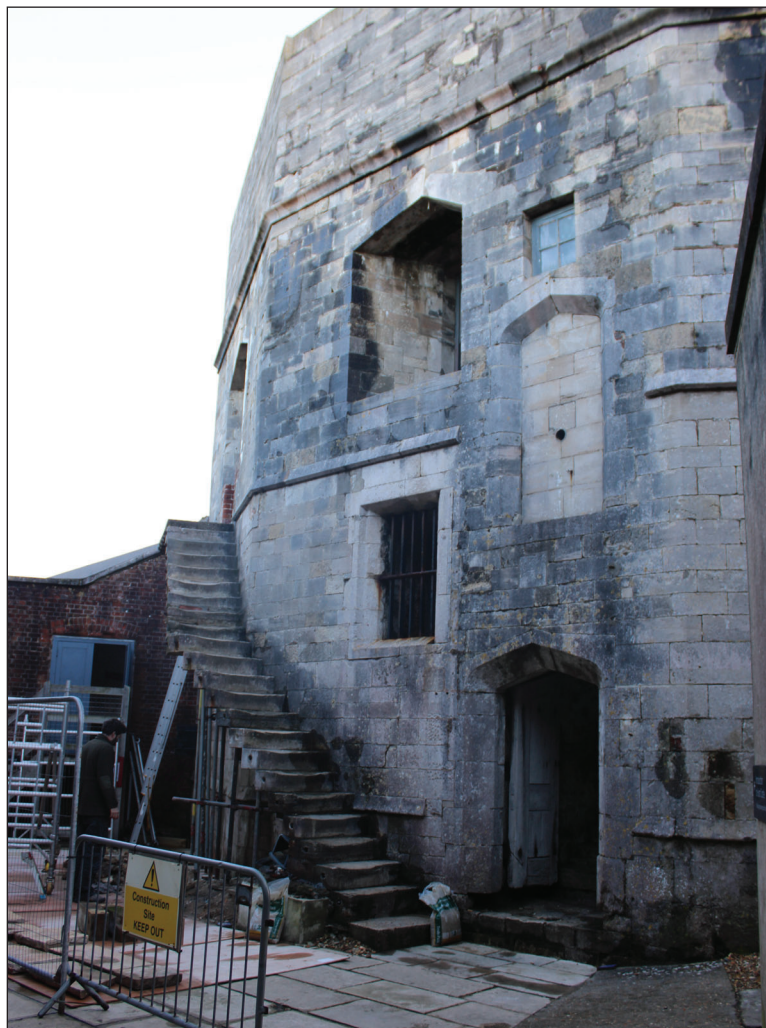




Hurst Castle Cantilever Stairs Hampshire

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording



Scheduled Monument Consent: S00245244

Document Ref: 293060.02

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Document Information

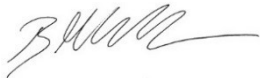

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Address The Engine House
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Site location Hurst Castle, Milford-on-Sea
County Hampshire
National grid reference (NGR) 431663 089733 NGR SZ 31663 89733
Statutory designations Scheduled Monument (NHLE 1015699)
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Planning authority New Forest District Council
Museum name Fort Brockhurst, Gosport
OASIS Id wessexar1-532034

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage ('the client') to undertake a programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording during groundworks associated with the repair of the cantilevered external staircase at Hurst Castle.

The groundworks monitored initially comprised the hand excavation of three pits measuring 0.75 m x 0.75 m in plan and 0.45 m deep, directly adjacent to the north facing wall of the keep. However, due to presence of three modern concrete pads it was decided on site to just dig one trench to encompass the three proposed locations.

The stratigraphic sequence that was observed within the trench comprised the underlying natural beach deposits formed of shingle and sand. Overlying this was a deposit of made ground through which a truncated portion of brick and concrete footing or foundation was cut. This was overlain by the flag stone floor of the courtyard.

It is possible that this footing could relate to a brick structure viewed on 18th century plans but due to the limited scope of the investigations this could not be substantiated. The footings may also relate to the infilling of the courtyard with concrete that occurred during the 1880's

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank English Heritage for commissioning the Archaeological Monitoring and Recording, in particular Tamsin Withers. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of the Senior Properties Curator South, who monitored the project on behalf of English Heritage and to SSH Conservation for their cooperation and help on site.



