



Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services

Drumlanrig Castle, Thornhill, Dumfries & Galloway: Archaeological Monitoring Works



**by Rebecca Shaw
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1 Introduction

This Data Structure Report presents the findings of archaeological monitoring works undertaken in respect of proposed works close to Drumlanrig Castle, near Thornhill in Dumfries & Galloway (Figures 1 & 2). The proposed works comprise: erection of ticket office and formation of decked area (17/1473/FUL) (Figure 2).

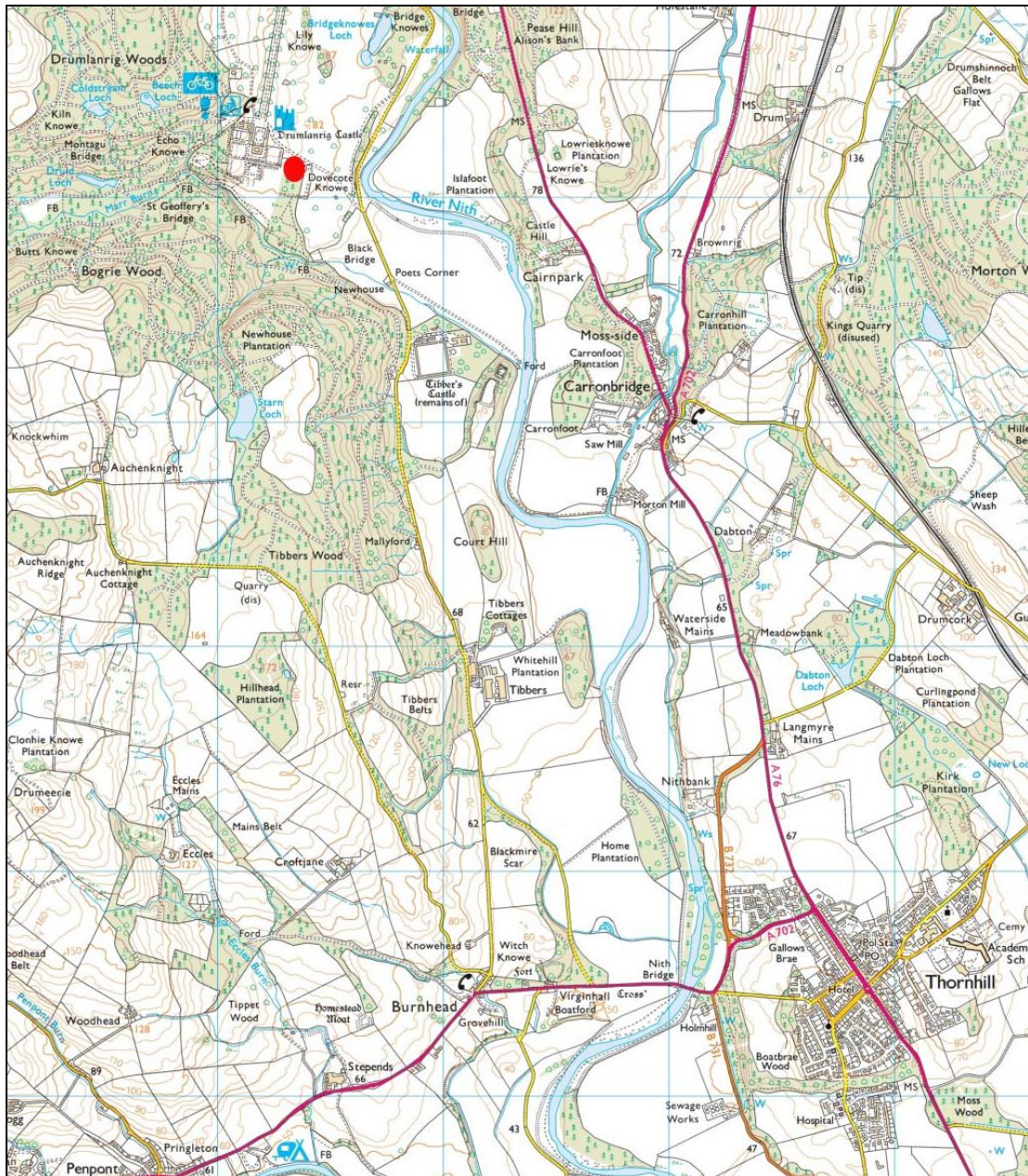


Figure 1 - location map
(Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100048957)

The proposal lies within the Area of Archaeological Interest relating to Roman finds made during the construction of the adventure playground (MDG21061) and the line of the ha-ha (MDG21375) associated with the Drumlanrig Inventory Designed Landscape. Examination of 19th century estate maps by McCallum and Dundas and subsequent Ordnance Survey mapping indicates that the area has been lightly wooded parkland since at least 1848.

