

Case information

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|---------------------------|---|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Reference/Case ID | | 201506162 | |
| Scheduled Monument | Brough of Birsay, settlements, church and related remains | | |
| Index no | M90034 | Grid Ref | HY239285 323900.0000 1028500.0000 |
| Date of Application | 23 December 2015 | Application Received | 23 December 2015 |
| Summary of proposed works | The installation of a ground mounted interpretation panel | | |

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends approval for the installation of a replacement interpretation panel.

2. Background

The monument comprises a complex of late Iron Age (or Pictish) settlements, Norse settlements and a church and monastic buildings around Birsay Bay.

As well as being scheduled, the monument is a Property in the Care of Scottish Ministers. The board forms part of a wider scheme of interpretation replacement at Historic Environment Scotland properties by the Interpretation Unit to replace outdated and faded signage, and address gaps in on-site interpretation. The applicant discussed the proposals during the Annual Monument Audit of May 2015 and then engaged in pre-application discussions.

3. Proposals

Consented works: Installation of a ground mounted interpretation panel

The proposed works comprise the additional works comprising installation of a new A3 panel to replace the existing cast metal plate by the possible sauna building as shown in the interpretation plan (BR06 W2F A3). This installation of the new panel has two aims: to better conserve the monument by discouraging visitor access to this part of it, and to better interpret the sauna building.

4. Representations received

No representations were received.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

The application should be viewed with the following legislative and policy considerations in mind:

3.16. Works on scheduled monuments should therefore normally be the minimum level of intervention that is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in a monument.

3.20. Where change is proposed, it should be carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed, properly planned and executed, and where appropriate in the context of an individual monument, reversible.

b) Assessment

The installation of a ground mounted interpretation panel will have an impact on the historic fabric of the monument. However, this impact is considered to be minimal as the sign will be mounted on angled metal stakes, and the impact has been assessed in relation to the cultural significance of the monument. Should there not be sufficient turf to take the spikes, the ground will be made up to a sufficient depth to prevent damage to any underlying archaeology.

The proposed location of the board will also aim to discourage access to this part of the monument where there are currently fragile flags and this will help to better preserve it.

The installation of a new board in this location also has the potential to have an indirect (setting) impact on the monument. However, in view of the proposed size and location of the board, we consider that it is unlikely that this would have a significant impact on its setting, and will not interrupt key views.

c) Other material considerations, including impact of the works on Protected Species and Places

There will not be any significant impacts on Protected Species and Places.

The monument is a Property in the Care of Scottish Ministers which is operated by Historic Environment Scotland as a visitor attraction.

d) Conclusion

The proposed works are compliant with Section 3.16 of the SHEP in that they are the minimum level of intervention that is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in the monument. The works have been carefully considered in order to mitigate any physical and visual impacts, meaning that they are also compliant with Section 3.20 of SHEP.

Therefore, the potential impact on the cultural significance of the monument is considered to be justified and the proposals have been carefully considered. I therefore consider that consent is granted, without conditions.

6. Recommended decision

The works proposed are considered acceptable in meeting the terms of national policy for scheduled monuments, and also accounting for other material considerations.

7. Conditions

None

8. Approval

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| Officer | Nicola Hall | Date | 22/01/2016 |
| Approved by | George Findlater | Date | 29/01/2016 |

Annex A – list of supporting documents

Scheduled area plan (3 March 1999)
Panel location plan
Interpretation plan
Panel details