239-241 High Street, Prestonpans: Data Structure Report

21086 July 2008





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239-241 High Street, Prestonpans Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: Oliver and Robb Architects

Pitreavie Drive Dunfermline KY11 8UH

National Grid Reference (NGR): NT 3821 7424

AOC Project No: 21086

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

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Abstract

Following the discovery of a large waster pit during an archaeological evaluation at 239-241 High Street Prestonpans AOC were commissioned to undertake an excavation in order to fully define the limits and nature of the pit. The results of the excavation showed that the pit was limited to the southern half of the proposed development area measuring approximately 19 m x 12 m. Due to safety constraints the depth of the pit was not fully ascertained but it was seen to be in excess of 1.6 m deep. The pit contained considerable quantities of 19th century stoneware and Rockingham glazed pottery as well as quantities of Kiln furniture and slag.

It is likely that the waster pit was associated with the former Bellfield Pottery works which produced pottery from the 1830's and into 20th century.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 A programme of archaeological works was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on the site of a proposed housing development at 239-241 High Street, Prestonpans, East Lothian. An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the site on during March 2008.
- 1.1.2 The development area (Figure 1) lies within the administrative area of East Lothian Council, who are advised on archaeological matters by East Lothian Council Archaeology Service (ELCAS), and attached an archaeological condition on the planning consent (Ref: 07/01017/FUL). Following the discovery of a large waster pit and wall remains during the evaluation phase (Hindmarch 2008) further works in the form of an excavation were required. The work was undertaken according to a Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2008) which was approved by ELCAS and was in accordance with NNPG 5 (SOEnd 1994) and PAN 42 (SOEnd 1994a) AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Oliver and Robb Architects to undertake the excavation.
- 1.1.3 The proposed development site lies on 239-241 High Street, Prestonpans, East Lothian and is centred on NGR: NT 3821 7424 (Fig 1). Its total area amounts to approximately 580 m².

1.2 Archaeological Background

- 1.2.1 A settlement has existed at the coastal location of Prestonpans since at least the 12th century, when monks from Newbattle Abbey first settled there, resulting in the '*Priest-town*' (Smith 2001, 783-4). The origins and growth of the town result from its access to local raw materials, specifically seawater and coal. The production of raw salt from seawater required huge amount of coal, but was clearly profitable, with the Abbot of Newbattle able to build the '*Newhaven of Prestonpans*' by 1542, in which tide mills were built. The development of the industry and subsequent growth of the town in the 16th century is further evidenced by it being made a burgh of barony in 1552. The local salt industry continued to prosper until the mid 17th century, but was in decline by 1707, as a result of the importation of cheaper brine salt from Cheshire. Salt was processed locally until the early 19th century.
- 1.2.2 The decline in the salt industry was in part replaced by the development of the local ceramic industry which was in place by at least the 1790s, when tide mills were being built for grinding the flint to be used in the potteries. By this time 250 people were being

- employed in the industry which was by now dependant on coal imported from Devon and Cornwall (Smith 2001 783-4).
- 1.2.3 Unfortunately Prestonpans appears relatively late in the cartographic record. The late 18th century map by Taylor and Skinner (Figure 2) reveals little in the way of annotated detail regarding the function of the various buildings.

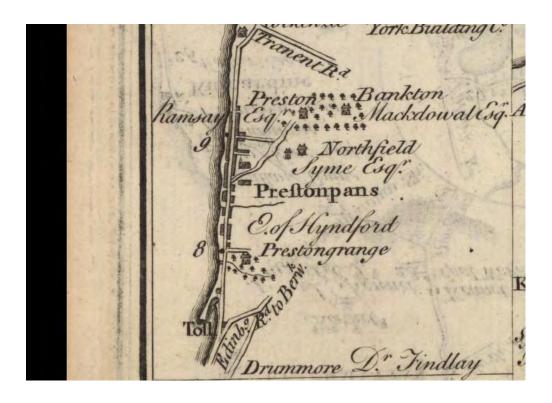


Figure 2: EXTRACT FROM TAYLOR & SKINNER 1776

1.2.4 Found in March 2000 during re-development work almost opposite on the northern side of High Street (NMRS NT37SE 141; NGR: NT 385 744) were numerous stoneware sherds protruding from, a newly levelled surface. The site lies was directly opposite 'The Pottery', a modern housing development on the site of the former Bellfield's Pottery. The assemblage included nine different types of ceramic body, and comprised 141 sherds. The great majority were of stoneware, most of them derived from a distinctive type of stoneware bottle, remarkable for its large size and elaborately turned top. The nature of the glazing was also noteworthy. All of these bottles were of the square-shouldered type, glazed in the typical stoneware colour scheme of buff body and tan-coloured upper section. No sherd bears any trace of a maker's mark. Predictably, the capacity of these large bottles (25 fluid ounces) was considerably more than the normal (later) bottles (10 fluid ounces). This difference can be accounted for by the nature of the intended contents; whereas the vast

majority of the countless millions of ordinary bottles produced by the Scottish stoneware factories were made to hold ginger beer (as is amply testified to by their transfer-printed labels), those belonging to the larger Prestonpans variety were reputedly made for beer. There is a degree of likelihood that this was a dump site for bottles with production flaws, as many of the sherds exhibit such features. Obtaining a provenance and a date to this assemblage is not easy. Certain comparisons can be made with the products of Thomas Tough of Portobello (situated some six miles W along the coast), dated to c 1863. On the other hand, Prestonpans' connection with the brewing industry, most notably represented by the celebrated firm of John Fowler & Co, means that a more local production site for these products should not be ruled out, even though the various potteries which existed in the vicinity of Prestonpans are not noted for their stoneware production (Cruickshank 2001).

