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Prof J. D. Pitts, FRSE

SHEP on Battlefields,
Historic Scotland,
Room 2.9, Longmore House,
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Dear Dr Macinnes,

Proposed policies for Scottish Battlefields

While welcoming any move to protect battlefields in Scotland, I am disappointed that the proposals in the consultation paper provide only a modest, a very modest, step towards that goal. The battlefields, or what is left of them, are an important resource for archaeologists and historians, an important part of our cultural heritage and attract tourists in sufficient numbers to be economically important. The proposals are aimed primarily at already well known, well researched sites and will do little to encourage the investigation and protection of small and as yet unknown sites.

There is currently a consultation on Scottish Planning Policy SPP 23 – Planning and the Historic Environment. It would seem that more attention should be given to co-ordinating these proposals for the protection of battlefields (and SHEPs in general) with SPP 23.

Specific Points:

Question 2 Why must the scope be limited in this way. Surely it would be better to propose an open-ended list that can be extended in future as information becomes available (as proposed in Para 5.12). It is reasonable to propose that the list should start with large, well-studied sites but (as with ancient monuments) there should be opportunities to add other sites (smaller battles, sea battles etc) in future.

Question 4 If the inventory is non-statutory there should be appropriate reference in SPP 23 so that it is quite clear what protection must be offered to battlefields in the planning process.

Question 5 If the inventory is not given appropriate status in the planning process (see above) then this proposal would be an alternative.

Para 4.14 Why can't the proposals include specific advice on the protection of small, locally important sites as well as large, nationally important sites. This again could be covered by SPP 23 but once more it seems a missed opportunity.

Question 7 Again the proposals seemed to be aimed at making it easy to prepare a list. If the first "edition" of the list were not expected to be complete, but only a start of a longer process where the list would be updated from time to time, then the selection criteria could be usefully widened.

Question 10 Best practice guidance would be important. Historic Scotland should produce it. It should be consistent with SPP 23 so the planning process is not confused.

I look forward to seeing the revised version of these proposals.

Yours sincerely,

John D. Pitts