

Seal Bay, Kildonan, Isle of Arran: Archaeological Investigative Works



Data Structure Report

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1 Introduction

This Data Structure Report presents the findings of archaeological works undertaken at a site at Seal Bay, Kildonan, Isle of Arran (centred on NGR NS 017 212). The site, which is located to the north of a raised beach, comprises an open grass field and extends to 0.72ha.

As only one of the six houses within the proposed development area had detailed consent, North Ayrshire Council initially asked for a watching brief to be undertaken of the excavation of the finds and associated services for this one house. However, as the other five houses had outline consent, Paul Robins at the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) agreed that a 5% evaluation of the whole proposed development area would be a more appropriate way to proceed. The main objective of the works was to inform on any archaeological hazard within the proposed development area.

Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services was appointed to act with regard to the archaeological condition by John McKean on behalf of Marriott Building Supplies. The terms of the evaluation were agreed with the WoSAS who advises North Ayrshire Council on such matters.

2 Background

Early cartographic sources indicate that the proposed development area (Figure 1) has always been open ground (Figures 2a and 2b) which has only been used for agricultural purposes. Old pictures (sourced at Ocean Breeze Bed & Breakfast next to the site) show that although the site was often in grass it was also used to grow crops (possibly potatoes) as well as hay stacks are visible in one of the pictures.

Given the close proximity of the sea and the mainly non destructive works on the proposed site area, there was the potential for prehistoric remains to have survived.

3 Project Works

The works, consisting of fourteen machine cut trenches, took place on the site at Seal Bay in Kildonan on the Isle of Arran from the 26th to 28th October 2009. The works were undertaken as agreed on-site with the Archaeology Service of North Ayrshire Council.

All works complied with the Institute of Field Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct, and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

4 Findings: trenches

The locations of the fourteen trenches are shown in (Figure 5) and the findings are detailed within the appendices:

The trenches exhibited a common stratigraphic sequence with a mid brown fine slightly clayey silty topsoil measuring between 250mm to 500mm in depth. Very occasional sherds of white china, glass and earthenware were found within the topsoil of all the trenches and a clay pipe stem was found in trench 7.

The subsoil (Figures 4a – 4d) varied from a mid brown coarse gravelly sandy silt containing numerous small sub-rounded and sub-angular stone; to a brownish orange clay with occasional stones and a gravelly clay with very frequent sub-rounded stones with occasional areas of silt and very occasional very large stones. Bedrock was visible at the base of trench 9 and trenches 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 12 all contained rubble drains.

The site slopes from north to south (Figure 3a) with steep cliffs (Figure 3b) located at the northern end before flattening out at the very southern end as it heads towards the sea. In general the topsoil was deeper at the northern end of the site at the base of the cliffs.

