

CFA Archaeology Ltd

archaeological consultants

Advice on Archaeology & Planning

Environmental Impact Assessment

Interpretation, Design & Display

Finds/ Environmental Analysis

Field Evaluation & Excavation

Historic Building Recording


Site & Landscape Survey

Geophysical Survey

**85-87 South Bridge,
Edinburgh
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Report No 3383

 0131 273 4380

 0131 273 4381

 info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk

 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
web: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Author	Ewan MacNeilage MA (Hons)
Illustrator	Shelly Werner BA MPhil PhD MCifA
Editor	Bruce Glendinning BSc PG Dip MCifA
Commissioned by	Mr Joe Crolla
Date issued	January 2016
Version	1
Grid Ref	NT 25958 73496

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

**85-87 South Bridge,
Edinburgh
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Report No 3383

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Working Methods	4
3.	Archaeological Results	4
4.	Conclusions	6
6.	References	7

Appendices

1.	Photographic Register	8
2.	Context Register	8

Illustrations (bound at rear)

Fig. 1 Floor plan of basement level showing room numbers

Fig. 2 Flagstone floor in Room 1/3

Fig. 3 Mortared walls and rubble supporting flagstone floor in Room 1/5

Fig. 4 Mortared walls and rubble supporting flagstone floor in Room 1/6

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out in December 2015 at 85-87 South Bridge, Edinburgh on behalf of Mr Joe Crolla (Fig 1). The work was based on an addendum to a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by Mr John Lawson at the City of Edinburgh Archaeology Service (CECAS).

1.2 Background

Number 85-87 South Bridge (otherwise recorded as Nos. 40, 42, 44 Blair Street; and Nos. 208-210 Cowgate) is a Grade B-listed tenement/office building forming an integral part of the Robert Kay design (circa 1790) for the South Bridge and it also lies at the centre of the UNESCO world heritage site. Prior to and during redevelopment a programme of archaeological works was required to record elements of the building put at risk by construction works.

A standing building appraisal was carried out by CFA (Cressey 2015). This identified that the majority of the building had been altered by later development and that this phase of redevelopment was unlikely to expose any significant historic fabric that was not already known about. However, the exception to this was in the basement where original rooms were present. At the time of the appraisal survey there was no lighting in the basement area and access was restricted. Also much of the area was filled with rubble and other rubbish. Following the removal of the rubble and other rubbish and the installation of task lighting a more detailed survey of the basement was undertaken at the request of the Council (Cressey 2016).

The redevelopment proposals required the floor levels in the basement to be lowered by 400mm. The council requested that this excavation work was monitored under a watching brief and it is these works that are reported herein.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were:

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (Watching Brief) to monitor the ground reduction in the basement to ensure that if earlier building remains or other archaeologically significant features or deposits are uncovered that they are carefully exposed within the area affected by the development so as to allow further archaeological excavation and recording work to take place;
- To provide an illustrated report on the work.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

Work will be conducted with regard to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards as appropriate.

2.2 Watching Brief

All groundbreaking in the basement was monitored by an archaeologist to ensure that if archaeologically significant features were uncovered that they were carefully exposed within the area affected by the development so as to allow further archaeological excavation and recording work to take place. The excavations were carried out by a mini digger fitted with a smooth bladed bucket.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 Building Survey Results

The interior layout of the basement is described and six rooms were each assigned a unique number 1/1 to 1/6 (Fig 1) as per the building appraisal (Cressey 2015). The following table provides the dimensions, floor covering and proposed former use of each room identified in the basement.

Room No	Room dimension LxB	Floor Type	Historical use
1/1	4.6m x 3.7m	Earth and rubble	Living room
1/2	7m x 3.8m	Earth and rubble	Living room and possible storage / work room
1/3	Stairwell 3.5m x 3.5m Sub-division 4.5m x 4.5m	Flagstone and Earth and rubble	Common stairs (front)
1/4	3.3m x 2.5 with passageway 10.4m long x 1m	Earth and rubble Flagstone?	Common stairs (back) and other room of unidentified purpose
1/5	7.6m x 2.8m	Part flagstone and Earth and rubble	Living room
1/6	6m x 4.5m	Part flagstone and Earth and rubble	Living room(s)

Table 1 Room number, dimensions, floor type and historical use.

