

City Centre District Heating Phase 1 Report on Archaeological Watching Brief



Cameron Archaeology
3 May 2012

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Cover: 29-31 Queen Street showing wall foundation *in situ* (left) and natural sand (right)

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1 INTRODUCTION

A watching brief was carried out from 15 November 2011- 1 May 2012 on trenches excavated for the City Centre Heating Phase 1 (Aberdeen City Council Planning references P110789, P111251 and change of route P120455). The trench for laying the pipes starts at The Beach Ballroom, Links Road (AB24 5NR), runs SW along Links Road, along Constitution Street, around Constitution Court, along Wales Street, across Park Street, along Frederick Street, north along King Street, Mealmarket Street, West North Street to Mitchell Hall (AB24 5AS) and also SW along Longacre and Queen Street to Grampian Police HQ and Aberdeen City Council Town House (AB10 1BS). The work was commissioned by Bill Rowe of Integrated Energy Utilities for Aberdeen Heat and Power. The site is located at NJ95273 07178 (Beach Ballroom) - NJ94325 06603 (West North Street) /NJ94325 06405 (Town House, Queen Street) and is in Aberdeen parish.



Illus 1 Location plan (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2011).

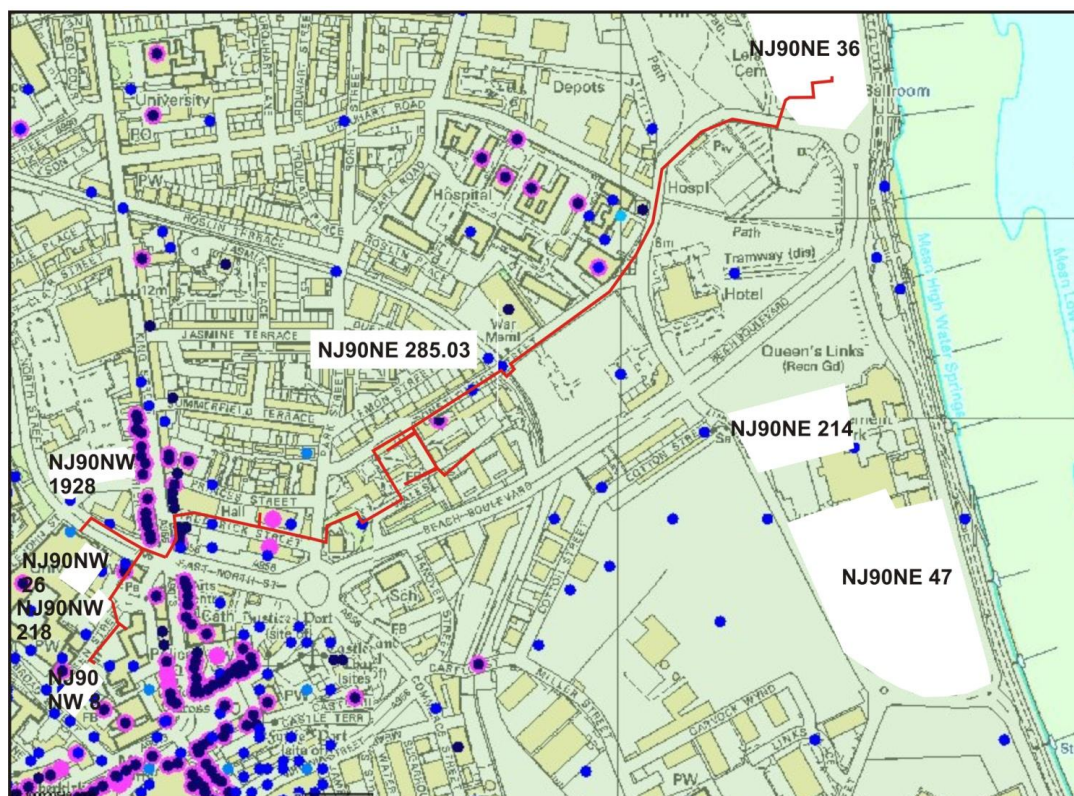
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

There are many archaeological and historical sites along the line of the current work a number of which may have had implications for the current work are highlighted below.

- 2.1 Prior to the construction of the Beach Leisure Centre (NJ 95268 07208) a deep bottle dump was explored by private collectors and notes lodged with Aberdeen City Council SMR. The area had been made up with up to 5m of mid 20th-century rubbish.
- 2.2 Prior to the construction of the beach multi-functional entertainment complex and associated buildings, an evaluation (**NJ90NE 47**; NJ 953 066) was carried out by Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit; no archaeological remains were uncovered. The east side of the area was turf on sand and the west area had been built up using demolition material and rubbish, probably in the early-mid 20th century (Cameron 1996, 5).
- 2.3 Prior to an extension to Codona's Amusement Arcade a watching brief (**NJ90NE 214**, NJ 9521 0673) recorded a deep layer of demolition rubble which was used to level the site prior to it being landscaped and grassed over. No archaeological features or finds were evident (Murray, 2006, 11).
- 2.4 Aberdeenshire Canal ran NW-SE along the line of the railway (Aberdeen Harbour to Kittybrewster branch line) which currently cuts under Constitution Street. The junction of the street and railway is thought to be the site of a canal lock (**NJ90NW 285.03**, NJ 9483 0682) located immediately north of the Constitution Street Bridge (**NJ90NW 285.02**) (Graham 1969, 175). Aberdeenshire Canal was opened in 1805 and ran from the harbour at Waterloo Quay along the south western side of the River Don to Port Elphinstone, near Inverurie. Later the canal was connected to the harbour when a tidal lock was built in 1834. Previously goods from the harbour were transferred by road to the canal.
- 2.5 A site north of Mealmarket Street was archaeologically evaluated (**NJ90NW 1928**) (Cameron 2002, 7) and 3m depth of cotton-grass peat recorded. There was no evidence of medieval features, but the area had been a low-lying marshland in the medieval period.
- 2.6 A number of archaeological interventions have taken place in Queen Street. A watching brief after the demolition of John Smith's Warehouse, 5 Queen Street in 1988 (**NJ90NW 218**) (Cameron and White 1988, 13). Machine trench was dug and development observed over the whole of the demolished warehouse site. Large amount (up to 1.20m deep) of garden soil, mainly undisturbed with small quantity of medieval pottery. Also there was an undisturbed layer over the natural subsoil containing heavily compacted organic remains. This seems consistent with an area which in the later 15th and 16th centuries may have been within the confines of the Franciscan friary (NJ90NW 26) and in the earlier medieval period was

