



Northamptonshire  
County Council

# Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief  
during the installation of replacement information  
boards at Castle Acre Castle,  
Castle Acre, Norfolk  
June 2008



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Report 08/184

## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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### QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Steve Parry		
Verified by	Iain Soden		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project name	An archaeological watching brief during the installation of replacement information boards at Castle Acre Castle, Castle Acre, Norfolk	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the installation of replacement information boards for the graphics scheme at Castle Acre Castle, Castle Acre, Norfolk. A total of six post-pits were re-excavated. No significant archaeological deposits or any artefacts were present.	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Site status	Scheduled Ancient Monument (No: 21441)	
Previous work	Watching brief undertaken in 2007 during initial installation of the information boards subject to the current watching brief	
Current Land use	Historic Monument in the care of English Heritage	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Medieval fortified site	
Significant finds		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
County	Norfolk	
Site address	Castle Acre Castle, Castle Acre, Norfolk	
OS Easting & Northing	58146 31480	
Height OD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	English Heritage Eastern Region	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	David J. Leigh	
Project Manager	Steve Parry	
Sponsor or funding body	English Heritage	
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>		
Start date	June 2008	
End date	June 2008	
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)</b>
Physical		
Paper		Watching brief forms (1) Colour slides (12) black and white contact prints (12) Digital photographs (18)
Digital		Report text and figures

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## **Appendix A** Stratigraphic detail of the post-pits

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
DURING THE INSTALLATION OF REPLACEMENT INFORMATION BOARDS  
AT CASTLE ACRE CASTLE, CASTLE ACRE, NORFOLK  
JUNE 2008**

*Abstract*

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in June 2008 during the installation of replacement information boards for the graphics scheme at Castle Acre Castle, Castle Acre, Norfolk. The groundworks were contained within the post-pits excavated under archaeological observation during the initial installation. No significant archaeological deposits nor were any artefacts were present.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology in June 2008 during the installation of replacement information boards for the graphics scheme at Castle Acre Castle, Castle Acre, Norfolk (NGR TF 8146 1480: Fig 1). The work was carried out on behalf of English Heritage following a specification produced by Northamptonshire Archaeology (Leigh 2006) and approved by English Heritage.

**2 BACKGROUND**

**2.1 Location and Topography**

The site lies within the village of Castle Acre, Norfolk. The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising Chalk.

**2.2 Historical Background**

Castle Acre Castle lies on the route of the Peddars Way, an ancient track-way which has its origins in the Romano-British period, although the name derives from the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The site comprises the earthwork remains of a bailey along with the remains of a stone keep (Plates 1 & 2). The castle was founded soon after the Norman Conquest by William de Warenne sometime around 1170 – 1180. The surviving remains comprise possibly the finest castle earthworks in England.

To the south-west, at the other end of the village is located Castle Acre Priory which was founded in 1090 (National Monument No: 21416) and eventually vacated by the monks in 1537 following the suppression of the monasteries by Henry VIII. The surviving remains include the 12<sup>th</sup>-century church and 15<sup>th</sup>-century gatehouse and prior's house.

Previous archaeological work within the confines of the castle include a watching brief carried out during the initial installation of the information boards that were replaced under the current watching brief (Burrow 2007).

### **3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

The aims of the watching brief were to:

- ◆ Observe the groundworks undertaken for the installation of the information boards, and to record all archaeological deposits uncovered.
- ◆ Determine the date, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits observed and to retrieve all datable artefacts.
- ◆ Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and analysis.

The fieldwork comprised a single visit to the site on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2008 during the like-for-like installation of information boards at Castle Acre Castle. The existing posts and boards were dug out by hand and the new posts inserted into the existing holes and secured with post-crete. The holes measured approximately 0.40m square with a maximum depth of 0.60m.

A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, with supplementary photographs in digital format. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma sheets. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the standards and guidelines for an archaeological watching brief (IFA 2000).

