

**NEW SWIMMING POOL, PENNSYLVANIA CASTLE,  
WAKEHAM, PORTLAND, DORSET  
Archaeological Observations and Recording**



**Report No. 53085.1**

**December 2002**

# **New Swimming Pool, Pennsylvania Castle, Wakeham, Portland, Dorset Archaeological Observations and Recording, April–May 2002**

## **CONTENTS**

Summary .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Archaeological and Historical background .....	1
Aims and Objectives .....	2
Methods.....	2
Results .....	2
Conclusions .....	3
Project Archive .....	3
References .....	3
Figures	
1 Location map .....	4
2 Site plan.....	5
3 Plan of Pennsylvania Castle in the late 19 <sup>th</sup> century .....	6
Plates	
1 General view of site from SW, with Rufus Castle in background .....	7
2 North end of site from west.....	7
3 South end of site from west.....	7
4 Wall footings from west.....	8
5 Stone rubble and mortar debris in soakaway in NE corner of site, viewed from SW.....	8
6 West-facing view along north edge of site.....	8
Appendices	
1 List of all contexts.....	9

Report written by:

Peter Bellamy

Prepared on behalf of:

Mr and Mrs S. L. Curtis

Through their agents:

John Stark Crickmay Partnership  
13 & 14 Princes Street  
DORCHESTER DT1 1TW

# **New Swimming Pool, Pennsylvania Castle, Wakeham, Portland, Dorset**

## **Archaeological Observations & Recording, April–May 2002**

### **SUMMARY**

*A watching brief was carried out during the construction of a new swimming pool on the south side of Pennsylvania Castle, Portland. Traces of a stone wall footing from the kitchen, probably demolished in 1911, was observed, just to the south of the existing building. Deposits of probable demolition debris and levelling layers of the same date were also observed. No earlier material was noted.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

This project, comprising an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a new swimming pool, was commissioned by John Stark Crickmay Partnership, on behalf of their clients Mr and Mrs S. L. Curtis.

The site lies within the gardens of Pennsylvania Castle, immediately to the south of the existing building. Pennsylvania Castle is located at the southern end of Wakeham, at Ordnance Survey NGR SY695711 (Figure 1, Plate 1), in a dramatic location on a natural terrace overlooking Church Ope Cove. The ground slopes down to the east and lies about 65 m above Ordnance Datum. The garden is walled to the west and south and comprises lawns, trees and flower beds. The lawn is undulating with a prominent bank running along the contours at the southern end of the site. The area to the east of the house is terraced. The underlying geology is mapped as Lower Purbeck Beds (Geological Survey of Great Britain 1:50,000 Sheet 342 *Weymouth Drift* 1976).

Pennsylvania Castle is a Grade II listed building.

The groundworks comprised the machine excavation of an area approximately 19 m by 15.5 m across, to form a level terrace at a depth of about 1.0 m below present ground levels. Deeper trenches were then excavated along the northern end of the area, adjacent to the existing building, in the centre of the site for the swimming pool, and on the eastern and western edges for drains and soakaways (Figure 2).

The fieldwork was carried out between 18<sup>th</sup> April – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2002 by Peter Bellamy.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the following for their help and cooperation during this project: Mr & Mrs Curtis, the landowners; Roy Fewtrell, architect, John Stark Crickmay Partnership; Iain Harborow, contract manager; C. G. Fry & Son Ltd, groundwork contractor.

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Pennsylvania Castle was built in 1800 for John Penn, Governor of Portland, to the design of James Wyatt (RCHME 1970, 253). It is of two and three storeys, with walls of ashlar and squared rubble and roofed in slate. The original plan consisted of a rectangular block with small rectangular towers on each corner with a larger circular tower adjoining the northeast corner. The main part of the castle was extended and altered in 1911. The area of the swimming pool extension was

previously partly occupied by single storey outbuildings (Figure 3). These are likely to have been demolished as part of the building works in 1911.

