

# CFA Archaeology Ltd

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*Environmental Impact Assessment*

*Interpretation, Design & Display*

*Finds/ Environmental Analysis*

*Field Evaluation & Excavation*

*Historic Building Recording*

*Site & Landscape Survey*

*Geophysical Survey*

## **Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract**

**Croft an Righ, Abbeyhill, Edinburgh**

**Archaeological Evaluation for the Construction of  
a New Flight of Stairs, August 2017**

**Report No. HES-PIC223-2017-01**

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Commissioned by	Historic Environment Scotland
Date issued	August 2017
Version	1
Oasis No.	cfaarcha1-292325
CFA Report No.	3584
Grid Ref	NT 2695 7407

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

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 General**

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in August 2017 consisting of the excavation and recording of a foundation trench for a new flight of stairs at Croft an Righ House, Abbeyhill, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 2695 7407) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Historic Environment Scotland as part of the Minor Archaeological Services Call-off Contract.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 was produced by Kirkdale Archaeology for this programme of works. The WSI was designed to fulfil the terms of the Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) (Case ID 300018851, Index No. SM 13031) and was agreed with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in advance of the work taking place.

## **1.2 Background**

HES are proposing to replace the existing external metal staircase between the grounds of Croft an Righ House and the gardens of the Palace of Holyroodhouse with a new staircase set at a shallower angle than that currently in place. This programme of works required the excavation of a single foundation trench situated adjacent to the southern wall of Croft an Righ House, which lies within the Scheduled Area associated with Holyrood Abbey (SM 13031) (Fig.1)

Croft an Righ House is thought to date from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, but displays evidence of extensive remodelling in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is identified on Gordon of Rothiemay's 1647 map as the property of Lord Elphinstone, though his lodgings are known to have burnt down within two years of completion, which could perhaps explain the subsequent rebuilding in the later 17<sup>th</sup> century. Recent standing building recording broadly supports this and identified six key phases of development, with its initial construction probably in the late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> century, followed by an extension and rebuilding in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century after extensive fire damage; further alterations particularly to the north range must have taken place in the later 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century as the present plan differs from that shown on Rothiemay's map.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the house formed the north-east corner of a development around a courtyard with tenements belonging to the Duke of Hamilton forming the south and west sides. The house was bought by the Crown in 1854, prior to the remodelling of the Palace grounds and around this time the building was embellished and the interiors altered to accommodate staff working in the palace gardens. In the 1990's, the subdivisions were removed and conservation work was undertaken. The building is currently in use as offices for Historic Environment Scotland.

The boundary wall to the west, to which the stair adjoins, dates to the 1850's and a stair must presumably have been in this location from at least this date. Conservation records note the replacement of an earlier timber stair to the north garden in 1921. Further records in 1954 note permission being granted to form an opening and stair between Croft an Righ and the gardens of Holyroodhouse, which may suggest the

creation of a new route (in the present location) or re-opening and repair to the earlier access stair.

When this evaluation was undertaken in August 2017, the area consisted of a small courtyard enclosed to the north and east by the walls of Croft an Righ House and to the south and west by a curving retaining wall along the edge of the gardens of Holyroodhouse. The courtyard had a gravel surface with concrete slab paths and a number of trees and shrubs (Fig. 3). Within the location of the foundation trench, concrete slabs associated with a modern service duct had been lifted (Fig. 5) prior to CFA arriving on site.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The objectives of the programme of archaeological works were:

- To conduct an archaeological evaluation by way of the excavation of a single hand-dug foundation trench for the proposed new staircase.
- To present the results of the fieldwork in an illustrated Data Structure Report with accompanying digital documentation as specified by Historic Environment Scotland CRT.

## **2. WORKING METHODS**

### **2.1 General**

All work was conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 'Code of Conduct' (CIfA 2014), and other relevant CIfA Standards and Guidance.

### **2.2 Evaluation**

The foundation trench measured 1.3m NW to SE by 0.7m NE to SW and was excavated to a depth of 0.45m. This programme of works carried out using hand tools.

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

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

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

The upper surface of the foundation trench consisted of concrete slabs associated with a modern brick service duct (**003**) and a c.0.08m thick layer of modern gravel (**002**) (Fig. 2 and 6). The modern service duct extended 0.42m out from the wall of Croft nan Righ House and had been removed prior to this evaluation being undertaken (Fig. 4).

