

**Date: June 2008**

**Client: Peter McGowan Associates on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council**

**Project Code: KSRE08**



## **Data Structure Report of an Archaeological Watching Brief at Kings Stables Road, Edinburgh**

**Edward Bailey**

**Date: August 2008**

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## PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET (KSRE08)

<b>Client</b>	Peter McGowan Associates
<b>National Grid Reference</b>	NT 2492 7351
<b>Project Manager</b>	Simon Stronach
<b>Text</b>	Edward Bailey
<b>Illustrations</b>	Jurgen van Wessal Rachael Kershaw Anna Faras-Pagowska
<b>Fieldwork</b>	Edward Bailey James McMeekin Laura Scott
<b>Schedule</b>	
Fieldwork	27/2/08 –20/5/08
Report	June/August 2008

### Summary

Headland Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief to monitor ground breaking works at the Kings Stables Road entrance to Princes Street Gardens. The work was designed to meet conditions of Scheduled Monument Consent as the development fell within the larger area that forms part of the Edinburgh Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 90130).

The works were part of a project to landscape the entrance area to the gardens, plant new trees, replace the gates and to improve the existing road access. This involved excavation to a minimum depth of 0.3m on either side of the entrance with deeper excavation of drain pits to 1.4m on Kings Stables Road and excavation up to 1.4m into the raised earth bank just within the entrance to Princes Street Gardens.

During the watching brief the foundation of a structure of 19<sup>th</sup> century date was exposed below the level of the current road surface. Deposits containing 19<sup>th</sup> century artefacts were exposed extending beyond the limit of excavation on both sides of the Princes Street Gardens wall. All deposits encountered relate to the landscaping associated with the creation of the Princes Street Gardens and the raising of Kings Stables Road.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Peter McGowan Associates to carry out an Archaeological Watching Brief on intrusive ground works at the Kings Stables Road entrance to Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh. The work was designed to meet conditions of Scheduled Monument Consent as the site partially falls within the area designated as the Edinburgh Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 90130). The scope of the required work was set out in a letter from Historic Scotland (HS ref: AMH/90130/1/1).

The ground works are part of a project to landscape the entrance area to the gardens, replace the gates and to improve the existing road access. The 'Princes Street Gardens Conservation Management Plan' (Peter McGowan Associates 2005) contains a full background to the work.

## 2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site was located around the King Stables Road entrance to Princes Street Gardens and bordered to the west by the wall of St Cuthbert's Kirk and burial ground. The works were concentrated on the entrance and extended onto Kings Stables Road to widen the pavement and entrance. Within the Gardens the site included part of the access road and part of the earth bank that runs along the east edge of the access road (Figure 1).

## 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Kings Stables Road entrance into Princes Street Gardens lies within the Edinburgh Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument, an area of national historical and archaeological importance that encompasses Edinburgh Castle and its immediate environs. The earliest human settlement on Castle Rock dates back to 900BC with archaeological evidence for late Bronze Age/early Iron Age settlement on the site (Driscoll and Yeoman 1997). Historical sources first mention a castle on the rock around AD 600 (Driscoll and Yeoman 5:1997).

Braun & Hogenburg's 1574 map shows a road in the location of present Kings Stables Road. Later maps label the road variously as 'The Way to St Cuthbert's' (Edgar 1742) and 'Queensferry Road' (Lizars 1778). The first map to depict the road under its present name was Kirkwood's map of 1817.

The depiction of the road as the 'Way to St Cuthbert's' refers to the road's primary function as an access from the Old Town to St Cuthbert's Kirk and burial ground. St Cuthbert's Kirk is first mentioned in a charter of 1127, when King David I gifted the land below the castle to St Cuthbert's, although its origins may be earlier (Stevenson, Simpson and Holmes 1981, 22). The ground around the Kirk has been used as a graveyard for nearly 1000 years, although the earliest surviving gravestone dates to 1606. Gradually, and predominantly through a number of acts of Parliament, the land held by St Cuthbert's decreased to its present size. The current kirk and burial ground is bounded by a sandstone wall built to enclose the Gardens in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The area of ground breaking is shown as open ground prior to the construction of Princes Street Gardens. The 1573 'Plan of the Siege of the Castle of Edinburgh May 1573' shows siege works in the vicinity of the development area.

