

# CFA Archaeology Ltd

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*Historic Building Recording*

*Site & Landscape Survey*


*Geophysical Survey*

## **Redevelopment of North Building, Renfrewshire Council Headquarters, Cotton Street, Paisley**

### **Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Report No. 3339**

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

**Redevelopment of North Building,  
Renfrewshire Council Headquarters,  
Cotton Street, Paisley**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Report No. 3339**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General**

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken in April, May July and September 2010, and April and May 2011 during ground-works for a residential development on the site of the North Building of the Renfrewshire Council Headquarters, Cotton Street, Paisley (NGR NS 48684 64000) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Westpoint Homes Ltd. The gap between the work and the report was due to a pause in development. Ultimately the final stages of development of Area 2 (Fig. 1) were completed under a different planning application and are reported upon separately.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 13 October 2008 for this programme of works was produced by CFA. The WSI was designed to meet the requirements of Renfrewshire Council, as advised by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS).

### **1.2 Background**

Planning Permission was granted for the construction of residential accommodation at North Building, Renfrewshire Council Headquarters, Cotton Street, Paisley, subject to an archaeological condition requiring a watching brief during groundbreaking works. This programme of works was required because the development occupied land close to Paisley Abbey (RCAHMS database no. NS46SE 2) and includes the former location of United Presbyterian Church, graveyard and associated buildings.

Map regression work (Haines & Glendinning 2008) indicated that the development site was built over during the expansion of Paisley sometime between 1774 and 1796. At this time the site was covered by a number of streets lined with buildings including the United Presbyterian Church, graveyard and Parish school. These streets were cleared in the late 1950's to make way for the construction of the Council Buildings. A study of topography and levels has shown that in order to construct the Council Offices and the attendant parking a presumably natural slope between Mill Street and Cotton Street was benched out to create a level platform for construction. Areas 1-3 were identified (Fig. 1) for a watching brief as there was a possibility that archaeological remains may have survived development in these locations.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of the programme of archaeological works were to establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits within the watching brief areas and to propose mitigation measures where necessary.

## 2. WORKING METHODS

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance as appropriate.

Groundbreaking works including the demolition below ground level and initial site strip/site reduction were carried out under constant archaeological supervision..

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

No archaeological work was undertaken in Area 3 and Area 2 was only partially developed under this planning application. The remainder of the archaeological work that was undertaken in Area 2 will be reported on under separate covers.

## 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

### *Area 1 (Fig 2)*

Area 1 occupied the eastern side of the former line of Cotton Street. The layout of the buildings on this side of the road (Fig. 2) did not appear to vary much from the mid/late 19<sup>th</sup> century up until their demolition in the late 50's.

A cobbled surface (**002 & 005**) (Fig 3) was uncovered in the southern part of Area 1. This was covered over in parts with concrete and cut through by services. This overlay a rubble and ash bedding layer (**004**). It was not possible to reconcile these features with the mapped evidence of structures predating the redevelopment of the area for the council buildings.

To the north of **002** and **005** a small area surfaced with brick (**007**) and sandstone flagstones (**006**) was identified (Fig 10). A drainhead (**019**) was present in the surface. These did not appear to be interior surfaces so it was not possible to reconcile these features with the mapped evidence of structures predating the redevelopment of the area for the council buildings.

Another cobbled surface (**009**) was uncovered (Fig. 9). The location of the cobbles suggested that that were the remains of the original Cotton Street before it was realigned. They overlay a concrete surface (**017**) so had presumably been re-laid at some point in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A row of sandstone flagstones (**008**) were identified just to the east of the cobbles.

Three parallel walls (**010, 011, 012**) (Fig. 4) were uncovered to the north of **009**. They were constructed of red brick lying over concrete foundations (**013, 014, 015**). On excavation it was revealed that the walls were four courses high. The use of concrete in their construction suggests that they were 20<sup>th</sup> century in date. They do not appear to match up with any known structures in the area. However, their position on the line of Cotton Street indicates that they may have been associated with the road or services under the road rather than structures.

