



# Market Strand Falmouth, Cornwall

Archaeological Watching Brief



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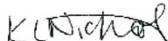
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Site location Market Strand, Falmouth  
County Cornwall  
National grid reference (NGR) 180754 032988 (SW 80754 32988)  
Statutory designations Falmouth Conservation Area, Grade II listed quay walls and pier (NHLE 1269994)  
Planning authority Cornwall Council  
Museum name Royal Cornwall  
Museum accession code TBC  
OASIS Id wessexar1-506617

WA project code 262020  
Dates of fieldwork 17/03/2022 23/03/2022 24/03/2022  
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### Quality Assurance

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1	10/05/2022	Draft to client	RLC	



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## Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Geotechnics Ltd, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during geotechnical works at Market Strand, Falmouth, Cornwall centred on NGR 180754 032988. The watching brief was undertaken 17, 23 and 24 March 2022.

The watching brief monitored the excavation of five slip trenches and one hand dug test pit. The geotechnical works were undertaken in order to identify any existing services that may be affected by the re-routing of a sewer main and to establish the depth and condition of the foundations for the sea wall and adjacent building.

No archaeological features or deposits were present within the monitored slip trenches and test pit. The made ground deposits exposed appeared to be modern in date and had been heavily disturbed by modern utilities.

## Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Geotechnics Ltd, for commissioning the archaeological watching brief, in particular Hannah Dwane. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of the archaeological advisor, who monitored the project for Cornwall Council, and Greg Chuter who monitored the works on behalf of the Environment Agency.



# Market Strand, Falmouth, Cornwall

## Archaeological Watching Brief

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Geotechnics Ltd ('the client'), to undertake an archaeological watching brief during geotechnical works at Market Strand, Falmouth, Cornwall centred on NGR 180754 032988 (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2 The works were required to inform the re-routing of a sewer main. The geotechnical works are aimed at identifying if there are any existing services that may be affected by the re-route and to establish the depth and condition of the foundations for the sea wall and adjacent building.
- 1.1.3 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (Wessex Archaeology 2022). The archaeological advisor approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and the Environment Agency Archaeologist, prior to fieldwork commencing. The watching brief was undertaken 17, 23 and 24 March 2022.

#### 1.2 Scope of the report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the watching brief, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSI, thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (a preservation by record).

#### 1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The watching brief was located on the north-eastern edge of Falmouth, near where it borders Carrick Roads, the estuary of the River Fal. The site lies adjacent to the Market Strand and the Prince of Wales Pier, within the quayside.
- 1.3.2 Existing ground levels between 3 m to 3.40 m aOD.
- 1.3.3 The underlying geology is mapped as the Porthleven Breccia Member (British Geological Survey 2022), with no superficial deposits recorded

### 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background has been informed by a consideration of publicly accessible information contained in the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) and the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's Historic Environment Record (CISHER) and included. Additional sources of information are referenced, as appropriate.



## 2.2 Archaeological and historical context

- 2.2.1 There is some evidence for Bronze Age and Iron Age activity on the Pendennis Headland, at the south-eastern edge of the town and the presence of tin is likely to have given rise to an early trading route out of the Fal estuary (Berry 1998, 3).
- 2.2.2 The remains of a submarine forest (CISHER MCO28693), below the low water mark, was discovered during the construction of a pier at Market Strand in the 19th century, though due to the date of its discovery the precise age of the remains is not known.
- 2.2.3 The area around Market Strand was the location of the settlement of Smythwyck, which is first documented in 1370 (CISHER MCO55657). Also in this area was Smithick Harbour, however the only definite remains of this are the old quay walls which partly enclosed a small harbour beside the Prince of Wales Pier.
- 2.2.4 Smythwyck was well established by the 17th century. Though there are few extant post-medieval structures remaining, 6 and 7 Market Strand (NHLE 1270015) is thought to be two town houses of likely late 18th-century date, which were re-fronted in the 19th century. Other earlier fabric may also be included in the early 19th properties along Market Strand.
- 2.2.5 While Market Strand Quay was built in 1871, it is believed to have 17th century origins (CISHER MCO4780). The quay was extended in 1905 with the Prince of Wales Pier (CISHER MCO4779). Though unlisted the former hotel which forms the southern edge of the quay also dates to the 19th century. Ordnance Survey mapping shows that the rear of property (in the area of TP2) was still foreshore in 1878 but that it had been built over with hardstanding and a lavatory block by 1933.

