



Culross Palace Garden Wall, Culross

July 2007

Carried out on behalf of the National Trust for Scotland



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ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Location plan.

Figure 2: west facing elevation and groundplan.

Figure 3: east facing elevation.

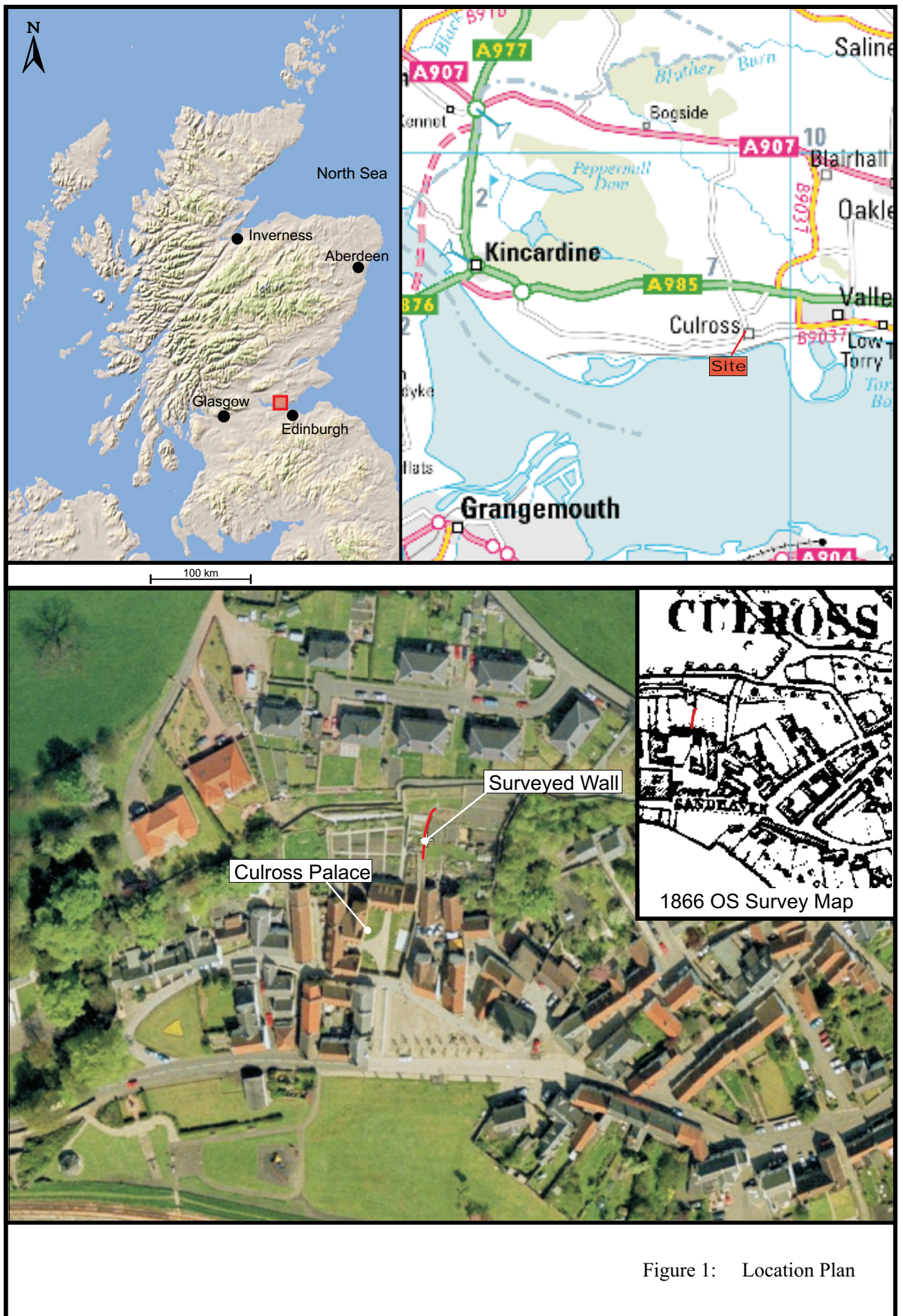
Figure 4: Wall head coping details.

