

Case information

Case ID	300009931		
File Reference	AMJ/9281/1/1		
Name of Site	Greenknowe Tower, Gordon		
Local Authority	Scottish Borders		
National Grid Reference	NT 639 428		
Designation No. (if any)	SM 90156		
Designation Type	Scheduled monument	Current Category of Listing	A
Case Type	Amendment		
Received/Start Date	01/07/2014		
Decision Date	19/11/2015		

1. Decision

Amend: Update to entry in the Schedule

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

Greenknowe Tower is a guardianship property in the care of Scottish Ministers and is scheduled under section 1 (2) of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

There have been no previous amendments to the entry in the Schedule.

Greenknowe Tower is currently also listed at Category A but is proposed for de-listing as part of the dual designations project.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals affecting the site.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The monument was assessed for amendment as part of the S17 East 2014 scheduling project and visited on 02 October 2014.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

The monument was assessed for scheduling against the criteria for determining national importance and found to meet the criteria (see **Annex A**).

The designation criteria are found in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), pp. 71-85. <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/shep-dec2011.pdf>

3.3 Other considerations

The monument is a guardianship property in the care of Scottish Ministers.

The existing scheduled area is the same as the area in guardianship. This is not satisfactory for capturing the known and potential archaeological remains of national importance.

There is a significant benefit in amending the existing scheduled monument designation. It will provide an up-to-date legal document and map and allow the monument to be accurately defined on the ground. It will also ensure that an appropriate area is designated. The boundary changes are an increase in the size of the scheduled area to the west, to include the whole platform, and a reduction in the scheduled area to the south, where the guardianship area extends to the road, taking in an area of less high archaeological potential.

Scheduling, rather than listing, is the most appropriate designation to secure the preservation of the monument. It is being delisted in tandem with the amended scheduling.

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria*

SM13590 Greenknowe Tower, Gordon

1. Description

The monument is the remains of Greenknowe Tower, an L-plan tower house surviving as a masonry structure that stands to full height. An inscription above the entrance gives the date 1581, but this probably refers to a major rebuilding of an earlier tower. Excavations have indicated the position of a walled courtyard to the E of the tower, containing at least one ancillary building. The site of a garden lies to the W. The tower stands 500m SW of Gordon on a knoll surrounded by low-lying ground, about 140m above sea level.

The tower has four storeys and an attic, crowstepped gables and corbelled angle turrets. It comprises a main block measuring 10m N-S by 7.6m transversely, with an adjoining wing at the NE angle housing the door and main stair from the ground floor to the hall on the first floor of the main block. Both the vaulted ground floor, housing the kitchen, and first floor hall contain large, fine fireplaces. From the first floor, a stair turret in the re-entrant angle leads to the upper floors, giving access to chambers both in the main block and in the wing. The tower retains features of interest such as the fine iron yett at the entrance doorway, Laird's lug (spy hole) to the left of the hall fireplace and the sundial at SW corner. Excavations have shown the base of a partition wall dividing the ground floor of the tower as well as providing evidence for the barmkin or courtyard, locating a building with cobbled floor and drains interpreted as a stable and part of the outer wall.

The scheduled area is irregular on plan, to include 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. On the N and NE sides, the scheduling extends up to but excludes a post and wire deer fence. The above ground elements of other fences that lie within the scheduled area are specifically excluded from the scheduling. The scheduling also specifically excludes modern structures such as metal safety barriers, the above ground elements of signs, and the top 30cm of the access path. The monument was previously scheduled under section 1 (2) of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, but the present amendment provides documents to modern standards.

2. Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria (SHEP 2011, 71-73**)

* This assessment is based on our current state of knowledge. It will form the basis of any new or updated scheduled monument record.

** A monument may be found to meet the scheduling criteria but in some circumstances may not be added to the Schedule. The purpose and implications of scheduling are issues that require to be taken into account when assessing monuments for scheduling. Scheduling may not be the only, or the most appropriate, mechanism to secure the future of all sites, even those that may otherwise meet the criteria.

Cultural significance

Characteristic	Assessment
Intrinsic	
Condition in which monument survives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The remains of this tower house are in excellent and stable condition, standing four storeys high (plus attic). The masonry retains details such as crow-stepped gables and corners with corbelled angle turrets. There is also high potential for buried archaeology to survive in good condition in areas within and around the tower.
Archaeological, scientific, technological or other interest or research potential of the monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenknowe Tower retains many of its original architectural features, including the fine iron yett at the entrance doorway, Laird's lug and sundial. The upstanding building can inform understanding of the construction and subsequent alteration of the tower, for example, the quoins at the NE and NW corners show a change in building stone above the level of the ground floor. Excavations have shown an internal partition and, to the E of the tower, evidence of a barmkin/courtyard. There is high potential for the presence of further buried ancillary buildings. Field surveys confirm the existence of former gardens to the W and an original approach from the N. Further investigation could enhance the understanding of the monument, its development and role in the landscape. There is also high potential for the survival of important archaeological deposits and artefacts within and around the tower which can enable us to better understand the daily domestic life of the inhabitants and can tell us about their society, economy, trading contacts and religion.
Apparent developmental sequence of monument (either long or short may provide insights of importance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is evidence for alterations and different phases of building to the tower by its successive owners. Historical references dating from the 1570s, as well as the use of different building stones, suggest that the 1581 inscription denotes re-working of an existing building and does not date the earliest structure here. Subsequently, the window sills in the first floor hall were lowered, and roof raggles and door blockings on the outside face of the N wall indicate a N extension, suggesting that 17th-century lairds tried to upgrade the accommodation. The rebuilding of the tower and subsequent alterations can add to our understanding of the fashion and function of such buildings and how this changed over time. Buried deposits can increase our knowledge about the duration and character of occupation, and about any earlier use of the site.
Original or subsequent functions of the monument and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tower served as a fortified domestic dwelling with stables and gardens. Its primary purpose was

