

25 Nicolson Square & Epworth Halls, Edinburgh: Watching Brief Report

AOC Project 21964

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28th June 2012



25 Nicolson Square & Epworth Halls

Watching Brief Report

On Behalf of:	City of Edinburgh Methodist Church 25 Nicolson Square Edinburgh EH8 9BX
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NT 26026 73121
AOC Project No:	21964
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Date of Fieldwork:	28 th November 2011 – 23 rd February 2012
Date of Report:	28 th June 2012

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Summary

AOC Archaeology were commissioned by the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church to undertake an archaeological watching brief on all ground-breaking works associated with the new development of the Methodist Church at 25 Nicolson Square and Epworth Halls.

The work involved the hand excavation of footings for a new extension and the excavations relating to a new lift shaft. The depth of excavation varied from 0.4m to 1.4m in depth. Made ground was encountered in all areas of ground reduction. The only archaeological remains exposed was a possible stone/concrete floor surface.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church to carry out an archaeological watching brief during development of 25 Nicolson Square & Epworth Halls, Edinburgh. The development lies within the administrative area of the City of Edinburgh Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS). The archaeological works were conducted in accordance with the principals set out in *Scottish Planning Policy* (Scottish Government 2010) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning & Archaeology* (Scottish Government 2010) and in accord with City of Edinburgh Council requirements as advised by CECAS.

1.1.2 The objective of the archaeological works was to determine the existence of any buried archaeological remains within the development area by means of a programme of trial trenching. A Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2011a) outlining the entire programme of archaeological works was agreed with CECAS in advance of the archaeological works being undertaken. A program of historic building recording (AOC 2011b) was carried out prior to the development.

1.2 Location

1.2.1 The proposed development area is centred on NGR NT 26026 73121 on the south side of Nicolson square, Edinburgh (Figure 1).

1.3 Historical background

1.3.1 The Methodist Church was built in 1815 – 1816 to replace an earlier Church at Low Calton. Built in a Classical style, its original form still exists with a small vestry to the south corner and an original Manse (now the Square Centre) to the north-west. With two storeys and an attic, the main Chapel has a typical Georgian style church interior with a large area reserved for the altar to the south with pews in front and wide galleries above. The altar area (which once had an upper walkway) has been altered throughout the years, with the large round-headed windows behind it now blocked-up. The basement contains a large dining hall for the café with adjoining kitchens and some smaller offices.

1.3.2 The Epworth Halls were built in 1916 to the east of the Church – seemingly in two phases - and has a large hall (now sub-divided into four smaller rooms) to the first floor and offices to the ground floor. It also has a small basement.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objective of the archaeological watching brief is to safeguard the archaeological resource from any adverse impact deriving from development works and, should significant archaeological material be discovered, to prepare a mitigation strategy compliant with *Scottish Planning Policy* (Scottish Government February 2010) and *Planning & Archaeology* (Scottish Government 2011).

