

# 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*

**Mixed Use Development  
King's Stables Road  
Edinburgh**

**Archaeological Test Pitting**

**Report No. 3337**

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 General**

This report presents the results of archaeological test pitting undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in September 2015 at King's Stables Road, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 2519 7330) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Fletcher Joseph Associates on behalf of a partnership between Peveril Securities (part of the Bowmer and Kirkland group) and Campus Development Management.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 09 September 2015 covering the programme of works was produced by CFA on behalf of Fletcher Joseph Associates and approved by the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS).

## **1.2 Background**

The work was designed to enhance the existing knowledge of the archaeological potential of the site, which has been explored principally to the west end of the site (Henderson & Wilson 2014). This work demonstrated that deposits and walls of probable 19th century date are present immediately beneath the current ground surface up to a depth of c.0.7m. Deposits of greater archaeological interest were found at a depth of c.1.5m and 1.7m below current ground surface. Those deposits are best characterised as cultivation soils containing medieval rubbish (pot and bone), which were revealed in one test pit to be over 1.5m thick. It is possible that more complex features may be present within these deposits, but none have been found by the work to date. Saxon and prehistoric remains may be present beneath the cultivation soils deposits. The area is reputed to have been the site of the Barrace, the medieval tilting ground located to the west of the 14th Century King's Stables (Henderson & Wilson 2014, 5); the existing courtyard may have retained the shape of the tilting ground.

## **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of the archaeological evaluation were:

- To explore the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological features or deposits within the proposed development area through trial trenching evaluation.

# **2. WORKING METHODS**

## **2.1 General**

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

## **2.2 Evaluation**

Three test pits (TP1-TP3) measuring 3m by 2m were excavated within the eastern end of the courtyard. A proposed fourth test pit (TP4) located within a building on the

southern side of the courtyard was not excavated, because it was not possible to access the building with a JCB 3CX.

Topsoil and subsoil were removed by a JCB 3CX type back-actor mechanical excavator equipped with a 0.6m wide smooth-bladed ditching bucket. All groundbreaking work was carried out under constant archaeological supervision. Any further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation was carried out by hand.

All 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. The stratification of all excavated areas was recorded whether or not significant archaeological deposits were identified. Trench positions were surveyed using industry standard electronic surveying equipment and all trenches were backfilled.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

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

Three test pits (TP1-TP3) were excavated within the locations shown on Fig.1. All three test pits revealed soil deposits (**005**) representing probable medieval/post-medieval occupation. The tops of these deposits were encountered at a depth of between 1.4m and 1.9m below the current ground surface. Overlying the medieval deposits was made-ground of probable 18th or 19th century date. Natural subsoil was not reached in any of the test pits. Details of the test pits are summarised below within the following sections.

#### *Test Pit 1 (TP1)*

TP1 measured 3m by 2m and was excavated to a depth of 3m. The deposits within this test pit from the surface downwards consisted of 0.1m of cobbles (**001**), 0.1m of beige sand levelling deposit (**002**), 1.2m of orangey-brown/beige sandy mortar and rubble made-ground (**003**), 0.5m of very compact dark-grey silty-ash made-ground (**004**), and >1.1m of dark-grey/black humic soil deposits containing occasional fragments of oyster shell (**005**). The humic soil deposit (**005**) occurred at a depth of 1.9m below the current ground surface.

#### *Test Pit 2 (TP2)*

TP2 measured 3m by 2m and was excavated to a depth of 2.1m. The deposits within this test pit from the surface downwards consisted of 0.13m of modern setts (**001**), 0.1m of grey made-ground levelling deposit (**002**), 1.4m of orangey-brown/beige sandy mortar and rubble made-ground (**003**), and >0.5m of dark-grey/black humic soil deposits containing occasional fragments of oyster shell (**005**). The humic soil deposit (**005**) occurred at a depth of 1.6m below the current ground surface.

TP2 was terminated at a depth of 2.1m because a line of stones (**006**) was identified within deposit **005** running north to south across the test pit at a depth of c.1.8m. Due

to the depth of the test pit, it was not possible to further investigate this line of stones, but it is possible that it represents a rough unmortared wall-line of medieval or post-medieval date. Several of the stones forming the possible wall line were flat, indicating that they may have been quarried.

