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North Berwick Law: Improvements to Summit Path, East Lothian

Archaeological Monitored Strip

Report No. 2035

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**North Berwick Law:
Improvements to Summit Path,
East Lothian**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an archaeological monitored strip undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) between February and March 2012 during ground breaking works at North Berwick Law Summit Path, East Lothian (NGR: NT 55357 84004) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by East Lothian Council.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), dated 06 February 2012, was produced by CFA on behalf of East Lothian Council. The WSI was designed to fulfil the requirements of Scheduled Monument Consent.

1.2 Background

Consent was granted within the Scheduled Monument of North Berwick Law, fort, hut circles and enclosures (SM no. 3863) for upgrading to the lower section of the main access path to the summit of North Berwick Law (Fig. 1).

The location of the proposed development is within an area of considerable archaeological importance. Evidence of a prehistoric settlement is apparent on the southern slope of the Law in the form of walled rock-faced terraces scooped to form huts and enclosures. Twenty-one individual structures were initially found and grouped into five hut circles; a later survey recognised a sixth grouping. Along the base are stone foundations and kitchen middens where assorted bone and stone implements have been found.

The summit of North Berwick Law was occupied by a later prehistoric hill fort. The hill fort was made up of dry-built stone walls which have since toppled and are strewn down the slopes of the hill. The hill fort was enclosed by walls running at different terraced levels along the slope. Numerous circular house platforms are visible in the lowest enclosure.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the monitored strip were:

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation, to monitor all ground breaking work that is required.
- To mitigate the effects of construction on any archaeological deposits or features identified through excavation and recording and production of a report.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Fieldwork. Recording of all elements followed established CFA methods, as detailed in the approved WSI.

2.2 Monitored Strip

The terms of the WSI required an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation to monitor all ground breaking works involved in the construction of the upgraded summit path.

The construction of the new path was undertaken by hand by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV).

All work was carried out under direct archaeological supervision.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

Numbers in bold in the following text refer to contexts, a full list of which is contained in Appendix 1.

Work consisted of the consolidation and repair of c. 100m of path with 14 pits dug for the introduction of anchor bars, levelling of the path between steps, digging alongside the lower path for a revetment wall and resurfacing, trenching for retaining stone along the downhill slope, and a ditch uphill to combat surface water eroding the path. A type one gravel surface was laid between the anchor bars to create a formal path and resurface worn areas.

The original access path overlaid an alignment of large boulders believed to be a former rampart line (Fig. 2). At this location, the new path was constructed through a gap in the alignment of the former rampart line. Consultation between the onsite CFA archaeologist and BTCV resulted in an agreement to use spoil from the excavation of anchor bars in the vicinity to backfill areas of erosion under the rampart. This would encourage walkers to follow the formal path as opposed to using the rampart stones as steps, and prevent further degradation of the surviving rampart remains.

The majority of the area of proposed development was covered by turf and topsoil (**001**) consisting of a mid-dark gravelly orange-brown sandy silt. The majority of the excavation did not reach natural substrate, but bedrock (**000**) was reached at the southern end of the path where it outcropped at, or near, the current ground surface.

No archaeological features were identified, but several finds were recovered from the topsoil (see below).

3.2 Lower path/revetment wall

Excavation for the lower path (northern section) involved the removal of turf and approximately 0.1-0.2m of topsoil (**001**), to form a path measuring approximately 0.7-0.8m wide. Excavation for the revetment wall along the lower slope consisted of the removal of c. 0.2m-0.4m in depth of topsoil (**001**) depending on the size of the stone used for revetment, and the natural slope of the ground. Natural was not reached in this area. A second trench was dug further down the slope for resurfacing.

A piece of possible worked quartz and a sheep's tooth were recovered from the topsoil (**001**) at approximately 35m from the start of the path.

3.3 Anchor bars

The pits for the anchor bars ranged from c. 0.3m-1m in length by c. 0.2-0.45m in width and c. 0.15m-0.3m in depth. Pits A-F removed topsoil (**001**) only, G-N removed topsoil (**001**) onto bedrock (**000**). Pits B, C and D were located between the rampart stones (Fig. 3).

