

**18 Ritchie Street, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae:
Archaeological Watching Brief**



Data Structure Report

by Rebecca Shaw

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Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services

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1 Introduction

This Data Structure Report presents the findings of archaeological works undertaken for Coastal Capers Ltd in respect of proposed development works on a site at 18 Ritchie St, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae (centred on grid ref: NS 1602 5483) (planning ref no. 06/01086/PP). The proposed development, which comprises two new dwelling houses, lies in relative close proximity to Millport harbour which was established circa. 1750. Although the site was previously occupied by a timber boat shed and yard it seems to have remained largely undeveloped therefore increasing the potential for 18th century or earlier archaeological remains to be located.

North Ayrshire Council asked for an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken as a requirement of the issued planning consent. The archaeological works were designed to address the general ground reduction and excavation of foundations relating to the new structure. The main objective of the works was to record and recover items of interest that were impacted on by the development works.

Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services was appointed to act with regard to the archaeological condition by Coastal Capers Ltd. The terms of the watching brief were agreed through a Written Scheme of Investigation (Shaw, 2008) with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, who advise North Ayrshire Council on such matters.

2 Background

Although in the mid 18th century (Roy Military Survey 1747-55) there were small settlements on the island of Great Cumbrae cartographic sources show that there was no settlement at Millport Bay. However, settlement must have begun around this period as the harbour was built circa. 1750 and the town of Millport then began to develop around the bay.

The Admiralty Charts of Scotland undertaken in 1845-47 indicate that there was possibly one small square structure on the development site at this time (Figure 1b). The first sound mapping that we have dates to the mid 19th century and denotes two structures within the development site; a long rectangular one and a square one (Figure 2a). At this time the street does not appear to have a name but close by there is a well called '*Mrs Ritchies Well*' which is presumably where the street gets its name.

The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey undertaken in 1896 shows little change to the development site with both a roofed square and rectangular structure still being depicted (Figure 2b), the street is now named Ritchie Street. The next map, which was surveyed in 1966, only depicts the rectangular structure, with the area where the square structure previously stood shown as open ground. Various locals mentioned that in the 1920's the small square structure was in use as a bakery and prior to that was a pottery. The rectangular structure, which was demolished recently, comprised a wooden boat shed with a concrete floor and a yard.

3 Project Works

The watching brief took place on the 31st June and the 1st July 2008. All groundbreaking works after the removal of the upper concrete were observed. The works comprised excavation of the foundation trenches as well as general ground reduction.

As agreed though the written scheme of investigation any potential features revealed were to be investigated. However, no archaeological features were observed during the on-site works and no material was recovered.

The works were undertaken as agreed with North Ayrshire Council and the West of Scotland Archaeology Service. All works complied with the Institute of Field Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct, and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

