

Case information

Reference/Case ID		201505457	
Scheduled Monument	Kinloss Abbey		
Index no	M1227	Grid Ref	NJ065615 306500.0000 861500.0000
Date of Application	24 November 2015	Application Received	24 November 2015
Summary of proposed works	Masonry repairs to the Abbot's House at Kinloss Abbey, including the installation of steel wire ropes, propping of openings, and the erection of temporary scaffolding		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for masonry repairs to the Abbot's House at Kinloss Abbey, including the installation of steel wire ropes, propping of openings, and the erection of temporary scaffolding be granted with conditions.

2. Background

The monument comprises the remains of Kinloss Abbey which was established by David I in 1150 or 1151 as a daughter house of Melrose. The buildings were greatly added to by Robert Reid (later to become bishop of Orkney), during whose abbacy from 1528 onwards the abbot's lodging was built at the south end of the east range. The abbey was erected into a temporal lordship in 1601, and in 1651-2 the owners, the Brodies of Lethen, sold much of the stone for the citadel in Inverness. The site is now a graveyard.

The remains of the medieval buildings are still much as they were when they were described by MacGibbon and Ross in 1896. The bases of some pillars and part of the walling of the church are now exposed and much of its outline can be conjectured, indicating a building some 52m east-west and about 35m north-south across the transepts. The south transept chapel, slype and north wall of the chapter house are still standing, as are parts of the south and west walls of the cloister. To the south of the cemetery wall stand the remains of the abbot's house, which is the subject of this application.

This work is being undertaken to improve the stability and safety of the Round Tower at the Abbots House. Whilst the remainder of Kinloss Abbey has been well consolidated in recent years, the Abbot's House is in a more ruinous condition and as such has remained safely fenced off and occasionally cleared of vegetation until such a time when funds and impetus can be identified to take forward its consolidation.

The works that are the subject of this application are designed to make the Round Tower safe enough to allow a subsequent Feasibility Study to be undertaken to look at the longer term options for the Abbot's House.

This work will benefit the long term preservation of the monument in that it will stabilise a vulnerable element of the monument in such a way that is either reversible (for instance the propping and ties - to permit more permanent repair in the future) or critical to permit further works on the monument (for instance the stitching of cracks and the rebuilding of voids). Whilst this work will not have a direct public benefit, it should facilitate subsequent works that would have a direct public benefit in terms of enhanced access.

HS/HES visited the monument in 2014 to assess the condition of the Round Tower. HS/HES has since undertaken extensive pre-application discussions with the applicant regarding the approach to this phase of works, and this application accords with the outcome of these discussions.

The applicant submitted additional information pertaining to the SMC application, namely an updated methodology for the masonry works from G Laing Stonecraft.

3. Proposals

Consented works – masonry repairs to the Abbot's House at Kinloss Abbey, including the installation of steel wire ropes, propping of openings, and the erection of temporary scaffolding.

The proposals comprise:

- Installation of Slimshor Soldier props below the lintels in the doorways at the base of the tower.
- Consolidation of large opening in the masonry beside the first floor doorway, facilitated by an independent tower scaffold inside and outside of the tower at this location.
- Erection of an independent cuplok system scaffold around the tower to the full height both inside and outside.
- Installation of wire ropes around the circumference of the tower at mid-point to help tie masonry together.
- Consolidation of remaining cracks in the tower.
- Installation of metal internal frame at the first floor doorway.

- All masonry consolidation will be using rubble sourced from around the base of the tower, with lime mortar being used and new stonework being built flush to the existing. All vertical cracks will be flushed and grouted, with larger cracks cross stitched with bridging stones at regular intervals, with pinnings being packed in as work moves upwards.

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.

Part 1 Section 2 (4) – allows consent to be granted with conditions.

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 masonry repairs to the Abbot's House at Kinloss Abbey, including the installation of steel wire ropes, propping of openings, and the erection of temporary scaffolding.

The physical impact of these works on the monument will be comparatively minor, but the benefits to the long term preservation of the monument will be significant. The works involve additions to the monument that are temporary and of a short duration (the scaffolding), temporary and of a longer duration (the steel wire ropes, propping of openings, and the metal frame in the first floor doorway), and additions that are effectively permanent and not easily reversible (the consolidation of the large void, and the stitching of the cracks and any minor voids).

