwall: Results of a geophysical survey*. South West Archaeology Report No. 160824.

Wells, T. and Budd, C. 2012: *Land at St. Breaca Close, Breage. Archaeological Evaluation Report*. Wessex Archaeology report 87270.03.

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