

Cardinham Castle, Cardinham, Cornwall

Analytical Earthwork Survey

Elaine Jamieson, Trevor Pearson and Olaf Bayer



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Cardinham Castle
Old Cardinham
Cornwall

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Summary

In early 2022 a team from Historic England completed the first detailed analytical earthwork survey of Cardinham Castle in Cornwall, 5.5km north-east of the town of Bodmin. The castle is situated on a natural eminence overlooking a steep-sided valley to the north beyond which is the small village of Cardinham and the parish church of St Meubred. The castle comprises a sub-circular enclosure classed as a ringwork with a bailey to its south and was probably abandoned as a residence around 1270 when the Cardinham estate was broken up. The castle remains are entirely formed by earthworks though the outline of masonry buildings and an encircling wall are evident within the ringwork. Earlier accounts generally dismiss the earthworks occupying the ringwork as the result of quarrying and stone robbing but the survey has demonstrated that they are the remains of five buildings and a probable gatehouse. The more detailed understanding of the layout and form of the ringwork and bailey that has emerged from the survey enables informed comparisons to be made between Cardinham and other castles in Cornwall.

Contributors

The earthwork survey was undertaken by Elaine Jamieson and Olaf Bayer of Historic England with volunteer support from Trevor Pearson. Drone photography was carried out by Olaf Bayer. This report was researched, written and illustrated by Elaine Jamieson and completed by Trevor Pearson. All photography is by the authors unless otherwise stated. Elaine Jamieson provided valuable comments on the completed draft, and the final report was reviewed by Sarah Newsome.

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Archive Location

The digital archive for all Historic England derived data for this project will be deposited with the Historic England Archive, Swindon. The report can be downloaded from the Historic England Research Report Series database and that of Archaeological Data Services, York, and a digital copy has been submitted to key local record offices and public libraries. The investigation has been registered under OASIS id: nmr1-531894.

Date of Survey

The earthwork and drone surveys took place between November 2021 and March 2022.

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Contents

Introduction	1
Topography, Geology and Land Use	2
Historical and Archaeological Background	5
The Honour of Cardinham	7
Cardinham castle	8
Description of the Earthworks	11
The castle mound	11
Buildings on the mound	14
The castle bailey	15
The shrunken settlement of Old Cardinham.....	18
Discussion	21
Survey Methodology	29
References	30

Illustrations

Cover image: Aerial view of Cardinham Castle looking north taken 15 June 2021 by Damian Grady © Historic England Archive 35085/021

Figure 1: Location map

Figure 2: Map of Cardinham parish showing historical and archaeological sites mentioned in the text.

Figure 3: Extract from the earthwork plan showing the area of the ringwork. Reduced from 1:500 scale original.

Figure 4: View looking east of the post-medieval ramp cut into the perimeter of the ringwork to assist with stone-robbing and quarrying.

Figure 5: View looking north-west across the interior of the ringwork.

Figure 6: Analytical earthwork survey plan of Cardinham Castle reduced from 1:500 scale original.

Figure 7: View looking north across the bailey towards the ringwork.

Figure 8: Map of Cornwall showing the sites of 11th and 12th century castles (based on Rose 1992, Figure 1a supplemented by information from the Cornwall HER).

Figure 9: Analytical earthwork survey plan of Cardinham Castle. 1:1000 scale, surveyed at 1:500.

Introduction

Cardinham Castle is a Scheduled Monument on private land (National Heritage List for England (NHLE) no. 1004443). It comprises a medieval ringwork-and-bailey castle occupying a steep-sided promontory overlooking a tributary of Cardinham Water (NGR: SX 12607 68025). Also known as White Hill, the castle is largely unknown to history and is thought to have been abandoned as early as the 13th century. Despite being an administrative centre for one of the most powerful medieval baronies in Cornwall, the castle has received surprisingly little scholarly attention. As a Cornish castle, it has been largely overlooked in favour of the castles of Trematon, Restormel and Launceston, all of which are better documented and retain significant upstanding masonry remains (Toy 1933; Saunders 2006; Guy & Higham 2018-19). Consequently, the role of Cardinham Castle within the process of Norman colonisation and consolidation of Cornwall in the 11th and 12th centuries remains poorly understood.

Recent conservation issues arising from changes to land-management practices led to the Scheduled Monument's inclusion on the Heritage at Risk Register. As a result, a Monument Management Scheme was developed to help address key heritage protection concerns, the work instigated by Historic England in collaboration with the local landowner. This involved clearance of damaging scrub and bracken and the provision of fencing to control grazing. During this process it was recognised that a clearer grasp of the extent and significance of the archaeology at Cardinham was required to both inform heritage protection decisions and to enhance the visitor experience. This research not only aims to provide a new perspective on the castle's well-preserved earthwork remains but will also consider the ways in which the medieval fortress influenced the wider physical and cultural landscape. A key objective of the work is to stimulate meaningful discussion on the place of Cardinham castle within the story of Norman influence on post-Conquest Cornwall.

This report presents the results of research undertaken by Historic England's Archaeological Investigation Team between November 2021 and March 2022. Drawing together evidence from a new programme of analytical earthwork survey and photogrammetry, this report represents the first detailed archaeological investigation of Cardinham Castle and its associated landscape. It analyses evidence for the form and style of the medieval castle and considers its relationship to contemporary landscape features, including the adjoining settlement of Old Cardinham, the medieval deer park of Kenketh/Pinsla to the south, and the parish church of St Meubred to the north.

Topography, Geology and Land Use

Cornwall lies within what Sir Cyril Fox defined as the Highland Zone of Britain based on its distinctive geological characteristics (Fox 1932). Sitting within in the eastern half of the county (Figure 1), the parish of Cardinham covers around 38 square kilometres and is defined by the River Fowey to the south and the River Bedalder [also known as Warleggan River] to the northeast (Figure 2). The northern extent of the parish ascends the south-western escarpment of Bodmin Moor to over 272m above ordnance datum (OD). The ecclesiastical unit is therefore divided between the Granite uplands in the north and the undulating Devonian Slate and Siltstone plateau to the south and west. The latter supports fertile clayey loam to silty loam soils, with the uplands predominantly comprising sandy loam soils and pockets of blanket or valley peat. Deep valleys scoured by fast-flowing streams follow lines of weakness in the granite, slate and siltstones and contain soils derived from riverine clay, sands and gravels (British Geological Survey 1982; Findlay et al. 1984).

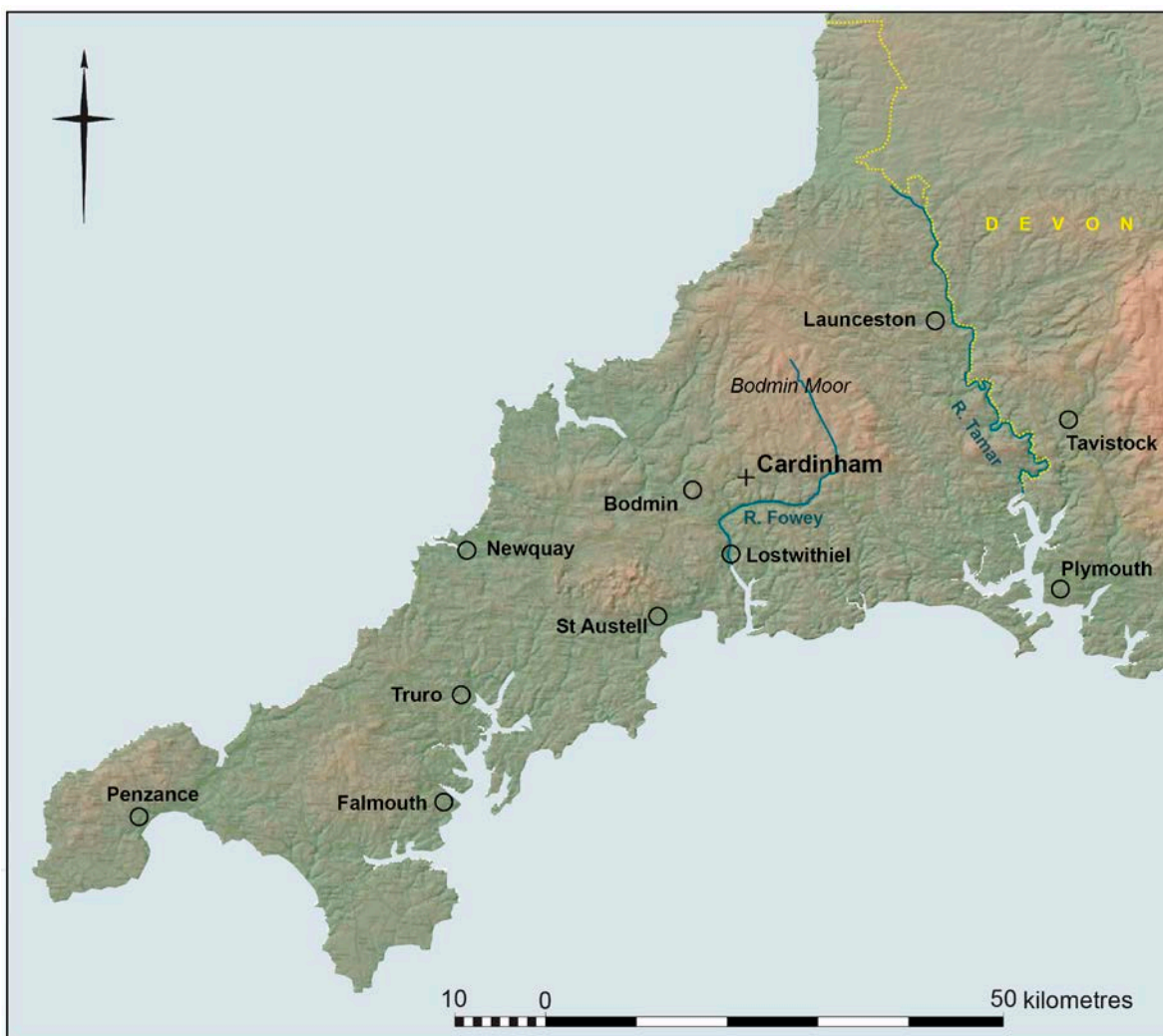


Figure 1: Location map. © Historic England. Background mapping © Crown copyright [and database rights] 2025. OS AC0000815036

