



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**THE COPPERS, 3 CUBY ROAD,**

**TREGONY, CORNWALL**

**NGR SW 92780 45110**

**MARCH 2019**

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## **SUMMARY**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at 3 Cuby Road, Tregony, Cornwall (NGR SW 92780 45110). Evidence of past use of the site, most likely during the medieval and post-medieval periods, was recorded. The earliest evidence for activity consisted of an undated garden soil that extended throughout the site. Towards the southern edge of the site this soil was truncated by an area of terracing or possible quarrying, also undated. This was later backfilled; two sherds of pottery, recovered from the earliest of the backfill deposits, were dated to between the 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. A garden soil layer (03) suggests that cultivation resumed after the terrace/quarry was backfilled; the date of this layer is not known due to the lack of dating evidence. There was no further evidence of significant activity until the construction of 3 Cuby Road, as evidenced by made ground deposits overlying garden soil (03).*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The development site is located within the garden of 3 Cuby Road, Tregony (NGR SW 92780 45110). The property lies on the north-eastern side of Tregony.

The proposal area occupies a south facing slope at a height of 54m AOD in the north sloping down to 50m AOD in the south and the geology of the area comprises Middle Devonian mudstone, siltstone and sandstone.

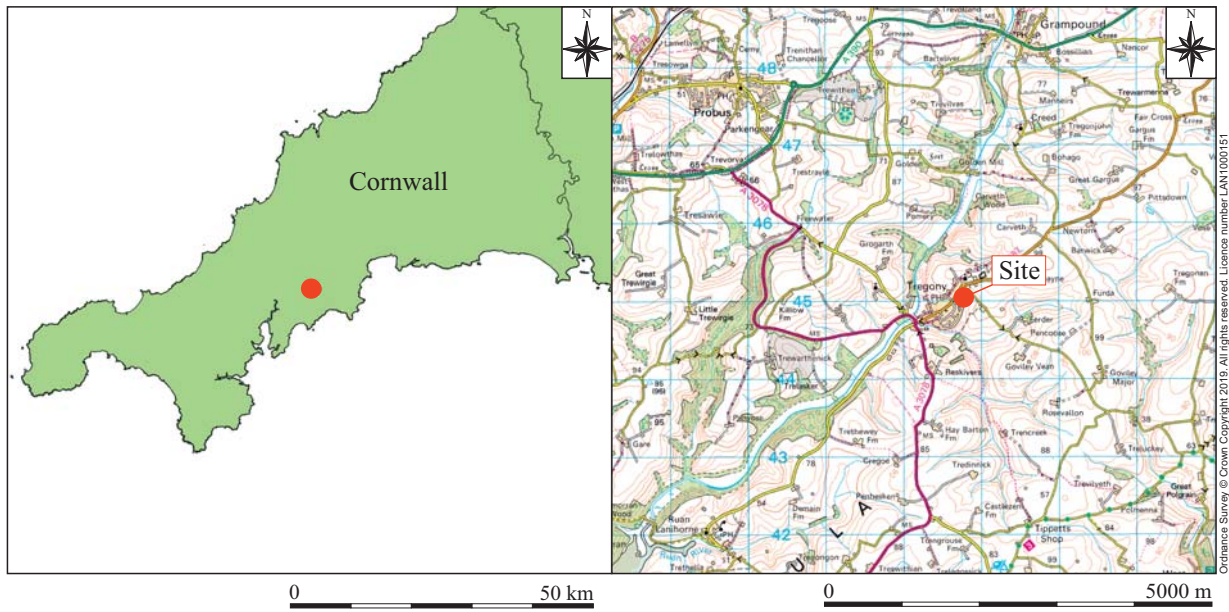
### **1.2 Planning Background**

Cornwall Council granted planning permission for **Proposed dwelling and formation of vehicular parking bay on land at No 3, Cuby Road, Tregony (PA15/07667)**. Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area a condition was attached to the permission requiring a watching brief to be maintained during the course of building operations or construction works on the site. This was in accordance with the aims and intentions of paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) for the proposal was carried out which concluded that there was some potential for archaeological remains to survive within the development area (Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) 2016).

