

54 Eglinton Street, Beith: Archaeological Watching Brief

Data Structure Report



by Liam McKinstry

issued 30th June 2015

on behalf of Valleycraft Ltd

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

Date 30th June 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

Date 30th June 2015....

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Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared on behalf of Valleycraft Ltd, in support of construction work on land at 54 Eglinton Street, Beith, North Ayrshire (Planning Ref: 13/00357/PP). The proposed development work includes the construction of a new dwelling. These archaeological works were designed to mitigate any adverse impact on any archaeological remains within the development area and were carried out between 24th and 25th June 2015.
2. North Ayrshire Council required a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken as an element of the granted planning consent (13/00357/PP). The West of Scotland Archaeology Service, who advise North Ayrshire Council on archaeology matters, provided guidance on the structure of archaeological works required for the granted planning consent and the mitigation of the proposed development works.
3. A Method Statement (Matthews 2015) provided the detail of the works (archaeological monitoring, exclusion, 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.

Historical and Archaeological Background

4. North Ayrshire Council has required that archaeological works be carried out in relation to this development and as an element of granted planning consent (13/00357/PP). Rathmell Archaeology Ltd consulted with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service regarding the potential for significant archaeological remains being uncovered within this site and what archaeological mitigation works were best suited to manage the archaeological resource.
5. The West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) have recognised an area of archaeological potential based around the likely medieval town of Beith (WoSAS Pin 51561). This is roughly equivalent to the modern town centre of Beith. The parish church of Beith has a medieval foundation and lies approximately 150m to the east of the development area. The area demarked by WoSAS as being the most likely for the survival of significant archaeological material relating to the medieval town of Beith is analogous with the town as it appears on Roy's Military Survey of Scotland (1747-55) (Figure 1a).
6. The town of Beith appears on Roy's Military Survey of Scotland (1747-55) as 'Bealk' with 'Beith Hill' immediately to the east. The town appears much smaller than its modern form however the streets conform to the familiar shape of the modern B7049 with short streets leading off to the north and south. The development area is located on the western edge of the town of 'Bealk'. Beyond the limits of the town are enclosed fields and numerous small farms and structures.
7. The centre of Beith is listed as a conservation area by North Ayrshire Council. Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest that are subject to strict planning constraints. The historic value of this area is further reflected in the several listed buildings which exist to the immediate west and east of the development area along Eglinton Street.
8. On the 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1858) (Figure 1b) Beith has expanded slightly from its appearance on Roy but not so much as its modern form. Much of the street frontage of Eglinton Street appears to be the same as its modern form. An exception is the development area which is currently an unoccupied plot but on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey is occupied by a structure, fronted immediately onto the street and with adjoining backlots.
9. WoSAS have agreed in consultation that the focus of the archaeological monitoring work should be to locate any pre-19th century remains within the development area, especially those relating to the medieval town of Beith. Although there is the potential for survival of significant archaeological remains it is likely that such remains have been heavily disturbed or removed by the construction and demolition of later structures.



Figure 1a: Roy's Military Survey (Lowlands 1747-55)

