

Historic Scotland
Properties in Care
Minor Archaeological Works
2006

**Broch of Gurness
(Aikerness Broch), Orkney**

PIC Index No. 90157

Project: HSCO-90157-2006-01

Archaeological monitoring
of minor excavations
October 2006

30 November 2006
Kirkdale Archaeology

Site Glasgow Cathedral
N.G.R HY 3811 2684
Project Description Archaeological monitoring
Project Code HSCO-90157-2006-01

Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1.0 Introduction | 1 |
| 2.0 Description | 1 |
| 3.0 Interpretation and observations | 2 |
| A1.0 Appendix 1: List of contexts | 3 |
| A2.0 Appendix 2: List of drawings | 3 |
| A3.0 Appendix 3: List of photographs | 3 |
| A4.0 Appendix 4: Archival references | 4 |

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake archaeological monitoring at Broch of Gurness, Orkney, while contactors (HoleQuest Ltd.) dug two small test pits and drilled four boreholes near the west side of the existing visitor centre situated in the far northwest corner of the guardianship area surrounding the site.

The work was undertaken 31 October 2006.

2.0 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Test Pit 1

Originally intended to be dug at the far north end of the west exterior wall of the existing shop/visitor centre, this pit had to be moved south from the corner *c* 1.1 m to avoid concrete service inspection hatches.

The pit measured 0.6 m N-S by 0.75 m E-W and had a maximum depth of 900 mm, although only the eastmost 0.4 m was dug to that depth while on the west side only turf and topsoil were removed to a depth of 120 mm.

The removal of 120 mm of turf and topsoil [001] revealed [002], very sandy, mid-brown, clayey soil which contained occasional, small, angular stones up to 20 x 30 x 30 mm. A grey plastic pipe [003] aligned N-S was found running through [002] sloping at an angle roughly parallel to ground level at a depth of *c* 0.7 m. Below [002], at a depth of 900 mm, bedrock [004] was encountered.

On the east side of the pit, the foundations of the west wall of the visitor centre [005] were seen to sit directly on the bedrock. These founds stepped out from the main wall *c* 100mm.

2.2 Test Pit 2

This pit was dug almost at the far south end of the west exterior wall of the shop/visitor centre.

The pit measured 0.7 m N-S by 0.65 m E-W and had a maximum depth of 750 mm. The removal of 120 mm of turf and topsoil [001] revealed [002], very sandy, mid-

brown, clayey soil which contained occasional, small, angular stones up to 20 x 30 x 30 mm.

A plastic covered cable [006] bedded in sand [007] was seen in the far north side of the pit running E-W at a depth of *c* 350mm.

Below [002], at a depth of 750 mm, bedrock [004] was encountered.

On the east side of the pit, the foundations of the west wall of the visitor centre [005] were seen to sit directly on the bedrock. These founds stepped out from the main wall *c* 100mm.

2.3 Boreholes BH1-4

Four boreholes were drilled in the positions shown on Fig.1. The diameter of the holes was *c* 100mm. Bedrock was encountered at a general depth of *c* 1m.

It was noted that there was little resistance to the core-sampling machine on its way through to the bedrock, and the layers were much the same as those seen in the two test pits.

3.0 INTERPRETATION AND OBSERVATIONS

As expected, the two test pits only revealed an area of modern disturbance associated with the foundations of the visitor centre and related services.

The soil and bedrock encountered in the boreholes did not seem to indicate the presence of anything other than natural deposits.

Nothing of archaeological significance was noted and no finds were retained.

A1.0 APPENDIX 1: LIST OF CONTEXTS

| No | Description |
|-----|------------------------------------|
| 001 | Turf and topsoil, depth 120mm |
| 002 | Very sandy, mid-brown, clayey soil |
| 003 | Grey plastic pipe |
| 004 | Bedrock |
| 005 | Visitor centre foundations |
| 006 | Plastic covered cable |
| 007 | Sand surrounding 006 |

A2.0 APPENDIX 2: LIST OF DRAWINGS

| No | Type | Description | Scale |
|----|------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Plan | Location plan (see Fig. 1) | 1:100 |

A3.0 APPENDIX 3: LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

HSCO-90157-2006-01-CD1

| Frame | Description | From | Date |
|-------|-------------|------|------------|
| 1 | Test Pit 1 | W | 31-10-2006 |
| 2 | Test Pit 1 | W | 31-10-2006 |
| 3 | Test Pit 2 | W | 31-10-2006 |
| 4 | Test Pit 2 | W | 31-10-2006 |