Following the draining of the Nor Loch to enable the creation of Princes Street Gardens in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the site has been continuously utilised as an entrance into the park.

#### **4. AIMS AND METHODS**

The watching brief was intended to ensure that any archaeologically significant deposits or features that would be destroyed or uncovered during the works were suitably recorded.

The works were carried out predominantly by machine excavation using a toothless ditching bucket. Sensitive areas (i.e. near services) were hand excavated. Continuous archaeological supervision was maintained on all ground breaking works. Any potential features identified during the works were hand cleaned, investigated and recorded appropriately.

Deposits were recorded using standard archaeological methods and on pro-forma record sheets. Photographs were taken on slide and print film. Locations were recorded on plans supplied by the client and related to the national grid.

## 5. RESULTS (figure 1)

### *Kings Stables Road*

Ground breaking works on Kings Stables Road covered an area beneath the existing access road and pavement on either side of the entrance way. Excavation involved the removal of paving slabs, tarmac and underlying road make up to an approximate depth of 0.3m. Deeper excavations were undertaken to insert three drains (numbered 1-3 on figure 1) and to remove an existing modern drain encased in concrete. These were to depths of 1.4m and 1.2m respectively.

Beneath the modern road/pavement surfaces and underlying make up dumped deposits containing 19<sup>th</sup> century artefacts were visible in section during excavations for the three drains and the removal of the modern drain. In drains 1 and 2 and in the section exposed by the removed drain, the deposit comprised red brown clay (04). In drain 3 the 19<sup>th</sup> century deposit comprised loose sandy loam, rubble and mortar (11).

Underlying, and partially exposed during the removal of the modern drain was the base of a stone and brick, lime mortar-bonded structure [06] (Plate 1). The structure consisted of a single course of sandstone blocks and a single red brick bonded with mortar superficially identical to that used in the construction of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Princes Street Garden wall. The structure is absent from any historic maps and it may have be associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> century sewer; possibly it was part of a former manhole. Following recording the structure was covered and left in situ.

A cut for the structure was visible in the northwest and southeast facing sections. This cut was filled by dark brown sandy clay (07) and was cut into deposit (04).

### *Princes Street Gardens*

The ground breaking works within Princes Street Gardens involved widening the entrance, inserting new gates, planting new trees and creating two raised flower beds. This generally involved excavation to a depth of 0.30m below the current ground surface with excavation of up to 1.4m into the raised earth bank along the east side of the driveway. The excavation of the tree pits were to depths of 0.5m. The excavations of foundation trenches for new gateposts and flower bed walls were up to a depth of 1.2m (figure 1).

The earliest deposit seen in the Gardens was a mixed deposit of brown loam, rubble and mortar (05). This deposit was present throughout the gardens area, including the tree pits. Fragments of glass, china and stoneware recovered from it indicated a 19<sup>th</sup> century date. It is probably associated with the original landscaping of the gardens and extended below the level of all the ground breaking works. In the raised banks to the east of the driveway this deposit was overlain by dark brown silty topsoil (14) which contained some inclusions of brick and concrete along with fragments of china, glass and a rifle bullet casing predominantly of 20<sup>th</sup> century date.

The insertion of a raised flower bed next to the St Cuthbert's burial ground wall necessitated the raising of a War Department marker stone to avoid burying the stone (figure 1). This marker was recorded prior to its raising. It is a whinstone block measuring 0.98m x 0.31 x 0.31m that is inscribed on the face opposite the St Cuthbert's burial ground wall. The stone was located approximately 3m from the corner pillar of the St Cuthbert's burial ground wall and 10mm from the wall itself.

The inscription reads:

W ↑ D  
No XXV  
W.D.By  
OUTSIDE  
OF WALL

The bottom half of the marker stone was buried below ground. This appears to be intentional as the lower half of the stone was roughly hewn. This marker stone first appears on the Ordnance survey map of 1896 and is one of a number of War Department stones that were erected around Castle Rock to show the extent of Crown land that has been leased as part of the Gardens since the 1820s.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Dumped deposits were recorded within the Gardens extending beyond a depth of 1.4m below current ground surface. The finds from these indicate that they were formed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and they presumably relate to landscaping associated with creation of the Gardens. Outside the entrance on Kings Stables Road dumped deposits of comparable date also extended to a depth exceeding 1.4m and presumably related to road construction.

