

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF  
INVESTIGATION AND METHOD  
STATEMENT**

*In respect of*

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION**

*At*

**ABBEY STRAND & ROYAL MEWS**

*For*

**The Royal Collections Trust**

*By*

**Kirkdale Archaeology**



4 Western Terrace, Murrayfield, Edinburgh EH12 5QF

[www.kirkdale.net](http://www.kirkdale.net)

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **WSI**

Introduction.....	2
Historical background.....	3
Archaeological Potential.....	4
Archaeological Response.....	8

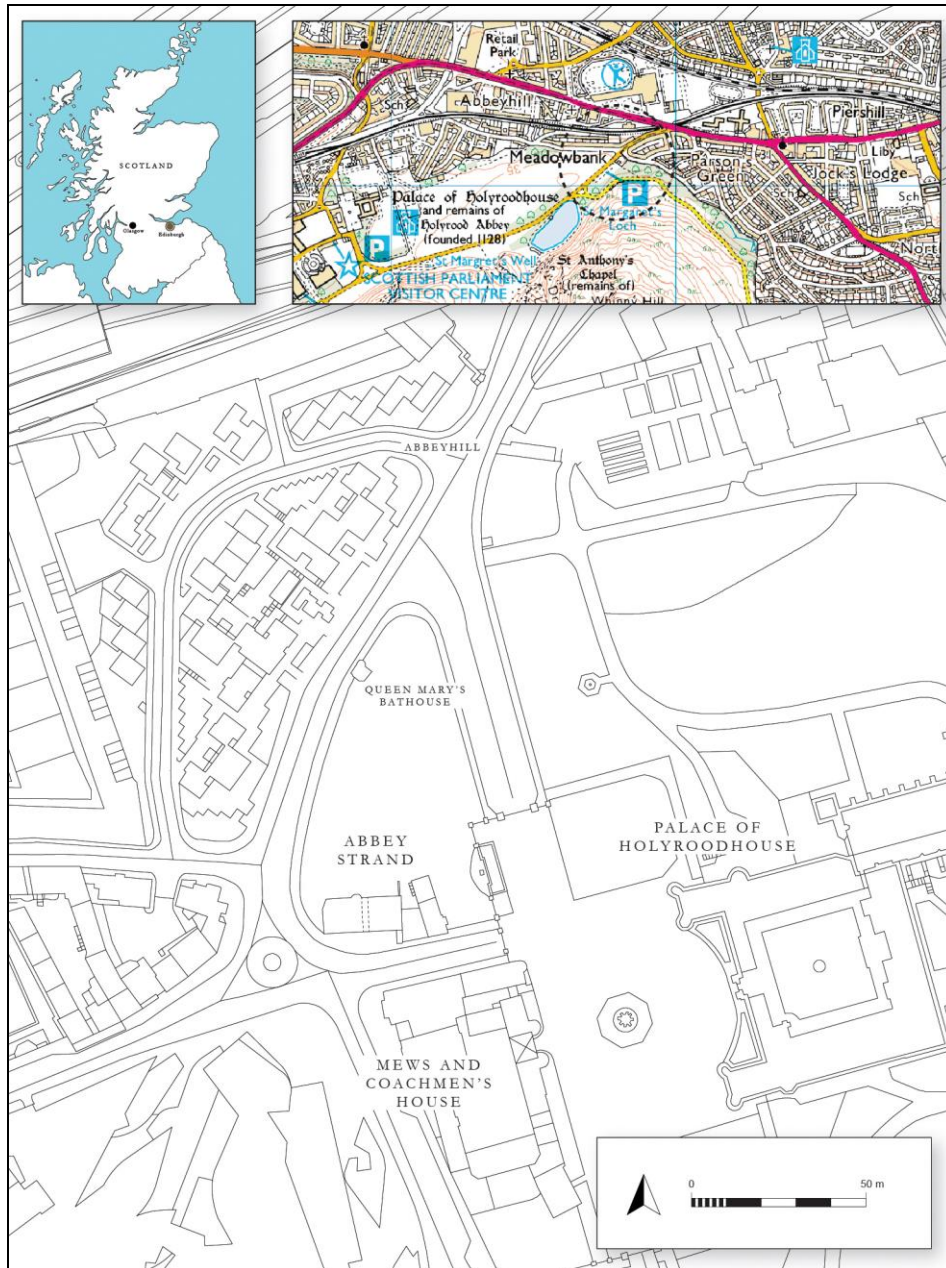
### **Method Statement**

Introduction.....	8
Excavation.....	9
Finds Assessment.....	12
Reporting.....	12
Archive.....	13

