

**MORRISON CONSTRUCTION** 

LIBERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL,
229 GILMERTON ROAD, EDINBURGH

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

**April 2017** 



#### Wardell Armstrong Archaeology

Marconi Road, Burgh Road Industrial Estate, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA2 7NA United Kingdom Telephone: +44 (0)1228 564820 www.wardell-armstrong.com



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#### **MORRISON CONSTRUCTION**

Liberton Primary School, 229 Gilmerton Road, Edinburgh

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# PREPARED BY: Ariane Buschmann Buildings Archaeologist Cat Peters Assistant Supervisor EDITED AND APPROVED BY: Frank Giecco Technical Director

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DESK BASED ASSESSMENTS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION
GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY
TOPOGRAPHIC AND LANDSCAPE SURVEY
HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



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#### **SUMMARY**

Wardell Armstrong (WA) was commissioned by Morrison Construction to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at Liberton Primary School, 229 Gilmerton Road, Edinburgh, EH16 5UD (NGR: NT 27475 70649). The watching brief was required to discharge a condition attached to the planning consent. The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) produced in response to advice given by John Lawson, Edinburgh City Council archaeologist, acting as the archaeological planning advisor on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council.

The watching brief was undertaken across several days in March and April of 2017, and monitored all groundworks associated with the new development.

The archaeological watching brief monitored the preliminary groundworks comprising foundation and service excavations relating to the new two-storey educational building for Liberton Primary School. A mixed levelling make-up deposit with a large concentration of modern brick was encountered beneath the tarmac levels forming a netball/ tennis court across the development footprint. This deposit was not breached by deeper excavations for the foundation trenches. The excavations for the new personnel access chamber were through undisturbed soil, but no archaeological finds or features were encountered within this 4m by 4m area.

It is possible that the recorded brick levelling deposit was demolition material from two northwest south-east aligned rectangular buildings which may have been associated with the primary school (constructed in 1956) and no longer required once Kingsinch school was constructed by 1976. The resulting demolition material may have been used as a levelling deposit for the new netball/ tennis court to serve both schools.

No features or finds of archaeological significance were noted during the watching brief.



#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Wardell Armstrong (WA) thanks Morrison Construction for commissioning the project, and for all their assistance throughout the work. Also, WA thank John Lawson, planning archaeologist, at Edinburgh City Council for their assistance.

Wardell Armstrong also thanks John Sutton of Esh Construction, and the staff of J and C Construction, Jedburgh, for their help during this project.

The rapid desk based assessment was undertaken by Ariane Buschmann, who also wrote that section of this report. The watching brief was undertaken by Cat Peters, Ariane Buschmann and Lynne Gardiner. Sue Thompson analysed the brick finds and inputted the information from that research. Cat Peters wrote the watching brief section of this report. The figures were produced by Helen Phillips. The project was managed by Frank Giecco and the report edited by Frank Giecco.



#### 1 INTRODUCTION

# 1.1 Project Circumstances and Planning Background

- 1.1.1 Between Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2017, Wardell Armstrong (WA) undertook an archaeological watching brief at on land at Liberton Primary School, 229 Gilmerton Road, Edinburgh, EH16 5UD (centred on NGR NT 27475 70649) It was commissioned by the client, who intends to build a two storey education building for which planning consent has been granted by the City of Edinburgh Council (planning reference: 16/05385/FUL).
- 1.1.2 A condition has been attached to the planning approval for the development which states "no development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority, having first been agreed by the City Archaeologist".
- 1.1.3 This planning condition was in line with advice provided to the City of Edinburgh Council by John Lawson, Edinburgh City Council archaeologist, in a letter dated 10<sup>th</sup> November 2013 (ref no. 16/05385/FUL).
- 1.1.4 The proposed development is considered to have the potential to impact on the Inch
  House Estate and the medieval village of Nether Liberton, the heritage significance of
  which may be affected by the development application.
- 1.1.5 A watching brief is defined as a programme of 'monitoring and investigation carried out during a non-archaeological activity within a specified area of land or development where construction operations may disturb or destroy archaeological remains' (CIFA 2014a).

# 1.2 **Project Documentation**

1.2.1 The project conforms to advice provided by the archaeological planning advisor John Lawson, Edinburgh City Council archaeologist (10<sup>th</sup> November 2013, ref no. 16/05385/FUL). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was then produced to provide a specific methodology based on the advice for a programme of archaeological mitigation implemented via a watching brief (WA 2017). This was approved by the archaeological planning advisor prior to the fieldwork taking place. This is in line with government advice as set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012).



1.2.2 This report outlines the initial desk-based research results, the work undertaken on site and the results of this watching brief.



## 2 METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Standards and Guidance

- 2.1.1 Archaeological monitoring is required during all groundworks for the proposed new building as it may disturb significant remains regarding the development of Inch House Estate and associated medieval village of Nether Liberton.
- 2.1.2 Following consultation with John Lawson, Edinburgh City Council archaeologist, The City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service, it has been determined that an archaeological watching brief is required during excavation for the proposed new building.
- 2.1.3 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken following the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2014a).
- 2.1.4 The fieldwork programme was followed by an assessment of the data as set out in the Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (CIfA 2014a) and the Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (CIfA 2014b).