3.2 Watching Brief Results

The watching brief was undertaken in Rooms 1/3, 1/4, 1/5, 1/6, as well as the east to west aligned passage adjoining Room 1 /4, referred to in this report as Passageway. Rooms 1/1 and 1/2 were not monitored as the floor level in these rooms did not need to be lowered.

Numbers in **bold** refer to contexts, a full list of which can be found in the Appendices at the rear of this report.

Room 1/3

A flagstone floor (**007**) (Fig. 2) was present in the northern half of this room. The sandstone flags were square or rectangular and measured up to 1m in length by 0.8m in width. Underlying this was a deposit of dark brown mixed sands with ash and rubble inclusions (**012**). This deposit measured 0.3m in depth. Underlying this was a deposit of mid brown/black clayey sand containing orange and black mottling (**013**). This deposit was excavated for 0.1m of depth before formation level was reached. No artefacts of significance were identified and these deposits appeared to be simple levelling deposits.

In the southern half of the room there was significant later (20th Century) disturbance so ground reduction in this area was not monitored.

Room 1/4

The surface deposit (**014**) in Room 1/4 comprised dark brown/grey ashy sand and a rubble layer which was 0.2m in depth. This layer contained large fragments of sandstone slabs, most likely the broken remains of a flagstone floor similar to that in Room 1/3. It also contained brick fragments and occasional sherds of recent pottery and glass. This deposit overlay a deposit of mid grey clay and mortar (**015**) which was 0.15m to 0.2m in depth, with large inclusions of stone wall rubble. A large stone slab was discovered within this deposit which most likely originated from the staircase that the previous phases of building survey (Cressey 2015 & 2016) identified as once being situated within this room. This deposit overlaid a deposit of dark brown clay with gravel and black mottling inclusions (**017**). This was only excavated to a depth of 0.1m as formation level was reached. No artefacts of significance were identified and the uppermost deposits (**014 & 015**) did not appear to be of any great antiquity as they appeared to contain broken up elements of flagstone flooring and staircase treads. This would suggest that these were secondary deposits laid down following the abandonment of this area as a living space.

Room 1/4 - Passageway

A passage lead east from Room 1/4 to join with Room 1/3. A broken covering of flagstones (**016**) was present although these were largely missing or shattered. Underlying these flagstones was a deposit of dark grey/brown mixed clay, ash and rubble (**018**) which was 0.4m in depth. This layer contained rubble, brick fragments and oyster shells. Underlying this was a layer of firm mid to dark brown sandy clay with black mottling (**019**). This deposit was only excavated to a depth of 0.05 to 0.1m as formation level was reached. No artefacts of significance were identified and these deposits appeared to be simple levelling deposits.

Room 1/5

The southern part of Room 1/5 was covered with a flagstone floor (**005**) although a section of this was also observed in the north side of the room. Later construction, including the insertion of the steel work in the 1930's, looks to have caused its destruction elsewhere. Below the flagstone flooring rough mortar bonded rubble, and in places brick, walls (**006**) (Fig. 3) supported the flagstone floor. These were spaced

about 0.2m apart and the gaps between the walls were filled with loose sandstone fragments, earth and broken brick rubble. These walls were set onto a deposit of rubble (009). This deposit overlay a deposit of midden material (010), comprising greyish black silty clay. Oyster shells and coal fragments were common inclusions. Two or three fragments of animal bone and one horn core fragment was observed, however no dateable finds were recovered.

The foundation of the wall between Rooms 1/5 and 1/6 carried on under the southernmost doorway between the two rooms and it was evident that the wall here had been broken out to create the doorway which suggested that it was a secondary feature.

Room 1/6

The southern half of the room was covered with a flagstone floor (001). Below the flagstone flooring rough mortar bonded rubble walls (002) (Fig. 4) supported the flagstone floor. These were spaced about 0.2m apart and the gaps between the walls were filled with loose sandstone fragments, earth and broken brick rubble. These walls were overlying a deposit of rubble, soil, mortar and ash (003), which did not extend into the northern half of the room where the flagstones were not present. Below this was a deposit of red/orangey brown mottled clay (008), with occasional sandstone and ash inclusions. The excavations ceased 0.1m into this layer as formation level was achieved.

