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Geophysical Survey

**85-87 South Bridge,
Edinburgh
Archaeological Building Survey**

Report No 3374

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**85-87 South Bridge,
Edinburgh
Archaeological Building Survey**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

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

Based on the results of an earlier building appraisal (Cressey 2015), Mr John Lawson requested a more detailed photographic survey be carried out within the basement after it had been cleared of rubble. A watching brief was also required to monitor floor reduction works within the basement. The results of this work are presented under separate cover.

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.

At the basement level (Level 1), the appraisal survey recorded fireplaces and the remains of two separate stone-built staircases. These features appeared to be of at least late 18th century in date when the core block of 85-87 South Bridge was first constructed. Two rooms had flagstone floors. The remains of the stone staircase were significant in that they showed two distinct circulation routes forming a front and back 'common' stair. It seemed likely that all the rooms with fireplaces formed individual tenancies and the rooms without fireplaces could have seen a wide variety of uses as workshops or stores.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the archaeological recording works were:

- Provide a more detailed survey of the basement.
- Produce a final report on the results of the survey.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

CFA Archaeology Ltd followed the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance as appropriate. The survey was carried according to recording levels outlined in ALGAO (2013).

Photographic recording

A new architectural plan was prepared and checked for accuracy and is reproduced as Fig 2.

A Nikon D300 camera was used to take high-resolution digital photographs of the internal elevations. All photographs taken were recorded onto photographic record sheets which are appended at the back of this report (Appendix 1). Selective representative images have been included in the report (Figs. 3-18) and all photographs are presented at the end in contact sheet format. Figure 2 shows the orientation at which each photograph was taken.

Fabric Recording

Pro-forma standing building recording sheets were completed for each room. Baseline measurements were obtained using a hand-held Leica distometer.

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. 2). Table 1 provides the dimensions, floor type and proposed historical use of each room:

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 Earth and rubble	Common stairs (front)
1/4	3.3m x 2.5 with passage 10.4m long x 1m	Earth and rubble	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 Room 1/1

North wall (south-facing elevation) (Figs. 2 and 3)

The north wall was stone-built with a press situated in the north-west corner of the room measuring 1.4m high, 0.9m wide and 0.5m deep. Three shelf scars were visible within its interior (Fig. 3). A fireplace measured 1.56m x 1.53m and was advanced off the wall by 0.1m. The fireplace had a broken lintel and molded surrounds. Its interior had been blocked with coursed rubble and brickwork (Fig. 3). A large modern I-beam had been inserted into the chimney breast.

East wall (west-facing elevation) (Figs. 2 and 4)

The east wall was rubble-built with a large timber wall-plate on the wall head (Fig. 4). Situated at the centre of the wall was a large doorway leading into Room 1/2. The doorway measured 1.8m by 1m. On the north-side of the door was a blocked rectangular window opening in-filled with brickwork. The position of a window is intriguing as it can only have allowed a minimal amount of light into Room 1/2. The wall on the south side of the doorway contained remnants of wall plaster. The softwood (pine) floor joists above the wall appeared to have once held a lath and plaster ceiling.

South wall (north-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The south wall was rubble-built with a small doorway at the east end leading into the passage 1/4. The doorway measured 1.5m high and 0.95m wide and was surmounted by a timber lintel. Reinforcement work above the doorway included modern brickwork and sandstone blocks along with a concrete lintel. The rest of the wall was covered with a cream-coloured backing plaster with remnants of an original buff-coloured surface plaster.

West wall (east-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The west wall contained a boarded window which had a splayed reveal on its south side. The rubble wall flanking the window had been faced with modern brick to support a steel I-beam. The north side of the window was featureless coursed stone. Foul water waste pipes ran down the north-west corner of the wall.