## Area 2 (Fig. 5)

A section of a substantial wall (**016**) was uncovered in Area 2 (Figs. 6, 7 & 8). This wall was the surviving remains of the southeastern wall of the United Presbyterian Church which stood on the site prior to the council buildings. Initially, a 13.3m long x 2.6m high section of the wall was exposed (Fig. 6). Above the roughly dressed foundation courses three complete and one partial wall recesses were present. These varied in width between 1.3m to 1.6m. Around the recesses the sandstone was dressed as this would have presumably been visible unlike the lower foundation courses which would have not been exposed. The blocks measured roughly 0.3m to 0.5m in size although larger blocks up to 1.4m were also recorded. The wall foundations were standing on bedrock. It appears that the wall may have been covered in plaster originally, as patches of plaster were evident. No internal features of the church survived and it appears that this section of wall may have been retained to form a revetment for a bank which formed part of the landscaping for the council buildings. A further portion of the church wall was uncovered slightly to the north of this section and also comprised another part of the northwest facing internal elevation (Fig. 8).

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks for a residential development on the site of the former North Building of the Renfrewshire Council Headquarters on Cotton Street, Paisley. The works recorded:

- Cobble, brick and sandstone flagstone surfaces and brick foundations;
- A possible old alignment of Cotton Street;
- A section of the southeastern wall of the former united Presbyterian Church.

CFA does not recommend any further archaeological work in relation to this programme of works. However the final decision on any further mitigation measures lies with WoSAS.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the HES and copies of reports will be lodged with the Council Sites and Monuments Record.

A summary statement to be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 3) will be sufficient to disseminate the results of this programme of works. An OASIS Scotland entry will also be completed.

## 5. REFERENCES

Haines, K. & Glendinning, B. 2008 *Cotton Street, Paisley – Map Regression Report*, unpublished CFA report no. 1546.

## APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

| Photo No | Description  | From | Conditions |
|----------|--|------|------------|
| 1-2      | General shots of Area 2  | N    | Overcast   |
| 3        | General shot of Area 1   | NE   |            |
| 4        | Post-excavation shot of stripped bank in Area 2                                      | N    | Overcast   |
| 5        | General shot of north-west facing elevation of church wall (016)                     | NW   | Overcast   |
| 6-8      | Detailed shots of north-west facing elevation of church wall (016)                   | NW   | Overcast   |
| 9-10     | North-west facing elevation of church wall (016)                                     | NW   | Overcast   |
| 11       | Walls 011, 012   | NE   | Sunny      |
| 12       | Walls 010, 011, 012  | NW   | Sunny      |
| 13       | Section across Walls 010, 011, 012   | SE   | Sunny      |
| 14       | Section across Walls 010, 011, 012   | NW   | Sunny      |
| 15-19    | Close up of section across Walls 010, 011, 012                                       | NW   | Sunny      |
| 20-22    | Cobbled surface (002)  |      |            |
| 23       | Cobbled surface (002)  | SE   | Sunny      |
| 24       | Cobbled surface (002)  | N    | Sunny      |
| 25       | Cobbled surface (002)  | S    | Sunny      |
| 26       | Cobbled surface (002)  | E    | Sunny      |
| 27       | Cobbled surface (002)  | E    | Sunny      |
| 28       | Cobbled surface (002)  | E    | Sunny      |
| 29       | Cobbled surface (002)  | SSE  | Sunny      |
| 30       | Cobbled surface (002)  | SW   | Sunny      |
| 31       | Shot of area of cobbles (002) being removed showing underlying black ash layer (004) | S    | Sunny      |
| 32       | Natural clay (001) below 004   | N    | Cloudy     |
| 33       | Brick surface (007) and sandstone flagstone surface (006)                            | S    | Cloudy     |
| 34       | Brick surface (007) and sandstone flagstone surface (006)                            | E    | Cloudy     |
| 35       | Brick surface (007) and sandstone flagstone surface (006)                            | N    | Cloudy     |
| 36       | Brick surface (007) and sandstone flagstone surface (006)                            | N    | Cloudy     |
| 37       | Brick surface (007) and sandstone flagstone surface (006)                            | N    | Cloudy     |
| 38       | Sandstone blocks (008) from the S  | S    | Cloudy     |
| 39       | Sandstone blocks (008) from E  | E    | Cloudy     |
| 40       | Cobble Surface (009)   | E    | Cloudy     |
| 41       | Detail of N end of sandstone blocks (008) showing 2 drains abutting W side of stone  | N    | Cloudy     |
| 42       | Sandstone blocks (008)   | E    | Cloudy     |
| 43       | Cobble Surface (009)   | S    | Cloudy     |
| 44       | Cobble Surface (009)   | S    | Cloudy     |
| 45       | Cobble Surface (009)   | NE   | Cloudy     |
| 46       | Cobble Surface (009)   | E    | Cloudy     |
| 47       | Concrete layer (017) under cobbles (009)   | S    | Cloudy     |
| 48       | Breaking of concrete layer (017)   | S    | Sunny      |
| 49       | Natural clay (001) under concrete layer (017)  | N    | Sunny      |

