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Geophysical Survey

**Former Coastguard Station, Victoria Road,
North Berwick, East Lothian**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. 2029

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**Former Coastguard Station, Victoria Road,
North Berwick, East Lothian**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in March 2012 during ground breaking works at the former Coastguard Station, Victoria Road, North Berwick (NGR: NT 5539 8554) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by No. 12 Quality Street.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), dated 08 March 2012, was produced by CFA. The WSI was designed to fulfil the requirements of the East Lothian Council Archaeology Service (ELCAS).

1.2 Background

Planning permission has been granted for the conversion of the former Coastguard Station, North Berwick, East Lothian to form a servery/takeaway food outlet with external seating area and bin store. The planning permission was subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work.

The development site lies within the heart of the medieval town of North Berwick and adjacent to the site of 12th-century St Andrew's Chapel and graveyard.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the watching brief were:

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (watching brief) to monitor all groundbreaking works.
- To mitigate the effects of construction on any archaeological deposits or features identified through excavation and recording and produce a report on them.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Fieldwork. Recording of all elements followed established CFA methods, as detailed in the approved WSI.

2.2 Archive Assessment

Historic map coverage for the area was examined together with any other readily available cartographic information on pre-recent land use in the development area. The National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), the East Lothian Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes (through Pastmap), and any other readily available bibliographic sources related to the area were consulted as appropriate.

2.3 Watching Brief

The terms of the WSI required an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (watching brief) to monitor all ground breaking works. Excavation was undertaken using a tracked excavator fitted with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket. All work was carried out under archaeological supervision.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 Archive Assessment

The Coastguard Station is not present on the Ordnance Survey First Edition map (1854), where Victoria Road was named Shore Street, but it does appear, and is labelled as such, on the Ordnance Survey Second Edition map of 1895 and the 1894 25-inch map. The walled enclosure surrounding the building is also shown on this latter map, with the remains of St Andrews Church lying just to the NE of the enclosure.

The adjacent St Andrews Church and Anchor Green comprise the Scheduled Monument of St Andrew's Church (NMRS NT58NE 3, SM no. 6681), including the Category B Listed Old Parish Church Porch (HB no. 38778). Anchor Green is the burial ground for St Andrew's Old Kirk.

The church porch is a single storey oblong structure of random rubble construction, with doorway mouldings dated to the 16th century, which is interpreted as the porch of the 13th century parish church. The church was first mentioned prior to 1177 and was in ruins by 1656. Finds from the site include a 13th century grave slab, a mould for making pilgrim's badges, and an incised cross slab of 9th or 10th century date. Two fragments of a grave slab (c. 13th century) are preserved within the structure, while a third fragment has been built into the coping of the boundary wall of the

swimming pool. Much of the associated graveyard has been eroded by the sea. The site of this church was excavated by Dr J S Richardson in 1951.

A number of interventions in this area since relating primarily to the construction of the Seabird Centre have uncovered human remains, including both in situ inhumations and charnel, mort-cloth pins and a fragment of white gritty pottery (Addyman 2000, Addyman 2006, Macfadyen 2004). Other features located include a charnel pit adjacent to the original north transept, that contained the remains of some 30 inhumations, considered to have been the product of excavations of the church site in the early 1950s and a dump of disarticulated human remains to the east of the porch, re-deposited following the construction of the sea wall.

An open area excavation was conducted in 2000 (Addyman 2000) on the north side of the church. A total of 21 inhumations and two dog skeletons were exhumed, principally from the south end of the site where archaeological deposits were found almost immediately below existing topsoil, where landscaping work in 1951 had reduced the ground level. A number of further grave cuts were also identified. Various episodes of post-graveyard activity were identified including various landfills, a substantial ditch, and the brick bottoming of a path of relatively recent origin.

Other work in the area, however, produced no features of archaeological interest, for example an evaluation in 2002 at East Lothian Yacht Club in advance of development (Johnson 2002).

3.2 Watching Brief

Numbers in bold in the following text refer to contexts, a full list of which is contained in Appendix 1. The watching brief monitored the excavation of a pipe trench around the western side of the building, within the enclosing wall (Fig. 2, 3). The trench was 0.5m wide, 9.5m in total length, and reached up to 0.5m deep.

