

Silverbank, Whiting Bay, Arran: Archaeological Monitoring

Data Structure Report



by Alan Matthews

issued 21st April 2015

on behalf of Mr & Mrs S & C Paterson

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

Date21st April 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

Date21st April 2015...

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Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared to present the findings of archaeological monitoring undertaken in support construction works at Silverbank, Whiting Bay, Arran (Planning Ref: N/13/00218/PP). This work was carried out for ICAD on behalf of Mr & Mrs S & C Paterson. 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 Silverbank, Whiting Bay, Arran as an element of the granted planning consent. The West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS), who advise North Ayrshire Council on archaeology matters, provided guidance on the structure of archaeological works required and the mitigation of the proposed development works.
3. Rathmell Archaeology Limited has been appointed by ICAD on behalf of Mr & Mrs S & C Patterson to undertake the development and implementation of archaeological mitigation works. The project works were defined by a Method Statement (Gorman 2015) that was agreed with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Historical and Archaeological Background

4. Silverbank itself is a Category C listed building, located at Whiting Bay, on the Isle of Arran. The building was constructed in 1840, and is depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1864.
5. While no known archaeological sites are present within the development area itself, to the south-east of the development area, south of Silverbank, and close to Silverbank Cottage, a cinerary urn was found (Canmore ID: 40106). This is a large pottery vessel, used for the storage of cremated human bone during prehistory. The urn is noted to have been discovered in 1900, located on the crest of a slope in a private garden (NS 0456 2542).
6. In addition, a stone cist (Canmore ID 40105) containing human bone and a late Bronze Age gold penannular armlet, was found to the north of the development area at NS 0442 2572. A Neolithic flint scatter (Canmore ID 305530) was also discovered to the south-west of the development area at NS 0413 2503.
7. Historical Mapping of the area depicts nothing within the development area until the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey Mapping (Figure 1a), where an extension to the western side of Silverbank is now depicted, in addition to pathway connecting Silverbank to Silverbank Cottage to the south. A pump is also now depicted in the field, in addition to two rectangular enclosures at the north and south end of the development area. These have disappeared by the 3rd edition OS Mapping (Figure 1b).

Project Works

8. The programme of works comprised archaeological monitoring (Figure 2) of ground-breaking works undertaken as the initial stages of construction on a raised terrace behind, to the west of, the existing Silverbank house (Figure 3a). The initial stage of ground-breaking works included vegetation and topsoil strip of the area required for construction of three dwelling places. The area of the vegetation strip was slightly larger than the area of the topsoil strip to provide an area for bunding of the up cast material. An additional area was vegetation and topsoil stripped down the slope in the eastern part of the development area to allow the construction of an access road and join the existing access road past Silverbank house.
9. The archaeological monitoring works were carried out on the 20th of April 2015. The work was undertaken by a single mechanical excavator, using a toothless ditching bucket, under the supervision of Rathmell Archaeology Ltd and in accordance with the terms of the agreed Method Statement (Gorman 2015).

