

HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2010

Dumbarton Castle: Watching brief on railing installation, February 2011.

HS PIC Index Number: 90107

Site: Dumbarton Castle, Dumbarton.

NGR: NS 399 744

Project Description: Archaeological watching brief on the excavation of three small trenches, dug to receive the concrete foundations of a new hand rail at the Spur Battery.

Project Code: HSCO-90107-2011-02

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Short Archaeological Report

**4th February 2011
Kirkdale Archaeology**

INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake archaeological monitoring on the digging of three small trenches as part of the installation of a new hand rail at the Spur Battery (see Figures 1 and 2). The excavation of the trenches was undertaken by Historic Scotland staff, and the work took place on 3rd February 2011.

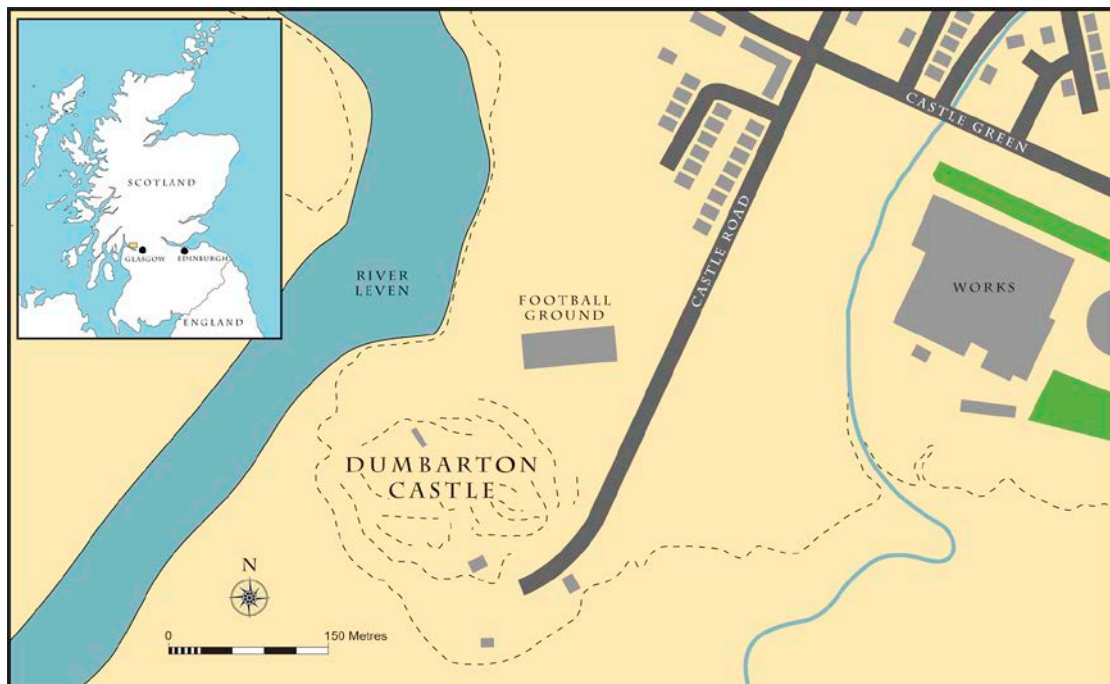


Figure 1: Location map of Dumbarton Castle.

DESCRIPTION

Trench 1, with its long axis aligned approximately NW/SE, measured 600 x 300 x 250mm in size.

Trench 2, which was square in plan, measured 300 x 300 x 250mm in size, with one axis parallel to Trench 1, and the other (since the trench was square in plan), perpendicular to the main axis of Trench 1.

Both trenches were dug through little more than turf and topsoil – a grey/black, humic loam, containing plant roots and decayed leaf material (001).

Nothing of archaeological significance was noted.