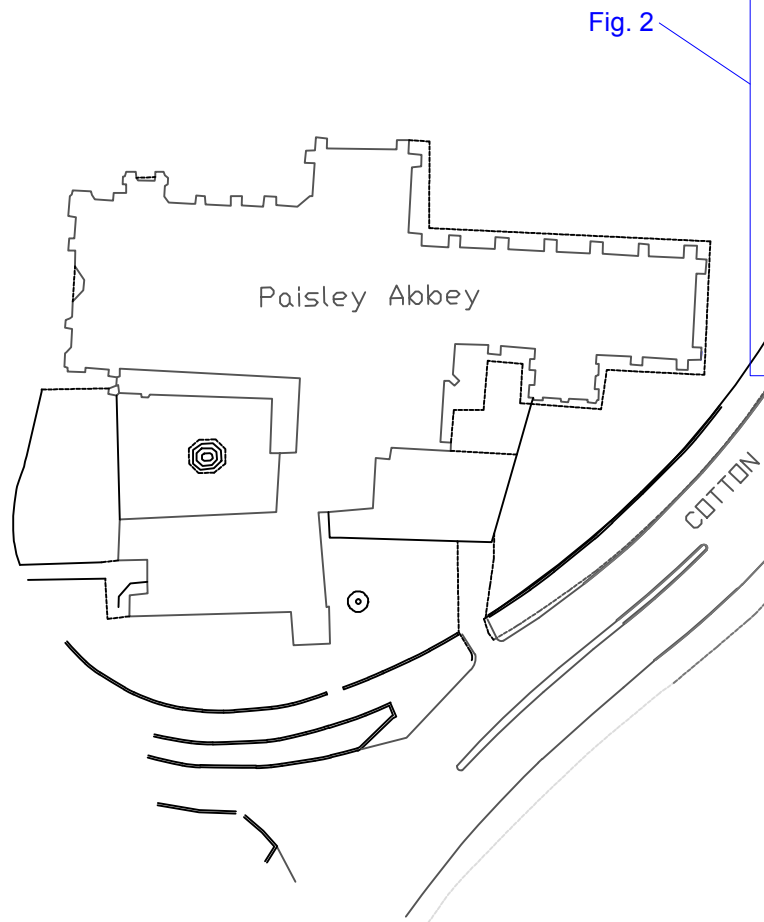
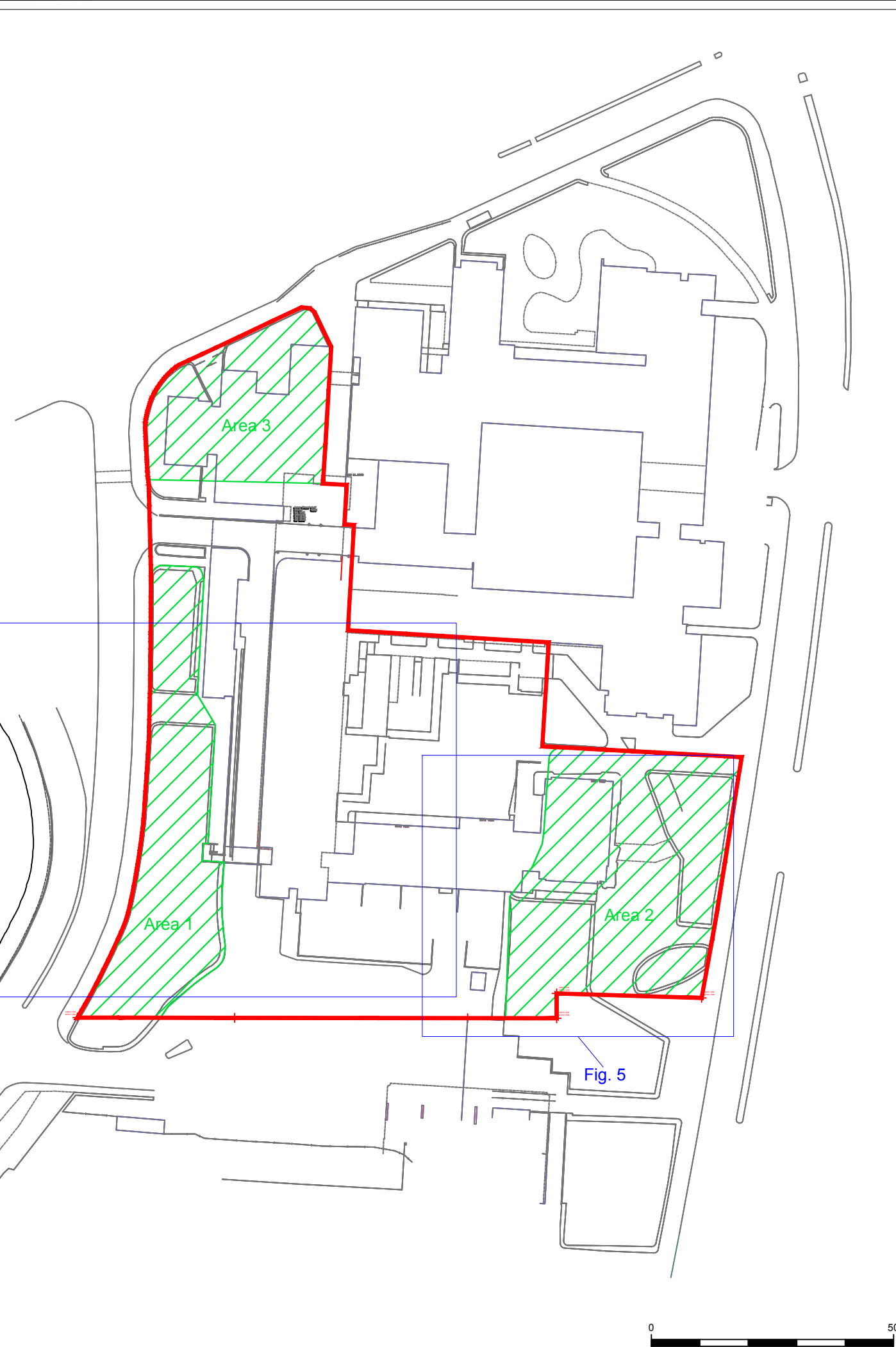
