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Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract Holyrood Park, Edinburgh PIC224

Path Erosion Repairs, Watching Brief
February/March 2018
Report No. HES-PIC224-2018-01

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Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) between 19 February and 14 March 2018 within Holyrood Park, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 272 728), a Property in Care (PIC224) in the guardianship of Historic Environment Scotland. The work was commissioned by Historic Environment Scotland as part of the Minor Archaeological Services Call-off Contract.

The works involved the repair of path erosion along Piper's Walk and at Powderhouse Corner. The work was carried out using pitched stone to reinforce path edges, reinstating the gravel path and repairing a section of rough stone steps using the bedrock and adding pitched stone; cross drains (waterbars) were also inserted at intervals along both paths.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 17 October 2017 was produced by CFA for this programme of works. The WSI was designed to fulfil the terms of the Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) and was agreed with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in advance of the work taking place.

1.2 Background

Holyrood Park is a rich archaeological resource, with a long and varied past. It has an extensive history of occupation, with the remains of at least four prehistoric settlements within the park, as well as enclosures and cultivation terraces of uncertain date. The medieval period has left behind little upstanding evidence, other than St Anthony's Chapel and Well, although various finds of medieval date have been recovered from the park.

The park was enclosed with a stone wall by King James V in 1541, as an adjunct to the Palace of Holyroodhouse and its history has close associations with the Palace. This effectively preserved the present Holyrood, or Queens, Park as an area of open ground, with no significant settlement from that time onwards.

With the exception of intermittent stone quarrying activities up to the 19th century, the present topography is mainly the result of mid-19th century landscaping, drainage and road construction. This massive programme transformed and rationalised both the higher ground (primarily Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat) and its perimeter/base on all sides. The natural landfall was retained and managed to create a romantic wilderness, now better drained and accessible, overlooking the Palace of Holyroodhouse.

A survey of the cultural heritage in Holyrood Park was undertaken in 1996 by the Centre for Field Archaeology (CFA) which recorded all known archaeological sites and find spots within the park boundary. The park was surveyed by RCAHMS in 1998; a LIDAR survey was completed in March 2017. No new features have been identified from the LIDAR data in the vicinity of the proposed works.

There have been numerous small scale archaeological interventions within the park in recent years. This has largely taken the form of archaeological monitoring alongside erosion and path repair works, and drainage works. Archaeological monitoring during path repairs in the vicinity of the Dry Dam, Nether Hill and Hunter's Bog in 2011 recorded nothing of archaeological significance, though a number of stray finds were recovered; similarly this was the case for archaeological monitoring of path works along the Guttled Haddie and close to St Anthony's Chapel in February/March 2015.

1.3 Archaeological Sensitivity and Impact

The works affected two separate areas of the park: Piper's Walk and a section of path between Powderhouse Corner and Volunteer's Walk (Fig. 1).

Piper's Walk

This section of path repair is in an area of unknown archaeological potential within the park. There are no known upstanding archaeological features in the area of the works, although the path is situated close to areas of possible prehistoric settlement and farming activity.

Powderhouse Corner

This section of path repair is also in an area of unknown archaeological potential. Nevertheless, the path is situated close to upstanding earthworks of probable Iron Age date and banks or enclosures of a later date (identified by RCAHMS and on the recent LIDAR survey). Stevenson (1949) suggested the presence of a medieval or later settlement close to Powderhouse Corner, though this has been questioned in subsequent surveys of the park and is beyond the area of path repairs. Powderhouse Corner is presumably named due to it being the location of a powder magazine in the 19th century, if not earlier. A powder magazine is shown on Kirkwood's map of 1817, and is also depicted on a map of Holyrood Abbey Sanctuary and Environs dated to 1839; the associated remains of this site are unlikely to be affected by the path repair works.

Both areas are treated as archaeologically sensitive, though given the relatively minor ground disturbance associated with the path repair works it was not considered likely that significant archaeological deposits would be encountered or disturbed; any surviving archaeological deposits are likely covered by hillwash. However, a high potential was assumed for the discovery of stray archaeological finds during the works.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the programme of archaeological works were:

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (watching brief) to monitor all ground disturbance works required for the path repairs.
- To mitigate the effects of construction on any archaeological deposits or features identified through their excavation and recording and produce a report on them.

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 Watching Brief

All ground-breaking works were carried out under constant archaeological supervision.