probably used for dumping, lying as it did at least 100m back from the Broad Street frontage. On this site in 1847 a hoard of coins of Mary Queen of Scots was found (**NJ90NW 64**).

- 2.7 Extensive excavation at Marischal College prior to and during the conversion of the building to the headquarters of Aberdeen City Council revealed that there was also undisturbed medieval garden soils and medieval rubbish in the area of the rear car park (now occupied by the multi-story car park) (**NJ90NW 26**, NJ 9425 0650) (Cameron 2009, 11).
- 2.8 12-26 Broad Street was a medieval site with prehistoric horizon excavated in 1973 (**NJ90NW 115**). Building evidence included remains of wattle and daub, half timbering, timber and clay-bonded stonework dating from between the 13th and 15th centuries. One oak corner post survived to a height of 1.3m. Three pits behind these houses produced French, Yorkshire and Rhineland pottery as well as native wares and animal bones, spindle whorls, leather, textiles, bronze and iron objects (Murray 1982, 26-37).
- 2.9 Excavation in Queen Street in 1973 (**NJ90NW 115**) revealed a large 14th century midden with large quantities of animal, fowl and fish bones, leather (boots and shoes), worked antler, textiles, heather, leaves, nuts and shells as well as two bone playing-dice and two finely-decorated spindle-whorls. Slightly earlier in date than the midden were a series of interrelated pits which had been infilled with 14th century rubbish after going out of use. One of them had the timber lining of a wooden vat. These were industrial pits and may have been a late 13th/early 14th century tannery. The rubbish fill of the pits produced much the same material as the midden plus a face-masked jug (Murray 1982, 17-26). A prehistoric horizon consisting of a thin layer of soil which covered the natural sand and gravel produced a large quantity of flint flakes and pebble cores which were possibly of late Mesolithic/early Neolithic date.
- 2.10 Frederick Street and Constitution Street were lined with warehouses and other 19th-century buildings for example Frederick Street School (**NJ90NW 1375**), Shuttle Lane Potato Crisp Works (**NJ90NW 1809**) and Seed Warehouses (**NJ90NW 1802**). The area has probably been very disturbed by 18th and 19th-century building works. Other sites are listed in Appendix 1 (below) and can be located on <http://jura.rcahms.gov.uk/PASTMAP/Map>.



Illus 2 NMRS sites mentioned in text (CANMAP)



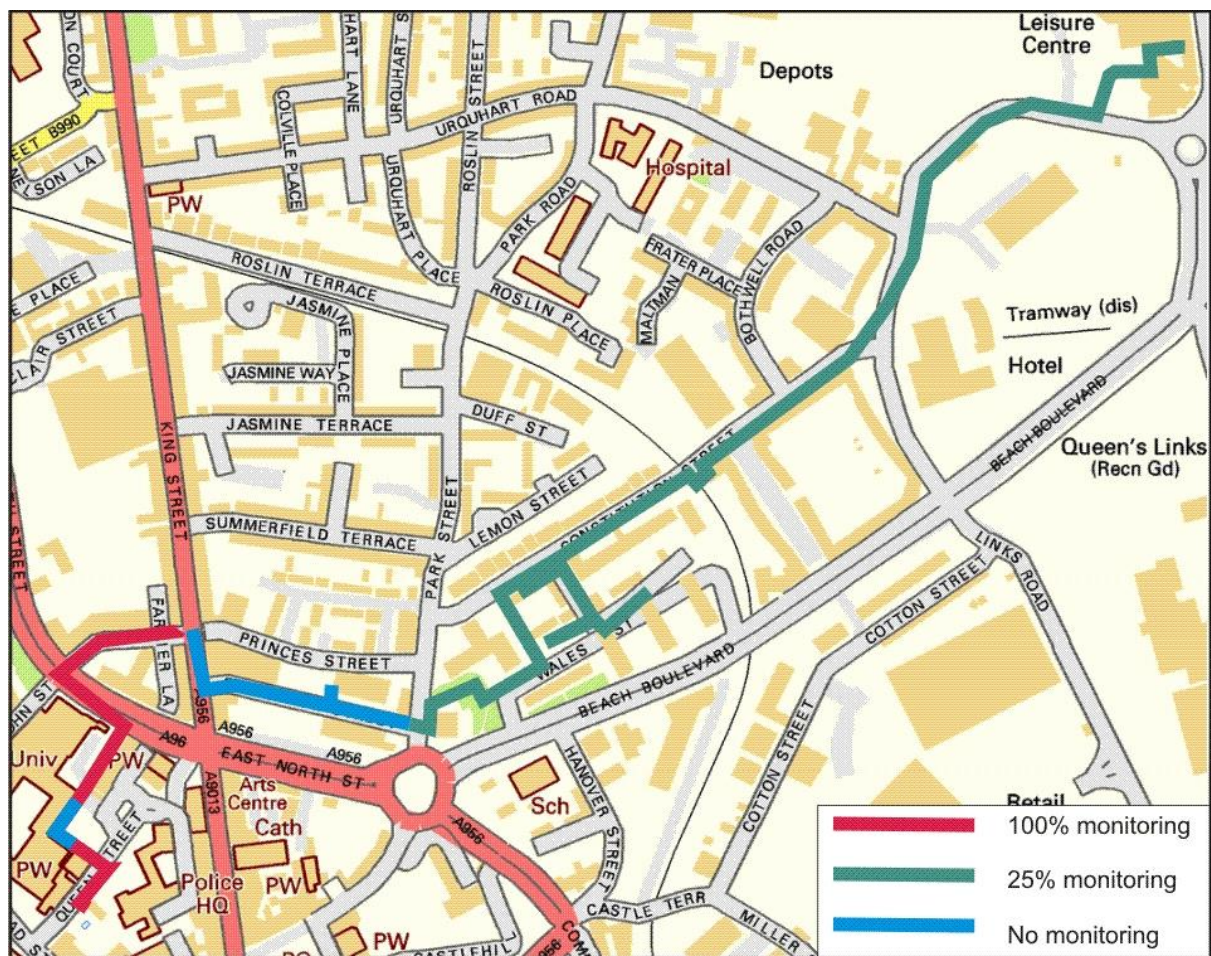
Illus 3 Shuttle Lane (copyright Aberdeen City Council)

