



Herefordshire Archaeology
Conservation and Environmental Planning
Planning Services
Environment Directorate
Herefordshire Council

**Archaeological Monitoring
at Brampton Bryan Castle**
Herefordshire Archaeology
Report No. 239

Report prepared by
Tim Hoverd

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Herefordshire Archaeology is Herefordshire Council's county archaeology service. It advises upon the conservation of archaeological and historic landscapes, maintains the county Sites and Monument Record, and carries out conservation and investigative field projects. The County Archaeologist is Dr. Keith Ray.

Archaeological Monitoring at Brampton Bryan Castle

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 239

Herefordshire Archaeology, January 2007.

Summary:

The work described in this report (HSM 44824), comprised the archaeological monitoring of works at Brampton Bryan Castle, HSM 191.

The works comprised the recording and removal of stone facing or revetting on either side of an early 20th century cutting through the castle mound, prior to it being in-filled. The stone facing was removed from both sides of the cutting at the same time. Behind the stone facing was a 0.6m thick dump of re-deposited material containing ash and late 18th or early 19th century ceramic material. This was left in-situ as much as possible to avoid the disturbance of foundations relating to the standing structure. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were recorded.

Disclaimer: It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. NGRs are accurate to approximately 10m. Measured dimensions are accurate to within 1m at a scale of 1:500, 0.1m at 1:50, and 0.02m at 1:20.

Figures contain material from the Ordnance Survey. The grid in this material is the National Grid taken from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. This material has been reproduced in order to locate the site in its environs.

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Introduction

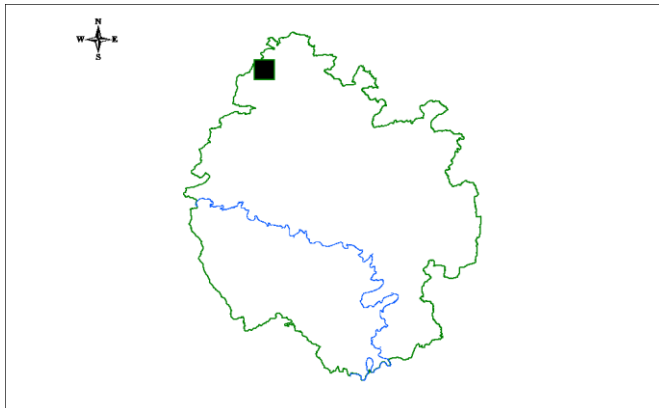
This report, (HSM 44824), provides an account of archaeological monitoring undertaken by Herefordshire Archaeology staff during January 2007 at Brampton Bryan castle (HSM 191, National Monument No. 27500). The works covered by the archaeological monitoring relate to the infilling of a cutting which bisects the castle ruins, in accordance with the terms agreed within the Scheduled Monument Consent. The cutting was created in the first half of the 20th century in order to provide easier access from the house to the tennis court.

As part of major refurbishment works on the house it was agreed that the cutting should be filled in. This would be of benefit to the monument as it would re-unite the northern and southern portions and therefore display the monument in a more complete and understandable way.

The cutting was faced with roughly squared stone to a height of approximately 0.8m on each side, in order to minimise erosion of the sides of the cutting and to act as a support for the battered embankment which formed its upper portion. Prior to the in-filling of the cutting the stone facing was removed for re-use elsewhere on the property. The archaeological monitoring was required in order to record any features or deposits made visible during the removal of the stone facing.

Location

Brampton Bryan castle is located at NGR SO 3702 7259, (Ordnance Survey, 1998), on the edge of the first river terrace to the south of the River Teme at approximately 135m O.D.



The solid geology surrounding Brampton Bryan comprises mudstone and siltstone of the Coalbrookdale formation with occasional limestone outcrops of the Leintwardine and Lower Bringewood formations. The valley base is covered in till and moranic deposits, (gravels), giving rise to sandy clay soils. (Ragg et al, 1984).

