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HEPBURN BASTLE, CHILLINGHAM,  
NORTHUMBERLAND

~ ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ~

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OCTOBER 2022



Prepared for: <i>Sir Humphry Wakefield</i>	By: <i>The Archaeological Practice Ltd.</i>
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# HEPBURN BASTLE, CHILLINGHAM NORTHUMBERLAND

## REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Prepared by:

*The Archaeological Practice Ltd.*



***Frontispiece:*** Stairs revealed in the south-east stairwell.

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## SUMMARY

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*This document reports on an archaeological evaluation conducted in September 2022, as part of an ongoing programme of investigation by the owner of Hepburn Bastle (NGR NU 07077 24885), Sir Humphry Wakefield, to investigate original floor levels and the potential for survival of other features within and outside the structure. The evaluation allows a more informed plan to be made concerning the proposed improvement of public access to the building as part of initiatives to secure its future by consolidating and protecting it prior to opening it to visitors. As part of this vision it is proposed to expose original internal floor surfaces and reduce external levels in the immediate curtilage of the building to more closely reflect original ground levels.*

*The investigation works took the form of trenches excavated around the outer walls of the building, as well as trenches inside the building on both the ground and first floors.*

*Within the building, the trenches on the ground floor uncovered a rough cobble surface throughout the whole of the main floor area, while those on the first floor recorded a substantial build-up of comparatively recent material post-dating the final abandonment of the structure in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Beneath this was clay-based packing and levelling material over the underlying barrel-vault. A small area of flagging remaining towards the entrance to the newel stairs on the upper floor may have been the last remaining patch of a once more-extensive flagged surface.*

*Externally, within the area of the newel stair, additional stairs the ground floor passage were exposed beneath later infill, while outside these were the remains of two phases of a plinth or foundation for a step or stairs overlying an earlier path. On the east side of the building was another cobbled area and step bounded by a possible wall, which may have represented an earlier structure or porch against this wall. Trenches on the north side of the building recorded shallow ditches extending out from the garderobe chutes. These and other trenches on the west side of the building also revealed considerable build-up of overburden over the stepped foundation plinth on which the structure was built. No remains were uncovered of a structure against the south wall of the building, known from a visible roof scar, suggesting that it had been entirely removed, perhaps having been of relatively light construction.*

*It is recommended that, should current proposals for improving access to the tower be enacted, the post-abandonment build-up of material within the structure should be removed, including top-soil above the original levelling material forming the sub-floor. The ivy and bushes on the first floor which currently weaken the mortar bonds between the surviving walls and may be penetrating the barrel vaulting should also be removed and continuously monitored thereafter.*

*On the ground floor, the current cobbled surface could be infilled, where patches have been lost, in order to recreate a safe and continuous, albeit slightly undulating surface which could also be cleaned of animal-based organic material as an additional aesthetic and safety measure.*

*Externally, with the exception of the south-east corner and south part of the east side of the building, few sub-surface features of note survive. Therefore, notwithstanding the impact of other factors, such as visual impact and safety concerns which may militate against such a course of action, it is suggested that archaeological impediments to the construction of supports for external roofing pillars, or for lowering the ground to original built levels, are minimal, although it is recommended that any limited excavations for that purpose should be carried out archaeologically, supported by a full Written Scheme of Investigation and pre-approved with Scheduled Monument Consent.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Location, Extent and Context of the site

Hepburn Bastle is situated just inside the southern boundary of Chillingham Park below Hepburn Moor and Ros Castle, bounded to the south by a minor road alongside Hepburn Woods on the edge of the Till Valley in North Northumberland (*Illus. 01-03*). It has extensive views to the west and north-west across the valley of the Till to the Cheviots beyond. Chillingham Park, the grounds and parkland of Chillingham Castle within which the site sits, occupies a large part of the parish of Chillingham which extends from the valley of the River Till to the western side of the Kylee hills on Hepburn Moor. Chillingham is the main settlement of the parish, which also includes a few scattered farmsteads and hamlets, including Hepburn, as well as parkland, open moorland and forest plantation.

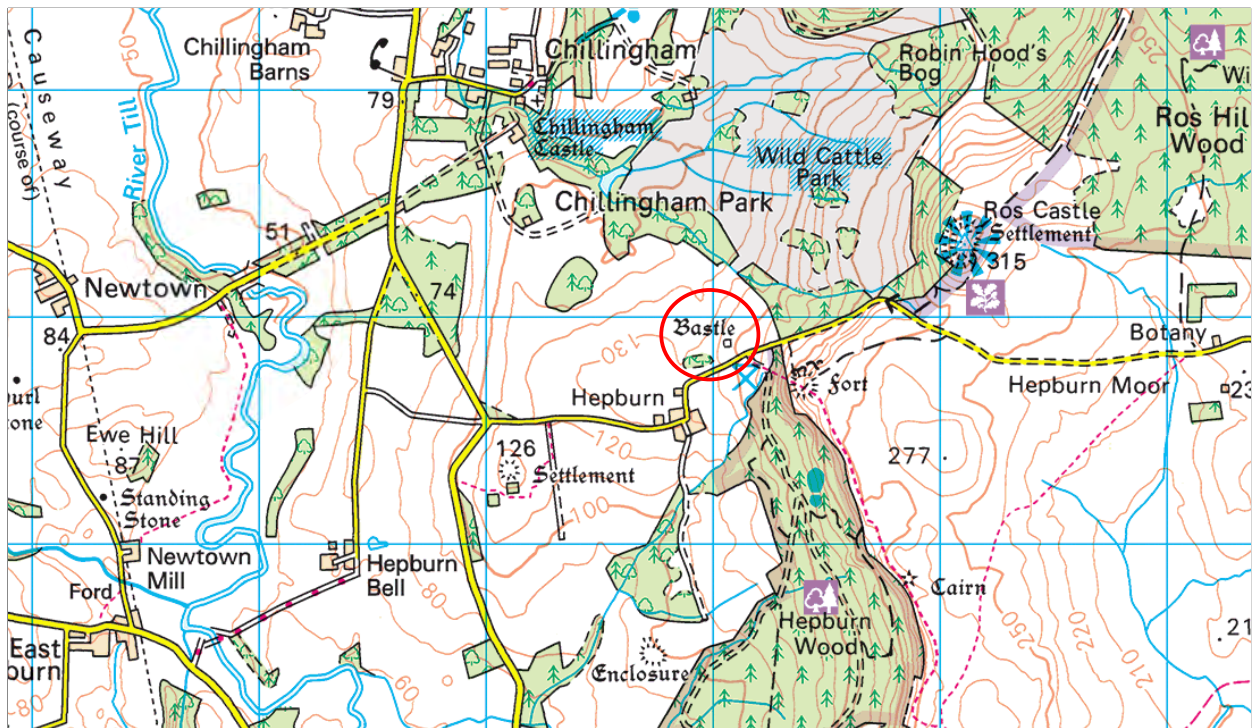
The bastle itself sits on the edge of the park's grassland but is bordered on its south side by a disused quarry and associated spoil heaps, with a remnant of forestry surviving between it and Hepburn hamlet to the south-west.



*Photo. 01 (above) & 02: Hepburn Bastle viewed from the north-east and (below) east, with views to the west.*







Illus. 01-03: The location of Hepburn Bastle on the edge of the Till Valley, North Northumberland.

## **1.2 Project Background**

The owner of the site, Sir Humphry Wakefield, is keen to secure the future of the building by consolidating it where necessary, protecting it from the elements and opening it to visitors to enable them to interpret the changes to the building over its long and turbulent history. As part of this vision, it is proposed to expose the original floor surfaces of the bastle and reduce external levels in the immediate curtilage of the building to more closely reflect original ground levels.

An archaeological assessment of the building was undertaken in 2018 by Peter Ryder, who recommended that excavations should be undertaken within and outside the building to gain a greater understanding of the depth and extent of its floor surfaces and other structural remains prior to any major invasive works on the site.

Sir Humphry Wakefield would like to follow this recommendation and gain consent for these works to inform plans for future works which aim to safeguard the site for future generations, and to allow members of the public to explore and gain pleasure from it.

## 2. CULTURAL HERITAGE BACKGROUND

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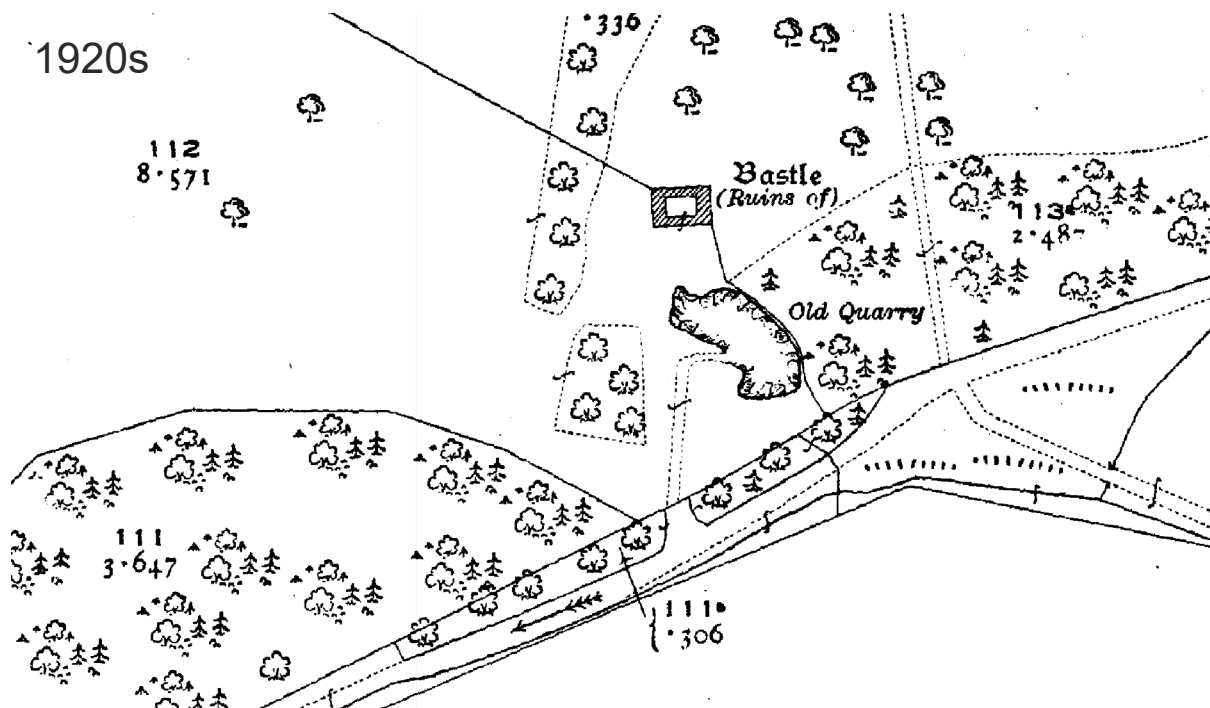
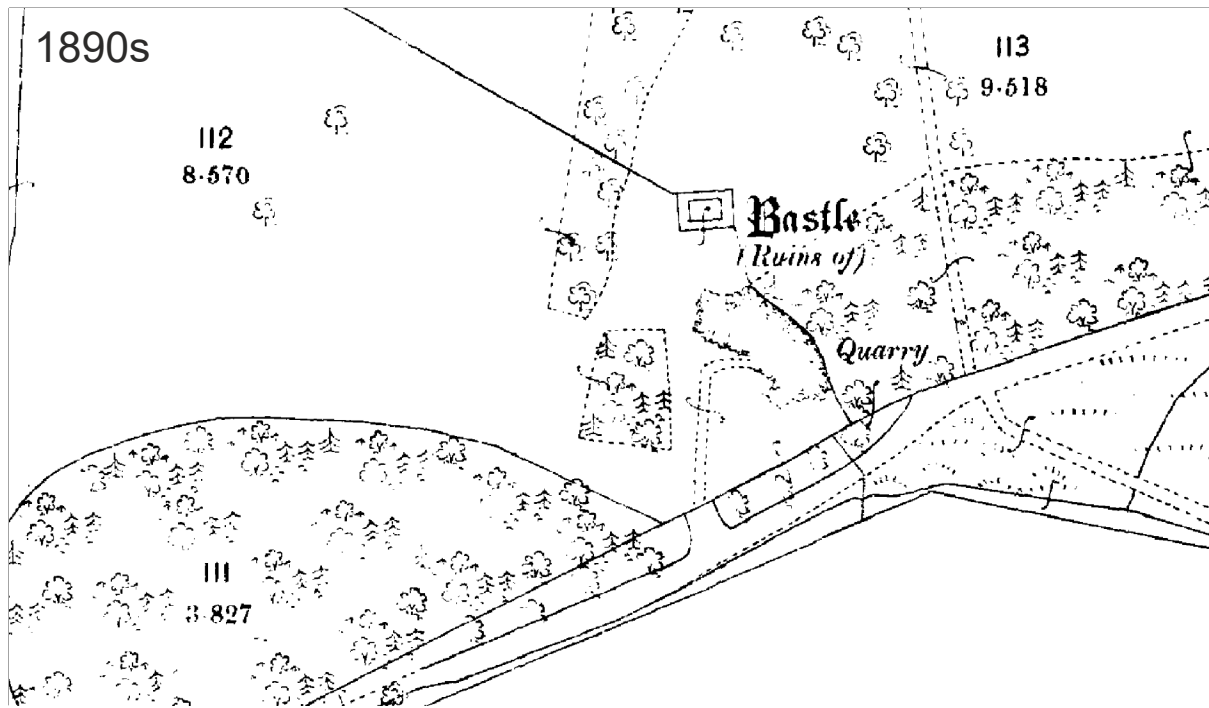
### 2.1 Archaeological Background and Potential (see Appendix 1)

