

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
DURHAM UNIVERSITY

on behalf of
English Heritage

Brough Castle, Cumbria, and
Easby Abbey and Spofforth Castle
North Yorkshire

archaeological monitoring

report 2646
May 2011

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1. Summary

The project

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief conducted during the installation of new interpretation panels at Brough Castle, Cumbria, and Easby Abbey and Spofforth Castle, North Yorkshire. The works comprised the monitoring of excavations prior to the interpretation panels being erected.
- 1.2 The works were commissioned by English Heritage, and conducted by Archaeological Services Durham University.

Results

- 1.3 Stones encountered at Easby Abbey may relate to a wall, and a stone layer encountered within Spofforth Castle may be an earlier floor surface.
- 1.4 Sherds of medieval pottery were recovered during panel installation at Easby Abbey and Spofforth Castle. Fragments of animal bone were recovered from all three sites.

Recommendations

- 1.5 No further archaeological works are recommended.

2. Project background

Location (Figure 1)

- 2.1 The sites were located at Brough Castle, Brough, Cumbria (NGR centre: NY 7906 3792), Easby Abbey, Easby, North Yorkshire (NGR centre: NZ 4184 5002) and Spofforth Castle, Spofforth, North Yorkshire (NGR centre: SE 3607 5117).

The works

- 2.2 The aim of the works was the installation of interpretation panels.

Objective

- 2.3 The objective of the monitoring programme was to identify and record any archaeological features or artefacts uncovered during groundworks.

Brief

- 2.4 The works have been undertaken in accordance with a Brief provided by English Heritage (Appendix 2). Scheduled Monument Consent was obtained for work on all three sites (SMC 6632: Easby, 6633: Spofforth, and 6634: Brough).

Dates

- 2.5 Fieldwork was undertaken between the 30th March and 14th April 2011. This report was prepared for the 16th May 2011.

Personnel

- 2.6 Fieldwork was conducted and this report prepared by Mathew Claydon, Alan Rae, and Mark Randerson, with illustrations by Janine Watson. Specialist reporting was conducted by Louisa Gidney and Peter Rowley-Conwy (animal bone) and Jennifer Jones (conservation and other finds). The Project Manager was Richard Annis.

Archive/OASIS

- 2.7 The site codes are **BCC11**, for **Brough Castle Cumbria 2011**, **EAR11**, for **Easby Abbey, Richmond 2011** and **SCG11**, for **Spofforth Castle Grounds**. The archive is currently held by Archaeological Services Durham University and will be transferred to the National Monuments Record in due course. Archaeological Services Durham University is registered with the **Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigationS** project (**OASIS**). The OASIS ID number for this project is **archaeol3-100447**.

3. Landuse, topography and geology

- 3.1 Brough Castle occupies an area of high ground west of Church Brough and south of the larger village of Brough. The keep, at the west of the site, stands higher than the rest of the structure, and the ground within the curtain wall generally slopes downward to the south, with a mean elevation of roughly 190m aOD. Large earthworks and fortifications surround the castle, extending down a long, gentle slope to the south, while the land drops away more sharply to the north. The buildings of Brough Castle Farm and teashop lie to the southeast, with the village beyond. The underlying solid geology of the area comprises Permian strata of the Penrith Sandstone Formation, which is overlain by Devensian Quaternary Till.

- 3.2 Easby Abbey lies to the southeast of Richmond, on the eastern bank of the River Swale. The site is predominately level with the land sloping eastwards towards the River Swale. The site lies at a mean elevation of 93m aOD. The geology of the area comprises Carboniferous Richmond Cherts, sealed by a Quaternary sand and gravel river terrace.
- 3.3 Spofforth Castle is set to the west of Spofforth village, on a rocky outcrop of Carboniferous Upper Plompton Grit overlooking the settlement. The site is predominantly level, set at a mean elevation of 44m aOD, although the ground level drops away sharply to the west, south, and north of the surviving west wing of the building, which was built against the rock outcrop. Upstanding earthworks to the east mark the remains of the other wings of the structure.