The proposals will involve ground disturbance and down-cutting which may affect any surviving buried remains associated with the Roman fort and marching camps to the south-east. Deposits related to the construction of the ha-ha may also be uncovered. Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeology Service therefore requested that a watching brief be

undertaken during all ground breaking works. The archaeological monitoring works will ensure appropriate archaeological recording of any remains that are uncovered as well as recovering any finds.

The archaeological monitoring works revealed a fairly clean fine silted topsoil of varying depths above either a bright red very stony silt with frequent larger stones / rocks in the western half and a pale yellowy orange gritty silt containing a moderate to frequent amount of small stones (in the eastern half). With the exception of a few angular rocks / stones recovered at the eastern edge of the site, which may be related to the construction of the ha-ha, no significant archaeological finds or features were uncovered.

Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services was appointed to act with regard to the archaeological condition by Callum Ramsay on behalf of Buccleuch Estates.

2 Project Works

The works at Drumlanrig Castle were undertaken between the 26th and 29th March 2019 (inclusive). The works were undertaken as stipulated in the Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeology Service (Shaw, January 2019).

All works complied with the Chartered Institute For Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct, and Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statements.

3 Findings

The main archaeological works consisted of the monitoring of ground reduction in an area measuring 24.2m by 11.7m (at most) (Figures 4a & 8). The topsoil comprised a mid to dark brown fairly fine silt [101] which measured between 260mm to 370mm in depth in the northern half and between 300mm to 600mm in the southern half. The topsoil was rooted along the northern edge adjacent to the hedge and the only finds within it were fragments of flower pots. The subsoil comprised a bright red very stony silt with frequent larger stones / rocks [102] in the western half (Figures 4b & 5a) and a pale yellowy orange gritty silt [103] containing a moderate to frequent amount of small stones in the eastern half (Figures 5b - 6a-b). Fragments of broken rock / stone were noted along the eastern edge of the excavated area (adjacent to the ha-ha). A slight mound was also observable adjacent to the ha-ha just outside (southwest) of the excavated area (Figure 7b).

A number of tree stumps (seven) and their roots systems were removed prior to the main ground reduction works. Below the subsoil in the eastern half the natural comprised rounded and sub-rounded stones, while in the western half they natural appeared to remain a consistent bright red (Figure 7a).

4 Discussion

Archaeological monitoring works were required at this site due to the recovery of Roman finds during the construction of the adjacent adventure playground (Figure 2) and the line of a ha-ha (along the eastern edge) associated with Drumlanrig Inventory Designed Landscape.

In general the topsoil [101] comprised a fairly clean silt of varying depths - being much deeper within the central area and southern half. Fragments of flower pots were the only finds recovered from within the topsoil and these possibly came from spread compost / rubbish heaps from works at the nearby gardens / greenhouses.

The stumps of seven trees (and their root systems) were removed at the start of the works. However, with reference to early mapping sources (Figure 3a-c) it would appear that there were previously far more trees in this location, which were possibly removed sometime in the second half of the nineteenth century (Figure 3d). The subsoil varied with a distinctive difference between the western half (bright red very stony silt with frequent larger stones / rocks [102]) and the eastern half (pale yellowy orange gritty silt containing a moderate to frequent amount of small stones [103]) (Figure 8). The natural, below the respective subsoils

also appeared to vary with the natural in the eastern half being particularly stony and its possible it is related to historic movement or flood plain of the nearby River Nith.

Ha-ha's were built as a landscape feature to prevent access, normally to formal gardens from animals, and although probably an early nineteenth century feature, the ha-ha below Drumlanrig Castle is still easily visible. It is likely that both the broken stones / rocks noted along the eastern edge of the site and the mound noted just outside (Figure 7b) are related to the construction of the ha-ha. The stones / rocks are probably fragments from the building of the retaining wall of the ha-ha and the mound is possibly upcast material from the slope.

