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Geophysical Survey

Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract

**Aberdour Castle, Aberdour, Fife
PIC001**

**Archaeological Watching Brief of Interpretation
Panel Installation, May 2017**

Report No. HES-PIC001-2017-01

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Commissioned by	Historic Environment Scotland
Date issued	June 2017
Version	2
Grid Ref	NT 19282 85435
OASIS Reference	cfaarcha1-286397
PIC No.	PIC001
HES Report No.	HES-PIC001-2017-01
CFA Report No.	3565

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Minor Archaeological Services Call-Off Contract

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Illustrations (bound at rear)

Fig. 1 Location map and site plan showing location of trenches monitored

Fig. 2 ABD 2 post-excavation from the NE

Fig. 3 ABD 12 post-excavation from the SW

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in May 2017, to monitor the insertion of two interpretation panels within the grounds of Aberdour Castle, Aberdour, Fife (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Historic Environment Scotland as part of the Minor Archaeological Services Call-off Contract.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 18 January 2017 was produced by Kirkdale Archaeology for this programme of works. The WSI was designed to fulfil the terms of the Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) and was agreed with Historic Environment Scotland (HES) in advance of the work taking place.

1.2 Background

Aberdour Castle is regarded as being of national importance both in that it is one of the two oldest datable standing castles in Scotland (parts of the castle date from around 1200) and it is complemented by a walled garden to the east and terraced gardens to the south. The terraces, dating from the mid-16th century, form one of the oldest gardens in Scotland. The site is both a Scheduled Monument (SM90002) and a Property In Care in the guardianship of HES (PIC001).

In total, fourteen new interpretation panels are to be placed within the grounds of Aberdour Castle, some of which replace existing ones, and the removal of 5 existing panels from the site, in order to meet access requirements and to achieve a uniformity in design and installation for interpretation. Only panels ABD 2 and ABD 12 will impact on the monument directly and require a watching brief.

Panel: ABD 2

This panel will be located in the courtyard, looking over to the castle. Early photographs suggest there has been considerable landscaping in this area in the mid-1900s. The wall footings currently exposed do not appear in images of the early to mid-1900s. It is likely that the clearance work undertaken to reveal these footings was conducted in the 1950s, judging by the photographic record. It is unlikely that this panel will encounter any substantial archaeological remains, as these would likely have been left exposed in the manner of the other footings. The panel will be sited to the side of the courtyard, to limit any impact on views towards the castle.

Panel: ABD 12

This lectern will be located in the garden orchard. Three trenches in the late 1970s revealed that up to 600mm of topsoil exists in the orchard area of the garden. It was not possible to determine the extent of modern vs. historic levels here due to the extensive use of the area as a market garden. The area was planted as an orchard in 1690 and 18th century estate plans show this area as planted rather than heavily built on. This has continued into the modern period. It is unlikely that any significant structure will be encountered or disturbed by this sign. Possible garden features may be uncovered, though this is also unlikely.

Scheduled Monument Consent was granted by HES containing a condition that an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundbreaking works for interpretation panels ABD 2 and ABD 12.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the programme of archaeological works were:

- To conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (watching brief) to monitor groundbreaking works.
- To mitigate the effects of construction on any archaeological deposits or features identified during the watching brief by excavation and recording and to produce a report on them.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

All work was conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 'Code of Conduct' (CIfA 2014), and other relevant CIfA Standards and Guidance.

2.2 Watching Brief

Both interpretation panels ABD 2 and ABD 12 required setting into the ground so two similar-sized, small excavation areas, measuring 1m x 0.6m and 0.3m deep, were excavated by hand. All ground-breaking works were carried out under constant archaeological supervision.

All excavation and on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures and by completing standard CFA record forms.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

Numbers in bold refer to contexts, a full list of which is contained in Appendix 2.

The excavation for ABD 2 disturbed a single context (**001**). This was a layer of turf and topsoil which contained small inclusions of broken sandstone and occasional oyster shell fragments and the base of a modern tin can.

The excavation for ABD 12 uncovered three layers (**002**, **003** and **004**). **002** was a 0.15-0.2m deep turf and topsoil layer under which lay a 0.05-0.1m deep layer (**003**) of small broken sandstone fragments, mortar and fragments of plastic sheet. Under this lay a topsoil layer (**004**). These layers probably derive from modern levelling of the area and rubbish material from the modern reconstruction of the garden terrace walls.

No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified.

