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Client: The Scottish Parliament



A WATCHING BRIEF AT THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, EDINBURGH

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MA(Hons) AIfA



HEADLAND
ARCHAEOLOGY Ltd

PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

<i>Client</i>	THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT
<i>National Grid Reference</i>	NT 2671 7388
<i>Address</i>	SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, CANONGATE, EDINBURGH
<i>Parish</i>	CITY OF EDINBURGH
<i>Council</i>	CITY OF EDINBURGH
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<i>Schedule</i>	
<i>Fieldwork</i>	MAY 2009 - MARCH 2010
<i>Report</i>	JUNE 2010

Signed off by: 

Simon Stronach BSc(Hons) MIFA, Project Manager

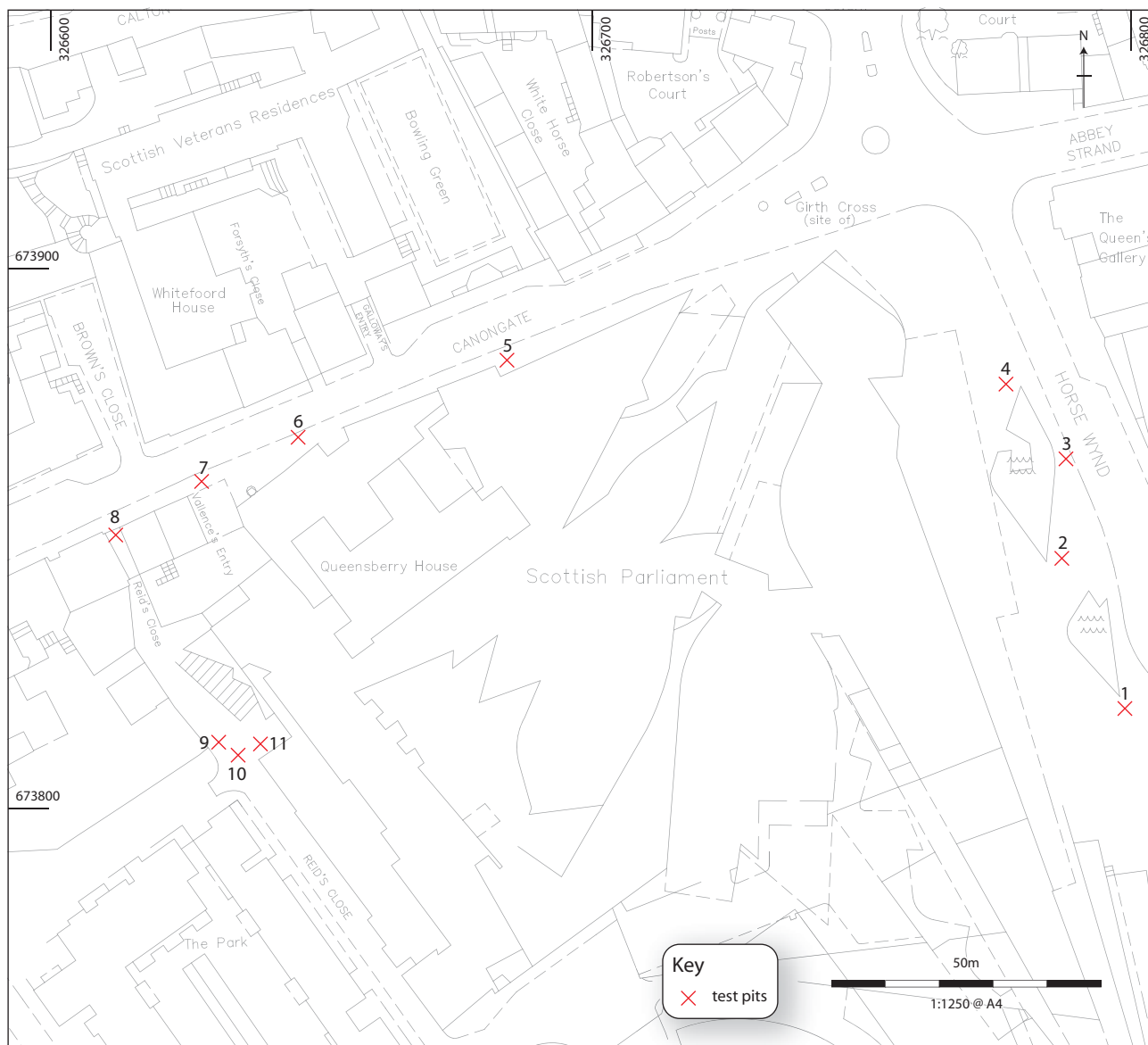
Date: 30/08/2010

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Illus 1
 Site and test pit locations

