

Pearson Cars, Largs, North Ayrshire: Archaeological Mitigation

Data Structure Report



by Jessica Lumb

issued 7th November 2014


on behalf of Pearson Cars

RATHMELL 
ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Quality Assurance

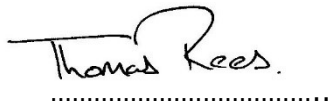
This report covers works which have been undertaken in keeping with the issued brief as modified by the agreed programme of works. The report has been prepared in keeping with the guidance of Rathmell Archaeology Limited on the preparation of reports. All works reported on within this document have been undertaken in keeping with the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct.

Signed

Date7th November 2014....

In keeping with the procedure of Rathmell Archaeology Limited this document and its findings have been reviewed and agreed by an appropriate colleague:

Checked

Date7th November 2014....

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Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared for Pearson Cars in support of the erection of a new MOT Testing Station at 123-125 Main Street, Largs, North Ayrshire (13/00108/PP). These archaeological works are designed to mitigate any adverse impact on the archaeological remains within the development area. The archaeological works detailed in the following report have been designed to mitigate any adverse impact on archaeological remains within the development area.
2. This report covers the removal of those sediments located to the east of Pearson Cars Garage in Largs, within the footprint of the proposed new building, to the rear of the Fiddlers and Oceans Nightclub. The first programme of works took place on the 15th of August 2013, with the second programme of works taking place on the 28th and 29th of October 2014.
3. North Ayrshire Council required a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken in support of any planning consent which may be granted by the planning authority. The West of Scotland Archaeology Service, who advise North Ayrshire Council on archaeological matters, provided guidance on the structure of archaeological mitigation required on this site prior to and during development works.
4. A Written Scheme of Investigation (Williamson 2013) provided the detail of the works (archaeological monitoring, excavation, post-excavation analyses and publication) for the mitigation pertaining to ground breaking within the development area and hence the direct physical impact on buried sediments.

Archaeological and Historical Background

5. Largs has a medieval origin, illustrated by the 1263 reference to its Parish Church. Early maps of Largs show it to be somewhat dispersed in terms of its settlement character, with settlement focused in linear bands along the road network. Roy's Military Map of Scotland, surveyed between 1752 and 1755, shows that by the mid 18th century a street with structures fronting it appears to be established on the line of Fraser's Close (Figure 1a).
6. The subsequent Ordnance Survey (Figure 1b) mapping shows an intensification on the frontage onto Fraser's Close and onto Waterside to the southeast. These two roads and their frontage buildings enclose the ground which is now the subject of development. There do not appear to be any significant structures built at this location between the mid 18th and the late 19th century, which suggests that the site has potential more for traces of ancillary activity from the medieval and post-medieval period.
7. While there are no recorded prehistoric remains from the development area, Largs has demonstrated that this area was a focus for prehistoric activity during the Neolithic and Bronze Ages (Turner forthcoming). The majority of the known prehistoric monuments are recorded to the south of Gogo Water and characterised by a Neolithic long cairn, a Bronze Age Beaker burial, a standing stone associated with Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age activity, and a number of round cairns, Munro suggests possibly six (Munro 1911, Turner forthcoming).
8. There is also the deliberate deposition of artefacts such as flanged axeheads of Middle Bronze Age. With the area to the north of Gogo Water also a focus for prehistoric activity, as demonstrated by the cremation cemetery and a further round cairn, these structural features form a monumental Landscape which is commonly recognised as representative of the Late Neolithic and Early to Middle Bronze Ages. Hence there remains the potential for prehistoric activity.
9. While no known sites are present within the development area, the presence of known sites within the nearby surrounding area suggests the potential for unknown archaeological sites to be present.



Figure 1a: Roy's Military Survey Lowlands 1752-55



Figure 1b: 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1857).

