



Case information

Reference/Case ID	201601190		
Scheduled Monument	Jarlshof, broch & settlement		
Index no	M90174	Grid Ref	HU398095 439900.0000 1109500.0000
Date of Application	03 June 2016	Application Received	03 June 2016
Summary of proposed works	Changes to grass and stone surfacing; some reburial of stone.		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends approval is granted without conditions.

2. Background

Jarlshof is a Property in Care and open to visitors. It is near the south tip of the Shetland mainland. Jarlshof is a complex multi-period settlement with many phases of drystone buildings. In order to assist visitors' understanding it is important that the remains are presented in an accessible and consistent manner.

The monument is best known for the remains of Norse buildings but includes structures from as early as 2500 BC up to the 17th century AD. Prehistoric periods of settlement include: a Bronze Age smithy, Iron Age roundhouses, souterrains and a broch.

A Norse farmstead was built around 850 AD and this settlement expanded and contracted until the 13th century. It was succeeded by a farmhouse and barn abandoned in the 16th century, when a laird's house was built. The site was finally abandoned by the end of the 17th century.

The monument is of national importance because it is exceptionally well preserved and includes remains from such a long period of time. It is very unusual to have so many dates and types of structure preserved in one place. The remains have the potential to add to our understanding and appreciation of a substantial part of Scotland's past.

The proposals are an extension of a programme of work to improve access, interpretation, presentation and management of the monument, which was begun around 2008.

The proposals have been set out in detail in documents that accompanied the application. These were prepared by HES Cultural and Natural Resources Team (HES CNR). They were informed by desk-based research undertaken by HES CNR to determine the archaeological sensitivity of the monument.

The design of the proposals is intended to avoid adverse impacts on remains and allow for improvements to their conservation. The proposals would result in a ground maintenance plan for the site that clearly identified archaeological features and defined appropriate maintenance.

The proposals also seek to improve the overall presentation of the site, by creating a consistent approach to the way in which interiors, exteriors and wall lines are presented and covering stones or features which do not add to visitor understanding.

The proposals have been discussed with HES Heritage Management Directorate (HES HMD) and draft supporting documents submitted for comment. The current application has been amended to take comments into account.

3. Proposals

Several phases of work are proposed.

Phases 1 and 2 are outlined below, alongside brief rationales for the proposed work and archaeological mitigation, where appropriate.

It is envisaged that Phase 3 works would be subject to future application.

PHASE 1

Reburial of selected exposed areas of 'midden'

There are a number of areas of 'midden' exposed during previous excavations and presented as open circles of earth covered with broken shells. These are surrounded by mown grass.

It is proposed that these are left as they are where they are accompanied by information and assist visitors' understanding. Where this is not the case it is proposed that they would be reburied to make maintenance easier. A layer of geotextile membrane would be laid over the exposed deposit before turf was laid to provide protection and a clear distinction between the turf and midden.

Archaeological mitigation

The proposed reburial would involve no ground disturbance. Each exposed area would be recorded by photograph prior to reburial. The areas are marked on existing plans. The resulting information would be included in an archaeological report of the works.

Reburial of exposed stones/features and removal of selected individual loose stones

There are exposed and loose individual stones, or piles of stones, at various locations on the monument. It is proposed that loose stones, where the original context is unknown or has been lost, are removed. Loose stones would be checked by an archaeologist to confirm their lack of significance prior to removal. Advice would be sought from HES CNR and HMD on a case by case basis.

There are also a number of stone features which are not obviously associated with a structure or otherwise understood or interpreted. It is proposed that exposed stonework or features which are *in-situ* but do not relate to a known structure should be covered with turf.

Archaeological mitigation

Stone features to be reburied would be recorded on the existing site plan prior to reburial (if they are not already shown). An archaeological record would be made prior to reburial. This would comprise a plan, brief description and photographs.

Wall differentiation

On some walls the boundaries between different phases or sections of wall have become obscured by turf. It is proposed that where turf has encroached to obscure different phases of construction it would be cut back. All walls would remain turf covered and cutting back would be done without compromising the protection turf provides to the underlying wall.

The extent of turf removal would be determined on site with advice from a member of CNR.

Archaeological mitigation

This work should not involve any disturbance of underlying deposits or structures and no archaeological mitigation is proposed. However, work would stop and CNR would be consulted if any disturbance inadvertently occurred during turf removal.

Additional works

Turf is thinning in some places due to visitor footfall. Turf would be reinstated and a small sign would be added at one location. The sign would be a small stone plaque in the style of the audio guide number plaques. It would not require any ground disturbance. The exact location of the sign would be determined in consultation with CNR to ensure that it is not placed on top of any sensitive features.

PHASE 2

Surfacing within structures

Turf would be removed from some structures' interiors and replaced with gravel to provide consistency in presentation across the monument. Interiors assessed as having high archaeological sensitivity have been excluded.

