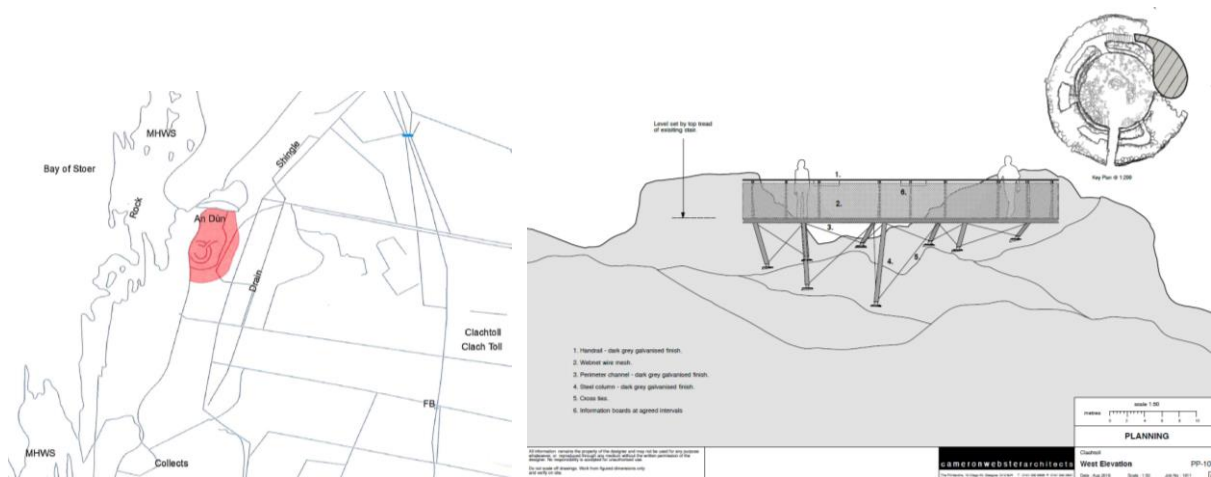




Case reference	SMC-HLD-004
Application details Site address	Erection of Viewing Platform An Dun broch, Clachtoll, Stoer , Sutherland (SM 1831)
Applicant Determining Authority Local Authority Area	Historic Assynt Historic Environment Scotland (HES) The Highland Council
Reason(s) for notification	Notification 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
Representations	2
Date notified to Ministers Date of recommendation	6 March 2019 25 March 2019
Decision / recommendation	Clear

### Description of Proposal and Site:

- Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is sought for the erection of a viewing platform at An Dun broch, a stone built substantial roundhouse dating from the Iron Age (600BC to 400AD) which is prominently sited on a rocky knoll above the foreshore at Clachtoll, a hamlet in Assynt, Sutherland.
- The structure is to be fabricated from heavily galvanised steel with a dark grey finish to avoid reflection. Eight 150mm steel columns will be braced to keep them as slender as possible while providing the necessary strength to withstand storms and fixed to bedrock with resin anchored bolts.
- SMC was granted in 2015 to excavate infill material and consolidate the broch walls to prevent further collapse.
- The monument is of national importance because it is a well preserved example that retains many archaeological features and has potential to make a significant addition to our understanding of the function, use and development of brochs in northwest Scotland. Brochs are unique structures to Scotland.



## Consultations and Representations:

- Historic Environment Scotland received two representations from local residents who raised issues about the potential visual intrusion, insensitive design and lack of consultation.
- 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. The application has been notified to Ministers because Historic Environment Scotland (HES) are minded to grant SMC for the erection and fixing of a viewing platform in a breach of the broch walls on the western side of the scheduled monument, which requires limited ground disturbance and goes beyond the minimum level of intervention which is consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in the monument.
2. The aim of the platform proposal is to control visitor access and circulation so that there is a reduction of visitors walking on the top of the turf covered drystone walls which are vulnerable to erosion. It also seeks to offer a degree of protection to the broch from the sea and would incorporate information/illustrations which increases the understanding and appreciation of visitors. HES undertook pre-application discussions with the applicant and they consider this application accords with the outcome of these discussions. HES consider the careful positioning of the platform limits its visibility and provides a sense of enclosure and would be consistent with its current use and in line with visitor expectations.
3. The fixing positions have been chosen in consultation with AOC Archaeology who undertook the previous archaeological works at An Dun. This is to ensure that where the columns meet the ground only bedrock would be disturbed and these aspects have been assessed and informed by consulting structural engineers. A construction method statement (CMS) did not accompany the application, therefore HES propose to set a condition of consent requesting a CMS is produced prior to any site works commencing.

4. HES believe that the introduction of the platform would change the appearance and character of the broch and would be an extensive intervention. However, they consider it has been sensitively designed to limit the visual impact, would result in considerable benefits in reducing further erosion of the existing broch walls created by visitors walking over the ruins, is reversible and could be removed in the future.
5. HES conclude that the proposal is broadly consistent with relevant policy and is justified in accordance with sections 3.17,3.19 and 3.20 of their Policy Statement. The benefits that the proposal would bring are considered to be greater than the negative effects of the construction of a modern viewing platform.
6. In summary, this SMC application is not considered to raise any issues of national importance that would merit intervention by Ministers.

**Recommendation:**

- The application should be cleared back to HES to issue Scheduled Monument Consent with one condition.