Bleachingfield, Dunbar, East Lothian: Evaluation Data Structure Report

AOC Project 21807 4th February 2011





Bleachingfield, Dunbar, East Lothian:

Evaluation Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: East Lothian Council

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National Grid Reference (NGR): NT 6753 7873 (centered)

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Abstract

This report represents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on the site of proposed new Community Centre, carpark and play area at Bleachingfield, Countess Crescent, Dunbar, East Lothian.

The archaeological evaluation comprised excavation of a 10% trenching sample.

The site was found to be much altered with in excess of a metre of made ground present across the entire site, with a uniform stratigraphy present in each trench suggesting a concerted and deliberate attempt to raise the ground level and create a flatter site. Within the made ground of redeposited clays and a cinder /ash layer were noted fragments of 19th and 20th Century white glazed ceramic and glass. Below this made ground were found the basal course of two unmortared, undated sandstone walls.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by East Lothian Council to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of a proposed new Community Centre with associated carpark and play area at Bleachingfield, Countess Crescent, Dunbar, East Lothian (centred NGR: NT 6753 7873). The proposed development would require the demolition of existing Council facilities (Planning Reference 10/00073/PCL).
- 1.1.2 The proposed development lies within the administrative area of East Lothian Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by the East Lothian Council Archaeology Service (ELCAS). ELCAS 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 (Dunbar 2011) was agreed with ELCAS in advance of the evaluation being undertaken. The evaluation was designed around a 10% trenching sample, although the footprints of existing buildings were excluded. The presence of a number of live services and public footpaths also affected the distribution of the evaluation trenches.
- 1.1.4 The evaluation identified neither significant archaeological features nor artefacts.

1.2 Location

1.2.1 The development area at Bleachingfield lies on the western side of Countess Crescent, Dunbar (NGR: NT 6756 7875) within a fully urban setting. The development area is currently occupied by a carpark, public toilets, a Scout Hall and the existing Countess Centre. The remainder of the development area consists of the eastern extent of Countess Park including a children's playpark, footpaths and grassed areas. The eastern side of Countess Crescent is all residential housing whilst directly to the north there is a vacant site, formerly a garage.

1.3 Archaeological background

- 1.3.1 The development area lies to the west of Dunbar's medieval High Street, situated within an area that has been identified in the Dunbar Burgh Survey (Dennison, E., Stronach, S. & Coleman, R. 2006, 29) as being the possible location for the pre-medieval settlement. Therefore the location of the proposed development is within an area of considerable archaeological importance and has been identified as potentially containing archaeological remains, especially pre-dating the medieval town. Whilst there is no direct evidence for the pre-medieval settlement in the area of the development the morphology of the street layout as well as proximity to known pre-medieval remains (at Castle Park) suggests that this area is the most likely location for this pre-medieval settlement.
- 1.3.2 The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland show that he proposed development site lies in close proximity to the remains of a 13th century friary (Plate 1: NMRS No. NT67NE 7 Friarscroft Priory). Although not much of the friary survives above ground, excavations have identified parts of it and the possible shape of its precinct fossilised in parts of the back walls to the High Street. The standing remains of the priory lie some c.100 northeast of the development area. A three week excavation confirmed that the

upstanding dovecot was a central tower for the presumed friary church. The walls, though elsewhere robbed out, showed it to be a building 39 m long by 8 m wide. The chancel and nave were of an equal size, 16 m long. Traces of a yellow and green glazed tile floor were found in the chancel, possibly dating to the foundation of the friary. Buttressing was found on the N side of the building. There was no trace of ancillary buildings (NMRS: Wordsworth 1981). A cemetery was found to the south of the church. To the north of the church there was evidence of medieval ploughing.

