



Case information

Reference/Case ID	201600875		
Scheduled Monuments	St John's Church, church, burial ground and carved stones, Killean Kilchenzie Church		
Index nos	M3030 M260	Grid Ref	NR695445 169500.0000 644500.0000
Date of Application	15 May 2016	Application Received	18 May 2016
Summary of proposed works	Temporary emergency stabilisation of ruins		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends approval of consent for a programme of temporary emergency stabilisation works at both scheduled monuments, which should help preserve them until funding can be found for a long term and fuller programme of conservation works.

2. Background

St John's, or Killean, is one of the most ornate medieval, non-monastic, churches in Argyll. In its first phase, belonging to the twelfth century, the church was modestly sized and the decoration associated with this phase remain reflects that modesty. It was significantly expanded in the early thirteenth century, with the addition of a chancel. The chancel exhibits a fine array of beautiful and intricately carved mouldings and tracery surrounding lancet windows and other features. These architectural details betray an awareness of the latest ecclesiastical styles being adopted throughout Europe at the time of their construction. This period was a time of ecclesiastical reforms throughout Europe, and these two phases span the creation of a formalised parish system, with responsibility for giving pastoral care to the whole community. This was also when the MacSorley and subsequent MacDonald Kings of the Isles were expanding their power base into Kintyre. The construction of such a fine church therefore also encapsulates the cultural aspirations of this emerging Gaelic lordship and their desire to use patronage to stamp their mark on their new territories.

Over the following centuries many of the leading Gaelic kindreds were interred at Killean, leaving behind a wide and particularly fine corpus of Late Medieval West

Highland sculpture. In the nineteenth or twentieth century most of this collection was moved into a fifteenth-century burial aisle for display and protection.

The building at Kilchenzie follows a similar history but does not seem to have attracted the same level of patronage as its neighbour. It is much plainer and has a smaller collection of graveslabs, displayed in a now dilapidated stone shelter in the southwest corner of the church.

Both churches continued in use until well after the Reformation and the amalgamation thereafter of many parishes to reflect smaller congregations and different ecclesiastical hierarchies. The churches and surrounding graveyards continued to be the focus of burial until the twentieth century, and a new graveyard enclosure immediately adjacent to Killean continues that tradition.

Both graveyards are managed by Argyll and Bute Council but maintenance has not extended to the church buildings. Until recently the buildings were covered in vegetation, ivy and trees and some of the buildings are beginning to show signs of structural stress.

Due in part to the links to Gaelic medieval culture, the fine architectural details and the genealogical links to those interred within the graveyards, the sites are of high importance to the local community who have been trying to encourage significantly improved management and initiate a programme of consolidation. To help achieve this end a number of members of the local community have formed the Killean and Kilchenzie Churches Preservation Association (KKCPA).

Over the last decade the community has worked with the Council to see two phases of ivy-cutting and, more recently, the KKCPA undertook a more comprehensive programme of vegetation clearance across the monuments, together with gravestone recording.

Several years ago Historic Scotland funded the production of a conservation strategy for both churches but the resulting scheme was unsatisfactory. The KKCPA approached Historic Scotland again two years ago to try and move things forward again. This resulted in the vegetation clearance, a presentation to the local community about how conservation projects work and what the scope could be, and the provisional offer of grant towards a wider consolidation programme. Unfortunately, the KKCPA has struggled to secure match funding and the project is on hold until an education and engagement programme can be brought forward that would meet the Heritage Lottery Fund's grant requirements.

Over the last winter the KKCPA began to raise serious concerns about the churches' structural stability and engaged Addison Conservation and Design (AC+D) to advise and draw up a remedial scheme.

AC+D have submitted a report outlining their assessment of the structural cohesiveness of both monuments as part of their application. In addition to wider issues cause by vegetation weight, root penetration, water ingress and retention, etc.

the report indicates there are some areas of significant concern where collapse could occur in the short term to immediate future if remedial action is not undertaken. At Killean this includes large splits in the east part of the south wall, where vegetation has dislodged and split the wall core. At Kilchenzie the issues include: 1) the stability of a sub of the south wall, where a now-dead tree stump and the removal of foundation stones has undermined the wall, and; 2) where the loss of supporting masonry under a lintel over a blocked opening means that no support is provided to the surrounding masonry. This is also where the stone shelter is located, so there could also be implications for the medieval graveslabs were this area to fail.

The report and accompanying drawings also set out how these issues could be redressed.

These proposals are also subject to a grant application to Historic Environment Scotland to support the works.

