

CPAT Report No. 1658

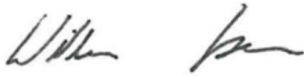


Longtown Castle, Herefordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



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Summary

In April 2019 the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of postholes associated with the installation of a new fence at Longtown Castle in Herefordshire. The castle is a scheduled monument (SM 28886) and the works were undertaken as a condition of scheduled monument consent.

Groundworks revealed that there had been a considerable depth of deposition within the inner bailey, probably owing to the use of this part of the site as an orchard after the castle had fallen into disrepair. A section of the defensive wall was revealed in one of the postholes along the eastern extent of the inner bailey.

Groundworks on the western side of the inner bailey revealed little evidence for the positioning of the defensive wall at the southern extent, although a considerable buildup of rubble in the soil suggested that the wall had collapsed or been pulled down in order to retrieve building material.

Nothing of archaeological significance was revealed during the groundworks upon the motte.

1 Introduction

- 1.1. In April 2019 The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) carried out a watching brief on behalf of English Heritage during the excavation of postholes for new fencing at Longtown Castle in Herefordshire (Fig. 1; SO 29757 80975).

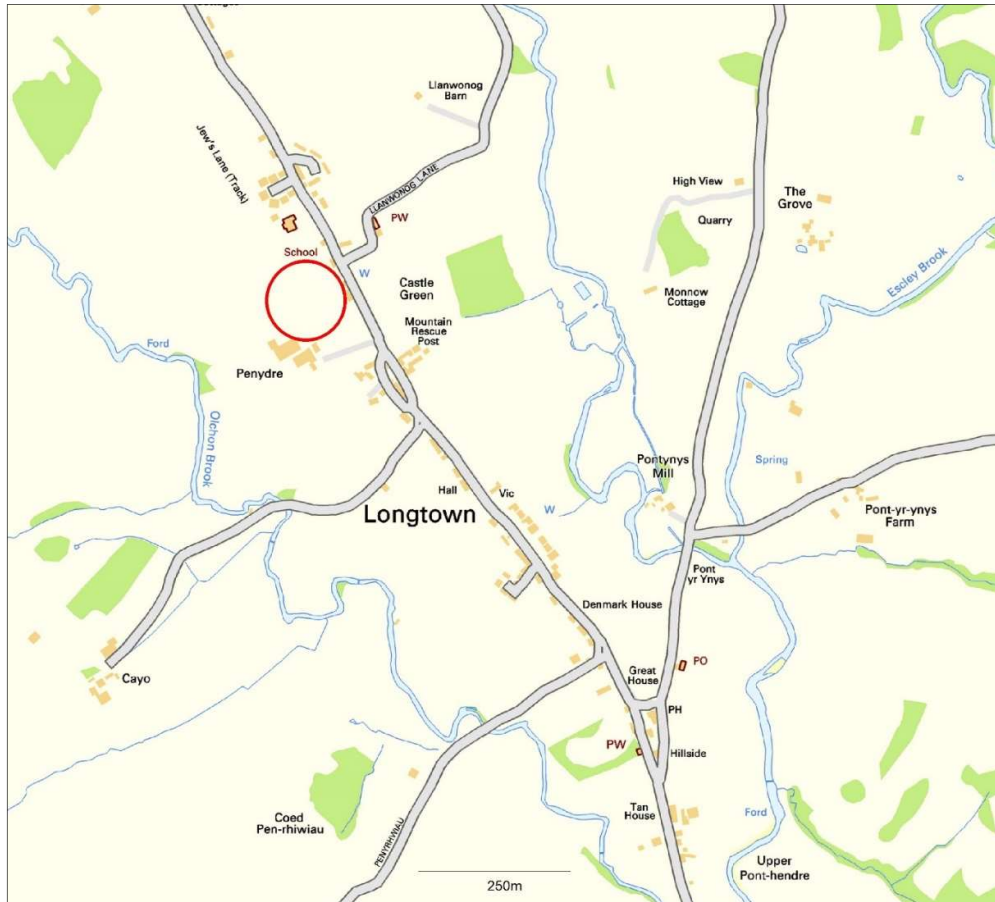


Fig. 1 Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018

Fig. 1 Location of Longtown Castle

- 1.2. The castle is a scheduled monument (SM 28886). Scheduled monument consent for the works was granted in March 2019 with the inclusion of the following conditions:

a) The works to which this consent relates shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, who will be advised by Historic England. At least 4 weeks' notice (or such shorter period as may be mutually agreed) in writing of the commencement of work shall be given to Alison MacDonald in order that an Historic England representative can inspect and advise on the works and their effect in compliance with this consent.