Although Roman finds were recovered during construction of the adventure playground to the immediate south, no significant finds or features were noted during the monitoring works.

5 Conclusion

This Data Structure Report presents the findings of archaeological monitoring works undertaken in respect of proposed works close to Drumlanrig Castle, near Thornhill in Dumfries & Galloway. The proposed works comprised the erection of ticket office and formation of decked area.

Archaeological works were required as Roman finds were noted during the construction of the adventure playground to the immediate south and there is an ha-ha adjacent to the eastern edge of the proposed development area.

The topsoil comprised a fairly fine silt, of varying depths, which contained fragments of flower pots. The subsoil varied between a bright red very stony silt with frequent larger stones / rocks and a pale yellowy orange gritty silt containing a moderate to frequent amount of small stones. The change in the subsoil was very distinctive as was the natural below each subsoil and this may relate to historical movement of the nearby River Nith.

The monitoring works noted fragments of stones / rocks along the eastern edge which were probably from the construction of the retaining wall of the ha-ha. A slight mound, more obviously visible to the southeast (just outside the proposed development area) may be the remnants of upcast material for the incline of the ha-ha. No significant finds or features were noted during the monitoring works.

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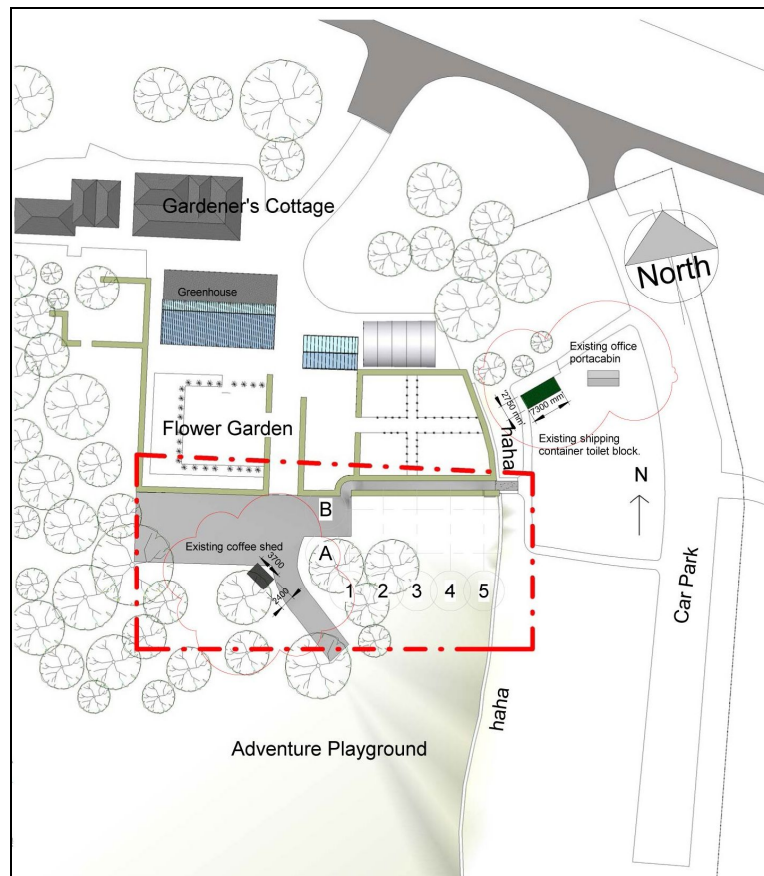
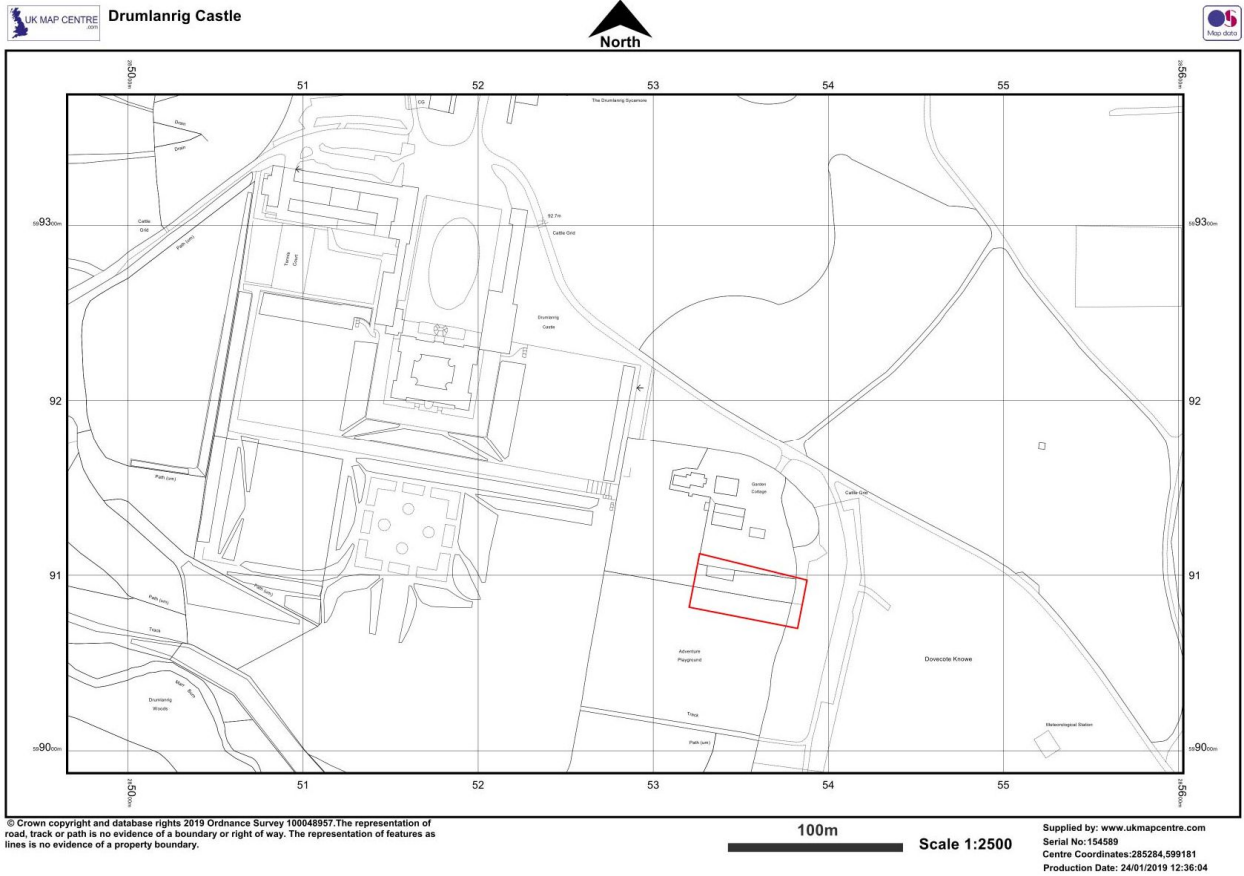


