

Dolphin Cottage, Blackwaterfoot, Arran: Archaeological Monitoring

Data Structure Report



by Alan Matthews

issued 6th May 2015

on behalf of Mr Miller

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 Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct.



Signed

Date6th May 2015...

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



Checked

Date6th May 2015...

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Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared to present the findings of archaeological monitoring undertaken for John Lamb Architect on behalf of their client, Mr Miller, in support of the ongoing construction works at Dolphin Cottage, Blackwaterfoot, Arran. The archaeological works were designed to mitigate any adverse impact on any archaeological remains within the development area.
2. North Ayrshire Council required a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken at Dolphin Cottage, Blackwaterfoot, Arran as an element of the granted planning consent. The West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS), who advise North Ayrshire Council on archaeological matters, provided guidance on the structure of archaeological works required and the mitigation of the proposed development works. The archaeological works were commissioned after the development work had already begun.
3. Rathmell Archaeology Limited has been appointed by John Lamb Architect on behalf of their client, Mr Miller, to undertake the development and implementation of archaeological mitigation works. The project works were defined by a Method Statement (Matthews 2015) that was agreed with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Historical and Archaeological Background

4. The works undertaken in this development included the demolition of the cottage which existed on the site and the construction of a new, larger dwelling. The site is located in the approximate centre of the village of Blackwaterfoot on the west coast of the Isle of Arran. The site is located to the rear of, to the north-west of, the Blackwaterfoot Lodge and less than 50m to the north of the A741. The site is located in part on top of a paleo-cliff line and the coast, the Firth of Clyde, is about 200m to the west.
5. Just to the north of the site is the Category B listed building Victoria Lodge (Reference No: 13635). Several other sites and archaeological events are recorded in the area immediately around Blackwaterfoot, this includes several archaeological investigations which have been undertaken. Three archaeological evaluations, two in 2006 and one in 2007, were undertaken by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd approximately 300m to the south of the development area. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered in the course of this work.
6. The West of Scotland Archaeology Service, in their letter of 15th October 2013, had noted several triggers for recognising the potential archaeological sensitivity of the development area. The first and most obvious of these was the fact that Arran is noted for the number and quality of its archaeological remains. The southern half of the island in particular has a number of prehistoric ritual and domestic sites. Sites of this nature would typically survive as negative features and the paleo-cliff where the development is located is a potential area for sites of this kind. A little more than 1km to the north of the development area are two scheduled monuments, Torr Righ Mor hut circles and cultivation remains (Monument No: 4414) and The Doon fort and standing stones (Monument No: 4415), illustrating the archaeological potential of the area.
7. There are no known significant archaeological sites within the development area and the existence of Dolphin Cottage, demolished as an element of this development, would have caused considerable disturbance to the soft sediment in the area. However, by looking at the surrounding landscape we are able to understand the potential for previously unknown archaeological remains to lie within the development area.
8. WoSAS also pointed out the limekiln (WoSAS Site ID: 52159), shown on superseded mapping (Figures 1a and 1b), to the west of the development area. A kiln of this nature which makes use of a cliff face, could result in the remains of activity both at the top and at the base of the cliff. Some of the potential scope of this activity is in the development area and so there was the potential for recovery of material or remains relating to lime processing.

