

PROPOSED PLAY AREA BRODIE CASTLE MORAY



- Archaeological Evaluation -
Carried out 17th January 2012
by
Murray Archaeological Services Ltd



Report No: MAS 2012-3
by
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-Archaeological Evaluation-

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1. Background

- 1.1 The proposed development of a new children's play area at the edge of woodland to the NW of Brodie Castle, Moray, would involve a small degree of ground disturbance and levelling. As relatively little is known about the archaeological potential of the castle environs, Dr Shannon Fraser, archaeologist for the National Trust for Scotland, determined that it was advisable to commission an archaeological evaluation, to assess and record any archaeological features that might be revealed.

- 1.2 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Glyn Young, Surveyor (Highlands and Islands) for the National Trust for Scotland to undertake the work; the field element of which was carried out on 17th January 2012.

2. The Site

- 2.1 The site lies to the N of the 19th-century extension of Brodie Castle, behind a hedge that separates it from an estate roadway. The S part of the site is rough grassland having been used as a drying green and with a timber kennel and run. To the N the site extends into the edge of predominantly conifer woodland, on either side of a track from the workshop/store towards the back of the castle.

Parish: Dyke and Moy

NGR: NH 97959 57775 (The castle)

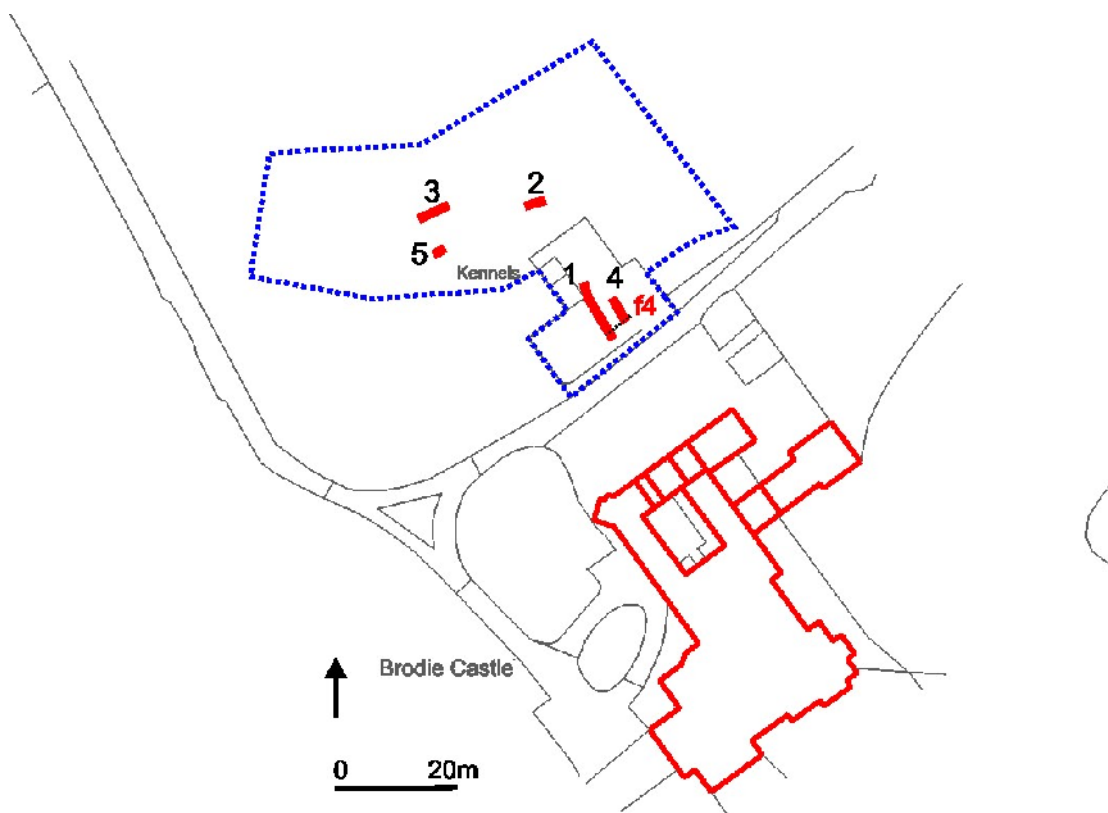
NMRS ref: NH95NE 10.00 (The castle)



