

# The Wisp, Niddrie, Edinburgh

## Programme of Archaeological Works:

### Strip, Map and Record

### Data Structure Report

*AOC Project 22457*

*Planning Ref: 13/02660/FUL & 16/04373/FUL*

*March 2017*



# The Wisp, Niddrie, Edinburgh: Programme of Archaeological Works Data Structure Report

On Behalf of:	Springfield Properties Plc.,
National Grid Reference (NGR):	NT 3039 7089 (centre of development area)
AOC Project No:	22457
Planning Application No:	13/02660/FUL & 16/04373/FUL
OASIS number:	aocarcha1-290428
Prepared by:	Anne-Aymonne Marot
Date of Fieldwork:	1st March 2017 to 08 <sup>th</sup> March 2017
Date of Report:	17/07/2017

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

Author: Anne-Aymonne Marot

Date: 17/07/2017

Approved by:

Date:

Draft/Final Report Stage: Draft

Date:

**Enquiries to:** AOC Archaeology Group  
Edgefield Industrial Estate  
Edgefield Road  
Loanhead  
EH20 9SY

Tel. 0131 440 3593  
Fax. 0131 440 3422  
e-mail. [admin@aocarchaeology.com](mailto:admin@aocarchaeology.com)



[www.aocarchaeology.com](http://www.aocarchaeology.com)

## Contents

	Page
List of Figures.....	3
List of Plates .....	3
List of Appendices.....	3
Summary .....	4
<b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Site Background .....	5
1.2 Site Location .....	5
1.3 Archaeological Background .....	5
<b>2 OBJECTIVES.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3 METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4 RESULTS.....</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	7
4.2 Excavation .....	7
<b>5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6 REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>11</b>
6.1 Bibliographic references.....	11
6.2 Cartographic references.....	11
<b>APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: SMALL FINDS REGISTER .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4: 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' (DES) Report .....</b>	<b>16</b>

---

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location plan

Figure 2: Site plan showing archaeological features

## List of Plates

Plate 1 - Pit [005], partially excavated showing sandstones backfilled in the centre

Plate 1 – Section of pit [022]

Plate 2 – Collapsed tunnel [018]

## List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Context Register

Appendix 2: Photographic Register

Appendix 3: Small finds Register

Appendix 4: *'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland'* entry

## Summary

---

A programme of archaeological works comprising a Strip, Map and record was required by Springfield Properties Plc prior to the residential development of a site lying immediately south of Cloverfoot Cottages on the western side of The Wisp, Niddrie, Edinburgh.

Previous work included a trial trenching evaluation and a Mining Investigation survey were undertaken in 2013-2014 due to the proximity of the site to the Niddrie Pits 14 and 15 and the potential of the area for mine working.

During the Strip, Map and Record eleven large circular pits were identified with colliery spoil and large sandstones backfill. In addition, two tunnels were exposed during excavation of the subsoil at a depth of 1.5-2m, suggesting pre-industrial mining activity.



