

Clickimin
Proposal for new grounds maintenance and site presentation plan

Background

Clickimin is a complex multi-period site that has been excavated to expose multiple different phases of occupation. The remains are difficult to present, as what survives is a number of structures of different phases, in differing degrees of survival. Across the site there is inconsistent use of grass and gravel to distinguish between interiors, exteriors and various structures. The lack of clarity poses a challenge for management and maintenance of the site and creates additional confusion for visitors to an already complex site.

Introduction

This document outlines the proposal for a new ground maintenance plan for Clickimin, changes to the existing presentation of the site and the rationale behind the proposed changes. The plan has arisen out of discussions with the District Architect over long term issues with management and maintenance of the site. This document should be read alongside the attached annotated site plan.

The primary objective is to produce an informed ground maintenance plan for the whole site, identifying all archaeological features and defining their maintenance regime, to assist the District Architect and MCU in future management of the site. The conservation of the monument has been the foremost consideration at all times in the process of determining the new maintenance plan and opportunities to improve the conservation of the archaeological remains have been included in the proposals. In addition to this, the proposal also seeks to improve the overall presentation of the site to the public, by creating a consistent approach to the way in which interiors, exteriors and wall lines are presented, as far as possible, and covering miscellaneous stonework or features which do not add to visitor understanding. The works will tie in with new interpretation panels which will be installed in early 2016, and it is hoped that the changes will make the site easier to understand and interpret for the non-expert visitor.

A number of site visits have been undertaken to discuss the nature of issues on site in terms of presentation and management of the structures and to determine a set of options going forward. Desk-based research has been undertaken by the Cultural & Natural Resources Team to determine the extent and nature of previous investigations and consolidation work and to establish the basis of past management regimes; this has been taken into full consideration when determining the proposed changes.

Proposed Works

1. Presentation of building interiors

There is inconsistency in the way in which interiors of structures are presented at Clickimin. The broch/wheelhouse interior is gravelled, but elsewhere the interiors of structures are grassed. Furthermore, very little survives of some structures, or they overlap/are overlapped by structures of other phases making the plan of individual structures difficult to determine and to present to the public.

A new regime is proposed to bring consistency to the presentation and management of the structures at Clickimin. For a number of the structures, where only fragmentary traces survive, the exposed stones will be left as at present, in situ with turf cover around. The interiors of more complete, or clearly defined, structures will be gravel covered – the gravel will be distinct from exterior pathways and modern paths. This involves the removal of turf and levelling of the underlying surface in three of the prehistoric dwellings to the west of the broch. The ground

disturbance will involve no more than removal of turf and levelling of topsoil to a depth of no greater than 100mm. The affected areas are marked on the accompanying plan.



Fig 1. Grassed interior of 'Hut I'.

2. Archaeological paths/exterior surfaces

At present the 'roadway' running along the west edge of the broch is part gravel and part grass covered. As far as can be determined, there is no conservation reason behind this and it does not correlate with any archaeological plans. It is therefore proposed that the whole length of path should be covered with an 'exterior' gravel, removing the turf cover where present and as defined on plan.

In the paved areas around the west and north of the earlier dwelling, the paving will be retained, with vegetation removed by hand as necessary. As above, this work will involve minor ground disturbance, as the paving stones will be lifted to remove vegetation and to level the ground below, with up to a maximum of 100mm excavated to provide a suitable foundation, before relaying and filling voids with fine gravel where required. Care will be taken to ensure that the paving stones are re-laid in the same locations as before, as far as this is possible. The same treatment is proposed for paving within hearths and structures, where shown on plan.



Fig 2. 'Exterior' paving to the north of the broch.



Fig 3. Paved area within structure adjacent to path and 'Bronze Age' structure.

3. Presentation of hearths

As consistent with the presentation at other, similar sites, the hearths will be covered with red whin to distinguish these features. The areas are marked on plan. Where paving is present, this will be retained and vegetation removed as outlined above. Any ground disturbance will not extend deeper than the top 100mm.

