

CFA Archaeology Ltd

archaeological consultants

Advice on Archaeology & Planning

Environmental Impact Assessment

Intpretation, Design & Display

Finds/ Environmental Analysis

Field Evaluation & Excavation

Historic Building Recording


Site & Landscape Survey


Geophysical Survey

**St Abbs Marine Station
St Abbs
Scottish Borders**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. 1766

 0131 273 4380

 0131 273 4381

 info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk

 www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

The Old Engine House
Eskmills Business Park
Musselburgh
East Lothian
EH21 7PQ

Tel: 0131 273 4380
Fax: 0131 273 4381
email: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
web: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Author | Fraser MacRae MA |
| Illustrator | Graeme Carruthers MA MAAIS |
| Editor | Melanie Johnson MA PhD FSA Scot MIfA |
| Commissioned by | Benjamin Tindall Architects |
| Date issued | April 2010 |
| Version | 0 |
| OASIS Reference | cfaarcha1- 75112 |
| Planning Application No | |
| Grid Ref | NT 92004 67285 |

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

**St Abbs Marine Station
St Abbs
Scottish Borders**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. 1766

CONTENTS

| | | |
|----|------------------------|---|
| 1. | Introduction | 3 |
| 2. | Working Methods | 3 |
| 3. | Archaeological Results | 4 |
| 4. | Conclusion | 4 |

Appendix

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Photographic Register (digital photographs) | 5 |
|----|---|---|

Illustrations (bound at rear)

Fig.1 General site plan showing location of test and inspection pits

Fig.2 Cobbled surface in area of TP1

Fig.3 North-facing section of TP1 showing construction cut of revetting wall

Fig.4 Cobbled surface in area of TP3

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken in March 2010 by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA), at the proposed site of the St Abbs Marine Station, St Abbs Head, Scottish Borders (NT 92004 67285). The work was commissioned by Benjamin Tindall Architects.
- 1.1.2 A written scheme of investigation for this scheme of works was produced by CFA and approved by Scottish Borders Council Archaeological Service.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 The Vennel area of St Abbs consists of a number of stone and brick buildings, some of which appear on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1858. None of the structures have listed building status.
- 1.2.2 No previous invasive archaeological fieldwork is known to have taken place within the area prior to this watching brief.

1.3 Objectives

- 1.3.1 The objectives of the watching brief were to monitor the excavation of machine dug Test Pits and hand dug Inspection Pits (Fig. 1) and record any archaeological remains that were present.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Fieldwork.

2.2 Watching Brief

- 2.2.1 Three machine dug Test Pits were opened under archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator fitted with a smooth bladed narrow bucket. The purpose of the test pits was to ascertain the depth of bedrock and soil types underlying the proposed development area.
- 2.2.2 Five hand dug Inspection Pits were opened adjacent to various buildings within the Vennel area to ascertain the extent, type and survival of foundations.
- 2.2.3 All on site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by photography and completion of on-site record taking.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 Watching Brief