Hurst Castle Cantilever Stairs Hampshire

Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by English Heritage, to undertake archaeological monitoring and recording (AMR) of the excavation and construction of foundations associated with the existing cantilevered external staircase. The monitored works covered 0.01 ha, centred on NGR 431663 089733, at Hurst Castle, Milford-on-Sea, Hampshire, PO40 9TB (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 Hurst Castle is a Scheduled monument and therefore the groundworks and associated AMR were conducted after Scheduled Monument Consent was granted (ref. S0024244) on the 26th of January 2024.
- 1.1.3 The AMR was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (English Heritage 2024). English Heritage approved the WSI, prior to the fieldwork.
- 1.1.4 The AMR was undertaken on 26th of November 2024.

1.2 Scope of the report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the watching brief, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSI, thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (a preservation by record).

1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The AMR was located within the grounds of Hurst Castle, Milford-on-Sea, Hampshire, immediately north of the Tudor keep.
- 1.3.2 Existing ground levels are recorded as 2.6 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.3.3 The bedrock geology is mapped as the Becton and Chama Sand formation with superficial deposits of marine beach deposits comprising sand and gravel (British Geological Survey 2024). During the archaeological investigation it was confirmed that marine beach deposits were present and overlain with made ground deposit(s).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background of Hurst Castle was detailed within the WSI for the project and is reproduced here (English Heritage 2024).



2.2 Archaeological and historical context

- 2.2.1 Hurst Castle is a series of structures or an accretive structure. At its core is a Henrician Device fortification constructed in the early 1540s. This fortification consisted of a central twelve-sided tower enclosed by a curtain wall with three projecting bastions. The keep comprises two storeys and basement with a central stairwell that provide access to all levels.
- 2.2.2 In 1802 – 1806 the arrangement of the keep was altered and its interior completely refashioned to create brick vaults on the first floor and over the basement. The purpose of these alterations was to support a roof-top gun deck and to protect the magazine stored in the basement. The Tudor central staircase was replaced with a more substantial stone construction.
- 2.2.3 C. 1888 concerns were raised about the vulnerability of the Tudor portion of the castle to fire and a 4ft thick capping layer of concrete was poured above the basement vault within the keep and the central stairwell was blocked off at basement level.
- 2.2.4 The surrounding courtyard was also filled in with concrete to a depth of 8ft and the southern bastion and adjacent casements were filled with a mixture of shingle and concrete.
- 2.2.5 These alterations and renovations caused the need for a new access to be created on the keep's first floor. Thus, the cantilever stone staircase was constructed.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The aims of the AMR, as stated in the WSI (English Heritage 2024), were to:
- To contribute to overall understanding of the castle through recording of any archaeological remains or features exposed during the groundworks;
 - To provide precautionary specialist oversight in case significant archaeological deposits are encountered;
 - allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of the development or other works;
 - provide an opportunity, if needed, to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the allocated resources are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and
 - guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

3.2 General objectives

- 3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the watching brief, also defined in the WSI (English Heritage 2024), were to:
- determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified works area;



- record and establish, within the constraints of the works, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains (a preservation by record);
- place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- make available information about the archaeological resource on the site by preparing a report on the results.

3.3 Site-specific objectives

3.3.1 The site-specific objectives, as defined in the WSI (English Heritage 2024), were to:

- To identify and record the presence and nature of archaeological deposits encountered during the works, including stray as well as stratified finds,
- To ensure that in the event of significant archaeological deposits being encountered work is paused pending consultation with Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments and English Heritage Senior Properties Curator to determine whether preservation in situ or more extensive excavation is required.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (English Heritage 2024) and in general compliance with ClfA standards and guidance (ClfA 2023a–b). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

4.2.1 The works undertaken during the course of the AMR at Hurst Castle initially comprised the hand excavation of three pits measuring 0.75 m x 0.75 m in plan and 0.45 m deep. However, due to on-site issues this was changed to the excavation of a single trench that encompassed the originally planned three pits.

4.2.2 The attending archaeologist monitored all mechanical excavations within the specified area. Where necessary, the surfaces of uncovered archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand to aid visual definition. A sample of archaeological features and deposits was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the project aims.

4.2.3 Spoil from machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Artefacts were collected and bagged by context. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, although those from features of modern date (19th century or later) were recorded on site and not retained.

Recording

4.2.4 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete record of excavated features and deposits was made, including plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections) and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.



