



CFA ARCHAEOLOGY

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Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract Blackness Castle, Falkirk PIC129 Gate-post Installation

Watching Brief, November 2017
Report No. HES-PIC129-2017-01

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Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract

**Blackness Castle, Falkirk
PIC129**

**Gate-post Installation
Watching Brief, November 2017**

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Fig. 3 Hinge post excavation

Fig. 4 Latch post excavation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) on 27 November 2017 to the south-west of Blackness Castle, Falkirk (Fig. 1) (NGR: NT 0534 8007). The work was commissioned by Historic Environment Scotland as part of the Minor Archaeological Services Call-off Contract.

The works involved the installation of a new gate on the road leading to the castle, outside of the scheduled area, comprising the excavation of two small trenches for the insertion of the gate posts.

1.2 Background

Blackness Castle dates from the 15th century, and continued in use until after the First World War, undergoing multiple adaptations. The castle is situated on a coastal promontory on the southern shore of the Firth of Forth. To the south of the castle there is forecourt bounded to the south by a late 19th century barrack block and to the west by an officer's block of similar date. Immediately beyond the south wall of the forecourt, the ground rises up as part of rocky headland. On this higher ground, there are the remains of a structure identified as a chapel and doocot, both associated with the castle.

The 15th century castle survives as a curtain wall incorporating the north tower with a free standing central tower within the central courtyard. These structures survive albeit substantially remodelled and sections of their crenelated wall heads are visible within later wall heightening. The castle was modified during the reign of James V. The curtain wall was significantly thickened on the east and south sides and was pierced by large gunports at ground level. The principle entrance was also relocated to the west side, where it was protected by a caponier – a vaulted gun-gallery within a defensive ditch. Later in the 16th century this was heightened to form a defensive spur. The south front was also strengthened and heightened at this time. This tower included a hall and was used as residence for the keeper of the castle.

To the south of the castle there is an area of open ground which is now bounded to the south by a 19th century barrack block and to the west by an officers' block of similar date. These buildings are associated with the use of Blackness as the central munitions depot for Scotland from 1870 to 1912. Also built at that time is the pier on the north side of the castle. This connects directly with the courtyard of the castle via a drawbridge and a gateway cut through the west curtain wall. To the south of these 19th century buildings are the remains of a building believed to be St Ninian's Chapel and a doocot, both of which are part of the larger castle complex

To the south of the castle on Castle Hill, it is recorded that Bronze Age cist burials were found in 1944-5, while an Iron Age burial was found in 1924 close to the Barracks. St Ninian's Chapel, destroyed during the reformation, is recorded to the SW of Castle Hill. A putative Roman fort lies between St Ninians Road the the Forth, identified from aerial photographs; Roman pottery was been collected in the vicinity.

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

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. The watching brief area prior to excavation was a tarmac road (Fig. 2).

The hinge post trench, located on the north side of the road, measured 0.6m by 0.6m by 0.9m deep. Deposits included 0.15m of tarmac and hardcore, followed by 0.75m of a rubble and sand deposit containing frequent voids. An iron pipe was uncovered within the trench. Natural was not reached.

The latch post trench, located on the south side of the road, measured 0.6m by 0.6m by 0.6m deep. Deposits included 0.15m of tarmac and hardcore, followed by 0.45m of Type 1 gravel. A utility service, marked by blue plastic tape, was recorded at the base of the trench. Natural was not reached.

No artefacts were recovered.

4. CONCLUSION

A watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd outside of the Scheduled Monument of Blackness Castle. No archaeological features, finds or deposits 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 the West Lothian Council Sites and Monuments Record.

