
5 THE EXCAVATION

The 2005 excavation of the Tron was completed by hand, the material removed comprising a homogeneous demolition layer of undiagnostic building debris, with a few inclusions of animal bone and pottery. The degree of survival of the remains was dependent on the depth of bedrock present; where the bedrock was low, or had been excavated to create cellars, structures and deposits survived to a depth of up to 2m. The recent excavation has revealed the fragments of four main buildings, A, B, C and D, two sections of road (Marlin's Wynd and the High Street), a courtyard and an area of possible industrial activity (illus 3). These features are described below.

5.1 *Building A*

Building A was represented by the foundations of a two- or three-storey tenement aligned north to south, which fronted onto both Marlin's Wynd and the High Street, forming the north-west corner between the two streets. The west of the building would have backed onto tenements located on Peebles Wynd. The known excavated extent of the building measured 14m north to south by 5m east to west. The footprint of the building was defined by four rock-cut cellars, the three cellars in the northern half of the building all being interconnected; door jambs still survive in the doorway between Cellar 2 and Cellar 3. Entry to the building was through at least three points: both Cellars 3 and 4 were accessed via rock-cut steps, while a turnpike staircase gave access to the upper floors of the building. In Cellar 3 there was a fireplace, an arch, an aumbry and vaulting springs. A flimsy partition wall divided Cellar 3, suggesting some re-modelling. The location of Cellars 1 and 2 suggests that both would have underlain the High Street. Occupation debris comprising burnt material, household rubbish such as shells and fragments of pottery were recovered from the rock-cut floor level. Oyster shells identified at various points within the cellars would have been used for pointing the mortar. The material assemblage was relatively poor, comprising a mixture of local and European ceramics, glass, clay pipes, roof tiles and eight coins. The coins, which were all recovered from the floor surface of Cellar 2, represent a selection of low-currency 17th-century examples in use at the time of demolition (see **Holmes** below). A fragment of a bowl from a pedestal stem goblet was recovered from Cellar 3 (illus 19). This type of goblet, which dates to the earlier portion of the 16th century, is normally only found on relatively

high-status sites although they are more common in the Low Countries and northern France, where they were probably produced (see **Wilmott** below).

