

APLE15-001

LEITH PRIMARY SCHOOL,
ST ANDREW PLACE, EDINBURGH

*Archaeological Monitoring
for Edinburgh City Council*

February 2015

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ST ANDREW PLACE, EDINBURGH

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	2
2	SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION	2
3	AIMS & OBJECTIVES	2
4	METHODOLOGY	3
4.1	Site works	3
4.2	Recording	3
4.3	Reporting and Archives	3
5	RESULTS.....	3
5.1	Discussion	5
5.2	Cartographic sources	6
5.3	Other sources	6
6	APPENDICES	7
6.1	Appendix 1 – Site registers	7
6.2	Appendix 2 – Discovery and Excavation in Scotland entry	11

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1 – Site location plan
- 2 - Extract from Ainslie’s map of 1804
- 3 – General view of Trench 1, 2, 4 and 5 facing east
- 4 - North facing section of Trench 1 at 7m from the east end
- 5 - View of the north facing section of Trench 2
- 7 - General view of the pad foundation excavations facing east
- 8 - Detail of the pad foundation sections

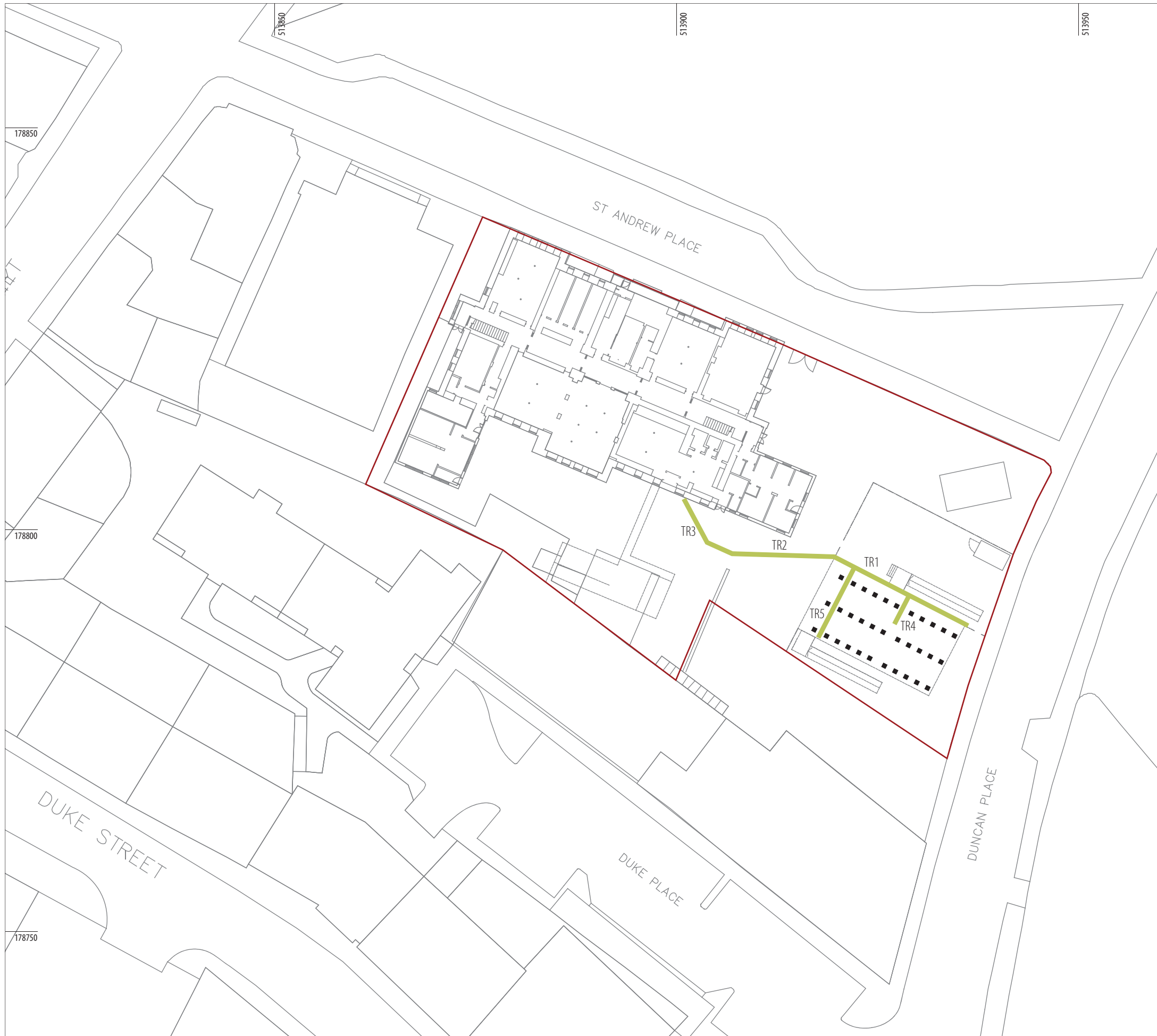
LEITH PRIMARY SCHOOL, ST ANDREW PLACE, EDINBURGH