(b) No works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological recording during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by Historic England.

(c) All those involved in the implementation of the works granted by this consent must be informed by the English Heritage Trust that the land is designated as a scheduled monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended); the extent of the scheduled monument as set out in both the scheduled monument description and map; and that the implications of this designation include the requirement to obtain Scheduled Monument Consent for any works to a scheduled monument from the Secretary of State prior to them being undertaken.

(d) Equipment and machinery shall not be used or operated in the scheduled area in conditions or in a manner likely to result in damage to the monument or cause ground disturbance other than that which is expressly authorised in this consent.

2 Historical Background

- 2.1. The following historical background is largely derived from research carried out for the Longtown Castles Project (Cook and Kidd 2018).
- 2.2. Longtown is located within an area containing considerable evidence of prehistoric occupation, with concentrations of Neolithic chambered tombs within the uplands of Golden Valley to the west and the Black Mountains to the east. Many of these sites have also yielded evidence of Mesolithic activity, suggesting a long continuation of occupation.
- 2.3. Bronze Age burials have been recorded in the upper Olchon Valley north of Longtown where two well preserved cists were revealed, dating from the later Beaker period.
- 2.4. Iron Age occupation within the area is known from an isolated find of a cloak pin in a field close to Longtown Castle. There are hill forts located at Hatterall Ridge and Ysgryd Fawr within the Black Mountains to the south of Longtown.
- 2.5. It has long been speculated that the square rampart surrounding Longtown Castle had originally been a Roman fort. This was subsequently confirmed during excavations of the rampart and within the eastern bailey, which revealed remains of the turf bank associated with the earliest phase of construction and pottery sherds dating from the 1st century AD. It probably served as an auxiliary fort located on the route between Magnis (Kenchester) and Gobannium (Abergavenny) and is likely to have fallen out of use during the 2nd century AD.
- 2.6. In the post-Roman period the area containing Longtown was within the Welsh kingdom of Ewyas, which was ruled during the 6th century by a King Clydawg. Religious centres were founded at Llanveynoe to the north of Longtown and possibly at Llanthony to the south during this period.
- 2.7. By the mid-11th century the western part of the kingdom of Ewyas was partially under Anglo Saxon control, and known as Ewyas Harold, although the area in which Longtown was located was still part of the Welsh Kingdom of Brycheiniog. Following a raid upon Hereford by King Gruffydd of Powys, the Anglo Saxons raised an army led by Earl Harold Godwinson to repel them. Historical records suggest that the former Roman fort at Longtown was used as an encampment by the Anglo Saxon army during this campaign, during which time the defensive ditch was deepened and the ramparts raised in height.
- 2.8. Following the Norman invasion of 1066 the new king granted the lands on the frontier with Wales to his nobleman, including William FitzOsbern and Walter de Lacy. Walter acquired part

of the land of Ewyas, referred to as Ewyas Lacy (to distinguish it from Ewyas Harold) to the south of Longtown, where he constructed a castle at Walterstone. Following this the construction of a second castle at Ponthendre was started immediately to the south of Longtown. It is unclear why the two castles were built so close to each other but it is possible that the old fort at Longtown was still occupied by forces hostile to the Normans. Longtown was evidently abandoned soon after however and subsequently occupied by the de Lacy family. A new motte and bailey castle was constructed at Longtown shortly thereafter. The castle at Ponthendre was never completed.

- 2.9. The new castle was originally constructed from timber, but was rebuilt in stone in about 1150, with a circular stone keep. A borough was laid out along the road running north to south through the settlement, although many of the plots were never occupied. The settlement was occupied by the de Lacy family until at least the mid-14th century, although the castle had fallen into disrepair at this time.
- 2.10. The castle at Longtown was ordered to be reoccupied during Owain Glyndwr's revolt during the early 15th century, but there was little activity at the site thereafter. Much of the stonework from the bailey walls was robbed after the castle fell out of use. The inner and southern bailey were utilised as orchards by the 19th century. The eastern bailey was used as a village green.

