

BPCE/01



23 CANONMILLS, EDINBURGH

Archaeological Excavation

Final Version

commissioned by BP Oil (UK) Ltd

14/00969/FUL

September 2014

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project info

HA JOB NO. BPCE/01
NGR NT 52579 75000
PARISH City of Edinburgh
LOCAL AUTHORITY City of Edinburgh
OASIS REF. headland1-188823

project team

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BP CANONMILLS
land at 23 Canonmills
Edinburgh
Midlothian

0 200km



KEY
[Red outline] development boundary

0 50m
scale 1:1,250 @ A4

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ILLUS 1
Site location

23 CANONMILLS, EDINBURGH

Archaeological Excavation

An archaeological excavation was carried out in order to satisfy a condition of planning consent for the construction of an extension to the existing sales building at the BP Petrol Station at 23 Cannonmills, Edinburgh. The programme of works comprised the excavation of a small area to the south side of the existing building, measuring approximately 11m x 6m, to a formation depth approximately 0.75m below the existing level of the forecourt. The removal of the overlying concrete slab revealed a number of modern services cutting a layer of undifferentiated made ground. The geological clay subsoil was only revealed in a small number of discreet areas. No features or artefacts of archaeological significance were recorded.

1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP) on behalf of BP Oil (UK) Ltd to carry out an archaeological excavation ahead of ground works associated with the construction of a shop extension at the site of the BP Garage, 23 Canonmills, Edinburgh. The work was carried out in order to satisfy a condition of planning consent (ref: 14/00969/FULL) and adhered to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by EDP (2014) and agreed with the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS) on behalf of Edinburgh City Council (the Local Planning Authority).

This report presents the results of the archaeological excavation, the footprint of which measured approximately 45m². The fieldwork was undertaken between 27th and 29th August 2014 in clear and dry weather conditions.

The development site (the Canonmills Service Station) is located at the west end of Canonmills. It occupies a position on the south side of the street and flanks the junction with Canon Street. It is centred on NGR: NT 52579 75000.

The site lies at around 20m OD and is underlain by superficial deposits of raised marine deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. These comprise clay, silt, sand and gravel. The bedrock geology of the area is dominated by the Gullane Formation; a sedimentary rock of the Strathclyde Group. The sedimentary bedrock formed in the Carboniferous Period (British Geological Survey website; <http://www.bgs.ac.uk>).

The site lies just outside the conservation areas of the New Town and Inverleith and includes three entries in the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS).

The archaeological interest of the site is identified by a long tradition of milling production that is known to have extended from the 12th into the 19th centuries. The historic records indicate this was the site of the medieval mill for Holyrood Abbey; established in the 12th century and from which the area takes its name.

The earliest cartographic evidence for mills on the site is recorded on Pont's 1636 'A new description of the shyers of Lothian and Linlithgow', although the detail on this is very poor. A more detailed map, Kirkwood's 1816 map, (Illus 2) based on details from mapping dating to the 1760s, depicts a long mill building to the north of the Canon Loch. The map indicates that the mill was powered from a leat emanating from the loch and running through the building

2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The development site is located to the north of Edinburgh city centre, c1.5km north of Edinburgh Castle and some 0.3km south of the Water of Leith, which issues into the Firth of Forth at Leith Docks to the north-east.

Canonmills forms a short, curving thoroughfare, which connects Rodney Street to the south-east with Montagu Terrace (B901) to the north-west, where the road is carried across the Water of Leith via the Canonmills Bridge.



2



ILLUS 2

Extract from Kirkwoods 1816 'Plan of Baron Nortons Fue'

