

Archaeological Watching Brief



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### **Archaeological Watching Brief**

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### **Archaeological Watching Brief**

#### **Summary**

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned to carry out an archaeological watching brief during works at St Swithin's Church Hall, Holmesfield, Derbyshire, National Grid Reference (NGR) 431918 377631. The site had been cut into the Scheduled Monument of Castle Hill, a medieval motte and bailey castle.

During refurbishment works two trenches were monitored at St Swithin's Church Hall in January 2015. No archaeological features were discovered during the monitoring works. The trenches monitored account for a very small precentage of the footprint of the site. As such the future potential for archaeological discoveries remains high.

The project archive us currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield under the project code 107720. An OASIS form will be completed for the inclusion in the ADS database and a copy of this report deposited with Derbyshire HER.



### **Archaeological Watching Brief**

#### Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Marc Richardson Building Services Ltd. on behalf of Mr. & Mrs. Ward and is grateful in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Marc Richardson for their assistance throughout the works and Steve Baker of Derbyshire County Council.

The archaeological watching brief was carried out by Alex Cassels, Sam Fairhead and Michael Howarth between 21st-27th January 2015. Report compilation was undertaken by Maria-Elena Calderón with illustrations prepared by Chris Breeden. The project was managed by Lucy Dawson on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.



### **Archaeological Watching Brief**

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Marc Richardson Building Services Ltd. on behalf of Mr. & Mrs. Ward (hereafter 'the Client') to carry out an archaeological watching brief at St Swithin's Church Hall, Holmesfield, Derbyshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 431918, 377631 (**Figure 1**, hereafter 'the Site').
- 1.1.2 Planning Permission was granted for the redevelopment of the Site, subject to conditions that included a programme of archaeological works (Planning Ref. 12/00558/FL).
- 1.1.3 The development works comprised the conversion of a disused church hall into two dwellings. The Site is cut into the Scheduled Monument of Castle Hill, motte-and-bailey castle, Holmesfield, Derbyshire (SM scheduled ancient monument, UID 23290, List Entry 1011211) which lies immediately to the northwest of the Site (**Figure 1**, **Appendix 1**).
- 1.1.4 The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with industry standards and guidelines (ClfA 2014a and b; Historic England 2015) and the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Wessex Archaeology (2015) submitted to and approved by Steve Baker, Development Control Archaeologist for Derbyshire County Council (DCC).

#### 1.2 Site location and topography

- 1.2.1 The Site was situated immediately north of Main Road, B6054 in Holmesfield, 3.5 km southwest of Dronfield, and 15.3 km west of the M1 at a level of 265 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.2.2 The Site comprised the disused St Swithin's Church Hall. The Church Hall was a single storey stone building with associated outbuildings. The Site, set within a rectangular enclosure, was approximately 1 m above the level of the road, bounded by a stone retaining wall. The Motte-and-Bailey Castle (**Appendix 1**) is located directly to the northwest of the Site.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology comprises mudstone and siltstone of the Pennine Lower Coal Measures (British Geological Survey (BGS) 2015).



#### 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 General

- 2.1.1 No archaeological evidence currently exists for prehistoric activity within the Site, yet flint fragments discovered at sites within the parish of Holmesfield attest to human occupation within the wider landscape from the Neolithic period (4000-2200 BC).
- 2.1.2 A stone cross that currently stands in St Swithin's church yard is thought to be a replacement of an earlier wooden cross that commemorated proselytising monks from Lindisfarne that travelled to Mercia in 641 AD (Holmesfield Church History). Holmesfield appears in the Domesday Book as 'Holmsfelt' meaning 'raised or dry open land' (Mills 1991, 175-6).
- 2.1.3 The Site lies within the boundary of a motte-and-bailey castle, now known as Castle Hill, a Scheduled Monument (UID 23290, List Entry 1011211, **Appendix 1**). Castle Hill was the centre of a medieval manor and later abandoned in favour of a later moated site. Motte-and-bailey castles were a common feature following the Norman Conquest. The remains of which occupied strategic positions all over the country (Historic England 1993, Scheduled Monument List entry- **Appendix 1**).
- 2.1.4 In the 1800s the Church Hall was built, originally functioning as a Sunday school (Holmesfield Church History), which first appears on the 1883 OS map (surveyed in 1876, not reproduced). A foundation stone within a porch extension to the south is dated to 1906 (**Plate 1**). The construction of St Swithin's Church Hall and Castle Bank Cottage would likely have disturbed buried archaeological remains relating to the Motte-and-Bailey Castle.

