

Cresswell Pele Tower Community Archaeology Project

Internal Evaluation



The 1st floor of Cresswell Pele Tower, prior to the excavation of the test pits.

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Cresswell Pele Tower Community Archaeology Project

Evaluation Trenching

ARS Ltd Report 2017/139

November 2017

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Name: Cresswell Pele Tower Community Archaeology Project. Floor plans and internal Test Pits

Site Code: CW17-2

Planning Authority: Northumberland County Council and Historic England

Geology: Pennine Middle Coal Measures overlain by till

NGR: NZ 29364 93356

Date of Fieldwork: October 2017

Date of Report: October 2017

The Cresswell Pele Tower Community Archaeology Project is led by Cresswell Parish Council and the Greater Morpeth Development Trust. Cresswell Pele Tower is thought to date to the 14th or 15th century and represents a well-preserved example of a border tower house or 'Pele'. The tower is a Scheduled Monument (NHLE: 1014509) and a Grade II Listed Building (NHLE: 1042148).*

Excavation of the archaeological test pits described in this document was undertaken as part of a Heritage Lottery Funded project which aims to remove the tower from the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register and also to provide public access to the tower. The project will conserve the asset for future generations to enjoy. As well as the test pits and floor plans described here, the programme of archaeological work has also included archaeological evaluation, geophysical survey and fieldwalking for which separate reports have been undertaken. All aspects of the archaeological work have been conducted in collaboration with the local community allowing for local engagement with the project and the tower, and providing training and participation opportunities in heritage and archaeological activities and skills.

The main aim of the archaeological recording and evaluation was to make a detailed record of the floor surfaces at ground and first floor levels and to examine the fabric of these floors in order to gain information that will help to inform conservation decisions regarding the best treatment of the floors during the delivery phase of the Cresswell Pele Tower Project. The primary objectives were to:

- produce an accurate drawn plan and photographs of the ground and first floor surfaces*
- expose what was beneath the different floor surfaces to assess the condition and preservation of whatever was encountered, any sequencing and whether there was potential to obtain dating evidence*
- provide information on the crack that can be seen in the barrel vaulting and whether this can inform the conservation and repair of this crack.*

The excavation of the three test pits not only provided dating evidence to help with dating the laying of the floors and, therefore, most likely the dating of the pele tower itself, but it also helped to establish a sequence of repair and replacement. In addition, excavation of the test pits on the first floor helped to reveal the construction of the barrel vaulted ceiling and the subsequent deposits that had been used to level the floor prior to the laying of the flagstones. Test Pit 2 at the top of the stairs allowed a

structural engineer to examine what had caused the crack in the barrel vaulted ceiling below.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Cresswell Pele Tower Community Archaeology Project is led by Cresswell Parish Council and the Greater Morpeth Development Trust. Cresswell Pele Tower is thought to date to the 14th or 15th century and represents a well-preserved example of a border tower house or 'Pele'. The tower is a Scheduled Monument (NHLE: 1014509) and a Grade II* Listed Building (NHLE: 1042148).

1.2 The archaeological excavation of three test pits within the tower, described in this document, was undertaken as part of a Heritage Lottery Funded project which aims to remove the tower from the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register and also provide public access to the tower. The project will conserve the asset for future generations to enjoy. As well as the test pits and floor plans described here, the programme of archaeological work has also included archaeological evaluation, geophysical survey and fieldwalking for which separate reports have been undertaken. All aspects of the archaeological work have been conducted in collaboration with the local community allowing for local engagement with the project and the tower, and providing training and participation opportunities in heritage and archaeological activities and skills.

2. SITE LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

2.1 Cresswell is located at the southern end of Druridge Bay and the tower is centred at NGR NZ 29364 93356 (Figure 1).

2.2 The tower and its surrounding grounds occupy a prominent position within Cresswell, on a raised area of land at a height of c.16m aOD, which provides clear views both up and down the coast to the north and the south, and east out to sea.

2.3 The solid geology of the site comprises Pennine Middle Coal Measures of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone overlain by superficial deposits of glacial till (BGS 2017).



Site name: Cresswell Pele Tower
 Date: April 2017
 Drawn by: PC
 Scale: Varies

Key:
 Site boundary



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Figure 1:
 Site location

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The main aim of the archaeological recording and evaluation was to make a detailed record of the floor surfaces at ground and first floor levels and to examine the fabric of these floors in order to gain information that will help to inform conservation decisions regarding the best treatment of the floors during the delivery phase of the Cresswell Pele Tower Project. The primary objectives were to:

- produce an accurate drawn plan and photographs of the ground and first floor surfaces
- expose what was beneath the different floor surfaces to assess the condition and preservation of whatever was encountered, any sequencing and whether there was potential to obtain dating evidence
- provide information on the crack that can be seen in the barrel vaulting and whether this can inform the conservation and repair of this crack.

3.2 The archaeological work comprised a drawn plan of the ground and 1st floor floor surfaces, and three hand-dug evaluation trenches:

- Test Pit 1 was a rectangular test pit located on the ground floor of the pele tower which investigated various phases of re-flooring and patch repairs as well as a mortice stone.
- Test Pit 2 was a rectangular test pit located at the top of the staircase leading from the ground floor to the first floor. The purpose of this test pit was to investigate what survives below both the later inserted stone paving and the original stone paving and also to assess any damage that has been caused to the floor and its underlying structure by a weakness in the building which has caused a large crack to appear in the barrel vaulted ceiling below.
- Test Pit 3 was a square test pit located towards the southern corner of the tower's first floor room. The purpose of this test pit was to try and extract some dating evidence which will reliably date the insertion of the original floor.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 A full archaeological test pit methodology is set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation that was compiled and approved prior to the commencement of fieldwork (see Appendix II).

4.2 The test pits were excavated entirely by hand and cleaned sufficiently to allow the identification and planning of archaeological and architectural features and deposits.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Recording of the pele tower's ground floor



Figure 2. The north-eastern end of the pele tower's ground floor. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 3. The north-eastern half of the ground floor floor surface. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 4. The south-western elevation of the pele tower's ground floor. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 5. The south-western side of the pele tower's ground floor. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 6. The recess behind the staircase within the ground floor of the pele tower. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 7. the flooring within the recess behind the stairs on the pele tower's ground floor. Scales = 2 x 1m.

