# 8-10 Vennel Street, Stewarton, East Ayrshire: Archaeological Mitigation

Data Structure Report

by Louise Turner

issued 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2010



## 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 of Field Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct.

	Louise Turner		
Signed	<i>Y</i>	Date	19 <sup>th</sup> July, 2010

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

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Checkea			Date	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2010

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#### Introduction

- 1. A programme of archaeological works was required by Travis Homes in respect to the refurbishment of 8-10 Vennel Street, Stewarton, East Ayrshire. The archaeological works are designed to mitigate the impact on the archaeological remains within the development area to the agreement of East Ayrshire Council.
- 2. The development site incorporates the footprint and associated backland area to the rear of a late nineteenth century former granary building, which forms part of a larger complex called the Commercial Buildings which sit at the junction between Vennel Street and Main Street in the town of Stewarton, East Ayrshire.
- 3. East Ayrshire Council required an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken as a condition of the granted planning consent (09/0598/PP). The West of Scotland Archaeology Service, who advise the planning authority on archaeological matters, has provided guidance on the structure of archaeological works required on this site.
- 4. Rathmell Archaeology Limited were appointed by Travis Homes to undertake the development and implementation of an archaeological watching brief during all groundbreaking works at 8-10 Vennel Street, Stewarton, as per the terms of the agreed Method Statement (Rees 2010).
- 5. This Data Structure Report presents the findings of the archaeological mitigation carried out on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2010; the mitigation consisted of archaeological monitoring of all groundbreaking works.

#### Archaeological and Historical Background

- 6. The development area lies in the southern portion of the town of Stewarton, itself thought to be a comparatively modern development with its origins in the early post-medieval period.
- 7. Human occupation in the area, does, however, date back much further, with evidence of activity evidenced in the parish to at least as far back as the Bronze Age. Cairn Duff, the remnants of which survive to the south of the town, represents a Bronze Age burial cairn, and it has been suggested that Law Mount, once thought to be the site of a medieval motte-and-bailey castle, may instead represent a much earlier prehistoric monument.
- 8. The antiquarian John Smith also notes finds of polished stone axeheads of Neolithic date from Fulwood and Stacklawhill (Smith, 1895), both located within the parish, with a significant discovery of a hoard of Late Bronze Age sheet bronze shields having been recovered at Lugtonridge, in the nearby parish of Beith.
- 9. The lands of Stewarton are first mentioned in the twelfth century, when they were granted to Hugh De Morville, who then bestowed them on his vassal Godfrey de Ross. By 1283, they were granted to John Stewart, Earl of Buchan, and his wife Elizabeth de Douglas. The Douglas connection appears to have been curtailed in the reign of James II, when the 'Black Douglases' fell out of favour with the King and had many of their lands forfeited, substantially reducing their power and influence. Their Stewarton lands were then granted to the Humes.
- 10. Stewarton remained with the Humes until the reign of James IV. Supporters of James IV at the Battle of Sauchieburn in 1488, the Humes sold the Stewarton lands in 1506 to another local figure who achieved great success at this time: Hugh, Lord Montgomery, soon to become the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Eglinton. This established a connection with the Montgomerie family which was to last several hundred years.
- 11. Throughout much of this period, the Montgomeries were engaged in a feud with another prominent local family, the Cunninghames, which culminated in the murder of the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Eglinton in 1585. This assassination was aided and abetted by the Cunninghame spouse of the Montgomerie Laird of the Lainshaw lands near Stewarton.
- 12. Following this incident, relations between the two warring factions were no doubt frosty, but by 1630 the bonnet makers of Stewarton had appointed Sir Alexander Cunninghame

of Corsehill as the 'Deacon Heritable'. Cunninghame must have been an acceptable choice to the local Montgomeries: moreover, his appointment to this office indicates that there must have been a settlement established by this time, and one which was already becoming a focus for bonnet weaving. The bonnet makers have themselves left an important record of their presence in the form of a minute book. This details the business transacted at meetings held either in Stewarton itself or at the Bonnet Court of Corsehill between the years of 1666 and 1773.

