

Working Statement of Intent for the re-examination of a trench within the Courtyard of Dunollie Castle.

INTRODUCTION

This *Working Statement of Intent (WSI)* has been produced for the Dunollie Projects Ltd with respect to the proposed re-examination of a previously excavated trench within the courtyard of the Castle (fig 1). The Trench itself while not excessively deep still presents a hazard to visitors to the site and it is proposed it is partially backfilled to make it less so. While the origins and purpose of the trench remain unknown, the re-examination of the trench prior to its partial backfilling would afford an important opportunity to examine the upper deposits within the castle courtyard as well as allowing the local community to be involved in small scale archaeological excavation and recording work.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Dunollie Castle comprises a tower house and courtyard or keep and bailey generally accepted to have been built in the early 15th century. First Scheduled as an Ancient Monument in 1931 (revised 1993, 2002), the Scheduled area was increased in 2011 to include the earthworks to the NE, which have archaeological significance as early medieval defences dating from the 7th century. Dunollie Castle is exceptionally significant for the continuity of its connection with Clan MacDougall. It also has considerable significance for its wider history and associations as an example of medieval fortification and as part of a group of West coast castles. It is an archaeological site of great antiquity and a picturesque landmark.

The origins of the trench within the courtyard are as yet unknown. Two possibilities suggest why it may have been excavated, firstly to act as drainage as the trench leads to a chute in the outer wall. Secondly and perhaps more likely it is the remains of a small evaluation or investigation trench, by person or persons unknown. This latter proposition is perhaps indicated that the trench appears to follow the outer face of the wall of a structure within the NW corner of the courtyard, but appears to encounter another rubble structure at the east. Both of these features (but not the trench line) are shown within the RCHAMS Inventory plan of the castle, which suggests the trench may have been excavated at or prior to this time (pre 1975). The trench measures 6.90m long EW before doglegging 3.30m to the SE, its original width c1.0m. At the SW side of the trench there is an area of what appears to be mounded soil this possibly the weathered remains of the spoil heap.

3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 The archaeological objectives are to:

3.1.1. Evaluate the nature of the previously excavated trench within the courtyard of the castle.

3.1.2 Fully record any archaeological features identified within the trench

3.1.3. Produce a descriptive report (text and plans)

3.1.4. To propose further stages of work as required

4 PROGRAMME OF WORKS

4.1 Excavation

4.1.1 The small excavation of will examine the archaeology within the previously excavated trench identified within the courtyard of the castle. The trench will be cut back to its original line and emptied to its original depth in order to record in plan any previously exposed archaeology. All exposed sections will be fully recorded and all features recorded in plan. The excavation will be undertaken by hand using handpick, trowel and hand shovel. Recording and sampling will be undertaken according to standard operating procedures.

4.1.2 If complex or fragile archaeological deposits or features are revealed these will be protected by temporary fencing (hazard tape) and covering (geotextile) until an appropriate mitigation strategy (excavation or preservation in situ) has been agreed with all parties.

4.1.3 The depth of the present trench affords a hazard to the general public visiting the site and it is proposed after full recording has been undertaken that the trench is partially backfilled to a safe level. This will be done with covering any exposed archaeology with geotextile this then sealed with a suitable leveling agent, this is turn sealed with a mixture of previously removed turf and soil and reseeded with grass if necessary.

5 REPORT

5.1 Within one month of completion of the whole programme of fieldwork the results will be presented in the form of a written Data Structure Report. The report will be prepared in accordance with current standard Historic Scotland procedural requirements and standard procedures. The report will contain the following:

- i) location plan of the archaeological resource
- ii) location plan showing those areas subject to the watching brief
- iii) a full descriptive statement of the results in the form of a Data Structure Report (DSR)
- iv) where appropriate recommendations for post-excavation work.

5.3 A summary report on the works and its findings will be submitted to Discovery and Excavation in Scotland to ensure compliance with standard practice.

5.4 Three copies of the report will be supplied to Dunollie Trust for distribution to the relevant bodies within four weeks of the completion of fieldwork.

6 FURTHER WORK

6.1 in the event of significant archaeological structures and features being discovered further stages of archaeological work may be necessary if 'preservation in situ' is not an option. This may include excavation, post excavation analyses and publication as required. Any requirement for

further stages of work will be detailed in an amendment to this WSI. Preparation of such an amendment would be undertaken in consultation with the Dunollie Projects Ltd and Historic Environment Scotland.

6.2 Should artefacts and samples be recovered there may be the need for further post-excavation analyses of samples. A costed Post-Excavation Design would be prepared in these circumstances. The need for, and scale of such works would be determined in consultation with Dunollie Projects Ltd and Historic Environment Scotland. Any Post-Excavation Design required will be produced within 3 months of the submission of the DSR and any final publication will be written within a year of agreement to the Post-Excavation Design. This is negotiable based on availability of specialists etc.

