

CPAT Report No. 1667

Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire




Archaeological Watching Brief



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 with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

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Summary

In May 2019 the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) undertook a watching brief on behalf of English Heritage during the installation of a water tank and oak gates in the Elizabethan Garden at Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire.

The groundworks for the water tank revealed a series of circular pits running parallel to the north wall of the gardens which were interpreted as tree planting holes from an earlier phase of the garden layout. The post holes for the gates revealed soil deposits 0.2m in depth below the level for the garden laid out in 2009. Nothing of archaeological significance was recorded from either post hole.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. In May 2019 The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) carried out a watching brief on behalf of English Heritage during the installation of a water tank for an irrigation system and the installation of a set of oak gates in the Elizabethan Garden at Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire.
- 1.2. The development is located within the scheduled area for the castle (SM 21576, HA 1014041). Scheduled Monument Consent for the works was granted in March 2019 with the inclusion of the following condition relating to archaeology:

(b) No ground works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been approved by Historic England.

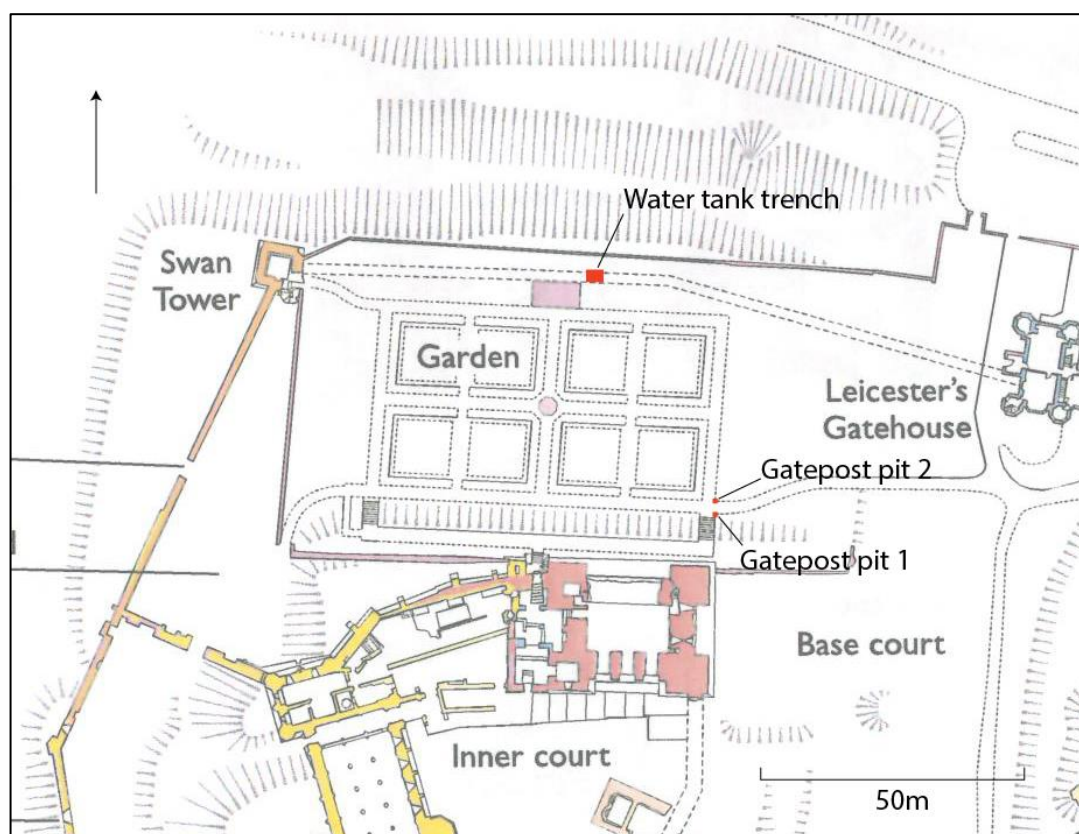


Fig. 1 Plan showing location of groundworks within the castle grounds (reproduced from English Heritage map)

