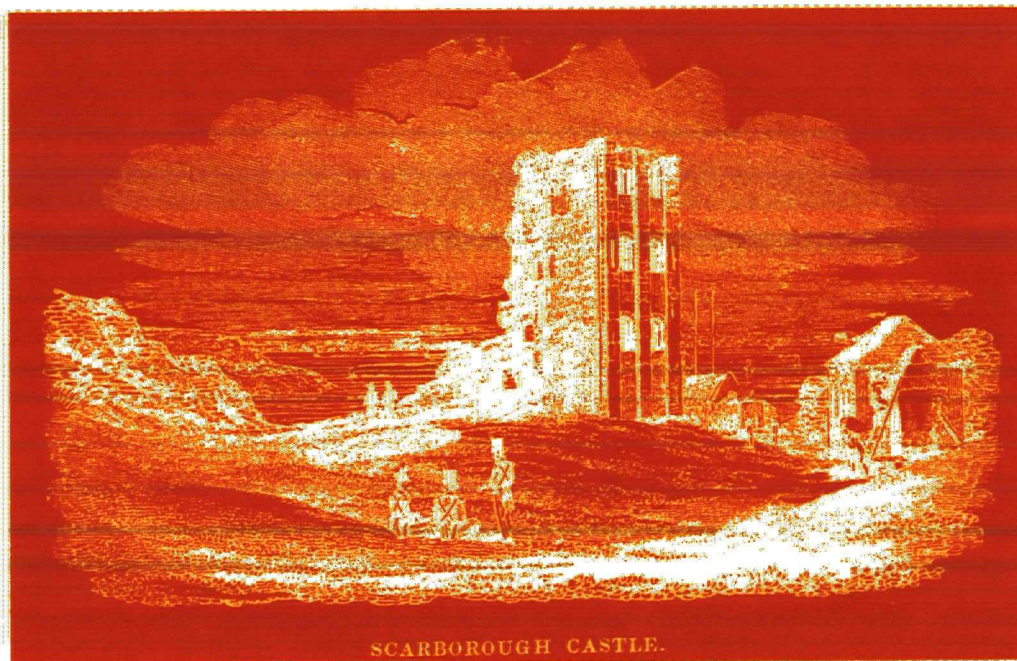


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Rec'd	1997

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT CASTLE DYKES
SCARBOROUGH**