The existing site surface was cobbled (**101**) which covered the whole site except for a thin strip 0.35m wide against the inner side of the western enclosing wall which was covered in concrete (**100**).

Underlying **101** and **100** was a layer of mid brown sand (**102**), which formed an upper layer of made ground. Two fragments of long bone were recovered from this fill. These fragments were taken by the police. This sand overlay an orangey-yellow sand comprising disturbed made ground (**103**) with previous utilities evident within this layer. A number of bones were recovered from this latter layer in two locations (see plan for Findspots 1 and 2). Those recovered at Findspot 1 included a neonate pelvis, mandible and four lengths of long bone. These were removed from the site at the time of excavation. Two probable long bones remained in situ. At Findspot 2 a skull, disarticulated mandible, one phalange and one rib were uncovered (Fig. 5); these were left in situ, being at the point of maximum depth required for excavation. Four additional pieces of long bone were re-buried at this location at the time of excavation, having been recovered from made ground further to the east.

An existing pipe trench **[104]**, with a mid brown sand fill **(105)**, contained a plastic pipe and cut through deposits **102** and **103** to a depth of 0.42m. Some lengths of long bone, skull and mandible were recovered from within this fill (Fig. 4).

All human remains which were uncovered at the time of excavation were reported to the local police and some were removed from site by the police. These were returned to CFA and subsequently reburied in close proximity to their find spots, at the depth of maximum excavation where they will not be disturbed (Fig. 6). The trench was then backfilled.

4. CONCLUSION

A watching brief was carried out during all ground breaking work for the conversion of the late 19th century former Coastguard Station, North Berwick, East Lothian to form a servery/takeaway food outlet with external seating area and bin store.

Human remains were recovered within the layers of made ground **(102, 103)** beneath the site's cobbled surface, and charnel was also recovered from within the fill **(105)** of a recent pipe trench **(104)**. Where possible these remains were left in situ. The human remains that had to be removed were reburied at an appropriate depth, close to their original find spots. Three individuals could be identified from the recovered remains, two adults and one child. These remains appear to relate to the graveyard of the 12th-century St Andrew's Chapel which lies adjacent to the development site.

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 the East Lothian Council Sites and Monuments Record.

A summary statement of the results of this watching brief will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 3) and an online OASIS form will be completed.

5. REFERENCES

Addyman, T 2000 'St Andrew's Old Church and kirkyard, North Berwick, East Lothian (North Berwick parish), medieval church and graveyard', *Discovery Excav Scot, vol.1*, p27-8, Fig. 12.

Johnson, M 2002 'East Lothian Yacht Club, North Berwick, East Lothian (North Berwick parish), evaluation', *Discovery Excav Scot, vol.3*, p40.

Macfadyen, K 2004 'St Andrew's Old Kirk, North Berwick (North Berwick parish), watching brief', *Discovery Excav Scot, vol.5*, p45-6.

Ordnance Survey 1854 First Edition 6-inch map, Haddingtonshire Sheet 2.

Ordnance Survey 1895 Second Edition 6-inch map, Haddingtonshire Sheet II.NE.

Ordnance Survey 1894 25-inch map, Haddingtonshire Sheet 002.08.

APPENDIX 1: Context Register

Context	Description
100	Concrete layer present against western wall of site
101	Cobbled surface
102	Upper layer, made ground. Dark brown sand
103	Made, disturbed ground. Orangey yellow sand.
104	Cut of trench for pipe
105	Fill of [104]
106	Existing wall enclosing building

