Saughton Hall, Edinburgh: Archaeological Recording of Site Investigation Trenches Data Structure Report

AOC Project 22747 30th May 2016





Saughton Hall, Edinburgh: Archaeological Recording of Site Investigation Trenches

Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: City of Edinburgh Council

Parks and Greenspace Services for Communities Waverley Court, Level G.4

East Market Street

EH8 8BJ

National Grid Reference (NGR): NT 2195 7187

AOC Project No: 22747

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Abstract

Archaeological excavations of site investigation trenches were conducted by AOC Archaeology within the development area of Saughton Hall, Edinburgh.

The excavations were localised to four trenches that were investigating the former Saughton Hall walls as well as areas requiring up to three metre deep investigations for engineering purposes.

Three of the trenches revealed remains relating to the various phases of Saughton Hall. The main external wall of the house, some internal walls and drainage features were all revealed within 14 m of trench. These findings from these works match the findings of the earlier evaluation and community excavation that show the foundation levels of the former house all survive under the modern compound and landscaping.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 **Background**

Archaeological excavations were undertaken by AOC Archaeology on behalf of the City of 1.1.1 Edinburgh Council as part of a programme of archaeological works related to a proposed redevelopment at Saughton Hall Park, Edinburgh. The site lies within the administrative area of the City of Edinburgh Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS). The archaeological works were conducted in accordance with the principles set out in Scottish Planning Policy (2014) and Planning and Archaeology 2/2011 (2011).

1.2 Location

1.2.1 The trenches requiring excavation were located within the council compound and an area of gardens to the immediate SE of the compound situated within Saughton Hall Park (centred on NGR: NT 2195 7187). The park lies to the west of the City of Edinburgh. The site is wholly enclosed by Saughton Park, and is bounded by Balgreen Road to the east, the Water of Leith to the south and Stevenson Drive to the north (Figure 1).

1.3 **Archaeological Background**

1.3.1 A Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by City of Edinburgh Council (2014) describes the archaeological and historic background and identified features of potential heritage significance within the boundaries of the site. Further historical research has been completed by AOC and has informed the archaeological and historical background summary assessment provided below.

Prehistoric period

1.3.2 As with many sites on the outskirts of Edinburgh, prehistoric activity is difficult to detect due to the urban development. A possible prehistoric spindle whorl discovered within the Saughton Park in 1917 (now in the National Museum of Scotland collections) is the only potentially prehistoric find recorded in the immediate vicinity.

Early Medieval period

1.3.3 It is likely that industrial activities were focussed around the Saughton Estate in the early medieval period. The nearby Gorgie Mill was a medieval (and later) mill and it is likely that there may have been other industrial activities in the Saughton Hall park area, possibly to the south of the site where a weir exists within the Water of Leith.

17th century & 18th century

1.3.4 The land that now encompasses Saughton Park and Gardens was part of the ancient Saughton Estate which had its own historic mansion house referred to as 'Sauch' (the name meaning 'willow' in Scots). The Estate is thought to date back to at least the early 17th century and, by the 1660s, the site was in the hands of Robert Baird, who is credited with the construction of the older parts of the mansion which survived until its demolition in 1952. The maps of 1652 and 1682 by Bleau and Adair respectively show the settlement at 'Saughtonhall' at this time, the latter showing it to form an estate and mansion house of some significance (Figures 2 & 3).

