

**Souter Johnnies Cottage, Kirkoswald, South
Ayrshire:
Archaeological Mitigation**

Data Structure Report



by Liam McKinstry

issued 12th May 2016

on behalf of The National Trust for Scotland

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 ..12th May 2016..

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 ..12th May 2016..

Copyright Rathmell Archaeology Limited. All rights reserved.

No part of this report may be copied or reproduced by any means without prior written permission from Rathmell Archaeology Limited. If you have received this report in error, please destroy all copies in your possession or control and notify Rathmell Archaeology Limited.

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the commissioning party and unless otherwise agreed in writing by Rathmell Archaeology Limited, no other party may use, make use of or rely on the contents of the report. No liability is accepted by Rathmell Archaeology Limited for any use of this report, other than the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided.

Opinions and information provided in the report are on the basis of Rathmell Archaeology Limited using due skill, care and diligence in preparation of the same and no explicit warranty is provided as to their accuracy. It should be noted and it is expressly stated that no independent verification of any of the documents or information supplied to Rathmell Archaeology Limited has been made.

Quality Assurance Data

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-----------|------------------|
| Author(s) | Liam McKinstry | | |
| Date of Issue | 12 th May 2016 | Version | 1.0 |
| Commissioning Body | The National Trust for Scotland | | |
| Event Name | Souter Johnnie's, Kirkoswald | | |
| Event Type | Watching Brief | | |
| Event Date(s) | May 2016 | | |
| Rathmell Archaeology Code | RA15121 | OASIS Ref | rathmell1-248866 |
| Location | United Kingdom : Scotland : South Ayrshire | | |
| NGR | NS 23997 07530 | Parish | Kirkoswald |
| Designation(s) | None | | |
| Canmore IDs | Cottage, Museum (40842) | | |

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Historical Background | 3 |
| Previous Archaeological work | 3 |
| Project Works..... | 7 |
| Findings..... | 7 |
| Discussion | 10 |
| Recommendations | 10 |
| Conclusion | 10 |
| Acknowledgements | 10 |
| References | 11 |
| Cartographic..... | 11 |
| Appendix 1: Registers..... | 12 |
| Context Register..... | 12 |
| Photographic Register | 12 |
| Finds Register | 13 |
| Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland | 14 |
| Contact Details | 15 |

Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared in support of the refurbishment of Souter Johnnie's Cottage, Kirkoswald, South Ayrshire (HES Ref: LB7586). The programme of archaeological monitoring works was required by the National Trust for Scotland. The archaeological works were designed to mitigate any adverse impact on the archaeological remains within the development area.
2. The National Trust for Scotland provided guidance on the structure of archaeological works appropriate on this site. Rathmell Archaeology Limited was been appointed by the National Trust for Scotland to undertake the archaeological monitoring works of the refurbishment of Souter Johnnie's Cottage, Kirkoswald, South Ayrshire (NGR?).
3. The Method Statement (Matthews 2016) 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 Background

4. The town of Kirkoswald appears likely to have grown up as an informal settlement close to the medieval parish church located at the western end of the town which was dedicated to St Oswald (Oswald, king of Northumbria, slain in battle in 641). The church was recorded as being granted to Paisley Abbey by the Earl of Carrick; the grant was confirmed by Florence, Bishop-elect of Glasgow (1202-6). While the dedication to the Northumbrian saint may indicate an early medieval date for the first church on the site, no direct evidence has been found to support this and it is not known when secular settlement first began.
5. The settlement layout is of a single street, which forms part of the main north-south routeway through Ayrshire. This layout is clearly visible on Roy's Military Survey of Scotland in 1752-55 (Figure 1a) and the town can be seen to still be relatively small in size on the 1st Ordnance Survey of 1859 (Figure 1b) where the town appears to have grown more through signs of "ribbon development" rather than from a more formal settlement plan.
6. Souter Johnnie's house is located roughly at the centre of the village facing onto the main street. It currently stands as a Category A-listed single storey thatched cottage with a lime washed exterior, and is recorded as being constructed in 1785 by John Davidson, the village cobbler of Kirkoswald. The name given to the house comes from the character 'Souter Johnnie' from Robert Burns' poem 'Tam O'Shanter' which was based on John Davidson.
7. As well as Souter Johnnie's house, other Listed Buildings are present within the village of Kirkoswald which also date to the late eighteenth century including two cottages sitting adjacent to Souter Johnnie's, a small church and a manse on the southern side of the town and the church which now stands on the site of the original Kirk.
8. The location of the development area at the centre of Kirkoswald itself suggests a high potential for medieval to nineteenth century remains to be present, and indeed, previous archaeological works within the surrounding area, supports the possibility that remains may lie sealed beneath the current ground surfaces surrounding the town's buildings.

