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## **James Gillespie's High School, Bruntsfield House, Edinburgh: Archaeological Evaluation**

**Data Structure Report  
No. 1939**

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standard operating procedures.

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Fig. 7 Test-Pit 5, north and west facing sections

## **0. ABSTRACT**

Five test-pits were excavated within James Gillespie's High School, close to Bruntsfield House, Edinburgh. Structural remains relating to former elements of the house were present in two of these. They included walls, paving and a box drain. Deep deposits of broken stone and made ground were recorded. No artefacts were recovered.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General**

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd at Bruntsfield House (properly Bruntisfield House), Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 2509 7216; Fig. 1) during August 2011. The work was commissioned by AECOM on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council Framework Agreement.

A proposed development at the above site is part of the 'Schools For The Future' initiative and involves the redevelopment of the existing James Gillespie's High School. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by AECOM and agreed by John Lawson of City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS) prior to the fieldwork.

### **1.2 Background**

James Gillespie was a wealthy Edinburgh manufacturer of snuff and tobacco and was born at Roslin in 1726. He left part of his fortune for the establishment of a free school for the education of poor boys. As a result of this, a school was opened in Bruntsfield Place in 1803. In 1870 the school moved into a larger building where the Royal Blind Asylum now stands at Gillespie Crescent. In 1908 the Edinburgh School Board took over the responsibility for the school and in 1914 it moved into the building at Bruntsfield Links, until recently used by Boroughmuir High School as an Annexe.

In 1935 Edinburgh Corporation acquired Bruntsfield House and its grounds from the Warrender family. The building of the present school adjacent to the house commenced in 1964 and was completed in 1966.

As early as 1381, records reveal that the mansion and lands of Bruntsfield then belonged to Richard Browne. Thereafter they passed to the Lauder family, who retained them for the next two hundred years, except for a brief period when the family was out of royal favour. In 1544 the original house was destroyed in the ravages of 'The Rough Wooing', the English attempt to force a marriage between Mary, Queen of Scots and Prince Edward of England. The house was rebuilt in the latter half of the sixteenth century by the Lauders of Haltoun. In 1603 the house and lands passed into the hands of John Fairlie and his wife, Elizabeth Westoun, whose initials appear over the windows and who, in 1605, added the east wing of the house.

In 1953 the attics were badly damaged by fire and in 1966 Bruntsfield House was incorporated into the new James Gillespie's High School. A number of Victorian additions, including a porch and a large wing to the NE were demolished during the conversion.

Bruntsfield House is a Category A Listed Historic Building (No. 30530) and is recorded by the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) (No. NT27SE 75.0).

No previous invasive archaeological work is known to have been conducted within the site.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The project's aim was to 'ground truth' anomalies identified during an earlier Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey and to establish the presence or absence, date and character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains within the Test-Pits.

### **1.4 Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge the site visit made by John Lawson of CECAS.

## **2. METHODS**

### **2.1 General**

CFA follows the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance and their Codes of Conduct for field evaluations and excavations.

### **2.2 Test-Pitting**

Five test-pits, each measuring 2m by 1m, were excavated at predetermined locations. These aimed to assess anomalies identified during a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey.

A plan of these locations was supplied by AECOM. Of the five, only Test-Pit 4 had to be slightly relocated as the planned location coincided with a fixed picnic table.

Ground breaking work was undertaken using a rubber tracked 360° mechanical excavator. A smooth-bladed ditching bucket was used whenever possible but the compaction of the encountered deposits necessitated the use of a toothed bucket at times.

All on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, by photography and by completing standard CFA record forms.

With the permission of CECAS, modern finds from Test-Pits 2 and 4 were photographed and recorded but were not retained.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

#### 3.1 General

Five test-pits totalling an area of 10m<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 1) were excavated. Their locations (grid references) are included in Appendix 1.

The test-pitting area comprised of tarmac to the south of Bruntsfield House (Test-Pits 1-4, Fig. 2), with concrete slabs to the rear (Test-Pit 5).

In the text below, context numbers are in bold and parentheses and further descriptions are in Appendix 2.

