

2020

Northumberland

Archaeological
Monitoring

MORPETH CASTLE GATEHOUSE KITCHEN

Morpeth, Northumberland

NGR 420015 585517

Archaeological Monitoring

Project 299-20-MON | February 2020

On behalf of the Landmark Trust

VINDOMORA SOLUTIONS LTD
Archaeological Practice

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Archaeological Monitoring

Morpeth Castle Gatehouse (Kitchen)

Morpeth Castle, Morpeth
Northumberland

February 2020



VINDOMORA SOLUTIONS LTD
Archaeological Practice

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SUMMARY

Name of location:	Morpeth Castle gatehouse (kitchen)
Address of location:	Morpeth Castle, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 1NS
National Grid Reference:	NGR 420015 585517
Client:	The Landmark Trust
Project Type:	Archaeological Monitoring (Watching Brief)
Local Authority Conservation Team:	Northumberland Conservation
Historic England Inspector:	Lee McFarlane
Scheduled Monument Reference:	SM ND 653, HA 1006394
Scheduled Monument Consent:	S00234675
Project Site Code:	MCN-20
Vindomora Solutions Reference:	299-20-MON
Report Author:	Tony Liddell
Report Version/Date:	V1 / Wednesday, February 12, 2020
This document datestamp:	12 February 2020
OASIS Identifier:	vindomor1-384467
Ordnance Survey Licence Reference:	100053142
Google Earth Pro Licence:	Licensed 2015-20

CONCISE SUMMARY OF REPORT

On the 28th January 2020 Vindomora Solutions Ltd were commissioned by Wiles and Maguire on behalf of their client, the Landmark Trust, to undertake a scheme of archaeological monitoring at Morpeth Castle gatehouse, Northumberland. The Landmark Trust were undertaking a scheme of works to renew the 20th century kitchen. The Castle holds Scheduled Ancient Monument status and as such Scheduled Monument Consent was required for the project. The consent document marked the requirement for an archaeological watching brief to cover the installation of new service ducts and the lifting of floor slabs for re-levelling.

The monitoring took place covering the lifting of ten floor slabs for re-levelling and the insertion of a small cable directly beneath the floor slabs within the modern packing sand.

No archaeological structures, deposits or artefacts were observed during the monitoring scheme.



Figure 1. Location of the site, regionally.

1. SCOPE OF PROJECT



Plate 1. Aerial view of the site courtesy of Google Earth (dataset © 2017 Google).

1.1 Project location

- 1.1.1 The monitoring area was located on first floor of Morpeth Castle gatehouse, Morpeth, Northumberland (centred at NGR 420015 585517). The site is accessed via Castle Walk which lies north of the A167. Figure 1 shows the location of the site regionally, and Figure 2 shows the location locally.
- 1.1.2 Geology: The development area lies over the Yoredale Group, consisting of successive limestones, sandstones, siltstones and mudstone. Over this lies glacial alluvium mainly composed of clay, silt, sand and gravel (British Geological Survey, 2019).
- 1.1.3 The site lies at an average of 56m OD (Ordnance Datum, above sea level).

1.2 Circumstances of the Project

- 1.2.1 On the 28th January 2020 Vindomora Solutions Ltd were commissioned by Wiles and Maguire on behalf of their client, the Landmark Trust, to undertake a scheme of archaeological monitoring at Morpeth Castle gatehouse, Northumberland. The Landmark Trust were undertaking a scheme of works to renew the 20th century kitchen. The Castle holds Scheduled Ancient Monument status (SM ND 653, HA 1006394) and as such Scheduled Monument Consent was required for the project. The consent document (reference S00234675) marked the requirement for an archaeological watching brief to cover the installation of new service ducts and the lifting of floor slabs for re-levelling.

- 1.2.2 Archaeological and historical research objectives are built into developer funded archaeological schemes of work. This is the result of a number of English Heritage national policy frameworks: *Exploring our Past* (1991), *Frameworks for our Past* (1996), *Research Agenda* (1997) and *Policy Statement on Implementation* (1999). The research priorities proposed initially to have potential direct relevance to this project are set out in *Shared Visions: North East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment* (2006), in particular:

Later Medieval: MDiv. Castles and defensive structures;
MDvii. Medieval ceramics and other artefacts.

1.3 Written Scheme of Investigation

- 1.3.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for this project was produced by Tony Liddell, Principal Archaeologist for Vindomora Solutions Ltd and approved by Lee McFarlane, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Historic England (Version 2, dated 30th January 2020).

1.4 Timetable of works

- 1.4.1 The fieldwork was undertaken on the 5th February 2020.
- 1.4.2 The results of the monitoring were compiled into this report during the week commencing the 10th February 2020, with the report finalised on the 12th February 2020.