- 1.2.5 Former salts pans lay to the immediate north-east (*NMRS* NT37SE 86; NGR: NT 3815 7425) of the development area, composed of a late 18th to early 19th century rectangular group of one and two-storey rubble buildings with pantiled roofs) Salt pan operations carried on until 1959 (Hume 1976; Hamilton 1976).
- 1.2.6 In 2000 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken on demolition work associated with the former buildings occupying the site. The brief was restricted to monitoring the removal of the existing building foundations and associated ground-breaking works within an area of 250m² to the immediate south of the High Street. No earlier foundations were visible during the permitted work, as demolition was restricted to the depth of the present foundations, approximately 0.60 m. No significant deposits were observed, nor were any artefacts recovered (Inglis 2000).

1.3 Evaluation Results

- 1.3.1 Six trenches were excavated as part of the evaluation (Fig 3). Trenches 3, 4 and 5 were the only trenches that contained significant remains; these consisted of sandstone walls and a large waster pit. The artefactual material was seen to be present within the waster pit fill was dominated by stone ware ceramics as well as an amount of kiln furniture and slag (Hindmarch 2008).
- 1.3.2 The discovery of the waster pit represented a significant archaeological find capable of providing a data set which would greatly supplement the existing knowledge of the Prestonpans pottery industry.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the excavation were:
 - i. the identification, excavation, soil sampling and recording of all significant archaeological features within the identified zone of archaeological significance;
 - ii. the retrieval of a representative artefact assemblage;
 - ii. upon conclusion of the excavation, prepare a post-excavation research design (*PERD*) to be agreed with East Lothian Council. The *PERD* will be pertinent to the quantity, quality, character, date and condition of retrieved small finds and soil samples when considered against the series of research questions raised by the excavated features.

3 Method

3.1 Fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The excavation was split into two areas (Fig 3). In both areas all machine excavation was carried out under the direct supervision of an experienced archaeologist. Area 1, which measured c. 10 m by 11 m, was located within the footprint of the new development. All overburden was removed by a JCB equipped with a toothless ditching bucket to a depth where the first archaeological horizons were uncovered. Initial hand excavation (Slots 1 and 2; Figure 3 and 4) revealed that loose nature and depth of the pit made continued hand excavation unsafe. It therefore decided to use a machine to reduce the pit in such a manner that safe hand working conditions and recording of the pit could be achieved.
- 3.1.2 Located at the eastern limit of the site, Area 2 measured 14 m by 2 m and was orientated NE-SW (Figure 3 and 4). In the north the cut for the waster pit was uncovered with the feature extending to the southern limit of Area 2.

4 Results

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The fieldwork was undertaken with a team of up to four archaeologists between 16th to 21st

 June 2008. The weather conditions during the excavation were generally dry and sunny with occasional rain.
- 4.1.2 The various data gathered from the excavation are presented as a series of appendices;
 - i. Appendix 1 lists the Context register
 - ii. Appendix 2 lists the Drawing register
 - iii. Appendix 3 contains the Photograph record
 - iv. Appendix 4 contains the Finds record
 - v. Appendix 5 Discovery and Excavation in Scotland entry

4.2 Area 1

- 4.2.1 Trench 3 (Figure 5; Plate 1) of the previous evaluation (Hindmarch 2008) revealed the presence of an extensive waster pit comprising various stratified fills contained within pit cut [309] and sealed below the current topsoil (301) The excavated section showed a depth to the pit in excess of 1.3 m. The basal fill (306) of the pit was a coarse mix of ash and cinders and contained considerable amounts of kiln furniture fragments. Above this deposit was a tip of fine black ash and ciders (305) above which was a deposit of moderately compacted crushed red sandstone (304). The final fill of the pit exposed here, and by far the largest, was loose mid brown clay silt (302) containing frequent ash and cinders. Although finds of stoneware pottery fragments were seen within all fills the concentration of such ceramics came from (302).
- 4.2.2 Due to Health & Safety constraints the base of the waster pit in *Slot 1* of *Area 1* (Figure 6) was not reached, but showed a depth to the pit at this point in excess of 2 m. The basal fill of the pit consisted of decayed/crushed red sandstone (107) through which was a narrow tip line of yellow brown mortar. No finds were recovered from this layer. Above this deposit was a deep fill of ash and clinker (102), similar to (302), and contained copious amounts of stoneware vessel sherds, slag and kiln furniture distributed evenly throughout. Fill 9102) had a depth of 1.2 m sealed below topsoil (104).
- 4.2.3 Slot 2 excavated at the northern end of Area 1 determined that it did not continue beyond modern drain [407]. The east-facing section of the slot (Figure 7; Plate 2) shows the cut of the pit (403 = 309) with at its maximum excavated depth of 1.2 m below the current land surface. This cut extended for a distance of 2.2 m toward the south at which point it changed from a gradual slop to one of approximately 45°. Beyond this point the base of

the pit was not excavated, again for Health & Safety concerns. However the pit showed a slightly different sequence of deposits to those seen within *Slot 1*. The main difference was that the lower fill was a mid brown sandy clay (402). Above which was a fill of crushed/decayed red sandstone (401) above which was the main waster pit fill of ash and clinker (400) similar to (102) and (302). The north-facing section (Figure 8) showed the same sequence.

