61 Wilson Avenue, Prestonpans.

March 2011

Carried out on behalf of Mr D. Ledward

CHC connolly • heritage • consultancy

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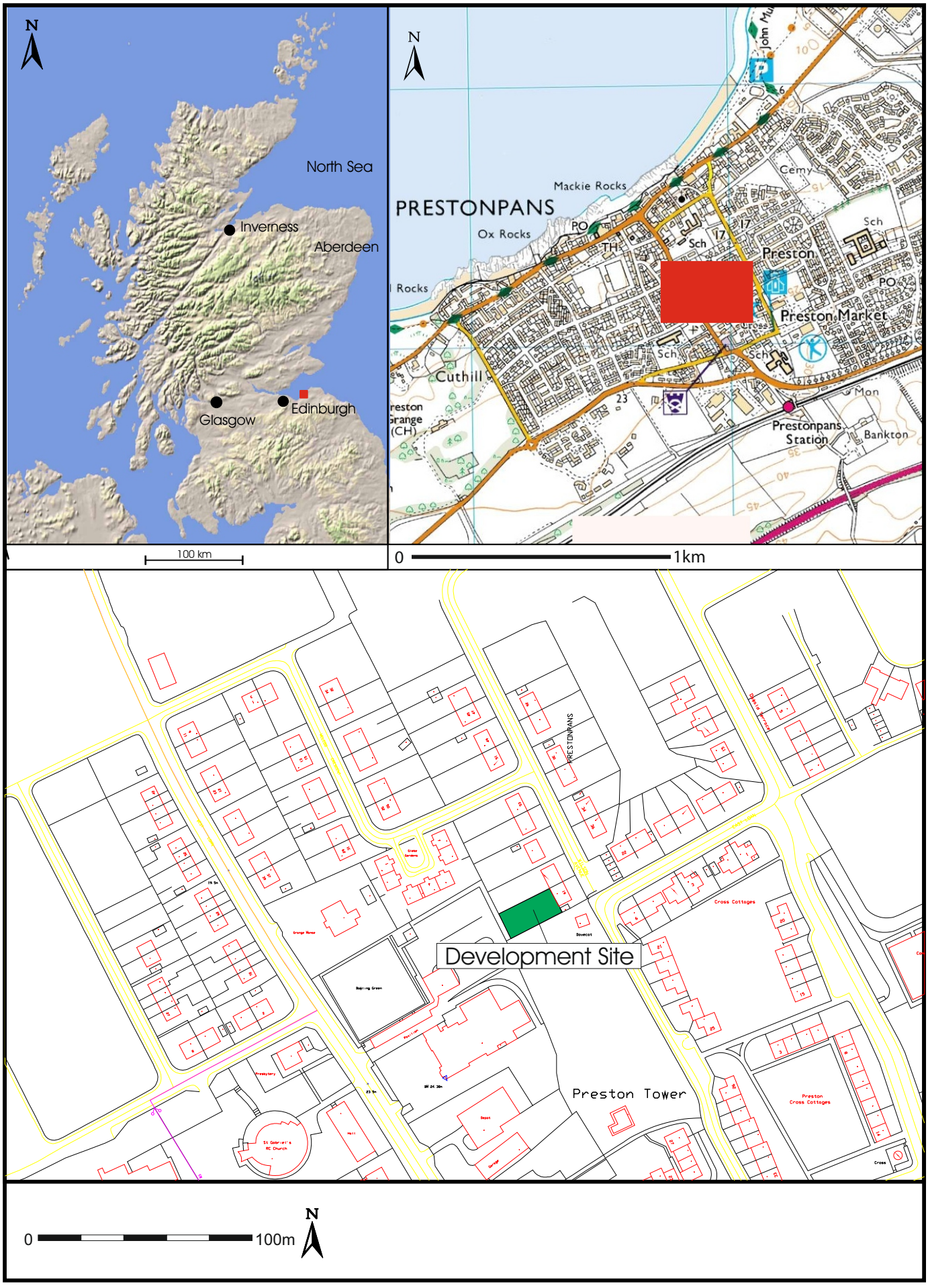


Figure 1: Location Plan

1. SUMMARY

1.1 An archaeological watching brief was required due to an archaeological condition being placed on the development at 61 Wilson Avenue, Prestonpans. The site is located, within an historic village, and has a southern boundary shared with Preston Tower.