Whilst the main focus of this project is a tower of late medieval origin, this part of Northumberland is known for the richness of its prehistoric remains, including Mesolithic flints (N3645) found on Hepburn Moor, and Neolithic cup and ring marked stones such as a small group (N3440) some 1 km east of the bastle site on a rocky outcrop at Ox Eye on Hepburn Moor, with others near Ros Castle (N3390). Bronze Age remains include burials such as Blaeweria cairn south-east of the bastle and a cairn cemetery (N3417) 1.5 km east, as well as closer settlements with associated field systems and/or cairnfields (N3629 & N3669) near Hepburn Crags, within 1km east and south-east of the bastle. Several Iron Age settlement sites are known in the vicinity, including the prominent Ros Castle camp and the clearly defensive Hepburn Bell enclosure, as well as others in more lowland/sheltered positions, the closest to the site being Hepburn Crags camp 400 m to the south-east (N3600), none of which display any evidence of Roman period settlement despite the presence of the Devil's Causeway some 2.7 km to the west.

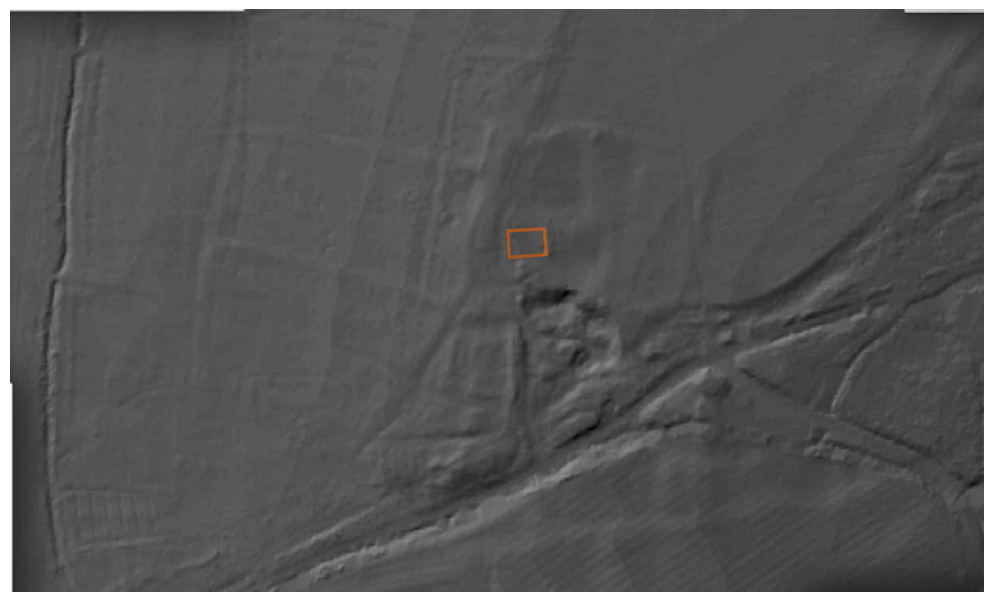
The early medieval period is not represented on or close to the site, although clearly some level of occupation and land-use would have continued after the Roman period until the Norman Conquest when archaeological remains again attest to specific activities. Chillingham and Hepburn are medieval villages referenced in documentary sources to the 13th century, both of which appear to have been cleared upon the creation of Chillingham Park. Each was associated with a defensible building and a chapel or church. The earliest reference to the de Hebburn family, owners of Hepburn tower or 'bastle', is dated 1271 and in 1509 the house was still in the hands of the same family, at that time owned by Thomas de Hebburn, when it is said to have been able to accommodate a garrison of twenty horsemen. The Northumberland County History XIV (1935, 347) notes the paucity of subsequent documentary records, beyond references to a 'hold' here in 1514, a tower in 1541, and a 'mansion house' in 1564. The building is thought to have been abandoned after the death in 1755 of Robert Hebburn, the last male heir, whose son in law, the Rev. Edward Brudenell, demolished part of the building.

The redevelopment of both Hepburn tower or 'bastle' and the larger Chillingham Castle as country houses between the later 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries reflected the growing security of the region at this time. Similarly, Chillingham Park, a deer park since medieval times, was redeveloped as a country garden and parkland in the 19th century when the greater part of the villages of Chillingham and Hepburn and their outlying farmsteads were also built. The economy of the parish is largely agricultural but 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century activities included a millstone quarry, saw mill, and lime kiln, the remains of which survive.

There have been various campaigns of restoration on the bastle, both in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and relatively recently; a photogrammetric survey of the building was made in February 1995 by Mason Land Services Ltd, on behalf of English Heritage, prior to the latest programme of conservation and repair



Illus. 04 & 05: Historic Ordnance Survey plans of the site from the 1890s (above) and 1920s.



*Illus. 06: Lidar survey plan of Hepburn Bastle shown in comparison to the OS 2nd edition Plan c. 1900.*

## 2.2 The survival of potential archaeological remains

The site is of variable character with respect to the potential survival of archaeological remains within the site, comprising a massively built late medieval tower with more ephemeral traces of other buildings and land divisions externally.

The bastle itself, as recently described by Peter Ryder (2018; see also Ryder 2021) is a rectangular structure c 16.6 by 10.8 m externally, of two storeys and attics. At basement level the walls are c 2.7 m thick, except for the 3.5 m thick east wall which includes a mural chamber. The basement retains its barrel vault, lit by a loop at each end, and contains an interesting mural chamber at the east end with a deep pit - perhaps a safe or prison - in its floor. Externally there is a hollow-chamfered plinth at or near ground level, and a chamfered set-back a little below eaves level, but its most characteristic features are the twin gables at east and west ends. The shell of the building remains more or less intact, but requires some consolidation at first floor level.

The entrance, altered in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is at the east end of the south wall, with remains of a newel stair alongside, the well of which is such a size that it must have been accommodated in a projecting turret, now fallen. Indeed, close inspection of the stair well reveals complexities, some of them due to post-medieval alteration, with various blocked openings and stairs rising anti-clockwise (at the foot of the well) and clockwise (at first floor level).

The upper floor seems to have been divided into three rooms by transverse walls, only traces of which remain, and lit by various mullioned and transomed windows. Each room had its own fireplace, and the western also had its own garderobe, adjacent to a window on the north. Above is what was, in the latest phase of the building's use, an attic, with small square windows in the gables, but there are also the remains of fireplaces, one at the west end cut into by a spout draining the valley gutter between the two roofs. This, and the chamfered set-back just below the present eaves, indicate that the building was originally a medieval tower of c 1500, later cut down in height and rebuilt with twin gables.

Externally, the remains of a gable end seen imprinted on the west part of the south face of the upstanding tower, associated with a damaged plinth below, show that a building was formerly attached here, although there is no doorway connecting it directly to the tower. The cut for its roof is visible, its apex a course below the chamfered off-set with sockets for two levels of purlins and a diagonally set ridge.

In addition, Lidar evidence (see *Illus. 06*) shows that various linear earthworks, some of them potentially agricultural - including rig & furrow with lynchets - and others defining enclosure boundaries, survive around the bastle. While most of these are seen on the west and south-west sides of the bastle, the bastle itself appears to sit in the south-west part of a c. 1 ha enclosure extending to the north and west.

It is likely that most or all of these earthwork features are contemporary with medieval and later phases in the defensible and subsequent uses of the site - some may be the remains of formal gardens, for example - but it is also possible that the site of the current building sits upon earlier built remains or deposits of unknown character and date.

Associated with the period following abandonment of the bastle in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century are the remains of a quarry immediately to the south. The quarry pit itself contains numerous worked stones, which may simply be rubble remains of the bastle structure and its southward extension, but could represent the remains of dressing. Quarry waste mounds extending from

the quarry towards the south side of the bastle are likely to preserve remains of the building extension noted above.

### **2.3 Previous Archaeological Work**

Prior to the latest programme of conservation and repair, in 1995 Peter Ryder produced a descriptive record of the structure based on his site visits and a photogrammetric survey of the building made in February 1995 by Mason Land Services Ltd. on behalf of English Heritage. Other than this and previous episodes of consolidation work, principally to the first floor of the building, no invasive archaeological work has taken place on the site although various interventions have occurred within the structure and in its environs which indicate that archaeological remains survive there.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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#### 3.1 Proposals for evaluation (*Illus. 07, 08*)

In broad terms, the proposed programme of evaluation excavation was intended to be of minimal impact and had the main purpose of establishing the presence and character of any archaeological remains surviving on the site.

##### 3.1.1 Floors

**Issues:**

Neither the lower or upper floors are currently safe for visitors to enter. The lower floor contains numerous loose stones, most of which do not derive from its two vaulted spaces, sitting within a matrix of organic soil, while the upper floor has been buried in soil and vegetation since a previous episode of consolidation. The deposits of soil appear to be causing damage the structure by making its walls permanently wet and increasing the load upon them.

**Proposals for evaluation:**

It was proposed to investigate the floors in key locations to determine what remains of the original floor surfaces, confirming levels and informing future decisions on conservation and restoration. In particular, it was to be ascertained whether any of the original floor surfaces remain and, if so, in what condition. (Upper floor, Trenches A-E, all approximately 1x1m, Lower floor, Trenches F1, F2, G,H, all 1x1m except G which measured 2x1m)

##### 3.1.2 External Levels

**Issues:**

It was clear that the levels around the building have increased over time, especially to the south and east due to the deposition of quarry waste and, perhaps, waste from previous episodes of structural clearance and consolidation work.