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.

The works involved minimal ground disturbance, though the extent to which they penetrated the ground was variable; in places the ground had to be levelled and turf and topsoil needed to be removed to build up the edges of the path, and slightly deeper excavation was required for the repair of steps and the insertion of waterbars. While it was unlikely that there would be any disturbance to archaeological deposits, there was the potential for recovery of stray finds.

The watching brief areas prior to excavation were an area of rough stone steps (Area 1), an area of path at Powderhouse Corner which was to be resurfaced along with the construction of waterbars (Area 2) (Fig. 11), and an area of path repair over a large section of Piper's Walk which comprised the construction of waterbars (Area 3).

Area 1 (Fig. 1) measured approximately 14m x 1m. Excavation up to a depth of 0.3m was often required to reset old stones/place new stones for pitched steps (Figs. 2, 4-6). Excavation through the overlying hillwash (**001**), which contained fragments of modern plastic food wrappers, revealed an orange-brown subsoil (**002**). This subsoil was completely sterile. In places under the existing stones was a separate discrete context (**003**), an old hardcore-like levelling deposit for the existing steps (Fig. 3). Bedrock was often encountered during the watching brief.

Area 2 (Fig. 1) was approximately 50m long. Work here involved occasional excavation up to a depth of 0.25m during the construction of revetments and waterbars and path resurfacing (Fig. 7-10). A thin layer of hillwash (**004**) overlay a sterile orange-brown subsoil (**005**).

Area 3 (Fig. 1) was similarly sterile. Hillwash (**006**) overlay old path material (**007**). The only excavation work in this section was for waterbars. The waterbars were constructed to a depth of c.0.25m (Fig. 12). An area of recent path collapse following heavy snow was also repaired (Fig. 13).

No finds were recovered from any of the areas.

4. CONCLUSION

A watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd along Piper's Walk and at Powderhouse Corner. No archaeological features, finds or deposits were identified.

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

A summary statement will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 2) and will also be reported on through *OASIS Scotland*.