In all test-pits, tarmac (**001**) or concrete (**005**) overlay quarry dust (**002**) and gravel (**003**) with a depth of around 0.2m. Very compact made ground was recorded below and this sealed structural remains and negative features. Natural subsoil (**004**) consisted of either a creamy pink sandy clay with red sandstone cobbles or red sandstone bedrock.

#### 3.2 Test-Pit 1 (Fig. 3)

Bedrock (**004**) at a depth of 1.1m had been truncated along the south side of the Test-Pit by a cut (**101**) which was aligned E-W within most of the Test-Pit, turning to near N-S at the eastern end. This was filled with a sterile brownish-pink clay (**102**). The cut and fill were overlain by a deep deposit of medium and large red sandstone cobbles and boulders (**103**). Large voids were present in this deposit and no mortar adhered to the stones. These were overlain by deposits of very compact made ground (**104, 105**) with modern quarry dust (**002**) gravel (**003**) and tarmac (**001**) above. No finds were recovered.

#### 3.3 Test-Pit 2

Bedrock and natural sandy clay (**004**) at a depth of 0.9m was overlain by deposits of made ground (**206**) consisting of pinkish-brown sandy clay with frequent sandstone cobbles. This was truncated by a NE-SW aligned cut (**202**) which was filled with a mixed deposit of brownish-pink sandy clay and sandstone cobbles which contained tarmac, bricks, glass, painted wood (window frame) and metal reinforcing bar (**201**). It was also cut by a modern service trench containing a cast iron pipe and a steel cable duct (**203**). Both cuts were sealed by very compact made ground (**205**) with modern quarry dust (**002**) gravel (**003**) and tarmac (**001**) above.

#### 3.4 Test-Pit 3 (Figs. 4-5)

Natural sandy clay and stones (**004**) at a depth of 0.8m was overlain by two lime-mortared red sandstone walls (**302/306, 303**) and a lime mortared red sandstone box drain or culvert (**304**). Both walls were aligned close to E-W. Wall **302/306** was partially exposed in the south-facing section. A single course of sandstone overlay a layer of lime mortar (**302**) with a deposit of loose stones (**306**) below. The wall had a length of 0.7m and a height of 0.45m within the trench. Wall **303** was partially

exposed in the north-facing section. Three courses of well-built red sandstone blocks were present. The wall had a length of 0.7m and height of 0.45m.

Drain **304** was constructed from lime-mortared red sandstone and was aligned NNW-SSE. The channel had a width of 0.3m and a depth of 0.25m. A primary fill of black gritty silt with a depth of 0.03m (**307**) was present in the base. The drain had been truncated by an E-W aligned cut (**305**) which ran along the northern edge of the trench. The structural remains were sealed by very compact made ground (**301**) with modern quarry dust (**002**) gravel (**003**) and tarmac (**001**) above. No finds were recovered from Test-Pit 3.

### **3.5 Test-Pit 4**

This Test-Pit was moved c.1m to the north to avoid a picnic table. Undulating bedrock (**004**) at a depth of c.0.45m was overlain by deposits of very compact made ground (**401**) with modern quarry dust (**002**) gravel (**003**) and tarmac (**001**) above. A broken cast iron sash window weight was recovered from **401**.

### **3.6 Test-Pit 5 (Figs. 6-7)**

Bedrock and natural sandy clay (**004**) at a depth of 0.8m was overlain by a substantial red sandstone wall footing (**507**) and by a thin levelling deposit of pinkish-brown sandy clay (**502**). Deposit **502** was overlain by sandstone paving slabs (**514**) at a depth of 0.7m. These were overlain by a layer of lime mortar (**506**) and a blueish-grey gritty silt deposit (**513**) containing substantial pieces of cut wood which may be broken floorboards (**505**). These deposits were overlain by deposits of compact made ground (**511**) which were cut (**508**) by a trench containing sandstone cobbles, a metal pipe and a telecommunications cable (**509/510**). Modern gravel (**003**) filled the upper levels of **508** and sealed all layers in the trench. Quarry dust (**002**), a thin concrete foundation (**501**) and concrete slabs (**005**) were recorded above.