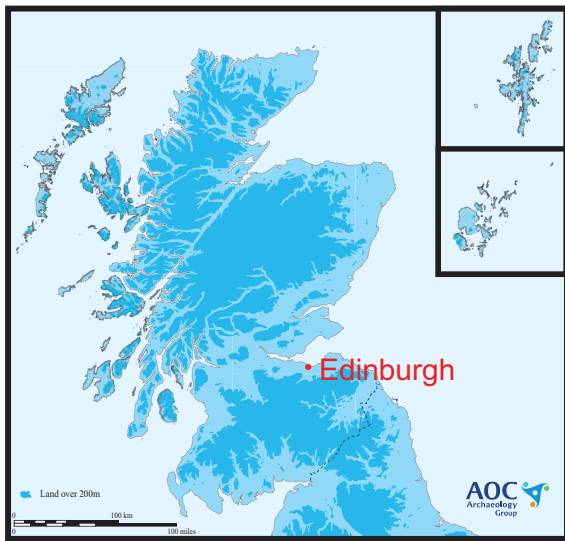


Figure 1: Site location plan

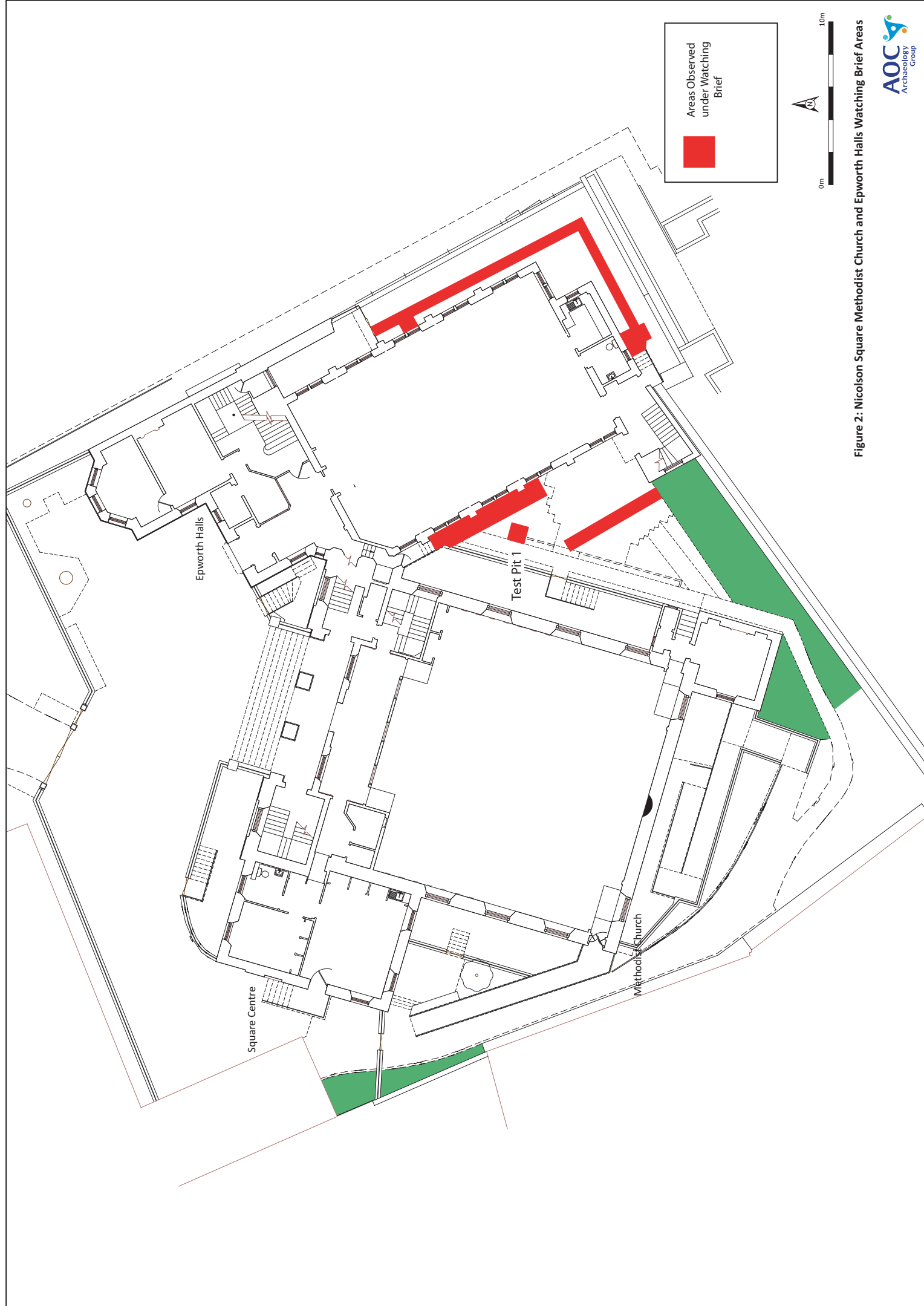


Figure 2: Nicolson Square Methodist Church and Epworth Halls Watching Brief Areas

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 All ground reduction was undertaken by hand under the observation of an experienced field archaeologist.

4 RESULTS

- 4.1 The watching brief took place between 28 November 2011 and 23rd February 2012 in mainly dry weather conditions rendering good archaeological visibility. Excavation varied from 0.55m within a service trench dug outside the south-east corner of Epworth Halls, to 1.0m within the new footing trenches of the new extension and lift shaft. The only archaeology identified was located in Test Pit 1 (see Figure 2) which was dug prior to the main excavations in order to identify the position/depth of a floor slab. This consisted of two sand stone slabs buried by 0.6m of made ground (Plate 1). These slabs were left *in situ* and undisturbed.



Plate 1: Sandstone slabs in base of Test Pit 1

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Apart from the stone slab identified in Test Pit 1, no archaeology was identified in any ground-breaking works associated with this development.

6 REFERENCES

AOC 2011a 25 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh: Written Scheme of Investigation (6th October 2011). Unpubl AOC Method Statement.

AOC 2011b 25 Nicolson Square Methodist Church and Epworth Halls, Edinburgh:

Historic Building Recording Assessment Report. Unpubl AOC Archive Report.

Scottish Government 2010 *Scottish Planning Policy*.

Scottish Government 2011 *PAN 2/2011 Planning & Archaeology*.

APPENDIX 1

DISCOVERY & EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND (DES) ENTRY

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh Methodist Church
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME	25 Nicolson Square
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 21964
PARISH:	City of Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Erlend Hindmarch
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S)	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 26026 73121
START DATE (this season)	28 th November 2011
END DATE (this season)	23 rd February 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	Historic Building Survey (2011)
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	AOC Archaeology undertook an archaeological Watching Brief at 25 Nicolson Square Edinburgh during development work. The work involved the hand excavation of footings for a new extension and the excavations relating to a new lift shaft. The depth of excavation varied from 0.4 m to 1.4 m. Made ground was encountered in all areas of ground reduction. The only archaeological remains revealed was a possible stone/concrete floor surface.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	---
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	City of Edinburgh Methodist Church
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EMAIL ADDRESS:	edinburgh@aocarchaeology.com
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



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