

**LAND AT WALDEN CASTLE,  
SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX**

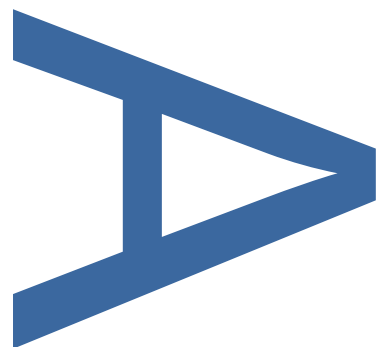
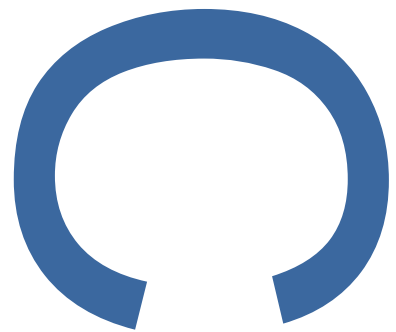
**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING  
BRIEF**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:  
UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**PCA REPORT NO: R13904**

**SITE CODE: HWCS19**

**OCTOBER 2019**



**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY**

## **Land at Walden Castle, Saffron Walden, Essex**

### **An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Local Planning Authority:** Uttlesford District Council

**Central National Grid Reference:** NGR TL5388 3868

**Site Code:** HWCS19

**Report No.** R13904

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**Commissioning Client:** Caroe Architecture Ltd on behalf of Uttlesford District Council

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**October 2019**

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## DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

Land at Walden Castle, Saffron Walden, Essex

### An Archaeological Watching Brief

#### Quality Control

<b>Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited</b>	
Project Code	K5959
Report Number	R13904

	Name	Date
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Graphics Prepared by:	R Scales	October 2019
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Project Manager Sign-off:	H Hawkins	October 2019

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

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## ABSTRACT

*This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology during groundworks at Walden Castle. The archaeological monitoring was commissioned by Caroe Architecture Ltd (CAL) on behalf of Uttlesford District Council (UDC). The castle is a Scheduled Monument and therefore an archaeological watching brief was required during groundworks by the Scheduled Monument Consent. The monitoring took place intermittently between 17th September and 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019. The works comprised the monitoring of minor levelling work inside the keep, six c.0.45m wide and 0.45m deep postholes for new gates, a shallow trench inside the keep for a new fence on the north wall and an electric cable for new external lighting. The impact of the proposed works was minimal. Apart from the identification of some possible mound material, no significant archaeological finds or features were recorded during this monitoring.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological monitoring at Walden Castle intermittently between 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019.

1.2 The site was centred at NGR TL5388 3868

1.3 The archaeological monitoring was commissioned by Caroe Architecture Ltd (CAL) on behalf of Uttlesford District Council (UDC). The monitoring comprised a watching brief on excavation works for new public access and lighting at Walden Castle, Saffron Waldon, Essex CB10 1JQ (Figures 1 to 3).

1.4 Walden Castle is a Grade I listed structure and Scheduled Monument. It sits within the Saffron Waldon Conservation Area and is one of only six Grade I listed structures in the CA. Scheduled Monument Consent for the work was obtained (14<sup>th</sup> December 2018, ref: S00206969), and a planning application for the work was approved. The archaeological work was carried out under the lead of Historic England as part of the Scheduled Monument Consent, rather than as a condition under the planning permission.

1.5 As the impact from the groundworks was minimal, an archaeological watching brief was required by the Scheduled Monument Consent as the archaeological mitigation for the site. PCA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the archaeological monitoring of the development works to assess the below ground conditions and mitigate any archaeological remains (PCA Hawkins 2019). The WSI was approved in advance of the work taking place by the Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Deborah Priddy. All works were undertaken in accordance with that document and with:

- EAA Occasional Papers 14, 2003: *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*, by David Gurney
- Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2017, '*Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*'
- MoRPHE (English Heritage, 2015).