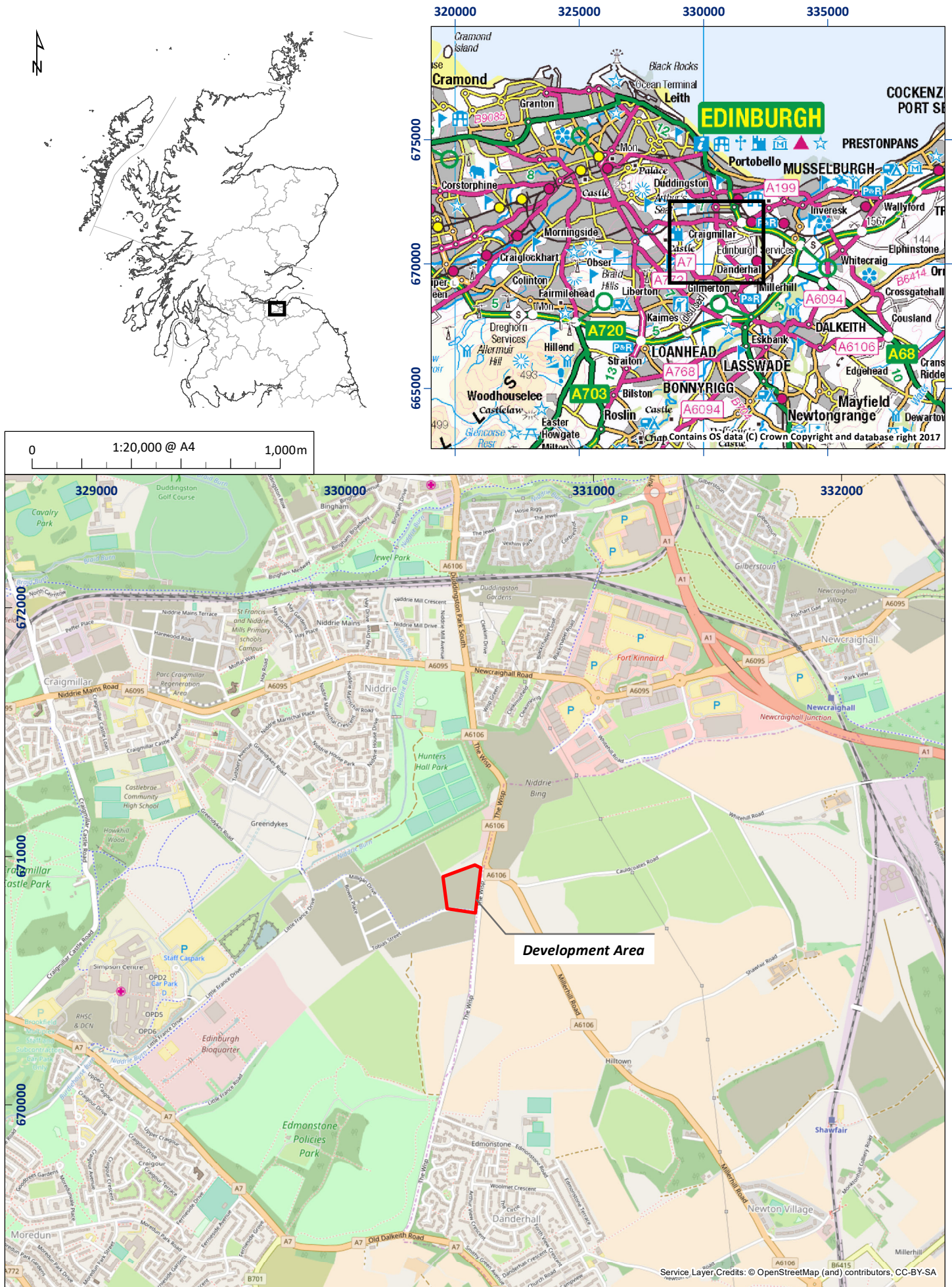


Figure 1: Site location plan

01/22457/REP/01/01

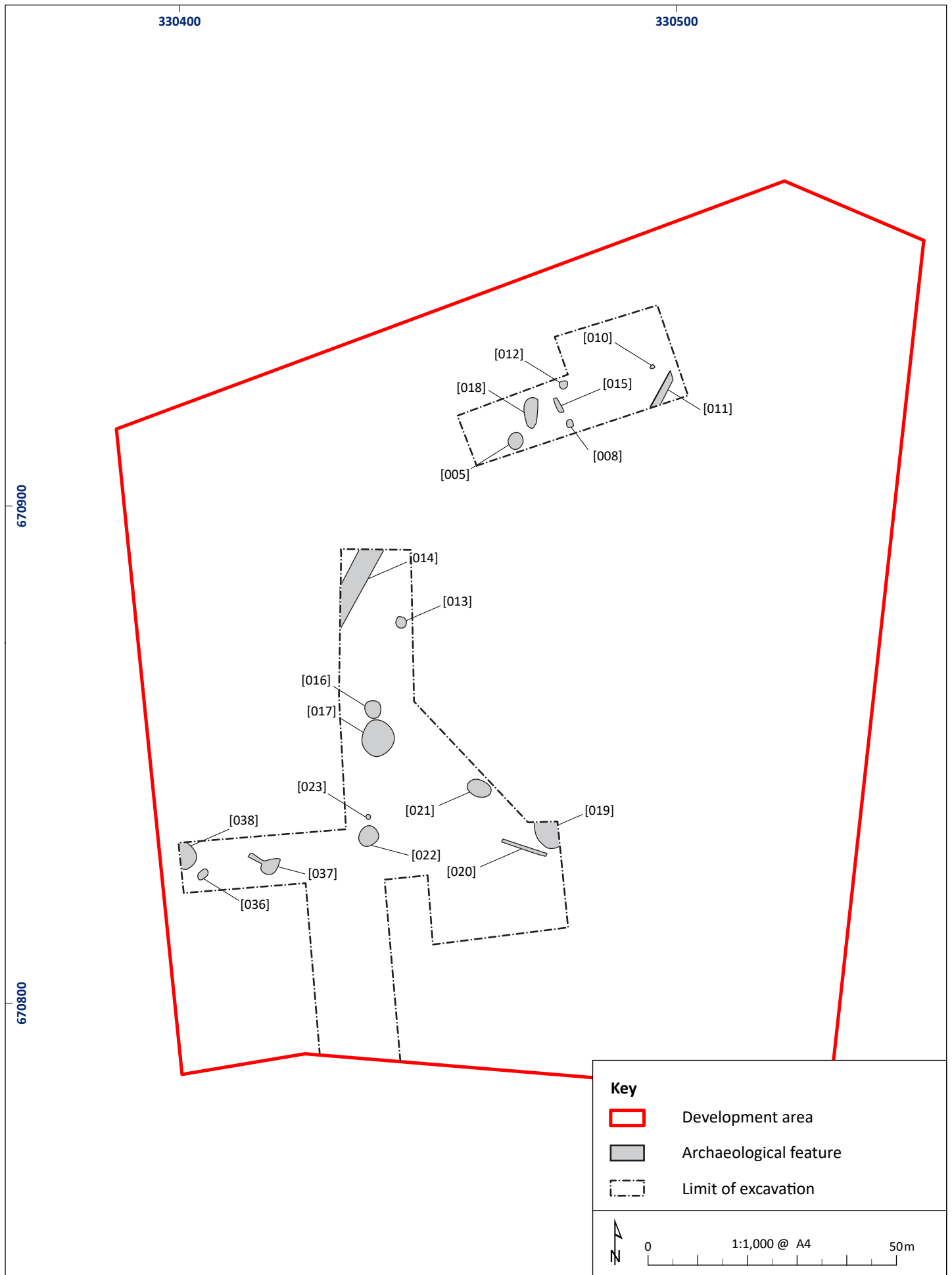


Figure 2: Proposed trench location plan

01/22457/REP/02/01

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 A programme of archaeological works comprising a Strip, Map and Record was required by Springfield Properties Plc prior to the residential development of a site lying immediately south of Cloverfoot Cottages on the western side of The Wisp, Niddrie, Edinburgh. The site lies within the administrative area of the City of Edinburgh Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by the Archaeological Officer at the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS).

1.1.2 AOC undertook a trial trench evaluation of the site in September 2013 (Streatfeild-James, 2013), and consent was subsequently granted for the construction of 72 dwellings there. Condition 2 of the Planning Permission (13/02660/FUL) states that:

*“No development shall take place on the site until the applicant has secured and implemented a programme of archaeological work (excavation, reporting and analysis and publication) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Head of Planning and Building Standards” (DPEA 2016).*

1.1.3 AOC understands that the client has recently submitted a further application (16/04373/FUL) which proposes to amend the number of dwellings to 83. In his comments on this revised application the CECAS Archaeological Officer notes the presence of historical mine working activity both on the site and within the vicinity and recommends that a ‘programme of archaeological works (strip, map & record) is undertaken prior to development in order to fully excavate and record any surviving archaeological remains occurring on this site’. The Archaeological Officer recommended that the scope of the programme of archaeological works included the analysis of any mine remediation works undertaken in conjunction with the development and a metal detecting survey.