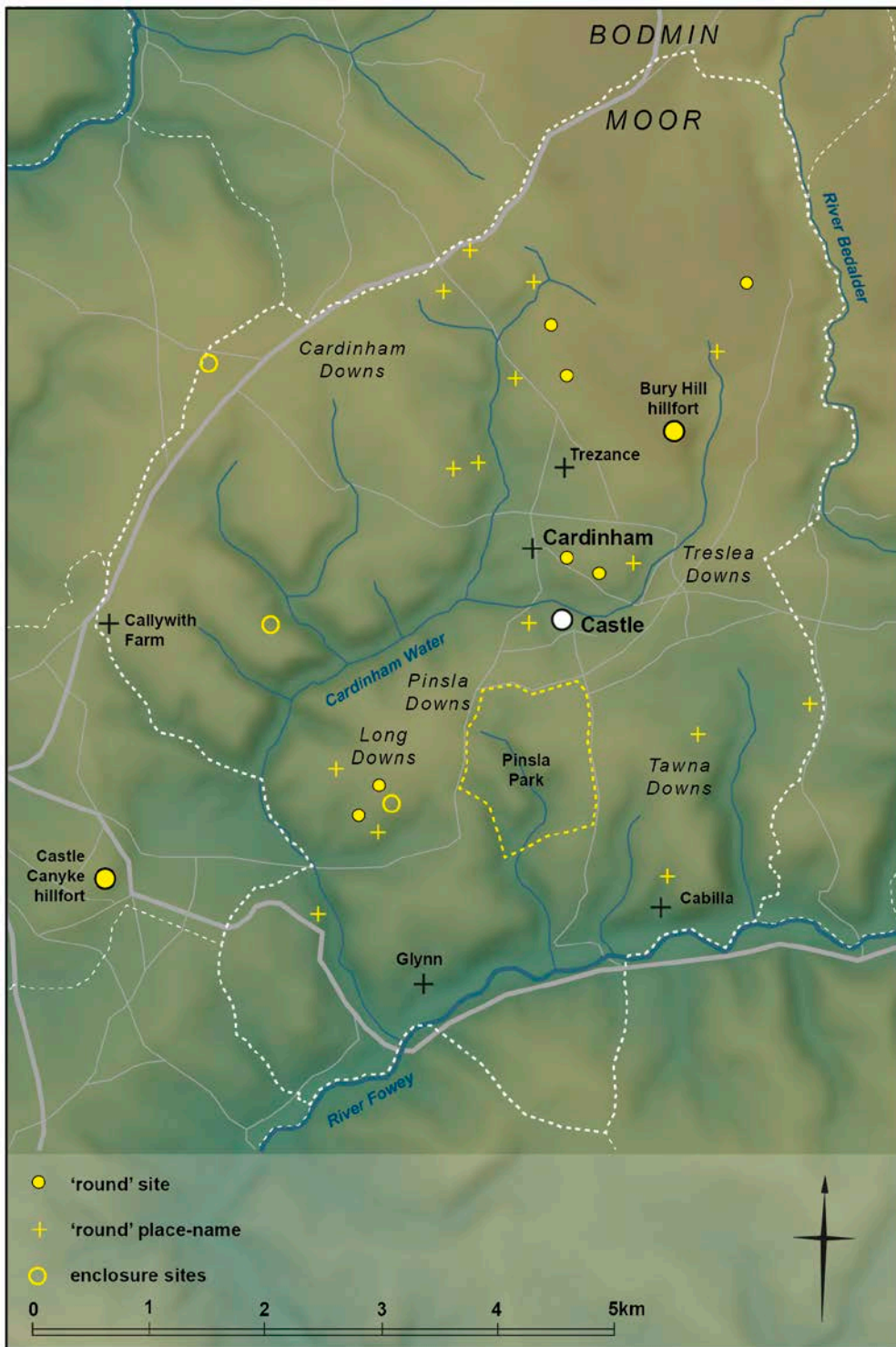


Figure 2: Map of Cardinham parish showing historical and archaeological sites mentioned in the text. © Historic England. Background mapping © Crown copyright [and database rights] 2025. OS AC0000815036

The region's geological contrasts and past human actions are evident in its varied landscape. The lowland areas of Cardinham are characterised by ancient enclosed fields defined by curving hedge banks, which contrast with the unenclosed rough ground that

dominates the granite uplands. This pattern reflects the former presence of a shared system of agriculture, comprising open arable on the more sheltered and fertile lowlands and extensive common grazing on the less productive upland areas (Johnson & Rose 1994). Zones of open commons also formerly covered the higher ground in the south and west of the parish, including Cardinham Downs, Tawna Downs and Long Downs, which were improved in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and are now defined by early-modern regular enclosure. The region is cut by steep-sided valleys which support blocks of ancient woodland and pockets of more modern plantation, giving Cardinham its distinctive character, lying as it does in a region with relatively few trees. Cornwall is within Roberts and Wrathmell's (2000) South-west Peninsula sub-province which is characterised as having medium' and above density of settlement dispersion. This is borne out by Cardinham, which is populated by scattered hamlets and farmsteads distributed around a centrally placed stone church. These small communities are linked by a sinuous network of roads and tracks which give access from the settlements out through the farmland to the higher ground of Bodmin Moor and the region's extensive areas of woodland and downland.

Cardinham castle occupies the Devonian slate and siltstone plateau around 0.7 km to the southeast of the parish church of St. Meubred, adjacent to the small hamlet of Old Cardinham. It is located on the south side of a steep-sided valley running east to west and is constructed on a natural tongue of land overlooking an unnamed stream which flows westwards into Cardinham Water. The castle comprises a sub-circular ringwork or motte on the north with a larger bailey to the south which together occupy an area of around 1.5ha. Although commanding a prominent position, at around 130m above OD, the castle does not occupy the highest point in the locality but is instead surrounded by rising ground to the north and south. It sits hard against the northern edge of a block of ancient enclosed land which represents the former open arable fields of Old Cardinham. The vestiges of the settlement are strung out along an east - west trackway that passes to the south of the castle, with a series of routeways converging on the southern rampart of the bailey. These routeways give access out through the farmland towards the moorland of Treslea Downs to the east, and up onto the higher ground and former open commons of Long Downs and Pinsla Downs to the west. Some 500m south, a trackway leads from the castle to the secluded Kenketh/Pinsla Park which is centred on a deep wooded valley with open land rising on each side. The Kenketh place-name is first recorded in c. 1250 and is a borrowing from the Breton kenkiz, meaning 'imparked residence' (Padel 1985, 49). The deer park is therefore thought to be contemporary with the castle and likely to date from the early to mid-12th century (Herring 2003, 38-9).

Historical and Archaeological Background

The place-name Cardinham derives from the Cornish words 'ker' and 'dynan', the former generally referring to the field monuments called 'rounds' (small univallate curvilinear hillslope enclosures) and the latter to 'hillforts' or 'cliff castles'. Cardinham therefore means 'round/fort by the hillfort' (Padel 1985, 50-3, 84-5). This place-name evidence has been used to propose that the castle may have appropriated an earlier enclosure or 'round' (Picken & Padel 2000, 51).

The western limit of Cardinham parish follows the boundary of an administrative district established as early as the 9th century and known as Wevelshire, the extent of the ancient 'shire' reflected in the hundreds now known as East and West. At the time of the Geld Roll of 1084 found in the Exon Domesday, West Wevelshire was known as Fawton after the hundredal manor in St. Neot to which it was annexed, but by 1188 was again documented as Westwiveleshundredum (Anderson 1934, 151, 153). The three ancient 'shires' of Wevelshire, Triconscire, and Piderscire converge at the western boundary of Cardinham parish, on what was formerly open moorland near Caldywith Farm. The manorial court rolls indicate that by 1476 the annual law-courts and the court of the Fee of Cardinham were being held in this location at a feature named 'le Gret Deche', an arrangement which may have been in place as early as 1320 (Picken 1954-5, 204). The archaeological remains of 'the Great Ditch' were identified north-west of Caldywith Farm during the construction of the Bodmin bypass in 1975, the undated rock-cut feature measuring 52m in length and 2m in depth (Irwin 1976, 79-80). Given its topographic setting and the use of the Great Ditch as an open-air meeting place in the later medieval period, the monument may represent the site of a long-standing focus for public or ritual gatherings.

At the time of the 1086 Domesday Survey there were three manors associated with the Cardinham area – Trezance, Cabilla and Glynn – with Cabilla and Glynn both located towards the southern boundary of the modern-day parish and held by the same minor lords before and after the Conquest. The more centrally positioned Trezance was the largest of the estates, with 12 ploughlands and 22 inhabitants, and had been granted to Richard fitz Tuold by 1086 (Morris 1978, 5,3,3). The Trezance place-name is not a Cornish 'tre' name meaning a farm but the much rarer 'tyr', which combined with sans means 'holy land, holy ground', possibly suggesting it was an important cult site from at least the early 11th century (Padel 1985, 204 & 217). The holy well and well chapel at Trezance would appear to have remained an important place of pilgrimage into the later medieval period, and up to the mid-19th century water was taken from the well to be used in baptisms at the parish church (Doble 1939, 23-4).

It has been argued that the dedication of the parish church to the Celtic saint Meubred is indicative of a site of early medieval origin, a suggestion possibly supported by a 10th century wheeled cross and a post-Roman inscribed stone which stand in the churchyard (NHLE: 1143116 & 1014879). The former was found in 1872 built into the external gable wall of the chancel, with the latter discovered leaning against the southeast corner of

the churchyard wall; both monuments had been re-erected in their current locations by 1896 (Langdon 1896, 354). The church was largely rebuilt in the 15th century, but fragments of carved stone dating from 1200 and reworked to make the sedilia would indicate at least some investment was made during the late Norman period (Beacham & Pevsner 2014, 144-6; Doble 1939, 21). A stone crosshead dating from the 13th century and thought to represent a gravestone was found built into the chancel wall during the refurbishments in the 19th century, the piece subsequently incongruously mounted on top of the post-Roman inscribed stone in the churchyard (Langdon 1896, 173). The churchyard is situated on a ridge top within a sub-rectangular enclosure, the shape and siting of which has led to speculation that it may be re-using the site of a round (Cornwall HER entry MCO22674; Heritage Gateway entry 2955.10).

