

# CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

June 2007

*Commissioned by Doig and Smith LLP on behalf of Merchiston Castle School*

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

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**Merchiston Castle School  
6th Form Boarders' Accommodation:**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Report No. 1342**

## **CONTENTS**

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Working Methods	3
3.	Archaeological Results	4
4.	Conclusions	4

## **Appendices**

1	Photo Register	6
2.	Discovery and Excavation in Scotland (DES) Entry	6

## **Illustrations**

Fig. 1	Site location and plan showing areas of proposed excavations	5
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in June 2007 during groundworks associated with the construction of new 6<sup>th</sup> form boarders' accommodation at Merchiston Castle School, Colinton, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 21758 69574 (centred)) (Fig.1). The work was commissioned by Doig and Smith LLP on behalf of Merchiston Castle School.
- 1.1.2 The City of Edinburgh Council has granted planning permission for the construction of the new 6<sup>th</sup> form boarders' accommodation at Merchiston Castle School (Ref. 06/01266/FUL) subject to the implementation of a programme of archaeological works prior to the start of construction. The archaeological work involved a phased watching brief on topsoil stripping.
- 1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by CFA, and agreed by John Lawson of the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS).

## **1.2 Background**

- 1.2.1 The watching brief followed a desk-based assessment and archaeological evaluation carried out by CFA in May 2007 (White 2007). The evaluation uncovered the remains of rig-and-furrow field systems in the east of the site.
- 1.2.2 The site covers an area of open ground of former park/gardens immediately to the north of the main school buildings, overlooking the southern bank of the Water of Leith. The proposed development was situated within a landscaped lawn area to the rear of the school.

## **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

- 1.3.1 The objectives of the project were to establish the presence or absence of archaeological features and deposits within the development area, and to record them prior to their destruction by the proposed development.

## **2. WORKING METHODS**

- 2.1 Recording of all elements followed established CFA methods, principally by drawing, photography and completion of standard recording forms.
- 2.2 CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs. This states that watching briefs are intended to allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits that could not be established in advance of development, and to provide an opportunity for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties if an archaeological find is made before its destruction.

- 2.3 The watching brief was to be conducted in two phases. The initial phase focussed upon the area to be stripped for the contractors' compound. If archaeological remains were encountered here then the rest of the site would have to be stripped of topsoil under archaeological supervision.
- 2.4 Topsoil was removed within the contractors' compound area by a JCB 3CX-type mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.5m wide smooth-bladed ditching bucket.
- 2.5 The stratification of all excavated areas was recorded whether or not significant archaeological deposits were identified.

### **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

- 3.1 The area set aside for the contractors' compound had been stripped of topsoil prior to CFA arriving on site (Fig. 1). The natural subsoil was exposed and undisturbed, and inspection of the stripped area showed that there were no archaeological remains present.
- 3.2 The topsoil was approximately 0.37m deep and overlay the natural subsoil which comprised orangey and mottled beige, moderately compacted sandy clay with 20% inclusions of shattered and angular pebbles and cobbles.