Figure 2 - detailed maps showing location of proposed works and extent of planning application area



Figure 3a - Roys Military Survey Map of Scotland (1747-55) (c) National Library of Scotland

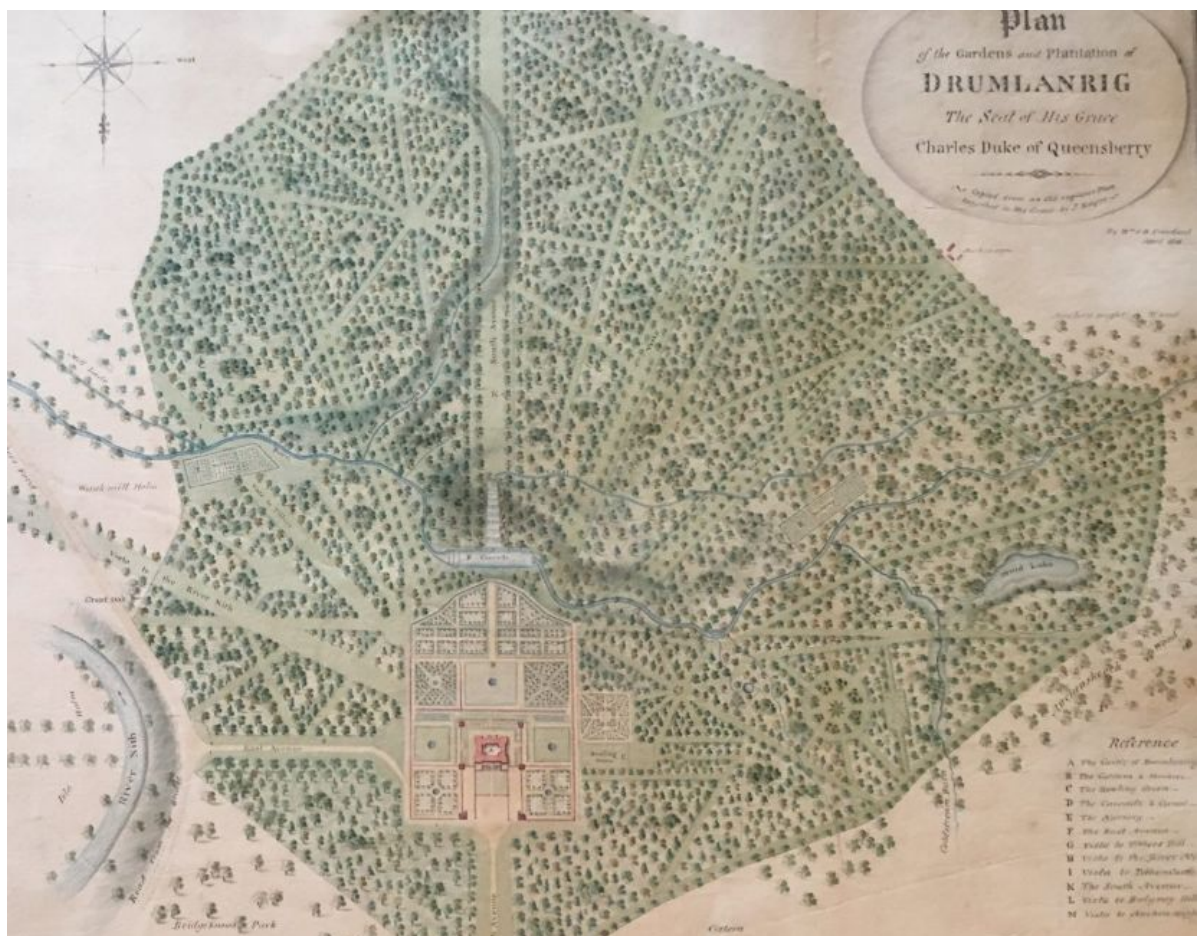


Figure 3b – Plan of the gardens and plantations of Drumlanrig (1818)
(c) National Library of Scotland (William Crawford)