Trezance is not recorded as a manor after the time of the Domesday Book, suggesting it was supplanted as the administrative centre between 1086 and c. 1180 when the manor of Cardinham is first documented (pers. comm. Oliver Padel). It can be assumed that the manorial centre was moved 1.3km south from Trezance when the castle was constructed at Old Cardinham, although exactly when this occurred is not known. Old Cardinham is documented in 1482 as a tenement of Cardinham manor (Cornwall Record Office AR2/449, membrane 4, court 1), with the 'old' element suggesting that by that date the place-name Cardinham applied to the settlement by the church. It had probably acquired this name following the relocation of the manorial centre from Trezance, but what the name of the church settlement was prior to it being renamed Cardinham is unknown.

With only a single pre-1100 habitative place-name identified from Cardinham – hendre ('winter homestead, home farm') – it has been argued that the region contained a low density of early medieval settlements, possibly as a consequence of its wooded character (Morris 1978; Padel 1985; Rose 1994, 79). Although around two thirds of the area's wood names are Cornish rather than Old English forms (such as Lidcutt, Callybarrett and Preeze), Cornish speaking in this region may have continued as late as the 13th century, with the process of woodland clearance therefore conceivably occurring in the post-Conquest period (Rose 1994, 79). It may be worthy of note that the place-names indicating a wooded environment are largely confined to the west of the parish, suggesting a process of clearance in an area that once supported extensive blocks of woodland and moorland. The wood names would appear to be located at the heads or upper reaches of the area's steep-sided combes, implying expansion into areas on the boundaries of productive land.

Place-name and Domesday Survey evidence have also been used to argue that the pre-Conquest pattern of settlement was largely confined to the periphery of the uplands, with the greater part of Bodmin Moor not permanently occupied until c. 1100 or after (Rose 1994, 79). In Cardinham, 76 per cent of the parish's moorland fringe settlements (those located predominantly above 250m OD) were first documented between 1180 and 1533, possibly indicating extensive expansion and colonisation of the Granite moorlands in the later medieval period. This may explain the origin of the detached portion of Cardinham

parish on the fringe of Bodmin Moor shown on large-scale Ordnance survey mapping of the late 19th century (Ordnance Survey 1886). The area comprised a roughly triangular shaped piece of land amounting to around 111ha called Sprey Moor, situated 7.5km to the north-east of Cardinham village on the north-east boundary of West Wivelshire hundred. The detached part of the parish may be a legacy of a much earlier arrangement whereby lowland settlements on the fringes of Bodmin Moor had defined grazing rights on the moor within the same hundred. Rose also notes that all but one of a group of seven place-names 2km south of Cardinham village are English in origin, which may suggest later medieval colonisation of open moorland also occurred away from the Granite uplands (1994, 79-80).

The Honour of Cardinham

Cornwall and West Devon were bestowed on Count Brian of Brittany after William the Conqueror's successful western campaign of 1068. Count Brian was possibly created the first Earl of Cornwall but following his involvement in the failed rebellion of 1075 his landholdings were passed to Count Robert of Mortain, the Conqueror's half-brother and one of William's most trusted supporters. The granting of these estates made Count Robert the largest landowner in the region holding almost the entire county and effectively creating a compact honour in Cornwall. Nevertheless, Robert of Mortain held only twenty-two of his Cornish estates in hand, the remainder being held by subtenants, with 43 per cent of his tenanted lands divided between just four Norman lords (Soulsby 1976, 147). The most important of Robert's tenants was Richard fitz Tuold, his principal steward in the county, whose father Turulf or Tuold possibly commanded the expedition which secured Cornwall for Duke William in 1068 (Beresford 1974, 95). When the Domesday Survey was compiled, Richard held twenty-nine manors from the Count of Mortain with a total annual value of thirty-three pounds. By 1104 Richard fitz Tuold had been elevated to tenant-in-chief of the Crown following the forfeiture of the English lands of the late Robert of Mortain by his son, Count William of Mortain, in 1106,. Richard's estates formed the core of an extensive honour which was held by his descendants until the mid-13th century (Soulsby 1976, 147-8).

On Richard fitz Tuold's death (c. 1120), the extensive honour passes to his son William fitz Richard who became the most powerful feudal baron in Cornwall. William married his daughter Beatrice to Reginald de Dunstanville, an illegitimate son of Henry I, and in 1140 both men joined forces to lead an uprising against Stephen during the time of 'the Anarchy' (Creighton & Wright 2016, 25). The following year Reginald was created Earl of Cornwall by his half-sister the Empress Matilda, and William fitz Richard became his tenant, holding his Cornish estates from the earl for the service of fifty-one knights' fees. By 1166 the Cardinham barony had passed to Robert fitz William who possessed a vast amount of land in his own right, including the manor of Bodardle which incorporated

the castle at Restormel. Robert initially held Bodardle in guardianship through his wife during the minority of Walter Hay, but after Walter's death in 1186 it came into the full possession of Robert fitz William (Ashbee 2020, 30).

In c. 1177 the honour passed to Robert de Cardinan who was the first to adopt Cardinham/Cardinan as the family name, then, following his death in c. 1227, to his son Andrew. Andrew de Cardinan died c. 1256 without a male heir and the barony subsequently passed to his daughter Isolde, who married Thomas de Tracey. On becoming a widow, she conveyed parts of her estates to Henry Champernoune and granted property, including Restormel Castle, to Richard, Earl of Cornwall. She also sold Bodardle, Cardinham, and the feudal overlordship of Cardinham to Oliver de Dinan who gained possession of these extensive Cornish landholdings in 1268 (Fox & Padel 1998, xxviii). Cardinham then passed down the Dinham line until 1501 when John, Lord Dinham died without male issue and the estate was divided amongst his four sisters, including Catherine, who was married to Sir Thomas Arundell (Hitchens & Drew 1824, 149). The Arundell family acquired most of the manor of Cardinham through inheritance and purchase, eventually selling it to E.J. Glynn in 1800 whose family had earlier acquired the portion of the manor not in the possession of the Arundells (Lysons 1814, 51-67). The Vivian family acquired the Glynn estates in the 19th century (Thurstan 1906, 331).

Cardinham castle

Unlike the castle of Dunheved at Launceston, and Reginald de Vautort's stronghold at Trematon, neither Cardinham nor the castle are recorded in the Domesday Survey (Morris 1978). Indeed, the name Cardinham is not documented until c. 1177 when Robert de Cardinan inherited the honour from Robert fitz William. It is unlikely, however, that the castle at Cardinham was founded at such a late date, and it is worth noting that the bulk of castles built in the 11th and 12th centuries are wholly undocumented (Creighton 2018, 220). Soulsby has argued that Penhallam was Richard fitz Tuold's principal estate centre prior to the ascendancy of Cardinham in the later 12th century (Soulsby 1976, 148). The medieval manorial centre at Penhallam was excavated by Guy Beresford between 1968 and 1973, the archaeological work revealing the substantial remains of a late 12th and early 13th century stone-built manor house standing within an earlier ringwork enclosure. When the ringwork was constructed at Penhallam is unclear, but its inner walls had been slighted to accommodate the late 12th century manorial buildings (Beresford 1974, 98).

Although there are no known documentary references to Cardinham castle's foundation, it may feasibly go back to Richard fitz Tuold in the late 11th or early 12th century. An alternative context for the origins or development of the castle is the reign of King Stephen when William fitz Richard joined forces with his son-in-law to lead an uprising in Cornwall against the king.

These events are described in the anonymous 'Deeds of King Stephen' (Gesta Stephani), which notes:

'Reginald for his part on becoming lord of so great an earldom began to behave with much more vigour than discretion, to bend all to his will by force of arms, to strengthen any castle that existed and put garrisons of his own men into them, and most grievously to oppress all supporters of the king that were in the neighbourhood' (Potter & Davis 1976, 48-9).

As one of Reginald's strongest supporters, it seems likely that William fitz Richard would have enhanced his existing strongholds in Cornwall during this turbulent period. However, the evidence for the origins of Cardinham castle at present remain ambiguous and attempting to assign a close date for the initial construction of the fortress is challenging. The monument form is perhaps the most revealing, with motte-and-bailey or ringwork-and-bailey castles a phenomenon largely confined to the hundred years following the Norman Conquest.

The castle at Cardinham would appear to have attracted only the briefest of attention from antiquarian travellers and topographic writers. It was mentioned by Leland in around 1538 but, in contrast to Launceston and Restormel, his entry did not include a physical description of the castle (Toulmin Smith 1907, 205). This may suggest there were no upstanding buildings worthy of note at that time, or alternatively, that he did not actually see the site during his travels through Cornwall. The castle was fleetingly mentioned in general histories of Cornwall in the 18th and 19th centuries, and Henry MacLauchlan noted in the mid-19th century that 'the much-disturbed remains ... may have been a Norman Castle, though no marks of mortar remain' (MacLauchlan 1850, 36). It would therefore appear that the upstanding masonry of the castle had been comprehensively removed at a relatively early date, possibly re-used in the surrounding farm buildings and Cornish hedges.

In 1878 the Reverend William Iago, Honorary Sectary for Cornwall of the Society of Antiquaries, London, wrote a short account of excavations carried out at Cardinham castle by Mr S. Jenkins at the request of Lord Robartes of Lanhydrock. The diggings were undertaken to procure stone for new building works and inadvertently revealed the footings of a large, mortared stone wall on the southern side of the mound's summit. Some finely dressed freestone was also discovered among the demolition rubble, the form and chamfered design of the stones indicating that they may have originated from a door jamb in a high-status building. Oyster shells, broken animal bones and unglazed pottery were recovered from the soil within the stone rubble wall, although their exact relationship to the structure is unclear. In his discussion of the site, the Rev. Iago mentioned that human remains 'laid in graves' had been revealed on a different part of the site during earlier quarrying works, but where exactly they were found remains unknown (Iago 1878, 360-1).

