The castle knoll

Situated on the edge of the Saussay forest, the “castle” knoll appears as an imposing man-made mound constructed around the middle of the 11th century. Surrounded by deep ditches, the site comprises a motte and two baileys protected by earth ramparts. A stockaded barbican protected the entrance to the castle.

Up to date information shows a building supporting a watch tower. Nearby was an extensive yard, probably surrounded by a wooden stockade. A circular walkway follows the traces of the ramparts. A stone-built passage topped by a tower, whose upper sections were half-timbered, formed the entrance.

The interior space was occupied by a stone courtyard and buildings for agricultural and workshop use. At the foot of the mound was an L-shaped dwelling alongside domestic premises: stores, living room, bedroom, bread oven. Roofing might have been covered with vegetation: only the roof ridges and openings for aeration were made of tiles. Although there is proof that stone walls were present on the site, most constructions were of earth and wood.

Apart from a crossbow bolt, the excavations uncovered no weapons. The castle’s military role appears to have lasted only a short time. It gradually disappeared as the constructions grew in number emphasising the residential and economic character of the site.

Although everyday furniture and fittings are few, what has been found is of the highest quality: bronze ornaments and belts , hair pins, keys, fine crockery, knife handles in carved bone, an enamelled emblazoned vervelle are evidence that the “castle motte” of Bretoncelles gradually became an aristocratic residence.

*The site of ‘la Butte du Château is private.*

*It is accessible thanks to the agreement of the owner.*

*We ask you to respect this place.*