

Swanston Road, Edinburgh: Archaeological Mitigation

Data Structure Report



by Claire Williamson
issued 9th April 2019
on behalf of Mr R Niklasson

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 Claire Williamson Date9th April 2019.....

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

Checked LM Clancy Date9th April 2019.....

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Quality Assurance Data

Author(s)	Claire Williamson		
Date of Issue	9 th April 2019	Version	1.0
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NGR	NT 23959 68258	Parish	Edinburgh
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Canmore IDs	None		

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Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared for Mr R Niklasson in support of the construction of a new house at Swanston Road, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 23959 68258). The archaeological works were designed to mitigate the impact on any archaeological remains within the development area.
2. The works have been granted conditioned Planning Consent by City of Edinburgh Council (18/03101/FUL). The City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service, which advises City of Edinburgh Council on archaeological matters, provided guidance on the structure of archaeological works appropriate on this site. Rathmell Archaeology Ltd has been appointed by Mr R Niklasson to undertake the development and implementation of the archaeological mitigation works.
3. The Written Scheme of Investigation (Krischer 2019) provided the detail of the works (archaeological monitoring, exclusion, excavation, post-excavation analyses and publication) for the mitigation pertaining to groundbreaking within the development area and hence the direct physical impact on buried sediments.

Historical and Archaeological Background

4. The development area is located between 4 and 12 Swanston Road, Edinburgh. The plot lies to the west of Swanston Road (centred on: NT 23959 668258, see Figure 3). The development area was in use as a garden until recently for a neighbouring house. The historical mapping shows very little change in the development area from the 18th century onwards. It is depicted as open countryside on Roy's *Military Survey of Scotland* (1747-52). Swanston Road and Oxgangs Road are both shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (Figure 1a), where the development area is depicted as agricultural fields. There is little change in the development area within the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey (Figure 1b) and the area remains unchanged until the Ordnance Survey of 1944, which depicts a number of houses around the intersection of Swanston Road and Oxgangs Road, including the house which currently lies adjacent to the development area to the north.
5. No known archaeological sites are located within the development area and no previous archaeological works have been conducted within the area.

Project Works

6. The programme of works comprised the archaeological monitoring of groundbreaking works within ground to the south of 4 Swanston Road, Edinburgh (Figure 3).
7. The groundbreaking works consisted of topsoil stripping across the site of the house plot, including part of the driveway, to reveal the underlying natural subsoil in order to clear the area of any archaeological features prior to further development works taking place. The eastern portion of the driveway was only taken down to the required maximum working depth which did not reach subsoil. The works were undertaken using a 360° tracked excavator with a smooth ditching bucket and took place on the 1st April 2019.
8. Prior to attending the site, upstanding vegetation along the northern half of the eastern edge had been cleared to ground level. This was to allow access for the machine to enter the site from Swanston Road.
9. In compliance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Krischer 2019) any potential archaeological features were investigated and recorded. All works were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statements.