4.3 Area 2

4.3.2 A further portion of the northern limit of the waster pit was found during excavation of Area 2 (Figure 2; Plate 3). As with the northern edge of the pit excavated in Slot 2 the cut [211] (= 403 & 309) was slightly concaved and angled at approximately 45°. The excavated depth at this northern limit was 0.6 m, but work elsewhere clearly illustrates it was probably much deeper. The trench section (Figure 9) showed the earliest exposed deposits consisted of alternating bands of brown sandy silts and bands of red sand, all free from pottery waste material. Above these deposits was the main waster pit fill (204) (= 400, 102 & 302) as seen elsewhere.

4.4 Finds

4.4.1 Finds recovered from secure contexts were collected and separated into their various types on site. Stoneware beer bottle fragments dominated the waster pit fills; *Rockingham* type glazed teapots (1872) were also noted. Large amounts of slag and kiln furniture were all also recovered. Post-excavation analysis of this material will from the basis of a subsequent report.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The evaluation and subsequent excavation unearthed remains pertaining to 19th century ceramic production in the centre of Prestonpans. These remains took the form of a large waster pit, proabaly assocaited with the nearby Bellfield's Pottery. It has been been possible to extrapolate the limits of the sub-oval waster pit as lying within the central area of the existing present land plot (development area).
- 5.2 The sections all showed slight differences between the early pit fills (as least those that were exposed) with no finds relating to the ceramic manufacturing industry. This may indicate that the pit was in existence prior to the Bellfields pottery usage and may have been origanally dug as a quarry pit.
- 5.3 The limits of the waster pit can be projected by combining the data from the evaluation and the excavation and are shown on Figure 2. The northern limit of the waster pit was visible during the excavation of Area 1 / Slot 1 and during the excavation of Area 2. Due to truncation by modern services (407) (Figure 7) the true extent of the waster pit in the NW corner of Area 1 could not be clearly defined but it did not extent beyond these modern

services. In evaluation Trench 5, the waster pit cut was observed in the centre of the trench oriented almost north /south; and in Area 1 its surface cut, aligned north-west / south-east, ran across the south-western corner.

- 5.4 If these extents are true it is likely that the walls are later than the pit and are part of the recently demolished building (Inglis 2000) that once occupied this site. The great depth of the walls seen during the evaluation (Figure 5) may relate to the loose nature of the waster pit and the need for deep foundations built on firmer ground.
- 5.5 This DSR report is both preliminary and provisional. A post excavation research design will be prepared for approval by the planning authority's archaeological advisor. This will describe all necessary and appropriate assessment processes and consequent post excavation analyses that will assist the overall interpretation of this site.

6 References

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239-241 High Street Prestonpans **Excavation Data Structure Report**

Section 2: Appendices



Appendix 1: Context Register

Context	Context type	Description
No		
100	Deposit	Area 1 Slot 1. Characterised as a fine red/orange brick dust layer clinker layer. It contains frequent debris of pot washers and general industrial waste. Dimensions: 1.5 m by 2.5 m by 0.05 m.
101	Deposit	Area 1 Slot 1. Grey/Black thick clay deposit. A general spread/dump of amorphous clay/building debris (kiln parts). Located in the centre of the waster deposit. Dimensions: 1.0 m by 1.10 m
102	Deposit	Area 1 Slot 1. Ash/clinker deposit. Very frequent inclusions of slag, frequent pot wasters, slag etc. Dimensions 8.0 m by 4.5 m.
103	Deposit	Area 1 Slot 1 Light brown sandy silt of medium compaction frequent shell fragments. Dimensions 1.2 m by 1.0 m by 0.05 m.
104	Deposit	Area 1 Slot 1. Greenish brown sandy silt deposit of medium compaction. Covers the whole site. Maximum thickness 0.3 m.
105	Cut	Area 1 Slot 1. Cut of the fill (102).
106	Deposit	Area 1 Slot 1. Dark brown silty sandy soil. Very frequent inclusions of ash material, slag, pottery, kiln furniture and red brick. 1.5 m width of spread.
107	Deposit	Area 1 Slot 1. Characterised as decayed red sandstone forming a sandy debris layer, frequent root disturbance also. Dimensions: 2.4 m by 0.5 m (depth). Beneath (102).
108	Deposit	Area 1 Slot 1. Decayed sandstone/mortar. A light yellow brown mortar layer/lens. Dimensions: 1.8 m by 0.1 m (depth).
201	Topsoil	Area 2 Moderately compact dark brown silt. Covers whole of Area 2. Depth at north end 0.15 m. Depth at south end 0.6 m. Same as 203
202	Deposit	Area 2 Lens of red sand possible as a result from up-cast of previous evaluation.

