

Land at Playing Place, Kea, Cornwall

Updated Desk-based Assessment



Land at Playing Place, Kea, Cornwall

Updated Desk-Based Assessment

Executive Summary

This short report presents the results of an updated desk-based assessment of the site at Playing Place, Kea, Cornwall. This work has been undertaken on behalf of Legacy Properties as part of a planning performance agreement with Cornwall Council.

This assessment has interrogated the evidence for playing places to suggest that, during the medieval and post-medieval period, the term playing place may have been applied generically to the circular enclosures known as rounds and that a critical re-evaluation of this class of monument is in order. It advances a new definition of playing places as purpose-built 'earthen amphitheatres' in unenclosed areas on main routes where large crowds could gather.

Of the two Scheduled Monuments at Playing Place, the northern enclosure would appear to be a purpose-built Playing Place and not a reused round. The southern enclosure falls into a category of small rectilinear enclosure attached to an existing field system, and as such may not be considered for Scheduling today.

The two Scheduled monuments here form a clear constraint on the development of the site, as it would transform the current setting. However, the current designs reference the heritage of the playing place and present an opportunity to better reveal the significance of the site through good design.

South West Archaeology Ltd. shall retain the copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project. The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of South West Archaeology Ltd. and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information available at the time of production.

Client	Legacy Properties Ltd.
Parish	Kea
County	Cornwall
NGR	SW 99448 58025
Site Code	PPLA25
Report No.	260629
Version No.	02
Date	07.07.26
Status	Draft01
Report Author(s)	B. Morris BA MA PhD MCIfA
Checked By	F. Balmond BA MA MCIfA
Approved By	S. Walls BA MA PhD MCIfA
Data Location	SWARCH FILES/ActiveJobs/SwarchLtd/Playing Place land at, PPLA25
OASIS No.	southwes1-535109
Acknowledgements	The client

South West Archaeology Ltd.

The Old Dairy, Hacche Lane Business Park, Pathfields Business Park
South Molton, Devon, EX36 3LH

Website: www.swarch.net

Email: mail@swarch.net

Telephone: 01769 573555 and 01872 223164

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	PROJECT BACKGROUND	4
1.2	LOCATION	4
1.3	TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS	4
1.4	SCOPE AND CONTEXT	4
1.5	DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS	4
1.6	CONSULTATION	5
1.7	METHODOLOGY	5
1.8	LIMITATIONS AND CAVEATS	5
1.9	QUALITY ASSURANCE	5
1.10	PREVIOUS WORK	5
1.11	STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT	5
2	BASELINE	6
2.1	EXISTING SITE	6
2.2	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	7
2.3	HISTORIC MAPS	8
2.4	LIDAR IMAGERY	10
2.5	GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY	10
2.6	INTERPRETATION OF THE SCHEDULED MONUMENTS	10
3	DESK-BASED REVIEW	14
3.1	DISCUSSION	14
3.2	UPDATED CONSIDERATION OF SETTING	17
3.3	DRAFT STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	18
4	COMMENT ON THE LATEST PROPOSALS	18
4.1	OVERVIEW	18
4.2	COMMENT	18
5	CONCLUSION	19
5.1	EFFECTS	19
5.2	MITIGATION	20
6	BIBLIOGRAPHY	24
7	PROJECT ARCHIVE	25

7.1	BACKGROUND	30
7.2	NEARBY HERITAGE ASSETS	30
7.3	ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY	30
7.4	KEY HERITAGE ASSETS	30
7.5	RECOMMENDATIONS	31

FIGURES

COVER PLATE: THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE SITE AND THE SCHEDULED PLAYING PLACE; FROM THE NORTH.

FIGURE 1: LOCATION MA.	4
FIGURE 2: SOUTH SIDE OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH.	6
FIGURE 3: EAST SIDE OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE WEST.	6
FIGURE 4: VIEW ALONG THE TRACK; VIEWED FROM THE NNW.	6
FIGURE 5: THE SCHEDULED AREAS, WITH HOUSING BEHIND; VIEWED FROM THE EAST.	7
FIGURE 6: THE SOUTHERN SIDE OF THE FIELD; VIEWED FROM THE ESE.	7
FIGURE 7: EXTRACT FROM THE 1699 GASCOYNE COUNTY MAP.	8
FIGURE 8: EXTRACT FROM THE 1748 MARTYN COUNTY MAP.	9
FIGURE 9: EXTRACT FROM THE 1811 ORDNANCE SURVEY SURVEYOR'S DRAFT MAP.	9
FIGURE 10: EXTRACT FROM THE 1840 KEA TITHE MAP.	9
FIGURE 11: EXTRACT FROM THE 1877 ORDNANCE SURVEY 25" MAP.	9
FIGURE 12: THE INTERPRETATION OF THE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY RESULTS.	11
FIGURE 13: TERRAIN IMAGES BASED ON 2023 1M DSM LIDAR DATA.	12
FIGURE 14: RESULTS OF THE TWO GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS.	13
FIGURE 15: RESULTS OF A MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY AT PLAYING PLACE.	17
FIGURE 16: RESULTS OF A GRADIOMETRY SURVEY AT ST PIRAN'S ROUND.	17
FIGURE 17: RESULTS OF AN EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY AT ST JUST.	18
FIGURE 18: CONCEPT MASTERPLAN OF THE SITE.	21
FIGURE 19: CONCEPT VIEW OF THE TWO SCHEDULED MONUMENTS; FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.	22
FIGURE 20: CONCEPT VIEW ACROSS THE PLAYING PLACE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST.	23
FIGURE 21: ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY.	33

TABLES

TABLE 1: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS WITHIN 1KM.	30
TABLE 2: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS WHERE THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR HARM.	30
TABLE 3: THE HIERARCHY OF VALUE/ IMPORTANCE.	32
TABLE 4: SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS MATRIX.	32
TABLE 5: PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT OF IMPACT.	32
TABLE 6: SCALES OF IMPACT AS PER THE NPPF, AS RELATED TO TABLE 5.	32

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: POLICY AND LEGISLATION	26
APPENDIX 2: PROVISIONAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT	30

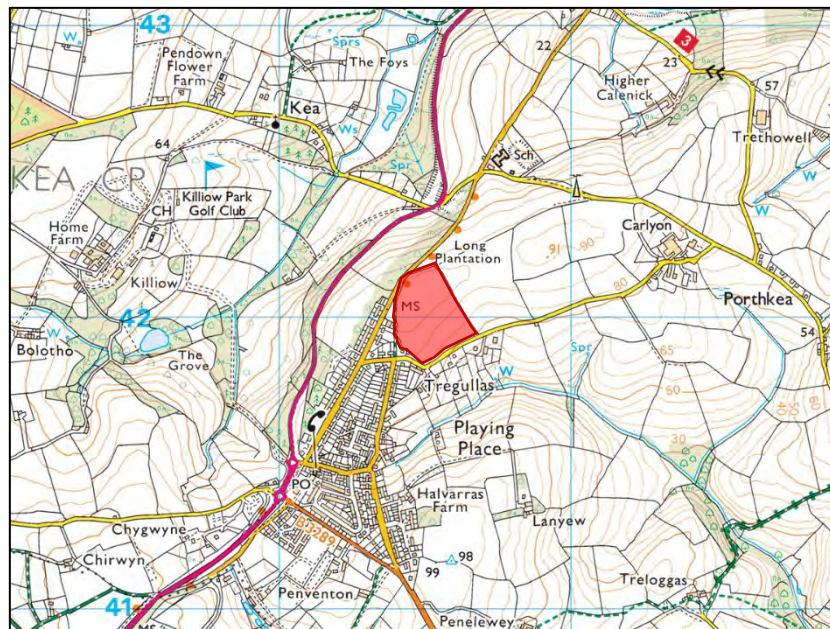


FIGURE 1: LOCATION MAP ©CROWN COPYRIGHT 2025. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. LICENCE NUMBER 100022432. THE PROPOSED SITE IS INDICATED.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was instructed by Legacy Properties Ltd. to prepare an updated desk-based assessment (DBA) as part of a planning performance agreement (PPA) for a proposed housing development on land at Playing Place, Kea.

1.2 LOCATION

The proposed development would comprise a single sub-rectangular field (c.6ha) on the northern edge of the modern settlement of Playing Place, to the east of the Old Coach Road.

1.3 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The field is located towards the western end of the elongated summit of a shallow ridge, with gentle slopes falling away to the north and south-east, at an elevation of 74-92m AOD.

The soils of this area are the well-drained fine loamy soils over slate or slate rubble of the Denbigh 2 Association¹; these overlie sandstone and argillaceous rocks of the Portscatho Formation².

1.4 SCOPE AND CONTEXT

The proposals form part of a PPA, with preliminary plans for the layout of the proposed development. This report is an updated assessment which seeks to feed into an iterative design process.

From a heritage perspective, the proximity of the two Scheduled Monuments is the key issue. This report is about understanding what these two sites are, what their significance is, and determining the importance of setting to that significance.

1.5 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The proposals are at an initial PPA stage, for a residential development and associated infrastructure (see Section 4 and Figures 18-20).

1.6 CONSULTATION

This document is produced for consultation with relevant stakeholders as part of an iterative process. The primary sources consulted at the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment record, the Historic England National List. A formal meeting with Historic England and an initial Cornwall Council pre-app have been undertaken, and informal inquiries have been made with the Cornwall Heritage trust and The Old Cornwall Society.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

The desk-based research and assessment have been undertaken in accordance with the relevant guidance; the geophysical survey was carried out in 2025³, completing a survey undertaken in 2018⁴.

1.8 LIMITATIONS AND CAVEATS

This report adds additional detailed desk-based assessment of the monuments on the site to the reports already undertaken (see 1.7). It is not a heritage impact assessment (HIA); a HIA would follow once finalised plans have been agreed, and the potential harms minimised.

1.9 QUALITY ASSURANCE

This assessment has been undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) is a Registered Organisation (RO) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and a member of the Federation of Archaeological Managers & Employers (FAME). SWARCH employees working on this project are appropriately qualified academically and commercially; SWARCH directors hold doctoral qualifications in archaeology and are Members (MCIfA) of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

1.10 PREVIOUS WORK

The southern part of the field was the subject of a geophysical survey⁴ and heritage assessment⁵, and one of the Scheduled rounds was the subject of enhancement work in the early 2000s⁶. A negative watching

brief took place in a nearby garden in 2006⁷. A short pamphlet about St Kea and the Kea playing place was produced in 2022⁸. Otherwise, work in the area has been limited to extensive desk-based assessments and a feasibility study for the Killiow Estate⁹.

This report follows on from a short appraisal document¹⁰ and a review by Avalon Planning & Heritage¹¹.