its parts	<p>accommodation, but it also reflects the wealth and power of the local lairds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tower stands on a raised knoll surrounded by low-lying ground, suggesting that provision of security may have been a factor in its siting.
Contextual	
Present rarity or representativeness of all or any part of the monument, assessed against knowledge of the archaeology of Scotland and of the region in which the monument occurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tower as rebuilt in 1581 is a fine example of a Jacobean tower house, substantially complete and with interesting decorative features as noted above. However, it also represents a rare example of a late 16th-century tower that can be demonstrated to be a remodelling of an existing building. Defensive details of the tower include functional, turret shot-holes, typical of the period; however, the inclusion of a guardroom in the wing is more unusual.
Relationship of the monument to other monuments of the same or related classes or period, or to features or monuments in the vicinity. (Particularly important for monuments forming part of a widespread but varied class)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site can be compared with Smailholm Tower as a useful contrast, Smailholm having been built a century earlier by a laird of similar standing Carluith Castle in Dumfries and Galloway is similarly a good example of a Jacobean tower house remodelled from an earlier building. Greenknowe Tower can also be compared with a wide variety of tower houses across the Scottish Borders and can contribute significantly to studies of this widespread building type.
Relationship of the monument and its parts with its wider landscape and setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tower stands on an artificially created platform, approx. 2-3 m high, on the E side of what may have been a dry 'island' in a low lying area. Immediately to the W of the tower is the likely site for surrounding gardens. Rows of mature trees still indicate the line of an avenue approaching the tower from the N. The grounds, park and avenues would have been important aspects of the wider ensemble.
Associative	
Historical, cultural and social influences that have affected the form and fabric of the monument, and vice versa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The monument reflects later/post-medieval cultural influences i.e. a preference among those of high status for dwellings that provided security, whilst also allowing the conspicuous display of wealth and resources.
Aesthetic attributes of the monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The monument is a romantic ruin in the landscape.
Significance in the national consciousness or to people who use or have used the monument, or descendants of such people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tower houses and romantic ruins such as Greenknowe Tower have a significant place in the national consciousness and are valued by local communities today.
Associations the monument has with historical, traditional or artistic characters or events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first mention of a castle on 'the landis and lordship of Greneknowe' was in 1576. The builders of 1581 were James Seton of Touch in Stirlingshire and his wife Janet Edmonstone; Seton's ancestors had acquired the property from the Gordons of the area by marriage in the 15th century. The Pringles of Stichel, a local family, purchased the property around 1620. Around 1660, Walker Pringle, a noted Covenanter, wrote in his memoirs about the gardens and fruit trees.

Assessment of national importance

Criteria	Assessment
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Its inherent capability or potential to make a significant addition to the understanding or appreciation of the past	<p>The monument has the potential to make a significant addition to our understanding of post-medieval domestic fortified dwellings, their architecture, construction, maintenance, development and abandonment. It can also enhance understanding of the immediate surroundings of fortified domestic dwellings through the evidence of garden archaeology. The tower itself retains its structural characteristics to a marked degree, surviving to full height (four storeys plus attic) with crow-stepped gables and corners with corbelled angle turrets. The retention of features of interest such as the fine iron yett at the entrance doorway, the Laird's lug and the sundial at the SW corner is notable and there is considerable potential to study and record the upstanding fabric of the castle.</p> <p>There is also good potential for the survival of important buried archaeological remains, including traces of additional structures within and around the tower, and artefacts and palaeoenvironmental evidence that can enhance understanding of how such buildings functioned, as well as adding to our understanding of the daily domestic life of the inhabitants and their society and economy. This monument would have been a prominent part of the post-medieval landscape and remains a significant feature in the contemporary landscape. Documentary records provide information about the families who owned the tower, enhancing our understanding of its context. Our understanding of the form, character and development of post-medieval towers in Scotland would be diminished if this monument was to be lost or damaged.</p>
Its retention of the structural, decorative or field characteristics of its kind to a marked degree	
Its contribution, or the contribution of its class, to today's landscape and/or the historic landscape	
The quality and extent of any documentation or association that adds to the understanding of the monument or its context	
The diminution of the potential of a particular class or classes of monument to contribute to an understanding of the past, should the monument be lost or damaged	
Its place in the national consciousness [a factor that may be considered in support of other factors]	

References

RCAHMS records the monument as NT64SW 5.

References

MacGibbon, D and Ross, T, 1887-92 The castellated and domestic architecture of Scotland from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries, vol 3, 542-6.

RCAHMS, 1915 The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland. Sixth Report and Inventory of Monuments and Constructions in the County of Berwick, Edinburgh. 90-92, fig 85.