

The Vennel, Linlithgow, West Lothian: Archaeological Mitigation

Data Structure Report



by Peter Klemen

issued 11th September 2015

on behalf of West Lothian Council Operational Services

RATHMELL 
ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Quality Assurance

This report covers works which have been undertaken in keeping with the issued brief as modified by the agreed programme of works. The report has been prepared in keeping with the guidance of Rathmell Archaeology Limited on the preparation of reports. All works reported on within this document have been undertaken in keeping with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct.

Signed  Date11/09/2015....

In keeping with the procedure of Rathmell Archaeology Limited this document and its findings have been reviewed and agreed by an appropriate colleague:

Checked  Date11/09/2015.....

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Quality Assurance Data

Author(s)	Peter Klemen		
Date of Issue	11 th September 2015	Version	1.0
Commissioning Body	West Lothian Council Operational Services		
Event Name	The Vennel, Linlithgow		
Event Type	Monitoring		
Event Date(s)	August 2015		
Rathmell Archaeology Code	RA15046	OASIS Ref	rathmell1-215150
Location	United Kingdom: Scotland: West Lothian		
NGR	NT 0001 7709	Parish	Linlithgow
Designation(s)	None		
Canmore IDs	None		

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Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared in support of the construction of a graded ramp at The Vennel, Linlithgow (Planning Ref: 0677/FUL/14). These archaeological works are designed comply with planning conditions and to mitigate any adverse impact on the archaeological remains within the development area.
2. West Lothian Council require a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken. West of Scotland Archaeology Service, who advise West Lothian Council on archaeology matters has provided guidance on the structure of archaeological works required to mitigate any adverse impact on the archaeological remains within the development area.
3. Rathmell Archaeology Limited has been appointed by West Lothian Council Operational Services to undertake the development and implementation of archaeological mitigation works for the project.

Archaeological Context

4. West Lothian Council has required that archaeological works be carried out in relation to this development and to comply with planning conditions (0677/FUL/14). The site currently exists as a park area and is located between The Vennel and Lochside Mews Linlithgow. The first phase of the works will include the excavation to formation of the existing ground before concrete foundations are poured for the brick walls. Excavation for the foundations will be into the retained embankment and will be at a depth from the high side of approximately 1.5m.
5. West of Scotland Archaeology Service has provided guidance on the potential nature of the archaeological resource. The development area is within an Archaeological Consultancy Trigger (ACT) associated with the historic core of Linlithgow. The medieval burgh of Linlithgow was focused on the royal manor and the Church of St Michael about 270m to the north-east of the proposed development area. The High Street, to the immediate south of the development area, is the original core of the medieval burgh with burgage plots running off to the north and south and with buildings fronted onto the street.
6. WoSAS recognise that the development area is within the sequence of burgage plots between the shore of the Linlithgow Loch and the buildings fronting onto High Street. This can be illustrated by examination of Roy's *Military Survey of Scotland* (1752-55) (Figure 1a) which provides the first detailed survey of the area although is insufficiently detailed to identify the specific buildings relating to the development area. Wood's *Plan of the town of Linlithgow* (1820) (Figure 1b) shows the area in more detail and identifies the owner of specific plots. Both of these maps show the development area as containing structures.
7. On the 1st edition *Ordnance Survey, 25-inch* (1855) (Figure 2a) and the *large-scale Ordnance Survey* (1856) (Figure 2b) the structures depicted by Wood between the buildings fronted on the High Street and the shore of the loch have been removed. WoSAS suggest that the location of the retaining wall and steps which has prompted this development conform closely to the position of these now removed structures. This suggests that the earth moving required to level the plot pre-dates the construction of the neighbouring modern flats.
8. WoSAS recognise that the development area lies within one of the most extensively redeveloped sections of the medieval core of the burgh. Although there is the potential for material relating to earlier occupation of the site to survive. During archaeological survey work (WoSAS ID: 50232) carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd on the neighbouring plot, to the west, structural and material evidence was uncovered of both domestic and industrial use of the area. Evidence was recovered for the use of the site as a bakers and for the manufacturing of leather goods. Similarly, to the immediate north-east of the development area midden material, animal bone and horn core, were uncovered during archaeological monitoring of drilling works.