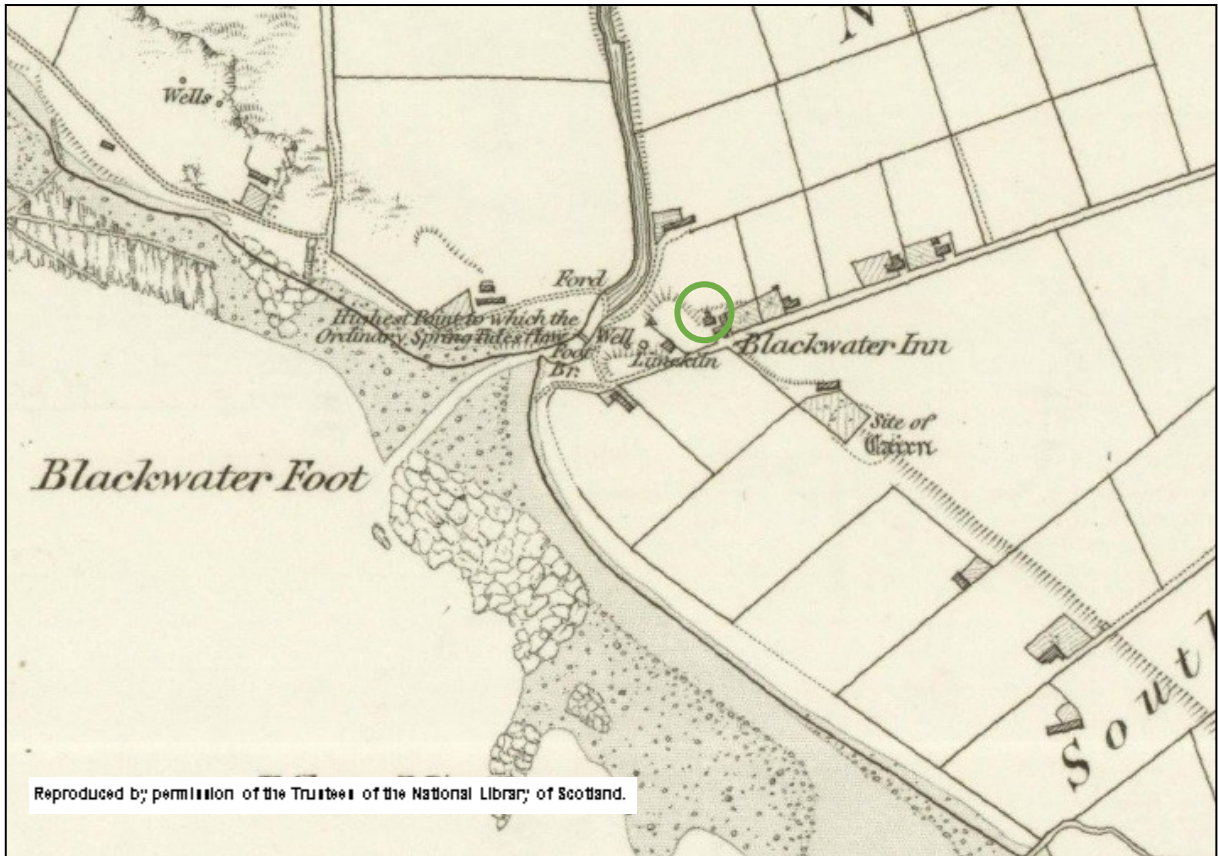


Figure 1a: 6-inch 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1843-1882)

