

Archaeological Watching Brief  
Old Fire Station  
Pearl Street  
CALLANDER  
CC02



Foundation trenches in natural sand. View N from Pearl Street

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF,  
OLD FIRE STATION, PEARL STREET,  
CALLANDER**

**CC02**

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*Front Cover: Foundation trenches in natural sand. View N from Pearl Street.*

*Illustration 1: Location*

*Illustration 2: Site Location*

*Illustration 3: Layout*

**Author** David Bowler, BA, MPhil, FSA Scot, MCIfA  
**Illustrator** David Bowler, BA, MPhil, FSA Scot, MCIfA

## ***ABSTRACT***

*Alder Archaeology conducted a watching brief (CC02) on preparation and foundation works for a small block of flats in Pearl Street, Callander, built for Stirling Council. The site was located in backlands on the S side of Main Street, a little N of the River Teith, on a sandy river terrace at the margin of the medieval and 18<sup>th</sup>-century settlement. No significant archaeology was found, but only traces of the demolished 20<sup>th</sup>-century fire station and other modern activity.*

## **1 Background**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Stirling Council commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological Watching Brief on the site of a small block of five flats at Pearl Street, Callander. The proposed development area was an area of about 45 x 25 m ( 1,125 m<sup>2</sup>) of waste ground at the rear of a gap site on the S side of Main Street, formerly the site of a 20<sup>th</sup>-century fire station, now demolished, centred on NGR NN 62982 07761. The work (site code CC02) was undertaken during the period 08<sup>th</sup> January – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2018, generally in quite severe winter conditions of ice and snow. The requirement was to watch all below ground excavations, including site stripping, foundations and service trenches.

The work was designed to satisfy the archaeological condition on development application reference 2017/0174/DET.

### **1.2 Aims and Objectives**

The main aim of this investigation was to establish the presence/absence, date, character and quality of any archaeological remains surviving within the development area, especially any relating to the early development of the medieval and 18<sup>th</sup>-century settlement.

### **1.3 Reporting**

The present document has been prepared as the final report on this watching brief. Copies will be sent to the client, Historic Environment Scotland and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Historic Environment Record, maintained by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

### **1.4 Acknowledgements**

We wish to thank Stewart Gillespie of Stirling Council and Martin O'Hare of WoSAS for their assistance and guidance throughout this project. Stirling Council funded this Watching Brief.

## **2 Details of Work**

### **2.1 The Site (Illus 1)**

Pearl Street runs approximately E – W, S of and parallel to Callander Main Street, in effect serving it as a back lane. The ground rises gently from the River Teith, S of Pearl Street, N towards Main Street. N of Main Street the ground rises more steeply. The development site is roughly rectangular, 25 x 45 m, aligned N – S, with its S end on Pearl Street and its N end towards Main Street. A footpath will extend N to the Main Street frontage. To the W is St Bride's Church (1844) on the corner with South Church Street. The church is of obviously 19<sup>th</sup>-century design, with ancillary buildings tightly laid out on an urban site. There is no associated burial ground or tradition of earlier church use on the site. To the E of the development site are 20<sup>th</sup>-century houses along Pearl Street.

## **2.2 Archaeological Potential**

In guidance issued by Martin O'Hare of WoSAS on 06<sup>th</sup> June 2017, it was noted that, at the time of Roy's Military Survey of Scotland (1747 – 55), Callander was a simple linear settlement developing along Main Street, the Military Road from Stirling to Fort William (constructed 1748 – 53). The present site would have been in the rear of properties on Main Street.

Roy shows a small structure to the SW, probably the medieval parish church, known from 1238 on, and about 300 m WSW of the present development site. The old bridge over the Teith, now carrying the main road to Glasgow, the old burial ground, and the remains of a small motte, Tom ma Chisaig, on the N bank of the river are also in this area. These would have been the focus of the pre-18<sup>th</sup>-century settlement. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was also a row of terraced buildings along the N side of Pearl Street, subsequently demolished to form parking spaces now outwith the S boundary of the site.

The present site is in the backlands of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century settlement, on the margin of the medieval village, and might have preserved evidence of either or both. The N part of the site would have been substantially disturbed by the construction and demolition of the Fire Station, but the S and central part of the site might have been largely intact.

