

## Case information

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<b>Reference/Case ID</b>	201504978		
<b>Scheduled Monument</b>	Kilmun Collegiate Church, tower and burial ground		
<b>Index no</b>	M5260	<b>Grid Ref</b>	NS165820 216500.0000 682000.0000
<b>Date of Application</b>	04 November 2015	<b>Application Received</b>	05 November 2015
<b>Summary of proposed works</b>	Relocation of early medieval cross-slab to the church interior		

### 1. Summary recommendation

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This report recommends approval of proposals to relocate an early medieval cross-slab, from its current, exposed position in the graveyard surrounding the church, to inside the church, where it can be better protected and displayed.

### 2. Background

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The early medieval cross-slab currently sits, recumbent, embedded but exposed within the turf of the graveyard. The carvings are vulnerable and exposed to inclement weather and strimming, during graveyard maintenance, and are showing signs of erosion. The current proposals to bring the cross-slab inside the church will remove these risks and also allow it to be displayed and become a centre piece within the church. This should encourage it to be better appreciated and more fully embraced and cared for in the long term by the community. It will also form part of a wider interpretation programme, involving works throughout the monument, which should allow the site to be better known and attract visitors.

The proposals have been discussed with Heritage Management and Conservation Group Directorates within Historic Environment Scotland prior to the application being submitted.

### 3. Proposals

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Relocation of early medieval cross-slab to the church interior

The works will involve carefully lifting and transporting the stone from its current location to a newly created space inside the church (the plans appear to confuse east and west but this is immaterial to consideration of the case). The works would be conducted by experienced stone masons but no conservation work is proposed.

#### 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:

##### **The Scottish Historic Environment Policy (2011) (SHEP)**

SHEP sets out the relevant considerations to be taken into account when assessing applications for change at scheduled monuments:

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. (Annex 1 sets out guidance as to how cultural significance and national importance should be determined.)

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.

## **Carved Stones, Scottish Executive Policy and Guidance, 2005**

**4.3.1** The principles of minimum intervention and sustainability should apply in any conservation works associated with a carved stone. Interventions need to be justified on conservation grounds, appropriate, carefully considered, authoritatively based, properly planned and executed and, where possible, reversible. Historic Scotland, in liaison with others, provides guidance, including guidelines for treatment of specific categories of carved stones.

**4.3.3** It is particularly important that the conservation strategy takes into consideration the relationship of the carved stone to its natural and cultural surroundings. Only rarely is a culturally significant carved stone self-contained within definite boundaries – there is usually a visible link to its broader environment, or the carved stone may be part of a larger monument or cultural landscape, all or part of which contributes to an understanding of its historical context. Care of a carved stone may therefore sometimes involve actions outside the immediate (legal) boundaries around the carved stone, or be better addressed as part of a holistic approach to a monument or historic landscape (such as a graveyard).

**4.3.4** There is a presumption in favour of the retention of the physical association of a carved stone with its locality, where this is feasible. The importance of the precise present location to the overall significance of the carved stone and its site therefore requires careful assessment before any decisions are made about moving it. Where a carved stone which still possesses visible monumental qualities is believed to be *in situ* or in a place of significance, the presumption is that it will not be moved unless the importance of retaining it there is outweighed by demonstrable conservation needs that cannot be satisfied in any other way. Such considerations also need to take into account not simply archaeological and historical factors, but also social and economic ones. In the case of some carved stones that are found beneath the present ground surface, reburial may be the most appropriate course of action.

**4.3.6** If considering moving a carved stone, particularly if moving to a new structure, consideration needs to be given to:

- future public access to the structure and its contents, and how these can be displayed
- long-term responsibility for conservation of the carved stone, including regular monitoring and access to specialist conservation skills
- long-term stability and maintenance responsibilities of the structure housing the carved stone
- how the carved stone can be safely relocated, both with reference to the carved stone itself and the health and safety of those persons involved in the project

**4.3.26** Carved stones should be stored in such a way that they are secure and free from inadvertent damage, yet as publicly accessible as possible. Stones placed in storage should be isolated from one another and be protected from any external influences that might affect their long-term preservation. The storage environment itself should also be conducive to their long-term preservation.

## **b) Assessment**

It seems likely that the cross-slab has been moved several times before ending up in its current location. Its existing location does not appear to have any historical significance and therefore makes little contribution to its overall cultural significance. This also means that there are unlikely to be any related archaeological deposits.

Display within the church will fit within a wider community project to celebrate their heritage and raise the profile of the site. It should remove the erosion risks and allow for the monument's long term preservation.

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

Any interventions are likely to be minimal so no natural heritage implication are likely to be incurred.

## **d) Conclusion**

Although the works would result in a significant change to the cross-slab's current circumstances, this is unlikely to have any significant impact to its cultural significance or its wider contribution to the monument's cultural significance. The association with the church will be retained, erosion risks will be removed and it will be better appreciated and celebrated. There would therefore be both conservation and wider public benefits. Consequently the proposals are compliant with the paragraphs of SHEP and the Carved Stones Policy identified above.

No details of the mounting and fixings for the cross-slab within the church have been provided. Whilst this does not alter the acceptability of the principle of the proposals and is likely to be easily achievable given the slab's condition, this does need to be agreed to ensure that no stress is placed on the slab in its new position. A suspensive condition has been added.

It would also be helpful to monitor the works, so an additional condition has been added.

## **6. Recommended decision**

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I recommend consent is **granted, subject to the conditions detailed below.**

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.

## 7. Conditions

1 No works shall commence on site until Historic Environment Scotland has agreed in writing the proposals for the mounting and fixings of the cross-slab within the church.

*Reason: to ensure that any impacts or future pressures on the cross-slab are minimised.*

2 At least two weeks prior to the works commencing on site Historic Environment Scotland shall be provided with a written timetable of works. Any subsequent changes to that timetable shall be notified to Historic Environment Scotland beforehand.

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

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## 8. Approval

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<b>Officer</b>	<b>John Raven</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>13/11/2015</b>
<b>Approved by</b>	<b>George Findlater</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>13/11/2015</b>

## Annex A – list of supporting documents

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| 1. A short essay concerning the church, its history and archaeology, offering a rationale for moving the carved stone, including a plan of the graveyard showing the location of the stone at present. | Rationale                               |
| 2. A plan of the church showing the proposed new location of the stone on its plinth and the rearranged furniture to accommodate it                                                                    | Kilmun Plan with proposed rearrangement |
| 3. Description of proposed method by James Innes & Son (Doune) for lifting, removal and mounting of stone.                                                                                             | Innes - Kilmun stone method statement.  |