

Turnberry Castle and Lighthouse

Summary Report of Archaeological Works Undertaken on Western Terrace

By Steven Black, Northlight Heritage, 10th May 2016

1.0 Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Turnberry Castle and Lighthouse on behalf of the Trump Organisation between 26th April and 29th April 2016. The work focussed on the western terrace of the lighthouse where the construction of a new stairway and patio area was proposed. The evaluation area was located within Bruce's Castle (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) and Turnberry Lighthouse (a Listed category B building) at NGR NS 1962 0721.

The archaeological evaluation of the western terrace comprised the stripping of the turf and topsoil over the area required for the new stairway and patio area, the re-excavation and recording of a previous evaluation trench opened in 2008 and the further evaluation of the area either side of the previous trench within the area required for the formation of the new stairway.

2.0 Results

Topsoil Strip

The turf and topsoil was removed from the western lighthouse terrace by a small mechanical excavator, fitted with a flat bladed ditching bucket, under the direct control and supervision of an archaeologist. It was composed of a mid-brown silty sand (008) that existed to approximately 0.20 m in depth.



Plate 1: Examples of concrete and stone blocks uncovered beneath the topsoil in the Western Terrace (large, raised, square white block at top right is the former flag pole base).

Immediately beneath the topsoil remains relating to the use of the area as part of the operational lighthouse were present (Plate 1). This included three dressed stone blocks running north to south down the inside of the western wall/fence line. These were very similar to those found during previous evaluation on the eastern side of the lighthouse (Black, 2015), which related to a boundary fence running down the northern side of the access road into the lighthouse. This suggests the three stones could relate to a former fence line on the western side of the enclosed terrace. A total of four small square concrete footings and two irregular and small concrete bases were also uncovered, the latter relating to a former washing line.

No evidence of material pre-dating the construction of the lighthouse was identified, or of the brown loamy-type material previously identified under the eastern access road and tentatively identified as possibly being evidence of earlier deposits (Black, 2015).

Excavation of 2008 Evaluation Trench

At the eastern side of the western terrace the previous evaluation trench, originally excavated in 2008, was re-excavated in order to provide a current assessment of the deposits in this area. The location of the previous trench corresponded approximately to the location of the new stairway (Plate 2).

The abbreviated summary report of the 2008 trench reported potentially significant deposits below a probably modern ashy black layer and builder work debris immediately below the turf. This took the form of possible curves at a depth of 1.0 m below the surface and the possible remains of a 'mound' of unknown date and purpose at a depth of 0.3 m below the surface.

The re-excavation of the backfill revealed a trench measuring 6.20 m E-W by 0.80 m N-S. The trench backfill was fully removed which resulted in a trench 0.80 m in depth with two deeper slots at either end, each measuring 2 m by 0.8 m and extending to a depth of 1.2 m.



Plate 2: Re-excavated 2008 evaluation trench

The eastern end of the trench contained seven deposits (001-007) all of which comprised sand with varying amounts of stone and gravel inclusions (Plate 3). The exception to this was a deposit of black silty ash (001) which was only present in a very small patch at the surface of the eastern trench extent.

The western end of the trench was capped by a dark brown sand deposit (004) which varied in depth from 0.1 m to 0.36 m and contained frequent angular stone inclusions along with yellow/brown brick and sandstone fragments. Beneath this lay three layers of sand (009, 016 & 012). The upper deposit (009) comprised 0.10 m of sterile mid-brown sand while the subsequent two deposits (016 & 012) comprised dark brown sand with occasional small rounded stone inclusions up to 0.04 m in size. The latter two sand deposits (016 & 012) were very similar and difficult to distinguish from each other with (016) existing to 0.45 m in depth and lying over (012) which extended to the base of the trench.



Plate 3: West facing section of 2008 evaluation trench

A likely archaeological feature [014] appeared to cut into sand deposit (016). The cut was only partially revealed in section but, where visible, appeared to have a gradual break of slope at the top and very shallow slightly concave sides (Plate 4). The cut was filled by a single fill comprising a moderately compacted very dark brown/black sand with abundant angular stone inclusions (010).



Plate 4: North facing section of 2008 evaluation trench showing possible cuts [014 & 015]

The base of cut [014] was not distinct or obvious in section due to it truncating a lower feature containing an almost identical fill (Plate 4). The lower feature [015] exhibited a similar profile to the upper feature [014] and appeared to be of similar dimensions. The lower feature [015], which was cut into sand deposit (012) contained a single fill comprising a moderately compacted very dark brown/black sand with abundant angular stone inclusions (013).

To the east of these two features [014 & 015] and lying between sand deposits (012 & 016) lay a small band of dark brown sand and gravel (011).

No evidence of the potential turf feature noted previously was observed.

Extended Evaluation

Once the 2008 evaluation trench had been fully recorded it was carefully backfilled to the post-topsoil strip ground level. The area covered by the previous evaluation trench was then expanded linearly to the north and south creating a trench measuring 4 m E-W by 3 m N-S (Plate 5) and comprising a cross-section of the proposed stair position. Depth was restricted to 0.4 m below ground level, being the maximum likely to be required for formation of the staircase using shallow pad foundations.

The trench was excavated through deposits (002-004 & 009) which were interpreted as disturbance, levelling or made ground associated with the lighthouse. No artefacts or potential archaeological deposits were noted during the course of the excavation.



Plate 5: Extended Evaluation

3.0 Discussion

The controlled stripping of turf and topsoil over the western terrace revealed features relating to the lighthouse but nothing obviously older than this or material of a nature which would be likely to be adversely affected by any proposed paving scheme.

The re-excavation of the 2008 evaluation trench has shown that no obviously significant archaeological layers exist within the upper levels where the deposits appear to relate to lighthouse activity.

Likely archaeological deposits and features were uncovered at the western end of the trench, the most obvious two being cut features [014 & 015]. Given the absence of any artefactual material being recovered and the narrow confines of the previous evaluation trench it was not possible to fully characterise these features or their associated deposits. It was, therefore, also not possible to fully confirm whether they related to the lighthouse or some prior episode of activity.

The abbreviated summary report of the previous evaluation trench indicated that potential archaeological layers and

features existed at either end of the trench. Re-excavation of this trench has shown that potential archaeological layers exist between 0.72 m (at the eastern or landward end of the trench) and 0.34 m (at the western or seaward end of the trench) beneath the base of the topsoil layer i.e. beneath ground level after the turf and topsoil had been removed. These features are at a depth whereby they would not be affected by the proposed paving scheme.

The removal of the 0.4 m either side of the previous evaluation trench during the extended evaluation was confined to layers above the potential archaeology. However, the extent of the extended evaluation resulted in excavation to within approximately 0.1 m of the top of the uppermost possible feature [014]. Further excavation was not undertaken in accordance with the conditions of the Scheduled Monument Consent dated 26th April 2016. It is considered that, if excavation is limited to this same depth, there will be no disturbance of archaeological deposits which might exist, however, consideration should be given to an appropriate archaeological mitigation for all remaining investigation works to ensure that the archaeological resource is fully protected.

4.0 Bibliography

Black, S 2015, *Turnberry Golf Course Archaeological Evaluation*, Unpublished Northlight Heritage Data Structure Report No. 135.