

HERMITAGE DRIVE, EDINBURGH

Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr & Mrs Ball

10/02738/FUL

April 2011



HEADLAND
ARCHAEOLOGY (UK) Ltd



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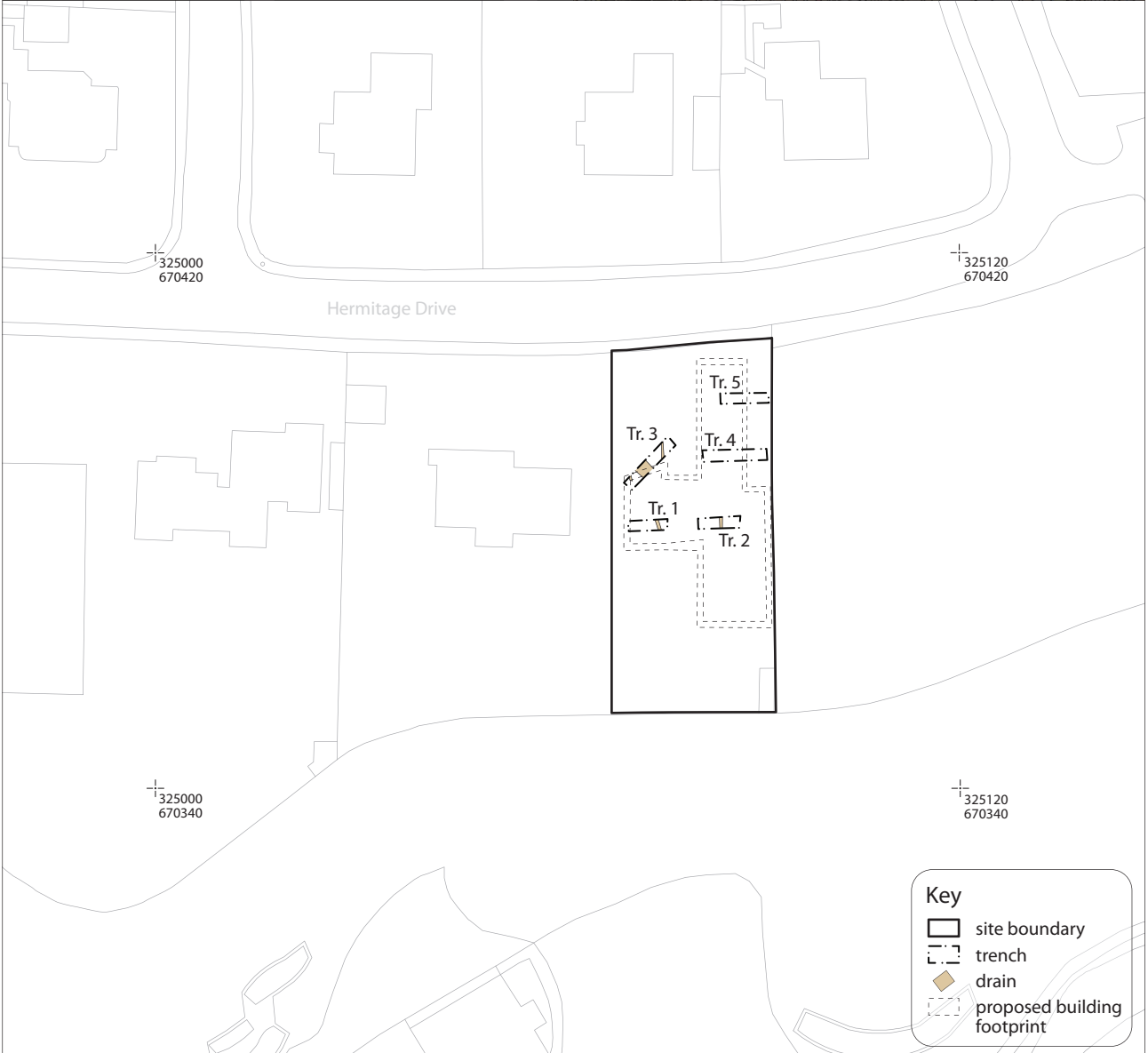
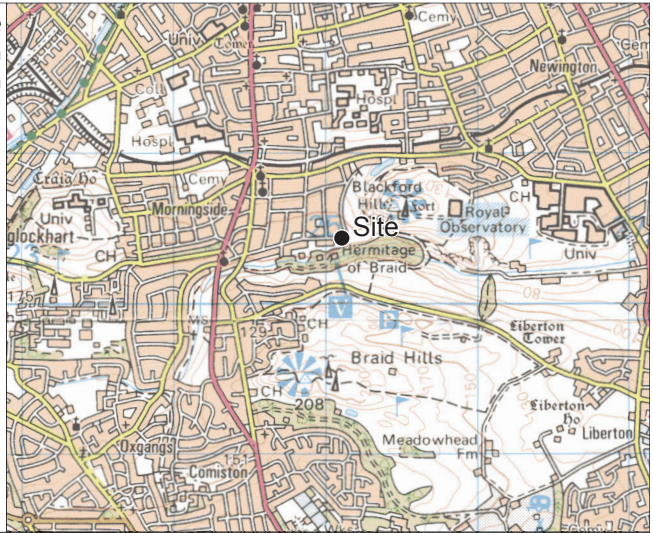
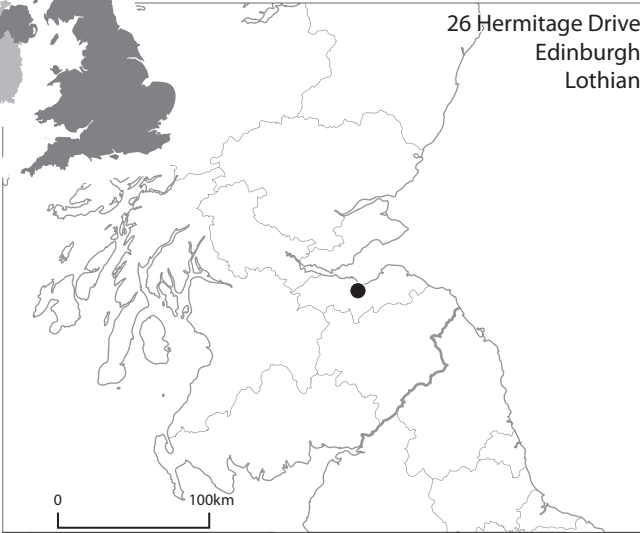
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26 Hermitage Drive
Edinburgh
Lothian



