

Historic Environment Scotland

Àrainneachd Eachdraidheil Alba

Elcho Castle, Application for Scheduled Monument Consent **Description of Proposed Works**

The Scheduled Monument Consent Application for Elcho Castle proposes to erect a suitable scaffold to carry out an initial high level inspection and undertake remedial and conservation works to mitigate health and safety risks to the public and maintain the watertightness of the castle's walls and roofs.

Options for scaffold provision have been investigated and it has been concluded that a self-supporting, buttressed, scaffold is impossible to erect safely due to the difficult ground conditions of the adjacent quarry (to the North of the Castle) and that securing a scaffold through windows is impractical due to the existing leaded glass. We currently propose to erect a scaffold with fixings into the existing mortar joints in the stonework. A series of conservation works to the NW of the castle were undertaken last year (SMC Case ID 20150221) and investigations at this time proved that scaffold ties into the castle walls were required.

The works propose to investigate the condition of the crowsteps to the North East Tower where aerial photographs from drone surveys have identified severely eroded and delaminating stones. Currently the area around the tower is closed to the public due to the risk of falling masonry. The stones are delaminating along their bedding lines and substantial pieces of masonry have been dislodged in the recent high winds/severe weather.

The crowsteps themselves have been brushed down over a series of many years to remove spalling stone and as such many now appear to have little fabric remaining above the roof line. This is causing difficulties with maintaining the weathertightness of the roof/wallhead as a suitable depth of upstand for a mortar fillet is no longer possible.

We propose to undertake a detailed survey of each individual crowstep stone, once a suitable scaffold is in place to allow access, and produce a report detailing the remedial works required, be this replacement or stabilisation in situ. It is hoped that the works to the crowsteps can be made a condition of the granted consent, provisional on the acceptability of the proposed works that will be contained within the detailed report.

Various other works are proposed to be undertaken whilst the scaffold is in position, these include:

- Overhauling of the slate roofs and stone ridges to replace any broken or cracked slates/stones.
- Replacing mortar fillets to roof verges and skewers to maintain the watertightness of the roof.
- Overhauling and re-painting/oiling of the timber window surrounds and iron window yetts to prevent further deterioration.
- Replacement of modern acrylic chimney caps, (which pose a H&S risk of being dislodged in high winds) with safety glass mechanically fixed into the mortar haunching
- Brushing down delaminating stonework to the elevations to remove areas of spalling stone and vegetation growth.
- Selective re-pointing of open joints in lime mortar, replacing stone pinnings where missing.
- Replacement of 1 No. broken spouts, provision of 1 No. new steel spout, re-aligning of 1 No. steel spout and elongation of 1 No. lead spout all to throw water further from the face of the building to reduce erosion of the stonework

Further details can be seen on drawings 079 to 083 Included in the SMC application package

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