

Gilmerton Road Cycle Ramp

Edinburgh

Watching Brief: September 2018

for

RJ McLeod

September 2018



Excavation in progress

Addyman Archaeology

Archaeology Heritage Consultancy Architecture

Addyman Archaeology

The Old Printworks, 77a Brunswick Street, Edinburgh EH7 5HS
admin@addyman-archaeology.co.uk
0131 555 4678

Gilmerton Road Cycle Ramp

Edinburgh

Watching Brief: September 2018

Job number 2359

September 2018

by Elizabeth Jones

Contents

Illustrations

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. | <i>Introduction</i> | 3 |
| | <i>i. Background</i> | 3 |
| | <i>ii. Site location and setting</i> | 3 |
| 2. | <i>Historical Summary</i> | 5 |
| 3. | <i>Methodology</i> | 6 |
| 4. | <i>Results</i> | 6 |
| 5. | <i>Discussion</i> | 9 |
| 6. | <i>References</i> | 9 |
| <i>Appendix A</i> | <i>Context Register</i> | 10 |
| <i>Appendix B</i> | <i>Photograph Register</i> | 11 |
| <i>Appendix C</i> | <i>DES entry</i> | 12 |

Illustrations

List of Figures

| | | |
|----------|---|---|
| Figure 1 | Site location | 4 |
| Figure 2 | Edinburghshire, Sheet 7 (includes: Cranston; Dalkeith; Edinburgh; Inveresk; Newbattle; Newton; Tranent) Survey date: 1852-3 Publication date: 1854 | 5 |
| Figure 3 | Edinburghshire Sheet VIII.NW (includes: Dalkeith; Edinburgh; Lasswade; Newton) Publication date: 1895 Date revised: 1893 Approximate site location in red | 6 |
| Figure 4 | Location of features | 8 |

List of Plates

| | | |
|---------|---|---|
| Plate 1 | Compound area, looking north-east, with furrow trace in foreground | 7 |
| Plate 2 | Ramp area, looking north-west showing linear feature [010] | 7 |
| Plate 3 | Ramp area, looking south-east showing linear feature [010] | 7 |
| Plate 4 | Ramp area, looking north-west, showing linear feature [010] from other side of spoil heap | 7 |

Unless otherwise stated, all content is the copyright of Simpson & Brown *Architects* with Addyman Archaeology.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Stuart Robertson and Graeme Barr at RJ McLeod for assistance during the Watching Brief and to Jimmy, the machine driver for his cooperation.

Gilmerton Road Cycle Ramp

Edinburgh

Watching Brief

Executive Summary

Addyman Archaeology undertook a watching brief at Gilmerton Road, Edinburgh during topsoil stripping for the construction of a new cycle access ramp; the compound area to the east was also monitored during the topsoil strip. Gilmerton Road lies on the route of a Roman road associated with the Roman fort at Elginhaugh.

Traces of broad rig and furrow cultivation were observed running east to west across the area of the site; furrows were up to 2m wide and 6-7m apart. In the ramp area a substantial industrial linear feature was recorded, running from the north-west, at the junction with the railway cutting, to south-east across the site. This was 9m wide, with vertical sides. The upper fill comprised 0.2m of ash and cinders and was very soft; the lower fill was dark brown silty clay. The feature had vertical sides and appeared to be at least 1m in depth; it petered out at the north-west end. It contained 19th/20th century ceramic within the fill and is thought to relate to mining/quarrying in the area, as depicted on OS maps on the opposite side of the road or to the construction of the railway line itself.

1. Introduction

i. Background

Addyman Archaeology was contracted by RJ McLeod (Contractors) Ltd to undertake an archaeological Watching Brief in relation to works being undertaken at land 201m northeast of 600 Gilmerton Road, Edinburgh, for the construction of a new cycle access ramp. The Watching Brief was undertaken as part of an archaeological planning condition associated with the proposed development of a new public access ramp from Gilmerton Road, linking to a shared use path along the former railway (planning ref: 17/00828/FUL). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was submitted to John Lawson with details of the proposed methodology to be undertaken.