The castle is not depicted on Thomas Martyn's 1748 map of Cornwall but the castle mound and bailey enclosure were shown on the Ordnance Survey 2 inch to the mile scale survey of 1805, although not clearly defined on the published 'Old Series' 1 inch map of 1813 (British Library: Maps OSD 11). The name White Hill for the area of the bailey first appears on the 1840 Tithe Map and 1839 apportionment, when the enclosure was under arable cultivation and the area named The Castle listed as 'furze', indicating rough ground or gorse (National Archives: IR 29/6/26; IR 30/6/26). The first accurate depiction of the castle appears on the Ordnance Survey 25 inch to the mile map published in 1882, which illustrates the earthwork ramparts of the bailey enclosure and the scarps of the castle mound; only minimal detail of the other associated earthworks are shown (Ordnance Survey 1882). Farm buildings located along the trackway on the west side of the bailey ramparts were mapped by the OS at this time, although three out of four of these structures had been demolished by the time of the revision survey of 1905 (Ordnance Survey 1907). These farm buildings were part of the holding named Old Cardinham Castle on the tithe map apportionment of 1840 (National Archives Ref IR/30/6/26), their removal possibly indicating rationalisation of the multiple holdings leased in 1839 by Thomas Butt. In contrast, buildings were also added to the hamlet, with the dwelling south of the castle constructed sometime between the 1840 tithe map and the 1882 Ordnance Survey map (surveyed in 1881). They occupy a former garden plot of Higher Old Cardinham Castle farmstead, possibly using material quarried from the castle.

The castle was mapped from the air as part of the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Mapping Project which was commissioned by English Heritage from the Historic Environment Service of Cornwall County Council as an external project of the National Mapping Programme. The project ran between 1994 and 2006 resulting in the discovery and mapping of new archaeological sites across the county (Young 2007). However, at Cardinham Castle the project was only able to record the main castle earthworks where they were clear of tree cover and did not materially add to the understanding of the site.

Description of the Earthworks

The remains of the castle and settlement were largely under pasture at the time of the survey, with some tree cover on the mound and along the eastern side of the bailey. The total area surveyed extended to approximately 3ha and encompassed the castle mound and bailey enclosure as well as the two pasture fields to their west, an earthwork dam in the valley bottom to the north and a woodland bank descending the valley side to the east (see Figure 9). The letters in the following description refer to Figure 3. At broadly the same time as the analytical earthwork survey, a local community archaeology group (Timeseekers Archaeological Group) undertook a magnetometer and resistivity survey of the bailey, the motte and a substantial part of the field to the west. The resulting unpublished plot appears to show the approximate location of probable buried structures in the bailey and field to the west, while the unevenness of the ground on top of the mound made it difficult to clearly detect buried remains.

The castle mound (Figure 3)

The castle mound is defined by a steep-sided grass-covered scarp which stands a maximum of 4.3m high on its western side, the well-defined sub-circular earthwork having a basal diameter of around 68m. A clear break-in-slope was identified between 1.6m and 1.2m below the summit of the mound and could be traced running around its western and northern flanks. This break-in-slope represents the old ground surface, the feature occupying the north-western end of a natural ridge that runs northwest to southeast across the site. A terraced platform was also identified following the foot of the mound around its northern and western sides. This terrace, which stands a maximum of 0.45m high and is up to 2.5m wide, would appear to represent the base of the cut of the natural slope defining the foot of the mound. The natural topography was therefore sculpted or enhanced in a way which gave the impression of a larger, more impressive feature when viewed from the north and west. A similar low terrace was also identified on the south-eastern side of the mound and may again represent shaping of the natural topography; small scoops recorded on the northern skirt likely represent tree throws.

The summit of the mound measures approximately 43m north-south by 49m east-west, with the central area raised no more than 1.5m above the natural ground surface. An intermittent low scarp can be traced running roughly parallel with the outer lip of the mound. The earthwork appears to define the inner edge of a raised platform. This platform, which measures between 5m and 9.1m in width, is best preserved around the northern and western sides of the mound where it is occupied by the sites of two buildings (Figure 3 - Buildings B1 and B2). The earthwork may represent the remains of a truncated enclosure bank. The low height of the mound and the presence of an encircling bank means the earthwork probably began life as a ringwork as opposed to a motte, which are generally much higher and more regular constructions but with a smaller summit area.

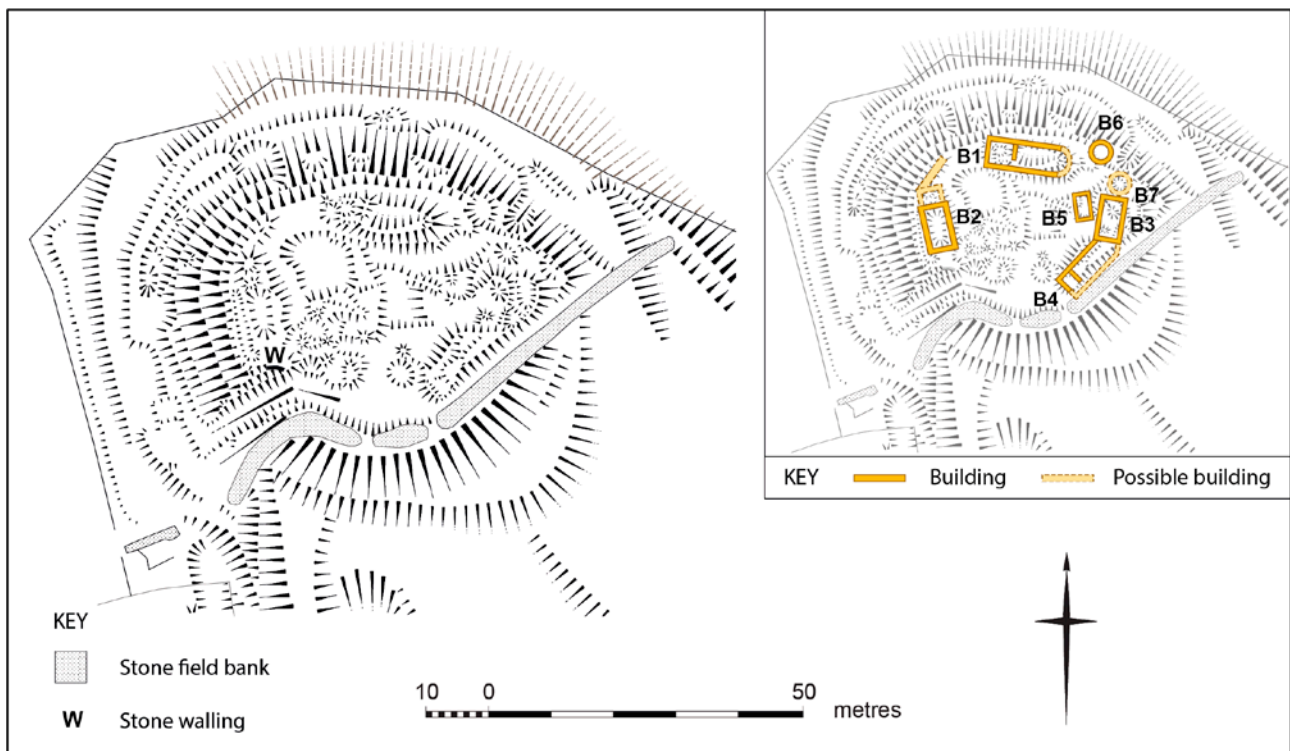


Figure 3: Extract from the earthwork plan showing the area of the ringwork. Reduced from 1:1000 scale original surveyed at 1:500. © Historic England

At a later stage at Cardinham, material from the bank was possibly pushed inwards to build up the interior of the enclosure to help make it appear outwardly more like a motte. There is no visible earthwork evidence that an outer ditch ever encircled the ringwork, but the terraced platform discussed above may have served to give the impression of a ditch when viewed from the down-slope side. Moreover, an almost vertical-sided quarry trench, approximately 33.5m long, was recorded cut into the ringwork's north-western flank. The quarry trench, which is up to 0.8m deep, closely follows the circumference of the mound and likely represents stone robbing, which raises the possibility that a masonry wall or revetment may have encircled all or part of the mound base. It is unclear if this was carried around the entirety of the mound or only extended to the area of the robber trench; breaks-in-slope were also identified on its western side and are possibly indicative of further masonry robbing.

That the west side was a focus for later mutilation is most clearly evidenced by a ramp around 2.2m wide which cuts through its south-western flank (Figure 4). This ramp provides access to the summit from the west, but the sharp, steep-sided nature of its scarps, which stand up to 2.4m high, indicate it is a latter feature. It seems likely it was constructed to facilitate easier stone removal from the summit of the mound, the material carried down the ramp and then southwards along a trackway tracing the western rampart of the bailey. Erosion on the northern scarp of the access ramp has revealed evidence for a short section of coursed stone walling orientated northwest to southeast, the feature now buried below the modern turf level.



Figure 4: View looking east of the post-medieval ramp cut into the perimeter of the ringwork to assist with stone-robbing and quarrying. © Historic England

The summit of the ringwork is very uneven, with spread banks, pits and grassy mounds indicative of past stone robbing activity (Figure 5). It may be no coincidence that the area around the top of the ramp on the south-western side of the motte represents a focus for surface disturbance. Although no discernible outlines of structures are evident in this location, it seems highly probable a substantial masonry building occupied this area. In 1878 the Reverend Iago noted several episodes of stone robbing from the castle, including an occasion in the late 19th century when material was removed for the construction of farm buildings (Iago 1878, 360). Judging from Iago's published sketch plan, the site of this quarrying activity is likely marked by a well-defined hollow and spoil heap positioned roughly centrally along the south side of the castle mound.



Figure 5: View looking north-west across the interior of the ringwork. © Historic England

Buildings on the mound (Figure 3)

The remains of a series of masonry structures are clearly visible as well-defined earthworks on the castle mound, predominantly placed around the perimeter of its summit. Along the northern side of the motte-top a major masonry structure (B1) survives as a turf-covered, sub-rectangular raised feature standing up to 0.45m high. A bank along its southern side and possible wall-footings at its western end are suggestive of a two-celled building. The east–west aligned feature, which is a maximum of 21m long and 8m wide, would appear to comprise a rounded eastern end, although the curving nature of this scarp may equally represent rubble spread associated with later demolition or collapse. The motte-top would appear to have been pushed outwards at this point to accommodate the building.

The remains of a further major structure are evident on the western side of the mound's summit (B2), the building aligned north–south and a maximum of 17m long and 8m wide. The feature is delineated by a series of sharp-sided grassy banks a maximum of 0.4m high, with a sub-circular mound at its northern end standing up to 0.6m above the level of the motte-top. A near vertical-sided L-shaped trench, up to 0.5m deep, follows the western side of the building and is indicative of later stone robbing. It is unclear if this represents robbing from the building or from an outer wall against which the building stood.