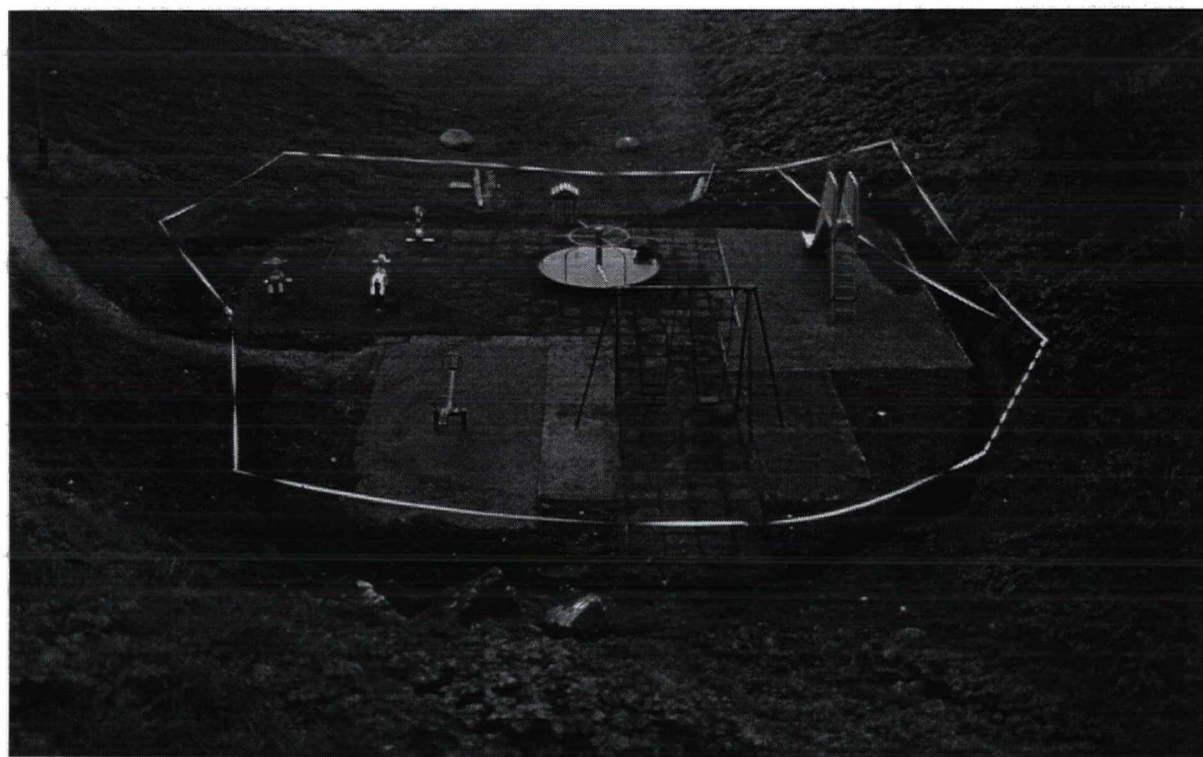


SCARBOROUGH CASTLE.

**BY
DANIEL FERGUSON**

**SCARBOROUGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
INTERIM REPORT NUMBER 25: 1997**

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View of the site looking from the north

BY
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Introduction

This report covers an archaeological watching brief carried out by the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society at the play area, Castle Dykes, Scarborough (NGR TA0487 8910; site code CD97; National Monuments No. 13300). The watching brief was commissioned by the Scarborough Borough Council as a requirement of Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent granted for works to improve the playground.

Background

Scarborough Castle occupies a flat topped promontory of several hectares in extent and some 75 metres above sea level at its highest point. Natural protection was afforded by a near vertical cliff on the east side, falling into the sea, whilst a similarly steep cliff on the north side falls to the area known as the Holms. As a result of this natural protection, it was only necessary to provide a curtain wall on the landward and part of the north sides. The north-west to south-east aligned curtain wall overlooks a steep sided ravine known as the Castle Dykes, comprising a naturally rocky cliff, the moat and a dyke on the landward side. The weakest point was protected by a turreted barbican, gatehouse and two drawbridges.

The moat itself is now flat bottomed. Since the early part of this century, the Castle Dykes have been used as a park and laid out with footpaths. The flat bottomed moat provides the location of the play area the subject of this watching brief, at its north-west end at the point where it begins to rise up towards the barbican (Figure 1).