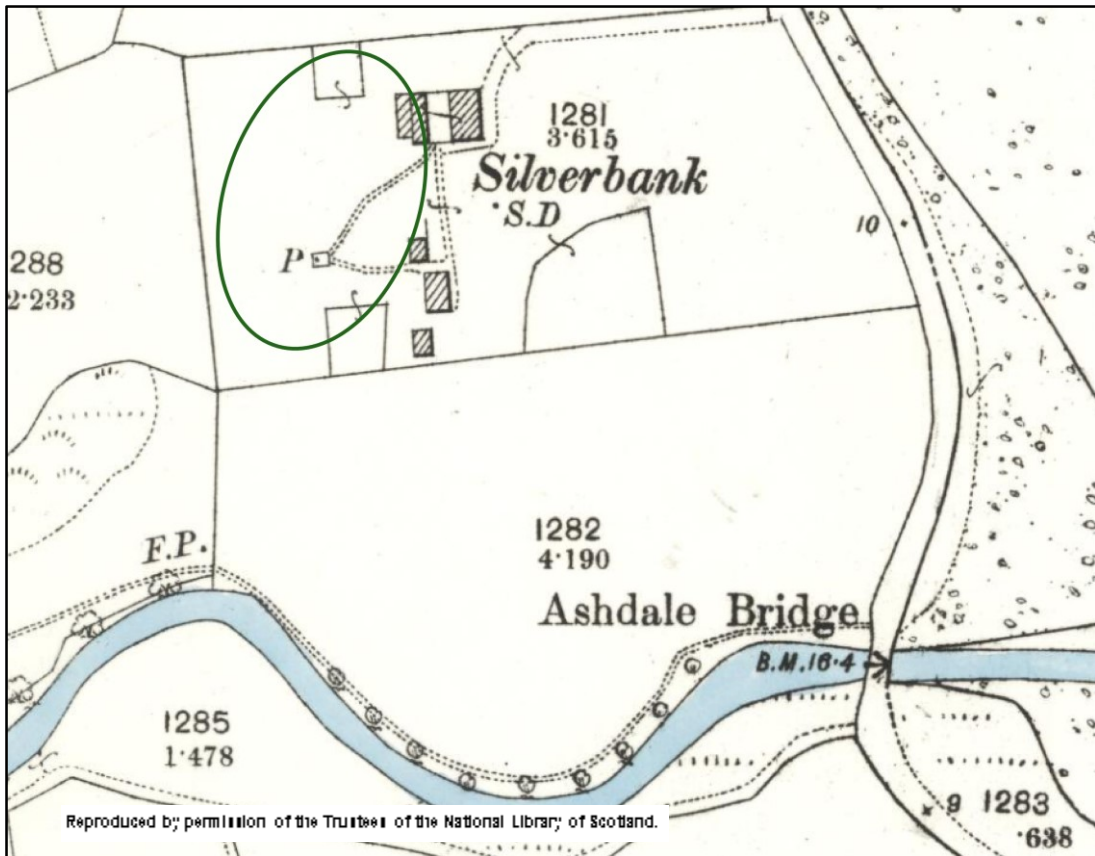


Figure 1a: 25-inch 2nd edition Ordnance Survey (1896)

