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## 3 Results by John A Lawson and David Reed

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The following results from the archaeological programme of works and building recording have been organised to reflect the three major phases of construction and redevelopment, starting with the construction of the Flodden Wall in the early 16th century.

### 3.1 Phase 1: Construction of the Flodden Wall (early 16th century)

The earliest section of the Wall (context 501: shown in red on [Illus 4](#)) – was constructed from random roughly-dressed blocks of sandstone and whinstone, ranging in size from 600mm × 200mm to 150mm × 50mm. The Wall, which averaged 1.10m in width, was bonded together by a buff coloured, lime-based mortar which included frequent inclusions of grit, shell fragments, pebbles and ceramics.



*Illus 6 West-facing elevation of the Flodden Wall and the Phase 2 & 3 walls, showing Test-Pit C*

Although the foundations for Wall 501 were never exposed, the eastern (inner) face of the Flodden Wall was recorded to a height of 2.0m above current ground level. It must be noted that the top of this had been truncated, principally in the later 19th century when it was used to form the foundations for the western boundary wall of Granny's Green (wall 416 of Phase 3, [Section 3.3](#)). Accordingly the current height of Wall 501 reflects that of the ground level of Granny's Green and **not** its original height.

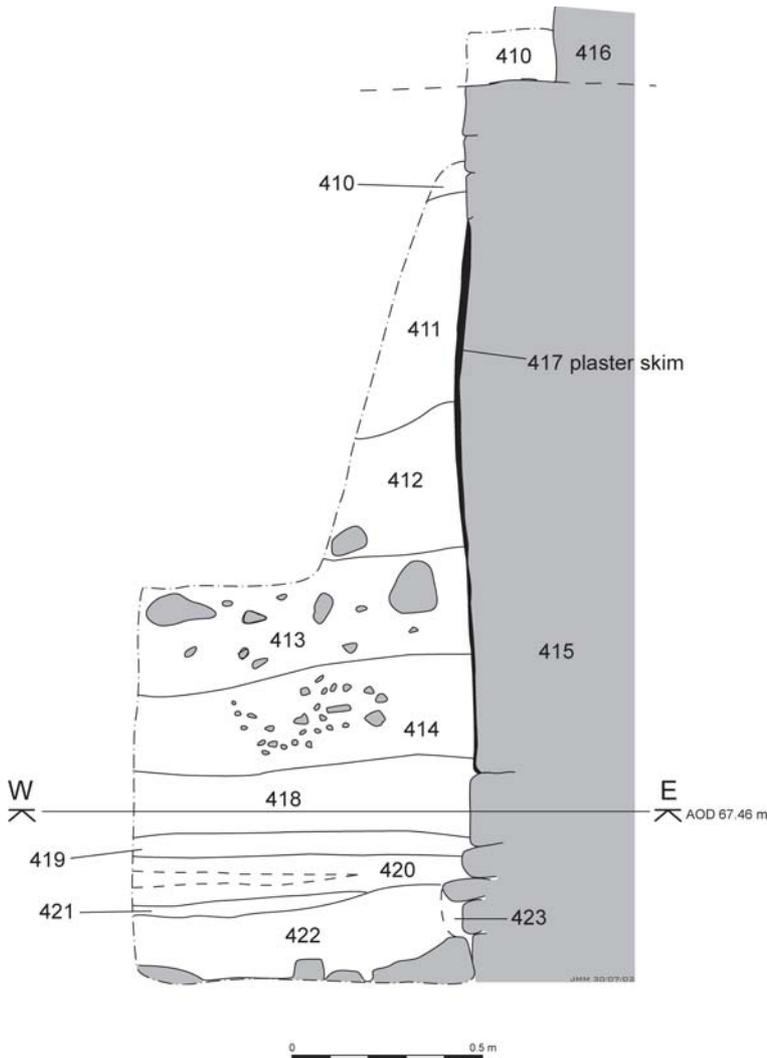
At a point approximately 16m from the north end of the former Robertson's Memorial Church the Wall was seen to change alignment slightly towards the north-west ([Illus 2](#)). The exact reason for this change is unclear though it may reflect the initial construction of the Wall in separate sections. This change in alignment would seem to reflect a change in direction depicted on the 1573 sketch in Holinshed's *Chronicles* ([Illus 11](#)) for this section of the Flodden Wall, though the change shown on this sketch is much more exaggerated.

