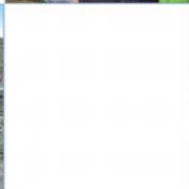
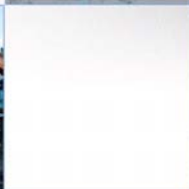
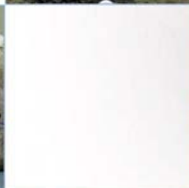
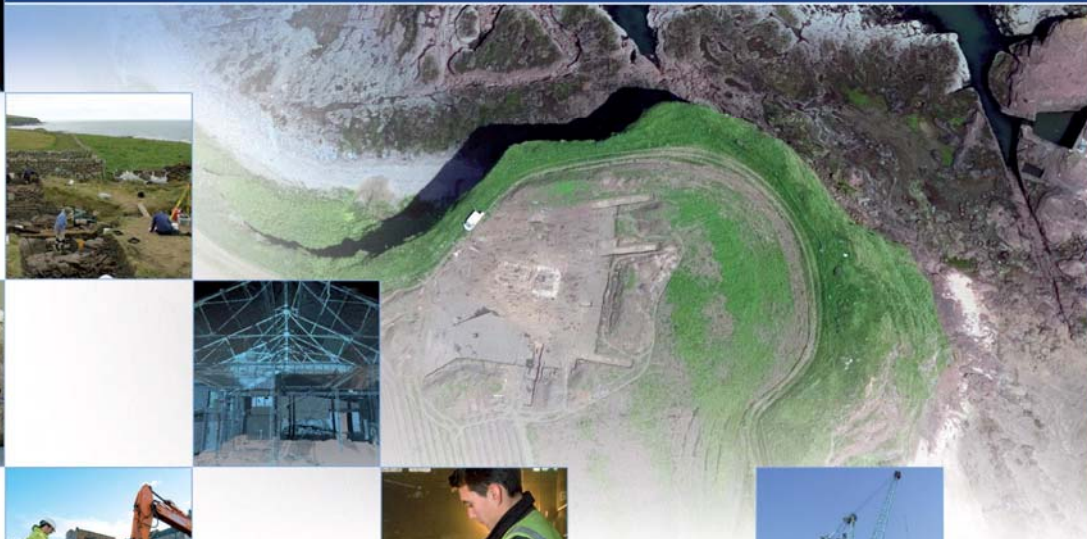


Piershill Square East and West Evaluation, Edinburgh: Data Structure Report

21803

January 2010



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

Piershill Square East and West Evaluation, Edinburgh

Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: **The City Of Edinburgh Council**
Property Services
329 High Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1PN

National Grid Reference (NGR): NT 2847 7421 and NT 2834 7421

AOC Project No: 21803

OASIS number: aocarcha1-91296

Prepared by: Martin Cook

Illustration by: Stefan Sagrott

Date of Fieldwork: 11th to 12th January 2010

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Author: Martin Cook

Date: 18th January 2011

Approved by: John Gooder

Date: 18th January 2011

Draft/Final Report Stage: Draft

Date: 18th January 2011

Enquiries to: AOC Archaeology Group
Edgefield Industrial Estate
Edgefield Road
Loanhead
EH20 9SY

Tel. 0131 440 3593
Fax. 0131 440 3422
e-mail. admin@aocarchaeology.com



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Abstract

This report represents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group across two existing parks which are being redeveloped and improved, at Piershill Square East and West, Edinburgh.

The archaeological works comprised the excavation of two 15 m long trenches positioned in each of the new Plaza areas and then by a further six 2-3 m long trenches/test-pits situated across the site.

Generally, the site was archaeologically sterile, with only modern features such as services being identified. However, a series of features comprising a cobble surface and associated kerb and red brick setting were identified in Piershill Square East. The features represent the fragmentary remains of the 18th century Piershill Barracks which formerly occupied the area.

No other significant features were identified and no further works are considered necessary.

1. NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Edinburgh City Council to address the potential negative archaeological impact of proposed development works at Piershill Square East and West, Edinburgh (Figure 1). The proposed development area comprises two separate land parcels, Piershill Square East (NGR: NT 2847 7421) and Piershill Square West (NGR: 2834 7421). The ground to be impacted upon covers two areas of approximately 3120 m² each.
- 1.1.2 The proposed development 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). CECAS recommended a programme of archaeological works in accordance with *Scottish Planning Policy* (Scottish Government February 2010) and *Planning Advice Note 42* (SOEnd 1994) in determining the nature, extent, condition, date and significance of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area.
- 1.1.3 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (AOC 2010) was agreed with CECAS in advance of the evaluation being undertaken. The evaluation was designed around the excavation of trenching up to a maximum of 100 m² split proportionally between the two areas. This trenching consisted of two 15 m long trenches positioned in each of the new Plaza areas and then by a further six 2-3 m long trenches/test-pits situated across the site to give a good geographical distribution.
- 1.1.4 The only archaeological find comprised an isolated patch of cobbles. This cobble surface forms the remnants of one of the hospital buildings or surfaces identified on the 1st Edition OS Map.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background and Location

- 2.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Edinburgh City Council to address the potential negative archaeological impact of proposed development works at Piershill Square East and West, Edinburgh (Figure 1). The proposed development area comprises two separate land parcels, Piershill Square East (NGR: NT 2847 7421) and Piershill Square West (NGR: 2834 7421). The ground to be impacted upon covers two areas of approximately 3120 m² each. The site is currently parkland, and is covered in both grass and concrete. Both land parcels are enclosed by the surrounding squares of Piershill Square East and West respectively, which are contemporary post-Second World War housing developments.

2.2 Archaeological Background

- 2.2.1 The two housing developments of Piershill West and East (respectively NMRS: NT27SE4254 and NT27SE4256) were built across the former location of the Piershill Cavalry Barracks (NMRS: NT27SE4220) between 1937 and 1938. Built in 1794, the

barracks were home to various regiments including the 6th Inniskillin Dragoon Guards and the 17th Lancers. The proposed development lies across the former parade ground of the barracks (Plates 1 and 2).



Plate 1: Detail of Piershill Cavalry Barracks

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Plate 2: Detail of Piershill Cavalry Barracks, 1st Edition OS Map 1885

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE INVESTIGATION

3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- i) to determine the character, extent, condition, quality, date and significance of any buried archaeological remains within the proposed development area;

- ii) to advise and implement an appropriate form of archaeological mitigation, such as excavation, post-excavation analyses and publication, should significant archaeological remains be encountered that cannot be preserved *in situ*.

4. METHOD

- 4.1 All ground reduction was completed by a 360 tracked excavator using a 2 m wide ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. The trench details are summarised in Appendix 1. Machine excavation was conducted in shallow units/spits through topsoil to the upper surface of the underlying geological deposits. The evaluation trial trenching was undertaken according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard operating procedures as detailed within the Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2010).

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 Piershill Square East and West are currently being used as parkland and as such are covered by a combination of grass, topsoil, tarmac and gravel, between 0.20 m and 0.70 m in depth. The natural subsoil comprised a combination of sands, silts and gravel.



Plate 3: Detail of Trench 2

- 5.2 The site was, in the main, archaeologically sterile; the entirety of both areas having been levelled on at least one occasion. Generally no evidence was identified for structures or the parade ground identified on the 1st Edition OS Map (Plate 1) or surviving photographs (Plate 2). Although evidence of modern services were identified in Trenches 8 and 9, no other features such as robber trenches or even building debris was identified within the make up of Trenches 1-6 and 8-10. The evidence suggests that once the barracks were decommissioned the entire area was demolished and either removed or recycled and used in the surrounding housing estate.