## **2.3 Archaeological Method**

All removal of existing topsoil and hard or soft surfaces was to be conducted under direct archaeological observation, using a midi-excavator with a smooth-edged bucket. The archaeologist was to observe and record the deposits exposed in each area until undisturbed natural deposits were reached or the excavations required for foundations were completed. Provision was made for further investigation if required.

In practice, excavations and investigations proceeded more or less as intended, except that excavation was very intermittent and sometimes unpredictable, due to the extreme weather conditions, logistical difficulties in assembling the necessary equipment and work force, the very confined nature of the site, further obstructed by the digging of the foundation trenches, difficulties in obtaining concrete when required, and difficulties in pouring and curing it in consistently freezing conditions.

Natural sand was generally reached very close to the surface, removing the need for more intensive investigations.

Excavation began with general machine stripping of rough vegetation, overgrowth, modern topsoil, and a modern yellow crushed stone surface, greatly mixed with topsoil and vegetation. After this, the various foundation trenches were dug by machine as required, generally about 1 m wide and about 0.75 m deep, down into natural sand. Because of the soft nature of the sand and the cramped site, the trenches had to be dug in small batches, filled with concrete and left to set before more trenches could be dug, or they would have collapsed and filled with sand. An L-shaped trial trench was also dug near the Pearl Street frontage. Features and deposits were observed and recorded as the trenches were dug, and in section.

## **2.4 Results of Investigations**

Most of the site was covered with a modern layer of vegetation and overgrowth 01, about 0.1 m deep, over a layer of dirty yellow type 1 gravel 02, probably from 20<sup>th</sup>-century or later use of the site as a car park. At the N end of the site, this gave way to a tarmac hardstanding area 03, probably relating to the 20<sup>th</sup>-century fire station. This had an irregular and uncertain boundary to the W, perhaps disturbed when the fire station was demolished. Under the tarmac 03 was a layer 11 of modern fill.

To the W of the hardstanding 03, there was a deep and irregular layer 06 of crushed red brick rubble, pressed down into the natural sand, presumably the demolished remains of the fire station.

In the middle part of the site, removal of the soil and gravel layers 01 and 02 exposed clean, soft, yellow natural sand 07. This had a fine, near-horizontal banding, confirming its natural origin, and sloping down gently S towards Pearl Street and the River Teith, by which it was probably deposited in post-glacial times.

At the lower, S end of the site, closest to Pearl Street, the natural sand 07 was overlain by a layer of dark humic soil 09, containing fragments of china, sawn animal bone and some corroded pressed steel cooking pots, obviously machine-made, probably of late 19<sup>th</sup> or early to mid 20<sup>th</sup>-century date (not retained). A similar deposit 10 seen in a trench section at first appeared to be the fill of a cut feature, but on cleaning proved to be merely a continuation of 09, tapering out to nothing about 5 m N of the Pearl Street frontage.

The deposit 09 and 10 is probably a layer of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century garden or topsoil, formed when the site was open ground at the back of Main Street properties, subject to the effects of hill wash and random rubbish dumping, until it was sealed under the gravel 02 when the site was converted to car parking.

Some small, shallow and irregular patches of dark soil, 08, 12 and 13 were seen in trench sections, containing small fragments of china and also tree roots. The features were poorly defined, formed no obvious pattern, and are most likely to have been created by the roots of bushes and shrubs growing on the site when it was waste ground in the present century.

## **3 Conclusions**

No significant archaeology survived on this site. It was not close to the medieval or early modern centres of the settlement, and not close to the Main Street frontage, so perhaps there never was much activity on this site. Also, except along the Pearl Street frontage, modern activity connected with the fire station, its demolition, and car parking had truncated everything down to natural sand.

If other, similar sites became available, perhaps closer to the bridge and motte, or closer to the core of Main Street, and in more favourable conditions of weather and accessibility, it is likely that any surviving archaeology would be very near the surface, and very easy to see as dark cut features in the yellow sandy river terrace on which the settlement is built.

If future development sites became available on the N side of Main Street, they would encounter a completely different terrain and underlying geology, perhaps with deep hill-

wash deposits along the frontage, and rapidly changing river, glacial and even solid geology as the ground rises steeply into the hills behind Callander.

