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GATE AND FENCING REPAIRS, LUDGERSHALL CASTLE, LUDGERSHALL, WILTSHIRE
Archaeological Observations and Recording

Report No. 53243/3/1

March 2007

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Archaeological Observations and Recording,

February 2007

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Terrain Archaeology in February 2007, during gate and fencing repairs at the public car park at Ludgershall Castle, Ludgershall. Nothing of archaeological significance was noted. The only deposits found consisted of dumps of building rubble and topsoil of post-medieval or modern date and probably associated with levelling of the area adjacent to the southern bank and ditch of the castle.

INTRODUCTION

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage to undertake a programme of archaeological observations and recording during gate and fencing repairs at the public car park at Ludgershall Castle, Ludgershall, Wiltshire (Figures 1-3).

Archaeological Observations and Recording, also known as an archaeological watching brief, is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as "a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, within a specified area or site where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed."

The repairs comprised the replacement of the post and rail fencing and kissing gate along the western edge of the car park, the removal of a double gate and fence along the northern edge and replacement with wooden bollards (Figure 2). The fence post, gate post, and bollard holes were excavated by hand and the resulting spoil investigated.

The site lies within Ludgershall Castle Scheduled Monument SM 10070, specifically in the area of the southern end of the bailey, centred on NGR SU26385110.

The fieldwork was carried out on the 14th and 19th February 2007 by Rebecca Montague and Steven Tatler.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and cooperation of the following during this project: Chris Bally (Regional Landscape Manager, English Heritage), Phil McMahon (Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage), and Chris and Luke of Parsons Landscapes.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Ludgershall Castle is an earthwork castle comprising a ringwork to the north with a bailey to the south. It was a royal castle was fortified by 1138. It played an active part in the 12th-century civil wars and was administered during the Anarchy period by John the Marshal. During the thirteenth century the castle was remodelled with the keep replaced by mural towers and a viewing platform on the northern defences. By the mid-13th century, Henry III undertook a programme of repair and replacing the buildings in stone, including a new great hall and enlarged royal apartments, turning the castle into a fortified country house. However, by the 15th century the castle had been neglected and had fallen down, much of the stone robbed and been replaced by a hunting lodge. In 1547 it passed out of royal hands. Subsequently, it was incorporated into terraced and landscaped gardens as a romantic ruin (Chandler 2001; Ellis 2000).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the archaeological observations was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

The archaeological works aimed to observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.

METHODS

The work was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation produced by Terrain Archaeology (Document No. 3243/1/1), and the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Code of Conduct and Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (1994, as revised).

A 50-metre length of post and rail fencing, gate posts for a kissing gate and eight wooden bollard holes were observed (Figure 3). All fence post, gate post and bollard holes were excavated by hand and the spoil investigated. The holes measured between 0.25–0.35 m across and between 0.5–0.7 m deep (Appendix 1).

All features and deposits, exposed during the works, were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. Each fencepost hole was given a unique number, with each context numbered as a suffix to the fencepost hole number (e.g. 101.1, 101.2, etc).

The records, and any materials recovered, have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current UKIC guidelines and the requirements of the receiving museum.

RESULTS

A total of 36 postholes were excavated by hand along the western and northern edges of the car park and a sequence of similar deposits was observed in each across the whole of the site. The locations of the holes are shown on Figure 3 and the depth and nature of the deposits is tabulated in Appendix 1 and shown diagrammatically on Figure 4.

Natural deposits

The underlying natural consisted of slightly degraded chalk bedrock and was found in postholes 101, 102, 103, 108 and 109 at the southern half of the fenceline and also in bollard postholes 129– 132.

Dumped material

Overlying the natural chalk, and present in all the postholes, were several deposits containing varying amounts of building rubble including brick, tile, chalk and mortar fragments and flint nodules. The lower deposits consisted mostly of building debris mixed with either pale grey marly loam or brown silty clay. Overlying this in most of the postholes was a brown clay loam deposit, probably dumped topsoil, 0.05 m to 0.45 m thick, containing occasional fragments of brick, tile or chalk.