Archaeological Monitoring

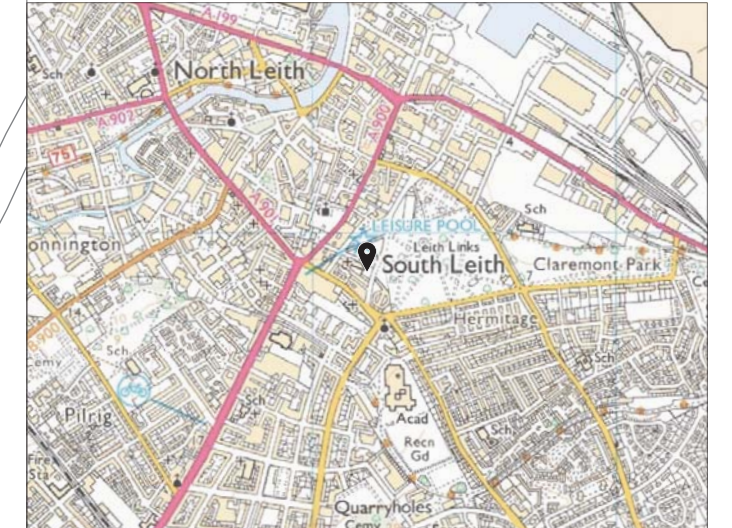
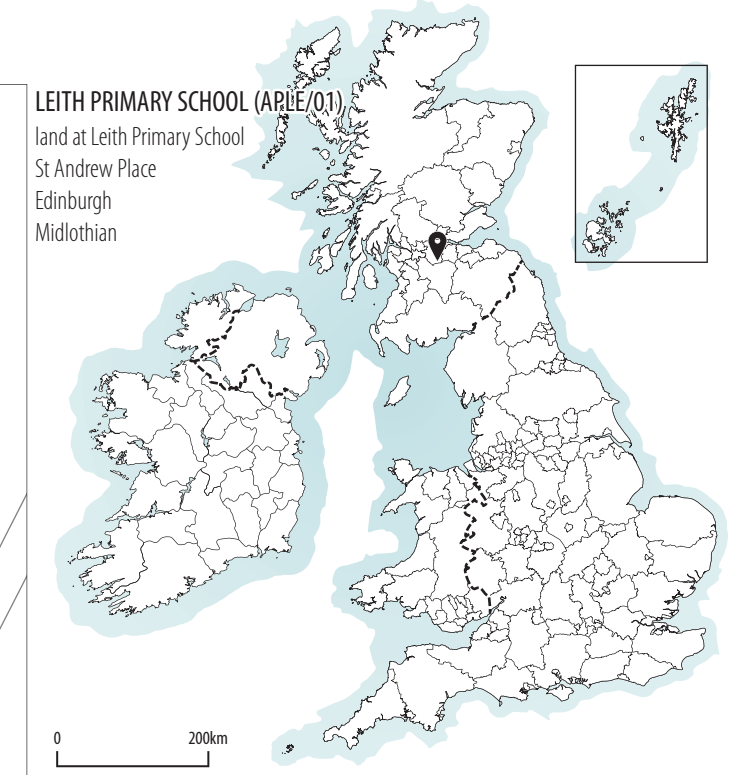
Summary

A programme of archaeological monitoring was carried out in order to satisfy a requirement for archaeological mitigation stipulated by the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeological Service (CECAS) prior to the construction of a new nursery building within the grounds of Leith Primary School. The programme of works comprised the monitoring all ground works associated with the laying of service pipes across the site plus monitoring the excavation of 32 footprint pads that will form the foundation of the new development.

