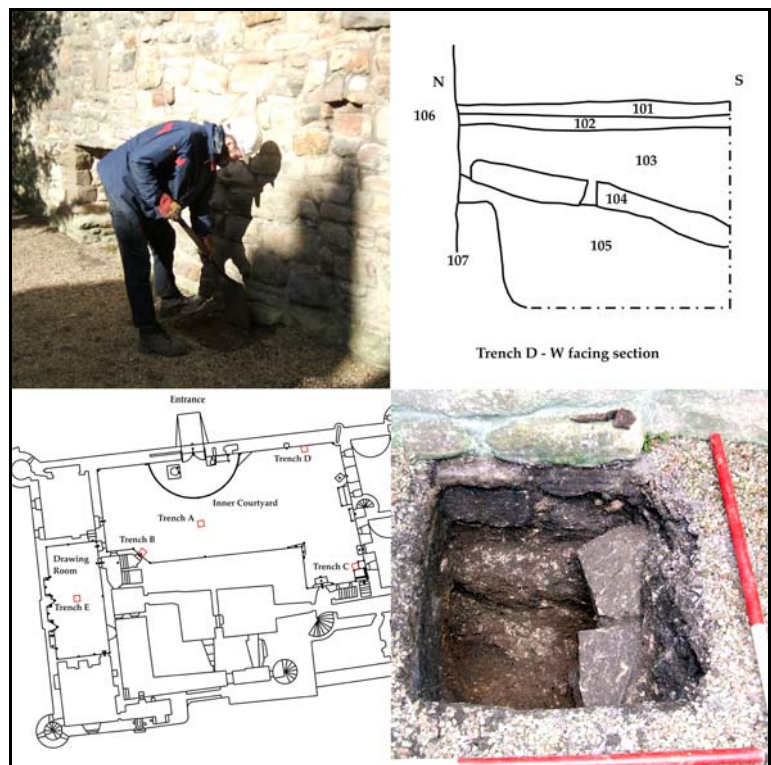


Historic Scotland  
Properties in Care  
Minor Archaeological Works 2007

# Craigmillar Castle

## Archaeological evaluation, March 2007

HS PIC Index number: 90129  
Project code: HSCO-90129-2007-01



12 May 2007  
Kirkdale Archaeology

<b><u>Site</u></b>	Craigmillar Castle
<b><u>N.G.R</u></b>	NT 283 705
<b><u>Project Description</u></b>	Archaeological evaluation
<b><u>Project code</u></b>	HSCO-90129-2007-01

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*SUMMARY: Small trial trenches were dug at Craigmillar Castle to assess the nature of deposits under the gravel in the inner courtyard and in the drawing room. There appeared to be make-up deposits below the level of the courtyard, perhaps suggesting an earlier, lower level.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Under the terms of its PIC call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Craigmillar Castle. This comprised the excavation of four small trenches (A-D) in the inner courtyard and one in the 'drawing room' to the SW (Fig. 1). All of the trenches were required to be excavated to a depth of 500 mm unless significant archaeological features were encountered above this depth.

The work was carried out on 20 March 2007.

## **2.0 DESCRIPTION AND PHASING**

### **2.1 Trench A**

600 mm x 600 mm x 500 mm deep.

Located fairly centrally within the inner courtyard.

#### *2.1.1 Phase 5 features*

The ground surface over the trench was **(101)**, a 60 mm thick deposit of gravel made up of small, 20 mm diameter, stones.

**(101)** sealed **(102)**, a deposit of pale grey silt with abundant ash, charcoal and mortar flecks. **(102)** was seen throughout the trench and measured up to 100 mm thick.

#### *2.1.2 Phase 2 features*

Deposit **(108)** was a mix of dark brown, silty clay and yellow clay, very compact, with some angular fragments of yellow sandstone (up to 100 mm x 150 mm). A depth of 340 mm of **(108)** was removed but it was not bottomed.

