

HSWB10/001



MID-HERMISTON STEADING, 58 HERMISTON

Archaeological Watching Brief

commissioned by Credential (Hermiston) Ltd

08/02886/FUL

10/00896/FUL

June 2013

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	SITE DESCRIPTION & BACKGROUND	1
3	OBJECTIVES	1
4	METHODOLOGY	1
	4.1 Fieldwork	1
	4.2 Recording	1
	4.3 Reporting and Archive	3
5	RESULTS	3
6	DISCUSSION	4
7	REFERENCES	4
8	APPENDICES	6
	Appendix 1 Site registers	6
	Appendix 1.1 Photographic register	6
	Appendix 1.2 Context register	6
	Appendix 2 Discovery And Excavation In Scotland	8

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<i>Illus 1</i>	viii
<i>Site location</i>	
<i>Illus 2</i>	2
<i>Plan of recently demolished building foundations and trench locations</i>	
<i>Illus 3</i>	3
<i>View of the excavated attenuation tank trench</i>	
<i>Illus 4</i>	3
<i>View of stratigraphy of the foundation trenches</i>	
<i>Illus 5</i>	4
<i>Upper courses of the stone-lined well (001)</i>	
<i>Illus 6</i>	5
<i>View of the stone-lined well (001) from the south</i>	
<i>Illus 7</i>	5
<i>Foundation walls within the new foundation trenches</i>	
<i>Illus 8</i>	5
<i>View of foundation trenches in area of Building E</i>	
<i>Illus 9</i>	5
<i>Detail of the re-set marriage stone in the wall of Building E</i>	



Illus 1

Site location

MID-HERMISTON STEADING, 58 HERMISTON

Archaeological Watching Brief

Headland Archaeology Ltd undertook a watching brief on foundation trench excavations associated with a housing development at Mid-Hermiston Steading, Edinburgh. The monitoring was undertaken in order to identify and record any archaeological remains that might be exposed during the works. The work was commissioned by Credential (Hermiston) Ltd, and a specification was agreed with the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service.

A significant number of foundation trenches and service trenches were monitored as part of the redevelopment. A large stone-lined well was recorded below the foundation of the 18th century steading walls and may relate to earlier 17th century activity on the site. A number of the foundation walls for the steading were also recorded within the trenches but no further features of archaeological significance were uncovered during the watching brief.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in response to a planning application placed on the development at Mid-Hermiston Steading, 58 Hermiston, Currie, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 17600 17210) by the City of Edinburgh Council (*Illus 1*). The fieldwork was commissioned by Credential Homes and was undertaken from the 22nd of March 2012 to the 13th March 2013.

The works were carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Headland Archaeology Ltd and agreed with the City of Edinburgh Archaeology Service (CECAS) prior to the commencement of fieldwork.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION & BACKGROUND

A detailed desk based assessment and historic building record covering the archaeological and historical background of the site was produced by Headland Archaeology Ltd (Geddes 2008). A brief summary of the archaeological background is included below.

The development area lies within the historic limits of the fermtoun of Hermiston, which is on record from the early 13th century. Estate maps from 1772 show the first depictions of farm buildings at Mid-Hermiston. The recently demolished agricultural buildings at Hermiston Steading included fragments of the late 18th century buildings but were mostly from the 19th century and incorporated a decorative stone marriage plate, considered to be of regional importance, inscribed with the year 1599. It is not known whether this stone is of local origin or if it was brought in from elsewhere.

Further archaeological work on the site, undertaken by Headland Archaeology, included trial trenching (Scott 2008), in which wall foundations relating to the 19th century buildings and stone lined culverts corresponding to the 18th century farmhouse buildings were recorded.

3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the watching brief were:

- To record any archaeological remains threatened by the proposed development works.
- To report on the results of the work.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 FIELDWORK

All ground breaking for the purpose of digging foundation trenches were monitored by an archaeologist. An excavator fitted with a toothed bucket was used to remove demolition layers and any hard surfaces at which point a flat bladed ditching bucket was attached to excavate any soft deposits.

4.2 RECORDING

All recording followed Headland Archaeology Ltd standard procedures and was in accordance with the codes of practice and guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists (2008). All recording



Illus 2

Plan of recently demolished building foundations and trench locations

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Illus 3

View of the excavated attenuation tank trench

Illus 4

View of stratigraphy of the foundation trenches

was undertaken on pro forma record cards that conform to accepted archaeological norms and all contexts were given unique numbers, a full list of which can be found in Appendix 1.

35mm colour transparencies and digital photographs were taken to record archaeological contexts and to illustrate the general nature of the work. All photographs have been recorded by individual print number and include information on the context and direction taken. A full list of the photographs can be found in Appendix 1.