- 13. It was during this period that one of Stewarton's most prominent sons was born, apparently at the Cross, i.e. in close proximity to the development area. This was David Dale, a weaver who achieved great success in large-scale textile manufacturing operations and was later to found the mills at New Lanark (Bannatyne Steven, 1834-43). He was the father-in-law of Robert Owen, the renowned social reformer.
- 14. The first mapping evidence to show the area in any detail is William Roy's Military Map of 1747-55. By this time, Vennel Street has been laid out on plan and the street frontages have already been built upon. However, there is no indication of intensive land use in the backland areas of the plots now occupied by the late nineteenth century Commercial Buildings complex.
- 15. In 1778, the Montgomeries were forced to sell their Stewarton and Lainshaw lands for financial reasons. The buyer was a Cunninghame William Cunninghame, the renowned Tobacco Lord who is well-known for having built the former townhouse in Exchange Square, Glasgow, which now houses the Gallery of Modern Art.
- 16. Throughout this period, Stewarton continued to flourish and expand. Maxwell noted in the 1791-9 Old Statistical Account, that Stewarton was famed for its French or Quebec hats. However, by the time Bannatyne Steven was writing for the New Statistical Account of 1834-43, he recorded that virtually all regimental bonnets and caps were made in the town, with more than 50 families employed in bonnet manufacture.
- 17. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map of 1858 shows that by this time, the backlands area to the rear of Vennel Street has become increasingly built up in the intervening years. There is in particular a single large structure occupying the corner of Main Street and Vennel Street. Marked as a 'Public House' on large scale maps of the town, this appears to be much larger on plan than the late nineteenth century structure which currently occupies the site. It extends to the rear of the adjoining property, which itself comprises two adjoining properties.
- 18. The public house shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition map, which occupies much of the corner between Main Street and Vennel Street appears to remain extant until at least 1910. However, the adjacent properties in Vennel Street are replaced by a single building at some point in the late nineteenth century. This represents the 2-storey, 5-bay granary which is currently being subject to restoration. A rare surviving example of a town granary, this structure once formed part of a larger complex (perhaps partially occupying the former public house?) known as the Commercial Buildings. These were owned by Thomas Young & Sons, Thomas Young being a former provost of the town (Information derived from Scottish Ministers Statutory List).



Fig. 1a: Roy's Military Map (1747-55) Showing the Town of Stewarton

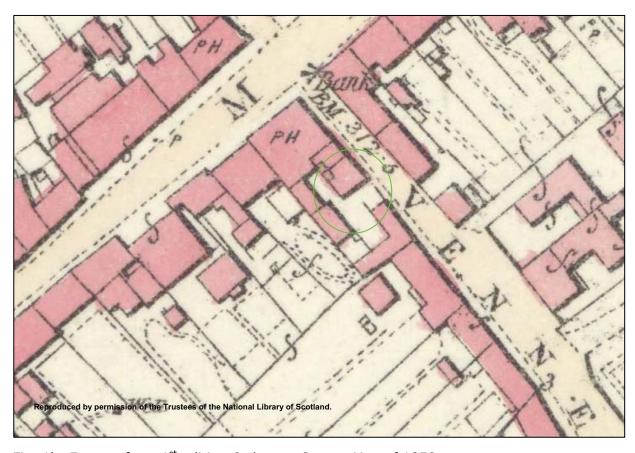


Fig. 1b: Excerpt from 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1858

#### **Project Works**

- 19. The programme of works was carried out on the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2010 (Fig. 2) in the form of archaeological monitoring of all ground breaking works as described in the Method Statement (Rees 2010) and agreed with East Ayrshire Council.
- 20. Some groundbreaking works had already taken place without the presence of an archaeologist on site. The results were inspected on an earlier site visit carried out by Rees on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2010, during which nothing of archaeological significance was found.
- 21. The remainder of the works comprised the reduction of a substantial area lying to the rear of the late nineteenth century building (Fig. 3a) to the level of the natural subsoil. These were carried out with an archaeologist in attendance.
- 22. Any exposed features were investigated to determine their archaeological significance. All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