Illus 1 Part of the proposed play area in relation to the castle, looking S

3 Methodology

- 3.1 Five small trenches (Illus 1, 2) were dug by a JCB using a straight-edged ditching bucket. The trenches were observed, planned and photographed by MAS Ltd.
- 3.2 The position of the trenches within the area was limited by a drain running N from the NE corner of the castle to a soakaway in the woods and by an electricity cable running along the S side of the track through the woods to the sub-station situated at the E side of the present site. Much of the N part of the site has standing trees which are being retained.



Illus 2 Location of evaluation trenches 1-5 with line of feature f4 marked. Blue dotted outline shows approximate limits of the proposed play area.

4 Documentary sources

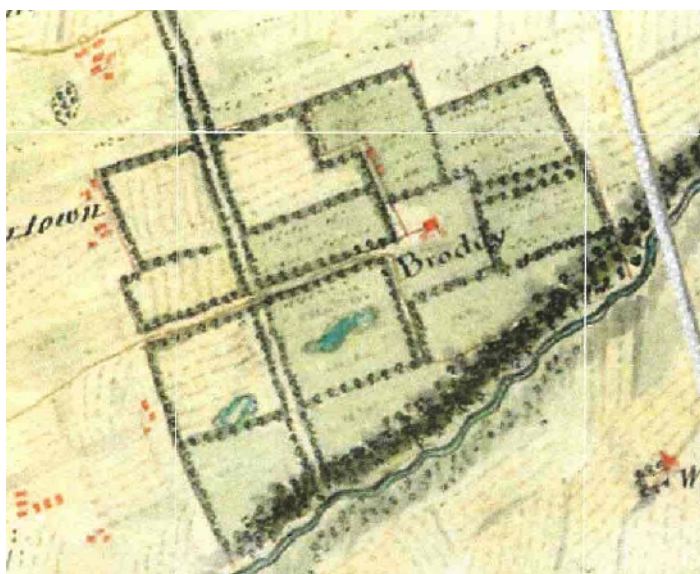
- 4.1 The excavators are grateful to Dr Shannon Fraser for access to the main documentary information and to the images of the estate plans. Pont's map, Roy's Military Map and the 25'' 1st OS map have been accessed through the National Library of Scotland (www.nls.uk).
- 4.2 The Brodie family has been settled at Brodie since the 12th century but to date there is no physical evidence of any structures of that period. The existing building incorporates a Z-plan tower house with considerable 19th century alterations and additions including the N range of buildings opposite the site of the present evaluation (Walker, 1993). Archaeological recording of part of the standing building in 1999 (Kirkdale Archaeology 1999, 13-17) suggests that while much of the tower house is of 16th century date, it may incorporate an earlier L-plan castle with some parts possibly being of 15th-century date. After the castle was burned in 1645 there was a period of restoration and the addition of the W wing may date to this period. The Stair Wing appears to date

to the 1730s. It is at this period in the early 18th century that the grounds were remodelled by Mary Sleigh, wife of the 19th Brodie of Brodie (Kirkdale Archaeology 1999, 16) and it is reasonable to assume that it is this remodelling that is reflected in the 1770 estate map.

4.3 Map evidence: The map evidence is examined in relation to the site of the present evaluation only.

1580s-1590s Pont's Map Pont shows Brodie Castle surrounded by an enclosed park.

