

Mountjoy, Colan, Cornwall – Archaeological Statement v.3

South West Archaeology Ltd. 11.12.2020 B Morris

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Project Background

South West Archaeology Ltd. was approached by Kingsley Village (the Client) to undertake a rapid archaeological appraisal of a large (c.48ha) area at Mountjoy, Colan, Cornwall (hereafter, the 'site'), prior to proposed development as a holiday park. This rapid appraisal of existing documentary and cartographic sources, together with a limited walkover and impact assessment, is intended to inform and guide subsequent archaeological work on the site.

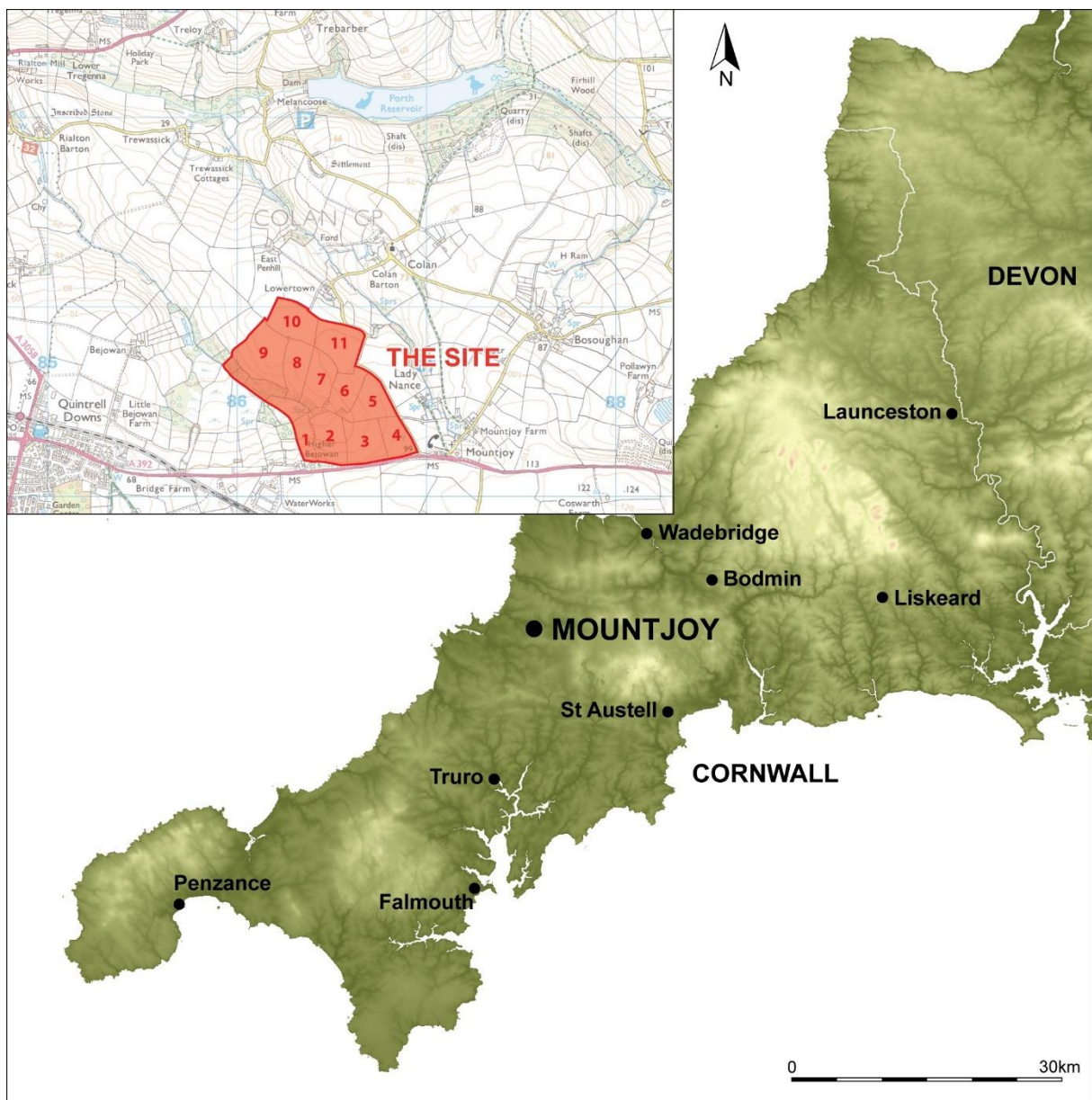


FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP.

