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Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract

**Skipness Castle, Kintyre, Argyll and Bute
PIC101**

**Archaeological Watching Brief on Installation of
New Boundary Fence, August 2017**

Report No. HES-PIC101-2017-01

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standard operating procedures.

Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in August 2017, to monitor the insertion of 3 strainer posts and a new fence line within the grounds of Skipness Castle, Kintyre, Argyll and Bute (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Historic Environment Scotland as part of the Minor Archaeological Services Call-off Contract.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 6 July 2017 was produced by CFA Archaeology for this programme of works. The WSI was designed to fulfil the terms of the Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) and was agreed with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in advance of the work taking place.

The site is both a Scheduled Monument (SM13225) and a Property In Care in the guardianship of HES (PIC101).

1.2 Background

The site was first occupied sometime in the first half of the 13th century, when a hall-house and a chapel were constructed by a local lord called Sween, or his son Dugald. The hall-house comprised a large rectangular stone building with cellars on the ground floor and a hall and chambers above; its walls survive incorporated into the northern part of the castle courtyard. Only the south wall of the chapel now survives, incorporated into the south wall of the courtyard. Other stone or timber buildings were probably built close to these two buildings, with the site possibly enclosed by a timber and earth rampart.

Around the late 13th/early 14th centuries a high curtain wall was built, incorporating the hall-house and chapel. The chapel was secularised, its place being taken by Skipness Chapel, built about 400m to the south-east. The curtain wall enclosed an oblong courtyard, with projecting towers at the north-east and south-east angles and in the northern section of the west wall.

During the 16th century, the Campbell's transformed the castle - three storeys were added to the northernmost portion of the east range of courtyard buildings and the new tower was furnished with a parapet walk. In the 18th century the portcullis chamber and the latrine tower of the hall house were adapted for use as a dovecot. In the late 18th century the castle was converted to a farmstead by the removal of the early courtyard buildings apart from the tower house, and the erection of lean-to sheds and offices against both sides of the curtain wall. It was probably during these alterations that the round-arched entrance gateway was knocked through the north wall. These farm buildings were removed in 1898.

To the east of the castle, a group of estate buildings formed an MCU workshop used during the consolidation of the castle. In the early 2000s the buildings were in a dangerous and ruinous state but have recently been renovated and re-roofed for use as a smokehouse (Fig. 2). It is this building that the estate fence is to be installed around. The smokehouse is out with the guardianship area however the new surrounding fence

will sit within the guardianship area and its corner will sit within the Scheduled Area. (Fig.1) In total, 3 Strainer Posts will form both ends and corner of the new fence line.

Previous archaeological work has mainly focussed on the castle and courtyard, although in 1967 a trench was extended westwards for 54ft but revealed no trace of outer defensive work.

Geophysical survey in the 1990s revealed that the present contours and limits of the castle mound had been extensively reworked but that it had been extended and complemented by a shallow ditch in the 13th century.

A watching brief for the digging of a service trench in the NE corner of the guardianship area in 1998 revealed modern deposits, indicative of levelling and destruction, most likely of the post-medieval farm buildings in the area. Local records also suggest that demolition rubble from Skipness House was used to level the ground to the east of the castle in the 1960s.

Excavation work in the vicinity, coupled with the recent development of the old workshop suggests that the immediate area of the fence line is of low archaeological sensitivity, although this cannot be said for certain; the watching brief in 1998 encountered modern deposits up to a depth of 0.3m but did not excavate below this.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the programme of archaeological works were:

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

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

All work was conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 'Code of Conduct' (CIfA 2014), and other relevant CIfA Standards and Guidance.

2.2 Watching Brief

The insertion of the 3 Strainer Posts required the hand excavation of holes approximately 400mm wide and 900mm deep. All ground-breaking works were carried out under constant archaeological supervision.

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

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

Numbers in bold refer to contexts, a full list of which is contained in Appendix 2.

Prior to excavation, the area was covered with lawn (Fig. 2, Fig. 6), adjacent to the smokehouse building.

Post 1: The excavation for Post 1 was 350mm wide and 900mm deep and disturbed a single context (**001**) (Fig. 3). This was a layer of turf and mid-brown sandy silt topsoil which contained numerous small, rounded pebbles. Directly under the turf at 200mm the hole cut through a section of orange, modern nylon fishing net. Two fragments of modern brick were also found within **001** but not retained.

Post 2: The excavation for Post 2 was 400mm wide and 970mm deep and disturbed a single context (**001**). (Fig. 4)

Post 3: The excavation for Post 3 was 400mm wide and 870mm deep and disturbed a single context (**001**). (Fig. 5)

No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified.