3. Proposals

- Installation of shoring system clamping the south wall of Killean
- Localised packing of voids in the foundations and infill of Kilchenzie
- Selective removal of vegetation

The emphasis of the works is that they should be temporary, minimal and reversible in order to arrest serious stability issues.

Shoring System at Killean

Assisted by scaffold, vegetation would be cut back and pairs of timber battens placed directly against the wallface opposing one another on both sides of the wall. These would be secured in position by wedges and clamped together by timber braces extending over the top of the wall heads and connected to each batten.

Four of these are proposed on the south wall. The clamps are designed to prevent further splitting of the wall.

Packing at Kilchenzie

The voids in the foundation of the stub of the south wall and the voids under the lintel in the south east corner would be packed using hessian bags filled with lime concrete. Installation would require removal of vegetation and loose soil from within the voids. A geotextile layer would separate the masonry from the hessian bags. Once in place the bags would provide support for the masonry above.

Vegetation Removal

Ivy would be cut back from the wallface in discrete areas, only after it was confirmed that the wallface was structurally sound. Roots would be cut and poisoned but roots would not be pulled out or removed from masonry joints.

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:

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

- Part 1 Section 2 - Control of works affecting an ancient monument.
- Part 1 Section 2 (4) - Allows consent to be granted with conditions.

Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement, June 2016

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 the 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.

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;

b) Assessment

The works will have no detrimental physical impact upon the historic fabric of the two monuments. Instead, they will have a significantly positive impact, in that both churches' structural stability would be restored until such time as a long-term conservation scheme be put in place. HES has already offered grant assistance towards a long-term project.

The shoring system will have a visual impact, change the current character of Killean, and detract from the ability to appreciate the historic masonry. However, these impacts would be substantially outweighed by the positive conservation dividends, keeping the historic fabric in place until it can be fully consolidated.

The lime concrete-filled hessian bags will subtly change the character of the historic masonry at Kilchenzie. However, the bags will be recessive in colour and mimic, although not replicate, historic stonework. Should the bags be left in place for a long period any exposed lime concrete would also be recessive in colour. Any negative impacts would, nevertheless, be counterbalanced by the positive impacts caused by restoring the walls' structural stability until a more encompassing scheme can be achieved. The lintel support will also help preserve the gravestones within the stone shelter.

It is hoped that both of these solutions will be temporary, which may also help mitigate any long term concerns about the potential visual impacts.

The ivy removal will have long term benefits for the monuments and the walls' structural stability. This is the single most pressing and ongoing threat to the walls and any reduction in the ivy should help redress weight pressures on the wallheads and reduce water retention. The poisoning of the roots may result in die back and voiding within the wall but any resulting long term structural concerns should be addressed by the wider conservation programme. Also, as the area where ivy reduction will take place is selective, any voiding, etc., should be limited and not have implications for the monument as a whole.

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

No European Protected Species are indicated to be present on the available SNH's GIS data, with the exception of bats. These, however, have not been recorded within 10km of both sites. As the works are minimal, no impacts are predicted.

d) Conclusion

Although there may be some minor visual impacts and changes to the character of both churches the work is necessary to ensure their long term preservation. It is further envisaged that any impacts would be temporary, until a longer term conservation programme can begin. The works would therefore be compliant with the Policy Statement, paragraph 3.16.

The works have been prepared by an accomplished conservation team, incorporating advisors with conservation architecture and engineering experience. The works have been carefully thought through to achieve an acceptable balance between restoring structural stability and minimal intervention. The proposals are therefore also compliant with the Policy Statement, paragraphs 3.20 and 3.22.

The application has, however, been submitted without funding in place. It is therefore unclear when the works are likely to take place.

In order that HES can respond to any queries, and to enable monitoring of the works, a condition has been added.

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 conditions detailed below.**

7. Conditions

- 1 At least four weeks prior to the works commencing on site Historic Environment Scotland shall be provided with a written timetable of works. Historic Environment Scotland shall be notified of any changes to that timetable in writing beforehand.

Reason: to enable Historic Environment Scotland to monitor the progress of the works and to enable a representative of Historic Environment Scotland to visit the site and monitor the works in progress.

8. Approval

Officer	John Raven	Date	10/06/2016
Approved by	Aonghus MacKechnie	Date	10/06/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

1. Killean and Kilchanzie Old Churches, Kintyre: Report
2. Killlean Old Church: Position of Bracing (Drawing SK01)
3. Killlean Church: Bracing of Wall Distortion, General Arrangement (Drawing SK/2)
4. Killlean Church: Bracing Details (Drawing SK/3)
5. Kilchenzie Old Church: Foundation Infill (Drawing SK10)
6. Kilchenzie Old Church: Infill to Support Lintel (Drawing SK11)