

The Cornish Arms  
St Blazey  
Par  
Cornwall

Archaeological Monitoring and  
Recording  
and Historic Building Recording

**REPORT**

June 2017





The Cornish Arms,  
St Blazey,  
Par,  
Cornwall

COAS project code: C1/SBR/14/CSC


for

COAS project code: C1/AMR/14/CSC

Mr Mike Rutt, BRG Construction Ltd

## REPORT

Prepared by	Cheryl Green, Post-excavation Manager & Historic Buildings
Date	19/05/17

Approved by	Richard McConnell, Projects Director
Signed	
Date	27/06/17

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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DETAILS

Listed Building entry no.	1212231
Listed Building Consent ref.	PA13/03325 Condition 4
Local Planning Authority	Cornwall Council
Scheduled Monument Consent ref.	N/A
Historic Environment Record ref.	N/A
Collecting Museum	N/A
Museum accession code	N/A
OASIS reference	contexto1-174153

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Cover image: The former Cornish Arms, from the east

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## Summary

*Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out a programme of historic building recording and archaeological monitoring and recording at The Cornish Arms, Church Street, St. Blazey, Par, Cornwall in 2014 And 2016 respectively. The historic building recording was carried out during the conversion of the former public house to residential accommodation, and the monitoring and recording occurred during test pitting prior to groundworks for several new dwellings. The project was commissioned by Mr Christopher Jones (Architect), and funded by Mr Mike Rutt (BRG Construction Ltd).*

*An archaeological desk-based assessment carried out by C1 in 2012 (Green) and commissioned to support the application concluded that the core of the building (Listed Grade II) is likely to date to 1820-1830, with subsequent phases of re-modelling and additions from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was conjectured that the ground beneath the car park to the rear of the Site, and once within the grounds of the former St Blazey County Primary School, may hold early occupation evidence. With consideration to these findings, the archaeological programme was required as a condition of granting Listed Building Consent (LBC) (Listed Building Consent reference: PA13/03325).*

*The core of the Cornish Arms represents the earliest remains identified on the Site, and likely to date to 1820-1830. The absence of archaeological deposits might be explained by extensive terracing which appears to have taken place behind the public house. The Victorian period saw the complex at its height, with expansion of the public house to the south, provision of a wide coaching entrance and a comfortable accommodation wing to the north. This reorganization also improved spatial organization with a more secure formal entrance to the inner courtyard, where people and luggage could be unloaded. Horses and carriages were presumably accommodated in this area, possibly within the buildings along the north, south and west boundaries. Storage facilities were also improved with the addition of a high-roofed small building within the inner courtyard, directly opposite the south extension of the public house through which goods could be passed directly from the road. Thereafter later 20<sup>th</sup> century additions and some rebuilding have subsequently detracted from the historic significance of this building.*

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Heritage & Archaeology (C1) carried out a programme of historic building recording and archaeological monitoring and recording at the former Cornish Arms, Church Street, St. Blazey, Par, Cornwall (the 'Site'). The historic building recording took place in March 2014 and the monitoring and recording in August 2016. The investigation was required as a condition of granting Listed Building Consent (LBC) for the demolition of existing flat roof structures, redevelopment of the redundant public house building, and new build construction to provide 9 residential units (Listed Building Consent reference: PA13/03325). The project was commissioned by Mr Christopher Jones (Architect), and funded by Mr Mike Rutt (BRG Construction Ltd).
- 1.2 An archaeological desk-based assessment carried out by C1 in 2012 (Green) and commissioned to support the application concluded that the core of the building (Listed Grade II) is likely to date to 1820-1830, with subsequent phases of re-modelling and additions from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was conjectured that the ground beneath the car park to the rear of the Site, and once within the grounds of the former St Blazey County Primary School, may hold early occupation evidence. With consideration to these findings, the archaeological programme was advised by Mr Dan Ratcliffe, (Cornwall Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer (HEPAO), Cornwall Council) who issued *A Brief for Historic Building Recording and Archaeological Investigation* (HB SMR ref. CCO5587) on 17 February 2014 setting out the scope of the work. The requirement for the programme is stated in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2 of the *Brief*:

### **“6.1 Building Recording**

*The present proposals will culminate in the potential destruction of material remains of the Listed Building. It is therefore important that the site is recorded to an appropriate level; and that the results are made available to interested parties. In this particular instance, for the photographic record, the recorder needs to consider:*