- 4.2.5 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Finds and environmental strategies

- 4.3.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (English Heritage 2024). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014a), *Environmental Archaeology. A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011) and ClfA's (n.d. a) *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* (Type 1: Description).

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 English Heritage monitored the AMR and progress of the groundworks involved. Any variations to the WSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with the client.

5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A single trench (Trench 1) was excavated immediately adjacent to the north facing wall of the Tudor Keep. Originally the brief was to excavate three individual trenches to allow the construction of the newly proposed concrete foundation pads. However, upon the lifting of the existing flag stone floor within the trench area, three existing concrete pads were encountered.
- 5.1.2 It was then decided on site that the existing concrete pads be removed and to dig a single trench and then place wooden formers in to allow for the pouring of the new concrete pads.
- 5.1.3 The stratigraphic sequence that was observed within the trench comprised the underlying natural beach deposits formed of shingle and sand overlain by a deposit of made ground through which a truncated portion of brick and concrete footing or foundation was cut (Fig. 2). This was, in turn, overlain by the flag stone floor of the courtyard. This is described in more detail below.
- 5.1.4 Full descriptions of the structures and deposits including Ordnance Datum (OD) heights can be found in Appendix 1.

5.2 Trench 1

- 5.2.1 Trench 1 measured 3.76 m in length, 0.86 m in width and an overall depth of 0.5 m. The underlying natural sands (104) and shingle that comprised the spit upon which Hurst Castle was built were encountered at a depth of 0.17 m below the current flagstone floor of the area in front of the keep (Figs 2 and 3).
- 5.2.2 Overlying these natural gravels was a deposit of made ground (102) which comprised a mixture of crushed CBM, concrete and gravel, this layer had a thickness of 0.10 m. Within this made ground a single piece of worked stone and a sherd of pottery were recovered. The layer was cut by a brick and concrete foundation or footing (103).



- 5.2.3 Foundation 103 measured 0.82 m in width, had a length of 0.26 m and an overall thickness averaging 0.18 m. It comprised a single course of red bricks sat on top of a mid to dark grey concrete. The bricks themselves measured 228 mm in length, 114 mm in width and had a height of 70 mm. The foundation itself appeared to have been truncated by one of the modern foundation pads initially encountered (Figs 4 and 5).
- 5.2.4 The final deposit observed within the sequence of Trench 1 was the paving slab surface that covered the courtyard outside the Tudor keep. This courtyard surface (101) comprised sandstone flagstones that had average dimensions of 0.70 m in length, 0.36 m in width and 0.07 m in thickness.

6 FINDS EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 A very small group of finds (totalling 1.9 kg) were recovered during the monitoring. These comprise three objects (Table 1) of post-medieval to early modern date that are in a good condition. The artefacts were recovered from made ground deposit 102 and brick wall foundation 103.

Table 1 Summary of finds by material type (number and weight in grammes)

Context No.	Feature Type	Ceramic Building Material		Pottery		Stone	
		No.	Wgt.	No.	Wgt.	No.	Wgt.
102	Made Ground	-	-	1	53	1	1354
103	Wall	1	574	-	-	-	-
Total by Material Type		1	574	1	53	1	1354

6.2 Pottery

- 6.2.1 One jug strap handle with a prominently curved profile was recovered from made ground 102. The piece occurs in a post-medieval redware fabric that is visually similar to that identified in Southampton as fabric 1523 (Brown 2002, 21). This fabric occurs across Hampshire in contexts dating between the 16-19th centuries. The item exhibits a patchy yellow lead glaze that is poorly vitrified and given the style of the handle it is likely to be of 17th century or later date.

6.3 Ceramic Building Material

- 6.3.1 One brick fragment was retrieved as a representative sample from brick wall foundation 103. The piece measures 111 mm in width, 66 mm in thickness and occurs in a mid-red, soft sandy fabric with rare flint (less than 4 mm in size). The brick is handmade, being constructed in an open topped mould, as evidenced by sanded stretchers and lower bed; the upper bed exhibits several wiring-off marks, and no frogging is evident. The brick is consistent with late 18th to early 20th century rural manufacture and is likely to be a locally produced item.



6.4 Stone

- 6.4.1 A faceted fragment of limestone was collected from made ground 102. The item displays five dressed faces and is an angled architectural piece. The tooling on the faces is consistent with post-medieval or later chiselling but the piece cannot be readily dated.