# 2.2 **Documentary Research**

2.2.1 A rapid archaeological desk-based assessment was prepared as part of this report, which sets out the archaeological and historical background of the site, and provides an assessment of the significance of all known and potential heritage assets up to 0.25km from the area of investigation.

# 2.3 The Watching Brief

- 2.3.1 The watching brief comprised the monitoring of all intrusive works associated with the current development. This included the ground reduction within the of footprint area of the building, an area of approximately 255m², and the excavation of deeper linear trenches for foundations and services to the new building.
- 2.3.2 The general aims of these investigations were:
  - To allow the monitoring archaeologist to signal that an archaeological find has been made before it is destroyed
  - to provide the opportunity for appropriate resource allocation if the archaeological find cannot be dealt with under the watching brief remit



- to determine the presence or absence of buried archaeological remains within the proposed development site
- to determine the character, date, extent and distribution of any archaeological deposits and their potential significance
- determine levels of disturbance to any archaeological deposits from past building activities
- investigate and record all deposits and features of archaeological interest within the areas to be disturbed by the current development
- to determine the likely impact on archaeological deposits from the proposed development
- to disseminate the results of the fieldwork through an appropriate level of reporting.
- 2.3.3 Deposits considered not thought to be significant were removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to maximise the chance for identification of archaeological remains should they be present. All intrusive groundworks were monitored under close supervision by a suitably trained archaeologist.
- 2.3.4 Only bricks and rubble were encountered, a sample of which were returned to the Carlisle office where they were identified, quantified and dated to period. A terminus post quem was then produced for each stratified context under the supervision of the WAA Finds Officer, and the dates were used to help determine the broad date phase for the site. These bricks will be discarded after a period of six months following the submission of this report, unless there is a specific request to retain them. No environmental samples were taken.
- 2.3.5 A summary of the archaeological work will be published in Discovery and Excavation in Scotland. A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project specification, and the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2011). The archive will be deposited with National Monuments Record Scotland held by Historic Environment Scotland. It is understood that once the report has been signed off and accepted by John Lawson, Archaeologist at Edinburgh City Council the report will become a publically assessable document within the Sites and Monuments Record maintained by the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service. The project archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier (LPS-A).



2.3.6 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology supports the Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an on-line index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded archaeological work. As a result, details of the results of this project will be made available by WAA as a part of this national project. The OASIS reference for the project is: wardella2-282350.



#### 3 BACKGROUND

# 3.1 Location and Geological Context

- 3.1.1 The site is located at NGR NT 27475 70649. It is located in the south-eastern part of the city of Edinburgh, in the area of Inch and Nether Liberton, both having medieval origins. The site's environs comprise of a school property surrounded by various residential and commercial buildings. The site is bounded by Gilmerton Road to the south, Glenhallan Drive to the east, a care home to the west and a park and sports area to the north. The site is located in the south-eastern outskirts of Edinburgh, in the area of Inch. The proposed development site is approximately 255m² in size. At present the site is located within school grounds within a wider urban area largely dominated by residential and commercial buildings.
- 3.1.2 The underlying solid geology within the area of investigation is mapped as sandstone of the Kinnesswood Formation deposited during the Carboniferous and Devonian Periods (approximately 352 to 385 million years ago). This is overlain by superficial deposits of Diamicton of the Devensian Till deposited up to 2 million years ago during the Quaternary Period (BGS 2017).

### 3.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 3.1.3 A rapid desk-based assessment was produced to summarise the known historical and archaeological background of the site and the surrounding landscape to a distance of 0.25km.
- 3.1.4 This report identified that there are no heritage assets within the site boundary, however there are nine heritage assets within the wider search area of 0.25km.
- 3.1.5 There are no heritage assets designated as scheduled ancient monuments recorded within the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 3.1.6 Nine non-designated heritage assets are recorded within the immediate vicinity of the site. The ground works associated with the proposed new building may disturb remains associated with the development of the medieval Inch House Estate and associated medieval village of Nether Liberton. The desk-based assessment concluded that there is a low likelihood that archaeological remains of medieval, post-medieval and modern date may be present within the proposed development site.
- 3.1.7 *Prehistoric*: there is one known heritage asset known for human prehistoric activity in the proposed development area. This is the Cat Stane Standing Stones (Canmore ID 52552), smaller than the general standing stones. It is now incorporated into the



playground of Kingsinch School. The RCAHMS state that it originally stood near the junction of the Dalkeith and Liberton roads at Nether Liberton farm, but was removed at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the road was widened, and lay in the field opposite, until in 1891 it was built into the wall on the road to Greenend at Nether Liberton (ie. Gilmerton Road), re-occupying its original position (Good 1892). It was afterwards taken by the proprietor of Inch House, who set it up in its present position.

