

Scheduled Monument Consent: Report on Handling



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Case information

Reference/Case ID	201600098		
Scheduled Monument	Burghead, fort, graveyard and chapel, including the Clavie		
Index no	M2205	Grid Ref	NJ108691 310700.0000 869100.0000
Date of Application	12 April 2016	Application Received	18 April 2016
Summary of proposed works	Removal of turf and installation of 'grasscrete' to form three additional parking spaces		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for the removal of turf and installation of 'grasscrete' to form three additional parking spaces be granted with conditions.

2. Background

The monument comprises the remains of a massive promontory fort of the early Historic period, some 1500 years old, and the possible remains of a contemporary or later Christian centre. The remains of the fort are in two parts, the upper and lower wards. The upper ward is now defined on its northern and western sides by ramparts of soil and stone. There are no traces of the southern rampart. The original three massive ramparts on the eastern side have largely been built over by the town of Burghead, but one fragment of the system survives, in the form of the Doorie Hill, which has the Clavie Stone on it. The lower ward is bounded on its north side by a rampart. The upper ward forms the core of the monument on the higher ground, with the lower ward an addition to the north.

This application relates to an area of ground within the upper ward adjacent to the existing access road to the former Coastguard cottages. The upper ward has seen significant landscaping and levelling in the 19th century.

The applicant has identified a need for additional parking at this location. The presence of the visitor centre within the former Coastguard lookout building has proved a popular draw, and the requirement for additional parking has come about as a way of addressing the needs of visitors who cannot walk far but who still want to visit the visitor centre and learn more about the monument, especially when the existing spaces are in use.

HES visited the monument in December 2015 to discuss various works with the applicant, and the principle of this application accords with the outcome of these discussions.

3. Proposals

Consented works – Removal of turf and installation of ‘grasscrete’ to form three additional parking spaces.

The proposals comprise:

- Removal of turf, the laying of a bed of dry cement, and then the installation of ‘grasscrete’.

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.

Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement June 2016 (the policy statement)

3.14. A monument is included 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 this policy statement, 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. (Annex 1 sets out guidance as to how cultural significance and national importance should be determined).

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.

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:

- 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;
- h. that any archaeological excavation or other intrusive investigation should be based upon a detailed research strategy, with adequate resources, using appropriately skilled and experienced archaeologists with a satisfactory record of the completion and publication of projects (see Note 3.10); 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 involve the removal of turf, the laying of a bed of dry cement, and then the installation of 'grasscrete' to form three additional car parking spaces.

The physical impact of these works on the preservation of archaeological deposits associated with the monument is likely to be minimal. The upper ward has seen significant landscaping and levelling in the 19th century, but little archaeological work has been done to the SE of the Coastguard cottages; excavation in the gardens of the cottages and to the NW of the cottages in the 1960s revealed 19th century disturbance but with earlier deposits preserved beneath, and therefore there is potential for deposits to be preserved where the additional car parking spaces are preserved. Whilst it is more likely that removal of the turf will reveal ground disturbed by landscaping in the 19th century than buried deposits associated with the fort, there is still potential for stray finds and/or redeposited material to be present.

Whilst there is no archaeological response proposed as part of the application, our understanding of the archaeological potential of this part of the monument means we

consider an appropriate response would be to condition an archaeological watching brief as part of the consent.

The aesthetic impact of these works on the character of the monument will be negligible; a semi-permeable surface has been chosen to help lessen the visual impact, and the works will sit alongside existing un-paved road and parking spaces.

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

No impact on Protected Species and Places.

d) Conclusion

Whilst the works are not for the benefit of the long term preservation of the monument, they are unlikely to have a significant impact upon culturally significant buried archaeological deposits, and therefore can be considered as the minimum level of intervention that is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in a monument, and thus compliant with paragraph 3.16 of the policy statement. Various excavations have shown that the interior of the upper ward has seen significant levelling and landscaping in the 19th century, and given the nature of the works (removal of turf, laying a bed of cement) it is likely that the cultural significance of the deposits below the turf are lower than other parts of the monument where less disturbance is known to have occurred. The works are thus compliant with paragraph 3.18 of the policy statement

The works have been designed to be low impact; more heavily engineered alternatives would likely have a greater impact on buried archaeological deposits. As such, the application is mostly compliant with paragraph 3.20 of the policy statement.

There is no archaeological response proposed as part of the application, and given the potential for stray finds and/or redeposited material to be present an archaeological watching brief will need to be conditioned. This will enable the application to be fully compliant with paragraph 3.20 of the policy statement.

In line with paragraph 3.22 of the policy statement, Condition 1 is to ensure that a WSI is agreed prior to works commencing, and that therefore the archaeological works are undertaken and reported to a satisfactory standard.

6. Recommended decision

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.

I recommend consent is **granted subject to the condition detailed below.**

7. Conditions

1. No works associated with the removal of the turf, the laying of the bed of dry cement, or the installation of the 'grasscrete' shall take place until the applicant has submitted and had approved in writing by Historic Environment Scotland a written scheme of investigation (WSI) to cover an archaeological watching brief for the works. This WSI should include a timetable for the works and should be fully implemented during the course of the approved development.

Reason: to ensure that archaeological information is recovered and recorded to a satisfactory standard.

8. Approval

Officer	Oliver Lewis	Date	30/05/2016
Approved by	George Findlater	Date	1/6/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- 1) Annotated aerial photograph showing location of parking spaces.
- 2) Email from applicant to Business Support, HES dated 17 April 2016 containing description of works and additional location map.