



Case reference	SMC-PAK-011
Application details	Evaluation of one of a series of 'nuclear'/complex hillforts
Site address	Dunsinane Hill, fort
Applicant	University of Aberdeen
Determining Authority	Historic Environment Scotland (HES)
Local Authority Area	Perth & Kinross
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	15 October 2020
Date of recommendation	21 November 2020
Decision / recommendation	Clear

Description of Proposal and Site:

- HES propose to grant Scheduled Monument Consent to the University of Aberdeen for archaeological works at the site of this former hillfort, at Dunsinane, Perth and Kinross. The map at figure 1 shows the site location.
- The monument comprises the remains of a hillfort of later prehistoric date. It also has historical associations with Macbeth although no remains dating to that period can be identified on the hill by field inspection alone. The monument comprises a strongly defended inner enclosure, measuring some 52m by 25m, within a wall spread to some 9m wide, and displaying evidence of successive reconstructions. A series of outer enclosures defines occupation areas on natural terraces around the flanks of the hill, and encloses a number of hut circles.
- Annotated photogrammetry is provided at figure 3.
- 3 small trenches are proposed. These are set out in Figure 3.
 - Trench 1 would measure c 12m x 2m. and would cross the line of the inner banks on the northeast side of the central fort.
 - Trench 2 would measure c 4m x 2m and would be on the line of the outer enclosure of the central fort.
 - Trench 3 would measure c 5m x 2m and be placed across the collapsed bank of the outer enclosure on the south side of the fort.
- The excavated trenches will be fully reinstated following a staged process, and reinstatement will be monitored.

- It is also proposed to repair of an area of erosion on a bank east of the central citadel.