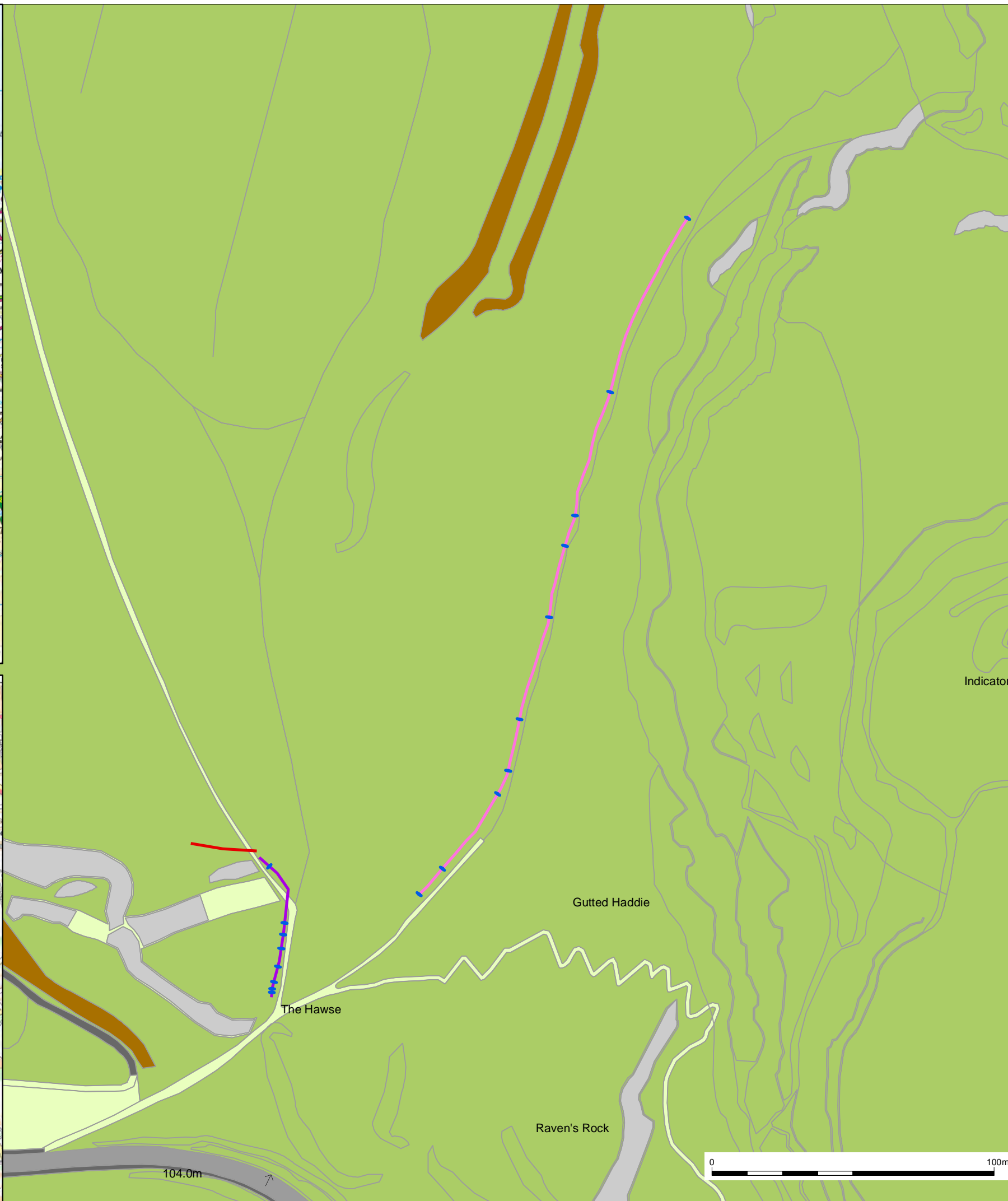
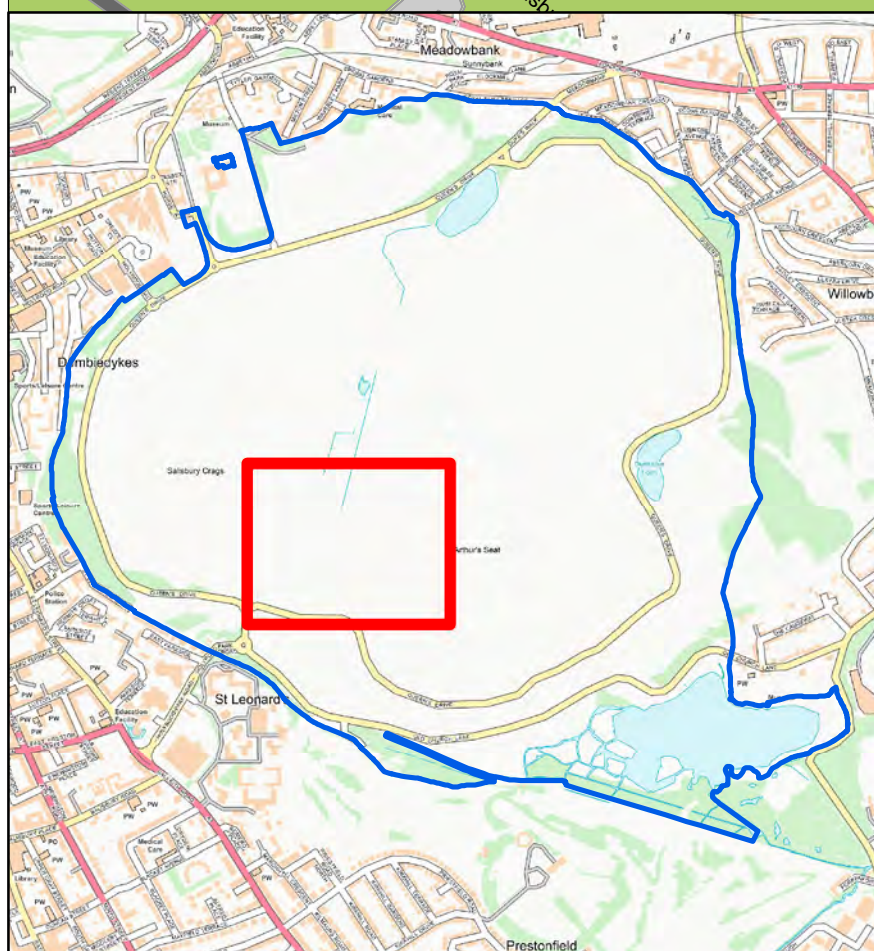
APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