No evidence of activity prior to the development of Princes Street Gardens was uncovered during the watching brief. However the limited nature of the works meant that excavation to below the level of the 19<sup>th</sup> century deposits did not occur.

## REFERENCES

Driscoll, S.T and Yeoman, P.A 1997 *Excavations within Edinburgh Castle in 1988-91* Edinburgh: Soc Antiq Scot. (= *Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Monograph Series 12*)

Stevenson, S, Turner Simpson, A and Holmes, N 1981 *Historic Edinburgh, Canongate and Leith the archaeological implications of development*. The University of Glasgow, Scottish Burgh Survey

## Maps Consulted

1573 *Plan of the Siege of the Castle of Edinburgh May 1573*

Braun and Hogenburg c.1574 *Edinburgh Scotia Metropolis*

W Edgar 1742 *The Plan of the City and Castle of Edinburgh*

R Kirkwood 1817 *The plan of the City of Edinburgh and its environs*.

D Lizars 1778 *Plan of the City, Castle and Suburbs of Edinburgh 1778*

## Websites

[www.st-cuthberts.net](http://www.st-cuthberts.net)

**APPENDICES****Appendix 1: Registers****Context Register**

Context no.	Description	Maximum thickness
1	Tarmac	0.10m
2	Mixed deposit of type 1 and tar	0.18m
3	Type 1 and sand	0.19m
4	Reddish brown clay mottled with yellow brown clay and containing inclusions of mortar, brick, sandstone rubble and charcoal.	0.90m
5	19 <sup>th</sup> century made ground of brown sandy silt containing frequent, sandstone rubble, mortar and brick fragments.	0.70m
6	19 <sup>th</sup> century sandstone and brick wall. Probably original sewer access or drain.	0.16m
7	Dark brown sandy clay silt flecked with charcoal and shell	0.32m
8	Line of cut, possible cut for [06]	0.32m
9	Dark brown moderate clay silt seen below [06]	n/a
10	Loose concrete and mortar below (03) drain 3	0.35m
11	Loose sandy loam and rubble deposit in drain 3, similar to (05)	0.55m
12	Modern cobbles below tarmac	0.16
13	Bedding deposit for cobbles	n/a
14	Topsoil in gardens	0.74m

**Photographic Registers****Film No 1****Colour Slide and Black and White**

Shot no.	Direction facing	Description
1	SE	Test Pit 1
2	SE	Test Pit 2
3	SE	Test Pit 3
4	SW	Area Excavated area in gardens 3/3/08
5	NW	Area Excavated area in gardens 3/3/08
6	NW	Area Excavated area in gardens 3/3/08
7	N	South facing section north LOE
8		Registration
9	NW	General shot
10	W	General shot
11	SW	Road make up
12	NW	Drainage gully in road
13	NW	Clay deposits below drain
14	NW	Close up clay deposits (04)
15	SW	NE facing section drain 1
16	NE	SW facing section drain 1
17	SW	Structure [06] below modern drain
18	SW	Structure [06] below modern drain

19	NE	Structure [06] below modern drain
20	SW	Drain 2
21	SW	NE facing section drain 3
22	NE	SW facing section drain 3
23	SW	Disturbed cobbles below tarmac
24	SE	Curb trench and gully on NW side of entrance
25	NW	Hand dug drainage trench on gardens side of wall
26	S	Machined area
27	E	West facing section through bank
28	SW	General shot stripping of entrance area
29	NW	General shot stripping of entrance area
30	S	General shot stripping of entrance area
31	N	General shot stripping of entrance area
32	N	General shot stripping of entrance area
33	SE	Excavated slot next to junction box
34	SE	Excavation of wall trenches
35	E	Made ground
36	SE	Excavated wall trenches.
37	NW	Section facing SE next to wall remains
38	N	N facing section of cut for gate post at west end of gate trench
39	W	General site shot
40	W	Trench cut for gate
41	E	General shot of bank being machined back
42	S	Post ex of bank
43	SE	Post ex of bank
44	W	War Department Marker stone in situ showing inscripted face
45	W	War Department Marker stone in situ showing inscripted face
46	W	War Department Marker stone in situ showing inscripted face
47	S	War Department Marker stone blank face
48	SW	War Department Marker stone inscription, using flash
49	SW	War Department Marker stone in relation to wall

