



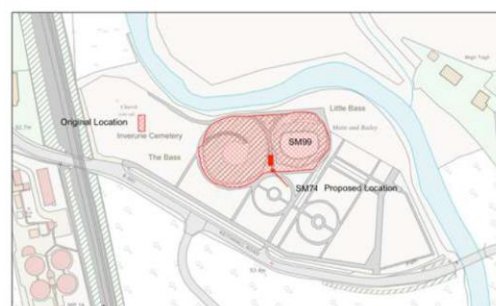
Case reference	SMC-ABS-004 (related to SMC-ABS-003)
Application details	Permanent removal of 4 Pictish symbol stones
Site address	Inverurie Cemetery, Inverurie (SM 99)
Applicant	Aberdeenshire Council
Determining Authority	Historic Environment Scotland (HES)
Local Authority Area	Aberdeenshire Council
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	14 June 2018
Date of recommendation	29 June 2018
Decision / recommendation	Clear

Description of Proposal and Site:

- Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is sought for the permanent removal of four Pictish symbol stones from Inverurie Cemetery. They are currently scheduled in their existing location but have been removed for conservation works off site (previously consented) after damage from flooding in 2015. The stones are understood to have been moved previously on a number of occasions, having formerly been built into the walls of Inverurie Old Parish Church (now demolished) which had once been located at the NE corner of the cemetery.
- The monument comprises a nationally important collection of Pictish stones, and each individual stone is also of national importance in its own right due to information they provide on the art, society and material culture of The Picts.
- The carved stones are to be relocated a short distance away, between The Bass and The Little Bass, a 12th century motte and bailey castle which is also a scheduled monument. “The Bass” and the “Little Bass” are grass covered mounds where the remains of the parish church, graveyard and 19th century cemetery developed around them.



Below: Plan showing original location and proposed location.





- A glazed shelter is to be installed to protect the stones from weathering in their new location. This related SMC has also been notified to Ministers - *SMC-ABS-003*.

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 advise that they have no comments to make on the proposals.

Assessment:

1. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) are minded to grant SMC for the permanent removal of the Pictish carved stones will impact on the Scheduled Monument as their entire removal 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 2016.
2. The application has been made by Aberdeenshire Council. The project team for the works comprises Bruce Mann, the Council's archaeologist and John Renshaw Architects, who specialise in conservation. Spectrum Heritage Conservators will be present to supervise the uplift of the stones from their current place of safe storage. HES undertook pre-application discussions with the applicant regarding the scope and timing of works, and this application accords with the outcome of those discussions.
3. The permanent relocation of the carved stones is intended to address significant conservation and management issues which threaten the long term survival of each stone. The stones were removed from their current location in 2017 to enable them to undergo conservation works to remove biological growth and stabilise the surface of the stones.
4. HES highlight the policy document "Carved Stones: Scottish Executive Policy and Guidance (2005)" which sets out a presumption in favour of the retention of the physical association of a carved stone with its locality. It indicates, where moved, it is normally preferable that repositioned stones are located as close as possible to where they are being removed from. HES consider the four carved

stones, whilst being removed from their former location, will be conserved into the future, in keeping with national policy. The stones have been moved on several occasions in the past, so there is no strong compelling national interest in retaining them in their precise former location.

5. HES consider the works provide public benefits in line with section 3.19 of their policy statement and deliver significant conservation benefits to a nationally important collection of Pictish symbol stones, preserving their strong links to the church and graveyard. HES consider the conservation benefits, combined with the identification of a suitable nearby location for relocation, mitigate the adverse impacts of the permanent relocation of the stones to an acceptable level, which is in line with national policy on the treatment of Carved Stones.
6. HES suggests imposing a single condition to ensure that the carved stones are returned to their current designated location in the cemetery, should the plans to relocate them fail.
7. Overall, HES consider the benefits the proposed works would bring are considered to be greater than any negative effects, and therefore the proposal is concluded to be broadly consistent with relevant policy. However the proposal is not considered the minimum necessary consistent with conserving the cultural significance of the monument, hence the requirement to notify Scottish Ministers as per The Scheduled Monument Consent (Notification of Applications) Direction 2015.
8. 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 the Scheduled Monument Consent with one condition.