



<b>Case reference</b>	SMC-ABC-004
<b>Application details</b>	Archaeological research excavation
<b>Site address</b>	Dunivaig Castle (also known as Dunyvaig), Islay (SM 4747)
<b>Applicant</b>	Islay Heritage/University of Reading
<b>Determining Authority</b>	Historic Environment Scotland (HES)
<b>Local Authority Area</b>	Argyll and Bute 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>	6 June 2018
<b>Date of recommendation</b>	20 June 2018
<b>Decision / recommendation</b>	Clear

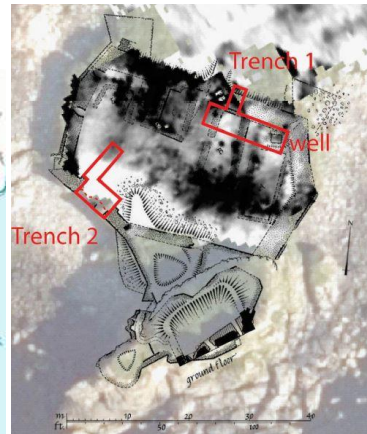
## Description of Proposal and Site:

- Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is being sought for the hand excavation of two evaluation trenches at Dunivaig Castle. The monument is a ruined castle on the tip of a promontory on the east side of Lagavulin Bay, Islay.



Remains of Dunivaig Castle (from submitted Project Design)

- The monument comprises the remains of an enclosure wall, possibly 14<sup>th</sup> Century, the remains of a hall and an outer courtyard dating, probably early 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The landward approach includes possible siege works that may relate to a siege of the castle in 1615. The scheduled area includes the remains of the castle, a boat landing on the southwest and surrounding area of the promontory. The monument is of national importance as it is an impressive and iconic ruin that was an important centre of power during the medieval period.



Location map showing scheduled area in brown and location of two trenches (from Project Design)

### 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 have no comments to make on the proposal.

### Assessment:

1. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) are minded to grant SMC for archaeological excavations which will impact on the Scheduled Monument as the insertion of two trenches 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 HES' Policy Statement.
2. The application has been made by Islay Heritage, in association with the University of Reading, and the proposed works are a preliminary phase of a wider project called The Dunyvaig Project. The aims of the project can be summarised as follows: i) to improve the understanding of the castle, ii) conserve it from active coastal erosion and to iii) improve the public appreciation of it. The overall aim of the specific works is to assess the archaeological potential of Dunyvaig to inform the future preservation of its structures. This is intended as preparation for the wider project described above.
3. The wider aims of the project align with key research areas of the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (ScARF). Additionally, Dunyvaig is within one of the several regions that ScARF describe as a 'black hole' where they recommend that research is undertaken in order to better understand them.
4. Trench 1 would measure 15m by 3m with a smaller arm projecting at a right angle and measuring 5m by 2m. The trench is intended to investigate the nature of a geophysical anomaly in the courtyard as well as assessing the nature and preservation of a building, the courtyard wall and associated deposits, and a probable well. Trench 2 would measure 6m by 4m, orientated southeast to northwest with a 7m by 2m leg positioned over the sea gate and exposed midden located in the southwest part of the courtyard. The trench is intended to enable the rescue excavation of midden deposits due to its exposed location.

5. The proposed works would remove superficial post-abandonment rubble and collapse. The cultural significance of these deposits largely relates to the contribution they make to the appearance or character of the castle and to any protection they offer to primary archaeological remains beneath them. The superficial deposits would be archaeologically recorded and the trenches would be stripped by hand and turfs stacked so they can be reinstated on the conclusion of the works.
6. HES do acknowledge that the excavation work carried out would have an irreversible impact on the monument's cultural significance. However, they highlight due to the small scale of the works to be carried out, the vast majority of archaeological remains within the monument would remain preserved in situ and the proposed intervention cannot be assessed as extensive.
7. Dunyvaig Castle is classed as a Priority 2 site by the Scotland's Coastal Heritage at Risk Project and has been categorised as a site where it would be 'highly desirable to rescue information'. HES highlight that if the excavation of the eroding deposits is not undertaken, then there is a likelihood that these deposits would continue to deteriorate and likely be lost. Therefore, they consider that it is to the wider benefit of understanding the monument that this element of work is undertaken now.
8. In conclusion, HES consider that the benefits of the proposed work are considered to be greater than the negative effects of the removal of some archaeological deposits. They believe the works have been justified in accordance with section 3.17 of the HES Policy Statement 2016 and respond positively to section 3.21 where it states that when unavoidable circumstances such as coastal erosion, threaten the survival of a scheduled monument, it should, where possible be excavated and/or recorded in detail before its destruction.
9. However, the proposal is not considered the minimum necessary, consistent with conserving the cultural significance of the monument, hence why the requirement to notify Ministers.
10. 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 without conditions.