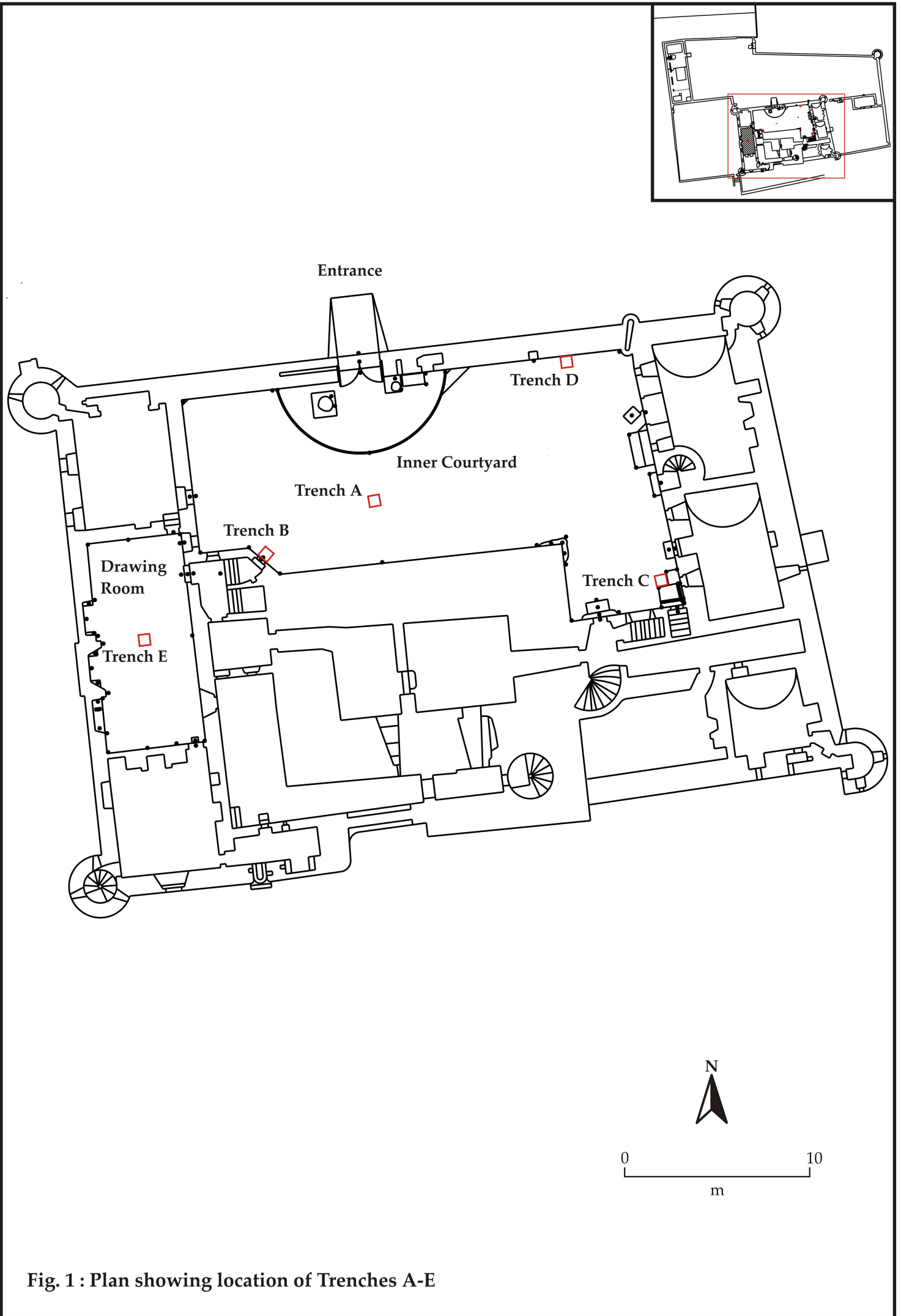


Fig. 1 : Plan showing location of Trenches A-E

## 2.2 Trench B

600 mm x 600 mm x 100 mm deep.