### **4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE**

An examination revealed the stratigraphic sequence to be exactly that as recorded during the initial installation. All of the post-pits displayed a similar stratigraphic sequence of anthropogenic subsoil comprised of a silty loam and chalk nodules which, in the cases of post-pits 1-4 represented the material cast-up from the construction of the castle's defences, which was overlain by a shallow topsoil and turf layer (see Appendix for details).

## **5 THE SITE ARCHIVE**

The project has generated a small archive comprising:

<b>RECORD</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>
Watching brief forms	1
Colour slides	12
Black and white contacts and negatives	12
Digital photographs	18

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

The groundworks undertaken for the installation of the replacement information boards were contained within the areas subject to the initial archaeological condition. In this respect no additional information was obtained to add to that already recorded.

No archaeologically significant deposits were present in the post-pits where the information boards have been located. The watching brief was carried out in favourable conditions and the results are considered to be reliable.

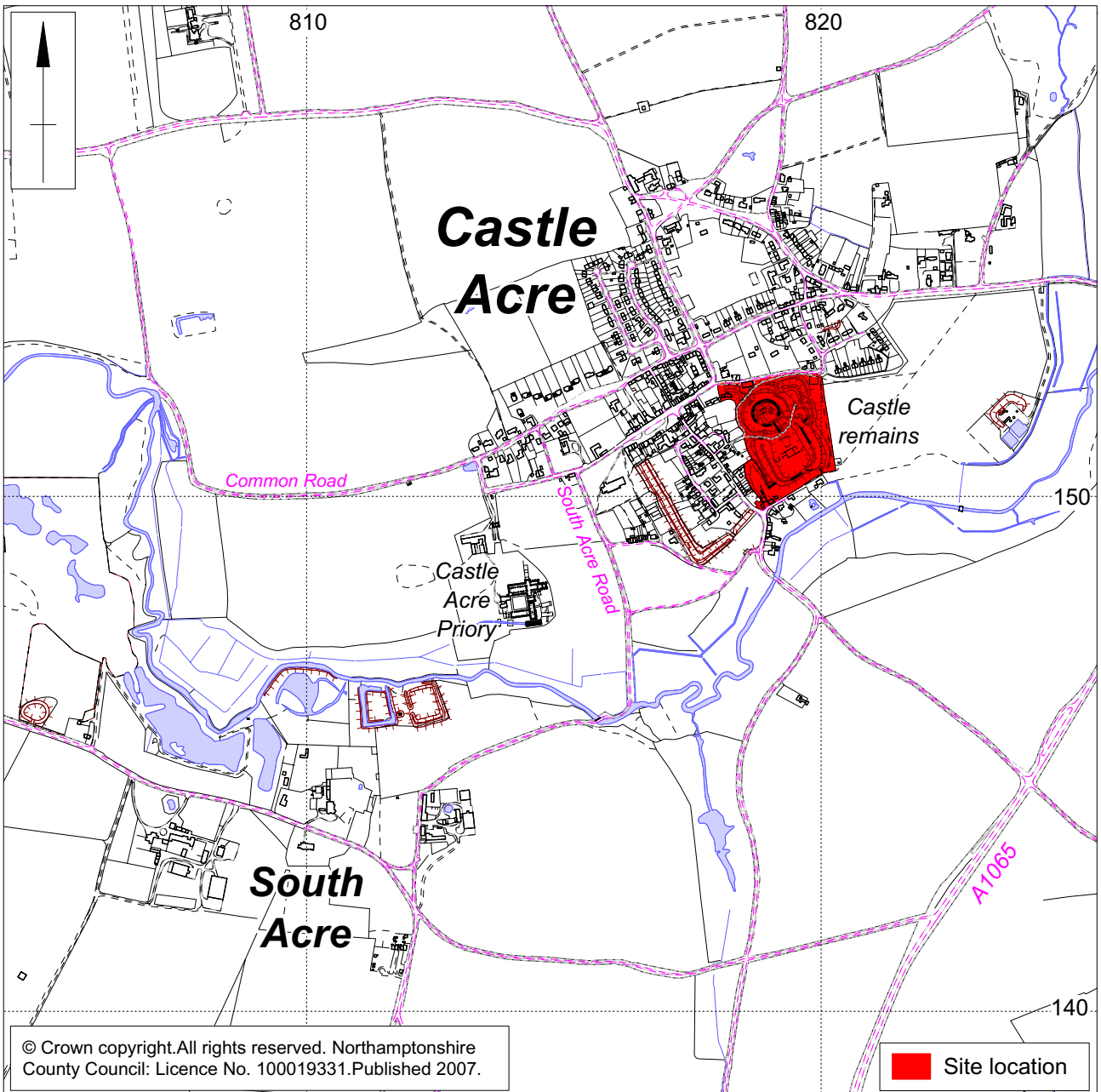
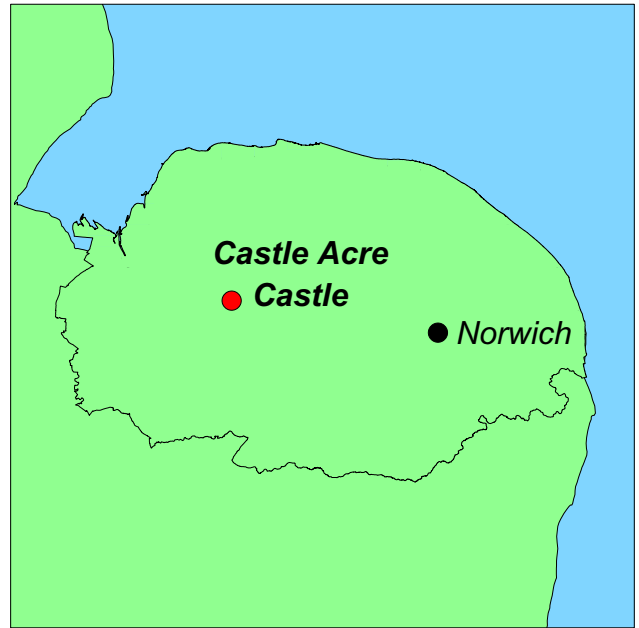
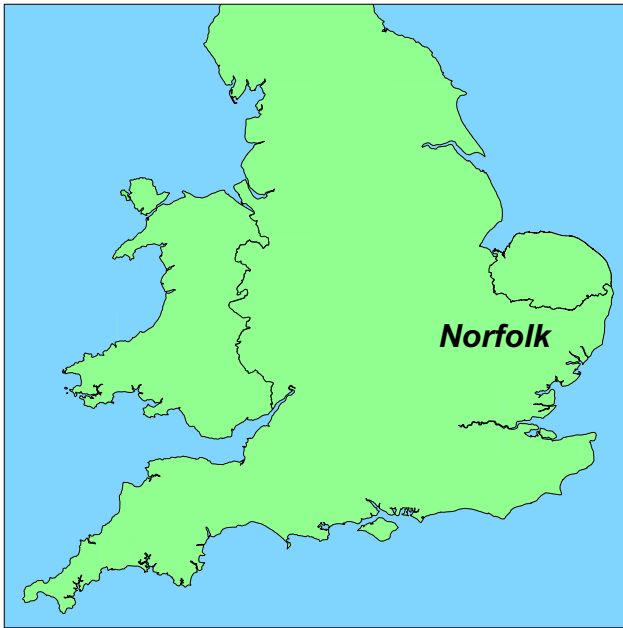
## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Burrow, A, 2007 *An archaeological watching brief at Castle Acre Castle, Castle Acre, Norfolk*, Northamptonshire Archaeology

