# Bolsover Castle Play Area

## Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief

**K. Mapplethorpe**

**2014**

**Project Code – BPA2**

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Working shot, looking towards the Riding House Range.

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## *Summary*


- English Heritage wishes to develop a small area of land within the grounds of Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire. The development site is immediately north of the Bolsover Castle Visitor Centre and approximately 70m south east of the Riding School Range. It is bounded to the east by the castle wall which is situated on the top of a steep escarpment. The open area of the Outer Court is situated to the west.

- The work has been undertaken following a successful planning application (13/00489/FUL) for the erection of a children's play area on the site. Due to the possibility that archaeological remains relating to the castle may be present on the site a watching brief was requested by the Derbyshire County Council Development Control Archaeologist, Steve Baker.

- The proposed redevelopment site is located off Castle Street within the Medieval town of Bolsover. It is approximately 10km east of Chesterfield and 12 km north-west of Mansfield. Topographically, the site slopes from east to west, with the development site situated on a slightly raised, level area previously used as a tennis court during the early 20th century.

- A total of eight trenches were stripped of topsoil in a preset pattern relating to areas where play equipment will be located. Within these areas deeper excavations were undertaken for the foundations of the play equipment.

- The watching brief has demonstrated that no archaeological remains are present within the proposed development site. With only occasional variation the trenches presented a consistent stratigraphic sequence of topsoil overlying a layer of compacted red clay (the former surfacing of a tennis court), above a subsoil comprising broken limestone chunks and chips within a dark brown silty soil matrix, a deposit known locally as ''ratchel'' which overlies bed rock (dolostone).

- Given that the site is within the castle boundary, it had been expected that some evidence of Medieval or Post-Medieval occupation or land use may have been discovered. However, it appears that any evidence that may have once been present has been lost, possibly during the construction of the tennis court during the early 20th century which almost certainly involved levelling and definitely involved the importing of material. All of the finds (almost exclusively post-medieval) that were recovered were found within the topsoil layer which has most likely been imported from elsewhere in order to cover the tennis court prior to turfing. Therefore, the finds are likely to be little significance to the history of the site.

**'BOLSOVER CASTLE PLAY AREA,**

**REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**Prepared by K. Mapplethorpe**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1 English Heritage wishes to develop a small area of land within the grounds of Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire (SK 47198 70624). The development site is immediately north of the Bolsover Castle Visitor Centre and approximately 70m south east of the Riding School Range. It is bounded to the east by the castle wall which is situated on the top of a steep escarpment. The open area of the Outer Court is situated to the west. The Derbyshire County Council Development Control Archaeologist (DCCDCA) has advised that the application site may contain archaeological remains pertaining to the Medieval and/or Post-Medieval castle occupation.

1.2 Trent & Peak Archaeology were subsequently contracted by English Heritage to carry out an archaeological watching brief at the site, in line with the planning consent (13/00489/FUL). The intention of the investigation was to identify any archaeological remains that would be affected by the development and to record these as appropriate.

## 2. PROJECT BACKGROUND.

2.1 The proposed redevelopment site is located off Castle Street within the Medieval town of Bolsover. It is approximately 10km east of Chesterfield and 12 km north-west of Mansfield. Topographically, the site slopes from east to west, with the development site situated on a slightly raised, level area previously used as a tennis court during the early 20$^{th}$ century.

2.2 The 1:50,000 British Geological Mapping shows that site is situated on Cadeby Formation Dolostone, a sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 251 to 271 million years ago during the Permian Period. This indicates a local environment previously dominated by shallow carbonate seas (http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html). No superficial geology is recorded for the site location, but upon excavation is was found to be layers of fractured dolostone mixed with silt and sand (locally referred to as 'ratchel').

2.3 As part of the planning consent for the development the DCCDA imposed a condition stating that:

> *"a) No development shall take place until a Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological work has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing, and until any pre-start element of the approved scheme has been completed to the written satisfaction of the local planning authority. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and*
> *1. The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording*
> *2. The programme for post investigation assessment*
> *3. Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording*
> *4. Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
> *5. Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation*
> *6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organization to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation"*
>
> *"b) No development shall take place other than in accordance with the archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (a)."*
>
> *"c) The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition (a) and the provision to be made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured."*
>
> *"d) Any significant archaeological features which are revealed when carrying out the development hereby permitted shall be retained in situ and reported to the English Heritage Inspector and Development Control Archaeologist immediately. Works shall be*

*halted until provision has been made for the retention in situ of the relevant remains in accordance with details submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority"*

2.4 Further consultation with the Derbyshire Development Control Archaeologist indicated that a watching brief undertaken during the works would be sufficient mitigation for the proposed development.

## 3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.

*By Richard Sheppard*

3.1 The present-day mansion of Bolsover Castle largely dates from the 17th century but is on the site of a formerly fortified Medieval castle, of which little evidence survives today. The most prominent building on the site, the Little Castle, is adjacent to a walled garden whose polygonal shape is believed to replicate the course of an original inner bailey, possibly a ring work dating from the later 11th century when the manor of Bolsover was granted to William Peveril, following the Norman Conquest of England. The extent of the Medieval castle has long been thought to be marked by the remains of an earthen bank by the present castle entrance at the north-west end of Castle Street. This bank once extended further to form an effective south-east barrier across the neck of the dolostone promontory that the castle site occupies; beyond this manmade barrier the castle was defended by steep natural falls in height.

3.2 The Outer Court, a largely open area between the bank and the 17$^{th}$ century Riding School Range has historically been known as *Castle Yard*. It is named so on early survey plans of the castle by Senior in c.1630 and Colbeck in 1739. Knyff's engraving of the castle from 1698 shows the area as a walled and fenced enclosure under grass, an area next to the Riding School Range that was almost certainly used for grazing horses in the 17th century. At this time the main approach to the Castle was the driveway along the south-west edge of the promontory, leading to the Terrace Range and the Little Castle steps. The 1780 enclosure map of the town still showed Castle Yard as an open area but now divided into a west and an east half by a straight boundary running through the middle. In the late 18th century a small school was built on Castle Street and in 1840 a Gothic-style house built for the school master encroached onto the south-west corner of the Yard, followed later by a new school in 1868-72. By 1875 a drive had been laid out across the east half of the Yard, running between the minor entrance at the end of Castle Street and a gateway into the Great Court, beyond the Riding School Range.

3.3 Between c.1900-18 Castle Yard was further divided up, with a tennis court laid out in the eastern part and a bowling green in the west part. After 1945 and the acquisition of the Castle by the Ministry of Works, a bungalow was built near the site entrance (roughly in the position of the later visitor centre), with separate halves for the site custodian and the head gardener. Another track was laid out east of the existing drive and across where the tennis court had been, to a probable equipment store / garage just beyond the east end of the bungalow. These features still show in the grass during dry spells. Services to the Castle (water, electricity and gas) followed the west edge of the drive.

