

# **West Park Farm, Coynton: Archaeological Mitigation**

Data Structure Report



by Claire Williamson  
issued 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018  
on behalf of Mr Young

**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 Claire Williamson Date .....18<sup>th</sup> October 2018.....

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

Checked Thomas Rees Date .....18<sup>th</sup> October 2018.....

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)	Claire Williamson		
Date of Issue	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2018	Version	1.0
Commissioning Body	Mr Young		
Event Name	West Park Farm, Coylton		
Event Type	Watching Brief		
Event Date(s)	September 2018		
Rathmell Archaeology Code	RA18082	OASIS Ref	rathmell1-327208
Location	United Kingdom : Scotland : South Ayrshire		
NGR	NS 39749 19872	Parish	Coylton
Designation(s)	None		
Canmore IDs	None		

## Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Historical and Archaeological Background .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Project Works .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Findings .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Discussion .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Cartographic .....	11
<b>Appendix 1: Registers .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Context Register .....	12
Photographic Register .....	12
<b>Appendix 2: Discovery &amp; Excavation in Scotland .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Contact Details .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared for Mr Young in respect of the erection of a poultry shed and other associated works at West Park Farm, Coylton (NGR: NS 39749 19872). The archaeological works were designed to mitigate the impact on the archaeological remains within their development area.
2. The works have been granted conditioned Planning Consent by South Ayrshire Council (18/00554/APP). The West of Scotland Archaeology Service, which advises South Ayrshire Council on archaeological matters, provided guidance on the structure of archaeological works appropriate on this site. Rathmell Archaeology Ltd has been appointed by Mr Young to undertake the development and implementation of archaeological mitigation works.
3. The Written Scheme of Investigation (Williamson 2018) provided the detail of the works (archaeological monitoring, exclusion, excavation, post-excavation analyses and publication) for the mitigation pertaining to groundbreaking within the development area and hence the direct physical impact on buried sediments.

## Historical and Archaeological Background

4. The development area sits within enclosed farmland to the west of Coylton. To the east of the area sits the site of Witch Knowe (WoSAS Pin: 6154; Canmore ID: 41581), visible in Figure 2a. Witch Knowe is a mound first depicted on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1860 (Figure 1a), which has had various interpretations throughout the years.
5. It was first described in 1895 as a mound measuring 17 paces in diameter across the top, 8ft 10ins high on one side and 16ft 4ins on the other. In 1954, it was identified as having been formerly tree covered but with only stumps remaining. The dimensions were the same but this visit identified an old-tree bank and traces of a ditch present around its base. They identified it as having an artificial appearance and suggested that it may be a motte. This interpretation was re-iterated in 1968, but later disputed during a visit in 1980. At this time, they did not see any sign of the ditch and strongly disagreed with its interpretation as a motte, suggesting that it may be a natural mound. The final interpretation from a visit by RCAHMS in 1985 stated that it was unclear whether it was artificial or natural.
6. While no archaeological sites had been identified directly within the development area, its close proximity to the site of Witch Knowe placed it as having the potential for archaeological remains. While the interpretation of the mound at Witch Knowe remains uncertain, its potential to be artificial indicates that it could be a significant feature and, if so, there may have been associated activity which could run into the development area. Any work within the area surrounding this feature may help towards an understanding of its nature.
7. Furthermore, evidence for earlier settlement survived within the surrounding landscape. The Scheduled Monument at Laighpark (SM4436; WoSAS Pin: 7216; Canmore ID: 42658) sits approximately 570m to the southeast of the development area (see Figure 1b). This is a roughly circular earthwork, enclosed by low, inner and outer, ramparts, with a medial ditch up to 11m broad and 1.5m deep, enclosing an area approximately 45m in diameter. The earthwork has been identified as the site of an Iron Age settlement.

