



Case Information

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| Reference/Case ID | 300018997 | | |
| Scheduled Monument | St Kilda village and related structures | | |
| Index no | SM2276 | Grid ref | NF103992 |
| Date application validated | 10 January 2017 | | |
| Summary of proposed works | Installation of WiFi access to the Factor's House | | |

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for installation of a wifi transceiver on the Factor's House be granted.

2. Background

The monument comprises an area around Village Bay on St Kilda, which includes evidence for settlement from as early as the Bronze Age through to the 1930s, when the island was evacuated.

The most visible remains relate to a village, first laid out in the 1830s and expanded in the 1860s. The monument is of national importance because it comprises diverse and well preserved remains of settlement that date from prehistory through to the early 20th century. These remains have the potential to provide important information about life on St. Kilda through the millennia, an extreme existence that is of enormous interest to Scottish and international observers. The latter is recognised in the islands' status as a World Heritage Site, and its Outstanding Universal Value includes reference to the surviving remains of the 19th Century village.

This application relates to the Factor's House. The application includes a Heritage Assessment, which sets out the particular significance of this structure in relation to the monument and WHS. The house was built between 1861 and 1878 and has a complicated history of use, abandonment and renovation. It is currently used by the National Trust for Scotland, who own and manage the islands. The house has a distinctive design of mortared stone and slate and is one of the buildings with a more

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'mainland' design in comparison to the styles used by the St Kildans. The building is therefore a significant part of the island's cultural significance.

The proposal has been discussed in advance with Heritage Casework and the design of the proposal has been modified to minimise impacts on the cultural significance of the building (in particular by reducing the size of the transceiver).

The proposal is to install a small wifi transceiver on the exterior of the building, connected by cable into the structure. The wifi would allow NTS staff and project workers stationed on the island, for example the long-running Soay Sheep research programme, internet access to facilitate both management and research.

3. Proposals

Installing a wifi transceiver on the exterior of the Factor's House and connecting it to the interior by cable.

A circular transceiver 12cm in diameter and mounted on a bracket would be fixed with screws on the exterior of the porch above the door. A cable would then run vertically above the transceiver to the roof before running under the guttering along the top of the wall to the south east corner. The cable would then be inserted above the wall head and run down the interior wall covering to a socket mounted in the south east corner of the living room. Cabling would be surface mounted with clips or in 1 inch trunking.

The small size of the transceiver means that it would not rise to the level of guttering above the porch door. The exterior of the building is white harled and the white plastic cover of the transceiver dish would be sympathetic to this colouring. For the same reason, and if possible, white cabling would be used from the transceiver to the roof, where the cable would run next to the guttering before entering the building. If white cable is not available the cable would be sleeved in white piping as per an existing electric light or concealed when the Factor's House is re-painted as part of the routine whitewashing routine (the following summer).

The cable would enter the building above the wallhead. Within the house, it would run down the south east corner of the living room before being fitted to a Wi-Fi socket above the skirting board. It is probable that most of the panelling in this area was replaced when the building was refurbished by the army and well after the evacuation of the island.

4. Representations received

No representations have been 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.

3.17. 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.

The building forms part of the St Kilda World Heritage Site. Any impacts of the proposal on the outstanding universal value of the WHS, as set out in the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), should be considered.

b) Assessment

The application makes clear that the proposed transceiver would be small and of sympathetic colour to the surrounding whitewash exterior of the Factor's House. It would be located adjacent to an existing modern electrical light. The cabling would run

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vertically up to the guttering and would be coloured to be sympathetic to the surroundings (by existing colour, sleeving or paint). It is concluded that the proposals would have a negligible visual impact on the exterior of the house and the wider landscape.

The cable would enter the building over the wallhead and would run down the corner of a room that is likely to have been refurbished relatively recently. It is concluded that the proposals would have a negligible visual impact on the interior of the house.

The fixings required would be of shallow depth and the cable would run into the building over the wall head. It is concluded that the proposal would have a negligible impact on the fabric of the building.

It is concluded that the proposal would make no substantive change to the cultural significance of the monument or on the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Site. This has been demonstrated by the applicant by supply of a thorough and considered Heritage Assessment. The proposals have been designed to minimise impacts on cultural significance.

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

SNH have been consulted with regard to the proposals and have responded that they have no comment or advice.

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, comprising installation of a wifi transceiver, would have no impact on the cultural significance of the monument. They do not, therefore, conflict with paragraph 3.14 and 3.18 of the policy statement.

The proposed work would facilitate management and research at the WHS and so are justified in accordance with paragraph 3.17. The application meets paragraph 3.20 because it has demonstrated that the works have been carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned. Consequently, no conditions are considered necessary.



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

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| Case officer | Simon Stronach | Date | 26 January 2017 |
| Approved by | Iona Murray | Date | 26 January 2017 |

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Wifi provision to Factor's House St Kilda, Heritage Impact Assessment 2017