Location sketches were drawn by hand measurements onto a plan of the development area in relation to the National Grid supplied by the client. Where appropriate, hand drawn plans of complex contexts, features or structures were produced.

4.3 REPORTING AND ARCHIVE

On completion of the monitored groundworks a site archive and an archive report will be produced. An online OASIS report has been completed and is accompanied by a pdf report and boundary file (headland1-130666). A summary report has been submitted for inclusion in Discovery and Excavation Scotland a copy of which can be found in Appendix 2.

The project archive will be compiled in accordance with the guidelines published by the Institute for Archaeologists on behalf of the Archaeological Archives Forum (July 2007). The documentary and digital archive will be submitted to RCAHMS within six months of completion of all work on this project.

5 RESULTS

All foundation trenches and service trenches excavated as part of the new development were monitored by an experienced archaeologist. Many of the trenches followed the line of the earlier buildings recorded on site therefore exposing the foundation walls to these original buildings (*Illus 2*). In addition to the foundation trenches a large attenuation tank trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.1m (*Illus 3*).

Full context descriptions are included in Appendix 1. Contexts were assigned consecutive numbers for the whole period of works. Cut and structure features are shown as [100] whilst their



fills are expressed as (101) for example. The results are described in chronological order.

An orange brown sandy clay [010] was observed at approximately 0.60m to 0.80m depth across the site and is interpreted as the geological subsoil. In places this was overlain by a 0.30m thick dark brown silty clay deposit [011] which was most likely a cultivation or garden soil. Demolition material ranging in thickness from 0.30 to 0.50m was observed above this (*Illus 4*).

A circular well 2.00m in diameter was uncovered beneath the foundation walls of Building A (see *Illus 2*). The well [001] was constructed of sandstone boulders lain in random courses with no bonding material (*Illus 5*). A cut for the well [002] appears to have been dug into the natural [010]. The well appeared to have been deliberately in-filled with a mix of sandstone building rubbish and garden soil [004] (*Illus 6*), prior to being capped with a single course of corbelled sandstone blocks at the same time as the construction of the building foundations of Building A. A ceramic field drain [007] running into well



Illus 5

Upper courses of the stone-lined well (001)

and were not deemed to be of archaeological significance.

6 DISCUSSION

The results of the monitoring of foundation works at Mid-Hermiston Steading as presented above are consistent with the results of previous archaeological works for the site. Evidence of wall foundations relate almost solely to the previously standing buildings that were recorded in detail in the historic building survey (Geddes 2008). The well beneath the foundations of Building A represents the only feature pre-dating the 19th century demolished Steading and possibly relates to the earliest buildings known from the site as seen on the 1772 estate map. As noted during the previous trial trenching of the site the area within the footprint of the proposed building has been heavily impacted upon by modern development.

Although historic documents and maps indicate that the site has been occupied since the medieval period, no evidence for activity predating the 1700s was uncovered during the watching brief.

The decorative stone marriage plate recorded in the initial historic building record (Geddes 2008) had been reset within the walls of the new development (*Illus 9*).

[001] was also observed and recorded but it is unclear if this drain was contemporary with the well. Because the well was recorded at the base of the foundation trench it did not impede the construction of the new development. Therefore it was covered with tarmac and left in situ with no further archaeological mitigation required.

A number of foundation walls relating to the 18th and 19th century farm buildings previously standing on the site were also uncovered (*Illus 7*). These buildings were recorded prior to demolition by Headland Archaeology Ltd as part of the previous historic building recording works (Geddes 2008). Contexts [013] to [016] represent foundation walls for of Building A. These foundation wall contexts appear to have incorporated the capping for the well [005] into the foundations of the building. Contexts [018] and [022] appear to be foundation walls attached to the northern wall of Building E.

Remains of a stone surface [017] situated between Buildings A and E were also uncovered during the archaeological evaluation previously undertaken by Headland Archaeology (Scott 2008). This has been interpreted as probably relating to buildings constructed in the 1850s linked to the introduction of steam power at the steading.

A small number of modern drain cuts were also observed running approximately north-south across the centre of Building E (*Illus 8*)

7 REFERENCES

- Brown, DH 2007 *Archaeological Archives Forum Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*, AAF.
- Geddes, G 2008 *Mid Hermiston Steading, 58 Hermiston, Currie, Edinburgh, Phase 2 – Historic Building Recording*, Headland Archaeology, unpublished report.
- IfA 'Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief' [online article], (28/10/2008) <http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/node-files/ifa_standards_watching.pdf> accessed 15/02/2012.
- Scott, L 2008 *Hermiston Steading, Edinburgh, Phase 3: Archaeological Evaluation* Headland Archaeology, unpublished report
- The Scottish Government 'SPP: Scottish Planning Policy' [online article] (03/02/2010) <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/300760/0093908.pdf>> accessed 15/02/2012.

