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The Boiler House High School Wynd, Edinburgh (Ref: 14/02444/FUL)

Archaeological Watching Brief
Report No. 3629

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

**The Boiler House
High School Wynd
Edinburgh**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. 3629

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd in December 2017 and January 2018 during alteration works to The Boiler House, High School Wynd, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 26133 73433, Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Crichton Lang, Willis & Galloway Architects (CLWGA) on behalf of the University of Edinburgh.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 01 November 2017 was produced by CFA on behalf of CLWGA. The WSI was designed to meet the requirements of the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS) on behalf of the planning authority, and was agreed by CECAS in advance of works.

1.2 Background

Planning permission (Ref. No. 14/02444/FUL) was granted to repair, refurbish and extend the existing boiler house at High School Wynd, Edinburgh in order to convert it into office space. The planning permission was subject to an archaeological condition requiring a Level 2 historic building survey and a watching brief on all ground breaking works. A full desk-based assessment containing further details on the historic background to this site is contained within the standing building survey (Cressey 2018).

This report contains the results of the archaeological watching brief. The standing building survey was undertaken by CFA in November 2017 and the results were produced under separate cover (Cressey 2018). The unit numbers used in the standing building survey to identify the individual internal compartments of the boiler house have been retained for the purpose of this report.

The site lies at the heart of Edinburgh's medieval old town, a UNESCO World Heritage site, though outwith the early medieval town limits. The site formed part of the Dominican (Black Friars) Friary, constructed in 1260 and dissolved during the mid 16th century Reformation. It then formed part of the Old High School and Infirmary. The remains of the Dominican Friary along with its associated graveyard were discovered and excavated in 2013 across the yard in front of the boiler house. Since the 17th/18th centuries the site has had a shared history between the Old High School and Royal Infirmary and Surgeons Hall with the site being closely associated with medical teaching through the 19th century.

Excavation in the forecourt of High School Yards by AOC Archaeology in 2016 (Roy & Streatfield-James 2016) revealed a series of structures surviving under tarmac and cobbles (Figs.1 and 2). The earliest evidence recorded was a clay-bonded wall that may have been related to a group of buildings depicted on a Rothiemay's map of 1647. Other features included a series of stone culverts and a pit. Post-medieval levelling was apparent and the fills contained glass and pottery dating to the 17th and 18th century. Later phases included so called 'garden' features and structural remains dating to the late 18th and early 19th century.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the programme of archaeological works were

- To conduct an archaeological watching brief on all ground breaking works.
- To provide suitable mitigation for further archaeological works if the results merited it.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

CFA follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance and Code of Conduct as appropriate.

2.2 Watching Brief

Groundbreaking works were undertaken with a mechanical excavator fitted with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. All discoveries, including soil profiles and subsoil characteristics, were recorded using standard CFA recording forms and digital photography.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

Context numbers are in bold and described in Appendix 1.

3.2 Watching Brief

Two areas were monitored during this watching brief (Fig.1). These consisted of a network of drainage trenches (Trench 1), and a trench (Trench 2) excavated for the purpose of reducing the floor level within the proposed entrance foyer to allow disabled access. Details of these two areas are given below.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated within the garage at the south-western end of the building (Unit 1 in the standing building survey). Towards the centre of the trench there was an existing brick-built pit (**013**) measuring c.2.5m by 2.75m housing a steel hopper and associated machinery (Fig.4). These features formed part of the boiler system which occupied this area prior to its conversion to a garage.

Towards the north-western end of Trench 1, an L-shaped sandstone and lime mortar wall (**009**) was identified (Figs. 2 and 3). This wall measured 2.2m north-west to south-east, with the south-eastern end having been cut by the brick-built pit (**013**) for the hopper. At its north-western end Wall **009** turned through 90° in a south-westerly

direction for a distance of >0.45m, extending beneath the section of the trench. The width of the main north-west to south-east wall alignment could not be established as it extended beneath the trench section, but the north-east to south-west return had a width of c.0.25m. A maximum height of 0.44m was recorded above the made-ground (**011** and **012**) into which the trench was excavated, but this wall extended beneath the base of the trench and therefore its full surviving height could not be established.

Wall **009** was abutted by a further wall fragment (**010**) measuring 0.6m in length (north-west to south-east) (Figs. 2 and 3). This wall fragment had been cut at its north-western end by an existing drainage ditch. Wall **009** and **010** are considered most likely to represent a continuation of the late 18th/early 19th century features identified by AOC Archaeology in 2016 (Roy & Streatfield-James 2016) (Fig.2).