4. Archaeological and historical background

- 4.1 Brough Castle was the site of the Roman fort of *Verterae*, part of a chain of forts which guard the road between Carlisle and Dere Street at Scotch Corner. The fort covered an area larger than the castle, and surviving earthworks can be seen to the south of the site. The castle was originally built by William Rufus as a simple motte-and-bailey fortification in the 1090s, and was subsequently rebuilt and enlarged as it passed through the hands of various noble families, mainly the Cliffords. The castle was last occupied in 1676, swiftly becoming ruined and derelict after its abandonment.
- 4.2 Easby Abbey was founded in 1150s by the Constable of Richmond Castle, and was dedicated to St. Agatha as a Premonstratensian house. Architecturally, the abbey buildings mainly date from the late 12th and early 13th centuries, indicating this as the principal period of construction. The abbey was surrendered as part of the dissolution in 1535, although it experienced a short-lived revival in 1536-7 as part of the Pilgrimage of Grace. Following this, the site was abandoned and became ruined.
- 4.3 Spofforth Manor was granted to William de Percy following the Conquest, and was the family's main residence. The castle was again originally of motte and bailey construction, presumably built in the latter part of the 11th century. A fortified house was built in the 13th century, and Henry de Percy gained permission to crenellate the structure in 1308, shortly before the family moved its seat of power to Alnwick. The castle declined following this move, although the surviving buildings are of 14th- and 15th-century construction, indicating that the site remained one of some importance. The castle was last occupied by the family's steward in the 1600s, and was ruined during the Civil War.

5. The archaeological monitoring

Introduction

- 5.1 Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the installation of five new lectern-style interpretation panels, and the replacement of an old panel, within the scheduled area of Brough Castle (Figure 2). The installation of five lectern-style panels at Easby Abbey and three similar panels at Spofforth Castle were also monitored. Two small postholes were required for each panel at Brough Castle and Easby Abbey. However, larger post-pits were excavated for four of the panels at Brough Castle as it proved impossible to dig individual postholes. All postholes and

post-pits were excavated by hand under close archaeological supervision. A written and photographic record of each excavation was produced. Due to the small scale of the excavations, none of the photographs was particularly illustrative, and so they are not reproduced in this report. The majority of the holes were too small and dark to adequately assess the nature of some of the lower layers.

Brough Castle (Figure 1)

Panel 1

- 5.2 This panel was located close to the northwest corner of the Castle Farm tea shop. Two postholes, each 0.2m by 0.2m and 0.5m deep, were excavated 0.25m apart on a north-south alignment. The lowest deposit encountered was brownish-red slightly clayey silty sand [17: 0.1m+ thick]. This was overlain by a layer of dark brown sandy silt [16: 0.32m thick], over which was a layer of turf and dark greyish-brown sandy silt topsoil [15: 0.08m thick]. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts recovered.

Panel 2

- 5.3 This panel was located to the south of the castle, near to the centre of the remains of the fort. One post-pit was excavated, orientated roughly east-west. It measured 0.52m E-W, 0.2m N-S, and was 0.58m deep. The lowest deposit exposed was a dark brown sandy silt subsoil [14: 0.48m+ thick], from which one piece of bone was recovered. This was overlain by a layer of turf and dark greyish-brown sandy silt topsoil [13: 0.1m thick] identical to [15] further to the east. No archaeological features were identified.

Panel 3

- 5.4 This panel was located inside the curtain wall, to the west of the gatehouse. The panel replaced a previous sign, and so one post-pit was excavated to remove the earlier foundation. The resulting pit measured 0.16m N-S, 0.5m E-W, and 0.55m deep. The lowest deposit encountered was a dark purplish-brown slightly clayey sandy silt [12: 0.1m+ thick], containing occasional pea grit and very frequent large, well-rounded cobbles. It is probable that this deposit formed a foundation layer for the castle courtyard. The layer was cut through by a sub-circular foundation cut [F11: 0.16m in diameter, 0.35m deep] containing a deposit of concrete [10], which supported the steel post of the former information board. This foundation was overlain by a cobble surface [10: 0.1m thick], probably a modern 'patch' repairing the castle courtyard after the insertion of the foundation. No artefacts were recovered.

Panel 4

- 5.5 This panel was located east of the keep, near the southeast corner of the structure. Two postholes, each 0.2m square and 0.55m deep, were excavated 0.2m apart on a north-south alignment. The lowest deposit encountered comprised mid brownish-red silty clay [6: 0.15m+ thick]. This was overlain by a mid reddish-brown sandy silt [5: 0.32m thick], containing animal bone. Over this was a layer of turf and dark greyish-brown sandy silt topsoil [4: 0.08m thick]. No archaeological features were identified.

Panel 5

- 5.6 This panel was located inside the castle keep, to the west of the doorway. One main post-pit was excavated, measuring 0.45m N-S by 0.18m E-W and 0.29m deep. The

base of the pit exposed a deposit of concrete [3: 0.17m+ thick], modern in origin and presumably used as underpinning for the keep. This was overlain by a layer of mid pinkish-brown medium coarse bedding sand [2: 0.08m thick] which was in turn overlain by a dressed flagstone floor [1: 0.04m thick]. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts recovered.

