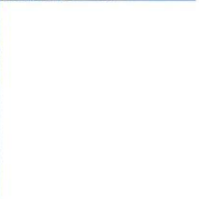
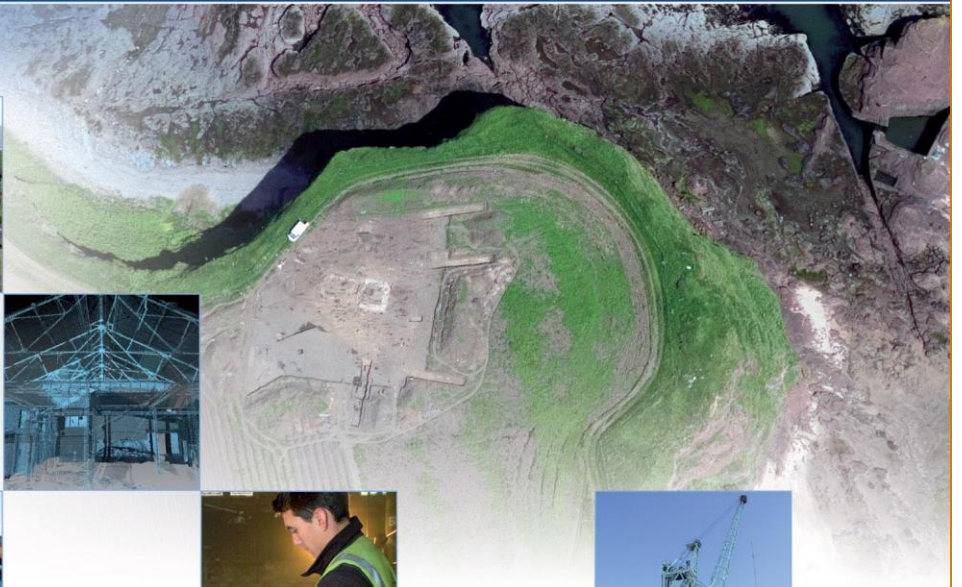
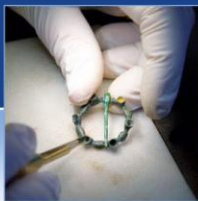


North College, Elgin: Archaeological Watching Brief Data Structure Report

AOC Project 21968
OASIS ID: aocarcha1-132615
22nd August 2012



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

North College, Elgin: Archaeological Watching Brief Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: Mr Nigel Robinson
c/o NB Planning and Architecture
33 Ellieside
Lintmill
Cullen
AB56 4XQ

National Grid Reference (NGR): NJ 2197 6314

AOC Project No: 21968

Prepared by: Kevin Paton

Illustration by: Stefan Sagrott

Date of Fieldwork: 6th June 2012

Date of Report: 22nd August 2012

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

Author: Kevin Paton

Date: 22nd August 2012

Approved by: John Gooder

Date: 22nd August 2012

Draft/Final Report Stage: Draft

Date: 22nd August 2012

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Contents

	Page
List of Illustrations	2
List of Appendices	2
ABSTRACT	3
1 INTRODUCTION	4
2 OBJECTIVES	4
3 METHODOLOGY	5
4 RESULTS	5
5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	5
6 REFERENCES	5
APPENDIX 1: DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND REPORT	7

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Test-pit location

Plate 1: Test-pit on completion of excavation

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* Report

ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on behalf of Mr Nigel Robinson during site preparation works for a proposed extension to buildings at North College, Elgin. The scope of the works was determined by Moray Council as advised by the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service and was designed to safeguard the archaeological resource from any adverse impact within the development area.

A single test pit was excavated at the western end of a previous extension to the North college building measuring 1 m by 0.5 m. Neither significant archaeological features nor artefacts were encountered during the watching brief.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Mr Nigel Robinson to undertake an archaeological watching brief during site preparation works for a proposed extension to buildings at North College, Elgin. The scope of the works was determined by Moray Council as advised by the Aberdeenshire Council Archaeology Service (ACAS). The works were conducted according to the terms of the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (AOC 2011) approved by ACAS, and in accordance with the principles set out in *Scottish Planning Policy* (Scottish Government 2010) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning & Archaeology* (Scottish Government 2011).

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The development site is situated to the immediate west of buildings attached to North College, Elgin which is north of King Street (centred on NGR: NJ 2197 6314; Figure 1). The site is currently part of the North College Gardens.

1.3 Historical Background

1.3.1 Elgin, centred on the fertile plain of the Laigh of Moray, was chartered as a Royal Burgh by David 1 in 1136. The development area lies within the medieval core of the city.

