

Victoria Primary School, Newhaven, Edinburgh: Archaeological Evaluation Data Structure Report

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AOC 22594

27th January 2014



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

Victoria Primary School, Newhaven, Edinburgh: Archaeological Evaluation Data Structure Report

On Behalf of:	Morrison Construction Grange House, West Mains Road, West Mains Industrial Estate, Grangemouth FK3 8YE
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NT 2564 7701
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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 Morrison Construction Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on a proposed re-development within the existing play-ground of Victoria Primary School, Edinburgh (NGR; NT 2564 7701).

Works consisted of an archaeological evaluation of two trenches totalling 26 linear metres. Two crouched inhumations of probable early prehistoric date were revealed. In addition, an overlying buried soil of probable medieval date and modern brick foundations were also recorded.

Small finds included skeletal material and associated prehistoric pot sherds. A single body sherd of medieval white gritty ware was recovered from the buried soil.

If the graves cannot be preserved in situ, further archaeological investigations will be required in order to define the extent of the burials within the limits of the development and to fully excavate the existing examples revealed by the evaluation. Any further investigations will require confirmation by, and be at the discretion of, John Lawson of CECAS.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Morrison Construction to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching prior to the re-development of the site. The works were to be undertaken at the request of City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS). The site lies within the administrative area of the City of Edinburgh Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by CECAS. The archaeological works were conducted in accordance with the principles as set out in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2010) and *Planning and Archaeology 2/2011* (2011).

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The proposed development area lies within the playground of the existing Victoria Primary School, Newhaven, Edinburgh (Centred on NGR NT 2564 7701). It is bounded to the north by Pier Place/Lindsay Road and to the south by Annfield Street. The evaluation took place within the playground area of the present Victoria Primary School and is currently a mix of tarmac playground with some mature trees along the eastern edge of the development area.

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The site lies within Newhaven which appears on Blaeu's mid 17th century map of the Lothians, Figure 1. The mid 19th century 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map shows the development area to be free of buildings so it seems the School was built on a greenfield site.



Plate 1: Extract from Blaeu Atlas of Scotland, Lothians, 1654

1.3.2 The evaluation area is currently the playground of the B-Listed mid 19th century 1861 John Lessel's designed 3-storey, 9 bay Gothic style primary school (Listed Building No. 43704, NMRS No. NT27NE 342).



Plate 2: View of Victoria Primary School From East

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objective of the archaeological works was to:

- i) assess the character, extent, condition, quality, date and significance of any buried archaeological remains within the proposed development area through evaluation trenching;
- ii) To advise and implement an appropriate form of mitigation strategy compliant with *Scottish Planning Policy (2010)* and *Planning and Archaeology 2/2011 (2011)*, such as excavation, post-excavation analyses and publication, given the infeasibility of preserving the archaeological material *in situ*, should significant archaeological remains be encountered.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 The development area is situated within the existing school playground. The area measures c. 4,750 m² in total area. CECAS required that a 10% sample of the development be subject to machine trial trenching to uncover the nature and extent of any archaeological remains which may be present on the site. Therefore, a total area of c. 475 m² (total basal dimensions), equating to 10% of the development area, was to be excavated. This was revised with the agreement of CECAS to include only the 128 m² metres covered by the footprint of the proposed building. A total of two trenches measuring a combined total of 26 linear metres were therefore excavated (Figure 2).

3.2 All trenches were excavated with an eight tonne tracked excavator using a 2m wide ditching bucket. The trench details are summarised in Appendix 1. Machine excavation was conducted in shallow units/spits through the overburden to the upper surface of the underlying geological deposits. The trenches were

stepped where necessary in order to access the trench. The trial trenching was undertaken according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard operating procedures as detailed in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (AOC 2014).

4 RESULTS

4.1 The entire available evaluation area was covered with tarmac 0.10m thick. This overlay a bedding layer of hardcore. These surface deposits capped a layer of made ground up to 1.00 m in depth. The made ground in turn overlay a buried soil between 0.10 m to 0.40 m in depth. Natural sub-soil was encountered in both trenches and comprised yellow/brown sand. The position of the trenches and the major features identified can be found in figures two and five.

