

2. INTRODUCTION

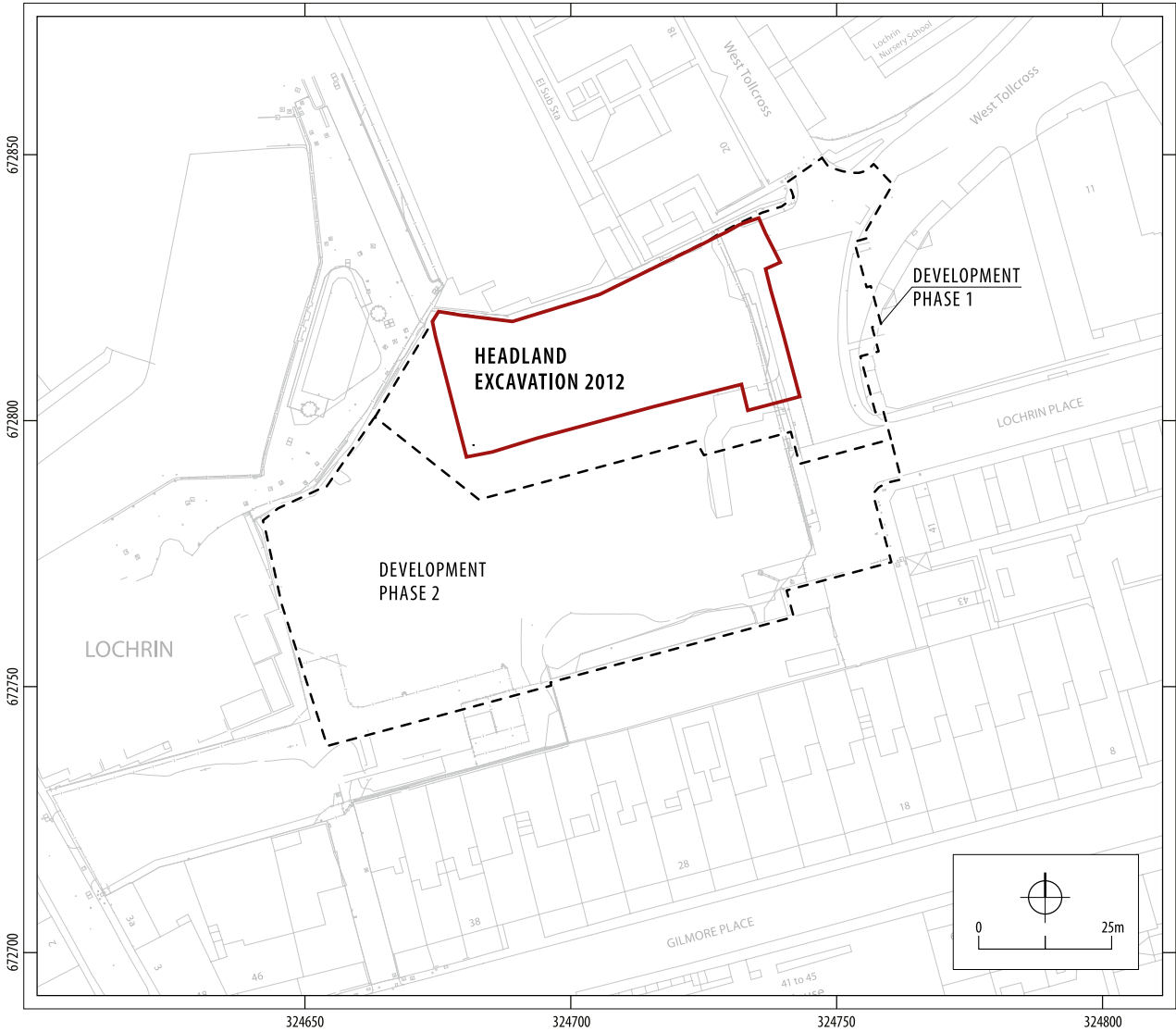
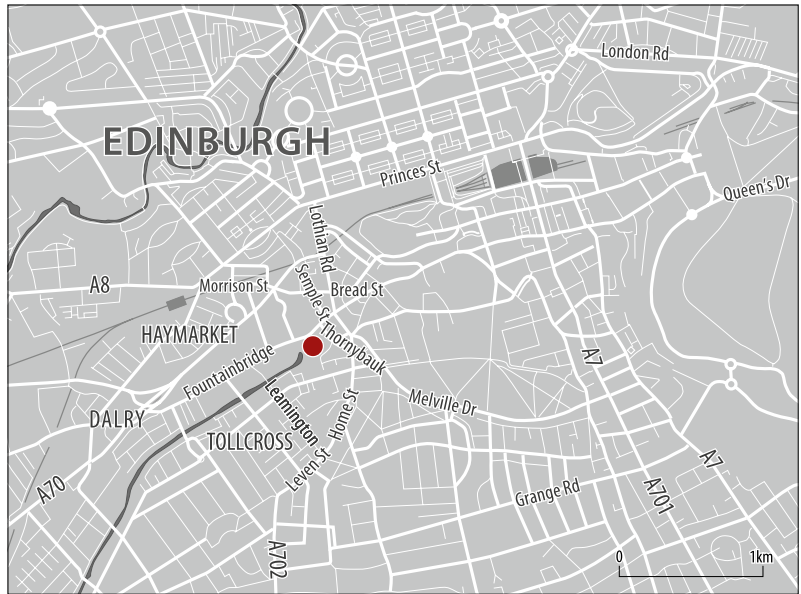
The archaeological potential of land at 19 West Tollcross, Edinburgh (NGR NT 2466 7276), was recognised due to its proximity to the former Lochrin Basin, which connected to the Union Canal, situated north-west of the excavation. The site fronted the western side of West Tollcross opposite its junction with Lochrin Place (Illus 1). The entire area examined covered *c* 7,844m². However, only the northern part was developed during this phase (Phase 1).

