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23 Seafield Road East, Edinburgh

Report type: Photographic Survey
Report No. 4692

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23 Seafield Road East, Edinburgh

Photographic Survey

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CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Methodology	4
3.	Desk-based Research Results	4
4.	Photographic Survey Results	5
5.	Discussion	9

APPENDICES

1.	DES Entry	11
2.	Photographic Thumbnails	12

PLATES

Plate 1.	General view of the stairwell.....	4
Plate 2.	Decorative banister.....	4
Plate 3.	Tiled floor surface.....	5
Plate 4.	Elephant Mural on southeast wall	5
Plate 5.	Tiled wall on northwest side	6
Plate 6.	Tiled wall on southeast side	7
Plate 7.	Carlsberg logo within tiled wall	8

FIGURES

Fig. 1	Site Location
Fig. 2	Plan
Fig.3.1	Ortho image of northwest mural
Fig.3.2	Ortho image of southeast mural

1. Introduction

CFA Archaeology were approached by the City of Edinburgh Council to undertake recording of a mural within 23 Seafield Road East (Fig.1). Planning permission has been granted for the demolition and redevelopment of the site which will result in the loss of the mural. There was no archaeological condition attached to planning permission, but it was decided a basic record should be made of the Mural. The building was formerly owned by Carlsberg Group and the elephant murals relate to their ownership.

Carl Jacobsen the founder of Carlsberg Brewing chose the symbol of the elephant because it represented strength, loyalty and industriousness. Elephants feature heavily at Carlsberg's headquarters in Copenhagen mostly famously in the Elephant Gate.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives are:

- To record by standard photography and photogrammetry the decorative tile mural prior to demolition.
- Provide an illustrated report on the results of the survey.

2. Methodology

The Carlsberg Archives in Copenhagen were contacted but they did not hold any information on either the building or the mural. An extensive internet search was undertaken but no information on the date of the building or the mural could be found.

2.2 Photographic Survey

CFA uses a Sony Alpha 7 II to take digital photographs of structures and specific architectural features.

A detailed photographic record was produced of the stair well that contained the mural, and of the murals themselves. Photogrammetry was used to record the murals.

4. Photographic Survey Results

4.1 General

The elephant murals are situated within a stairwell at the back of the building (Plate 1) Fig.2. They are attached to the side walls of the staircase and there is a large window overlooking the sea formed of six panels. The stairs treads and half landings were originally timber, but the lower landing and bottom flight have been replaced with checker plate. The stairs are fitted with a decorative banister (Plate 2). The handrail is varnished wood with decorative metal panels and posts painted cream. The upper landing and ground floor have a tiled surface made of

small square ceramic tiles (Plate 3). Most of the tiles have a speckled grey finish with randomly located red, mustard, blue and grey tiles replicating the colours in the murals (Plate 4).



Plate 1. General view of the stairwell



Plate 2. Decorative banister



Plate 3. Tiled floor surface



Plate 4. Elephant Mural on southeast wall

4.2 The murals

The tiled murals originally covered the southeast and northwest walls of the stair wells (Plate 5 and Plate 6) Fig 3,3.1. It appears they were later covered by wallpaper which has been largely removed. The walls are covered in polychromatic tiles featuring a geometric pattern. Evenly spaced within the design are 4 tiles forming the stylised letter C (Plate 7). The same stylised letter has been used to form the elephant's trunk.

By the 1960s Mid Century Modern (MCM) was the predominant design style. The style used natural materials such as pale timbers along with lighter or thinner looking fittings, (Plate 1& Plate 2), as a reaction to the dark woods and chunkier, highly decorated earlier Victorian/Edwardian style. MCM also used a lighter colour palette and made use of simple geometric patterns again as a reaction to the earlier, darker Victorian/Edwardian palette and its overly intricate designs. Pastels and oranges as accents against pale off whites were preferred, this can be seen in the murals use of sky blue and yellow ochre (Plate 3) and again reflected in the tiled floor (Plate 4).

No information relating to the dates that Carlsberg operated from this building could be found but the stylistic grounds are strong for dating the building construction and the murals creation to the 1960's. No evidence could be found to attribute the murals to an individual artist though they could also have been created by Carlsberg's own internal design team as part of the building's construction.