3.3 Room 1/2

North wall (south-facing elevation) (Figs. 2 and 5)

The north wall was constructed of coursed rough-dressed sandstone. A fireplace was situated at the west-end of the elevation (Fig. 5). The fireplace measured c. 1.4m high and 1m wide and had a large rectangular rear lintel above its stone fire surrounds. The surrounds were advanced by c.0.1m and the main front lintel was missing. The fireplace was blocked with coursed rubble. Within the north-west corner of the room between the fireplace and the west wall was a modern brick-built buttress. The rest of the north wall was featureless with the exception of modern I-beams that had been inserted to carry the weight of the floor above. The position of an earlier now demolished partition wall was visible as a wall scar and this wall once formed a sub-division within Room 1/2.

East wall (west-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The east wall contained an advanced section of wall that was c.1m high and constructed of large blocks of rough-dressed sandstone. Above this section of wall was a panel of regular coursed stonework rising to ceiling height. Abutting this wall was a section of hand-made brickwork.

South wall (north-facing elevation) (Figs. 2 and 6)

The south wall had two doorways leading into the passage (Room 1/4) (Fig. 6). On the immediate right-hand side of the eastern doorway was the return stub of the aforementioned partition wall. The wall had been impacted on by the insertion of modern I-beams and concrete lintels inserted above the doorways. As with Room 1/2 the floor joists at ceiling level showed evidence for having been covered with lath and plaster.

West wall (east-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The east wall was constructed of coursed sandstone blocks and contained the doorway connecting into Rooms 1/1 and 1/2 and the blocked window on its north side. The doorway and blocked window were surmounted by the aforementioned wall plate that supported the floor joists above.

3.4 Room 1/3

North wall, (south-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The north wall contained a doorway leading into the passage (Room 1/4). The door surrounds were formed from long and short stone quoins. The wall flanking the door was rubble built with a distinct curve.

East wall, (west-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The east wall contained an abutting panel of coursed stone about 3m wide. On its south side it partly abutted a modern brick wall that continued southwards for about another 3m. The brick wall had been laid in stretcher bond and it supported a large concrete beam that spanned the room. The brickwork and concrete beam were part of a rebuild carried out in the late 20th century.

South wall, (north-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The south wall was brick-built and was partly hidden behind a recent large brick-built column. The south-west corner of the wall was masked by demolition material that had been dumped during the 20th Century rebuilding works.

West wall, (east-facing elevation) (Figs. 2, 7-8)

The west wall included the partially demolished remains of a rubble built wall that flanked the south side of a wide opening into Room 1/5. This wall has been demolished during the earlier 20th Century rebuilding works. On the north side of the opening a large panel of brickwork abutted the remains of a return wall stub associated with a partition wall that ran east to west. This wall had been upstanding during the initial survey (Cressey 2015) and had stood to a height of c.1.2m with a door opening at its east end. The presence of this wall indicates that Room 1/3 was subdivided into two discrete units with a stair well on the north side and a larger now much modified room with very little surviving historic building fabric on the south side.

On the north side of the former partition wall a stone built staircase (Fig. 7) had seven stone treads still in situ. These had been built into the stone and brick-faced north-west corner of the room. The bottom of the stairs was hidden behind a heap of rubble but the underside of the stairs showed that each tread was roughly dressed (Fig. 8).

3.5 Room 1/4

North wall (south-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The north wall was rubble-built. Situated near the wall head between a modern I beam and the timber work associated with the floor above was a truncated stair tread (Fig 9). This strongly suggests that the staircase that had previously been identified in this room (Cressey 2105) rose in an anticlockwise direction.

East wall (west-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The east wall contained a continuation of the stairs and embedded within the wall were two stair treads that had been cut back flush with the wall. An opening on the left hand side (facing) led from the stairwell into the passageway.

South wall (north-facing elevation) (Fig 2. and 10)

The south wall was built of random rubble and the remains of a flight of steps were visible within the wall fabric (Fig. 10). These had been cut back flush with the wall. The steps rose upwards from west to east. Above the stair treads the wall was constructed of small angular random rubble in contrast to the larger rectangular random rubble used below.

