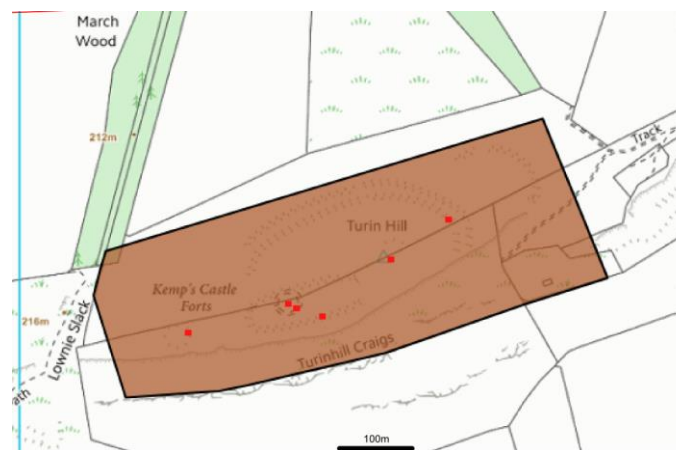




Case reference	SMC-ANG-001
Application details	Excavation of six trenches on Turin Hill
Site address	Turin Hill fort near Forfar (SM 142)
Applicant	University of Aberdeen
Determining Authority	Historic Environment Scotland
Local Authority Area	Angus Council
Reason(s) for notification	Notification Direction 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 six small-scale trenches at Turin Hill near Forfar. This SMC application is related to four others in the vicinity.
- The monument is rectangular and comprises the remains of two forts and three smaller enclosures which occupy the hilltop. It is a good example of a prehistoric hill fort with a long history of use and its importance is enhanced by the potential below ground remains. Two other circular enclosures/ring forts lie to the east and west. There is also evidence of possible roundhouses and later quarry scoops.



Location map of Turin Hill, with excavation trenches 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 six locations on Turin Hill 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 proposed works involve the excavation of six small trenches (the largest to be no bigger than 3m x 3m) that would aim to provide basic chronology for the enclosures on Turin Hill by obtaining samples for scientific dating.
4. HES consider the works to be broadly consistent with relevant policy and would involve controlled excavations within a relatively small area 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. Two areas still need to be clarified – i) the extent of excavation and preservation *in situ* in each trench and ii) the update of the research design produced after the fieldwork. Consultation is required with HES during fieldwork to ensure that the amount of excavation conducted balances the need to meet the project aims with the principle of minimal intervention. Therefore two conditions are required as set out in paragraph 3.22 of the HES Policy Statement 2016.
6. 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. The application meets section 3.20 of their 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.
7. 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 two conditions.