A short section of linear bank can be seen tracing the outer lip of the mound's summit on its northern edge and may represent the fragmentary remains of a stone wall, although whether this ever entirely encircled the summit remains unclear.

Further sub-rectangular buildings are evident on the eastern side of the mound. The northernmost of these (B3) is aligned roughly north-south and is approximately 11m in length and 6.3m in width externally. The building is defined by a series of linear banks with a gap on the western side possibly indicative of an original entrance. To its south, a building aligned northeast–southwest (B4) has clearly been truncated along its south-eastern side by the insertion of a later stone hedge bank. The mutilated remains of this two-cell structure are a maximum of 16.5m in length, its northern wall obliquely angled where it abuts the adjoining structure on a different alignment; this may suggest phasing in the construction of the buildings or may simply be a response to the sub-circular form of the site. A further single-cell structure surviving as a low terraced platform (B5) was identified to the west of structure (B3). This small, north–south aligned building measures around 6.2m in length and 4.4m in width externally, with the low bank defining its western side standing no more than 0.3m high; a gap in this bank would suggest the site of an entrance on the west side.

The final buildings identified on the mound are two possible circular or drum towers located on its eastern side. The remains of the northern tower (B6) take the form of a sub-circular terraced platform with a diameter of around 4m. The tower to the southeast (B7) is less clearly defined but survives as an oval hollow a maximum of 4.8m in diameter and up to 0.45m deep. The drum form of the buildings would suggest a construction date in the early 13th century or later and would signify a phase of rebuilding or remodelling at the castle, possibly by Robert de Cardinan or his son Andrew. It seems likely these towers formed part of an inner gatehouse as they are positioned either side of a ramp which provides access up onto the summit of the motte from the east. The disturbed nature of the eastern side of the motte suggests there were likely other structural elements associated with these towers which can no longer be discerned above ground. A sunken trackway can be traced leading from the gatehouse westwards across the mound-top, the route dividing and turning south towards the centre.

The castle bailey (Figure 6)

The castle bailey lies on the south-eastern side of the motte and encloses a ridge of higher ground that drops steeply to the northeast and more gradually to the southwest. The bailey extends to approximately 0.7ha in area and, although now laid to pasture, was arable land for much of the 19th century, as noted on the Tithe Map apportionment and by the Rev. Iago when he visited the site in the late 1870s (National Archives: IR 29/6/26; Iago 1878, 361). Ploughing has given the bailey a smoothed appearance and has severely degraded the earthwork remains within this area of the castle.

The bailey enclosure is bounded on the western and southern sides by a spread, grass-covered L-shaped bank: the western arm of the bank is up to 12.7m in width and stands a maximum of 1.4m high; to the south, a more massive rampart rises to 3.5m above

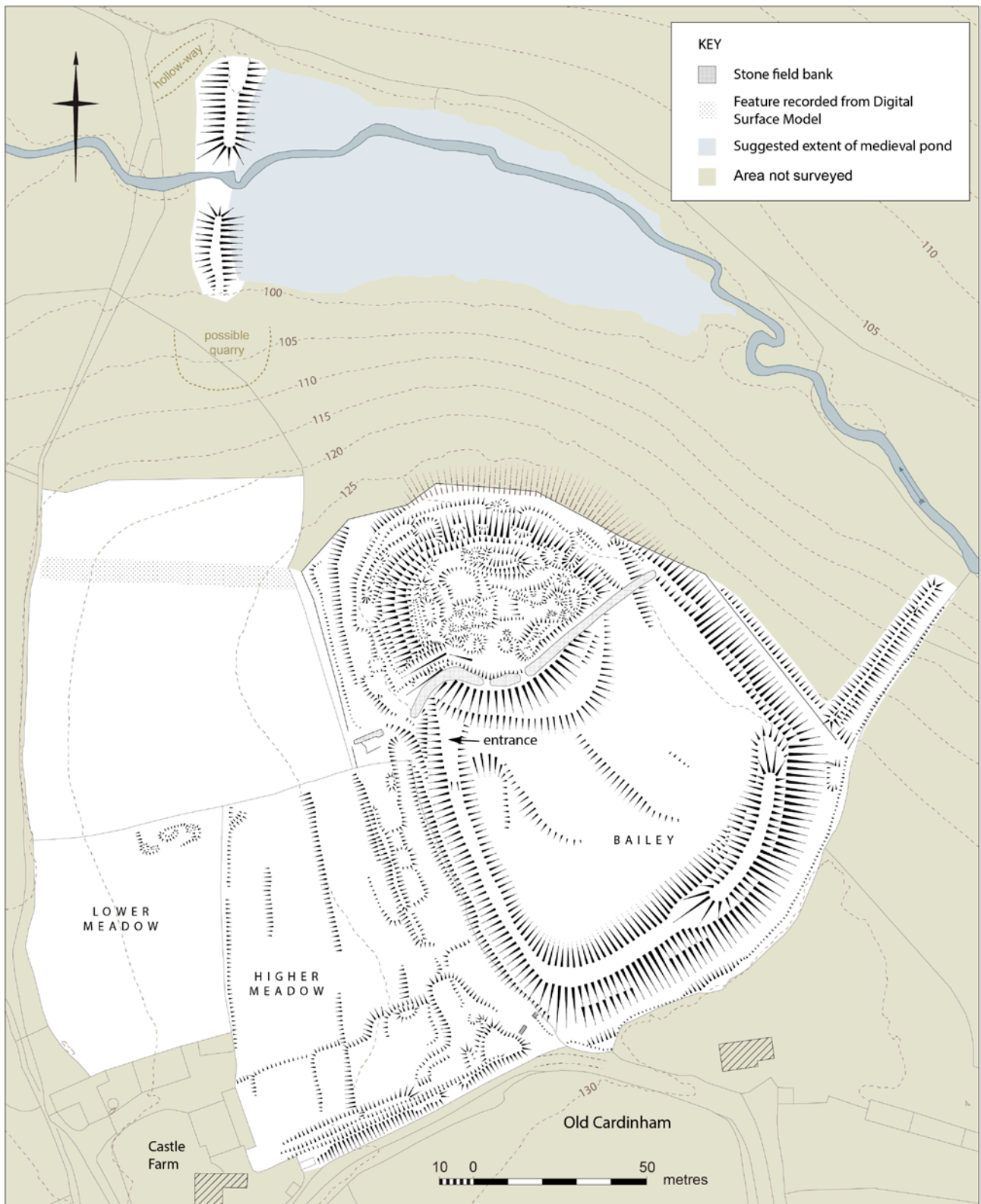


Figure 6: Analytical earthwork survey plan of Cardinham Castle. Reduced from 1:1000 scale original surveyed at 1:500. © Historic England. Background mapping © Crown copyright [and database rights] 2025. OS AC0000815036

the bottom of the shallow outer ditch, which is little more than 0.3m in depth, with the spread bank having a maximum overall width of 25.8m. Breaks-in-slope were recorded on the outer face of the southern bailey bank and correspond with the height of the grounds surface in the interior of the enclosure, indicating the natural topography was enhanced to give the impression of a larger, more impressive rampart. The southern arm of the bank also rises noticeably as it runs eastwards, this higher section possibly augmenting an earlier arrangement.

The eastern side of the bailey is defined by a steep scarp, a maximum of 4.7m high, which has a break-of-slope around 1.75m below its summit that can be traced along almost the entirety of its length. Although there are considerable amounts of stone visible in the near-vertical top section of rampart, there is no indication of masonry visible above the grounds surface. There is no outer ditch along the eastern side of the bailey. Instead, a levelled terrace up to 3.7m wide and defined by a steep scarp, a maximum of 0.8m high on its down-slope side, could be traced for much of the bailey's length. This terrace represents the cut of the natural ground surface and defines the bottom of the bailey rampart, with the scarp on the downslope side possibly serving to give the allusion of an outer ditch when viewed from below.

Access into the bailey was almost certainly on its western side, where the enclosure bank joins the castle mound and rises to create a levelled platform approximately 6m in width. This platform likely represents the grass-covered remains of a gatehouse structure, although no masonry trace of this building is visible above ground today. A hollow-way follows the length of the western side of the bailey enclosure and would have functioned as the main approach route into the medieval castle.

The interior of the bailey has been heavily improved and as a result few earthworks could be identified (Figure 7). A sub-rectangular hollow, a maximum of 0.6m deep, was noted adjacent to the inner face of the western bailey bank and may be associated with the gatehouse and access route. Two very slight linear features were identified running from northwest to southeast across the interior of the enclosure. These low scarps lie approximately 23m apart and would appear to run roughly parallel with each other, possibly representing subdivisions within the bailey or the remnants of strip fields pre-dating the castle enclosure. A low, curving scarp can also be traced on the northern side of the bailey, adjacent to the castle mound. Whether this represents a natural feature or the remnants of a routeway leading round from the bailey entrance to the castle's inner gateway on the motte remains unclear.



Figure 7: View looking north across the bailey towards the ringwork. © Historic England

The shrunken settlement of Old Cardinham (Figure 6)

Vestiges of settlement remains were recorded to the west of the castle bailey, located along the hollow-way leading to the castle entrance and in the adjacent field to the west named Higher Meadow on the 1840 Tithe Map apportionment (National Archives: IR 29/6/26). Lower Meadow on the 1840 map to the west of Higher Meadow has the earthwork remains of only a single structure. Covering an area of around 0.8ha, the settlement remains take the form of low grass-covered earthworks and represent the remnants of structures, boundaries and enclosures. These would appear to span multiple phases of settlement development, with the later features somewhat obscuring the earlier settlement pattern. However, viewed in conjunction with the cartographic evidence, these archaeological remains give us an insight into the process of settlement change and continuity during the medieval and post-medieval periods.

The earliest discernible features would appear to be a series of linear boundaries running north to south in Higher Meadow, the features defining settlement plots which front onto the main street of Old Cardinham. These tapering plots are around 100m in length and comprise a number of tofts and crofts, with the crofts a maximum of 31m in width and narrowing to approximately 25m at their northern end. The fragmentary remains of linear scarps within the crofts may be cultivation ridges, or alternatively, could represent the vestiges of earlier field system pre-dating the setting out of the settlement and castle.

