

# **BANFF CASTLE, CASTLE STREET BANFF ABERDEENSHIRE**



## **- Archaeological Watching Brief -**

Carried out 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010  
by  
**Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2010-26**  
by  
J C Murray

H K Murray BA, PhD, MIFA, FSA Scot  
J C Murray BA, MIFA, FSA Scot, FMA  
Hill of Belnagoak, Methlick, Ellon, Aberdeenshire AB41 7JN  
Telephone: (01651) 806394 e-mail: cmurray@btinternet.com

---

**BANFF CASTLE, CASTLE STREET  
BANFF  
ABERDEENSHIRE**

**- Archaeological Watching Brief -**

**J C Murray**

**1. Background**

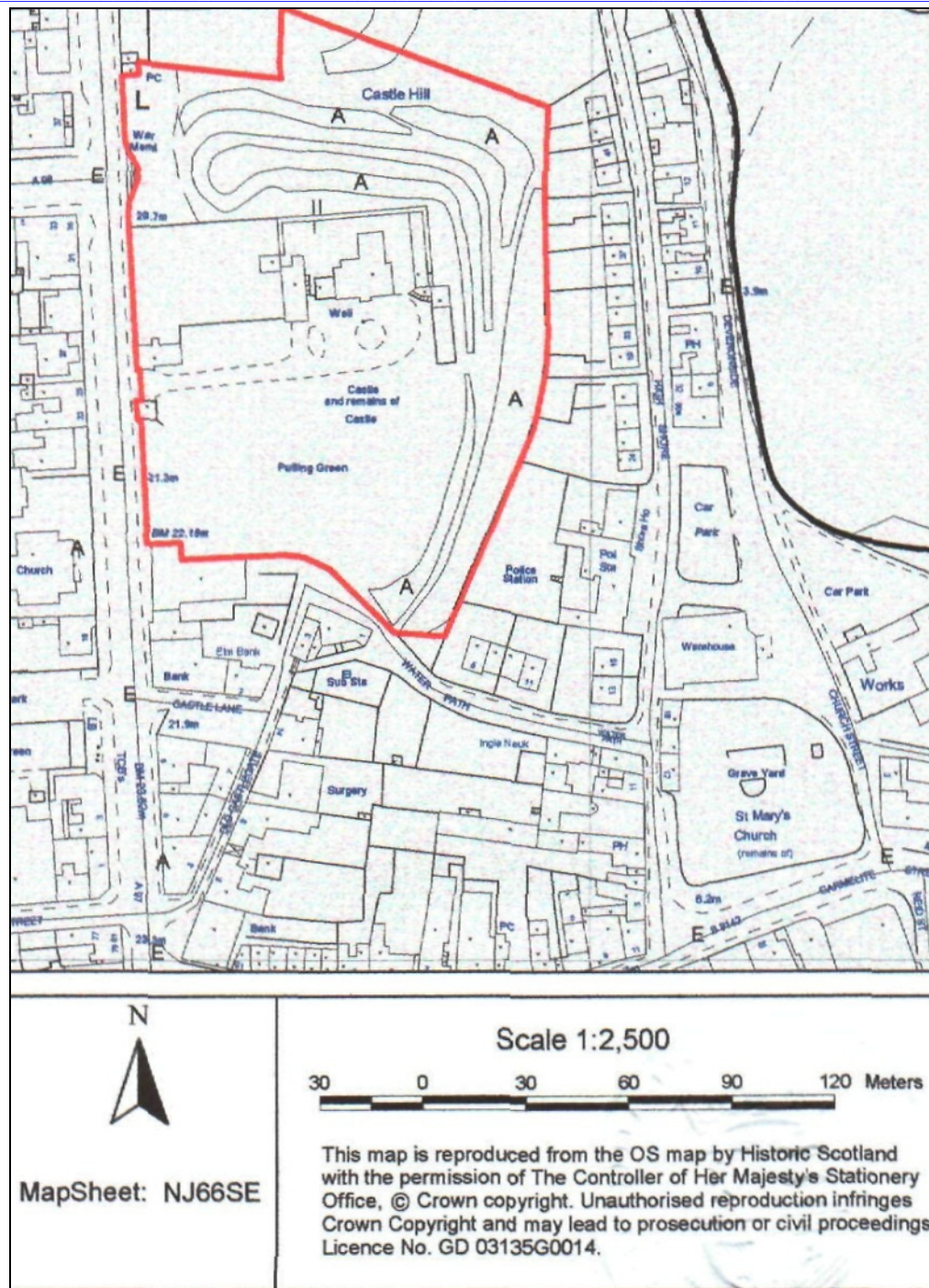
- 1.1 The need by Scottish Water to excavate a trench to find the location of a drain within the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Banff Castle, required that an archaeological watching brief be carried out during any ground disturbance.
- 1.2 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by Chap Civil Engineering Ltd, who carried out the work on behalf of Scottish Water, to carry out the watching brief, the field element of which was carried out on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

