

**Written Scheme of Investigation for an  
Archaeological Excavation  
at  
Walden Castle Keep - west curtain wall  
Saffron Walden  
Essex**

**NGR: TL 53904 38716**

**ASE Project no: 8369**

**Site Code: SW61**

**April 2015**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared by Archaeology South-East (ASE) on behalf of Uttlesford District Council (UDC) for an archaeological excavation on the line of the west curtain wall of the keep of Walden Castle, Saffron Walden, Essex. It has been prepared in response to consultation between Uttlesford District Council and Historic England over a scheme of repair work to the walls of the keep of Walden Castle.
- 1.2 The archaeological works will comprise a hand-dug excavation trench measuring 2m by 4m and covering a maximum total of 8 square metres, located on the line of the west curtain wall. The trench will later be used for the foundation of a buttress that will be constructed to support a cantilevered section of the west wall of the keep.
- 1.3 The site is part of a Scheduled Monument protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Scheduled Monument consent for the repair works to the keep and the related archaeological investigation has been granted by the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), following the advice of Debbie Priddy, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Historic England (hereafter referred to as Historic England).

## **2. BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Site Description and Location**

- 2.1.1 The keep and inner bailey of Walden Castle lie within the grounds of Saffron Walden Museum (TL 53904 38716) with the surrounding streets, especially Castle Street and Museum Street, marking the line of the inner bailey ditch (Fig. 1).
- 2.1.2 The keep is located in the eastern half of the inner bailey with the forebuilding projecting from its north-west corner. The keep and forebuilding are not accessible by the public and are separated from the museum grounds by a fence and hedge. There is open grassland on three sides of the keep and trees to the north.

2.1.3 The castle is situated on the top of a promontory known as Bury Hill. The uppermost geology is Chalk of the Lewes and Seaford Formations patchily overlain by grey glacial clay.

## **2.2 Reasons for Project**

2.2.1 As the fabric of the forebuilding is in poor condition Uttlesford District Council are funding a programme of repair work.

2.2.2 Scheduled Monument consent has been granted for this project, following the advice of Historic England. This WSI provides full details of the archaeological investigation in support of the consent.

## **2.3 Historical and Archaeological Background**

2.3.1 The following archaeological background makes use of the historic town survey for Saffron Walden (Medlycott 1998) and a published report on previous archaeological excavations in the town and castle (Basset 1982).

2.3.2 Saffron Walden originated as a late Saxon settlement that developed into a prosperous market town during the early medieval period. In the 13th-16th centuries the town was a major centre for the cloth trade and was famous for the production of saffron dyestuffs, from which its name is derived.

2.3.3 The castle, around which the town developed, was presumably built in the mid-12th century, as in 1141 Geoffrey de Mandeville was given permission to remove the market at nearby Newport to his castle at Saffron Walden. It is assumed that by 1141 the keep and its earthworks were well advanced, if not finished (Bassett 1982, 16). The castle had inner and outer baileys, with the outer bailey to the west of Museum Street containing the parish church of St Mary and the original market place. The castle keep and inner bailey are designated a Scheduled Monument (SM 20671).

2.3.4 The town expanded in the early to mid-13th century, with a planned rectilinear street grid and a new market place added to the south of the castle's outer bailey. The enlarged town area was enclosed within a new defensive

earthwork, the magnum fossatum (great ditch), although the northern length of the town defences used the existing outer bailey ditch. The castle's keep and inner bailey were presumably still intact in 1347, when Humphrey de Bohun was given permission to crenellate (Bassett 1982, 16).

2.3.5 Buildings within the castle complex appear to have been maintained in the later medieval period as evidenced by repairs to the roof of a hall in 1393 (Cromarty 1967, 105). Documentary and archaeological evidence suggests that the castle had become ruinous by 1594 and that the fabric of the keep was regularly robbed up to the mid-18th century (Bassett 1982, 50). The keep was used as a barn in the later 18th and 19th centuries and repairs were made to the structure in 1796 which included the construction of a small turret above the forebuilding (Bassett 1982, 48-50).

2.3.6 The forebuilding is believed to be integral with the keep. Small-scale excavation took place in the forebuilding in 1978. The removal of over 1m of modern overburden revealed the remains of a probable 19th century or later lime kiln that utilised pre-existing parts of the keeps structure. Also revealed were two floors and a dry flint wall that respected brick-blocking of late 18th century or earlier date (Couchman 1979, 70-72).

