

# CFA Archaeology Ltd

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*Environmental Impact Assessment*

*Interpretation, Design & Display*

*Finds/ Environmental Analysis*

*Field Evaluation & Excavation*

*Historic Building Recording*

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*Geophysical Survey*

**St Nicholas House, St Andrews, Fife**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Report No. 2036**

## **CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD**

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Commissioned by	Eastacre Investments LLP
Date issued	January 2013
Version	0
OASIS Reference	cfaarcha1-141393
Planning Ref No.	11/03730/FULL
Grid Ref	NO 51224 16371

This document has been prepared in accordance with CFA Archaeology Ltd standard operating procedures.

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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 February, March and November 2012 which monitored the external groundbreaking required during the redevelopment of St Nicholas House, St Andrews, Fife (Planning Ref: 11/03730/FULL, Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Eastacre Investments LLP.

A Written Scheme of Investigation for the watching brief was produced by CFA on behalf of Eastacre Investments LLP. and agreed in advance by the Fife Council Archaeologist.

### **1.2 Background**

St. Nicholas House, Abbey Walk (NO51NW 74.2) is a Category B Listing Building dating to 1930. The house consists of 3-stories with a harled and slated construction and projecting end bays. It is understood that it was built as a boarding house for St Leonard's School and first opened in the autumn term of 1930.

The development is located in an area with limited archaeological potential. A bronze finger ring (NMRS No. NO51NW 27) inscribed with Anglo-Saxon runes was found close to the development area in 1849 and a watching brief undertaken at St Leonard's Field directly south-east of the site recovered a small quantity of medieval pottery and bone.

No previous invasive archaeological fieldwork is known to have taken place within the proposed development area prior to this watching brief.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of the programme of archaeological works were

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (watching brief) and 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

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.

Ground-breaking in the watching brief areas was carried out using a mechanical excavator equipped with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

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

## 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

### 3.1 General

Numbers in bold refer to contexts, a full list of which are contained in Appendix 2. Other site records form Appendices 1 and 3. A draft entry for inclusion in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (DES) 2013 is included as Appendix 4.

Two areas of groundbreaking work were monitored (Fig. 1) and these were located to the south and north of St Nicholas House.

### 3.2 Southern Area

The area to the south of the building had been covered by trees which had previously been removed and as a result all of the deposits had been disturbed by tree roots. The topsoil comprised of dark brown-black/grey loose sandy clay (**001**) and was 0.40m deep to the south and up to 1.0m to the north. Below this was a layer of building debris and orange sand (**009**) which measured 0.3m-0.5m thick. The upper horizon of this layer was intermixed with the topsoil (**001**). The rubble lay directly over the natural geology which comprised of mid-light pinkish sandy clay and brown-orange and white silty sand with small sub angular inclusions (**002**).

The remains of a NE-SW aligned drain (**007**) were uncovered. It was cut into the natural subsoil (**002**) and constructed using light yellow quarried sandstone slabs (**003**). It had filled up with a lower fill of compact yellow grey mottled clay (**005**). Overlying this was reddish-brown mixed silty (**004**) fill and this was itself overlain by grey-brown silt (**006**) a deposit which also filled areas where stones had been removed by later disturbance.

Drain (**010**) was aligned initially NW-SE but turned towards the South as it crossed the area. The drain cut into the natural subsoil (**002**) and was filled with brown sandy silt (**011**). A small part of the drains original sandstone capping (**012**) survived.

### *Human Skull Fragment*

During the course of the works a fragment of disarticulated human skull came to light. The actual provenance of this fragment is not known but it is thought that it either came from the immediate development area or from the wider masterplan development area that surrounds this site (for a full analysis see below).

### **3.3 Northern Area**

The ground in this area was reduced by 0.2m and the stratigraphy comprised of 0.1m of rubble which overlay compacted garden soil. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

### **4.0 FINDS**

#### Human Bone Sue Anderson

The fragment is well preserved and represents part of the facial bones (right zygoma, complete right maxilla, partial left maxilla) of an adult individual. The robusticity of the zygoma suggests that the individual was male.

The dentition is complete and all teeth were erupted and present in the jaw at death, but two teeth (both mesial incisors) had been lost post-mortem. There is slight dental calculus on most of the teeth, although only traces remain on the molars. Tooth wear is relatively slight, which may indicate a young age at death, perhaps in the mid to late twenties. Both maxillary sinuses are exposed and show no signs of inflammatory changes associated with maxillary sinusitis.