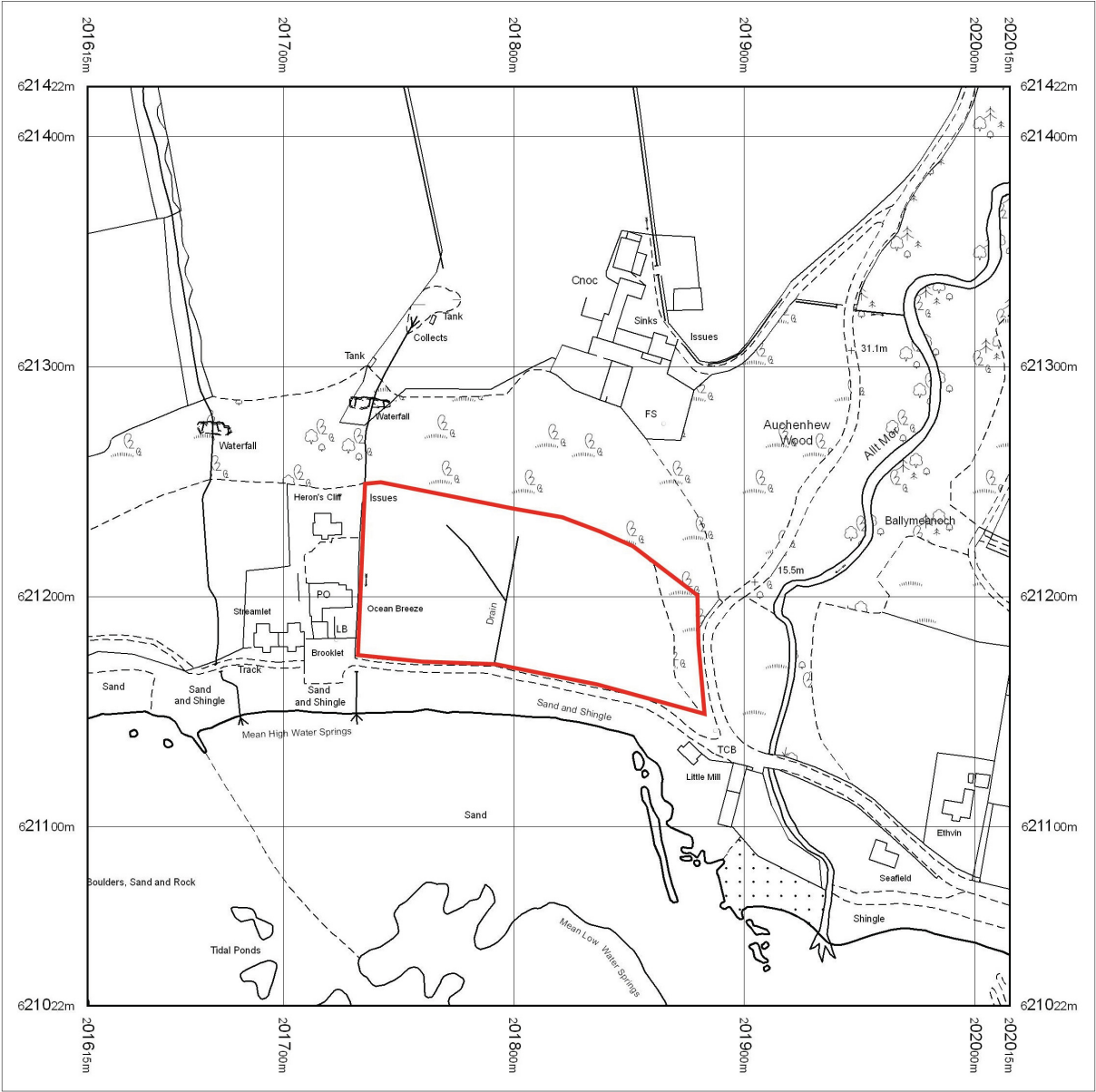


Figure 1 – Site location map



Figure 2a – 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (1869)