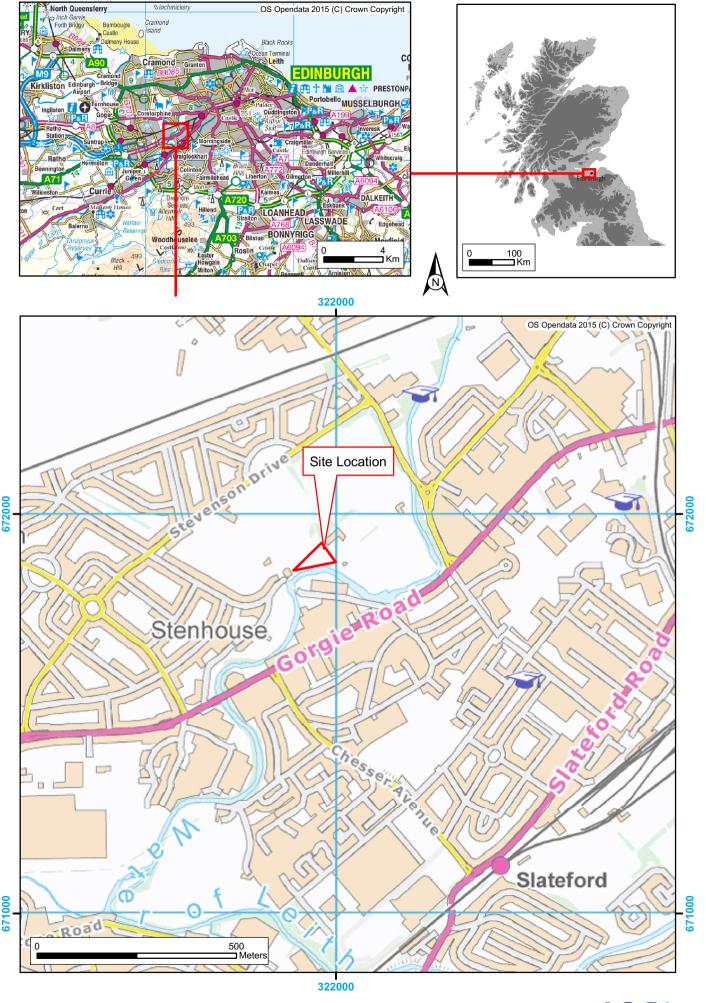


Figure 1: Site Location Plan





Figure 2: Extract from Bleau's map, 1654



Figure 3: Extract from Adair's map, 1682

The maps throughout the 18th century show the general layout of the estate, including the 1.3.5 mansion house and its gardens, with Roy's Military Map of Scotland from ca. 1747 - 55 showing the house and grounds in a rectangular plot of land roughly orientated NNW/SSE (Figure 4). This is clearly a slightly earlier form of layout than is seen later in the 19th century, which stretches to the east and west of the house.



Figure 4: Extract from Roy's map, ca. 1747 - 55

19th century and the 'Private' Lunatic Asylum

Into the 19th century, the mansion house and gardens appear much the same. James Knox's 1.3.6 1816 plan even annotates the estate as belonging to Sir Ja[mes]s Baird, indicating that the estate remained in the hands of the Baird family from the 17th century to this time (Figure 5). In 1824, the house was leased to the Institute of the Recovery of the Insane - essentially a 'private' lunatic asylum for those of higher ranks - admitting over 100 patients from 1824 -1840. The 1855 Ordnance Survey map details the mansion house and estate, including the extent of its outbuildings and the sundial in the garden (Figure 6). The grounds are extensive with paved walkways bounded by rows of mature trees and with an open expanse of land to the south where the estate meets the Water of Leith. Two large mill complexes have also sprung up to the north-east (Gorgie Mills) and to the south-west (Saughton Mills).



Figure 5: Extract from Knox's plan, 1816

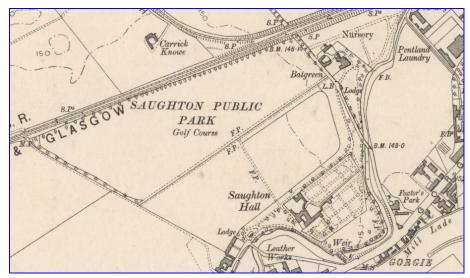


Figure 6: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1855

The Edwardian period and the Scottish National Exhibition

- By the end of the 19th century, 90 acres of the estate lands were being considered for a 1.3.7 public park, following a report in June 1899 by the Town Clerk of Edinburgh. The owner of the estate at the time was Sir William Gardiner Baird who sold the land to the Council in 1900 for £52,900. To the north, a golf course was laid out on the lands, sparking controversy that the new park was not as 'public' as the residents had hoped. However, by 1904, the 7 acre walled garden was acquired together with a further 22 acres of land in 1905, the whole site opening in June 1905 as the city's new public park.
- 1.3.8 In 1907, the mansion house, together with the remainder of the land in its immediate estate, also came into public ownership. It instantly became extremely popular, hosting the Scottish National Exhibition for 6 months starting in May 1908. To encourage city residents to attend, a new railway station - Exhibition Station - was erected at Balgreen Halt. The 1908 Ordnance Survey map shows the estate and house as it was under the new council ownership, the railway line to the north side adjacent to the golf course, with the extensive house, outbuildings and gardens to the south-east (Figure 7). The 1919 Ordnance Survey map (surveyed in 1912) demonstrates that activities undertaken at the park were greatly extended with an athletics ground added to the west of the site (itself bounded by its own line of mature trees), a large band stand to the immediate west of the house as well as some alterations and additions to the buildings themselves (Figure 8). These items remained once the Exhibition closed in October 1908 after around 3.5 million admissions. The bandstand, however, is said to have been relocated to the Marine Gardens at Portobello, although was replaced at the Fords Road entrance in 1909. The gardens were open (free) to the public in June 1910.