- 3.1.1 Test Pit 1 (TP 1) was opened at the west-facing side of the north-south running revetting sea wall (Fig. 1). It measured 3m by 1.3m and reached a depth of 2.1m before bedrock was struck. A cobbled surface at the surface consisted of rounded stones between 0.1m and 0.15m in size (Fig. 2). The west face of the revetting wall was revealed at a depth of 2.1m below ground level. The north and south-facing sections revealed a construction cut for the wall which truncated the natural subsoil. The cut was filled with loose unworked stone (Fig. 3). In the south-facing section of TP 1, a patch of made ground overlying the natural subsoil was present. It seems likely that this provided a bedding layer for the north-south orientated rough track (Fig. 1).
- 3.1.2 Test Pit 2 (TP 2) was opened to the west of the wooden sheds (Fig. 1) and measured 1.5m by 0.3m and reached a depth of 1.3m before bedrock was struck. The upper deposit in TP 2 was a layer of modern made ground with frequent inclusions of gravel, brick and wood. Underlying this was a 0.8m thick layer of hill wash which, in turn, overlay the natural subsoil or bedrock.
- 3.1.3 Test Pit 3 (TP 3) was situated to the west of the brick built garages (Fig. 1) and measured 1.5m by 0.5m and reached a depth of 1.7m before bedrock was encountered. Grass and topsoil overlay a thin layer of tarmac which overlay a cobbled surface very similar in form to that seen in TP 1 (Fig. 4). The cobbles directly overlay the natural subsoil or bedrock.
- 3.1.4 The five hand excavated Inspection Pits (IPs 1 to 5), which reached depths of between 0.5m and 0.95m, were located against the sides of existing structures to ascertain the nature of their foundations. In IPs 2 to-4 a cobbled surface similar to that seen in TP 1 & TP 3 was encountered whereas IP 1 and IP 5 revealed no evidence for this surface. In all the Inspection Pits natural subsoil identical to that seen in the Test Pits was encountered underlying a thin layer made ground.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 A watching brief was carried out to monitor the excavation of machine dug Test Pits and hand dug Inspection Pits in the Vennel area of St Abbs as part of a pre-application programme of works for a proposed marine research station.
- 4.2 The watching brief demonstrated that a cobbled surface is likely to cover much of the Vennel area stretching from the rough track southwards (Fig. 1). No evidence was found for archaeologically significant deposits beneath the cobbled surface or made ground in any of the areas examined.
- 4.4 The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and

copies of reports will be lodged with the Scottish Borders Council Sites and Monuments Record.

- 4.5 A summary statement of the results of this watching brief will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* once all archaeological works are completed. An *OASIS Scotland* entry will also be completed.

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register (digital photographs)

| Shot | Description | From | Conditions |
|-------|---|------------|------------|
| 1 | Registration shot | - | - |
| 2 | Pre-excavation shot of test-pit 1 | West | Overcast |
| 3 | Mid-excavation shot showing construction cut for wall | North | Overcast |
| 4 | Post-excavation shot of inspection pit 1 | North | Overcast |
| 5 | Post-excavation shot of north-facing section of test pit 1 showing construction cut | North | Overcast |
| 6 | Post-excavation shot of south-facing section of test pit 1 showing construction cut and made ground of road/track | South | Overcast |
| 7-9 | West facing section of test pit 1 showing wall face | West | Overcast |
| 10 | Post-excavation shot of inspection pit 2 | North | Overcast |
| 11 | General shot of St Abbs | South | Overcast |
| 12-14 | General shots of site from cliff top | West | Overcast |
| 15 | Post-excavation shot of inspection pit 3 | West | Overcast |
| 16 | Shot of east face of revetting wall against which test pit 1 was dug | North-East | Overcast |
| 17 | Shot of east face of revetting wall against which test pit 1 was dug | North-East | Overcast |
| 18 | General shot of St Abbs | North | Overcast |
| 19 | Post-excavation shot of inspection pit 4 | West | Overcast |
| 20 | Post-excavation shot of test pit 1 after backfilling | West | Overcast |
| 21 | Post-excavation shot of inspection pit 5 | East | Overcast |
| 22 | Pre-excavation shot of test pit 3 | North | Overcast |
| 23 | Shot of cobbles in area of test pit 3 | North | Overcast |
| 24 | Shot of cobbles in area of test pit 3 | North | Overcast |
| 25 | Shot of east facing section of test pit 3 | East | Overcast |
| 26 | Pre-excavation shot of test pit 2 | South | Overcast |
| 27 | Shot of east facing section of test pit 2 | East | Overcast |
| 28 | Post-excavation shot of test pit 3 after backfilling | North | Overcast |
| 29 | Post-excavation shot of test pit 2 after backfilling | South | Overcast |

Key:

- Inspection pit
- Test pit
- Cobbled surface revealed

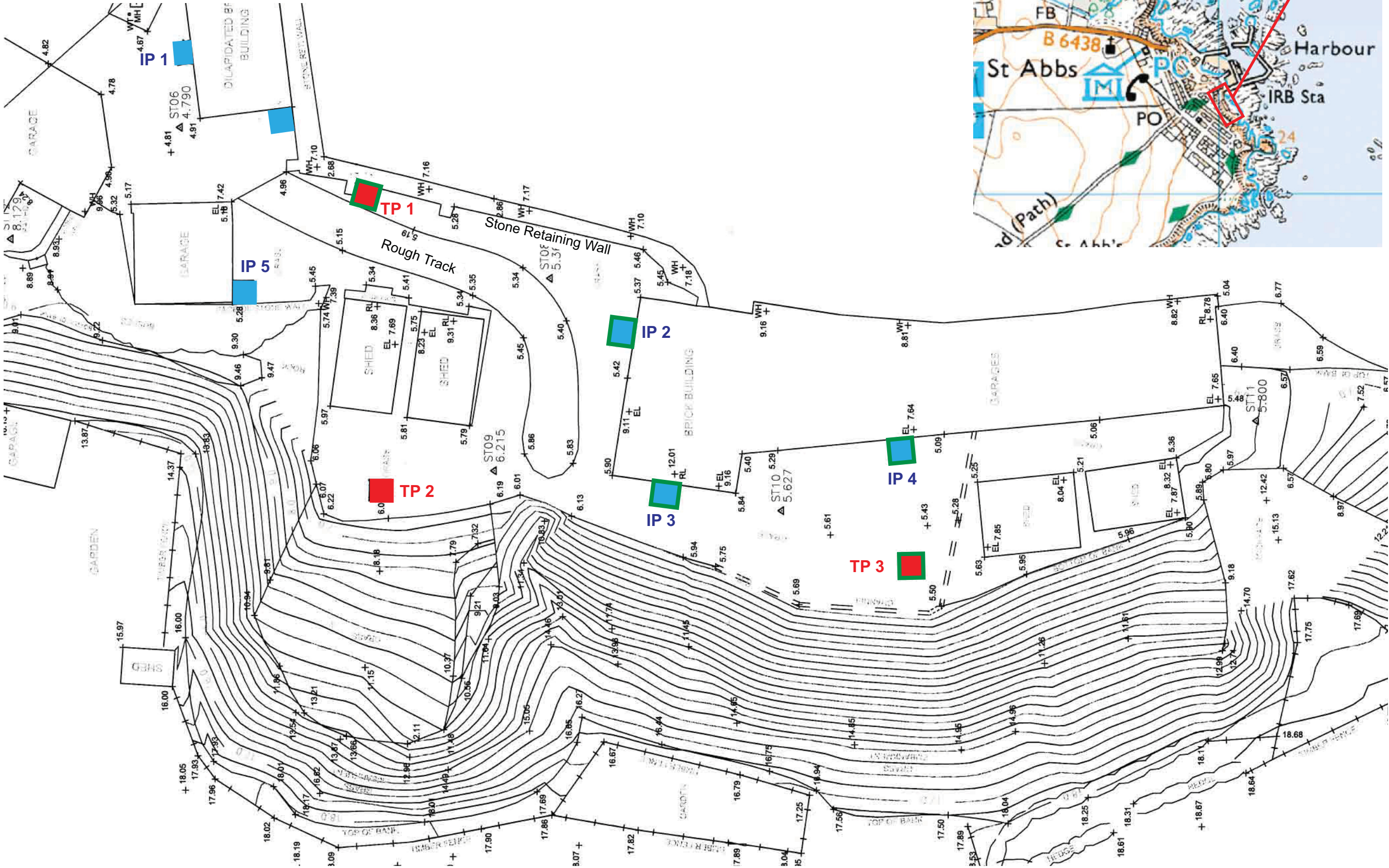




Fig. 2 Cobbled surface in area of TP 1



Fig. 3 North-facing section of TP 1 showing construction cut of revetting wall


| | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|------------------------|-----|-----------|---|---------|-----------------------------|--|----------|--------------------|
| Key: | Fig. No: | 2-3 | Revision: | A | Client: | Benjamin Tindall Architects |  <div>CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD</div> <div>GFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD The Old Engine House Eskmills Park Musselburgh East Lothian, EH21 7PQ t: 0131 273 4380 f: 0131 273 4381 e: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk w: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk</div> | | |
| | Title: | | | | | | | | |
| | Project: | | | | | | | | |
| Scale: | St Abbs Marine Station | | | | | | Drawn by: GC | Page No: | Report No: 1766 |



Fig. 4 Cobbled surface in area of TP 3