Plate 5. Tiled wall on northwest side



Plate 6. Tiled wall on southeast side

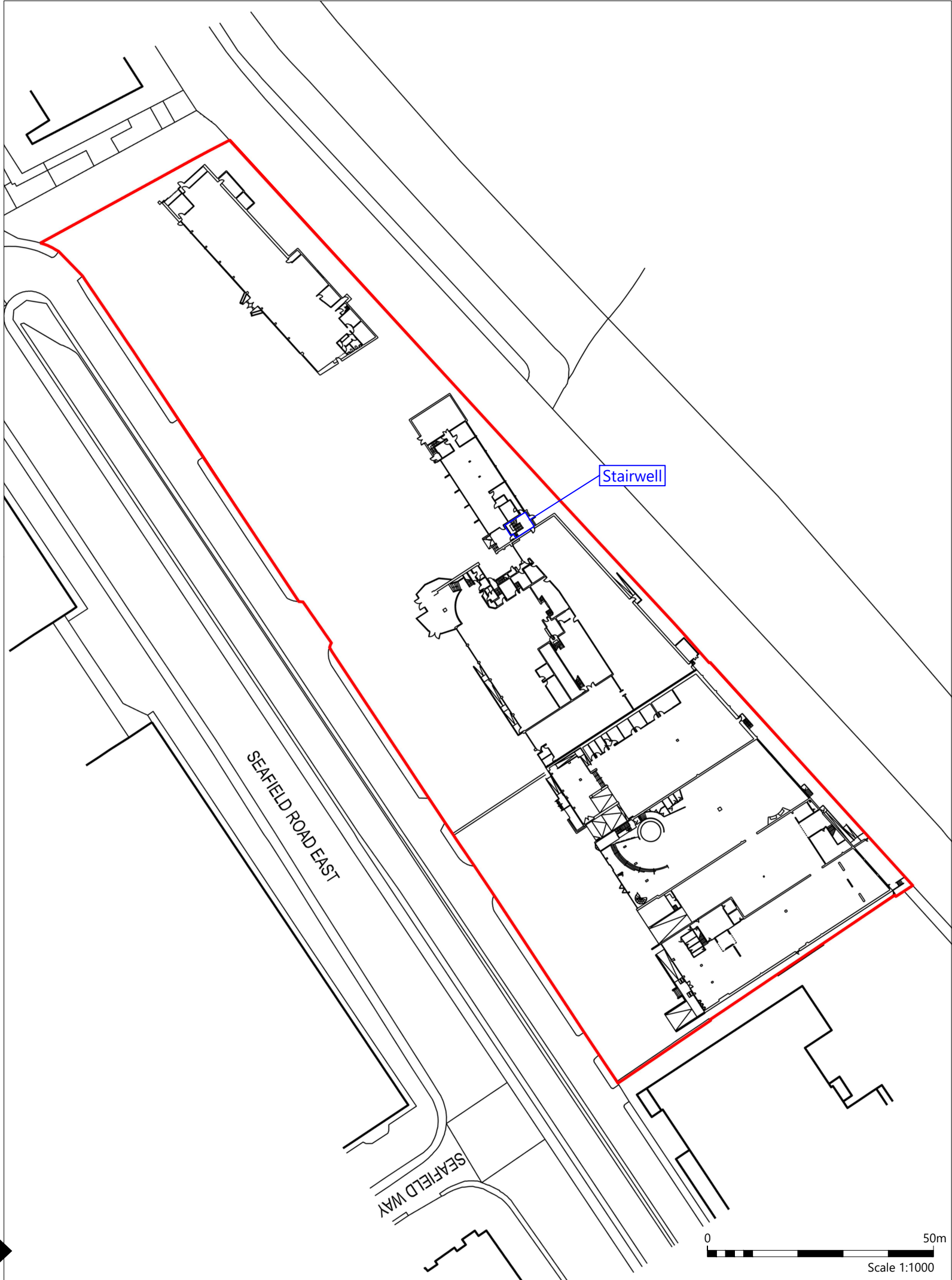
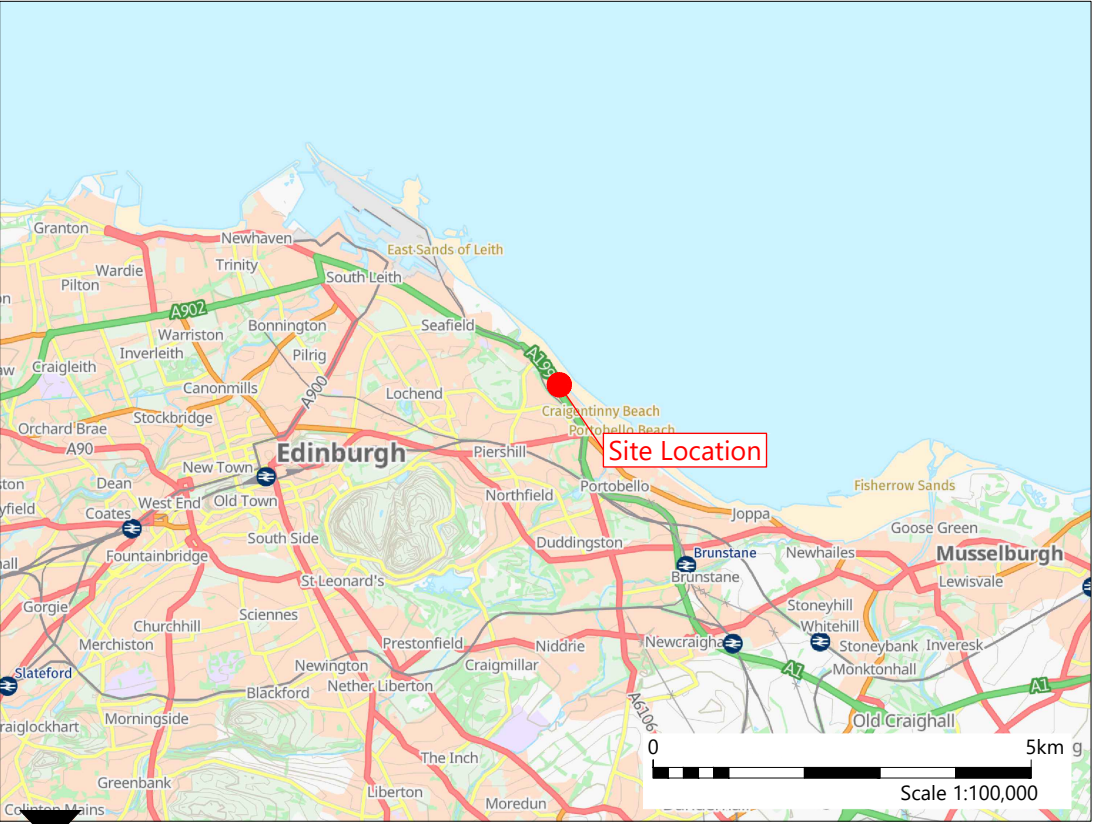