#### **4 Bibliography**

Bowler, D P 2017 *Rear of former Fire Station, Pearl Street, Callander, Stirling. Archaeological Monitoring and Excavation. Written Scheme of Investigation.* Unpublished, Alder Archaeology Ltd, Perth.

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## Appendix 1 Context Register

No:	Description
01	Modern vegetation overgrowth and topsoil, 0.1 m deep, over most of the site.
02	Modern Type 1 angular gravel fill, dirty yellow. Under 01. Covers most of site, except at N end.
03	Modern (ie 20 <sup>th</sup> Cent) Tarmac hard standing, at N end of site. S edge is 2 m N of S wall of church house on site to W. Occupies NE corner of site. Peters out to W without well-defined boundary. Probably part of old fire station.
04	Not used.
05	Steel fence E – W along N boundary of site. Divides site from Main Street Gap Site. Continues hedge line on Church house site to W. Made of galvanized steel. Rolled posts, with angled vertical slats riveted to channel rails.
06	Rough red brick hard core in N end of site to W of tarmac 03. Presumed demolished remains of fire station.
07	Clean yellow natural sand 07, over all of site, under modern fill 02 and other deposits. Fine natural banding slopes down N – S, towards River Teith.
08	Irregular dark earth patch with tree roots. Tiny fragment of 19 <sup>th</sup> cent china.
09	Dark humic soil under modern fill 02 in S area of site. Exposed in section in foundation trenches. About 200 mm down, 100 mm thick. Fragments of china, steel pot, sawn animal bone fragments, etc.
10	Apparent deeper cut, visible in section, but on cleaning proves to be a shallow soil layer, continuation of 09. Extends 5 m N of site S boundary (Pearl Street), and tapers out to N.
11	Modern fill at N end of site, under tarmac 03, over natural gravel and sand.
12	Dark soil patch, just under modern fills. 0.1 m thick, over natural sand. Seen in E section of foundation trench. Trench extends c 0.75 m N – S. Located 7 paces ( 7 x 0.9 = 6.3 m) E of site W boundary. N – S, level with N wall of church garage on site to W.
13	Small dark-filled pit in section at E end of L-shaped trench, just under E wall of new building. 0.2 m diameter, c0.2 m down from surface, c0.2 m deep. Under late fills. No visible finds. Created by modern root action?
14	Small, dark-filled feature in W end of trench. Tree root? Top about 0.3 m down. Bottom about 0.5 m down. Trench runs E – W. N edge level with S end of church garage. Trench is 5 paces (4.5 m) long E – W. Runs from E wall of building, across parallel internal wall, and 0.75 m beyond.

## Appendix 2 Photographic Register

No	Description	View
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	<b>08<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018</b>	
01	General view from Pearl Street, site start. Ground rises to N of Main Street.	N
02	Stripping vegetation along E edge of site.	N
03	General view from Pearl Street.	N
04	Detail, modern overgrowth 01 over modern gravel 02. S edge of hard standing 03 exposed behind standing figure.	N
05	Modern Tarmac Hard Standing 03. Church house beyond. S edge of 03 about 2 m N of S end of house.	W
06	N end of site with site boundary fence 05. Gap site on Main Street beyond.	N
07	Steel fence line 05 at N edge of site. Continues hedge line to W on church site.	W
08	Rough brick hard core 06 to W of 03. Presumed remains of fire station.	W
09	St Bride's Church, directly to W of site, in Pearl Street.	NW
10	St Bride's Church, W front (South Church Street).	E
11	St Bride's Church and adjacent hall (South Church Street).	SSE
12	St Kessog's Church, N front, Ancaster Square, from Main Street. Ground rises to N.	N
13	St Kessog's Church, N front, Ancaster Square, from Main Street.. Ground rises to N.	N
14	Main Street / Cross Street, with Ben Ledi beyond.	WSW
15	Detail, Ben Ledi, snow covered, overlooking Main Street.	WSW
16	View S from Main Street to Bridge Street over River Teith.	S
17	Historic information panel in Ancaster Square.	N
18	Main Street frontage of gap site, directly N of development site.	S
19	Sondage in brick rubble 06. Remains of fire station.	W
	<b>11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018</b>	
20	General view of site. Digging trench in sand 07	N
	<b>30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018</b>	
21 - 2	Dark humic soil 09 under fill 02 in S area of site. Exposed in section in foundation trenches. Very low light.	NW
23	Detail of soil 09 in section. Low light.	NW
24	Detail of soil 09 in section. Better light.	NW
25	Detail of soil 09 in section. Low light.	NW