Figure 1a: Roy's *Military Survey of Scotland* (1752-55)

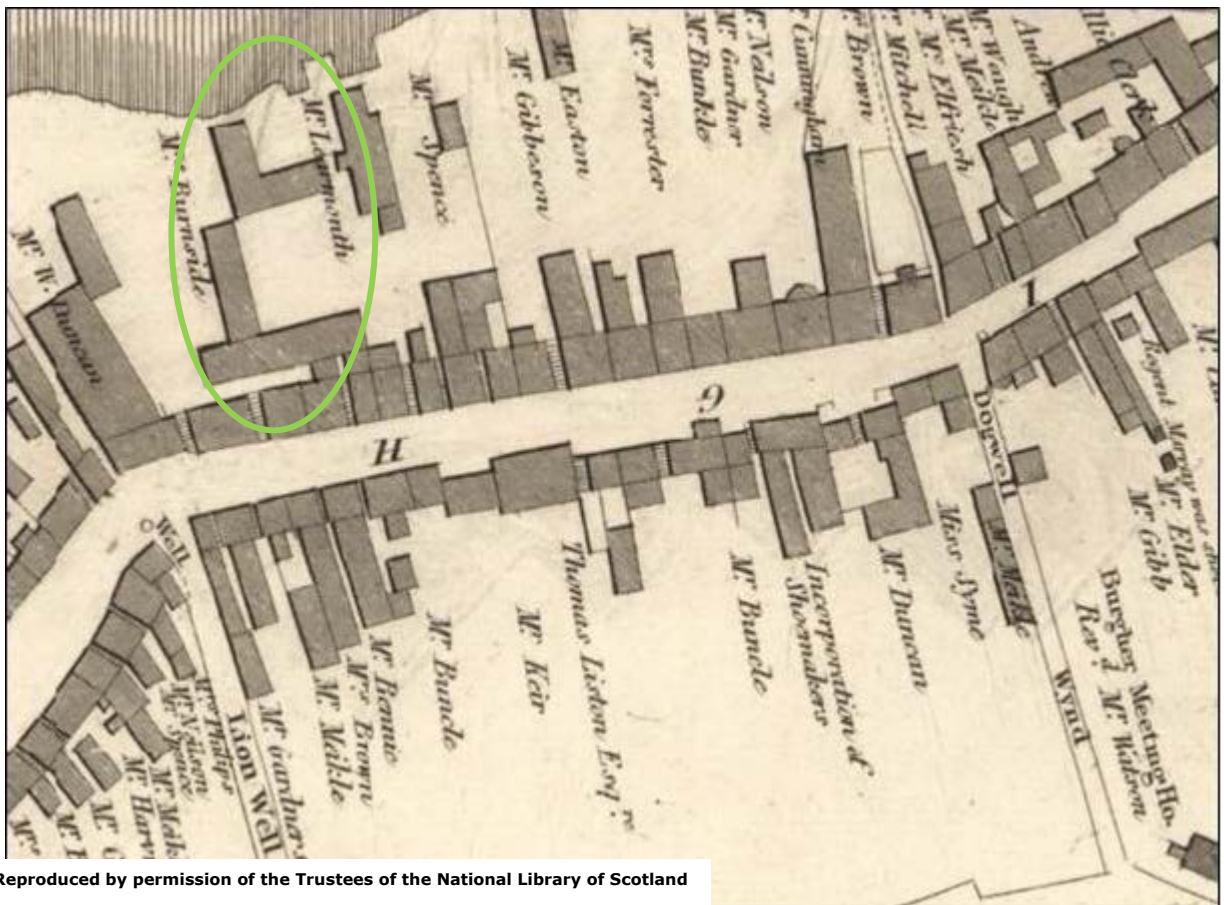


Figure 1b: Wood's *Plan of the town of Linlithgow* (1820)

