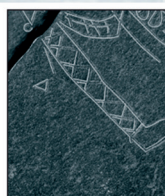
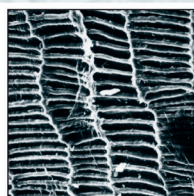
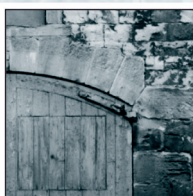
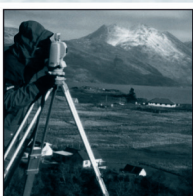
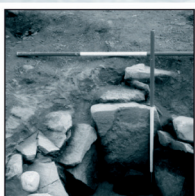
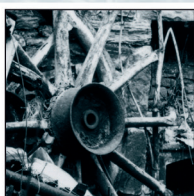
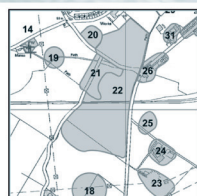


ACHE11



ACHESON HOUSE, EDINBURGH

Archaeological Excavation

for City of Edinburgh Council

October 2011



HEADLAND
ARCHAEOLOGY (UK) Ltd



ACHESON HOUSE, EDINBURGH

Archaeological Excavation

for City of Edinburgh Council

October 2011

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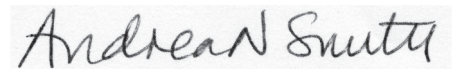
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CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	OBJECTIVES	1
3.	METHODOLOGY	1
4.	RESULTS	2
5.	DISCUSSION	2
6.	REFERENCES	3
	APPENDICES	4
	Appendix 1 – Site registers	4
	<i>Context register</i>	4
	<i>Photographic register</i>	4
	<i>Drawing register</i>	5
	Appendix 2 – Finds catalogue	6
	Appendix 3 – Discovery and Excavation in Scotland entry	8
	Appendix 4 – Digital photographic index	9

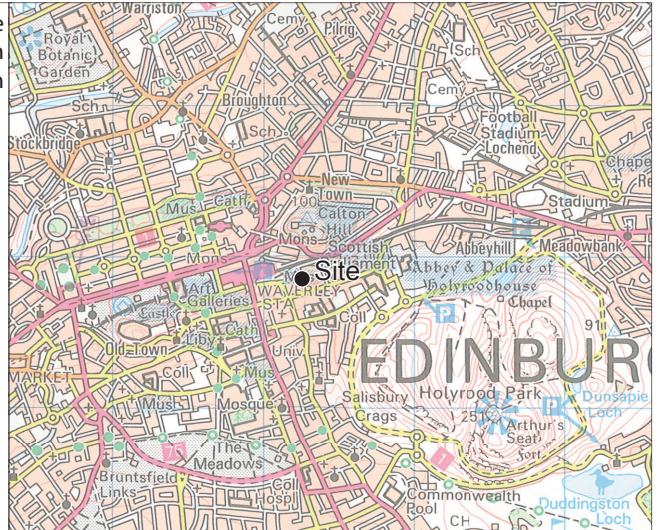
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Illus 1</i>		viii
<i>Site location</i>		
<i>Illus 2</i>		2
<i>Site plan</i>		
<i>Illus 3</i>		3
<i>Working shot</i>		