The site lies within a field designated as green belt land, 201m north east of 600 Gilmerton Road and is bounded by a disused railway line. The site lies along the route of a Roman road associated with the fort at Elginhaugh. This route is an extension of Dere Street, the main north-south Roman road in eastern Britain and therefore possesses some archaeological potential.

A record of the work (*OASIS ID: addymana1-329272*) has been deposited with the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) website hosted by the Archaeological Data Service and with *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (DES), the annual publication of fieldwork by Archaeology Scotland.

This report contains maps reproduced under licence by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland (NLS).

ii. Site location and setting

The site, an irregular sub-rectangular area of c. 0.29 hectares, lies on the southern flank of the disused Edinburgh to Hawick branch railway line (now a cycle path), on land currently under cultivation and part of a green belt area (*Figure 1*). The land slopes down gently to the east and south.

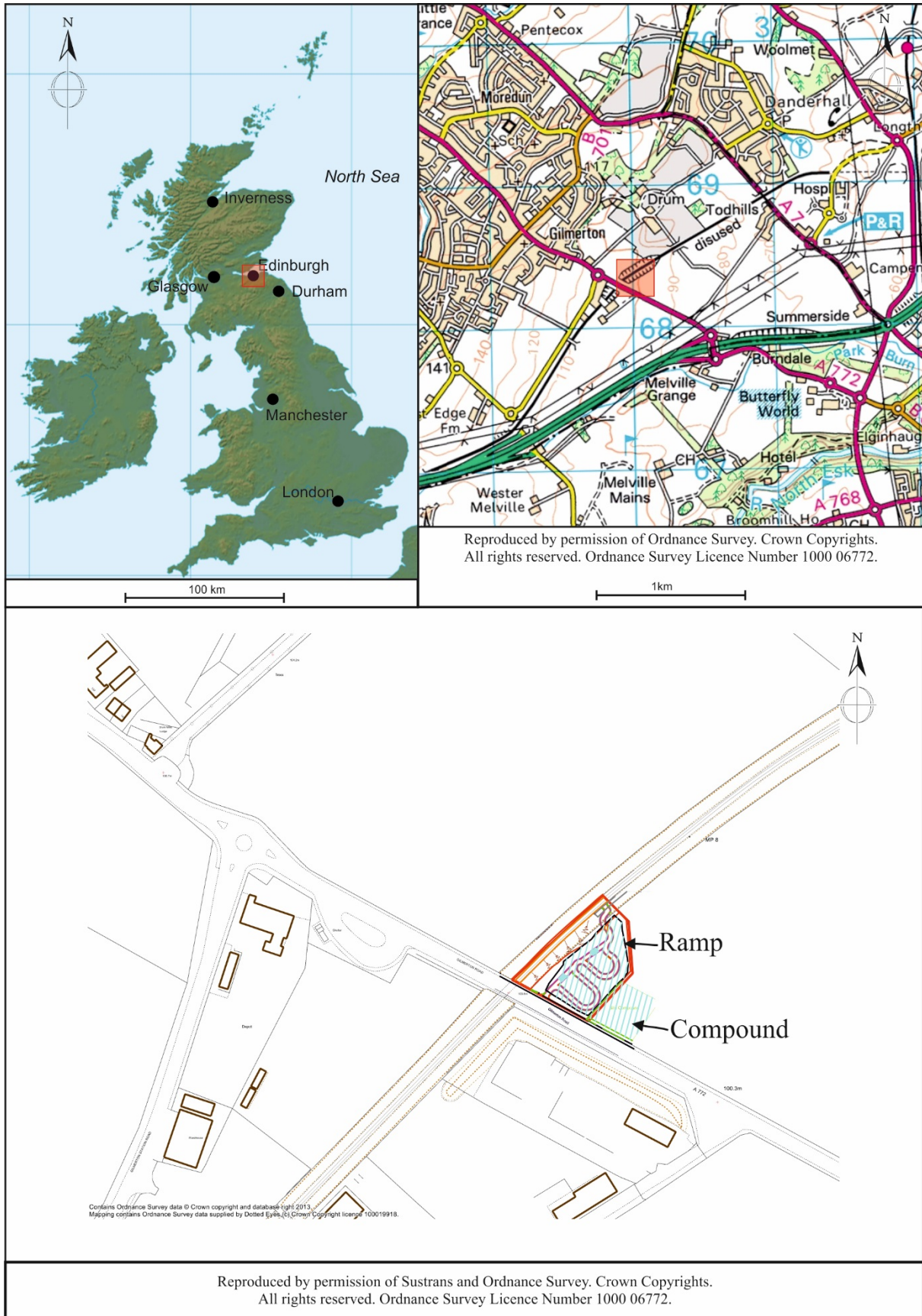


Figure 1 Site location

2. Historical Summary

The site lies very near or on the assumed line of Dere Street, the Roman Road here extending from the Roman fort at Elginhaugh and thought to run along the line of the A772 (Canmore ID 51675).

The proposed development area lies immediately south of the policies of The Drum but is outwith *the Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape* boundary. Since the establishment of the Drum estate and its policies, the present development area has been under cultivation.

The north side of the proposed development area, now in use as a cycle path is part of the former Edinburgh to Hawick branch railway line, Millerhill Station to Dalhousie Station section (Midlothian Council HER ref. MEL 9472).

The first edition Ordnance Survey map of the area from 1854 predates the railway (*Figure 2*). The road leading to the Drum estate is to the north of the site, which lies within a large open field. On the opposite side of the road are a number of mine shafts parallel to the road; to the west of these is a Sandstone Quarry. Several further quarries can be seen running to the south in a linear fashion on the wider map.