1.1.4 The CECAS Archaeological Officer has recommended that, should it be consented, the following condition be attached to the current application (16/04373/FUL):

*“No development shall take place on the site until the applicant has secured and implemented a programme of archaeological work (excavation, metal detecting survey, analysis & reporting, publication) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority”. (John Lawson, Memorandum 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016).*

The proposed programme of archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with best practice requirements outlined in the current planning guidelines *Scottish Planning Policy* (2014) & *Planning and Archaeology 2/2011* (2011) as well as the guidance and standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) in order to record the extent and significance of any archaeological remains present within the development area.

### 1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The development area is located to the immediate south of Cloverfoot Cottages with the eastern site boundary marked by The Wisp. The western and southern site boundaries extend into undeveloped arable fields. The centre of the development area is centred on NGR: NT 3039 7089 (Figure 1).

### 1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 An archaeological evaluation of the consented development undertaken in September 2013 suggested that the site lay at the periphery of a large industrial area and was used to dump spoil. A single large cut feature



was identified at the base of Trenches 2 and 3 it measured five metres across and was 2.5 metres deep with a large rubble drain at its base it was backfilled with colliery spoil (Streatfeild-James, 2013).

- 1.3.2 The northern extent of the development is bounded by the site of the former Niddrie Pits 14 and 15, which appear to be active until the beginning of the 20th century, and could potentially be the source of the colliery waste and mining evidence encountered during the evaluation. The six inch-to-the-mile Ordnance Survey (Edinburghshire Sheet IV.SW) records marks the site as operational in 1893; by 1906 the site has been marked as disused, with the buildings demolished. The designed landscape of Niddrie House was situated to the North of the pits, separated by a substantial shelter belt of mature trees. Eight hundred metres to the south of the site lies Edmonston House, which was also surround by sheltered policies, while to the east of the Wisp the Mineral Railway is marked on several Ordnance Survey sheets, running between the village of Edmonston and the New Craighall Colliery, connecting these sites to the Niddrie Brickworks. An examination of the map archive suggests that surrounding landscape during the late 19th and 20th centuries was characterised by the immediate juxtaposition of high status dwelling and large scale mineral extraction.
- 1.3.3 Although the site appears to be situated within farmland, the immediate proximity of the colliery suggested the possibility of mine works pre-dating or contemporary with the Niddrie Pits.
- 1.3.4 No evidence of pre-mining activity was identified within the consented development during the evaluation (Streatfeild-James, 2013).
- 1.3.5 One of the defining characteristics of the Midlothian coalfield is the presence of good quality seams at or near the surface, due to the steep incline of the strata. This means that the area was a focus of mining from a comparatively early date and that the Niddrie mines were well established by 1682 when a new colliery was opened at Niddrie (Bradley-Lovekin and Hindmarch, *forthcoming*). Consequently there is a potential for evidence of earlier mine working, predating Niddrie Pits 14 & 15 being encountered during the course of development.
- 1.3.6 A Mining Investigations Survey undertaken on the consented development site as part of the planning process identified a possible mine entry on the site as well as evidence of shallow mine workings (Wardell Armstrong, 2014, 19-20), which could suggest the presence of early mine workings on the site.
- 1.3.7 AOC understands that further work has recently been undertaken by GUARD Archaeology on an adjacent site and that this has produced evidence of pre-industrial mining activity (John Lawson, Memorandum 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016).