4.2 Trench 1

4.2.1 Trench one was excavated to a depth of 1.6 m and revealed two possible crouched inhumations [105-107] of probable early prehistoric date cut into the natural sands. An overlying buried soil (104) of probable medieval date 0.30 m in depth and a modern brick wall [101] were also revealed.

4.2.2 *Brick Wall [101]*

4.2.2.1 A truncated brick wall [101] was revealed immediately underlying the playground formation deposits (100) running east/west from the western end of the trench. The wall was double coursed and lay on a concrete foundation [102]. The wall was cut into an underlying deposit of made ground and demolition material (103). The wall ran along the northern edge of the trench and turned to the north at 3.40 m. The wall reappeared within Trench 2 [201].

4.2.3 *Buried Soil (104)*

4.2.3.1 A buried soil (104) of medium brown silty sand containing occasional small pebbles was recorded immediately underlying the deposit of made ground (103). The soil ranged from 0.20 m to 0.40 m in depth and included oyster shell and flecks of charcoal. A single sherd of medieval white gritty ware [SF 5] was recovered from above [105]. The soil which has built up within the deflation of a dune system is of probable medieval date.

4.2.4 *Inhumation [105]*

4.2.4.1 The excavation of Trench 1 revealed human skeletal remains (109). Upon hand cleaning these were found to be located within the upper (106) and primary fills (111) of an oval grave cut [105] situated 3.40 m from the western end of the trench. The grave cut measured 1.40 m east to west by 1.20 m north to south. The remains were orientated west to east with the skull positioned at the western end. Several other bones including a clavicle and vertebrae were also revealed *in situ*. No excavation of the grave cut was attempted due to the threat of subsidence along the northern trench section. cursory cleaning revealed several prehistoric pot-sherds (SF 4) located close to the presumed position of the body. The size and shape of the grave cut together with the position of the prehistoric pot-sherds next to the body suggest that the feature represents a crouched inhumation of early prehistoric date.