Project Works

10. The first programme of works commenced on the 15th of August 2013. These works consisted of the monitoring of twelve test pits within the work area. During these works a mini digger was used to excavate three small test pits through the modern surface for site investigation purposes. These works were all undertaken within the day.
11. The second programme of works commenced on the 28th October 2014 with the archaeological monitoring of ground reduction in an area to the rear of the Fiddlers and Oceans Nightclub, adjacent to Pearson Cars' garage.
12. The aim of the works was to reduce the ground level of the work area (extending to 500mm out-with the footprint of the projected new garage build) to a level 300mm below the current tarmac level at the west of the work area. This included monitoring the removal of the concrete floor of the demolished garage to access the ground below.
13. Work was carried out on the 28th of October 2014 using a mini digger (alternating between using a toothless bucket and a 'pecker') and an eight tonne tracked 360° excavator (alternating between using a large toothed bucket and a small toothless one). On the 29th October 2014 only the eight tonne machine was used.
14. Near to completion of works on the 29th there was a small section of ground, roughly 4m² in area still to be reduced. This area could not be reduced until all the spoil had been removed from site to allow access for the removal lorries. It was clear from the stratigraphy in the south facing section of the trench in this area (Figure 4b) that the deposits below the ground surface were primarily made up of 20th century detritus which included modern rubber hosing, modern wood waste and some diesel waste.
15. It was therefore inferred that levels of disturbance during the late 20th century was so great that the likelihood of surviving archaeology was diminished. Therefore on behalf of the client, Rathmell Archaeology through consultation secured WoSAS's agreement to not monitor the removal of this small area.
16. In compliance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Williamson 2013) any potential archaeological features were investigated and recorded. All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

Findings

17. Prior to excavation the site area comprised a mixture of modern surfaces. On the NNW side of the area there existed a small garage building with a concrete floor. Directly surrounding this building there was a surface of concrete, to the NW, and a tarmac surface, to the SW. On the southern and eastern side of the area there was a moderately compact dark grey Type 1 stone material, measuring 100mm deep (009) making up a modern car parking area.
18. The reduction of the ground surface within the second programme of works began at the SW area of the site, while the debris from the demolition of the existing garage was being lifted and removed from site (Figure 3a).
19. Topsoil (001) across the site was rare, and mainly concentrated underneath the concrete floor surface of the demolished building. This concrete floor (003) had been poured directly onto a thin layer of topsoil (001) overlaying the subsoil (002).
20. Several services existed below this concrete surface which appeared to be contemporary with or primarily associated with the demolished building. There were copper water pipes below the concrete surface, contained within the thin deposit of topsoil. These had no visible cut. The ceramic drain which ran WSW-ENE from the modern brick drainage pit was adhered to the underside of this concrete, indicating that it was either an open feature at the time of pouring, or it is contemporary with the floor.



Figure 2a: Working shot of test pit excavation, 15th August 2013



Figure 2b: S facing section of Test Pit 1, 15th August 2013

21. It was clear from the stratigraphy that the area had been subject to modern landscaping for working use. The upper surface of the sediments beneath the Type 1 stone to the south and east had been levelled for the laying of this engineered surface. This stone material (009) had two distinct layers; it was inferred that it had been overlain with a new Type 1 surface more recently (Figure 4a).
22. Below this Type 1 deposit (009) were predominantly made ground layers (003), consisting of modern waste materials which had likely been compacted and then overlain with a modern surface for the purpose of car parking. These made ground deposits (003) overlaid the subsoil in the NE of the site and were stratigraphically directly above a firm light brown silty clay, with small sub rounded and angular stone inclusions (004). This context only existed in the SW of the site, and was directly above a loosely compacted mid to light brown clayey gravel subsoil (002), which was the lowest deposit encountered on the site.
23. In the southern area of the site there was a possible rubble drain present. This rubble drain was not directly visible in the southern section of the trench, nor was it visible in plan. The only indication of the possible drain was an increase in the size and frequency of the larger stone inclusions stones in the subsoil in a concentrated area visible upon excavation by the mechanical excavator.
24. Directly to the rear of the northwest corner of the Fiddlers and Oceans Nightclub the remains of a relatively modern red brick garden/yard wall of two courses (006) was uncovered, set in a heavily compacted beige/yellow sand (008). From its truncated appearance, it is clear that the wall remains had already been disturbed in previous works. Surrounding the wall remains was a firm dark brown/black silty clay deposit with inclusions of small to medium rounded stones and plant material (005). The finds from this deposit consisted mainly of modern waste materials such as animal bone, glass fragments and modern white glazed ceramic sherds.

