

Case information

Case ID	300017026		
File Reference	AMJ/9283/1/1		
Name of Site	Smailholm Tower		
Local Authority	Scottish Borders		
National Grid Reference	NT 63786 34668		
Designation No. (if any)	SM13614		
Designation Type	Scheduled Monument	Current Category of Listing	Delisted on 14/12/2015
Case Type	Amendment		
Received/Start Date	24/09/2014		
Decision Date	29/01/2016		

1. Decision

The decision is to amend and update the entry in the Schedule.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

Smailholm Tower is a 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.

Smailholm Tower is currently also listed at Category A, but scheduling is considered the most appropriate designation to secure the preservation of the monument. The tower is proposed for de-listing as part of the dual designations project.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

Smailholm Tower was assessed for amendment as part of the S17 East scheduling project in autumn 2014.

It was visited on 24 September 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 published in 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 current documentation is not adequate to support definition of the extent of the scheduled area. The existing scheduled area is not large enough to include all the known and potential archaeological remains.

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 adequate area is designated to include nationally important building remains and enclosures which lie outside the area in guardianship.

Smailholm tower was dual designated as a scheduled monument and an A-listed building. It is being delisted in tandem with the amended scheduling.

Elizabeth McCrone

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria*

SM13614 Smailholm Tower, tower, buildings and enclosures

1. Description

The monument comprises Smailholm Tower, built between the mid 15th and early 16th century, together with the remains of associated buildings and enclosures around the tower. The tower-house itself is a roofed building standing five storeys high. It occupies a highly prominent position on a rocky outcrop 2km SW of Smailholm village and 400m W of Sandyknowe Farm. The site stands a relatively modest 195m above sea level, but offers very long views in several directions.

The tower-house is a relatively plain, rectangular tower, entered by a door at ground level on the S elevation. The tower-house measures 12m ENE-WSW by 9.5m transversely, with walls a little over 2m thick. It stands about 20m high and offers five storeys of accommodation. The lowest two floors comprised a ground floor cellar and loft beneath a stone barrel vault. A small hatch communicates with the third storey, the laird's main room, with a good sized fireplace and three windows. The fourth storey is similar, though slightly smaller, and probably represents a private chamber. The top storey has been significantly altered, obscuring its original function. A narrow spiral stair in the SE corner of the building links the floors.

The elevated platform around the tower was almost completely surrounded by a wall, forming an enclosed courtyard or 'barmkin'. Parts of the W barmkin wall and entrance gate are visible as upstanding features. Excavations in 1980-81 located the foundations of N and S building ranges in the barmkin W of the tower. The first phase of the barmkin N range has been interpreted as a hall block and chamber, with a service block to the S. The remains of a 17th-century fireplace from a later house that replaced the hall are still visible above ground. Outside the barmkin, the remains of associated buildings are represented by low earthworks or stone footings, some with attached yards. Earthworks of a split-level building tentatively identified as a stable lie 15m SW of the barmkin gate, terraced into the slope. A building complex comprising a stone-founded house and yard lies some 30m NW of this, while another house and yard lie 100m to the E. These may be houses of the laird's 'cottagers'. Several other banks lie below the tower to the NW and may suggest cattle enclosures. There are also numerous drainage gullies, lades and cultivation remains.

The scheduled area is irregular on plan, to include the remains described above and an area around them in which evidence for the monument's construction, use and abandonment is expected to survive, as shown in red on the accompanying map. On the N, W and S sides, the scheduling extends up to but excludes post-and-wire fences. On the E side it follows the edge of the pond, then extends N to the SE corner of the car park. The scheduling specifically excludes the above-ground elements of all modern structures, fittings and fixtures within and around the tower. The monument is scheduled under section 1 (2) of the Ancient Monuments and

Archaeological Areas Act 1979; 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 tower-house survives as a roofed building in excellent condition. The barmkin area has seen considerable archaeological excavation, but structural remains of wall foundations appear to remain in situ. Beyond, earthworks and low stone footings represent houses and enclosures. Buried archaeological remains in good condition can be expected here.
Archaeological, scientific, technological or other interest or research potential of the monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tower-house is substantially complete and retains many of its original architectural features, giving significant potential to appreciate and research the residence of an important Borders laird. The round-headed entrance doorway retains its iron yet, and an inverted keyhole gunloop above forms part of the evidence for a 15th-century date for the tower. The first floor hall fireplace has two decorative 'stops', one of which may be interpreted as a heart, the armorial device of the Black Douglases. The top storey has a blocked oval-mouthed gunhole, suggesting the reconstruction here post-dates 1520. The monument has the potential to inform our knowledge of the construction of the building and subsequent alterations, and to add to our understanding of the fashion and function of such buildings and how this changed over time. There is also high potential for the survival of important archaeological deposits and artefacts, predominantly outwith the barmkin, which can enable us to better understand the daily domestic life of the inhabitants of this estate centre and can tell us about their society, economy, trading contacts, horticulture and agriculture.
Apparent developmental sequence of monument (either long or short may provide insights of importance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence has been recovered to date for use of the site before erection of the tower, potentially as early as the mid-15th century. However, there is then a clear development sequence, that illustrates how lairds might alter and sustain a late medieval tower in the face of evolving events and fashions. This includes re-working of the top floor of the tower, potentially in response to the turbulent events of the 16th century, and then the erection of a new house alongside the tower to the W in the 17th century.
Original or subsequent functions of the monument and its parts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tower served as a fortified domestic dwelling. Its primary purpose was to provide secure accommodation for the laird and his family, but it also reflects his wealth and power. Excavation and field survey suggests that there was a hall block in the barmkin that may have provided more public space for the laird to use in running his estate, and that houses and enclosures of the laird's cottagers lay outside of the barmkin.