Plate 4: Detail of Structure [701]

- 5.3 The exception to the evaluation was Trench 7, in Piershill Square East, in which feature, [701], comprising a cobble surface forming the floor of a structure on the 1st Edition OS Map (Plate 1) was identified. The surface was composed of a layer of water rounded cobbles [702], abutted to the east by a linear cobble edge [703] and to the north by a red brick setting [704]. The entire structure measured 3.60 m east to west by 5.40 m north to south and was built directly on to the underlying natural sand [705]. The cobble kerb [703] which demarcated the eastern edge of the structure measured 3.80 m in length by 0.25 m in width. A rectangular setting [704], constructed from hand made red bricks, measured 1.80 m east to west by 0.80 m north to south (where it survived), was built in to the cobble surface [702]. A thin layer of mortar [706] was identified in the north-east corner of the structure [701] and may represent the surviving element of a wall.
- 5.4 Cartographic analysis has identified feature [701] on the 1st Edition OS Map (Figure 4). Unfortunately, the surviving remains are not complete enough to suggest a conclusive function and the map does not offer detailed description. However, the surface clearly represents either the internal floor of a building or an area of hard standing, perhaps to allow vehicular access by horse and cart.

- 5.5 The archaeological remains have been covered in terram, and reburied, thereby preserving the structure *in situ*, as requested by Mr John Lawson, CECAS.
- 5.6 No other significant archaeological remains or artefacts were identified during the work.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 A cobble and red brick built structure [701] was identified and subsequently recorded during the archaeological evaluation completed at Piershill Square East and West. The structure relates to the 18th century Piershill Barracks which occupied the site until its demolition in the 1930s. That more of the barracks hasn't survived is perhaps unsurprising considering the quality of the cut stonework used. Local hearsay suggests that all of the stone was recycled and re-used when the surrounding Piershill Square East and West was built immediately following the demolition of the barracks.
- 6.2 Feature [701] was fully recorded on the instructions of Mr John Lawson of CECAS, and was covered in terram and left *in situ*.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