### Findings: Monitoring

- 23. Excavation works were undertaken using a 14 ton 360° tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. A rectangular area measuring approximately 16m by 16m in extent was exposed, with an additional deeper strip trench being sunk over the length of the central area in order to remove a buried service pipe of nineteenth century date. This central trench formed a line of demarcation, with the areas to the east and the west displaying very different characteristics.
- 24. The eastern half revealed *in situ* topsoil (001), which reached a depth of 0.5m in places. This was very loose and humic in character, suggesting that it had been subject to regular intensive cultivation until fairly recent times (perhaps subject to double-digging). There were numerous finds of modern glass and pottery, including sherds of blue-and-white transfer-printed white glazed earthenware and more modern ceramic types such as kitchen and bathroom tiles. There were some dumps of demolition debris (006) in places this comprised fragments of blonde sandstone (Fig. 3b). This material appeared to be contained within the topsoil, which suggests that this may have been redistributed over the site in the past, or the even the existing topsoil augmented with imported material in order to improve the quality of the soil here. The topsoil directly overlay a compact pink-brown subsoil (002).
- 25. By contrast, the western half comprised a modern layer of Type 1 (003) 0.2m deep which directly overlay very compact, dirty pink-brown silty clay (004) with frequent coal flecks. This occurred at a similar level to the undisturbed natural (002) described above, and is interpreted as being a heavily disturbed natural surface. This was probably exposed during earlier works on the site (perhaps contemporary with the demolition or even the construction of earlier buildings on the site), and left discoloured and disturbed as a result. Running from NE to SW across this area were a series of parallel negative features (context nos. (013), (014), (015), and (016), each measuring 0.3m in width). These were only faintly visible on plan in certain light conditions and could not be seen in section. They are concentrated only in the western portion and may represent the lines of earlier drains.
- 26. At least four stretches of wall footings were uncovered across the extent of the site. Three of these, (005) (Fig. 4a), (007) (Fig. 4b) and (011) (Fig. 5a) comprised squared rubble blocks of blond sandstone. There were no traces of mortar, but since these appear to represent buried founds, this omission can be interpreted as insignificant.
- 27. Walls (005) and (007) each overlay salt-glazed earthenware drainpipes of nineteenth century date, and abutted one another. They could conceivably have represented adjoining walls of the same building, though it is possible that (007) functioned also as a boundary wall. Wall (011) continued on the same course as that followed by the upstanding garden wall which forms the rear of the adjacent house plot.

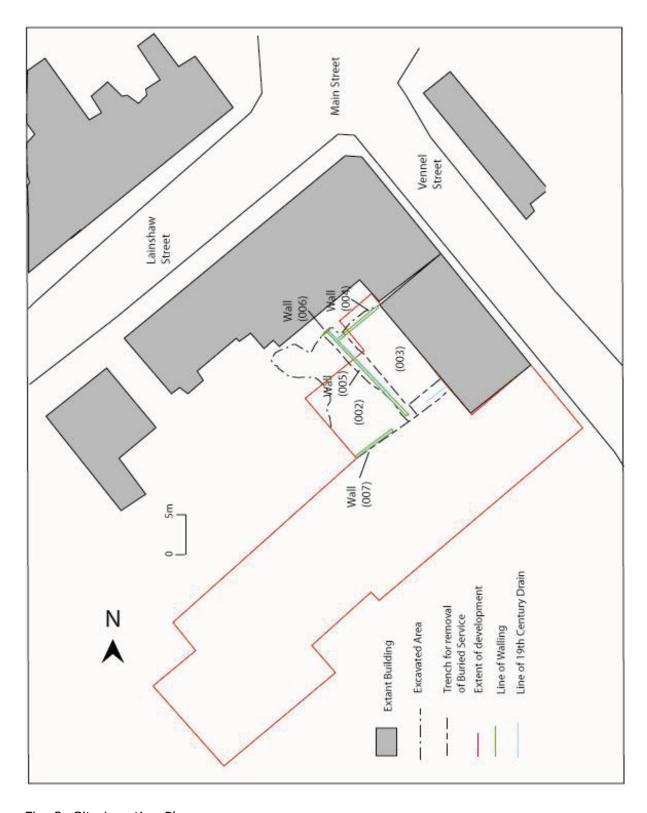


Fig. 2: Site Location Plan



Fig. 3a: View Showing Rear of Late  $19^{\text{th}}$  Century Granary Prior to Ground Reduction



Fig. 3b: SW Facing Section, NE Corner, Showing Topsoil (001) Over Sandstone Rubble



Fig. 4a: Wall (004) Running NE-SW From Rear of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Granary (?Structure)