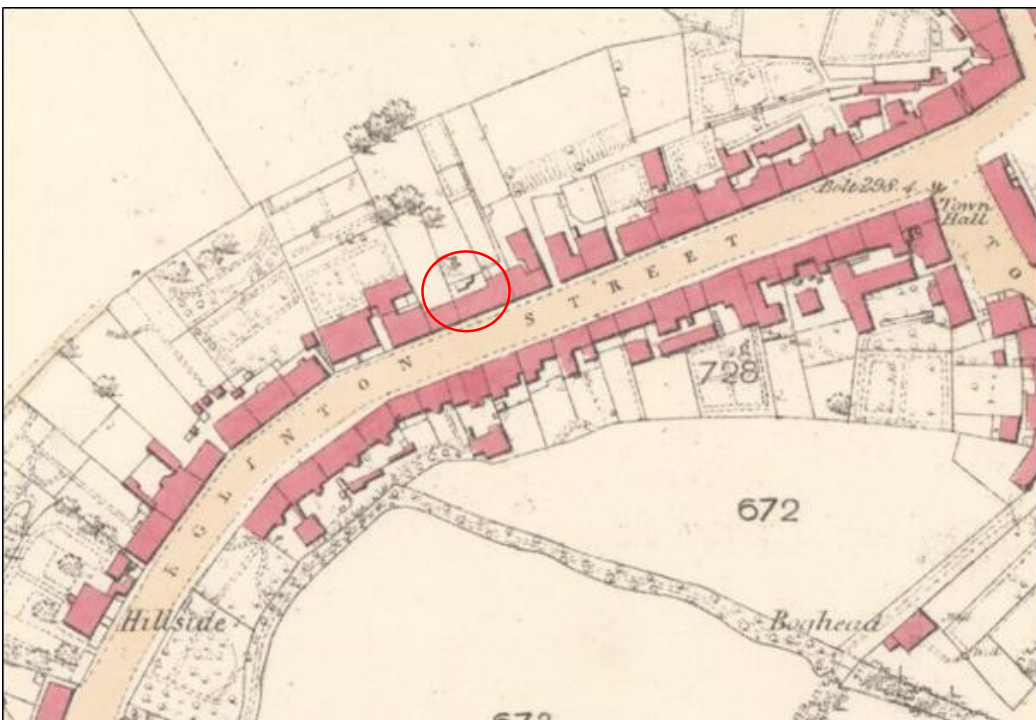


Figure 1b: 1st edition Ordnance Survey, 25 inch.

Project Works

10. The programme of works comprised the archaeological monitoring of excavations at 54 Eglinton Street (Figure 2). The footprint of the building was located within a square shaped area measuring 7.5m (WSW to ENE) by 8.5m (SSE to NNW). This area was stripped down to a depth of 0.6-0.8m below the current ground level. The foundation trenches of the building were then excavated deeper into the extent of the stripped area. The building was orientated in a NNE-SSE direction and was formed by four outer trenches forming a rectangle around a single central WSW-ENE orientated trench. The foundation trenches were each 1-1.5m wide, and were to be excavated to a depth where sufficiently stable subsoil could be reached so that a series of piles could be inserted to aid the buildings overall stability. The remainder of the development area was to be used as a garden for the proposed property and as such was not excavated. The works were carried out in compliance with the terms agreed in the method statement (Matthews 2015).
11. Any potential archaeological features were investigated and recorded, with the on-site works taking place between the 24th and 25th of June 2015. 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. The excavated area was covered by a very disturbed and overgrown topsoil (001) which consisted of moderately compacted, mixed dark grey/brown, silty sand with frequent inclusions of modern debris (e.g. building stone fragments, brick and domestic refuse). The topsoil layer covered the entirety of the excavated area (Figure 3a), measuring 8.5 m by 7.5m, and also the unexcavated part of the site to the immediate NNW. The topsoil layer had a depth range within the excavated area of 0.1-0.15m thick.
13. Beneath the topsoil, the upper parts of a cellar [004] could be discerned, chiefly the SSE and WSW walls (Figure 4b), and two thick layers of modern rubble backfill, (002) and (003),. The uppermost of these two layers, (002), directly underlay the topsoil (001) and consisted of very loose to loosely compacted, mid- grey/grey brown, silty sand with frequent (80%) inclusions of 19th or 20th century building debris (mainly pale yellow sandstone blocks). There was also occasional modern refuse (e.g. drinks cans and plastic) mixed in across the layer. The layer was located mainly within the ENE side of the cellar [004] and measured 5.7m by 1.2-3.9m, narrower in the middle and curving round to be wider at either end, with a thickness of 1.5m.
14. The lower layer, (003), underlay (002) and topsoil (001) where (002) was not present. It consisted of very loose to loosely compacted, dark grey/black (with mid grey patches), silty sand/gravel with frequent (70-80%) inclusions of modern brick. There was also occasional to moderate inclusions of 19th or 20th century building debris and modern refuse (drinks cans and plastic) mixed in with the layer. The layer was located within the cellar [004] across the full extent of its interior. The layer measured 5.7m by 7.2m and had a thickness range of 0.7-2.3m, shallower at the ENE end where it ran under (002).
15. The cellar (Figure 4b), [004], was rectangular shaped in plan. As well as the SSE and WSW walls revealed after the removal of topsoil (001), a third wall, which formed the NNW limit of the cellar, was revealed underlying modern infill layers (003)/(008). The ENE side of the structure lay outside the excavation area, most likely under the driveway of a nearby pub (The Eglinton Inn). The full extent of the structure measured 7.5m from WSW to ENE (though it continued outside the excavation area) by 6m from SSE to NNW. The structure had a maximum depth from the current level of the street of 2.3m, though the NNE wall had been partially demolished (Figure 4a) to a height of 0.7-1m (at a depth of c.1m from the current ground level).