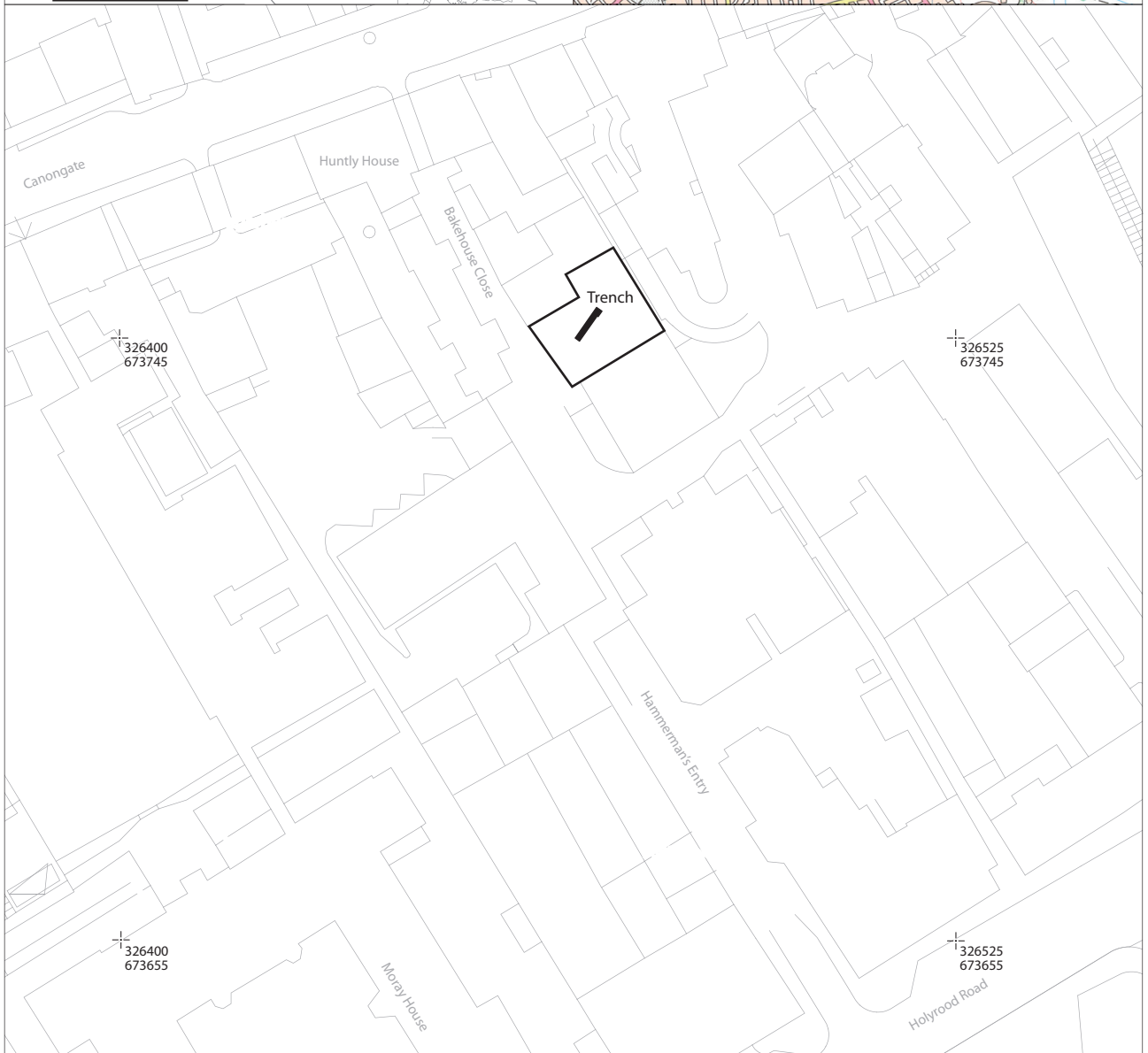


Acheson House
Edinburgh
Midlothian

0 100km



viii



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Scale 1:1,000 @ A4



0 50m

Illus 1
Site location

ACHESON HOUSE, EDINBURGH

Archaeological Excavation

Headland Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by John Lawson, City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service to undertake the hand excavation of a service trench to the rear of Acheson House, 140 Canongate, Edinburgh. Workmen had already collected numerous finds from the soil overlying an existing pipe. Further hand excavation showed that two-thirds of the trench comprised backfill from two separate pipe trenches. Natural bedrock was overlain in the west half of the trench by a layer of light brown clayey silt. A feature filled with stone rubble was cut through this deposit but was not excavated. The feature was overlain by a thin band of midden deposit. At the east end of the trench were the remains of a wall cut into the natural slope, with midden deposits abutting it. These deposits are thought to pre-date the construction of Acheson House in 1633. A thick layer of post-medieval midden debris overlay these features. The remains of a brick path were found in the centre of the trench, truncated by the two pipes. Map evidence suggests demolition of structures to the rear of the house took place in the first half of the 19th century; a brick path in the new open yard or garden may have been added at this time.