6.5 Recommendations for Further Analysis

- 6.5.1 The items are all readily identifiable and can be dated with an acceptable degree of accuracy. The finds have been recorded in line with standard guidance for archaeological archives and the finds themselves are not of intrinsic archaeological importance to the scheduled monument. The only piece that can perhaps be linked to construction of part of the castle is the piece of architectural limestone, that likely relates to the creation of the keep cantilever stairway in the 1880s (English Heritage 2024b). However, the piece cannot be readily dated as it is too small a fragment to be diagnostic.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Summary

- 7.1.1 The AMR conducted during groundworks carried out at Hurst Castle successfully met the aims and objectives set out in the WSI. Evidence of brick and concrete footing / foundation were found directly underneath the current / modern flagstone floor of the courtyard immediately to the north of the Tudor Keep.
- 7.1.2 A single piece of worked stone and a sherd of post-medieval (17th century) pottery were recovered from the made ground that surrounded the brick and concrete footing.

7.2 Discussion

- 7.2.1 The brick and concrete footing revealed during the AMR works may relate to a guard room constructed in the courtyard during the 18th century. Indeed, the brick fragment recovered as a sample for dating evidence corroborates a 18th – 20th century origin for the foundation. However, due to the truncated nature of the footing itself and the narrow scope of intrusive excavation it is not possible to confirm this fact.
- 7.2.2 The footing may also represent the remains of the infilling of the courtyard with concrete c.1888 (Coad 1985).
- 7.2.3 The results of the AMR, although minimal due to the small area of investigation, do, however, add to the corpus of knowledge of Hurst Castle and its environs.

8 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

8.1 Museum

- 8.1.1 The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury. Fort Brockhurst, Gosport has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.



8.2 Preparation of the archive

Physical archive

- 8.2.1 The physical archive will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Fort Brockhurst, Gosport, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Brown 2011; ClfA 2014b; SMA 1995).
- 8.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:
- 1 cardboard box or airtight plastic box of artefacts ordered by material type
 - 1 file/document case of paper records and A3/A4 graphics

Digital archive

- 8.2.3 The digital archive, which comprises born-digital data (e.g., site records, survey data, databases and spreadsheets, photographs and reports), will be deposited with a Trusted Digital Repository, in this instance the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), to ensure its long-term curation. Digital data will be prepared following ADS guidelines (ADS 2013 and online guidance) and accompanied by metadata.

8.3 Selection strategy

- 8.3.1 It is widely accepted that not all the records and materials (artefacts and ecofacts) collected or created during an archaeological project require preservation in perpetuity. These records and materials will be subject to selection to establish what will be retained for long-term curation, with the aim of ensuring that all elements selected for retention are appropriate to establish the significance of the project and support future research, outreach, engagement, display and learning activities (i.e., the retained archive should fulfil the requirements of both future researchers and the receiving museum).
- 8.3.2 The selection strategy, which details the project-specific selection process, is underpinned by national guidelines on selection and retention (Brown 2011, section 4) and generic selection policies (SMA 1993; Wessex Archaeology's internal selection policy) and follows ClfA's (n.d. b) *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives*. It should be agreed by all stakeholders (e.g., Wessex Archaeology's specialists, external specialists, local authority, museum) and fully documented in the project archive.
- 8.3.3 Project-specific proposals for selection are presented below. The proposals are based on recommendations by Wessex Archaeology's specialists and will be updated in line with any further comment by other stakeholders (e.g., museum, local authority), prior to deposition of the archive. Any material not selected for retention may be used for teaching or reference collections by Wessex Archaeology.

Finds

- 8.3.4 It is recommended that all material types be retained for long term curation, as Hurst Castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National heritage List No. 1015699) and the artefacts are the property of English Heritage.

Documentary records

- 8.3.5 Paper records comprise site registers (other pro-forma site records are digital), drawings and reports (written scheme of investigation, client report). All will be retained and deposited with the project archive.



Digital data

- 8.3.6 The digital data comprise site records (tablet-recorded on site) in spreadsheet format; finds records in spreadsheet format; survey data; photographs; reports. All will be deposited, although site photographs will be subject to selection to eliminate poor quality and duplicated images, and any others that are not directly relevant to the archaeology of the site.

8.4 Security copy

- 8.4.1 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.

