



Case Information

Reference/Case ID	300018963		
Scheduled Monument	Blackness Castle		
Index no	SM90036	Grid ref	NT 00000 0
Date application validated	11 January 2017		
Summary of proposed works	Habitat Enhancement		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for 'Blackness Castle - Habitat Enhancement' be granted.

2. Background

The monument is a castle dating from the 15th century on a coastal promontory in the Firth of Forth. In use until after World War 1, it has numerous later alterations.

The scheduled area takes in the entire promontory on which the castle sits and includes the pier. It is bounded to the E and the NW by the high tide mark, to the SE by the Black Burn and to the S and SW by modern boundaries. The monument is of national importance because it has played a key role in Scotland's history. Blackness offers the potential for further information about the development of fortifications, prisons, military architecture and even temporary military camps.

The application is for improving pre-existing grassland in order to benefit wildlife by making three wildflower plots and a new hedgerow. It has been submitted by RSPB Scotland.

3. Proposals

- The creation of three wildflower plots measuring around 1 hectare overall
- The planting of a hedgerow in order to link existing habitats.



Consented works – The wildflower plots would be created in three areas of pre-existing grassland toward the south of the scheduled area, south of the remains of a church and dovecot. They would be created by spraying the area with weedkillers, rotovating to a depth of c15cm, spreading the seed, and the rolling the ground to ensure contact between seed and soil. The creation of a hedgerow created by strimming back existing vegetation, laying a weed suppressant membrane, cutting holes for the individual plants to a depth of 10-15cm, planting, and attaching guards to prevent damage to the plants.

Aims - The work is being undertaken in order to improve habitats for wildlife in the area.

Personnel and Timescale - The works will be undertaken within 3 months and may involve volunteers.

4. Representations received

No third party 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.

3.16. 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 habitat enhancement on the promontory at Blackness. This is intended to improve the site as a habitat for wildlife, particularly birds, which will increase biodiversity and the overall amenity of the site.

The physical impact of the proposed works would be the impacts of limited hand-digging and rotovating in order to plant a hedgerow and wildflower meadow. The depth of the proposed works is minimal and is likely only to disturb recent topsoil comprised of organic buildup and top soil created during agriculture on the site in the 20th century. There should therefore be little potential to impact any historic fabric.

The area within which the proposed works would take place is already comprised of amenity grassland with patches of scrub and hedges. The proposed works would therefore not fundamentally alter the visual character of the landscape or block or obscure key views which relate the castle with the hillside to the south which contains the remains of a church and dovecot, and evidence of the 17th century siege of the castle. The proposed works therefore have little potential to alter the monument or its setting in a way which would impact upon its cultural significance.

The proposed works would benefit wildlife in the area and improve the overall amenity of the site, if the work is undertaken with volunteers, then this would engage the wider public and the local community. It should therefore enhance an appreciation of the monument and the historic environment in general.

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

No impact on Protected Species and Places considered likely – see PP&S assessment.



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 would have little potential to alter historic fabric and they will have a minimal impact on the overall character of and setting of the monument. They will improve the amenity of the site and may encourage greater engagement by the local community.

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	26 January 2017
Approved by	Iona Murray	Date	26 January 2017

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Habitat Enhancement Proposal Report
- Wildflower Meadow Proposal Map
- Headgerow Proposal Map