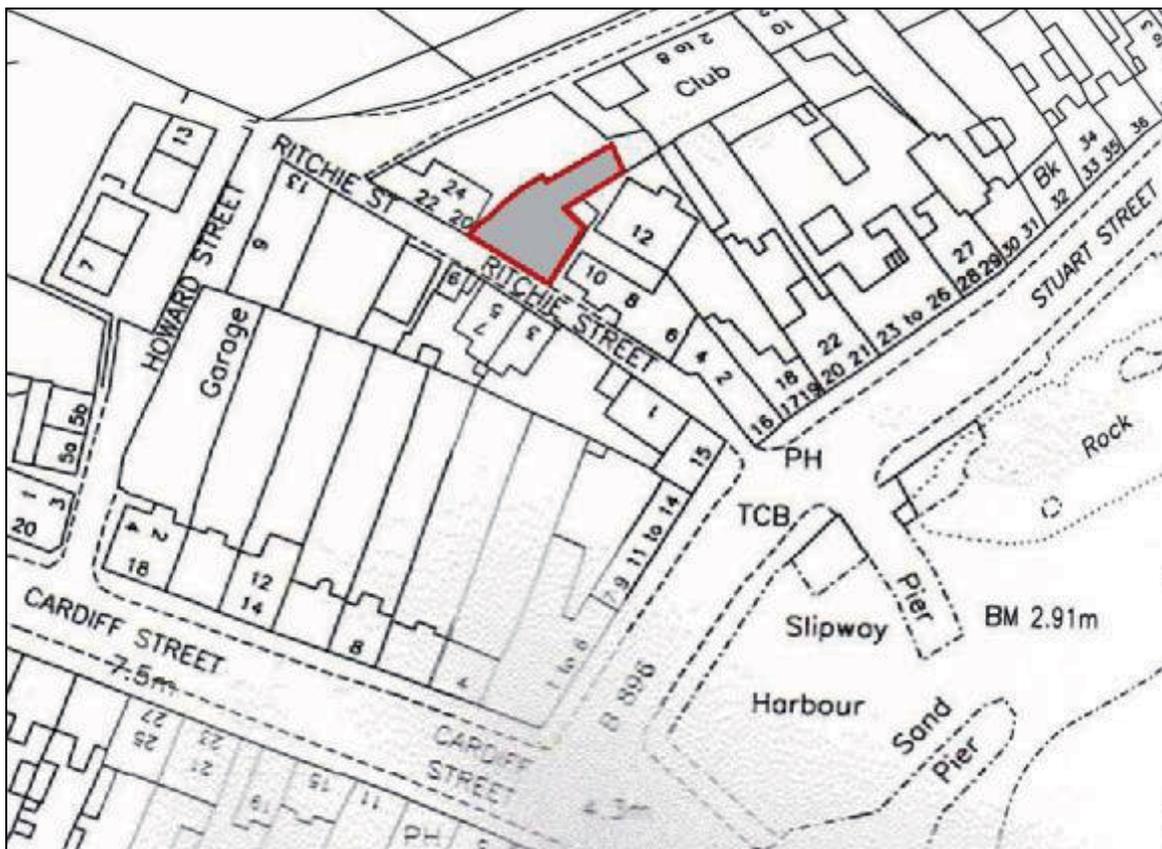


Figure 1a – modern ordnance survey map showing site location



Figure 1b – Admiralty Chart of Scotland (1845-47)