Within Test Pit C the foundation trench (context 423) for the 18th-century rebuild of the Flodden Wall (wall 415) was identified as cutting an earlier deposit of dark pink-brown clay ([Illus 7](#), context 422). This layer contained both midden material (animal bone and oyster shell fragments) and quantities of rubble. The rubble comprised large angular sandstone and igneous blocks similar to those used in the construction of the Flodden Wall. Although no dating evidence was recovered, the stratigraphic evidence indicates that this layer formed the outer ground surface contemporary with the Flodden Wall.

### 3.2 Phase 2: Reconstruction and development (16th century–c1850)

Wall 415 (shown in blue on [Illus 4](#)) represents the rebuilding of the southern section of the original Flodden Wall (context 501), extending southwards from a point 4.50m to the north of the former Robertson's Memorial Church to the Grassmarket. This probably coincided with the construction of a group of buildings either side of the Wall, to the west between 1765 and 1784 and to the east between 1765 and 1810 x 1817 (on the map and plan evidence, see [Section 4.2](#)).

Wall 415 was constructed using the same roughly-dressed sandstone and whinstone blocks as used in the earlier construction of Flodden Wall 501. The rebuilt wall also contained occasional fragments of pantile used as pinnings. This later wall was also bonded together using a different lime-based mortar,



*Illus 7 Test Pit C: south-facing section (context 415: Phase 2 rebuild)*

yellow-cream in colour and containing noticeably fewer quantities of sand and grit inclusions. Wall 415 was also narrower than the earlier Flodden Wall (501) averaging 0.80m in width in comparison to 1.10m for Wall 501. The narrow foundation trench (context 423) for wall 415 was identified within Test Pit C (Illus 7), cut into the underlying ground surface (422) that had built up against the Flodden Wall (501).

On the western face of the Wall a visible vertical scar marked the change between Walls 501 and 415 on the western elevation (Illus 4). This would appear to respect the position of the northernmost wall for the building shown on Kincaid's 1784 plan of the area (Illus 13). To the south of this scar the Wall's face had been finished with a fine (14mm thick) layer of yellow-brown plaster (context 417) to form an internal surface. To the south of this a second patch of the same plasterwork contained shards of pantile, flattened into the face of the Wall, presumably to form a better bedding surface for the applied plaster.

A uniform levelling layer (Illus 7, context 421) of hard pink-brown, sandy-clay was deposited



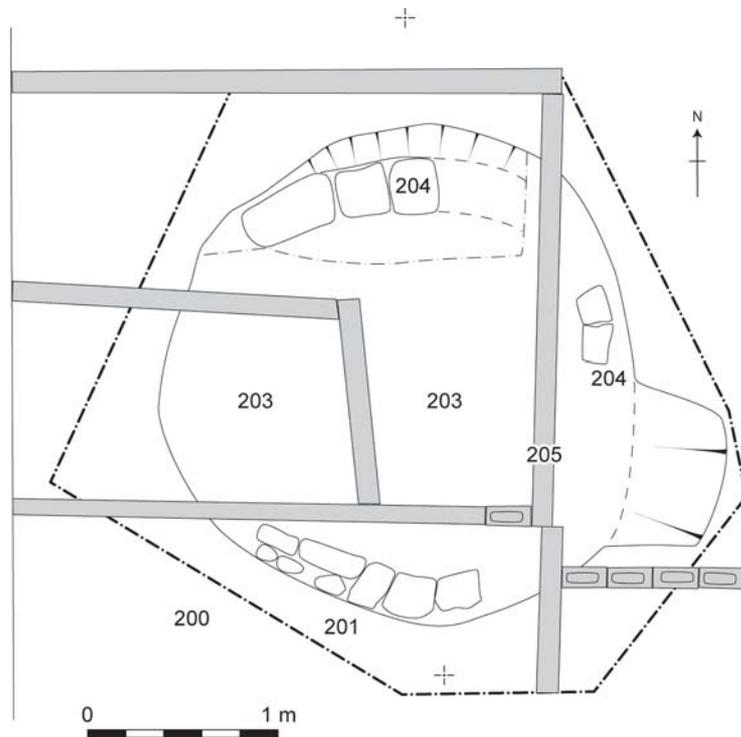
*Illus 8 South-facing section of Test Pit C, same view as Illus 7*

overlying the irregular surface ground surface 422 to the west of the Flodden Wall, prior to the construction of the later 18th-century building associated with wall 415 and plasterwork 417 (described above). Overlying this layer was a 0.13m thick bedding layer (420) for mortar floor 419. This deposit consisted of a firm dark grey-black, sandy silt containing lenses of sandy mortar and also contained artefacts dating to the 18th century. These included 'hand-made' brick fragments, pottery, clay pipe stems, a fragment of window glass and an undecorated copper-alloy button (finds analysis throughout by John A Lawson). Context 420 overlay both the foundation trench for the rebuilt wall 415 and the clay levelling deposit (421). A 0.07m deep floor surface (419) comprised of a hard, friable, cream-coloured lime mortar was subsequently laid over the bedding layer and abutted the internal wall-surface 417. Also contained within the floor surface were lenses of coal, charcoal and coal ash.