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 Fieldwork Aims**

3.1.1 The aim of the archaeological excavation is to record, excavate, analyse and report on any archaeological remains present within the excavation trench, thereby preserving by record those features/deposits threatened by the proposed repair works.

3.1.2 Specific aims:

- To gain greater understanding of the construction and use of the medieval curtain wall and later alterations to which it has been subjected.

### **3.2 Research Objectives**

- 3.2.1 In the event that significant discoveries are made appropriate research objectives will be identified for any post-excavation assessment and publication work, in line with those laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. Research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: a revised framework for the East of England*. (Medlycott 2011).

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Requirements**

- 4.1.1 Prior to the start of fieldwork, an OASIS online record will be started and key fields on Details, Location and Creators forms completed. The site code SW61, which has been used for other recent work at the Castle, will be retained and used for this phase of work.
- 4.1.2 One archaeological trench, measuring 2m x4m and covering a maximum area of 8 sqm, will be hand-excavated on the line of the west wall of the Keep, as shown in Figure 2. The trench will be dug to a depth of 1.2m or less depending on the presence of archaeological remains.
- 4.1.3 Provision has been made for any unforeseen additional hand-excavation or recording that may be required as the repair work progresses. In the event that important archaeological remains are identified a site meeting will be held with the client and Historic England to discuss the significance of the remains and decide whether any variation to the agreed excavation strategy is required.

### **4.2 Standards**

- 4.2.1 ASE will adhere to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's (ClfA) *Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation*, and *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014a & 2014b), and the ALGAO *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003) throughout the project. ASE is a Registered Organisation with the ClfA.

### **4.3 Machining**

- 4.3.1 The trench will be hand dug and no machining will be required
- 4.3.2 Any spoil heaps generated will be visually scanned and checked with a metal detector as appropriate.
- 4.3.3 The arisings will be neatly stockpiled next to the excavation area. Upon completion of the excavation the trench will be left open.

### **4.4 Excavation and Recording**

- 4.4.1 All exposed archaeological features and deposits will be recorded and excavated, except obviously modern features.
- 4.4.2 Standard ASE methodologies will be employed. All stratigraphy will be recorded using the ASE context recording system.
- 4.4.3 The trench will be accurately located using Global Positioning System (GPS) or Total Station survey equipment. All features revealed will be planned either by hand or using digital survey equipment.
- 4.4.4 Where drawn, site plans will be at 1:20 scale unless circumstances dictate otherwise. Plans at other scales will be drawn if appropriate (e.g. cremation burials at 1:10). Sections will be drawn at 1:10.
- 4.4.5 Datum levels will be taken where appropriate. Sufficient levels will be taken to ensure that the relative height of the archaeological/subsoil horizon can be extrapolated across the whole of the development area.
- 4.4.6 Archaeological features and deposits will be excavated using hand tools, unless they cannot be accessed safely.
- 4.4.7 With the exception of modern disturbances, normally a minimum 50% of all contained features will be excavated. Modern disturbances will only be excavated as necessary in order to properly define and evaluate any features

that they may cut. Normally 10% (or at least a 1m-long segment) of non-structural linear features will be excavated. At least 50% of linear features with a possible structural function (e.g. beam slots) will normally be excavated. Details of the precise excavation strategy and any alterations to it will be discussed with Historic England if particularly significant archaeology is revealed. Further discussion and agreement on the approach to the excavation of complex areas may be requested during the project.

4.4.8 All articulated human remains, graves and cremation vessels/deposits will receive minimal excavation to define their extent and establish whether they are burials or not. Generally all graves and cremation burials will be recorded and their positions noted without full excavation, only surface cleaning. A decision would then be made on future treatment of the human remains in consultation with the client and Historic England, and the coroner would be informed. Graves and cremation burials would only be excavated if they have already been disturbed, or if it is decided that a small sample of the burials need be evaluated to assess their condition and preservation.

4.4.9 A full photographic record comprising colour digital images will be made with monochrome prints of significant features/feature groups or in situ artefacts only. The photographic record will aim to provide an overview of the excavation and the surrounding area. A representative sample of individual feature shots and sections will be taken, in addition to working shots and elements of interest (individual features and group shots). The photographic register will include: film number, shot number, location of shot, direction of shot and a brief description of the subject photographed.