Previous Archaeological work

9. Archaeological monitoring works were carried out by Rathmell Archaeology in 2012 (Williamson 2012) with respect to the renewal of drainage on the exterior of Souter Johnnie's Cottage. These works failed to identify the presence of any new archaeological features within the drainage trench, although the presence of 19th, and possibly even 20th, century artefacts within the deposit underlying the current ground surface suggested the area had been disturbed at some point since the construction of the cottage in 1785.



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



Figure 1b: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey, 6inch, 1859

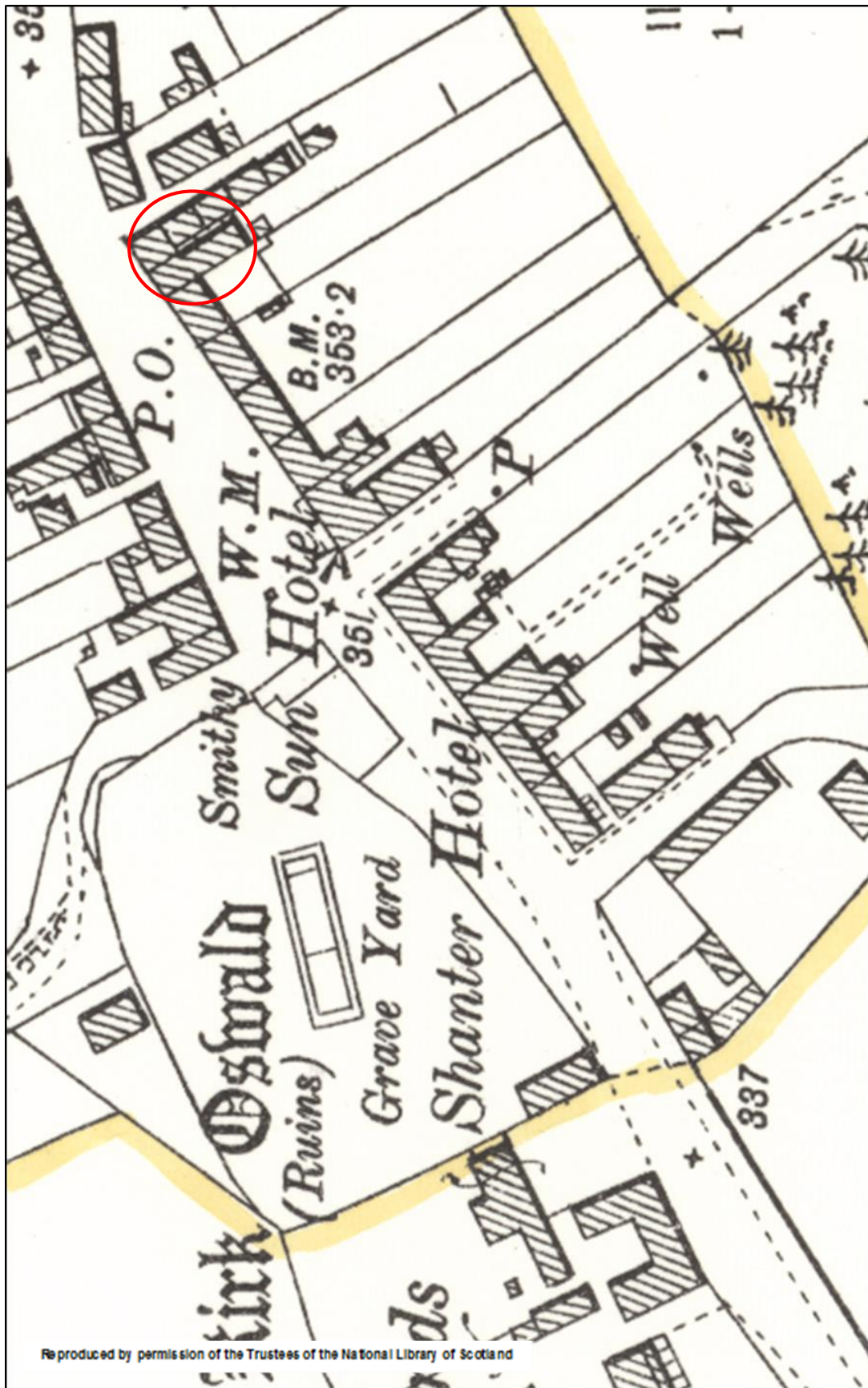


Figure 2: Extract from 2st edition Ordnance Survey, 25inch, 1896

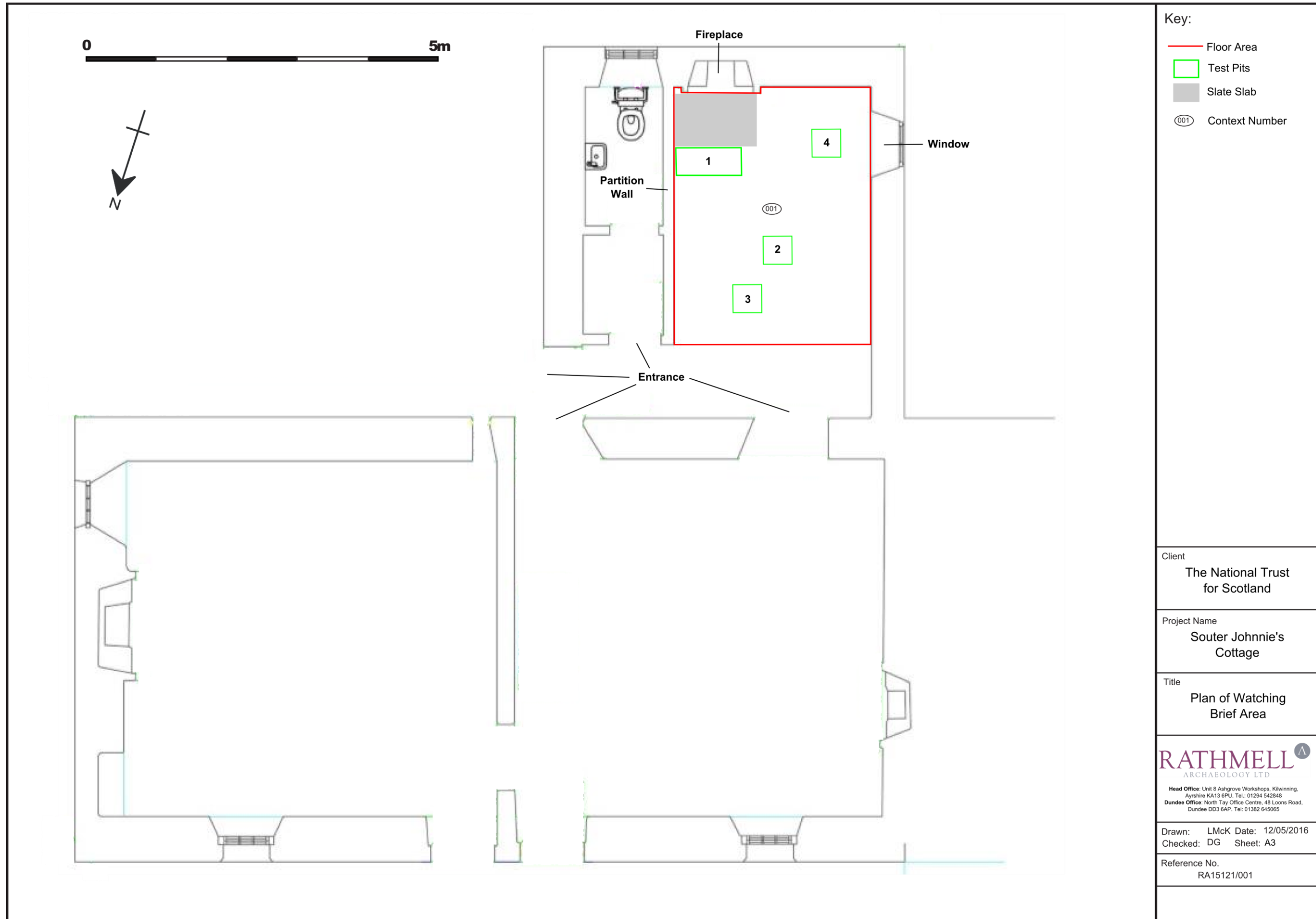


Figure 3: Plan of watching brief area

Project Works

10. The National Trust for Scotland secured Listed Building Consent from South Ayrshire Council for refurbishment of Souter Johnnie's Cottage, Kirkoswald, South Ayrshire (16/00106/LBC). These works were to create an Art Gallery, by removing/returning existing artefacts and developing a new environment by installing a new lighting system, a hanging system to display the art works. Furthermore, to the rear extension of the property, works would finish the floor to match the existing concrete slab, (removing the existing earth floor) and building a partition