1.2 The work consisted of an intrusive evaluation on the line of the extension foundations to a depth of +700mm to ensure no archaeologically significant deposits would be impacted.

1.3 These works were commissioned by Mr Ledward, the current occupier of the property. The work was undertaken on the 10th and 11th March 2011, and was restricted to the area to be impacted by development works set out in application **(09/01048/P).**

1.4 The work will enable the East Lothian Archaeological Officer to decide on the need for further work, or the removal of this particular condition.

1.5 The project is recorded as OASIS entry: connolly1-97098 (1)

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Site location

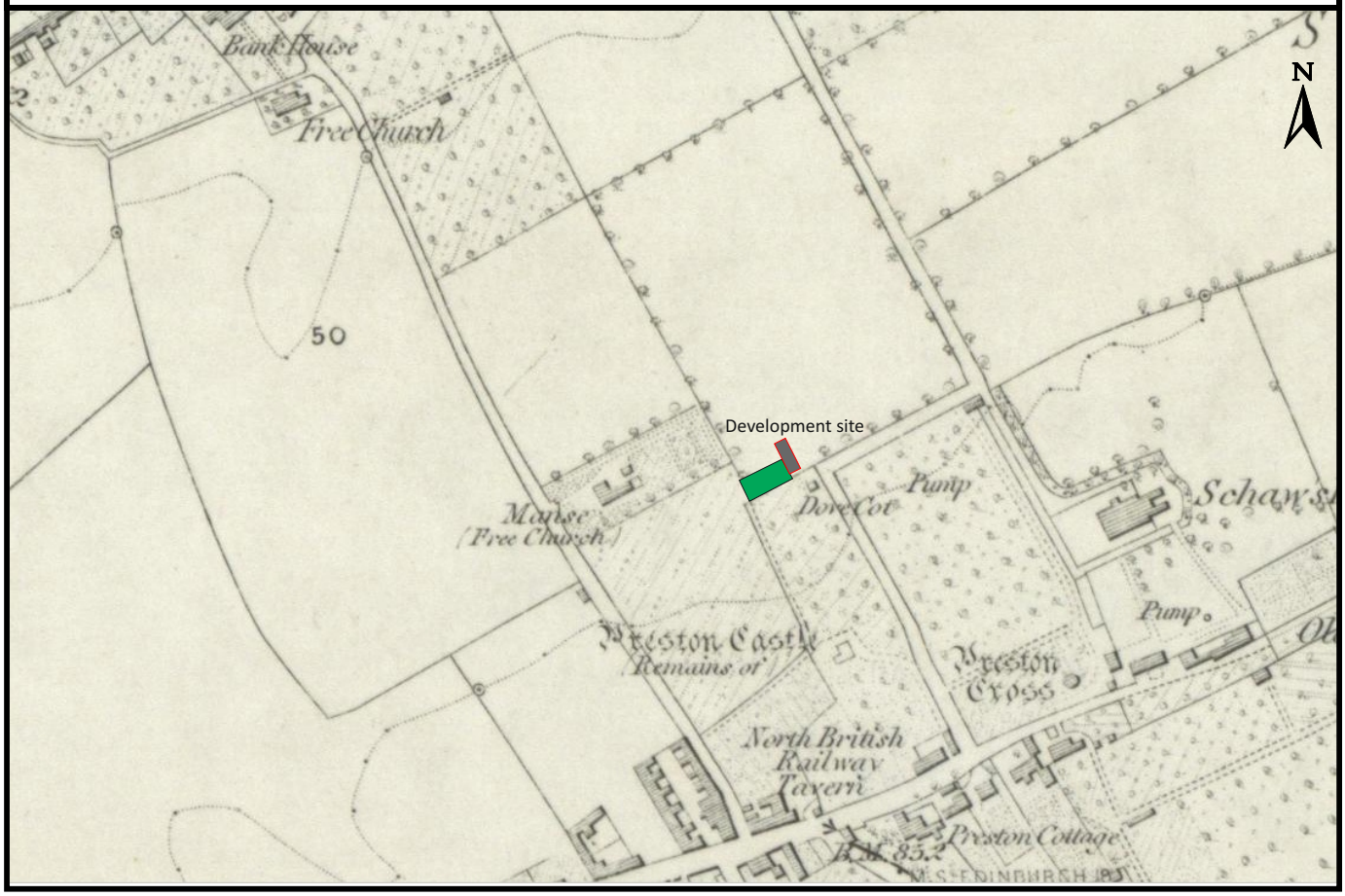
2.1.1. The site is located at the south end of Wilson Avenue directly to the south of Preston Tower centred at NT 3897 7417 (Fig. 1). The site lies on the upper reaches of a raised cliffline.