26	Apparent deeper cut 10, visible in section.	NE
27	General view of site showing location of previous details.	N
28	General view showing location of previous details in relation to E and S boundaries of site.	E
29	On cleaning, 'cut' 10 proves shallow, continuation of soil 09. Compare 26 above.	E
30	Deposit 10. Scales 1 m.	E
31	View of intersection of trenches with deposit 10 and scales.	NE
32	General view, showing relation to E and S boundaries of site.	NE
33	General View N from Pearl Street frontage.	N
34	View N from Pearl Street frontage. N section under white generator.	N
35	Detail of N section. Tarmac 03 over modern fill 11, over natural gravel and sand.	N
36	Detail, Tarmac 03 over modern fill 11, over natural gravel and sand.	N
37	St Bride's Church, Pearl Street, adjacent to site.	WNW
38	St Bride's Church, Pearl Street, adjacent to site.	NW
39	Detail, SE corner of Church with bowed S wall.	NW
40	Detail, SE corner of Church leans S.	W
	<b>02<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2018</b>	
41	General View. Second batch of foundation trenches dug.	N
42	Detail. Second batch of foundation trenches dug.	N
43	Detail. Dark soil patch 12, just under modern fills. 0.1 m thick, over natural sand. Seen in E section of new trench.	E
44	Detail of dark soil patch 12.	E
45	General, from N end of site. New trench. W wall foundation of new building, dug in sand.	S
46	General, from N end of site. New trench. W wall foundation of new building, dug in sand.	S
47	N wall foundation trench of new building, from NW corner.	E
48	N wall foundation trench of new building, from NW corner. General view.	E
49	N wall foundation trench of new building, from NW corner. General view.	
50	General view from NW corner of site, with N and W foundation trenches.	SE
51	General view to Pearl Street from NW corner of site, with N and W foundation trenches.	SE
	<b>07<sup>th</sup> Feb 2018</b>	

52	N Wall foundation now filled with concrete. Internal E – W trench dug to S.	E
53	Detail, Internal E – W wall foundation trench dug in sand.	E
54	Internal wall foundation trench, with N Wall foundation beyond.	N
55	Detail of N section, internal wall foundation trench.	N
56	Small L – shaped trench in NE corner of building. N and E wall foundations lined with concrete.	NE
57	Small L – shaped trench in NE corner of building. N and E wall foundations lined with concrete.	N
58	Small L – shaped trench in NE corner of building. E wall foundations lined with concrete.	E
59	Detail, small dark-filled pit 13 in section, E end of L-shaped trench, under concrete of E wall foundation.	E
60	General view from Pearl Street.	N
	<b>12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2018</b>	
61	Small, dark-filled feature 14 in W end of trench. Church beyond.	W
62	Detail, small, dark-filled feature 14 in W end of trench.	W
63	View to Pearl Street. One small trench dug E – W.	S
64	Trench runs from E wall of building, across parallel internal wall, and 0.75 m beyond.	N
65	General view of site from Pearl Street frontage.	N
	<b>20<sup>th</sup> March 2018</b>	
66	General, from Pearl Street, on arrival.	N
67	General, from site entrance. Note drop from S wall foundation to street level. Foundations built. Block-and-beam floors in preparation.	NE
68	Detail at site entrance. Note drop from S wall to street level. Note divergence of S wall and S boundary of site.	E
69	General, from NW corner. Note foundations and solum level with ground at N end of building.	SE
70	Detail, E wall and 1 m gap to site boundary. Service trench along E boundary.	S
71	Detail, E wall and 1 m gap to site boundary. Service trench along E boundary. Ground drops to S. Trench open in natural sand, exposes base of foundation.	S
72	Detail, E wall and 1 m gap to site boundary. Service trench along E boundary. Ground drops to S. Trench open in natural sand, exposes base of foundation. Old wooden strainer post marks SE corner of site.	S
73	Detail, wooden strainer post at SE corner of site. Black plastic inspection cover will be out on pavement.	N

