

British Waterways

Archaeological Works 2006

South Speirs Wharf Project: BW-6771-06-01

Archaeological Monitoring April 2006



April 2006

Site

South Speirs Wharf

Project DescriptionArchaeological Monitoring on the South Bank
of Speirs Wharf during insertion of services**Contents**

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1.0

Introduction

On behalf of British Waterways and at the request of Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the south bank of Spiers Wharf, Glasgow during trenching to insert services. Telecom, water and electrical conduits were all to be instated within a trench 600mm wide by 1.0m deep and 210m long, running E-W from the delineating fence SW of the new lock gates. 150m of this trench had been excavated, and much of it backfilled, before archaeological monitoring was in place; however Digit Site Services (the contractor) had kept a photographic record of this work. The work was carried out using a digger with a 600mm wide toothed ditching bucket and additional clearance, where appropriate, was carried out manually.

The Forth and Clyde Canal was built between 1768-90, providing fast E-W transit across Scotland for seafaring vessels wishing to avoid the perilous and circuitous traditional coastal route around the N of Scotland. In addition, passenger traffic was encouraged while the canal provided a convenient means of trading imported or locally produced goods at the various stops along its length. Remnants of this bustling trade can be seen at various places along the canal route and a fine example are the large grain stores, now converted into flats, which dominate the N bank of Speirs Wharf. On the South Bank, fixing points for removed machinery (probably cranes) can be seen cut into the copes of the canal side. The area was largely under grass when work commenced and when this was removed, the original granite setts on the wharf side were revealed. Stone mooring ring pads also attest to activity on the South Bank.

The work was carried out on Tuesday 4th April 2006.

2.0 Description and Interpretation

The final 60m of the trench had a relatively uniform set of fills (this changed for a short distance at the E end) occasionally truncated by modern interventions in order to fit services etc. To the W, a typical S facing profile consisted of (1000) turf 100mm thick covering laid granite setts (1001), 230mm high (separated by a mixture of mid-brown silty sand). These lay on a moderately compact bed of dark brown silty sand (1002) 100mm thick which in turn overlay a 220mm thick moderately compact layer of orange-brown sand (1003). Below this was 1004, a heavily compacted mid-grey boulder clay containing numerous undressed sandstone boulders <400mm. This layer was exposed to 450mm thickness. This showed that boulder clay with its waterproofing qualities provided the base of the S wharf side- this uneven layer was levelled with sand which provided support for the silty sand bedding layer under and between the granite setts. This may be an original construction sequence although it is possible that the cobbles are later.

59m from the E trench end, an electrical cable 1005 sealed in bitumen 1006 was uncovered at a depth of 1m, running approx E to W - disturbance was noted in the section and red blaze 1007 within the backfill of the cut 1008 confirmed that a modern intervention had occurred to instate the cable. At 54m (1009), 49.5m (1010), 37m (1011), 33m (1012) and 28m (1013) from the E trench end large cast iron pipes 700mm wide were uncovered at a depth of 700mm running N-S and corresponding to openings within the S canal wall beneath the level of the copes. 1011-13 were capped with concrete containing smashed sandstone. The pipes sat within broad u-shaped cuts 1.5-2.5m wide (1014-1018) backfilled with a redeposited mixture of 1002-1004 (1019-

1023). The cuts for the pipes showed that these were not original and that they were likely to be 20thC additions, perhaps outflows for the canal or possibly providing water for industrial purposes to buildings/warehouses to the S- these were marked on a Scottish Power plan as 'Water Mains' and must have been encountered and tentatively identified when cable **1005** was instated. The presence of the pipes forced a reduction in trench depth to 650mm.

18m from the E trench end, a concrete foundation (**1024**) 300mm thick running N-S was encountered at a depth of 300mm. This was the found for (**1025**) a modern retaining wall faced with red brick S of the embankment on the S wharf. The concrete was pecked out to make way for the services to be instated. **1024** abutted a modern red brick sewer conduit (**1031**) with manhole to the E.

15m from the E trench edge abutting the S-facing section, a snapped circular wooden pole (**1026**) was exposed 300mm below the setts. The pole was 270mm wide and was exposed to a depth of 350mm where it was bedded in the boulder clay below. The pole looked machine-stripped and finished and strongly resembled a telegraph or electrical pole probably 20thC.