Artefacts

25. The only stratified finds were noted within deposit (005). These consist of modern white glazed earthenware, one glass fragment and one complete small glass jar with an embossing star motif repeating around the exterior towards the base. These artefacts all appear to date from the 19th and possibly even the 20th century, especially in the case of the glass jar.
26. The remainder of the finds noted from the site, not in stratified deposits, were primarily 19th – 20th century modern white glazed, transfer printed earthenwares and one sherd of slip glazed red earthenware.

Discussion

27. The stratigraphy revealed across the site was simple in character. The deposit (009), which consisted of a modern Type 1 stone material predominantly overlay made ground deposits, likely made up of workshop debris, which existed in the NE, E and SE area of the site. Under these made ground deposits the topsoil was either extremely thin or absent, indicating that it may have been stripped prior to modern use of the site. The only area with topsoil deposits surviving under (009) was located to the south of the site, where the ground level increased slightly. This is also where the natural clay deposit (004) primarily existed, which was interpreted as a natural clay deposit.
28. The only archaeological feature of note was the discovery of the remains of a yard wall (006), likely previously belonging to the Fiddlers and Oceans Nightclub building. This small remnant foundation was surrounded by the deposit (005) which was characterised by modern ceramic sherds, glass fragments and organic waste. As none of the finds pre date the modern period, this deposit was interpreted as a waste deposit from earlier occupation of the surrounding buildings and likely dates from the 19th to 20th century.
29. It was clear from the absence of topsoil deposits and the abundance of made ground deposits that considerable landscaping has taken place on the site throughout the 19th and 20th centuries in preparation for building works, workshop use and in preparing the ground for the laying of the Type 1 stone.



Figure 3a: Commencing works on reduction of ground level SW corner of site and removal of demolition debris in NW corner of site.



Figure 3b: Removal of concrete floor of demolished garage.