The service pipe excavations comprised a series of five interconnected trenches located to the south-east of the school building. The trenches were excavated to between 0.4m and 1.8m deep revealing several distinct layers of material overlying the geological subsoil. The majority of these layers proved to be the result of 19th/20th century disturbance or of modern origin. The only layer of any significance was a sand subsoil recorded close to the base of two of the trenches immediately above the geological beach deposits. This subsoil included a number of disarticulated sheep/goat bones at a depth of 1.3m and was thought to represent the remains of a post-medieval cultivation soil. A series of 33 footprint pads were also monitored as part of the archaeological works. These pads were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m with no features or artefacts of archaeological significance identified.



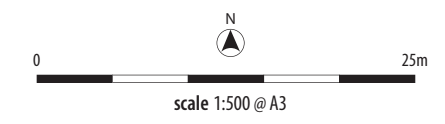
LEITH PRIMARY SCHOOL (ARLE/01)
 land at Leith Primary School
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 Edinburgh
 Midlothian



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- KEY
- development boundary
 - trench location
 - pad pits



1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned to carry out a programme of archaeological monitoring on all ground breaking works associated with the service trench excavations and footprint foundation pads prior to the construction of a new childcare nursery at Leith Primary School, St Andrew Place, Leith, Edinburgh (Illus 1). The monitoring was undertaken to satisfy a requirement for archaeological mitigation stipulated by the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeological Service (CECAS) who advise the City of Edinburgh Council (the Local Planning Authority).

This report presents the results of the archaeological monitoring, which incorporated approximately 70m of service pipe trenching and 32 footprint pad foundations. The fieldwork was undertaken between 13th and 19th February 2015 in mixed weather conditions.

2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The proposed new nursery building was located within the grounds of Leith Primary School, St Andrew Place, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 27159 75867). The building is to be constructed immediately south-east of the existing school building within the existing playground.

The site lies around 9m OD and is underlain by superficial deposits of; Holocene beach sands characteristic of the drift geology of much of the area, comprising raised marine deposits of sand and gravels (British Geological Survey website; <http://www.bgs.ac.uk>). The playground had a gradual east facing slope requiring deeper excavations to the higher west end of the site.

The archaeological potential was assessed as moderate. The school is situated upon part of Leith Links close to the eastern line of the 16th century defensive wall which was aligned along Constitution Street to the west of the school.

The present school was opened in 1898 being designed by George Craig. It is a Grade B listed

building (Historic Scotland Ref: 27877) and has a single entry in the National Monuments Record (NMR: NT27NE 571; Canmore ID: 152354). Prior to the construction of the present school an earlier school building (Leith Academy) existed on the same site until its demolition in 1896. This earlier school was constructed in 1804 by the architect Robert Burn and is depicted on Ainslie's 1804 map of Old and New Town of Edinburgh and Leith (Illus 2).



Illus 2. Extract from Ainslie's map of 1804.

Prior to this the site was part of Leith Links which had been open public land until it was formalised as a public park in 1888. The Links were known to be the resting place of many of the victims of plague that struck Leith badly in 1645. Over a third of the population were killed during this outbreak.

Archaeological monitoring undertaken at the corner of St Andrew Place, Leith in May 2014 (Wessel v 2014) identified the presence of disarticulated human bone that may relate to 15th/16th century activity in the area.

3 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The watching brief was designed to mitigate any adverse impacts on sub-surface remains of archaeological interest.

The resulting archive will be organised and deposited in the NMRS; to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit. Reports will be made available through the forums noted below.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Site works

The main sub-contractor undertook all ground breaking works. A toothed bucket was used to remove any hard surfaces/demolition deposits and all soft deposits were removed using a flat bladed ditching bucket. The majority of ground breaking works were monitored by an archaeologist. The monitoring strategy was put in place to provide information on any previously unrecorded features of archaeological interest in a relatively unobtrusive manner. It did not involve major interruption to the work programme. Isolated features or artefacts were recorded according to normal watching brief methodology.

4.2 Recording

All recording followed Cifa Standards and Guidance for conducting archaeological watching briefs (2014). All trenches and contexts have been given unique numbers. A full list of these can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this report. All recording was undertaken on *pro forma* record cards. Digital photographic images were taken with a graduated metric scale clearly visible. A full photographic record can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

4.3 Reporting and Archives

On completion of the fieldwork and reporting Headland will produce a site archive and an archive report that includes all relevant specialist assessments of excavated material. An online OASIS report will be completed and will be accompanied by a PDF report and boundary file – headland1-204452. A summary report will be 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 Cifa on behalf of the Archaeological Archives Forum (Brown 2007). The documentary and digital archive will be submitted to RCAHMS within six months of completion of all work on this project. All finds will be reported to the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel, which will determine the ultimate destination of the material archive. Once this is determined, and within three months, arrangements will be made with the specified museum for transfer of material and title.