Panel 6

- 5.7 This panel was located inside the castle's curtain wall, near to the northeast corner of the courtyard. One post-pit was excavated, orientated roughly east-west and measuring 0.25m N-S by 0.45m E-W and 0.5m deep. The lowest deposit encountered was a dark purplish-brown slightly clayey sandy silt [8: 0.4m+ thick], containing animal bone. This deposit also contained inclusions of pea grit and very frequent large, well-rounded cobbles and was presumably, like deposit [12], a foundation layer for the castle courtyard. It was overlain by a cobbled yard surface [7: 0.1m thick]. No archaeological features were identified.

Easby Abbey (Figure 2)

Panel 1

- 5.8 This panel was located to the north-east of the entrance. Two postholes, each 0.2m square and 0.55m deep, were excavated 0.25m apart on a north-west-south-east alignment. The lowest deposit encountered was a dark grey brown silty clay [2: 0.45m+ thick]. Over this was a layer of turf [1: 0.08m thick]. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts recovered.

Panel 2

- 5.9 This panel was located within the refectory. Two postholes, each 0.2m square and 0.55m deep, were excavated 0.25m apart on a north-west-south-east alignment. The lowest deposit encountered comprised dark grey sandy silty clay [5: 0.47m+ thick], which contained medieval pottery. This was overlain by a layer of turf [3: 0.08m thick]. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts recovered. Panel 2 was moved 0.45m north-east from its original position as a layer of stones [F4] was encountered immediately below the turf [3]. It is possible that these stones represent a wall within the refectory.

Panel 3

- 5.10 This panel was located within the cloister. Two postholes, each 0.2m² and 0.55m deep, were excavated 0.25m apart on a north-west-south-east alignment. The lowest deposit encountered was orange sandy gravel [8: 0.15m+ thick]. This was overlain by a dark grey sandy silt [7: 0.32m thick], containing animal bone. Over this was a layer of turf [6: 0.05m thick]. No archaeological features were identified.

Panel 4

- 5.11 This panel was located in the infirmary. Two postholes, each 0.2m square and 0.55m deep, were excavated 0.25m apart on a north-west-south-east alignment. The lowest deposit encountered comprised dark grey brown silty clay [10: 0.45m+ thick]. Over this was a layer of turf [9: 0.08m thick]. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts recovered.

Panel 5

- 5.12 This panel was located inside the church. Two postholes, each 0.2m square and 0.55m deep, were excavated 0.25m apart on a north-west-south-east alignment.

The lowest deposit encountered comprised dark grey brown silty clay [10: 0.40m+ thick]. Over this was a layer of turf [9: 0.12m thick]. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts recovered.

Spofforth Castle (Figure 3)

Panel 1

- 5.13 This panel was located adjacent to a footpath north-east of the castle. Two postholes, each 0.2m square and 0.55m deep, were excavated 0.25m apart on a north-south alignment. The lowest deposit encountered comprised brown sandy silt [5: 0.45m+ thick]. This was overlain by a thin layer of crushed stone [4: 0.05m thick] which had been used to surface the footpath. Over this was a layer of turf [3: 0.05m thick]. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts recovered.

Panel 2

- 5.14 This panel was located east of the castle. Two postholes, each 0.2m square and 0.55m deep, were excavated 0.25m apart on a north-south alignment. The lowest deposit encountered comprised brown sandy silt [5: 0.3m+ thick] from which a sherd of medieval pottery and a fragment of animal bone were recovered. Over this was a layer of topsoil and turf [1: 0.25m thick]. No archaeological features were identified.

Panel 3

- 5.15 This panel was located in the south-west corner of the castle. Two postholes were excavated 0.1m apart on an east-west alignment. The excavation was hampered by a probable layer of stones [8], possibly an earlier floor surface, which was reached at 0.3m below ground level. Consequently the west posthole was 0.2m square and up to 0.5m deep, and the east posthole was 0.3m by 0.2m, and 0.3m deep. The stones were overlain by 0.15-0.35m of mixed brown sandy silt [7], over which was a modern crushed sandstone surface [6]

6. The finds

Pottery assessment

- 6.1 Easby Abbey (EAR11) context [5] produced a single rim sherd from a cooking vessel or large jug. This is a piece of Hartlepool type ware, dateable to the late 13th-15th century. The fabric is orange, fully oxidised and slightly gritty, with patches of orange slip on the outside, which are overlaid by a splashed green/brown glaze.
- 6.2 Context [2] from Spofforth Castle (SCG11) produced a single body sherd in a hard, wheel thrown, fine sandy fabric, which is dark grey with an oxidised orange-red margin. The slightly pitted glaze is brown to olive green. It can be dated to the medieval period.