1.3.2 The North College (NMRS: NJ 26SW1.06) is a town house which was originally one of the manses of the Cathedral. Although now much altered, the private residence is thought to be medieval in date and retains some of its original features. It consists of an L-plan with vaulted ground floor, the oldest part being the North Wing, which contains a *gare de l'eau* found in an outer wall, some moulded windows and corbelled chimney stacks.

1.3.3 The site lies within close proximity to and within the former grounds of Elgin Cathedral (NMRS: NJ65SW1), a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 90412). Founded in 1224 and dedicated to the Holy Trinity, Elgin Cathedral was the seat of the Bishopric of Moray. Built to a cruciform plan, the cathedral featured an octagonal chapter house. Despite a fire in 1270 and further burning by Alexander Stewart in 1390, parts of the 13th century building have survived along with fine stonework and sculpture of later date (Shepherd 1986).

1.3.4 To the immediate south of the site lies the Bishop's Palace (NMRS NJ26SW1.02), a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 90141) and the remnant of the town house of the Bishop's of Moray, dating to 1406. It comprises a rectangular three-storey block with a stair tower to the south gable with small wheel stair and corbelled out upper stage north elevation.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief are:

- i) to safeguard the archaeological resource that may be disturbed by the site investigation works;
- ii) to liaise with ACAS/Moray Council and the client in the event of significant archaeological features and/or small finds being unearthed as to the most appropriate response in

safeguarding these features either by preservation *in situ*, if at all feasible, or by archaeological recording;

iii) to report on the findings of the watching brief.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 All excavations were undertaken by a mini excavator using a narrow toothless bucket under the constant supervision of an experienced field archaeologist. All recording was carried out according to AOC Archaeology Groups' standard practices.

4 RESULTS

4.1 The watching brief was undertaken on 6th June, 2012 in fair weather conditions which provided good archaeological visibility. The single test-pit, measuring 1 m by 0.5 m by 0.7 m deep, was excavated through a shallow silty garden soil to the west of the building to be extended revealing an orange gravel natural subsoil (Figure 2; Plate 1). Neither archaeological features nor significant artefactual material were observed.



Plate 1: Test-pit on completion of excavation

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The ground impacts necessitated by the preliminary works were very limited in extent with neither significant features nor unstratified artefacts encountered by the watching brief.

