

LHED11/001



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS AT LIBERTON HOUSE, EDINBURGH

Watching Brief and HBR

*for Groves Raines Architects  
on behalf of Jonathan & Kelly Foley*

10/00185/FUL

*August 2011*

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Project Manager

Edward Bailey

Author

Donald Wilson

Fieldwork

Donald Wilson

Graphics

Anna Sztromwasser

Approved by

Edward Bailey, Project Manager



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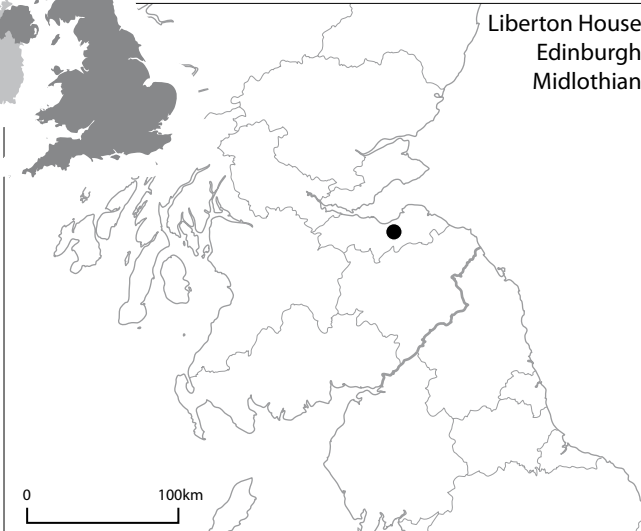
13 Jane Street, Edinburgh EH6 5HE  
T 0131 467 7705 • F 0131 467 7706 • E office@headlandarchaeology.com  
www.headlandarchaeology.com

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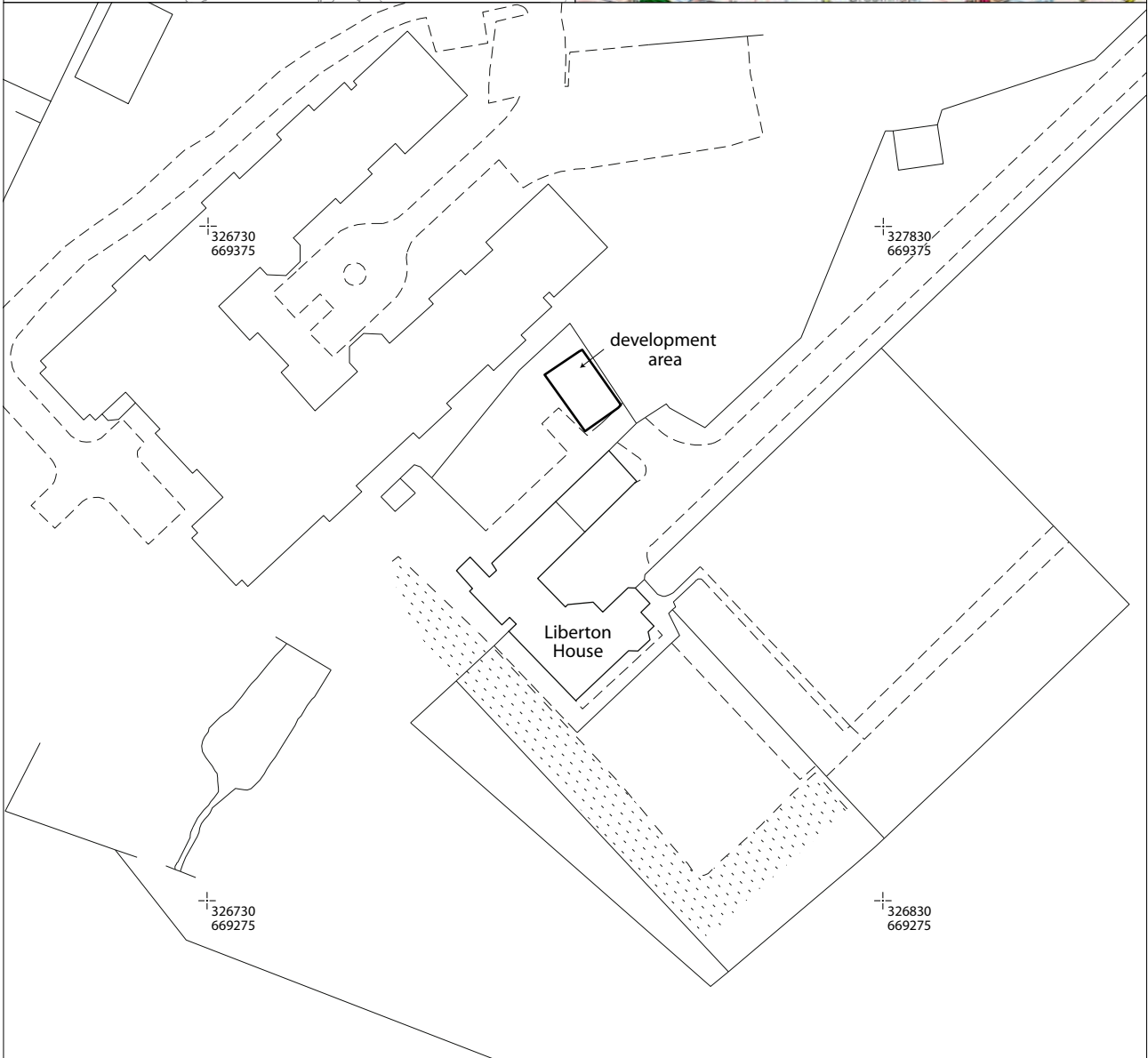
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Liberton House  
Edinburgh  
Midlothian