Tregony may have its origins in the Romano-British period. The town has been postulated as the location of a Roman inland port and trading centre, with this settlement later developing into the historic medieval core of the town. The location and extent of this early settlement is not known, however recent excavation to the south of the site recorded evidence of a Romano-British funerary enclosure and late Roman or early medieval corn dryers (CAU 2016).



Key Site boundary Monitored area

Figure 1: Site location

The site lies within the boundary of the medieval town borough on land that was previously occupied by medieval burgrave plots. As such there is potential for the survival of archaeological remains associated with medieval backyard activity and plot boundaries of this date (CAU 2016).

In the south-east corner of the development plot lies what is considered to be St Cuby's well. This stone-built well is designated as a Scheduled Monument (SM 32952) and is thought to be that referenced in manorial documents in 1643.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To make a record of any significant archaeological remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular any evidence relating to:

- known Roman British activity to the south of the site,
- possible early and later medieval activity
- any post-medieval and 19<sup>th</sup> century evidence of land-use and/or activities

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Historic Environment Planning (Archaeology), the archaeological advisors to Cornwall Council.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

### **3.2 Methodology**

Where archaeological horizons were encountered they were cleaned by hand and excavated appropriately. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

Groundwork undertaken included: topsoil strip, ground reduction in the area of the proposed parking space and excavation of footings trenches for the proposed dwelling. Excavation of the proposed soakaway was not monitored: spoil from the excavations was used to raise the ground level to the rear of the property, in the area of the proposed soakaway. The increase in ground level was such that the soakaway was to be dug into this new made ground without impacting on any underlying *in-situ* layers or deposits.

The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to Romano-British and medieval occupation.

#### 4 RESULTS (Figures 2, 3)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features.

##### **Topsoil Strip and Ground Reduction**

Topsoil (01) was stripped from an area of approximately 190m<sup>2</sup> prior to ground reduction and footings trench excavation. Across the site the topsoil was a uniform soft mid greyish brown silty loam that varied in thickness from 0.1 to 0.25m.

An area of approximately 7m in length by 5m in width was excavated at the front of the property, adjacent to Cuby Road. This area was excavated without archaeological supervision however no features were seen in the sections recorded. Prior to excavation the ground level in this area was approximately 1.9 to 1.5m above Cuby Road and was revetted by a stone wall; the north-western boundary was formed by the sunken access path to 3 Cuby Road. Excavation extended to the greatest depth immediately adjacent to Cuby Road, where the overlying deposits were removed to bring the area level with the road. A footings trench for a new retaining wall was excavated on the eastern side of the area; this measured 6.5m in length by 0.6m in width and 1.7m in depth.



Plate 1: Section 04; Retaining wall footings trench, looking southeast.

The lowest deposit encountered here was the geological horizon (06) a deposit of poorly sorted mudstone bedded in a stiff light yellowish grey to whitish grey clay. This layer was encountered throughout the area of ground reduction. Overlying the geological horizon was (14) a natural subsoil comprising stiff mid brown silty clay with a maximum thickness of 0.24m; this deposit was present over a length of 6m, as seen in section, and extended beyond the limit of excavation (l.o.e.) to the south and

