

CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

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

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**Merchiston Castle School
6th Form Boarders' Accommodation:**

**Archaeological Evaluation
and Desk Based Assessment**

Report No. 1323

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological desk-based assessment and evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in May 2007 on the site of a proposed new 6th Form Boarders' Accommodation at Merchiston Castle School, Colinton, Edinburgh (NGR NT 21758 69574 (centred)) (Fig.1). The work was commissioned by Doig and Smith LLP on behalf of Merchiston Castle School.
- 1.1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by CFA, based upon discussions with John Lawson of the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS).

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 The City of Edinburgh Council has granted planning permission for the construction of a new 6th form boarders' accommodation at Merchiston Castle School (Ref. 06/01266/FUL) subject to the implementation of a programme of archaeological works prior to the start of construction. The archaeological work involved a desk-based assessment and trial-trenching evaluation.
- 1.2.2 The site covers an area of open ground of former park/gardens immediately to the north of the main buildings for the school situated overlooking the southern bank of the Water of Leith east of Colinton. The landscape in which the proposed development was situated consisted of a landscaped lawn area to the rear of the school.
- 1.2.3 No previous invasive archaeological fieldwork is known to have taken place within the proposed development area prior to this evaluation.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

- 1.3.1 The objective of the evaluation was to identify the presence/absence, character and quality of any archaeologically sensitive deposits that may have lain within the proposed development area. The aim of the desk-based assessment was to guide the placement of evaluation trenches to any documented archaeological remains within the proposed development area.

2. METHODS STATEMENT

2.1 General

2.1.1 CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation.

2.2 Desk-Based Assessment

2.2.1 Historic map coverage for the area was examined together with any other readily available cartographic information on pre-recent land use in the development area. The National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), and bibliographic sources related to the area were also consulted.

2.3 Evaluation

2.3.1 Although the proposed development site covers an area of 0.93ha, the area available for evaluation was considerably less than this (3211m²) due to the presence of underground utility services and tree preservation orders. Consequently, eight trenches were excavated within the area available for evaluation (Fig. 1), amounting to 325m² (approximately 11% of the total area available for evaluation).

2.3.2 Topsoil and modern overburden were removed by a JCB 3CX-type mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.5m wide smooth-bladed ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. All further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation was carried out by hand.

2.3.3 The stratification of all excavated areas was recorded whether or not significant archaeological deposits were identified.

2.3.4 Trench positions were surveyed using industry standard electronic surveying equipment and all trenches were backfilled immediately.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 Desk-Based Assessment

3.1.1 The NMRS holds no details of any archaeological sites within the proposed development area. The Category B Listed Rogerson Boarding House (HB Number 49559), which lies directly adjacent to the development site, is part of the Merchiston Castle School complex of buildings.

3.1.2 The school is centred upon Colinton House, built in 1801-6 for Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo. Immediately SW of this house lies the Scheduled remains of Colinton Castle (SAM no. 1197), constructed in the early 16th century. This L-shaped towerhouse (with 17th century additions) was occupied and subsequently burnt by the forces of Cromwell in 1650. Although subsequently repaired the castle was unroofed by 1801 and was then partly demolished to

form a ‘romantic ruin’ within the gardens of Colinton House and school. The remains of an alleged chapel or oratory, consisting of the N gable only, was recorded in the 19th century (Small 1883; NMRS no. NT26NW 5) about a hundred yards west of Colinton Castle, though no visible remains exist today and it was not marked on any of the maps consulted.

- 3.1.3 Colinton House is depicted on Roy’s 1745 map as ‘Collinton’ with a formal garden surrounded by arable fields. The castle is not marked but Collinton Kirk is labelled to the west on the opposite bank of the river. Armstrong’s 1773 map shows that the application area is open ground within or bordering the lands of Colinton House. Knox’s map of 1816 also depicts Colinton House and the ruined castle, with the kirk on the opposite side of the river, as does Johnson & Gellatly’s 1834 map, which also states that Colinton House is owned by a Sir J Forbes.
- 3.1.4 The Ordnance Survey (OS) First Edition map (1855) and Second Edition map (1885) depict Colinton House set within its grounds, with the ruined castle marked. There is little change between the two map editions.
- 3.1.5 The school buildings were built in the late 1920s and early 1930s and the application area incorporated into this design as part of a landscaped lawn area.