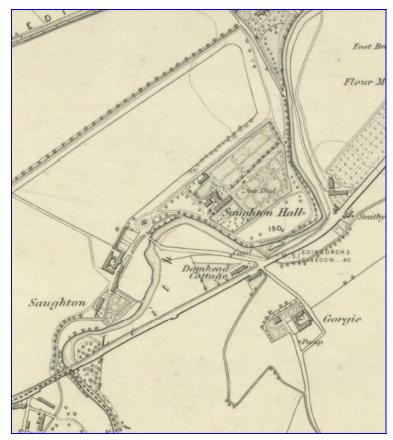


Figure 7: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1909

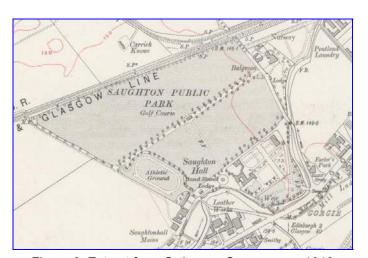


Figure 8: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1919

1.3.9 The Edwardian period was the hey-day of public parks on the outskirts of major cities and Saughton was no exception. Considerable investment was put into maintaining and caring for the gardens throughout the early part of the 20th century. In 1920, it was host to another event, the Royal Highland Show Fair, after which time much of the estate (forming mainly the golf course to the north) was used to construct the Whitson Council Housing Scheme. The 1944 Ordnance Survey map (surveyed in 1938) shows the extent of the neatly laid out new housing estate with Stevenson Drive forming the boundary to the site on the north side (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Extract from Ordnance Survey map, 1944 (surveyed in 1938)

The 1930s & 1940s period

- 1.3.10 The house and grounds that remained were still heavily used into the 1930s, the Royal Highland Show taking place there in 1931, and Coronation celebrations in 1937, which included a 40 foot bonfire that attracted 12,000 people.
- 1.3.11 The onset of the Second World War saw Saughtonhall and its grounds as with so many old country houses at this time - converted for use to aid the war effort. Onion beds were planted to aid the 'Dig for Victory' campaign. The house accommodated Land Girls and also served as a convalescence home for members of the Women's Land Army. However, once the war ended, the future of the house remained uncertain. Due to the age of the building and that parts were not occupied all the time, it was clear that the building would fall into decay if it was not maintained. The dereliction of the house, which included an extensive dry rot problem, together with the high cost of its maintenance, proved too much for the Corporation who sadly instructed its demolition in 1952. The stables and outhouses remained, most probably because they were still in use by the gardeners and maintainers of the park.

The 1950s - 1990s period

- 1.3.12 Despite the loss of the house, the Corporation continued to maintain the gardens to a high standard in the 1950s into the 1980s. A 'Garden of the Blind' was laid out in 1952, an Italian Garden in 1957, a display by the Royal National Rose Society in 1967 and a new Winter Garden in a single-span greenhouse in 1984 at a cost of £100,000. A children's play area was also created, upgraded in the 1980s with a 'Wild West' theme. The Saughton Sports Complex was introduced in the 1970s and was upgraded in the 1990s.
- 1.3.13 As tastes changed into the 1980s and public parks became less common as a 'day out' for local residents, they also attracted their fair degree of vandalism, which caused the dismantling of the bandstand in the late 1980s. Into the 1990s, however, the park was still used for public display with a bust of Mahatma Ghandi unveiled in 1997 in the Winter Garden.

The 21st century period

1.3.14 A Skate Park was created in the park in 2010. However, it had become clear to the Council and members of the public alike that not enough investment was being funnelled to maintain the gardens to their 'former glory' of 30 - 40 years before. Vandalism had caused the

removal of many of the freestanding garden ornaments that once inhabited the featured gardens on the site, as well as the aforementioned bandstand. The paddling pool was also no longer in use. Yet, parts of the gardens today are still finely maintained as are the lawns and hedgerows. The park is widely used by local residents. The original outbuildings associated with the house are now fenced off from the public and are clearly in a state of dereliction.