3 Watching Brief

- 3.1. The watching brief was conducted between 2 April and 18 April 2019 in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) (2014) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. (2017).
- 3.2. The groundworks within the inner bailey comprised an intermittent run of fencing along the eastern edge of the area and a continuous run of fencing along the western edge. The postholes were excavated by hand and typically measured 0.2m by 0.2m and 0.6m in depth. The postholes were typically excavated at 1.8m intervals.
- 3.3. Three contexts were identified during the groundworks on the eastern side of the bailey. The uppermost context comprised a soft mid-reddish brown loam (001), 0.2m thick, extending across the entire excavated area. Underlying this was a soft mid-reddish brown silt sand (002), containing frequent building rubble, angular sandstone and occasional lime mortar flecking, >0.4m thick and also extending across the entire excavated area. A buried section of wall (003) was partially revealed in one of the postholes (Fig. 5, 1) comprising six courses of worked grey sandstone >0.6m thick (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 Wall (003) viewed from the west. Photo CPAT 4639-0004

- 3.4. Groundworks on the west side of the bailey revealed homogeneous deposition across most of the area, comprising a soft mid-reddish clay silt (004) and occasional small angular stones, extending to >0.6m in thickness (Fig. 3). A change in deposition was revealed towards the north end of this area (Fig. 5, 2) comprising a soft dark reddish brown sandy silt and large flat sandstones (005) extending 12m by >0.6m.



Fig. 3 Posthole on the west side of the bailey showing deposit (004) Photo CPAT 4639-0012

- 3.5. Groundworks around the motte revealed three contexts. The upper deposit comprised a soft dark brown loam (101), 0.3m thick. Underlying this was a firm light yellowish clay (102), 0.15m thick, sealing a firm reddish silt and sandstone deposit (103), >0.3m thick.



Fig. 4 Posthole on the north side of the motte Photo CPAT 4639-0024

4 Conclusions

- 4.1. The groundworks at Longtown Castle revealed that there had been a considerable depth of deposition within the inner bailey, probably owing to the use of this part of the site as an orchard after the castle had fallen into disrepair. A section of the defensive wall was revealed in one of the postholes along the eastern extent of the inner bailey. It seems likely, based on the height of the current ground level below the doorway into the inner bailey, that the ground level had been built up by at least 1m after the castle had fallen out of use.
- 4.2. Groundworks on the western side of the inner bailey revealed little evidence for the positioning of the defensive wall at the southern extent, although a considerable buildup of rubble in the soil suggested that the wall had collapsed or been pulled down in order to retrieve building material.
- 4.3. Nothing of archaeological significance was revealed during the groundworks upon the motte. It is possible that a clay layer visible in several places was used to help retain the looser material forming the main body of the motte.

5 Sources

Published sources

Cook, M. and Kidd, N., 2018. *The Mystery and History of The Castles of Longtown*. Longtown and District Historical Society.

6 Archive deposition Statement

- 6.1. The project archive has been prepared according to the CPAT Archive Policy and in line with the CIfA *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives guidance* (2014). The archive is entirely digital and will be deposited with the Herefordshire Archives and Records Centre.

Archive summary

5 Watching brief visit forms

27 digital photographs, CPAT film no 4639

Appendix 1: CPAT WSI 2039

1 Introduction

- 1.1. The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) have been invited by English Heritage to undertake a watching brief during the excavation of postholes associated with the installation of a new fence at Longtown Castle in Herefordshire (SO 29757 80975).
- 1.2. Longtown Castle is located to the north of the village of Longtown. It is a ruined Norman motte and bailey castle which was established in the 11th century by Walter de Lacy on former Roman earthworks which are still apparent today. The castle is a scheduled monument (SM 28886) and scheduled monument consent for the works was granted in March 2019 with the inclusion of the following conditions:
 - a) The works to which this consent relates shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, who will be advised by Historic England. At least 4 weeks' notice (or such shorter period as may be mutually agreed) in writing of the commencement of work shall be given to Alison MacDonald in order that an Historic England representative can inspect and advise on the works and their effect in compliance with this consent.
 - (b) No works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological recording during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by Historic England.
 - (c) All those involved in the implementation of the works granted by this consent must be informed by the English Heritage Trust that the land is designated as a scheduled monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended); the extent of the scheduled monument as set out in both the scheduled monument description and map; and that the implications of this designation include the requirement to obtain Scheduled Monument Consent for any works to a scheduled monument from the Secretary of State prior to them being undertaken.
 - (d) Equipment and machinery shall not be used or operated in the scheduled area in conditions or in a manner likely to result in damage to the monument or cause ground disturbance other than that which is expressly authorised in this consent.
- 1.3. This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) provides a method statement for maintaining an archaeological watching brief during any groundworks. The works comprise the removal of an existing post and wire fence around the top of the motte, to be replaced by a new post and rail fence. A total of twenty posts will be required upon which the rails will be affixed. Holes for the posts will be hand-excavated to an approximate depth of 0.6m and approximately 0.15m square. On the east and west boundaries of the inner bailey it is proposed that the existing post and wire fencing be removed and replaced with similar fencing, using the same construction methods. The total length of fencing in this area is approximately 75m, requiring a total of 44 posts.

