

PE273 PORTH-Y-RHAW CAMP
FOOTPATH DIVERSION WORK
COMPLETION REPORT



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Crynodeb / Summary

Mae'r adroddiad canlynol yn darparu manylion am waith cafodd ei chario allan ar heneb gofrestredig PE273 Caer Porth-y-Rhaw yn Ebrill a Mai 2023. Yn benodol, gwaith i gael gwared â grisiau troed, a thorri trwy fanc ôl-ganoloesol o fewn ardal yr heneb gofrestredig fel rhan o waith i ailgyfeirio llwybr yr arfordir i ffwrdd o'r heneb gofrestredig.

The following report provides details of work carried out at PE273 Porth-y-Rhaw Camp scheduled monument in April and May 2023. Specifically, work to remove the footsteps and cut through a post-medieval bank within the scheduled area as part of work to re-divert the coast path away from the scheduled monument area.

1. Background

Prior to the diversion of the coast path from within the scheduled area of PE273 Porth-y-Rhaw Camp in 2023, there had been longstanding issues with coastal erosion. The National Park Authority, in partnership with the landowner, the National Trust, had attempted to mitigate this issue over a number of years by moving the coast path away from the cliff edge as and when required and also to reinforce pinch point erosion areas. However, in recent years it was acknowledged that this approach was not sustainable and was becoming logistically challenging due to the location of the path. Specifically, reinforcing and repairing the pinch point erosion at the northwest corner adjacent to the footbridge (see figure 2) was almost impossible due to the inability to bring heavy material to the location. Also, this would only be a temporary solution and would require ongoing maintenance. As a result, it was agreed that the best solution would be to move the coast path away from the scheduled area onto adjacent land overlooking the monument (see figure 1).

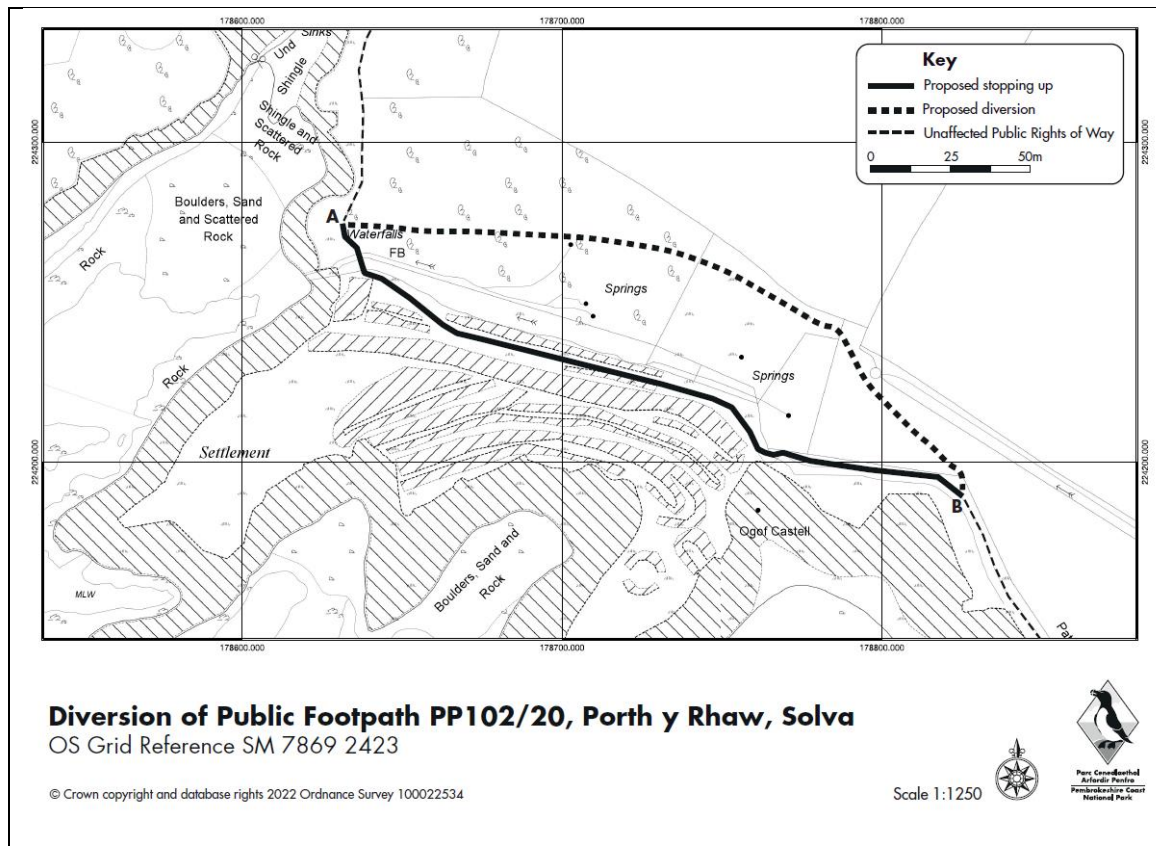


Figure 1. Map showing the diverted location of the coast path.