Plate 7. Carlsberg logo within tiled wall

DES Summary

OASIS ID (UID)	cfaarcha1-535299
Project Name	Photogrammetric Survey at 23 Seafield Road East
Sitename	23 Seafield Road East
Sitecode	ACSR
Activity type	Photogrammetric Survey
Reason For Investigation	Unexpected discovery
Organisation Responsible for work	CFA Archaeology Ltd
Project Dates	27-May-2025 - 27-May-2025
Location	23 Seafield Road East NGR: NT 29623 75126 LL: 55.96396496190543, -3.128940762228031 12 Fig: 329623,675126
Administrative Areas	Parish: Leith Council: City of Edinburgh Country: Scotland
Project Methodology	A photogrammetric Survey was undertaken of two tiled murals within a stairwell. A standard photographic record was also made of the murals and the stairwell. The archives of Carlsberg who formerly owned the building were contacted but no information could be found on the date or artist responsible for the murals.
Project Results	the murals were recorded photogrammetrically and photographically prior to the buildings demolition.
Keywords	
Funder	Public body Edinburgh City Council
Person Responsible for work	Jenni Morrison
Archives	
NGR	NT 29623 75126
Previous Work	No
Future Work	No
Caption(s) for illustrations	
Summary will appear in	This will appear in DES: Year 2025