3.4 Six small trenches were excavated for replacing diseased trees alongside the east side of the drive in 1979. The remains of 8 undated human burials were found in three of the holes at depths of 0.7m to 0.8m; they were generally orientated east-west. A post-hole was seen in one trench, and some sherds of medieval pottery recovered from undisturbed stratigraphical levels. Four burials were found in Trench A, three in Trench B and a single one in Trench D, some 56m south of the entrance to the Great Court. These, and other burials found to the north within the *Great Court*, are thought to date to within the 14th-17th century period when the castle site was largely unoccupied.

3.5 In 1996 six small test-pits around 0.2m² were dug by *Northamptonshire Archaeology* as part of their third season of exploratory investigations at the Castle. These were widely spaced but being relatively small in dimension were only taken to a maximum depth of 0.4m and, consequently, were not informative.

3.6 Two T-shaped anchor points 1.1m across and 0.45m deep were excavated by ground-staff for use in a forthcoming tattoo in 1997. In an attempt to locate another point previously put in, an area

near anchor point A was de-turfed. This came down on to the gravel surface belonging to the former track mentioned above. The anchor points cut through topsoil, subsoil to 0.2m depth, and into a consistent limestone rubble and clay soil mixture. No bedrock was exposed (Sheppard 1997).

3.7 In 2002 a set of 27 small pits were dug for a marquee on the platform that is thought to have been formed for the former tennis court. Despite its supposed flatness, the ground slopes gently westwards and northwards, in total by over a metre. The west edge of the supposed tennis court platform has a pronounced dip of 0.2m, and the ground falls a further half-metre to the drive. The site chosen for the marquee is relatively prominent. No definite archaeological features were observed and the finds only included one sherd of medieval pottery; the rest were relatively late in date. Along the west side of the marked area the gravelled track was encountered in two pits and a concrete slab in two other pits was found to overlie a drainage pipe which had run alongside the track between the Ministry of Works bungalow and the outlet near the toilet block at the north end of the Yard. Other pits along this side had a consistent sequence of topsoil, subsoil, broken limestone with soil (referred to locally as *'ratchel')* and bedrock. Bedrock was found at only 0.35-0.55 depth and had not been penetrated by any obvious archaeological features. The *'ratchel'* in one pit may have been disturbed by a feature, but this was uncertain. Most pits forming the short sides and the east long side of the rectangle contained introduced material – varying from individual layers of re-deposited stone and soil, brick dust and chippings, ground stone, tile and brick, mortar, yellow clay and dark clay soil (possibly buried topsoil). These layers went down to an average depth of 0.45m and appear to have been introduced. Although some fragments of plaster and old tiles were found amongst the rubble, most finds were 19th century or early 20th century in date. The only early finds were a single medieval pot sherd and a piece of daub, both re-deposited. In two-thirds of the total of 27 pits bedrock was found at a depth of 0.5-0.6m; with the ground sloping naturally from east to west (Sheppard 2002).

3.8 The decision was made in the late 1990s to erect a new visitor centre within the castle grounds, close to the existing entrance and over the site of the by now demolished bungalow. As a first step an evaluation excavation was carried out across the footprint of the new building and the surrounding area affected. This was followed by an excavation of the full site. In 1997 two evaluation trenches, numbered 01 and 02, were excavated. Trench 01 penetrated the bank of the former Medieval castle's outer bailey and the underlying buried soil was found to contain pottery dating from the late Saxon to the early Medieval period, thereby dating the bank's construction to after the late 11th century. The remaining part of the trench and Trench 02 provided other evidence for Medieval occupation of the area. Here the topsoil was found to go down to 0.2m and the subsoil to 0.35m. The natural limestone was found to have dips suggestive of fissures in the underlying rock. A year later the full area to be occupied by the new building was excavated. Here, large post-pits belonging to part of an aisled timber building were found. This was interpreted as a structure running north-south, with either one or two aisles, this point remaining uncertain as a later quarry pit had removed evidence for any former east aisle. A series of smaller post-pits at the south end of the building could have been for an outshot, perhaps replaced by a fence on a slightly different alignment. Finds from the post-pits and a nearby cess-pit collectively indicated a probable domestic use of the building and a construction date in the first half of the 13th century. An alternative function as an administrative building might explain its more public position close to the likely site entrance. The building's use terminated towards the end of the same century. These dates correlated with what is known from the limited documentary record of the castle (Sheppard 1998a, Sheppard 1998b, Sheppard 1999).

3.9 From the visitor centre evaluation and a subsequent watching brief on the south-east side of the bank it was concluded that the surviving earthen bank of the Medieval castle had a total width of about 12m and survives, with topsoil, to less than 1.5m in height. Such a low height-width ratio would result from a reduction of the bank's height prior to the present wall being built upon its crest. References in documents from 1771-75 to workmen 'getting stone in the Castleyard Bank' suggests that part of the bank was actively quarried, in part to provide stone for building 'a fence wall in the Castle Yard' (*Nottinghamshire Archives, Portland Collection Bundle 15*). Part of the wall skirting the east side of Castle Yard is shown in Figure 9. This shows a length where a lower buttress and some concrete reinforcements can be seen. Although it is not clear if Knyff shows a wall along this side of the Castle Yard, both the survey plans suggest that there had been one; Colbeck's plan in particular shows a dark line around most of the castle's perimeter and this is lacking where the banking was present instead. The reference of 1771-75 probably relates to the introduced boundary that was added to cut the Yard in two halves and which is shown on the enclosure map. The proposed play area is near the point at where the earthen bank terminated and the walling started. There is a notable inward kink to the wall's route here which is not evident on the early survey plans (or the enclosure

map). This, and the evident reinforcing of the slope, might suggest that this area has suffered slippage in the recent past.

3.10 The castle site is a promontory position along the escarpment of a limestone plateau, naturally defended on three sides and a favoured position for a settlement requiring security. There is no conclusive evidence for use of the site in the Prehistoric or Romano-British period but finds from under the earthen bank included features and 10th-11th century pottery indicating a pre-Conquest settlement; this is further supported by the old English origin of the Bolsover name. A lack of such finds elsewhere in the town might suggest that the focus of settlement may have been within the area of the Outer Bailey of the castle. The evaluation excavation of the visitor centre site found that it was extremely difficult to identify subtle features in the subsoil at Bolsover where feature fill with a high stone content was almost indistinguishable from the surrounding material and in an area already disturbed by former buildings and an aborted attempt to construct a works compound. Both here, and during the main excavation, the features became most evident once they had penetrated into the underlying natural bedrock and their fills showed up in contrast to the surrounding limestone. The discovery of the aisled hall, fence-posts and a cess-pit showed that the site has an important archaeological potential, the full nature of which was not at first obvious during the evaluation stage. The clearance of a relatively large area, 15m x 39m to a formation depth of 0.7m provided the rare opportunity to record the first known medieval structure within the castle site. Few castle sites have been explored sufficiently to determine how their ground-plans were organised, especially in the outer bailey areas. From the 13th century the typical castle may have had several halls, each the focus of a different household or social group. It is reasonable to conclude that other structures and associated features might have existed within Castle Yard and that some evidence for these survives.

