

Site & Landscape Survey

**Bonnington House** Near Wilkieston, City of Edinburgh

> **Archaeological Evaluation** and Recording

> > Report No. 3076







## CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

The Old Engine House Eskmills Business Park Musselburgh East Lothian EH21 7PQ

Tel: 0131 273 4380 Fax: 0131 273 4381

email: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk web: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Author	Melanie Johnson MA PhD FSA Scot MIfA &Gary Savory MA
Illustrator	Shelly Werner BSc MPhil PhD
Editor	Tim Neighbour BSc MIfA
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Bonnington House Near Wilkieston, City of Edinburgh

**Archaeological Evaluation and Recording** 

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#### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 General

This report presents the results of archaeological works undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in August and September 2013 at Bonnington House, near Wilkieston, City of Edinburgh (NGR: NT 11141 69102) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by SurveyLINK Projects Ltd.

Planning permission (Ref. 13/02941/FUL) has been granted for landscaping and garden alterations around Bonnington House (Fig. 1). The planning permission was subject to a programme of archaeological works.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 26 August 2013 was produced by CFA on behalf of SurveyLINK Projects Ltd. The WSI was designed to fulfil the requirements of the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS).

## 1.2 Background

This report covers a programme of investigation carried out prior to ground works for landscaping and garden alterations to the east and west of Bonnington House.

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. 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 was undertaken by the University of Bradford Department of Archaeological Sciences in 2009 (Gaffney and Sparrow 2009) on behalf of CFA, over the locations of the new wings. This work indicated that the area to the east of the house where the new wings were to be constructed had been heavily landscaped in the past. The GPR data indicated the presence of paths, roadways and garden features. There was no clear evidence of the wings depicted on Roy's map, supporting the cartographic evidence that they lay further to the east.

A watching brief (Kirby 2011) was carried out during the excavation of trial pits. 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 machine dug trial pits indicated that deep deposits of made ground were present on the southern side of the house, while elsewhere shallow deposits of topsoil and made ground lay directly over undisturbed subsoil. This evidence suggested that substantial structures such as the earlier wings did not occupy the area of the new wings.

A programme of watching briefs in 2011 and 2012 was undertaken during ground works on the north and south sides of Bonnington House for the construction of the news wings. The watching brief monitored the demolition of the boiler house, a later

addition to the house. The removal of the boiler house exposed the original set of sandstone steps into the structure and a length of sandstone wall beneath the concrete floor. Walling to the east of the door, on the north side of the main house, was also exposed. A number of field drains were discovered to the east of the boiler house. No features were discovered that may have related to the north wing of the house.

To the south of Bonnington House the demolition of the modern kitchen revealed the foundation walls and plinth for the extension building. A stone box drain, stone built water cistern and a brick built septic tank were also recorded within the watching brief area. An 'L'-shaped foundation wall which protruded from the main house foundations was exposed. This wall did not align with the front wall of the main house and may relate to an earlier structure or a now demolished extension.

## 1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the programme of archaeological works were

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation to investigate the survival of archaeological features.
- To mitigate the effects of construction on any archaeological deposits or features identified through excavation and recording and produce a report on them.
- To make recommendations for mitigation, if merited.

### 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.

The areas to be investigated were (see Figs. 1a and 1b):

*Area A*: A semi-circular road round a lawn to the east of the House. An archaeological trial trenching evaluation was undertaken along the route of the road. Six trenches were excavated, with a combined total area of c.66m<sup>2</sup> (a 10% sample of the road area).

*Area B*: A recently uncovered, stone-built well lay within the area of the lawn defined by the proposed road. The well was 11m deep and will be kept in situ, capped in an appropriate manner with a turf-covered manhole lid. The well was drawn in plan and recorded by photography.

*Area C*: The gardens to the west of the House are to become a formal layout of four rectangular beds. An existing monument in the centre of the garden was retained. Trial trenches, with a combined total area of c.250m<sup>2</sup>, were excavated in the

easternmost pair of the two rectangular beds to investigate whether features (paths etc) survives that related to an earlier formal garden. The foundations of the central monument were investigated insofar as this could be conducted without damage to or movement of the monument

*Area D*: A trench for a water feature had been excavated to the east of the House. The sections of the trench were cleaned to investigate whether signs of cuts or built features are present. The sections were recorded by drawing and photography.

## 2.2 Trenching Methods

The trenches were excavated by machine under direct archaeological supervision to remove topsoil and other soil deposits down to natural subsoil or the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was reached first.