3 THE WATCHING BRIEF

A watching brief was maintained on trenches excavated for Aberdeen Heat and Power pipes between Queen Street and The Beach Leisure Centre, Aberdeen between 15 November 2011 and 1 May 2012. Trenches were monitored according to Illus 4 (below). All the trenches were c 1.2m deep and c 1.2m wide.

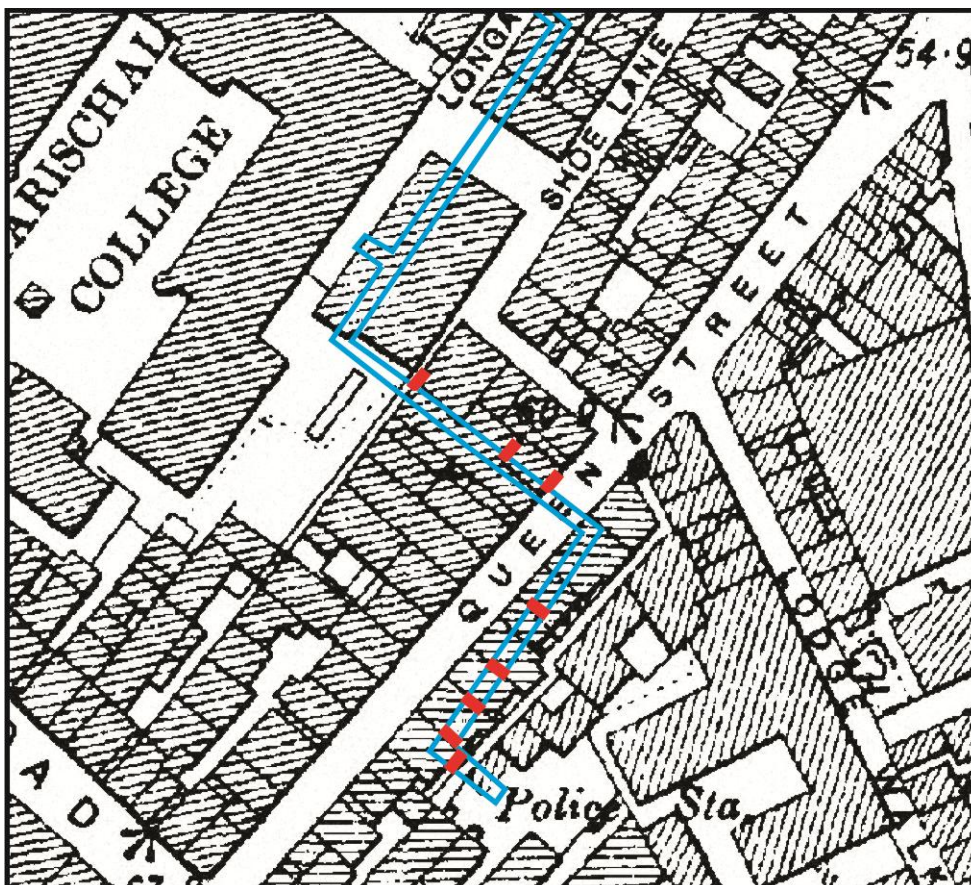
3.1 QUEEN STREET

100% of this street was monitored apart from areas between Marischal College and Queen Street which were known to have been previously disturbed.



Illus 4 Location plan (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2011).

Remains of 19th-century wall foundations were recorded in Queen Street (Illus 6; Illus 7); details are available in archive. The level of the natural sand was recorded immediately below the current road and pavement surfaces and no earlier features were encountered during this work.