5.2 *Building B*

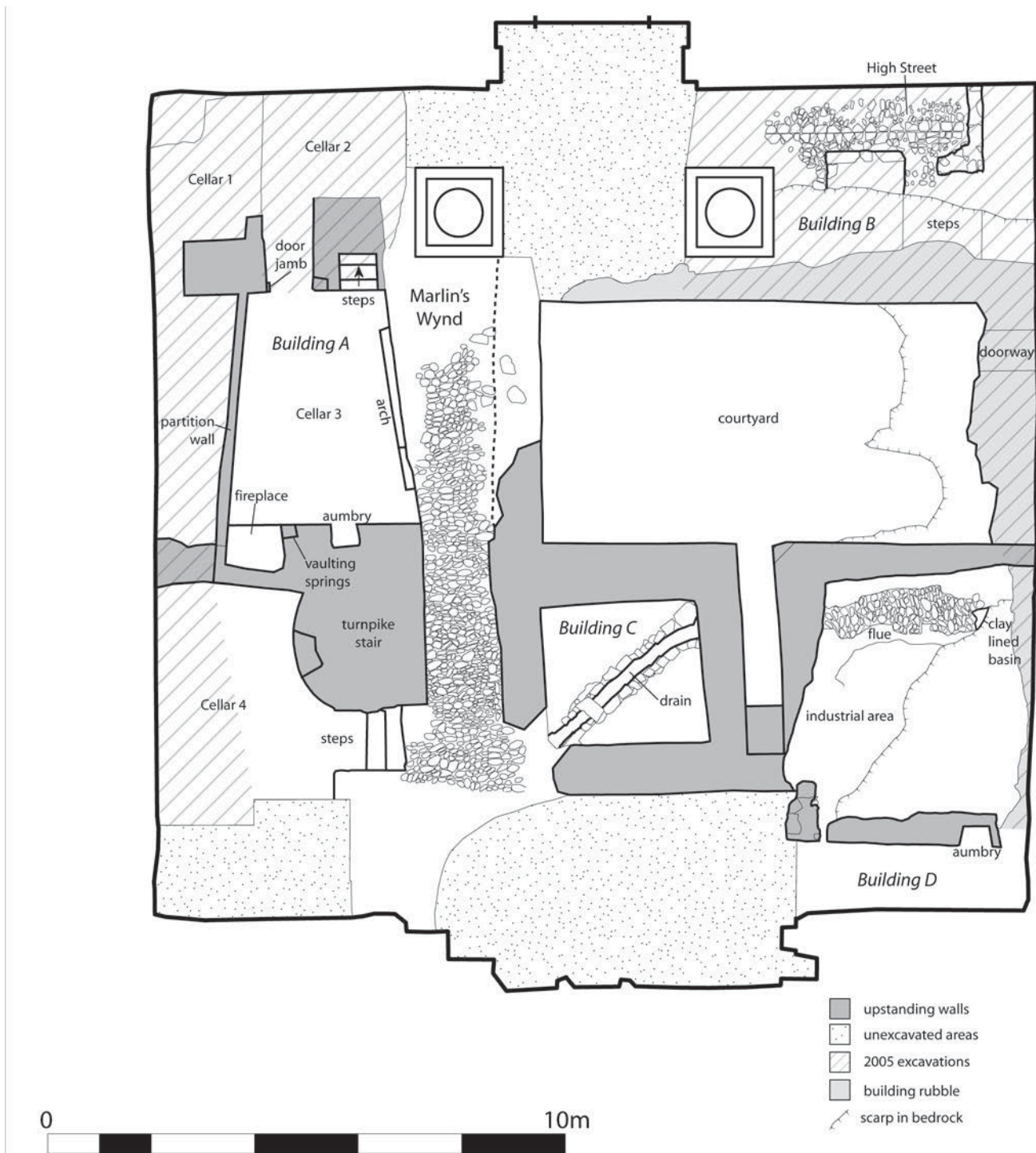
Building B was aligned east to west, parallel with the High Street. Very little of the actual structure survived, its footprint being inferred from the position of a plinth of an arched booth which extended out into the High Street (illus 4), and the northern edge of the courtyard, suggesting a building approximately 4m wide from north to south. The building probably formed the north-east corner of the High Street and Marlin's Wynd. As the northern foundation of the building was built almost directly onto bedrock, no cellars would have been present. The building would probably have been accessed through an external stair on the High Street. A set of extremely worn rock-cut steps was identified under the proposed location of the building, perhaps allowing access to the courtyard, but it is unclear whether the two features are contemporary. The stone plinth at the front of the building suggests a shop or booth (for example see Fig. 2, Allen 2006).

5.3 *Building C*

Building C comprised a square building, 7m by 7m, on the east side of Marlin's Wynd, to the immediate south of the courtyard. The building contained a single room/cellar, accessed through an entrance in its south-west corner. A succession of floor levels, including two clay deposits and a stone level, were found to overlie a slab-covered drain. The drain, which was accessed through a chute in the east wall, drained into the sewer under Marlin's Wynd. A larger drain identified in the west wall also allowed access to the underground sewer under Marlin's Wynd.

5.4 *Building D*

Building D comprised the remnants of a rock-cut cellar which was truncated to the east, south and west. Only the northern wall survived and was built up hard against the cut bedrock. The wall, in contrast to the other examples, contained a double skin, with a rubble core, inferring some degree of architectural development. An aumbry was also present. An occupation layer overlay a cobbled floor surface, which itself overlay up to 1m of a foundation deposit.