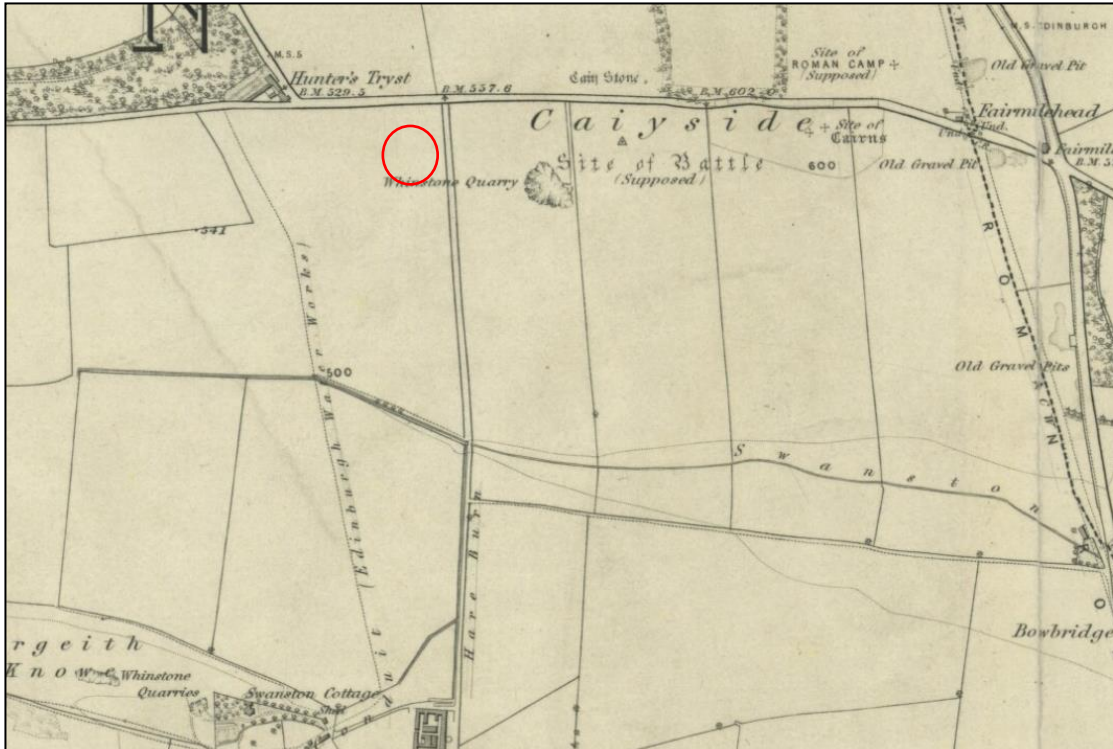


Figure 1a: Ordnance survey 1st edition (1855) with the development area shown in red

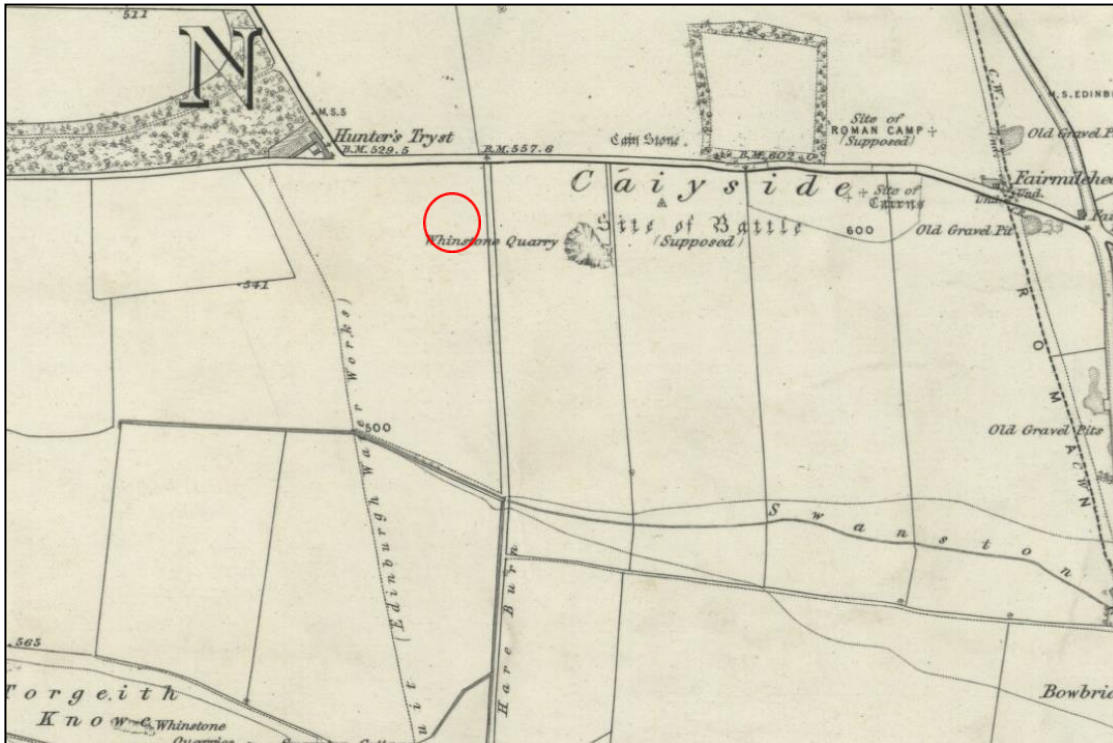


Figure 1b: Ordnance Survey 2nd edition (1885) with the development area shown in red



Figure 2a: Pre-excitation shot of the development area from the east



Figure 2b: Sample shot of south facing section showing depth of topsoil (001)

Findings

10. The area sat within an enclosed grassed area just to the south of 4 Swanston Road, Edinburgh (Figure 3). The area had been previously used as a garden and was bounded by a mixture of timber fencing and hedgerows (Figure 2a).
11. The stripped area consisted of both the area of the house plot and also the driveway which will run in from Swanston Road to the east (Figure 3). The area of the house plot measured approximately 15.4m east-west by 12.6m north-south (Figure 4a). Directly adjacent to the east, the area for the driveway measured approximately 7m east-west by 5.2m north-south (Figure 4b). The stripped area stopped roughly 3m to the west of the pavement along Swanston Road where the driveway will be built up to meet the back edge of the pavement. This 3m section was not covered by turf as it comprised the area of upstanding vegetation (previously cleared) and also a 1m wide strip of concrete which bounded the eastern edge of the development area.
12. Prior to excavation, the entire area was covered by turf with underlying topsoil (001). (001) comprised a moderately compacted dark brown clayey silt with frequent rootlets and small stone inclusions. It contained occasional fragments of modern glass and 19th/20th century white glazed pottery sherds. The topsoil measured up to 500mm thick (Figure 2b).
13. The works removed (001) to reveal natural subsoil (002) across the entire area of the house plot and the western 2m of the driveway. This consisted of a firmly compacted mid- brownish orange sandy clay with frequent gravel inclusions (Figure 4a). The eastern portion of the driveway stopped within topsoil (001) and does not require to be taken any deeper.
14. No archaeological features were present, and the only finds noted were the occasional 19th/20th century artefacts throughout topsoil (001).