2 Methodology

- 2.1. The watching brief will be conducted according to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014). The watching brief

will be undertaken to monitor the excavation by hand of post-holes for the new fencing. 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.

2.2. 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 with an appropriate museum, subject to the permission of the owner.

2.3. 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

-
- 2.4. In addition to copies submitted to the client, a copy of the report will be provided to the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record.
- 2.5. 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 presented to an appropriate Museum or recipient body within 12 months.

3 Resources and Programming

- 3.1. 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).
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 3.5. CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance, as well as Professional Indemnity insurance.

N Jones

26 March 2019

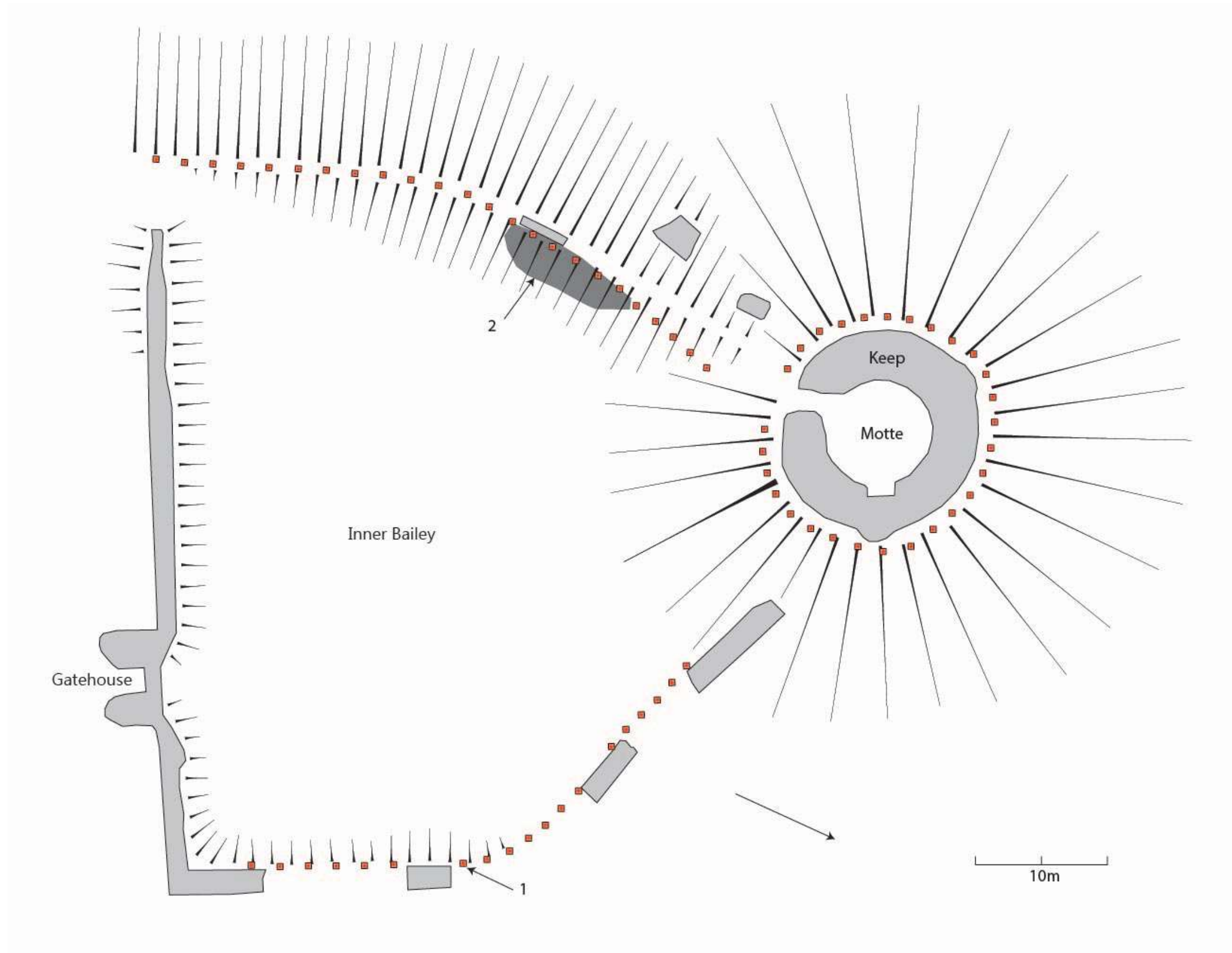


Fig. 5 Plan of Longtown Castle showing the positions of the postholes (marked in orange) and features (numbered)