- 3.1.8 *Romano-British*: there is no known evidence for Roman activity in the proposed development area.
- 3.1.9 *Medieval*: there is no direct evidence of activity in the vicinity of the proposed development during the early medieval or medieval periods. No early medieval or medieval activity has been recorded in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development, however, the property the site is located on, was once associated with Inch House Estate, which is said to originate from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The land was owned by Holyrood Abbey and passed to the Forresters of Corstorphine who may have been responsible for the construction of the first stage of Inch (Liberton Heritage Project 2017).
- 3.1.10 Post-Medieval to Modern: the site appears too been undeveloped parkland until the construction of the primary school in 1956. The building was sold to Edinburgh Council in 1946. It became a Primary School for the growing local population. In 1956 most of the children moved to the new Liberton Primary School with the remainder staying as St John Vianney until they too moved to new accommodation in 1966 (Liberton Heritage Project 2017). The dovecot at Nether Liberton (Canmore ID 52139), thought to be the manorial dovecot of Inch House, is the largest in the Edinburgh area.
- 3.1.11 To the north of the site is the Clapperfield building (Canmore ID 120104), a residential property built by the architect Stuart Renton in 1971.
- 3.1.12 A number of other buildings of unknown date were listed in a 250m radius at Canmore. This comprises the Nether Liberton House (Canmore ID 120105), Old Mill Cottage and Outbuildings (Canmore ID 120107), and No 6 Old Mills Lane (Canmore ID 258755).

# 3.3 Map Regression

3.3.1 The Inch estate is thought to have been in existence since the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Liberton Heritage Project 2017). A map dating to 1786 (Figure 3), shows the property as rectangular structure to the east of Nether Liberton. The First Edition Ordnance Survey map (Figure 4), surveyed in 1852, presents the estate in more detail. The site is located



- to the west of the property, between the West Lodge and an L-shaped building, probably a stable complex. It is an open area with occasional tree growth.
- 3.3.2 By 1908 (Figure 5), the site is greatly covered by scattered trees. No significant change could be observed until 1949 (Figure 6), when the Cat Stane, the standing stones, were moved to the north of the site. The tree plantation declined over the decades. The Inch Primary School was constructed by 1967 (Figure 7), which included several new buildings and footpaths in the near vicinity of the affected development site.
- 3.3.3 A second school, Kingsinch School (Graham Construction 2017) was constructed between 1967 and 1976 to the north-west of the watching brief site, and this was demolished at some time between July 2008 (Plate 1) and January 2009 (Plate 2). On its site, a care home was constructed, Inch View (Plate 3), which opened in the Summer of 2011 (The Edinburgh Reporter 2017).

## 3.4 Previous Archaeological Work in the 0.25km Study Area

- 3.4.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out in 2010 by CFA Ltd. during construction works associated with Braid Burn Flood Prevention Scheme at Nether Liberton. Three trenches were excavated prior to the construction of reinforced concrete walls. Two substantial stone box culverts were observed and were thought to relate to the control of water for the nearby former corn mill with one culvert, a mill lade that took the water back to the Braid Burn form and the mill and the other culvert, a side lade that took excess or diverted water back into the Braid Burn before it reached the mill. The watching brief was also maintained during the required demolition works of a section of the road bridge that carried Gilmerton Road over the Braid Burn.
- 3.4.2 Outside the immediate study area, numerous archaeological works have been undertaken. SUAT Ltd carried out a desk based assessment of Dovecot Cottage, 20 Gilmerton Road, Edinburgh (Canmore ID 238016), which was followed by an evaluation of the former nursery garden in advance of housing development.
- 3.4.3 A further evaluation, undertaken in Inch Park identified three box drains, eight lengths of wall, two areas of paving and one pile of stones containing a circular compressed shale disc. The shale disc may have been a sharpening/grinding wheel. All of these features were thought to be part of the designed landscape associated with Inch House, which was constructed in 1617. These discoveries led to further excavation work in two areas. Two sections of wall, a bank and a culvert were identified and excavated and a relative chronology for these features was established. The



revetment or retaining wall was constructed to contain a bank of redeposited natural and was associated with a culvert. The finds evidence suggested that the wall had been demolished by the early 20th century. It is possible that the earlier wall and culvert represented part of the boundary between Ward Park and Horse Park as depicted on the 1794 estate plan. A single trial trench excavated at Mayfield Road to assess the survival of a mill dam and mill lead did not locate any features or deposits of archaeological significance.

- 3.4.4 A series of archaeological work was carried out at 217b Gorgie Road in July to August 2010 prior to the construction of a residential development (Canmore ID 312317). The desk-based assessment indicated that the proposed development lay within the former Nether Liberton village, and the photographic survey recorded the boundary wall fronting onto the street prior to its demolition. Trial trenching identified a single linear feature, but this did not contain any datable material.
- 3.4.5 Heritage and Archaeological Research Practice Limited (HARP) carried out a programme of archaeological works at 2 Old Mill Lane, Edinburgh (Canmore ID 351684), prior to the construction of an extension. The works consisted of an archaeological watching brief to monitor ground breaking associated with the development. No archaeologically significant remains were uncovered during excavations at 2 Old Mill Lane.
- 3.4.6 Headland Archaeology Ltd was commissioned to undertake a programme of trial trenching at Old Mill Lane, Edinburgh (Canmore ID 341209). The works were designed in response to a planning condition set by City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service. An existing 1950's house on the site had burned down, with a replacement under construction at the time of the fieldwork. Four trenches were excavated around the new structure to test for the existence of archaeologically significant features. A single isolated cut was encountered to the south of the building. It was filled with loose mixed topsoil, ash, clay and stones and is assumed to be a waste pit, most likely relating to the construction of the 1950's house. No further remains were encountered. A section of boundary wall to the SE of the site may date from the early 20th century or possibly earlier.