1.11 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report contains a more detailed and updated desk-based assessment of the site, to make informed comment as to the identification of the two Scheduled Monuments.

The report will then explore what we know about playing places more generally, to determine whether there are discernible commonalities of location and setting that would allow further comment on the contribution of these aspects to their significance.

Finally, the report comments on the latest plans for the development.

2 BASELINE

2.1 EXISTING SITE

The site is located on the gently sloping upper part of a ridge extending to the east-north-east. The site consists of a single large open field, bounded by tall stone-faced Cornish hedgebanks. To the north-west runs the Old Coach Road; to the west are the gardens of houses flanking the Old Coach Road; to the south-west are the gardens of the houses along Carlyon Road; and to the south Carlyon Road, with houses beyond. The site is open to fields to the north-east. There are very slight earthworks of the two Scheduled Monuments, as well as one of the relict field boundaries.



FIGURE 2: SOUTH SIDE OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH.



FIGURE 3: EAST SIDE OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE WEST.



FIGURE 4: VIEW ALONG THE TRACK BETWEEN THE PLOUGHED FIELD AND GRASS AREA; VIEWED FROM THE NNW.



FIGURE 5: THE SCHEDULED AREAS, WITH HOUSING BEHIND; VIEWED FROM THE EAST.



FIGURE 6: THE SOUTHERN SIDE OF THE FIELD; VIEWED FROM THE ESE.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The tithe apportionment states the fields containing the Scheduled Monuments formed part of the tenement of Carlyon (located c.0.7km to the north-east. At that time (1840) Carlyon was owned by The Earl of Falmouth and leased to Samuel Hearle. Samuel Hearle is located at Penalewey by the 1841 Census; 1851 Census put him at Carlyon, listed as farming 400a of land.

Carlyon is first documented in 1278, the first element derived from the Cornish *ker (fort/round). Further detail about this farm is difficult to disaggregate from the other Carlyons, and the notable St Austell family of the same name.

Lysons notes that it had been the seat of a Carlyon family, passing by female heir to the Haweis family and finally vested in the person of Mrs. Ursula Haweis widow (d.1826). That would place it as part of the Killiow estate, later coming into the possession of R.L. Gwatkin Esq. (who was listed as a trustee for Ursula in 1836¹²). How it came to be owned by Lord Falmouth is not clear. It is likely to have formed part of the manor of Albalanda/Blanchland, the manor being acquired by the Boscawens through marriage with the daughter of Otto de Albalanda in the 1350s.

2.3 HISTORIC MAPS

The readily available historic maps (going back to the 1699 Gascoyne county map – Figures 7-9) appear to show this field, together with the land extending to the east as far as Carlyon Farm, as enclosed.



FIGURE 7: EXTRACT FROM THE 1699 GASCOYNE COUNTY MAP; THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE IS INDICATED.

By the 1840 tithe map (Figure 10), the field was split into two (called *Round Croft* and *Tregullas Croft*), and the north-east corner formed part of an adjacent field. It is of interest that the open area immediately to the east around the crossroads was called *Plain Place* (i.e. *Playing Place*).

The Cornwall HLC shows these fields as forming part of *medieval farmland* (*Anciently Enclosed Land* or AEL), but the usage of the *Croft* element in Cornish field names came to mean rough ground or enclosed but uncultivated land¹³. The morphology of these fields would indicate they are post-medieval additions to Carlyon Farm, and the unenclosed land around the crossroads was originally much larger.

The historic Ordnance Survey maps (Figures 9 & 11) show, in the south-west corner of the field, one (1811) and then two (1877) enclosures.

Both of these enclosures are now Scheduled (List no. 1019503). Based on the results of the geophysical survey (below), the larger one is clearly the playing place. Only the western arc of the northern enclosure bank survives, incorporated into a hedgebank.

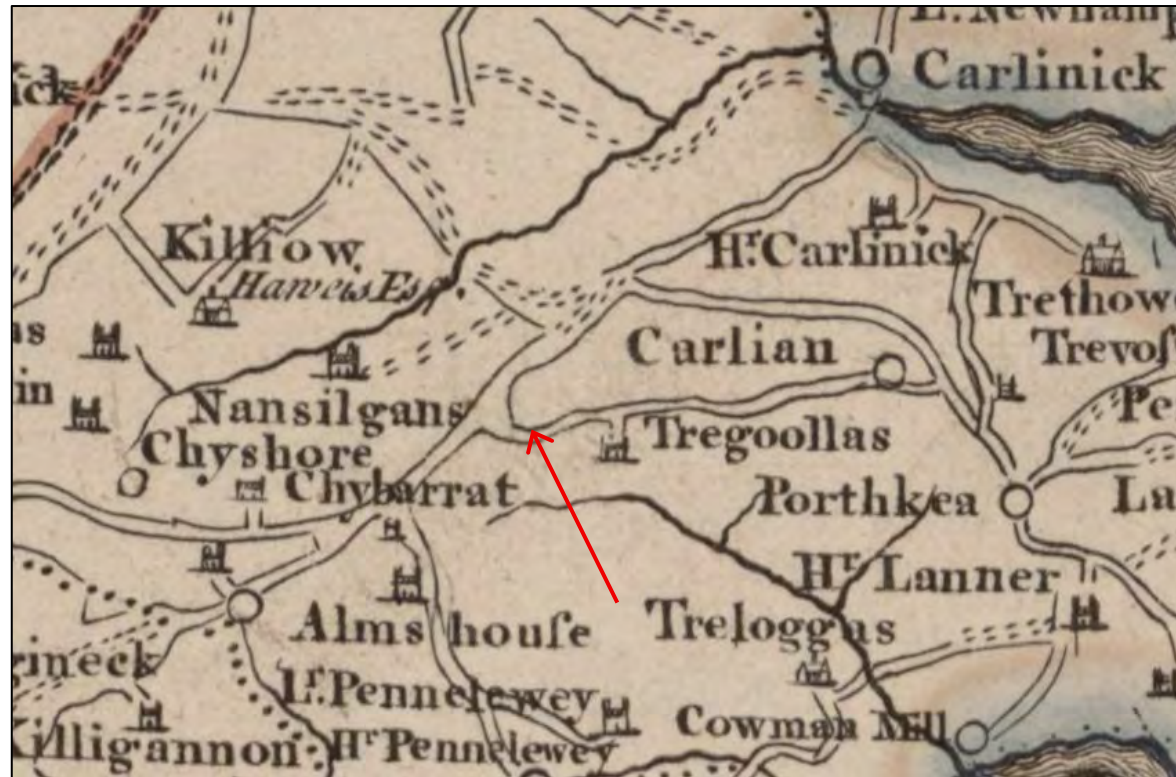


FIGURE 8: EXTRACT FROM THE 1748 MARTYN COUNTY MAP (HARVARD); THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE IS INDICATED.

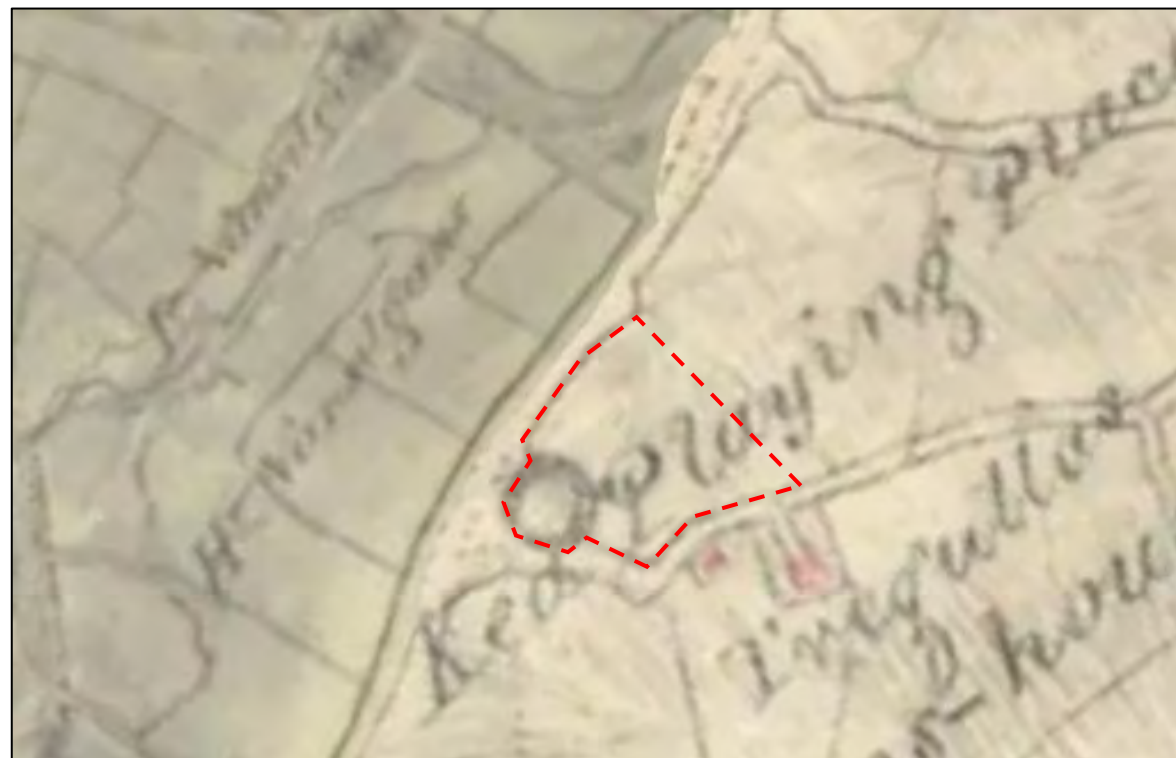
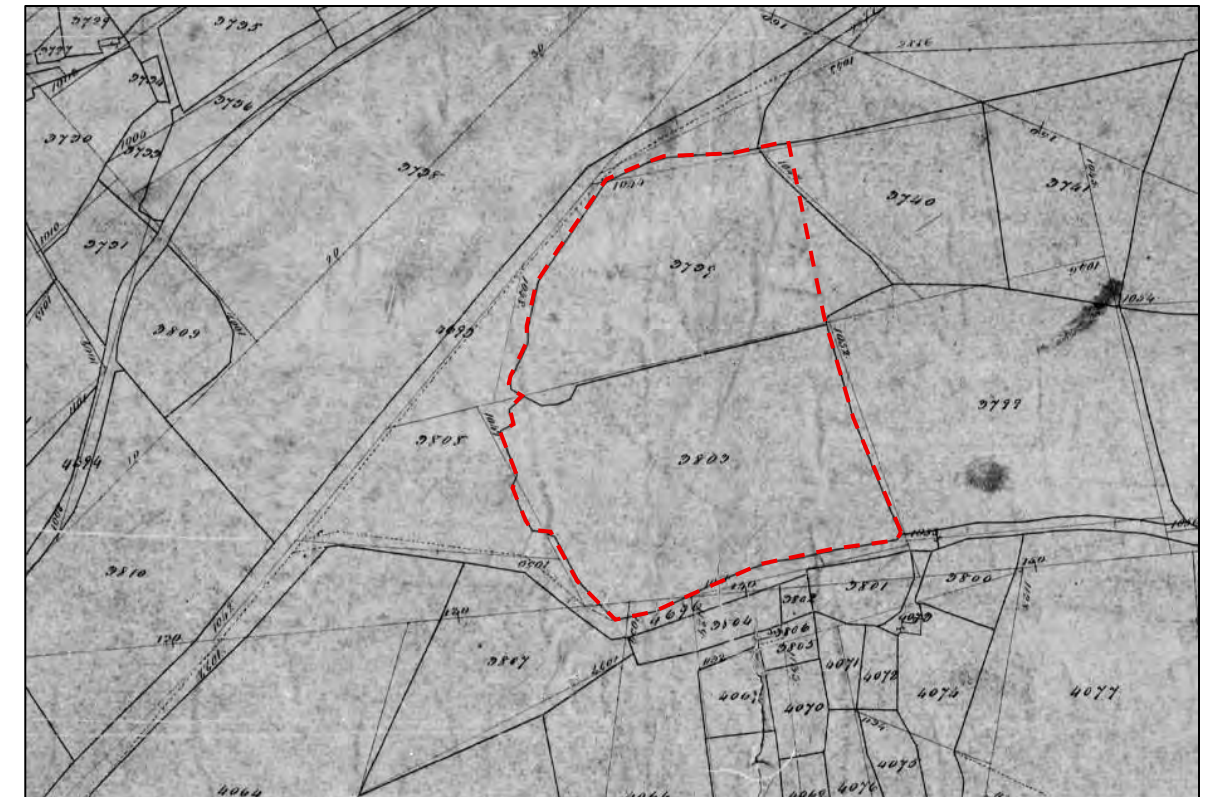