Discussion

15. No archaeological features were uncovered during the course of the monitoring works. The ground was revealed to have a simple stratigraphy of topsoil directly overlying natural subsoil, with no features visible cut into the upper surface of the subsoil.
16. The only artefacts noted were occasional fragments of modern glass and white glazed pottery visible within the topsoil. Looking at the available mapping from the 19th and early 20th century, this ground appears to have sat at the corner of a large agricultural field, although the use of the ground for this purpose has left behind little in terms of archaeological evidence. The presence of modern artefacts in the topsoil likely reflects the growing expansion of housing and settlements within the surrounding area throughout this period and into the latter half of the 20th century.
17. We know from historical accounts that prehistoric burials have been found within the surrounding area further to the east, and we also know of the presence of a standing stone in the area – Caiy Stane – which is protected as a Scheduled Monument (SM1155). The lack of archaeological features within this ground might imply that this activity did not extend this far west, but it is quite possible that this we are looking at too small a sample area to have caught what might still be present elsewhere in the vicinity.

Recommendations

18. No significant archaeological remains were located within the development area.
19. On balance, given the lack of significant archaeological material recovered in the course of the monitoring works, we consider that the development works will not compromise any significant archaeological strata. Rathmell Archaeology Ltd recommends that no further archaeological works be undertaken with regards to this development and the planning condition be purged.
20. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with City of Edinburgh Council and their advisors, the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service.

