

# CFA Archaeology Ltd

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**Yester House, Gifford, East Lothian**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Report No. 3308**

 0131 273 4380

 0131 273 4381

 [info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk](mailto:info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk)

 [www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk](http://www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk)

## **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](mailto:info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk)  
web: [www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk](http://www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk)

Authors	Samantha Hickman MA FSA Scot AICfA
Illustrator	Shelly Werner MA MPhil PhD MCIfA
Editor	Melanie Johnson MA PhD FSA Scot MCIfA
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General**

This report presents the results of a watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd during site investigations at Yester House, Gifford, East Lothian in June 2015 (NGR: NT 5436 6712).

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 23 June 2015 was produced and was designed to fulfil the requirements of East Lothian Council Archaeology Service (ELCAS).

### **1.2 Background**

A short programme of site investigation works was required on ground to the south of Yester House in order to establish the ground conditions in preparation for landscaping works. Yester House dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and it is possible that former garden and landscaping features may survive beneath the current surface.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of the programme of works were:

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (watching brief) to monitor the excavation of the trial pits.
- 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 follows the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance and Code of Conduct.

### **2.2 Watching Brief**

Excavations were undertaken with JCB fitted with smooth-bladed ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. All discoveries, including soil profiles and subsoil characteristics, were recorded using standard CFA recording forms and digital photography.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

Context numbers are in bold and described in Appendix 1.

Trial-pit 1 measured 1.8m by 2.3m by 1.1m deep and was located 5m to the south of the west wing of the house. A 0.3m thick mid-brown silty sand topsoil (**001**) overlay a dark red sandy gravel 0.35m thick, containing clay and small rounded stones (**002**). This may be redeposited natural used to build up the area in front of the house. A lens of redeposited topsoil (**003**) may represent a former ground surface, lending credence to **002** being redeposited natural. Below this lay dark brown/red sandy gravel (**004**), which is considered to be probable natural.

Trial-pit 2 measured 1.8m by 2.6m by 1.5m deep and was located 6m south of the east wing of the house. Topsoil (**001**) overlay subsoil (**002**), as in trial pit 1. Below this was darker brown/red sandy gravel with no clay (**005**), which lay on top of a light grey sandy clay (**006**); both deposits appear to be natural.

Trial-pit 3 measured 1.8m by 2.6m by 0.95m deep and was located approximately 14m due south of the stairs leading up to the main door of the house. 0.25m of topsoil (**001**) was followed by 0.5m of **002** which lay on top of 0.2m of a clayey sand (**007**). Below this, **006** was visible in the base of the trial pit.

Trial-pit 4 measured 1.8m by 2.7m by 1.25m deep and was located 27m south of trial pit 1. 0.3m of topsoil overlay 0.45m of dark red brown sandy gravel (**004**). A bright orange sandy gravel (**008**) was visible in the base of the trial pit.

Trial-pit 5 measured 1.8m by 2.4m by 1.5m deep and was located 27m south of trial pit 2. In this trial pit 0.2m of topsoil overlay 0.55m of the red/brown gravel (**002**), which in turn lay on top of darker red/brown sandy gravel (**003**). 0.3m of yellow grey sandy clay (**006**) was visible in the base of the trench.

Trial-pit 6 measured 1.8m by 2.8m by 1.5m deep and was located 15m south of trial pit 5. 0.2m of orange/red sandy gravel containing clay (**009**) lay beneath 0.2m of topsoil (**001**). Below the gravel was 0.7m of mixed grey/orange sandy silt (**010**). Bright orange sandy gravel (**008**) was visible in the base of the trial pit.

Trial-pit 7 measured 1.8m by 2.9m by 0.3m deep and was located 15m south of trial pit 4. This trial pit was only excavated to 0.3m deep, as a stone culvert (**011**) running NW-SE was encountered at this level. The culvert itself was not excavated but was cleaned and recorded before the trial pit was backfilled.

Trial-pit 8 measured 1.8m by 2.7m by 0.3m deep and was located directly to the west of trial pit 7. It was only excavated to a depth of 0.3m, as a stone filled drain was encountered at this level.

Trial-pit 9 measured 1.8m by 2.5m by 1.1m deep and was located to the east of Yester House. A layer of topsoil (**001**) 0.3m thick overlay a 0.5m thick layer of dark brown soil with charcoal inclusions (**013**), which may be redeposited topsoil or garden soil, as seen in trial-pit 1. Below this deposit was orange/yellow sandy silt containing angular and rounded stones (**014**).