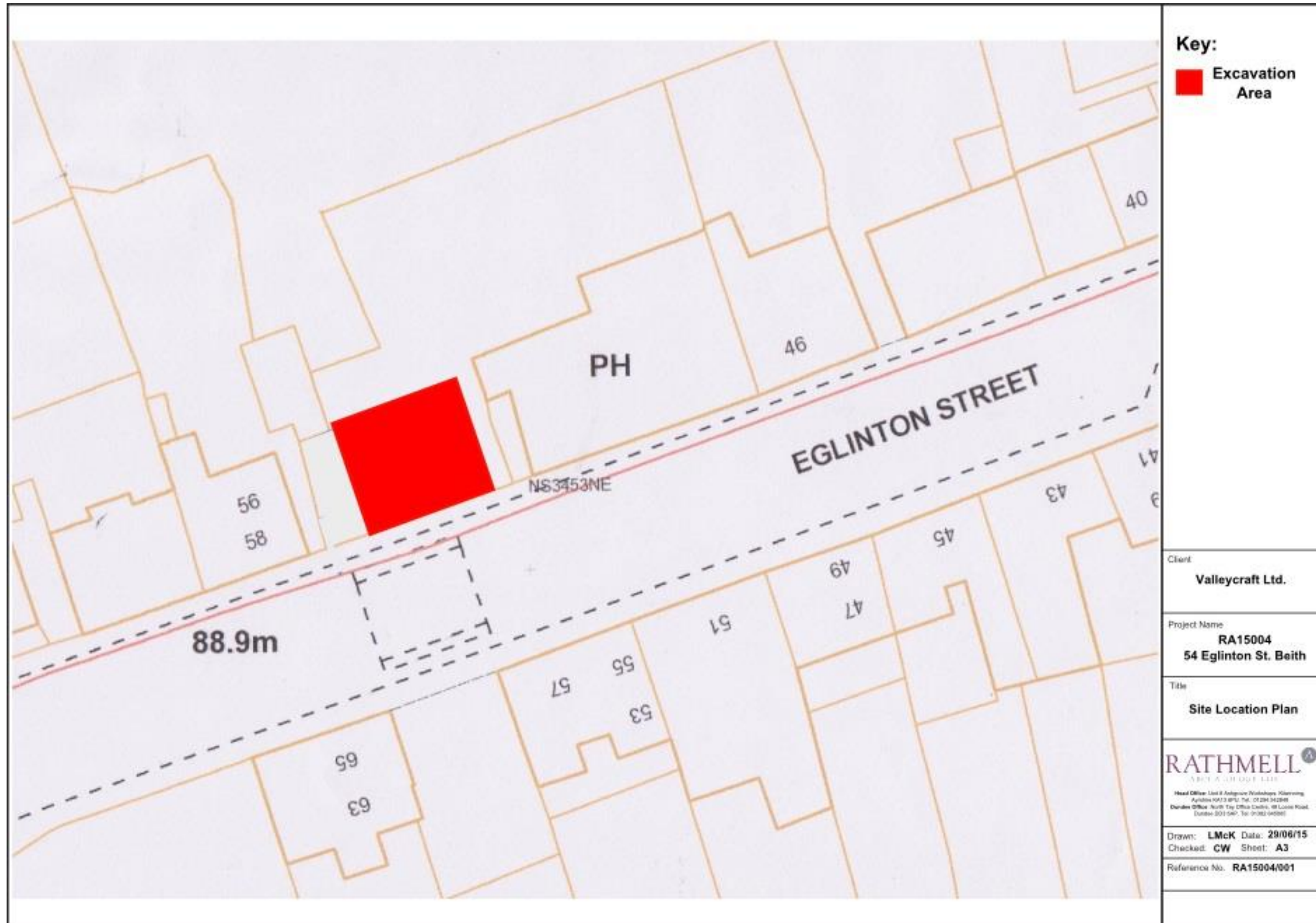


Figure 2: Site Location Plan.

