

mately 20m × 11m was excavated by machine to the first archaeological layer and all subsequent excavation took place by hand. The development area was most recently a tarmac car park with a garage at the back of the present presbytery. A brick wall enclosed the western and southern boundaries of the site.

Six phases of occupation, construction and demolition were identified. In summary from the earliest to the latest, these were: pits and a well; midden deposits; further pits; the remains of four inhumations and a further midden; the construction of Balmerino House; and the modern levelling of the site.

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## 3 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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Leith lies to the north of Edinburgh, at the mouth of the Water of Leith. The earliest recording of any settlement appears in the foundation charter of Holyrood Abbey, issued by David I in 1128 (Mowat 1994, 1). Excavations by the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS) in the 1990s at Burgess Street and Ronaldson's Wharf have provided evidence for this early 12th-century settlement, with the latter providing evidence for the pre-Burgh settlement (Lawson forthcoming a & b). The port grew throughout the 12th and 13th centuries, and Leith became the main trading port in Scotland after the Wars of Independence in 1333, although the import and export trade coming through the port was not controlled by Leithers as Leith was not a Royal Burgh, but was instead controlled by the burgesses and merchants of Edinburgh, who severely curtailed the trading activities of Leith's inhabitants.

In 1544 and again in 1547, Leith was burnt by English troops on the orders of Henry VIII during a period known as 'the rough wooing', in which the English king attempted to enforce the Treaty of Greenwich, which betrothed the infant Queen Mary to his son, the future Edward VI. Henry's aggressive tactics forced Scotland into alliance with France and, at the instigation of the Catholic Mary of Guise, who ruled Scotland as regent from 1544, substantial fortifications were constructed in Leith, which were occupied by a garrison of French troops. When Elizabeth I came to the

throne in 1558, the Protestant Lords of the Congregation rebelled against Catholic rule and, with the support of English troops, besieged Leith in 1560. Ultimately the confrontation resulted in the Treaty of Edinburgh (under which the French agreed to destroy the fortifications in Leith and go home), the eventual fall of the Catholic Church in Scotland and the end of the Franco-Scottish Alliance. The site would have lain just within the defences on the eastern side of the fortress (Harris 1991).

In the 17th century the plague struck Leith, most notably in 1645, when almost half the town's population died. Leith fell to Cromwell's troops in 1650, and was used as the Parliamentarians' Scottish headquarters for much of that decade.

A full historical analysis of Balmerino House was beyond the scope of this project, although it would be merited if further work were carried out on the site in the future. In summary, it was built in 1631 by John Stewart, Earl of Carrick, and sold to Lord Balmerino in 1643 (Grant 1882). Several generations of Balmerinos were resident in the house until the fifth Lord Balmerino, who died in January 1746, seven months before his brother, the sixth Lord Balmerino, was executed for his part in the 1745 Rebellion. After this the house changed hands several times and the land was eventually sold to the Church in 1848. St Mary's Star of the Sea was built in 1853 and Balmerino House was finally demolished in the 1970s.