1

1. INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by John Lawson, City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service to undertake the excavation of a service trench in an open yard to the rear of Acheson House, 140 Canongate, Edinburgh (Illus 1; NT 2647 7375). The site is part of the Museum of Edinburgh and is currently being refurbished. Workmen had already collected numerous finds from the soil overlying an existing pipe and therefore it was decided that the remainder of the trench should be archaeologically hand-excavated. The site lies within the burgh of Canongate, within the bounds of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site. Acheson House was built in 1633 for Sir Archibald Acheson, then secretary of state to Charles I, and is an important surviving example of the houses built for high-ranking courtiers along the lower part of the Royal Mile to be close to the monarch and Holyrood Palace.

2. OBJECTIVES

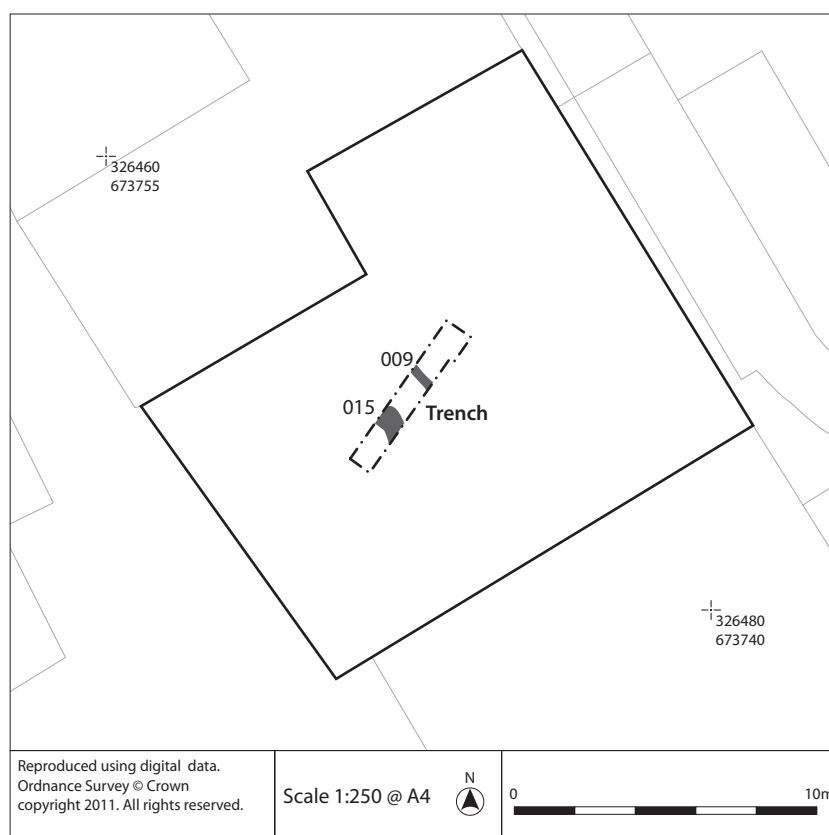
The objectives of the work were to record any archaeological remains encountered during the excavation of the service pipe trench.

3. METHODOLOGY

A single trench measuring 5.6m by 0.8m was excavated by hand. The east end of the trench measured 1m in width; an area 1m by 1m at this end of the trench had already been excavated by workmen. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m and excavation ceased at the base of the service pipes or the top of the natural, whichever was reached earlier.

All recording was undertaken according to IfA standards and guidance. All contexts were given unique numbers and all recording was undertaken on *pro forma* record cards. Features were added to the overall site plan using hand drawn plans at 1:20 and sections of the trench were drawn at 1:10. The site has been related to the National Grid. Digital photographs were taken and recorded in a photographic register. Record shots of archaeological contexts included a metric scale. Site registers can be found in Appendix 1.

A summary report has been prepared for submission to Discovery and Excavation in Scotland (DES) a copy of which is found in Appendix 3 and the project has also been recorded on the OASIS database.



