

BACH CAMP, KIMBOLTON, HEREFORDSHIRE



A REPORT ON THE INSALLATION OF A NEW PEDESTRIAN GATE

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Summary:

Herefordshire Archaeology was commissioned by Balfour Beatty to undertake an archaeological watching brief in order to facilitate the installation of an pedestrian gate within the Scheduled Area of the remains of the Iron Age hillfort known as Bach Camp, Kimbolton, Herefordshire.

The gate replaces a stile on a public right of way and was located on the top of the counterscarp bank. A narrow trench was excavated and two post holes dug in order to install the gate. The post holes were excavated over the locations of the remains of the driven timber posts of the old stile so any additional disturbance to the monument was minimised. Whilst nothing of archaeological significance was recovered from the works, they did confirm that the counterscarp bank was constructed from redeposited natural clays.

Disclaimer: It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. National Grid References are accurate to approximately 5m. Measured dimensions are accurate to within 1m at a scale of 1:500, 0.1m at 1:50 and 0.02m at 1:20m. Figures contained within this report 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 (OS Licence 100024168). This material has been reproduced to locate the site in its environs.

Contact details: Herefordshire Archaeology, Economy, Communities & Corporate, Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Archives & Record Centre, Fir Tree Lane, Rotherwas, Hereford, HR2 6LA. 01432 383352. Copyright: This report is the copyright of Herefordshire Council.

1 Introduction

This report (HAR 391) describes the excavation for a pedestrian gate within the Scheduled Area of Bach Camp, Herefordshire. The gate was required in order to maintain and upgrade access on a public foot path and replaced a wooden stile that was in need of repair.

Scheduled Monument Consent, (HE reference S00240250), was granted on 23rd October 2020. The works which included the removal of the old stile, excavation for the new gate and its installation were undertaken by Balfour Beatty Living Places on 13th November 2020. Due to the designation of the monument, an archaeological watching brief was required as part of the Scheduled Monument Consent.

2 Archaeology

Bach Camp is a Scheduled Monument (Scheduled Monument Number 1007316) and is of national importance.