2.2 Site History

2.1.2. No prior work on this site has been carried out by professional archaeologists however, prior work in the immediate locale has been undertaken.

2.1.3. A watching brief was carried out by AOC Archaeology in 1996 within the area of Preston Tower and identified archaeological remains possibly relating to the construction or repair of the tower itself. In 2002 and 2003 Headland Archaeology Ltd carried out an evaluation and subsequent excavation (EEL 237 and 238) of the area to the immediate west of Preston Tower (to the south west of the current development area). A number of archaeological features were identified including prehistoric and medieval remains as well as post medieval cultivation furrows.

1755 - Gen. William Roy



1853 - 1st edition Ordnance Survey map

Figure 2: Historical maps

2.1.4. To the immediate south of the development lies the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Preston Tower and Dovecot (SAM 774). Preston Tower (MEL 60) dates to the 15th century with 17th century additions. It has been burnt three times during its history 1544, 1633 and 1650. The Dovecot (MEL 52) dates to the late 16th century. Both structures are surrounded by an enclosure wall dating to the 17th century.

2.1.5. Preston Tower was probably built by Sir Robert Hamilton when he inherited the estates of Preston around 1460. Originally the four storey tower stood to a height of 14 metres. The walls in the main tower are 2 metres thick.

2.1.6. During the Rough Wooing, the tower was burned by the English under the command of the Earl of Hereford in 1544, but it was restored and reoccupied.

2.1.7. Preston Tower has the unusual feature of having a further two storeys built above the level of the parapet (raising the overall height to 20.4 metres). These were added by Sir John Hamilton in 1626, and on the south pediment above a Renaissance window are the initials SIDKH (for Sir John and Dame Katherine Hamilton).

2.1.8. In 1650, following the Battle of Dunbar, Cromwell's troops burned the castle, but it was restored, as noted by the date and initials carved into the east pediment. At the same time as the restoration a doocot was built and the whole property surrounded by a garden wall.

2.1.9. However in 1663 the castle was accidentally set on fire, and never reoccupied, the Hamiltons moving to their nearby property Preston House. It was bought by the National Trust for Scotland in 1969, and is now under the guardianship of East Lothian Council.

2.1.10. Map regression on the site was conducted; however, it clearly shows the site has been open ground to the north of the 17th century enclosure wall, since at least the mid 18th century. (Fig. 2)

2.1.11. The potential for pre 17th century material was likely, given the development sites location and prehistoric features would not be unusual along this coastline and raised beach area.

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 The basis for investigation is to examine the presence of any substantive remains that may survive in the backlot to the rear of the property, which may show the evolution medieval activity including plough lands and even prehistoric features.