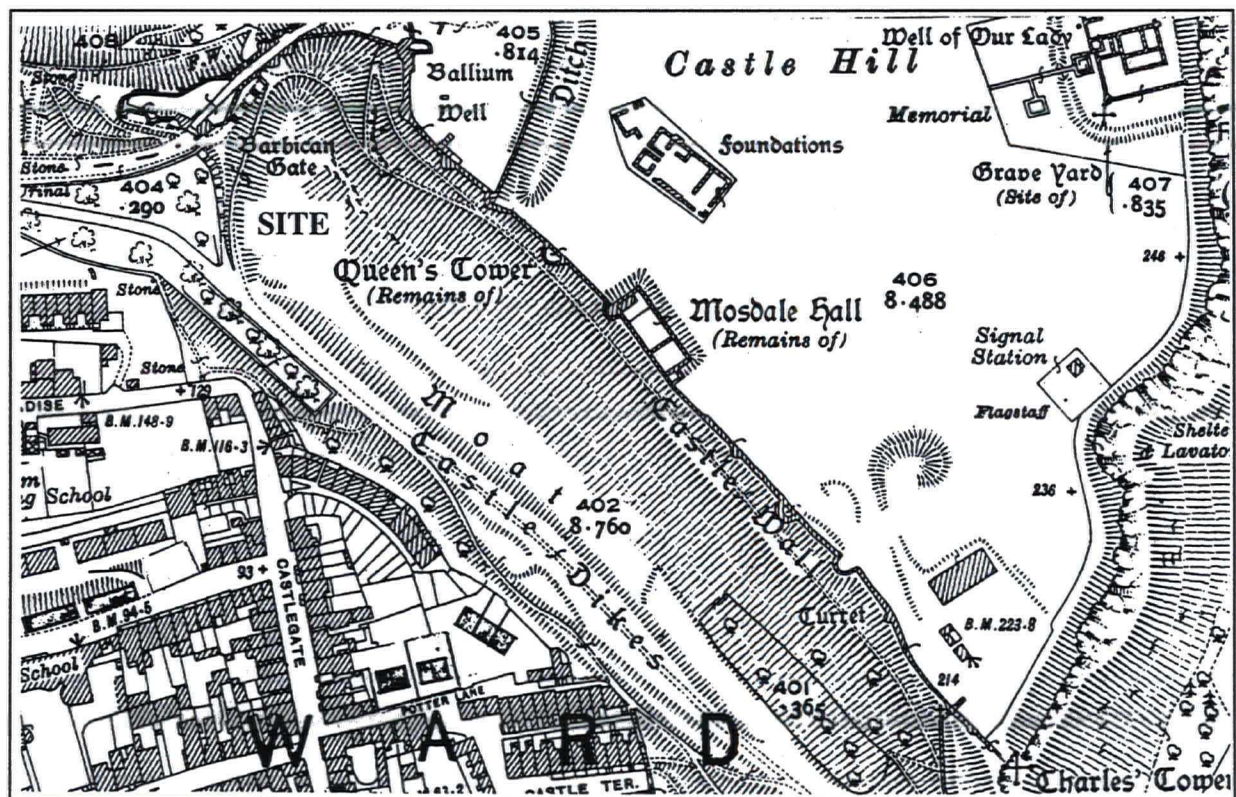


Figure 1: Location plan

The Watching Brief

The works to the playground comprised the erection of a log fence around the perimeter (Figure 2). A watch was kept throughout the three days, 18th to 20th March 1997, while a slot trench was cut, to provide the foundation for the log fence. The trench, which for the purposes of this report has been referenced CD100 varied somewhat in size because of the nature of the site, but was typically 300mm wide and 700mm deep, on a sub-circular line of about 16m diameter, and therefore about 50m in total length.

In the eastern sector of the circle the slot cut into the base of the main hillside below the curtain wall of the castle, around the northern and western margin into lesser slopes, while to the south its route ran along the rim of the platform, and the ground had in fact to be partially built up here to bring it near to the same level as the rest of the site (Figure 3).

The slot was mostly machine-cut using a narrow bucket, but hand dug where this was impractical because of the proximity of the play equipment. The area to be cut by CD100 was covered by rough grass and weedy vegetation growing in a dark loamy topsoil (CD101) which lay upon the site at varying thicknesses according to the steepness of the slope. At the foot of the banks in the east and west it was generally 500mm deep, but much thinner around north sector, at only 100-200mm. This topsoil was found to contain much debris including late 19th to early 20th century pottery fragments, broken bottles, glass marbles, occasional marine shells and animal bones, bits of metal and other rubbish. Because of the nature of the excavation as a circular slot trench it was found easiest to record it by sectors related to compass points

On the north slope, (Figure 4A) within and beneath the shallow topsoil, were small patches of ashy material, probably from the burning of cleared woody vegetation in separate bonfires rather than a general burning off of vegetation. Also in this area were several dumps of black asphalt, as if debris from the construction of the footpath which runs higher across this bank. These features lay upon the stony subsoil (CD102), a sandstone gravel, seen to extend right round the northern sector of the site, and overlying all but the uppermost layers of spill from the hill slopes to the east and west. This sandstone gravel was penetrated by the cut for the slot trench the total depth being as much as 1m from the surface, but no bottom was reached across the central area, indicating that this bank consists, in its lower parts at least, of a scree slope, fronting a much steeper original ditch profile cut into the natural bedrock further back. This scree CD102 contained a few pieces of brick, tile and mortar, pottery fragments comprising shards of late medieval pink wares with green-brown glazes, and later hard grey stonewares, a length of clay pipe stem and occasional animal bones and marine shells.

On the east side, (Figure 4B) below the great bank, the topsoil CD101, which included much loose stone gravel, overlay a fine sandy subsoil (CD103), possibly derived by erosion from the sandstone of the hillside above, outcrops of which are evident nearby. This sand was cut into by the slot trench with a depth of up to 1m below the surface but no artifacts were seen within it. In the bottom of the cut a stonier layer CD104 was encountered, from which came a small sherd of green-glaze pottery, and a large fragment comprising a portion of a thick, flanged rim of a pink fabric with a pale green-brown glaze.

In the north-east sector the transition from the fine sand to loose scree subsoil was noted. The original playground floor was seen to consist of concrete on brick/mortar hardcore up to 200mm thick on west side by the access path. The ground falls away to the south of the playground by as much as 1m within 5m, indicating that the area has been raised above the regular level of the moat as a platform, probably in the inter war period.

In the north-west sector, below the castle gatehouse, the transition from the scree of the north slope to the western bank was marked by several large rocks which were removed by machine. These seem too large to have been moved before and were not worked, so were most likely fragments of bedrock from the bank.

