

Cannonball House, 356 Castlehill, Edinburgh

Archaeological and Structural Watching Brief Report

AOC 22573

31st March 2014



Cannonball House, 356 Castlehill, Edinburgh Archaeological and Structural Watching Brief Report

On Behalf of: Thomas and Adamson
On behalf of:
The Royal Military Tattoo Ltd
32 Market Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1QB

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

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SUMMARY

AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Thomas and Adamson, on behalf of the Royal Military Tattoo Ltd, to undertake an archaeological and structural watching brief at Cannonball House, Castle Hill, Edinburgh, in advance of and during renovation works.

The frontage of Cannonball House dates to the late 16th century with a later wing to the rear completed in 1630 by Alexander Mure, although there have been significant 18th century additions. The interior and part of the south elevation fronting the Royal Mile was significantly altered in the 1930s when the house was incorporated into Castlehill School. The archaeological watching brief recorded four wall foundations exposed during the limited ground-breaking works which may relate to a previous phase of building on the site. The limited scope of the works hinders the interpretation of these features.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Thomas and Adamson, on behalf of the Royal Military Tattoo Ltd, to undertake an archaeological and structural watching brief before and during renovation work at Cannonball House at the top of the Royal Mile at Castle Hill, Edinburgh, in advance of renovation work. This work included the creation of a lift shaft, some door slappings and the installation of a large substation to the north of the building at basement level.

1.1.2 The work was undertaken as part of a planning condition on the consent on the demolition of the buildings in advance of the development (Planning Ref: 12/02498/FUL).

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 Cannonball House is located on the south side of Castle Hill at the very top of the Royal Mile adjacent to Edinburgh Castle Esplanade at NGR: NT 25937 73504 (Figure 1). It is bounded to the immediate west by the steps of Castle Wynd North, to the north by Castlehill and to the east by the Scotch Whiskey Heritage Centre.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objective of the structural watching brief was to identify and record any earlier features associated with the history and development of the building which may be exposed as part of the renovations.
- 2.2 The objective of the archaeological watching brief was to identify the nature and extent of any below-ground remains associated with the history and development of the building and, if possible, any earlier development associated with the history of the site.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Structural Watching Brief

- 3.1.1 Prior to the internal renovations, a general record of the areas of the building which were to be affected by the development was undertaken. A general and detailed photographic and written record was undertaken in black and white print and colour digital using a 35mm SLR and digital SLR respectively. A 1m and 2m ranging pole was used for scale and a running register of photographs was used on site and can be found in Appendix 1. This was accompanied by a general written record of the building.
- 3.1.2 During the renovations, the limited areas of the buildings that were subject to a soft strip and these were further examined to identify any potential earlier features or phases of development of the building after removal of the later furnishings. These were the subject to digital photography (see Appendix 1) with the areas noted and annotated on floor plans provided by the client, which have been reproduced here as Figures 8 - 10.

3.2 Archaeological watching Brief

- 3.2.1 The limited ground-breaking works were all conducted by hand excavation and were located to the lower ground floor level (see Figure 8). All excavation was monitored by an experienced field archaeologist and all recording was carried out according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard practices.