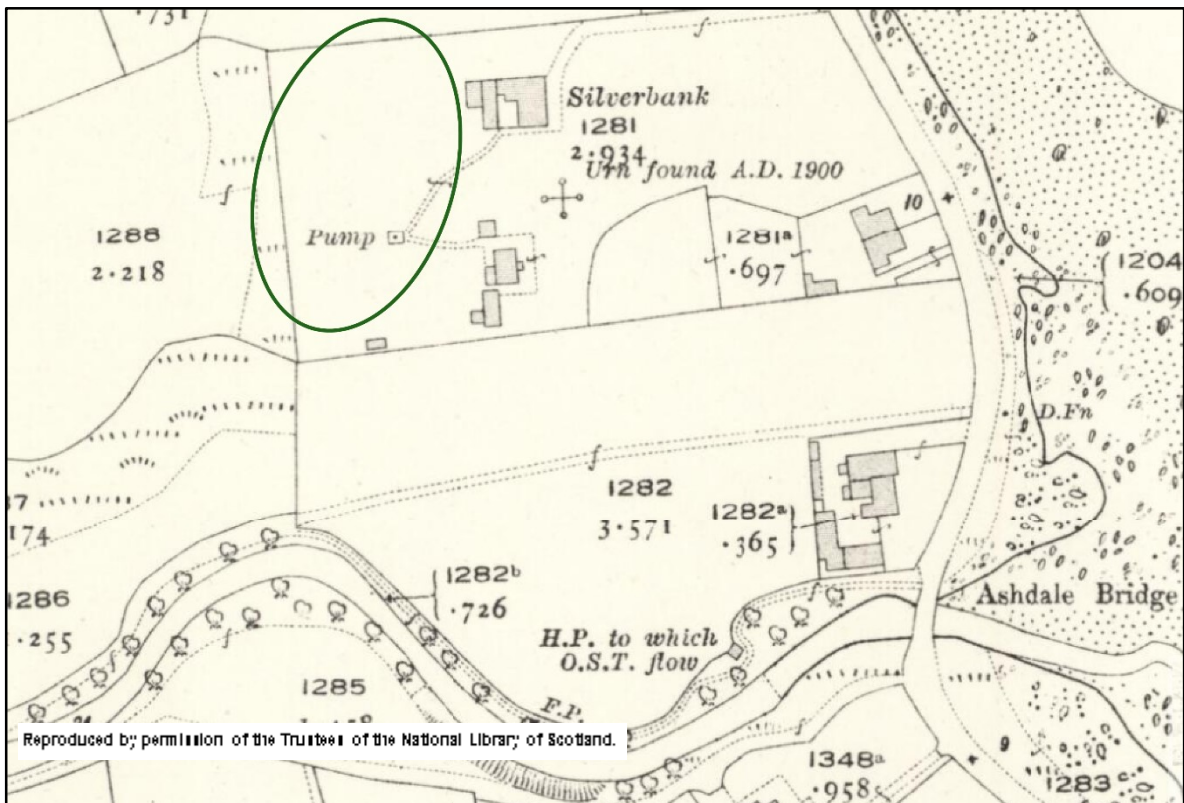
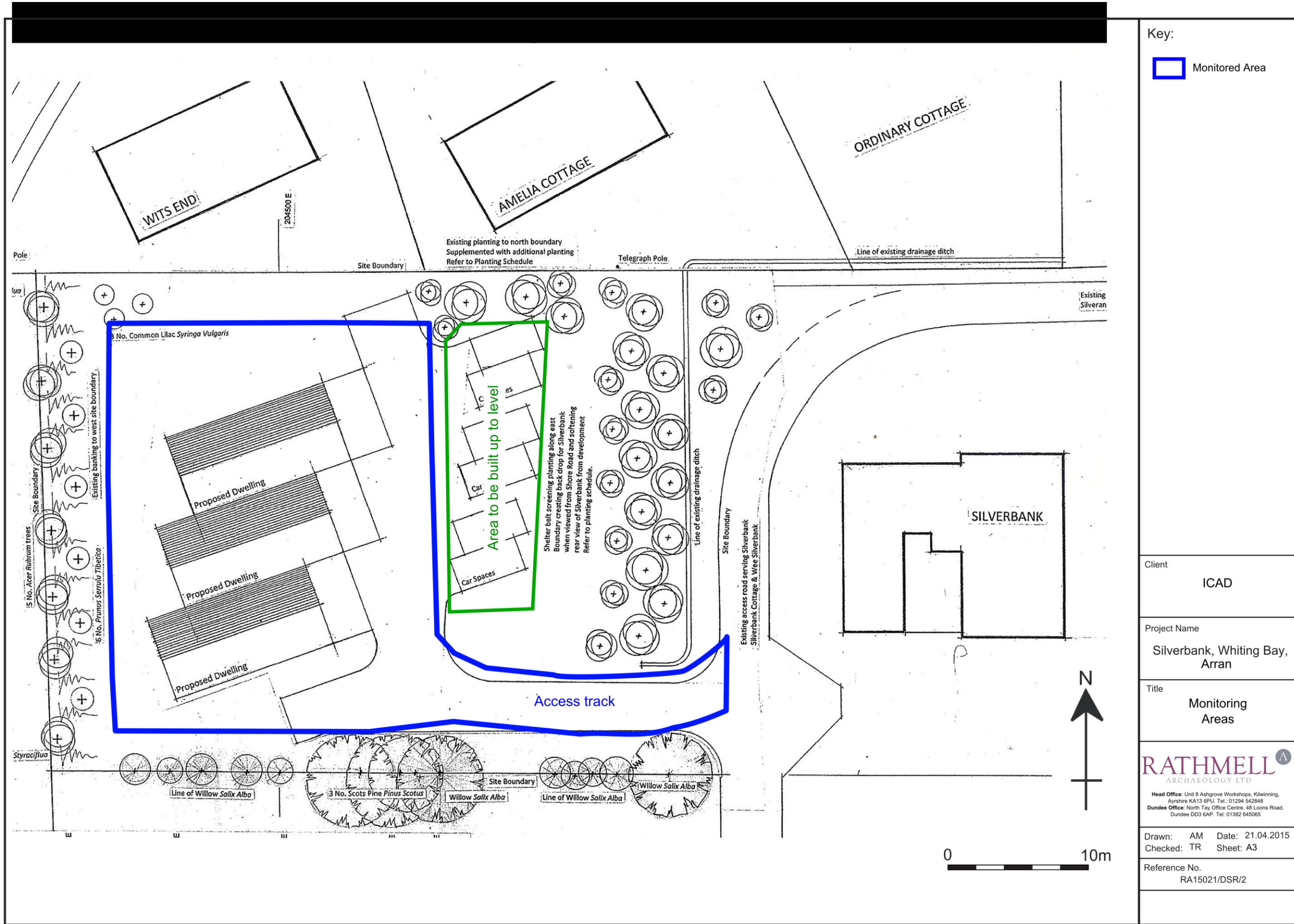