wall to allow for a secure storage area. The archaeological works involved the monitoring of a series of four small test pits (Figure 3) which were hand excavated into the earthen floor to ascertain the stratigraphic makeup of the floor followed by the overall reduction of the floor surface by 0.37m.
11. In compliance with the Method Statement (Matthews 2015), all potential archaeological features were investigated and recorded, with the on-site works taking place on the 4th of May 2016. 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 four test pits excavated within the interior floor of Souter Johnnie's Cottage identified a number of layers (Figure 3). The uppermost layer, (001), consisted of loosely compacted, light to mid grey-brown sandy gravel with frequent small pebble and gravel inclusions. This layer covered the entire area of the floor of the watching brief area with the exception of the ESE corner where a slab of grey slate was set in front of the Fireplace (Figure 4a). The hearth slab was rectangular in shape and measured 1.2m by 0.75m and had a thickness of 0.07m.
13. Beneath this upper layer was a dry mix layer, (002), which consisted of a moderately compacted, mixture of mid orange-brown/mid grey sand and cement which was visible in all four test pits (Figures 4b, 5a and 5b). The layer contained frequent inclusions of small irregular shaped stones and gravel (or aggregate). The layer was 0.19-0.22m thick and extended across the entire floor (3.5m NNW-SSE and 2.6m ENE-WSW) and also underlay the slab of slate associated with the fireplace.
14. Underneath the dry mix layer, (002), was a layer, (003), which consisted of loose to moderately compacted, mid grey-brown sand with very infrequent pebble and gravel inclusions. The layer was excavated to a thickness of 0.06-0.08m (though the layer was not fully excavated so the true depth was unknown). The full extent of the layer was unclear as it only showed up initially in test pits 2 and 3 (Figures 4b and 5a) but the later reduction of the whole floor surface by a depth of 0.37m showed that like the dry mix layer, (002), the layer of sand covered the entire floor with the exception of the area under the slab of slate.
15. Beneath the dry mix layer, (002), adjacent to the fireplace was a layer of small to medium sized, irregular shaped cobbles, (004). Material similar to the dry mix flooring (002) filled the voids between the individual cobbles. The layer was roughly rectangular in shape and measured 1.25m by 0.82m though the depth was unknown as the layer was not fully excavated.
16. The only artefacts recovered were from the dry mix layer, (002), a sherd of twentieth century pottery and fragment of modern glass. A small piece of cardboard from a cigarette paper packet (Rizla) was also identified in the sand layer (003) but was not retained as it disintegrated almost immediately due to water damage.