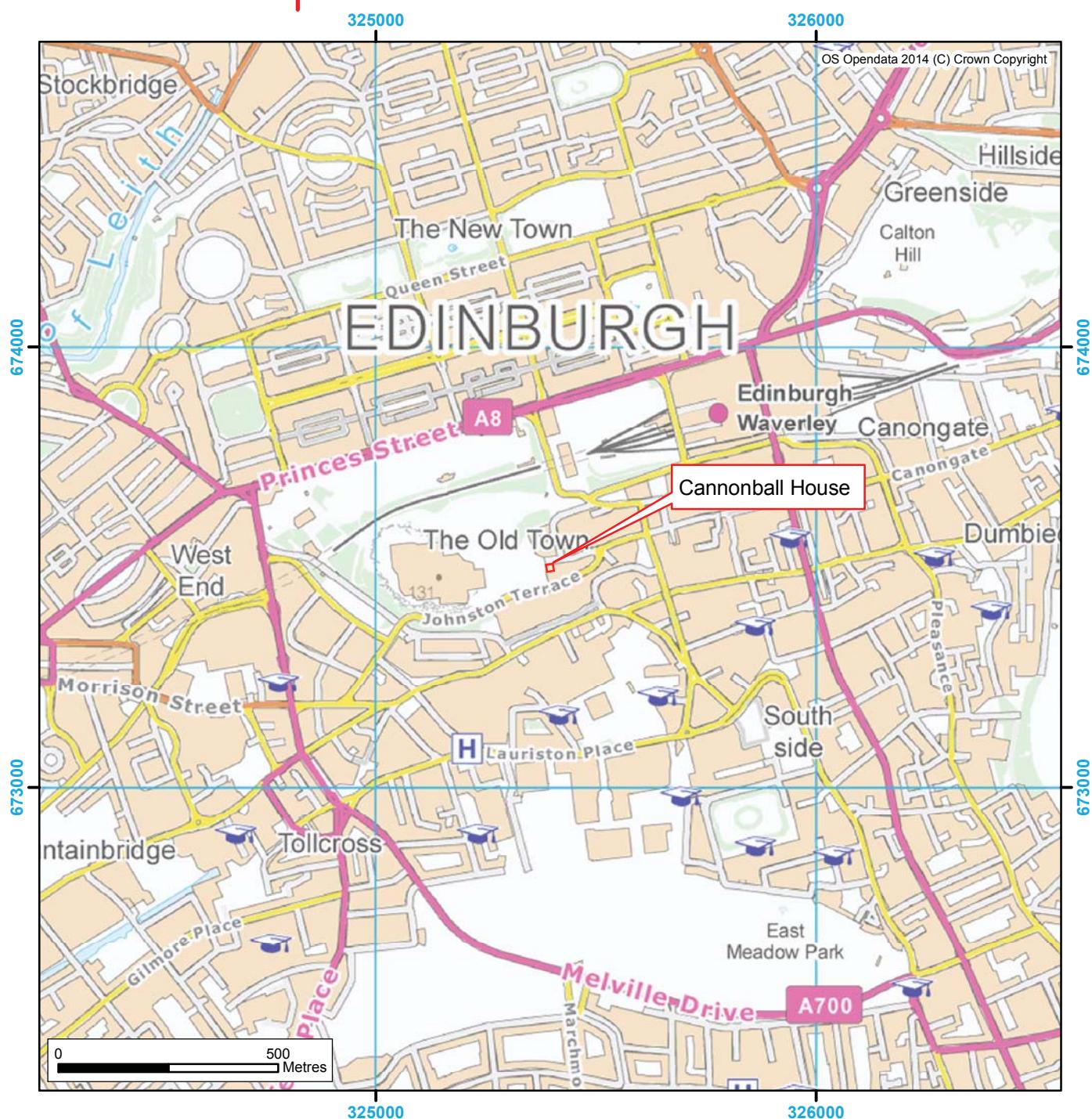
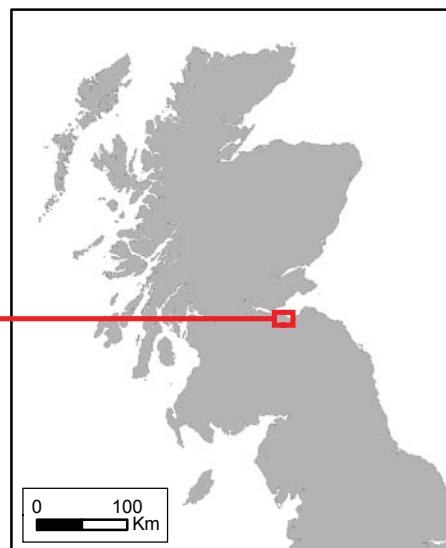
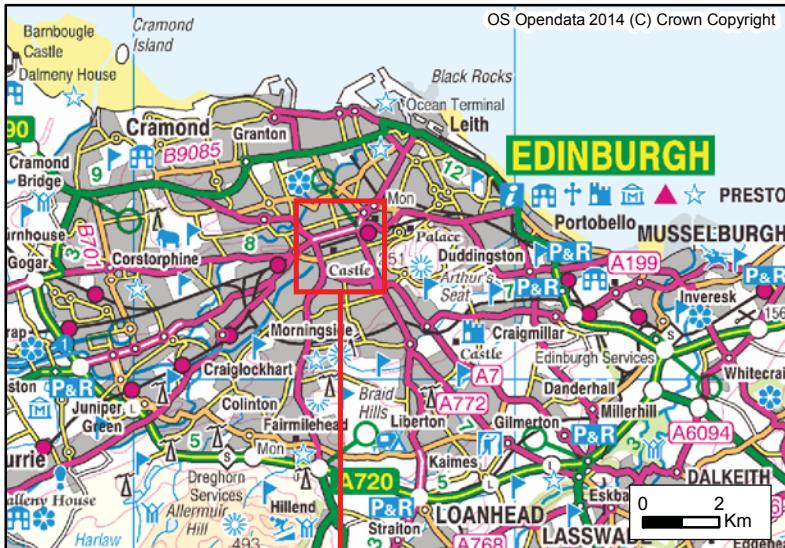


Figure 1: Site location plan

3.3 Archiving

- 3.3.1 The project has been recorded in the *Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS* (OASIS) site (Ref: 168791). An entry will also be submitted to Discovery and Excavation in Scotland (DES) publication for inclusion in the forthcoming 2014 volume. A CD of the original photographs, together with a hard copy and a pdf digital version on CD of the report and jpgs has also been submitted to the National Archives of Scotland held at the RCAHMS building at Salisbury Place, Edinburgh

4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The frontage of Cannonball House dates to the late 16th century with a later wing to the rear completed in 1630 by Alexander Mure (McWilliam *et al* 1991, 193). Braun and Hogenberg's stylised map of Edinburgh of 1582 shows a building in its position, with a gable fronting Castlehill and to the rear (Figure 2). James Gordon's more detailed 1647 map shows the building in more detail, with what is presumably the rear 1630 extension to the east side (Figure 3).



Figure 2: Extract from Braun's map, 1582



Figure 3: Extract from Gordon's map, 1647

- 4.2 The house was also later extended in the 18th century to the east side and remodelled with a lower pitched roof (McWilliam *et al* 1991, 193). In Edgar's 1765 map, it is shown as a simple rectangular block with a small recess to the south-east corner and adjacent to Blair's Close to the east (Figure 4). The same layout is seen throughout the later 18th century and early 19th century mapping.