FIGURE 9: EXTRACT FROM THE 1811 ORDNANCE SURVEY SURVEYOR'S DRAFT MAP (BL).



2.4 LIDAR IMAGERY

Imagery derived from 2023 1m DSM Environment Agency LiDAR data (Figure 13) indicates the earthworks are very slight, the banks of the lower enclosure and attached relict field boundary registering as slight breaks of slope, and the upper enclosure as a slight platform.

2.5 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

Given the archaeological potential of the site, a geophysical survey was undertaken to extend and complete a survey undertaken in 2018¹⁴. This survey provides valuable additional information about the two Scheduled enclosures, and sets them both in context (see Figure 13)

The results of the geophysical (gradiometer) survey carried out in 2018 and 2025 reveal a busy archaeological landscape similar to many other sites in Cornwall.

The whole field is crossed by relict field boundaries defining small rectilinear fields. The magnetic response of those field boundaries is marked (+20 to +60nTs), and this is likely to mean these represent substantial (1.0-1.4m deep) ditches. These are likely, by analogy with excavated examples in the Threemilestone area, to be Late Prehistoric in date¹⁵. The southern Scheduled enclosure is built into the corner of one of these fields.

The northern Scheduled enclosure is shown as a broad (c.6m) circular ditch with an entrance to the east and only a few internal features.

West of the Scheduled enclosures are two large (c.6-8m) pits, which are likely to be Middle Bronze Age sunken-featured roundhouses, a common structural type (e.g. multiple examples at Tolgarrick Farm¹⁶, 1.7km to the north). Central to the field is a faint ring ditch that is likely to represent a Late Prehistoric roundhouse, or perhaps – given its elevated location – an Early Bronze Age barrow. In the north-west part of the field there is the faint remnants of a curving double-ditched linear; it is possible this represents the remains of an earlier enclosure.

Lastly, the results of the geophysical survey also show more modern features: a removed post-medieval double-ditched field boundary, modern services, and modern arable cultivation.

2.6 INTERPRETATION OF THE SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

The Scheduling covers two separate but adjacent areas, the Scheduled areas corresponding with the extent of the earthworks shown on the 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey maps. On these maps (Figure 11) the monuments appear roughly circular.

The geophysical survey (Figure 14) demonstrates the two monuments are quite different in character. The northern monument is defined by a near-circular ditch c.4-6m wide and with a diameter of 60m, with an entrance to the east side. The entrance was visible when the post-medieval field boundary splitting *Round Croft* and *Tregullas Croft* was built, as it addressed the south cheek of the entrance to reuse the south arc of the monument. It has an internal area c.50m across (c.0.2ha). Inside the monument the survey shows an off-centre pit and a pair of pits just to the north of the entrance; there are no other clear internal features. This monument most closely resembles a playing place as evidenced by St Piran's Round and the documentary references.

The southern monument is shown to be sub-square, with an internal area c.40m across (c.0.15ha) with ditch c.2.3-3.3m wide. The northern side of the enclosure is formed by one of the curiously regular, relict field boundaries crossing the site. No clear internal features are shown.

Both monuments have been identified as Late Prehistoric/Romano-British settlement enclosures ('rounds'), but the geophysical survey, and the regularity and location of the north enclosure, would appear to contradict this.

Firstly, the majority of rounds are located on hillslopes, rather than hilltops. The northern enclosure (Figure 12) can be seen to occupy the flat summit of the ridge, only a little way down from the top of the hill.

Secondly, the north enclosure is very regular, almost a perfect circle. The assessment of enclosures undertaken for the area around the Camel estuary would suggest such regularity is very unusual¹⁷.

Thirdly, we would expect to see more, and more recognisable, internal features (i.e. ring ditch(es), larger postholes/pits). As the survey has identified those features across the wider site, we may assume it is not the prospection technique that is at fault, and the absence is likely to be genuine.

Fourthly, it is noted that rounds tended to have their entrances on the downslope side; the northern enclosure has an entrance facing east, along the slope. (St Piran's Round has opposing entrances – might we expect there to have been a second entrance facing west?) The ditch of the southern enclosure is shown as uninterrupted, and thus the evidence is equivocal, but it probably faced along the slope to the south-west.

Lastly, the relationship between the southern round and the relict field boundaries is anomalous. Normally, rounds can be observed to post-date an earlier fieldsystem, appear quite separate to a fieldsystem, or are respected by the fieldsystem. In this instance, the small sub-square enclosure is formed *against* the existing field boundary, more in the manner of a medieval or post-medieval farmstead. Several examples were identified in the area round the Camel estuary, but often in association with larger enclosures, and the author of that study speculated they might be for livestock rather than settlement.¹⁸

Taken together, this throws doubt on the identification of these enclosures as Late Prehistoric and/or Romano-British settlement enclosures.

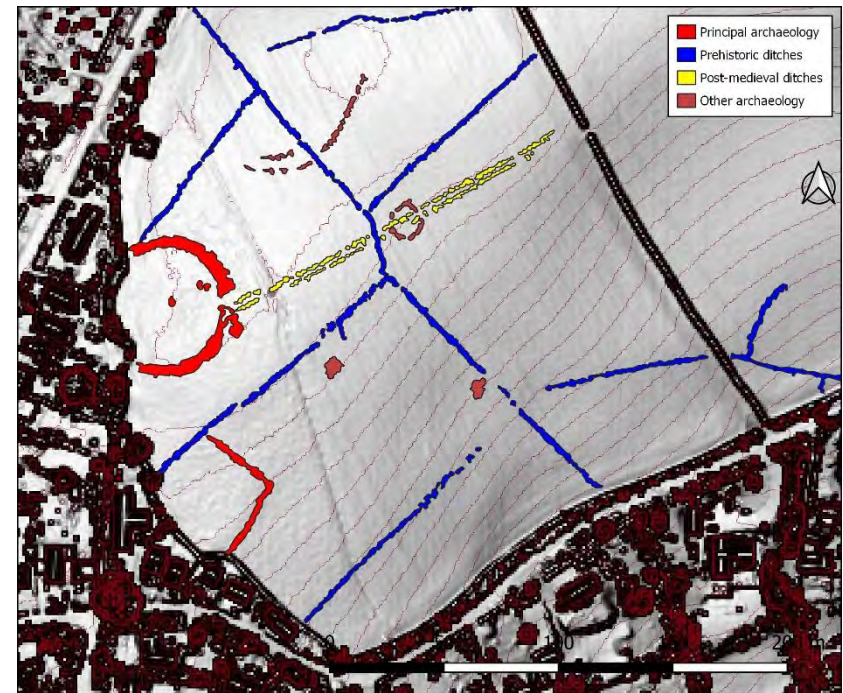


FIGURE 12: THE INTERPRETATION OF THE GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY RESULTS OVERLAID ON A LIDAR-DERIVED IMAGE, WITH CONTOURS AT 1M INTERVALS (DATA USED UNDER THE OPEN GOVERNMENT LICENCE V.3.0).

