

Archaeological Watching Brief
Queen Margaret Hall
St Michael's RC Church
Linlithgow

LL04

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
QUEEN MARGARET HALL
ST MICHAEL'S RC CHURCH
LINLITHGOW
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Illustration 1: Site Location Plan

Illustration 2: Trenches Observed

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ABSTRACT

St Michael's Roman Catholic Church, Linlithgow, commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological Watching Brief during alterations to Queen Margaret Hall. The hall, which lies to the SE of St Michael's Church (off Blackness Road), is centred on NGR NT 00535 77313. The work (site code LL04) was undertaken on the 17th and 18th of May in good weather conditions. The requirement was to monitor any excavations undertaken during alterations to the hall. The work revealed that the area around St Margaret's hall was artificially made up in the 19th and 20th century, though these deposits were not bottomed. One of the deposits was found to contain a piece of re-deposited late medieval / early post-medieval pottery.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

St Michael's Roman Catholic Church, Linlithgow, commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological Watching Brief during alterations to Queen Margaret Hall. The hall, which lies to the SE of St Michael's Church (off Blackness Road), is centred on NGR NT 00535 77313. The work (site code LL04) was undertaken on the 17th and 18th of May in good weather conditions. The requirement was to monitor any excavations undertaken during alterations to the hall.

The work was designed to satisfy the archaeological condition on development application reference 0897/FUL/09.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this investigation was to establish the presence/absence, date, character and quality of any archaeological remains revealed during construction works associated with alterations to the Hall.

1.3 Reporting

The present document has been prepared as the final report on this Watching Brief. Copies will be sent to the client, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland and the local authority Sites and Monuments Record.

1.4 Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Alex Mulholland and Jim Headridge, as well as Fr Paul Kelly of St Michael's RC Church and Hugh McBrien of WoSAS for their assistance and guidance throughout this project. St Michael's Roman Catholic Church funded this Watching Brief.

2 Details of Work

2.1 The Site (Illus 1)

Queen Margaret Hall lies roughly 25m to the SE of St Michael's Roman Catholic Church alongside a large tree-covered boundary bank aligned NW-SE. To the N of the hall is an area of flat waste ground, the site of buildings that were recently demolished. Further north the ground slopes sharply down an artificial bank to an ex-playing field and tennis court. Immediately to the SE of the hall is a small brick surfaced carpark and to the E are two areas of lawn and a 20th century war memorial.

2.2 Archaeological Potential

Current land boundaries within and around the periphery of medieval burghs often date back to the medieval period, and any development within plots could shed light on the burgh's development over time. Queen Margaret Hall lies outside the recorded location of the Low Port, one of the two ports or gateways into and out of the burgh when it was laid out in the first planning of the settlement in the early twelfth century. However, the site lies to the rear of an ownership plot shown on the First Edition Ordnance

Survey map of the mid-nineteenth century, and lies adjacent to a boundary which appears to be mapped on General Roy's mid-eighteenth century map of the area. A comparison of these two maps indicates that the development site lies in the area between the former, natural course of what is now known as Bell's Burn, and its present, canalised course.

It is possible that the boundaries shown on Roy's Military Survey may reflect former land-uses such as 'sub-urban' settlement or possible industrial use on lands technically outwith the burgh proper.

2.3 Archaeological Method

During alterations to Queen Margaret Hall, a foundation trench was excavated by the developers for a new layer of cladding which was to be built against external walls of the hall. This excavation (carried out using a mini digger and by hand) was monitored by a single archaeologist from Alder Archaeology. Deposits encountered were recorded by taking detailed notes, sample sections and digital photographs (Nikon D60 DSLR). The locations of the trenches were plotted on a scaled plan of the hall. Also monitored was the excavation of a small trench dug to locate and divert a power cable. Two tiny sondages were also excavated by the archaeologist to gain a deeper understanding of the deposits across the development area.

