

**HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2011**

Ravenscraig Castle: Watching Brief, September 2011.

HS PIC Index Number: 2496

SITE: Ravenscraig Castle, Kirkcaldy, Fife.

N.G.R.: NT 2908 9252; NT 2096 9245

DESCRIPTION: Watching brief during the excavation of two small trenches
designed to receive new signage.

PROJECT CODE: HSCO-2496-2011-01

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4 Western Terrace, Murrayfield, Edinburgh EH12 5QF.

NOVEMBER 2011



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INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its Properties-In-Care (PIC) call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was requested to monitor the excavation of two small trenches at Ravenscraig Castle (Fig.1). These trenches were dug to allow the installation of new signage at the site. The work was undertaken on 7th September 2011, with the Historic Scotland staff manually excavating both trenches under archaeological supervision.

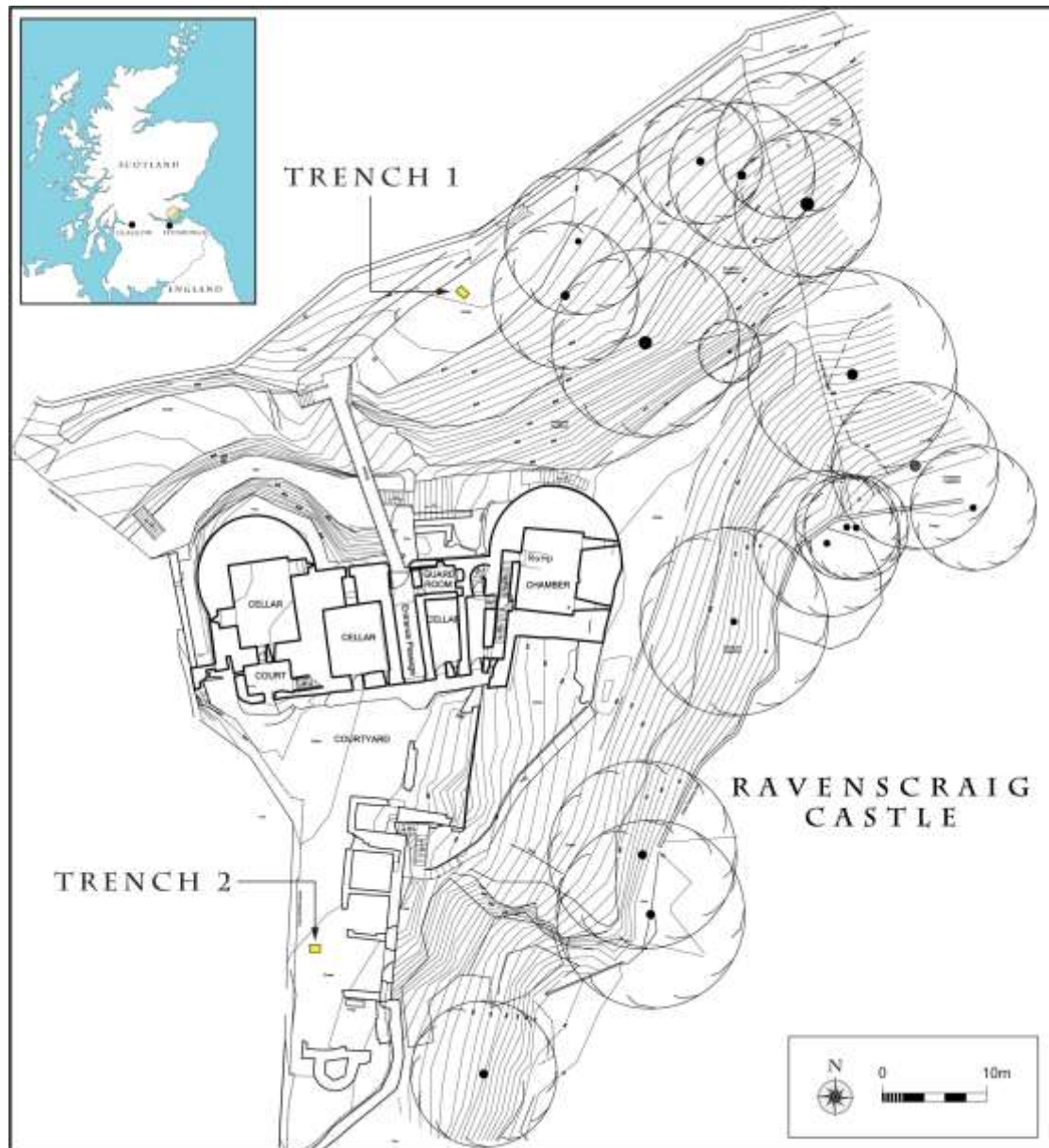


Figure 1: Plan showing the location of Ravenscraig Castle with Trenches 1 and 2.
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DESCRIPTION

Trench 1 was located outside the Castle to the N, adjacent to the path approaching the site from the NE. This replaced an existing sign on a concrete base, which occupied most of the trench. The excavated area measured 1.75m NW/SE x 0.65m NE/SW and was dug to a depth of 0.3m. The topsoil **100** was 0.1m thick and sealed a deposit of dark grey sandy silt rich in bottle glass, **101**, that was not bottomed.

Trench 2 was located in the courtyard to the S of the Castle, just 1.2 m E of the fence line that sits at the top of the cliff edge along the W side of the site. Traces of masonry further S along this fence suggests that this side was once enclosed. Some 2m to the E is a range of buildings, now reduced to their footings.

Trench 2 measured 1.1m E/W x 0.6m N/S, reaching a depth of 0.2m. The topsoil **200** was 0.15m - 0.20m thick and comprised a dark grey sandy silt with modern detritus within. The trench bottomed-out onto context **201**, which consisted mostly of small sub-angular flaking sandstone blocks. Some of these had fragments of degraded pale yellow mortar with shell inclusions attached. Context **201** sat directly over a layer of dark brown sandy silt containing some coal and charcoal, **202**, with frequent mortar flecks throughout. This deposit was not excavated, and its upper surface sloped down from W to E.

CONCLUSIONS

In Trench 1 nothing of archaeological significance was noted. In Trench 2 the upper surface of a rubble deposit, **201**, was revealed. The mortar noted on some of the stones indicates that this is structural debris, with the probable wall line to the W, and the ruined range of buildings to the E a likely sources for this material. This trench demonstrated the potential for archaeological deposits to survive within the castle's courtyard.

LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
100	Dark grey sandy silt (topsoil)
101	Sandy silt rich in bottle glass
102	Existing concrete pad
200	Dark grey sandy silt (topsoil)
201	Mix of sandstone fragments and sandy silt
202	Dark brown sandy silt (unexcavated)

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
01	Trench 2 as finished	E	07/09/2011
02	Trench 2 as finished	S	07/09/2011
03	Trench 2 in context	SE	07/09/2011
04	Trench 2 as finished	W	07/09/2011
05	Trench 1 as finished	NW	07/09/2011
06	Trench 1 in context	NE	07/09/2011
07	Trench 2 with new sign installed	S	07/09/2011