The sub-rectangular tofts are defined by low, spread scarps standing no more than 0.4m high and would appear to represent plots of varying size. The westernmost plot is 18.5m in width and adjoins a plot half its size, although the very slight nature of the earthworks may indicate these tofts were amalgamated at an early date. Neither of these

tofts display any above-ground evidence for building remains, but a substantial Cornish hedge (a stone-faced bank) now defines the southern boundary of Higher Meadow and may have destroyed or obscured any evidence for buildings along the street frontage. The easternmost toft would appear larger, at around 31m in width, and may again represent the amalgamation of two plots. A sub-rectangular mound 7.4m in length located at the rear of this toft could be the remains of a small building, with a scarp c. 6.9m in length towards its southern boundary possible defining one side of a building platform running parallel with the street frontage.

A series of building platforms and an enclosure recorded towards the eastern boundary of this field clearly represent a later phase of settlement which overlies the earlier croft. This phase of settlement would appear to have developed alongside the access route to the castle bailey. An enclosure associated with these structures blocks the hollow-way however, indicating it had gone out of use as a main route by the time the enclosure was constructed. This enclosure is defined on its western side by an earth and stone bank which stands no more than 0.4m high, and to the east by a steep scarp which formed one side of the medieval hollow-way. A linear arrangement of buildings was identified located against the western bank of the enclosure, these structures surviving as a series of sub-rectangular platforms the largest of which is 9.5m long and 4.2m wide. One of these structures is shown on the Tithe Map of 1840. Another building on a similar alignment was identified 10m to the south of the enclosure, on a slightly raised area that would appear to have been formed by a natural ridge of higher ground cut by the hollow-way. The building platform is 9.3m long and is not shown on any of the cartographic sources.

The fragmentary remains of what may be a small structure was also recorded towards the northern boundary of Lower Meadow, defined by a series of low scarps and mounds which describe an area 17.4m in length and 6.3m in width. The degraded remains of this feature make interpretation difficult, and it may represent a structure of relatively modern date.

The field to the north of High and Low Meadow preserves the levelled remains of a bank which is not discernable on the ground but shows as a broad earthwork on the digital surface model. The feature is aligned east-west across the field close to the point where the ground starts to fall away northwards to the valley bottom. On the west the feature ends at the present field boundary but on the east it may have continued further beyond a short section of green lane and into the adjacent field, ending close to the north-west corner of the motte. Here, a slight outwards bulge in a north-south scarp at the foot of the motte may represent the original east end of the bank. The width of the levelled section of bank suggests it must have been quite a substantial feature before it was destroyed though it is difficult to interpret and date. It could be associated with the castle and settlement and therefore date to the medieval period though it could equally be a much later field boundary.

The survey recorded a second bank on the opposite side of the castle that starts at the crest of the slope just beyond the east corner of the bailey and continues for around 50m directly down the wooded valley side. The earthwork is around 1.2m high with a ditch on its east side and is well-preserved suggesting it is unlikely to be as old as the castle and is more probably a recent woodland bank. The ditch may have been created to provide material for the bank but, despite the steepness of the gradient, it could have been employed as a track for people and pack animals to traverse the slope. In the valley bottom outside the survey area, an earthwork embankment either side of the stream may represent the point where the suggested track crossed onto the opposite side of the valley.

Around 250m downstream from this crossing point, the survey recorded the substantial remains of a 70m long earthwork dam. The dam is around 15m wide at the base, tapering to 5m on the summit, and has a maximum height of around 2.5m above the valley floor where the stream cuts across the feature in a 15m wide opening. The opening is presumably a later breach after the dam had gone out of use. The dam has the height to retain a body of water stretching for over 150m upstream but to what purpose is uncertain. There are no obvious remains of a mill adjacent to the dam or a leat to direct water from the pond to power a mill wheel. There must have been a bypass channel or a sluice to stop the pond overtopping but there are no visible remains surviving. It is possible that the purpose of the dam was to create an artificial pond as part of a designed landscape below the main castle residence. It is also wide enough to have had a secondary role providing a level, dry passage across the valley floor.

Discussion

The survey has conclusively demonstrated that more survives of Cardinham Castle than has been previously recognised, particularly in the area of the mound on the north of the site. While preceding accounts have dismissed the earthworks in this area as simply the result of quarrying and stone robbing, the survey identified the remains of five buildings arranged around the edge of the mound and an inner gatehouse comprising a pair of drum towers on the north-east side. The survey demonstrated that the buildings were constructed in the footprint of a Norman ringwork. The bailey to the south preserves no visible building remains and the interior has been degraded by ploughing, but evidence survives for an entrance on the north-west side. Immediately to the west of the castle, the remains of several small buildings and plots associated with the shrunken settlement of Old Cardinham were recorded in detail for the first time along with a substantial dam in the stream valley to the north.

The established centre of local secular and religious authority at the time of the Norman Conquest is represented by the twin locations of the parish church of St Meubred and the manor at Trezance. The manor site has not been located but was presumably 700m north of the church where several cottages, a farm and a holy well perpetuate the Trezance name. The church was at the centre of an extensive parish stretching from the margins of Bodmin Moor on the north to the valley of the River Fowey on the south. Added to this, it may well have functioned as the cult centre for the veneration of St Meubred since it is the only church dedicated to this little-known Cornish saint. The castle introduced a new focal point in the landscape some distance to the south, the physical separation from the established centre perhaps the result of a deliberate choice by new Norman overlords to emphasise the dramatic change that had occurred in the exercise of political power across the landscape.

The possibility of an enclosure pre-dating the castle largely rests on the evidence that Cardinham derives from 'Ker' and 'dynan' which respectively denote a round enclosure and a hillfort (Padel 1985, 50-3, 84-5). It is conceivable that a small enclosure, such as a round, occupied the end of the ridge and that its bounding bank was later incorporated in the perimeter of the castle mound. A surviving feature of this earlier enclosure might be the cut-back into the natural slope and its associated terrace below the crest on the north and west sides of the hill. Though adding strength to the medieval ringwork, the feature could have been inherited from a much earlier defensive circuit such as a prehistoric round or hillfort. A clear example of a similar feature in a prehistoric context occurs locally on the west side of the round at Veryan, 9km north-east of St Mawes (HER No. MC087). Here the natural slope underlying the west side of the round has been artificially steepened, creating a terrace similar to that at Cardinham, 7.5m below the crest.

Rounds are the most common recognisable type of settlement in Cornwall in the Late Iron Age and Roman period with perhaps as many as a thousand examples (Lane 2006, 515-6).

The only round to be fully excavated in Cornwall is at Trethurgy which dates between the 2nd and 6th centuries AD. Finds of mediterranean pottery indicate that Trethurgy enjoyed widespread trade links in the post-Roman period indicating that some of these sites could develop into elite centres whose occupants had the wealth to import exotic goods (Quinnell 2004). The Cornwall HER lists 23 rounds in the area of Cardinham parish, 15 of which are based solely on place-name evidence (Figure 2). Most of these are indicated on the tithe award maps from the 1830s and 40s including a field 'called 'Round Park' 250m to the west of Cardinham Castle. The majority of the others have been identified recently through analysis of Lidar digital ground models as part of the 2017 National Lottery Heritage Fund 'Understanding Landscapes' project. The HER also lists three further curvilinear enclosures in the parish but does not identify them as rounds. The largest late-prehistoric site in the parish is the multivallate hillfort called Bury Hill 1.8km to the north-east of Cardinham Castle (NHLE: 1004457). It covers an area of about 1.5ha but there is no mention in the HER or NHLE entries of any excavation at the hillfort so its development sequence and date range are unknown. A second multivallate hillfort around 8h in extent called Castle Canyke is situated 2km to the south-west of Cardinham parish (NHLE: 1006660). There is no record of any excavation at this site either.

There are four known or possible rounds listed in the Cornwall HER within a kilometre of Cardinham, indicating that this type of late-prehistoric enclosure is common in the area. Two sites are indicated solely by field names while the other two were identified through the modelling of Lidar data as part of the 2017 'Understanding Landscapes' project. They appear on the Lidar ground model as low earthworks 400m to the north of the castle, on the opposite side of the valley. At 0.03ha, one of these rounds is much smaller than the 0.1ha area of the castle mound (HER No. MC067225) while the second to the south-east is larger with an internal area of 0.5ha (HER No. MC067226). These sites occupy open ground in contrast to the castle mound where access is partly constricted by the adjacent steep-sided valley. The end of the ridge where the castle mound is situated is naturally strong which perhaps favours the possibility that the earlier enclosure indicated by the Cardinham placename was a small hillfort rather than a round. The nearest hillfort to Cardinham, Bury Hill, lies 1.8km to the north-east along the same valley and is approximately equal in area to the combined extent of the mound and bailey at Cardinham (HER No. MC033). Bury Hill is less strongly sited on the crest of a gentle south-facing slope but it has much more open, widespread views than the hilltop at Cardinham where rising ground on the opposite side of the valley obscures the view to the north-east. The 'dynan' (hillfort) element of the name Cardinham could refer to Bury Hill within whose former territory Cardinham Castle probably lies.

The survey confirmed that the castle mound at Cardinham is a type of early Norman fortification called a ringwork as noted by several previous authorities (King and Alcock 1969, 112; Pounds 1990, 138). Cardinham, and the other five certain ringworks identified in the Cornwall HER, are distributed towards the northeast and middle of the county while the four known motte and bailey castles lie along the Devon border with a possible

fourth, much further west, at Tregony (Figure 8). This site was destroyed in 1862 but is identified in the Cornwall HER as a motte and bailey castle based on antiquarian accounts and two 19th century plans (Cornwall HER No. MC0143).

