



NORTHLIGHT HERITAGE	22 High Street
REPORT: 205	Archaeological Watching Brief
PROJECT ID: 1289	Paisley, Renfrewshire
DATA STRUCTURE REPORT	

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22 High Street, Paisley, Renfrewshire

Planning ref: n/a

NGR: NS 48254 64010

Data Structure Report

on behalf of

Renfrewshire Council

Cover Plate: Test pit 5

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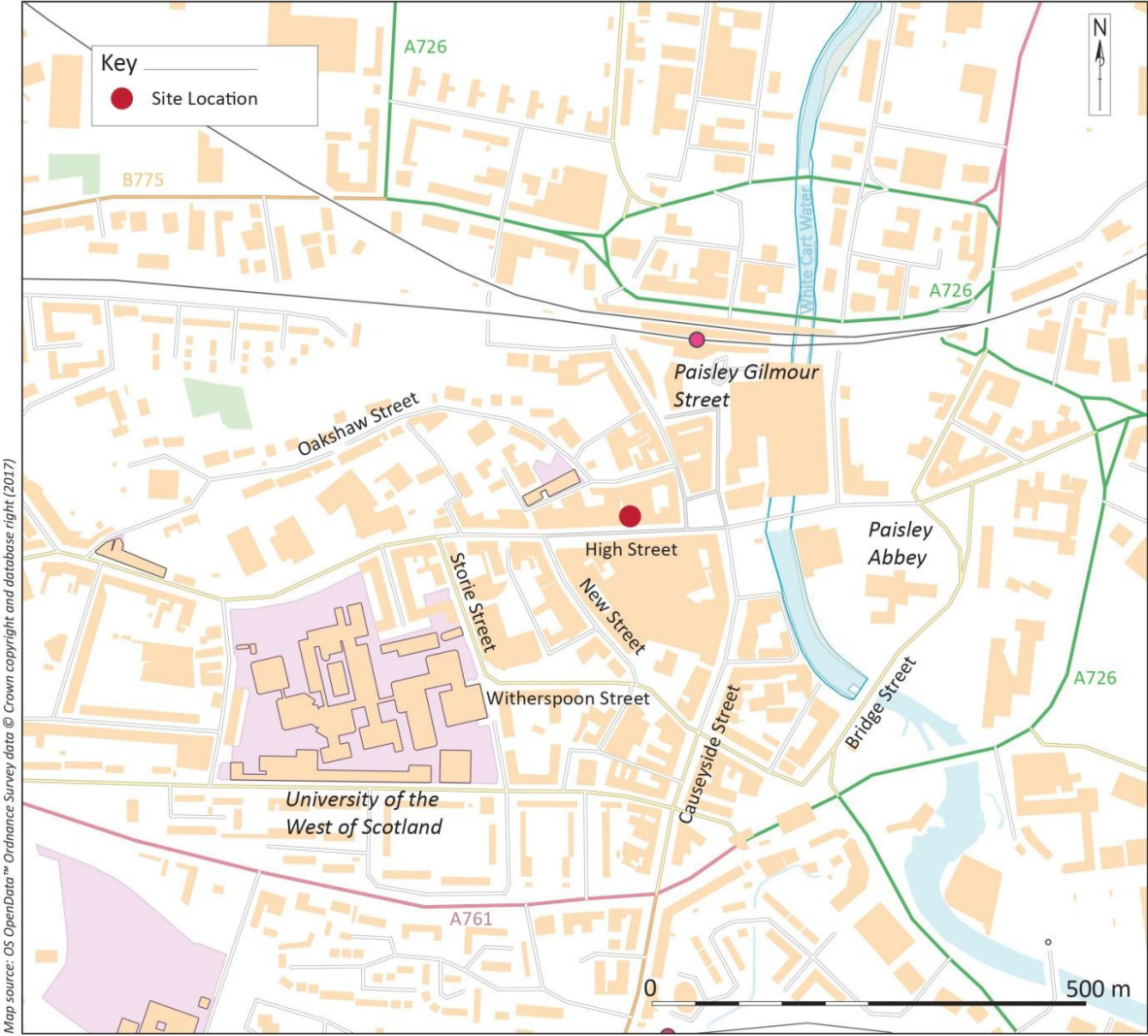
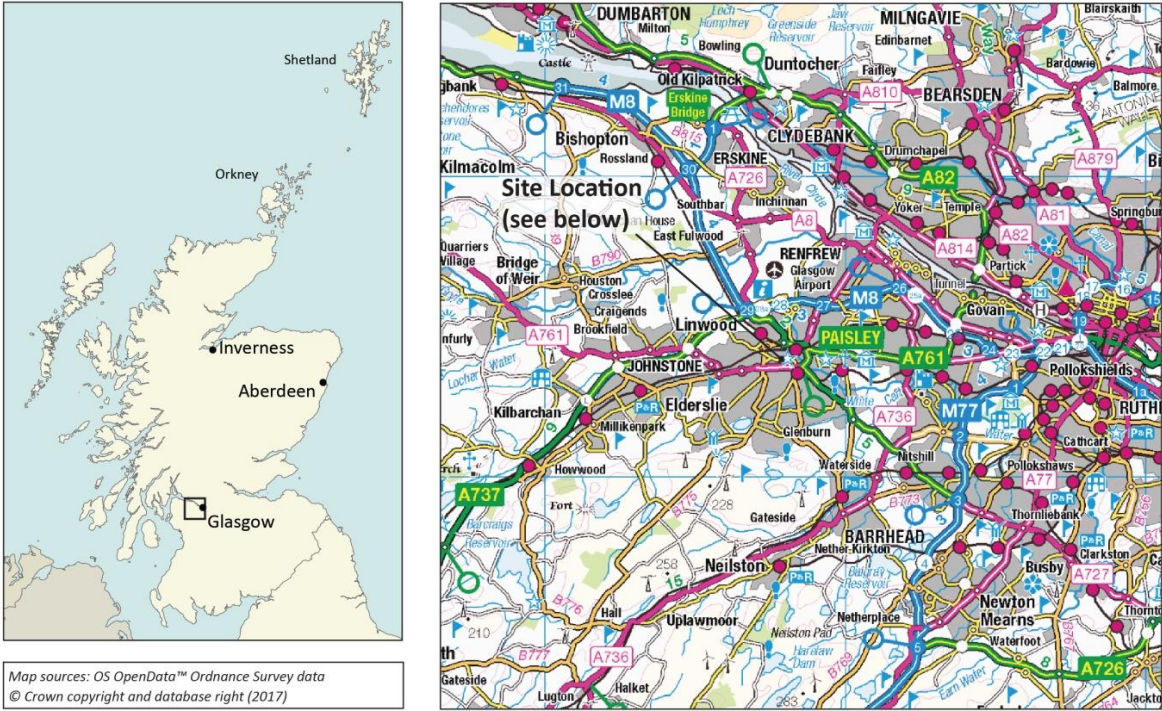


