Scheduled Monument Consent:
Report on Handling

Case Information

Reference/Case ID	300018499

Scheduled Monument	Kildalton Church, church, High Cross, and cross 60m NE of		
Index no	SM13236	**Grid ref**	NR 45800 50800

Date application validated	21 September 2016
Summary of proposed works	Kildalton Church, Thief's Cross - Replace loose stone, 'curtain' iron railings with replica, clean biological growth off surface of cross and fill open fracture

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for replacing a loose stone, 'curtain' iron railings with replica, cleaning biological growth off the surface of Kidalton Thief's Cross and filling an open fracture is granted with conditions.

2. Background

The proposal affects a medieval cross, which stands 60m to the northeast of a roofless medieval church, graveyard and early Christian cross at Kildalton. It is a free-standing disc-headed cross with splayed arms, sometimes referred to as the 'Thief's Cross'. It stands up to 1.94m in height and has been positioned on an artificial stony mound enclosed by iron railings. It is on the opposite side of a minor road from the church. The cross is 14th-15th century in date and belongs to the Iona School. The scheduled area around the cross is 3m square and corresponds with the iron railings surrounding the cross. The railings themselves are excluded from the scheduling.

The monument is of national importance becuase it is in generally excellent condition and has elements dating to a number of periods. The free-standing cross relevant to this application is one of those elements and is noted to have considerable research potential.

A report on the monument's condition and conservation was produced by HES Conservation Directorate in October 2015. This noted that there were fractures on the cross, biological growth on both faces and that the iron railings were in poor

condition. It recommended careful filling of the fracture and removal of the biological growth by a conservator. It also recommended repair of the railings.

The application is for replacement of the iron railings, removal of the biological growth and filling of the fracture. It also includes for the replacement of a large stone that has rolled out of the cairn at the base of the cross and leans against the existing railings. The application has been informed by the above report and discussions with HES Heritage Management. It has been submitted on behalf of Ardtalla Estates, the owner of the monument.

The application is accompanied by a risk assessment and method statement for the fitting of the replacement railings.

3. Proposals

- Replacement of a loose stone that has rolled out of, and to the base of, the artificial mound at the base of the cross.
- Replacement of the iron railings with a replica.
- Cleaning biological growth from the surface of the cross.
- Filling an open fracture with sacrificial acrylic mortar.

A large stone has rolled from the artifical mound at the base of the cross toward the southwest. It now lies against the iron railings and has caused this side of the railings to sheer. It is proposed to replace the stone in the position it rolled out from if possible. If not possible it is proposed to infill using matching smaller stones. The proposal does not contain a detailed methodology for fixing stones in position.

The corroded railings around the cross would be cut and removed. Corroded material would be drilled out from existing fixing holes so that existing holes could be re-used to fix the new railings where possible. If new holes are required it is proposed that they would be dug with minimal ground disturbance; the proposal does not specify how large these holes are likely to be. There are fixing posts at each corner and mid-way along the sides of the replacement railings. These would be placed into the fixing holes and the railings bolted together. The posts would be fixed into position with concrete.

Biological growth on the surface of the cross would be carefully removed using a medium natural or nylon bristle brush using clean tap water and care would be taken to monitor the surface of the stone to avoid damage. The open fractures on the north side would be filled with a sacrificial acrylic mortar. Work would be undertaken under the supervision of an accredited conservator from an established conservation practice.

4. Representations received

No representations have been received.

5. Report

a) Policy considerations

The application should be considered 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

Carved Stones: Scottish Executive Policy and Guidance 2005

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.

3.15. Monuments are subject to decay and the threat of destruction, from natural and human causes. Conservation work is normally needed to prolong the life of a monument, but there is a risk that this can be so invasive that it irreversibly modifies the monument's character and affects the special interest or features that made the monument important in the first place.

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.

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 various elements of the proposal are assessed below:

Replacement of a loose stone that has rolled out of, and to the base of the artificial mound at the base of the cross

It is proposed to replace the stone in position if possible, or fill the void with several smaller matching stones. The application does not set out a methodology for fixing the stone or stones.

The presence of remnants of cementitious mortar in the void left by the large stone suggests that the artifical mound at the base of the cross has been consolidated relatively recently, presumably to support the cross. The void created by the large

stone rolling away may result in a reduction of this support, or accelarate further erosion, if it is not filled. Therefore the replacement of the stone would be beneficial for the long term preservation of the monument. The artificial mound is not contemporary with the cross and there is no particular significance to the particular stone that has come loose. If necessary, the replacement of this large stone with matching smaller stones would not materially alter the overall appearance of the mound and the cultural signficance of the monument would not be materially affected. The application does not set out a methodology for replacing the stone and it is necessary for this to be done in a sensitive and appropriate manner; it is recommended that a condition be applied to ensure this.