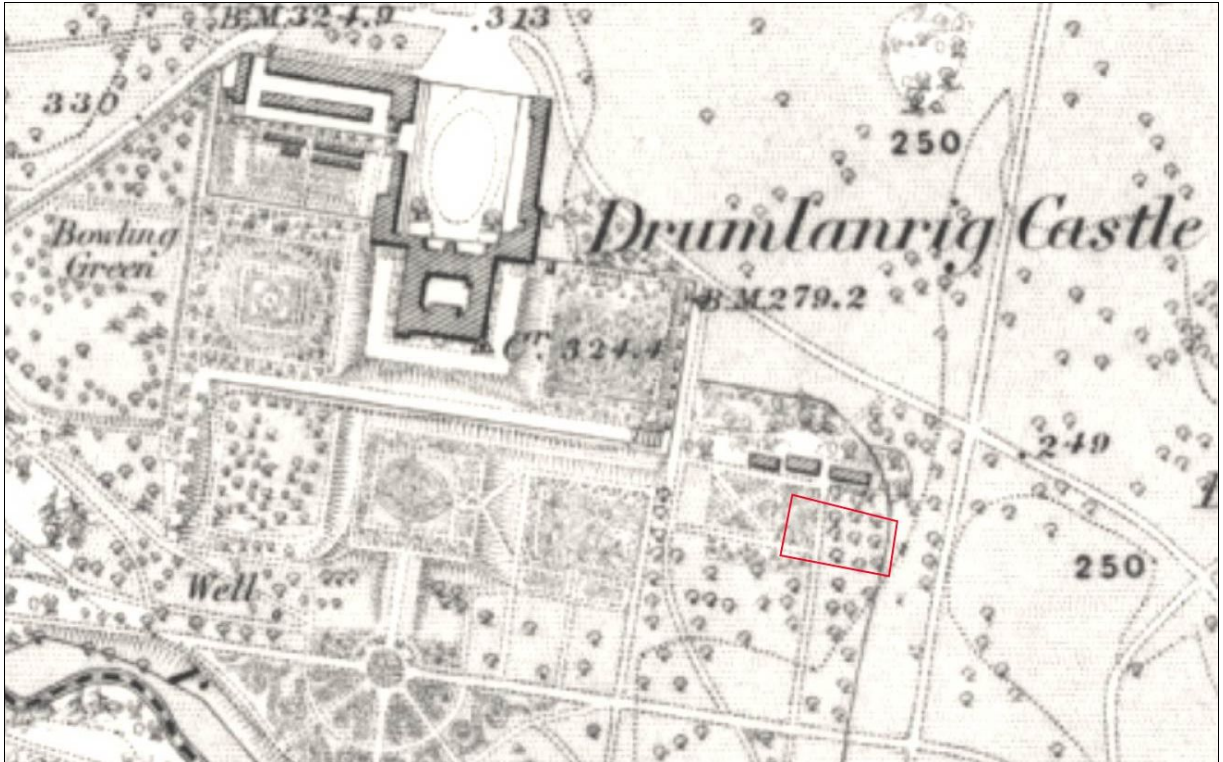


Figure 3c – 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1857) 1:2500 © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission (981998784)