Site Location

The site consists of 11 arable fields and a strip of wooded valley occupying the upper part and western flank of a long hill spur. Broadly speaking, the site is bounded by the A392 to the south, the

The adjacent settlements and farms are: Higher Bejowan (SW863601); Mountjoy (SW871603); Lady Nance (SW869605); Lowertown (formerly *Mellionec Vean*) (SW864610); Penhill (formerly *Mellionec Wartha*) (SW861613) and Colan churchtown (SW867612). The farmhouse at Chyngwith (SW867608) was ruinous by the mid-20th century and Lawhittack at Colan (SW867613) had been lost by the mid-19th century. The Cornwall and Scilly HER notes that Chyngwith (*Cheynqut* 'house+trees' AD1372), Colan (AD1277) Lawhittack (AD1297), and Mountjoy (*Meyndi* 'stone house' AD1277) are medieval settlements. The farmhouses at Penhill and Colan Barton are Listed as 17th century in date but could easily be earlier given the vagaries of the Listing process. Some of the other houses in the area (e.g. No.2 Mountjoy Cottage, Lowertown Farmhouse etc.) may be earlier than appreciated. The holy well at Lady Nance is attested as such from c.1700. It is clear from this summary that the bulk of the site falls within a fieldscape with medieval origins, and this conclusion is reinforced by the gently-curving character of many of the field boundaries here (i.e. they reflect the curve of medieval plough strips).

The mid-19th century tenurial landscape also retains echoes of the medieval layout of the site. It was divided between four tenements and two landowners: William Mallet Hoblyn and a collective (William and Henry Benny, Richard Taunton and Eliza Mackey). The Hoblyn family acquired the Colan Barton estate in the 17th century, by sale from the Blewetts and the last Earl of Radnor. The Barton was originally held by a family of the same name, passing in moieties through marriage to the Blewetts and the Trefusis family in c.1500 (Lysons 1814). The four tenements were: Lower Town; Chyngwith; Hoblins (presumably from *Hoblyn*); and Mellionack Wartha. The intermingled distribution of Lower Town and Hoblins, and the fact that Lower Town was owned by three different families, points to a complex pattern of landholding ultimately derived from the intermingled parcels of a medieval strip field system. The field names themselves are mostly prosaic and straightforward; the exceptions are *Round Meadow* and *Old Hendras*. Round Meadow could be taken to indicate the presence of an enclosure of Late Prehistoric or Romano-British date (as recorded on the HER: MCO7857), and a stone spindle whorl has been recovered from the field (MCO920). No earthworks are reported here. *Hendra* (hen+tre) is Cornish for 'winter farmstead/home farm' and would strongly indicate either a medieval or earlier settlement site in or near this field. It is worth noting there is a Scheduled enclosure on the hill spur c.0.8km to the north-north-east (MCO950/8224) in a similar topographical location.

There are relatively few recorded archaeological features within the site, restricted to the cropmarks of probable medieval lynchets on the upper slopes of Field 9 (MCO32846) and a lost field boundary (MCOMCO32847). There is a tiny stone-built structure on the roadside near Mountjoy (Field 4) described on the HER as a well house (MCO57027); formerly a two-storey structure, this has been cut down and fitted with a mono-pitch roof. The west wall is pierced by three openings: two doors flanking a small central window. The three openings have pointed segmental stone arches that would suggest an association with house Mellionec Vean ('Lowertown Barn'). Internally there are alcoves in the north and south walls just inside the doors, evidence for floor joists, and a blocked first floor opening in the south wall; the well is not immediately obvious. At the south-west corner of the site a quarry is noted (MCO26012), with Bejowan Mine (MCO11826) just to the west. This would suggest mining-related features could be present on this part of the site.

