

Archaeological Watching Brief
Extension to house and new garage to rear,
Kirk House, 8 The Square,
Torphichen, West Lothian



General view of The Square, Torphichen (no 8 indicated by red arrow)



23rd May 2016

Introduction

This archaeological watching brief was carried out for Mr and Mrs K Scobie to satisfy the outstanding archaeological condition on the planning consent for this development, Condition 2 on the decision notice to Planning Application 0396/H/15 dated 29th July 2015. This work was carried out by the author on Tuesday 10th May 2016; weather conditions were bright and sunny.

Archaeological Background (Illus 1 and 2)

The village of Torphichen grew up around a Preceptory of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem which was founded in 1160. It is suggested that the importance of the Preceptory and its need for supporting masons and labourers to support its rental lands is likely to have caused the development of a 'kirktoon' in the medieval period and this may have operated in the same way as a monastic grange (WOSAS HER 17889). There has been little opportunity for archaeological excavation or monitoring in Torphichen and the site at 8 The Square lies at a central location in the settlement in an ideal location to assess the survival, nature and date of any archaeological deposits.

Watching Brief (Illus 3)

West of Scotland Archaeological Services requested that an archaeological watching brief should be carried out on all below ground excavations associated with the erection of the house extension and new garage at this site.

New house extension (Illus 4, Illus 6 to 9)

Two hand dug test pits in the footprint of the new extension to the house were monitored.

Test Pit 1 measured 1.25m by 0.70m and was dug to a depth of 0.60m. A deposit of 0.20m of loose broken stone and concrete fragments (1) overlay 0.40m of grey black sandy clay (2). At the bottom of this test pit a 20th century brown glazed waste pipe running from the current house was located (3). The only find recovered from this trench was a sherd of Standard White Earthenware from the base of a vessel; this ceramic was of early modern date.

Test Pit 2 measured 0.60m by 0.80m and was dug to a depth of 0.51m. A deposit of 0.19m of grey black sandy clay (4) overlay 0.10m of broken red bricks (5) which overlay 0.22m of broken stone and clay (6). The only find from this trench was a 19th century brass poker with a leather bound handle (Illus 9).

Summary and Interpretation

All of the deposits encountered in the test pitting of the footprint of the house extension date to the 19th/20th centuries and there was no trace of any residual material. The layer of broken stone and clay at the base of Test Pit 2 looked like it was a deliberately laid surface and may represent the courtyard area shown on the 19th century Ordnance Survey map (Illus 2).

Foundation trenches for new garage (Illus 5, Illus 10-13)

The entire lengths of the Northern and Western foundation trenches for the new garage were monitored during their machine excavation.

Northern foundation trench

This trench was 0.60m wide and 7m long and was dug to a depth of 1.10m at its western end and 0.60m at its eastern end. A deposit of 0.57m of very rooty dark grey black sandy loam topsoil (100) overlay 0.16m of light brown sandy clay (101) which overlay 0.39m of grey brown silty clay (102). 102 sealed a deposit of former building stones most of which had mortar on their faces (103). Finds from this trench included bottle glass, window glass and broken waste pipe fragments all of which are of early modern date.

Western foundation trench

This trench was 0.60m wide and 4m long and 0.70m deep. A deposit of 0.40m of dark brown sandy clay (200) overlay a continuation of the dump of building stones encountered in the Northern foundation trench (201) which continued until formation level was reached. There were no finds from this trench.

Summary and Interpretation

The back garden of this property appears to have been artificially raised by at least 0.50m by the dumping of soil deposit 100. That deposit overlay light brown sandy clay 101 which resembles an old ground surface. The stone dump (103 and 201) appears to have been laid down to create a roadway leading to the electricity substation to the rear of the site (built in the 1950's). All finds recovered were of a date no earlier than the 19th century.

Recommendations

Monitoring of the excavations associated with the construction of the new garage and house extension located nothing of a date any earlier than the 19th century, and the back garden area has been artificially raised at some point in the past. The footprint of the proposed extension covers an area of dumped soil and brick of early modern date and at least one active service. No residual finds of an earlier date were recovered. Following this watching brief it is recommended that no further archaeological works are required.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Charlie, Chris and Scott for their help with the hand and machine excavations.

