



Case information

Reference/Case ID	201602521		
Scheduled Monument	Rait, old parish church		
Index no	M5613	Grid Ref	NO227268 322700.0000 726800.0000
Date of Application	28 July 2016	Application Received	05 August 2016
Summary of proposed works	Masonry consolidation works, including the installation of new safe lintels, consolidation and repointing, soft capping, and levelling of the interior		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for masonry consolidation works, including the installation of new safe lintels, consolidation and repointing, soft capping, and levelling of the interior be granted **with conditions**.

2. Background

The historic environment asset and its cultural significance

The monument comprises the remains of the pre-Reformation parish church of Rait. The church was abandoned in the early part of the 17th century when the parish of Rait was united with that of Kilspindie. The present ruin, which is likely to overlie the original 13th-century foundation, is situated in a fenced-off graveyard. It is rectangular-plan, measuring 20m E-W by 6.4m N-S over walls 0.8m thick. The masonry is random coursed rubble with freestone quoins and dressings bonded with lime mortar.

The E gable survives to its full height. The W gable is reduced to 1.5m and the N and S walls are fairly intact and stand to a maximum height of 2.5m. There is a square-headed entrance with chamfered jambs in the S wall near the W end. A moulded jamb near the E end may indicate the position of a second door. The E gable has an upper level window and a square-headed lower level window with deeply splayed inner jambs. On either side of the entrance are square-headed windows with chamfered dressings. The W is grooved for glazing and the E one is incomplete.

The cultural significance of the monument is vested in its preservation as a simple church of pre-Reformation date which shares characteristics with a large group of religious buildings designed primarily for lay use. As such it provides evidence which

contributes to our knowledge of the parish system, church design and layout, ecclesiastical history and material culture during the period of its construction and use.

The applicant

Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT) act as the local authority archaeological service and undertake a wide range of conservation projects to assets within their remit. PKHT are the lead partner in the HLF-funded Tay Landscape Partnership (TLP), and works to Rait fall within the broad scope of the TLP. The project team (including the lead contractor) have undertaken similar work on other ruined churches/scheduled monuments nearby, and have a track record of delivering a successful project on time.

Pre-application discussions

The project has been subject to substantial pre-application discussions since 2007. The timeline of the project to date is such that it has been carefully thought through, with changes made and priorities altered as time has passed. Initial vegetation clearance gained SMC in 2007 and was undertaken in 2009 and 2012, with two large trees being removed from the monument in 2012. The applicant expressed interest in grant funding from HES after the initial vegetation clearance, and HES architects visited the monument to provide advice.

The proposed works follow the priorities and recommendations as informally advised by the HES architects during the vegetation and tree clearance campaigns, and the scope of the proposed works have been discussed and agreed at a site meeting in 2015. HES have provided detailed comments on the tender drawings that support this application.

The project has been developed to be suitable for inclusion and support from the Traditional Building Skills element of the ongoing HLF-funded Tay Landscape Partnership and has thus been subject to the scrutiny involved in that process.

3. Proposals

Consented works - Masonry consolidation works, including the installation of new safe lintels, consolidation and repointing, soft capping, and levelling of the interior.

The proposals comprise:

- Installation of new safe lintels above the window openings in the East Gable and the South Wall, comprising pre-stressed concrete lintels faced with timber oak lintols.
- Consolidation and lime pointing of the East Gable wall head.
- Consolidation and soft capping of the remaining wall heads

- Levelling of the church interior under archaeological supervision, followed by installation of geotextile membrane and gravel.
- Localised pinning, repointing and consolidation of wall faces, including rebuilding around the window jamb in the South Wall.

These works are in response to long-identified decay to the fabric of the structure, and have been developed following similar projects to other ruined churches on the Carse of Gowrie. The works sit within the broader Tay Landscape Partnership.

4. Representations received

No 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.

Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement June 2016 (the policy statement)

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, which 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. (Annex 1 sets out guidance as to how cultural significance and national importance should be determined).

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;
- c. that where change is necessary, strategies should be adopted to mitigate its impact and limit intervention;
- 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;
- 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 (see Note 3.10); 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 works comprise masonry consolidation works, including the installation of new safe lintels, consolidation and repointing, soft capping, and levelling of the interior.

Overview of works

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 conservation works to the monument to maintain the structural integrity of the masonry and historic mortar and to mitigate potential health and safety risks to the public.

The installation of the new safe lintels represents a change to the character of the monument. The design is such that the visible outermost lintel in each case will be

oak, but the remainder (supporting the wall core) will be pre-stressed concrete. Existing lintels have failed and are no longer present, and to not replace the safe lintels would threaten the long term stability of the masonry above. Whilst concrete will have an aesthetic impact, this will only be visible when standing underneath each window and looking up.

The masonry consolidation works are all considered sound conservation work. An element of rebuild will be required to a few localised areas where facing stones have been lost, and also around one of the window jambs in the South Wall where there is insufficient seating left remaining for the existing outer stone lintel. This level of rebuild will be kept to the minimum necessary.