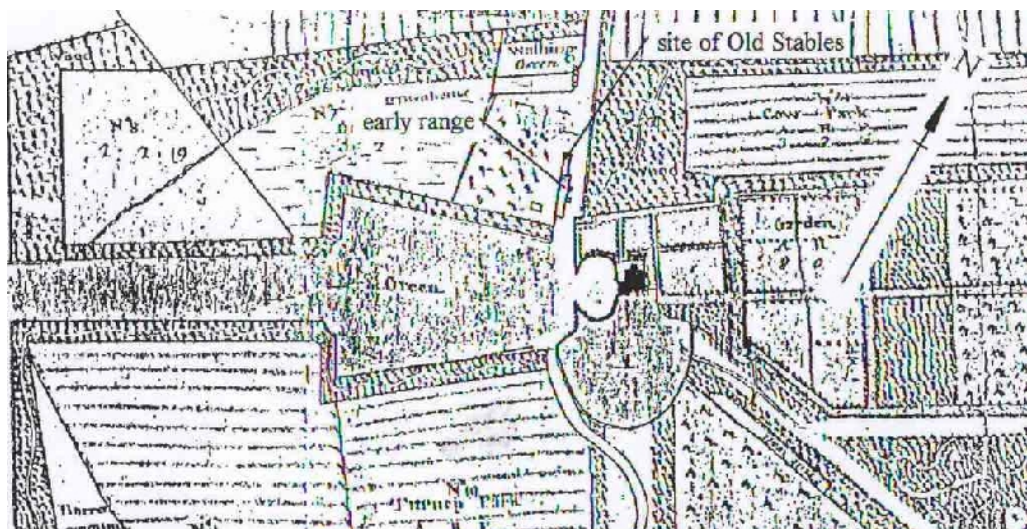
1747-55 Roy's Military Map. Brodie is shown surrounded by a series of rectangular enclosures, with the main approach being towards the W face of the castle. The double line of trees extending E to the S of the boundary may be preserved in the line of the present track that leads past the walled garden. The road towards the Home Farm past the (present) Stables is shown. All these features help to locate the area of the present evaluation within the central enclosure around the castle. This is shown bordered by trees/bushes along the N boundary.



Illus 3 Detail of Roy's Military map of 1747-55 (www.nls.uk)

1770 Estate map of George Brown (reproduced from Addyman and Kay Ltd for the NTS). This shows considerable elaboration of the landscape, presumably reflecting the redesign of the 1730s. In the area of the present evaluation, the N and E parts of the inner enclosure around the castle have been developed into formal garden compartments, with some sort of boundary separating the

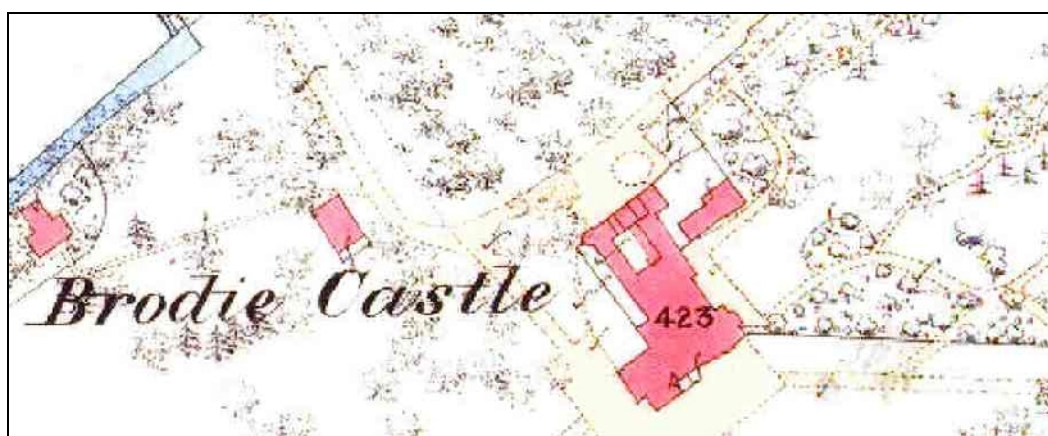
N edge of the garden from the woodland beyond. Again it is possible to locate the present evaluation by reference to the buildings which formed the early range later extended by the stables.



Illus 4 Estate map of 1770 by George Brown. (Detail reproduced from Addyman and Kay Ltd for the NTS).

1825 An estate plan by N Maclean shows the transformation after the extensions at the N side of the castle in the 1820s, which would have taken up much of the N compartment of the 18th-century garden. The remaining garden has been opened out into lawns with the site of the present evaluation shown as woodland to the N of the track.