**Proposals for evaluation:**

It was proposed to investigate several key and representative areas through strip trenches arranged orthogonal to the building in order to determine the level of overburden, whether any floor surfaces survive and if any other features lie hidden around the outside of the bastle, notably remains of the attached building on the south side. (Trenches I-O, generally measuring 1.2x5m, with Trench I measuring 12m long, and Trench O also continuing into the newel stair area).

##### 3.1.3 Newel Stair

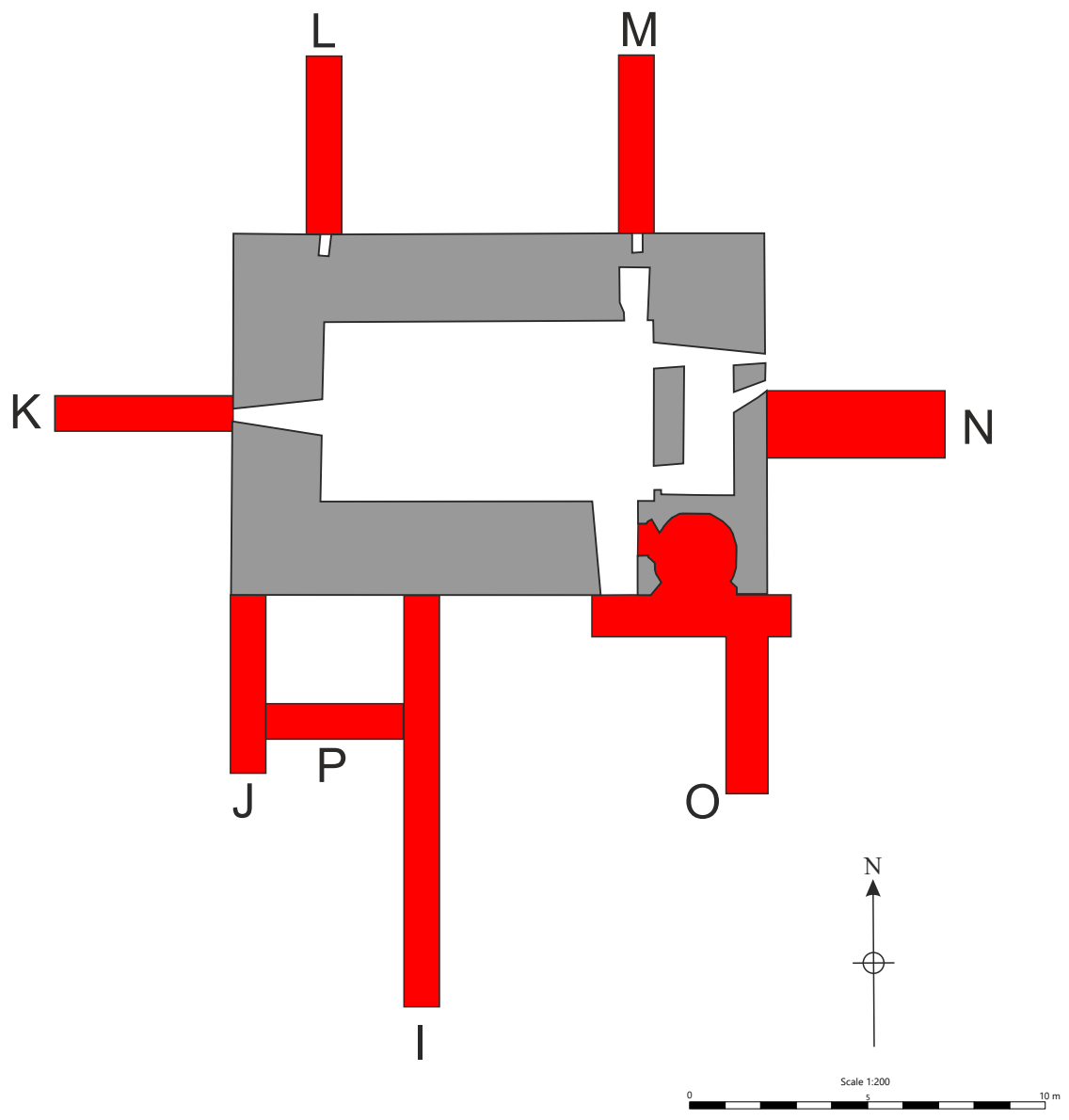
**Issues:**

As well as openings representing different phases of use, there have clearly been at least two forms of stair within the bastle, one rising clockwise and the other anti-clockwise.

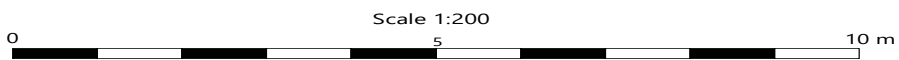
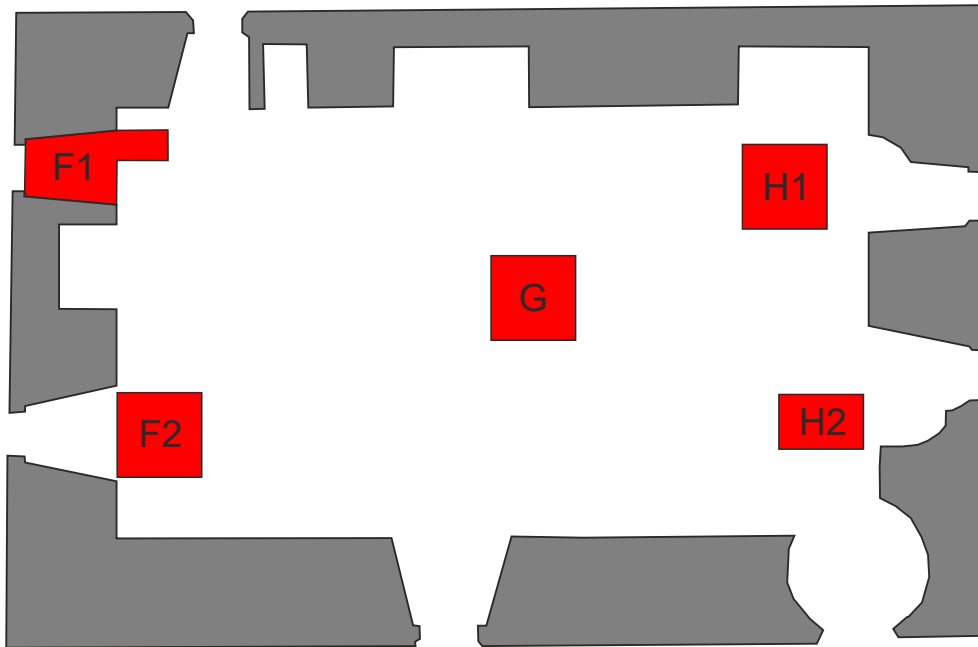
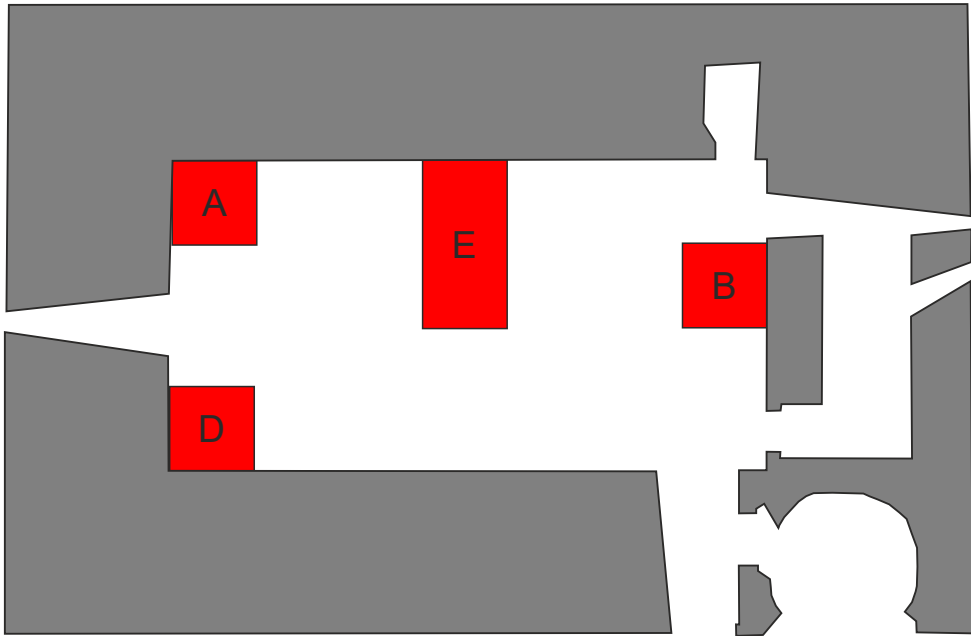
**Proposals for evaluation:**

It was proposed to evaluate this area by removing overburden to the level of solid masonry and/or floors, thereby deriving evidence regarding the structural composition and phasing of





*Illus. 07: Building plan showing the proposed locations of external trenches 'I' - 'O'.*



*Illus. 08a & b: Building plans showing the proposed locations of internal trenches 'A' - 'H' in the basement (08a) and upper (08b, below) floors of the building.*

the stair and form of the outer wall, as well as how the stair was accessed. (Trench O, which covered the area of the stair itself and an adjacent area outside).

#### 3.1.4 Former structure on south wall

**Issue:**

At the west end of the south wall are traces of an attached north-south building, noted above, with some remains of possible grassed-over footings extending towards the quarry to the south.

**Proposals for evaluation:**

It was proposed to explore the footings of the structure to see how far they extended to the south, and to find any evidence of what form the building took, the state of its floors and possible functional indications. (Trenches I-J as mentioned above)

### 3.2 The Evaluation

The evaluation took place during September 2022, its aims being to identify and determine the character of any remains uncovered during groundworks on the site, and to make an appropriate record of such finds by photographic and other means.

The external trenches were opened by mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. All excavations were closely monitored by a suitably trained and experienced archaeologist from The Archaeological Practice Ltd. Following this, all subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. All of the internal trenches were excavated by hand.

Owing to the substantial amount of undergrowth, loose rubble and other overburden found to exist on the first floor of the building, in consultation with Historic England the trenches here were reduced in size from those initially proposed (see WSI, *Appendix 1*). Those on the ground floor were also reduced, generally to 1 x 1 m test-pits, in order to reduce overall impact and avoid destruction of the cobbled floor found to exist there, in line with Historic England advice.



*Photo. 03: Aerial view of the tower during excavation (with an additional excavation, not part of the current investigation, shown at top right of view).*

## 4. RESULTS

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### 4.1 Stratigraphy and Interpretation

#### 4.1.1 Trench A (*Illus. 08, 09*)

This trench was situated within the north-western corner of the lower floor of the bastle and measured 1x1 m.

Beneath a 0.05m layer of modern accumulated dark grey silty loam and bird waste (100-A) was a surface made up of rounded and worn cobbles averaging 0.15m in size (101-A). This surface was slightly uneven in its survival, and did not survive well within the area of the trench closest to the walls of the bastle. Here, a dark grey silty loam (102-A) continued beneath the excavated depth of the trench.

#### 4.1.2 Trench B (*Illus. 08, 09*)

This trench was situated against the eastern side of the lower floor of the bastle and measured 1x1 m.

Beneath a 0.10m layer of modern accumulated dark grey silty loam and bird waste (100-B) was a surface made up of rounded and worn cobbles averaging 0.15m in size (101-B). This surface survived reasonably well across the whole of the investigation trench. A small area of coal-dust rich silting (103-B) survived across the northern part of these cobbles, and measured up to 0.10m deep

#### 4.1.3 Trench C (*Illus.08*) – Trench cancelled

#### 4.1.4 Trench D (*Illus.08, 09*)

This trench was situated within the south-western corner of the lower floor of the bastle and measured 1x1 m.

