



<b>Case reference</b>	SMC-NAY-001
<b>Application details</b>	Community-led research evaluation of Castle Hill
<b>Site address</b>	Ardrossan Castle, Ardrossan
<b>Applicant</b>	RSPB Scotland (on behalf of the landowners North Ayrshire Council)
<b>Determining Authority</b>	Historic Environment Scotland (HES)
<b>Local Authority Area</b>	North Ayrshire Council
<b>Reason(s) for notification</b>	Notification Direction 2015 – works to be granted Scheduled Monument Consent by <b>Historic Environment Scotland</b> go beyond the minimum level of intervention that is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in a monument
<b>Representations</b>	Nil
<b>Date notified to Ministers</b>	18 December 2018
<b>Date of recommendation</b>	10 January 2019
<b>Decision / recommendation</b>	Clear

### Description of Proposal and Site:

- Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is sought for research excavations at the Ardrossan Castle. The monument comprises of ruins standing on a rocky outcrop on the south-eastern side of Castle Hill, within central Ardrossan, between South and North Beach. The earliest fabric dates from the late C13<sup>th</sup>/early C14<sup>th</sup> but there may have been a fortification present since the C12<sup>th</sup>. By 1689, the castle was ruinous. In 1911 the Town Council restored elements and incorporated them into a public park. The scheduled area is outlined in red below (© Rathmell) with four proposed trenches.
- The monument is of national importance as it displays impressive remains of an important medieval castle which played a significant role in the Wars of Independence. The ruins contain valuable archaeological information about the castle and its grounds. It also has the potential to inform our understanding of its inhabitants, medieval Ayrshire and advances in Scottish castle design.



## Consultations and Representations:

- No Representations were made during consideration of the application.
- PAD consulted Scottish Government's Culture and Historic Environment Division following notification and they are content and have no further comment to make.

## Assessment:

1. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) are minded to grant SMC for archaeological hand excavation of four trenches which will impact on the scheduled monument as the 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 application has been submitted by RSPB Scotland. The proposed investigations form part of a wider programme of investigations called '*Exploring Castle Hill*' which is a sub project within the '*Community Heritage and Archaeology Project*' of the Garnock Connections Landscape Partnership Scheme. Ardrossan Castle Heritage Society and HES have been close collaborators with the central purpose of the project being research, community engagement, schools involvement and training.
3. The aims of the project are to establish when the castle was abandoned as a fortified residence; identify specific phases of building, layouts, materials used and the type of function/use for each structure; and to investigate if early timber fortifications exist. The investigations respond to key research areas suggested by the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF). The project will be directed by an experienced Archaeological Project Manager from Rathmell Archaeology Ltd along with three archaeologists and community volunteers. A ratio of one staff member to five volunteers would be maintained and excavation would only take place in the presence of a Rathmell archaeologist.
4. In terms of physical works, Trenches Ki and Kii will measure 2m x 2m and are positioned to investigate wall breaches and possible castle gates and the phasing of three access points. Trench N measures 9m x 1.5m and will seek evidence of a second gate and courtyard walls. Trench O measures 7.5m x 1.5m and will look for alignments of walls, surfacing of the courtyard and any buildings within. The trenches combined cover an area of 33 sq m. They would be excavated by hand and backfilled with geotextile to demarcate the limits of each excavation. If significant archaeological remains were uncovered they would be cleaned and recorded but not removed.
5. HES consider whilst the excavations would leave the vast majority of the site's archaeological deposits intact and not, on balance, materially alter the overall character of the monument, they would result in some loss of archaeological deposits and therefore impact upon the archaeological integrity of the monument. The proposals are, therefore, inconsistent with paragraphs 3.16 and 3.18 of their policy statement. However they conclude that the physical and cultural significance impacts would be minor and justified through the public benefits of local community involvement.

6. Overall, HES believe the application meets paragraphs 3.17 and 3.20 of their policy statement because the works have been carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned and solid public benefits have been demonstrated. They conclude that the proposal is broadly consistent with relevant policy.
7. In summary, with HES detailed consideration and the limited nature of the proposed works, this SMC 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.