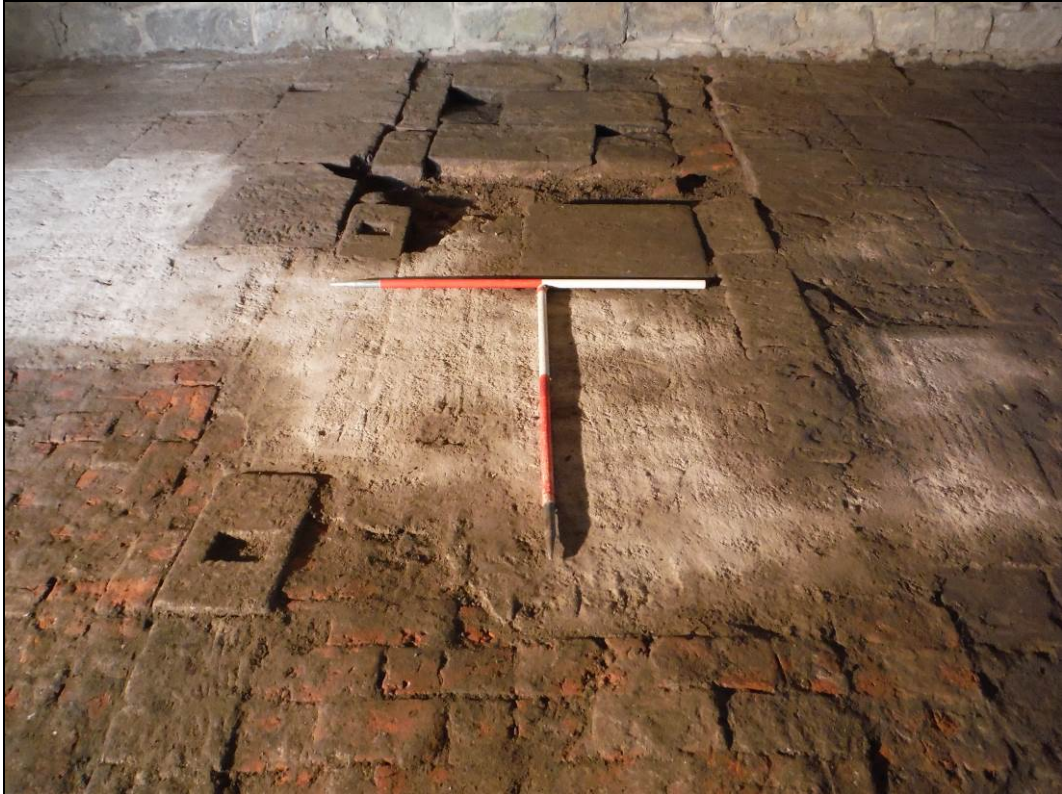


Figure 8. The stone and brick passage seen within the flooring of the ground floor level of the pele tower. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 9. The south-eastern elevation of the pele tower's ground floor. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 10. The north-western elevation of the pele tower's ground floor. Scales = 2 x 1m.

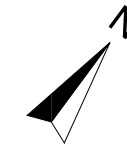
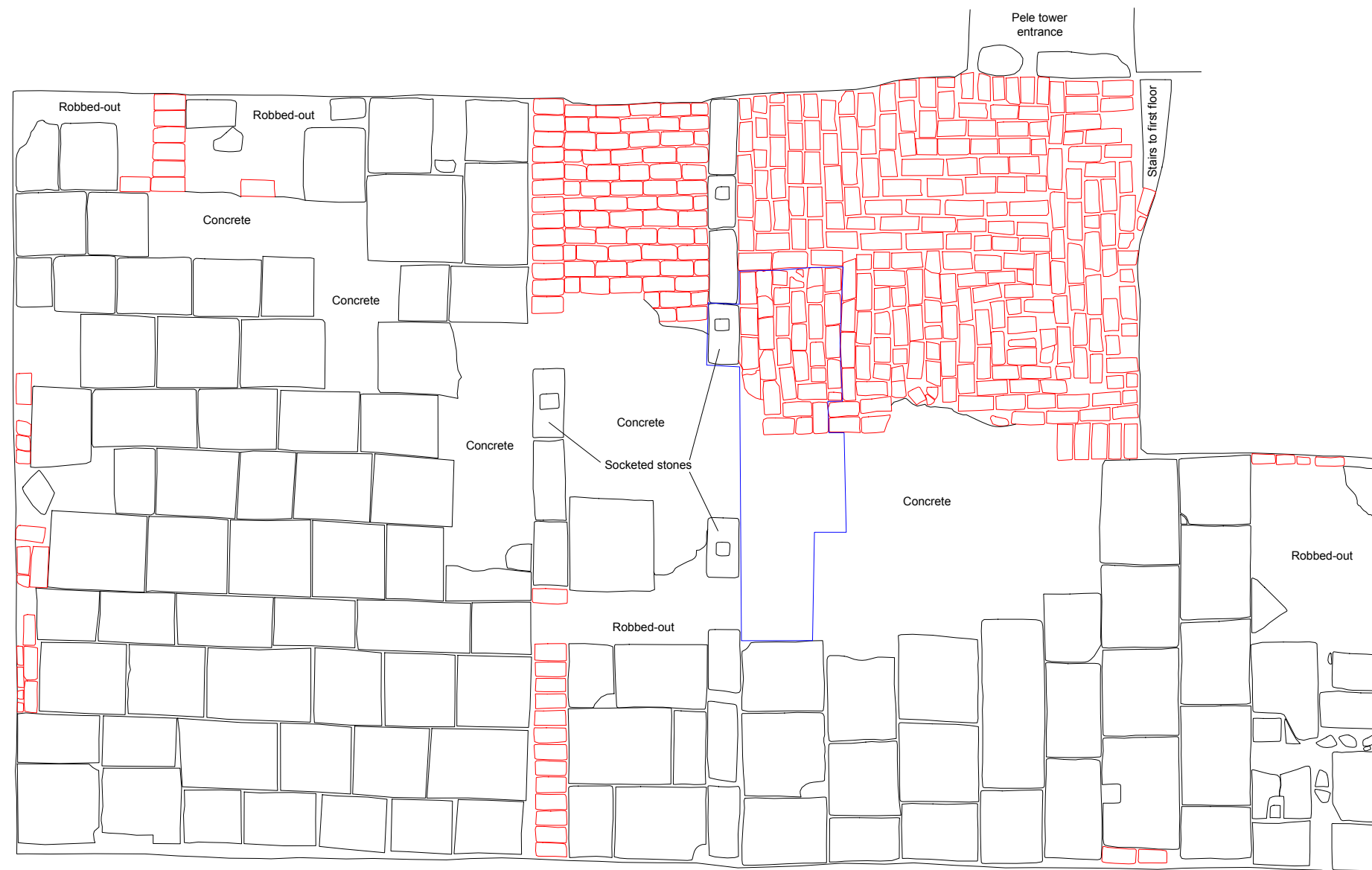



Figure 11:
A drawn plan of the ground floor of the pele tower.
Scale = 1:40 at A3



Key:
 Bricks

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5.2 Test Pit 1

5.2.1 Test Pit 1 was located on the ground floor of the pele tower and measured a maximum of 0.94 x 2.6m. The test pit was located in order to test beneath at least three separate phases of flooring including concrete, flagstones and laid bricks. The area of concrete (101) that was removed measured 0.68 x 0.74m and was 0.04m deep. Directly beneath the concrete was a layer of felt material, (102), that had been laid before the wet concrete had been poured directly on top of it. Concrete (101) had been laid in order to fill a space between laid bricks, (104), and flagstones, (110). The brick surface, (104), had been constructed using red, un-frogged and unstamped bricks which each measured 9 x 4 ½ x 2 ¼ inches. The brick surface was un-mortared and did not appear to have been laid in any deliberate, consistent pattern. A total of 31 bricks were removed during excavation of Test Pit 1, although some of these bricks were partial and many were heavily damaged. The bricks had been laid down on a layer of orange bedding sand, (105), which measured 0.05m in depth. A single socketed stone measuring 0.42 x 0.23 x 0.17m which abutted the brick flooring, (104), was removed during the excavation of Test Pit 1 as well as a single flagstone, (110), at the south-eastern extent of the test pit.

