

A77 Pedestrian bridge, Corton, Ayr: Archaeological Evaluation Data Structure Report

AOC 22362
2nd July 2015



ARCHAEOLOGY

| HERITAGE

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A77 Pedestrian bridge, Corton, Ayr: Archaeological Evaluation Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: **Geddes Consulting**
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17 Bernard Street
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National Grid Reference (NGR): NS 34898 18274

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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Abstract

AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Geddes Consulting, on behalf of their client, to undertake a programme of archaeological works at Corton, Ayr. The areas evaluated comprised a plot of land to the NE of the junction where the A77 and A79 meet as well as an area directly across the A77 that was formerly excluded from previous evaluation works due to the presence of otters.

Eight linear trenches totalling 730 m² were excavated throughout the two areas. No archaeological features or artefacts were encountered throughout the evaluation.

The railway embankment next to the road junction was also recorded where it had been previously disturbed and partly excavated. The embankment consists of over 3 m of orange clay and stone, and contains ceramic tile field drainage throughout. The clay has then been overlain by up to 1 m of imported topsoil with an abundance of trees and bushes growing over the entire structure.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Geddes Consulting, on behalf of their client, to undertake an archaeological evaluation prior to the construction of a pedestrian bridge linking a proposed new residential development with Maybole Road at Corton, Ayr, South Ayrshire. The proposed development lies within the administrative area of South Ayrshire Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS). A programme of archaeological works had been specified by WoSAS in keeping with the policies outlined in *Scottish Planning Policy (2010)* and *PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology (2011)* in order to record the extent and significance of any archaeological remains which may be present within the development area.

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The development area lies on the south eastern edge of the town of Ayr, South Ayrshire, centred on NGR: NS 34898 18274 (Figure 1). The development areas consist of two rectangular pieces of land either side of the A77 where it meets the A79 (Maybole Road). An upstanding but derelict farm building exists in the NW area which is bounded by a 19th century railway embankment to the NW, the A77 to the SE and the A79 to the SW. The SE area is contained within a former pasture field that extends to the SE, SW and NE and is bounded by the A77 to the NW.

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 A Desk-Based Assessment of the development areas was conducted in January 2015 (AOC Archaeologyb). A summary of the findings and area background is given below.

1.3.2 An archaeological evaluation partially within the SE development area, was conducted by Headland in 2010, identifying various features including three possible concentrations of settlement with boundary and enclosure ditches and remains of possible structures in the form of pits and postholes. A single posthole produced four prehistoric pottery sherds and a pitchstone bladelet, indicating the existence of prehistoric features within or in very close proximity to the development area. Subsequent excavation within an element of Headland's evaluation area identified two structures, one certainly an Iron Age roundhouse and the other most likely also of Iron Age date (in spite of contrary radiocarbon dating evidence) as well as a Neolithic pit (Headland Archaeology 2010).

1.3.3 No other prehistoric or later period features are noted within the development areas. The earliest map to show the area in any detail is the Military Survey by Roy of 1747-55. This shows settlement associated with fields at 'Glengaw', High Glengall and 'High Courtown' and 'Low Courtown'. Both Laigh Glengall and High Glengall are recorded on estate maps of 1774 and 1804 respectively, which accord with the farms visible on later, Ordnance Survey mapping.

1.3.4 The First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping, surveyed in 1856-7 shows the development area as open ground, with the exception of Maybole Road (A79) which is shown in its current location and a field boundary which is shown running south-east to north-west along the current course of the A77. The Second Edition shows no changes within the development area.

1.3.5 The railway line and embankment for the Maidens & Dunure Light Railway that bounds the NW edge of the NW area is constructed in the early 20th century and is shown on the 1908 Ordnance Survey.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- i)* to determine and assess the character, extent, condition, quality, date and significance of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area;
- ii)* should significant archaeological deposits be discovered, to prepare a mitigation strategy compliant with *Scottish Planning Policy* (Scottish Government 2010) and *Planning and Archaeology 2/2011* (Scottish Government 2011).
- iii)* a programme of recording is required of the remains of a 19th century railway embankment which crosses the site.