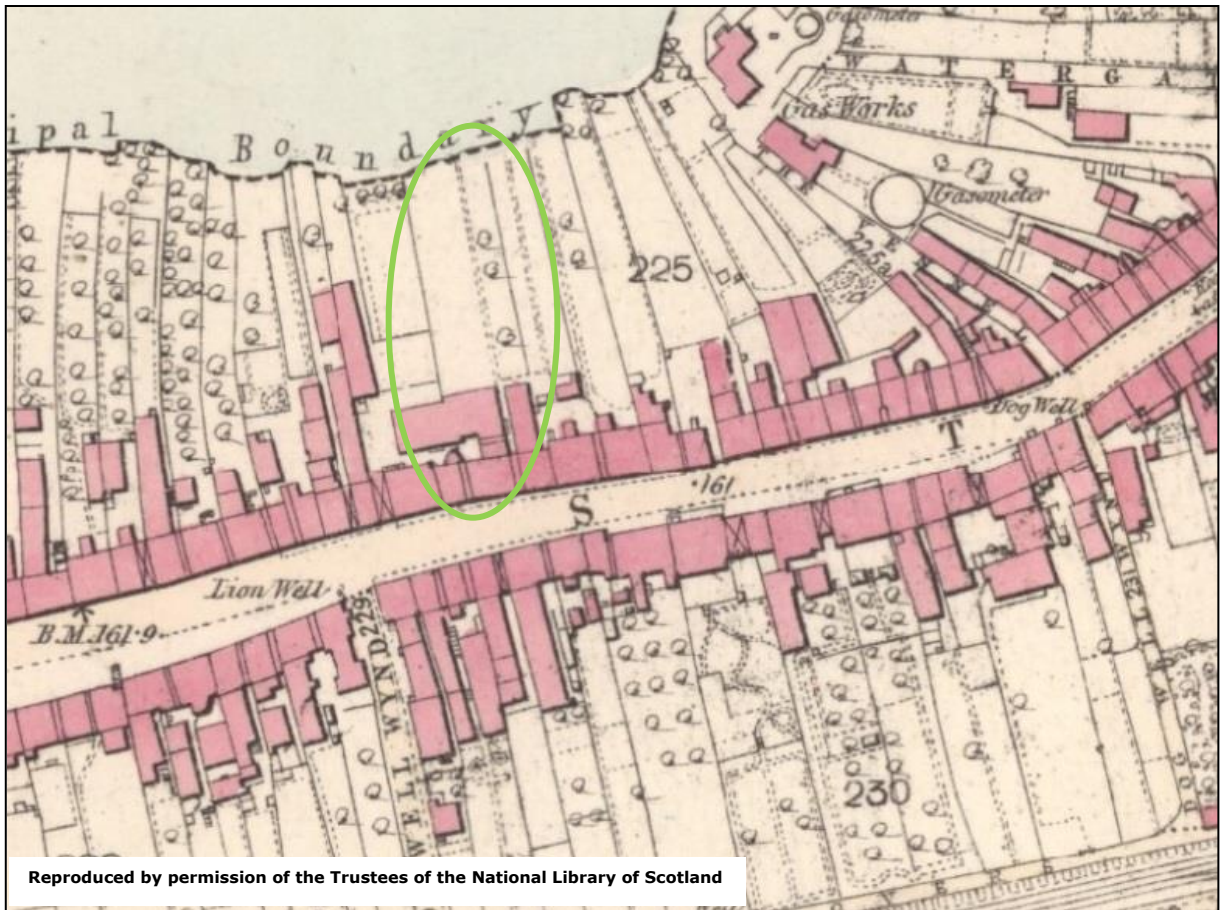


Figure 2a: 1st edition Ordnance Survey, 25-inch (1855)

