Case information

Reference/Case ID	201507062

Scheduled Monument	Kirkton,Craignish Old Parish Church and tombstones		
Index no	M285	**Grid Ref**	NM778014 177800.0000 701400.0000

Date of Application	05 February 2016	**Application Received**	08 February 2016
Summary of proposed works	The removal and repair of a broken grave slab and subsequent reinstatement within Craignish Chapel in the same position		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that consent be granted.

2. Background

The broken slab is a West Highland grave slab of the Loch Awe School, attributed to the 14th - 15th centuries. It is about 2m tall, tapering towards the foot. The upper part of the slab bears a carving of an armed figure 0.6m tall within a niche. The lower part of the stone is mostly occupied by a network of plant stems. It is part of a collection of carved stones that lies within Craignish Old Parish Church, in a roofed shelter at the west end. The church probably dates originally from the early 13th century, but there is evidence for late medieval and post-Reformation remodelling and the building was consolidated during the 19th and 20th centuries. In 1976, Historic Scotland's Stone Conservation Centre was involved with the conservation and redisplay of the stones within the shelter. The Scheduled Monument comprises the church and the carved stones within it.

In December 2015, the Historic Environment Scotland (HES) Field Officer reported that the cross slab had broken across the line of an old repair. The slab had formerly been attached to the interior of the church wall. It is no longer attached, and the upper part of the slab now stands on the ground leaning against the lower part.

3. Proposals

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Consented works
The removal and repair of a broken grave slab and subsequent reinstatement within Craignish Chapel in the same position.

Description of works
The two halves of the grave slab would be carefully lifted and transported either to Kilmartin House Museum or the local HES depot in Lochgilphead for short term storage before being moved to the studios at HES, South Gyle, Edinburgh. The stone would be photographed and examined in detail and a treatment record card completed recording its condition and any subsequent works. The remaining resin repair would be carefully removed and the stone cleaned by hand using deionised water. It is anticipated that the repair would use a separate backing piece of lightweight reinforced glass fibre board. Use of the backing piece would avoid drilling into the stone and allow the stone to be safely supported from the back. The stone would be adhered to the support with epoxy resin pads and the backing would not be visible when back in situ. The stone would be returned directly to site and re-attached to the wall of the chapel with replacement phosphor bronze cramps utilising the existing fixing holes in the wall to avoid drilling new ones. An illustrated final conservation report would be prepared recording all works and submitted to HES HMD within four weeks of completion of the project. It is anticipated that all the works will be completed within one year of SMC being granted.

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

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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 proposals would involve re-joining two parts of a stone slab that was displayed as a single piece until 2015, when a former repair failed. The two fragments are at present vulnerable to loss or damage. Repair is likely to consist of preparing a separate backing piece using a sheet of lightweight reinforced glass fibre board. The stone will be adhered to the support with epoxy resin pads and the backing will not be visible when the stone is returned to its former location. This method should be reversible and would avoid drilling into the stone while allowing it to be safely supported from the back. The proposed repair of the stone slab and its re-attachment to the church wall should have no negative impact on the fabric of the grave slab and should ensure its future security, removing the danger of loss or accidental damage that exists while the two fragments are simply leaning against the wall. The works would also allow the decorated stone slab to be appreciated again by the public as a single piece rather than two fragments. It is proposed that the stone be re-attached to the wall of the chapel with replacement phosphor bronze cramps utilising the existing fixing holes in the wall to avoid drilling new ones, and no adverse impact on the fabric of the church building is anticipated. It is anticipated that the works will be conducted within one year, so that the slab will not be away from the site for an extended period.

The proposed works are very unlikely to have an adverse impact on the cultural significance of the monument. They appear to have been carefully considered and properly planned. In addition, it is likely that the proposals would enhance public appreciation and understanding of the monument.

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

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The application site does not lie close to any SSSI, SPA or SAC designation. National Biodiversity Network GIS data sets indicate no evidence for Protected Species in the relevant 100m grid squares.

d) Conclusion

The proposals would involve re-joining two fragments of a stone grave slab following failure of a previous join. The two fragments are presently standing on the floor, propped against the wall, and are vulnerable to loss or damage. The proposals appear to be the minimum intervention consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in the monument (SHEP para 3.16). We do not anticipate any adverse impact on the cultural significance of the monument, which accords with SHEP para 3.18. Indeed the proposals will allow a conserved stone to be returned to the monument and enjoyed by future generations. The proposals appear to be carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned and should accord with SHEP para 3.20. They should also enhance public appreciation and understanding of the monument.

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.

7. Conditions

Granted without conditions.

8. Approval

Officer	**Richard Heawood**	**Date**	**17/02/2016**
Approved by	**John Raven**	**Date**	17/2/16

Annex A – list of supporting documents

Description of proposed works
Location plan of site
Plan showing location of slab

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