



Case Information

Reference/Case ID	300018581		
Scheduled Monument	Melrose Abbey and Precinct		
Index no	SM90214	Grid ref	NT 54300 34400
Date application validated	12 October 2016		
Summary of proposed works	Works to memorial headstone		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that consent be granted without conditions.

2. Background

This monument is the remains of one of the finest Cistercian monasteries in Scotland. Founded in 1136 as a daughter house of Rievaulx Abbey, Melrose was the first Cistercian abbey in Scotland.

The greatest part of the remains is the abbey church itself, largely built after the abbey was sacked by the English in 1385. All that survives standing of the nave are eight south aisle chapels and the three bays to the west of the crossing. These are closed off to the west by the stone screen which formed the monks' choir. The ribbed vault of this section of the church was replaced with a barrel vault when the abbey was in parochial use. The aisles at this stage have retained their ribbed vaulting.

The transepts each had three chapels, though the north transept vault, part of the south transept vault and the western part of the presbytery vault were lost when the crossing tower collapsed. The eastern bay of the presbytery and the southern bay of the south transept have retained their vaults. The stone work is of a very high quality, making Melrose one of the most richly carved churches in Scotland.

The proposed works relate to a memorial stone located in the eastern section of the cemetery. The stone is a late 19th C memorial stone, the foundations of which are no longer sufficient for a stone of this size and it is at risk of being lain flat. Many of the stones at Melrose graveyard deemed to be a hazard have been lain flat after a serious incident in another Council area highlighted issues with loose and poorly secured

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headstones and memorials. As a result of this audit, a large number of memorials in the graveyard at Melrose Abbey were laid flat or partially dismantled to ensure public safety. This application should secure the memorial stone in its current location and remove the potential need to dismantle it or lay it flat.

3. Proposals

Consented Works - Re-erection of memorial on new foundation

Details of Works

The works will comprise the following elements -

- Lay flat the memorial stone
- Excavate and lay new foundation
- Lift memorial stone and re-pin in original position
- Clean the stone

4. Representations received

None

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

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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.

3.20. 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 works involve the removal of the existing stone the cleaning out of an existing socket, the addition of a new foundation and the lifting and re-pinning of the existing stone to the new foundation.

The works should result in very little additional ground disturbance within the monument and as such I do not consider that archaeological supervision is required in this case.

As the works will restore this part of the monument to its original condition, I also consider the application will not have an adverse impact on the character or setting of the monument.

The works will be carried out by an established stone masonry company, on behalf of the direct descendants of the individuals commemorated on the headstone.

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

None

d) Conclusion

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

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I am content that the works described in this application will result in no disturbance to archaeological deposits and will not significantly alter the character or setting of the monument. As such I consider they will have a minimal impact on the cultural significance of the monument, in accordance with sections 3.16 and 3.18 of the Policy Statement.

I am content that the documentation supporting the application is sufficiently detailed to show that the proposals have been carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned, in compliance with section 3.20 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	James Bruhn	Date	29 November 2016
Approved by	George Findlater	Date	05 December 2016

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Photos-elevation drawing-location plan