3.2 As no intrusive work has been carried out in this location before further, the relationships of the present standing structures will be examined as part of the investigation.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 A single trench was excavated using a Kubota mechanical digger fitted with a 600mm flatbladed ditching bucket. All surfaces examined and were then hand cleaned prior to further excavation. Trenches were excavated until natural was reached, and a small sondage was excavated through the natural for a further 100mm to ensure it was not redeposited.

4.2 For ease of reference, the single foundation trench is split into three with the trenches were located along all three sides of the proposed extension.

4.3 Each context was cleaned, levelled recorded and photographed using a 10 Mega-pixal digital camera, before further examination.

4.4 A field drawing was made of the features in situ which is presented in Figure 3.

4.5 Artefacts were collected and are presented in Appendix 3.

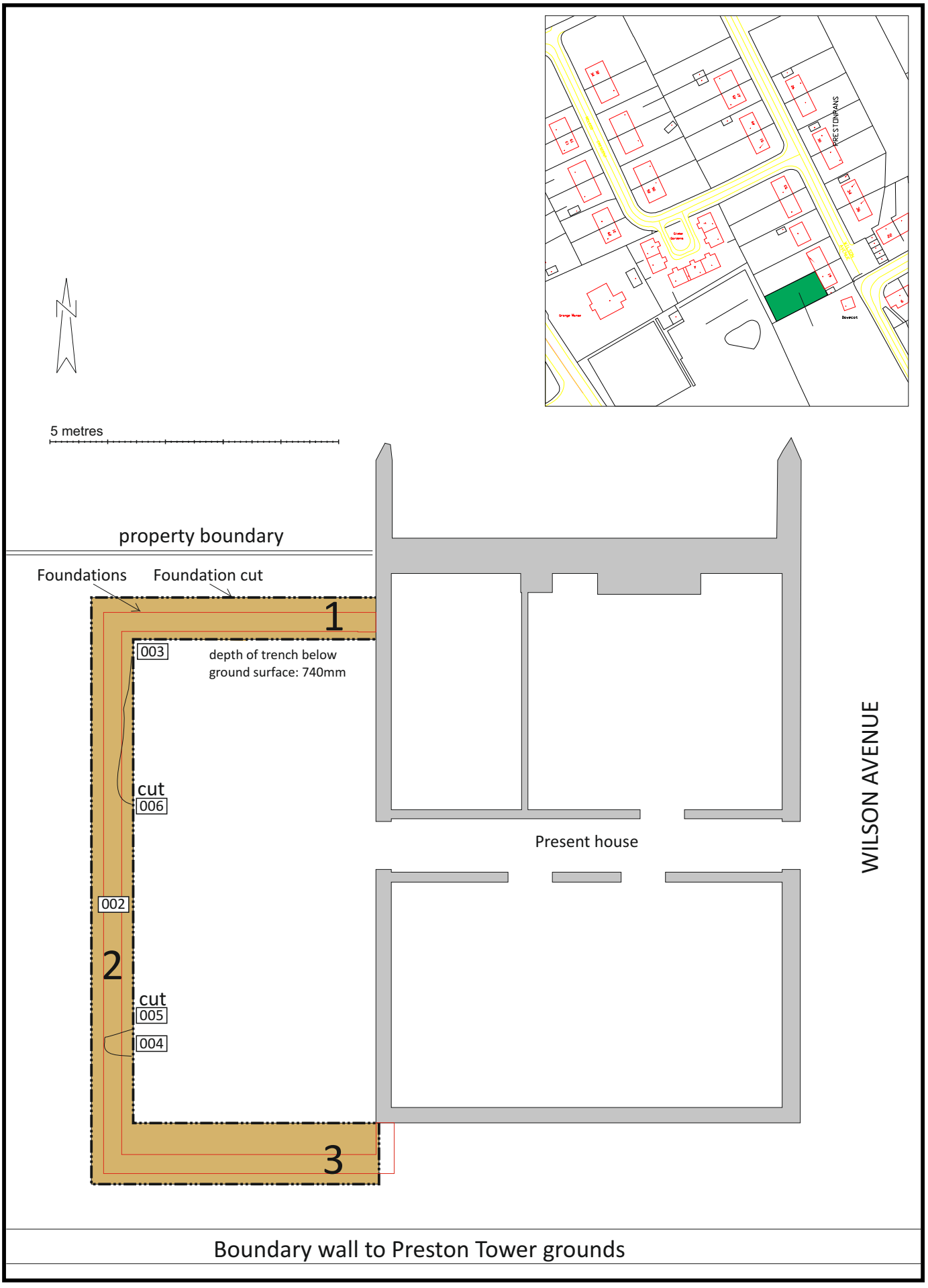


Figure 3: Site Plan

5.0 RESULTS

5.1 Fieldwork

5.1.1 The work was undertaken over 2 days on the 10th and 11th March 2011, with fine weather and good visibility of soil changes. The garden soil was of even thickness across the evaluated area and was c. 300-350mm in depth and the distinction between layers was marked.

5.1.2 The various datasets from the investigation are presented in the appendices; Contexts (Appendix 1)Photographic list (Appendix 2), Finds register (Appendix 3),

5.2 Trenches (Fig. 3)

5.2.1 **North trench (1);** length 4.6m east west, width 660mm, final depth .740mm (from ground surface)

5.2.2 After the initial clearance of patio slabs and whindust, the topsoil [001] was removed to a depth of circa 420mm revealing a sandy clay matrix [002] which is interpreted as subsoil/natural. Removal of this layer to a depth of 200mm showed it to be an artefact sterile deposit. A pit cut [006] was recognised from the top of the soil horizon, also cutting into layer [002]. The fill was of modern debris from house construction, including broken glass, concrete and rubbish – including crisp packets.