		Depth 0.1 m
203	Deposit	Area 2
		Same as 201
204	Deposit	Area 2
201	Бороок	Upper fill of waster pit (211).
		Moderately compact dark brown silt. 90% ash and cinders. High
		frequency of stone ware ceramic pottery.
		Excavated depth 0.5 m.
205	Donosit	Area 2
203	Deposit	Tip line. Fill of (211)
		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
		Compact light brown sand containing occasional brick fragments
000	D it	Excavated depth 0.6 m
206	Deposit	Area 2
		Tip line. Fill of (211)
		Compact red sand containing occasional brick fragments
		Excavated depth 0.25 m
207	Deposit	Area 2
		Tip line. Fill of (211)
		Compact dark brown sandy silt containing occasional brick
		fragments
		Excavated depth 0.25
208	Deposit	Area 2
		Tip line. Fill of (211)
		Compact red sand containing occasional brick fragments
		Excavated depth 0.25
209	Deposit	Area 2
		Tip line. Fill of (211)
		Compact dark brown sandy silt
		Excavated depth 0.3 m
210	Natural Sand	Area 2
		Compact light brown sand
211	Cut	Area 2
		Cut of waster pit
		Concaved cut through natural sand and angled by approximately
		45°. Filled by (204)-(209)
		Excavated depth 1 .0 m
301	Topsoil	Evaluation Trench 3
	'	Loose clay black silt
302	Deposit	Evaluation Trench 3
	'	Fill of waster pit. Loose mid brown clay silt. Frequent coarse ash
		and cinders and ceramic debris (Find 001). Cut by (312).
		Exposed width 2.8 m. Exposed depth 1.5 m.
304	Deposit	Evaluation Trench 3
	_ 5,000.	Fill of waster pit. Moderately compact coarsely crushed
		sandstone. Forms steep tip line. Width of tip line 0.5 m.
		Exposed Depth 1.1 m. No finds.
305	Deposit	Evaluation Trench 3
303	Dehogir	Fill of waster pit. Compact layer/tip of fine ash and cinders.
		May width at tin 0.8 m. depth 0.7m. No tinde
306	Deposit	Max width of tip 0.8 m, depth 0.7m. No finds. Evaluation Trench 3

	1	Fill of weater with Lance time with at account single-many and solve
		Fill of waster pit. Loose tip mix of coarse cinders and ash.
		Frequent large kiln furniture fragments find (002).
		Width of tip line 1.4 m.
		Exposed depth of tip line 0.8 m.
309	Cut	Evaluation Trench 3
		Linear cut seen at a depth of 0.5 m against wall (310) Only
		northern edge seen and tilts to the south at approximately 45°.
		Forms waster pit and appears to respect wall (310).
		Cuts natural sand and filled by (302), (304), (305) and (306).
		Exposed depth 1.2 m.
310	Wall	Evaluation Trench 3
		Sandstone wall sealed below topsoil (301). Runs from northern
		edge of Trench 3 for 1.5 m before turning 90° to the east and
		continues into Trench 4 for 2.5 m before becoming fragmentary.
		Width of wall 0.45 m, depth over 0.8 m.
		Built from large sandstone blocks, individually up to 0.3 m by 0.2
		m and bonded with a lime mortar. Relationship with waster pit not
		fully understood, but it appears that the pit may respect the wall
		making the wall earlier.
311	Fill	Evaluation Trench 3
		Fill of drain. Moderately compact black clay silt.
		O.25 m thick. Fills (312).
312	Cut	Evaluation Trench 3
		Cut of drain. Straight sided linear cut aligned east to west along
		south side of wall (310). Cuts (302)
		0.35 m wide by 0.25 m thick
400	Deposit	Area 1 Slot 2.
		Ash/clinker deposit. Main fill of the waster pit. Pottery fragments
		and kiln furniture make up this pit fill deposit. Frequent inclusions
		of slag and red brick also within this deposit.
		Depth in excess of 1.25 m
401	Deposit	Area 1 Slot 2.
		Pink sand that is recognised as one of the possible primary
		deposits of the waster pit.
402	Deposit	Area 1 Slot 2.
		Mid brown sandy clay, located only at the north western limit of
		the pit.
403	Cut	Area 1 Slot 2.
		Cut of the waster pit.
404	Natural	Area 1 Slot 2.
		Varies across the site, mid brown mottled sand, very compact
		yellowish brown clay.
405	Wall	Area 1 Slot 2.
		Significant dressed sandstone wall. Orientated north to south for
		a distance of 6.5 m.
406	Wall	Area 1 Slot 2.
		Two large roughly hewn sandstone blocks. Wall collapse
		associated with wall (305), orientated east to west.
407	Cut	Area 1 Slot 2.
		Cut for modern service at the north west limit of the site.
	1	1