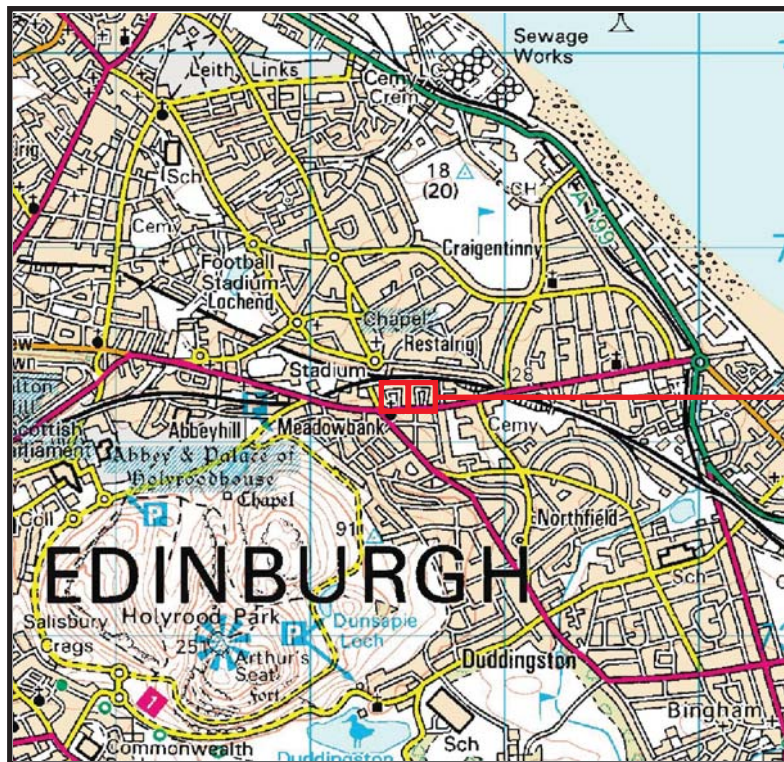
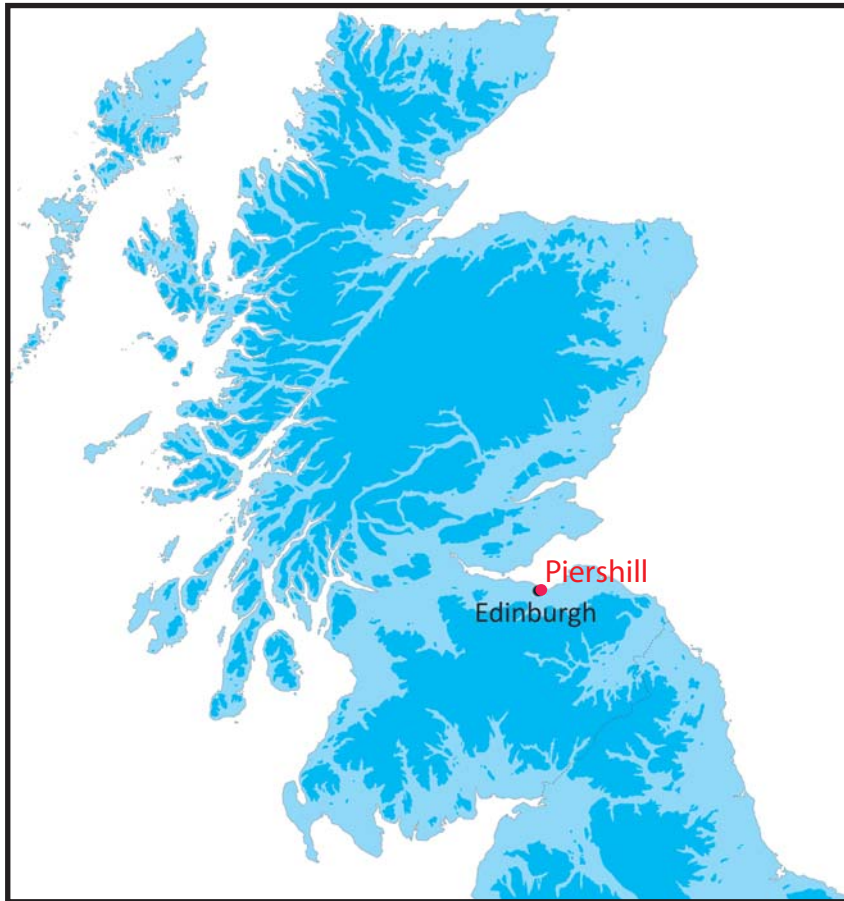
- 7.1 No further archaeological works are considered necessary. This recommendation will require confirmation by CECAS on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council.

8. REFERENCES

AOC 2011, Piershill Square East and West, *Written Scheme of Investigation*. AOC Unpubl Archive Report

Scottish Government Feb 2010 Scottish Planning Policy 2010.

The Scottish Office Environment Department 1994. *Planning Advice Note 42. Archaeology – the Planning Process and Scheduled Ancient Monument Procedures*. January 1994.

