

CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

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Commissioned by Lewis & Hickey Architects Ltd

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**Charteris Land, 15 St John Street,
Edinburgh:
Archaeological Evaluation**

**Data Structure Report:
No. 1466**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in March 2008 at the Charteris Land building, part of Edinburgh University, at 15 St John Street, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 2637 7362, Figs 1-2). The work was commissioned by Lewis & Hickey Ltd.
- 1.1.2 This work was undertaken in order to fulfil a planning condition (07/00768/FUL). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by CFA and approved by Mr John Lawson, of City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS) prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 The proposed development comprises a three storey extension to the south of and refurbishment of the existing Charteris Land Building at 15 St John Street. The site currently comprises a car parking area to the south of the building.
- 1.2.2 The site lies within the core of Edinburgh's medieval Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The site has the potential to contain nationally significant urban archaeological deposits dating from the inception of the medieval town in the 12th century to the industrial period of the 19th century.

1.3 Objectives

- 1.3.1 The objectives of the project were to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological features or deposits within the proposed development area; to establish their vulnerability to the proposed development; and to propose mitigation measures.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 CFA follows Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidelines as appropriate.

2.2 Desk-based Assessment

- 2.2.1 The NMRS and the City of Edinburgh Council SMR were consulted for all available data relevant to the proposed development area.
- 2.2.2 All readily available mapping held in the online collection of the National Map Library as well as Historic Environment Record/Sites and Monuments Record, Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes were consulted.

2.3 Archaeological Evaluation

- 2.3.1 A single trial trench was excavated within the proposed development area. The location of this trench was agreed in advance with John Lawson of CECAS.
- 2.3.2 The trench was excavated by machine under direct archaeological supervision to remove topsoil and modern deposits to either natural subsoil or the first archaeological horizon.
- 2.3.3 All excavation and on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, by photography and by completing standard CFA record forms. The stratification was recorded even though no deposits of archaeological significance were discovered. The trench was backfilled on completion of excavation and the surface of the car park compacted.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 In the following text, numbers in bold and parentheses (eg **001**) relate to contexts, which are described fully in Appendix 2. An assessment of the finds by Sue Anderson is included below (Section 3.4). NMRS numbers are included where appropriate.

3.2 Desk-Based Assessment

General

- 3.2.1 The study area lies on the western side of St John Street, to the south of the Canongate and to the north of Holyrood Road (Fig. 1). The present Charteris Land building was constructed in 1969 (Tom Angus pers. comm.).

Cartographic

- 3.2.2 Early mapping, such as Gordon (1647), indicate that the site was on the edge of the walled town of medieval Edinburgh and lay within the garden plots behind the buildings on the Canongate. This is still shown to be the case on Edgar's map of 1765. However, by the late 18th century a road had developed in the position of the current Holyrood Road, named as South Back of the Canongate, and buildings begin to appear in these back plots, extending habitation southwards from the Canongate.
- 3.2.3 Late 18th and early 19th century mapping, such as Kincaid (1784), Ainslie (1804), Scott (1805), Kirkwood (1817) and Wood & Brown (1823) show St John's Street. The development site remains a vacant plot, probably used as gardens, with buildings further to the north on the street.

- 3.2.4 A close named Charteris at the north end of St John's Street is shown on Kincaid (1784). This map also shows a small rectangular building within or close to the development site; however, the majority of the buildings still cluster at the north end of the street and on the east side. On Kirkwood's map (1817) the development site is a vacant plot with Stein's Brewery to its north.
- 3.2.5 The 1853 OS First Edition and the 1849-53 and 1876 Town Plans show that the Edinburgh and Leith Brewery (NT27SE 4401) now occupied the north end of St John Street on the west side. A vacant plot is still present to the south, which by 1888 (Johnston & Johnston 1888) is occupied by the Old Kirk of Edinburgh and Church Hall (NT27SE 1754). By the 1893-4 OS Town Plan, the Edinburgh and Leith Brewery had also been remodelled, with a number of smaller buildings being replaced by a larger unit.