4. Reburial of exposed stonework

Exposed stonework or features which are in-situ but do not obviously relate to a known structure or that do not add to understanding and interpretation of the site should be turf-covered; these are indicated on the supporting plan. By reducing an element of the site's visual complexity it will be hoped it will enhance overall presentation of the site, without reducing visitor understanding. The areas to be reburied are very limited in extent and their 'removal' will not detract from or alter visitor understanding or the cultural significance of the site. Reburial of these remains will be beneficial for their conservation, reducing the risk of potential damage through erosion and accidental damage from grass cutting. It will also reduce staff time spent strimming around such features.

As far as possible these areas have been identified, their context has been investigated and the archaeological sensitivity assessed. This has largely been based on a comparison of Hamilton's plans (see Hamilton's Master Plan, Appendix A, fig.1) with up-to-date aerial photography. The work will not impact upon any sensitive archaeological deposits. It is anticipated that additional miscellaneous stones may be identified through the course of these works. It is requested that these be dealt with on a case by case basis, in consultation with HES Cultural & Natural Resources and Heritage Management.

5. Reinstate turf on all wall heads where required

It is proposed that all structural walls (both internal and external) are capped with turf to protect and stabilise the drystone walls. Turf cover of wall heads is already consistent across the site, but in places where it has receded, this should be reinstated. This work will involve no ground disturbance and will not impact upon any archaeological deposits.

6. Erosion to rear of blockhouse

The area to the rear and west of the blockhouse is suffering from visitor erosion which has in places completely eroded grass cover. The areas of exposed earth are not only unsightly, but if

the erosion is left unmanaged it could lead to the loss or degradation of the archaeological resource.

It is proposed that grass bars are installed in the area to the west, immediately behind the blockhouse, to reinforce the ground and reduce the risk of further erosion, while allowing for drainage. Strips of Caithness flagstone approximately 50mm wide and 100mm deep will be laid widthways across the affected area of grass – the lengths will be cut to fit the area. There will be some ground disturbance for the installation of the grass bars but this should not extend to greater than 150mm.

The area to the rear and east of the blockhouse, abutting the ‘inner ringwork’ is also becoming worn, though erosion is less of a problem here as present. The condition of this area will be monitored and if the area of erosion worsens, proposals will be developed to reinforce the ground and reinstate turf – this would form a separate SMC application in due course.



Fig 4. Hut structure to rear of blockhouse and eroded route (on left hand side).



Figs 5 & 6. Area to the rear and north-east of the blockhouse, with the inner ringwork and grass bank.

Assessment of Archaeological Sensitivity and Impact

A summary of previous archaeological interventions and a plan of Hamilton’s excavations are included in appendix C below. There has been very little modern investigation, except for monitoring during the installation of floodlighting around the site in 1990. Due to the early nature of many of the previous interventions we do not have a clear record of the nature or extent of these. We do however have a clear record of the areas excavated by Hamilton. Despite extensive excavation,

some areas were deliberately left unexcavated in certain parts of the site to ensure that archaeological deposits were preserved in situ for future scientific investigation. This includes an area around the exterior wall line of 'hut I' (see 'HI' on Hamilton's Master Plan, Appendix A, fig.1), an area against the enclosing wall in the south-west quarter of the site, earlier floor deposits within the broch interior below paving in the north-east cell and paving, and postholes and kerbing beneath the layer of gravel within the broch interior. The grassed areas to the west of the broch around the hearths and upstanding stones are also of higher archaeological sensitivity. In some areas, the archaeological potential remains high and there is potential for surviving midden and occupation deposits, particularly in those areas just described. Given these sensitivities no ground disturbance or changes to the present management regime have been proposed within these areas of known archaeological sensitivity.

