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Geophysical Survey

**Bonnington House
Near Wilkieston
City of Edinburgh**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. 1943

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CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Working Methods	4
3.	Archaeological Results	4
4.	Conclusion	6
5.	Reference	6

Appendices

1.	Context Register	7
2.	Photographic Register	7

Figures (bound at rear)

1.	Location map showing position of proposed new wings
2.	Site plan showing location of test pits
3.	HP1, post-excavation
4.	TP1, post-excavation
5.	TP2, post-excavation
6.	TP3, post-excavation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in August 2011 at Bonnington House, near Wilkieston, City of Edinburgh (NGR: NT 11141 69102) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Benjamin Tindall Architects on behalf of Robert and Nicky Wilson.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by CFA on behalf of Benjamin Tindall Architects. The WSI was designed to fulfil the requirements of the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS).

1.2 Background

Planning permission (Ref. 09/03184/VARY) has been granted for the construction of two new wings at Bonnington House (Fig. 1). The planning permission was subject to a programme of archaeological works. This report covers a watching brief carried out during test-pitting in advance of the proposed development.

Bonnington House is a Category A-Listed Jacobean mansion (HB No. 26826) remodelled in 1858 (probably by Alexander Black), but incorporating an earlier house of c.1622 with additions dating to c.1720. The house is depicted on Roy's Military Survey of Scotland, where it is shown as having two additional wings, one situated to the north-east of the current building and the other situated to the south-east. Analysis of the cartographic evidence suggests that the earlier wings lay further to the east than those currently proposed. A detailed analysis of the history of the house is contained within a Draft Design Statement produced by Benjamin Tindall Architects in 2009.

A geophysical survey undertaken by the University of Bradford Department of Archaeological Sciences in 2009 (Gaffney and Sparrow 2009) on behalf of CFA indicated that the area to the east of the house where the new wings will be constructed had been heavily landscaped in the past. The GPR data indicated the presence of paths, roadways and garden features, the majority of which occurred at a depth of 0-0.5m. There was no clear evidence of the wings depicted on Roy's map, supporting the cartographic evidence that they lay further to the east than those currently proposed.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the watching brief were:

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (Watching Brief) to monitor the excavation of ground breaking that is required.
- To mitigate the effects of construction on any archaeological deposits or features identified through excavation and recording and production of a report.
- To determine if the earlier wings depicted on Roy's Military Survey are present within the proposed development area.

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 Trial Pits

Four hand-dug trial pits (**HP1 – HP4**) and four machine dug trial pits (**TP1 – TP4**) were excavated (Fig. 2). The machine dug pits were excavated using a JCB 3CX type excavator equipped with a 0.6m wide bucket. Topsoil and modern overburden were removed to the level of the natural subsoil and the ground inspected for archaeological features before the trial pits were excavated to their full depth. All groundbreaking works were carried out under constant archaeological supervision.

The stratification of all trial pits was recorded whether or not significant archaeological deposits were identified.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

The four hand-dug trial-pits were excavated against the side of the existing house and garden wall in order to establish the condition of the existing foundations. Those dug by machine were placed further out into the garden within the footprint of the proposed wings and were excavated to establish the nature of the ground for the purpose of the proposed development.

Numbers in bold in the following text refer to contexts, a full list of which is contained in Appendix 1.

3.2 Hand Dug Trial Pits (**HP1 – HP4**)

HP1 (Fig. 3) was excavated against the eastern elevation of the house at basement level. It measured 1.1m north to south by 0.6m east to west. The deposits within this trial pit consisted of 0.9m of made-ground (**001**) consisting of angular stones within a clay matrix overlying yellowish-brown sandy clay natural (**002**). This trial pit was excavated to a depth of 1.1m and probed to a depth of 1.4m. The foundations for the house sat directly on top of the natural subsoil. There were no features or deposits of archaeological significance identified.

HP2 was excavated against the eastern elevation of the house at basement level. It measured 0.8m north to south by 0.4m east to west. The deposits within this trial pit consisted of >1.1m of made-ground (**003**) consisting of angular stones within a clay matrix. This trial pit was excavated to a depth of 1.1m and probed to a depth of 1.4m. Natural subsoil was not reached and the base of the house foundations was not

identified. There were no features or deposits of archaeological significance identified.

HP3 was excavated against the northern elevation of the house at basement level. It measured 0.7m north to south by 0.6m east to west. The deposits within this trial pit consisted of >1m of made-ground (**004**) consisting of mixed grey-brown silty-clay. Due to the location of services, this trench was only excavated to a depth of 0.4m, with a very narrow slot going down to a depth of 1m. Natural subsoil was not reached and the base of the house foundations was not identified. There were no features or deposits of archaeological significance identified.

