



## Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services

### Former Workers Club, St John Street, Stranraer, Wigtownshire, Dumfries & Galloway: Archaeological Monitoring Works



by Rebecca Shaw  
15<sup>th</sup> April 2019

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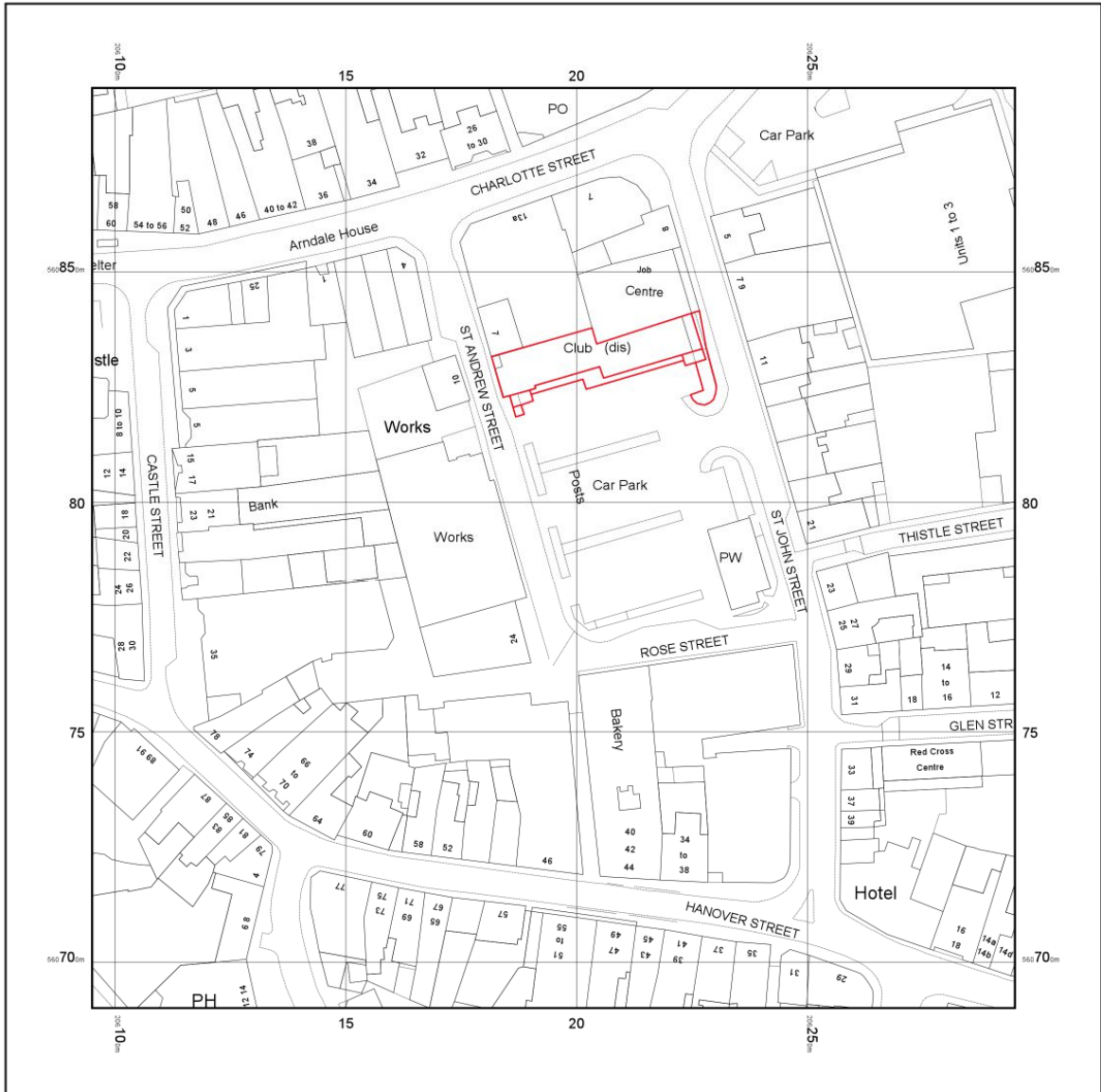
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# 1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of a programme of archaeological undertaken at the Former Workers Club, St John Street, Stranraer, Wigtownshire in Dumfries & Galloway (Figure 1). The planning application comprises: alterations, erection of extensions and change of use of former workers club to form three retail units (planning application no. 18/0427/FUL) (Figure 2).

