

Project Code: BCWK10
Planning Ref No: N/09/00172/PP
Date of report: March 2010
Client: The West Kilbride Community Initiative



THE BARONY CENTRE, WEST KILBRIDE NORTH AYRSHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief and Test Pits

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HEADLAND
ARCHAEOLOGY Ltd

PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

<i>Client</i>	THE WEST KILBRIDE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
<i>National Grid Reference</i>	NO 648350 220650
<i>Address</i>	86 MAIN STREET
<i>Parish</i>	WEST KILBRIDE
<i>Council</i>	NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
<i>Planning Ref No</i>	N/09/00172/PP
<i>NMRS No</i>	N/A
<i>Oasis No</i>	HEADLAND1-74680
<i>SMR No</i>	N/A
<i>HB/SAM No</i>	N/A
<i>Listing Category</i>	N/A
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<i>Schedule</i>	
<i>Fieldwork</i>	21ST JANUARY 2010 - 26TH FEBRUARY 2010
<i>Report</i>	MARCH 2010

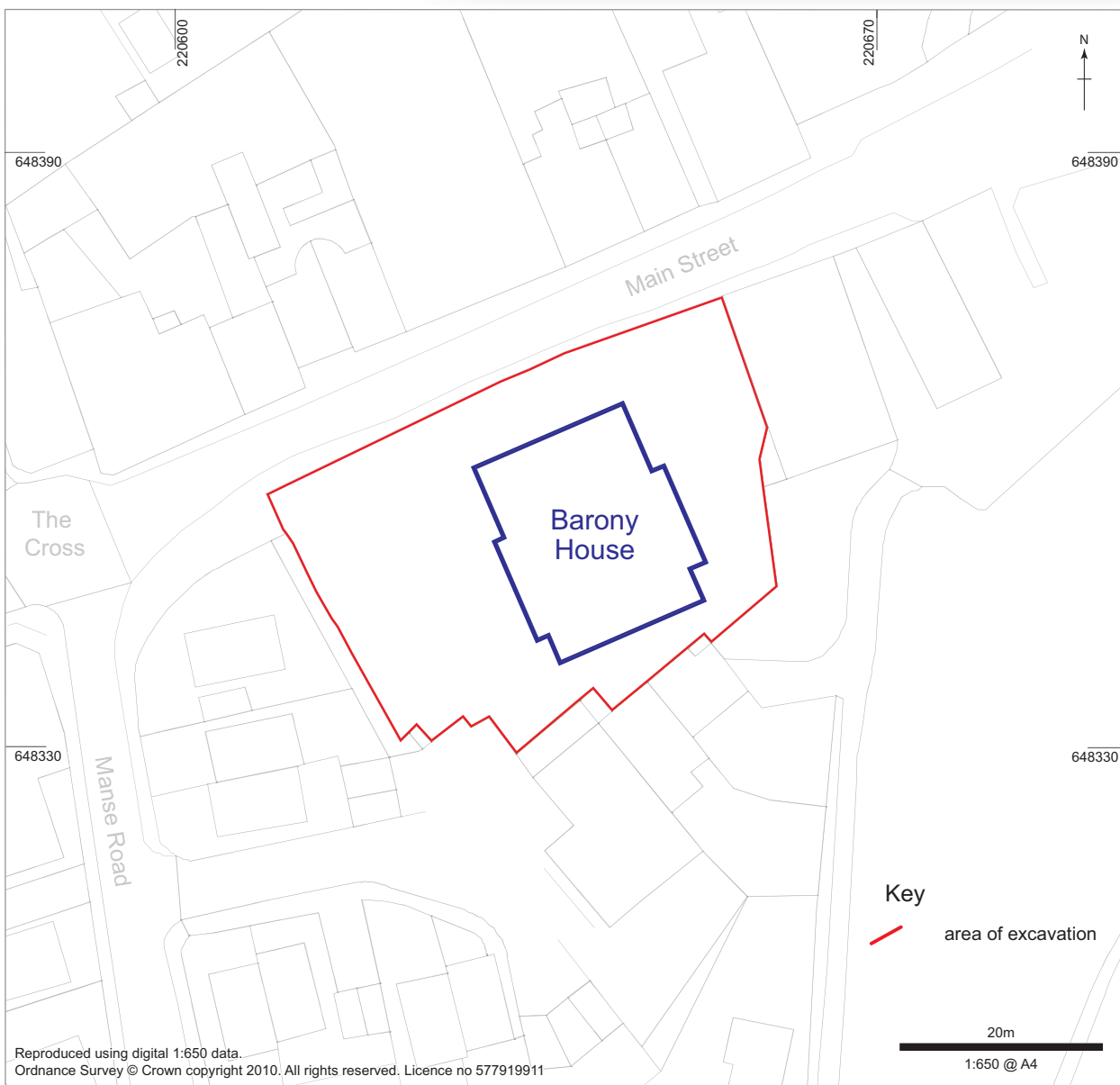
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CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	OBJECTIVES	1
3.	METHOD	1
	3.1 Archaeological Test Pits	1
	3.2 Archaeological Monitoring	2
4.	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	2
5.	RESULTS	2
	5.1 Archaeological Test Pits	3
	5.2 Machine Excavated Test Pits	3
	5.3 Gravestone Investigation	3
6.	DISCUSSION	4
7.	CONCLUSION	4
8.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	4
	Cartographic References	4
	Internet References	4