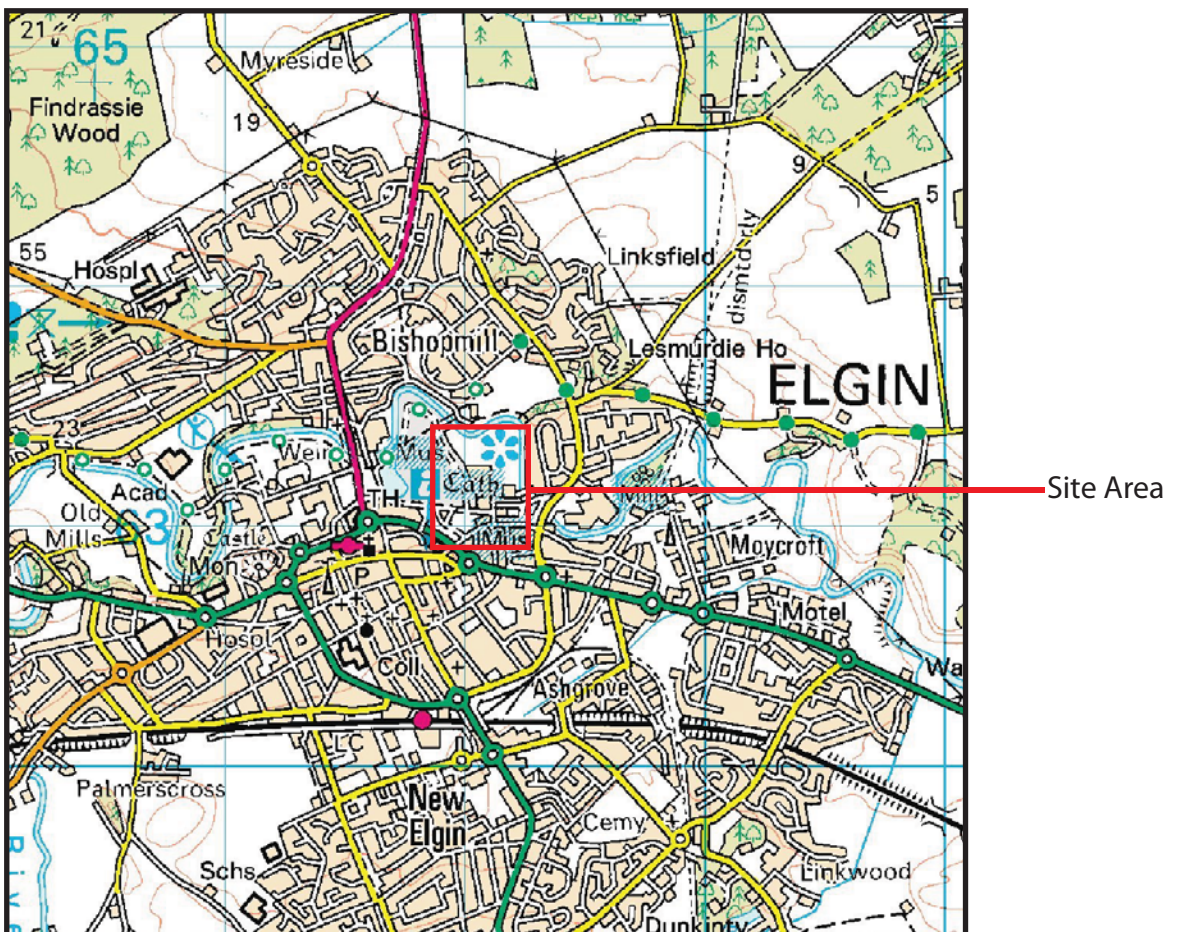
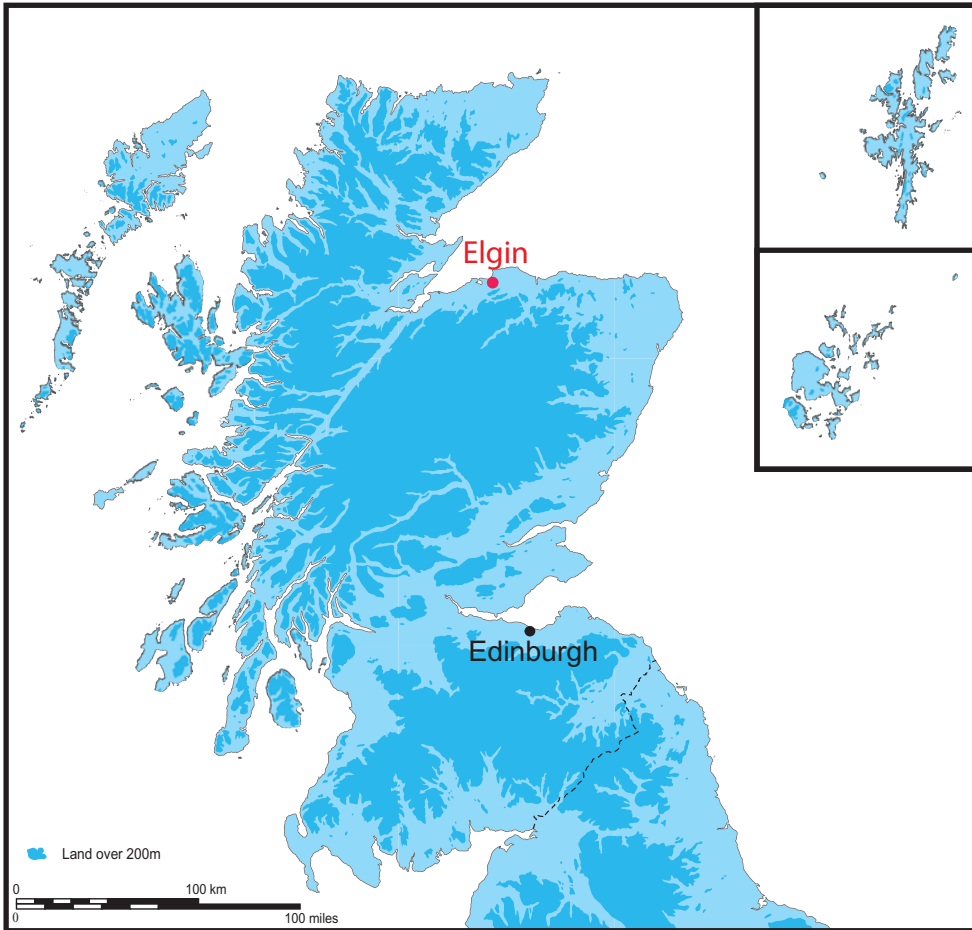
6 REFERENCES

AOC Archaeology 2011, *North College, Elgin: Written Scheme of Investigation*.

Scottish Government 2010 *Scottish Planning Policy*.

Scottish Government 2011 *Archaeology and Planning 2/2011*.