Figure 1: Site Location

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northlight Heritage, on behalf of Renfrewshire Council, during the excavation of five test pits in the basement of 22 High Street, Paisley. The work was carried out between 23rd and 25th October 2017. The archaeology uncovered within the small test pits was limited to the basement walls, foundation stones, levelling deposits and floor surfaces of the current building which was initially constructed in the early 1880's and saw a period of extensive renovation in the 1960's.

1. Introduction

1.1

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken at 22 High Street, Paisley conducted by Northlight Heritage on behalf of Renfrewshire Council. The watching brief took place between the 23rd to 25th October 2017 and involved archaeological monitoring during the excavation of test pits within the basement of the property. These test pits were required to expose the current building foundations prior to its redevelopment into the new Paisley Library.

2. Location, Geology and Topography

2.1

Number 22 is located on the northern side of the pedestrianised section of Paisley High Street at NGR NS 48254 64010 (Figure 1).

2.2

The underlying bedrock consists of Hurler Limestone with overlying superficial deposits comprising of gravels, sand and silt (online British Geological Survey 1:50000 data).

3. Archaeological and Historical Context

3.1

The town of Paisley grew up around a Cluniac priory that was established on the eastern bank of the White Cart water in 1163. In the 13th century this became the site of Paisley Abbey. Developing as a medieval town Paisley became a Barony in 1488 and continued to grow in to a heavily industrialised commercial centre by the end of the 18th century, specialising in the production of cotton and other textiles. The High Street in Paisley leads up to the west from the Abbey precinct and has developed over time from a narrow series of burgage plots to a wider Victorian thoroughfare and, in more recent times, a pedestrianised shopping area.