#### 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

#### 3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The aims of the project were:
  - to identify and record any archaeological features exposed during any groundworks;
  - to recover any artefact evidence during groundworks;
  - to make available the results of the investigation; and
  - to identify any previously unknown archaeological remains and define their location, extent, date, function and form.

#### 4 METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 General

4.1.1 The work was carried out in accordance with the approved WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2015) and Wessex Archaeology and industry standards and guidelines (ClfA 2014a and b).



- 4.1.2 Wessex Archaeology monitored all groundworks within the Site. All works were carried out by a suitably qualified archaeologist. All excavation was carried out manually due to Site restrictions.
- 4.1.3 All deposits encountered were recorded using Wessex Archaeology *pro forma* recording system. This written record is hierarchically based and centred on the context record. Each context record fully described the location, extent, composition and relationship of the subject and was cross-referenced to all other assigned records.
- 4.1.4 A full photographic record was maintained consisting of digital images. The photographic record illustrates both the detail and the general context of principal features.

#### 4.2 Specialist strategies

**Finds** 

- 4.2.1 All finds were treated in accordance with national industry guidance (UKIC 2001; MGC 1991; Historic England 2015, English Heritage 2005 and 2006), and the requirements of DCC.
- 4.2.2 All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained (except unstratified modern material) and taken to Wessex Archaeology offices in Sheffield for further work.
- 4.2.3 All artefacts were recorded by context, with summary listing of artefacts by category to provide simple quantification. Artefacts were analysed and reported by specialists.

#### 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

#### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A total of two foundation trenches were hand excavated within the Church Hall and a concrete slab lifted all of which was monitored. In addition, existing paving and concrete to the rear was lifted without monitoring. No further groundworks were undertaken as part of this scheme of works.

#### 5.2 Trench 1

Trench 1 lay within the Main Hall of the Church Hall (**Figure 2**) and was orientated eastwest. This was a foundation trench for the dividing wall of the two new properties. It measured 7.10 m in length by 0.80 m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.55 m (**Plate 2**). A layer of dark brown grey, loamy clay (**100**) was encountered to a depth of 0.30 m, beneath which lay a mid-brownish grey, silty clay subsoil (**101**) (**Plate 3**). Pottery and glass were recovered from the subsoil (**101**). A north-south aligned stone wall (**102**) was identified at a depth of 0.4 m with a minimum height of 0.30 m (**Plates 2**, **4**). Wall **102** supported the suspended wooden floor of the room (**Plate 2**).

#### 5.3 Trench 2

A concrete slab overlay the floor of the store within the western extension to the Church Hall (**Figure 2**). Wessex Archaeology monitored the removal of the southern half of the concrete surface (**Figure 2**) and the excavation of a further foundation trench measuring 2.2 m in length, 0.70 m wide and 0.70 m in depth (**Plate 5**). Beneath the concrete slab (**201**) and underlying hard-core (**202**) a flagstone path (**205**) was exposed at a depth of 0.32 m. The path was orientated north-south and likely continued beyond the limit of

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excavation. This overlaid a buried topsoil layer (203) of dark brown clay loam which was found at a depth of 0.32 m - 0.40 m. A mid-brownish grey silty clay subsoil (204) underlay 203 at the base of the trench (Plates 5-6).

