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Extension to Yester House, Gifford, East Lothian

Archaeological Watching Brief
Report No. 3833

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

**Extension to Yester House
Gifford
East Lothian**

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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) in January and February 2019 for a garage to the side of the Category A-Listed Yester House, Gifford, East Lothian (Fig. 1) (NGR: NT 54349 67163). The work was commissioned by Grove-Raines Architects Ltd.

A Written Scheme of Investigations (WSI) dated 19 December 2018 was produced by CFA for this programme of works. The WSI was designed to fulfil the requirements of East Lothian Council Archaeology Service (ELCAS) and was agreed in advance of works.

1.2 Background

Planning permission (Ref. No.18/00480/P) was granted for the construction of a single storey flat roofed garage type extension to the A-Listed Yester House (LB14693). The planning permission was subject to an archaeological condition requiring a watching brief during all groundbreaking works. Listed Building Consent (18/00481/LBC) for this development was granted by East Lothian Council on the 13th July 2018.

Yester House consists of a classical mansion and pavilions constructed between 1699 and 1728. It was originally designed by James Smith and Alexander McGill, but later alterations were carried out between 1729 and 1839 by William Adam, Robert Adam, John Adam, James Adam and Robert Brown. It is a two-storey mansion with attic and basement constructed from channelled sandstone ashlar.

Yester House is understood to lie within close proximity to the medieval village of Bothans (Site No. NT56NW 9) which was demolished in the 17th century when the new village of Gifford was constructed. Records suggest that the church associated with this village was dedicated in 1241, with a collegiate church constructed in 1421. The 15th Century church remained in use until 1710, with it being replaced by the current church (Site No.NT56NW 4) in 1760. Elements of the medieval choir and transepts are incorporated into the current building.

When this watching brief was undertaken in January and February 2019, the proposed development area consisted of a levelled surface consisting of made-ground/modern overburden. The sloping nature of the adjoining land would suggest that a degree of landscaping works had previously been undertaken.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the programme of archaeological works were:

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (watching brief) to monitor groundbreaking works.

- To mitigate the effects of construction on any archaeological deposits or features identified during the watching brief by excavation and recording and to produce a report on them.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

CFA follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidelines as appropriate. Recording of all elements was carried out following established methods.

2.2 Watching Brief

Following the excavation of five exploratory test-pits, ground levels within the development area were reduced by up to c.0.7m to reach formation level, for the slab foundation. Two deeper slit trenches were excavated to a depth of c.1.6m below formation level to either side of an existing vaulted stone drain in order to encase it in concrete. All ground-breaking works were carried out under constant archaeological supervision. Any further work required to fulfil the terms of the WSI were carried out by hand.

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.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

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

The deposits within the development area down to formation level consisted of recent landscaping topsoil (**001**) overlying made-ground/redeposited natural (**002**). A c.1.5m drop in the ground level between the south and north of the existing extension would indicate that a significant degree of benching had been undertaken during its construction, thus reducing the potential for identifying features which pre-dated the house. Two earlier features were identified. These consisted of a stone built box drain (**004**) and a vaulted stone drain (**005**). Details of these features are contained within the following paragraphs.

Stone Box Drain 004

The box drain **004** (Figs 2 and 3) abutted the southern wall of the existing outshot extension. It was of sandstone and lime mortar construction with a flagstone base and capping stones. Internally, it measured 1.3m in height by 0.45m in width, while externally it measured 1.8m high by 1.1m wide with a more recent concrete capping bringing its upper surface flush with the adjoining ground surface. The drain appeared to have become partially backfilled with debris before the remainder of it was blocked off using modern brick. This feature had been cut by the vaulted drain **005**.