Samples of all features of archaeological interest were hand excavated in order to establish their likely date, nature, extent and condition.

All hand 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.

Trench locations were recorded using industry standard surveying equipment.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

Numbers in bold in the following text refer to contexts, a full list of which is contained in Appendix 2.

### 3.1 Summary of Historical Background

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map gives a date for the house of 1622. However, the earliest charter to refer to a 'mansionhouse' on the estate is from 1608, referring to James Elphinstone, 1st Lord Balmerino. By 1609 however, the estate belonged to the Montgomery's after Elphinstone fell out with the King. The first indication of who was in residence at the house is in 1648, with a charter making reference to James Scott of 'Bonytoun'.

The 1654 Blaeu map shows Bonnington estate (named Bonitoun). The estate seems to have been transferred to Hugh Cunningham when he became Lord Provost of Edinburgh in 1702, and was passed to his son in Alexander in 1714. Alexander appears to have undertaken alterations to the estate some time in the first half of the 18th century, and probably even re-built the house into the form recognised on Roy's map and which forms the main core of the structure today. The house and estate are depicted in detail on Roy's military map of 1747-55. The house is shown as a square house with curved screen walls and two pavilions, with a tree-lined avenue and formal gardens shown on the east.

In 1804 the estate was purchased by Matthew Wilkie, who owned it for the next hundred years, and who undertook some minor alterations. An 1822 estate plan shows a walled garden to the rear of the house, and does not depict the two wings shown on Roy's plan. There is an extension on the southern side of the main building which is depicted as being separate from, although built directly onto, the main house

The house was given a 'Jacobean' makeover in 1858 (possibly by the architect Alexander Black, with the date recorded on the wallheand gutters), with re-facings to the exterior and internal refurbishment. By the time of the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1853) the 1822 southern extension is no longer present and there are formal gardens to the west and the growth of woodland around the house. The paths of the formal garden that are shown on the 1853 map (Fig 1b) are not present on the next Ordnance Survey (1894) or on subsequent editions.

The house is Category A Listed (HB number 26826). The sundial and dovecot are also A Listed.

#### 3.2 Area A

Six trenches were excavated in Area A (trenches A1-A6). These all measured 2m by 5m except Trench A5 which measures 2m by 8m. They were distributed along the route of the road.

The trenches in this area all had a similar stratigraphy, with a modern path surface built of Type 1 hardcore (014), up to 0.3m thick, forming the surface with a levelling deposit (015) of dark brown clayey sand beneath, measuring up to 0.3m thick. In trenches A1 and A2 (Fig. 2) this directly overlay natural clay (000). In Trenches A3-A6 (Fig. 3) there was a layer (002) of up to 0.5m of re-deposited topsoil between (015) and natural, which had been deposited during landscaping works.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were found.

#### 3.3 Area B

A stone-built well (003) had been uncovered in this area. This was fully exposed and recorded (Figs. 4-5).

The well was nearly circular, with an external diameter of 2.6m and internal diameter of 1.8m and a recorded depth of 11.5m. It underlay re-deposited topsoil (002). It was constructed using mainly sandstone boulders and was mortared. A lead pipe was visible on the interior on the west side which reaches to the bottom of the well and presumably was used to pump water up from the well and to the house. An old pump in the basement of the main house has a matching lead pipe, but no remains of a connecting pipe were unearthed during the ground works closer to the house and it appears that the pump and well are no longer connected. The well is not shown on early maps, suggesting that it was not visible as surface feature when the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1853) was surveyed. It seems most likely that the well is of 17th or 18th century date; that is, contemporary with the house.

On the south-west side of the well was a small area of flagstones (004), probably representing the original ground surface and forming a path to, or firm area for standing beside, the well.

On the north-east side was a cut for an electrical cable (011), which was capped with ceramic covers joined together with iron staples and stamped with the manufacturer 'Baldwin'.

The cleaned sections in this area showed the stratigraphy to comprise of re-deposited topsoil (002) overlying dark grey sandy clay (009, 010) overlying light brown sandy clay deposits (007, 008, 013), with the electrical cable trench cutting all of these. Deposit 013 was the level at which the well was cut and also underlay the flagstones (004) and so can be presumed to be the ground surface existing at the time the well was built.

#### 3.4 Area C

Four trenches were excavated in this area, each measuring 20m by 2m. Topsoil was up to 1.2m deep. Natural (000) was mottled yellow and orange-brown sandy clay.

