



## Case Information

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Reference/Case ID	300018575
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Scheduled Monument	Buittle Castle		
Index no	SM1115	Grid ref	NX 81900 61600

Date application validated	12 October 2016
Summary of proposed works	Removal of two pre-war lattice towers

### 1. Summary recommendation

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This report recommends that approval for removal of redundant lattice electricity towers be granted.

### 2. Background

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Buittle Castle dates from around 1230 and has been built on a large, earlier motte strategically sited to the west of the River Urr. It was destroyed early in the 14th Century and was associated with John Balliol. Excavations have been undertaken in the 19th and later 20th Century. These recorded the remains of several stone and timber buildings as well as recovering an important range of artefacts including arrowheads, jewellery and other items indicative of high status occupation. There was also evidence for earlier prehistoric activity. The monument includes ruins, earthworks and sub-surface archaeological deposits.

The monument is of national importance because of its potential to contribute to an understanding of one of the most important landholding dynasties of medieval Scotland, the Balliols. The archaeological potential of the monument is very high and a monument of this type is rare and vulnerable. The physical evidence is important to our understanding of atypical 'motte-and-bailey' castles in Scotland.

### 3. Proposals

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The proposed work is essential to comply with health and safety regulations relating to the decommissioning of electrical line infrastructure. The existing towers were replaced during line modernisation in 2014; the new infrastructure is outside the

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scheduled monument. There are two redundant towers within the scheduled monument. It is proposed to:

- Remove the two small pre-war steel lattice towers from concrete bases and remove them from site.
- Partially break out and remove the concrete bases of both towers.
- Reinststate the ground and re-seed with grass.

A 4x4 low ground pressure vehicle with a cherry picker or mobile elevating work platform would be used to access and remove the porcelain insulator pins, this would prevent them from falling and shattering during lowering of the towers.

The towers would be cut as close to the concrete bases as possible on one side and would be lowered down onto straw bale mats to prevent the tower penetrating the ground surface. The remaining side would then be cut. The towers would then be cut into small pieces and transported off site using an excavator with low ground pressure tracks.

A small amount of manual excavation using a shovel may be necessary around the concrete base of the tower (within 0.2m) to allow a mechanical pecker to gain access to it. The concrete bases would then be reduced in height by the pecker to a level of up to 600mm below ground. The bottom of the concrete base would not be broken out. The resulting rubble would be removed and transported off site using the excavator. An ATV quad would be used to transport materials to and from the towers.

At the start of operations an archaeologist would be in attendance to advise contractors on the presence/absence of any upstanding features in the vicinity of the works and where appropriate mark these with canes and tapes. The archaeologist would also advise on associated plant movements and provide guidance on routes of access and working areas to ensure there would be no damage to upstanding remains (including if plant is moving between the two towers when the archaeologist is not on site). The archaeologist would also provide advice on avoiding inadvertent damage to sub-surface remains through vehicle movement. To minimise potential ground disturbance bog mats or ply boarding would be used within the scheduled area. During below-ground work and excavations an archaeological watching brief would be carried out to identify and record any archaeological remains that may be exposed, and to record changes in the geological conditions. A Written Scheme of Investigation for the archaeological works has been submitted with the application.

After the rubble has been removed, the ground would be reinstated using topsoil sourced from outside the scheduled monument and seeded with grass. At present no date has been set for the works to take place, but they would be likely to take place before November to allow the grass seed to take hold, HES would be informed when a date is proposed. Works are intended to last two days at maximum.



## 4. Representations received

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No representations have been received.

## 5. Report

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### 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.

#### 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 proposed works involve the removal of two redundant lattice towers and part of their concrete bases. This is intended to comply with health and safety regulations.

The breaking out of the towers' concrete bases has been minimised in order to reduce the risk of disturbing sensitive deposits. In particular, it would not remove the bottoms of the bases. However, the proposed works may require some hand excavation around the immediate surrounds of the bases. This is likely to be ground disturbed during the installation of the towers but there is some potential to expose undisturbed deposits in the sides of these excavations, or significant redeposited artefacts. In response to this potential an archaeologist would monitor the work and record or recover any exposed deposits or artefacts. With this mitigation in place the breaking out of the bases is not likely to have any material effect on the cultural significance of the monument.

There is some potential for the proposed works to cause inadvertent damage to archaeological remains above and below ground during machine movements and lowering the towers. However, the proposed work has allowed for an archaeologist to be on site to provide advice on plant movements and ensure this is avoided. As a result there should be no accidental damage to the monument.

It is concluded that the works would not affect the cultural significance of the monument.

The redundant towers would be removed from the monument, and the ground reinstated and seeded with grass. This would improve the appearance of the monument and be beneficial to an appreciation of its cultural significance. The work would also mitigate health and safety risks. The application is concluded to have been fully and explicitly justified.

The application has been accompanied by a detailed WSI and method statement that set out a well-considered, appropriate and careful methodology.

The WSI sets out a suitable method and timetable for reporting and process for designing post-excavation analyses and reporting. The project team are highly experienced and have an established track record of successful delivery of archaeological projects. Accordingly, the specified method of the work reflects all professional expectations.

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

No impact on Protected Species and Places is considered likely.



## 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 removal of two redundant towers, are being done to elements of the monument in such a way that they would have no 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 proposed works would be beneficial in that they would improve the appearance of the monument and comply with health and safety requirements. They therefore have been justified and accord with paragraph 3.17.

The application meets paragraph 3.20 because it has demonstrated that the works have been carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned.

Consequently, no conditions are considered necessary.

## 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 recommend consent is **granted without conditions**.

## 7. Conditions

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No conditions have been attached to this decision.

## 8. Approval

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<b>Case officer</b>	Simon Stronach	<b>Date</b>	18 October 2016
<b>Approved by</b>	Iona Murray	<b>Date</b>	19 October 2016

### Annex A – list of supporting documents

- 1) Buittle Castle Written Scheme of Investigation (September 2016)
- 2) Connicks Method Statement
- 3) Email from HES Heritage Management to Connicks (18 October 2016)