



making sense of heritage

Portchester Castle Portchester, Hampshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



Ref: 108231.01
October 2015



**Portchester Castle
Portchester, Hampshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Portchester Castle Portchester, Hampshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Nick Johnston of English Heritage to carry out an archaeological watching brief during repair works to fencing at Portchester Castle. The purpose of the watching brief was to comply with a condition of the Scheduled Monument Consent.

English Heritage prepared a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for the work. An archaeologist was required to monitor the opening-up work conducted during the site visit. In brief, one fence post had been damaged and the base had rotted *in situ*. To install the new fence post, the base was extracted from the hole that had been reused over time. The recording comprised inspection and photography of the area where opening up work was completed to extract the base of rotted fence post.

The fence post is located within a line of fencing, set along the north bank of the Roman ditch or moat, to the north of the bastion tower, east of the Keep. The bastion and north Outer Bailey wall have been dated to the Roman period, while the Keep dates from 11th – 12th centuries. The fencing separates the grassed north bank from the gravel path running along from the car park to the harbour-side castle perimeter walk.

The works at Portchester Castle were monitored and recorded on 15th October 2015.



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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Nick Johnston of English Heritage for commissioning this archaeological watching and recording programme. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful to Quadron and the carpenters for meeting site staff and carrying out the works that were monitored. Thanks are due to English Heritage for supplying data used in this report.

Rosemary Thornber carried out the watching brief and wrote this report, while Elizabeth James created the illustrations. The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Matt Rous.



Portchester Castle Portchester, Hampshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage to conduct a watching brief on repair works to fencing that had been damaged during 2015. The fencing was located along the north bank of the moat at Portchester Castle, Portchester, Hampshire, centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) 462475, 104560. The work involved the digging out and removal of a rotten fence post base, prior to the insertion of new fence post.
- 1.1.2 The work was carried out in conjunction with, and on the same day as, similar repairs to failed fence posts at Bishop's Waltham Palace. This work has been reported on separately (Wessex Archaeology 2015).
- 1.1.3 Portchester Castle is a Grade I Listed Building (National Heritage List for England (NHLE) no. 1229190) and a Scheduled Monument (NHLE no. 1015698). A separate notification for the watching brief was made under the Standing Scheduled Monument Consent with Historic England (the reference for this is: *Works of Routine Management and Conservation Maintenance or repair by, or for the English Heritage Trust to Scheduled Monuments in the National Heritage Collection which are authorised by the Standing Scheduled Monument Consent, 20 February 2015, Scheduled Monument Consent no. ENSEN008*).
- 1.1.4 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Nick Johnston at English Heritage (EH) to undertake an archaeological watching brief of the repair work at Portchester Castle in order to comply with the Scheduled Monument Consent condition. EH prepared a WSI for the work.

1.2 The Site

- 1.2.1 Portchester Castle is located east of Portchester, Hampshire on the north side of Portsmouth Harbour and south-west bank of Paulsgrove Lake (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 The following description is based on information in the English Heritage (*Written Scheme of Investigation*) *WSI for Archaeological Watching and Recording Brief: Portchester Castle, Hampshire* (2015), which was prepared for the conservation works completed earlier in 2015.
- 1.2.3 The castle consists of a Roman shore fort built circa 290 AD with an 11th century keep constructed in its northwest corner and a 12th century inner bailey wall enclosing the Norman keep and outer ranges (**Figure 2**). The square plan Roman fort forms the Outer Bailey walls of the fortification, complete with the D-shaped bastion towers. The Roman ditch is situated to the north, south and west of the fort.



