

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

In the last few decades several archaeological interventions in the vicinity of the current study area have revealed vestiges of the medieval Canongate in the form of walls, drains, ditches, middens, garden soils, backlands and human remains.

In 1997, in a plot adjacent to the current study area, human remains and sandstone walls related to the 18th-century Canongate Poorhouse were revealed, together with deep deposits of medieval and post-medieval 'backland' soil. Additional works opposite the Poorhouse site, north of Calton Road, also exposed stone foundations, cellars and drains belonging to later 18th/19th-century development (CECAS 1997; Reed 1999).

Excavation of a number of trial pits was monitored across the present development area (AOC 2006), exposing disturbed, disarticulated human bones from a pit within the Poorhouse site close to Old Tolbooth Wynd. In 2013, the archaeological monitoring of a series of further trial

pits within the Poorhouse site, prior to the main phase of excavation, revealed sandstone walls and further deposits of backland soils up to 4.0m in depth (AOC 2013).

These substantial deposits have been recorded at a number of other sites within the Calton Road area, including Calton Road Gasworks/Old Tolbooth Wynd to the immediate west of the current site (Goode 2013); 32 Calton Road (Hatherley 2004) and 22 Calton Road, where excavation revealed stratified garden soil and midden deposits up to 3.0m in depth ranging from the 13th to the 18th centuries (Jones & Holden 2003).

To the west of the site further evidence of backland deposits was found during the excavation of the Waverley Vaults undertaken by AOC Archaeology between 2002 and 2005 (Toolis & Sproat 2007). The deposits here consisted of a cultivation soil ranging between 0.35m and 0.80m in depth, considerably shallower than many of the other Calton Road sites, and containing artefacts predominantly dated to the late 16th and early 18th centuries (*ibid*: 173).