



Case information

Case ID	300017291
File Reference	AMH/5450/2/1
Name of Site	Dunoon Castle

Local Authority	Argyll and Bute
National Grid Reference	NS 17500 76300
Designation No. (if any)	SM5450
Case Type	Amendment

Received/Start Date	27/10/2015
Decision Date	14/06/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1992 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 **Dunoon Castle**.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1992: no subsequent amendments.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals affecting the revised scheduled area. There is an adjacent building (the Gate Lodge) that is the subject to redevelopment discussions. This building was previously within the scheduled area but this amendment will remove it from the designation as it does not form part of a monument of national importance.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The site was considered for amendment as part of the dual designation project and visited on 27/10/2015.

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 published in the Historic Environment Scotland policy statement June 2016, Annex 1, pp. 48-50.

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance/historic-environment-scotland-policy-statement/>

3.3 Other considerations

N/A

Elizabeth McCrone

Head of Designations

Heritage Management

Historic Environment Scotland

Contact	Dr Kirsty Millican, Designations Officer kirsty.millican@hes.scot, 0131 668 5103
----------------	---

ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria

Dunoon Castle

1 Description

The monument is the remains of castle constructed by the 13th century and in use until the 17th century. During the 14th century it served as a Royal castle. It was re-used for military purposes during the First and Second World Wars. It survives as fragmentary masonry remains on the summit of a rocky mound around 27m in height with the remains of a ditch visible on the northwest side. The monument is located on the seaward end of a low peninsula, overlooking the Firth of Clyde.

The visible remains of the castle are fragmentary and comprise the remains of a curtain-wall enclosing a roughly oblong area on the summit of the mound, measuring about 26m northwest to southeast by 18m. An entrance-gateway of consolidated masonry, oriented east-west and measuring about 1.7m in width, lies close to the southwest of the enclosure. The outer wall of this passageway is 8.8m long, 1.6m thick and 2.2m high, while the inner wall is four metres high and 1.3m wide. The summit of the mound incorporates the brick and concrete foundations of First and Second World War military structures. The mound on which the castle stands is natural but has been scarped in places to improve its defensive capabilities. There is evidence of masonry tumble on the steep south, while the remains of a ditch is visible to the northwest.

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 extends up to but excludes the retaining wall to the east, south and southwest. The scheduling specifically excludes the above-ground elements of all modern structures, fittings and fixtures within and around the monument, such as handrails, pathways and steps. The monument was first scheduled in 1992 but the documentation does not meet current standards: the present amendment rectifies this.

2 Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria (Historic Environment Scotland policy statement June 2016, Annex 1, pp. 48-50.)

2.1 Intrinsic Characteristics

The monument is a castle occupied throughout the medieval period. In its original form it may have consisted of a simple masonry enclosure built on a natural mound altered to improve its defensive nature. It survives as a substantial altered mound, ramparts and ditches and the fragmentary remains of masonry structures. Although

the remains of the stone castle are fragmentary, the mound survives in good condition and there is potential for the survival of archaeological deposits, artefacts and ecofacts within, beneath and around the upstanding structures and within the ditch. The buried archaeological deposits have the potential to provide information about the date and character of the site and the function of buildings, while any artefacts and ecofacts would enhance understanding of the economy, diet and social status of the occupants, as well as provide information about landuse and environment. Scientific study of the construction and character of the surviving structures has the potential to inform us of their character and function and add to our knowledge of castle architecture.

The castle was first recorded in the second quarter of the 13th century, but as there is no record of its date of construction, it may have had an earlier origin. The placename Dunoon suggests late Iron Age or Early Historic origins for the site. It was a royal residence in the 14th century, when it is recorded as consisting of three round towers set around a triangular courtyard, though nothing upstanding of this survives. The castle was abandoned in the 17th century and was re-used for military purposes during the First and Second World Wars. The monument therefore had an extended development sequence, appears to have been remodeled on at least one occasion and was re-used as part of the Clyde defences during the 20th century. Scientific study of the monument would allow us to develop a better understanding of the chronology of the site, including its date of origin, the nature of any early structures, later rebuilding and 20th century use of the site. The summit of the site has the potential to contain traces of features related to the occupation of the site and these too have the potential to inform our knowledge of the daily lives of the occupants of this site over several centuries.