The temporary works are considered necessary in order to facilitate the more permanent consolidation works, and they are entirely reversible. Their impact on the cultural significance of the monument will be negligible, although there is a risk that the propping and ties might remain in situ on the Round Tower for much longer than expected if the proposed Feasibility Study and/or large scale consolidation proposals fail to come to fruition. If this were to happen then these temporary interventions will have an impact on the way that the monument is viewed and perhaps appreciated, although it is reasonable to consider that these interventions will be understood as being non-historic and that without them it would be possible that less of the monument would remain in situ.

The permanent works associated with the consolidation of the large first floor void and the stitching of the cracks will be of benefit to the longer term preservation of the monument, as the works will help ensure that the Round Tower remains standing and that further elements of it do not collapse. Their impact on the cultural significance of the monument will be minor; the crack stitching is merely rejoining the sides of cracks that have formed since the tower lost its roof, and the consolidation of the void adjacent to the first floor doorway is replacing historic fabric lost from the Round Tower when it was weakened by the sometime collapse of the east wall of the Abbot's House.

If the works as set out in the application are not undertaken within a few years then there is a real likelihood that the condition and structural integrity of the Round Tower of the Abbot's House will continue to deteriorate, with the likely outcome that addition historic fabric and architectural detailing will be lost.

It is therefore to the benefit of the long term preservation of the monument that the thinning 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

No impact on Protected Species and Places considered likely – see PP&S assessment.

d) Conclusion

The proposed works will be of benefit to the long term preservation of the monument. They will stabilise a vulnerable element of the monument in such a way that is either reversible (for instance the propping and ties - to permit more permanent repair in the future) or permanent yet critical to permit further works on the monument (for instance the stitching of cracks and the rebuilding of voids). 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 also being done to elements of the monument in such a way that their impact on the cultural significance of the monument is minor, and as such the application is compliant with SHEP 3.18.

The works are a continuation of previous consolidation work elsewhere at Kinloss Abbey, and will in due course likely facilitate further consolidation work at the Abbot's House. They are designed in such a way as to be reversible (where relevant), are well planned with identified funding, and as such the application is compliant with SHEP 3.20.

A number of conditions are recommended to be applied to the consent:

Condition 1 seeks a timetable for the proposed works, thus providing HES with the opportunity to inspect the works whilst they are being undertaken, and as a mechanism to make Condition 4 enforceable.

Condition 2 is to ensure that only rubble is used in the rebuilding of voids, thus preventing the incorporation of carved or dressed stone into non-original locations.

Condition 3 is to ensure that fixings for the temporary metal frame do not impact upon historic masonry.

Condition 4 is to ensure that an adequate visual record of the works is added to the public record within a reasonable timescale.

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

7. Conditions

1. The applicant shall provide Historic Environment Scotland with a timetable for works at least 1 week prior to the commencement of works on site.

Reason: to enable a representative of Historic Environment Scotland to have the opportunity to visit the general site whilst works are being undertaken.

2. No carved stone or identifiable pieces of dressed facing stone shall be used in the consolidation of voids, unless by prior written agreement with Historic Environment Scotland.

Reason: to ensure that only rubble is used so as to avoid accidental incorporation of historic carved masonry into non-original locations.

3. All fixings for the metal internal frame at the first floor doorway shall be into mortar joints rather than masonry, unless agreed in advance in writing with Historic Environment Scotland.

Reason: to ensure that the work is carried out so as to prevent accidental damage to historic masonry.

4. A series of annotated photographic records taken before, during, and after the works to show the masonry consolidation works, the installation of the wire ropes, and the installation of the metal internal frame at the first floor doorway should be submitted to Historic Environment Scotland within 4 weeks of completing the works on site.

Reason: to provide an accurate record of the site before, during, and after the various works have been completed.

8. Approval

Officer	Oliver Lewis	Date	15/01/2016
Approved by	George Findlater	Date	18/01/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Location plan – 38320-01
- Site plan – 38320-02
- Photographic evidence of work to be completed – 38320-03
- Description of works from Speyside Scaffolding Service Ltd including scaffolding layout drawing and slimshor soldier drawing – 11265 dated 04 Feb 2015
- Masonry estimation document from G Laing Stonecraft – dated 04 June 2015
- Email from Chris Clare of Moray Council to Oliver Lewis of HES dated 08 January 2016 containing updated methodology for masonry works from G Laing Stonecraft