3.2

The history of number 22 High Street (HER ID: 22920; NMRS ID: NS46SE 380) is detailed in the Conservation Narrative (Sinclair 2017) but is described in brief below. It is believed to have been the site of the townhouse of the Semple family from the mid 15th century until the demolition of that building in 1861. The following building on this site was two storeys in height which stood until the 1880's when the High Street underwent a street-widening initiative. The current building was believed to have been built around 1882. This building comprised four stories with basement and contained shop units on the ground floor, offices above with flats on the third floor along with attic space. Undergoing change and refurbishment over the years the building was extensively renovated in the early 1960's with the alteration of the bottom two floors into larger shop units,

the removal of the Victorian frontage and insertion of concrete pillars and larger glass windows. The building continued as a commercial unit recent years and now lies empty.

4. Summary Objectives

The objectives of the watching brief were:

- establish the presence or absence of any archaeological remains which may be encountered during ground breaking works;
- determine the character, extent and significance of any archaeological deposits encountered;
- excavate and record any significant archaeological features or sites encountered during the watching brief that could not be avoided to ensure preservation through record;
- to make sure that the needs for archaeological conservation and recording are met without causing any unnecessary delay or disturbance to the development.

5. Methodology

5.1

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation of five test pits excavated to determine the nature of the current building foundations.

5.2

The test pits were initially opened using a pneumatic breaker to split through the concrete and bitumen floor surfaces and then excavated by hand using both spade and pick. Each pit was excavated where possible to a depth that allowed the exposure of the current building foundations. Excavation of the test pits was stopped either after the exposure of the foundations or at the level where water was encountered.

5.3

Archaeological features, deposits and finds were recorded by means of conventional *pro forma* sheets. Where appropriate scaled hand-drawn plans were made at 1:20 and sections at 1:10. High resolution digital images were also taken. By the close of the work the locations and dimensions of all test pits were recorded in such a way as to tie them to the OS grid.

6. Results

6.1

The results of the watching brief are given below. In the following paragraphs numbers in round brackets indicate unique context numbers issued to deposits.

