Case information

Reference/Case ID	201506111

Scheduled Monument	Millhaugh,enclosure and pit alignment 300m E of		
Index no	M5776	**Grid Ref**	NO010140 301000.0000 714000.0000

Date of Application	29 December 2015	**Application Received**	29 December 2015
Summary of proposed works	Area excavation and fieldwalking within the scheduled area		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for archaeological excavation and fieldwalking to collect artefacts at Millhaugh, enclosure and pit alignment, Perth and Kinross be granted with conditions.

2. Background

The monument comprises the remains, showing as a cropmark, of a large ditched enclosure, probably a prehistoric settlement, and an alignment of pits, probably a contemporary land boundary. Other features have been also identified including a possible Neolithic funerary enclosure, square barrows and pit/ post holes features. From the cropmark evidence, it would appear that the monument is a multi-period, multi-functional site.

This application forms part of a long running research programme known as the Stathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot (SERF) project which has been running since 2006. The project is both a research excavation and a field school providing training in archaeological field work. The project is part funded by Historic Environment Scotland.

Strathearn contains a remarkable range of archaeological remains and at many times in the area's long history the locality is comparable to other major prehistoric centres such as Brogar in Orkney, Dunragit in Galloway and Stonehenge in southern England. Forteviot also has a strong, credible tradition as the site of a Pictish palace

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and the SERF project seeks to uncover the millennia-deep traditions that nurtured the changes in politics and economy that resulted in the unification of our country.

Through archaeological investigation of this resource the SERF project has three major objectives:

- **Research: to reveal a significant body of new knowledge about the past**

  SERF has four interrelated research aims. The first two concern a greater understanding of specific periods of the past, specifically: the long sequence of prehistoric ritual monuments that preceded and eventually gave way to the extensive Pictish remains and a better understanding of the development of Forteviot as a Pictish royal centre. A third aim seeks to better understand the impact of agricultural landuse (such as ploughing) on archaeological monuments. Lastly, SERF seeks to better understand the archaeology of two key human expressions: power and ceremony, within the wider landscape of Strathearn.

- **Training: to train a new generation of students in archaeology and related subjects**

  The SERF excavation and post-excavation programmes are designed to function as a practical school that will provide a high standard of training and tutored experience in archaeological theory, field practice, science and research through participation in a wide variety of activities that enhance skills for students and volunteers. SERF is run as a field school through the University of Glasgow, which is a nationally, and internationally, important higher education institution.

- **Legacy: to inspire an enduring curiosity in and a pride for this archaeologically embedded landscape in the wider community**

  SERF seeks to inspire and gain inspiration from the interest and participation of the resident communities within Strathearn and neighbouring districts. The project has sought a strong element of community involvement in the development of the project design and its execution. As the project progressed, SERF has also sought to engineer the means by which its new knowledge would form the basis for a lasting legacy within the communities of Strathearn.

As examples of their achievements with regard to these aims, SERF has produced, and is designed to produce, the following outcomes:

- Numerous opportunities for Masters and Doctoral studentships to undertake research both within the academic aims of the project and in related topics.

- Graduates from the ten years of the SERF project are now found working in every sector of the historic environment in the UK and further afield.

- As the project progresses onto the production of nationally significant academic publications it is seen as a major component in Glasgow University's submission to the next assessment of research excellence.

- The SERF project has actively promoted a wider public understanding and a greater engagement with the past. This is achieved through a volunteering

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programme, workshops and seminars. In collaboration with Perth Museums and Galleries and the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow, the project has built a major museum exhibition, entitled *Cradle of Scotland*, which was first presented to the international audience attending the European Association of Archaeologists in Glasgow in 2015 (2500 delegates). The exhibition is now on show in Perth Museum. SERF aims to develop further lasting legacies in the local community and beyond; through displays, education, support for local heritage initiatives and web-based and interactive content.

- SERF has documented the preservation of archaeological features within a variety of environmental areas for nearly ten years. This presents a large record of accessible knowledge that can be compared and assessed and therefore has great potential to inform local and national management policies to enable better strategies for the preservation of archaeological features within the plough zone.