#### 6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

#### 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The only finds recovered during the watching brief comprised one sherd of pottery and one fragment of green bottle glass from subsoil **101** in Trench 1, and two (joining) sherds of pottery from topsoil **203** in Trench 2. The pottery sherds are all of the same type, post-medieval brown-glazed redwares, of 18th or 19th century date. The glass fragment is from the base of a cylindrical wine bottle of late 18th or early 19th century date. These finds have not been retained.

#### 7 DISCUSSION

#### 7.1 Summary

7.1.1 The excavation of the two trenches revealed no archaeological features that pre-date the construction of the Church Hall.

#### 7.2 Conclusions

- 7.2.1 Stone wall **102** directly related to the construction of the Church Hall. The orientation and location of the flagstone path (**205**) related to an earlier phase of the Church Hall, subsequently built over by later extensions.
- 7.2.2 Throughout the excavations, buried topsoils and subsoils were encountered, suggesting the construction of the Church Hall may have had a limited impact on the potential archaeology within the Site.

#### 8 STORAGE AND CURATION

#### 8.1 General

8.1.1 The recording of the archaeological watching brief has produced an archive that is currently held in the Wessex Archaeology Sheffield office. A copy of this report will be deposited with the Derbyshire HER. Further copies of this report will be deposited with the Client and an OASIS form will be completed for the inclusion in the ADS database. The Site archive will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995, CIfA 2014c, Brown 2011, ADS 2013).

#### 8.2 Discard policy

8.2.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in Selection, Retention and Dispersal (SMA 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. In this instance, the quantity of

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finds receovered was negligible, and they were of relatively recent date and of no intrinsic interest. All have been discarded.

#### 8.3 Security copy

8.3.1 In line with current best practice (e.g. Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.



#### 9 REFERENCES

#### 9.1 Bibliography

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- Wessex Archaeology, 2015. St Swithin's Church Hall, Castle Hill, Holmesfield, Derbyshire, Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief (ref:T19687.01)

#### 9.2 Consulted cartographic sources

1883 OS Map (surveyed 1876)



#### 9.3 Online sources consulted

British Geological Survey 2015: <a href="https://www.bgs.ac.uk">https://www.bgs.ac.uk</a> (accessed 19/11/2015)

Historic England, 1993: <a href="http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1011211">http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1011211</a> (accessed 19/11/2015)

Holmesfield Church History, 2015: <a href="http://www.holmesfieldchurch.org.uk/history.html">http://www.holmesfieldchurch.org.uk/history.html</a> (accessed 19/11/2015)

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#### 10 APPENDICES

#### 10.1 Appendix 1: Scheduled Monument List Entry

Castle Hill motte and bailey castle

List Entry Summary

This monument is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended as it appears to the Secretary of State to be of national importance. This entry is a copy, the original is held by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Name: Castle Hill motte and bailey castle

List entry Number: 1011211

Location

The monument may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Derbyshire

District: North East Derbyshire District Type: District Authority

Parish: Holmesfield

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: Not applicable to this List entry. Date first scheduled: 29-Dec-1952

Date of most recent amendment: 15-Sep-1993

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: RSM

UID: 23290 Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Monument

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

#### Reasons for Designation

Motte and bailey castles are medieval fortifications introduced into Britain by the Normans. They comprised a large conical mound of earth or rubble, the motte, surmounted by a palisade and a stone or timber tower. In a majority of examples an embanked enclosure containing additional buildings, the bailey, adjoined the motte. Motte castles and motte-and-bailey castles acted as garrison forts during offensive military operations, as strongholds, and, in many cases, as aristocratic residences and as centres of local or royal administration. Built in towns, villages and open countryside, motte and bailey castles generally occupied strategic positions dominating their immediate locality and, as a result, are the most visually impressive monuments of the early post-Conquest period surviving in the modern landscape. Over 600 motte castles or motte-and-bailey

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castles are recorded nationally, with examples known from most regions. As one of a restricted range of recognised early post-Conquest monuments, they are particularly important for the study of Norman Britain and the development of the feudal system. Although many were occupied for only a short period of time, motte castles continued to be built and occupied from the 11th to the 13th centuries, after which they were superseded by other types of castle.