2.4 Results of Investigations

Excavations revealed that the original foundation trenches for the hall and extension had been dug into relatively clean rich topsoils (03) and (24) on the SE, S and SW sides of the hall. These topsoils produced both 20th century and 19th century pottery. Around the N corner of the hall, the original trenches were found to have been excavated into loam that had become much more mixed with sand, silt and clay and coal waste (21) and (22). The shallow nature of the new foundation excavations meant that deposits below these loams were generally not exposed. A small exception was where orange layer (23) was just exposed around the W corner of the hall. Along the NW side of the hall, the hardcore below the brick footpath was found to be much thicker than elsewhere and so extended across the bottom of the trench. Various services were found when viewing the works. These included the two 5cm diameter iron pipes (15) and (13), as well as more modern services for electricity (19), gas (05) and a series of waste water drains running along the rear of the extension.

Outside the new proposed doorway of the hall, a trench was excavated to locate and divert an electricity cable. This trench revealed a concrete path (18, 19) below turf and topsoil (12) of the lawn. Below this was a series of silty and loam layers (07, 08, 09). A small sondage was excavated in the corner of this trench to gain further understanding of deeper deposits. This revealed a greenish-blue silty loam (32) containing a fragment of modern glass and a piece of re-deposited medieval/early post-med pottery. Below this was a rich brown sandy silt (31) containing coal fragments, but this was not bottomed.

A small sondage was also excavated near the W corner of the hall to see if orange layer (23) was a subsoil or made-up ground similar to orange layer (08). This revealed that below (23) lay a grey brown silty layer (26) which in turn lay above a silty and mortary

layer (27). This layer was not bottomed, but was found to contain blocks of stone, large pieces of mortar and a fragment of pantile.

3 Interpretation

The loams (03, 24, 21, 22, 07) revealed below the original hall foundations and in the electric cable trench appear to be the upper-most deposits of a series of layers deposited as make-up across the site. It seems that towards the S of the hall this layer (03, 24) received more organic material over time (probably from the tree leaves) and developed into a richer topsoil.

Pipes (13) and (15) are similar in appearance and were probably buried at the same time. As pipe (15) follows the SE wall of the hall and bends round behind hall under the extension (see illus 2), it seems likely that they were laid down when the hall was built in the late 1940s.

The sondages as well as the electric cable trench show that at least four layers of make-up were deposited on the site before the uppermost loams were laid down. The fragment of glass found in (32) and the coal in (31) suggests that these layers may be relatively modern, despite the finding of a piece of medieval/early post medieval pottery – which appears to be re-deposited. However, the find does suggest that the makeup was sourced from deposits containing medieval remains, perhaps from an old field soil.

Comparison between the layers in the two sondages, suggests that two of the deposits were laid down at the same time across the site. These were orange layer (08) which equates to (23), and (09) which equates to (26). However, below this, different layers seem to have been deposited on the site: a mortary, stony layer which may have come from a demolished building to the W (27), and a grey-blue silty layer to the east (32).

Given the close proximity of St Michael's RC Church, it seems likely that many of the deposits of make-up under Queen Margaret Hall may date to the construction of the church in 1887 or its enlargement in 1893. If this is the case then the deposits were probably laid down to level the ground as part of the landscaping of the church grounds.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

This watching brief has revealed important evidence suggesting the area around St Margaret's hall has been artificially made up. The material in these deposits points to a relatively late date (19th-20th century) for this activity. However, as the natural ground was not revealed, we do not know the full depth of these deposits or whether they lie above earlier remains.

4.2 Recommendations for Further Work

There is no recommendation for further work; however the ultimate decision lies with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Appendix 1 Context Register