We have a reasonably good understanding of the nature of the underlying deposits and archaeological sensitivity across the site, in light of Hamilton's excavation report. As noted, no interventions are proposed in areas where significant archaeological deposits are expected to survive. Hamilton's Bronze Age farmstead was cleared in the 19th century by the Shetland Literary Society¹, and at least one other occasion prior to the 1950's excavations and it is unlikely that significant archaeological deposits will be encountered within the top 100 – 150mm; the roadway has been excavated down to at least the original floor level, though sections were excavated to natural, and the area to the rear of the blockhouse was excavated down to natural. Within the interiors of structures, the ground disturbance is not expected to impact upon any archaeological deposits as it will only involve the removal of turf and topsoil.

The proposed works are not likely to impact upon archaeological deposits. By creating greater consistency in the presentation of structures across the site the works should also have a positive visual impact, resulting in improved presentation and clarity of a complex site. A number of the proposed works will also have a beneficial impact upon the conservation of the monument, including the reburial of small areas of exposed stonework and the removal of vegetation around paved areas.

Proposed Mitigation

Given the extent to which the site has been excavated and the minimal nature of the intervention, it is unlikely that archaeological deposits will be encountered during turf stripping within the interiors of the structures shown on plan, or for the roadway. However, this should be undertaken by hand and with care by a member of HES MCU. As there is little chance of encountering archaeological deposits during works, we do not propose to have an archaeologist from HES call-off contract on site during works. However, it is important that the works are carried out as specified and it is possible that questions may arise during their execution. As such, a more sensible and cost-effective approach would be to have a member of HES Cultural and Natural Resources with archaeological expertise present on site during potentially sensitive aspects of the work, who is familiar with the project and its aims. The Cultural Resources Advisor will be present for ground breaking works, including the removal of turf within interiors and the lifting, weeding and levelling of the paved areas to ensure work is carried out to specification and no archaeological deposits or features are disturbed.

Installation of the grass bars requires a greater level of ground disturbance, in an area where we cannot be certain about the extent of previous excavations. However, excavation for the installation of the grass bars should not extend to a depth of greater than 150mm and is unlikely to impact upon archaeological deposits. These works will also be supervised by a member of HES Cultural and Natural Resources and will be carried out at the same time as the above. The installation of the grass

¹ Irvine, J T, 1866, 'On The Brough of Clickimin', J Brit Archaeol Ass, vol. 22, 369-375.

bars will be subject to the same constraints as the turf stripping. The CRA will direct the rate, location and method of excavation.

If any archaeological features are encountered during any of the works, work should stop immediately. The features will be photographically recorded and the significance of the findings discussed with HES Heritage Management. If any further recording is deemed necessary, or any specific conservation methods appropriate, a short specification will be produced within 10 working days, and will be submitted and agreed with HES Heritage Management before any work continues.

Following completion of works the supervising member of HES CNR will produce a short report (DSR) and distribute to HES Heritage Management and Conservation Group colleagues. The report will include a basic photographic record of the works and descriptions, including turf-stripped interiors and areas of stonework to be reburied; it will be submitted within 20 working days of completion of the works.