## 4. OBJECTIVES.

4.1 ***The objective of the archaeological watching brief can be stated as:***

4.2 To identify the presence of any archaeological remains to be affected by any intrusive aspects of the development and to achieve an appropriate level of *preservation by record.* Where practical (within the constraints of the watching brief and development), this will include an assessment of the overall extent, date and state of preservation of archaeological remains. Any features of geoarchaeological significance will also be recorded and where there is the potential for palaeoenvironmental data, an appropriate level of sampling will be undertaken.

4.3 All excavations potentially provide an opportunity to recover palaeoenvironmental samples which contribute to an understanding of the nature of the landscape and the uses to which it was put. If appropriate archaeology is identified then a representative proportion of excavated features were to be sampled in line with the methodology set out in the WSI Appendix 2. The results of processing and analysis will be assessed in the light of the research objectives set out above.

## 5. METHODOLOGY.

5.1 ***The methodology can be summarised as:***

5.2 TPA would firstly monitor archaeologically the main soil strip up to a depth of 300mm, allowing the overall distribution and survival of remains to be revealed and the proposed footing layout tested. If at the area strip stage it was apparent that important archaeological remains (including but not limited to human and structural remains) coincide with the proposed footing locations, the EH Principal Inspector and the DCC Archaeologist would be informed and to their satisfaction alternative locations would be explored and identified. Following this, excavation of the foundation trenches 800mm in depth (500mm of additional depth) would be undertaken and monitored/excavated archaeologically. If significant archaeology was identified, work would immediately cease and the DCC archaeologist and EH Principal Inspector would be consulted, and would decide on an appropriate methodology before work could recommence.

5.3 No existing services were known to be present within the development area, and CAT scanning undertaken by the groundworkers did not reveal any previously unidentified services.

5.4 Features were to be hand-cleaned and planned, then excavated to determine their plan and form, and to recover any datable artefacts. Each feature sample excavated was be removed by contextual change (the smallest usefully definable unit of stratification) in spits no greater than 5cm. The location of any artefacts recovered in the subsoil or in features was recorded three-dimensionally or by context if appropriate. A minimum of one section of each trench was photographed and drawn at 1:20 or by GPS if no archaeological detail is present (recording will correspondingly increase with presence of archaeological deposits). The position of each trench was located with reference to the OS 1:2500 map.

5.5 On completion of the fieldwork and monitoring by the DCC DCA the trenches were backfilled by machine.

## 6. RESULTS.

6.1 A total of eight trenches were excavated (Figure 2), the results of which are presented below. The entire site was covered by a deposit of imported topsoil 0.3m deep which contained several fragments of modern and late post-medieval pottery.

6.2 Trench 1 (7m x 3.2m). Rectangular trench aligned north-west/south-east, located towards the south edge of the proposed development site. Trench 1 contained two subsidiary trenches (1a, 1b) for the foundations of the play equipment, measuring approximately 1m by 0.5m. The main trench was stripped of topsoil (001) to a depth of 0.3m, at which the remains of the early 20$^{th}$ century tennis court (003) were found (Plate 1). This consisted of a thin layer of compacted hard red clay fragments with a maximum depth of 0.15m. Excavation of Trenches 1a and 1b were excavated through this layer to depth of c.0.3m, exposing the underlying deposit (005), comprising broken limestone chunks and chips within a dark brown silty soil matrix which averaged 0.18m in depth (Plate 2). This deposit is known locally as ‘‘ratchel’’. The bedrock (006) was encountered at the base of this deposit. No archaeologically significant finds or features were identified within Trenches 1, 1a, 1b, although a single metal plate connected to a concrete base (009) was identified as a marquee anchor point (see section 3.7).

6.3 Trench 2 (21.2m x 4.4m). L-shaped trench, positioned on the eastern edge of the proposed play area. The stratigraphic sequence was similar to that of Trench 1; however, the red clay layer of the former tennis court surface did not extend further than 2m from the south-west end of the trench. Past this point the surface changed to pale yellow compacted gravel 0.25m deep (004) which appeared to be imported hardcore. It is likely that this was the surface material used as pathways around the outside of the tennis court. After removal of topsoil a continuous shallow foundation slot was cut following the midpoint of Trench 2 to an additional depth of 0.2m (Plate 3). This demonstrated that below the compacted gravel surface (004) the stratigraphy was almost identical to that of Trench 1, with a layer of ‘ratchel’ covering the bedrock.

6.4 Trench 3 (x2m). Circular trench 2m in diameter, located in the space between the south-west end of Trench 2 and the south-east end of Trench 1. Following the removal of topsoil from Trench 3, a deeper (c.300mm) excavation was made of a 1m² area within Trench 3. This gave a maximum excavated depth for Trench 1 of c.600mm, The stratigraphy was almost identical to that in Trench 1, with topsoil 0.3m deep covering the red tennis court clay. A layer of ‘ratchel’ approximately 0.2m deep was present below the clay surface, which in turn rested above bedrock (Plate 4).

6.5 Trench 4 (x2m). Circular trench 2m in diameter, situated c.2m north-west of Trench 3. Following removal of c.300mm of topsoil the level was reduced by a further 300mm within a central 1m² area, this established an identical stratigraphic sequence to that recorded in Trench 3, with topsoil overlying the red clay of the tennis court beneath which was a layer of ‘‘ratchel’’ to a thickness of c.200mm over rock head (Plate 5).

6.5 Trench 5 (1m x 0.5m). Rectangular trench aligned north-west/south-east and located c.1m north of Trench 4. The small trench was excavated in its entirety to a depth of 0.5m. As with Trenches 1, 3 and 4 the red clay layer of the former tennis court surface was encountered at a depth of c. 0.3m deep (Plate 6). This layer had a maximum thickness of 0.15m and directly overlay the ‘‘ratchel’’ deposit. Bedrock was revealed at approximately 0.6m.

6.6 Trench 6 (1m x 0.5m). Rectangular trench aligned north-west/south-east and positioned c.2.5m north-west of Trench 6. Excavation to a depth of 0.5m revealed an identical stratigraphic sequence (Plate 7) to that recorded for Trench 5.

6.7 Trench 7 (7.75m x 3.5m). Rectangular trench aligned north-east/south-west. The main trench contained subsidiary foundation trenches (Figure 2, 7a-d), each measuring c. 1m x 1m and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.8m. As with trench 2, the trench contained a mixture of red tennis court clay and imported hardcore approximately 0.15m deep below the topsoil, which covered a layer of 'ratchel' (Plate 8). The bedrock was encountered at approximately 0.5m. A second marquee anchor point (010) was uncovered below the topsoil in this trench, which extended through all layers into the natural bedrock. A disused modern water pipe was found in subsidiary trench 7d within the ratchel (005) at approximately 0.45m deep.