## Project Works

8. The programme of works comprised the archaeological monitoring of groundbreaking works within ground to the north of West Park Farm, Coylton (Figure 3).
9. The groundbreaking works consisted of topsoil stripping across the site of the poultry shed, including ground to the rear and part of the roadway to the fore, to reveal the underlying natural subsoil in order to clear the areas of any archaeological features prior to the development works taking place. The works were undertaken using a 360° tracked



Figure 1a: Extract from 1<sup>st</sup> edition six-inch Ordnance Survey 1860



Figure 1b: Extract from 2<sup>nd</sup> edition six-inch Ordnance Survey 1897 showing earthwork at Laighpark



Figure 2a: View of Witch Knowe from the northwest



Figure 2b: General pre-excavation view of the area from the north-northeast

excavator with a smooth ditching bucket and took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

10. While the majority of the area for development was stripped during this monitoring phase, some minor areas of groundbreaking works were still required outwith, namely, the insertion of a swale and a turning point just to the northwest. After discussions with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service however, it was agreed that enough of the area had already been monitored to be able to assess the archaeological significance of the ground and therefore satisfy the requirements of the planning condition with no further monitoring works required.
11. In compliance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Williamson 2018) any potential 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 Environment Scotland Policy Statements.

## Findings

12. The area sat within an enclosed field just to the northwest of West Park Farm. The area to be stripped sat on a slope which ran from higher ground at the farm down to lower ground along the northwest (Figure 2b).
13. The stripped area was roughly rectangular in shape, measuring 145m long and between 38-48m wide (widening towards one end).
14. Prior to excavation, the entire area was covered by turf with underlying topsoil (001). (001) comprised a firmly compacted mid- orange brown silty clay with frequent rootlets and small stone inclusions. It contained occasional sherds of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century pottery and modern glass, as well as large chunks of burnt flint. The topsoil measured 100-200mm thick across the southeastern end of the area which sat upslope, and 300-400mm across the northwestern end which sat along lower ground.
15. The works removed (001) to reveal natural subsoil. This predominantly consisted of (002): a firmly compacted mid- brownish orange silty clay with frequent small stone inclusions (Figure 4a). Although (004), a firmly compacted light greyish orange yellow silty clay with moderate small-medium sized stone inclusions, was present in the western corner representing natural variation (Figure 4b).
16. Cut into the upper surface of the natural subsoil, two sets of archaeological features were exposed that appeared to represent agricultural activity.
17. The first was a number of shallow linear features (003) representing ploughscars, which were present across the site running NW-SE (Figure 5a). They had a 'U' shaped cut in profile and were filled by topsoil (001). Each feature measured 0.05m wide and up to 0.03m deep, and they were spaced at intervals of roughly 0.3m.
18. The second was a series of field drains in the form of linear features (005) (Figure 5b), which were again present across the full area. These were all orientated NW-SE and were filled by re-deposited natural subsoil. They each measured 0.2m wide and sat at intervals of approximately 3.5m. In each case, the cut had vertical sides and contained a red tile drain at a depth of 300mm from the surface of the natural subsoil.
19. No significant archaeological features were present, and the only finds noted were the burnt flint and occasional 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century artefact throughout topsoil (001).

## Discussion

20. No significant archaeological features were uncovered during the course of the archaeological works, with the only features present relating to the use of the area during recent periods.
21. Those features consisted of ploughscars (003) and field drains (005) which were present across the full area. The ground is shown as enclosed farmland from the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey in 1860 (Figure 1a), and it is likely that these features are remnants of the use of the ground for this purpose. The field drains represent a deliberate attempt at