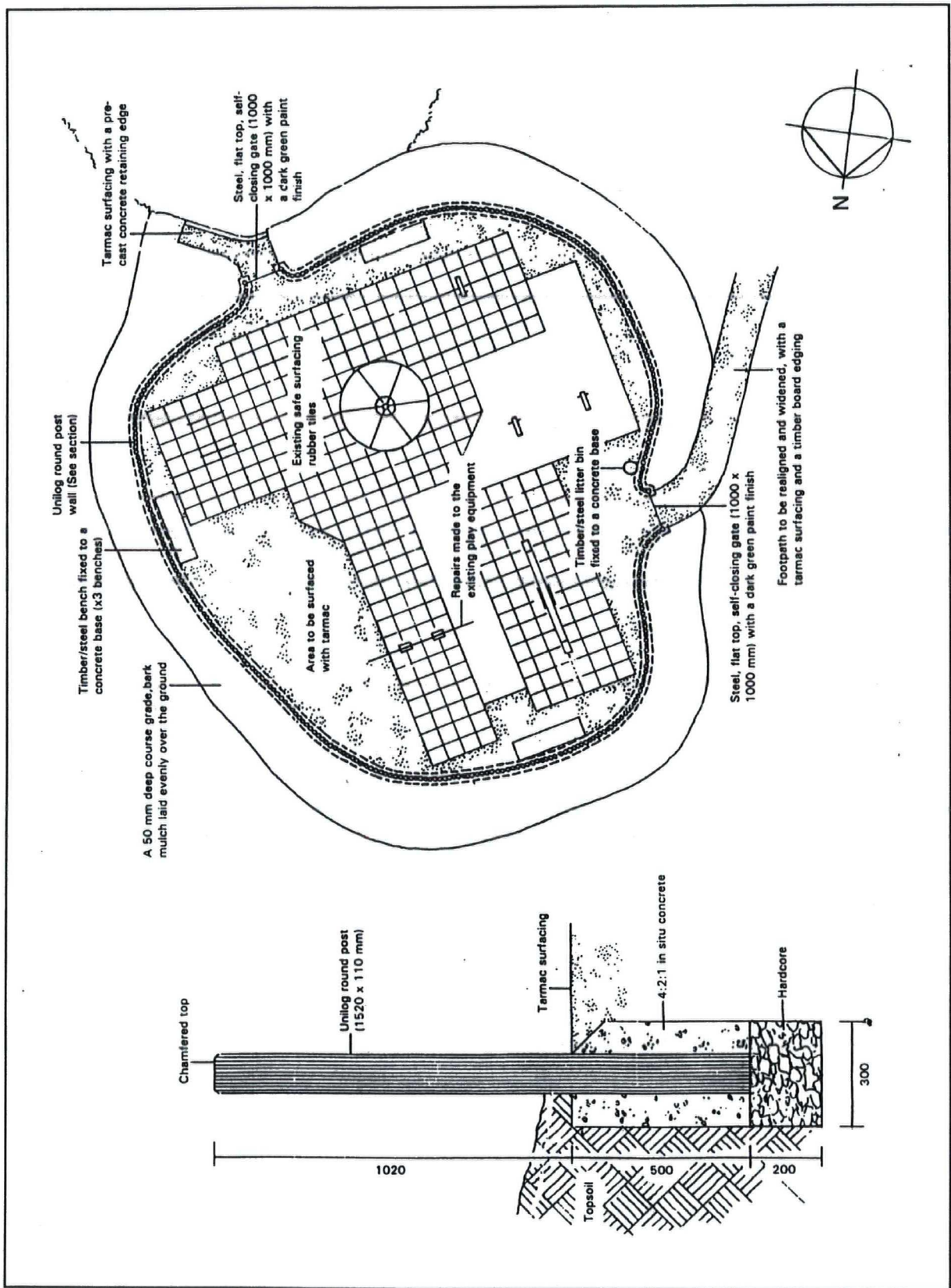


Figure 2: Proposed works reproduced and reduced from Scarborough Borough Council drawing P.286/122