In addition to these earlier walls, two more recent features were recorded. These consisted of a brick wall (**007**) (Fig.5), and a foundation course (**008**) for a demolished internal wall (wall stub still surviving) of the existing boiler house.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated within the main workshop and storage area at the centre of the building (Unit 3 in the standing building survey). It measured 3.8m by 3.4m and was excavated to a depth of 0.65m below the current floor surface (Fig.6). The deposits within this trench consisted of 0.1m of concrete (**001**) overlying >0.55m of sand and rubble made-ground (**002**). Natural deposits were not identified.

Two recent features were uncovered within this trench. These consisted of a sand and lime mortar foundation course (**003**) (Fig.7) for the existing boiler house walls (**004**), and a modern brick wall with a concrete foundation. A small area of external cobbling (**005**) was lifted immediately to north-west of Trench 2 just outwith the boiler house, but these were found to directly overlie made-ground **002** and no earlier features were identified.

4. CONCLUSION

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at The Boiler House, High School Wynd, Edinburgh during renovation and alteration works to convert the boiler house into offices. A short L-shaped length of sandstone and lime mortar wall was identified abutting a fragmentary wall stub of similar construction. These features are considered to be a continuation of the late 18th/early 19th century structures identified by AOC Archaeology in 2016 (Roy & Streatfield-James 2016). Also uncovered was a modern brick built pit containing machinery and a hopper associated with the boiler system which previously occupied this building. There were no other features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance identified.

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

A summary statement will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 3) and will also be reported on through *OASIS Scotland*.

5. REFERENCES

Bibliographic

Cressey, M, 2018, *The Boiler House, High School Wynd, Edinburgh: Level 2 Historic Building Survey* CFA Data Structure Report No. 3610

Roy, M and Streatfield James, J, 2016 *Combined Heat and Power Network, University of Edinburgh: Archive Report* AOC Project 22330/22761

APPENDIX 1: Context Register

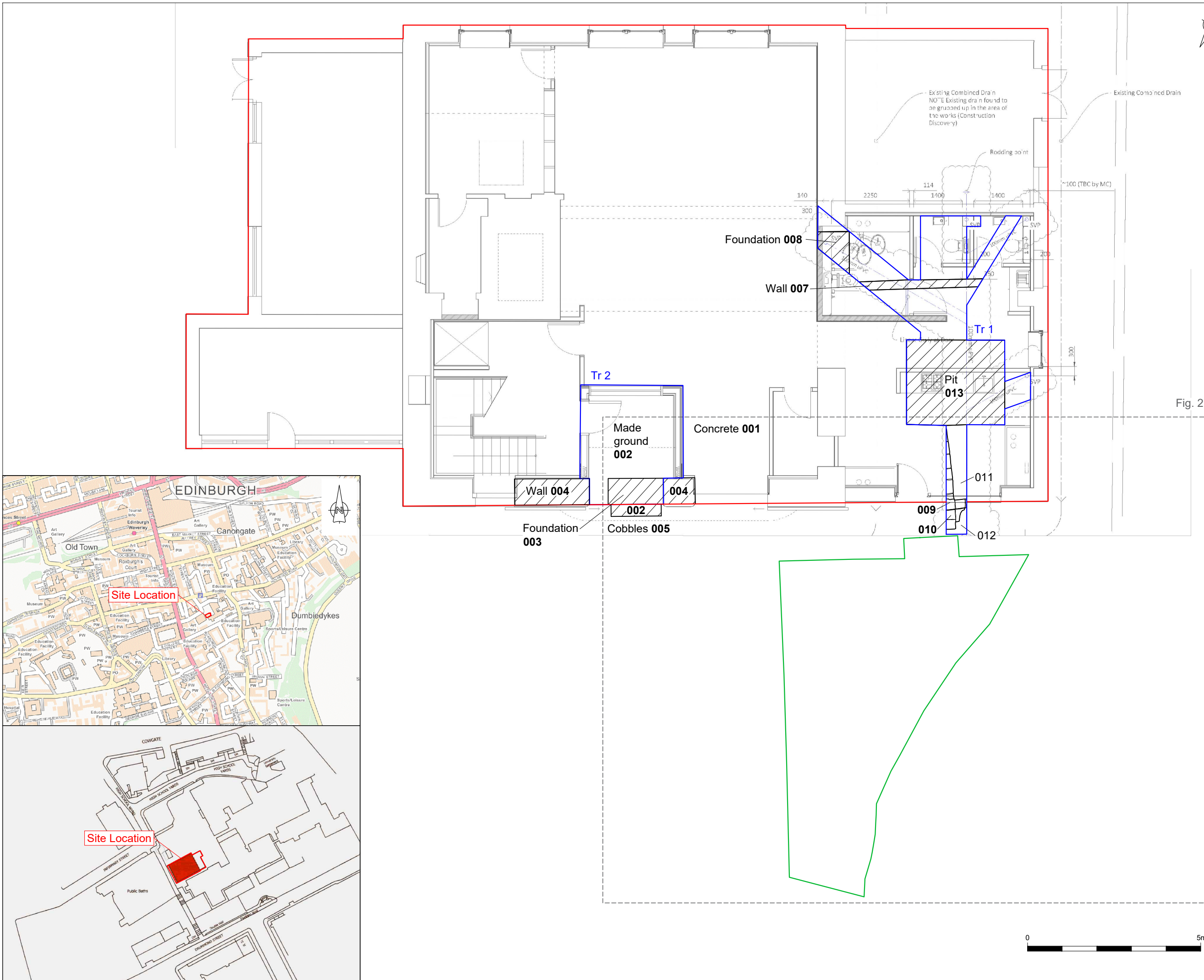
Context No.	Description
001	Modern concrete floor surface
002	Made ground levelling deposit consisting of sand and rubble
003	Sandstone and lime mortar foundation for existing building
004	Wall of existing building
005	External cobbles surfacing yard
006	Modern brick sleeper wall on concrete foundation
007	Modern red brick wall
008	Sandstone and lime mortar foundation for existing building
009	L-shaped sandstone and lime mortar wall
010	Wall fragment abutting Wall 009
011	Made ground levelling deposit consisting of sand and rubble
012	Made-ground backfill of modern service trench
013	Brick-built pit containing steel hopper and machinery