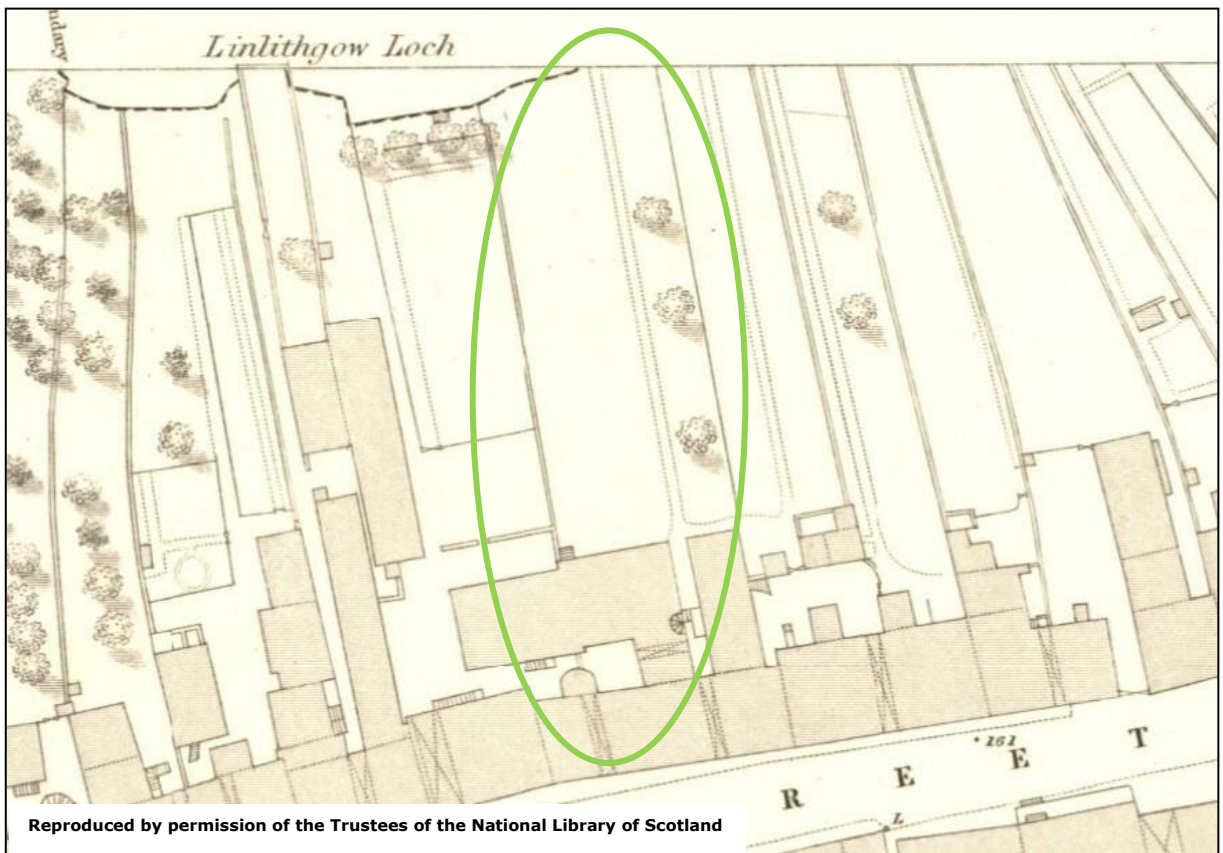


Figure 2b: large-scale Ordnance Survey Town Plan (1856)