Figure 1: The location of Brampton Bryan within the county.

<i>Previous fieldwork / records</i>
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The standing remains of Brampton Bryan castle are built of local sandstone rubble and ashlar. They represent several phases of construction and include the outer gatehouse, part of the inner gatehouse and part of the south wall of the hall and kitchen range. The whole monument was constructed on a motte and surrounded by a moat.

The earliest documentary references to the castle at Brampton Bryan state that Bryan de Brampton had a “*tower with curtilage*” on the site in 1295. In 1309 the castle passed into the hands of Robert Harley through marriage. Alterations took place during the late 16th century and the early 17th century in an attempt to convert the castle into more comfortable domestic quarters. These alterations were still underway when the castle was besieged by the Royalists in 1643. Despite being kept under siege for seven weeks, the occupants of the castle, lead by Lady Brilliana Harley, stood firm and the siege was lifted. It was not until after her death in October 1643 that the castle fell and was burned to the ground by Sir Michael Woodhouse. Twenty years after the sacking of the castle, Lady Brilliana’s son, Edward Harley began construction of a two-storeyed, seven-bayed house approximately 40m to the west of the castle. This structure was later incorporated into the 18th century hall, which still occupies the site.

The surviving structure has been subjected to repairs in 1903, 1935, 1957 and 1972. Parts of the structure recorded by detailed scaled drawing in October 1986.(Shoesmith, R.)