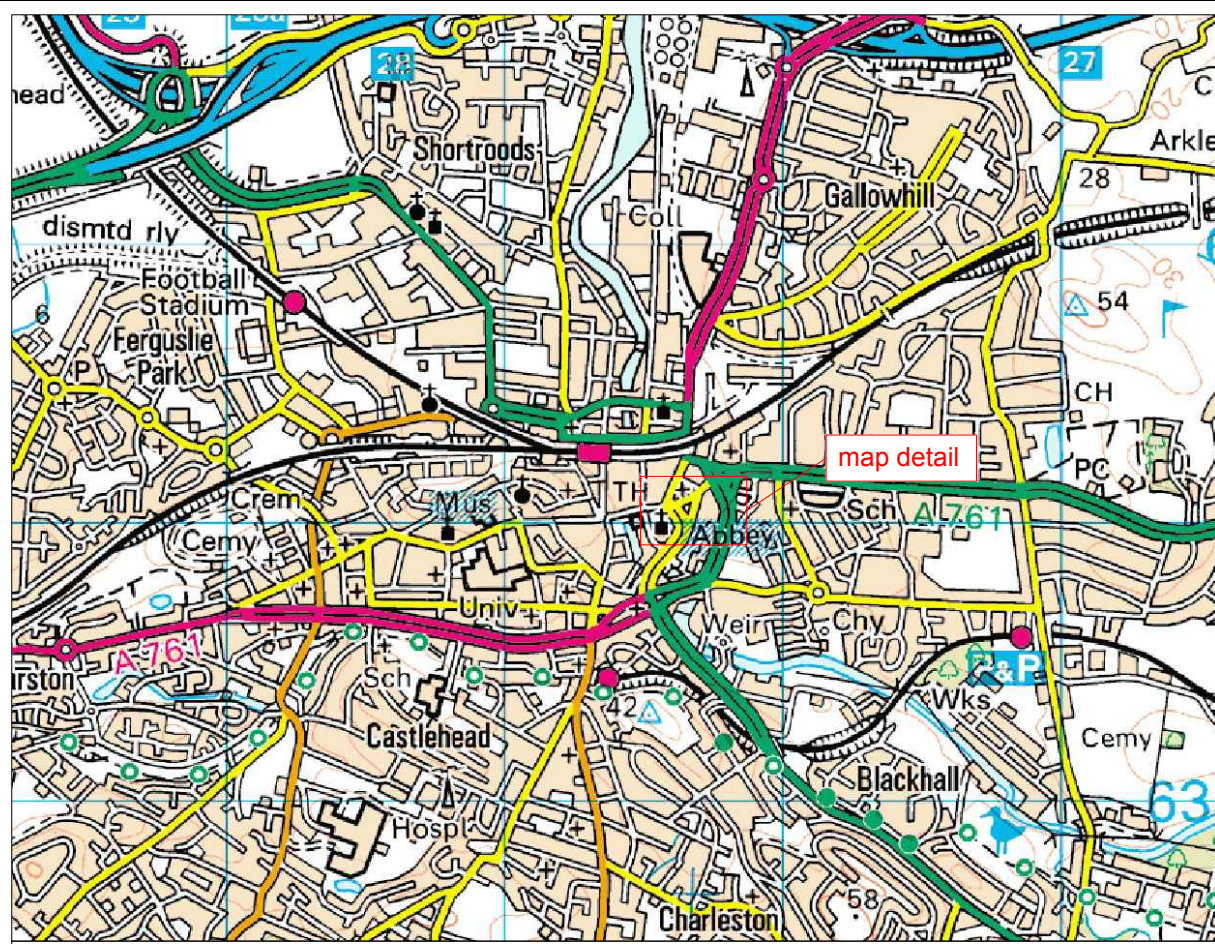
## APPENDIX 2 Context Register