3.2 Evaluation

- 3.2.1 Context numbers assigned to each stratigraphic deposit or archaeological feature are shown in bold and listed in Appendix 3.
- 3.2.2 The eight trial trenches revealed no remains of archaeological significance; red clay pipe field drains were encountered in the majority of trenches. Trenches 4, 5 and 6 revealed evidence of north-east to south-west running rig and furrow. The furrows identified were typically 1.2m wide and the truncated rigs were spaced an average of 2m apart. Exploratory excavations revealed that the furrows were approximately 0.15m deep, with curved bases and shallow sloping sides.
- 3.2.3 The excavation of Trenches 5 and 6 revealed deposits of sandy loam with rubble fragments (**501** and **601**) that were 0.7 to 0.8m deep. This material was presumably deposited as part of the lawn landscaping works associated with the construction of the school buildings in the 20th century. These deposits petered out 17.3m from the south end of the trench in Trench 5 and 13.3m from the south end of the trench in Trench 6. The re-deposited material lay below 0.2 – 0.25m of topsoil (**500** and **600**), and overlay a 0.1m deep firmly compacted bluish black sandy clay (**503** and **602**), which possibly represents the remains of the original turf layer. Below this was a greyish brown sandy clay (**504** and **603**), which overlay the natural subsoil.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 A desk-based assessment and trial-trenching evaluation has been carried out at the proposed site of a new 6th Form boarders' accommodation at Merchiston Castle School, Colinton, Edinburgh
- 4.2 Trial trenching amounting to 325m² was carried out within the areas available for evaluation. No features of archaeological significance were identified other than the remains of rig and furrow.
- 4.3 A summary statement of the results of this archaeological work will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, a copy of which is attached in Appendix 4.
- 4.4 Based on the results of the trial trenching evaluation and desk-based assessment, CFA recommends that no further archaeological work is required on this site. However, the final decision on any further mitigation measures lies with John Lawson of CECAS.

5. REFERENCES

Bibliographic

Small, J 1883 *The castles and mansions of the Lothians. Illustrated in one hundred and three views with historical and descriptive accounts*, Edinburgh, Vol.1.

Cartographic:

Armstrong, A. & M. 1773, *Map of the Three Lothians*

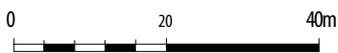
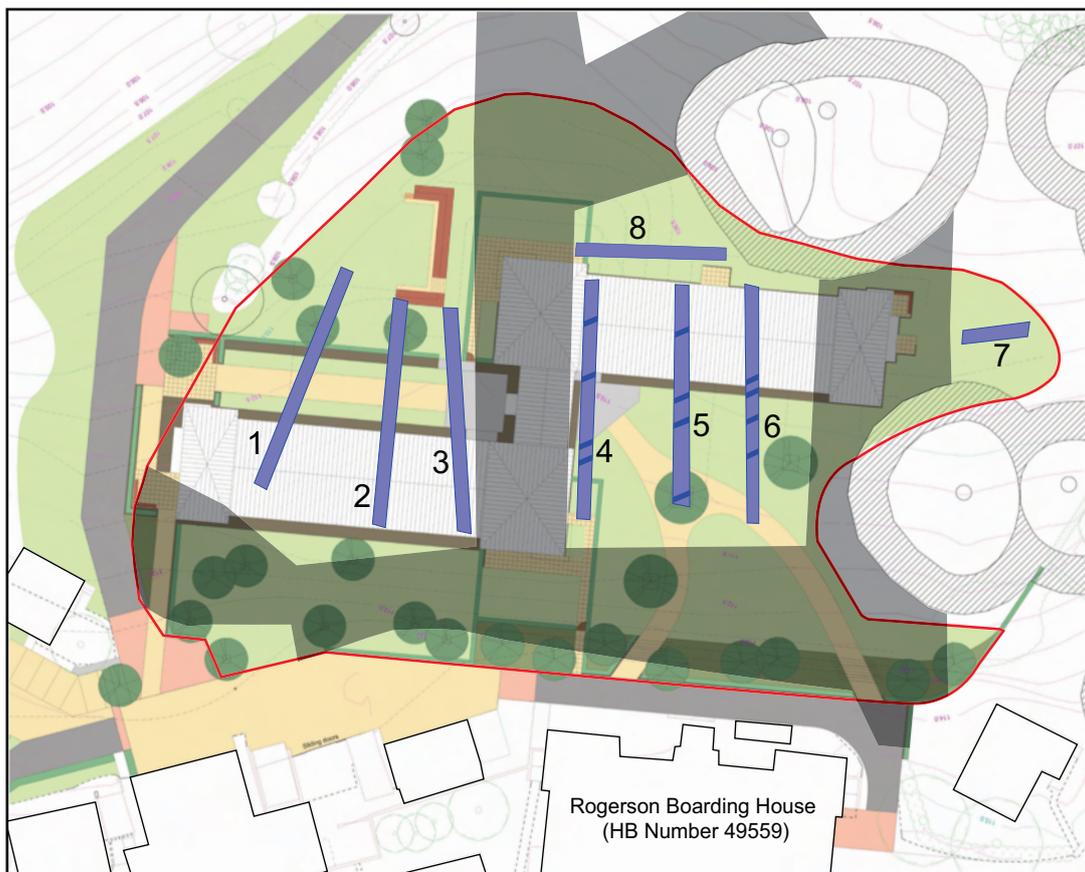
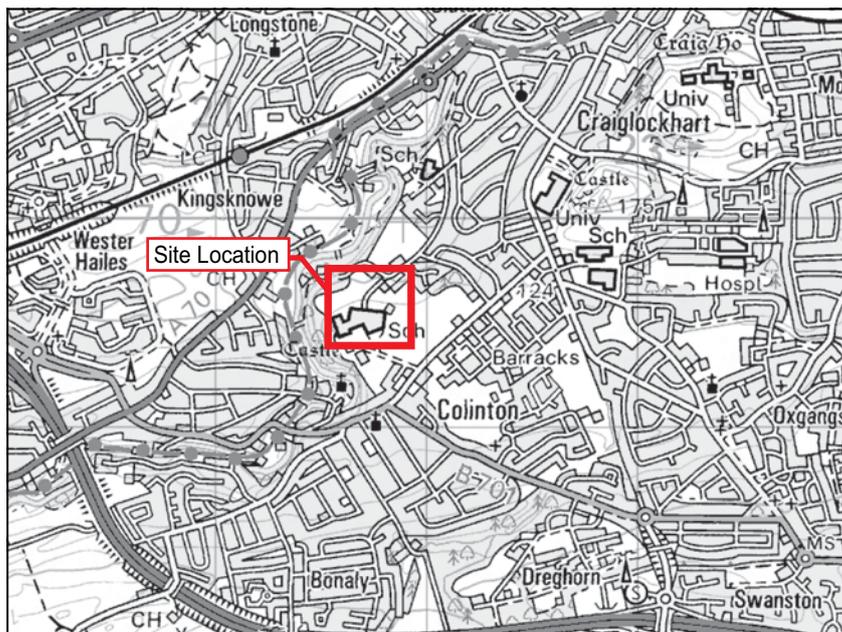
Johnson, W, Gellatly, J 1834 *Gellatly's New Map of the country 12 miles round Edinburgh.*

Knox, J 1816 *Map of the shire of Edinburgh.*

Ordnance Survey 1855 Edinburghshire. Sheet 6. 1:10560

Ordnance Survey 1885 Edinburghshire. Sheet 6. 1:10560

Roy, W 1745 *Map 07/5b: Area around Corstorphine, in Edinburghshire (or Midlothian)*



scale 1:1000



- Key:
- = Utility service exclusion corridor
 - = Evaluation trench
 - = Development site limits
 - = Tree preservation order buffer zone
 - = Rig and Furrow

Fig. No: 1

Revision: 0

Client:
Doig & Smith LLP,
on behalf of Merchiston
Castle School

Title:
Site and Trench Location Plans, and Proposed
Development Layout



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Page No: 7

APPENDIX 1: Evaluation Trench Results Summary

Trench Number	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth of Topsoil (m)	Orientation	Comments
1	30	1.5	0.43	SSW -NNE	Field drains, no significant archaeological remains
2	30	1.5	0.3	N – S	Field drains, no significant archaeological remains
3	30	1.5	0.39	N – S	Field drains, no significant archaeological remains
4	30	1.5	0.6	N – S	Field drains, rig and furrow
5	30	1.5	0.2	N – S	Field drains, rig and furrow, made ground
6	30	1.5	0.25	N – S	Field drains, rig and furrow, made ground
7	10	1.5	0.6	NW – SE	No significant archaeological remains
8	25	1.5	0.32	E – W	No significant archaeological remains