Rachel Pickering
03/02/2016

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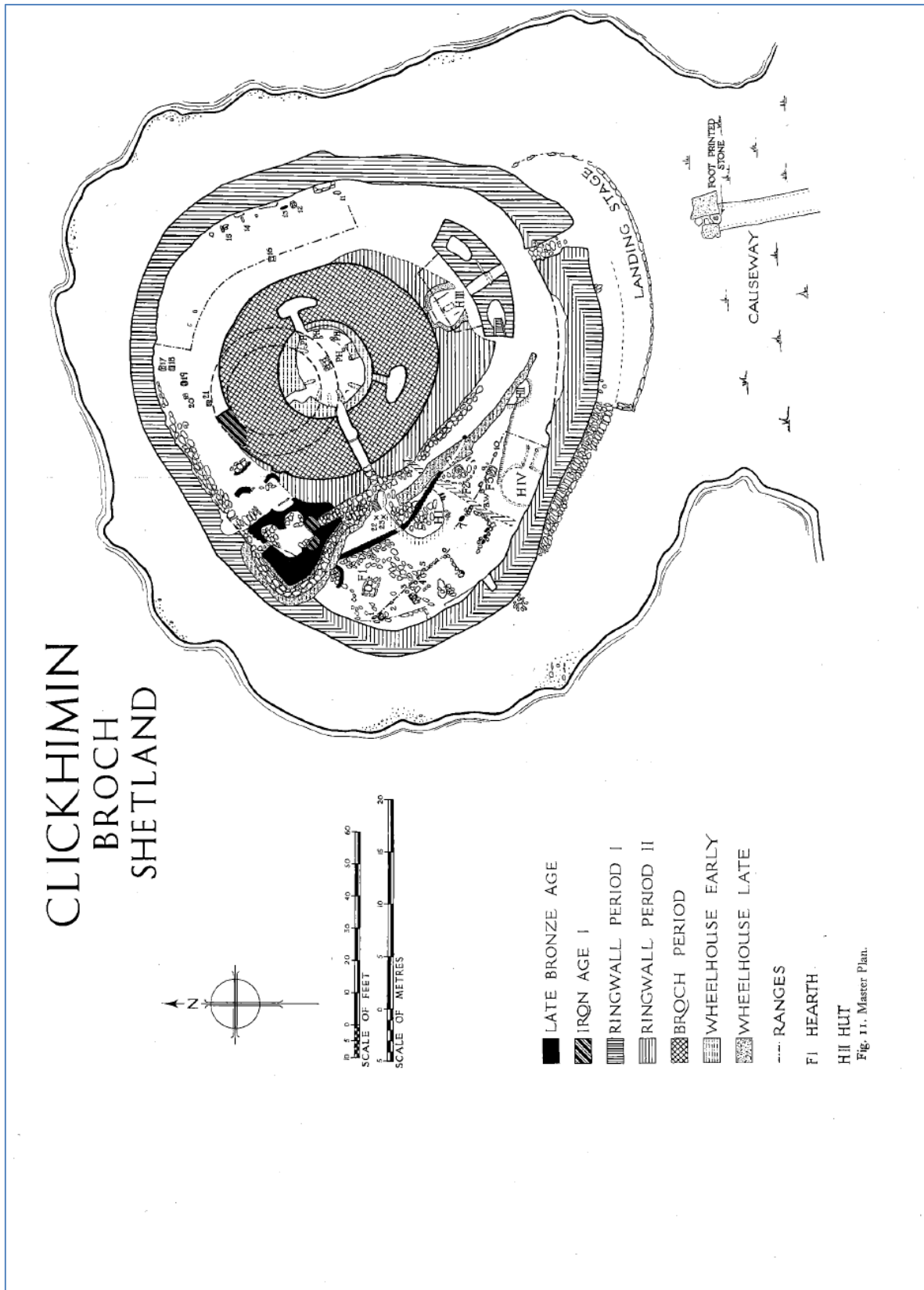
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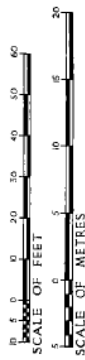
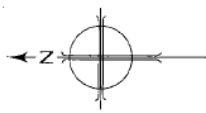
Appendices

Appendix A

Hamilton's Master Plan for Clickimin



CLICKIMIN
BROCH
SHETLAND



- LATE BRONZE AGE
- ▨ IRON AGE I
- ▤ RINGWALL PERIOD I
- ▥ RINGWALL PERIOD II
- ▧ BROCH PERIOD
- ▩ WHEELHOUSE EARLY
- WHEELHOUSE LATE
- - - RANGES
- FI HEARTH
- HII HUT

Fig. 11. Master Plan.