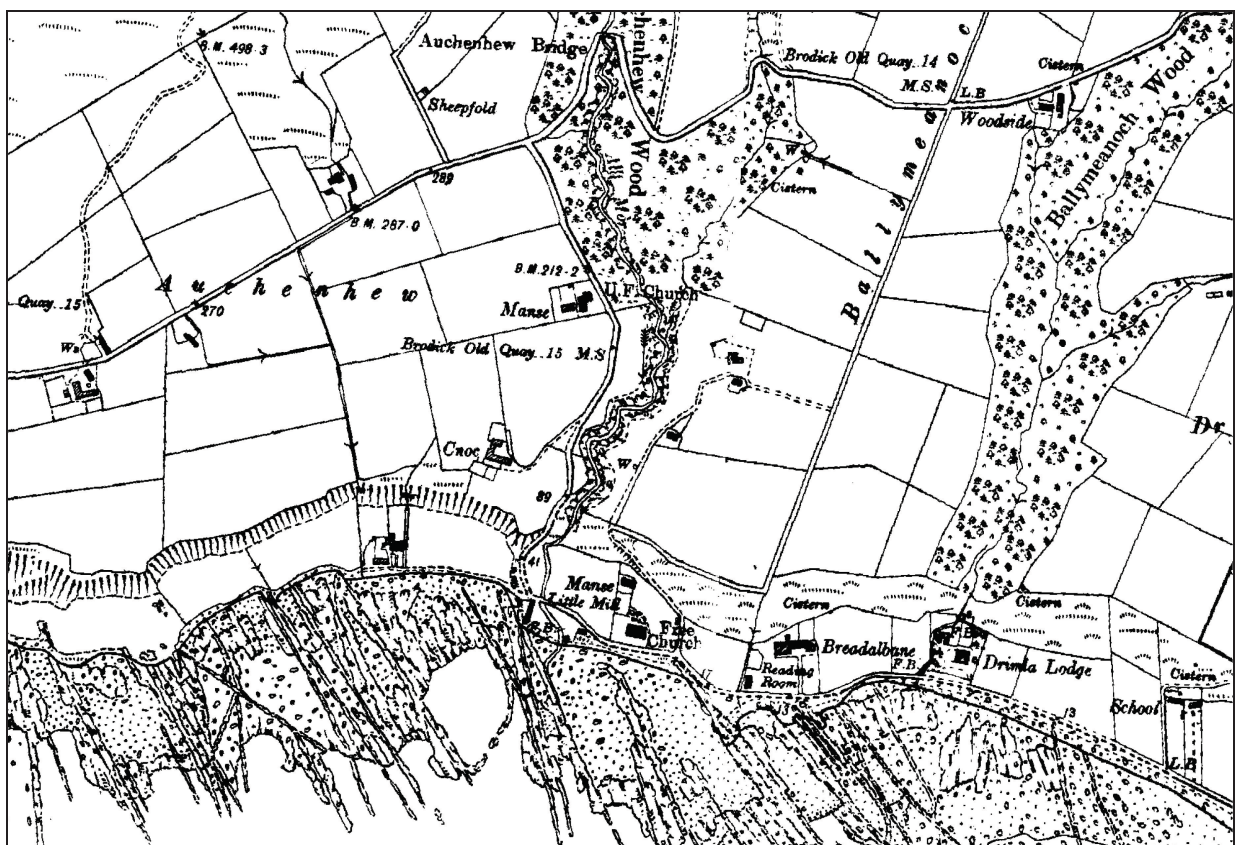


Figure 2b – 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey (1924)



