

**NORTH BAY PATH  
DUNNOTAR CASTLE  
STONEHAVEN  
ABERDEENSHIRE**



**Watching brief**

Carried out 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019

by

**Murray Archaeological Services Ltd**



**Report No: MAS 2019-02**

by

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**- Watching Brief-**

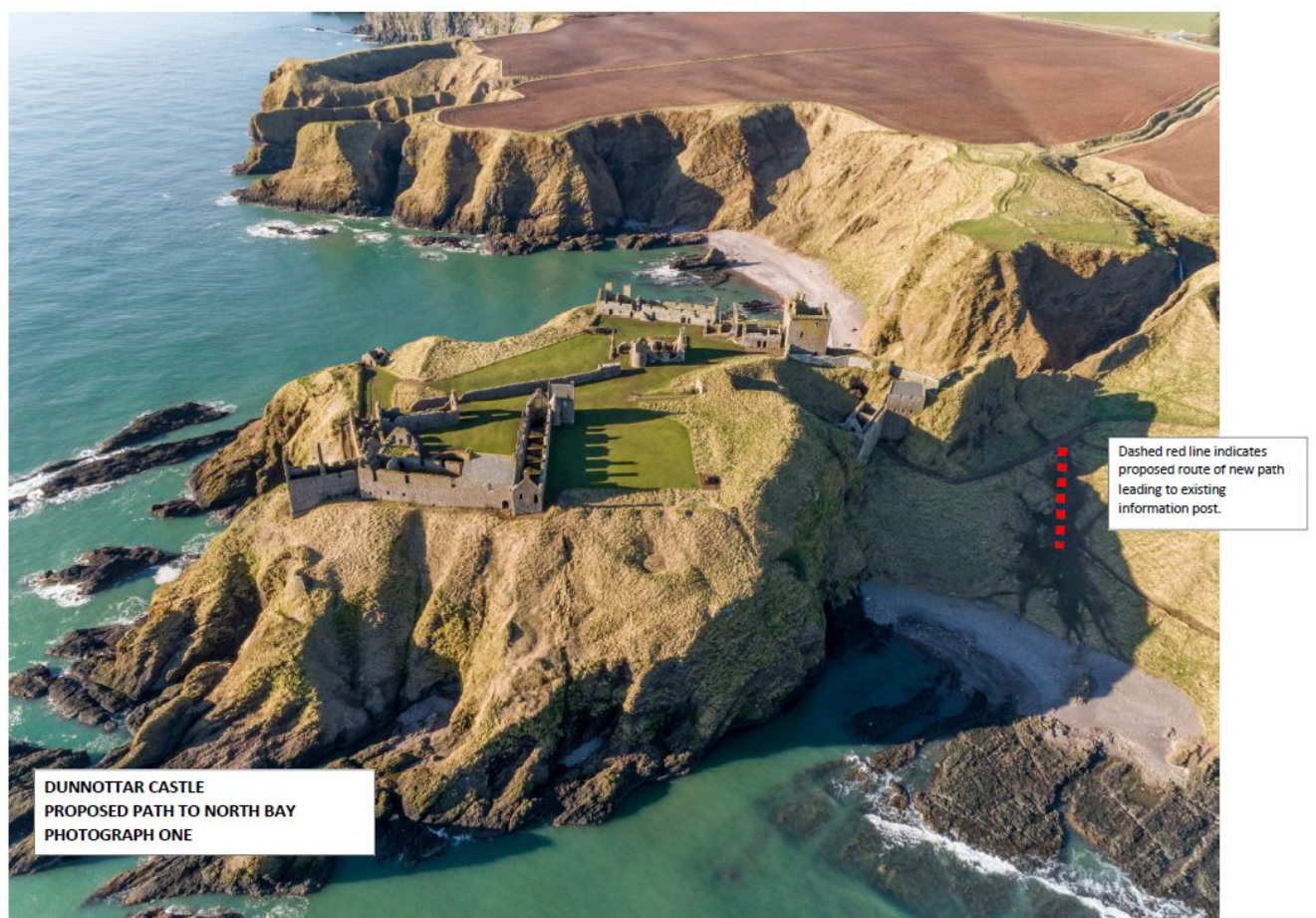
**1. Background**

- 1.1 An application to improve the North Bay Path by the creation of a gravel footpath with two steps off the main path to Dunnottar Castle required Scheduled Monument Consent from Historic Environment Scotland (Index No. SM986; Case ID 300025981). The Consent was granted subject to one condition. The Condition stipulated that no work should take place within the scheduled area until the applicant had secured the initiation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to be approved in writing by Historic Environment Scotland.
- 1.2 A Planning Application for the work was also required by Aberdeenshire Council (Planning Ref: APP/2018/2355). The application was approved with one condition (Condition 1) that also required a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a WSI to be approved in writing by the planning authority.
- 1.3 Murray Archaeological Services Ltd were commissioned by the Dickinson Trust Ltd (Trustee for the Dunnottar Estate) to provide the Written Scheme of Investigation which was approved by HES and Aberdeenshire Council and to carry out the requisite fieldwork..
- 1.4 The WSI stipulated that the excavation of the path should be carried out under archaeological supervision and recorded, in accordance with the plans submitted and approved. In the event of archaeological features or finds being discovered they were to be recorded in accordance with best archaeological practice.