Context List

Extension footprint

Test Pit 1

- 1 Loose broken stone and concrete fragments
- 2 Grey black sandy clay
- 3 Brown glazed waste pipe

Test Pit 2

- 4 Grey black sandy clay
- 5 Broken red bricks
- 6 Broken stone and clay

Garage Foundation trenches

Northern

- 100 Dark grey black sandy loam
- 101 Light brown sandy clay
- 102 Grey brown sandy clay
- 103 Dumped building stone

Southern

- 200 Dark brown sandy clay
- 201 Dumped building stone

Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	West Lothian
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Kirk House, 8 The Square, Torphichen
PROJECT CODE:	TOR01
PARISH:	Torphichen
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR(S):	Derek Hall
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Derek Hall, archaeologist and ceramic specialist
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	N/A
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NS 967 723
START DATE	10 th May 2016
END DATE	10 th May 2016
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was carried out on the test pitting of a proposed house extension and the digging of the foundation trenches for a new garage. All finds recovered were of 19 th century date or later.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr and Mrs K Scobie
CAPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRS	N/A
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	34 Glenfarg Terrace, Perth, PH2 0AP
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	NMRS
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Derek.hall1@blueyonder.co.uk

Illustration List

Illustration 1 Site Location (red circle) (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2014. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)

Illustration 2 Location of site on Second Edition Ordnance survey map of 1897 (red arrow) (© Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

Illustration 3 Location of proposed extension and new garage (based on supplied architects plan) North to right of plan

Illustration 4 General view of rear of Kirk House, 8 The Square, Torphichen looking East

Illustration 5 General view of location of new garage looking East

Illustration 6 General view of test pits 1 and 2 looking South

Illustration 7 Excavated Test Pit no 1 looking South

Illustration 8 Excavated Test Pit no 2 looking South

Illustration 9 Poker with leather bound handle from Test Pit 1

Illustration 10 South facing section of Northern foundation trench for garage looking North East

Illustration 11 Detail of South facing section for Northern foundation trench showing potential buried Old Ground Surface 101 (red arrow)

Illustration 12 Reused building stone from Context 103 in Northern foundation trench for garage

Illustration 13 Excavated Northern and Western foundation trenches for garage looking West with electricity substation in the background



Illustration 1 Site Location (red circle) (based on Ordnance Survey map Crown Copyright 2014. All Rights Reserved. Licence number 100049628)

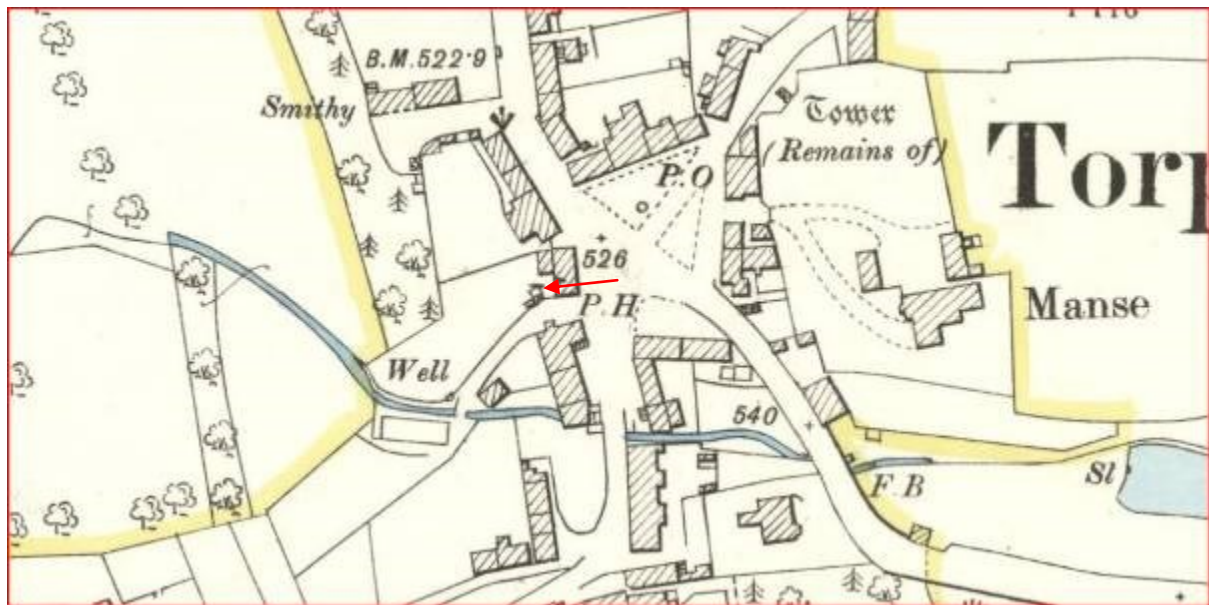


Illustration 2 Location of site on Second Edition Ordnance survey map of 1897 (red arrow) (© Trustees of the National Library of Scotland)

