

Planting End, Dumfries and Galloway: Archaeological Evaluation

Data Structure Report

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Rathmell

Archaeology Ltd

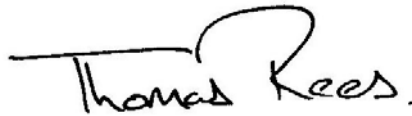
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1 Overview

- 1.1 This Data Structure Report presents the findings of archaeological investigative works required by Dumfries and Galloway Council in respect to a new farm access road for Kirminnoch Farm. The new farm access road forms part of proposed improvement works on the A75 from Planting End to Drumflower which is due to commence construction in Spring 2007.
- 1.2 Dumfries & Galloway Council has required a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken as a consequence of the likelihood of the new access road crossing the remains of the Souleseat to Kirminnoch Roman Road and its associated quarry pits (NMRS NX15NW 75/02, DG8800).
- 1.3 In addition there is the proximity of the route to Kirminnoch Enclosure and Ring Ditches, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Index No. 5791; NMRS NX15NW24; DG1294), protected under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
- 1.4 The proposed access road is to be situated in the field to the north of Kirminnoch Farm (NX 1225 5840). The field is presently used for grazing, and is bounded to the northeast by the Stranraer to Glasgow Railway line, to the northwest by C18 Public Road, to the southeast by the current access road to Kirminnoch Farm and to the southwest by a burn.
- 1.5 The findings presented below inform on the character of any archaeologically significant features within the proposed access road corridor. The character of any archaeological mitigation will need to be agreed with Dumfries and Galloway Council and Historic Scotland.
- 1.6 Rathmell Archaeology Ltd was appointed by Dumfries and Galloway Council to act with regard to the archaeological issues. Historic Scotland who in this instance advised Dumfries and Galloway Council on archaeological matters, provided guidance on the character of archaeological investigations required on this site. These were agreed through a Written Scheme of Investigation (Gordon 2006).

2 Project Works

- 2.1 The programme of works agreed with Historic Scotland, commenced with an archaeological evaluation through a machine cut trench anticipated to extend to 535m along the centre line of the proposed road. In total 466m was excavated along the whole centre line of the proposed road, with the on-site works taking place on the 13th to 14th December 2006.
- 2.2 The majority of exposed features within the trenches were investigated and evaluated to determine archaeological significance, as stated in the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation. All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.



