

Case information

Case ID	300009926		
File Reference	AMH/7906/2/1		
Name of Site	Vicarsford Cemetery, enclosure 600m SE of		
Local Authority	Fife		
National Grid Reference	NO 44367 25268		
Designation No. (if any)	SM7906		
Designation Type	Scheduled monument	Current Category of Listing	N/A
Case Type	Amendment		
Received/Start Date	10/06/2014		
Decision Date	26/11/2015		

1. Decision

Amend: Update to entry in the Schedule

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was scheduled in 1998.

No previous amendments to the scheduling have taken place.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The monument was assessed for amendment as part of the S17 East 2014 scheduling project and visited on 10 June 2014.

As the monument is visible as cropmarks on oblique aerial photography, the assessment also took into consideration aerial photography taken by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS AP56965).

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 continues to meet the scheduling criteria.

Designation as a scheduled monument remains an appropriate mechanism to secure the preservation of the monument.

Analysis of RCAHMS aerial photographic evidence indicates that the scheduled area is currently larger than necessary to include all the archaeological features of national importance.

There is a significant benefit in amending the existing scheduled monument designation. It will provide an updated legal document and map, allowing the monument to be defined accurately on the ground. It will also ensure that an appropriate area is designated.

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria*

SM 7096 Cowbakie Hill, enclosure 220m NNE of 12 Forgan Drive

1. Description

The monument is a palisaded enclosure of prehistoric date (earlier than AD 400). The remains lie buried beneath the topsoil and are visible as cropmarks captured on oblique aerial photographs. The enclosure is sub-circular in shape, defined by a ditch that encloses an area measuring about 45m SW-NE by at least 30m transversely. The enclosing ditch is clearly visible on the SW, NW and NE sides but the extent of the enclosure to the SE is not known. A possible break in the NW side may indicate an entrance. Several pits lie within the interior of the enclosure: cremated human bone was recovered from one of these during archaeological evaluation. The monument lies to the S of Cowbakie Hill on a SE-facing slope, overlooked by rising ground to the N. It stands at around 20m above sea level.

A single evaluation trench dug across the W part of the enclosure in 1990-1991 showed that the enclosure ditch is 0.7m wide and 0.3m deep, with evidence for at least two phases of ditch-cutting. It also demonstrated the presence of pits in the enclosure interior; three small pits and two wide pits were identified, all containing high proportions of charcoal and wood ash. The human bone recovered from one of the smaller pits indicates that this site may have been a prehistoric cremation cemetery, either enclosed by the palisade trench or of a different date to the enclosure.

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. The monument was first scheduled in 1998, but the documentation did not meet modern standards: the present amendment rectifies this.

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 monument comprises the buried archaeological remains of an enclosure and pits, visible as cropmarks on oblique aerial photographs. Archaeological evaluation in 1990-91 verified that complex archaeological remains survive in good condition.The larger part of the monument has not been cultivated

	since that time, indicating that the potential for survival remains high.
Archaeological, scientific, technological or other interest or research potential of the monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The monument is of high archaeological interest because it includes both an enclosure and pit features, one of which proved to contain cremated human bone when evaluated archaeologically. • Surviving deposits can be expected to include burnt human remains in small burial pits, ditch and pit fills, and potentially house foundations and occupation debris if there was settlement within the enclosure. There is high potential for artefacts and palaeoenvironmental evidence to survive, both in funerary contexts and in potential settlement remains. • These remains can tell us about chronology, daily life and economy, and death and burial. They can tell us how people lived and were treated at death, their trade and exchange contacts and their social status. • This potential is amply demonstrated by evaluations and excavations conducted in the vicinity of Cowbakie Hill during the 1990s (eg Driscoll 1991; Halliday and Simpson 1997).
Apparent developmental sequence of monument (either long or short may provide insights of importance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A complex development sequence is likely and evaluation has revealed evidence for two phases of ditch cutting. If the interpretation of a cremation cemetery is correct, this is likely to be Bronze Age in date and there is potential to determine if it was originally enclosed, or if an unenclosed cemetery site was subsequently re-used for an agricultural or settlement enclosure.
Original or subsequent functions of the monument and its parts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both ritual/funerary and domestic settlement functions are likely to be represented.
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"> • This monument is unusual in its regional context in combining a relatively large enclosure, pits and evidence for human burial.
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"> • This monument can be compared with the evidence from a Bronze Age cremation cemetery excavated 3.25km to the WSW at North Straiton (Stronach <i>et al</i> 2006). • More widely, the monument lies within a concentration of evidence for prehistoric settlement around Cowbakie Hill (eg Driscoll 1991; Halliday and Simpson 1997). • The cluster of prehistoric sites here has rich potential to support study of the changing character of prehistoric funerary activity and settlement over time.
Relationship of the monument and its parts with its wider landscape and setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The monument lies on a SE-facing slope and is overlooked by higher ground immediately to the N.
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 form of enclosures probably reflects cultural and social influences, as well as practical concerns.

Aesthetic attributes of the monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
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"> N/A
Associations the monument has with historical, traditional or artistic characters or events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

Assessment of national importance

Criteria	Assessment
Its inherent capability or potential to make a significant addition to the understanding or appreciation of the past	<p>The monument is of national importance because of its potential to make a significant addition to knowledge and understanding of prehistoric enclosures in eastern Scotland. The survival of a ditched enclosure with clear evidence for internal features is rare in its regional context. The monument is particularly unusual because there is potential for a development sequence encompassing prehistoric burial and settlement/agricultural activity. The cropmarks, complemented by trial excavation, demonstrate that the enclosure has high potential for complex archaeological remains, including cremation burials. Extensive archaeological fieldwork has revealed details of extensive prehistoric settlement in the immediate vicinity, with the evidence preserved in archaeological reports and archives. The importance of the monument is greatly enhanced by its association with the wider landscape of prehistoric settlement in this part of NE Fife, an important concentration of evidence for social and economic change in eastern Scotland between around 2000 BC and AD 1000. Our understanding of the distribution and character of prehistoric enclosures and funerary sites 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 NO42NW 77.

RCAHMS Aerial Photograph 56965

Archaeology Projects Glasgow, undat, 'Drumoig archaeological assessment statement', unpubl client rep, **25**.

Driscoll, S T, 1991 'Cowbaki Hill and Craigie Hill (Leuchars parish): cropmark sites of domestic and funerary character', *Discovery Excav Scot*, 21-2

Halliday, S and Simpson, B, 1997 'Drumoig, Craigie Hill, Fife; Data structure report. Part Three: Forgan housing area and access road', GUARD unpubl rep **25.4**.

Stronach, S, Sheridan, A, and Henderson, D, 2006 'A Bronze Age cremation cemetery at North Straiton, Fife', *Tayside Fife Archaeol Jour* **12**, 1-13