In the northern half of the room, a compact deposit of ash containing small sandstone fragments (004) made up the surface deposit. This directly overlay 008. The available evidence suggested that there was a real difference to the floor coverings in Room 1/6 as there was no evidence of there having been a flagstone floor over the southern half of the room. If there had been and it had been removed we would have expected to find quantities of levelling rubble mixed in with deposit 004. The presence of two fireplaces in this room might indicate that it was once two rooms which could explain the difference in the observed deposits. No evidence of a former wall line was identified in the elevations but if the wall was timber built we would not necessarily expect any trace to survive.

4. CONCLUSION

A watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd during floor level reduction works in the basement of 85-87 South Bridge, City of Edinburgh. The watching brief identified levelling deposits below flagstone floors in Rooms 1/3, 1/5 and 1/6 and in the passageway that led from Room 1/4. These deposits were interpreted to be contemporary with the construction / use of the building and were devoid of any archaeologically significant finds. In Room 1/4, the southern half of Room 1/3 and part of the northern portion of Room 1/5 20th Century disturbance caused during alterations to the building had removed any in situ deposits. In room 1/5 below the levelling deposits a midden deposit was identified. No dateable artefacts were recovered but the consistency of the material and inclusion of significant quantities of oyster shells along with bone fragments and a horn core suggest that this was probably an in situ medieval / post medieval midden and therefore earlier than the overlying building.

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 City of Edinburgh Council Sites and Monument Record.

On completion of the work, including the ongoing standing building survey, a summary statement will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* and will also be reported on through *OASIS Scotland*.

5. REFERENCES

Cressey, M. 2015. *85-87 South Bridge, Edinburgh, Archaeological Building Appraisal*. CFA Report No 3302.

Cressey, M. 2016. *85-87 South Bridge, Edinburgh, Archaeological Building Survey*. CFA Report No 3374

APPENDIX 1: Photograph Register

Photo No.	Summary description of subject
1	Context 002 after removal of flagstone floor 001
2	re-used roll molded masonry in walls
3	re-used roll molded masonry in walls
4	Context 006 after removal of flagstone floor 005
5	Context 006 after removal of flagstone floor 005
6	Context 006 after removal of flagstone floor 005
7	Flagstone floor 007 in Room 1/3
8	Flagstone floor 007 in Room 1/3
9	Flagstone floor 007 in Room 1/3
10	Flagstone floor 007 in Room 1/3
11	Flagstone floor 007 in Room 1/3

APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context	Room	Description
001	1/6	Sandstone flagstone floor
002	1/6	Mortared walls and rubble supporting flagstone floor 001
003	1/6	Rubble, clay and mortar deposit underlying 002
004	1/6	Mixed ash deposit with small sandstone inclusions
005	1/5	Flagstone floor
006	1/5	Mortared walls and rubble supporting flagstone floor 005
007	1/3	Flagstone floor
008	1/6	Mottled clay deposit with ash and sandstone fragments
009	1/5	Deposit of rubble underneath walls 006
010	1/5	Grey/black silty clay midden deposit containing numerous oyster shells
011	Not used	Not used
012	1/3	Mixed sand and ashy rubble deposit underlying flagstones in room 1/3
013	1/3	Mid brown and black mottled clayey sand
014	1/4	Dark brown/grey ash and rubble upper deposit
015	1/4	Grey mortar and clay/rubble deposit containing
016	1/4 passageway	Broken flagstone slabs on the surface of the corridor leading east from Room 1/4
017	1/4	Dark brown clay and gravel/rubble deposit in Room 1/4
018	1/4 passageway r	Mixed clay, ash and rubble underlying surface flagstones in corridor leading east from Room 1/4
019	1/4 passageway	Mottled grey/brown clay



Key:

- Fireplace
- Blocked opening
- Doorway
- Modern opening



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

Fig. No: 1 Report No: 3383

Title:
Floor plan of basement level showing room numbers

Project:
85-87 South Bridge, Edinburgh, Archaeological Watching Brief

Client:
Mr Joe Crolla

Scale at A3:
1:50

Drawn by: SW Checked: BG Date: 01/06/15

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.





Fig. 2 - Flagstone floor in Room 1/3



Fig. 3 - Mortered walls and rubble supporting flagstone floor in Room 1/5



Fig. 4 - Mortered walls and rubble supporting flagstone floor in Room 1/6



CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD
 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

Title:	Fig. 2 - 4	Report: 3383	Drawn: SW	CKD: BG	Date: 20/01/16
Client:	Mr Joe Crolla				
Project:	85-87 South Bridge, Edinburgh: Archaeological Watching Brief				