1.6 PCA has the following accreditations:

- ISO9001 registration
- Construction Line registration
- Achilles registration
- CHAS registration

## **2 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Geology**

2.1.1 The solid geology of the site is shown by the British Geological Survey Online (BGS 2019) as Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation and Seaford Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) - Chalk. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 84 to 94 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. Local environment previously dominated by warm chalk seas. No drift geology is noted as being present on the site.

### **2.2 Topography**

2.2.1 Saffron Walden lies about 2km to the east of the River Cam at the point where the important Lea/Stort/Cam river route cuts a gap through the East Anglian Heights (a chalk ridge). The castle is located at the highest point, 68m OD, on the top of the chalk promontory known as Bury Hill. This promontory is flanked on either side by the streams known as The Kings Ditch and the Madgate Slade; these converge to the west of the town to form the Slade (ECC 1999).

### **2.3 Archaeological Background**

2.3.1 The archaeological background is presented in detail in the WSI (PCA Hawkins 2019). The following information has been extracted from that document.

2.3.2 There is evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity in and around the town, but nothing to suggest that it was urban in nature. There is then a gap in the evidence until the Middle to Late Saxon period when there was a small Saxon settlement in the south-west quadrant of the present town around Abbey Lane. A Saxon cemetery was excavated in 1876. The latest burials in it were thought to be Christian on the basis of their east-west orientation and lack of grave-goods, except for one woman in a Viking style pendant and necklace. The pottery found on this site dated from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries.

2.3.3 After the Norman Conquest Saffron Walden was granted to the de Mandevilles, becoming the centre of their Essex and Suffolk estates. They built a castle on the chalk peninsula between the two streams of the Slade (King's Ditch and Madgate Slade). The castle was built to dominate the area and its plan

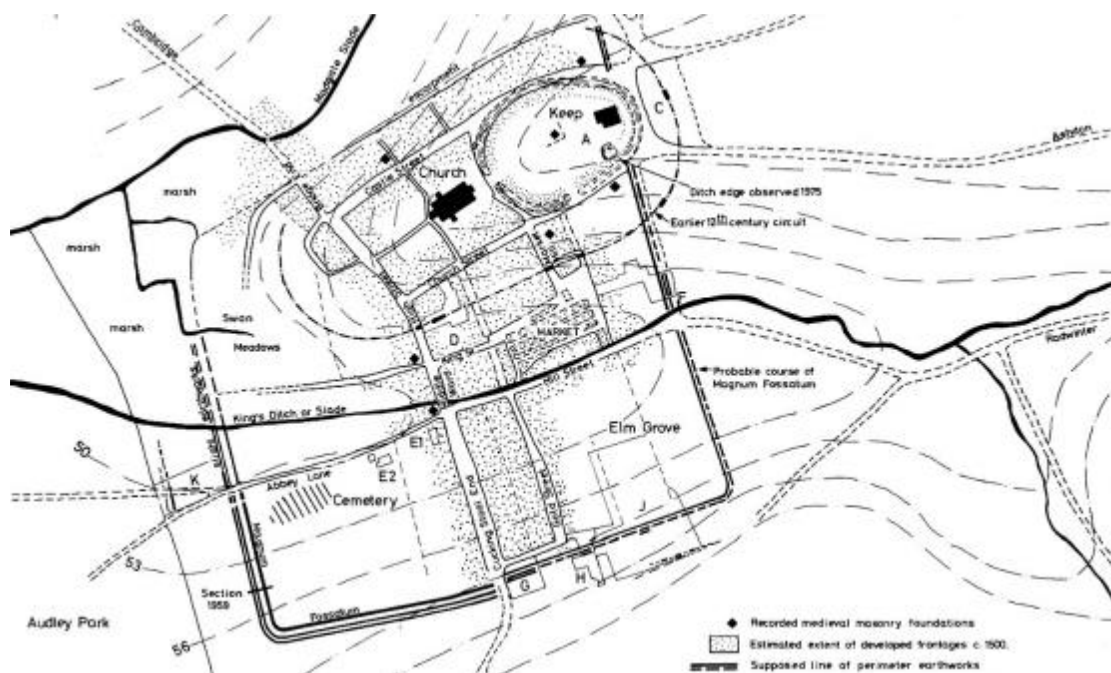


determined the subsequent street layout. The inner bailey was oval in plan and contained the domestic and defensive buildings of the de Mandevilles, of which only the flint rubble keep survives. The outer bailey was also ovoid in plan, fully enclosing the inner bailey and the original town. The church was built at this time and two streets, Church Street and Castle Street, laid out within the outer bailey.