Key

-  site boundary
-  trench
-  drain
-  proposed building footprint

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Scale 1:1,000 @ A4



Illus 1
Site location and trench plan

HERMITAGE DRIVE, EDINBURGH

Archaeological Evaluation

Headland Archaeology Ltd conducted an evaluation at a development site at Hermitage Drive, Edinburgh in order to satisfy a planning condition placed by the City of Edinburgh Council, Planning ref. 10/02738/FUL. The work was commissioned by Mr & Mrs Ball with a specification for the work agreed with the City of Edinburgh Archaeological Service.

Within the area of the development, five trenches were excavated and no archaeological features, deposits or artefacts of significance were revealed during these investigations.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Headland Archaeology was commissioned by Gareth Hoskins Architects on behalf of Mr and Mrs Ball to undertake an archaeological evaluation for a development on land adjacent to 26 Hermitage Drive, Edinburgh. The evaluation was undertaken as part of a programme of archaeological work required to fulfil a planning condition attached by the City of Edinburgh Council (Planning ref. 10/02738/FUL).

An assessment of the area concluded that the site had the potential for containing important archaeological remains associated with a historic landscape that includes the Blackford Hill Iron Age Hillfort and Hermitage of Braid House.

Prior to the works commencing a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd and agreed with the City of Edinburgh Archaeology Service (CECAS). The fieldwork took place on the 21st of March 2011, the results of which are presented in this report.

1.2 Site location and background

The development area is located on land adjacent to 26 Hermitage Drive which is located in the south-eastern part of the Morningside area of Edinburgh. The land is

bordered to the north by Hermitage Drive, to the west by the house of no. 26 Hermitage Drive, and to the east and west by boundary walls enclosing the land before open parkland and woods.

The geology of the area comprises Braid Hills Volcanic Member overlain by glacial till which is characterised by mainly silt and clay. At the time of the evaluation the site was used as gardens with gravel paths and hedge rows bordering and dividing the land.