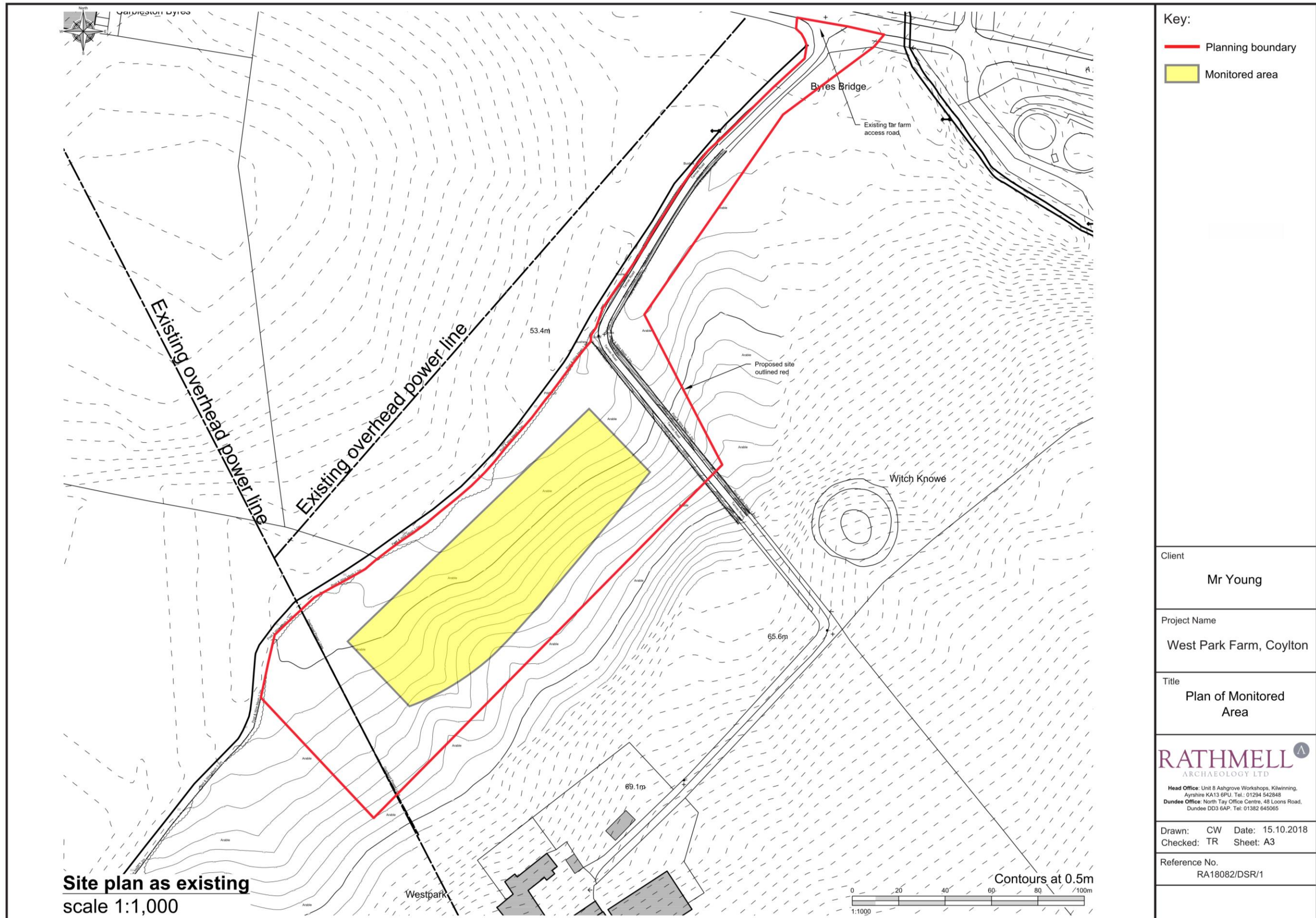


Figure 3: Plan showing monitored area





Figure 4a: General view of the area from the northeast showing subsoil (002)



Figure 4b: General view of the western corner of the area from the northeast showing subsoil (004)