#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

A programme of archaeological Test-Pitting was carried out at James Gillespie's High School, adjacent to Bruntsfield House in Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh. Five Test-Pits were excavated.

Structural remains were recorded in Test-Pits 3 and 5, the closest to Bruntsfield House. Modern or undated negative features were recorded in Test-Pits 1 and 2.

No pre-modern artefacts were recovered. The environmental potential of the site is considered to be low. No waterlogged deposits are present and the layers are heavily compacted. Cut wooden planks, which may be floorboards, are present.

Historical maps and photographs suggest that the structural remains may be part of former phases of Bruntsfield House, as this building has a long history and has undergone a number of structural changes. A substantial porch structure is shown in the area of Test-Pit 3 to the south of the existing building in plan and elevation drawings (DP 059061, DP 088492) and a photograph (SC 1161361) held by the NMRS. Both the NMRS (DP 088492-3) and historical maps show a former north-east wing of the house to be present in the area of Test-Pit 5. Both structures appear to have been demolished around 1964-6 when the present school was built.

All decisions regarding further work at Bruntsfield House rest with John Lawson, City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service.

A summary statement of the results of the Test-Pitting will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland 2011* (draft as Appendix 5) and an OASIS record will be completed.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and copies of reports will be lodged with City of Edinburgh Council Sites and Monuments Record.

Copies of this report will be distributed in line with the requirements of the Written Scheme of Investigation.

## APPENDIX 1: Test-Pit Locations and Summary

Test-Pit No.	Location		Dimensions (m)	Depth of overburden (m)	Features
	Easting	Northing			
1	325091.80	672161.53	2 x 1	1.1	Undated feature 101
2	325086.74	672163.91	2 x 1	0.9	Modern feature 202 Disused services 203
3	325091.80	672174.07	2 x 1	0.2	Culvert Drain 304 Wall 302/306 Wall 303
4	325105.71	672171.19	2 x 1	0.45	None
5	325102.91	672192.41	2 x 1	0.8	Wall 507 Paving 514

## APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context No.	Test-Pit No.	Description
001	1-4	Tarmac
002	1-5	Quarry dust
003	1-4	Gravel
004	1-4	Natural subsoil (pink sandy clay and red sandstone cobbles) and bedrock (red sandstone)
005	1, 5	Concrete slabs
101	1	E-W aligned cut truncating natural sandy clay and bedrock 004
102	1	Fill of 101. Pinkish-brown firm sandy clay and stones
103	1	Deposit of medium and large voided red sandstone angular boulders
104	1	Made ground. Firm pink sandy clay and stones
105	1	Made ground. Compact brownish-pink sandy clay and stones
201	2	Mixed fill of 202. Modern finds including tarmac
202	2	NE-SW aligned modern cut truncating natural sandy clay and bedrock 004
203	2	Linear cut for redundant services. Cast iron water pipe with overlying metal duct pipe
204	2	Mixed (as dug) fill of 203
205	2	Made ground. Compact brownish-pink sandy clay and stones
206	2	Pink clayey sand with red sandstone cobbles and boulders
301	3	Made ground. Compact brownish-pink sandy clay and stones
302	3	Wall base. Lime mortar layer with cut red sandstone block
303	3	Lime-mortared cut red sandstone wall
304	3	Lime-mortared red sandstone box drain or culvert
305	3	E-W aligned cut truncating drain/culvert 304
306	3	Random angular red sandstone cobbles below 302. May be part of 302
307	3	Grey-black gritty silt in base of 304. Very shallow deposit
401	4	Made ground. Compact brownish-pink sandy clay and stones
501	5	Shallow concrete slab continuing the alignment of the eastern wall of the existing Bruntsfield House
502	5	Levelling layer. Pinkish-brown sandy clay and stones
503	5	Cut for modern borehole
504	5	Fill of 503. Soft, wet brown silty sand
505	5	Well preserved cut wood within deposit 513
506	5	Compact lime mortar
507	5	Large red sandstone ashlar block continuing the alignment of the eastern wall of the existing Bruntsfield House
508	5	Cut for modern services