HP4 was excavated against the outside of the eastern wall of the walled garden. It measured 0.4m north to south by 0.3m east to west. The deposits within this trial pit consisted of 0.2m of dark silt topsoil (**005**) overlying >0.9m of mottled yellowish-brown sandy-clay (**006**) (probably re-deposited natural from the excavation of the wall foundation trench). This trial pit was excavated to a depth of 1.1m and probed to a depth of 1.45m where it came down onto a hard surface. The base of the wall was identified at a depth of c. 1.1m. There were no features or deposits of archaeological significance identified.

3.3 Machine Dug Trial Pits (TP1 – TP4)

TP1 (Fig. 4) was located to the south of the house within an area of gravel path. It measured 2m east to west by 0.6m north to south. The deposits within this trial pit consisted of 0.15m of hardcore, 0.25m of angular stones, 0.1m of mortar and 1.7m of mottled sandy-clay made-ground (all **007**) overlying yellowish-brown clay natural (**008**). This trial pit was monitored to a depth of 3.2m. There were no features or deposits of archaeological significance identified.

TP2 (Fig. 5) was located to the south-east of the house within an area of gravelled driveway. It measured 2m north to south by 0.6m east to west. The deposits within this trial pit consisted of 0.3m of hardcore and 0.4m of mixed sandy-gravel made-ground (**009**) overlying yellowish-brown sandy-clay natural (**010**). This trench was monitored to a depth of 3.4m. There were no features or deposits of archaeological significance identified.

TP3 (Fig. 6) was located to the north-east of the house within a grassed area of garden. It measured 2m north to south by 0.6m east to west. The deposits within this trial pit consisted of 0.25m of mid-brown silt topsoil (**011**) and 0.2m of hardcore (**012**) overlying yellowish-brown sandy clay natural (**013**). This trench was monitored to a depth of 2.1m. There were no features or deposits of archaeological significance identified.

TP4 was located to the north of the house within an area of grassed garden. It measured 2m north to south by 0.6m east to west. The deposits within this trial pit consisted of 0.35m of mid-brown silt topsoil (**014**) overlying yellowish-brown sandy clay natural (**015**). This trench was monitored to a depth of 2m. There were no features or deposits of archaeological significance identified.

4. CONCLUSION

The watching brief on the hand dug trial pits indicated that the foundations for the house sat directly on top of the natural subsoil at a depth of 0.9m or greater below the current ground surface.

The watching brief on the machine dug trial pits indicated that deep deposits of made ground (2.2m deep) were present on the southern side of the house. These were possibly re-deposited to create a level platform for construction. The other trial pits indicate that shallow deposits of topsoil and made ground 0.9m – >1m deep lie directly over undisturbed subsoil. This evidence would suggest that substantial structures such as the earlier wings did not occupy the area of the new proposed wings and it is very likely that if they ever existed that they were further to the east in an area not affected by the proposed development.

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 City of Edinburgh Council Sites and Monuments Record.

Upon completion of this project a summary statement of the results of this watching brief and any other information collated will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* and an online OASIS form will be completed.

5. REFERENCES

Benjamin Tindall Architects 2009 *Bonnington House Proposed New Wings: Draft Design Statement*.

Gaffney, C and Sparrow, T 2009 *Bonnington House, Geophysical Survey Report s2137*. (Unpublished DSR produced by the University of Bradford Department of Archaeological Sciences on behalf of CFA).

