

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

Updated on 15/06/2007

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	East Lothian
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Tantallon Castle
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-90295-2010-02
PARISH:	North Berwick
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	D Gorman
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kirkdale Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	NT58NE 5.00
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Castle
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NT 58957 85014
START DATE (this season)	4 June 2010
END DATE (this season)	4 June 2010
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was maintained at Tantallon Castle during the removal of a redundant welcome/admissions sign at the entrance to the castle, and the excavation of a new site for the replacement sign to be installed. Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered during the course of this excavation. The main deposit within the trench was likely to be the result of backfilling from the installation of the previous sign. However, at completion the trench was not very deep (less than 0.5 m), and so there remains a distinct possibility that at depths greater than this, even in this area, features of significant archaeological interest survive.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Historic Scotland
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS

**Historic Scotland
Properties in Care
Minor Archaeological Works 2010**

Tantallon Castle: Signage Replacement June 2010

**HS PIC Index Number: 90295
Project Code: HSCO-90295-2010-02**



**4th June 2010
Kirkdale Archaeology**

<u>Site</u>	Tantallon Castle, East Lothian.
<u>N.G.R</u>	NT 58957 85014
<u>Project Description</u>	Archaeological monitoring of the removal of a redundant welcome/admissions sign at the entrance to the castle, and the excavation of a new site for the replacement sign to be installed.
<u>Project Code</u>	HSCO-90295-2010-02

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology undertook archaeological monitoring and recording works at Tantallon Castle, East Lothian.

The work related to the removal of the previous old welcome/admissions sign located at the entrance to the lower car park (immediately to the right as one exited the main road, on a grassy verge) and the excavation of a shallow trench immediately adjacent to the site of the old sign for the replacement sign, which was to be installed at a later date.

All work was carried out by hand and took place on 4th June 2010.

2.0 DESCRIPTION AND INTERPRETATION

The dimensions for the area to be excavated for the new sign were specified by Historic Scotland as: 1.4m x 0.5m x 0.45m (length x width x depth). The expectation was that the old sign would be set in concrete, but as the work proceeded this turned out not to be the case; the sign was set into the topsoil soil only, out with the concrete immediately to the SE.

The trench was rectangular in plan and was dug on a NW/SE axis. The dimensions once excavated were 1.44m x 0.61m x 0.45m (length x width x depth). At the NW end of the trench an area of concrete (003) was uncovered measuring 0.53m x 0.26m x 0.32m (length x width x depth). Topsoil (001) throughout the trench was of c.0.08m depth. Below this, one deposit filled the trench, a compact silty sand containing roots, charcoal and small stone inclusions (002).

The inclusions and the overall depth of (002) indicated that the material was the result of one episode of backfilling. This occurred with the installation of the old

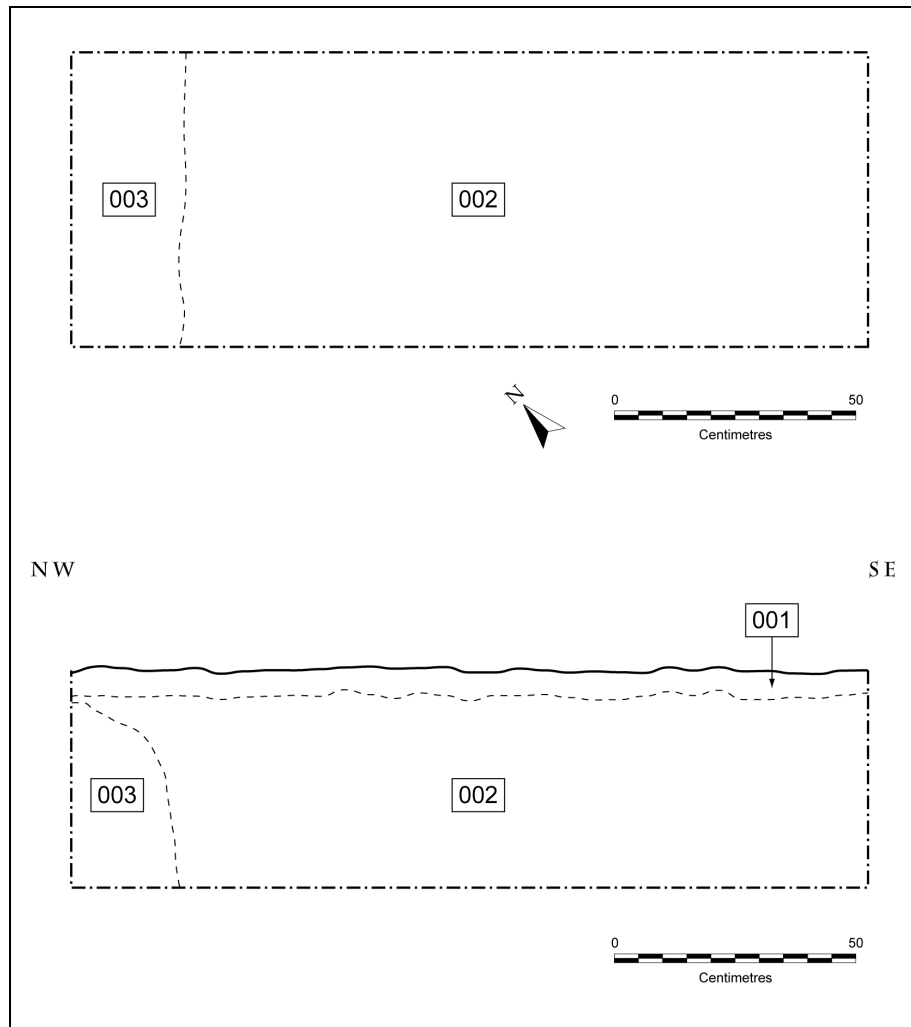


Figure 1: Post-excavation trench plan (top) and SW facing section.

sign, when a large area was excavated and then almost immediately backfilled. The lack of cut marks within the trench supported this idea (i.e. the present trench was within the older trench that was dug when the old sign was installed). The presence of concrete in the NW area of the trench was further evidence of recent disturbance. It was also possible that the entire area adjacent to the lower car park had been subject to landscaping activity, and thus the origins of (002) could lie in the work associated with the construction of the car park.



