

## **Summary**

It is intended that the former doorway on the north -side of the gatehouse at Kenilworth Abbey be opened up and a new door inserted. At present the ground is considerably higher outside the blocked doorway than inside and historic photographs show that the ground level outside was lower in the 19th century than it is now. Excavation of a 1m square test-pit outside of the door revealed the door threshold overlain by 0.42m of soil. Residual fragments of glazed medieval floor tile were recovered from the overlying soil.

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 It is proposed to replace the stone blocking of a disused doorway at Kenilworth Abbey gatehouse with a new wooden door. As the gatehouse is part of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Kenilworth Abbey (SAM No. 35115) it was a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent that a programme of archaeological work, comprising the excavation of a 1m square test-pit north of the blocked doorway was carried out in order to examine the nature of the build-up of ground immediately north of the building.

1.2 A programme of work, consisting of the archaeological excavation and recording of the test-pit, was commissioned from the Warwickshire Museum Field Archaeology Section in accordance with a Brief by the County Archaeologist on behalf of and in consultation with English Heritage, and carried out in December 2008. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under site KX08.....

## **4. Test-pit**

4.1 A test-pit, measuring c.1m square was excavated immediately north of the blocked doorway on the north side of the gatehouse. The pit was excavated to a depth of c.0.45m. At a depth of 0.42m, the threshold of the block doorway was recorded. A layer of reddish brown clayey sandy loam with frequent small fragments of sandstone was found at a depth of 0.3.5m· this layer overlay the western end of the threshold. Six fragments of residual floor tile were recovered from this layer which also contained two sherds of pottery dating to the 18th/19th century.

4.2 Overlying layer 3 was a 0.3m deep layer of dark reddish brown sandy loam with frequent charcoal flecks. A 0.02m deep lens of black ash and coal was recorded in the western and northern sections. Six fragments of roof tile, a sherd of late 18th/ early 19th century pearlware and two sherds of transfer-decorated pottery dating to between the late 18th century and 20th century were recovered from layer 2. This layer had begun to accumulate before the doorway was blocked up as the lowest mortar for the blocking overlay layer 2. In the top of the layer was a concrete kerbstone which was probably a displaced section of edging from a grave. A similar block was noted to the east of it.

4.3 A 0.05m deep layer of very dark reddish brown sandy loam topsoil overlay layer 2. The doorway itself was possibly a modification to the original building as there are no quoins or mouldings on the exterior (unlike the window above) and from the interior the doorway looks rough (Fig. 7). Hard brown mortar and sandstone rubble had been used to block the doorway. The infilling was a single block thick. There are brick steps leading down from the threshold to the floor inside.

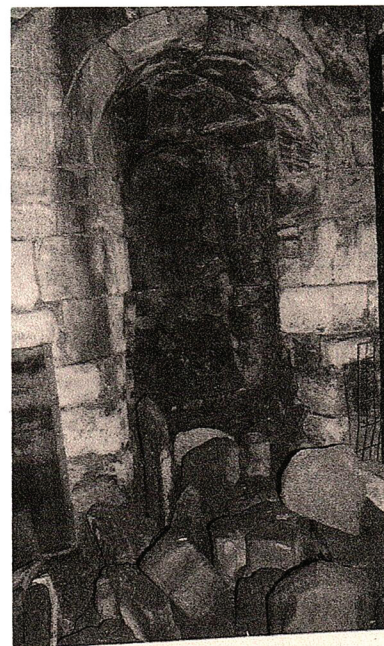


Fig. 7: Interior of blocked doorway

## **5. Conclusions**

5.1 The threshold of the former doorway was recorded below 0.42m of soil build-up. The lowest layer of soil accumulation contained residual fragments of medieval floor tile in addition to 18th/19th-century pottery. It was apparent that the doorway had gone out of use some time before it was blocked as the blocking overlies a build-up of 0.10-0.20m of soil.