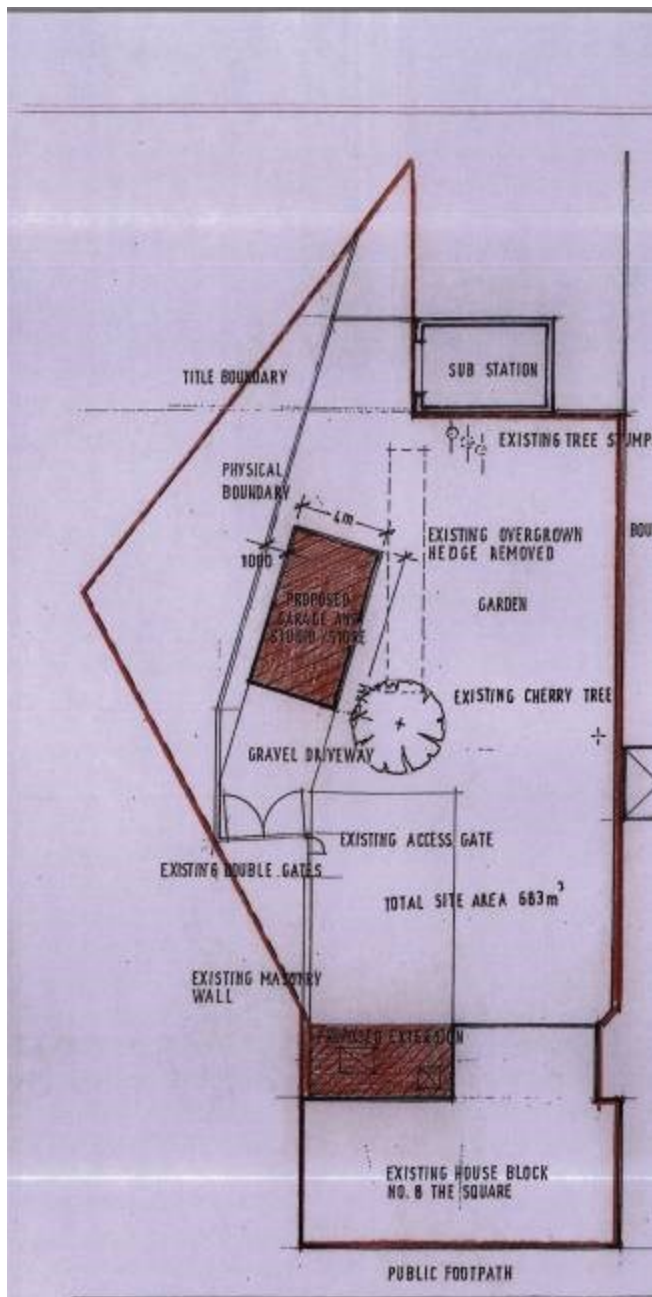


Illustration 3 Location of proposed extension and new garage (based on supplied architects plan), North is to right of plan



Illustration 4 General view of rear of Kirk House, 8 The Square, Torphichen looking East



Illustration 5 General view of location of new garage looking East



Illustration 6 General view of test pits 1 and 2 looking South



Illustration 7 Excavated Test Pit no 1 looking South



Illustration 8 Excavated Test Pit no 2 looking South



Illustration 9 Poker with leather bound handle from Test Pit 1



Illustration 10 South facing section of Northern foundation trench for garage looking North East



Illustration 11 Detail of South facing section for Northern foundation trench showing potential buried Old Ground Surface 101 (red arrow)



Illustration 12 Reused building stone from Context 103 in Northern foundation trench for garage



Illustration 13 Excavated Northern and Western foundation trenches for garage looking West with electricity substation in the background