

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

Kinneil House: New Signage Watching Brief, July 2011.

HS PIC Index Number: 90189

SITE: Kinneil House, near Bo'ness.

N.G.R.: NS 9822 8055

DESCRIPTION: Watching Brief during the excavation of a trench to install new signage.

PROJECT CODE: HSCO-90189-2011-01

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4 Western Terrace, Murrayfield, Edinburgh EH12 5QF.

AUGUST 2011

INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its Properties In Care (PIC) call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a trench ahead of the installation of a new information sign at Kinneil House near Bo'ness (Fig.1).

The trench was excavated manually by Historic Scotland under archaeological supervision, and was undertaken on 28th July 2011.

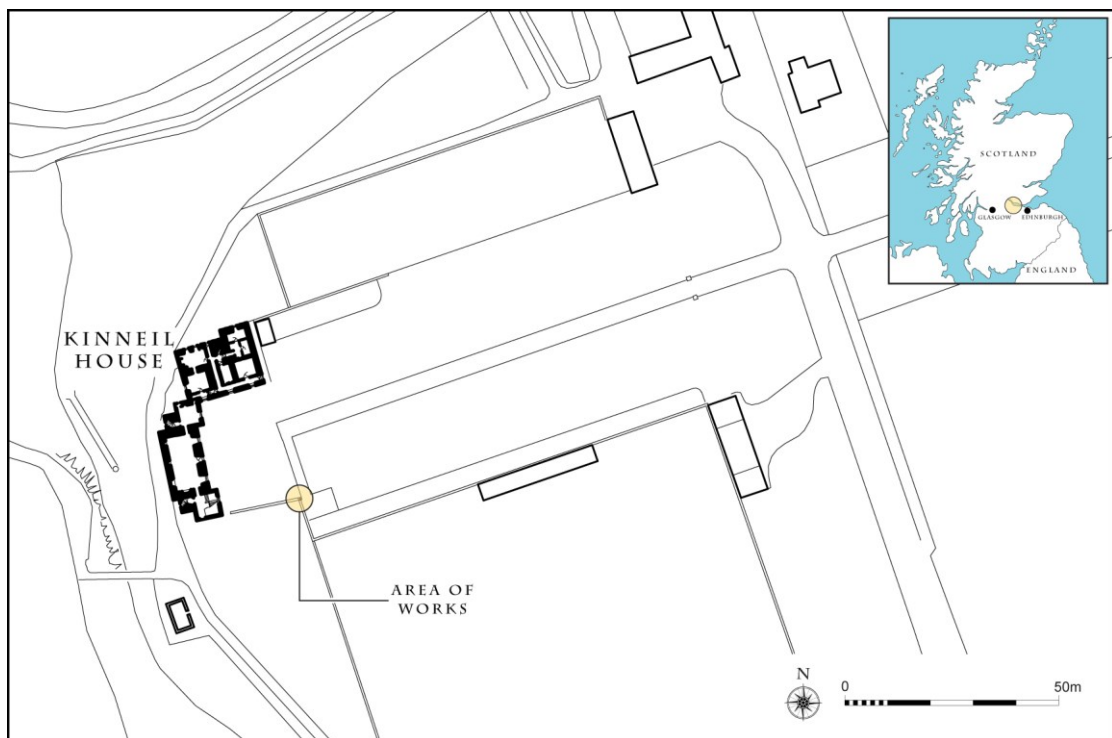


Figure 1: Kinneil House. Plan showing the location of the new signage.

DESCRIPTION

The site of the new signage was SE of the house, on the grassed area to the W of the curving footpath. To the S of the trench was a stretch of wall running E for 25m from the S pavilion of the house, where it returned to the S. At this juncture was a gate pier with a moulded shaft resting on a shelf of cropping bedrock. The N face of the pier contained two filled holes, indicating that they once held door furniture. This arrangement was truncated during the development of the site. The cropping bedrock close to the trench raised concern about the ability to achieve the preferred trench

depth of 0.46m. A further concern was the potential presence of *in situ* remains of the ditch of the Antonine Wall, which is estimated to run W/E close to the S face of Kinneil House. The house itself is situated on the edge of a precipitous ravine formed from bedrock, and cut through by a stream to the W.

