

CTCM



CASTLE TOOT, CLEOBURY MORTIMER

Archaeological Watching Brief

for Mr S Thorogood

April 2012

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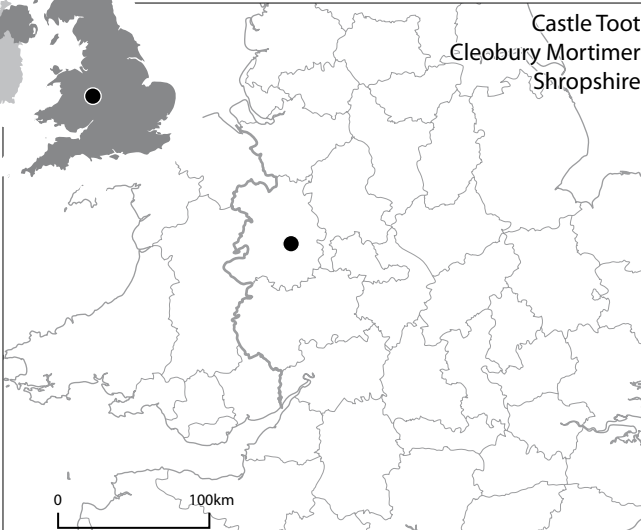


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Scale 1:1,750 @ A4



0 100m

Illus 1

Site location

CASTLE TOOT, CLEOBURY MORTIMER

Archaeological Watching Brief

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd conducted a watching brief at Castle Toot, Cleobury Mortimer during extensions and alterations to the existing building. The existing house is built on the position of a scheduled motte but is not included in the scheduling of the site.

No deposits or finds of archaeological significance were observed during the work.

1. INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Castle Toot, Cleobury Mortimer, in response to a planning application to extend the existing house (Illus 1). Castle Toot lies about 1km to the east of the town of Cleobury Mortimer on the Shropshire/Worcestershire border. The site is currently occupied by a house, garage, lawns and a garden. Underlying geology comprises the top of the Lower Old Red Sandstone comprising Clee Formation and Brownstones group – sandstone and conglomerate with some siltstone.

The site comprises a Scheduled motte situated on a natural promontory on the east side of the River Rea. It is surrounded by a dry moat on three sides and drops steeply to the river on the fourth. The entrance is in the northeast corner of the motte. Fragments of walling and the remains of a gatehouse were visible in this area at the end of the 18th century and in 1911 stones forming the base of a causeway or bridge were observed. The current house was built in the 1950s.

Cleobury is mentioned in the Domesday Book as ‘*Claiberie*’ or ‘*Cleberie*’. It was held by Ralph de Mortimer ‘*Edith held it. There are 4 hides paying geld. There is land for 24 ploughs. In the demesne are 4 plough and fourteen slaves and 20 villans and a priest and 2 radmen and 8 bordars. Among them all they have 20 ploughs. There is a mill rendering 2 summae of*

corn. Woodland for fattening 500 pigs renders 40s. TRE it was worth £8 and afterwards the same: now £12’.

