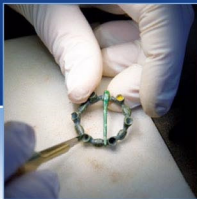


Edinburgh Castle Esplanade, Edinburgh Archaeological Watching Brief Data Structure Report

AOC 24186

March 2018



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

Edinburgh Castle Esplanade, Edinburgh Archaeological Watching Brief Report

On Behalf of:	Scottish Water
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NT 25378 73520
AOC Project No:	24186
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Date of Fieldwork	28th February – 8th March 2018
Date of Report:	08th March 2018

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

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on behalf of Scottish Water in relation to excavations associated with an existing water main at Edinburgh Castle Esplanade (NGR: NT 25378 73520).

The proposed works lie at the north-eastern end of the Esplanade at the entrance to Castlehill.

No significant archaeological remains or artefacts were revealed during the watching brief. The only remains encountered being a large, possibly carved, stone situated within the modern infill associated with the existing road surface preparation and services.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 An Archaeological Watching Brief was required by Scottish Water on the excavation of an existing water main at Edinburgh Castle Esplanade. The Castle and Esplanade are classified as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM90130), with the Esplanade also listed as a Designated Listed Building (LB28011). The site lies within the administrative area of the City of Edinburgh Council, who are advised on archaeological matters by the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (hereafter referred to as CECAS). The archaeological works will be conducted in accordance with the principles as set out in *Scottish Planning Policy (2014)* and *Planning and Archaeology 2/2011 (2011)*.

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The works are located at the north-eastern end of the Esplanade at the entrance to Castlehill. The works are centred on NGR: NT 25378 73520 (Figure 1) and are bounded to the north by the Tartan Weaving Mill and to the south by Contini Restaurant and Bar.

2 OBJECTIVE

2.1 The objective of the Archaeological Watching Brief was to identify the nature and extent of the archaeological resource which may have been present within the proposed excavation area.

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The Esplanade itself is a Designated Listed Building ((LB28011). This designation includes a group of monuments including the Statue of the Duke of York, the Scottish Horse Memorial, the 72nd Highlanders Memorial, the 78th Highlanders Memorial, the Monument to Colonel MacKenzie and the Statue of Earl Haig (all separately listed). A parade ground between the entrance to the Castle and the approach road from the Lawnmarket was built in 1753, using spoil taken from the foundations of the Royal Exchange in the High Street. It was widened and given the wall and railings to the north in 1816. Low walls with alternate towers and turrets were added 'a few years later'. The turrets to the south incorporate a decorative horse trough erected by the Princess Louise's Argyllshire Highlanders in 1874 and a decorative bronze plaque commemorating officers and men of the Gordon Highlanders who fell in the South African War of 1899 to 1902.

3.2 A number of archaeological investigations have been undertaken within the Esplanade in recent years. In 1998 an archaeological watching brief (NT 253 734) was carried out by Kirkdale Archaeology on work on the south side of the Esplanade. The slope as seen today is likely to be highly artificial, although in a limited number of areas bedrock can be seen. This is a yellow sandstone, forming part of the 'tail' of the crag-and-tail formation that the Castle and High Street sit on, and representing soft deposits shielded from the glacial scouring by the hard basalt of the Castle Rock. In 1753 spoil from the construction of what is now the City Chambers was used to level off the area, to form a parade ground, an arrangement formalised between 1816-20, when the Esplanade as it stands today was constructed. A number of walls are visible through geophysical survey running across the slope, presumably built as retaining walls, which may relate to either

of these phases of construction, or to other undocumented work. It should be noted that no walls are shown on the 1877 OS map, although areas of bedrock are clearly shown.