Up to 0.1m depth of gravelly topsoil was removed from the area of the path between anchor bars to create space for surfacing gravel to be laid (Fig. 4).

Fragments of unarticulated animal bone were recovered from the topsoil (001) of pits B-F at an average depth of 0.2m.

3.4 Upper path/ revetment wall

Given the gradient of the slope and the changing orientation of the alignment of the new path, most of the new path upslope was constructed using anchor bars and intervening levelling (as described above). Along the downslope side of the path, just above the surviving rampart section, a second revetment trench was excavated. This measured approximately 3m in length and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.4m, removing topsoil only (001).

A few fragments of bone and pottery of a Post-medieval/modern date were recovered from topsoil (001) within the northern end of the upper revetment trench.

3.5 Drainage ditch

A small trench was excavated along the western side of the new path near the upper terminus of the new path to help provide surface water drainage. The ditch was curvilinear in shape and measured approximately 3m in length by 0.25m wide and 0.2m deep. Only topsoil was removed, and the turfs were re-laid into the trench to provide a drainage surface in keeping with the surrounding landscape.

4. CONCLUSION

A monitored strip was carried out during all ground breaking work for the upgrading to the lower section of the main access path to the summit of North Berwick Law. With the exception of a piece of possible worked quartz, and occasional small fragments of unarticulated animal bone and tooth recovered from the topsoil, no artefacts or features of archaeological significance were identified.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS) and copies of reports will be lodged with the East Lothian Council Sites and Monuments Record.

A summary statement of the results of this watching brief will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 4) and an online OASIS form will be completed.

APPENDIX 1: Context Register

Context no.	Type	Description
000	Bedrock	Bedrock
001	Topsoil	Mid-dark orange brown slightly coarse sandy silt, gravelly (50%) + small-medium angular stones (20-30%)

APPENDIX 2: Digital Photographic Register

Shot No.	Summary description of subject	Taken from	Conditions
1	General views of work area from NT 55310 84050 to NT 55393 84002		Overcast
2	General views of work area from NT 55310 84050 to NT 55393 84002		Overcast
3	General views of work area from NT 55310 84050 to NT 55393 84002		Overcast
4	General views of work area from NT 55310 84050 to NT 55393 84002		Overcast
5	General views of work area from NT 55310 84050 to NT 55393 84002		Overcast
6	General views of work area from NT 55310 84050 to NT 55393 84002		Overcast
7	General views of work area from NT 55310 84050 to NT 55393 84002		Overcast
8	Example of path work to create a revetment below existing path and kerb above. At NT 55339 84012	N	Overcast
9	Example of trenches across path to accept steps and alongside path for kerb stones. At NT 55351 84003	NW	Overcast
10	Example of trenches across path to accept steps and alongside path for kerb stones. At NT 55351 84003	NW	Overcast
11	Section at NT 55351 84003, path gravel over stony soil	WNW	Overcast
12	As 9-10 at NT 55357 84002	NW	Overcast
13	Possible rampart at NT 55357 84004 showing steps cut to avoid the most exposed stones	WSW	Overcast
14	Possible rampart at NT 55357 84004 showing steps cut to avoid the most exposed stones	WSW	Overcast
15	As 13-14, showing new stones over rampart to form wider path above	WSW	Overcast
16	Steps cut 1m x 0.5m x 0.25m deep at NT 55368 84000	NW	Overcast
17	General view of work area	WSW	Overcast
18	General view of work area	WSW	Overcast
19	General view of work area	WSW	Overcast
20	General view of work area	WSW	Overcast
21	Views of ditch between NT 55372 83996 and NT 55367 83993	NE	Sun/Shade
22	Views of ditch between NT 55372 83996 and NT 55367 83993	NE	Sun/Shade
23	General shot of drainage ditch digging	NE	Dull
24	General shot of levelling between steps	ENE	Dull
25	General shot of digging along lower path to lay revetment stones	SE	Dull
26	General shot of digging along lower path to lay revetment stones	SW	Dull
27	Area dug for anchor bar (B) where bone was found	SW	Overcast
28	Trench dug to accommodate revetment stones only into	S	Overcast