Fig 1a: Roy 1747-55

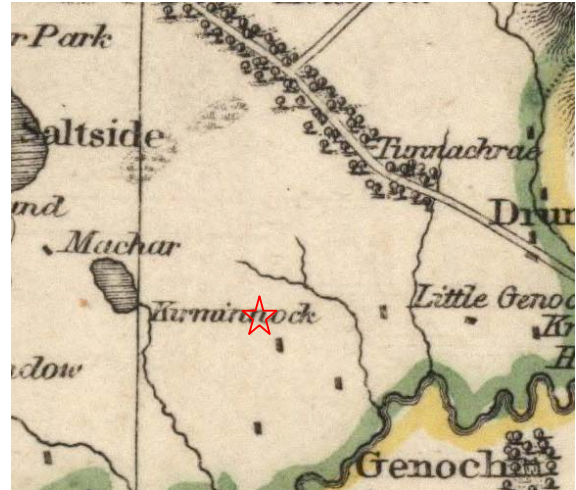


Figure 1b: Thompson 1820

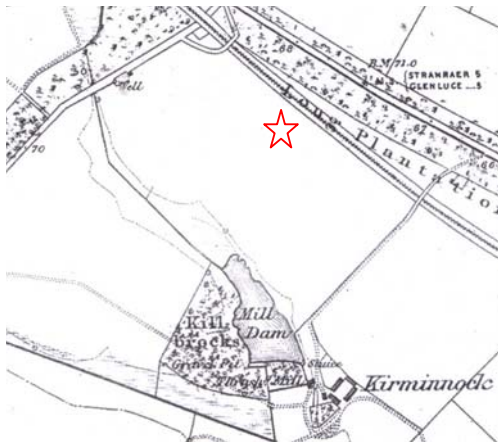


Fig 1d: Ordnance Survey 1st edition 1849

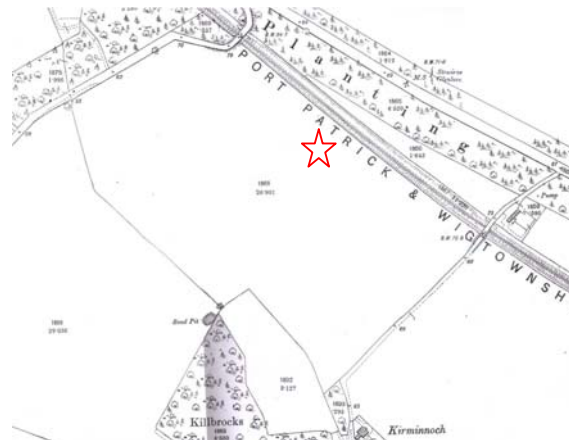


Fig 1e: Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 1894

3 Findings: Desktop study

3.1 *Statutory protected sites*

- 3.1.1 The desktop study did not identify the presence within the development area of any sites protected for their archaeological or historical merit under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 or buildings protected under the Town and Country Planning Act 1997 (Historic Scotland 1998).
- 3.1.2 Nor were any sites identified that have the confident potential to contain the burial of human skeletal material, and hence raise the difficulties of the crime of violation of sepulchre (the common law crime of unlawful interference with human remains).
- 3.1.3 However, in proximity to the route is the Kirminnoch Enclosure and Ring Ditches, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Index No. 5791; NMRS NX15NW24; DG1294).
- 3.1.4 Within this scheduled area cropmarks have revealed at least two ring-ditches and an oval enclosure. The enclosure (NX 1221 5840) measures about 18m by 13m within a narrow ditch. About 40m to the southwest there is a double ring-ditch (NX 1217 5841). Its outer ditch (2m broad) measures about 12m in diameter internally, while the eccentrically placed inner ring is 7m in internal diameter. What is probably another ring-ditch is revealed by an arc of ditch 13m to the east.

3.2 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

- 3.2.1 The Dumfries & Galloway Sites and Monuments Record confirmed the presence of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (see Section 3.1) within the general area and identified the known route of the Soulseat to Kirminnoch Roman Road with its associated quarry pits (NMRS NX15NW 75/02, DG8800) crossing the line of the proposed access road.
- 3.2.2 The putative course of a Roman road is indicated by features, seen on oblique aerial photographs, which have been interpreted as possible road-side quarry pits. The reconstructed line of this road, shown on Fig 3, is predicted to run through the line of the access road.

4 Findings: Evaluation

- 4.1 The single evaluation trench showed a common stratigraphic sequence with topsoil (101) over varying subsoil (102), (107), (108), (109). The topsoil was mid brown sandy silt that varied in depth from 230mm to 600mm, with the deeper topsoil at either end of the trench, where it meets the road. The subsoil was sand varying in colour and gravel. Findings were recorded at chainages along the length of the trench, denoted by +, with chainage +0.0m at the north-west end of the trench.
- 4.2 *Modern Features*
 - 4.2.1 Three features of modern origin were present within the evaluation trench, at +72.2m the trench for the earthing cable for the overhead electricity service.
 - 4.2.2 The other two features were situated at the eastern end of the evaluation trench, the first consisted of 4 ephemeral linear features [110] that were recorded between +401.7m and +403.2m (distances are quoted from the western limit of the trench), aligned northeast to southwest. Generally they were between 100mm and 200mm wide and 20mm deep. The eastern two petered out approximately half way across the trench floor and appear to be plough scars. The second was a modern deposit [111] of what appears to type 2 hardcore which was present in the last metre of the south eastern end of the trench.
 - 4.2.3 No field drains were present in the trench, though a shard of a field drain was evident in the eastern section of the trench.



Figure 2a: Trench looking West



Figure 2b: Trench looking East

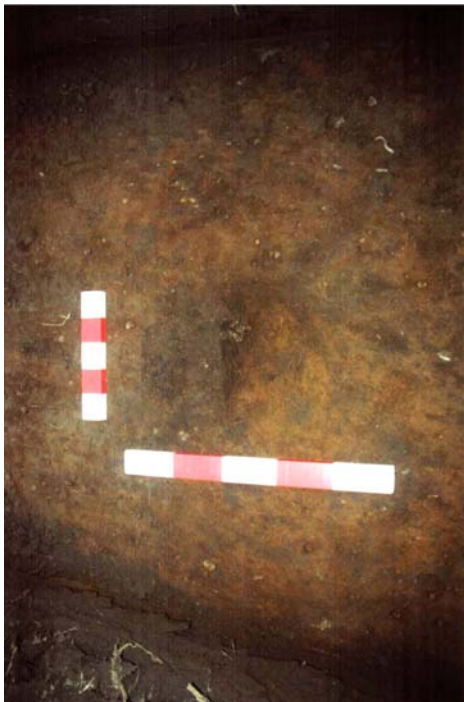


Figure 2c: Feature [103]