4. CONCLUSION

A watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd within the Scheduled Monument of Aberdour Castle, Aberdour, Fife. Two small, shallow trenches were excavated by hand for the insertion of site interpretation panels. The trenches both contained contexts indicative of modern landscaping. No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the National Record for the Historic Environment Scotland (NRHE) and copies of reports will be lodged with Fife Council Sites and Monuments Record.

A summary statement will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (Appendix 3) and will also be reported on through *OASIS Scotland*.

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

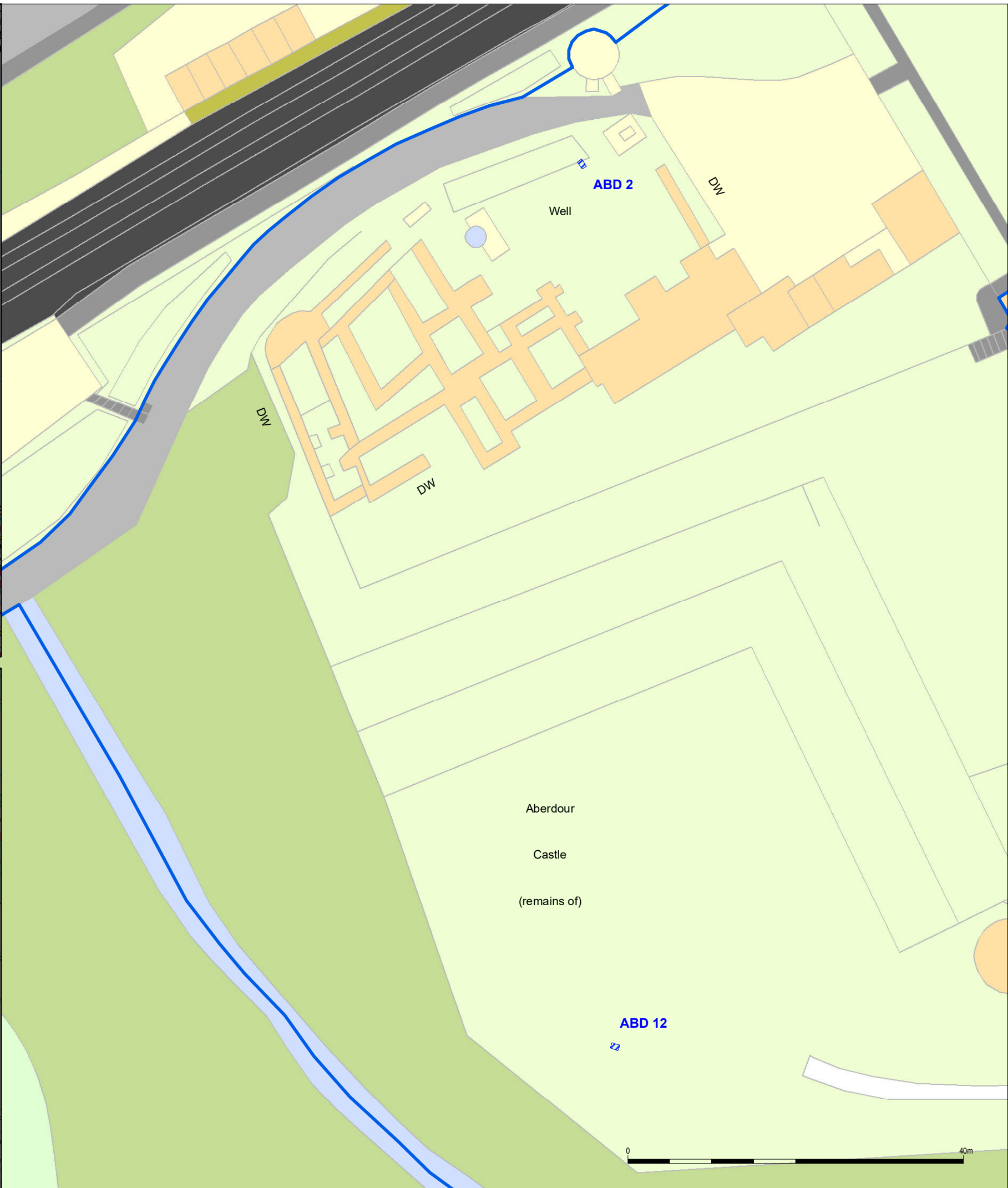
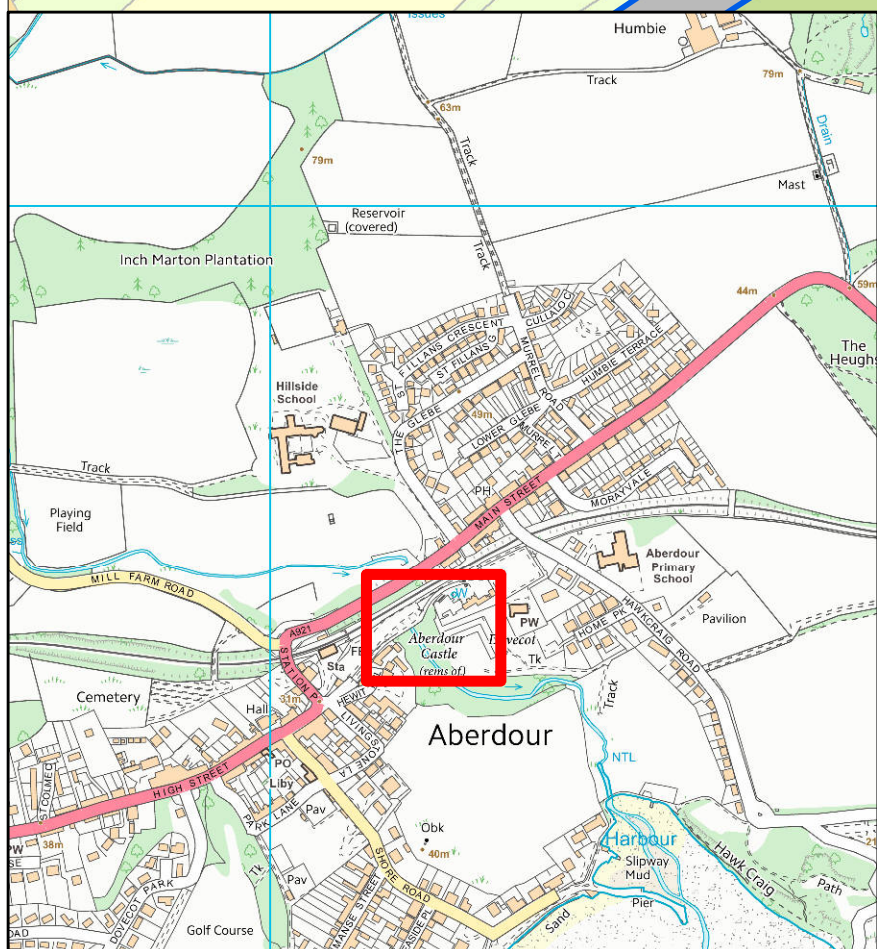
Photo No.	Description	Taken From
1	ABD 2 De turfed	NE
2	ABD 2 Post excavation	NE
3	ABD 2 Post excavation	NE
4	ABD 2 Post excavation	NE
5	ABD 12 De turfed	SW
6	ABD 12 Post excavation	SW

APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context No.	Fill of	Description
001	ABD 2	Turf and topsoil
002	ABD 12	Turf and topsoil
003	ABD 12	Levelling or rubbish layer
004	ABD 12	Topsoil

APPENDIX 3: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Fife
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Aberdour Castle, Aberdour, Fife
PROJECT CODE:	MINA2
PARISH:	Aberdour (Fife)
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Graeme Carruthers
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Watching Brief
NMRS NO(S):	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	N/A
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	N/A
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 19282 85435
START DATE (this season)	May 2017
END DATE (this season)	May 2017
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A watching brief was carried out by CFA Archaeology Ltd within the Scheduled Monument of Aberdour Castle, Aberdour, Fife as part of the Minor Archaeological Services Call Off Contract. Two small, shallow trenches were excavated by hand for the insertion of site interpretation panels. The trenches both contained contexts indicative of modern landscaping. No features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Historic Environment Scotland
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ.
EMAIL ADDRESS:	cfa@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited with NRHE, reports lodged with SMR.



Key:

- Property In Care Boundary
- Watching Brief Area

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Title:
Location map and site plan showing location of trenches monitored

Project:
Aberdour Castle, Fife

Client:
Historic Environment Scotland

Scale at A3:
1:500

Drawn by: SW	Checked: MJ	Date: 11/08/2017
Report No: 3565	Fig. No: 1	



Fig. 2 - ABD 2 post-excitation from the NE



Fig. 3 - ABD 12 post-excitation from the SW

Project:
Aberdour Castle, Fife



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Drawn by: SW	Checked: MJ	Date: 12/06/17
Report No: 3565		Fig. No: 2 - 3