Figure 4: Extract from Edgar's map, 1765

- 4.3 Into the mid - late 19th century, the Ordnance Survey maps show us the layout of the building in detail (Figures 5 – 7). The 1852 map (Figure 5) annotates the building as the 'Crown Tavern' with Blair's Close to the east beneath a pend. The late 1877 map (Figure 6) shows the same layout, as does the 1894 map (Figure 7), although in the latter the small annexe to the south of the building has been reduced in size.

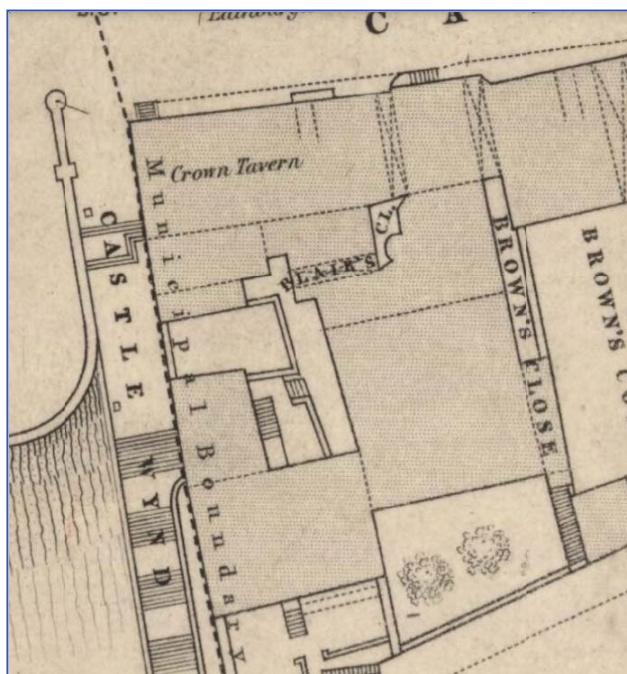


Figure 5: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1852

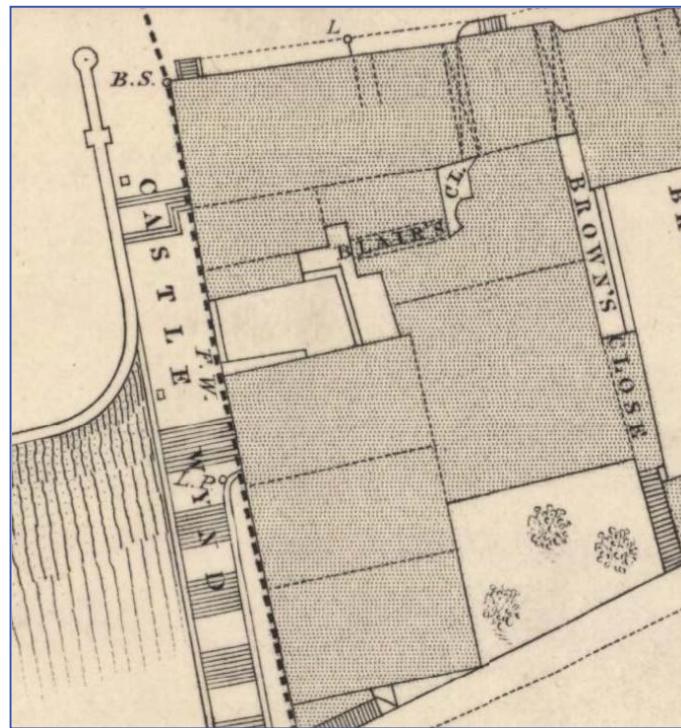


Figure 6: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1877

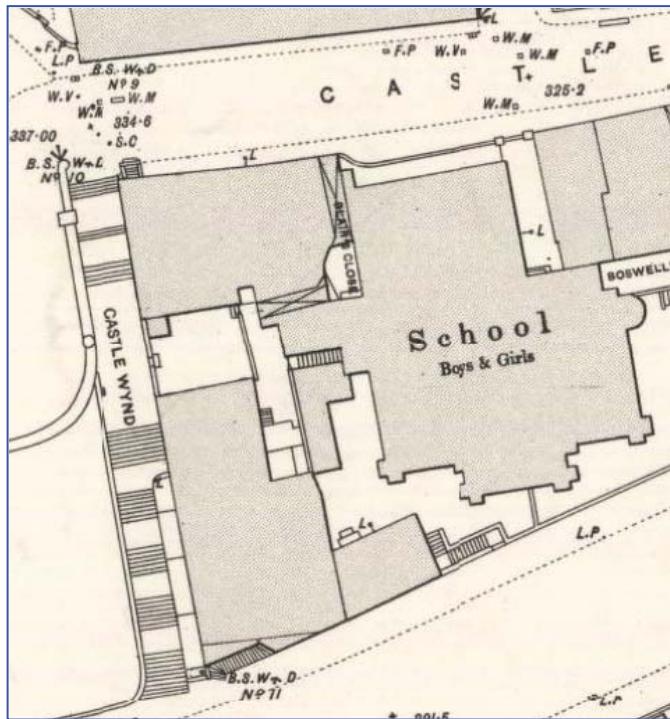


Figure 7: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1894

- 4.4 In 1913, the entire building was largely remodelled by John Carfrae when it formed an annexe of Castehill School (seen in Figure 7 above to the east), which saw the removal of part of the 18th century additions and providing a new east gable, the frontage here now reduced to three bays (McWilliam *et al* 1991, 193). The interior was also gutted and re-furnished at the same time.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Structural Watching Brief

