



Case information

Reference/Case ID	201508243		
Scheduled Monument	Whithorn Priory, monastic settlement and priory		
Index no	M12992	Grid Ref	NX444403 244400.0000 540300.0000
Date of Application	04 April 2016	Application Received	04 April 2016
Summary of proposed works	Construction of a replica Iron Age roundhouse within the scheduled area.		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends approval of Scheduled Monument Consent, with conditions, for the construction of a replica Iron Age Roundhouse on the edge of the scheduled early medieval ecclesiastical complex.

2. Background

Outline of the proposal

The Whithorn Trust proposes to erect a replica Iron Age roundhouse within the scheduled area, in the upper (western) part of an open area known as The Glebe Field. The replica would be based on information derived from the excavations the Trust have sponsored at the Black Loch of Myrton, about 5 miles to the west of Whithorn.

The Whithorn Trust is a charitable body founded in 1986 to promote and explore the archaeology of Whithorn and the Machars region. It originally focused on providing site visits and interpretation to the extensive archaeological excavations carried out at Whithorn from 1984 to 1991 on successive Early Christian, Viking and medieval settlements, and which were visited at their peak by up to 50,000 people per annum. Since the conclusion of the excavations and the various follow-up projects, the Trust has focused on operating the site museum (maintained by HES), café and shop, and on providing interpretation material and guided tours for visitors. They also have taken a role in conducting historic environment-related educational activities for community groups and schools. As such, they are key stakeholders in promoting the historic environment of the Galloway region.

Site description

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.

The core of the site focuses on the surviving buildings on the highest part of a low hill, which is mainly approached from Main Street to the south via Bruce Street. This approach from the south leads past the Museum (managed by the Whithorn Trust) and the Glebe Field.

The proposed roundhouse would be located within the upper (western) part of what is known as the Glebe Field, which lies to the south and southwest of the main complex. The lower (eastern) part of the Glebe Field was the focus of extensive and widely-publicised archaeological excavations from 1984 to 1991 on successive Early Christian, Viking and medieval settlements. The excavated remains would have formed part of the historic approach for pilgrims on their way to the east end of the church, and probably represent a secular adjunct to the ecclesiastical centre.

After the excavation of two small trenches within the upper (western) part of the Glebe Field in the mid-1980s, that part of the site was used for dumping spoil from the main excavation site to the east. The eastern boundary of this upper part of the Glebe Field is dominated by a large grassed-over spoil heap measuring approximately 2.5m high, 7m wide and 10m long, and by a smaller spoil heap about 1m high, 3.5m by 3m long. These spoil heaps are the result of the modern excavations and are archaeologically sterile, having been subjected to wet-sieving (a proven method of extracting all ecological and artefactual information) as part of the excavation process. Since 2013, the Whithorn Trust has cleared vegetation and created a community garden in this space, including the construction of raised beds.

The eastern boundary of the proposed development site has a single mature tree, and a north-south stone dyke in good repair, which separates the upper part of the Glebe Field from the lower part.

The upper (western) part of the Glebe Field was also the site of a former market garden with at least two greenhouses, which were out of use before archaeological excavation commenced in 1984. This will have caused currently unquantified levels of disturbance to parts of the proposed development site.

Pre-application discussions

Following pre-application engagement with Historic Environment Scotland's Heritage Management Directorate, the applicant pursued an assessment of alternative options which led to the preferred site being identified. Other locations outside the scheduled area were not available, and other parts of the scheduled area were not suitable because of the potential for significant adverse impacts (see assessment below for details).

The applicant originally proposed to erect the roundhouse on the lower (eastern) part of the Glebe Field, beside the main excavation trenches. This was rejected during subsequent discussions as it would have covered the core of the Early Christian, Viking and medieval settlement associated with the monastery, and also be in close proximity to the medieval buildings on the site. As this would have created a large and highly visible feature immediately beside the main approach to the monastery and potentially interfere with the view to the monastery from that approach, other options were considered.