3 METHOD

3.1 The *Written Scheme of Investigation* (AOC 2015a) proposed the excavation of trenches equating to 900 m², a 10% sample of the development area. However, due to the presence of hard standing, the upstanding building and services surrounding the NW development area, this total was reduced. Furthermore, a 10 m wide buffer to the SE of the upstanding building was put in place due to the instability of the structure.

3.2 All trenches were excavated with a JCB 3CX wheeled excavator using a 1.8 m wide ditching bucket. The trench details are summarised in Appendix 1. Machine excavation was conducted in shallow units/spits through topsoil/overburden to the upper surface of the underlying geological deposits. The evaluation trial trenching was undertaken according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard operating procedures as detailed within the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (AOC 2015).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Evaluation

4.1.1 The works were conducted between 25th and 26th June 2015. The weather conditions during the evaluation were variable, but overall archaeological visibility was good. In total, eight evaluation trenches were excavated covering 730 m² (Figure 2).

4.1.2 The soil profile across the SE development area comprised a thin layer of topsoil between 0.30 m and 0.40 m in depth, overlying a combination of yellow clay and orange sandy clay and stone (Plate 1). Ceramic field drains were noted in places with plough scarring evident throughout the majority of the site.

4.1.3 In the NW development area, the soil profile consisted of 0.15 m to 0.55 m of clay, soil and wood chips covering a topsoil averaging 0.30 m in depth (Plate 2). The underlying geological deposits were similar to the SE development area, consisting of clays and sandy clays.

4.1.4 No archaeological features or artefacts were identified within either area.

4.2 Railway Embankment

- 4.2.1 From two recent excavations into the SE edge of the railway embankment (Plate 3) it was possible to conduct a summary recording of the embankments make-up material. Modern trees and shrubs that formerly lined the slope of and top of the embankment along the length of the future development had recently been cut down.
- 4.2.2 Under this vegetation there is up to 1 m of topsoil at the top of the embankment, decreasing to 0.5 m in thickness at the base of the slope. The topsoil was a greyish brown clay loam with an abundance of roots throughout. This overlay an orangey brown clay with frequent rounded and angular stone inclusions, with occasional lumps of grey clay throughout. Within this clay was a ceramic tile field drain approximately 1.5 m above current ground level and 3 m from the top of the embankment (Plate 4). The tile drain was aligned and sloping NW to SE, but no cut was evident in the cleaned section around it.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The evaluation has identified that the two development areas are archaeologically sterile. No further on-site works are considered necessary. This recommendation will require confirmation by WoSAS on behalf of South Ayrshire Council.

7 REFERENCES

AOC Archaeology 2015a *A77 Overbridge, Corton, South Ayrshire: Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation* AOC Archaeology Client Report

AOC Archaeology 2015b *A77 Pedestrian Bridge, South Ayrshire: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment* unpublished client report

Headland Archaeology 2010 '*Corton, Area A Evaluation and Strip, Map & Record Excavation, Interim Report*' (Dec 2010) unpublished client report

Scottish Government 2010 *Scottish Planning Policy*

Scottish Government 2011 *2/2011 Planning and Archaeology*.

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Plate 1 – Post excavation view of Trench 1