2.3.4 In 1141 the de Mandevilles acquired the right to move the market which had been held at Newport to Saffron Walden. At that date a Benedictine priory, which became an Abbey in 1190, was built on the site of the later Audley End House. By the 13th century the town had passed from the de Mandevilles to the de Bohuns. In the early to mid 13th century a large town enclosure was laid out to the south and west of the outer bailey and the outer bailey ditch back-filled. The date of this work may have corresponded to the granting of a new charter in 1236. The town enclosure ditches, known as the Battle or Repell Ditches enclosed a total area of 20 hectares. Within this were laid out new streets, principally High Street and its back lane Gold Street, and a new marketplace. Only the market area and the High Street were actually built-up by the end of the 14th century, the remainder being under agricultural use.

2.3.5 In the late medieval period Saffron Walden became the major English centre for the production of the saffron crocus which was used to produce dye (hence the town's name). It also played an important role in the East Anglian wool industry, with the keeping of sheep and manufacture of cloth. The magnificent parish church reflects the prosperity in the town in this period. In the post-medieval period the economic emphasis of Saffron Walden changed, as the saffron crocus was replaced by other dye-stuffs and the woollen industry shifted elsewhere. The town became a major centre of the Essex malt industry in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. However, an 18th century map shows that Saffron Walden had still not expanded beyond its medieval limits. During the late 19th century the railway station to the south of the medieval town emerged as the centre of an important manufacturing area with the erection of goods sheds, maltings, a cement works, iron foundry and steam-driven corn mill (ECC 1999).

2.3.6 The extent of the bailey of the castle can be traced from the presence of ditches, particularly to the northwest, where archaeological recording has noted the likely western boundary. Ditches and escarpments have also been recorded to the south and this has been corroborated with geophysical data which suggests an arrangement similar to that pictured by Bassett in 1982 (Plate 2). The geophysical survey also identified a number of broad responses that could be archaeologically significant including the existence of a building to the west of the castle.



Medieval Saffron Walden (Bassett 1982 fig 10)

2.3.7 The keep was made less defensible in 1157-58, when money was raised by the Crown for demolishing the de Mandeville castles in Essex following his trial for treason, although the extent of the demolitions is unclear. It was certainly not completely destroyed because it still functioned as a manor in 1347 when Humphrey de Bohun was afforded a licence to crenellate the keep. By 1594, the Castle was described as ruinous and housed farm stock and in 1796 a turret was added at the north-west corner as a semaphore station.

2.3.8 The keep would have been located within an ovoid inner bailey with an internal area of c.1.25 ha, which was in turn enclosed by an oval outer bailey. The keep would have been one of many buildings within the perimeter defences,

including the medieval church. The keep itself consists of a square tower which would have extended to at least three storeys of flint rubble and mortar construction with coursed facing, although very little dressing remains today. Today the visible structure is the extent of the basement and part of the ground floor levels, with the rectangular forebuilding on the north end of the west side of the keep and remains of an entrance tower on the northwest corner. The basement would have had the ground built up around it externally, with the undivided hall at the first floor level accessed across a walkway. The basement has two alcoves on the west wall and single alcoves on the north and south walls.

2.3.9 There is a single alcove on the west wall at first floor level. Central to the basement is the foundation of a central pillar, it is unclear whether this formed the central springer for a vaulted undercroft or a support for timber flooring. The Castle is under the protection of the local authority. Due to its precarious state, it was added to the Heritage at Risk Register. In 2014, UDC commissioned a series of systematic repairs to the castle walls in an attempt to conserve the site by removing overgrown vegetation, repairing and consolidating the walls and introducing soft capping to protect the wall tops from weathering. These works were completed in early 2017. However, since its inclusion in the Heritage at Risk Register and the successful repair works that led to the site being removed from the Register, it has remained fenced and closed to the public. (CAL 2018).