Illus 2

Plan of trench showing features [009] and [015]

2

4. RESULTS

Natural subsoil [008] comprising brown silt and crumbly clay with fragmented bedrock was exposed only in the western half of the trench at 0.95m below the surface. This was overlain by a layer of light brown silty clay [013], a mixture of midden debris and subsoil, which was cut by a stone-filled feature [015]. The narrow confines of the trench and a service pipe made it difficult to determine the shape of the feature; it appeared to be linear or oval in plan. The feature was not excavated. Overlying this feature was a thin (0.06m) band of dark brown silt [011] containing a fragment of Scottish post-medieval reduced ware, probably dating to the late 17th – mid 18th century (Julie Franklin, Finds catalogue, Appendix 2). This deposit also contained charcoal and bone and appears to represent midden material.

On the eastern side of the trench a cut [012] had been made into the natural, and a stone wall [009] bonded with mortar built up against the edge. The wall ran NNE-SSW and continued below the level of excavation and was at least two courses deep. Midden material comprising fine black silt [010] containing charcoal and small stones abutted the wall. These deposits and those on the western side of the trench were overlain by a thick layer of post-medieval midden debris [005] containing brick fragments, clay pipe and pottery. This material was partly overlain

by a layer of black silty sand and charcoal [004]. A brick surface [003] was laid within this material. The bricks were hand made and laid on their sides north-east to south-west across the trench. The surface was truncated to the west and east by two pipe trench cuts [006] and [007]. Above these was a layer indistinguishable from the pipe trench fills comprising gritty sandy silt [002], which contained frequent modern and post-medieval ceramic, tile and brick fragments and clay pipe. Above this was 0.3m of mixed topsoil, containing lenses of clean sand and occasional ashy patches. Finds from topsoil were not retained.

5. DISCUSSION

The width of the trench and the limited nature of the excavations mean that it is difficult to interpret the oldest features on the site. The narrow width of the wall and its orientation suggest it may be a garden or backland feature, such as a well or outhouse. The large amount of stone recovered from the fill of the pipe trench [007] suggests that the wall had originally been higher and possibly wider than what now remains. This feature and the cut feature filled with stone to the west are undated but are likely to pre-date the construction of Acheson House in 1633. In the early 19th century maps show buildings to the rear of Acheson House (Kirkwood 1817); the present

open yard is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1853. This suggests that the post-medieval debris overlying the early features may relate to the demolition of a structure to the rear of the house sometime in the first half of the 19th century. The brick path may have been added as a garden feature around this time.

The finds recovered included some dated as early as the 15th century, but most fell between the 17th and 19th centuries. The finds, however, indicate that there were no undisturbed early contexts, as late medieval and early post-medieval finds were recovered from the same deposits as 19th-century material. The finds represented mostly domestic and industrial waste, but particularly glass-working waste. A more unusual find is a piece of stone shot, unstratified, and slightly damaged, possibly from firing or through post-depositional damage. Stone shot of a similar size (around 2.4 or 2.5 inches in diameter) have been recovered from sites in Leith, including Burgess Street, Ronaldson's Wharf and Constitution Street (Franklin pers comm) and can be dated to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

6. REFERENCES

- Kirkwood, R, 1817, *A Map of the Environs of Edinburgh*.
Ordnance Survey, 1953, *Edinburghshire, Sheet 2, 6 in to 1 mile* (Surveyed 1852).