- 3.3 The excavation of four test-pits showed evidence for a surprising depth of deposits (1.2-2.3m+) across this slope. This material is almost all likely to represent 18th-century or later landscaping, raising the possibility that medieval features may survive underneath, if use was made of this area in that period. It was not possible to relate any of the upstanding revetting walls encountered to any of the excavated areas, but it seems likely, on cartographic grounds, that they all post-date 1877.
- 3.4 In October 1999, a watching brief (NT 2537 7352) was carried out on the excavation of two holes dug for the siting of a new notice board situated in the north-east corner of the castle esplanade, immediately to the east of the ticket caravan. The westernmost trench removed an anchor point for the Tattoo scaffolding. The main deposits seen were thought most likely to be levelling material imported during large-scale changes to the esplanade, of unknown but relatively recent date.
- 3.5 In 2005 a watching brief (NT 254 735) was required during the installation of electrical supplies around the southern, eastern and northern perimeters of the Esplanade. The watching brief confirmed that a substantial depth of relatively modern material, probably deriving from the 18th century onwards, forms the level ground of the esplanade. No other significant archaeology was encountered.
- 3.6 A watching brief was carried out in 1999 on two holes dug for the siting of a new notice board in the north-eastern corner of the castle esplanade, immediately to the east of the ticket caravan. The main deposits revealed were thought most likely to be levelling material imported during large-scale changes to the esplanade. No date was assigned to this activity.
- 3.7 Monitoring of site investigation works (NT 2531 7350) was carried out in February 2008. The works included the excavation of seven test pits to examine the foundations of the Tattoo grandstands and 16 test pits at borehole locations, to investigate the depth and quality of the underlying bedrock. Deep deposits of made ground were encountered. Fragments of disarticulated human bone were also recovered from one test pit. In Princes Street Gardens made ground overlay either undated buried soils or concrete foundations for Raker supports for an earlier Esplanade Wall. Finds dating from the medieval period to the 20th century were recovered.
- 3.8 Between December 2009 – September 2011, a series of Scheduled Monument Consents (SMCs A–E) were granted for work associated with the design of new temporary stand for the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.
 - 3.8.1 SMC A: Existing utilities were realigned or replaced to accommodate new stand foundations. These works revealed part of the Spur, a triangular artillery fortification built in the 1540s and demolished in 1650. Part of a second boundary-type wall was revealed to the NE of the Spur and this overlay an infilled ditch. The corner of a building was revealed at the E end of the Esplanade. All of these remains may be shown on an Edinburgh plan drawn by Gordon of Rothiemay in 1647. At the top of Castle Wynd Steps, a massively built stone plinth may have been a part of the Esplanade wall which was demolished prior to 1780.
 - 3.8.2 SMC B: The Scottish Horse Monument was dismantled and rebuilt on a new abutment projecting from the North Esplanade Wall. A photographic survey of the wall was carried out.
 - 3.8.3 SMC C: This covered the erection of the new stands and had no archaeological significance.

- 3.8.4 SMC D: The statue of Earl Haig and its stone plinth were moved from the Esplanade to Hospital Square. Excavations in Hospital Square revealed the wall of the 1748–54 powder magazine and the blast wall to the E.
- 3.8.5 SMC E: Work to relocate utilities serving the castle took place in Princes Street Gardens, in the Moat Vault, in the Coal Yard and on the steep grass slope between the South Esplanade Wall and Johnston Terrace. Walls were recorded prior to the placement of pipes/ducts. No archaeological remains were recorded in Princes Street Gardens. In the Moat Vault, plinths associated with former arched vaults were recorded. In the Coal Yard, a buried wall was recorded. Between the South Esplanade Wall and Johnston Terrace, a stone revetment was recorded.
- 3.8.6 Additional non-SMC work took place in Castlehill, Ramsay Lane and Mound Place. In Ramsay Lane, the foundations of what may be tenement buildings were recorded and to the N, part of a culvert drain was recorded.
- 3.9 A watching brief (NT27SE 1.33) was undertaken in 2016 during the excavation of the footprint for a replacement kiosk at the E end of the esplanade. The removal of whin setts revealed only modern infill and no features or finds of archaeological significance.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The Watching Brief involved the monitoring of the topsoil strip/ground reduction associated with the excavations associated with an existing service pipe. Machine excavation was undertaken in shallow units/spits and ceased on the first significant archaeological horizon or natural subsoil, whichever was encountered first. Spoil was scanned for artefacts. Monitoring in any one area ceased once an archaeological sterile natural subsoil surface had been observed. All excavations were monitored by an experienced field archaeologist.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 A single trench 3.0m in length by 1.5m in width was excavated in order to expose the existing water main. A depth of c.1.0m was reached revealing a mixed modern backfill associated with the road surface preparation and the existing services. This material consisted of mixed sandy gravels and stone.



Plate1: Excavation area

- 5.2 A large stone (Plate 2) was found within this backfill, though whatever it's origin, was clearly associated with this backfill event. Remains of modern piping were also revealed.



Plate 2: Stone found within backfill

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The watching brief revealed that there was no significant archaeology present within the excavation of the water main trench. The single stone appeared unrelated to any observable archaeological features and likely represents part of the modern backfill.