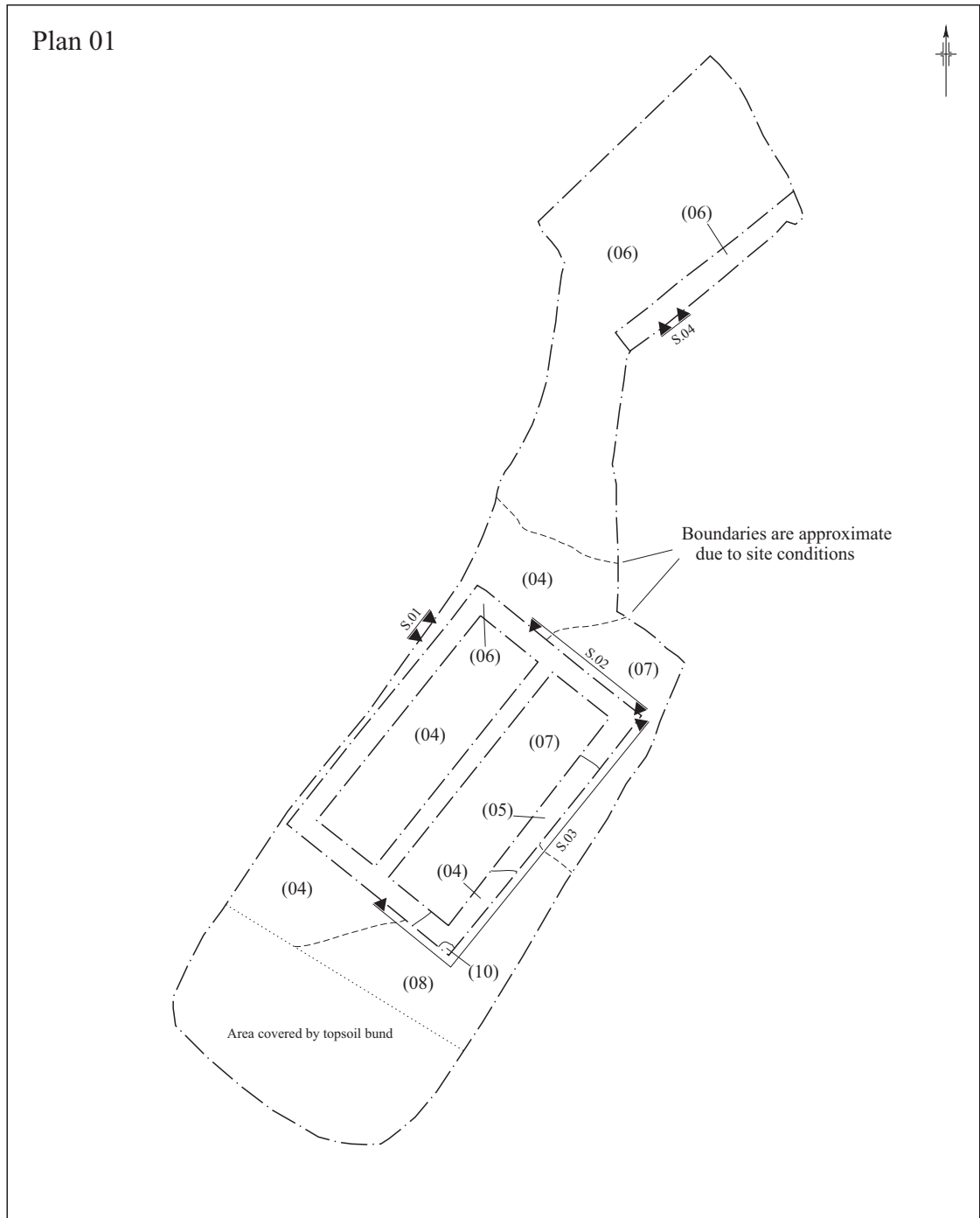


Figure 2: Footings trenches and area of ground reduction



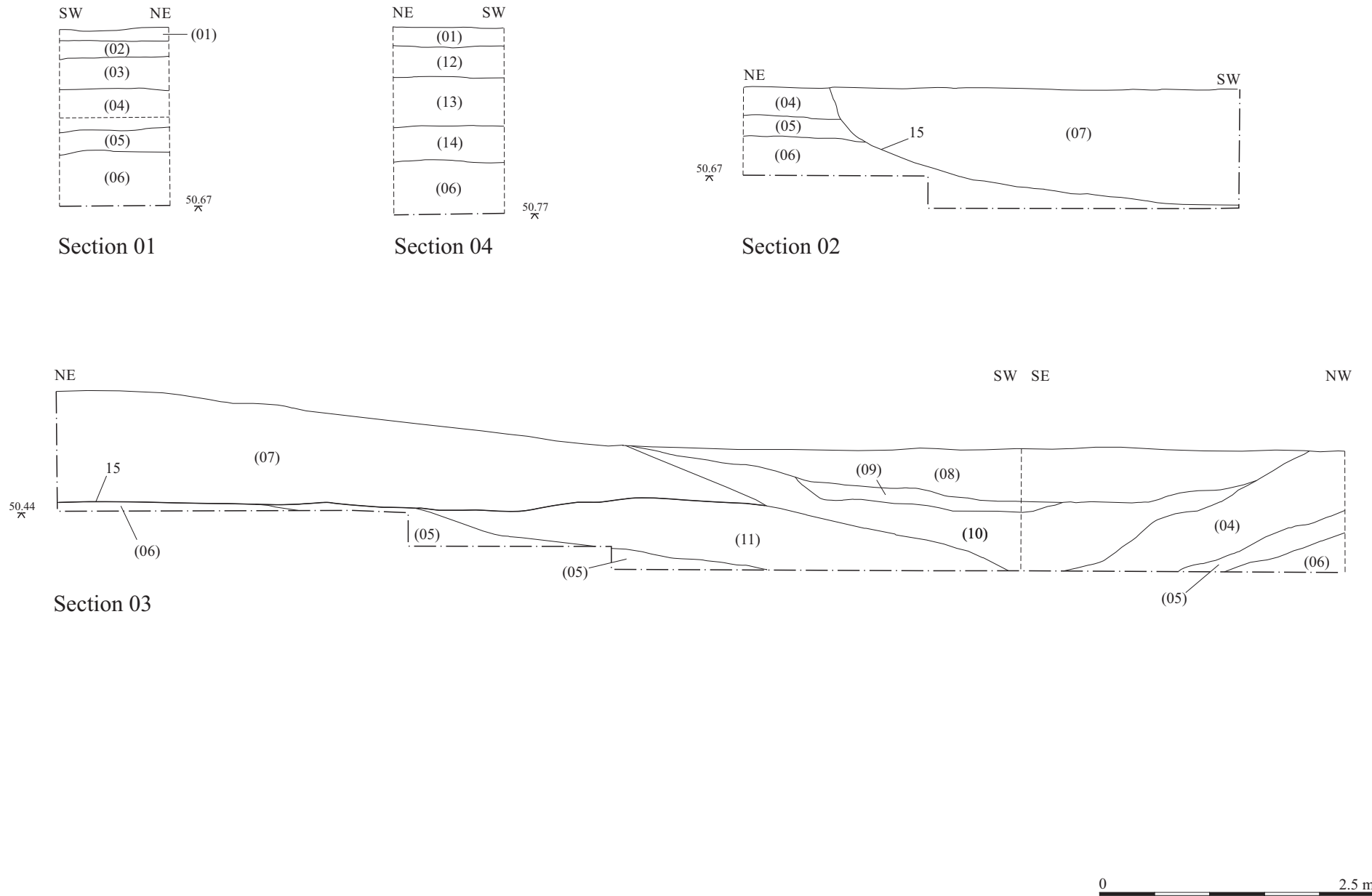


Figure 3: Sections

east. Subsoil (14) was overlain by (13) a firm mid reddish brown silty clay, 0.43m in thickness and 6.1m in length, as seen in section. This deposit was interpreted as a buried cultivation/garden soil and was overlain by (12) a firm dark brownish grey clayey silt loam with occasional well sorted sub-angular stone <50mm, 0.18m in thickness and 6.1m in length. This was interpreted as a further layer of garden soil. Garden soil (12) was in turn overlain by topsoil (01).

### Footings Trenches

The lowest deposit encountered was the geological horizon (06); this was present throughout the footings trenches, with a maximum thickness of 0.2m. This was overlain by (05) a stiff light yellowish brown silty clay 0.2 to 0.3m in thickness, with occasional sub-angular stone <50mm. This deposit was interpreted as a natural subsoil, potentially the same as that seen in the area of ground reduction to the northeast. The natural subsoil was overlain by a cultivation soils (04) and (11); (04) was a firm mid reddish brown silty clay, 0.3m in thickness, with occasional sub-angular stone <50mm; (11) was recorded in the southeast section of the footings trench and is considered likely to have been the same as (04). This was a mid brown silty clay >0.45m in thickness, extending below the l.o.e.