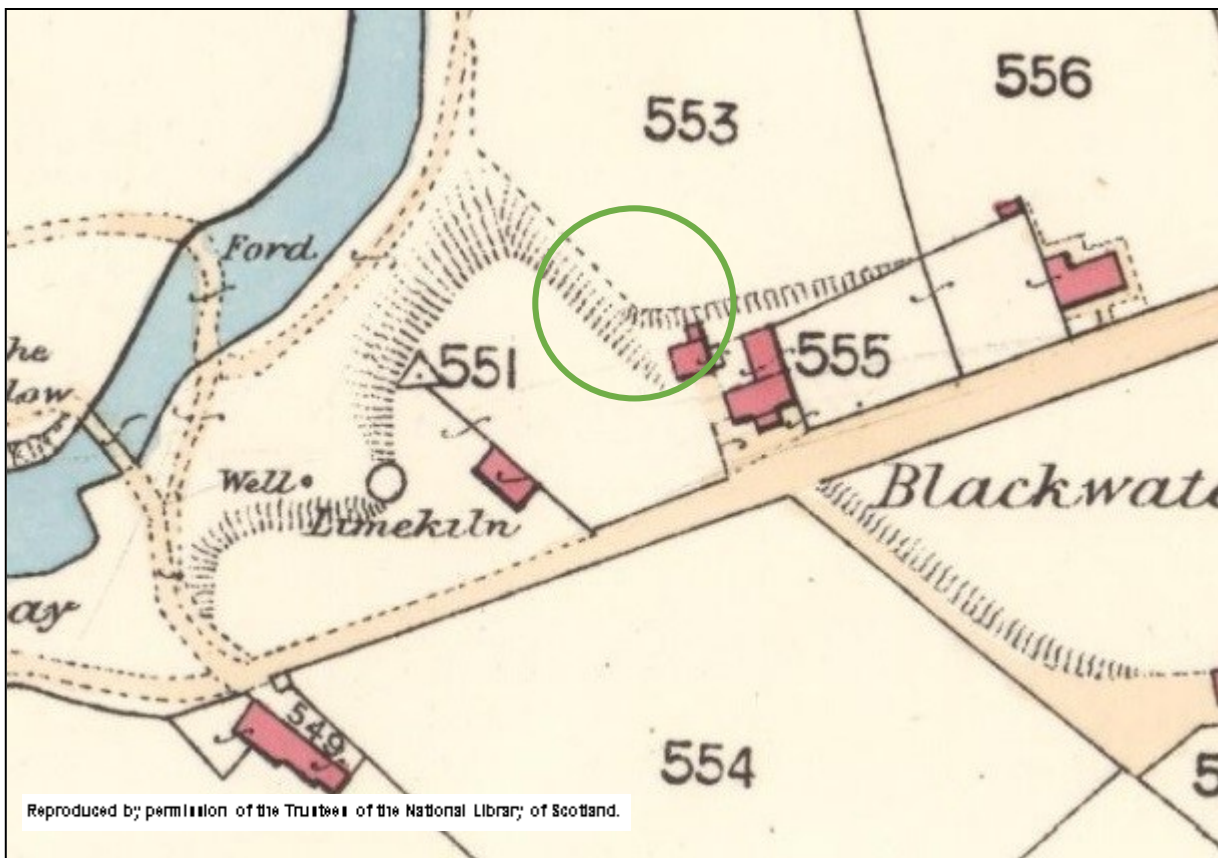


Figure 1b: 25-inch 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1868)