- 1.3.15 In 2014 the City of Edinburgh Council successfully secured a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to initialise a programme of works to rehabilitate the park and to re-engage the community which it has served since 1908 by embracing the rich heritage of the site in the first instance. A programme of archaeological works including evaluation, geophysical survey and building recording, revealed substantial remains of the former Saughtonhall (Engl & Sproat 2014). This included elements of its initial 17th century construction. The project included significant local involvement.
- 1.3.16 In August 2015 CEC submitted their Round 2 application to the Heritage Lottery Fund Parks for People and in January 2016 learnt that they were successful in securing £3.8million of funding. The total cost for the restoration and improvement works is estimated to be £5.2 million with the rest of the funding comprising Council and external funding.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works are:
 - to determine whether buried archaeological remains exist within the proposed Site Investigation areas through controlled archaeological excavation of the test pits required;
 - *ii)* to fully excavate and record any archaeological remains that are encountered within the test pits prior to their removal, if required.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 The excavation of the trenches was undertaken by an 8-tonne excavator equipped with a 1.6 m wide bladed ditching bucket. Excavation was undertaken in shallow units/spits until the first significant archaeological horizon or natural subsoil was reached. All machine excavation was supervised by an experienced field archaeologist and according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard operating procedures, and as per the methodology within the Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2016). After the features within the trenches were fully recorded the trenches were excavated below the natural subsoil using a toothed bucket to reach the depths required by the site investigation contractor.

4 RESULTS

- 4.1 The weather during the works was fair allowing for good archaeological visibility. In total, 15.9 linear metres of trench was excavated and recorded within and immediately adjacent to the council compound (Figure 10), within the footprint of Saughton House.
- 4.2 Trench 1

4.2.1 Two sandstone walls [101] and [102] were revealed within this trench (Figure 11; Plate 1). The first of these was angled at NW-SE and was at least two courses high measuring 0.32 m wide. The uppermost course of the wall was unusual in that it did not have any mortar on its upper surface and it first resembled the cap of a culvert. The second wall revealed is the main N wall of the house and measures 0.6 m wide and has a foundation excavated over 1 m into the natural subsoil. Neither of these walls were removed by the site investigation works.

4.3 Trench 2

4.3.1 A sandstone wall [201] and the remains of four culverts [202], [203], [204] and [209] were revealed within the trench that suggest various phases of use (Figure 11; Plate 2). The wall is similar in construction to wall [102] and is most likely a continuation of the external wall of the house. Culvert base [204] represents the earliest phase of the house construction with culverts [203] and [209] using the base as a partial foundation. From the frogged nature of the bricks it is most likely that culvert [202] is also contemporary with these later culverts. None of these features were removed by the Site Investigation works.

4.4 Trench 3

- 4.4.1 A small sandstone wall [301] and the edge of a brick culvert [303] were revealed within this trench (Figure 11; Plate 3). The wall is only one course high and sits within a shallow construction cut [302] that is only visible within made ground [305]. This suggests that the overlying made ground and mortar deposit [304] could have been a levelling layer for a floor surface that would have formerly abutted wall [301].
- 4.4.2 Only the culverts W edge was visible within the trench, with the alignment possibly suggesting that it may be related to culvert [209] within Trench 2. The culvert was within a visible construction cut [307] that cut through deposit [306] suggesting a large amount of levelling had taken place in the area during construction of the house. The wall [301] and part of the culvert [303] were removed by the Site Investigation works.

4.5 Trench 4

4.5.1 Trench 4 revealed the natural subsoil at a depth of 0.6 m with a modern cut containing a gas pipe running along the W half of the trench.



Plate 1 - View of Trench 1



Plate 2 - View of Trench 2



Plate 3 - View of Trench 3

6 **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 The archaeological excavations conducted ahead of the Site Investigation works was able to fully record several features related to Saughton Hall. Only part of wall [301] and culvert [303] were truncated by the Ste Investigation works. These features have been preserved in record and the information gained can be added to any future excavations due to take place within the development area. The full scope and scale of future works would be defined by City of Edinburgh Council, with the detailed methodology for their undertaking set out in further Written Schemes of Investigation.