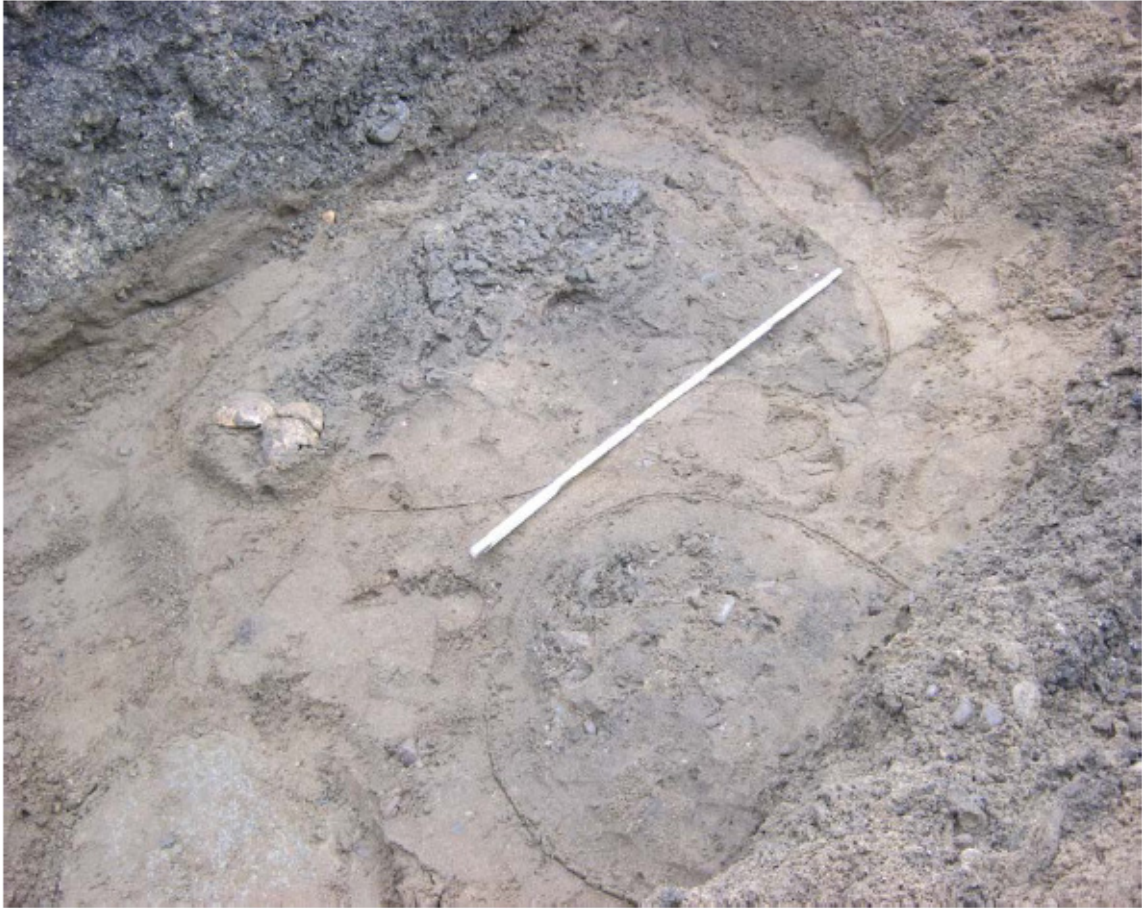


Plate 3: Grave cuts [105-107] from south-west



Plate 4: South facing section Trench 1 showing buried soil and inhumation [105]

4.2.5 Inhumation [107]

4.2.5.1 A second partially visible grave cut [107] was revealed to the immediate south of grave cut [105]. This appeared to be orientated north to south and measured 1.10 m east to west by 0.70 m north to south. The full north/south extent of the feature was obscured due to the need to step the southern side of the trench for safe egress. The feature was again filled with compact grey silty sand (108). A single human vertebra (110) was recovered from the fill.



Plate 5: Inhumation [107] from north.

4.3 Trench 2

4.3.1 Trench 2 was positioned along the northern edge of the building footprint and was excavated to a depth of 2.0 m until the water table was reached. The south facing section of the trench revealed 1.0 m of made ground deposited in tip-lines. This again was overlain by the formation deposits of the existing playground. The made ground in-turn covered a thin deposit of buried soil (202)-(104) 0.10 m to 0.30 m in depth. No further inhumations were observed. The modern brick wall [203-101] recorded within Trench 1 was observed running across Trench 2 north to south. This again was formed on a concrete base [204-102] cut into the made ground [201-103]



Plate 6: Wall [203] crossing Trench 2 from north.

5 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The evaluation revealed significant archaeological remains in the form of two possibly crouched inhumations of probable early prehistoric date forming a cemetery site. Inhumations of this period are exceedingly rare within the limits of the City of Edinburgh (J Lawson pers com). Therefore, if the burials cannot be preserved in situ, further archaeological investigations will be recommended in order to define the extent of the burials within the limits of the development and to fully excavate the existing examples revealed by the evaluation. This will need to be approved by John Lawson of CECAS.

6 REFERENCES

AOC Archaeology 2013 *Victoria Park Primary School, Newhaven, Edinburgh: Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished client method statement