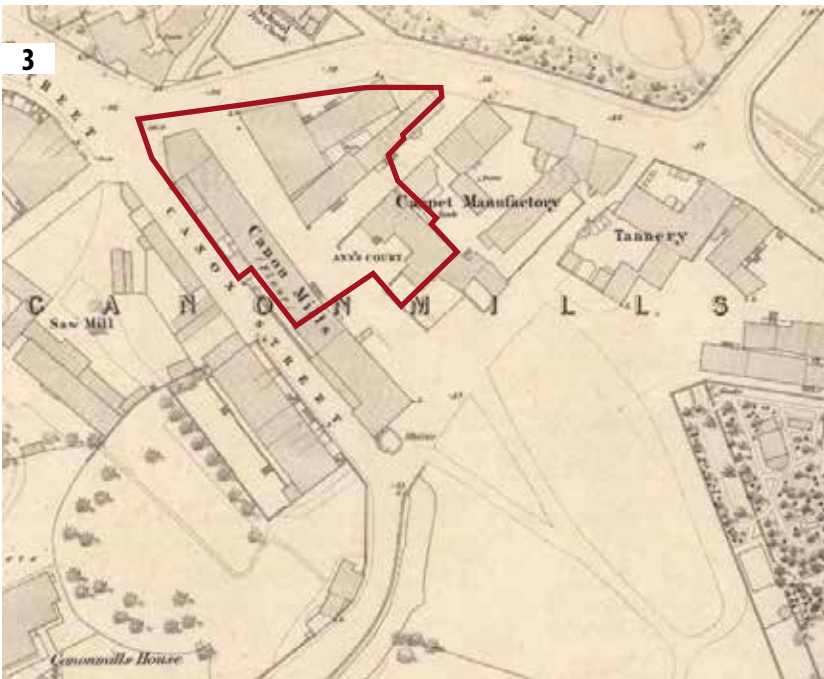
ILLUS 3

Extract from 1853 Ordnance Survey map

depicts the increasingly industrial nature of the surrounding area with a tannery, carpet factory and sawmill established close by.

The later 1877 Ordnance Survey depicts an additional building attached to the north-east side of the mill, which may indicate a change in its power source. During this period steam engines were becoming a predominant source of power and the building may have been the location of such an engine, although the map continues to show the mill leat and sluice to the north-west end of the building.

3



By the time of the 1896 Ordnance Survey the mill was marked as 'Disused' and the land previously occupied by the loch had been transformed into the Royal Gymnasium. By 1905 the building was in use as a printing works. Over the following 30 years additional buildings were added to the north-east side of the main building. With the demise of the printing works part of the mill became the site of a garage by the 1940s. It is not clear if the garage included a petrol station at this point, but one had clearly been established by the early 1970s.

A photo held by the RCAHMS (NMRS: NT27NE 836) and dated to 1978 shows that much of the 18th century mill building survived to this date, although the central section along with the extension that possibly held the steam power supply had been demolished. This was in the approximate location of the modern extension.

before continuing to the south-west. A similar configuration is depicted on both Ainslie's 1804 map and Kirkwood's 1817 map. The only change depicted in these maps is an increase in the number of surrounding buildings in the area since the 1760s.

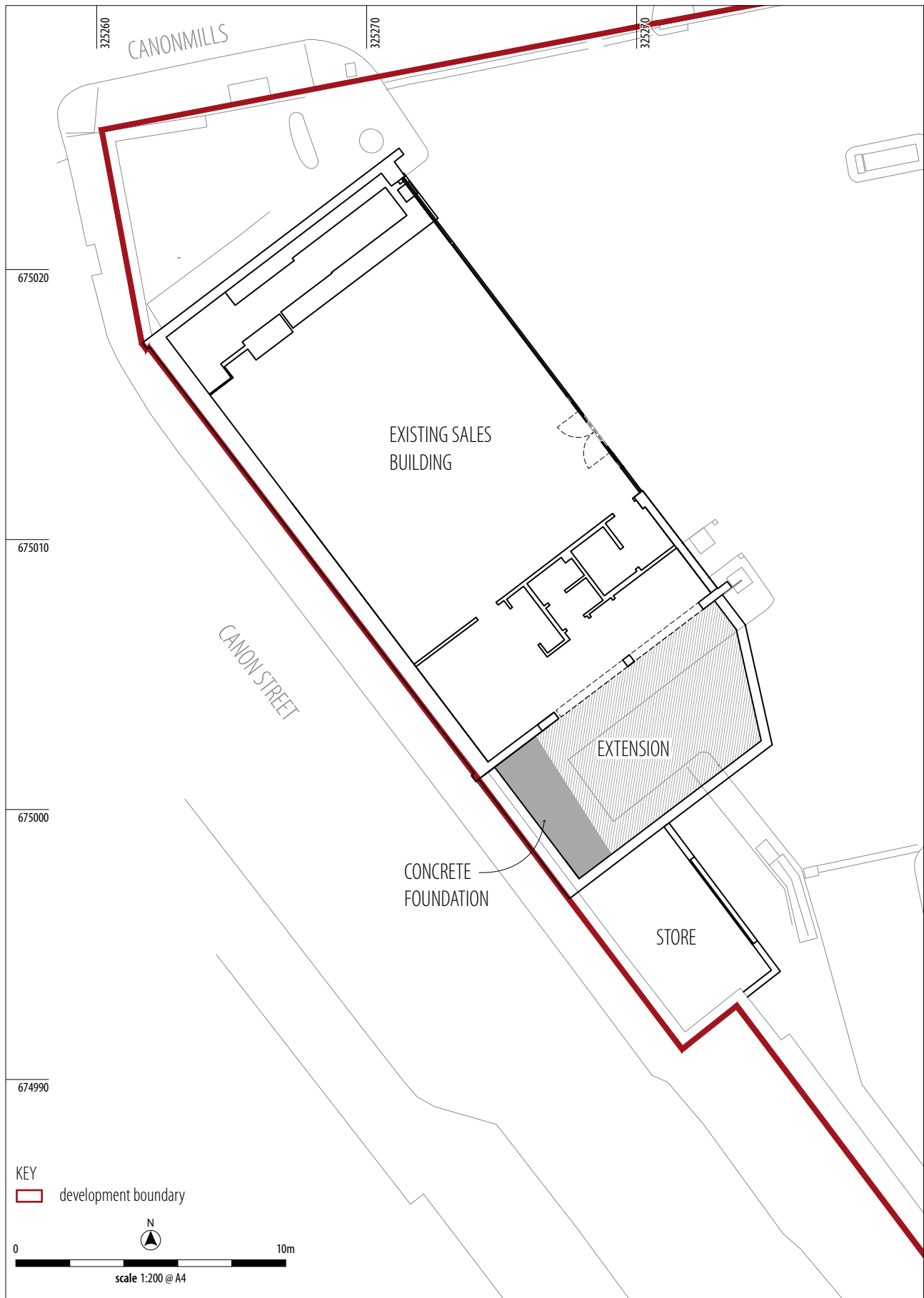
The detail of the mill is more accurately depicted on the Ordnance Survey town plan of 1853 (Illus 3). This shows Canonmills as a north-west to south-east aligned linear range of buildings flanking the north-east side of Canon Street. The building is labelled as a flour mill and clearly occupied the west side of the existing service station forecourt, where the sales building is located. The map shows the mill was still fed from a mill leat entering the building at the south-east end. The Canon Loch by this time had been infilled and the leat was fed by the Water of Leith, probably originating in Stockbridge to the west. This early Ordnance Survey map also