- 5.1.1 Prior to the development, the building was relatively modernly furnished, featuring the early 20th century three bays to the north elevation and more randomly-spaced windows elsewhere corresponding to the earlier 17th and 18th century phases of the building. The following descriptions are best seen in conjunction with the floor plans (Figures 8 – 10) and Plates (1 – 11).
- 5.1.2 The lower ground floor consisted of the main entrance to the building on the north side with a long thin corridor to the east with a dog-leg stair in the north-east corner. The rest of the floor was taken up with a large four- by two-bay office to the west side (Figure 8; Plates 1 & 2). The casement windows date to the 1913 phase, with a fire exit door installed to the north wall and a number of irregularly-shaped windows elsewhere. The development called for a slapping for a new doorway to the south side of the east wall of this room (see Figure 8). Exposure of the wall behind this identified lath-and-plaster covering a heavily mortared stone rubble wall (Plate 3).
- 5.1.3 The ground floor consisted of the stairwell to the north-east corner leading on to a wide corridor to the east side (with a toilet block to the south) and two offices to the west side (Figure 9). The northernmost office had three windows to the north wall, four to the west and a partition wall to the south (Plates 4 – 6). The toilet to the south end had a small window to the south side of the east wall, a probable original window opening (Plate 7). No areas on this floor level were subject to any soft strip.
- 5.1.4 The first floor consisted of the top level of the building with the stairwell to the north-east side, opening out into a wide lobby (a modern partition separates them). There is a small office to the south and a large office to the west side taking up the entirety of the building here (Figure 10; Plates 8 & 9). As with the floors below, the three windows along this wall demonstrates the 1913 remodelling of the frontage (see Plate 8). The rest of the windows are much more irregular corresponding to the earlier 17th century building with later 18th century modifications. The west wall consists of three double windows with small separate windows to the north side. The south wall also has an irregular arrangement of windows with a small window to the far west side (see Plate 9). A door slapping was placed to the south side of the east wall and this exposed a heavily rendered stone rubble wall with an area of brick patching above the dado level above the timber panelling (Plate 10). To the far southern end of this east wall, a small cupboard was also exposed, which revealed a brick blocking to the wall, possibly a blocking of an original doorway through to the office to the east side (Plate 11).

5.2 Archaeological watching Brief

- 5.2.1 The ground-breaking works associated with the renovation of Cannonball House were limited in scope and area and all undertaken in the lower ground floor (Figure 8). The excavations comprised drainage trenches, 0.5m wide and 0.7m deep which tied in to existing drainage outside. A plan of the excavations can be found in Figure 8.
- 5.2.2 Four sandstone walls were exposed. Walls [001] & [002] were constructed of a single course of ashlar sandstone blocks, between 0.33m and 0.35m in size, bonded with lime mortar. The walls were clearly keyed into each other, therefore being of the same phase of construction (Plate 12). Wall [003] was wider, 0.5m in width, and parallel to the line of Wall [001]. It was exposed to 0.8m of its length in the small service trench that was excavated (see Figure 8; Plate 13). Wall [004] lay directly below it, although on the same alignment, as an upstanding internal wall foundation. It was 1.2m in width and composed of irregular sandstone blocks bonded with lime mortar.

6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Structural Watching Brief

6.1.1 The renovations in the house were very minimal and did not reveal any features of note within the building. The cupboard in the second floor to the south of the east wall was possibly an original doorway through to the office on the opposite side.

6.2 Archaeological watching Brief

6.2.1 The archaeological watching brief recorded a number of walls relating to either an earlier phase of Cannonball House or to a previous structure. While the limited scope of the ground-breaking works hinder the interpretation of these features, the watching brief has demonstrated that the potential for survival of earlier structures and deposits below the current building is good.

6.2.2 No further archaeological works are considered necessary as part of this development. This recommendation will require confirmation by CECAS.