1.5 Professional standards

- 1.5.1 The work undertaken was in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (2014) and their *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2014) as well as the British Archaeologists' and Developers' Liaison Group's *Code of Practice* (1988).

1.6 Health and safety

- 1.6.1 Standard PPE was utilised for health and safety purposes throughout the fieldwork. All issues of on-site health and safety were undertaken in accordance with the Vindomora Solutions Limited *Health and Safety Manual* (updated 2018).

1.7 Archive

- 1.7.1 A full archive has been compiled in line with the specification and current UKIC and English Heritage Guidelines. The project code is **MCN-20** (**M**orpeth **C**astle **N**orthumberland **2020**). Vindomora Solutions support the **Online Access** to the **Index of Archaeological InvestigationS** project (OASIS). As a result, this report will be made available to the project under the unique identifier **vindomor1-384467**.

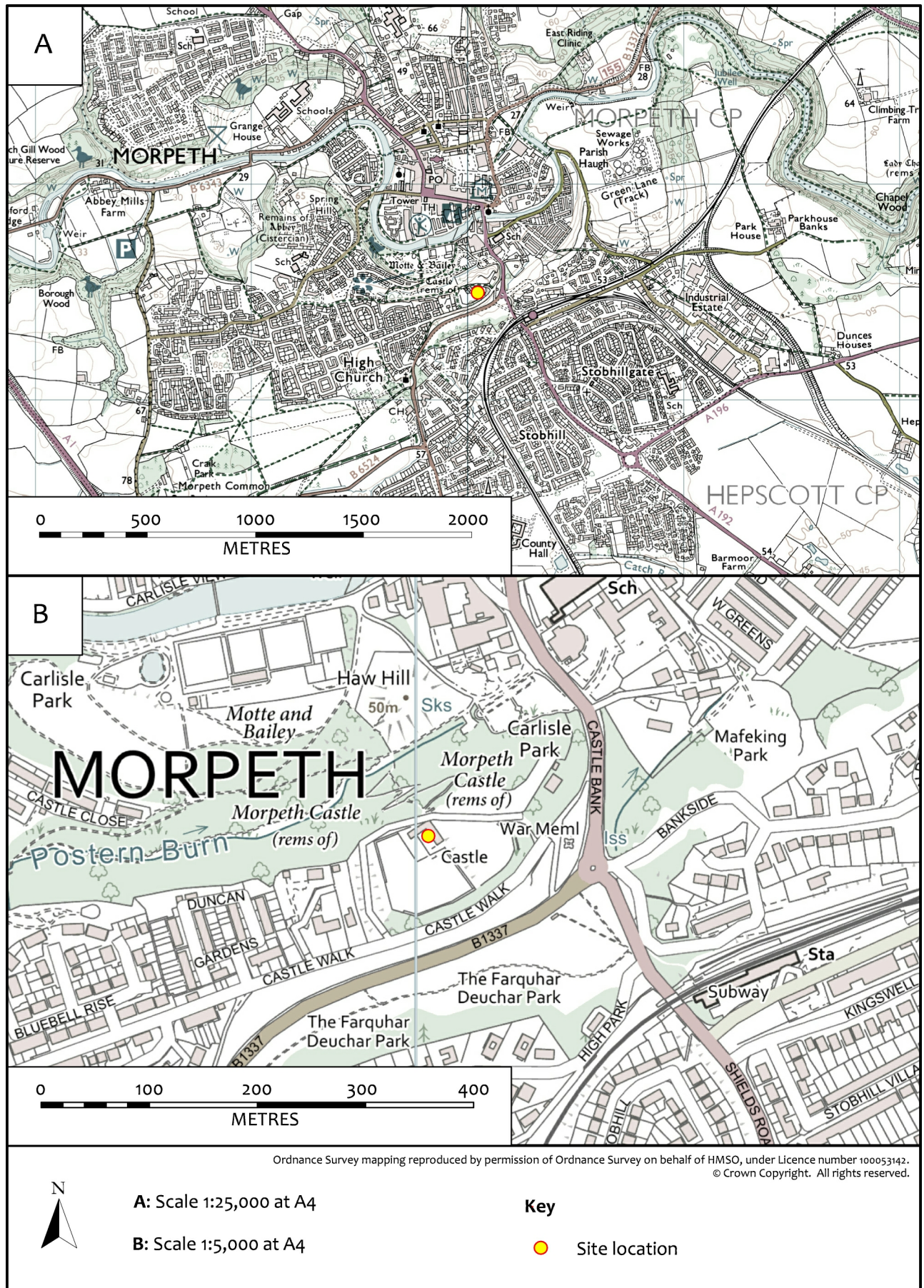


Figure 2. Location of the site, locally.

2. BACKGROUND



Figure 3. Location of the kitchen within the castle gatehouse.