#### 4 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken between Monday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2017. The archaeological watching brief monitored all excavations associated with the construction of a new building to the north-west of the existing buildings comprising Liberton Primary School.
- 4.1.2 The development groundworks required the reduction by c. 0.25m of the area covering the footprint of the new building, and the excavation of linear trenches to a depth of 0.5m for foundations, as well as the excavation of a service trench and an area up to  $4m^2$  for a new personnel access chamber adjacent to an existing one.

#### 4.2 Results

- 4.2.1 The groundworks associated with the new development required the initial reduction, to a maximum depth of c. 0.25m, of an area 23.5m by 14.5m within a former netball court to the north-west of the main primary school building (Figure 2; Plate 4). This revealed a large accumulation of brick within a mixed levelling make-up deposit, some with writing including 'Whitehill', 'Pentland' and 'Niddrie'. Whitehill Colliery Brickworks was located in Lasswade, Midlothian and was formed in 1890 from the Newbattle and Whitehill Pits. It was largely rebuilt and re-equipped in 1938-9 and by the 1940s, it was producing over 15 million common bricks a year, eventually closing in 1977 (Penforma 2017). Pentland Brickworks are depicted on the 1931 Ordnance Survey map as a row of three rectangular buildings, and the kilns seem to have been demolished in the 1950s (Scotland's Places 2017). The Niddrie brickworks were based at Niddrie, near Edinburgh between 1924 and 1991, built to supply bricks for housebuilding by the Niddrie and Benhar Coal Company (Scottish Brick History 2017). It is likely, therefore, that all of the bricks are of mid 20th century origin.
- 4.2.2 This initial ground reduction was followed by the excavation of foundation trenches running along the north-west, south-west and north-east extents of the new building, each trench measuring 0.8m in width and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m (Figure 2; Plate 5). Box cuts were excavated within these foundation trenches, every 2m, and these measured 0.8m square and were excavated to a depth of 0.8m deep (Figure 2; Plate 6). These excavations revealed more made ground comprising the same levelling deposit including a large number of bricks and brick fragments (Plate 5). No archaeological finds or features were encountered and natural was not reached.



4.2.3 A service trench was also excavated under archaeological monitoring as part of the watching brief, and this occurred to the south-west of the new building and main area of observation, and measured 1m in width and 7m in length, with an additional area of 4m² to a maximum of 4m depth excavated next to an existing manhole (Figure 2). This revealed a mid-brown loose silty soil overlying a loose orange sand (Plate 7). A gravelly deposit was noted at the base of the trench. No archaeological finds or deposits were encountered.



## 5 CONCLUSIONS

## 5.1 **Interpretation**

- 5.1.1 The archaeological watching brief monitored the preliminary groundworks comprising foundation and service excavations relating to the new two-storey educational building for Liberton Primary School. A mixed levelling make-up deposit with a large concentration of brick was encountered beneath the tarmac levels forming a netball/tennis court across the footprint area, and this deposit was not breached by deeper excavations for the foundation trenches. The excavations for the new personnel access chamber were through undisturbed soil, but no archaeological finds or features were encountered within this 4m by 4m area.
- 5.1.2 The 20<sup>th</sup> century bricks (confer 4.2.1), which formed the deposit used as a levelling layer for the netball/ tennis court, cannot have been the result of the demolition of the nearby Kingsinch School, as the court can be seen in place while the school was still in existence (Plate 1). None of the Ordnance Survey maps encountered during the research and post-dating 1976 are at a large enough scale to depict individual sports courts, but it is not shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1967 (Figure 7). This 1967 map does show Tennis Courts to the north-east, so it is unlikely that the one within the site have existed then. It could be that it was built to serve both schools, and therefore dates to between 1967 and 1976. As the brick levelling deposit is likely to have resulted from demolition, and as it would be costly to move such material large distances, it could be that the bricks come from nearby demolished buildings. Intriguingly, two north-west south-east aligned narrow rectangular buildings are depicted to the north of Inch Primary School on the 1967 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 7), and not on earlier mapping. These two buildings are not shown on the 1976 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 8), and it could be that they were associated with and contemporaneous with the Primary School, and no longer required after the construction of Kingsinch School. Thus the demolition material from these mid-20th century buildings may have been used as a levelling deposit for the new netball/tennis court to serve both schools.
- 5.1.3 No features or finds of archaeological significance were noted during the watching brief.

