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Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme, St Mark's Park, Edinburgh: Archaeological Evaluation

Report No. 1874

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**Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme,
St Mark's Park, Edinburgh:
Archaeological Evaluation**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation works undertaken prior to the construction of a works compound at St Mark's Park, Edinburgh (NGR: NT 257 756; Fig. 1). The compound is for works associated with the Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme. The work was commissioned by The City of Edinburgh Council.

A WSI for the evaluation was produced by CFA and agreed by John Lawson, City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS). Modifications to the WSI were agreed with John Lawson following a meeting on site.

The work was project managed by John Lawson of CECAS.

1.2 Background

As part of the Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme a works compound is required at St Mark's Park. Prior to the construction of this compound a 10% evaluation of the affected area was requested by CECAS.

No previous archaeological work is known to have taken place within the park.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the project were to evaluate the development area to establish the presence or absence, location, extent, date and character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains within the development site; and to establish their significance and vulnerability to the proposed development.

2. METHODS

2.1 General

Work was conducted with regard to the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance. Recording of all elements followed established CFA methods.

2.2 Rapid Desk-Based Assessment

A rapid desk-based assessment was undertaken prior to work commencing, in order to collate relevant information on the historic development of the proposed development area. Sources consulted included the National Monuments Record of Scotland and early map coverage.

2.3 Trial Trenching

Trial trenches totalling 495m² (10% of 4950m²) were to be excavated.

Topsoil and modern deposits were removed by a back-acting mechanical excavator using a smooth-bladed ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision, to reveal either the subsoil surface or the surface of the first significant archaeological horizon.

Following on site discussions with John Lawson, it was agreed to excavate trenches to a uniform depth of c.0.5m deep with a sondage measuring c.1m deep at each end of the trench; this was deemed sufficient to establish the nature of the deposits up to the formation depth for the construction of the site compound.

All excavation and on-site recording were carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, by photography and by completing standard CFA record forms.

The trenches were backfilled on completion of excavation, and the site was left in a tidy condition. The positions of trenches were recorded using industry standard GPS surveying equipment.

3. RESULTS

3.1 General

The site was situated on the north bank of the Water of Leith and comprised a grass covered public park. The surface was mostly flat, with several pronounced hollows and scoops in the centre of the area.

3.2 Desk-Based Assessment

Cartographic

The park was formerly bounded to the east by the Granton and Leith Branch of the former North British Rail line. The park is depicted as comprising plantations and allotments on Johnson's 1851 plan of Edinburgh. It is depicted as being landscaped with avenues of trees on the large scale Ordnance Survey town plans (1852 and 1876), with an L-shaped path/track running SW-NE and NW-SE.

Bartholomew's Plan of 1893 depicts the park as being occupied by avenues of trees and accessed by a track from St Mark's Place to the east. Bartholomew's Plan of 1912 depicts St Mark's Park to be unoccupied and undeveloped land.

The 1940s air mosaic photo shows the area to comprise avenues of trees with the railway line running down the east side.

NMRS

The NMRS holds one record for the environs of St Mark's Park; the Bailey Bridge (NT27NE 1580) which crosses the water of Leith at the south-west corner of the site. The bridge was erected in 1950 to replace an earlier structure depicted on the Ordnance Survey 25" (Edinburghshire) map of c. 1930.

3.3 Trial Trenching

Trial trench results are presented in Appendix 2. All dimensions are in metres.

Fourteen trenches with a total area of 390.5m² (8%) were excavated (Fig. 1), giving comprehensive coverage across the area with some trenches specifically targeting the hollows and scoops. An exclusion corridor was maintained down the west side of the area and the south-east corner due to the presence of live buried services.

Following on site discussions with John Lawson, the trenches were excavated to c. 0.5m deep with a c.1m deep sondage excavated at each end (Figs. 2-7). Trench 1 was excavated deeper to attempt to ascertain the depth of natural subsoil, which was not reached due to safety considerations.

The results of the evaluation suggest that the park is surfaced on top of deep deposits of made ground and that the current surface level of the park is significantly higher than the landscape depicted on the early editions of maps and town plans. The many bottles within the sub-surface deposits suggest a mid-20th century date of deposition.

A life-long local resident provided anecdotal information that large quantities of ash were imported and dumped c.1950-1951 prior to landscaping. The hollows and scoops on the surface are likely to be the result of subsidence in the dumped material.

4. CONCLUSION

The desk-based assessment and evaluation in St Mark's Park have been completed and have shown that no archaeological remains or deposits are at risk from the proposed site compound.