Field drains (rubble, clay piped and pea gravel filled) were recorded in all of the trenches.

A cobbled path, probably the former path shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1853, was recorded in the SW end of Trench C3 and the NW end of Trench C4 (Fig. 6-7), aligned roughly N-S and measuring 2.1m wide. A 0.2m deep cut (017) for the path was present, cutting into a mid grey sandy clay deposit (016), which had been filled with angular stones (018) to form the path. A deposit of light grey silty clay (019) overlying the path appeared to be material which had been trampled into the upper surface of the stones. The path was overlain by re-deposited topsoil (020).

A further amorphous stony spread (027) was found at the SE end of Trench C4 extending c.4m across the trench but with no clear edges. It is possible that the stone spread relates to the path recorded on the Ordnance Survey map of 1853, perhaps being a damaged cobbled surface.

There were no archaeological features in Trenches C1 and C2 (Fig. 8).

#### 3.5 Area D

The exposed section in Area D was cleaned by hand and recorded. The only feature exposed was the cut and foundation for a set of steps which formed a garden feature (Fig. 9).

The cut (023) was wide and shallow, up to 0.5m deep and c.4m wide, and was filled with mid brown sandy clay with inclusions of mortar and coal (022). The foundations for the steps (026) were composed of quarried angular stone (025). A modern drainage feature (024) lay to the south of the steps.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

A programme of archaeological recording and watching brief was carried out as part of a scheme of ground works associated with garden landscaping at Bonnington House.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were found in Area A.

A stone-built well was recorded in Area B. A lead pipe on the interior of the well on its west side reaches to the bottom of the well and was most likely used to pump water from the well to the house. An old pump in the basement of the main house has a matching lead pipe, but no remains of a connecting pipe were unearthed during the ground works closer to the house and it appears that the pump and well are no longer connected. The well is not shown on early maps, suggesting that it was not visible as surface feature when the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (1853) was surveyed. It seems most likely that the well is of 17th or 18th century date; that is, contemporary with the house.

Trial trenching in Area C uncovered cobbled paths which are most likely the former garden paths recorded on the Ordnance Survey map of 1853. The level at which these paths were revealed lies below the surface on which topsoil for the new garden layout will be placed, and thus the paths will be preserved in situ. The cut and foundation for a set of steps which formed a garden feature was recorded in Area D.

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).

Kirby, M 2011 Bonnington House, Near Wilkieston, City of Edinburgh. Archaeological Watching Brief. CFA Archaeology Ltd Report No. 1943.

McCaig, A 2012 Bonnington House, Near Wilkieston, City of Edinburgh. Archaeological Watching Brief. CFA Archaeology Ltd, Report No. 2028.

Ordnance Survey 1853 and 1893 Edinburghshire Sheet VI, 6 inch to 1 mile.

# **APPENDIX 1: Trench Summary**

Trench	Size	Depth	Description
no.			
A1	2x5	0.9	No archaeology. Type 1 path hardcore (014) then levelling
			material (015) then clay
A2	2x5	0.6	No archaeology. Type 1 path hardcore (014) then levelling
			material (015) then clay
A3	2x5	0.6	No archaeology. Type 1 path hardcore (014) then topsoil
			(001) then subsoil (002) then clay
A4	2x5	0.6	No archaeology. Type 1 path hardcore (014) then subsoil
			(002) then clay
A5	2x8	0.65	No archaeology. Type 1 path hardcore (014) then subsoil
			(002) then clay
A6	2x5	0.7	No archaeology. Type 1 path hardcore (014) then subsoil
			(002) then clay
C1	2x20	0.4-1.2	No archaeology. Garden soil (001) over clay. Field drains.
C2	2x20	0.4	No archaeology. Garden soil (001) over clay
C3	2x20	0.8	Garden soil (001) over (016) over N-S oriented irregular
			cobble paving. Field drains present.
C4	2x20	0.5	Garden soil (001) over (016) over irregular cobble paving.
			Field drains present. 2 small rectangular pits, possible flower
			beds.