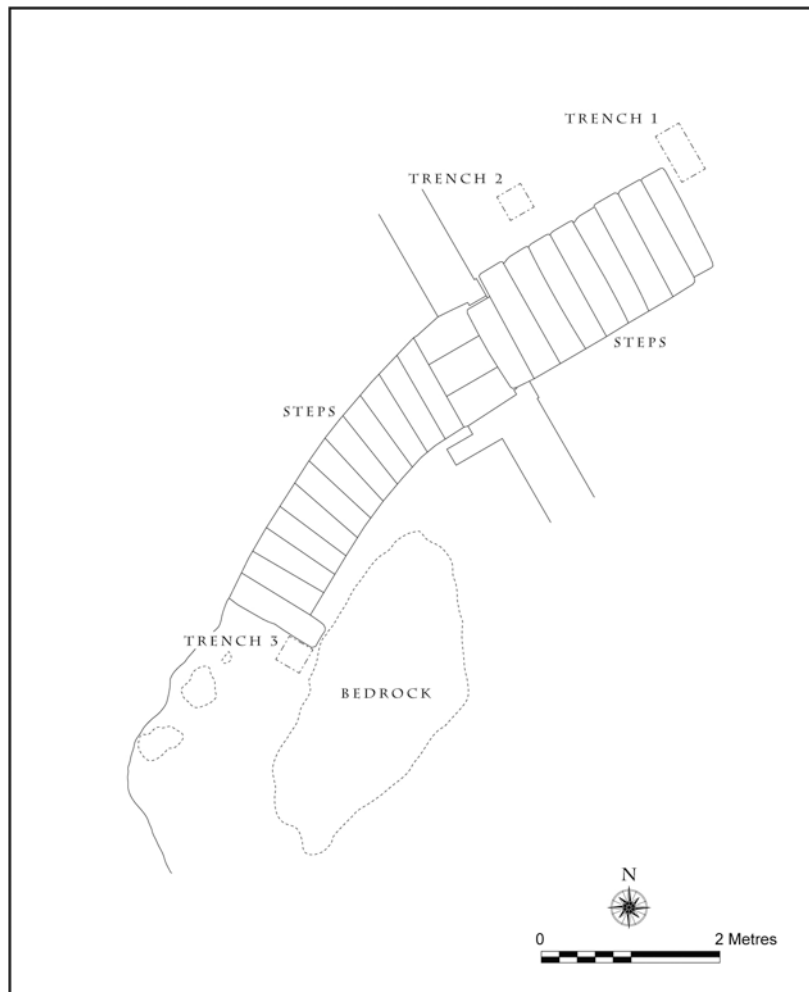


Figure 2: Trench location plan.

Trench 3, which was again square in plan, measured 300 x 300 x 250mm in size, with one axis aligned NE/SW and the other NW/SE. It was dug adjacent to, and to the S of, the top step.

Almost immediately upon breaking the ground, a large piece of dressed, grey/blonde sandstone (002) – see Figure 3 - with a rebated edge was found, sitting in a compact matrix of pieces of broken brick, stone and dark grey silt (003). In order to remove this stone, the trench had to be enlarged to the NW and SW.

Upon enlarging the trench, it was seen that context (002) measured 550 x 350 x 160mm in size. The rebated edge measured 30mm deep x 50mm high. There were signs of tooling marks on the stone.