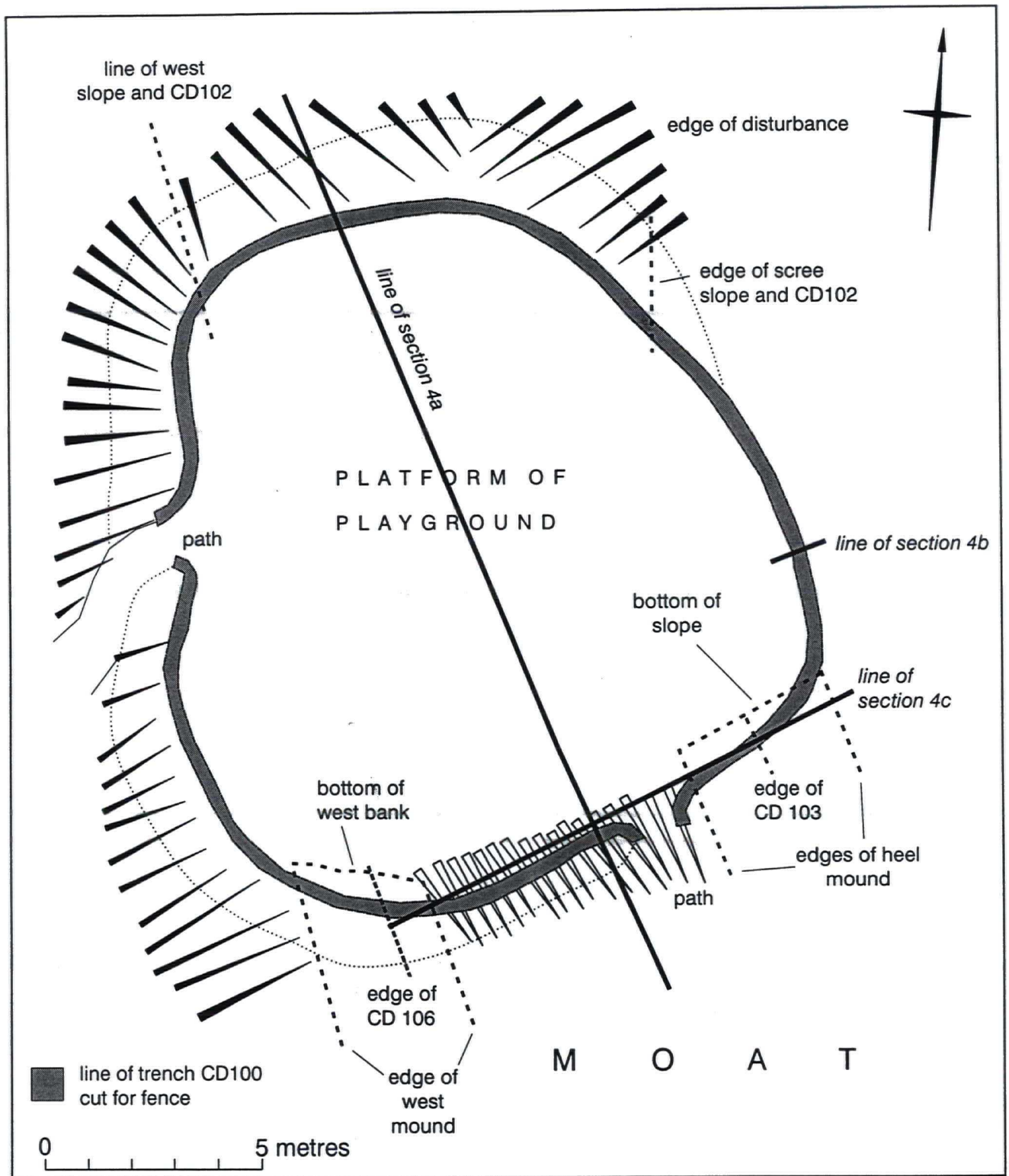


Figure 3: Plan of trench CD100 cut for fence and section lines

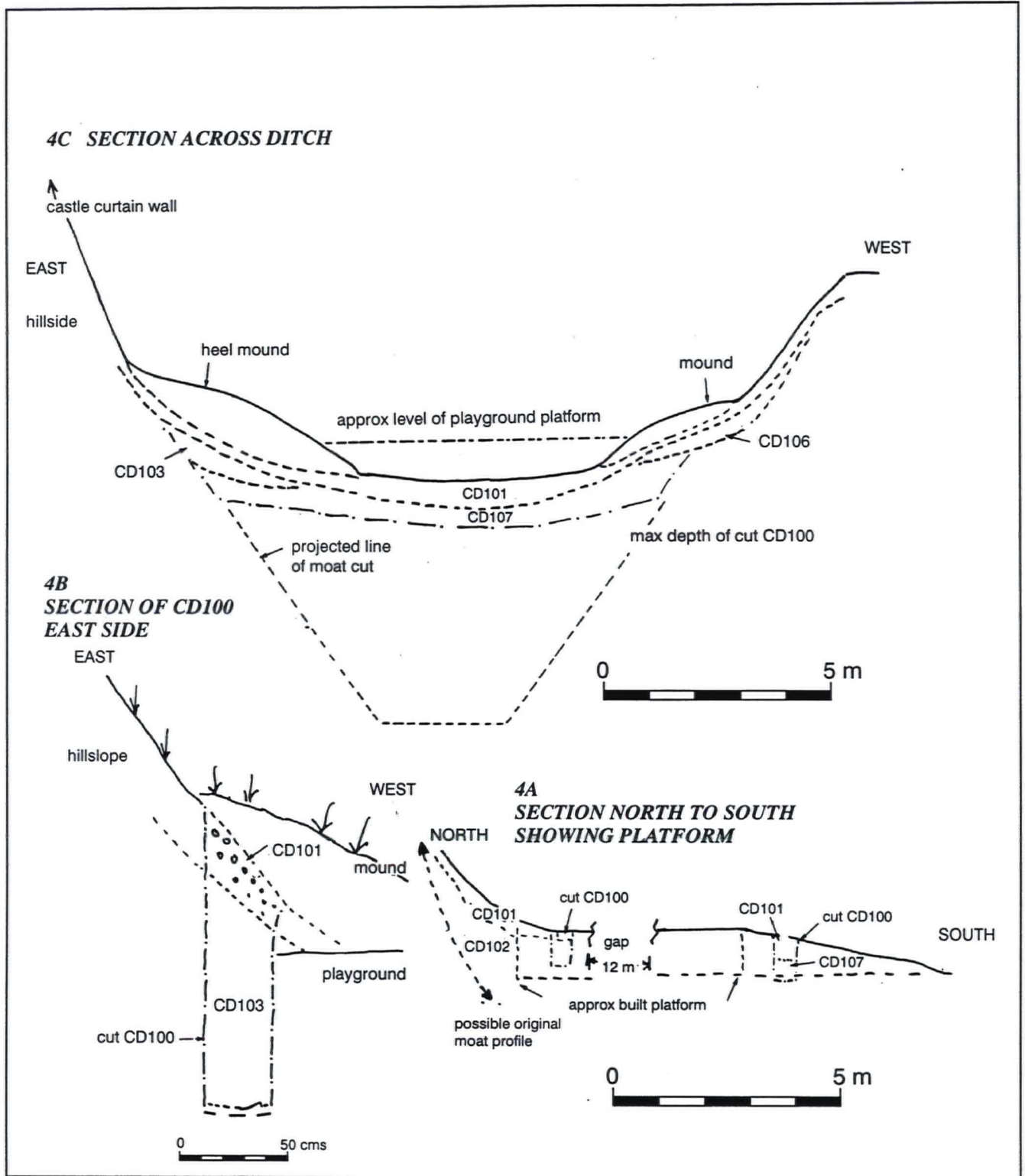


Figure 4: Sections 4A - 4C

South-west of this on the west bank was a thinner scree spread (CD105), 100-200mm on fine sandstone clay (CD106), in which no artifacts were seen. In the sector south-west of the access path, sandy CD106 sits on darker mid-brown clay (CD107) which runs round south sector.

The topsoil CD101 lay up to 400mm on western bank and the sandy subsoil CD102 up to 200mm. These layers taper off and dip into the ditch, with the sandy layer ending at the base of the slope. From the point where this ends in the west to where a similar corresponding feature shows in the east is about 10m. This represents the width of the present 'bottom' of the moat, actually the top of the more recent fill of the original ditch.

The mid brown clay (CD107) cut into by up to 300mm, sits immediately under the topsoil which is up to 550mm at the centre of ditch on south side. This probably represents the natural silty fill of the ditch rather than part of the platform makeup, as the sandy layers overly it both east and west, and it is not seen elsewhere around the site.

Conclusion

The excavation of the slot trench around the playground allowed for an idea of the original profile of the ditch to be formed. It is evident that the sides were very much steeper than they now appear and therefore that the ditch was considerably deeper (Figure 4C).

The east side, below the curtain wall, has rock outcrops and areas of quarrying and very thin or no topsoil held by tree-roots. This must have once have presented the aspect of a stepped cliff face. At the base of this hillside a large bulge or 'heel' of recent debris forms a mound along the ditch. A similar, but slighter mound occurs at the base of the western bank in places.



Figure 5: Barrow run over the moat at the turn of the century

The present bottom of the moat is generally wide and level, representing the top of a fill of unknown date. A projected profile suggests this may be as much as 8m deep. Photographic evidence from the early 20th century shows barrow runs built out over the moat for the deposit of spoil generated by repairs to the castle (figure 5).

In the northern sector, below the castle gatehouse, a very steep line was noted, and the footpath here has most likely been built out on terracing, rather than being cut into the slope.

The playground has been set on a platform raised for it some 1m or more above the general moat level

The mounds at the base of the banks to the east and west may have been cut away at the same time to allow more room for this, unless they have only built up since.