408	Fill	Area 1 Slot 2.
		Fill of the modern service trench [307].

Appendix 2: Drawing Register

Drawing Number	Details	Scale
1	Area 2. West-facing section of Area 2	1:20
2	Area 1 and 2. General plan of site mid excavation	1:50
3	Area 1 Slot 1. East-facing section	1:20
4	Area 1 Slot 1. West-facing section	1:10
5	Area 1 Slot 1. South-facing section	1:20
6	Area 1 Slot 2. East-facing section	1:20
7	Area 1 Slot 2. North-facing section	1:20
8	Area 1 Slot 1. South-facing section (following ground reduction)	1:20
9	Area 1 Slot 1. Full South-facing section	1:20

Appendix 3: Photograph Register

Photo Number	Details	From
Number		
1-2	Registration	
3-4	Area 2. General	S
5-6	Area 2. General.	N
7-8	Area 2. North end.	W
9-10	Area 1 slot 1. Detail of Brick debris layer	N
11-12	Area 1 slot 2. General shot of area	N
13-14	Area 1 slot 1. Overview of South- facing section – eastern end	S
15-16	Area 1 slot 1. Overview of South- facing section- middle end	S
17-18	Area 1 slot 1. Overview of South- facing section- western end	S
19-20	Area 1 slot 1. Overview of East- facing section	E
21-22	Area 1 slot 1. Overview of East- facing section	E
23-24	Area 1 slot 1. Overview of North- facing section	N
25-26	Area 1 slot 1. Overview of North- facing section	N
27-28	Area 1 slot . Overview of South-facing section	W
29-30	Area 1 slot 2. North-facing section	N
31-32	Area 1 slot 2. North-facing section	N
33-34	Area 1 slot 2. South-facing section	S

Appendix 4: Finds Register

Context	Find Type	Quantity
101	Pottery	3 Boxes
101	Slag	1 Box
102	Pottery	16 Boxes
102	Slag	11 Boxes
302	Pottery	2 Boxes
306	Kiln Furniture	1 Box
400	Pottery	8 Boxes
400	Kiln Furniture	2 Boxes
400	Slag	1 Box

Appendix 5: DES Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	East Lothian Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	239-241 High Street, Prestonpans
PROJECT CODE:	21086
PARISH:	Prestonpans
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Sarah Lynchehaun
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Excavation
NMRS NO(S):	NT37SE.131
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	Pottery waster pit
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 3821 7424
START DATE (this season)	16 th June 2008
END DATE (this season)	22 nd June 2008
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	Inglis, R 2000 '239-241 High Street, Prestonpans, East Lothian (Prestonpans parish), watching brief' <i>Discovery Excavation Scotland</i> , 1, 2000, 29.
	Hindmarch, E 2008 239-242High Street Prestonpans: Evaluation Data Structure Report, AOC Group Unpublished client Report
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Following the discovery of a large waster pit during an archaeological evaluation at 239-241 High Street Prestonpans AOC were commissioned to undertake an excavation in order to fully define the limits and nature of the pit. The results of the excavation showed that the pit was limited to the southern half of the proposed development area measuring approximately 19 m x 12 m. Due to safety constraints the depth of the pit was not fully ascertained but it was seen to be in excess of 1.6 m deep. The pit contained considerable quantities of 19 th century stoneware and Rockingham glazed pottery as well as quantities of Kiln furniture and slag. It is likely that the waster pit was associated with the former Bellfield Pottery works which produced pottery from the 1830's and into 20 th century.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR	None

ILLUSTRS:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Cairn Housing Association
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	AOC Archaeology, Edgefield industrial Estate, Edgefield Road, Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SY
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Sarah.Lynchehaun@aocscot.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	NMRS