APPENDIX 2: Photo Register

SLR 35mm Slide Camera

Photo Number	Description	Taken From	Conditions
Film 1			
20	Registration shot	-	-
21 – 22	Trench 1 general shot	SSW	Overcast
23 – 24	Trench 2 general shot	S	Overcast
25 – 26	Trench 3 general shot	S	Overcast
27 – 28	Trench 4 general shot	S	Overcast
29 – 30	ENE facing section of 402	ENE	Overcast
31 – 32	Plan shot of 402 showing field drain cutting it	NNW	Rain
33 – 34	Trench 5 general shot	SSW	Overcast
35 – 36	Trench 6 general shot	S	Overcast
37	W facing section of Trench 6 at S end of trench, showing 601	W	Overcast
Film 2			
1	Registration shot	-	-
2 – 3	W facing section of Trench 6 at S end of trench, showing 601	W	Overcast
4 – 5	Trench 7 general shot	SE	Overcast
6 – 7	Trench 8 general shot	W	Overcast

Digital Camera

Photo Number	Description	Taken From	Conditions
2402.JPG	Trench 2 general shot	S	Overcast
2404.JPG	General site shot	SW	Overcast
2405.JPG	General site shot	SE	Overcast
2406.JPG	Trench 3 general shot	S	Overcast
2407.JPG	Trench 4 general shot	S	Overcast
2408.JPG	ENE facing section of 402	ENE	Overcast
2409.JPG	Trench 5 general shot	SSW	Overcast
2410.JPG	Trench 6 general shot	S	Overcast
2411.JPG	W facing section of Trench 6 at S end of trench, showing 601	W	Overcast
2412.JPG	Trench 7 general shot	SE	Overcast
2413.JPG	Trench 8 general shot	W	Overcast

APPENDIX 3: Context Register

Context No.	Trench No.	Description
100	1	Topsoil
101	1	Natural subsoil – orangey mottled beige, firm compacted sandy clay with 20% inclusions of shattered and angular pebbles and cobbles
200	2	Topsoil
201	2	Natural subsoil – orangey mottled beige, firm compacted sandy clay with 20% inclusions of shattered and angular pebbles and cobbles
202	2	Possible buried soil – mid orangey brown silty clay, firm compacted with occasional small sub-rounded pebbles
300	3	Topsoil
301	3	Natural subsoil – orangey mottled beige, firm compacted sandy clay with 20% inclusions of shattered and angular pebbles and cobbles
400	4	Topsoil
401	4	Natural subsoil – orangey mottled beige, firm compacted sandy clay with 20% inclusions of shattered and angular pebbles and cobbles
402	4	Cut for furrow at 6.2m from S end of trench – slight concave base, shallow sloping sides, 1.2m wide, 0.15m deep, aligned NE – SW
403	4	Fill of furrow – mid orangey brown (mottled light grey) sandy clay, firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, occasional manganese flecks and chunks
404	4	Cut for furrow at 9.8m from S end of trench – slight concave base, shallow sloping sides, 1.8m wide, 0.15m deep, aligned NE – SW
405	4	Fill of furrow – mid orangey brown (mottled light grey) sandy clay, firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, occasional manganese flecks and chunks
406	4	Cut for furrow at 19.2m from S end of trench – slight concave base, shallow sloping sides, 1.2m wide, 0.15m deep, aligned NE – SW
407	4	Fill of furrow – mid orangey brown (mottled light grey) sandy clay, firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, occasional manganese flecks and chunks
408	4	Cut for furrow at 25m from S end of trench – slight concave base, shallow sloping sides, 1.4m wide, 0.15m deep, aligned NE – SW
409	4	Fill of furrow – mid orangey brown (mottled light grey) sandy clay, firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, occasional manganese flecks and chunks, and some plant roots
500	5	Topsoil
501	5	Made ground – 0.67m deep at S end of trench, and disappears at 17.3m from S. Loosely compacted sandy loam with frequent inclusions of angular to rounded stones and apparent demolition rubble
502	5	Natural subsoil – orangey mottled beige, firm compacted sandy clay with 20% inclusions of shattered and angular pebbles and cobbles
503	5	Bluish black sandy clay, firmly compacted, 0.1m deep – possible relict turf layer before deposition of imported material (501) to landscape the lawn
504	5	Greyish brown sandy clay, moderately firm compaction, possible relict topsoil layer before deposition of imported material (501)
505	5	Cut for furrow at 6.7m from S end of trench, aligned NE – SW, 1.1m wide
506	5	Fill of furrow – mid orangey brown (mottled light grey) sandy clay, firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, occasional manganese flecks and chunks
507	5	Cut for furrow at 13.2m from S end of trench, aligned NE – SW, 1.12m wide
508	5	Fill of furrow – mid orangey brown (mottled light grey) sandy clay, firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, occasional manganese