Illus 5 First Edition Ordnance Survey map showing trench (in blue) and recorded walls (in red)



Illus 6 Queen St: wall foundation (left) cut into natural sand (right)

3.2 WEST NORTH STREET

100% of trenching in West North Street was monitored; a previous cobbled surface was recorded but all other layers recorded were make-up for previous roads or service trenches.



Illus 7 West North Street section showing previous road surface (cassies/granite cobbles)

3.3 MEALMARKET STREET

100% of trenching in Mealmarket Street was monitored. The natural gravels were up to 1m below the current road surface and above this garden soils survived *in situ* at the west end of the street whereas at the east the ground had been made up using soil and sand infill. This infill probably dates to the 19th century when the level of this area was raised to create King Street.



Illus 8 Mealmarket Street showing natural gravels with garden soil above

3.4 CONSTITUTION STREET

25% of trenching in Constitution Street was monitored; all layers under the current road surface were infill including many service trenches. No archaeologically significant contexts were recorded.



Illus 9 Constitution Street trench

3.5 LINKS ROAD

25% of trenching in Links Road was monitored; natural sand deposits were recorded immediately below the current pavement and no archaeologically significant layers or features were recorded.



Illus 10 Links Road trench showing natural sand below current road

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that no further archaeological work is required during this current development.

5 REFERENCES

- Cameron, A (1996) 'Queen's Links (Aberdeen parish), demolition debris', *Discovery Excav Scot*, 5.
- Cameron, A (2002) 'Mealmarket Street, Aberdeen City (Aberdeen parish), assessment', *Discovery Excav Scot*, vol.3, 7.
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- Murray, JC (ed) 1982 Excavations in the medieval burgh of Aberdeen 1973-81. Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Monograph Series, 2. Discovery and Excavation in Scotland for 1973, 3. Council for Scottish Archaeology.
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APPENDIX 1 PHOTOGRAPHS

QUEEN STREET



DSC_0001



DSC_0002



DSC_0003



DSC_0004



DSC_0005



DSC_0006



DSC_0007



DSC_0008



DSC_0009



DSC_0010



DSC_0011



DSC_0012



DSC_0013



DSC_0014



DSC_0015



DSC_0016



DSC_0017



DSC_0018



DSC_0019



DSC_0020



DSC_0021



DSC_0022



DSC_0023



DSC_0024



DSC_0025



DSC_0026



DSC_0027



DSC_0028



DSC_0029



DSC_0030



DSC_0031



DSC_0032



DSC_0033



DSC_0034



DSC_0035



DSC_0036



DSC_0037



DSC_0038



DSC_0039



DSC_0040



DSC_0041



DSC_0042



DSC_0043



DSC_0044



DSC_0045



DSC_0046



DSC_0047



DSC_0048



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DSC_0050



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DSC_0052



DSC_0053



DSC_0054



DSC_0055



DSC_0056



DSC_0057



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DSC_0060



DSC_0061



DSC_0062



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DSC_0099



DSC_0100



DSC_0114



DSC_0115



DSC_0116



DSC_0117



DSC_0118



Photo no	Description	Facing
Queen Street		
DSC_0001-0002	Queen St showing trench, St Nicholas House and Greyfriars church	W
DSC_0003-0008	Queen St showing trench & Greyfriars church	NW
DSC_0009	Queen St showing trench, St Nicholas House and Greyfriars church	
DSC_0010-11	S end Tr 1 showing link into Town House undergroup car park	W
DSC_0012-13	Tr 1 location	N
DSC_0014	Trench location	NE
DSC_0015-16	Trench 2 W end showing sewer	W
DSC_0017-20	Trench 2 W end showing sewer	N
DSC_0021-26	F2	N
DSC_0027-28	F2	NW
DSC_0029-30	F2	S
DSC_0031-32	F2	S
DSC_0033-34	Trench 2	W
DSC_0035-42	F3	N
DSC_0043-51	Trench 2	E
DSC_0053-62	F4 showing natural subsoil (right)	N
DSC_0063-64	F4 showing natural subsoil (right)	NE
DSC_0065-66	F4 showing natural subsoil (right)	N
DSC_0067-68	F4 showing natural subsoil (top)	E
DSC_0069-70	Trench 2	W
DSC_0071-74	F4 showing natural subsoil (right)	NE
DSC_0075-78	Trench 2	W
DSC_0079-81	Trench 2 natural	E
DSC_0082-84	F5	N

DSC_0085-90	F5	S
DSC_0091-93	Trench 2 east end of trench	E
DSC_0094-97	Trench 2 F5	N
DSC_0098-100	Trench 2 east end of trench	ENE
DSC_0114-117	Trench 2 east end of trench	W
DSC_0118	Trench 2 east end of trench	NW
DSC_0119-120	Trench 2 east end of trench	E
DSC_0121-124	Trench 2 east end of trench	W
DSC_0128-130	Trench 2 east end of trench showing natural	NE
DSC_0130-31	Trench 2 east end of trench	NW
PB140001-2	Trench 1	N
PB140003	Trench 1	NW