#### **4.5 Finds/Environmental Remains**

4.5.1 In general, all finds from all features will be collected. Where large quantities of modern finds are present and the feature is not of intrinsic or group interest, a sample of the finds assemblage will normally be collected, sufficient to date and characterise the feature.

4.5.2 Finds will be identified, by context number, to a specific deposit or, in the case of topsoil finds, to a specific area of the site.

- 4.5.3 All finds will be properly processed according to ASE guidelines and the ClfA Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (2014c). All pottery and other finds, where appropriate, will be marked with the site code and context number.
- 4.5.4 If appropriate, environmental samples will be taken from well-stratified, datable deposits that are deemed to have potential for the preservation/survival of ecofactual material. Bulk soil samples (minimum 40 litres or 50% of context) will be taken for wet sieving and flotation, and for finds recovery. ASE's environmental consultant is Karine Le Hegarat (ASE) and, if necessary, the English Heritage regional scientific advisor will be consulted. In all instances deposits with clear intrusive material shall be avoided.
- 4.5.5 Any finds believed to fall potentially within the statutory definition of Treasure, as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, amended 2003, shall be reported to the Essex County Council Finds Liaison Officer, the client and Historic England. Should the find's status as potential treasure be confirmed the Coroner will also be informed. A record shall be provided to all parties of the date and circumstances of discovery, the identity of the finder, and the exact location of the find(s) (OS map reference to within 1 metre, and find spot(s) marked onto the site plan).
- 4.5.6 See above and Appendix 1 for information regarding specialist consultants.

## **5.0 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

### **5.1 Combined post-excavation analysis and updated project design report**

- 5.1.1 A detailed report on the excavation results will be completed, containing the following information:
- **INTRODUCTION:** Introduction to project including summary, site location, reasons for work, planning background, geology and topography, methodology etc.



- HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND: To include history and archaeology of the surrounding area.
- ORIGINAL RESEARCH AIMS: Summary of the aims and objectives of the project.
- ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS: Detailed description of results. The character, location, extent, date, significance and quality of any archaeological material will be described, as well as the depth of the archaeological horizon and/or subsoil across the site.
- FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL: ASSESSMENT: ID, catalogue, descriptive overview of assemblages, assessment of significance, further work, etc.
- OVERVIEW AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RESULTS: discussion and interpretation of results in relation to original research objectives, etc.
- PUBLICATION REQUIREMENT: proposals for dissemination, to include updated research objectives, publication synopsis, task list for further work, archiving.
- APPENDICES: Context descriptions, specialist reports, finds catalogues, contents of archive and deposition details, HER summary sheet.
- FIGURES: To include a location plan of the archaeological works in relation to the proposed development (at an Ordnance Survey scale), plans of features and selective section drawings to show relevant features, present ground level and depth of deposits, and photographs as appropriate.

5.1.2 In addition to copies of the report supplied to the client, a digital copy of the report will be supplied to Historic England and the Essex Historic Environment Record.

5.1.3 Copies of the report will also be submitted to Saffron Walden Museum as part of the project archive.

5.1.4 A form will be completed for the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> in accordance

with the guidelines provided by English Heritage and the Archaeological Data Service.

## **5.2 Publication**

- 5.2.1 As a minimum, a summary report will be submitted for publication in the annual round-up of the Essex Archaeology and History journal.
- 5.2.2 Should the results of the fieldwork be of sufficient significance to warrant publication, a proposal for dissemination in an appropriate academic journal or monograph series will be presented (see 5.1.1 above) within 6 months of the end of fieldwork.
- 5.2.3 The client has been made aware of the potential implication for publication of results and an indication of probable cost has been supplied.

## **5.3 Archive**

- 5.3.1 Guidelines contained in the ClfA Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives (2014d) and the requirements of Saffron Walden Museum will be followed for the preparation of the archive for museum deposition.
- 5.3.2 Finds from the archaeological fieldwork will be kept with the archival material.
- 5.3.3 Subject to agreement with the legal landowner, ASE will arrange with Saffron Walden Museum for the deposition of the archive and artefact collection. Any items requiring treatment will be conserved. The landowner will be asked to donate the finds to the local museum.