A review of the readily available aerial photography indicates that the field boundaries lost since c.1840 show readily as both soil- and cropmarks. Nothing else is particularly clear. This is surprising as the Newlyn Downs plateau is noted for its good cropmarks, which show the relict field boundaries of Late Prehistoric or Romano-British fields and settlement enclosures (rounds). Rounds have been identified from cropmarks at Mountjoy (MCO32849); Cosworth (MCO33773) and Bejowan (MCO7573), all within 0.5km of the site. On balance, however, it is likely the absence of cropmarks relates to the geology and should not be taken to indicate the absence of archaeological features.

Analysis of TELLUS survey DTM and DSM LiDAR data (there is no Environment Agency LiDAR data for this area) picks up the lost 19th century field boundaries and a possible service trench crossing the southern part of the site west-south-west to east-north-east but is otherwise uninformative.

No intrusive archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken on the site or in its immediate vicinity. However, fieldwork in and around Quintrell Downs and particularly around Newquay has identified the high potential of this landscape. Multiple large-scale geophysical surveys around Newquay have identified numerous Late Prehistoric/Romano-British settlements that do not produce cropmarks, as well as Middle Bronze Age sunken-featured roundhouses and Prehistoric pit groups (e.g. Bampton & Morris 2013; *CA forthcoming*; Joyce 2011). The landscape type *Anciently Enclosed Land* is regarded as having a *high* potential for such remains, and it is likely that this site – which covers c.48ha – will feature a relict fieldsystem and more than one early settlement.