Bibliographic

- 3.2.6 During the 19th century, a number of breweries occupied the land between the Canongate and the South Back. These made use of the high quality water from the springs and wells in this part of the Canongate. The Edinburgh and Leith Brewery (NT27SE 4401) was owned by John Aitchison & Co Ltd and, although operating between 1828 and 1985, production was concentrated in the years 1895 to 1965 (Glasgow University 2002). It is recorded by Pearson (2003) that a 'reconstruction' was undertaken in 1888 and this accords well with the cartographic evidence. In response to the shortage of teachers in Scotland in the late 1950s and early 1960s Moray House looked to the possibility of building additional teaching facilities close to its existing estate. In 1961 Moray House purchased the property of the Aitchison Brewery. The brewery buildings appear to have been demolished to make way for the present Charteris Land building in 1969.
- 3.2.7 The NMRS records that the Old Kirk of Edinburgh and Church Hall (NT27SE 1754) was built by Anderson and Browne between 1881-2 to accommodate the congregation which worshipped in St Giles Cathedral. The church was acquired by Moray House Training College National Committee around 1945, and equipped for use by the music and educational handwork departments. It is currently boarded up and used for storage by Edinburgh University.

3.3 Archaeological Evaluation

- 3.3.1 A single trench 10m in length, 1m in width and 2m in depth was excavated by machine (Figs 1-3). This was aligned ENE-WSW and was positioned to intersect both the buildings shown on historic maps as lying between the brewery and the church, and the yard or garden area to their east.
- 3.3.2 The trench (Fig. 4) revealed that deep deposits (up to 2m) of pinkish clayey gravel were interspersed with clay layers. Several thin lenses of mortar and redeposited soils were recorded from which occasional artefacts were recovered. Neither structural remains or cut features were present and the construction of the Charteris Land building would appear to have destroyed all earlier deposits in the area.

3.4 Finds, by Sue Anderson

- 3.4.1 Finds were recovered from made ground deposits (**001**) and are listed in Appendix 4. All were of post-medieval or modern date.
- 3.4.2 Three sherds of pottery comprised two fragments of Scottish post-medieval oxidised/reduced wares (15th-18th c.), including a body sherd with applied thumbed decoration, and a piece of tin-glazed earthenware (17th-18th c.). Other ceramic finds included two pieces of a coarse brick and a fragment of clay pipe stem. Seven fragments of modern window and vessel glass were recovered, along with seven iron nails. Animal bone included several sheep long bones and one metapodial of a cat.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The archaeological evaluation within the proposed Charteris Land extension at 15 St John Street has revealed extensive ground disturbance which would appear to stem from the construction of the existing building in 1969. No archaeological deposits or features were recorded within the evaluation trench.
- 4.2 The final decision on any further mitigation measures lies with John Lawson, City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service.
- 4.3 The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and copies of reports will be lodged with the Edinburgh City Council Sites and Monuments Record.
- 4.4 A summary statement of the results of this evaluation, to be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 5), will be sufficient to disseminate the results of this watching brief.

5. REFERENCES

Cartographic

Ainslie, J 1804 *Old and New Town of Edinburgh and Leith with the proposed docks.*

Edgar, W 1765 *City and castle of Edinburgh.*

Gordon, James, c.1647 *Edinodunensis Tabulam / Iacobus Gordinius P. Rothemayus.* Amsterdam?

Johnston, W & Johnston, A 1888 Johnstons' plan of Edinburgh, Leith, Portobello and environs, constructed from the latest surveys with additions by the local surveyors of these towns.

Kincaid, A 1784 *A plan of the city and suburbs of Edinburgh.*

Kirkwood, R 1817 *This plan of the City of Edinburgh and its environs.* Edinburgh: Kirkwood & Son.

Ordnance Survey First Edition (1853) Edinburghshire Sheet 2

Ordnance Survey Second Edition (1895) Edinburghshire Sheet 32

Ordnance Survey Town Plan (1849-53) Edinburgh

Ordnance Survey Town Plan (1876) Edinburgh

Ordnance Survey Town Plan (1893-4) Edinburgh

Scott, R, 1805 *The Strangers Guide, being a Plan of Edinburgh & Leith exhibiting all the streets principal buildings & late improvements.*

Wood, J & Brown, T 1823 *Plan of the City of Edinburgh, including all the latest and intended improvements.*

Bibliographic

Glasgow University 2002 <http://www.archives.gla.ac.uk/sba/sbacolls/ja.html>

NMRS (Pastmap) <http://jura.rcahms.gov.uk/PASTMAP/>

Pearson, L F 2003 *British Breweries: An Architectural History*, Hambledon Continuum 2003.