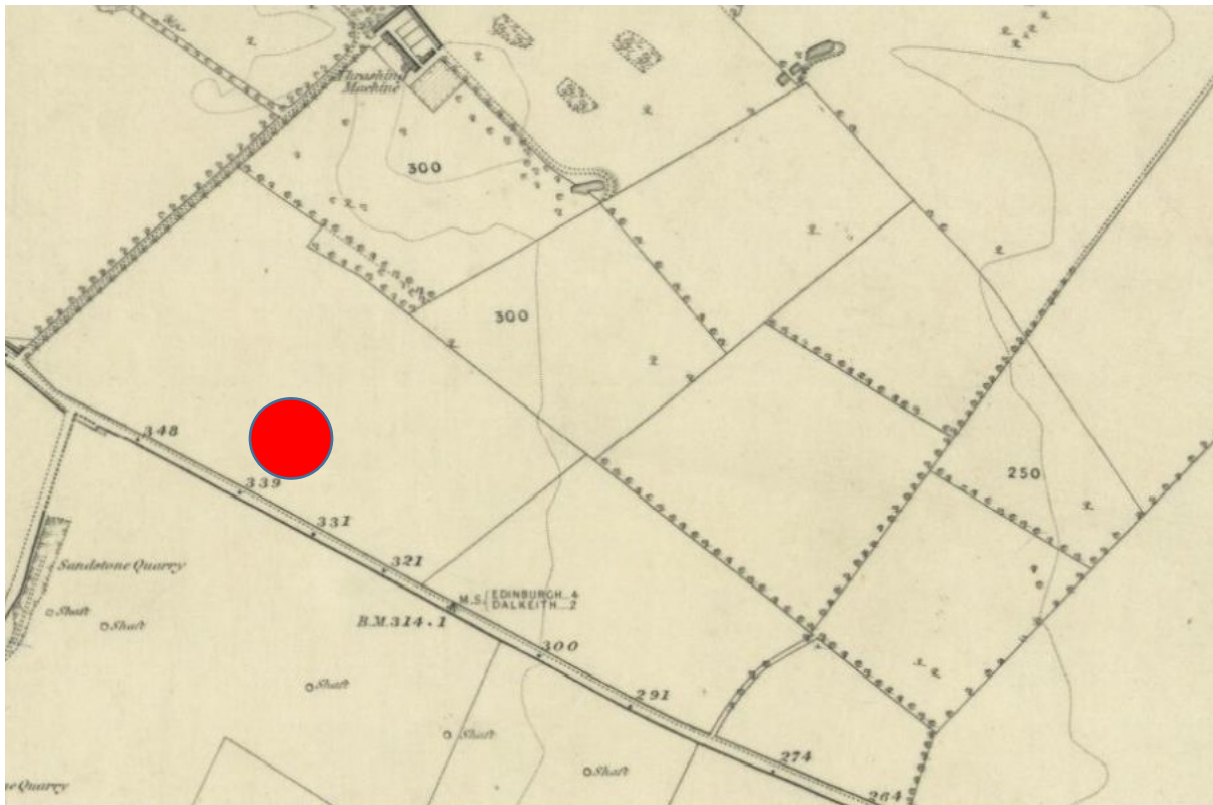


Figure 2 Edinburghshire, Sheet 7 (includes: Cranston; Dalkeith; Edinburgh; Inveresk; Newbattle; Newton; Tranent) Survey date: 1852-3 Publication date: 1854

By the time of the second edition Ordnance Survey (1895) the railway has cut through the open fields and runs beneath Gilmerton Road (*Figure 3*); Gilmerton Station and a number of sidings are evident on the south side of the road. There are 'Old quarries' marked on both sides of the road as well as 'Old shafts' and there is a Colliery opposite Gilmerton Station.