Planning history

Apart from the archaeological excavations on the overall site, this part of the Glebe Field has seen two recent SMC applications by the Whithorn Trust;

- for vegetation clearance to facilitate a community garden. The works have been completed and the conditions discharged (Our Ref. 201406495).
- for construction of timber-framed raised beds between the two spoil heaps, to facilitate educational activities performed by the Trust. The works have been completed and the conditions discharged (Our Ref. 201501822).

There is a planning application related to the present proposals: Dumfries & Galloway Council is presently considering the application as of 26 May.

Rationale

The roundhouse would be used to support the interpretation and education remits of the Whithorn Trust. In particular, it is proposed that it would be used as an experimental archaeology site, acting as the setting for an outdoor classroom, stage for re-enactments, tours and community events, and recreation of prehistoric cookery for visitors to the site.

These activities are central to the Trust's revised approach to its remit, undertaken after the loss of one of its core funding streams in 2012. The project has been awarded in-principle funding from both the Heritage Lottery Fund and LEADER, subject to the securing of landowner permissions and Scheduled Monument Consent.

The Whithorn Trust was the prime instigator in the ongoing excavations at the Black Loch of Myrton (about 5 miles to the west of Whithorn), on an Iron Age settlement site which is the first of its kind excavated using modern excavation techniques, and is part-funded by HES. The Myrton excavations are significant because the

archaeological remains are extremely well-preserved by waterlogged soils, meaning that the timber structures and artefacts from the site can be more readily recovered and analysed. The Myrton excavations are currently unique in Scottish archaeology, as previous discoveries of similarly complex sites have not been fully excavated using modern techniques (only one parallel excavation is known in England, and is currently ongoing). The main roundhouse at Myrton was exceptionally well-preserved and vital information on how it was constructed has been obtained. In this case, the quality of information recovered offered the opportunity to learn from prehistoric building techniques through reconstruction of a building.

3. Proposals

The Whithorn Trust proposes to erect a replica Iron Age roundhouse (closely modelled on the excavated example from Myrton) within the scheduled area but on the edge of the early ecclesiastical complex. The Trust's project partners on the Myrton project have used the excavated remains to extrapolate the likely form of the main roundhouse, and this has been used as the basis of the replica.

It would be constructed on modern foundations so as to avoid the need for ground penetration, but would otherwise resemble the original, with a conical reed thatch roof supported on two concentric rings of upright timbers, wattle-and-daub walling, and a single entrance with porch.

The roundhouse footings would be set on a level surface using soil derived from the smaller spoil heap and new sterile soil from offsite. This levelled-off ground would be used as the base layer for a concrete raft foundation, measuring 15.248m by 15.248m, and 450mm deep. This would support the superstructure, spreading the weight and downward thrust from the building in order to avoid compaction of buried archaeological deposits. The present ground surface would be separated from the spoil heap material by a layer of protective terram membrane, with no ground-breaking or turf removal proposed.

Two concentric rings of round timbers would be constructed, based in steel fixings in the concrete raft. The outer ring would be 13.2m in diameter and constructed with 350mm round timbers, with the inner ring being 8.8m diameter and constructed with 350mm round timbers. This would support the roof structure, and the wattle and daub walls would be non-structural.

The application provides a short statement and detailed report indicating that the proposed foundation detail and superstructure would cause minimal ground compaction (see application form; letter dated 21 April 2016; and *Structural Calculations for new timber roundhouse, Whithorn*).

The application states that the proposed location represents the only sustainable option that would deliver the Trust's requirements (see letter dated 21 April 2016). It is argued that the proposed site needs to be physically close to the Whithorn Trust's museum and offices, so that it can be part of their interpretation and presentation

work at the site, and this precludes the use of sites outside the town or outwith the monument. The original excavation site at Myrton is 5 miles from Whithorn, it is not generally open to the public as it is in proximity to a private dwelling. Sites within the town and outwith the scheduled area already have defined uses (such as car-parking, parkland or sports grounds) and were not available to the applicant. Agricultural land on the western fringes of the scheduled area and also immediately outside the scheduled area were not available.

The application states that the proposed site has a degree of physical separation from the main part of the site. The physical separation is provided by the presence of the stone dyke, large spoil heap and a mature tree on the eastern boundary of the site, with other mature trees on the south and west boundaries. All of these features would be retained.

