

Case information

Reference/Case ID		201506139	
Scheduled Monument	Drumin Castle		
Index no	M356	Grid Ref	NJ184303 318400.0000 830300.0000
Date of Application	16 December 2015	Application Received	21 December 2015
Summary of proposed works	Selective masonry consolidation and repointing at Drumin Castle		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for selective masonry consolidation and repointing at Drumin Castle be granted without conditions.

2. Background

The monument comprises the remains of the 14th century tower house of Drumin Castle, and was probably built by either the Wolf of Badenoch or his son. It is relatively well preserved, despite being abandoned in the 16th century and having quickly fallen into disrepair. Square in plan, the east wall and part of the south wall are missing, and part of the ground floor vault survives with the remainder of the walls still standing up to parapet level.

The monument was subject to an extensive consolidation programme in the early 2000s; the works covered by this application are minor in nature and could be described as 'routine maintenance' works that build upon the previous consolidation by making good a decades-worth of exposure and weathering.

This work will benefit the long term preservation of Drumin Castle in that it will continue to stabilise vulnerable elements of the monument using appropriate reversible techniques.

HS/HES has since undertaken extensive pre-application discussions with the applicant regarding the approach to this phase of works, and this application accords with the outcome of these discussions.

3. Proposals

Consented works – selective masonry consolidation and repointing at Drumin Castle.

The proposals comprise:

- Potential requirement to replace fixings as well as the netting (which itself is used to limit movement on the wall head) in places on the wall head. The full extent of this will be set out in an updated scheme of works once access to the wall heads has been achieved.
- Selective stabilisation of loose stones and mortar on the wall heads using a NHL 5 hydraulic lime mortar.
- Selective raking out of Old Portland Cement mortar and repointing using an NHL 3.5 lime mortar in the staircase area.
- Selective consolidation of loose stonework and wall core where required.
- Re-fixing of wall head slates where required.
- Selective raking out of OPC mortar and repointing of cracks and joints using NHL 3.5 lime mortar in places on the external walls.

4. Representations received

No third party representations were received.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

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

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

Part 1 Section 2 - Control of works affecting an ancient monument.

Part 1 Section 2 (3) – authorises works where Scottish Ministers or Historic Environment Scotland Have granted consent (scheduled monument consent) for the execution of the works where the works are executed in accordance with the terms of the consent and of any conditions attached to the consent.

Part 1 Section 2 (4) – allows consent to be granted with conditions.

The Scottish Historic Environment Policy

3.14. Scottish Ministers include a monument in the Schedule to secure the long-term legal protection of the monument in the national interest, in situ and as far as

possible in the state it has come down to us. Scheduled monuments have an intrinsic value as monuments, not related to any concept of active use. It is the value of the monument to the nation's heritage, in terms set out in the section on Scheduling in Chapter 2 of SHEP, that is the primary consideration in determining applications for scheduled monument consent.

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.

3.18. Scheduled monument consent applications must be considered in terms of the cultural significance of the monument and the impact that the proposals would have upon this cultural significance. The more important particular features of the monument are to its cultural significance, the greater will be the case against interventions which modify these features.

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 works involve selective masonry consolidation and repointing at Drumin Castle.

The physical impact of these works on the monument and its cultural significance will be comparatively minor, but the benefits to the long term preservation of the monument will be significant. The work will build upon previous consolidation works by making good a decades-worth of exposure and weathering.

The wall heads have been extensively consolidated previously, so the repair of this previous work where mortar has failed and where fixings for slates have failed, and the replacement of the netting (and potentially the fixings) that helps hold the wall head together will unlikely have a significant impact on undisturbed historic fabric.

Likewise, the selective consolidation of loose stonework and wall core on the low level wall heads and vault, and the selective removal of OPC mortar and repointing in lime is sound conservation work and should allow the masonry to breathe better than it does at present.

If the works as set out in the application are not undertaken within a few years then there is a real likelihood that the condition of the masonry will continue to deteriorate, with the likely outcome that the benefits and good work associated with the previous extensive consolidation scheme will begin to get undone.

It is therefore to the benefit of the long term preservation of the monument that the thinning is undertaken now, and I consider that the prescribed methodology will not have an impact on the monument.

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

No impact on Protected Species and Places considered likely – a nesting barn owl has been observed on site, but a wildlife consultant has confirmed that this will not limit work unless offspring are present. The applicant confirms in the application that all personnel will be briefed on ecological concerns and the requirement that this might place on works.

d) Conclusion

The proposed works will be of benefit to the long term preservation of the monument. They will continue to stabilise vulnerable elements of the monument using appropriate reversible techniques that build upon previous consolidation works that have suffered a decades-worth of exposure and weathering. The works can therefore be considered as the minimum level of intervention that is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in a monument, and thus compliant with SHEP 3.16.

The works are also being done to elements of the monument in such a way that their impact on the cultural significance of the monument is minor, and as such the application is compliant with SHEP 3.18.

The works build upon previous extensive consolidation, and they are designed in such a way as to be reversible (where relevant), are well planned with identified funding, and as such the application is compliant with SHEP 3.20.

The application states that a scheduled of works will be presented to HES for agreement two weeks prior to the commencement of works on site, and also states that a photographic record of the works will be taken throughout the works and submitted to HES within four weeks of completing works on site. An updated scheme of works will also be agreed with HES once temporary scaffolding access to the wall heads has been achieved. Given the above, no conditions are recommended to be applied to the consent.

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.

I recommend consent is **granted without conditions**.

7. Conditions

None.

8. Approval

Officer	Oliver Lewis	Date	10/02/2016
Approved by	George Findlater	Date	11/02/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- 1) Location Plan
- 2) Detailed information of proposed works (including photographs and maps)