

Case reference	SMC-SLS-002
Application details	Archaeological Excavation
Site address	Castle Qua, Fort 345m WSW of Mouse Bridge, near Lanark (SM 2604)
Applicant	Northlight Heritage
Determining Authority	Historic Environment Scotland
Local Authority Area	South Lanarkshire
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	30 June 2017 (Fully documented on the 3 July 2017)
Date of recommendation	12 July 2017
Decision / recommendation	Clear

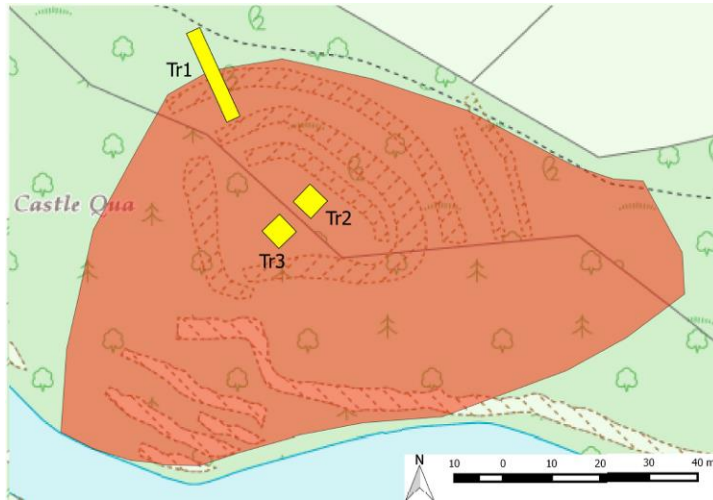
Description of Proposal and Site:

- Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is sought for the excavation of three archaeological trial trenches at Castle Qua fort, near Lanark. Castle Qua is within Cleghorn Glen and Cartland Craigs National Nature Reserve, managed by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).
- The monument comprises an impressive earthwork relating to a rampart and double ditch, enclosing an area of approx. 28m by 30m, with a steep drop to the Mouse Water to the south. The interior includes depressions or hollows that possibly could be structures, such as a souterrain (underground Iron Age chamber). The site is of national importance because of its sub-surface remains and strategic location to defend a site overlooking the river and may have formed a central place within the region, such as a fortification for a leader.
- There is a related SMC which has also been notified for excavations at Black Hill Prehistoric fort and settlement nearby, which forms part of the same project.

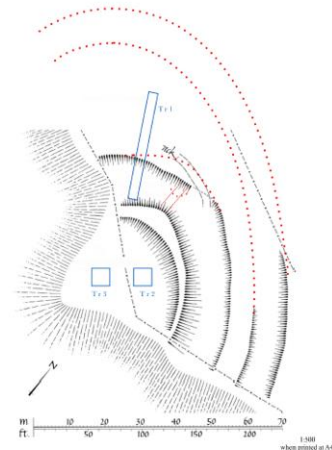


Location Plan of Black Hill and Castle Qua.

Castle Qua fort scheduled area and location of proposed trenches



Sketch plan of Castle Qua, South Lanarkshire
overlay on RCAHMS plan from 1973 after field assessment on 30 April 2013
Alderson Archaeology with Peter Dixon RCAHMS, Stue Halliday, University of Edinburgh



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 three 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 Northlight Heritage who are working as a partner with the Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership (CAVLP).
3. The objectives of the project link to the CAVLP 'Investigating the Past' programme and aims to involve local communities, provide opportunities for volunteers and heritage groups to be involved in site investigations, produce a site management plan and engage the public, young people and people with additional support needs in hands-on learning.
4. The project is specifically aligned with the aims and objectives of the Landscape Conservation Action Plan (2011) by "strengthening the connection between community and landscape" as well as "providing information that can assist others to learn about the history and cultural importance of the landscape". The project will also help address research aims set out in the Scottish Archaeological Research Framework (SCARF) and deliver the aims of the Scottish Archaeology Strategy and answer overarching research questions such as what is the date of Castle Qua, is it multi-period or single period, who built it and whether it was for the elite or communal use.

5. The trenches are primarily for research purposes. Trench 1 measures 20m x 3m with approx. 10m of the trench outside the scheduled area and will investigate a structure which has been identified as a potential 'bailey'. Trench 2 measures 5m x 5m and will be located within the interior of the fort to identify if there are any structures present. Trench 3 measures 5m x 5m and will be located within the interior of the fort to investigate how the site was used and recover dating evidence.
6. The project will be led by the CAVLP Heritage Project Officer, managed by the Director of Northlight Heritage with support from two site supervisors from Northlight Heritage and up to 14 volunteers. The ratio of staff member to volunteer would be 1:7 and they would be closely supervised and directed in all elements of work.
7. The site is within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and SNH were consulted. SNH are content that consent can be issued on the basis that the work is undertaken in accordance with the methodologies described. SNH advise that no excavation should take place within 30m of a badger sett, measures should be taken to allow badgers to escape from exposed trenches and that the presence of trenches or any other hazards should be made apparent to the public on site. Recommendations on securing each trench would be implemented following agreement with HES. At the end of the excavations, geotextile would be placed at the bottom of each trench to protect any unexcavated archaeological deposits, and all areas would be backfilled by hand and the turf replaced. Measures for protecting the backfilled trenches from badgers would be deployed where appropriate in consultation with SNH.
8. HES considers that the proposed works 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 the timetable of works and to allow for written approval of the trench excavations where the extent of excavation remains uncertain.
9. In summary, the 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.