6.8 Trench 8 (7m x 3m). Rectangular trench aligned north-west/south-east positioned within the south-west corner of the playground area (Figure 2). Two deeper triangular extensions were excavated on the north-east and south-west sides of the main trench (Figure 2), each accommodating two foundations and cut to a depth of 0.8m. The excavations revealed the red clay layer (003) of the former tennis court at a depth of 0.3m, directly below the topsoil. The clay layer was again c. 0.15m in thickness and was located above the ''ratchel'' layer (005) which was approximately 0.2m deep. This was situated directly above the bedrock (006). A disused modern drainage pipe (007) was found at the base of Trench 8, with its trench cut through the bedrock to a depth of approximately 0.8m and filled by (008), consisting of redeposited topsoil and 'ratchel' with crushed patches of red clay, indicating that it was later in date than the tennis court (Plate 9).

6.9 Fence Holes (0.2m diam. x 0.5m deep). A total of 28 fence holes were excavated around the limits of the play area (Figure 2). The holes were excavated with a boreholer down to the 'ratchel' layer, and thereafter with a small breaker. Due to the small diameter of the holes it was not possible to observe the base of the holes during excavation, but the upcast was monitored for finds and photographs of the completed holes were taken (Plate 10).

## 7. THE FINDS by Lee Elliott

| Site Code | Find Code | Material | Object | Period | Context |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BPA2 | AAA | Pot | Base – White Ware, 19th – 20th century | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAB | Pot | Rim – White Ware with basket weave pattern, 19th – 20th century | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAC | CBM | Tile fragment, indeterminate date | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAD | Pot | Rim – White Ware with blue transfer pattern, 19th – 20th century | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAE | Pot | Body – White ware with blue transfer pattern, 19th – 20th century | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAF | Pot | Rim – White Ware with green transfer pattern, 19th – 20th century | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAG | Pot | Base – White ware, 19th – 20th century | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAH | Pot | Body – White Ware, 19th – 20th century | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAI | Pot | Base – White Ware with blue glaze, 19th – 20th century | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAJ | CBM | Tile fragment, indeterminate date | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAK | Pot | Body – possibly Cistercian/Black Ware, 16th – 17th century | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAL | CBM | Tile fragment, indeterminate date | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAM | CBM | Tile fragment, indeterminate date | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAN | Pot | Base – White Ware, 19th – 20th century | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAO | Pot | Base – White Ware, 19th – 20th century | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAP | CBM | Tile fragment, indeterminate date | P/M | 001 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BPA2 | AAQ | Ceramic | Clay pipe stem with slag adhering | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAR | Pot | Body – White Ware, 19th – 20th century | P/M | 001 |
| BPA2 | AAS | Glass | Blue glass fragment | P/M | 001 |

All finds were recovered from the topsoil (001).

Post-medieval pottery was recovered, predominantly in the form of White Ware, a standard table ware dating to the 19th and early 20th century – some of this had blue transfer patterns.

One sherd is potentially identifiable as Cistercian/Black Ware, dating to the 16th/17th century.

The remaining finds consisted of tile fragments of indeterminate date, one fragment of modern blue glass and a clay pipe stem with black, glass like slag adhering.

**Archive Statement**

**Bolsover Castle Play Area**
**Trent & Peak Archaeology project code: BPA2**

**Accession no:**

**Archive**
The archive is fully indexed and contains:

- Original photographic records
- Site drawings (plans, sections, elevations)
- Original context records
- Original finds records

**Artefacts**
The artefacts from the site are a typical post-medieval/modern background assemblage and as such, following identification and quantification, discard is recommended.

**Archive and finds deposition**

- As the results of the evaluation were negative the archive will be deposited in digital format with Wrest Park, and a copy of the report will be retained by the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record.

## 8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The watching brief has demonstrated that the excavated land directly north of the Bolsover Castle visitor centre (to a depth of c.0.6m below ground level) does not contain finds, features or buried land surfaces of any archaeological significance.

8.2. Given that the site is within the castle boundary, it had been expected that some evidence of Medieval or Post-Medieval occupation or land use may have been discovered. However, it appears that any evidence that may have once been present has been lost, possibly during the construction of the tennis court during the early 20th century which almost certainly involved levelling and definitely involved the importing of material. All of the finds that were recovered were found within the topsoil layer which has most likely been imported from elsewhere in order to cover the tennis court prior to turfing. Therefore, the finds may not be significant.

## ACKOWLEDGEMENTS

Trent & Peak Archaeology would like to thank Amy Saunders of English Heritage for commissioning the work. We would also like to thank Steve Baker, the Development Control Archaeologist for Derbyshire County Council, for his advice.

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# *Appendix 1. Summary context list.*

| ***Context*** | ***Description*** |
|---|---|
| 001 | Topsoil |
| 002 | VOID |
| 003 | Red clay tennis court surface |
| 004 | Imported pale yellow hardcore |
| 005 | Layer of broken limestone with soil ('ratchel') |
| 006 | Bedrock |
| 007 | Cut for modern pipe |
| 008 | Fill of 007 |
| 009 | Marquee anchor point within Trench 1 |
| 010 | Marquee anchor point within Trench 7 |