Figure 3a – Pre-ex of site



Figure 3b – Post-ex of site



Figure 4a – Trench 14

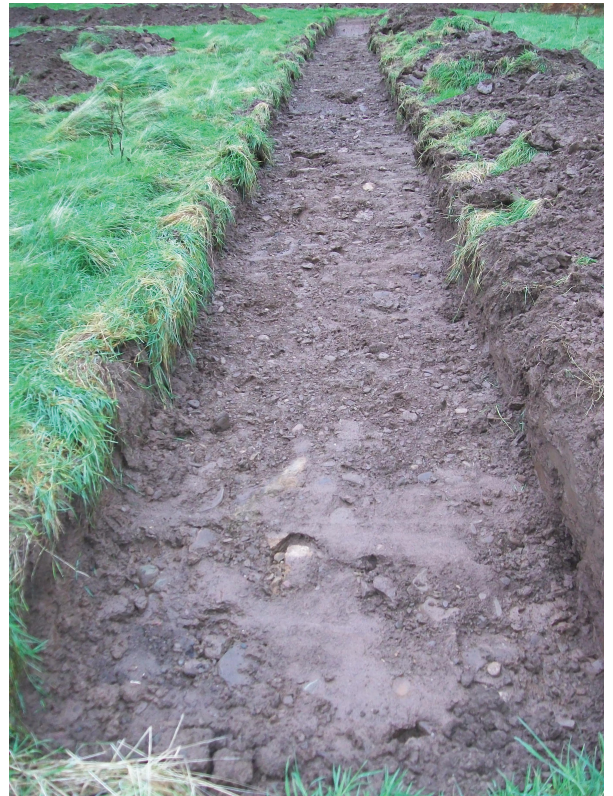


Figure 4b – Trench 3



Figure 4c – Trench 12



Figure 4d – Trench 4

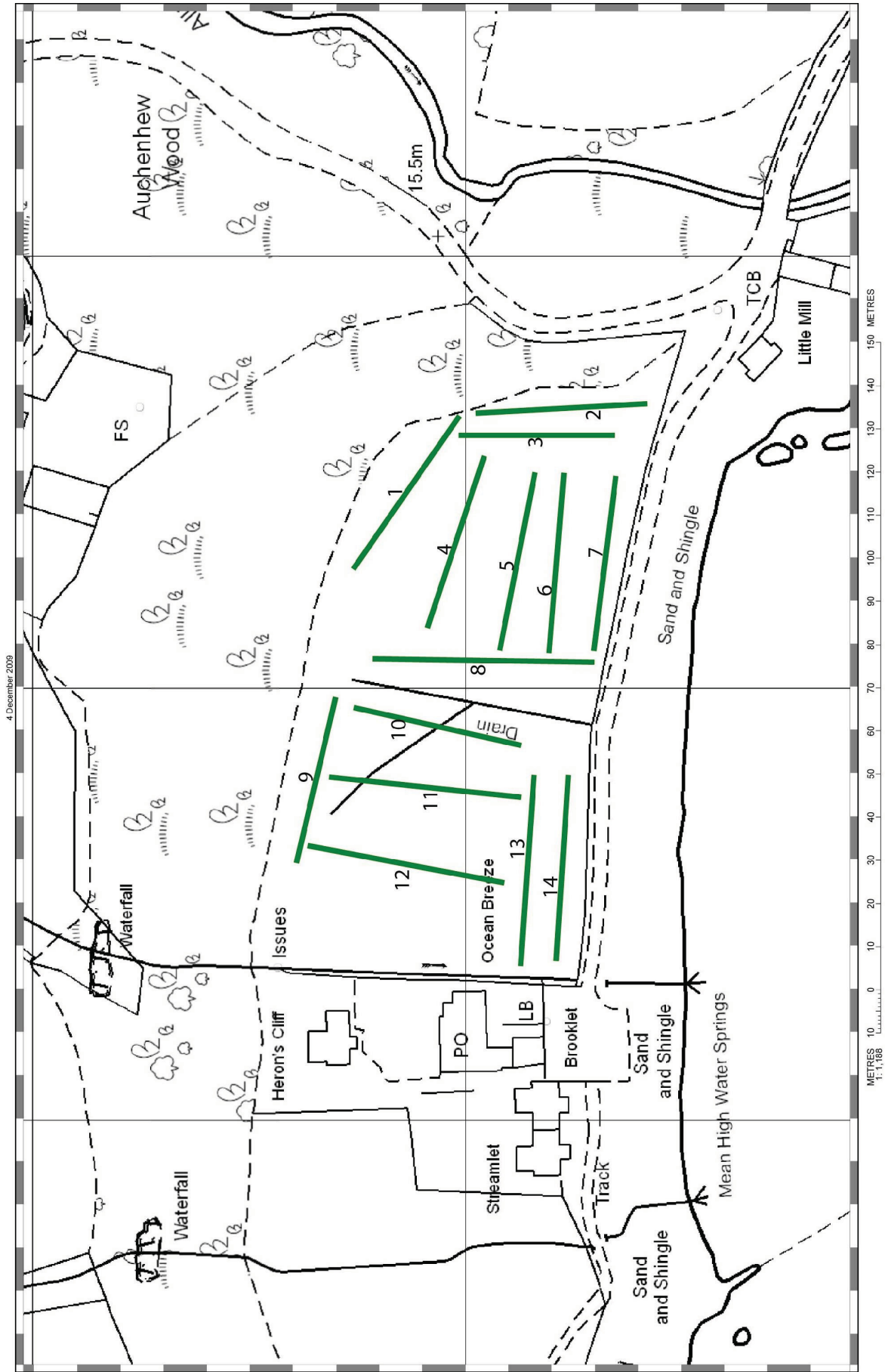


Figure 5 – Trench Location Plan

5 Discussion

No significant archaeological features were identified during the course of the evaluation works undertaken on the site at Seal Bay, Kildonan, Isle of Arran.

All the trenches exhibited a common subsoil that was either mostly gravelly or clayey, with both comprising a varying amount of stones. It is probable that this piece of land was not used to build on as it provided a small area of much needed productive ground for the dwellings that did exist there in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when they lived off the land.

The clay element within the subsoil was possibly the reason that rubble drains were dispersed throughout the site, as this would help the soil to drain, therefore making it even more productive. The natural incline on the slope though, would also have helped with the drainage. The topsoil at the top of the slope, averaging between 400mm to 500mm, is fairly deep. This may have been due to extra topsoil being brought in as in some sections bedrock was fairly close to the surface or from soil being washed down from the cliffs and gathering here.