IFA 2000 *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

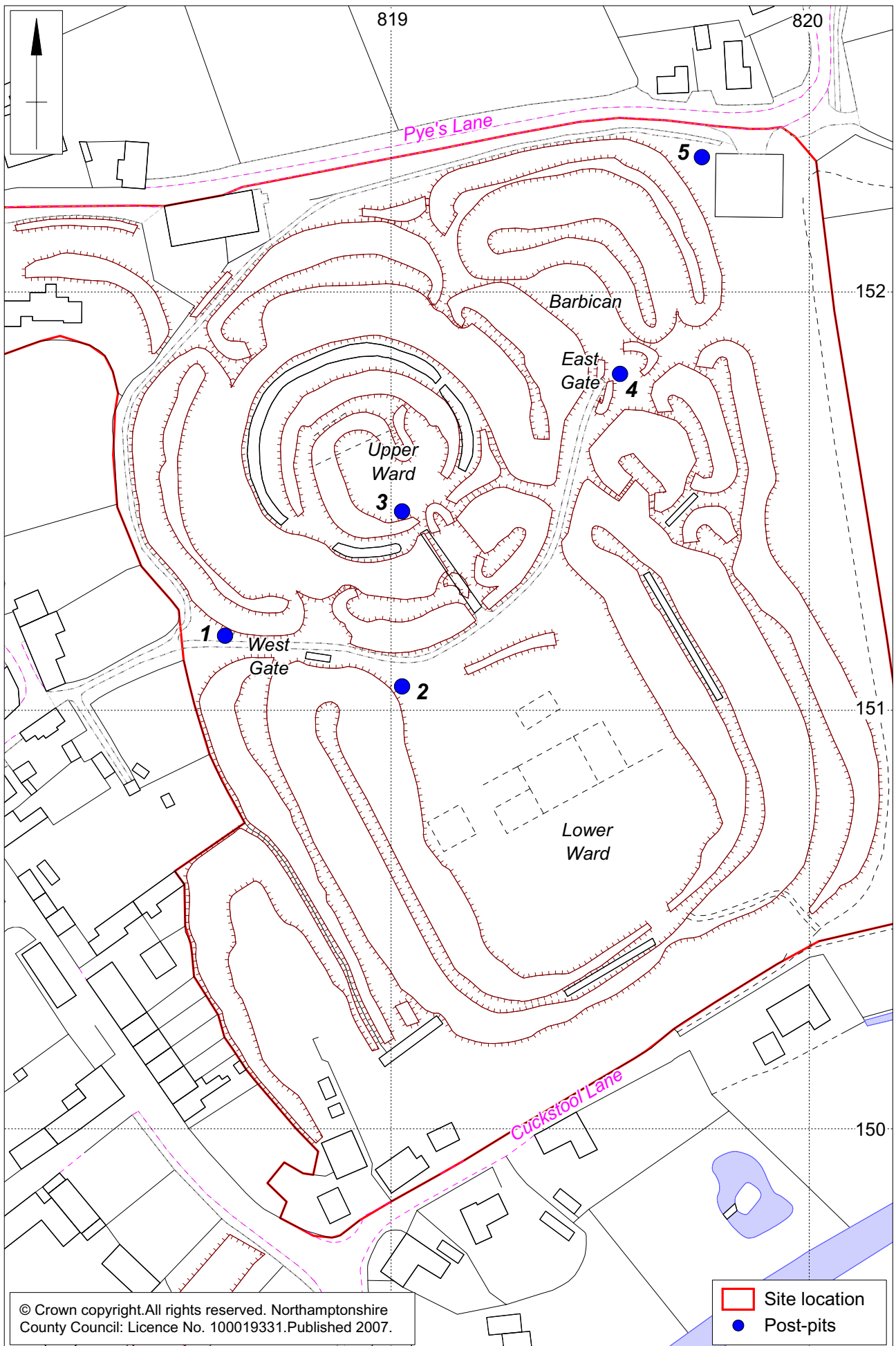
Leigh, D, 2006 *Specification for an archaeological watching brief at Castle Acre Castle, Castle Acre, Norfolk*, Northamptonshire Archaeology





Scale 1:12,500

Location of Castle Acre Castle Fig 1



The location of the post-pits Fig 2





Plate 1: A general view of the Bailey of Castle Acre Castle



Plate 2: A general view of the Keep of Castle Acre Castle





Plate 3: The installation of the new information boards



Plate 4: A close up of one of the new boards