## WRITTEN STATEMENT OF INVESTIGATION

### INTRODUCTION

OS Grid Reference: NT 926 739



**Figure 1:** Location plan.

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A programme of site assessment involving test trenching will be completed in two areas of the Palace of Holyroodhouse. These are:

- Abbey Strand;
- The Palace Mews; and,

These interventions will require a programme of archaeological fieldwork and reporting. The proposed works will comprise:

- Archaeological watching brief (WB);
- Archaeological excavation and recording; and,
- Archaeological reporting and archive.

It is proposed that excavation, recording and reporting will follow the methodologies described below, where practicable. However it is acknowledged that the appropriate level of recording and excavation across the site will be informed by site conditions as they emerge during the course of the fieldwork.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Abbey Strand**

This is now recognised as a multiphase and multifunctional residence. The earliest surviving elements date from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century before conversion in the later 16<sup>th</sup> century. These in turn were extended and reoccupied from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, and later-19<sup>th</sup> century, before wholesale conversion in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **The Mews**

This suite of buildings define the royal stables and courtyard on the west side of the palace forecourt. They are part of the later-19<sup>th</sup> century improvements to the palace and park.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

The proposed interventions comprise a series of trial pits, each 0.5m x 0.5m x 0.75m in size.

The archaeological potential of each intervention is summarised below<sup>1</sup> in terms of date and possible findings, per archaeological component (Abbey Strand) or per room (Mews).

It is intended that the findings of all of the proposed interventions will be added to existing site records where possible, towards creation of an integrated overall site archive.

### Abbey Strand

The following trial pits may reveal evidence of pre-15<sup>th</sup> century occupation of the areas west of the abbey complex. The western limit of the latter is presently reflected by the palace forecourt ; further to the west were gardens and lodgings immediately outwith the formal boundaries of the 12<sup>th</sup> century foundation.

