Sornhill, Galston: Archaeological Watching Brief

Data Structure Report

by Alan Matthews

issued 21st April 2011



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

Signed		Date	
	g with the procedure of Rathmell Archae ave been reviewed and agreed by an ap	- ,	
Checked		Date	

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Contents

Introduction	3
Historical and Archaeological Background	3
Project Works	3
Findings	6
Discussion	
Recommendations	
Conclusion	
References	
Documentary	
Cartographic	12
Appendix 1: Registers	13
Context Register	13
Photographic Register	13
Drawing Register	17
Finds Register	17
Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland	18
··· Contact Details	
Figure:	
Figure 1a: Area of Sornhill depicted on Roy's Military Survey (1847-55)	4
Figure 1b:Area of Sornhill on 1 st edition Ordnance Survey	4
Figure 2: Site Plan	5
Figure 3a: Layout of garage foundations	7
Figure 3b: Excavation of the garage foundations	
Figure 4a: Foundations of garage excavated	8
Figure 4b: Main house of Sornhill Farm	8
Figure 5a: Service track to the south of the main house	
Figure 5b: Service track to the north of the main house	
Figure 6a: Section of service track to west of main house	
Figure 6h: North-western corner of service track	11

Introduction

- 1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared for Mr Haddow in respect of the construction of a garage and placement of services connected with the refurbishment of Sornhill Farm, to the south of Galston. The archaeological works were designed to mitigate the impact on the archaeological remains within their development area to the agreement of the West of Scotland Archaeology Service and East Ayrshire Council. The area concerned comprises an area of open ground to the immediate west of Sornhill Farm (NGR: NS 51103410).
- 2. East Ayrshire Council has required an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken as a requirement of the issued planning consent (06/0949/FL). The West of Scotland Archaeology Service who advises East Ayrshire Council on archaeological matters requested archaeological mitigation be undertaken to manage the potential impact on archaeological remains. They provided guidance on the structure of archaeological works required on-site during development works.
- 3. Rathmell Archaeology Limited was appointed by Mr Haddow to undertake the development and implementation of archaeological mitigation works for the build at Sornhill Farm in support of their contractors. This was agreed through a Method Statement (Matthews 2008).

Historical and Archaeological Background

- 4. The preliminary archaeological interest derives from the identification of Sornhill Farm as a Category A listed building and from a few notable prehistoric finds in the general locale. In addition there is the potential for the survival of ancillary structures relating to the early use of the farm in the vicinity of the existing structures.
- 5. Sornhill is described as a tall, attractive laird's house of the 17th century. It is an L-planned building of three stories and a garret, with crow-stepped gables and a square stair tower rising in the re-entrant angle. The main wing was originally three floors but according to the listing information has since been converted to two. A range of 18th century byres adjoin to the rear. Despite its proximity to later farm buildings the house is in an almost park-like setting with land falling away to the rear and rising in front.
- 6. Two prehistoric finds of note come from the immediate area of Sornhill Farm. A cist was found in 1895 in a knoll on Cowgrave farm. Its cover stone bore a cup mark and traces of two others. Although it is not certain where the cist was located it has been suggested that the knoll has since been removed and now exists as a hollow in the field. Similar reports of polished stone axes and spindle whorls being recovered from nearby fields exist; however, the exact location of these finds is uncertain.

Project Works

- 7. The programme of archaeological works comprised two visits for the purpose of archaeological monitoring of ground breaking works. The first visit took place on 24th of November 2008 and concerned the excavation of foundations for the placement of a garage. The second visit took place on 10th of March 2011 and concerned the excavation of a trench for the placement of rainwater drainage. The reason that the work took place in two parts was that the area immediately surrounding the house was inaccessible until the later stages of the project.
- 8. The programme of works comprised archaeological monitoring of all ground breaking works relating to this development. Specifically this excavation for the construction of a garage and the placement of rainwater drainage (Figure 2). Excavation was carried out by use of a 3t 360° mini digger and where necessary by hand. Were possible the work was carried out using a toothless ditching bucket but in situations where the sediments proved to be too compact or where a narrow track was required a narrow toothed bucket was used. Sediments were removed progressively, in spits; and any potential archaeological features were investigated.