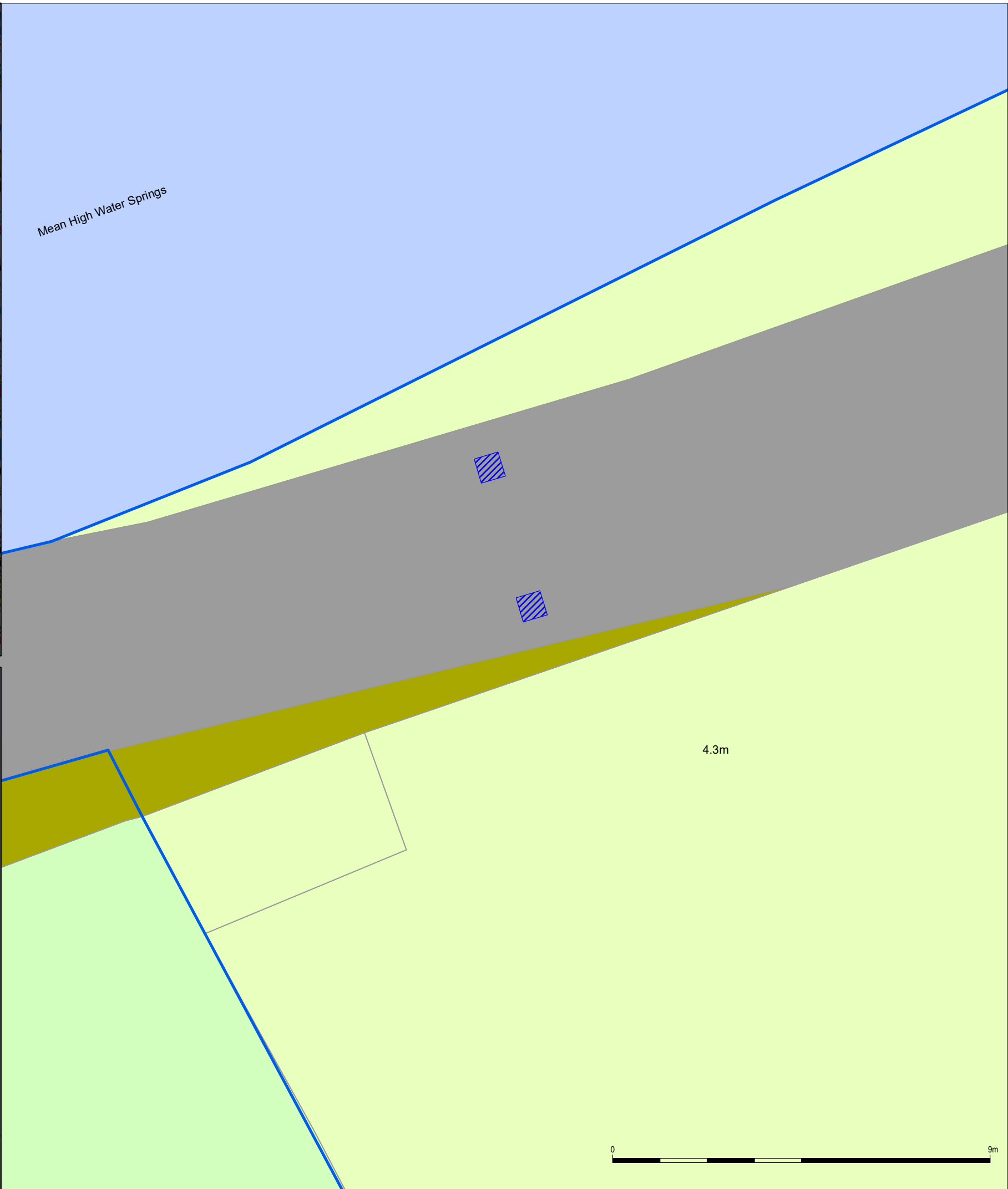
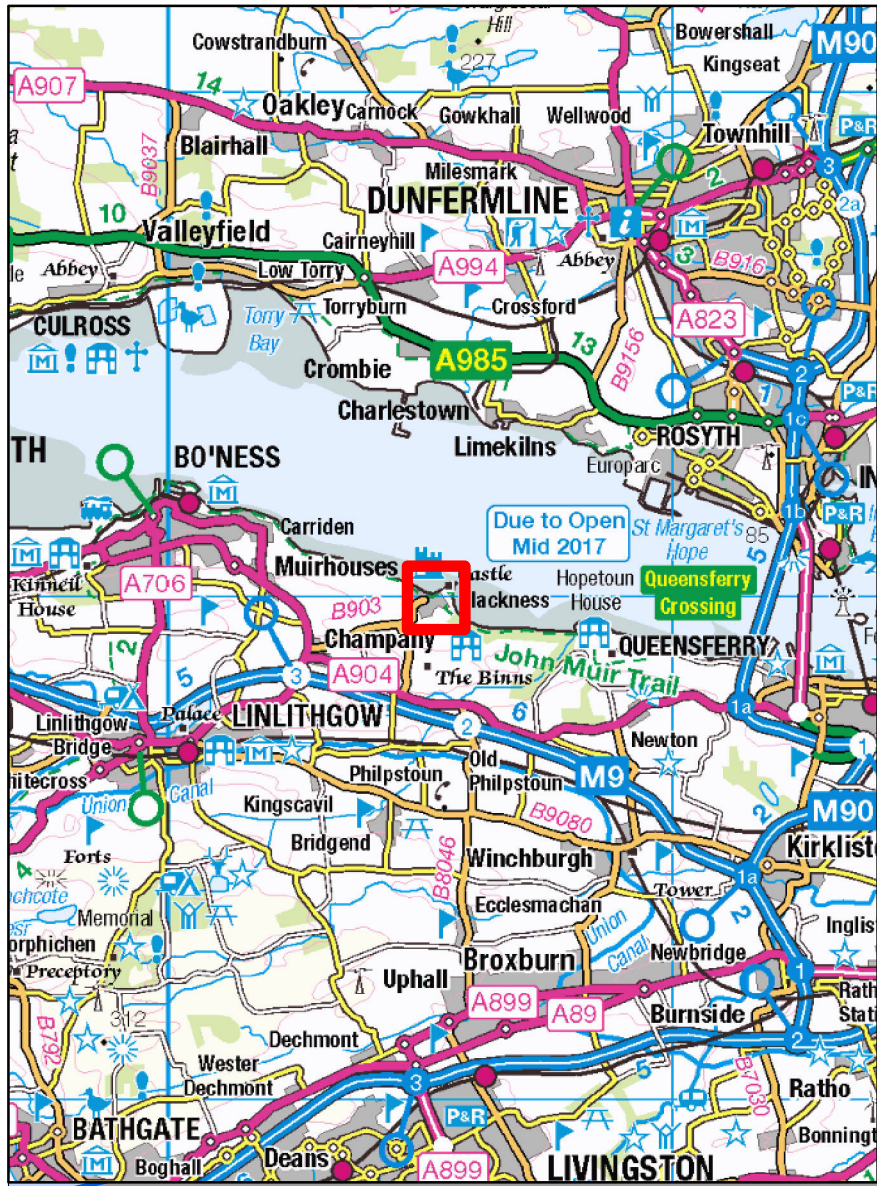
A summary statement will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 2) and will also be reported on through *OASIS Scotland*.

