Scheduled Monument Consent: Report on Handling

Case Information

Reference/Case ID	300019140

Scheduled Monument	Antonine Wall, Golden Hill Park, Roman fort, annexe and bathhouse		
Index no	SM7070	**Grid ref**	NS 49400 72700

Date application validated	15 February 2017
Summary of proposed works	Goldenhill Park - Renewal of existing path network and associated works

1. Summary recommendation

This report recommends that approval for renewal of an existing path network and other landscape improvements within the park be granted.

2. Background

The monument is a section of the Antonine Wall which runs across the slopes and summit of Golden Hill in a public park in Duntocher. It includes the surviving remains of one of the Antonine Wall forts. There have been several archaeological interventions in the park, including a series of excavations from 1949-51.

The fort is a complex structure of three phases, including an early fortlet, a later fort and an annexe. To the northwest is the site of a bathhouse. Faint traces of the earthworks of the fort, wall and fortlet survive in the park. The Antonine Wall formed part of the fort's northeast defences and continued downslope to the northwest where it crossed Duntocher Burn. On the northwest slope of Golden Hill a small area of rampart base has been left exposed within a square enclosure of iron railings, which have been recently renewed (Case 201507447). This application has been designed in response to the results of an archaeological evaluation (Case 300018520).

The scheduled area includes much of the western half of Goldenhill Park. It includes the Antonine Wall rampart, berm (area between rampart and ditch), ditch and upcast mound; the fort and annexe and their associated ditches, and an area to the north and south where traces of activities associated with the construction and use of the Wall may survive.

The monument is of national importance as part of a major Roman frontier system. The Antonine Wall is the most substantial and important Roman monument in Scotland. The fort is one of at least 18 Roman forts on the Antonine Wall military frontier. It is of particular importance because, with the exception of its south corner, it has not been built upon. The Antonine Wall is also part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site and has Outstanding Universal Value.

The applicant for the proposed works is the owner of the monument (West Dunbartonshire Council). They are proposing improvements to footpaths within the park as well as other works designed to improve the park's appearance and appreciation of the monument.

In order to ensure these works do not have an adverse impact on Roman remains (which may survive at shallow depths within the Park) archaeological investigative works have been undertaken. The proposals have been subject to a range of discussions with HES Heritage Management and the application has been amended in light of those discussions. The application has been prepared by Rathmell Archaeology on behalf of the Council, and includes an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.

3. Proposals

- resurfacing paths and removal of raised 'lips' of topsoil on the downslope verge
- removing redundant features, namely: steps, a path, modern landscaped features and a former play area
- fixing a leaking field drain
- removing a stretch of hedge that overlies and crosses the Antonine Wall

Greenspace (West Dunbartonshire Council) who have responsibility for the management of Goldenhill Park have recognised a series of issues that needed to be addressed to sustain the community's use of the park while safeguarding and presenting the internationally significant heritage within it.

Specifically, Greenspace have identified:

- paths that are degraded, of poor composition and breadth so that they fail a reasonable test of their suitability as paths that are accessible to all;
- paths that incorporate inappropriate structures (such as steps) so that they fail a reasonable test of their suitability as paths that are accessible to all;
- path lips that force paths to act as channels for water leading to erosive scour;
- defunct path and play areas;
- inadequate seating provision;

- a broken field drain that is discharging water; and a hedge that blocks the appreciation of the linearity of the Antonine Wall.

The proposed works seek to remedy the issues identified above. For the renewal of the paths the works would include:

- resurfacing of all retained pathways. For paths with intact surfaces detritus would be cleared to 1.5m width and 20mm depth bituminous surfacing laid. Where inadequate subbase exists, new subbase would be laid over the existing surface before a new 30mm bituminous surface was applied. For one stretch, approximately 1om long, larch rail edging would be installed to enable the new subbase to be retained. The railing would be bedded in a shallow slot (<150mm) within existing path fabric with stakes driven on the outer edge;
- where raised lips remain on the downslope verge of the path, after the laying of the new surface, these would be removed to match the finish level. The extent would be detailed by the archaeologist on the completion of surfacing.

The resurfacing works would extend into a bay that was formally part of the path network. A new bench would be fixed to the path surface, the bench would be of comparable deisign to the benches already installed within the park.

Given the evidence presented in the evaluation report (Case 300018520) the main path renewal works (item (a) above) would not require archaeological monitoring because there is no potential for sensitive remains to be affected. The removal of the lip (item (b) above) may require monitoring if significant depths of lip remain after surfacing. An inspection by an archaeologist would confirm whether this is appropriate, based on the scale of removal relative to the information within the evaluation report. Should there be any reasonable potential for impact on significant archaeological horizons, the relevant section of works would be subject to archaeological monitoring. Any lip removal works of greater depth than 150mm would be automatically considered to have such potential and hence monitored.