West wall (east-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The west wall was rubble built and contained a large bricked-up opening that occupied the full height of the wall. The brickwork was modern and presumably it blocked a large doorway that provided access from the stair well into Blair Street.

Passageway (Fig. 2)

The passage measured 7m long by 1.4m wide. The passage walls were rubble built. The north-facing elevation contained doorways into Room 1/3 and 1/6 and the south-facing elevation contained doorways into Rooms 1/1 and two doorways into Room 1/2.

3.6 Room 1/5

North wall (south-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The north wall was built of featureless random rubble covered with the vestigial remains of wall plaster.

East wall (west-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The east wall was built of random rubble at the north end which was replaced with section of brick-built wall in the middle. The brick wall was flanked by cast-concrete columns. The south end of the wall was rubble built had been partially demolished during the 20th century alterations to allow the installation of a concrete lintel between Rooms 1/3 and 1/5.

South wall (north-facing elevation) (Figs. 2 and 11)

The south wall comprised coursed rubble with an off-centre panel of brickwork for a blocked opening (Fig. 11). This cannot have been a door or a window as this elevation does not open to the outside world. The brickwork was laid in English Garden bond (3:1) and is modern.

West wall, (east-facing elevation) (Figs. 2, 12-13)

The west wall was built of coursed blocks of rough-dressed sandstone. At the south end a stone-built fireplace was present (Fig. 12). It measured 0.85m high and 1m wide and had a single cracked lintel and stone surrounds that were advanced from the chimney breast by c. 0.10m. A door opening leading into Room 1/6 was situated on the immediate north side of the fireplace. The wall on the north side of the doorway was largely rubble-built with a timber wall plate towards the wall head. Several phases of brick-infill were present and included modern 20th century and smaller 19th century brickwork. At the centre of the wall was a riveted 1930s iron stanchion that had been covered by the brickwork and had been recently exposed. The stanchion had been inserted into a void that cut through the wall plate and the void was then infilled with brickwork (Fig. 13). On the north side of the stanchion the wall was stone-built and contained a door leading into Room 1/6. At the wall head, a single piece of re-used architectural stone with roll moulding had been inserted into the wall (highlighted in Fig. 13). This was one of two pieces of re-used molded stonework recorded and it was probably a 17th century rybatt from a door or window reveal.

3.7 Room 1/6

North Wall (south-facing elevation), (Figs. 2 and 15)

The north wall had been built using coursed blocks of sandstone. Within the corner angle of this wall and the east-facing elevation was a small stone-built fireplace that measured 0.85m high and 1m wide, its surrounds and lintel were c.0.10m thick (Fig. 15).

East Wall (west-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The east wall was rubble built and contained a doorway leading into Room 1/5 at the north end. The wall had been cut by the insertion of the aforementioned 1930s steel stanchion. On the south side of the stanchion, a section of brickwork had been built that included a timber wall plate near the wall head. Abutting the brickwork was another rubble-built wall that continued southwards to the doorway leading into Room 1/5. The doorway appears to be a more recent insertion as it had a concrete lintel.

West Wall (east-facing elevation) (Fig. 2)

The west wall was rubble built and contained a brick-blocked window of which the lower two thirds were visible. A timber sill was still present. On the south side of the window a doorway had been recently enlarged by the contractor. The doorway led to a set of external steps leading up to the corner of the Cowgate and Blair Street. On the floor in front of the doorway was a large wedge-shaped concrete plinth with a series of foul water pipes running through it.

South Wall (north-facing elevation) (Figs. 2, 16-17)

The south wall was rubble built and contained a stone-built press and fireplace. The press (Fig. 16) was situated on the east side of the wall and measured 1.8m high and 0.95m wide and contained four shelf scars surrounded by the remains of wall plaster. A modern (20th century) concrete lintel had been inserted to strengthen the wall above. On the west side of the press was the fireplace which had ashlar surrounds and a three-centred arched mantelpiece (Fig. 17). Incorporated into the chimneybreast immediately above the mantelpiece was a large block of re-used architectural masonry that had an L-shaped moulding on its lower edge (Fig. 17). The rest of the wall on the west side of the fireplace was featureless.