Pennsylvania Castle lies close to two significant medieval buildings. It is about 150 m WSW of Rufus Castle, a late 15<sup>th</sup> century rebuilding of an earlier 12<sup>th</sup> century castle and about 80 m to the west of St Andrews Church, which was built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

## 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 observations were carried out in compliance with the specification prepared by Terrain Archaeology (Document 3090, May 2002) and in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (1994, rev. 1999).

The location of the groundworks was surveyed by taped measurements from the existing buildings. All depths have been recorded as below present ground levels.

All archaeological deposits and features exposed during the works were recorded using components of the Terrain Archaeology recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records.

The records 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, Dorset County Museum.

## RESULTS

### *Natural deposits*

The stripping of the area of the swimming pool extension revealed natural broken limestone slatt in a reddish-brown clay matrix across the site. The upper part of this is much more clayey, becoming stonier with depth. The natural was exposed at a depth of 0.4 m, immediately below the garden soil, on the western (uphill) part of the site. It was more deeply buried on the eastern side of the site, at about 1.1 m below present ground levels.

### *Building remains*

After the initial stripping of the area down to a depth of about 1 m below existing ground levels, the northernmost c. 6 m, adjacent to the existing building, appeared to have more stone rubble than the rest of the site. This may have been a remnant of the former outhouses in this area, but there was nothing that could be positively identified as part of a structure.

Deeper excavation at the northern end of the site revealed the remains of a stone wall running parallel to and 0.9 m south of the existing southern wall of the building (Figure 2). This wall was 0.4 m wide and was constructed from squared limestone rubble bonded with lime mortar (Plate 4). This was likely to be part of the building range demolished in 1911, perhaps the south wall

of the kitchen (Figure 3). Most of the rest of the area close to the existing building was disturbed by modern drains (Plate 6).

During the excavations for the new drains and soakaway in the northeastern corner of the site, an area of mixed limestone rubble and lime mortar debris was exposed. This had vertical edges and appeared to be oriented roughly north–south. (Plate 5) To the east of this stone and mortar rubble were a series of garden soil layers, but, to the west, the area had been destroyed by the digging of the new drain trenches. This stone rubble may be the destroyed remnants of the eastern wall of the former outhouses (Figure 2). Another patch of stone rubble and mortar debris was exposed about 0.8 m south of the existing building, which may be another remnant from the demolition of the outhouses.

### *Landscaping*

At the western (uphill) side of the site, the dark grey-brown clay loam garden soil was about 0.4 m thick and lay directly on top of the natural deposits. To the east, the thickness of the deposits overlying the natural increased to about 1.1 m. The section exposed in the side of the soakaway in the southeastern corner of the site revealed the full sequence. Here, immediately overlying the natural was a 0.3 m thick layer of dark grey-brown clay loam soil, sealed by a 0.4 m thick layer of dark grey-brown clay loam soil with large quantities of limestone rubble, which was covered, in turn, by a 0.4 m thick layer of dark grey-brown clay loam soil. Large quantities of late 19<sup>th</sup> century material were noted from the upper layers during machine stripping.

It would appear that the level of the eastern half of the garden has been raised by the dumping of deposits of stone rubble and soil on top of the original garden soil. It is likely that this was done after the demolition of the outbuildings and the remodelling of the house in 1911.

### *Finds*

No finds were retained from the watching brief.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

No archaeological evidence for activity that pre-dates the construction of Pennsylvania Castle was observed.

The wall footing exposed just south of the existing building, almost certainly is part of the remnants of the south wall of the kitchen, which was demolished in 1911. The all other deposits encountered can be associated with this demolition and the subsequent landscaping of the garden.

## **PROJECT ARCHIVE**

The archive (Terrain Archaeology Project No. 53085) will be deposited with Dorset County Museum, which has agreed in principle to accept the archive, subject to fulfilment of the Museum's requirements of the preparation of archaeological archives. A copy of the microfilmed archive will be deposited with the National Monuments Record.