The type of gravel would be different to that used for modern paths. Red gravel would be used for hearths.

Historic paving would be retained, consolidated and weeded where it is already present within structures or along paths. Vegetation around the paving stones would be removed by hand.

Where required consolidation of paved areas would be undertaken. The paving stones would be carefully lifted and the ground below levelled. Excavation would extend to a maximum depth of 100mm. A geotextile layer would be laid and covered with a layer of fine gravel or whin dust. The paving stones would be re-laid in their original position as far as possible. Voids between the stones would be filled with fine gravel. In areas where paving forms interior and exterior surfaces, different gravel would be used to differentiate them.

Some interiors are already gravel covered but with small areas of turf. Some of this turf would be removed by hand following discussion with a member of CNR. This would ensure the removal of turf was not likely to expose sensitive remains. Removal of turf would be undertaken under archaeological control except where the desk based assessment has determined that there is limited archaeological sensitivity.

Archaeological Mitigation

Previous excavations are likely to have removed many sensitive deposits within the structures at Jarlishof. Archaeological sensitivity has been assessed and where this remains high these works are not proposed.

The removal of turf, lifting of paving stones and excavations to the required depth would be archaeologically monitored to ensure that any disturbance did not impact upon sensitive archaeological deposits. Appropriate recording would be undertaken as set out below.

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

The application is accompanied by an archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), which sets out the methodology for archaeological monitoring. It includes for:

- The presence of at least one archaeologist during all ground breaking works.
- That the archaeologist would direct the rate, location and method of excavation employed by the contractor.
- The archaeologist would suspend excavation where necessary.

The WSI also includes for an appropriate standard of recording, sampling, and treatment of recovered materials.

The WSI notes that in the event of the discovery of significant remains and/or artefacts, excavation would be suspended. HES CNR would be informed. HES CNR would consult with HES HMD to agree appropriate responses.

The results would be subject to a suitable level of assessment and an illustrated Data Structures Report (DSR) produced within 20 working days of completion of the

fieldwork. If further analyses and reporting is considered appropriate a proposed programme would be submitted. There is suitable provision for summary reporting and archiving.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT

Upon completion of the proposed work an annotated aerial photographic plan of the site would be produced detailing present management and presentation across the site and highlighting areas of archaeological sensitivity. This would be used to inform the site's ongoing maintenance.

4. Representations received

No representations have been 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.

Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement, June 2016

3.14. A monument is included 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 this policy statement, 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.

3.20. 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 are being proposed primarily to improve the presentation of the monument and facilitate its maintenance. It would also enhance the conservation of the monument where the re-covering of 'midden' and stone features or replacement of eroded turf are proposed.

The work would re-cover some exposed parts of the monument, which do not add to visitor understanding. It would remove some turf where it does not assist understanding and replace it where it has been eroded. The work would also adjust the surfacing used in structures to ensure consistency in the site. It would re-lay paving in some places.

The resulting surfaces should make the presentation of the complex structural remains at Jarlshof more consistent and hence more easily understood by visitors. The works would also improve the visual appearance of the monument for the same reason.

The works have been informed by an assessment of evidence provided by previous excavations and have been designed to avoid areas of high archaeological sensitivity. They are confined to the upper surfaces/layers of the ground surface. Consequently, they should not have an adverse effect on sub-surface archaeological remains.

The work would be accompanied by a programme of archaeological monitoring, recording and reporting. This would provide further advice 'on the ground', record existing conditions before reburial and monitor excavations in case sensitive deposits or artefacts were to be exposed.

If sensitive remains were exposed work would cease and an appropriate course of action decided with HES HMD. The primary aim would be conservation of the monument.

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

The application site does not lie close to any SSSI, SPA or SAC designation. National Biodiversity Network GIS data sets indicate no evidence for Protected Species in the relevant 100m grid squares.

d) Conclusion

The proposals have been carefully designed to avoid impacts on upstanding structures or underlying deposits. This would be ensured by the presence of an archaeologist during the works.

The works should assist in conservation of some re-covered parts of the monument and should improve its visual appearance. The works are not inconsistent with the policy statement's paras 3.16, as they should conserve the cultural significance of the monument.

Similarly, the proposals should not adversely affect the cultural significance of the monument (para 3.18) or its long term preservation (para 3.14).

The proposals appear to be carefully considered, sensitively designed and properly planned and should accord with the policy statement para 3.20.

The proposals should also contribute to better management and presentation of the monument, which is consistent with Key Principles 1.9a and d of the policy statement.

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.

7. Conditions

Granted without conditions.

8. Approval

Officer	Simon Stronach	Date	20/06/2016
Approved by	John Raven	Date	20/06/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

Scheme Drawings 568.174.278-283

Proposal (24 February 2016)

Written Scheme of Investigation (29 February 2016)