6.3 Finally, the planning condition will not be discharged until all archaeological works as required by the Council have either been completed or secured by a written contract.

7 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

7.1 The archive from these works will be prepared for deposition in the National Monuments Record of Scotland within 6 months of the completion of fieldwork

8 TIMETABLE AND MONITORING

8.1 No date has been fixed for the watching brief, but will be undertaken prior to the consolidation work, it is not expected the work will take longer than a day.

9 HEALTH & SAFETY

9.1 The Health & Safety policy of the on site contractor Heritage Consolidation will be adhered to.

10 PROJECT TEAM AND FACILITIES

10.1 Roddy Regan of Kilmartin Museum will undertake the project.

11 CONDITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

11.1 The on site contractor will provide up to date service information, including type and location prior to archaeological works taking place. Kilmartin Museum will not accept responsibility for any services that deviate from the mapped locations nor for unmarked services.

APPENDICES – METHODS

A) Controlled topsoil strip/Watching Brief

i) Machinery and method of excavation during a controlled topsoil strip will be under the direction of the archaeologist. The archaeologist will be permitted to halt and/or re-locate proceedings in the event of archaeological material, or potential archaeological being uncovered.

ii) The controlled topsoil strip will normally be comprehensive, i.e. the archaeologist will be present during ground breaking works

iii) Where previously agreed with the client and the local authority's archaeological advisor and where archaeological material can be adequately dealt with within the time-scale, within each significant archaeological horizon a number of features will be hand excavated. Pits and postholes normally will be sampled by half-sectioning although some features may require complete excavation. Linear features will be sectioned as appropriate. No deposits will be entirely removed unless this is unavoidable. As the objective is to define remains it will not necessarily be the intention to fully excavated all trenches to natural stratigraphy. Even in the case where no remains have been located the stratigraphy will be recorded.

iv) All investigation of archaeological horizons will be by hand, with cleaning, inspection and recording both in plan and section.

v) Any excavation, whether by machine or by hand, will be undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features or deposits which appear to be demonstrably worthy of preservation in situ.

vii) If any finds of human remains are uncovered the local police will be informed. If removal is essential this will only take place with police approval, and in compliance with Historic Scotland's Operational Policy Paper 'The Treatment of Human Remains in Archaeology.

viii) All finds of gold and silver will be moved to a safe place. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery, suitable security measures will be taken to protect the artefacts from theft or damage. In Scotland the recovery of such material, along with all other finds, will be reported to the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrance.

Recording

ix) The minimal recording will comprise a photographic record and day book entry.

x) For each trench,/area a block of numbers in a continuous sequence will be allocated.

xi) Written descriptions, comprising both factual data and interpretative elements, will be recorded.

xi) Plans will normally be drawn at a scale of 1:50. Burials will be drawn at 1:10, other detailed plans will be drawn at an appropriate scale.

xii) Long sections of showing layers and any cut features will be drawn at 1:50. Sections of features or short lengths of trenches will be drawn at 1:20.

xiii) Generally all sections will be accurately related to Ordnance Datum. There may, occasionally, be instances where this is unnecessary or not feasible.

xiv) Registers of sections and plans will be kept.

xv) A full digital colour photographic record will be maintained. This will illustrate the principal features and finds both in detail and in a general context. The photographic record will also include working shots to represent more generally the nature of the fieldwork.

xvi) A register of all photographs taken will be kept on standardised forms.

xvii) All recording will be in accordance with the standards and requirements of the Archaeological Field Manual (Museum of London Archaeology Service 3rd edition 1994).

Finds

xviii) All identified finds and artefacts will be collected and retained. Certain classes of material, ie post-medieval pottery and building material may on occasion be discarded after recording if a representative sample is kept. Finds will be scanned to assess the date range of the assemblage with particular reference to pottery. In addition the artefacts will be used to characterise the site, and to establish the potential for all categories of finds should further archaeological work be necessary.

xix) All finds and samples will be treated in a proper manner and to accepted standards. Finds will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the guidelines set out in United Kingdom Institute for Conservation's Conservation Guidelines No. 2.

xx) All recovered archaeological material in Scotland belongs to the Crown and its disposal is administered by the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer.

B) Reporting

The style and format of the report will be compliant with Historic Scotland's issued guidance on Data Structure Reports.

The report will include as a minimum the following;

- i) A location plan of the excavated
- ii) A location plan of the features and archaeology located
- iii) A summary statement of the results.
- v) Assessment of the merit of the archaeological resource.

C) General

- i) The requirements of the Brief will be met in full where reasonably practicable.
- ii) Any significant variations to the proposed methodology will be discussed and agreed with the local authority's archaeological representative in advance of implementation.
- iii) The scope of fieldwork detailed in the main part of the Project Design/Written Scheme of Investigation is aimed at meeting the aims of the project in a cost-effective manner. However there may on occasions be unusual circumstances which have not been included in the programme and costing, These can include;

- a) unavoidable delays due to extreme weather, vandalism, etc;

b) trenches requiring shoring or stepping, ground contamination, unknown services, poor ground conditions;

c) extensions to specified trenches or feature excavation sample sizes requested by the ioca authority's archaeological advisor;

d) complex structures or objects, including those in waterlogged conditions, requiring specialist removal.