Appendix B

Historical Background

The sequence of development at Clickimin is complex and there are a number of different interpretations as to its chronological development. The main structural elements, according to Hamilton are outlined below, though his chronological framework has been widely disputed:

- Late Bronze-Age small house, outbuilding and enclosure.
- Early Iron-Age ring-fort: stout wall with shallow ditch across isthmus.
- Middle Iron-Age broch (with later alterations) and blockhouse (rectangular, free-standing multi-storey structure with central passage and intramural cells) erected within ring-fort
- Later Iron-Age wheelhouse-type building and several lesser foundations representing late Iron-Age dwellings. A causeway leading to the site probably belongs to this phase.
- Immediately in front of the ring-fort, at the end of the causeway, is a stone sculpted with a pair of feet. Hamilton attributes this to the Iron Age, but more recently it has been suggested to be Pictish/early Historic. This rare type of sculpture is associated with inauguration rites but this particular stone has no known historical associations.

The site also has a complex recent history, with a considerable amount of antiquarian investigation, stone robbing and vandalism, reconstruction and consolidation since at least the early 19th century. Research by Shetland Amenity Trust's archivist, Brian Smith, has shed light on the extent of alteration, repair and reconstruction at the site during the 19th and early 20th century². It was in a ruinous condition in the early 19th century and contemporary sources suggest it was robbed for stone. The site was surveyed by Dryden in 1855 and again in 1866 – comparison between these two sketches provides evidence for some consolidation and rebuilding following excavation by the Shetland Literary and Scientific Society. However, sources from the later 19th century suggest that neglect and vandalism continued after this early attempt at consolidation.

Clickimin was one of the first sites to be protected under the Ancient Monuments Protection Act in 1882 and was came into guardianship in 1888. Since then it has undergone a number of other phases of consolidation, reconstruction and excavation: between 1907 – 1910 when work focused on repairing the drystone masonry and stabilising entrances, passages and staircases within the broch and the broch interior and entrance through the ring wall were cleared; in the 1930's the interiors were cleared of debris, vegetation was cleared and the drystone structures were again consolidated; in 1958 further consolidation work was carried out on the ring wall.



Fig 1. Clickimin c. 1890.

² Smith, B 'The Broch of Clickhimin: a modern history', unpublished report.



Fig 2. Clickimin prior to 1950's excavation and reconstruction.



Fig 3. Clickimin today, following excavation, reconstruction and consolidation.

Appendix C

Archaeological Background

There have been a number of archaeological investigations at Clickimin, however it has not been excavated to modern standards. Much of the site has been excavated and as noted above it has been heavily consolidated, however details of the extent and nature of earlier interventions are partial or non-existent. In 1861 the Shetland Literary Society excavated the upper levels of the broch interior and partially cleared out the interiors of other structures on the islet, though this was carried out without detailed archaeological recording.

Between 1953 and 1957 Clickimin was extensively excavated by Hamilton. The site was excavated to different levels, reaching natural deposits or the bedrock in places. The plan below indicates the locational extent of Hamilton's excavations.

There has been very little recent archaeological intervention at Clickimin, apart from a small number of archaeological watching briefs for minor works, including the installation of floodlights in 1990. None have produced new information on the site.