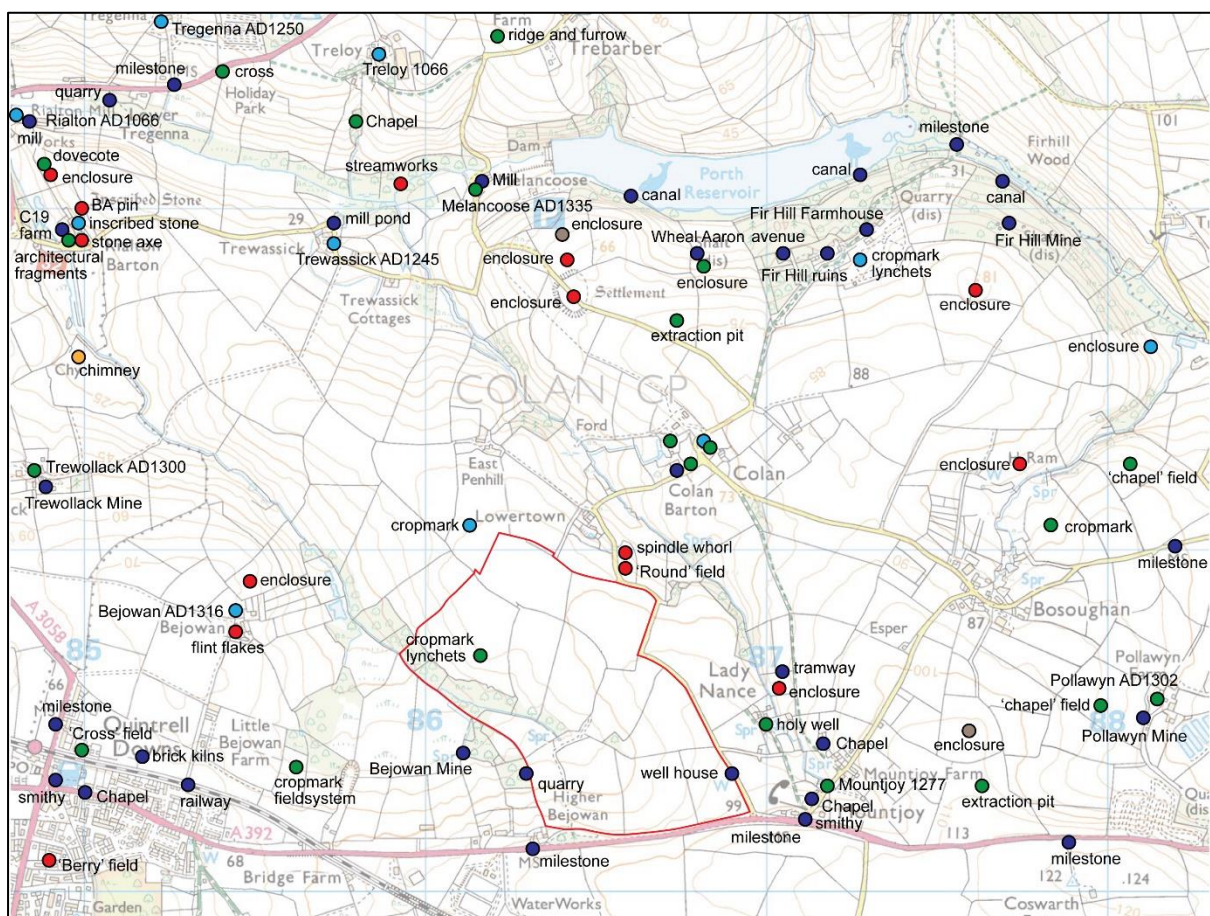


FIGURE 3: SITES LISTED ON THE CORNWALL AND SCILLY HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD.

Impact Appraisal

Given the preliminary stage at which this statement is being produced, no detailed consideration of possible harm has been made. This statement will be limited to general observations of those designated heritage assets where an appreciable effect could be experienced. This assessment is informed by a rapid site visit undertaken by the author on 09.12.20; the weather was overcast but otherwise dry and clear. It should be noted that at the time of the site visits the screening provided by trees and hedgerows was at its least pronounced, and thus the assessments should provide a worse-case scenario.

In terms of general observations, the Newlyn Downs LCA is comprised of gently undulating low hills dissected by shallow valleys. Woodland tends to be limited to the narrow valleys and hedge trees

are relatively uncommon. The topography and the limited tree cover facilitate the extensive views possible across the area. This makes the landscape more rather than less sensitive to change. The other key observation is that this is a very rural landscape of narrow lanes and wide, open fields. The proposed development is extensive and would alter the character of the immediate landscape. However, arguably holiday parks are a *distinctive* feature of this part of North Cornwall.

That said, most of the site (Fields 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, and 9; most of Fields 5 and 6) slopes to the west or north along the western side of the spur. Only a limited part of the site (Fields 4, 10 and 11; part of Fields 5 and 6) is on the flat summit or gentle east-facing slopes. The subdued terrain enhances the role of screening, and while the hedges are low the earth and/or stone-faced banks are uniformly high, especially along the lanes, and provide a good level of screening to the public highways. In terms of the Listed buildings in the area (see below), in general they are located on the lower valley slopes within a curtilage containing or bounded by mature trees. These were presumably planted or allowed to grow to provide protection from the elements, but they also enhance the privacy of these places and limit views to and from each site.

There are 46 designated heritage assets within 2km of the site boundary: five Scheduled Monuments (Tregenna wayside cross; wayside cross and cross base in Colan churchyard; Melancoose round; and Treloy holy well); one Grade I Listed building (Church of St. Colanus); three Grade II* Listed buildings (Rialton Manor; Courtyard walls at Rialton; holy well at Rialton); and the rest being Grade II Listed structures. Of this group, some are located at some distance and there is intervening screening, from the terrain (e.g. Rialton manor GII*), built environment (e.g. Manuels Farmhouse GII) or both. The total also includes nine milestones. At this preliminary stage it is considered an appreciable effect could be experienced at: the barn at Lowertown (GII); Penhill Farmhouse (GII); Colan Barton (GII); the Church of St Colanus (GI); the Glebe at Colan (GII); and Melancoose Round (SAM). This is due to proximity, line of sight, and the impact arising from the effect a development could have on the approach to the assets. Accordingly, site visits were made to all of these assets to assess the potential for harm, with the exception of Penhill Farmhouse, which is not visible from the public road and is accessed via a private track. It should be noted that all the Listed buildings and the Scheduled round are located at a distance and immediate settings would not be affected – it is distance views and contextual views that are considered here.