Plate 2: Section 01; northern footing trench, looking northwest.

Cultivation soil (04) was truncated by cut 15. Within the footings trench this measured 6m in length by 4m in width, with a depth of 1.1m, extending beyond the l.o.e. to the southeast. This feature appeared to be a terrace cut into the naturally sloping topography. Where it was recorded in the northern footings trench (Fig. 3; section 2) the cut appeared to truncate cultivation soil (04), subsoil (05) and the geological horizon (06); from this point the geology sloped downwards towards the southeast corner of the site while the cut remained level. Cultivation soil (11) and subsoil (05) were again seen to the southeast (Fig. 3; section 3), indicating that the former land surface had not been subject to the same level of truncation seen to the northwest due to the natural slope.

Cut 15 was overlain by a series of layers that appear to have been deposited in order to fill in the terrace created by the cut. The lowest of these was (07); this was a loose

mid grey silty clay with frequent poorly sorted sub-angular mudstone and fragmented slate <0.2m in size. The deposit measured 1.1m in thickness by >7.0m in length and >4.0m in width, extending beyond the l.o.e. to the east. Two sherds of pottery dating to between the 15<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> centuries were recovered from this deposit. In the southeast corner of the footings, (07) was overlain by (10) a loose mid whitish grey clayey silt containing frequent poorly sorted sub-angular stone <0.15m; within the footings trench this was >0.6m in thickness and >3.1m in length by >2.0m in width, extending beyond the l.o.e. to the southeast. This was overlain by (09) a deposit of highly fragmented slate, 0.15m in thickness with a length in section of >2.1m, extending beyond the l.o.e. to the southeast. Deposit (09) was overlain by (08) a firm mid greyish brown silty clay 0.5m in thickness with moderately sorted sub-angular stone <0.1m; the deposit measured >6m in length by >5.5m in width and also extended beyond the l.o.e. to the southeast.



Plate 3: Section 02; oblique shot showing truncation by cut 15, looking northeast.



Plate 4: Section 03; oblique, showing backfill/made ground deposits filling cut 15.  
Looking northeast

On the western side of the footings trench (04) was overlain by (03) a firm dark brownish grey clayey silt with moderate well sorted sub-angular stone <50mm, 0.3m in thickness. The deposit was seen in section for a length of 10m along the western l.o.e. and extended into the area of excavation for 1.2m at the northern end of the trench, reducing to 0.5m at the southern end. Deposit (03) was overlain by (02), a firm mid reddish brown silty clay 0.2m in thickness; this deposit was recorded in section for a length of 6.2m from the northern end of the trench. The sharp boundary between this and underlying deposit (03) suggested deposition in a single event, perhaps during the construction of 3 Cuby Road. Deposit (02) was overlain by topsoil (01), which was present throughout the area of the footings trenches.

## 4.2 Reliability of Results

The monitored work was undertaken in fair conditions with excellent cooperation from site staff, ensuring that the archaeological investigation could be undertaken without impediment.

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Pottery by Imogen Wood

The assemblage is very small, consisting of 2 sherds weighing 30g. The 2 sherds from context (07) were examined macroscopically with a hand lens at x2 magnification to identify initial fabric groups. The condition of the assemblage is good with very little abrasion.

#### Results

The unglazed body sherd is Lostwithiel Ware dating to between the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century (Thorpe and Herring 2011, 303). This ware is characterised by the abundance of muscovite mica and quartz giving it a shimmering appearance. This wheel made ware is the most common pottery found in Cornwall for this period, the range of forms represent domestic everyday functions and even ridge tiles.

The body sherd with internal greenish brown glaze is Cornish Coarse ware, with possible shell inclusions. There are 3 incised lines on the external oxidised surface and is wheel made and most likely dates to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Although no kiln site is known for this ware, it has been suggested it was produced in Cornwall and used throughout the region (Brown and Vince 2006).