5 RESULTS

The programme of archaeological works comprised the monitoring of both ground works associated with the laying of service pipes across the grounds of the school and the pad footprint foundations for the construction of a new nursery building. This work required the excavation of five inter-connected trenches (Trench 1 to 5) (Illus 1 & 3) 0.5m wide to a maximum depth of 1.8m and 33 small pad footprint foundations 0.5m² and 0.6m deep.



Illus 3 – General view of Trench 1, 2, 4 and 5 facing east.

The trenches varied in length from 4.5m to over 20m. A full description of each trench and the deposits recorded within them can be found in the Trench Records in Appendix 1. Due to the gradual east facing slope of the existing ground surface, the main service pipe trenches (Tr.1 and Tr.2) increased in depth from east to west.

Trench 1 was aligned east/west with the east end located at the eastern perimeter of the

school grounds. The trench was 20m long and was linked to Trench 2 by the excavation of a 1m² manhole. Two further north/south aligned trenches (Tr.4 and Tr.5) extended off the south side of Trench 1.

Trench 2 was aligned NE/SW and 20m long linking both Trench 1 at the NE end and via a second manhole to Trench 3 at the SW end. It was excavated to between 1.2m at the NE end to a maximum of 1.8m at the SW end. Trench 3 was located to the south of the school building being 10m long and aligned east/west. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.77m.

The general stratigraphy of the service trenches altered along their course although the geological subsoil (context 105) was exposed in both trench 1 and 2. This comprised a course yellow sand and was approximately 0.5m below the surface close to the east end of Trench 1 but was at 1.8m depth at the SW end of Trench 2. At the east end of Trench 1 significant tree root bioturbation masked any subsoil. At approximately 5m from the east end of Trench 1 (Illus 4) a mottled yellow (wind-blown) sand deposit (C.104) was recorded above the geological subsoil although this did not continue to the west end of the trench.



Illus 4 North facing section of trench 1 at 7m from the east end showing the wind-blown sands at the base of the section

At the west end of Trench 1 and continuing into Trench 2 the geological subsoil was overlain by a dark orange brown sand (C.207 (Illus 5)). At approximately 9m from the NE end of Trench 2 and at a depth of 1.3m a significant number of disarticulated animal bones were recovered from this deposit (207) and seem to represent the remains at least two sheep/goat (Laura Baillie pers comm). Apart

from these animal bones the layer C.207 was sterile although health and safety issues hindered access into the trench. It was thought that this layer may represent a cultivation horizon related to the land use prior to the 19th century.



Illus 5 View of the north facing section of trench 2 with C.207 at the base

All the deposits above layer C.207 were considered to be of 19th and 20th century origin. This included a further layer of dark orange brown sand (C.204) representing re-deposited cultivation soil. This was recorded at the SW end of Trench 2 at a maximum depth of 1.25m below the current ground surface (Illus 6).



Illus 6 View of north facing section at the SW end of Trench 2.

Above these layers within Trench 1 and 2 was a dark grey brown sand (C.103, C203) forming what was interpreted as the remains of an old ground surface possibly relating to the construction of the original school in 1804. A small fragment of 19th century pottery (Julie Franklin pers comm) and a clay pipe stem were recovered from this deposit. This layer was also exposed in trench 4 and 5. A layer of stone and brick rubble (C.102) with frequent red roof tile fragments was recorded in the sections of all the excavated trenches above C.103 & C.203. This layer probably relates to the demolition of the 1804 Leith Academy in 1896.

Trench 3 was only excavated to a maximum depth of 0.7m exposing the re-deposited sand (204) also recorded in Trench 2. This was overlain by rubble and concrete.

A total of 33 pad foundations were excavated across the footprint of the new building. These measured 0.5m² and were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m (Illus 7).



Illus 7 General view of the pad foundation excavations facing east

The small size of these pads meant it was difficult to identify any features whilst the excavation was in progress. Due to this they were inspected for archaeological deposits or features after they had been machine excavated. The spoil from each pit was also inspected for artefacts. The sections of all these pad foundations displayed a very similar pattern to that recorded in the trenches with a dark orange brown sand (similar to 204) exposed below a layer of rubble levelling material and tarmac surface (Illus 8). No features or finds of archaeological significance were identified during this work.