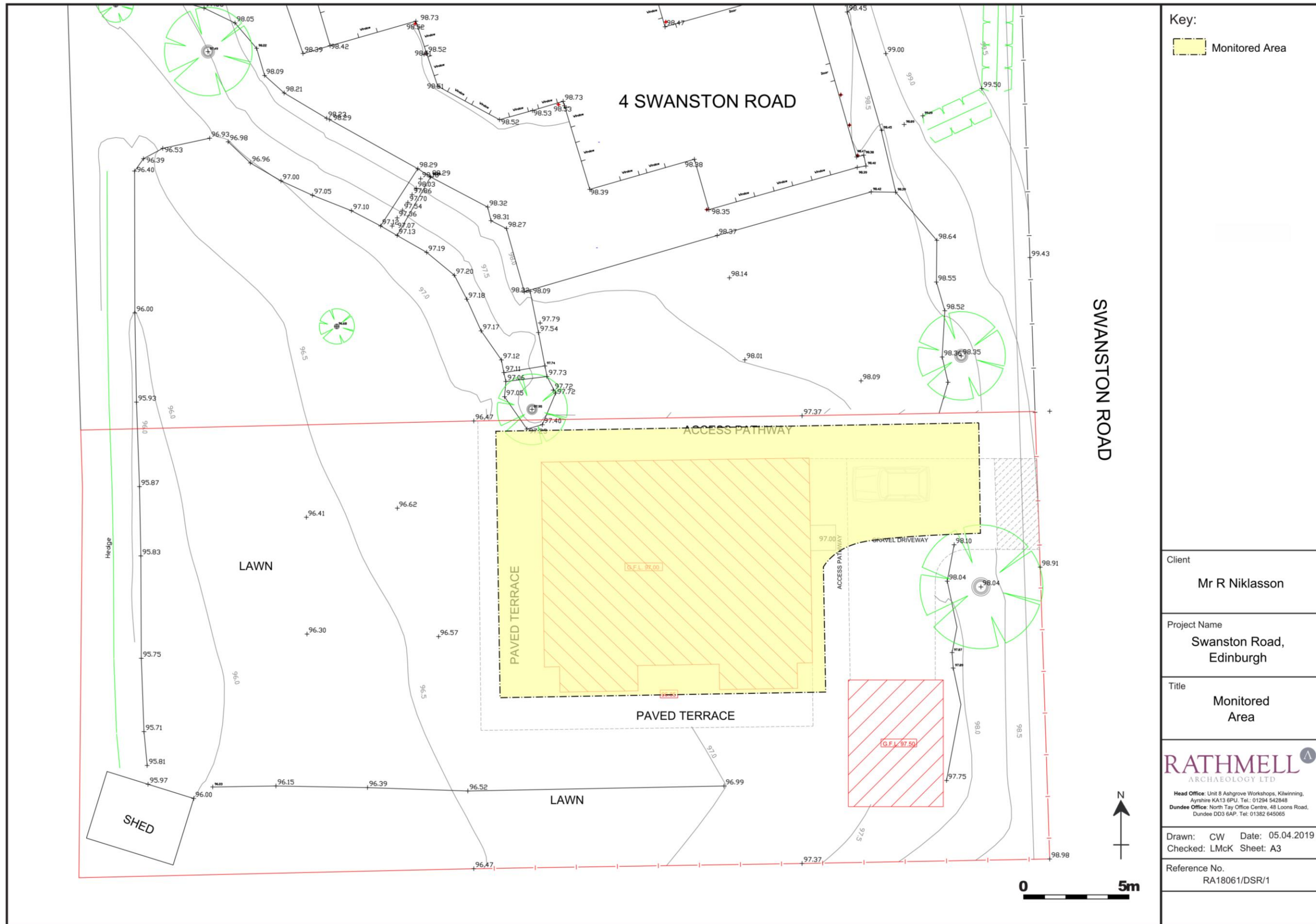


Figure 3: Plan showing monitored area



Figure 4a: General view of the house plot from the northeast showing subsoil (002)



Figure 4b: General view of the area for the driveway from the east-northeast

Conclusion

21. Archaeological monitoring works were carried out in support of the construction of a new house at Swanston Road, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 23959 68258). The archaeological works were designed to mitigate the impact on any archaeological remains within the development area.
22. The works did not identify the presence of any archaeological features within the development area and the only artefacts present were fragments of modern 19th/20th century pottery and glass within the topsoil.

Acknowledgements

23. The author is grateful to the client, Mr R Niklasson, for allowing us the chance to carry out these works, and also to the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service who gave guidance throughout the project. I would also like to thank Iain Thompson Contracts Ltd who carried out the works on site. Final thanks also go to Thomas Rees for his support throughout the project, as well as to Liam McKinstry for his final editing of the report.

References

Krischer, S. 2019 *Swanston Road, Edinburgh: Archaeological Mitigation, Written Scheme of Investigation*, unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd

Cartographic

Roy, W.	1752-55	<i>Military Survey of Scotland (Lowlands)</i>
Ordnance Survey	1855	Six-inch 1 st Edition <i>Edinburghshire Sheet 6</i>
Ordnance Survey	1885	Six-inch 2 nd Edition <i>Edinburghshire Sheet 6</i>
Ordnance Survey	1944	Six-inch 7 th Edition <i>Edinburghshire Sheet VII.NE</i>

Appendix 1: Registers

Within this appendix are all registers pertaining to works on-site during the watching brief.

Context Register

Context	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
001		Deposit	Moderately compacted dark brown clayey silt with frequent rootlets and small stone inclusions. Also contained occasional fragments of modern glass and 19 th /20 th century white glazed pottery sherds. Measured up to 500mm thick. Present across the whole area.	Topsoil
002		Deposit	Firmly compacted mid- brownish orange sandy clay with frequent gravel inclusions. Present across the whole area.	Natural subsoil

Photographic Register

Image	Digital	Description	From	Date
01	972	Pre-excavation shot of site	E	01/04/19
02	973	Pre-excavation shot of site	E	01/04/19
03	974	Working shot	W	01/04/19
04	975	Working shot	W	01/04/19
05	976	Sample S facing section	S	01/04/19
06	977	Post-excavation shot of house plot fully stripped	NE	01/04/19
07	978	Post-excavation shot of house plot fully stripped	NE	01/04/19
08	979	General post-excavation shot of site	W	01/04/19
09	980	General post-excavation shot with area of driveway in foreground	ENE	01/04/19
10	981	General post-excavation shot with area of driveway in foreground	ENE	01/04/19

Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Swanston Road, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	RA18061
PARISH:	Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Claire Williamson
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rathmell Archaeology Limited
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NT 23959 68258
START DATE (this season)	1 st April 2019
END DATE (this season)	1 st April 2019
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	Archaeological monitoring works were carried out in support of the construction of a new house at Swanston Road, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 23959 68258). The archaeological works were designed to mitigate the impact on any archaeological remains within the development area. The works did not identify the presence of any archaeological features within the development area and the only artefacts present were fragments of modern 19 th /20 th century pottery and glass within the topsoil.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr R Niklasson
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Unit 8 Ashgrove Workshops, Kilwinning, Ayrshire KA13 6PU
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Report to the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service and archive to the National Record of the Historic Environment

Contact Details

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