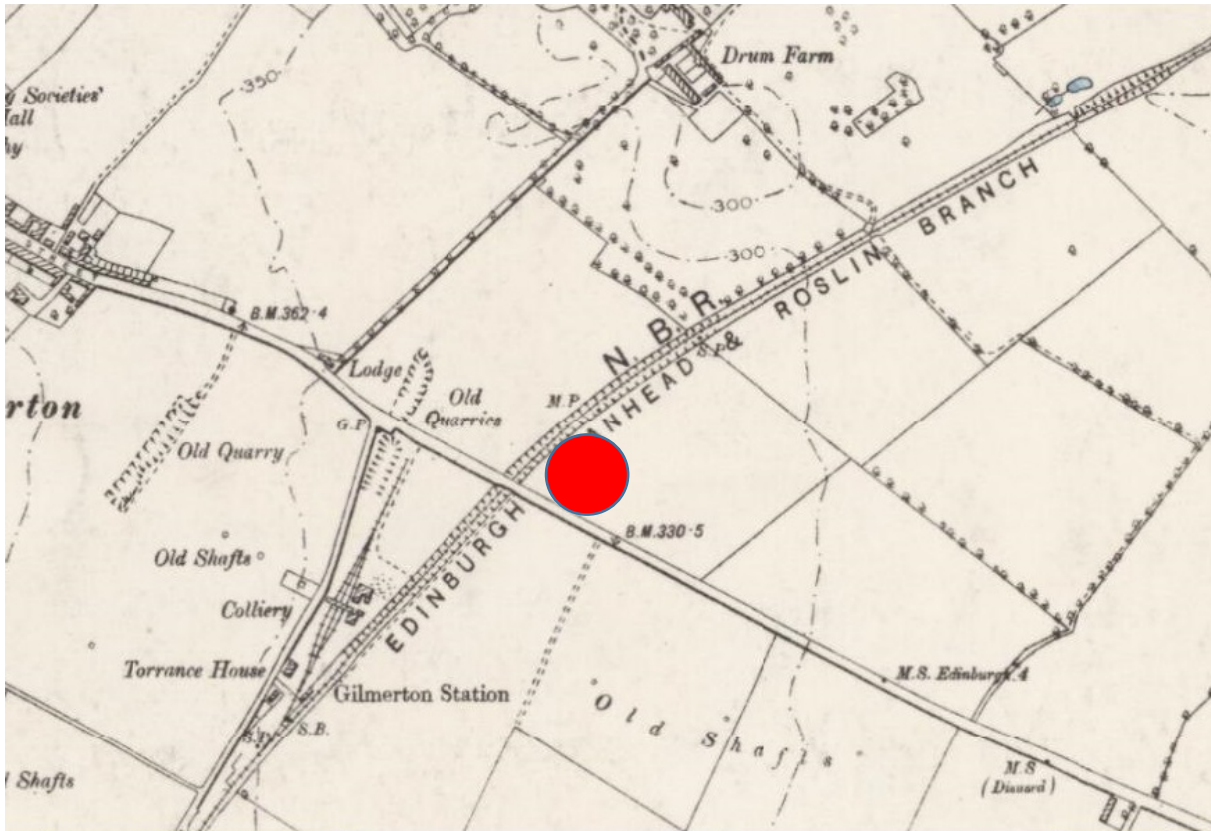


Figure 3 Edinburghshire Sheet VIII.NW (includes: Dalkeith; Edinburgh; Lasswade; Newton)
Publication date: 1895 Date revised: 1893 Approximate site location in red

3. Methodology

The proposed works included topsoil stripping across the area of the ramp 56m x 35m, as well as the compound (35m x 35m).

An archaeological watching brief was maintained on all topsoil removal within the proposed development area. Ground reduction was conducted by a tracked excavator fitted with a flat-bladed ditching bucket under archaeological supervision.

The compound area was stripped first, with the easternmost corner cleared initially, followed by a strip along the western and northern edges. The ramp excavations were begun by stripping along all 4 sides of the area, with spoil piled centrally; this was then moved on to the stripped area to the east for removal by lorry. The central section was stripped in two halves, again with the spoil from the second area moved on to the section previously stripped. An access point was made from the field through the existing hedge at the west end of the compound area, however this area was not reduced to natural subsoil and instead the soil was formed into a ramp for access.

4. Results

Topsoil [001] comprised a loose, rich dark brown silty loam, currently cultivated and containing the remains of a cereal crop. At the uncultivated southern edges of the field the soil was heavily compacted and contained modern rubbish, discarded on the field edges from the adjacent road, and roots from the hedges and trees forming the field boundary. Irregular traces of broad rig were noted running east to west across the compound area (Figure 4; Plate 1). These were at approximately 6-7m intervals, and where surviving the furrows were around 2m wide. Test excavation showed these to be at most 0.1m in depth. The furrows [003], [005] and [007] were filled with mid brown silt [002], [004] and [006].



Plate 1 Compound area, looking north-east, with furrow trace in foreground



Plate 2 Ramp area, looking north-west showing linear feature [010]



Plate 3 Ramp area, looking south-east showing linear feature [010]



Plate 4 Ramp area, looking north-west, showing linear feature [010] from other side of spoil heap

The remainder of the compound area was exposed to natural subsoil [011], consisting of yellowish brown silty clay till with occasional fragmented sandstone bedrock inclusions.

The ramp area also contained furrow traces, as seen in the compound area to the east. At the south-east corner a substantial linear feature [011] was revealed (*Plates 2, 3 and 4*). On further excavation this was found to extend across the whole ramp area from south-east to north-west, where it petered out (*Figure 4*). The upper fill of the feature was loose, grey ashy material mixed with cinders [009], which contained occasional fragments of 19th century ceramic (not retained). Investigation of the feature determined that it had vertical sides and that the ashy fill was confined to the centre of the feature and was 0.2m in depth. This overlay dark brown firm clayey silt [010], which was exposed at the surface at the north-west end. On excavation for the construction of the ramp this material was exposed in section and revealed to be shallow sloping; it was recorded at 0.75m depth (*Plate 5*). The feature was not excavated elsewhere as the material was not required to be removed for constructional purposes.

