

Scheduled Monument Consent: Report on Handling



HISTORIC
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Case information

Reference/Case ID	201601689		
Scheduled Monument	Ellon Castle and garden		
Index no	M7333	Grid Ref	NJ960307 396000.0000 830700.0000
Date of Application	30 June 2016	Application Received	30 June 2016
Summary of proposed works	Installation of a low voltage electricity supply cable under the garden wall and the erection of a new post-mounted meter box		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for the installation of a low voltage electricity supply cable under the garden wall and the erection of a new post-mounted meter box be granted **with conditions**.

2. Background

The historic environment asset and its cultural significance

The monument comprises the remains of old Ellon Castle and the designed garden landscape in which it is set. Ellon Castle was formerly the seat of the Kennedies of Kermuck. It now forms a principal feature in the formal garden laid out for Baillie James Gordon in the early 18th century. The (old) castle stands on a broad terrace overlooking a formal garden laid out in 1715 and still retaining aged yews, apparently remnants of the original planting. The cultural significance of the monument is vested in the surviving remains of a 16th-century castle, incorporating 18th-century additions, which was subsequently made the centerpiece of an 18-century garden.

The applicant

Ellon Castle Gardens Trust Ltd is a community based organisation that was recently formed to take on ownership and management of the old Ellon Castle and its designed garden landscape. Works to the monument involve both ensuring that upstanding masonry is consolidated and safe, and restoring the designed garden landscape, with the aim that the gardens will then be opened up to the wider public. Recent works have focussed on the installation of a welfare unit and interim health and safety works, as prerequisites to create a suitable working environment for volunteers and contractors working to restore the garden.

Pre-application discussions

SSE (utility company) contacted HES in June 2016 to seek advice on the installation of an electricity supply to the area that the welfare unit is located. HES subsequently confirmed to SSE and the applicant that SMC would be required for the works.

3. Proposals

Consented works - Installation of a low voltage electricity supply cable under the garden wall and the erection of a new post-mounted meter box.

The proposals comprise:

- Installation of a low voltage electricity supply cable beneath the garden wall.
- Erection of a post-mounted meter box on the inside of the garden wall.

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.

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, which 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).

3.17. 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;
- c. that where change is necessary, strategies should be adopted to mitigate its impact and limit intervention;
- 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 installation of a low voltage electricity supply cable under the garden wall and the erection of a new post-mounted meter box close to the existing welfare unit.

Overview of works

In order to facilitate the ongoing restoration of the garden, a reliable electricity supply is required for the welfare unit. This supports volunteers and contractors working on bring the garden back into use.

Whilst the works will involve an element of excavation on the inside face of the boundary wall and to its foundations (and the extent of this is not set out in the application), the works relate to an area of the garden that has historically been used for planting, and as such the topsoil would have been routinely turned over and is unlikely to contain archaeological deposits that relate to the cultural significance of the monument. The exception is where the supply cable will need to run under the foundations of the wall, where there is the potential for impact to the foundations of the wall. The aesthetic impact of the works will be the addition of a new post-mounted meter box close to the existing welfare unit.

Methodology

There is no methodology for the works attached to the SMC application. Advice at pre-application stage has led to the cable being run underneath the boundary wall rather than through it. A sufficiently detailed method statement will ensure that excavation is kept to a minimum and that the boundary wall and its foundations are adequately protected during the course of works. This method statement can be conditioned as part of this SMC.

Summary

The works will support the restoration and enhancement of the garden, and therefore benefit the monument's cultural significance. Whilst there will be a below-ground impact, this will be within soil that has regularly been cultivated and as such is unlikely to contain in-situ archaeological deposits of significance. The works do not, therefore, conflict with paragraph 3.16 of the policy statement.

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

No impact on Protected Species and Places.

d) Conclusion

As works to support the conservation of a monument, the application should be viewed as works as set out in both Part 1 Section 2 of the AMAA Act 1979 and paragraph 3.4 of the policy statement.

Whilst the application does not involve works that directly benefit the monument, it instead indirectly benefits the monument by facilitating the ongoing restoration of the garden. The work can take place in such a way that it does not impact on the cultural significance of the monument. As such, the work justified under paragraph 3.16 of the policy statement. However, a condition as outlined in paragraph 3.22 of the policy statement is required in order to provide a detailed method statement for the works so as to ensure that the works are undertaken in an appropriate manner.

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 work associated with the installation of a low voltage electricity supply cable under the garden wall and the erection of a new post-mounted meter box shall take place until Historic Environment Scotland has approved in writing a method statement detailing: 1) how the trench will be dug and the cable installed, and; 2) how the post for the meter will be installed.

Reason: to ensure that historic fabric is adequately protected during the course of works.

8. Approval

Officer	Oliver Lewis	Date	23/08/2016
Approved by	John Raven	Date	24/08/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Electricity supply cable plan.