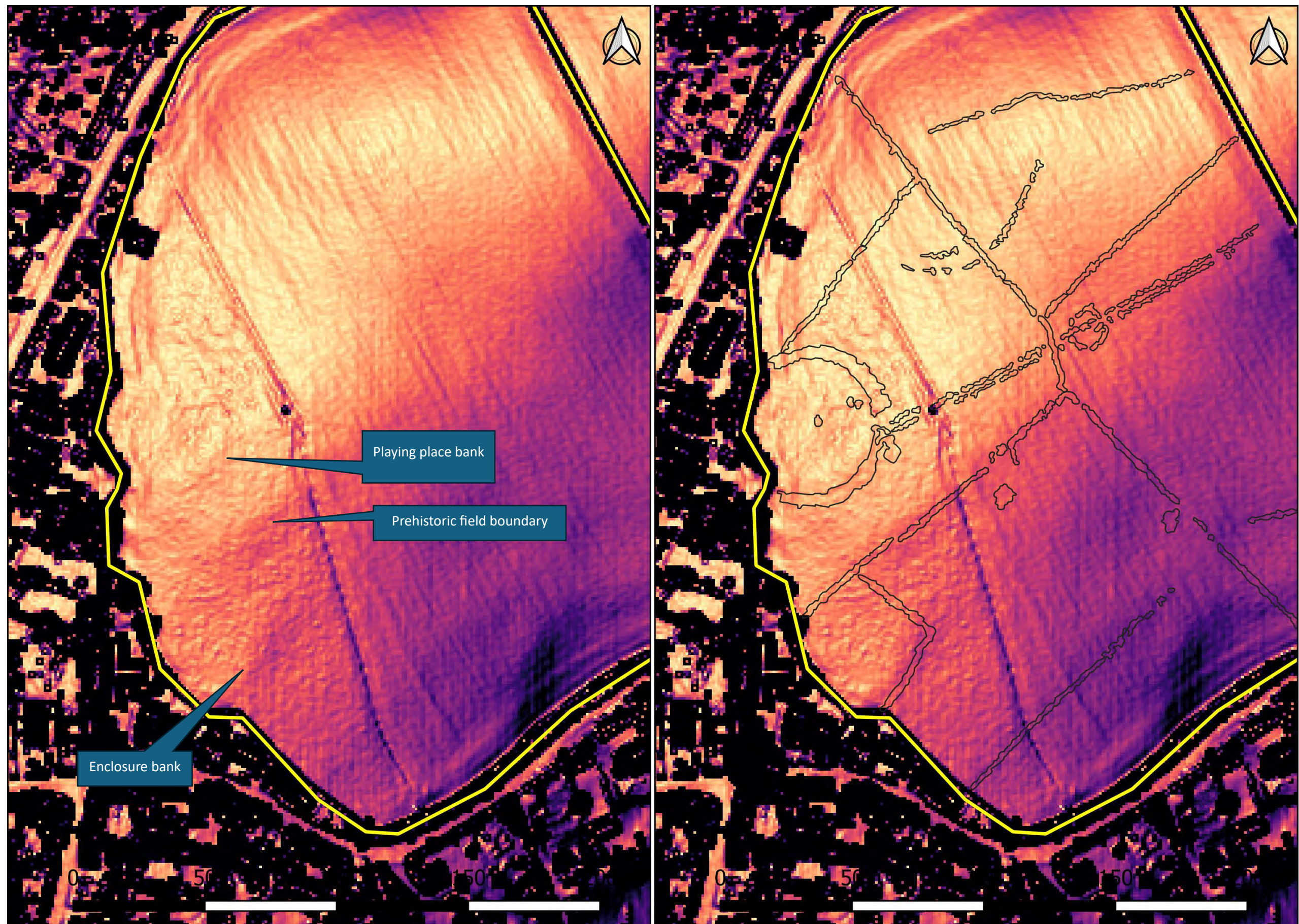


FIGURE 13: TERRAIN IMAGE BASED ON FREELY AVAILABLE 2023 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY 1M DSM LiDAR DATA, SHOWING SLOPE ANALYSIS WITH COLOUR RAMP (LEFT) IN RELATION TO THE ARCHAEOLOGY (RIGHT). PROCESSED USING QGIS 3.16.11. DATA USED UNDER THE OPEN GOVERNMENT LICENCE V.3.0. THE SITE IS INDICATED.

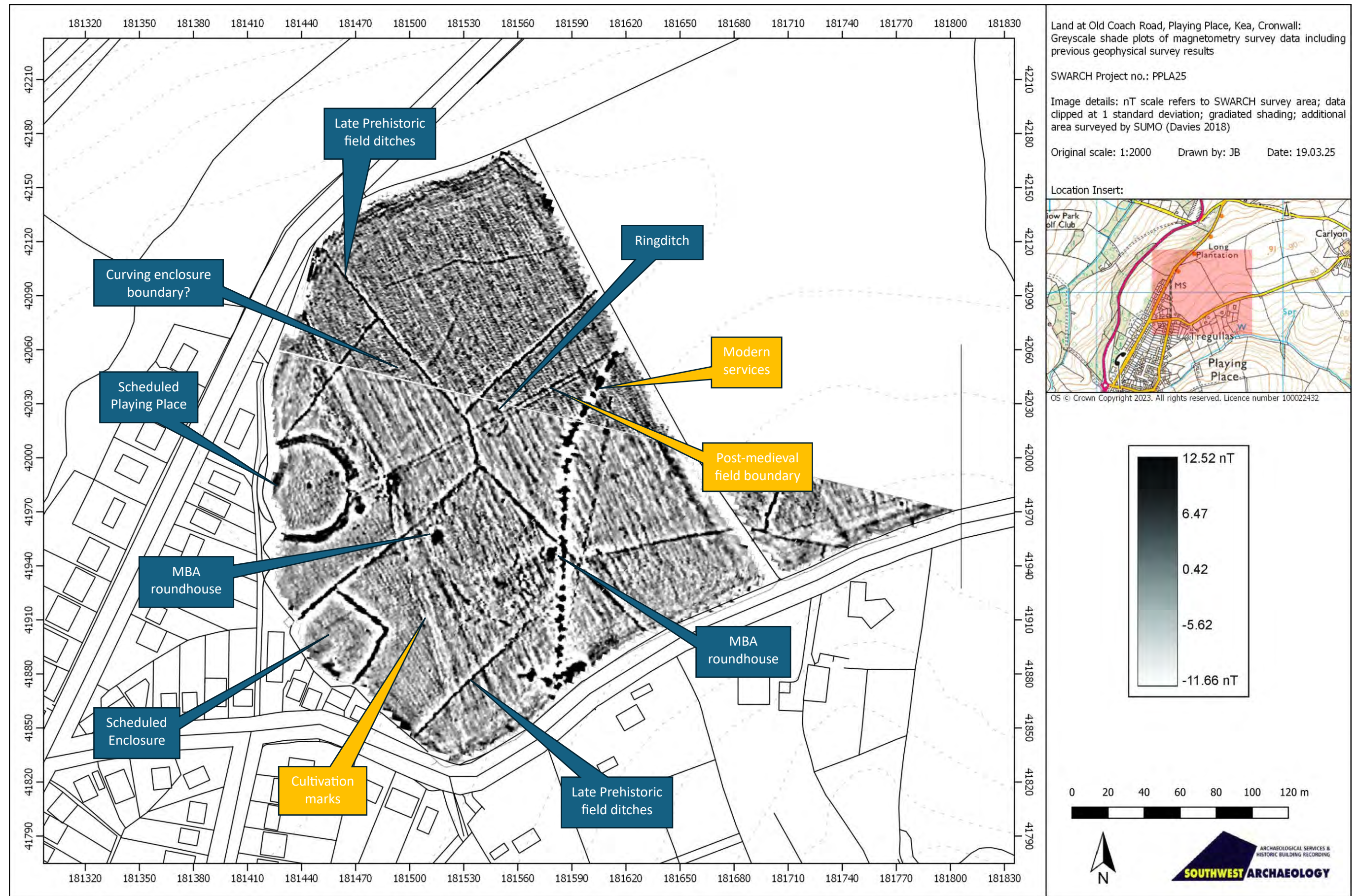


FIGURE 14: RESULTS OF THE TWO GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS (AFTER BAMPTON 2025, FIGURE 5 AND DAVIES 2018, FIGURE 3), WITH INTERPRETATION.

3 DESK-BASED REVIEW

3.1 DISCUSSION

There are numerous publications and articles covering the Cornish miracle play tradition. These mostly focus on the nature of drama in a Cornish and international context, the plays themselves, what it says about the Cornish language¹⁹, and a sense of Cornishness²⁰. A small subset of these publications attempt to identify lost playing places²¹.

The search for lost playing places is essentially the practice of finding a textual reference (a place-name – *plain* or *plen an gwarry* or *playing place* – a reference to a miracle play, or a local tradition) and then attempting to locate a circular earthwork in approximately the right location.

The problem with this approach is that during the Late Prehistoric and Romano-British periods the best-evidenced settlement type is a sub/circular or sub-rectangular enclosure defined by a ditch with an internal bank: the ‘round’. There are so many examples in Cornwall, and morphologically so diverse (a majority of univallate ‘rounds’ in one study would appear, in fact, to be sub-rectangular²²), there is considerable scope to reassess, in the light of recent development-led archaeological work, what these monuments actually are. The current (interim) definition is not a morphological one: *a permanent settlement with substantially built houses whose inhabitants merited the distinction of a formal bound or enclosure, which may have held significance for their status beyond its provision of protection or defence*²³. Nonetheless, a common perception of their morphology has led to their 20th century appellation: ‘rounds’.

In areas characterised by the county HLC as *Anciently Enclosed*, these settlement enclosures can be found with a density of two per 1km²,

with fewer in more recently enclosed land²⁴. The likelihood of happening upon a false positive is therefore exceedingly high.

There is also the fact that these forms of settlement appear to have been largely abandoned in favour of unenclosed settlements in the second half of the first millennium AD (i.e. the shift to *tre sites). Leaving aside for the moment the issue of the of potential re-use of rounds as playing places, it is worth exploring what the medieval and later inhabitants of Cornwall perceived these rounds to be.

Taking the antiquarian Borlase as a well-informed case study, chapter VII Book III of his *Observations* published in 1754 is entitled *of Circular Monuments, the Use and Design of them among the Ancients of foreign countries, and the Druids in this*. The first part of the chapter (p.180-195) discusses stone circles, which Borlase states are often called:

Dawns-mên, that is, the Stone-Dance, so call'd of the common people on no other account, than that they are "plac'd in a circular Order, and so make an Area for Dancing".

He goes onto state:

*...the traditions of the common people seldom fixing upon, and being constant to points of history, but rather taking their rise from some obvious property that strikes the senses, and resembles the customs of the Country.*²⁵

This is an important point we will return below. The second part of the chapter (p.195-198) moves on to discuss the playing place:

But though theatrical form is best adapted for the instruction and information of the Audience, yet... it is not so commonly met with among the Ancients, as the Amphitheatres of stone (not broken as the Cirques of Stones-erect) the Britans did usually assemble to hear plays acted, to see the Sports and Games, which upon particular

occasions were intended to amuse the people, to quiet and delight them... these are call'd with us in Cornwall (where we have great numbers of them) Plan an guare; viz. the level place, or Plain of sport and pastime.

Borlase goes on to describe the playing place at St Just and notes the use of playing places for miracle plays, athletics, 'martial challenges' (i.e. judicial combat), and burial (i.e. potentially conflating a whole series of different monuments). Later in the book Borlase briefly discusses the roman camps (one of which is a medieval moated site) and ancient castles (cliff castle and hillforts), but the key omission is any concept of the round as a class of settlement site.

A second antiquarian reference provides additional information. The antiquarian Hals wrote in c.1710²⁶:

[Miracle plays] ...wherein the actors in open fields within an Earthen Cirque or Amphitheatre at least 100 foot diameter – on wch the Spectators sate, in the centre of which was a Cave, or subterranean Vault out of wch at a Little door issued forth the Actors or players... those plays heretofore were soe generally Used by our ancestors the Britains... that Scarce any p[ari]sh in Cornwall was heretofore without a cirque or Amphitheatre for that purpose. Particularly, the writer of these lynes hath yest Extant in his Grounds one in Kernick mill moors St. Wenn an[d] an other on Tresawsen in Peransand.