Church of St Colanus, Grade I

A small and attractively composed church with a low, two-stage tower with pinnacles. Located on a facing slope, the road around the churchyard is raised up above the level of Colan Barton providing something of a viewing platform. However, on this side of the church the field boundaries sport mature trees and views from the body of the church are extremely limited; views from behind and over the church from the cemetery behind are not possible. Limited views would, however, be possible in winter from the south entrance/coffin rest to Field 11. Impact: negligible.

The Glebe at Colan, Grade II

An attractive rectory building set back from the road to the east of the church. The slate-hung and whitewashed façade is fairly low, but it is considered likely that limited views across the trees and shrubs in the front garden from the upstairs windows would be possible to Field 11. Impact: negligible.

Colan Barton, Grade II

A larger former farmhouse (Listed as 17th century but probably with a medieval core), renovated and converted for use as a holiday let, diminishing its intrinsic value. The surroundings are neatly kept but the principal façade faces south-east to the lane and again, the trees along the sunken lane provide comprehensive screening. Views to the lower part of Field 11 would be possible in winter

from the field gateway opposite the house. Views across the farmhouse from higher ground to the east are not possible due to the trees around its curtilage. Impact: negligible.

Lowertown Barn, Grade II

The Listed structure here (*Mellionec Vean*) is deeply curious. The Listing states it forms part of a range of *barns* in a Gothic style. Its form and architectural elaboration are decidedly atypical for an agricultural building but is mirrored by other buildings on the Hoblyn estate (e.g. Whitewater Farm at Talskiddy (Berry 2018), and probably the wellhouse in Field 4). It is the work of noted Gothic Revival architect William White, designed and built c.1875 for the Hoblyn family of Fir Hill. It may have been adapted from a farm building, but this structure was a dwelling from the outset. The association with White, together with the loss of Fir Hill and his other work for the Hoblyns, enhances the importance of this building. The other oddity about Lowertown is the fact that the older farmhouse – with a massive and clearly 17th century gable and lateral stacks – is not Listed despite the fact it is probably medieval in origin. Both buildings are set back into the slope, fully screened from the site by the terrain, with additional screening from trees around the curtilage. Neither building is visible in views from across the valley. Impact: negligible.