As no significant archaeological remains were located during the course of the evaluation works the recommendation is that no further works are required. The appropriateness and acceptability of this recommendation rests with North Ayrshire Council and the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

6 Conclusion

A programme of archaeological investigative works were undertaken on an area of land located at Seal Bay, Kildonan, Isle of Arran (centred on: NGR NS 017 212). The works, which comprised a series of evaluation trenches laid out in a grid pattern across the proposed development area, were carried out from the 26th to 28th October 2009.

Although initially only one house plot had detailed consent with a watching brief condition attached, WoSAS agreed that as a further five house plots had outline consent, an evaluation would be an acceptable method by which to proceed, rather than a watching brief on each separate house as it was constructed.

The trenches exhibited a fine slightly clayey silty topsoil on top of either a clay subsoil with occasional stones or a gravelly subsoil with areas of sand or silt. No significant archaeological features were identified.

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	1869	1 st edition Ordnance Survey, Argyllshire
Ordnance Survey	1924	3 rd edition Ordnance Survey, Argyllshire

Appendix 1: Trench Details

Trench 1

Orientation:	West northwest to East southeast
Size:	40.30m by 1.8m (72.54m ²)
Subsoil character:	Brownish orange clay with occasional stones (slightly sandy in some areas) [102]
Modern features:	Rubble drain [103]
Significant features:	None
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 2

Orientation:	North to South
Size:	39.50m by 1.8m (71.10m ²)
Subsoil character:	Very gravelly clay with very frequent sub-rounded stones with occasional areas of silt and very occasional very large stones (southern end) [202]
Modern features:	None
Significant features:	None
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 3

Orientation:	North to South
Size:	35m by 1.8m (63m ²)
Subsoil character:	Brownish orange clay with occasional stones (slightly sandy in some areas) [302] changing to a very gravelly clay with very frequent sub-rounded stones [303] at roughly 5m.
Modern features:	None
Significant features:	None
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 4

Orientation:	West to East.
Size:	39m by 1.8m (70.20m ²)
Subsoil character:	Brownish orange clay with occasional small stones [402].
Modern features:	Rubble drain.
Significant features:	None
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 5

Orientation:	West to East
Size:	38m by 1.8m (68.40m ²)
Subsoil character:	Mid brown course gravelly sandy silt containing numerous small sub-rounded and sub-angular stones [502]. There are also very occasional larger rocks within the subsoil.
Modern features:	Rubble drain [503].
Significant features:	None
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 6

Orientation:	West to East
Size:	39m by 1.8m (70.20m ²)
Subsoil character:	Mid brown course gravelly sandy silt containing a moderate amount of stones with occasional larger stones [602]. There are also very occasional large rocks within the trench.
Modern features:	Rubble drains [603].
Significant features:	None
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 7

Orientation:	West to East
Size:	38.50m by 1.8m (69.30m ²)
Subsoil character:	Brownish orange silty clay with occasional to frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded stones [702]. At roughly 20m the subsoil changes to a mid brown gravelly silt – slightly clayey with occasional stones [703].
Modern features:	None.
Significant features:	None
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 8

Orientation:	North to South
Size:	49.50m by 1.8m (89.10m ²)
Subsoil character:	Brownish orange gravelly clay with occasional large stones [802] – trench fairly wet.
Modern features:	None.
Significant features:	None
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 9

Orientation:	West to East
Size:	35.50m by 1.8m (63.90m ²)
Subsoil character:	Brownish orange stony clay with occasional very large rocks [902].
Modern features:	Rubble drain [903].
Significant features:	None
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 10

Orientation:	North to South
Size:	40.50m by 1.8m (72.90m ²)
Subsoil character:	Brownish orange stony clay with occasional very large rocks [1002] – occasional very large rocks in southern half. At roughly 8.5m subsoil changes to a orangey brown gravelly clay containing a moderate amount of rounded and sub-rounded stones [1003].
Modern features:	None.
Significant features:	None.
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 11

Orientation:	North to South
Size:	43m by 1.8m (77.40m ²)
Subsoil character:	Brownish orange stony clay with occasional very large rocks [1102] changing to a mid brown gravelly silt with frequent small angular and sub-angular stones [1103] at roughly 9m. In the centre of the trench the subsoil was a orangey brown gravelly clay with occasional small stones [1104]. From roughly 27m to the end of the trench the subsoil comprised a mid brown silty clay containing a moderate to frequent amount of sub-angular and sub-rounded stones [1105].
Modern features:	None.
Significant features:	None
Artefacts:	None.