It was acknowledged that this diverted route would provide a number of benefits, including making the coast path sustainable and mitigated against the threat posed from coastal erosion. The diversion would also have a number of benefits for the scheduled monument, including a better vantage point for visitors of the coast path and improved management of the monument due to the removal of the coast path from within the scheduled area. As part of the diversion process, it was agreed that access to the scheduled monument would be retained. The idea to retain the old path was considered,

however it was agreed that this was not a suitable option, as the old path would need to be managed. Also, people walking the coast path would continue to use the old path. As a result, it was agreed that access to the scheduled monument would take place from the east side of the coast path only. This meant that new access to the scheduled monument was required through the post-medieval bank overlaying the monument. Using the old path running to the monument from the east was not possible, as it would encourage people to walk up the monument via a pinch point next to a sheer cliff edge. People carrying on via the coast path would also attempt to use the old path and would end up at a dead end at the northwest corner of the old path.

The diversion meant that work needed to be carried out within the scheduled area, as such an application for scheduled monument consent was made to Cadw in March 2023 for the following works to be carried out:

- To deter continued use of the redundant path via the scheduled monument, removal of 16 steps from the northwest corner of the scheduled area. Also, removal of the footbridge.
- Installation of a physical barrier to deter visitors from continuing to use the old path and also attempting to re-join the coast path at the northwest corner of the scheduled area.
- On the eastern side of the scheduled area, create new access by cutting through a portion of the overlaying post-medieval bank and using the cut material to infill the old access through the bank near the cliff to deter continued use by visitors.

Due to the archaeological sensitivity of the area of work, the Authority's community archaeologist agreed to supervise the work. Scheduled monument consent was granted by Cadw on 29 March 2023 and work was carried out by the Authority's warden team and area ranger under the supervision of the community archaeologist on 21 April 2023, 09 May 2023, and 11 August 2023.

2. Removal of steps, footbridge and installation of physical barrier (northwest corner)

On 21 April 2023, the wardens under the supervision of the community archaeologist carried out the first element of work. Specifically, removing the steps and footbridge, and installing a physical barrier to deter continued use of the coast path via the northwest corner of the monument (see photographs section). In relation to this work, the following approach was undertaken:

- The steps were removed by hand, with hand tools used to loosen the step from the ground. The steps were then carried off the scheduled area by hand. Removal of the steps began with the top step and the wardens worked their way down to the bottom step next to the foot bridge.
- Once the steps were removed, the community archaeologist checked for any archaeological deposits or features, of which none were identified.

- Following an archaeological check, the wardens reprofiled the area where the steps used to be with hand tools to smooth the surface. This approach meant that the soils were mixed which would help with re-growth of turf. The wardens also walked over the area to help compact the surface.
- To assist with water management and erosion following the removal of the steps, the wardens cut a shallow drainage ditch above the group of steps directly next to the footbridge. This would help encourage water to runoff directly into the stream rather than running down the surface of the monument.
- Once the work on the steps had been completed, the wardens diverted their attention to the installation of the physical barrier. An attempt was made to drive the wooden posts directly into the ground, but this was not possible due to the hardness of the surface. As a result, pits were dug to accommodate the posts. The community archaeologist checked for any anomalies as the pits were created, but no archaeological feature or material was identified. However, there did appear to be a difference in colour and composition between the material removed from the two pits. Due to the small size of the pits, it was not possible to determine if there was any significance to this variation.
- Once the pits were created, the wooden posts were installed and packed with the material that had been dug out to create the pits. The timber frame connecting the posts was then added to complete the physical barrier.
- Finally, the wardens removed the footbridge connecting the scheduled monument area to the surrounding path. On the outer side, a physical barrier was installed to deter visitors attempting to use this as a path.
- No new archaeological features or material was identified for any aspect of the work above.