- 1.2.4 There were four entrances into the Roman fort, centrally located on each side of the square, with principal gates in the east and west walls and postern gates in the north and south walls. The principal gates were entirely rebuilt in the medieval period and are now primarily of 14th century date with some earlier elements incorporated into the fabric.
- 1.2.5 The south and west ranges are the remains of a 14th century royal palace, but incorporate some earlier reused fabric. The south range contained the castle's great hall from the Norman period onwards and also the kitchen and service areas. It was rebuilt in the mid-14th century by Edward III when it was extended east and a second storey added. Between 1396 and 1399 it was extensively remodelled by Richard II. The southwest range contains the Great Chamber and its sequence of development is similar to the south range. Earlier structures, dating from the 12th century onwards, form part of the lower wall fabric but the majority of the range dates from two phases of development in the 14th century when it was raised in height to two storeys (mid-14th century phase) and later remodelled (late 14th century phase). Following these alterations, the range had a great chamber and inner chamber on the first floor and lodging rooms on the ground floor.
- 1.2.6 The east range was initially constructed in the 13th century as a single-storey store and stable. It was substantially rebuilt twice, in the mid-14th century and in the first decade of the 17th century. This later phase of rebuilding was undertaken by the castellan Sir Thomas Cornwallis to provide comfortable apartments. Modifications included the addition of an upper floor and insertion of a brick fireplace in the east wall.
- 1.2.7 Also within the boundary of the Roman shore fort is St Mary's Church. The Church is the surviving remnant of a medieval priory, established in 1120, constructed in the southwest corner of the fort. The Church and its surrounding yard are excluded from the Scheduled Ancient Monument area however; the Church, churchyard wall, lychgate and lamp within the churchyard are all designated Listed Buildings.
- 1.2.8 A tree-lined land boundary and dashed line footpath were located roughly on the site of the current path, as shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1868-69 (not reproduced). The 1897 edition labels the path as a footpath, with solid lines and no trees, and labels the Roman ditch as the 'Moat'. The 1950 edition shows the addition of trees along the south side of the path, which may be the same trees as those of the 1868-69 edition. The car park was added to the north of the path sometime after 1950, as shown in the 1971-72 edition, together with a public convenience building at the east end. The map shows a footpath along the south side of the east end of the car park and this remains today.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims and objectives

- 2.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was commissioned to comply with the condition of the Scheduled Monument Consent issued in February 2015. These repair works are covered by the consent.
- 2.1.2 The objectives were for an archaeologist to monitor opening-up works under a watching brief (EH 2015). The purpose of archaeological attendance on site was to monitor the repair work in order to preserve by record any archaeological features revealed.



2.2 Fieldwork methodology

- 2.2.1 The methodology for the watching brief was established through email communications with Nick Johnston of EH and complies with the '*Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*' (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, December 2014).
- 2.2.2 Inspection and photography were the primary method of recording, which in general took place after completion of vegetation clearance and repointing work. Photographs were taken on a Canon D40 digital SLR camera. They were recorded on Wessex Archaeology's pro-forma 'Photographic Record' sheets.
- 2.2.3 Notes were taken on Wessex Archaeology pro-forma Daybook sheets and Trench Record sheets.
- 2.2.4 A Leica GPS Viva Net Rover GS08 unit (WA no.22) was used to map the location of the post hole. This data was downloaded and put into AutoCAD 2014 drawing files.
- 2.2.5 The post hole of the broken post was located adjacent to a mature oak tree and therefore, as the tree was in full leaf, it was difficult to establish a GPS signal. However, a car park lamp post, the adjacent fence posts and the south wall of the toilet block were mapped, to help extrapolate the position of the post hole.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 An archaeologist attended site on the 15th October 2015 to conduct the watching brief. The existing fence post hole was mapped using the GPS Rover and the excavation of the rotted base of the post was then observed.

3.2 Results

- 3.2.1 The fence along the south side of the gravel footpath consists of square profile oak posts measuring 0.1 x 0.15 m in profile, approximately 2.6 m apart with three horizontal wooden staves linked between them (**Cover**).
- 3.2.2 Turf and topsoil form a layer over the area of the north ditch bank, through which the fence post holes have been made. It was commented by the carpenters installing the new posts at Bishop's Waltham Palace, that they estimated the current posts to be roughly 10 years old and their insertion had been monitored by Wessex Archaeology c 2004. This would suggest that the deposit within the holes would be very disturbed and largely consist of back-fill.
- 3.2.3 The post had been removed from the hole some weeks ago and the hole backfilled with beach pebbles. The pebbles were removed and the hole excavated down, to retrieve the rotted post base. The topsoil layer was observed to be 0.02 m depth from the ground surface and the deposit below was largely disturbed brown soil with tree roots. There was minimal disturbance and the deposit was photographed and recorded (**Plates 1 and 2**).
- 3.2.4 Following the watching brief, a new fence post was inserted and staves were nailed into place (**Plate 3**).



4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1.1 A watching and recording brief was successfully conducted by Wessex Archaeology during the repair works outlined above, to fulfil the condition of the Scheduled Monument Consent. It has achieved the aims of monitoring the repair works and recording any archaeological features revealed during the removal of the rotted post base. The GPS record and a selection of the photographic record are included in this report.
- 4.1.2 The post hole contained soil which is likely to have been redeposited during the activities of excavation and fence post insertion during the early 21st century, and also disturbed by tree root growth. No artefacts were gathered, although one seashell was found, which was discarded as it was deemed non-diagnostic.
- 4.1.3 The excavation of the post hole did not disturb any untouched archaeological deposits and no further dating evidence for the Castle was gathered from the watching brief. The new fence post will not have any adverse impact upon the existing archaeological remains of the site.