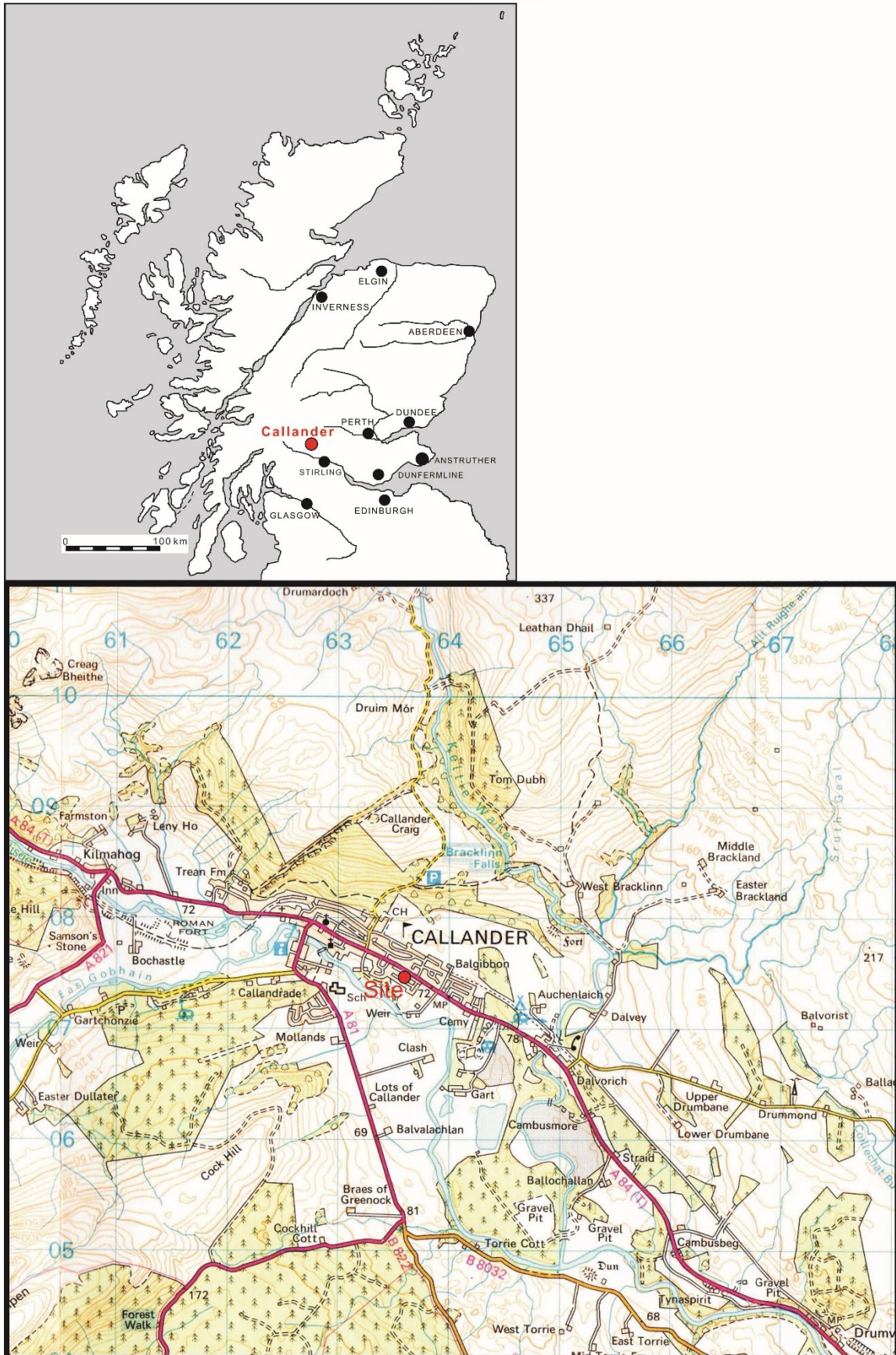
74	Detail, S wall diverging from S boundary.	E
75	General, from Pearl Street, on departure.	N