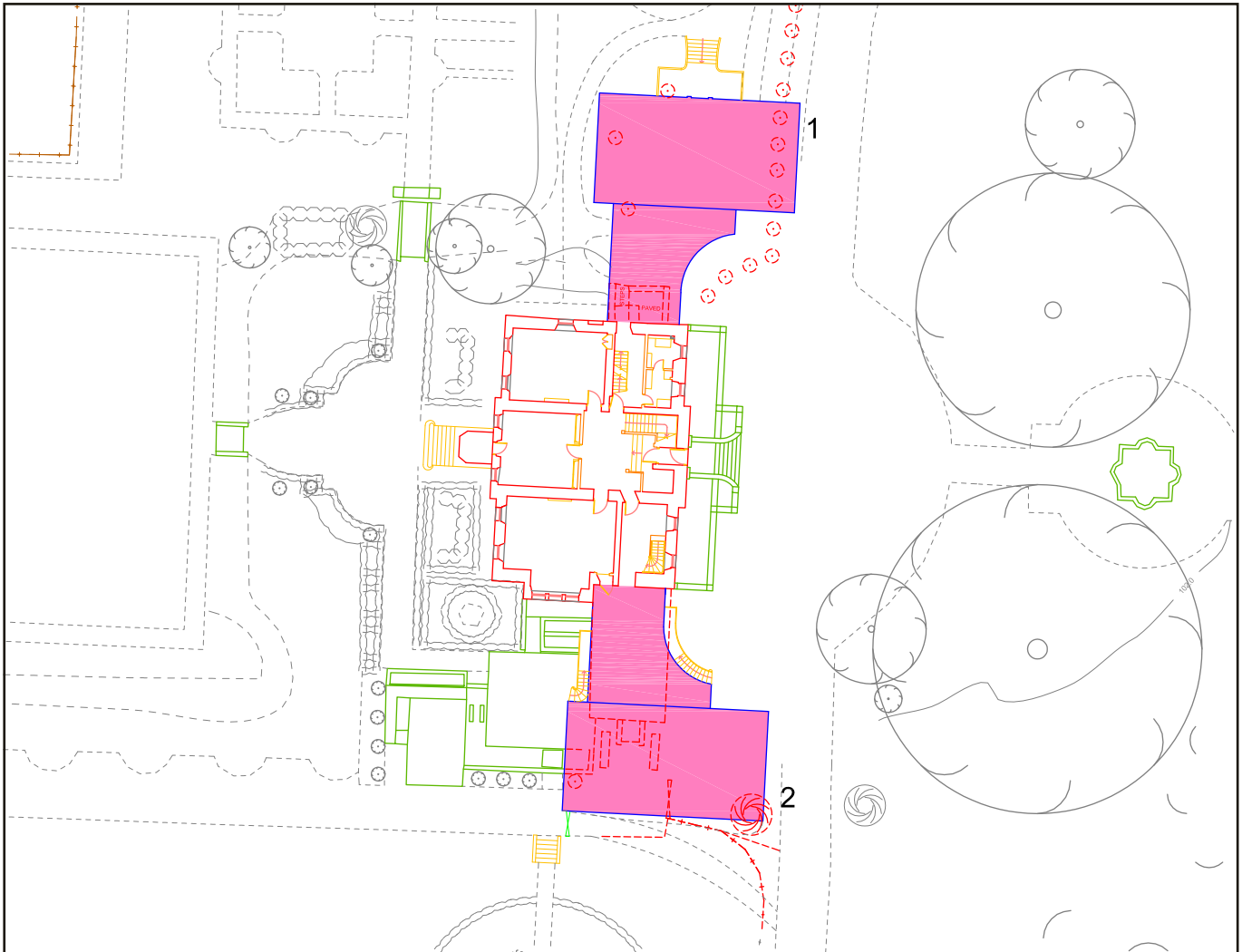
APPENDIX 1: Context Register

Context	Description
001	Made-ground within HP 1
002	Natural subsoil within HP1
003	Made-ground within HP2
004	Made-ground within HP3
005	Topsoil within HP4
006	Re-deposited subsoil within HP4
007	Made-ground and modern deposits within TP1
008	Natural subsoil within TP 1
009	Made-ground and modern deposits within TP 2
010	Natural subsoil within TP2
011	Topsoil within TP3
012	Made-ground within TP3
013	Natural subsoil within TP3
014	Topsoil within TP4
015	Natural Subsoil within TP4

APPENDIX 2: Photographic Register

Digital Images

Shot	Description	From	Conditions
1-2	HP4, General post-ex shot	East	Rain
3-4	HP1, General post-ex shot	East	Rain
5-6	TP3, General post-ex shot	North	Rain
7-8	HP2, General post-ex shot	East	Rain
9-10	HP3, General post-ex shot	North	Rain
11-12	TP4, General post-ex shot	South	Overcast
13-14	TP2, General post-ex shot	South	Overcast
15-16	TP1, General post-ex shot	North	Overcast
17-18	TP1, General post-ex shot	West	Overcast



Key:
 proposed new wings



Fig. No: **1** Revision: **A** Client: Benjamin Tindall on behalf of Robert and Nicky Wilson
 Title: **Site location and position of proposed new wings**