### *Test Pit 3 (TP3)*

TP3 measured 3m by 2m and was excavated to a depth of 2.6m. The deposits within this test pit from the surface downwards consisted of 0.13m of modern setts (**001**), 0.1m of grey made-ground levelling deposit (**002**), 1.2m of orangey-brown/beige sandy mortar and rubble made-ground (**003**), and >1.4m of dark-grey/black humic soil deposits (**005**). Humic soil deposit **005** occurred at a depth of 1.4m below the current ground surface. The deposit was waterlogged and, as a result, excavation was terminated at a depth of 2.6m. Several pieces of bone, horn and wood were recovered. The waterlogged nature of the deposit within this test pit indicates a high potential for the recovery of organic artefacts.

### **3.3 Finds (Christina Hills and Mike Cressey)**

#### *Bone*

Seven bones were found in context **005**, within test pit 3. Six of the bones were horn cores, and one bone was unidentified animal bone.

#### *Waterlogged Wood Analysis*

Pieces of waterlogged oak were recovered from humic soil deposit (**005**) in TP3:

*Plank (barrel stave?):* A section of plank measuring 300mm long, 75mm wide and 25mm thick. The ends of the plank were degraded and a notch was present at one end. Axe marks were present on one side.

*Plank (barrel stave?):* A section of plank measuring 480mm long, 85mm wide and 28mm thick. The plank had square ends with slight degradation. Axe or adze signatures resulting from shaping were present on two sides.

*Faceted piece (barrel hoop fragment?):* A pointed piece of wood measuring 250mm long and 45mm thick with a semi-circular profile. A single oblique facet 120mm in length is present on one end. Bark was present on one edge. This piece is either the point of a stake or more likely the end of a barrel hoop.

*Barrel hoop:* A curved piece of wood measuring 140mm long and 45mm in circumference and 20mm thick.

*Barrel hoop:* A curved piece of wood measuring 102mm long and 45mm in circumference and 20mm thick.

*Barrel hoop:* A curved piece of wood measuring 50mm long and 30mm in circumference and 15mm thick.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

An archaeological test pitting evaluation was carried out in advance of a mixed use development at King's Stables Road, Edinburgh. The test pitting identified probable medieval soil deposits at a depth of between 1.4m and 1.9m below the current ground surface. These results are in accordance with an earlier evaluation carried out immediately to the west, which identified similar deposits at a depth of between 1.5m and 1.7m below the current ground surface (Henderson and Wilson 2014). A number of pieces of bone, horn and wood were recovered. The wooden fragments recovered from TP3 (005) have been identified as short pieces of plank and hoops from barrel making. The waterlogged nature of the deposits within TP3 (005) suggests a high potential for the survival of organic artefacts at the south-eastern corner of the proposed development area.

No traces of features that may have related to the tilting ground were revealed.

A programme of archaeological mitigation will be agreed with the City of Edinburgh Archaeological Service (CECAS). This work will include archaeological trial trenching, watching briefs, and, if merited, set-piece excavation, post-excavation and publication. It is probable that only those parts of the development that require excavation deeper than c.1.5m below the present ground surface will impinge upon complex archaeological remains.

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.

On completion of the programme of archaeological works 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

Henderson, C. & Wilson, D. 2014, 8–20 *King's Stables Road, Edinburgh: Archaeological Desk Based and Historic Building Assessments and Evaluation*, Headland unpublished report commissioned by City of Edinburgh Council.

## APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

Photo Number	Contexts/Description	Taken From
1-2	TP2, west-facing section	West
3-4	TP2 showing stones forming possible wall-line 006	East
5	TP1, west-facing section	West
6	TP1, south-facing section	South
7	TP1, west-facing section	West
8-9	TP3, west-facing section	West
10	TP3, east-facing section	East
11	TPS, service pipe in east-facing section	East
12	TP1 following backfilling	South
13	TP2 following backfilling	South
14	TP3 following backfilling	North
15-18	General shots of area following backfilling	SE

## APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context No.	Test Pit	Description
001	All	Cobbled surface, modern setts in TP2 and TP3, and earlier cobbles in TP1
002	All	Levelling deposit for cobbled surface, sand in TP1, grey made-ground within TP2 and TP3
003	All	Made-ground, beige/orange-brown sandy-rubble and mortar
004	1	Made-ground, black silty ash with rubble and shattered stone. Very compacted
005	All	Black humic silt soil deposits. Contains oyster shell, bone, horn and wood.
006	2	Stones within deposit 005. Possibly represents a wall line

## APPENDIX 3: Field Drawings Register

Number	Sheet	Scale	Sec/Plan	Description
1	1	1:20	S	TP2 west-facing section
2	1	1:20	P	TP2 plan
3	1	1:20	S	TP1 west-facing section
4	2	1:20	S	TP3 west-facing section

## APPENDIX 4: Sample Register

Sample	Context	Test Pit	Type	Size
1	005	TP1	Bulk	1 bag
2	005	TP2	Bulk	1 bag
3	005	TP3	Bulk	1 bag

## APPENDIX 5: Finds Register

Test pit	Context	Find type	No.	Wt (g)	Notes	Spot date
3	005	Animal bone	7	739		
3		Wood	8	N/a	Oak barrel fragments	Post-Med/Med