Trench 12

Orientation:	North to South
Size:	44m by 1.8m (79.20m ²)
Subsoil character:	Brownish orange stony clay with occasional very large rocks [1202]. From 16m to 23m the subsoil comprises a mid to dark brown slightly gravelly clay containing an occasional to moderate amount of small stones [1204]. From 23m to the end of the trench the subsoil is a mid brown gravelly silt with frequent small angular and sub-angular stones [1205].

Modern features: Rubble drain [1203].

Significant features: None

Artefacts: None.

Trench 13

Orientation: East to West

Size: 40m by 1.8m (72m²)

Subsoil character: Mid brown silty clay containing a moderate to frequent amount of sub-angular and sub-rounded stones [1302].

Modern features: None.

Significant features: None

Artefacts: None.

Trench 14

Orientation: East to West

Size: 40m by 1.8m (72m²)

Subsoil character: Mid brown silty clay containing a moderate to frequent amount of sub-angular and sub-rounded stones [1402].

Modern features: None.

Significant features: None

Artefacts: None.

Appendix 2: Record Summaries

Context Summaries

No.	Interpretation	Description
101	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 400mm and 420mm.
102	Subsoil	Brownish orange clay with occasional stones (slightly sandy in some areas)
103	Rubble Drain	Measuring 0.30m in width and comprising medium sized rounded and sub-rounded stones.
201	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 300mm and 410mm.
202	Subsoil	Very gravelly clay with very frequent sub-rounded stones with occasional areas of silt and very occasional very large stones (southern end).
301	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 370mm and 400mm.
302	Subsoil	Brownish orange clay with occasional stones (slightly sandy in some areas).

303	Subsoil	Very gravelly clay with very frequent sub-rounded stones.
401	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 320mm and 370mm.
402	Subsoil	Brownish orange clay with occasional small stones
403	Rubble Drain	Measuring 0.35m in width and comprising medium sized rounded and sub-rounded stones.
501	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 270mm and 300mm.
502	Subsoil	Mid brown course gravelly sandy silt containing numerous small sub-rounded and sub-angular stones. There are also very occasional larger rocks within the subsoil.
503	Rubble Drain	Measuring 0.30m in width and comprising medium sized angular stones.
601	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 300mm and 410mm.
602	Subsoil	Mid brown course gravelly sandy silt containing a moderate amount of stones with occasional larger stones. There are also very occasional large rocks within the trench.
603	Rubble Drain	Measuring 0.30m in width and comprising medium sized sun-angular stones.
701	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 310mm and 400mm.
702	Subsoil	Brownish orange silty clay with occasional to frequent sub-angular and sub-rounded stones.
703	Subsoil	Mid brown gravelly silt – slightly clayey with occasional stones
801	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 300mm and 500mm.
802	Subsoil	Brownish orange gravelly clay with occasional large stones.
901	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 410mm and 500mm.
902	Subsoil	Brownish orange stony clay with occasional very large rocks.
903	Rubble Drain	Measuring 0.40m in width and comprising fairly large angular stones.
1001	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 250mm and 450mm.
1002	Subsoil	Brownish orange stony clay with occasional very large rocks – occasional very large rocks in southern half.

1003	Subsoil	Orangey brown gravely clay containing a moderate amount of rounded and sub-rounded stones.
1101	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 300mm and 400mm.
1102	Subsoil	Brownish orange stony clay with occasional very large rocks.
1103	Subsoil	Mid brown gravely silt with frequent small angular and sub-angular stones.
1104	Subsoil	Orangey brown gravely clay with occasional small stones
1105	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay containing a moderate to frequent amount of sub-angular and sub-rounded stones.
1201	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 300mm and 400mm.
1202	Subsoil	Brownish orange stony clay with occasional very large rocks.
1203	Rubble Drain	Measuring 0.30m in width and comprising medium sized angular and sub-angular stones.
1204	Subsoil	Mid to dark brown slightly gravely clay containing an occasional to moderate amount of small stones.
1205	Subsoil	Mid brown gravely silt with frequent small angular and sub-angular stones.
1301	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 310mm and 400mm.
1302	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay containing a moderate to frequent amount of sub-angular and sub-rounded stones.
1401	Topsoil	Mid brown fine slightly clayey silt, measuring between 380mm and 400mm.
1402	Subsoil	Mid brown silty clay containing a moderate to frequent amount of sub-angular and sub-rounded stones

