Case information

Reference/Case ID	201507447

Scheduled Monument	Antonine Wall, Golden Hill Park, Roman fort, annexe and bathhouse		
Index no	M7070	**Grid Ref**	NS 49464 72744

Date of Application	19 February 2016	**Application Received**	29 February 2016
Summary of proposed works	Enhancement of exposed rampart base and renewal of fence enclosure around same.		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that consent be granted.

2. Background

The monument is a section of the Antonine Wall which runs across the slopes and summit of Golden Hill in Duntocher. It includes the surviving remains of one of the Antonine Wall forts. There have been several archaeological interventions in the park, including a series of excavations from 1949-51.

The fort is a complex structure of three phases, including an early fortlet, a later fort and an annexe. To the northwest is the site of a bathhouse. Faint traces of the earthworks of the fort, wall and fortlet survive in the park. The Antonine Wall formed part of the fort's northeast defences and continued downslope to the northwest where it crossed Duntocher Burn. On the northwest slope of Golden Hill a small area of rampart base has been left exposed within a square enclosure of iron railings; believed to have been erected in the 1970s.

The scheduled area includes much of the western half of Golden Hill Park. It includes the Antonine Wall rampart, berm (area between rampart and ditch), ditch and upcast mound; the fort and annexe and their associated ditches, and an area to the north and south where traces of activities associated with the construction and use of the Wall may survive.

The monument is of national importance as part of a major Roman frontier system which has the potential to increase considerably our understanding of Roman frontier

policy and military organisation. The Antonine Wall is the most substantial and important Roman monument in Scotland. The fort is one of at least 18 Roman forts on the Antonine Wall military frontier. It is of particular importance because, with the exception of its south corner, it has not been built upon. The Antonine Wall is also part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site and has Outstanding Universal Value.

The applicant for the proposed works is the owner of the monument (West Dunbartonshire Council). The area of exposed rampart base is viewed by them as a valuable asset for presenting the monument to the public but there have been recent problems with its management. Specifically, that unmanaged vegetation may be obscuring and compromising the base and that the surrounding railings are not sympathetic to an appreciation of the monument.

Consequently, the applicant is seeking consent to undertake works that would be aimed at retaining the rampart base in a stable, readily interpretable, condition within an enclosure that reflects the significance of the monument. The project has been subject to a range of discussions with HES Heritage Management and the World Heritage Site (WHS) Coordinator.

3. Proposals

Consented works
Enhancement of exposed Antonine Wall rampart base and renewal of fence enclosure around same.

Description of works
The rampart base is formed of stone in a matrix of earth. This was cleared of detritus, vegetation and soil in 2010. However, the base has now reverted to its previous state. The proposed works set out what is stated to be a more sustainable approach that would aim to improve both conservation of the monument and public appreciation of it, through delivery of the following outcomes:

- The stones of the rampart base would be managed through a maintenance regime to be within a short grass sward to avoid the need for repeated cleaning/clearing (and reflective of the historic turf fabric of the Wall).
- The linear form of the Wall, as reflected in the rampart base, would be accentuated by introducing a strip of gravel on the outer edge of both kerbs.
- The fenced enclosure would be replaced with a new design expressive of the significance of the monument.

The sequence of works needed to deliver the renewal of the fenced enclosure would be as follows:

1. Two archaeological test pits would be hand excavated to characterise the existing foundations of the fence enclosure in order to allow design of the new enclosure. These test pits would not excavate into, or through, significant archaeological deposits.

2. A foundation design informed by the above would be submitted to HES for approval. The design would be aimed at maintaining the same configuration of main upright posts as the existing enclosure (in order minimise disturbance of previously undisturbed ground). Other supports may be needed but would be bedded in topsoil.
3. A design for the panels of the fence to be submitted to HES for approval.
4. Removal of the existing fence enclosure and associated subsurface elements as required (including concrete bases and stays) under archaeological supervision.
5. Installation of new fence as per agreed foundation and panel design under archaeological supervision.