Appendix 1: Photo List

Appendix 2: DES entry

Appendix 3: Context List

Appendix 4: Stratigraphic Matrix



1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 An archaeological building record of a garden wall to the rear of Culross Palace was required prior to repair, consolidation and rebuild. Two small test-pits were excavated at the proposed locations for support buttresses. These works were commissioned by Robin Turner of the National Trust for Scotland. The work was undertaken in July 2007, and was restricted to the eastern wall between the recent gate to the east garden and the upper platform (Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The work will inform reconstruction and consolidation of the existing wall to the original height and ensure the wall-head coping details are correct. The excavations provided evidence that to a depth of 700mm in both locations, no archaeologically significant deposits will be disturbed if buttresses are constructed.
- 1.3 Further work is not required.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Site location

The garden wall is located to the east of the backlot stairway that ascends from the northeast corner of Culross Palace, site centred at NS 986 859 (Fig. 1).

2.2 Site History

The existing walls flank a steep stairway that separates backlot gardens that extend from the rear of the 16th century properties now in the care of the NTS. The terraced gardens have been returned to use as vegetable and herb gardens, much as the original function was intended.

The rear retaining wall that towers over the slope is later in date, and the walls have obviously undergone several rebuilds and alterations, though keeping roughly to the original layout.

The centrepiece of Culross is the magnificent house of Sir George Bruce, a wealthy coalmine owner who constructed the building now known as Culross Palace.

Bruce, persuaded King James VI to grant the town Royal Burgh status, allowing it to trade with the continent and it was said that as many as 170 ships could be seen sheltering in the bay of Culross harbour.

This trade with the continent defined the architecture of Culross and the whole area of the Forth. Scottish ships sailed for the Low Countries carrying raw materials, such as coal, salt and wool, and returned with luxury goods - ceramics, silk, glassware, and works of art but they often returned with red

pantiles as ballast which along with other architectural influences, shaped the look of the area.

Bruce's mansion was started in 1597 and completed in 1611, additions being made as his wealth increased as no great plan for the building exists and it grows organically as the whim took Bruce. The house is built with a heavy Dutch influence, from its pantile roof and crow-stepped gables to the furniture inside, which was all purchased in Holland with even the painted ceiling based on a Dutch pattern book.

The gardens to the rear also respect this continental connection – while the lines of the south facing sloping burgage plots (backlots) represent the medieval lines of the village.

The unusual feature of this locality is the style of coping used on wall heads. A single slope is used, which is either constructed of multiple stones set in mortar or a single large stone to the rear, and smaller stones forming the slope to the ‘front’ of the wall (Fig. 4).

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 To record the two faces of the garden wall that will be affected by future works, and inform the rebuilds with evidence recovered from the record.
- 3.2 To ensure that the potential buttress location will not affect buried archaeological deposits.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The wall was photographed using a 10megapixel digital camera with a 1m ranging rod used for scale, a white horizontal/vertical string-line was used to ensure accuracy and orientation. A sketch pencil drawing of the outline of the wall, and larger stonework was also recorded.
- 4.2 Trenches were hand dug and filled in immediately on completion of the investigation. The excavation was continued to 700mm through topsoil.
- 4.3 The wall photographs were rectified and used as the base for interpretation, a further site visit was conducted to enhance the drawn record.