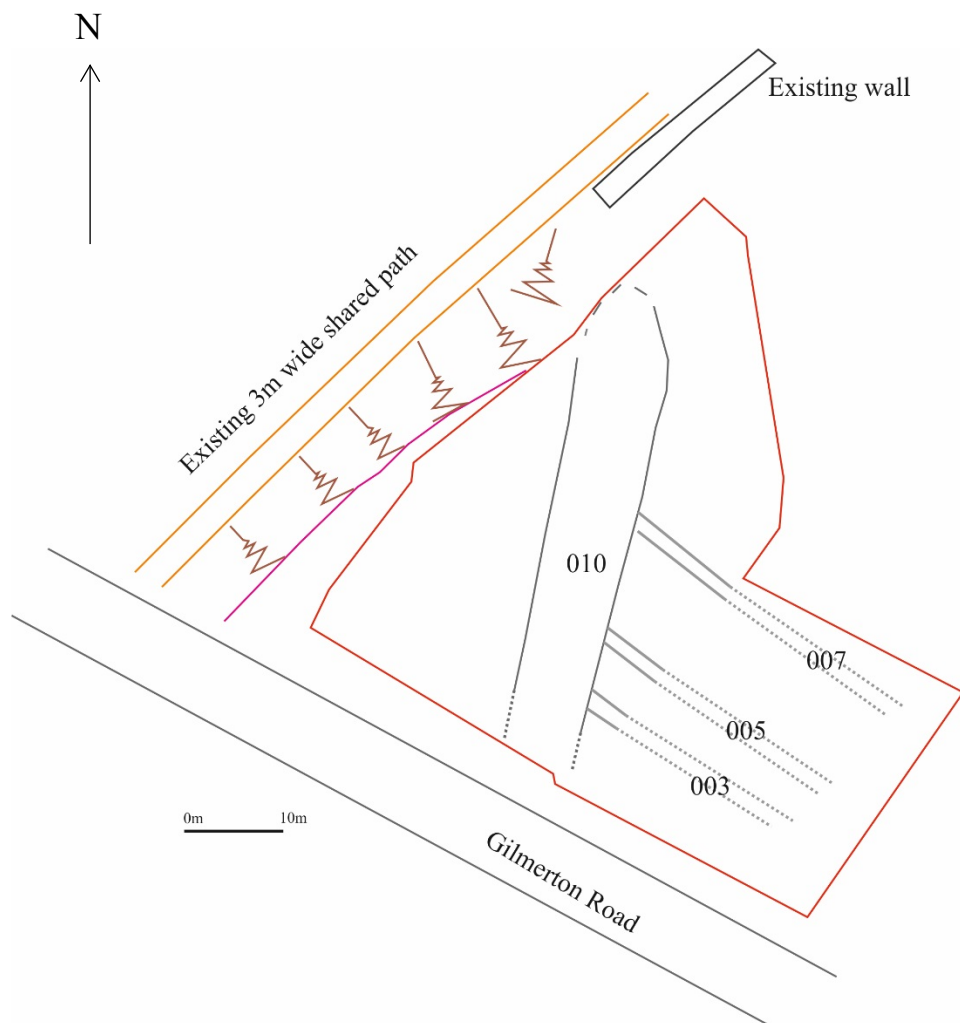


Figure 4 Location of features



Plate 5 Excavations for ramp at north-west end, showing feature [011] in section

5. Discussion

Traces of broad rig and furrow were found crossing the site from east to west, at amplitude of 6-7 metres. Gilmerton village is recorded in the medieval period and the area is shown as being crossed by furrows on Roy's Military Survey of the area; the area has been recorded as being under cultivation since the 18th century establishment of The Drum (Jones & Uglow 2015). No finds were recovered from the furrows.