E) Health and Safety

All relevant health and safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice will be respected.

Insurances.

i) Kilmartin Museum holds Liability Insurance, Public Liability Insurance and Hired equipment insurance. Details can be supplied on request.

Standards

i) Kilmartin Museum conforms to the standards of professional conduct outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct, the WA Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology, the WA Standards and Guidance for Desk Based Assessments and Field Evaluations etc.

ii) All relevant health and safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice will be respected.

RCAHMS. (1975) *The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Argyll: an inventory of the ancient monuments: volume 2: Lorn.* Edinburgh.

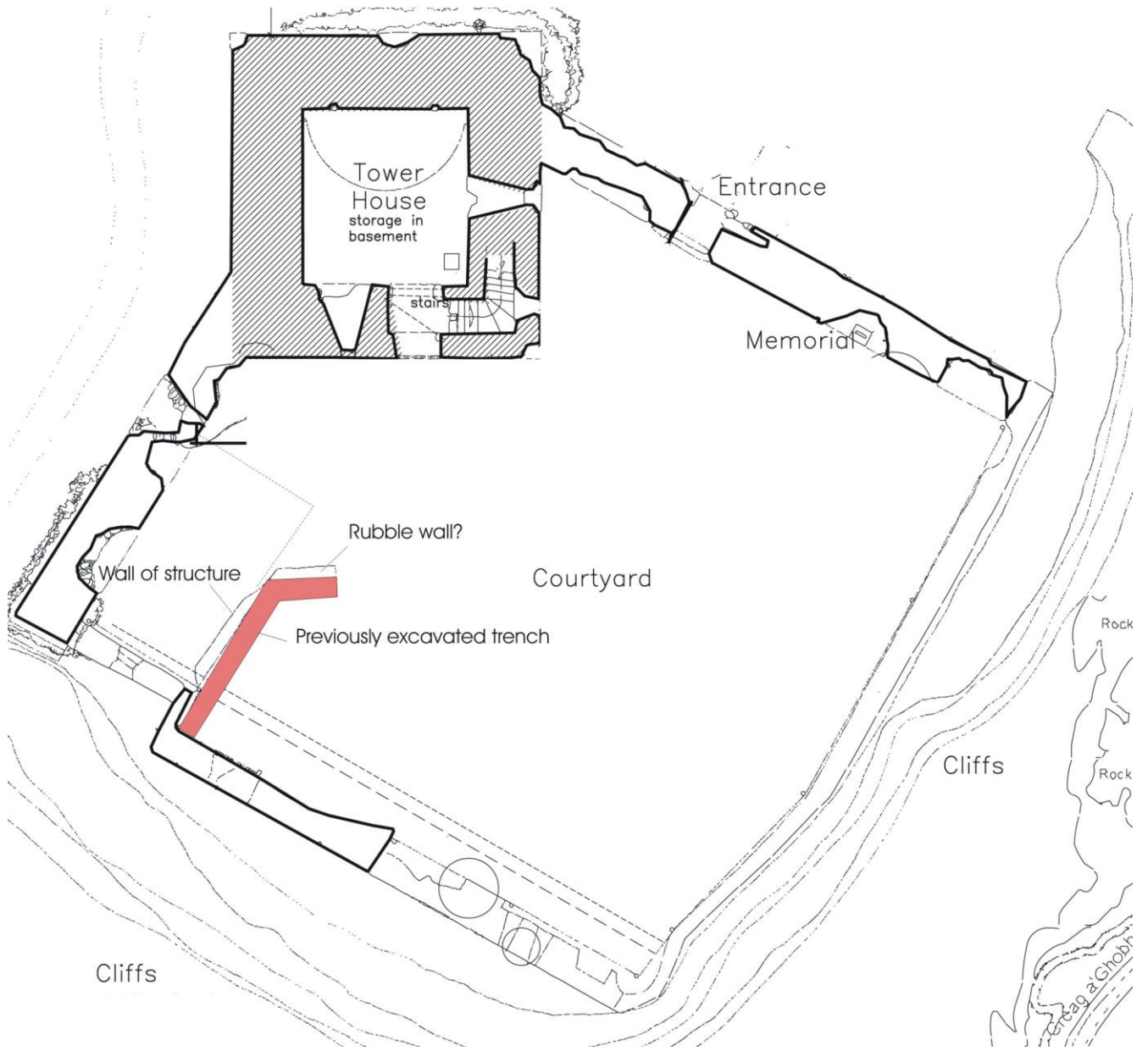


Figure 1: Location of Trench

