

# Scheduled Monument Consent: Report on Handling



HISTORIC  
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## Case information

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<b>Reference/Case ID</b>	201600398		
<b>Scheduled Monument</b>	Whithorn Priory, monastic settlement and priory		
<b>Index no</b>	M12992	<b>Grid Ref</b>	NX444403 244400.0000 540300.0000
<b>Date of Application</b>	26 April 2016	<b>Application Received</b>	26 April 2016
<b>Summary of proposed works</b>	Proposed replacement interpretation fixings within the Crypt.		

### 1. Summary recommendation

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This report recommends approval for proposed replacement interpretation fixings within the Crypt.

### 2. Background

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The monument comprises: the buried remains of a large Early Christian monastic settlement, founded probably in the 5th or 6th centuries AD and closely associated with St Ninian, the leading figure in the conversion of southern Scotland to Christianity; the buried remains of later Viking and medieval settlements; graves that may date from the 5th or 6th century AD to the 19th century, and; the remains of a medieval priory and cathedral that served as the pilgrimage centre for the cult of St Ninian.

The west end of the medieval cathedral survives as a standing structure, while the east end is represented by buried foundations and crypts. The 'Candida Casa' or 'White House' of St. Ninian represents the first ecclesiastical structure on the site, and it is generally thought that this structure is underneath the present church. The crypts and east end were the focus of medieval pilgrimage to Whithorn and were partially reconstructed during the late 19th and 20th centuries.

As well as being scheduled, the monument is a Property in the Care of Scottish Ministers. Therefore, the board forms part of a wider scheme of interpretation replacement at Historic Environment Scotland properties by the Interpretation Unit to replace outdated and faded signage, and address gaps in on-site interpretation. As part of this, the applicant engaged in pre-application discussions regarding the proposed replacement signage.

### 3. Proposals

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The proposals involve the like for like replacement of an old interpretation sign with a new sign within the crypt area of the monument. Existing fixings in the existing mortar joints within rubble stone wall will be re-used if possible, however new fixings may be required. New fixings would also be placed in to masonry joints.

#### **4. Representations received**

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No representations were received.

#### **5. Report**

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##### **a) Policy considerations**

The application should be viewed with the following legislative and policy considerations in mind:

##### Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)

Part 1 Section 2: Control of works affecting an ancient monument.

##### Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (2016)

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 (see Note 3.2). A consent under section 42 of the 1979 Act is also required to use a metal detector within a scheduled monument (see Note 3.3). It is a criminal offence to carry out any of these works without 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. (Annex 1 sets out guidance as to how cultural significance and national importance should be determined.)

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 proposed replacement fixings within the Crypt would have a minimal impact on the historic fabric and character of the monument.

The proposals involve the like for like replacement of an interpretation sign with a new sign. Existing fixings in the existing mortar joints within rubble stone wall will be re-used if possible, meaning that any impact on historic masonry is minimised. Should new fixings be required, this would still have a minimal impact on historic fabric as it would be to minor areas of mortar joints within the historic masonry.

Given that the proposals would be the replacement of an existing sign, the potential visual impact would be negligible.

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

There will not be any significant impacts on Protected Species and Places.

The monument is a Property in the Care which is operated by Historic Environment Scotland as a visitor attraction.

**d) Conclusion**

In conclusion, the proposed works do not conflict with the Policy Statement, paragraph 3.16: works that are the minimum level of intervention consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in the monument.

The works have also been carefully considered in order to mitigate any impacts, and are therefore equally compliant with the Policy Statement, paragraph 3.20.

**6. Recommended decision**

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The works proposed are considered acceptable in meeting the terms of national policy for scheduled monuments, and also accounting for other material considerations.

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

**7. Conditions**

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None.

**8. Approval**

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<b>Officer</b>	<b>Nicola Hall</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>14/06/2016</b>
<b>Approved by</b>	<b>John Raven</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>15/06/2016</b>

**Annex A – list of supporting documents**

Signage schedule for replacing external panels' 2015-16 - cover page (dated 23/10/2015)  
Signage schedule – signage within Crypt including plan (dated 23/10/2015)  
Drawing (A4) Location Plan (dated 23/10/2015)