| Context no. | Description   |
|-------------|---|
| 001         | Natural clay  |
| 002         | Cobbled surface   |
| 003         | A layer of concrete covering cobbled surfaces 002 and 005 |
| 004         | Ash and rubble layer beneath cobbled surfaces 002 and 005 |
| 005         | Cobbled surface   |
| 006         | Sandstone flagstones                                      |
| 007         | Brick Surface   |
| 008         | Sandstone blocks / flagstones                             |
| 009         | Area of cobbles   |
| 010         | Brick wall  |
| 011         | Brick wall  |
| 012         | Brick wall  |
| 013         | Concrete foundations beneath wall <b>(010)</b>            |
| 014         | Concrete foundations beneath wall <b>(011)</b>            |
| 015         | Concrete foundations beneath wall <b>(012)</b>            |
| 016         | Church wall   |
| 017         | Concrete layer under cobbles <b>(009)</b>                 |
| 018         | Drain   |
| 019         | Drainhead   |



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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>   | Renfrewshire Council  |
| <b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>   | Redevelopment of North Building, Renfrewshire Council Headquarters, Cotton Street, Paisley – watching brief   |
| <b>PROJECT CODE:</b>  | PABB  |
| <b>PARISH:</b>  | Paisley   |
| <b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>   | Samantha Hickman  |
| <b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>  | CFA Archaeology Ltd   |
| <b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>  | Archaeological Watching Brief   |
| <b>NMRS NO(S):</b>  | N/A   |
| <b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>   | N/A   |
| <b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>   | N/A   |
| <b>NGR</b>  | NS 48684 64000  |
| <b>START DATE (this season)</b>   | April 2010  |
| <b>END DATE (this season)</b>   | May 2011  |
| <b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>   | N/A   |
| <b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b><br>(May include information from other fields) | An archaeological watching brief was carried out during ground-works for a residential development on the site of the North Building of the Renfrewshire Council Headquarters, Cotton Street, Paisley. A small number of features including cobble, brick and sandstone flagstone surfaces were identified. It was not possible to reconcile these features with the mapped evidence of structures predating the redevelopment of the area for the council buildings. Features that could be reconciled with the map evidence of the former layout of the area included part of the old alignment of Cotton Street and a section of the southeastern wall of the former united Presbyterian Church. |
| <b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>  | None  |
| <b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>   | N/A   |
| <b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>   | Westpoint Homes Ltd   |
| <b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>   | The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ  |
| <b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>   | cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk   |
| <b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>  | Historic Environment Scotland<br>Council Sites and Monuments Record (Report)  |



