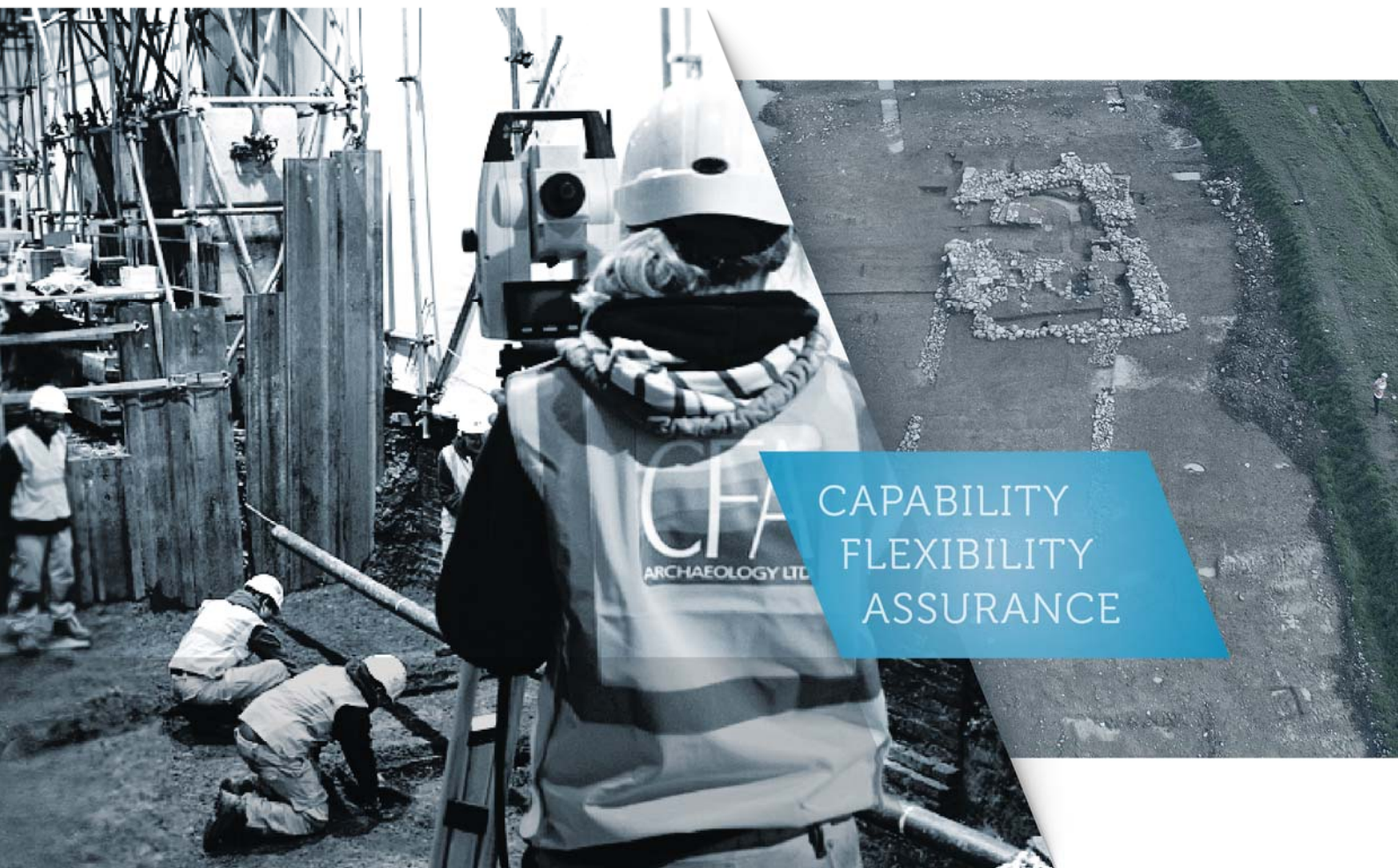




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CAPABILITY
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Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract Dirleton Castle, East Lothian (PIC139)

Handrail Installation, Watching Brief October
2018

Report No. [HES-PIC139-2018-01](#)

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

Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract

Dirleton Castle, East Lothian (PIC139)

**Handrail Installation, Watching Brief
October 2018**

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

A watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd on 16th October 2018 at Dirleton Castle, East Lothian (Grid reference: NT 516 839) during the installation of a new steel barrier and handrail down the west side of the west stair stone steps leading up to the Close.