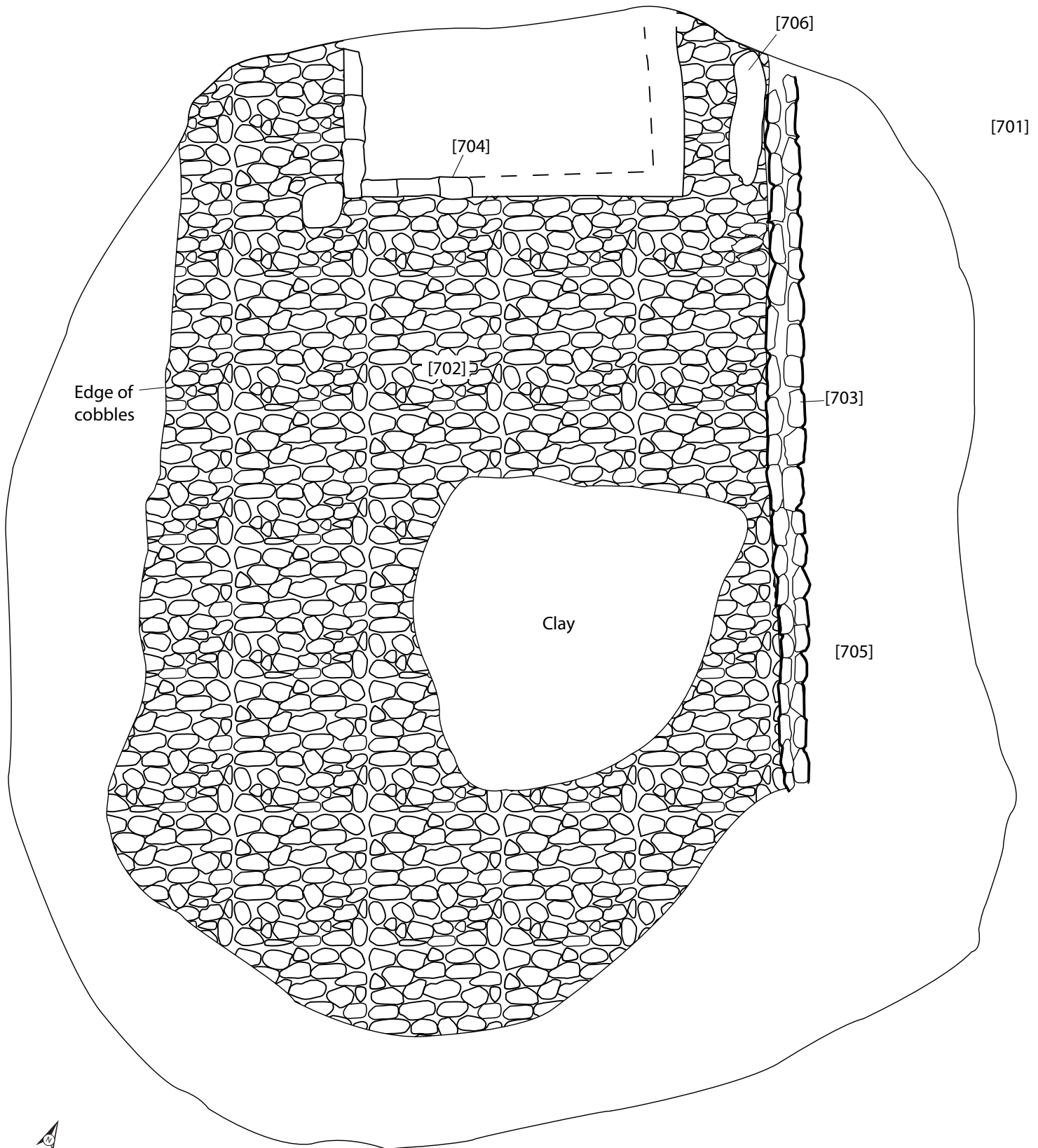


Site Areas

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Figure 1: Location of the sites at Piershill





Edge of cobbles

[704]

[706]

[701]

[702]

Clay

[703]

[705]