## 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

### 3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2022) and as defined in the ClfA *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), were to:
- allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of the development or other works;
  - provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and
  - guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

### 3.2 Objectives

- 3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the objectives of the watching brief, also defined in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2022), were to:
- determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified works area;



- record and establish, within the constraints of the works, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains (a preservation by record);
- place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- make available information about the archaeological resource on the site by preparing a report on the results of the watching brief.

### **3.3 Site-specific objectives**

3.3.1 Following consideration of the archaeological potential of the site, the following site-specific objectives have been identified:

- Identify any surviving evidence within the works for the medieval settlement of Smythwyck;
- Record any information arising from the works relating to the construction of the 19th-century quay and its earlier 17th century origins;
- Provide an opportunity within interventions adjacent to the former 19th century hotel and the Grade II listed quay wall to explore their construction and phasing; and
- Allow for any peat deposits encountered to be sampled as they may allow for a greater understanding of the changes to the sea level and landform during the prehistoric era.

3.3.2 These site-specific objectives have the potential to inform wider research questions from the South West Archaeological Research Framework (Webster 2008; Grove and Croft 2012). In particular:

- Research Aim 36: Improve our understanding of medieval and later urbanism; and
- Research Aim 23a: Sea level change.

## **4 METHODS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2022) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

### **4.2 Fieldwork methods**

#### *General*

4.2.1 The watching brief monitored the excavation of five slip trenches (0.5 m wide by 2 – 4 m long, by 1.10 m – 1.20 m deep) and one hand dug test pit (0.7 m long, by 0.6 m wide, and 0.35 m deep). Test pit 1 was combined with slip trench 1 (4 m long by 0.4 m wide by 1.20 m deep). Due to the presence of multiple services across the site vacuum excavation was used to remove overburden within the slip trenches following removal of the tarmac surface. Deposits beneath the tarmac in the test pit were hand excavated.



4.2.2 The watching archaeologist monitored all excavations within the specified areas. Where necessary, the surfaces of uncovered archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand to aid visual definition. A sample of archaeological features and deposits was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the aims of the watching brief.

4.2.3 Spoil from machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. No artefacts were recovered from the watching brief.

#### *Recording*

4.2.4 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete record of excavated features and deposits was made, including plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections) and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.

4.2.5 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSTN15 and OSGM15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.

4.2.6 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

### **4.3 Finds and environmental strategies**

4.3.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2022). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b), *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011) and ClfA's *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* (Type 1: Description).

### **4.4 Monitoring**

4.4.1 The archaeological advisor monitored the watching brief on behalf of the LPA. Any variations to the WSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with the client and the archaeological advisor.

## **5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE**

### **5.1 Introduction**

5.1.1 The archaeological watching brief monitored the excavation of five slip trenches and one test pit (**Figure 1**), which were placed to investigate existing services that may be affected by the re-route of a sewer main. No archaeological features or deposits were revealed, only layers of modern made ground were exposed.

5.1.2 **Figure 1** shows the location of the slip trenches and test pit, the results of which are outlined below, full descriptions of all deposits can be found in the trench tables **Appendix 1**.



## 5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

- 5.2.1 The soil sequence was largely consistent across all five slip trenches and the test pit. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed. All excavations were topped with a modern tarmac surface 0.08 m – 0.20 m thick. In slip trenches 2-5 and test pit 2 the tarmac was laid on yellow-grey hardcore and sand bedding 0.05 m – 0.28 m thick (**Figures 2-6**). Re-enforced concrete 0.10 m thick was found within slip trench 1 and test pit 1 beneath the tarmac (**Figure 7**).
- 5.2.2 Beneath the tarmac bedding made ground deposits of mixed yellow, grey and brown sand, gravels and hardcore was exposed across all trenches, with a depth of at least 1.10 m – 1.20 m, although its full extent was not reached in any of the interventions. The made ground was disturbed by modern services in all slip trenches and test pits. Within test pit 2, concrete was found beneath the made ground at 0.15 m below ground level.

## 6 FINDS EVIDENCE

- 6.1.1 No archaeological finds were recovered from the watching brief.