Plate 2 - Post excavation view of Trench 6



Plate 3 - General view of embankment cut

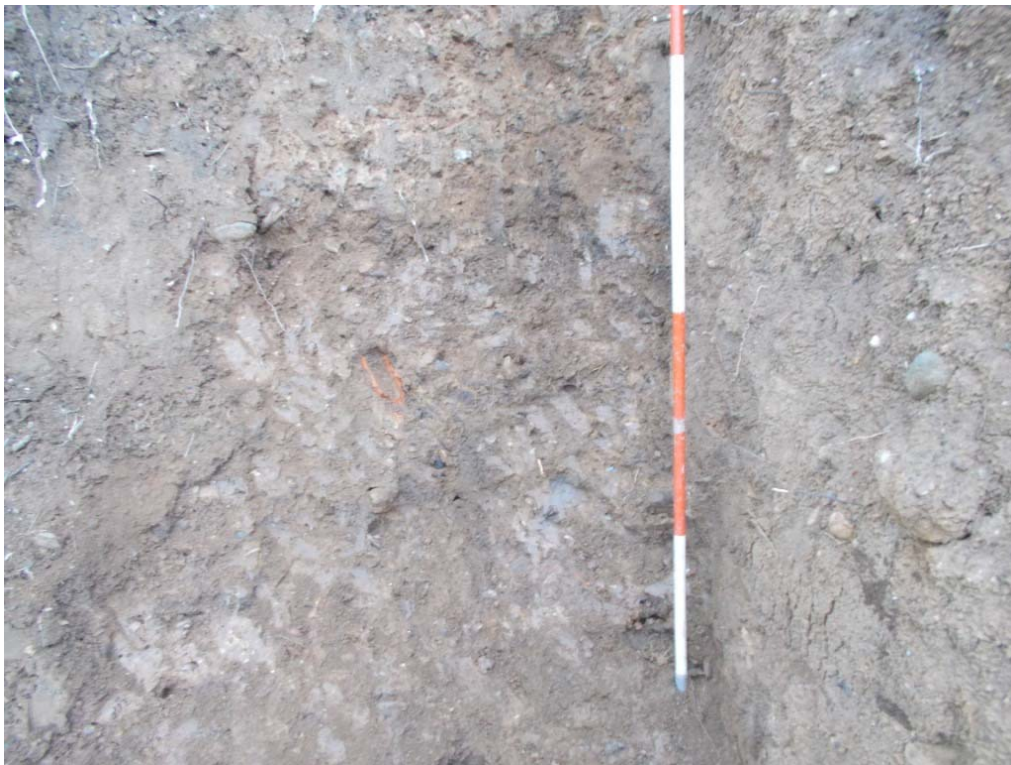


Plate 4 - Ceramic drain with embankment clay