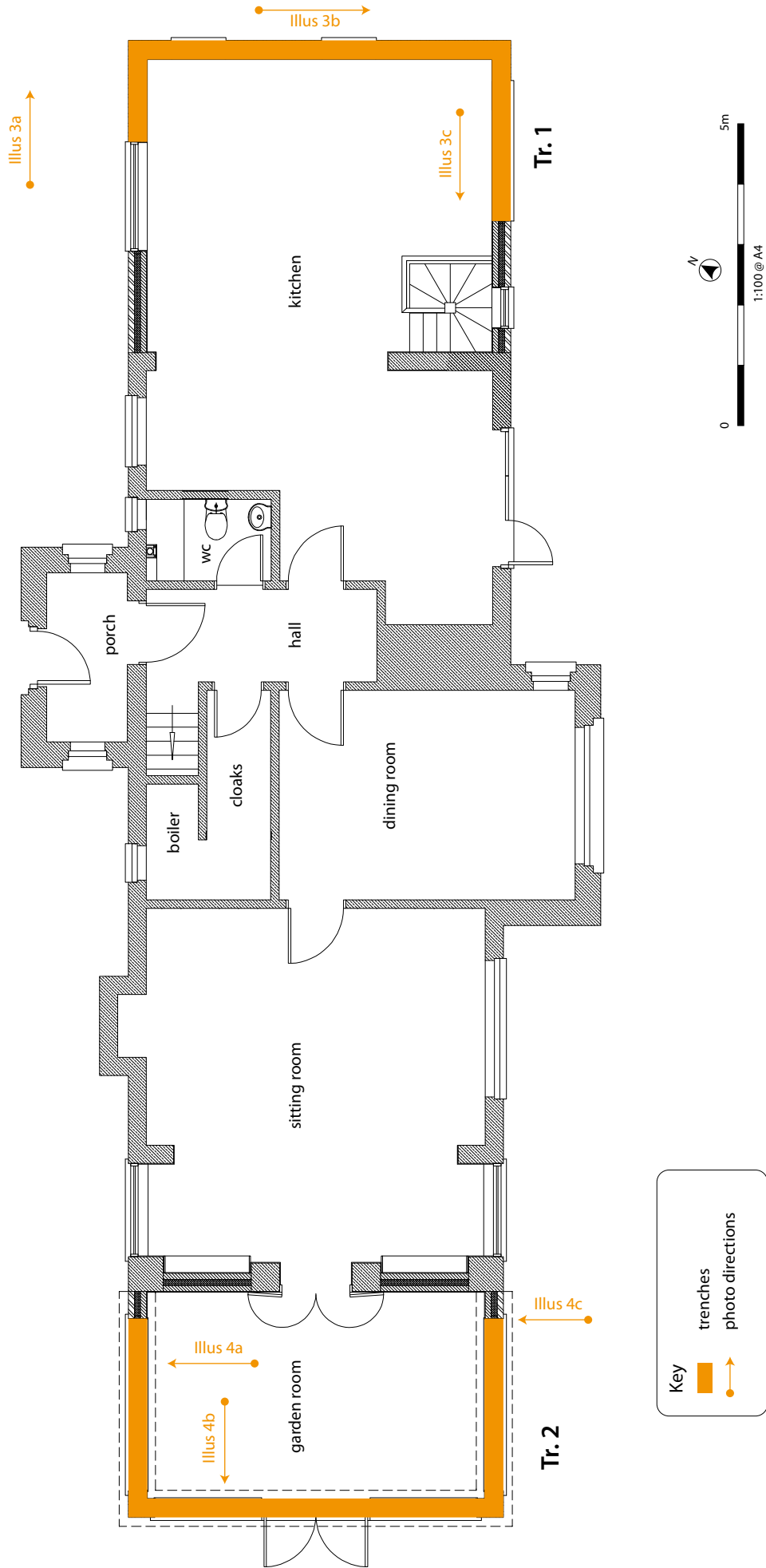
There is no obvious reason for the presence of two castles at Cleobury. Possible suggestions are that Castle Toot was constructed as a replacement for Cleobury Castle when it was burnt down in 1155 by the forces of Henry II against whom Hugh Mortimer was in rebellion. Another suggestion is that it was a subsidiary fortification or that it was constructed by Henry’s army as a siegework (Ironbridge Archaeology 2007).

A small evaluation was carried on the site in 2007 by Ironbridge Archaeology, which identified only post-medieval remains. It was thought most likely that an outcrop of sandstone encountered was natural bedrock but the possibility that it could have been structural and associated with the castle was not completely ruled out.

2. METHOD

Two visits to the site took place, on 2nd February 2011 and 4th April 2011.

Excavation was undertaken by the contractors throughout, with an archaeologist on site during the groundworks. Excavation took place using a mechanical excavator to a depth of 1m, following which the trenches were hand



Illus 2
Site plan with photo directions

cleaned preparatory to insertion of foundations.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Institute for Archaeologists. Contexts were given unique numbers and recording was undertaken on *pro forma* record cards that conform to accepted archaeological norms.

Photographs were taken throughout using 35mm monochrome and colour slide film while digital photographs were taken on a 7.2mp camera for illustrative purposes. Registers were kept for context records, photographs and drawings.

No archaeological finds or features were present on the site.

3. RESULTS (ILLUS 2)

No significant archaeological features were observed in the course of work at Castle Toot.

3.1 Trench 1

No finds or features of archaeological significance were encountered in Trench 1. Removal of the modern surface revealed natural deposits. In the northeastern corner of the trench the natural subsoil was cut by a linear feature, about 1m deep, apparently machine dug. It contained a fragment of clay pipe stem.

3.2 Trench 2

Trench two utilised the footprint of existing foundations for a former conservatory. These were broken out prior to the commencement of the work. A number of services were present; these were associated with the existing building and as they did not disturb archaeological deposits they were not recorded. The trenches were excavated to the natural bedrock at about 1m beneath the previous ground level. The only feature present was a substantial, probably circular pit [2003] in the northernmost foundation trench. It was filled with a mixture of crushed building rubble, including brick and



Illus 3a



Illus 3b

Illus 3a–4c
Exposed trench sections



Illus 3c



mortar. A clay pipe stem confirmed the post-medieval date. The pit extended beneath the existing house and outside the trench to the north.

