



Case Information

Reference/Case ID	300018516		
Scheduled Monument	Wemyss Caves,caves		
Index no	SM817	Grid ref	NT 34700 97300
Date application validated	28 September 2016		
Summary of proposed works	Wemyss Caves - Removal of painted graffiti		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that consent be granted with conditions

2. Background

Wemyss Caves is a group of six natural caves located in the shoreline cliffs overlooking Wemyss Bay. The caves are notable for the rare collection of Pictish carvings they contain, featuring animal and abstract symbols and particularly rare examples of a boat and a human form.

The caves are open to the public at all times and as such are an occasional target for anti-social behaviour and vandalism. Jonathan's Cave, one of the two caves with the highest concentration of known carvings, was subject to an incident of extensive graffiti vandalism in summer 2016, comprising initials, slogans symbols and obscene images sprayed painted onto the walls of the interior and entrance. The graffiti does not directly overlie any Pictish carvings but does come very close to some. There is significant local concern that if not removed, the graffiti will lead to further "copycat" behaviour.

HES is a member of the Wemyss Caves Working Group established to develop and maintain the site as an archaeological, educational and community resource. The applicants in this case – the Save the Wemyss Ancient Caves Society (SWACS) – are also members of the Working Group and have worked closely with HES and other members to develop a Conservation Management Plan for the site. SWACS have engaged in pre-application discussions with HES over the removal of the graffiti. Advice has also been sought from HES Conservation Group's stone conservators and their recommendations have been passed to the proposed cleaning contractor. HES has



offered to fund the graffiti removal through our Monument Management Grant scheme; this application for scheduled monument consent is an essential stage in that process.

3. Proposals

Removal of spray-painted graffiti.

The application does not contain a detailed method statement, as this will not be prepared by the chosen contractor until the grant and tendering process has been finalised. ; From pre-application discussions conducted with HES Stone Conservators, the works should comprise the following –

- Application of appropriate chemical cleaner to painted areas.
- Gentle removal of cleaner from walls.
- Rinsing of walls with imported fresh water.

4. Representations received

SNH - e-mail of 10 November from David Shepherd, Operations Officer for Fife confirming the proposals raised no concerns for natural heritage issues.

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.

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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.

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 works will involve the application and removal of chemical cleaner to the painted areas of the walls. This should result in no physical damage to the walls where the paint has been applied to a sound substrate. There is a risk that in some areas where the stone surface is powdery or delaminating, even gentle application and removal of solutions or gels could result in some loss of stone surface. ;

The graffiti removal should not have a direct impact on any of the historic carvings within the cave and as such will not have an adverse impact on the cultural significance of the monument. The works could be considered to represent a positive impact on the cultural significance of the monument, removing disfiguring graffiti to allow the site to be appreciated more easily, and reducing the risk of further copycat vandalism.

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

The monument lies within the Firth of Forth Site of Special Scientific Interest. SNH has confirmed it is content that the works will not have an adverse impact on the natural heritage interest of the site.

d) Conclusion

The works described in this application represent alterations and repairs to the monument under part 1: 2: 2(b) of the Act and as such, scheduled monument consent is required.

I am content that the works described in this application should result in a minimal amount of disturbance to the archaeologically significant carvings within the caves and will not significantly alter the original appearance or setting of the monument. As such, I consider they will have no impact on the cultural significance of the monument, in accordance with sections 3.16 and 3.18 of the Policy Statement.

The application does not provide a detailed method statement for the cleaning works. I would therefore recommend that a condition should be attached to the consent to ensure that the works are carried out by suitable practitioners using appropriate materials and techniques in accordance with section 3.22 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.

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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 method statement 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.

8. Approval

Case officer	Deirdre Cameron	Date	14 November 2016
Approved by	George Findlater	Date	17 November 2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

Location Plan