Illus 1
Location plan

THE BARONY CENTRE, WEST KILBRIDE NORTH AYRSHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief and Test Pits

by Sophie Nicol

This report comprises a series of archaeological works at the Barony Centre, West Kilbride, presenting the results of the fieldwork. The fieldwork was undertaken from 21st January to the 26th February 2010. This report presents the results of these works, providing the reader with a descriptive narrative of the archaeological remains at the Barony Centre and their historic significance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by The West Kilbride Community Initiative to undertake a series of archaeological works at the Barony Centre. The building is being renovated into a craft centre, as craft town of Scotland, and plans include building an extension to the west, within the graveyard plot (Canmore ID 266880 (ScotlandPlaces2010a). This extension will house

a small café and the plans to improve the structure will be a great asset to the community and its many visitors.

2. OBJECTIVES

The aim of the programme of archaeological works was to ensure that the foundations of the extension did not disturb any human remains that may be located within graveyard. Initially, this was implemented by excavating two test pits over the proposed wall foundations in order to provide information for foundation design. In addition, an archaeological watching brief during the machine excavated test pits (TP 3-5) was undertaken, to ensure no human remains were disturbed during the process. After the results from these were considered it was decided by WOSAS and the client that the original building footprint, which ran through at least 2 marked graves – should be investigated around the stones in order to ascertain whether any human remains were contemporary with this.

3. METHOD

3.1 Archaeological Test Pits

Two 1m² test pits were excavated on the proposed line of the western wall of the extension on (see Illus 2). Test Pit 1 was located approx 3m south from the north-west corner of the building. Test Pit 2 was orientated over the proposed northwest corner of the extension. These were both excavated to a depth of 0.6m, with turf and topsoil retained separately for reinstating. Both test pits were fully recorded on trench record sheets and with full colour slide, b & w and digital photography. Each test pit was planned using an EDM which was mapped relative to Ordnance Survey datum.



Illus 2

Photo of Barony church



Illus 3
Plan of site showing church and test pits

Two further test pits were excavated next to two gravestones within the line of the proposed foundation. These followed the same recording methodology outlined above, but were located using previously surveyed gravestones.

3.2 Archaeological Monitoring

On the 4th of February 2010 three machine dug trenches were excavated by the engineer/ contractors in order to gain information on the existing church foundations and ground conditions. The three test pits (numbers 3-5) were respectively located at the north, west and south of the church, against the church wall. The test pits were fully recorded and digitally photographed, the results of which will be discussed in section 5.2.

4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The existing Barony Church building dates from 1873, and was formerly known as the Parish Church. According to the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1858) an earlier church was located on this plot. The date of the previous building is unknown but it appears to be considerably smaller in size, and orientated on a more E-W alignment than the modern structure. On investigating the interior of the church two date stones were discovered. One of which appeared to be contemporary with the current building – 1872. The other dated from 1732 and may be the date stone of the church seen in the 1st Edition OS. This latter can only be speculated.

The graveyard was closed in the 1860's (Ayrshire Roots (2010b)), and a new public cemetery plot was opened at the northeast of the village in 1858. No further interment was allowed within the old plot, but it is possible that some later burial of special families' members may have been allowed.