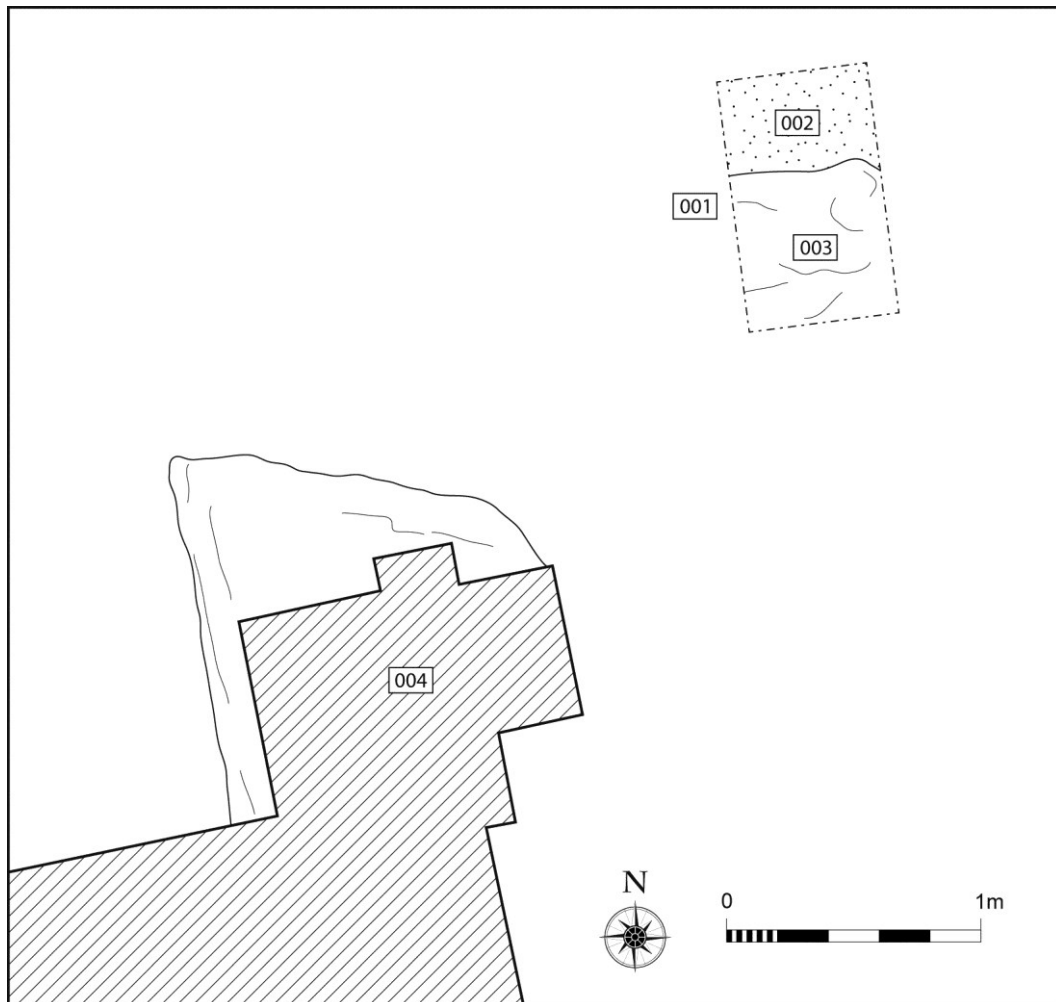


Figure 2: Post-excavation trench plan.

The trench was originally planned to measure 1m N/S x 0.6m E/W x 0.46m deep, and to be located to the SE of the house in order to prevent any blocking of the vista to the façade. The fills consisted of turf and topsoil **001**, 0.2m deep, containing modern bottle glass - indicating that it was a layer of modern (20th century) landscaping. At a depth of 0.2m the layer cleared onto a shelf of yellow and orangey-brown sandstone bedrock **003** in the S part of the trench, and a levelling layer of cinders **002** to the N. The trench was planned at this level and then the cinders were removed and sampled. They

appeared to be part of an earlier landscaping exercise to make-up the ground, but were only exposed in a small section of the trench. When these were removed, the bedrock below them was shown to be gently shelving to the N, hence the need to make-up the ground. Unfortunately no artefacts were found within the layer to help with possible dating of the landscaping.

The bedrock was reduced manually allowing a depth of c. 0.30m to be achieved, providing an appropriate base of concrete to be poured. The bedrock itself could be seen cropping at the surface 1m to the SW of the trench, where it supported a gate pier with a moulded shaft 004. As discussed earlier, there were indications on its N face that it had originally carried a gate, suggesting that there should be a matching pier base somewhere close by to the N. Further to the E, the entry to the formal avenue is flanked by a pair of gate piers with similar moulded shafts.

Nothing else of archaeological interest was uncovered during the excavation.

CONCLUSIONS

Although no artefactual remains were encountered during the works, it was interesting to note the sequence of landscaping which so often accompanies the development of large country house estates. With the close proximity of the Antonine Wall the site presents itself as one with great archaeological potential from a number of historical periods, and it would therefore be appropriate to accompany any further ground-breaking works with an archaeological watching brief.

LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
001	Turf and mid-brown topsoil.
002	Compacted layer of cinders acting as levelling over bedrock 003.
003	Bedrock.
004	Moulded gate pier.

LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Type	Description	Scale
1	Plan	Trench.	1:20

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
01	Kinneil House and lawn.	E	28/7/2011
02	Site, pre-excavation.	N	28/7/2011
03	Site, pre-excavation.	E	28/7/2011
04	Pre-excavation shot, with bedrock and moulded gate pier.	W	28/7/2011
05	Work in progress.	W	28/7/2011
06	Trench following removal of turf and topsoil (001), showing cinders (002) and bedrock (003).	N	28/7/2011
07	Trench following removal of turf and topsoil (001), showing cinders (002) and bedrock (003).	N	28/7/2011
08	Trench.	N	28/7/2011
09	Trench.	E	28/7/2011
10	S-facing section of trench, showing cinder layer (002) above shelving bedrock (003).	S	28/7/2011
11	Trench, post-excavation.	S	28/7/2011
12	General shot of trench.	N	28/7/2011
13	General shot of trench.	NW	28/7/2011
14	Broken-out sandstone bedrock (003).	W	28/7/2011
15	Cleared trench after reduction of bedrock (003).	N	28/7/2011
16	Cleared trench after reduction of bedrock (003).	W	28/7/2011
17	Cleared trench after reduction of bedrock (003).	S	28/7/2011
18	Shot of wall and shafted pier (004).	E	28/7/2011
19	Doorway and wall to S of trench.	N	28/7/2011
20	Location shot of trench.	SE	28/7/2011
21	Location shot of trench.	N	28/7/2011
22	Tusking on the SE corner of the S pavilion.	NE	28/7/2011
23	Tusking on the S face of the S pavilion.	S	28/7/2011

LIST OF SMALL FINDS

No.	Context	Description	Date
1	002	Levelling layer of cinders.	29/7/2011