16. The WSW wall continued beyond the limits of the cellar to the NNW with an additional 2.5m stretch being observable within the excavated area (though it most likely continued further outwith). This continuation may indicate that this also acted as a boundary wall.
17. The walls had a consistent width of 0.3m throughout and were built with flat, narrow, slab-like blocks of pale yellow sandstone (measuring 0.5-0.6m long, 0.28-0.3m wide and 0.08-0.12m thick). The bonding for the structure consisted of a pale yellow/grey mortar. The interior faces of the walls were covered, in places, by a pale grey plaster possibly as a form of water proofing. Two beam slots were also observed on the WSW and NNW walls at 0.2m from current ground/street level.
18. These beam slots were roughly square shaped and measured 0.28-0.3m by 0.28-0.3m in size. The walls of the cellar enclosed a concrete floor; (005), which consisted of very compacted mid-grey concrete with what appeared to be aggregate and small and medium sized stones in its make-up. The surface was only uncovered in places (Figure 3b) but it seems probable that it formed the main floor surface within the cellar [004]. The surface covered the entire interior of the cellar measuring 7.2m by 5.7m in extent. The thickness of the surface was unknown.
19. The area to the immediate NNW of the cellar's exterior comprised of two layers which were banked up against the cellar and the extended WSW wall. The uppermost of these layers, (008), sat directly beneath topsoil (001) and consisted of loose to moderately compacted, mid- to dark grey/black silt with frequent modern brick and domestic refuse inclusions. There was also occasional 19th century building stone inclusions. The layer measured 7.2m by 2.5m and had a thickness range of 0.8-1.1m. The relationship between (003) and (008) was unclear. While they may relate to the same phase, differences in their composition makes it difficult to be certain.
20. The lower layer underlying (008), (009), consisted of moderately compacted, mid- to dark grey-brown/orange-brown silty sand with moderate stone and modern debris (brick and domestic refuse) inclusions. This layer measured 7.2m by 2.5m in extent and had a thickness range of 0.4-0.7m. The lowermost layer overlay the natural subsoil, (010), which consisted of moderately compacted, mid to dark, orange/red-brown, silty sand with occasional small to medium sized stone. The full extent and depth of the natural subsoil was unknown as it was only exposed in a few places within the NNW foundation trench.
21. Two service pipes were also identified within the excavated area. The first of these, (006), consisted of a relatively recent British Telecom Broadband pipe which cut into the SSE wall of the cellar [004] and into the topsoil (001). The small plastic pipe (which contained a number of cables) was laid within a shallow trench which measured 0.45m wide and 0.4m deep. The trench and pipe ran across the excavation area in a NNW-SSE direction. The second service, (007), consisted of a 20th century metal water pipe which was located close to the British Telecom Pipe, (006), at a depth of 0.15m.



Figure 3a: Pre excavation view of the site. From the S.



Figure 3b: The SSE wall of the cellar [004] and concrete floor (005). From the NNW.



Figure 4a: View of the partially demolished NNE cellar wall [004]. From the W.



Figure 4b: View of the SSE and WNW walls of the cellar showing the remains of the rubble layers (002) and (003). From the NNE.