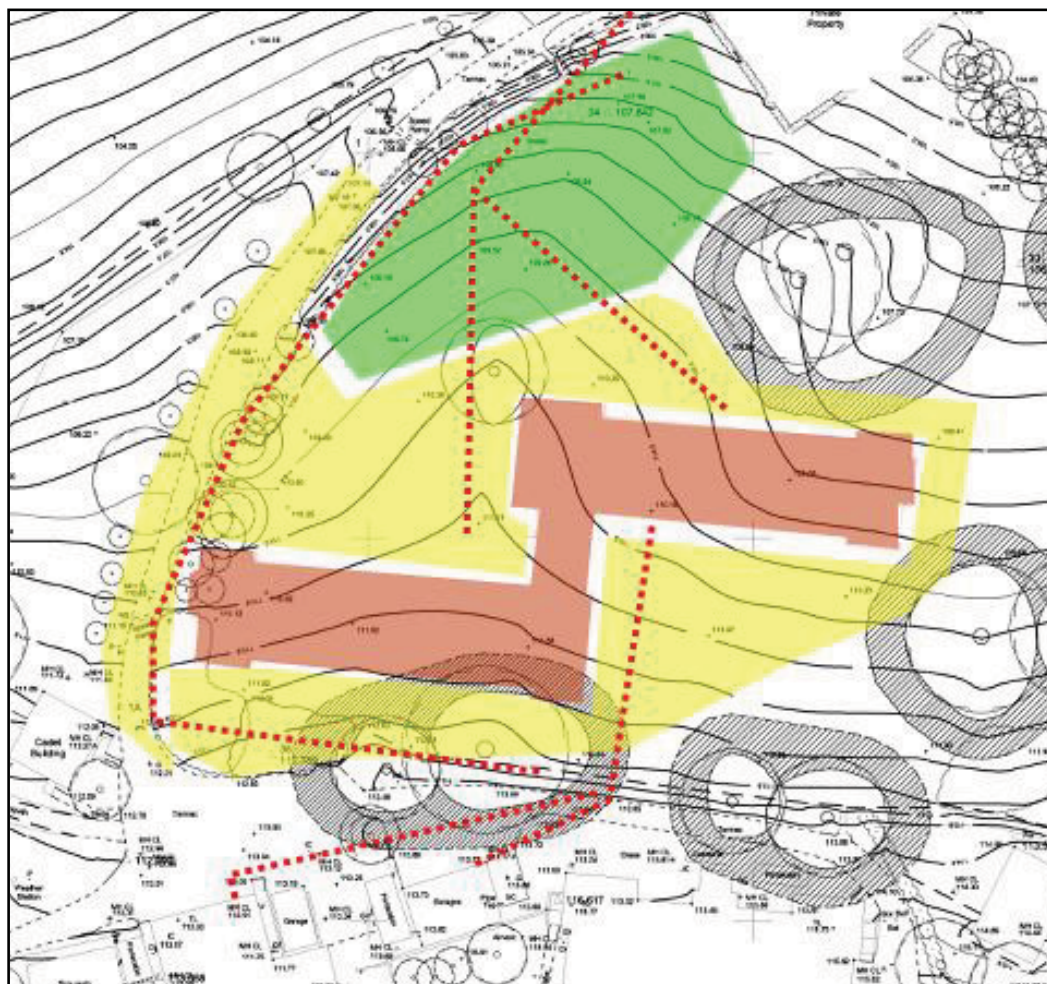
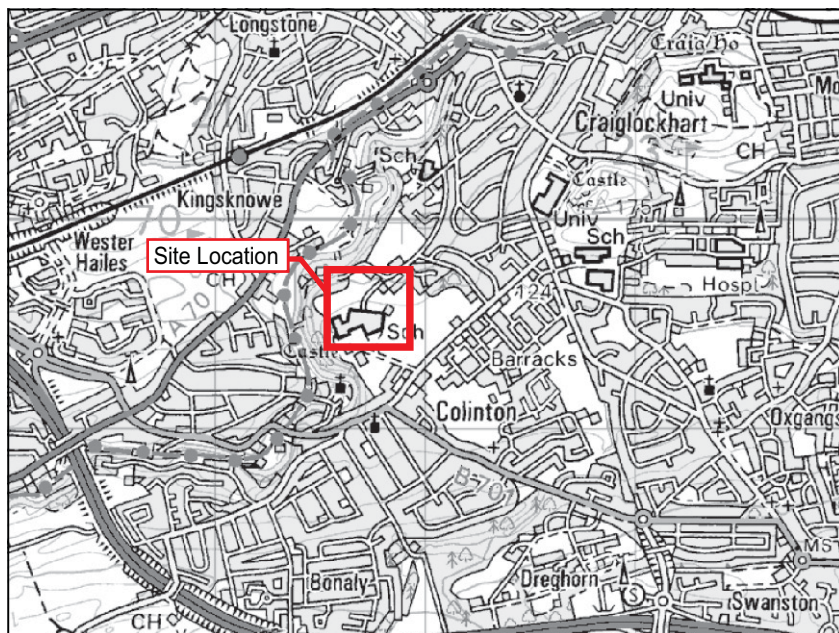
### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 No archaeological features were encountered during the watching brief. Discussions with John Lawson confirmed that CECAS required no further archaeological work to be carried out on the site due to the findings of the first phase of the watching brief on the area of the contractors' compound.
- 4.2 A summary statement of the results of this archaeological work will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, a copy of which is attached as Appendix 2.
- 4.3 The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, plans and reports, will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland.

### **5. REFERENCES**

White, R. 2007. *Merchiston Castle School 6th Form Boarders' Accommodation: Archaeological Evaluation and Desk Based Assessment*. CFA Report No. 1323, commissioned by Doig and Smith LLP on behalf of Merchiston Castle School.





Key:

- = Area of site to be excavated for landscaping works soil strip
- = Area of excavation for building foundations etc
- = Area to be topsoil stripped and hardcore base laid for contractor's compound
- = Proposed service trenches

Fig. No:

1

Revision:

0

Client:  
Doig & Smith LLP,  
on behalf of Merchiston  
Castle School

Title:

Site Plan Showing Areas of Proposed Excavations



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Page No:  
5

## APPENDIX 1: Digital Photograph Register

Photo No.	Description	Conditions	Taken From
DSCN2033.JPG	General view of topsoil stripped area	Overcast	N
DSCN2034.JPG	General view of topsoil stripped area	Overcast	NE
DSCN2035.JPG	General view of topsoil stripped area	Overcast	S

## APPENDIX 2: DES Entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	City of Edinburgh Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Merchiston Castle School, 6th Form Boarders' Accommodation
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	MECA
<b>PARISH:</b>	Edinburgh, City Of
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Ross White
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	CFA Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching Brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	None
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	N/A
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)</b>	NT 217 695 (centred)
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2007
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2007
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	Desk-Based Assessment and Evaluation
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological watching brief followed on from a desk-based assessment and evaluation which were carried out in advance of the construction of new 6 <sup>th</sup> form boarders' accommodation at Merchiston Castle School, Colinton, Edinburgh. The desk-based assessment revealed that the application area had been agricultural land and then became part of the ornamental grounds of Colinton House. The school buildings began to be built in the late 1920s. The trial trenches revealed no finds or features of archaeological significance, except for traces of rig and furrow aligned north-east to south-west. The watching brief on the topsoil removal revealed no archaeological remains.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	N/A
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Doig and Smith LLP on behalf of Merchiston Castle School
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<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	rwhite@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>	National Monuments Record of Scotland; City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service Sites and Monuments Record