To the E, a modern plastic pipe (**1027**) 120mm across ran SE-NW through the trench 5m from the E trench edge at 250mm depth.

The final 18m of the trench was cut to a depth of 1m. 6m from the E trench edge, the section altered. Mid grey-brown boulder clay (**1028**) again provided the base for 250mm, but this time a layer of denuded fine sandstone rubble (**1029**) 150mm thick ran over it- this was in turn capped

by a gritty grey-brown silt (**1030**) 50mm thick with an orange brown sand (**1003**) 250mm thick above supporting the brown silt (**1002**) bedding the granite setts (**1001**). This suggests that detritus from the construction process was backfilled onto the S wharf and became part of the construction sequence.

3.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

A relatively small trench set back 5.60m from the canal copes has revealed the method of construction for the S wharf side. Later interventions can be easily spotted due to the consistency and clarity of the fills. Future work involving trenching to tie in fixtures on the canal copes should be monitored to note the canal side construction make up, as well as to establish if there are footings for machinery such as cranes or winches that would have operated at the canal edge.

A1.0 Appendix 1: List of contexts

No	Description
1000	Turf
1001	Granite Setts
1002	Dark Brown Silty Sand
1003	Orange Brown Sand
1004	Mid-Grey Boulder Clay
1005	Electrical Cable
1006	Bitumen seal around 1005
1007	Red blaze fill of 1008
1008	Cut for 1005
1009	Cast Iron Pipe
1010	Cast Iron Pipe
1011	Cast Iron Pipe
1012	Cast Iron Pipe
1013	Cast Iron Pipe
1014	Cut for Cast Iron Pipe 1009
1015	Cut for Cast Iron Pipe 1010
1016	Cut for Cast Iron Pipe 1011
1017	Cut for Cast Iron Pipe 1012
1018	Cut for Cast Iron Pipe 1013
1019	Fill of Cut 1014
1020	Fill of Cut 1015
1021	Fill of Cut 1016
1022	Fill of Cut 1017
1023	Fill of Cut 1018
1024	Concrete Foundation
1025	Retaining Wall over 1024
1026	Wooden Pole
1027	Plastic Pipe
1028	Mid Grey Brown Boulder Clay
1029	Sandstone Rubble
1030	Gritty Grey-Brown Silt
1031	Red Brick Sewage Duct

A2.0 Appendix 2: List of drawings

No	Description
001	Sketch Plan

A3.0 Appendix 3: List of photographs

COLOUR PRINT 1

Frame	Description	From	Date
1	W-most Cast Iron Pipe and Cut looking S	N	4/4/06
2	W-most Cast Iron Pipe and Cut looking S	N	4/4/06
3	Cast Iron Pipe	N	4/4/06
4	Trench looking E	W	4/4/06
5	Trench looking E	W	4/4/06
6	Square openings on Canal Wall looking SW	NE	4/4/06
7	Square openings on Canal Wall looking SW	NE	4/4/06
8	Square openings on Canal Wall looking SW	NE	4/4/06
9	Square openings on Canal Wall looking S	N	4/4/06
10	Square openings on Canal Wall looking S	N	4/4/06
11	Crane fittings on S wharf Copes looking W	E	4/4/06
12	Plaque Stone	W	4/4/06
13	Pole 1026 looking E (Close Up)	W	4/4/06
14	Pole 1026 looking E	W	4/4/06
15	Typical 1m S-Facing Section	S	4/4/06
16	Concrete Pipe Caps looking E	W	4/4/06
17	Red brick Sewer Duct and S-N Retaining Wall looking N	S	4/4/06
18	Trench looking W	E	4/4/06
19	S Facing section at E end of Trench	S	4/4/06
20	Cast Iron Pipe filled with concrete looking S	N	4/4/06
21	Cast Iron Pipe filled with concrete looking S	N	4/4/06
22	Trench Looking E	W	4/4/06
23	Trench Looking E	W	4/4/06
24	Trench Looking E	W	4/4/06

A4.0 Appendix 4: Archival references

Site	South Speirs Wharf
BW PIC Index no	BW-6771-06-01
SAM #	6771

Report files submitted on CD:

Report in MS Word	BW-6771-06-01.doc
Corel Draw files	
TIFFs	

Other files submitted on CD:

AutoCAD files	
Photo scans	BW-6771-06-01 CP1(1).jpg - BW-6771-06-01 CP1(25).jpg
Workings	