- 6.3 No further work is recommended.

Animal bone assessment

- 6.4 Seven fragments of animal bone came from three of the excavations at Brough Castle. Context [14] produced a fragment of cattle occipital bone; context [5] had fragments of a cattle calcaneum, a probable pig vertebra and a piece of acetabulum from a red deer. This latter bone had clear evidence of chopping; context [8] had

cattle and sheep-sized rib fragments and a cattle-sized ileum fragment, which had been gnawed by a dog.

- 6.5 Three pieces of bone were recovered from Easby Abbey context [7]. Two are phalanges, one from a pig and the other from a deer (probably a fallow deer). The third piece is an indeterminate fragment from the long bone shaft of a large (horse/cattle) sized animal.
- 6.6 Spofforth Castle context [2] also produced one small, indeterminate fragment from the long bone shaft of a small to medium sized animal.
- 6.7 No further work is recommended.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 No further archaeological works are recommended.

Appendix 1: Data tables

Table 1.1: Context data

Brough Castle

The • symbols in the columns at the right indicate the presence of finds of the following types: B bone.

No	Area	Description	B
1	5	Dressed stone paving	
2	5	Bedding sand	
3	5	Concrete	
4	4	Turf and topsoil (inside the castle)	
5	4	Subsoil	•
6	4	Subsoil	
7	6	Cobble surface	
8	6	Bedding deposit	•
9	3	Cobble surface	
10	3	Concrete foundation	
F11	3	Cut for foundation	
12	3	Bedding deposit	
13	2	Topsoil and turf	
14	2	Subsoil	•
15	1	Topsoil and turf	
16	1	Subsoil	
17	1	Subsoil	

Easby Abbey

The • symbols in the columns at the right indicate the presence of finds of the following types: P pottery, B bone.

No	Area	Description	P	B
1	1	Turf		
2	1	Dark grey brown silty clay		
3	2	Topsoil		
F4	2	Wall		
5	1	Dark grey sandy silt	•	
6	3	Topsoil		
7	3	Dark grey sandy silt		•
8	3	Orange sandy gravel		
9	4	Topsoil		
10	4	Dark grey silt		
11	5	Topsoil		
12	5	Dark grey sandy silt		

Spofforth Castle

The • symbols in the columns at the right indicate the presence of finds of the following types: P pottery, B bone.

No	Area	Description	P	B
1	2	Turf		
2	2	Crushed sandstone layer		
3	2	Sandy silt deposit		
4	1	Topsoil		
5	1	Sandy silt deposit	•	•
6	3	Surface		
7	3	Sandy silt deposit		
8	3	Stone layer		

Appendix 2: Project specification

BRIEF FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Brough Castle, Cumbria
Easby Abbey, North Yorkshire
Spofforth Castle, North Yorkshire

1.0 Summary

1.1.1 An application for *scheduled monument consent* has been submitted in order to carry the installation interpretive panels at three English Heritage, Guardianship sites:

- Brough Castle, Brough, Cumbria. **Scheduled Ancient Monument Number** (OCN CU334
- Easby Abbey, Easby, Richmond, North Yorkshire. **Scheduled Ancient Monument Number** (21624)
- Spofforth Castle, Spofforth, Harrogate, North Yorkshire. **Scheduled Ancient Monument Number** (13273)

1.2 It is essential that a watching brief be maintained during the proposed work and this document provides a brief for the archaeological monitoring that is required whilst this work is taking place. This is a condition of *scheduled monument consent*. The aim is to examine, record and recover archaeological deposits affected by the works, and provide further information about the deposits encountered.

1.3 The project proposal involves the installation of several interpretation panels at each site with each panel requiring the excavation of two 200mm x 400mm post holes.

Brough Castle, six panels = 12 post holes
Easby Abbey, five panels = 10 post holes
Spofforth Castle, three panels = six post holes.

1.4 The tenderer is to be asked to provide a day rate for supervising this work. It is not envisaged that work at any site will take longer than one day.

2.0 Site Descriptions

2.1 **Brough Castle.** The castle stands within the northern sector of the earlier Roman fort of *Verterae*, in fact employing sections of the Roman defences. The earliest castle on the site, constructed around 1100, was a motte and bailey earthwork; later replaced in stone during the course of the 12th century. Destroyed by the Scots in 1174, the later rebuilding of the castle included the construction of the large square keep. The castle is a multi-period structure constructed of coursed squared sandstone blocks with ashlar dressings. The castle comprises a square three storey keep within a sub-rectangular paved ward enclosed by a curtain walls. In addition to the keep there are the remains of several other structures of various dates including; on the north side, brew house, bake house, and kitchen and on the south, stables, gatehouse and a Great hall. At the south-east corner of the ward is the semi-circular, 'Clifford's Tower.'