7 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

6.1 **Bibliographic References**

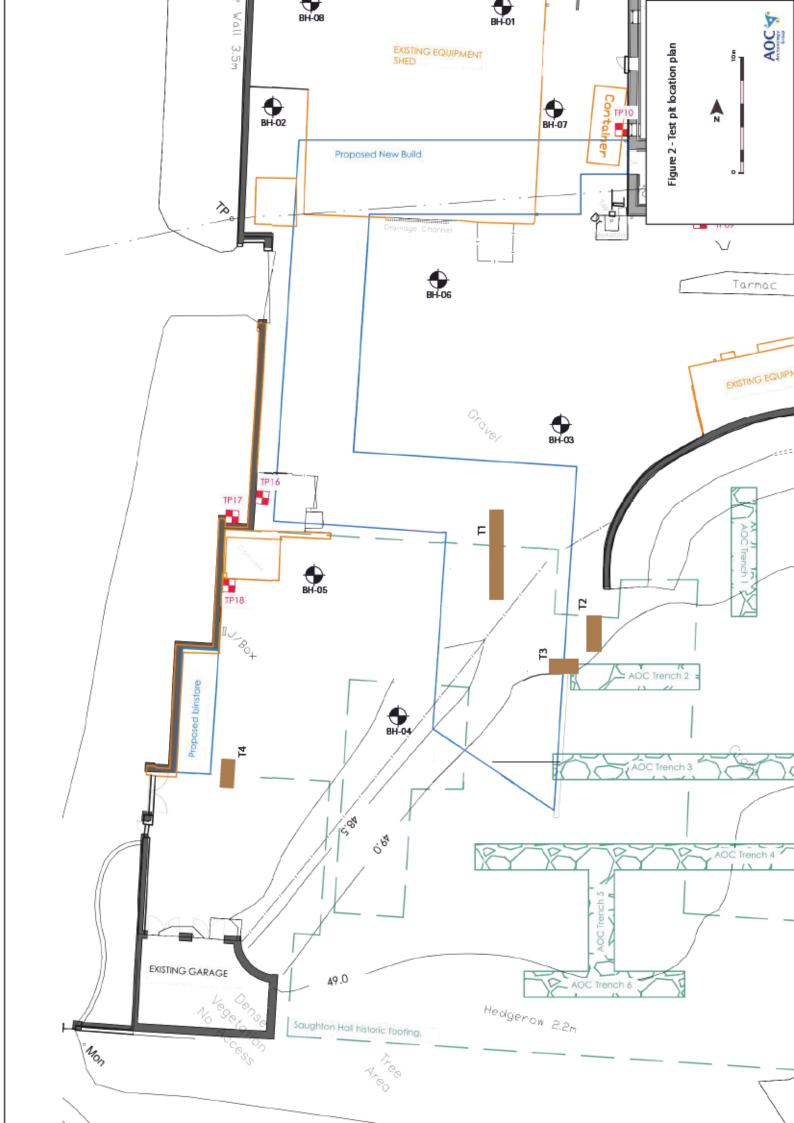
AOC Archaeology Group 2016 Saughton Hall, Edinburgh: Archaeological Excavations Phase 3 Written Scheme of Investigation, Unpublished Client Report

Scottish Government 2014 Scottish Planning Policy (2014)

Scottish Government 2011 PAN 2/2011 Planning & Archaeology

6.2 **Cartographic References**

1654	Bleau	Lothian and Linlithquo
1682	John Adair	Map of Midlothian
ca. 1747 – 55	William Roy	Military Map of Scotland
1816	James Knox	Map of the Shire of Edinburgh
1855	Ordnance Survey	Edinburghshire Sheet 5
1909	Ordnance Survey	Edinburghshire Sheet III.SW
1919	Ordnance Survey	Edinburghshire Sheet III.SW
1944	Ordnance Survey	Edinburghshire Sheet III.SW