### Drawing Register

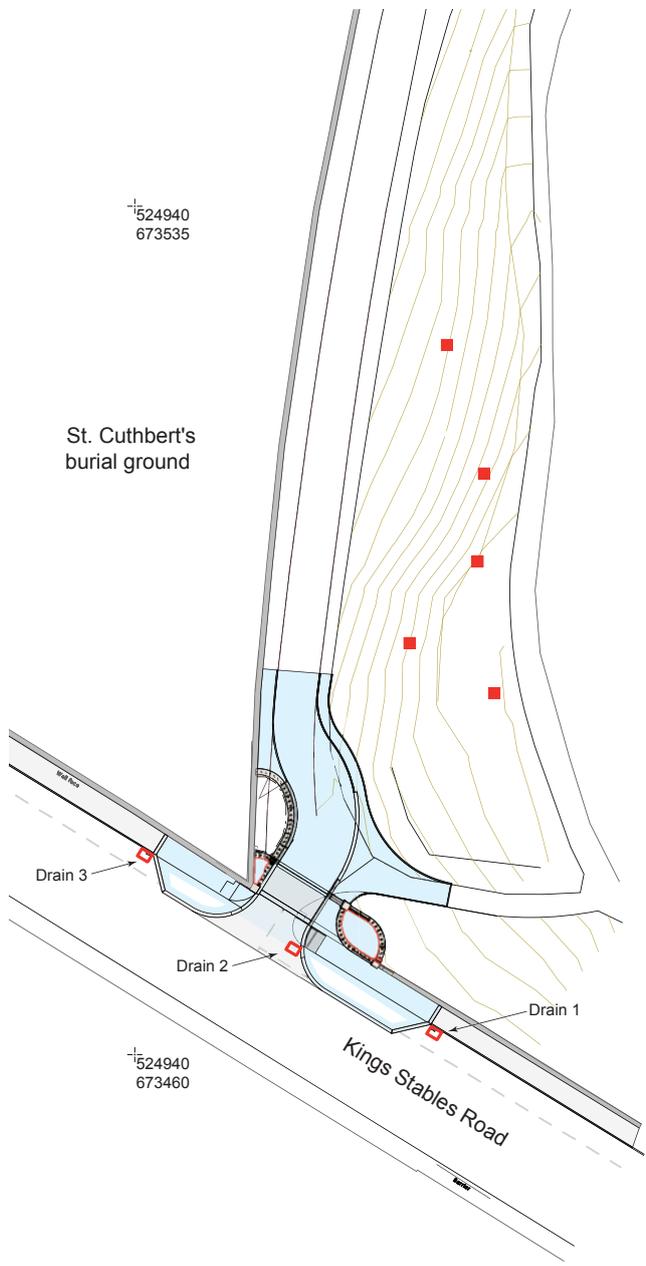
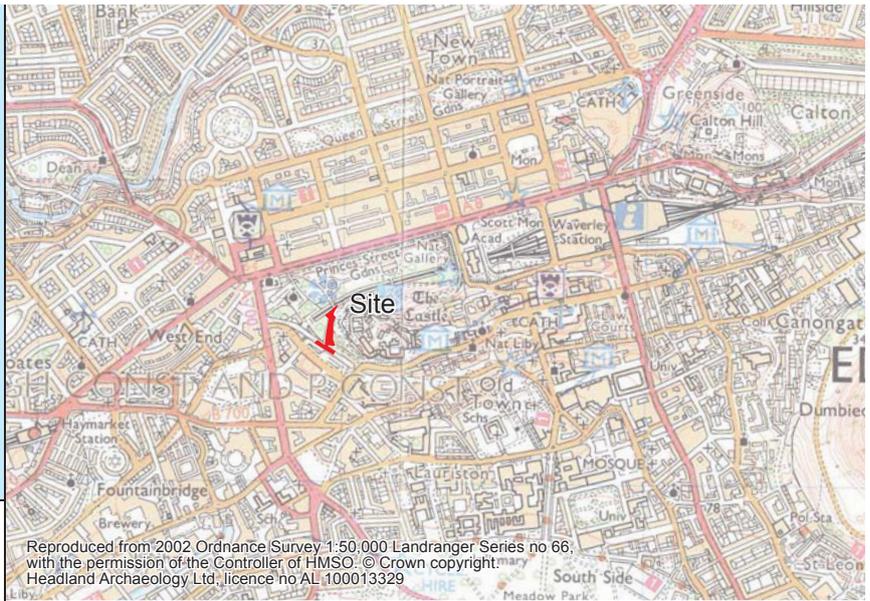
Drawing no.	Description
1	Plan of structure [06]
2	Section showing deposits over structure [06] SE facing

