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**Westport Dental Practice
261 High Street
Linlithgow, West Lothian**
Archaeological Watching Brief
Report No. 1785

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**Westport Dental Practice
261 High Street
Linlithgow, West Lothian**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Working Methods	4
3.	Archaeological Results	5
4.	Conclusion	7
5.	References	7

Appendices

1.	Context Register	8
2.	Photographic Register	8
3.	Drawing Register	9
4.	Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry	10

Illustrations (bound at rear)

Fig. 1 Site Location plan

Fig. 2 Site plan showing archaeological features identified

Fig. 3 General shot of masonry (009) and cut features [003], [005] and [007]

Fig. 4 South-facing section of [007]

Fig. 5 North-facing section through ash dump [012]

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken in June 2010 by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA), at Westport Dental Practice, 261 High Street, Linlithgow (NS 9976 7703, Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by EK: JN architects.
- 1.1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the project was produced by CFA to fulfil the requirements of West Lothian Council, as advised by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS).

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 A programme of works was undertaken at Westport Dental Practice to construct an extension and make alterations to the existing building. This work involved the removal of an outbuilding front wall and associated flooring, followed by the reduction of the current ground level.
- 1.2.2 An archaeological watching brief was required on all groundbreaking works following the demolition of the outbuilding.
- 1.2.3 No previous invasive archaeological fieldwork is known to have taken place within the proposed development area prior to this watching brief.
- 1.2.4 The 1856 Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Linlithgow shows the main High Street structure and outbuilding on the same footings as they appear today showing that the structure, or a previous structure, existed on the site from at least the mid 19th century.

1.3 Objectives

- 1.3.1 The objectives of the watching brief were:
- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (Watching Brief) during the excavation of all groundbreaking works associated with the construction of Westport Dental Practice extension and building alterations, and to report on its findings.
 - To determine the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeologically sensitive deposits which may lie within the proposed development area, and record them prior to development.

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 Watching Briefs, and to the standard conditions of WoSAS for fieldwork in its area.
- 2.1.2 Watching briefs are intended to allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits that could not be established in advance of development, and to provide an opportunity for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties if an archaeological find is made before its destruction.

2.2 Watching Brief

- 2.2.1 The removal of soil deposits was carried out using mechanical excavators under constant archaeological supervision. The excavation of archaeological features was carried out by hand.
- 2.2.2 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

3.1 General

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

3.2 Watching Brief

3.2.1 An area of c. 8m by 6m was reduced by 0.4m across the working area (Fig. 1) using a 3 ton track mechanical excavator fitted with a smooth edged bucket.

3.2.2 Natural subsoil **(018)** was reached at the working depth of 0.4m across the site with the exception of the south-west corner of the outbuilding's interior where a deposit of charcoal, tile and rubble **(021)** was left *in situ* (Fig. 2).

3.2.3 A number of archaeological features and deposits were identified and recorded within the outbuilding.

3.2.4 No archaeological features were noted outwith the outbuilding.

3.3 Masonry and floor surfaces associated with the outbuilding

3.3.1 A deposit of compacted coal dust **(001)** with frequent inclusions of ash, brick and glass made up the existing floor surface of the structure.

3.3.2 A low section of lime mortar-bonded masonry, formed of roughly shaped sandstone blocks and brick **[009]**, measured c. 0.4m in height and enclosed an area of 2m by 2m in the south-east corner of the outbuilding (Fig. 2). The exterior face and top of the masonry was dressed whereas the interior face was either undressed or had been truncated.

3.3.3 The masonry **[009]** abutted the walls of the outbuilding (Fig. 1) indicating that it was a later addition to the structure, although it may have been added during the same general construction phase.

3.3.4 A cobbled surface **(010)** formed of rounded cobbles up to 0.1m in size abutted both the internal masonry **[009]** and the main wall of the outbuilding indicating that it formed at least a partial contemporary floor surface of the outbuilding (Fig. 1).