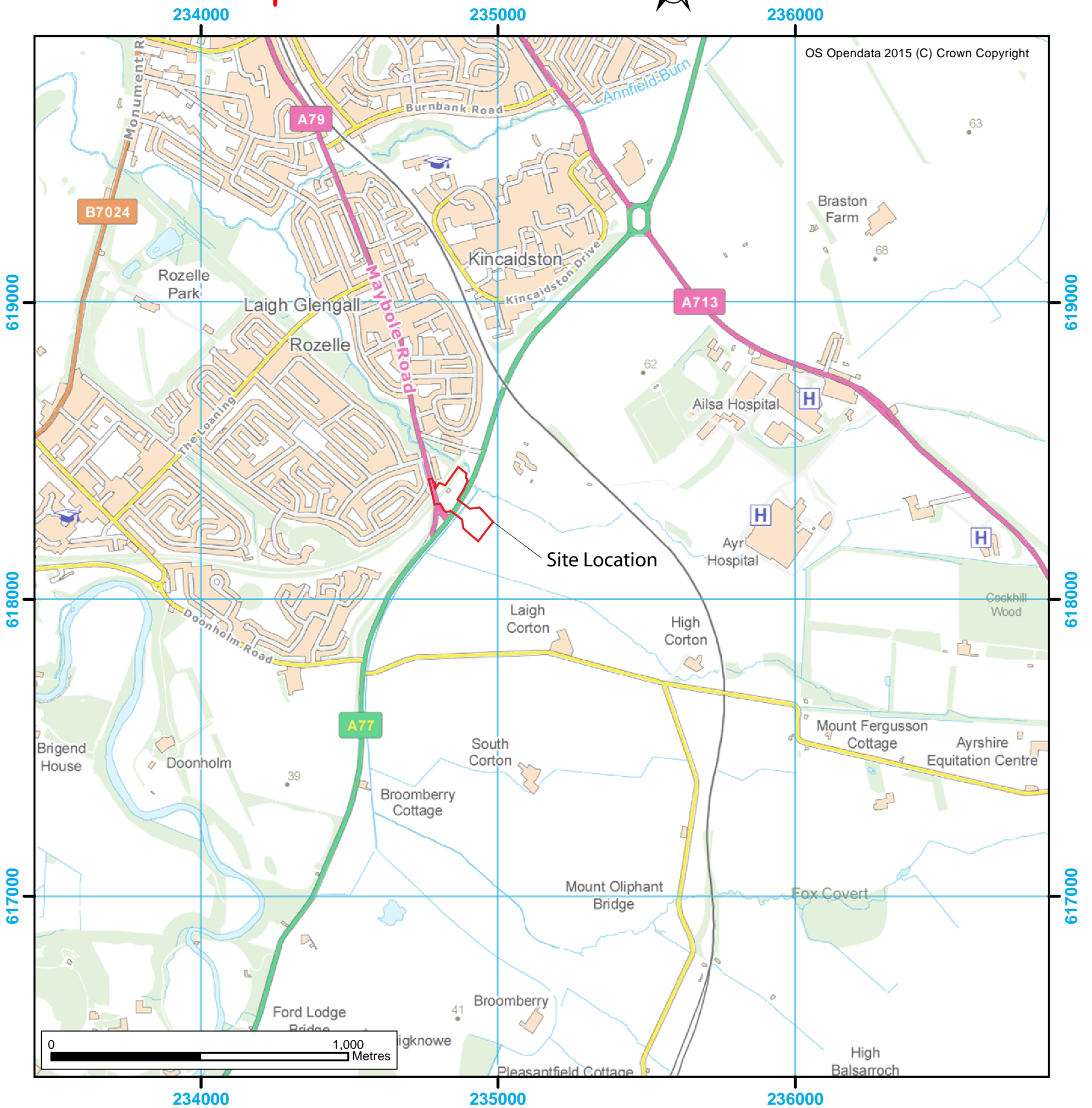
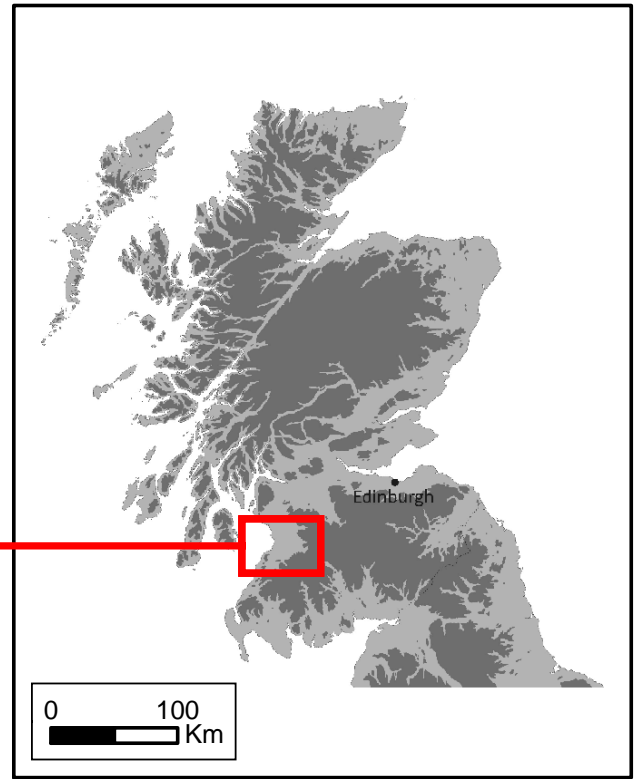