1868 The 25th/mile 1st Ordnance Survey Map of 1868 (published 1872. Elgin Sheet X.10 (Dyke and Moy)) shows the area of the evaluation as woodland to the N of the present yard area at the N side of the 19th-century extension of the castle.



Illus 5 25th/mile 1st Ordnance Survey map of 1868 (pub 1872). (www.nls.uk)

5 Results

Trench 1

GPS N:297936, 857833 S:297940, 857824

Dimensions: 1.6m x 10m. Orientated approx NNW/SSE, angled slightly to the E from the corner of the kennels due to the restrictions of space for the machine to operate. A total depth of 600mm was excavated to natural yellow sandy boulder clay. This comprised c.300mm of dark brown humic topsoil (1) overlying c.200mm of a stony scatter with considerable rubbish dumping (2). This dumping included occasional pieces of mortar and a few slate fragments as well as bottle fragments, china and some animal bone and sea-shells from food debris. It was not a construction or demolition layer but the incorporation of some building debris may have derived from the 19th-century extensions to the castle. This layer extended only some 5m N of the S end of the trench. Below this was a fine, slightly sandy, humic layer (3), generally some 100mm in depth but extending deeper within feature 4. Layer 3 appeared to be cultivated garden earth and there was no distinction between topsoil/subsoil.



Illus 6 Trench 1, looking N with feature 4 in the foreground marked by horizontal ranging rod.

At between 2.5 and 3.5m from the S end of the trench a clear trench/cut (4) ran ENE/WSW across the evaluation trench. This feature had a clear, almost vertical S edge cut 200mm into the natural. It extended for a width of *c.* 0.90-1m, with the base of the cut gradually rising to meet the general level of the natural. The fill was the same as Layer 3. The only finds within the fill of 4 were two sherds of flat, possibly window, glass without any datable characteristics.

Another feature (5) that cut into the natural near the corner of the kennels proved on excavation to be an animal burrow.

Trench 2

GPS E:297931, 857845 W:297927, 857845

Dimensions: 1.6m x 4m. Orientated approx. E/W.

A total depth of *c.* 800mm was excavated to natural yellow sandy boulder clay. This comprised *c.* 500mm of dark brown humic topsoil (6) over *c.* 300mm slightly lighter subsoil (7).



Illus 7 Trench 2 looking W towards Trench 3

Trench 3

GPS E:297915, 857840 W: 297910, 857837

Dimensions: 1.6m x 5.2m. Orientated approx. E/W. On N side of track through trees. A total depth of *c.* 600mm at the E end of the trench and *c.* 750mm at the W end was excavated to natural yellow sandy boulder clay. This comprised *c.* 300-500mm of dark brown humic topsoil (6) over *c.* 300mm slightly lighter subsoil (7). There was considerable tree-root disturbance.



Illus 8 Trench 3 looking W. A tree root runs across the centre of the trench

Trench 4

GPS N:297941, 857831 S:297943, 857827

Dimensions: 1.6m x 2.8m. Orientated approx NNW/SSE. Placed to test if feature 4 in Trench 1 continued to the E. Most of the width of feature 4 was revealed although due to the proximity of the hedge, the S edge could not be revealed. Between trenches 1 and 4 *c.* 6.8m of feature 4 was revealed.

Trench 5

GPS (*centred*): 297915, 857838

Dimensions: 1.6m x 2m. Orientated approx E/W on S side of track through trees. This trench was abandoned at a depth of *c.* 300mm when the protective tape over the electricity cable (originally thought to have been along the centre of the track) was uncovered.

6 The Finds

The finds recovered from Trench 1 layer 2 consisted of a mixture of glass wine bottles, table ware and kitchen ware. A smaller amount of this material had mixed into the topsoil (1) and apparently midden material of this sort is often seen in mole-hills in this area (pers.comm. Peter Mitchell). A sample selection was collected for washing and identification. It was not retained.