It is considered that no damage to archaeological levels has been done by the present work on this site, or by the construction of the original playground, specifically because a platform was raised for this. Enough was observed within the cut to indicate the original profile of the banks and the nature of the fill, and to suggest that the moat was much deeper than it now appears, and so is likely to retain in the lowest parts of its fill archaeological material, unless it has been recut at some time. The ceramic and other material recovered from this small sample of the area suggests that a considerable amount of dumping. A similar material probably survives where the moat fills have not been disturbed.

Archive

The watching brief archive comprising field notes, field drawings, artefacts (catalogued at Appendix 1) and photographs (catalogued at Appendices 2A, 2B and 2C) will be deposited in the Rotunda Museum Scarborough.

Appendix 1 Catalogue of finds

CERAMICS: From topsoil CD 101

001 Shard, fragment of base. Gritty dark red fabric, exterior unglazed, interior shiny glaze. Cream with slightly darker swirl pattern.

002 Shards, two joining pieces from shoulder-neck of cylindrical bottle. Grey fabric, glazed both sides. Exterior two tone brown/buff. Pair of parallel incised lines. 19th cent.

003 Large fragment. Dark, coarse grey fabric. Interior pink unglazed. Recent drain pipe?

004 Fragment, very coarse grey fabric. Brown-grey/green glaze. Recent drain pipe.

005 Shards, two joining pieces from rim of a cylindrical mug/cup including a complete handle, a small loop with space for only one or two fingers. Hard white fabric, glossy buff glaze. Recent teacup or mug.

006 Shard, small. White fabric, fine. Pale blue background, small 4-petal flowers and white dots, edged in darker blue. One side also has white grounded border decoration.

007 Shard. White fabric. Blue/white, willow pattern, border circles and net, dark blue on white. Other side white only. Rim/border of dish/plate. 19th/20th century.

008 Shard. White fabric. Damaged glaze both sides. Blue/white. Mostly pale blue on off-white background. One side has linear design, mast and rigging of ship, other has figure or foliage pattern. Flat, so plate or bowl base. 19th century.

009 Shard, small. White fabric. Dulled glazed surface, smoothed as if water-worn. White with pale blue border, consisting a broad band and single parallel blue line below it. Interior only. Rim of cup or bowl.

010 Shard, white/ivory glazed porcelain. Slight base ring, indicating a wide bowl or plate. 19th/20th cent.

011 Shard, fine porcelain. White fabric. Blue/white glaze. Curved, part of cylindrical vessel. 19th/20th century.

012 Shard. White fabric, damaged white/cream glaze. Slight incised curved line indicates base of a plate. 19th/20th century.

CD102 N slope scree.

001 Shard, grey, hard fabric. Glazed. Speckled brown exterior. Fragment of shoulder carination to neck section of bottle. 19th/20th century.

002 Fragment of glazed brick/tile. Corner with three faces glazed. Pink gritty fabric with quartz inclusions. One face chamfered with incised mould lines.

003 Fragment, grey stoneware. Pink exterior glaze.

004 Fragment, pale grey fabric. Interior unglazed, streaked. Exterior glazed light brown with bubbles. 19th/20th century.

005 Fragment. Grey fabric, hard. Exterior glaze has some dark speckles. Cylindrical, from jug or bottle. 19th/20th century.

006 Shard, coarse grey fabric. Exterior unglazed. Interior has very dark/black shiny glaze with finger made wheel grooves. Section of flat base and foot ring, thick walled. Late/post medieval?

007 Small fragment. Pink fabric. Surfaces lost. Late/post medieval?

008 Shard. Coarse pink fabric. Exterior unglazed. Interior has olive green glaze, with parallel finger grooves. Similar to 006 except in colour. Fragment of foot ring, or lip? Bowl or cup. Post medieval?

009 Short length of clay pipe stem. 19th century?

010 Shard. Fine pink fabric. Exterior unglazed. Interior brown/green glaze. Cylindrical form. Late/post medieval.

BRICK AND TILE

011-018 8 pieces of brick/tile: 2 rectangular brick, 1 fragment large flat pink, roof tile?
5 fragments thick roof/floor tiles.

FAUNAL REMAINS

019 Bone: Cut section of small long bone, from domestic animal species. Sheep/pig?

020 Bone: Small fragment of mandible, with one tooth. Sheep?

021 Oyster shell.

CD 104 Stony layer below east hillside.

CERAMICS

001 Small fragment fine pink fabric, thin walled, Scarborough ware. Internal wheel throwing lines, unglazed. Exterior bright green glaze, with slight vertical ridge, and parallel loss of glaze where another has been. 14th century?