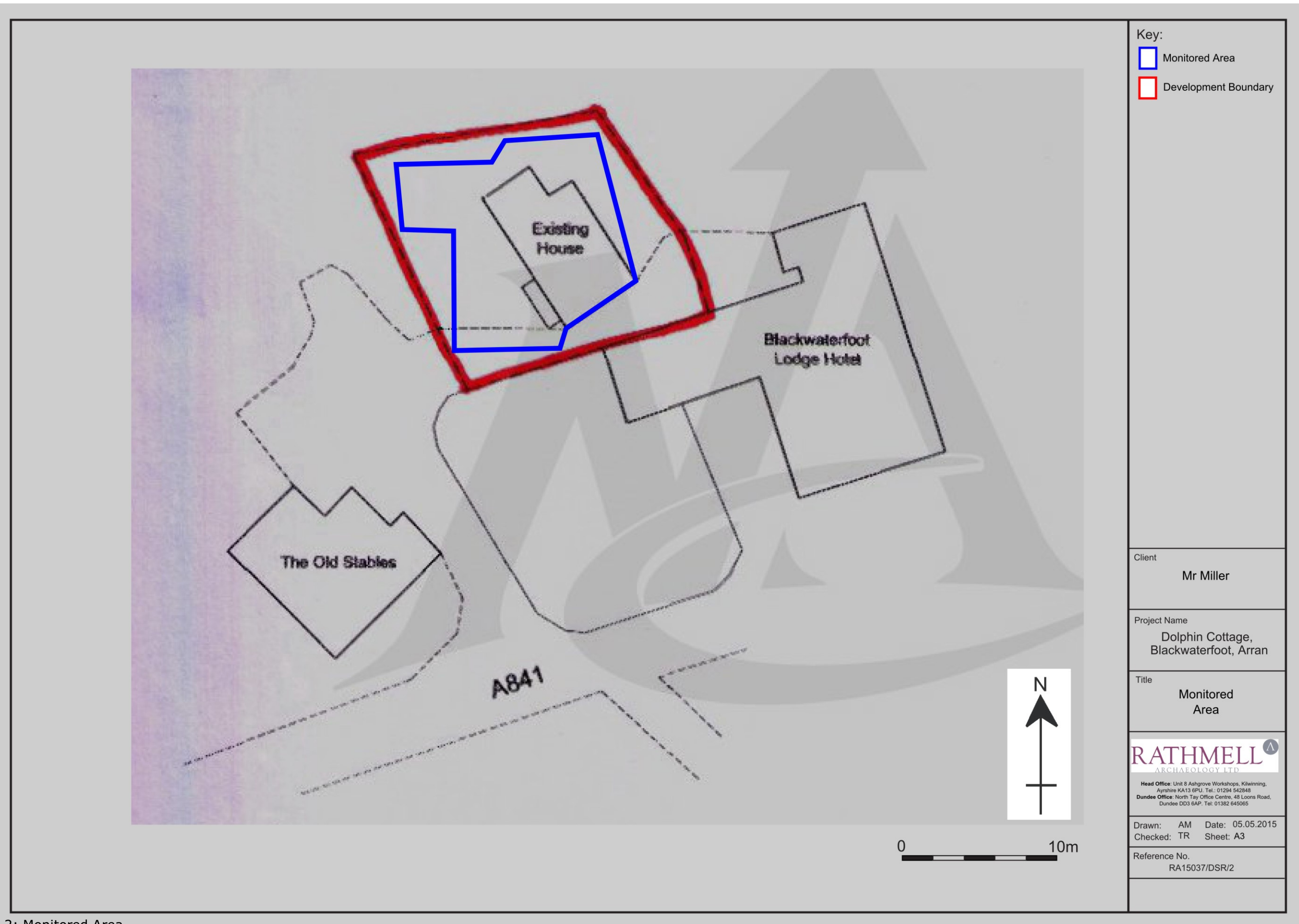


Figure 2: Monitored Area

Project Works

9. The programme of works comprised archaeological monitoring (Figure 2) of ground-breaking works undertaken after the partial demolition of the existing cottage and initial stages of construction work had already taken place. Archaeological monitoring works were carried out in order to establish the potential for significant archaeological material within the remaining soft sediment which was still to be impacted by the proposed development works, and establish as far as possible if significant archaeological material had been removed by those works already carried out.
10. The archaeological monitoring works were carried out on the 15th of April 2015 and then again on the 22nd of April 2015. The work was undertaken by a single mechanical excavator, using a toothless ditching bucket where possible and a toothed bucket where the ground became stony, under the supervision of Rathmell Archaeology Ltd and in accordance with the terms of the agreed Method Statement (Matthews 2015).
11. In compliance with the Method Statement (Matthews 2015), any potentially significant archaeological features were investigated and recorded. All works were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

Findings

12. Rathmell Archaeology Ltd arrived on site after demolition and excavation work had already progressed. Dolphin Cottage, which had previously existed on site, had latterly existed as a single story structure with a pre-fabricated structure on top. This building had been constructed on a roughly north-north-west by south-south-east alignment and recessed into the natural slope. Ground level on the west side of the building sat much higher than on the east. The construction of this building has caused substantial disturbance to the sediments on the slope. Prior to Rathmell Archaeology Ltd being on site most of this original building had been removed including the foundation levels. Only the lower portion of the southern gable wall remained (Figure 3a).
13. Resulting from the demolition of the former Dolphin Cottage and other associated excavation work almost the entire footprint of the new building has been stripped down to the top of the foundation level by the time of the site visit on the 15th of April 2015. In addition part of the new building, in the form of a steel frame structure, had already been created in the north-west corner of the development area (Figure 3b). Between this structure and the remaining gable on the southern boundary there was an exposed section through the natural slope which was accessible for examination and recording.
14. The exposed section on the western part of the site (Figure 4a) was composed of an upper layer of loose gravel and large rounded pebbles in a matrix of dark brown clayey sand (004). This deposit was observed to cover the ground to the west and south of the site and may represent a raised beach deposit. Immediately beyond the southern part of the excavated area, (004) formed the surface of the access road. In other parts of the site topsoil and turf, (001) to the west and (005) to the east, formed the ground surface.
15. Beneath (004) was a layer of compact yellow orange sand with lenses of small rounded pebbles (003). This was identified as archaeologically sterile natural subsoil. (003) was exposed across the rest of the excavated area which had already been opened by the 15th of April 2015. After examination of the exposed sediments upon arrival, no significant archaeological features were observed and no anthropic material was recovered other than that which would relate to the modern (later 19th to 21st century) use of the site.
16. On the 15th of April 2015 the area to the east of the now demolished Dolphin Cottage was still under turf. At this time two pieces of ground breaking work remained to be done; the excavation and partial removal of the existing septic tank and the excavation of foundation trenches into the untouched area to the east of the demolished Dolphin Cottage.



