

Case information

Reference/Case ID	201505219		
Scheduled Monument	Fort George		
Index no	M6692	Grid Ref	NH759566 275900.0000 856600.0000
Date of Application	16 November 2015	Application Received	20 November 2015
Summary of proposed works	The conversion of the casemates building 22 into armouries		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends approval for the conversion of the casemates building 22 into armouries.

2. Background

Fort George comprises an artillery fort which was built by the Government in the aftermath of the 1745 Jacobite Rising to replace the earlier fort at Inverness. Construction began in 1748 and was completed in 1769 and the fort is still a working army base. Parts of the site are open to the public as a Property in Care on behalf of Scottish Ministers and a Memorandum of Agreement exists between the Ministry of Defence and Historic Environment Scotland.

The applicant has engaged in pre-application discussions prior to the submission of the SMC.

3. Proposals

The proposed works are to the interior of the buildings and comprise the installation of a water management system, the re-lining of the walls, the installation of a new ventilation system, new electrics and heating, new security doors and alarm systems. This is illustrated in the accompanying drawings and includes the following elements:

1. Masonry repairs: remove stud wall lining and masonry plaster, undertake a light mechanical scabbing and made good.
2. Vaults: installation of waterproofing system to walls and arched ceilings within the vaults only comprising a Kontract 8 mesh membrane with weepholes. Also includes works to plasterwork.
3. Channel drains, service pipe, concrete floor and skirting. Drainage to be undertaken via a plastic sheet which will funnel into a channel drain.
4. Tiles: existing tiles to be removed.

5. Door: existing double door (and grille) to be removed and replaced with new security door
6. Floor: existing floor to be removed to accommodate proposed floor channel drain
7. New electrics and alarm system
8. New heating system with ventilation

4. Representations received

No representations were received. In addition, Conservation Group are aware of, and content with, the proposals.

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

All of the works are internal and can effectively be described as the replacement of the drylining within the casemates. The main potential impact to historic fabric (masonry) comes from the masonry repairs which involve stripping out the stud wall lining in the first instance, and the removal of masonry plaster.

Prior to the application being submitted, the applicant was proposing to cover the masonry with a waterproof concrete. We were concerned that this approach could potentially trap in moisture within historic fabric. We therefore welcome that the applicant has amended the proposal and now aims to install a membrane which will provide a waterproofing system to walls and arched ceilings. This is also reversible. Although it is likely that the plaster is modern, there still remains the issue of the potential for historic masonry to be uncovered during the works.

The proposals also include the demolition of the screens and partitions at the door into the casemate, and the installation of a secure door at the north end of the corridor. However, as these are all modern (including the door grilles), the works will not impact on historic fabric.

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

There will be no impact on Protected Species and Places.

d) Conclusion

The proposed works comply with Section 3.16 of the SHEP in that represent a minimum level of intervention. As they are considered necessary and will have public benefits of national importance once they have been completed, they are also justified in terms of Section 3.19 of SHEP.

The proposals have been altered during pre-application discussions to avoid adversely impacting on historic fabric. However, it is possible that historic plaster could be present and in order to ensure that the proposals are justified against Section 3.20 of the SHEP, a related condition has 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.

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

7. Conditions

1. Upon removal of the stud wall, the applicant will stop work and inspect the masonry for any historic plaster with a representative of Historic Environment Scotland. Should any historic plaster be found, an agreed method statement for the retention and recording of the plaster will be sent to Historic Environment Scotland in writing for approval.

Reason: to ensure that the potential adverse impact on any historic fabric is minimised, and that an accurate record of works to the monument is maintained.

8. Approval

Officer	Nicola Hall	Date	14/01/2016
Approved by	George Findlater	Date	14/01/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

Existing and downtakings plan
Proposed layout plan
Proposed sections and details
Door and window details
Proposed drainage