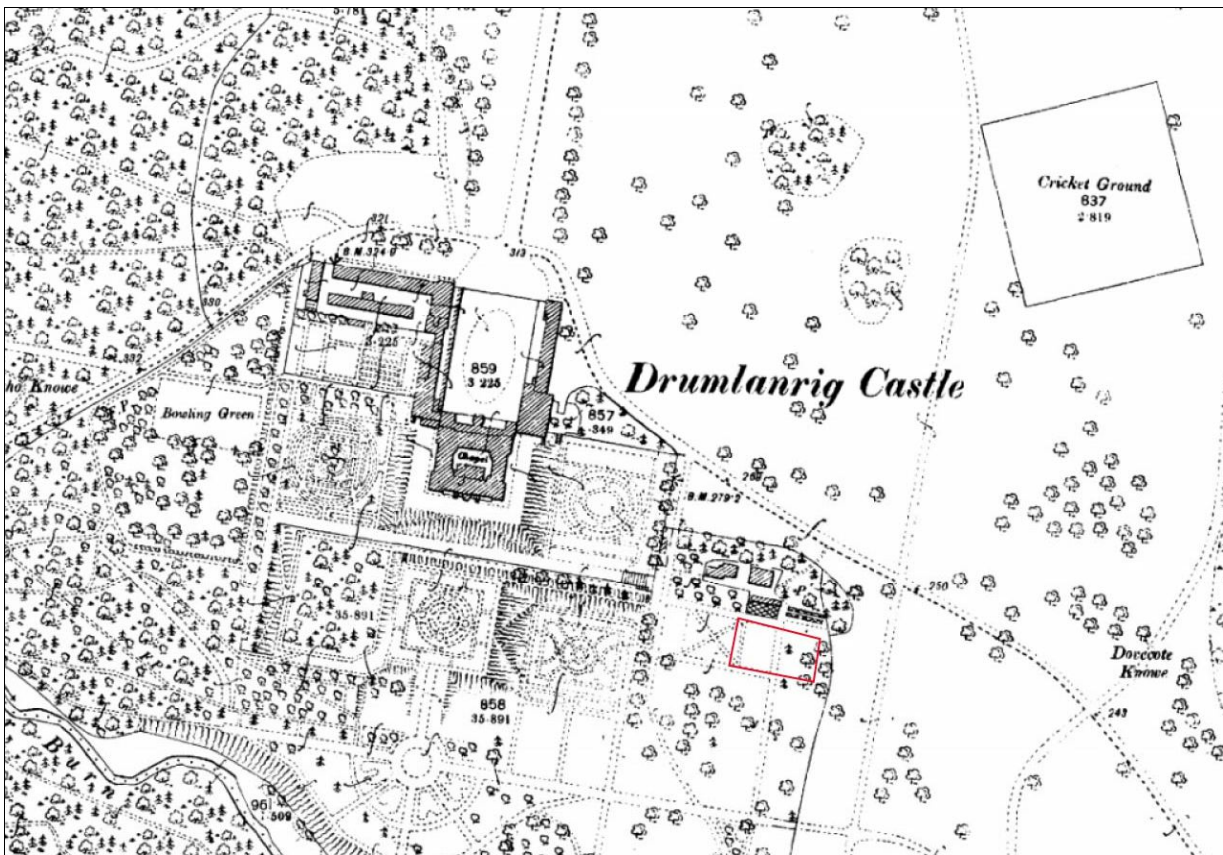


Figure 3d – 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1899) 1:2500 © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission (981998784)

References

<i>Documentary</i>		
SOEn	2010	Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). <i>Archaeology</i> , Scottish Office Environmental Department.
SOEn	2011	<i>PAN 2/2011</i> , Planning & Archaeology Scottish Office Environmental Department.
HES	2016	Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement June 2016
<i>Cartographic</i>		
Roy	1747-55	Military Survey Map of Scotland
Ordnance Survey	1857	1 st Edition Ordnance Survey Map, Dumfriesshire
Ordnance Survey	1899	2 nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map, Dumfriesshire