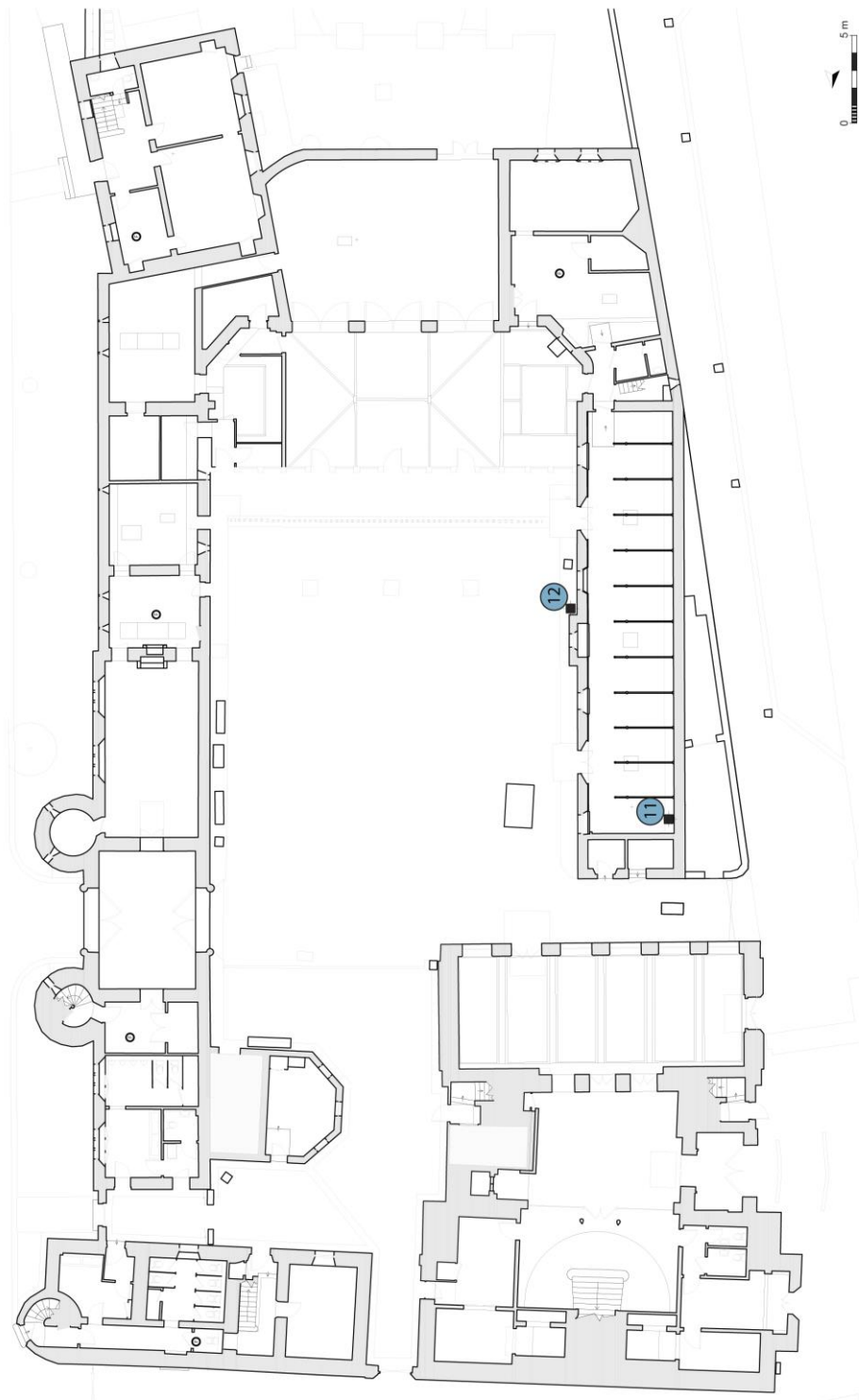
### The Mews

This area was the site of royal stables from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, along its south side, with a series of residential and service structures along Horse Wynd. Some of these structures may have been converted in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century creation of the present stable complex. Elsewhere, the footings may survive as there is evidence from archaeological excavation in the forecourt and Queen's Gallery to suggest that floors and yard levels were raised by c.300mm – 500mm, to their present height, sealing residual drains, ditches and wells.



**Figure 2:** Abbey Strand, general location of trial pits.

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of consistency and cross-referencing, the numbering used follows that supplied by the Client. Thus there may, on occasion, be gaps in the numerical sequence.



**Figure 3:** The Palace Mews: General location of trial pits.

- 1 Abbey Strand, Component 020: This will reveal levelling for the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century extension of the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century range. This area in turn contained the sacristy garden. The potential survival of garden deposits and associated features will reflect the naturally high water table in the vicinity of Abbey Strand which may have been truncated by post-medieval construction/drainage works.
- 2 Abbey Strand, Component 004: This trench will reveal footings of 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century masonry and also evidence of demolished, predominantly 19<sup>th</sup> century tenements, abutting the western end of Abbey Strand (cleared in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century).
- 3 Abbey Strand, Component 024: This lay within the western end of a 15<sup>th</sup> century range – monastic or guest accommodation – later forming the south-west element of the later-16<sup>th</sup> century series of apartments on three floors. Sub-floor deposits will reflect occupation and construction from these two major building programmes, potentially sealing pre-15<sup>th</sup> century deposits and structures.
- 4 Abbey Strand, Component 027. As above, this area formed an element of the 15<sup>th</sup> century range and 16<sup>th</sup> century series of apartments.
- 5 Abbey Strand, Component 027. As above, this area formed an element of the 15<sup>th</sup> century range and 16<sup>th</sup> century series of apartments.
- 6 Abbey Strand, Components 029/030: This will contain evidence of the 17<sup>th</sup> century extension eastwards of the 15<sup>th</sup> century range, although potentially much disturbed by later drainage works.
- 7 Abbey Strand, Component 026: This will reveal levelling for the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century extension of the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century range. This area in turn contained the sacristy garden. The potential survival of garden deposits and associated features will reflect the naturally high water table in the vicinity of Abbey Strand which may have been truncated by post-medieval construction/drainage works.
- 8 Abbey Strand, Component 005: This may contain evidence of a succession of courtyard/hard standings associated with yards north of Abbey Strand, dating to after the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. These in turn seal deposits associated with the early medieval Sacristy Garden.