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 7.1.1 No deposits uncovered were deemed suitable for environmental sampling, therefore no samples were taken.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 The watching brief identified that no archaeological features or deposits were present within the monitored slip trenches and test pit.
- 8.1.2 The made ground deposits exposed appeared to be modern in date due to its homogenous form across all interventions and lack of archaeological material. The made ground deposits did not contain any archaeological material dating to medieval or post-medieval periods, and therefore did not appear to form part of the original construction of the quay. The made ground was heavily disturbed by modern utilities.
- 8.1.3 No evidence for the remains of medieval settlement or post-medieval buildings was found along Market Stand. As concrete was exposed within test pit 2 at 0.15 m below the ground surface, there was no opportunity to explore construction methods associated with the sea wall.
- 8.1.4 No evidence of prehistoric activity was encountered, nor were any peat deposits, deposits possibly associated with the submarine forest or below sea level deposits exposed.

## 9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

### 9.1 Museum

- 9.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Bristol. Royal Cornwall has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

## 9.2 Preparation of the archive

### *Physical archive*

- 9.2.1 The physical archive, which includes paper records, graphics, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Royal Cornwall, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Brown 2011; ClfA 2014c; SMA 1995).
- 9.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:
- 1 files/document cases of paper records

### *Digital archive*

- 9.2.3 The digital archive generated by the project, which comprises born-digital data (e.g., site records, survey data, databases and spreadsheets, photographs and reports), will be deposited with a Trusted Digital Repository, in this instance the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), to ensure its long-term curation. Digital data will be prepared following ADS guidelines (ADS 2013 and online guidance) and accompanied by metadata.

## 9.3 Selection strategy

- 9.3.1 It is widely accepted that not all the records and materials (artefacts and ecofacts) collected or created during the course of an archaeological project require preservation in perpetuity. These records and materials will be subject to selection in order to establish what will be retained for long-term curation, with the aim of ensuring that all elements selected to be retained are appropriate to establish the significance of the project and support future research, outreach, engagement, display and learning activities, i.e., the retained archive should fulfil the requirements of both future researchers and the receiving Museum.
- 9.3.2 The selection strategy, which details the project-specific selection process, is underpinned by national guidelines on selection and retention (Brown 2011, section 4) and generic selection policies (SMA 1993; Wessex Archaeology's internal selection policy) and follows ClfA's *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives*. It should be agreed by all stakeholders (Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists, external specialists, local authority, museum) and fully documented in the project archive.
- 9.3.3 In this instance, given the relatively low level of finds recovery, the selection process has been deferred until after the fieldwork stage was completed. Project-specific proposals for selection are presented below. These proposals are based on recommendations by Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists and will be updated in line with any further comment by other stakeholders (museum, local authority). The selection strategy will be fully documented in the project archive.
- 9.3.4 Any material not selected for retention may be used for teaching or reference collections by Wessex Archaeology.

### *Documentary records*

- 9.3.5 Paper records comprise site registers (other pro-forma site records are digital), drawings and reports (Written Scheme of Investigation, client report). All will be retained and deposited with the project archive.



#### *Digital data*

- 9.3.6 The digital data comprise site records (tablet-recorded on site) in spreadsheet format; finds records in spreadsheet format; survey data; photographs; reports. All will be deposited, although site photographs will be subject to selection to eliminate poor quality and duplicated images, and any others not considered directly relevant to the archaeology of the site.

### **9.4 Security copy**

- 9.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g., Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

### **9.5 OASIS**

- 9.5.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (<http://oasis.ac.uk>) has been initiated, with key fields completed (Appendix 2). A.pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by the archaeological advisor on behalf of the LPA. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.

## **10 COPYRIGHT**

### **10.1 Archive and report copyright**

- 10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.
- 10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

### **10.2 Third party data copyright**

- 10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g., Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Trench tables

Slip Trench and Test Pit 1		Length 3.90 m	Width 0.40 m	Depth 1.20 m
Easting 180753.21		Northing 32987.22		m OD 3.23
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
200		Surface	Tarmac Surface. Black.	0.00–0.10.
201		Re-enforced Concrete	Bedding Layer?	0.10–0.25.
202		Made ground	Disturbed by trenching for modern services. Yellow-grey. Sub-angular chunks of rock, up to boulder-sized, mixed with gritty sand.	0.25–1.20+