50 cm 0 50 cm



Area of cobbling

Figure 3: Plan of excavated features

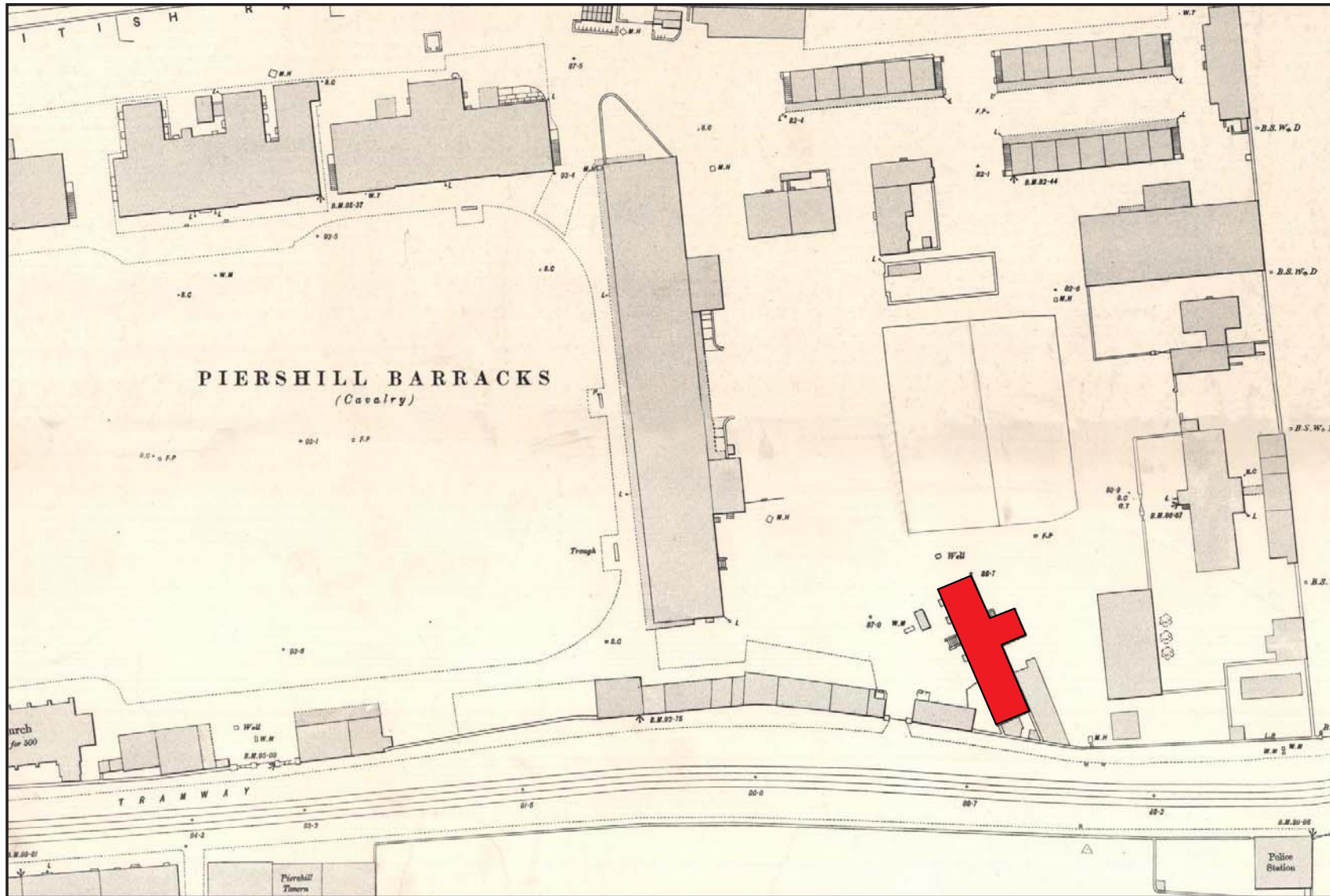


Figure 4: 1st Edition OS Map extract with identified building highlighted

**Piershill Square East and West, Edinburgh
Data Structure Report
Section 2: Appendices**

APPENDIX 1: Trench Descriptions

Trench 1

<i>Dimensions</i>	7 m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	East to west
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.70 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Subsoil</i>	Sands and gravels
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 2

<i>Dimensions</i>	m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	North-west to south-east
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.40 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Subsoil</i>	Sands and gravels
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 3

<i>Dimensions</i>	3 m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	North to south
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.20 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Subsoil</i>	Sands and gravels
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 4

<i>Dimensions</i>	3 m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	North-to south
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.30 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	Concrete kerb
<i>Subsoil</i>	Sands and gravels
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 5

<i>Dimensions</i>	3 m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	North to south
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.40 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Subsoil</i>	Sands and gravels
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 6