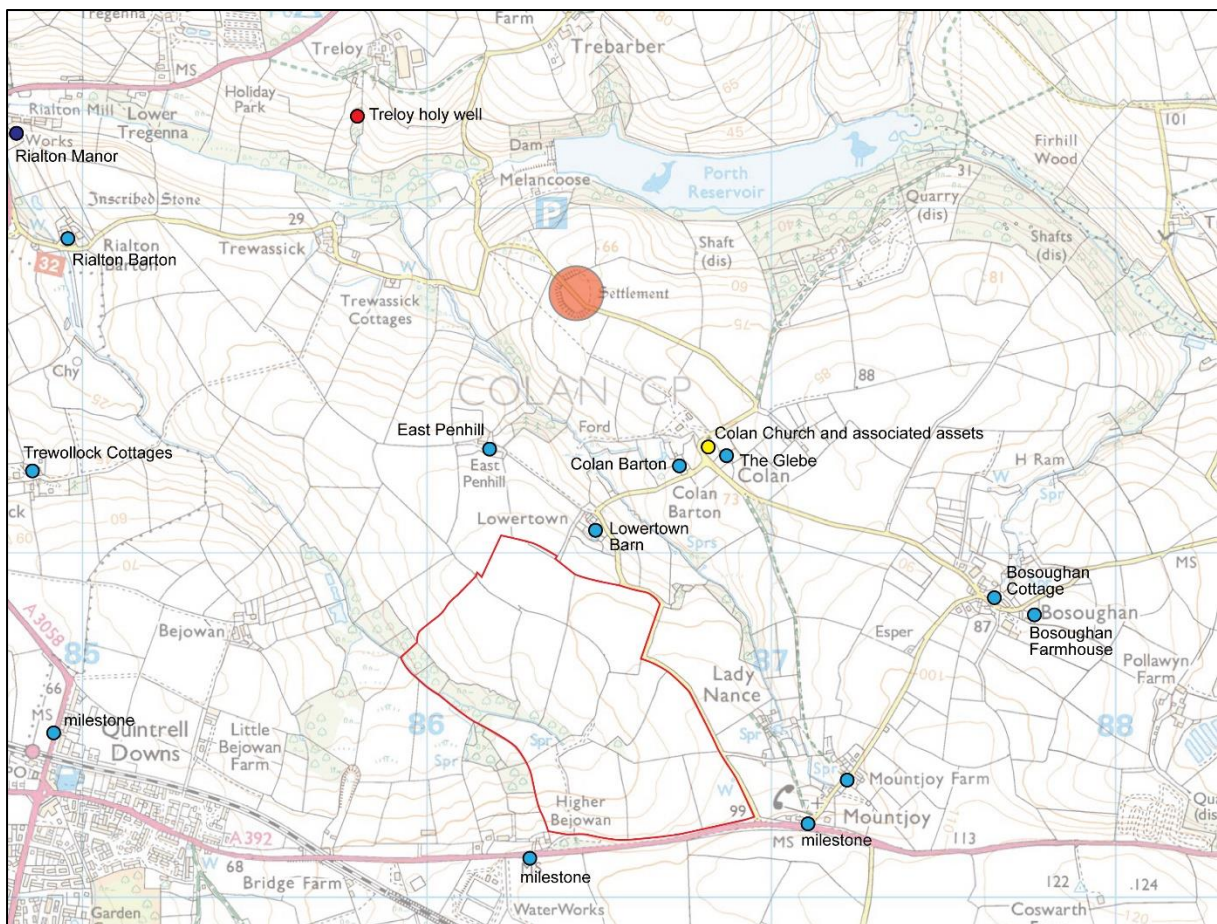


FIGURE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS (SOURCE: HISTORIC ENGLAND).

Penhill Farmhouse, Grade II

Penhill was not accessible but is (just) visible in distant views. Its curtilage is also surrounded by trees and views back to the site are unlikely to be possible, and in contextual views it is largely concealed. One of the surviving farm buildings (converted?) sports a long roof with high narrow gables and thus may also be the work of William White. Impact: negligible.

Melancoose Round, Scheduled Monument

The round is bisected by a public lane and only the western half of the earthwork survives. The interior is overgrown with scrub, on the edge of a large arable field. It no longer presents as a dramatic earthwork but the surviving part faces towards the site. Views from the monument to Field 10 may be possible, but there is screening from hedgebanks. Impact: negligible.

Impact Summary

On the basis of this preliminary assessment, the effect on the setting of the designated assets would appear to be limited, falling at the lower end of the 'less than substantial harm' scale.

Recommendations

Following the site visit, and having reviewed the preliminary masterplan for the site, the following comments can be made:

- The visual effect of the proposed development is best reduced by making use of the terrain to screen the site from the main concentrations of designated heritage assets to the east. This means most built elements should be concentrated to the west and any element to be built or installed along the top of the spur and its eastern slopes should be restricted to a single storey and provided with an adequate level of screening.
- Where there are to be built structures, sympathetic tree planting with native deciduous species will mimic the curtilages of the existing farms/houses.
- Field 11 appears to be most readily visible from Colan Church, so excluding this field from the development could be considered. Otherwise, additional screening along the hedgeline or use as public open space would be appropriate.
- The architectural styling of any built structures could echo that of the local vernacular and – with careful thought – the quirky Gothic Revival style of William White would provide a link to Hoblyn estate history. Information boards could be erected at the park.
- Colour palette is also an important consideration. Subject to the advice of the LVIA consultants, green or dun colours that blend into the background, particularly when viewed through trees/foliage, would be ideal; white caravans (and also glare from windows or cars) would stand out starkly from the background.

References:

- Bampton, J. & Morris, B. 2013: *Trevithick Manor, Newquay, Cornwall: results of an archaeological evaluation*. SWARCH report 130115.
- Berry, E. 2018: *Whitewater Farm (Tripe Barn + East Barn + Piggery Scheme), St Columb, Cornwall: heritage impact assessment*.
- BGS geology viewer 2020: <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>
- Cotswold Archaeology forthcoming: *Trevithick Manor, Newquay: results of an archaeological excavation*.
- Joyce, S. 2011: *Newquay Strategic Route, Newquay, Cornwall: archaeological evaluation and watching brief*. CA report 11247.
- Lysons, D. & Lysons, S. 1814: *Magna Britannia: volume 3 Cornwall*. London.
- SSEW 1983: *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (a brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)*.