- 1.3.3 The field of Friarscroft, Dunbar, was examined in advance of redevelopment so that an assessment of its archaeological potential could be made. By tradition this field has been ascribed to the Red (or Trinitarian) Friars who founded a house at Dunbar c 1240 (Cowan & Easson 1976, 108). This tradition was accepted by the RCAHMS (1924, 29) when they examined a dovecot tower that still stands in the centre of the field. The ashlar masonry incorporated in this building, two substantial arches inside and two gable ends facing respectively east and west, were interpreted as forming part of the Trinitarian Friars' Church. As a result of exploratory trenches the extent of this friary church and part of a cemetery were uncovered. No cloister or other associated buildings were found, though only a portion of the field could be examined (Wordsworth 1983).
- 1.3.4 Historically the area proposed for the development has been undeveloped. However, in the 18th century as the town population increased and the town diversified in to linen manufacture, much of the existing open space could have been used as drying and bleaching fields. Before developments in chemical bleaching methods, material would be naturally bleached by the sun, and huge areas would have been required for this purpose. Specifically, cartographic evidence suggests it is likely that this area was utilised as a drying green or bleaching field from at least the 18th century (Dennison et al, 2006, 47). The location of this site towards the edge of the town during this period suggests that it has never heavily developed and this coupled with the cartographic evidence makes it reasonable to assume that any underlying archaeology may remain preserved.
- 1.3.5 Prior to the evaluation no archaeological remains were definitively known within the development area. However, the fact that the majority of the site has no history of significant development meant that subsurface remains may have existed within the site, especially given the medieval presence of a friary in the immediate locale.

2 **OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The objectives of the archaeological evaluation were:
 - i) to determine and assess 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 mitigation, such as excavation, post-excavation analyses and publication, given the infeasibility of preserving the archaeological material in situ, should significant archaeological remains be encountered.

METHODOLOGY 3

- 3.1 Trenching comprised the excavation of eight trenches of varying size and orientation located across the entire site. The distribution was in close agreement with WSI's trenching plan (Dunbar 2011).
- 3.2 The evaluation was undertaken by means of a 13 tonne tracked 360 excavator equipped with a 2.0 m wide toothless 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.
- 3.3 All trial trenching was undertaken according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard operating procedures. The trenches were backfilled on completion of the evaluation.

RESULTS 4

4.1 Introduction

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the 1st and 2nd February 2011. Overall 4.1.1 weather conditions were good, comprising overcast but dry conditions yielding good archaeological visibility. The following should be read in conjunction with the data presented in Appendices 1-3 and Figure 1.



Plate 1: South-facing section of Trench 4 showing extent of made ground

4.1.2 The generally flat development area was a mixture of carpark, hardstanding, footpaths, play park and grassed areas. Trenching showed that across the development area there was at least 1.1 m of madeground, which in places extended to a depth of 2.0 m. The excavation of the trenches revealed a very similar stratigraphy across the entire site suggesting that the area was built up in a concerted and planned effort to create a flatter area, smoothing out natural hollows and rises.



Plate 2: Wall [801] viewed from north, Trench 8

- 4.1.3 The madeground consisted of two main layers. The basal layer present in all trenches varied from 0.2 m to 0.6 m thick and consisted of a dark sandy matrix which contained modern white glazed ceramics, oyster shell, bone, glass and large amounts of burnt material such as ash and cinder. Overlying this layer was a thick deposit of relatively clean redeposited pink/orange clays and sands. Again this layer was present in all trenches, though in Trench 7 it appeared to be truncated and replaced with crushed sandstone and mortar rubble. The trenches with hardstanding (Tr.1) and those in the carpark (Tr.7 and Tr.8) have additional layers of tarmac, bedding gravel whilst the trench within the playpark (Tr.6) had modern rubber matting, tarmac and bedding gravels but in general these two layers of madeground existed across the site.
- 4.1.4 Both the layers of made ground contained modern white glazed ceramics dating to the 19th and 20th century whilst in the lower layer of ash and cinder there was also glass, metal wire, animal bone, oyster shell and wood in varying quantities. This deposit can be seen as more industrial / domestic waste, whilst the upper re-deposited natural contained far fewer modern artefacts.
- 4.1.5 In two trenches, Tr.4 and Tr. 5, a possible buried topsoil underlay all the madeground. Presumably elsewhere the site was stripped of topsoil prior to the site being levelled by the subsequent dumping of the madeground deposits.

- 4.1.6 In Tr.1 and Tr.8 lay the remains of two sandstone walls cut into the natural geology and underlying all of the dumped material. They were on similar NW-SE alignments and both were unmortared. In Tr.1 sandstone wall, [101], measured c.0.6 to 0.7 m wide with two courses of stone present whilst sandstone wall, [801], measured c.0.35 to 0.45 m wide with only one course of stone present. In Tr.8 wall [801] was directly overlain by a spread of modern white glazed ceramic sherds within the base of the ash/cinder layer immediately overlying the wall.
- 4.1.7 No significant archaeological features or artefacts were identified during the evaluation. The only artefacts (ceramics and glass sherds) noted during the evaluation were modern in date, the majority dating from the latter part of the 19th Century and early part of the 20th century.