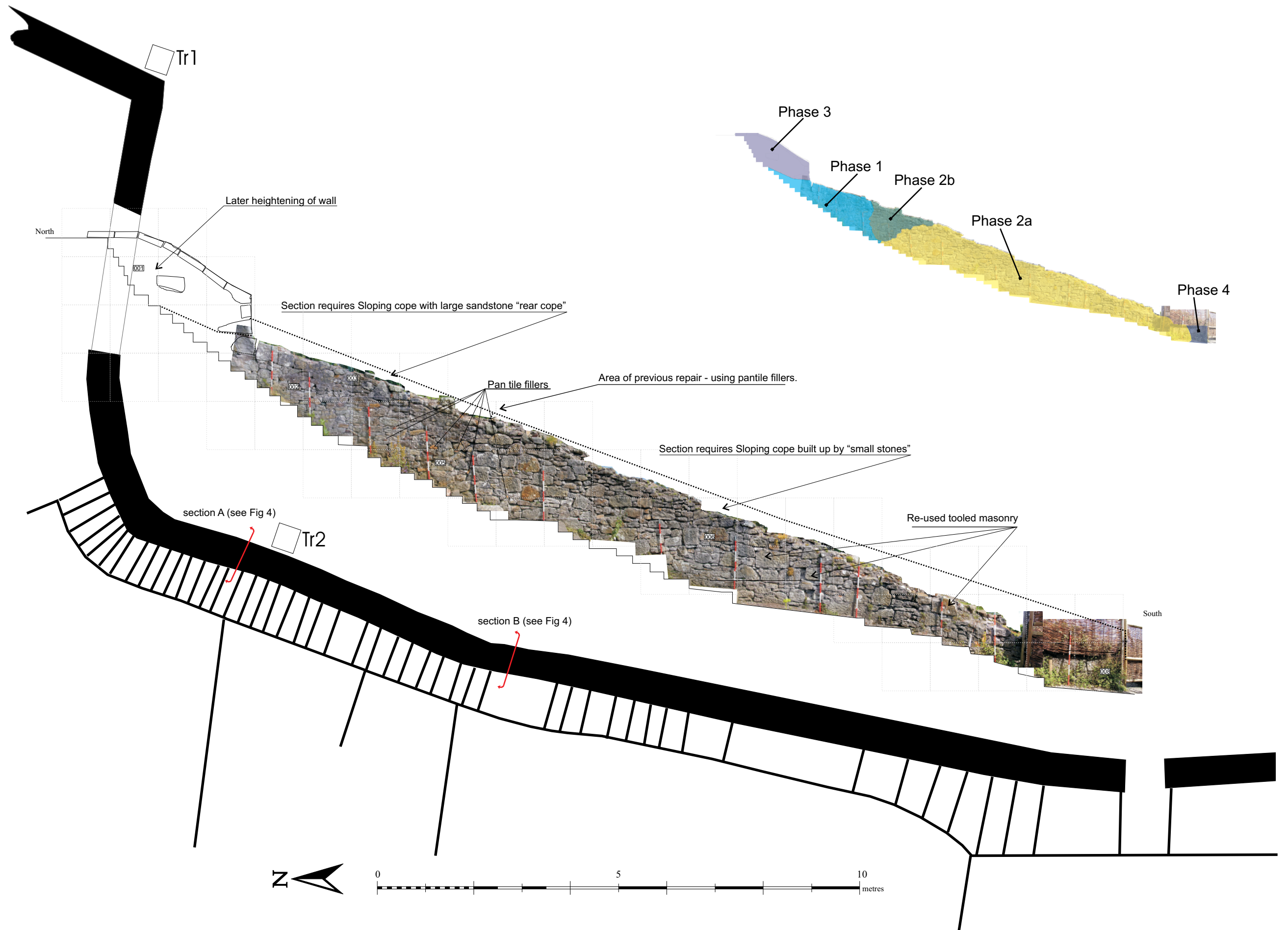


Figure 2: west facing wall, with phased elevation

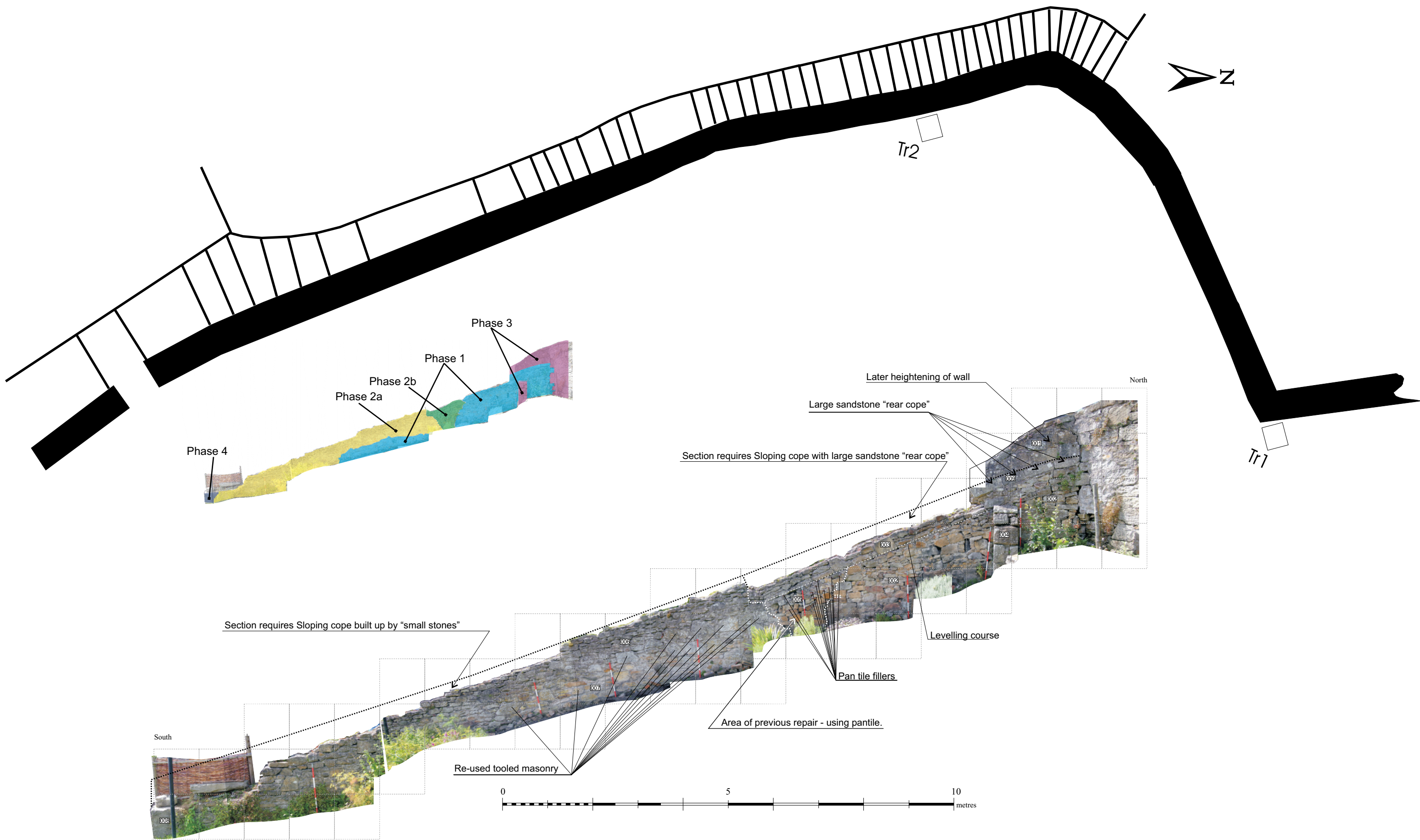


Figure 3: east facing wall, with phased elevation

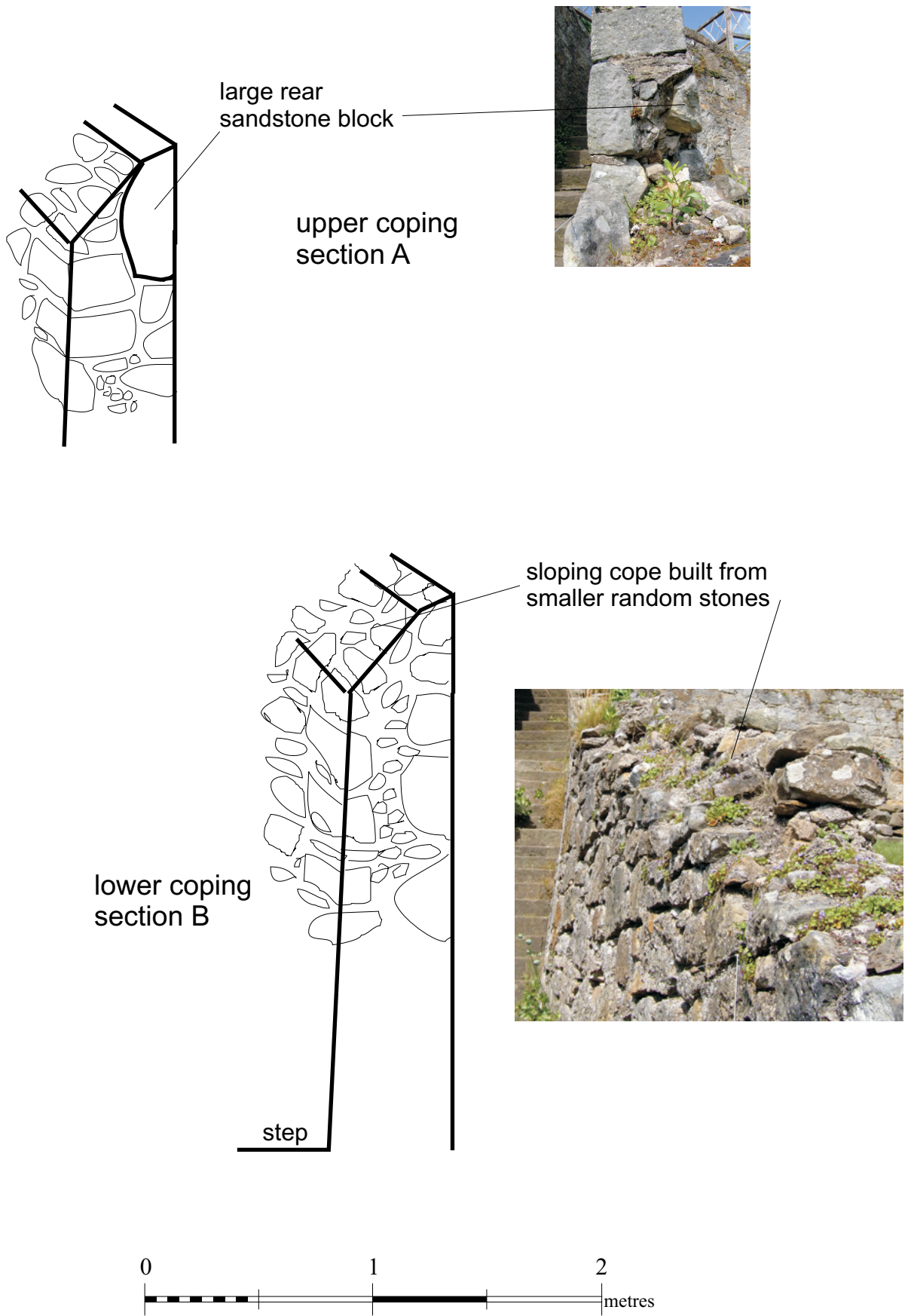


Figure 4: Cross sections A and B showing two forms of coping detail

5.0 RESULTS

5.1 Garden Wall (west facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The original surviving phase 1 wall is visible at the north end of the wall [002], before the wall steps up [001] in phase 3. The construction is of rough yellow sandstone with a cream mortar containing frequent inclusions of shell and grit.

The alignment of the wall curves round, however the phase 2a wall [006] of grey hard sandstone rubble build with several large blocks that show reuse from other buildings (tooling marks and droving for example) lies directly on the original wall alignment, as evidenced on the east facing elevation (though on this elevation the original phase 1 walling [007] cannot be seen).

