Case information

Case ID	300009800
File Reference	AMH/2584/2/1
Name of Site	Balcastle, motte 260m SSW of

Local Authority	North Lanarkshire		
National Grid Reference	NS 7011 7818		
Designation No. (if any)	SM2584		
Designation Type	Scheduled Monument	**Current Category of Listing**	N/A
Case Type	Amendment		

Received/Start Date	12/05/2014
Decision Date	27/04/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1967 and the documentation does not conform to current standards. The assessment against criteria demonstrates that the monument continues to be of national importance. The decision is to amend the entry in the Schedule as **Balcastle Farm, motte 250m SSW of**.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

Monument first scheduled in 1967; no subsequent amendment.

2.2 Development Proposals

N/A

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The site was visited on 12/05/2014.

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

3.3 Other considerations

N/A

Elizabeth McCrone
Head of Designations
Heritage Management
Historic Environment Scotland

Contact	Dr James Bruhn, Senior Designations Officer, 0131-668 0316, james.bruhn@hes.scot

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria*
Balcastle Farm, motte 250m SSW of

1. Description

The monument is a motte, the earthwork mound of a castle likely to date from the 12th or 13th centuries AD. It is visible as a substantial mound with a ditch and bank to the north. The monument is located at the foot of the Kilsyth Hills at about 95m above sea level and has extensive views along the Kelvin Valley.

The motte is situated at the confluence of two streams and was constructed by enhancing a natural knoll. The mound rises approximately 3.5m above the ground level of the field and about 12m above the banks of the surrounding stream. Three courses of a stone revetment is intermittently visible under the turf near the base of the motte along the northern arc. The mound has a flat oval summit which measures about 35m northwest-southeast by 26m transversely. There is a later track ascending the northeast flank of the mound. The ditch measures 5m in width and survives to a depth of 0.20m and the bank to a width of 1.5m and to a height of 0.20m high.

The scheduled area is irregular on plan and bounded by the streams to the east, west and south. The scheduled area 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 the post and wire fence. The monument was last scheduled in 1967 but the documentation does not meet current standards; the present scheduling 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	• The monument is a motte. The earthwork and the archaeological features and deposits within it are the surviving elements of a medieval castle probably constructed mostly in timber and

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	situated on altered natural knoll. Such castles were built in Scotland in the 12th and 13th centuries although some continued in use into the 14th and 15th centuries. • The monument is visible as a large grass-covered mound with the remains of a ditch and bank on its northern arc. The monument appears to be in relatively good condition although the evidence of the bank is slight. Apart from the later track, there is no obvious evidence of disturbance or previous excavation. • There is high potential for the survival of important archaeological remains that can enhance our understanding of the date, construction, function and development of the site.
Archaeological, scientific, technological or other interest or research potential of the monument	• It is likely that the remains of internal structures will survive as buried archaeological features, along with perimeter defences around the edge of the motte. This potential can be demonstrated by the results of excavations at other mottes such as Auldhill, North Ayrshire (SM 2175), Barton Hill, Perthshire and Kier Knowe of Drum, Stirling (SM 1733). • The surrounding ditch and bank has the potential to provide information about the construction of the outer defences, while the fill of the ditch can be expected to preserve archaeological deposits including artefacts and ecofacts. • The exploitation of natural topography is of particular interest in this case. A natural knoll was altered to create the mound on with the castle was constructed. The mound was a naturally strong defensive position located in the confluence of a number of streams. These natural defences were accentuated to the north by a ditch and bank. The natural strength of the location would have influenced the decision to build a castle here.
Apparent developmental sequence of monument (either long or short may provide insights of importance)	• It is possible that the motte could contain evidence for more than one construction phases. At Auldhill, excavation revealed evidence for a series of hall houses on the summit of the motte dating from the 13th and 14th century.
Original or subsequent functions of the monument and its parts	• The role of these fortified settlements was symbolic as well as functional, marking and protecting the lands of emerging lordships, and

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	the routeways through those lands.
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	• There are around 300 fortified earthworks in Scotland dating probably from the 12th or 13th centuries. Many timber castles were associated with the establishment of Anglo-Norman lordships during and after the reign of King David I. • Such castles played a role in the consolidation of Royal power and the development of centralised authority. The remains of such castles provided us with evidence of how this elite population lived and how they used castles to establish their authority. They represent the introduction of a European model of land tenure and feudal obligations.
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)	• The monument is one of a number of surviving mottes situated on the along the Kelvin Valley. Maiden Castle, motte (SM 1750) is situated on the lower slopes of the Campsie Fells about 5.8km to the west and Castlehill (SM 2572) near the valley floor about 3.5m to the east.
Relationship of the monument and its parts with its wider landscape and setting	• The monument is situated at the foot of the Kilsyth Hills at about 95m above sea level and has uninterrupted views along the valley of the River Kelvin. This would have played a significant factor in locating the motte at this position.
Associative	
Historical, cultural and social influences that have affected the form and fabric of the monument, and vice versa	• N/A
Aesthetic attributes of the monument	• N/A
Significance in the national consciousness or to people who use or have used the monument, or descendants of such people	• N/A
Associations the monument has with historical, traditional or artistic characters or	• N/A

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events	

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 is of national importance because it has an inherent potential to make a significant addition to the understanding of the past, in particular the dating, construction and function of medieval castles. The monument retains its field characteristics and is a well-preserved example of its class, with little sign of disturbance other than a later track. Comparison with other excavated examples suggests that we can expect evidence for internal buildings and perimeter defences to survive. The monument's significance is enhanced as it is located in relatively close proximity to other mottes along the Kelvin Valley. This can enhance our knowledge of the distribution and chronology of medieval fortified earthworks in this area. The loss of this motte would significantly diminish our future ability to appreciate and understand medieval castles, settlement and land tenure, in medieval Scotland.
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

Historic Environment Scotland http://www.canmore.org.uk reference number CANMORE ID 45883 (accessed on 26/04/2016).

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