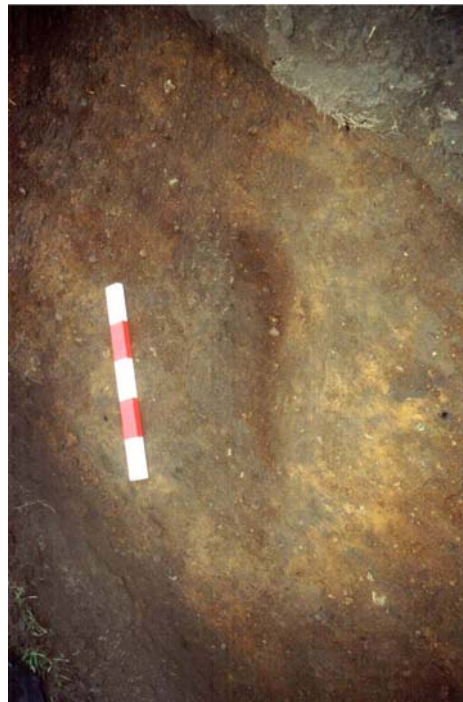


Figure 2d: Feature [105]

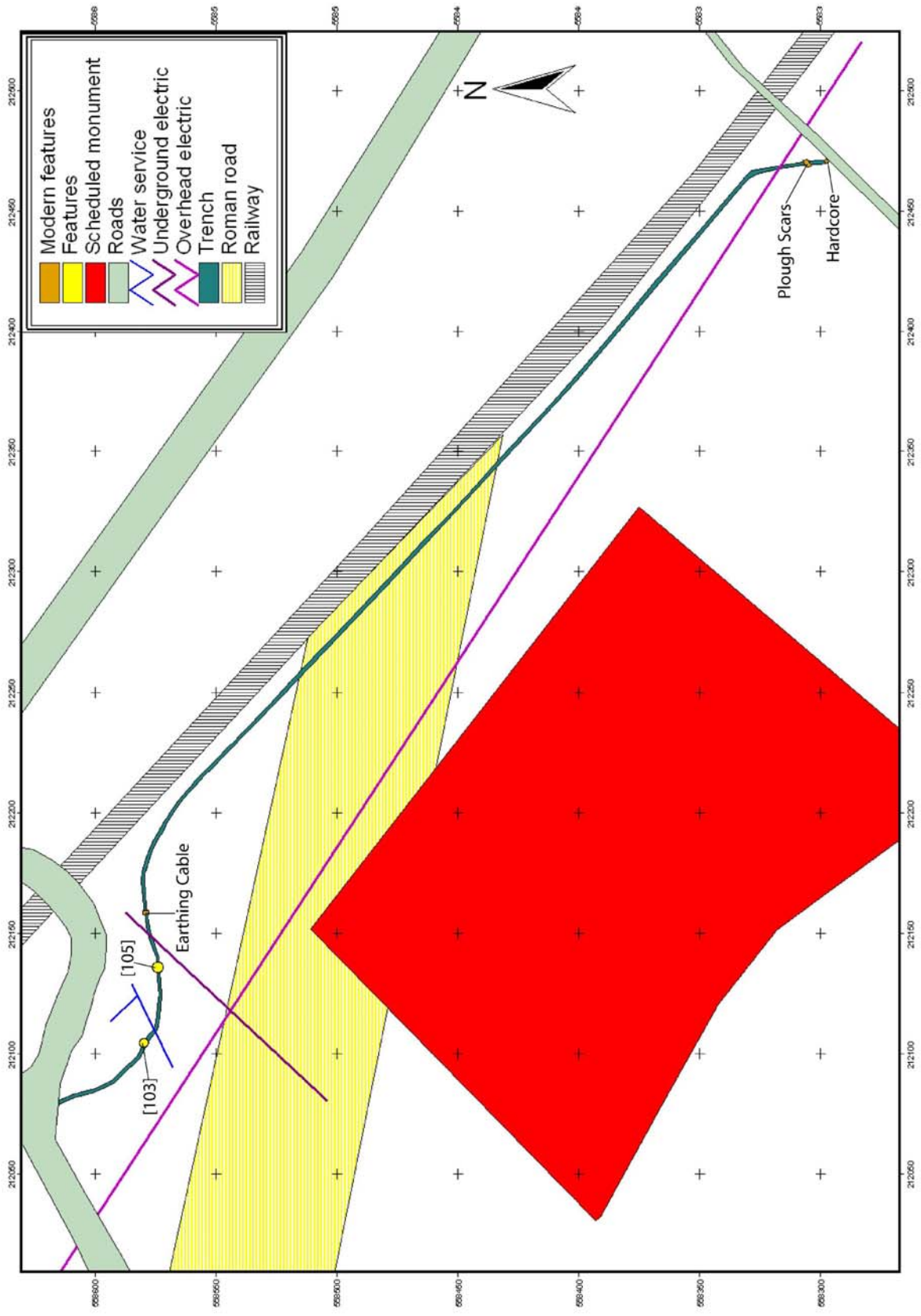


Figure 3: Trench Location

4.3 *Pit and Posthole*

- 4.3.1 A possible posthole [103] was recorded at +52.5m, it was oval in plan with a scooped cross section and measured 350mm by 250mm and was 110mm deep. At +77.6m a probable pit [105] was recorded which was oval in plan and measured 510mm by 420mm and 100mm deep.

4.4 *Bioturbation*

- 4.4.1 The floor of the trench exhibited a significant amount of bioturbation, in particular from animal burrows.

5 Discussion

- 5.1 The two features of possible archaeological interest [103] and [104] are what appear to be a pit and a posthole. No artefacts were recovered in association with the features making it hard to date them. Their presence indicates the potential for the survival of such features even though the field has clearly been ploughed.
- 5.2 There is the potential that these truncated features may be contemporary to the prehistoric settlement archaeology within the scheduled area. Indeed it is not unusual for outlying features from unenclosed settlement to stretch for a considerable distance from the core of the site. However, this can only be a potential relationship at this stage.
- 5.3 The evaluation trench did not encounter any features which could be interpreted as originating with the construction or use of a Roman road. This absence may reflect the loss of information due to continued ploughing since the date of the aerial photograph though this could not be determined from the evaluation trench. It remains possible that features still survive outwith the line of the evaluation trench but these will survive in all likelihood in a very degraded state.
- 5.4 Various modern services had been cut across the line of the trench, the eastern end of the trench showed a lot of modern disturbance [111], with a deposit of type 2 hardcore which is likely to be in association with the access road that appeared to overlay it.