# *Appendix 2: Figures and Plates*


Figure 1: Site location

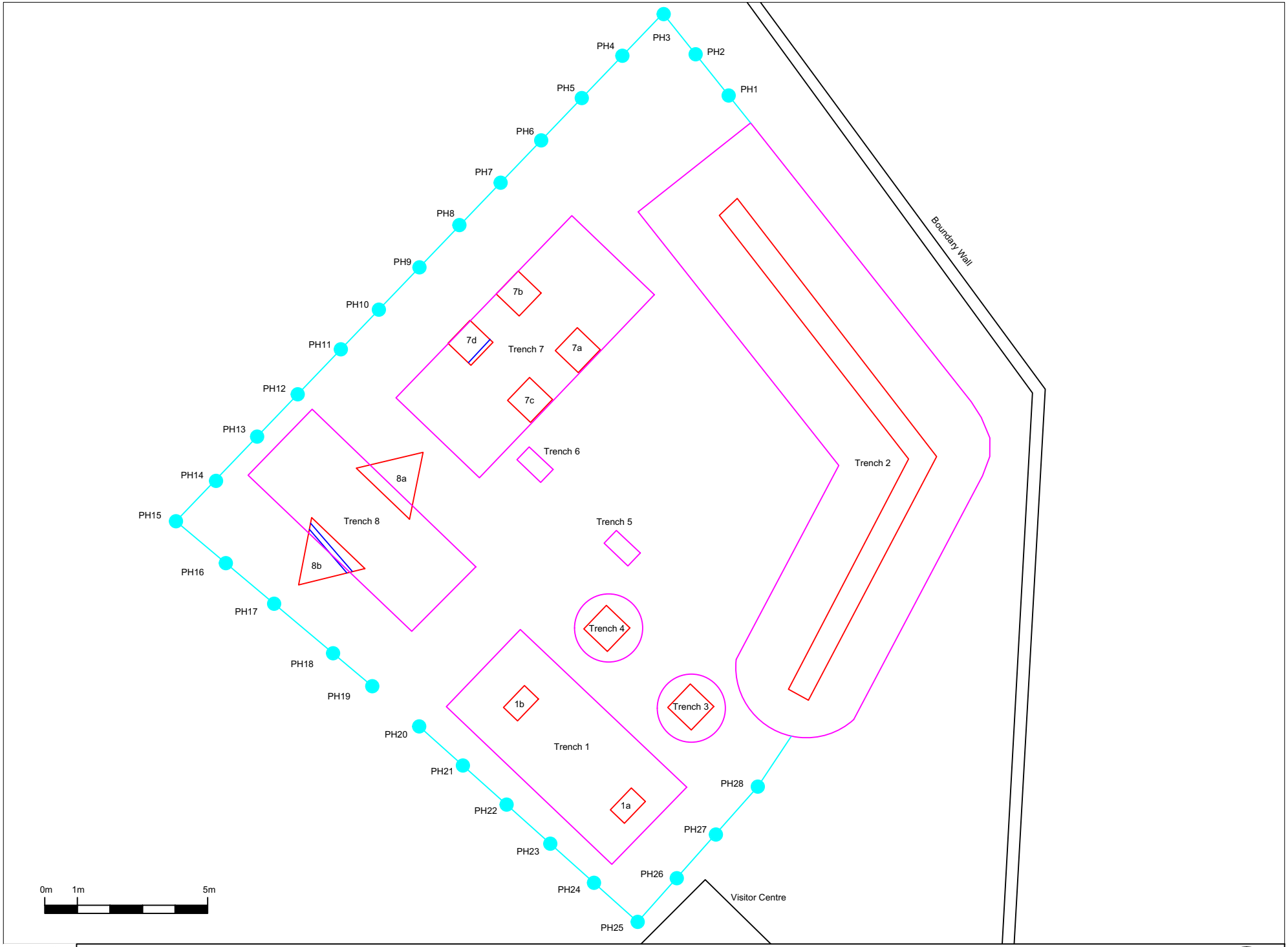


Figure 2: Site Plan

Trent & Peak ARCHAEOLOGY

Plate 1: Trench 1 after stripping showing the tennis court layer (003). Scales = 1m

Plate 2: Trench 1a. Scale = 1m


Plate 3: Trench 2. Scales = 1m


Plate 4: Trench 3. Scale = 1m.


Plate 5: Trench 4. Scale = 1m.


Plate 6: Trench 5. Scale = 1m


Plate 7: Trench 6. Scale = 1m


Plate 8: Trench 7a. Scale = 1m


Plate 9: Trench 8b, showing pipe trench [007]. Scale = 1m


Plate 10: Post-hole, showing the typical stratigraphy along the fence line.

## *Appendix 3: Written Scheme of Investigation.*

**Bolsover Castle,**

**Bolsover,**

**DERBYSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Written Scheme of Investigation.**

**2013**
**TPA Project Code BPA2**

**Wrest Park Accession No XXXX**

**TPA Report no 100/2013**
**Prepared by Dr. Gareth Davies MIfA**

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**Bolsover Castle,**
**Bolsover,**

**DERBYSHIRE**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)**

## 1. BACKGROUND

***Site Name:*** Bolsover Castle Play Area, Bolsover .
***NGR:*** SK 4600 3372
***Client:*** English Heritage.
***Planning Application No.:*** Bolsover District Council 13/00489/FUL
***Brief:*** N.A.
***Proposed Development:*** Play Area.
**Geology:** Limestone Bedrock
***Previous Archaeological Evidence:*** Four phases of interventions in the immediate vicinity, see Impact Assessment (*Appendix* 1).