Figure 1



Figure 2

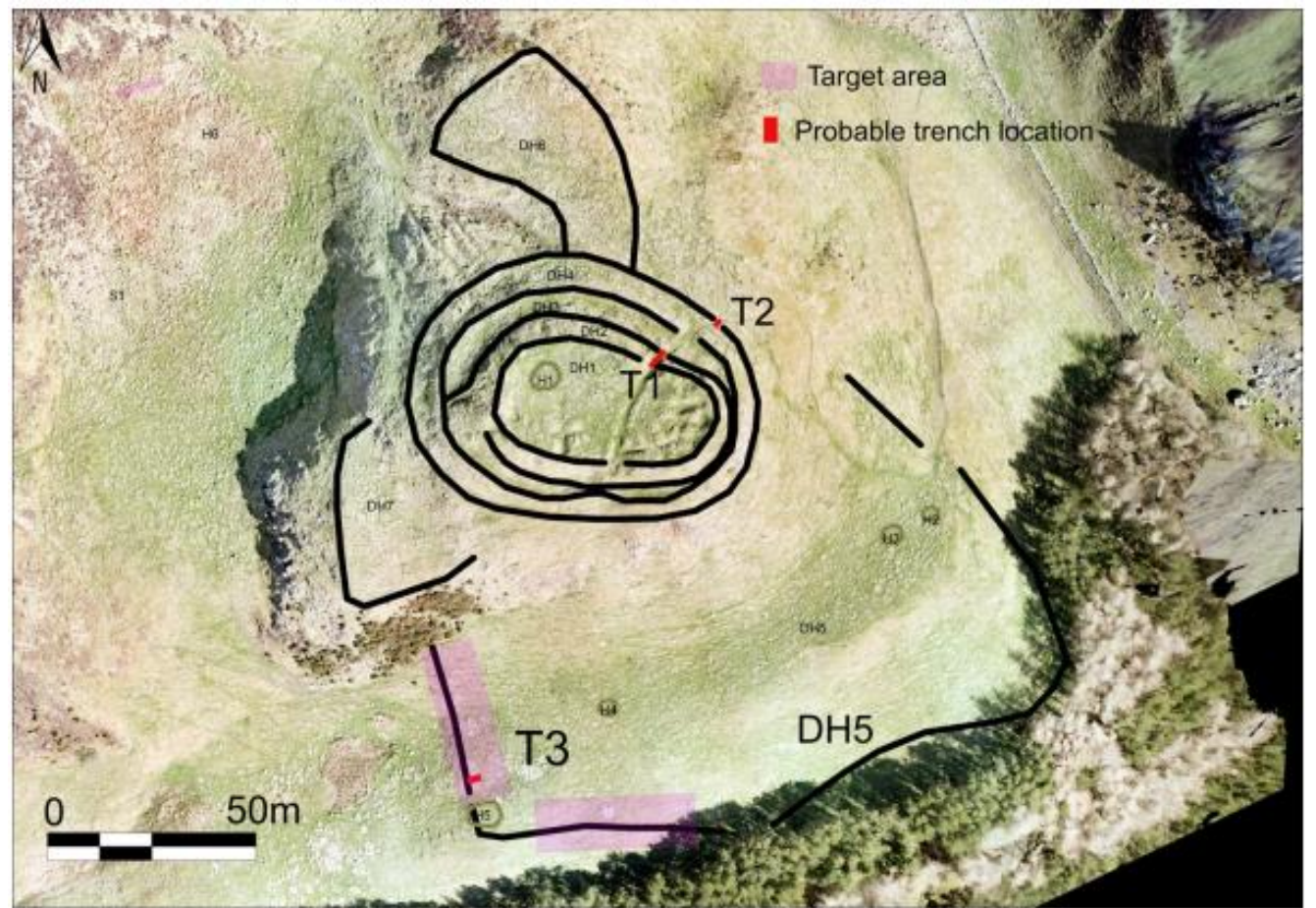


Key

Figure 1: Site Location
Figure 2: Site Location

Figure 3: Photogrammetry of Site

Figure 3



Consultations and Representations:

- No representations were made during consideration of the application.
- HES conclude that the works are considered acceptable in meeting the terms of national policy for scheduled monuments
- Upon notification to Scottish Ministers, the Scottish Governments Cultural and Historic Environment Division (CHED) was consulted. CHED comment that the proposed SMC does not appear to raise any specific issues of national importance. The proposed excavation should have minimal impact and could offer additional intelligence in terms of understanding the monument, especially as a part of the wider 'Comparative Kingship' project. There will be expert archaeological monitoring during the works, which will ensure no permanent impact to the monument as well as repairing a small area of soil erosion sympathetically. There are also valuable opportunities for increased community engagement and education.

Assessment:

1. The application has been notified as Historic Environment Scotland (HES) are minded to grant scheduled monument consent for evaluative excavation of three trenches which impact upon the Scheduled Monument as the removal of material goes beyond the minimum level of intervention which would be consistent with conserving what is culturally significant in the monument.
2. The proposed archaeological works would see the excavation of three trenches, as detailed above. These excavations are part of a wider research project, on Comparative Kingship, that aims to investigate seven important hillforts across Scotland, at Stirling, Perth and Kinross, Fife, Edinburgh, and the Scottish Borders. The University of Aberdeen is the applicant.
3. A limited degree of repair work would also be undertaken, to tackle erosion damage to an embankment. HES are satisfied that the erosion repairs are the minimum level of intervention to conserve cultural significance in the monument.
4. The application was accompanied by a detailed Project Design, and HES are satisfied that this includes a well-considered, appropriate and careful methodology.
5. HES consider that the proposed works will have a minimal impact upon the cultural significance of the monument, and that the works are therefore compliant with their Scheduled Monument Consent Policy 1. The HES consider that the works would be of public benefit, increasing public understanding of hillforts in Southeast Scotland. HES also consider that the proposal is broadly consistent with relevant policy.
6. This SMC application is not considered to raise any issues of national importance that would merit intervention by Scottish Ministers.

Decision/Recommendation:

- The application should be cleared back to Historic Environment Scotland to grant Scheduled Monument Consent without conditions.