

**Site**      **Linlithgow Palace**

**N.G.R**      NT 002 773

**Project Description**

Monitoring of excavation of 4 trenches to receive lightning conductors

**Report**

The 4 trenches were excavated over 2 days (trenches 1 & 2 on 2.10.95 and 3 & 4 on 24.10.95).

Trench 1 : This cutting was located 7.60m N of the (extended) SE corner of the Palace, and it was 1m x 1m x 1m deep. The main deposits in this trench comprised topsoil (F100) with a depth of 45cm, overlying a substantial dump of predominantly sandstone chippings in a dark grey, sandy matrix (F101). This feature was not fully excavated, the required depth having been reached.

Interpretation : The sandstone chippings and sandy deposit are clearly a dump of, most likely construction debris from a period of building at the Palace, although whether this activity dates to the 15th or 17th century is not known. The apparent size of the deposit and its location, projecting from the Palace mound (itself a residual feature from earlier, medieval activity, predating the Palace construction), indicate its use as a landscaping deposit, possibly infilling redundant features, or lessening the steep profile of the mound.

Trench 2 : This trench lay 2.8m to the W of the NE corner of the Palace, and 1.10m to the N of the North Wall. It measured 1m x 1m in plan, and was dug to a depth of 1.15m. The first deposit removed was a turf and dark humus deposit (F102), reaching a depth of 70cm. This sealed a mixed stony layer (F103) some 45cm deep, which in turn overlay a cleaner, stone-free horizon (F104) at the base of the trench.

Interpretation : F102 contained pottery and animal bone, and coal and charcoal fragments, suggesting that it was a midden deposit dating to the occupation of the Palace, although whether this was a primary context remains unclear, given the degree of redeposition during frequent landscaping operations. At the NE edge of the complex, the pottery (mainly reduced grey ware jug sherds) suggested a late medieval / early post-medieval date for the deposits, indicative of 16th- early 17th-century activity on the site.

Trench 3 : This cutting lay 16.2m to the S of the NW corner of the Palace block, and 1.0m to the W of the West Wall. It also measured 1m x 1m and was excavated to a depth of 0.5m. Below topsoil (F001), at a depth of 20cm, a mixed deposit of broken sandstone and lime mortar fragments in a humic matrix was encountered (F002). This was 10cm in depth, and sealed a rich garden soil (F003) containing bone, charcoal, coal and shell fragments. F003 was only partially excavated.

Interpretation : F001 had been disturbed in the recent past, as had a part of F002. But given the enriched nature of F003, F002 may have acted as a surface, or at least as bedding for a surface, possibly a garden path.

Trench 4 : Trench 4 lay 1.2m to the N of the SW corner of the Palace, and 1m to the W of the West Wall. It was excavated to a depth of 0.5m, and comprised largely a single deposit to the limit of the excavations' depth (F005). This material comprise dark, loose earth with small stones, containing a few 19th- and 20th-century artefacts. In places, beneath F005, a stone-free, orange/brown fine grained soil horizon was identified. F006 may be a natural soil horizon.

### **Interpretation**

F005 may have been the tipping slope of a low bank which runs along the base of the West Palace Wall for most of its length, and which is of apparently recent date.

### **Finds**

4 misc. frags. post-medieval / medieval pottery (F102)

3 misc. animal bone frags. (F102)

Oyster shell frags. (F003)

Modern china and bottle glass (005)

### **Context List**

F100	Topsoil in trench 1
F101	Sandstone fragments in grey sand (trench 1)
F102	Topsoil in trench 2
F103	Loose silty sand and stones (trench 2)
F104	Orange/brown silty clay (trench 2)
F001	Topsoil in trench 3
F002	Mortar and stones (trench 3)
F003	Humic 'garden' soil (trench 3)
F004	Topsoil in trench 4
F005	Dark soil and stones, the fabric of a bank (trench 4)
F006	Orange/brown silty clay (trench 4)

## **Illustrations**