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Site | Broch of Gurness (Aikerness Broch) |
| HS PIC Index no | 90157 |
| Kirkdale Project no | HSCO-90157-2006-01 |

Report files submitted on CD:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Report in MS Word | HSCO-90157-2006-01-Report.doc |
| TIFFs | HSCO-90157-2006-01-Report Fig1.tif |
| PDF (Report inc. Fig.1) | HSCO-90157-2006-01-Report Fig1.pdf |

Other files submitted on CD:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Photo scans | HSCO-90157-2006-01-CD1 1-4 (jpgs) |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|

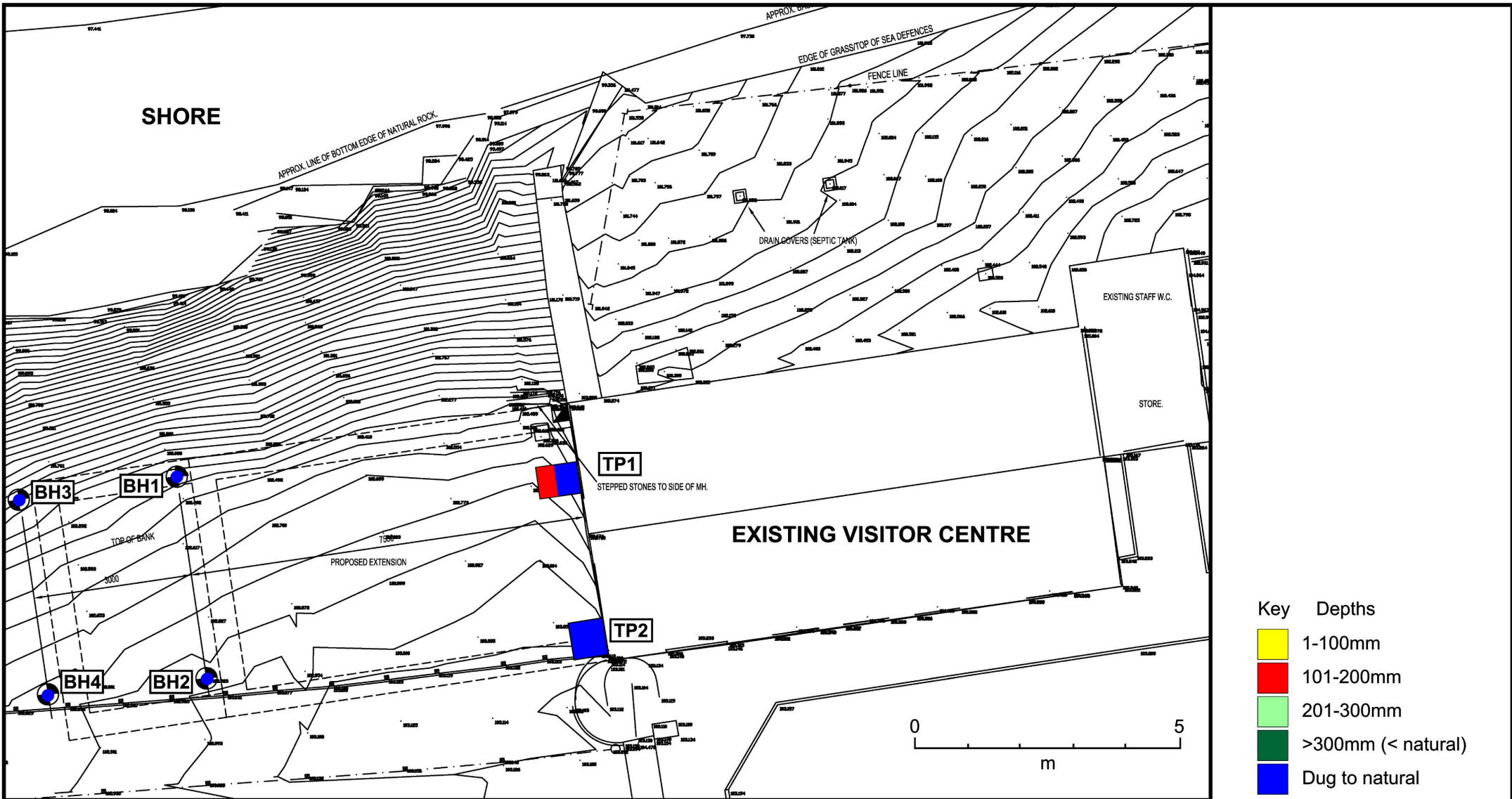


Fig. 1 : Plan (1:100) showing location of test pits and boreholes