Figure 3a: Southern gable of demolished Dolphin Cottage



Figure 3b: Steel frame structure in the north-west corner



Figure 4a: Section exposed in western part of site



Figure 4b: Excavation for the removal of the existing septic tank

17. Excavation and partial removal of the existing septic tank (Figure 4b) was carried out on the afternoon of the 15th of April 2015 under archaeological supervision. An area approximately 3m by 3m was excavated to a depth of 1.6m. The only sediments exposed were modern backfill (006) containing modern brick, plastic, wood and building debris. At the depth of 1.6m, excavation was halted with the intention to concrete over it although the existing tank continued deeper. No significant archaeological material was exposed during this excavation work.
18. The excavation for the foundation trenches for the new building was carried out on the 22nd of April 2015 under archaeological supervision. A portion of this excavation was carried out in the already exposed natural subsoil in the footprint of the demolished Dolphin Cottage (Figure 5a) and the north-eastern portion was in the undisturbed area which was still mostly under turf (005). Natural subsoil (003) (Figure 5b) was exposed at the base of these trenches. The only feature exposed was identified as the base of the foundation of the demolished Dolphin Cottage (007). No archaeologically significant features were uncovered during this work and no anthropic material was recovered other than would suggest the modern (later 19th to 21st century) use of the site.
19. No significant archaeological features were exposed during the monitoring works. Despite the fact that ground breaking works relating to the demolition of Dolphin Cottage were not carried out under archaeological supervision it is unlikely that these excavations exposed any significant archaeological features. Had any features existed it is likely that they would have been removed by the construction of the demolished Dolphin Cottage. No further archaeological monitoring was carried out in relation to this development.

Discussion

20. No significant archaeological features were uncovered during the course of the archaeological monitoring works. The only material uncovered probably related to the modern (mid 19th to 21st century) use of the area as the site of Dolphin Cottage. Although some of the work was carried out without archaeological monitoring it is likely that any significant archaeological features had already been destroyed by the construction of the demolished Dolphin Cottage.

Recommendations

21. No significant archaeological remains were located within the development area and the only anthropic material observed during the monitoring related to 19th century or more recent use of the site. The entire development area was stripped down to exposed subsoil.
22. On balance, given the lack of significant archaeological material recovered in the course of the monitoring works, we consider that the development works will not compromise any significant archaeological strata. Rathmell Archaeology Ltd recommends that no further archaeological monitoring work be undertaken with regards to this development and the planning condition be purged.
23. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with North Ayrshire Council and their advisors, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Conclusion

24. A programme of archaeological monitoring works was required by John Lamb Architect on behalf of Mr Miller in support of the ongoing construction works at Dolphin Cottage, Blackwaterfoot, Arran. The archaeological monitoring works involved examination of the existing excavated area, monitoring of the excavation for the removal of a septic tank and monitoring of the excavation for foundation trenches. The area was stripped down to subsoil. No significant archaeological features or anthropic material was observed in the course of the works.



Figure 5a: Excavation in the footprint of the demolished Dolphin Cottage



Figure 5b: Exposed subsoil (003)

Acknowledgements

25. I am grateful to the staff of John Lamb Architect and William Kerr & Sons Ltd for their support during the site works and also to the West of Scotland Archaeology Service who gave guidance throughout.
26. And to the site staff Claire Williamson and Thomas Rees for their hard work on site.

References

Matthews. A, 2015, *Dolphin Cottage, Blackwaterfoot, Arran: Archaeological Mitigation, Method Statement*, unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd

Appendix 1: Registers

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

Context Register

Context No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
001	Deposit	Moderately compact, very dark brown/black, very clayey sand with frequent rootlets and rounded pebble inclusions (120mm by 90mm by 6mm in size). Covers area to the east of the original building. Exposed along eastern edge of reduced area. Up to 500mm deep.	Topsoil and turf covering garden area to the east of the original building.
002	Deposit	Very compact, dark orange brown sand with moderate small rounded stone inclusions. Exposed in section in eastern edge of reduced area, extends 8.2m north-south and continues to the west. Approximately 600mm thick.	Natural subsoil, b-horizon.
003	Deposit	Firmly compacted pale yellow orange sand with lenses of small rounded pebbles. Extends across whole site.	Natural subsoil.
004	Deposit	Loose to moderately compacted gravel (comprising rounded beach pebbles ranging from very small (10mm) up to 240mm in size, sitting in a matrix of very dark brown clayey sand. Revealed in section in the south-west corner. Covers extent roughly 6.4m east-west by 5.8m north-south although continues outside monitored area to the west and south. Maximum depth is 1.9m to 2m.	Raised beach deposit? Sitting to the south-west of the original building. Possible that it may underlie (001) in places but has come to the surface in areas used for vehicle access.
005	Deposit	Moderately compacted, very dark brown/black, very clayey sand with frequent rootlets and small stones. Similar to (001) and (006). Approximately 200mm to 300mm in thickness although difficult to differentiate between this and the underlying (006). Possible that they are the same context which has been grassed over.	Turf and topsoil covering garden area to east of original building.
006	Deposit	Loose and very dark brown/black clayey sand with frequent inclusions of modern brick plastic, wood, building debris and frequent small to medium sub-angular and sub-rounded stones. Some ash lenses. Also contained modern ceramic glass and metal. Exposed to a depth of 1.6m but full depth not reached as only top of septic tank exposed. Revealed as 3m by 3m area but continued beyond this.	Made ground/ infilled material around septic tank which sat to the north-east of the original building. Could extend across whole of garden area to the east.
007	Deposit	800mm broad belt of medium to large rounded stones 500mm deep, orientated north north-west to south south-east, cut into (003).	Foundation to east wall of cottage.

Photographic Register

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Card No.	Image No.				
1	-	-	-	-	1391	Area of new build	SE	15/4/15
2	-	-	-	-	1392	E facing section through higher ground to west	ESE	15/4/15
3	-	-	-	-	1393	New build	SSE	15/4/15
4	-	-	-	-	1394	Remaining wall from original build	NE	15/4/15
5	-	-	-	-	1395	Northern half of area reduced from new build	E	15/4/15
6	-	-	-	-	1396	Remaining wall from original build	NE	15/4/15
7	-	-	-	-	1397	Lower ground to the east	SW	15/4/15
8	-	-	-	-	1398	Eastern half of site from the higher ground	SW	15/4/15
9	-	-	-	-	1399	Southern end of reduced area	W	15/4/15
10	-	-	-	-	1400	N-facing section through higher ground	NNE	15/4/15
11	-	-	-	-	1401	Northern half of reduced area	E	15/4/15
12	-	-	-	-	1402	Southern half of reduced area	NE	15/4/15
13	-	-	-	-	1403	Southern edge of reduced area	NE	15/4/15
14	-	-	-	-	1404	Area dug out to remove septic tank	SW	15/4/15
15	-	-	-	-	1405	Area dug out to remove septic tank	SW	15/4/15
16	-	-	-	-	1406	Area dug out to remove septic tank	W	15/4/15
17	-	-	-	-	1407	E-facing section of reduced area (southern half)	E	15/4/15
18	-	-	-	-	1408	Sample of E-facing section (northern half)	WNW	15/4/15
19	-	-	-	-	3376	N finds	SE	22/4/15
20	-	-	-	-	3377	Reduction of (003) by gable	N	22/4/15

21					3378	Cleaned southern section (004)/(002)/(003)	N	22/4/15
22					3379	General shots around site	-	22/4/15
23					3380	General shots around site	-	22/4/15
24					3381	General shots around site	-	22/4/15
25					3382	General shots around site	-	22/4/15
26					3383	General shots around site	-	22/4/15
27					3384	General shots around site	-	22/4/15
28					3385	General shots around site	-	22/4/15
29					3386	General shots around site	-	22/4/15
30					3387	General shots around site	-	22/4/15

Appendix 3: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	North Ayrshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Dolphin Cottage, Blackwaterfoot, Arran
PROJECT CODE:	RA15037
PARISH:	Kilmory
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Alan Matthews
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, 8 or 10 figures)	NR 8968 2821
START DATE (this season)	15 th April 2015
END DATE (this season)	22 th April 2015
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	A programme of archaeological monitoring works carried out in support of the ongoing construction works at Dolphin Cottage, Blackwaterfoot, Arran. The archaeological monitoring works involved examination of the existing excavated area, monitoring of the excavation for the removal of a septic tank and monitoring of the excavation for foundation trenches. The area was stripped down to subsoil. No significant archaeological features or anthropic material was observed in the course of the works.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr Miller
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Unit 8 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 RCAHMS Collections.

Contact Details

27. Rathmell Archaeology can be contacted at our Registered Office or through the web:

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