Illus 3 Plan of the excavated features

5.5 Marlin's Wynd

Marlin's Wynd, fully excavated but left in situ by Holmes, comprised a north to south aligned section of well-laid irregular cobbles, 9.2m long and up to 1.3m wide (illus 5). A V-shaped drain, constructed by tilting two adjacent rows of cobbles, ran along the eastern edge. The buildings around Marlin's Wynd contained relatively sophisticated drainage systems, providing a direct link to the underlying sewer. A selection of pottery recovered from the drain underlying Marlin's

Wynd comprised locally produced Scottish Post-Medieval Oxidised Ware (illus 9) found in association with single shards each from a Beauvais dish of double and single Sgraffito (illus 10), of mid 16th-century origin (see **Haggarty & Lawson** below).

5.6 The High Street

A previously unexcavated section of the High Street was exposed to the north of Building B. It comprised



Illus 4 The section of the High Street which lies under the Tron Kirk. The plinth of an arched booth which forms part of Building B is visible just behind the drain.



Illus 5 Work in progress in the Tron Kirk. Marlin's Wynd is the cobbled street running from the foreground north towards the High Street.

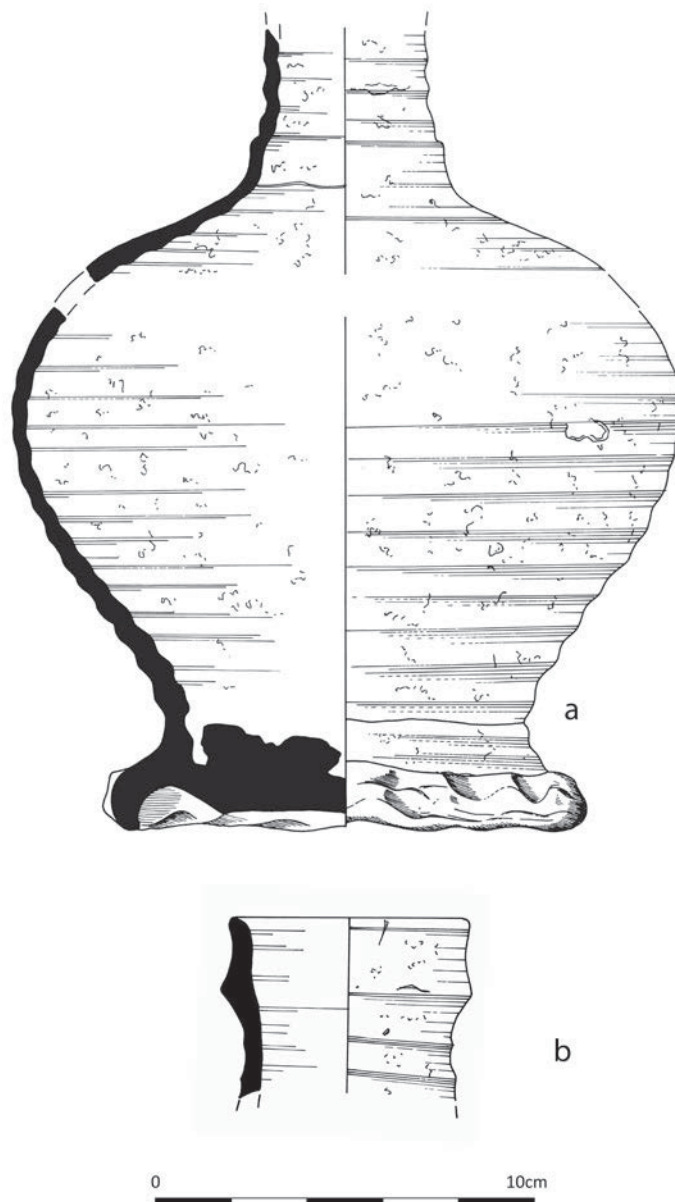
a 3.6m long cobbled surface running east–west with a drain constructed in a similar fashion to that along Marlin’s Wynd (illus 4). The road lay approximately 1m above the existing High Street, indicating the lowering of the existing road. A set of rock-cut steps may have provided access to the High Street from Building B, but the area between the two features was so severely truncated that it is impossible to establish the relationship between the two. The road was truncated to the north, east and west by the construction of the Tron.