Vaulted Stone Drain 005

The vaulted drain **005** (Figs 4-6) was located to the east of the existing extension, ran in a south to north direction, and was still a functioning drain. It was of sandstone and lime mortar construction, with a well constructed vaulted cap. Internally, it measured 1.5m in height by 0.65m in width, while externally it measured 1.8m high by 1.3m wide. Although this feature was largely located below formation level, narrow slit trenches were excavated on either side of it in order to encase it in concrete so it did not collapse under the weight of the new garage. The slit trenches showed that the drain had been cut into grey clay natural (**006**) (Fig.6), which was identified c.0.3m below formation level.

4. CONCLUSION

A watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd during ground-works for a garage extension to the Category A-Listed Yester House. The watching brief identified a stone box drain running parallel with the southern wall of the existing extension, and a vaulted stone drain immediately to the east of the extension but on a north – south alignment. This vaulted drain cut the box drain. Both of these features were associated with the house and its estate. Landscaping work associated with the construction of the house meant that the potential for identifying earlier features was negligible.

CFA recommends that no further work is required in relation to this watching brief. However, it is understood that the final decision regarding mitigation measures lies with ELCAS.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) 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
001	TP 1 Working shot	W
002	TP 1 Working shot	N
003	TP2 Working Shot	W
004	TP 3 Working Shot	N
005	TP 1	E
006	TP 2	E
007	TP 3	W
008	TP 5	S
009	TP5	W
010	General pre-ex site view	SE
011	General pre-ex site view	E
012	Working Shot	N
013	Detail of Vaulted Drain 005 in plan	
014	Working Shot	S
015	Working Shot	N
016	Detail of Vaulted Drain 005	N
017	Working Shot	E
018	Working Shot	NE
019	Working Shot	NE
020	Stub end of Box Drain 004	NW
021	Stub end of Box Drain 004	NW
022	Stub end of Box Drain 004	W
023	Stub end of Box Drain 004	S
024	Stub end of Box Drain 004	W
025	Box Drain 004 in plan	W
026	Vaulted Drain 005 detail plan	W
027	Vaulted Drain 005 detail plan	W
028	Vaulted Drain 005 detail plan	W
029	Vaulted Drain 005 detail plan	W
030	Vaulted Drain 005 detail plan	N
031	Vaulted Drain 005 detail plan	N
032	Vaulted Drain 005 detail plan	N
033	Vaulted Drain 005 detail plan	N
034	Water Pipe	N
035	Trench uncovering line of Vaulted Drain 005	S
036	Trench uncovering line of Vaulted Drain 005	N
037	Trench uncovering line of Vaulted Drain 005	N
038	Stub end of Box Drain 004	W
039	Southern end of exposed part of Vaulted Drain 005	S
040	Southern end of exposed part of Vaulted Drain 005	S
041	Southern end of exposed part of Vaulted Drain 005	N
042	Southern end of exposed part of Vaulted Drain 005	N
043	Southern end of exposed part of Vaulted Drain 005	W
044	Southern end of exposed part of Vaulted Drain 005	E