509	5	Metal pipe within 508
510	5	Loose sandstone cobbles within 508 under pipe
511	5	Made ground. Compact brownish-pink sandy clay and stones
512	5	Small deposit of lime mortar at the base of 507
513	5	Blueish-grey gritty silt deposit containing substantial pieces of cut wood 505
514	5	Creamy sandstone flat paving slabs

### APPENDIX 3: Photograph Register

Photo No.	Description	From
1-2	TP 5 pre-excavation	N
3	TP 5 pre-excavation	E
4-5	TP 3 pre-excavation	S
6-7	TP 2 pre-excavation	SE
8	TP 1 pre-excavation	SE
9	TP 4 pre-excavation	SE
10-11	TP 1-4 and area pre-excavation, general view	E
12-13	TP 1-4 and area pre-excavation, general view	SE
14-15	TP 1-4 and area pre-excavation, general view	SW
16	TP 5 pre-excavation	NW
17	1605 date stone on a more recent part of the building	S
18	Corner stones, old part (west wing)	E
19	Corner stones, new part showing different dressing technique	S
20	TP 1-4, general view of the area	SSE
21-22	TP 3 marked out pre-excavation	S
23	TP 2 marked out pre-excavation	S
24	TP 1 marked out pre-excavation	W
25	General view of the compound around TP 1-3	SE
26-27	TP 3, south-facing section & general view including wall 302/306	S
28-29	TP 3, north-facing section & general view including wall 303	N
30	TP 3, west-facing section & general view including drain/culvert 304	W
31	TP 3, culvert drain 304 at the east side of the trench	NW
32	TP 3, plan view of the drain/culvert 304	E
33	TP 3, east-facing section & general view including walls 302/306, 303	E
34-36	TP 2, north-facing section & general view including cut 202 and services 203	N
37	TP 2, general view	E
38	TP 2, general view	W
39	TP 4, marked out	W
40	TP 4, marked out	N
41	TP 5, marked out	E
42	TP 5, marked out	N
43-44	TP 1, north-facing section & general view	N
45-46	TP 1, west-facing section & general view	W
47	TP 1, west and of the north-facing section	NE
48	As 43-44	W
49	TP 1-2, general view with TP 4 beyond	W
50	TP 4, general view	N
51	TP 4, general view	W
52	TP 4, north-facing section	N
53	TP 4, sash window weight from 401	-
54	TP 2, modern artefacts from 201	-
55-57	TP 5, north-facing section & general view including wall 507 and paving 514	N
58-59	TP 5, west-facing section & general view including paving 514 and wood	W