4. DISCUSSION

The only finds or features observed during the watching brief at Castle Toot were of 19th century date. This date suggests similar deposits to those found during work by Ironbridge Archaeology. It predates the construction of the existing house though it is possible that existing dumped rubble was levelled during the construction of the house in the 1950s.

If the castle was indeed used as a siegework it would have been occupied for only a short period, in which case few remains may have survived modern construction on the parts of the site examined.

5. ARCHIVE

The project archive will be deposited in a suitable repository.

6. REFERENCES

- Ironbridge Archaeology 2007 *Archaeological Evaluation of Castle Toot, Cleobury Mortimer*, Ironbridge Archaeology no. 188.
- Williams, A & Martin, GH (eds.) 1992 *Domesday Book, a complete translation*.

7. APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix 1 – Site registers

Context register

Context no.	Trench no.	Description	Dimensions (m)
1000	1	Existing surface of concrete and aggregate.	D: 0.1
1001	1	Mixed dark brown silt clay and stones, former topsoil	D: 0.25
1002	1	Light/mid brown clay silt – subsoil beneath 1001.	–
1003	1	Layer of natural sand overlying natural clay.	D: 0.1
1004	1	Firm red brown clay – natural in Trench 1.	D: 1.1m
1005	1	Fill made up of mixture of deposits 1001/2/3/4. Fill of apparently machine cut trench.	c. 1.0m
1006	1	Apparent machine cut trench in NE corner of Trench 1	D: 0.36 (max)
2000	2	Mid grey brown silt clay beneath concrete footings. Former topsoil = 1001	D: 0.28
2001	2	Mixed sandstone and yellow clay subsoil	D: 0.45
2002	2	Natural sandstone bedrock in base of trench.	–
2003	2	Probably circular cut extending beneath existing building and outside trench to N.	L: 1.4+ W: 0.3+ D: 0.7+
2004	2	Yellow/orange mixed clay stone and rubble upper fill of modern pit 2003.	L: 1.4+ W: 0.3+ D: 0.5
2005	2	Mortar, brick and rubble lower fill of pit 2003. Continued beneath depth of trench.	L: 1.2+ W: 0.3+ D: 0.2+

Drawing register

Drawing no.	Scale	Plan / Section	Description
1	1:20	Section	North facing section, North footing Trench 1
2	1:20	Section	South facing section, South footing Trench 1
3	1:20	Plan	Plan of NE corner, Trench 1 showing modern feature 1006

Drawing no.	Scale	Plan / Section	Description
4	1:20	Section	Northern section, northern foundation Trench 2 showing modern pit 2003
5	1:20	Plan	NE part of northern foundation showing modern pit 2003

Photographic register

Photo no.	BW	CS	Digital	Direction	Description
1	–	–	Y	SW	General, site at beginning of work
2	–	–	Y	S	General, site at beginning of work
3	–	–	Y		General, site at beginning of work
4	–	–	Y	W	General, site at beginning of work
5	–	–	Y	W	General, site at beginning of work
6	–	–	Y	N	General, site at beginning of work
7	–	–	Y	NW	General, site at beginning of work
8	Y	Y	Y	–	Film ID
9	Y	Y	Y	S	Test pit against foundation
10	Y	Y	Y	S	Test pit against foundation
11	Y	Y	Y	S	Section cleaned to show natural deposits from above
12	Y	Y	Y	S	Close detail of section
13	Y	Y	Y	–	Section of S foundation trench
14			Y	E	S foundation under excavation
15	Y	Y	Y	W	Southern trench looking back to house
16	Y	Y	Y	N	Return wall N/S
17	Y	Y	Y	E	Stone rubble in NE corner
18	Y	Y	Y	S	Stone rubble in NE corner
19	Y	Y	Y	N	Eastern footing under excavation
20	Y	Y	Y	E	NE corner excavated to bedrock
21	Y	Y	Y	N	Bedrock at bottom of N/S aligned trench
22	Y	Y	Y	SE	Yellow sand layer 1003
23	Y	Y	Y	S	N/S aligned footing
24	Y	Y	Y	E	S footing showing bedrock in base



Photo no.	BW	CS	Digital	Direction	Description
25	Y	Y	Y	E	N trench showing existing footing
26	Y	Y	Y	N	Tr 2 - old footing being lifted
27	Y	Y	Y	N	Tr 2 - old footing removed
28	Y	Y	Y	N	Tr 2 - southern footing down to natural
29	Y	Y	Y	N	Tr 2 - W footing removed
30	Y	Y	Y	E	Tr 2 - E section N footing
31	Y	Y	Y	S	Tr 2 - pit 2003 in N footing
32	Y	Y	Y	S	Tr 2 - pit 2003 in N footing
33	Y	Y	Y	N	Tr 2 - pit 2003 in N footing
34	Y	Y	Y	S	Site after excavation of footings



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