To the east of the Wall, the results of the main watching brief and excavation of Test Pits A and B showed that a loose dark brown loam (context



*Illus 9 The well at the Black Bull, showing the two vaulted feeder drains*



*Illus 10 Plan of the Black Bull well (modern floor joists shown in grey)*

503/505), with pockets of sandstone rubble, had accumulated to a depth of 0.70 m to the east of the Flodden Wall. This deposit occurred across the whole area between the eastern side of the Flodden Wall and the late 18th-century tenement, with

little differentiation observed. Interpreted as a 'garden soil', it contained small quantities of domestic midden throughout, including animal butchery waste, oyster shells, clay pipe and sherds of 16th–17th century pottery (Westerwald type

stoneware, Scottish post-medieval reduced and oxidised wares).

A watching brief was undertaken during the relaying of the ground floor of the Black Bull public house. The results showed that the area had been truncated down to the natural reddish-brown clay. However one significant archaeological feature was recorded: well 204, towards the rear (north) of the building (Illus 9). This well (diameter 1.94 m: Illus 10) was constructed from roughly dressed stone blocks. It had been capped at some point in the last century and the water table was observed at approximately 2.5m below the top of the well.

### 3.3 Phase 3: Granny's Green (post 1850)

The mid-19th century saw the undertaking of large scale landscaping on both sides of the Flodden Wall. This involved the demolition of the Phase 2 buildings constructed against the western side of the Flodden Wall and the subsequent creation of Granny's Green. Furthermore, to the east of the Wall the stables belonging to Mr Marshall (according to a plan of Grassmarket properties, 1810: NAS RHP4995 = Adams and Timperley 1988, 42) were demolished to create an upper garden-terrace across the northern half of the area.

This resulted in the construction of a series of new boundary walls (shown in green on Illus 4: 416, 502 & 504) each of which were made from roughly tooled sandstone blocks laid in fairly regular courses with occasional mudstone pinnings. The walls were bonded together with an offish-white mortar containing inclusions of coarse grit and unburnt lime. Only wall 502 retained its original sandstone copingstones (average length 300m long), with the remaining sections of wall having suffered from recent collapse. Two modern concrete paving slabs were recorded being used as coping along the surviving upper stretch of wall 416. Phase 3 wall 502 also contained

evidence that recent localised rebuilding and repointing work had been undertaken.

The sequence of demolition/construction and levelling deposits associated with the creation of Granny's Green was recorded within Test Pit C (Illus 7). Overlying the Phase 2 mortar floor 419 was a compact deposit of dark grey-brown, silty-sand containing coal and ash and numerous artefacts (context 418). The artefacts included fragments of 18th–19th century pottery and clay pipe stems, a fragment of window glass, fragments of pantile, animal bone and a copper-alloy circular button. Overlying context 418 and also abutting the Phase 2 plaster rendering (context 417) was a 0.20m depth of loose, cream coloured, mortar fragments and rubble (context 414). Context 414 contained three 19th-century clay pipe stems (one stamped 'Burns of Leith') and one bowl ('Thomas White of Edinburgh', date-range 1867 x 1880s).

Overlying context 414 was a 0.38m deep deposit of firm dark grey-brown silty-clayey-sand (context 413) contained fragments of stone, pantile, brick and lime mortar. Artefacts within this deposit included a cat's jawbone, two clay pipe stems and a 19th-century clay pipe bowl decorated on the right side with the Prince of Wales' crest. Pottery within context 413 included one sherd of 17th-century Scottish Post-Medieval redware and five sherds of red and white earthenwares dating to the late 18th to 19th centuries. This in turn was sealed by 0.26m of sandstone rubble within a matrix of loose pink-brown plastic clay (context 412). Numerous fragments of off-white mortar were present within context 412 which also included fragments of pantile, two sherds of 19th-century pottery (white earthenware) and a 19th-century clay pipe stem. Stratigraphically later than context 412 were the foundations for Phase 3 boundary wall 416 (described earlier).

Finally, a dumped deposit of firm dark pink-brown sandy-silty-clay (context 411) overlay layer 412. This dumped material contained both animal bone and 18th to 19th-century pottery and was overlain by modern topsoil (context 410).