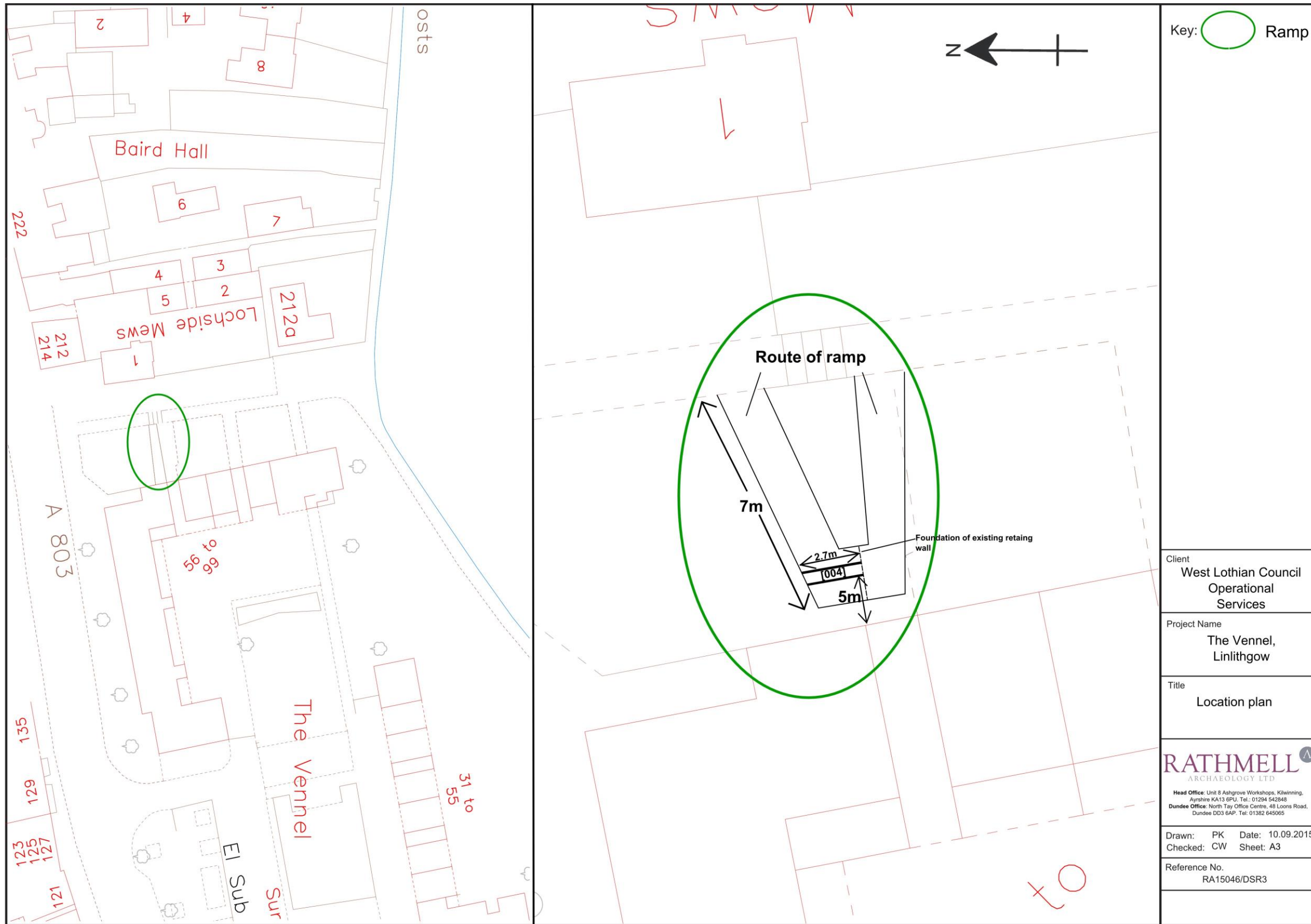


Figure 3: Plan of the ramp and location of feature [004]

Project Works

9. The programme of mitigation consisted of the archaeological monitoring of the excavation of the route for graded ramp and associated foundation trenches. Works were undertaken by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd and consistent with the terms described in the Written Scheme of investigation (Matthews 2015). Monitoring, recording and excavation were carried out in conjunction with the terms of this document.
10. Archaeological monitoring works were undertaken over four days. Site investigation works consisting of the excavation of the existing ground to the required depth and for wall foundations were undertaken on the 20th, 21st, 25th and 27th August 2015. Excavations were carried out by a Schaeff HR14 rubber tracked excavator.
11. Any potentially significant archaeological features, structures or deposits encountered were recorded by the archaeologist on site, using Rathmell Archaeology Ltd standard methods. All contexts, small finds and environmental samples were given unique numbers with bulk finds collected by context.
12. All works complied with West of Scotland Archaeology Service Standard Conditions who also visited the site on two occasions, the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statement.