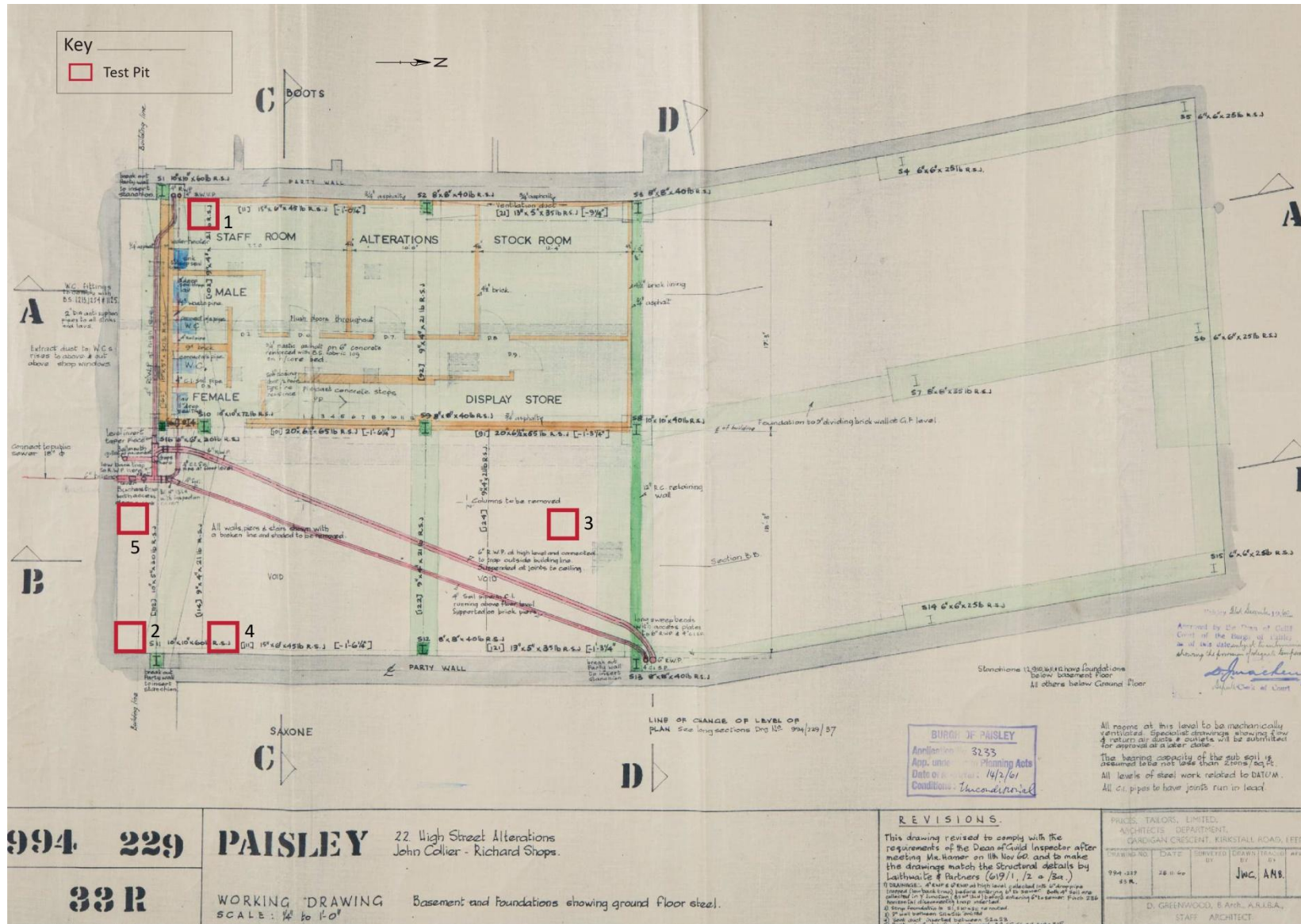


Figure 2: Location of test pits on a 1961 plan of the basement (from Sinclair 2017)

6.2

In total five test pits were excavated throughout the basement of 22 High Street (Figure 2). Test Pit 1 was located in the old staff room area in the south-western corner and against the west wall. All other test pits were located within the large room to the east of this which ran the length of the basement from north to south. Test pit 2 was in the south-eastern corner of this room against the eastern and southern walls, Test Pit 3 was in the middle of the room 1.24 m from the northern wall and up against the edge of a concrete surface, Test Pit 4 was up against the eastern wall 2.30 m from Test Pit 2 and Test Pit 5 was against the southern wall approximately 1 m to the west of Test Pit 2.

6.3

Test Pit 1 measured 0.9 m by 0.85 m in size and was excavated to a total depth of 0.52 m. The top of this pit consisted of a 0.13 m thick concrete floor surface (001). Below this was a thin layer of black bitumen (002) which existed to 0.05 m in depth underneath which lay a deposit of rubble (003) which, although not fully excavated, was exposed to a depth of 0.34 m. This rubble layer (003) consisted of a dark reddish brown friable silty sand matrix surrounding frequent fragments of red brick 0.05 m and 0.15 m in size and irregular stones 0.02 m to 0.10 m in size. At the base of this test pit part of a foundation stone (004) was exposed extending from the south-western corner of the pit (Plate 1). This foundation stone was a rectangular dark yellowish grey sandstone block of which 0.6 m by 0.15 m was exposed and to a depth of 0.27 m. This stone was part of the foundations for the west wall of the basement.



Plate 1: Test pit 1 taken from the north showing foundation stone (004)

6.4

Test Pits 2 to 5 in the east room were all approximately 1 m by 1 m in size, apart from Test Pit 5 which was 1 m by 0.5 m, and were all surfaced with a 0.05 m deep layer of bitumen (005). Underneath this layer (005) was a deposit of rubble (006) that formed the base of each test pit and ranged in depth from approximately 0.25 m in Test Pit 2 to 0.60 m in Test Pit 5. This rubble layer (006) consisted of a dark greyish brown friable silty sand matrix with frequent inclusions of red brick fragments, ranging in size from 0.05m to full bricks, and frequent irregular stones 0.02 m to 0.20 m in size. Within Test Pit 4 part of a foundation stone (007) for the east wall was uncovered. This stone (007) comprised a rectangular dark yellowish grey sandstone block extending 0.25 m from the east wall and was exposed to a depth of 0.28 m.

7. Discussion and Summary

7.1

The excavation of Test Pits 1 to 5 within the basement of 22 High Street, Paisley encountered a layer of rubble (003 & 006) underlying the present ground surface. This rubble appears to have been used to level the basement area of the present building and may relate to the last period of renovation within the building during the early 1960's. Foundation stones underlying the building walls were uncovered within Test pits 1 and 4 and likely relate to the original construction of the building in the early 1880's.

7.2

Given the limited depth of the test pits the full depth of the foundations of the present building were not revealed and no other archaeology was found to be present.

8. Recommendations

8.1

Given that no significant archaeological remains were uncovered during the watching brief it is recommended that no further archaeological works are needed in relation to the current phase of work at 22 High Street, Paisley unless further ground disturbance is to be undertaken.