8.5 OASIS

- 8.5.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (<http://oasis.ac.uk>) has been initiated, with key fields completed (Appendix 2). A.pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by English Heritage. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.

9 COPYRIGHT

9.1 Archive and report copyright

- 9.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.
- 9.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

9.2 Third party data copyright

- 9.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g., Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Trench tables

Trench No 1		Length 3.76m	Width 0.86m	Depth 0.50 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
101		Stone slabs of the keep courtyard	Stone slabs of the keep courtyard	0–0.07m (3.33m OD – 3.26m OD)
102		Made ground	Mixed crushed concrete, CBM and sand with occasional gravel	0.07–0.17m (3.26m OD – 3.16m OD)
103		Foundation	Irregular foundation aligned n / a with irregular sides and an irregular / undulating base. Constructed from red brick and bonded with mid brown mortar and grey concrete. Maximum height: 0.30 m. Average height 0.18 m.	0.07–0.25m (3.26m OD – 3.08m OD)
104		Natural	Natural beach shingle, various colours.	0.17m+ (3.16m OD – upper surface of deposit)



Appendix 2 OASIS summary

OASIS Summary for wessexar1-532034

OASIS ID (UID)	wessexar1-532034
Project Name	Hurst Castle Cantilever Stairs, Milford-on-Sea
Sitename	Hurst Castle, Milford-on-Sea
Sitecode	293060
Project Identifier(s)	293060
Activity type	Watching Brief
Planning Id	
Reason For Investigation	Scheduled monument consent
Organisation Responsible for work	Wessex Archaeology
Project Dates	26-Nov-2024 - 26-Nov-2024
Location	Hurst Castle, Milford-on-Sea NGR : SZ 31663 89733 LL : 50.70637737966762, -1.552965020192733 12 Fig : 431663,89733
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : Hampshire Local Authority District : New Forest Parish : Milford-on-sea
Project Methodology	<p>Wessex Archaeology was commissioned to undertake a programme of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording during groundworks associated with the repair of the cantilevered external staircase at Hurst Castle.</p> <p>The groundworks monitored initially comprised the hand excavation of three pits measuring 0.75 m x 0.75 m in plan and 0.45 m deep, directly adjacent to the north facing wall of the keep. However, due to presence of three modern concrete pads it was decided on site to just dig one trench to encompass the three proposed locations.</p> <p>The attending archaeologist monitored all mechanical excavations within the specified area.</p>
Project Results	<p>Evidence of brick and concrete footing / foundation were found directly underneath the current / modern flagstone floor of the courtyard immediately to the north of the Tudor Keep.</p> <p>A single piece of worked stone and a sherd of post-medieval (17th century) pottery were recovered from the made ground that surrounded the brick and concrete footing.</p> <p>The brick and concrete footing revealed during the AMR works may relate to a guard room constructed in the courtyard during the 18th century. Indeed, the brick fragment recovered as a sample for dating evidence corroborates a 18th – 20th century origin for the foundation. However, due to the truncated nature of the footing itself and the narrow scope of intrusive excavation it is not possible to confirm this fact.</p> <p>The footing may also represent the remains of the infilling of the courtyard with concrete c.1888 (Coad 1985).</p> <p>The results of the AMR, although minimal due to the small area of investigation, do, however, add to the corpus of knowledge of Hurst Castle and its environs.</p>

Keywords	Structure - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types Sherd - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus Brick - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus
Funder	Historic England
HER	Scheduled Monument Casework - unRev - STANDARD Hampshire Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record (AHBR) - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	B Eaton
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Physical Archive, Documentary Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with Historic England Archive;