- *Site layout and organisation*
- *Character*
- *Function*
- *Materials, method of construction*
- *Fenestration*
- *Internal arrangements*
- *Original fixtures and fittings*
- *Subsequent fixtures and fittings*
- *Evidence of use and status*
- *Date/period of initial build and subsequent alterations*

### **6.2 Archaeological Recording**

*Ground works associated with the development may disturb buried archaeological remains. It is therefore important that a suitably qualified archaeologist(s) is/are present during these works in order to identify and record any features of interest.*

*The site specific aims are to:*

- *Establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains*
- *Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered*
- *To establish the nature of the activity on the site*
- *To identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of the site*
- *To provide further information on the archaeology of St Blaise Parish from any archaeological remains encountered”*

- 1.3 The advice was accepted by the Case Officer and a condition was placed on LBC approval. Condition 4 states:

*“No development shall take place within the area to be developed until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological recording based on a written scheme of investigation submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority”*

- 1.4 The programme of archaeological works comprised five elements: the production of a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which set out the project strategy; historic building recording; archaeological monitoring and recording; post-excavation and report production (this document); and archive preparation and deposition. The WSI was approved by Mr Ratcliffe on 6 March 2014.
- 1.5 The requirement follows advice by Central Government as set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* (DCLG 2012); *The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990*; and *Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*.

## 2. The Site

- 2.1 The Site (centred on NGR SX 06851 54781) is centrally located in the small town of St Blazey, c. 5km east-north-east of St Austell. The public house occupies an amorphous corner plot on the west side of the A390 St Austell road, opposite the parish church of St Blaise at the southern end of Fore Street (**Figure 1**). Covering an area of c. 0.2ha, the 19<sup>th</sup> century building range occupies the east side and north-east corner of the plot, and prior to development groundworks later 20<sup>th</sup> century extensions continued along the north side and to the west of the original range. The remainder of the plot was occupied by the public house car park in the southern area, tarmac in the centre and woodland/ shrubs in a raised area to the west. The Site occupies a terrace cut into the hillside at 40m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), the ground gently declining from west to east. The recorded solid geology for the Site is mudstone and sandstone belonging to the Porthtowan Formation, although the nearby church was built on a rocky outcrop (Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative 1999, 10) which may extend to the Site. The soils in this area are characterised by free draining, slightly acid loams of low fertility (CSAIS 2017).
- 2.2 A detailed history of the Site is set-out in the desk-based assessment produced by C1 to accompany the planning application (Green 2012) and is summarized here together with a figure showing the phasing (**Figure 2**). The public house was first mentioned in 1823, consistent with the expansion of St Blazey from 1820 as a direct result of industrial activity associated with the mining of copper, tin and granite. The impetus for the business was most likely the construction of the turnpike road in 1820. In 1839, the tithe map shows the Cornish Arms as a symmetrical building fronting the street with two smaller buildings to the north which were slightly set-back. This is the main building with the porch and four sash windows (**Plate 1**).
- 2.3 By 1880 the pub had been extended southward and the two buildings to the north of the main building had been replaced by the coaching entrance and a building with a curved frontage. Three substantial structures were added to the rear of the property and along the northern boundary. This indicates that the business was flourishing, no doubt reflecting the prosperity of St Blazey during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Further expansion had taken place before 1907 with the addition of a substantial range along the western boundary of the site. This may have housed a wool processing establishment, although the West of England cloth industry which utilized this wool had ceased by 1905. Thereafter, a gradual decline in the economy of St Blazey is clearly reflected in the fortunes of the Cornish Arms. By 1933 the building along the western boundary had been demolished, while the building along the northern boundary had been remodelled with a possible open-fronted structure. In more recent times, a flat-roofed range enclosing the rear of the public house provided updated kitchen facilities, and the building along the north boundary had been replaced with a modern block providing accommodation.
- 2.4 The listing detail describes the building as follows;
- C19. Stucco. Quoins. 2 storeys. 4 windows; sashes with glazing bars and keyblocks. Open Doric porch with entablature, panelled door, plain rectangular fanlight. Curved roofline at one end. Adjoining curved fronted wing of 5 sash windows making total of nine windows.*
- The Church and wall with gateway, the Vicarage and Cornish Arms Inn form a group.*