5 CONCLUSION

- It is possible that the late 18th Century and 19th Century use of the site as a 'Bleaching 5.1 Green' led to the area being deliberately landscaped into a level piece of ground. The growth in the town of Dunbar may have yielded the domestic waste of cinders and ash whilst building work and construction may have provided the large quantities of natural clays and sands which were spread across the site. The amount of material dumped here is considerable and the works would have required serious effort and planning. The uniformity in the deposits suggests a concerted strategy rather than piecemeal dumping. The result was the creation of a large flat area on the outskirts of the town suitable for use as a bleaching field.
- 5.2 The significance of the two sandstone walls is difficult to ascertain. There form was not much more than seen in a rubble drain, though given the size of the stones and closeness of the positioning they are believed to be wall bases rather than drains. No finds were derived from the cuts of the walls. It is unlikely that the new development will impact upon these features given their location in relation to the new buildings to be erected on the site and more importantly the depth of made ground covering these features.
- 5.3 No significant archaeological remains or artefacts were confirmed during the evaluation. The significant balance of probability is that the site is free of significant archaeological material.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 No further archaeological works are considered necessary. This recommendation will require confirmation by ELCAS on behalf of East Lothian Council.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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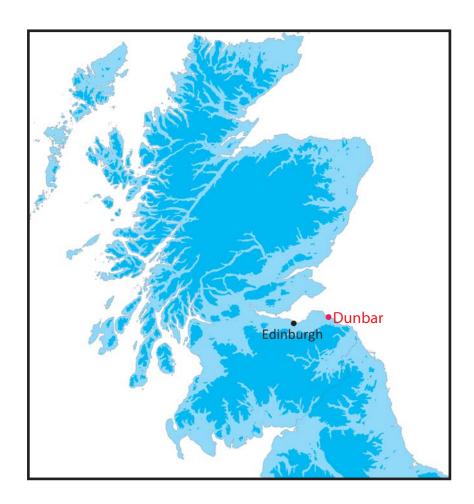
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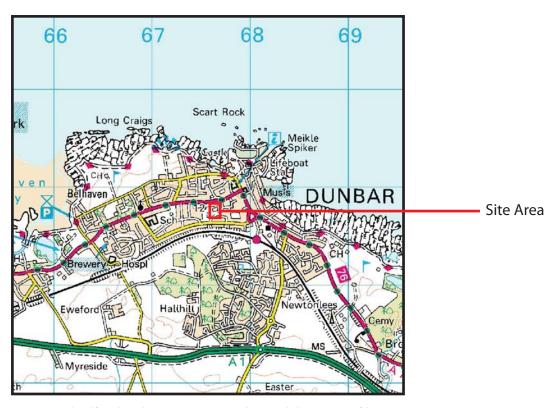
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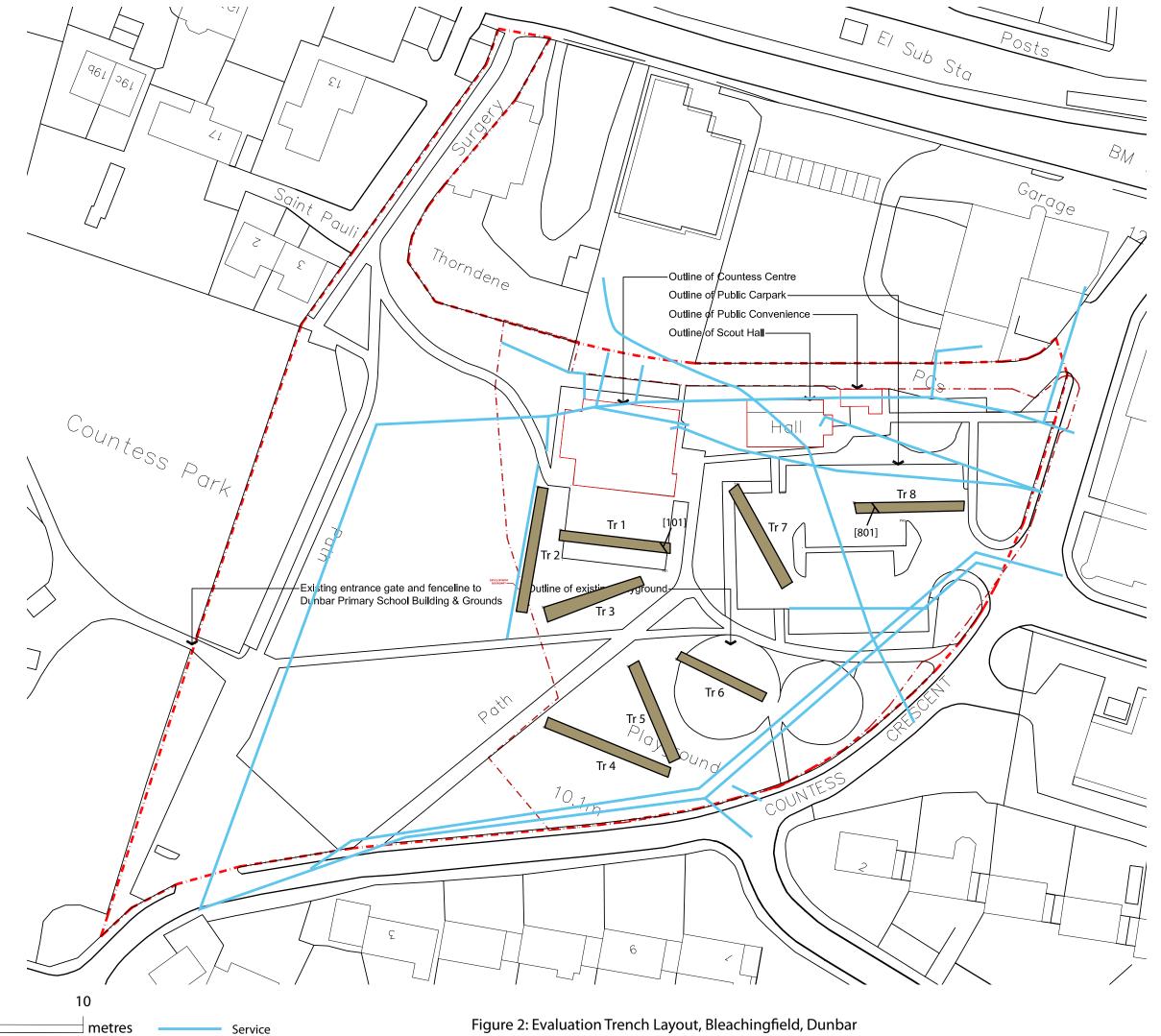