APPENDIX 2: Context Register

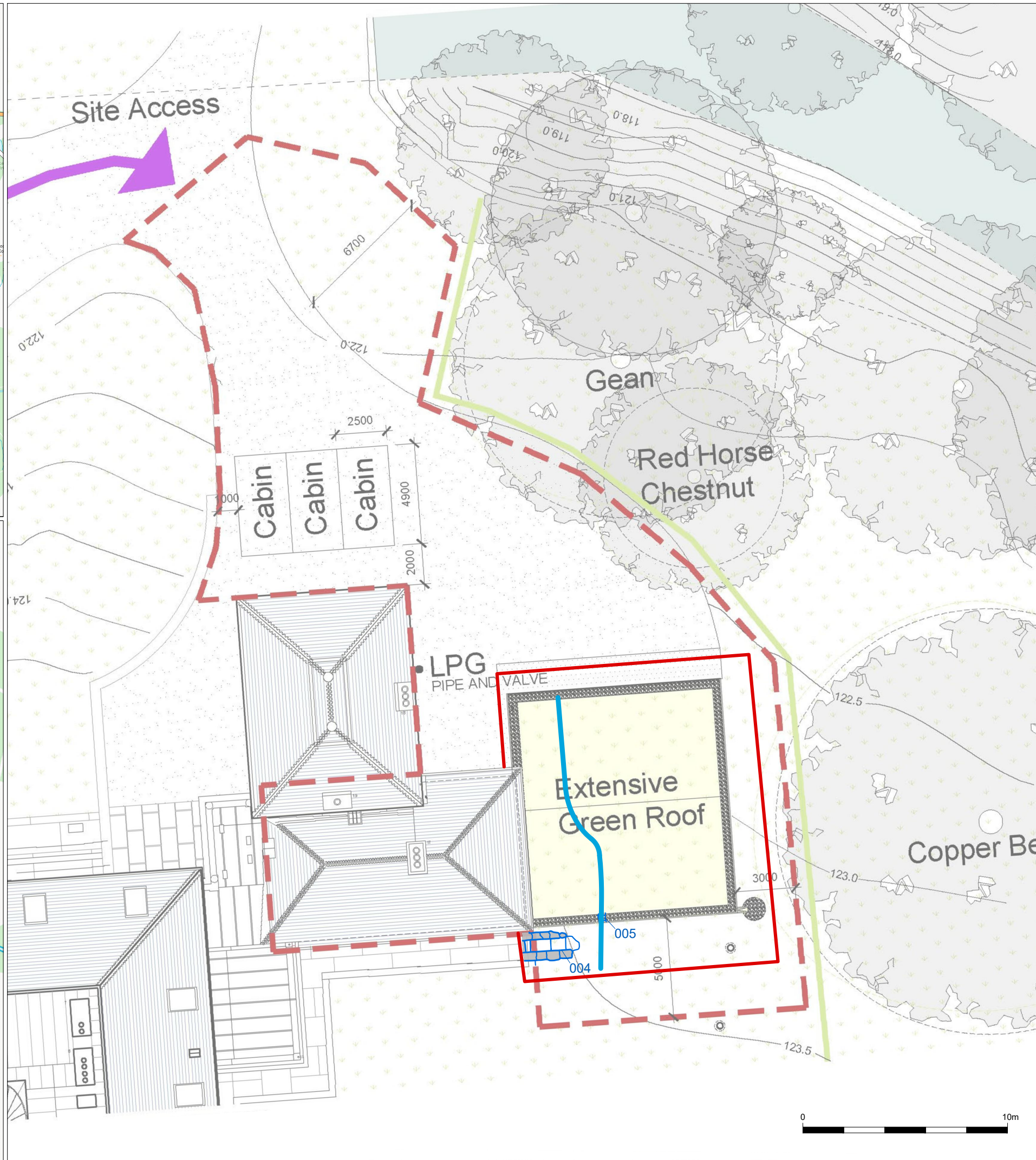
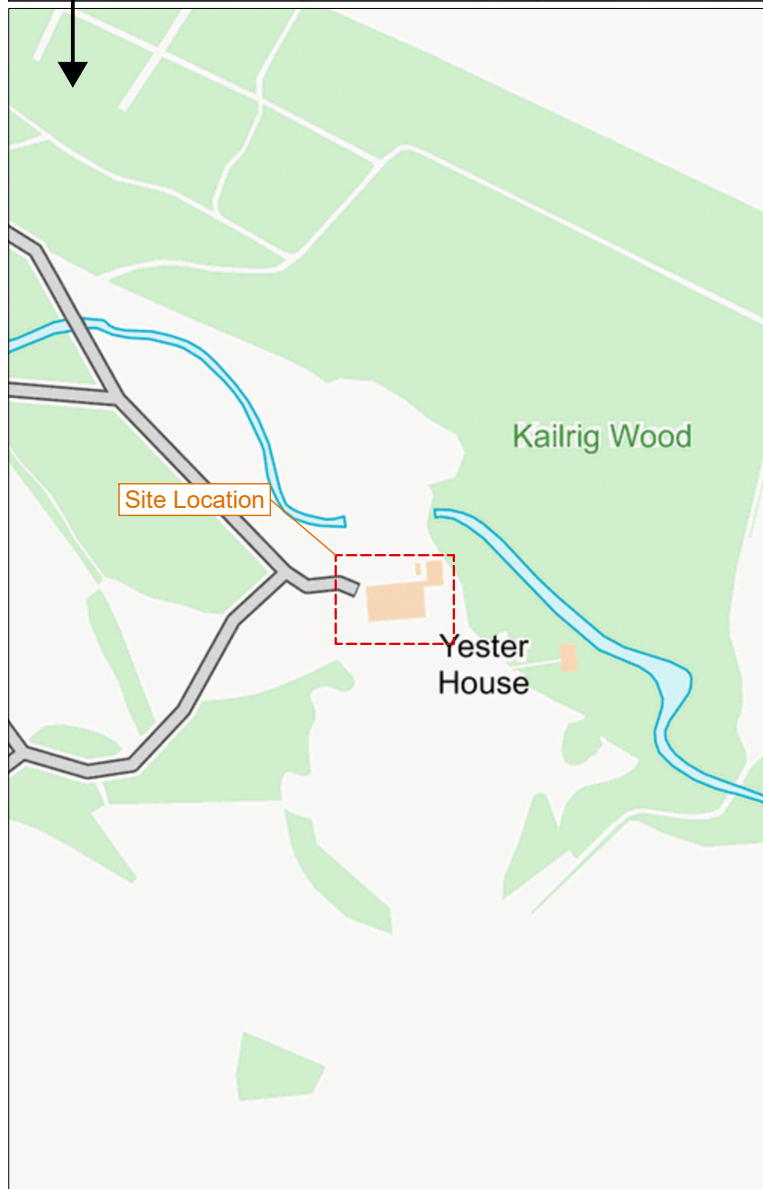
Context no.	Fill of	Type	Description
001		Deposit	Surface Overburden
002		Deposit	Made ground
003		Structure	Modern Drainage
004		Structure	Stone Gully
005		Structure	Cundy

