HISTORIC SCOTLAND PROPERTIES IN CARE
MINOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS 2011

St Mungo's Cathedral, Glasgow: Damage Inspection, July 2011.

HS PIC Index Number: 90150

SITE: St Mungo's Cathedral, Glasgow.

N.G.R.: NS 6022 6557

DESCRIPTION: Inspection of an area of flood damage on the N side of the Nave.

PROJECT CODE: HSCO-90150-2011-01

CONTENTS:

KIRKDALE ARCHAEOLOGY

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AUGUST 2011

INTRODUCTION

Under the terms of its Properties In Care (PIC) call-off contract with Historic Scotland, Kirkdale Archaeology was asked to undertake the inspection of an area of flood damage on the N side of the nave of St Mungo's Cathedral, Glasgow. Severe rain on Sunday 17th July 2011 caused the dislodging of a significant amount of material around two of the exterior window bays; the material comprised a mixture of small sub-rounded quartz pebbles (used as a decorative surface spread) as well as mixed backfill containing modern glass, iron nails, scaffolding bolts and a single disarticulated human bone. The work was carried out on 29th July 2011.

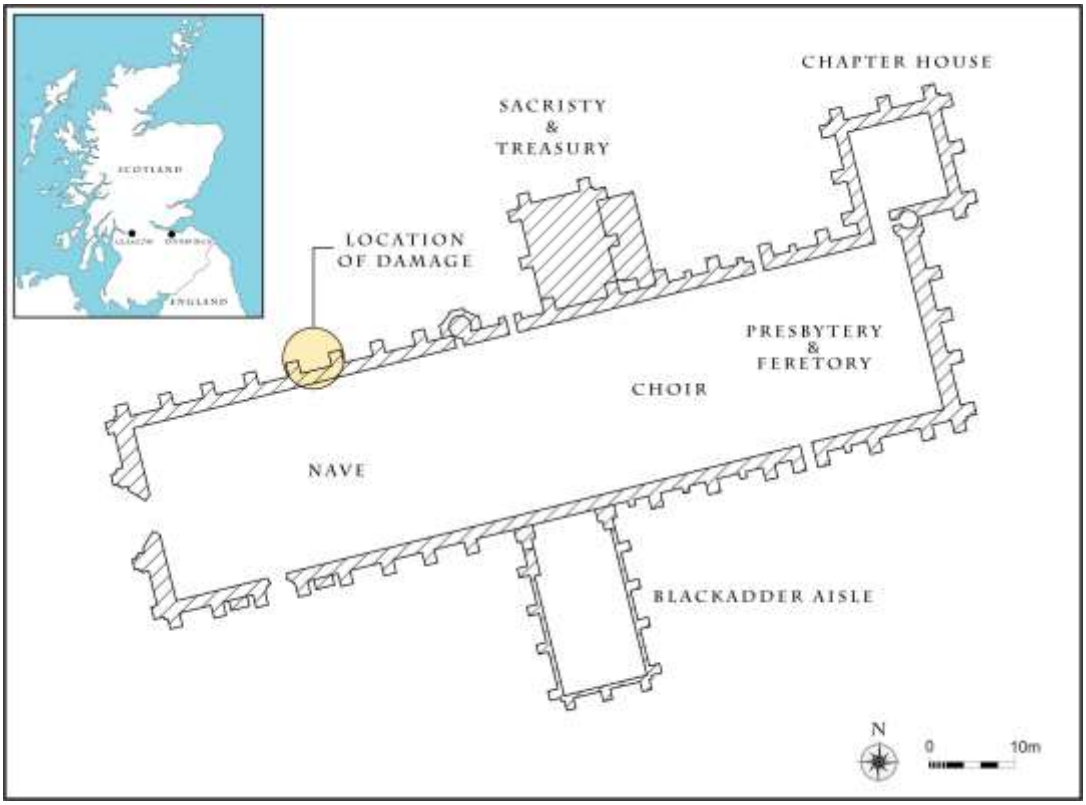

Figure 1: Location plan showing flood damaged area.