Figure 2: Evaluation Trench Layout, Bleachingfield, Dunbar

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Section 2: Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Trench Descriptions

Trench 1

Dimensions 21.0 m by 2.0 m

Orientation E-W
Depth of Topsoil N/a
Depth of Excavation Up to 2.0 m

Trench Stratigraphy Tarmac surface, 0.1 m thick lying over a bed of red gravel some 0.2 m to 0.3 m thick. Beneath

the bedding gravel was a layer of red sand varying between 0.2 m and 0.5 m thick which in turn lay over a mixed dump deposit of a dark sand matrix but containing crushed sandstone rubble, modern white glazed ceramics, oyster shell and lenses of ash/cinder. This deposit

was between 0.2 m and 0.5 m deep and overlay the natural geology.

Subsoil Orange/Red clay with red/grey sand in patches

Significant Features Unmortared sandstone wall, [101], aligned NW-SE. Cut into natural, c.0.6 to 0.7 m wide with

two courses of stone present. A few metres east of the wall lay a ceramic field drain on the same alignment. The horse-shoe shaped ceramic drain lay upon a sandstone rubble filled cut.

Finds Modern ceramic and glass noted within redeposited made ground.

Trench 2

Dimensions 26.0 m by 2.0 m

Orientation N-S

Depth of Topsoil Up to 0.15 m
Depth of Excavation Up to 1.2 m

Trench Stratigraphy Turfed surface, with up to 0.15 m thick topsoil lying over a mixed dump deposit of a dark sand

matrix but containing considerable quantities of crushed sandstone rubble, with brick and mortar rubble also present. This deposit was between 0.35 m and 0.6 m deep and overlay a dark sandy matrix which contained modern white glazed ceramics, oyster shell and lenses of ash/cinder. This deposit was between 0.1 m and 0.4 m thick and lay over the natural geology.

Subsoil Orange/Red clay with red/grey sand in patches

Significant Features None

Finds Modern ceramic and glass noted within redeposited made ground contexts.

Trench 3

Dimensions 21.0 m by 2.0 m

Orientation NE-SW

Depth of Topsoil Up to 0.15 m

Depth of Excavation Up to 1.3 m

Trench Stratigraphy Turfed surface, with up to 0.15 m thick topsoil lying over a mixed dump deposit of a dark sand

matrix but containing considerable quantities of crushed sandstone rubble, with brick and mortar rubble also present. This deposit was between 0.4 m and 0.6 m deep and overlay a dark sandy matrix which contained modern white glazed ceramics, oyster shell and lenses of ash/cinder. This deposit was between 0.3 m and 0.4 m thick and lay over the natural geology.

Subsoil Orange/Red clay with red/grey sand in patches

Significant Features A NW-SE aligned horse-shoe shaped ceramic drain lay upon a sandstone rubble filled cut.

Finds Modern ceramic and glass noted within redeposited made ground.

Trench 4

Dimensions 26.0 m by 2.0 m

Orientation NW-SE

Depth of Topsoil Up to 0.15 m

Depth of Excavation Up to 1.2 m

Trench Stratigraphy Turfed surface, with up to 0.15 m thick topsoil lying over a mixed dump deposit of a

redeposited natural red/orange clays and sands. This deposit was between 0.4 m and 0.5 m deep and overlay a dark sandy matrix which contained modern white glazed ceramics, oyster shell, bone, glass and lenses of ash/cinder. This deposit was between 0.3 m and 0.4 m thick and lay over a possible buried topsoil deposit. This brown sandy matrix was only up to 0.2 m

thick and lay over the natural geology.

Subsoil Orange/Red clay with red/grey sand in patches

Significant Features None

Finds Modern ceramic and glass noted within redeposited made ground.

Trench 5

Dimensions 22.0 m by 2.0 m

Orientation N-S

Depth of Topsoil Up to 0.15 m
Depth of Excavation Up to 1.2 m

Trench Stratigraphy Turfed surface, with up to 0.15 m thick topsoil lying over a mixed dump deposit of a

redeposited natural red/orange clays and sands. This deposit was between 0.3 m and 0.4 m deep and overlay a dark sandy matrix which contained modern white glazed ceramics, oyster shell, bone, glass and lenses of ash/cinder. This deposit was between 0.4 m and 0.5 m thick and lay over a possible buried topsoil deposit. This brown sandy matrix was only up to 0.2 m

thick and lay over the natural geology.

Subsoil Orange/Red clay with red/grey sand in patches

Significant Features None

Finds Modern ceramic and glass noted within redeposited made ground.

Trench 6

Dimensions 23.0 m by 2.0 m

Orientation NW-SE
Depth of Topsoil N/a
Depth of Executation Up to 1.1

Depth of Excavation Up to 1.3 m

Trench Stratigraphy Rubber mat surface over a tarmac layer over a bed of gravel, with a combined total of nearly

0.3 m thick lying over a mixed dump deposit of a redeposited natural red/orange clays and sands. This deposit was between 0.4 m and 0.6 m deep and overlay a dark sandy matrix which contained modern white glazed ceramics, oyster shell and lenses of ash/cinder. This

deposit was between 0.3 m and 0.4 m thick and lay over the natural geology.

Subsoil Orange/Red clay with red/grey sand in patches

Significant Features None

Finds Modern ceramic and glass noted within redeposited made ground.