5.2.3 **West trench (2);** length 10.2m east west, width 660mm, final depth .740mm (from ground surface)

5.2.4 After the initial clearance of patio slabs and whindust , topsoil [001] was removed to a depth of circa 420mm revealing a sandy clay matrix [002] which is interpreted as subsoil/natural. Further removal of this layer to a depth of 200mm showed it to be an artefact sterile deposit. Pit cut [006] continued from Trench 1 cutting into layer [002], allowing the shape to be defined as sub rectangular with steep sides, measuring 1.90m se-nw and 3.20m sw-ne and a depth of 800mm from the top of [002].

5.2.5 A shallow cut [005] only 300mm wide and 200mm deep was recognised within [002], though it may have been cut from higher. Filled with a darker brown silty clay, [004] and smaller stones at its base, it may have been an animal burrow. A sherd of early 19th century stoneware and a shard of bottle glass were recovered from the base. [Plate 1]

Plate 1: Feature [005] with fill [004] and stones in base.

5.2.6 **South trench (3);** length 4.6m east west, width 760mm, final depth .740mm (from ground surface)

5.2.7 After the initial clearance of patio slabs and whindust , topsoil [001] was removed to a depth of circa 420mm revealing a sandy clay matrix [002] which is interpreted as subsoil/natural. Further removal of this layer to a depth of 200mm showed it to be an artefact sterile deposit.

5.2.8 No further features were found within this trench

5.3 Artefacts

5.3.1 All artefacts were recovered from within [001] and fills [003] / [004] and date from the late 18th century to the late 20th century. The artefacts consisted of glass bottle shards and general cooking and tableware ceramics, including recognisable late 18th century/19th century Prestonpans redwares.

5.3.2 A broken picture hook was also recovered from the topsoil [001] but is of 19th/early 20th century date

5.3.3 A fragment of kiln furniture was recovered a No. 8 tripod. Obviously from one of the Prestonpans potteries.

5.3.4 A pipe bowl was found with a harp and the word Erin beneath, made by Campbell and Co The stem is stamped with the word Derry, which was a brand of pipe dating to the late 19th century, created mainly for Irish immigrants.