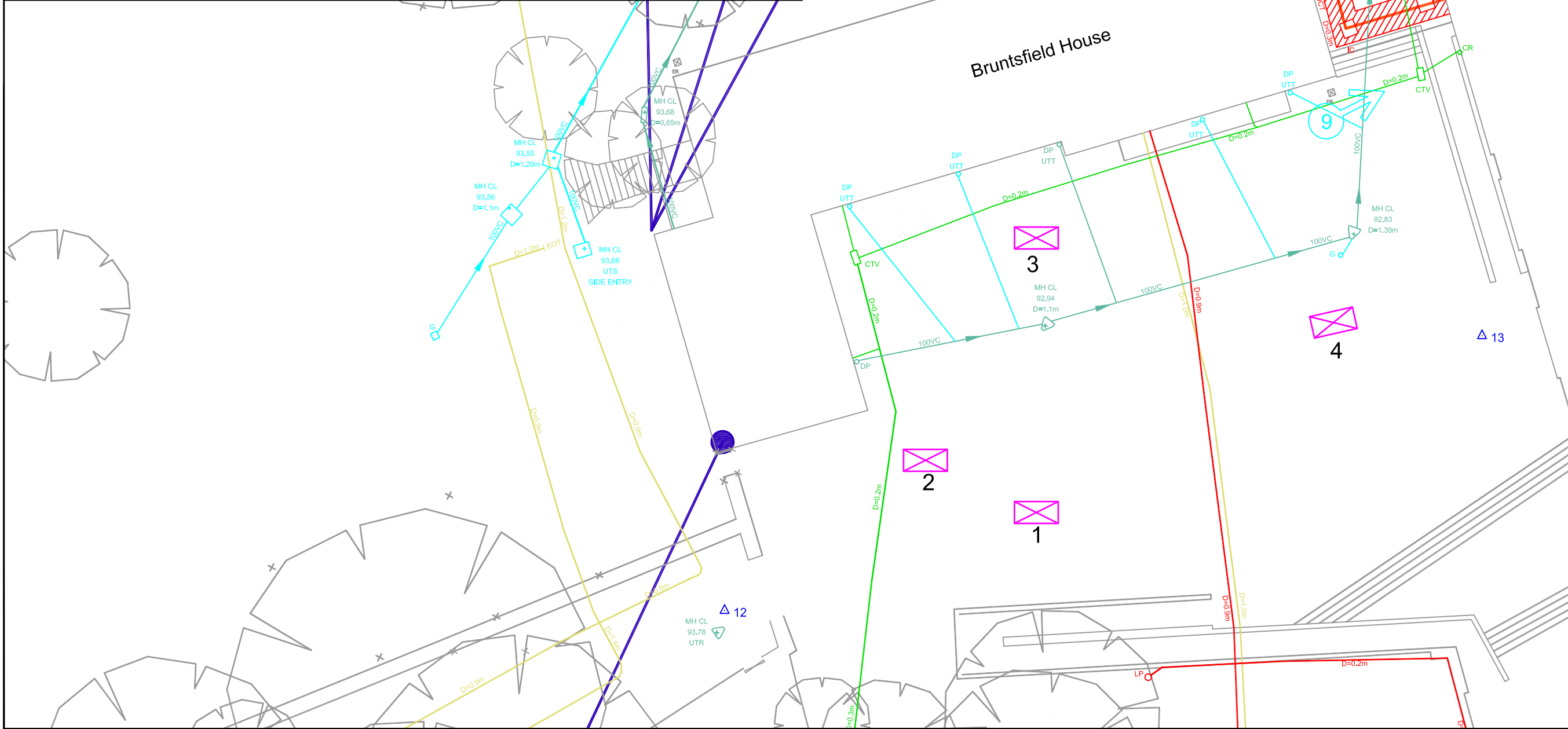
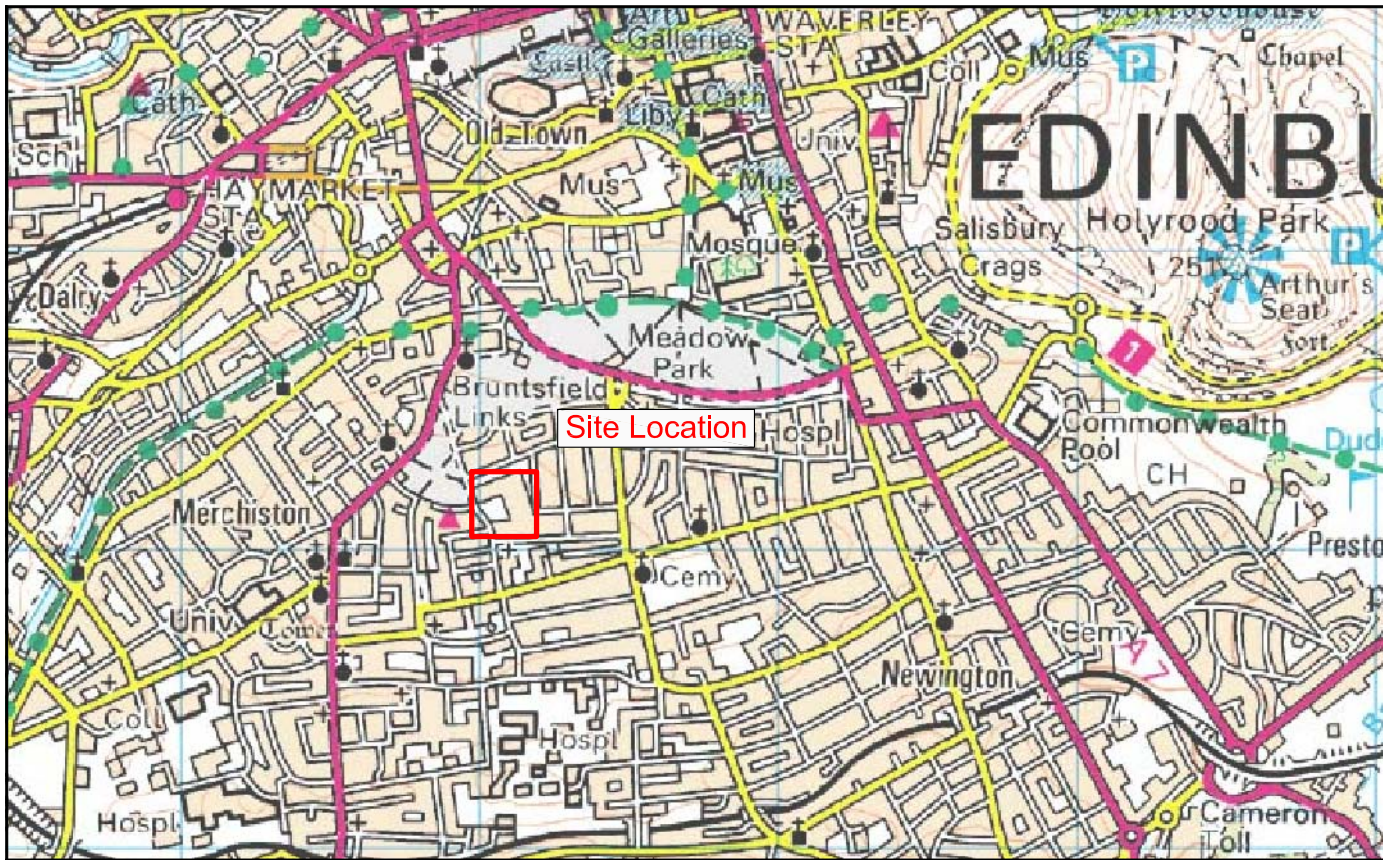
	505	
60-61	TP 5, east-facing section & general view including wall 507	E
62	TP 5 close-up views of paving 514 and wood 505 in the west-facing section	NW
63	TP 5 close-up views of paving 514 and wood 505 in the west-facing section	W
64	TP 5, view along the line of the existing Bruntsfield House wall showing the alignment of wall stone 507	NNW
65-66	Steps after repairs. Pretty even	N
67	General view of the fenced compound around TP 5	S
68-72	General views of the fenced compound around TP 1-4 and views of the backfilled test-pits 1-4	Varied