The applicant has provided a finalised Statement of Benefit, setting out the nature of and need for the project. This outlines how the Trust's funding levels (which primarily are determined by the local authority) are not increasing, and that its mission to promote Whithorn does not appear to be sustainable unless it reduces its dependence on local authority funding. Following loss of one of its key funding streams in 2012, the Trust sought ways to enhance its sustainability by:

- increasing visitor numbers through a more vibrant visitor experience, and widening the age range of those visitors
- increasing volunteering, including seeking of new Board members from outwith traditional backgrounds for such people, including members of younger generations
- finding connections with contemporary markets in the digital age

The Statement of Benefit sets out that the three objectives would be met through the roundhouse project.

The Statement argues that the construction and use of the replica roundhouse would enhance the attractiveness of the site as a draw for tourism. This would be achieved through use of the space as an outdoor classroom, craft exhibition and participation space, setting for weddings and other events, stage for re-enactment, tours and community events, and enable exploration of historic diet and crops, with communal cooking area. The Whithorn Trust already carries out some of these activities with local groups and visitors, but the proposed replica roundhouse would provide an historically appropriate setting for these, and serve as an attraction to new participants. The experimental/ educational events would also help address the increasing age profile of visitors to Whithorn, by opening up possibilities for the Trust to become a regional draw, with guided tours, greater involvement by schools, and seasonal events.

In their LEADER application (supplied in support of this application), the Trust notes that other sites which feature replica Iron Age houses such as the Loch Tay Crannog Centre and the experimental re-enactments have proven enduring attractions to visitors. While the proposed roundhouse would be of a smaller scale than that found

at the Crannog Centre, the applicant argues that it would assist the Trust towards the goal of a sustainable funding model, and reduce its reliance on funds from other sources.

The Statement of Benefit also sets out the importance of maintaining and increasing the level of volunteering at the Trust, which has been increasing since a low point a few years ago. This is regarded as vital in two ways; to increase the sustainability of the Trust in attracting appropriate staff from a wider intake; and to cement and improve relations with the local community. These measures have previously been identified as key elements in it being able to continue its work.

The Statement of Benefit also notes that increasing visitor footfall to Whithorn would potentially support surrounding businesses (particularly those in the retail and tourism sectors).

Finally, the Trust proposes to develop a mobile app which would engage visitors in the activities around the replica roundhouse, and with the wider importance of the site. While this would largely be limited to those with modern phones, it is argued that this would be likely to enhance the experience of Whithorn monastery and its surroundings for younger and technically-literate visitors, and thus provide a longer-term investment in the sustainability of the Whithorn Trust and its work.

The applicant also notes the value in using up-to-date excavation data in reconstruction, as this has been infrequently carried out in Scotland in recent years and is also likely to widen knowledge and understanding of the importance of the Black Loch excavations, as well as the work of the Whithorn Trust.

4. Representations received

Representations have been received from one member of the public on 24 May. This objects to the scale of the proposed roundhouse, as well as questioning its relevance to the Early Christian and medieval significance of the site.

A petition, containing seventy-nine signatures, has also been submitted. The petition opposes the proposals due to concerns that it would destroy the archaeology and heritage of the town.

A further phone call was received on 07 June from the same person who submitted the above representation and coordinated the petition. They raised a number of related concerns, including the potential impact: of construction vehicles on the site and its surroundings; upon European Protected Species, and; on the monument's spiritual values.

These issues are considered in detail below.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended)

- 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.
- Part 1 Section 4 (1&2) – established a five year time limit for works to commence. If you need to change this limit for some reason, or set a specific period for a consent, quote this section.

Historic Scotland Environment Policy Statement, June 2016

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 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;
- d. that the management and execution of alteration, including remedial work, is sympathetic to the historic character;
- e. that appropriate skills and techniques, materials and construction techniques are specified where appropriate;
- 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;
- g. that it is possible, on close inspection, to differentiate new work from old particularly on masonry structures;
- 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; 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 applicant has stated why no alternative locations are possible for the proposed replica. On balance, these arguments appear to be reasonable, as the alternatives would be remote from the site, would entail significant adverse impacts on the monument, or because alternative land is not available to the Trust. The applicant has therefore demonstrated that no alternative locations, suitable to their needs, could be identified.