In the ramp area a substantial linear feature was recorded, running from the north-west, at the junction with the railway cutting, to south-east across the site. Partial excavation of this feature suggested that it became shallower at the north-west and was of substantial depth, given the vertical sides. The 19th/20th century ceramic within the fill and its nature suggests that it is related to industrial activity in the area. The first edition Ordnance Survey map (*Figure 2*, above) illustrates some of this activity in the form of sandstone quarries and mine shafts recorded on the opposite side of the road; the second edition (*Figure 3*) shows the intrusion of the railway, with the old quarries, old shafts and station sidings and Colliery at Gilmerton all shown. As the feature does not appear on the maps, it is thought possible that it relates to the construction of the railway, representing perhaps quarrying for stone or to provide access to the cutting; it appears to have been backfilled with redeposited material and industrial waste.

The watching brief did not reveal any evidence for the Roman Road or any associated features.

6. References

Jones, E & Uglow, N 2015 *The Drum Policies, City of Edinburgh: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment*. Addyman Archaeology unpublished client report.

Appendix A Context Register

| Context No. | Recorded by | Date | Description | Interpretation |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|---|---|
| 001 | EJ | 07/09/2018 | Dark brown silt loam with occasional small stones, D: 0.3m, extends across site. | Topsoil, currently cultivated ploughsoil. |
| 002 | EJ | 10/09/2018 | Mid brown clayey silt loam. | Fill of [003] |
| 003 | EJ | 10/09/2018 | Linear feature, E-W, uneven edges and untraceable in places. W: 2m, D: 0 - 0.1m. | Furrow |
| 004 | EJ | 10/09/2018 | Mid brown clayey silt loam. | Fill of [005] |
| 005 | EJ | 10/09/2018 | Linear feature, E-W, uneven edges and untraceable in places. W: 2m, D: 0 - 0.1m. | Furrow |
| 006 | EJ | 10/09/2018 | Mid brown clayey silt loam. | Fill of [007] |
| 007 | EJ | 10/09/2018 | Linear feature, E-W, uneven edges and untraceable in places. W: 2m, D: 0 - 0.1m. | Furrow |
| 008 | EJ | 11/09/2018 | Loose greysih ash and clinker deposit, contains 19th century ceramic/glass, D: 0.2m. | Upper fill of [010] |
| 009 | EJ | 11/09/2018 | Blackish brown firm clay silt, D: >1m | Secondary fill of [010] |
| 010 | EJ | 11/09/2018 | Linear cut, runs from SE of Ramp area to NW where it peters out. Vertical sides, not excavated. W: 9, D: >1m. | Possible former quarry/mine infilled with 19th C material |
| 011 | EJ | 11/09/2018 | Yellow brown silty clay and sandstone, natural till. | Natural subsoil |