APPENDIX 2: Photographic Register

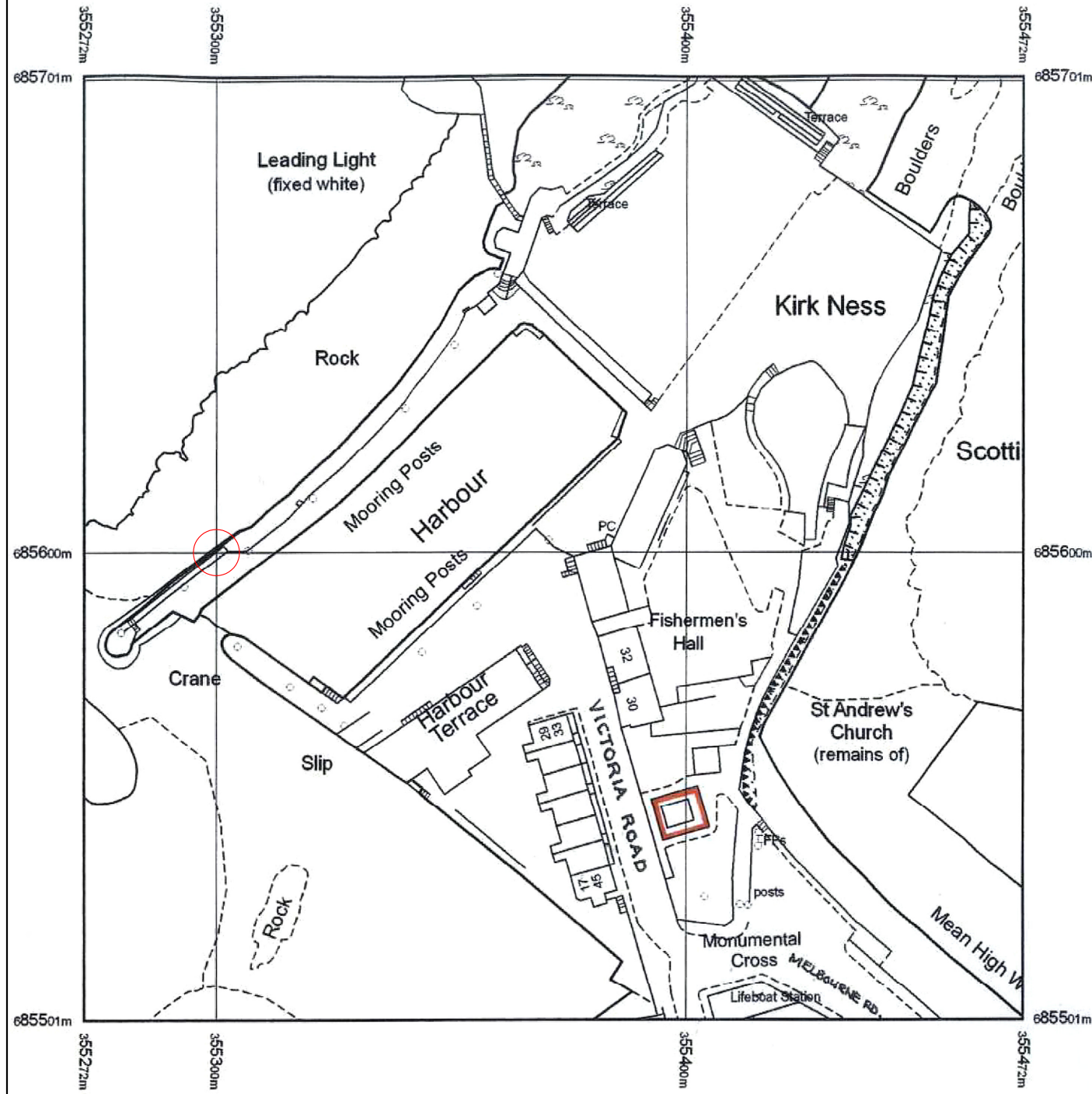
Digital Images

No.	Description	From	Conditions
1	Sample section 1- some bone in situ in section [104] pipe trench	SW	Overcast
2	Uncovered bones (jaw, skull and neonate pelvis in (103)	W	Overcast
3	Sample section 1 (101),(102), (103)	SW	Overcast
4	Sample section 1 following removal of loose bones, [104] pipe cut	W	Overcast
5	Sample section 2- wall, foundation and human remains (skull and jaw)	E	Overcast
6	Close up of human remains at SS2 (remained in situ)	E	Overcast
7	Close up of human remains at SS2 (remained in situ)	E	Overcast
8	View of groundworks monitored	S	Overcast

