

Land Adjacent to Rockholm, Whiting Bay: Archaeological Watching Brief

Data Structure Report

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Rathmell
Archaeology Ltd

Quality Assurance

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1 Overview

- 1.1 This Data Structure Report presents the findings of an archaeological monitoring exercise undertaken, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Montieth in respect of the construction of a dwelling house and associated works on a site directly south of their existing residence: Rockholm, Whiting Bay, Isle of Arran (NS 044257). The archaeological works were designed to mitigate the impact on the archaeological remains within the development area.
- 1.2 The area concerned measures roughly 0.0325ha in extent. The area concerned is currently used as a garden containing two small wooden tool-sheds to the south. It is bounded by a disused quarry to the east, which now contains two houses: St. Quivox and Rhanna. These sit at the base of the old quarry face which is a forty foot drop below the level of the current development area. Middle Road and Invererne House are to the west, while Monstewart and Dunsloggin House are on the southern boundary of the site (Fig. 1).
- 1.3 North Ayrshire Council required archaeological monitoring to be undertaken as a requirement of the issued planning consent. The archaeological works were designed to address the general ground reduction and foundations relating to the new building. This condition was in keeping with the issued planning guidance (SODev 1994; SOEnd 1994) and was based on the guidance provided by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.
- 1.4 Rathmell Archaeology Ltd was appointed to act with regard to the archaeological condition for Mr and Mrs Montieth. The terms of the monitoring were agreed through a Written Scheme of Investigation (Rees 2007) agreed in advance with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service on behalf of North Ayrshire Council.

2 Historical Background

- 2.1 The available cartographic sources show the development ground to have been agricultural ground prior to the construction of the surrounding settlement. To the immediate east was a quarry which cut back into the natural slope forming a marked quarry face. The weaving roadway to the west and north is present from at least 1869 (visible on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey).
- 2.2 To the immediate south, in the gardens of Mount Stewart Cottage (now Monstewart Cottage) the 1st edition Ordnance Survey and associated Name Book record the recovery of a gold armlet from a late Bronze Age cist – a burial chamber (NMRS NS02NW7; WoSASPIN 4688). This is recorded at NGR:NS 044257 although as it is the attributed site of an 1840 discovery recorded in 1869 some caution should be ascribed this location.
- 2.3 The name “Whiting Bay” is thought to have come from the Norse “Hvit Ting” meaning “White place of assembly” (Currie, 1908, p83). The nearby site at King’s Cross contains a Viking burial mound while even earlier settlement evidence may be seen in the “Giant’s Graves” (NMRS Number: NS02SW 2) or numerous Chambered cairns around the bay (SWRI, 1983, p48). These are most likely to have been Neolithic funerary structures. Agricultural settlement around the bay became established in the medieval period when small farms began to develop along the shore and on top of the hills to the west (SWRI, 1983, p48). The earliest road followed these farms and was redirected down and across the shore in around 1843 (SWRI, 1983, p49). This was consolidated in the twentieth century and now exists as the A841.
- 2.4 There are no known archaeological sites of significance in the development area. There is a nominal hazard to significant archaeological features being present.

3 Project Works

- 3.1 The monitoring took place on the 4th September 2007; the works included the removal of turf followed by topsoil stripping of the house plot, access road and parking areas.