**Key:**

- Development Area
- Archaeologically Sensitive Area



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Fig. No: **1** Report No: **3339**

Title:  
**Location Plan**

Project:  
**Redevelopment of North Building, Renfrewshire Council Headquarters, Cotton Street, Paisley**

Client:  
**Westpoint Homes Ltd**

Scale at A3:  
**1:1000**

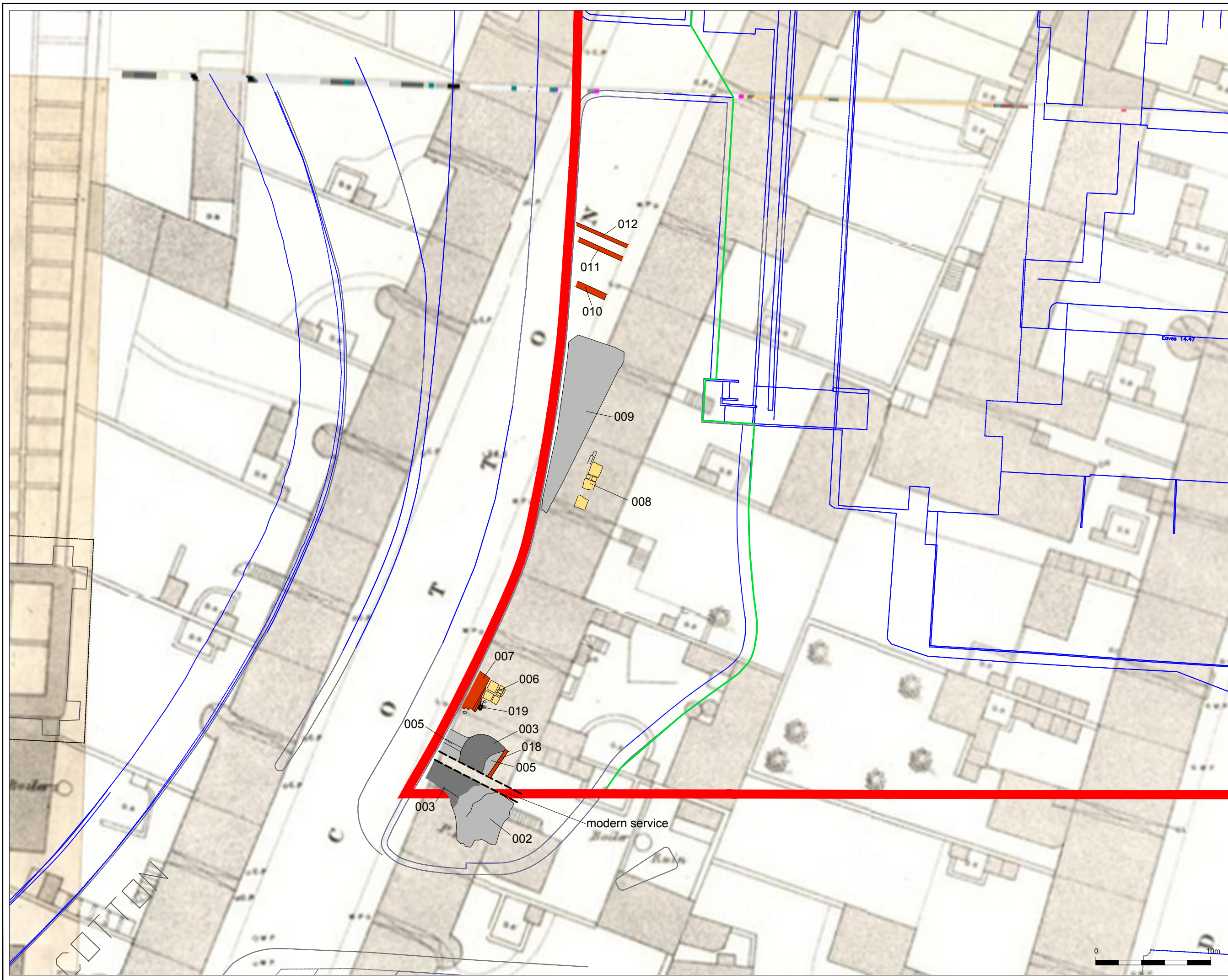
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| GC        | SW       | 05/10/15 |