A WATCHING BRIEF AT THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, EDINBURGH

by Ross Murray

A total of 11 test pits were monitored prior to, and during, the erection of security barriers and bollards around the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood. The test pits generally extended to a depth of around 1 metre. They encountered modern make-up and services except in one location within Reid's Close. Here a post-medieval loam or 'garden soil' was encountered. The results are consistent with the extensive archaeological excavations which preceded the construction of the parliament and do not add any significant new information.

1. INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned to monitor groundworks during works to erect bollards and re-direct services around the perimeter of the Scottish Parliament, from Reid's Close down Canongate to Horse Wynd, in Edinburgh.

The archaeological monitoring was part of a planning condition attached to the works and followed a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved by the Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS) who monitored the works on behalf of the Planning Authority.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the archaeological works were:

- to record any archaeological remains exposed by the proposed development works
- to report on the results of the work

3. METHOD

Main contract excavations were monitored by a single archaeologist. The results from an initial sequence of test pits were used to determine which areas were archaeologically sensitive and required further monitoring. This strategy was agreed with CECAS through submission of a WSI. Recording in the sensitive areas consisted of cleaning, inspection and recording of exposed sections in order to retrieve artefacts, if present, and record general stratigraphy, including any features apparent in section.

Given the nature of the most sensitive of expected deposits (homogenous post-medieval loams) the contractor was permitted to mechanically excavate using a toothed bucket.

4. RESULTS

A total of eleven test pits were monitored during the course of the works (Illus 1). Full details can be found in Appendix 1; results are summarised below.

Test pits 1-4 were located on the east side of the parliament building adjacent to Horse Wynd. These all exposed a sequence of modern surfaces, plastic drainage ducts and make-up to a depth of 1 m below current ground (Illus 2).

Test pits 5-7 were located in Canongate to the north of Queensberry House and a tenement and all contained modern services and make-up to a depth of 1 m below current ground surface (Illus 3).

Test pit 8 was located in the entrance of Reid's Close and a sequence of modern surfaces and make up to a depth of 1m below current ground was recorded. A large gas pipe was present at the base of the test pit.

Test pit 9 was located adjacent to the corner of the Royal Mile Primary School in Reid's Close (Illus 4). Here at a depth of 0.5m was dark brown loam containing probable post-medieval material (clay pipe and oyster shell; not retained). This was consistent with the upper deposits of 'garden soil' recorded during the adjacent Scottish Parliament excavations. The deposit may date to the 17th or 18th century.

Test pits 10 and 11 were adjacent to Test pit 9 and contained modern services and make up to a depth of 1-1.3m below current ground surface.

5. DISCUSSION

The test pits were generally limited in depth to 1 m below contemporary ground surfaces. They showed that to this depth on the east and north side of the new Parliament building only modern surfacing, make-up and services are present. In Horse Wynd the presence of a plastic duct drainage system suggested that this represented



Illus 2
Test pit 4 in Horse Wynd

very recent activity associated with the construction of the Parliament. On the north side the test pits again encountered modern make up and services; in this case probably pre-dating construction of the Parliament.

Only one pre-modern deposit was encountered, on the west side of the Parliament in Reid's Close. This was a homogenous loam thought to be of post-medieval date. This appears to be the equivalent of an upper loam deposit encountered beneath the site of the Parliament immediately to the east (Holyrood Archaeology Project Team 2008).