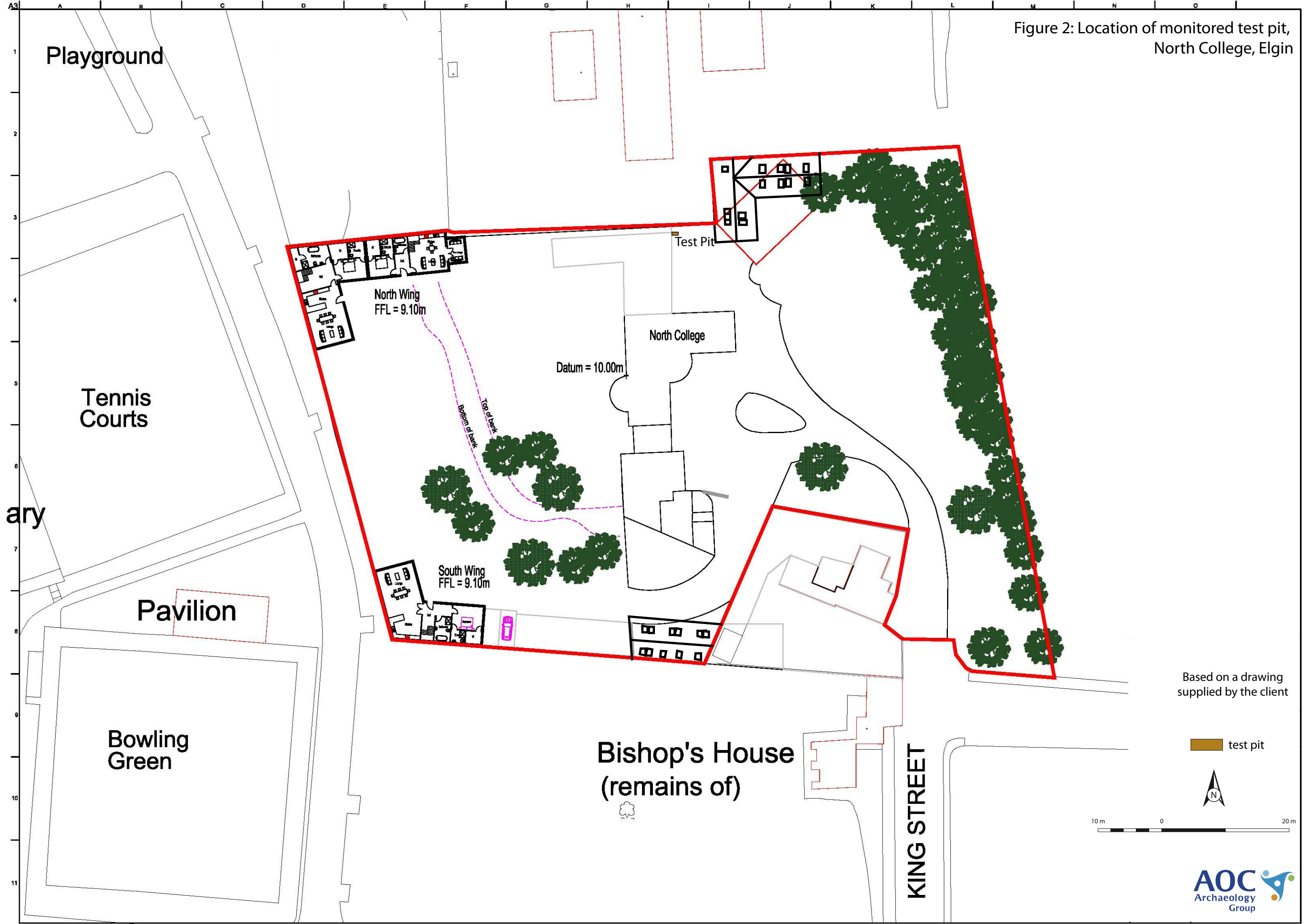
Shepherd, IAG 1986 *Exploring Scotland's heritage: Grampian, Exploring Scotland's heritage series* Edinburgh.



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Figure 1: Location of the site at North College, Elgin

Figure 2: Location of monitored test pit, North College, Elgin



Based on a drawing supplied by the client

test pit

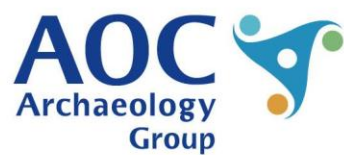


North College, Elgin: Archaeological Watching Brief Data Structure Report

Section 2: Appendix

APPENDIX 1: DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND REPORT

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Moray Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	North College, Elgin
PROJECT CODE:	21968
PARISH:	Elgin
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Kevin Paton
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	NJ 26SW1.06
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Town House
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NJ 2197 6314
START DATE (this season)	6 th June 2012
END DATE (this season)	6 th June 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (inc DES)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during site preparation works for a proposed extension to buildings at North College, Elgin.</p> <p>A single test pit, measuring 1.0 m by 0.5 m by 0.7 m deep, was machine excavated at the western end of a previous extension to the North College building. Neither significant archaeological features nor artefacts were encountered during the watching brief.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRATIONS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr Nigel Robinson
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	AOC Archaeology Group Edgefield Road Industrial Estate Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SY
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ARCHIVE LOCATION	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



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