Ordnance Survey	2019	Ordnance Survey Map (www.ukmapcentre.com)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jed (excavator operator) and Brian (tractor & trailer driver) for undertaking the on-site works. Many thanks also to Ian Vernon (and Drumlanrig Castle) for provision of facilities.



Figure 4a - general pre-ex image (from W)



Figure 4b - general post-ex of western half (from W)



Figure 5a - general post-ex of western half (from E)



Figure 5b - general post-ex of eastern half (from S)



Figure 6a - general post-ex of eastern half (from S)



Figure 6b - general post-ex of eastern half (from E)



Figure 7a - one of the excavated tree bowls (from SW)



Figure 7b - mound along eastern edge of ha-ha (from N)

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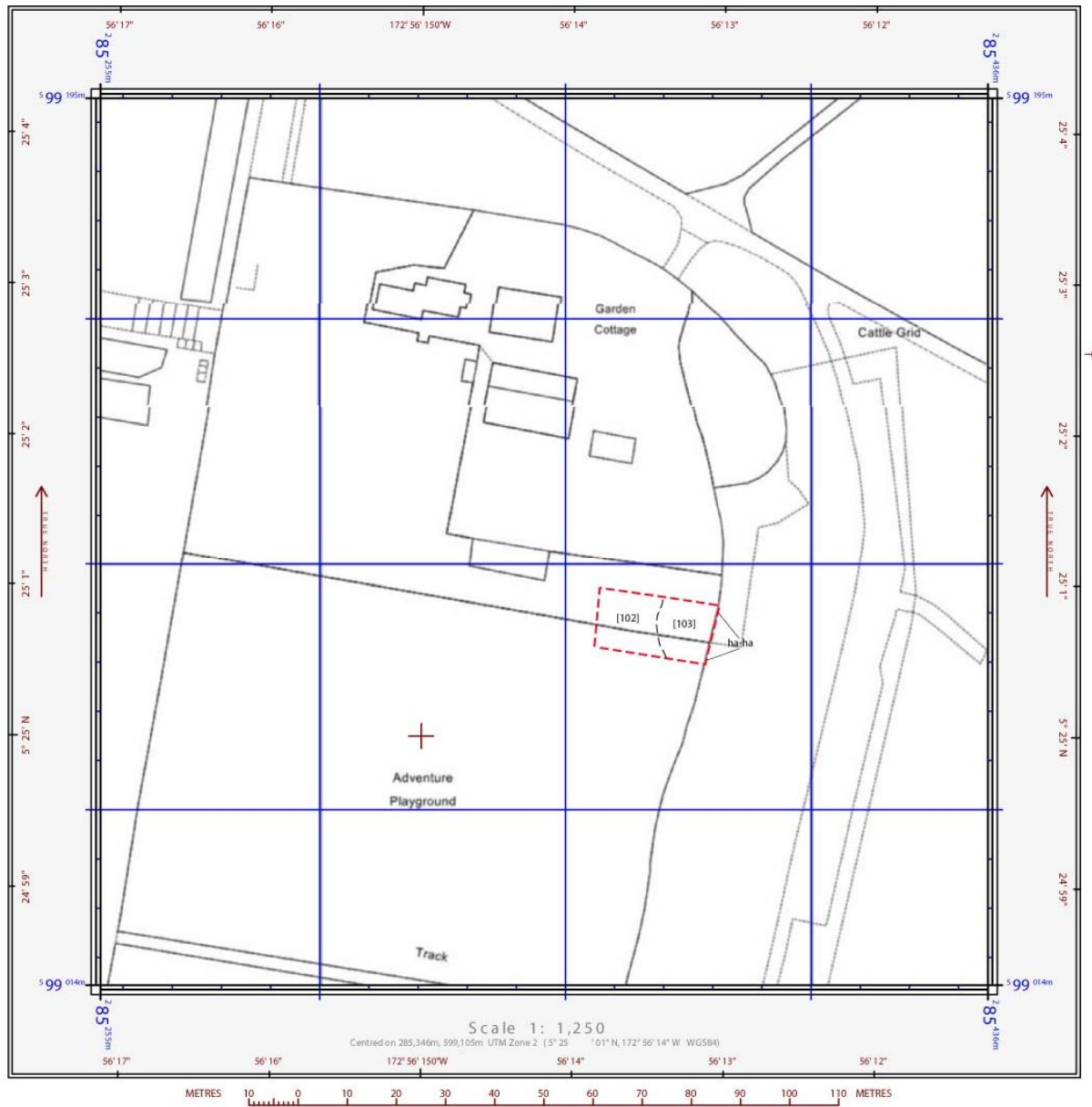


