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**Access Road Retaining Wall,
Rosslyn Castle,
Midlothian.
Archaeological Watching Brief.**

Report No. 3502

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Commissioned by	Limerich Ltd
Date issued	December 2016
Version	1
Oasis No.	cfaarcha1-268405
Planning Application No	N/A
Grid Ref	NT 27495 62834

This document has been prepared in accordance with CFA Archaeology Ltd standard operating procedures.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an archaeological Watching Brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) during October and November 2016 during remedial works on a retaining wall at Rosslyn Castle, Midlothian (NGR: NT 27495 62834) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Nic Boyes on behalf of Limerich Ltd.

Rosslyn Castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), Index No. 1208. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the work dated 24 October 2016 was produced by CFA for Nic Boyes on behalf of Limerich Ltd. This WSI was approved by Deirdre Cameron of Historic Environment Scotland (HES) prior to the fieldwork.

1.2 Background

Rosslyn Castle is the remains of a 15th-century castle with a later residential block built for the St Clair family, Earls of Orkney. The castle sits on a promontory, to the north the neck of the promontory has been isolated by cutting a very deep gap which is now spanned by a bridge. The scheduled area includes the castle, the bridge, the linn and the gardens.

In 2006 it was noticed that part of the retaining wall on the west side of the access track leading from Rosslyn Chapel to Rosslyn Castle was being damaged by tree roots and erosion associated with a public path. A large block of masonry was becoming detaching from the main wall and was in danger of collapsing onto the path. Scaffolding was erected to prevent this collapse and the remedial work was undertaken to rectify the damage.

As Rosslyn Castle is a Scheduled Monument, Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) was required for the remedial works on the wall. This was granted by HES and a watching brief was undertaken whilst the wall was deconstructed and during the excavation of the new foundation trench.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the programme of archaeological works were

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (watching brief) to monitor all ground breaking works.
- To mitigate the effects of construction on any archaeological deposits or features identified through their excavation and recording and produce a report on them.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance as appropriate.

2.2 Watching Brief

All excavation and on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, by photography and by completing standard CFA record forms.

The stratification of all excavated areas was recorded.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

The track leading from Rosslyn Chapel to Rosslyn Castle ran south through the wooded Rosslyn Glen and an embankment lead onto the bridge across to the castle (Figs. 1-2). The track to the castle had a concrete foundation at this point and was flanked by cement-bonded stone parapet walls. Below the level of the concrete track foundation, both sides of the embankment had retaining walls. In 2006 it was noticed that tree roots and erosion associated with a public path on the western side had caused damage to the structure of the wall. A large block of masonry had been undermined and had become detached from the remainder of the wall (Fig. 3). This was in danger of collapsing onto the path below. Scaffolding was erected to prevent further damage.

It was noted that tree roots had penetrated the wall in several places to the south of the detached portion of wall and that the original lime mortar was degrading. The wall had previously been repointed with ordinary Portland Cement which was also cracking.

Numbers in bold below refer to contexts which are fully described in Appendix 2.

3.2 Work prior to duntaking

Soil and vegetation were removed from the upper surface of the retaining wall (**005**, **006**) and the concrete foundation (**003**) for the track and parapet wall (**002**). The stone work contractors sketched, numbered and photographed the stones in the retaining wall so they could be reinstated in their original position in the wall (Fig. 4).

3.3 Duntaking

The recent cement pointing (**004**) was removed. The detached portion of the wall (**006**) was dismantled and the stones stored. The rest of the retaining wall (**005**) was assessed and the portion that was affected by roots (Fig. 5) was also dismantled and the stones stored. In total, a length of 4.2m was dismantled. Two sections through the

wall were recorded, the one further to the south is shown in Fig. 6. This revealed that the wall was 0.7m wide. Most of the large stones were dressed to some extent. Several of the stones were reused carved architectural pieces. Examples of arched lintels, springers and ashlar blocks were identified.