Illus 8 Detail of the pad foundation sections

5.1 Discussion

Due to the identification of human bone excavated on the corner of St Andrew Place in 2014 there was a moderate chance that further human remains may occur in the area of the development. The monitoring as a whole revealed relatively little in the way of archaeological features and no further human remains were recorded. The animal bone found in lowest layer (C.207) of Trench 2 is of limited interest being within what was thought to be a potential cultivation soil. Very little artefactual evidence was recovered and what was identified was of 19th/20th century date.

Evidence of the demolition of the Leith Academy building (constructed in 1804) may be represented by the spread of stone and roof tile recorded across the site but again this was of very limited interest.

The identification of different layers within the sections proved difficult to fully establish in Trench 2 particularly as the depth meant it was not safe to enter the trench.

Bibliographic sources

Brown, D H 2007 Archaeological Archives Forum Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation.

CifA Standards and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs (revised December 2014).

http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/nodefiles/CifAS&GWatchingbrief_1.pdf

Wessel v, J 2013 St Andrew Place, Leith: Archaeological Works. Unpublished client data report- WSAL13 Headland Archaeology

5.2 Cartographic sources

John Ainslie 1804 *Old and New Town of Edinburgh and Leith with the proposed New Docks*. National Map Library.

5.3 Other sources

Internet

British Geological Society
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> accessed February 2015

National Map Library of Scotland website
<http://maps.nls.uk/> accessed February 2015

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1 – Site registers

Trench Records

Tr. no.	Orient ation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
1	E-W	20m	0.5m	0.4m to 1.2m
Context No.	Context Description			Thickness of deposit (m)
101	Tarmac surface recorded across the site			0.15m
102	Rubble made ground with brick, stone and roof tile fragments recorded across the site. Possibly the remains of the early 1804 academy building			0.20m
103	A dark grey/brown compact band of sand that is only 0.1m thick at the E end but up to 0.5m at the W end. Frequent stone inclusions and a diffuse horizon between 103 and 104 below. Possibly representing an old ground surface			0.5m
104	Mixed orange brown laminated soft sand up to 0.4m thick overlying the geological subsoil. Only recorded in the initial 15m of Trench 1			0.2m
105	A bright yellow course sand forming the geological subsoil			
106	Remains of a concrete & rubble stone wall aligned NW-SE bonded with cement and overlying 104			
A linear trench excavated to a maximum of 1.2 m to the geological subsoil, although this was only just exposed towards the W end. No Archaeology present.				

Tr. no.	Orient ation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
2	NE-SW	12.5m	0.5m	1.2m to 1.8 m
Context No.	Context Description			Thickness of deposit (m)
201	Same as 101			0.15
202	Same as 102			0.2m
203	Same as 103			0.5m
204	A dark orange brown sand with occasional stone inclusions. This possibly forms a layer of re-deposited material as a thin deposit (206) of 19 th century origin is recorded below it at the SW end.			0.8m
205	Yellow course sand natural recorded at 1.2m deep at the NE end of Trench 2 and 1.8m at the SW end. Sand included marine shell fragments			

206	A thin layer of stone and ash rich sand thought to be 19 th /20 th century disturbance as includes brick fragments. Lies below 204 and above 207. Recorded at the W end of the trench	0.1m
207	A thick layer of dark orange brown compact sand with occasional small stone inclusions. Below 206 and above the natural 205. This may represent a cultivation soil. Disarticulated animal bone was recovered from this deposit at 1.3m	0.5m
A linear trench excavated to a maximum of 1.8m at the SW end to the depth of the yellow course sand geological subsoil. A clay pipe stem and a 19th C pottery fragment was recovered from the upcast and may have been from 203. Within 204 was a collection of animal bones		

Tr. no.	Orientation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
4	N-S	4.5m	0.5m	0.75m
Context No.	Context Description			Thickness of deposit (m)
401	Same as 101			0.15m
402	Remains of a brick wall foundation 2 courses high bonded with cement			0.25m
403	Concrete foundation to the wall 302			0.10m
404	Same as 104			< 0.1m
A linear trench aligned N-S to a maximum depth of 0.7m at the N end. No archaeology identified.				

