

YCWE11

# Yardheads and Cables Wynd, Leith, Edinburgh

Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Works

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Client: City of Edinburgh Council

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## **Summary**

*Headland Archaeology Ltd were commissioned by City of Edinburgh Council to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring of groundbreaking works associated with the installation of a new gas main at Yardheads and Cables Wynd, Leith, Edinburgh.*

*The excavations revealed structural remains of the Lochend Distillery, established on the site in 1825. Pre-modern features were limited to deposits of garden or backland soils preserved below the wall footings of the distillery. These limited excavations showed that there was good archaeological preservation in the area of the former distillery.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by City of Edinburgh Council to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring at Yardheads and Cables Wynd, Leith, Edinburgh. The monitored excavations comprised narrow trenches dug for the installation of a new gas main. The work was undertaken in response to a planning condition set by City of Edinburgh Council and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Headland Archaeology Ltd 2010) was submitted to the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS) for approval prior to site works.

The development covered an area on the corner of Yardheads and Cables Wynd adjacent to Cables Wynd House. Because of the site's location within the medieval town of Leith it had a high archaeological potential. In particular archaeological excavations on Giles Street and Henderson Street have recorded medieval remains. More recently, Cables Wynd House itself occupies the site of the demolished Lochend Distillery built in 1825. This indicated the potential for the discovery of medieval remains and structural remains relating to the demolished Lochend Distillery was high.

This report presents the findings of the archaeological monitoring. The work was undertaken between 11<sup>th</sup> July and 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

## METHODOLOGY

The objective of the work was to record any archaeological remains threatened by the development works.

All ground breaking activity was monitored and was carried out using a tracked mechanical excavator equipped with a flat-edged bucket. The resulting surfaces were hand cleaned where appropriate and investigated for archaeological features. Archaeological features identified were subject to sample excavation and recording.

### Recording

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). All contexts, small finds and environmental samples were given unique numbers and all recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards.

Colour transparency, print and digital photographs were taken and recorded in a photographic register. A graduated metric scale was clearly visible in all record photographs of contexts. *An overall site plan has been supplied by the client.* Archaeological trenches and features were recorded and added to this using hand drawn plans and related to the National Grid. Hand-drawn plans of individual features at a scale of 1:20 were drawn where appropriate. Sections were drawn where appropriate.

### Samples and artefacts

No finds were retrieved during the works and no samples were taken.

## Monitoring

Access was afforded to a representative from CECAS to monitor the progress of the works. All significant discoveries or unexpected conditions were communicated immediately to the client and CECAS.

## RESULTS

The new gas main ran north-east to south-west across a grassed area to the south-west of Cables Wynd House before running north-west to south-east along the northern pavement of Yardheads and finally crossed the road to join to an existing gas main. The trench excavated for the gas main was between 0.4m and 0.6m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.85m.

The soil profile was consistent across the site and archaeological preservation was good except in the southern half of Yardheads where there were many services cutting through the road.

The earliest deposits exposed on site comprised beach or wind brown sands with no inclusions [021, 022] suggesting that these were formed through natural processes. Overlying these clean sands were silty sands [009, 010, 014, 020, 032] with frequent charcoal flecks interpreted as garden soils consistent with the area being utilised as backlands behind tenements.

Cutting into the garden soils were four sandstone walls. Three of these [005, 015, 023] ran north-west to south-east, parallel to Yardheads. Walls [015] and [023] were constructed of dressed sandstone blocks and were thicker (0.52m and 0.74m thick respectively) than wall 005 that was 0.30m thick and of rubble construction. All of these walls were mortar bonded and where coursed [015 & 023] survived 2 courses high. The fourth wall [035] ran perpendicular to the others on a north-east south-west alignment. This was constructed of roughly squared sandstone blocks bonded with lime mortar and was 0.80m wide. Overlying these walls were deposits of crushed sandstone and brick that appear to be demolition deposits. Above the demolition deposits lay the tarmac and topsoil.

## DISCUSSION

The garden soils are the earliest archaeological deposits seen on the site, while little of these deposits were seen and no diagnostic artefacts were recovered, these deposits probably result from the use of the site as backlands or gardens in the medieval to post-medieval period.

