

Case reference	SMC-ABS-001
Application details	Evaluation excavation at Rhynie
Site address	Craw stane, symbol stone and enclosure 575M E of Mains of Rhynie
Applicant	University of Aberdeen
Determining Authority	Historic Environment Scotland
Local Authority Area	Aberdeenshire Council
Reason(s) for notification	Notification Direction 2015 - requires Historic Environment Scotland to notify Ministers if it intends to grant Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) where the works go beyond the minimum level of intervention that is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in a monument.
Representations	Nil
Date notified to Ministers	8 August 2016
Date of recommendation	12 August 2016
Decision / recommendation	Clear

Description of Proposal and Site:

- SMC consent is sought for the archaeological excavation of four trenches of a cropmark enclosure surrounding the scheduled monument known as Craw Stane, symbol stone and enclosure 575m E of Mains of Rhynie.
- This application is for the final season of excavation proposed at this monument as part of the Northern Picts Project / Rhynie Environs Archaeological Project.
- The four trenches have a combined area of 1,305sqm, compared with the total area of the monument of 9,432sqm.

EIA Development:

- N/A

Consultations and Representations:

- No objections from third parties.
- PAD consulted Scottish Government's Culture and Historic Environment Division following notification and they do not consider that the SMC application raises issues of national interest that would merit Ministerial intervention.

Assessment:

1. HES are minded to grant consent for archaeological excavations which will impact on the Scheduled Monument as the insertion of trenches and related ground disturbance goes beyond the minimum level of intervention which is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in the monument. This is a significant departure from HES Policy Statement June 2016 (section 3.16)
2. This SMC application is for the final season of excavation proposed at this monument as part of the Northern Picts Project / Rhynie Environs Archaeological Project. The trenches have been designed to specifically target areas where answers to previously established research questions are still required, and the excavation methodology of strip and map has proven to be effective in the 2011, 2012 and 2015 excavations in minimising the volume of material removed from the monument whilst maximising the information gained.
3. Upon completion of the excavation, all excavated features will be backfilled by hand and then the remainder of the trench will be backfilled by machine using material previously excavated from the trench. The trench will then be reseeded and returned to its previous agricultural use.
4. HES consider the application is compliant with section 3.19 and 3.20 of the HES Policy Statement as it demonstrates that there is a public benefit of national importance that outweighs the impact on the cultural significance of the monument, and that the works are carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned.
5. From the information provided with this application, and based on pre-application discussions with the applicant, HES have considered that further conditions as outlined in paragraph 3.22 to ensure the works are undertaken in an appropriate manner are not required.
6. In summary, the SMC application does not raise any issues of national importance that would merit intervention by Ministers

Decision/Recommendation:

- The application should be cleared back to HES

Location Map