Located in the SW corner of the courtyard.

### 2.2.1 Phase 5 features

(101) and (102) were removed; both measured up to 50 mm in depth.

### 2.2.2 Phase 4 features

The excavation bottomed onto (123), a mix of sub-rounded and sub-angular stones within a deposit of very compact, dark brown silt with some mortar flecks.

## 2.3 Trench C

600 mm x 600 mm x 500 mm deep

Trench C was located in the SE corner of the courtyard with the E and S sides against stone slabs. The majority was excavated to a depth of 500 mm but the S end could not be fully excavated without risking destabilising the stone slab at that end.

### 2.3.1 Phase 5 features

(101) and (102) were removed from the whole trench; both varied between 40 mm and 60 mm in depth.

E-W across the S end of the trench, sealed by (102), (109) was a roughly "U"-shaped cut measuring 200 - 250 mm in width and up to 300 mm deep. (110), the fill of (109), comprised a mix of loose, light brown sand and grey ash with pieces of broken, red ceramic drain. Some pieces of drain were still *in situ* but broken.

Features (111), (112), (113) were only seen in the E section. (111) was a 200 mm thick concrete block at the base of which were two red bricks, (112). Below (112), (113) was a 200 mm thick block of concrete.

### 2.3.2 Phase 4 features

Below (102) and cut by (110), there was a 250 - 280 mm thick deposit, (114), of light to mid-brown, slightly silty sand with 20% sub-angular stones (80 mm by 60 mm on average) and occasional charcoal flecks.

### 2.3.3 *Phase 3 features*

At the S end of the trench, **(117)** was seen as two flat sub-rectangular basalt slabs, only part of which were in the trench. The areas to the E and W could not be investigated to determine their extent.

### 2.3.4 *Phase 2*

Sealed by **(114)**, **(115)** was a mix of slate fragments and mid-brown, silty clay, 60% slate fragments measuring 80 mm by 60 mm, 15 mm thick on average. **(115)** measured up to 150 mm in thickness.

### 2.3.5 *Phase 1*

Sealed by **(115)**, **(116)** is a deposit of quite compact, light to mid-grey, slightly clayey silt with occasional small stones and charcoal and mortar flecks. **(116)** was uncovered but not excavated.

## 2.4 **Trench D**

600 mm x 600 mm x 500 mm deep

Located near the NE corner of the courtyard, against the N wall.

### 2.4.1 *Phase 5*

In this trench, **(101)** and **(102)** were up to 50 mm and 30 mm thick respectively.

### 2.4.2 *Phase 4*

Sealed by **(102)**, **(103)** was a deposit of dark grey, clayey silt with sandstone fragments, at least one brick fragment and mortar flecks throughout. **(103)** varied from 100 mm to 230 mm in thickness, thicker at the S end.

Below **(103)** there were two yellow sandstone fragments, **(104)**, with a fairly even upper face, sloping down to the S. The larger stone measured 350 mm N-S and was 70 mm thick, the full extent not seen as the stones continued into the E section.

### 2.4.3 *Phase 3*

The bottom two courses of the N wall of the courtyard, **(106)**, were exposed within the trench. **(106)** comprised coursed, sandstone blocks and measured 250 mm in height. Below **(106)**, **(107)** was formed with rectangular, sandstone blocks pointed

with course, pale yellow, crumbly mortar. 250 mm in height of **(107)** was uncovered but the base was not seen.

#### 2.4.4 *Phase 2*

At the bottom of the trench, sealed by **(104)**, **(105)** was a mix of brown, silty clay and yellow clay (mostly the former) with abundant flecks and lumps of mortar, some small stones and charcoal flecks.

### 2.5 **Trench E**

600 mm x 600 mm x 80 mm deep

This trench was in the drawing room (to the SW of the inner courtyard) and it measured 600 mm square and was excavated to a depth of 80 mm.