Beneath a 0.05m layer of modern accumulated dark grey silty loam and bird waste (100-D) was a surface made up of rounded and worn cobbles averaging 0.15m in size (101-D). This surface survived reasonably well across the whole of the investigation trench.

#### 4.1.5 Trench E (*Illus.08, 09*)

This trench was located within the north central part of the lower floor of the bastle and measured 2x1 m.

Beneath a 0.10m layer of modern accumulated dark grey silty loam and bird waste (100-D) was a surface made up of rounded and worn cobbles averaging 0.15m in size (101-D). This surface survived reasonably well across the whole of the investigation trench.

#### 4.1.6 Trench F1 (*Illus.08, 10*)

This trench was located within the north-western part of the first floor of the bastle and measured approximately 1x1.7 m



Illus 9a: Trench A looking NW



Illus 9b: Trench B looking E



Illus. 9c: Trench D looking SW

Illus. 9d: Trench E looking N



*Illus. 09a-d: Ground Floor Trenches A, B, C, E*



Illus. 10a: Trench F1 looking W



Illus. 10c Trench F2 looking S



Illus. 10b Trench F2 looking W

Illus. 10d: Trench G looking S



Illus. 10a-d: First Floor Trenches F1, F2, G

#### **4.1.7 Trench F2** (*Illus.08, 10*)

This trench was located within the south-western part of the first floor of the bastle and measured 1x1m.

Beneath the 0.20m thick turf, topsoil, and vegetation (104-F2), was a 0.30m thick layer of mixed demolition material including stone and mortar fragments, loam, ash, and pebbles. This lay above a very firm and compact mixed tan-orange clay (105-F2) containing occasional stone and mortar fragments, which continued beneath the excavated base of the trench. This likely represented a combination of packing material for the underlying vault, and levelling material for the floor which had once been here.

No floor surface was found in this trench and it is assumed that such flooring had been robbed after the building went out of use.

#### **4.1.8 Trench G** (*Illus.08 10*)

This trench was located within the central part of the first floor of the bastle and measured 1x1m.

Beneath the 0.20m thick turf, topsoil, and vegetation (104-G), was a 0.25m thick demolition material including stone and mortar fragments, loam, ash, and pebbles (105-F). This lay directly above a layer of very compacted crushed mortar and sandstone fragments (106-F) which formed the base of the trench. This likely represented a combination of packing material for the underlying vault, and levelling material for the floor which had once been here.

#### **4.1.9 Trench H1** (*Illus.08, 11*)

This trench was located within the north-eastern part of the first floor of the bastle and measured 1x1m.

#### **4.1.10 Trench H2** (*Illus.08, 11*)

This trench was located within the south-eastern part of the first floor of the bastle, immediately adjacent to the newel stairs, and measured 1x0.6m.

Beneath a thin (0/05m) layer of turf and topsoil (104-H2) was the remains of a flagged surface (107-F2). This surface was heavily cracked and worn, with perhaps only a single c.0.25x0.25m flag still remaining intact. No dating evidence was recovered from this surface, but it seems likely to have been a small remaining survival of the original stone flagged first floor of the bastle, perhaps left in-situ as a hard stand next to the staircase as the other stones were removed.

#### **4.1.11 Trenches I, J, P** (*Illus07, 12*)

These trenches were located against the south-eastern external wall of the bastle, and were positioned to investigate a possible building associated with the remains of a gable end seen imprinted on the west part of the south face of the upstanding wall. An associated notch in the plinth below this gable mark was assumed to have been made to enable an associated north-south wall to have cleanly abutted the standing bastle wall.

Illus. 11a: Trench H1



Illus. 11b: Trench H2 looking SE



Illus. 11c: Trench H2 vertical





Illus. 12a: Trench K looking W



Illus. 12b: Trench K looking W, showing foundation step



Illus. 12c: Trenches I,J,O looking NE



Illus. 12d: Trench I,J,O looking N showing lower courses and building wall foundation

Trenches I and J ran north-south along the projected walls of this building, whereas Trench P ran east-west between them. Trench I measured 12x5 m, Trench J measured 1x5 m, and Trench P measured 1x4 m.

No trace of a building was found in any of these trenches. The 0.15-0.20m thick turf and topsoil (108-I,J,P) generally lay directly upon the natural tan clay (109-I,J,P), which here contained several fragments of the underlying sandstone.

Towards the northern end of the trench was the construction cut (110-I) for the southern bastle wall, which here contained a rubble and clay packing (111-I), in front of which was a flat course of sandstone blocks forming a foundation layer for the overlying wall. The lower part of this wall (113-I), up to the level of the plinth, consisted of three courses of squared blocks, with the lowermost one being very much more fragmentary in nature.

The modern ground level within the southern part of Trenches I and J rose considerably as the trenches were cut into the upstanding remains of the spoil heaps associated with the adjacent quarry works. This material (114-I,J) consisted of loam, clay, and sandstone fragments).

#### **4.1.12 Trench K** (*Illus.07, 12*)

This east-west trench was located against the western wall of the bastle and measured 1x5m

Beneath the 0.15m thick turf and topsoil (108-K) was a layer of mixed loam (115-K) containing numerous inclusions of mortar and sandstone pieces, as well as post-medieval pottery. This lay at a maximum thickness of 0.15m against the wall of the building, and became thinner towards the west. This material lay directly above the natural tan clay (109-K) to the west, and above a slightly offset foundation course (116-K) for the wall. This foundation course consisted of roughly laid flat sandstones here offset 0.11m from overlying wall.

#### **4.1.13 Trench L** (*Illus.07, 13*)

This north-south trench was located against the northern wall of the bastle adjacent to a garderobe chute and measured 1x5m.

Beneath the 0.20m thick turf and topsoil (108-L) was a 0.20m thick layer of mixed loam (115-L) containing numerous inclusions of mortar and sandstone pieces, as well as several tooled sandstone blocks tumbled from the bastle walls. Beneath this, towards the north of the trench was the natural tan clay (109-L). Within the southern c.2.5m of the trench was a shallow east-west cut (117-L) or hollow which acted as a drain for the associated garderobe. This contained a 0.15m thick fill (118-L) of dark grey silt containing numerous charcoal and ash lenses, as well as post-medieval pottery and glass). This fill overlay the lower offset foundation course, which lay at a depth of 0.60m below the current ground surface and projected 0.38m from the standing wall line.

#### **4.1.14 Trench M** (*Illus.07, 14*)

This north-south trench was located against the northern wall of the bastle adjacent to a garderobe chute and measured 1x5m.

Beneath the 0.10m thick turf and topsoil (108-M) was a 0.20m thick layer of mixed loam (115-M) containing numerous inclusions of mortar and sandstone pieces, as well as several tooled sandstone blocks tumbled from the bastle walls. Beneath this, towards the north of the trench

was the natural tan clay (109-M). Within the southern c.2.5m of the trench was a shallow east-west cut (117-M) or hollow (maximum depth of 0.35m) which acted as a drain for the associated garderobe. This contained a 0.40m thick fill (118-M) of dark grey-black silt containing numerous charcoal and ash lenses, as well as post-medieval pottery and glass). This fill overlay the lower offset foundation course, which lay at a depth of 0.74m below the current ground surface and projected 0.43m from the standing wall line.

#### **4.1.15 Trench N** (*Illus.07, 15*)

This east-west trench was located against the eastern wall of the bastle and measured 1.7x5m.

Immediately beneath the 0.15m deep turf and topsoil (108-N) was what may have been the remains of a structure which originally stood against this eastern wall of the bastle. This survived as a carefully laid and partly edged cobble surface/floor (120-N), edged by a 0.65m wide rough sandstone north-south wall (121-N) along its eastern edge at a distance of 4.7m from the bastle wall. At the northern end of the cobbles were two shallow steps (122-N) forming a threshold and including several re-used worked stone blocks. These blocks likely came from the original phase of the building, therefore indicating that this external lean-to structure was of a later date. And although shallow, these steps would have sufficiently raised the floor level within the structure to help keep it dry. It is unclear whether it is merely a coincidence that this apparent structure is immediately adjacent to a rubble-patched hole/entrance through the eastern building wall at this point.

This building had been constructed directly upon the natural tan clay levels (109-N), which otherwise lay directly beneath the turf and topsoil (108-N) within this trench.

#### **4.1.16 Trench O** (*Illus.07, 17, 18, 19*)

This trench was located around the south eastern area of the bastle and included both an area immediately outside the building walls, as well as the internal area of the newel stairs. The outer trench formed an L-shape, running 7m east-west (and up to 1.7m wide) along the wall of the building, before turning south for a further 5m (and up to 1.3m wide).

#### **The external area**

Beneath the 0.15m thick turf and topsoil (108-O) was a large rectangular step or plinth set up against the southern wall of the bastle in the area of the newel stair. This step was solidly made up of sandstone blocks, faced on the outer sides, and was evidently of two phases. The earliest phase (123-O) measured 4.3m by 0.85m and was positioned directly outside the area of the staircase. The blocks were bonded with a hard white mortar, and evidently represent an entrance point into the adjacent stairwell – or the projecting base of a stairway into this area. This step was subsequently enlarged (124-O), with the original stonework becoming incorporated within a larger rectangular plinth/step which projected slightly beyond the eastern edge of the bastle. This later phase measured 5m long and 1.7m wide. It is unknown whether it continued around the corner and along the eastern wall of the building, though it is perhaps more likely that it merely provided a stable foundation for a north-south staircase up the outside of the building to the first floor. Notably, the approach to the building appears to have been from this direction, which would have avoided circumnavigating the adjacent quarry and spoil heap between the modern field gate and the bastle.

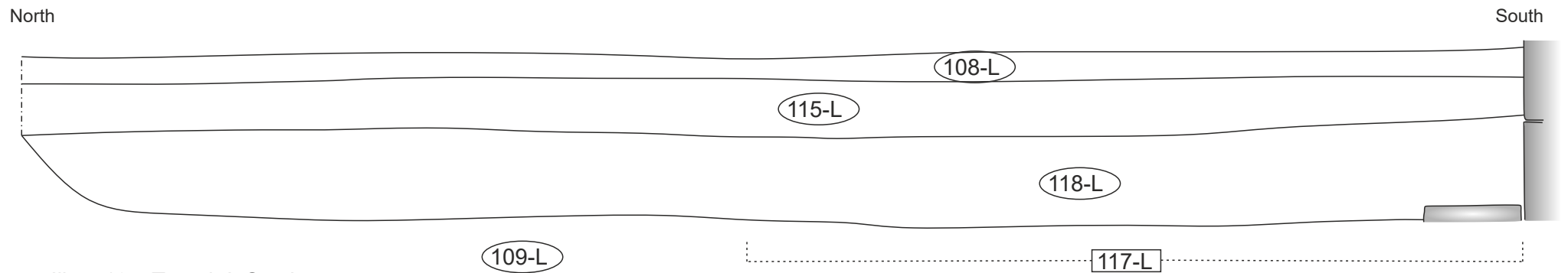
Projecting for a distance of 1.6m from beneath the southern edge of this step/plinth was an area of cobbling (125-O), roughly bounded on its southern edge by larger stones. This may either



