

Case information

Reference/Case ID	201505011		
Scheduled Monument	Eden Castle		
Index no	M5638	Grid Ref	NJ697587 369700.0000 858700.0000
Date of Application	04 November 2015	Application Received	06 November 2015
Summary of proposed works	Sectional felling of an elder tree growing within the castle, the removal of all arisings, and the poisoning of the stump		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for the sectional felling of an elder tree growing within the castle, the removal of all arisings, and the poisoning of the stump be granted without conditions.

2. Background

The monument comprises the remains of a 16th/17th century towerhouse, known as Eden Castle. The original plan consisted of a main block lying N-S with a tower at the SW angle and another (now destroyed) at the NE angle. A round tower, now also destroyed, was added to the NW angle. Only the S portions of the tower survive. The building is rubble built and has had a vaulted basement and two upper storeys. The monument is of national importance as a good example, albeit reduced, of a fortified towerhouse dating from the 16th century.

HES Field Officer visited the monument in October 2015 on a routine monitoring visit, and discussed the condition of the monument with the landowner. A mature elder tree was noted growing within the interior of the castle on top of the vault. As its root growth is likely to be causing damage to the masonry, the landowner agreed to remove it.

HES Field Officer has since undertaken discussions with the applicant regarding the approach to works, and this application accords with the outcome of these discussions.

3. Proposals

Consented works – sectional felling of an elder tree growing within the castle, the removal of all arisings, and the poisoning of the stump.

The proposals comprise:

- Felling of a single elder tree growing within the castle, the removal of all arisings, and the poisoning of the stump.
- All felling will be sectional, with timber extracted by hand onto the livestock handling area to the immediate N of the castle, and the stump will be treated with an appropriate herbicide to prevent regeneration.

4. Representations received

No third party representations were received.

5. Report

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.

Part 1 Section 2 (3) – authorises works where Scottish Ministers or Historic Environment Scotland have granted consent (scheduled monument consent) for the execution of the works where the works are executed in accordance with the terms of the consent and of any conditions attached to the consent.

The Scottish Historic Environment Policy

3.14. Scottish Ministers include a monument 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 SHEP, that 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.

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 sectional felling of an elder tree growing within the castle, the removal of all arisings, and the poisoning of the stump. The physical impact of these works on the preservation of the monument will be minimal, but the outcome will be beneficial; the operation to remove the tree has been designed so that all felling is sectional, with cut timber then being removed by hand from the scheduled area and the stump poisoned to prevent regeneration.

The existing growth of the tree is likely to have caused damage to the masonry; removing the tree now will prevent further disturbance through root growth and will remove the abrasive effect of branches on masonry.

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

d) Conclusion

The proposed works will be of benefit to the long term preservation of the monument. They will result in the removal of a tree that will likely have been causing damage to historic masonry, and the methodology for removal is such that the operation to remove the tree will not cause additional damage or result in additional intervention to archaeological deposits and features.

The works can therefore be considered as the minimum level of intervention that is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in a monument, and thus compliant with SHEP 3.16.

The works are being undertaken on the remains of the vault of the castle, and are for monument conservation purposes. Further root growth could damage the vault more than at present. Loss of the vault could threaten the integrity of the remainder of the monument, so these works will have a beneficial impact on an area of the castle of high cultural significance, thus making the application compliant with SHEP 3.18.

The works have been designed to have a low residual impact on the scheduled monument, are well planned, and as such the application is compliant with SHEP 3.20.

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

None

8. Approval

Officer	Oliver Lewis	Date	23/12/2015
Approved by	George Findlater	Date	24/12/2015

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Location maps (at 1:5000 and 1:15,000)
- Photograph of castle from the north