5 ARCHIVE

5.1 Preparation and deposition

- 5.1.1 The Site archive, to include all project records, will be prepared in accordance with *Deposition of Archaeological Archives with the English Heritage Collections Team* (Version 4, May 2011) and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; IfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013). On completion of the project Wessex Archaeology will arrange for the archive to be deposited with English Heritage at the regional curatorial store: Fort Brockhurst, Gosport, Hampshire.
- 5.1.2 The archaeological watching and recording brief project archive will include:
- *hard copy of the report*
 - *pdf copy of the report on CD*
 - *full photographic record with photographic registers*
 - *hard copies of the drawn record at 1:100 (or other appropriate scale)*
 - *field notes and sketches*
- 5.1.3 If required, following approval of the report, Wessex Archaeology will provide hard copies to:
- *David Wilkinson, Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Roy Porter, Territory Properties Curator (South), English Heritage*
 - *the Hampshire Historic Environment Record*
- 5.1.4 Upon completion of the on-site watching and recording programme, Wessex Archaeology will submit an OASIS 'Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations' form that, once written, will be included in this report as an additional appendix.



5.2 Copyright

- 5.2.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the Site will be retained by Wessex Archaeology Ltd under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. The designated repository, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profit making, and conforms to the Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003.

5.3 Security Copy

- 5.3.1 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.

5.4 Discard Policy

- 5.4.1 Wessex Archaeology follows the guidelines set out in *Selection, Retention and Dispersal* (Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993), which allows for the discard of selected artefact and ecofact categories which are not considered to warrant any future analysis. In this instance, certain categories of 'vulnerable' finds (i.e. materials requiring some form of conservation treatment for long-term storage) are considered not to warrant retention, on the basis of having little or no potential for further research; these comprise most of the metalwork (retaining only the horse bit, possible leather-working tool, and possible strapend) and all of the leather (offcuts, and parts of one modern shoe of common type). Marine shell and roofing slate have also been discarded on the same grounds. All finds discard has been documented in the project archive.

6 REFERENCES

6.1 Bibliography

- ADS 2013 *Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice*, Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice
- Brown, D.H., 2011 *Archaeological archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*, Archaeological Archives Forum (revised edition)
- ClfA 2014 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
- ClfA 2014 *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
- English Heritage 2014 May *Deposition of Archaeological Archives with the English Heritage Collections Team*. Version 4
- SMA 1995 *Towards an Accessible Archaeological Archive*, Society of Museum Archaeologists



*Wessex Archaeology 2015 Bishop's Waltham Palace, Bishops Waltham, Hampshire,
Archaeological Watching Brief, unpublished client report, Ref: 108231.02*



APPENDIX 1 : POST HOLE SUMMARY

		Max Depth: 0.46 m	Length: 0.20 m	Width: 0.20 m
Context	Type	Description		Depth (m)
001	<i>Cut</i>	Cut of Post Hole 1, for new fence post, filled with 002, 003		0.00 – 0.46 m
002	<i>Layer</i>	Turf layer over site		0.00 – 0.02m
003	<i>Deposit</i>	Mid-brown silt deposit, with one marine shell (mussel) and tree roots from adjacent oak tree		0.02- 0.46 m



APPENDIX 2 : OASIS REPORT 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: wessexar1-228884

Project details

Project name	Portchester Castle, Portchester Watching Brief
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Nick Johnston of English Heritage to carry out an archaeological watching brief during repair works to fencing at Portchester Castle. The purpose of the watching brief was to comply with a condition of the Scheduled Monument Consent. An archaeologist was required to monitor the opening-up work conducted during the site visit. In brief, one fence post had been damaged and the base had rotted in situ. The fence post is located within a line of fencing, set along the north bank of the Roman ditch or moat, to the north of the bastion tower, east of the Keep. No archaeological remains were encountered.
Project dates	Start: 15-10-2015 End: 15-10-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	wessexar1-208683 - OASIS form ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Other 8 - Land dedicated to the display of a monument
Monument type	FORT Roman
Monument type	KEEP AND BAILEY CASTLE Early Medieval
Monument type	KEEP AND BAILEY CASTLE Medieval
Significant Finds	N/A None
Significant Finds	N/A None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Scheduled Monument Consent

Project location

Country	England
Site location	HAMPSHIRE GOSPORT GOSPORT PORTCHESTER CASTLE, PORTCHESTER, HAMPSHIRE
Postcode	PO16 9QW