APPENDIX 2: Photographic Register

Number	Description	Facing
1	General shot within garage (Unit 1)	NW
2	General shot within garage (Unit 1)	N
3	General shot of area at proposed entrance foyer (Unit 3)	N
4	General shot of area at proposed entrance foyer (Unit 3)	S
5-6	Trench 2 with concrete removed	N
7	Trench 2 excavated to formation depth	N
8-9	Sandstone and lime mortar foundations 003 for existing building (004)	N
10-12	Brick-built pit 013 with steel hopper and associated machinery	SE
13-14	Brick-built pit 013 with steel hopper and associated machinery	E
15-18	Foundation course 003 with cobbles 005 removed	N
18-20	Foundation course 003 with cobbles 005 removed	W
21	General shot within garage (Unit 1)	N
22	General shot within garage (Unit 1)	S
23	General shot within garage (Unit 1)	SE
24	General shot within garage (Unit 1)	NW
25	Trench 1 following removal of concrete	NE
26	Trench 1 following removal of concrete	SW
27	Modern brick wall 007	E
28-30	General shots of Trench 1 following excavation	Various
31	Trench1, NE-SW aligned spur	SW
32	Trench 1, NW-SE aligned spur	SE
33-34	Modern brick-wall 007	W
35	Sandstone and lime mortar foundations 008 for existing building (004)	Plan
36-43	Walls 009 and 010	Various