A levelling course can be seen running parallel to the slope overlying wall [002] and rebuild [005], large blocks are used at intervals to insure stability.

To join the wall rebuild [006] and the original wall [002] a section of walling bears the evidence of repair. The V-shaped loose walling of [005] which although of similar physical makeup to [002] is looser in build quality and contains frequent brick and pantile fragments as fillers. This section of wall (attributed to phase 2b) is of very poor quality, although the mortar is similar to [006] which is bonded by cream mortar with frequent small black grit. The heightened extension to the wall at the north end [001] leads the stairs up to a higher level platform round a dogleg to the east and a large retaining wall.

This phase 3 build overlays the earlier wall, and may be 19th century in date.

The final phase 4 consists of a modern (1980s) opening [008] at the extreme south of the recorded wall, leading from the stairs into the east garden.

5.2 Garden Wall (east facing elevation) (Fig. 3)

The east facing elevation shows the same phasing as the west facing elevation, however part of the original wall (consisting of the poor quality yellow sandstone) survives centrally at a lower level [007]. Above this section the wall survives to the full height, though the rear coping is built of the smaller stones, as opposed to the earlier northern coping with large blocks to the rear [009] surviving beneath the later rebuild [001]. The pressure of the addition [001] must have caused structural instability, and a buttress has been added [004] of roughly squared grey sandstone.

