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## 8 DISCUSSION

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Analysis of the Tron Kirk excavations has benefited from the abundance of historical maps, prints and documentary evidence such as the housemails book of 1634–5, available in such a richly recorded burgh. The documentary evidence records that at least four tenements were compulsorily purchased, from the western block along Taverner's Close, through to the eastern side of Peebles Wynd (illus 2). Unfortunately, Marlin's Wynd was the only close actually identified, so little can be said about the width of the burgage plots. The building works would have destroyed all four tenements, but the surviving footprint of the Tron covers only portions of those buildings on either side of Marlin's Wynd, the remaining tenements lying under the now absent east and west wings of the church. The analysis of the housemails book suggests that the footprint of the church covered the partial remains of three tenements, generally referred to as Napier's, Lauder's and Taverner's Tenements. New documentary research has made it possible to identify some of the owners of these tenements, and also some of the functions to which the buildings were put. This work has been complemented by the material assemblage recovered from all phases of excavation, which comprised ceramic, glass, coins, iron, coarse stone, leather and animal bone (Holmes 1975). The finds confirmed the basic conclusions one would expect from a post-medieval settlement (*ibid*), but the high-status glass also demonstrated the general wealth of at least some of the inhabitants of the wynd. The re-analysis of the early 17th-century ceramic assemblage includes a number of north German slipwares, along with a range of French, Iberian, German and Low Countries imports, while the glass assemblage included an early 16th-century goblet from the Low Countries, a vessel type normally only found on relatively high-status sites in Britain. Unfortunately, all the material was found in the demolition layer and so none of it can be associated with specific buildings or occupants. Clearly, the systematic 'evacuation' of the site prior to its demolition enabled all but a few objects to be removed, the material assemblage possibly representing already broken and useless goods.

The general lack of a wider range of *in situ* deposits made the original dating and chronology of the site difficult (Holmes 1975, 161). Artefactually, the ceramic assemblage consisted of material dating to the 16th and early 17th century, demonstrating that later activity had removed the earlier medieval occupation. Ultimately, an approximate date of 1600 attributed to a pair of moulded door-jambs within Lauder's Tenement was used to date the whole of the site (*ibid*). However, new documen-

tary research suggests a probable construction date in the latter half of the 16th century, following its destruction through fire in 1544, and suggests that Napier's Tenement had a far earlier origin, being occupied from at least 1508, and possibly as early as 1493. The origin and date of Marlin's Wynd itself is similarly problematic. It seems most likely that wynds were laid out at the same time as burgage plots, being used to mark the boundaries between land parcels (Coleman 2004, 297; Tait 2006, 306). A 1477 reference to both Niddry's and Peebles Wynds implies that Marlin's Wynd may date to this period (Tait 2006, 305), although the name is not used until 1555.

The recent excavations have provided a more extensive plan of the structures, while the new documentary evidence provides a more comprehensive record of the inhabitants of the buildings, their careers and social status. In the following discussion the documentary and archaeological evidence is drawn together to form a narrative of sorts for each building. Analogy with both existing buildings and cartographic records provides evidence for the layout and form of the structures excavated within the Tron. Buildings of similar age elsewhere along the High Street generally have at least four or five storeys, with either shops or booths to the front, and accommodation above accessed through the booth front or up a set of external stairs. Access to the backlands would have been through either the larger wynds or the closes.

### 8.1 *Building A (Lauder's Tenement)*

Building A was located on the north-west corner of Marlin's Wynd and the High Street, and represents the fragmentary remains of Lauder's Tenement, a building constructed to replace those burnt down during the invasion by the Earl of Hertford in 1544, when much of the town on the south side was destroyed. Only partially investigated by Holmes, the remaining building was excavated to reveal more of the rock-cut cellarage. The actual occupancy of each part of the building is difficult to establish, but by the publication of the 1635 housemails book a series of wealthy occupants had lived in the building, including Thomas Bannatyne, a confectioner. Generally, confectioners were among the first merchants to realise the importance of presentation and this is reflected in Bannatyne's inventory list, which included imported high-value luxury produce from London. The identification of high-prestige glassware from the tenement, while not necessarily associated with Bannatyne himself, certainly

reflects the status of at least some of the people who lived there. The building overlying Marlin's Wynd comprised a combination of shops, booths and cellars all accessed off the High Street. Despite the northern part of Napier's Tenement being owned or inhabited by, among others, a writer and a cloth merchant, no evidence, perhaps unsurprisingly, was identified of their occupation of the site.

### 8.2 *Building B (Napier's Tenement)*

Napier's Tenement was located on the north-east corner of Marlin's Wynd and the High Street from at least 1508. Despite truncation, the front of the building and a fragment of the High Street were revealed in the recent works, providing new evidence for the alignment and construction of the street. By 1626, the front of the building, a former bakehouse, appears to have been sub-divided into two shops, accessed via the High Street. It is unclear from the documentary evidence whether the shops occupied the ground or first floor areas but the stone plinth facing onto the High Street confirms that an arcaded booth lay along the ground floor frontage. There is no archaeological evidence for a bakehouse, but both the courtyard, an open area traditionally associated with craft activities (Coleman 2004, 298) and the industrial area beyond it could have served as preparation areas for the bakehouse. The material assemblage from the industrial area, together with the presence of a possible flue and basin, are more indicative of iron working (Holmes 1975, 161), but

it is possible that this industry superseded the bakehouse.

### 8.3 *Buildings C (Napier's Tenement) and D*

Building C, an isolated structure to the immediate south of the courtyard, was also located within Napier's Tenement. The building appears independent of any other structures, the courtyard and industrial area fitting around it. Though the possibility exists that it represents an independent tower-like structure, the lack of any other such feature in the historical maps argues against this. Alternatively, the building may form the northern part of a T-shaped tenement, a common design in medieval and post-medieval Edinburgh (illus 2 and 3). Truncation has removed any stratigraphic relationship that may have existed between the northern wall of Building D and the southern wall of Building C; it seems possible that the two were contemporary. The recent documentary evidence demonstrates that Dr Scott, a later owner of Napier's Tenement, also owned a cellar to the immediate north of a fleshhouse accessed directly from Marlin's Wynd. This description of course matches Building C, suggesting that the fleshhouse exited in the now truncated area to the immediate south. The incorporation of the drains into the building further demonstrates the owner's incentive to provide amenity to the building and occupants, which was previously demonstrated by Napier's attempt to provide more windows in the building.