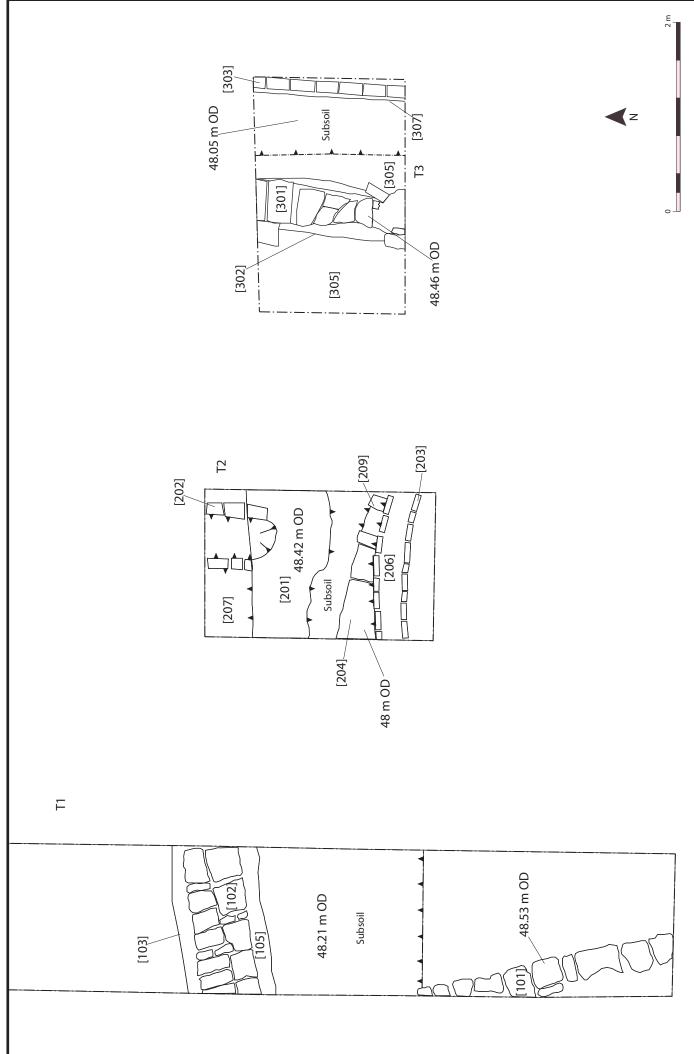


Figure 11 - Plan of trenches 1,2 & 3

Saughton Hall, Edinburgh: **Archaeological Recording of Site Investigation Trenches Data Structure Report**

Section 2: Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Trench Descriptions

Trench 1

Dimensions7.8 m by 1.6 mTotal Area12.48 m²Excavated OrientationS to N

Soil Make-up Hard standing – partially concreted type 1 stone onto very compact ash and clay – 0.25 m;

Demolition material – yellowish brown sandy rubble – 0.32 m

Depth of Excavation 0.6 m

Significant Features [101] - Sandstone wall; [102] - Sandstone wall; [103] - Construction cut for wall [102]; [104] -

Levelling deposit to N of wall [102]; [105] - Fill of cut [103]

Other Features None

Natural Subsoil Orange gravel

Finds None

Trench 2

Dimensions 3.1 m by 1.6 m

Total Area 4.96 m²

Excavated Orientation N to S

Soil Make-up Imported topsoil and turf – 0.1 m;

Demolition material – yellowish brown sandy rubble – 0.4 m

Depth of Excavation 0.96 m

Significant Features [201] - Sandstone wall; [202] - Brick culvert or drain truncating wall [201]; [203] - Brick culvert

or drain overlying [211]; [204] – Base of earlier culvert; [205] – Made ground deposit; [206] - Fill of culvert [203]; [207] – Made ground to E of culvert [202]; [208] – Fill of culvert [202];

[209] - Remnant of truncated culvert

Other Features None

Natural Subsoil Orange gravel

Finds None

Trench 3

Dimensions 2.5 m by 1.6 m

Total Area 4 m²
Excavated Orientation W to E

Soil Make-up Imported topsoil and turf – 0.3 m;

Demolition material - yellowish brown sandy rubble - 0.26 m

Depth of Excavation 0.87 m

Significant Features [301] - Sandstone wall; [302] - Construction cut for wall [301]; [303] - Brick culvert or drain

edge; [304] - Made ground deposit; [305] - Made ground deposit; [306] - Made ground

deposit; [307] - Cut for culvert [303]

Other Features None

Natural Subsoil Orange gravel

Finds None

Trench 4

Dimensions 2.5 m by 1.6 m

Total Area 4 m²
Excavated Orientation N to S

Soil Make-up Hard standing – partially concreted type 1 stone onto very compact ash and clay – 0.22 m;