#### APPENDIX 4: Drawings Register

Drawing No.	Sheet	Scale	Description
1	1	1:20	TP 3 plan. Walls 3-2/306, 303 and drain/culvert 304
2	1	1:10	TP 3, south-facing section including wall 302/306
3	1	1:10	TP 3, north-facing section including wall 303
4	2	1:20	TP 2 plan including modern cut 202
5	2	1:10	TP 2, north-facing section including modern cut 202 and services 203
6	2	1:20	TP 1 plan including cut 101
7	2	1:10	TP 1, north-facing section including cut 101
8	2	1:10	TP 4, north-facing section
9	3	1:20	TP 5, plan including wall 507, paving 514
10	3	1:10	TP 5, north and west-facing sections including wall 507, paving 514

## APPENDIX 5: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	City of Edinburgh Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	James Gillespie's High School, Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh.
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	GIHS
<b>PARISH:</b>	City of Edinburgh
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Ian Suddaby
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	CFA Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Evaluation
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NT27SE 75.0
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Walls and box drain
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)</b>	NT 2509 7216
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	August 2011
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	August 2011
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	Five test-pits with a total of 10m <sup>2</sup> were excavated adjacent to Bruntsfield House within James Gillespie's High School. Structural remains consisting of two walls and a box drain or culvert were recorded in Test-Pit 3 to the south of the house and a wall with associated paving was recorded in Test-Pit 5 to the east of the house. Undated or modern negative features were recorded in other Test-Pits. No finds were recovered.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	Unknown
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	None
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	AECOM on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council Framework Agreement
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ.
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	isuddaby@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>	Archive to be deposited in NMRS, Reports lodged with SMR and NMRS.