002 Large shard. Coarse pink fabric. Interior pale green glaze, with dark flecks. Exterior had lost most of similar glaze, especially around the flange. Section of rim of large dish with flange. Late/post medieval. 17th century.

GLASS

CD 101 Topsoil on north-west slope.

013 COIN: George V penny, 1921, bronze, slightly worn, patinated.

014 Metal object: Brass cylindrical fitment, 50mm diameter, a cap or cover, with 3 countersunk holes in collar evenly spaced around circumference. Flat headed brass rivet through centre, holding an iron concretion on the outside. Purpose unknown. Modern?

015-016 Metal objects. Two lengths of brass tube formed handle? With iron concretions. 130mm and 150mm respectively. Use unknown, probably recent.

Appendix 2 Catalogue of Photographs

2A COLOUR TRANSPARENCIES (MOUNTED) 11.3/97 H

007 Dykes playground from above in NW, by g/house, before cut.

- 022 Playground, 18.3.97, before work, from W bank path, to NE.
023 Site from N slope below gate/arch, 19.3.97, trench cut, to SE.
024 Detail of trench, E side, from N to S.
025 Detail of trench, 20.3.97, N sector (with rocks), E to W.
026 Trench, N sector, with \n slope to arch, from S.
027 Site, trench cut, from S to N (with arch).
028 Site, trench cut, from NW above, to SE.
029 Site, trench cut, from N above, to S.
030 Detail of trench, E side, N to S.
031 Site from moat in south, to N.
032 Detail of trench, E side, N to S.
033 Detail of trench, S sector, W to E.
034 Detail of trench, W side, S to N.
035 Detail of trench, N sector, from S.
036 Detail of trench, E side, N to S.
037 Detail of trench, E side, S to N.

2B COLOUR PRINT FILM (KODAK DB5) SAHS REF CD 97:1

Negative number	Trench sector	Contexts description	Date
00	NE	CD100 IN CD102/101	18.03.97
0	NE	CD100 IN CD102/101	
01	NE	CD101 ON CD102	
02	NW	CD101 ON CD102	
03	NE	CD100 IN CD102/101	
04	NW	CD101 ON CD102	
07	SE	CD100 IN CD101/103/104	20.03.97
08	E/N-S	CD100 IN CD101/103/104	
09	NE/V	CD100 IN CD101/103	
10	NE/V	CD100 IN CD101/103	
11	N/V	CD100 IN CD102	
12	NE/V	CD100 IN CD102	
13	NW	CD100 IN CD102	
14	NW	CD100 IN CD102	
15	NW	CD100 IN CD102	
16	NW	CD100 IN CD102	
17	SW	CD100 IN CD105/106	
18	SW	CD100 IN CD105/106	
19	SW	CD100 IN CD105/106	
20	SW	CD100 IN CD 105/106	
21	SW	CD100 IN CD 105/106/107	
22	SE	CD100 IN CD105/106/107	
23	SW	SPOIL SPREAD ON W BANK	

2C COLOUR TRANSPARENCIES (UNMOUNTED) KODAK EKTACHROME 400 ASA

18th March 1997

- 07A General view from north slope to south slope.
- 08A General view of site from west access path to path top to east.
- 09A 19/03/97, north east sector cut CD100 in topsoil CD101.
- 10A Lower north slope, subsoil CD102, metre scale, to north west.
- 11A East sector of cut CD100, section with metre scale, to south
- 12A East sector cut CD100 from above to north
- 13A North sector of cut CD100 to north-west corner
- 14A North sector of CD100, detail north-west corner
- 15A North sector of CD100, west to east
- 16A North-west sector CD100, 3 large rocks from cut below gatehouse
- 17A North-west sector CD100, to south-west, JCB at work
- 18A Site east side from north slope to south
- 19A East and south sector CD100, west-east

20th March 1997

- 20A Site from above, in west looking east
- 21A West side CD100, from north to south
- 22A South side CD100, west to east
- 23A West side CD100, south to north
- 24A North-west corner CD100, south to north
- 25A North-west sector CD100, north to south
- 26A Site from above, north to south
- 27A Site from above, north-west to south-east
- 28A Site from above, south-west to north-east
- 29A East side CD100. From north to south
- 30A Site general, playground platform from moat, south to north
- 31A Site platform, south sector CD100, from south-west to north-east
- 32A Site from above on hillside, in south-east looking north-west
- 33A Site from south-west bank top, looking north-east
- 34A North sector CD100, south to north
- 35A Site general shows hill and curtain wall above, north to south
- 36A North-east slope to barbican bridge, south to north