2.1 Summary

- 2.1.1 Morpeth Castle was built in the 13th century for the de Merlay family. In AD 1271 it passed from the de Merlays to the Greystokes who used it as an administration and command centre to manage their other estates. The gatehouse to which the monitoring scheme relates dates to circa 1300, built by the Greystokes with more aesthetics in mind than defence. By the end of the 17th century the castle was described as "mightily decayed" - a decay that resulted in the ruination of most of the structure. The gatehouse was taken on by The Landmark Trust in 1988 and now serves as a holiday-let. At that time the kitchen was completely renewed, with the slabbed floor and packing sand beneath replaced by the current modern materials.

2.2 Designations

- 2.2.1 The monitoring area lies within Scheduled Ancient Monument SM ND 653, HA 1006394.

3. THE MONITORING



Figure 4. The extent of the monitoring within the kitchen.

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The scheme of works consisted of observing beneath ten floor slabs being lifted to allow for re-leveling, as well as the insertion of a small service between the central kitchen range and the western wall.

3.2 The service

- 3.2.1 The location of the cable insertion can be seen on *Figure 4* as a blue line. It had been found that the original scheme to install a new armoured duct from the central range to the wall in the southeast was not needed, as the currently installed cable was sufficient for the needs of the updated kitchen.
- 3.2.2 One slab was lifted to allow for the cable insertion, which was laid directly beneath the modern floor, cutting into the bedding sand (see *Plates 2 and 3*).



Plate 2. The new cable location in the foreground with a further lifted slab for levelling in the background, looking southeast.

Plate 3. The new cable length in-situ.



3.2.3 No archaeological structures, deposits or artefacts were observed.

3.3 The floor slabs

3.3.1 The floor slabs were new machine-cut stone slabs laid in 1988-89 atop renewed fresh bedding sand. Since they were laid, a number of slabs had subsided slightly, creating trip hazards due to the uneven floor.

3.3.2 Ten floor slabs were lifted within the area marked in red on Figure 4 to allow for re-levelling. No excavations into the bedding sand were undertaken: sand was added to lift the subsiding corners.

3.3.3 No archaeological structures, deposits or artefacts were observed.



Plate 4 (right). Lifting a slab using suction to prevent the need to scrape and dig between slabs.

Plate 5 (below). One of the slab holes showing the packing sand).



4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 On the 5th February 2020, a monitoring scheme took place on the insertion of a new cable and the lifting of ten floor slabs within Morpeth Castle gatehouse kitchen during the refurbishment of the room, in line with Scheduled Monument Consent (ref S00234675).
- 4.1.2 The floor slabs and the packing sand beneath were installed in 1988-89 when the Landmark Trust took over the property. None of the packing sand was excavated during the lifting of the slabs for re-levelling (sand was added rather than removed) and the cable added lay within a 0.03m deep run within the packing sand. As such, none of the works exceeded the 1980's construction.
- 4.1.3 No archaeological structures, deposits or artefacts were observed during the monitoring scheme.

5. REPOSITORIES AND SOURCES

5.1 Repositories

Beamish Museum People's Collection. Online at <http://collections.beamish.org.uk/>

Britain from Above Project. Online at <http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/>

British Library. Online at <http://www.bl.uk/>

British Geological Survey. Online at <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

Durham Record Office. County Hall, Durham DH1 5UL

Google Earth Pro 2019

Historic England Archive. Online at <http://archive.historicengland.org.uk>

Keys to the Past. Online at <http://www.keystothepast.info>

Newcastle City Library. Local studies section, Princess Square, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE99 1DX

PastScape Project. Online at <http://www.pastscape.org.uk/default.aspx>

Portable Antiquities Scheme. Online at <https://finds.org.uk/>

Tyne and Wear Archives. Blandford House, Blandford Square, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4JA

ViewFinder Project. Online at <http://viewfinder.english-heritage.org.uk/>

Vindomora Solutions Ltd Archive. Prospect House, Prospect Business Park, Leadgate, Consett, County Durham DH8 7PW

5.2 Sources

ClfA (2014) Code of Conduct. *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*

ClfA (2014) *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs.* Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

ClfA (2014) *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.* Institute for Archaeologists

ClfA (2014) *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives.* Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Department for Communities and Local Government (updated 2019) *Communities and Local Government: National Planning Policy Framework*

English Heritage (2008) *Conservation Principles - Policies and Guidance*

English Heritage (1991) *Managing Archaeological Projects.* Second edition

Historic England (2015) *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment - The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*

Liddell, T. (2019) *Written Scheme of Investigation for a programme of archaeological monitoring: Morpeth Castle, Northumberland.* WSI 299-20-MON.

Ordnance Survey mapping: 1857, 1895, 1915, 1919, 1939, 1978 and 2019 editions

Petts, D. & Gerrard, C. (2006) *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment.* Durham