Easby Abbey. The Abbey, which was dedicated to St Agatha, was founded c. 1155 as a Premonstratensian house by Roald, Constable of Richmond Castle. Little is known of the early history of the monastery, however, based on the architectural style of the standing buildings it was during the late 12th and early 13th century that most of the claustral buildings were constructed. This began with the erection of the abbey church and then continued from west to east across the site. Easby was dissolved in 1535, being surrendered by the abbot to Henry VIII's commissioners. The involvement of local gentry and landowners in the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536 led to the short-lived re-establishment of the abbey until its final demise in 1537. It is known that the site was later leased to lord le Scrope, however, little of the history of the site from that date onwards has been established.

Spofforth Castle. Spofforth was at one time the principle residence of the Percy family in Yorkshire. The surviving buildings represent the western range of a suite of building that originally surrounded a central courtyard. The structures which formed the north and south ranges can still be traced as wall footings or earthworks. The eastern range would have contained the main gate into the complex. The manor of Spofforth came into the possession of the Percys' soon after the conquest of England in the late 11th century. In 1224, William de Percy obtained a license to hold a weekly market in the town of Spofforth, which indicated the importance the site held in the fortunes of the family. In 1308 Henry de Percy obtained a license to crenellate the manor house from king Edward II, indicating some interest in the site, however, it was soon after this date that Henry purchased the manor of Alnwick, Northumberland, from the Bishop of Durham and the family's main considerations were, from this point onwards, firmly focused on events further north. The west range is of two storeys, with the earliest part being the undercroft which is dated to the 13th century. Above this are the great hall and certain private rooms, built and modified in the 14th and 15th centuries. The plan of the west range is a parallelogram with an extension at the north-east corner and polygonal stair turret and spire at the north-west. The building is interesting in that it is built directly against a natural gritstone outcrop with the first floor of the building being entered directly from the east.

2.2 The location of the is provided on the attached plan.

2.3 Access to the site will be by prior arrangement with Mr David Thomas (Interpretation Officer, English Heritage)

3.0 Archaeological Watching Brief

3.1 A full archaeological watching brief must be carried out during the excavation.

The objectives of this watching brief are as follows:

- to provide archaeological supervision of during the excavation;
- to identify, sample, record and interpret all archaeological features and deposits exposed. The contractor will be given the opportunity to halt works whenever it is deemed necessary and allowed the time to clean and make an assessment of the potential of features and deposits exposed. The complete excavation of all features is not necessary particularly where features continue into sections or go below the maximum depth of excavation. Complex archaeological features and deposits will be fully excavated and recorded; less complex should be sufficiently sampled in order to understand their nature, stratigraphic complexity and date;

4.0 Method

4.1 A record of all features excavated will be produced using appropriate archaeological context recording. All features will require a full written, drawn and photographic record.

4.2.1 All measurements will be expressed in metres. Plans and sections will be produced at appropriate scales. Excavated post holes will be located using reliable and repeatable measurements.

4.3 All photographic recording of features should use the most appropriate method to fulfil the objectives of the project (35mm colour slide, black and white print, Digital photograph) and agreed in advance of the fieldwork.

4.4 An appropriate artefact collection and discard policy should be defined and agreed in advance of any fieldwork.

4.5 If appropriate, a sampling strategy must be prepared in consultation with the English Heritage Regional Archaeological Science Advisor. The archaeological contractor will ensure that all conservation specialists and consultants are identified as part of the contractor's team from the outset. The archaeological contractor will ensure that a sum for any sampling and assessment work is identified in the tender return.

4.6 On completion of the fieldwork all samples will be processed and artefacts cleaned, conserved, identified, labelled and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the appropriate repository guidelines and standards.

5.0 Archive and Report

5.1 The site archive will be prepared to the standards specified in the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) 2006. Archive preparation and deposition should be undertaken with reference to the appropriate repository guidelines and standards. The contractor must demonstrate that arrangements have been with an appropriate organisation for the deposition of the project archive in advance of any work on site.

