Case information

Case ID	300016739
File Reference	AMH/3846/2/1
Name of Site	Whiteleys, chambered cairn 300m SSW of

Local Authority	Highland Council		
National Grid Reference	NH 530 565		
Designation No. (if any)	SM3846		
Designation Type	Scheduled monument	**Current Category of Listing**	N/A
Case Type	Amendment		

Received/Start Date	05/05/2015
Decision Date	06/05/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1976 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 update the entry in the Schedule as **Whiteleys, chambered cairn 300m SW of Craig Ruadh**.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was scheduled in 1976 and no previous amendments to the scheduling have taken place. The existing 1976 legal documents are not adequate to support definition of the extent of the scheduled area or capture the full potential of the monument.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

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3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The monument was assessed for amendment as part of the S18 Highland scheduling project and visited on 05 May 2015.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

An assessment against the Scheduling was carried out (see **Annex A)** and the monument was found to continue 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

Designation as a scheduled monument remains an appropriate mechanism to secure the preservation of the monument. Amending the existing scheduled monument designation will provide an updated legal document and map, allowing the monument to be defined accurately on the ground and shown on modern mapping. It will also ensure that an adequate area is designated.

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria*

SM 3846 Whiteleys, chambered cairn 300m SW of Craig Ruadh

1. Description

The monument is the remains of a Neolithic chambered cairn probably built between 3800 and 2500 BC. It is visible as a group of large stones, around seven of which define a polygonal chamber. The cairn lies 90m above sea level, near the top of an east facing slope that overlooks the head of the Cromarty Firth.

The monument is an Orkney-Cromarty type chambered cairn. Seven stones define a polygonal chamber but there are other large slabs in the vicinity. One of these recumbent stones, immediately to the northwest of the chamber, has possible cup marks. A low, grass-covered subcircular mound about 25m in diameter and 1m in height appears to represent the remains of the cairn surrounding the chamber.

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 scheduling specifically excludes the above ground elements of post and wire fences and a gate. The monument was first scheduled in 1976, but the documentation does not meet current standards: the present amendment rectifies this.

2. Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria (SHEP, 2011) pp71-73**

* 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 has been denuded of much of its cairn material, exposing the key structural features of the chamber. The large, exposed stones of the chamber form a significant upstanding monument. • Although the monument has lost much of its cairn

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	material, the remains of the cairn is still visible. • The monument is in a relatively stable condition at present, located within a small clearing of conifers.
Archaeological, scientific, technological or other interest or research potential of the monument	• The stones that define the chamber are exposed, but there is good potential for the survival of further archaeological deposits, including human burials, artefacts and environmental remains such as charcoal or pollen, within, beneath and around the upstanding structure of the cairn. • Excavations of chambered cairns elsewhere show continuing potential for undisturbed deposits, evidence of earlier structures, and artefacts and ecofacts such as pottery, flints and human and animal bone (Davidson and Henshall 1989). • This cairn has potential to add to our understanding of ritual and funerary practices during the Neolithic period, and to provide information about contemporary agriculture, economy and environment. • One of the large recumbent stones may have cup marks on it.
Apparent developmental sequence of monument (either long or short may provide insights of importance)	• Few radiocarbon dates have been obtained for Orkney-Cromarty chambered cairns because many of them were excavated before the advent of modern scientific techniques. From the dates available, and on the basis of typological study of the pottery found at such sites, it appears that chambered cairns were constructed and in use between around 3800 and 2500 BC. • There is no clear indication of whether this cairn derives from an extended development sequence. However, it is likely that this tomb was in use through several or many generations. • Scientific study of the tomb's form and construction techniques compared with other tombs would enhance our understanding of the development sequence of this site and of chambered cairns in general.
Original or subsequent functions of the monument and its parts	• The monument was a place of burial and ritual during the Neolithic. • It is likely to have had a prominent place within a group's territory and to have been a focal point in the landscape.
Contextual	
Present rarity or representativeness of all	• Orkney-Cromarty cairns are found only in north and west Scotland, with the greatest concentration in

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or any part of the monument, assessed against knowledge of the archaeology of Scotland and of the region in which the monument occurs	Orkney. Their design is particularly interesting because the shape and form, with subdivisions formed by upright slabs, is comparable with contemporary house forms eg Knap of Howar, Orkney. It is likely that this was deliberate, with the tombs representing 'houses for the dead'. • Whiteleys is a significant example, with many large stones apparently in situ, surrounded by a low mound which, though denuded, remains a significant upstanding feature.
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)	• Whiteleys is one of a group of Neolithic burial monuments lying relatively close to the coast between Brora and Beauly. The proximity of these monuments can give important insights into the Neolithic landscape and add to our understanding of social organisation, land division and land-use. • There is high potential to carry out spatial and landscape analysis of this cairn in comparison others nearby, and other prehistoric monuments in the vicinity, enhancing our understanding of the placing of such sites in the landscape and the organisation, division and use of land in the Neolithic.
Relationship of the monument and its parts with its wider landscape and setting	• Chambered cairns are often placed in conspicuous locations within the landscape, at the edge of arable land and overlooking or inter-visible with other ritual monuments. This cairn is located on higher ground overlooking the head of the Cromarty Firth.
Associative	
Historical, cultural and social influences that have affected the form and fabric of the monument, and vice versa	• The form of the monument is influenced by attitudes to burial and commemoration of the dead in the Neolithic, but may also reflect the influence of Neolithic social structure.
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 events	• N/A

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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 potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of the past, in particular the design and construction of prehistoric burial monuments. It continues to be visible as an upstanding field monument, and unlike some other cairns in the area the mound around the chamber remains an upstanding feature. Chambered cairns are often our main source of evidence for the Neolithic in Scotland, and can enhance our understanding of Neolithic society and economy, and as well as the nature of burial practices and belief systems. This chambered cairn is one of an important group of well-preserved Neolithic burial monuments close to the coast between Beauly and Brora. They are important surviving components of what would have been a wider prehistoric landscape of settlement, agriculture and ritual. The loss of the monument would diminish our ability to appreciate and understand the meaning and importance of death and burial in prehistoric times and the placing of cairns within the landscape.
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 12822 (accessed on 05/05/2016).

The Highland Council Historic Environment Record reference is MHG9029.

Davidson, J L and Henshall, A S 1989, The chambered cairns of Orkney: an inventory of the structures and their contents, Edinburgh.

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