5.2.2 Found underneath the concrete floor surface (101) and the flagstone floor (110) was a levelling layer of mixed sand and mortar (109) which had a depth of 0.06m. Found amongst this levelling layer were the disarticulated bones of a bird that still had a metal ring around one of its leg bones. The ring had been stamped with 'BTO BRITISH MUSEUM NAT HIST. LONDON SW7.' and a code: 'FV66794'. Investigation into the origins of the ring found it to have been attached to the leg of a fulmar on the 18th August 1986 on the Farne Islands, Northumberland. This therefore securely dates the laying of the concrete flooring to sometime after 1986. Levelling layer (109) was sat directly upon a layer of orange/brown bedding sand (111). Sitting across the extent of Test Pit 1 beneath bedding sand (111), as well as the bedding sand for the brick floor (105), and the socketed stone (107) was a further levelling deposit of medium to coarse textured very dark grey coal, clinker, ash and brick dust (103). Amongst this levelling deposit (103) were two sherds of pottery dating to c.1720-1840.

5.2.3 Deposit (103) was removed to reveal a rough stone flagged floor surface at a depth of 0.15m BGL that extended beyond the limits of excavation. The flooring consisted of un-shaped, un-mortared, large flat stones and medium-sized rounded cobbles that had been laid with no apparent regularity.



Figure 12. The ground floor of the pele tower prior to the excavation of Test Pit 1. Scale = 1m.



Figure 13. Test Pit 1 after excavation showing the earlier flagstone floor surface at the base. Scale = 2 x 1m.

5.3 Recording of the pele tower's first floor



Figure 14. The first floor of the pele tower prior to excavation. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 15. The first floor of the pele tower prior to excavation. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 16. The first floor of the pele tower prior to excavation. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 17. The south-western elevation of the pele tower's first floor. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 18. The southern extent of the south-eastern elevation of the pele tower's first floor. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 19. The northern extent of the south-eastern elevation of the pele tower's first floor. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 20. The northern extent of the north-western elevation of the pele tower's first floor. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 21. The southern extent of the north-western elevation of the pele tower's first floor. Scales = 2 x 1m.

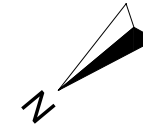
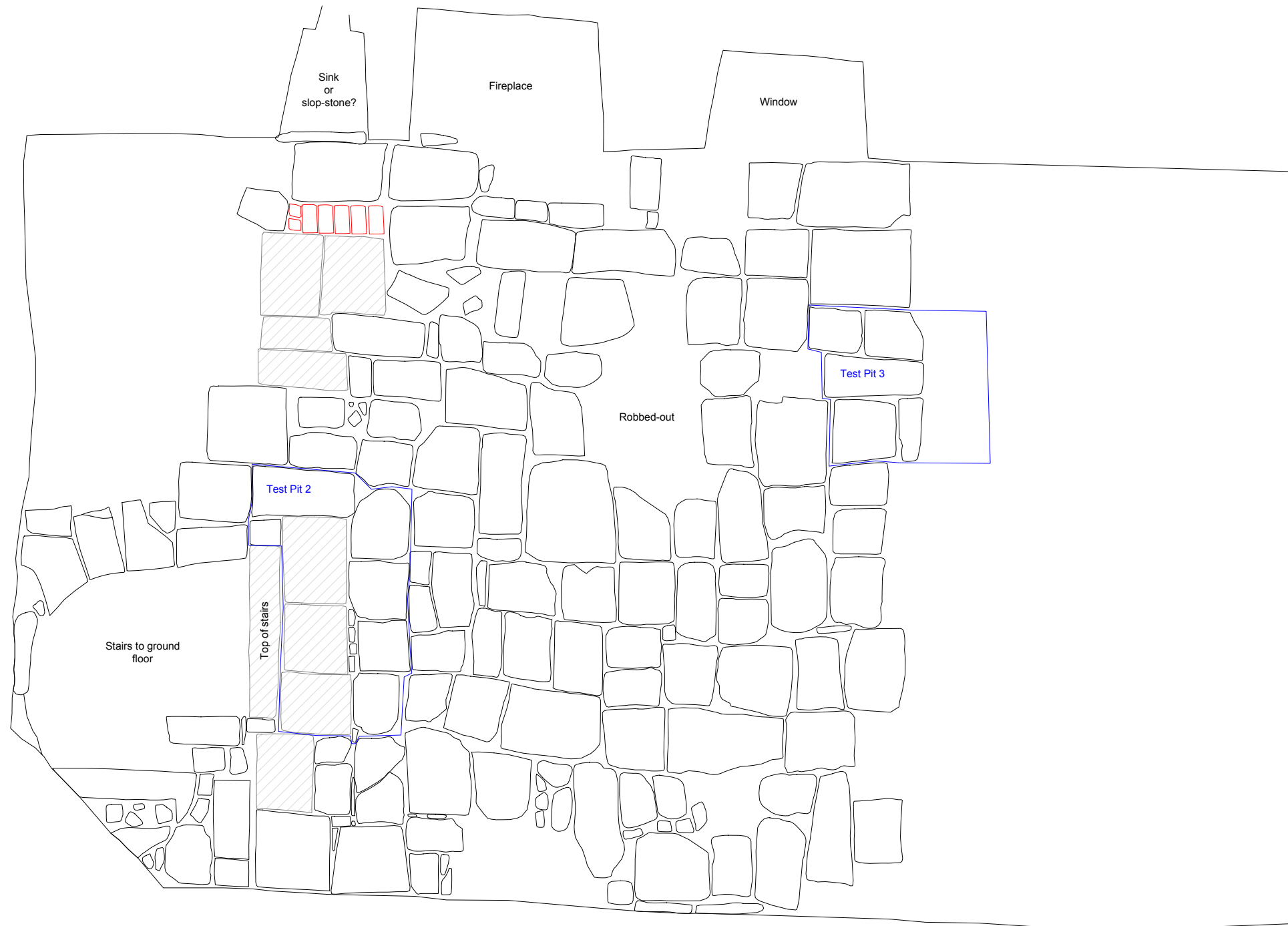


Figure 22:
A drawn plan of the first floor of the pele tower.
Scale = 1:40 at A3



- Key:
-  Bricks
 -  Replacement flagstones

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5.4 Test Pit 2

5.4.1 Test Pit 2 was excavated at the top of the staircase leading from the ground floor to the first floor of the pele tower. The trench measured a maximum of 2 x 1.2m and involved the lifting of nine flagstones. The three largest stones abutting the top stair of the staircase were noticeably less weathered than the other six that were removed and therefore appeared to have been laid later, most probably as repairs or to replace stones that had been robbed.

5.4.2 Beneath earlier flagstones (204) was a layer of dark brown/grey soil (202). This deposit is believed to have been an original levelling deposit for the flagstones that became mixed with soil through weathering and bioturbation. Deposit (202) had an average depth of 0.1m. Beneath the later replacement flagstones and abutting levelling deposit (202) was a different levelling deposit of crushed lime mortar and broken red tile (203), which had a maximum depth of 0.09m.

5.4.3 At the northern end of the test pit, beneath levelling deposits (202) and (203), were a number of additional levelling deposits. These consisted of a deposit of medium to coarse crushed sandy mortar (205) above a lens of black clayey sand (207). A further deposit of crushed mortar (210) the same as (205) was encountered beneath dark lens (207). Crushed mortar deposit (210) also extended beneath levelling layer (203) for the later flagstone flooring (201). A large deposit of medium textured mixed orange and brown sandy clay (208) was situated at a depth of 0.24m BGL and had a maximum depth of 0.35m. A further deposit of crushed mortar (211) surrounding large, rounded cobbles (206) was located beneath clay layer (208). Both the crushed mortar and cobbles and the sandy clay had been deposited in order to fill the voids either side of the barrel vaulted ceiling of the ground floor room below.