Figure 1a: Area of Sornhill depicted on Roy's Military Survey (1847-55)

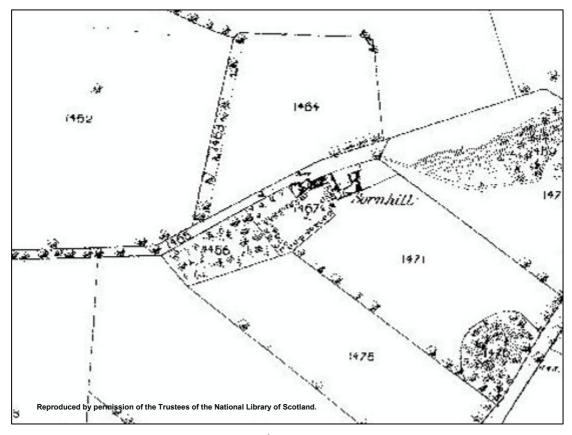


Figure 1b: Area of Sornhill Farm on $\mathbf{1}^{\text{st}}$ edition Ordnance Survey

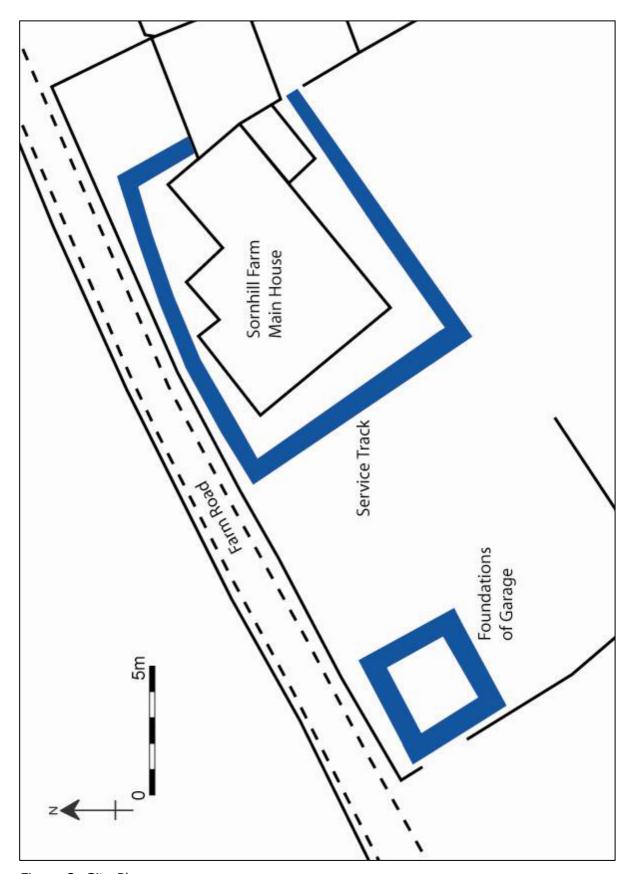


Figure 2: Site Plan

9. In compliance with the Method Statement (Matthews 2008) all ground breaking works were monitored and any potential archaeological features were investigated and recorded, with the on-site works taking place from the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

Findings

- 10. The development area was located to the immediate south-west of the farm buildings of Sornhill Farm. To the north-east the land slopes gently up towards the village of Sornhill. Sornhill Farm is at the break of slope before the land slopes more steeply down to the south. The fact that the site is located on the slight ridge line may go some way towards explaining the sediments exposed during the excavation work. Bedrock was met frequently during the excavation works and often within the first 500mm of the excavation. The shallow nature of the soft sediments on site meant that the potential for survival of significant archaeological material was in some places reduced.
- 11. Excavation of the foundation for the garage involved excavation of a trench approximately 1.2m wide and 450mm to 700mm deep (Figure 3a). The internal area of which was left unexcavated due to the plans for the garage requiring the floor to be elevated above the current ground level by at least 200mm. This work exposed a variety of sediments. Subsoil, (004) and (005), was reached in all parts of the excavation for the garage foundations (Figure 3b). However, the subsoil to the south, west and north appeared disturbed at the uppermost layers and may have been redeposited. The possibility of disturbance of this type is emphasised by the existence of a modern field drain running east-west across the excavated area.
- 12. The remaining sediments in the area of the garage were made ground containing modern (19th or 20th century) material. Some modern ceramic was recovered from the topsoil (001). Additional fragments of mortar and ceramic were recovered from the build up of made ground (003). Additional made ground (002) took the form of levelling material and imported gravel, Type 1. All of the material recovered from the area of the garage was modern (19th or 20th century) in origin this includes the build up of made ground and the placement of modern drainage. Any potentially significant archaeological features were investigated and none were found (Figure 4a).
- 13. The archaeological monitoring of the excavation for rainwater drainage surrounding the main house (Figure 4b) took place more than two years later when the majority of the refurbishment work had been completed. The excavation for services surrounding the house was the only remaining ground breaking work requiring archaeological monitoring. The work was carried out using a 3 ton 360° mini-digger with a small toothed bucket (Figure 5a). The toothed bucked was required in order to break through the high bedrock which was frequently reached during the excavation works. The excavation was carried out in spits in order to achieve a trench approximately 500mm wide, 1.2m deep and around the north (Figure 5b), west and south of the main house approximately 1m from the building. The distance from the building varied depending on the location of the trench and where it had to tie in to outflow pipes.
- 14. The sediments uncovered were consistent for all of the excavation carried out around the house and varied only in the relative depths. Typically the first 200mm to 300mm was composed of very compact dark brown sandy-silt (009) with inclusions of small stones and modern rubbish. This made up the surface of the yard surrounding the house. Beneath this was a layer of archaeologically sterile natural soil (005) which continued for an additional depth of between 200mm and 700mm. This compact clay contained no anthropic material but did contain fragments of rock which increased in frequency towards the base. Bedrock was typically encountered at depths of between 400mm and 1m. This bedrock (008) was progressively broken by the digger in order to achieve the proper depth from the drainage.