The desk-based assessment indicates that the area was landscaped with avenues of trees and possibly in use as allotments during the late 19th century and first half of the 20th century.

The evaluation has shown that the park is landscaped on a base of deep deposits of ash and refuse. Anecdotal evidence and examination of bottles recovered from the deposits indicate that the ground was made up by ash and refuse during the early 1950s.

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 Edinburgh City Council Sites and Monuments Record.

A summary statement of the results of this work, to be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, with the other work that is undertaken on the Water of Leith flood prevention scheme.

5. REFERENCES

Bartholomew, JG 1893 *Plan of the City of Edinburgh with Leith & Suburbs*. John G. Batholomew & Sons.

Bartholomew, JG 1912 *Plan of Edinburgh and Leith*. The Edinburgh Geographical Institute.

Lancefield, A 1851 *Johnson's Plan of Edinburgh and Leith* W. & A. K. Johnson.

Ordnance Survey large scale town plans. 1852. *Edinburgh*: Sheets 15 and 20.

Ordnance Survey large scale town plans. 1876. *Edinburgh*: Sheets 15 and 20.

APPENDIX 1: Context Register

Context No.	Description
000	Natural Subsoil
001	Topsoil
002	Made ground deposits

APPENDIX 2: Summary of Trench Results

Trench No.	Dimensions	Max depth	Description
1	35 x 2.8	4.4m	Deposits of made ground: mostly ash, frequent bottles, glass, occasional rubble, animal bones (dog and pig identified) and re-deposited clay and soils. Rotted carcass of a pig at c.2m depth. Reburied at bottom of pit.
2	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.
3	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.
4	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.
5	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.
6	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.
7	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.
8	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.
9	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.
10	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.
11	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.
12	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.
13	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.
14	15 x 1.5	1.3m	Made ground. Ash and ash-rich soil. Frequent bottles and glass, occasional animal bones.

APPENDIX 3: Photograph Register

Digital images

Shot	Description	From
1-3	Pre-excavation shots of St Mark's Park	Various
4-5	Pig carcass in Trench 1 sondage	
6-7	Trench 1 sondage	E
8-10	Trench 1 sondage section	N
11	Trench 1 sondage backfilling working shot	E
12-13	Trench 1 working shots	W
14	Trench 2 sondage section	E
15	Trench 3 sondage section	E
16	Trench 3 sondage section	E
17	Trench 4 trench section	E
18	Trench 4 sondage section	W
19	Trench 5 working shot	N
20	Trench 5 sondage section	W
21	Trench 7 sondage section	NW
22	Trench 7 general view	SW
23	Trench 8 sondage section	SW
24	Trench 8 sondage section	SW
25	Trench 9 working shot	SW
26	Trench 9 sondage section	SE
27	Trench 9 sondage section	SE
28	Trench 9 general view	SW
29	Trench 10 sondage section	SE
30	Trench 10 sondage section	SE
31	Trench 11 sondage section	NE
32	Trench 11 sondage section	NE
33	Trench 11 general view	SE
34	Trench 12 sondage section	SW
35	Trench 12 sondage section	SW
36	Trench 12 general view	NE
37	Trench 13 working shot	W
38	Trench 13 sondage section	N
39	Trench 13 sondage section	N
40	Trench 13 general view	E
41	Trench 14 sondage section	W