7 REFERENCES

Scottish Planning Policy 2014, Archaeology and Planning, Scottish Government 2014

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

APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

<i>Frame</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Taken From</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Water mains excavation after road surface removal.	W	06/03/18
2	Stone	S	06/03/18
3	Stone	W	06/03/18
4	Detail of excavation	N	06/03/18
5	Excavation at the end of the day	N	06/03/18
6	End of initial excavation	W	07/03/18
7	End of initial excavation	N	07/03/18
8	View of excavation	W	07/03/18
9	Detail of excavation	N	07/03/18
10	Excavation at the end of the day	W	08/03/18

APPENDIX 2: DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND (DES) REPORT

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Edinburgh Castle Esplanade, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 24186
PARISH:	Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Andrew McLean
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Edinburgh Castle Esplanade
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 25378 73520
START DATE (this season)	28 th February 2018
END DATE (this season)	8 th March 2018
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on behalf of Scottish Water in relation to excavations associated with an existing water main at Edinburgh Castle Esplanade (NGR: NT 25378 73520).</p> <p>The proposed works lie at the north-eastern end of the Esplanade at the entrance to Castlehill.</p> <p>No significant archaeological remains or artefacts were revealed during the watching brief. The only remains encountered being a large, possibly carved, stone situated within the modern infill associated with the existing road surface preparation and services.</p>

PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	Archaeological watching brief on all ground-breaking works
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Scottish Water
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