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Scale 1:1,000 @ A4



0 50m

**Illus 1**  
Site location

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS AT LIBERTON HOUSE, EDINBURGH

## Watching Brief and HBR

*A programme of archaeological monitoring and building recording was undertaken in advance of a small development within the grounds of Liberton House, Edinburgh. The excavation of an 8m long foundation trench and two small test pits revealed the entire footprint of the development to comprise up to 1.5m of 'made ground'. A significant quantity of 19th/20th century ceramic fragments, bottles and brick were recovered from this deposit. No negative archaeological features were revealed and no finds of medieval or post-medieval date were recovered.*

*The survey of the upstanding stone wall affected by the development revealed a number of minor features and possible evidence for two phases of development. The wall fabric included a significant amount of repair, including a brick and cement capping. The wall is thought to represent one elevation of a long rectangular building first depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1858.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Groves Raines Architects on behalf of Jonathan and Kelly Foley to carry out a programme of archaeological works comprising the monitoring of ground-breaking works and the survey of an upstanding stone wall affected by the development of a two storey garage within the grounds of Liberton House, Edinburgh (Planning Ref. 10/00185/FUL; Illus 1).

The works were carried out in response to a planning condition and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd and agreed with the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS), which advises the planning authority on archaeological matters. Background information and plans were provided by Groves Raines Architects.

### 1.1 Project background

The development covered an area adjacent to the north corner of Liberton House (NGR: NT 2679 6934; Illus 2), adjoining an existing garden wall and including part of an area being used as a car park. Because of the site's location near to Liberton House it was considered to have a high archaeological potential. In particular, Liberton House dates to around 1675 and was constructed to replace the nearby 15th century

Liberton Tower. Liberton House is a Category-A listed building (HB No. 28086) and includes a walled garden (NMRS: NT26NE 9.01) and a listed dovecot (HB No. 28141). Place name evidence records the medieval estate of Over Liberton as early as AD 1128. Therefore there was potential for the discovery of medieval and early post-medieval remains in the area.

The stone wall surveyed during this work formed part of the boundary wall to the grounds of Liberton House. The wall was located to the NW corner of the house, being the north-eastern limit of the existing car park. The wall was thought to represent the remains of a long rectangular building that is clearly depicted on the 1858 1st edition Ordnance Survey (Illus 3). Unfortunately none of the earlier cartographic sources and in particular Roy's military survey of 1746 show enough detail to indicate an earlier date for this building.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the work were:

- to record any archaeological remains threatened by the proposed development works,
- to undertake a photographic and written record of the upstanding wall affected by the development,
- to report on the results of the work.



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**Illus 2**  
Plan of the development area

**Illus 3**

Extract from the 1856 1st edition Ordnance Survey  
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### 3. METHOD

#### 3.1 Monitoring excavation of the building footprint

The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) stated that a mechanical excavator was to be used to excavate the entire footprint of the development (62m<sup>2</sup>). As the development only required the footprint of the wall foundations to be excavated an amendment was verbally agreed with CECAS to monitor the excavation of the wall foundations. Further to this, due to the results of the initial trench and two test pits located at the opposing corners of the development area, it was agreed with CECAS that no further monitoring would be necessary.