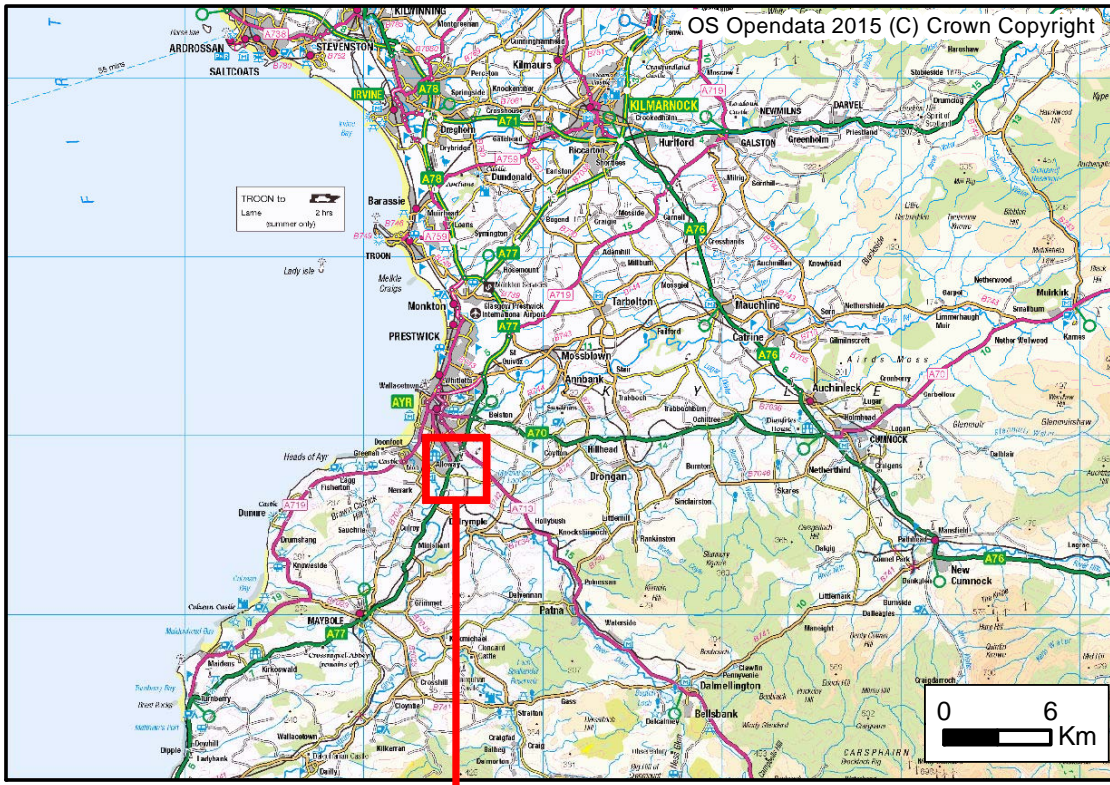
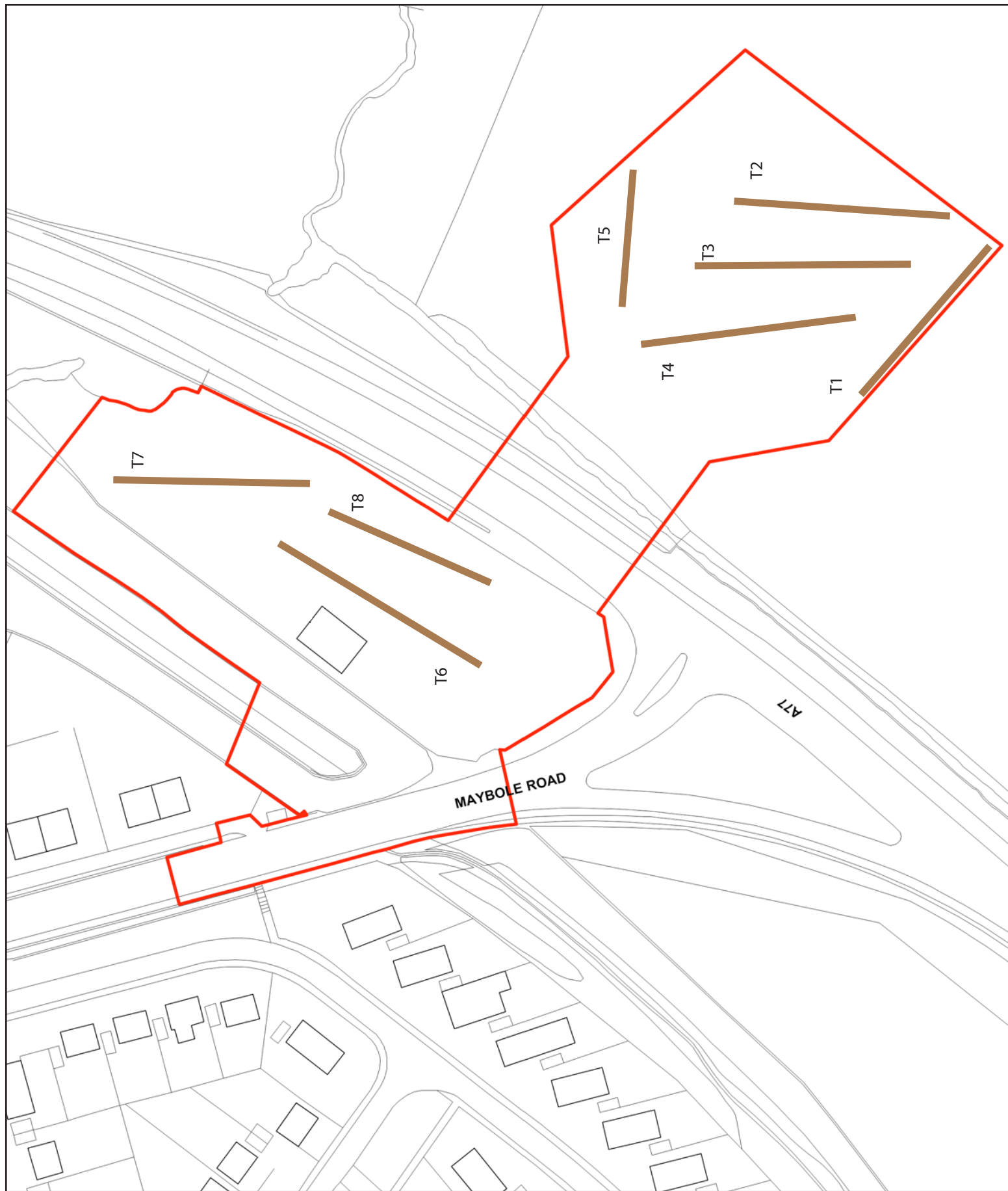