## **APPENDIX 2: Context Register**

Context no.	Area	Fill of	Type	Description
000	All		Natural	Light brown sandy clay natural,
				boulder clay
001	All		Deposit	Topsoil
002	В		Deposit	Re-deposited topsoil, overlies (006)
003	В		Structure	Well
004	В		Structure	Paving adjacent to well
005	В		Structure	Ceramic electrical cable covers
006	В		Deposit	Dark grey sandy clay, overlies (009)
007	В		Deposit	Light brown sandy clay containing mortar inclusions
008	В		Deposit	Light brown/grey sandy clay, same as (007)
009	В		Deposit	Dark grey sandy clay, overlies (008), same as (010)
010	В		Deposit	Dark grey sandy clay containing mortar inclusions, overlies (007)
011	В		Cut	Cut for electrical cables, cuts (006)(007)(009)
012	В	011	Deposit	Modern fill of (011)
013	В		Deposit	Light brown sandy clay, underlies (004)
014	A		Deposit	Type 1 laid down for path, modern
015	A		Deposit	Mid-dark brown clayey sand
016	С		Deposit	Garden soil, mid grey sandy clay with mortar inclusions
017	С		Cut	Cut for formal garden path, N-S oriented to E of sundial
018	С	017	Deposit	Fill of (017), angular stones
019	С		Deposit	Path top surface, light grey silty clay trampled into (018)
020	С		Deposit	Modern re-deposited soil as part of

Context no.	Area	Fill of	Type	Description
				landscaping works
021	D		Deposit	Topsoil
022	D		Deposit	Fill of (023), mid brown sandy clay with inclusions of mortar and coal
023	D		Cut	Cut for stairs, cut into natural (000)
024	D		Cut	Cut for drainage, modern
025	D		Structure	Foundation deposit for stairs, angular quarried stone and mortar
026	D		Structure	Stairs
027	С		Structure	Possible path surface, vestigial

## **APPENDIX 3: Photographic Register**

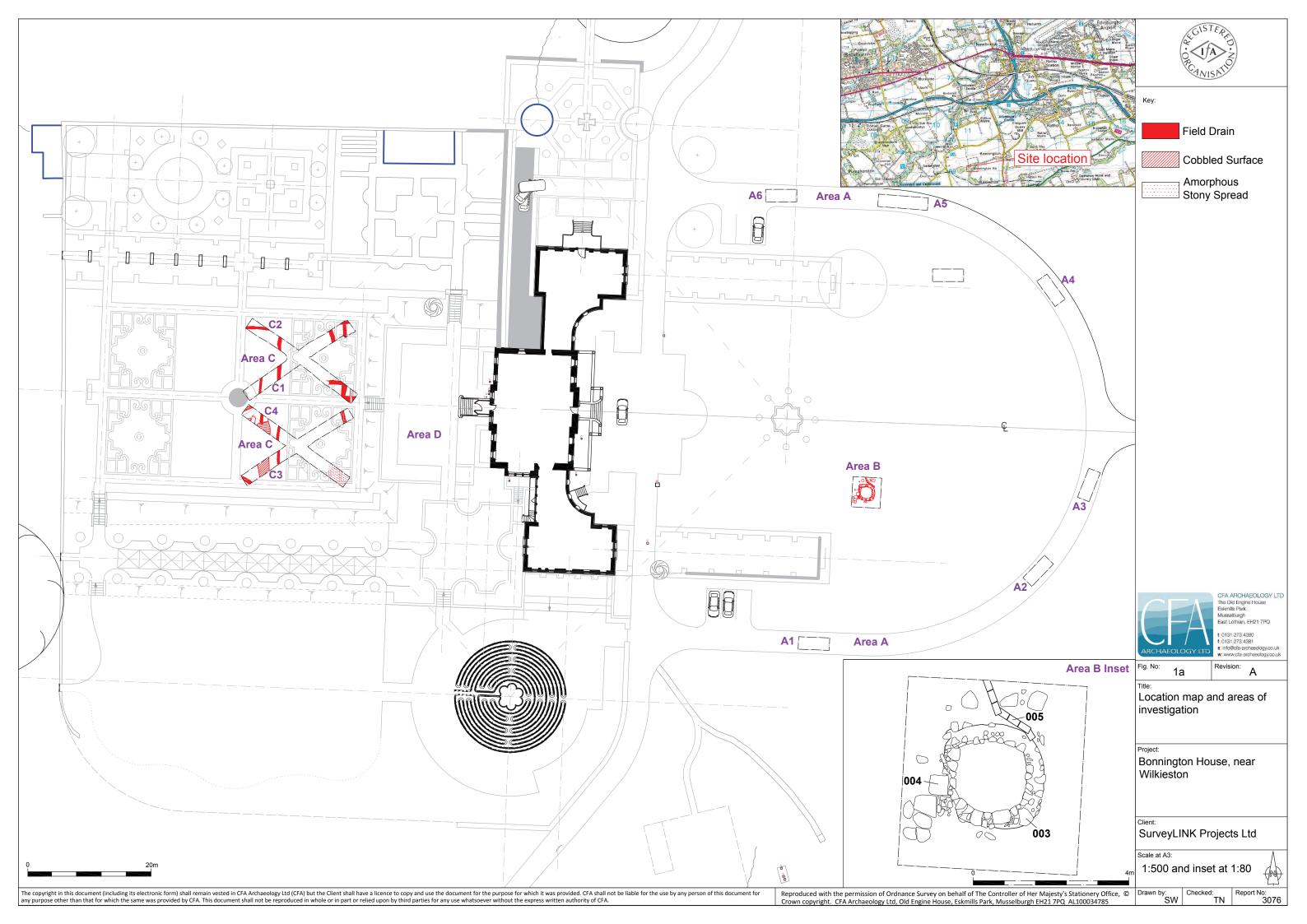
Shot No.	Summary description of subject	Taken from	Conditions
1	Well (003), possible paving (004)	W	Bright
2	Well (003), possible paving (004)	N	Bright
3	Well (003), possible paving (004)	NW	Bright
4	Well (003), possible paving (004)	Е	Bright
5	Well (003), possible paving (004)	SE	Bright
6	Trench A3 post-excavation	NE	Overcast
7	Trench A1 post-excavation	W	Overcast
8	Trench A2 post-excavation	SW	Overcast
9	Trench A5 post-excavation	SE	Overcast
10	Trench A4 post-excavation	SE	Overcast
11	Trench A6 post-excavation	Е	Overcast
12	S-facing section Trench B	S	Sunny
13	Trench C4 post-excavation	SE	Overcast
14	Trench C4 post-excavation	NW	Overcast
15	Trench C4 details of cobbles in NW end	N	Overcast
16	Trench C4 cobbles with field drain cut	NW	Overcast
17	Trench C3 post-excavation	SW	Overcast
18	Trench C3 detail of cobbles	S	Overcast
19	Trench B post-excavation	NE	Overcast
20	Trench C2 post-excavation	SE	Overcast
21	Trench C2 post-excavation	NW	Overcast
22	Trench C1 post-excavation	SW	Overcast
23	Trench C1 post-excavation	NE	Overcast
24	E-facing section Area D	Е	Light rain
25	Detail of cut in natural	Е	Light rain
26	Section through path	SE	Light rain
27-30	Detail of path	SE	Light rain
31	General shot of path	SE	Light rain