## 2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objective of the strip, map and record are as follows,
  - i) to determine and assess the character, extent, condition, quality, date and significance of any buried archaeological remains within the proposed site that maybe disturbed by the Site Investigation works, including any historic mine workings;
  - ii) to advise and implement an appropriate form of mitigation, formulated with the approval of the CECAS Archaeological Officer, such as excavation/watching brief, post-excavation analyses and publication, given the infeasibility of preserving the archaeological material *in situ*, should significant archaeological remains be encountered.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 An archaeological strip, map and record was required during the stripping of topsoil in conjunction with the development.
- 3.2 All mechanical excavations were undertaken by contractors. A toothless ditching bucket was used wherever possible. All excavations were supervised by an experienced field archaeologist.
- 3.3 All significant archaeological features were cleaned and fully defined.
- 3.4 The strip, map and record was undertaken according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard operating procedures for watching briefs. A metal detecting survey was not considered appropriate on this site.
- 3.5 Upon completion of the strip, map and record, a data structure report was produced, prepared in accordance with AOC standards and includes the following:
  - a full descriptive text detailing the features identified and an interpretation of their date and purpose;
  - a location map plan of the site within its landscape at a scale of at least 1:10 000;
  - plans and elevations at an appropriate scale showing the investigated areas and features located;
  - appropriate lists and diagrams summarising the contexts and artefacts recovered and the records made of them;
  - analysis of the results of the works, including appropriate post-excavation appraisals;
  - a strategy to mitigate the impact of the development on any archaeological deposits revealed by the programme of archaeological works.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The excavation took place between the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2017. Weather conditions were changeable throughout the excavations with periods of light rain but archaeological visibility remained good. The results of the excavation are summarised below with the detailed records from the works shown in the report appendices:

Appendix 1: Context Register

Appendix 2: Photographic Register

Appendix 3: Finds Register

Appendix 4: *'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland'* (DES) entry

### 4.2 Excavation

- 4.2.1 Nine circular pits ranging from 2.2 to 7.0m in diameter were identified with an additional two partially visible at the limits of excavation. The fill of the pits consisted of visible dark greyish brown silty sand with coal fragments [005], [012], [013], [016], [017], [022], [036], [037] and [038] or silty clay [019], [021]. Six of the circular pits ([005], [016], [017], [022], [036] and [037]) were machine excavated to a depth of 1-2m, exposing a series of circular pits, which progressively narrowed into a bowl like shape. None of the pits were excavated to their base but continued to be visible as a narrower circular cut.

The observed pit sections contained the tree main fills: the basal fill was a silty clay backfill, the secondary fill was a loose, gritty and coarse silty sand fill with with coal, stones and sandstones of various sizes and the upper fill consisted of gritty coarse silty sand with coal and stone fragments.

In plan, pit [037] appeared an irregular shape and, upon investigation, turned out to be a circular pit joined to a linear in a NW-SE orient linear.

No finds were recovered from any of the pits and it could not be determined how far vertically the pits continued.



**Plate 1 - Pit [005], partially excavated showing sandstones backfilled in the centre**





**Plate 3 – West facing section of pit [022]**

- 4.2.2 During the excavation of an E-W pipe trench through the subsoil, two NE-SW tunnels [015] and [018] not visible on the surface, were exposed with voids visible along both sections of the trench. The tunnels were both in close proximity to pit [005] and [012], which are suspected to be mine shafts.



**Plate 4 – Collapsed tunnel [018]**

- 4.2.3 A N-S linear [014] in the NW area of site, was exposed in close proximity to, and in alignment with, three pits [016], [017] and [022], measuring about 2m wide to the north and progressively widening before continuing beyond the limit of excavation to the south. The linear was backfilled with colliery spoil and redeposited natural, which was visible in section. The depth of the linear could not be determined as it continued beyond the limit of excavation but as it was in proximity to three other colliery spoil filled pits, it is possible that this linear related to strip mining.
- 4.2.4 A single angular shallow pit [010] was uncovered in the area NE of the site with a white ceramic container fragment at the base.
- 4.2.5 Fragmentary remains of two shallow trenches NE-SW aligned [011] and E-W aligned [020] were identified but are presumed to be modern, possibly trenches from previous evaluations.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The shallow pits backfilled with colliery spoils and large sandstones identified during this phase of work could suggest pre-industrial mining activity. Those pits ranging from 2.2M to 7.0M in diameter indicate the presence of mine shafts below the limit of excavation, but could also be shallow pits along a coal seam testing for coal near the surface. The overall depth of the pits could not be determined as they continued beyond the limit of excavation. It is noteworthy that a degree of uniformity was evident in that three of the pits were 3.5m wide ([005], [012] and [016]) and two 7.0m ([017] and [021]).



