

Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

Updated on 15/06/2007

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	West Dunbartonshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Dumbarton Castle
PROJECT CODE:	HSCO-90107-2013-01
PARISH:	Dumbarton
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	John Godbert
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Kirkdale Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	NS47SW 5
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Castle
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NS 4000 7441
START DATE (this season)	7 March 2013
END DATE (this season)	7 March 2013
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>A watching brief was maintained during excavations to expose existing drains in advance of the installation of new drainage measures. The area excavated lay immediately N of the inner (N) face of the 18th-entury rampart and associated stone drainage channel.</p> <p>The remains of a wall were found, likely to represent an earlier version of the southern defences of the castle, predating the 1735 building campaign. Although only revealed in a small trench, it appears to show the upper limits of a wall on a different alignment from the 18th-century layout. The masonry, in turn, lies beyond the assumed limits of the 17th-century plan, and as such is most likely part of the medieval defences associated with other known residual elements such as the medieval gatehouse.</p>
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 2013**

Dumbarton Castle • Monitoring • March 2013

HS PIC Index Number: 90107

SITE: Dumbarton Castle, Dumbarton

N.G.R.: NS 398 744 – NS 401 745

DESCRIPTION: Monitoring the excavation of one of a series of investigative trenches excavated in order to expose existing drains in advance of new drainage measures

PROJECT CODE: HSCO-90107-2013-01

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MARCH 2013

INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to monitor the excavation of one of a series of investigative trenches excavated in order to expose existing drains in advance of new drainage measures (Fig.1).

The work was undertaken by Historic Scotland staff under archaeological supervision and took place on 7th March 2013.

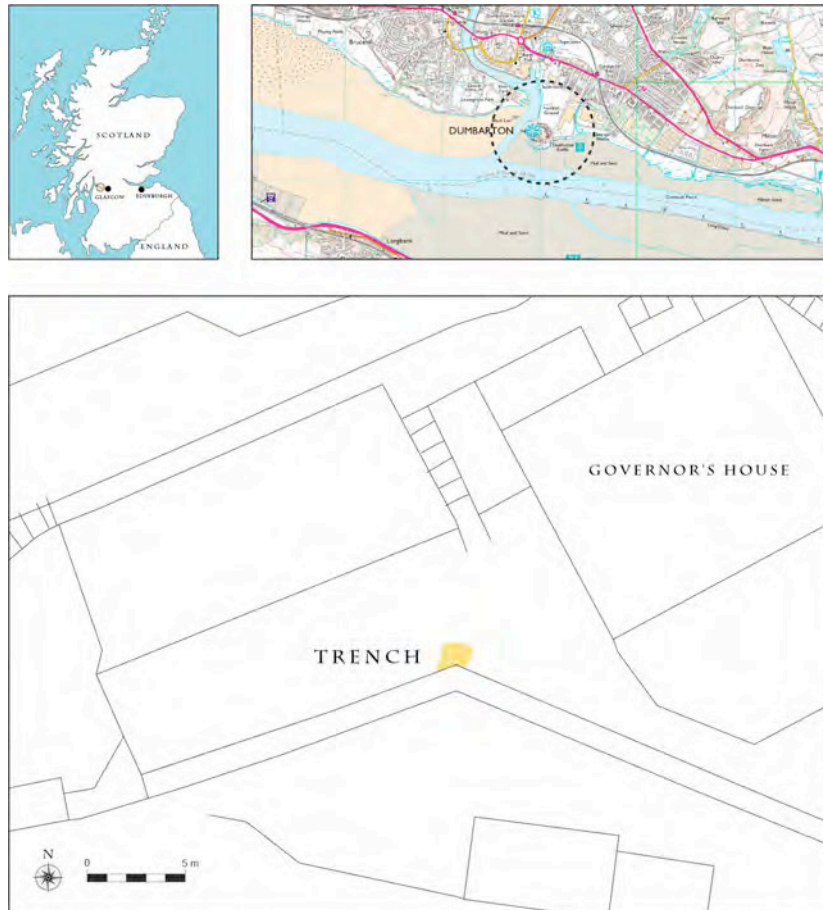


Figure 1: Plan showing the location of Dumbarton Castle and the area of works.
Inset No. 2 © Crown copyright. All rights reserved 2013. Licence number 100036933.