When found, the left lateral incisor was inserted, back-to-front, into the socket for the right mesial incisor. It has been suggested that this may have been a crude attempt at dental work, but as the tooth belonged to this individual it seems unlikely. Transplantation of teeth using those of the dead (so-called 'Waterloo' teeth) was practised in the Victorian period, but the removal of a healthy tooth to replace another within the same mouth seems unlikely. There is no evidence in the socket of the right mesial incisor to indicate any modification which might have been caused through loss of the original tooth, nor to suggest regrowth of the alveolus around the inserted tooth. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that the left lateral incisor had been extracted *in vivo*. Therefore the insertion is most likely to have occurred post-mortem, and indeed is unlikely to have occurred before the individual was skeletonised. The loss of the front incisors after burial and decay of the soft tissue is extremely common due to the nature of the roots and the large size of the sockets. Damage to the anterior wall of the left mesial incisor socket is likewise post-mortem; again there is no ante-mortem change to the socket to indicate that the tooth was lost in life.

The anomalous position of the left lateral incisor is perhaps most easily explained by disturbance of the grave in antiquity, during which the face became separated from the rest of the skull. The loose tooth was presumably noticed in the spoil and jammed back into the only apparently open socket in the maxilla (the left incisor sockets were both filled with compacted soil when found), before the fragment was reburied. One

other possibility is that the fragment was part of an anatomical specimen which was discarded after breakage, but the brownish colouration of the fragment suggests that it has been buried for some time.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

A watching brief was carried out during groundwork for a residential development at St Nicholas House, St Andrews.

The southern area was found to contain two drains. No associated dating evidence was found within these features so it was not possible to date them. They are likely however to be post-medieval but more than this can not be stated.

The ground reduction in the northern area was not enough to expose the natural geology and so no features were found within this area.

No evidence is available to securely locate where the human remains came from but it is thought that they must have come from immediate environs of the development site.

A summary statement of the results of this watching brief, submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 4), will be sufficient to disseminate the results of this work.

## APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

Shot No.	Summary description of subject	Taken from	Conditions
1	General Pre Ex Shot of Car Parking Area on south side of house	E	Shade
2	General Shots Along Slip Showing Machining/Plough Scores and Plough Scores	E	Shade
3	General Shots Along Slip Showing Machining /Plough Scores and Plough Scores	ESE	Shade
4	Post Ex Shots Showing Topsoil Removal from Strip and Heavily Disturbed Subsoil from Roots	W	Shade
5	Post Ex Shots Showing Topsoil Removal from Strip and Heavily Disturbed Subsoil from Roots	E	Shade
6	Post Ex Shots Showing Topsoil Removal from Strip and Heavily Disturbed Subsoil from Roots	W	Shade
7	Pre-ex shot of drain <b>007</b> showing sandstone structure <b>003</b>	SE	Shade
8-9	Pre-ex shot of drain <b>007</b> showing sandstone structure <b>003</b>	SW	Shade
10	Pre-ex shot of drain <b>007</b> showing sandstone structure <b>003</b>	NE	Shade
11	Post Ex Shot of section through drain <b>007</b> showing sandstone structure <b>003</b>	SE	Shade
12-13	NE Facing Section through drain <b>007</b> showing sandstone structure <b>003</b>	NE	Shade
14	SW Facing Section through drain <b>007</b> showing sandstone structure <b>003</b>	SW	Shade
15	General Pre Ex Shot of Car Parking Area	W	Sun
16	General Working Shot	W	Sun
17	Post Ex Shot of Western End of Car Park Area on south side of house	W	Rain
18	Detail of <b>009</b> Rubble Layering SSW Facing Section	S	Rain
19	Post Ex Shot of Eastern End of Car Park Area showing Disturbed Subsoil	W	Rain
20	NW Facing Section of Slot Through drain <b>010</b>	NW	Bright
21	SE Facing Section of Slot Through drain <b>010</b>	SE	Bright
22	NE Facing Section through drain <b>007</b> after removal of sandstone structure <b>003</b>	NE	Bright
23	SW Facing Section through drain <b>007</b> after removal of sandstone structure <b>003</b>	SSW	Bright
24	Drain <b>010</b> (left) and Drain <b>003</b> (right)	S	Bright
25	Drain <b>007</b>	NE	Bright
26	View of Drain <b>010</b> with Slot Excavated	NW	Bright
27	Detail of Drain <b>010</b> Where Stone Cover <b>011</b> is Intact	NW	Bright
28	Pre-excavation of area to north of house	W	Overcast
29	Pre-excavation of area to north of house	E	Overcast
30	In-situ services showing depth of garden soil and made ground	SE	Overcast
31	Modern Brick manhole	S	Overcast



## APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context no.	Description
<b>001</b>	Topsoil- Dark Brown, Black/Grey Loose Sandy Clay Silt with Numerous Roots
<b>002</b>	Probable Natural Subsoil but Very Disturbed by Roots- Mid-Light Pinkish Sandy Clay and Brown-Orange and White Silty Sand with Small Sub angular Inclusions and Full of Roots of Various Sizes,
<b>003</b>	Light Yellow Quarried Sandstone Forming sides of drain
<b>004</b>	Upper Fill of drain Between Stones ( <b>003</b> )- Mid Reddish-Brown Mixed Silt
<b>005</b>	Lower Fill of drain Between Stones ( <b>003</b> )- Bright Yellow Grey Compact Mottled Clay (Possible Liner)
<b>006</b>	Mid Grey Brown Silt overlying ( <b>003</b> )
<b>007</b>	Cut of Probable drain Through <b>002</b> and containing <b>003-006</b>
<b>008</b>	Disturbed Stones of ( <b>003</b> )
<b>009</b>	Layers of Building Debris- Brick Fragments and Orange Sand 0.30m Deep Along Northern Side of Trench Extent
<b>010</b>	Cut of Drain Through <b>002</b>
<b>011</b>	Mid Brown Fill of Drain Cut ( <b>010</b> )
<b>012</b>	Sandstone capping for the drain <b>002</b>

## APPENDIX 3: Drawing Register

Dwg No.	Sheet No.	Scale	Plan / Section	Description/contexts
1	1	1:20	Plan	Plan of Probable Base of drain <b>003</b>
2	1	1:10	Section	NE Facing Section across <b>003</b>
3	1	1:10	Section	SW Facing Section across <b>003</b>
4	2	1:20	Plan	Plan of Probable Base of drain <b>003</b> and Drain <b>010</b> across
5	2	1:10	Section	NW Facing Section across <b>007</b> and <b>003</b>
6	2	1:10	Section	SE Facing Section of Slot across <b>007</b> and <b>003</b>
7	2	1:10	Section	NNE Facing Section across <b>010</b>
8	2	1:10	Section	SSW Facing Section across <b>010</b>

## APPENDIX 4: DES Entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Fife Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	St. Nicholas House, St Andrews, Fife
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	HOST
<b>PARISH:</b>	St Andrews and St Leonards
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Jamie Lewis
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	CFA Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NO51NW 74.2
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Listed Building
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 Figures)</b>	NO 51224 16371
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	March 2010
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	November 2012
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	N/A
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	A Watching brief was carried out on the external ground-breaking associated with the redevelopment of St. Nicholas House in St Andrews. No deposits or features of archaeological significance were identified although an unstratified fragment of human skull was recovered. Following police examination it was returned to CFA.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	N/A
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Eastacre Investments LLP
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, East Lothian, EH21 7PQ
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>	National Monuments Record for Scotland (NMRS)