Located to the north-east of the site, is the scheduled ancient monument known as Blackford Hill, fort and settlement (SAM no. 5818), which comprises the remains of a walled fort of probable Iron Age date located on the highest point of Blackford hill. On a SW-facing slab of bedrock below the summit of Blackford Hill, there is a rock carving of a deer and a possible representation of a hunter.

To the south of the site is Hermitage of Braid House which was built in 1785 by the architect, Robert Burn. It lies within an estate that has a medieval origin centred upon Braid Castle, known to have stood somewhere near to the present house until its final demolition in the 18th century. Evidence of occupation of the estate prior to the construction of Hermitage of Braid House is located nearby with a converted grain mill to west



of the house recorded on deeds dating to 1700 bearing the watermark 'Braid'. Braid is likely a derivation of the name 'De Brad', a family who were associated with the area from the 12–14th centuries.

The above suggests the area of development lies within an important historic landscape with potential for significant archaeological remains.



Illus 2

Trenching in gardens of 26 Hermitage Drive

2



Illus 3

Trench 3 from the north-east

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation were:

- to evaluate the archaeological potential of the development site (in particular remains associated with the estates medieval origins) and determine the location, character, extent and quality of any archaeological remains identified within it,
- to determine the likely impact of the development on any such remains and to inform the scope of any required mitigation measures.

2.2 Methodology

Machine evaluation

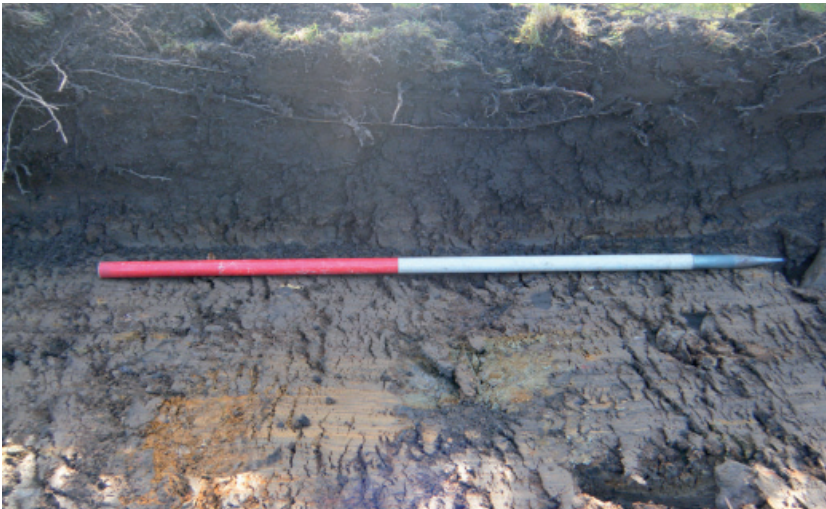
The footprint of the proposed building comprised an area of 450m². A 10% sample of the area was scheduled to be evaluated amounting to 45m² or 28m of linear trench 1.6m wide. After discussions with CECAS, it was decided an additional trenching was needed amounting to a new requirement of 37m of linear trench (59.2m²). Evaluation trenches were laid out to provide coverage across the application area and any topographic features or areas that were thought to have archaeological potential.

A mechanical excavator equipped with a flat-bladed ditching bucket was used to remove topsoil under direct archaeological control. Excavation continued until clean geological sediments, significant archaeological deposits or structures were encountered or until the limit of safe excavation (1m) was reached. Only trenches less than 1m and considered safe were entered by site staff.

Further excavation required to satisfy the objectives of the evaluation was continued by hand. A representative sample, sufficient to meet the objectives of the evaluation, of identified features were investigated by hand and all identified features were recorded. The stratigraphy of each trench was recorded in full.

2.3 Recording

All recording was in accordance with the code of practice of the Institute for Archaeologists. All trenches and contexts were given unique numbers and all recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards that conform to accepted archaeological standards. All stratigraphic relationships were recorded.



Illus 4

North facing section of Trench 5 showing typical soil profile

An overall site plan at an appropriate scale and relative to the National Grid was recorded by digital survey using a total station linked to an onsite PC equipped with CAD software.

A full photographic record of colour slide and colour print photographs was taken, supplemented with digital photography. A metric scale was clearly visible in record photographs of contexts.