## Appendix 3 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Stirling Council / Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Old Fire Station, Pearl Street, Callander
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	CC02
<b>PARISH:</b>	Callander
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	David Bowler
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Alder Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching Brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	-
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	None
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)</b>	NN 62982 07761
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	08 Jan 2018
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	20 Mar 2018
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	None
<b>MAIN DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	Alder Archaeology conducted a watching brief (CC02) on preparation and foundation works for a small block of flats in Pearl Street, Callander. The site was located in backlands on the S side of Main Street, a little N of the River Teith, on a sandy river terrace at the margin of the medieval and 18 <sup>th</sup> -century settlement. No significant archaeology was found, but only traces of the demolished 20 <sup>th</sup> -century fire station and other modern activity.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	none
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	-
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Stirling Council
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	<a href="mailto:director@alderarchaeology.co.uk">director@alderarchaeology.co.uk</a>
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended/deposited)	HES (intended)

Illus 1

# Old Fire Station, Pearl Street, Callander Location



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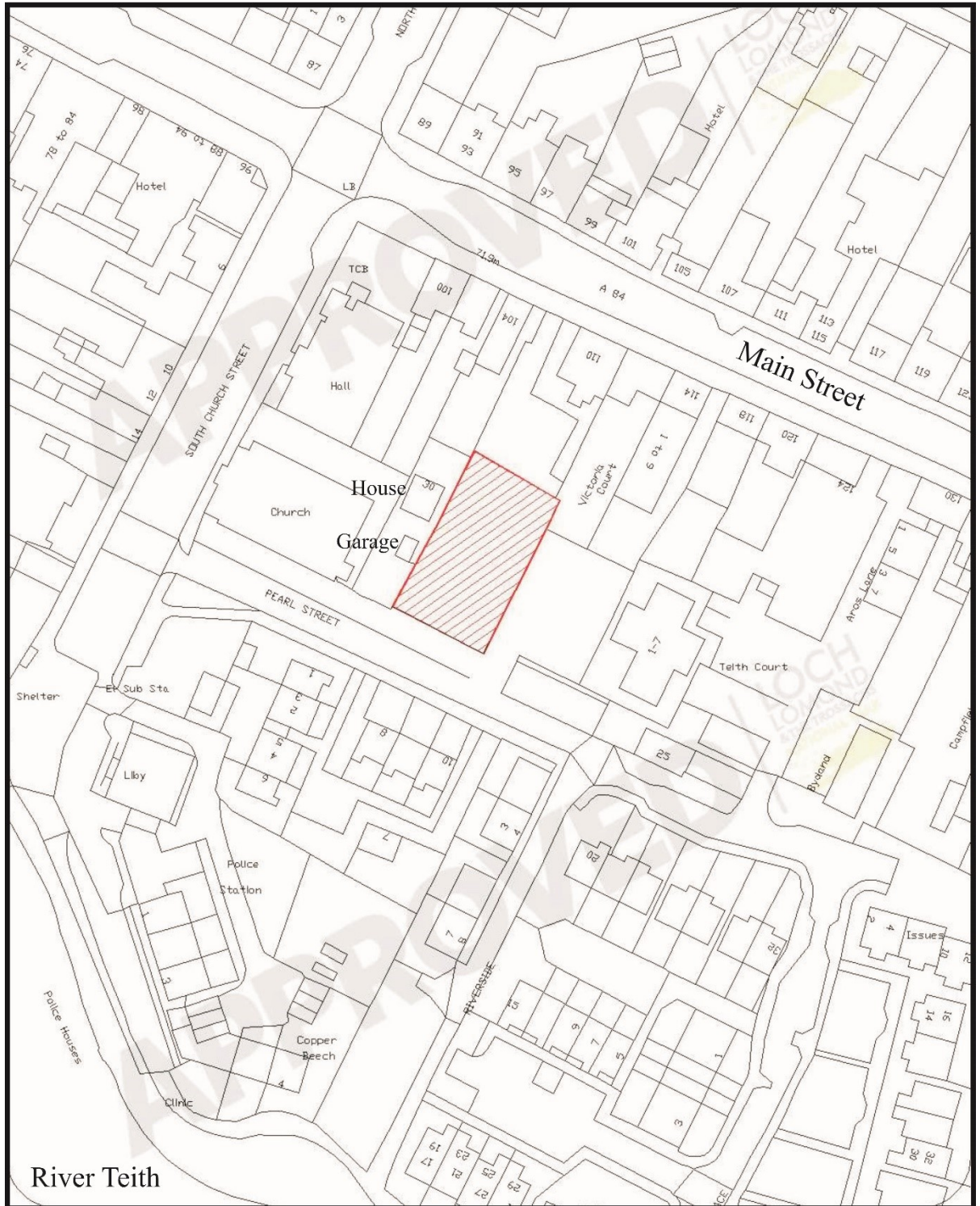
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CC02