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

Shot No.	Summary description of subject	Facing
1	Working Shot showing location of gate	NE
2	Location of gate in setting	NE
3	Working shot, hinge post	N
4	Working shot, hinge post	NE
5	Working shot, hinge post	NW
6	Working shot, hinge post, tarmac removal	NE
7	Hinge post showing pipe	SW
8	Hinge post showing pipe	NW
9	Hinge post showing pipe	NE
10	Latch post working shot	S
11	Latch post working shot	S
12	Latch post fully excavated showing service warning tape	NE
13	Latch post fully excavated showing service warning tape	SE

APPENDIX 2: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Falkirk
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Blackness Castle
PROJECT CODE:	MINA22
PARISH:	Bo'ness and Carriden
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Melanie Johnson
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)	NT 0534 8007
START DATE (this season)	November 2017
END DATE (this season)	November 2017
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd just outside of the Scheduled Monument of Blackness Castle as part of the Minor Archaeological Services Call Off Contract, during the installation of a new gate. The work involved the excavation of two small trenches for the gate posts. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts 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:

- Property in Care boundary
- Watching brief location

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Title:
Location map

Project:
Blackness Castle

Client:
Historic Environment Scotland

Scale at A3:
1:100

Drawn by: SW	Checked by: MJ	Date: 16/01/2018
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Fig. 2 - General view of watching brief location



Fig. 3 - HInge post excavation

Project:
Blackness Castle



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Fig. 4 - Latch post excavation

Project:
Blackness Castle



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