The proposed development plot lies within the Archaeologically Sensitive Area covering the former medieval burgh of Stranraer (HER ref. MDG946). Nineteenth century Ordnance Survey mapping indicates that the current structure lies on the former sites of houses, fronting onto St Andrew Street and St John Street, and their respective gardens. The development site lies 80m east of the medieval Castle of St John.



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Figure 1 - location map

As the proposals involved down cutting works, where there was the possibility of uncovering archaeological finds or features, Dumfries & Galloway Council asked for a programme of archaeological monitoring works to be undertaken as a requirement of the issued planning consent. Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeology Service, who advise Dumfries & Galloway Council on archaeological matters have provided guidance on the nature of archaeological works

required.

The archaeological works comprised monitoring of the excavation of three foundation trenches for extension (A) and recording of an area of slight ground reduction for extension (B) (Figure 2). No significant archaeological deposits or finds were noted during the course of the monitoring works.

Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services was appointed to undertake the archaeological works by Diane McClintock.

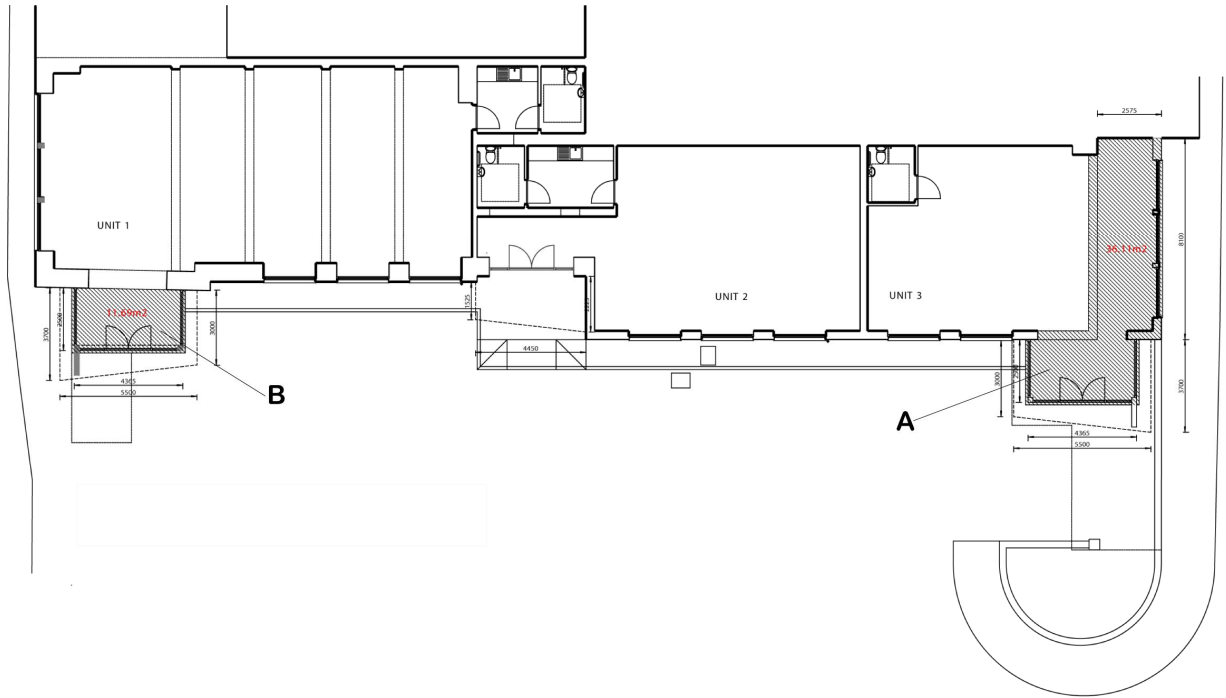


Figure 2 – proposed site plan

## 2 Project Works

The archaeological monitoring works were undertaken at the formers workers club on St Johns Street in Stranraer on the 14th March 2019.