WEST NORTH STREET



DSC_0258



DSC_0259



DSC_0260



DSC_0261



DSC_0262



DSC_0263



DSC_0264



DSC_0265



DSC_0266



DSC_0267



DSC_0268



DSC_0269



DSC_0270



DSC_0271



DSC_0272



DSC_0273



DSC_0274



DSC_0275



DSC_0276



DSC_0277



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DSC_0279



DSC_0280



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DSC_0282



DSC_0283



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DSC_0301



DSC_0302



DSC_0303



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MEALMARKET STREET



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DSC_0104



DSC_0105



DSC_0106



DSC_0107



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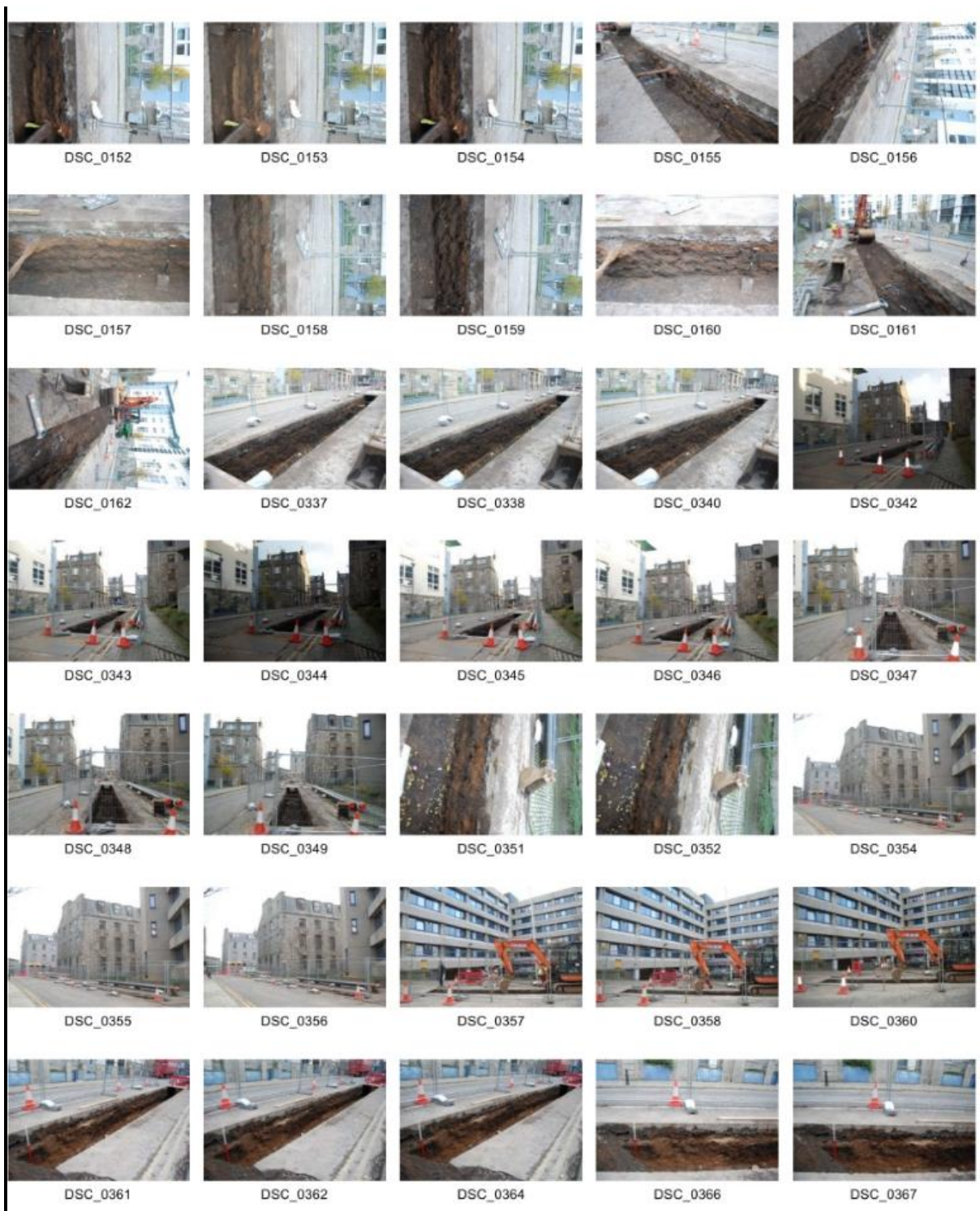
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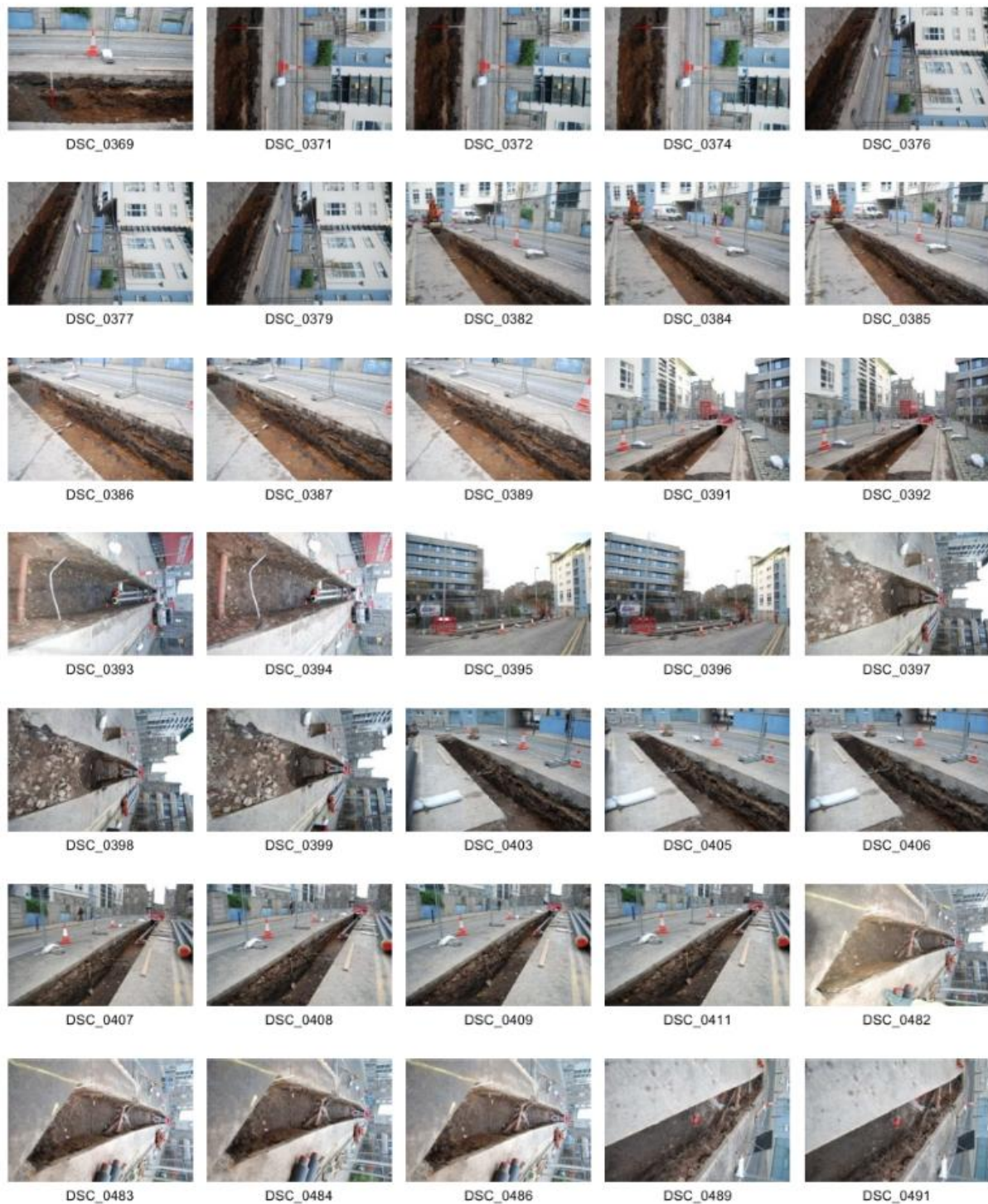
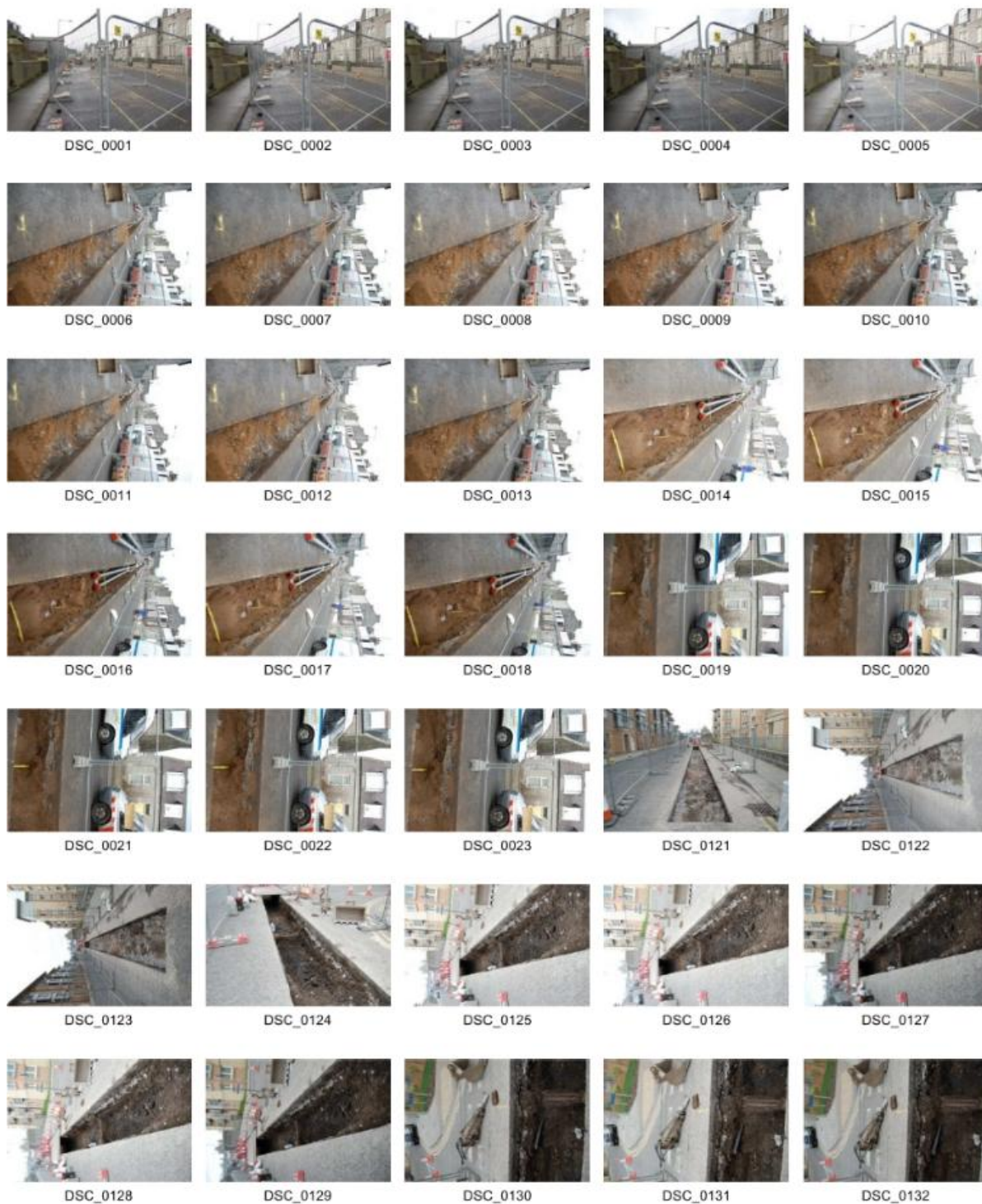