Illus 2

## Old Fire Station, Pearl Street, Callander Site Location



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Base Map supplied by Stirling Council

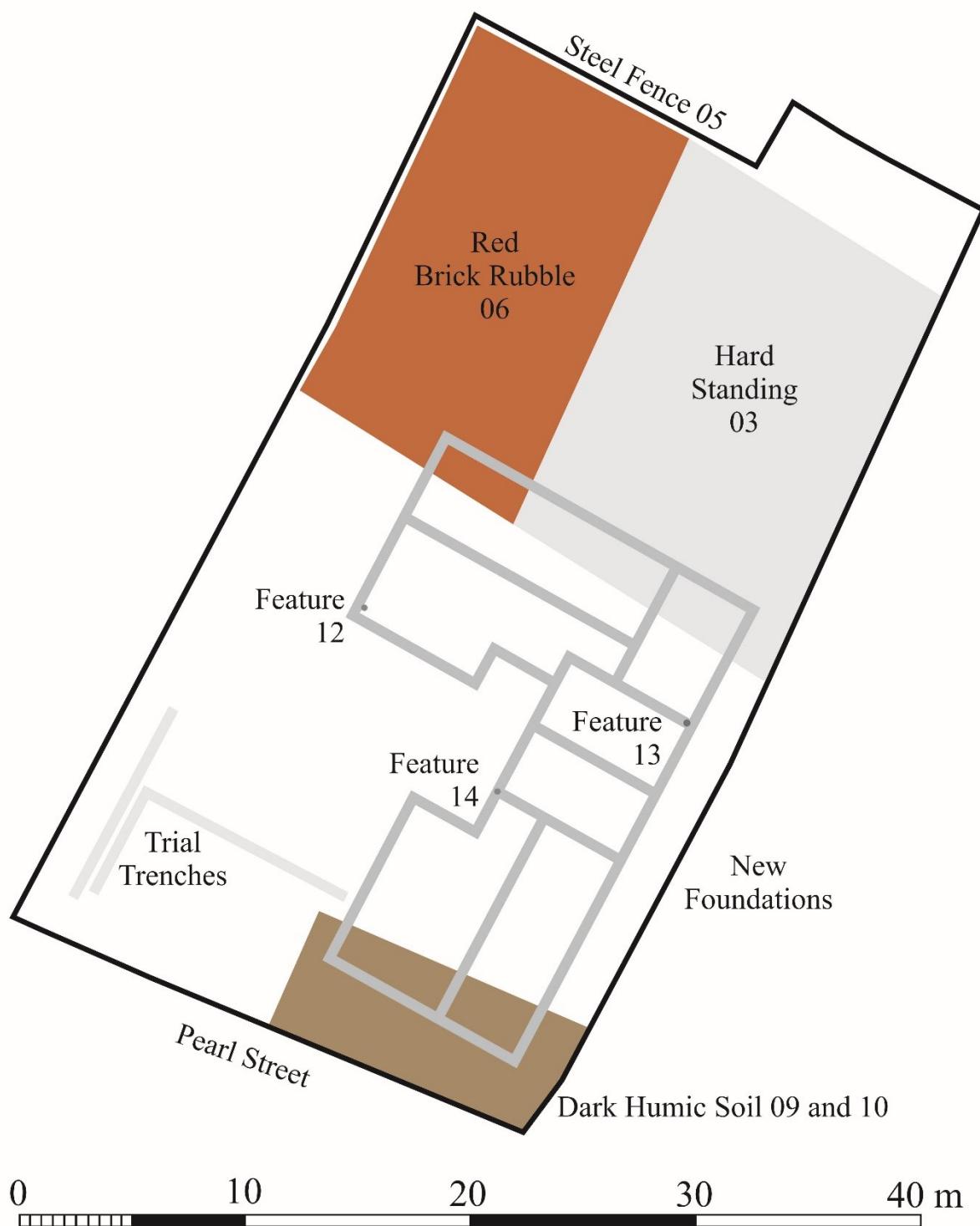
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CC02

Illus 3

Old Fire Station, Pearl Street, Callander  
Layout



CC02