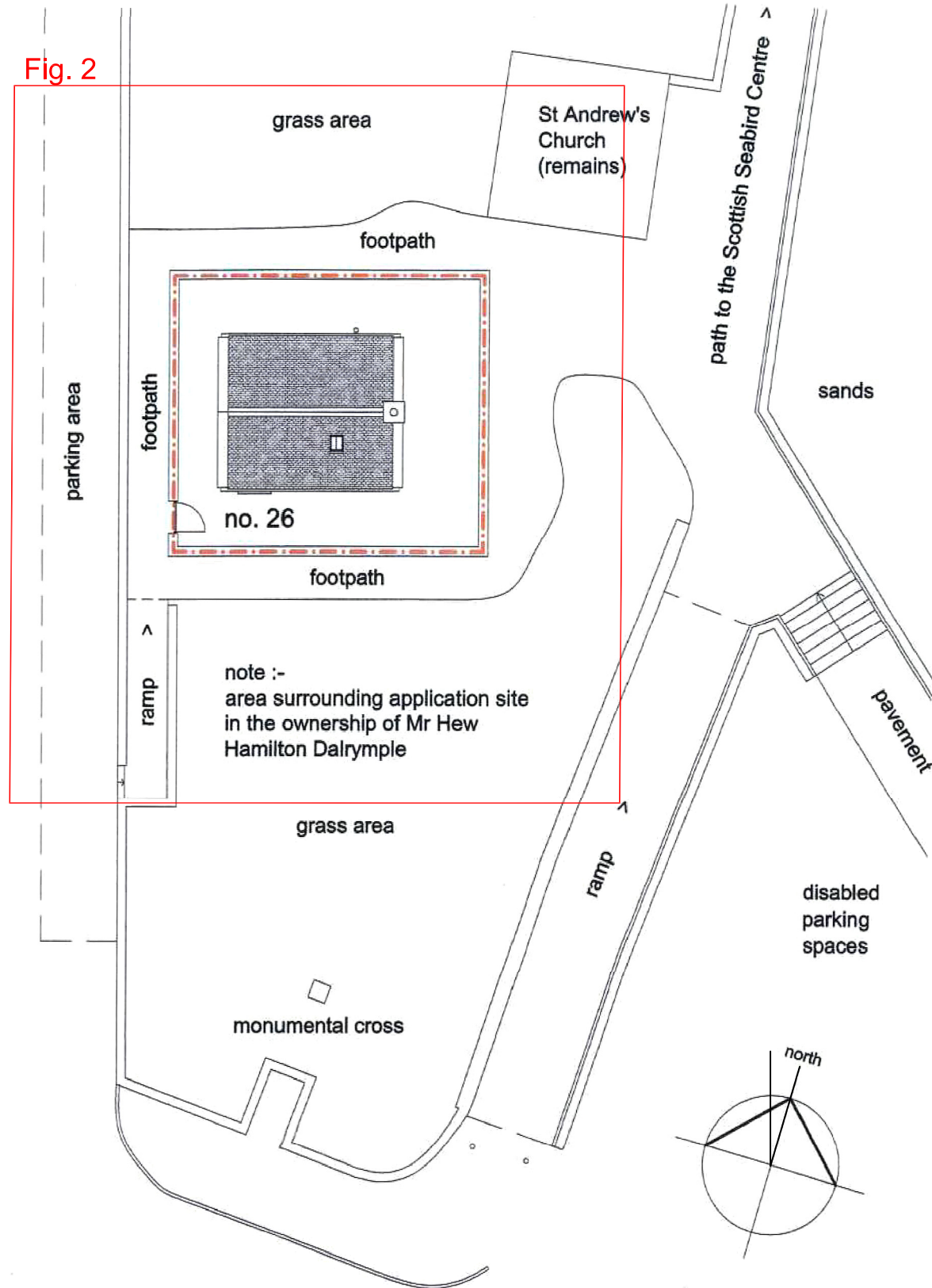
APPENDIX 3: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	East Lothian
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Former Coastguard Station, Victoria Road, North Berwick
PROJECT CODE:	COST
PARISH:	North Berwick
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Alison McCaig
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	-
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	-
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 10 figures)	NT 55395 85542
START DATE (this season)	March 2012
END DATE (this season)	March 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	N/A
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological watching brief was carried out during ground breaking work for the conversion of the former Coastguard Station, North Berwick, East Lothian. Charnel relating to the adjacent 12 th century St Andrews Chapel was recovered and reburied on site within the base of the service trench.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ
EMAIL ADDRESS:	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	National Monuments Record of Scotland East Lothian Council Sites and Monuments Record

