Case information

Reference/Case ID	201506204

Scheduled Monument	Torlum, cairn		
Index no	M3147	**Grid Ref**	NN819192 281900.0000 719200.0000

Date of Application	21 December 2015	**Application Received**	30 December 2015
Summary of proposed works	The self sown conifer on the summit of Torlum Cairn will be cut down and removed from the site		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that consent be granted.

2. Background

This monument is a large grass and heather-covered cairn, measuring 20.0m in diameter and 3.5m in height, with an OS pillar on top. It stands on the summit of Torlum Hill some 393m above sea level. The cairn is likely to be a funerary monument of the Bronze Age (c 2500 BC to 800 BC).

The landowner has identified the presence of a self-seeded conifer on top of the cairn, some 4m high, and proposes to remove the tree in order to improve the condition of the cairn. The method for felling the tree was discussed with the HES Field Officer after her visit, and the HES Heritage Management Officer also provided advice.

3. Proposals

Consented works
The self sown conifer on the summit of Torlum Cairn will be cut down and removed from the site.

Description of works

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The tree will but cut at its base. Any branches that are likely to cause damage to the cairn as the tree falls will be lopped prior to felling. The tree will then be cut into sections and all of the material will be removed from the scheduled area by hand. The stump will be left to rot. A photographic record of the site will be taken after the tree is felled and removed and will be submitted to HES.

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.

b) Assessment

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The proposals would involve removal of a self-seeded tree that is growing on top of the cairn. If the tree continues to grow on the cairn, additional root damage to the cairn can be anticipated. There is also a significant risk that this lone tree will blow over in the future if it remains in place, with potential to cause significant damage to the monument. Removal of the tree appears essential to conserving the cultural significance of the monument.

The proposed methodology appears appropriate and well considered, making provision for the tree to be cut at the base without disturbing the roots, with any branches that may damage the monument being lopped before felling. Thereafter, the tree would be removed from the monument.

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

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

Removal of the tree is important for conserving the cultural significance of the monument. The works proposed are the minimum intervention consistent with this and are consistent with policy at SHEP para 3.16. There should be negligible impact on the cultural significance of the monument, which accords with SHEP para 3.18.

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**	**19/02/2016**
Approved by	**John Raven**	**Date**	**19/02/2016**

Annex A – list of supporting documents
Location map
Digital image showing tree

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