Figure 5a: Example of ploughscars (003) from the south-southeast

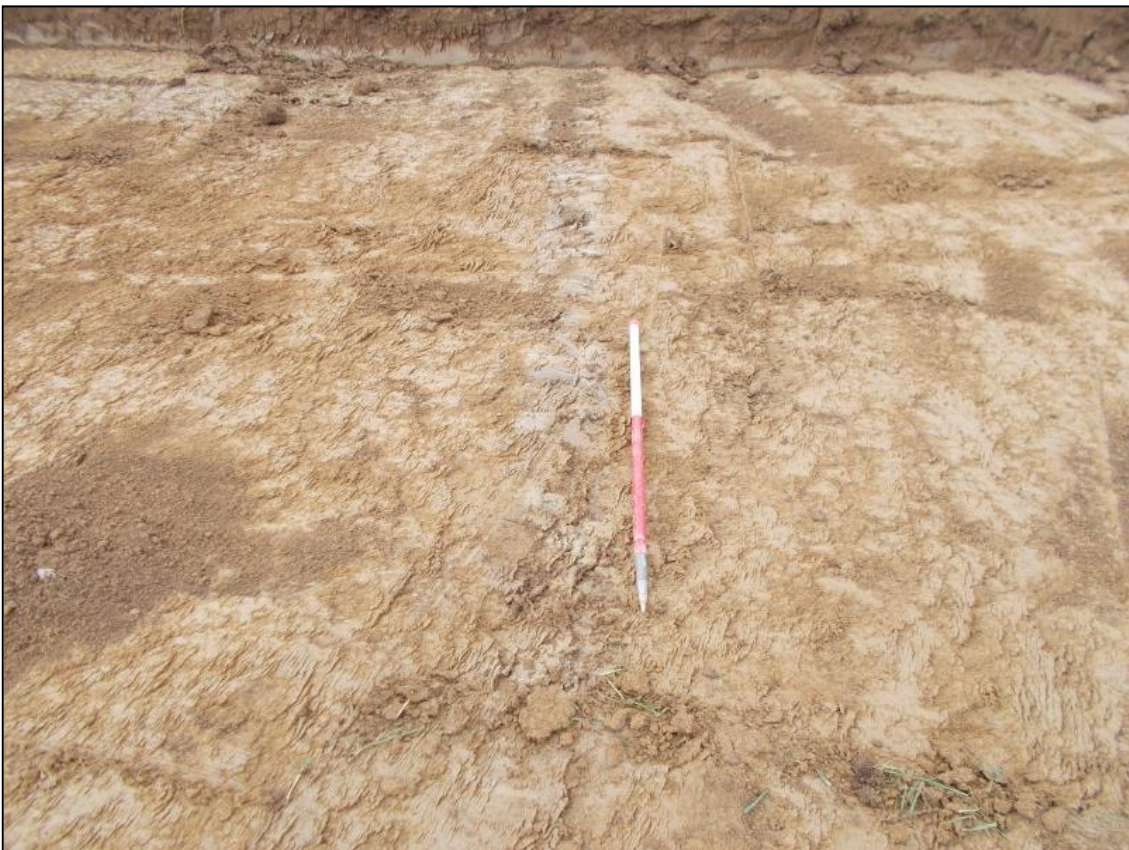


Figure 5b: Example of field drain (005) from the southeast

improving the ground; not surprising in an area where the underlying clay subsoil likely limits the natural drainage.

22. The presence of the burnt flint within the topsoil is also likely to be a by-product of further attempts at improving the ground. As the chunks were very large in size, and exhibited intense heat alteration, it is likely that they have derived from an industrial process such as liming. This involves using lime to treat the soil in order to reduce acidity and improve its fertility. In this instance, the flint will have been present within the limestone that was fired to create the lime. Their presence within the topsoil indicates that these fields have likely been subject to liming as part of agricultural improvements during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.
23. Unfortunately the lack of significant features within the development area has not helped to further any understanding of the mound represented at the Witch Knowe. While any associated activity that could be present does not appear to have extended to this area, it is still possible that such evidence exists at another side of the mound, or is perhaps confined to the limits of the mound itself.

## Recommendations

24. No significant archaeological remains were located within the development area and the only features recorded during the monitoring related to agricultural use of the site.
25. 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 works be undertaken with regards to this development and the planning condition be purged.
26. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with South Ayrshire Council and their advisors, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

## Conclusion

27. Archaeological monitoring works were carried out in support of development work on land at West Park Farm, Coylton. The archaeological works were designed to mitigate the impact on any archaeological remains within the development area.
28. The works did not identify the presence of any significant archaeological features within the development area, with the only archaeological features present relating to agricultural activity in recent periods.

## Acknowledgements

29. The author is grateful to the client, Mr Young, and David Mair at Agri Design for allowing us the chance to carry out these works, and also to the West of Scotland Archaeology Service who gave guidance throughout the project. I would also like to thank Ve-Tech Concrete Ltd who carried out the works on site. Final thanks also go to Thomas Rees for his support throughout the project and his input regarding the burnt flint, as well as to Dr Louise Turner for her final editing of the report.