Shot No.	Summary description of subject	Taken from	Conditions
	topsoil		
29	Trench dug to accommodate revetment stones only into topsoil	S	Overcast
30	G + H Pits for Anchor Bar (See DB Notes For Sketch)	NW	Sun
31	G + H Pits for Anchor Bar (See DB Notes For Sketch)	NW	Sun
32	I (as above)	E	Sun
33	I (as above)	E	Sun
34	J anchor bar pit	S	Sun
35	J anchor bar pit	S	Sun
36	A + b + c anchor bar pit	W	Sun
37	A + b + c anchor bar pit	W	Sun
38	A + b anchor bar pit	E	Sun
39	A + b anchor bar pit	E	Sun
40	C + d anchor bar pit	E	Sun
41	C + d anchor bar pit	E	Sun
42	E anchor bar pit	SW	Sun
43	E anchor bar pit	SW	Sun
44	F anchor bar pit	N	Sun
45	F anchor bar pit	N	Sun
46	K+l anchor bar pit	NE + SW	Sun
47	K+l anchor bar pit	NE + SW	Sun
48	M Anchor Bar Pit (With K + L in Background)	SE	Sun
49	M Anchor Bar Pit (With K + L in Background)	SE	Sun

APPENDIX 3: Finds Register

Context	Find type	No.	Wt (g)	Notes	Spotdate
U/S	Animal Bone	13	116		
001	Pottery	1	15	Topsoil	Modern
001	Pottery	1	61	Topsoil	Post-Med
001	Animal Bone	5	100	Topsoil	
001	Animal Bone	2	8	From Anchor Pit between Rampart	
001	Quartz Lump	1	10	From Lower Path	
001	Animal Bone	9	36	Anchor Pit B	
001	Animal Bone	13	11	Anchor Pit C	
001	Animal Bone	12	13	Anchor Pit D	
001	Animal Bone	1	14	Anchor Pit E	
001	Animal Bone	2	11	Anchor Pit F	

APPENDIX 4: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	East Lothian
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	North Berwick Law- Improvements to Summit Path Archaeological Monitored Strip
PROJECT CODE:	LAWP
PARISH:	North Berwick
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Leigh Garst
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Monitored Strip
NMRS NO(S):	SM no. 3863
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	North Berwick Law, fort, hut circles and enclosures
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 10 figures)	NT 55357 84004
START DATE (this season)	February 2012
END DATE (this season)	March 2010
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	N/A
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A monitored strip was carried out during all ground breaking work for the upgrading to the lower section of the main access path to the summit of North Berwick Law. The excavation depth rarely fully removed topsoil, although the uppermost sections revealed areas of bedrock outcrop close to the current ground surface. With the exception of a piece of possible worked quartz, and occasional small fragments of unarticulated animal bone and tooth recovered from the topsoil, no artefacts or features of archaeological significance were identified.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	N/A
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	East Lothian Council
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	The Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ
EMAIL ADDRESS:	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	National Monuments Record of Scotland East Lothian Council Sites and Monuments Record



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Key:  Site Location	Fig. No: 1 Revision:	Client: Historic Scotland	 CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD The Old Engine House Eskmills Park Musselburgh East Lothian, EH21 7PQ t: 0131 273 4380 f: 0131 273 4381 e: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk w: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk
	Title: Location map		
Scale at A3: 1:2,000	Project: North Berwick Law - Improvements to Summit Path, East Lothian Archaeological Monitored Strip		Drawn by: SW Checked: MJ Report No: 2035



Fig. 2 - Original access path through rampart



Fig. 3 - Pits C and D between rampart boulders

Key:	Fig. No:	2-3	Revision:	A	Client:	Historic Scotland					
	Project:	North Berwick Law- Improvements to Summit Path, East Lothian Archaeological Monitored Strip									
 CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD The Old Engine House Eskmills Park Musselburgh East Lothian, EH21 7PO t: 0131 273 4380 f: 0131 273 4381 e: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk w: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk						Drawn by:	LW	Checked:	LW	Report No:	2035



Fig. 4 - Re-surfacing between anchor bars

Key:

Fig. No: 4 Revision: A Client: Historic Scotland

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