Illus. 13a: Trench L looking SE



Illus. 13b: Trench L looking S showing offset wall foundation



Illus. 13c: Trench L Section



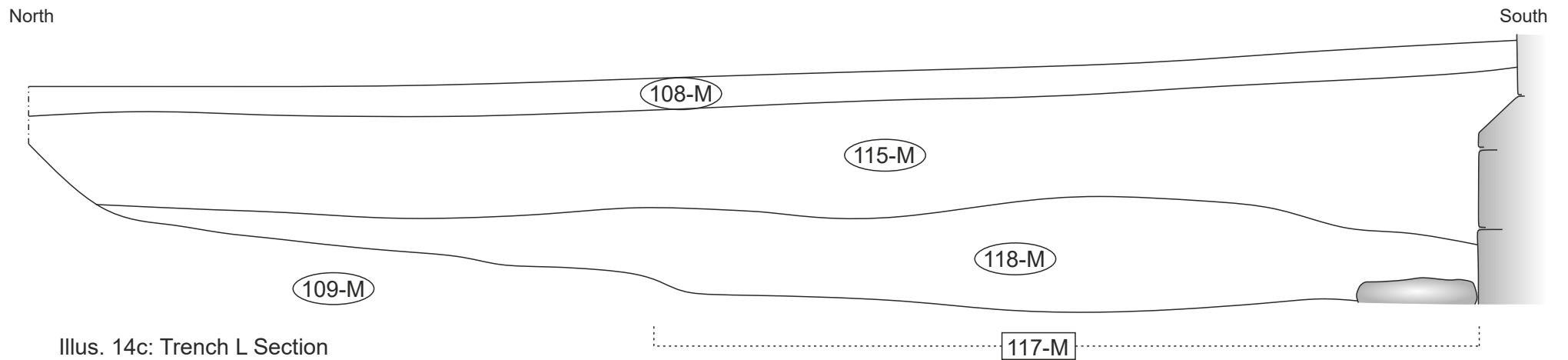
Illus. 13a-c: Trench L



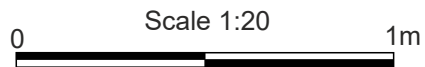
Illus. 14a: Trench L looking SE



Illus. 14b: Trench L looking SE showing offset foundation



Illus. 14c: Trench L Section



Illus. 14a-c: Trench L



Illus. 15a: Trench N looking W



Illus. 15b: Trench N looking SW



Illus. 15c: Trench N looking NW

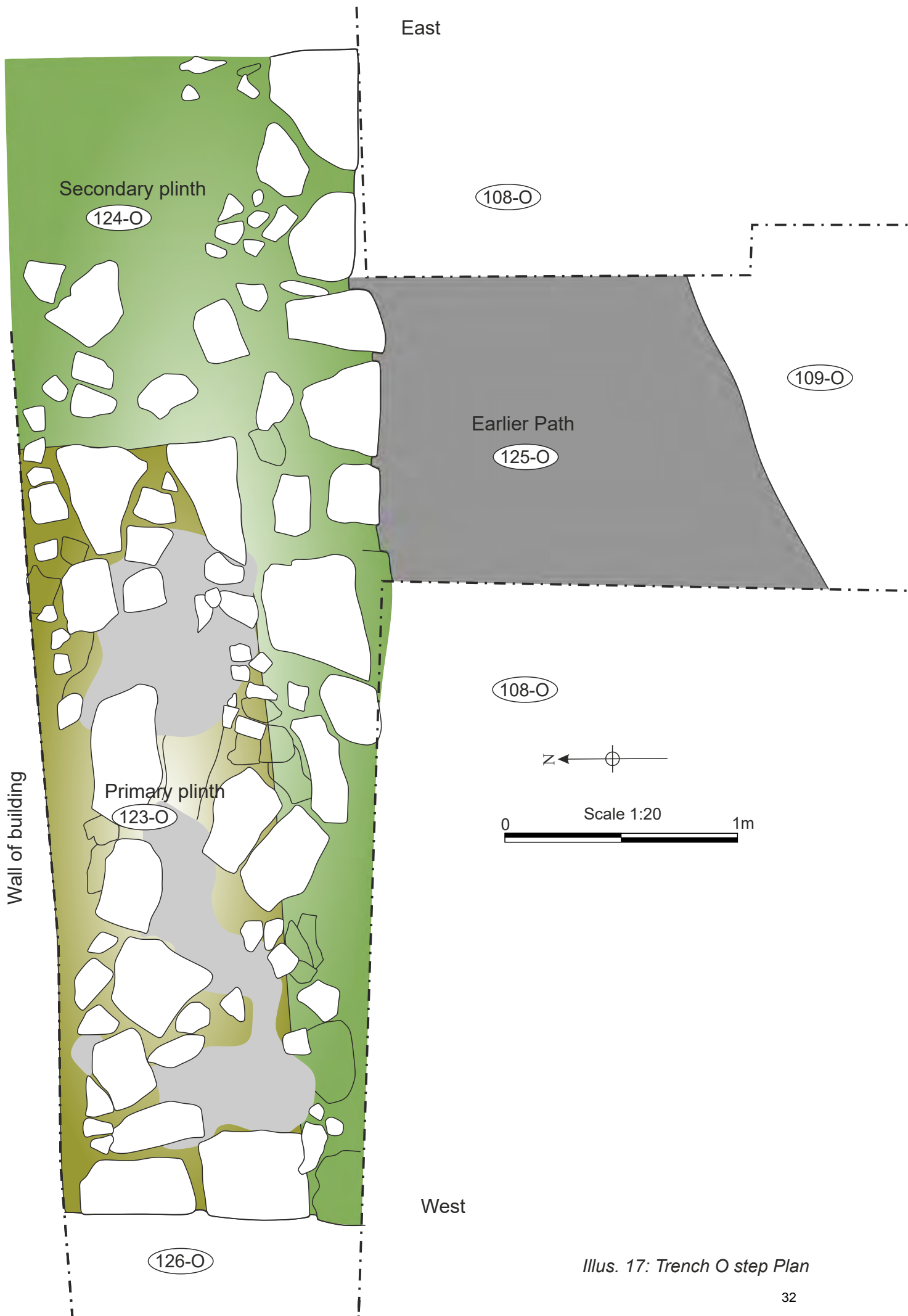
Illus. 15d: Trench N looking N



Illus. 15: Trench N Photos



Illus. 16: Trench N Plan



Illus. 17: Trench O step Plan





*Illus. 18: Trench O newel stair plans and section*



Illus. 19a: Newel stair looking NE



Illus. 19b: Trench O stair/plinth looking W



Illus. 19c: Trench O, earlier path



Illus. 19d: Excavated newel stair looking NW

*Illus. 19a-d: Trench O photos*

have represented a foundation layer for the stepped area, or more likely an earlier path which was subsequently built over. Beneath this area of cobbling was the natural tan clay (109-O)

To the immediate west of the step/plinth, in the area of the current entranceway into the ground floor of the bastle, was a rough spread of small sandstone pieces (126-O) which continued beyond the excavated area. This surface abutted the plinth, and therefore represents a secondary surface around this doorway.

### **The newel stair**

Following the initial clean of this area, it was apparent that the lower part of the stairwell had been filled in with loose rubble and tooled blocks (127-O), evidently from dismantled/collapsed areas of the initial phase of the building. Three faced sandstone blocks (128-O) forming the southern wall of the entrance to the stairs were visible, along with the upper tread and newel of one stair (129-O), climbing in an anti-clockwise direction. Behind these was a mixed packing of sandstone blocks, fragments, mortar, and soil (130-O).

The mixed backfill (127-O) filling the surviving lower stair area was subsequently removed, revealing three surviving steps (129-O), with risers averaging 0.23m, and treads measuring up to 0.36m wide. At the base of these stairs, a thin layer of coaldust-rich silt (131-O) had accumulated over a rough, sparsely cobbled surface (132-O). These cobbles were pressed into the underlying natural tan clay (109-O), with several areas of friable bedrock also visible.

From the upper edge of the surviving southern wall (128-O) of the stairwell, there were three courses of squared stone blocks measuring 0.72m down to the cobbled surface.

Within the doorway between the staircase and the ground floor corridor into the bastle was a carved stone threshold step (134-O), which was set directly onto the natural bedrock (109\_O). This step was made up of two blocks, the faces of which were carved with a curved scrollwork decoration and measured 0.23m high. The southernmost stone measured 0.43m long (as visible) and the northernmost 0.66m long (as visible). Above this threshold was a 0.17m deep accumulation (133-O) of modern silty loam, as was found within those trenches excavated within the ground floor of the building.

## **4.2 List of Contexts**

- 100 Dark grey silty loam within ground floor of bastle
- 101 cobble surface within ground floor of bastle
- 102 Dark grey silty loam within ground floor of bastle
- 103 Coal dust-rich silt within ground floor of bastle
- 104 Turf and foliage on first floor of bastle
- 105 Clay and stone fragment vault packing on first floor of bastle
- 106 Mortar and sandstone vault packing on first floor of bastle (Tr.G)
- 107 Flagged surface on first floor of bastle (Tr. H2)
- 108 Turf and topsoil outside bastle
- 109 Natural clay and sandstone
- 110 Construction cut for bastle foundations, south wall (Tr.I)
- 111 rubble and clay fill for 110 (Tr.I)
- 112 Stepped foundations for bastle (Tr.I)
- 113 Wall stones, south wall of bastle (Tr. I,J)
- 114 Quarry spoil-heap – soil, stone frags (Tr. I,J)
- 115 Mixed accumulation below turf and topsoil

- 116 Foundations for west wall of bastle (Tr.K)
- 117 'cut' for garderobe channel along north wall of bastle (Tr.L,M)
- 118 Fill of 117
- 119 Offset foundation for north wall of bastle (Tr.L,M)
- 120 Cobble surface/floor (Tr.N)
- 121 North-south wall (Tr.N)
- 122 Possible steps/threshold (Tr.N)
- 123 Possible step/plinth; first phase (Tr.O)
- 124 Possible step/plinth; second phase (Tr.O)
- 125 stone spread/surface (Tr.O)
- 126 Rough sandstone surface outside door (Tr.O)
- 127 Fill of stairwell (Tr.O)
- 128 South face of stairwell (Tr.O)
- 129 Stairs (Tr.O)
- 130 Initial construction packing within stairwell (Tr.O)
- 131 Silt accumulation under 127 (Tr.O)
- 132 Surface at base of stairs (Tr.O)
- 133 Silty loam accumulation in ground floor corridor (Tr.O)
- 134 Threshold between corridor and stairwell (Tr.O)

### 4.3 Finds

A range of artefactual and ecofactual materials were recovered from the excavations, the latter restricted to the under-stair area at the south-east corner of the ground floor and outside garderobe chutes on the north side of the building.

#### 4.3.1 Artefacts

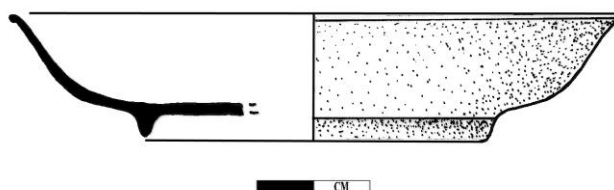
##### TRENCH A:



Kennis Yip

Porcelain. 4 conjoining fragments of porcelain recovered from HB22, Trench A have been identified a part of a finely-potted eighteenth-century Chinese *famille rose* porcelain tea saucer, produced at the famous Jingdezhen kilns in Jiangxi province, China (pers. comm., Prof. Peter Lam).<sup>1</sup> *Famille rose*, named after its distinctive gold-based pink enamel, was a technique developed around 1720 in Jingdezhen (Vainker 1991, 204).

Dimensions: height 2.3 cm, rim diam. 11 cm (17.5%), foot ring diam. 7 cm, foot ring height 0.3 cm, wall thickness 0.1-0.2 cm.



<sup>1</sup> Professor Peter Y.K. Lam is a world-renowned Hong Kong based expert in Chinese ceramics, and former director of the Chinese University of Hong Kong Art Museum.

This particular type of overglaze polychrome painted decoration involved the application of an opaque white enamel called glassy white containing arsenic trioxide over high-fired white porcelain (Li 2014, 375). The ceramics would go through a second firing process at a lower temperature (typically 600-900°C) after the enamel colours were applied to the glaze (Xu 2014, 106).