## **6.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **6.1 Site Risk Assessment and Safety Measures**

- 6.1.1 ASE's Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) system covers most aspects of excavation work and ensures that for most sites the risks are adequately controlled. Prior to and during fieldwork, sites are subject to an ongoing assessment of risk. Site-specific risk assessments are kept under

review and amended whenever circumstances change which materially affect the level of risk. Where significant risks have been identified in work to be carried out by ASE, a written generic assessment will be made available to those affected by the work. A copy of the Risk Assessment is kept on site.

## **6.2 Site risk assessment and safety measures**

- 6.2.1 An initial appraisal of risk suggests that adherence to ASE's RAMS system should adequately control identified risk. Assessment of risk is an ongoing process and should circumstances demand, additional risk assessments will be carried out prior to and during archaeological work.
- 6.2.2 ASE staff will liaise with the client and/or their agent and will follow any additional Health and Safety instructions that are given/ agreed.
- 6.2.3 Archaeology South-East is insured against claims for: public liability to the value of £50,000,000 any one occurrence and in the aggregate for products liability; professional indemnity to the value of £10,000,000 any one occurrence; employer's liability to the value of £50,000,000 each and every loss.

## **7 RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING**

### **7.1 Staffing and Equipment**

- 7.1.1 The archaeological works will be undertaken by a professional team of archaeologists, comprising a project supervisor and one assistant archaeologist with support from a surveyor as required.
- 7.1.2 The project supervisor (Mark Germany) will be responsible for fieldwork, post-excavation reporting and archiving in liaison with the relevant specialists and under the overall direction of the fieldwork project manager (Adrian Scruby) and the post-excavation project manager (Mark Atkinson).
- 7.1.3 Historic England will be notified should any subsequent change of personnel occur. CVs of all key staff are available on request.

- 7.1.4 Specialists who may be consulted are listed in Appendix 1.
- 7.1.5 Other specialists may be consulted if necessary. These will be made known to the monitoring office for approval prior to consultation. Similarly, any changes in the specialist list will be made known to the monitoring office for approval prior to consultation.

## **7.2 Timetable and Programme**

- 7.2.1 The works are provisionally programmed to commence on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015. It is envisaged that hand digging, excavation and recording will take three to four days to complete. The production of the report will take c. 4 weeks from the end of the fieldwork. The client is aware of working methods and provision has been made to allow access to undertake the works.

## **8 MONITORING**

- 8.1 The Historic England will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project.
- 8.2 Any variations to the specification will be agreed with the client and Historic England prior to being carried out.
- 8.3 The client and Historic England will be kept informed of progress throughout the project and will be contacted in the event that significant archaeological features are discovered. Arrangements will be made for the project stakeholders to inspect the excavation trench prior to/ upon completion of the archaeological work