Photo no	Description	Facing
Mealmarket Street		
DSC_0101-104	East end of trench with King St in background	NE
DSC_0105-107	Trench section showing bands of soil and sand	N
DSC_0108-112	East end of trench	NW
DSC_0113	Trench showing Mealmarket Street site in background	
DSC_0125-127	East end of trench with King St in background	NE
DSC_0133-134		E
DSC_0135-138		NE
DSC_0139		SE
DSC_0140-143		NW
DSC_0144-145		N
DSC_0146-149		ENE
DSC_0150-154		N
DSC_0155-156		NW
DSC_0157-160		S
DSC_0161-162		WNW
DSC_0337-340		NE
DSC_0342-346		ENE
DSC_0347-349		E
DSC_0351-352		S
DSC_0354-356		SE
DSC_0357-360		S
DSC_0361-364		NE
DSC_0366-374		N
DSC_0376-389		NW
DSC_0391-392		ENE
DSC_0393-394		E
DSC_0395-396		WSW
DSC_0397-399		E
DSC_0403-406	Showing garden soil at base of trench	NW

DSC_0407-411	Showing garden soil at base of trench	NE

CONSTITUTION STREET





DSC_0133



DSC_0134



DSC_0135



DSC_0136



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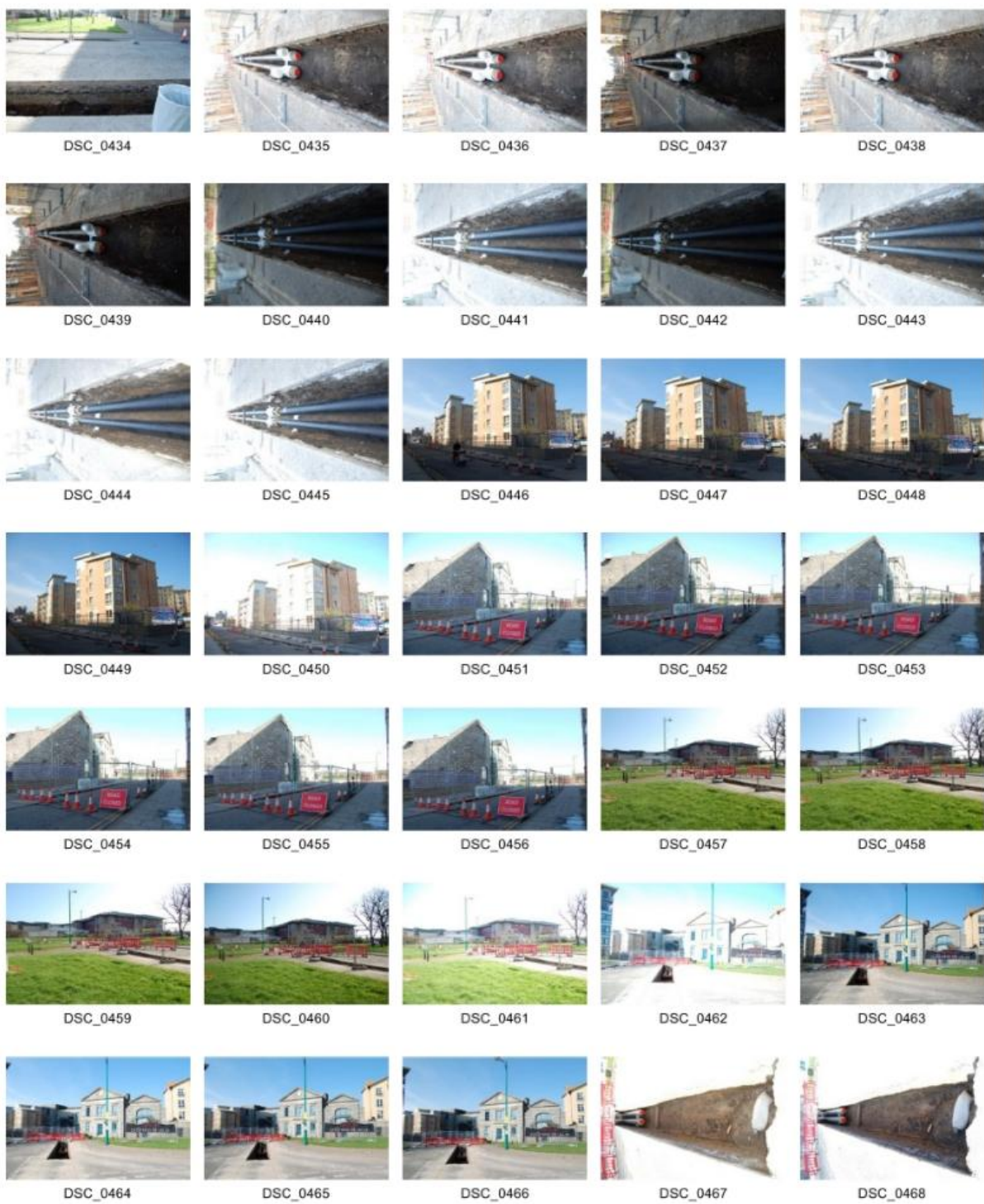