Trial-pit 10 measured 1.8m by 2.5m by 2.4m deep and was located to the west of Yester House. Excavation revealed that the topsoil (001) overlay dark brown sandy silt which in turn covered mixed grey/brown sandy silt (016). Very friable, dark red/burgundy clayey silt was uncovered in the base of the trial pit.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Excavation of trial-pit 7 revealed a stone culvert and excavation of trial-pit 8 revealed a stone drain. Natural undisturbed subsoil appears to have been encountered at depths varying between 0.9m and 1.5m below the current ground surface.

CFA recommends that this report along with the *OASIS* and *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* entries will be sufficient to disseminate the results of the watching brief.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the RCAHMS and copies of reports will be lodged with the East Lothian Council Historic Environmental Record.

## APPENDIX 1: Context Register

Context No.	Description
001	Topsoil, a mid brown silty sand., 0.3m thick, consistent in all trial pits.
002	Dark red sandy gravel with clay pockets, 0.35m thick, containing medium to small rounded stones. Possibly re-deposited natural.
003	Lens of buried topsoil/former ground surface, dark brown silty soil. Visible in Trial pit 1.
004	Dark brown/red sandy gravel with pockets of clay.
005	Dark brown/red sandy gravel, 0.35m thick.
006	Light grey sandy clay.
007	Orange/red/brown clayey sand, 0.2m thick.
008	Bright orange sandy gravel.
009	Orange/red sandy gravel containing clay, 0.2m thick.
010	Mixed, dirty grey/orange sandy silt, 0.7m thick.
011	Stone culvert in trench 7, 0.3m below the surface.
012	Stone filled drain in Trial Pit 8, 0.3m below the surface
013	Dark brown , possibly redeposited topsoil/garden soil, charcoal inclusions
014	Orange/yellow sandy silt with angular and rounded stones
015	Mid dark brown sandy silt
016	Dirty, mixed grey brown sandy silt
017	Dark red/burgundy clayey silt, very friable, sterile.

## APPENDIX 2: Photographic Register

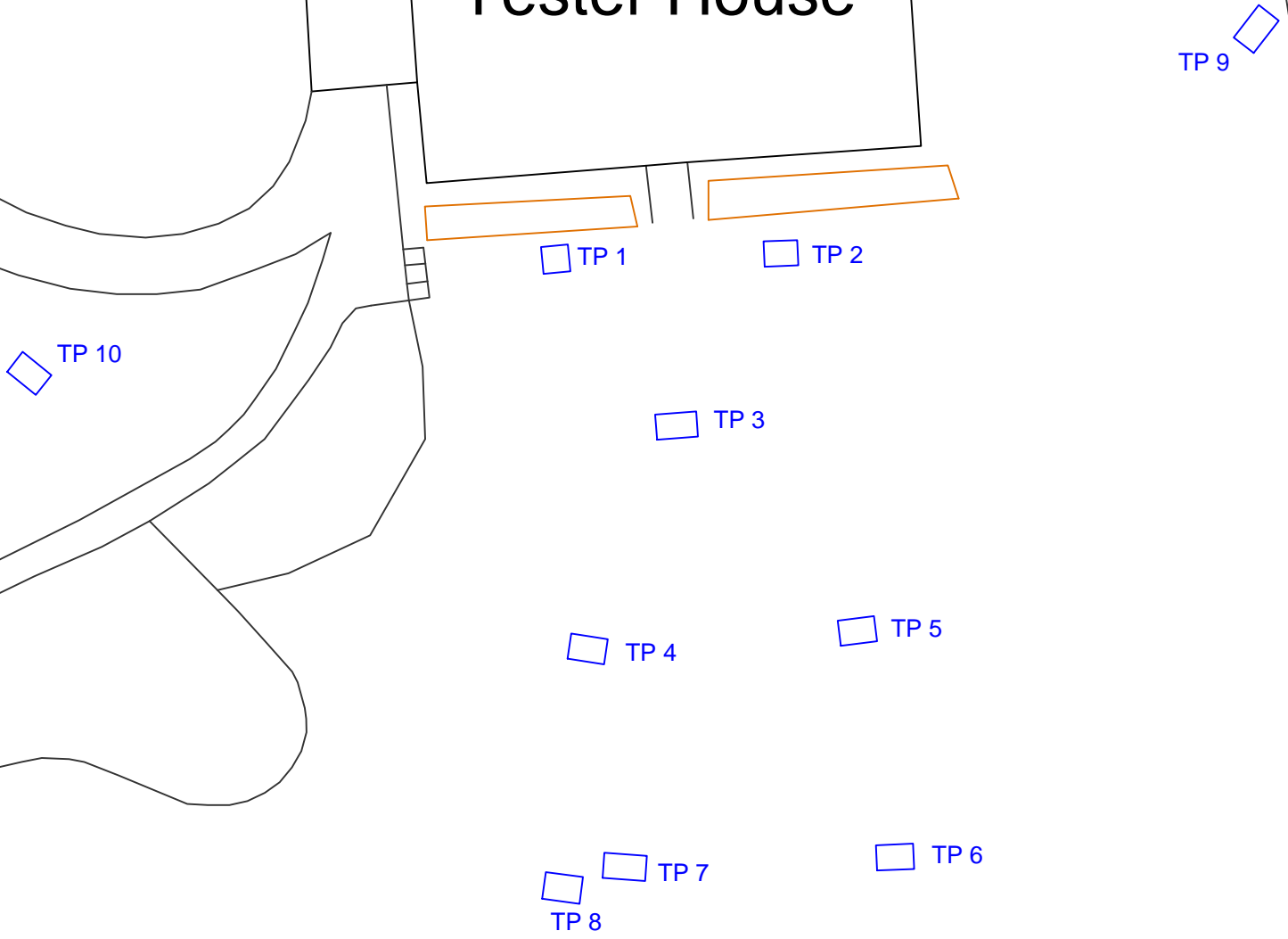
Number	Description	From	Conditions
1	Location of Test Pit 1-3	SW	Bright
2	Section of Test Pit 1	S	Bright
3	Section of Test Pit 2	N	Bright
4	Section of Test Pit 3	S	Bright
5	Section of Test Pit 4	N	Bright
6	Section of Test Pit 5	N	Bright
7	Section of Test Pit 10	SE	Bright
8	Section of Test Pit 6	N	Bright
9	Section of Test Pit 9	S	Bright
10	Plan of stone culvert in Test Pit 7	NW	Bright