5.3 Garden Wall (Coping) (Fig. 4)

The local vernacular for coping is of a single slope and this wall contains two distinct variations. The earlier construction consists of a horizontally coursed wall [002], which is then levelled to the line of the slope [003], the rear cope is a large, slab of grey sandstone with smaller stones set in mortar

making up the slope to the west. This can be seen in the photograph in Figure 4. The lower coping (integral to wall [005]), as commented on previously, consists of smaller stones from rear to front face, set in mortar, and flush pointed.

5.4 The Trenches (Fig. 2)

Trenches 1, 2, measuring 600mm x 600mm were excavated by hand to a depth of 700mm, which was the potential foundation depth of a supporting buttress plus 100mm buffer.

No archaeological deposits were observed and no artefacts recovered. The single deposit was a rich garden soil and no layers were encountered that contained archaeological artefacts.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although a simple garden wall, the construction shows two distinct styles of wall head that would be required to use in the reconstruction. These are highlighted on Figures 2 and 3 and cross-sections are illustrated on Figure 4 and further constructional details are contained in Sections 5.1 and 5.2. The original wall (phase 1) is unlikely to be earlier than early 17th century, as the stairway bounds the garden of Culross Palace. Later rebuild (phase 2) must date to a period of perhaps



Reused stonework in [005] highlighted

later 18th century/early 19th century, due to the reuse of tooled architectural fragments that are at least mid-18th century in date. The repair [005] must have taken place soon after (if not coeval with) this construction. The next

works – phase 3 – takes place to the north, where a large retaining wall is constructed

(cutting into the base of the original wall – and not fully tied in, as evidenced by a large structural crack at this join) and the raising of the upper section [001] over the original walling. This has then required the installation of a buttress [004] to strengthen the structural integrity. The final alterations – phase 4 – took place in the 1980s, with the forcing of a new gate from the stairway into the eastern garden, which suggests that entry to this terraced garden backlot was from the buildings to the south only.

Reconstruction should take into account the variation of stone type and the two separate coping details.

Trenching in the areas suggested for further buttresses show no archaeological implications.

David Connolly August 2007

Appendix 1 Photo Register

Photo Record List – Garden Wall - Culross				
Photo ID	Digital	Description	Direction from	Date
1	CulrossWall_001	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
2	CulrossWall_002	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
3	CulrossWall_003	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
4	CulrossWall_004	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
5	CulrossWall_005	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
6	CulrossWall_006	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
7	CulrossWall_007	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
8	CulrossWall_008	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
9	CulrossWall_009	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
10	CulrossWall_010	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
11	CulrossWall_011	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
12	CulrossWall_012	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
13	CulrossWall_013	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
14	CulrossWall_014	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
15	CulrossWall_015	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
16	CulrossWall_016	West facing garden wall – north end	W	28/07/2007
17	CulrossWall_017	West facing garden wall – centre	W	28/07/2007
18	CulrossWall_018	West facing garden wall – centre	W	28/07/2007
19	CulrossWall_019	West facing garden wall – centre	W	28/07/2007
20	CulrossWall_020	West facing garden wall – centre	W	28/07/2007
21	CulrossWall_021	West facing garden wall – centre	W	28/07/2007
22	CulrossWall_022	West facing garden wall – centre	W	28/07/2007
23	CulrossWall_023	West facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
24	CulrossWall_024	West facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
25	CulrossWall_025	West facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
26	CulrossWall_026	West facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
27	CulrossWall_027	West facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
28	CulrossWall_028	West facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
29	CulrossWall_029	West facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
30	CulrossWall_030	West facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
31	CulrossWall_031	West facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
32	CulrossWall_032	West facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
33	CulrossWall_033	West facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
34	CulrossWall_034	West facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
35	CulrossWall_035	East facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
36	CulrossWall_036	East facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
37	CulrossWall_037	East facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
38	CulrossWall_038	Detail garden wall coping – north end		28/07/2007
39	CulrossWall_039	East facing garden wall – south end	N	28/07/2007
40	CulrossWall_040	Detail garden wall head		28/07/2007
41	CulrossWall_041	Detail garden wall head		28/07/2007
42	CulrossWall_042	General view garden wall		28/07/2007