- 9 Abbey Strand, Component 004: Site of demolished 18<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> century houses abutting the western end of Abbey Strand.
- 10 Abbey Strand, Component 028: Interior of mid-17<sup>th</sup> century south extension at the eastern end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Abbey Strand complex. Floors and levelling may survive over a residual roadway leading to the abbey entrance.
- 11 Mews, north end of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century stables. Intact paving over 17<sup>th</sup> century– 18<sup>th</sup> century service and accommodation structures. Possible wells.
- 12 Mews, east wall of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century stables. Intact surfaces over 17<sup>th</sup> century – 18<sup>th</sup> century service and accommodation structures. Possible wells.



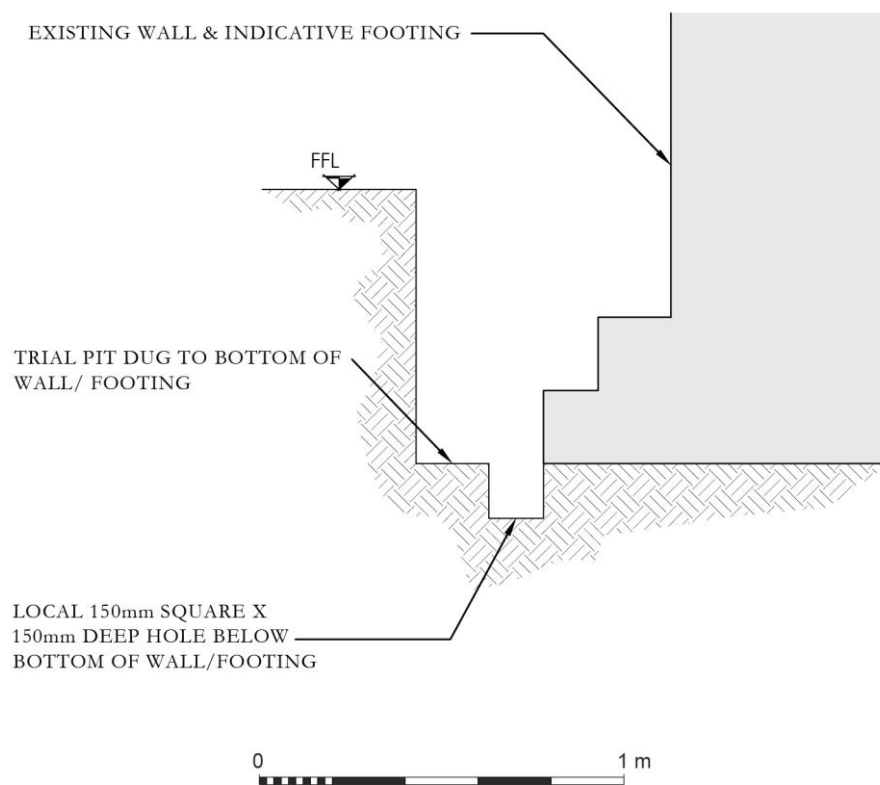
## ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESPONSE

### METHOD STATEMENT

#### Introduction

The archaeological programme will comprise three basic elements:

1. Watching Brief/ Excavation;
2. Artefact retrieval, assessment and conservation;
3. Reporting/Archive.



**Figure 17:** Typical section through trial pit.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF/ EXCAVATION**

It is assumed that all ground-breaking , down taking and reinstatement work will be undertaken by a specialist contractor . This work will be monitored by on-site archaeological staff.. This will require the presence on site of at least one member of the archaeological site staff during all ground breaking/downtaking work at each intervention as defined above.

Excavation by contractor should extend to the first archaeologically sensitive horizon.

All features, structures, and surfaces revealed during and after this work, should be cleaned and recorded archaeologically. This work will be completed by archaeological site staff. The specialist contractor will allow adequate time and opportunity for this work. Depending on the character of the archaeological deposits /contexts revealed, subsequent excavation will be completed either by the specialist contractor under archaeological supervision, or by the archaeological staff, to the next archaeologically sensitive horizon. At this point, further archaeological recording cleaning /recording will occur. This process will continue to required depth. All sections/elevations will then be recorded archaeologically before reinstatement by the specialist contractor.