Physical impact of proposed works

The applicant has provided a clear statement that buried foundations would not be required due to the spreading of a soil layer (created using the smaller spoil heap and a small amount of new sterile material) and the construction of a concrete raft which would support the superstructure of the roundhouse. However, the key risks of this proposal for the below ground archaeology are that deposition of a soil base layer and a concrete raft to support the roundhouse carries a strong risk of compression of soil profiles (and thus buried archaeology) under the structure.

The applicant has provided a short text from a structural engineer (contained in the application form) which summarises a detailed set of structural calculations (see *Structural Calculations for new timber roundhouse, Whithorn*) for the proposed roundhouse and its foundations. Taken together, these demonstrate that the underlying soil is of a firm to loose nature, and contains up to 3m depth of sill wash overlying bedrock. The calculations indicate that this would be adequate to form a solid base for the overlying soil layer and concrete raft. The calculations also

demonstrate that the entire superstructure would exert a vertical load which would be spread across the full extent of the concrete slab by the two rings of timber uprights, and this (in combination with the soil layer) would mean that localised compaction of the below-ground remains would not occur.

The application also notes that the development site was used for market gardening. While the extent of ground disturbance caused by this activity is not known, it will certainly have seen the topsoil turned over on a very frequent basis.

Consequently, the physical impact of compaction would be of a minimal nature. However, subsurface archaeological deposits would be overlain and covered by the foundations and superstructure. No excavations are presently proposed at Whithorn and the core areas of the site would still be available. In addition, the applicant notes that the foundations and superstructure would be separated from the present ground surface by a terram/ geotextile layer, so modern introduced materials could be removed in the future without risking further disturbance.

Impacts on cultural significance

These proposals have the potential to impact upon a number of factors that contribute to the monument's cultural significance. Those impacts can be broadly summarised as:

- a) Visual impacts on the ability to understand and appreciate the prominence, scale and context of the surviving buildings at the core of the site
- b) A contradiction between the replica Iron Age roundhouse and the Early Christian, Viking and later character of the monastic complex
- c) Soil compaction on the below-ground archaeology immediately below the roundhouse

a) Visual impacts

A structure of this scale (whether of prehistoric or modern form) may dominate many views from, in and across the monument. Specifically it has the potential to have an impact on the ability to understand and appreciate the medieval phases and current character of the monument and by conflicting with the central visual dominance of the most important surviving medieval buildings detract from the ability to appreciate their centrality to the site.

The indicative site sections (drawing no. 089/04) show that the mature tree, spoil heap and stone dyke would create a clear sense of visual separation from the lower parts of the structure, but that the high-pitched conical roof would be visible on the periphery of views towards the core buildings.

The proposed roundhouse would be visible to the extreme left from the main approach to the monastic complex, via Bruce Street, at a distance of about 75m. The scale of the structure would mean that it would be a prominent feature in the periphery of views from this approach towards the main buildings. It would also be

about 65m from the nearest part of the western part of the church. While it would be only slightly visible from the lower parts of the east end of the church which were the focus of medieval pilgrimage, it would be fully visible from much of the western end facing it.

The scale of the roundhouse (and particularly the roof) would mean that even though it is on the periphery of most views to the surviving buildings, including the most important ones listed above, and is partly screened from the rest of the site, it would still be a prominent feature in general, less important, views from within and across the site. This would particularly be the case when viewed from the south front of the church nave. Other built elements in the vicinity (such as the houses on Main Street and Bruce Street, or the adjacent farms) are at a greater distance from the core of the complex, and form a backdrop to views within the monastery rather than lie on the edge of it. The scale and proximity of the new structure would diminish the the scale and prominence of the main monastic buildings, but not in the most important views: the main approach from the town to the south. This would represent an adverse impact on the cultural significance of the site.

b) *Contradiction between the replica roundhouse and the monument's current character*

There is some artefactual evidence of Iron Age settlement at the Whithorn site, which is largely incidental to the main Early Christian and medieval phases of use. The artefacts were originally displayed in the museum at Whithorn, but were then relocated to Stranraer Museum about fifteen years ago. The presentation and interpretation material at Whithorn today largely focusses on the importance of St Ninian's role in the Early Christian period, as well as the medieval and modern relevance of pilgrimage to the monastery. The Iron Age is largely absent from HES's two Statements of Cultural Significance supporting the designation and the property in care. This suggests that, on the basis of our current understanding of the site, the Iron Age does not make a significant contribution to its importance.

