



Case Information

Reference/Case ID	300018474		
Scheduled Monument	Fort George		
Index no	SM6692	Grid ref	NH 75900 56600
Date application validated	13 September 2016		
Summary of proposed works	Erection of De Minimis Granite Memorial to honour Fort George Airfield		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends approval for the installation of a seaplane base memorial stone.

2. Background

Fort George comprises an artillery fort which was built by the Government in the aftermath of the 1745 Jacobite Rising to replace the earlier fort at Inverness. Construction began in 1748 and was completed in 1769. It is considered to be the finest example of 18th century military architecture anywhere in Britain, and comprises a ravelin, foreworks and ramparts with six bastions and a series of buildings laid out symmetrically within the interior. The fort is still a working army base and parts of the site are open to the public as a Property in Care on behalf of Scottish Ministers. A Memorandum of Agreement exists between the Ministry of Defence and Historic Environment Scotland.

The applicant, the Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust (ABCT), engaged in extensive pre-application discussions prior to the submission of the SMC. The proposed memorial stone is part of a wider project by the ABCT to raise awareness of, and commemorate, airfields. The airfield at Fort George is located in the southern part of the monument and was an important seaplane base before and during WWI. Aircraft such as Wight seaplanes carrying out anti-submarine patrols in the earlier stages of the conflict. The remains of the seaplane sheds and slipways can still be seen as concrete platforms and wooden stumps running into the sea.



3. Proposals

The proposed works would comprise the installation of a seaplane base memorial stone just south of the public car park to overlook the seaplane base. The stone would be made of Indian light grey granite and would be approximately 1.2m high, 0.6m wide and 0.6m deep.

The installation of the stone would involve the following:

- A hole would be dug for the foundations, measuring approximately 800 by 800 millimetres length by breadth, and approximately (certainly no more than) 250-300 millimetres deep;
- The concrete laid for the foundations would be installed 2-3 weeks before the eventual unveiling;
- The memorial itself would be installed 7-10 days before the unveiling, using standard lifting equipment;
- The memorial would be fully underpinned with a stainless steel pin in the centre, plus the use of cement

4. Representations received

No representations were received. The MOD, Conservation Group and Cultural and Natural Resources Team have all been involved in pre-application discussions regarding the proposal.

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

Part 1 Section 2: Control of works affecting scheduled monuments

Historic Environment Scotland 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.



b) Assessment

The proposed memorial stone would have a minimal impact on the historic fabric and character of the monument.

The installation of the memorial stone involves a potential archaeological impact as it will require excavation for the 800 by 800 mm wide and 250-300 mm deep foundation. A number of minor archaeological works have taken place in and around Fort George and the proposed location for the stone is away from the main part of fort, the rifle range and training grounds, meaning that is likely to be of lower archaeological sensitivity than other areas. However, as little is known about the nature of the underlying deposits in this particular area of the monument, there is still the potential for below-ground evidence relating to its construction and use in this area, and for the discovery of stray finds associated with the Fort.

In order to mitigate these potential impacts, the works will be monitored by an archaeologist under a watching brief. The assessment accompanying the application commits to ensuring that no significant archaeological deposits are affected by these works. The methodology includes provision for protecting any *in situ* archaeology, and discussing potential changes with Historic Environment Scotland to their methodology to avoid any impacts. This will be outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to be agreed in advance by Historic Environment Scotland.

The proposed location of the memorial stone has also been carefully considered in order to minimise any impact on the setting and character of the monument. Fort George comprises low-lying, wide and expansive defences in a remote and exposed location. Given that the Fort is the best preserved and least altered of any major fortress in Britain and retains much of its original appearance, it is important that this character is maintained with as few modern elements as possible.

In order to mitigate against any such impacts, a number of options for the location of the stone were discussed as part of the pre-application process. The proposed location for the stone would be away from the main approach to the fort, on lower ground to the south. Given the location and the height of the memorial, it is not likely to significantly impact views of the fortifications, and is not likely to significantly break the skyline when viewed from the approach towards the Fort. This location was also chosen to also avoid any potential health and safety issues (e.g. fast moving traffic to/from the fort), and services (e.g. cables, pipelines etc.). In addition, the design for the stone mitigates any visual impact. For instance, the material chosen for the design means that its overall appearance will be relatively neutral. Therefore, although the stone would be a modern addition to the site, it is likely to have a very minimal visual impact and will not significantly affect views to or from the Fort in the proposed location.



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

None.

d) Conclusion

Having assessed the potential impact on the fabric of the monument and its cultural significance, it is concluded that the proposed works would highlight an important part of the Fort's history and would involve the minimum necessary level of intervention. Given this, the works accord with Section 3.16 of the Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement.

However, as a commitment to providing a photographic record to Historic Environment Scotland is not included with the application, this is controlled through a related condition. Provided this is addressed, the proposal can be considered to be the minimum necessary to preserve the monument's long term preservation in line with the Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement (2016).

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. Within two weeks of the works being completed on site, the applicant will provide a photographic record of the area affected by the works, taken before, during and after the works.

Reason: to maintain an accurate record of works to the monument.

8. Approval

Case officer	Nicola Hall	Date	01 November 2016
Approved by	John Raven	Date	01 November 2016

Scheduled Monument Consent Report on Handling



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Annex A – list of supporting documents

- 1) Illustration of memorial
- 2) Proposed location of memorial
- 3) Comments from CNRT