# 5.2 **Development Impact**

5.2.1 The development has not resulted in the loss of any archaeological remains.



#### 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

# **Primary Sources**

A Plan of Edinburgh and the County Adjacent, 1786

First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1855, surveyed 1852, 6inch scale

Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1908, surveyed 1905, 25inch scale

Ordnance Survey Map 1949, 25inch scale

Ordnance Survey Map 1967, 25inch scale

Ordnance Survey Map 1976, 1:10000 scale

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# **APPENDIX 1: PLATES**



Plate 1: Google Earth Imagery showing Kingsinch School to the north-west, 21st July 2008



Plate 2: Google Earth Imagery showing demolition of school/ construction of care home, 1<sup>st</sup>

January 2009





Plate 3: Google Earth imagery showing Inch View Care Home, 31st July 2012



Plate 4: Showing initial ground reduction of building's footprint, facing north-east





Plate 5: Showing the north-western foundation trench for the new building, facing southwest



Plate 6: One of the 0.8m² square box cuts within the foundation trenches



Plate 7: Showing excavations for the new personnel access chamber, facing north-west



# **APPENDIX 2: FIGURES**



Figure 1: Site location.

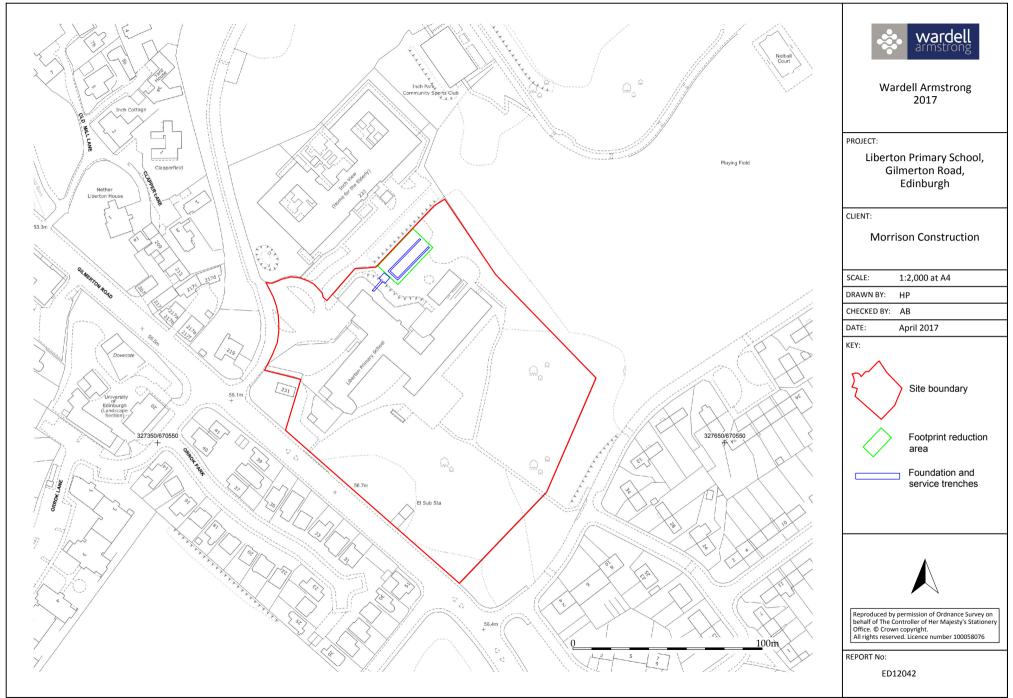


Figure 2: Location of excavations monitored during archaeological watching brief.