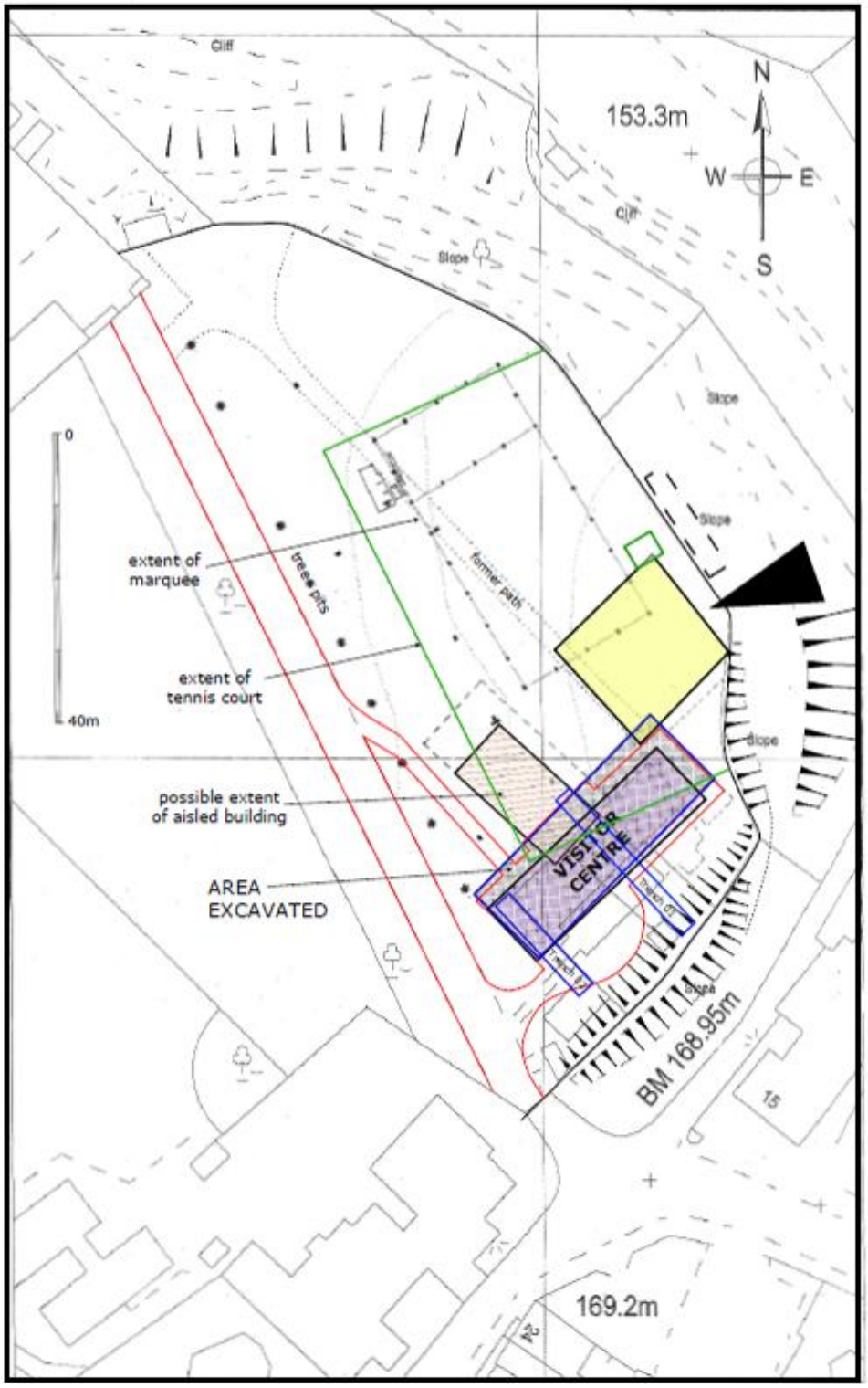



**Figure 1: Site Location (yellow) showing interventions detailed in Appendix 1**

## 2. OBJECTIVES

### *2.1. The objective of the archaeological watching brief can be stated as:*

To identify the presence of any archaeological remains to be affected by any intrusive aspects of the development (Figure 2) and to achieve an appropriate level of *preservation by record.* Where practical (within the constraints of the watching brief and development), this will include an assessment of the overall extent, date and state of preservation of archaeological remains. Any features of geoarchaeological significance will also be recorded and where there is the potential for palaeoenvironmental data, an appropriate level of sampling will be undertaken.

### *2.2. The proposed archaeological work comprises:*

Continuous archaeological monitoring of intrusive ground works with the potential to impact on features and layers of archaeological significance, with the prior agreement of the Development Control Archaeologist for Derbyshire County Council (Steve Baker) and Louise Brennan/Tim Allen/Joanna Sanderson (English Heritage).

All recording will result in 'the preparation of a report and ordered archive, in line with the guidelines of the IfA Institute for Archaeologists (*Standard and Guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* published October 1994, revised September 2001 and October 2008).

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 General conditions

*Staffing.* The work will be undertaken by suitably qualified members of TPA according to accepted archaeological practice and the Standard & Guidance' produced by the Institute for Archaeologists.

*Notice.* Clients are requested to give at least one weeks notice of the commencement of works to both TPA and the Development Control Archaeologist for DCC and the English Heritage Principle Inspector.

*Services.* The client will be responsible for carrying out service checks prior to groundworks, and will provide plans of all services within the development area.

*Base maps.* The client is requested to supply copies (preferably digital) of base maps for the Unit to use in the report.

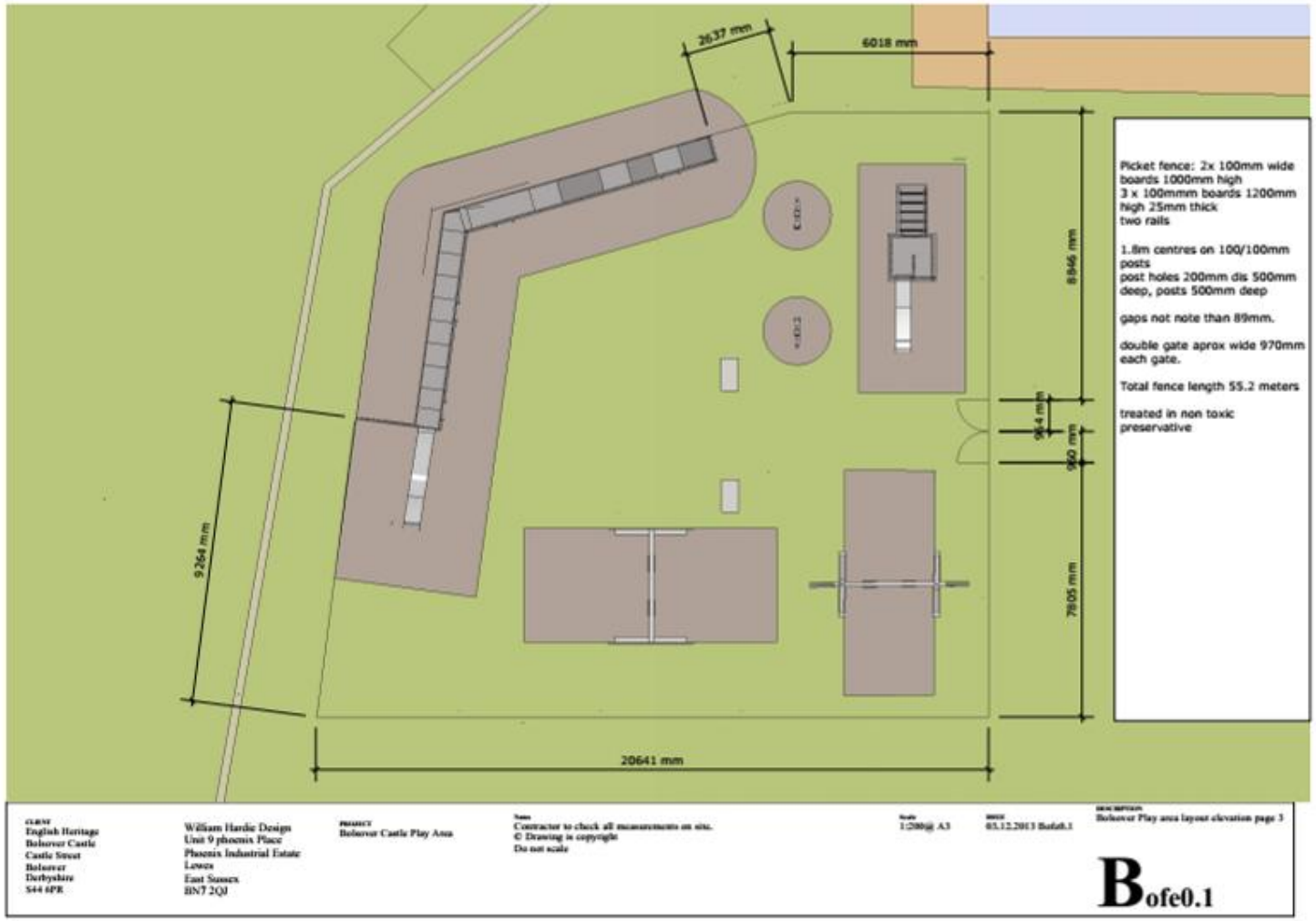
*Contingency.* If an unusually high volume of artefacts, or deposits worthy of palaeoenvironmental investigation are recovered, these may be subject to a request for contingency funding covering additional staffing and/or specialist attendance and post-excavation analysis. No requests for contingency funding would be made without the approval of the client and the recommendation of the Development Control Archaeologist for DCC and the English Heritage Principle Inspector. Should archaeological remains be encountered that cannot be treated to a satisfactory and proper standard within the resources allocated to the watching brief the Development Control Archaeologist will immediately be informed. This may entail ceasing site work until

recourses are in place to either ensure preservation *in situ* or adequate treatment of the archaeological remains.