The works were mainly undertaken as agreed with Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeology Service though a written scheme of investigation (Shaw, February 2019). However, no foundation trenches were required to be excavated in area (B) as after removal of concrete sets & bedding it was established that existing founds could be utilised. An additional trench was also excavated in area (A).

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

## 3 Findings

### Area (A)

In total three foundation trenches were exacted in area (A) (Figures 4b & 7). Foundation trench A measured 3.1m x 0.9m and was excavated to a total depth of 900mm (Figures 5b-c). The upper fill comprised a mid brown gritty silt containing frequent stones [101] which averaged 300mm (approx) in depth. Deposit [101] was above a brown beach sand [102]. A plastic pipe / duct (for 2 cables) was observed within this trench - there was 200mm of concrete above the pipe. Existing walls with concrete founds were located at both the WSW and ENE ends of this trench.

Foundation trench B measured 8.2m x 0.5m and was excavated to a total depth of 800mm



(Figure 5d). The upper surface comprised concrete with bedding [103] above a fairly fine orange sand [104] below which was a dark brown sands & gravels [105]. The remains of a red brick wall was observed in the WSW section of this trench and large rounded foundation stones for the existing (large) wall were uncovered at the NNW end (Figure 6a).

Foundation trench C measured 2.8m x 0.65m (approx) and was excavated to a total depth of 400mm (at most) (Figure 6b). Located almost immediately below the existing concrete surface were fairly large stones (mostly rounded) which were bonded with lime mortar [106] - exploration below the remaining concrete surface indicated these stones measured 0.76m in width.

### Area (B)

The upper concrete sets were removed from this area prior to the attendance of the archaeologist on-site (Figure 4a & 7). The opened area measured 4.55m x 3.55m (approx). Below the concrete sets was an infill / levelling deposit [107] comprising sand (coarse); gravel; small stones and brick & tile fragments - this deposit was excavated for a depth 300mm (approx) but was not bottomed.

## 4 Discussion

Early sound cartographic sources indicate that there has been probably been structures on the site of the Formers Workers Club on St Johns Street since at least the mid eighteenth century (Figure 3a). Detailed sound mapping dating to the mid nineteenth century depicts structures fronting onto both St John Street and St Andrews Street (Figures 3b-c). There is a slight extension / protrusion to the rear of the St Johns Street frontage but apart from that the areas to the rear of the frontages appear undeveloped and are most likely still in use as backlands / gardens. By the late nineteenth century structures still front onto both St Johns Street and St Andrews Street but structures now also exist at the far end of the St Johns Street plot (Figures 3d-e).

By the mid 1960's the structures within the St Johns Street plot have been extended / altered which has left very little open space between the two and the entire St Andrews Street plot is now developed into one large building (Former Workers Club / Empire Kinema) (Figures 3f-g).

Documentary sources record that the Kinema was opened on St Andrews Street on 18th July 1914 and the proscenium was 25 feet wide and the stage 25 feet deep. A cinema scope was installed in the mid 1950's. The Kinema closed down in 1966 and was demolished in the late 1980's (<http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/47220>). The Free Press recorded that care had to be taken during the demolition process to protect the adjacent wall of the St Andrews Workers Club and that this section was in fact taken down by hand (Free Press article kindly provided by Diane McClintock).

By the mid 1970's / mid 80's mapping there is little or no change to the St Andrews Street plot, while the majority of the St Andrews Street plot is empty with structures only mapped at the rear (WSW end) (Figures 3h-i).

The archaeological monitoring works for proposed extension (A) (Figures 2 & 7) essentially indicated that that this area had been previously cleared down to the natural sandy subsoil, (Figures 5b-d) probably when the structures that previously fronted onto St Johns Street were cleared. At the NNW end of trench B the foundation stones of the gable of the adjacent building were noted (Figure 6a) while the extent of the width of trench C contained large stones (Figure 6b) which also appeared to be foundation stones. In general the foundation stones in trench C appeared more stable than those located at the NNW end of trench B (set mortar rather than sandy mortar) and it is possible the foundation stones in trench C are slightly later in date.

The archaeological monitoring works for the proposed extension (B) (Figures 2 & 7) mainly indicated disturbed ground (Figures 4a) which is consistent with the large cinema structure that previously stood there. No great depth was excavated as existing finds were uncovered that could be utilised for the new extension.