3. RESULTS

A total of five trenches were excavated designed to provide coverage across the site of the development (Illus 1). Limited space was available to trench due to the landscaping of the garden and a requirement by the landowner to avoid disturbance to paths and hedges. Once trenching was completed, the total amounted to 37m. The trenches were orientated E-W, apart from Trench 3 which was orientated NE-SW, with the maximum trench measuring 9m. Full trench descriptions, including orientation and length, can be found in Appendix 1.

The soil profile comprised between 0.3m and 0.5m of dark brownish grey soft silty clay topsoil which contained tree and shrub roots throughout. The topsoil overlay a geological deposit of dark orange brown silty clay with various sized stone inclusions. This stratigraphic sequence was uniform throughout the trenches.

Within the topsoil, perforated plastic land drainage pipes were present in Trench 1 and Trench 3 and were orientated both NW-SE and NE-SW. Cut into the geological deposits were ceramic field drains visible in Trenches 2, 3 and 4 (presence in Trench 4 not shown on plan) and were orientated N-S. These had been installed by the current owner of the property in recent times.

Further excavation of Trench 4 for geotechnical works revealed that the geological deposit of clay continued to a depth of c. 2.5m and lay over a deposit of shattered bedrock mixed with clay.

No archaeological features or finds were present within the excavated trenches.

4. DISCUSSION

The five trenches excavated within the development area only produced evidence of drainage works relating to a modern garden landscape. Despite the archaeological potential of the area, no archaeological features or deposits were identified during the evaluation.

5. REFERENCES

5.1 Bibliography

Bailey, E, 2011, *Hermitage Drive, Edinburgh: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation*, Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd, Client Report.

5.2 Internet sources

RCAHMS – PASTMAP, <www.rcahms.gov.uk/pastmap.html>, accessed 22 March 2011.

RCAHMS – SCRAN, <www.scran.ac.uk>, accessed 23 March 2011.



6. APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1 – Trench register

Trench no.	Orientation	Description	Length	Depth (max)
1	E-W	Topsoil of dark brown grey silt clay with root inclusions overlaying natural subsoils of dark orange brown silt clay with frequent small to medium stones.	6m	0.8m
2	E-W	Topsoil of dark brown grey silt clay with root inclusions overlaying natural subsoils of dark orange brown silt clay with frequent small to medium stones. Disturbance by presence of field drains.	6m	0.55m
3	NE-SW	Topsoil of dark brown grey silt clay with root inclusions overlaying natural subsoils of dark orange brown silt clay with frequent small to medium stones. Disturbance by presence of field drains.	9m	0.7m
4	E-W	Topsoil of dark brown grey silt clay with root inclusions overlaying natural subsoils of dark orange brown silt clay with frequent small to medium stones. Disturbance by presence of field drains.	9m	0.4m
5	E-W	Topsoil of dark brown grey silt clay with root inclusions overlaying natural subsoils of dark orange brown silt clay with frequent small to medium stones.	7m	0.55m

6.2 Appendix 2 – Photographic register

Photo no.	Direction facing	Description
001	NE	Pre-ex shot of area of Trench 4
002	NE	Pre-ex shot of area of Trench 5
003	SW	General shot of Trench 3 during excavation
004	W	Post-ex shot of Trench 1
005	E	Post-ex shot of Trench 2
006	NE	Post-ex shot of Trench 3
007	E	Post-ex shot of Trench 4
008	E	Post-ex shot of Trench 5
009	SW	N facing section of Trench 5



6.3 Appendix 3 – DES entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY	The City of Edinburgh Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME	Hermitage Drive, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE	HDED11
PARISH	Edinburgh (City of Edinburgh)
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S)	Nuala C. Marshall
NAME OF ORGANISATION	Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT	Evaluation
NMRS NO(S)	N/A
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None
NGR	NT 25053 70382
START DATE (this season)	21/03/11
END DATE (this season)	21/03/11
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION (may include information from other fields)	<p>An evaluation was conducted at a development site at Hermitage Drive, Edinburgh.</p> <p>Within the area of the development, five trenches were excavated. Despite the potential of the site, being in close proximity to Blackford Hill Iron Age Hillfort and Hermitage of Braid House, no archaeological features, deposits or artefacts of significance were revealed during these investigations.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK	None
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	<p>Archive to be deposited in NMRS.</p> <p>Reports to be deposited with NMRS and HCAU.</p>
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY	Mr & Mrs Ball
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR	Headland Archaeology Ltd, 13 Jane St, Edinburgh, EH6 5HE
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