Appendix B Photograph Register

| Image No. | Direction facing | Date | Description | Initials |
|------------------|-------------------------|-------------|--|-----------------|
| 001 | NE | 07/09/2018 | Pre-ex shots of area | EJ |
| 002 | E | 07/09/2018 | Pre-ex shots of area | EJ |
| 003 | E | 07/09/2018 | Compound strip in progress | EJ |
| 004 | E | 07/09/2018 | Compound strip in progress | EJ |
| 005 | E | 07/09/2018 | Compound E side after stripping | EJ |
| 006 | NE | 07/09/2018 | Compound E side after stripping (mostly complete) | EJ |
| 007 | N | 07/09/2018 | W side of compound stripping | EJ |
| 008 | NE | 07/09/2018 | General view of compound strip in progress, showing furrow | EJ |
| 009 | N | 07/09/2018 | Compound strip complete, shows E-W furrows | EJ |
| 010 | NW | 10/09/2018 | Ramp area strip in progress | EJ |
| 011 | W | 10/09/2018 | Furrow E-W Ramp area | EJ |
| 012 | SW | 10/09/2018 | Ramp area NE strip | EJ |
| 013 | N | 10/09/2018 | Ramp E part showing modern disturbance at S end | EJ |
| 014 | S | 10/09/2018 | Ramp E part strip | EJ |
| 015 | W | 10/09/2018 | Ramp S part showing modern pit at S end | EJ |
| 016 | E | 10/09/2018 | Ramp S part showing modern pit at S end | EJ |
| 017 | N | 10/09/2018 | Ramp - modern pit at N end, west side | EJ |
| 018 | S | 10/09/2018 | Ramp - W side with pit | EJ |
| 019 | N | 10/09/2018 | Ramp final strip W side, with pit petering out at N | EJ |
| 020 | S | 10/09/2018 | Ramp final strip W side, with pit petering out at N | EJ |
| 021 | W | 10/09/2018 | Ramp - strip at N end | EJ |
| 022 | S | 11/09/2018 | Ramp - central strip with pit | EJ |
| 023 | SE | 11/09/2018 | Ramp - central strip with pit | EJ |
| 024 | SW | 11/09/2018 | Ramp - general view after central strip | EJ |
| 025 | NW | 11/09/2018 | Ramp, showing pit extending to cutting at NW end | EJ |
| 026 | NW | 11/09/2018 | Ramp, showing pit extending to cutting at NW end | EJ |
| 027 | NW | 11/09/2018 | Ramp, showing pit extending to cutting at NW end | EJ |
| 028 | NW | 11/09/2018 | Ramp after final strip with pit | EJ |
| 029 | NW | 11/09/2018 | Ramp after final strip with pit | EJ |
| 030 | NW | 11/09/2018 | Ramp after final strip with pit | EJ |
| 031 | NW | 11/09/2018 | Ramp SW corner | EJ |
| 032 | N | 14/09/2018 | Ramp, excavation through pit feature at N end | EJ |
| 033 | SW | 14/09/2018 | Ramp, excavation through pit feature at N end, showing shallow cut | EJ |

Appendix C DES entry

| | |
|---|--|
| LOCAL AUTHORITY: | City of Edinburgh |
| PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME: | Gilmerton Road Cycle Ramp |
| PROJECT CODE: | 2359 |
| PARISH: | Edinburgh |
| NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR: | Elizabeth Jones |
| NAME OF ORGANISATION: | Addyman Archaeology |
| TYPE(S) OF PROJECT: | Watching Brief |
| NMRS NO(S): | - |
| SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S): | - |
| SIGNIFICANT FINDS: | - |
| NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures) | NT 29980 68302 |
| START DATE (this season) | 7 September 2018 |
| END DATE (this season) | 11 September 2018 |
| PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.) | - |
| MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields) | <p>Addyman Archaeology undertook a watching brief at Gilmerton Road, Edinburgh during topsoil stripping for the construction of a new cycle access ramp; the compound area to the east was also monitored during the topsoil strip. Gilmerton Road lies on the route of a Roman road associated with the Roman Fort at Elginhaugh.</p> <p>Traces of broad rig and furrow cultivation were observed running east to west across the area of the site; furrows were up to 2m wide and 6-7m apart. In the ramp area a substantial industrial linear feature was recorded, running from the north-west, at the junction with the railway cutting to south-east across the site. This was 9m wide, with vertical sides. The upper fill comprised 0.2m of ash and cinders and was very soft; the lower fill was dark brown silty clay. The feature had vertical sides and appeared to be at least 1m in depth; it petered out at the north-west end. It contained 19th/20th century ceramic within the fill and is thought to relate to mining/quarrying in the area, as depicted on OS maps on the opposite side of the road or to the construction of the railway line itself.</p> |
| PROPOSED FUTURE WORK: | none |
| CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS: | - |
| SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY: | RJ McLeod Ltd/Sustrans |
| ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR: | The Old Printworks, 77a Brunswick Street, Edinburgh EH7 5HS |
| EMAIL ADDRESS: | admin@addyman-archaeology.co.uk |
| ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited) | NRHE (intended) |