

Case information

Reference/Case ID	201506135		
Scheduled Monument	St Mary's Chapel, Wyre		
Index no	M90317	Grid Ref	HY 4430 2628
Date of Application	22 December 2015	Application Received	22 December 2015
Summary of proposed works	Change of interpretation panel location		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that consent be granted.

2. Background

The monument comprises a medieval chapel and a walled burial ground surrounding it on the island of Wyre, which forms part of the Orkney Islands. The chapel was built in the late 12th century and was partially restored in the late 19th or early 20th century. It is a property in the care of Scottish Ministers.

The monument is of national importance as a fine example of a small 12th century chapel, which contributes to our understanding of medieval ecclesiastical architecture and religious life. Its significance is enhanced by its close association with Cobbie Row's Castle, which lies immediately to the west.

3. Proposals

Consented works

Change of interpretation panel location.

Description of works

The proposed work would remove an existing interpretation panel and fit a new, replacement panel on the other side of the same wall. The existing panel is located on the external, west-facing, side of the wall around the burial ground, where it would

normally be encountered by visitors on exiting the adjacent Cubbie Row's Castle. The work would update the panel's appearance and content, and move it to a location where it would provide a better welcome to visitors and enable useful visitor management messages to be provided earlier in visits.

The panel would be fixed into joints in the burial ground wall and so would have a very limited impact on the fabric of the monument. The design would be in accordance with HES Interpretation Unit house style, which would insure that the panel would be visually discreet and that its visual impact would be minimal.

4. Representations received

No representations have been received.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

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

AMAAA 1979, Part 1 Section 2:
control of works affecting an ancient monument.

The Scottish Historic Environment Policy (2011):

3.4. Scheduled monument consent is required for any works that would demolish, destroy, damage, remove, repair, alter or add to the monument or to carry out any flooding or tipping on the monument. It is a criminal offence to carry out any of these works without consent.

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.

4.32. Subject to the overriding objective of conservation and to the careful consideration of the safety of visitors and staff, Scottish Ministers are committed to improving, enhancing and encouraging all forms of access and understanding at their properties and their collections, and to setting the highest standards.

b) Assessment

The proposals would involve the removal of an interpretation panel from one face of a burial ground wall and the fixing of a replacement on the opposite face. The panel would be fixed to the wall using the joints between stones. This would not affect the fabric of the monument in a way that adversely affects its cultural significance. The panel would be sensitively designed and would not have a visual effect that would harm the monument.

The movement of the panel would make it more likely to be read near the start of a visit and hence contribute positively to an understanding of the monument. The proposed works appear to have been carefully considered and properly planned.

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

The application site does not lie in a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area. National Biodiversity Network GIS data sets indicate no evidence for Protected Species in the relevant 100m grid squares.

d) Conclusion

The proposal is to replace an interpretation panel with an updated version in a more appropriate location. The panel would be fitted and designed in such a way as to have negligible impact on the cultural significance of the monument. Consequently, the proposals accord with SHEP 3.18.

The works can be regarded as the minimum level of intervention required to move the panel and would not harm the cultural significance of the monument (SHEP 3.16). The proposal appears to be sensitively designed and planned, according with SHEP 3.20.

As the proposed works would not have an adverse effect on the conservation of the monument and would improve visitors' understanding, they accord with SHEP 4.32, which relates to the management of properties in care.

6. Recommended decision

The works proposed are considered acceptable in meeting the terms of national policy for scheduled monuments and properties in care, and also accounting for other material considerations.

7. Conditions

Granted without conditions.

8. Approval

Officer	Simon Stronach	Date	7/1/2016
Approved by	John Raven	Date	7/1/16

Annex A – list of supporting documents

Location Plan and Plan of panel relocation (Dwg No. 90/317/5)

Cubbie Roo's Castle/St Mary's Church – Interpretation Plan

Fitting instructions for wall mounted signs