

Case information

Reference/Case ID	201506666		
Scheduled Monument	Isle of May, lighthouse		
Index no	M887	Grid Ref	NT655993 365500.0000 699300.0000
Date of Application	21 January 2016	Application Received	22 January 2016
Summary of proposed works	Removal and replacement of failing coating on walls, repointing, conservation of decorative panel, and replacement of door and window.		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends approval subject to conditions.

2. Background

Built in 1638, the Isle of May lighthouse was the first such structure in Scotland. The light was a simple beacon fire on the top of a stone tower and continued in use until 1816 when the modern light was installed. At that point, the original tower was nearly demolished, but thanks to the intervention of Walter Scott, it was reduced in height and left as a roofless shell. Subsequently, decorative crenellations were added to the wallhead and the building was reroofed.

In 2015, concerns were expressed about the external coating of the monument which was flaking off in substantial patches. Not realising the building was a scheduled monument, the Northern Lighthouse Board stripped the loose “snowcrete” coating from the building and prepared to recoat the structure. The works were reported to Historic Scotland and enforcement action was undertaken, resulting in an agreement with the Northern Lighthouse Board that they would complete the project under scheduled monument consent. This application is the result of a thorough examination of the conservation needs of the monument.

3. Proposals

Consented Works:

The works comprise the removal of existing external render and paint materials from the monument, repointing, and the application of new render and paint coats. The existing 19th or 20th century door and window will be replaced. The carved panel above the door will be cleaned, and conserved by a carved stone specialist.

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:

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979: Part 1

2 Control of works affecting scheduled monuments.

(1) If any person executes or causes or permits to be executed any works to which this section applies he shall be guilty of an offence unless the works are authorised under this Part of the Act.

(2) This section applies to any of the following works, that is to say –

(a) any works resulting in the demolition or destruction of or any damage to a scheduled monument;

(b) any works for the purpose of removing or repairing a scheduled monument or any part of it or of making any alterations or additions thereto;

(c) any flooding or tipping operations on land in, on or under which there is a scheduled monument.

(4) Scheduled monument consent may be granted unconditionally or subject to conditions (whether with respect to the manner in which or the persons by whom the works or any of the works are to be executed or otherwise).

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3.4. Scheduled monument consent is required for any works that would demolish, destroy, damage, remove, repair, alter or add to the monument or to carry out any flooding or tipping on the monument. It is a criminal offence to carry out any of these works without consent.

3.15. Monuments are subject to decay and the threat of destruction, from natural and human causes. Conservation work is normally needed to prolong the life of a monument, but there is a risk that this can be so invasive that it irreversibly modifies

the monument's character and affects the special interest or features that made the monument important in the first place.

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.

3.17. As each monument will require treatment specific to its individual nature, characteristics, significance and needs, any proposed change to it must be fully and explicitly justified.

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.

3.19. Extensive intervention will only be allowed where it is clearly necessary to secure the longer-term preservation of the monument, or where it will clearly generate public benefits of national importance which outweigh the impact on the national cultural significance of the monument. Such public benefits could come from, for example, interventions which make public access to scheduled monuments easier, or assist public understanding, or will produce economic benefits once the works are completed.

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.

3.22. Where consent for the range of works set out in paragraph 3.4 is granted, conditions are normally applied to ensure the works are undertaken in an appropriate manner. Common requirements are:

- a. the use of appropriate assessment methodologies to determine the full impact of any proposed management, use or development;
 - b. the avoidance of irreversible change particularly wherever its effects cannot be adequately assessed;
 - c. that where change is necessary, strategies should be adopted to mitigate its impact and limit intervention;
 - d. that the management and execution of alteration, including remedial work, is sympathetic to the historic character;
 - e. that appropriate skills and techniques, materials and construction techniques are specified where appropriate;
 - f. that an appropriate level of record is made before, during and after any work and deposited in local and national archives, and, where appropriate, published;
 - g. that it is possible, on close inspection, to differentiate new work from old particularly on masonry structures;
- and,

i. that the design, planning and execution of works on scheduled monuments are undertaken by people with appropriate professional and craft qualifications, skills and experience.

b) Assessment

The works represent repairs and alterations to the monument and as such require scheduled monument consent under the Act.

The principle of the works as outlined in the application is acceptable, as is the choice of practitioners to undertake the works. Consultation with colleagues within HES has, however, raised concerns over some of the materials and techniques proposed in the application, specifically that some materials proposed for use on the site contain additives not found in traditional building materials and their effect on stonework of this nature is untested. Use of such materials could result in an adverse impact on the long-term preservation of the stonework.

The application also notes the need for expert input into the treatment of a carved plaque above the entrance door to the lighthouse. It does not provide a detailed scheme for this work but makes it clear that a specialist will be employed to carry out this aspect of the project.

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

No Protected Species will be affected, but the monument is located within a Protected Place with multiple designations (Special Area of Conservation; Special Protected Area; National Nature Reserve). SNH has advised that the proposed works should not have an adverse impact on natural heritage interests provided they can be undertaken outwith the breeding season for seabirds.

d) Conclusion

In principle, the proposed works represent restoration and repairs to make good actions undertaken in 2015, and to ensure the longer term preservation of the monument. If undertaken using suitable materials and expertise, the works would restore the condition and appearance of the lighthouse and provide it with a weather protective coating to help to maintain and preserve the underlying fabric of the structure. The replacement of the failing door and window will also help to render it wind and water-tight. I am content that under such circumstances, the works would not have an adverse effect on the cultural significance of the monument, and that they represent the minimum necessary to achieve the stated aim of restoring this aspect of the cultural significance of the monument. I therefore consider SHEP policy 3.16 can be met.

The technical detail of the proposals has, however, raised concerns over the proposed materials to be used. There is also a lack of detail provided for the consolidation of the plaque. I therefore consider it necessary to apply conditions to

the consent in accordance with SHEP 3.22 (e) and (i) to ensure that appropriate materials, techniques and personnel are deployed.

6. Recommended decision

I recommend consent is **granted with conditions**.

Subject to compliance with the schedule of conditions, 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

1. The applicant shall provide Historic Environment Scotland with a method statement detailing the working practices and materials to be used to repair and render the masonry. Works must not commence on site until the method statement has been approved, in writing, by Historic Environment Scotland. Any subsequent changes to the works detailed within the method statement must also be approved, in writing, by Historic Environment Scotland.

Reason: to ensure that the monument is not damaged by works or materials required to facilitate the proposed repairs.

2. The applicant shall provide Historic Environment Scotland with a method statement detailing the working practices and materials to be used to clean and consolidate the carved plaque above the entrance door of the lighthouse. Works must not commence on site until the method statement has been approved, in writing, by Historic Scotland Environment Scotland. Any subsequent changes to the works detailed within the method statement must also be approved, in writing, by Historic Scotland Environment Scotland.

Reason: to ensure that the monument is not damaged by works or materials required to facilitate the proposed repairs.

8. Approval

Officer	Deirdre Cameron	Date	16/03/2016
Approved by	George Findlater	Date	16/03/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- 1) Plans, Sections & Elevations as Existing (1598-E-101)
- 2) Site and Location Plan (1598-PL-001)
- 3) Plans, Sections & Elevations as Proposed (1598-PL-101)
- 4) Door Details as Proposed (1598-PL-501)
- 5) Window Details as Proposed (1598-PL-502)
- 6) Supporting Statement - Final