Although there was potential to uncover archaeological features or finds relating to the medieval period, no remains that pre-dated the nineteenth century were uncovered.

## 5 Conclusion

A programme of archaeological works was undertaken on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019 in respect of proposed development works at the Former Workers Club, St John Street, Stranraer, Wigtownshire in Dumfries & Galloway. The works comprised monitoring of the excavation of three foundation trenches and the recording of a slight area of ground reduction.

In general the monitored excavations revealed that the ground had been subject to a fair amount of previous disturbance from both nineteenth century structures and the later twentieth century cinema. Removal of these structures within area A in particular, appeared to result in the ground been cleared down to the natural subsoil. Although in-situ foundation stones were located within two of the trenches, these more than likely date to different phases of buildings in the nineteenth century. No significant archaeological deposits or remains were identified during the course of the works.



Figure 3a - Roys Military Survey Map of Scotland (1747-55)



Figure 3b – 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1:2500 (1848) © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission (86384374)

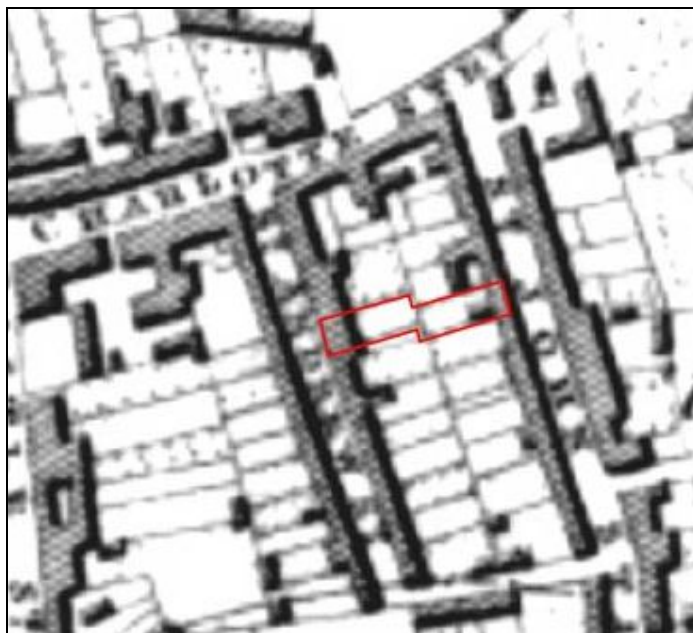


Figure 3c - Detail of 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1:2500 (1848)





Figure 3d – 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1:2500 (1895) © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission (86384374)