Tregony was an established port in the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century and this pottery is typical of such a settlement in Cornwall (Sheppard, 1980).

There is limited significance for these sherds within the region.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The earliest evidence for activity was buried cultivation soil (04) (11) (13). This soil appeared to extend across the whole site, with the exception of the area truncated by the later terrace; the lower boundary between (04) and subsoil (05) was diffuse, suggesting that the soil had been reworked over time. It is possible therefore that the area of the site, and as such the land at the rear of the burgage plot within which the

site was formerly contained, was used for cultivation. Unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered from this deposit.

The next phase of activity is represented by cut 15. This perhaps represents a phase of landscaping, undertaken in order to provide a level surface in an area where the ground naturally slopes downwards to the southeast. Alternatively it could represent quarrying, undertaken in an area of sloping ground in order to provide quicker access to the underlying geology. The date of this activity could not be established due to a lack of evidence; furthermore no evidence for any occupation or activity surface was seen. At some point the cut was backfilled with a series of thick homogenous deposits, presumably deposited in order to level the area off. The composition of these deposits suggest that they were formed of waste material, with a frequent number of roofing slate fragments and mudstone rubble evident. The date of this backfilling is also uncertain; two residual sherds of pottery from deposit (07) date to the 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, whether these were contemporary with the deposition or residual sherds cannot be established; the fresh condition of the sherds may perhaps indicate that they are contemporary, however given the lack of any further dating evidence this is somewhat tentative.

To the north of the cut cultivation appeared to continue, as evidenced by garden soil (03), which overlay garden soil (04); the limited southern extent of this deposit perhaps suggests that the boundary of the terrace/quarry was being respected, however this is uncertain as there was no direct relationship between this deposit and cut 15.

The construction of 3 Cuby Road is evidenced by layer (02), a compact made ground deposit.

## 7 ARCHIVE

### Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

#### Paper record

The project brief

Written scheme of investigation

The project report

The primary site record

#### Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Royal Cornwall Museum when it is receiving archives.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, D.H, Thomson, R. & Vince, A. 2006: 'The pottery', in A.D. Saunders (ed.), Excavations at Launceston Castle, Cornwall, The Society of Medieval Archaeology Monograph 24, Leeds: Maney Publishing, 269-281.

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**OASIS ID: johnmoor1-343605**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological Watching Brief at 3 Cuby Road, Tregony, Cornwall
Short description of the project	John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at 3 Cuby Road, Tregony, Cornwall. Evidence of past use of the site, most likely during the medieval and post-medieval periods, was recorded. The earliest evidence for activity consisted of an undated garden soil that extended throughout the site. Towards the southern edge of the site this soil was truncated by an area of terracing or possible quarrying, also undated. This was later backfilled; two sherds of pottery, recovered from the earliest of the backfill deposits, were dated to between the 15th - 16th centuries. A later garden soil layer suggests that cultivation resumed after the terrace/quarry was backfilled; the date of this layer is not known due to the lack of dating evidence. There was no further evidence of significant activity until the construction of 3 Cuby Road, as evidenced by modern made ground deposits.
Project dates	Start: 01-02-2019 End: 01-02-2019
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	TGCR 18 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	3829 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	BURIED SOIL HORIZON Uncertain
Monument type	EXTRACTIVE PIT Uncertain
Monument type	TERRACED GROUND Uncertain
Significant Finds	SHERD Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	CORNWALL CARRICK TREGONEY 3 Cuby Road
Postcode	TR2 5TW
Study area	190 Square metres
Site coordinates	SW 92780 45110 50.268842789155 -4.90818496133 50 16 07 N 004 54 29 W Point

**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	John Moore Heritage Services
Project brief originator	Cornwall County Council Historic Environment Service
Project design originator	JMHS
Project director/manager	John Moore
Project supervisor	Tom Rose-Jones
Type of sponsor/funding body	client

**Project archives**

Physical Archive recipient	Royal Cornwall Museum Truro
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Images vector"
Paper Archive recipient	Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Microfilm","Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

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