The southern half of the mill building survives today as converted flats. The northern half was demolished with the redevelopment of the existing petrol station in 1996. During this redevelopment, structural remains relating to the mill leat were present and visible at the site close to the ground surface.

3 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The excavation was designed to mitigate any adverse impacts on sub-surface remains of archaeological interest and to report on the result of the works.

The resulting archive will be organised and deposited in the NMRS; to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.



ILLUS 4

Plan of the extension area



ILLUS 5

View of the extension area facing E



ILLUS 6

Detail of worked stone removed from the area

5 RESULTS

The programme of archaeological works comprised an excavation within the footprint of the extension to the existing sales building (Illus 4). The footprint of the extension measured approximately 11m x 6m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.75m below the existing ground level, approximately 19m OD.

With the exception of the wall foundations around the perimeter of the extension, the final formation level of the constructions works was only 0.5m below the level of the existing forecourt at approximately 20m OD (Illus 5). The removal of the overburden from this area exposed a number of service pipes and the remains of a modern man-hole which were subsequently removed. Within this area the geological subsoil was partially exposed close to the south-west side. This comprised a very compact dark blue/grey sandy clay. At the south-west end of the area this clay had been cut by a concrete slab that formed part

of a foundation support for the boundary wall facing onto Canon Street. The majority of the area was only excavated down to a layer of undifferentiated modern overburden, with no archaeology or subsoil revealed.

A 0.5m wide foundation trench around the perimeter of the development area was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.75m below the existing surface level. This exposed a few small areas of the geological subsoil. The high number of services traversing the site indicated that the area had been heavily disturbed, with the foundation trenches only exposing further deposits of modern made ground.

During the removal of the overburden from the site a shaped sandstone block (Illus 6) measuring 0.35m x 0.20m x 0.18m with a shallow lip on one side was revealed. No context for this stone was identified and, although it is unclear what it represents it is thought to be associated with the mill building.

4 METHODOLOGY

The archaeological excavation involved the supervised reduction of the footprint of the proposed extension to the existing sales building.

The main contractor undertook all ground breaking works. All ground breaking works were supervised by an experienced archaeologist. A breaker and toothed bucket were used to remove any hard surfaces or demolition deposits. All soft deposits were removed using a flat bladed ditching bucket. The strategy was put in place to provide information on any previously unrecorded features of archaeological interest

All recording followed IfA Standards and Guidance for conducting archaeological excavations (www.archaeologists.net). All recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards. Digital images were taken for recording purposes. A full photographic record can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

An inspection of the wider area beyond the garage revealed that the boundary wall between the development area and Canon Street masked the fact that the level of Canon Street was 2.35m higher than the development area. Provided that Canon Street represents the original 18th century street level either the foundations of the mill building or the modern garage must have cut into the bank forming this anomaly. It is entirely possible that it was the construction of the mill building that originally cut the bank, although no evidence for this was observed. The upstanding back wall was clearly of modern design and included the concrete foundation that was recorded cutting the geological subsoil and leaving no trace of any earlier structure.