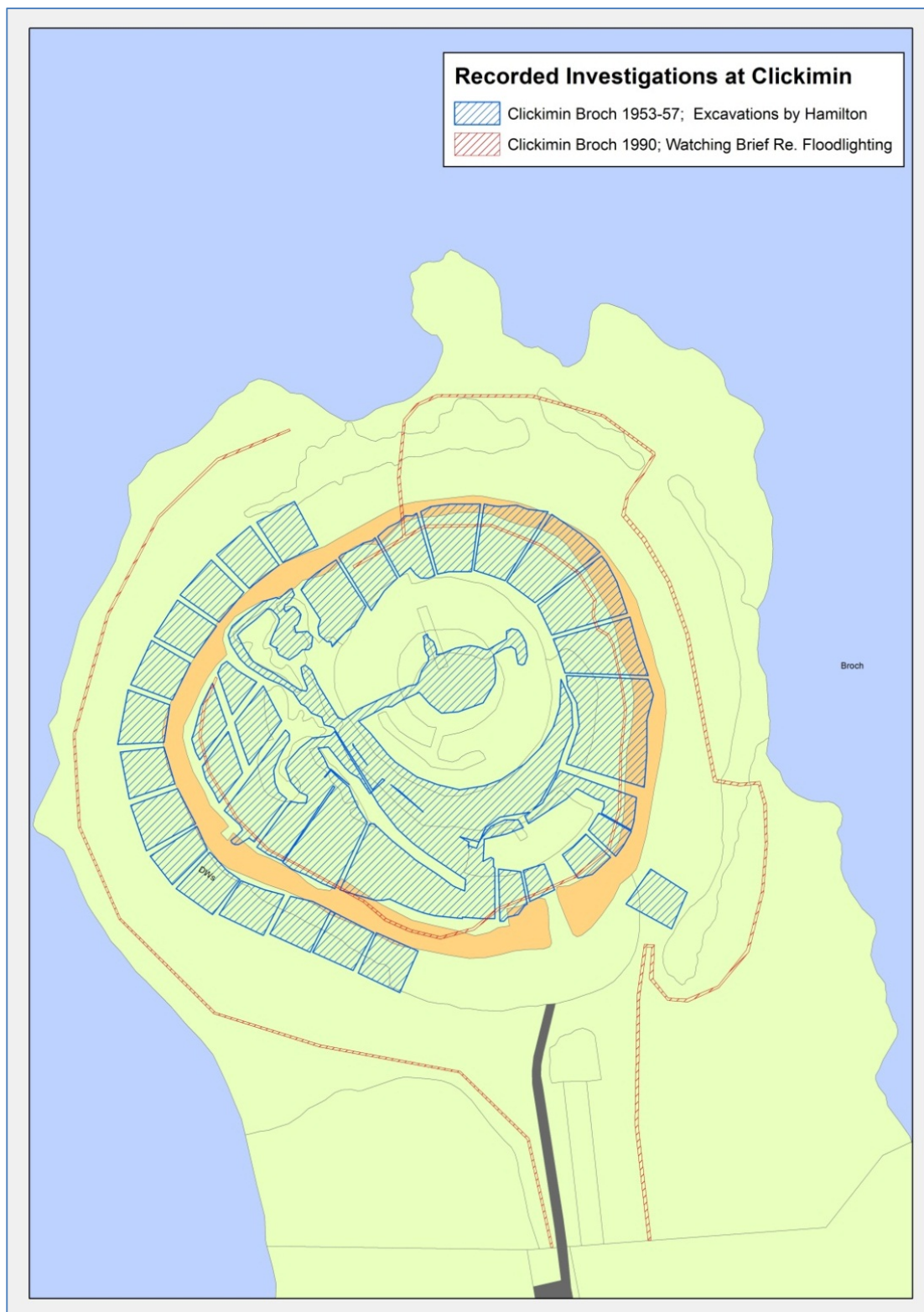


Fig 1. Plan showing previous recorded archaeological interventions.

Appendix C

Archaeological Recording and Reporting

A short report will be produced by HES CNR within 20 working days of completion of the works, and will be circulated to HES Heritage Management and HES Conservation Group.

The report will include a photographic record of reburied stonework: still photographs will be colour digital and will record a general location of the works and their progression. All photographs will have a suitable scale visible. All photographs will be submitted as part of the report and will include a photo register detailing content, orientation and date.

A short note will be submitted to 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' and OASIS.

If there is no further requirement for reporting beyond the DSR and D&ES entry, the report and site records will be compiled in a suitable archive comprising primary data and digital documentation as appropriate, suitable for submission to local and national archives.

The archive will follow current guidelines for archival standards set by the Archaeology Data Service and RCAHMS.

The project archive will be deposited with the NMRS within six months of completion of fieldwork.