Beneath the slabs and gravel the deposits consisted of mixed grey-brown sandy-silty made ground (**001**) containing a few sherds of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century glass and pottery, which were not retained. This deposit abutted the edge of duct **003**, partially overlying the basal slabs for it.

The trench was excavated to a total depth of 0.45m, but natural subsoil was not reached. There were no features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance identified.

### 4. CONCLUSION

An archaeological evaluation consisting of the hand-excavation of a foundation trench for a new flight of stairs was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd at Croft an Righ House within the Scheduled Monument of Holyrood Abbey (SM 13031). No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Record for the Historic Environment (NRHE) and copies of reports will be lodged with City of Edinburgh Council Sites and Monuments Record.

A summary statement will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 4) and will also be reported on through *OASIS Scotland*.

## APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

Photo Number	Contexts/Description	Taken From
1-2	General location shots	East
3	Pre-excavation shot of foundation trench	SW
4-5	Pre-excavation shot of foundation trench	NE
6-7	General location shot	SW
8	Foundation trench, SW-facing section	SW
9	Foundation trench, SE-facing section	SE
10-11	Foundation trench, NE-facing section	NE
12	General location shot	East
13	Foundation trench, NW-facing section	NW
14	General location shot from top of existing stair	SW

## APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context No.	Trench	Description
001	Foundation Trench	Mixed grey-brown sandy-silty made ground
002	Foundation Trench	Modern gravel
003	Foundation Trench	Modern service duct constructed from brick and concrete slab