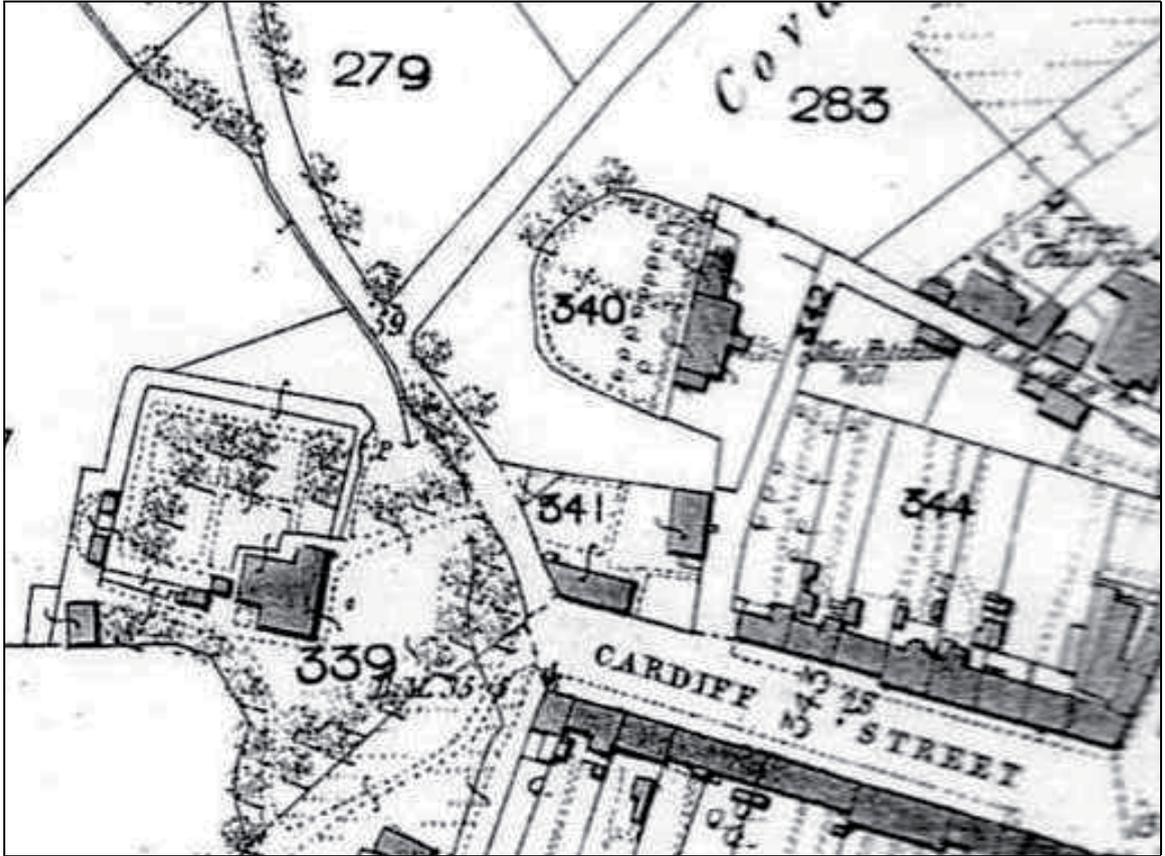


Figure 2a – 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (1856)