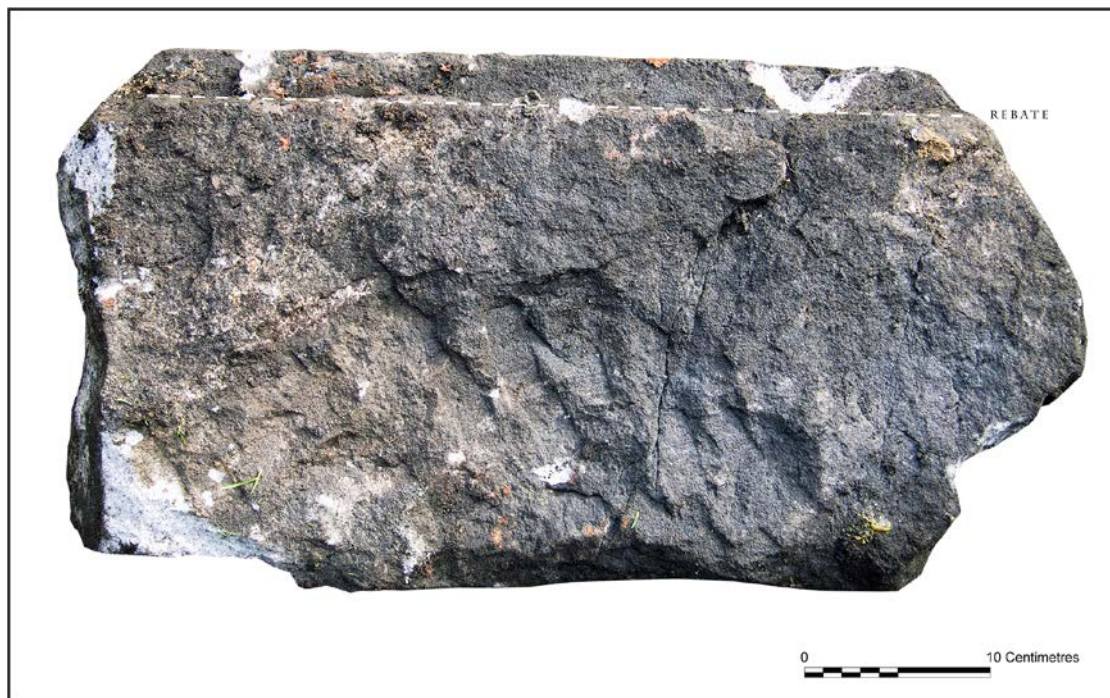


Figure 3: Context (002), the dressed sandstone block.

Contexts (002) and (003) clearly represented a form of infill within the undulating bedrock, in effect creating a level surface for the path. The bedrock outcropped substantially to the SE, but also within, and at the level of, the current path within which Trench 3 was situated (visible just to the W of Trench 3, see Figure 2).

CONCLUSIONS

Context (002) – the dressed sandstone block – was the only thing of archaeological interest encountered during the current works, and was retained on site by Historic Scotland staff.

The discovery of this piece of stone – which presumably came from some pre-existing substantial structure, possibly nearby – shows that even relatively shallow trenches have the potential for revealing material of interest, and it is recommended that any future ground breaking works of this nature be similarly monitored.

LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
001	Grey/black, humic loam in Trenches 1 and 2.
002	Dressed sandstone block in Trench 3.
003	Grey silt with brick and stone debris in Trench 3.

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
01	General view of the site.	E	03/02/2010
02	General view of the site.	SE	03/02/2010
03	General view of the site.	SE	03/02/2010
04	General view.	SE	03/02/2010
05	Work in progress.	E	03/02/2010
06	Work in progress.	S	03/02/2010
07	Work in progress.	SE	03/02/2010
08	Work in progress.	S	03/02/2010
09	Work in progress.	SE	03/02/2010
10	General view.	E	03/02/2010
11	General view.	SE	03/02/2010
12	General view.	W	03/02/2010
13	Contexts 002 and 003.	SW	03/02/2010
14	Contexts 002 and 003.	SW	03/02/2010
15	Contexts 002 and 003.	SW	03/02/2010
16	Contexts 002 and 003.	SW	03/02/2010
17	Contexts 002 and 003.	SW	03/02/2010
18	Contexts 002 and 003.	SW	03/02/2010
19	Contexts 002 and 003.	SW	03/02/2010
20	Contexts 002 and 003.	SW	03/02/2010
21	Context 002.	N/A	03/02/2010
22	Context 002.	N/A	03/02/2010
23	Context 002.	N/A	03/02/2010
24	Context 002.	N/A	03/02/2010
25	Work in progress.	SW	03/02/2010
26	Work in progress.	SW	03/02/2010
27	Context 003.	SW	03/02/2010
28	Context 003.	SW	03/02/2010
29	Context 003.	SW	03/02/2010
30	Context 003.	SW	03/02/2010
31	Context 003.	SW	03/02/2010
32	Context 003.	SW	03/02/2010
33	Drilled hole for handrail.	E	03/02/2010
34	Drilled holes for handrail.	S	03/02/2010