<i>No:</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Phase</i>
01	Brick footings of Queen Margaret Hall.	Modern
02	Concrete foundations of Queen Margaret Hall. Thin layer (10cm) of ash concrete.	Modern
03	A mid brown slightly clayey silty loam below (02). Contains flower pot, tin glazed earthenware, burnt stone & coal. More loamy to the S of the hall. Same as (24). Makeup.	Pre-1940s
04	Reddish-brown coarse sands with 10% angular gravel below brick pathway on the NE side of the hall.	Modern
05	A modern gas pipe	Modern
06	Cut for gas pipe (05) trench, not visible.	Modern
07	A mid brownish-grey clayey loam below below gravel (19). 12cm thick. Makeup.	Pre-1940s
08	A mid orange-brown silt below (07). 12cm thick. Merges into (09). Makeup.	Pre-1940s
09	A grey-brown loamy silt below (08). Coal present. Contains white glazed, black patterned pottery frag of probable 20 th century date. 18cm thick. Makeup.	Pre-1940s
10	Creamy-white sand below car park bricks.	Modern
11	Green type 1 hardcore below (10).	Modern
12	Topsoil and turf, the lawn to the east of the hall. 18cm thick.	Modern
13	5cm dia cast iron gas or water pipe running diagonally under (02) near SE corner of hall. Very similar to (15).	Probably 1940s
14	Cut for the trench belonging to (13), not seen.	Probably 1940s
15	A 5cm dia cast iron gas or water pipe running along the SE side of hall. Extends around the back of the original hall under the extension foundations.	Probably 1940s
16	Cut for (15)- not seen. Cut into (03).	Probably 1940s
17	A 3-5cm thick layer of tarmac around the S corner of the hall below (11).	Modern
18	Path surface below (12), above (19)	Modern
19	Gravel below path (18), grey angular.	Modern
20	Red crushed brick dust under brick path running around the N end of the hall.	Modern
21	A mid brown clayey silty loam with glass frags, chicken bone, burnt stone and burnt coal waste. Makeup. Same as (22).	Pre-1940s

22	Made-up ground below a thick layer of type 1 hardcore on NW side of the hall. Mixed dark grey-brown loam containing fragments of mortar and 19 th century pottery. Makeup. Same as (21)	Pre-1940s
23	A mid orange-brown silt below (24) with 20-40% sub-angular and sub-rounded gravel and stones. 17cm thick. Make-up. Merges into (26).	Pre-1940s
24	A rich dark silty loam containing 19 th century pottery, below (02). NW and SW sides of hall. 24cm thick. Same as (03).	Pre-1940s
25	Breeze block wall of extension.	1960s?
26	A grey-brown silt with flecks of charcoal and coal below (23). Make-up. 12cm thick.	Pre-1940s
27	A dark brown silt with 50% frags of mortar and large blocks of angular stone. Contains probable 19 th century pantile. Demlition layer or demolition material used as make-up.	Pre-1940s
28	A spun-steel pipe near the new entrance to the hall, runs under foundations (02).	Modern
29	The bricks of the carpark and paths surrounding the hall.	Modern
30	Concrete foundations of the extension.	1960s?
31	A mid rich brown slightly clayey sandy silt with thin lenses of light brown compact clayey silts. Frequent coal fragments. Depth unknown but more than 25cm. Make-up.	Pre-1940s.
32	A darkish to mid brown loamy silt with a slight greenish-blue appearance. Contains occasional small stones. Base sherd of green-glazed pot and modern glass found in this layer. 11cm in thickness, below (09).	Pre-1940s.
33	Type 1, green crushed rock below sands under bricks on NW side of hall.	Modern

Appendix 2 Photographic Register

<i>Image No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>View</i>
DSCF4048.jpg	Excavation of the foundation trench along the NE side of the hall.	S
DSCF4049.jpg	Layer (09) below concrete foundations (02).	S
DSCF4050.jpg	Excavation of the foundation trench along the NE side of the hall.	S
DSCF4051-2.jpg	Excavating for the electric cable.	NW
DSCF4053.jpg	View of the foundation trench along the NE side of the hall. Looking at layer (03) below foundations (02)	SW
DSCF4054-5.jpg	Excavation of the foundation trench along the SE side of the hall.	SW
DSCF4055-7.jpg	Pipe (15) revealed in the foundation trench along the SE side of the hall.	SW

DSCF4058-62.jpg	Shot showing layers (12, 18, 19, 07, 09, 08) revealed in the electric cable trench.	NW
DSCF4063.jpg	Continuing excavation of the foundation trench along the NE side of the hall.	S
DSCF4064.jpg	Continuing excavation of the foundation trench along the NE side of the hall.	NW
DSCF4065.jpg	Starting to excavate along the NW side of the hall.	SW
DSCF4066.jpg	Excavating along the NW side of the hall.	SW
DSCF4067.jpg	Excavating along the SW side of the hall.	S
DSCF4068-9.jpg	Make-up (23) revealed in the foundation trench.	SW
DSCF4070-1.jpg	Greyish make-up layer (26) revealed in a small sondage.	SE
DSCF4072-3.jpg	Mortar and stone layer (27) at the bottom of the small sondage.	-
DSCF4074.jpg	Photo of the foundation trench running along the SW side of the extension. Shot shows extension foundation concrete (30) and where it has been laid over a boulder in (24).	NE
DSCF4075.jpg	Shot of the foundation trench along the SW side of the hall.	SE
DSCF4076.jpg	Shot of the foundation trench along the SW side of the hall.	NW