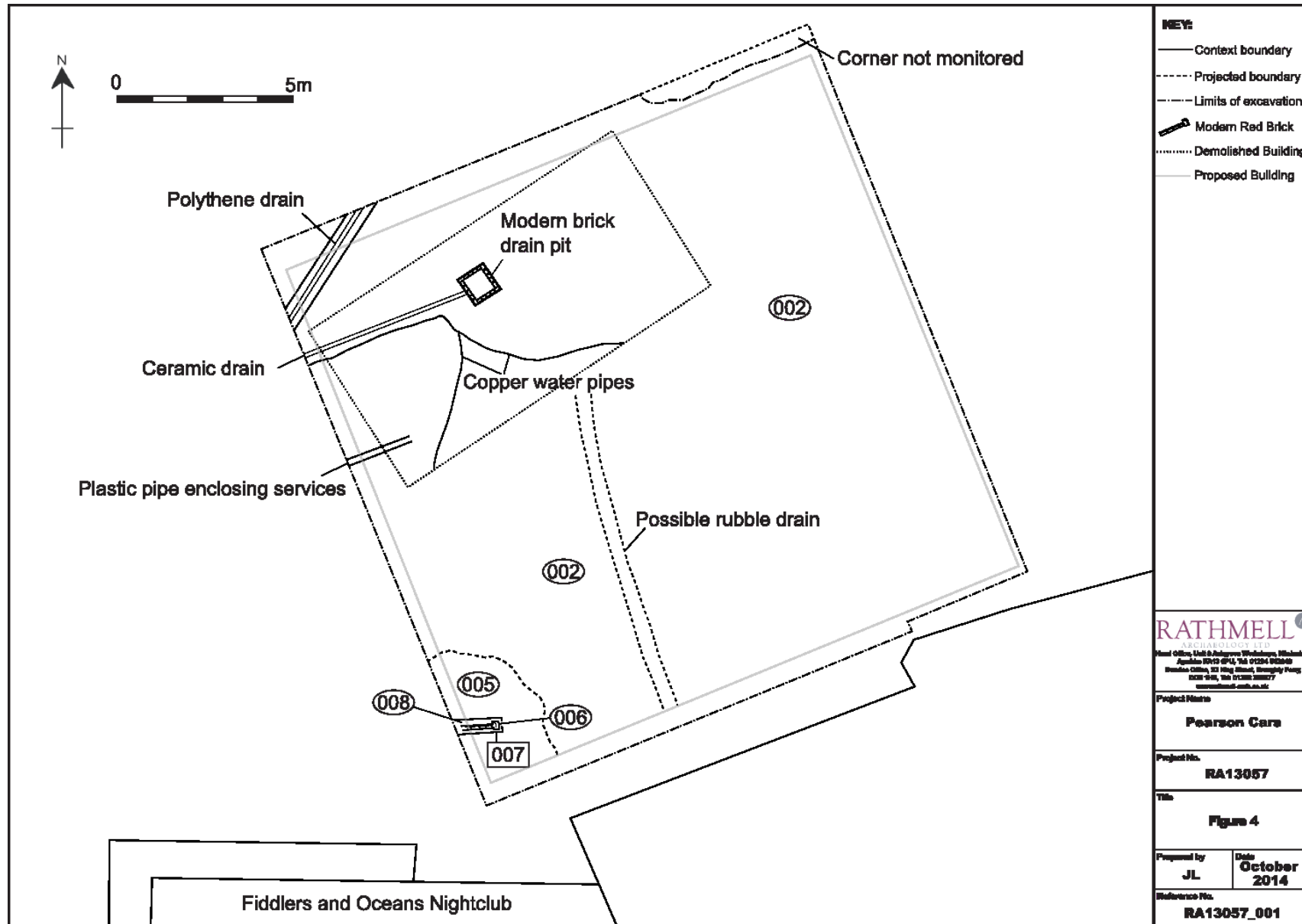


Figure 4: Plan of trench



Figure 4a: SW facing section of trench showing Type 1 deposition layers



Figure 4b: Section through ground to the rear of modern brick revetment, showing topsoil/garden soil (001) directly overlying subsoil (003)



Figure 5a: SW corner of site showing (005) deposit and [006] 20th century yard wall remains.



Figure 5b: [006] 20th century yard wall remains.

30. This supports the mapping evidence suggesting that the main usage of the site has been since the mid 18th and early 19th century.

Recommendations

31. The archaeological monitoring works revealed evidence of landscaping and site occupation which had taken place in the 19th and/or 20th centuries, but no features or artefacts pre-dating the modern period were identified.
32. With no significant archaeological features identified, it is recommended that no further work should be carried out. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations must, however, rest with North Ayrshire Council and their advisors, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Conclusion

33. Archaeological monitoring work was carried out for Pearson Cars in support of the erection of a new MOT Testing Station at 123-125 Main Street, Largs, North Ayrshire (13/00108/PP). These archaeological works took place on the 15th of August 2013 and the 28th to 29th of October 2014.
34. The programme of works revealed evidence of landscaping and site occupation which had taken place in the 19th and/or 20th centuries, but no features or artefacts pre-dating the modern period were identified. It has been recommended that no further work should be carried out. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations must, however, rest with North Ayrshire Council and their advisors, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Acknowledgements

35. The author would like to thank Mr David Pearson and Mr Ross Pearson of Pearson Cars, Mr Douglas Campbell of Ace Construction and Mr Martin O'Hare of the West of Scotland Archaeology Service for their assistance throughout the on-site works. Thanks must also be extended to Mr Thomas Rees, Director at Rathmell Archaeology, for casting an editorial eye over the text.

References

Documentary

Munro, R., 1910, 'On a Bronze Age Cemetery and other Antiquities at Largs, Ayrshire', in *Archaeologis* 62 240-250

Rees, T. & Turner, L., (Eds). Forthcoming. *Excavations by Rathmell Archaeology across Central and Southern Scotland - A compendium 2003-2009*. BAR

Williamson, C., 2013, *Pearson Cars, Largs: Archaeological Mitigation. Written Scheme of Investigation*. (Rathmell Archaeology Ltd, Unpublished report)

Cartographic

Roy, W.	1752-55	Military Survey of Scotland (Lowlands)
Ordnance Survey	1857	Six-inch 1 st Edition Ayrshire Sheet III.12

Appendix 1: Registers

Within this appendix are all registers pertaining to works on-site during the excavation.

