

BERRY POMEROY CASTLE, DEVON
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF DURING EXCAVATIONS
FOR FENCE-POST HOLES

By
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SUMMARY

Seven fence-post holes were dug by Quadron Services for English Heritage on the valley side to the north-west of the castle ruins. The excavations exposed topsoil mixed with demolition material, and produced three Beer stone window fragments dating from c. 1600.

The Project

In July 2005, Stewart Brown Associates were asked to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of seven holes for fence posts. The new fence was to be an addition to security measures along the north-west side of the site. The excavation was undertaken by Quadron Services for English Heritage. The holes were dug by hand.

Description

The seven holes were approximately circular in plan (0.5m in diameter) and dug 0.7m deep (below present ground level). Fig. 1 shows their location. In all cases, excavation of the holes exposed only dark brown clayloam topsoil mixed with demolition material, comprising: local limestone and slate building stone fragments, Beer stone fragments, mortar, roofing slates and roofing tile. The soil also contained food remains comprising sea shells and animal bones.

Finds

Three large stone fragments (A, B, and C) from a window or windows were recovered. These were all of Beer stone and date from c. 1600. They almost certainly came from the nearby bay and bow windows of the north range of the castle (built c. 1600, abandoned c. 1688-1701; see Brown 1996, 1). Fig. 2 shows a reconstruction drawing of the bay and bow windows, together with the likely positions from which the three fragments came (A, B, and C).

Various other small Beer stone fragments were recovered, but none of these could be certainly identified.

The stone fragments have been returned to the site.