Topsoil

Overlying the whole of the site was a dark brown clay loam topsoil varying in depth from 0.1 m along the northern edge of the car park to up to 0.4 m along the western edge.

Finds

No artefacts were retained from this watching brief although a record was made of recoveries from each posthole (Appendix 1). A substantial amount of brick, tile, chalk and mortar fragments along with flint nodules were observed across most of the site. These probably derive from demolished buildings associated with either the town or castle. Other artefacts included fragments of glass, bone and iron, all modern.

DISCUSSION

The character and small scale of the groundworks mean the scope for undertaking more than a simple description of the findings is extremely limited. None of the postholes produced recognisable evidence for any significant *in situ* archaeological features or deposits. The dumps of building rubble most likely derive from the demolition of local buildings and have been used to level the ground in the vicinity of the car park, possibly infilling the end of the outer ditch of the castle bailey.

REFERENCES

Chandler, J.	2001	*Marlborough and Eastern Wiltshire*. Wiltshire: a history of its landscape and people 1. Hobnob Press.
Ellis, P.	2000	*Ludgershall Castle. Excavations by Peter Addyman 1964-1976*. Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Monograph No. 2.

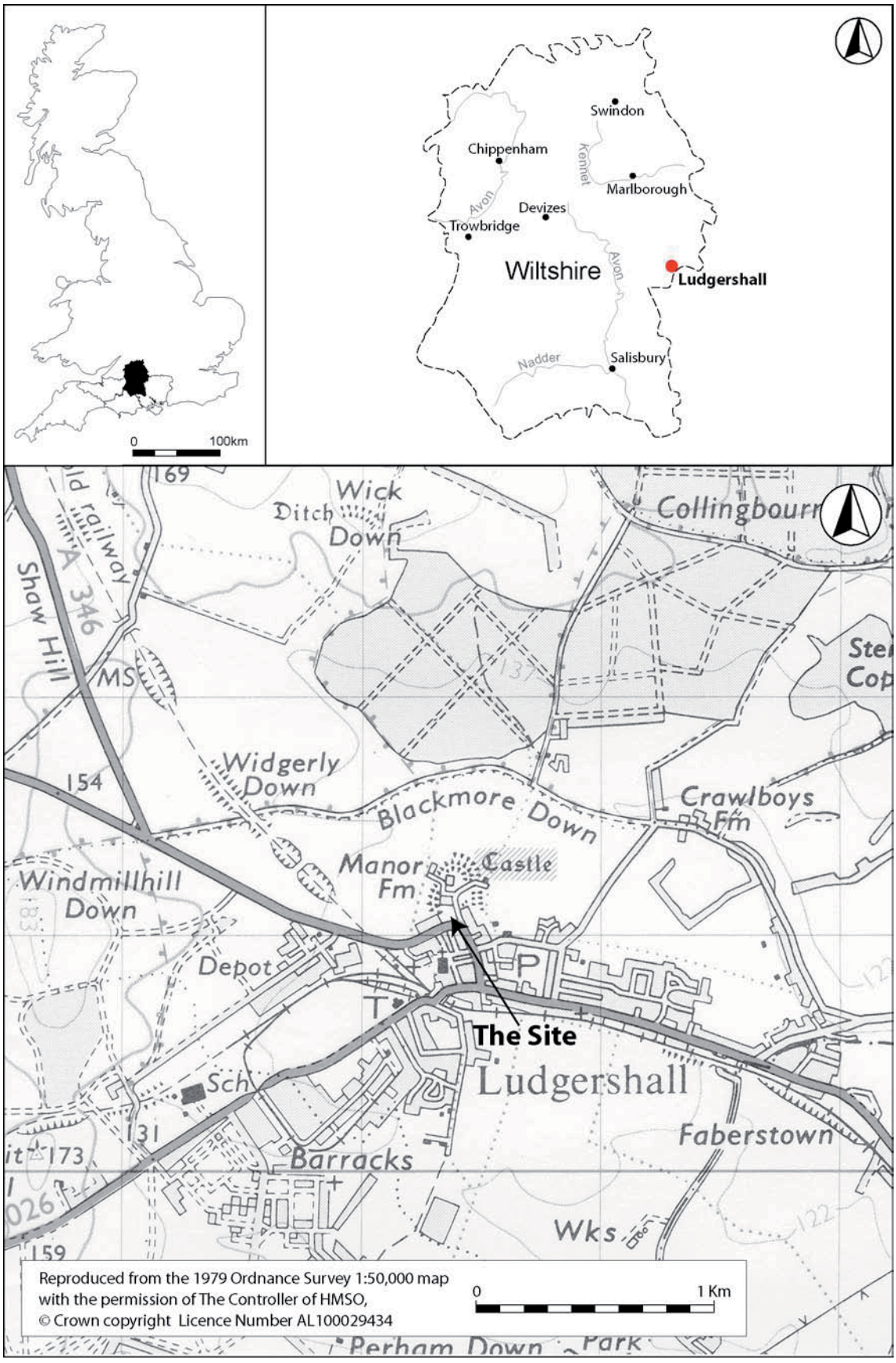

Figure 1: Site Location map

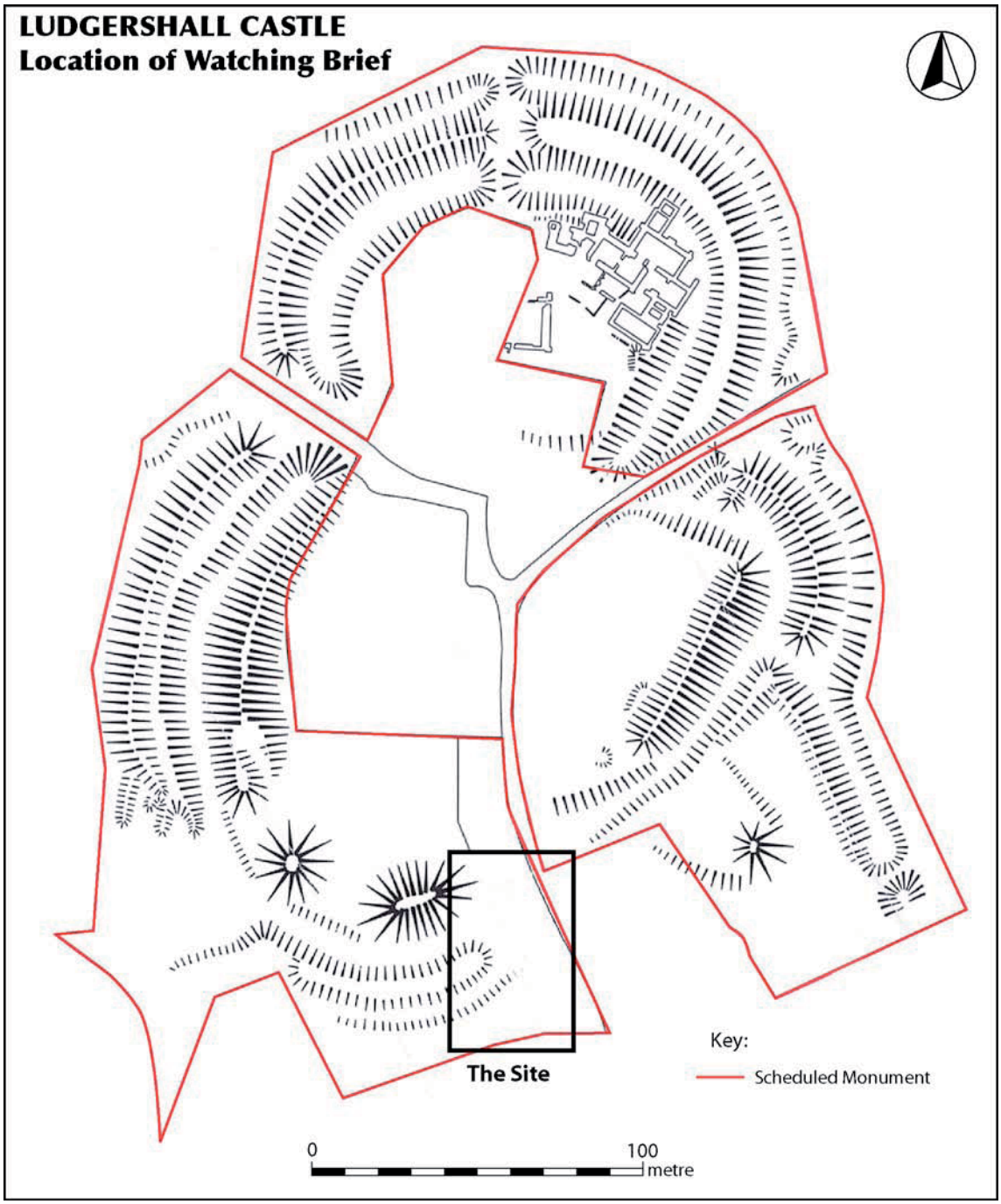

Figure 2: Plan of castle showing site location (from a plan provided by English Heritage)