*Report.* A record of the results, whether positive or not, will be made and presented in an appropriate report format to the client, the Development Control Archaeologist for DCC, and the English Heritage Principle Inspector within 6 weeks of the completion of the fieldwork. For further details of the report structure see below (Detailed Specification of Archaeological Recording).

*Fencing.* The client will be responsible for securing the site from unauthorised public access.

**Figure 2: Proposed Groundworks and Foundation areas (grey)**



### 3.2 Fieldwork

The heritage impact assessment, see Appendix 1, identified that bedrock (into which archaeological features are cut) is generally located at around 0.5m to 0.6m in the vicinity of the play area development. However, the footprint of the development appears to have been subject to groundworks in the 20th century comprising the introduction of imported material in connection with of laying-out of a tennis court. This may have impact upon preservation of archaeological features within in the area or increased the depth of deposit covering them.

The archaeological contractor will therefore implement the following procedure:

**TPA will firstly monitor archaeologically the main soil strip up to a depth of 300mm, allowing the overall distribution and survival of remains to be revealed and the proposed footing layout tested. If at the area strip stage it is apparent that important archaeological remains (including but not limited to human and structural remains) coincide with the proposed footing locations, the EH Principal Inspector and the DCC Archaeologist will be informed and to their satisfaction alternative locations will be explored and identified.**

**Following this, excavation of the foundation trenches 800mm in depth (500mm of additional depth, see Figure 2) will be undertaken and monitored/excavated archaeologically. If significant archaeology is identified, work will immediately cease and the DCC archaeologist and EH Principal Inspector will be consulted, and will decide on an appropriate methodology before work can recommence.**

*Machining*
Initial stripping of topsoil and overburden in all other areas will be carried out under archaeological supervision, **and the client must ensure that the contractor has been made aware of the archaeological constraint on their operations.**

Wherever possible the contractor must ensure the use of a toothless ditching bucket on any excavator/machine so that a clean surface can be exposed and the archaeologist can inspect the deposits revealed. Foundation/service trenches should also be excavated with a toothless bucket where possible. Any exceptions to this must only occur following agreement with the archaeologist on site. There should be no trafficking by vehicles on the exposed surface until the archaeologist has agreed that there are no archaeological deposits of significance.

*Service trenches*
Within Health & Safety constraints, the contractor will ensure access to service and/or foundation trenches to permit examination/cleaning and where necessary recording of sections. **It is important that time is allowed for such work, before any**

**form of backfilling occurs.** Where excavation can be quickly demonstrated not to have revealed significant archaeological deposits, delay will be minimal.

*Spoil-heaps*
Where practical and safe to do so, all spoil heaps will be regularly examined for archaeological material, this will include the use of a metal-detector.

### 3.3 Recording – general

Recording will as a minimum include the location and extent of the monitored areas of excavation, their depth, and the deposits exposed, both by scale drawing (section and/or plan where applicable) and photograph (monochrome prints/digital). For further details of the recording methodology see below

(*Detailed specification of archaeological recording by Watching Brief).*

*Project staff*
The watching brief will be managed by Gareth Davies, the attending archaeologist will be:

Kate Mapplethorpe (Project Supervisor, 07950719744) or Richard Parker (07775566945)

*Reporting and Liaison*
A report on the results, whether positive or not, will be prepared in the appropriate format and presented to the client and the curator within 6 weeks of the completion of the fieldwork. A summary of the findings will also be submitted for inclusion in the next edition of Derbyshire Archaeological Journal. Should the results of the watching brief warrant it then a detailed report will also be submitted for publication in the Derbyshire Archaeological Journal and an appropriate specialist publication covering the period from which the remains have been dated. For further details of the contents of the report see below (Detailed Specification of Archaeological Recording by Watching Brief).

The Development Control Archaeologist for Derbyshire Co. Council and the English Heritage Principle Inspector will be given a minimum of one weeks notice of the commencement of the watching brief, and TPA will continue to liaise closely throughout the period of the works. The curator will be free to visit the site to monitor fieldwork subject to access conditions imposed by the client and/or landowner, and adherence to relevant health and

*Bolsover Castle Play Area, Derbyshire, Watching Brief, Accession Number XXXX*

safety guidance.

### 3.4 Welfare, Access and Insurance

The client will ensure safe access to the ground-works and if possible make toilet and hand-washing facilities available to archaeological staff.

*Services Checks*

The client will make available all information relating to buried services prior to the commencement of intrusive groundworks.

*Insurance/compensation*

As part of York Archaeological Trust, TPA carries the appropriate public, third party and employee insurances, copies of which are available for inspection if required.

Any compensation claims for disruption to the land should be directly between the client and landowner.

### 3.5 Health and Safety

TPA will adhere to all relevant health and safely regulations. No archaeological staff will be allowed to enter the site until they have undergone a health and safety induction organised by TPA and/or the principal contractor. TPA will complete a task specific risk assessment safe working method statement before the commencement of the watching-brief, and copies of this will be made available to the client. This will be in compliance with the industry guidelines laid out in FAME Manual, *Health & Safety in Field Archaeology.* TPA staff will wear appropriate personal protective equipment at all times.

## 4 DETAILED SPECIFICATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

The investigation will be carried out in accordance with the code of conduct of The Institute for Archaeologists.

Within the confines of site safety, contexts (the smallest usefully-definable unit of stratification) will be cleaned by hand and recorded.

All finds will be assigned an individual finds code. *In-situ* finds will be recorded three dimensionally, while finds from spoil will be noted in relation to their location within the trench/stripped area.

Excavation will be sufficient to securely establish the character and where possible date, and stratigraphic relationship of features.

In the event that important archaeological remains are uncovered, the client's site representative will be informed immediately, with a proposal for the most effective measures for dealing with the remains. If they cannot be preserved *in situ,* their

excavation may require contingency resources and additional time: the Development Control Archaeologist for DCC and the English Heritage Principle Inspector will be informed of such events and their input requested.

*Human Remains*

Should human remains be uncovered they will initially be left in situ and provided with appropriate protection. The Development Control Archaeologist for DCC, the English Heritage Principle Inspector and the Coroner will be informed immediately and a Ministry of Justice burial license obtained to permit removal where necessary.

*Recording*

*Bolsover Castle Play Area, Derbyshire, Watching Brief, Accession Number XXXX*

Plans of all contexts including features will be drawn on drafting film in pencil at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50, and will show at least:
context numbers,
all colour and textural changes,
principal slopes represented as hachures,
levels expressed as O.D. values, or levelled to permanent features if benchmark absent,
sufficient details to locate the subject on a 1:500 plot of the area of ground-works and o.s 1:2500 map (i.e the national grid).

