



Case Information

Reference/Case ID		300018851	
Scheduled Monument	Holyrood Abbey, precinct and associated remains		
Index no	SM13031	Grid ref	NT 26900 73900
Date application validated		13 December 2016	
Summary of proposed works		Metal Access stair replacement from Palace Gardens to Croft an Rìgh	

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval be granted.

2. Background

The monument comprises the remains of Holyrood Abbey and precinct, which also incorporates elements of the gardens and buildings surrounding the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Holyrood Abbey was founded in 1128 by the Augustinian order. As the importance of the Abbey grew, so did its royal patronage, with the guest accommodation for the Abbey developing into a royal palace under the aegis of James IV. By the mid-16th century, the Palace was the principle royal residence in Scotland, a status it enjoys to this day. At the same time, the Abbey was dissolved during the Reformation, although the Abbey church saw reuse as the parochial church for the Canongate burgh, then as the Chapel of the Order of the Thistle until the roof collapsed in 1768, after which it was abandoned.

The scheduled area is irregular in shape, covering the current enclosed area of the Palace grounds. The scheduling designation incorporates a large number of exclusions including the above ground elements of all buildings, sheds and their floors, except for the upstanding remains of Holyrood Abbey and Queen Mary's Bath. The above ground elements of all boundary walls, gates, railings, street furniture, statues, sundials, fountains and structures built after 1950 are also excluded, as are the top 500mm of North Carriage Drive and Abbey Strand roads and the top 300mm of all other surfaced roads.



The monument is of national importance for its 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. In the vicinity and beneath the present palace building are significant remains of early structures that have the potential to increase our understanding of the palace's construction, development and use, and its evolving relationship with adjacent structures, especially Holyrood Abbey. The existing garden and its archaeology have the potential to expand our knowledge of the post-Reformation use of Church lands and the post-union use of Crown lands. The site's varied and well-preserved buried archaeology can also provide information about the economy and trading contacts of the abbey and palace.

The application will affect an area near the northern edge of the scheduled area where a gate in the boundary wall of the Palace gardens allows access to and from the Historic Environment Scotland depot at Croft an Rìgh. The ground level drops approximately 2.5m from the gardens to the depot and an existing metal stair allows access between the two areas. The application is for the replacement of this stair. It has been submitted by Historic Environment Scotland's Conservation Directorate.

The application is supported by a location plan, a technical drawing showing the site as existing, a technical drawing showing the design for the proposed replacement and a Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological monitoring and recording. The applicant has also subsequently submitted a change to the design in an e-mail dated 16 January sent by Karen Williamson, HES District Architect. In that e-mail, Ms Williamson advises that the width of the stair will be 1000mm rather than the 900mm shown on the submitted plans. This change has been prompted by amended Technical Standards Scotland requirements for non-domestic buildings which came into effect after the application was submitted.

HES Heritage Management Directorate has undertaken pre-application discussions with the applicant regarding the scope and timing of works, and this application accords with the outcome of those discussions.

3. Proposals

Metal access stair replacement from Palace Gardens to Croft an Rìgh.

Consented works

- Insertion of one new fixing into the boundary wall between Holyrood Palace gardens and Croft an Rìgh,
- Excavation and infilling of pit for foundation for new stair

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ALBA

- Insertion of stone infill step at top of stair to provide level access
- Installation of new stair
- Archaeological monitoring of the works

It should be noted that the existing stair is a structure built after 1950 and as such is specifically excluded from the scheduling designation. Consent is therefore not required for its removal.

Aims

To ensure an existing element of the access infrastructure for the Palace and Abbey grounds meets modern standards.

4. Representations received

No third party representations were 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.

3.15. Monuments are subject to decay and the threat of destruction, from natural and human causes. Conservation work is normally needed to prolong the life of a monument, but there is a risk that this can be so invasive that it irreversibly modifies the monument's character and affects the special interest or features that made the monument important in the first place.



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.

3.17. 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.

3.20. 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 insertion of a replacement metal stair to facilitate access between the gardens of Holyrood Palace and Croft an Rìgh. This is intended to comply with current regulatory requirements and thereby provide a safe working environment for HES staff. The stair could also be utilised as a safe evacuation route from the gardens or Palace in case of emergency.

The physical impact of the proposed works would comprise the insertion of one additional fixing point for the stair in a mortar joint within the boundary wall, the addition of a single additional stone step level at the top of the stair, the creation of a new concrete foundation for the stair and the installation of the new stair, which is wider and shallower than the current stair. This will result in minimal disturbance to the boundary wall and ground levels at the upper reach of the stairs and the disturbance of an area of ground approximately 1000mm by 450mm by 450mm to create a suitable foundation for the stair at its base.

While the works are not an exact "like for like" replacement of existing modern infrastructure, they come very close to such a replacement and the minimal disturbance that will result will not affect the cultural significance of the monument.

The application has been accompanied by a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological monitoring and recording that sets out a well-considered, appropriate and careful methodology.



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

No impact on Protected Species and Places considered likely – see PP&S assessment.

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.

I am content that the works described in this application will result in minimal disturbance to the physical remains of the monument and will not significantly alter its appearance or setting. As such I consider they will have a minimal impact on the cultural significance of the monument, in accordance with sections 3.16 and 3.18 of the Policy Statement.

The application meets paragraph 3.20 of the Policy Statement as 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	Deirdre Cameron	Date	24 January 2017
Approved by	Iona Murray	Date	24 January 2017



Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Location plan: Croft-an-Righ House, external access stair site plan.
- Drawing 002_allexisting: Croft-an-Righ House, external access stair as existing
- Drawing 003_allproposed: Croft-an-Righ House, external access stair as proposed
- Written Scheme of Investigation, Croft an Righ (Kirkdale Archaeology, 30 September 2016)
- E-mail of 16 January 2017 from Karen Williamson to Deirdre Cameron noting requirement to change width of new stair from 900mm to 1000mm to comply with revised regulations