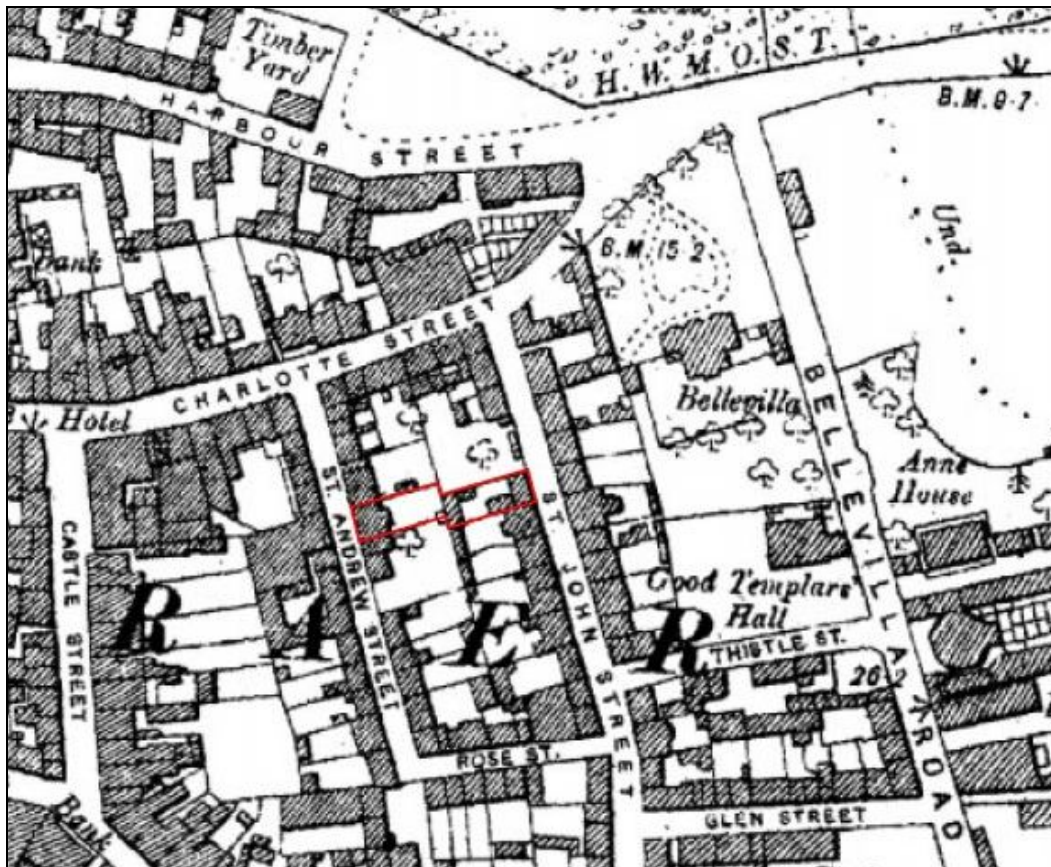


Figure 3e – Detail of 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1:2500 (1895)





Figure 3f - Ordnance Survey Map 1:2500 (1965) © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission (86384374)