Fig. 4b: Line of 19<sup>th</sup> century Wall (005) Running NW – SE (?Former Boundary Wall)



Fig. 5a: Line of Wall (007) Running NE-SW (?Former Boundary at Rear of Plot)



Fig. 5b: View along Line of Wall (005) & Underlying Drain, with Revetment Wall (012) to Left

28. Wall (012) was the best preserved of all these structural elements, surviving to a height of 0.6m (Fig. 5b). It was very roughly built, comprising an unmortared rubble face. Its survival appears to be related to the fact that it is still functioning as a revetment and helping to support a level patio area to the rear of the extant house/shop structure which currently occupies the site. Again, its late date was attested by the fact that it overlay a salt-glazed earthenware drainpipe. It may have formed a revetment wall for a semi-subterranean structure such as a coal cellar which was associated with one of the earlier properties which occupied the site.

#### Discussion

- 29. While the excavations revealed no features of archaeological significance, there was plenty of evidence for earlier occupation of the site in terms of structural remains. In particular, there were three lengths of sandstone walling (005), (007) and (011), which in two instances overlay lengths of salt-glazed earthenware drainpipe, of probable nineteenth century date.
- 30. Wall (005) followed a similar alignment to the N wall of the late nineteenth century building, which appeared to overlie it, and it therefore must be a precursor of this structure. However, this feature itself overlay a salt-glazed drainpipe, so it must be of nineteenth century date or later. It therefore seems likely to represent the rear wall of an earlier building, probably that of the public house shown on the historic mapping.
- 31. Wall (007) ran perpendicular to (005). It was not clear whether both walls formed part of a larger structure, or whether they were abutting. However, it seemed likely that (007) once formed a boundary wall dividing the yard to the rear of the granary from an adjacent, domestic property. This may have post-dated the public house structure, though it is also possible that it employed the footings of an extant wall which once formed part of the now-demolished public house as a means of defining the backland plot.
- 32. These different uses manifested themselves in markedly different soil profiles. To the east, in the area which remained a private garden, there was deep topsoil (001), which reached a depth of 0.5m in places, and which appeared to have been thoroughly worked in the intervening century. This mostly overlay clean, undisturbed subsoil (002), though localised deposits of sandstone rubble (006) suggested that some of the topsoil had been imported and used to bury demolition debris from an earlier structure, probably material derived from wall (005) or wall (007). In the western area, by contrast, a layer of hard standing (003) directly overlay a dirty, coal-flecked subsoil (004) which appeared to have been subject to earlier exposure and disturbance.
- 33. The findings were therefore consistent with intensive land use in the backland area throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The artefactual evidence reflected this in part, in that numerous sherds of glazed white earthenware were recovered from the topsoil in the former garden area. One surprising observation was, however, the lack of clay tobacco pipe fragments from a site that once functioned as a public house. This may be further indication that topsoil (001) was imported onto the site following the demolition of the public house. The fact that the topsoil overlay and incorporated some demolition debris, similar in character to the upstanding wall footings, also supports this possibility.

#### Recommendations

- 34. The archaeological monitoring works comprised the monitoring of topsoil stripping from a roughly rectangular area, measuring approximately 16m by 16m in extent, which lay to the rear of the extant late nineteenth century granary building which is the focus of current renovation works.
- 35. The purpose of the archaeological works was to determine the nature, form and extent of the archaeological resource within those areas adversely impacted upon by the development according to the Method Statement (Rees 2010).

- 36. No significant archaeology was observed within those areas adversely impacted upon by the development, with all physical remains identified clearly associated with nineteenth and twentieth century activities on the site, in particular the intensive development of the backland area attested to by historic mapping evidence. Hence, within the area monitored we recommend that no further archaeological work is appropriate.
- 37. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with East Ayrshire Council and their advisers, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

#### Conclusion

- 38. A programme of archaeological works was carried out on behalf of Travis Homes, in respect to a proposed development at 8-10 Vennel Street, Stewarton. The work entailed archaeological monitoring of the application area during the stripping of topsoil in the area lying to the rear of a late nineteenth century town granary which is currently subject to renovation. The archaeological works were designed to mitigate the impact on the archaeological remains within the development area.
- 39. No significant archaeological deposits were revealed. There was ample evidence, however, in the form of buried wall footings, of earlier structures which had occupied the site in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These represented structures shown on historic mapping of the area. All the anthropic material recovered indicated modern use of the site. As a result, no further works are recommended.