Figure 3a: Layout of garage foundations



Figure 3b: Excavation of the garage foundations



Figure 4a: Foundations of garage excavated



Figure 4b: Main house of Sornhill Farm

- 15. Archaeological monitoring was carried out during the removal of some of the bedrock to the north and south of the main house but typically monitoring ceased when the surface of the bedrock was reached. After the completion of the excavation for this track the only work remaining to be carried out was to join the new drainage track into the existing outflow pipes from the house (Figure 6a). After consultation with West of Scotland Archaeology Service it was agreed that this work did not require archaeological monitoring given that; length of area to be excavated was no more than 500mm, the excavation was to be carried out through previously disturbed made ground and that the area of the excavation had already been seen in section (Figure 6b).
- 16. Over the course of the archaeological monitoring works any potentially significant archaeological features were investigated according to the terms of the Method Statement (Matthews 2008). The only features or anthropic material observed on site related to the modern (19th or 20th century) use of the area.

Discussion

- 17. No significant archaeological features were uncovered during the archaeological monitoring works and no anthropic material was observed other than that relating to the modern (19th or 20th century) use of the site. No material was observed which would relate to the 17th or 18th century occupation of the house and no evidence was recovered of the original outlying farm buildings. In addition the local potential for prehistoric archaeology, as demonstrated by the archaeological background of the area, was not realised during the archaeological monitoring works. No prehistoric material was recovered from within the development area.
- 18. Excavation in the area of the garage demonstrated a build up of made ground. This contained only modern material; however, the concentration of material in layer (003) suggested that in may have resulted from the demolition of some other building. The presence of Type 1 gravel in this area along with the build up of made ground suggested that there had been some attempt to artificially level the area in recent times. None of the material recovered suggested anything other than 19th or 20th century use of the area.
- 19. Excavation around the area of the house for services also suggests that the area has been artificially levelled if only because archaeologically sterile natural soil is reached so quickly beneath the surface of the yard. In addition the high bedrock in this area makes the horizon for the potential recovery of archaeological material very shallow. The excavation work carried out in relation to this development covered a very small percentage of the area of the farm and its outlying buildings; however, from the archaeological monitoring work carried out in relation to this development it is possible to suggest that any significant archaeological material has been removed from the area surrounding the house by recent informal landscaping.

Recommendations

- 20. The archaeological monitoring failed to identify any significant archaeological features or artefacts within the development area. Only a small percentage of the area of the farm yard was subject to archaeological monitoring however from this it was possible to suggest that the area to the west of the house has been subject to informal landscaping which has involved the reduction of ground close to the house and the build up of made ground in the are of the garage.
- 21. After consultation with West of Scotland Archaeology Service it was agreed that no further archaeological monitoring work was required with regards to this development. For this reason Rathmell Archaeology Ltd recommends that the planning condition be purged.



Figure 5a: Service track to the south of the main house



Figure 5b: Service track to the north of the main house



Figure 6a: Section of service track to west of main house



Figure 6b: North-western corner of service track

22. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with East Ayrshire Council and their advisors, West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Conclusion

- 23. This Data Structure Report was prepared in respect of the construction of a garage and placement of services connected with the refurbishment of Sornhill Farm, to the south of Galston. East Ayrshire Council required an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken as a requirement of the issued planning consent (06/0949/FL).
- 24. An archaeological watching brief was carried in two stages; November 2008 and March 2011. The archaeological works were designed to mitigate the impact on the archaeological remains within the development area. The archaeological monitoring included excavation for the placement of services around the main house as well as the placement of foundations for a garage.
- 25. No significant archaeological material was observed during the course of the archaeological works and the only anthropic material observed was that relating to 19th or 20th century use of the site.