5.4.4 The top of the barrel vaulted ceiling (209) was encountered at a maximum depth of 0.63m BGL, at its deepest, but rose to a depth of 0.2m BGL at its shallowest. The ceiling had been constructed using long, narrow sandstone blocks that had been arranged to form a self-supporting corbelled structure. The stones had been bonded with a sandy mortar. At the southern extent of Test Pit 2 levelling deposit (203) was sat directly upon the barrel vaulted ceiling (209).



Figure 23. Test Pit 2 after excavation showing the top of the barrel vaulted ceiling of the ground floor. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 24. test Pit 2 after excavation. Scales = 2 x 1m.

5.5 Test Pit 3

5.5.1 Test Pit 3 was also located on the first floor of the pele tower but was situated close to the southern corner of the room. The test pit was excavated in order to attempt to retrieve dating evidence from beneath the flagstones that would help to date when they were laid. The test pit measured a maximum of 1.43 x 1.2m and involved lifting five of the original flagstones (301).

5.5.2 Beneath the flagstone flooring was a dark brown clayey sandy loam that had been deposited through vegetation growth within the tower, weathering and bioturbation and had mixed into the layer of mid-brown clayey sand below (303). This mid-brown clayey sand produced animal bone, metal waste and sherds of green-glazed pottery dating to the 14th – 15th centuries. Directly below deposit (303) was a 0.3m deep layer of pale brown sandy clay, the same as deposit (208) found within Test Pit 2. This had been used to fill the voids either side of the top of the barrel vaulted ceiling of the ground floor room below and also to provide a level surface for the laying of the flagstones (301).



Figure 25. Test Pit 3 after excavation. Scales = 2 x 1m.



Figure 26. Test Pit 3 after excavation. Scales = 2 x 1m.

Plan and section of Test Pit 1, Ground Floor

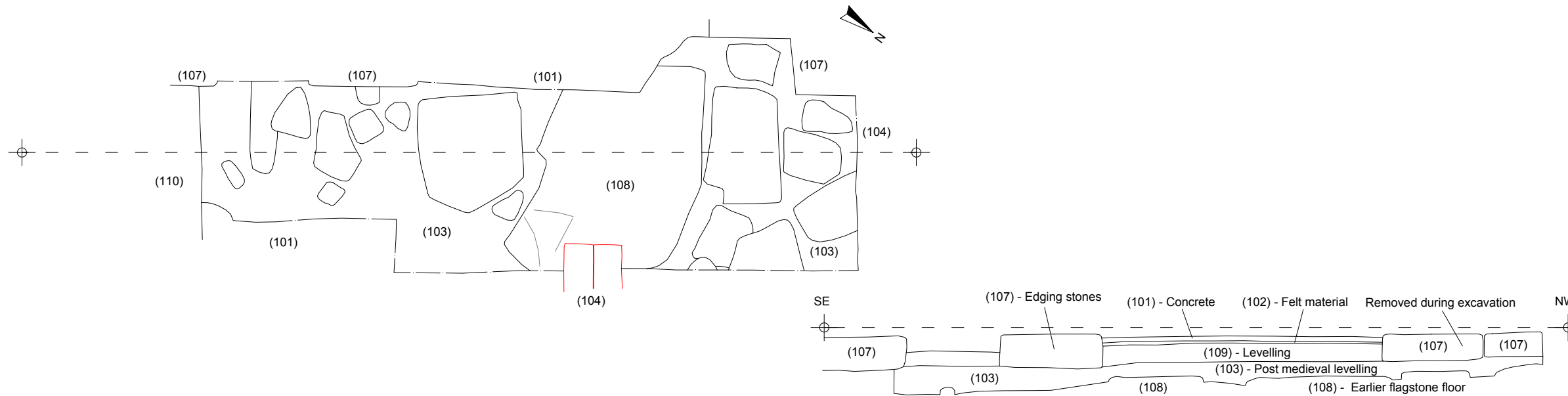


Figure 27:

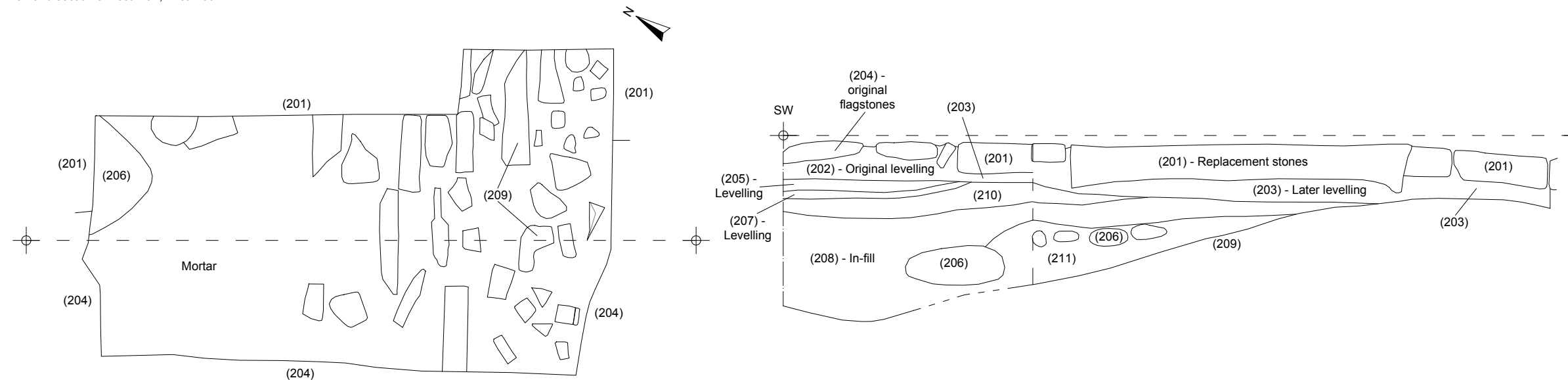
Plans and sections of Test Pits 1, 2 and 3.

Scale = 1:20 at A3

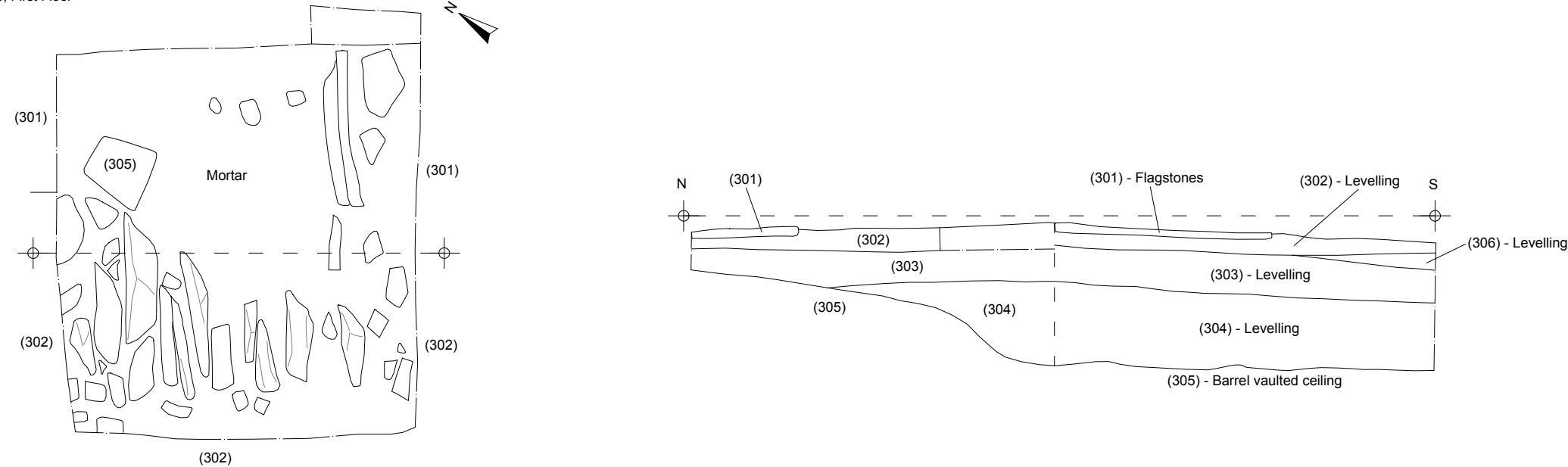
Key:

Bricks

Plan and section of Test Pit 2, First Floor



Plan and section of Test Pit 3, First Floor



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6. POTTERY REPORT

C. G. Cumberpatch BA PhD

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The pottery assemblage from Cresswell Pele Tower was examined by the author on 3rd November 2017. It consisted of fourteen sherds of pottery weighing 191 grams representing a maximum of nine vessels. The data are summarised in Table 1.

6.2 The pottery

6.2.1 The earliest pottery in the assemblage was of Reduced Greenware type from contexts (203) and (303) beneath the flagstones in Test Pits 2 and 3. Reduced Greenware is ubiquitous in later medieval (14th to 15th century) assemblages in north-eastern England (Vaughan 2007) and occurs in a variety of fabrics ranging from the sandy textured to much finer, smoother types. The examples from Cresswell lie at the finer end of the spectrum. At present little is known of the organisation of production or the sources of this type of pottery, despite its significance.

6.2.2 Levelling layer (303) also contained a small sherd of Raeren Stoneware dating to the late 15th or 16th century (Gaimster 1995). German stonewares are one of the few types of European pottery that occurs regularly on sites outside the major east coast ports (including Newcastle) through which it was imported. Although the sherd in question was small, it appeared to be from a mug or drinking jug and part of a relief decoration, probably a plaque or seal, was visible on one edge.

6.2.3 Levelling layer (103) produced the latest sherds in the assemblage, dating to the early modern period (c.1720 – c.1840). The sherds of Slipware formed part of the rim of a wide, shallow press-moulded dish or bowl, typical of the type and found widely on sites of all types in the 18th century (Cumberpatch 2014) and somewhat earlier in Staffordshire. It was accompanied by a sherd from the rim of a cup or bowl in transfer-printed Pearlware dating to the period between c.1780 and c.1840. Pearlware was the latest of the three types of formal tableware typical of the period.

6.3 Discussion

6.3.1 The small size of the assemblage precludes any detailed interpretation although it seems clear that contexts (203) and (303) can be considered to be broadly contemporary and probably date from the later 15th to early 16th century. Context (103) is somewhat later and probably dates from the late 18th or early 19th century.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The excavation of the three test pits not only provided dating evidence to help with dating the laying of the flooring and, therefore, most likely the dating of the pele tower itself, but it also helped to establish a sequence of repair and replacement. In addition, excavation of the test pits on the first floor helped to reveal the construction of the barrel vaulted ceiling and the subsequent deposits that had been used to level the floor prior to the laying of the flagstones. Test Pit 2 at the top of the stairs allowed a structural engineer to examine the crack in the barrel vaulted ceiling.

7.2 Test Pit 1 revealed an earlier flagstone floor surface (108) that could possibly pre-date the pele tower or be part of its original floor. During the archaeological evaluation that was carried out externally of the pele tower in February 2017 (Cockburn 2017), a rough wall foundation and associated cobbled floor surface were found within Trench 11. The wall foundation was on a different alignment to both the pele tower and the 18th century mansion that is known to have been built adjoining the pele tower but was subsequently demolished. This has led to the conclusion that the rough wall foundation and cobbled surface within Trench 11 pre-date the construction of the pele tower, which is thought to have occurred in the 14th – 16th centuries. Therefore it is believed that a structure occupied the site of the pele tower prior to its construction and it is possible that the flagstone surface found within Test Pit 1 could relate to this earlier building or the original phase of the pele tower.

7.3 Sitting directly above the flagstone floor surface in Test Pit 1 was a layer of coal, clinker and brick dust (103) which contained post-medieval pottery and has been interpreted as a levelling layer for the brick (104) and (106) and flagstone flooring (110) which still exists within the pele tower. Clearly visible within the existing flooring is the line of a 0.98m wide passage which is represented by the remains of two parallel lines of edging stones, some with sockets for holding doorframes, bounding a brick and flagstone surface. This passage, which was inserted into the ground floor room of the pele tower, clearly separated the space into two fairly evenly sized rooms with what is assumed would have been two partition walls. The entrance into this passage would have been through a door in the north-western elevation wall of the pele tower which has since been blocked up. In his survey of the building in 2000, Ryder (2003) states that this doorway was 18th century and that at this time the original doorway that is currently used to enter the pele tower was blocked up. Therefore the creation of the passage and the insertion of the partition walls is most likely to be contemporary with the construction of the mansion house, or it certainly occurred before the house was demolished. The pottery dating to c.1720-1840 recovered from levelling layer (103) which sat directly above earlier flagstones (108) correlates with levelling layer (103) being laid down most probably at the same time as the mansion house was under construction, before the bricks (104) and (106) and later flagstones (110) were laid, in order to improve the pele tower's ground floor surface.

7.4 Edging stones (107) on the ground floor surface were found to be sitting directly upon levelling deposit (103) and it can therefore be assumed that they have remained in place since they were first laid sometime during the 18th – 19th centuries. A number of these stones have been robbed out, however, and in some cases have been replaced with lines of bricks. This would indicate that the entire ground floor was originally surfaced with flagstones laid upon post-medieval levelling deposit (109) in the 18th – 19th centuries when the mansion house was constructed and the partition walls were inserted. The bricks were, therefore, later patch repairs that had been laid upon bedding sand (105) to fill gaps within the flagstone floor after the flagstones had been robbed-out. It is unlikely that the robbing of the materials occurred during the occupation of the mansion house, and the use of the bricks to replace the missing edging stones must have occurred once the partition walls had been removed. Subsequently it can be surmised that the brick floor surfaces date to sometime after the demolition of the mansion house in the 19th century.

7.5 Encountered between edging stones (107) and above levelling deposit (103) in Test Pit 1 was a bedding layer of sand mixed with crushed lime mortar (109). This layer was present only beneath modern concrete flooring (101) and later flagstone flooring (110). It is therefore believed that sometime post-1986, when the fulmar was ringed, some repairs were carried out to the ground floor which included filling gaps in the flooring, presumably made through robbing of the materials, with concrete laid upon bedding layer (109) and felt material (102). At the same time it is thought that some of the existing flagstones were lifted and re-laid on the same bedding layer (109) as the concrete.