DESCRIPTION

Trench 1 (Test Pit 4) was located within the limits of the forework forming part of King George's Battery, built in 1735. The trench lay immediately N of the inner (N) face of the 18th Century rampart (004) and an associated stone drainage channel (005). It measured a maximum 1.2m (N/S) x 1.1m (E/W) and extended to a depth of c0.35m.

After the successive removal of gravel (001) and a mixed deposit of stones and dark silt (002), a large single stone (003) - the remains of an earlier wall - was revealed. Further excavation revealed a wall face

(006) with associated wall core (007), apparently reflecting a wall aligned NE/SW. This was truncated by the footings (008) for the present drainage channel (005) at its S end.



Plate 1: Context 002



Plate 2: Contexts 002, 006 and 008

CONCLUSIONS

This wall appears to represent an earlier version of the southern defences of the castle, predating the 1735 building campaign. Although only revealed in a small trench, it appears to show the upper limits of a wall on a different alignment from the 18th Century layout. The masonry, in turn, lies beyond the assumed limits of the 17th Century plan, and as such is most likely part of the medieval defences associated with other known residual elements such as the medieval gatehouse. Significantly, the platform occupied by the gatehouse and its successor, the Governors House, and that which was projected by both 17th and 18th Century batteries, was not seen in the trench, on the basis of **006** defining the outer face of a free standing wall. On this basis **006/007** could represent a wall rising up from the beach/shoreline levels, with the natural terrace exploited by the gatehouse on its N side.

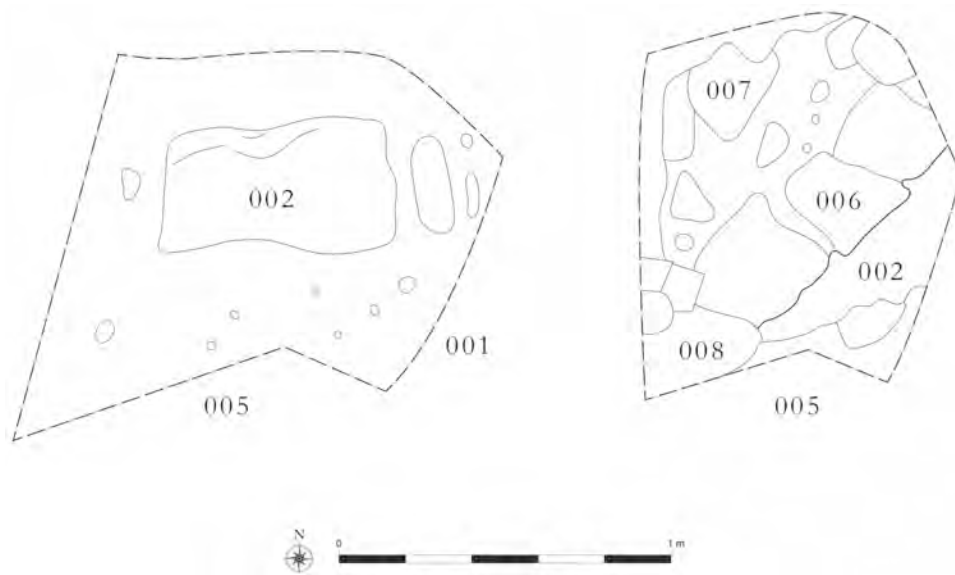


Figure 2: Plan of trench prior to removal of 002 (left) and following removal of 002



Figure 3: Alignment of wall 006

LIST OF CONTEXTS

Number	Description
001	Modern gravel surface
002	Dark brown soil with loose rubble and small stones
003	A single large stone, part of 002
004	N face of 1735 rampart
005	Stone channel, immediately N of 005, comprised of cut stone sections, c.180mm wide
006	Wall face, comprising three facing stones for wall core 007 – not exposed beyond plan
007	Wall core associated with 006 - rubble set in loose silty matrix, not fully exposed beyond upper surface; no sign of mortar or other bonding at this level
008	Mortared rubble footings for drain channel 005. Cuts 006, not excavated

LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Type	Description	Scale
1	Plan	Prior to removal of 002	1:20
2	Plan	Following removal of 002	1:20

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
1	Trench, pre-excavation	N	07/03/2013
2	Trench, showing 003	W	07/03/2013
3	Trench fully excavated	E	07/03/2013