Plate 1. The Cornish Arms (from the E; 2m scale)

### 3. Archaeological aims and research objectives

3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological works were to:

- identify, investigate and record any significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during groundworks;
- determine the character of the archaeological remains, where present;
- establish the nature of activity on the site;
- recover environmental information, which may provide further information relating to the local historic environment of the area;
- provide sufficient information to enable further mitigation strategies to be determined, where appropriate
- carry out a photographic survey of the material remains of the Listed building , and record any historic fabric exposed during building work as evidence of dating and phasing

3.2 The research objectives were to:

- contribute to information on the archaeology of St Blaise Parish
- gather any further evidence relating to the history of the Listed building

### 4. Methodology

4.1 COAS adhered to the *Code of Conduct* of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (2014), and *Regulations for Professional Conduct* (CIfA, 2014, rev. 2015) at all times. The fieldwork methodology employed is summarised below.

#### *Monitoring and Recording*

4.2 All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a).

- 4.3 Prior to the commencement of Site works, the excavation methodology was agreed between those responsible for carrying out the groundworks and C1 to ensure that all parties were aware of the monitoring requirements.
- 4.4 Four test pits were excavated in advance of development groundworks within the footprint of the new dwellings in the former car park area (**Figure 1; Plate 2**). This represents the only part of the development not utilizing areas previously occupied by 20<sup>th</sup> century structures. The test pits were excavated with a 2-tonne mini Hitachi digger equipped with a 0.45m wide bucket, and each measured 1.50m long by 0.45m wide and 1.20m deep.
- 4.5 In the absence of archaeological features/deposits, core details of the general deposit sequence were recorded for each test pit. Details were logged on COAS *pro-forma* profile forms in digital format using iPad mini tablets. Each deposit was given a unique context reference which combines a site staff number as a prefix to the context number itself. Spoil was examined for the retrieval of artefacts. A photographic record of the monitoring work was prepared and comprised digital images in .jpg format of the profiles and more general contextual shots.

#### *Historic Building Recording*

- 4.6 The historic building survey conformed to the *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* published by the ClfA (2014b) and *Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England 2016).
- 4.7 The building survey conformed to recording Level 2 as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England, 2016). This states:

*‘This is a descriptive record, made in circumstances similar to those of Level 1 but when more information is needed. It may be made of a building which is judged not to require any fuller record, or it may serve to gather data for a wider project. Both the exterior and the interior will be viewed, described and photographed. The examination of the building will produce an analysis of its development and use and the record will include the conclusions reached, but it will not discuss in detail the evidence on which this analysis is based. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will normally not be comprehensive and may be tailored to the scope of a wider project’.* (para 5.2.1)

- 4.8 The photographic survey comprised digital images in .jpg format captured using a Nikon D40X 10.1 megapixel digital SLR camera fitted with an 18-55mm lens. Images were captured on a 4GB SD card on site and were subsequently transferred to the C1 Cloud server for storage. Digital photographs were taken in accordance with Historic England’s guidelines for Digital Image and Capture (<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/digital-image-capture-and-file-storage/>). The images set the structure in context, with record shots illustrating architectural details featuring an appropriately sized scale. The photographic survey was accompanied by observational notes/descriptions and the completion of a photographic register. Plans and elevations provided by the architect were used as a basis for annotation.

## 5. Results

#### *Monitoring and Recording*

- 5.1 Profiles 1 and 2 at the south end of the car park, exposed a double layer of tarmac separated by a levelling layer (7-100) (7-200) and overlying 0.80m of modern made ground (7-101) (7-201). This directly covered natural loose shillet rock (7-102), encountered at a depth of 1.20m below the modern tarmac surface (**Plate 3**). In the north-west area of the car park, Profile 3 showed the tarmac resting on a 0.90m thick modern make-up (7-301) of silty clay with shillet, above the natural (7-302), also encountered at a depth of 1.20m (**Plate 4**). To the east, Profile 4 recorded 1.00m of made-ground (7-400) (7-401), sandwiched between the natural (7-402) and the tarmac (**Plate 5**).