7.6 Test Pit 2 at the top of the staircase at first floor level was successful in locating the top of the barrel vaulted ceiling which allowed the structural engineer to inspect the stonework. It also revealed a sequence of backfilling and levelling as well as a later phase of repair to the flagstone floor. Layers of crushed sandy mortar (205), (210) and (211) had been used, interspersed with a layer of clay (208) and large rounded cobbles (206, to fill in the voids on either side of the barrel vaulted ceiling (209) and to provide a level surface for the laying of the original floor (204). It was clear prior to excavation that some of the flagstones had been replaced due to the fact that some of them displayed a much greater degree of wear than others. The later, replacement stones had been laid upon a deposit of crushed mortar and broken red tile (203) which lay directly above the top of the barrel vaulted ceiling (209) at the southern extent of the test pit. It is believed that the bedding for the original flagstones (202) was removed during the replacement of the stones and replaced with deposit (205) which was created using available materials. Green glazed pottery dating to the 14th – 15th centuries found beneath the flagstones indicates that the flooring was most probably laid at this time.

7.7 Test Pit 3 was the only one to display the original flagstone flooring and levelling sequence without evidence of any repairs and/or alterations. Excavation of the test pit revealed a simple sequence of sandy clay (304) sitting directly above the top of the barrel vaulted ceiling (305) and sitting below a layer of mid brown clayey sand which had been used as levelling for the flooring. A small lens of crushed mortar and tile (306) was also present which can be interpreted as additional material used as levelling. The pele tower has been without a roof for some years which had allowed dense vegetation to grow on and between the flagstones of the first floor. This vegetation, which was removed prior to the recording of the floor, had transported soil beneath the flagstones, which had then mixed into levelling layer (302). An area at the south-eastern extent of the first floor, measuring 6 x 3.2m, was completely devoid of any flagstones and while it is possible that the flagstones in this area had been robbed-out, its regularity suggests it may never have been laid with flagstones but rather a raised floor, possibly of timber. Green glazed pottery dating to the 14th – 15th centuries found beneath the flagstones in Test Pit 3 indicates that the flooring was most probably laid at this time. The south-western half of Test Pit 3 was excavated directly through an area that contained no flagstones but this did not reveal any evidence to suggest a different floor covering.

8. PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

8.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client.

8.2 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

9. STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

9.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

10.1 ARS Ltd would like to thank all those involved with the project, particularly Community Project Manager Barry Mead and all of the volunteers for their valuable assistance.

11. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX I: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context number	Description	Test Pit
101	Concrete floor surface, ground floor	1
102	Felt material beneath (101)	1
103	Levelling layer beneath (102 and (105)	1
104	Brick floor surface	1
105	Bedding sand for (104)	1
106	Later (?) brick floor surface	1
107	Ashlar blocks with sockets	1
108	Stone flagged floor surface beneath (103)	1
109	Mixed sand and mortar layer beneath (102) and (110)	1
110	Existing stone flagged floor surface	1
111	Layer of bedding sand beneath (109)	1
201	Existing flagstones 1 st floor	2
202	Soil between and beneath (201)	2
203	Layer of broken tile and crushed mortar beneath (201)	2
204	Earlier flagstones	2
205	Crushed mortar and sandstone chips	2
206	Large cobbles used to in-fill above vault amongst (211)	2
207	Lens of black sandy material	2
208	Mixed orange/brown sandy clay	2
209	Top of barrel vaulted ceiling	2
210	Second layer of crushed mortar	2
211	Basal layer of crushed mortar	2
301	Flagstones - same as (204)	3
302	Soil beneath (301)	3
303	Mid brown clayey sand beneath (302)	3
304	Paler brown clayey sand beneath (303) and above (305)	3
305	Top of barrel vaulted ceiling	3
306	Crushed mortar and tile in south side of TP3	3

APPENDIX II: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

Written scheme of investigation for recording of floor surfaces and archaeological evaluation within Cresswell Pele Tower, Northumberland

April 2017



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The Eco Centre, Windmill Way, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear

www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com

Prepared on behalf of: Cresswell Parish Council and
the Greater Morpeth
Development Trust

Date of compilation: April 2017

Compiled by: Philippa Cockburn ACIfA and
Clive Waddington MCIfA

Local Authority: Northumberland County
Council and Historic England

Site central NGR: NZ 29364 93356

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) was commissioned by Cresswell Parish Council and the Greater Morpeth Development Trust to produce a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the recording of floor surfaces and their evaluation by way of targeted test pits within Cresswell Pele Tower which is a Scheduled Monument (NHLE no. 1014509) and a Grade II* Listed Building (NHLE: 1042148). The site is centred at NZ 29364 93356 and covers an area of c.440m² (Figure 1).

1.2 The underlying solid geology of the PDA comprises Pennine Middle Coal Measures of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. This is overlain by superficial deposits of till (BGS 2017).

1.3 This document comprises a WSI which describes the method of investigation to be used by ARS Ltd for recording the floor surfaces and excavating three, hand-dug, investigative test pits within the tower following on-site discussions between Cresswell Parish Council and the Greater Morpeth Development Trust, Historic England, the project's conservation architect and ARS Ltd. Test Pit 1 will be located on the ground floor while Test Pits 2 and 3 will be located on the first floor.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Cresswell Pele Tower represents a well-preserved example of a border tower house or 'Pele' and is believed to date to the 14th or 15th century. The tower was first shown on historic mapping on Armstrong's map of 1769 when it was labelled as 'Cresswell Hall' and had, by this time, had a Mansion House built on to its north-west elevation. By 1840 the mansion house had been demolished, but the tower was retained as a feature in the landscaped grounds of a new hall which was built to replace the original one. The new hall's carriage route ran past the tower and a mounting block was built in order to allow visitors to disembark and view the old building. In the 20th century the estate was sold to the Ashington Coal Company after a decline in fortunes of the Baker-Cresswell family. The new hall was demolished in the 1930s, but the tower remained and was used occasionally for parties and local events until these ceased and the tower fell into a state of disrepair. The tower now stands on the edge of a caravan park where it has been the target of vandals in recent years.

2.2 The tower was surveyed by Peter Ryder as part of a small conservation programme which was undertaken in 2000 (Ryder 2003). Ryder's survey of the tower followed the opening up of blocked access on the ground floor allowing for inspection of the tower's interior. The survey includes drawn plans, cross sections and elevations of all walls and provides a description of the fabric and historical development of the building (Ryder 2003).



Site name: Cresswell Pele Tower
 Date: April 2017
 Drawn by: PC
 Scale: Varies

Key:
 Site boundary



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This drawing: © ARS Ltd
 Contains Ordnance Survey data.
 © Crown copyright and database right 2016

Figure 1:
 Site location

2.3 The tower was the subject of an archaeological watching brief in 2014 undertaken as part of preliminary investigations into the structural integrity of the building. This monitored the removal of a build-up of soil and debris at first floor level, exposing a flag-stone floor, the date of which could not be established at the time of the watching brief (Eadie 2014).