Deposits behind the wall (Figs. 7-8) consisted of an upper layer of dry grey-brown soil, stones and stone chips (**009**). This had a depth of up to 0.85m. Layer **009** overlay a deposit of dry pinkish-grey gritty silt (**011**) with numerous cobbles, fragments of lime mortar, coal and occasional bones. This overlay a very compact deposit of brownish-orange clayey silt, dipping to the south, with a few, mostly small stones (**008/010**). All of these deposits were heavily permeated with roots. The foundation trench (**012**) for wall **005/006** cut through layer **008/010**. The other deposits behind the wall appeared to be infilled behind the wall after it had been built.

3.4 New Foundation

A new foundation trench was created slightly to the east of the previous foundation. Two trees were cut down and the stumps dug out by hand so that their roots did not affect the new trench. The ledge on which the new wall was be founded was 0.8m wide and around 2m long. Beyond this to the south, the new wall was constructed on the foundations of the old one.

4. CONCLUSIONS

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Rosslyn Castle, Midlothian during work to dismantle and rebuild a section of the retaining wall on the west side of the access track.

The work did not provide a date for the building of the retaining wall. The wall included occasional reused architectural fragments.

Modern finds were common in the topsoil. The infill deposits **009, 011** exposed behind the retaining wall contained no medieval or post-medieval finds. Deposit **008/010** could have been natural but it was not possible to say for certain.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with Historic Environment Scotland and copies of reports will be lodged with the Midlothian Council Historic Environment Record.

A summary statement on the work will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 4) and it will also be reported on through *OASIS Scotland*.

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

Photo	Contexts/Description	Taken From	Conditions
1-2	General view of Rosslyn Castle from the access road to the bridge	NE	Overcast
3-5	General views of the work area prior to cleaning and duntaking	N	Overcast
6-15	Close-up views of the wall priot to duntaking	Various	Dull
16-17	Upper surface of wall 005, 006 and the concrete foundation 003 cleaned	S	Overcast
18-20	Upper surface of wall 005, 006 and the concrete foundation 003 cleaned	N	Overcast
21	Close-up of the N end of the wall showing the slumped portion 006	N	Overcast
22-25	Close-up views of the upper part of the wall priot to duntaking with the stones numbered	Various	Overcast
26-27	Slumped wall portion 006 partially taken down	N	Overcast
28-29	Slumped wall portion 006 taken down	N & NW	Overcast
30-31	Working shots		Overcast
32-33	General view of the wall with slumped portion 006 removed	N	Overcast
34-36	Views of the N facing wall section (005)	N & W	Overcast
37-38	Voussoir built into parapet wall 002	W	Overcast
39	Sketch drawing of the numbered wall stones		Overcast
40-41	Views of the tree roots (007) within wall 055	W & NW	Overcast
42-43	W facing section of the deposits behind wall 005. 011 over 008/010	W	Overcast
44-48	Sketch drawing of the numbered wall stones		Overcast
49-50	W facing section of the deposits behind wall 005. 011 over 008/010	W & NW	Overcast
51-52	Working shots		Overcast
53-54	Arch lintel stone (Stone 46) in-situ within wall 005	NW & W	Overcast
55-57	Working shots		Overcast
58	Arch lintel stone (Stone 46) removed		Overcast
59	Large root (007) through wall 005	NW	Overcast
60	Carved stone (Stone 65) removed		Overcast
61	Lintel stone reused in parapet wall 002	E	Sunny
62-65	Carved stone (Stone 36) removed from wall. Uncertain function		Overcast
66	General view of the work area fenced for the weekend	N	Overcast
67	Sketch drawing of the numbered wall stones		
68-69	carved stone (Stone 40) removed from wall. A springer (the start of an arch)		
70-71	Landsnail included in lime mortar		
72-73	Carved stone (Stone 143)		
74	Section through wall 005 and deposits 009, 011 to the left	N	Overcast
75	Cavity left in 011 after the removal of a large stone from 005. Shows 005 was constructed before 011 was deposited	W	Overcast
76	Rectangular ashlar block (Stone 137) removed from wall		Overcast
77	Deposit 009 on the left and 011 on the right		Overcast
78-81	Deposits 008-011 behind wall 005. Section cleaned	W & SW	Overcast & Sun/shade
82	Wall 005 section	N	Overcast
83	General view of the work area from the access to the castle	S	Sunny