2 Historical Background

- 2.1. Kenilworth Castle is located in the town of the same name in Warwickshire. Constructed from Norman through to Tudor times, the castle has been described by architectural historian Anthony Emery as 'the finest surviving example of a semi-royal palace of the later middle ages, significant for its scale, form and quality of workmanship.' Kenilworth has also played an important historical role. The castle was the subject of the six-month-long Siege of Kenilworth in 1266, thought to be the

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- longest siege in medieval English history, and formed a base for Lancastrian operations in the Wars of the Roses. Kenilworth was also the scene of the removal of Edward II from the English throne, the French insult to Henry V in 1414 (said by John Strecche to have encouraged the Agincourt campaign), and the Earl of Leicester's lavish reception of Elizabeth I in 1575.
- 2.2. The castle was built over several centuries. Founded in the 1120s around a powerful Norman great tower, the castle was enlarged significantly by King John at the beginning of the 13th century. Huge water defences were created by damming the local streams, and the resulting fortifications proved able to withstand assaults by land and water in 1266. John of Gaunt spent lavishly in the late 14th century, turning the medieval castle into a palace fortress designed in the latest perpendicular style. The Earl of Leicester then expanded the castle once again, constructing new Tudor buildings and exploiting the medieval heritage of Kenilworth to produce a fashionable Renaissance palace.
- 2.3. Kenilworth was partly destroyed by Parliamentary forces in 1649 to prevent it being used as a military stronghold. Ruined, only two of its buildings remain habitable today. The castle became a tourist destination from the 18th century onwards, becoming famous in the Victorian period following the publishing of Sir Walter Scott's novel *Kenilworth* in 1821. English Heritage has managed the castle since 1984. The castle is designated as a Grade I listed building (1035327) and as a Scheduled Monument (1014041).
- 2.4. The development is located within a pleasure garden laid out by Robert Dudley prior to Elizabeth I's visit to Kenilworth in 1575. It was a formal, ornamental garden which occupied an area of almost 1ha and was divided into quarters with the walks meeting at a fountain. A levelled terrace is visible parallel to the northern wall of the keep and this is believed to be the remains of a terraced walkway, originally 3m high, from which the gardens could be viewed. The site of the garden was under cultivation until the 1930s and in 1970 it was partly excavated and then reconstructed using a 17th century plan and description. The current layout was unveiled in 2009.

3 Watching Brief

- 3.1. The watching brief was conducted on 28 May 2019 in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) (2014) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.
- 3.2. The new gateway was located at the entrance to the garden located in the south-eastern corner. The groundworks comprised two large pits (SP 27871 72325 and SP 27870 72329) located on either side of the existing pathway.
- 3.3. Deposition in both pits was similar and consisted of a grit path surface (101/201) 0.1m thick overlying deposit (102/202) composed of a moderately compacted silty sand 0.2m thick. Underlying this was deposit (103/203) comprising a layer of greyish red clay silt and stone laid on a terram sheet. Underlying the terram was a compact reddish sand deposit (104/204), 0.2m thick, overlying a compact red clay (105/205) >0.05m thick.



Fig. 2 Post pit 1 viewed from the north. Photo CPAT 4649-001

- 3.4. The groundworks for the water tank were located immediately to the north-east of the aviary which was located centrally at the north end of the garden (SP 27845 72367). It comprised a single trench measuring 4m by 2.2m.



Fig. 3 Water tank trench viewed from the east. Photo CPAT 4649-009

- 3.5. Removal of the upper deposit (301), which consisted of a soft dark brown clayey sand, 0.2m thick, revealed a soft mid-brown silt sand deposit (304) which was not

excavated into. Cutting deposit (304) was a line of six circular pits 0.5m in diameter and oriented east-west. Overlying deposit (304) at the north extent of the trench was a gravel surface (303), 0.1m in thickness.