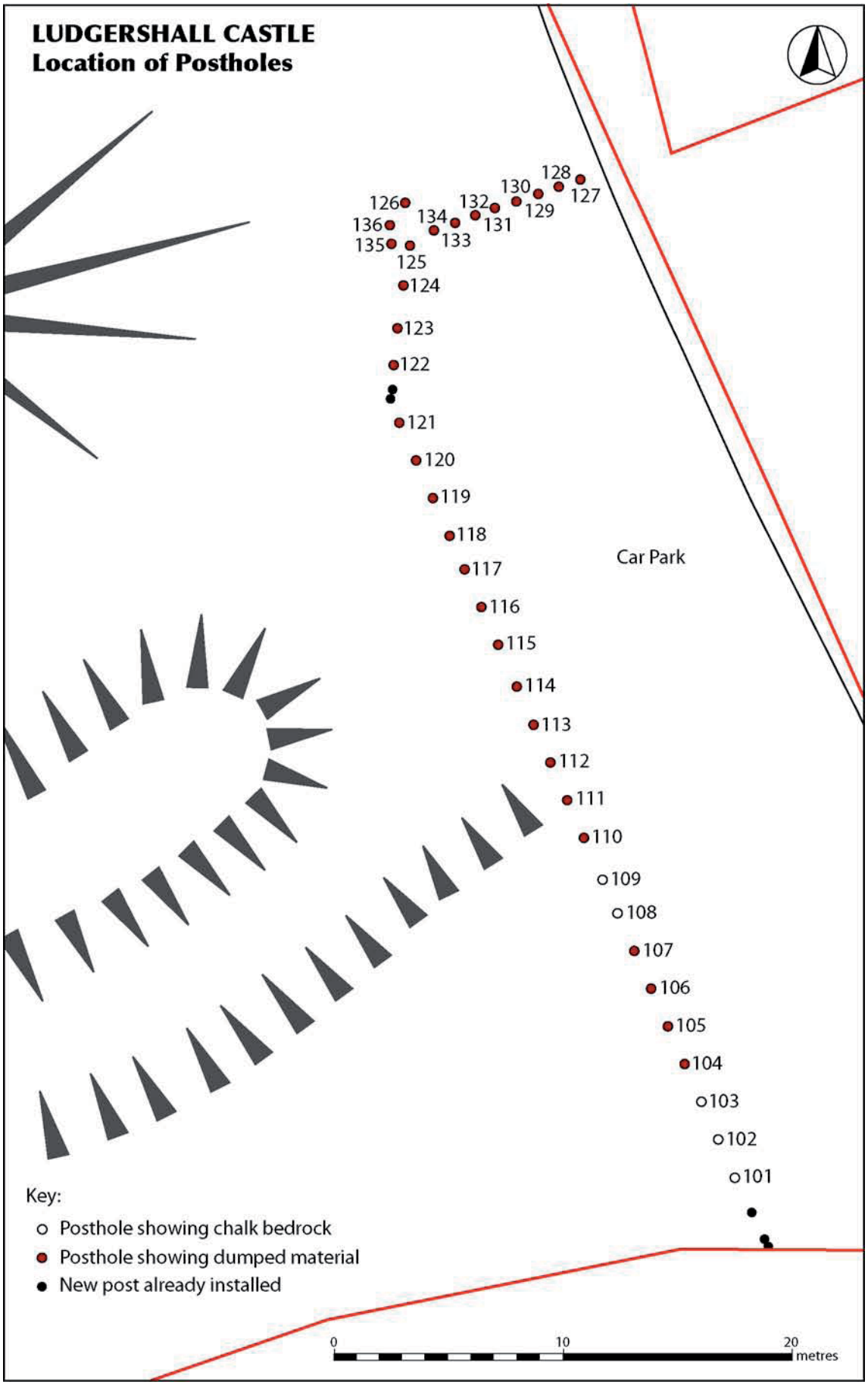

Figure 3: Location of postholes

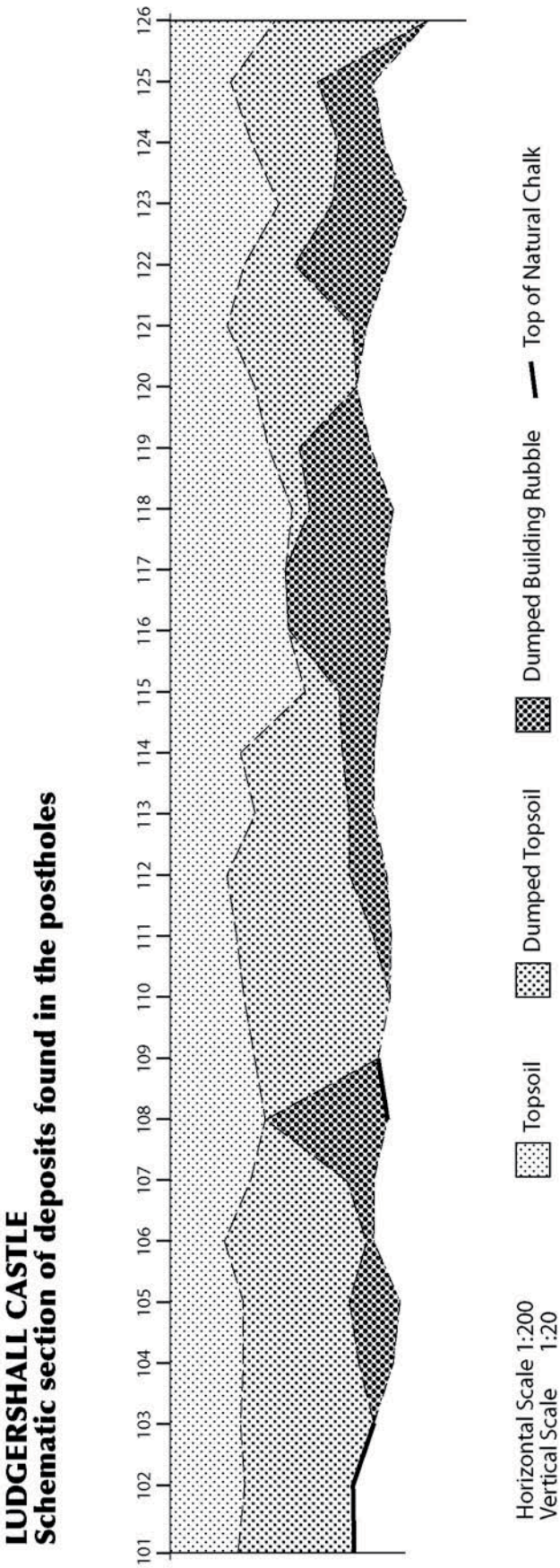

Figure 4: Schematic section showing deposits found in fence postholes

Plate 1: General view of site of new fencing, from north.