**2. The Site**

- 2.1 Little now remains of the late 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century castle of enclosure except the northern and eastern curtain walls and wide ditches and ramparts. Located on Castle Street, Banff [NGR: 68936 64201; NMRS No: NJ66SE 23.0: Parish: Banff], the site was scheduled as a Scheduled Ancient Monument in 2001, Index No. 2927 [see Illus.1, p.2].
- 2.2 The dry moat is in good preservation and has a maximum depth of 3.4m on the NW side. The trench excavated was located c.35m N of the northern curtain wall and NW of the moat and rampart [see Illus. 2, p.3]

**3. The Trench**

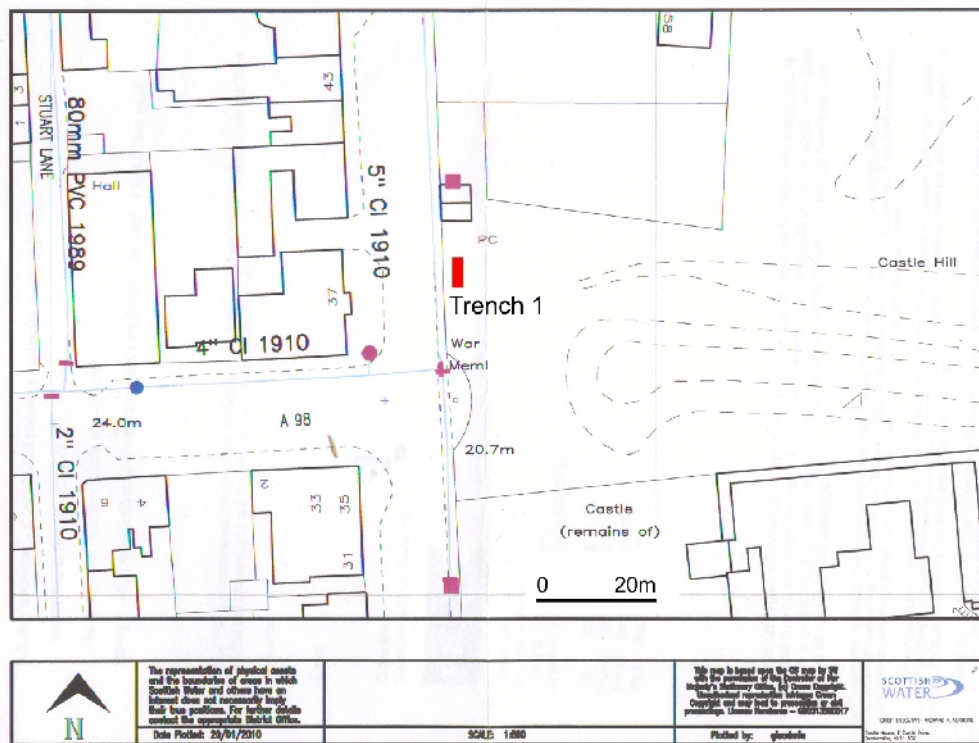
- 3.1 The trench excavated measured 5m long x 1.8m wide x c.1.9m deep. It ran N-S and lay a few metres E of the boundary wall separating the site from Castle Street [NGR: 6885 6425]. It was thought that locating it at this point, it would be possible to pick up the line of a blocked drain running E-W under the road from the N end of 37, Castle Street.
- 3.2 A layer of topsoil and subsoil, much mixed with tree root, extended to c.1.1m below ground level. This overlay c.500mm of clean yellow/beige natural sand, which, in turn, overlay hard, but fairly friable, bedrock.



**Illus. 1 Plan showing the extent, in red, of the Scheduled Ancient Monument**

- 3.3 It was evident that the natural sand and bedrock below the topsoil was completely undisturbed and, therefore, not on the supposed line of the blocked drain.
- 3.4 Having established that this was the case, the trench was backfilled and no further excavation took place.





Illus. 2: Plan showing the location of Trench 1, in red.



Illus. 3: Trench 1 looking W at E facing section.

---

#### **4. Results**

- 4.1 The excavation of a 5m long trench within the scheduled area of Banff Castle, failed to locate the supposed line of an E-W running drain coming from across the road at 37 Castle Street.
- 4.2 No archaeological features or finds were evident in the trench excavated.
- 4.3 Should a further attempt be made to locate the drain within the area of the Scheduled Monument, then another watching brief is recommended.

#### **Catalogue of Digital Photographs (supplied to SMR, NMRS, and Historic Scotland only).**

- 1 – 8        T1, looking W, at E facing section.
- 9 – 13      T1, looking SE and E.
- 14 – 17     S end of T1, looking W.
- 18 – 19     N end of T1, showing broken bedrock, looking W.
- 20 – 22     General view, looking N, of area of T1.
- 23 – 25     General view, looking NW, across moat at area of T1.
- 26 – 27     As, 23 – 25, above, looking N.