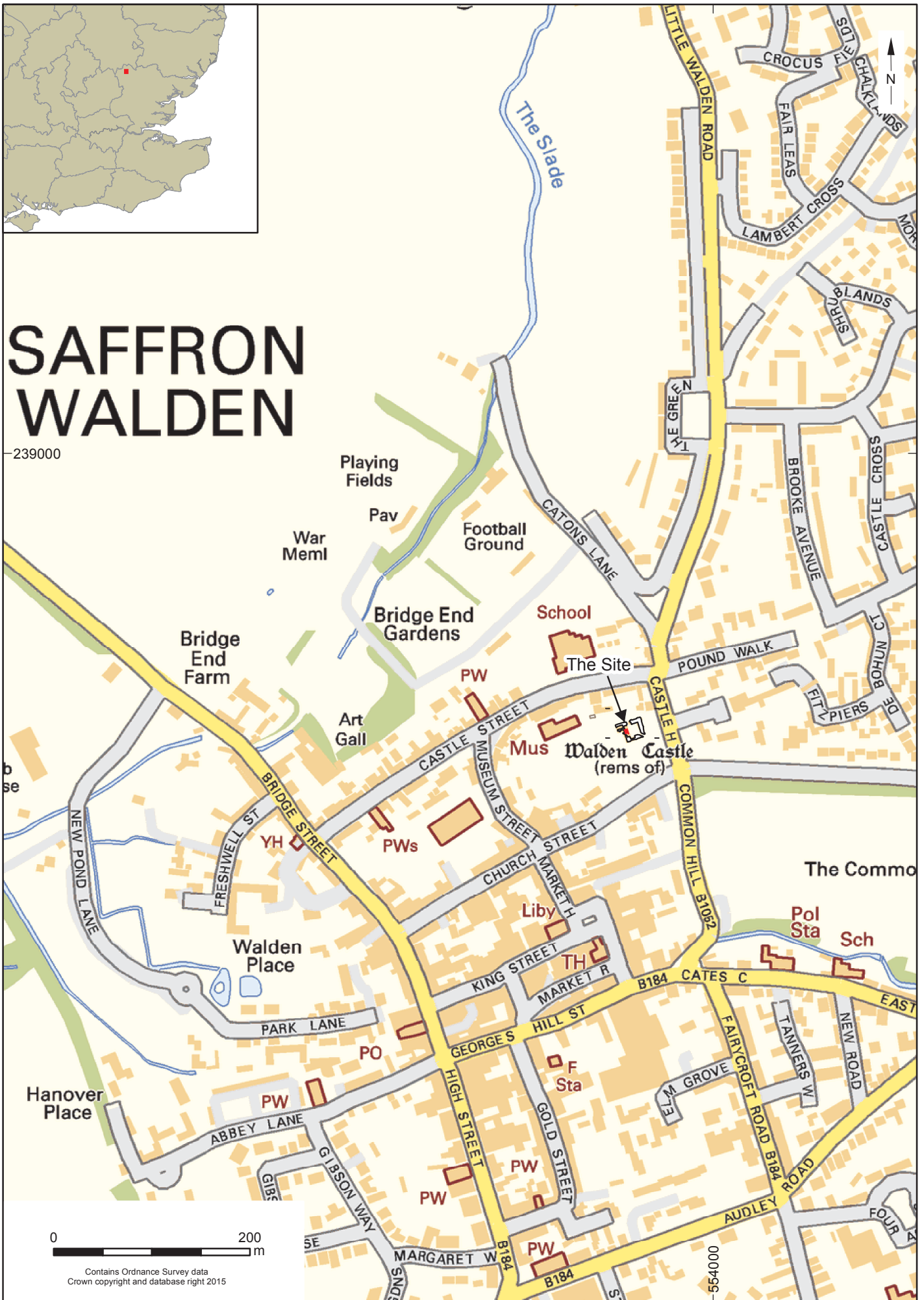
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**APPENDIX 1**

Specialists to be used as necessary:

Prehistoric and Roman pottery	Louise Rayner & Anna Doherty (ASE)
Prehistoric	Nick Lavender (external: Essex region)
Post-Roman pottery	Luke Barber (external: Sussex, Kent and London)
Post-Roman pottery (Essex)	Helen Walker (external: Essex)
CBM	Sue Pringle & Luke Barber (external)
Fired Clay	Elke Raemen & Trista Clifford (ASE)
Clay Tobacco Pipe	Elke Raemen (ASE)
Glass	Elke Raemen (ASE)
Slag	Luke Barber, Lynne Keyes (external); Trista Clifford (ASE)
Metalwork	Trista Clifford (ASE)
Worked Flint	Karine Le Hégarat (ASE); Hugo Anderson-Whymark (external)
Geological material and worked stone	Luke Barber (external)
Human bone incl cremated bone	Lucy Sibun (ASE)
Animal bone incl fish	Gemma Ayton (ASE)
Marine shell	Elke Raemen (ASE); David Dunkin (external)
Registered Finds	Elke Raemen & Trista Clifford (ASE)
Coins	Trista Clifford (ASE)
Treasure administration	Trista Clifford (ASE)
Conservation and x-ray	Fishbourne Roman Villa or UCL Institute of Archaeology
Geoarchaeology	Dr Matt Pope & Liz Chambers (ASE)
Geoarchaeology (incl wetland environments)	Kristina Krawiec (ASE)
Macro-plant remains	Dr Lucy Allott & Karine Le Hégarat (ASE)
Charcoal & Waterlogged wood	Dr Lucy Allott (ASE)



# SAFFRON WALDEN

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© Archaeology South-East		Walden Castle, Saffron Walden	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8369	Apr 2015	Site location	
Report No: WSI	Drawn by: APL		



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Apr 2015

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Walden Castle, Saffron Walden

Location of archaeological excavation

Fig. 2