84-88	Deposits 008-011 behind wall 005. Section cleaned	W, SW & NW	Overcast
89	Wall 005 section	N	Overcast
90	General view of the work area from the access to the castle	N	Sun/shade
91-99	Working shots, tree removal	Various	Overcast
100-101	Working shots, concrete (003) cutting	S & N	Overcast
102-103	General & close-up views of a large stone tumbled down the slope from wall 005/006	SW	Overcast
104-105	Location views of where several loose surface stones are to be used within the rebuild of wall 005	N & SE	Overcast
106-107	General views of the work area after wall 005 duntaking and cutting away of concrete 003	NW	Overcast
108-110	Working shots		Overcast
111-112	General views of the work area	SW & SSW	Overcast
113-114	Views of the work area after tree stump removal	NNW & N	Overcast

APPENDIX 2: Context Register

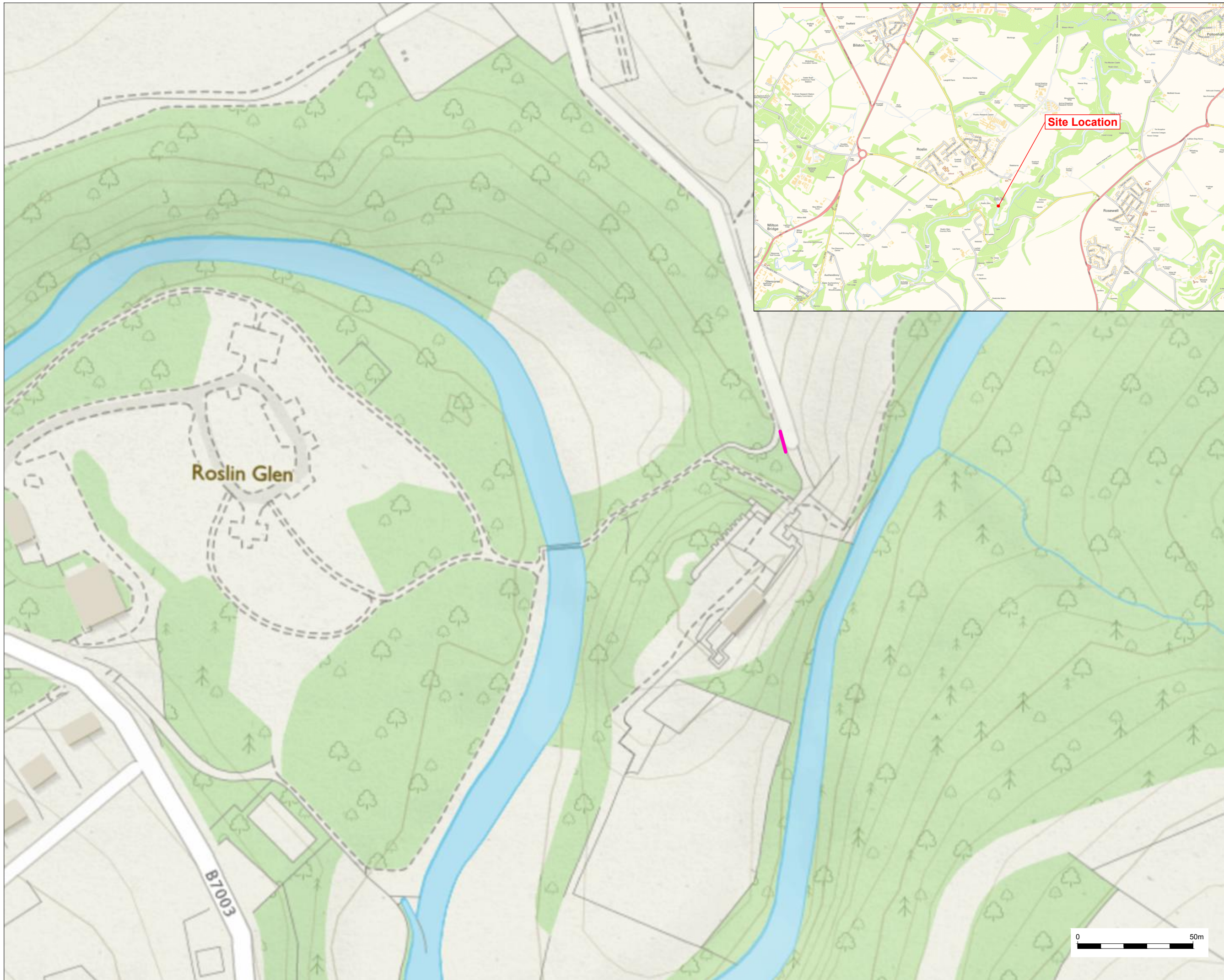
Context No	Fill of	Description
001	Layer	Topsoil. Dry and powdery grey-brown gritty silt. Heavily rooted containing Modern finds.
002	Structure	Modern parapet wall on the west side of the access road approaching the bridge. Cement bonded sandstone blocks which include several architectural fragmants
003	Structure	Concrete foundation for 002
004	Structure	Modern cement pointing on walls 005, 006
005	Structure	Lime-bonded sandstone wall retaining the western side of the access road approaching the bridge. Includes several architectural fragments
006	Structure	Lime-bonded sandstone wall retaining the western side of the access road approaching the bridge. Contemporary with 005, this portion has become detached and slumped
007	Vegetation	Trees and roots within 005, 006
008	Layer	Orange-brown compact clay-silt and small stones. Possibly natural
009	Layer	Grey-brown soil and stones behind wall
010	layer	Same as 008
011	Layer	Pinkish-grey gritty silt with lime mortar fragments, coal fragments and larger stones behind wall
012	Cut	Cut in layer 008/010 to found wall 005, 006