APPENDIX 1: HIA PHOTOGRAPHS



1. THE SOUTH GATE OF THE CHURCHYARD; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH. THE BIER HOUSE COULD ALSO BE THE WORK OF WILLIAM WHITE.



2. THE CHURCH OF ST COLANUS; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH. THE SCHEDULED CROSS AND CROSS BASE ARE INDICATED.



3. THE CHURCH FROM THE CEMETERY; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST. VIEWS THROUGH TO THE SITE ARE EFFECTIVELY SCREENED.



4. THE CHURCH FROM THE PUBLIC ROAD; VIEWED FROM THE NNE.



5. THE VIEW FROM THE PUBLIC ROAD NEXT TO THE CHURCH, WITH COLAN BARTON IN THE TREES TO THE RIGHT; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST.



6. THE VIEW FROM THE CHURCH PORCH, LOOKING TOWARDS THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST.



7. THE SOUTH GATE OF THE CHURCHYARD, LOOKING OUT TO THE SITE. FIELD 11 IS JUST VISIBLE (INDICATED); VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST.



8. THE GLEBE; VIEWED FROM THE WSW.



9. COLAN BARTON; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.



10. THE VIEW FROM THE GATES OPPOSITE COLAN BARTON. FIELD 11 IS JUST VISIBLE (INDICATED). VIEWED FROM THE NORTH.



11. THE APPROACH TO LOWERTOWN FROM THE SOUTH; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH.



12. THE CONVERTED BARN AT LOWERTOWN, IN A SIMILAR STYLE TO THE LISTED HOUSE; VIEWED FROM THE EAST.



13. THE LISTED 'BARN' AT LOWERTOWN (*MELLIONEC VEAN*), A GOTHIC REVIVAL HOUSE BY WILLIAM WHITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST.



14. THE LISTED 'BARN' AT LOWERTOWN (*MELLIONEC VEAN*); VIEWED FROM THE NORTH.



15. THE UNLISTED FARMHOUSE AT LOWERTOWN; VIEWED FROM THE EAST.



16. THE UNLISTED FARMHOUSE AT LOWERTOWN; NOTED THE MASSIVE GABLE AND LATERAL STACKS; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH.



17. THE SITE VIEWED FROM MELANCOOSE ROUND (ON THE LEFT); PENHILL FARM IS INDICATED. VIEWED FROM THE NORTH.



18. THE SITE (EXTREME LEFT, BEHIND THE HEDGE) VIEWED FROM EAST OF MELANCOOSE ROUND; PENHILL FARM IS INDICATED. VIEWED FROM THE NORTH.



19. THE SITE VIEWED FROM TREBARBER FARM ABOVE PORTH RESERVOIR. NOTE THE WAY MOST OF THE SITE IS SCREENED BY THE INTERVENING HILL SPUR. VIEWED FROM THE NORTH.



20. THE VIEW BACK TO THE CHURCH OF ST COLANUS (INDICATED) FROM THE SOUTH CORNER OF FIELD 11; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH.



21. THE VIEW ACROSS FIELD 6 TO HIGHER BEJOWAN FROM THE SOUTH CORNER OF FIELD 11; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH.



22. THE VIEW ACROSS FIELD 6 TO LADY NANCE FROM THE SOUTH CORNER OF FIELD 11; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST.



23. THE VIEW OUT TO THE SEA FROM THE SOUTH CORNER OF FIELD 11; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.



24. FIELDS 1, 2 AND 3, VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH CORNER OF FIELD 3; VIEWED FROM THE EAST.



25. VIEW ALONG THE MAIN PART OF THE SITE FROM THE SOUTH CORNER OF FIELD 3; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH.



26. THE 'WELLHOUSE' ON THE EDGE OF FIELD 4; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH.



27. THE 'WELLHOUSE' ON THE EDGE OF FIELD 4; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH.