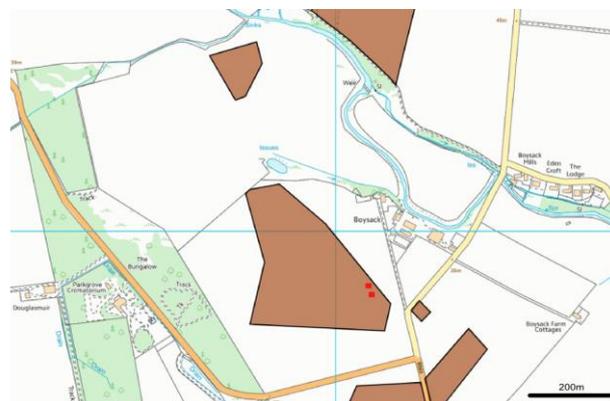




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| Case reference | SMC-ANG-005 |
| Application details | Excavation of enclosures, ring ditches and souterrains |
| Site address | Boysack, near Arbroath (SM 5986) |
| Applicant | University of Aberdeen |
| Determining Authority | Historic Environment Scotland |
| Local Authority Area | Angus Council |
| Reason(s) for notification | Notification Direction 2015 – works to be granted Scheduled Monument Consent by Historic Environment Scotland 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 | 16 April 2018 |
| Date of recommendation | 16 May 2018 |
| Decision / recommendation | Clear |

Description of Proposal and Site:

- Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is sought for the excavation of two small trenches at Boysack near Arbroath.
- The monument comprises the remains of three prehistoric or early historic pit defined enclosures, an unenclosed settlement of roundhouses, two rectangular timber structures and at least one souterrain. This is a multi-period site and the maximum date range for its various elements is around 4500 BC to AD 800.
- The designated area comprises two parts, a large area to the west containing most of the remains, and smaller area to the east, containing a souterrain. The site is important for its potential to add to our understanding of prehistoric funerary and ceremonial activity and of prehistoric house construction, domestic organisation and settlement.



Location map of Boysack with excavation trench overlaying limits of scheduled area.

Consultations and Representations:

- No representations were received by HES during their consideration.

- PAD consulted SG Culture and Historic Environment Division following notification and they have no comments to make on the proposal.

Assessment:

1. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) are minded to grant consent for archaeological excavations at Boysack which, with its related ground disturbance and removal of material, goes beyond the minimum level of intervention which is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in the monument.
2. The works are part of the Aberlemno Environs Project being undertaken by the University of Aberdeen, a component of the university's Comparative Kingship Project. The Kingship Project aims to use various methodologies along with modelled chronologies to understand the changes that led to the formation of state societies beyond the Roman Empire. A major element of the project is researching Pictish kingdoms of early Scotland and the Aberlemno Environs Project aims to improve understanding of several enclosed sites in the vicinity of the Aberlemno Pictish stones to test hypothesis that the stones and enclosures may represent a Pictish power centre comparable to that identified recently at Rhynie. This would respond to key research areas suggested by the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF).
3. The monument was chosen for investigation because it contains two very unusual features, a pit defined enclosure and rectangular timber structure that may relate to high status early historic activity. The proposed works involve excavating two trenches each measuring 3m x 5m. Trench 1 would target some of the postholes of the enclosure that lie towards the SE of the main scheduled area. Trench 2 would target postholes of the probable timber hall within this enclosure. Trenches would be positioned with reference to crop marks visible on aerial photographs.
4. HES consider the works to be broadly consistent with relevant policy and would involve controlled excavations within a relatively small part of the monument. The application is accompanied by a project design that sets out a well-considered and appropriate methodology and makes provision for post excavation analysis. The project team are experienced and have an established track record of successful delivery of archaeological projects.
5. HES consider the benefits of the proposed works are greater than the negative effects of the removal of archaeological deposits. They are the minimal necessary to achieve the project objective which leaves the majority of archaeological deposits intact with no visual impact. HES believe the works to be broadly consistent with policy subject to a condition to be imposed to ensure that the post excavation research design is updated after fieldwork. The application meets section 3.20 of HES policy statement because it has demonstrated that works have been carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned. However, the proposal is not considered the minimum necessary, consistent with conserving the cultural significance of the monument, hence the requirement to notify Ministers.
6. In summary, this 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 Historic Environment Scotland to issue Scheduled Monument Consent with one condition.