

Marches Archaeology

Motte at East Dudston Farm Chirbury Shropshire (SAM 281)

**A report on emergency
Archaeological recording**

April 2004

Marches Archaeology Series 339

Archaeological Consultants and Contractors

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**Motte at
East Dudston Farm
Chirbury
Shropshire
(SAM 281)**

**A report on emergency
archaeological recording**

NGR: SO 2445 9741

SMR:

**Report by
Vicky Sears**

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**A report on emergency
archaeological recording**

Summary

Emergency recording works were undertaken due to damage caused to the east face of the motte (SAM 281) during road widening works. The north face was cleaned, illustrated and photographed. Two sherds of unstratified post medieval pottery were recovered as well as one C19th tile fragment from the top of the motte.

1 Introduction

A small area of the motte at East Dudston Farm, Chirbury, (Scheduled monument 281) was damaged (NGR SO 2445 9741) during road widening works (Fig.1). Emergency recording was undertaken prior to reconstruction of the motte (Plate 1).

2 Aims and objectives

The aim of the emergency recording works was to record the damaged section of the motte, prior to its reconstruction.

3 Methodology

Fieldwork

The area of the damaged motte was cleared of the soil, which had been displaced during the road widening works. The exposed face of the motte was cleaned to reveal the stratigraphy of the construction of Scheduled Monument 281 (Plate 2). The recording in the field consisted of a site plan (Fig. 2) and a drawing of the exposed north facing section (Fig. 3). A photographic record was also undertaken. An OS map was obtained that indicated the site of a bench mark on the northern corner of Barn 1 (Fig. 1).

Office work

On completion of the site fieldwork, the written, drawn and photographic records were cross-referenced and a site archive was produced. The pottery recovered from the motte was processed at the office. The finds were washed, labelled and catalogued.

This report summarises the results of the fieldwork.

4 Site description

Scheduled Monument 281 is located at the entrance of East Dudston Farm, Shropshire (NGR SO 2445 9741) and is situated to the south-east of the B4386 between Chirbury and Montgomery. The motte is situated to the right of the farm entrance (see Plate 3). The entrance to the farmyard has been concreted over. The motte had previously extended to the edge of the concrete, however, following the damage caused by road widening works, a gap of approximately a foot separated the concrete from the motte (Plate 4). Barn 2 (Fig. 1) was situated at the southern extremity of the motte that can also be seen in Plates 3 and 4.

5 The emergency recording

The general stratigraphy of the motte (Fig. 3 and Plate 5), was capped by the topsoil (1), a mixed mid brown silty clay with occasional pebbles and a thickness of approximately 300mm, which covered the entire exposed face of the motte. In the eastern area of the motte a sub-circular cut [3] with a dish shaped base was observed. The fill (2) was a mid to light beige with frequent stones and a substantial amount of root action. The feature was interpreted as a tree bole. Layer (4), a mid brown clay silt with frequent stone, pebble and charcoal inclusions was also situated at the southern extremity of the motte. This may be an earlier soil horizon. In the central to western area of the motte, a layer or dump of material of very compact, hard yellowish brown clay silt with frequent stones and pebbles was observed (5). A mid grey brown silty-clay (6) with occasional flecks of charcoal and mortar was recorded in the central area. This layer was interpreted as an earlier soil horizon or a turf line and was very similar to layer (4) in its consistency. Cut [8] was noted in the western end of the scheduled monument. It had a sharp break of slope and near vertical sides. The interpretation of this feature was that of a possible post-medieval cut into the side of the motte or it may have been a natural slippage of topsoil. The fill (7), was very similar to the topsoil, however, it contained a larger amount of stones. Layers (9) and (10) were interpreted as re-deposited natural from the construction of the motte. Both consisted of hard yellow clay with frequent stones. Layer (10), however, was less clean and contained a higher soil content.

Levels were taken from the bench mark on Barn 1 (Fig. 1). The first to be recorded was the height of the datum line on the section drawing (Fig. 3). This was followed by three more readings, situated on the plan of the site (see Fig. 2). The level sited on the bench mark was 122.94m OD.

The finds

One sherd of pottery was recovered from context (5) and two sherds were retrieved from unstratified contexts. All of these were post-medieval ranging from the 18th to 19th century in date.

6 Conclusions

In conclusion, the motte appears to be of single phase construction. There was evidence of a possible later soil horizon (post-medieval?), which may suggest that the motte had been