Reference

Brown, S.W. 1996 'Berry Pomeroy Castle', *Proc. Devon Archaeol. Soc.* **54**

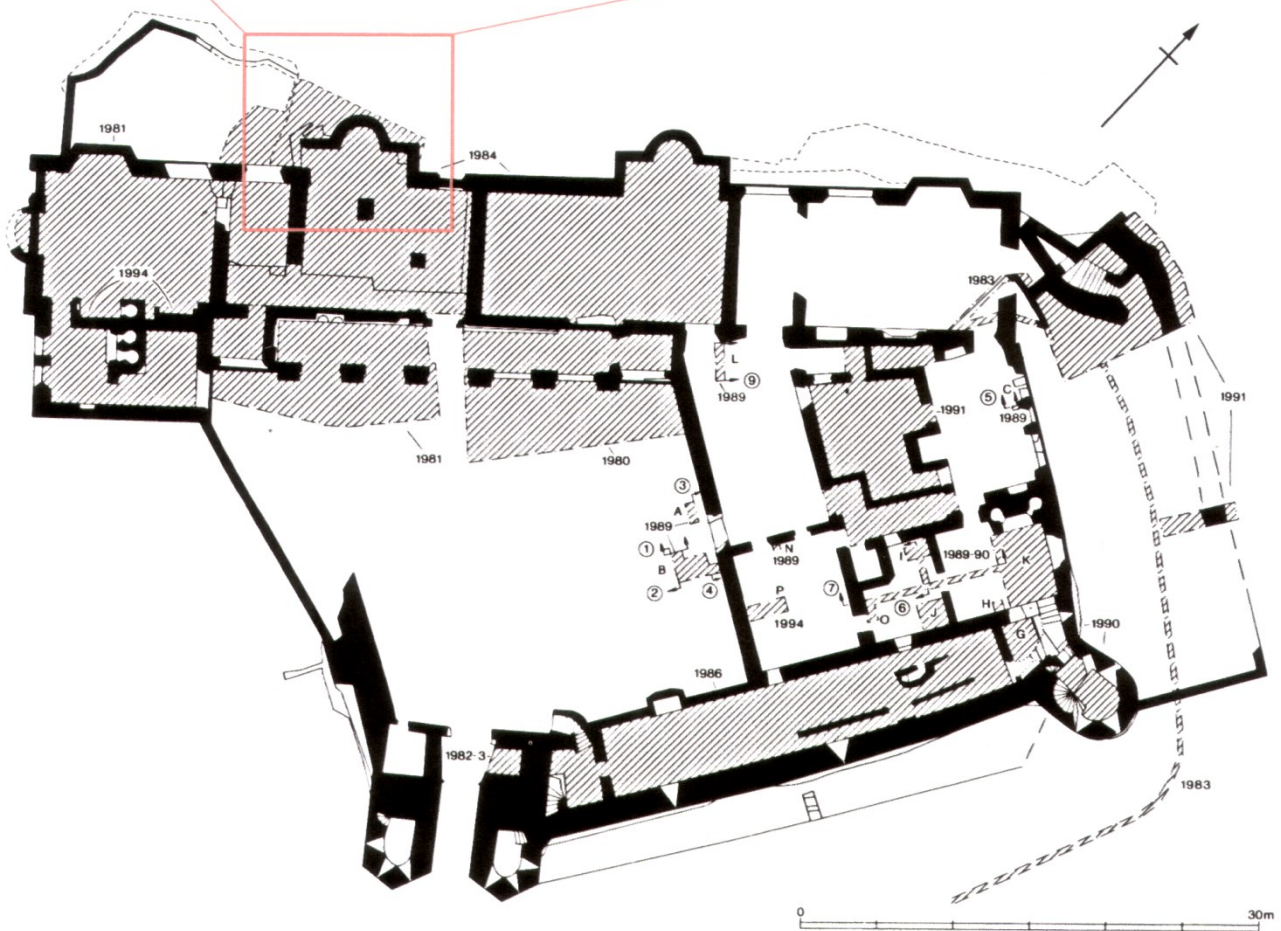
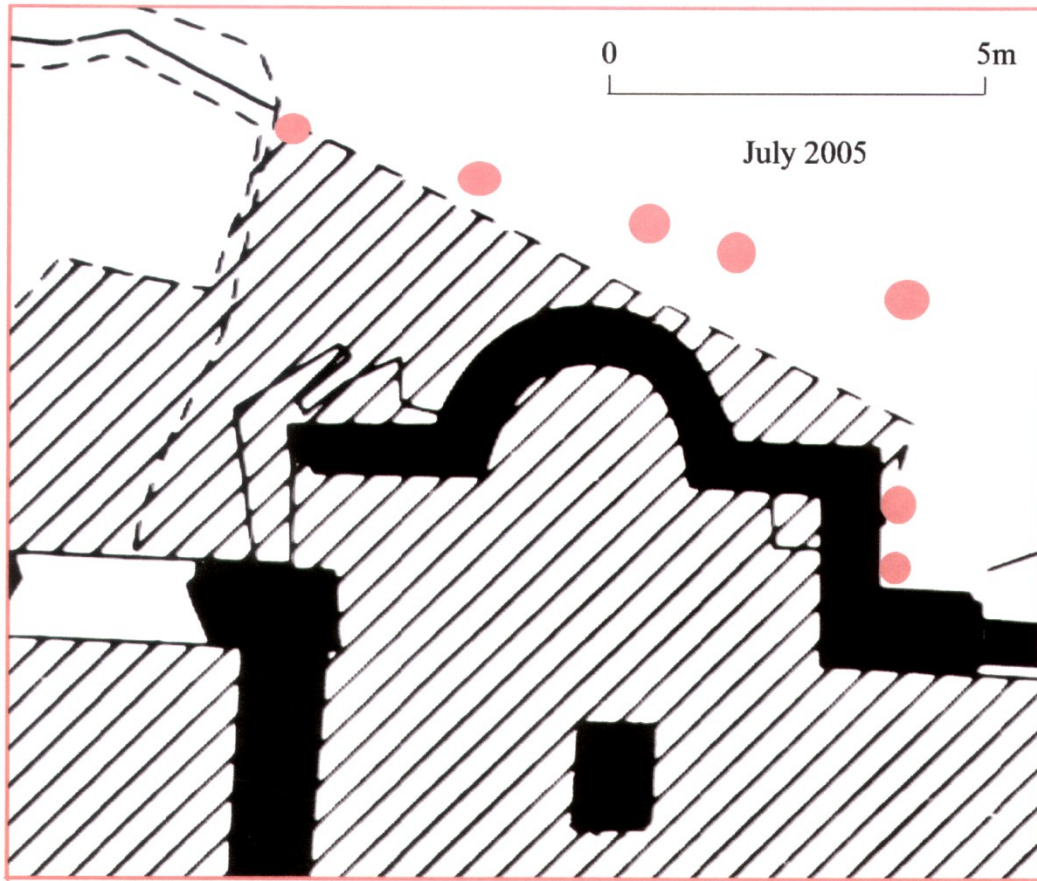


Fig. 1 Location of fence-post holes (shown in red)

Stone window fragments found during excavation of fence-post holes:

Stone A 0.61m long fragment of window mullion

Stone B fragment of transome from corner of bow window

Stone C fragment of sill with seating for mullion

The diagram below shows whereabouts in the window the fragments could have come from.