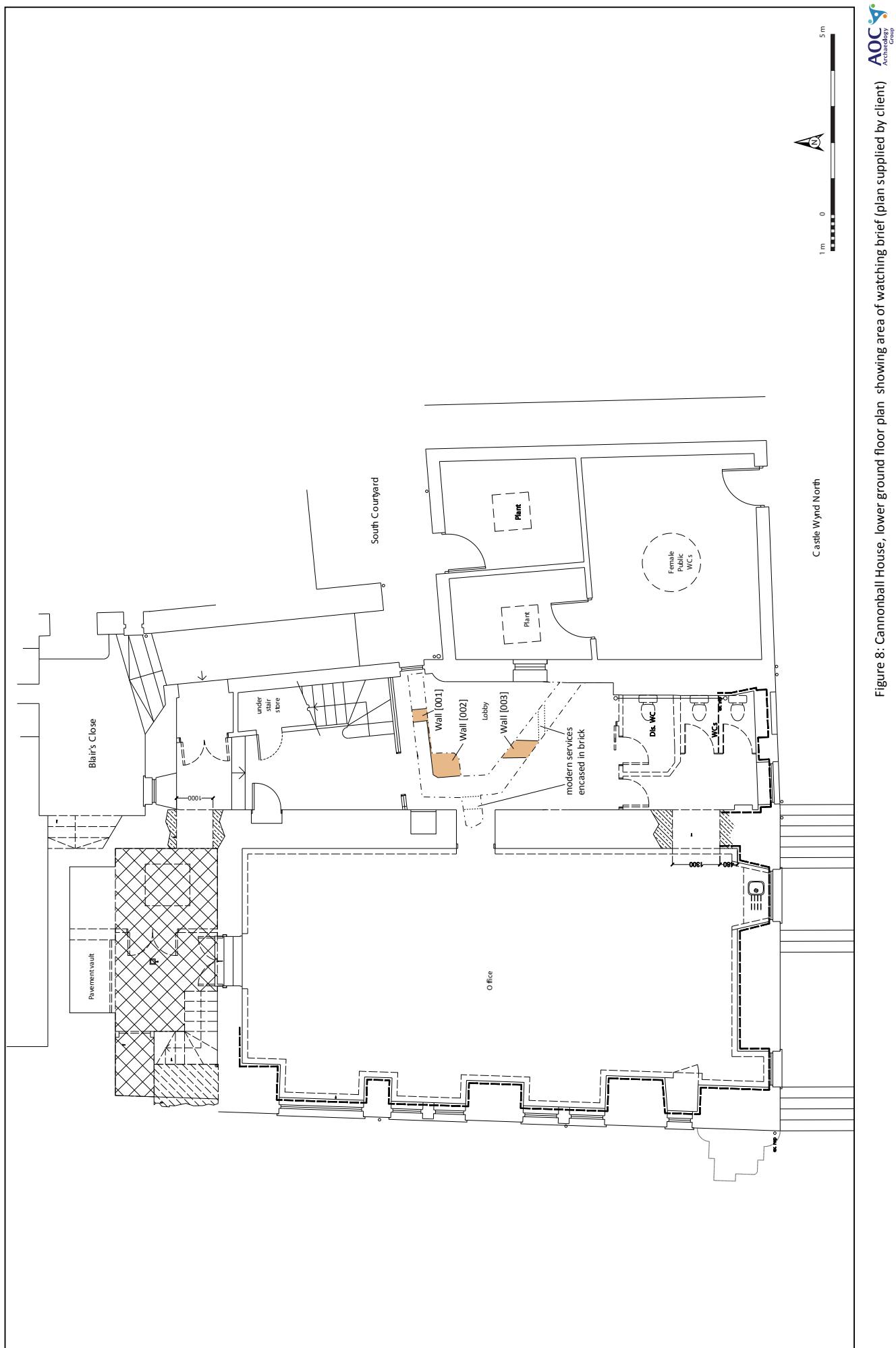


Figure 8: Cannonball House, lower ground floor plan showing area of watching brief (plan supplied by client)