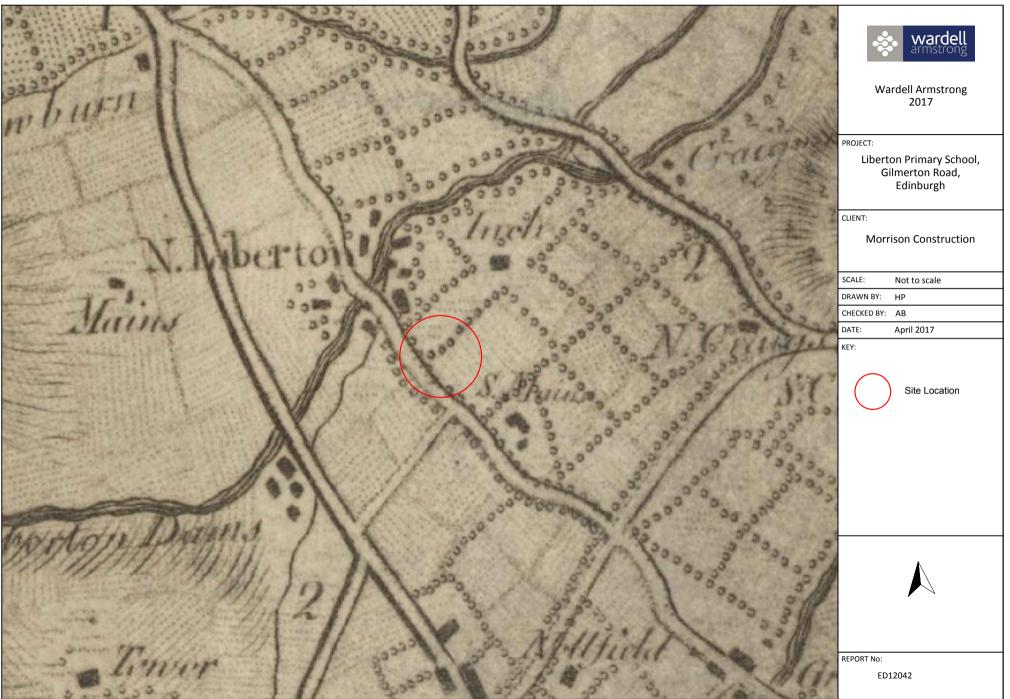


Figure 3: A Plan of Edinburgh and the Country Adjacent, 1786.

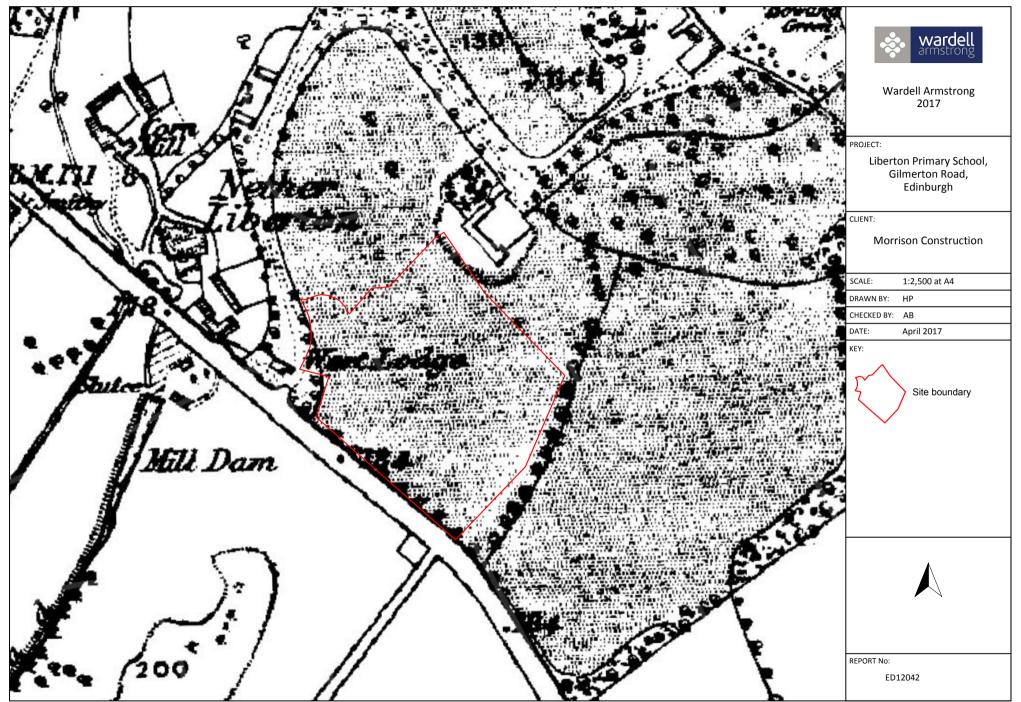


Figure 4: First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1855, surveyed in 1852 (6 inches to 1 mile scale).