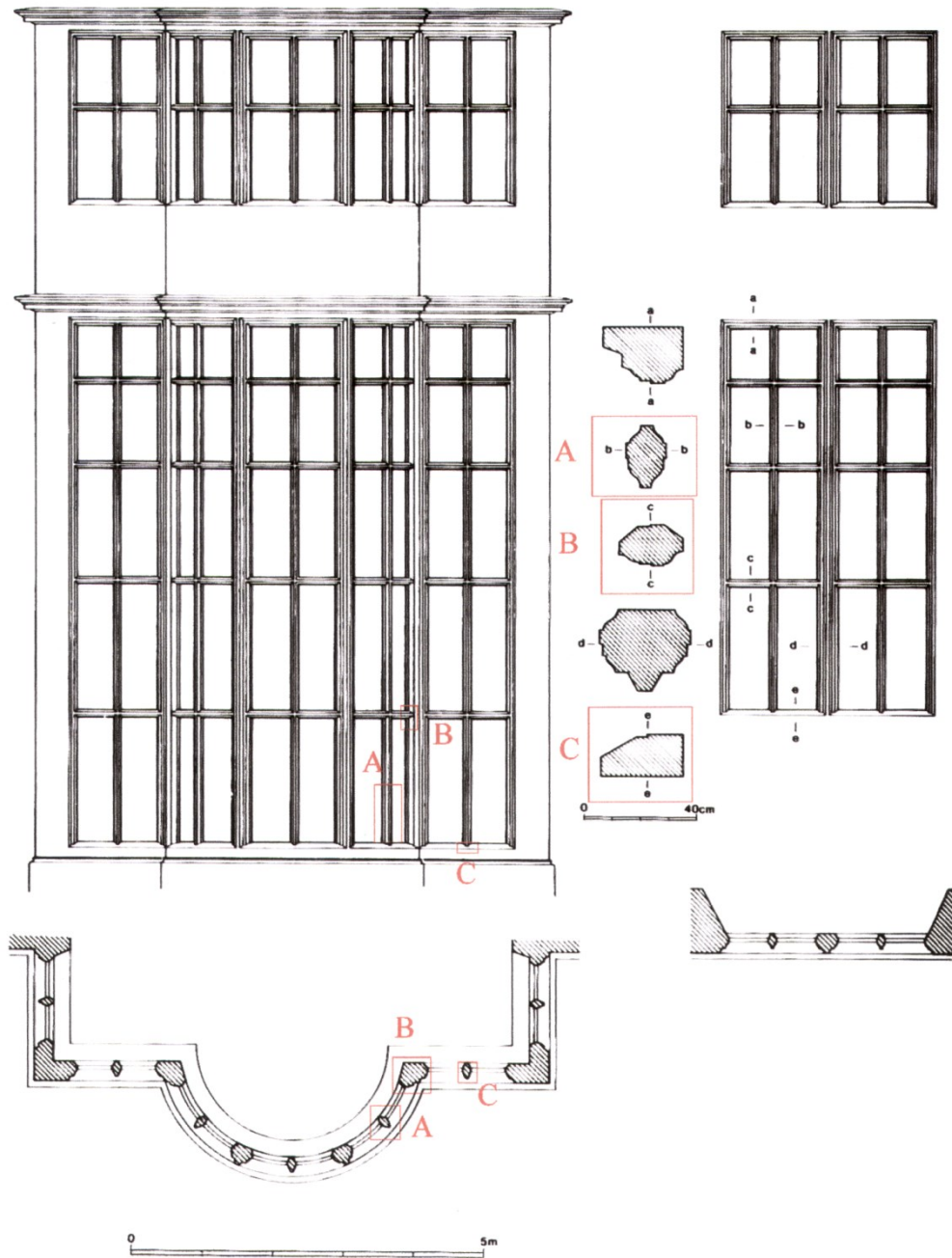


Fig. 2 Diagram showing the original position of the three Beer stone window fragments found during excavation.