APPENDIX 3: Drawing Register

Number	Sheet	Description	Sec/ Plan	Scale
1	1	Pre-excavation plan of the wall surface (005, 006), the concrete surface 003 and the trees 004 after surface soil and vegetation removal	P	1:20
2	1	N facing section through wall 005	S	1:10
3	2	W facing section through the deposits behind wall 005 (008/010, 009. 011)	S	1:10
4	2	N facing section through wall 005 to the S of Dwg. 2. Includes the parapet wall 002 and the remaining height of wall 005	S	1:10

APPENDIX 4: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Midlothian
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Access Road Retaining Wall, Rosslyn Castle, Midlothian. Archaeological Watching Brief
PROJECT CODE:	ROSI2
PARISH:	Lasswade
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Ian Suddaby
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	NT26SE 21.02
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 27495 62834
START DATE (this season)	October 2016
END DATE (this season)	November 2016
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	N/A
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd during October and November 2016 during remedial work on a retaining wall adjacent to the bridge leading to Rosslyn Castle. The unsafe part of the existing wall was dismantled and a new foundation trench was excavated. The wall was then rebuilt using the same stones. The work identified that several carved architectural stones had been incorporated into the wall. The actual date of the wall construction was not established and no medieval or post-medieval artefacts were recovered from the deposits behind the wall.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Limerich Ltd
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ.
EMAIL ADDRESS:	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited with HES, Reports lodged with Midlothian Council.



Key:

Retaining Wall Location



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Title:
 Rosslyn Castle and the location of the retaining wall

Project:
 Rosslyn Castle, Midlothian

Client:
 LIMERICH

Scale at A3:
 1:1500

Drawn by: MP	Checked by: SW	Date: 13/01/2016
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Report No: 3502	Fig. No: 1
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Fig. 2 - View from the north of the retaining wall location and the access over to the castle