In the event of the discovery of any features, structures, artefacts and surfaces of archaeological significance, excavation should be suspended until a suitable archaeological response is agreed with all relevant agencies.

The archaeological site staff will follow all Health and Safety site protocols as required by the specialist contractor.

## **Technical Statement**

### *Archaeological Excavation/Cleaning*

- Use of hand tools only.
- Spoil will be stored adjacent to the intervention site.
- All excavated artefacts and faunal remains will be retained for archaeological recording and specialist assessment.

### *Drawing*

- Confirmation of site plans as supplied by Client.
- Location plan of all interventions at a suitable scale, 1:50/1:100.
- Detailed, individual area plans of all features and artefacts – at significant stages of excavation if appropriate and on completion of excavation, drawn at a scale of 1:20.
- All sections, or a representative selection, will be drawn in detail at a scale of 1:10.
- All drawing will be annotated with site Feature Numbers, site code, scale, date and name(s) of staff.
- All artefacts will be photographed, drawn and described.

### *Photography*

- Still photographs will be colour digital and will record general location of works, plus detailed coverage during and on completion of the excavation.
- All photographs will have a suitable scale visible.
- All photographs will be listed in a full photo register (describing content, orientation and date).
- ‘Documentary’ photographs will also be taken in order to represent site conditions, constraints and resources.
- If appropriate, digital moving coverage will be taken for further illustration of site conditions, constraints and resources.

### *Site Recording: Buried Archaeology*

- Description of all excavated material in terms of archaeological Features, each of which will be assigned a unique three-digit number. The numbering will also reference the Site Code and any individual Trench number.

- Each discrete feature will be described on site *pro forma* which will cover stratigraphic relationships, finds, physical description, location, drawing references and interpretation.
- Each feature will also be listed in a Feature Register – comprising a brief description, date and Feature Number.

### *Sampling*

When required, three levels of sampling are proposed for above and below ground investigations:

**General:** Bulk sample per context removed.

**Special:** Specific sample identified for later specialist attention (charcoal, industrial waste, environmental, infestations, organics).

**Specialist:** Monitoring of any independent sampling strategy from external specialists (dendrochronological, mortar, paint, *etc.*)

## FINDS ASSESSMENT

- All artefacts, faunal remains and samples will be initially processed on-site.
- This will entail: washing, drying, marking, bagging, description and initial storage of all assemblages as required.
- Disposal and/or examination/conservation/storage of this material will be assessed in the light of results of fieldwork.
- Any programme of specialist post-excavation work on finds, faunal remains and analysis of samples will be assessed on completion of fieldwork.
- Any human remains revealed during the excavation will remain *in situ*. All discoveries of human remains will be reported to the local police, Client and CECAS
- If human remains are to be excavated during any subsequent work, this will be completed in line with HES policy on the treatment of human remains.

## REPORTING

The results of the Fieldwork will be presented in an illustrated Data Structures Report (DSR) with accompanying digital documentation as required by the client.

Copies of the report and digital files will be produced as specified. Typically this comprises:

- Four bound paper copies.
- Two digital versions on CD including all photographs (the latter in .tiff or jpeg format).

This will include an assessment of all assemblages and recommendations for any further specialist work.

A costed programme for the full sample analysis towards publication of the findings will be included if appropriate.

A short note will be submitted to 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland'.

The position of all trenches, excavation areas *etc.*, will be supplied on CD disk, as a georeferenced .dxf file.

Reports will be submitted within 30 working days of completion of the fieldwork.

## **ARCHIVE**

If there is no further requirement for reporting beyond the DSR and D&E entry, the report and site records will be compiled in a suitable archive comprising primary data and digital documentation as appropriate, suitable for submission to local and national archives.

The archive will follow current guidelines for archival standards set by the Archaeology Data Service and RCAHMS.

The project archive will be deposited with the NMRS within six months of completion of fieldwork and relevant post-excavation analyses. Finds will be subject to the Scots laws of Treasure Trove and *Bona Vacantia*, and will be reported to the Crown Agent for disposal. Appropriate conservation of finds will be conducted before disposal.

**Gordon Ewart**

**18<sup>th</sup> October, 2016**