Illus 3
Working shot



APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site registers

Context register

Context no.	Description	Dimensions (m)
001	Dark brown sandy silt with frequent roots, moderate brick, tile fragments and small-medium stones. Topsoil.	D: 0.30
002	Brownish grey sandy silt with moderate small-medium stones, occasional brick fragments, occasional cinders. Modern debris.	D: 0.2
003	Single layer of hand-made bricks laid on edge, end to end, in a line roughly NE-SW. No bonding between bricks but mortar adhering to bricks and around area. Brick surface.	L: 1.0 W: 0.4 D: 0.1 Bricks 0.24 x 0.10 x 0.06
004	Fine black compact sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks. Contains post-medieval ceramic and glass. Midden.	L: 0.4 W: 0.2 D: 0.08
005	Greyish brown gritty silt with frequent brick, mortar and stones. Contains clay pipe, post-medieval and 19th century ceramic. Post-medieval demolition/dumping deposit.	D: 0.3–0.5
006	Linear cut, E-W with near vertical sides, base not reached. Filled with gritty sandy silt, similar to [002]. Pipe trench, west end of trench.	W: 0.38
007	Linear cut, NE-SW with near vertical sides, base not reached. Filled with gritty sandy silt, similar to [002]. Pipe trench, east end of trench.	W: 0.5
008	Mid brown fine clayey silt/crumbley silty clay with broken bedrock. Natural.	At 0.95 below surface
009	Large sub-rounded and sub-angular stones bonded with lime mortar, >1 course deep but only 1 course exposed; not fully excavated. Built against edge of natural on W side. Retaining wall/revetment?	At 0.95 below surface; not excavated. W: 0.3 Stones max 0.2 x 0.2 x 0.1
010	Fine black silt with occasional small stones and charcoal. Abuts [009]. Midden.	At 1.2m below surface. Not excavated.
011	Dark brown silt with moderate charcoal and occasional small-medium stones. Midden.	At 0.9 below surface. D: 0.06
012	Linear cut into natural (E side only), N-S with near vertical sides, base not reached. Cut for wall [009].	–
013	Light brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks. Midden material mixed with subsoil.	At 0.97 below surface. D: 0.14
014	Light greyish brown silty clay with frequent medium-large rounded and sub-angular stones, occasional charcoal. Fill of [015].	W: 0.75
015	Linear/sub-oval cut with regular sloping sides at top; feature not fully exposed or excavated.	L: 1.0 W: 0.75

Photographic register

Photo no.	Digital ref.	Direction facing	Description
001	ACHE11-001.jpg	SE	Working shot excavating West end of trench
002	ACHE11-002.jpg	NE	Working shot
003	–	NE	Working shot
004	ACHE11-004.jpg	NE	Trench after removal of topsoil showing [002]
005	ACHE11-005.jpg	S	Brick surface [003]
006	ACHE11-006.jpg	E	Trench after removal of pipe fills and [005], showing natural [008] in centre

Photo no.	Digital ref.	Direction facing	Description
007	ACHE11-007.jpg	W	Trench after removal of pipe fills and [005], showing natural [008] in centre
008	ACHE11-008.jpg	S	Natural [008] in centre of trench, plan view
009	ACHE11-009.jpg	SE	Natural [008] in centre of trench, plan view
010	ACHE11-010a.jpg, ACHE11-010b.jpg & ACHE11-010c.jpg	NW	Working shots
011	ACHE11-011.jpg	S	Wall [009] showing midden [010] to east
012	ACHE11-012.jpg	S	North facing section (central part)
013	ACHE11-013.jpg	N	South facing section (central part)
014	ACHE11-014.jpg	E	West end of trench after removal [011] and [013] showing natural [008]
015	ACHE11-015.jpg	S	Stones in cut [015] at west end of trench

Drawing register

Drawing no.	Plan	Section	Description
001	1:20	–	Plan of brick surface [003], deposits [004] and [005]
002	1:20	–	Plan of pipes [006] and [007] and natural [008]
003	1:20	–	Plan of wall [009] and midden deposits [010] and [011]
004	–	1:10	South facing section of trench
005	1:20	–	Plan of cut [015] and wall [009]
006	–	1:10	North facing section of trench (W half)