References

Documentary

Matthews, A	2008	Sornhill, Galston: Archaeological Watching Brief,
		Method Statement, Rathmell Archaeology Ltd

Cartographic

1747-1755	Roy	Military Survey of Scotland
1775	Armstrong	A new map of Ayrshire
1858	Ordnance Survey	1 st edition Ordnance Survey, Ayrshire
1897	Ordnance Survey	2 nd edition Ordnance Survey, Ayrshire
1911	Ordnance Survey	3 rd edition Ordnance Survey, Ayrshire
1938	Ordnance Survey	4 th edition Ordnance Survey, Ayrshire

Appendix 1: Registers

Within this appendix are all registers pertaining to works on-site regardless of the process by which that information was gathered (e.g. evaluation or strip, map & sample).

Context Register

Context No.	31		Description	Interpretation
001	Site	Deposit	Soft mid-brown silty clay with flecks of small red ash gravels	Topsoil
002	Garage	Deposit	Loose dark grey small sharp angular gravels	Type 1 and building material
003	Garage	Deposit	Moderate mid-grey silt and clay with occasional charcoal and sandstone included	demolition layer
004	Site	Deposit	Very compact light grey mottled clay with occasional stone inclusion	Subsoil, possibly re-deposited
005	Site	Deposit	Very compact orange-brown large stone gravel in clay matrix	Subsoil
006	Site	Deposit	Moderately compact orange-brown clay with frequent rooting and stone inclusions	Subsoil, possibly re-deposited
007	Garage	Deposit	Ceramic tile field drain	Field drain
008	Site	Deposit	Very compact natural rock	Bedrock
009	House	Deposit	V. compact dark brown to black sandy silt. Containing small stones. Inclusions of brick and other modern rubbish.	Compact surface forming the surface surrounding the house.

Photographic Register

Image	Print Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date		
No.	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
01	1	18	1	24	-	Pre-ex of the garage area-marked out	S	24/11/08

Image	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
No.	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
02	1	19	-	-	-	Pre-ex of the garage area-marked out	SE	24/11/08
03	1	20	-	-	-	Working shot	WSW	24/11/08
04	1	21	1	25	-	Section of sediments	SSE	24/11/08
05	1	22	1	26	-	Section of sediments	NE	24/11/08
06	1	23	-	-	-	Post-ex of garage area	S	24/11/08
07	1	24	-	-	-	Post-ex of garage area	SE	24/11/08
08	1	25	-	-	-	Post-ex of garage area	SE	24/11/08
09	-	-	-	-	814	Area marked out around the house	W	10/3/11
10	-	-	-	-	815	Area marked out around the house	W	10/3/11
11	-	-	-	-	816	Area marked out around the house	S	10/3/11
12	-	-	-	-	817	Area marked out around the house	S	10/3/11
13	-	-	-	-	818	Area marked out around the house	W	10/3/11
14	-	-	-	-	819	Area marked out around the house	W	10/3/11
15	-	-	-	-	820	The House	S	10/3/11
16	-	-	-	-	821	The House	S	10/3/11
17	-	-	-	-	822	Beginning the excavation on the SE	W	10/3/11
18	-	-	-	-	823	Beginning the excavation on the SE	W	10/3/11
19	-	-	-	-	824	Beginning the excavation on the SE	E	10/3/11
20	-	-	-	-	825	Beginning the excavation on the SE	E	10/3/11
21	-	-	-	-	826	Beginning the excavation on the SE	S	10/3/11
22	-	-	-	-	827	Beginning the excavation on the SE	S	10/3/11
23	-	-	-	-	828	Excavation along the S of House	SE	10/3/11
24	-	-	-	-	829	Excavation along the S of House	SE	10/3/11