Culross Palace Garden Wall, Culross, July 2007

Photo Record List – Garden Wall - Culross				
Photo ID	Digital	Description	Direction from	Date
43	CulrossWall_043	General view garden wall		28/07/2007
44	CulrossWall_044	General view garden wall		28/07/2007
45	CulrossWall_045	General view garden wall		28/07/2007
46	CulrossWall_046	East facing garden wall – north end	S	28/07/2007
47	CulrossWall_047	East facing garden wall – north end	S	28/07/2007
48	CulrossWall_048	East facing garden wall – north end	S	28/07/2007
49	CulrossWall_049	East facing garden wall – north end	S	28/07/2007
50	CulrossWall_050	East facing garden wall – north end	S	28/07/2007
51	CulrossWall_051	East facing garden wall – north end	S	28/07/2007
52	CulrossWall_052	East facing garden wall – north end	S	28/07/2007
53	CulrossWall_053	East facing garden wall – north end	S	28/07/2007
54	CulrossWall_054	East facing garden wall - centre	W	28/07/2007
55	CulrossWall_055	East facing garden wall - centre	W	28/07/2007
56	CulrossWall_056	East facing garden wall - centre	W	28/07/2007
57	CulrossWall_057	East facing garden wall - centre	W	28/07/2007
58	CulrossWall_058	East facing garden wall - centre	W	28/07/2007
59	CulrossWall_059	East facing garden wall - centre	W	28/07/2007
60	CulrossWall_060	General view garden wall		28/07/2007
61	CulrossWall_061	General view garden wall		28/07/2007
62	CulrossWall_062	General view garden wall		28/07/2007
63	CulrossWall_063	General view garden wall		28/07/2007
64	CulrossWall_064	General view garden wall		28/07/2007
65	CulrossWall_065	Detail garden wall rebuild	W	28/07/2007
66	CulrossWall_066	Detail garden wall rebuild	SW	28/07/2007
67	CulrossWall_067	Trench 1	E	30/07/2007
68	CulrossWall_068	Trench 2	E	30/07/2007
69	CulrossWall_069	Trench 2	NE	30/07/2007

Appendix 2

Discovery and Excavation Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY: Fife

Site Name: Culross Palace Garden Wall

Parish: Culross

Name of Contributor(s): David Connolly (Connolly Heritage Consultancy)

Type of Site or Find: 17-19th Century Garden Wall

NGR (2 letters, 6 or 8 figures): NS 986 859

Report:

Prior to reconstruction of a garden wall sloping up to the north from Culross Palace, a full building record was undertaken which showed 4 main phases of build, rebuild, repair and alteration. The earlier wall was of poor quality yellow sandstone, while the later constructions were of harder grey sandstone. Coping details were noted as being of the vernacular single slope, with the earlier coping detail having large sandstone blocks to the rear.

2 investigative trenches were excavated on the site of potential retaining buttresses, no archaeological deposits were encountered to a depth of 700mm

Sponsor(s): HS, Society, Institution, Developer, etc. (where appropriate):

The National Trust for Scotland

Address(es) of Main Contributor(s):