<i>Dimensions</i>	8 m by 2 m
<i>Orientation</i>	East to west
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.40 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None

Subsoil Sands and gravels
Finds None

Trench 7

Dimensions 8 m by 2 m
Orientation North-west to south-east
Depth of Excavation 0.40 m
Significant Features Cobble surface of building [701]
Other Features None
Subsoil Sands and gravels
Finds None

Trench 8

Dimensions 3 m by 2 m
Orientation East to west
Depth of Excavation 0.40 m
Significant Features None
Other Features Possible service
Subsoil Sands and gravels
Finds None

Trench 9

Dimensions 3 m by 2 m
Orientation East to west
Depth of Excavation 0.40 m
Significant Features None
Other Features Possible service
Subsoil Sands and gravels
Finds None

Trench 10

Dimensions 3 m by 2 m
Orientation East to west
Depth of Excavation 0.40 m
Significant Features None
Other Features Demolition material including roof tiles
Subsoil Sands and gravels
Finds None

APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context	Structure	Description
701	701	General number assigned to a series of contexts comprising a cobble surface [702], abutted by a cobble kerb [703] and a red brick setting [704]. Measuring 3.60 m by 5.40 m.
702	701	Cobble surface, measuring 3.60 m by 5.40 m. Built directly on to the underlying natural sand [705], and abutted by [703] and [704].
703	701	Cobble edge measuring 3.80 m by 0.25 m, and abutting [701].
704	701	Rectangular setting constructed of hand made red bricks, measuring 1.80 m by 0.80 m.
705	N/A	Natural sand underlying all the recorded features.

APPENDIX 3: Photographic Record

Black & White Print/ /Digital Film 1

Frame	Trench	Description	From
1		Registration	
2-3	1	Post-excavation shot of trench	E
4-5	2	Post-excavation shot of trench	E
6-7	3	Post-excavation shot of trench	E
8-9	4	Post-excavation shot of trench	E
10-11	5	Post-excavation shot of trench	N
12-13	6	Post-excavation shot of trench	S
14-15	7	Post-excavation shot of trench	W
17-18	8	Post-excavation shot of trench	E
19-20	9	Post-excavation shot of trench	E
21-22	10	Post-excavation shot of trench	E
23-24	7	General shot of Structure [701]	S
25-26	7	General shot of Structure [701]	W
27-28	7	General shot of Structure [701]	N
29-30	7	General shot of Structure [701]	E
31-32	7	Detail of kern [703]	E
33-34	7	Detail of red brick setting [704]	E

APPENDIX 4: Drawing Register

Drawing	Area	Description	Scale
1	701	Plan of Structure [701] including features [702] to [704]	1:20

APPENDIX 5: 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland'

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Piershill Square East and West Evaluation
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 21803
PARISH:	Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Martin Cook
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	NT27SE4220
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 2847 7421 and NT 2834 7421
START DATE (this season)	11 th January 2011
END DATE (this season)	12 th January 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN DESCRIPTION: (NARRATIVE) (May include information from other fields)	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken prior to the redevelopment of two areas of parkland at Piershill Square East and West, Edinburgh. Ten trenches were excavated totalling a basal area of 96 m².</p> <p>A red brick and cobble surface was excavated and recorded. The surface represents an element of a building recorded on the 1st Edition OS Map associated with the 18th century Piershill Barracks which occupied the site until its demolition in the 1930s. The surface remains were preserved <i>in situ</i>.</p> <p>No other significant archaeological remains or features were identified.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	n/a
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	City of Edinburgh Council (Property Services)
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	C/o AOC Archaeology Group
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Martin.cook@aocarchaeology.com



AOC Archaeology Group, Edgefield Industrial Estate, Edgefield Road, Loanhead EH20 9SY

tel: 0131 440 3593 | fax: 0131 440 3422 | e-mail: admin@aocarchaeology.com

www.aocarchaeology.com