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

Scottish Government 2011 *Planning and Archaeology 2/2011*

Ordnance Survey 1852 Edinburgh Town Plan Sheets 21 & 25

Ordnance Survey 1894 Edinburgh Town Plan Sheet III.4.17

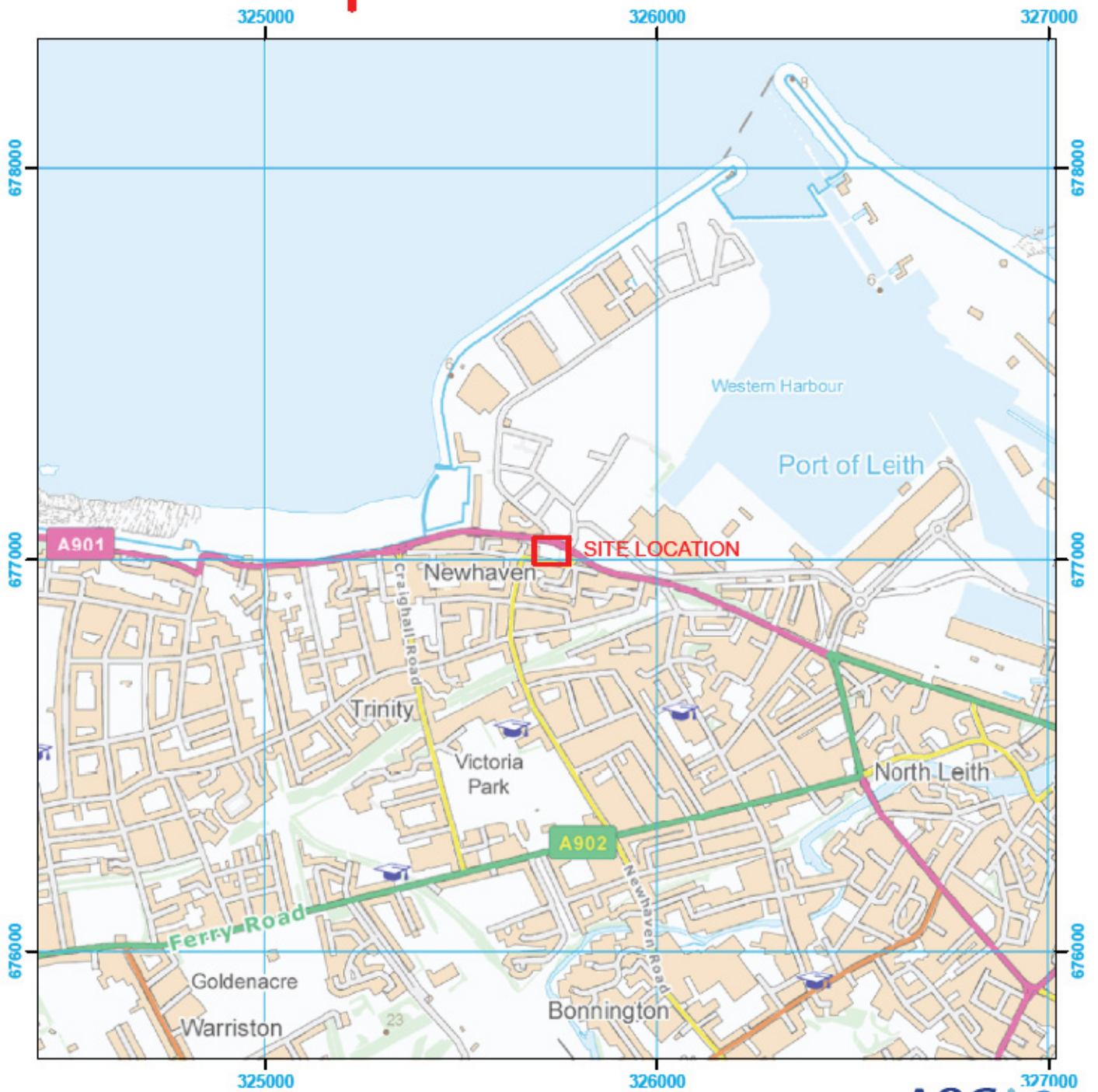
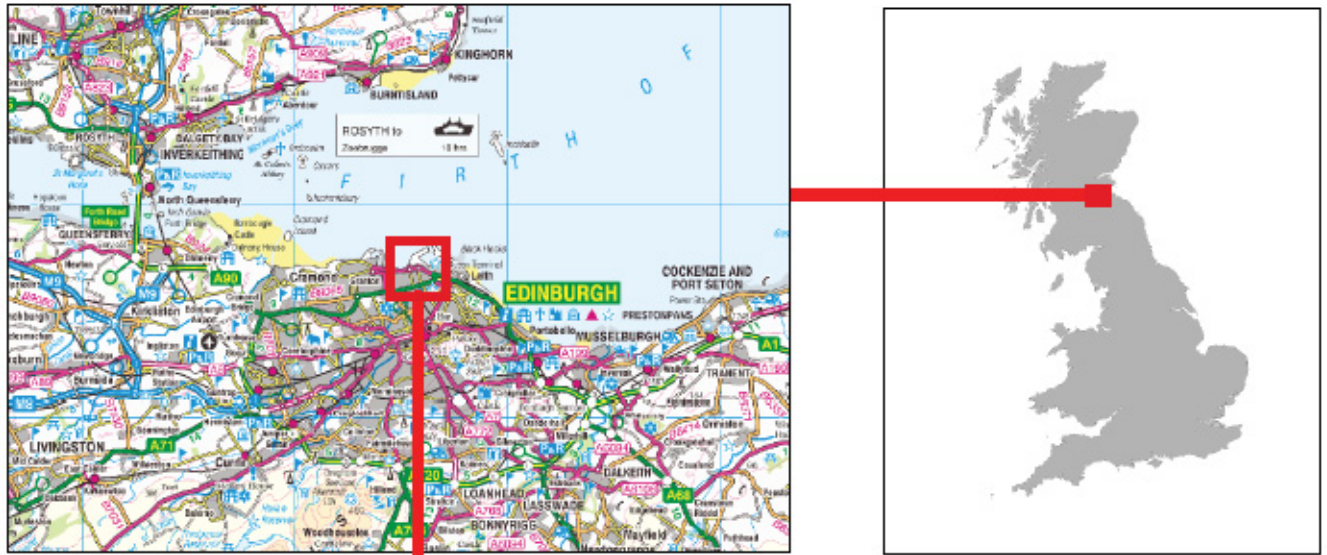