The point of interest is not the description of the playing place itself, but Hals' assessment of frequency: *Scare any p[ari]sh in Cornwall was... without a cirque or amphitheatre.*

A superficial reading of Borlase and Hals would suggest playing places were very common (there are 200+ parishes in the County), and thus there are great numbers remaining to identify and locate, but the place-name evidence is relatively sparse.

There are strong hints here that both Borlase and Hals are as guilty as the common people for *taking their rise from some obvious property that strikes the senses, and resembles the customs of the Country*. Several centuries after the suppression of the miracle plays, and with some understanding of what a playing place should look like, the implication is that rounds were mis-interpreted as playing places. If this reflects common practice, it throws the place-name evidence into doubt (though, of course, not discarding it altogether – after all, the playing play at Playing Place does appear to be genuine).

The antiquarian Richard Carew was born in 1555 and wrote his *Survey of Cornwall* in the later years of the 16th century. He is closer in time to the suppression of the miracle plays than Hals and Borlase, with a greater expectation of accuracy. In his description of the playing place he states²⁷:

The Gwary miracle, in English, a miracle play, is a kind of interlude, compiled in Cornish out of some scripture history, with that grossness which accompanied the Romans' vetus comedia. For representing it, they raise an earthen amphitheatre in some open field, having the diameter of this enclosing plain some forty or fifty foot. The country people flock from all sides, many miles off, to hear and see it, for they have therein devils and devices to delight the eye as the ear.

There are several important points to note in this paragraph. Firstly, there need be no re-use of earlier monuments. The *earthen amphitheatre* could be erected specifically for the event. Given the self-evident cost- and time savings of re-using a round, this seems absurd. Upstanding examples of rounds would have been more numerous, prominent and in better condition during the medieval period. That purpose-built playing places were built seems distinctly odd *unless* we question the assumption that all playing places re-used rounds. The apparently ephemeral nature of the playing place

– as demonstrated by the loss of most of them – should also be considered. There are only two upstanding examples in the whole County. Bearing in mind the miracle plays were actively suppressed, this could be taken to imply they were not perceived as being that special outside of the three days they were in use.

Secondly, that *some open field* would be selected for the site. Thirdly, that *country people...* [from] *many miles off* would attend the miracle plays.

The sites that were selected were in an open field. It seems distinctly unlikely that enclosed lands, or open lands subject to cultivation (i.e. Cornish common open/strip fields) would have been selected for the holding of a large festival. As rounds tend to be located within *Anciently Enclosed Land*, that would favour the construction of a playing place rather than the reuse of existing ones.

The phrase that *the country people flock from all sides* indicates a great deal of space was required to accommodate a great throng, with a footprint a great deal larger than the titular earthwork itself. Taking this one step further, the playing place might not actually refer to the earthwork at all, but to the venue as a whole. Note that at Playing Place in 1840 the field containing the earthwork was called *Round Croft*, it was the open ground adjacent that was called the *Plain Place*.

Taking Carew rather than the Hals, Borlase or the place-names evidence as a guide, sites to be used as a playing place should be open, extensive, convenient and (presumably) dry/not liable to flooding. Therefore, we should expect to encounter them within areas of unenclosed ground traversed by important land routes and/or connecting to water routes. That such places were also likely to be relatively elevated is a corollary of those factors and not necessarily a defining requirement. This is the case for two of the three best-known playing places: St Piran's Round and Playing Place.

The question remains, however, to what extent were or could rounds be re-used as playing places, given their obvious similarity (in some instances) of form. The only way to prove this, one way or the other, would be to investigate and securely date the three best examples, and extend that programme to the best of the probable examples. A section through the ditch (and bank, if a buried soil survives), with OSL dating in the absence of any charcoal or artefacts, has the potential to be conclusive.

At this present time, we only have the geophysical survey results for Playing Place (Figure 15), St Piran's Round (Figure 16), and St Just (Figure 17) and the results of minor archaeological works at St Just²⁸ (which were inconclusive).

At both Playing Place and St Piran's Round a central pit was identified. At St Piran's Round a narrow linear anomaly was also identified, corresponding with an earthwork, and a possible track or compacted area between the two entrances. The report on St Piran's Round concluded there was no conclusive evidence it had been a round, and that it was likely to have been medieval in origin²⁹.

The site at St Just is embedded within a modern settlement, and the use of an electrical resistance survey, makes direct comparison difficult. However, an off-centre pit appears to be present, together with a large curving feature to its east and south-east. With caveats, this survey does not appear to show internal features consistent with the re-use of an earlier settlement enclosure.

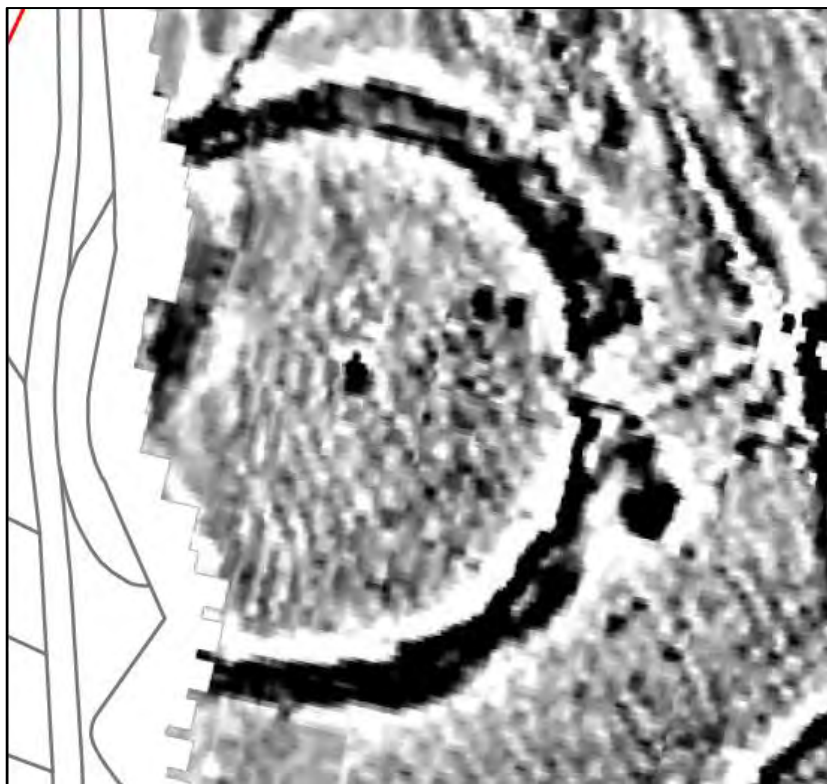


FIGURE 15: RESULTS OF A MAGNETOMETRY SURVEY AT PLAYING PLACE.³⁰

3.2 UPDATED CONSIDERATION OF SETTING

This reassessment would suggest what we now regard as the playing place (i.e. the embanked enclosure) formed a principal focal element of a larger site, that it could be constructed *do novo* for the purpose, and would be located in readily accessible, unenclosed areas with plenty of space. Visual prominence and intervisibility may have been a consideration, but it need not be a significant one. Of course, this would not appear to exclude places like St Just or Penryn (unless the playing places came first?).



FIGURE 16: RESULTS OF A GRADIOMETRY SURVEY AT ST PIRAN'S ROUND³¹.

Further research on those other potential playing places would be needed to refine this definition, leading to the possibility that playing places could be identified on locational and morphological criteria alone, and excavated/sampled without utilising invasive techniques on the Scheduled ones. Furthermore, if indeed the miracle plays were attended by *...the country people [who] flock from all sides, many miles off...* then a metal detector survey might be able to demonstrate that through the range of small medieval metal objects that should be present within the ploughsoil.

FIGURE 17: RESULTS OF AN EARTH RESISTANCE SURVEY AT ST JUST³².

3.3 DRAFT STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The general dearth of intrusive archaeological fieldwork means this whole class of site has high evidential value. They have very high historical/associative value and high historical/ illustrative value due to their role in medieval Cornish culture and the Cornish language. They have variable aesthetic value (much more site dependant). They once possessed very high communal value, much diminished after the suppression of the miracle plays, but now growing once again with the renewed interest in Cornish distinctiveness.

4 COMMENT ON THE LATEST PROPOSALS

4.1 OVERVIEW

The latest design proposals for the development engage with the concept of the playing place as a locus for medieval Cornish drama. The Scheduled areas would be set aside as public open space, with the structure of the new residential areas structured around lines of sight to and from the Scheduled areas, and from nodal points within the new housing. Selective planting of tree and shrub species would be used to colourise the public realm symbolically, referencing the dramatic structure of the playing place (e.g. the placement of heaven and hell, the bishops and so forth³³).

4.2 COMMENT

The revised design proposals represent a good balance between the development of the site and the conservation of the heritage assets. Referencing how the physical space within the playing place was subdivided through tree and shrub planting is an excellent, constraints-led piece of planning. Combined with the pastiche-free use of local vernacular materials and styling, it has the potential to be a good piece of residential planning.

The updated interpretation of the site would suggest the northern enclosure is indeed a purpose-built playing place, constructed within a formerly unenclosed expanse of rough grazing on an important routeway. The contribution of setting to the significance of such a monument is quite different to that of a round – *a permanent settlement with substantially built houses whose inhabitants merited the distinction of a formal bound or enclosure, which may have held significance for their status beyond its provision of protection of defence*³⁴ - to which intervisibility in the landscape is perceived to be an important aspect. The 'earthen amphitheatre' was a focus, an inward-looking space for assembly and shared experience of drama

and mythmaking which referenced but shut out the wider landscape. However, the apparent scale of the associated festival of the miracle plays would have extended beyond the earthen amphitheatre to encompass a wider area, hence a need to locate them in unenclosed areas. In that respect, rather than visibility and intervisibility, a sense of space would appear to be important to their significance. In that respect proposed development presents as a two-edge sword. It provides an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the monument in a way that simply is not currently the case, while simultaneously hemming in and restricting its wider setting. That is why the layout of the proposed development and its need for visual permeability will be so crucial. There is also potential through interpretation of the site to increase the appreciation of its significance, to leverage the role of playing places in contributing to Cornish distinctiveness to engage the local community and contribute to place making within the new development.

The second enclosure, under the definition offered by Quinnell (cited above) would appear to be a borderline case. It is at the smaller end of the spectrum and appears more an element of the Prehistoric fieldsystem than a separate monument in and of itself. Larger and more complex examples have been found and excavated during development-led archaeological work in recent years. In comparison to those examples, it is hard to see this one being considered worthy of Scheduling today. Given its relationship with the relict Prehistoric fieldsystem identified through geophysical survey, a specific research objective of any fieldwork would be to obtain dates for that fieldsystem through appropriate available techniques (e.g. C14 or OSL), the date(s) providing a proxy for the scheduled enclosure.