#### *Historic Building Recording*

- 5.2 All photographs are reproduced in **Appendix 1**, with the photo captions replicating information recorded in the photographic register. In addition, a selection of these photographs are included as plates to support the text. Photographs include elements that required scaled photographs, and features or areas that were



previously concealed or not fully accessible. The building numbers used in the desk-based assessment (Green 2012) are repeated to ease navigation, and replicated on **Figure 2** which also illustrates the building phases.

- 5.3 No additional evidence was found during the course of the historic building recording to contradict the phasing as set-out in the desk-based assessment (*ibid.*). However, closer inspection of specific features did clarify some aspects of development and use. In building A, the window at the southern end of the east flank retained evidence of having been a loading door, as represented on a Francis Frith photograph of the Cornish Arms in 1960 (**Plates 6 & 7**). Vertical cracks running downwards from either end of the sill show where the base of the doorway was blocked, and the concrete plinth at the base of the wall dips slightly at the junction with the infill.
- 5.4 Within the attic of building A, the southward extension suggested by analysis of the 1880 Ordnance Survey (OS) map (Green 2012, 10), is evidenced by the presence of an earlier south gable wall to the north of the existing south gable wall (**Plate 8**). The King Post truss roof (commonly employed in the Victorian period) appears to have been installed at the same time, presumably replacing an earlier roof. This also explains the slightly lower height of the earlier gable wall.
- 5.5 Within buildings A and F, removal of modern décor exposed remnants of Victorian wood panelling around doors and windows (**Plates 9 & 10**), blocked fireplaces in first floor bedrooms, and traces of earlier décor including blue decorative wall paper.
- 5.6 Following removal of a 1970's extension to the west of building A, the elevation could be properly viewed, and the large space within the inner courtyard fully appreciated (**Plates 11 & 12**). The gap between the Victorian building (I) and the west flank of building A is now restored, the former serving as a storage facility. The wide coaching entrance (E) is testimony to the traffic that passed beneath, the only noteworthy feature being a blocked round-headed window in the coaching entrance (**Plate 13**).

## 6. The finds

- 6.1 No finds were recovered or observed during archaeological monitoring.

## 7. Discussion

- 7.1 No archaeological horizon was observed during monitoring of test pit excavations, the deep modern make-up deposits above the natural proving that the terracing noted during the desk-based assessment (Green 2012, 21) did indeed extend south to the former car park. As such, no further monitoring and recording was deemed necessary during subsequent groundworks associated with the development.
- 7.2 The historic building survey provides a record of the former Cornish Arms at a point in the conversion works where modern material had been removed. Together with the desk-based assessment carried out prior to development works, the evidence confirms that the original hostelry established between 1820 and 1830, underwent significant expansion throughout the Victorian period so that by 1880 a U-shaped arrangement of buildings encircled an inner courtyard. As part of this expansion, the original public house underwent some structural alterations, including a short extension to the south and (probably as part of these works) the replacement of the roof with a King Post truss structure. The building to the north of the original public house was mostly used for accommodation, with wood panelling and wall-papered bedrooms each provisioned with a fireplace. This accommodation was accessible from the coaching entrance, from which guests could cross the covered entranceway and directly access the public house through another door. A round-headed window within the coaching entrance may have been manned by a gatekeeper, controlling access to the inner courtyard.
- 7.3 Modern additions to the complex are testimony to the continuation of the business, although by 1907 a substantial range along the western boundary may have housed a wool processing establishment. Despite a downturn in the economy of St Blazey throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Cornish Arms continued to expand

with the construction of a modern kitchen area and additional accommodation block (both demolished as part of the development).

- 7.4 To conclude, the core of the Cornish Arms represents the earliest remains identified on the Site, likely dating to 1820-1830. The Victorian period saw the complex at its height, with expansion of the public house to the south, provision of a wide coaching entrance and a comfortable accommodation wing to the north (both on the site of an earlier building of c. 1839). This reorganization also improved spatial organization with a more secure formal entrance to the inner courtyard, where people and luggage could be unloaded. Horses and carriages were presumably accommodated in this area, possibly within the buildings along the north and south boundaries, and by 1907 perhaps within the building along the west boundary. Storage facilities were also improved with the addition of a high-roofed small building within the inner courtyard. This was positioned directly opposite the south extension of the public house, which appears to have served as a passageway for moving goods from the road to the store without using the main entrance. Thereafter later 20<sup>th</sup> century additions and some rebuilding have subsequently detracted from the historic significance of this building, which to some extent has been restored by the recent removal of these additions.