4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The excavation for the water tank in the northern extent of the garden revealed the edge of the gravel surface running east-west along the perimeter of the garden and a series of closely spaced tree planting pits, presumably associated with an earlier phase of the garden layout, probably during the 20th century.
- 4.2. The excavation of two pits for the gateway located in the south-eastern corner of the garden identified approximately 0.4m of soil build up overlying a layer of terram, which suggests it was probably contemporary with the construction of the modern garden which opened in 2009. Underlying the terram was a layer of sand overlying a layer of clay which appear to represent the upper level of archaeological deposition. No archaeological finds or features were apparent at this level however.

5 Sources

Online Sources

www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000496 (accessed March 2019)

www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/catalogue_her/lord-leicesters-stables-kenilworth-castle (accessed March 2019)

Published Sources

Morris, R. K., 2015, English Heritage Guide Books: Kenilworth Castle, English Heritage

6 Archive deposition Statement

- 6.1. The project archive has been prepared according to the CPAT Archive Policy and in line with the ClfA Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives guidance (2014). The archive which will be digital only will be deposited with English Heritage. No artefacts were recovered in the course of this work.

Archive summary

1 watching brief visit form

10 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4649

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2040

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) have been invited by English Heritage to undertake a watching brief during the installation of an irrigation system with water tank and oak gates to the Elizabethan Garden at Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire (Fig. 1; SP 2794 7216).
- 1.2. The development lies within the scheduled area for the castle (SM 21576, HA 1014041) and Scheduled Monument Consent for the works was granted in March 2019 with the inclusion of the following condition relating to archaeology:
 - (b) No ground works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been approved by Historic England.
- 1.3. This document presents the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a watching brief during the works, to be submitted to and approved by Historic England prior to the commencement of the works.
- 1.4. The new water tank (Fig. 2) will need to be placed on a concrete base formed by excavating approximately 200mm of existing surface to an area of 4m x 2m, compacting the existing surface and constructing timber edging, then adding 50mm of MOT Type 1. The new gates will be positioned in the gap in the hedge in the south-east corner, between the Elizabethan Garden itself and the lawn/proposed Bowling Green site (Fig. 3). The posts for the gates will need to be positioned just on the edges of the exiting path. The posts for the gate will be 200 x 200mm and 2400mm high. They will be installed 600mm below ground (set in concrete), with an excavation hole of 400 x 400mm by 600mm deep.

2 Historic Background

- 2.1. Kenilworth Castle is located in the town of the same name in Warwickshire. Constructed from Norman through to Tudor times, the castle has been described by architectural historian Anthony Emery as 'the finest surviving example of a semi-royal palace of the later middle ages, significant for its scale, form and quality of workmanship.' Kenilworth has also played an important historical role. The castle was the subject of the six-month-long Siege of Kenilworth in 1266, thought to be the longest siege in medieval English history, and formed a base for Lancastrian operations in the Wars of the Roses. Kenilworth was also the scene of the removal of Edward II from the English throne, the French insult to Henry V in 1414 (said by John Strecche to have encouraged the Agincourt campaign), and the Earl of Leicester's lavish reception of Elizabeth I in 1575.
- 2.2. The castle was built over several centuries. Founded in the 1120s around a powerful Norman great tower, the castle was enlarged significantly by King John at the beginning of the 13th century. Huge water defences were created by damming the local streams, and the resulting fortifications proved able to withstand assaults by land and water in 1266. John of Gaunt spent lavishly in the late 14th century, turning the medieval castle into a palace fortress designed in the latest perpendicular style. The Earl of Leicester then expanded the castle once again, constructing new Tudor buildings and exploiting the medieval heritage of Kenilworth to produce a fashionable Renaissance palace.