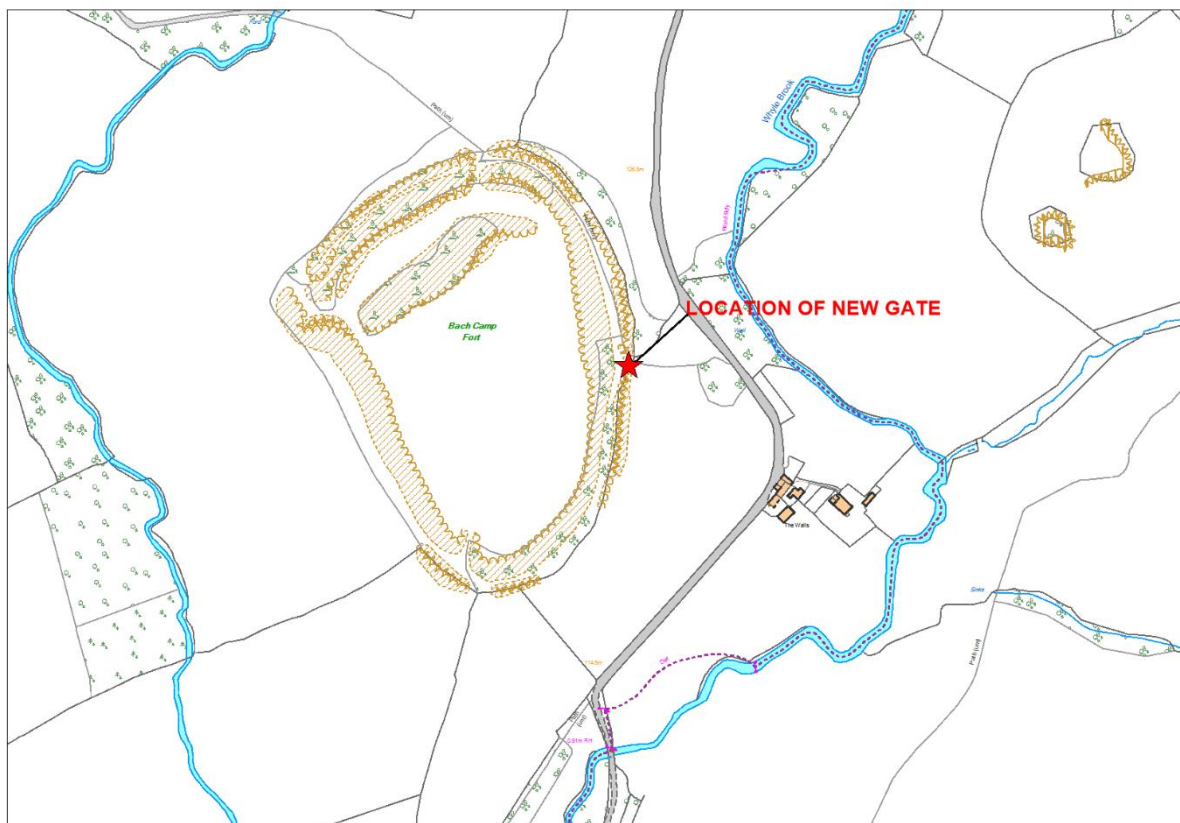


Figure 1: Location of new gate in relation to the hill fort earthworks and its environs.

Historic Environment Record and Scheduled Monument documentation:

Bach Camp, Kimbolton

National Grid Reference:

SO 54656 60235

Summary

This monument includes a large univallate hillfort situated on the summit of a rounded hill forming the watershed between the valleys of the Whyte Brook and one of its major tributaries and overlooking their confluence. The hillfort survives as an irregular shaped enclosure covering approximately 4.1ha and defined differentially by a single rampart of up to 5.1m high with partially buried outer ditch and counterscarp bank up to 1.8m high to the north, east and south and by a berm and deep scarp to the west. Of the three entrances the southern one is inturned, the northern is a simple gap and one to the west is presumed to be more modern.

Reasons for Designation

Large univallate hillforts are defined as fortified enclosures of varying shape, ranging in size between 1ha and 10ha, located on hilltops and surrounded by a single boundary comprising earthworks of massive proportions. They date to the Iron Age period, most having been constructed and used between the fourth century BC and the first century AD, although evidence for earlier use is present at most sites. The size of the earthworks reflects the ability of certain social groups to mobilise the labour necessary for works on such a monumental scale, and their function may have had as much to do with display as defence. Large univallate hillforts are also seen as centres of redistribution, both for subsistence products and items produced by craftsmen. The ramparts are of massive proportions except in locations where steepness of slope precludes easy access. They can vary between 6m and 20m wide and may survive to a height of 6m. The ditches can measure between 6m and 13m wide and between 3m and 5m deep. Access to the interior is generally provided by one or two entrances which often take the form of long passages formed by inturned ramparts and originally closed by a gate located towards the inner end of the passageway. The entrance may be flanked by guardrooms and/or accompanied by outworks. Internal features included timber or stone round houses; large storage pits and hearths; scattered postholes, stakeholes and gullies; and square or rectangular buildings supported by four to six posts, often represented by postholes, and interpreted as raised granaries. Large univallate hillforts are rare with between 50 and 100 examples recorded nationally. Most are located within southern England where they occur on the chalkland of Wessex, Sussex and Kent. The western edge of the distribution is marked by scattered examples in north Somerset and east Devon, while further examples occur in central and western England and outliers further north. Within this distribution considerable regional variation is apparent, both in their size, rampart structure and the presence or absence of individual components. In view of the rarity of large univallate hillforts and their importance in understanding the organisation and regional structure of Iron Age society, all examples with surviving archaeological remains are believed to be of importance.

Following extensive management works the large univallate hillfort known as Bach Camp 240m north west of The Walls survives well and will contain archaeological and environmental evidence relating to its construction, development, longevity, social organisation, territorial and strategic significance, agricultural practices, trade, industrial activity, domestic arrangements and overall landscape context.