## 8. Archive

- 8.1 As no archaeological evidence or artefacts were encountered during monitoring and recording, all relevant data has been incorporated into this report. As such, the paper/digital archive will be stored on the COAS cloud storage server or discarded.
- 8.2 All relevant photographs taken during the Historic Building Recording have been incorporated into this report.
- 8.3 A copy of this report will be provided to the HES so that it can be included as part of the county Historic Environment Record. A digital copy of the report will also be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service, via OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations – <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>).

## 9. Acknowledgements

- 9.1 C1 would like to thank Mr Mike Rutt and Mr Chris Jones for their kind assistance during the course of this project.

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- |  |   |
|--|---|
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Historic England, 2016

*Understanding Historic Buildings – A guide to good recording practice.* London, Historic England

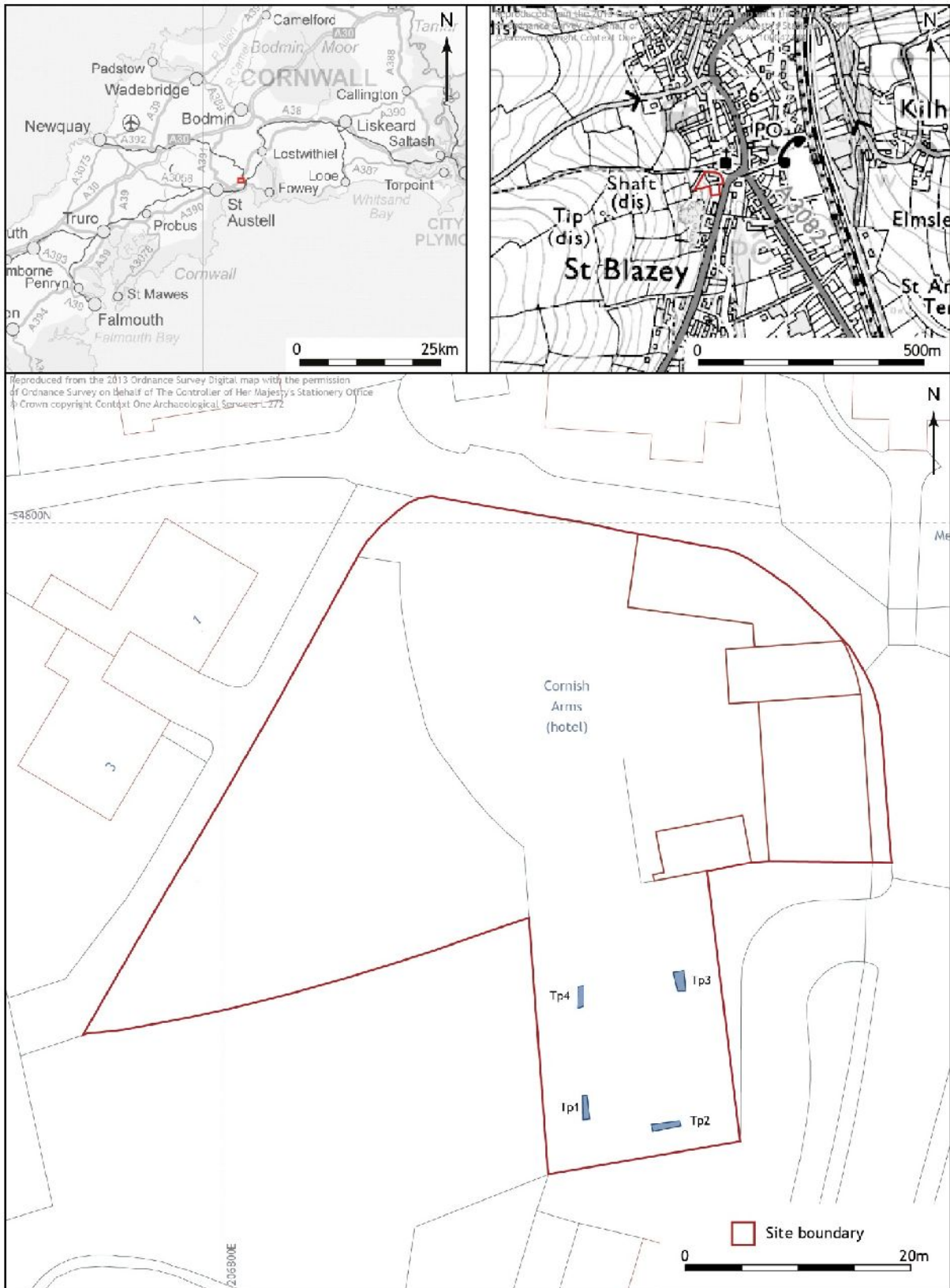


Figure 1. Site setting & test pit locations



Figure 2. Detailed site setting showing phasing of the building



Plate 2. Working shot (from S)



Plate 3. Profile 1 (from S; 1m scale)



Plate 4. Profile 3 (from E; 1m scale)



Plate 5. Profile 4 (from E; 1m scale)



Plate 6. Window re-modelled from former doorway at S end of east flank (from E; 2m scale)



Plate 7. Francis Frith photograph of the Cornish Arms, c. 1960, showing doorway at S end of building © Francis Frith



chimney breast of c. 1880 south

c. 1830 south gable wall

Plate 8. Roof at southern end of building A (from N)



Plate 9. Exemplar window with wood panelling in building A (from W; 2m scale)



Plate 10. Exemplar 1<sup>st</sup> floor window in building F (from SW; 2m scale)



Plate 11. West elevation of building A (from W; 2m scale)





Plate 12. Inner courtyard (from SW)



Plate 13. Coaching entrance (from SW; 2m scale)

**Appendix 1: Photographic survey**



Main entrance in east elevation of building A (from E; 2m scale)