Discussion

22. The remains of a building in the form of a cellar, [004], and an associated boundary wall were identified within the watching brief area and most likely date to the 19th century though an earlier 18th century date cannot be wholly ruled out as Roy's military survey (Figure 1a) shows a significant number of buildings in Beith, some of which may relate to cellar in Eglinton Street. The original ground level to the NNW of Eglinton Street seems to have been steeply sloping and the cellar appears to have been cut into the side of this slope. This would have meant that there was a very distinct difference in level between the rear and front of the building. The extension wall which ran off the cellar to the NNW at the rear of the building seems to correspond to a property boundary marked on both the 1st and 2nd Ordnance Surveys enclosing the garden.
23. It is unclear how access to the cellar was gained, though it is possible that it was achieved via a trapdoor or interior stairwell from the building above. There is also the possibility that there was access at the rear through the garden, though no doorway was identified within the excavated foundation trenches. The function of the cellar is unclear but the fact that there was a concrete floor, (005), and plastered walls would suggest that keeping the cellar waterproofed and dry was important to the builders. This waterproofing would be very important if the cellar was to be used for storage, particularly the storage of perishable items such as food.
24. It seems probable that the building was part demolished at some point in the 20th century leaving the frontage and sides as a shell. The back, NNW, wall was probably reduced to allow for the dumping of the first layer of modern rubble, (003). The building material within this layer was predominantly 20th century brick and the domestic refuse within the layer (tin cans and plastic) also appeared to be from the 20th century. The second layer of rubble, (002), contained mostly 19th century sandstone similar to that used in the construction of the cellar though there was also 20th century material mixed in with it. This second layer most likely relates to the final demolition of the building with all the remaining walls being pulled down and used to backfill and level off the area to street level.
25. The layers identified to the NNW of the cellar also seem to be of 20th century date. The upper layer, (008), was similar to the lower rubble layer, (003), within the cellar but didn't contain quite as much modern building material. The lower layer (009) was disturbed but did not contain much modern debris and may represent the topsoil level in the 20th century prior to the buildings demolition. This possible topsoil layer overlay the natural subsoil, (010).
26. The services, (006) and (007), which were identified within the watching brief area all appear to be 20th century or later in date and cut through the very disturbed topsoil, (001), which was built up over the levelled building.
27. No significant artefacts or features were identified within the excavated areas of the site.

Recommendations

28. This Data Structure Report covers archaeological works undertaken in support of construction work on land at 54 Eglinton Street, Beith, North Ayrshire (Planning Ref: 13/00357/PP).
29. The archaeological monitoring works uncovered the remains of a 19th century cellar which had been deliberately backfilled at some point in the 20th century. No significant archaeological features were identified within any of these layers or within the naturally occurring subsoil within the development area. As such, it is recommended that no further work should be carried out.
30. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with North Ayrshire Council and their advisors, the West of Scotland Archaeological Service.

Conclusion

31. Archaeological monitoring work was carried out for Valleycraft Ltd, in support of

construction work on land at 54 Eglinton Street, Beith, North Ayrshire (Planning Ref: 13/00357/PP). These archaeological works are designed to mitigate any adverse impact on the archaeological remains within the development area.

32. This report covers the excavation of the building footprint for the construction of a new dwelling. The works were carried out between the 24th and 26th of June 2015 and uncovered the remains of a 19th century building in the form of a cellar with an associated rear boundary wall. The remains of the building and boundary wall had been backfilled with a number of layers containing building rubble mixed with domestic refuse dating to the 20th century. No significant archaeological features or artefacts were identified within the area.

Acknowledgements

33. The author would like to thank Colin McVey of Valleycraft Ltd and his on site team for their support throughout the project and Claire Williamson senior archaeologist with Rathmell Archaeology Ltd for her kind input and editing.
34. This project has been monitored for the West of Scotland Archaeological Service by Martin O'Hare who has given guidance and direction throughout.

References

Documentary

- | | | |
|-------------|------|---|
| Matthews, A | 2015 | <i>54 Eglinton Street, Beith, North Ayrshire: Archaeological Mitigation. Method Statement.</i> Unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd. |
|-------------|------|---|

Internet

www.canmore.rcahms.gov.uk

Cartographic

- | | | |
|------|-----------------|--|
| 1793 | Roy, William | Roy's Lowlands map 1747-55 |
| 1858 | Ordnance Survey | 1 st edition Map of Ayrshire 1:2500 |
| 1897 | Ordnance Survey | 2 nd Edition Map of Ayrshire 1:2500 |