3.3.5 The cobbled surface overlay a deposit of grey-brown silty sand **(013)** with the masonry **[009]** being laid directly onto the natural subsoil **(018)** with no obvious construction cut or foundation trench.

3.3.6 A deposit **(002)**, very similar to **(013)**, had built up around the interior of the masonry **[009]** indicating either a laid sub-floor surface or a build up of material. It seems likely that **(013)** and **(002)** formed part of the same deposition episode given their similar compositions and inclusions.

3.4 Ash and charcoal dump located within the outbuilding

- 3.4.1 An ash and charcoal dump was uncovered and comprised of an initial cut [012] filled by two ash deposits, (016) and (017), and a re-cut [015] into which had been placed a wooden container (014) which was in turn filled with another ash deposit (011) (Fig. 5).
- 3.4.2 The earlier cut was a smooth sided sub-rectangular pit measuring 0.9m by 0.75m with a depth of 0.3m [012]. This pit cut through the cobbled surface bedding layer (013), and was either respected by or truncated the cobbled surface (010) and was defined to the north, east and south by the walls of the outbuilding, indicating that its use was contemporaneous with that of the outbuilding (Fig. 5).
- 3.4.3 Pit [012] was filled by a lower deposit (017) of yellow-grey sand with frequent coal, ash and mortar inclusions and an upper fill, (016), a similar deposit with a higher grit composition.
- 3.4.4 The fills of [012] had been truncated by a small circular cut [015], measuring 0.5m in diameter and with a depth of 0.2m. Into this cut had been placed a circular wooden container (014) which was filled with a yellow-white sand-ash with frequent mortar inclusions (011) (Fig. 5).
- 3.4.5 The wooden container (014) had a diameter of 0.5m and a thickness of 0.02m. It was constructed from thin staves and appeared to be made from some sort of wood composite such as plywood or chipboard. It had no evidence of a bottom and seems likely that it was inserted into the cut [015] for use as an ash refuse container.

3.5 Cut features underlying the outbuilding

- 3.5.1 A number of small pits were found underlying the masonry [009] and cut directly into the natural subsoil (018) (Fig. 2).
- 3.5.2 Pit [003] was only exposed in part and measured 0.35m by 0.25m with a depth of 0.3m. It was filled with (004) a brown-grey sand with inclusions of ash, cinders, brick, tile and small stones.
- 3.5.3 Pit [005] was sub-circular in plan with a diameter of 0.4m and a depth of 0.3m, with sharply sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill (006) was of the same composition as (004).
- 3.5.4 Pit [007] formed a large cut, only exposed in part, measuring 1m by 0.45m with a depth of 0.4m and a flat base with sharply sloping sides (Fig. 4). The fill (008) was of the same composition as (004).
- 3.5.5 Given the nature of the respective fills of pits [003], [005] and [007] they appear to be relatively modern in origin and it is doubtful if they predate the outbuilding by any great length of time.

3.6 Architectural features within the outbuilding

- 3.6.1 A chimney flue [019] was built into the north-facing interior wall of the outbuilding with an associated, but later in date, brick and concrete hearth [020] (Fig. 2). The flue measured 0.25m in width and ran up the entire height of the exterior wall of the outbuilding to a height of c. 2.5m.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks in preparation for the erection of an extension to the Westport Dental Practice, 261 High Street, Linlithgow.
- 4.2 The watching brief identified the remains of a 19th century outbuilding and associated internal features. Given the nature of the deposits found within the outbuilding, in particular the high concentration of ash, cinder, charcoal and coal inclusions and the features such as the re-cut ash dump and the hearth and flue, the structure's function is tied in with an activity that requires a high level of burning, such as a washhouse or smokehouse.
- 4.3 It is worth noting that the development area had been severely truncated during the construction of the property and subsequent outbuilding. This is evidenced by the height of the ground level to the south of the site which is c. 2.5m higher than that of the development area and is held back by a large revetting wall which forms the north-facing exterior wall of the outbuilding.
- 4.4 No further work is recommended in relation to the watching brief.
- 4.5 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 WoSAS Sites and Monuments Record.
- 4.6 A summary statement of the results of this watching brief will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 4). An *OASIS Scotland* entry will be completed.