Figure 1 : Site Location

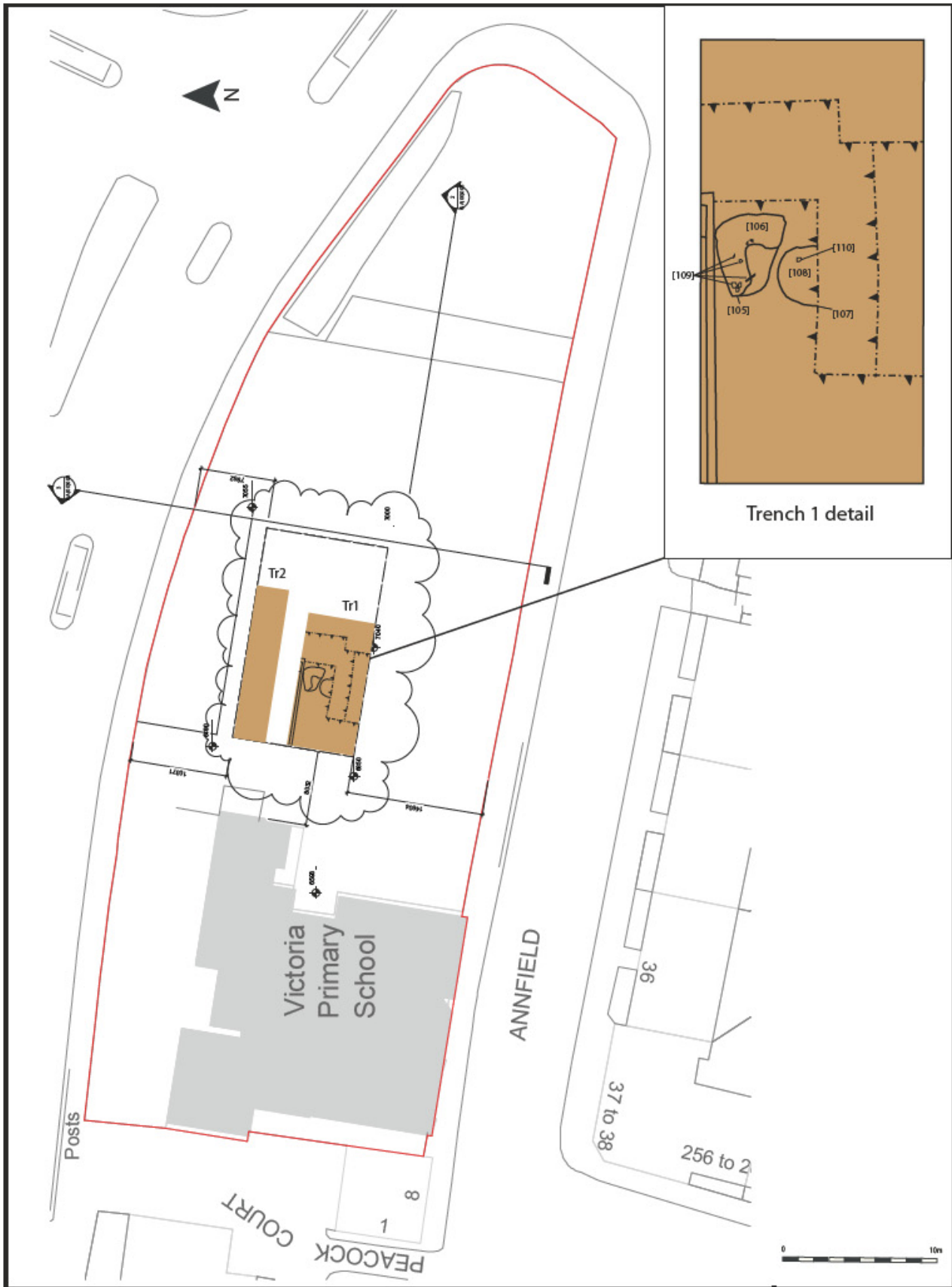


Figure 2 - Trench Location Plan showing features within

**Victoria Primary School, Newhaven,
Edinburgh
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Appendices

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

Trench 1

Dimensions	8.0m by 4.0m
Orientation	W-E
Depth of Made-ground	1.60m
Features	Inhumation [105] – (106) – (109), inhumation [107] – (108) – (110). Brick wall [101-102]
Subsoil	Yellow/brown sand
Finds	Human Skeletal material SF [1-2-3-6], Prehistoric potsherds SF [5] and Medieval pot sherd SF [4]

Trench 2

Dimensions	10.0m by 2.0m
Orientation	W-E
Depth of Made-ground	1.60-2.00 m
Features	Brick wall [201]
Subsoil	Yellow/brown sand
Finds	None

APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Digital Register

Frame	Trench	Description	From
1	-	Registration	-
2-3	1	Removed skeletal material from [105]	N
4-5	1	Grave cuts [105] & [107]	SW
6	1	Grave cut [105] from south	S
7	1	Close up shot of [105]	W
8	1	Close up shot of [107]	N
9-10-11	1	South facing section showing association of [105] and overlying buried soil (104)	S
12	1	Grave cuts [105] & [107]	E
13	1	Grave cuts [105] & [107]	S
14	2	South facing section showing made ground	SW
15	2	North facing section showing made ground	N
16	2	Western end of Trench 2	E

APPENDIX 3: CONTEXT REGISTER

Digital Register

Context	Trench	Description
100	1	Playground formation deposits of tarmac and type 2 hardcore 0.60 m in depth. Over all.
101	1	Brick wall. Double coursed with concrete mortar. Running west to east along the northern edge of Trench 1. Appears to turn to the north at 3.40 m and runs into Trench 2. The wall is 0.60 m