The complex planning history of the site has resulted in the production of at least 12 different archaeological reports, including two desk-based assessments (Barber et al 2002; Bradley-Lovekin 2011). Several phases of fieldwork both on site (detailed in Wilson 2005; Hunter-Blair 2009) and within the wider area, have ensured that its heritage has been thoroughly investigated. Extensive excavation within the development area was carried out by Headland Archaeology in 2012, on behalf of Watkin Jones Group, as a condition of the planning consent for the development of the site. Excavation revealed evidence of activity dating from the medieval period to the present day. Remains of buildings that formed part of Lochrin Distillery and features containing medieval pottery were uncovered together with remains of the slaughterhouse, Edinburgh Ice and Cold Storage Company, an ice rink and a garage. As the site had

been continuously developed over the years, many of the earlier structures had been heavily truncated by later activity. Therefore, only fragmentary remains of the various structures survived.

The historical background provides a more general reconsideration of the site as a whole, rather than focusing on the archaeological results, and provides a reference for future work. The early history of Lochrin Distillery is discussed by Heawood (2009), where he suggests that the distillery closed in 1848. In fact, further research has shown that distilling continued into the 1860s (see 3. 'Historical background' below) (*Caledonian Mercury*, 28 June 1849: 1; *Scotsman*, 14 July 1849: 3; Moss and Hume 2000: 315).

The land use of Lochrin Distillery and Canal Basin changed with technological innovation. Tenants included James 'Paraffin' Young, progenitor of the world's first 'oil rush', early wallpaper-printers, a cold store-turned ice rink and makers of Australian ranch fencing. In 1897–8, a development consortium infilled the disused dock with the old granaries. The shops and flats of Lochrin Buildings, Lochrin Place and Terrace were then built from south to north. The primary emphasis of the archive and documentary investigation was on the industrial development of the Lochrin site as a whole, including other areas previously dug, in order to combine multiple individual snapshots into a more comprehensive and overall picture.



Illus 1 Site location © Headland Archaeology