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**Key:**

- Development Area
- Archaeologically Sensitive Area
- Cobbled surface
- Brick
- Sandstone
- Concrete



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|            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| Fig. No: 2 | Report No: 3339 |
|------------|-----------------|

Title:  
**Area 1 showing features over OS Town Plan 1867**

Project:  
**Redevelopment of North Building, Renfrewshire Council Headquarters, Cotton Street, Paisley**

Client:  
**Westpoint Homes Ltd**

Scale at A3:  
**1:300**

|              |             |                |
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Fig. 3 Cobbled surface 002 and 005



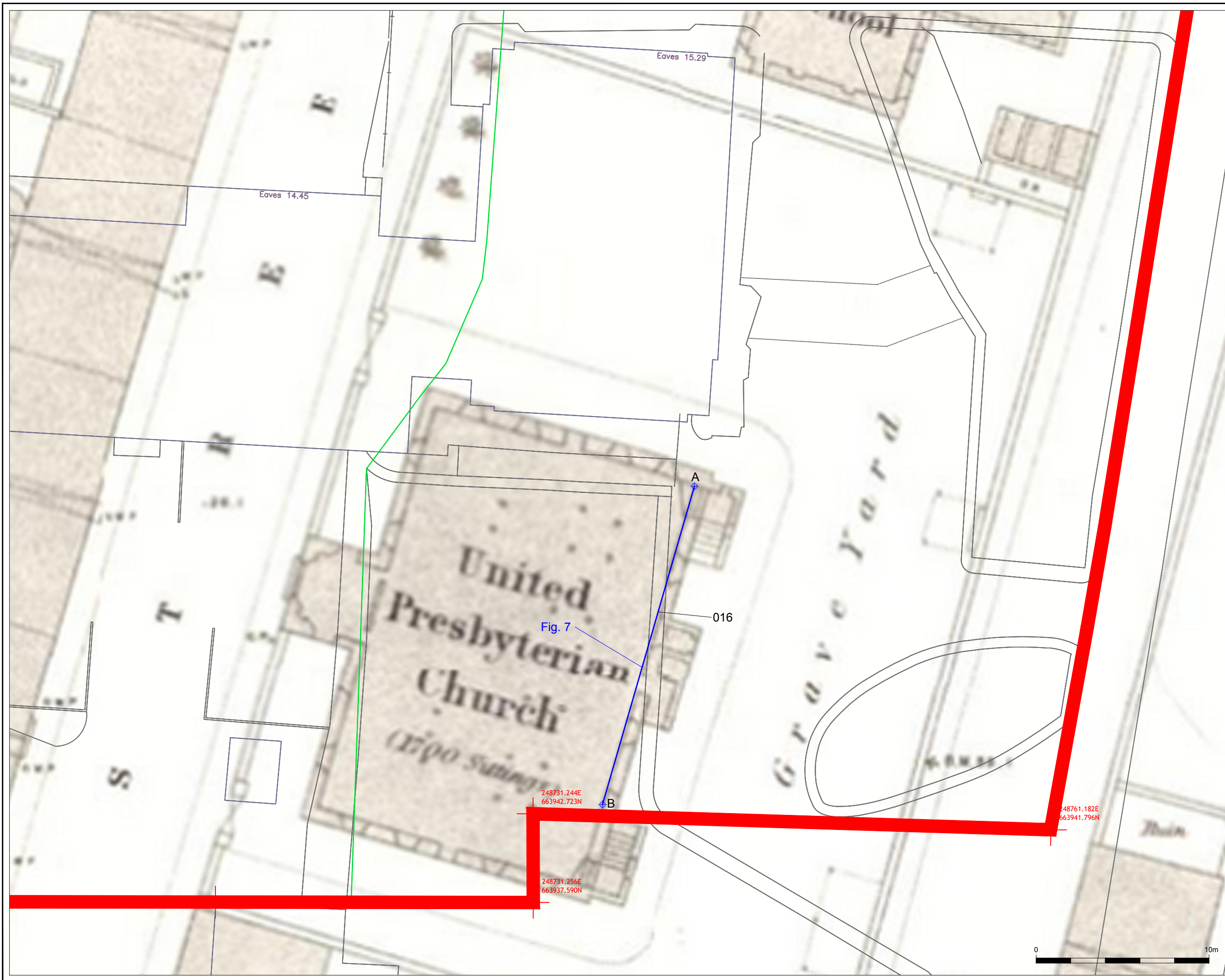
Fig. 4 Walls 010, 011 and 012




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|--|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------|---------|----------------|
| Title:   | Fig. 3 - 4                  | Report: 3339 | Drawn: GC | CKD: SW | Date: 13/11/15 |
|  | Client: Westpoint Homes Ltd |              |           |         |                |
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Key:

 Section line on Wall 016



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Fig. No: 5 Report No: 3339

Title:  
**Area 2 showing location of church wall exposed**

Project:  
**Redevelopment of North Building, Renfrewshire Council Headquarters, Cotton Street, Paisley**

Client:  
**Westpoint Homes Ltd**

Scale at A3:  
**1:200**

Drawn by: GC Checked: SW Date: 05/10/15

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Fig. 6 NW-facing section of church wall



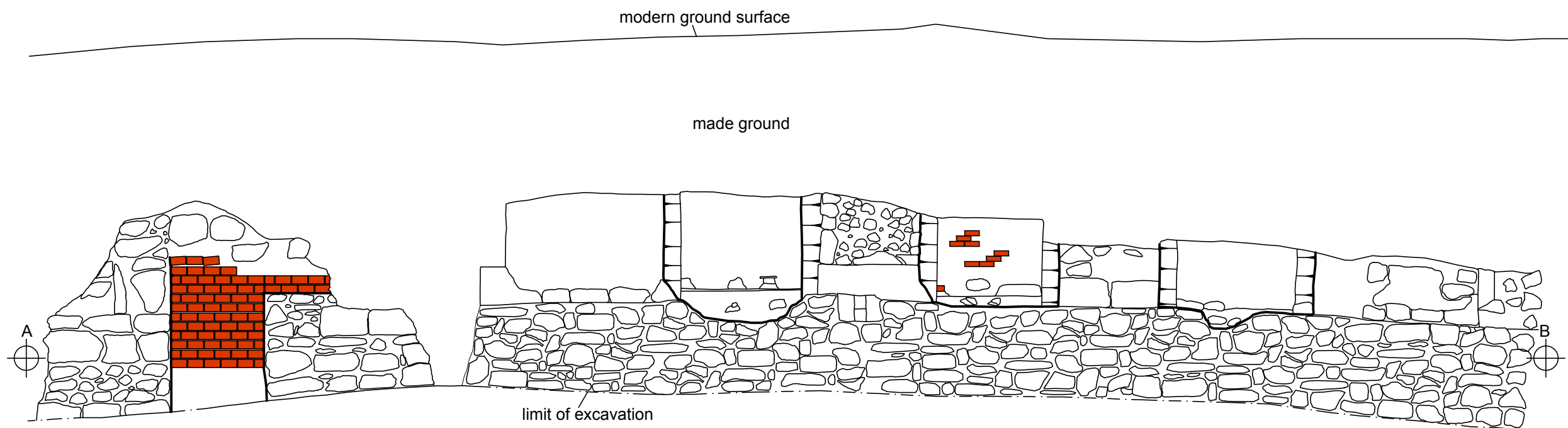
Fig. 7 NW-facing section of church wall



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|  | Client: Westpoint Homes Ltd |              |           |         |                |
| Project:<br>Redevelopment of North Building, Renfrewshire Council Headquarters, Cotton Street, Paisley |                             |              |           |         |                |





**Key:**

 Brick

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Fig. No: **8** Report No: **3339**

Title:  
**NW facing section of interior  
 of church wall 016**

Project:  
**Redevelopment of North  
 Building, Renfrewshire  
 Council Headquarters, Cotton  
 Street, Paisley**

Client:  
**Westpoint Homes Ltd**

Scale at A3:  
**1:60**

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Fig. 9 Cobbled surface 009 from the north



Fig. 10 Brick surface 007, sandstone flagstones 006 and drainhead 019 from the south



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| Title:  | Fig. 9 - 10 | Report: 3339 | Drawn: GC | CKD: SW | Date: 11/11/15 |
| Client: Westpoint Homes Ltd   |             |              |           |         |                |
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