Wine Bottles

Each rim has a very pronounced lip with a deep groove between it and the string ring. The neck length is between 70 and 80mm, with a narrow shoulder and cylindrical body *c.*80 in diameter. The depth of the base kick-up varied between 38-40mm. The bottles seem typical of the type in use in the 19th century.

Table Ware

The dump contained white and blue willow pattern ware, mainly plates but also portions of a small tureen with an incised Wedgwood mark on the base. Together with other sherds of fine table ware it indicates a date of *c.*mid-19th century.

Kitchen Ware

This consisted mainly of white internally glazed red earthenwares, black glazed redware and some brown stoneware. Forms were deep bowls and dishes and one strainer base. As with the bottle glass and the table ware, a mid to late 19th-century date is most likely.

7 Discussion

Trenches 2, 3, 5 and the N half of trench 1 revealed no archaeological evidence. They are consistent with the documentary evidence suggesting that this area was woodland from at least the 18th century. The depth of topsoil is indicative of the accumulation of leaf mold over the years.



Illus 9 Looking E across the N part of the proposed play area. Trenches 3 (LHS) and 5 (RHS) in foreground, Trench 2 behind.

Across the S end of Trench 1 and in Trench 4 however, there was an ENE/WSW trench or cut identified over a length of more than 6.8m, with an almost vertical S edge. There was no evidence that this had been a wall foundation, although the vertical nature of the S side makes this possible. It could also be the result of the digging out of a hedge, although this is perhaps less likely given the very straight edge and lack of obvious root damage.



Illus 10 Looking W across Trench 4 (foreground) and Trench 1. Ranging rods mark the line of feature 4.

The orientation suggested that this might relate to the 18th-century N garden and overlays of the excavation trenches on the 1770 estate plan make this a convincing identification. It appears that this could be the outer N edge of the formal gardens to the N of the castle. These were probably part of the redesign of the castle grounds in the 1730s. They appear to have been swept away in the 1820s when part of this garden was built over by the N extensions to the castle itself. By the 1825 estate plan this N limit of the garden has been replaced by the present yard with the existing hedge near the line of the edge of the garden.

In the mid-19th century this area had been leveled with a mixture of stone and midden material, the latter possibly derived from the nearby dairy and pantry in the Victorian service wing.



Illus 11 Detail of 1770 estate plan with overlay of proposed development (blue outline) and evaluation trenches (red). Trenches 1 and 4 (feature 4) appear to overlap the N limit of 18th-century garden.

In summary, the proposed play area does not appear to pose a problem to any archaeological features. The remnant trench feature 4 is to the S edge of the play area

and appears to be S of the line of any of the proposed play equipment shown on the plan supplied by Playdale.

8 References

Kirkdale Archaeology 1999 Brodie Castle: Archaeological Recording, 1998. Unpublished.

Roy. Military Map of 1747-55 on line at <http://www.nls.uk/maps>

Walker, D 1993 Brodie Castle: Extended version of notes printed in SAHGB excursion handbook for visit, 19th September, 1993). Unpublished.

Acknowledgements

Murray Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Glyn Young for his help and Dr Shannon Fraser for providing copies of estate plans and earlier reports. We are grateful to Peter Mitchell for assistance on site.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Catalogue of digital photographic record (on CD)

Photographic catalogue Brodie Castle 17/1/2012	
Digital frame no	Content
1	Trench 1, S edge of feature 4
2-4	Trench 1 looking N with feature 4 in foreground
5-6	Trench 1, looking S towards castle
7-10	Trench 2 looking W
11-13	Trench 3 looking W (tree root left across centre of trench)
14	Looking N towards trench 3 from trench 5
15-16	Trench 5. Electricity line tape
17-18	Looking E from the W limit of the proposed development. Trench 3 to LHS with poles, Trench 5 to RHS opposite it and Trench 2 behind
19-20	Looking S towards trench 1
21-23	Trench 4 with ranging rod beside N side of feature 4
24-25	Looking W across Trench 4 (foreground) and Trench 1. Ranging rods indicate feature 4.
26-27	Looking NE across the yard from the castle towards the hedge that screens the S side of the site.