The foundation trench along the line of an existing stone wall and the two test pits were excavated through all modern overburden and underlying deposits under archaeological control. A mini-digger with a toothed bucket was used to remove all the deposits. Excavation continued until clean geological sediments, significant features or structures were encountered or the foundation level of the development was reached.

The resulting surfaces were investigated by hand and all identified features were recorded. The stratigraphy of the excavations was recorded in full.

The monitoring was undertaken by one archaeologist over a single day period.

#### 3.2 Structural recording

A Level 1–2 Historic Building Survey was undertaken of the section of historic wall affected by the development. This was undertaken prior to the works commencing and comprised a photographic survey and written description linked to a phased plan. The results of the structural recording have been incorporated into this report.

The historic building recording was undertaken on the same day as the monitoring of the footprint excavation.

#### 3.3 Recording

All recording was according to IfA standards and guidance. All contexts, and small finds were given unique numbers and all recording was undertaken on *pro forma* record cards.





**Illus 4**

View of the development area showing the SW facing elevation of the wall  
(from left to right: F5, F1, F4, F3, F3, F2)

4



**Illus 5**

Detail of Trench 1 along the upstanding wall facing SE



**Illus 6**

Detail of stone steps at the SE end of Trench 1



**Illus 7**  
SW facing elevation of the wall showing F5 (left) and F1 (right)



**Illus 8**  
NE facing elevation showing F6 (left) and F5 (right)

5



**Illus 9**  
Detail of F2 (right) and F3 (left) on the SW facing elevation



**Illus 10**

Detail of F3 on the SW facing elevation

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Colour transparency and digital photographs were taken and recorded in a photographic register. Record shots of archaeological contexts included a metric scale. A full photographic register can be found in Appendix 1.

An overall site plan has been supplied by the client. Archaeological trenches and features were measured by hand from mapped features and the site has been related to the National Grid.

A summary report has been prepared for submission to Discovery and Excavation in Scotland (DES) a copy of which is found in Appendix 2 and the work has also been recorded on the OASIS database (headland1-100440).

## 4. RESULTS

The work was carried out on 4th May 2011 in clear and dry conditions.

### 4.1 Excavation results

An area measuring 8 x 5m aligned NW-SE positioned along the SW facing elevation of an existing stone wall (Illus 4) was cleared of modern overburden comprising a

shallow layer of gravel. Following this a foundation trench (Trench 1) 8m long and 0.6m wide was excavated along the SW facing elevation of the existing stone wall (Illus 5) that formed the north-eastern limits of the development area. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.6m revealing the wall foundation and natural geological deposits of alluvial clay. Two distinct layers of material were revealed within the trench section. The upper layer comprised between 0.1m to 0.25m of compacted sand and rubble. Below this was a 1.5m thick layer of re-deposited grey/black loam mixed with occasional ash deposits. A significant quantity of frogged bricks, 19th/20th century ceramic fragments and discarded bottles (including one with a date stamp of 1910) were recovered from this layer, particularly at the NW end of the trench. This material was interpreted as a modern waste dump. At the base of the trench was a tile drain above pale yellow clay, interpreted as a natural geological deposit. No old ground surfaces or garden soils were encountered.

At the SE end of Trench 1 was a set of stone steps (Illus 6) abutting the stone wall. It was not clear how these steps related to the wall or what date they represented as no floor level or surface was recorded at the base of the steps. The steps were probably later in date than the wall as they were clearly machine cut stone and were not keyed into the wall.

**Illus 11**

Detail of F4 (left) and F3 (right) on the SW facing elevation

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Two small test pits (TP1 & TP2; Illus 2) were excavated at the S and W corners of the development area. These were both excavated to a maximum depth of 0.9m (the limit of the foundation level of the development). Both test pits revealed 0.5m of compacted sand and angular stone forming a modern ground surface over 0.4m of mottled grey/black loam similar to that recorded in Trench 1.

The results of these test pits in conjunction with Trench 1 indicated that the footprint of the development was located over a considerable deposit of modern made ground and any further ground works within this area would not encounter any significant archaeology. Therefore, after discussion with CECAS regarding the initial results it was decided that no further monitoring was required.