3. Cut through post-medieval bank and infill previous access (east side)

On 09 May 2023 the wardens under the supervision of the community archaeologist cut through a portion of the post-medieval bank to create the new access point. The material removed during this work was then reused to infill the post-medieval bank closer to the cliff edge by the area ranger, warden manager and community archaeologist on 11 August 2023 (see photographs section). In relation to this work, the following approach was undertaken:

- The wire fence adjacent to the portion of post-medieval bank to be opened was cut and removed, and ranging rods were used to mark out the extent of area to be opened.
- As a first step to open up the post-medieval bank, the wardens carefully removed the vegetation layer from the portion of the bank to be opened. The wardens then began to carefully take down the bank with the assistance of hand tools in layers. Material removed from the bank was stacked so that it could be reused to block up the old access in the post-medieval bank closer to the cliff edge.

- While the wardens were taking the bank down in layers, the community archaeologist routinely checked for any archaeological anomalies, none of which were identified.
- The removal revealed that the banks were composed of soil and stones, with the largest stones being located at the base of the bank.
- Due to the different ground level between the scheduled monument side of the post-medieval bank and the outer side, the wardens used some of the soil to level this out, notably on the outer side of the monument.
- Material removed from the post-medieval bank was then used to infill the old access through a post-medieval bank closer to the cliff edge on 11 August 2023. The larger stones were laid at the base, gradually reducing in size towards the top of the bank. The centre was infilled with soil and in-between stone layers, soil and turf were placed. At the top of the infilled bank, turf was placed.
- The old path leading to the monument from the east was blocked with a physical barrier to deter continued use by visitors. A post and way marker were also installed to indicate direction and access to the scheduled monument.
- No new archaeological features or material was identified for any aspect of the work above.

4. Photographs

4.1. Removal of steps, footbridge and installation of physical barrier



Figure 2. Photo showing location of steps/foot bridge to be removed, pinch point erosion also visible.



Figure 3. Photo showing top group of steps prior to removal.



Figure 4. Photo after removal of the top group of steps.



Figure 5. Photo showing middle group of steps prior to removal.



Figure 6. Photo after removal of middle group of steps.



Figure 7. Photo showing bottom group of steps prior to removal.



Figure 8. Photo after removal of bottom group of steps.



Figure 9. Photo showing approach to remove steps, including pickaxe and then crowbar to help lift steps from the ground.



Figure 10. Photo showing removal of steps using hand tools.



Figure 11. Photo showing use of hand tools to re-profile the surface after removing the steps.



Figure 12. Photo showing shallow drainage ditch created directly above the bottom group of steps that were removed.



Figure 13. Photo showing pits created to house the wooden posts of physical barrier. Note the colour and composition difference between the material from the two different pits.



Figure 14. Photo showing posts in place packed with the material dug out to create the pits.



Figure 15. Photo showing the completed physical barrier after a few weeks, also showing condition of surface where top group of steps were.



Figure 16. Photo showing condition of surface where middle group of steps used to be after a few weeks. Also, physical barrier in background.



Figure 17. Photo showing condition of surface where bottom group of steps used to be, also physical barrier in background.



Figure 18. Photo showing the absence of the footbridge after removal and also the physical barrier to deter visitors attempting to use the old path from a northwest direction.



Figure 19. Photo showing northwest corner of monument a few weeks after completion. There are no traces of steps, footbridge has been removed and physical barriers are in place from both directions to deter use of the old path.

4.2. Cut through post-medieval bank and infill previous access



Figure 20. Photo showing cut wire fence and ranging rods marking area to be opened in bank.



Figure 21. Photo showing wardens removing vegetation from historic bank to expose earth and stone underneath.



Figure 22. Photo showing start of removal of earth and stones from the opening in the bank.



Figure 23. Photo showing the outer earth and stone from the monument side of the bank has been removed down to level required. Note large stone at base.



Figure 24. Photo showing the outer earth and stone layer of the bank on the side outside the monument has been removed to the required level.



Figure 25. Photo showing the final layer separating either side of the bank being removed.



Figure 26. Photo showing the new access through bank after removing the final partition layer. Note that some of the soil from the bank has been used to level the surface through this new access.



Figure 27. Photo showing new access with levelled surface from scheduled monument side.



Figure 28. Photo showing new access with levelled surface from outside scheduled monument.



Figure 29. Photo showing access through bank to be infilled to deter use of the old coast path.



Figure 30. Photo showing former access through bank filled with stones, earth and topped with turf using available repurposed material (view from inside scheduled monument).



Figure 31. Photo showing former access through bank filled with stones, earth and topped with turf using available repurposed material (view from outside scheduled monument).



Figure 32. Photo showing physical barrier to access the old path from an east direction, also view of new path heading towards the right in the image.



Figure 33. Photo showing post and way marker to indicate new direction to access scheduled monument.