Findings

13. The first stage of archaeological monitoring works covered the machine digging and removal of the existing flower bed and modern red brick retaining wall (Figure 4a) to enable access to the upper southern area and route of the ramp.
14. The upper southern area of the ramp (Figure 4b) was excavated from the present footpath and west towards the flats, covering an area of 7m by 3m with an eventual maximum depth of 1.2m. On excavation it became clear that the underlying deposits were formed of demolition material with red brick forming one of the predominant materials (Figure 5a).
15. The north and south facing sections (Figures 5b & 6a respectively) in the upper area of the ramp provided the clearest example of the underlying deposits. Context (001) was formed by a loose to moderately compacted clayey silt mix with frequent roots & rootles and formed the upper topsoil.
16. Directly below (001) was a moderately compacted black aggregate (Type 1) mixed with bitumen, 7m in length and 100mm thick (002) (Figure 5b). Forming the lowest and thickest deposit was (003) and characterised by a moderately compacted, light brown silty sand with very frequent red brick and sandstone fragments. Evidence of inclusions throughout representing demolition and general waste material: paint tins, glass, brown salt glazed piping and exposed to a maximum depth of 800mm.
17. The only feature recorded was [004] (Figures 6b & 7a) which consisted of a north-south aligned stone feature. This measured 560mm wide by 2.70m in length, extending northwards from the section, and was exposed to a maximum depth of 600mm. It was constructed predominantly of sandstone, and both faces were formed of sandstone blocks, though these were snecked rubble rather than ashlar. Red brick and small sandstone fragments had been used as filling in the core of the wall, and cement bonding was observed when the top 400mm of the feature was removed.
18. Where the ramp turned to return back east and to the present footpath, this exposed the west facing section (Figure 7b). This exposed both contexts (001) and (003) as well as a new context; (005). This was a moderately compacted, red pink coloured layer, 470mm thick by 4m in width and formed by small fragments of stone.



Figure 4a: Removal of the modern retaining wall and flower bed



Figure 4b: Route of the upper southern area of the ramp



Figure 5a: Demonstrating the substantial quantity of red brick in the underlying deposit



Figure 5b: North facing section in the upper southern area of the ramp



Figure 6a: South facing section in the upper southern area of the ramp



Figure 6b: East facing section of feature [004]



Figure 7a: Plan view of feature [004]



Figure 7b: West facing section



Figure 8a: Showing the lower northern area of the ramp and foundation trenches



Figure 8b: South facing section of the north side foundation trench

19. On excavation of the lower northern area of the ramp (Figure 8a) it was clear that along with the southern area of the ramp, this area had also been heavily disturbed by the previous flower bed and by the insertion of services (Figure 8a).
20. The upper layer (006) was a compacted, black and 100mm thick tarmac. Below this (007) was a moderately compacted with light grey angular and sub angular small stones measuring 200mm thick and 7m in length.
21. The final context (008) was formed by a moderately compacted, black clay silt with very frequent brick and sandstone and exposed to a depth of 200mm. This deposit was damp to touch.

Discussion

22. As WoSAS noted, the development area lies within one of the most extensively redeveloped sections of the medieval core of the burgh. Evidence for the substantial development was recorded in the contexts (002), (003) and (005) that formed the underlying deposits or 'made-ground' in the upper southern area of the ramp and have produced the approximate 1.5m difference in height between the southern and northern parts of the ramp.
23. Context (002) forms what may have been previously a tarmac footpath or car park that was eventually grassed over, or may possibly have been linked to the construction of the adjacent flats and represents the temporary flooring of a compound/storage area.
24. The make-up of context (003) would suggest that this is a layer of demolition material and may have been brought in from elsewhere or is associated with previous structures from within the development area. Context (005) represents an industrial waste material commonly referred to as red blaes and has also been used to raise the ground level.
25. The large-scale Ordnance Survey Town Plan (1856) depicts buildings within the development area and it is possible that the linear feature [004] is potentially located on the footprint of part of this earlier structure, whose location may well have been influenced by an older structure. Where diagnostic fragments of red brick from the core were able to be inspected they showed well defined right angled arises/edges and gauge/height that would suggest they were modern mass produced and not older forms of brick. Along with the use of cement bonding, this would further suggest that [004] represents the lower courses of a 19th century or later wall.
26. The last contexts (006) formed the present footpath that provides access for 'The Vennel' flats to the east with (007) forming a levelling aggregate layer onto which the footpath was laid. Context (008) represents a natural subsoil which has been heavily disturbed by the insertion of service and drainage pipes. The evidence of small fragments of brick and sandstone possibly represents material that was deposited when the area was cleared to construct 'The Vennel' flats and then landscaped to from the present appearance.