APPENDIX 1: Colour Slide and Digital Images Register:

Shot no. / (digital)	Description	Conditions	From
Film 1			
1-4 (1-2)	Site pre-ex	Dull	North
5-8 (3)	Site pre-ex	Dull	SE
(4)	Site pre-ex	Dull	East
(5)	Site pre-ex	Dull	West
(6-7)	Partially excavated trench fenced overnight	Overcast	N & E
9-11 (8-9)	Trench excavated. Section 1-2.5m from West end	Dull	SSE
12-14 (10-11)	Trench excavated. Section 2.5-5m from West end	Dull	SSE
15-19 (12-13)	Trench excavated. Section 5-7.5m from West end	Dull	SSE
20-24 (14-15)	Trench excavated. Section 7.5-10m from West end	Dull	SSE
25-29 (16-17)	Trench excavated. WSW facing section	Dull	WSW
30-31 (18-19)	General view of the trench from the Charteris Land building with the church beyond	Overcast	NNW
32-33 (20)	General view of the trench	Overcast	SW
(21-25)	General view of the backfilled and compacted trench with the spare spoil in the corner of the car park protected by bollards	Overcast	Various

APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context	Description
001	Made ground comprising: 1. Thick bands of compact pinkish grey and creamy-red clayey gravel. Gravel is angular and may be mudstone/sandstone from local bedrock. 2. Thick band of very compact mixed silty clay with both mortar and dark soil included. 3. Lenses of buff/grey-black silty clay Contains bones, shell, pottery, glass, CBM, coal, black lumps and clay-pipe stems 4. Lenses of powdered mortar

APPENDIX 3: Drawings Register

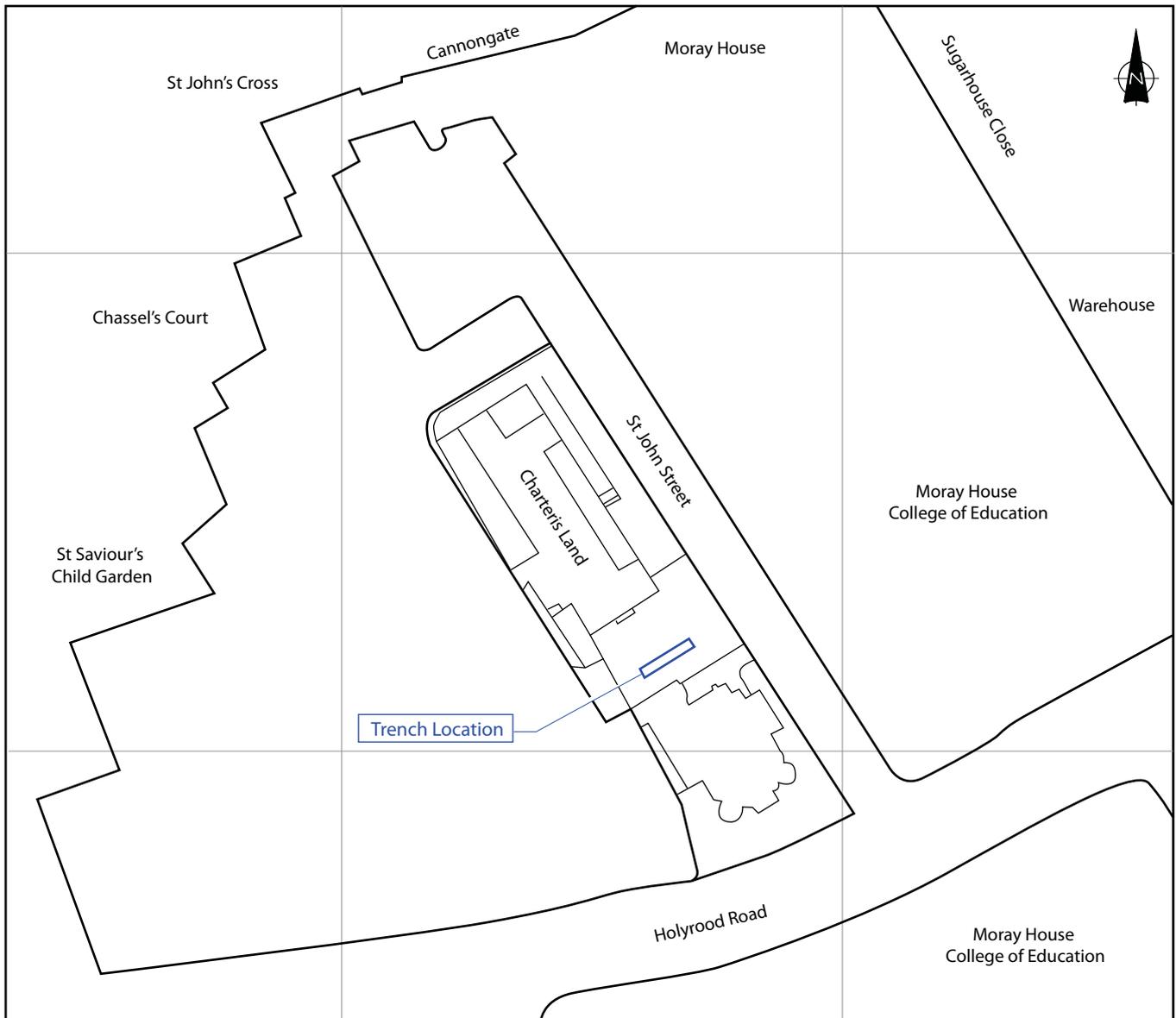
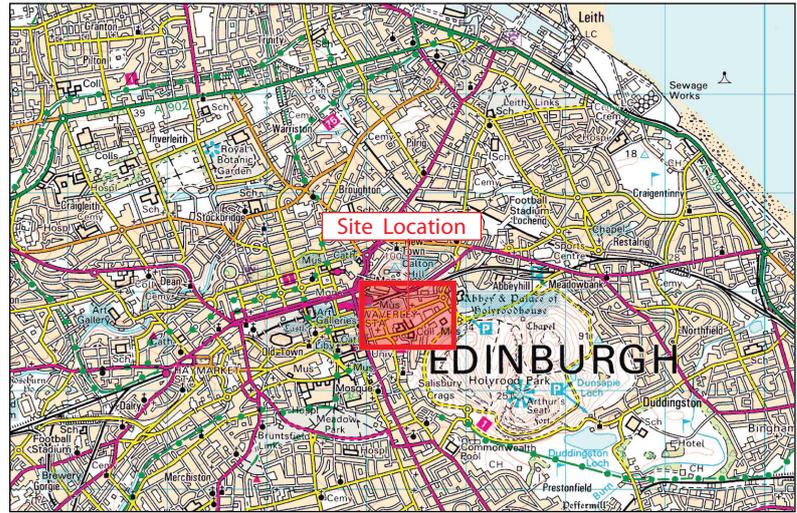
Drawing No.	Scale	Description / Contexts
1	1:100	Scale plan showing the trench location