Shot No.	Summary description of subject	Facing
1	Area 1 upper half of path pitching, portrait	W
2	Area 1 upper half of path pitching, landscape	W
3	Area 1, lower half, example of (002)	W
4	Area 1, work in progress	W
5	Area 1, working shot	E
6	Hunter's Bog from Area 1 looking north	N
7	Hunter's Bog from Area 1 looking north, with sun	N
8	Area 1, completed path with some snow	W
9	Area 1, completed path with some snow	SW
10	Area 1, path facing downhill	E
11	Area 1, detail showing bedrock	W
12	Area 1, detail showing bedrock	W
13	Area 1, revetment, stone	S
14	Area 1, revetment, stone	W
15	Area 1, revetment, soil	W
16	Area 2, waterbar, W2	N
17	Area 2, working shot	N
18	Area 2, waterbar, W3	N
19	Area 2, waterbar, W3	W
20	Area 2, working shot	SSW
21	Area 2, working shot, revetment work	W
22	Area 2, working shot, revetment work	NW
23	Area 2, general shot	W
24	Area 2, waterbars, W2, W3, W4	N
25	Area 2, waterbars, W2, W3, W4	N
26	Area 2, revetment	E
27	Area 2, path prior to surfacing	N
28	Area 2, unplanned waterbar W6	NW
29	Area 2, waterbar W3 and path after surfacing	SE
30	Areas 1 and 2, working shot	W
31	Areas 1 and 2, working shot	W
32	Area 2, after surfacing	NW
33	Area 2, W6 after surfacing	NW
34	Area 2, blockers to counter erosion	E
35	Area 2, completed path	S
36	Areas 1 and 2 from Pipers' Walk	SW
37	Area 3, waterbar W9	S
38	Area 3, waterbar W9	N
39	Area 3, waterbar W8	S
40	Area 3, waterbar W8	N
41	Area 3, example of surfacing near W7	S
42	Area 3, waterbar W7	S
43	Area 3, collapse due to snowmelt	S
44	Area 3, collapse and example of hillwash (006)	W
45	Area 3, collapse	N
46	Area 3, waterbar W5	NE
47	Area 3, waterbar W6	S
48	Area 3, waterbar W6	S
49	Area 3, waterbar W6	N
50	Area 3, waterbar W4	S
51	Area 3, waterbar W4	N
52	Area 3, revetment on area of collapse	W
53	Area 3, waterbar W3	S

Shot No.	Summary description of subject	Facing
54	Area 3, waterbar W2	S
55	Area 3, waterbar W1	S
56	Area 3, waterbar (unplanned)	S

APPENDIX 2: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Holyrood Park, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	MINA18
PARISH:	City of Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Edward Rayner
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	N/A
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 10 figures)	NS 90819 57794
START DATE (this season)	February 19 2018
END DATE (this season)	March 14 2018
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd within the grounds of Holyrood Park, specifically the areas of Powderhouse Corner and Piper's Walk as part of the Minor Archaeological Services Call Off Contract, during the repair of paths and the construction of waterbars. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were identified.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Historic Environment Scotland
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ.
EMAIL ADDRESS:	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited with NRHE, reports lodged with SMR.



Key:

- PIC Boundary
- Area 1
- Area 2
- Area 3
- Waterbar

Indicator

Contains Historic Environment Scotland data
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Title:
Map showing affected areas

Project:
Holyrood Park

Client:
Historic Environment Scotland

Scale at A3:
1:1,500

Drawn by: MP	Checked by: MJ	Date: 19/06/2018
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Report No: 3646	Fig. No: 1
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Fig. 2 - Detail of finished pitching in Area 1



Fig. 3 - Detail of material under old pitching (003)
Area 1

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Drawn by: MP	Checked: SW	Date: 14/06/18
Report No: 3646		Fig. No: 2-3



Fig. 4 - Working shot Area 1



Fig. 5 - Completed pitching Area 1

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Fig. 6 - Completed stone revetment Area 1



Fig. 7 - Working shot and completed waterbars Area 2

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Fig. 8 - Join between Area 1 and 2



Fig. 9 - Completed path surfacing Area 2

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Fig. 10 - Completed waterbars Area 2



Fig. 11 - Completed Areas 1 and 2

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Fig. 12 - Completed waterbar and surfacing Area 3



Fig. 13 - Path collapse due to snowmelt Area 3

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