Illus 6

View of the stone-lined well (001) from the south



Illus 7

Foundation walls within the new foundation trenches



Illus 8

View of foundation trenches in area of Building E



Illus 9

Detail of the re-set marriage stone in the wall of Building E





8 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS

APPENDIX 1.1 PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Photo	Facing	Description
001		ID shot Film 1 and 2
002	N	Well [001]
003	S	Well [001]
004	W	Well [001]
005	E	Well [001]
006	N	Well [001] detail of capping [005]
007	W	Well [001] detail of capping [005] and foundation [006]
008	SE	General view of site
009	SW	General view of site
010	NW	General view of site
011	NE	General view of site
012	SE	General view of trenches
013	SW	General view of trenches
014	NW	General view of trenches
015	NW	General view of trenches
016		ID Shot Film 3 and 4
017	N	Well north side
018	N	Well north side
019	NE	North side of well close up
020	N	North side of well close up
021	NW	North side of well close up
022	E	Well extent
023	W	Well extent
024	S	Well extent
025	N	Well extent
026	S	General view of site at start of day. 10:30am 17/5/12
027	SW	General view of site at start of day. 10:30am 17/5/12
028	NW	General view of site at start of day. 10:30am 17/5/12
029	W	Stone slab surface [017]
030	N	Stone slab surface [017]
031	NE	Wall foundation [018]
032	W	Wall foundation [022]
033	E	Wall [023]

Photo	Facing	Description
034	N	Cut [019] left and possible drain [020] right.
035	S	Possible rubble drain [024]
036	NE	General shot of trenches
037	E	General shot of trenches
038	S	General shot of trenches
039	N	General shot of trenches
040	SW	General shot of trenches
041	SW	General shot of trenches
042	S	General shot of trenches
043	SW	General shot of trenches
044	S	General shot of trenches
045	NE	General shot of trenches
046	NW	General shot of trenches
047	SE	General shot of trenches
048	SW	General shot of trenches
049	NW	General shot of trenches
050	NE	General shot of trenches
051	SW	Working shot of soak-away trench excavations
052	SE	Sections in the SE corner of soak-away trench
053	S	E end of the soak-away trench
054	N	S facing section of the soak-away trench
055	S	N facing section of the soak-away trench
056	W	Working shot of soak-away trench excavations
057	E	Detail of the date stone in the new-build wall
058	NE	Detail of the date stone in the new-build wall
059	E	Detail of the date stone in the new-build wall
060	S	N facing section of the soak-away trench
061	N	S facing section of the soak-away trench
062	W	View of the soak-away trench
063	E	Fully excavated view of the soak-away trench

APPENDIX 1.2 CONTEXT REGISTER

Context	Description
001	Stone work of well
002	Construction cut for well [001]
003	Fill of cut [002]
004	Infill of well [001]
005	Corbelled stone capping of well [001]

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006	Stone foundations to west of [001]
007	Field drain running into well [001]
008	Cut for [007]
009	Fill of [008]
010	Natural
011	Clay loam garden soil
012	Overburden or rubble
013	Foundation wall SE of well [001]
014	Foundation wall NW of well [001]
015	Foundation wall
016	Foundation wall
017	Stone slab surface
018	Wall foundation
019	Cut for [018]
020	Modern drain cut
021	Fill of [020]
022	N-S wall foundation
023	E-W wall foundation
024	Broad rubble drain or trench
025	Fill of [024]



APPENDIX 2 DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	A watching brief at Mid-Hermiston Steading, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	HSWB10
PARISH:	Currie
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Donald Wilson
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Headland Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	none
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	none
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NGR: NT 17600 70210
START DATE (this season)	20th march 2012
END DATE (this season)	13th March 2013
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	none
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>Headland Archaeology Ltd undertook a watching brief on foundation trench excavations associated with a redevelopment at Mid-Hermiston Steading, Edinburgh. The monitoring was undertaken in order to identify and record any archaeological remains that might be exposed during the works. The work was commissioned by Credential (Hermiston) Ltd, and a specification was agreed with Edinburgh City Council.</p> <p>A significant number of foundation trenches and service trenches were monitored as part of the redevelopment. A large stone-lined well was recorded below the foundation of the 18th century steading walls and may relate to 17th century activity on the site. A number of the foundation walls for the steading were also recorded within the trenches but no further features of archaeological significance were uncovered during the watching brief and no artefacts were recovered.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Credential (Hermiston) Ltd
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