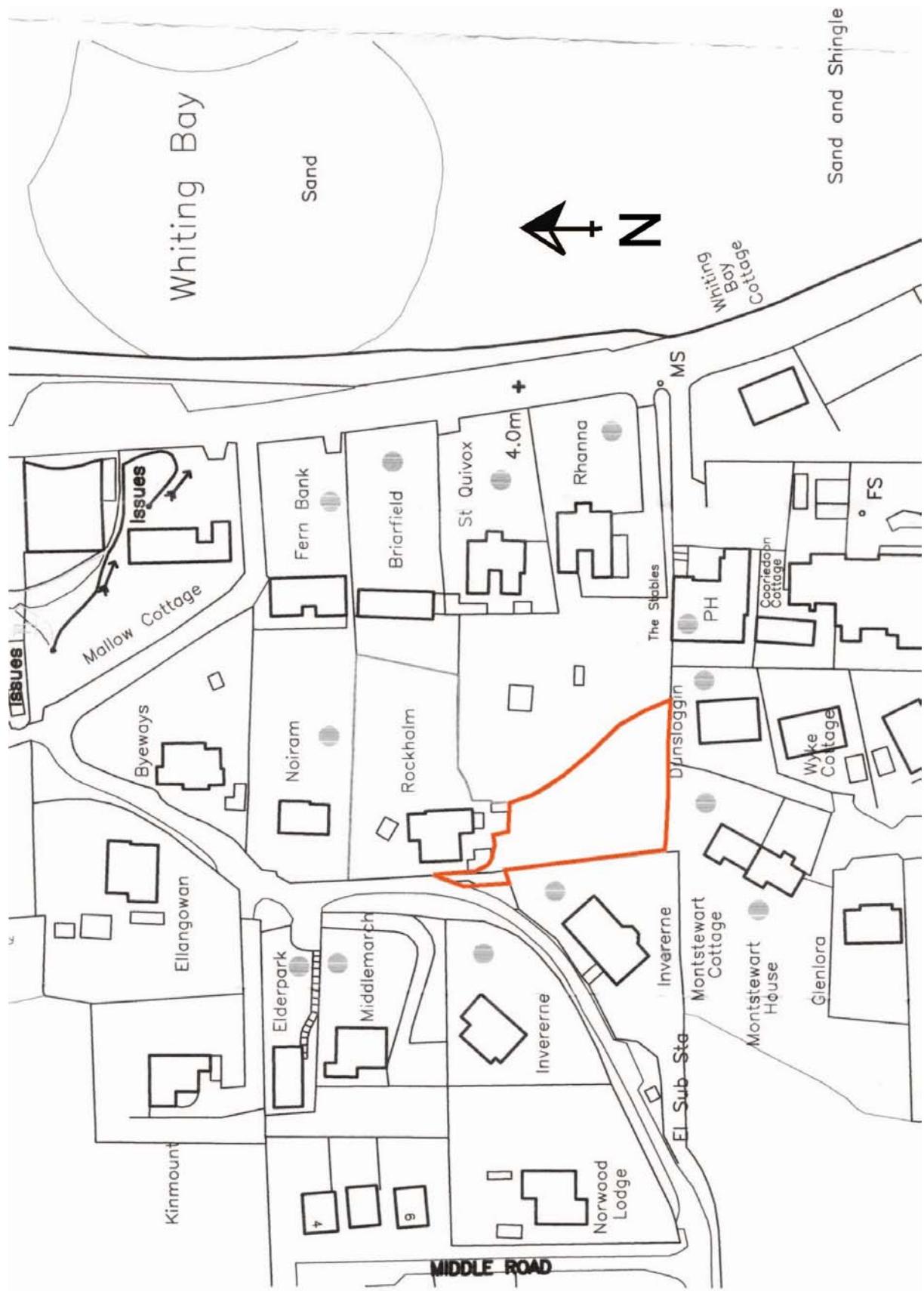


Figure 1: Location of Development, south of Rockholm, Whiting Bay