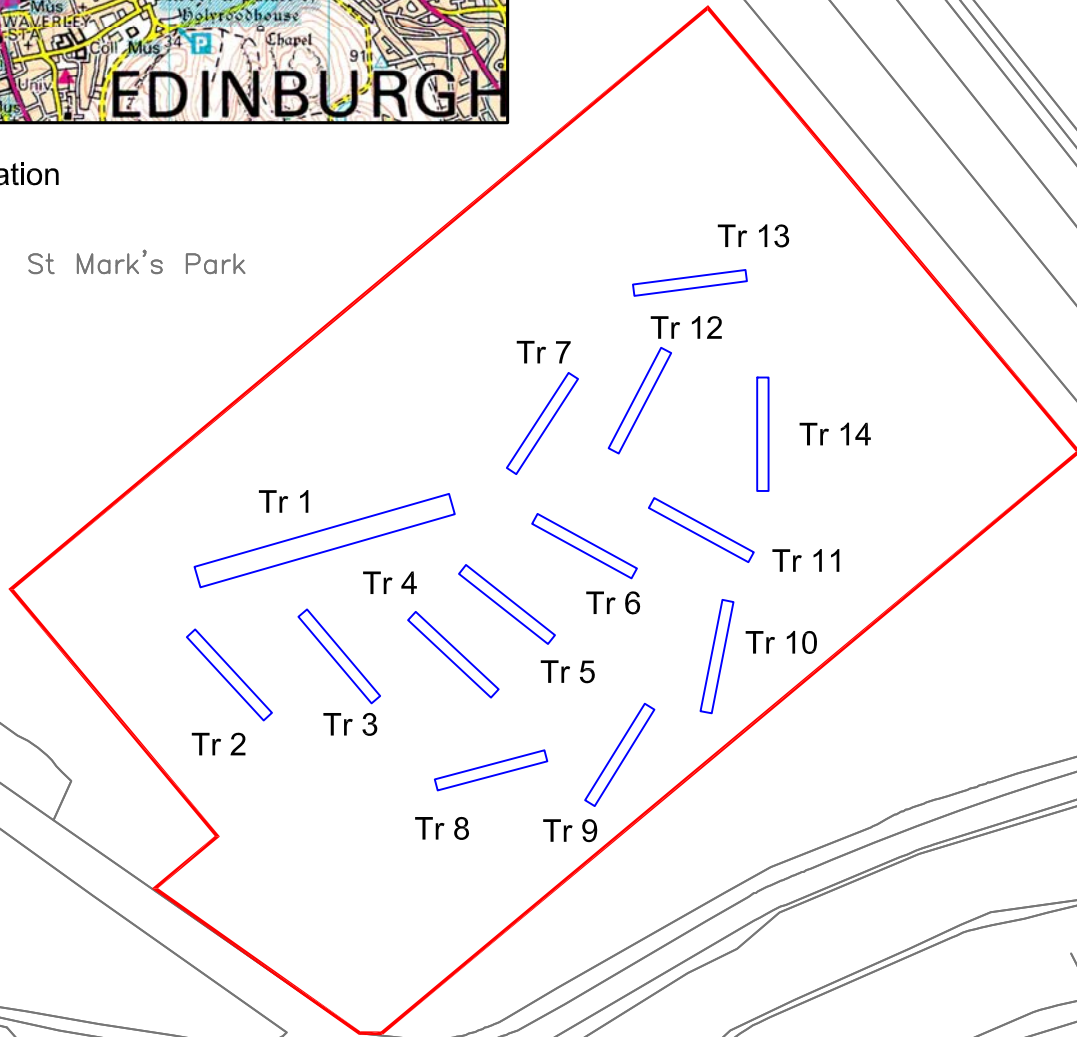
APPENDIX 4: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	City of Edinburgh
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme, St Mark's Park, Edinburgh
PROJECT CODE:	LEIT3
PARISH:	Edinburgh
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	S Mitchell
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Desk-based assessment and evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	N/A
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 2570 7567
START DATE (this season)	March 2011
END DATE (this season)	March 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A Desk Based Assessment and Evaluation carried out at St. Mark's Park, Edinburgh showed that the park was landscaped with avenues of trees and used as allotments during the mid 19 th century and first half of the 20 th century. Trial trenching showed the park to comprise deep deposits of made ground, comprising mostly ash with large quantities of glass and bottles and occasional animal bone and rubble, which were deposited during the early 1950s.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	City of Edinburgh Council
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ.
EMAIL ADDRESS:	smitchell@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS, Reports lodged with SMR and NMRS.



Site Location

St Mark's Park



Key:
— Site Boundary
— Trench



Scale: 1:100 A4

Fig No: 1 Revision: A Client: City of Edinburgh Council

Title: Location map and trench layout plan

Project: St Marks Park; Archaeological Evaluation

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Fig. 2 - Section of sondage Tr 1



Fig. 3 - Section of sondage Tr 5


Key:	Fig. No:	2-3	Revision:	A	Client:	City of Edinburgh Council	 CFA CFA 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		
	Title:								
Scale:	Project: St Mark's Park, Edinburgh					Drawn by:		SW	Report No:



Fig. 4 - Section of sondage Tr 9



Fig. 5 - General view of Tr 12



Key:	Fig. No:	4-5	Revision:	A	Client:	City of Edinburgh Council
	Title:					
Scale:	Project:					
	St Mark's Park, Edinburgh					
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Fig. 6 - Section of sondage Tr 12



Fig. 7 - General view of Tr 11

Key:	Fig. No:	6-7	Revision:	A	Client:	City of Edinburgh Council
	Title:					
Scale:	Project:					
	St Mark's Park, Edinburgh					
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