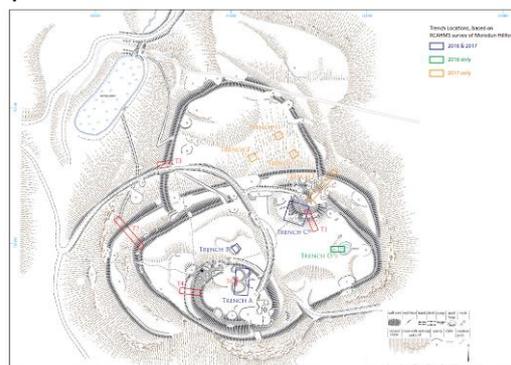
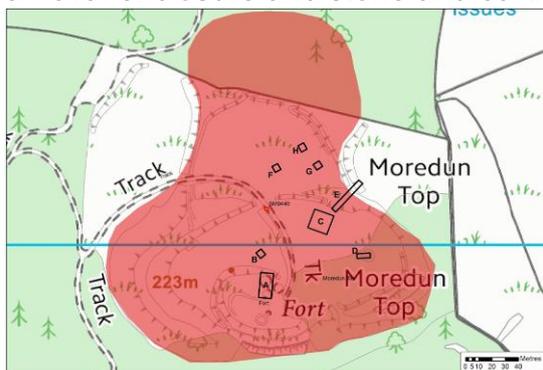


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|-----------------------------------|--|
| Case reference | SMC-PAK-003 |
| Application details | Archaeological excavation |
| Site address | Moredun Top fort, Moncreiffe Hill, near Bridge of Earn, Perthshire - M9440. |
| Applicant | Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust |
| Determining authority | Historic Environment Scotland |
| Local authority area | Perth & Kinross |
| Reason(s) for notification | Notification Direction 2015 – requires Historic Environment Scotland to notify Ministers if it intends to grant Scheduled Monument Consent where the works proposed 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 | 25 August 2016 |
| Date of recommendation | 1 September 2016 |
| Decision / recommendation | Clear |

Description of Proposal and Site:

- Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is sought for archaeological excavation of Moredun Top hillfort, located on Moncreiffe Hill, a key geographical feature in the landscape at the confluence of the Rivers Tay and Earn near Perth.
- The monument comprises the remains of a hill and promontory fort with evidence for use dating from both the Iron Age and the Early Historic period. It is of national importance because of its potential to contribute to an understanding of prehistoric or early Historic defended settlement and economy.
- The proposed works include a series of trenches to investigate features such as an oval enclosure and stone and earth rampart.



Scheduled area and proposed trench locations

Consultations and Representations:

- No representations have been received with respect to this application.
- PAD consulted SG 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. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) are minded to grant consent for archaeological excavations which will impact on the Scheduled Monument as the insertion of eight trenches for research purposes 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 policy as set out in section 3.16 of Historic Environment Scotland's Policy Statement 2016.
2. The application forms part of a long running research project called 'Hillforts of the Tay' part of the Tay Landscape Partnership (TLP) scheme, where initial evaluation was carried out in 2015. The work of the hillforts project will feed into a wider programme of research by Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT) on settlements types and patterns from c.1000 BC to c.1000 AD in the wider area. The project will be directed by PKHT and delivered through TLP staff working with archaeological contractors AOC Archaeology Ltd.
3. The eight trenches, being opened up over a two year project period, are purely for research purposes and not for any conservation benefit. Trench A will extend 10m x 20m. Trench B will extend 5m x 5m. Trench C will extend 15m x 15m. Trench D will extend 4m x 10m. Trench E will extend 4m x 30m. Trenches F,G and H will extend 5m x 5m each.
4. Upon completion of the excavations, all excavated features will be backfilled by hand with the soil returned to its original angle of repose and the turf will be replaced.
5. HES considers 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. Some aspects require further control and HES have attached five conditions to the consent to cover areas such as the production of an excavation strategy, resources and document timescales.
6. In summary, this SMC application does not raise any issues of national importance that would merit intervention by Scottish Ministers.

Decision/Recommendation:

- The application should be cleared back to Historic Environment Scotland to issue SMC with conditions.