Recommendations

27. The archaeological mitigation works revealed the lower courses of a sandstone wall aligned north-south and exposed to a length of 1.7m and a maximum depth of 600mm. The presence of cement bonding and red brick used within the core suggest that this feature is considered to be of a recent origin. No other significant archaeological was uncovered during the archaeological monitoring.
28. As such it is the recommendation of Rathmell Archaeology Ltd that no further works are appropriate. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with WoSAS on behalf of West Lothian Council.

Conclusion

29. A programme of archaeological monitoring was carried over four days on the 20th, 21st, 25th, 27th August 2015 on behalf of West Lothian Council Operational Services in support of the construction of a graded ramp at The Vennel, Linlithgow (Planning Ref: 0677/FUL/14). This Data Structure Report covers the monitoring works requested by WoSAS who advise West Lothian Council on archaeological matters.
30. In the course of the archaeological monitoring a structural feature [004] was recovered and represents the lower courses of a sandstone wall representing possibly 19th century activity. No other significant archaeology was uncovered.
31. The deposits recorded, primarily in the southern area of the ramp, represent modern activity in the form of 'made-ground' to raise the level of the area to its present form.

Acknowledgements

32. The author would like to thank West of Scotland Archaeology Service for their guidance on the structure of these archaeological works. We are grateful to West Lothian Operational Services who provided us the opportunity to carry out these works and for ensuring that the on-site works ran smoothly.

References

Documentary

Matthews, A. 2015. *The Vennel, Linlithgow, West Lothian: Archaeological Mitigation: Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd.

Cartographic

Roy, W.	1747-52	<i>Military Survey of Scotland Highlands</i>
Woods, W.	1820	<i>Plan of the Town of Linlithgow</i>
Ordnance Survey	1855	<i>25-inch 1st edition sheet V.3</i>
Ordnance Survey	1856	<i>25-inch large scale sheet 3</i>

Appendix 1: Registers

Context Register

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
001	Upper southern area of ramp and flower bed	Deposit	Loose to moderately compacted humic and silty with frequent roots & rootles, 300mm-500mm thick	Topsoil/garden soil
002	North & South sections, upper southern area of ramp	Deposit	Moderately compacted black aggregate (Type 1) mixed with bitumen, 7m in length and 100mm thick. Located below (001)	Tarmac surface, possibly representing an old road/path surface.
003	Southern area of ramp	Deposit	Moderately compacted, light brown silty sand with very frequent red brick and sandstone fragments. Evidence of inclusions throughout representing demolition and general waste material; paint tins, glass, brown salt glazed piping. Exposed to a maximum depth of 800mm, below (002)	Demolition material used to raise ground level: Made-ground
004	Southern area of ramp	Feature	N-S aligned, 560mm wide by 2.70m in length and exposed to a maximum depth of 600mm. Sandstone construction with red brick and small sandstone fragments used in the core/centre as filling. Finish on both faces is sandstone blocks (not ashlar), most likely snecked rubble construction. Cement bonding recorded when the top 400mm was removed.	Possibly a 19 th or early 20 th century wall
005	East facing section of ramp	Deposit	Moderately compacted, red pink colour, 470mm thick and 4m in width. Formed by small fragments of stone	Industrial waste material: Blaise
006	North area of ramp	Deposit	Compacted, black and 100mm thick tarmac	Footpath
007	North area of ramp	Deposit	Moderately compacted, light grey angular and sub angular small stones, 200mm thick and 7m in length	Aggregate (Type 1)
008	North area of	Deposit	Moderately compacted, black clay silt with very frequent brick and sandstone, exposed to a depth of 200mm.	Natural subsoil, heavily disturbed

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
	ramp		Deposit water logged to touch. The area has been heavily disturbed due to the insertion of services	