APPENDIX 3: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

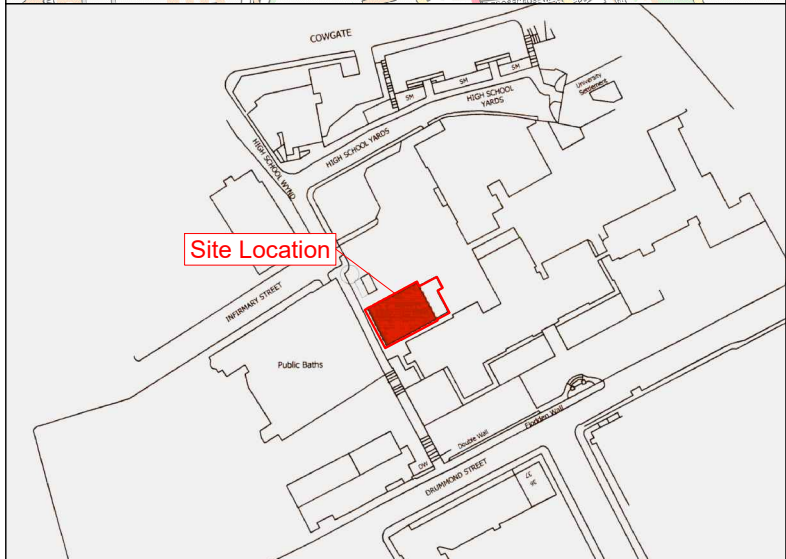
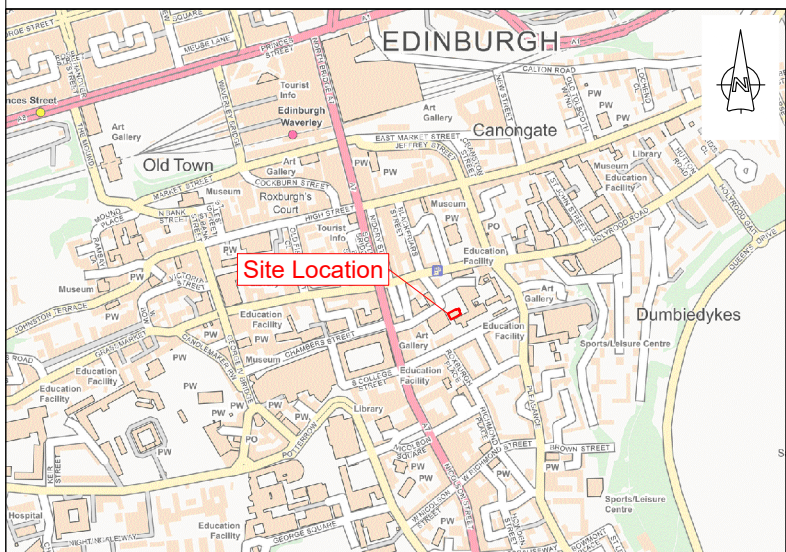
LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	The Boiler House, High School Wynd, Edinburgh Level 2 Survey and Archaeological Watching Brief
PROJECT CODE:	BOIL
PARISH:	Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Dr M Cressey and Magnus Kirby
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd,
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Standing Building Recording and Archaeological Watching Brief
NHRE NO(S):	NT27SE 5931
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Boiler House
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 26133 73433
START DATE (this season)	December 2017
END DATE (this season)	January 2018
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>A Level 2 historic building survey and an archaeological watching brief were conducted on a boiler house in advance of/during its conversion to modern offices.</p> <p>The boiler house occupied a near rectangular plan that comprised the two storey boiler house with two single storey additions at each end. Cartographic evidence suggests that the main core block dates to the late 19th century. It was largely constructed from snecked sandstone with ashlar quoins, but had a brick built rear wall. At the east end two electrical switch rooms occupied what appeared to be a c.1930s addition that replaced an earlier building on the same site.</p> <p>During the watching brief a short L-shaped length of sandstone and lime mortar wall was identified abutting a fragmentary wall stub of similar construction. These features are considered to be a continuation of the late 18th/early 19th century structures identified by AOC Archaeology in 2016. Also uncovered was a modern brick built pit containing machinery and a hopper associated with the boiler system which previously occupied this building. There were no other features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance identified.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Crichton Lang, Willis & Galloway Architects on behalf of the University of Edinburgh
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Old Engine House, Eskmills Business Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Report Lodged with Edinburgh Council SMR NHRE intended archive



Key:

- Site Boundary
- AOC Excavation
- Trench Outline

Fig. 2



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Title:
Location map and site plan

Project:
**The Boiler House High School
 Wynd, Edinburgh**

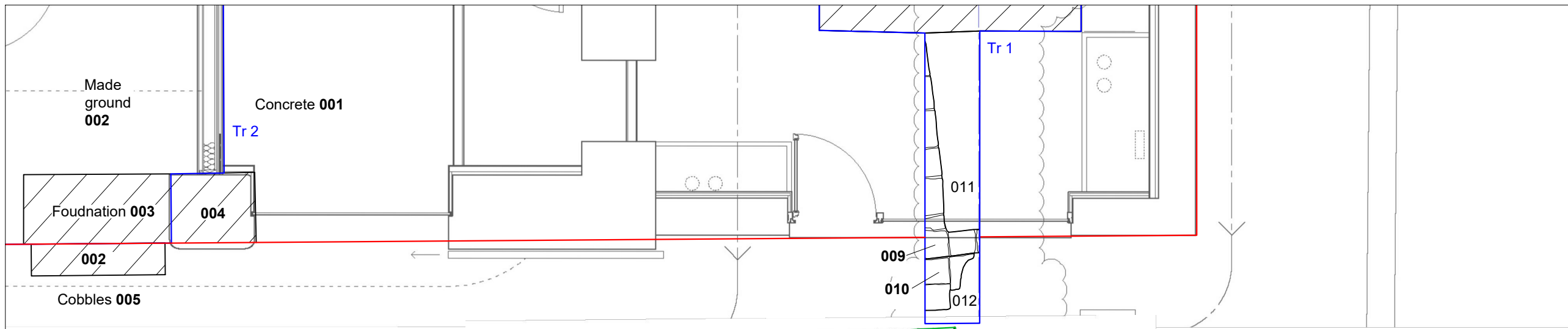
Client:
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 Architects**

Scale at A3:
1:100

Drawn by: MP	Checked by: TB	Date: 30/04/2018
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Report No: 3629	Fig. No: 1
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Key:

- Site Boundary
- AOC Excavation
- Trench Outline



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Title:
Detailed plan of Trench 1 showing Wall 009/010 in relation to the features identified during the 2016 program of works undertaken by AOC

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Client:
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Scale at A3:
1:50

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Fig. 3 - Sandstone walls 009 and 010



Fig. 4 - Hopper and associated machinery within brick-built pit 013

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Fig. 5 - Modern wall 007



Fig. 6 - General shot of Trench 2

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Fig. 7 - Foundation 003 for existing building

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