#### References

Bannatyne Steven, 1834-45. The Parish of Stewarton. In *The New Statistical Accounts of Scotland* Volume 5, pp. 727-740

Maxwell, T, 1791-99. The Parish of Stewarton. In *The Statistical Accounts of Scotland* Volume 9, pp. 377-381.

Ordnance Survey, 1857, 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:2500 (Ayrshire)

Rees, T, 2010. 8-10 Vennel Street, Stewarton, East Ayrshire: Archaeological Watching Brief Unpublished Method Statement, Rathmell Archaeology Ltd.

Roy, 1747-55, Military Survey of Scotland

Smith, J. 1895. Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire (London)

## 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.	Area/ Trench	Туре	Description	Interpretation
001	Eastern half	Deposit	Loose, black humic silty sand up to 0.5m deep. Occasional fragments of modern ceramic (blue & white transfer-printed pottery, modern kitchen/bathroom tiles)	Former garden, under regular cultivation until fairly recent times.
002	Eastern half	Deposit	Compact pink-brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of small stones (up to 0.05 x 0.06m in extent) and occasional flecks of manganese.	Natural subsoil
003	Western half	Deposit	Whinstone chips (Type 1) 0.2m deep.	Laid as base material or hard standing, of modern date.
004	Western half	Deposit	Very compact pink-brown silty clay, with few inclusions of small stones 0.06 x 0.05m in extent and frequent flecks of coal. Similar to (002), but darker in colour, with more blackish hue.	Disturbed natural subsoil.
005	Western half	Structure	Wall footing, one course high, composed of squared rubble blonde sandstone blocks and running in NW-SE alignment. Overlies a salt-glazed service pipe and appears to run beneath late nineteenth century granary building.	Early-mid nineteenth century wall, perhaps represented wall of former public house shown on Ordnance Survey mapping.
006	Eastern Half	Deposit	Concentration of crushed blonde sandstone, localised in NW corner adjacent to walls (005) and (007), and underlying topsoil in this location.	Demolition debris, probably representing remains of (005)
007	Centre of Site		Wall footing of squared blonde sandstone, upstanding to 3 courses at NE corner. Runs perpendicular to (005) but not clear if it abuts or forms uniform build. Overlies nineteenth century salt-glazed service pipe.	Either rear wall of structure, or – more likely – former boundary wall defining rear of property.
008	Western Half	Cut	Trench for nineteenth century service pipe. Filled with compact black silty clay, with numerous finds of glazed white earthenware and a salt-glazed earthenware pipe. Underlies	Early to mid nineteenth century service pipe.

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Туре	Description	Interpretation
			(007)	
009	All	Deposit	Compact grey silty-clay, occasional inclusion of small rounded stones.	Natural subsoil.
010	Eastern Half	Deposit	Medium compact, red-brown sand.	Natural subsoil.
011	Eastern Half	Structure	Line of walling, composed of squared blonde sandstone.  Measures 0.6m in extent and runs for distance of 7m in a NW- SE alignment. Does not seem to adjoin (007), perhaps due to recent destruction	Rear boundary wall of former backland plot.
012	Central Area	Structure	In situ wall built of unworked sandstone rubble, standing up to 0.6m high and overlying a salt-glazed earthenware pipe.	Revetment wall of nineteenth century building, now used to support a modern patio.
013	Western Half	Cut	Narrow linear feature, running NE-SW, parallel to wall (005). Filled with very compact grey-pink silty clay.	Line of earlier drain.
014	Western Half	Cut	Narrow linear feature, running NE-SW, parallel to wall (005). Filled with very compact grey-pink silty clay.	Line of earlier drain.
015	Western Half	Cut	Narrow linear feature, running NE-SW, parallel to wall (005). Filled with very compact grey-pink silty clay.	Line of earlier drain.
016	Western Half	Cut	Narrow linear feature, running NE-SW, parallel to wall (005). Filled with very compact grey-pink silty clay.	Line of earlier drain.