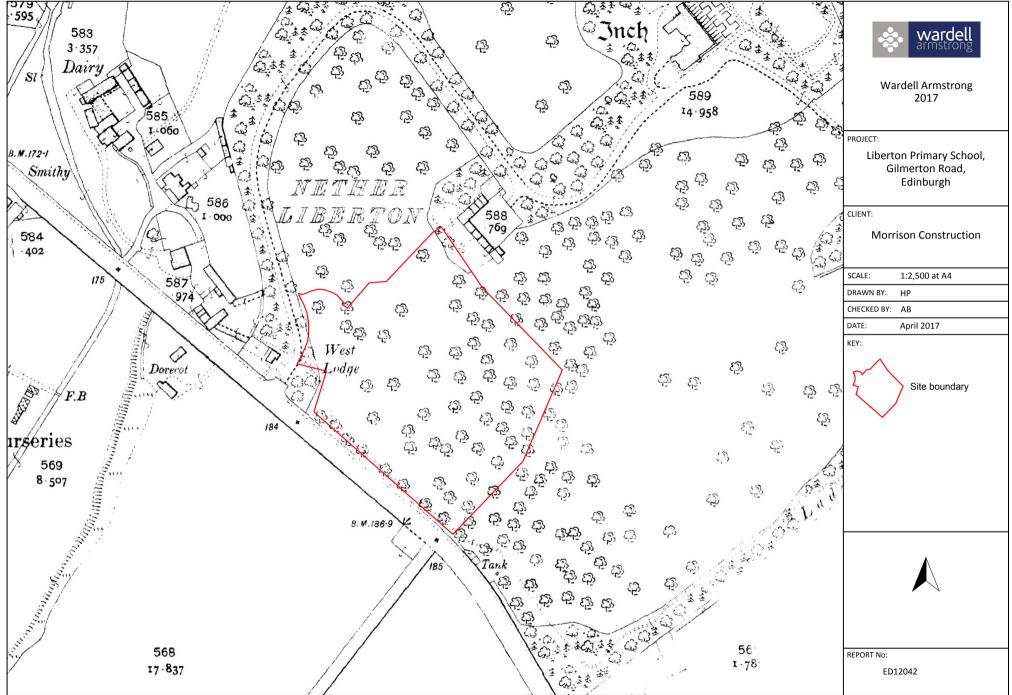


Figure 5: Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1908, surveyed in 1905 (25 inches to 1 mile scale).

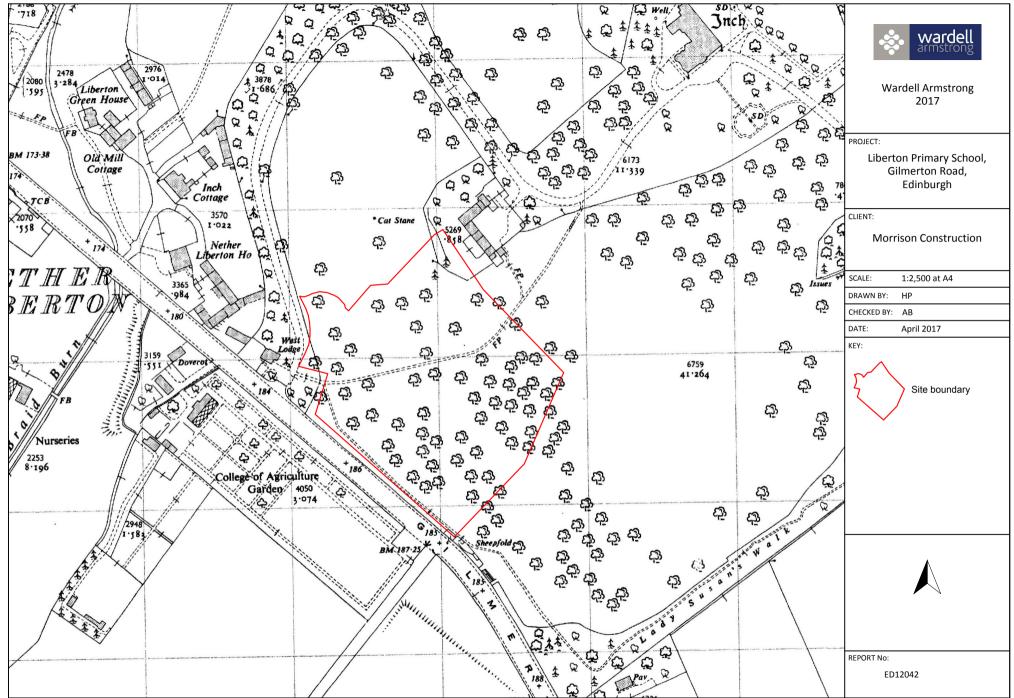


Figure 6: Ordnance Survey Map, 1949 (25 inches to 1 mile scale).

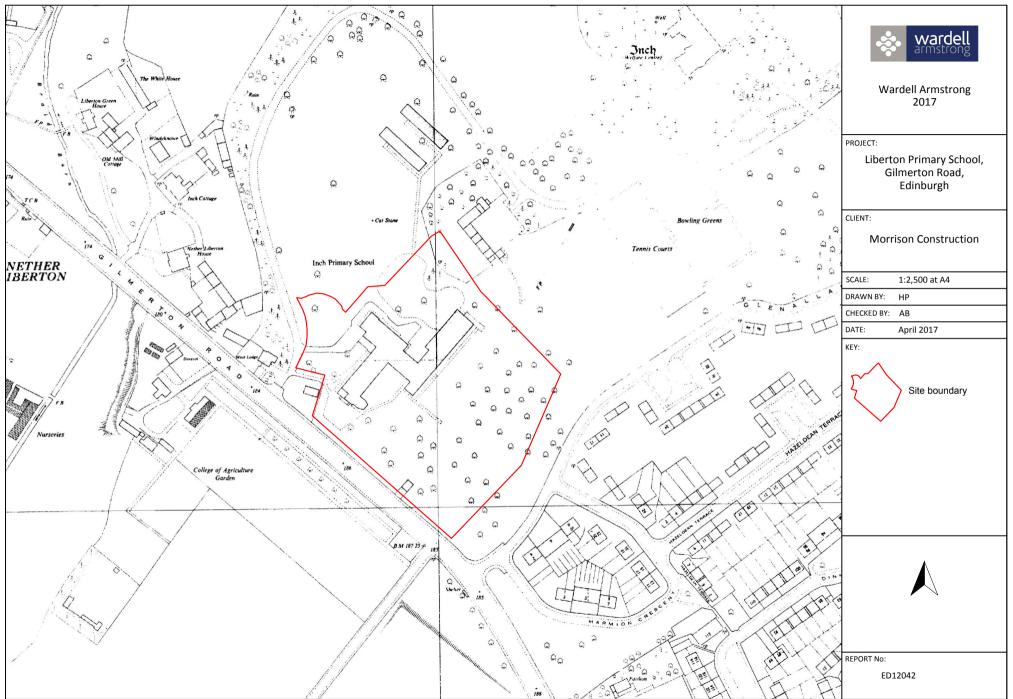


Figure 7: Ordnance Survey Map, 1967 (25 inches to 1 mile scale).