The views of a roundhouse of clearly prehistoric derivation could conflict with and confuse the ability to appreciate and understand the Early Christian and medieval nature of the complex, even though it lies on the edge of the monastic site. It is therefore inconsistent with available statements of cultural significance, which emphasise the importance of remains from those later periods. However, there is some evidence of Iron Age occupation which has not been integrated into those statements of cultural significance. Moreover, the part of the site where the roundhouse is proposed was historically part of the secular settlement, not the spiritual centre or most sacred part of the site. The present homogeneity of the monument, which is primarily medieval and later in character, would be diminished, but the spiritual focus of the monument would remain largely unaffected.

c) *Soil compaction*

Compression of the soil underneath the proposed structure would represent a significant adverse impact on buried remains. As set out above, the proposed

construction detail avoids this risk, but would mean that the remains are unavailable for further excavation until the structure and foundations are removed. There is presently no proposal to excavate this part of the site, and the foundations are reversible. Nevertheless, there would be a slight adverse impact on the cultural significance of the site through temporary burial of the archaeology under the structure.

There is a small but perceptible risk that movement of vehicles in the construction phase could cause rutting of soft ground in times of wet weather, and no mitigation for this risk is proposed in the application. Without mitigation, this could also pose an adverse impact on the cultural significance of the site.

Public benefits of the proposal

The application sets out a wide range of public benefits, which have been summarised above. The Trust has played a central role in attracting visitors to the site since the conclusion of the excavations in 1991, and provides an essential link between the Whithorn community and regional and national partners, including Dumfries & Galloway Council and HES. The Statement of Public Benefit tangentially indicates that without this project being undertaken, the work of the Trust would be unsustainable due to the lack of additional funding and lack of diversity amongst visitors and volunteers, and would not add substantially to the success of the wider community. The value of using excavation data to reconstruct accurately the form and general appearance of an Iron Age roundhouse also has value, in that it demonstrates how that data can be used to widen appreciation and knowledge of the past to a general audience.

These are important objectives not merely for the Whithorn Trust, but also would represent important outcomes for Historic Environment Scotland and the wider historic environment sector. Enhancing the attractiveness of the monastery to visitors and engaging more strongly with visitors satisfies one of the key priorities set out in Our Place in Time: The Historic Environment Strategy for Scotland, namely:

- Value – Share & Celebrate/Enhancing participation/Broad-ranging approach to learning/Tourism

The project would appear to fulfil these aims. Both the Heritage Lottery Fund and LEADER stress the importance of a sustainable legacy from a project proposal and have awarded in-principle funding, presumably on the basis that they are confident in the intended outcomes.

The applicant has not provided a detailed financial statement on the importance or relevance of this proposal to the continued survival of the Whithorn Trust, or of how not developing the site would negatively impact on the Trust's finances. However, both the Heritage Lottery Fund and LEADER (who are experts in assessing financial viability and sustainability, as well as analysing business models) have accepted in

principle that the proposal would have a clearly defined benefit for the work of the Trust, and that it would materially contribute to the sustainability of the Trust going forward. This indicates their confidence in the Trust's business and financial modelling, and that they are content that the proposals will contribute significant benefits to the Trust's long term sustainability and viability.

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

No assessment of potential impacts upon European Protected Species was submitted with the application. HES Officers conducted their own assessment based on data provided by SNH. This indicates that there otters and bats have been noted in the vicinity but not within, respectively, 2km and 100m of the monument. There are no proposals to remove trees as part of this application, suggesting that any impact on any bats is likely to be minimal. These conclusions are outlined further in the *Protected Places and Species Assessment* appended to this Report of Handling.

d) Conclusion

The application demonstrates that no alternative locations for the proposed replica roundhouse can be identified outside the scheduled area, and the proposed location represents one that would be viable for the continued work of the Trust.