5.2.1 The contractor will provide a written report within 3 months (or shorter period by mutual agreement) on completion of the fieldwork. A copy of the report should be sent to the English Heritage Properties Curator, local authority archaeologist, and to the English Heritage, regional Inspector of Ancient Monuments and the County Sites and Monument Record. A copy should also be sent to the English Heritage archaeological archive at Helmsley. The National Monuments Record should be asked if they wish to receive copies of the archive and report. The report should contain as a minimum:

- Non-technical summary
- Introductory statement
- Aims and objectives
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusion
- Index and location of archive
- References and bibliography
- Copy of project design

7.0 Timetable and Monitoring

7.1 Fieldwork should start on **to be determined** (early March).....

7.2 The project will be monitored by the English Heritage, Inspector of Ancient Monuments who will be given at least two weeks notice by the principle contractor, (or shorter period by mutual agreement) in writing of the commencement and timetable of the work.

7.3 The archaeological contractor will ensure that additional arrangements are made for monitoring visits if necessary during or after the fieldwork is complete. The archaeological contractor will report any unexpected discoveries immediately to the project monitor/s.

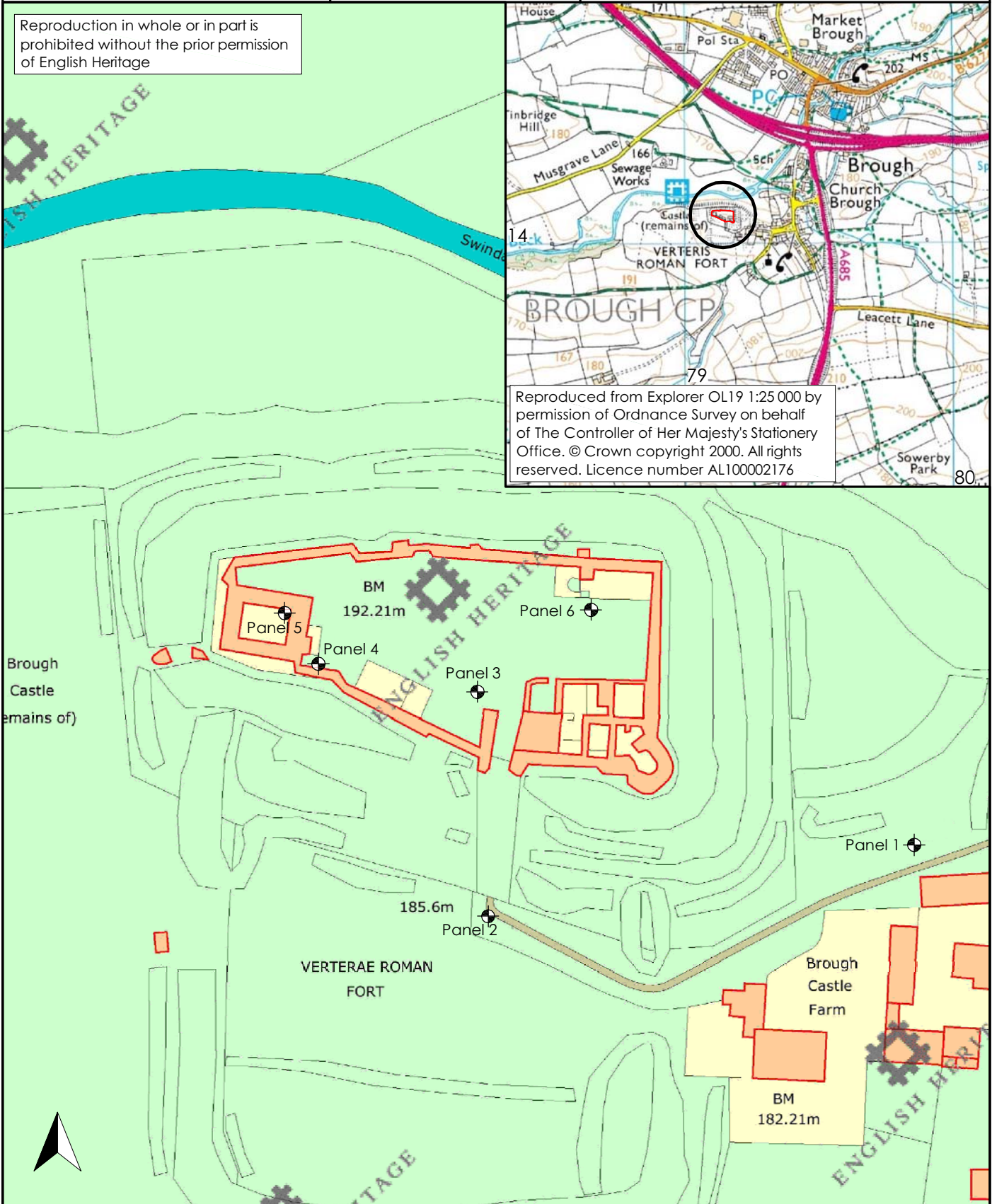
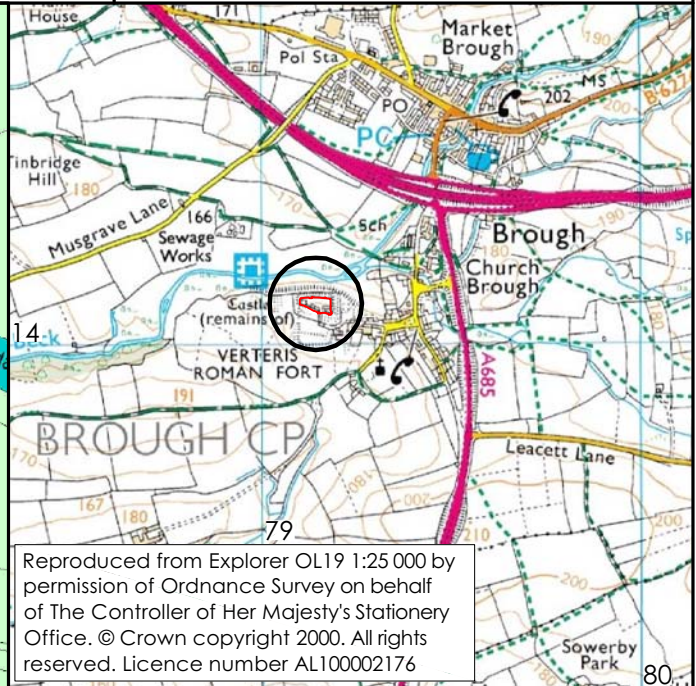
8.0 Health and Safety