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Holyrood Archaeology Project Team 2008 *Scotland's Parliament Site and the Canongate: archaeology & history*



Illus 3
Test pit 6 in Canongate



Illus 4
Test pit 9 in Reid's Close

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site registers

Test Pit register

Test Pit No.	Description
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1	Dimensions (L x W): 2m x 1.4m Depth: 1m Paving slabs, concrete and hardcore (0.5m) over made ground and plastic ducts
2	Dimensions (L x W): 1.8m x 1.9m Depth: 1m Paving slabs, concrete and hardcore (0.5m) over made ground and plastic ducts
3	Dimensions (L x W): 1.7m x 1.1m Depth: 1m Paving slabs, concrete and hardcore (0.5m) over made ground and plastic ducts
4	Dimensions (L x W): 2.5m x 1.3m Depth: 1m Paving slabs, concrete and hardcore (0.5m) over made ground and plastic ducts
5	Dimensions (L x W): 1.9m x 1.1m Depth: 0.6m Paving slabs, concrete and hardcore (0.3m) over sand and gravel containing services
6	Dimensions (L x W): 2.2m x 0.97m Depth: 1m Paving slabs, concrete and hardcore (0.5m) over sand and gravel containing services
7	Dimensions (L x W): 1.9m x 1.1m Depth: 0.6m Paving slabs, concrete and hardcore (0.5m) over sand and gravel containing services
8	Dimensions (L x W): 1.3m x 0.8m Depth: 1.1m Paving slabs, concrete and hardcore (0.5m) over made ground services
9	Dimensions (L x W): 1m x 1m Depth: 1m Cobbles, concrete (0.5m) over dark brown clay-silt containing charcoal, oyster shell, clay pipe
10	Dimensions (L x W): 2.7m x 1m Depth: 1.3m Cobbles, concrete over hardcore services
11	Dimensions (L x W): 1m x 1m Depth: 1m Cobbles, concrete over hardcore services

Photographic register

Photo No.	Direction facing	Description
1	E	Test Pit 6
2	E	Test Pit 6
3	S	Test Pit 6 - section
4	SE	Test Pit 6 - section
5	S	Test pit 7
6	W	Test pit 7 - section
7	W	Test pit 7 - section
8	S	Test pit 9
9	S	Test pit 9
10	SW	Test pit 9 - close up possible garden soil
11	E	Test pit 11
12	E	Test pit 5
13	S	Location shot of test pit 11
14	S	Location shot of test pit 9
15	SW	Location shot of test pit 7
16	SE	Location shot of test pit 6
17	SE	Location shot of test pit 5
18	N	Test Pit 4 - section
19	N	Test Pit 3 - section
20	N	Test Pit 2 - section
21	N	Test Pit 1 - section
22	S	General Shot
23	N	General Shot
24	W	Test Pit 8 - Top of Reid's Close
25	W	Test Pit 8 - Top of Reid's Close
26	N	Test Pit 8 - Top of Reid's Close
27	N	Test Pit 8 - Top of Reid's Close
28	S	Test Pit 8 - Top of Reid's Close
29	S	Test Pit 8 - Top of Reid's Close
30	E	Test Pit 10
31	W	Test Pit 10
32	NW	Test Pit 10
33	W	Test Pit 10
34	S	Test Pit 10
35	S	Test Pit 10
36	W	Test Pit 10
37	W	Test Pit 10
38	NE	Test Pit 10
39	S	Test Pit 10

Photo No.	Direction facing	Description
40	E	Test Pit 10
41	E	Test Pit 10

Appendix 2 – Discovery and Excavation Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Scottish Parliament Watching Brief
PROJECT CODE:	SPWB09
PARISH:	City of Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Simon Stronach
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Headland Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological monitoring
NMRS NO(S):	n/a
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Post-medieval/modern deposits
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	n/a
NGR	NT 2671 7388
START DATE (this season)	1/5/09
END DATE (this season)	1/3/10
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	DES 1999, 39.
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:	A total of 11 test pits were monitored prior to, and during, the erection of security barriers and bollards around the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood. The test pits generally extended to a depth of around 1 metre. They encountered modern make-up and services except in one location within Reid's Close. Here a post-medieval loam or 'garden soil' was encountered. The results are consistent with the extensive archaeological excavations which preceded the construction of the parliament and do not add any significant new information.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
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SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	The Scottish Parliament
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	–
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