The monument at Holmesfield is a reasonably well-preserved example of a small motte and bailey castle which retains substantial areas of intact archaeological remains. The site is also of interest for the evidence it provides of the development of the medieval manor at Holmesfield through its relationship with the later medieval moated site and the post-medieval manor house which now survives as Hall Farm.

#### History

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

#### **Details**

The monument is a medieval motte and bailey castle and includes the motte or castle mound, the defensive ditch round the base of the motte on the north side and the bailey on the south and west sides. A small part of the motte has been disturbed by the construction of Castle Bank Cottage. This area is therefore not included in the scheduling. The part of the bailey which originally extended eastward into the area now occupied by the parish church hall of St Swithin and the landscaped garden south of Castle Bank Cottage is also not included in the scheduling because although archaeological remains are likely to survive here, their extent and state of preservation is not sufficiently understood for them to be included as part of the scheduling. The motte is a 3m high flat-topped mound measuring c.30m across the summit. Its appearance indicates that it was the site of a shell keep; a type of castle keep in which timber buildings were arranged round the inside of a circular wall or palisade. To the north the motte is defended by a 15m wide ditch with a current depth of c.2m. On the west side, the ditch terminates on the edge of the bailey and it is believed that the same arrangement existed on the east side where the modern church hall now overlies the remains. The bailey originally extended in an arc round the south side of the motte. It occupies a level area defined by a steep scarp and would have been enclosed by a timber palisade constructed along the top of the scarp. The buried remains of a variety of domestic and ancillary buildings will survive within the bailey and will include the lord's hall and other living accommodation, kitchens, workshops, stables and pens for stock and horses. The castle was the centre of a medieval manor and was probably abandoned by its owners or tenants in favour of the later medieval moated site 400m to the north-east. Excluded from the scheduling are the boundary walls within the monument and the outbuildings and telegraph pole behind Castle Bank Cottage, although the ground beneath these features is included.

MAP EXTRACT The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract. It includes a 2 metre boundary around the archaeological features, considered to be essential for the monument's support and preservation.

Selected Sources
Books and journals
Hart, CR, North Derbyshire Archaeological Survey to AD 1500, (1981)

National Grid Reference: SK 31885 77640

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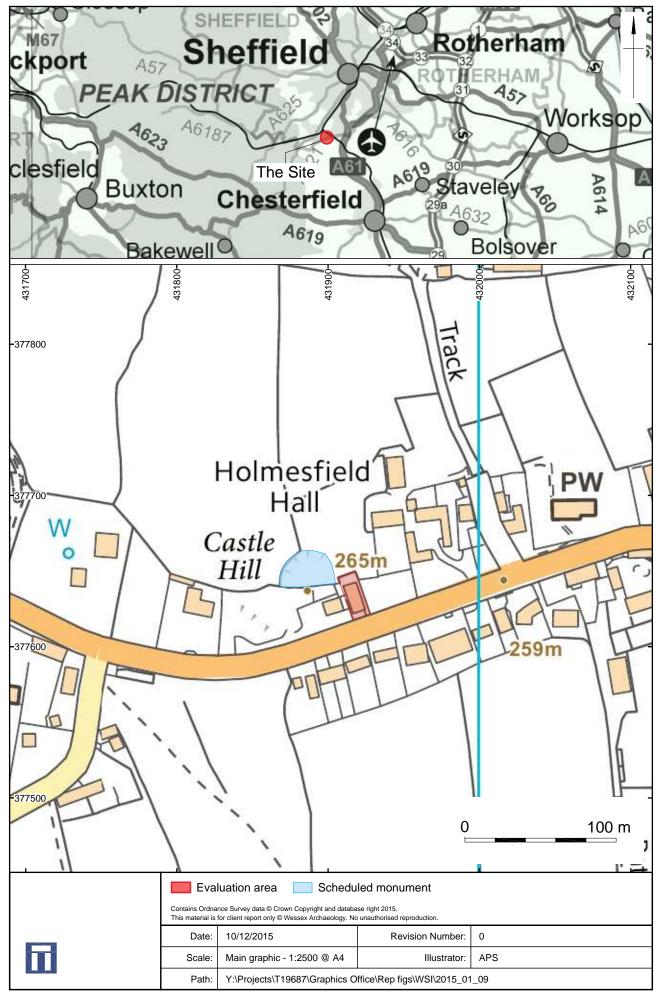