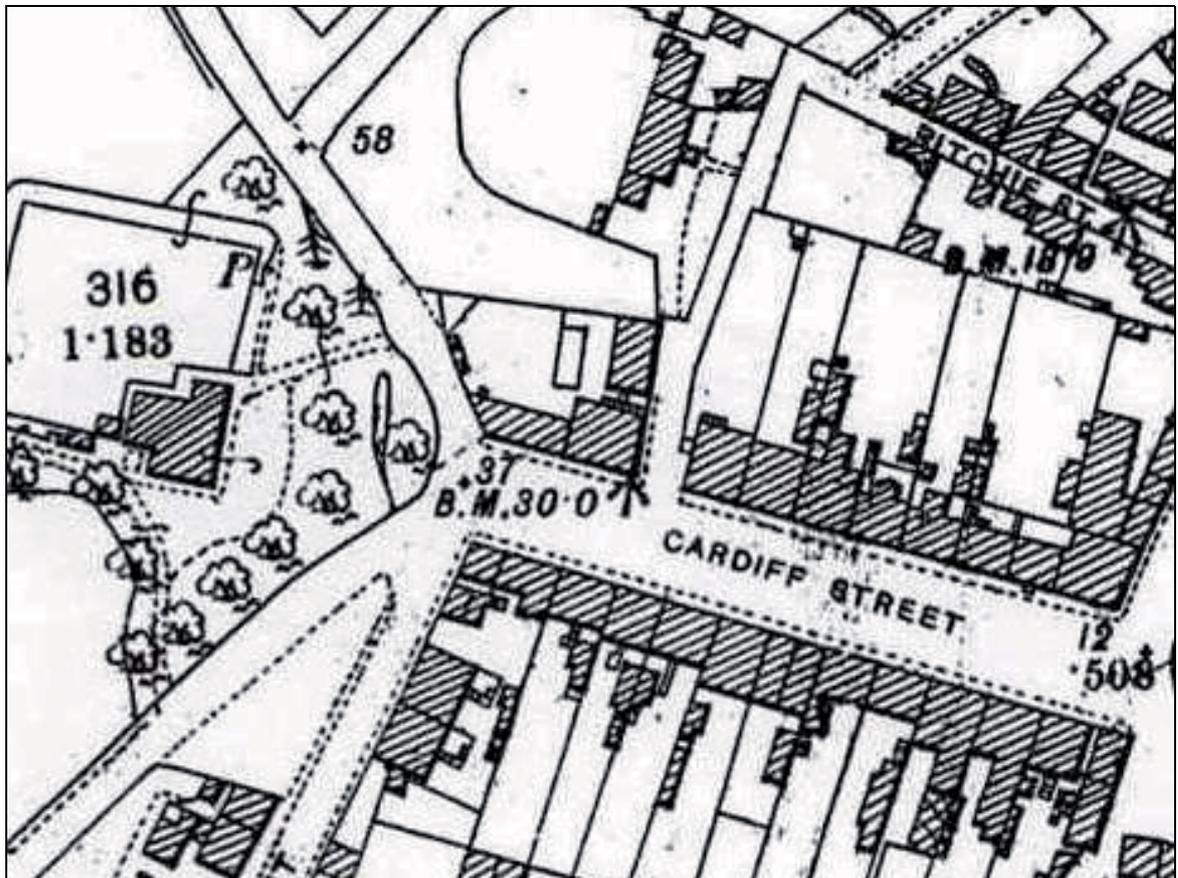


Figure 2b – 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey (1896)



Figure 3a – dwelling site after removal of concrete



Figure 3b – northern end of site



Figure 3c – showing bedrock close to surface

4 Findings:

The development area lies on the north side of Ritchie Street, roughly 50m from the junction on Stuart Street (Figure 1a) and is rectangular in shape with a narrow dog-leg at the rear. It is bounded by a vacant ground to the rear (north) with residential properties on both sides (ie to the east and west) and the road to the south.

Northern and western areas

Removal of the upper surface of concrete and vegetation [101] revealed a layer of demolition debris comprising irregular shaped sandstone blocks, glass and general rubbish [102]. In some areas within this section bedrock was very close to the surface (Figure 3a).

Excavation of the foundation trenches revealed a subsoil which comprised either bedrock [103]; a pinky red clay [104] or a yellowish /orange sand [105], both the width and depth of the founds trenches varied. There was an in-use water pipe [106] running roughly north/south across the site which was encased in concrete with fine pea-gravel on top, it measured 600mm in width (approx). The southwest corner area was left unexcavated as it is to be a parking area.

Eastern half

In the eastern half of the site the entire area was reduced as it was easier than excavating out individual foundation trenches. Immediately below the grass there was a very dark greyish/brown friable fine ashy silt [107] containing glass fragments; bits of saltglaze pipes; animal bones; 19th century earthenware; 20th century ceramics; red tile drain fragments and some fairly large stones. What appeared to be a (unmarked) lintel stone and a round (wheel-like) sharpening stones were found within deposit [107].

The subsoil in this area was mostly a sandy clay [108]. Along part of the eastern edge of the site (visible in section) were the remains of what appeared to be a sandstone wall [109]. A similar looking wall was also visible in the southern section (below the road). Within the eastern half there was the *in-situ* remains of an upright pipe (Figure 4a) as well as the fragmented remains of a saltglaze pipe aligned roughly east/west.

5 Discussion

The archaeological watching brief failed to identify any significant archaeology within the development area. In general after removal of the upper surface of concrete and vegetation the ground comprised either backfill type material or demolition debris which came down onto a clay; sandy or sandy clay subsoil. A fair amount of ground disturbance had already taken place due to the insertion of a number of pipes.

From cartographic sources we know that the rectangular structure is standing by 1856 (Figure 2a) but did not exist in 1845 (Figure 1b). Between 1856 and 1896 (Figure 2b) the structure appears to have become slightly longer but apart from that seems to have changed very little between its construction and demolition. Locals only seem to remember a timber boat shed being on this site.

Deposit [107] was midden-like in nature and was possibly bought in from elsewhere as build up material to level the ground after the demolition of the small square structure. Cartographic sources denote that a square building stood in the northwest corner of the site from about 1845 (Figure 2b) and was it still there in 1896 (Figure 2b), however, by 1966 the structure was no longer marked. Local knowledge indicates that the square structure was still standing in the 1920's when it was in use as a bakery and prior to this was a pottery.

This therefore gives us a demolition date for the square structure of between roughly 1925 and 1966, which is in keeping with material bought in to level up the ground. It is presumed that the two partial sandstone walls visible in the east and south sections are the remains of this square structure (Figures 4b and 4c). The wheel-like sharpening stone may have come from elsewhere but it could also have been used in either the pottery or bakery for sharpening tools or knives.