This Jingdezhen saucer is decorated with a combination of pink peony and butterfly of typical Chinese style, quite unlike the westernised designs often seen in *guangcai* ware *famillie rose* porcelain, which was enamelled in Canton. In *guangcai* ware, the high-fired white porcelain was transhipped from Jingdezhen to Canton, where it was then decorated in styles tailored-made to suit the expanding European export market (pers. comm., Prof. Peter Lam). Similar Jingdezhen *famillie rose* porcelain dated to the early Qianlong reign (c.1751) was found in the so-called 'Nanking Cargo' shipwreck. The vessel was identified as the *Geldermalsen*, a cargo ship belonging to the Dutch East India Company ('VOC'), which set sail in 1751 from Canton carrying valuable cargo of Jingdezhen porcelain, raw silk, silk textiles, tea, gold ingots and medicinal herbs. It sank in the South China Sea in 1752 enroute to Amsterdam and was eventually found and salvaged by Michael Hatcher in 1985 (Jörg 1986). Approximately 239,000 pieces of porcelain were carried in the *Geldermalsen*, of which over 150,000 were recovered in 1985. According to the shipping invoice, the *Geldermalsen* carried a fairly typical cargo of export porcelain, which comprised simple wares for daily use, dominated by teacups and saucers, while the more expensive enamel wares were outnumbered by blue-and-white and Chinese Imari wares (Jörg 1986). Jörg (1986) further suggested that 'the assortment of the *Geldermalsen* is characteristic of this entire period and in fact, of the whole 18<sup>th</sup> century porcelain trade of the VOC.'

*Kennis Yip, October, 2022*

- 1 stoneware
- 4 tin-glazed buff earthenware with blue painted decor. on white underglaze slip.
- 1 white, tin-glazed base in buff fabric
- 3 int/ext. brown-glazed earthenware
- 1 glass vessel rim
- 6 clay pipe bowls, 2 stems – no stamps; broadly 18<sup>th</sup> century type
- 1 large, bent iron nail or bolt.

#### **TRENCH D:**

1 piece of hard-fired pot with ext. 'splashed' green glaze on oxidised reddish surface, with black reduced core and interior. Made from unsorted clay. Probably later medieval in origin.

#### **TRENCH I:**

- 3 transfer-printed blue on white buff stoneware.
- 8 other white-wares.
- 8 dk. brown-glazed earthenwares AND 11 streaked/marbled slipwares, some with ext. brown glaze.
- 1 ext. light-brown glazed earthenware rim of 17/18<sup>th</sup> century character.
- 16 semi-opaque, laminating (mostly base) glass bottle fragments – probably 18<sup>th</sup> century in origin.
- 1 transparent bottle fragment – probably of 19<sup>th</sup> century manufacture.
- 1 square-headed iron nail and one piece of flat, iron strap.
- 2 brick fragments, 5.6 mm thick where full profile survives.

**TRENCH K:**

1 large base fragment of int. white-slipped and glazed red earthenware of prob. late-18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century origin.

**TRENCH L:**

2 semi-opaque, laminating glass bottle base fragments – probably 18<sup>th</sup>-century type.  
1 thin window glass fragment.

**TRENCH M:**

1 stoneware  
1 int. cream-glazed earthenware.  
1 fine brown-ware rim with int./ext. glaze.  
2 (?)roof tile.  
5 semi-opaque, laminating glass bottle fragments (mostly basal) – probably 18<sup>th</sup> century type.  
3 thin, window glass fragments.

The great majority of dateable artefacts recovered from the excavations are of 18<sup>th</sup> century, with only a single fragment of later medieval pottery and a pancheon fragment of possible 19<sup>th</sup>-century origin falling outside that range. Much of the pottery is of relatively high-status, in keeping with the manorial status of the building and its occupants at that time, but utilitarian pots associated with cooking and food preparation/storage are also well-represented. The discovery of a number of clay pipe bowls of the same, 18<sup>th</sup>-century form from the upper storey suggests re-use of the building immediately after abandonment as a manorial residence.

**4.3.2 Ecofacts**

<b>TRENCH A:</b> 5 cockle shells, 2 oyster shell. Coal and coal waste.	<b>TRENCH D:</b> 12 animal bone.
<b>TRENCH I:</b> 3 animal bone.	<b>TRENCH I:</b> 3 animal bone.
<b>TRENCH I:</b> 3 animal bone.	<b>TRENCH L:</b> 1 cockle shell.
<b>TRENCH M:</b> 8 animal bone. 2 oyster shell. 1 burnt shale.	

The ecofacts and other materials recovered from the excavations at Hepburn Bastle are the remains of food waste and, in the case of burnt shale and coal, cooking fires. These materials are probably of the same date as the majority of artifacts, suggesting that shellfish was being consumed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as well as domestic animals.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 5.1 Conclusions

Within the building, the trenches on the ground floor uncovered a rough cobble surface throughout the whole of the main floor area, with no clear indication of earlier floor levels beneath. Those on the first floor recorded a substantial build-up of comparatively recent material post-dating the final abandonment of the structure in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Beneath this was clay-based packing and levelling material over the underlying barrel-vault. The first floor in particular showed a considerable build-up of post-abandonment infill material, which has promoted extensive growth of shrubs and ivy the roots of which were clearly compromising the mortar bonding between surviving stone walls and may in places penetrate to the barrel vaulting. The small area of flagging remaining towards the entrance to the newel stairs on this upper floor may have been the last remaining patch of a more extensive flagged surface which once covered the whole level.

Outside the building, Trench O, within the area of the newel stair recorded additional stairs beneath later backfilling levels which lead down to the ground floor passage. Outside this, the remains of two phases of a plinth or foundation for a step or stairs were recorded overlying an earlier path around the side of the building.

Trench N, on the eastern side of the building, contained a cobbled area and step bounded by a possible wall, which may have represented an earlier structure or porch against this wall. This and Trench O indicate that the focus of the building was formerly orientated towards an approach from the northern end of the site.

Trenches L and M on the north side of the building recorded shallow ditches or hollows beneath the garderobe chutes which contained post-medieval pottery, glass, and ash/charcoal. Still traceable on the modern ground surface as a wide linear patch of nettles, this shallow channel was likely cleaned out fairly often as the remaining fill contained only more modern material. These trenches, along with Trench K on the western side of the building, also indicate a considerable build-up of soil and turf levels above the stepped foundation plinth onto which the building was originally constructed.

Investigations into a structure against the south wall of the building (Trenches I, J, O) failed to recover any surviving evidence to accompany the roof scar visible on the south wall of the building here. This structure has therefore been entirely removed, and it has been speculated that it may originally have been a fairly ephemeral construction, perhaps of wood. Given the care taken to cut a groove along the wall for an associated roof however, the latter option seems unlikely.

It is concluded that sub-surface remains of significance appear to survive externally only adjacent to the east side and east part of the south side of the building, where floor surfaces were uncovered which appear to post-date the abandonment of the building as a residence in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Elsewhere, it remains possible that other remains survive below the overburden which exists to variable depths – as indeed shown by excavations carried out by other parties some 20 m east of the building, which have also revealed features apparently of relatively modern origin. Internally, the ground floor of the building has been shown to be almost-entirely covered by a cobbled surface, probably of relatively late origin, sitting on a silty base which is likely to be an infill deposit. Any remains of earlier surfaces existing within or below

this infill deposit could be negatively impacted by any future uncontrolled groundworks taking place within the building. The upper floor of the building is covered by a deep deposit of overburden derived from demolition deposits and natural build-up of a humic soil derived from leaf-fall. This deposit is up to 0.50 m deep in places and sits upon what appears to be a levelling deposit of reddish sub-soil which, since it sits upon the upper surface of the stone vault, is deeper to the north and south sides of the floor area than in the middle. Only in the south-east corner was a fragment of paved flooring revealed which may be a remnant of an original, flagged surface. Any future groundworks in the interior have the potential to impact negatively on any other surviving remnants of this surface, but the levelling surface below it is so compact that inadvertent damage to the vault below is unlikely to occur, unless by means of root penetration from some of the more substantial trees and bushes now growing in the open floor area and within the surrounding walls.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Should the current proposals for improving access to the building be carried out, involving consolidation where necessary prior to roofing with external support, it is recommended that the post-abandonment build-up of material on the first floor of the structure be removed, including top-soil above the original levelling material forming the sub-floor, and the ivy, trees and bushes which are currently weakening the mortar bonds between the surviving walls and may be penetrating the barrel vaulting.

On the ground floor, if proposals for public access go ahead, the current almost-complete cobbled surface should be infilled where patches have been lost in order to recreate a safe and continuous, albeit slightly undulating surface, which could also be cleaned of remaining organic materials as an additional safety measure and for aesthetic reasons.

With respect to the internal stairwell and adjacent area, further excavation might reveal more surviving features but would be unlikely to improve significantly the current understanding of its structural phasing.

Elsewhere, with the exception of the south-east corner and south part of the east side of the building, few features of note survive externally beyond the limited extent of the building foundations. Where significant features or deposits are absent, as appears to be the case against the west part of the south side, the west side, the entire north side and the north part of the east side of the building, it is suggested that, other factors notwithstanding, no evidence for sub-surface archaeological impediments to the construction of supports for external roofing pillars as proposed has been found, although it is recommended that any limited excavations for that purpose should be carried out or monitored archaeologically. Where significant features exist - albeit superficially contemporary with the post-abandonment phase of the building when it was used as a farm-building, as at the south-east corner and on the east side of the building - any groundworks would have to be carried out archaeologically, supported by a full Written Scheme of Investigation and pre-approved with Scheduled Monument Consent.

It is also suggested that, in those areas where significant features or deposits are absent, as against the west part of the south side, the west side, the entire north side and the north part of the east side of the building, there are no archaeological impediments to limited ground reduction to the original ground-level of the building, as also proposed in discussions about improved access for the site, although other factors, such as visual impact and safety which may militate against such a course of action would also have to be considered.





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## **APPENDIX 1: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT HEPBURN BASTLE, CHILLINGHAM, NORTHUMBERLAND - Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation.**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Location, Extent and Context of the site**

Hepburn Bastle is situated just inside the southern boundary of Chillingham Park below Hepburn Moor and Ros Castle, bounded to the south by a minor road alongside Hepburn Woods on the edge of the Till Valley in North Northumberland (*Illus. 01-03*). It has extensive views to the west and north-west across the valley of the Till to the Cheviots beyond. Chillingham Park, the grounds and parkland of Chillingham Castle within which the site sits, occupies a large part of the parish of Chillingham which extends from the valley of the River Till to the western side of the Kylee hills on Hepburn Moor. Chillingham is the main settlement of the parish, which also includes a few scattered farmsteads and hamlets, including Hepburn, as well as parkland, open moorland and forest plantation.

The bastle itself sits on the edge of the park's grassland but is bordered on its south side by a disused quarry and associated spoil heaps, with a remnant of forestry surviving between it and Hepburn hamlet to the south-west.

#### **1.2 Project Background**

The owner of the site, Sir Humphry Wakefield, is keen to secure the future of the building by consolidating it where necessary, protecting it from the elements and opening it to visitors to enable them to interpret the changes to the building over its long and turbulent history. As part of this vision, it is proposed to expose the original floor surfaces of the bastle and reduce external levels in the immediate curtilage of the building to more closely reflect original ground levels.

An archaeological assessment of the building was undertaken in 2018 by Peter Ryder, who recommended that excavations should be undertaken within and outside the building to gain a greater understanding of the depth and extent of its floor surfaces and other structural remains prior to any major invasive works on the site.

Sir Humphry Wakefield would like to follow this recommendation and gain consent for these works to inform plans for future works which aim to safeguard the site for future generations, and to allow members of the public to explore and gain pleasure from it.