Connolly Heritage Consultancy

Traprain House

Luggate Burn

Whittingehame

East Lothian

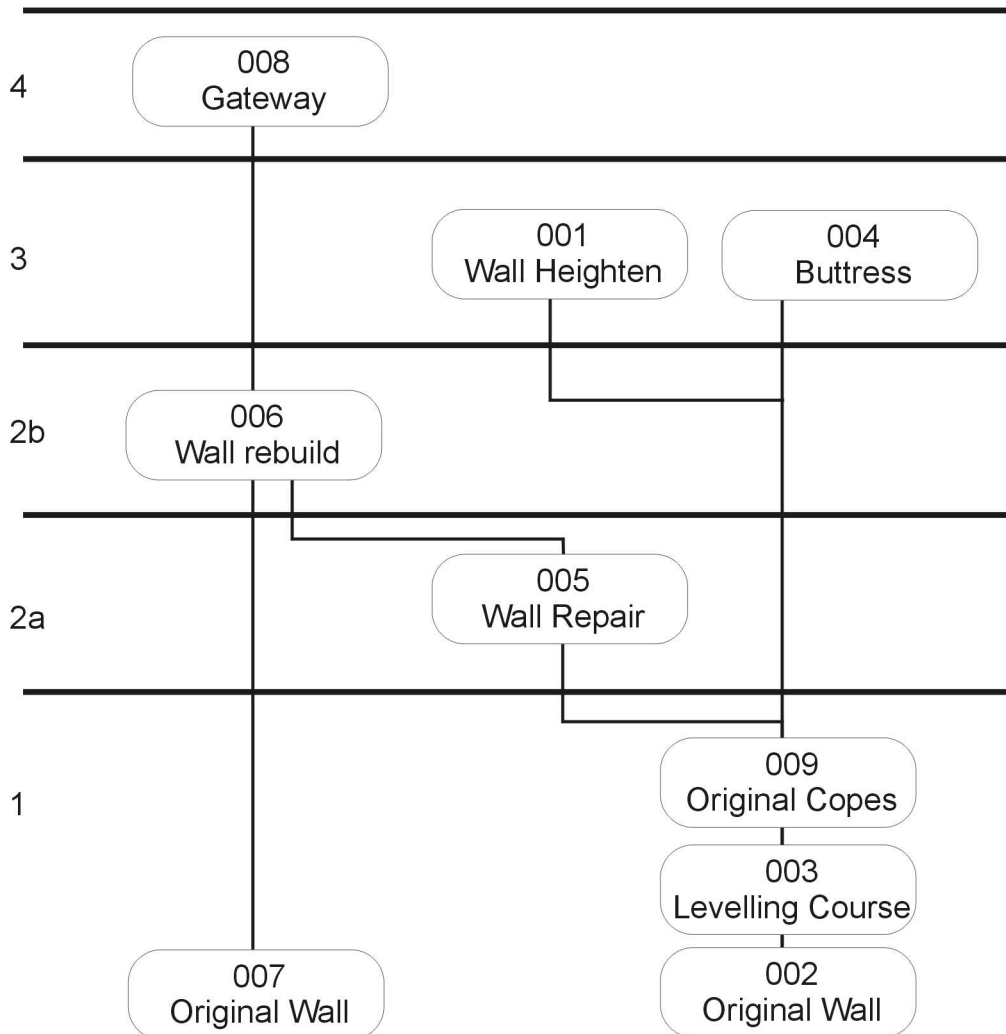
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Appendix 3 Context Register

Photo Record List – Garden Wall - Culross		
Wall Context	Phase	Description
1	3	Wall heightened over original wall at north end.
2	1	Original wall to north – yellow sandstone
3	1	Levelling Course on original walling [2]
4	3	Buttress at north end on east face – part of later P3 rebuild
5	2b	Repair of join between wall [2] and wall [6]
6	2a	Rebuild of wall from north to gate at south
7	1	On east face of wall, the lower courses are of the original P1 build
8	4	Recent gateway into garden.
9	1	East face of wall, at north end the larger rear coping stones.

Appendix 4 Stratigraphic Matrix

PHASE





CulrossWall_041.JPG



CulrossWall_042.JPG



CulrossWall_043.JPG



CulrossWall_044.JPG



CulrossWall_045.JPG



CulrossWall_046.JPG



CulrossWall_047.JPG



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CulrossWall_051.JPG



CulrossWall_052.JPG



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CulrossWall_054.JPG



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CulrossWall_058.JPG



CulrossWall_059.JPG



CulrossWall_060.JPG



CulrossWall_021.JPG



CulrossWall_022.JPG



CulrossWall_023.JPG



CulrossWall_024.JPG



CulrossWall_025.JPG



CulrossWall_026.JPG



CulrossWall_027.JPG



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CulrossWall_041.JPG



CulrossWall_042.JPG



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CulrossWall_064.JPG



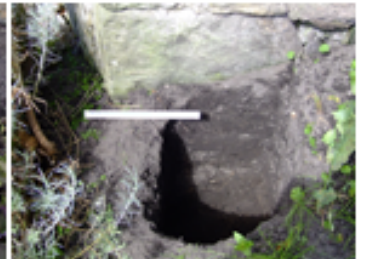
CulrossWall_065.JPG



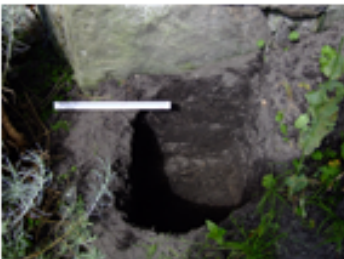
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CulrossWall_067.JPG



CulrossWall_068.JPG



CulrossWall_069.JPG