2.4 In February 2017 ARS Ltd on behalf of Cresswell Parish Council and the Greater Morpeth development Trust, and with the help of local volunteers, conducted a two-week archaeological evaluation within Fisheries Field, to the east and south of the pele tower, and in the immediate vicinity of the pele tower itself. The evaluation aimed to identify and assess any archaeological features within these areas. A total of nine evaluation trenches were excavated within Fisheries Field (Trenches 1-9) and a further three, hand-dug evaluation trenches (10, 11 and 12) were around the tower. The hand-dug trenches around the pele tower produced important new evidence for buried archaeological remains. The wall foundation of the front of the 18th century mansion house that once stood on the site was found within Trench 11. An important discovery in the same trench, however, was evidence for an earlier building than the tower consisting of a cobbled floor surface and a rough but substantial wall foundation on a different alignment to the tower and the Mansion House. In hand-dug Trench 10 a well-built, stone-lined drain, a linear ditch and a stone-lined gully of unknown function and date were revealed. Medieval pottery dating from the 12th-14th centuries was also recovered supporting the structural evidence for occupation on the site pre-dating the pele tower.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The main aim of the archaeological recording and evaluation is to make a detailed record of the floor surfaces at ground and first floor levels and to examine the fabric of these floors in order to gain information that will help to inform conservation decisions regarding the best treatment of the floors during the delivery phase of the Cresswell Pele Tower Project. The primary objectives are to (1) produce an accurate drawn plan and photographs of the ground and first floor surfaces, (2) expose what is beneath the different floor surfaces to assess the condition and preservation of whatever is encountered, any sequencing and whether there is potential to obtain dating evidence, and (3) provide information on the crack that can be seen in the barrel vaulting and whether this can inform the conservation and repair of this crack.

3.2 The archaeological work will comprise a drawn plan of the ground and 1st floor, floor surfaces and three hand-dug evaluation trenches:

Test Pit 1 c.2.5 x 1.1m: A rectangular test pit located on the ground floor of the pele tower which will investigate various phases of re-flooring and patch repairs as well as one of two mortice stones (Figure 2). It will be carefully positioned so as to examine the area of brick, concrete and stone flooring as well as the location where a partition wall was inserted.



Figure 2. Location and extent of Test Pit 1.

Test Pit 2 c.2 x 1m: A rectangular test pit located at the top of the staircase leading from the ground floor to the first floor. This test pit will involve the lifting of c.8 flagstones, some thought to be original and some known to be later concrete insertions put in place when the stairwell was repaired in recent times. The purpose of this test pit will be to investigate what survives below both the later inserted paving and the stone paving and also to assess any damage that has been caused to the floor and its underlying structure by a weakness in the building which has caused a large crack to appear in the barrel vaulted ceiling below (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Location and extent of Test Pit 2.

Test Pit 3 c.2 x 1m: A square test pit located towards the southern corner of the tower's first floor room which will involve lifting c.8 sandstone flags in order to try and extract some dating evidence which will reliably date the insertion of the original floor (Figure 4).

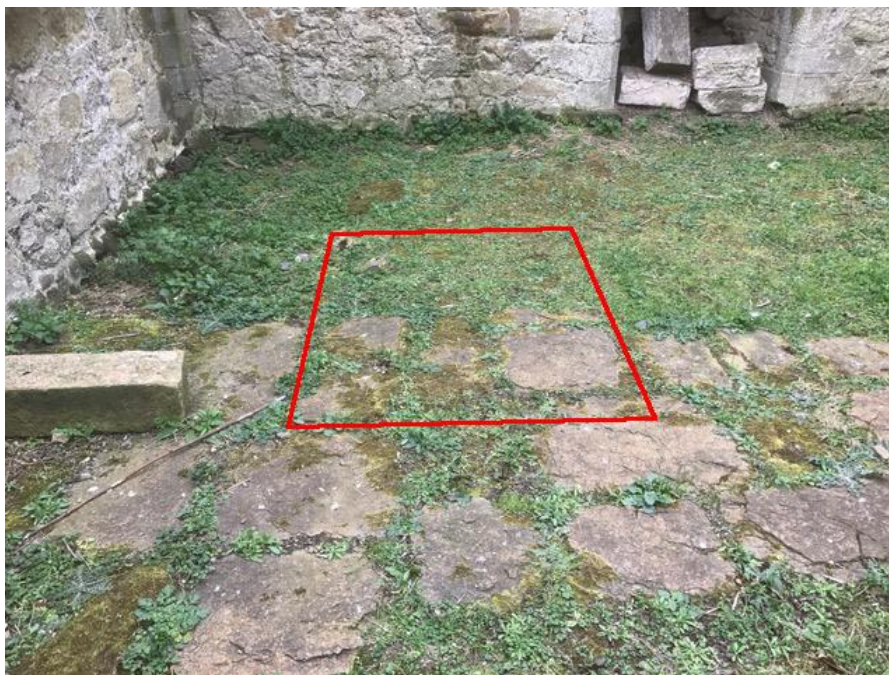


Figure 4. Location and extent of Test Pit 3.

4. METHOD STATEMENT

4.1 All elements of the archaeological evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the ClfA *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014a) and *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Field Evaluation* (ClfA 2014b).

4.2 The test pits will be excavated entirely by hand and cleaned sufficiently to allow the identification and planning of archaeological and architectural features and deposits.

4.3 Finds of "treasure" will be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act (DCMS 2008). The Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer will also be notified.

Coroner
17 Church Street
Berwick-Upon-Tweed
Northumberland
TC15 1EE
Tel No: 01289 304318

Finds Liaison Officer
Andrew Agate
Great North Museum
Barras Bridge
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE2 4PT
Tel No: 0191 208 6765

The County Council Historic Environment Officer and Historic England's Inspector of Ancient Monuments will also be notified and, if necessary, a site meeting arranged to determine if further investigation in the vicinity of the find spot is required.

4.4 Site recording will follow standard conventions in accordance with Archaeological Research Services Ltd.'s Site Recording Manual.

4.5 All vegetation covering the floors will be carefully removed by hand before any recording and excavation takes place.

4.6 The floor surfaces of both the ground and first floors will be accurately planned at a scale of 1:20, using a planning frame and hand tapes, before any test pits are undertaken. They will also be photographed with digital high resolution photography and monochrome print. Each photograph will include a scale bar, north arrow and information board. The ground floor area will require artificial lighting and the movement of stored stone blocks due to it being dark and being used as a store. This will mean that the floor will have to be photographed in sections, although the largest single photograph of the floor will also be taken following practical and health and safety considerations. Prior to work commencing on the ground floor guidelines will be followed to ensure no bats are present.

4.7 Following planning and photographing of the floor surfaces controlled excavation of each test pit will take place. This will comprise careful hand-dug excavation. This will be undertaken by carefully taking up slabs, and bricks where present, and stacking and temporarily marking them up so it is clear which slab/brick goes back where. For the areas of concrete on the ground floor this will be carefully chipped away by hand using a hammer and chisel. Sections and plans for each test pit will be produced, at an appropriate scale, to show what material each floor covering type is constructed over, and to show any relationships that show sequence or other informative stratigraphy. Each section and base of the pits will also be photographed. Once the test pits have been fully excavated their locations and extents will be accurately recorded on the plans.

4.8 A full record (written, graphic and photographic as appropriate) will be made for all work, using pre-printed record sheets with text descriptions appropriate to the work.

4.9 All stratified finds will be collected by context. All finds will be retained, the only exception being modern artefacts.

5. FINDS PROCESSING AND STORAGE

5.1 All finds processing, conservation work and storage of finds will be carried out in accordance with the ClfA (2014d) *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* and the UKIC (1990) *Guidelines for the Preparation of Archives for Long-Term Storage*.

5.2 All finds will be washed and, with the exception of animal bone, placed in marked bags or boxes. Marking and labelling will be indelible and irremovable by

abrasion. All finds will be appropriately bagged, boxed and recorded (e.g. lithics in self-sealing plastic bags and ceramic in acid-free tissue paper). Vulnerable objects will be specially packaged and textile, painted glass and coins stored in appropriate specialist systems (including controlled storage, correct packaging, and regular monitoring, immediate selection for conservation of vulnerable material). All storage will be secure. This process will be carried out within two days of the small find being excavated.

