



## Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** [PE1352](#)

**Main Petitioner:** Mark Hirst on behalf of the campaign group Saltire Scotland

**Subject:** Saltire on Edinburgh Castle

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government who own Edinburgh Castle to instruct Historic Scotland, who manage the site, to work to erect a 90ft flagpole in Crown Square at the Castle from where a Saltire, Scotland's national flag, will be flown on a permanent basis.

### Background

Whilst Edinburgh Castle is run and cared for by Historic Scotland, 52 Infantry Brigade is headquartered there. The Brigade carry out largely ceremonial duties including flag raising, as the castle is an official Army flag flying station. In this respect, flag protocol instructions are issued by the MoD and mainly concern the Union Flag. The MoD does not issue instructions on flying the Saltire.

Historic Scotland's *Properties in care: Guidance Note* includes a section on Flag Flying at Monuments: monuments with special arrangements, which states:

<b>Edinburgh Castle:</b>	An official army flag flying station. The arrangements are as follows: <u>Clock Tower</u> (main flagpole) – Union flag: this is the army's responsibility and is usually raised and lowered by them; <u>Half Moon Battery</u> – Saltire: Historic Scotland's responsibility; <u>Gatehouse</u> – the central flagpole is usually reserved for the governor's flag (and is operated by the army); the left centre one flies the regimental flag (this is for the army to operate) and the third flies the Edinburgh Castle flag.
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At Historic Scotland properties, which are not official army flag flying stations, the Saltire flag always has the superior position.

## Historic Scotland

Historic Scotland has raised concerns about the proposed flagpole:

- In considering any changes to a scheduled monument, the prime consideration is the effect of the works on the cultural significance of the Castle and its buildings. The mechanism for considering the effects on the property is through the Scheduled Monument Consent process
- Health and safety issues for a flagpole of this size would be immense. Given its exposed location and being in the heart of Edinburgh Castle, a tourist hot spot

Scheduled Monument Consent is required for any works that would demolish, destroy, damage, remove, repair, alter or add to the monument. Historic Scotland administers the Scheduled Monument Consent process on behalf of Scottish Ministers.

In addition, Historic Scotland cannot be certain if the height of the proposed flagpole would mean that a Saltire flown from it would have a superior position to the Union flag on the Clock Tower. It is thought that the Union flag currently flies at around 120ft above Crown Square.

## Scottish Parliament Action

The MSP Christine Grahame has lodged motions on the flying of the Saltire in Edinburgh Castle including [S3M-0033](#) which urged the Scottish Government to fly the Saltire in “pole position” from Edinburgh Castle.

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