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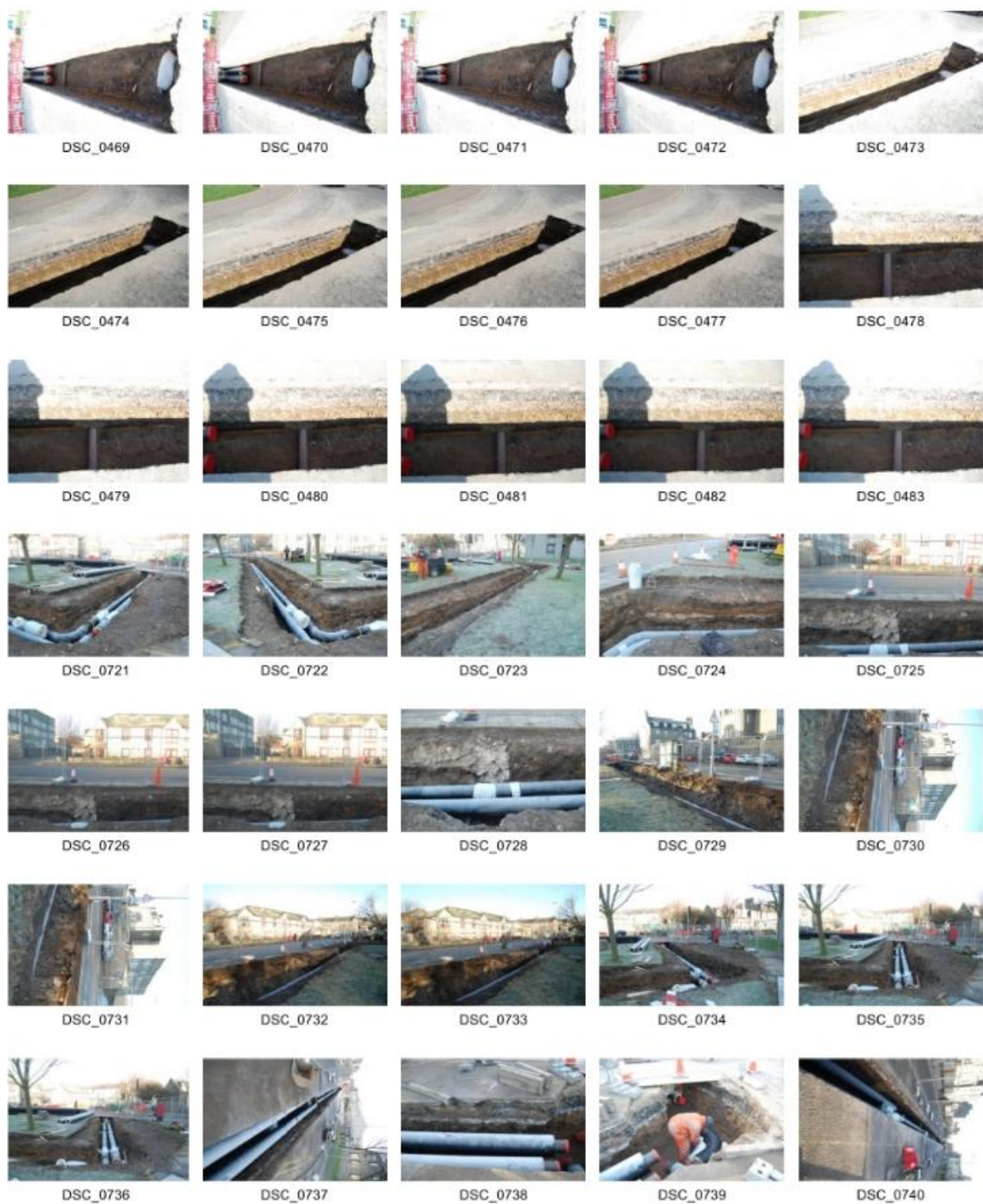


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DSC_0750



IMGP9576



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IMGP9578



IMGP9579



IMGP9580



IMGP9581



IMGP9582



IMGP9583



IMGP9584



IMGP9585



IMGP9586



IMGP9587



IMGP9588

Photo no	Description	Facing
Constitution Street		
DSC_0001-0023	22.2.12	
DSC_0121-0160	13.3.12	
DSC_721-750	7.2.12	
IMPG9576-9588	13.2.12	

LINKS ROAD



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DSC_0548



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DSC_0550



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DSC_0560



DSC_0561

Photo no	Description	Facing
Links Road		
DSC_0545-549	Links Road (near Junction east end Constitution St)	S
DSC_0550-554	Links Road (near Junction east end Constitution St)	NNE
DSC_0555-559	Links Road (near Junction east end Constitution St)	NE
DSC_0560-561	Links Road (near Junction east end Constitution St)	SSW