Main entrance in east elevation of building A (from E; 2m scale)



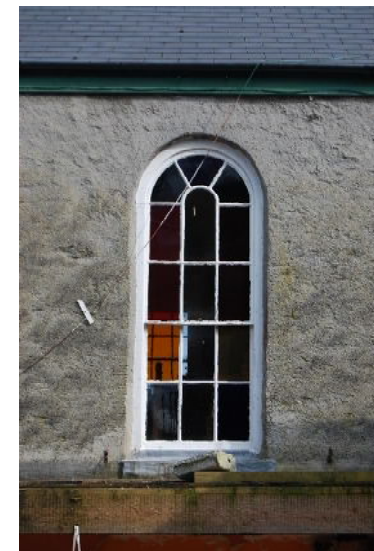
Main entrance in east elevation of building A (from NW; 2m scale)



Window in position of old doorway at S end of east elevation of building A (from E; 2m scale)



West elevation of building A following removal of modern extension (from W; 2m scale)



Round-headed window in centre of west elevation of building A (from W)

*The Cornish Arms, St Blazey, Par, Cornwall.*



Internal door off hallway from main entrance in west elevation of building A (from S; 2m scale)



Exemplar window with wood panel surround in west elevation of building A (from W; 2m scale)



Interior of round-headed window in east elevation of building A (from E)



Roof at southern end of building A (from N)



Coaching entrance E & building F (from E; 2m scale)



Building F (from NW; 1m scale)



Traces of earlier décor in first floor bedrooms of building F (1m scale)



Blocked fireplace in first floor bedroom of building F (1m scale)



Exemplar window in first floor bedroom of building F with wooden surround (from SW; 2m scale)



Corridor in first floor of building F showing curve in building (2m scale; from ESE)



Corridor in first floor of building F showing curve in building (2m scale; from NW)



Coaching entrance E (from E; 2m scale)



Coaching entrance E (from W; 2m scale)



Coaching entrance E showing doorways into buildings A and F (from W; 2m scale)



Doorway from coaching entrance E into building F (from S; 2m scale)



Doorway from coaching entrance E into building A (from N; 2m scale)



Blocked window on north side of coaching entrance E (within passage) (from S; 1m scale)



Building I following removal of modern extension (from N; 2m scale)



West side of complex following removal of modern extension (from SW)



Ground floor of building I with round-headed door (from SE; 2m scale)



East side of roof in building I observed through hatch in ground floor ceiling (from W)



Blocked window in first floor of building I (from SW)



West side of roof in building I observed through hatch in ground floor ceiling (from E)



Evidence of building J in car park (from NE; 2m scale)

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