Appendix 2 – Finds catalogue

Context	Qty	Material	Object	Description	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Period
Unstrat	1	Copper Alloy	Button	hollow military button with moulded design on front, featuring crown over crossed swords	–	–	Mod
Unstrat	1	Glass	Bottle	rim & neck of onion or mallet wine bottle	1680	1740	PM
Unstrat	4	Glass	Bottle	selection of complete moulded small colourless or natural bottles, medicinal, three with screw tops	L.19th	present	Mod
Unstrat	2	Iron	Nails	wrought nails, flat round heads, round shafts, tapering to square tips, very good condition, no corrosion	–	–	–
Unstrat	1	Lead Alloy	Button	solid domed disc and loop button, moulded design of crown over 'GR'	1910	1952	Mod
Unstrat	1	Stone	Shot	Sandstone/basalt, damaged one side. Dia 60mm	–	–	PM?
Topsoil	1	CBM	Sanitary Ware	thick fragment with white glazed interior	–	–	Mod
Topsoil	2	Ceramic	Marbles	glazed	–	–	Mod
Topsoil	4	Clay Pipe	Stems	wide and narrow bores, unmarked	17th	20th	PM-Mod
Topsoil	1	Copper Alloy	Fitting	U-shaped tube	–	–	Mod
Topsoil	1	Copper Alloy	Fitting	small open ended box with integral tube, function unknown	–	–	Mod
Topsoil	1	Copper Alloy	Sheet	small piece of distorted sheet, thick corrosion products	–	–	–
Topsoil	1	Glass	Bottle	green bottle sherd with embossed lettering 'CRA- / EDIN-'	–	–	Mod
Topsoil	5	Industrial Waste	Glass Waste	various pieces of heat damaged glass, glass rods etc	–	–	–
Topsoil	1	Industrial Waste	Silver Material	possibly aluminium waste?	–	–	Mod
Topsoil	1	Iron	Bolt	large square head, thick shaft with screw thread	–	–	Mod
Topsoil	1	Iron	Caster Wheel	furniture caster wheel, with industrial waste adhering	–	–	Mod
Topsoil	1	Iron	Washer	–	–	–	Mod
Topsoil	16	Pottery (Mod)	Various	creamware, rockingham, spongeware, stoneware, red earthenware, Staffs type slipware and others, several heat damaged with industrial waste adhering	1830	present	Mod
Rear Garden	1	Clay Pipe	Stem	wide bore	1600	1750	PM
Rear Garden	1	Glass	Bottle	complete small colourless ?medicine bottle with screw threaded neck. Crystallised residue inside	1900	present	Mod
Rear Garden	8	Pottery (Mod)	Various	blue painted pearlware, spongeware, red earthenware, trans printed hand coloured, several heat damaged with industrial residues adhering	1830	present	Mod
Rear Garden	1	Pottery (PM)	PMO	strap handle	1500	1600	PM
002	1	Building Material	Mortar	sherd of white lime-mortar	–	–	PM/Mod
002	4	CBM	Brick	various fragments	–	–	Mod
002	8	CBM	Pan Tile	sherds and fragments	–	–	PM/Mod
002	11	Clay Pipe	Stems	wide & narrow bores	1600	1950	PM-Mod
002	1	Glass	Bottle	green sherd, laminating	–	–	PM/Mod
002	2	Glass	Window	small colourless sherds, laminating	–	–	PM/Mod
002	1	Industrial Waste	Glass Waste?	lump of glass or iron-working waste	–	–	–
002	1	Iron	Nail?	large nail or bolt, covered in thick corrosion products	–	–	–