- 5.5 The lack of field drains recorded within the trench is properly due to the fact that the underlying soil is very well draining, as shown by the severe wet weather that occurred during the evaluation.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The evaluation trench did not reveal any archaeological features or materials with the exception of a pit and a possible posthole. Which were both located in the northern portion of the proposed road, these features inform on the potential for archaeological features in this area (see Figure 3).
- 6.2 Consequently, we recommend that the most appropriate response where significant but poorly located archaeology has been identified is the archaeological monitoring of the topsoil stripping associated with the development. This would in turn lead to the targeted excavation of the potentially significant features exposed and appropriate post-excavation and reporting tasks.
- 6.3 The scale and character of these works should be defined through a Written Scheme of Investigation with the interested parties (Dumfries & Galloway Council and Historic Scotland).

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 A programme of archaeological investigative works was undertaken in respect of the proposed access road to Kirminnoch Farm (NGR: NX 1231 5847). An evaluation was carried out from the 13th to the 14th December 2006. The evaluation comprised a single trench that followed the centre line of the proposed road.

- 7.2 There was a common stratigraphy along the length of the trench, with only small variations in the subsoil. A significant amount of bioturbation was present within the trench in the form of animal burrows.
- 7.3 There were only two features of possibly archaeological interest recorded within the trench. These features consisted of a pit and a posthole of indeterminate age. No artefacts were recovered during the evaluation, although very occasional modern detritus of white glaze and other modern wares were noted in the topsoil of the trench.