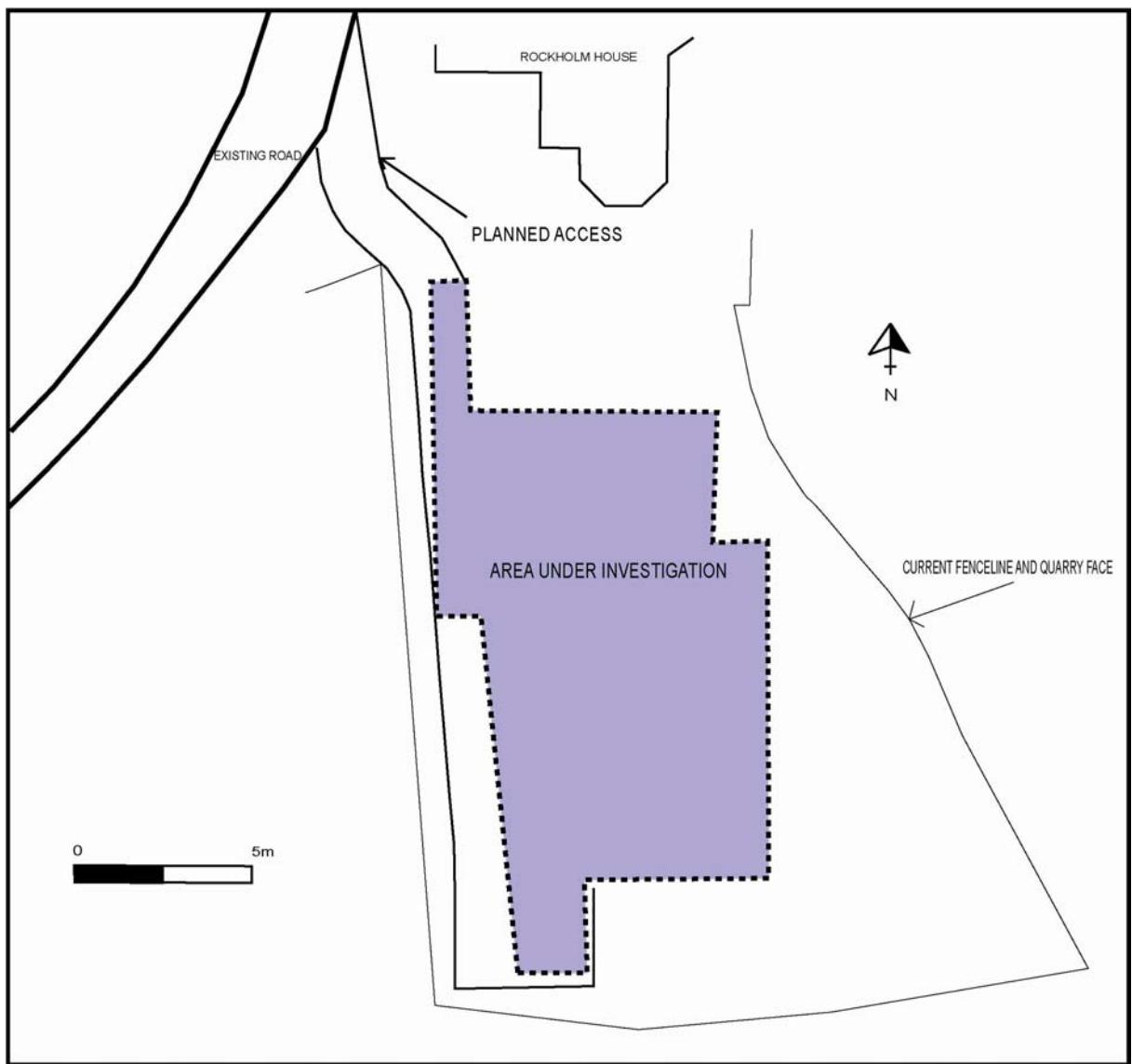


Figure 2: Plan of area stripped for access road and footprint of house.