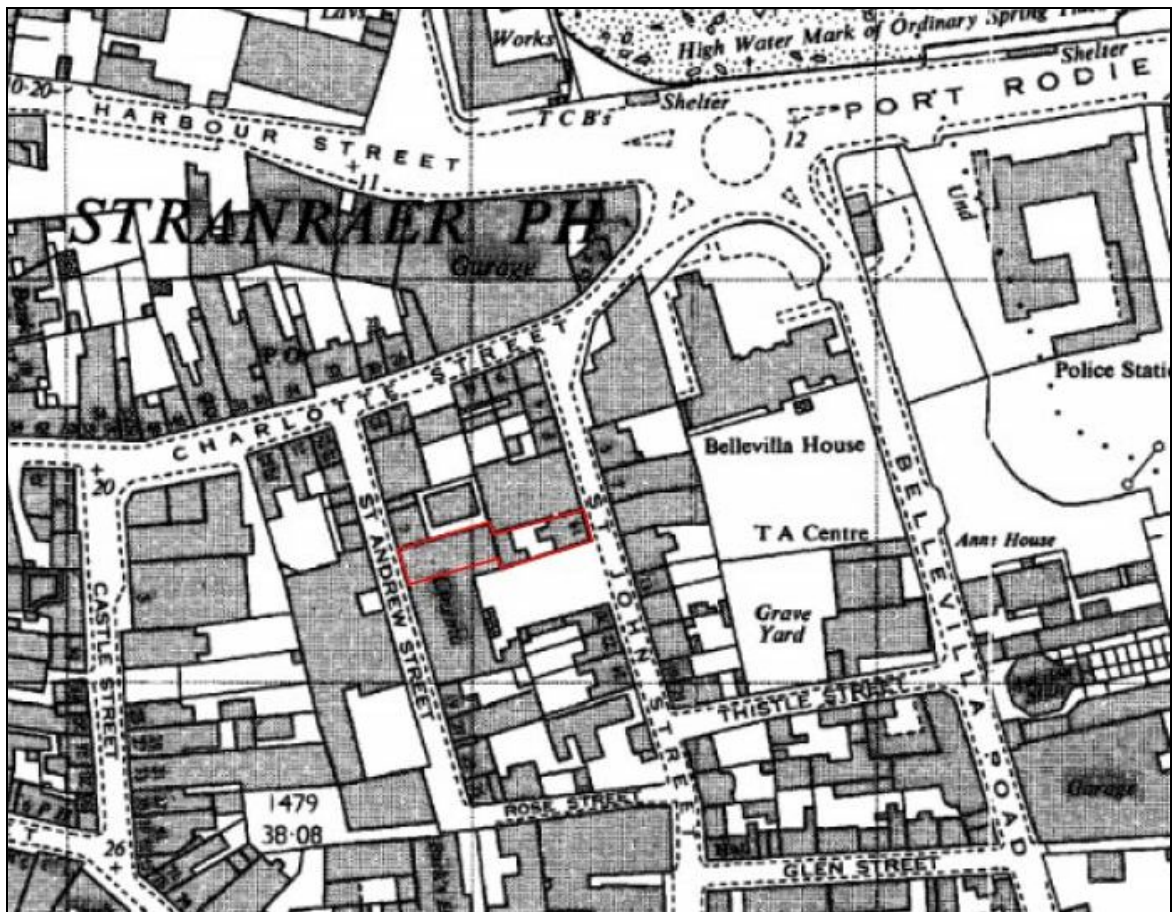


Figure 3g - Detail of 1965 Ordnance Survey Map





Figure 3h - Ordnance Survey Map 1:2500 (1974-86) © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group – not to be reproduced without permission (86384374)

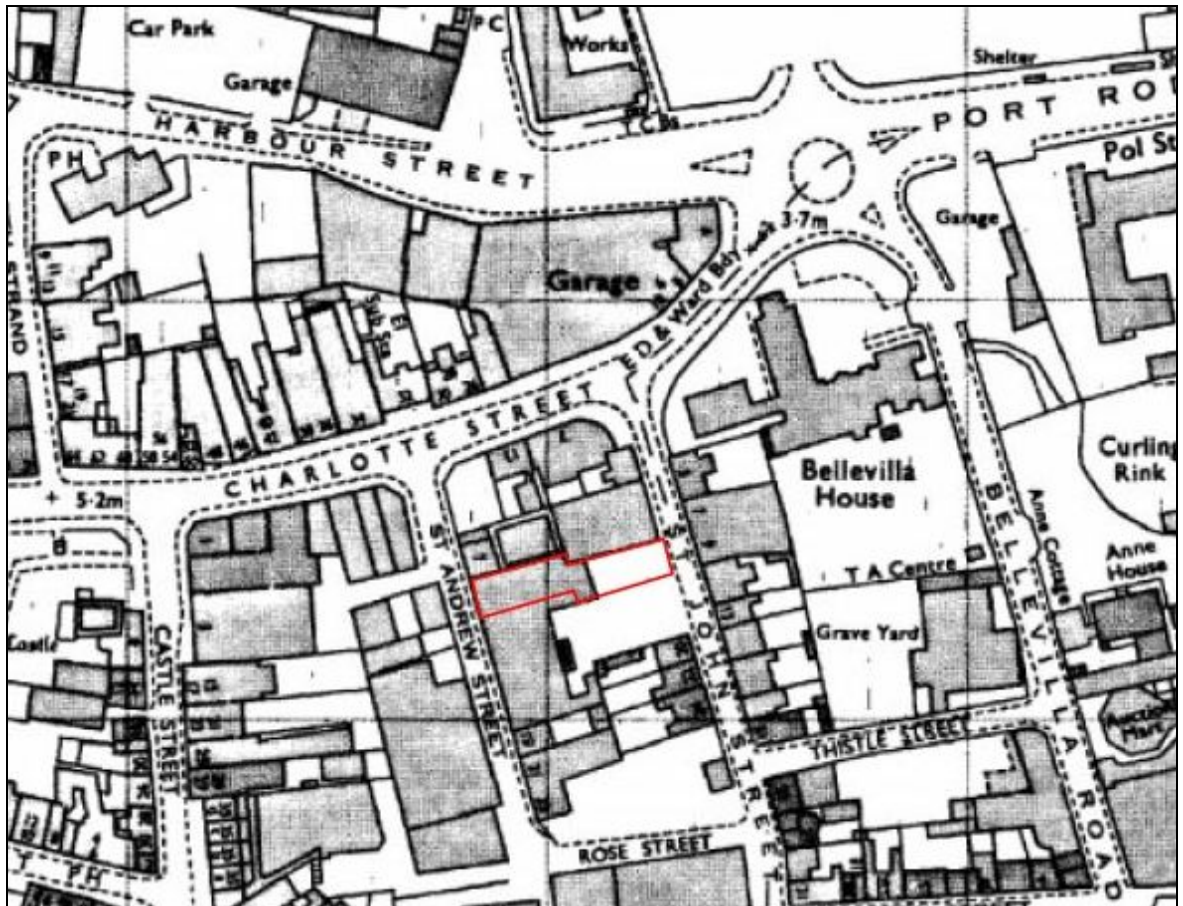


Figure 3i - Detail of 1974-86 Ordnance Survey Map





Figure 4a – area (B) (from ENE)