## **REFERENCES**

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| RCHME 1970 | Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England 1970 <i>An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the county of Dorset 2, South East.</i> |
|------------|---|

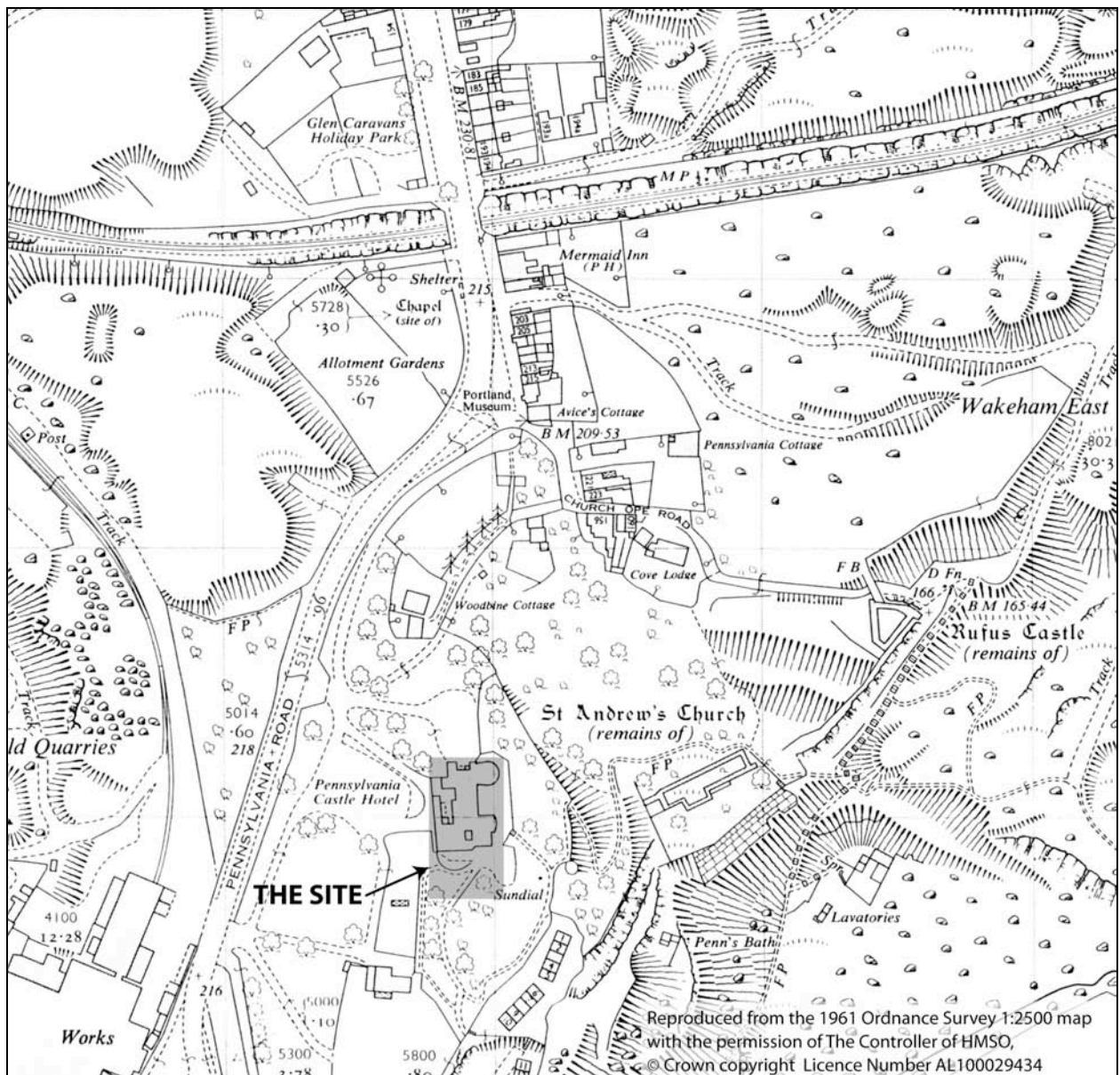