5 CONCLUSION

As stated in the initial appraisal, there would be significant direct impacts associated with the proposed development of the site, as the two geophysical surveys have identified a range of archaeological features in addition to the two Scheduled monuments. However, these represent the usual type and range of features encountered on sites in Cornwall. Excluding the Scheduled part of the site, mitigation in the form a staged programme of archaeological investigation would be appropriate here.

As discussed, there are relatively few designated heritage assets in the local area and most would be screened from the housing by the topography, or else setting makes a less of a contribution to their overall significance than other values.

The two Scheduled monuments here form a clear constraint on the development of the site, as it would transform the current setting of these monuments. This updated assessment would suggest the northern enclosure is a purpose-built 'earthen amphitheatre' rather than a reused round, simultaneously a bounded and inward-looking space excluding the wider landscape *and* wider gathering place in a (formerly) unenclosed landscape. The southern enclosure is not a 'round' under the current definition, and can be regarded as a borderline case for Scheduling.

5.1 EFFECTS

The development of this field as a residential housing estate would lead to the damage or destruction of buried archaeological features across the site. In terms of significance, the range and type of archaeological features present are fairly typical of lowland Cornwall, although the identifications would need to be tested.

The two Scheduled enclosures are protected by statute and could not – save under exceptional circumstances – be developed. As noted, the southern enclosure is probably a borderline case for Scheduling. The northern enclosure, as a purpose-built playing place was probably to be associated with broad, open spaces capable of hosting a great crowd. The proposed development would inevitably constrain the current experience of space here, while simultaneously offering the opportunity to better reveal the heritage value of the monument.

5.2 MITIGATION

It would be appropriate for any development here to be preceded by an archaeological evaluation to test the validity of the geophysical surveys and the identifications presented here. It is considered highly likely that, should planning permission be granted, that a programme of targeted excavation (strip-map-sample/SMS) with archaeological monitoring would be required. A metal detector survey outside the Scheduled area would be appropriate to test the hypothesis that the wider site was the subject to temporary activity akin to a festival, that should reveal itself through discarded or lost portable metal artefacts. Fieldwork should also attempt to obtain a date for the probable Prehistoric fieldsystem, which appears to be contemporary with the southern Scheduled Monument.

In terms of the proposed design and layout of the development, the care and nuance expended, and vernacular treatment of materials employed will have a pronounced effect on the levels of harm.

With regard to the northern Scheduled Monument (the playing place), consideration should be given to placing this monument in the care of a trust which can safeguard its longer-term conservation, including a plan for interpretation and outreach to help embed its heritage significance within the existing and new community around it. This has the potential to increase appreciation of the significance

of this heritage asset, providing a clear public benefit. Its demarcation within the communal space should be considered; as a playing place, it historically derived its significance in part from its communal value and, with good planning and design, this element of its heritage value could be enhanced within the local community.



FIGURE 18: CONCEPT MASTERPLAN OF THE SITE. LEGEND: 7. WILD OPEN MEADOW; 8. GATHERING/PLAY NODES; 9. SEASONAL COLOUR, BULBS, FLOWING RELATING TO PLAY NARRATIVE; 10. RUGGED NATIVE PLANTED BANKS TO CREATE GREEN LANE CHARACTER; 11. FRUIT TREE PLANTING; 12. MEDIEVAL STYLE COMMUNITY GARDENS; 12. CORNISH HEDGEBANKS REFLECTING THE ANCIENT FIELD PATTERN; 15. NARROW MOWN PATHS; 16. INFORMATION BOARDS.



FIGURE 19: CONCEPT VIEW OF THE TWO SCHEDULED MONUMENTS; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.



FIGURE 20: CONCEPT VIEW ACROSS THE PLAYING PLACE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Avalon Planning & Heritage 2025: *Land East of Old Coach Road, Playing Place. Heritage & Archaeology Appraisal & Advice.*

Baker, N. 2022: *St Kea, truth, legend, and the rounds at Playing Place.*

Borlase, W. 1754: *Observations on the Antiquities Historical and Monumental of the County of Cornwall consisting of several essays on the First Inhabitants, Druid Superstition, Customs, and Remains of the Most Remote Antiquity, in Britain, and the British Isles.* Oxford.

BGS 2025: <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk>

Carew, R. 1953 edition: *Richard Carew of Antony. The Survey of Cornwall.* Edited, with an Introduction by F.E. Halliday. Andrew Melrose.

CAU 2020: *St Just in Penwith Plain an Gwary, Cornwall: archaeological recording.* CAU report 2020R042.

Davies, R. 2018: *Geophysical Survey Report: Land at Playing Place, Cornwall.* Sumo Survey Report 12726.

Diggle, V.A. 2017: *A poetics of uncertainty: a chorographic survey of the lift of John Trevisa and the site of Glasney College, Cornwall, mediated through locative arts practice.* Unpublished Falmouth University thesis.

Dudley, P. 2011: *Goon, hal, cliff & croft: the archaeology and landscape history of west Cornwall's rough ground.* Cornwall Council. p79.

English Heritage 2008: *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance.*

Gossip, J. 2021: 'Section 5: Life Outside the Round: Bronze Age and Iron Age Settlement at Higher Besore and Truro College, Threemilestone, Truro, 2004-5', in A.M. Jones & G. Kirkham (eds.) *Later Prehistoric Settlement in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly: Evidence from Five Excavations*, Archaeopress, p147-280.

Guthrie, A. 1957: 'The Plain-an-Gwary, St. Just, Cornwall. Report on exploratory excavation', *Proceedings of the West Cornwall Field Club* 2.1, 3-7.

Hals, W. c.1710: *Lhadymer ay Kernow, or the Cornish Interpreter.*

Historic England 2017: *The Setting of Heritage Assets. Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition).*

Historic England 2019: *Statement of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets. Historic England Advice Note 12.*

Historic England unpublished: *Climate Change and Historic Building Adaption. Historic England Advice Note Public Consultation Version.*

Hughes, S. & Farnell, A. 2016: 'Excavations at Tolgarrick Farm, Truro, Cornwall', *Cornish Archaeology* 55, p1-64.

ICOMOS 2011: *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties.* International Council on Monuments and Sites.

IEMA, IHBC & Cifa 2021: *Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK.*

National Highways 2024: <https://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/dmrb>

- Preston-Jones, A.** 2003: *Two Rounds at Playing Place, Cornwall: Enhancement Work*. CAU report 2003R064.
- Quinnell, H.** 2004: *Trethurgy. Excavations at Trethurgy Round, St Austell: community and status in Roman and post-Roman Cornwall*. Truro.
- Roseveare, M.** 2009: *Plen-an-Gwary, St. Just, Cornwall: geophysical survey*. Archaeophytica Ltd. report PGJ081.
- Spriggs, M.** 2004: 'The Cornish Language, Archaeology, and the Origins of English Theatre', in M. Jones (ed.) *Traces of Ancestry: studies in honour of Colin Renfrew*, Cambridge, p.143-161.
- SSEW** 1983: Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales.
- Taylor, S.R.** 2006: *Carlyon Road, Playing Place, Cornwall. Archaeological Watching Brief*. CAU report 2006R046.
- SWARCH** 2022: *Perran Round, Rose, Perranzabuloe, Cornwall: results of a geophysical survey*. SWA report 220717.
- SWARCH** 2025: *Land at Playing Place, Cornwall: Heritage Statement*. SWA report 250402.
- UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS & IUCN** 2022: *Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context*.
- Young, A.** 2012: 'Prehistoric and Romano-British enclosures around the Camel estuary, Cornwall', *Cornish Archaeology* 51, 69-124.

7 PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive code for this project is PPLA25.

The OASIS number for this project is **SOUTHWES1-535109**.

There is no museum accession number for this project.

The digital archive is held and maintained by South West Archaeology Ltd. This archive consists of:

3. The digital archive, consisting of this report, will be stored on the SWARCH premises at South Molton. They will be transferred to the secure server: ArchivePC\Archives\Playing Place land at, PPLA25. Data backups are held offsite.

APPENDIX 1: POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Statutory Legislation

<i>Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979</i>	<i>Confers a duty on the Secretary of State to maintain a Schedule of monuments of national importance and areas of archaeological importance. It is a criminal offence to carry out unauthorised works or to destroy or cause damage to a monument covered by this act as well as to metal detect without written consent.</i>
<i>Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990)</i>	<i>Part 1 confers a duty on the Secretary of State to maintain a List of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and provides a statutory duty to preserve the special character of heritage assets covered by this act, including their setting. It is a criminal offence to carry out works to a Listed Building which affect its character without the necessary authorisation. It requires consideration of the contribution a building makes to any group of buildings of which it forms part (group value). Part 2 requires local authorities to designate as Conservation Areas, areas of special architectural or historic interest. It requires that special attention is paid to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of these areas in exercising planning functions</i>
<i>Treasure Act (1996)</i>	<i>Defines 'treasure' as: any object except a coin, over 300 years old with a metallic content of at least 10% precious metal, one of two or more coins found together meeting these criteria or one of at least 10 coins over 300 years old. It also makes provision for objects found in association with the above. There is a duty to notify the coroner of any find or acquisition of an object which may be covered by this act.</i>

<i>Burial Act (1857)</i>	<i>Covers the removal of human remains from a burial place and requirement for consent, often in the form of a license issued by the Ministry of Justice</i>
<i>Hedgerow Regulations (1997)</i>	<i>Contains criteria for the protection of 'important' hedgerows. This includes hedgerows marking a boundary of at least on historic (pre 1850) parish or township; is included in the schedule of monuments under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979; is wholly or partly within a site which falls under this act or on land adjacent to and associated with any monument or feature on such a site; marks a boundary of a pre-1600AD estate or manor or is visibly related to any building or other feature of such an estate or manor; is recorded as an integral part of a field system pre dating the Inclosure Acts or is part of/related to any building or feature associated with such as system.</i>
<i>Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act (1953)</i>	<i>Established the provision of a register of gardens of special historic interest</i>
<i>National Heritage Act (1980, amended 1983 & 1997)</i>	<i>1980: Established a National Heritage Memorial Fund 1983: Established the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (now Historic England) with responsibility for overseeing heritage management and reporting to the Secretary of State.</i>
<i>Electricity Act 1989</i>	<i>Requires regard to the desirability of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest</i>

National Planning Policy Framework

General policy and guidance for the conservation of the historic environment are now contained within the *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government 2024). The relevant guidance is reproduced below:

Paragraph 202: *Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.*

Paragraph 207: *In determining applications, local planning authorities should require the applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should be consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which a development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.*

Paragraph 208: *Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.*

Paragraph 210: *In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

Paragraph 212: *When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.*

Paragraph 213: *Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

Paragraph 214: *Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

Paragraph 215: *Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*

Paragraph 216: *The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*

Paragraph 219: *Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.*

Paragraph 220: *Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 207 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 208, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.*

A further key document is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in particular section 66(1), which provides statutory protection to the setting of Listed buildings:

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Local Policy

Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies 2010-2030: Policy 24: Historic environment

Development proposals will be permitted where they would sustain the cultural distinctiveness and significance of Cornwall's historic rural, urban and coastal environment by protecting, conserving and where appropriate enhancing the significance of designated and non-designated assets and their settings.

