



Case information

Case ID	300016754
File Reference	AMH/551/2/1
Name of Site	Green Hill, Broch, West Watten

Local Authority	Highland Council
National Grid Reference	ND 2299 5502
Designation No. (if any)	SM 551
Case Type	Amendment

Received/Start Date	North 2015 project
Decision Date	16/09/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1934 and the documentation does not conform to current standards. The assessment against criteria demonstrates that the monument continues to be of national importance. The recommendation is to update the entry in the Schedule as **Green Hill Broch, 40m W of Grant Hall**.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1934. At the time of the site visit in April 2015 a number of site management issues were observed, relating to works that had been carried out on the monument

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals affecting this monument.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The site was considered for amendment as part of the North 2015 Scheduling Enhancement Project.

The site was visited on 22/04/2015.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

An assessment against the Scheduling criteria has been carried out (see Annex A).

The monument was found to meet the criteria for scheduling.

The designation criteria are published in the Historic Environment Scotland policy statement June 2016, Annex 1, pp. 48-50.

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance/historic-environment-scotland-policy-statement/>

3.3 Other considerations

N/A.

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria

Green Hill Broch, 40m W of Grant Hall.

1 Description

The monument is a broch, a complex stone-built substantial roundhouse, dating to the Iron Age (between 600 BC and AD 400). It is visible as a roughly circular grass-covered mound about 32m in diameter and 2.5m high, with an entrance passage visible on its south east side. The monument is located in garden ground to the south of Loch Watten at approximately 50m above sea level.

The scheduled area is polygonal on plan and includes the remains described above and an area around them within which evidence relating to the monument's construction, use and abandonment is expected to survive, as shown in red on the accompanying map. The scheduling specifically excludes the above ground elements of all earthfast garden furniture. The monument was first scheduled in 1934 but the documentation does not meet current standards. The present amendment rectifies this.

2 Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria (Historic Environment Scotland policy statement June 2016, Annex 1, pp. 48-50.)

2.1 Intrinsic Characteristics

The monument is a broch, visible as a grass-covered mound. The scale of the mound indicates that a substantial proportion of the lower broch structure survives under the collapsed upper structure. The only visible architectural feature is the entrance passage which has been partly excavated. When surveyed in 1911, door checks were identified within the passage, as was an entrance to an inaccessible intermural guard cell. By analogy with a number of excavated brochs there are other features likely to present within the mound such as walling, additional cells, the remains of intramural stairs, scarcement ledges, internal stone partitions and evidence for hearths. It has been suggested that the entrance passage or outer broch structure has been modified or extended at some point in its use and this therefore indicates at least two development phases in its construction. Scientific study of the site would allow us to develop a better understanding of the chronology of the site, including its date of origin, state of completeness and any possible development sequence.

There is likely to be considerable occupation debris, artefacts and palaeoenvironmental evidence within the mound, as has been found at other broch sites. This provides information on how people lived, their trade and exchange contacts, and their social status, while the structural remains can help us understand broch architecture and construction methods. The potential for significant surviving archaeological remains is demonstrated by excavations at other brochs, such as

Nybbster, also in Caithness, and Howe on Orkney, where a broch mound was found to preserve significant buried deposits.

Broch towers are primarily seen as a specific specialised development of complex Atlantic roundhouses. They were large complex structures that could have accommodated either an extended family or a small community. While there would have been a social hierarchy within this community, the construction of these elaborate towers is often understood in terms of elite settlement. Other interpretations have stressed their likely role as fortified or defensive sites, possibly serving a community across a wider area. Brochs are complex structures likely to have had numerous purposes and a complex role in prehistoric society.

2.2 Contextual Characteristics

Brochs are a widespread class of monument across northern Scotland with notable concentrations in Caithness, Sutherland, Orkney, Shetland, the Western Isles and the northwest Highlands. This monument is significant because it belongs to a broadly contemporary regional group in Caithness and interestingly, part of a very dense local concentration of brochs in the area surrounding Loch Watten. The proximity of these brochs in such a small area adds to the significance of this example. There is therefore great potential for comparative study on a local and national scale to better understand the function of these monuments, their interrelationship and the significance of their placing within the landscape, in particular in relation to our understanding of Iron Age social hierarchy, changing settlement patterns and systems of inheritance.

2.3 Associative Characteristics

N/A.

Purpose and implications of scheduling

The field visit and assessment have concluded that this monument remains of national importance despite the impacts of later land use and that scheduling remains an appropriate mechanism for the monument's long term protection.

3 Assessment of national importance

The monument is of national importance because it has an inherent potential to make a significant addition to our understanding of the past, in particular of Iron Age society in Caithness and the function, use and development of brochs. It is a well-preserved example with previous surveys recording internal features. Its field characteristics indicate the likely survival of considerable structural, artefactual and paleoenvironmental evidence beneath the mound. Its proximity to a locally dense group of brochs adds considerably to its significance. The loss of the monument would significantly diminish our future ability to appreciate and understand the development, use and re-use of brochs, and the nature of Iron Age society, economy and social hierarchy in the north of Scotland.

4 References

Historic Environment Scotland <http://www.canmore.org.uk> reference number CANMORE ID 8757 (accessed on 05/05/2016).

The Highland Council Historic Environment Record reference number is MHG2327 (accessed on 05/05/2016).

Armit, I (2002), *Towers in the North: The Brochs of Scotland*. The History Press. Stroud.

Banks and Beverley Ballin, I and E (Eds.) (2002), *In the Shadow of the Brochs: The Iron Age In Scotland*. Stroud, Tempus Publishing.

MacKie, E W, (2007), *The Roundhouses, Brochs and Wheelhouses of Atlantic Scotland c. 700 BC - AD 500: architecture and material culture. Part 2 The Mainland and the Western Islands*. BAR, vol 444. Oxford.

RCAHMS, (1911), *The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland. Third report and inventory of monuments and constructions in the county of Caithness*. London.