## Photographic Register

Image	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
No.	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
01	1	1	-	-	1	General View, Pre-excavation	NW	28/05/10
02	1	2	-	-	2	General View, Pre-excavation	N	28/05/10

Image			Slide		Digital	Digital Description	From	Date
No.	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
03	1	3	-	-	3	General View, Pre-excavation	SE	28/05/10
04	1	4	-	-	4	General View, Pre-Excavation	S	28/05/10
05	1	5	-	-	5	General View, Pre-excavation, From Rear of Plot	NW	28/05/10
06	1	6	-	-	6	Rear of Late Nineteenth century Granary Building	N	28/05/10
07	1	7	-	-	7	View Showing SE-Elevation of Outbuilding	SE	28/05/10
08	1	8	-	-	8	End Wall (SW End) of Outbuilding	S	28/05/10
09	1	9	-	-	9	Eastern Portion of Site, Stripped to Subsoil	NW	28/05/10
10	1	10	-	-	10	As above	SE	28/05/10
11	1	11	-	-	11	Line of Wall (005)	NE	28/05/10
12	1	12	-	-	12	Line of Wall (007)	S	28/05/10
13	1	13	-	-	13	Section 1 (NW Facing)	NW	28/05/10
14	1	14	-	-	14	Western Portion of Site, Stripped to Subsoil	SE	28/05/10
15	1	15	-	-	15	Track sunk to remove Nineteenth Century Drain	NE	28/05/10
16	1	16	-	-	16	Western Portion of Site, Stripped to Subsoil	W	28/05/10
17	1	17	-	-	17	Buried Walling (012)	NW	20/05/10
18	1	18	-	-	18	Central track dug to remove Nineteenth Century Drain	NW	28/05/10
19	1	19	-	-	19	As above	Е	28/05/10
20	1	20	-	-	20	Additional stripping, SE Corner	NW	28/05/10
21	1	21	-	-	21	NW-Facing Section (Section 2)	NW	28/05/10
22	1	22	-	-	22	NE-Facing Section, Central Track for Drain (Section 3)	NE	28/05/10
23	1	23	-	-	23	General View of Structural Elements (Walls (005) and (007)	NW	28/05/10
24	1	24	-	-	24	General View, Post-excavation	S	28/05/10

Image	_		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
No.	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
25	1	25	-	-	25	General View, Post-Excavation	Е	28/05/10
26	1	26-	-	-	26	General View, Post-Excavation	N	28/05/10
27	1	27	-	-	27	General View, Post-excavation	W	28/05/10
28	1	28	-	-	28	Wall (011)	SW	28/05/10
29	1	29	-	-	29	As above	SW	28/05/10
30	1	30	-	-	30	Wall (011) in Wider Landscape Context	S	28/05/10
31	1	31	-	-	31	Outbuilding, NE End	Е	28/05/10
32	1	32	-	-	32	General View, Post-Excavation	NW	28/05/10
33	1	33	-	-	33	General View, NE-SW Track to Rear of Nineteenth Century Granary Building	NE	28/05/10
34	1	34	-	-	34	General View, Central Track for removal of Nineteenth Century Drain	NNW	28/05/10

## Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Sheet No.	Area/ Trench	Drawing Type	Scale	Description	Drawn By	Date
1	1	Site	Plan	1:100	Site layout	CLT	20/05/10

## Appendix 2: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	East Ayrshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	8-10 Vennel Street, Stewarton
PROJECT CODE:	10034
PARISH:	Stewarton
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Louise Turner
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, 6 figures)	NS 419 457
START DATE (this season)	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2010
END DATE (this season)	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2010
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	An archaeological watching brief was carried on the site of a proposed development which focussed upon the restoration of a late 19 <sup>th</sup> century granary building, which once formed part of the Commercial Buildings, owned by Thomas Young and Son.
	Nothing of archaeological significance was found, but the remains of three walls and a stone revetment were identified. The walls were of blonde sandstone, and in two instances overlay salt-glazed earthenware drain pipes. They followed similar alignments to the modern buildings and land boundaries which remains extant in the vicinity, and are likely to represent the remains of earlier 19 <sup>th</sup> century structures shown on historic mapping of the area.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Travis Homes
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 West of Scotland Archaeology Service and archive to National Monuments Record of Scotland.

#### **Contact Details**

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