- 3.2 In compliance with the Written Scheme of Investigation any potential archaeological features were investigated. All features impacted by the ground reduction appeared to be of relatively modern or natural origin, and throughout the course of the investigation no artefacts were recovered.
- 3.3 All works complied with WoSAS Standard Conditions, the Institute of Field Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

4 Findings

- 4.1 The development area is centred NS 044257 and can be seen in Figure 3a and 3b before archaeological works took place. The site looks out to Whiting Bay to the east. It is enclosed by high hedge rows to the west and a small hedge and fence to the south. The view to the east is unblocked by the housing there since these houses to the east sit at the base of the old quarry face. The site is essentially enclosed, and outwith the sight of any of the surrounding residences.
- 4.2 The development area lies within the existing garden of Rockholm House. The land slopes gently from Rockholm down to the curved fence line where the old quarry face lies. The garden is made up of several small square terraces, one with a red brick retaining wall running E-W through the centre of the development (Figure 3e). This is almost certainly a twentieth century addition to the garden and therefore of little archaeological significance.
- 4.3 In order to gain access to the site part of the existing western boundary wall on Middle Road had to be demolished. The debris from this created a ramp on which machinery could access the site. During the deconstruction of the wall a power cable was disrupted. This occurred the day before archaeological works took place. The southwest corner of the site contained two small tool sheds which were avoided by any ground works. This area was of minimal extent and added elsewhere to the trenching area.
- 4.4 The stripping was undertaken using a toothless ditching bucket. Work commenced on the southernmost boundary of the ground works taking place, working north over the footprint of the proposed housing site and its associated access road. Here, dark grey humic topsoil was removed to reveal mid-brown silty subsoil, that comprised of a red-brown silty sand. The overlying sediments were fairly uniform in depth and texture sitting on more variable natural subsoil at a maximum depth of 500mm. A sample section (Fig. 3d) shows the depth and nature of the sediments. The natural subsoil onsite unsurprisingly consisted of yellow sandstone bedrock. This rock was very soft and was surrounded by mixed and degraded sands. Evidence of water courses was apparent as they had black patches of manganese throughout. Moreover the sands and manganese are clearly mixed and most likely related to water action. These were consistently found to be natural occurrences; no charcoal or any other cultural material was recovered from these deposits.
- 4.5 The topsoil revealed only occasional modern materials: plastic, degraded metal, modern ceramics and window glass. None of these were retained.
- 4.6 The only structural evidence onsite was that relating to the landscaping of the garden. This consisted of the levelling off of small square terraces and the construction of the red brick wall running E-W through the centre of the garden. There was also a modern dump of slate debris around this wall which related to the recent alterations to the roof on Rockholm House itself.
- 4.7 The nature and consistency of the overlying sediments suggests that these may have been introduced as part of the landscaping of the garden in the mid-twentieth century. The underlying natural, consisting of such poor quality stone, would supply a reason for the abandonment of the quarry here. Also, the survival of any ephemeral archaeological structures within these deposits would be nominal in such deposits.



Fig 3a: General shot of Rockholm House

Looking North (Pre-Excavation)



Fig 3b: General shot of Rockholm House

Looking Northwest (Pre-Excavation)



Fig 3c: General Shot; Commencement of stripping looking north.



Fig 3d: West Facing Section: Sample Shot



Fig 3e: Working shot of red brick wall;
terrace or garden wall looking east.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 The archaeological monitoring failed to identify any significant archaeological features or artefacts within the development area. Consequently, we recommend that no further archaeological works are appropriate.
- 5.2 The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with North Ayrshire Council and the West of Scotland Archaeology Service, their advisors. Confirmation that the above recommendations are acceptable should be confirmed with these bodies prior to the implementation of any development works whose appropriateness may rely on these recommendations.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 An archaeological monitoring exercise was carried on the 4th September 2007 for Mr and Mrs Monteith in respect of the construction of one dwelling house and associated works directly south of their current residence at Rockholm, Whiting Bay. The monitoring revealed no evidence of human occupation or land-use that constitute further investigation.
- 6.2 On balance we have illustrated that this development has not adversely impacted on any archaeological remains and we recommend that no further archaeological works are appropriate.