6 DISCUSSION

The excavations identified no features or artefacts of archaeological significance. This indicates that the construction of the modern garage has probably truncated any evidence of the earlier buildings in this area of the site. This is tempered by the fact that the excavations did not reach a significant depth and it is possible that remains of the mill may survive below this level.

The extension also only covered a small area of the overall garage and, although much of the site has probably been truncated by the insertion of the service station fuel tanks, there may still be surviving foundations to some of the other 19th century buildings that existed across the site.

7 REFERENCES

7.1 BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Brown, DH 2007 *Archaeological Archives Forum: Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*, AAF.

Environmental Dimension Partnership 2014 *23 Canonmills, Edinburgh: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Excavation*, Unpublished client report; EDP2374_01.

7.2 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Pont, T 1636 *A new description of the shyers of Lothian and Linlithgow*.

Ainslie, J 1804 *Old and New Town of Edinburgh and Leith with the proposed docks*.

Kirkwood, R 1816 *An ancient plan of the city of Edinburgh and its environs*.

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Ordnance Survey 1853 *Edinburghshire Sheet 24* 1:1056 Surveyed 1852.

Ordnance Survey 1876 *Edinburghshire Sheet 24* 1:1056 Surveyed 1852, Revised 1876.

Ordnance Survey 1896 *Edinburgh New Series Sheet III.7.3*, 1:2500 Surveyed 1894.

7.3 OTHER SOURCES

Internet

British Geological Society [<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>], accessed August 2014.

IfA 'Standards and Guidance for archaeological excavations' (online article), (28/10/2008) [http://archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/nodefiles/ifa_standards_watching.pdf], accessed August 2014.

National Map Library of Scotland website [<http://maps.nls.uk>], accessed August 2014.

SPP: Scottish Planning Policy (February 2010; [<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/02/03132605/0>], accessed August 2014.



8 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS

Photographic register

Frame	Digital	Direction	Description
01	BPCE-001	NE	Pre-excavation shot of the development area
02	BPCE-002	SW	Pre-excavation shot of the development area
03	BPCE-003	S	Pre-excavation shot of the development area
04	BPCE-004	W	Development area with concrete removed
05	BPCE-005	W	Development area with concrete removed
06	BPCE-006	SW	Development area with concrete removed
07	BPCE-007	NE	Development area with concrete removed
08	BPCE-008	SW	Development area showing services and concrete foundation
09	BPCE-009	S	Development area showing services and concrete foundation
10	BPCE-010	NE	Development area showing services and concrete foundation
11	BPCE-011	NE	Formation levels of the development
12	BPCE-012	SE	Formation levels of the development
13	BPCE-013	SW	Formation levels of the development
14	BPCE-014	NW	Formation levels of the development
15	BPCE-015	NE	Formation levels of the development
16	BPCE-016	NW	Excavations to the front of the garage
17	BPCE-017	E	Excavations to the front of the garage
18	BPCE-018	—	Detail of recovered stone
19	BPCE-019	NE	View from Canon Street
20	BPCE-020	—	Detail of recovered stone
21	BPCE-021	—	Detail of recovered stone
22	Bpce-022	—	Detail of recovered stone
23	BPCE-023	SE	View of foundation excavation revealing clay
24	BPCE-024	E	View of foundation excavation revealing clay

APPENDIX 2 DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND ENTRY

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Edinburgh City Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	23 Canonmills, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	BPCE14
PARISH:	Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Donald Wilson
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Headland Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Excavation
NMRS NO(S):	NT27NE 836
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Garage
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NT 25279 75000
START DATE (this season)	27th August 2014
END DATE (this season)	29th August 2014
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	none
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An Archaeological Excavation was carried out in order to satisfy a condition of the planning consent for the construction of an extension to the existing sales building at the BP Petrol Station at 23 Canonmills, Edinburgh. The programme of works comprised the excavation of a small area to the south side of the existing building, measuring approximately 11m x 6m, to a formation depth approximately 0.75m below the existing level of the forecourt. The removal of the overlying concrete slab revealed a number of modern services cutting a layer of undifferentiated made ground. The geological clay subsoil was only revealed in a small number of discreet areas. No features or artefacts of archaeological significance were recorded.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	RCAHMS
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	BP Oil (UK) Ltd
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	—
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	13 Jane Street, Edinburgh EH6 5HE
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