Figure 4b - area (A) (from NNW)





Figure 5a - pre-ex of foundation trench A (from SSE)



Figure 5b - post-ex of foundation trench A (from WSW)



Figure 5c - post-ex of foundation trench A (from ENE)



Figure 5d - post-ex of foundation trench B (from SSE)





Figure 6a - detail of finds at NNW end of foundation trench B (from SSE)



Figure 6b – post-ex of foundation trench C (from ENE)

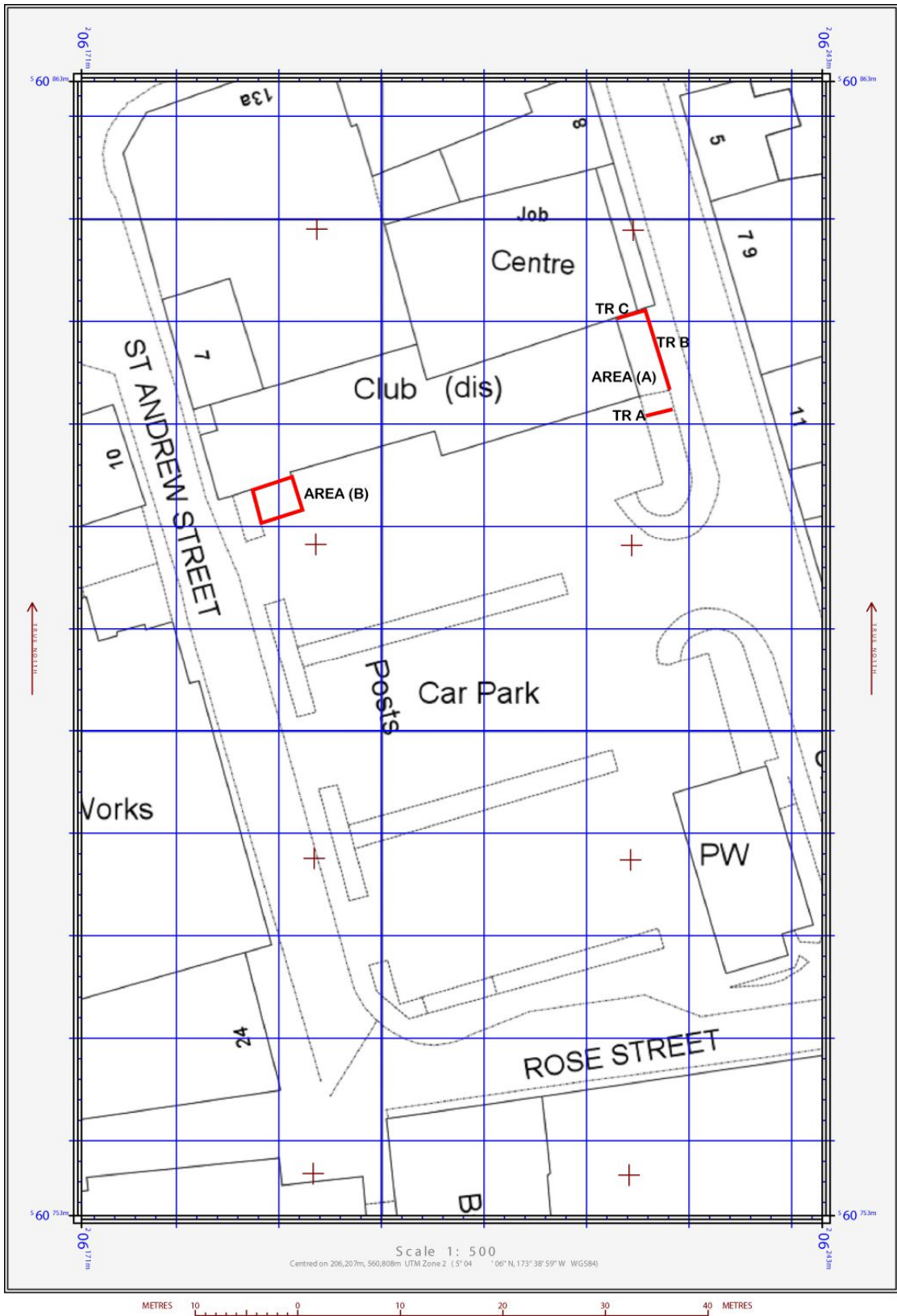


Figure 7 – plan showing location of monitoring works / trenches



## References

### *Documentary*

SOEn	2010	Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). <i>Archaeology</i> , Scottish Office Environmental Department.
SOEn	2011	<i>PAN 2/2011</i> , Planning & Archaeology Scottish Office Environmental Department.
HES	2016	Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement June 2016

### *Cartographic*

Roy	1747-55	Military Survey Map of Scotland
Ordnance Survey	1848	1st Ed OS Map, Wigtownshire (1:2500)
Ordnance Survey	1895	2nd Ed OS Map, Wigtownshire (1:2500)
Ordnance Survey	1965	OS Map, Wigtownshire (1:2500)
Ordnance Survey	1974-86	OS Map, Wigtownshire (1:2500)
Ordnance Survey	2019	Ordnance Survey (1:250)

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Chris and Kenny for undertaking the on-site marching and for their assistance during the works. Many thanks also to Andy Nicholson for provision of historical mapping overlay and to Diane McClintoch for sending me the newspaper article relating to the demolition of the cinema.

## Appendix 1: Record Summaries

*Context Summaries*

No.	Interpretation	Description
101	Upper deposit	Mid brown gritty silt containing frequent stones 300mm in depth
102	Subsoil	Brown beach sand
103	Concrete surface	Concrete & bedding
104	Subsoil	Fairly fine orange sand
105	Natural	Dark brown sands & gravels
106	Foundation Stones	Large rounded foundation stones bonded with lime mortar
107	Infill / Levelling Deposit	Sand (coarse); gravel; small stones and brick & tile fragments

*Photographic Record*

N o.	Disc No.	Print No.	Description	From	Date
1	1	1	Area B - after removal of concrete sets	ENE	14/03/2019
2	1	2	General pre-ex of Area A	NNW	14/03/2019
3	1	3	Area A - pre-ex of foundation trench B	SSE	14/03/2019
4	1	4	Trench A post-ex	WSW	14/03/2019
5	1	5	Trench A post-ex	ENE	14/03/2019
6	1	6	Trench B post-ex	SSE	14/03/2019
7	1	7	Trench B post-ex - detail of finds	SSE	14/03/2019
8	1	8	Trench C post-ex showing finds	ENE	14/03/2019