Development proposals will be expected to:

- *sustain designated heritage assets;*
- *take opportunities to better reveal their significance;*
- *maintain the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas, especially those positive elements in any Conservation Area Appraisal;*
- *conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the design, character, appearance and historic significance of historic parks and gardens;*
- *conserve and, where appropriate, enhance other historic landscapes and townscapes, including registered battlefields, including the industrial mining heritage;*
- *protect the historic maritime environment, including the significant ports, harbours and quays.*

Development within the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site (WHS) and its setting should accord with the WHS Management Plan. Proposals that would result in harm to the authenticity and integrity of the Outstanding Universal Value, should be wholly exceptional. If the impact of the proposal is neutral, either on the significance or setting, then opportunities to enhance or better reveal their significance should be taken.

All development proposals should be informed by proportionate historic environment assessments and evaluations (such as heritage impact assessments, desk-based appraisals, field evaluation and historic building reports) identifying the significance of all heritage assets that would be affected by the proposals and the nature and degree of any effects and demonstrating how, in order of preference, any harm will be avoided, minimised or mitigated.

Great weight will be given to the conservation of the Cornwall's heritage assets. Where development is proposed that would lead to substantial harm to assets of the highest significance, including undesignated archaeology of

national importance, this will only be justified in wholly exceptional circumstances, and substantial harm to all other nationally designated assets will only be justified in exceptional circumstances.

Any harm to the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset must be justified. Proposals causing harm will be weighed against the substantial public, not private, benefits of the proposal and whether it has been demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use, find new uses, or mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset; and whether the works proposed are the minimum required to secure the long term use of the asset.

In those exceptional circumstances where harm to any heritage assets can be fully justified, and development would result in the partial or total loss of the asset and/or its setting, the applicant will be required to secure a programme of recording and analysis of that asset, and archaeological excavation where relevant, and ensure the publication of that record to an appropriate standard in a public archive.

Proposals that will help to secure a sustainable future for the Cornwall's heritage assets, especially those identified as being at greatest risk of loss or decay, will be supported.

APPENDIX 2: SCOPING ASSESSMENT

7.1 BACKGROUND

The proposed development would be located on the upper slopes of the ridge to the north-east of Playing Place, with arable and pasture fields to the south-west, west and north, a strip of woodland to the north-west, and the settlement of Playing Place to the south and south-west.

7.2 NEARBY HERITAGE ASSETS

There are 32 designated heritage assets within 1km of the proposed turbine site:

TABLE 1: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS WITHIN 1KM (HISTORIC ENGLAND).

Name	List No.	Grade	Distance
Two rounds at Playing Place, 960m and 970m SW of Carlyon Farm	1019503	SM	On site
Milestone c.8m west of No.32 Old Coach Road	1396489	GII	30m
Milestone at SW813422	1159510	GII	170m
The Quarry Cottage	1310991	GII	220m
Kea County Primary School and playground walls	1140844	GII	360m
Mr Lanyon's Almshouses and garden walls	1141647	GII*	530m
Skewberries Farmhouse	1141658	GII	640m
Round Barrow 290m north-east of Penventon	1019156	SM	680m
×10 Listed headstones/tomb chests, St Kea Church	Multiple	GII	650m
St Kea War Memorial	1453230	GII	670m
Lych Gate and adjoining Building, St Kea Church	1328615	GII	680m
All Hallows Church of St Kea	1310700	GII*	680m
Church Cottage, Kea	1160204	GII	740m
The Old School, Kea	1141655	GII	740m
California House, Gate Piers and Gate	1140852	GII	940m
Potting Shed c.100m NE of Killiow House	1159492	GII	870m
Kitchen Garden Walls c.75m NW of Killiow House	1140850	GII	840m
Terrace Walling c.23m east of Killiow House	1140845	GII	880m
Killiow House	1329022	GII*	990m
Higher Calenick Farmhouse and Wall	1140843	GII	990m
Milestone at SW815409	1140853	GII	990m
Gate Piers c.100m west of Penelewey Barton	1311006	GII	995m
Farmbuildings c.25m north of Penelewey Barton	1140854	GII	995m

There are three Registered Parks and Gardens (Tregothnan, Trellissick and Carclew), four Conservation Areas (Truro, St Clement, Devoran and Perranarworthal), two World Heritage Sites (both part of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape, the Gwennap Mining District with Devoran, Perran and Kennall Vale), but no Registered Battlefields, within 5km of the site; it is highly unlikely any of these area designations would suffer any adverse effect.

7.3 ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY

The ZTV for the site (generated by SWARCH; Figure 6) indicates intervisibility to ridge height (taken here to be 8.0m) is – due to screening from trees and existing structures – restricted to hillsides to the east and south.

7.4 KEY HERITAGE ASSETS

Of the designated heritage assets noted in Table 1, where level of value and proximity suggest there is potential for harm via change in setting – are:

TABLE 2: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS WHERE THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR HARM.

Name	List No.	Grade	Distance
Two rounds at Playing Place, 960m and 970m SW of Carlyon Farm	1019503	SM	On site

It should come as no surprise that the main issue should lie with the two Scheduled enclosures located in the same field as the proposed development. The significance of the north enclosure is enhanced by the fact it is *the* playing place that gives the modern settlement its name.

While these two designated heritage assets are barely perceptible on the surface, and essentially unrecognisable in their current form, they do currently lie (mostly) within a single large field with clear and open views to the east and south-east. The proposed transformation

of part of this field to a residential housing estate would constitute a significant change to the immediate setting of the two enclosures. The question is, therefore, to what degree the significance of the enclosures is derived from their setting, and to what degree the setting of the enclosures facilitates the understanding of these monuments.

It is unclear whether the southern enclosure is actually a settlement. – it was either constructed at the same time as the fieldsystem or constructed in the corner of an existing enclosure. The banks that were identified by the Ordnance Survey are now no higher than those of that fieldsystem. There are no internal features visible on the geophysical survey. It is entirely possible this is simply a stock enclosure.

The northern enclosure does appear to be a medieval playing place. The character and size of the monument is consistent with that interpretation, as is the general lack of internal features (as indicated by the geophysical survey). It is likely it was constructed within an area of open ground where several routeways met (e.g. St Pirran's Round, Perranzabuloe), presumably with reference to the old route of the road from Truro to Penryn (*Old Coach Road*). That being the case visibility within the landscape will contribute to its significance. That said, it is now neither prominent nor noteworthy, reduced to a section of hedgebank, with a bench and plaque positioned to the rear of gardens and along a footpath.

The transformation of the field to a residential development would block outward views from the Scheduled enclosures to the east, reducing the scope of their landscape and enclosing them within the urbanised area of Playing Place. This would constitute an adverse effect. However, it should be considered that the Playing Place was not a monument about outward views, rather it was about internal views to the miracle plays and performances held here. In addition,

there is a potential here for a development to better reveal the heritage value of the monument through careful design.

Finally, the issue of cumulative effect should be considered, for existing and other consented and proposed development around the site.

7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

More detailed analysis, with fieldwork, would be required to validate the findings of this appraisal, and, following the generation of preliminary masterplans, contribute to an iterative design process.

TABLE 3: THE HIERARCHY OF VALUE/ IMPORTANCE (DERIVED FROM DMRB LA104 TABLE 3.2N).

Value (Sensitivity) of Receptor / Resource	Typical description
Very High	Very high importance and rarity, international scale and very limited potential for substitution e.g. elements of a WHS that convey OUV
High	High importance and rarity, national scale, and limited potential for substitution e.g. Grade I and II* buildings; Scheduled Monuments
Medium	Medium or high importance and rarity, regional scale, limited potential for substitution e.g. Grade II buildings
Low	Low or medium importance and rarity, local scale
Negligible	Very low importance and rarity, local scale.

TABLE 4: SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS MATRIX (DERIVED FROM ICOMOS 2011, 9-10).

		Scale and Severity of Change/Impact				
		No Change	Negligible Change	Minor Change	Moderate Change	Major Change
		Significance of Effect (either adverse or beneficial)				
Value	Very High	Neutral	Slight	Moderate or Large	Large or Very Large	Very Large
	High	Neutral	Slight	Slight or Moderate	Moderate or Large	Large or Very Large
	Medium	Neutral	Neutral or Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate or Large
	Low	Neutral	Neutral or Slight	Neutral or Slight	Slight	Slight or Moderate
	Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral or Slight	Neutral or Slight	Slight

TABLE 5: PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT OF IMPACT (DERIVED FROM DMRB LA104 TABLE 3.4N).

Magnitude of Impact		Typical Description
Major	Adverse	Loss of resource and/or quality and integrity of resource; severe damage to key characteristics, features, or elements.
	Beneficial	Large scale or major improvement of resource quality; extensive restoration; major improvement of attribute quality.
Moderate	Adverse	Loss of resource, but not adversely affecting the integrity; partial loss of/damage to key characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Benefit to, or addition of, key characteristics, features, or elements; improvement of attribute quality.

Magnitude of Impact		Typical Description
Minor	Adverse	Some measurable change in attributes, quality, or vulnerability; minor loss of, or alteration to, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features, or elements.
	Beneficial	Minor benefit to, or addition of, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features, or elements; some beneficial impact on attribute or a reduced risk of negative impact occurring.
Negligible	Adverse	Very minor loss or detrimental alteration to one or more characteristics, features, or elements.
	Beneficial	Very minor benefit to or positive addition of one or more characteristics, features, or elements.
No change		No loss or alteration of characteristics, features, or elements; no observable impact in either direction.

TABLE 6: SCALES OF IMPACT AS PER THE NPPF, AS RELATED TO TABLE 5.