Scale at A4: **1:500**

Project:
Bonnington House, near Wilkieston, City of Edinburgh



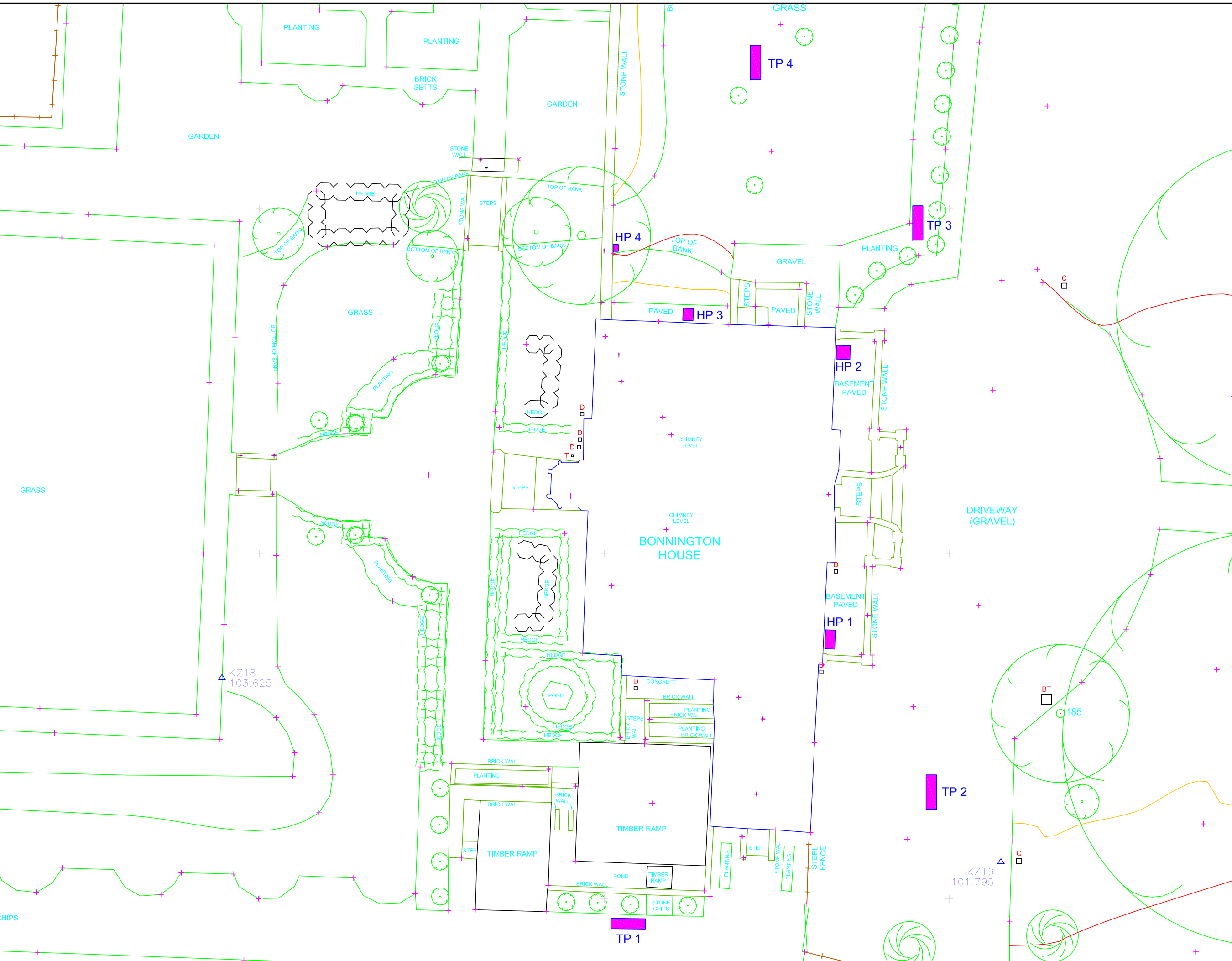
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Drawn by: **GC** Checked: **LW** Report No: **1943**



Key:

Test Pits



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Fig. No: 2 Revision: A

Title: Site plan showing location of Test Pits

Project: Bonnington House, near Wilkieston, City of Edinburgh

Client: Benjamin Tindall on behalf of Robert and Nicky Wilson

Scale at A3: 1:200

Drawn by: GC Checked: LW Report No: 1943



Fig. 3 HP 1, post excavation



Fig. 4 TP 1, post excavation



Key:	Fig. No: 3&4	Revision: A	Client: Benjamin Tindall on behalf of Robert and Nicky Wilson	 CFA 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
	Title:			
Scale at A4:	Project: Bonnington House, near Wilkieston, City of Edinburgh			Drawn by: GC Checked: LW Report No: 1943



Fig. 5 TP 2, post excavation



Fig. 6 TP 3, post excavation

Key:	Fig. No: 5&6	Revision: A	Client: Benjamin Tindall on behalf of Robert and Nicky Wilson	 CFA 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
	Title:			
Scale at A4:	Project: Bonnington House, near Wilkieston, City of Edinburgh			Drawn by: GC Checked: LW Report No: 1943