### 3 QUANTIFICATION OF ARCHIVE

#### 3.1 Paper Archive

Context register sheets	1
Context sheets	0
Plan registers	0
Plans at 1:50	0
Plans at 1:20	0
Plans at 1:10	0
Plans at 1:5	0
Section register sheets	0
Sections at 1:10 & 1:20	4
Trench record sheets	0
Photo register sheets	1
Small finds register sheets	0
Environmental register sheets	0

#### 3.2 Digital Archive

Digital photos	120
GPS survey files	0
Digital plans	0
GIS project	0
Access database	0

#### 3.3 Physical Archive

Struck flint	0
Burnt flint	0
Pottery	0
Ceramic building material (CBM)	0
Glass	0
Briquetage	0
Small Finds	0
Slag	0
Animal bone	0
Shell	0
Environmental bulk samples	0
Environmental bulk samples (10 litre buckets)	0
Monolith samples	0
Other samples (specify)	0
Black and white films	0
Colour slides	0

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

### **4.1 Levelling of keep interior for new surface**

4.1.1 This work was monitored on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019. Some very minor adjustment (<100mm depth) of the modern surface (101) inside the keep and at the entrance was undertaken before geotextile and type 1 crush was laid down. The modern surface comprised modern rubbish and weed growth on a very dry silty deposit. At the south-east entrance to the keep the machine scraped the ground to a depth not exceeding 100mm. It was decided in order to create a gentler access slope the ground immediately to the interior of the south-east entrance would be built up rather than reduced further. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

### **4.2 South East Gate.**

4.2.1 Two postholes were excavated at the south-east gate on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019 (Figure 2), the postholes measured 0.45m square and 0.45m deep. It became clear when excavating the two postholes at the south-east entrance that the planned position of the posts would impact the castle walls. Permission was subsequently granted to impact the walls for this purpose and the postholes were further monitored on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2019. Apart from the flint and mortar of the castle structure itself, deposits removed from these postholes abutting the castle walls were modern (102) and consisted of a semi-compact, grey silt with modern inclusions (green bottle glass and screws). This material comes from the site of the 1980s excavation that recorded the 'stairs' (see Bassett 1982 in Place Services - Medlycott 2017).

### **4.3 North-East Gate**

4.3.1 Two 0.45m square and 0.45m deep postholes were excavated at the north-east gate on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019. One of these abutted the residential property to the north-east of the keep. Here deposits consisted of a modern topsoil and made-ground deposits relating to the construction of the adjacent property. The western of these postholes, abutting the castle, revealed the original line of the castle wall. Here, below the topsoil (c. 0.30m), a layer of what could be original

(105) mound material (i.e. thought to have been built up against the lower keep) was recorded abutting the castle wall. Layer (105) was a compact reddish-brown sandy silt with chalk flecks. No finds were recovered from this layer.

#### 4.4 **Western Gate**

4.4.1 Two square postholes (0.45m x 0.45m x 0.45m) were monitored at the entrance to the building on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2019. Disturbed modern layers associated with modern renovations were observed.

#### 4.5 **Northern Fence.**

4.5.1 A shallow trench for railings within the north wall was monitored on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019. This trench was hand excavated to a depth of 0.20m through modern silty material. No archaeological finds or features were recorded.

#### 4.6 **Lighting Cable Trench**

4.6.1 This trench was 0.25m wide and c. 0.45m deep. It ran from the eastern end of the museum to near the south-west corner of the castle where it turned south and then eastwards parallel to the south wall of the keep before turning north-east just beyond the south-east entrance (Figure 2). No archaeological features were observed in the trench. Apart from the modern topsoil, deposits comprised late post-medieval/19<sup>th</sup> century levelling material (108).