Context Register

Context	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
001	1	Deposit	Moderate to loosely compact mid brown silty sand	Topsoil
002	1	Deposit	Loosely compacted mid to light brown clayey gravel	Natural Subsoil
003	1	Deposit	Loose to compacted mixed dark brown/mid brown gravelly silty sand with inclusions of demolition debris	Modern made ground - overburden
004	1	Deposit	Firm light brown silty clay, with small sub rounded and angular stone inclusions	Natural Clay
005	1	Deposit	Firm dark brown/black silty clay with small to medium rounded stones, domestic waste and plant material	Modern yard demolition/waste layer
006	1	Material	Modern red brick, two courses	Modern yard wall
007	1	Cut	Linear in plan, 1.2m x 350mm	Cut for a wall
008	1	Fill	Heavily compacted beige/yellow sand	Fill of [007] surrounding (006)
009	1	Deposit	Moderately compact dark grey gravel/type 1 material. Measures 100mm deep.	Modern gravel surface

Photographic Register

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
1	-	-	-	-	1	Pre ex shot of area (southern half)	SW	15/8/13
2	-	-	-	-	2	Pre ex shot of area, with pre-existing building still standing	WSW	15/8/13
3	-	-	-	-	3	Pre ex shot of area, with pre-existing building still standing	SW	15/8/13

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
4	-	-	-	-	4	Pre ex shot of area, with pre-existing building still standing	W	15/8/13
5	-	-	-	-	5	General shot of Test Pit 1	E	15/8/13
6	-	-	-	-	6	S facing section of Test Pit 1	S	15/8/13
7	-	-	-	-	7	Working shot – digging test pits	WNW	15/8/13
8	-	-	-	-	8	General shot of Test Pit 2	S	15/8/13
9	-	-	-	-	9	W facing section of Test Pit 2	W	15/8/13
10	-	-	-	-	10	General shot of Test Pit 3	W	15/8/13
11	-	-	-	-	11	S facing section of Test Pit 3	S	15/8/13
12	-	-	-	-	12	Post ex shot after test pits backfilled	SW	15/8/13
13	-	-	-	-	1070	Photo of Plan		28/10/2014
14	-	-	-	-	1071	Photo of Plan		28/10/2014
15	-	-	-	-	1072	General shot of area	N	28/10/2014
16	-	-	-	-	1073	General shot of area	N	28/10/2014
17	-	-	-	-	1074	General shot of area	NE	28/10/2014
18	-	-	-	-	1075	Close up of brick type 1 from demolished building		28/10/2014
19	-	-	-	-	1076	Close up of brick type 1 from demolished building		28/10/2014
20	-	-	-	-	1077	Working shot of trench	SW	28/10/2014
21	-	-	-	-	1078	Working shot of foundation demolition	SW	28/10/2014

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
22	-	-	-	-	1079	Working shot	NW	28/10/2014
23	-	-	-	-	1080	NNW facing trench edge showing test pit	NNW	28/10/2014
24	-	-	-	-	1081	WSW facing trench edge	WSW	28/10/2014
25	-	-	-	-	1083	WNW facing trench edge	WNW	28/10/2014
26	-	-	-	-	1085	Overview of trench 10:30am	NW	28/10/2014
27	-	-	-	-	1086	Overview of trench 10:30am	SW	28/10/2014
28	-	-	-	-	1087	Trench showing sub clay	W	28/10/2014
29	-	-	-	-	1088	Working shot	W	28/10/2014
30	-	-	-	-	1089	Trench under concrete	W	28/10/2014
31	-	-	-	-	1090	Working shot	SW	28/10/2014
32	-	-	-	-	1091	Working shot	W	28/10/2014
33	-	-	-	-	1092	Exposed water service and area	SW	28/10/2014
34	-	-	-	-	1093	Black silty spread	WNW	28/10/2014
35	-	-	-	-	1094	Black silty spread removed/sectioned	WNW	28/10/2014
36	-	-	-	-	1095	Black spread actually water pipe	WNW	28/10/2014
37	-	-	-	-	1096	Trench overview 12:30pm	NW	28/10/2014
38	-	-	-	-	1097	Trench overview 12:30pm	W	28/10/2014
39	-	-	-	-	1098	Trench overview 12:30pm	SW	28/10/2014