Figure 4a – *in-situ* pipe from sink of timber boat shed



Figure 4b – section showing remains of wall in east



Figure 4c – section showing remains of wall in south

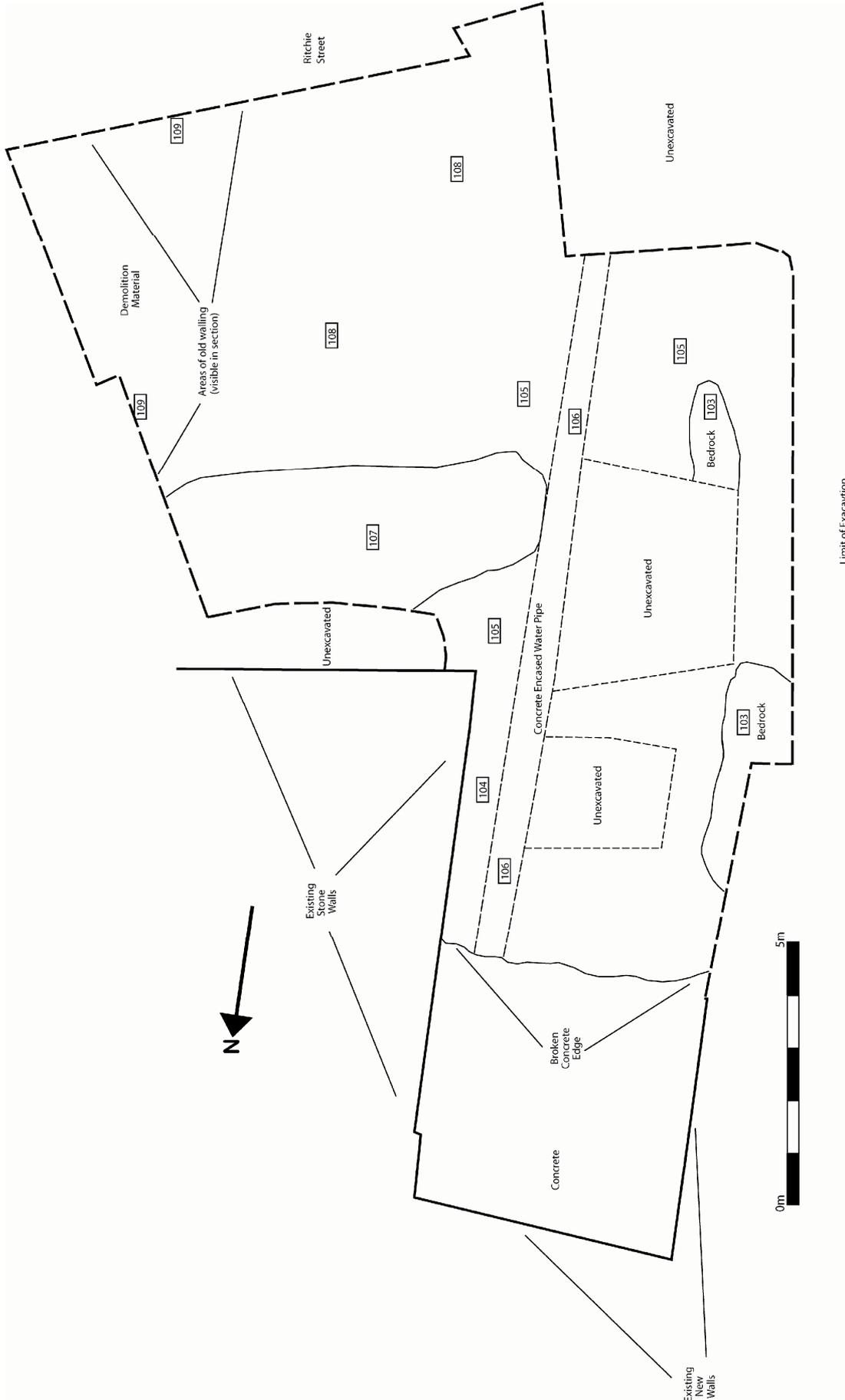


Figure 5 – Post-ex plan of site

6 Conclusion

An archaeological watching brief was carried on the 31st June to the 1st July 2008 for Coastal Capers Ltd. The works were undertaken in respect to the construction of a two new dwelling structures site located on land at 18 Ritchie Street, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae.