Figure 2: The concrete and inset metal post at the N end of the trench.

One small piece of modern white glaze pottery was retrieved from (002), again indicating the recent disturbance or origins of this context. No other artefacts were found.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered during the course of this excavation. The main deposit (002) within the trench was likely to be the result of backfilling from the installation of the previous sign.

However, at completion the trench was not very deep (less than 0.5m), and so there remains a distinct possibility that at depths greater than this, even in this area, features of significant archaeological interest survive.

It is recommended therefore that any future ground breaking works should be carried out under close archaeological supervision.

4.0 ADDENDUM

While on site, Kirkdale Archaeology was notified that a linear stone feature located on the NE side of the castle courtyard had recently been weeded and tidied by a castle custodian. The feature ran NE/SW and was located almost parallel to the remains of the old brewery. It consisted of two courses of roughly worked stone blocks, each of which was sitting either side of some stone slabs beneath. At the NE end of this linear feature a stone lintel covered the structure as it ran underneath overgrown grass and possibly out to the cliff face. At the SW end, the feature was still covered by grass, so its full extents could not be determined. From what was visible, it appeared to be c.2m long. This feature was possibly a stone drain, which perhaps ran from the old brewery into the sea.



Figure 3: The stone drain near the Brew House.

In order to expose the full extents of this feature and properly identify it, it would be necessary to remove the soil and vegetation which now fills it on its SW side. From the section visible at the SW end, this would involve removing a depth of c.0.09m of soil (a figure which could increase due to the sloping nature of the courtyard).

5.0 APPENDIX 1: LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
001	Topsoil. A light-mid brown silty sand (c.0.08m depth). Upper fill of trench.
002	Light-mid brown silty sand. Rare small stone inclusions and stone flecks, occasional small charcoal flecks and rare small root inclusions. Lower fill of trench.
003	Concrete.

6.0 APPENDIX 2: LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
1	Pre-excavation location shot showing the old sign and area on the grassy verge to be excavated. Showing main road on left, entrance to castle car park, and fence surrounding the grassy verge.	SE	04/06/2010
2	As above, zoomed in.	SE	04/06/2010
3	Pre-excavation location shot showing the old sign and the area on the grassy verge to be excavated. Also showing North Berwick Law and main road in the background, and entrance to castle from the main road.	E	04/06/2010
4	As above.	E	04/06/2010
5	As above, zoomed in.	E	04/06/2010
6	Working shot showing the removal of the old sign.	S	04/06/2010
7	As above, zoomed in.	S	04/06/2010
8	Working shot showing the removal of the old sign. Also showing extent of the area stripped for new foundations.	S	04/06/2010
9	Shot of area stripped for excavation of foundations, with old sign removed.	S	04/06/2010
10	Showing area after removal of post.	V	04/06/2010
11	Working shot.	S	04/06/2010
12	Post-excavation location shot. Taken from near side of the main road, showing the grassy verge, entrance from main road, and car park. Castle is also visible in background.	SW	04/06/2010
13	Post-excavation location shot.	S	04/06/2010
14	Post-excavation location shot showing the grassy verge and entrance to the lower castle car park.	SW	04/06/2010
15	Post- excavation shot of trench.	E	04/06/2010
16	Post- excavation shot of trench.	SW	04/06/2010
17	Post- excavation shot of trench.	SW	04/06/2010
18	Northern part of NW facing section of the trench showing the concrete.	SW	04/06/2010

No.	Description	From	Date
19	Central part of NW facing section of the trench.	W	04/06/2010
20	Southern part of NW facing section of the trench.	W	04/06/2010
21	Southern part of SE facing section of the trench.	NE	04/06/2010
22	Central part of SE facing section of the trench.	E	04/06/2010
23	Northern part of SE facing section of the trench. Also showing the concrete, with the metal fence post resting on top.	SE	04/06/2010
24	Post- excavation shot. Close up of the concrete, with metal post at the N end of the trench.	S	04/06/2010
25	As above, zoomed out.	S	04/06/2010
26	Showing concrete with metal post at N end of trench.	SE	04/06/2010
27	Interior of castle near Brew House. Showing the stone drain leading to the sea.	SW	04/06/2010
28	As above, showing location.	SW	04/06/2010
29	As above. Total extent of drain as revealed. Showing the lintel at the far end.	SW	04/06/2010
30	As above.	SW	04/06/2010
31	As above.	W	04/06/2010
32	Close-up of stone drain showing the lintel at the NE end.	N/A	04/06/2010
33	Showing most westerly extent of the drain (as revealed).	SE	04/06/2010
34	Close-up of the most westerly extent of the drain.	SE	04/06/2010

7.0 APPENDIX 4: LIST OF SMALL FINDS WITH DIMENSIONS

No.	Context No.	Description	Date
001	003	1 x Sherd of white glazed pottery	04/06/2010