Photographic Record

No.	Film No.	B&W Negative No.	Disc No.	Digital No.	Description	From	Date
1	1	18	1	1	General pre-ex of site (I)	WSW	26/10/09
2	1	17	1	2	General pre-ex of site (II)	WSW	26/10/09
3	1	16	1	3	Post-ex of trench 14	E	27/10/09
4	1	15	1	4	Post-ex of trench 10	S	27/10/09
5	1	14	1	5	Post-ex of trench 13	W	27/10/09
6	1	13	1	6	Post-ex of trench 12	S	27/10/09

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7	1	12	1	7	Post-ex of trench 11	S	27/10/09
8	1	11	1	8	Post-ex of trench 9	W	27/10/09
9	1	10	1	9	Post-ex of trench 8	N	27/10/09
10	1	9	1	10	Post-ex of trench 5	W	27/10/09
11	1	8	1	11	Post-ex of trench 6	W	27/10/09
12	1	7	1	12	Post-ex of trench 3	S	27/10/09
13	1	6	1	13	Post-ex of trench 2	N	27/10/09
14	1	5	1	14	Post-ex of trench 1	WNW	27/10/09
15	1	4	1	15	Post-ex of trench 4	E	27/10/09
16	1	3	1	16	Post-ex of trench 7	E	27/10/09
17	1	2	1	17	General post-ex of site	SE	28/10/09
18	1	1	1	18	General post-ex of site	SE	28/10/09

Drawing Record

Sheet No.	Drawing No.	Description	Scale	Date
2	001	Post-ex plan of trench 9	1:100	28.10.09
2	002	Post-ex plan of trench 10	1:100	28.10.09
2	003	Post-ex plan of trench 11	1:100	28.10.09
2	004	Post-ex plan of trench 12	1:100	28.10.09
2	005	Post-ex plan of trench 13	1:100	28.10.09
2	006	Post-ex plan of trench 14	1:100	28.10.09
2	007	Post-ex plan of trench 8	1:100	28.10.09
1	008	Post-ex plan of trench 7	1:100	27.10.09
1	009	Post-ex plan of trench 6	1:100	27.10.09
1	010	Post-ex plan of trench 5	1:100	27.10.09
1	011	Post-ex plan of trench 4	1:100	27.10.09
1	012	Post-ex plan of trench 3	1:100	27.10.09
1	113	Post-ex plan of trench 2	1:100	27.10.09
1	114	Post-ex plan of trench 1	1:100	27.10.09

Appendix 3: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	North Ayrshire Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Seal Bay, Kildonan, Isle of Arran
PARISH:	Kilmory

NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Rebecca Shaw
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NS 017 212
START DATE (this season)	26 th October 2009
END DATE (this season)	28 th October 2009
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
DESCRIPTION:	<p>A programme of archaeological investigative works were undertaken on an area of land located at Seal Bay, Kildonan, Isle of Arran (centred on: NGR NS 017 212). The works comprised a series of evaluation trenches laid out in a grid pattern across the proposed development area.</p> <p>Although initially only one house plot had detailed consent with a watching brief condition attached, WoSAS agreed that as a further five house plots had outline consent, an evaluation would be an acceptable method by which to proceed, rather than a watching brief on each separate house as it was constructed.</p> <p>The trenches exhibited a fine slightly clayey silty topsoil on top of either a clay subsoil with occasional stones or a gravelly subsoil with areas of sand or silt. No significant archaeological features were identified.</p>
PROJECT CODE:	09020
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Marriot Building Supplies
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	1780 Great Western Road Anniesland Glasgow G13 2TL
E MAIL:	rebeccashaw@archaeologist.com
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended)	Report to the West of Scotland Sites and Monuments Record and archive to National Monuments Record of Scotland.

Contact Details

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