## 10.2 Appendix 2: Context register

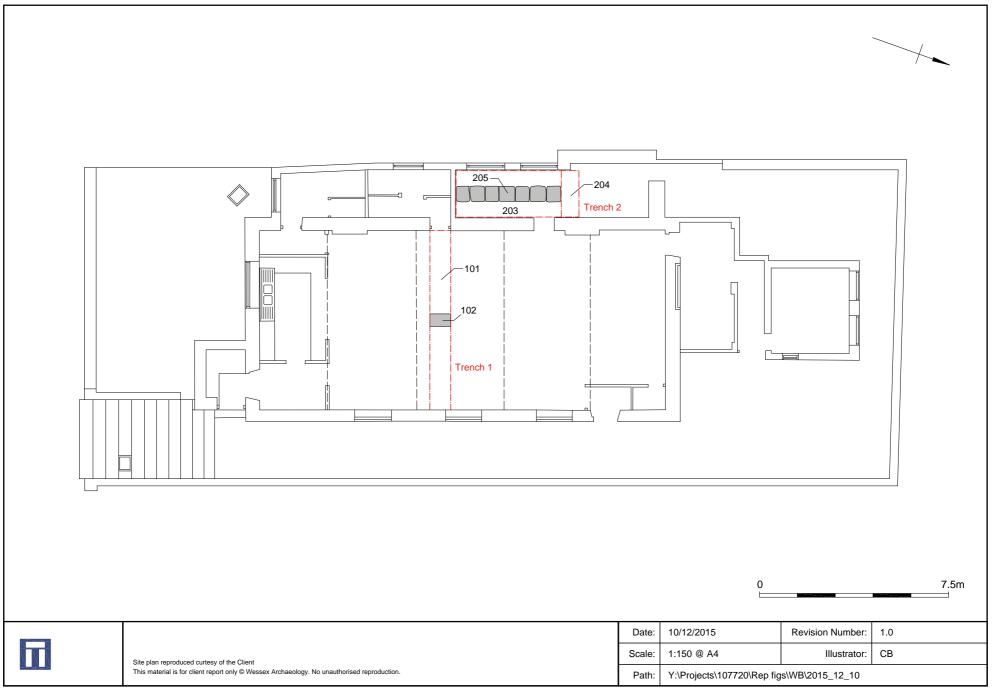
Trench No. 1	Description:	Dimensions: 7.1 x 0.8m
Context No.		Depth: 0.55m
100	Topsoil – Dark brownish grey corse loamy	0 – 0.30 m
	clay	
101	Subsoil – Mid brownish grey silty clay with	0.30m - 0.55m +
	moderate pebble inclusion	
102	Structure – Stone rubble liner wall orientated	0 – 0.55m+
	north-south – foundation wall	

Trench No. 2	Description:	Dimensions: 4.5x 2.2m	
Context No.		Depth: 0.70m	
201	Layer – Grey concrete floor	0 – 0.12m	
202	Madeground – Rubble hardcore	0.12 - 0.32m	
203	Topsoil – Dark brownish grey clay loam	0.32 - 0.40m	
204	Subsoil – Mid brown grey silty clay with very common stone	0.40 – 0.70m	
205	Structure – Flag stone path	0.12 – 0.20m	

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Site location Figure 1



Site plan showing trench locations



Plate 1: View of foundation stone at St Swithins Church Hall, looking north



Plate 2: General view of Trench 1, looking east

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Plate 3: View of south facing section of Trench 1



Plate 4: View of south facing section of **Trench 1**, showing wall **102** 

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Plate 5: General view of Trench 2, looking northwest



Plate 6: View of south facing section of **Trench 2** 

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