## **APPENDIX 4: Field Drawings Register**

Dwg No.	Sheet No.	Scale	Plan / Section	Description/contexts
1	1	1:20	P	Plan of well (003)
2	2	1:50	P	Trench C4
3	2	1:50	P	Trench C3
4	2	1:50	P	Trench C2
5	3	1:50	P	Trench C1
6	3	1:20	S	South-facing section of overburden above well, Trench B
7	4	1:20	S	E-facing section Tr D
8	4	1:20	S	SW-facing section through path Tr C3

# **APPENDIX 5: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry**

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Bonnington House, near Wilkieston
PROJECT CODE:	ВОНО2
PARISH:	Ratho
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	M Johnson & G Savory
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Investigation
NMRS NO(S):	-
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Well, Garden Paths
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	-
NGR (2 letters, 10 figures)	NT 11141 69102
START DATE (this season)	August 2013
END DATE (this season)	September 2013
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	N/A
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological investigation was carried out as part of a scheme of ground works associated with garden landscaping at Bonnington House. A stone-built well was discovered to the east of the House and cobbled paths related to the garden recorded on the 1853 OS map were discovered to the west.
	A lead pipe on the interior of the well on its west side reaches to the bottom of the well and was most likely used to pump water from the well to the house. An old pump in the basement of the house has a matching lead pipe, but no remains of a connecting pipe were unearthed during the ground works closer to the house and it appears that the pump and well are no longer connected. It seems most likely that the well is of 17th or 18th century date; that is, contemporary with the house.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	Watching Brief to east of House.
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Robert Wilson
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 City of Edinburgh Council Sites and Monuments Record