4. DISCUSSION

The remains of flagstone floors were recorded in Rooms 1/3 (Fig. 2), 1/5 (Fig. 14) and 1/6 (Fig. 18). The flagstones on the front stairwell area were much larger (c.0.75m x 0.5m) in comparison to those recorded in Rooms 1/5 and 1/6 which measured on average 0.5m x 0.45m. The difference in size probably reflects the difference between living spaces (Rooms 1/5 and 1/6) and the non domestic common stair well in Room 1/3. Rooms 1/1, 1/2, 1/5 and Room 1/6 all contained fireplaces. The latter room had the most ornate fireplace of the five that were recorded (Fig. 17). It seems likely that the rooms with fireplaces formed individual tenancies. A smaller sub-division of Room 1/2 and the larger sub-division of Room 1/3 had no fireplace and these may have functioned as storerooms. However, Room 1/3 had been significantly altered during 20th Century rebuilding so it was possible that any trace of an original fireplace had been masked by this rebuilding.

The survey also recorded the remains of two separate stone-built staircases in Rooms 1/3 and 1/4. These are interesting in that they show two distinct circulation routes forming a front and back 'common' stair linked by a common passage. These features appear to be of at least late 18th century in date when the core block of 85-87 South Bridge was first constructed.

Both staircases had been truncated during later alterations to the floor above. Prior to this event the staircases probably rose as far as the first floor. Although no longer present during this survey, a reduced rubble-built wall recorded during the initial survey (Cressey 2015) confirmed that the back staircase was not a cantilever-type staircase but that it was fully supported by a load-bearing wall.

5. CONCLUSION

The photographic survey carried out at 85-87 South Bridge has recorded the historical fabric and extant features within the basement prior to its refurbishment. The survey has recorded and photographed all significant architectural elements surviving within the basement and it is recommended that this now provides a complete and detailed record and that no further building recording work is necessary. CFA recognises that the final decision on further work rests with CECAS.

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.

A summary statement on the archaeological recording of the cinema complex will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* and will also be reported on through *OASIS Scotland*.