5. REFERENCES

Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Linlithgow, 1857, Sheet 3, 1:1056

APPENDIX 1: Context Register

Context	Fill of	Description
001	-	Grey-black ash and cinder layer – compacted floor surface
002	-	Brown-grey silt-sand – very similar inclusions to (004-006)
003	-	Cut of small pit underlying masonry [009]
004	003	Fill of pit [003] – brown-grey sand
005	-	Cut of pit
006	005	Fill of [005] – as (004)
007	-	Cut of pit underlying masonry [009]
008	007	Fill of [007] – as (004)
009	-	Masonry – interior partition within outbuilding
010	-	Cobbled surface in outbuilding interior
011	015	Ash dump
012	-	Original cut of ash dump
013	-	Grey-brown silt-sand underlying cobbles (010) probably same as (002)
014	015	Degraded circular wooden container containing (011)
015	-	Cut for ash dump/container – truncates (017)
016	012	Deposit within pit [012]
017	012	Earliest deposit within pit [012]
018	-	Natural soil, mid orange yellow sand
019		Chimney flue in north facing wall of outbuilding
020		Brick and concrete hearth associated with flue
021		Large charcoal, tile and rubble deposit

APPENDIX 2: Digital Photographic Register

Shot	Description	From	Conditions
1	General shot of site showing services under excavation	N	Bright
2	General shot of site	NW	Bright
3	General shot of site	SW	Bright
4	General shot of site	SE	Bright
5	General shot of site	E	Bright
6	West facing section through Outhouse front wall	W	Bright
7	Oblique views of Outhouse front wall	SE	Bright
8-9	Shot of cobbled surface (010) and ash dump [012]	W	Bright
10-12	West facing slot showing masonry [009] and pit [005]	W	Bright
13	Oblique shot of masonry [009]	NW	Bright
14	Post-excavation shot of [009]	W	Bright
15-16	North facing section through pit [005]	W	Bright
17	Shot of [009]	N	Bright
18-19	South facing section through [007]	S	Bright
20-21	South facing elevation of [009] showing [003] and possible interior facing	S	Bright
22	Pre-excavation shot of ash dump [015]	W	Bright
23	Void		
24-25	Post-excavation shots of eastern half of site at the working level	W	Overcast
26	North facing section of [012]	N	Overcast
27	Shot of fireplace within outbuilding	N	Overcast
28	Void		
29	Detail of wood lining (014) of ash dump [012]	S	Overcast

30-31	North facing section through ash dump [012]	N	Overcast
32-33	Post-excavation shots of remainder of site at working level	SW	Bright

APPENDIX 3: Drawing Register

Drawing Number	Description	Section/Plan	Scale
1	W facing box section against interior dividing wall of outbuilding showing natural sand and underlying cut	S	1:10
2	W Facing section through small modern pit [005]	S	1:10
3	Post-ex plan of outbuilding interior divisions	P	1:50
4	S facing section through pit [007]	S	1:10
5	N facing section through charcoal /ash deposit	S	1:10

APPENDIX 4: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	West Lothian Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Westport Dental Practice, High Street, Linlithgow
PROJECT CODE:	WEPO
PARISH:	Linlithgow
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Fraser MacRae and Helena Gray
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Outbuilding
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 10 figures)	NS 99767 77044
START DATE (this season)	02/06/2010
END DATE (this season)	04/06/2010
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	N/A
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was undertaken during ground reduction works in advance of the construction of an extension to Westport Dental Practice, 261 High Street, Linlithgow. In advance of the groundworks a 19 th century outbuilding was partially demolished and the associated features recorded during the watching brief relate to this structure. The remains of a low wall or plinth were recorded as well as an associated cobbled surface and re-cut ash and cinder pit. A chimney flue and hearth were also recorded. Several pits were found underlying the masonry, with their fills indicating they were of a similar date to the outbuilding and it is unlikely that they preceded the structure by any great length of time. Judging by the ash deposit, hearth and flue it seems likely that the outbuilding performed a function that required a high level of burning such as a wash house or smoke house.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	N/A
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ
EMAIL ADDRESS:	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	National Monuments Record of Scotland West of Scotland Archaeology Service Sites and Monuments Record



