

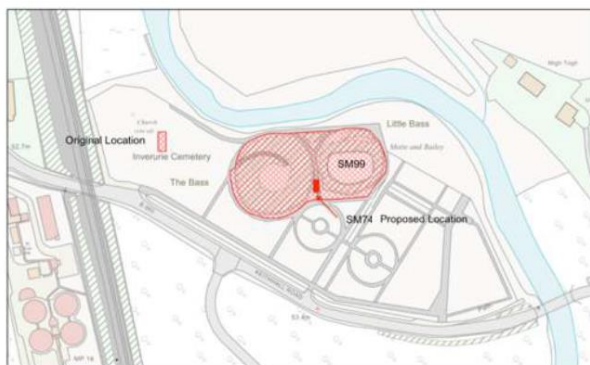


Case reference	SMC-ABS-003 (related to SMC-ABS-004)
Application details	Addition of symbol stones and stone shelter
Site address	The Bass and Little Bass, motte and bailey castle, Inverurie (SM 74)
Applicant	Aberdeenshire Council
Determining Authority	Historic Environment Scotland (HES)
Local Authority 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	26 June 2018
Decision / recommendation	Clear

Description of Proposal and Site:

- Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) is sought for the addition of four Pictish carved symbol stones to be relocated between The Bass and The Little Bass, a 12th century motte and bailey castle, which is visible as substantial earthworks, on the outskirts of Inverurie.
- “The Bass” and the “Little Bass” are grass covered mounds, the west mound being the motte and the east the bailey. They were once joined, but landscaping work in the later 19th century cut a path between them.
- The stones are to be relocated from the immediately surrounding Inverurie Cemetery, where they are currently scheduled in their existing location, to a space between the mounds (see plan below with each scheduled area outlined in red).

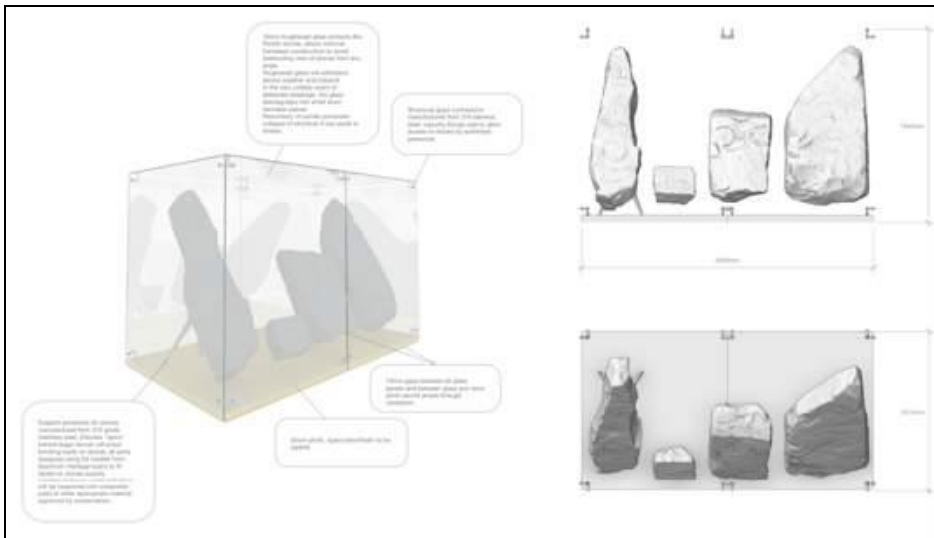
Below: Plan showing original location and proposed location.



- The monument is of national importance because of its inherent potential to make a significant addition to the understanding of 12th century defensive structures in

the Strathdon area and the construction and use of timber fortifications. It also has the potential to shed light on the feudalisation of this part of Scotland.

- A glazed shelter is to be installed to protect the carved stones from weathering in their new location, as detailed below. This application is one of two related SMC applications for the conservation of these stones. The application for the permanent removal of the stones from their previous location has also been notified to Ministers - *SMC-ABS-004*.



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 installation of the relocated carved stones and construction of a new glass shelter to encase the stones, which will impact on the Scheduled Monument as the installation 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 the HES Policy Statement.
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 glass shelter would measure 2.94m x 1.62m x 1.84m and be built on a stone plinth with ground disturbance limited to a depth of no more than 0.3m in an area

of low archaeological potential. All ground breaking works will be monitored by an archaeologist to ensure no archaeological deposits are disturbed. The stones would be ventilated and protected from water and sap within the shelter, while being displayed at a slight angle to permit better perception of carved relief detailing on the surface. The new location adjoins the footpath and graveyard. It will be visually separated from the main elements of the motte and bailey earthworks by a pre-existing fence.

4. HES consider the physical and cultural significance impacts of the proposed works would be low and therefore are broadly in line with sections 3.16 and 3.18 of their policy statement. Although located within a scheduled area, the assessment accompanying the application considers the potential for encountering significant archaeological remains in this particular area to be low due to the landscaping works undertaken in the past. A topographical assessment and sun study accompanied the application, to ascertain the best position to place the stones. The existing location is one of a number of places where the stones have been located over the last 250 years. The proposed area of relocation is considered the only viable option to retain their important links to the church and graveyard, due to the widespread risk of flooding and presence of graves within the graveyard.
5. HES consider the conservation benefits, combined with the identification of a suitable nearby location to relocate the stones has mitigated 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. 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.
6. HES believe the works are intended to secure the long term preservation of the carved stones, retain their strong links to the church and graveyard and increase access and interpretation in order that the stones can be understood and enjoyed for future generations. The proposals also provide conservation and public benefits to a nationally important collection of Pictish symbol stones and therefore the proposal is concluded to be broadly consistent with relevant policy.
7. HES require two conditions to enable the application to be considered fully compliant with paragraph 3.20 of their policy statement. The conditions require the applicant to i) inform HES of the commencement of works to enable a representative to monitor the work; and ii) provide a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prior to commencement of works to be approved by HES, and implemented on site.
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.