6. REFERENCES

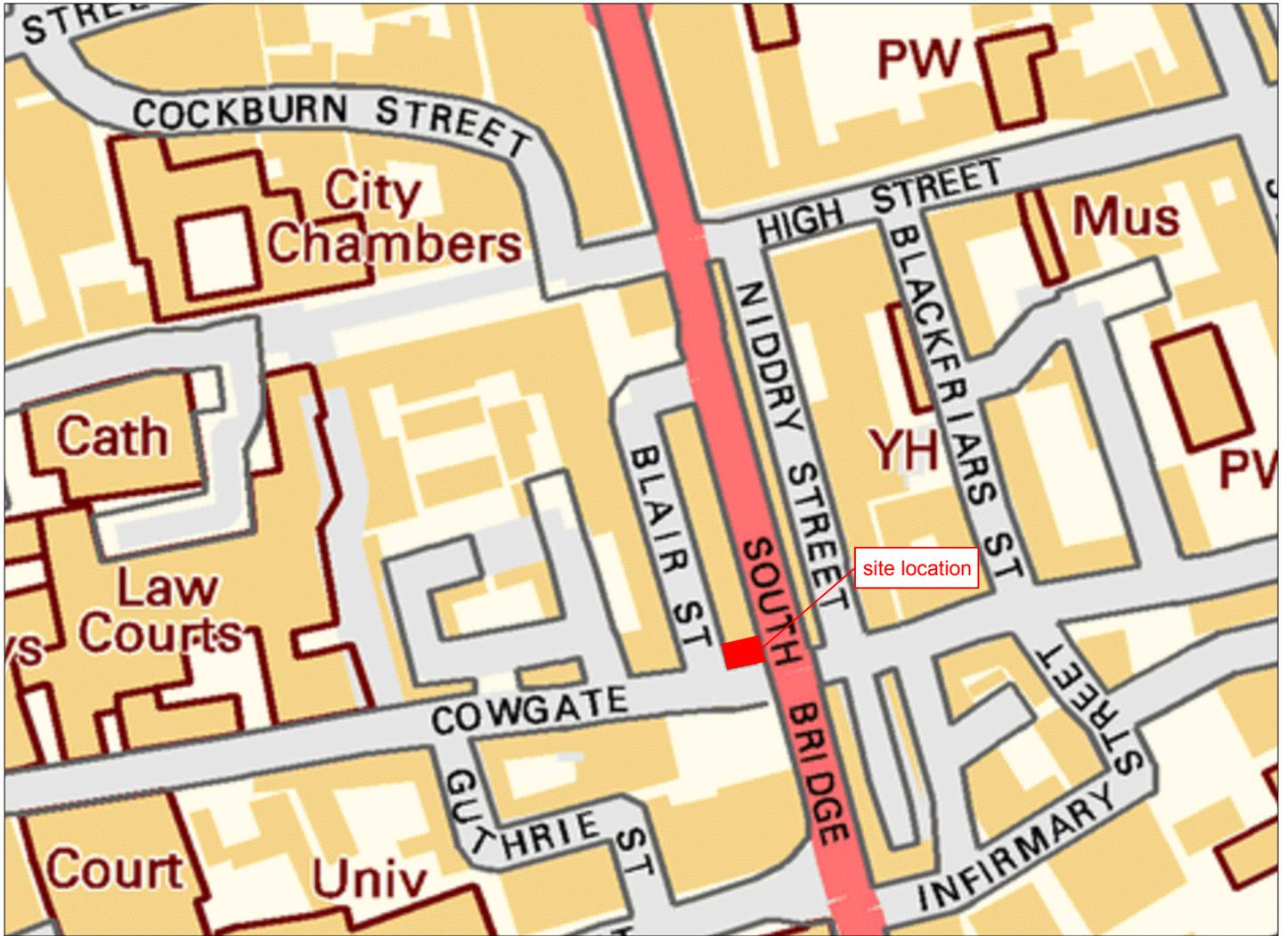
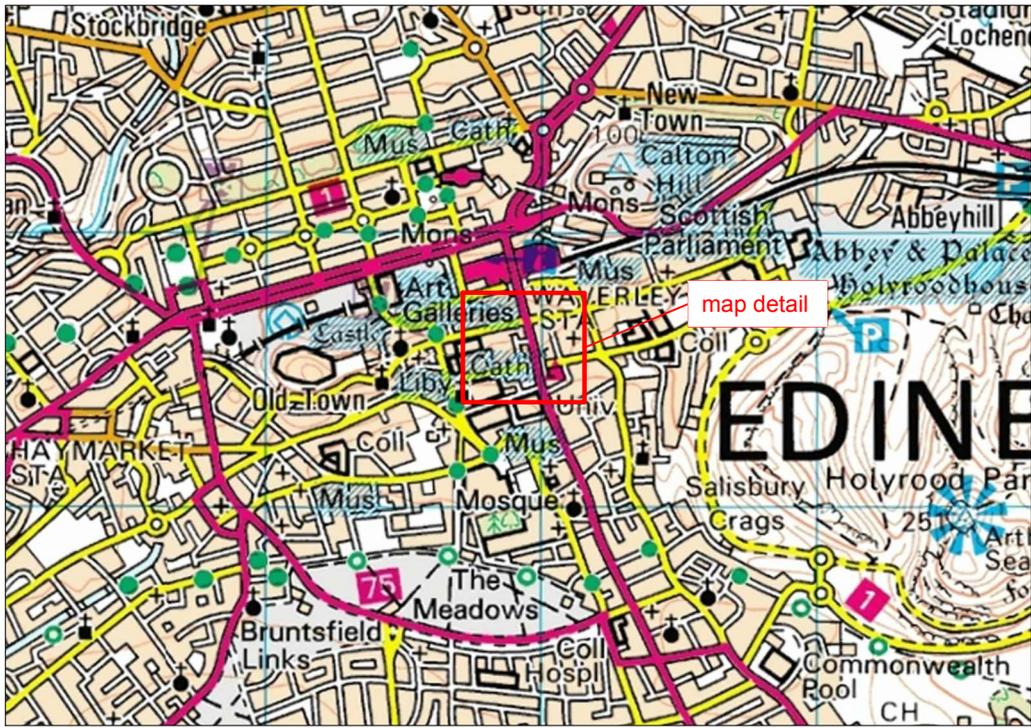
ALGAO 2013 *Scotland Historic Building Recording Guidance*.