Key:



area of groundworks



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Fig. No: 1

Revision: A

Title:

Site location and plan

Project:

West Port Dental Practice,
Linlithgow

Scale:

Main site plan, 1:50 @ A3

Client:

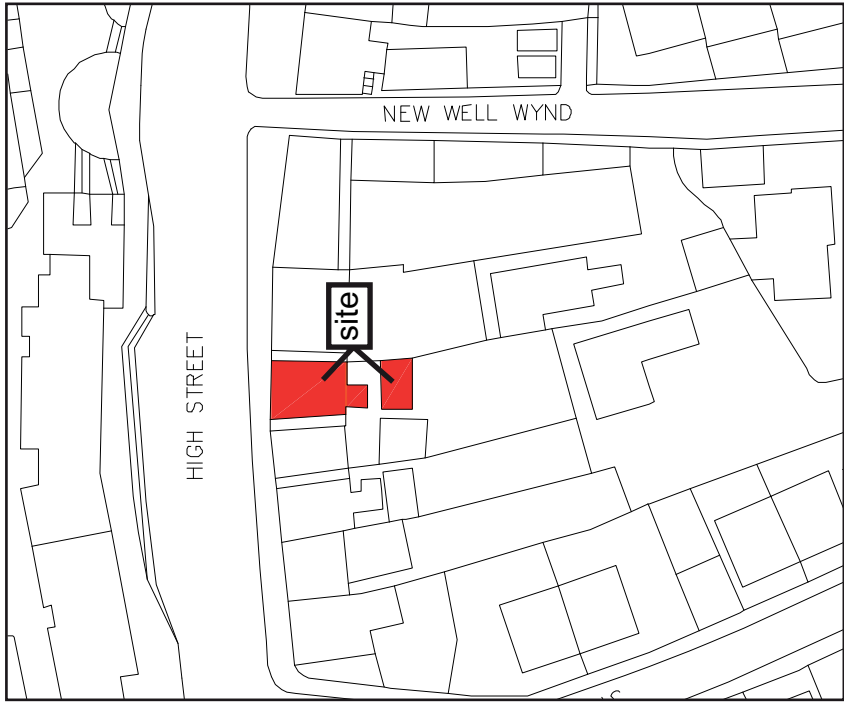
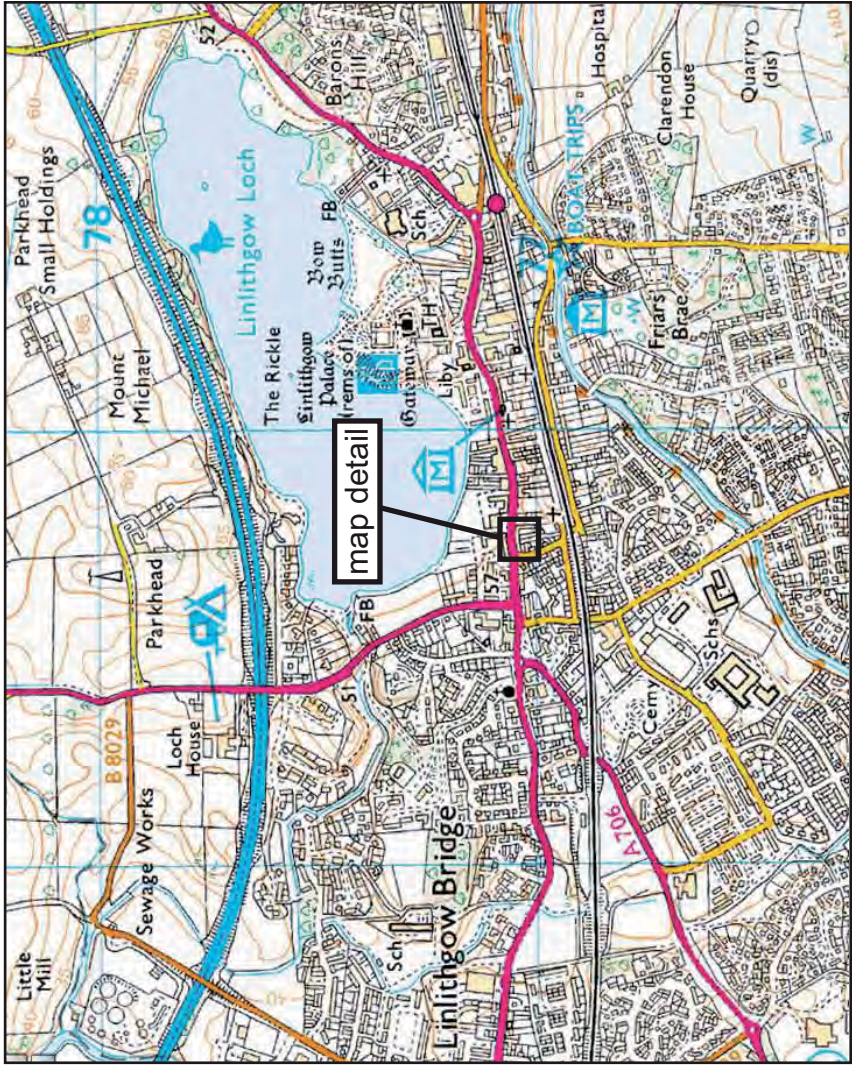
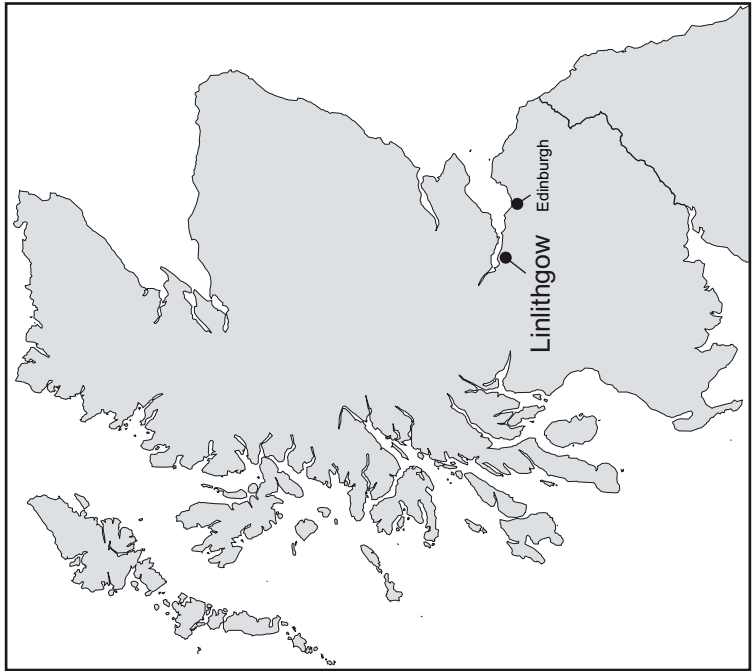
EK:JN Architects

Drawn by:

GC

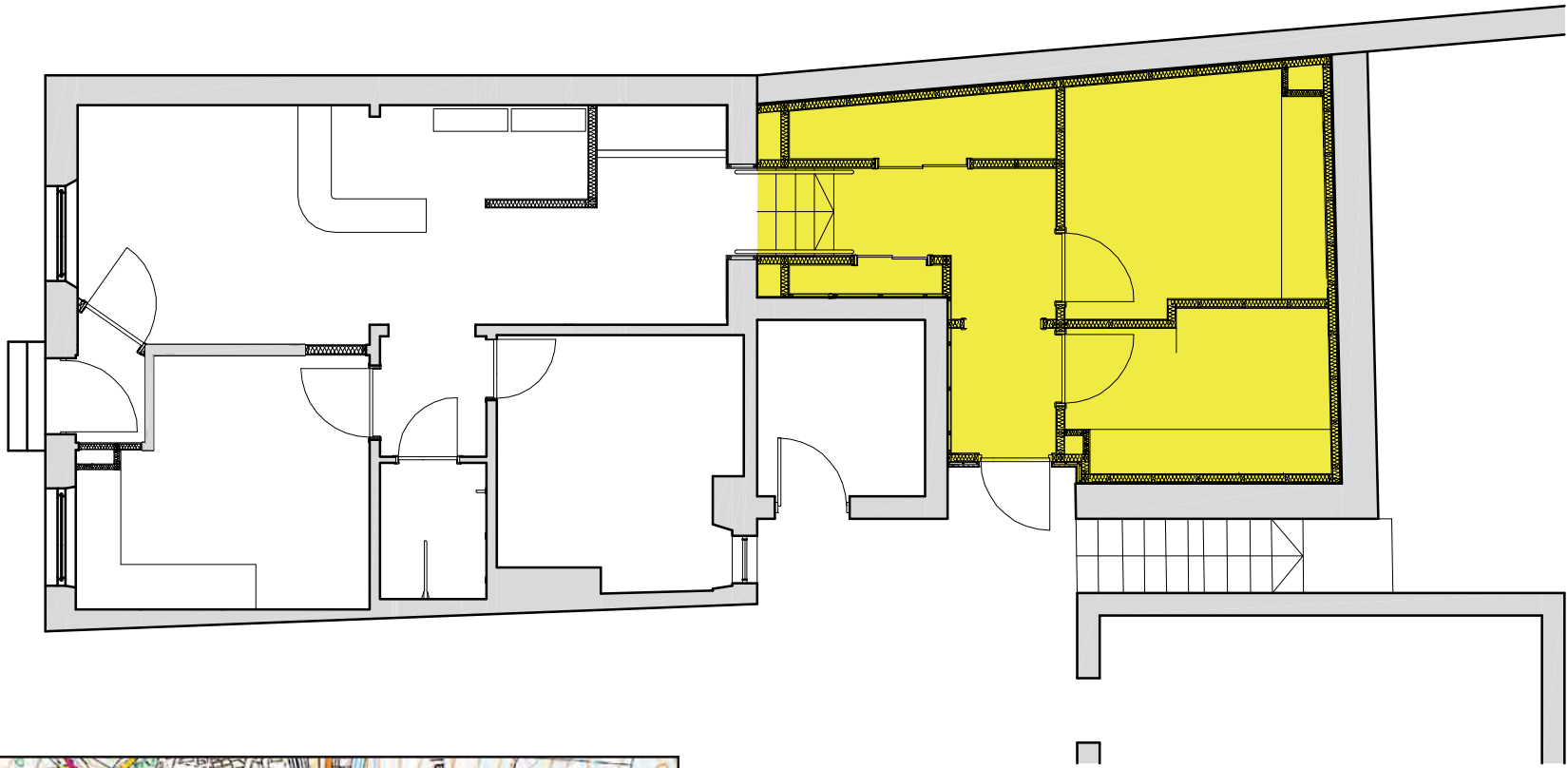
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1785