## **5 DISCUSSION**

- 5.1 The monitored works were of a minimal impact. Nothing new of particular archaeological significance was recorded during this watching brief. The castle walls exposed by the south-east gate postholes were recorded in the 1982 excavation.
- 5.2 Layer (105) seen in the north-east gate postholes may represent part of the original mound laid against the castle walls.
- 5.3 Layer (108) was a post-medieval levelling layer seen in the trench for the lighting cable.

## **6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

6.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Caroe Architecture for commissioning the work on behalf of Uttlesford District Council. We would also like to thank the contractors Bakers of Danbury and the staff of the Saffron Walden Museum for their helpful cooperation during the monitoring. The project was managed for PCA by Helen Hawkins and was supervised by Alexander Pullen and Ryszard Molenda.



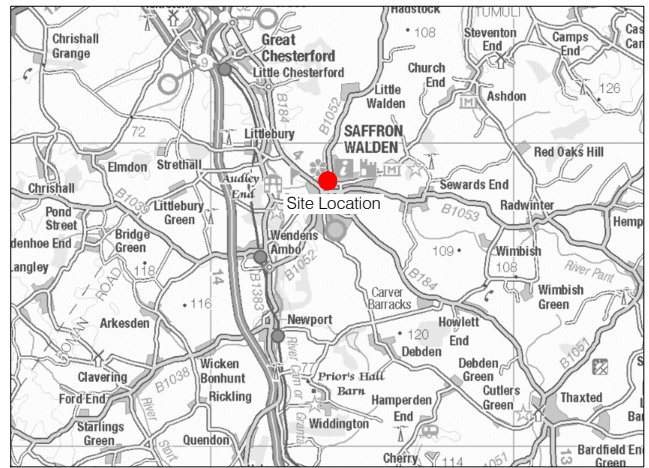
## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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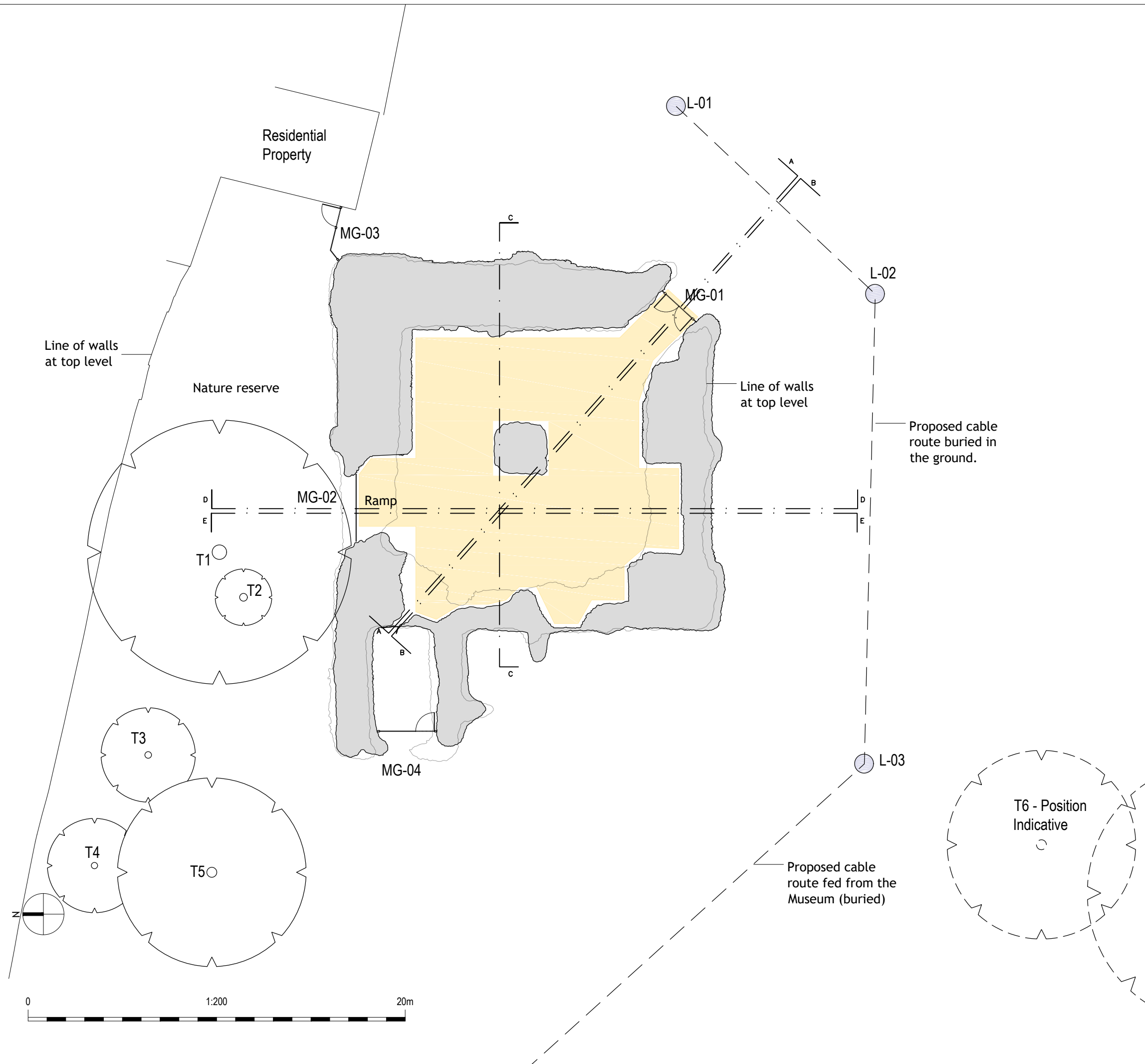