Edinburgh Castle Esplanade, Archaeological Watching Brief:
Data Structure Report

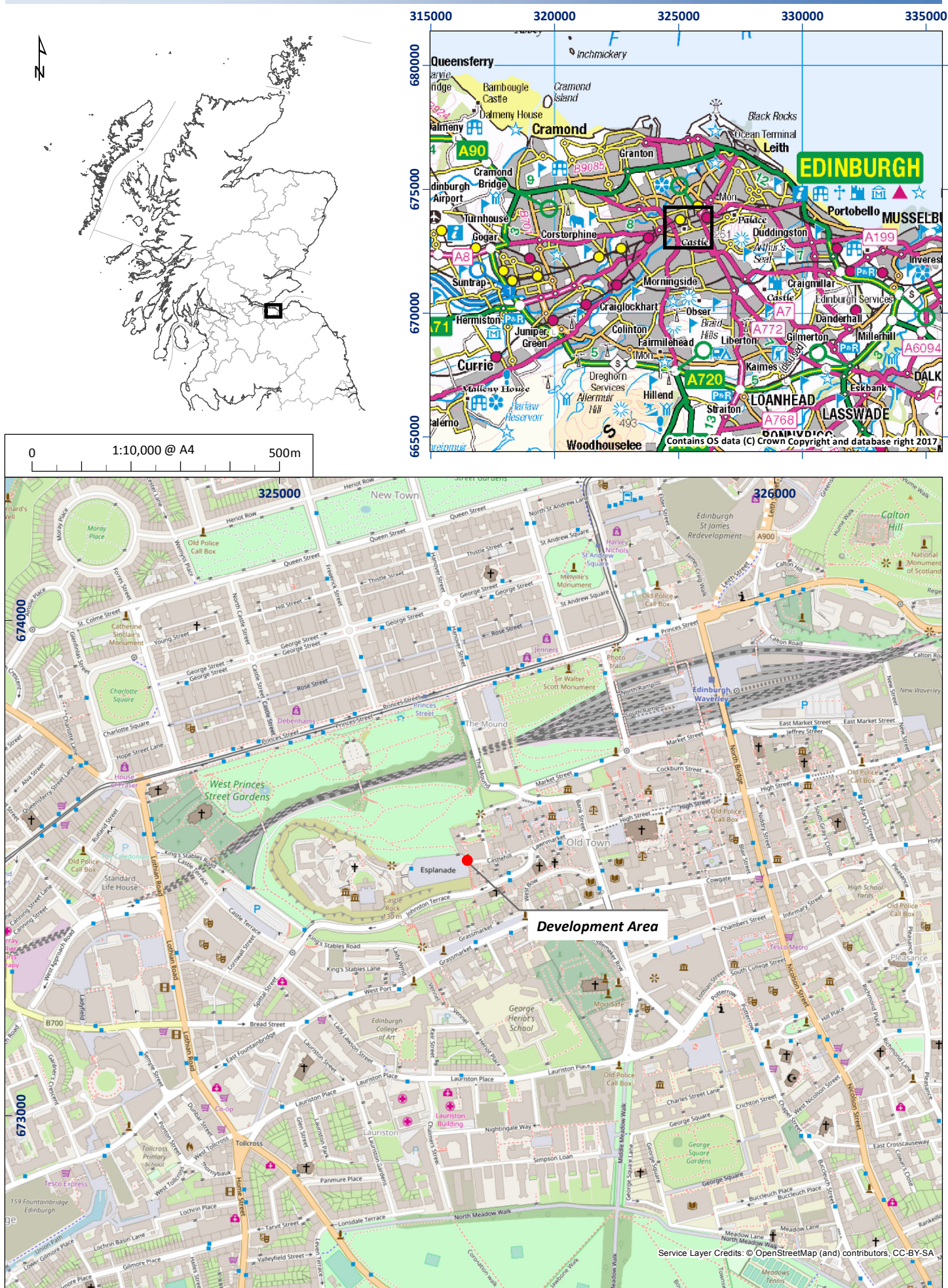


Figure 1: Site location plan

01/24186/DSR/01/01

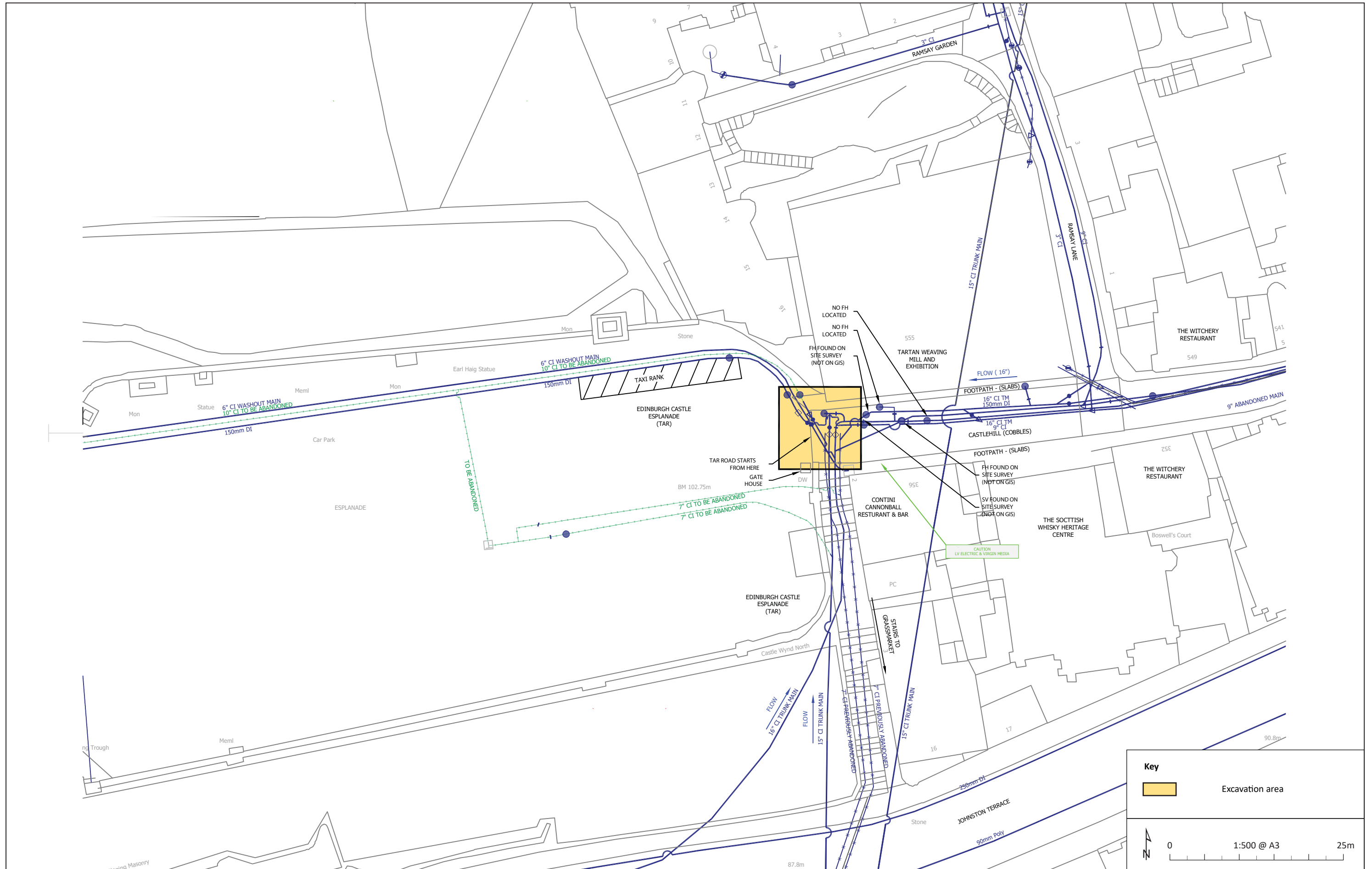
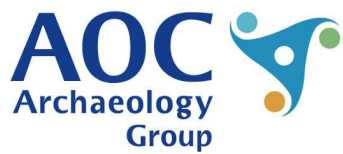
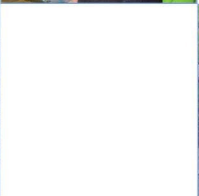
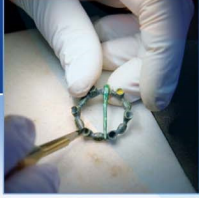


Figure 2: Area Plan



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