Plate 2: Fence posthole 102, western edge of car park

Plate 3: Fence posthole 117, western edge of car park.

Plate 4: Postholes northern edge of car park.

Plate 5: Bollard posthole 129, northern edge of car park.

Plate 6: Bollard posthole 134, northern edge of car park.

Plate 7: Kissing gate postholes 135 and 136, view from the south.

Plate 8: Kissing gate postholes 135 and 136, view from the east.

APPENDIX 1: Posthole Stratigraphic Summary

(Depth below ground level in metres)

Posthole	Type	Topsoil	Dumped Topsoil	Dumped Building Rubble	Chalk Bedrock	Depth of posthole	Finds Noted
101	Fence	0	0.20	—	0.54	0.56	CBM
102	Fence	0	0.22	—	0.54	0.60	CBM
103	Fence	0	0.21	—	0.60	0.62	—
104	Fence	0	0.22	0.56	—	0.66	CBM
105	Fence	0	0.22	0.53	—	0.68	CBM
106	Fence	0	0.16	0.58	—	0.60	CBM, Mortar
107	Fence	0	0.24	0.52	—	0.60	CBM, Flint
108	Fence	0	—	0.28	—	0.64	CBM, Flint
109	Fence	0	0.25	—	—	0.63	—
110	Fence	0	0.22	—	—	0.65	CBM
111	Fence	0	0.20	0.60	—	0.65	Floor Tile
112	Fence	0	0.17	0.53	—	0.64	Flint, Bone
113	Fence	0	0.25	0.53	—	0.60	CBM, Flint
114	Fence	0	0.21	0.51	—	0.60	CBM
115	Fence	0	0.40	0.50	—	0.62	CBM, Flint, Mortar
116	Fence	0	—	0.35	—	0.65	CBM, Flint
117	Fence	0	—	0.34	—	0.63	CBM, Flint
118	Fence	0	0.36	0.41	—	0.66	CBM, Flint
119	Fence	0	0.29	0.38	—	0.59	CBM, Flint
120	Fence	0	0.25	0.55	—	0.55	CBM
121	Fence	0	0.17	0.54	—	0.58	CBM, Flint, Metal
122	Fence	0	0.22	0.37	—	0.64	CBM, Flint
123	Fence	0	0.32	0.48	—	0.70	CBM, Flint
124	Fence	0	0.24	0.50	—	0.63	CBM, Flint, Glass
125	Fence	0	0.18	0.44	—	0.60	CBM, Flint
126	Gate	0	—	0.31	—	0.76	CBM
127	Bollard	0	—	0.10	—	0.50	CBM, Flint
128	Bollard	0	—	0.10	—	0.50	CBM, Flint
129	Bollard	0	—	0.10	0.40	0.60	CBM, Flint
130	Bollard	0	0.10	0.35	0.50	0.60	CBM, Flint
131	Bollard	0	0.10	0.35	0.50	0.50	CBM, Flint
132	Bollard	0	0.10	0.35	0.50	0.60	CBM, Flint
133	Bollard	0	0.10	0.35	—	0.60	CBM, Flint
134	Bollard	0	0.10	0.40	—	0.60	CBM, Flint
135	Gate	0	0.10	0.40	—	0.60	CBM, Flint
136	Gate	0	0.10	0.40	—	0.60	CBM, Flint

CBM = Ceramic Building Material