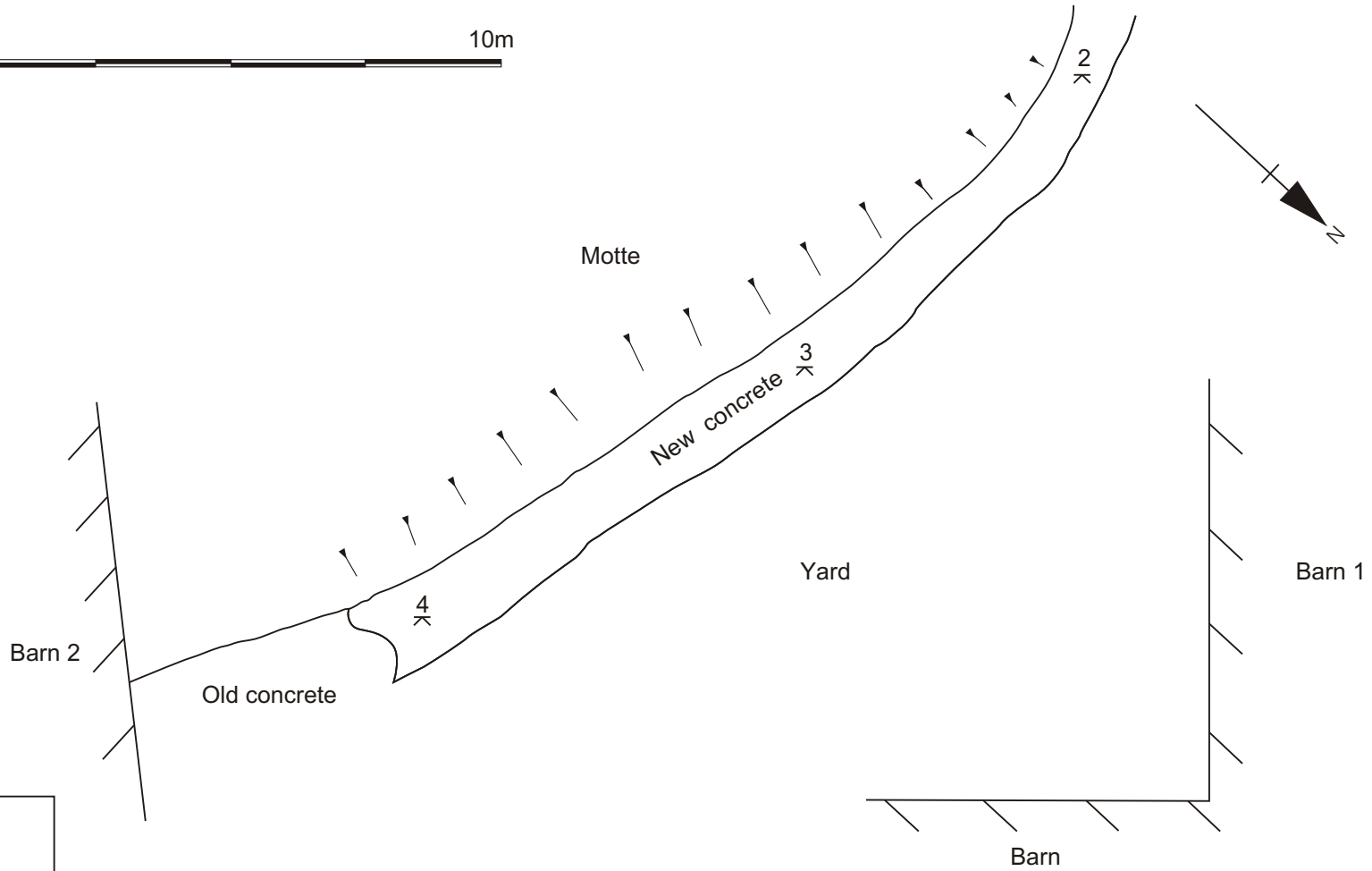
altered at a later date by means of activity around the base of the motte, or natural slippage from the top. However, no dating evidence was recovered to confirm this. Cut [8] also poses similar questions regarding to a later alteration to the motte. This may however, simply be due to a natural slippage of the topsoil.

7 Archive

The site code is EDF04A. The archive consists of:

- 10 context sheets
- 1 context index sheet
- 1 drawing index sheet
- 2 field drawings on 1 sheet
- 1 sheet of levels
- 3 finds sheets
- 1 photo record sheet
- 1 film of black and white photographic negatives
- 1 film of colour photographic transparencies

The archive is currently held by Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to Rowley's House Museum, Shrewsbury.



Key		
List of levels		
⌘	2	124.56m OD
⌘	3	124.10m OD
⌘	4	123.66m OD

Fig. 2 Plan of the site

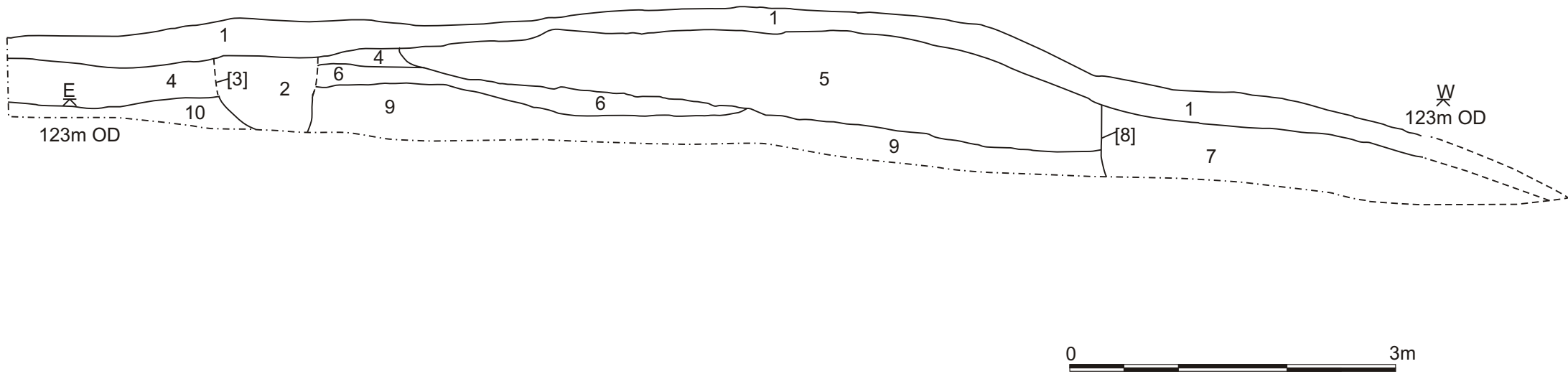


Fig. 3 East facing section of the motte



Plate 1 View of the motte looking north west prior to cleaning



Plate 2 View of the motte looking west (east facing section)



Plate 3 View of the motte facing south -
(noting the distance between the concrete and motte)



Plate 4 View of the motte facing south
(Barn two is visible in the background)



Plate 5 The stratigraphy of the motte