**Illus 1 Proposed line of path (Graphic courtesy of Dunecht Estates)**

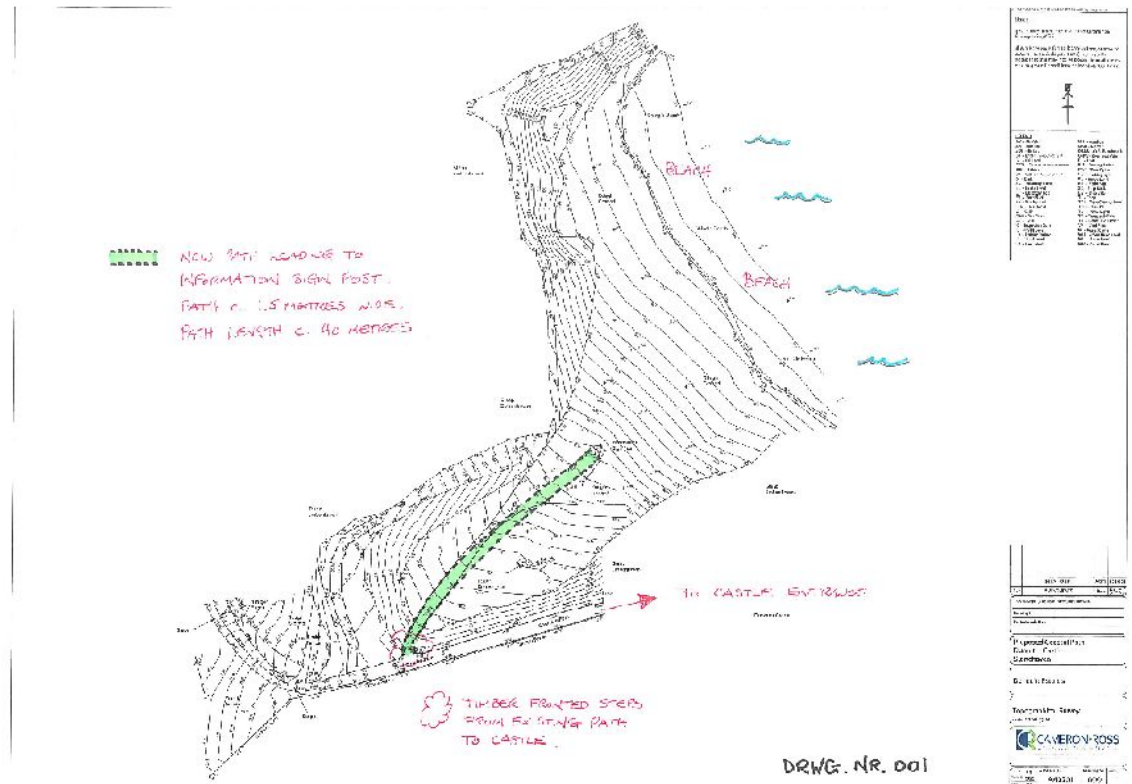


**Illus 2 Location of proposed path (Graphic courtesy of Dunecht Estates)**

1.5 The watching brief was completed on the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

## 2 Methodology

2.1 The topsoil and vegetation was stripped from the line of the new path by a mini-digger with a flat-edged drainage bucket.. The work was observed by MAS Ltd and the excavated trench recorded.



Illus 3 Location of the path (Plan courtesy of Dunecht Estates)

## 3. The Site

3.1 Dunnottar Castle occupies a coastal promontory c.3km S of Stonehaven, protected on all sides by steep cliffs [NGR: NO88128 83842; NMRS No: NO88SE 11; Parish: Dunnottar]. Although the castle probably occupies the site of a prehistoric fort, in its present form the remains date to various periods from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.



In 1716 the castle was forfeited to the government and sold to the York Mining Company and all fittings of value, including floors and doors were removed, and sold.

In 1919 it was bought by the Pearson family and restoration began soon after. It has continued under the management of Dunecht Estates since then.

Parish: Dunnottar

NGR: NO88128 83842

Aberdeenshire SMR: NO88SE0007

NMRS No: NO88SE 11

NRHE Numlink 36992

HES Index No. SM986



**Illus 4 Path after topsoil stripping looking E towards North Bay**



**Illus 5 Path after topsoil stripping looking W towards existing path to castle**

#### 4. Results

The path was c. 1.3m wide and extended for 41.5m from the existing path to an information panel near the beach. The path extended from NO 87979, 83895 through NO87982, 83896, NO87991, 83914, NO 87997, 83919 to NO 88003, 83924.

The topsoil was between 80 and 160mm deep and overlay natural pebbles to the lower (beach end) and a mixture of pebbles and fragmented rock at the upper end. There was no evidence of any archaeological features or finds.



**Illus 6 Detail of the path surface after topsoil removal**



## 5 Archive

A full set of photographs will be supplied to the Aberdeenshire SMR and to the HES archive.

Photo number	Content
1	Line of path looking W, before machining
2	Line of path looking E before machining
3	W end of path before machining
4	Centre of path before machining
5-7	Path after topsoil removed looking E
8	Path after topsoil removed looking W
9-10	Detail of surface below topsoil