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By email to: info@dundonaldcastle.org.uk

[REDACTED]
Friends of Dundonald Castle

Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH

Enquiry Line: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

21 December 2018

Dear [REDACTED]

[Proposed New Castle Visitor Centre](#)
[Statutory Designation: Dundonald Castle \(SM90112\)](#)

Thank you to and the other Friends for meeting with me on site on 10 December 2018 in order to discuss the potential for creating a new visitor centre at the foot of the castle hill, immediately to the west of the existing one, and immediately south of the path that runs alongside the playing fields.

I should reiterate that this response is solely concerned with heritage impacts and Historic Environment Scotland's role as regulator and statutory consultee under the planning system. I have no remit regarding any other discussions you are having with my colleagues about management or ownership of the castle or any part of it.

The proposed location is outwith the scheduled area, which is confined to the top of castle hill, so a separate scheduled monument consent would not be required. Any potential impacts would therefore be restricted to the castle's setting. We would therefore expect to be consulted by the planning authority if a related planning application is forthcoming.

The castle has been strategically placed in a prominent location, where it commands views over much of the surrounding area and serves as a highly visible landmark. These views are central to how the castle is understood and appreciated today. Dundonald town now occupies much of the ground to north and east, but the housing is small scale and largely subservient to castle hill in wider views of and from the castle. The playing field to the castle hill's north allows for a degree of separation between it and the housing in closer views out from the castle and on the approach towards it. The fields to the castle's south and the hill to the west, together with the intervening valley, are also an integral part of the castle's setting, but they would not be affected by these proposals.

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The ground where the proposed development would be located is low and it seems likely that a one or two storey building could potentially be accommodated here without detracting from the prominence of the castle and hill in wider views from the north and east. However, care should be taken through the design process to ensure any impacts are minimised. This is equally true of closer views, especially on the route visitors might take. It would be helpful if visualisations were produced to accompany any future planning application to help demonstrate the level of any impact.

It seems likely that the steep hillside and rocky lip around the castle and hill top might prevent any new build here being visible from much of the lower part of the castle. However, any new building in this location would be visible from the north of the hilltop and, considerably more importantly, higher levels within the castle. In these views the new building would be located in between the castle and playing fields and may reduce the degree of visual separation between the castle and nearby development. This will remain a high concern for us, so any design process should focus on seeking to address and reduce any visibility. A flat, or gently sloping turf roof, for example, may assist in this. Again, visualisations will be necessary as part of any forthcoming planning application.

My comments about reducing any impacts through design aside, I should perhaps reiterate that I have no preference for any particular design and you should feel free to explore a medieval influenced design if that is what the Friends wish to do.

Due to the proximity to the castle I would anticipate that there is a high likelihood of undesignated archaeology. I would recommend that you contact the local authority's archaeological advisors about what this might mean for you at pre-determination stage and/or as part of the development process: West of Scotland Archaeology Service, c/o Development and Regeneration Services, 231 George Street, Glasgow G1 1RX / (0141) 287 8332 / enquiries@wosas.glasgow.gov.uk.

Detailed guidance on the application of national policy is set out in our 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment' series available online at www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance/managing-change-in-the-historic-environment-guidance-notes/. Technical advice is available through our Technical Conservation website at www.engineshed.org.

I hope this is helpful. Please contact us if you have any questions about this response please contact me by phone on [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully

Historic Environment Scotland

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