#### 2.5.1 *Phase 5*

**(101)** and **(102)** were excavated together and recorded as **(118)**. **(118)** was up to 80 mm deep.

#### 2.5.2 *Phase 4*

At the N end of the trench, but not extending as far as the E baulk, **(121)** was a cut of which only the S and E edges were seen. The S edge of **(121)** was fairly straight and the E curved, the revealed part measuring 550 mm E-W, 350 mm N-S, but extended further in both directions beyond the trench. The upper fill of **(121)** was **(119)**, loose, pale grey silt with many charcoal and mortar flecks. Shards of glass were recovered from **(119)**, probably no later than 18<sup>th</sup>-century in date. Below **(119)**, **(120)** comprised angular sandstone fragments varying in size from 80 mm by 60 mm on average to 250 mm by 150 mm - two of the larger stones were at the N and S sides with the smaller stones infilling in the middle.

**(121)** cut **(122)**, a deposit of course, pale yellow mortar with many small stones and silty patches. **(122)** was not excavated.

### 3.0 INTERPRETATION AND OBSERVATIONS

#### 3.1 Phase 1

Seen in Trench C (116) was very compact and it was thought possible that it could be a trampled surface, but this deposit was only glimpsed and it is just as likely that it was more (phase 2) infill.

#### 3.2 Phase 2

In Trench A (108) is thought most likely to be material imported to raise the ground level, probably immediately prior to a construction phase. (105) in Trench D was a similar deposit and here, although the relationship of this deposit with the courtyard's N wall could not be established with any confidence, it is worth noting that if it was not *in situ* then the (phase 3) foundations (107) would have stood a fair bit (over 250 mm) above ground level. This suggests that (105) was *in situ* before the N wall. Both (108) and (105) included material that may indicate it included demolition debris.

(115) in Trench C looked like demolition debris but the high slate content and the fact that they lay flat seemed slightly odd - a possible explanation may be that they were levelling for something to sit over.

The material used as infill in this phase could have been brought in with gardens in mind, as it seems like it would be free draining, fairly rich, soil.

#### 3.3 Phase 3

This phase is one of the more tentatively linked between trenches - the principle common factor is that these features look to relate to the current structure.

In Trench C (117) appeared to be levelling for the slab to the S of the trench - this stone slab has a drainage channel cut in it, unlike the one to the E of the trench, and may be a remnant of a surface within the courtyard.

The phase 3 features in trench D were the N wall of the courtyard, (106), and the foundations for it, (107).

#### 3.4 Phase 4

In Trench B (123) was soon reached, this is likely to be a disturbed surface. The



location of the trench means that it could equally be related to the stairway immediately to the SW or simply part of a surface throughout the inner courtyard.

In Trench C, **(114)** looked to be a fairly thick make-up deposit, raising the ground level by around 250 mm. It may be that the level was raised to the level of the current doorways and later disturbed by **(101)** and **(102)**. In Trench D **(103)** was a similar deposit.

Below **(103)**, **(104)** may be stones that have fallen from wall **(106)**, construction debris from it, or the W end of a structure mostly outside the trench. The first of these suggestions is perhaps the most unlikely as the wall did not look to have sustained much damage. The fact that the stones were sloped may suggest that they were taking water from the wall to a drain somewhere to the S of the trench.

The nature of the **phase 4** deposits in the inner courtyard trenches seemed to suggest that the ground level was raised for construction purposes and although the level reached was lower than the current entrances of the courtyard this may be due to **phase 5** disturbance.

It is difficult to interpret the Trench E feature **(121)**, since not all of it was seen. It is interesting that it was thought possible that the lower fill, **(120)**, may be stones lining the edge of the cut, perhaps suggesting a structural use, perhaps some sort of slot. Another possibility is that the stones were tipping into a pit, if so they were large and tipping very steeply suggesting a very large pit – perhaps a well.