## Appendix 2: Discovery &amp; Excavation in Scotland

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Dumfries & Galloway Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Former Workers Club, St Johns Street, Stranraer
<b>PARISH:</b>	Stranraer
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Rebecca Shaw
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Rebecca Shaw Archaeological Services
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Archaeological monitoring works
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	None
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	None
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 10 figures)</b>	NX 06204 60834
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> March 2019



Data Structure Report - Former Workers Club, Stranraer

<b>END DATE</b> (this season)	14 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
<b>PREVIOUS WORK</b> (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>DESCRIPTION:</b>	<p>A programme of archaeological works was undertaken on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019 in respect of proposed development works at the Former Workers Club, St John Street, Stranraer, Wigtownshire in Dumfries &amp; Galloway. The works comprised monitoring of the excavation of three foundation trenches and the recording of a slight area of ground reduction.</p> <p>In general the monitored excavations revealed that the ground had been subject to a fair amount of previous disturbance from both nineteenth century structures and the later twentieth century cinema. Removal of these structures within area A in particular, appeared to result in the ground been cleared down to the natural subsoil. Although in-situ foundation stones were located within two of the trenches, these more than likely date to different phases of buildings in the nineteenth century. No significant archaeological deposits or remains were identified during the course of the works.</p>
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	019008
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Diane McClintock
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	9 Earl Place, Ranfurly, Bridge of Weir, PA11 3HA
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<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended)	Report to Dumfries & Galloway Council Sites and Monuments Record and archive to Historic Environment Scotland Archives.

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