The removal of redundant hard and soft landscaping that related to former path and play areas would include:

- stripping out existing surface and subbase from the path and play area to the west of the Roman fort leaving sufficient subbase to enable excavation plant to access the area without rutting. Introducing topsoil to form a smooth profile and re-seeding;
- stripping out existing redundant wooden steps and introducing new topsoil to form a smooth profile and re-seeding; and
- removing topsoil from a hollow and mound, redistributing *ex situ* subsoil from the landform to form a smooth slope profile and capping with topsoil.

All the works above (items (c) to (e)) would be accompanied by archaeological monitoring with the exception of lifting a bitumous surface.

To manage a broken field drain the proposed work would include:

f. a hand excavated pit that would expose the broken terminal of the field drain. This would be extended as a trench or a sequence of pits across the path until sound sections of field drain were located. A 100mm diameter twin wall pipe would be installed to carry the water flow between functioning sections of field drain or, failing that, on a common line with the defunct field drain to Duntocher Burn to the north. The extent of work would be determined by the condition of the field drain and limited to the line previously disturbed by the original drain. The trench would be filled by arisings.

This work would be accompanied by archaeological monitoring.

To restore the linearity of the monument a 17m stretch of the hedge that crosses the main Antonine Wall, ditch and berm would be removed. This would limit the hedge to its placement along the edge of the annexe ditch, stopping 3m short of the inferred west face of the Antonine Wall. The work would include:

g. cutting all woody vegetation at ground level, with vegetation removed from site. Larger stems/roots would be locally hand dug out to a maximum depth of 300mm, then cut. No root masses or stems would be pulled from the ground. Selected stems would be poisoned at ground level. Then new topsoil would be introduced to form a smooth slope profile and seeded for grass.

The digging of roots would be accompanied by archaeological monitoring.

General Items

Wherever possible materials would be retained and reused, this would necessitate temporary stock piles adjacent to work locations. Excavation would be undertaken by hand and tracked excavator, as appropriate. Mechanical plant would, wherever possible, access locations along the path network and not across the grass.

A sample of locations that would be impacted by the works have been tested by archaeological evaluation and shown to have no archaeologically significant strata within the depths the works are anticipated to impact. As such the archaeological monitoring detailed above is designed as a precautionary measure to ensure an appropriate response should the archaeological resource prove variable across the work areas.

An Archaeological Method Statement (WSI) has been included with the application and sets out a methodology for archaeological fieldwork, recording and reporting.

A Method Statement with regard to the main contract works has been included with the application that sets out the methodology for main contract works in relation to each element identified above.

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.

3.17. 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 the upgrading of existing paths, the removal of redundant features, the removal of a stretch of hedge and the fixing of a field drain. The proposed works have been designed to be compliant with the principles set out in the Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Antonine Wall) World Heritage Site. Specifically, they have been designed to avoid adverse physical impacts on the monument, conserve the cultural significance of the monument and promote public benefit from the monument.

In particular, the work has been informed by the results of an archaeological evaluation so that it avoids any disturbance to sensitive remains; this would be ensured by archaeological monitoring. The work would improve the visual appearance of the monument and accessibility to it. It would remove a section of hedge that impairs an appreciation of the monument's linearity, which forms a key component of its Outstanding Universal Value.

It is concluded that:

- The works would not adversely affect the cultural significance of the monument or the OUV of the World Heritage Site.
- The work would reduce health and safety risks, improve accessibility to and appreciation of the monument.

The application has been accompanied by detailed documentation including: evaluation results, WSI and main contract method statement. This sets out a well-considered, appropriate and careful methodology. The WSI would ensure that the archaeological work would be undertaken to appropriate professional standards, including post excavation, reporting and archiving. A timetable for the work has been provided. Consequently no conditions are considered necessary.

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

The proposed work would be undertaken within the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site (Antonine Wall).

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 improvements are being done to elements of the monument in such a way that they will have no impact on the cultural significance of the monument. They do not, therefore, conflict with paragraphs 3.14 and 3.18 of the policy statement.

The works have been proposed in order to improve safety, appearance of the park, access to the park and understanding of the monument, so are justified in accordance with paragraph 3.17 of the policy statement.

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

Case officer	Simon Stronach	**Date**	20 February 2017
Approved by	John Raven	**Date**	21 February 2017

Annex A – list of supporting documents

- Location Plan 15109LPWorks
- Archaeological Method Statement 15109MSWorks
- Paths Methods 15109PMWorks
- Landscaping Methods 15109LMWorks
- Archaeological Evaluation Report 15109DSAccess