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
40	-	-	-	-	1099	General area shot	W	28/10/2014
41	-	-	-	-	1101	General area shot	WNW	28/10/2014
42	-	-	-	-	1102	Exposed services	W	28/10/2014
43	-	-	-	-	1103	Exposed services	W	28/10/2014
44	-	-	-	-	1104	Days end 28/10	SW	28/10/2014
45	-	-	-	-	1105	Days end 28/10	SW	28/10/2014
46	-	-	-	-	1106	Working shot- removal of water pipes	W	29/10/2014
47	-	-	-	-	1107	Exposed topsoil under demolished building	SW	29/10/2014
48	-	-	-	-	1108	Working shot	SW	29/10/2014
49	-	-	-	-	1109	Ground surface level	W	29/10/2014
50	-	-	-	-	1110	Exposed subsoil	W	29/10/2014
51	-	-	-	-	1111	Completion of strip	W	29/10/2014
52	-	-	-	-	1112	Working shot (005) [006] [007] (008)	NW	29/10/2014
53	-	-	-	-	1113	Uncovered (005) [006] [007] (008)	W	29/10/2014
54	-	-	-	-	1114	Plan view (005) [006] [007] (008)	E	29/10/2014
55	-	-	-	-	1115	(005) [006] [007] (008)	N	29/10/2014
56	-	-	-	-	1116	Strip complete N side of trench	S	29/10/2014
57	-	-	-	-	1117	Section under tarmac	E	29/10/2014

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
58	-	-	-	-	1118	Working shot	SW	29/10/2014
59	-	-	-	-	1119	Section of overburden (003) deep and darker in this area	N	29/10/2014
60	-	-	-	-	1120	Exposed subsoil	SW	29/10/2014
61	-	-	-	-	1121	W facing trench edge	W	29/10/2014
62	-	-	-	-	1122	Working shot	N	29/10/2014
63	-	-	-	-	1123	Working shot	NW	29/10/2014
64	-	-	-	-	1124	Trench 1	W	29/10/2014
65	-	-	-	-	1125	Trench 1	SW	29/10/2014
66	-	-	-	-	1126	Exposing subsoil in NE corner	NW	29/10/2014
67	-	-	-	-	1127	Working shot	NW	29/10/2014
68	-	-	-	-	1128	Working shot	N	29/10/2014
69	-	-	-	-	1129	Working shot	NE	29/10/2014
70	-	-	-	-	1130	Showing corner not monitored	W	29/10/2014
71	-	-	-	-	1131	Removal of (003)	W	29/10/2014
72	-	-	-	-	1132	Section showing (003) in corner not removed	SW	29/10/2014
73	-	-	-	-	1133	Days End 29/10	W	29/10/2014
74	-	-	-	-	1134	Days End 29/10	W	29/10/2014

Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Sheet No.	Area/ Trench	Drawing Type	Scale	Description	Drawer	Date
1	1	1	Plan	1:100	Plan of Trench	JL	29/10/2014

Finds Register

Find No.	Area/Trench	Context no.	Material Type	Description	Excavator	Date
1	1	Unstratified	Ceramic	3 x ceramic sherds	JL	28/10/2014
2	1	(005)	Ceramic	3 x ceramic sherds	JL	29/10/2014
3	1	(005)	Glass	2 x glass, 1 intact vessel, 1 fragment	JL	29/10/2014

Samples Register

Sample No.	Area / Trench	Context	Sample Type	Description / Quantity	Excavator	Date
1	1	5	Bulk x 1 L Bag	Dark brown/black silty clay, inclusions of domestic waste and small stones	JL	29/10/2014

Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	North Ayrshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Pearson Cars, Largs
PROJECT CODE:	RA13057
PARISH:	Largs
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Jessica Lumb
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rathmell Archaeology Limited
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching brief
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NS 2048 5929
START DATE (this season)	15 th August, 2013
END DATE (this season)	29 th October, 2014
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	<p>Archaeological monitoring work was carried out for Pearson Cars in support of the erection of a new MOT Testing Station at 123-125 Main Street, Largs, North Ayrshire (13/00108/PP). These archaeological works took place on the 15th of August 2013 and the 28th to 29th of October 2014.</p> <p>The programme of works revealed evidence of landscaping and site occupation which had taken place in the 19th and/or 20th centuries, but no features or artefacts pre-dating the modern period were identified. It has been recommended that no further work should be carried out. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations must, however, rest with North Ayrshire Council and their advisors, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Pearson Cars
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Unit 8 Ashgrove Workshops, Kilwinning, Ayrshire KA13 6PU
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Report to West of Scotland Archaeology Service and archive to RCAHMS Collections

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