Plate 2: Derry pattern clay pipe - Late 19th century

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The programme of evaluation has shown that in the areas of investigation there are no archaeological constraints within the zone of proposed development.

6.2 A large depth of well sorted topsoil confirms the use of this area as open field from at least the 17th century, after the construction of the Preston Tower surrounding wall to the south.

6.3 Beneath this topsoil is natural subsoil [002] which is archaeologically sterile.

6.4 The large cut [006] relates to the building of the modern houses at the site, while the smaller cut [005] may be an animal burrow.

6.5 There is no archaeological evidence in features or artefacts that give any indication of medieval or earlier activity in this locale.

David Connolly March 2011

Appendix 1 Context Register

Context	Description
001	Topsoil layer of well sorted dark brown garden soil – c. 420mm depth (beneath ground surface)
002	Firm grey mottled brown sandy silt with some charcoal flecks but sterile from anthropogenic material
003	A recent rubbish pit fill containing building waste, glass, and crisp wrappers, suggesting a date corresponding to the house building. c. 800mm + deep and c.3m north south – fill of cut 006
004	Dark brown silty clay, with frequent small stones towards base fill of cut 005
005	Shallow cut measuring c.300mm wide and 80mm deep, cut into the natural 002. A possible animal burrow
006	Steep sided modern rubbish pit – up to 800mm deep. Cut from 200mm beneath present ground surface.

Appendix 2 Photo Register

ID	Code	Description	from	Date
1	PWA10_1	General view of site after removal of topsoil	**SW**	10/03/2011
2	PWA10_2	General view of site after removal of topsoil	**S**	10/03/2011
3	PWA10_3	Feature F005 after partial excavation, showing stone base	**E**	10/03/2011
4	PWA10_4	Glass and building waste 003 in pit 006	**N**	11/03/2011
5	PWA10_5	Along trench 1	**W**	11/03/2011
6	PWA10_6	Along trench 2	**NW**	11/03/2011
7	PWA10_7	General shot of excavation	**N**	11/03/2011
8	PWA10_8	General shot of excavation	**SE**	11/03/2011

Appendix 3 Artefact List

Context	Description
001	12 various sherd glazed redware and creamware (18th / 19th century) 2 Oyster shells 1 Kiln furniture tripod fragment 3 bones (animal) 1 Clay pipe 1 Cu Alloy picture hook (partial)
003	2 crisp packets (diagnostic 1970s (discarded)
004	1 stoneware (1 rim) (19th century) 1 fragment of bottle glass (19th century)

References

Roy Military Survey of Scotland, 1747-1755
Ordnance Survey Map 1854 Haddingtonshire 1:2500 scale map surveyed 1852
The Castles of Scotland Martin Coventry Edinburgh, **2006**

Discovery and Excavation Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY: East Lothian
Site Name: 61 Wilson Avenue
Parish: Prestonpans
Name of Contributor(s): David Connolly (Connolly Heritage Consultancy)
Type of Site or Find: 18th- 19th century orchard/field
NGR (2 letters, 6 or 8 figures): NT 3897 7417

Report:

An archaeological investigation prior to the rear extension of an 20th century semidetached property to the north of Preston Tower in Prestonpans. Excavation to a depth of 740mm exposed the construction debris of a late 20th century building and two features of possible late 19th century date relating to the orchard phase. Sandy clay natural was encountered at a depth of 520mm beneath the existing ground surface.

No significant archaeology was uncovered, with most of the area being heavily altered in the 1960s.

Sponsor(s): HS, Society, Institution, Developer, etc. (where appropriate):
Mr D. Ledward

Address(es) of Main Contributor(s):

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Photo List : APPENDIX 2

PWA10_1.JPG

PWA10_2.JPG

PWA10_3.JPG

PWA10_4.JPG

PWA10_5.JPG

PWA10_6.JPG

PWA10_7.JPG

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