Key:



location plan : 1:1250



site / block plan : 1: 200

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Fig. No:	1	Revision:	A
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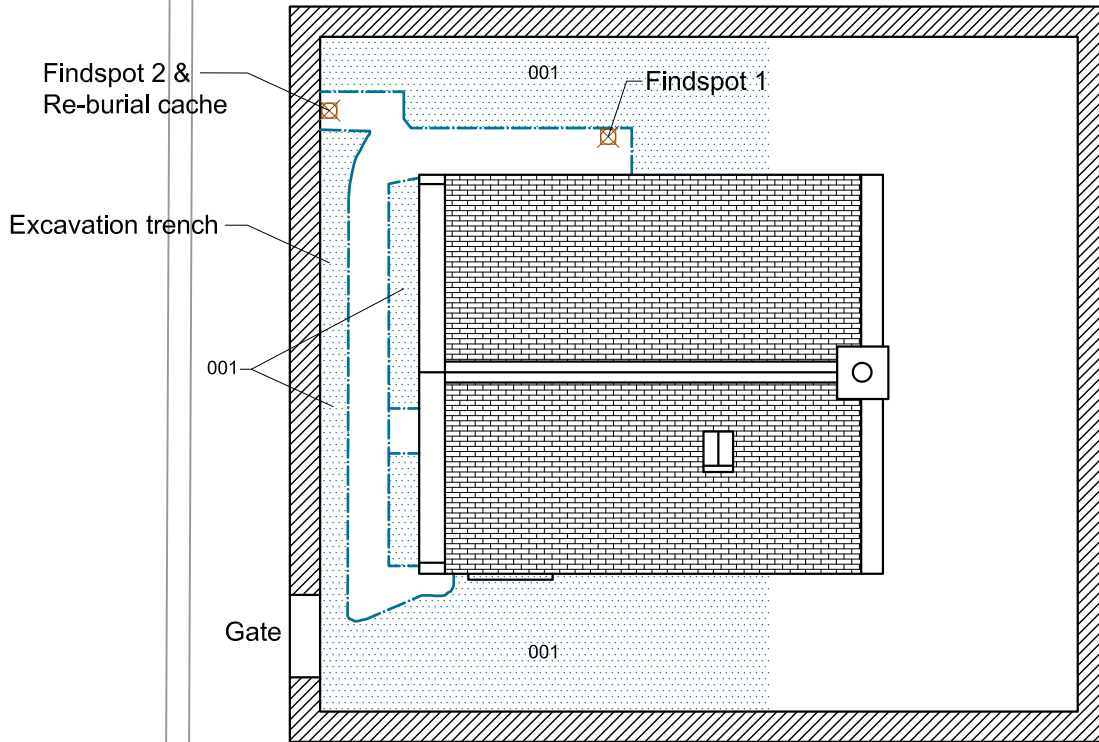
Title:
Site Location

Project:
Former Coastguard Station,
Victoria Road, North Berwick

Client:
No. 12 Quality Street

Scale at A3:
1:200
1:1250

Drawn by:	Checked:	Report No:
KH	LW	2025



Key:
 Watching brief area



Fig No: 2 Revision: 0 Client: No. 12 Quality Street

Title:
Excavation Plan

Project:
**Former Coastguard Station,
 Victoria Road, North Berwick**

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Scale at A4:
1:100

Drawn by: KH Checked: LW Report No: 2025



Figure 3 - General view of the service trench along the west side of the Coastguard Station



Figure 4 - Loose human remains in fill of pre-existing pipe

Key:



Fig. No: 3 - 4 Revision: A Client: No. 12 Quality Street

Title: Plates

Project:
Former Coastguard Station,
Victoria Road, North Berwick



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Scale: nts



Drawn by: KH Checked: LW Report No: 2025



Figure 5 - Human remains located below wall on west - left in situ



Figure 6 - Reburial cache

Key:		Fig. No: 5 - 6	Revision: A	Client: No. 12 Quality Street	 <p>CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD The Old Engine House Eskmills 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: Plates				
Scale: nts	Project: Former Coastguard Station, Victoria Road, North Berwick			Drawn by: KH	Checked: LW	Report No: 2025