

BERRY POMEROY CASTLE: EAST TERRACE 2000 AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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THE PROJECT (Fig. 1)

In March 2000 English Heritage undertook some minor re-landscaping on the east terrace of Berry Pomeroy Castle comprising the removal of existing steps, the laying of a new gravel pathway 1m wide and planting of young gorse bushes. For part of its length the make-up gravels for the pathway were laid directly on the existing ground surface; for the remainder, the make-up deposits were laid within a shallow trench excavation. The trench for the path varied in depth from 0.15m at the top of the slope next to St. Margaret's Tower to 0.6m next to the present terrace wall, close to the North-East Tower.

Stewart Brown Associates conducted an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks.

THE WATCHING BRIEF

Next to the terrace wall, the trench excavation for the pathway was cut entirely from backfill associated with the 1991 and 1996 excavations (Brown 1996 and 1997). The backfill material consisted of two layers. The uppermost was a deposit of yellow/brown silty clay and broken local slate stone, containing some lime mortar flecks and lumps. The lower layer was a red/brown clay with many slate stone fragments and mortar lumps (some stone had mortar adhering and some appeared to be quarry waste). The upper layer was present only for a distance of 15m from the south-east corner. The lower layer extended across the whole area but varied in the proportions of clay, stone and mortar. The latter layer produced a sandbag from the 1996 works.

On the higher slope, closer to the castle buildings, the trench excavation disturbed only topsoil.

The planting of gorse on the slope involved the excavation of thirty small holes 0.2m square and 0.25m deep set 1 metre apart. These holes penetrated no deeper than topsoil and revealed nothing of archaeological interest.

FINDS

The excavations produced eight fragments of late mediaeval roof tile, two fragments of 16th- or 17th-century Totnes ware, and assorted 19th-century and modern finds.

CONCLUSION

The re-landscaping affected only topsoil and ground that had been made up from spoil from previous excavations, and did not damage archaeological stratigraphy.

The finds add no new information to the body of finds already collected.

Bibliography

Brown, S. 1996 'Berry Pomeroy Castle East Terrace', Internal Report to English Heritage.

_____ 1997 'Berry Pomeroy Castle' *Proc. Devon Archaeol. Soc.* **54**