Photographic Register

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
01	1	Pre-excavation of steps and location of the ramp	NW	20/08/15
02	2	Pre-excavation of steps and location of the ramp	NE	20/08/15
03	3	Pre-excavation of steps and location of the ramp	N	20/08/15
04	4	Pre-excavation of steps and location of the ramp	S	20/08/15
05	5	Pre-excavation of the east side of the steps where the ramp is to be sited	W	20/08/15
06	6	Pre-excavation of the east side of the steps where the ramp is to be sited	W	20/08/15
07	7	Pre-excavation of the east side of the steps where the ramp is to be sited	N	20/08/15
08	8	Cutting tarmac on the path (lower northern are of the ramp)	W	20/08/15
09	9	Removing plants from flower pad	E	20/08/15
10	10	Upper southern course of ramp	SW	20/08/15
11	11	Removing garden/topsoil room flower pad	W	20/08/15
12	12	Showing removal of flower bed; working shot	N	20/08/15
13	13	Showing removal of flower bed; working shot	NW	20/08/15
14	14	Showing the garden soil (001)	N	20/08/15
15	15	Showing the west end of the ramp stratigraphy (where it turns)	N	20/08/15
16	16	De-turfing upper ramp area to the south	SW	20/08/15
17	17	Working shot	W	21/08/15

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
18	18	Made-ground (003), upper S length of ramp	S	21/08/15
19	19	Section of uncovered N-S wall (004)	S	21/08/15
20	20	Section of uncovered N-S wall (004)	E	21/08/15
21	21	Upper southern side of ramp	E	21/08/15
22	22	West side of ramp	N	21/08/15
23	23	West facing of (004)	W	21/08/15
24	24	West facing of (004) south side	W	21/08/15
25	25	West facing of (004) north side	W	21/08/15
26	26	East facing section	E	21/08/15
27	27	Retaining wall	N	21/08/15
28	28	Retaining wall	N	21/08/15
29	29	North facing section	N	21/08/15
30	30	South facing section	S	21/08/15
31	31	North facing section	N	21/08/15
32	32	Context (003) behind retaining wall	NE	21/08/15
33	33	West facing section of (004)	W	25/08/15
34	34	Digger bucket with wall debris showing red brick inclusion in (004)	W	25/08/15
35	35	Wall (004) being taken down	E	25/08/15
36	36	North facing section& wall debris	N	25/08/15
37	37	General shot, showing cement/concrete bonding	NE	25/08/15
38	38	North facing section, where (004) continues under grass	N	25/08/15
39	39	Working shot, showing brick & made-ground, upper S area	W	25/08/15
40	40	South facing section, upper S area of ramp	S	25/08/15

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
41	41	Showing concrete founds of retaining wall	N	27/08/15
42	42	Working shot, digging founds in lower N part of ramp	SE	27/08/15
43	43	South facing section of foundation trench in lower N area of ramp	S	27/08/15
44	44	Showing foundation trench for wall on N edge of ramp	NW	27/08/15
45	45	Post-excavation of area	E	27/08/15
46	46	Post-excavation of area	SE	27/08/15

Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	West Lothian
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	The Vennel, Linlithgow, West Lothian
PROJECT CODE:	RA15046
PARISH:	Linlithgow
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Peter Klemen
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rathmell Archaeology Limited
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Monitoring
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NT 0001 7709
START DATE (this season)	20 th August 2015
END DATE (this season)	27 th August 2015
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	<p>A programme of archaeological monitoring was carried over two phases on the 20th, 21st, 25th, 27th August 2015 on behalf of West Lothian Council Operational Services in support of the construction of a graded ramp at The Vennel, Linlithgow (Planning Ref: 0677/FUL/14). This Data Structure Report covers the monitoring works requested by WoSAS who advise West Lothian Council on archaeological matters.</p> <p>In the course of the archaeological monitoring a structural feature [004] was recovered and represents the lower courses of a sandstone wall representing possibly 19th century activity. No other significant archaeology was uncovered.</p> <p>The deposits recorded, primarily in the southern area of the ramp, represent modern activity in the form of 'made-ground' to raise the level of the area to its present form.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	West Lothian Operational Services
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Unit 8 Ashgrove Workshops, Kilwinning, Ayrshire KA13 6PU
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Report to WoSAS and archive to HES Collections.

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