DESCRIPTION

To the N of the window bays (separated by buttresses) runs a stone gully with a central channel 0.06m deep. Pebbles have been laid between the gully and the bays and buttresses to the S. As well as flooring the ground surface, the pebbles also appear to have partially filled a depression in the ground, a cut for the re-laying of the stone

gully after the insertion of cast iron down pipes running from the Triforium-level wall walk into a pipe running to a manhole at the NE exterior corner of the Nave.

These down pipes required the cutting of channels in order to meet the main culvert. The Triforium-level wall walk is drained by a series of lead spouts, and the sheer volume of rain in the downpour caused the water emanating from the spouts to churn and dislodge the loose material. As a result, this material gathered down slope to the E, clogging the stone gully and causing further back up of the flood water. The gully and the pipe channels appear to have been cut through crushed sandstone deposits, including some sandstone slabs (**003**). These may relate to the original construction of the cathedral.

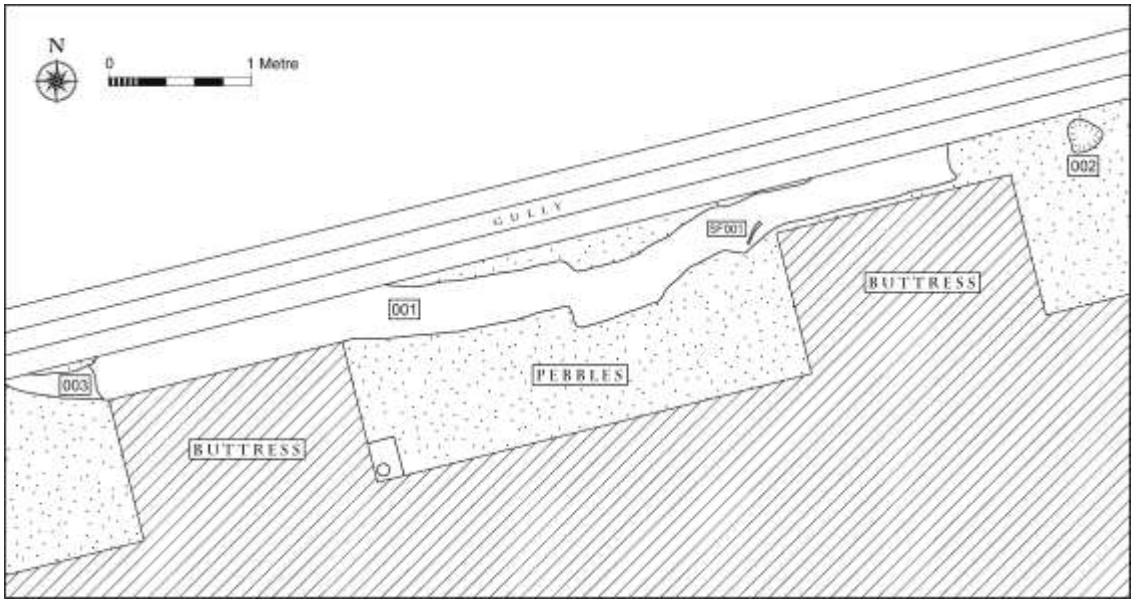

Figure 2: Plan of the flood damaged area.

The cuts to re-lay the gully and to backfill the down pipe channels appear to have been backfilled with a mixed, loose material. It is likely that the human bone became disarticulated during the backfilling work, and was reburied along with the backfill, only to be disturbed by the rainwater. There was no indication of further human remains being present. In some locales the concentration of pebbles is high, allowing them to sit above the level of the drain. This, coupled with their low weight, means that they will be washed into the channel during episodes of severe rain.