Demolition material - yellowish brown sandy rubble - 0.38 m

Depth of Excavation 0.6 m Significant Features None

Other Features Gas pipe aligned N-S

Natural Subsoil Orange gravel

Finds None

APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context No.	Description and Interpretation	
101	Sandstone wall with sand and lime mortar aligned NW-SE measuring 2.5 m by 0.32 m by 0.31 m. At least two courses high surviving with top course unmortared and looking like the top of a culvert. Internal wall of Saughton House	
102	Sandstone wall with sand and lime mortar aligned E-W measuring 1.6 m by 0.6 m by 1.09 m. Sits on top of 1.04 m wide by 0.26 m thick sandstone foundation. Sits within construction cut [103]. External wall of Saughton House	
103	Linear cut aligned E-W with vertical sides and a flat base. Contains wall [102] and packing fill [105]. Measures 1.04 m wide by 1.05 m deep through natural gravel. Construction cut for wall [102]	
104	Large rounded river gravels to the N of wall [102], underlying the made ground in the compound. Measures 0.27 m thick. Landscaping deposit of levelling layer	
105	Re-deposited natural and rubble placed within cut [103] to N of wall [102]. Measures 0.4 m wide by 0.77 m deep. Fill of cut [103]	
201	Sandstone wall with sand and lime mortar aligned E-W measuring 1.6 m by 0.64 m by 0.4 m (visible). Drainage channel (end of culvert [202]) cut within S face. External wall of Saughton House	
202	Red brick lined culvert aligned N-S starting at wall [201]. Filled by [208] and measuring 0.58 m wide with internal gap of 0.31 m by 0.2 m. Base of culvert is made ground. Culvert	
203	Red brick lined culvert aligned W to E and curving NE. Three courses high and partly constructed on earlier culvert base [204]. Filled by [206] and measures 0.45 m wide with internal gap of 0.16 m by 0.34 m. Culvert	
204	Dark grey stone slabs mortared by sand and lime, aligned NW-SE and measuring 0.39 m by 0.09 m. Sitting on natural gravel and overlain by culvert [203]. Earlier culvert base	
205	Mid grey and brown sandy gravel and rubble between wall [201] and culvert [203] measuring 0.5 m thick. Made ground covering culverts	
206	Fill of culvert [203]	
207	Made ground to E of culvert [202] and S of wall [201]	
208	Fill of culvert [202]	
209	Remnant of brick lined culvert connecting to culvert [203] from the S. Aligned S to N and measures 0.18 m long and 0.62 m wide with internal gap of 0.26 m. Culvert	
301	Sandstone wall with sand and lime mortar aligned N-S measuring 1.6 m by 0.41 m by 0.11 m. Single course surviving within cut [302]. Internal wall of Saughton House	
302	Linear cut aligned N-S with steep sides onto a flat base. Filled by wall [301] in centre and deposit [308] on either side. Measures 0.6 m by 0.15 m and cuts through made ground deposit [305]. Construction cut for wall [301]	
303	W edge of brick lined culvert aligned N-S and sitting within cut [307]. Survives to at least two courses and measures 1.6 m by 0.12 m (visible) by 0.14 m. Frogged bricks are 0.25 m by 0.12 m by 0.08 m. May be same as [209]. Culvert	
304	Very compact sand and lime mortar and rubble overlying deposit [305] and immediately underneath demolition deposit. Measures 0.2 m thick. Possible levelling layer for floors	
305	Compact dark grey sandy clay with rubble inclusions measuring 0.04 m over deposit [306]. Cut by wall construction cut [302].	

	Possible former landscaped soil horizon	
	Pale yellow and orangey brown sand, rubble and clay mixture with occasional coal	
306	flecks. Underlies deposit [305] and cut by [307]. Measures 0.2 m thick.	
	Made ground after house construction	
	Linear cut aligned N-S (W-edge only and not excavated) for culvert [303]. Cuts made	
307	ground layer [306].	
	Construction cut for culvert [303]	