Report generated on: 14-07-2025:1248



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Location of Stairwell

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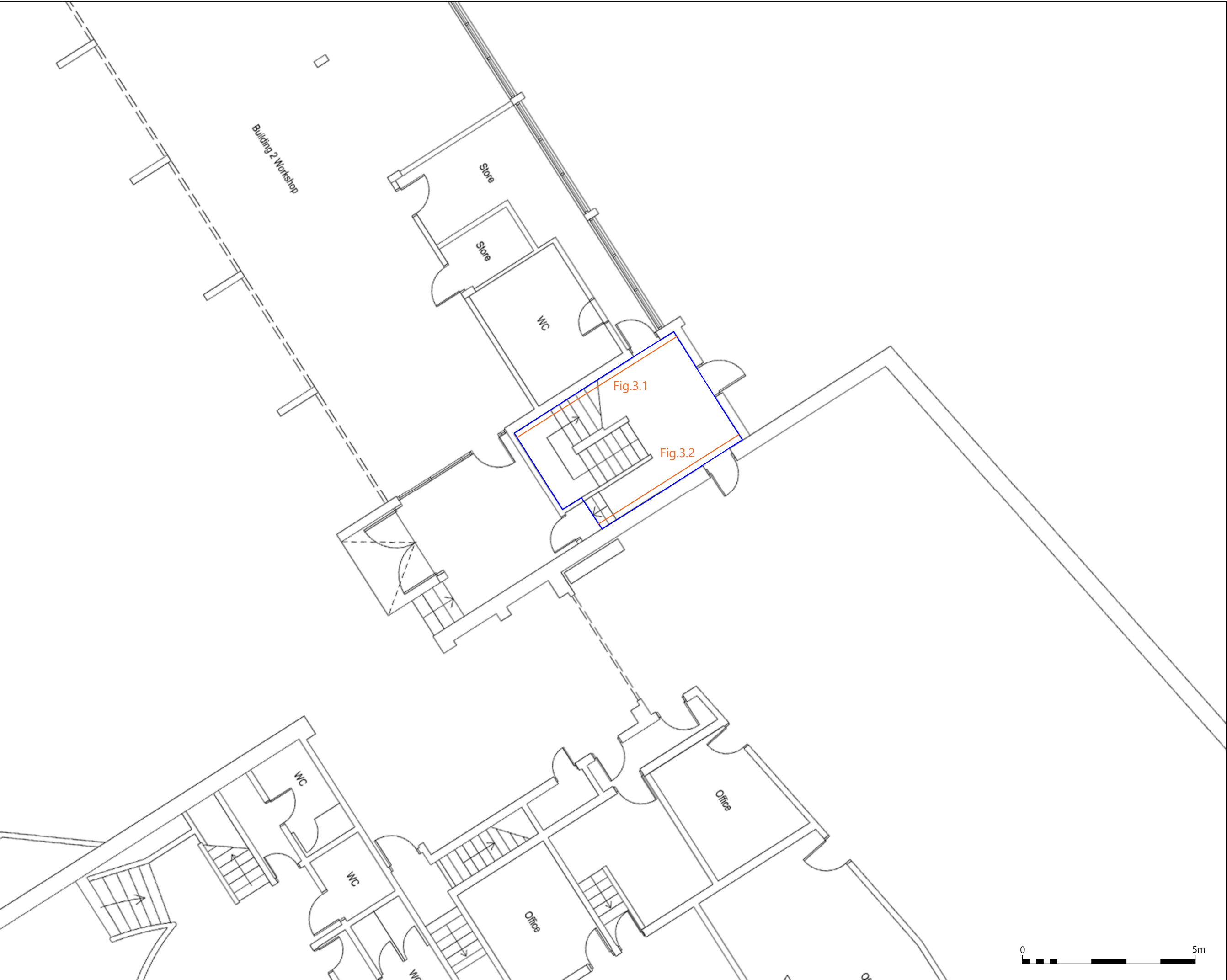
Title:
Site Location