Study area	47650 Square metres
Site coordinates	SU 64288 04502 50.83591254116 -1.086940770119 50 50 09 N 001 05 12 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	WGS 84 Datum
Lat/Long Datum (other)	50°50'13.94"N
Height OD / Depth	Min: 3.5m Max: 4.5m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	English Heritage
Project design originator	Wessex Archaeology
Project director/manager	Matt Rous
Project supervisor	Rosemary Thornber
Type of sponsor/funding body	English Heritage

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	English Heritage
Digital Archive ID	108231
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector", "Survey", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	English Heritage store, Fort Brockhurst, Gosport, Hampshire
Paper Archive ID	108231
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Diary", "Plan"

Project bibliography 1

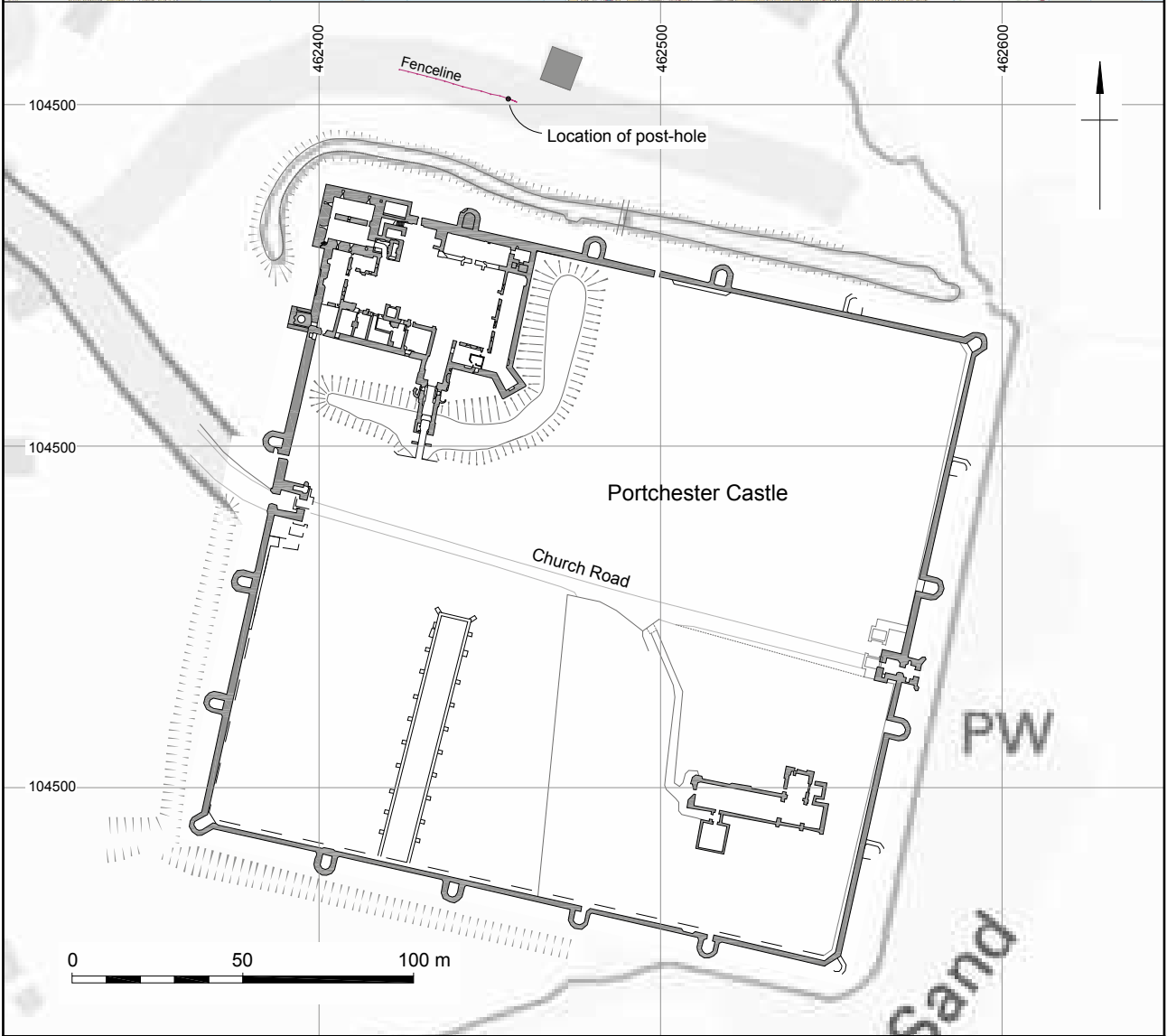
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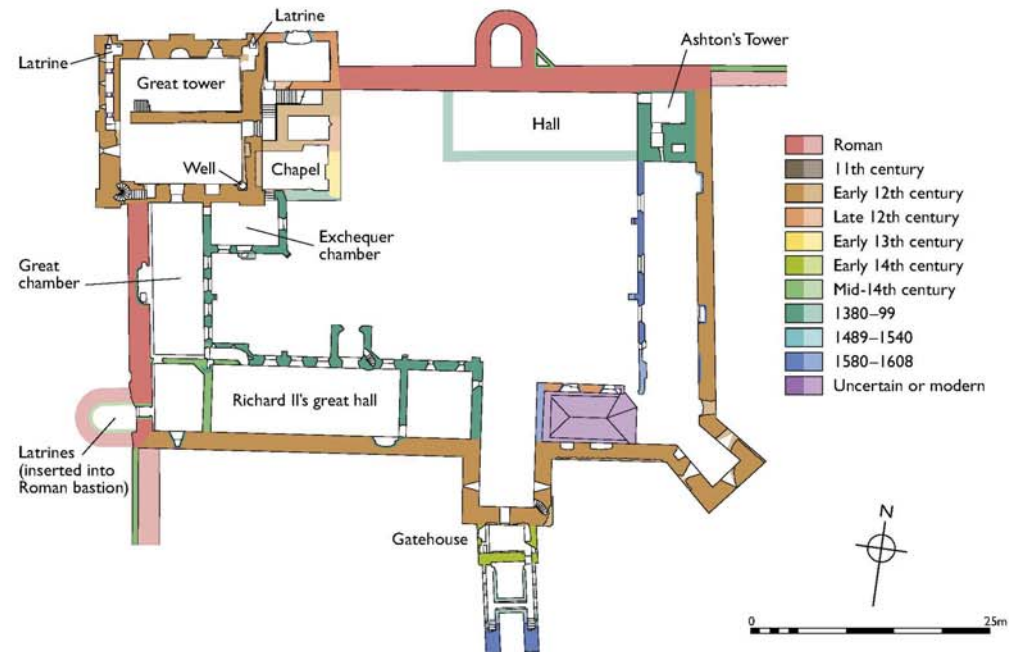