## 4.2 Upstanding wall remains

The remains of a NW-SE aligned rubble stone wall were recorded along the north-eastern limits of the development area (see Illus 2 & 4). The wall was 15m long, 0.37m thick and upstanding to a maximum height of 1.8m above contemporary ground level. The wall was in a reasonable condition with the exception of a small section of the NE facing elevation that had recently collapsed. It was constructed of rubble stone throughout with a cement

bond, although a number of repairs and changes in the type of stonework were evident. A significant part of the NE facing elevation and part of the SW facing elevation (at the NW end) were masked by trees and vegetation.

The wall was thought to represent the remains of a long rectangular building depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey 1858 although it was not fully clear prior to the survey if this wall represented the SW or the NE wall of this building. The excavation of a trench (Trench 1) to the SW side of the existing wall did not reveal any floor or surface level suggesting that the SW facing elevation was the outer face of the building and therefore represented the remains of the SW wall of the original building.

The main feature of the SW facing elevation was a possible phase/construction line. This was represented by a vertical construction line (F1) (Illus 7) 6.5m from the NW end of the wall. This line continued to the foundation stones 1.3m below the contemporary surface level. The stonework immediately to the SE side of this line (large roughly cut stones forming basic quoins) projected slightly from the remainder of the wall to the NW (see Illus 4). This seemed to indicate that this was the W corner of the original building. This was further confirmed by a section of smaller rounded rubble stones (F6) recorded on the NE facing elevation (Illus 8). This section (F6) probably



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**Illus 12**

Display of the bottles recovered from N end of the foundation trench

represented the remains of the return wall that would have continued from the W corner of the original building. Assuming this interpretation is correct would therefore suggest that the NW end of the wall is a later phase.

The SW facing elevation of the supposed earlier section of wall also included three further features of note. The first of these (F2) was a small rectangular shaped series of narrow slots in the wall (Illus 9). This may have represented a small stone-blocked window, although the surrounding rubble wall showed no indication of a distinct stone surround or lintel. The slots of this feature may have been more indicative of an external feature built into the wall such as a drain hopper. Two further vertical slots (F3) (Illus 10) immediately to the NW were initially thought to be evidence of a blocked doorway but again no surround stones or lintel were evident. These may instead have represented slots for an external timber feature such as a lean-to. Both these features were only recorded to the contemporary ground level and unlike F1 did not continue to the foundation stones at the base of the wall. Given this, it may indicate that these two features (F2 and F3) represent later features inserted into the wall once the contemporary ground surface has been instated. A further feature recorded on this section of wall

was a vertical row of small stones (F4) (Illus 11) although it was unclear as to what if anything these represented.

On the supposed later section of wall to the NW a small area of the wall comprised of smaller rounded rubble stone (see Illus 7) with a cement bond (F5). This was also visible on the NW facing elevation (see Illus 8). This was topped by a course of larger squared stones. This feature may represent a slightly earlier phase of construction for the lower part of the wall although the construction lines were not very clear and it may be that the wall above this had been repaired more recently.

Much of the upper part of the whole wall had been repaired or reconstructed and the entire wall had been topped with a brick and cement capping. The wall at the SE end also curved to the S and increased in height although this section of wall was presumed to be fairly modern in construction and associated with the boundary wall of the property.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The location of the wall seems to correspond with a building depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey

plan of 1858. Although no dating evidence for the construction of the wall was recovered it is reasonable to assume that this wall was part of the building depicted. The possible phase line recorded does seem to indicate that the structure may have been built in two phases, although the wall had been heavily repaired and altered, making any interpretation difficult. The stone steps recorded during excavation also provide an interpretative problem as no old ground surface was recorded at their base. As the stairs were located on the outside of the building they may be indicative of a sunken area of garden, possibly with stone slabs forming a pavement along the side of the building. The slabs may subsequently have been removed and the sunken area filled in to raise

the ground level up to its contemporary level. Given the lack of significant features within the wall it is probably safe to assume that the building had a utilitarian use, such as a store or byre.

## 6. REFERENCES

### 6.1 Cartographic sources

1747–55, Roy, W, *Military Survey of Scotland*.

1858, Ordnance Survey, *Edinburghshire*, 1:10,560, surveyed 1856.