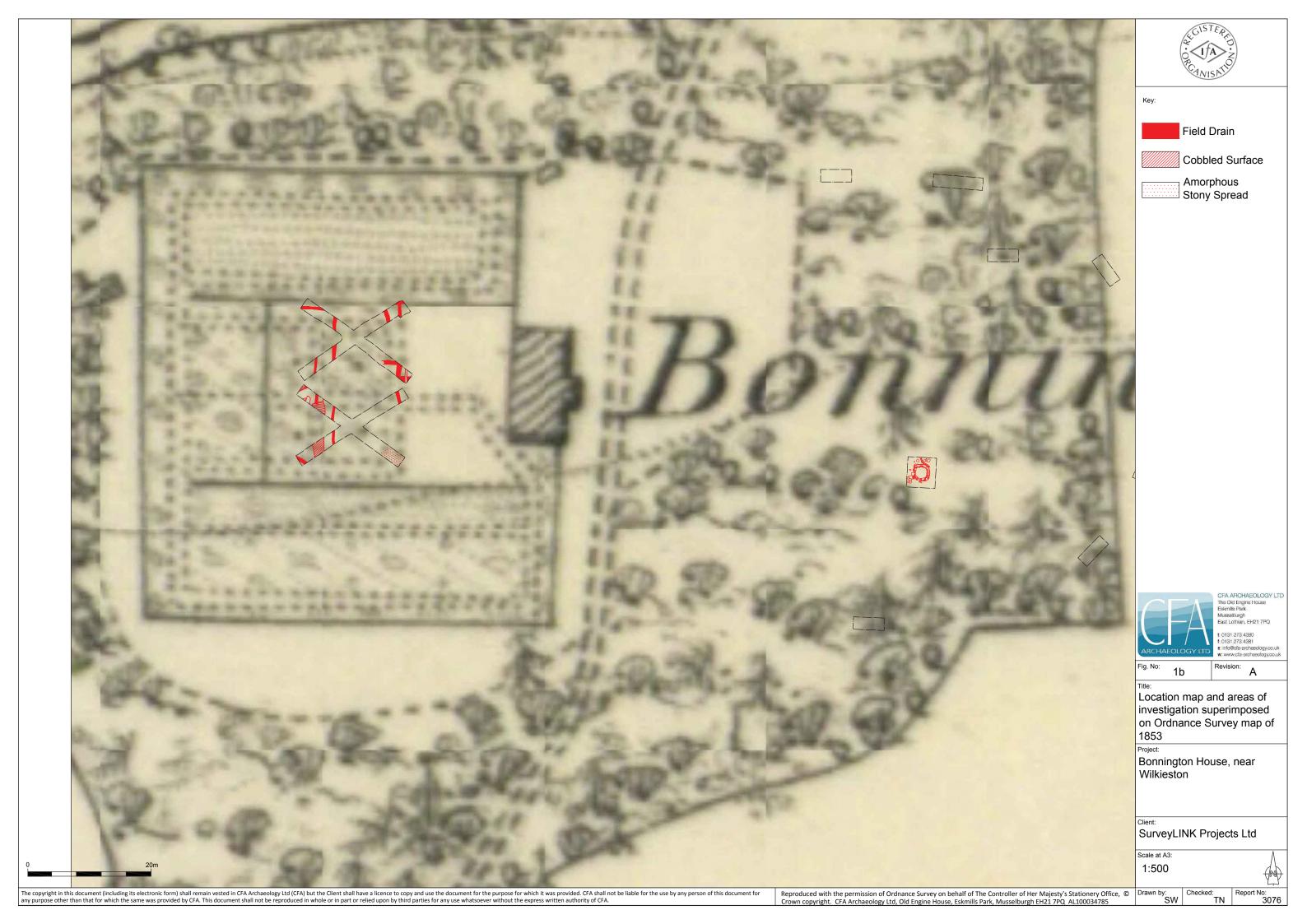




Fig. 2 Trench A2 from the south west



Fig. 3 Trench A4 from the south east

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Fig. 4 Area B, the well (003) from the south east



Fig. 5 Area B, the well (003) from the north

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Fig. 6 Cobble surface in Trench C3 from the south west



Fig. 7 Cobble surface and Field Drain cut in in Trench C4 from the north west

Fig. No: 6-7		Revision:	Project: Bonnington House, near Wilkieston	& CISTER O	CEA	CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD The Old Engine House Eskmills Park, Musselburgh
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Fig. 8 Trench C1 from the north east



Fig. 9 Aread D, foundation cut for steps, east facing section

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