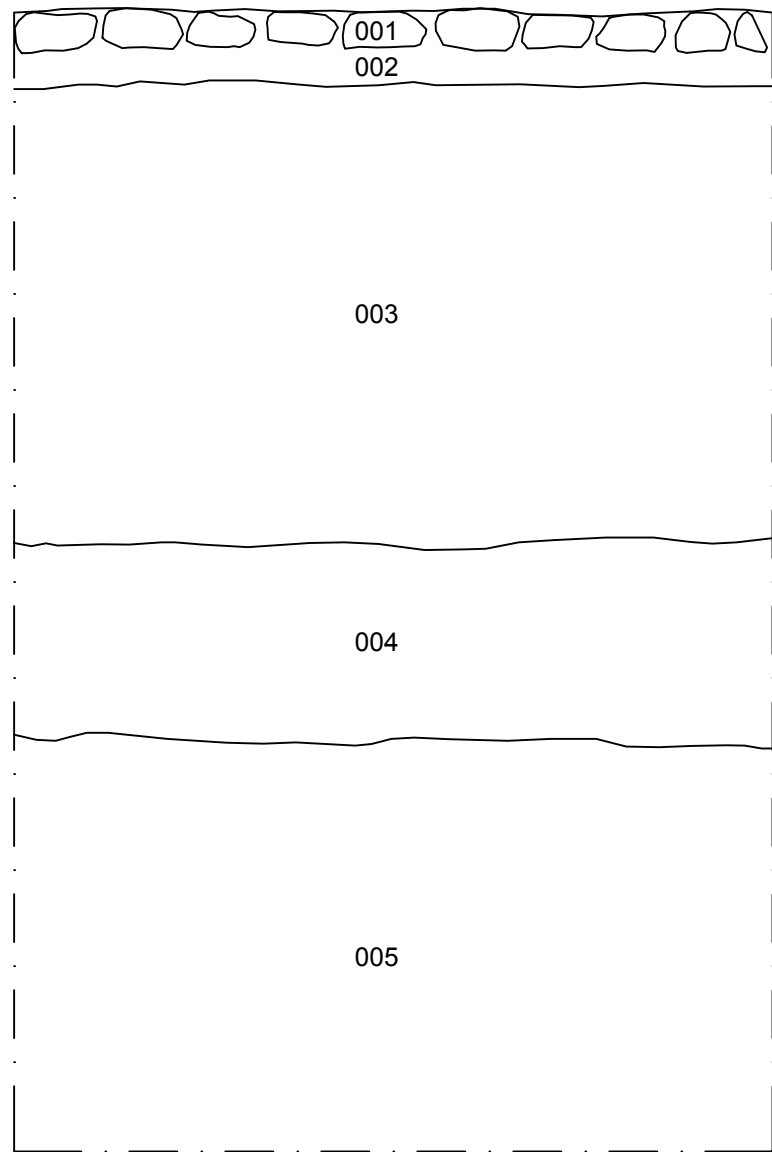


Fig. 2: TP1, west-facing section

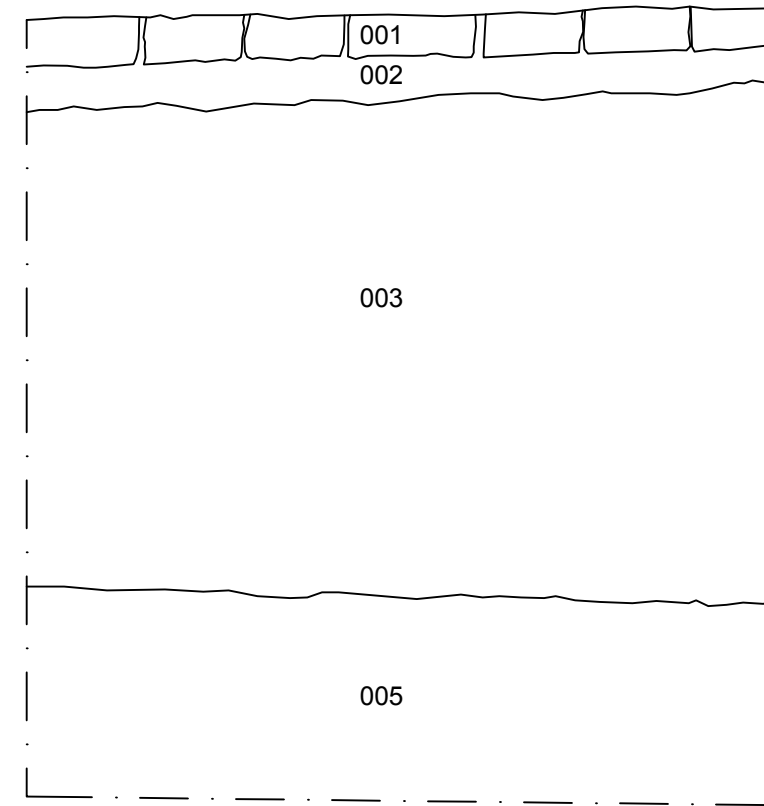


Fig. 3: TP2, west-facing section

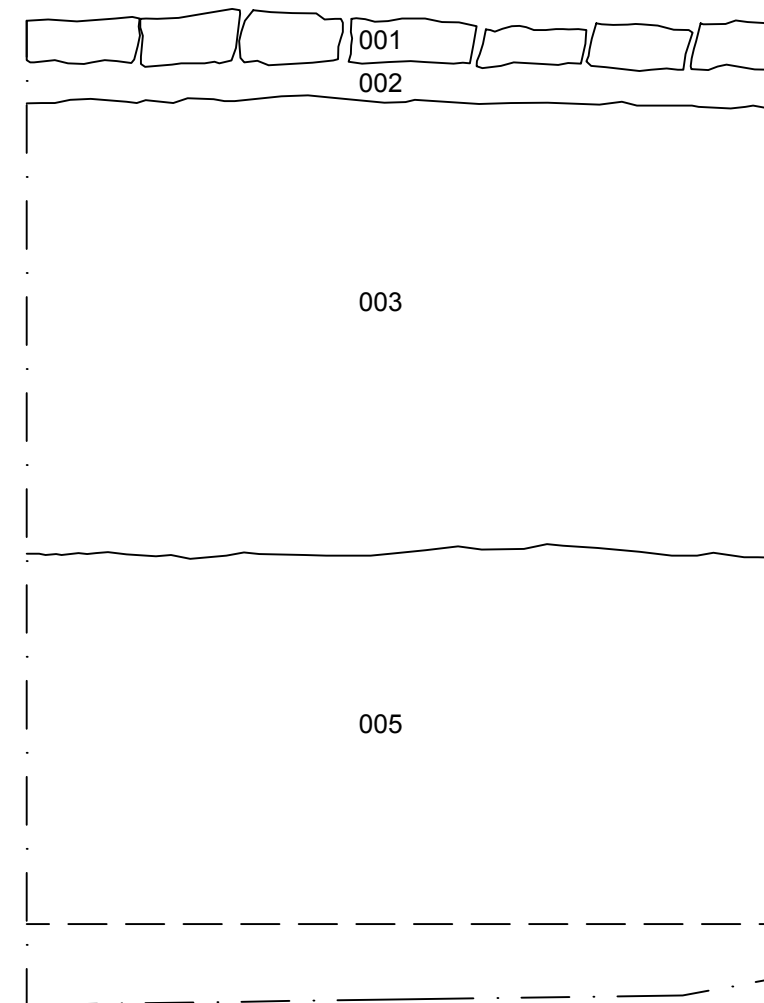


Fig. 5: TP3, west-facing section

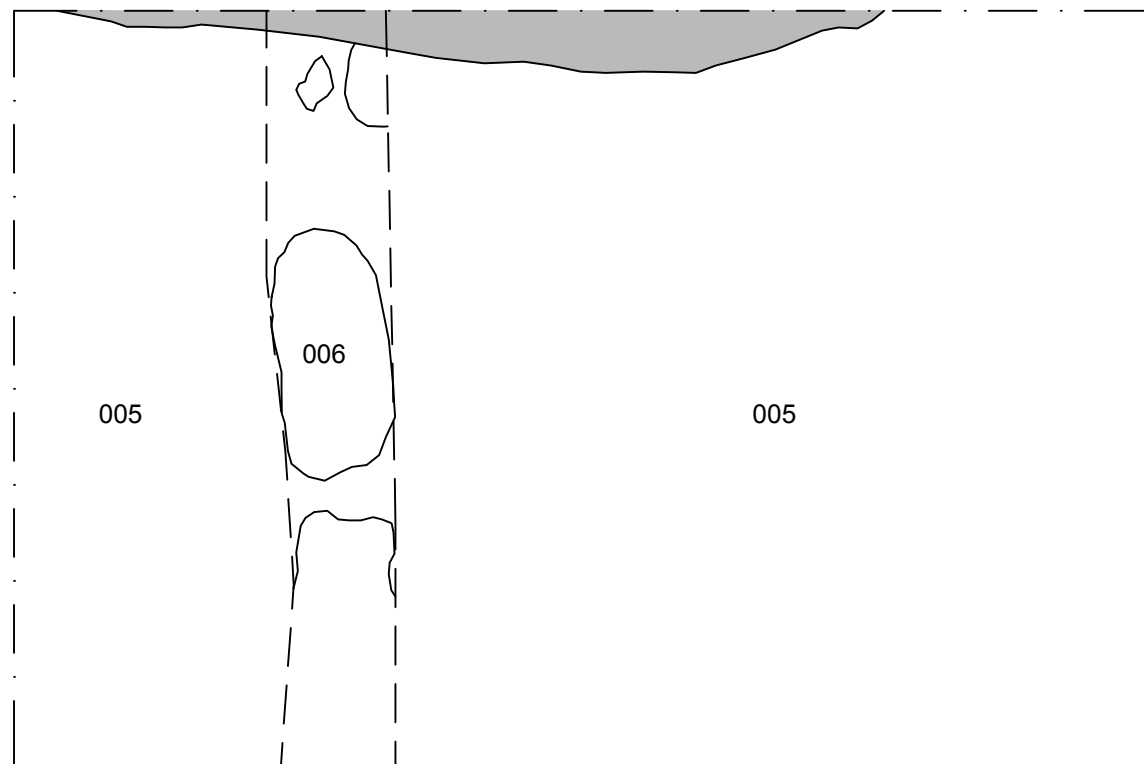




Fig. 4: TP2, plan

Key:

-  Trench Edge
-  Concrete



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Fig. No:	2-5	Report No:	3337
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Title:  
**Location map and Test-Pit Plan**

Project:  
**Mixed Use Development  
 King's Stables Road  
 Edinburgh  
 Archaeological Test Pitting**

Client:  
**Fletcher Joseph Associates  
 on behalf of Peveril Securities  
 and Campus Development  
 Management**

Scale at A3:  
**1:20**

Drawn by:	Checked:	Date:
SW	BG	22/07/2014

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Fig. 6: TP1, west-facing section



Fig. 7: TP2, west-facing section



Fig. 8: TP2, possible wall 006



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Fig.	6 - 8	Report:	3337	Drawn:	SW	CKD:	BG	Date:	23/09/15
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Fig. 9: TP3, west-facing section



Fig. 10: General shot of site following backfilling



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Fig.	9 - 10	Report:	3337	Drawn:	SW	CKD:	BG	Date:	23/09/15
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