7 References

Bibliographic References

Currie, Ronald, M.D.	1908	<i>The Place-Names of Arran</i> , Glasgow; John Smith and Son.
Rees, T	2007	<i>Land Adjacent to Rockholm, Whiting Bay: Archaeological Investigation Written Scheme of Investigation</i>
SODev	1994	<i>National Planning Policy Guideline 5, Archaeology and planning</i> , Scottish Office Development Department.
SOEnd	1994	<i>Planning Advice Note 42, Archaeology</i> , Scottish Office Environmental Department.
SWRI	1983 (Revised)	<i>History of the Villages of the Isle of Arran</i> , Scottish Women's Rural Institute, Arran.

Cartographic References

Ordnance Survey	2001	<i>Outdoor Leisure 37: Isle of Arran</i> , 1:25,000
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Appendix 1: Record summaries

Context Summaries

No.	Interpretation	Description
101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown, humic silty sand, with occasional inclusions of small stones (up to 4 x 4 x 4 cm in extent). Consistent depth of 35cm across site. Well-drained. Produced occasional modern ceramics, plastics and window glass.
102	Silty Subsoil	Red-brown silty sand, with frequent small stones. The stones measure up to 5x 8 x 6 cm in extent. Consistent depth 15cm across site.
103	Natural Subsoil/ bedrock	Mixed sands and yellow sandstone bedrock with occasional lenses of manganese/ iron pan. Varies across site. Sandstone is very soft. Contains frequent angular and sub angular stones; small (5cm by 5cm by 5cm) up to very large (1m by 50cm by 50cm).
104	Slate Dump	Slate deposited on the east side of the garden/ development area sitting against the east end of the red brick wall. Is 4m long by 2m wide by 50cm deep. Related to recent alterations to the roof on Rockholm house.

Drawing Register

Sheet	No.	Title	Scale	Date	Author
1	001	Measured Sketch Plan of Excavated Area	1:100	12/09/07	KS

Photographic record

Image no.	Description	From	Date
1	General view of Entrance	NE	11/09/07
2	General view of Entrance	NE	11/09/07
3	Close up of Entrance	SW	11/09/07
4	General View of disturbance at entrance prior to archaeological works	SE	11/09/07
5	General view of Rockholm house	S	11/09/07
6	Pre-Ex Shot of garden/ development area	N	11/09/07
7	Pre-Ex Shot of garden/ development area	N	11/09/07
8	Pre Pre-Ex Shot of garden/ development area	SW	11/09/07
9	Pre-Ex Shot of garden/ development area	S	11/09/07
10	Pre-Ex Shot of garden/ development area	NW	11/09/07
11	Pre-Ex Shot of garden/ development area	S	11/09/07
12	Pre-Ex Shot of garden/ development area	SE	11/09/07
13	Working Shot-turf stripping	S	11/09/07

14	General view of Scottish power electrical cable- fixed.	E	11/09/07
15	West facing section of trench	W	11/09/07
16	Working shot of red brick wall	W	11/09/07
17	General view of excavated area	N	11/09/07
18	General view of excavated area	E	11/09/07
19	General view of excavated area	SE	11/09/07
20	General view of excavated area	N	11/09/07
21	General view of excavated area	N	11/09/07
22	General view of excavated area	NW	11/09/07
23	General view of excavated area	E	11/09/07
24	General view of excavated area	S	11/09/07

Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	North Ayrshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Rockholm
PARISH:	Kilmory
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Katie Sludden
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rathmell Archaeology Limited
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Monitoring
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NS 044257
START DATE (this season)	4 th September 2007
END DATE (this season)	4 th September 2007
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	Archaeological monitoring was carried on the 4 th September 2007 for Mr. and Mrs. Monteith in respect of the construction of a dwelling house and associated works in an area A of Rockholm, Whiting Bay, Arran. Archaeological monitoring failed to identify any significant archaeological features within the development area.
PROJECT CODE:	07025
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr. and Mrs Monteith
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	10 Ashgrove Workshops, Kilwinning, Ayrshire KA13 6PU
E MAIL:	contact@rathmell-arch.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Report to West of Scotland Archaeology Service and archive to National Monuments Record of Scotland.

Contact Details

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