The work was commissioned by Historic Environment Scotland as part of the Minor Archaeological Services Call-off Contract. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the work, dated 17 November 2017, was produced by CFA on behalf of Historic Environment Scotland (HES).

1.2 Background

The first stone castle at Dirleton was built by the De-Vaux after 1240, and was based on Coucy-le-Chateaux in France, north of Paris. Dirleton copied the great Donjon on the east side as a retreat point during times of siege if the castle courtyard fell. In its original form, Dirleton consisted of an enclosing wall or enceinte following very much the line of the present wall. Circular towers, now overlaid by later building, once occupied the south-east and north-north-east angles; in the south-west corner stood the main block, very much as it still is. Off the triangular inner court a semi-circular and a rectangular tower both project outwards; also the principal 'drum' tower of well-dressed masonry, with 3m thick walls to an overall diameter of some 11m. At first-floor level it contains the roughly hexagonal Lord's Chamber, with stone seats-three of them in window openings.

In 1298, Dirleton was besieged by Bishop Beck on behalf of King Edward I of England (Hammer of the Scots). In 1311, it was recaptured by the Scots and in accord with King Robert the Bruce's policy of slighting castles it was torn down.

In the 1350's the castle passed to the Halyburtons, who built a new gatehouse and hall on the stump of the great Donjon. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the Halyburtons had raised most of the east block-including cellars, bakery, kitchens and chapel. Below the chapel is a prison; below this, a pit-prison which, like others of the lower chambers, has been hewn out of the natural rock. The outer wall of this block was built against parts of the earlier curtain wall-re-used to provide further support for the new tunnel-vaulting. The imposing main entrance and drawbridge also date to this period.

In 1363, Dirleton was seized by William Douglas of Tantallon castle in his rebellion against King David II of Scots(1329-1371). In the 1550s the Ruthvens added a Dovecote, a village Barmkin wall and a Ruthven Range hallhouse in the castle courtyard. The 16th century additions of the Ruthvens also include the enclosing of the inner court or close at the south -west corner.

In 1650 the castle was besieged by General Lambert on behalf of Cromwell. A mortar piece ripped open the Halyburton gatehouse and after a day's bombardment the castle was taken by storm. In 1663 the castle, in a slighted state, passed to the Nisbet family. They chose to abandon it as a residence and built a new residence at Archerfield

nearby. The castle fell into ruins but the gardens continued to develop in its shadow. There is a 17th century bowling green in the grounds, whose surviving yew trees are a reminder of an earlier, formal planting within the 'garth'.

1.3 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 handrail installation.
- 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

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance. Recording of all elements followed established CFA methods.

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.

2.2 Watching Brief

All ground breaking work for the banister within the scheduled area were monitored by an appropriately qualified archaeologist. The work required an archaeological watching brief to monitor the excavation of 14 postholes which were excavated by hand by members of HES.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

Numbers in bold refer to contexts, a full list of which is contained in Appendix 1.

14 postholes were excavated running as a continuation from the existing banister on the west side of the castle beside the current stone steps (Fig. 2, 4). These lay roughly 0.5m apart and measured between 0.15m x 0.15m to 0.25m x 0.25m in plan and all were excavated to a depth of 0.4m (Fig. 3).

The topsoil measured 0.1m deep whilst the mid brown sandy silt subsoil measured 0.3m and contained infrequent small and medium sized stones. The base of the subsoil was not reached.

4. CONCLUSION

No archaeological features or deposits were uncovered and no artefacts were recovered.

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 East Lothian 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*.