The walls seen across the site tie in well with the mapped evidence for the Lochend distillery depicted on the Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition mapping of the area of 1849-53. This distillery is thought to have been established by 1825. The demolition deposits overlying these walls probably originated in the demolition of these distillery buildings.

The watching brief has shown that archaeological preservation in the area around Cables Wynd house is good. Substantial foundations of the former Lochend Distillery survive and earlier deposits are preserved beneath these.

## REFERENCES

### Cartographic

Ordnance Survey, 1852, Edinburgh Town Plan, Sheet 16.

### Bibliographic

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd, 2010, *Yardheads and Cables Wynd, Leith, Edinburgh*

*Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Works.*

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – Site registers

#### Context register

Context	Description
001	Concrete paving slabs
002	Levelling sand for [001]
003	Broken red brick levelling deposit
004	Dark grey silt
005	Sandstone foundation running E-W, constructed of un-coursed sandstone blocks bonded with lime mortar. Measures 0.3m wide and runs across the full width of the trench.
006	Deposit of broken brick and concrete. Demolition deposit.
007	Cobbles in dark silty sand matrix. Fill of construction cut [026]
008	Silty sand with frequent broken sandstone. Fill of construction cut [026]
009	Dark brown silty sand garden soil.
010	Mixed dark silty sand garden soil.
011	Modern gravel road make up
012	Modern stone road make-up
013	Broken brick road make up
014	Dark brown silty sand garden soil.
015	Sandstone foundation running E-W, constructed of squared blocks laid in courses and bonded with lime mortar. Measures 0.52m wide and runs across full width of trench.
016	Turf
017	Dark brown silt topsoil.
018	Mixed deposit of lime mortar and cobbles in a silty sand matrix. Fill of construction cut [015]
019	Rubble and hardcore levelling deposit
020	Dark brown silty sand garden soil
021	Orange brown clean windblown sand
022	Yellow brown coarse clean beach sand
023	Sandstone wall foundation running E-W, constructed of squared sandstone blocks laid 1 course wide and surviving 2 courses high. Measures 0.76m wide and runs across the full width of trench.
024	Mixed deposit of silty sand and gravel fill of construction cut [025]
025	Construction cut for wall [023]
026	Construction cut for wall [005]
027	Dark brown silty sand topsoil.
028	Clayey silt subsoil
029	Rubble demolition deposit
030	Yellow sand and lime mortar deposit between demolition deposit [029] and garden soil [032]
031	Cut for electric cable
032	Dark brown sandy silt garden soil.
033	Construction cut for wall [035]

<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>
034	Sand with mortar flecks fill of construction cut for wall [033]
035	Sandstone wall running N-S, constructed of roughly squared sandstone blocks bonded with lime mortar. Measures 0.80m wide and runs across full width of trench.

#### Photographic register

<b>Photo</b>	<b>Direction facing</b>	<b>Description</b>
001	-	ID Shot
002	W	general view
003	N	S facing section of trench
004	N	S facing section of trench
005	N	S facing section of trench
006	N	S facing section of trench
007	N	S facing section of trench
008	N	S facing section of trench
009	E	W facing section through wall [005]
010	W	E facing section through wall [005]
011	SW	General view of trench
012	N	Wall [015]
013	N	S facing section of trench
014	E	General view of trench
015	E	Wall [023]
016	S	N facing section of trench
017	E	W facing section of trench
018	E	General view
019	E	Wall [035]
020	S	N facing section of trench
021	S	N facing section of trench
022	S	N facing section of trench
023	S	N facing section of trench
024	S	N facing section of trench
025	NE	General view of trench
026	N	General view of trench
027	E	General view of trench

#### Drawing register

<b>Drawing</b>	<b>Plan</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>
001	1:100		Trench location plan
002		1:50	S facing section of trench
003		1:50	E facing section of trench
004		1:20	S facing section of trench
005	1:20		Wall [023]
006		1:20	W facing section of trench
007	1:100		Trench location plan



<b>Drawing</b>	<b>Plan</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>
008	NTS		Trench location plan
009		1:20	N facing section of trench



Yardheads  
& Cables Wynd  
Edinburgh

0 100km



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Scale 1:700 @ A4



0 30m



**Illus 2**

*S facing section of trench showing natural sands and garden soils*



**Illus 3**

*Wall [023], facing E*





**Illus 4**

*Wall [035], facing E*



**Illus 5**

*Demolition deposits of brick and sandstone*