



SHEP on Historic Battlefields
Historic Scotland
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH

By email

22nd July 2008

Dear Sirs

Consultation on Scottish Historic Environment (SHEP) on Historic Battlefields

Archaeology Scotland (AS) welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation and applaud Historic Scotland and the Scottish Government's determination to establish a policy to promote better protection of Scotland's Historic Battlefields.

Archaeology Scotland would hope that having defined a Scottish Government policy for Historic Battlefields and the existing Inventory of Gardens & Designed Landscapes this is not the completion of Historic Scotland's (HS) commitments to cultural landscapes. Though some concerns can be addressed through **SHEP 1: Scotland's Historic Environment**, Archaeology Scotland would wish to see a firmer commitment to preserve other key historic landscapes such industrial landscapes in Central Scotland or the prehistoric landscapes surviving in Caithness and Sutherland. Given the increasing development pressures supported by the Scottish Government such as the housing targets set for local authorities and the strategy of increasing forest cover of Scotland by 8% by the year 2050, it is crucial that a clear landscape policy is articulated by Historic Scotland beyond this SHEP.

Question 1:

Do you agree that a policy for the protection and sustainable management of historic battlefields is necessary? If not, what alternative course of action would you suggest, and why?

Archaeology Scotland agree that a policy is necessary as battlefields do not currently have protection, except where they form part of scheduled ancient monuments. Given that battlefields are significant features and places of event both to individuals and local communities it is important that these areas are recognised as places of significance.

As discussed above we believe that a policy on protecting and managing battlefields must also be tied into a wider statement of HS (and thus Scottish Government) policy towards promoting Scotland's historic landscapes.

Question 2:

Do you agree with the scope and definition? If not, what changes would you propose and why?

Archaeology Scotland would like clearer guidelines for distinguishing battlefields of local and regional importance as compared to those of national importance. The duties of local authorities towards the register and to the unregistered sites should be more clearly defined though perhaps this could best be done through supplementary guidance.

We feel that greater weight could be given to non-tangible values in helping define the significance of individual battles. These could be more significant than the historic results of individual conflicts – for examples the skirmishes and massacres of the Covenanted period might not be on a large enough scale to be defined as battles but are yet highly significant part of the folklore of the period both locally and nationally. It may be that individual skirmishes, such as fighting on the Corrieayack during the 1745/6 Jacobite/Hanoverian conflict, are significant because they form part of larger campaigns.

Given the recent success in obtaining World Heritage status for the Antonine Wall, it may be worth considering how the other elements of the Roman frontier and campaigns such as the Flavian and Severan Marching camps with the blocking forts in Perth and Angus can be dealt with more thematically rather than just as individual scheduled monuments. Whether they form part of this Inventory or part of a more thematic approach needs further consideration.

Question 3:

Are there other reasons for valuing battlefields that should also be considered?

The intangible values as discussed above could be given greater prominence and economic values such as visitor access and tourism should also be relevant. However the key factors do seem to be defined here. The issue of 'significance' needs to be more clearly defined though perhaps this is contextual and cumulative in value for each site. It may well be that 'significance' of individual sites will change over time as evidence and beliefs, whether local or national, change.

Question 4:

Do you support the proposal to create a non-statutory Inventory of nationally important battlefields? If not, what alternative approaches should be considered?

Yes, Archaeology Scotland do support this proposal. We would have preferred a statutory register but understand that this is not currently on offer. However we would urge Historic Scotland to give strong guidance to planning authorities to make sure this is a material factor when Local and Strategic Development Plans are drawn. It will also be important to make sure that protection of Inventory Battlefields is a condition of forestry and agricultural grants as part of Scottish Government Rural Land Use policy.

Question 5:

Should an Inventory of Historic Battlefields be given the same status currently enjoyed by Gardens and Designed Landscapes within the planning system (see Note 6)?

As discussed above, we feel that an Inventory of Historic Battlefields should have the same status as Inventory of Gardens & Designed Landscapes.

Question 6:

Do you agree with the purpose of the proposed Inventory? If not, what changes would you suggest and why?

There needs to be a wider discussion of the issue of national importance. Individual battles may not in themselves be national events, given the regional nature of some conflicts. This does not mean that such battles are not of national importance because they may form part of larger events or have a wider impact than the immediate locality or because of the material aspects surviving of the battlefield or are presumed to survive.

Question 7:

Do you believe that the criteria set out in Annex A are suitable? If not, what alternative criteria would you suggest and why?

Archaeology Scotland believes that the criteria set out in Annex A provide a good basis for selecting sites for inclusion in the Inventory. However it is unclear how these criteria fit iconic Scottish battles such as Bannockburn where there are no clear clues on the ground or even certainty where the battle was fought. No Inventory that excluded Bannockburn would be politically or publicly acceptable and there must be some category of battle site where the intrinsic folklore element is as crucial as the actual physical site. AS realises that this raises problems in planning terms because it is not possible to protect a myth and beliefs can change over time. However this is the same for the 'objective' evaluation of both physical and documentary evidence and it is clear that a monitoring process will have to be carried out for sites recorded on a Battlefield Inventory. This is already done for other protected sites such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

Question 8:

Do you agree with the proposed definition of the area of interest? If not, what changes would you suggest and why?

Archaeology Scotland recognises that it is difficult to define the extent of a battlefield site due to the limitations of the physical or documentary evidence surviving and that this extent of definition will vary from battlefield to battlefield. We also accept that it may be necessary to distinguish between a core and a peripheral area. It is important to realise that battlefields are more landscape rather than monument definitions and should therefore be treated holistically as landscape areas. It will be important for HS to define through guidance material how local councils and others should deal with the issue of the setting of battlefields.

Question 9:

Do you agree that policies are needed for both the overall area of the battlefield and specific areas within it? If not, what changes would you suggest and why?

Archaeology Scotland accepts that management of core and peripheral may well differ, though this should be guided by principles that promote a holistic view of battlefields.

Question 10:

Do you agree that best practice guidance would be useful? If so, who should lead in developing this? If not, what alternative approaches should be considered?

Best practice guidance is essential for local councils and others to best manage these sites. As they are a new (proposed) designation it will be important that adequate guidance and expert training is necessary to ensure that these areas are properly cared for. Given the relatively small number of Battlefields expected to be included in this new Inventory, it will be important that a requirement is placed on

owners/managers of such Battlefields to draw up and action agreed management plans within 5 years of designation. This will require support from Historic Scotland and other relevant bodies.

Question 11:

Do you agree with the roles identified here? If not, what changes would you propose, and why? Are there other key stakeholders who have significant roles to play?

It would be useful to set up either an advisory group or a standing panel of expert stakeholders to comment on the content and practice of the Inventory, particularly in the initial stages of defining this Inventory. Community groups may well have a role to play on such stakeholder groups as they often have a passionate commitment to individual battlefields and it will be important to include them. Given that rural Scotland funding and management of the countryside is being increasingly controlled under the RPAC (Regional Project Advisory Committee) system as part of the SRDP (Scottish Rural Development Programme), it would be sensible to include representatives of these groups in decision making process for managing and enhancing such sites.

Archaeology Scotland are happy to be consulted further on this topic should this prove helpful.

Yours sincerely



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Director