Test Pit 2		Length 0.68 m	Width 0.63 m	Depth 0.35 m
Easting 180775.08		Northing 32977.90		m OD 3.06
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
2000		Surface	Tarmac Surface. Black.	0.00–0.10
2001		Made ground	Yellow and grey-brown. Mixed sand(s) and silt(s).	0.10–0.15.
2002		Concrete	Off-white.	0.15–0.35+

Slip Trench 2		Length 3.15 m	Width 0.45 m	Depth 1.15 m
Easting 180764.17		Northing 32991.34		m OD 3.41
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
100		Surface	Black Tarmac. Hardstanding for pedestrian and vehicle access to pier.	0.00– 0.08.
101		Bedding Layer for tarmac	Yellow-grey. Medium-coarse hardcore / crush and gritty sands.	0.08–0.36 max.
102		Made ground	Mix of colours; grey, yellow, brown-grey. Mixed gritty sands and water-rolled pebbles (fine gravel-sized), silty soils and abundant sub-angular stones up to cobble- sized. Heavily- turbated by modern wrenching for services / utilities.	0.26– 1.15+

Slip Trench 3		Length 2 m	Width 0.50 m	Depth 1.15 m
Easting 180732.44		Northing 32978.87		m OD 3.10
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
300		Bus Stop Surface	Tarmac. Black.	0.00–0.20
301		Bedding Layer for tarmac	Yellow-grey. Medium-coarse hardcore / crush admixed with sands.	0.20–0.40
302		Made -Ground	Grey. Medium-coarse hardcore / crush, now heavily-turbated by modern trenching for services / utilities.	0.40–1.15+



Slip Trench 4		Length 2.10 m	Width 0.50 m	Depth 1.20 m
Easting 180724.08		Northing 32975.09		m OD 3.09
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
400		Road Surface	Black Tarmac.	0.00–0.18
401		Bedding layer for tarmac	Yellow-grey. Medium-coarse hardcore / crush mixed with sands.	0.18–0.38
402		Made ground	Mix of grey, brown and yellow. Mix of silts and sands and abundant sub-angular stones up to cobble-sized. Heavily turbated by modern trenches for services and utilities.	0.38–1.20+

Slip Trench 5		Length 2.30 m	Width 0.50 m	Depth 1.10 m
Easting 180730.15		Northing 32985.36		m OD 3.13
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
500		Bus Stop Surface	Black Tarmac.	0.00–0.20
501		Bedding Layer for tarmac	Yellow-grey. Medium-coarse hardcore / crush mixed with gritty sands.	0.20–0.40
502		Made ground	Yellow-grey and grey. Coarse hardcore / crush mixed with gritty sands. Heavily-turbated by modern trench for service / utility	0.40–1.10+