Replacement of the iron railings with a replica

The railings around the cross offer it protection, for example from animals rubbing against it or visitors taking stone rubbings. It is therefore beneficial to the monument's long term preservation. The railings are excluded from the scheduling and are in poor condition, in particular one side has become detached from the anchor points at its base. It is proposed to cut and remove the old railings, drill out corroded material from fixing holes and re-use them, where possible, to erect new like-for-like railings. It is possible that new holes may be required, where this is the case it is proposed that the new holes would be the minimum dimension required.

The digging of any new fixing holes may disturb ground on the edge of the scheduled area around the Thief's Cross. The Thief's Cross is a free standing cross on the opposite side of a road from Kidalton Church and Churchyard. It is not predicted to be associated with extensive sub-surface archaeological deposits. The holes required are likely to be small but no dimensions have been specified in the application. Small holes are are unlikely to disturb archaeological deposits or have a material affect on the cultural significance of the monument and hence would not require archaeological mitigation. However, it is recommended that a condition is applied to ensure that HES are informed of the likely dimensions of any holes required so that we can determine whether any archaeological mitigation is required..

Cleaning biological growth from the surface of the cross

Biological growth on the surface of the cross would be removed as per advice offered by HES Conservation Directorate. This would be undertaken under the supervision of an appropriately experienced Conservation professional. This would make the stone's carving easier to appreciate and would have no adverse effects on its long term preservation.

Filling an open fracture with sacrificial acrylic mortar

An open fracture on the north side of the cross would be filled with a sacrificial acrylic mortar as per advice offered by HES Conservation Directorate. Work would be

undertaken under the supervision of an accredited conservator from an established conservation practice. This would be beneficial for the long term preservation of the cross.

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

The proposed work is consistent with the Carved Stones: Scottish Executive Policy and Guidance 2005 in particular, the Section 4 Guidance Notes and the advice that interventions should be minimal and informed by appropriate conservation advice and expertise.

The works would be within in the Ardmore, Kildalton and Cullumkill Woodlands SSSI. SNH have been consulted regarding the proposed works and confirmed that the works are not likely to have a significant impact on the SSSI.

d) Conclusion

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 proposed works, comprising replacement of a loose stone, railings, cleaning of surface and filiing of fractures are being done in such a way that they would have minimal impact on the cultural significance of the monument. They do not, therefore, conflict with paragraphs 3.16 and 3.18 of the policy statement.

The application partially meets paragraph 3.20 because it has partially demonstrated that the works have been carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned. However, it has not set out the method for replacement of the loose stone that has been displaced from the artificial mound at the base of the cross or the likely size of excavations that may be required to fix the replacement railings. Consequently, conditions are required to ensure these elements of the work are appropriately designed and undertaken.

In order to ensure the works comply with the policy statement, two conditions as outlined in paragraph 3.22 are considered necessary. These would require further informaiton to be submitted to HES Hertiage Management relating to the method of securing loose stone or stones in the cairn and the likely size of any holes required to be excavated to fix the replacement railings. This information should be supplied to HES Hertiage Managment in advance of site works and the proposed work should be amended to take account of any comments or requirements from HES Hertiage Management regarding this further information.

Condition 1 is to submit and agree with HES Heritage Management a method to replace the loose stone in the artifical mound prior to work commencing at the monument.

Condition 2 is to submit and agree with HES Heritage Management the likely dimensions of excavation required to fix the replacement railings in position prior to work commencing at the monument.

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 conditions detailed below**.

7. Conditions

1. No works requiring scheduled monument consent shall commence on site until a specification for fixing stones in the mound at the base of the cross has been approved in writing by Historic Environment Scotland.

   Reason: to ensure that work will be carried out to a standard acceptable to Historic Environment Scotland and impacts on the monument are minimised.

2. No new holes necessary for the erection of the railings shall be drilled or excavated until the dimensions and method have been approved in writing by Historic Environment Scotland.

   Reason: to ensure that any impacts on the monument are minimised.

8. Approval

Case officer	Simon Stronach	**Date**	13 October 2016
Approved by	John Raven	**Date**	13 October 2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

1) Meddicks Risk Assessment and Method Statement
2) HES Conservation Directorate October 2015 Carved Stones, Old Parish Church, Kildalton, Islay
3) Plan showing the Scheduled Area