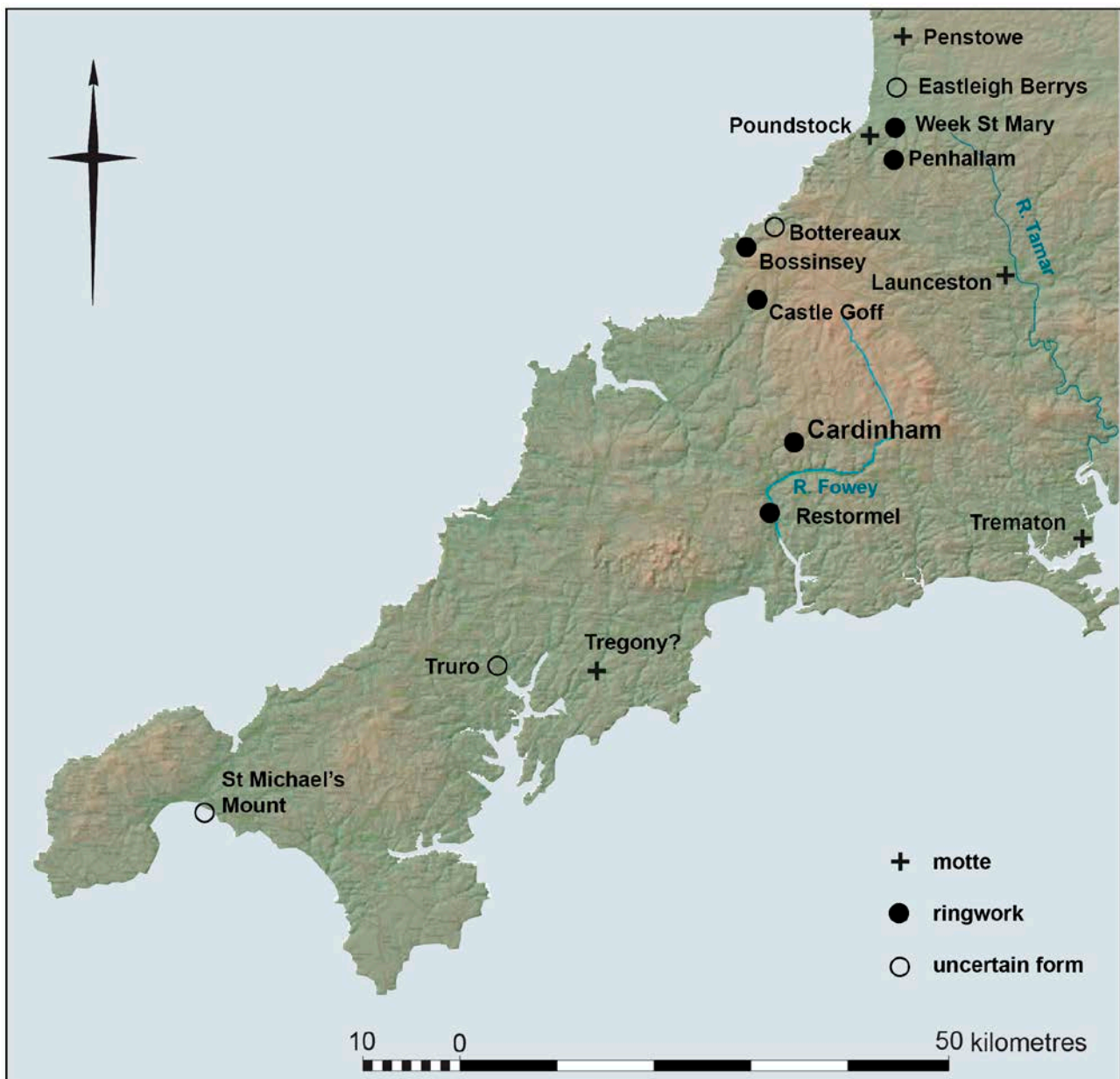


Figure 8: Map of Cornwall showing the sites of 11th and 12th century castles (based on Rose 1992, Figure 1a supplemented by information from the Cornwall HER). © Historic England. Background mapping © Crown copyright [and database rights] 2025. OS AC0000815036

The similarity in size and shape that exists between a Norman ringwork and a prehistoric round has sometimes led to mistaken identifications in modern studies as with the round at Veryan which was included in the list of medieval Cornish ringworks in the 1969 study (King and Alcock, 112). This mistaken identification confirms how outwardly similar the two forms of enclosure actually are. Therefore, in choosing to build ringworks in the heart of Cornwall, the Normans may have deliberately appropriated a familiar form of monument traditionally associated with status and control, thereby helping to legitimise their take over of the county. However, as Creighton has noted (2002, 49), the adoption of the ringwork form in preference to the motte may simply have had been down to the availability of resources. In a sparsely populated area with dispersed settlements such as central Cornwall, it would have been much easier to create a ringwork than attempt the labour-intensive task of raising and enclosing a motte. Additionally, construction of a ringwork was made even less onerous if the opportunity arose to reuse the site of a hillfort or round, as may have occurred at Cardinham.

The ringwork at Cardinham is around 1.5m above the pre-existing ground level while the top of the steep, underlying slope on the north and west has been cut back to make the perimeter of the ringwork more imposing on these sides. As was noted above, the steepened scarp may be evidence of an earlier enclosure on the castle site. The south side of the ringwork, where it faced into the bailey, and the east sides appear far less imposing as they are formed solely by the ringwork mound without the benefit of an underlying natural slope to add height. The survey noted the spread remains of the bank in the form of a platform on the north and west sides of the ringwork. The bank may have been levelled to increase the height of the interior prior to the construction of the buildings identified as earthworks. The levelled bank was replaced by a stone perimeter wall which survives as a short length of in-situ masonry on the west side of the ringwork and as an earthwork on the north-west. The absence of any other visible remains means it is uncertain if the wall continued around the entire circuit of the mound.

The discovery of architectural fragments on the south side of the mound in 1878 together with the evidence from the earthworks indicates that the buildings abutting the perimeter wall were probably well-built masonry structures. Collectively these building remains probably formed the private residence of the Cardinan family. The ringwork offered greater privacy and security than the elsewhere in the castle as it was elevated above the bailey and looked out northwards onto the steep-sided valley. The survey identified the sites of five buildings but there were probably others that have not survived as earthworks, such as in the heavily-disturbed area on the south side of the mound where architectural remains were discovered in 1878. As a lordly residence, the buildings within the ringwork may have included a hall, kitchen, chapel and a private chamber block or 'camera'. The latter building might be tentatively identified as the rectangular structure on the north side of the motte (Figure 3 B1). This is the furthest from the bailey and so would have had greater privacy compared to the other buildings in the mound area and it had the benefit of the secluded view northwards overlooking the valley and artificial lake. The survey identified the site of a probable inner gatehouse with twin drum towers at

the north-west corner of the mound. This distinctive form of castle entrance is generally thought to have developed in the 13th century (Kenyon 1990, 63). The gatehouse presumably replaced an earlier entrance in the same location and it is plausible that its construction was part of a general remodelling of the ringwork which also saw the construction of a perimeter wall and the group of masonry buildings represented by the surviving earthworks.

The layout revealed in the earthworks bears some comparison with the Cardinan residence at Penhallam excavated between 1968 and 1973 (Beresford 1974). Penhallam began as a ringwork enclosure comparable in size to that at Cardinham but underwent considerable elaboration in the early 13th century following the levelling of the ringwork bank. Unlike the individual structures around the perimeter of the mound at Cardinham, the plan of Penhallam was more sophisticated, involving a continuous suite of buildings on four sides of a central courtyard. The excavator concluded that the main parts of the residence were probably constructed in the time of Andrew de Cardinan between 1226 and 1234 (Beresford 1974, 126) with their successors undertaking further building work around 1300. The excavation also found evidence for a much earlier stone hall dating to the early 12th century associated with the ringwork. It is quite conceivable that the inner gatehouse, perimeter wall and buildings on the mound at Cardinham could be the work of Andrew de Cardinan who may have refurbished the residence here at the same time as making major changes at Penhallam.

The transformation of the Cardinan's ringwork at Penhallam is matched throughout England in the 13th century as the seigneurial class sought to enhance the quality and sophistication of their accommodation (Crouch 2011, 271). By contrast, other castles in Cornwall accommodated change within the framework of their original layout seen most particularly in the continued use of the motte as a residence in the shell keeps at Launceston and Trematon while at Restormel, a high bank was added to the base of the shell-keep to give the impression of a motte. This continuation of the motte tradition is contrary to much of the rest of the country. Starting in the 12th century, mottes were increasingly abandoned in favour of residential apartments in purpose-built masonry towers and keeps, or in a suite of buildings within the castle bailey. The persistence of the motte tradition in the county has led to the suggestion that this particular form was regarded as a symbol of the earldom of Cornwall (Goodall 2011, 239).

The oldest castle of the earldom is at Launceston where the motte and bailey called Dunheved in the Domesday Survey became the administrative centre of the earl's estates in Cornwall from the late 11th century until 1270. Guarding the only crossing of the River Tamar, the high motte, which is partly built on a natural mound, was visible to everyone using the main route into Cornwall (Saunders 1998, 11). This, and the castle's early and prolonged association with the earldom, may explain the continued appeal of the motte as an architectural form in Cornwall. The strength of this connection is evident on the 1610 map of Cornwall compiled by John Speed (reproduced in Nicolson and Hawkyard 1988, 54-5).

This carries a distant view of Launceston in the top left corner dominated by an exaggerated castle motte with, at the bottom of the map, a row of small shields displaying the heraldic devices of past Earls of Cornwall.

At Restormel castle, the shell keep appears to occupy a motte but it is thought that this is a secondary feature created by forming a bank around the foot of the existing outer wall of the keep. The work to make the keep appear more motte-like has been credited to Edmund, Earl of Cornwall after he succeeded his father, Richard, in 1272 (Higham 2010, 249).

While the residence at Cardinham may have developed broadly along the same lines as Penhallam, efforts may have been made to make it appear outwardly more like a shell keep on a motte, perhaps in emulation of the castle at Launceston. The impression was probably only achievable on the north and west where the cut-back slope and resulting terrace may have been fashioned to resemble the base of a motte and an external ditch. The overlying ringwork increased the height of the 'fake' motte by another 1.5m while the replacement of the ringwork bank by a stone wall could have given the outward appearance of a shell keep.

The survey discovered evidence for an outer wall in the form of a prominent robber trench extending part way along the artificial terrace formed by the cut-back into the natural slope. The feature is reminiscent of the so-called chemise or apron wall that partially survives on a terrace a similar distance below the summit of the motte at Launceston castle. The wall at Launceston is not firmly dated but could be 13th century (Saunders 1998, 10). However, unlike at Launceston where the wall was carried around the circumference of the motte, at Cardinham there is no certain earthwork evidence for either the wall or terrace on the south and east sides of the mound. The wall may have been an additional line of defence wrapping around the more exposed west and north sides of the residence between the castle entrance and the inner gatehouse. Alternatively, it may have been purely for display, to make the castle look more impressive when viewed from the north, across the valley.