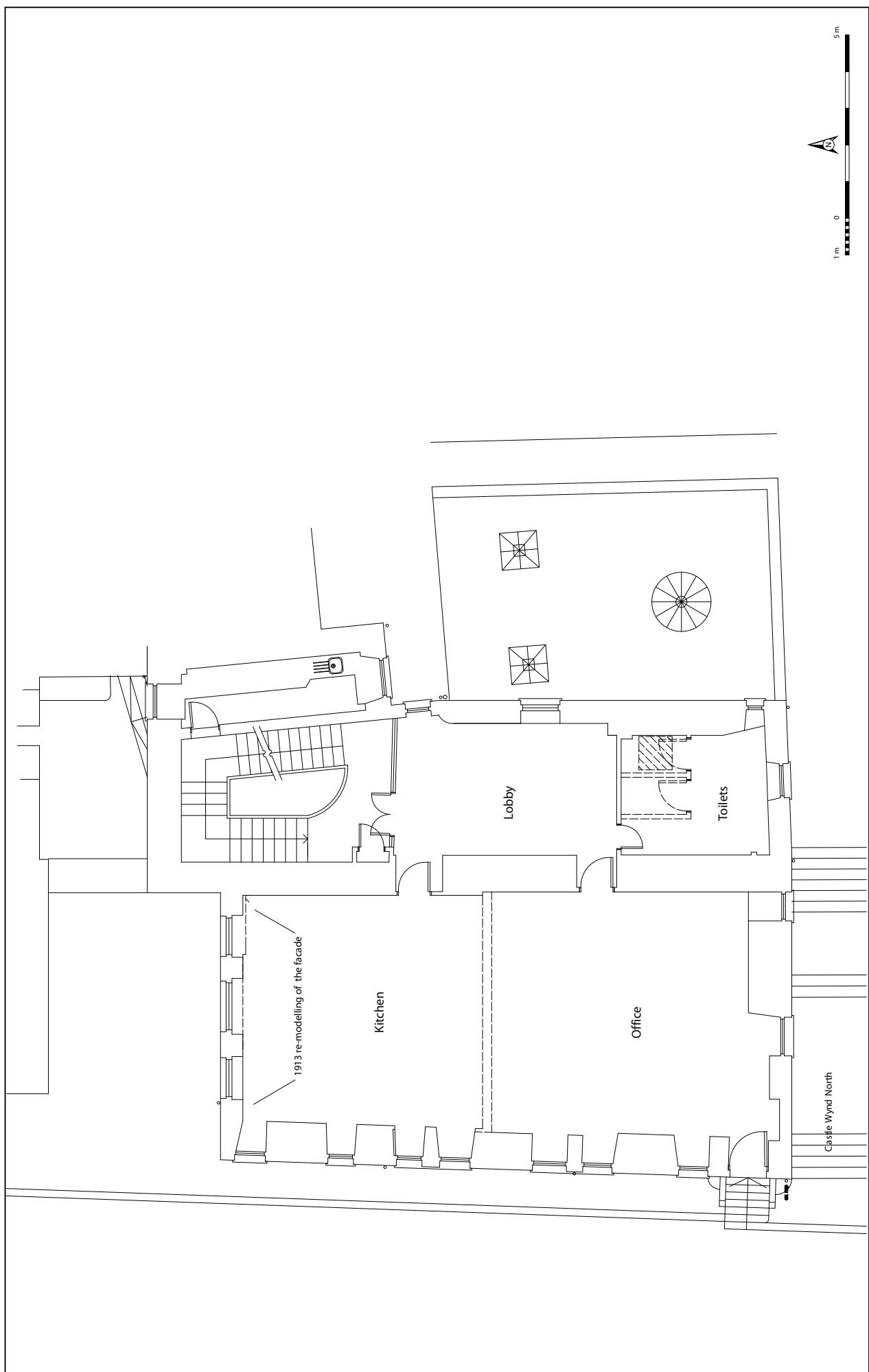


Figure 9: Cannonball House, ground floor plan (plan supplied by client)

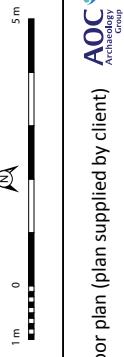
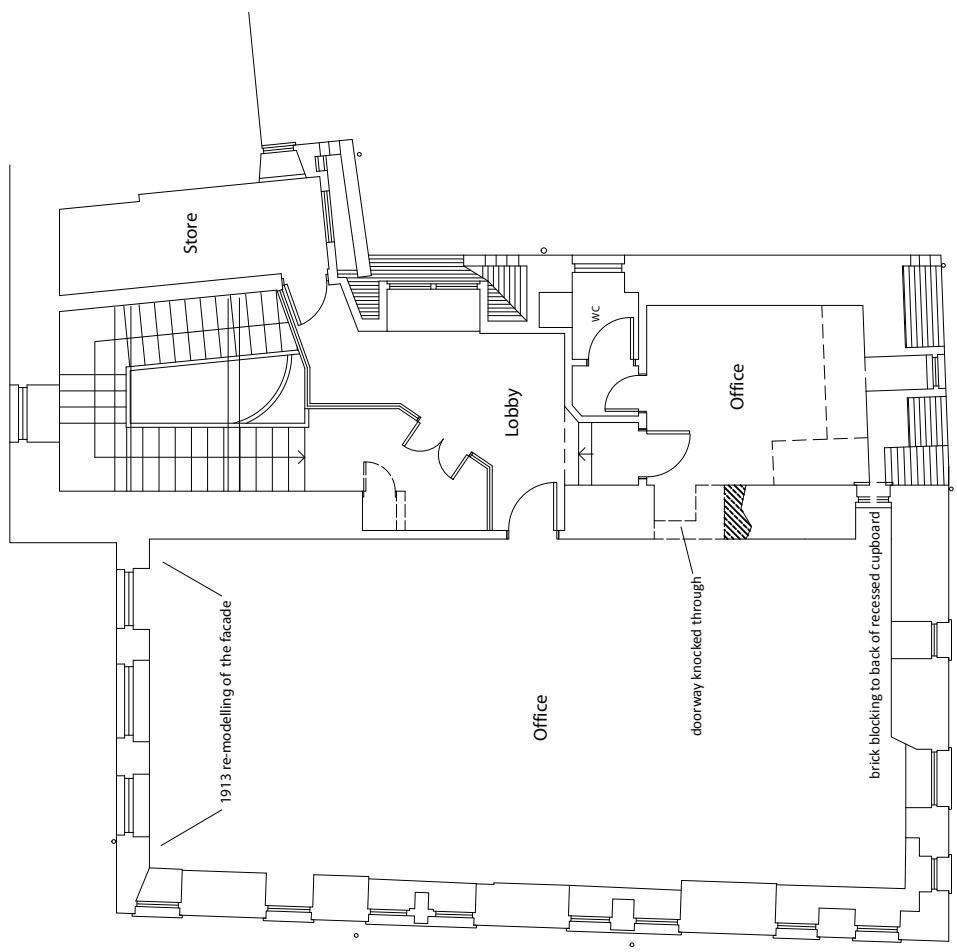


Figure 10: Cannonball House, first floor plan (plan supplied by client)



Plate 1: Cannonball House, lower ground floor, general view of the westernmost room from the south



Plate 2: Cannonball House, lower ground floor, general view of the westernmost room from the north

