



Case Information

Reference/Case ID	300018926		
Scheduled Monument	Castle Hill, motte		
Index no	SM355	Grid ref	NJ 50800 67000
Date application validated	19 December 2016		
Summary of proposed works	Excavation of 8 test pits around the top of the Rampart		

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for the excavation of eight test pits to help inform the subsequent reinstatement of a historic path network be granted with conditions.

2. Background

The historic environment asset and its cultural significance

The monument comprises a motte on a hill encircled by a wide ditch and an outer rampart, except for its north side where a landslip has removed much of the hillside. The ditch is generally 6m wide and up to 1.7m deep; the outer rampart is about 6m wide by 1.5m high. Antiquarian accounts from 1873 mention that there were the slight remains of masonry on the summit that might suggest a similarity between the castle here and those of nearby King Edward and Elgin (both occupied in the 13th century), but this masonry is no longer visible.

The hill has been incorporated into the 18th century designed landscape surrounding nearby Cullen House, and a network of paths, benches, a folly and a flagpole all previously adorned the hill. Now all lost and/or dilapidated, it is the reinstatement of these former features of the designed landscape that is the focus of recent works to the monument, and it is the former path network that is the subject of this application.

The cultural significance of the monument is vested in its survival as a well preserved motte with ditch and rampart that likely contains deposits and features associated with a 13th century castle, all now subsequently incorporated into an 18th century designed landscape.



The applicant

The application is for the excavation of eight test pits to help inform the subsequent reinstatement of a historic path network, and it has been submitted by Cullen Past and Present Volunteer Group (CPPVG). The application is accompanied by an archaeological written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by Anderson Archaeology (Scotland).

CPPVG is an active community group who have a lease on the monument, and whose aims include undertaking community-based projects that benefit Cullen, its people, and visitors to the area. Works to date at Castle Hill motte have involved clearing back rank vegetation and opening up access once again; the current application forms part of a project to reinstate a network of 19th century paths on the monument and to create a new link to Cullen, with the intention of making access easier for people of all abilities.

Pre-application discussions

The applicant has discussed the proposed works with HES, and the current application accords with the outcome of these discussions.

3. Proposals

- Excavation (by hand) of eight archaeological test pits, each measuring no more than 1m square, located at key points over the line of the historic path network, followed by reinstatement.

Consented works – the works comprise the excavation of eight test pits to help inform the subsequent reinstatement of a historic path network.

Aims – the purpose of the works is to help inform the subsequent reinstatement of a historic path network by establishing what remains beneath the turf of the historic paths. This will then inform whether the reinstated paths are set into the turf, or whether the archaeological sensitivity is such that they are set on top of the turf. Reinstating the path network will help make access easier for people of all abilities.

Timetable – the applicant hopes to undertake the work prior to April 2017.

Personnel – the archaeological evaluation will be undertaken by Anderson Archaeology (Scotland).



4. Representations received

No third party representations were received. The landowner has written to confirm their support for the project and application.

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.

3.19. Extensive intervention will only be allowed where it is clearly necessary to secure the longer-term preservation of the monument, or where it will clearly generate public benefits of national importance which outweigh the impact on the national cultural



significance of the monument. Such public benefits could come from, for example, interventions which make public access to scheduled monuments easier, or assist public understanding, or will produce economic benefits once the works are completed.

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 involve the excavation of eight test pits to help inform the subsequent reinstatement of a historic path network.

The physical overall impact of the test pits on the monument and its cultural significance will likely be minimal, as the works have been designed to answer questions relating to the presence/absence of the historic path network in as least an invasive way as possible. The test pits will extend to a depth of either 150mm or the former path surface, whichever is reached sooner. The trench dimensions are restricted to the minimum possible to achieve the project aims, and cover a very small proportion of the scheduled

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monument. As the test pits are targeted over the route of the antiquarian path network, it is most likely that the works will involve turf removal and cleaning back prior to remnants of the previous path surface being identified, and as such is unlikely to involve the destruction of in situ archaeological deposits that relate to the cultural significance of the monument. However, there is the possibility that the former path surface was closer to the present ground surface than presently anticipated, and as such digging to a depth of 150mm might then have the possibility of impacting upon previously undisturbed archaeological deposits, which may then incidentally contribute to our understanding of the cultural significance of the monument.

The results of the test pits should improve our understanding of recent landscaping works on Castle Hill, and thus help inform the subsequent proposed path reinstatement; this path reinstatement should improve physical access to visitor of all abilities to the site. As such, the works will indirectly enable an enhanced appreciation and understanding of the monument and the historic environment in general.

The application has been accompanied by a written scheme of investigation (WSI) that sets out a well-considered, appropriate and careful methodology for these shallow test pits, as well as a reporting process. However, the WSI does not address the treatment of any finds, or cater for unexpected archaeological complexity, and it would be preferable for the timetable for producing a report to be shortened from 6 weeks to 4 weeks. The project team are experienced and have a track record of successful delivery of archaeological projects of this kind. Accordingly, the provision of an updated WSI would enable the application to be considered compliant with paragraph 3.20 of the policy statement.

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

No impact on Protected Species and Places is considered likely.

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 works would involve controlled archaeological excavation of 150mm deep test pits within a very small part of a scheduled monument. The excavations are the minimum necessary to achieve the project's objective and would leave the vast majority of the site's archaeological deposits intact. They would not visually alter the monument. It is concluded that they would have no material effect on the overall significance of the monument and are, therefore, not inconsistent with paragraphs 3.16 and 3.18 of the policy statement.

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The objectives of the proposed work have been clearly set out and include a clear public benefit as enabling works that will facilitate enhanced public/community access. As such, the works meet with paragraph 3.17 of the policy statement.

Although the works are effectively destructive in nature, the works would affect only a very small proportion of the monument and are designed to be evaluative only in nature, so they are therefore not considered extensive. As such, they do not conflict with paragraph 3.19 of the policy statement.

In order to ensure full compliance under paragraph 3.20 of the policy statement, an updated archaeological WSI is required to cover the treatment of any finds, unexpected archaeological complexity, and the production of a suitable report within 4 weeks of the ground breaking works, so as per paragraph 3.22 of the policy statement a condition to control the production of an updated WSI is necessary.

Condition 1 is to allow for the submission of an updated WSI to cover the treatment of any finds, unexpected archaeological complexity, and the production of a suitable report within 4 weeks, to ensure that archaeological information is recorded.

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. No works requiring scheduled monument consent shall commence on site until an updated Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been approved in writing by Historic Environment Scotland. This updated WSI should cover the treatment of any finds, cater for unexpected archaeological complexity, and allow for the production of a report within 4 weeks of ground breaking works finishing on site.

Reason: to ensure that archaeological information is recovered and recorded to a satisfactory standard.

8. Approval

Case officer	Oliver Lewis	Date	27 January 2017
Approved by	Iona Murray	Date	27 January 2017

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Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Written scheme of investigation, containing location plans – Anderson Archaeology (Scotland) – November 2016