#### **1.3 Archaeological Background and Potential**

Whilst the main focus of this project is a tower of late medieval origin, this part of Northumberland is known for the richness of its prehistoric remains, including Mesolithic flints (N3645) found on Hepburn Moor, and Neolithic cup and ring marked stones such as a small group (N3440) some 1 km east of the bastle site on a rocky outcrop at Ox Eye on Hepburn Moor, with others near Ros Castle (N3390). Bronze Age remains include burials such as Blaeweria cairn south-east of the bastle and a cairn cemetery (N3417) 1.5 km east, as well as closer settlements with associated field systems and/or cairnfields (N3629 & N3669) near Hepburn Crags, within 1km east and south-east of the bastle. Several Iron Age settlement sites are known in the vicinity, including the prominent Ros Castle camp and the clearly defensive Hepburn Bell enclosure, as well as others in more lowland/sheltered positions, the closest to the site being

Hepburn Crags camp 400 m to the south-east (N3600), none of which display any evidence of Roman period settlement despite the presence of the Devil's Causeway some 2.7 km to the west.

The early medieval period is not represented on or close to the site, although clearly some level of occupation and land-use would have continued after the Roman period until the Norman Conquest when archaeological remains again attest to specific activities. Chillingham and Hepburn are medieval villages referenced in documentary sources to the 13th century, both of which appear to have been cleared upon the creation of Chillingham Park. Each was associated with a defensible building and a chapel or church. The earliest reference to the de Hebburn family, owners of Hepburn tower or 'bastle', is dated 1271 and in 1509 the house was still in the hands of the same family, at that time owned by Thomas de Hebburn, when it is said to have been able to accommodate a garrison of twenty horsemen. The Northumberland County History XIV (1935, 347) notes the paucity of subsequent documentary records, beyond references to a 'hold' here in 1514, a tower in 1541, and a 'mansion house' in 1564. The building is thought to have been abandoned after the death in 1755 of Robert Hebburn, the last male heir, whose son in law, the Rev. Edward Brudenell, demolished part of the building.

The redevelopment of both Hepburn tower or 'bastle' and the larger Chillingham Castle as country houses between the later 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries reflected the growing security of the region at this time. Similarly, Chillingham Park, a deer park since medieval times, was re-developed as a country garden and parkland in the 19th century when the greater part of the villages of Chillingham and Hepburn and their outlying farmsteads were also built. The economy of the parish is largely agricultural but 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century activities included a millstone quarry, saw mill, and lime kiln, the remains of which survive.

There have been various campaigns of restoration on the bastle, both in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and relatively recently; a photogrammetric survey of the building was made in February 1995 by Mason Land Services Ltd, on behalf of English Heritage, prior to the latest programme of conservation and repair

#### **1.4 The survival of potential archaeological remains**

The site is of variable character with respect to the potential survival of archaeological remains within the site, comprising a massively built late medieval tower with more ephemeral traces of other buildings and land divisions externally.

The bastle itself, as recently described by Peter Ryder (2018; see also Ryder 2021) is a rectangular structure c 16.6 by 10.8 m externally, of two storeys and attics. At basement level the walls are c 2.7 m thick, except for the 3.5 m thick east wall which includes a mural chamber. The basement retains its barrel vault, lit by a loop at each end, and contains an interesting mural chamber at the east end with a deep pit - perhaps a safe or prison - in its floor. Externally there is a hollow-chamfered plinth at or near ground level, and a chamfered set-back a little below eaves level, but its most characteristic features are the twin gables at east and west ends. The shell of the building remains more or less intact, but requires some consolidation at first floor level.

The entrance, altered in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, is at the east end of the south wall, with remains of a newel stair alongside, the well of which is such a size that it must have been accommodated in a projecting turret, now fallen. Indeed, close inspection of the stair well reveals complexities, some of them due to post-medieval alteration, with various blocked openings and stairs rising anti-clockwise (at the foot of the well) and clockwise (at first floor level).

The upper floor seems to have been divided into three rooms by transverse walls, only traces of which remain, and lit by various mullioned and transomed windows. Each room had its own fireplace, and the western also had its own wardrobe, adjacent to a window on the north. Above is what was, in the latest phase of the building's use, an attic, with small square windows in the gables, but there are also the remains of fireplaces, one at the west end cut into by a spout draining the valley gutter between the two roofs. This, and the chamfered set-back just below the present eaves, indicate that the building was originally a medieval tower of c 1500, later cut down in height and rebuilt with twin gables.

Externally, the remains of a gable end seen imprinted on the west part of the south face of the upstanding tower, associated with a damaged plinth below, show that a building was formerly attached here, although there is no doorway connecting it directly to the tower. The cut for its roof is visible, its apex a course below the chamfered off-set with sockets for two levels of purlins and a diagonally set ridge.

In addition, Lidar evidence (see *Illus. 06*) shows that various linear earthworks, some of them potentially agricultural - including rig & furrow with lynchets - and others defining enclosure boundaries, survive around the bastle. While most of these are seen on the west and south-west sides of the bastle, the bastle itself appears to sit in the south-west part of a c. 1 ha enclosure extending to the north and west.

It is likely that most or all of these earthwork features are contemporary with medieval and later phases in the defensible and subsequent uses of the site - some may be the remains of formal gardens, for example - but it is also possible that the site of the current building sits upon earlier built remains or deposits of unknown character and date.

Associated with the period following abandonment of the bastle in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century are the remains of a quarry immediately to the south. The quarry pit itself contains numerous worked stones, which may simply be rubble remains of the bastle structure and its southward extension, but could represent the remains of dressing. Quarry waste mounds extending from the quarry towards the south side of the bastle are likely to preserve remains of the building extension noted above.

## **1.5 The Impact of the Development**

Any sub-surface remains of significance surviving within the site are currently protected by overburden which exists to variable depths internally and externally, but such remains could be negatively impacted by uncontrolled groundworks intended to expose floor surfaces and other structural remains.

Work on the built fabric and surfaces of the built assemblage, particularly the 16-18<sup>th</sup> century tower, has the potential to impact negatively if significant features are damaged or obscured, but may have a positive impact if such features are revealed or conserved.

## **1.6 Previous Archaeological Work**

Prior to the latest programme of conservation and repair, in 1995 Peter Ryder produced a descriptive record of the structure based on his site visits and a photogrammetric survey of the building made in February 1995 by Mason Land Services Ltd. on behalf of English Heritage. Other

than this and previous episodes of consolidation work, principally to the first floor of the building, no invasive archaeological work has taken place on the site although various interventions have occurred within the structure and in its environs which indicate that archaeological remains survive there.

## **1.7 Proposals for evaluation**

In broad terms, the proposed programme of evaluation excavation is intended to be of minimal impact and has the main purpose of establishing the presence and character of any archaeological remains surviving on the site.

### **1.7.1 Floors**

#### **Issues:**

Neither the lower or upper floors are currently safe for visitors to enter. The lower floor contains numerous loose stones, most of which do not derive from its two vaulted spaces, sitting within a matrix of organic soil, while the upper floor has been buried in soil and vegetation since a previous episode of consolidation. The deposits of soil appear to be causing damage the structure by making its walls permanently wet and increasing the load upon them.

#### **Proposals for evaluation:**

It is proposed to investigate the floors in key locations to determine what remains of the original floor surfaces, confirming levels and informing future decisions on conservation and restoration. In particular, it will be ascertained whether any of the original floor surfaces remain and, if so, in what condition. In addition, traces of dividing walls will assist with the future management and interpretation of the building.

### **1.7.2 External Levels**

#### **Issues:**

It is clear that the levels around the building have increased over time, especially to the south and east due to the deposition of quarry waste and, perhaps, waste from previous episodes of structural clearance and consolidation work.

#### **Proposals for evaluation:**

It is proposed to investigate several key and representative areas through strip trenches arranged orthogonal to the building in order to determine the level of overburden, whether any floor surfaces survive and if any other features lie hidden around the outside of the bastle, notably remains of the attached building on the south side.

### **1.7.3 Newel Stair**

#### **Issues:**

As well as openings representing different phases of use, there have clearly been at least two forms of stair within the bastle, one rising clockwise and the other anti-clockwise.

#### **Proposals for evaluation:**

It is proposed to evaluate this area by removing overburden to the level of solid masonry and/or floors, thereby deriving evidence regarding the structural composition and phasing of the stair and form of the outer wall, as well as how the stair was accessed.



#### 1.7.4 Former structure on south wall

**Issue:**

At the west end of the south wall are traces of an attached north-south building, noted above, with some remains of possible grassed-over footings extending towards the quarry to the south.

**Proposals for evaluation:**

It is proposed to explore the footings of the structure to see how far they extended to the south, and to find any evidence of what form the building took, the state of its floors and possible functional indications.

#### 1.7.5 'Tunnel'

**Issues:**

There have long been rumours of a tunnel leading out of the bastle. A ground penetrating radar survey recently found possible evidence of such a structure to the east of the structure.

**Proposals for evaluation:**

Investigation by trial trenching across the line of this putative tunnel will determine whether any such feature exists and, if so, its method of construction, state of survival and function (whether if it was an escape tunnel or water channel, for example).

### 1.8 Proposed Interventions

It is considered that a programme of intrusive archaeological field evaluation based on the excavation of linear trial trenches and / or test pits) is an appropriate evaluation method. The purpose of this exercise would be to establish the presence / absence, significance and extent of the archaeological resource within the parts of the site investigated. The exercise will also establish the extent to which medieval or later archaeological horizons have been buried and sealed below later deposits and the extent of any modern truncation, if applicable.

The results of this exercise would inform the LPAs assessment of the application, having regard to paragraphs 194, 195 and 203 of the NPPF, and the detail of an appropriate archaeological mitigation response, if required, in line with paragraphs 56 and 205 of the NPPF.

Thus, internally, four test pits and one strip trench ('A'- 'E') are proposed in the corners of the ground floor vaulted space and another 3 strip trenches ('F'- 'H') across the upper floor (see *Illus. 07a*). The purpose of these will be to investigate the depth of overburden, test for the presence of floor surfaces and, if present, record their character and state of survival.

Externally, a total of 7 trenches ('I' to 'O') of varied size are proposed (see *Illus. 07b*), along with another two to be contingent on the results of these, as follows:

I: Trench I, 12 m long N-S by 1 m wide, will explore the east side of a building attached to the south side of the bastle, known from grass-covered foundations and an imprint of the gable wall on the south side of the bastle. It will also investigate the depth of overburden/original ground level on the south side of the bastle.

J: Trench J, 5 m long N-S by 1 m wide, will explore the west side of a building attached to the south side of the bastle, also establishing the depth of overburden/original ground level on the south side of the bastle.

K: Trench K, 5 m long E-W by 1 m wide, will explore the west side of the bastle for possible floor surfaces and establish the original ground level.

L: Trench L, 5 m long N-S by 1 m wide, will explore the north side of the bastle for depth of overburden, possible floor surfaces and establish the original ground level.

M: Trench M, 5 m long N-S by 1 m wide, will explore the north side of the bastle for possible floor surfaces and establish the original ground level.

N: Trench N, 5 m long E-W by 1 m wide, will explore the east side of the bastle for possible floor surfaces and establish the original ground level.

O: Trench O, 7 m long E-W by 1-2 m wide, will explore the newel stair area and investigate the south side of the bastle for possible floor surfaces, additional features associated with the adjacent doorway and the original ground level in that area.

P: Contingency Trench P, 5 m long by 1-2 m wide, will explore the position of the putative 'tunnel' if its course suggested by geophysical survey or other means lies outside the scope of trenches 'I' - 'O'.

Q: Contingency Trench Q, 5 m long E-W by 1-2 m wide, will establish the width and record the nature and state of survival of the floor of the building known to have existed on the south side of the bastle if not satisfactorily revealed in Trenches 'I' & 'J'.