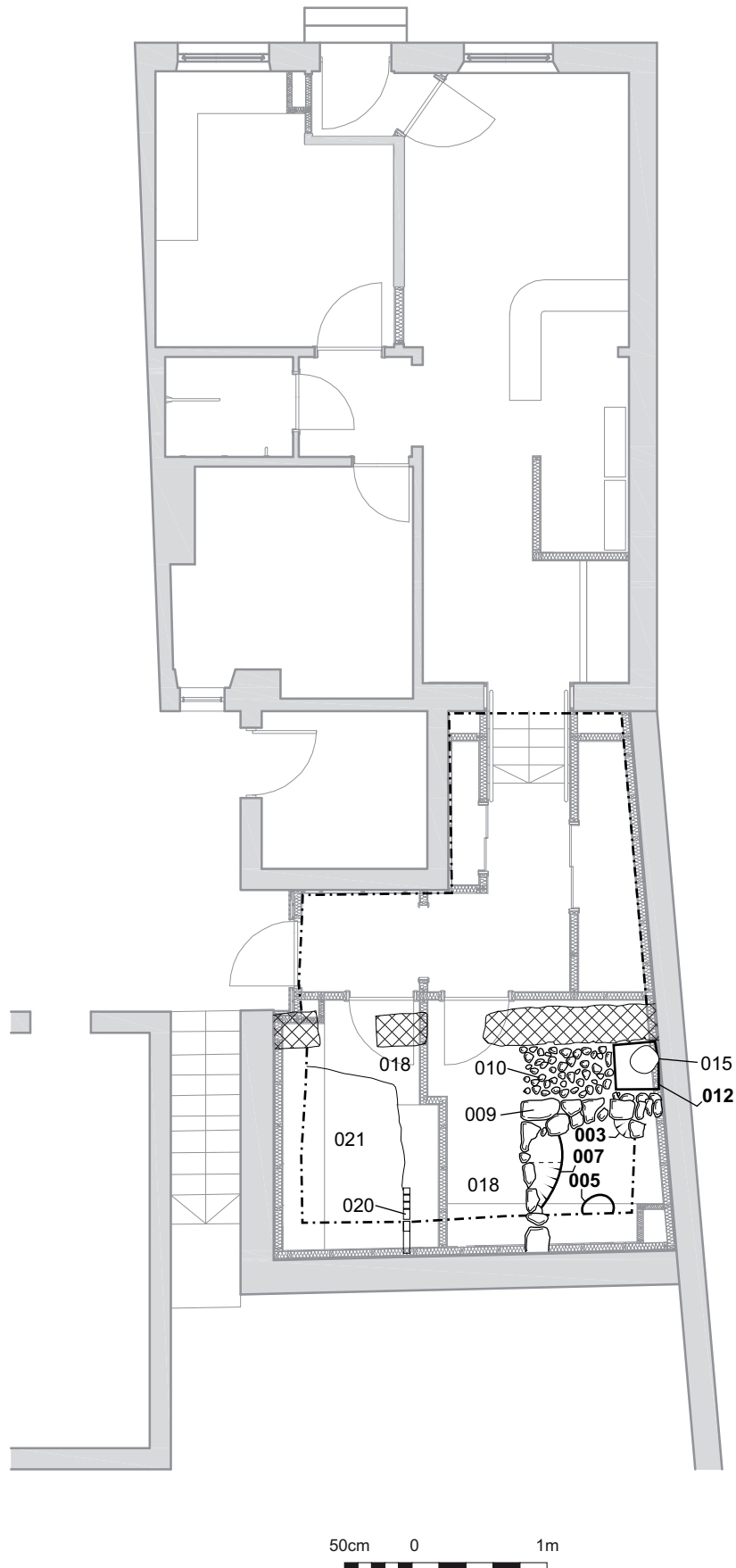
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High Street



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Key:

--- limit of excavation

⊠ upstanding stone walls removed



Fig. No: **2**

Revision:

Client:

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Title:

Plan of structural and cut features found during groundworks

Project:

Westport Dental Practice, Linlithgow



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Scale: 1:50 @ A4

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Page No:

Report No: 1785



Fig 3. General view of masonry 009 and cut features 003, 005 and 007



Fig 4. South facing section of feature 007


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	Project:	Westport Dental Practice, Linlithgow									
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Fig 5. North-facing section through ash dump (012)

Key:

Fig. No:	5	Revision:		Client:	EK:JN Architects
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Scale:

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