

Case information

Reference/Case ID	201504179		
Scheduled Monument	Portmahomack monastic settlement, 95m SSW of Tarbat West Church		
Index no	M12793	Grid Ref	NH914839 291400.0000 883900.0000
Date of Application	6 October 2015	Application Received	6 October 2015
Summary of proposed works	Installation of a new electricity supply to BT high speed Internet box/cabinet		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends approval for the installation of a new electricity supply to BT high speed Internet box/cabinet.

2. Background

The monument comprises the buried remains of a monastic settlement the buried remains of a large early historic, Pictish monastic settlement, used from the 6th to 8th centuries AD and later re-occupied. Archaeological excavations have revealed the foundations of buildings surviving within the settlement, and aerial photographs show the cropmark of a D-shaped boundary ditch surrounding the settlement and enclosing the present Tarbat West Church.

The applicant sought pre-application advice on the proposal and we advised in our response of 23 December 2014 that Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) would be needed for the works.

3. Proposals

The proposals are to lay an underground cable along the road verge to provide a new electricity supply to BT high speed Internet box/cabinet.

4. Representations received

No representation were received.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

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

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.

3.19. 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.

b) Assessment

The proposed works will result in a high speed Internet connection which will have considerable public benefits. The works proposed in this application are located in the northern part of the scheduled area of the monument in a verge adjacent to the road. This is not considered to be a particularly archaeologically sensitive area given the likely previous ground disturbance. Any impacts on the historic fabric of the monument from the works will be minimal, and the Watching Brief included with the application provides for an archaeologist on site during the works to identify and record any unexpected deposits and features encountered.

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

None

d) Conclusion

The proposed works are not in conflict with Section 3.16 of the SHEP in that they are likely to represent a minimum level of intervention. The works will also have public benefits and have been carefully considered in order to mitigate any impacts. The works are therefore equally compliant with 3.19 and 3.20 of SHEP.

However, as there are no proposals to record or monitor any resulting impacts, a related condition has therefore been recommended.

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.

7. Conditions

1. At least two weeks before any works begin on site, the applicant shall inform Historic Environment Scotland and the local authority archaeologist in writing of the likely timetable of works.

Reason: to enable a representative of Historic Environment Scotland to have the opportunity to inspect the work for which consent is granted, and to inform the local authority archaeological service of the proposed works.

2. Should any unexpected archaeological deposits which were not anticipated in the project design be discovered during excavation all works on site shall cease, the deposits will not be disturbed further and works shall not recommence without prior written consultation with and prior written agreement from Historic Environment Scotland.

Reason: to ensure that any unexpected archaeological discoveries made during excavation are avoided, where appropriate, or adequately recorded and treated in any post-excavation work.

3. Two weeks after completion of the works on site, the applicant will provide to Historic Environment Scotland annotated photographs taken before, during and after the works.

Reason: To ensure that an accurate record of works to the monument is maintained.

8. Approval

Officer	Nicola Hall	Date	29/10/2015
Approved by	John Raven	Date	2/11/15

Annex A – list of supporting documents

1:250 Proposed Works Plan
1: 1000 Location Plan
Copy of Historic Scotland Letter
Watching Brief
Annotated Photographs