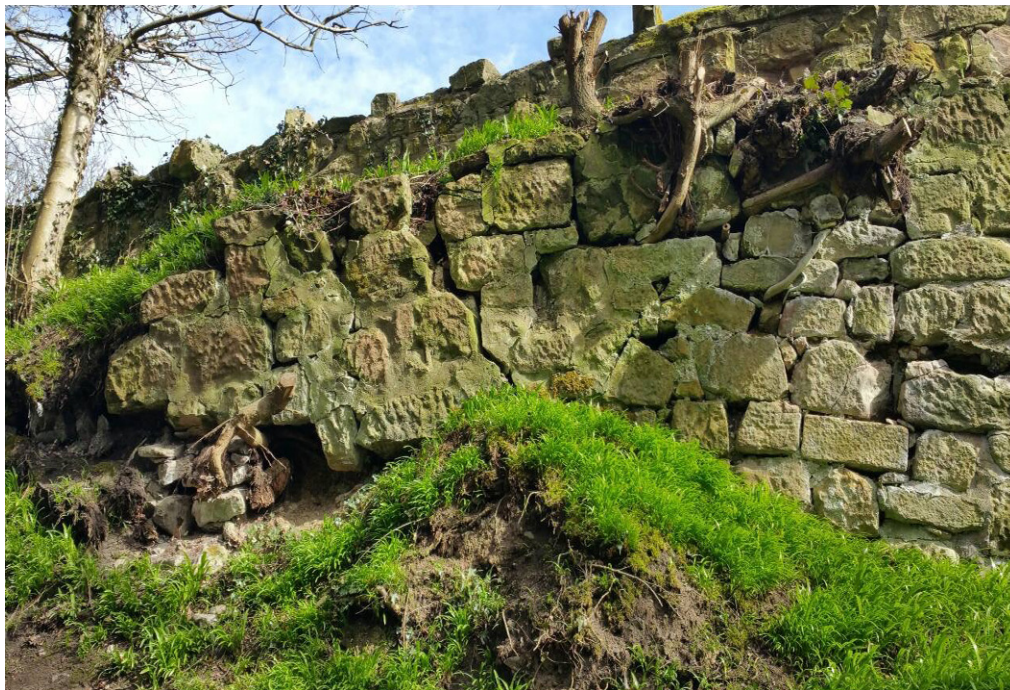


Fig. 3 - View of the retaining wall from the west prior to the scaffolding being erected

Project:
Rosslyn Castle, Midlothian



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Fig. 4 - Numbering of the stones in the detached portion (006) of the retaining wall



Fig. 5 - Tree roots (007) growing through the wall

Project:
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Report No: 3502		Fig. No: 4-5



Fig. 6 - North facing section through the retaining wall (005)



Fig. 7 - Oblique view of the deposits (008-011) behind the retaining wall

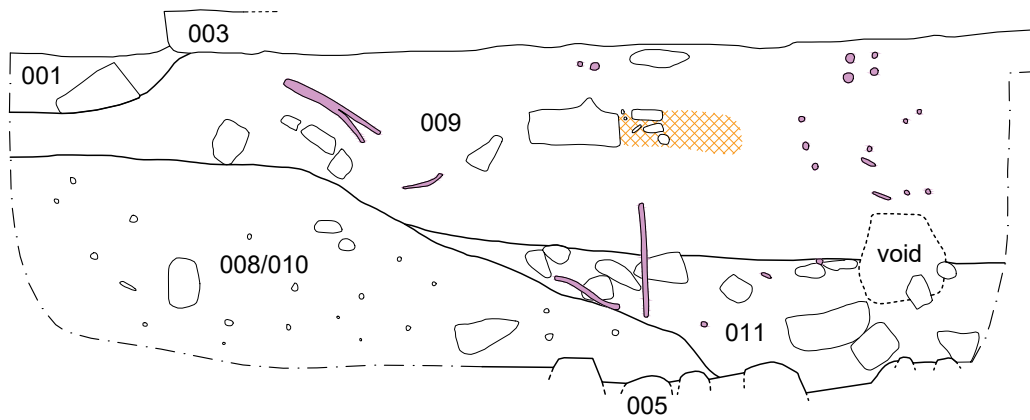
Project:
Rosslyn Castle, Midlothian



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Drawn by: MP	Checked: SW	Date: 30/11/16
Report No: 3502		Fig. No: 6-7



Key:

- Roots
- Lime and stone chips

Title: West facing section of the deposits (008-011) behind the retaining wall

Client: LIMERICH

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Project:
Rosslyn Castle, Midlothian

Scale at A4:
1:30

Drawn by:
MP

Checked:
SW

Date:
30/11/2016

Report No:
3502

Fig. No:
8