## **2. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION**

2.1.1 The Field Investigation will be carried out by means of Archaeological Evaluation.

2.1.2 All work will be carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Chartered Institute for Archaeology (CIfA) and will follow the CIfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations.

2.1.3 All archaeological staff will be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles. Before commencement of work they will have been made aware of what work is required under the specification and they will understand the aims and methodologies of the project.

2.1.4 Each context identified as important will be considered for recording by drawing and/or photography.

2.1.5 An appropriate control network for the survey of any archaeological remains revealed will be established.

2.1.6 The survey control network will be related to the OS grid.

2.1.7 The survey control network and the position of recorded structures, features and finds will be located on a map of an appropriate scale (1:2500 or 1:500)

2.1.8 At least one absolute height value related to OD will be recorded for each archaeological context.

2.1.9 All processing, storage and conservation of finds will be carried out in compliance with the relevant ClfA and UKIC (United Kingdom Institute of Conservation) guidelines.

2.1.10 Portable remains will be removed by hand; all artefacts encountered will be recovered.

2.1.12 All staff must be suitably qualified and experienced for recording historic buildings and a curriculum vitae will be supplied if requested to the Northumberland Planning Archaeologist for approval prior to work commencing. Furthermore, all staff will familiarise themselves with the archaeological background of the site and with the work required, and must understand the projects aims and methodologies.

### **3 EXECUTION OF THE SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION**

#### **3.1 Excavation**

3.1.1 The excavations will be carried out in the positions indicated on *Illus. 07*). Excavation, recording and sampling procedures will be undertaken using the strategies indicated below.

3.1.2 The setting out of the trenches will be undertaken by the archaeological contractor.

3.1.3 Unstratified modern overburden will be removed by hand. All manual excavation will be carried out by trained, archaeologically competent staff.

3.1.4 Spoil will be kept close-by and rapidly backfilled into the trenches at the conclusion of this work. Although the site is private property without public access, signs will be displayed to warn of deep excavations on the site.

3.1.5 All excavation of archaeological horizons and trench faces will be carried out by hand and every effort will be made to leave all potentially nationally important remains *in situ*.

3.1.6 All excavation of archaeological horizons will be carried out by hand and every effort will be made to leave all nationally important remains *in situ*.

3.1.7 Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits identified will be excavated by hand through a sampling procedure to enable their date, nature, extent and condition to be described. Pits and postholes will normally be sampled by half-sectioning although some features may require complete excavation. Linear features will be sectioned as appropriate. No archaeological deposits will be entirely removed unless this is unavoidable.

#### **3.2 Recording**

Archaeological stratigraphy revealed by excavation will be recorded by the following means:

3.2.1 **Written descriptions.** Each archaeological context will be recorded on a pro-forma sheet. Minimum recorded details will consist of the following: a unique identifier; an objective description which includes measurements of extent and details of colour and composition; an interpretative estimate of function, clearly identified as such; at least one absolute height value; the identifiers of related contexts and a description of the relationship with such contexts (for preference, executed as a mini Harris matrix); references to other recording media in which representations of the context are held (plans, sections, photographs).

**3.2.2 Measured illustrations.** Detailed plans and sectional profiles of archaeological features will be at appropriate scales (1:50, 1:20 or 1:10). Archaeological contexts will be referenced by their unique identifiers. All illustrations will be properly identified, scaled and referenced to the site survey control and, in turn, accurately tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area

**3.2.3 Photographs.** Any features of archaeological note will be recorded on b&w and colour film stock. A system will be used for identifying the archaeological features photographed. The record will include, in addition to detailed views of specific features, the context of the feature and the relationship of the feature and its context to the wider setting and, where appropriate, to other sites or viewpoints.

Specifically, a digital photographic record of all contexts will be taken and each photograph will include a clearly visible, graduated metric scale. A register of all photographs will be kept and the location of all photographs will be recorded on a plan base. A full archive of photographs will be maintained on the AP. Ltd hard drive and provided to Historic England, the County Archives and ADS, York.

All photographs will be in sharp focus, well-lit and will include a clearly visible 1 m or 2 m scale.

**3.2.4** An appropriate control network for the survey of any archaeological remains revealed in excavation will be established.

**3.2.5** The survey control network will be related to the OS grid.

**3.2.6** The survey control network and the position of recorded structures, features and finds will be located on a map of an appropriate scale (1:2500 or 1:500)

**3.2.7** At least one absolute height value related to OD will be recorded for each archaeological context.

**3.2.8** All processing, storage and conservation of finds will be carried out in compliance with the relevant ClfA and UKIC (United Kingdom Institute of Conservation) guidelines.

**3.2.9** Portable remains will be removed by hand; all artifacts encountered will be recovered.

**3.2.10** The potential requirement for specialist analyses (see below) is an unavoidable risk in all such excavations. The scientific investigation of any features/deposits which are considered significant will be undertaken as a non-negotiable part of this programme. Any such analyses would be carried out by specialists and priced to the client on a costs-only basis within the ceiling of costs established by the project brief.

### **3.3 Analysis and Reporting of Recovered Data**

**3.3.1** Following the completion of the Field Investigation and before any of the post-excavation work is commenced, an archive (the Site Archive) containing all the data gathered during fieldwork will be prepared. This material will be quantified, ordered, indexed and rendered internally consistent. It will be prepared according to the guidelines given in English Heritage's MAP 2 document, Appendix 3 (English Heritage 1991).

3.3.2 An interim report of no less than 200 words, containing preliminary recommendations for any further work required, will be produced within two weeks of completion of the field investigation for the commissioning client.

3.3.3 Following completion of the Field Investigation, an interim report will be produced within 30 days and a full report will be prepared within 3 months of the completion of fieldwork, collating and synthesizing the structural, artefactual and environmental data relating to each agreed constituent part of the evaluation works.

### **3.4 Environmental Sampling and Scientific Dating**

3.4.1 The investigations will be undertaken in a manner consistent with Historic England MoRPHE guidelines (Historic England 2015).

3.4.2 Don O'Meara, the Historic England Science Advisor (07824 529245) has been contacted (16<sup>th</sup> August 2022) to confirm the strategy proposed here.

3.4.3 Soil samples will be collected from deposits which will inform the project aims and objectives, particularly on the presence or absence of deposits related to the bastle's construction, use, and abandonment (though not from obvious quarry waste material). Samples will be taken in line with relevant Historic England guidance (English Heritage 2011) This will include cut features, and floor deposits. Environmental sampling will typically take the form of bulk soil samples, which will be processed to extract plant remains, animal bone, smaller artefacts, and industrial remains. Animal bone will be collected by hand if present. If greater concentrations of bone are identified, this will be sampled as per Historic England guidelines (Barker and Worley 2019). Information on the nature and history of the site, aims and objectives of the project, summary of archaeological results, context types and stratigraphic relationships, phase and dating information, sampling and processing methods, sample locations, preservation conditions, residuality/contamination, etc. will be provided with each sample submitted for analysis.

3.4.4 It is not anticipated that waterlogged preservation will be present in this area. If waterlogged deposits are encountered then the Historic England Science Advisor will be contacted to discuss a suitable sampling strategy.

3.4.5 It is anticipated that the primary means of dating for the project will be undertaken via artefactual analysis, and relative stratigraphic relationships. Should scientific dating be required this will be discussed in conjunction with the Historic England Science Advisor, and via discussions with the client. At the evaluation stage the primary means of scientific dating undertaken would likely be radiocarbon dating.

3.4.6 In the event of the identification of human remains these will be left in-situ, covered and protected, and the police, coroner, HE Inspector and County Archaeologist informed. If it is agreed that removal of the remains is essential, the Archaeological Practice Ltd, will apply for a licence from the Ministry of Justice. Analysis of the osteological material will take place according to accepted best practice (APABE 2017).

3.4.7 If anything is found which could be Treasure, under the Treasure Act 1996, it is a legal requirement to report it to the local coroner within 14 days of discovery. The Archaeological Practice Ltd. will comply with the procedures set out in The Treasure Act 1996. Any treasure will be reported to the coroner and to The Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer,

(0191 2225076) for guidance on the Treasure Act procedures. Treasure is defined as the following:

- Any metallic object, other than a coin, provided that at least 10% by weight of metal is precious metal and that is at least 300 years old when found
- Any group of two or more metallic objects of any composition of prehistoric date that come from the same find
- All coins from the same find provided that they are at least 300 years old when found, but if the coins contain less than 10% gold or silver there must be at least ten
- Any object, whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or had previously been together with, another object that is Treasure
- Any object that would previously have been treasure trove, but does not fall within the specific categories given above. Only objects that are less than 300 years old, that are made substantially of gold or silver, that have been deliberately hidden with the intention of recovery and whose owners or heirs are unknown will come into this category

#### **4 PRODUCTION OF FINAL REPORT**

4.1 Copies of the report will be provided within three months of the completion of fieldwork to the Client, Historic England and Northumberland County HER.

4.2 Digital copies of the report will be provided, with each page and heading numbered. Paper copies required will be produced upon request. The report will include as a minimum the following:

- A summary statement of methodologies used.
- A location plan of the site and any significant discoveries made.
- Plans and sections of any archaeological discoveries of note.
- A summary statement of results.
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- A table summarizing the deposits, features, classes and numbers of artefacts encountered and spot dating of significant finds.

4.3 The report will finish with a section detailing recommendations for further archaeological work needed to mitigate the effects of the development upon any significant deposits revealed during the evaluation or if necessary, for further evaluation.

4.4 Following completion of the analysis and publication phase of the work, an archive (the Research Archive) containing all the data derived from the work done during the analysis phase will be prepared. The archive will be prepared to the standard specified by English Heritage (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute of Conservation guidelines.

4.5 Arrangements will be made to deposit the Site Archive (including Finds) and the Research Archive with the designated repository within 6 months of the end of the fieldwork. Additionally, a copy shall be offered to the National Monuments Record (NMR).

4.6 Summary reports of the project will be prepared, if necessary, for inclusion in the appropriate Notices, Annual Reviews, Reports, etc.

4.7 An entry for inclusion in the Northumberland County Heritage Environment Record will be prepared and submitted.

## 5 OASIS

5.1 The Archaeological Contractor will complete the online form for the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations Project (OASIS), following consultation with the relevant planning authority. The Contractor agrees to the procedure whereby the information on the form will be placed in the public domain on the OASIS website, following submission to or incorporation of the final report (see 3.4) into the HER.

## 6. TIMESCALE

Following the agreement of the current WSI document with the planning archaeologist, it is proposed to carry out the above tasks according to the developer's schedule in Summer, 2022.

Environmental samples, ecofacts and artefacts will be submitted for analysis immediately following the fieldwork period and a reporting period of 2 months requested.

Structural reports on the trenches will be completed to allow submission of an interim report within 30 days of completion of the fieldwork.

The full archive report will be produced using the structural report and any commissioned specialist reports within 6 months of the completion of fieldwork.

## 7. PERSONNEL

*The Archaeological Practice Ltd.* has been operating in its present form since 2002, previous to which it was a part of the former Department of Archaeology at the university of Newcastle. During this time it has considerable experience and expertise in producing reports based on a combination of fieldwork and documentary analysis.

The Archaeological Practice Ltd comprises **Richard Carlton** and **Dr Alan Rushworth**, along with Marc Johnstone, Terry Frain and Adam Leigh, who are experienced fieldworkers and now principally engaged in documentary research and illustration.

The fieldwork will be carried out principally by **Richard Carlton** and Terry Frain, with additional assistance from **Marc Johnstone** and **Adam Leigh** if required.

Further details of The Archaeological Practice and its staff can be found on its web-site at: <http://www.archaeologicalpractice.co.uk>

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