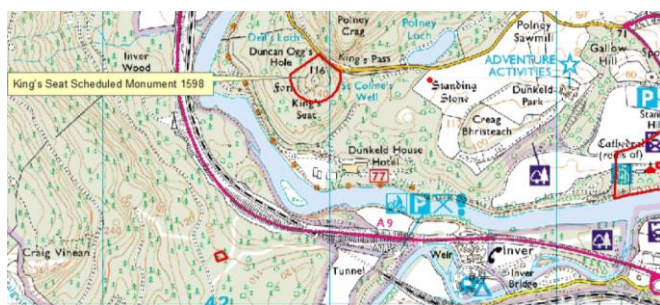


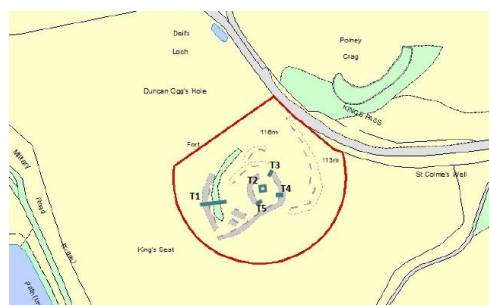
Case reference	SMC-PAK-005
Application details	Archaeological Excavation
Site address	King's Seat Hillfort, Kings Seat, Dunkeld (SM 1598)
Applicant	Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust
Determining Authority	Historic Environment Scotland
Local Authority Area	Perth and Kinross Council
Reason(s) for notification	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	Nil
Date notified to Ministers	2 June 2017
Date of recommendation	21 June 2017
Decision / recommendation	Clear

## Description of Proposal and Site:

- Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is sought for excavations at King's Seat fort, a hillfort situated in a commanding position above a bend in the River Tay near Dunkeld.
- The fort comprises the substantial upstanding remains of a later prehistoric or early historic fort enclosing an area of approx. 180m by 140m. The defended settlement survives as a series of concentric ramparts and terraces enclosing a central walled citadel on the summit of the hill. Due to its remote location, remains of occupation and related activities may survive relatively undisturbed. The cultural significance of the monument lies in its morphology, its apparent intactness and its likely position as a seat of royal power in Atholl during the early historic period, due to its prime geographical location marking the transition between lowland and highland.



Dunkeld location map



Location of proposed trenches within scheduled area

## **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 are not aware of any broader context or issues surrounding the case and do not highlight any reasons why the case should be called in for Ministerial intervention.

## **Assessment:**

1. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) are minded to grant consent for archaeological excavations which will impact on the Scheduled Monument as the insertion of five trenches, 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. This is a significant departure from policy as set out in section 3.16 of HES' Policy Statement.
2. The application has been submitted by Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust who are working in partnership with Dunkeld and Birnam Historical Society.
3. The objectives of the project are to establish the chronology for the development and occupation of the fort, assess the impact of rhododendron growth on the preservation of archaeological deposits and foster a continued enthusiasm and engagement of the local community.
4. The project will help address research aims set out in the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (SCARF) and deliver the aims of the Scottish Archaeology Strategy. It will build on recent work undertaken by Glasgow University's Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot (SERF) project and the Tayside Landscape Partnership's ongoing research at Moncreiffe Hill and Moredun Top, previously notified cases.
5. The trenches, to be opened up over three seasons in September 2017, September 2018 and September 2019, are primarily for research purposes. Trench 1 measures 4m x 30m to be located across the terraces and ramparts on the western side of the fort. Trench 2 measures 8m x 8m to be located within the summit interior. Trench 3 measures 2m x 5m to be located across the NE summit rampart close to the entrance. Trench 4 measures 2m x 5m to be located across the SE summit rampart. Trench 5 measures 2m x 5m to be located across the SW summit rampart. The project team will include an experienced project director and a site director, a team of at least three professional supervisors from an archaeological contractor and up to 20 volunteers. The ratio of experienced to non-experienced diggers will not exceed 1:5 in each trench.
6. Upon completion of the excavation, all areas will be backfilled by hand with the soil returned to its original angle of repose and the turf replaced. Revisiting the monument each season allows for the condition of the reinstated trenches to be examined and a monthly site visit will also be undertaken to monitor any erosion issues and allow for mitigation. Some European protected species have been identified in the vicinity however due to the nature of the works no impact on their habitat is considered likely.

7. HES considers that the proposed works are minor in relation to the scale of the monument, have clear public benefit and encourage outreach and engagement. They believe the application accords with sections 3.17, 3.19 and 3.20 of their Policy Statement, because it has been demonstrated that the works have been carefully considered, based on good authority, sensitively designed and properly planned and that the public benefits of the project outweighs the impact on the cultural significance of the monument. HES have set two conditions to clarify timing, approval and ensure that the works planned in subsequent seasons remain within the scope of works consented.
8. In summary, the SMC application does not raise any issues of national importance that would merit intervention by Ministers.

**Recommendation:**

- The application should be cleared back to Historic Environment Scotland to issue Scheduled Monument Consent with two conditions.