Figure 1: Location map



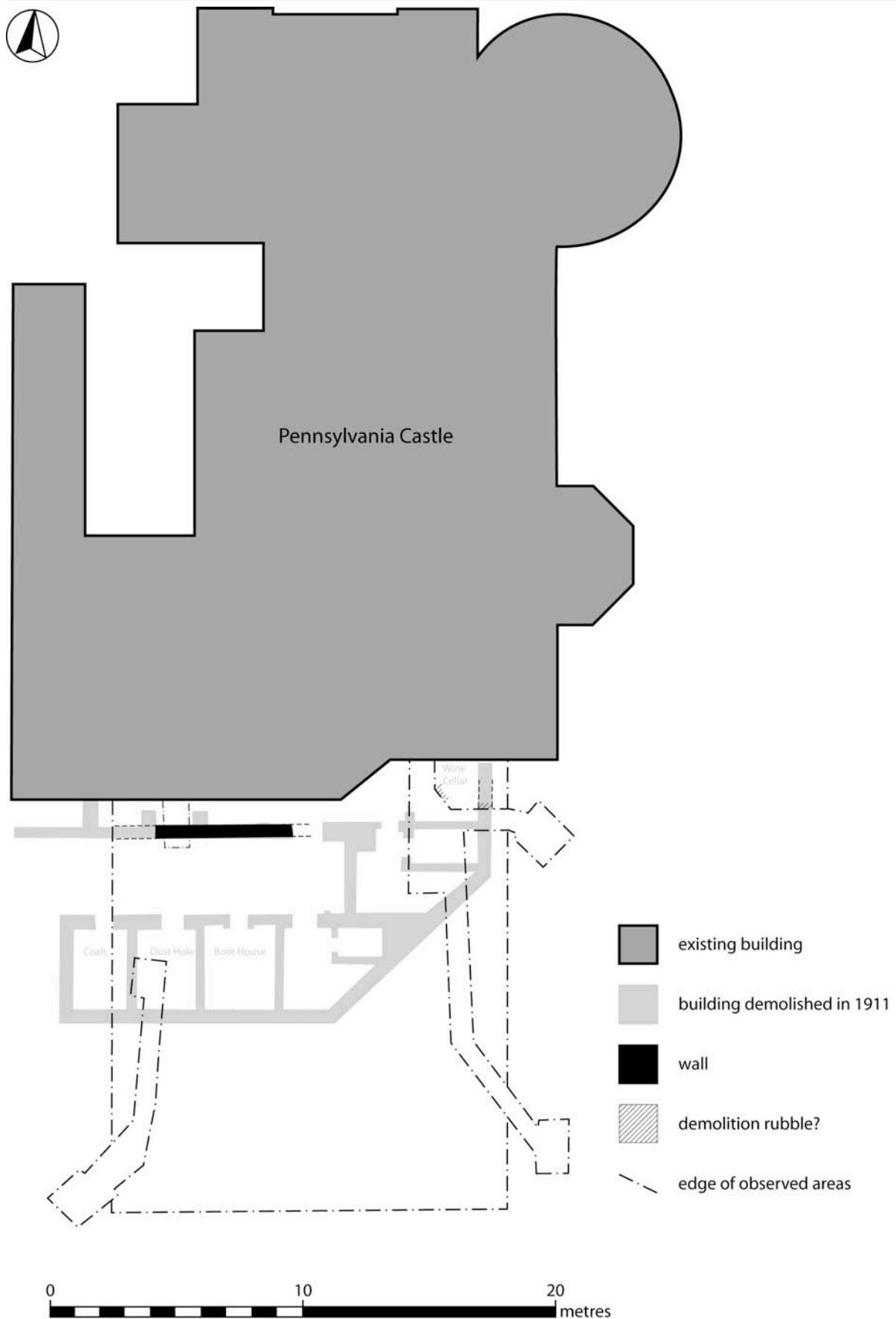


Figure 2: Site plan

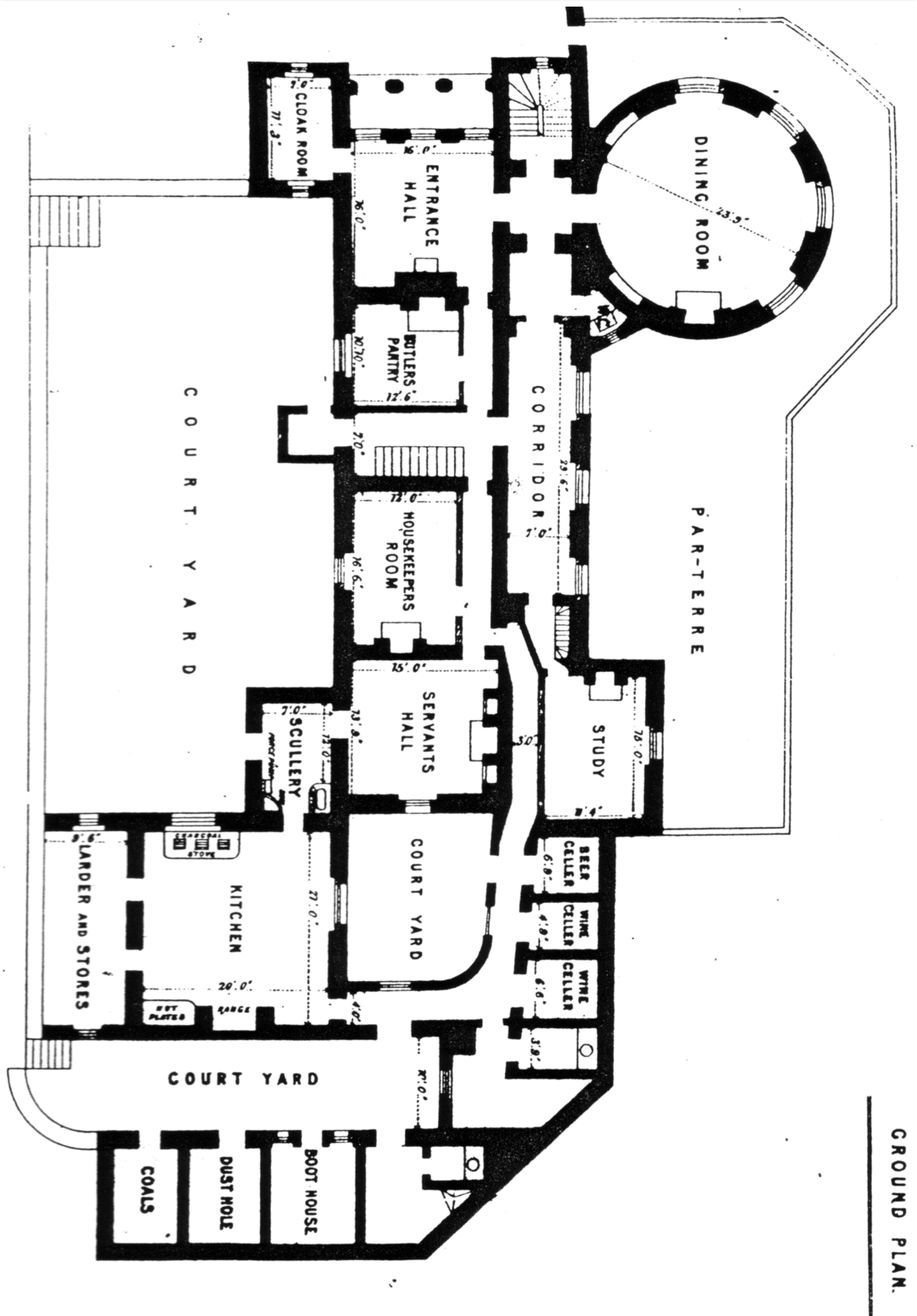


Figure 3: Plan of Pennsylvania Castle in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (from a drawing provided by John Stark Crickmay Partnership)





*Plate 1: General view of site from SW, with Rufus Castle in background.*



*Plate 2: North end of site from west.*



*Plate 3: South end of site from west.*





*Plate 4: Wall footings from west*



*Plate 5: Stone rubble and mortar debris in soakaway in NE corner of the site, viewed from SW.*



*Plate 6: West-facing view along north edge of site.*