		flecks and chunks
509	5	Cut for furrow at 18.3m from S end of trench, aligned NE – SW, 1.1m wide
510	5	Fill of furrow – mid orangey brown (mottled light grey) sandy clay, firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, occasional manganese flecks and chunks
511	5	Cut for furrow at 23.7m from S end of trench, aligned NE – SW, 1.3m wide
512	5	Fill of furrow – mid orangey brown (mottled light grey) sandy clay, firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, occasional manganese flecks and chunks
600	6	Topsoil
601	6	Made ground – 0.8m deep at S end of trench, and disappears at 13.3m from S. Loosely compacted sandy loam with frequent inclusions of angular to rounded stones and apparent demolition rubble
602	6	Bluish black sandy clay, firmly compacted, 0.1m deep – possible relict turf layer before deposition of imported material (601) to landscape the lawn
603	6	Greyish brown sandy clay, moderately firm compaction, possible relict topsoil layer before deposition of imported material (601)
604	6	Natural subsoil – orangey mottled beige, firm compacted sandy clay with 20% inclusions of shattered and angular pebbles and cobbles
605	6	Cut for furrow at 8.4m from S end of trench, aligned NE – SW
606	6	Fill of furrow – mid orangey brown (mottled light grey) sandy clay, firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, occasional manganese flecks and chunks
607	6	Cut for furrow at 13.5m from S end of trench, aligned NE – SW
608	6	Fill of furrow – mid orangey brown (mottled light grey) sandy clay, firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, occasional manganese flecks and chunks
609	6	Cut for furrow at 16.6m from S end of trench, aligned NE – SW
610	6	Fill of furrow – mid orangey brown (mottled light grey) sandy clay, firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, occasional manganese flecks and chunks
611	6	Cut for furrow at 19.4m from S end of trench, aligned NE – SW
612	6	Fill of furrow – mid orangey brown (mottled light grey) sandy clay, firm compaction with occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles, occasional manganese flecks and chunks
613	6	Cut for rubble culvert – aligned NE – SW
614	6	Stone lined culvert, 2.8m from S end of trench, 0.58m wide, flat stone sides, base and cap
700	7	Topsoil
701	7	Natural subsoil – orangey mottled beige, firm compacted sandy clay with 40% inclusions of shattered and angular pebbles to boulders
800	8	Topsoil
801	8	Possible buried soil – mid orangey brown sandy clay, firmly compacted, <5% inclusions sub-rounded pebbles and coal flecks
802	8	Black and mixed brown firmly compacted silty clay lens with coal flecks
803	8	Mid orangey brown firmly compacted clayey sand with <5% inclusions of sub-rounded pebbles
804	8	Mixed brown sand and orange clay with <5% inclusions of sub-rounded and sub-angular pebbles to cobbles

APPENDIX 4: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Merchiston Castle School, 6th Form Boarders' Accommodation
PROJECT CODE:	MECA
PARISH:	Edinburgh, City Of
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Ross White
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Desk-Based Assessment and Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	N/A
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 217 695 (centred)
START DATE (this season)	16 th May 2007
END DATE (this season)	17 th May 2007
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological desk-based assessment and evaluation were carried out in advance of the construction of new 6 th form boarders' accommodation at Merchiston Castle School, Colinton, Edinburgh. The desk-based assessment revealed that the application area had been farming land and then became part of the ornamental grounds of Colinton House. The school buildings began to be built in the late 1920s. An evaluation of 11% of the area available for trenching resulted in 325m ² of trenching. The trenches revealed no finds or features of archaeological significance, except for traces of rig and furrow aligned north-east to south-west, identified in Trenches 4, 5 and 6.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Doig and Smith LLP on behalf of Merchiston Castle School
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	National Monuments Record of Scotland; City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service Sites and Monuments Record