8 References

- 8.1 *Documentary*
- | | | |
|-------|------|---|
| AMAA | 1979 | Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. |
| SODev | 1994 | <i>National Planning Policy Guideline 5, Archaeology and planning</i> , Scottish Office Development Department. |
| SOEnv | 1994 | <i>Planning Advice Note 42, Archaeology</i> , Scottish Office Environmental Department. |
- 8.2 *Cartographic*
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------|---|
| Roy | 1747-55 | Military Survey of Scotland |
| Thomson, J | 1820 | County of Wigton |
| Ordnance Survey | 1849 | 1 st edition map county series |
| Ordnance Survey | 1894 | 2 nd edition county series |

Appendix 1: Trench Details

Within this appendix a standardised set of data pertaining to the evaluation trenches is presented.

All measurement distances quoted along the trench measure based on the quoted orientation of the trench. See Figure 2 for trench locations.

Trench 1

Orientation:	Generally northwest to southeast
Size:	466m by 1m (466m ²).
Topsoil depth:	230mm to 600mm.
Subsoil character:	Subsoil (102), (107), (108) and (109) is in general light brown orange sand, varying slightly in colour and gravel present.
Modern features:	Three modern features were present, (104) was a trench for a electricity earthing cable. (109) 4 linear plough scars aligned Northwest to southeast.
Significant features:	(103) a probable posthole oval in plan measuring 350mm x 250mm x 110mm in depth with sloping sides and a U shaped section. (105) is a pit which is oval in plan measuring 510mm x 420mm x 120mm in depth
Artefacts:	None.

Appendix 2: Registers

Context Summaries

No.	Trench	Interpretation	Description
101	1	Topsoil	Mid brown sandy silty soil with moderate small stone inclusions and frequent rootlets
102	1	Subsoil	Light Brown Orange Sand, with ≤5% gravel inclusions
103	1	Posthole	Oval in plan, with sloping sides and a scooped cross section, measuring 350mm x250xx and 100mm deep
104	1	Service Trench	Trench for an electricity cable
105	1	Pit	Oval in plan with sloping side a wide scoped cross section, measuring 510mm x 420mm and 120mm in depth
106	1	Service Trench	Trench for an electricity earthing cable
107	1	Subsoil	Mottled silty sand, varying in colour
108	1	Subsoil	Dark Brown Orange Sand
109	1	Subsoil	Dark Grey Brown silty sand becoming

			more gravely at eastern end.
110	1	Plough scars	4 Ephemeral linears, 100mm wide and 20mm deep. Aligned north east to southwest
111	1	Modern Pit	Pit measuring 1700mm x 600mm in the trench, filled with type 2 hardcore.

Drawing Register

Sheet	No.	Title	Scale	Date	Author
1	1	Trench 1	1:100	14/12/06	DG

Photographic Register

Image	Description	From	Date
1	General Shot of Trench	W	13/12/06
2	General Shot of Trench	E	13/12/06
3	West end of Trench	E	13/12/06
4	Detail Shot of (103)	W	13/12/06
5	Detail Shot of (105)	NE	13/12/06
6	General Shot of Trench	W	14/12/06
7	General Shot of Trench 1	E	14/12/06
8	East End of Trench	W	14/12/06
9	General Shot	NE	14/12/06
10	General Shot	N	14/12/06
11	General Shot	NW	14/12/06

Appendix 3: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Dumfries and Galloway
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Planting End
PARISH:	Inch
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Douglas Gordon
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rathmell Archaeology Limited
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	NX15NW 75/02, NX15NW24
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Pit and Posthole
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NX 1229 5845
START DATE (this season)	13 th December 2006
END DATE (this season)	14 th December 2006
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	<p>A programme of archaeological investigative works was undertaken in respect of the proposed access road to Kirminnoch Farm (NGR: NX 1231 5847). The evaluation comprised a single trench that followed the centre line of the proposed road.</p> <p>There was a common stratigraphy along the length of the trench, with only small variations in the subsoil. A significant amount of bioturbation was present within the trench in the form of animal burrows.</p> <p>There were only two features of possibly archaeological interest recorded within the trench. These features consisted of a pit and a posthole of indeterminate age. No artefacts were recovered during the evaluation, although very occasional modern detritus of white glaze and other modern wares were noted in the topsoil of the trench</p>
PROJECT CODE:	06078
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Dumfries and Galloway Council
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	10 Ashgrove Workshops, Kilwinning, Ayrshire KA13 6PU
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Report to Historic Scotland, Dumfries and Galloway Council and archive to National Monuments Record of Scotland.

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