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"> • Tower-houses are relatively common in the Scottish Borders, but Smailholm Tower has several features that make it a rare and significant survival: (1) It survives to a high degree of completeness, giving strong potential to appreciate and research the building type; (2) Excavation of the barmkin allows the key relationship between the tower and outer hall to be appreciated, and provides information on diet and material culture to augment the structural remains; (3) The long development sequence, including alterations to both tower and barmkin, can support research into how lairds adapted their accommodation over time; (4) There is rare evidence for houses and yards around the tower that may relate to contemporary accommodation for the estate's tenants, allowing a fuller understanding of how the site functioned as an estate centre; and (5) the tower appears earlier than the more common 16th century examples.
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"> • There is potential to compare this tower, potentially of the 15th century, with later examples such as Greenknowe Tower, and to understand advances made in tower-house design over the 16th century. • Smailholm Tower can be compared with other towers to gain insights into the context of its construction. Researchers have suggested a marked similarity with the tower-house of the Earls of Douglas at Newark Castle, on the Yarrow Water 14 miles to the W. • Features such as the inverted keyhole gunloop can be paralleled elsewhere, for example at Threave Castle, Kirkcudbrightshire
Relationship of the monument and its parts with its wider landscape and setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smailholm Tower's elevated position gives long views in several directions, and conversely means the monument can be seen from across a wide area. To the W, there is a view to the Eildon Hills which rise above Melrose, the burial place of the Pringle lairds. Looking E, there is a long view to Wark Castle, the origin of at least two historically attested raids on Smailholm in 1544 and 1546.
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. • Conversely, the form and setting of the monument affected Walter Scott, introducing him to Scottish history, poetry and literature and arguably influencing many of his works and his own shaping of Scottish culture.
Aesthetic attributes of the monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The monument is a romantic focal point in the landscape, and has been described as one of the most evocative sights in the Border country.
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"> • Castles in romantic settings have a significant place in the national consciousness and are valued by visitors and local communities alike. The association of Scott with Smailholm is widely known and appreciated.

Associations the monument has with historical, traditional or artistic characters or events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tower-house was built either by the Black Douglases, or by the Pringles, their squires and successors as lairds of Smailholm. An attack on Smailholm from Wark Castle was the first recorded raid of the 'War of the Rough Wooing' in 1544. • The Scotts bought the property in 1645. In 1773, the young Walter Scott, then a 'wee sick laddie' was brought to his relatives' adjacent farm at Sandyknowe. He later wrote 'and still I thought that shatter'd tower the mightiest work of human power'.
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Assessment of national importance

Criteria	Assessment
Its inherent capability or potential to make a significant addition to the understanding or appreciation of the past	The monument has significant potential to contribute to our understanding and appreciation of late medieval and post-medieval domestic fortified dwellings, their architecture, construction, maintenance, development and abandonment. The monument retains its structural characteristics to a marked degree and is an excellent example of a fortified dwelling of a locally important landowner. There is considerable potential to appreciate and study both the upstanding fabric of the tower and the archaeological remains in the wider area. The monument would have been a prominent part of the Border country when occupied, and remains an evocative and striking focal point in the Scottish Borders landscape. Documentary records enhance the interest and potential of the monument, providing information about the families who owned the tower, and even documenting individual raids; the recorded losses of large numbers of cattle and horses suggest that the livestock of the locality could not have been protected within the relatively small barmkin and were more probably held in enclosures below the tower. Our understanding of the form and character of post-medieval towers in E Scotland would be much diminished if this monument was to be lost or damaged; for example, Smailholm provides a rare opportunity to compare a tower-house with surrounding houses and yards, potentially of the laird's cottagers. Castles such as this have a significant place in the national consciousness, and Smailholm's influence on Walter Scott is widely appreciated.
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 NT63SW 2. The record includes a full bibliography.

Good, G L and Tabraham, C J, 1989 'Excavations at Smailholm Tower, Roxburghshire', *Proc Scot Antiq Soc* **118**, 231-66.