The bailey at Cardinham preserves little visible evidence of its internal layout though the recent unpublished geophysical survey by the Timeseekers Archaeological Group has pinpointed the sites of several possible structures against the perimeter bank and the sites of three possible towers regularly spaced on the line of the west bailey bank. The bank defining the west and south sides of the bailey enclosure has been degraded by later ploughing but it is nevertheless noticeable that towards the east end of the south side it broadens and rises in height over a distance of about 50m. There is no obvious explanation for this other than it made the bailey defences appear outwardly more impressive when viewed from one specific direction. The other feature of note connected with the bailey bank is the slight sub-rectangular hollow or platform on the north-west at the point that the bailey bank meets the south-west angle of the ringwork. Interpreted as the entrance into the castle, its discovery demonstrates that access to

the residential area on the mound was far from direct. From the castle entrance the route arcs around the south and south-east sides of the mound before turning north to follow the terrace to the inner gatehouse. This curving route around more than half the circumference of the mound added to both the security and the privacy of the residential area by intentionally drawing out the time taken to pass between the castle entrance and the inner gatehouse. The circuitous route to the inner gatehouse also enabled visitors to appreciate the full extent of the castle ending with a view over the valley and artificial lake before passing through the inner gatehouse to enter the exclusive world of the seigneurial residence.

The survey identified the exterior route to the castle entrance from the south in the form of a hollow-way immediately to the west of the bailey, overlooked by the three probable towers identified by the geophysical survey on the western bailey bank. From there southwards the medieval alignment is probably preserved by the course of the existing road taking the route past the castle's former hunting ground at Kenketh/Pinsla park and on to the valley of the River Fowey along which lay the Domesday manors of Glynn and Cabilla. There are no physical remains surviving of a route north from the castle entrance until the valley bottom is reached where a short length of hollow way near the castle dam indicates the point where the route crossed the stream to climb the far slope. The dam itself is wide enough to have carried a track across the stream with the pond providing an eye-level reference to the position of the castle mound on the ridge top above. From the crossing point a footpath, and further on a road, doubtless preserve the alignment of the medieval route heading north to the parish church of St Meubred and beyond it to the former manorial centre at Trezance and the uplands of Bodmin Moor.

The survey established that the partial remains of several north-south plots survive in the fields bordering the west side of the bailey. These are interpreted as forming part of a medieval settlement associated with the castle, beginning on the east side of the main access route to the castle and extending for an unknown distance westwards. The associated buildings, now not surviving as earthworks, probably stood towards the south end of these plots fronting on to the precursor of the modern road. Here Castle Farm probably occupies the frontage of part of the medieval settlement with the farmyard perpetuating the outline of the rear part of one of the medieval plots.

The origin of the settlement is obscure but is almost certainly linked with the development of the castle. At the time of the Conquest the settlement pattern in the south-west was dispersed and lacked major market centres found in the rest of the country. It has been noted that after the Conquest feudal lords in Cornwall, Devon and Somerset founded numerous small boroughs as a way of stimulating economic growth (Beresford 1967, 399-402; Slater 2000, 596). In Cornwall itself, markets were commonly associated with 11th and 12th century castles (Preston-Jones and Rose 1992, 151). It is therefore conceivable that the settlement represents an undocumented attempt by the lordship to establish a market centre or even a small borough next to the castle. There is documentary evidence that the Cardinans took these steps at the nearby castle

of Restormel. A confirmation charter of Robert de Cardinan dating to the period 1190-1200 records that the small town and port of Lostwithiel on the River Fowey, near to Restormel castle had been founded by the lords of Cardinham sometime in the 12th century (Beresford 1967, 406-7; Slater 2000, 596). Robert himself gave a palfrey horse to the crown in 1224 in return for the right to hold a weekly market and an annual two-day fair at Lostwithiel, demonstrating that he was actively involved in trying to grow the economic base of the lordship (The National Archives Fine Rolls C60/21 8 HENRY III 271). There is no documentary evidence of an attempt to foster the growth of a borough next to Cardinham Castle, though the junction of routes immediately to the south of the castle bailey could indicate the location of a small market place. Another possibility is that the present Cardinham village around St Meubred church functioned as the main market centre for the area. The 'Old Cardinham' name attached to the settlement next to the castle suggests the present Cardinham village is 'new' Cardinham, and probably had a different name before that. Possibly it was part of the settlement called Trezance mentioned in the Domesday Survey while the later change of name to that of the castle suggests that over time a stronger link existed between these two places than between the castle and the immediately adjacent settlement of Old Cardinham. The change of name to Cardinham could have been a deliberate attempt to reinforce the authority of the castle and its associated settlement over the much earlier religious centre represented by St Meubred Church.

While Cardinham might have begun as the principal seat of the lordship to which it gave its name, it lost this status to Restormel during the 13th century. Cardinham was perhaps maintained thereafter as an occasional rural retreat or possibly a hunting lodge given its proximity to Pensla park. Later, the use of the bailey as an arable field is indicated by the slight plough furrows visible across the interior while the unevenness of the ground probably made it too difficult to plough the smaller area of the mound, thus helping to preserve the earthworks.

A north-south row of small farm buildings was constructed on the west side of the castle bailey within the footprint of the medieval settlement but these had disappeared by the time of the earliest Ordnance Survey mapping. An episode of stone robbing extensively damaged the area of the mound and was evidently pursued with some determination judging from the effort taken to cut a ramp for carts in the west side of the mound. The name White Hill recorded on Ordnance Survey mapping in the 19th century (Ordnance Survey 1888) could have arisen because of the fresh scatterings of stone, plaster and mortar resulting from episodes of robbing. Alternatively, several individuals with the surname White are recorded in the Cardinham parish records in the 19th century including Joseph and Bessie White who registered several births in the 1890s while residing at Milltown, 700m to the west of the castle (Information from Cornwall Online Parish Clerks database record nos. 4185361, 4185365 and 4185373). It is possible that one of their ancestors gave their surname to White Hill.

Survey Methodology

The survey of Cardinham castle and its immediate surroundings was undertaken using a combination of Trimble R8 differential GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System) and Trimble S7 Total Station Theodolite (TST) equipment and completed in the field using graphical survey methods. The fieldwork produced an Historic England Level 3 survey at 1:500 scale. A digital hachure plan of the site was created using AutoCAD software and completed for publication at 1:1000 scale using Adobe Illustrator software. The area was also recorded using drone-based Structure from Motion (SfM) photogrammetry. The castle and its immediate environs were flown using a quadcopter and a digital surface model produced at 20cm resolution using Agisoft software.

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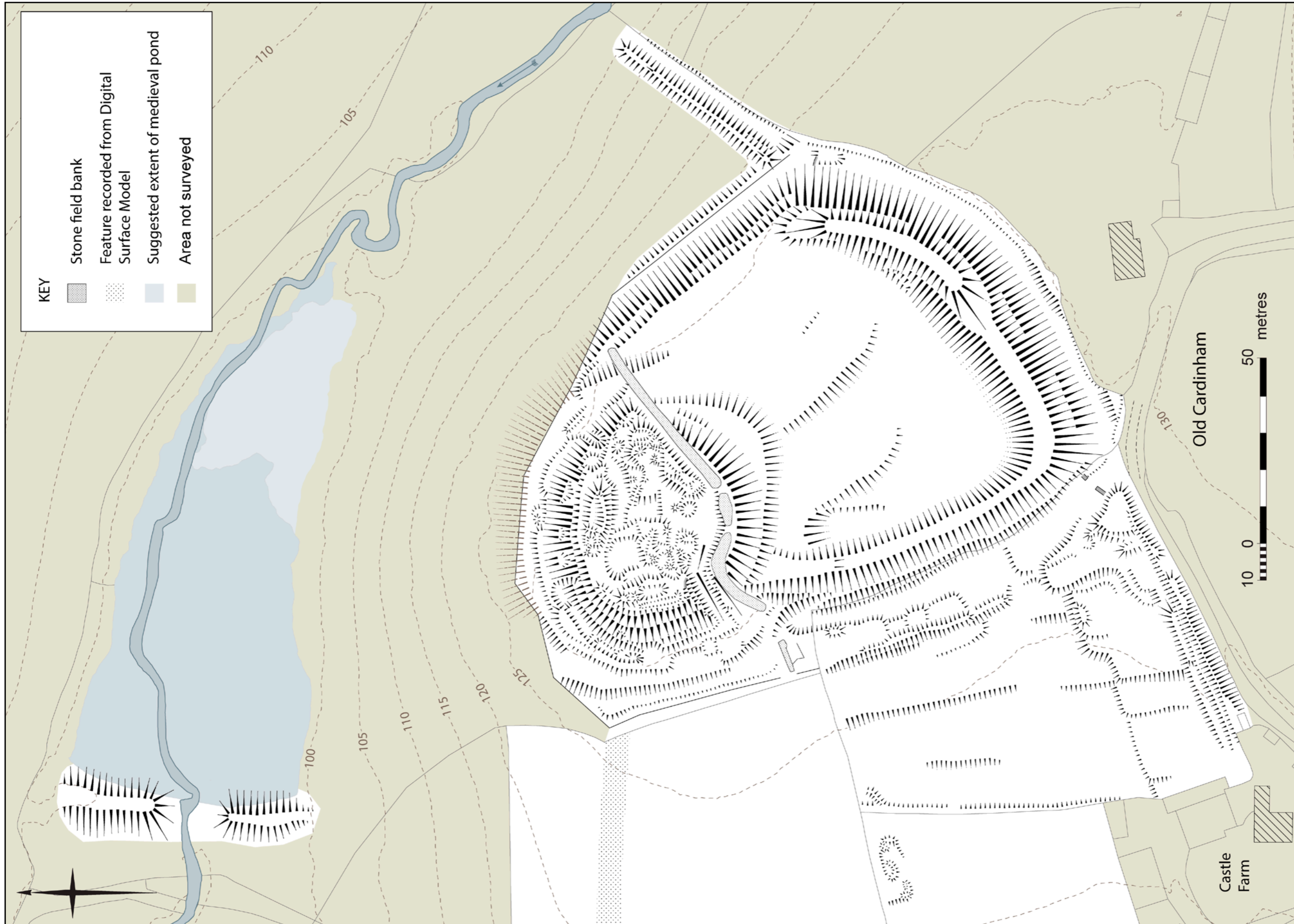


Figure 9: Analytical earthwork survey plan of Cardinham Castle. 1:1000 scale, surveyed at 1:500. © Historic England. Background mapping © Crown copyright [and database rights] 2025. OS AC0000815036



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