4. CONCLUSION

A watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd within the Scheduled Monument of Skipness Castle, Kintyre, Argyll and Bute. Three holes were excavated by hand for the insertion of strainer posts for a new fence line. The holes all contained a single context of topsoil indicative of modern landscaping. No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Record for the Historic Environment Scotland (NRHE) and copies of reports will be lodged with Argyll & Bute Council Sites and Monuments Record.

A summary statement will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 3) and will also be reported on through *OASIS Scotland*.

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

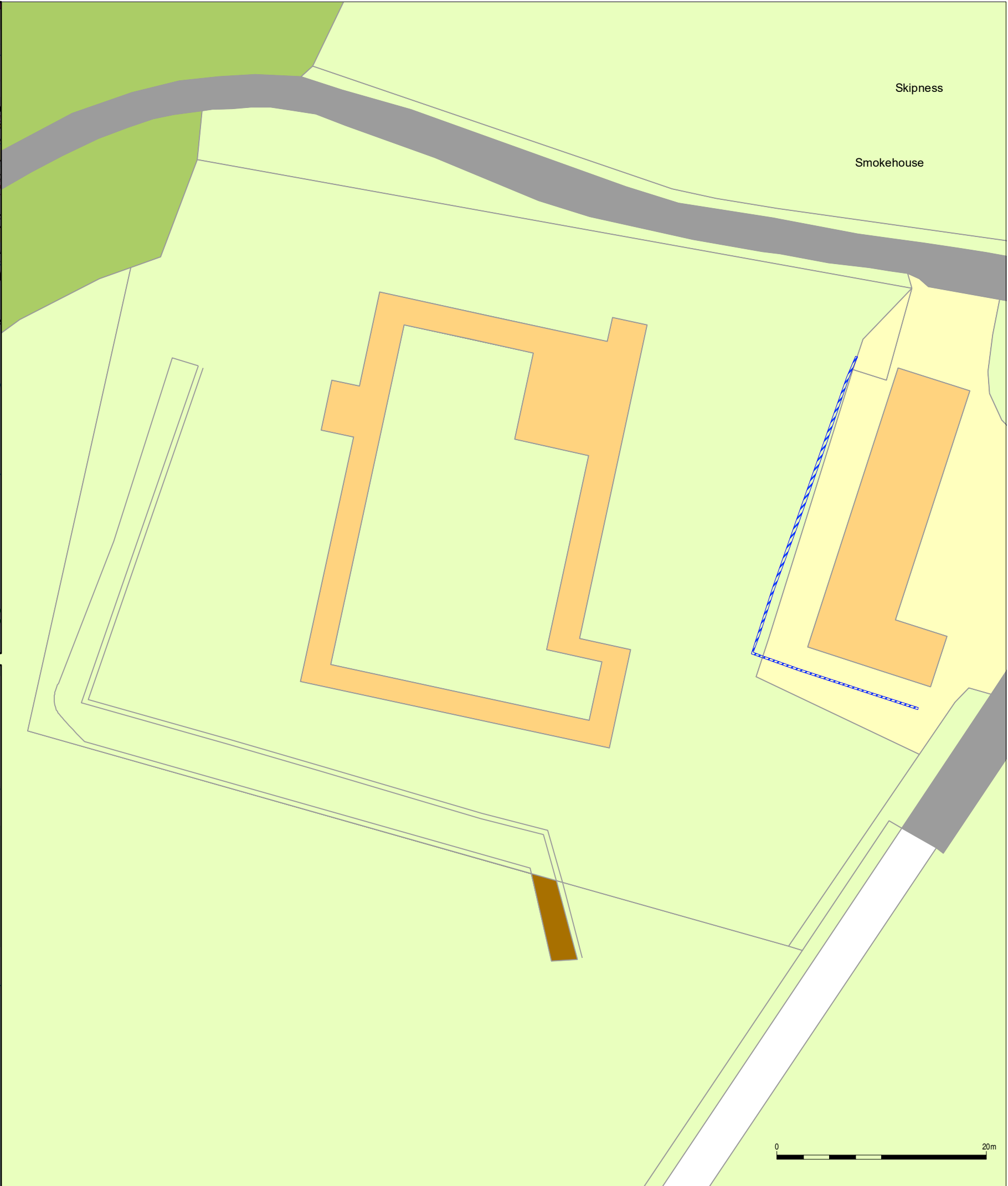
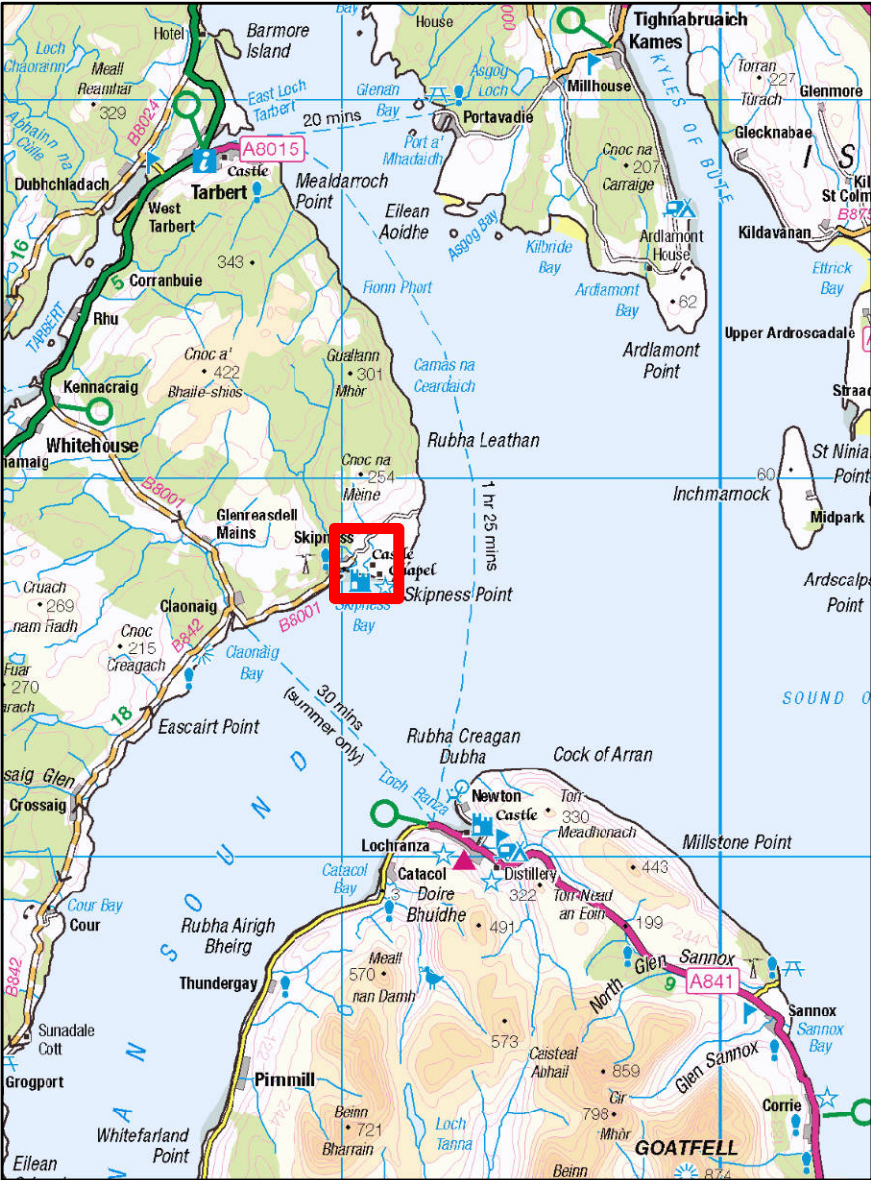
Photo No.	Description	Taken From
1	General view, pre-excavation	S
2	General view, pre-excavation	N
3	Post 1, post excavation	W
4	Post 2, post excavation	N
5	Post 3, post excavation	W
6	View of new fence and fence posts, post excavation	N
7	Post 1, with new support post	W
8	Post 2, with new support post	SE
9	Post 3, with new support post	S

APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context No.	Fill of	Description
001	Posthole 1-3	Turf and topsoil

APPENDIX 3: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Fife
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Skipness Castle, Kintyre, Argyll and Bute
PROJECT CODE:	MINA3
PARISH:	Saddell and Skipness
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Graeme Carruthers
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	N/A
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NR 90809 57779
START DATE (this season)	August 2017
END DATE (this season)	August 2017
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd within the Scheduled Monument of Skipness Castle, Kintyre, Argyll and Bute as part of the Minor Archaeological Services Call Off Contract. Three circular holes were excavated by hand for the insertion of fence strainer posts. The holes contained single topsoil contexts indicative of modern landscaping. No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Historic Environment Scotland
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 NRHE, reports lodged with SMR.



Key:

 Fence Line

Contains Historic Environment Scotland data
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Title:
Location map and site plan
showing location of new fence
and Strainer Posts

Project:
Skipness Castle, Kintyre,
Argyle and Bute

Client:
Historic Environment Scotland

Scale at A3:
1:400

Drawn by: SW	Checked: MJ	Date: 22/09/2017
Report No: 3592		Fig. No: 1



Fig. 2 - New smokehouse building showing location of new fence and strainer posts



Fig. 3 - Post 1, post excavation

Project:
Skipness Castle, Kintyre, Argyle and Bute



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Fig. 4 - Post 2, post excavation



Fig. 5 - Post 3, post excavation

Project:
Skipness Castle, Kintyre, Argyle and Bute



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Report No:
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Fig. No:
4 - 5



Fig. 6 - Fence line, post excavation

Project:
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