

CARVED STONES - HISTORIC SCOTLAND'S APPROACH

Response by Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland

HEACS welcomes the consultation paper and supports the overall approach taken to this important subject.

Council would take the opportunity to make a number minor points.

- a) para 1.3 Carved stones do not all share the same vulnerability. some stones are much more erodable (eg soft sandstone) than others (eg granite) and some, being close to urban centres, may be much more in danger of vandalism (look at Inveresk kirkyard). Council thinks it would be seriously wise to have a gradation of 'at risk'.
- b) para 1.8. i. - literal ' have' for 'has' in 1.5: but Council very much doubts that a carved stone on a building is any more reliable about the building's date than its mos. All it does (we know these things were moved around) is give you an indication of when the stone was carved. There are some exceptions of course - eg Craigston.
- c) para 2.2 does not list vandalism as one of the threats. it should.
- d) In this section, there is little coverage of 'non-owners' of graveyards - e.g. local authorities upon whom the responsibility may fall.
- e) para 2.3.1 Conservation plans are far too elaborate and expensive and slow for them to be applied on a stone by stone basis throughout the country. It would never happen. Would the process be grant-aidable?
- f) 2.3.3 Whilst a presumption against further erosion is necessary, rubbing may be the only way of recording the last gasp of a piece of decoration/writing before it erodes for good. Would that record not be valuable ?
- g) 2.3.4 This para fails to see that carved stones MOVE like sundials (which are also carved stones but not apparently mentioned).
- h) 2.3.5 Many ancient sites are now private and inaccessible.
- i) 2.3.6 Who is expected to pay the costs of public viewing ?
- j) 2.3.10 Raises many questions, and some words are omitted which make it not wholly comprehensible. What alternative means of replication are there?
- k) Sections 2.3.11ff This is getting somewhat minatory in tone.
- l) 2.3.17 Refers to research into techniques: it should be in the same place as research into culture and understanding (Section 2.4).

HEACS
May 2004