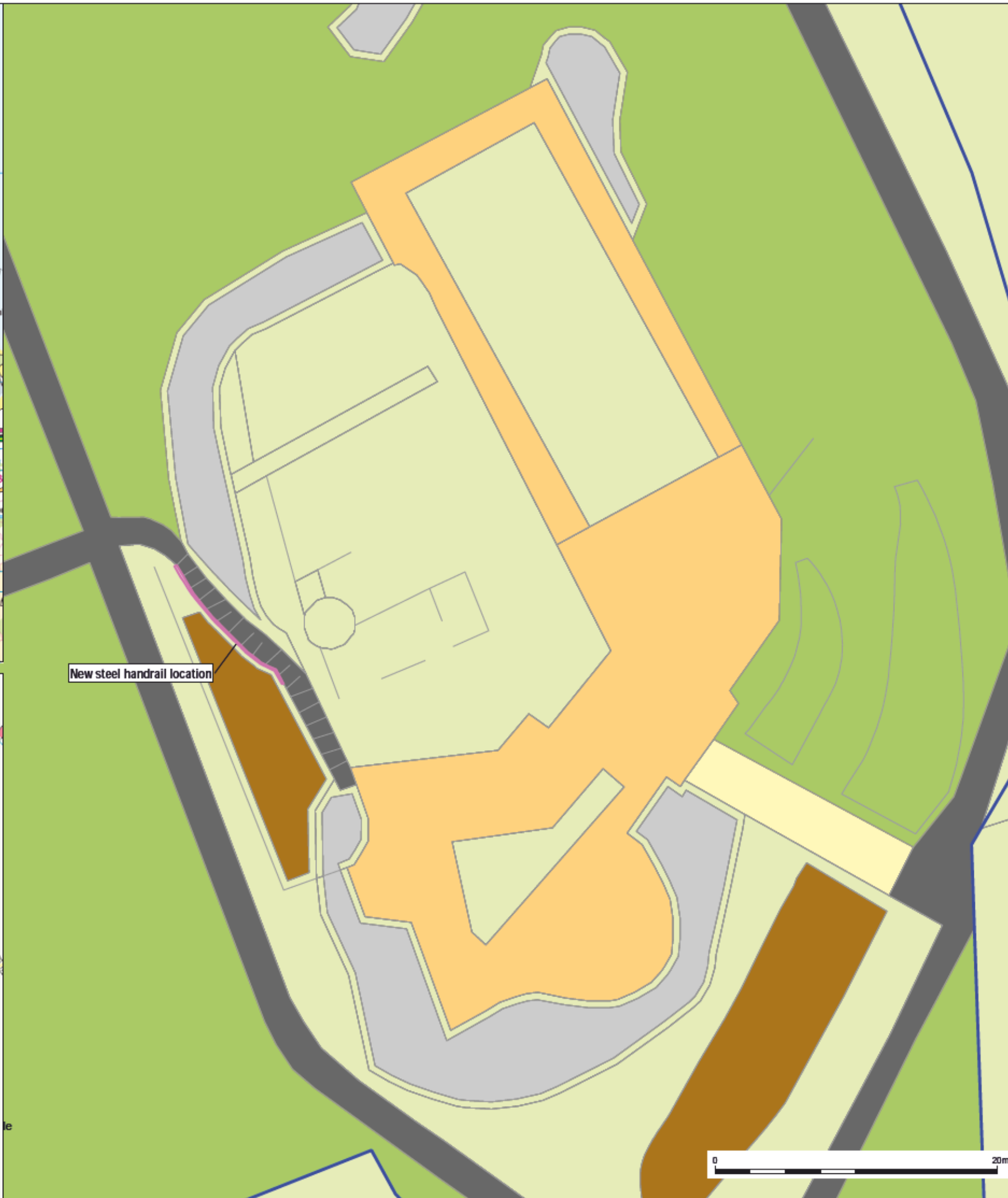
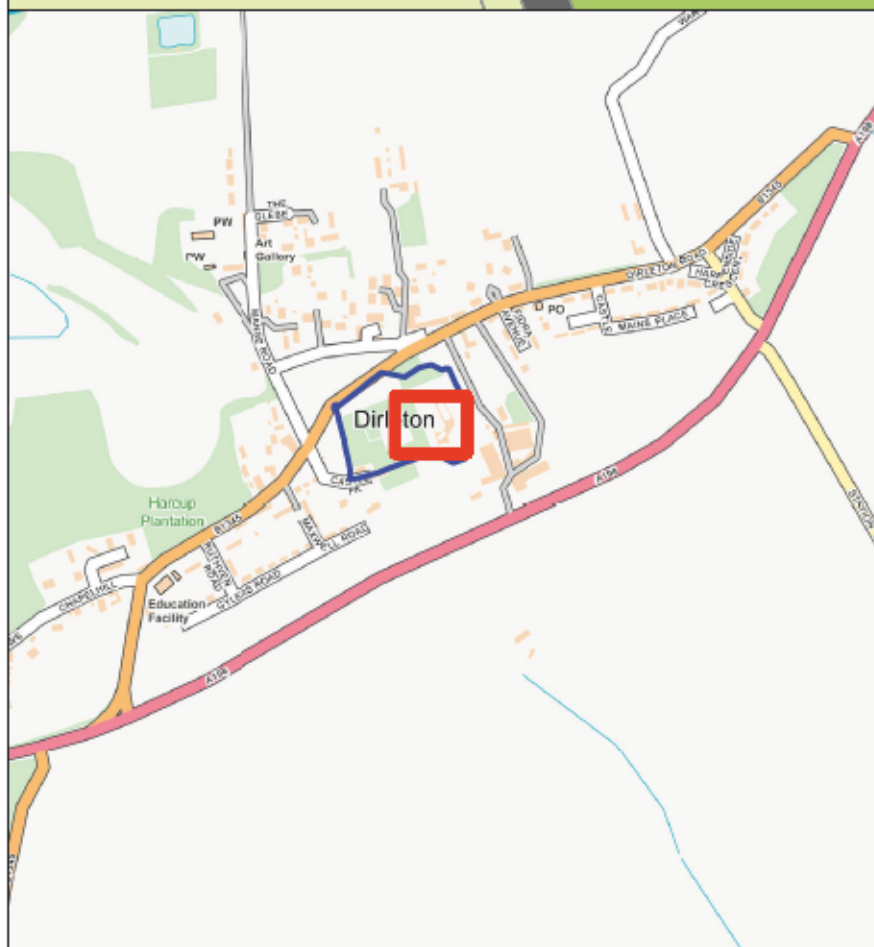
APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