The area of damage (**001**) measured 6.80m long E/W x (up to) 0.40m wide x 0.15m - 0.40m deep. A further small sub-circular 'rut' (**002**) lay 0.80m to the E, with a width of 0.20m and a depth of 0.18m. A curved piece of ridged bone (**SF001**), 0.15m long - possibly a human rib bone - was recovered along with some modern iron artefacts.

C O N C L U S I O N S

The area around the N, S and E of the Cathedral is known as the 'Old Burial Ground'. By the 1830s a 'New Burial Ground' had been established to the N of the North Precinct Wall, on the former site of the Hall of the Vicar's Choral. The area under inspection comprises a short stretch of the 'Old Burial Ground' on the N side of the Nave, an area which has seen considerable disturbance from the introduction of a variety of services over the years, including exterior lights, drainage and a large tank which was buried a short distance to the S. As such, it is not uncommon to encounter disarticulated human remains - appearing in the form of concentrated bone clusters as opposed to articulated skeletons.

The severe rain, while not unusual in Glasgow, was forceful enough to dislodge deposits which up until now had retained their integrity. The artefacts noted (modern glass, iron nails, scaffolding bolts) would appear to have derived from modern backfilling episodes. The area may benefit from formal shallow excavation in order to establish the ground make-up and secure any further archaeological contexts close to the surface. Continued exposure of the 'rut' to the elements will only lead to further erosion. The small, loose pebbles - especially those sitting above the drain - would not appear to be fit for purpose during episodes of extreme weather.

LIST OF CONTEXTS

No.	Description
001	Area of damage.
002	Sub-circular 'rut'.
003	Sandstone slabs.

LIST OF DRAWINGS

No.	Type	Description	Scale
1	Plan	Damaged area.	1:20

LIST OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHS

No.	Description	From	Date
01	Area of damage.	NW	29/7/2011
02	Area of damage.	W	29/7/2011
03	Area of damage.	W	29/7/2011
04	Area of damage.	W	29/7/2011
05	Area of damage.	N	29/7/2011
06	Dislodged pebbles in stone gully.	E	29/7/2011
07	Area of damage.	NE	29/7/2011
08	Area of damage with bone SF001.	N	29/7/2011
09	Area of damage with bone SF001.	N	29/7/2011
10	Area of damage with bone SF001.	NE	29/7/2011
11	Disarticulated bone SF001.	N	29/7/2011
12	Disarticulated bone SF001.	N	29/7/2011
13	Dislodged pebbles in stone gully.	W	29/7/2011
14	Area of damage from W to E.	S	29/7/2011
15	Area of damage from W to E.	SW	29/7/2011
16	Area of damage from W to E.	S	29/7/2011
17	Area of damage from W to E.	S	29/7/2011
18	Area of damage from W to E.	SW	29/7/2011
19	Area of damage from W to E.	SW	29/7/2011
20	Area of damage from W to E.	SE	29/7/2011
21	Dislodged pebbles in stone gully.	W	29/7/2011
22	Manhole at NE angle of Nave.	W	29/7/2011
23	Area of damage and down pipes.	NE	29/7/2011
24	Area of damage and down pipes.	NE	29/7/2011
25	N wall of Nave with down pipes and lead spouts.	N	29/7/2011
26	Lead spouts protruding from the Triforium-level wall walk.	NE	29/7/2011
27	Area of damage.	NE	29/7/2011
28	Dislodged pebbles in stone gully.	N	29/7/2011
29	Dislodged pebbles in stone gully.	NW	29/7/2011
30	Area of damage.	NE	29/7/2011

No.	Description	From	Date
31	Area of damage and dislodged pebbles.	E	29/7/2011
32	Area of damage.	E	29/7/2011
33	Dislodged pebbles in stone gully.	W	29/7/2011
34	Dislodged pebbles in stone gully.	W	29/7/2011

LIST OF SMALL FINDS

No.	Context	Description	Date
1	Unassigned.	Human bone.	29/7/2011