The sequence of works needed to improve the presentation and management of the rampart base within the enclosure would be as follows:

1. Rank and deleterious vegetation would be removed by cutting and point delivery of herbicide.
2. Any loose stone and modern material that has accumulated around the edge of the exposed base would be removed.
3. A strip of ground adjacent to the exposed rampart edge (kerbs) would be archaeologically excavated. This would not be broader than 500mm or half the distance between the kerbs and the fenced enclosure. The ground would be reduced to a maximum depth of 150mm below the lower edge of the kerb stones, however if significant archaeological remains are encountered these would be safeguarded *in situ* and such preservation would take priority over depth of excavation.
4. A geotextile membrane would be fitted (by pins) within the excavated strip and overlain by gravel to a level flush with the lower edge of the kerb stones (a maximum depth of 150mm). The type of gravel to be used would be agreed in writing and in advance with HES. Excess spoil would be used where appropriate to returf areas disrupted by the fence installation or removed from the Scheduled Monument.

A specification for archaeological excavation and watching brief has been included with the application (Rathmell Archaeology 2016). The methodology with regard to on-site protocol, recording and reporting is appropriate, and in particular:

- During all excavation and monitoring the default approach is that all significant archaeology would be safeguarded until an appropriate response is agreed. This response would typically be preservation *in situ*; where this is not practicable any excavation would be subject to HES approval.
- All works would comply with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards, Policy Statements and Code of Conduct.
- The results of the work would be presented in a Data Structure Report and circulated more widely through the OASIS online database and a DES entry.
- The project archive, including finds, would be ordered and deposited in line with appropriate guidance.
- A suitable timetable has been set out and includes for: notice of the works to HES, submission of reports and archiving.

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.

3.19. 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

The proposals are aimed at creating a more sustainable management regime for an exposed section of Antonine Wall rampart base. To achieve this, rank vegetation, loose stone and modern detritus would be removed and then the exposed stones of the rampart base maintained in a short grass sward. This would avoid the need for regular clearing and cleaning of the rampart base, which would be likely to contribute to its erosion. Hence, this element of the proposal would assist in the long term preservation of the scheduled monument.

The proposed works also include for excavating adjacent strips of ground and laying gravel to accentuate the linear form of the rampart base (which is not currently easy to understand or appreciate). Appropriate controls have been put in place to ensure that this would not disturb significant archaeological remains associated with the Wall base. Hence this should not have any adverse impact on the cultural significance of the monument while assisting in its public understanding.

The proposed works also include for replacing the existing fenced enclosure around the rampart base and erecting a replacement. The foundation design would be informed by the results of test pits excavated at the existing foundations with the aim of ensuring they would not disturb significant archaeological remains. Both the foundation design and that of the new panels would be subject to HES approval. The design of the new fence would seek to express the significance and history of the monument and hence increase public appreciation of it. Given the controls put in place to inform and control foundation design, this element of the work should not have any adverse impact on the cultural significance of the monument. An appropriately designed new fence should increase public appreciation of 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.

The works are within the Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Antonine Wall) World Heritage Site. They are designed to avoid adverse impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of the WHS, specifically by avoiding adverse physical impacts or adversely affecting its setting. In addition, the works are intended to conserve the cultural significance of the WHS and and promote public benefit.

d) Conclusion

The proposals should improve the presentation of an exposed section of the Antonine Wall base by removing detritus that currently obscures the monument and also remove

any rank vegetation that may be causing erosion. The work should result in a sustainable management regime for the rampart base that avoids the need for repeated cleaning and hence would contribute to its long term conservation.

The proposed works also include for accentuating the linearity of the base by limited excavations on both sides and the deposition of gravel. They also include for removing the current dated and deteriorating fencing and erecting a replacement that expresses the significance of the monument. Both these elements of work have been designed with adequate controls to avoid adverse physical impacts on the monument. Both should produce public benefit by increasing understanding.

It is concluded that the works should cause negligible impact to the cultural significance of the monument, which accords with SHEP para 3.18. The proposals appear to be carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned and should accord with SHEP para 3.20. By introducing a sustainable management regime they should also contribute to the long term preservation of the monument (according with SHEP 3.14) and there is no conflict with policy at SHEP para 3.16, which notes that interventions should normally be the minimum consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in a monument. As the works are limited in scope and aimed at enhancing the presentation of a currently exposed area of rampart base, they cannot be defined as an extensive intervention (SHEP 3.19), however, it should be noted that they would bring public benefits in the form of increased understanding.

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	**Simon Stronach**	**Date**	**09/03/2016**
Approved by	**John Raven**	**Date**	9/3/16

Annex A – list of supporting documents
Drawing RA15109/LP Location Plan
Rathmell Archaeology Ltd ‘Goldenhill Park, Clydebank: Archaeological Support for Antonine Wall Enhancement: Risk Assessment Method Statement’, February 2016.