

HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2010

Edinburgh Castle: Watching brief on lowering of steps, December 2010.

HS PIC Index Number: 90130

Site: Edinburgh Castle, City of Edinburgh
NGR: NT 2514 7344
Project Description: Archaeological watching brief on the lowering of steps in a passage cut between the two vaults in the French Prison.
Project Code: HSCO-90130-2010-01

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Short Archaeological Report

**31st January 2011
Kirkdale Archaeology**

INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake archaeological monitoring of the lowering of steps in a passage cut between the two vaults currently housing the French Prison reconstruction at Edinburgh Castle (see Figure 1). The work took place on 16th December 2010.

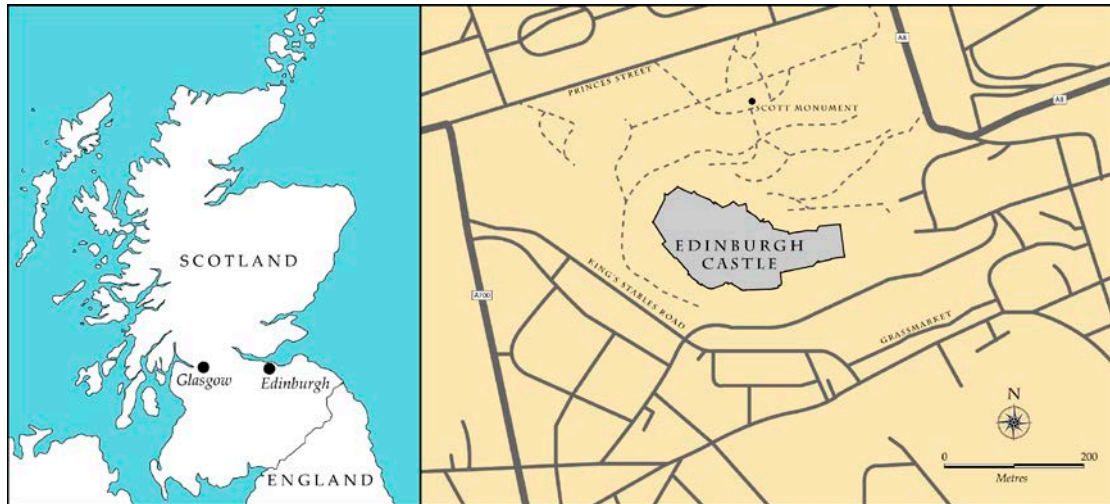


Figure 1: Location map of Edinburgh Castle.

DESCRIPTION

The two vaults currently housing the French Prisoners display are part of a series of six vaults immediately below major buildings around the W and S sides of Crown Square (see Figure 2). The two vaults (referred to as components 6 and 9 in the Kirkdale vault survey) underlie the S end of the Queen Anne Building and the Great Hall. They are probably the work of James IV and represent service space below the suite of major buildings around Crown Square. The present route between the two lies towards the S end of the site and is a modern breach inserted *c.*1980 (?) to allow visitor circulation between the two structures. The recent work entailed the lowering of steps that were inserted in *c.*1980 to allow better headroom for visitor circulation in the new Prisoner display area. The work entailed the cutting back of wall core and the removal of the modern steps that were set in concrete.

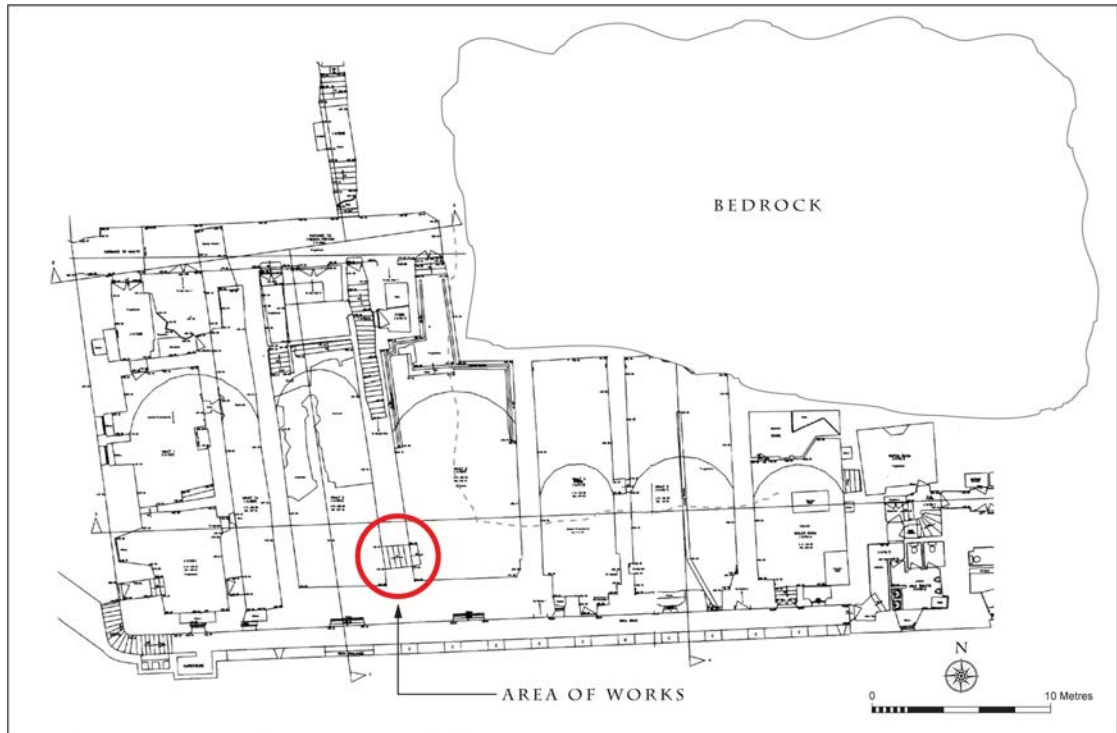


Figure 2: Location plan of the area of works.

CONCLUSIONS

Nothing of archaeological note was revealed during this exercise except that brick fragments were noted in the fabric of the wall-core. The latter may reflect the presence of an existing gap, exploited in 1980 and enlarged, rather than the use of brick within the late 15th / early 16th century wall lines.

LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
001	Modern steps.
002	Wall core.

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	Date
01	Work in progress.	16/12/2010
02	Work in progress.	16/12/2010
03	Work in progress.	16/12/2010