Appendix 1: Registers

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

Context Register

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
001	-	Deposit	Moderately compacted, mixed dark grey/brown, silty sand with frequent inclusions of modern debris (building stone fragments/brick/domestic refuse). Extent of the layer was 8.5 m x 7.5m x 0.1-0.15m thick.	Topsoil within the excavation area.
002	-	Deposit	Very loose to loosely compacted, mid grey/grey brown, silty sand with frequent (80%) inclusions of 19 th or 20 th century building debris (mainly pale yellow sandstone blocks). There was also occasional modern refuse (drinks cans and plastic) mixed in with the layer. Extent of the layer was 5.7m x 1.2-3.9m x 1.5m thick.	Upper layer of backfill material within cellar [004].
003	-	Deposit	Very loose to loosely compacted, dark grey/black (with mid grey patches), silty sand/gravel with frequent (70-80%) inclusions of modern brick. There was also occasional to moderate inclusions of 19 th or 20 th century building debris and modern refuse (drinks cans and plastic) mixed in with the layer. Extent of the layer was 5.7m x 7.2m x 0.7-2.3m thick.	Lower layer of backfill material within cellar [004].
004	-	Structure	Structure was rectangular shaped in plan with an extension (NNW-SSE orientated) of the WNW corner of the structure. The ENE side of the structure lay outside the excavation area, most likely under the driveway of a nearby pub (The Eglinton Inn). The structure measured 7.5m from WSW to ENE (though it continued outside the excavation area) by 6m from SSE to NNW. The structure had a maximum depth from the current level of the street of 2.3m though the NNE wall had been partially demolished to a height of 0.7-1m (at a depth of c.1m from the current ground level). The	19 th century sandstone building which had been demolished down to street level. The remaining deep cellar and concrete floor [005] were backfilled with two large rubble layers ,(002) and (003), both of which contained frequent building and domestic refuse inclusions from the 19 th and 20 th centuries. There was also an extension wall which ran off the NNW side of the building and most likely demarcated the garden to the

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
			extension wall continued outside the excavation area to the NNW with a 2.5m stretch being observable within the excavated area. The walls of the structure had a consistent width of 0.3m throughout and were built with flat, narrow, slab-like blocks of pale yellow sandstone (0.5-0.6m long, 0.28-0.3m wide and 0.08-0.12m thick). The bonding for the structure consisted of a pale yellow/grey mortar. The interior faces of the walls were covered in places by a pale grey plaster. Two beam slots were also observed on the WSW and NNW walls at 0.2m from current ground/street level. These beam slots were roughly square shaped and measured 0.28-0.3m x 0.28-0.3m in size. The structure was filled by two very thick layers of backfill material, (002) and (003), and which overlay the structures concrete floor [005].	rear.
005	-	Deposit	Very compacted, mid grey, concrete surface with what appeared to be aggregate and small and medium sized stones in its make-up. The surface was only uncovered in places but it seems probable that it formed the main floor surface within the cellar [004]. The surface measured 7.2m x 5.7m within the cellar. The thickness of the surface was unknown.	Concrete floor surface within the 19 th century cellar [004]. Unclear if this surface was original or a later 20 th century surface.
006	-	Cut/fill	Cut into the SSE wall of the cellar [004] and into the topsoil (001). Consists of shallow trench (0.45m wide and 0.4m deep) into which a small plastic pipe was laid. This pipe in turn contained a number of cables. The trench and pipe ran across the excavation area in a NNW-SSE direction.	Modern British Telecom internet cable.
007	-	Cut/fill	Metal pipe which was located close to (006) at 0.15m depth.	20 th century water mains pipe.
008	-	Deposit	Loose to moderately compacted, mid to dark grey/black, silt with frequent modern brick and domestic refuse inclusions. There was also occasional 19 th century building stone inclusions. The layer measured 7.2m x 2.5m x 0.8-1.1m thick. The layer had an unclear relationship with (003)	Upper layer of backfill material to the immediate NNW of cellar [004].

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
			and (002). It overlay layer (009).	
009	-	Deposit	Moderately compacted, mid to dark grey-brown/orange-brown, silty sand with moderate stone and modern debris (brick and domestic refuse) inclusions. The layer measured 7.2m x 2.5m x 0.4-0.7m thick. The layer abutted the NNW wall and extension walls of the cellar [004]. It overlay the natural subsoil (010).	Lower layer of backfill material to the immediate NNW of cellar [004].
010	-	Deposit	Moderately compacted, mid to dark, orange/red-brown, silty sand with occasional small to medium sized stone. Extent and depth unknown.	Natural subsoil layer identified to the immediate NNW of the cellar [004].