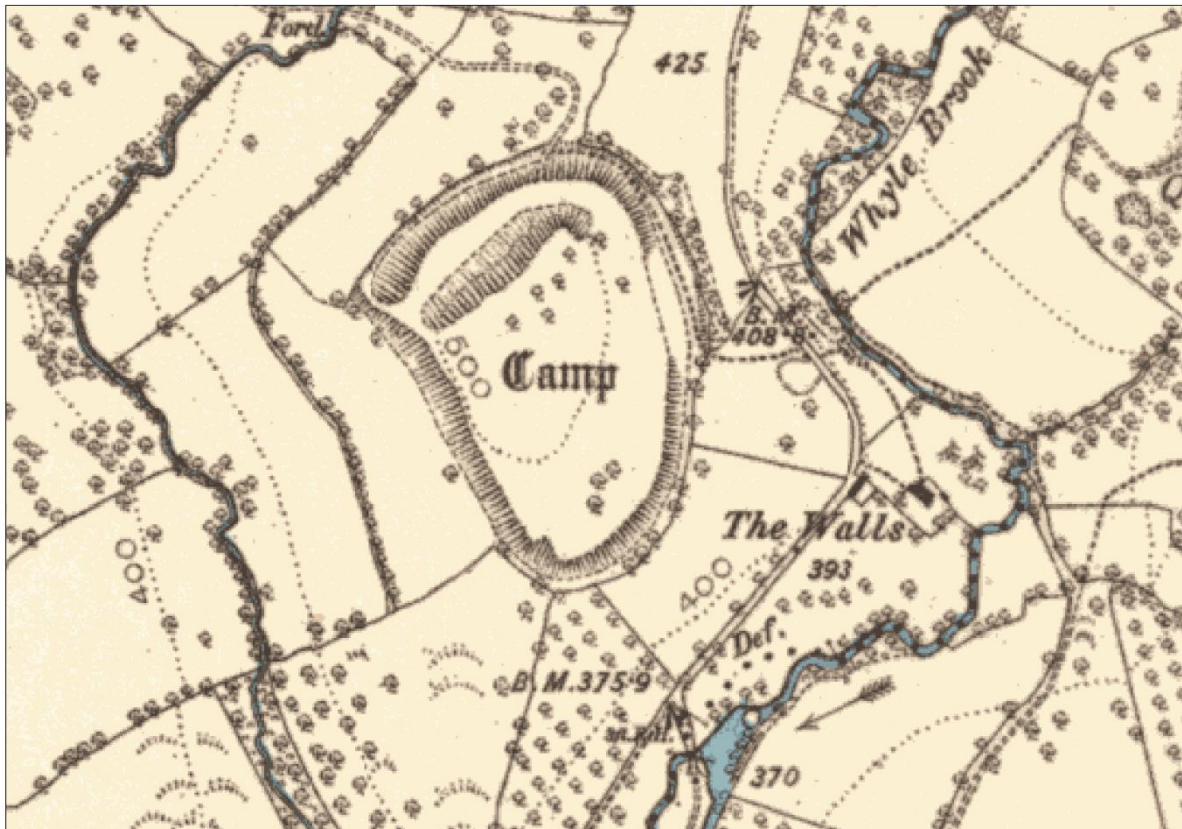


Figure 2: Extract from 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1886-7

3 Historical Land Use

Associated Historic Landscape Character Records

1. HHE 714 – Enclosure of common arable fields

Cartographic evidence gives the following historical land use of the site:

- 1839 Tithe Map shows that the internal of the hill fort was called “The Camp” and that the field through which the footpath runs was called “Upper Walls”
-
- 1886-7 1st Edition Ordnance Survey shows the area inside and immediately surrounding the hill fort as being managed under permanent pasture with occasional trees. (Figure 2).

4 Current land use and management

The Scheduled Area and fields immediately surrounding it is under permanent pasture.

5. Fieldwork

The archaeological monitoring (as outlined in the Scheduled Monument Consent), comprised a watching brief on the excavation for and installation of a galvanised steel pedestrian gate.

The remains of the wooden stile were removed and the two supporting posts dug out to a depth of approximately 0.6m in order to accommodate the new gate posts. A 0.3m wide trench between the two post holes was excavated to a depth of approximately 0.35m in order to bed in the base rail for the gate. The gate was levelled with compacted stone and clay prior to premixed concrete being poured to ground level. All works were undertaken by hand.



Plate 1: Post holes and base bar trench fully excavated.



Plate 2: The replacement gate after concreting.

6 Discussion:

The installation works have caused no damage to the monument, the only deposits being disturbed comprising redeposited natural clay from the counterscarp bank.

7 Acknowledgements:

Herefordshire Archaeology would like to thank Colin Smith, Locality Steward, Balfour Beatty Living Places.

8 Archive:

This document

10 digital images