APPENDIX 3: Photographic Register

Digital Images

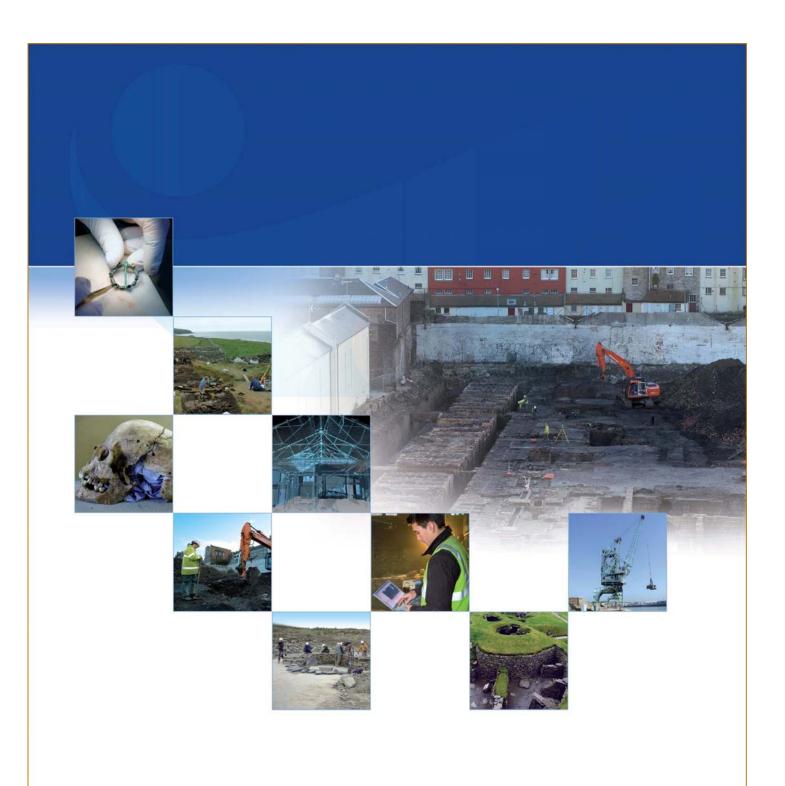
Frame	Description	From	Date
1	View of T3 Pre-ex	N	18/5/16
2-3	View of T4 Pre-ex	N	18/5/16
4	Cobbles in T4 location	N	18/5/16
5	Gas pipe in T4	N	18/5/16
6-9	Location shots of T4	Various	18/5/16
10	Wall (301) in T3	S	19/5/16
11	Culvert (303) in T3	S	19/5/16
12	View of T3	Е	19/5/16
13	View of T3	W	19/5/16
14	South facing section of T3	S	19/5/16
15-21	General shots of T3	Various	19/5/16
22-23	View of wall (208)	W	19/5/16
24-25	View of drain (209)	N	19/5/16
26-27	View of culvert (210)	Е	19/5/16
28-29	View of slabs (211) beneath (210)	W	19/5/16
30-31	General shot of drain (209) & wall (208)	W	19/5/16
32-33	West facing section of T2	W	19/5/16
34	South facing section of cut (302)	S	19/5/16
35	North facing section of cut (302)	N	19/5/16
36	View of (210) not aligned with (209)	W	19/5/16
37	View of T1, Post-ex	S	19/5/16
38	View of wall (101)	S	19/5/16
39	View of Wall (102)	Е	19/5/16
40	View of Trench 1, post-ex	N	19/5/16

APPENDIX 4: Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Details	Scale
1	Plan of Trench 3	1:20
2	S-facing section through cut [302]	1:10
3	Plan of Trench 2	1:20
4	Plan of Trench 1	1:20

APPENDIX 5: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Report

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME	Saughton Hall, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	22747
PARISH:	Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Kevin Paton
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Excavation
NMRS NO(S)	NT27SW 9
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	House
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 219 719
START DATE (this season)	18 th May 2016
END DATE (this season)	20 th May 2016
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	Evaluation of Saughton Hall Gardens over the location of demolished house (Engl & Sproat 2014); Evaluation of development area (Paton 2015)
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Archaeological excavations of site investigation trenches were conducted by AOC Archaeology within the development area of Saughton Hall, Edinburgh. The excavations were localised to four trenches that were investigating the former Saughton Hall walls as well as areas requiring up to three metre deep investigations for engineering purposes. Three of the trenches revealed remains relating to the various phases of Saughton Hall. The main external wall of the house, some internal walls and drainage features were all revealed within 14 m of trench. These findings from these works match the findings of the earlier evaluation and community excavation that show the foundation levels of the former house all survive under the modern compound and landscaping.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	To be confirmed
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	The City of Edinburgh Council Parks and Greenspace
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Edgefield Road Industrial Estate, Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SY
EMAIL ADDRESS:	admin@aocarchaeology.com
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS





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