Photographic Register

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
01	1505	Pre excavation view of the site	S	24/06/15
02	1506	Pre excavation view of the site	SSE	24/06/15
03	1507	Test pit showing corner of the 19 th century buildings cellar [004], shows possible beam slot	N	24/06/15
04	1508	Test pit showing corner of the 19 th century buildings cellar [004]	W	24/06/15
05	1509	ENE facing section of the site, SSE end, under excavation	WSW	24/06/15
06	1510	SSE wall of 19 th century cellar showing possible beam slot	NNW	24/06/15
07	1511	WSW facing section, SSE end. Initial stage of excavation	WSW	24/06/15
08	1512	View of 19 th century building stone from rubble layer (002)	-	24/06/15
09	1513	Possible foundation stones or building debris between (002) and (003)	N	24/06/15

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
10	1514	Corner of the 19 th century cellar [004], shows possible beam slot	NNE	24/06/15
11	1515	View of central excavation area after initial strip, shows (003)	SSE	24/06/15
12	1516	Close up view of brick debris from rubble layer (003)	WSW	24/06/15
13	1517	NNW part of the site stripped down to rubble layers (002) and (003)	S	24/06/15
14	1518	SSE part of the site stripped down to rubble layers (002) and (003)	WSW	24/06/15
15	1519	WSW facing section at SSE end stripped down to rubble layers (002) and (003)	WSW	24/06/15
16	1520	Excavation close to pavement showing part of the 19 th century cellar [004]	WSW	24/06/15
17	1521	Excavation close to pavement showing part of the 19 th century cellar [004]	W	24/06/15
18	1522	Excavation close to pavement showing part of the 19 th century cellar [004]	WNW	24/06/15
19	1523	Excavation close to pavement showing part of the 19 th century cellar [004]	ENE	24/06/15
20	1524	Excavation close to pavement showing part of the 19 th century cellar [004]	ENE	24/06/15
21	1525	Excavation close to pavement showing part of the 19 th century cellar showing concrete cellar floor (005)	WNW	24/06/15
22	1526	Excavation close to pavement showing part of the 19 th century cellar showing concrete cellar floor (005)	WNW	24/06/15
23	1527	View of the SSE foundation trench completed showing cellar wall [004]	WSW	24/06/15
24	1528	WSW foundation trench under excavation	ENE	24/06/15
25	1529	WSW foundation trench under excavation shows the WSW cellar wall [004]	SSE	24/06/15
26	1531	Close up view of cellar wall [004] within WSW trench	W	24/06/15
27	1532	Close up view of cellar wall [004] within WSW trench	W	24/06/15
28	1533	ENE foundation trench under excavation	SSE	24/06/15

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
29	1534	Central foundation trench under excavation	E	24/06/15
30	1535	Central foundation trench under excavation	ESE	24/06/15
31	1536	General view of work carried out so far	NNE	25/06/15
32	1537	Central foundation trench under excavation	WSW	25/06/15
33	1538	ENE foundation trench completed	N	25/06/15
34	1539	NNW foundation trench under excavation showing BT cable	WSW	25/06/15
35	1540	NNW foundation trench under excavation (mostly done but small amount of collapse to be removed)	WSW	25/06/15
36	1541	Site fully excavated	NW	25/06/15
37	1542	Site fully excavated	SE	25/06/15
38	1543	Site fully excavated	SSE	25/06/15
39	1544	NNW foundation trench completed	WSW	25/06/15
40	1545	Site fully excavated	S	25/06/15

Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	North Ayrshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	54 Eglinton Street, Beith
PROJECT CODE:	RA15004
PARISH:	Beith (Cunninghame)
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Liam McKinstry
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 34684 53872 (Centred)
START DATE (this season)	24 th June 2015
END DATE (this season)	25 th June 2015
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	Archaeological monitoring work was carried out for Valleycraft Ltd, in support of construction work on land at 54 Eglinton Street, Beith, North Ayrshire (Planning Ref: 13/00357/PP). The works uncovered the remains of a 19 th century building in the form of a cellar with an associated rear boundary wall. The remains of the building and boundary wall had been backfilled with a number of layers containing building rubble mixed with domestic refuse dating to the 20 th century. No significant archaeological features or artefacts were identified within the site.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Valleycraft Limited
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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