8.1 The contractor should comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act and subsequent additions and amendments. All fieldwork must be carried out under an agreed Health and Safety Policy. A risk assessment should be carried out prior to the commencement of work and the project should have a nominated Safety Officer.


- 8.2 If the Provisions of Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 1994 are appropriate the employer will appoint a Planning Supervisor who will prepare a Health and Safety Plan which will be made available to the archaeological contractor prior to the commencement of work.
- 8.3 On arrival on site, the archaeological contractor will report to the principle contractor and confirm all working arrangements. The archaeological contractor will have the power to suspend works when necessary, but they must ensure that this does not unreasonably disrupt the work schedules of other contractors.

Brief prepared by:
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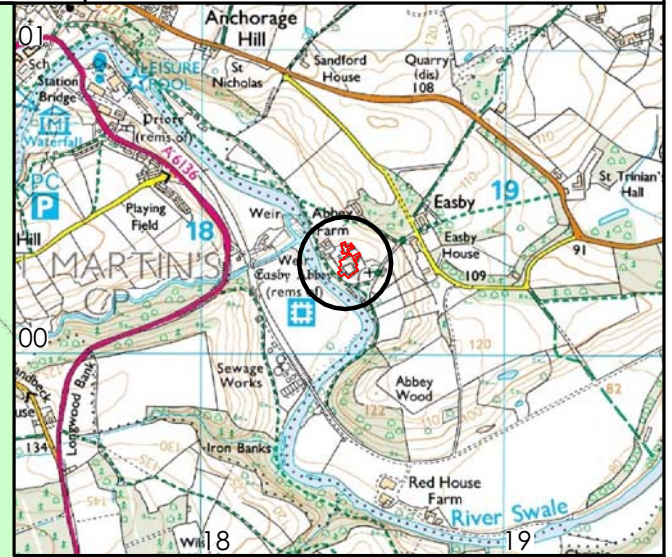


 location of monitoring

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
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(Premonstratensian founded 1152)