Figure 8 - post-ex sketch plan

Appendix 1: Record Summaries

Context Summaries

No.	Interpretation	Description
101	Topsoil	Dark to mid brown fairly fine silt with occasional stones measuring between 260mm to 600mm in depth. Fragments of flower pots.
102	Subsoil	Bright red very stony silt with frequent larger stones / rocks (western half)
103	Subsoil	Pale yellowy orange gritty silt containing a moderate to frequent amount of small stones

Photographic Record 1

No.	Disc No.	Digital No.	Description	From	Date
1	1	1	General pre-ex image	W	26/03/19
2	1	2	One of the larger tree bowls excavated	SW	26/03/19
3	1	3	General post-ex image of western half	W	29/03/19
4	1	4	General post-ex image of western half	E	29/03/19
5	1	5	General post-ex image of eastern half	S	29/03/19
6	1	6	General post-ex image of eastern half	S	29/03/19
7	1	7	General post-ex image of eastern half	E	29/03/19
8	1	8	Mound along the eastern edge of the ha-ha	N	29/03/19

Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Dumfries & Galloway Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Drumlanrig Castle, Thornhill
PARISH:	Penpont
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Rebecca Shaw
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Monitoring Works
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 10 figures)	NGR: NS 85367 99087
START DATE (this season)	26th March 2019
END DATE (this season)	29th March 2019
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
DESCRIPTION:	This Data Structure Report presents the findings of archaeological monitoring works undertaken in respect of

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	<p>proposed works close to Drumlanrig Castle, near Thornhill in Dumfries & Galloway. The proposed works comprised the erection of ticket office and formation of decked area.</p> <p>Archaeological works were required as Roman finds were noted during the construction of the adventure playground to the immediate south and there is an ha-ha adjacent to the eastern edge of the proposed development area.</p> <p>The topsoil comprised a fairly fine silt, of varying depths, which contained fragments of flower pots. The subsoil varied between a bright red very stony silt with frequent larger stones / rocks and a pale yellowy orange gritty silt containing a moderate to frequent amount of small stones. The change in the subsoil was very distinctive as was the natural below each subsoil and this may relate to historical movement of the nearby River Nith.</p> <p>The monitoring works noted fragments of stones / rocks along the eastern edge which were probably from the construction of the retaining wall of the ha-ha. A slight mound, more obviously visible to the southeast (just outside the proposed development area) may be the remnants of upcast material for the incline of the ha-ha. No significant finds or features were noted during the monitoring works.</p>
PROJECT CODE:	019001
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	Report to Dumfries & Galloway Council Sites and Monuments Record and archive to Historic Environment Scotland Archives.

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