**(122)**, the deposit cut by **(121)**, looked as if it may have been the base for a surface. Although there was not a stone surface seen in this trench elsewhere in this room there are flat stones seen appearing through the gravel finish.

### 3.5 **Phase 5**

The ground surface at Trenches A-D was a modern gravel finish, **(101)**, and **(102)** immediately below was bottoming for it.

In Trench C **(109)** was the trench for a red ceramic drainage pipe that was still within the fill, although it was badly broken.

In the E section **(111)**, **(112)**, **(113)** were modern and thought most likely to relate to

services, or perhaps the surface slab to the E of the trench, which has no drainage channel cut in it and probably a replacement. It may even be that the slab caps a service inspection box.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Trenches B and E were not fully excavated to the desired depth since this would remove archaeological features that may be significant.

In Trench B the feature bottomed onto may have been a surface, but if so it was not complete. If a larger area was opened it is likely that somewhere in the vicinity there would be enough of a gap in the stonework to excavate a trench.

At Trench E the problem is primarily that although a feature has been identified its extent has not and excavation of it within the small trench may damage the feature without giving much information.

The absence of structural features encountered in the other trenches is not an indication that this would be the case elsewhere in the courtyard. Slabs (104) in Trench D may indicate structural remains immediately to the E of this area and there was a lot of disturbance at Trench C, which would have removed any courtyard surface for instance, that it is unlikely to be representative. Trench A did show an area where the modern surface bottomed onto make-up material down to, and beyond, the desired level.

The preferred archaeological methodology would be to open larger trenches. As the current gravel finish is to be removed the ideal would be that this, and perhaps the bottoming for it, was removed from the whole area and then areas of archaeological interest either investigated or avoided depending on the brief.

As a smaller project prior to the removal of all the gravel larger trenches would be needed. If the desire is to reach a depth of 500 mm then fairly large areas of the gravel and bottoming could be removed and areas for smaller, deeper, holes identified within this. This would almost certainly achieve holes of the desired depth in most areas and give an indication of the problems likely to be encountered when a straight line through the room, a service trench for instance, needed to be

investigated.

In summary, whatever further intrusive works are carried out, larger trenches are probably necessary. The size and number of the trenches is always dependant on the time available for excavation, however it is unlikely that any trench smaller than a 1.00 m square will give much useful information and larger areas should probably be cleared before deep excavation.

#	Tr.	Description	Over	Under	Phase
101	A-D	Current gravel surface.	102	-----	5
102	A-D	Pale grey silt, bottoming for 101.	103 108	101	5
103	D	Dark grey clayey silt with sandstone fragments and mortar and charcoal flecks.	104 106	102	4
104	D	Two yellow sandstone slabs in the top of 105.	105	103	4
105	D	Mix of brown silty clay and yellow clay with mortar stone and charcoal inclusions.	-----	104	2
106	D	Bottom two courses of sandstone blocks in the S face of the N wall.	107	103	3
107	D	Footings for 106.	-----	106	3
108	A	Mix of dark brown silty clay and yellow clay with some stones.	-----	102	2
109	C	Cut for red ceramic drain.	110	102	5
110	C	Fill of 109, light brown sand and grey ash.	111	109	5
111	C	Concrete base for the slab on the ground surface E of the trench.	112	110	5
112	C	Red brick under 111.	113	111	5
113	C	Concrete base for 112	114	112	5
114	C	Light-mid brown slightly silty sand and stones.	115	113	4
115	C	Mix of slate fragments and mid brown silty clay.	116	114	2
116	C	Quite compact light-mid grey slightly clayey silt.	-----	115	1
117	C	Sub-rectangular basalt slabs, bottoming for the slab on the <sup>1</sup> ground surface S of the trench.	115	102	3
118	D	Gravel and makeup.	119	120	5
119	D	Upper fill of 121, loose pale grey silt.	120	118	3