The treatment of the wall heads varies from lime pointing of the crowsteps on the East Gable to soft capping of the lower wall heads elsewhere. At present the wall heads are open, and moisture penetration is therefore exacerbating decay and failure of the wall core which is leading to mortar washout and the loss of facing stones. Preventing water ingress into the wall core will therefore help preserve historic fabric.

The levelling of the interior, the grubbing out of ivy stumps, and the installation of a membrane topped by a gravel layer is proposed to not only reduce the likelihood of future rank vegetation growth with the church, but also to help facilitate safe public access by removing a number of trip hazards.

Methodology

The drawings attached to the application set out a comprehensively detailed methodology for each area of the works.

All masonry consolidation works will be undertaken using existing stone from the site, with carved stone set aside and not used. A suitable lime mortar mix has been determined from previous sampling. The build style will match the existing.

The soft capping will use commercially supplied turf seeded with a mix to match the local seed mix, to help ensure its longevity.

The ground levelling will be done under archaeological control as a precautionary measure, and any carved stone will be classed as 'finds'. There is no written scheme of investigation attached to the application to cover this archaeological control and the treatment/disposal of finds, but this can be conditioned.

The drawings set out that a photographic record will be made as works progress, and the deposition of this record to a suitable repository will need to be conditioned.

Summary

The works are required in order to maintain the structural integrity of the surviving historic fabric. They have been designed to be as light touch as possible, and as such will not detract from the cultural significance of the monument. The works are

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considered to be sound conservation practice as they aim to retain as much historic fabric in situ using tried and tested techniques in such a way that should stabilise loose masonry whilst retaining the character and integrity of the monument. Whilst there will be changes to the aesthetic of the monument, through the introduction of both timber and pre-stressed concrete safe lintels and also through the introduction of soft capping, this change is not considered significant. The works do not, therefore, conflict with paragraph 3.16 of the policy statement.

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

No impact on Protected Species and Places. A bat specialist has undertaken an assessment of the potential for bats to be present in the masonry and has found no evidence, but a further precautionary check will be carried out prior to the works commencing.

The works have received grant funding from HES in the financial year 2016-17, and as such have been subject to the scrutiny involved in that process.

The works have a strong community element, and the sense of 'community ownership' has been a key driver behind this project. Previous initial ivy clearance work has involved significant levels of local community engagement, and it is envisaged that this engagement will continue where safe to do so as part of the project.

d) Conclusion

As works to support the conservation of a monument, the application should be viewed as works as set out in both Part 1 Section 2 of the AMAA Act 1979 and paragraph 3.4 of the policy statement.

The works have been designed in such a way that they do not impact on the cultural significance of the monument. As such, the work is justified under paragraph 3.16 of the policy statement. The detailed methodology is such that the works can be undertaken without detriment to the integrity of the monument and without impacting on potential natural heritage issues, and although not easily reversible the works are considered to be well planned. However, a condition as outlined in paragraph 3.22 of the policy statement is required in order to provide a written scheme of investigation for the archaeological control associated with the ground levelling and carved/stones/finds treatment/disposal so as to ensure that the works are undertaken in an appropriate manner. In addition, a condition is required in order to ensure that the photographic record is produced and deposited in a suitable repository within a given timescale. A timetable for works is also required so that monitoring visits can be undertaken to ensure quality of work is sufficient. As works to support the conservation of a monument, the application should be viewed as works as set out in both Part 1 Section 2 of the AMAA Act 1979 and paragraph 3.4 of the policy statement.

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 consent is **granted, subject to the condition detailed below.**

7. Conditions

1. No work associated with the levelling off of the ground surface or treatment/disposal of carved stone shall take place until Historic Environment Scotland has approved in writing a written scheme of investigation (WSI) from an archaeological contractor to cover the works.

Reason: to ensure that archaeological information is adequately recorded during the course of works.

2. The applicant shall provide Historic Environment Scotland with a timetable for works at least 2 days prior to the commencement of works on site.

Reason: to enable Historic Environment Scotland to monitor the progress of the works that have been consented.

3. A series of annotated photographic records taken before, during, and after the works to show the masonry consolidation works, including the installation of new safe lintels, consolidation and repointing, soft capping, and levelling of the interior should be submitted to Historic Environment Scotland within 4 weeks of completing the works on site.

Reason: to provide an accurate record of the site before, during, and after the various works have been completed.

8. Approval

Officer	Oliver Lewis	Date	26/09/2016
Approved by	George Findlater	Date	30/09/2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Structural lintel detail – 600400_DG-01-P2
- Elevation repair and spec – Rait WD07 Rev E
- Elevation repair and spec – Rait WD08 Rev D
- Elevation repair and spec – Rait WD09 Rev C
- Elevation repair and spec – Rait WD10 Rev B
- Engineers report
- Email from Sophie Nicol to Oliver Lewis dated 23 September 2016 regarding bat survey