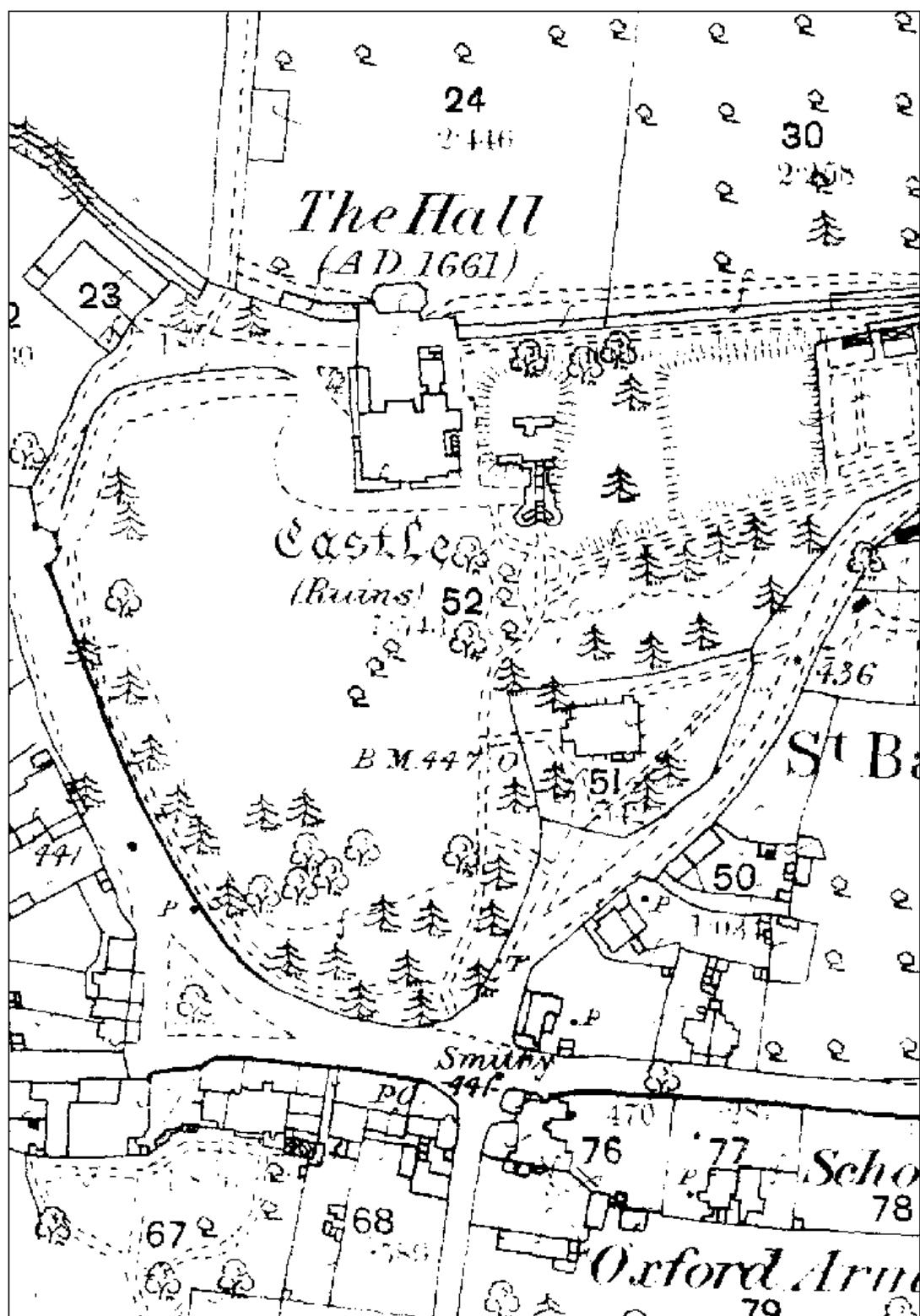


Figure 2: Extract from the County Series Ordnance Survey Map c. 1840-60

Method

The stone facing / revetting was removed by hand during the 9th and 10th of January 2007. Monitoring visits were made on both days and records made. The stonework was inspected for any evidence of tooling / moulding or mason's marks, however none were found.

Immediately behind the stonework was a 0.6-0.8m thick deposit of loose soil containing ash, fragments of brick and tile and sherds of late 18th or early 19th century pottery. It would appear that the initial cutting was excavated to a width of over 4m at its base and 5m at its top and that the loose material was used to not only fill in behind the stone revetting but also to enable a uniform profile to be achieved along the entire length of the cutting.

Discussion & Conclusions

The thickness of the loose deposit was surprising and would have involved the removal of a far greater volume of archaeologically significant material than anticipated. It would seem that the mound was cut back as far as the main foundation line on either side prior to being landscaped. This will have resulted in a considerable loss of archaeological evidence relating to the development of the castle.

