

2. INTRODUCTION

During 2013 and 2014 AOC Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological works culminating in the excavation of the former Canongate Poorhouse site, Calton Road, Canongate, Edinburgh. The work was undertaken to satisfy an archaeological planning condition in advance of the redevelopment of New Waverley, a large multi-site development scheme.

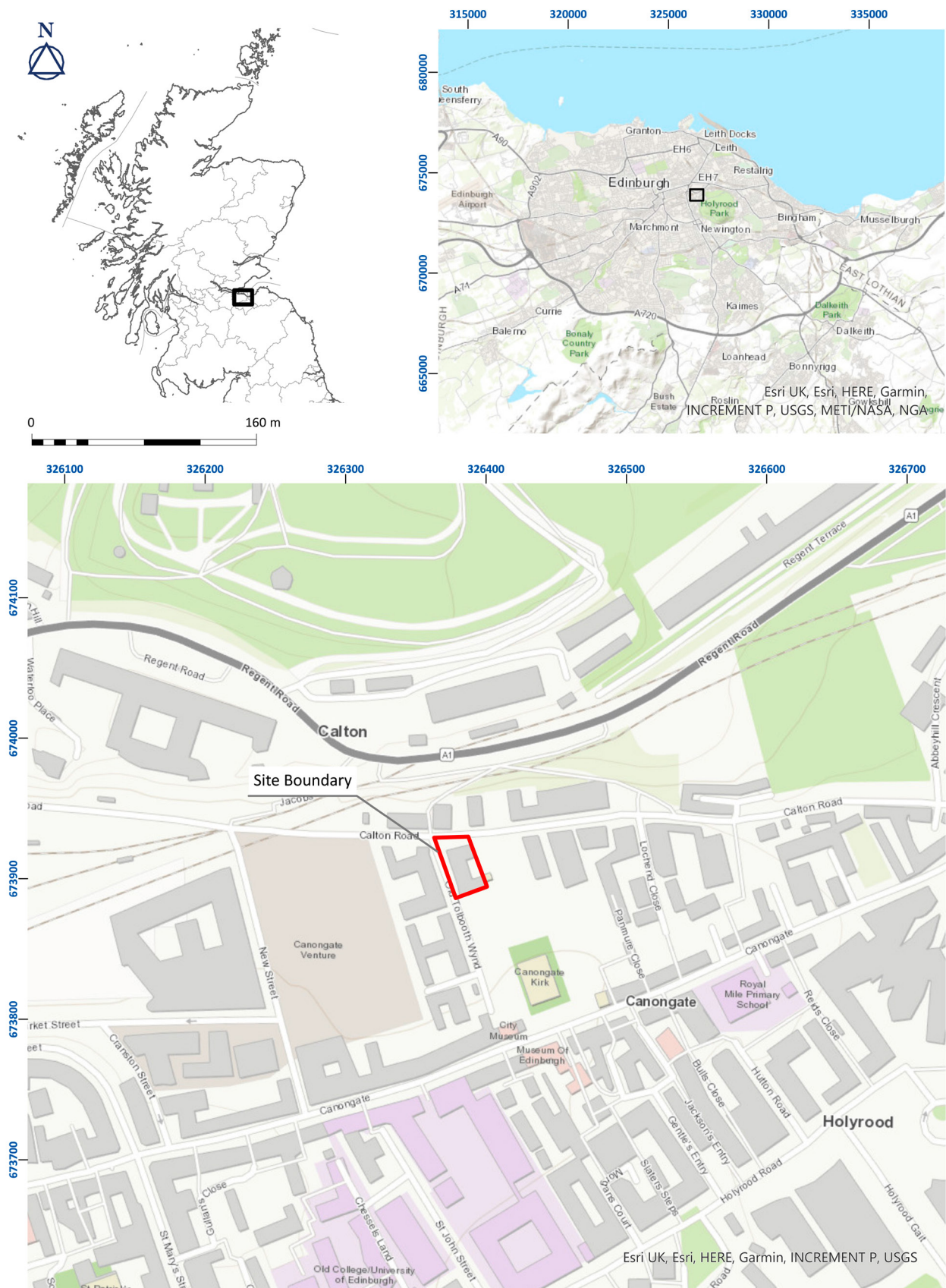
The site (NGR: NT26385 73905) lies in a rectangular plot of 'brownfield' land formerly occupied by a 20th-century warehouse, bounded to the north by Calton Road and to the west by Old Tolbooth Wynd. The kirkyard of the Canongate Kirk is located to its immediate south and east (Illus 1 & 2). Calton Road runs along the medieval North Back, which defined the northern boundary of the

medieval burgh of Canongate, while the Canongate itself, a component of the principal east/west axis along which the Old Town of Edinburgh is laid out, runs south of the kirkyard.

The New Waverley site is located within the 'backlands' of the burghage plots which historically extended northwards from the rear of the Canongate. To the west of the site, a previous excavation encountered extensive cultivation soils and quarry pits, related to medieval and post-medieval activity (Gooder 2013: 12). Kirk session records show that the Canongate Poorhouse, a parochial foundation, was constructed upon the site in 1761 (NRS CH2/122/13c). The Poorhouse was converted into an epidemic hospital in 1871 (Lothian Health Services Archives) and, according to Ordnance Survey mapping, was demolished between 1920 and 1935.



Illus 1 South-facing view of the New Waverley site under excavation, showing the relationship with the Canongate Kirk and Kirkyard



Illus 2 Site location (Ordnance Survey OpenData © Crown copyright)