APPENDIX 4: Finds Quantification

Context	Find type	No	Wt/g	Notes	Date
001	pot	1	33	SPMO body sherd, applied thumbled strip on shoulder, green glaze internally	15th-16th c.?
001	pot	1	2	SPMR green glaze externally	15th-18th c.
001	pot	1	2	TGE, blue painted	17th-18th c.
001	clay pipe	1	4	stem	pmed
001	CBM	2	39	coarse fabric, brick?	19th c.+
001	glass	6	12	window	modern
001	glass	1	5	vessel	modern
001	iron	7	69	nails	pmed/modern
001	bone	8	75	long bones of sheep, cat	

APPENDIX 5: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Edinburgh City Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Charteris Land, 15 St John Street, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	STCH
PARISH:	City of Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Ian Suddaby
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	NT27SE 4401
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Edinburgh & Leith Brewery
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 figures)	NT 2637 7362
START DATE (this season)	March 2008
END DATE (this season)	March 2008
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Prior to the construction of an extension to the Edinburgh University Charteris Land building at 15 St John Street, a desk-based assessment and archaeological evaluation of the site took place. A single trench was excavated with an area of 10m ² . This revealed deep deposits of made ground comprising clayey gravel, mixed with thin redeposited soils and mortar lenses. Occasional post-medieval finds were recovered.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Commissioned by Lewis & Hickey Ltd
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Old Engine House, Eskmills Business Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ
EMAIL ADDRESS:	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Report lodged with City of Edinburgh Council SMR NMRS intended archive



Key:

Scale: 0 50 m

Fig. No:	1	Revision:	A	Client:	Lewis & Hickey Ltd
Title:	Location Map				
Project:	Charteris Land, 15 St John Street, Edinburgh Archaeological Evaluation				

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	Drawn by: LW
	Page No:



Fig. 3 - General view from the Charteris Land building showing the trench with the church beyond



Fig. 4 - View of the south facing section

Key:

Scale:

Fig. No:	3,4	Revision:	A	Client:	Lewis & Hickey Ltd
Title:	Photographs				
Project:	Charteris Land, 15 St John Street, Edinburgh Archaeological Evaluation				



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