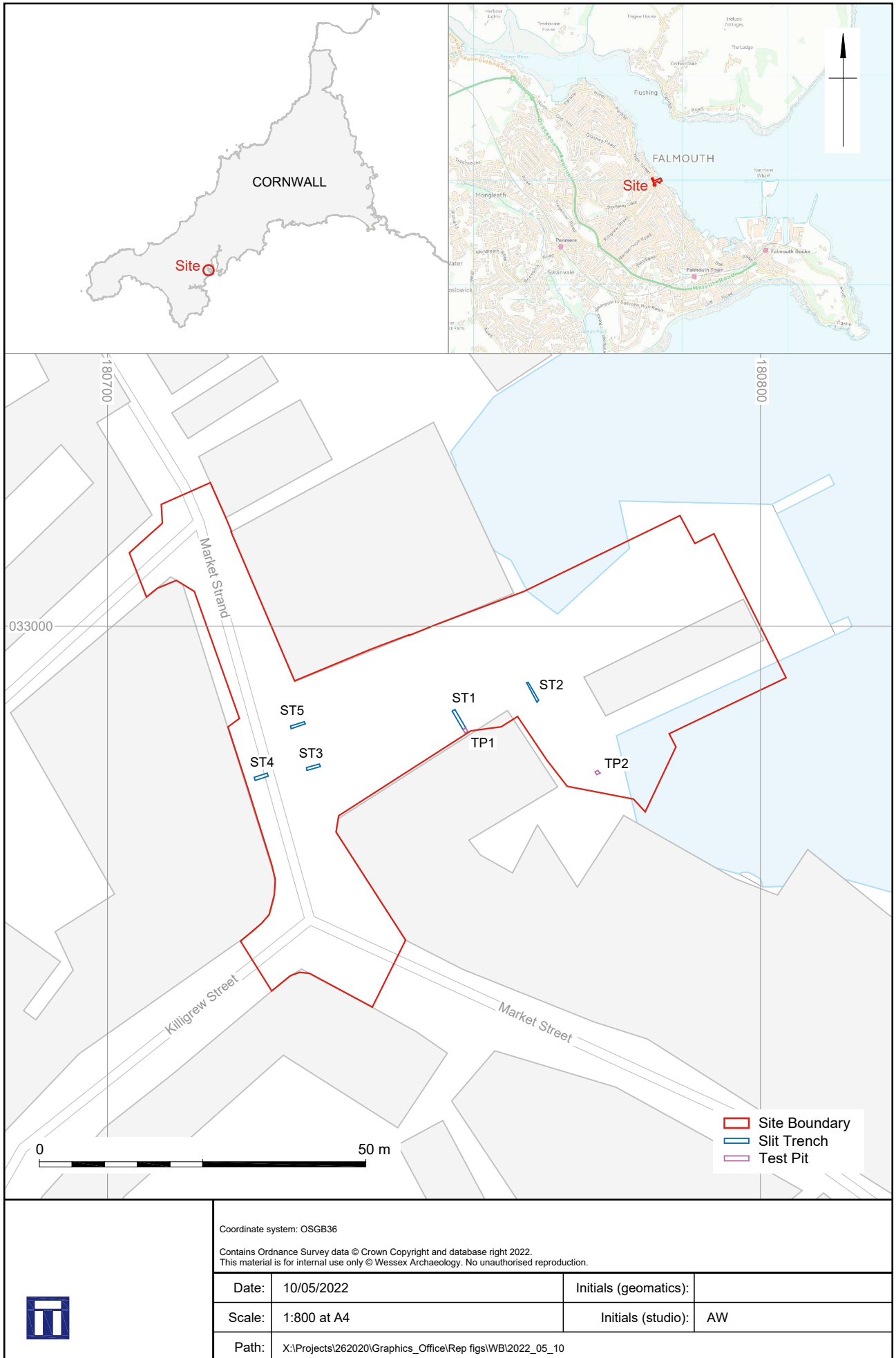




## Appendix 2 OASIS summary

## Summary for wessexar1-506617

OASIS ID (UID)	wessexar1-506617
Project Name	Market Strand, Falmouth, Cornwall: Archaeological Watching Brief
Sitename	
Activity type	Watching Brief
Project Identifier(s)	262020
Planning Id	
Reason For Investigation	Statutory requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	Wessex Archaeology
Project Dates	17-Mar-2022 - 24-Mar-2022
Location	Market Strand, Falmouth, Cornwall NGR : SW 80754 32988 LL : 50.1563095850344, -5.07070959523069 12 Fig : 180754,32988
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Cornwall District : Cornwall Parish : Falmouth
Project Methodology	The watching brief monitored the excavation of five slip trenches (0.5 m wide by 2-4 m long, by up to 1.10 m – 1.20 m deep) and one hand dug test pit (0.7 m long, by 0.6 m wide, by 0.35 m deep). The geotechnical works were aimed at identifying if there are any existing services that may be affected by the re-routing of a sewer main and to establish the depth and condition of the foundations for the sea wall and adjacent building. The tarmac was initially broken with a breaker attached to an excavator, due to the presence of multiple services vacuum excavation was used to extract the deposits within the slip trenches, the deposits beneath the tarmac in the test pit were hand excavated.
Project Results	No archaeological features or deposits were present within the monitored slip trenches and test pit, and therefore no archaeological material was disturbed during the investigation works. The made ground deposits exposed appeared to be modern in date due to its homogenous form across all interventions and lack of archaeological material, it had been heavily disturbed by modern utilities.
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	Cornwall and Scilly HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Rachael, Capps
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Documentary Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with Royal Cornwall Museum Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive



Site location with slit trenches and test pits

Figure 1



Figure 2: Test pit 2 from the south-west, 0.5 m scale



Figure 3: Slip trench 2 from the north, 1 m scale


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Figure 4: Slip trench 3, 1 m scale



Figure 5: Slip trench 4 from the south-east, 1 m scale



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Figure 6: Slip trench 5 from the west, 1 m scale



Figure 7: Slip trench 1 and test pit 1 from the north-west, 1 m scale

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