5.3 The deposition of artefacts will be agreed with the legal owner and the recipient museum prior to the works taking place. All finds except treasure trove are the property of the landowner.

5.4 All retained artefacts and ecofacts will be cleaned and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the recipient museum (Great North Museum Hancock).

6. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will give no less than 10 working days' notice prior to the commencement of fieldwork to the Northumberland County Council Historic Environment Officer and the Historic England Inspector.

6.2 ARS Ltd will liaise with the Historic England Inspector throughout the course of the fieldwork with a view to a site visit being organised towards the end of the fieldwork when there is optimum visibility of the floor surfaces and test pits. Visits throughout the fieldwork are welcomed.

6.3 The Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments will be notified on completion of fieldwork, with a timetable for reporting and archive deposition to follow within less than one month of fieldwork completion.

7. TIMETABLE, STAFFING AND RESOURCES

7.1 The Project Manager for the fieldwork will be Dr Clive Waddington (MCIfA). The Project Officer will be Philippa Cockburn (ACIfA). Both have experience of working on Scheduled Monuments including: Coupland Henge, Harehaugh Hillfort, Humbleton Hill Hillfort, Fin Cop Hillfort, High Rochester Roman Fort, South Shields Roman Fort, Housesteads Roman Fort, Hadrian's Wall, Farnley Grange Temporary Camps, Harbottle Castle, amongst others.

7.2 Post-excavation analysis will be carried out by appropriately qualified specialists as detailed below subject to availability. Any other specialist input will be sourced from established specialists as appropriate.

- ◆ Medieval and post-medieval pottery: Jenny Vaughan
- ◆ Medieval and post-medieval glass, Mike Wood MCIfA

metalwork and clay pipes:

- ◆ Plant macrofossils and charcoals: Luke Parker
- ◆ Human and animal bone: Milena Grzybowska
- ◆ Radiocarbon dating: Prof Gordon Cook (SUERC)
- ◆ Finds conservation: Vicky Garlick (Durham University)

8. REPORT

8.1 Following completion of the evaluation, Archaeological Research Services Ltd will produce a report which will include:

- ◆ Executive summary
- ◆ Introductory statement to include
 - ◆ OASIS reference number, Archive reference and an eight figure grid reference
- ◆ Aims and purpose of the project
- ◆ Methodology (this WSI as an Appendix)
- ◆ A location plan showing all excavated test pits
- ◆ Detailed illustrations of floors
- ◆ Plans and sections of excavated test pits
- ◆ A narrative and supporting tables describing the results
- ◆ Specialist sections based on full analysis for Dating and Small Finds and any other topics as appropriate
- ◆ Discussion
- ◆ Conclusions
- ◆ Supporting data – tabulated or in appendices to include:
 - ◆ Context list and site matrix
 - ◆ Structural and Stratigraphic details including context summary tables
 - ◆ Photographs and drawings of selected small finds
- ◆ Details of archive location
- ◆ References

8.2 One bound copy of the final report with a digital copy of the report in PDF/A format on disk will be deposited with the Client, Historic England and Northumberland Historic Environment Record (HER). A digital copy of the report will be uploaded as part of the OASIS record.

8.3 Provision is made for publication of the results of this work on completion of the whole project. The primary publication is intended to be a journal article in a peer-reviewed regional or national journal depending on the significance of the

results obtained. The archive report will ultimately be made available as a downloadable pdf file available on the internet (OASIS).

9. ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

9.1 A digital, paper and artefactual archive, which will consist of all primary written documents, plans, sections, photographs and electronic data, will be produced. The archive will ultimately be deposited with the Great North Museum Hancock on completion of the project.

9.2 Written confirmation of the archive transfer arrangements will be included as part of the final report.

9.3 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>) will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. All parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the HER. On completion of the works this will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included within the archive).

9.4 Northumberland County Council and Historic England's Inspector of Ancient Monuments will be notified of the final deposition of the archive.

10. GENERAL ITEMS

10.1 Health and Safety

10.1.1 All work will be carried out in accordance with The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Specific health and safety policies exist for all our workplaces and all staff employed will be made aware of the policy and any relevant issues. The particular risks involved with this project will be assessed, recorded and relevant mitigation measures put in place as part of a full risk assessment, which will be compiled in advance of fieldwork. ARS Ltd retains Citation as its expert health and safety consultants.

10.2 Insurance Cover

11.2.1 ARS Ltd will carry full and up to date insurance cover for employee liability (£10 million) public liability (£5 million), professional indemnity (£2 million) and all-risks cover.

10.3 Changes to the Written Scheme of Investigation

11.3.1 Changes to the approved methodology or programme of works will only be made with prior written approval the National Park Historic Environment Officer and Historic England's Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

10.4 Copyright

10.4.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client. ARS Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988). Licence will be granted for Historic England and the HER to use the report which may include dissemination to others.

11. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX III: OASIS FORM

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Printable version

OASIS ID: archaeol5-300032

Project details

Project name	Cresswell Pele Tower Community Archaeology Projects. Internal evaluation
Short description of the project	The Cresswell Pele Tower Community Archaeology Project is led by Cresswell Parish Council and the Greater Morpeth Development Trust. Cresswell Pele Tower is thought to date to the 14th or 15th century and represents a well-preserved example of a border tower house or 'Pele'. The tower is a Scheduled Monument (NHLE: 1014509) and a Grade II* Listed Building (NHLE: 1042148). Excavation of the archaeological test pits described in this document was undertaken as part of a Heritage Lottery Funded project which aims to remove the tower from the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register and also to provide public access to the tower. The project will conserve the asset for future generations to enjoy. As well as the test pits and floor plans described here, the programme of archaeological work has also included archaeological evaluation, geophysical survey and fieldwalking for which separate reports have been undertaken. All aspects of the archaeological work have been conducted in collaboration with the local community allowing for local engagement with the project and the tower, and providing training and participation opportunities in heritage and archaeological activities and skills. The excavation of the three test pits not only provided dating evidence to help with dating the laying of the floors and, therefore, most likely the dating of the pele tower itself, but it also helped to establish a sequence of repair and replacement. In addition, excavation of the test pits on the first floor helped to reveal the construction of the barrel vaulted ceiling and the subsequent deposits that had been used to level the floor prior to the laying of the flagstones. Test Pit 2 at the top of the stairs allowed a structural engineer to examine what had caused the crack in the barrel vaulted ceiling below.
Project dates	Start: 09-10-2017 End: 13-10-2017
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Type of project	Recording project
Monument type	PELE TOWER Medieval
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Modern
Investigation type	"Test-Pit Survey"
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORTHUMBERLAND CASTLE MORPETH CRESSWELL Cresswell Pele Tower
Study area	800 Square metres
Site coordinates	NZ 29364 93356 55.233494224983 -1.538230191837 55 14 00 N 001 32 17 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Project brief originator Historic England

Project design originator Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Project director/manager Clive Waddington

Project supervisor Philippa Hunter

Type of sponsor/funding body Parish Council

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Great North Museum

Physical Contents "Animal Bones","Ceramics"

Digital Archive Exists? No

Paper Archive recipient Great North Museum

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Drawing"

Entered by Philippa Hunter (philippa@archaeologicalresearchservices.com)

Entered on 3 November 2017

OASIS:

Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

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