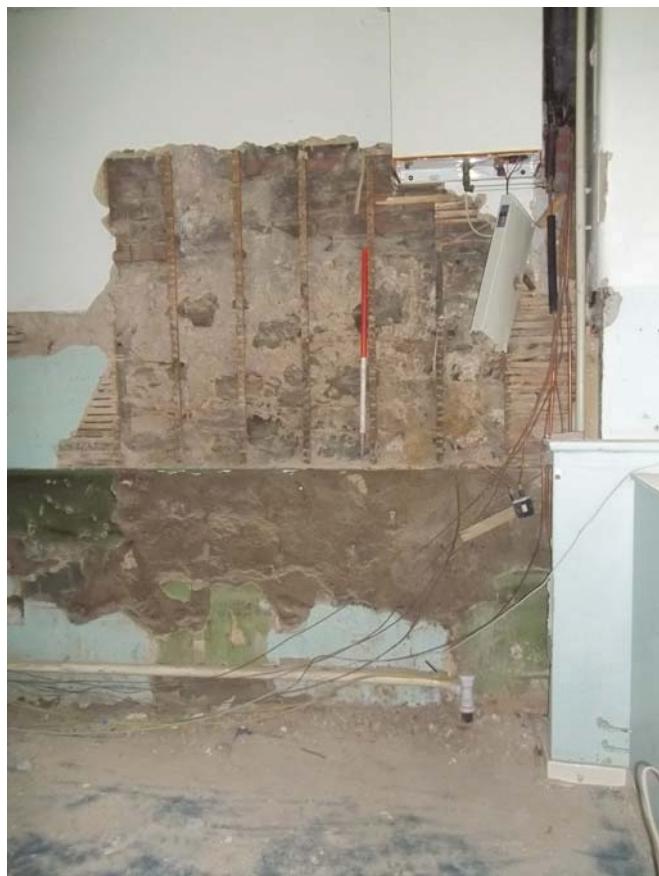


Plate 3: Cannonball House, lower ground floor, detail of exposed area to the south of the east wall from the west



Plate 4: Cannonball House, ground floor, general view of the westernmost office from the south-west



Plate 5: Cannonball House, ground floor, general view of the westernmost office from the south-east



Plate 6: Cannonball House, ground floor, general view of the westernmost office from the north-east



Plate 7: Cannonball House, detail of small early window to toilet block to the south in the south side of the east wall, from the west



Plate 8: Cannonball House, first floor, general view of the westernmost room from the south



Plate 9: Cannonball House, first floor, general view of the westernmost room from the north



Plate 10: Cannonball House, first floor, detail of the exposed walling to the east side of the south wall from the west



Plate 11: Cannonball House, first floor, detail of the small cupboard to the far south side of the east wall from the west

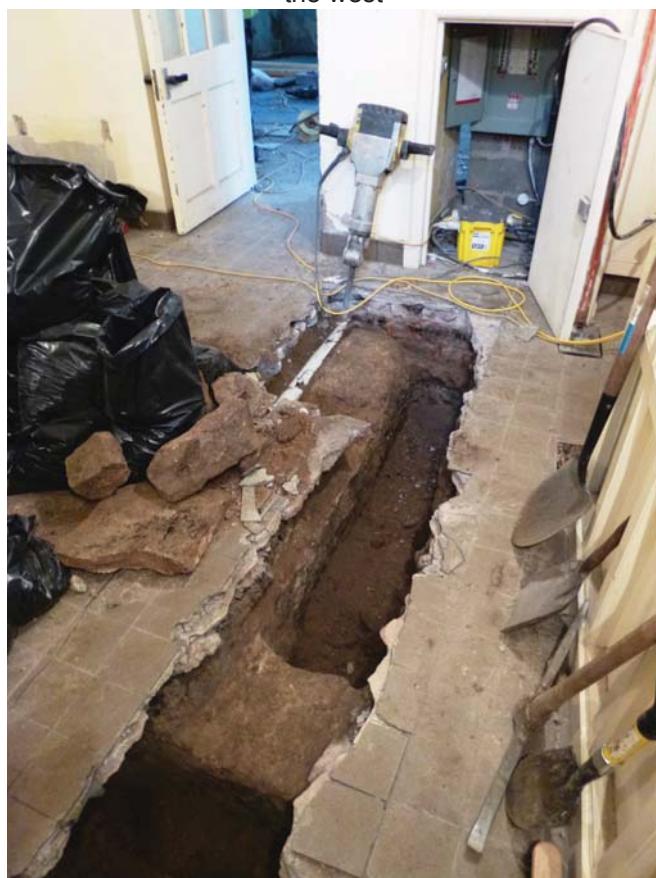


Plate 12: Cannonball House, lower ground floor, detail of the service trench exposing Wall [001] (to the foreground) and Wall [002] (running perpendicular to it from Wall [001], from the south)



Plate 13: Cannonball House, lower ground floor, detail of the service trench exposing Wall [003] from the south - note that a modern brick and concrete service is located below this to the south

7 REFERENCES

7.1 Bibliography and bibliographical references

McWilliam, C, Gifford, J & Walker, D 1991 *The Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh*. Penguin: London

Scottish Planning Policy SPP23. *Archaeology and Planning*. Scottish Government Nov 2008.

