

# Scheduled Monument Consent: Report on Handling



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## Case information

<b>Reference/Case ID</b>	201601739		
<b>Scheduled Monument</b>	Holyrood Abbey, precinct and associated remains		
<b>Index no</b>	M13031	<b>Grid Ref</b>	NT269739 326900.0000 673900.0000
<b>Date of Application</b>	30 June 2016	<b>Application Received</b>	01 July 2016
<b>Summary of proposed works</b>	Felling of two ash trees considered unsafe after storm damage.		

## 1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for the felling of storm damaged trees, to be granted without conditions.

## 2. Background

The monument comprises Holyrood Abbey, precinct and associated remains. Holyrood Abbey was founded by King David I in 1128. The first church was modest, with an aisle-less nave, short transepts and a short straight-ended choir. It was modelled on Merton Priory in Surrey and was home to the first Augustinian monks brought by David I to Holyrood. This church was replaced by a magnificent cathedral-sized church between 1195 and 1230. The domestic ranges and cloister lay to the S of the church and may have been demolished in 1570. Their remains now lie beneath the palace gardens.

This monument is of national importance because it has an inherent potential to make a significant addition to our understanding of the past, in particular of a prominent medieval abbey and the origins and development of what became the principal royal palace in Scotland from the early 16th century onwards. The remains of Holyrood Abbey represent evidence for one of Scotland's foremost medieval monastic houses, adapted and modified at the Reformation.

This application is for the removal of damaged and unsafe ash trees in the Palace Gardens. After falling and broken branches in January and February 2016 the diseased ash trees (091 and 094) are recommended for felling to assure safe public access to the gardens. Class V emergency works were undertaken in June 2016 to remove dangerous branches (Ref: 201601740); this application is now for the full

felling of these trees. Pre application discussions between District Architect Karen Williamson and Senior Heritage Management Officer Deirdre Cameron took place at this time and the application accords with these discussions.

### **3. Proposals**

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Consented works: The felling of two ash trees.

The proposed works will involve the

- Section felling of the trees to avoid damage to underlying archaeology
- cutting of the stumps to 100mm above ground level;
- stumps then to be ground down to 100mm below existing ground level

The application is supported by a method statement for the felling and removal of the trees and a plan detailing their location.

### **4. Representations received**

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No representations were received.

### **5. Report**

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#### **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).

3.18. 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 the felling and removal of damaged trees to the south of Holyrood Palace Gardens.

The operation to fell and remove the two trees has been designed so that felling is sectional, and the stumps will be cut and then ground down. The physical impact of these works on the monument will be minimal; the methodology for removal is such that the operation to remove the trees will not cause additional damage or result in additional intervention to archaeological deposits.

It is therefore to the benefit of the long term preservation of the monument that the felling is undertaken, 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**

None predicted. Whilst tree cavities are potential roost sites HES' Natural Heritage Advisor has been consulted for appropriate date of commencement of work

#### **d) Conclusion**

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

The application, comprising the felling of two ash trees in Holyrood Palace Gardens, is the minimum necessary to conserve what is culturally significant in this scheduled monument. The works are 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 paragraphs 3.16 and 3.18 of the policy statement.

The application meets paragraph 3.20 which demonstrates/sets out that the works are carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned.

From the information provided with this application further conditions as outlined in paragraph 3.22 to ensure the works are undertaken in an appropriate manner are not required.

## 6. Recommended decision

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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

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No conditions required.

## 8. Approval

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<b>Officer</b>	<b>Hazel Johnson</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>24/08/2016</b>
<b>Approved by</b>	<b>George Findlater</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>25/08/2016</b>

### Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Location Plan Ref: 2016-05-(90)-001A
- Tree Assessment Reports Ref: Ash trees 091 and 094
- Annotated Photographs Ref: email dated 03 June 2016
- Protected Species Assessment Ref: email from RT 03.06.16