Figure 1b: 25-inch 3rd edition Ordnance Survey (1919)



Key:	
	Monitored Area
Client	ICAD
Project Name	Silverbank, Whiting Bay, Arran
Title	Monitoring Areas
	
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Drawn: AM	Date: 21.04.2015
Checked: TR	Sheet: A3
Reference No.	RA15021/DSR/2

Figure 2: Monitored Areas

10. In compliance with the Method Statement (Gorman 2015), any potentially significant archaeological features were investigated and recorded.
11. 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. Almost the entire area of the terrace was stripped of vegetation (Figure 3b), approximately 30.6m north-south by 21m east-west, during the initial stages of the work. Examination of the topsoil revealed only modern (late 19th to 21st century) material such as white glazed ceramic and pieces of plastic and modern glass. No sign of negative or structural features was apparent in the topsoil (001). The typical depth of topsoil uncovered was between 150 and 250mm, however, in the northwest corner the depth reached a maximum of 410mm.
13. A slightly smaller area, only 18m east-west, was stripped of topsoil down to subsoil (002). The purpose of the smaller area was to permit bunding of the up cast topsoil at the edges of the plot for the construction work. In the flat area of the terrace the subsoil (002) was uniformly orange/brown sandy silt with frequent small sub-rounded stones. Roots and rootlets were common in the subsoil and four large tree bowls, from now removed mature trees, were evident in the area. There was no anthropic material observed in the subsoil.
14. A single sub-rectangular feature (003) (Figure 4a) was observed close to the northern boundary of the stripped area, approximately 7m from the northwest corner. This feature was a pit 1.65m by 1.3m in plan. The upper sediments of this pit were investigated and found to contain modern (late 19th to 21st century) ceramic material. The fill of the pit was mainly ash and clinker with some small rounded stones. By its regular form, fill and the anthropic material recovered this feature was confidently identified as of modern origin.
15. Extending east from the southeast corner of the stripped area and down the slope of the terrace another area was stripped in preparation for the placement of an access road (Figure 4b). To this end an area of approximately 4m wide (north-south) by 25m long (east-west) was stripped of vegetation and topsoil. The topsoil in this area was the same as the terrace area and of similar depth. The subsoil along the access road was uniform grey clay (004) without inclusions.
16. A concentration of large stones was observed near the break of the slope in (002) at the beginning of the area stripped for the access road. This concentration of stones was interpreted as a natural feature. This interpretation is supported by the almost immediate transition to subsoil (004) to the east of the stones.
17. The base of the slope was heavily waterlogged. There was some evidence of attempted drainage in the form of a tile and rubble drain. With the exception of the drains no anthropic material was observed in the stripping of this area and no significant archaeological features were observed.

Discussion

18. 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 site as the rear gardens to Silverbank House. It was evident that several large mature trees had been removed from the northern half of the stripped area.
19. Feature (003) was identified by its form, fill and the material recovered from the upper portions of its fill as a modern feature and of no archaeological significance. It was the only archaeological negative feature observed in the course of the monitoring works. The only anthropic material recovered during the monitoring works was white glazed ceramic, plastic and modern glass, therefore, all confidently identified as archaeologically non-significant.