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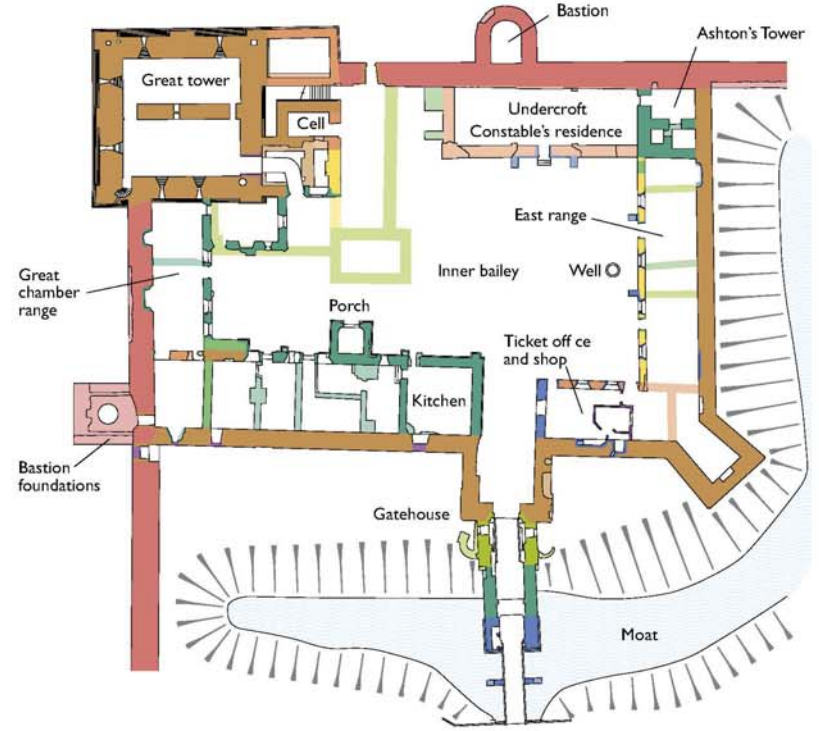
Site location plan

Figure 1

PORTCHESTER CASTLE
INNER BAILEY FIRST FLOOR



INNER BAILEY GROUND FLOOR



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Phased plan of the castle from English Heritage

Figure 2



Plate 1: The excavated post hole on the fence line, looking south


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Plate 2: The excavated post hole with scale bar of 10cm and 50cm divisions, looking south



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Plate 3: The repaired fence with installed replacement post and staves, looking south

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