General Notes:  
 Never scale dimensions from this drawing. Use written dimensions only. Report any discrepancies. Ask if in doubt. Always use latest revision.  
 Note that this drawing is based on a combination of dimensional surveys by others, therefore site verification of dimensional information is particularly important.  
 Read in conjunction with other information from CAL and other consultants.

Notes:  
 Survey Information provided by:  
**Randall Surveys LLP**  
 High Street, Bures, Suffolk, COB 5HZ  
 Reg No. OC316325  
 T: 01787 227580

Rev.	Date	Drn.	Chkd.	Description
3.0	08.03.18	PFS	CAL	Revised for pre-planning
3.1	15.10.2018	CH	PFS	Issued for Planning and Scheduled Monument Consent

Drawing to be read in conjunction with drawing Nos 210-214, 230-234 by CAL and drawing No 3841\_D\_001 by Light Perceptions.



-  Existing walls
-  Area of new ground finish - refer to dwg. 098-301 for details
-  New proposed gates and fences
-  Location of light units as per lighting specialist's design. See also CAL Dwg. 302

## FOR PLANNING & SMC

STAGE 3 - NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

CLIENT	SCALE	DATE	
Uttlesford District Council	1:200 @ A3	16.01.2018	
PROJECT	DRAWN	CHECKED	
Walden Castle - Phase 3	PFS		
DRAWING TITLE	JOB NUMBER	DRAWING NO.	REVISION
Proposed General Layout	098	200	3.1