		in elevation and sat on a concrete foundation (102). It lies within a deposit of made ground (03). The wall lies immediately beneath the play ground formation deposits (100). Modern wall
102	1	Concrete foundation of Wall (101) 0.20 m in depth. Built into made ground (103)
103	1	Made ground consisting of cinder, re-deposited top-soil and demolition material. Deposit is between 0.20 m and 0.70 m in depth. The deposit overlies a buried soil (104).
104	1	Buried soil. Medium brown silty sand containing oyster shell and a single sherd of medieval pottery [SF 4]. Deposit is 0.20 m to 0.40 m in depth. The deposit lies immediately over the grave cuts [105-107]. Probable medieval soil/deflation of dune.
105	1	Cut. Roughly oval cut feature containing human skeletal material (109) (SF 1-2-3) within its fill (106). The cut measures 1.40 m E/W by 1.20 m N/S. No excavation was undertaken. The cut lay immediately under the buried soil (104) and cut the natural sands. A further cut [107] was recorded 0.20 m to the immediate south. Filled by (106 – 111). Cut for inhumation of probable prehistoric date.
106	1	Upper fill of [105] compact grey silty sand with occasional small pebbles. Contains skeletal material of single individual (109). Several unarticulated bones and skull fragments were given finds numbers (SF 1-2-3). The fill appears to overlie a deposit of re-deposited natural (111). The fill is hook shaped and measures 1.40 m E/W at its eastern end and 0.40 m N/S at its western end. Fill of inhumation cut [105].
107	1	Cut. Probable oval cut feature containing human skeletal material (110) (SF 106) within its fill (108). The cut measures 1.10 m E/W by 0.70 m N/S and runs into the southern step section of the trench. No excavation was undertaken. The cut lay immediately under the buried soil (104) and cut the natural sands. A further cut [105] was recorded 0.20 m to the immediate north. Filled by (108). Cut for inhumation of probable prehistoric date.
108	1	Fill of [107] compact grey silty sand with occasional small pebbles. Contains skeletal material (110) (SF 106).
109	1	Skeleton material of single individual within (106) of grave cut [105]. Consists of mostly skull fragments and jaw (SF 1-2-3).
110	1	Skeleton material of single individual within (108) of grave cut [107]. Consists of spinal bone (SF 6).
111	1	Lower fill of [105]. Orange brown silty sand. Deposit is partially visible and measures 0.90 m E/W by 0.50 m N/S. The deposit appears to underlie (106). Probable re-deposited natural. Initial fill of [105].
200	2	Playground formation deposits of tarmac and type 2 hardcore 0.60 m in depth.
201	2	Made ground mixed deposit of cinder, demolition material and re-deposited top-soil 1.0 m in depth. Same as (103)
202	2	Buried soil. Medium brown silty sand containing oyster shell and charcoal flecks. Deposit is 0.10 m to 0.30 m in depth. Same

		as (104). Probable medieval soil/deflation of dune.
203	2	Brick wall. Double coursed with concrete mortar. Running north to south across Trench 2. Appears to run from Trench 1. The wall is 0.30 m in elevation and sat on a concrete foundation (204). It lies within a deposit of made ground (201). The wall lies immediately beneath the play ground formation deposits (100-200). Modern wall same as [101]
204	2	Concrete foundation of Wall (203) 0.20 m in depth. Built into made ground (201). Same as [102].

APPENDIX 4: SMALL FINDS REGISTER

Number	Trench	Description	Context
1	1	Lower jaw	106
2	1	Skull casing	106
3	1	Upper jaw	106
4	1	Medieval pot sherd (white gritty ware)	104
5	1	Prehistoric pot-sherds	106

APPENDIX 5: DRAWING REGISTER

Number	Trench	Description	Scale
1	1	Plan of Trench 1 showing inhumations [105-107]	1:20

APPENDIX 4: DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND REPORT

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Victoria Primary School, Newhaven, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 22594
PARISH:	Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Rob Engl
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Human Burials
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	Human skeletal remains, prehistoric pot sherds & medieval sherd of white gritty ware
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 2260 7495
START DATE (this season)	25 th January 2014
END DATE (this season)	26 th January 2014
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Morrison Construction Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on a proposed re-development within the existing playground of Victoria Park Primary School, Edinburgh.</p> <p>Works consisted of an archaeological evaluation of two trenches totalling 26 linear metres. Two crouched inhumations of probable early prehistoric date were revealed. In addition, an overlying buried soil of probable medieval date and modern brick foundations were also recorded.</p> <p>Small finds included skeletal material and associated prehistoric pot sherds. A single body sherd of medieval white gritty ware was recovered from the buried soil.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	Yes
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	n/a
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Morrison Construction
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	AOC Archaeology Group; Edgefield Road Industrial Estate; Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SY
EMAIL ADDRESS:	admin@aocarchaeology.com
ARCHIVE LOCATION	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



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