Figure 4a: Pre excavation view of the interior of the cottage from the NNW



Figure 4b: Post excavation view of test pit 1 from the WSW



Figure 5a: Post excavation view of test pit 2 from the WSW



Figure 5b: Post excavation view of test pit 3 from the NNW

Discussion

18. The works within Souter Johnnie's Cottage did not identify any significant archaeological features within the excavated floor area relating to the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. The layers identified within all of the four test pits related to renovation works carried out in the mid twentieth century.
19. The upper layer, (001), seems to represent a build-up of detritus mixed with degraded material from the dry mix layer, (002), beneath. The dry mix layer formed the main part of rooms flooring with the sand layer, (003), acting as a bedding layer. Without fuller excavation it is unclear if the deposit of rough cobbling, (004), adjacent to the cottages fireplace was contemporary with the other flooring layers or not though the fact that material similar to the dry mix layer, (002), was found between the gaps in the cobbles would suggest that they are.
20. No other significant archaeological features were identified during the watching brief at Souter Johnnie's Cottage.

Recommendations

21. The reduction of the interior floor of the rear room at Souter Johnnie's Cottage, as part of the overall refurbishment of the property, uncovered only twentieth century floor layers and no other significant archaeological features. As no new significant archaeological features were uncovered it is recommended that no further archaeological works are necessary with regards to the flooring in the rear room of the cottage. However, should further ground breaking works be required in the future within Souter Johnnie's Cottage then these should be carried out under archaeological supervision.
22. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with the National Trust for Scotland.

Conclusion

23. A programme of archaeological monitoring works was required by the National Trust for Scotland for refurbishment works at Souter Johnnie's Cottage, Kirkoswald, South Ayrshire. These archaeological works were designed to mitigate any adverse impact on the archaeological remains within the development area.
24. The works consisted of a series of four small test pits followed by the reduction of the floor of the cottages rear room by 0.37m. The test pits revealed a number of layers of flooring dating to the twentieth century or later, most likely part of an earlier programme of refurbishment at the cottage.
25. No significant archaeological features or artefacts were identified.

Acknowledgements

26. The author is grateful to the National Trust for Scotland who gave their support and guidance for these archaeological works. Thanks also go to Douglas Gordon for editing this report.

References

HM Government, 1997, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act, HMSO

Historic Scotland, 2008, Scottish Historic Environment Policy

Matthews, A. 2016 Souter Johnnie's, Kirkoswald, South Ayrshire: Archaeological Mitigation, Method Statement, unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd.

Museum of London, 1994, Archaeological Site Manual

Museums and Galleries Commission, 1992, Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections

Scottish Government, 2008, Treasure Trove in Scotland: A code of Practice

Scottish Government, 2010, *Scottish Planning Policy*

Scottish Government, 2011, Planning Advice Note 2/2011: Planning & Archaeology

Watkinson & Neal, 1998, *First Aid for Finds*

Williamson, C. 2012 Souter Johnnie's, Kirkoswald: Archaeological Mitigation, Data Structure Report, unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd.

Cartographic

Roy, W. 1752-55. Roy's map of the Lowlands

Ordnance Survey, 1859, 6-inch 1st edition, Ayrshire Sheet XLIV

Ordnance Survey, 1896, 25-inch 2nd edition, Ayrshire Sheet 004.10

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 | Interior floor | Deposit | Loosely compacted, light to mid grey-brown sandy gravel with frequent small pebble and gravel inclusions. | Modern soil/gravel surface covering the rear room at Souter Johnnie's cottage |
| 002 | Interior floor | Deposit | Moderately compacted, mixture of mid orange-brown/mid grey sand and cement. Frequent inclusions of small irregular shaped stones and gravel (aggregate). Layer was 0.19-0.22m thick. Extent 3.5m NNW-SSE and 2.6m ENE-WSW. | Modern (1950's) layer of dry mix flooring. |
| 003 | Interior floor | Deposit | Loose to moderately compacted, mid grey-brown sand with very infrequent pebble and gravel inclusions. Layer was excavated to a thickness of 0.06-0.08m (though the layer was not fully excavated). Extent unclear. | Deliberately deposited layer of sand. Probably associated with the 1950's dry mix flooring. |
| 004 | Interior floor | Deposit | Several small to medium sized, irregular shaped cobbles (0.08m x 0.06m). Material similar to the dry mix flooring (002) fills the voids between the cobbles. The layer was roughly rectangular in shape and measured 1.25m by 0.82m. The depth was unclear as it was not fully excavated. | Possible cobbled plinth in front of fireplace. Dry mix material filling the voids between the stones would suggest twentieth century date. |