The proposed roundhouse would have an adverse impact on the ability to understand and appreciate the overall Whithorn monastic complex, as it would become a dominant feature in views from throughout the site and would also be different in appearance and historic form from the key features of the complex. However, it would be on the periphery of views from the main approach, and visually separated from the core complex. This, along with its location in a secular part of the early medieval ecclesiastical complex, should, in turn, help reduce any impacts on spiritual values attributed to the monument. Overall, however, the scale of the roundhouse would detract from the cultural significance of the site. On the basis of the above, the proposed works are not consistent with the policy statement paragraph 3.16, as they do not represent the minimum necessary consistent with the conservation of the cultural significance of the monument.

The proposed foundation detail of the roundhouse would spread the vertical loading of the superstructure over the whole width of the concrete slab, and would therefore have a minimal impact on below ground archaeology which is of nationally-important cultural significance. The effective removal of that archaeology from exploration over the lifetime of the roundhouse would adversely impact on the ability to carry out such work, but none is presently proposed and the foundations are of a reversible nature. In terms of design and the steps taken to mitigate any potential impacts the proposal has been carefully considered and properly planned, and reversible. Therefore, the proposals do have regard to the policy statement paragraph 3.20.

In assessing the overall acceptability or otherwise of this proposal, the public benefit to the work of the Whithorn Trust and to the community of Whithorn and district is

therefore of primary importance. The proposed project would place the Whithorn Trust on a sustainable footing, and would mean that it could continue and enhance its charitable activities in promoting, interpreting and presenting the site. The Trust's ability to deliver its educational support to local and wider communities and groups would also be enhanced through the provision of a building closely linked to the work of the body. It would also lie directly adjacent to the new community garden, to the Trust's facilities, and to the Whithorn site, thereby creating potential efficiencies for the Trust and for visitors. There would also be a wider benefit through using data from the excavations to demonstrate the abilities of Iron Age builders to construct substantial dwellings, and which would be used to directly experience the historic past.

On balance, the adverse impact on the scheduled monument would not be sufficiently significant to warrant a refusal of this application. These impacts would also be offset through the enhanced opportunities to sustain the Whithorn Trust in its activities. Therefore, it is concluded that the proposal is consistent with paragraph 3.19 of the policy statement, as it would generate significant public benefits, enhance public understanding and will potentially produce economic benefits once the works are completed. On that basis, it is recommended that consent is granted.

No works timetable has been provided with the application, and it will be essential for HES to monitor progress during the construction phase. On that basis, it is proposed to incorporate a monitoring condition into the consent.

The residual risk of construction vehicles causing rutting in times of soft ground in poor weather also requires mitigation, and it is proposed to incorporate a condition for a vehicle access scheme to be identified in order to mitigate that risk.

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.

I recommend that consent is **granted, subject to the conditions detailed below.**

7. Conditions

1. At least four weeks prior to works commencing on site, a detailed works timetable to include an intended completion date shall be submitted to Historic Environment Scotland for written approval. Any alteration to this timetable should also be notified to Historic Environment Scotland.

Reason: to ensure that Historic Environment Scotland have the opportunity to visit the site and monitor the works in progress.

2. A ground protection scheme for vehicle access during the works shall be provided to Historic Environment Scotland for written approval prior to the timetabled commencement of works.

Reason: to ensure that the risk of ground damage from vehicles during the construction phase is identified and appropriately mitigated.

8. Approval

Officer	John Malcolm (updated by John Raven on 07/06/16)	Date	26/05/2016
Approved by	Aonghus MacKechnie	Date	7/6/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Roundhouse Drawing –drawing no. 089/01b
- Site sections as existing – drawing no. 089/03
- Site sections as proposed - drawing no. 089/04
- Site plan - drawing no. 089/02
- Roundhouse elevations and design statement - drawing no. 089/05
- Whithorn Roundhouse Calculations – dated 10 April 2016
- Whithorn Priory. Statement of Benefit – dated 18 May 2016
- LEADER Project Plan WHITHORN