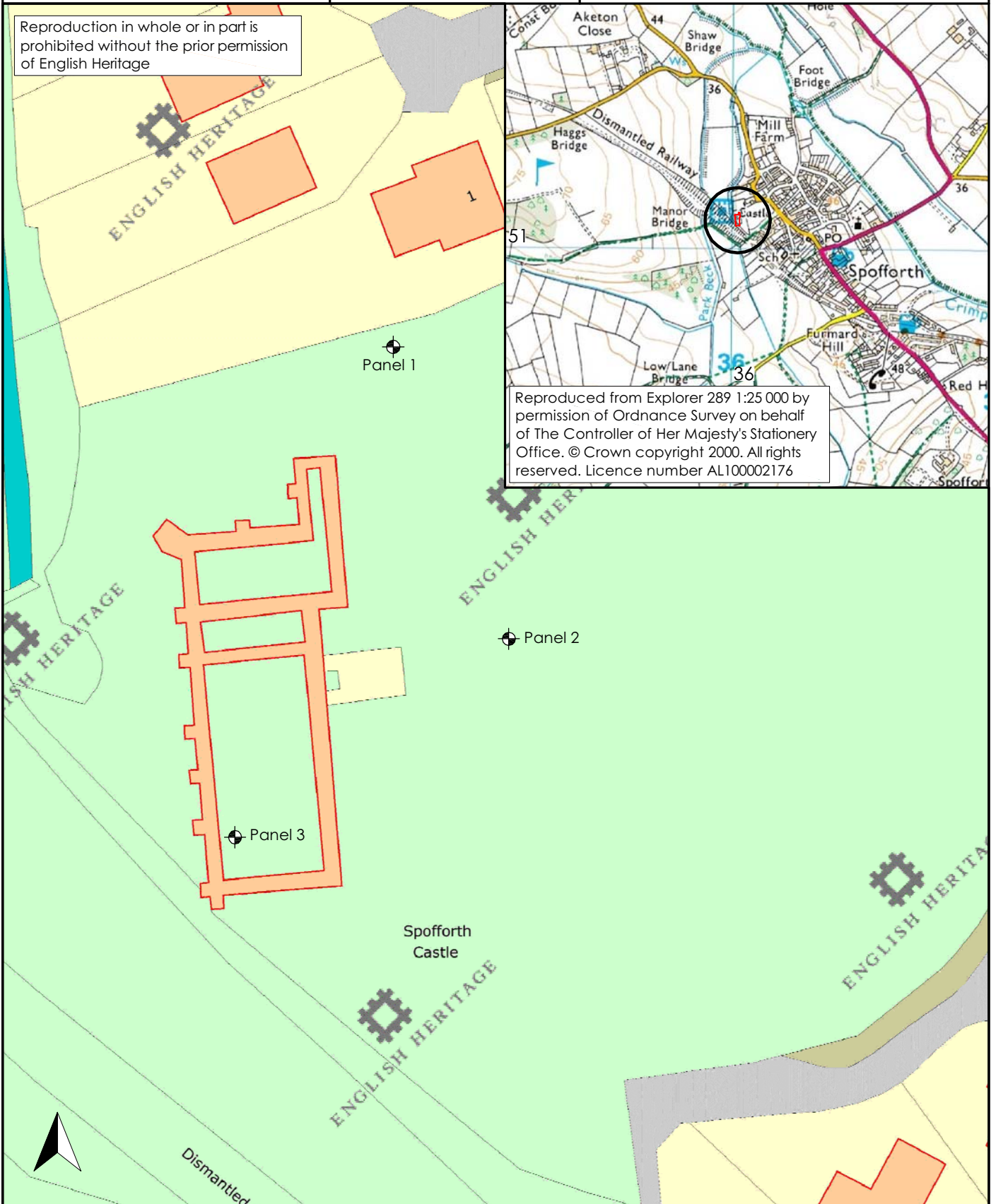
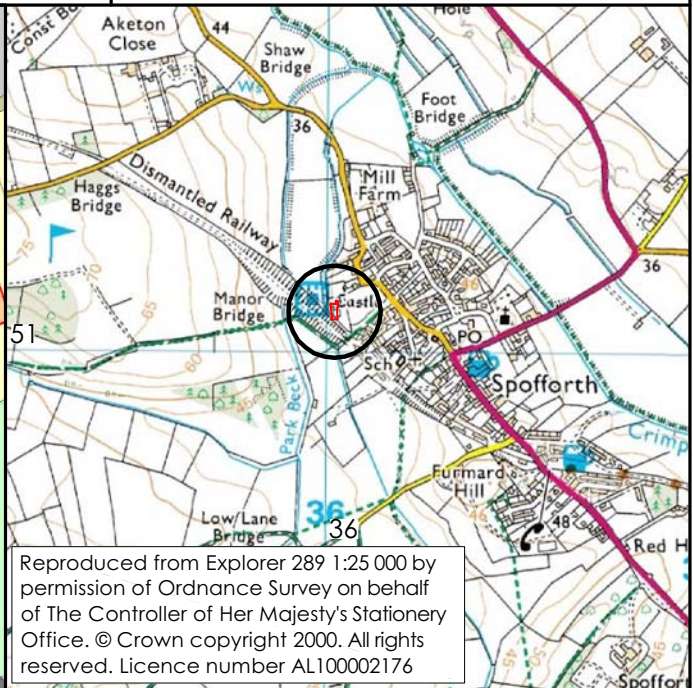
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


 location of monitoring

0 30m
scale 1:600 for A4 plot

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 location of monitoring

0 30m
scale 1:600 for A4 plot