Photographic Register

| Image No. | Digital | Description | From | Date |
|-----------|---------|--|------|----------|
| 01 | 2012 | Pre excavation view of the cottages interior floor | NNW | 04/05/16 |
| 02 | 2013 | Pre excavation view of the cottages interior floor | NNW | 04/05/16 |
| 03 | 2014 | Modern partition wall and section showing concrete floor | WSW | 04/05/16 |
| 04 | 2015 | Modern partition wall and section showing concrete floor | WSW | 04/05/16 |

| Image No. | Digital | Description | From | Date |
|-----------|---------|--|------|----------|
| 05 | 2016 | Pre excavation view of the interior – Wall and window | N | 04/05/16 |
| 06 | 2017 | Pre excavation view of the interior – entrance | S | 04/05/16 |
| 07 | 2018 | Pre excavation view of the interior – wall and stone trough | ENE | 04/05/16 |
| 08 | 2019 | Test pit 1, initial excavation | WSW | 04/05/16 |
| 09 | 2020 | Test pit 1, fully excavated | WSW | 04/05/16 |
| 10 | 2021 | Test pit 1, removal of adjacent slate slab next to fireplace | WSW | 04/05/16 |
| 11 | 2022 | Test pit 2, fully excavated | WSW | 04/05/16 |
| 12 | 2023 | Test pit 2, fully excavated | NNW | 04/05/16 |
| 13 | 2024 | Test pit 3, fully excavated | NNW | 04/05/16 |
| 14 | 2025 | Test pit 4, fully excavated | N | 04/05/16 |
| 15 | 2026 | Outside of Souter Johnnie's cottage | W | 04/05/16 |
| 16 | 2027 | Outside of Souter Johnnie's cottage | NW | 04/05/16 |

Finds Register

| Find No. | Area Trench | Context no. | Material Type | Description | Excavator | Date |
|----------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--|-----------|----------|
| 001 | - | 002 | Glass/Ceramic | 1 x glass fragment and 1 x modern pottery sherd. | LMcK | 04/05/16 |

Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

| | |
|--|---|
| LOCAL AUTHORITY: | South Ayrshire |
| PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME: | Souter Johnnie's cottage, Kirkoswald |
| PROJECT CODE: | RA15121 |
| PARISH: | Kirkoswald |
| NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR: | Liam McKinstry |
| NAME OF ORGANISATION: | Rathmell Archaeology Limited |
| TYPE(S) OF PROJECT: | Watching brief |
| NMRS NO(S): | NS20NW 18 |
| SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S): | Cottage, Museum |
| SIGNIFICANT FINDS: | None |
| NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures) | NS 23997 07530 |
| START DATE (this season) | 4 th May 2016 |
| END DATE (this season) | 4 th May 2016 |
| PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.) | Archaeological monitoring by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd. (2012) |
| MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields) | <p>A programme of archaeological monitoring works was required by the National Trust for Scotland for refurbishment works at Souter Johnnie's Cottage, Kirkoswald, South Ayrshire. These archaeological works were designed to mitigate any adverse impact on the archaeological remains within the development area.</p> <p>The works consisted of a series of four small test pits followed by the reduction of the floor of the cottages rear room by 0.37m. The test pits revealed a number of layers of flooring dating to the twentieth century or later, most likely part of an earlier programme of refurbishment at the cottage.</p> <p>No significant archaeological features or artefacts were identified.</p> |
| PROPOSED FUTURE WORK: | None |
| CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS: | None |
| SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY: | The National Trust for Scotland |
| 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 The National Trust for Scotland, West of Scotland Archaeology Service and archive to HES Collections |

Contact Details

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

Rathmell Archaeology Ltd
Unit 8 Ashgrove Workshops
Kilwinning
Ayrshire
KA13 6PU

www.rathmell-arch.co.uk

t.: 01294 542848

f.: 01294 542849

e.: contact@rathmell-arch.co.uk

End of Document