Shot No.	Summary description of subject	Facing
1	General shot area of banister	SE
2	General shot area of banister	NW
3	Post excavation shot PH #1	Plan
4	Post excavation shot PH #2	Plan
5	Post excavation shot PH #3	Plan
6	Post excavation shot PH #4	Plan
7	Post excavation shot PH #5	Plan
8	Post excavation shot PH #6	Plan
9	Post excavation shot PH #7	Plan
10	Post excavation shot PH #8	Plan
11	Post excavation shot PH #9	Plan
12	Post excavation shot PH #10	Plan
13	Post excavation shot PH #11	Plan
14	Post excavation shot PH #12	Plan
15	Post excavation shot PH #13	Plan
16	Post excavation shot PH #14	Plan
17	Post excavation general shot	SE

APPENDIX 2: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	East Lothian Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract: Dirleton Castle
PROJECT CODE:	MINA23
PARISH:	Dirleton
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Leah Watt
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	NT58SW 1
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Castle grounds
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 516 839
START DATE (this season)	October 2018
END DATE (this season)	October 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 at Dirleton Castle, East Lothian during the installation of a new steel barrier and handrail down the west side of the west stair stone steps leading up to the Close. It consisted of 14 postholes running alongside the current steps. No archaeological features or deposits were uncovered and no artefacts were recovered.
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 NMRS, reports lodged with East Lothian Council SMR.



Key:

 PIC Boundary

Contains Historic Environment Scotland data
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Title:
Location Plan

Project:
Dirlerton Castle Banister Installation
Watching Brief

Client:
Historic Environment Scotland

Scale at A3:
1:300

Drawn by: MP
Checked: MJ
Date: 17/10/2018

Report No: 3808
Fig. No: 1



Fig. 2 - General shot of area pre excavation

Project:
Dirleton Castle Banister Installation Watching Brief



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Client:
Historic Environment Scotland

Drawn by: MP	Checked: SW	Date: 17/10/18
Report No: 3808		Fig. No: 2



Fig. 3 - Post excavation shot of post hole #1



Fig. 4 - General shot of area post excavation

Project:
Dirleton Castle Banister Installation Watching Brief



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Drawn by: MP	Checked: SW	Date: 17/10/18
Report No: 3808		Fig. No: 3-4



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