## 7. APPENDICES

### 7.1 Appendix 1 – Site registers

#### *Photographic register*

<b>Shot no.</b>	<b>Colour slide</b>	<b>Facing</b>	<b>Description</b>
001	1\37	-	Film 1; ID shot
002	1\36	N	View of development area showing the upstanding stone wall
003	1\35	NE	View of the SW facing elevation of the stone wall
004	1\34	NE	View of the SW facing elevation of the stone wall
005	1\33	NE	Detail of the SW facing elevation of the stone wall
006	1\32	NE	Detail of the SW facing elevation of the stone wall
007	1\31	NE	Detail of the SW facing elevation of the stone wall
008	1\30	NE	Detail of the SW facing elevation of the stone wall
009	1\29	NE	Detail of the SW facing elevation of the stone wall
010	1\28	NE	Detail of the SW facing wall showing the foundation
011	1\27	NE	Detail of the SW facing elevation of the stone wall
012	1\26	NE	Detail of the SW facing elevation of the stone wall
013	1\25	SW	General view of the NE facing elevation of the wall
014	1\24	SW	Detail of the NE facing elevation of the stone wall
015	1\23	SW	Detail of the NE facing elevation of the stone wall
016	1\22	N	Detail of the SE end of the stone wall
017	1\21	E	View of the Trench 1 being excavated
018	1\20	NE	Detail of foundations stones of the wall

<b>Shot no.</b>	<b>Colour slide</b>	<b>Facing</b>	<b>Description</b>
019	1\19	-	Detail of pottery fragments recovered from Trench 1
020	1\18	-	Detail of the bottles recovered from Trench 1
021	1\17	SW	Detail of the NE facing elevation of the stone wall
22	1\16	SW	Detail of the NE facing elevation of the stone wall
23	1\15	SW	Detail of the NE facing elevation of the stone wall
24	-	SW	Detail of the NE facing elevation of the stone wall
25	-	-	Detail of one of the recovered bottles
26	-	-	Detail of one of the recovered bottles
27	1\14	NW	General view of site
28	1\13	SW	General view of Liberton House
29	1\12	W	General view of Liberton House
30	1\11	NW	General view of Liberton house
31	1\10	NE	Detail of feature F4
32	1\9	E	View of wall and Trench 1
33	1\8	SE	Detail of the stone steps
34	1\7	NE	Detail of feature F2
35	-	NE	Detail of feature F3
36	1\6	NE	Detail of feature F3
37	1\5	NW	General view of Trench 1 and wall
38	1\4	NW	View of test pit TP1
39	1\3	SW	View of test pit TP2

## 7.2 Appendix 2 – Discovery and Excavation in Scotland

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	City of Edinburgh
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	A programme of archaeological works at Liberton House, Edinburgh
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	LHED11
<b>PARISH:</b>	Edinburgh
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Donald Wilson
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Headland Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching brief and building survey
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NT26NE 9.00
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	None
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)</b>	NT 2679 6934
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	May 2011
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	May 2011
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)</b>	<p>A programme of archaeological monitoring and building recording was undertaken in advance of a small development within the grounds of Liberton House, Edinburgh. The excavation of an 8m long foundation trench and two small test pits revealed the entire footprint of the development to comprise up to 1.5m of 'made ground'. A significant quantity of 19th/20th century ceramic fragments, bottles and brick were recovered from this deposit. No negative archaeological features were revealed and no finds of medieval or post-medieval date were recovered.</p> <p>The survey of the upstanding stone wall affected by the development revealed a number of minor features and possible evidence for two phases of development. The wall fabric included a significant amount of repair, including a brick and cement capping. The wall is thought to represent one elevation of a long rectangular building first depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1858.</p>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	-
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Kelly and Jonathan Foley
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	13 Jane Street Edinburgh EH6 5HE Scotland
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	donald.wilson@headlandarchaeology.com
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/ deposited)</b>	NMRS





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**North East (HQ)**

13 Jane Street, Edinburgh EH6 5HE

**T** 0131 467 7705 • **F** 0131 467 7706 • **E** office@headlandarchaeology.com

**North West**

10 Payne Street, Glasgow G4 0LF

**T** 0141 354 8100 • **F** 0141 332 9388 • **E** glasgowoffice@headlandarchaeology.com

**Midlands & West**

Unit 1, Premier Business Park, Faraday Road, Hereford HR4 9NZ

**T** 0143 236 4901 • **F** 0143 236 4900 • **E** hereford@headlandarchaeology.com

**South & East**

Technology Centre, Stanbridge Road, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 4QH

**T** 01525 850 878 • **E** leighton.buzzard@headlandarchaeology.com

[www.headlandarchaeology.com](http://www.headlandarchaeology.com)