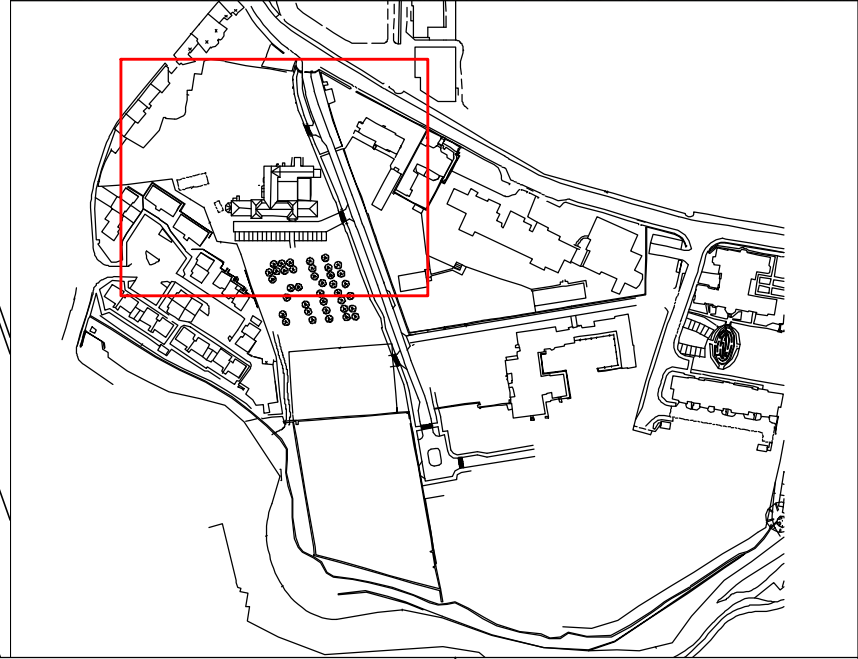
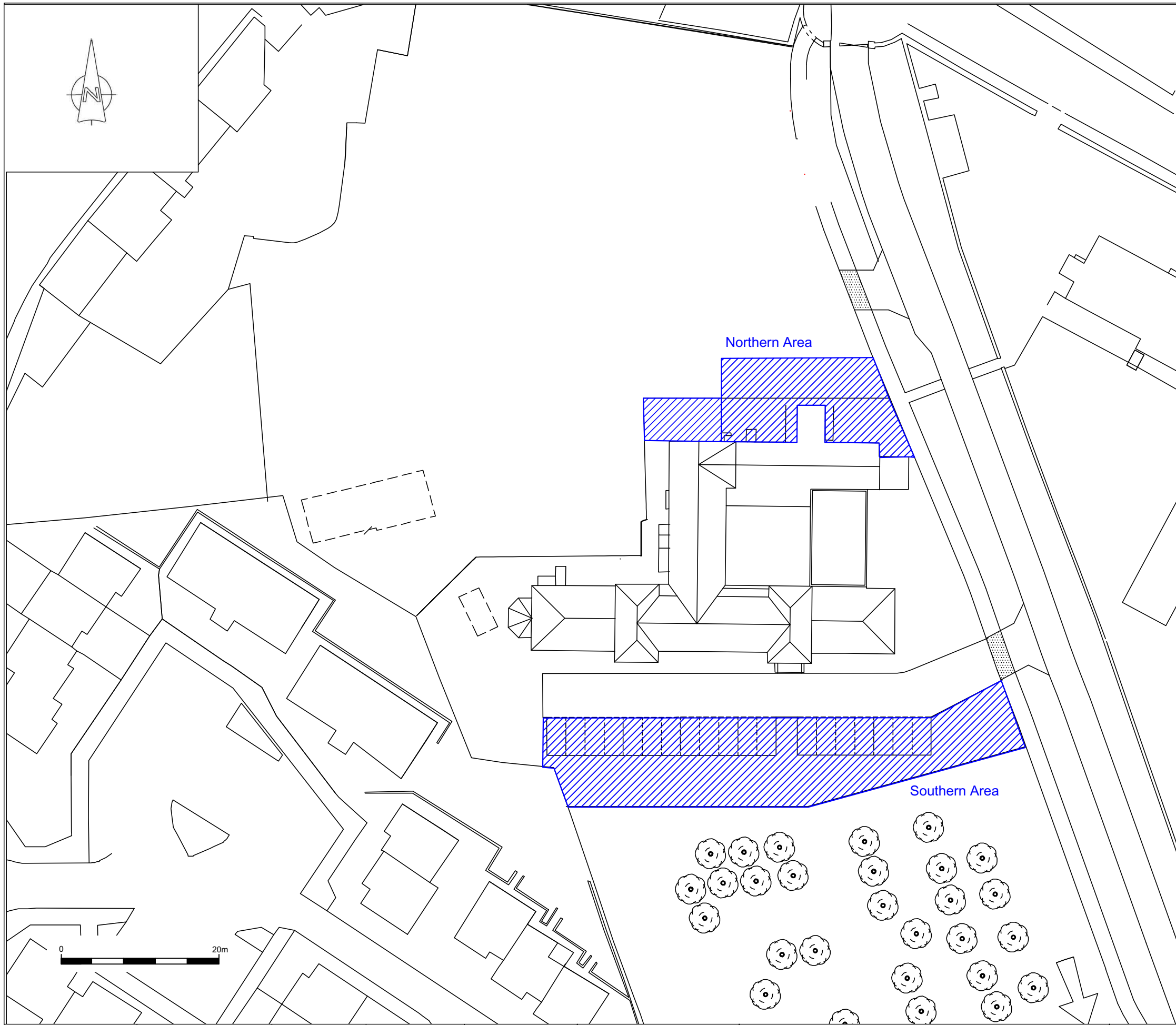







Fig. No: <b>1</b>	Revision: <b>A</b>	Checked: <b>KH</b>	Report No: <b>2038</b>	Drawn by: <b>TB</b>	Scale at A3: <b>1:500</b>	Key:  Watching Brief Areas	 <b>CFA</b> CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD The Old Engine House Eskmills Park Musselburgh East Lothian, EH21 7PQ t: 0131 273 4380 f: 0131 273 4381 e: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk w: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk		The copyright in this document (including its electronic form) shall remain vested in CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) but the Client shall have a licence to copy and use the document for the purpose for which it was provided. CFA shall not be liable for the use by any person of this document for any purpose other than that for which the same was provided by CFA. This document shall not be reproduced in whole or in part or relied upon by third parties for any use whatsoever without the express written authority of CFA.
Title: <b>Location Map of Watching Brief Areas</b>		Project: <b>St Nicholas, At Andrews, Fife</b>		Client: <b>Eastacre Investments LLP</b>					



Fig 2. Drain 007



Fig 3. Drain 010

Key:	Fig. No: 2-3	Revision: A	Client: Eastacre Investments LLP	 <b>CFA</b> 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: Selected Digital Photos			
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