Scale of Impact		
No Change	<i>Neutral</i>	No impact on the heritage asset.
Less than Substantial Harm	<i>Negligible Adverse</i>	Where the developments may be visible or audible but would not affect the heritage asset or its setting, due to the nature of the asset, distance, topography, or screening.
	<i>Minor Adverse</i>	Where the development would have an effect on the heritage asset or its setting, but that effect is restricted due to the nature of the asset, distance, or screening from other buildings or vegetation.
	<i>Moderate Adverse</i>	Where the development would have a pronounced impact on the heritage asset or its setting, due to the sensitivity of the asset and/or proximity. The effect may be ameliorated by screening or mitigation.
Substantial Harm	<i>Major Adverse</i>	Where the development would have a severe and unavoidable effect on the heritage asset or its setting, due to the particular sensitivity of the asset and/or close physical proximity. Screening or mitigation could not ameliorate the effect of the development in these instances.
Total Loss	<i>Total Loss</i>	The heritage asset is destroyed.

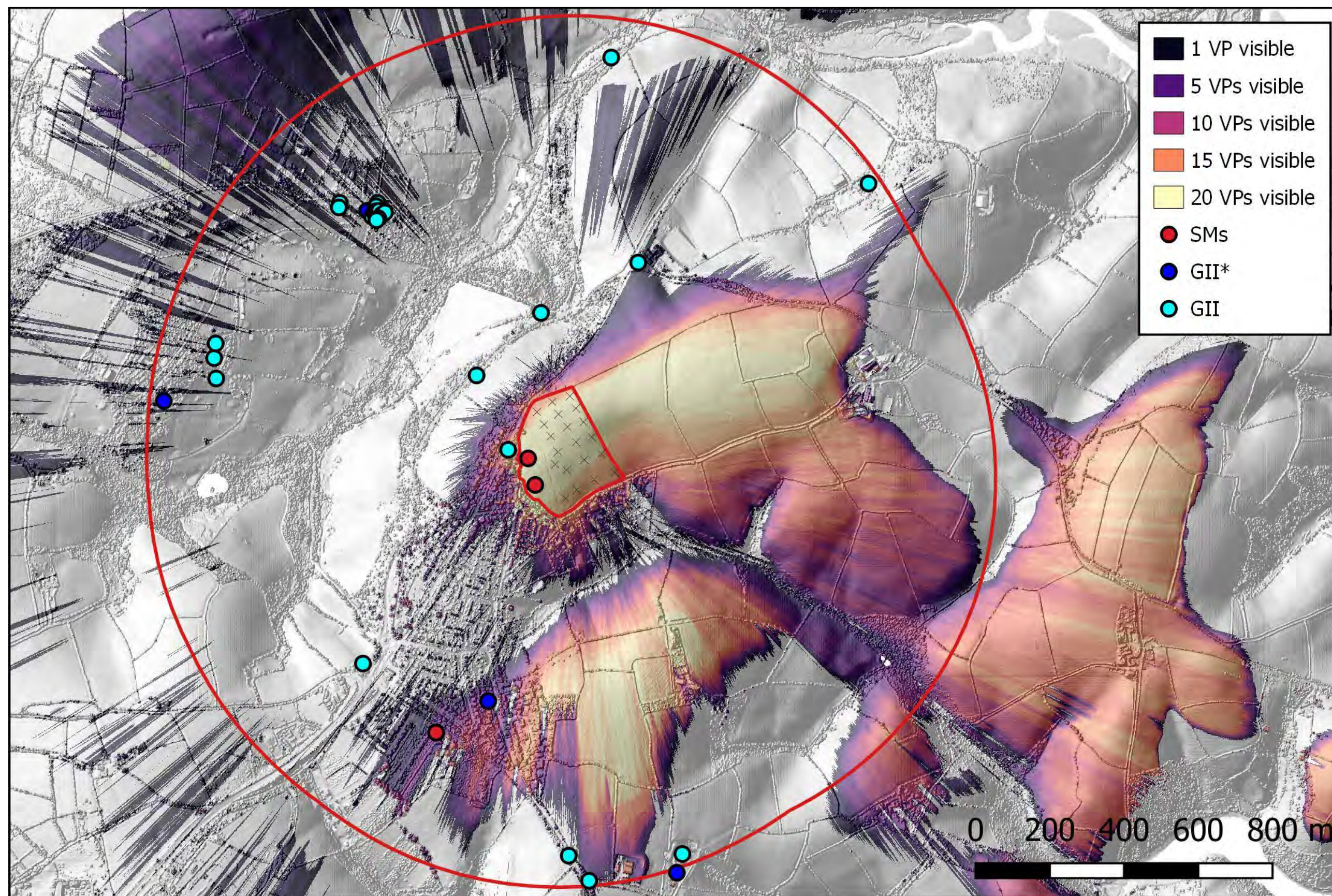


FIGURE 21: ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV) GENERATED FOR THE SITE USING 2032 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY 1M DSM LiDAR DATA, USING ×20 VIEWPOINTS ACROSS THE SITE (HEIGHT 8.0M; OBSERVER HEIGHT 1.6M) TO DETERMINE THE LIKELY VISUAL EFFECT OF A HOUSING DEVELOPMENT HERE. DATA PROCESSED USING QGI 3.16.11 AND VISIBILITY ANALYSIS V.1.8. LiDAR DATA USED UNDER THE OPEN GOVERNMENT LICENCE V.3.0.

¹ SSEW 1983: *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales*.

² BGS 2026: <https://geologyviewer.bgs.ac.uk>

³ SWARCH 2025: *Land at Old Coach Road, Playing Place, Kea: Results of a geophysical survey*

⁴ Davies, R. 2018: *Geophysical Survey Report: Land at Playing Place, Cornwall*. Sumo Survey Report 12726.

⁵ Heritage statement by Orion Heritage (not available).

⁶ Preston-Jones, A. 2003: *Two Rounds at Playing Place, Cornwall: Enhancement Work*. CAU report 2003R064.

⁷ Taylor, S.R. 2006: *Carlyon Road, Playing Place, Cornwall*. Archaeological Watching Brief. CAU report 2006R046.

⁸ Baker, N. 2022: *St Kea, truth, legend, and the rounds at Playing Place*. <https://www.keaparishcouncil.org.uk/st-kea-truth-legend-and-the-rounds-at-playing-place/>

⁹ Taylor, S.R. 2006: *Carlyon Road, Playing Place, Cornwall*. Archaeological Watching Brief. CAU report 2006R046.

¹⁰ SWARCH 2025: *Land at Playing Place, Cornwall: Heritage Statement*. SWA report 250402.

¹¹ Avalon Planning & Heritage 2025: *Land East of Old Coach Road, Playing Place. Heritage & Archaeology Appraisal & Advice*.

¹² Kresen Kernow BRA2118/5.

¹³ Dudley, P. 2011: *Goon, hal, cliff & croft: the archaeology and landscape history of west Cornwall's rough ground*. Cornwall Council. p79.

¹⁴ Davies, R. 2018: *Geophysical Survey Report: Land at Playing Place, Cornwall*. Sumo Survey Report 12726.

¹⁵ Gossip, J. 2021: 'Section 5: Life Outside the Round: Bronze Age and Iron Age Settlement at Higher Besore and Truro College, Threemilestone, Truro, 2004-5', in A.M. Jones & G. Kirkham (eds.) *Later Prehistoric Settlement in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly*, Archaeopress, p147-280.

¹⁶ Hughes, S. & Farnell, A. 2016: 'Excavations at Tolgarick Farm, Truro, Cornwall', *Cornish Archaeology* 55, p1-64.

¹⁷ Young, A. 2012: 'Prehistoric and Romano-British enclosures around the Camel estuary, Cornwall', *Cornish Archaeology* 51, 79-83.

¹⁸ Young, A. 2012: 'Prehistoric and Romano-British enclosures around the Camel estuary, Cornwall', *Cornish Archaeology* 51, 69-124.

¹⁹ See

http://www.ikjordan.plus.com/Players/medievaldrama/Bibliography_of_Cornish_Medieval_Drama.html Also see: Spriggs, M. 2004: 'The Cornish Language, Archaeology, and the Origins of English Theatre', in M. Jones (ed.) *Traces of Ancestry: studies in honour of Colin Renfrew*, Cambridge, p.143-161.

²⁰ Diggle, V.A. 2017: *A poetics of uncertainty: a chorographic survey of the lift of John Trevisa and the site of Glasney College, Cornwall, mediated through locative arts practice*. Unpublished Falmouth University thesis. p.135-137.

²¹ Lyon, R. n/d: *Cornwall's Playing Places*; and Coleman, W. 2020: *Plen An Gwari: Ther Playing Places of Cornwall* 2nd edition. Golden Tree Productions. p.54-65.

²² Young, A. 2012: 'Prehistoric and Romano-British enclosures around the Camel estuary, Cornwall', *Cornish Archaeology* 51, p.79.

²³ Quinnell, H. 2004: *Trethurgy. Excavations at Trethurgy Round, St Austell: community and status in Roman and post-Roman Cornwall*. Truro. p.213.

²⁴ Quinnell, H. 2004: *Trethurgy. Excavations at Trethurgy Round, St Austell: community and status in Roman and post-Roman Cornwall*. Truro. p.211-214.

²⁵ Borlase, W. 1754: *Observations on the Antiquities Historical and Monumental of the County of Cornwall consisting of several essays on the First Inhabitants, Druid Superstition, Customs, and Remains of the Most Remote Antiquity, in Britain, and the British Isles*. Oxford. p.183.

²⁶ Hals, W. c.1710: *Lhadymer ay Kernow, or the Cornish Interpreter*.

²⁷ Carew, R. 1953 edition: *Richard Carew of Antony. The Survey of Cornwall*. Edited, with an Introduction by F.E. Halliday. Andrew Melrose.

²⁸ CAU 2020: *St Just in Penwith Plain an Gwary, Cornwall: archaeological recording*. CAU report 2020R042. Also: Guthrie, A. 1957: 'The Plain-an-Gwary, St. Just, Cornwall. Report on exploratory excavation', *Proceedings of the West Cornwall Field Club* 2.1, 3-7.

²⁹ SWARCH 2022: *Perran Round, Rose, Perranzabuloe, Cornwall: results of a geophysical survey*. SWA report 220717. p.16.

³⁰ Davies, R. 2018: *Geophysical Survey Report: Land at Playing Place, Cornwall*. Sumo Survey Report 12726.

³¹ SWARCH 2022: *Perran Round, Rose, Perranzabuloe, Cornwall: results of a geophysical survey*. SWA report 220717.

³² Roseveare, M. 2009: *Plen-an-Gwary, St. Just, Cornwall: geophysical survey*. Archaeophysica Ltd. report PGJ081.

³³ As set out in, amongst others: Coleman, W. 2020: *Plen An Gwari: Ther Playing Places of Cornwall* 2nd edition. Golden Tree Productions.

³⁴ Quinnell, H. 2004: *Trethurgy. Excavations at Trethurgy Round, St Austell: community and status in Roman and post-Roman Cornwall*. Truro. p.213.