- 2.3. Kenilworth was partly destroyed by Parliamentary forces in 1649 to prevent it being used as a military stronghold. Ruined, only two of its buildings remain habitable today. The castle became a tourist destination from the 18th century onwards, becoming famous in the Victorian period following the publishing of Sir Walter Scott's novel *Kenilworth* in 1821. English Heritage has managed the castle since 1984. The castle is designated as a Grade I listed building (1035327) and as a Scheduled Monument (1014041).
- 2.4. The area of the Elizabethan Garden and adjacent lawn, the subject of the current proposal, is highly significant for its historical associations; the below-ground archaeological evidence for Dudley's Privy Garden and for what preceded it, the aesthetics of its setting so close to the Keep, Curtain Wall, and Leicester's Gatehouse; and its undoubted communal significance enhanced by the 2009 restoration of the Garden. The Elizabethan Garden incorporates a fountain, obelisks, aviary, terrace and arbours all reconstructed from a contemporary account of the garden in 1575, combined with historical and archaeological research.
- 2.5. Archaeological layers beneath the Elizabethan Garden have been preserved and protected by a permeable and root-resistant geotextile membrane laid beneath the soil covering and existing paths. These layers have the potential to reveal more about the 1570s garden, as well as earlier use of this part of the north court of the outer bailey. The new scheme will not remove or rupture this membrane.

3 Methodology

- 3.1. The watching brief will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014, revised 2017). The watching brief will be undertaken to monitor groundworks associated with the installation of a water tank for the irrigation system (with associated concrete base), and the introduction of new garden gates.
- 3.2. The excavation of any archaeological features or deposits will be undertaken by hand using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation:
 - The presence or absence of archaeological features encountered during the ground works will be noted.
 - Where features of archaeological interest are identified during the ground works they will be systematically investigated by hand with sufficient work being undertaken to determine their date, character and function, using the conventional techniques for archaeological excavation and in accordance with CIfA Standard and Guidance.
 - All features will be located as accurately as possible on an overall plan of the development at an appropriate scale, showing boundaries depicted on Ordnance Survey mapping.
 - Contexts will be recorded on individual record forms, using a continuous numbering system, and be drawn and photographed as appropriate.
 - Plans will be drawn on permatrace to a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50, as appropriate.
 - All photography will be taken using a digital SLR camera with a minimum resolution of 8 mega pixels, including a metric scale in each view, with views logged in a photographic register.
 - In the event of human burials being discovered the Ministry of Justice will be informed. The remains will initially be left *in situ*, and if removal is required, a MoJ licences will be applied for under the Burial Act 1857.
 - In the event of finding any artefacts covered by the provisions of the Treasures Act 1996, the appropriate procedures under this legislation will be followed.

- 3.3. All artefacts and environmental samples will be treated in a manner appropriate to their composition and a sampling strategy will be developed as appropriate:
- All stratified finds will be collected by context, or where appropriate, individually recorded in three dimensions. Unstratified finds will only be collected where they contribute significantly to the project objectives or are of particular intrinsic interest.
 - All finds and samples will be collected, processed, sorted, quantified, recorded, labelled, packed, stored, marked, assessed, analysed and conserved in a manner appropriate to their composition and in line with appropriate guidance.
 - arrangements to assess and study any artefacts, assemblages and environment samples.
 - Any artefacts recovered during the evaluation will be deposited in the English Heritage collection.
- 3.4. Following the on-site work an illustrated report will be prepared containing conventional sections to include:
- Non-technical summary
 - Introduction
 - Site location
 - Archaeological Background
 - Watching brief
 - Conclusions
 - References
 - Appropriate appendices on archives and finds
- 3.5. In addition to copies submitted to the client, a copy of the report will be provided to the regional Historic Environment Record.
- 3.6. The site archive will be ordered, catalogued, labelled and conserved and stored according to the UKIC Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage and the CIfA *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (2014). The project archive will be deposited in the English Heritage collection within 12 months, while any artefacts will be deposited in the English Heritage collection, with the permission of the freeholder, Kenilworth Town Council.

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1. The watching brief will be undertaken by a skilled archaeologist under the overall supervision of Nigel Jones, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). CPAT is also a CIfA Registered Organisation (RAO No 6) and as such agrees to abide by their *Code of Conduct* (2014) and the *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology* (2014).
- 4.2. All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist(s) who conducted the site work. Copies of the report will be deposited with the client and the regional Historic Environment Record within one month of the completion of on-site works.
- 4.3. The client should be aware that in the event that significant archaeological remains are revealed there may be a requirement for more detailed excavation and specialist services. Any

further work over and above the original watching brief and report would be the subject of a separate WSI and costing.

- 4.4. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.5. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

NW Jones

24 April 2019