Context	Qty	Material	Object	Description	Earliest Date	Latest Date	Period
002	22	Pottery (Mod)	Various	slip trailed redware, lathe turned slipware, blue hand painted pearlware, black transfer printed, blue trans printed, green trans printed, feather edges creamware, black and brown wares, slip lined red earthenware, some with green mottles, hand painted	1820	1850	Mod
002	4	Pottery (PM)	PMR	large jar sherds, olive glazed both sides, small storage jar rim, glazed interior	1600	1780	PM
002	1	Stone	Facing	sherd of polished stone facing, pink marble-like stone	–	–	Mod
002	1	Wood	Cork	part of cylindrical cork	–	–	Mod
004	1	Ceramic	Marble	small, unglazed, cream fabric	–	–	Mod
004	2	Industrial Waste	Glass Waste	green and white pieces	–	–	–
004	9	Pottery (Mod)	Various	creamware, whiteware, spongeware, stoneware	1830	1850	Mod
005	1	CBM	Delft Tile	edge sherd with fragment of blue decoration towards middle, pinkish cream fabric, sandy back, 12mm thick	1630	1670	PM
005	4	Clay Pipe	Bowl & Stems	bulbous bowl stamped with castle stamp and moulded WB initials either side of heel, wide bore stems	1640	1660	PM
005	1	Glass	Bottle	green sherd, good condition	–	–	PM/Mod
005	2	Glass	Window	small sherds, laminating	–	–	PM/Mod
005	1	Industrial Waste	Glass Waste?	large dark lump	–	–	–
005	1	Iron	Nail	shaped unclear	–	–	–
005	15	Pottery (Mod)	Various	creamware, blue trans printed, brownware, poss slip dipped fan decoration	1800	1850	Mod
005	1	Pottery (PM)	PME	jar sherd, olive glazed both sides	1600	1780	PM
005	1	Pottery (PM)	TGE	small sherd, bluish white glaze on both sides, painted on interior in dark blue, blue and grey, possibly floral design, blue dash on exterior	1650	1800	PM/Mod
006	1	CBM	Brick	large fragment	–	–	Mod
006	1	CBM	Chimney	sherd, red earthenware chimney stack, missing interior surface	–	–	Mod
006	7	CBM	Drain Pipe	large stoneware drain pipe sherds	–	–	Mod
006	3	CBM	Pan Tile	sherds	–	–	PM/Mod
006	2	Clay Pipe	Stems	wide bore	1600	1750	PM
006	3	Pottery (Mod)	Various	spongeware, blue painted	1830	1930	Mod
006	2	Pottery (PM)	PMR/PMO	jar rim, jug sherd	1600	1780	PM
007	3	Clay Pipe	Stems	wide bore	1600	1750	PM
007	1	Iron	Object	shaft, hooked fork at one end, cross at other, possibly a tool or fitting	–	–	Mod
007	1	Iron	Pipe/ Guttering	large sherd of curving pipe or guttering	–	–	Mod
007	1	Pottery (Medi)	LWW	olive glazed jug sherd	1400	1600	Medi
007	4	Pottery (Mod)	Various	creamware, spongeware, brownware	1830	1850	Mod
007	3	Pottery (PM)	PMR	bevelled rim jar, jug sherd, jar sherd	1550	1780	PM
011	1	Pottery (PM)	PMR	olive glazed jug sherd	1600	1780	PM

Abbreviations: LWW = Scottish Late Medieval Whiteware; PMR = Post-Medieval Reduced Ware; TGE = Tin-Glazed Earthenware



Appendix 3 – Discovery and Excavation in Scotland entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Acheson House, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	ACHE11
PARISH:	Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Elizabeth Jones
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Headland Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Excavation of service trench
NMRS NO(S):	NT27SE 60
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Post medieval midden; wall; pit
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR	NT 2647 7375
START DATE (this season)	30 August 2011
END DATE (this season)	31 August 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	–
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>A service trench measuring 5.6m by 0.8m was excavated to the rear of Acheson House, 140 Canongate, Edinburgh. The site is part of the Museum of Edinburgh and is currently being refurbished. The site lies within the medieval core of Edinburgh, within the bounds of the World Heritage Site. Workmen had already collected numerous finds from the soil overlying an existing pipe. Further excavation revealed two thirds of the trench comprised backfill from two separate pipe trenches. Natural bedrock was overlain in the west half of the trench by a layer of light brown clayey silt. A feature filled with stone rubble was cut through this deposit but was not excavated. The feature was overlain by a thin band of midden deposit. At the east end of the trench were the remains of a wall cut into the natural slope, with midden deposits abutting it. These deposits are thought to pre-date the construction of Acheson House in 1633. A thick layer of post-medieval midden debris overlay these features. The remains of a brick path were found in the centre of the trench, truncated by the two pipes. Map evidence suggests demolition of structures to the rear of the house took place in the first half of the 19th century; a brick path in the new open yard or garden may have been added at this time.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/ deposited)	Archive to be deposited at RCAHMS. Reports to be deposited at RCAHMS and CECAS.
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	City of Edinburgh Council
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	–
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Headland Archaeology Ltd, 13 Jane St, Edinburgh. EH6 5HE
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Appendix 4 – Digital photographic index



ACHE11-001.jpg



ACHE11-002.jpg



ACHE11-004.jpg



ACHE11-005.jpg



ACHE11-006.jpg



ACHE11-007.jpg



ACHE11-008.jpg



ACHE11-009.jpg



ACHE11-010a.jpg



ACHE11-010b.jpg



ACHE11-010c.jpg



ACHE11-011.jpg



ACHE11-012.jpg



ACHE11-013.jpg



ACHE11-014.jpg



ACHE11-015.jpg



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