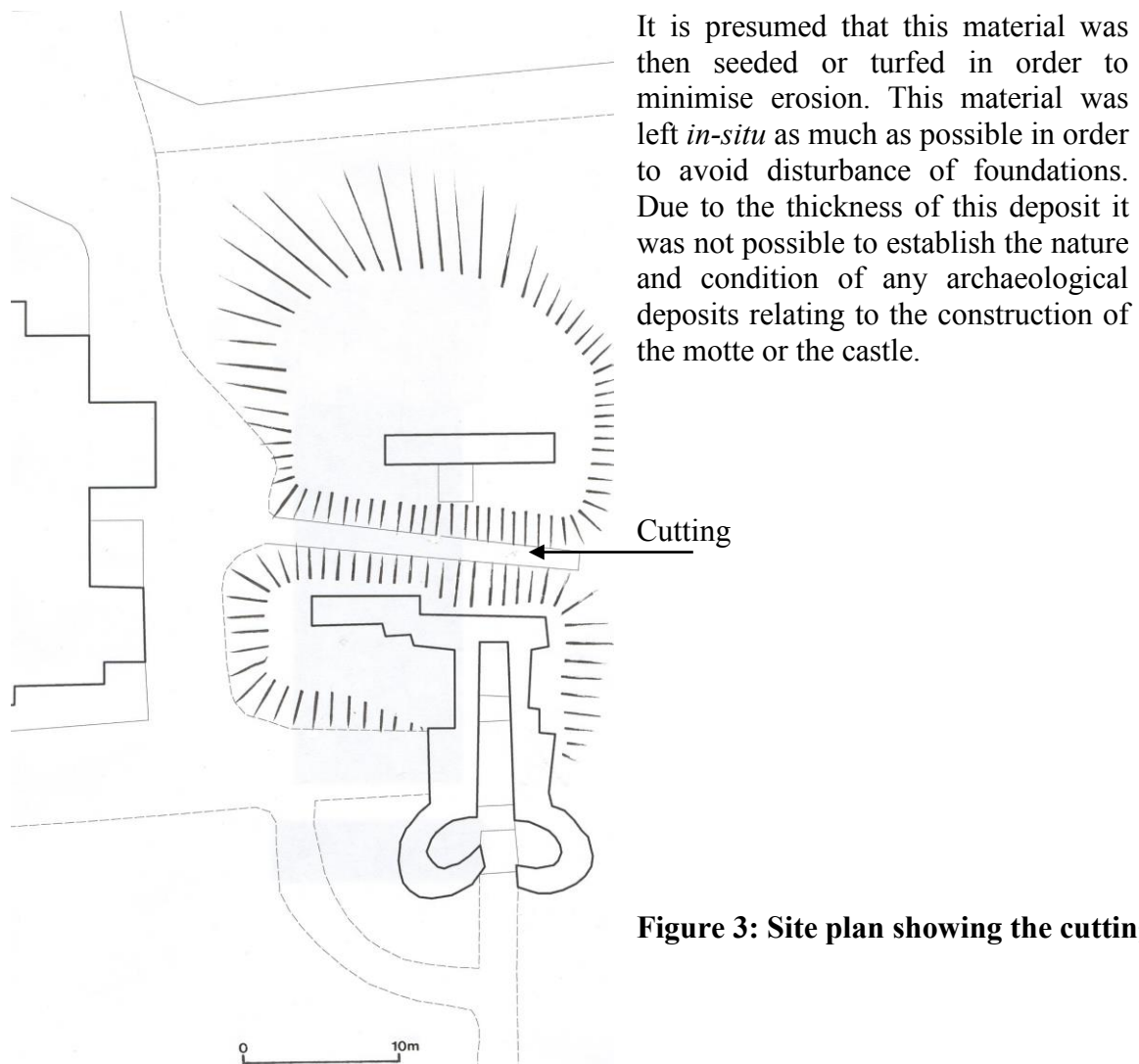


Figure 3: Site plan showing the cutting



Plate 1: The cutting looking east during the removal of the revetting.



Plate 2: The loose material immediately behind the revetting.



Plate 3: The cutting looking west upon completion of the removal of the stone revetting.

References

Ordnance Survey, 1998. Landline map base supplied under licence (100024168) to Herefordshire Council

Shoesmith, R. *Brampton Bryan Castle: An interim report on survey work*. City of Hereford Archaeology Committee 1986.

(Ragg *et al*): Ragg, J.M, Beard, G.R., Heaven, F.W., Hollis, J.M., Jones, R.J.A., Palmer, R.C. Reeve, M.J., Robson, J.D. and Whitfield, W.A.D., 1984. Soils and their use in midland and western England, *Soil Survey of England and Wales*, 12.

Ray, K. 2001. *Medieval Towns in Herefordshire: An Archaeological Management Review*. Herefordshire Archaeology Reports, 20.

Acknowledgements

Julian Cotton, Archaeological Advisor, for his editorial input into this report.

Archive

Two site monitoring record sheets
Ten digital Photographs
No finds were retained from this fieldwork
This Document

Validation

Herefordshire Archaeology operates a validation system for its reports, to provide quality assurance and to comply with Best Value procedures.

This report has been checked for accuracy and clarity of statements of procedure and results.

Dr. K. Ray, County Archaeologist.