The works revealed demolition material as well as what appeared to be a midden-like levelling layer, both of these came down onto either a clay, sand or sandy clay subsoil, though bedrock was close to the surface some areas. The watching brief identified no archaeological material during excavation groundbreaking works.

References

<i>Documentary</i> SODev	1994	<i>National Planning Policy Guideline 5, Archaeology and planning</i> , Scottish Office Development Department.
SOEn	1994	<i>Planning Advice Note 42, Archaeology</i> , Scottish Office Environmental Department.
<i>Cartographic</i> Ordnance Survey	1856	1 st Edition Ordnance Survey, Argyllshire
Ordnance Survey	1896	2 nd Edition Ordnance Survey, Argyllshire
Ordnance Survey	1966	Ordnance Survey, Argyllshire

Appendix 1: Record Summaries

Context Summaries

No.	Interpretation	Description
001	Upper surface	Concrete and upper vegetation
002	Demolition debris	Irregular shaped sandstone blocks, glass and general rubbish
003	Bedrock	Bedrock
004	Subsoil	Pinky red clay
005	Subsoil	Yellowish orange sand
006	Water pipe	In use water pipe running north / south across site and encased in concrete
007	Levelling layer?	Very dark greyish/brown friable fine ashy silt containing glass fragments; bits of saltglaze pipes; animal bones; 19 th century earthenware; 20 th century ceramics; red tile drain fragments and some fairly large stones.
008	Subsoil	Sandy clay
009	Walling	Partial remains of two sandstone walls both visible in section in part of the eastern and southern limits of the site.

Photographic Record

No.	Film No.	B&W Negative No.	Disc No.	Digital No.	Description	From	Date
1	1	22	1	1	General pre-ex after removal of concrete	SSW	30/6/08
2	2	21	1	2	General pre-ex after removal of concrete	SSW	30/6/08
3	2	20	1	3	General post-ex	N	01/7/08
4	2	19	1	4	General post-ex	NE	01/7/08
5	2	18	1	5	General post-ex	S	01/7/08
6	2	17	1	6	N-facing section through southern end of site	NE	01/7/08
7	2	16	1	7	In-situ cast iron pipe from sink in wooden boat shed	N	01/7/08
8	2	15	1	8	Bedrock near surface	SE	01/7/08
9	2	14	1	9	Showing section through path at the side of number 10 Ritchie Street	NW	01/7/08
10	2	13	1	10	Showing section through main road	NE	01/7/08

Drawing Record

Sheet No.	Drawing No.	Description	Scale	Date
1	001	Post ex site plan	1:50	01/7/08

Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Argyll & Bute Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	18 Ritchie Street, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae
PARISH:	Cumbrae
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Rebecca Shaw
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NS 160 548
START DATE (this season)	31 st June 2008
END DATE (this season)	1 st July 2008
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
DESCRIPTION:	<p>An archaeological watching brief was carried on the 31st June to the 1st July 2008 for Coastal Capers Ltd. The works were undertaken in respect to the construction of a two new dwelling structures site located on land at 18 Ritchie Street, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae.</p> <p>The works revealed demolition material as well as what appeared to be a midden-like levelling layer, both of these came down onto either a clay, sand or sandy clay subsoil, though bedrock was close to the surface some areas. The watching brief identified no archaeological material during excavation groundbreaking works.</p>
PROJECT CODE:	08002
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Coastal Capers Ltd
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	1780 Great Western Road Anniesland Glasgow G13 2TL
E MAIL:	rebeccashaw@archaeologist.com
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Report to West of Scotland Sites and Monuments Record and archive to National Monuments Record of Scotland.

Contact Details

Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services

1780 Great Western Road
Anniesland
Glasgow
G13 2TL

tel: 0141 959 3168
mob: 07786 135432
email: rebeccashaw@archaeologist.com

West of Scotland Archaeology Service

Charing Cross Complex
20 India Street
Glasgow
G2 4PF

tel: 0141 287 8332/3
fax.: 0141 287 9259
email: enquiries@wosas.glasgow.gov.uk