Figure 3a: The development area prior to the vegetation strip



Figure 3b: The development area stripped to subsoil



Figure 4a: Location of Feature (003)



Figure 4b: Access road stripped to topsoil

Recommendations

20. 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. Almost the entire development area was stripped down to exposed subsoil.
21. Rathmell Archaeology Ltd was informed that there is the possibility that the 4m wide access road may be expanded if safety considerations or ground conditions require it. Any expansion of the monitored works would take place on the steep clay slope and therefore the chances of archaeological material being uncovered is minimal. In the event that additional stripping did take place more than 90% of the development area would have been stripped to subsoil under archaeological supervision and this would include the entire development area on the flat portion of the terrace.
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. In the event that the stripping for the access road is expanded, given the complete lack of significant archaeological material observed thus far, Rathmell Archaeology Ltd recommends that there is little practical value in archaeologically monitoring this additional work.
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 ICAD on behalf of Mr & Mrs S & C Paterson in support of development work at Silverbank, Whiting Bay, Arran. The archaeological monitoring works involved the vegetation and topsoil strip of the area for the construction of three dwellings plus an access road. The area was stripped down to subsoil. No significant archaeological features or anthropic material was observed in the course of the works.

Acknowledgements

25. I am grateful to the staff of ICAD for their support during the site works and also to the West of Scotland Archaeology Service who gave guidance throughout.

References

Gorman, D., 2015, *Silverbank, Whiting Bay, Arran: Archaeological Mitigation, Method Statement*, 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.	Area/Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
001	Whole site	Deposit	Mid to dark brown clayey silt with common roots (small and large). Frequent small sub rounded stones. Occasional sherds of white china, pieces of plastic and similar. At most 4100mm deep, more commonly 150-250mm.	Topsoil
002	Whole site	Deposit	Orangy brown sand with some silt component (silty sand) with frequent small to medium rounded – sub rounded stones. Common roots and rootlets. No anthropic inclusion.	Subsoil
003	Terrace	Deposit	Sub rectangular feature in NW corner 1.65m by 1.3m in plan. Fill an ash/clinker with rounded stone and piece of white glaze visible.	19 th -20 th century ash pit
004	Drive	Deposit	Grey clay – no inclusions	Subsoil

Photographic Register

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Card No.	Image No.				
1	-	-	-	-	355	General view of working area	SE	20/04/2015
2	-	-	-	-	356	General view of working area	SW	20/04/2015
3	-	-	-	-	357	General view of working area	NW	20/04/2015
4	-	-	-	-	358	General view of working area	NE	20/04/2015
5	-	-	-	-	359	View along drainage gully	S	20/04/2015
6	-	-	-	-	360	View post de-veg	NW	20/04/2015
7	-	-	-	-	361	View post de-veg	SW	20/04/2015
8	-	-	-	-	362	View of topsoil on wedge	S	20/04/2015
9	-	-	-	-	363	View at restart after lunch	SW	20/04/2015
10	-	-	-	-	364	View at restart after lunch	NW	20/04/2015
11	-	-	-	-	365	Detail of ash pit (003)	N	20/04/2015
12	-	-	-	-	366	General of ash pit (003)	N	20/04/2015
13	-	-	-	-	367	General of topsoil complete	SW	20/04/2015
14	-	-	-	-	368	General of topsoil complete	SW	20/04/2015
15	-	-	-	-	369	General of topsoil complete	NW	20/04/2015
16	-	-	-	-	370	View of stones in (002) at top slope	N	20/04/2015
17	-	-	-	-	371	View of clay pipe and rubble drain in (004)	NW	20/04/2015
18	-	-	-	-	373	View along hist. of houses	N	20/04/2015
19	-	-	-	-	374	View up roadway	-	20/04/2015
20	-	-	-	-	375	View of Silverbank	-	20/04/2015

Appendix 3: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	North Ayrshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Silverbank, Whiting Bay, Arran
PROJECT CODE:	RA15021
PARISH:	Kilbride
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)	NS 0450 2543
START DATE (this season)	20 th April 2015
END DATE (this season)	20 th April 2015
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	A programme of archaeological monitoring works was in support of development work at Silverbank, Whiting Bay, Arran. The archaeological monitoring works involved the vegetation and topsoil strip of the area for the construction of three dwellings plus and access road. 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 & Mrs S & C Paterson
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.

Contact Details

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

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