Report generated on: 04 Mar 2025, 09:51

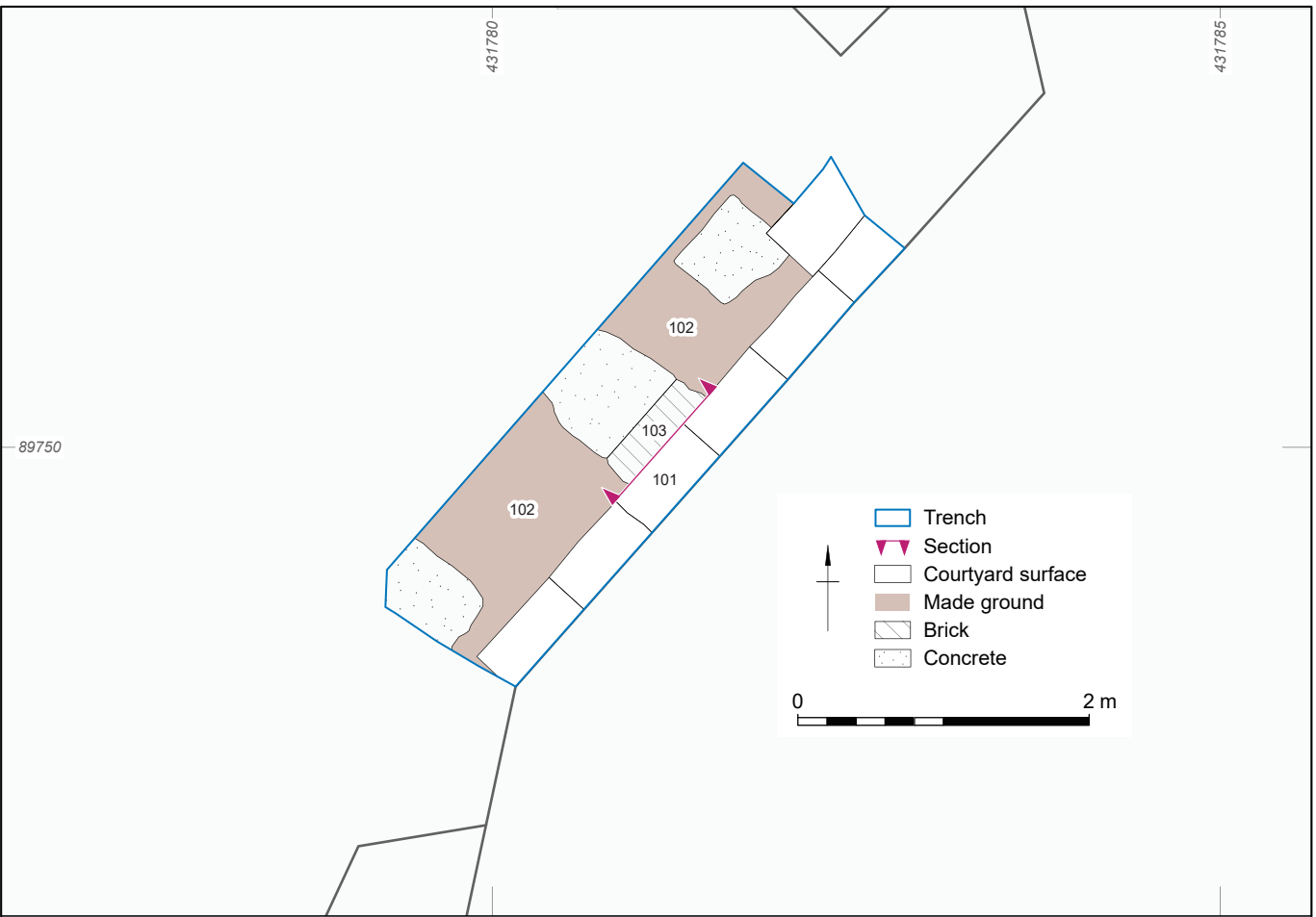


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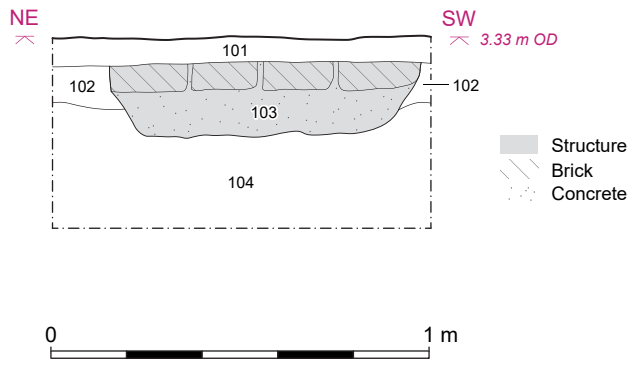
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Figure 1. Site location





North-west facing section of trench



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Figure 2. Plan and section of trench





Figure 3. Trench 1 looking west, 1m scale



Figure 4. Brick foundation 103, 1m scale, looking west



Figure 5. Brick foundation 103, 1m scale, looking east



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