Trench 7

Dimensions 25.0 m by 2.0 m

Orientation NW-SE
Depth of Topsoil N/a
Depth of Excavation Up to 1.3 m

Trench Stratigraphy Tarmac surface up to 0.05 m thick lying on a bed of pink gravel up to 0.15 m thick. At NW end

of trench this was followed by up to 0.6 m of sandstone rubble with mortar including some dressed stone work. This extended for 10 m before abruptly reverting to a deposit of a mixed dump deposit of a redeposited natural red/orange clays and sands for the remainder of the trench. It looked from the section that the building rubble was later than the redeposited natural. In either case both overlay a thin but distinct band of dark, nearly black dirty clay only

0.1 m thick. This in turn lay over a dark sandy matrix which contained modern white glazed ceramics, oyster shell and lenses of ash/cinder. This deposit was between 0.3 m and 0.6 m

thick and lay over the natural geology.

Subsoil Grey clay with red/grey sand in patches

Significant Features None

Finds Modern ceramic and glass noted within redeposited made ground.

Trench 8

Dimensions 24.0 m by 2.0 m

Orientation E-W Depth of Topsoil N/a Depth of Excavation Up to 1.6 m

Trench Stratigraphy Tarmac surface up to 0.05 m thick lying on a bed of pink gravel up to 0.1 m thick. This

> covered a cement layer 0.05 m thick with 0.1 m of orange gravel below. Under this lay 0.1 m of cinder and ash which covered considerable quantities of crushed sandstone rubble, with rare lenses of mortar also present. This deposit was between 0.4 m and 0.5 m deep and overlay a dark sandy matrix which contained modern white glazed ceramics, oyster shell and lenses of ash/cinder. This deposit was between 0.3 m and 0.4 m thick and lay over the natural

geology.

Subsoil Orange/Red clay with red/grey sand in patches

Significant Features Unmortared sandstone wall, [801], aligned NW-SE. Cut into natural, c.0.35 to 0.45 m wide

with only one course of stone present. A spread of modern white glazed ceramics directly

overlay the wall.

Finds Modern ceramic and glass noted within redeposited made ground.

APPENDIX 2: Context Record

Context No	Trench	Context Type	Description
[101]	Tr.1	Wall cut	NW-SE aligned cut for a wall. Cut into natural, measured c.2.8 long (exposed length, extended into both sections) by up to 0.7 m wide. Steep sides with cut up to 0.30 m deep.
[102]	Tr.1	Fill	Unmortared sandstone wall, [101], aligned NW-SE. Cut into natural, c.0.6 to 0.7 m wide with two courses of stone present.
[801]	Tr.8	Wall cut	NW-SE aligned cut for a wall. Cut into natural, measured c.2.8 long (exposed length, extended into both sections) by up to 0.45 m wide. Steep sides with cut up to 0.15 m deep.
[802]	Tr.8	Fill	Unmortared sandstone wall, [801], aligned NW-SE. Fill of cut [801], c.0.35 to 0.45 m wide with only one course of stone present. A spread of modern white glazed ceramics directly overlay the wall.

APPENDIX 3: Photographic Record

Black & White Print/ /Digital Film 1

Frame	Trench	Description	From
1-2	-	Registration shot	-
3-4	Tr.1	N-facing section of Trench 1	N
5-6	Tr.1	General Post-excavation view of Trench 1 from the West	W
7	Tr.1	View of unmortared stone wall [101] from East, Trench 1	Е
8	Tr.1	View of unmortared stone wall [101] from West, Trench 1	W
9-10	Tr.1	View of unmortared stone wall [101] from Northeast, Trench 1	NE
11-12	Tr.2	W-facing section of Trench 2	W
13-14	Tr.2	General Post-excavation view of Trench 2 from the South	S
15-16	Tr.3	General Post-excavation view of Trench 3 from the Northeast	NE
17-18	Tr.4	S-facing section of Trench 4	S
19-20	Tr.4	General Post-excavation view of Trench 4 from the West	W
21-22	Tr.5	General view of Trench 5 after backfilling	Е
23-24	Tr.6	General Post-excavation view of Trench 6 from the Northeast	SE
25	Tr.6	NE-facing section of Trench 6	NE
26-27	Tr.7	General Post-excavation view of Trench 7 from the Northeast	NE
28-29	Tr.8	N-facing section of Trench 8	N
30	Tr.8	General view of Trench 8 during excavation	Е
31-32	Tr.8	View of unmortared stone wall [801] from Northwest, Trench 8	NW
33-34	Tr.8	View of unmortared stone wall [801] from West, Trench 8	W
35-36	Tr.8	General Post-excavation view of Trench 8 from the West	W