## 9 APPENDIX 1: PLATES

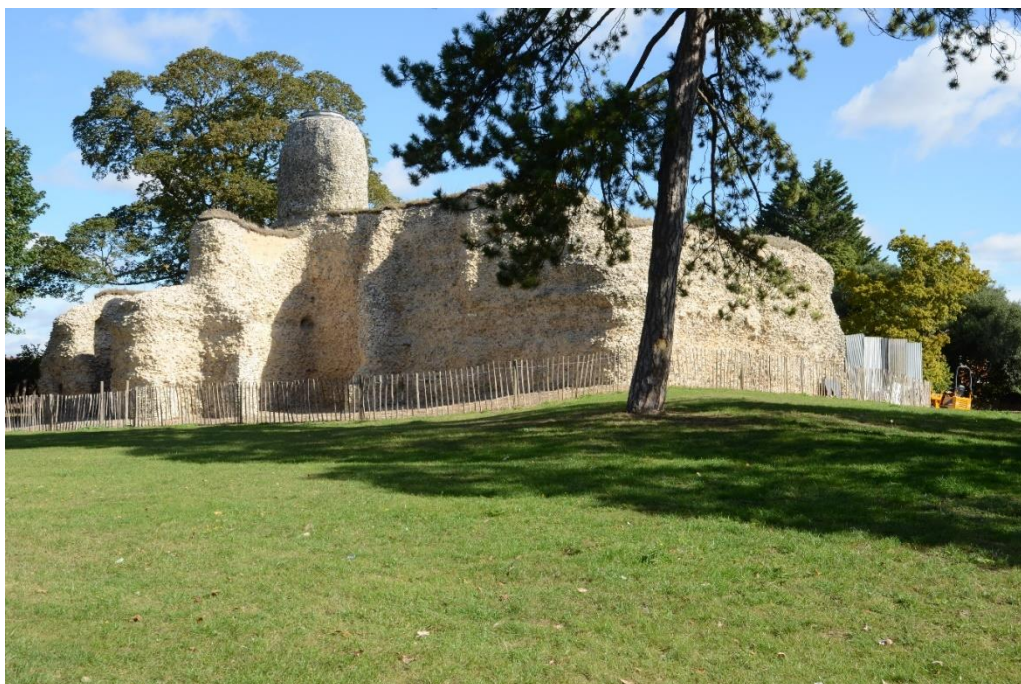


Plate 1: general view north-east Walden Castle



Plate 2: general view north-west Walden Castle





Plate 3: view south, levelling the ground inside the keep





Plate 4: view south-east, postholes for the new gate at the south-east entrance



Plate 5: view south-east, detail of new posthole excavated through the castle wall





Plate 6: view south, north-east gate posthole with possible mound material (105) base



Plate 7: view east, west gate (forebuilding)





Plate 8: view north, trench for north fence (in front of scale)



Plate 9: view north-east, late post-med deposits (108) and topsoil in section of trench for electric cable

## 10 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Type	Category	Comments
101	Layer	existing surface	Modern. Silty material with modern rubbish inside keep
102	Fill	backfill	1982 excavation backfill
103	Fill	backfill	Backfill of modern renovation work at forebuilding
104	Layer	topsoil	Modern
105	Layer	structure	Mound material? Compact reddish-brown sandy-silt with chalk fragments
106	Layer	structure	Castle wall(s)
107	Layer	existing surface	Same as (101)
108	Layer	made ground	Post-medieval levelling

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## OASIS ID: preconst1-370711

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### Project details

Project name	Land at Walden Castle, Saffron Walden, Essex: Archaeological Monitoring
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology of groundworks at Walden Castle. The archaeological monitoring was commissioned by Caroe Architecture Ltd (CAL) on behalf of Uttlesford District Council (UDC). The monitoring took place intermittently between 17th September and 3rd October 2019. The works comprised the monitoring of minor levelling work inside the keep, six c.0.45m wide and 0.45m deep postholes for new gates, a shallow trench inside the keep for a new fence on the north wall and an electric cable for new external lighting. The impact of the proposed works was minimal. Apart from the identification of some possible mound material, no significant archaeological finds or features were recorded during this monitoring.
Project dates	Start: 17-09-2019 End: 03-10-2019
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HWCS19 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Monument type	CASTLE Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

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### Project location

Country	England
Site location	ESSEX UTTLESFORD SAFFRON WALDEN Walden Castle
Postcode	CB101JL
Study area	1 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 5388 3868 52.024708693691 0.243088777253 52 01 28 N 000 14 35 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 67m Max: 67m

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### Project creators

Name of Organisation	PCA
Project brief originator	Place Services
Project design originator	Helen Hawkins
Project director/manager	Helen Hawkins

Project supervisor	Alexander Pullen
Type of sponsor/funding body	Local District Council

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### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	Yes
Paper Archive recipient	Saffron Walden Museum
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Section"

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### Project bibliography

1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land at Walden Castle, Saffron Walden, Essex: Archaeological Monitoring
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Pullen, A. G.
Date	2019
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Brockley
Description	A4 Grey Lit report 25 pages

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Entered by	Alexander Pullen (agpullen@pre-construct.com)
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