



Case Information

Reference/Case ID	300018680		
Scheduled Monument	Lochmaben Peel and Castle		
Index no	SM90205	Grid ref	NY 00000 0
Date application validated	09 November 2016		
Summary of proposed works	Mortar and masonry survey, sampling and analysis		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for mortar and masonry survey, sampling and analysis be granted.

2. Background

The monument comprises the remains of the peel and stone castle at Castle Loch, Lochmaben. The monument survives as earthworks, substantial stone structures and archaeology.

Lochmaben Castle is situated on a promontory projecting into Castle Loch. The earliest phase of castle is thought to have been a motte and bailey, which was occupied and redefended by the invading army of Edward I of England at the end of the 13th Century. These records may, however, refer to one of the Bruce family's strongholds nearby.

The development of the site has been subject to some debate and is not fully understood. The first documentary evidence for stone buildings in the castle dates to 1364, in a reference to repairs. A stone castle occupied the inner ward of the peel and comprised an impressive curtain wall and front gate. The castle remained in English hands for much of the 14th Century but fell to the Earl of Douglas in 1384 and later became a royal possession.

The monument is of national importance as the best-preserved, and earliest, example of the peels built in Scotland by Edward I and because it is a impressive



example of a stone medieval castle. It has the potential to produce further evidence related to the development of a castle, which was of pivotal importance within southwest Scotland. The castle is a Property In Care.

The application has been informed by a rapid preliminary survey. Access to upstanding parts of the castle is restricted because of safety concerns. But there are two large fragments of masonry 'tumble' in the northeast of the castle that are easily accessible. These are believed to be associated with primary mortar. The survey noted that this primary mortar is highly degraded. Analysis of this mortar was assessed as having good potential to inform our understanding of the development of the castle. It was recommended that this be undertaken immediately because of the vulnerability of the mortar. Further sampling in upstanding parts of the structure is also proposed; this would be subject to discussion and agreement with the HES District Architect to ensure it is safe and practical.

The proposed work forms part of the Scottish Medieval Castles and Chapels C-14 Project and has been discussed with HES Casework Team in advance. This included email correspondence during the application regarding the proposed reporting arrangements. The application has been amended to take HES comments into account. The application is supported by a report of the preliminary survey and a sampling strategy document.

3. Proposals

- Collection of mortar samples from several contexts.
- Removal from site for lab-based analysis.

A mortar sample from an area measuring approximately 50 x 50 x 50mm would be extracted from the two large fragments of masonry 'tumble' (referred to as Contexts 1 and 2 in the application).

One to three samples of the same dimensions would be taken from various locations in the upstanding remains where access is restricted.

An additional number of samples (approximately 0.5g or 1 cm³) containing relict fuel would be sought from Contexts 1 and 2 and from the upstanding structure.

The samples would be removed using hand tools. Brushing or gentle trowelling may be used to investigate mortars. No samples would be retrieved where this would be likely to affect the conservation of the monument. The work would be undertaken by a suitably experienced academic and qualified stonemason from the University of Stirling, who has successfully undertaken similar work at other monuments.



The samples would be stored appropriately. They would be thin sectioned and examined using effective types of microscopy. Samples would be radiocarbon dated by the SUERC laboratory.

The site work would be described in a short report, with a plan showing the sample contexts, to be supplied to HES within 4 weeks of the completion of site works. A full report would be submitted following completion of all analyses and expected to be within 9 months. A summary report would be submitted to the OASIS online database. Any variation to the reporting arrangements would be subject to agreement with HES.

Sampling in the restricted access parts of the monument would be subject to further discussion and approval of HES Conservation directorate.

4. Representations received

No representations have been received.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

The application should be considered with the following legislative and policy considerations in mind:

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

Part 1 Section 2: Control of works affecting scheduled monuments.

Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement June 2016

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.

3.18. 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 proposed works involve the retrieval and removal of small mortar samples from a limited number of locations at Lochmaben Castle. This work forms part of the Scottish Medieval Castles and Chapels C-14 Project, which aims to improve our understanding of the development of these structures. The development of Lochmaben Castle is poorly understood and subject to debate. The proposed work has the potential to significantly increase our understanding of this monument and the character of English invasions. Also, more generally, the development of castles throughout Scotland.

It is proposed to remove a number of mortar samples from locations that have been identified during preliminary survey. The work would be undertaken by a suitably experienced archaeologist with a stonemasonry qualification. They would ensure that samples were retrieved from locations with the potential to increase our understanding of the monument whilst not adversely affecting the conservation of the monument. The removal of these samples would have no substantive physical impact on the monument and would not visually alter it. The cultural significance of the monument would be unaltered by the work.

Because the works would not affect the conservation or cultural significance of the monument they are consistent with paragraphs 3.14 and 3.18 of the policy statement.

The application is supported by the results of a preliminary survey and proposed strategy. Taken together these provide a strong justification and a carefully considered methodology for site works and subsequent analyses. Further correspondence during the application has confirmed that the works would be subject to suitable reporting, which would include making the results publicly available. Addressing gaps in our understanding of this monument and making the information publicly available is assessed as a considerable benefit.

The project team are highly experienced and have an established track record of successful delivery of similar projects; the work forms part of the Scottish Medieval Castles and Chapels C-14 Project. The application reflects all professional expectations and is assessed as consistent with paragraph 3.20 of the policy statement.



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

The applicant has contacted SNH because the proposed work would be undertaken in a location that is adjacent to a SSSI. SNH have confirmed that their consent is not required and they are not aware of any protected species that would be affected by the proposed works.

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 proposed works, comprising mortar sampling and analyses, would have no impact on the cultural significance of the monument. They do not, therefore, conflict with paragraph 3.18 of the policy statement.

The proposed work would address a gap in our understanding of the castle's development. The application meets paragraph 3.20 because it has demonstrated that the works have been carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned. Consequently, no conditions are considered necessary.

6. Recommended decision

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

No conditions have been attached to this decision.

8. Approval

Case officer	Simon Stronach	Date	10 November 2016
Approved by	John Raven	Date	10 November 2016



Annex A – list of supporting documents

- 1) Preliminary mortar and masonry survey of Lochmaben Castle. Dumfriesshire (SC14-LCD-PRE-01)
- 2) Proposed mortar sampling strategy at Lochmaben Castle, Dumfriesshire (SC14-LCD-PRE-02)
- 3) Email from applicant to Historic Environment Scotland Casework Team (10 November 2016)