- SERF also embodies an international outreach programme, for example through the annual European Association of Archaeologists conference, and other research conferences, Through these SERF has had, and will have, a prominent role in promoting Scotland as a leading nation in the development of evidence-based policy on landscape protection, designation and public understanding.

Pre-application discussions have taken place between October 2015 and December 2015 involving HES staff and the applicants regarding the latest proposals for archaeological excavation to inform consent. The present application has been adapted as a result of pre-application consultations and it accords with the outcome of these discussions.

3. Proposals

Consented Works –
Stripping topsoil from a large area 80m x 30m (2400m²), followed by targeted excavation and recording
Fieldwalking

4. Representations received

No representations were received with respect to this application.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

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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.

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.

3.17. As each monument will require treatment specific to its individual nature, characteristics, significance and needs, any proposed change to it must be fully and explicitly justified.

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.

3.22. Where consent for the range of works set out in paragraph 3.4 is granted, conditions are normally applied to ensure the works are undertaken in an appropriate manner. Common requirements are:

a. the use of appropriate assessment methodologies to determine the full impact of any proposed management, use or development; b. the avoidance of

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irreversible change particularly wherever its effects cannot be adequately assessed;

c. that where change is necessary, strategies should be adopted to mitigate its impact and limit intervention;
f. that an appropriate level of record is made before, during and after any work and deposited in local and national archives, and, where appropriate, published;
h. that any archaeological excavation or other intrusive investigation should be based upon a detailed research strategy, with adequate resources, using appropriately skilled and experienced archaeologists with a satisfactory record of the completion and publication of projects (see Note 3.10); and,
i. that the design, planning and execution of works on scheduled monuments are undertaken by people with appropriate professional and craft qualifications, skills and experience.

b) Assessment

The SERF project has been conceived of as a research project and field school which has been divided into two main phases of fieldwork over ten years. There was an initial pilot season in 2006, followed by Phase 1 (2007/8-2011/12) which focussed on the archaeology of Forteviot, and Phase 2 (2012/3-2016/7) which hopes to place the work at Forteviot within the wider Strathearn environs.

The works proposed to this monument are threefold: geophysical survey, field walking and area excavation. The geophysical survey of the monument was granted Section 42 consent (Case ID: 201506112) on 27 January 2015.

There are proposals to fieldwalk the monument in an effort to collect artefacts that will aid in the interpretation of the cropmarks and give indications of their likely chronology. All finds are to be lifted by hand, bagged, the find spot flagged and recorded using a Garmin GPS device. This will result in the removal of artefactual evidence from the site which could be deemed as removal of part of the monument.

The excavation proposals are to ‘strip-and-map’ the area prior to sampling features. In this case the stripped area would comprise a single trench measuring a total of 2.400m². The trench location has been chosen to examine the putative Neolithic mortuary enclosure, pit alignment and interrupted ditched enclosure as well as attempt to identify archaeological features that are not visible as cropmarks. Within this area, it is proposed to excavate 25% of any surviving buried deposits comprising the square barrows and interrupted enclosure. Any pits or post holes will be half-sectioned and should burials be present they will be fully excavated.

The aims and outcomes of the overall project have been set out above. They include research into both the remarkable prehistoric remains in Strathearn and its development into a Pictish royal centre, both of which have the potential to provide results which improve our archaeological understanding in a nationally important manner.

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By producing a body of accessible knowledge derived from a variety of environments the project is also designed to inform the management of cropmark sites at both national and local levels, including that of other scheduled monuments by Historic Environment Scotland.

The project also has a key role in the training of archaeological students studying at the University of Glasgow. Many of these students will form the next generation of Scottish archaeologists, heritage managers and other sector professionals. Of equal importance is SERF's role enhancing the understanding of the wider Scottish public through volunteering and the circulation of accessible information about our past using, for example, seminars, web content, other media and museum exhibitions.

