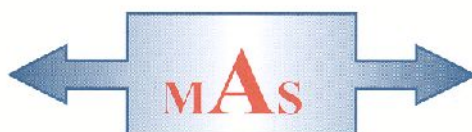


**PATHWAY  
DRUM CASTLE  
ABERDEENSHIRE**



**Archaeological Watching Brief**  
Carried out 7<sup>th</sup> March 2016  
by  
**Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2016-11**  
by  
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**PATHWAY  
DRUM CASTLE  
ABERDEENSHIRE**

**-Archaeological watching brief-**

**J C Murray**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 In 2015 a major programme of maintenance to driveways and associated drainage was undertaken by the National Trust for Scotland at a number of properties, including Drum Castle, Aberdeenshire. As part of this programme, the drainage for the pathway linking the car park and the castle Courtyard was also improved in March 2016.
- 1.2 Dr Shannon Fraser, archaeologist for the National Trust for Scotland, determined that it was advisable to commission a watching brief along the length of the pathway.
- 1.3 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd was commissioned by the National Trust for Scotland to undertake a watching brief on ground disturbance along the pathway and to record any finds or features that were revealed. The watching brief was carried out in March 2016.

**2. The Site**

The work relates to the linking pathway between the Drum Castle Courtyard and the public car park on the W side of the Castle.

Drum Castle, Drumoak, Aberdeenshire.

Parish: Drumoak

NGR NJ 7962 0050

NMRS No: NJ70SE 4.00 Canmore ID 18550

### 3 Methodology

- 3.1 The trench for the new drain and the double gully pots was excavated by JCB under archaeological supervision. Where necessary, areas were hand cleaned and recorded.

### 4 Results

- 4.1 A new Whin dished channel was excavated along the N side of the pathway leading from the car park located to the W of the Castle, E to the castle courtyard. It was 61m long, 500mm wide, with an average depth of 300-400mm. For c.12m W of the entrance to the courtyard, the fill of the trench consisted of soil mixed with stone rubble. The trench was angled to avoid disturbance to a patch of cobbles visible on the N side of the path which may represent an earlier old pathway running SE to NW (Illus: 6, A, GPS 379596 800508), identified on the geophysical survey carried out in 2014 (Ovenden, 2014, fig.4, no.6, Illus.7).



**Illus 1: Cobbles of possible pathway (6), looking E**

Between 12.7m – 13.5m W of the E end of the path (Illus: 6, B, GPS 379588 800506), a concentration of stone and broken field drain may represent a disturbed earlier field drain, possible running N-S across it.



**Illus 2: Possible earlier field drain, looking N**

At 21m W of the E end of the trench and extending W for c.11m the fill consisted of beige sand mixed with rubble stone and would appear to be a consolidation of the ground on the N side of the path.

From 34.5m W of the E end of the path (Illus: 6, C, GPS 379568 800504) and continuing W to the car park entrance, the trench fill consisted of c.100mm of brown soil with some tree root overlying hard beige/yellow sandy natural with some rock outcrop visible. At c.3m SE of the W end of the channel, an electrical cable which provides light for the display on the NW side the path was located.



**Illus 3: Soil and tree root overlying natural, looking NW**

- 4.2 At the E end of the drainage channel, on the W side of the courtyard entrance, a trench 1.9m E-W x 900mm wide and 1.1m deep was excavated for a double gully pot to replace an existing brick-built drain butting up the W side of the courtyard entrance wall. This area had been heavily disturbed by earlier drainage work with plastic drainage pipes visible in the sides of the trench.



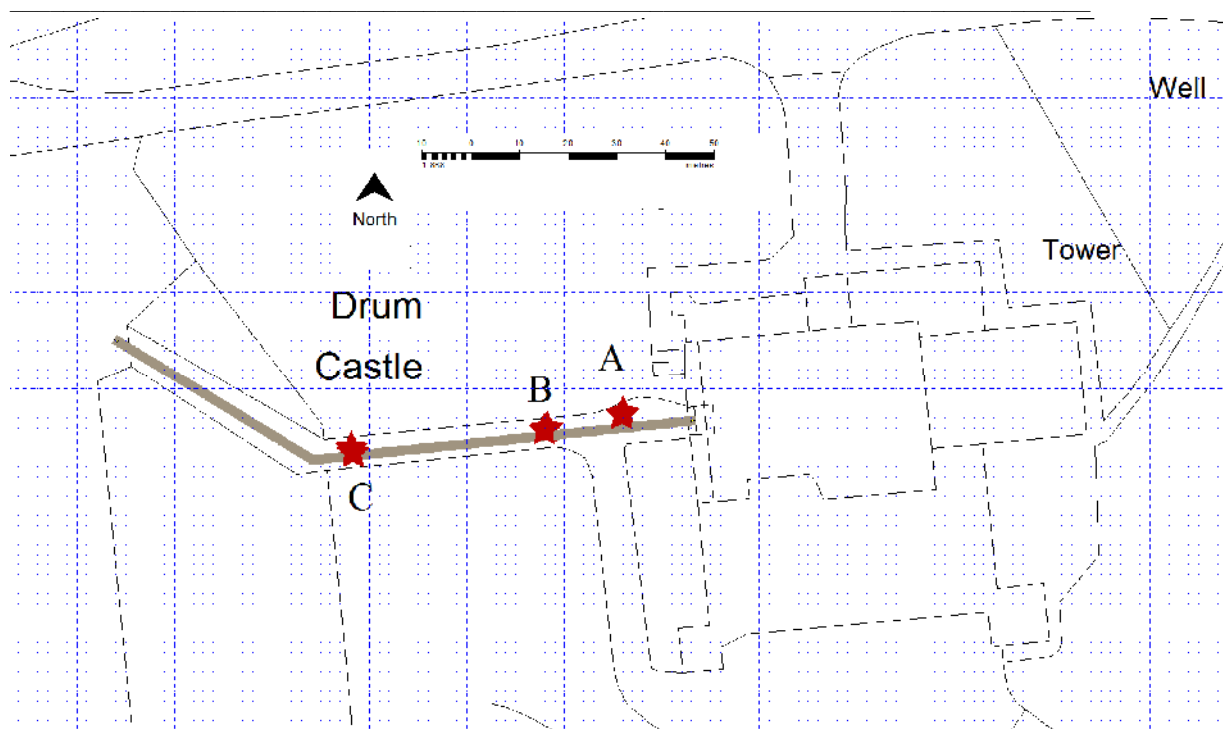
**Illus 4: Trench for gully pots, looking E**



**Illus 5: Gully pot trench, looking SE**

## 5. Discussion

- 5.1 With the exception of the cobbles that may represent an earlier path running SE-NW, nothing of archaeological importance was visible in the excavated drainage channel. The green areas shown on the N side of the pathway, and identified in the geophysical survey as areas of high resistance, are probably a combination of rubble stone and very hard sandy granitic natural.



**Illus 6: Plan of Pathway**



**Illus 7: Plan showing geophysical features in relation to the Pathway**

## References

Ovenden, S 2014 *Geophysical Survey Report: Drum Castle*. Unpublished client report, available in NTS archive