8.2

Northlight Heritage would stress that these recommendations are intended for guidance only. In relation to any planning conditions final decisions on the requirement for further mitigation rests with the planning authority.

9. List of Sources

British Geological Survey, 1:50000, <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html> (accessed 26/10/2017).

Sinclair, F 2017, *22 High Street, Paisley, Conservation Narrative*

10. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Tables/ Concordances

Table 1: Context Information

Context No.	Type	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description / Interpretation
001	Deposit	-	-	0.13	Concrete floor surface of Test Pit 1
002	Deposit	-	-	0.05	Bitumen layer below concrete floor surface (001)
003	Deposit	-	-	0.34	Dark reddish brown, friable silty sand matrix surrounding frequent fragments of red brick, 0.05-0.15m, and irregular stones, 0.02-0.10m. / Rubble infill Test Pit 1
004	Structure	0.6 (where exposed)	0.15 (where exposed)	0.27 (where exposed)	Rectangular dark yellowish grey sandstone brick / part of wall foundation in Test Pit 1
005	Deposit	-	-	0.05	Bitumen floor surface of Test Pits 2-5
006	Deposit	-	-	0.25 - 0.6	dark greyish brown friable silty sand matrix with frequent inclusions of red brick fragments, 0.05 to full bricks, and frequent irregular stones, 0.02-0.20m / Rubble infill Test Pits 2 - 5
007	Structure	1 (where exposed)	0.25 (where exposed)	0.28 (where exposed)	Rectangular dark yellowish grey sandstone brick / part of wall foundation in Test Pit 4

Table 2: Digital Photographs

Photo No.	Context No.	Description	From (Compass)
1	n/a	Pre-ex test pit 1	N
2	n/a	Pre-ex for proposed test pit in NW corner of basement	SE
3	n/a	Pre-ex test pit 2	W
4	n/a	pre-ex test pit 3	S
5	001, 002, 003, 004	Test pit 1 E facing section showing foundation stone (004) / with flash	E
6	001, 002, 003, 004	Test pit 1 E facing section showing foundation stone (004) / without flash	E
7	001, 002, 003, 004	Post-ex test pit 1 / with flash	S
8	001, 002, 003, 004	post-ex test pit 1 / without flash	S
9	n/a	Working shot - excavation of test pit 3	S
10	005, 006	Test pit 2 N facing section / with flash	N
11	005, 006	Test pit 2 N facing section / without flash	N
12	005, 006	Post-ex test pit 2 / with flash	N
13	005, 006	Post-ex test pit 2 / without flash	N

Photo No.	Context No.	Description	From (Compass)
14	005, 006	Test pit 3 S facing section / with flash	S
15	005, 006	Test pit 3 S facing section / without flash	S
16	005, 006	Post-ex test pit 3 / without flash	W
17	005, 006	Post-ex test pit 3 / with flash	W
18	n/a	Post-ex test pit 1 wider shot showing location in room	N
19	n/a	Abandoned test pit in NW corner	S
20	005, 006, 007	Test pit 4 W facing section / with flash	W
21	005, 006, 007	Test pit 4 W facing section / without flash	W
22	005, 006, 007	Post-ex test pit 4 / with flash	W
23	005, 006, 007	Post-ex test pit 4 / without flash	W
24	005, 006, 007	Post-ex test pit 4 / with flash	N
25	005, 006, 007	Post-ex test pit 4 / without flash	N
26	005, 006	Test pit 5 N facing section / with flash	N
27	005, 006	Test pit 5 N facing section / without flash	N
28	005, 006	Post-ex test pit 5 / without flash	N
29	005, 006	Post-ex test pit 5 / with flash	N

APPENDIX 2: DES

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Renfrewshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	22 High Street, Paisley
PROJECT CODE:	1289
PARISH:	Paisley
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Nicola Reid
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Northlight Heritage
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	NS46SE 380
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	n/a
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NS 48254 64001
START DATE (this season)	23 rd October 2017
END DATE (this season)	25 th October 2017
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Renfrewshire Council, during the excavation of five test pits in the basement of 22 High Street, Paisley. The work was carried out between 23 rd and 25 th October 2017. The archaeology uncovered within the small test pits was limited to the basement walls, foundation stones, levelling deposits and floor surfaces of the current building which was initially constructed in the early 1880's and saw a period of extensive renovation in the 1960's.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	n/a
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Renfrewshire Council
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Northlight Heritage, Studio 114, South Block, 64 Osborne Street, Glasgow G1 5QT .
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	National Monuments Record for Scotland (intended)