



Case Information

Reference/Case ID	300018667		
Scheduled Monument	Urquhart Castle		
Index no	SM90309	Grid ref	NH 53000 28600
Date application validated	2 November 2016		
Summary of proposed works	Removal of small self-seeded trees		

1. Summary recommendation

It is recommended that consent be granted without conditions.

2. Background

The monument comprises the complex remains of a medieval castle on a promontory on the shore of Loch Ness. The most prominent structure in the castle is a 16th century tower, but other structures also survive such as the great hall, kitchens, and curtain wall. The landward side of the castle is protected by a large ditch. Excavations have revealed evidence for an early medieval or iron age period of occupation in the southern part of the site.

The castle has a dramatic setting on Loch Ness and so the key views to the castle are from along the loch and from the south bank. Views along and across the loch from the castle are also an important aspect of the castle's setting as they emphasise the importance of its position along a key route through the Highlands.

Pre-application discussions took place on-site in May 2016.

3. Proposals

- a) Felling of three small self-seeded trees in sections.
- b) Snedding and chipping of felled trees on site.
- c) Extraction of waste materials.



It is proposed to remove three self-seeded trees from the steep wooded embankment which lies to the north of the site, which lies between the keep and Loch Ness below. The trees are destabilizing the embankment and so must be removed in order to secure it and therefore ensure the safety and stability of the keep wall to the south.

The works will be undertaken by a qualified tree-surgeon.

4. Representations received

No representations were 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 scheduled monuments.

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.



3.17. 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.

b) Assessment

The area in which the proposed works are to take place is a lightly-wooded steep embankment covered in rank vegetation. Due to the small scale of the trees and the fact that the root bole will be left in-situ, there is little potential for ground disturbance which could damage sensitive underlying archeological deposits. The small trees to be felled lie within an area which is already wooded and their removal will have discernable impact on the visual character of this area or the wider setting of the monument.

The works are required to stabilize the embankment, which is important to the maintenance and conservation of the keep above.

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

No Protected Species or Places will be affected by the proposed works.

d) Conclusion

The works are not likely to impact on the fabric of the monument and should have no discernable impact on the monument. The method statement for the works is appropriate and the works are necessary to conserve the monument. They are therefore compliant with Para 3.18 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.

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



7. Conditions

No conditions have been attached to this decision.

8. Approval

Case officer	Kevin Grant	Date	14 November 2016
Approved by	John Raven	Date	14 November 2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- 1) Method Statement for works
- 2) Marked up photograph showing location of trees
- 3) Detailed tree location plan
- 4) Plan of Scheduled Area
- 5) Site location plan