SERF also has an international profile and has prominently promoted Scotland as a leading nation in the development of evidence-based policy on landscape protection, designation and public understanding of archaeology.

The excavation trench to be opened is 80m x 30m which represents an intervention of 4.62% of the monument which has a total area of 51,847m². These excavations constitute the destruction of part of the monument and as such this application cannot be seen to be the minimum works necessary as laid out at SHEP 3.16. The remainder of the deposits will be preserved for the future.

The trench layout and the specific justification for the trenches in relation to the project aims set out above has been agreed by both the project lead and Historic Environment Scotland. The area would be stripped of topsoil by mechanical excavator then excavation would proceed by hand. Excavation would normally include a defined percentage of all features exposed in the trench (except in the case of burials, which would be fully excavated in line with standard practice). Archaeological excavation would therefore remove a representative sample of the deposits preserved in the monument. However, the majority of archaeological remains within the monument would be preserved and this would constitute a representative sample. The work has been accompanied by the design of an appropriate methodology as set out in the Project Design, and including appropriate strategies with regard to environmental samples and artefact collection (Sections 8.0-8.3).

The outcomes of the project in relation to: archaeological knowledge, public understanding, conservation management and training have been set out above. They represent a range of nationally important benefits. The impacts of the excavation as set out above have been judged in balance against those benefits and it is concluded that the proposal is compliant with the public benefit test set out in SHEP 3.19. It is also concluded that the works have therefore been "fully and explicitly justified" and "carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed, properly planned" as set out in SHEP 3.17 and 3.20.

From the information provided with this application and based upon the pre-application discussions with the project team it is clear that the works also meet the requirements set out in SHEP 3.22.

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There are concerns with the information provided within the application. The primary issue is one of the management of the works on site (i.e. would the excavation team have an appropriate level of skills and experience and sufficient levels of monitoring) and its suitability for excavations on a scheduled monument. A related issue is that the research design does not provide adequate information on the supervisory team. These issues are dealt with through the imposition of an appropriate condition.

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

The application has no impact upon protected species or places.

The proposed excavations form part of the largest and longest running research and training project in Scotland. It has targeted a suite of monuments throughout the valley. It seeks to take landscape approach and undertaken a similar programme of research at most of the major prehistoric and early historic sites in the area in order to understand the landscape's development and how the monuments relate to one another. Since its inception SERF has trained over 300 students in archaeological field techniques and has a successful outreach project which disseminates the results of the project. This is complemented by an extensive catalogue of publications which are publicly available through the University of Glasgow's web site.

SERF is part funded by Historic Environment Scotland but this does not exempt it from the scrutiny that all scheduled monument consent applications undergo and is subject to the same policy tests.

The SERF project is approaching its end. This is likely to be the final year of field work, with archiving and publication proposed for 2017-2020.

d) Conclusion

The intervention should be viewed as works as set out in both Part 1 Section 2 of the AMAAA 1979 and under section 3.4 of SHEP. The works are in the form of destruction of part of the monument.

The application, which forms part of a long running research and training project, is more than the minimum necessary to conserve what is culturally significant of this monument.

This application is mostly compliant with SHEP 3.19, 3.20 and 3.22 in that there is a clear public benefit of national importance and that it is carefully considered, is based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned.

A single condition is necessary to apply grant of scheduled monument consent covering the following topics: the suitability and experience of the project staff.

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Condition 1 is required to ensure that the supervisory staff are suitably experienced and qualified to carry to out the work.

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.

Granted with conditions.

7. Conditions

1. The work on site shall not commence until Historic Environment Scotland has agreed in writing the management and supervisory structure of the excavations, including details of the experience and skills of the personnel involved.

Reason: to ensure that excavations are undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced staff and to ensure that the excavations are adequately monitored.

8. Approval

Officer	**Rory McDonald/Simon Stronach**	**Date**	**14/03/2016**
Approved by	**John Raven**	**Date**	**14/03/2016**

Annex A – list of supporting documents

1. Research Design

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