Sections will show the same information, but levelling information will be given in the form of a datum line with O.D/arbitrary value; the locations of all sections will be shown on the plan.

Photographs of each context will be taken as monochrome prints and digital images (as per Brown 2007), together with general views illustrating the principal features of the excavations.

Written records will be maintained as laid down in TPA recording manual (as accepted by all regional county archaeologists).

*Sampling (Palaeoenviromental & Industrial residues)*

Appropriate sampling of deposits of palaeoenvironmental potential and residues and debris from industrial processes will be conducted in accordance with Table 1 (see below), with appropriate amendments following subsequent specialist advice. Specialist palaeoenvironmental advice will be provided by James Rackham and/or members of the School of Geography, University of Nottingham. Samples (both palaeoenvironmental and industrial) will be assessed, followed by full analysis and reporting where appropriate following receipt of specialist advice and liaison with the Development Control Archaeologist for DCC and the English Heritage Principle Inspector.

## Table 1 – Preliminary Site Sampling Strategy*

| **feature type** | **Sediment condition** | **Overall scope of sampling** | **MM** | **C14** | **Po/Dm** | **Ch** | **BP/BS** | **Bo** | **Wd** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **s**<br>Sampling method: | | | | A4x1cm (seal) | Film caps or column in gutter + Clingfilm | Min.30L+ Tubs<br>(specialists to advise as to appropriate level of sub sampling of deposit) | | | wrap each bit sep. |
| Man-made feature | Waterlogged organic (looks 'peaty) | each occurrence series of samples if thick (>150mm) | | | * | * | * | * | * |
| buried soil | Dry visible charred material | each occurrence (C14 selected: best is twigs then layer then flecks) | | * | | * | | * | |
| | Waterlogged organic | each occurrence, at thickest point | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| | Dry visible charred material | each occurrence, at thickest point, series of samples if thick (>150mm) | * | * | * | * | | * | |
| Any | Wood structure | retain all, keep damp, bag each timber | | * | | | | | * |
| Industrial residues / debris etc. | | All process stages to be represented | | | | | * | | |
| *Adjustments to be made following specialist advice and liaison with DCC DCA where appropriate. | | | | | | | | | |

**Abbreviations MM** Micromorphology **C14** Radiocarbon **Po/Dm** Pollen/diatoms **Ch** Charred material **BP** Waterlogged Beetles/Plant remains **Bo** small bone **Wd** wood. BS – Bulk Sample (industrial waste/residues/processing debris)

### 4.1 Post¯excavation Processing

All finds will be stored as recommended in "First aid for finds" (by the Archaeology section of the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation), and marked with the site and find codes, and relevant accession numbers. These will be deposited with English Heritage collections store (Wrest Park) on completion of the report, subject to the provisions of the brief and the agreement of the client. Any Prehistoric pottery will be submitted for assessment to Dr.D.Knight (TPA), Romano-British pottery to Ruth Leary (Independent), Anglo-Saxon/Medieval pottery/tile to L.Elliott & Dr.H.Jones (TPA), Flint to J.Brown (Associate of TPA).

### 4.2 Archive

The archive will be fully indexed and contain where relevant:

copies of correspondence relating to fieldwork
site notebooks/diaries
original photographic records
site drawings (plans,sections,elevations)
original context records, matrix diagrams showing stratigraphic sequence of all contexts. artefacts
original finds records
original sample records
original skeleton records
computer discs and printout

### 4.3 Archive and Finds Deposition

Initial contact with the English Heritage Collections Store (Wrest Park) will be made before the commencement of fieldwork, using the appropriate notification form.

Where necessary the documentary archive will be sent to the NMR for copying.

Finds will remain the property of the client with deposition to English Heritage Collections Store subject to their approval.

The paper and digital archive generated by TPA will remain the property of the Unit until deposited within the English Heritage Collections Store

:

**Accession no XXXXXX**

The Development Control Archaeologist, English Heritage and museum store curator will be notified in writing on completion of fieldwork, with a proposed timetable for deposition of the archive. This should be confirmed in the project report.

The Development Control Archaeologist and English Heritage must be informed in writing on final deposition of archive.

## 4.4 Report

A verbal report and where appropriate textual summary will be provided to the client on completion of fieldwork. Within 6 weeks of the end of the fieldwork, a final report on results will be completed and copies provided to:

> The client
> Derbyshire County Council Development Control Archaeologist for accession to the HER. This will include a copy of the report in PDF format on CD along with indexed copies of all digital on site photography.
> English Heritage (copies sent to both the Scheduled Monument files at Derngate, and a copy for the properties department)

The report will include:

- Non-technical summary
- Introductory statement
- Aims and purpose of the project
- Methodology
- An objective summary statement of results
- Conclusion
- Illustrations at appropriate scales, all to include levels tied to Ordnance Datum.
- Illustrative site photography, including key features and working shots
- Supporting data - tabulated or in appendices, including as a minimum a basic quantification of all artefacts, ecofacts and structural data including recommendations for retention/discard and proposals for conservation.
- Index to archive and details of archive location; confirmation of archive transfer arrangements including a provisional timetable for deposition.
- References
- A copy of the OASIS form

*Dissemination*

The results will be submitted for publication within the annual summary, if applicable, in *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal.* If significant results are discovered then an individual report of an appropriate level of detail, will also be submitted for publication to a suitable academic journal.

*Copyright*

Trent & Peak Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved excepting that it hereby provides exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project, with no limitation on the number of times that the client may reproduce any report. The client's contribution will be acknowledged in any future use of the work by TPA.

## 4.5 OASIS

Prior to commencement of the fieldwork an OASIS online record will be initiated (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/). A copy of this document will be included in the report.

### 4.6 Monitoring

A minimum 5 working days prior notice of the commencement of the development is to be given to the archaeological contractor, English Heritage and Derbyshire County Council Development Control Archaeologist.

All phases of the investigation will be undertaken in line with the relevant *'Standard and Guidance'* documents prepared by the IfA (Institute for Archaeologists).

TPA will keep the client English Heritage and Development Control Archaeologist for DCC informed of all material facts of the archaeological investigations. This will include agreeing any changes to the approved methodology or programme of works, and invitations to inspect any uncovered remains at appropriate stages in the fieldwork programme. The Development Control Archaeologist and the English Heritage Principle Inspector will be free to visit the site at any stage of the fieldwork

## 6 PROVISIONAL TIMETABLE

A provisional timetable of 10 February 2014 has been suggested for the commencement of the main ground works. As soon as a project start date is confirmed the Development Control Archaeologist for DCC and the English Heritage Principle Inspector will be informed.

## References

Brown, D.H. 2007 *Archaeological Archives – A guide to best practice in creation,*
*compilation, transfer and curation* (IFA/AAF).

BGS Geology Viewer http//maps.bgs.uk/geologyviewer