## Appendix 2: DES entry

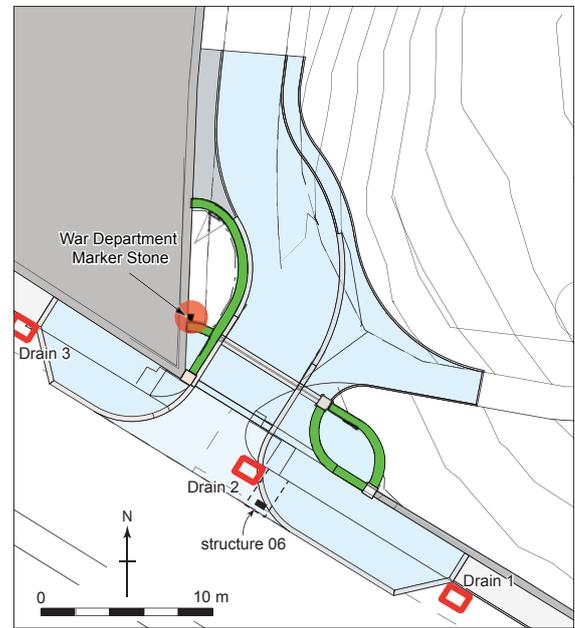
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Edinburgh City Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Kings Stables Road, Edinburgh
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	KSRE08
<b>PARISH:</b>	City of Edinburgh
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):</b>	Edward Bailey
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Headland Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching Brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Scheduled Ancient Monument 90130
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR</b>	NT 2492, 7351
<b>START DATE</b> (this season)	27/2/08
<b>END DATE</b> (this season)	1/5/08
<b>PREVIOUS WORK</b> (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken to monitor ground breaking works at the Kings Stables Road entrance to Princes Street Gardens. The work was designed to meet conditions of Scheduled Monument Consent as the development fell within the larger area that forms part of the Edinburgh Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 90130).</p> <p>The works were part of a project to landscape the entrance area to the gardens, plant new trees, replace the gates and to improve the existing road access. This involved excavation to a minimum depth of 0.3m on either side of the entrance with deeper excavation of drain pits to 1.4m on Kings Stables Road and excavation up to 1.4m into the raised earth bank just within the entrance to Princes Street Gardens.</p> <p>During the watching brief the foundation of a structure of 19<sup>th</sup> century date was exposed below the level of the current road surface. Deposits containing 19<sup>th</sup> century artefacts were exposed extending beyond the limit of excavation on both sides of the Princes Street Gardens wall. All deposits encountered relate to the landscaping associated with the creation of the Princes Street Gardens and the raising of Kings Stables Road</p>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended/deposited)	NMRS
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Peter McGowan Associates
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Headland Archaeology Ltd, 13 Jane St, Edinburgh. EH6 5HE
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Insert



Key

- tree pits
- area of ground breaking
- foundation
- trenches for gateposts and flower-bed wall
- - - extent of excavation to remove modern drain

524990  
673460



Fig 1: Site Location Plan



Plate 1: Post Medieval stone and brick wall below drain.



Plate 2: 19th century dumped deposits below modern road surface and makeup



Plate 3: 19th century dumped deposits overlaid by topsoil deposits on east side of Princes Street Gardens entrance