Currently the majority of gravestones have been moved against the church wall and the boundary wall. Some however are standing in what was presumed their original position associated with a grave. Upright "in situ" stones are seen in the east and west of the church.

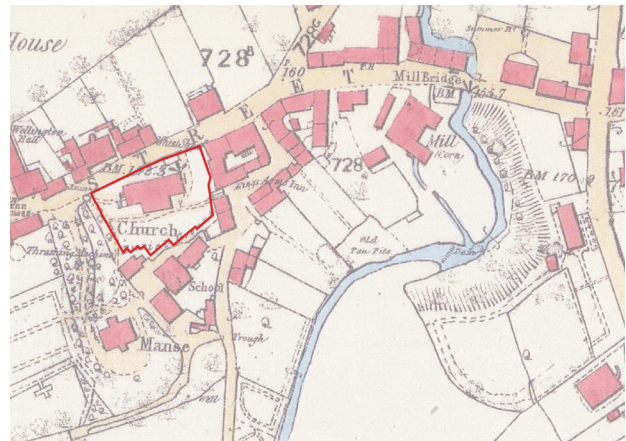
The upstanding church wall appears contemporary with the current church and the elevated position of the building from the surrounding street levels may be an indication of it being significantly built up.

5. RESULTS

The following section provides the results of the archaeological works at the Barony Centre, West Kilbride. This is arranged in order of when they were undertaken. Please see Illus 2 for location plan of all test pits.

5.1 Archaeological Test Pits

Excavation revealed no human or archaeological remains so the test pits were excavated to the full 0.60m as outlined



Illus 4

1st Edition OS map showing old church

in the WSI. Three clear deposits were identified, the lowest of which was a deposit of red sandy rubble, containing frequent sandstone fragments, occasional slate, mortar and unstamped brick fragments. Overlying this was a mixed brown sandy-silt deposit which included finer building material, which acted as a levelling material.

Uppermost being turf and topsoil (001). Some occasional disarticulated human remains, mainly phalanges (a few finger and toe bones) were discovered; however these were mixed in with building demolition material/ made ground.

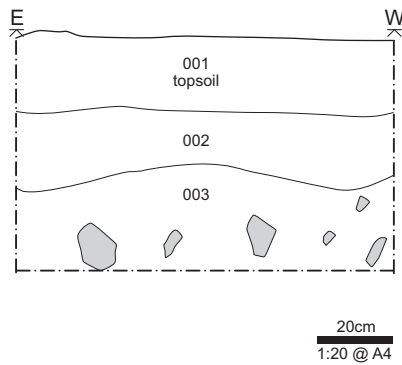
5.2 Machine Excavated Test Pits

This section of archaeological monitoring was undertaken on the 4th February 2010. A total of three machine excavated test pits were investigated as a requirement for the engineer. For recording purposes these have been given the next consecutive numbers from the previous fieldwork – test pits 3-5. All test pits were located immediately next to the current upstanding walls of church, and were excavated in order to reveal the foundations of the building. Test Pit 1 was not fully



Illus 5

Working Shot



Illus 6
Drawn up section of test pit 2

excavated due to discovering a waste drain. All test pits contained similar material as those described in TP1 and TP2, mixed sandy rubble with frequent inclusions of sandstone, occasional brick and slate fragments. The deposits were more disturbed than those seen in the previous test pits, possibly as this is the backfill around the building.

5.3 Gravestone Investigation

Following on from the results of the previous work undertaken at the Barony Centre (sections 5.1 and 5.2) it was agreed that further investigations of the upstanding grave stones that lie on the proposed wall line should be undertaken. The main focus of excavating additional test pits was to ascertain whether these stones were actually contemporary with articulated buried human remains. If a grave cut or change in deposits were encountered this would allow us to determine whether the stones are functional or purely aesthetic.

The fieldwork was undertaken on the 26th February 2010, and consisted of two test pits located next to the two afore mentioned gravestones. The test pits (numbers 6 & 7) measured 60cm x 40cm and were 60–65cm deep. The result revealed the same stratigraphic sequence as previously



Illus 7
Photo of plan of Test Pit 1

encountered in test pits 1 & 2. The topsoil overlay mixed reddish sandy rubble (003) within which several fragments of human bone were discovered. These were identified in the field as small skull fragments, vertebrae and phalanges (finger and toe bones). Although both test pits included human bone within this deposit there were more fragments retrieved from test pits 7. This discovery is likely chance as the ground there has been more disturbed.