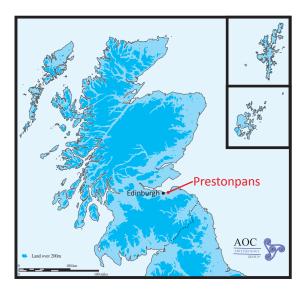




Figure 1: Site location





Figure 2: Extract from Taylor & Skinner, 1776





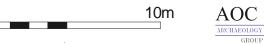


Figure 3: Locations of Excavation areas 1 and 2

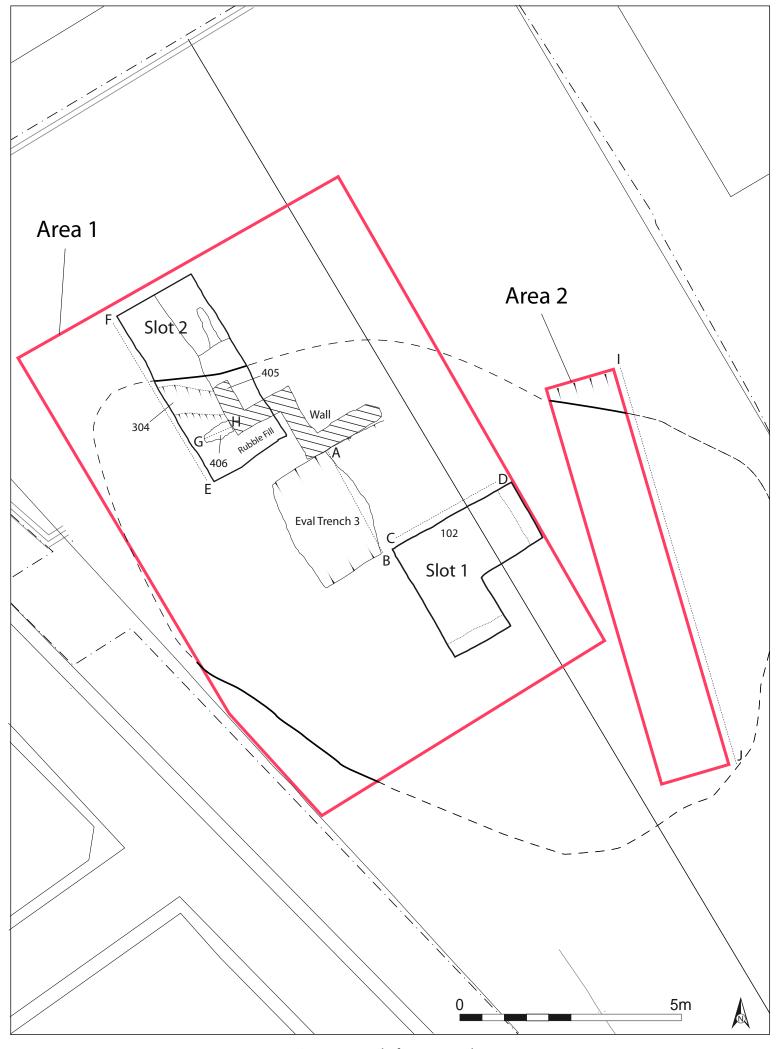


Figure 4: Detail of Areas 1 and 2



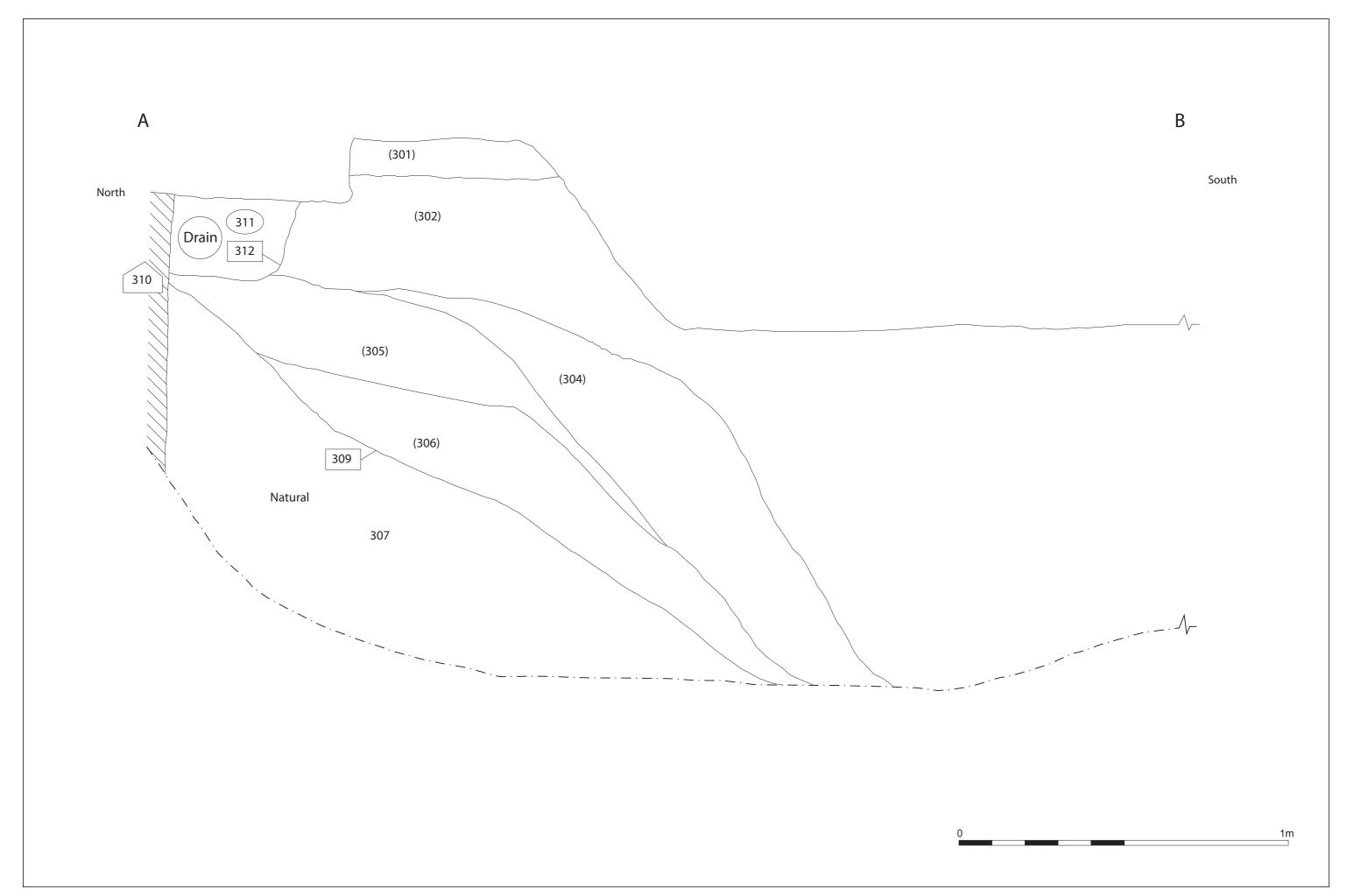
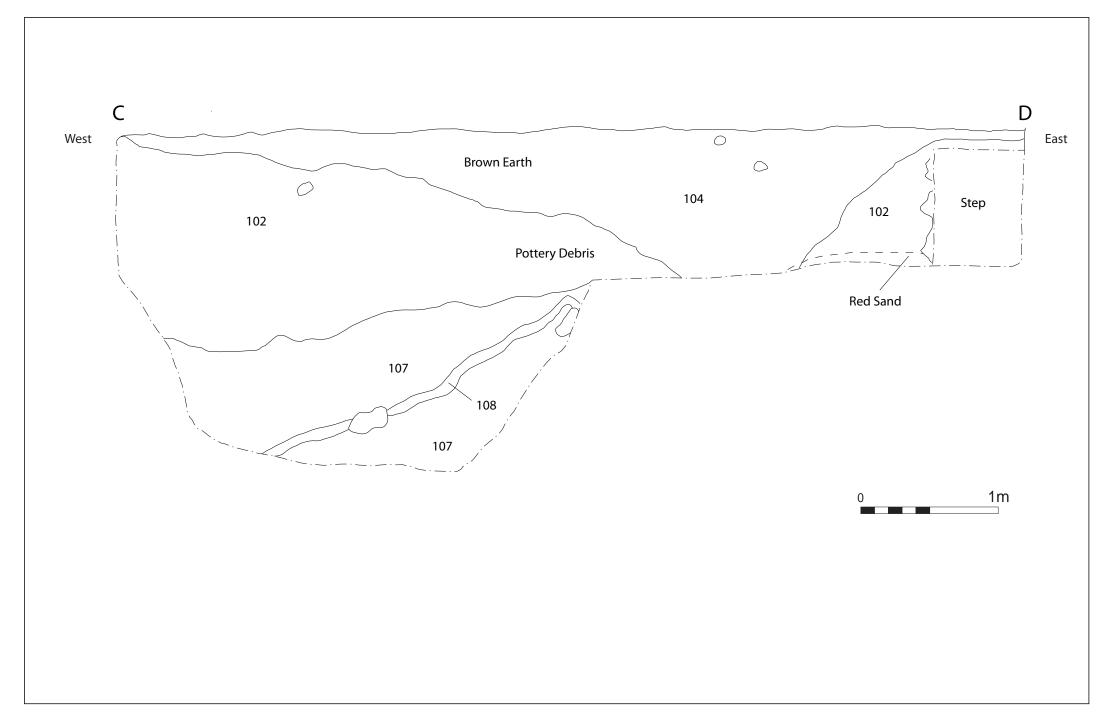