5.7 *The courtyard*

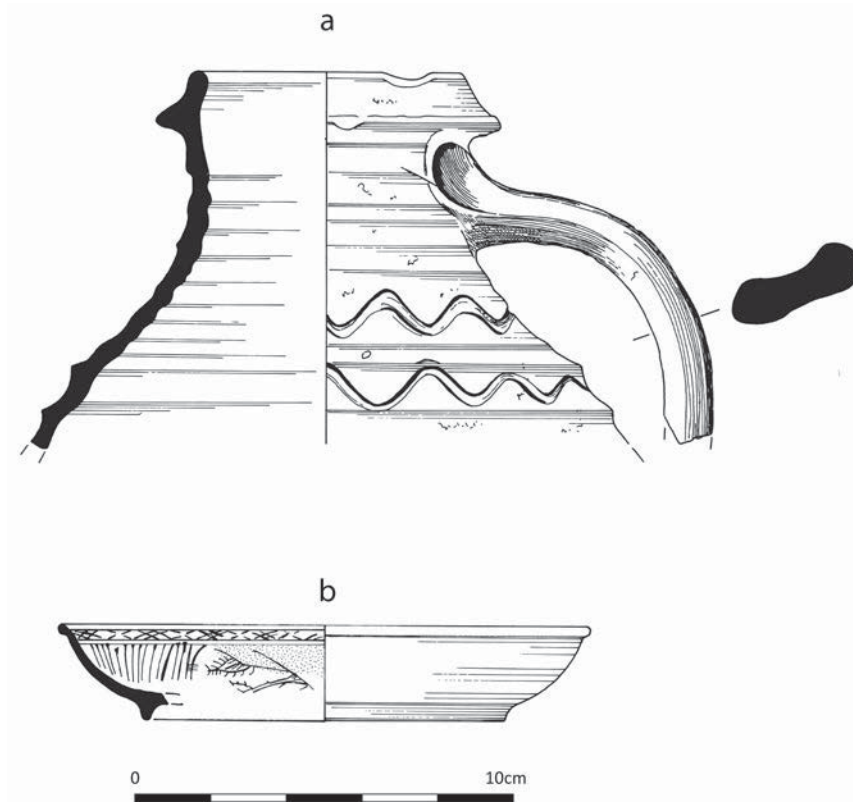
A cobbled courtyard measuring 8.5m east to west and 4.75m north to south was located between Buildings B and C, and to the east of Marlin’s Wynd. The structure appears to have been formed by occupying

an empty space between buildings (Coleman 2004, 298); it is bounded to the west by a wall running parallel with Marlin’s Wynd, and by the northern walls of Building C and the walls bounding the industrial area. Access to the courtyard was via the rock-cut steps on its northern boundary and a doorway to the east, which may have led directly into Taverner’s Close (illus 2). A pit identified in Holmes’ original excavation within the courtyard contained fragments of both a Raeren Stoneware bottle (illus 6a) of the late 15th/early 16th centuries and a Scottish Redware jug (illus 7a).

A rock-cut corridor/tunnel runs south from the courtyard, between Building C and the industrial area, both of which were built on to the natural bedrock. The feature, which was originally covered by slabs, contained material suggesting that it had silted up naturally before being filled with the demolition rubble from the construction of the Tron. The



Illus 6 a) Raeren Stoneware bottle; b) Raeren Stoneware



Illus 7 a) Scottish Medieval Redware jug; b) Chinese porcelain

north and south parts of the feature were truncated by later development of the Tron, hampering interpretation and its relationship to the courtyard.

5.8 The industrial area

An area of exposed bedrock contained a series of truncated structural elements, comprising a rock-

cut flue and clay-lined basin. Both negative features were filled with a deposit of silt which contained frequent inclusions of bone and slag. A rubble wall built over the natural may have defined the northern edge of the area. The area, previously excavated by Holmes, was so truncated as to make interpretation impossible, although an industrial use is suggested. A huge amount of slag and iron nails was recovered in both excavations (Holmes 1975).