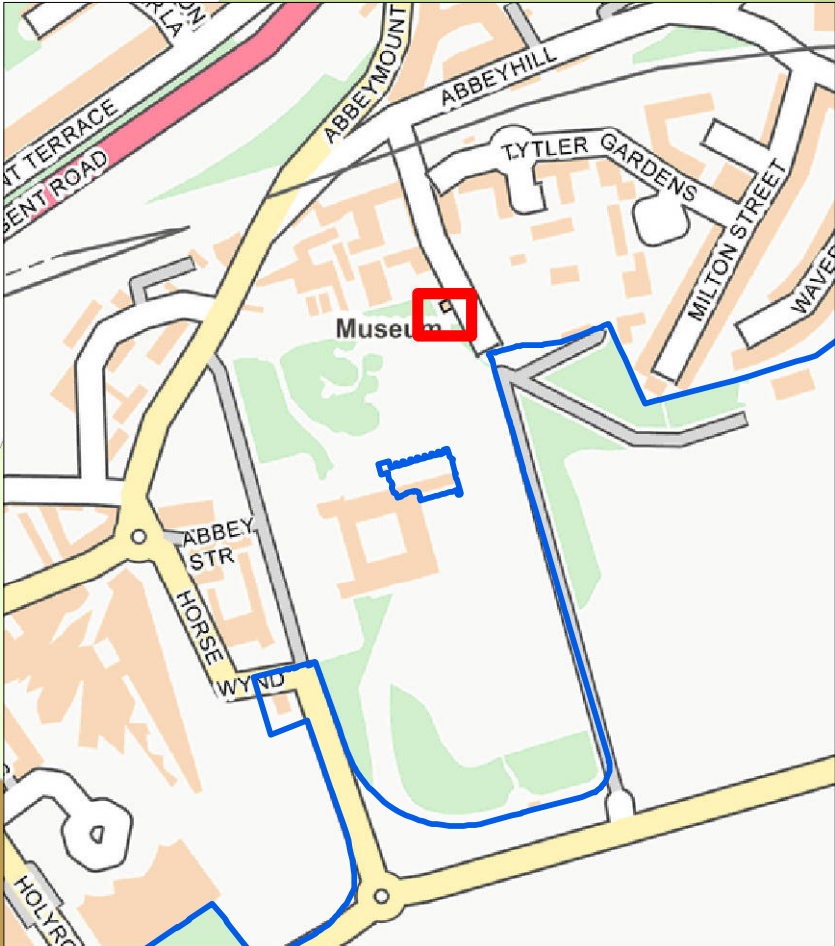
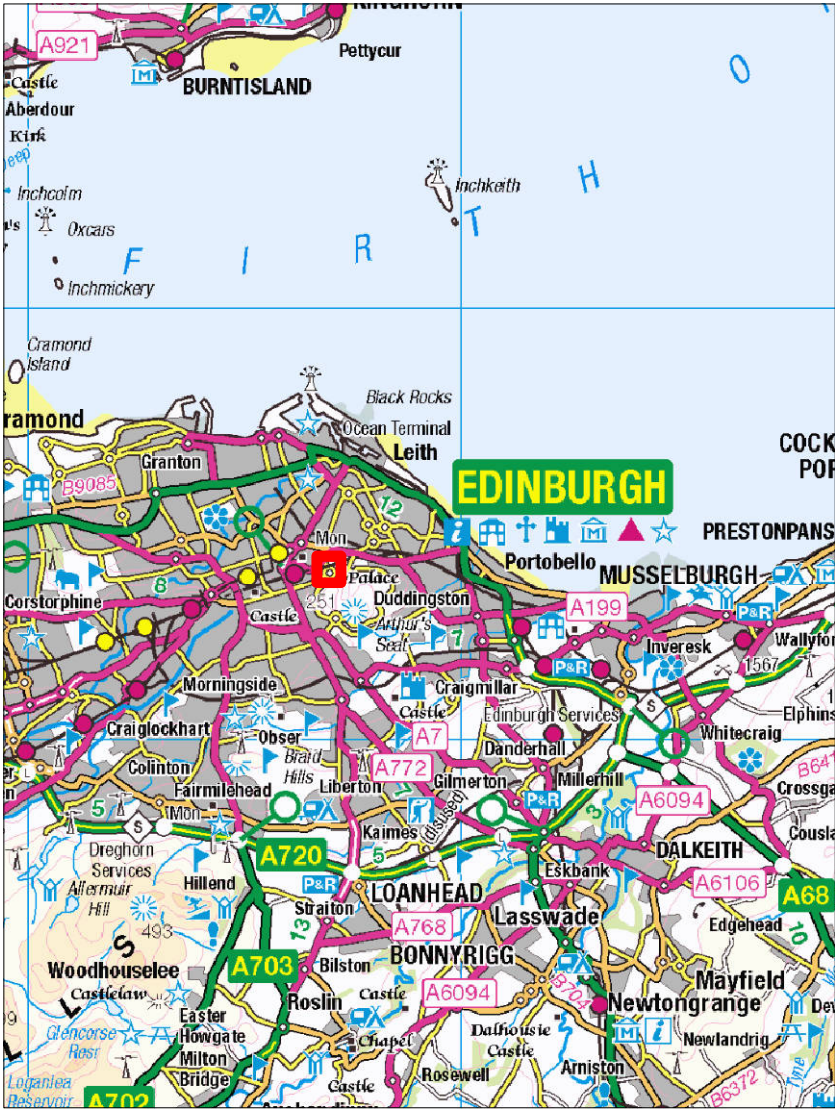
## APPENDIX 3: Field drawings register

Drawing no.	Sheet no.	Description	Section/Plan	Scale
1	1	Location Plan	P	1:50
2	1	Foundation Trench, SW-facing section	S	1:10

## APPENDIX 4: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	City of Edinburgh Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Croft an Righ, Abbeyhill, Edinburgh
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	MINA5
<b>PARISH:</b>	Edinburgh (City of)
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Magnus Kirby
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	CFA Archaeology Ltd
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Archaeological Evaluation
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NT27SE59
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	House (16 <sup>th</sup> Century)
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	N/A
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)</b>	NT 2695 7407
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	August 2017
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	August 2017
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)</b>	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	An archaeological evaluation consisting of the hand-excavation of a foundation trench for a new flight of stairs was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd at Croft an Righ House within the Scheduled Monument of Holyrood Abbey (SM 13031). No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	None
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Historic Environment Scotland
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ.
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	<a href="mailto:cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk">cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk</a>
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>	Archive to be deposited with NRHE, reports lodged with SMR.