APPENDIX 3: Drawings Register

Dwg No.	Sheet No.	Scale	Plan / Section	Description/contexts
1	1	01:20	Plan	Plan of SW corner of site
2	2	01:50	Plan	Site Plan
3	3	01:50	Plan	Site Plan

APPENDIX 4: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	East Lothian
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Proposed Garage Extension, Yester House, Gifford, East Lothian
PROJECT CODE:	YEGA
PARISH:	Yester
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Magnus Kirby
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	NT56NW 17
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Yester House (Country House)
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 54349 67163
START DATE (this season)	January 2019
END DATE (this season)	February
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd during ground-works for a garage extension to the Category A-Listed Yester House. The watching brief identified a stone box drain running parallel with the southern wall of the existing extension, and a vaulted stone drain immediately to the east of the extension but on a north – south alignment. This vaulted drain cut the box drain. Both of these features were associated with the house and its estate. Landscaping work associated with the construction of the house meant that the potential for identifying earlier features was negligible.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Garreth and Nicola Wood
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 NHRE, Reports lodged with SMR.



Key:

- Site location
- Monitored area
- Alignment of 005



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Title:
 Location map and plan of Yester House showing area monitored and location of stone drains

Project:
 Yester House, Gifford, East Lothian

Client:
 Groves-Raines Architects Ltd
 per Garreth and Nicola Wood

Scale at A3:
 1:200

Drawn by: CA	Checked: SW	Date: 26/04/2019
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Report No.: 3833	Fig. No.: 1
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Fig. 2 - Box Drain 004 looking west



Fig. 3 - Box Drain 004 looking south

Project:
Yester House, Gifford, East Lothian



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Fig. 4 - Vaulted Drain 005 showing detail of vaulted capping



Fig. 5 - Vaulted Drain 005 looking north

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Fig. 6 - Vaulted Drain 005 looking west

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