Project:
23 Seafield Road East,
Edinburgh

Client:
City of Edinburgh Council

Scale at A3:
Varies

Drawn by: SB	Checked: SW	Date: 14/07/2025
Report No: 4692		Fig. No: 1



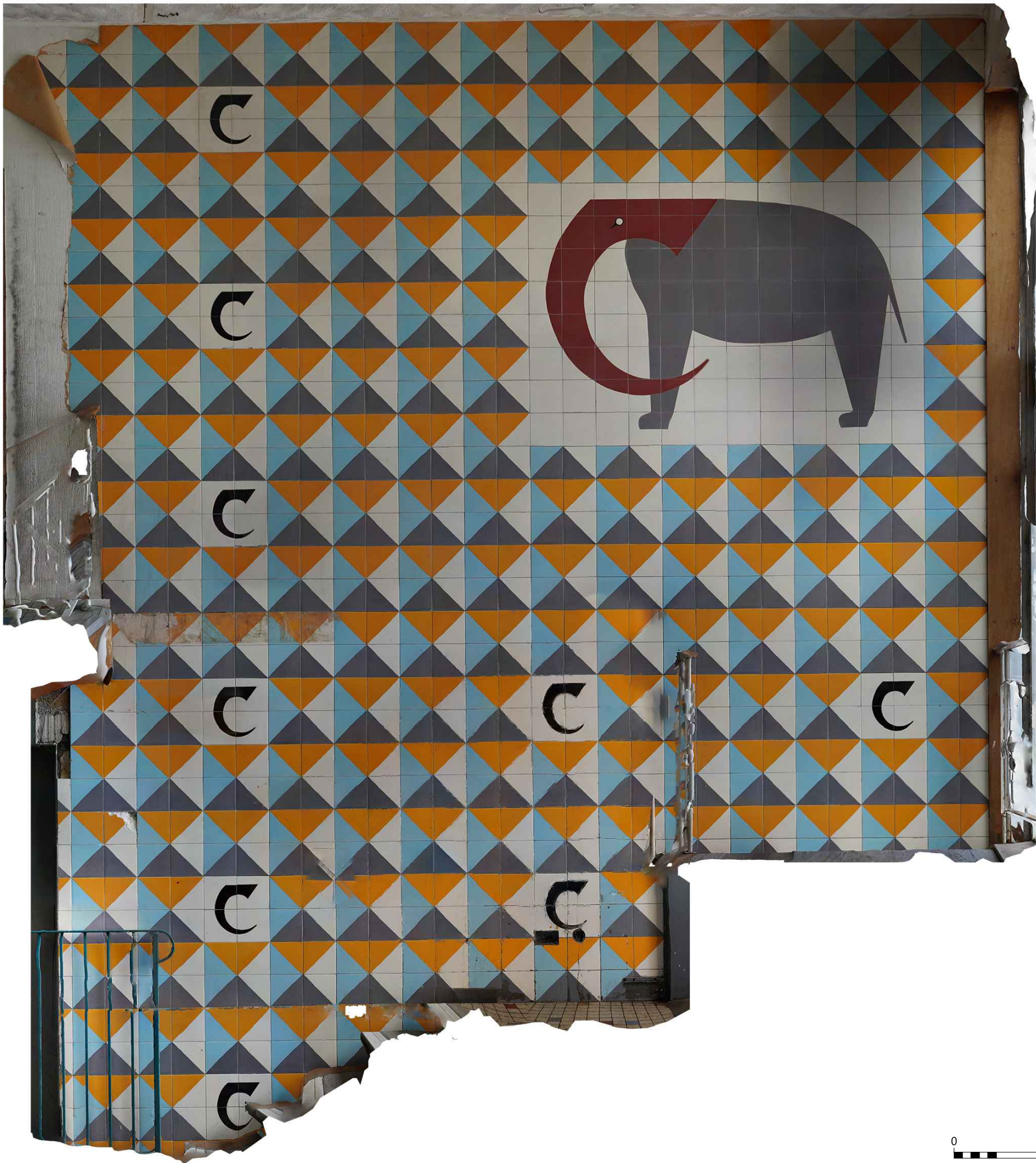
Key:

Location of Stairwell

Location of Mural



Title: Plan		
Project: 23 Seafield Road East, Edinburgh		
Client: City of Edinburgh Council		
Scale at A3: 1:100		
Drawn by: SB	Checked: SW	Date: 14/07/2025
Report No: 4692		Fig. No: 2



Key:



Title:
Scaled ortho image of
Northwest side mural

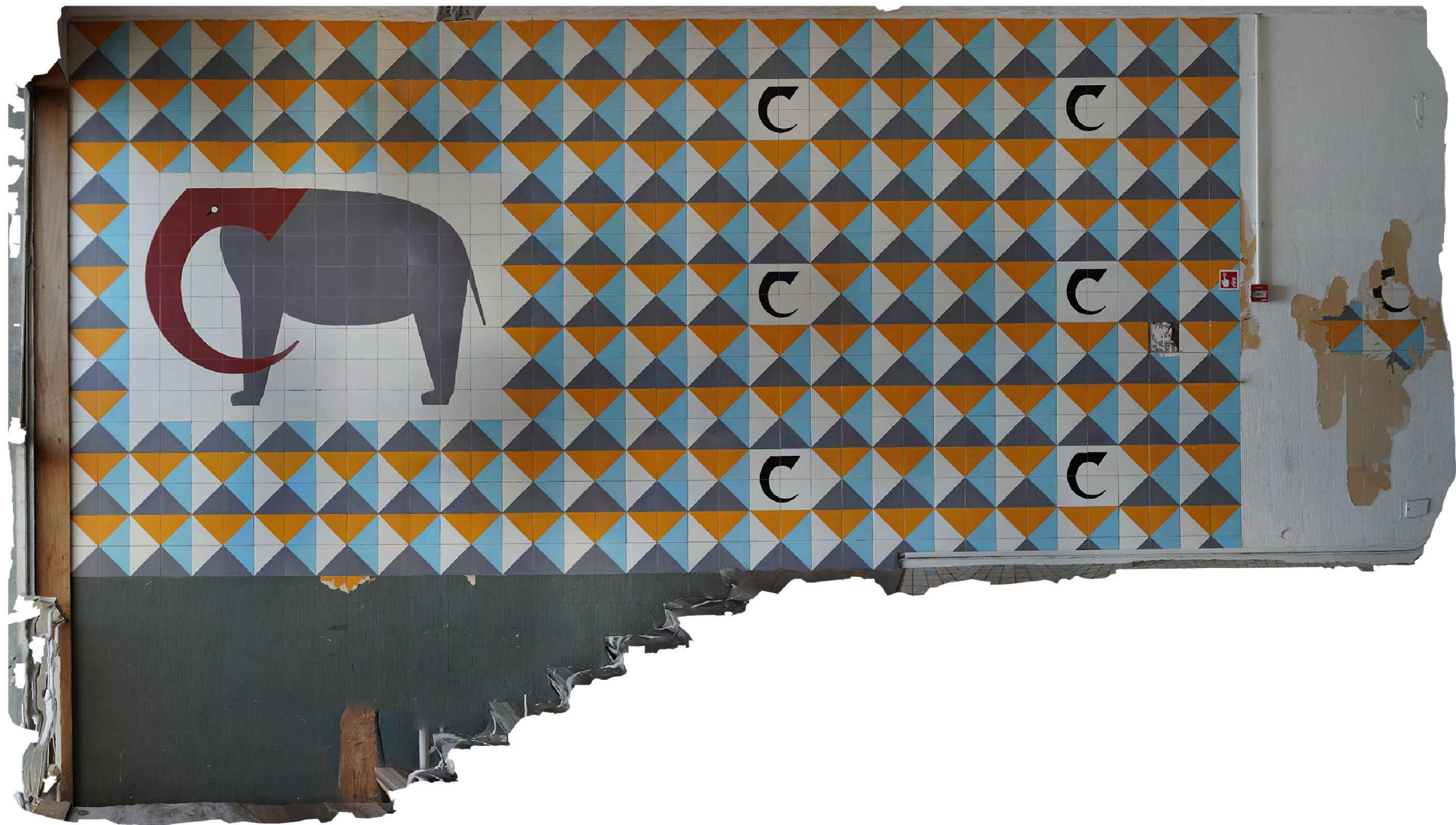
Project:
23 Seafield Road East,
Edinburgh

Client:
City of Edinburgh Council

Scale at A3:
1:20

Drawn by: SB	Checked: SW	Date: 14/07/2025
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Report No: 4692	Fig. No: 3.1
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Key:



Title: Scaled ortho image of Southeast side mural		
Project: 23 Seafield Road East, Edinburgh		
Client: City of Edinburgh Council		
Scale at A3: 1:20		
Drawn by: SB	Checked: SW	Date: 14/07/2025
Report No: 4692		Fig. No: 3.2





ACSR_001.JPG



ACSR_002.JPG



ACSR_003.JPG



ACSR_004.JPG



ACSR_005.JPG



ACSR_006.JPG



ACSR_007.JPG



ACSR_008.JPG



ACSR_009.JPG



ACSR_010.JPG



ACSR_011.JPG



ACSR_012.JPG



ACSR_013.JPG



ACSR_014.JPG



ACSR_015.JPG



ACSR_016.JPG



ACSR_017.JPG



ACSR_018.JPG



ACSR_019.JPG



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