Image	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
No.	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
25	-	-	-	-	830	Excavation along the S of House	Е	10/3/11
26	-	-	-	-	831	Excavation along the S of House	E	10/3/11
27	-	-	-	-	832	Excavation along the S of House	Е	10/3/11
28	-	-	-	-	833	Excavation along the S of House	E	10/3/11
29	-	-	-	-	834	Excavation along the S of House	S	10/3/11
30	-	-	-	-	835	Excavation along the S of House	S	10/3/11
31	-	-	-	-	836	Excavation along the S of House	SE	10/3/11
32	-	-	-	-	837	Excavation along the S of House	SE	10/3/11
33	-	-	-	-	838	Excavation along the S of House	NE	10/3/11
34	-	-	-	-	839	Excavation along the S of House	NE	10/3/11
35	-	-	-	-	840	Beginning excavation on N side of House	Е	10/3/11
36	-	-	-	-	841	Beginning excavation on N side of House	Е	10/3/11
37	-	-	-	-	842	Beginning excavation on N side of House	Е	10/3/11
38	-	-	-	-	843	Beginning excavation on N side of House	E	10/3/11
39	-	-	-	-	844	Excavation along N side of House	E	10/3/11
40	-	-	-	-	845	Excavation along N side of House	Е	10/3/11
41	-	-	-	-	846	Section N side of House	Е	10/3/11
42	-	-	-	-	847	Section N side of House	E	10/3/11
43	-	-	-	-	848	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
44	-	-	-	-	849	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
45	-	-	-	-	850	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
46	-	-	-	-	851	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
47	-	-	-	-	852	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11

lmage	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
No.	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
48	-	-	-	-	853	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
49	-	-	-	-	854	Section N side of house	N	10/3/11
50	-	-	-	-	855	Section N side of house	N	10/3/11
51	-	-	-	-	856	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
52	-	-	-	-	857	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
53	-	-	-	-	858	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
54	-	-	-	-	859	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
55	-	-	-	-	860	Section on N side of house	N	10/3/11
56	-	-	-	-	861	Section on N side of house	N	10/3/11
57	-	-	-	-	862	Section on N side of house	N	10/3/11
58	-	-	-	-	863	Section on N side of house	N	10/3/11
59	-	-	-	-	864	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
60	-	-	-	-	865	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
61	-	-	-	-	866	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
62	-	-	-	-	867	Excavation along N side of House	NE	10/3/11
63	-	-	-	-	868	NW corner of excavation	NW	10/3/11
64	-	-	-	-	869	NW corner of excavation	NW	10/3/11
65	-	-	-	-	870	NW corner of excavation	W	10/3/11
66	-	-	-	-	871	NW corner of excavation	W	10/3/11
67	-	-	-	-	872	Excavation down W side of house	N	10/3/11
68	-	-	-	-	873	Excavation down W side of house	N	10/3/11
69	-	-	-	-	874	Excavation down W side of house	W	10/3/11
70	-	-	-	-	875	Excavation down W side of house	W	10/3/11

Image	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
No.	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
71	-	-	-	-	876	Trench down the W side of house	N	10/3/11
72	-	-	-	-	877	Trench down the W side of house	N	10/3/11
73	-	-	-	-	878	Trench down the W side of house	N	10/3/11
74	-	-	-	-	879	Trench down the W side of house	N	10/3/11
75	-	-	-	-	880	Excavation down W side of house	N	10/3/11
76	-	-	-	-	881	Excavation down W side of house	N	10/3/11
77	-	-	-	-	882	Excavation down W side of house	N	10/3/11
78	-	-	-	-	883	Excavation down W side of house	N	10/3/11
79	-	-	-	-	884	House from the W	W	10/3/11
80	-	-	-	-	885	House from the W	W	10/3/11

Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Sheet No.	Area/ Trench	Drawing Type	Scale	Description	Drawer	Date
001	001	Garage	Section	1:10	SSE facing section of sediments	KP	24/11/08
002	001	Garage	Section	1:10	ENE facing section of sediments	KP	24/11/08

Finds Register

Find No.	Area/ Trench	Context No.	Material Type	Description	Excavator	Date
1	Garage	001	Ceramic	1x ceramic tile fragment	KP	24/11/08
2	Garage	003	Mortar	1x mortar fragment	KP	24/11/08
3	Garage	003	Ceramic	1x ceramic fragment	KP	24/11/08

Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	East Ayrshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Sornhill, Galston, Ayrshire
PROJECT CODE:	08054
PARISH:	Galston
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Alan Matthews
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rathmell Archaeology Limited
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Monitoring
NMRS NO(S):	Sornhill Farm NS53SW 3
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Sornhill Farm HB Number 13829
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NS 511 341
START DATE (this season)	24 th November 2008
END DATE (this season)	10 th March 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	An archaeological watching brief at Sornhill Farm, to the south of Galston was carried in two stages and included excavation for the placement of services around the main house as well as the placement of foundations for a garage. No significant archaeological material was observed during the course of the archaeological works and the only anthropic material observed was that relating to 19 th or 20th century use of the site.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr Haddow
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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