Appendix 3 Drawing Register

<i>Sheet No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Scale</i>
1	Notes and sample sections.	1:10
2	Annotated plan of the excavations around Queen Margaret Hall.	1:100

Appendix 4 Finds Register

<i>Context</i>	<i>Material Type</i>	<i>Details</i>
32	Ceramic	Redware base sherd. Traces of green glaze externally and on base of vessel. Late medieval?
32	Glass	Curved pale green ?bottle fragment. No denaturing of surface. Modern

Appendix 5 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Linlithgow
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Queen Margaret Hall, St Michaels RC Church, Linlithgow
PROJECT CODE:	LL04
PARISH:	Linlithgow
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Barton, T
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Alder Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	-
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	-
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	Medieval/Post-medieval pottery
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	Site centred on NT 00535 77313
START DATE	17-05-2010
END DATE	18-05-2010
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	St Michael's Roman Catholic Church, Linlithgow, commissioned Alder Archaeology Ltd to undertake an archaeological Watching Brief during alterations to Queen Margaret Hall. The hall, which lies to the SE of St Michael's Church (off Blackness Road), is centred on NGR NT 00535 77313. The work (site code LL04) was undertaken on the 17 th and 18 th of May in good weather conditions. The requirement was to monitor any excavations undertaken during alterations to the hall. The work revealed that the area around St Margaret's hall was artificially made up in the 19 th and 20 th century, though these deposits were not bottomed. One of the deposits was found to contain a piece of re-deposited late medieval / early post-medieval pottery.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	St Michael's Roman Catholic Church
CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	-
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX
ARCHIVE LOCATION	NMRS

(intended)	
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Director@AlderArchaeology.co.uk

Appendix 6 Standard Terms of Reference for all Fieldwork

6.1 Recording Methodology

Alder Archaeology employs a Single Context Recording System that allows full cross-referencing of stratigraphy, finds and environmental samples, as well as site-wide phasing. All features will be planned at scale 1:20, and sections drawn at scale 1:10. Sections and profiles will be drawn and all features will be photographed with metric scale included. Environmental samples will be taken from archaeologically significant contexts, if the analysis of these samples would aid significantly in the interpretation of any features identified.

6.2 Human Remains

If human remains are encountered they will be left in situ and the local police will be informed. If removal is required this will take place in compliance with Historic Scotland's Policy Paper *The Treatment of Human Remains in Archaeology*.

6.3 Products and Reporting

A Data Structure Report will normally be prepared within a period agreed within the Written Scheme of Investigation/ Project Design, after the completion of the fieldwork. This forms the basic level of reporting. Further reporting may be required on the basis of discoveries made during excavations.

A copy of the report and the project archive will be deposited in the NMRS. Further copies will be sent to the client, LAAO and others, as appropriate.

6.4 Artefacts

Finds of objects will be subject to the Scots Laws of Treasure Trove and *Bona Vacantia*. We will report such finds, if recovered, with supporting documentation to the Secretariat of the Treasure Trove Panel for disposal to the appropriate museum.

6.5 Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

A brief summary of the results will be submitted to *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*.

6.6 General Conditions and Health and Safety

We adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists.

Alder Archaeology Ltd has public liability insurance of £2,000,000. Details of this can be provided on request.

We operate a strict health and safety policy and conforms to the Health and Safety at Work Act. We undertakes Risk Assessments on all fieldwork carried out.

Alder Archaeology representatives will at all times wear protective footwear, high visibility clothing and other appropriate clothing. Hard hats will be worn if there is active plant on site or at all times if the site is deemed a hard hat area.

If lightly contaminated deposits are uncovered disposable boiler suits and gloves will be worn. A source of clean water will be made available for staff to clean hands with. If the health risk posed by site contamination is felt to be too high all further archaeological work will stop in that area.