**Key:**

Property In Care Boundary

Watching Brief Area

Contains Historic Environment Scotland data  
© Historic Environment Scotland

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Title:

Location map and site plan

Project:

Croft an Righ, Abbeyhill, Edinburgh

Client:

Historic Environment Scotland

Scale at A3:

1:100

Drawn by:

Checked:

Date:

SW

MJ

18/08/2017

Report No:

Fig. No:

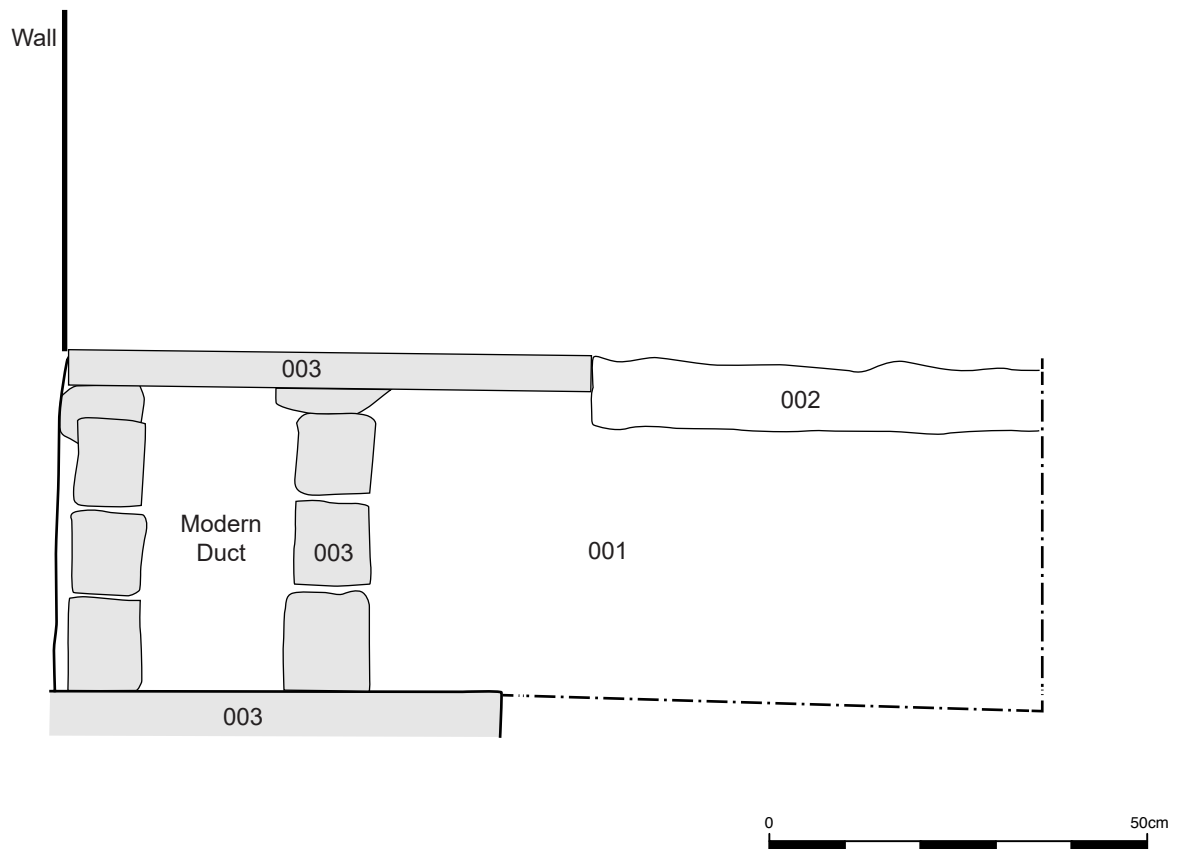
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**Key:**



Concrete/Brick

Title:  
SW-facing section of foundation trench

Client:  
Historic Environment Scotland



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Project  
Croft an Righ, Abbeyhill, Edinburgh

Scale at A4:  
1:10

Drawn by:  
SW

Checked:  
MJ

Date:  
18/08/17

Report No:  
3584

Fig. No:  
2





Fig. 3 - Genereal location shot



Fig. 4 - Location shot from top of existing staircase

Project:  
Croft an Righ, Abbeyhill, Edinburgh



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Report No: <b>3584</b>		Fig. No: <b>3 - 4</b>





Fig. 5 - Pre-excitation shot showing previously removed service duct



Fig. 6 - Post-excitation shot showing SW-facing section of foundation trench

Project:  
Croft an Rìgh, Abbeyhill, Edinburgh



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**MJ**

Date:  
**18/08/17**

Report No:  
**3584**

Fig. No:  
**5 - 6**