### APPENDIX 3: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	East Lothian
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Yester House, Gifford, East Lothian Site investigation to the south of Yester House
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	YEGI
<b>PARISHES:</b>	Yester
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Samantha Hickman
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	CFA Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching Brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NT56NW 17
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	Country House
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR</b> (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 5436 6712
<b>START DATE</b> (this season)	26 <sup>th</sup> June 2015
<b>END DATE</b> (this season)	26 <sup>th</sup> June 2015
<b>PREVIOUS WORK</b> (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	An Archaeological watching brief was undertaken during site investigations at Yester House, Gifford, East Lothian. Ten trial-pits were excavated to the south of Yester House. Trial-pit 7 revealed a stone culvert and Trial-pit 8 revealed a stone drain. No other features of archaeological interest were found.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	None
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Vanessa Stephen
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ.
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in RCAHMS, Reports lodged with East Lothian SMR and RCAHMS




# Yester House



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**CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD**  
 The Old Engine House  
 Eskmills Park  
 Musselburgh  
 East Lothian, EH21 7PQ  
 T: 0131 273 4380  
 F: 0131 273 4381  
 info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk  
 www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

<b>Title:</b> Location of trial-pits	Fig No:	1	Report:	3308	Drawn by:	SW	CKD:	TN	Date:	08/07/2015
	<b>Client:</b> Yester House									
<b>Project:</b> Yester House, Gifford, East Lothian: Trial Pits	<b>Scale:</b> 1:500									
	 Trial-pit location									

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Fig. 2 - Photograph of Trial Pit 1



Fig. 3 - Photograph of Trial Pit 2



Fig. 4 - Photograph of Trial Pit 3



Fig. 5 - Photograph of Trial Pit 4



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 Old Engine House  
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 F: 0131 273 4381  
 info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk  
 www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Title:	Fig. 2 - 5	Report: 3308	Drawn: SW	CKD: TN	Date: 08/07/15
Client:	Yester House				

Project:  
**Yester House, Gifford, East Lothian: Trial Pits**



Fig. 6 - Photograph of Trial Pit 5



Fig. 7 - Photograph of Trial Pit 6



Fig. 8 - Photograph of Trial Pit 7



Fig. 9 - Photograph of Trial Pit 9



Fig. 10 - Photograph of Trial Pit 10



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Title:	Fig. 6 - 10	Report: 3308	Drawn: SW	CKD: TN	Date: 08/07/15
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