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

Appendix 1: Photographic Register

Black & White Print (Film # 1) & Colour Digital (Structural Watching Brief)

Frame	Area	Description	Taken From	Date
1	Basement	Detail of arched entrance in E side	SE	25/10/2013
2 – 3	Basement	General view of the steps	NW	25/10/2013
4 – 5	Basement	General view of the steps	NE	25/10/2013
6 – 7	Basement interior	General view of entrance area prior to slapping being put in	SE	25/10/2013
8 – 9	Room 04	General view of the W side of the S wall	N	25/10/2013
10 – 11	Room 04	General view of the W side of the S wall	NE	25/10/2013
12 – 13	Room 04	General view	E	25/10/2013
14 – 15	Room 04	General view	W	25/10/2013
16 – 17	Gents WC	General view of the S corner	NE	25/10/2013
18 – 19	Gents WC	Detail of the small window in the S wall	N	25/10/2013
20 – 21	Room 03	General view of the NE corner	SW	25/10/2013
22 – 23	Room 03	General view showing partition wall to be removed	SE	25/10/2013
24 – 25	Room 03	General view	NW	25/10/2013
26 – 27	Room B1	General view of the W side of the S wall	E	25/10/2013
28 – 29	Room B1	General view	E	25/10/2013
30 – 31	Room B1	General view of the E-most bay in the N wall	SE	25/10/2013
32 – 33	Room B1	General view of the E-most bay in the N wall	SW	25/10/2013
34 – 35	Room B1	General view	W	25/10/2013
36	-	Registration	-	25/10/2013

Colour Digital (Watching brief)

Frame	Feature no.	Description	Taken From	Date
1 – 2	-	Basement interior - General view of stripped plaster	N	05/11/2013
3 – 4	-	Basement interior - Upper section of stripped plaster	N	05/11/2013
5 – 6	-	Basement interior - Lower section of stripped plaster	N	05/11/2013
7 – 8	-	First Floor - General view of stripped plaster	N	05/11/2013
9 – 10	-	First Floor - General view of stripped plaster	N	05/11/2013
11 – 12	-	First Floor - Upper section of stripped plaster	N	05/11/2013
13 – 14	-	First Floor - Lower section of stripped plaster	N	05/11/2013
15 – 16	-	First Floor - View of small cupboard	S	05/11/2013
17	[001]	Wall [001]	S	15/11/2013
18	[001]	Wall [001]	S	15/11/2013
19	[001, 002]	Walls [001 & 002]	S	15/11/2013
20	[001, 002]	Walls [001 & 002]	S	15/11/2013
21	[001, 002]	Walls [001 & 002]	S	15/11/2013
22	[001, 002]	Walls [001 & 002]	N	15/11/2013
23	[001, 002]	Walls [001 & 002]	N	15/11/2013
24	[001, 002]	Walls [001 & 002]	S	15/11/2013
25	-	General view of watching brief area	E	16/11/2013

Frame	Feature no.	Description	Taken From	Date
26	[003]	Wall [003]	N	16/11/2013
27 – 32	[003]	Wall [003]	Varied	16/11/2013
33 – 34	-	View of extension to trench to north	S	16/11/2013
35	-	Patch of possible Victorian wallpaper		25/11/2003
36	-	Detail of wallpaper		25/11/2003
37	-	Detail of wallpaper		25/11/2003
38	-	Wallpapered wall		25/11/2003
39	-	Doorway/Alcove on 2 nd floor		25/11/2003
40	-	Doorway/Alcove on 2 nd floor		25/11/2003
41 – 45	[004]	Pipe trench on lower ground floor showing wall {004}		25/11/2003
46	-	General view of watching brief area		25/11/2003

Appendix 2: Context Register

Context No.	Type	Description and Interpretation
001	Structure	Sandstone wall oriented east – west. Extends for 0.5m across trench, 0.33m wide and surviving 0.42m high. Single course of ashlar sandstone bonded with lime mortar. Chamfered corner at extreme east of the exposed section of wall suggesting opening through wall.
002	Structure	Sandstone wall oriented north – south. Extends for 1.9m across trench, 0.35m wide and surviving 0.53m high. Single course of ashlar sandstone blocks bonded with lime mortar. Truncated to north by modern brick wall.
003	Structure	Sandstone wall oriented east – west. Extends for 0.8m across trench, 0.5m wide and surviving 0.8m high in two courses. Two courses of ashlar sandstone blocks bonded with lime mortar.
004	Structure	Sandstone foundation oriented east – west. Extends for 0.5m across trench, 1.2m wide. Composed of irregular sandstone blocks bonded with pale brown lime mortar. Upstanding wall of the building directly on top of this structure on same alignment, [004] is the foundation for the upstanding walls.

Appendix 3: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland (DES) Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME	Cannonball House, 356 Castlehill, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 22573
PARTHIS:	Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Diana Sproat & Jamie Humble
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Historic Building Recording & Archaeological Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	NT27SE 318
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Post-medieval walls
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR	NT 25395 73505
START DATE	25 th October 2013
END DATE	25 th November 2013
PREVIOUS WORK	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:	<p>AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Thomas and Adamson, on behalf of their client to undertake an archaeological and structural watching brief at Cannonball House, Castle Hill, Edinburgh, in advance of and during renovation works at this large A Listed building at the top of the Royal Mile.</p> <p>The frontage of Cannonball House dates to the late 16th century with a later wing to the rear completed in 1630 by Alexander Mure although there have been significant 18th century additions. The interior was significantly altered in 193 when the house was incorporated into Castlehill School. The archaeological watching brief recorded four post-medieval wall foundations exposed during the limited ground breaking works which may relate to a previous phase of building on the site, although the limited scope of the works hinders the interpretation of these features.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None.
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None.
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Thomas and Adamson, on behalf of their client
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	AOC Archaeology Group, Edgefield Road Industrial Estate, Edgefield Road, Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SY
EMAIL ADDRESS:	edinburgh@aocarchaeology.com
ARCHIVE LOCATION:	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



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