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

Figure 2 - Evaluation trench location plan

Development boundary

Evaluation trench



(Based on a drawing provided by the client)

A77 Pedestrian Bridge, Corton, Ayr: Archaeological Evaluation Data Structure Report

Section 2: Appendices

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

Trench 1

<i>Dimensions</i>	50 m by 1.8 m
<i>Total Area</i>	90 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	NW to SE
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Topsoil – mid brown clay loam – 0.4 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.4 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Orangey brown sandy clay and yellow clay
<i>Finds</i>	Burnt flint in topsoil

Trench 2

<i>Dimensions</i>	55 m by 1.8 m
<i>Total Area</i>	99 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	S to N
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Topsoil – mid brown clay loam – 0.33 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.33 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Orangey brown sandy clay and yellow clay
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 3

<i>Dimensions</i>	55 m by 1.8 m
<i>Total Area</i>	99 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	S to N
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Topsoil – mid brown clay loam – 0.33 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.33 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Orangey brown sandy clay and yellow clay
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 4

<i>Dimensions</i>	55 m by 1.8 m
<i>Total Area</i>	99 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	S to N
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Topsoil – mid brown clay loam – 0.39 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.39 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Orangey brown sandy clay and yellow clay
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 5

<i>Dimensions</i>	35 m by 1.8 m
<i>Total Area</i>	63 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	NW to SE

<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Topsoil – mid brown clay loam – 033 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.33 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Orangey brown sandy clay and yellow clay
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 6

<i>Dimensions</i>	60 m by 1.8 m
<i>Total Area</i>	108 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	SW to NE
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Made ground – Mixture of type 1 stone, purple and grey clay and wood chippings from recent tree removal – 0.3 m Topsoil – mid brown clay loam – 03 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.60 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Orangey brown sandy clay
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 7

<i>Dimensions</i>	50 m by 1.8 m
<i>Total Area</i>	90 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	N to S
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Made ground – clay loam with wood cuttings and some areas of type 1 stone at N end of trench – 0.55 m Topsoil – mid brown clay loam – 030 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.30 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Orangey brown sandy clay and yellow clay
<i>Finds</i>	None

Trench 8

<i>Dimensions</i>	45 m by 1.8 m
<i>Total Area</i>	81 m ²
<i>Excavated Orientation</i>	NE to SW
<i>Soil Make-up</i>	Topsoil – mid brown clay loam – 045 m
<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	0.45 m
<i>Significant Features</i>	None
<i>Other Features</i>	None
<i>Natural Subsoil</i>	Orangey brown sandy clay and yellow clay
<i>Finds</i>	None

APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Frame	Description	From	Date
1	View of railway embankment in NW area	S	26/6/15
2	View of building in NW area	SW	26/6/15
3-7	General views of NW area – pre-ex	Var	26/6/15
8-9	General views of SE area – pre-ex	Var	26/6/15
10	Plough scars in T1	NW	26/6/15
11	T1 post-ex	SE	26/6/15
12	T2 post-ex	S	26/6/15
13	T3 post-ex	N	26/6/15
14	T4 post-ex	N	26/6/15
15	T5 post-ex	NW	26/6/15
16	E facing section of embankment	E	27/6/15
17	S facing section of embankment	S	27/6/15
18	Detail view showing field drain	E	27/6/15
19	Topsoil on slope of embankment	S	27/6/15
20	Topsoil at top of embankment	E	27/6/15
21	View of embankment cuts	S	27/6/15
22	View along embankment	SW	27/6/15
23	View of top of embankment	SW	27/6/15
24	Made ground and rubbish in T6	SW	27/6/15
25	T6 Post-ex	NE	27/6/15
26	T7 post-ex	S	27/6/15
27	T8 post-ex	SW	27/6/15

APPENDIX 3: 'DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND' REPORT

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	South Ayrshire Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	A77 Pedestrian Bridge, Corton, Ayr
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 22362
PARISH:	Ayr
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Kevin Paton
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NS 34898 18274
START DATE (this season)	25 th June 2015
END DATE (this season)	26 th June 2015
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	Headland Archaeology Ltd (2010); AOC Archaeology Group (2012 & 2014)
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	<p>AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Geddes Consulting, on behalf of their client, to undertake a programme of archaeological works at Corton, Ayr. The areas evaluated comprised a plot of land to the NE of the junction where the A77 and A79 meet as well as an area directly across the A77 that was formerly excluded from previous evaluation works due to the presence of otters.</p> <p>Eight linear trenches totalling 730 m² were excavated throughout the two areas. No archaeological features or artefacts were encountered throughout the evaluation.</p> <p>The railway embankment next to the road junction was also recorded where it had been previously disturbed and partly excavated. The embankment consists of over 3 m of orange clay and stone, and contains ceramic tile field drainage throughout. The clay has then been overlain by up to 1 m of imported topsoil with an abundance of trees and bushes growing over the entire structure.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	n/a
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Geddes Consulting
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	AOC Archaeology Group; Edgefield Road Industrial Estate; Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SY
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ARCHIVE LOCATION	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



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