---

## 6 REFERENCES

### 6.1 Bibliographic references

AOC Archaeology 2016, 125 *The Wisp, Niddrie, Edinburgh, Programme of Archaeological Work: Metal Detecting, Strip, Map and Record, Written Scheme of Investigation* unpublished AOC client report

Scottish Government 2011 *Planning and Archaeology PAN 2/2011*.

Scottish Government 2014 *SPP Scottish Planning Policy*.

Bradley-Lovekin and Hindmarch, forthcoming, *Niddrie Marischal: The Evolution of an Edinburgh Estate from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

Wardell Armstrong, 2014 *The Wisp: Mining Investigation Report (ED11257, April 2014)*

# **The Wisp, Niddrie, Edinburgh: Programme Of Archaeological Works: Data Structure Report APPENDICES:**

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context	Description	Structure Number
001	Topsoil – Dark greyish brown silty clay – 0.40M	-
002	Subsoil – Mid yellowish brown sandy silt to orange brown sandy silt	-
003	Greyish brown coarse silty sand fill of [005]	-
004	Dark yellowish brown silty clay fill of [005]	-
005	Cut of possible mine shaft	-
006	Mine shaft, N-S orientated	-
007	Fill of [008]	-
008	Cut of possible linear	-
009	Fill of sub-angular pit/posthole [010] – ceramic find	-
010	Cut of sub-angular pit/posthole	-
011	NE-SW Linear – partially exposed	-
012	Cut of possible mine shaft – Dark greyish brown silty sand	-
013	Cut of possible mine shaft – Dark greyish brown silty sand – 2M wide	-
014	Cut of linear 2.5 to 3M wide – N-S – Possible mine shaft	-
015	Cut of N-S mine tunnel/shaft – horizontal, not visible in subsoil	-
016	Cut of possible mine shaft 3.5M wide	-
017	Large pit, entry point? Dark greyish brown silty sand – 7.0M wide	-
018	Cut of N-S mine tunnel/shaft? Horizontal, not visible in subsoil	-
019	Cut of possible pit partially visible about 2M wide, mid greyish brown fill silty clay, unexcavated	-
020	Linear E-W, only partially visible about 10M long, disappears to the south so width cannot be determined	-
021	Circular cut – possible mine shaft, uneven and highly disturbed grounds, dark greyish brown mix silty clay fill with sandstones	-
022	Cut of mine shaft/large pit visible in section, coal mix	-
023	Cut of mine shaft visible in section	-
024	Upper fill of [022] dark greyish brown silty sand, coal mix with sandstones, very coarse	-
025	Lower fill of [022], mid orangey brown silty clay	-
026	Fill of [017], dark greyish brown silty clay	-
027	Dark greyish brown silty sand with coal inclusions fill of [016]	-
028	Mid orangey brown silty clay fill of [016]	-
029	Mid orangey brown silty clay fill of [016]	-
030	Dark greyish brown silty clay and coal band, fill of [016]	-
031	Dark greyish brown silty clay and coal band, fill of [016]	-
032	Mid greyish brown silty clay with some sandstones, fill of [016]	-
033	Dark greyish brown silty clay, fill of [017]	-
034	Coal band, fill of [017]	-
035	Dark greyish brown silty clay, fill of [017]	-
036	Cut of large pit, possibly mine shaft, 2.20M wide – sandstone filled	-
037	Irregular cut of pit and E-W linear	-
038	Cut of large pit partially visible	-
039	Upper fill of [037], dark greyish brown silty sand and coal, very coarse	-
040	Lower fill of pit [037] – Mid greyish brown silty clay	-

**APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER**

No.	Description	Taken From
001	General view of excavated area	E
002	Pre-ex of [005] mine shaft	S
003	General view of [005] mine shaft	SW
004	Mid-ex of [005] mine shaft	NW
005	Mid-ex of [005] mine shaft	W
006	Mid-ex of [005] mine shaft	W
007	Mid-ex of [005] mine shaft	N
008	Slot through [005] showing North facing section	N
009	Slot through [005] showing North facing section	N
010	General view of [005] dug to level	PLAN
011	General view of [005] dug to level	E
012	General view of [005] dug to level	NE
013	General view of [005] dug to level	NE
014	Detail shot of mine shaft	SW
015	General view of mine shaft	SW
016	General view of mine shaft	SW
017	General view of mine shaft	SW
018	Detail view of mine shaft	SW
019	General view of excavated area	W
020	Detail view of mine shaft	W
021	General view of mine shaft S-facing section	S
022	General view of mine shaft N-facing section	N
023	General view of excavated area	W
024-068	General view of site	
069	General view of excavated area	W
070	General view of excavated area	E
071	Detail of linear [ 011]	W
072	General of linear [011] and pit [010]	W
073	Detail of linear [011]	S
074	Detail of cut [008]	W
075	General view of mine shaft entrance [012]	S
076	Detail of pit [010]	N
077	Detail of pit [010]	N
078	Section of cut [008]	N
079	Detail of mine shaft entrance [013]	E
080	General view of excavated area	S
081	General view of excavated area	N
082	General view showing [014]	S
083	General view of collapsed section [015]	W
084	General view of collapsed section [015]	W
085	General view of collapsed section [015]	NW
086	General view of pit [016] and [017]	N
087	General view of pit [016] and [017]	S
088	General view of excavated area	S
089	General view of excavated area	E
090	General view of possible cut [020]	W
091	Detail of possible pit [019]	W
092	Section of trench showing [014]	SE
093	Section of pit [017]	W

094	Section showing [022] and [023]	W
095	Detail of section through [022]	W
096	Detail of section through [022]	W
097	Detail of [036] – plan	NE
098	General view of excavated area	W
099	Detail of pit [037]	W
100	Detail of pit [037]	S
101	Detail of pit [037]	E
102	Detail of pit [036]	NW
103	General view of excavated area	W
104	General view of pit [037]	W

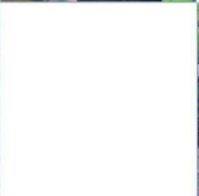
### APPENDIX 3: SMALL FINDS REGISTER

No.	Context	Description	Material Code
1	(009)	Ceramic, possibly bottle base	Ce



**APPENDIX 4: 'Discovery and Excavation in Scotland' (DES) Report**

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	The City of Edinburgh Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	The Wisp, Niddrie, Edinburgh
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	22457
<b>PARISH:</b>	City of Edinburgh
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Anne-Aymonne Marot
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	AOC Archaeology Group
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Monitored Strip, Map and Record
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	None
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	None
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)</b>	NT 3039 7089 (centre of development area)
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	01 March 2017
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	08 March 2017
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (inc DES)</b>	Archaeological Evaluation
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	<p>A programme of archaeological works comprising a Strip, Map and record was required by Springfield Properties Plc prior to the residential development of a site lying immediately south of Cloverfoot Cottages on the western side of The Wisp, Niddrie, Edinburgh.</p> <p>Previous work included a trial trenching evaluation and a Mining Investigation survey were undertaken in 2013-2014 due to the proximity of the site to the Niddrie Pits 14 and 15 and the potential of the area for mine working.</p> <p>During the Strip, Map and Record eleven large circular pits were identified with colliery spoil and large sandstones backfill. In addition, two tunnels were exposed during excavation of the subsoil at a depth of 1.5-2m, suggesting pre-industrial mining activity.</p>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRATIONS:</b>	N/A
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Springfield Properties Plc.
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	AOC Archaeology Group, Edgefield Road Industrial Estate, Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SY
<b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b>	admin@aocarchaeology.com
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b>	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



AOC Archaeology Group, Edgefield Industrial Estate, Edgefield Road, Loanhead EH20 9SY  
tel: 0131 440 3593 | fax: 0131 440 3422 | e-mail: admin@aocarchaeology.com

[www.aocarchaeology.com](http://www.aocarchaeology.com)