Key:  
 Test-pit

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Fig. No: 1 Revision: A

Title:  
 Site plan showing the location of test-pits

Project:  
 James Gillespie's High School, Bruntfield House, Edinburgh

Client:  
 AECOM on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council Framework Agreement

Scale at A3:  
 1:200


Drawn by: SW Checked: LW Report No: 1939

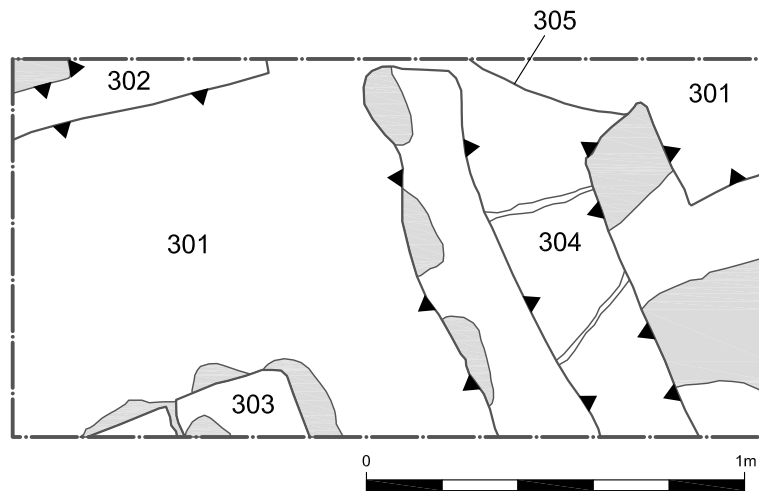


Fig 2 General view of the fenced site showing test-pits 1, 2 and 4.



Fig 3 Test-pit 1, general view from the north showing the voided sandstone blocks.

Key:	Fig. No:	2-3	Revision:	A	Client:	AECOM on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council Framework Agreement
	Title:					
Scale at A4:	Project:					
James Gillespie's High School, Bruntsfield House, Edinburgh						 <p>CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD The Old Engine House Eskmillis Park Musselburgh East Lothian, EH21 7PQ t: 0131 273 4380 f: 0131 273 4381 e: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk w: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk</p>
Drawn by:			SW	Checked:		LW
Report No:						1939



Key:  
 Stone



Fig No: 4      Revision:      Client: AECOM on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council Framework Agreement

Title:  
 Test-Pit 3, plan of the walls and box drain

Project:  
 James Gillespie's High School, Bruntsfield House, Edinburgh




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Key:	Fig. No: 5	Revision: A	Client: AECOM on behalf of City of Edinburgh Council Framework Agreement	 <p>CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD The Old Engine House Eskmillis Park Musselburgh East Lothian, EH21 7PQ t: 0131 273 4380 f: 0131 273 4381 e: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk w: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk</p>
	Title: Test-Pit 3, view from the west			
Scale at A4:	Project: James Gillespie's High School, Bruntsfield House, Edinburgh			Drawn by: SW   Checked: LW   Report No: 1939

Key:

Wood

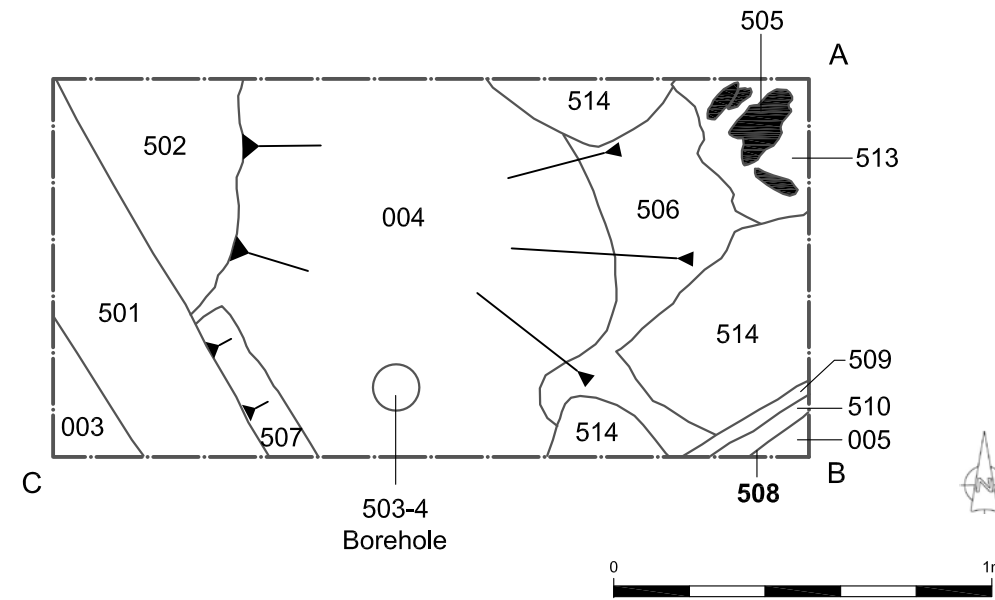


Fig 6 Test-Pit 5, plan of wall and paving

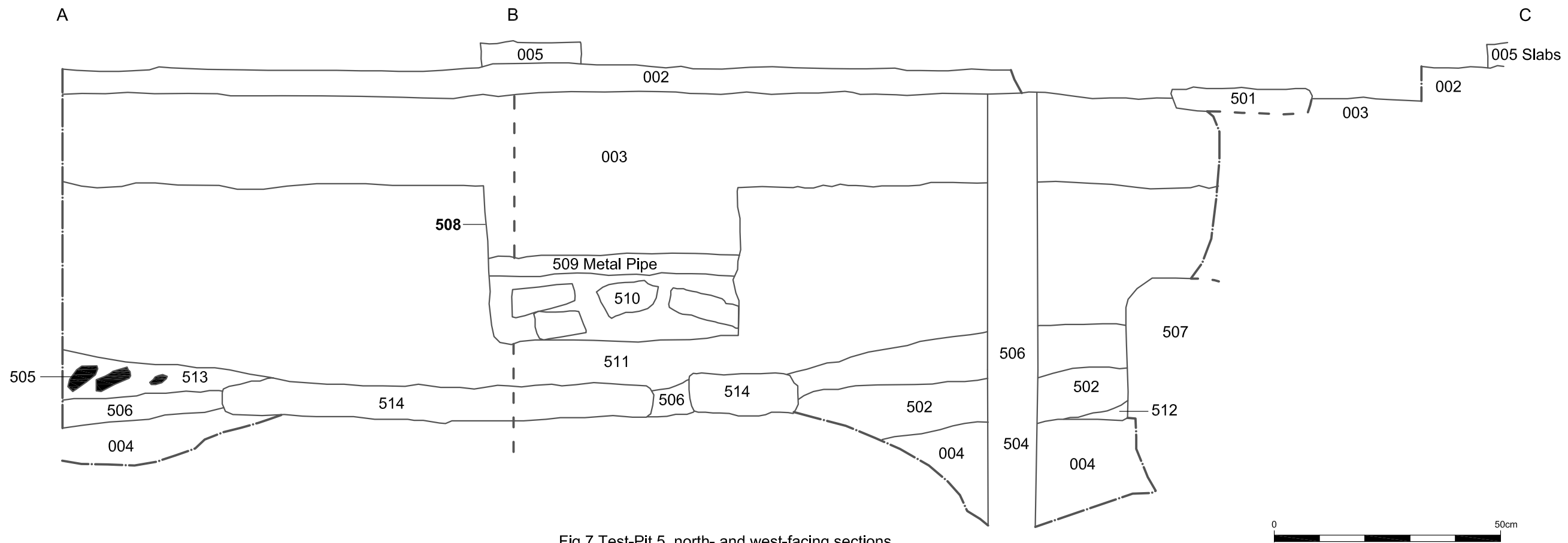


Fig 7 Test-Pit 5, north- and west-facing sections