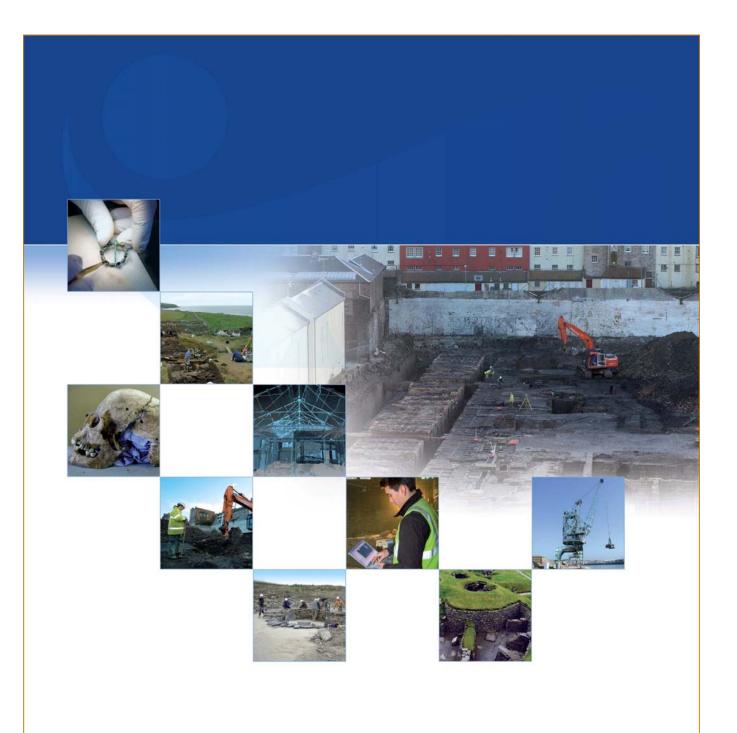
Digital Film

Frame	Trench	Description	From
1	-	Registration shot	-
2	Tr.1	N-facing section of Trench 1	N
3-4	Tr.1	General Post-excavation view of Trench 1 from the West	W
5	Tr.1	View of unmortared stone wall [101] from East, Trench 1	Е
6	Tr.1	View of unmortared stone wall [101] from West, Trench 1	W
7-8	Tr.1	View of unmortared stone wall [101] from Northeast, Trench 1	NE
9-10	Tr.2	W-facing section of Trench 2	W
11-12	Tr.2	General Post-excavation view of Trench 2 from the South	S
13-14	Tr.3	General Post-excavation view of Trench 3 from the Northeast	NE
15-16	Tr.4	S-facing section of Trench 4	S
17-18	Tr.4	General Post-excavation view of Trench 4 from the West	W
19	Tr.5	General view of Trench 5 after backfilling	E
20	Tr.6	General Post-excavation view of Trench 6 from the Northeast	SE
21-22	Tr.6	NE-facing section of Trench 6	NE

23-24	Tr.7	General Post-excavation view of Trench 7 from the Northeast	NE
25-26	Tr.8	N-facing section of Trench 8	N
27	Tr.8	General view of Trench 8 during excavation	Е
28-29	Tr.8	View of unmortared stone wall [801] from Northwest, Trench 8	NW
30-3	Tr.8	View of unmortared stone wall [801] from West, Trench 8	W
34-35	Tr.8	General Post-excavation view of Trench 8 from the West	W
36-42	various	General views of backfilled trenches	various

APPENDIX 4: 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' Report

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	East Lothian Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME	Bleachingfield, Dunbar, East Lothian
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 21807
PARISH:	Dunbar
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Lindsay Dunbar
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation
NMRS NO(S)	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	N/A
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 675 788 (centred)
START DATE (this season)	1 st February 2011
END DATE (this season)	2 nd February 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	N/A
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological evaluation comprised of a 10% trenching sample was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on the site of a proposed community centre, car park and play area. The site was found to be much altered with in excess of a metre of madeground present across the entire site. A uniform stratigraphy present in each trench suggesting a concerted and deliberate attempt to raise the ground level and create a flatter site. Within the madeground of redeposited clays and a cinder /ash layer were noted 19th and 20th Century white glazed ceramic and glass sherds. Below this madeground were found the basal courses of two unmortared, undated sandstone walls.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	East Lothian Council
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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