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

APPENDIX 1: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Photo Number	Room No	Description	Facing
001	1/4	South-facing elevation, general view	N
002	1/4	South-facing elevation, stone stair treads above the wall head	N
003	1/4	West-facing elevation, showing stone stair treads cut flush with the wall	E
004	1/4	North-facing elevation showing the line of stair treads flush with the wall	S
005	1/1	South-facing elevation, corner press with shelving scars	N
006	1/1	South-facing elevation, blocked fireplace	N
007	1/1	West-facing elevation, blocked opening and doorway to Room 1/2	E
008	1/1	North-facing elevation with opening to 1/4 and remnants of wall plaster	S
009	1/1	East-facing elevation, boarded-up opening, 20 th century brickwork	W
010	1/2	South-facing elevation, remains of a corner fireplace	S
011	1/2	South-facing elevation, oblique view of the wall fabric	NE
012-013	1/2	South-facing elevation, wall fabric at the E end.	N
014	1/2	West-facing elevation, stepped lower wall and rebuilt upper	E
015	1/2	North-facing elevation, door to F/4 Passage, partition wall in section with brick infill above the doorway	S
016	1/2	North-facing elevation, door detail	S
017	1/2	East-facing elevation, door to Room 1/1, and brick-blocked opening	W
018	1/4	Passage 1/4, general view of the south-facing wall	NW
019	1/4	Flagstone ceiling over Passage 1/4	Oblique
020	1/3	North-facing elevation, curved wall and door to Passage 1/4	N
021	1/3	West-facing elevation, panel of stonework and risband joints	E
022	1/3	West-facing elevation, brickwork at south end of the room	SE
023	1/3	Rubble-filled void below concrete ceiling	SW
024	1/3	East-facing elevation, brick-blocking work and ruined stairs	W
025	1/3	East-facing elevation, stone staircase treads and under-stairs brickwork	W
026	1/3	Stone staircase (remains of) with brick lined rear wall	S
027	1/5	South-facing elevation, general shot	N
028	1/5	West-facing elevation, stone and brick-filled opening and shuttered concrete (20 th c.)	E
029	1/5	West-facing elevation, S end showing reduced rubble wall and reinforced concrete lintel	E
030	1/5	North-facing elevation, bricked-up opening, flanked by rubble walls	S
031	1/5	East-facing elevation, stone-built fireplace and stone chimney breast	W
032	1/5	East-facing elevation, timber wall plate and stonework and two phases of brickwork. 1930s steel stanchion exposed.	W
033	1/5	East-facing elevation 1930s steel stanchion detail	W
034-036	1/5	East-facing elevation, wall head, close up on a roll-molded architectural stonework (door or window rybat)	W
037	1/5	East-facing elevation, door to Room 1/6	W
038	1/5	Flagstone floor in front of the fireplace	S
039	1/6	South-facing elevation, fabric detail and corner fireplace	N
040	1/6	West-facing elevation, 1930s steel stanchion with modern brickwork	E
041	1/6	East-facing elevation, bricked-up window	W
042	1/6	West-facing elevation, wall fabric and door to Room 1/5	E
043	1/6	North-facing elevation, corner press with shelving scars	S
044	1/6	North-facing elevation, stone fireplace, general shot	S