Tr. no.	Orientation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
5	N-S	10m	0.5m	Up to 1m
Context No.	Context Description			Thickness of deposit (m)
501	Same as 101			0.15m
502	Same as 102			0.2m
503	Same as 103			0.4m
504	Same as 204			<0.25
A linear trench excavated to a maximum of 1m with no geological subsoil reached. No Archaeology present				

Tr. no.	Orientation	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
3	E-W	10m	0.5m	0.77m
Context No.	Context Description			Thickness of deposit (m)
301	Same as 101			0.15m
302	Layer of concrete			0.2m
303	Same as 102			0.25m
304	Same as 204			<0.17m

A linear trench to the south side of the school building. Only excavated to a maximum depth of 0.7m with only layers of made ground being exposed. No archaeology found

Photographic register

Photo No	Direction facing	Description
APLE-01	SW	General view of trench 1
APLE-02	NW	General view of trench 1
APLE-03	S	North facing section of trench 1 at 5m
APLE-04	S	North facing section of trench 1 at 12m
APLE-05	S	North facing section of trench 1 at 15m
APLE-06	NW	View of stone wall remains in the section of Trench 1
APLE-07	N	General view of trench 1 from the W end
APLE-08	N	S facing section of manhole at W end of trench 1
APLE-09	SE	NW facing section of Trench 2 at the location of the animal bone
APLE-10	NE	View of trench 2
APLE-11	E	View of Trench 1 and 2
APLE-12	NE	View of SE facing section of Trench 2
APLE-13	E	General view of Trenches
APLE-14	SE	General view of trench 4
APLE-15	SE	Detail of Trench 4
APLE-16	E	West facing section of Trench 4 at the N end
APLE-17	S	General view of trench 5
APLE-18	S	Detail of Trench 5
APLE-19	E	West facing section of Trench 5 at the N end
APLE-20	E	General site view showing Tr. 1, 2, 4 and 5
APLE-21	W	View if brick wall at W end of trench 2
APLE-22	W	View if brick wall at W end of trench 2
APLE-23	SW	View of trench 2 near completion
APLE-24	SW	Brick culvert associated with pipes and manhole
APLE-25	SW	View of manhole area to W end of Trench 2
APLE-26	NE	View of Trench 2 from the SW end

APLE-27	E	View of Trench 2 from the SW end
APLE-28	SE	NW facing section at the SW end of Trench 2
APLE-29	W	East facing section of Trench 3 at the E end
APLE-30	W	East facing section of Trench 3 at the E end
APLE-31	E	West facing section of the manhole at the W end of Trench 2
APLE-32	W	General view of Trench 3 excavations
APLE-33	N	South facing section of Trench 3 at the E end
APLE-34	NW	SE facing section of trench 2 at 5m after depth increased
APLE-35	E	Location shot of pad pit excavations
APLE-36	W	Detail of pad pits at the E end of site
APLE-37	W	East facing section of pad pit at E end of the site
APLE-38	W	View of pad pits at N end of site
APLE-39	W	Oblique view of N facing section of Trench 2 after depth increased
APLE-40	W	Oblique view of N facing section of Trench 2 after depth increased
APLE-41	E	View if central row of pad pits being excavated
APLE-42	E	W facing section of one of the pad pits
APLE-43	E	Working shot of pad pit excavations
APLE-44	NE	View of extended depth of trench 2 at the SW end
APLE-45	S	View of extended depth of trench 2 at the SW end

6.2 Appendix 2 – Discovery and Excavation in Scotland entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Leith Primary School, St Andrew Place, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	APLE15-001
PARISH:	Leith
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Donald Wilson
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Headland Archaeology
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	NT27NE 571
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	School
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NT 27159 75867
START DATE (this season)	13 th Feb 2015
END DATE (this season)	19 th Feb 2015
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	none
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>A programme of archaeological monitoring was carried out in order to satisfy a requirement for archaeological mitigation stipulated by the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeological Service (CECAS) prior to the construction of a new nursery building within the grounds of Leith Primary School. The programme of works comprised the monitoring all ground works associated with the laying of service pipes across the site plus monitoring the excavation of 32 footprint pads that will form the foundation of the new development.</p> <p>The service pipe excavations comprised a series of five interconnected trenches located to the south-east of the school building. The trenches were excavated to between 0.4m and 1.8m deep revealing several distinct layers of material overlying the geological subsoil. The majority of these layers proved to be the result of 19th/20th century disturbance or of modern origin. The only layer of any significance was a sand subsoil recorded close to the base of two of the trenches immediately above the geological beach deposits. This subsoil included a number of disarticulated sheep/goat bones at a depth of 1.3m and was thought to represent the remains of a post-medieval cultivation soil. A series of 32 footprint pads were also monitored as part of the archaeological works. These pads were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m with no features or artefacts of archaeological significance identified.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Edinburgh City Council
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	RCAHMS