However, unlike the first test pits an extent of (003) was reached, at around 57–60cm deep. This rubble deposit overlay cleaner dark brown sandy silt (004) which appeared to resemble old topsoil/ typical graveyard soil. Deposit (003) was easily peeled from the surface of (004) and within test pit 7 slate fragments were found to be almost sealing (004).



Illus 8
Machine excavated Test Pit 5, at south of church

The relationship of these deposits suggest that after the demolition of the previous church building, a significant amount of demolition material was generated – (003) then upcast over some of the existing churchyard to a depth of 60cm +. This was then turfed and some gravestones were possibly put back roughly in place.

6. DISCUSSION

Overall the results of the archaeological works carried out at the Barony Centre are positive for the client as no clear *in situ* archaeological remains are apparent at the level the construction works will disturb. Although some disarticulated bone was identified this is very typical of a graveyard, and confirms its previous use as one. The matter of the upstanding gravestones and lack of any evidence of associated burials gives the impression that the stones have been re-positioned after the build of the current church. Though not entirely well known this practise was probably commonly adopted in similar instances across Victorian Britain, through the frequent replacement of bigger churches. The desired “graveyard” effect would keep the locals happy, while causing less offense to the deceased’s family.



Illus 9

East facing section of Test Pit 6

It is also plausible that deposit (004) is a continuation of made ground, but this could only be confirmed with further excavation. By keeping the disturbance of the works above 60cm then it is likely that no *in situ* human remains will be encountered along the proposed line of the extension.

7. CONCLUSION

The archaeological works carried out in advance of development at the Barony Church, West Kilbride have identified that no human inhumations are likely to be *in situ* to a depth of 0.6m. If construction work extends beyond this there is a chance that human burials will be encountered. Additionally, any structural remains of the previous church that do survive will likely underlie the previous church; there is a strong possibility that this has been completely destroyed during the recent build of the Barony Church.

Any disarticulated human remains discovered during further works should not be removed from site but re-buried as the works allow.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cartographic References

Ordnance Survey 1858 25 inch First Edition, Ayr Sheet X.8.
National Library of Scotland

Internet References

Scotland's Places (2010a) http://www.scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/search_item/index.php?service=RCAHMS&id=266880

Ayrshire Roots (2010b) <http://www.ayrshireroots.com/Genealogy/Records/Burial/Burial%20Grounds%20in%20Ayrshire%201.htm>

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Photographic register

Photo No	Colour Slide	Monochrome	Digital	Direction	Description
1	y	y	y	–	ID SHOT
2			y	NW	Working Shot
3	y	y	y	W	Working Shot
4	y	y	y	NW	Working Shot
5	y	y	y	W	Shot of plan of Test Pit 1
6	y	y	y	NW	Shot of S-Facing section of TP1
7	y	y	y	S	Shot of N Facing section of TP2
8	y	y	y	S	Working Shot
9	y	y	y	–	Shot of plan of Test Pit 2
10	y	y	y	NW	Post ex shot after the backfill
11	y	y	y	E	Post ex shot after the backfill
12	–	–	y	S	Beginning of machine excavation @ north of church -TP 3
13	–	–	y	S	Beginning of machine excavation @ north of church -TP 3
14	–	–	y	E	W-Facing section of TP3
15	–	–	y	E	W-Facing section of TP3
16	–	–	y	E	Date stone within church
17	–	–	y	NEE	Excavation of Test Pit 4
18	–	–	y	S	Excavation of Test Pit 4
19	–	–	y	–	Excavation of Test Pit 4
20	–	–	y	–	Excavation of Test Pit 4
21	–	–	y	W	Excavation of Test Pit 5 @ rear of church
22	–	–	y	–	Excavation of Test Pit 5 @ rear of church
23	y	y	y	W	E-Facing section of Test Pit 6
24	y	y	y	–	Plan view of test pit 6
25	y	y	y	E	W- Facing section of test pit 7
26	y	y	y	–	Plan view of test pit 7
27	–	–	y	NE	Working shot
28	–	–	y	E	General shot of Barony Church
29	–	–	y	SEE	General shot of Barony Church
30	–	–	y	E	General shot of Barony Church
31	–	–	y	W	Post ex shot after the backfill
32	–	–	y	W	Post ex shot after the backfill
33	–	–	y	W	Post ex shot after the backfill