045	1/6	North-facing elevation, re-used stone above the fireplace	S
046	1/6	North-facing elevation, fabric detail west of the fireplace	S
047	1/6	East-facing elevation, concrete plinth	W
048-049	1/6	Flagstone floor in front of the fireplace	S
050	1/6	Flagstone floor and concrete plinth	W




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Site location

Project:
**85-87 South Bridge, Edinburgh,
Archaeological Building Survey**

Fig No:	1	Report:	3374	Drawn by:	GC	CKD:	SW	Date:	01/06/15
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Key:

- Fireplace
- Blocked opening
- Doorway
- Modern opening



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Fig. No: **2** Report No: **3374**

Title:
Internal Floor plans

Project:
**85-87 South Bridge,
 Edinburgh, Archaeological
 Building Survey**

Client:
Mr Joe Crolla

Scale at A3:
1:50

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

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Fig. 3 - Room 1/1, press and blocked fireplace on the south-facing elevation



Fig. 4 - Room 1/1, blocked window and entrance to Room 1/2 in the west-facing elevation



Fig. 5 - Room 1/2, blocked fireplace on the south-facing elevation



Fig. 6 - Room 1/2, doorways on the north-facing elevation leading to Room 1/4, the passage



Fig. 7 - Room 1/3, the remains of the staircase on the east-facing elevation



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Fig. 3 - 7 Report: 3374 Drawn: SW CKD: MC Date: 20/01/16

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Fig. 8 - Room 1/3, detail of the underside of the stair treads



Fig. 9 - Room 1/4, the remains of a stair tread on the south-facing elevation



Fig. 10 - Room 1/4, rising stair treads cut flush with the wall on the north-facing elevation



Fig. 11 - Room 1/5, blocked opening on the north-facing elevation



Fig. 12 - Room 1/5, fireplace on the east-facing elevation



Re-used
Masonry

Fig. 13 - Room 1/5, 1930s steel stanchion cutting through a timber wall plate with re-used roll-molded masonry highlighted



Fig. 14 - Room 1/5 the remains of a flagstone floor taken from the north



Fig. 15 - Room 1/6, a small fireplace in the angle of the south-facing elevation



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Fig. 12 - 15 Report: 3374 Drawn: SW CKD: MC Date: 20/01/16

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Fig. 16 - Room 1/6, a press on the east side of the fireplace on the north-facing elevation



Fig. 17 - Room 1/6, ashlar built fireplace with re-used carved architectural stone in the chimney breast, north-facing elevation



Fig. 18 - Room 1/6 flagstone floor in front of the fireplace taken from the north



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Project: 85-87 South Bridge, Edinburgh, Archaeological Building Survey					



SOBR_001



SOBR_002



SOBR_003



SOBR_004



SOBR_005



SOBR_006



SOBR_007



SOBR_008



SOBR_009



SOBR_010



SOBR_011



SOBR_012



SOBR_013



SOBR_014



SOBR_015



SOBR_016



SOBR_017



SOBR_018



SOBR_019



SOBR_020



SOBR_021



SOBR_022



SOBR_023



SOBR_024



SOBR_025



SOBR_026



SOBR_027



SOBR_028



SOBR_029



SOBR_030



SOBR_031



SOBR_032



SOBR_033



SOBR_034



SOBR_035



SOBR_036



SOBR_037



SOBR_038



SOBR_039



SOBR_040



SOBR_041



SOBR_042



SOBR_043



SOBR_044



SOBR_045



SOBR_046



SOBR_047



SOBR_048



SOBR_049



SOBR_050