Figure 5: West facing section of Evaluation Trench 3, showing waster pit (309) and related fills.





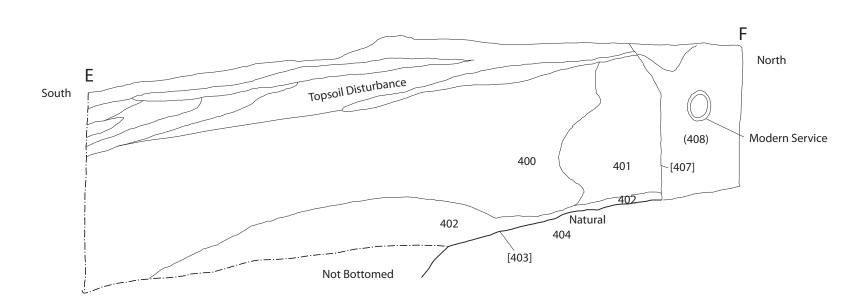


Figure 7: Slot 2 - E facing section

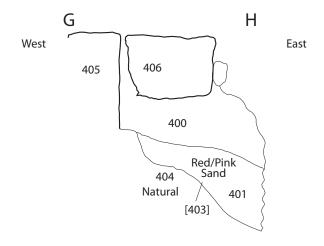


Figure 8: Slot 2 - N facing section





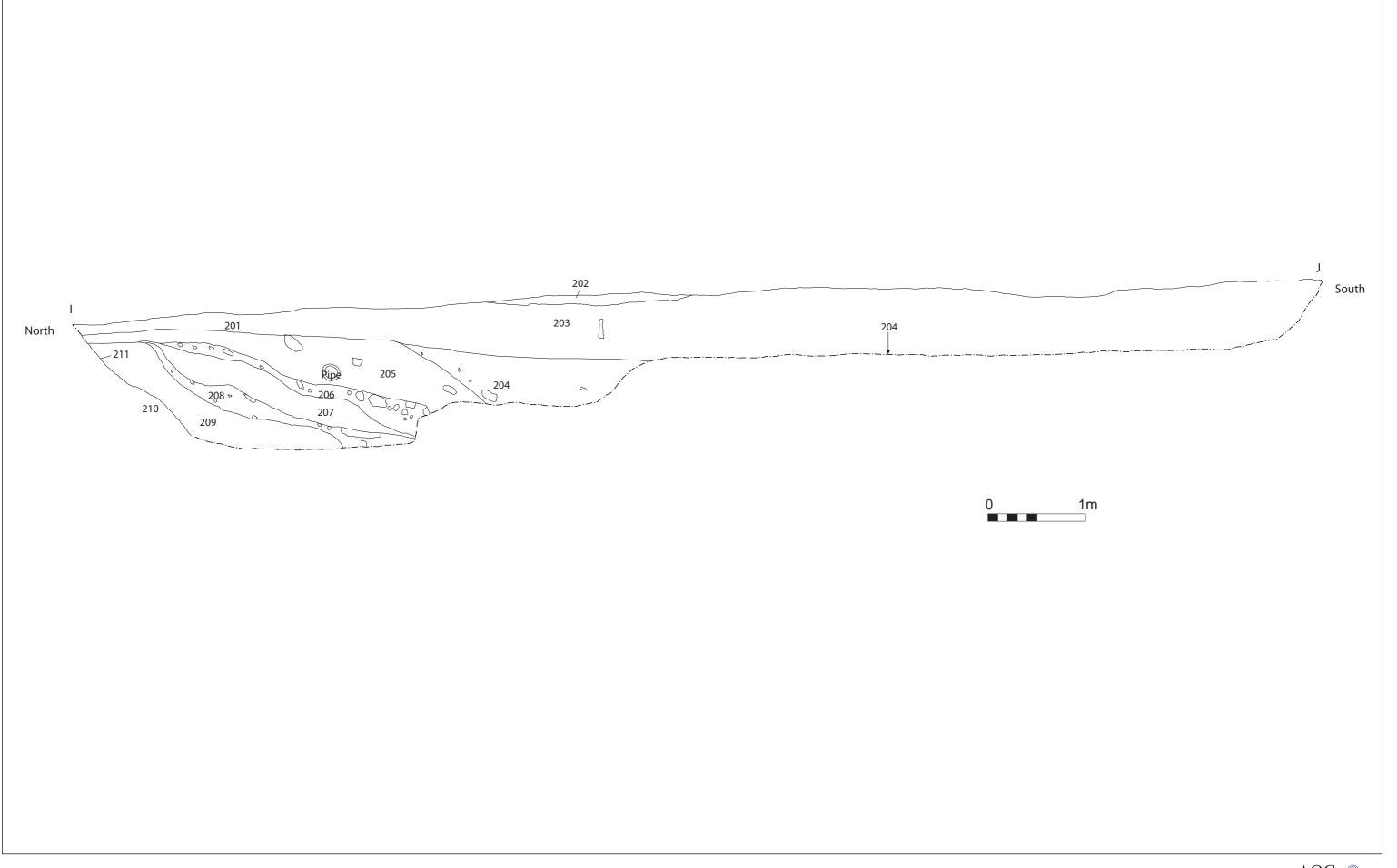




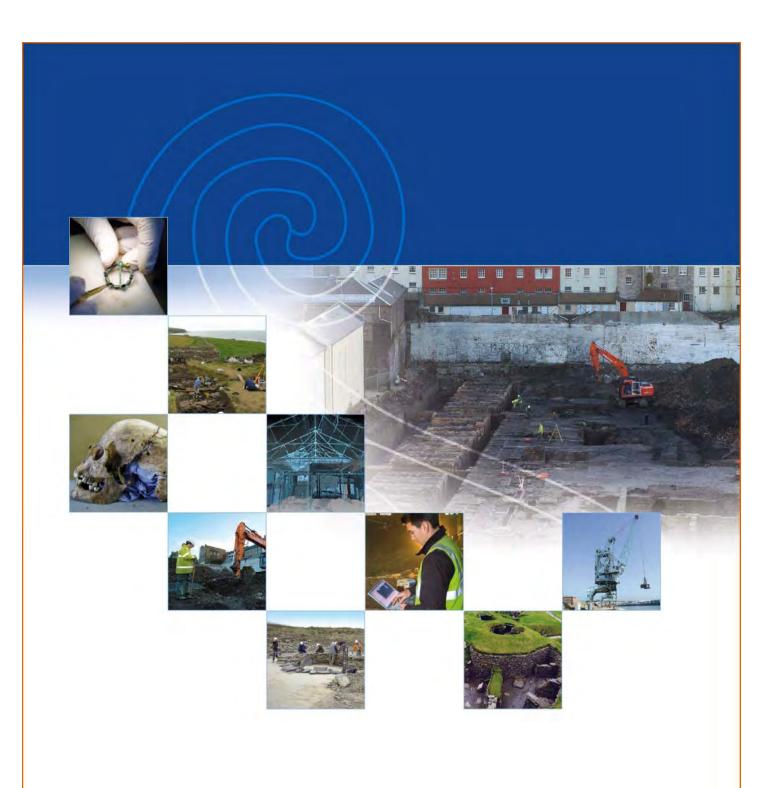
Plate 1: West facing section of evaluation Trench 3



Plate 2: Area 1, Slot 2



Plate 3: Area 2, North end





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