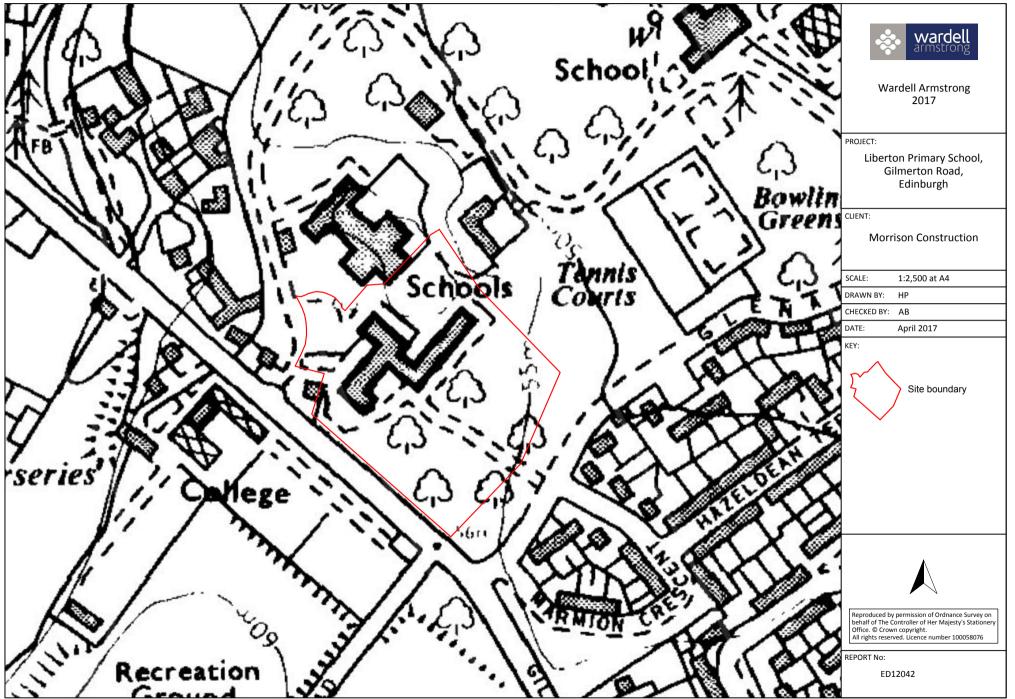


Figure 8: Ordnance Survey Map, 1976 (1:10,000 scale).

# wardell-armstrong.com

STOKE-ON-TRENT
Sir Henry Doulton House
Forge Lane
Etruria
Stoke-on-Trent
ST1 5BD
Tel: +44 (0)178 227 6700

BIRMINGHAM Two Devon Way Longbridge Technology Park Longbridge Birmingham B31 2TS Tel: +44 (0)121 580 0909

CARDIFF 22 Windsor Place Cardiff CF10 3BY Tel: +44 (0)292 072 9191

CROYDON
Suite 8 Suffolk House
College Road
Croydon
Surrey
CRO 1PE
Tel: +44 (0)208 680 7600

EDINBURGH Suite 3/1 Great Michael House 14 Links Place Edinburgh EH6 7EZ Tel: +44 (0)131 555 3311

GREATER MANCHESTER 2 The Avenue Leigh Greater Manchester WN7 1ES Tel: +44 (0)194 226 0101

LONDON Third Floor 46 Chancery Lane London WC2A 1JE Tel: +44 (0)207 242 3243

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE City Quadrant 11 Waterloo Square Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4DP Tel: +44 (0)191 232 0943 SHEFFIELD Unit 5 Newton Business Centre Newton Chambers Road Thorncliffe Park Chapeltown Sheffield S35 2PH Tel: +44 (0)114 245 6244

TAUNTON
Suite E1 Victoria House
Victoria Street
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 3JA
Tel: +44 (0)182 370 3100

TRURO
Baldhu House
Wheal Jane Earth Science Park
Baldhu
Truro
TR3 6EH
Tel: +44 (0)187 256 0738

#### International offices:

ALMATY 29/6 Satpaev Avenue Hyatt Regency Hotel Office Tower, 7th Floor Almaty Kazakhstan 050040 Tel: +7(727) 334 1310

MOSCOW Office 4014 Entrance 2 21/5 Kuznetskiy Most St. Moscow Russia Tel: (495)626-07-67

#### Wardell Armstrong Archaeology:

CUMBRIA Cocklakes Yard Carlisle Cumbria CA4 0BQ Tel: +44 (0)122 856 4820

