Case information

Reference/Case ID	201600582

Scheduled Monument	Stirling Castle		
Index no	M90291	**Grid Ref**	NS788941 278800.0000 694100.0000

Date of Application	04 May 2016	**Application Received**	04 May 2016
Summary of proposed works	Masonry conservation and stabilisation works to the James IV Arch at Stirling Castle		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for masonry conservation and stabilisation works to the James IV Arch at Stirling Castle be granted without conditions.

2. Background

The monument comprises Stirling Castle and its immediate setting. Stirling Castle is a strongly-fortified royal castle occupying a volcanic outcrop which commands the upper Forth valley. The defences define three main enclosures: the outer defences (on the main line of approach), the main enclosure (at the summit of the rock) and the nether bailey (to the N). The principal buildings for royal occupation at the summit of the rock form a square enclosed by the King's Old Building, the Great Hall, the Chapel Royal and the Palace.

The rock has been fortified since at least the 12th century, and probably for long before that, in view of the defensive and strategic advantages of its location. The structure subject to this application is the James IV Arch or forework on 1501-6 that is a curtained cross-wall extending across the full width of the castle rock. Now much reduced from its original impressive façade of a four tower gatehouse, flanking walls, and rectangular towers at either side, the present form of the James IV Arch is a result of 18th and 19th century remodelling by the military to heighten and cap the medieval remains. The change in build is visually evident; the quality of the later heightening and capping is being remedied through this application.

Historic Environment Scotland – Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH
Scottish Charity No. **SC045925**
VAT No. **GB 221 8680 15**

The monument is cared for by HES Conservation Directorate and is operated as a visitor attraction. Open joints had been identified in the later upper courses during audits of the castle, and a phase of repointing works was added to the planned work programme for the castle subject to funding for a scaffold. A subsequent inspection scaffold to address a blocked rainwater pipe allowed detailed inspection of the open joints, and displacement and ready dislodgement of the masonry was discovered. Emergency funding was provided for a full access scaffold in April 2015 to confirm the extent of the issue and to protect from any masonry becoming dislodged and falling in the vicinity of the sole pedestrian and vehicular access route into the castle.

HES Heritage Management Directorate has undertaken pre-application discussions with the applicant (HES Conservation Group) regarding the scope and timing of works, and this application accords with the outcome of those discussions.

3. Proposals

Consented works – Masonry conservation and stabilisation works to the James IV Arch at Stirling Castle.

The proposals comprise:

- Repointing of all open joints in the later upper courses (the ‘military build’), adopting small slate pinnings between the wider joints where necessary, with pinnings set back and concealed by lime mortar pointing.
- Installation of stainless steel tie rods through wider joints and into the rubble core, to engineers specification and design.
- Upon completion of the repointing, pinning, and ties, the selective/isolated consolidation of pockets/voids within the wall core using grout-infilling.

4. Representations received

No third party representations were received.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

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.

Part 1 Section 2 (3) – authorises works where Scottish Ministers or Historic Environment Scotland Have granted consent (scheduled monument consent) for the execution of the works where the works are executed in accordance with the terms of the consent and of any conditions attached to the consent.

Part 1 Section 2 (4) – allows consent to be granted with conditions.

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.

3.18. 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 works involve the conservation and stabilisation of masonry within the upper levels of the James IV Arch at Stirling Castle.

The proposals comprise:

- Repointing of all open joints in the later upper courses (the 'military build'), adopting small slate pinnings between the wider joints where necessary, with pinnings set back and concealed by lime mortar pointing.
- Installation of stainless steel tie rods through wider joints and into the rubble core, to engineers specification and design.
- Upon completion of the repointing, pinning, and ties, the selective/isolated consolidation of pockets/voids within the wall core using grout-infilling.

The physical impact of these works on the monument and its cultural significance will be comparatively minor, but the benefits to the long term preservation of the

monument will be significant. The work will involve undertaking remedial and conservation works to mitigate health and safety risks to the public and to maintain the structural integrity of the masonry. These works are those that go beyond the scope of routine maintenance works and are in areas otherwise inaccessible unless by scaffold.

The repointing and pinning works are all considered sound conservation work as they aim to retain historic fabric in situ using techniques previously employed across this part of the monument, and in such a way that should stabilise loose masonry. This work is reversible if required.

The installation of the stainless steel ties will not impact upon masonry, but rather the ties will be installed into wider joints at spacings to the engineer's specifications and design. The heads of the ties will then be hidden behind lime mortar repointing, so there will be no adverse visual impact to the works.

The selective/isolated consolidation of pockets/voids within the wall core using grout-infilling is included within this application as an option upon completion of the repointing and tie installation should there be concerns remaining that the core required additional stabilisation. Whilst this work changes the character of the wall core slightly, the significance of the wall core is considered low compared to the masonry it is protected by, and therefore the impact of the works on the wider significance of the monument will be minor.

If the works as set out in the application are not undertaken with some urgency then there is a real likelihood that the structural integrity of the upper levels of the James IV Arch will continue to deteriorate, with the likely outcome that historic fabric and architectural detailing will be lost, and there would be a risk to public safety.

It is therefore to the benefit of the long term preservation of the monument that the works are undertaken now, and I consider that the prescribed methodology will not have an impact on the monument.

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

No impact on Protected Species and Places considered likely – see PP&S assessment.

d) Conclusion

The proposed works will be of benefit to the long term preservation of the monument. They will stabilise a vulnerable element of the monument using sound conservation practices in such a way that is either reversible (the repointing and pinning) or has permanent impacts on a part of the monument where the cultural significance is low (the steel ties and the grout-infilling of the wall core). The works can therefore be considered as the minimum level of intervention that is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in a monument, and thus compliant with SHEP 3.16.

The works are also being done to elements of the monument in such a way that their impact on the cultural significance of the monument is minor, and as such the application is compliant with SHEP 3.18.

The works build upon previous consolidation and conservation, and they are designed in such a way as to be reversible (where relevant), are well planned with identified funding, and as such the application is compliant with SHEP 3.20.

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.

I recommend consent is **granted without conditions.**

7. Conditions

None.

8. Approval

Officer	**Oliver Lewis**	**Date**	**18/05/2016**
Approved by	**George Fnidlater**	**Date**	**20/05/2016**

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Location plan – 334/291/E/L(00)1
- Drawing 1 of 2 showing military period stone coursing – 334/291//E/34
- Drawing 2 of 2 showing military period stone coursing – 334/291//E/35
- James IV Arch supporting information