120	D	Lower fill of 121, sandstone fragments along the sides of the cut.	121	119	3
121	D	Cut in the N half of the trench.	122	120	3
122	D	Course light yellow/white mortar with many inclusions.	-----	121	4
123	B	Possible surface, mix of sub-rounded and sub-angular stones in dark brown silt.	-----	102	4

## A2.0 APPENDIX 2: LIST OF DRAWINGS

#	Type	Tr.	Scale	Description	Date
1	Section	A	1:10	East section.	20/03/07
2	Plan	D	1:10	Post excavation plan.	20/03/07
3	Plan	C	1:10	Post excavation plan.	20/03/07
4	Section	C	1:10	West section.	20/03/07
5	Section	C	1:10	East section.	20/03/07
6	Section	D	1:10	East section.	20/03/07
7	Plan	E	1:10	Post excavation plan.	20/03/07

## A3.0 APPENDIX 3: LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

HSCO-90129-2007-01-CD1

#	Tr.	Description	From	Date
1	D	Dave opening the trench.	E	20/03/07
2	D	Trench post excavation 105.	W	20/03/07
3	D	E section 103 and 105.	W	20/03/07
4	D	N section, 106 and 107.	S	20/03/07
5	D	W section 101-107.	E	20/03/07
6	C	Trench post excavation 116.	E	20/03/07
7	C	Trench post excavation 116.	N	20/03/07
8	A	Trench post excavation 108.	W	20/03/07
9	A	N section 101, 102 and 108.	S	20/03/07
10	A	S section 101, 102 and 108.	N	20/03/07
11	A	W section 101, 102 and 108.	E	20/03/07
12	A	E section 101, 102 and 108.	W	20/03/07
13	A	Trench post excavation 108.	S	20/03/07
14	E	Trench post excavation 119-122.	W	20/03/07

#	Tr.	Description	From	Date
15	E	Trench post excavation 119-122.	E	20/03/07
16	B	Trench post excavation 119-122.	N	20/03/07
17	B	Trench post excavation 119-122.	N	20/03/07

**A4.0****APPENDIX 4: ARCHIVAL REFERENCES**

<b>Site</b>	Craigmillar Castle
<b>HS PIC Index no</b>	90129
<b>Kirkdale Project no</b>	HSCO-90129-2007-01
<b>Date(s) of site work</b>	20 March 2007

Report files submitted on CD:

<b>Report in MS Word</b>	HSCO-90129-2007-01-Report.doc
<b>TIFFs</b>	HSCO-90129-2007-01-Report Fig(s) 1-3.tif(s)
<b>PDF</b>	HSCO-90129-2007-01-Report.pdf

Other files submitted on CD:

<b>Photo scans</b>	HSCO-90129-2007-01-CD1- 1-17.jpg(s)
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## *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*

Updated on 15/06/2007

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Edinburgh, City of
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Craigmillar Castle
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	HSCO-90129-2007-01
<b>PARISH:</b>	Edinburgh, City of
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	David Murray
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Kirkdale Archaeology
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NT27SE 107
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Defence; Residential/ Castle
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)</b>	NT 283 705
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	20 March 2007
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	20 March 2007
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)</b>	<p><b>Ewart and Dunn, G and A (1996 b)</b> 'Craigmillar Castle (City parish of Edinburgh), excavation'. Discovery and Excavation, Scotland, 38,</p> <p><b>Stewart, D (1998 b)</b> 'Craigmillar Castle (City parish of Edinburgh), watching brief', Discovery and Excavation, Scotland, 1998, 34-35,</p> <p><b>Ewart, G (2003 j)</b> 'Craigmillar Castle (City parish of Edinburgh), watching brief', Discovery Excav Scot, 4, 2003, 68,</p>
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	Small trial trenches were dug at Craigmillar Castle to assess the nature of deposits under the gravel in the inner courtyard and in the drawing room. There appeared to be make-up deposits below the level of the courtyard, perhaps suggesting an earlier, lower level.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Historic Scotland
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	4, Western Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5QF
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	g_ewart@hotmail.com
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>	Archive to be deposited in NMRS