## References

Williamson, C. 2018 *West Park Farm, Coylton: Archaeological Mitigation, Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd

### *Cartographic*

Ordnance Survey	1860	Six-inch 1 <sup>st</sup> Edition <i>Ayrshire, Sheet XXXIII</i>
Ordnance Survey	1897	Six-inch 2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition <i>Ayrshire, Sheet XXXIII.SE</i>

## Appendix 1: Registers

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

### *Context Register*

Context	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
001		Deposit	Firmly compacted mid- orange brown silty clay with frequent rootlets and small stone inclusions. Contained occasional sherds of 19 <sup>th</sup> /20 <sup>th</sup> century pottery and modern glass. Covered entire area. Measured 100-200mm thick across southeastern end which sat upslope, and 300-400mm across the northwestern end which sat at the base of the slope.	Topsoil
002		Deposit	Firmly compacted mid- brownish orange silty clay with frequent small stone inclusions.	Natural subsoil
003		Feature	Shallow linear features running NW-SE. 'U' shaped cut in profile with a topsoil fill. Measured 0.05m wide and up to 0.03m deep. Spaced at intervals of roughly 0.3m.	Ploughscars
004		Deposit	Firmly compacted light greyish orange yellow silty clay with moderate small-medium sized stone inclusions. Present in western corner of site measuring approximately 34m (NE-SW) by 18m (NW-SE) in extent where exposed.	Natural subsoil present in western corner of area
005		Feature	Linear features running NW-SE. Vertical sides, and filled by re-deposited natural subsoil. Measured 0.2m wide and sat at intervals of approximately 3.5m. Contained red tile drains at approximately 300mm depth from the surface of the natural subsoil.	Red tile field drains

### *Photographic Register*

Image	Digital	Description	From	Date
01	697	Pre-excavation shot of site	NE	11/09/18
02	698	Pre-excavation shot of site	NNE	11/09/18
03	699	Pre-excavation shot of site	SW	11/09/18
04	700	Working shot	N	11/09/18
05	701	Shot of area to rear of shed after topsoil strip complete	SW	11/09/18

Image	Digital	Description	From	Date
06	702	Shot of area to rear of shed after topsoil strip complete	SW	11/09/18
07	703	Shot of area to rear of shed after topsoil strip complete (SW half)	NE	11/09/18
08	704	Shot of area to rear of shed after topsoil strip complete (NE half)	SW	11/09/18
09	705	Shot of ploughscars (003)	SSE	11/09/18
10	706	NW side of shed after topsoil strip (SW half)	NE	12/09/18
11	707	Sample shot of field drain (005)	SE	12/09/18
12	708	Sample shot of field drain (005)	SE	12/09/18
13	709	General shot along NW side	SW	12/09/18
14	710	General shot of S corner	WNW	12/09/18
15	711	General shot of full area, end of second day	NE	12/09/18
16	712	Witch Knowe	S	13/09/18
17	713	Witch Knowe	NW	13/09/18
18	714	Shot along NW edge of area – topsoil strip complete	NE	13/09/18
19	715	Shot of NE end – topsoil strip complete	SE	13/09/18
20	716	Shot of full area after topsoil strip	SW	13/09/18
21	717	Shot of full area after topsoil strip	SW	13/09/18
22	718	Shot of full area after topsoil strip	SW	13/09/18
23	719	General shot of area	SE	13/09/18
24	720	General shot of area	SE	13/09/18

## Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	South Ayrshire
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	West Park Farm, Coylton
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	RA18082
<b>PARISH:</b>	Coylton
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Claire Williamson
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Rathmell Archaeology Limited
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	None
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	None
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR</b> (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NS 39749 19872
<b>START DATE</b> (this season)	11 <sup>th</sup> September 2018
<b>END DATE</b> (this season)	13 <sup>th</sup> September 2018
<b>PREVIOUS WORK</b> (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (may include information from other fields)	<p>Archaeological monitoring works were carried out in support of development work on land at West Park Farm, Coylton. The archaeological works were designed to mitigate the impact on any archaeological remains within the development area.</p> <p>The works did not identify the presence of any significant archaeological features within the development area, with the only archaeological features present relating to agricultural activity in recent periods.</p>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	None
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Mr Young
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Unit 8 Ashgrove Workshops, Kilwinning, Ayrshire KA13 6PU
<b>E MAIL:</b>	contact@rathmell-arch.co.uk
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b> (intended/deposited)	Report to West of Scotland Archaeology Service and archive to the National Record of the Historic Environment

## Contact Details

30. 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](http://www.rathmell-arch.co.uk)

t.: 01294 542848

f.: 01294 542849

e.: [contact@rathmell-arch.co.uk](mailto:contact@rathmell-arch.co.uk)

End of Document