2.2 Contextual Characteristics

The remains of the castle suggests it was an example of an early simple stone curtain wall castle, of which there are a number of examples on the western seaboard of Scotland, although it is possible that its first phase was as an earth and timber castle. As with other examples such as Dunstaffnage Castle (scheduled monument reference number SM90120, Canmore ID 23036) and Rothesay Castle (scheduled monument reference number SM12970, Canmore ID 40395), Dunoon Castle appears too developed into a more complex castle with a number of towers. This monument therefore has the potential to broaden our understanding of the nature and chronology of castle building in Argyll and how such castles developed over a number of centuries. Masonry castles are a widespread class of monument and the example at Dunoon is of particular significance because of its potentially early foundation, extended development sequence and function as a medieval royal residence and administrative centre. As the only castle in the region to serve as a royal administrative centre during the later medieval period, it is of particular importance and can enhance understanding of the way in which castles were used by the Scottish crown during the later medieval period to extend its control into the more peripheral parts of the kingdom.

There is potential to study this monument in the context of other important and early masonry castles in the region, such as Castle Sween (scheduled monument

www.historicenvironment.scot

Historic Environment Scotland, Longmore House,
Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH

Historic Environment Scotland
Scottish Charity **No. SC045925**
VAT Number: **GB 221 8680 15**

reference number SM90068, Canmore ID 39028), Lochranza Castle (scheduled monument reference number SM90206, Canmore ID 39807), Dunstaffnage Castle and Rothesay Castle This monument has considerable potential to enhance our understanding of the nature of medieval lordship and crown control, landownership and the organisation of territories in this area. It has the potential to broaden our understanding of the nature and chronology of medieval castles and their place within the landscape of the west of Scotland. As it was re-used as searchlight emplacements, part of the Clyde defences, during the First and Second World Wars, the monument also has the potential to enhance our understanding of both the Clyde defences and the wider defences around Scotland.

The castle stands in a commanding position at the seaward, southeast, end of a low promontory, overlooking the narrowest part of the Firth of Clyde. From the summit, there are clear views to the east and south. The monument is therefore positioned in a strategic location, enabling control over the Firth of Clyde. This is particularly significant considering the importance of seaways throughout the medieval period, and resulted in its reuse for military purposes during the First and Second World Wars. The position of the monument in the landscape can enhance our understanding of the status of the site, communications and relationships with other territories, and the nature of land ownership and control during the medieval period.

2.3 Associative Characteristics

The castle was first recorded in the 13th century when John ‘constabularius de Dunnon’ witnessed a charter in association with Walter Stewart. However, the placename *Dùn Obhainn* (fort of the river, although the river element is debated) suggests earlier origins for a fortification on this site. It played a role in the Second War of Independence when it was surrendered to Edward Balliol in 1334, but recaptured for David II in the same year by Sir Colin Campbell and Robert Stewart. From 1446 annual payments were allowed from the royal exchequer for ‘custody of the tower’ to successive constables, and in 1473 the Earl of Argyll received a royal charter granting hereditary custody of the castle. The castle was unsuccessfully targeted by an English fleet led by the Earl of Lennox in 1544, an attack in which the town was burnt. In 1563 Queen Mary spend two nights at Dunoon after her visit to Inveraray, and in 1550 the keepership of the castle was granted to Colin Campbell of Ardkinglas.

3 Purpose and implications of scheduling

The field investigation concluded the site is in a stable condition and well preserved. It has few management issues apart from tree and vegetation growth on the south side of the monument. Designation as a scheduled monument is therefore the most appropriate mechanism to secure the preservation of the monument, and ensure the recognition of its national importance.

4 Assessment of national importance

The monument is of national importance because it has an inherent potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of the past, in particular of late medieval society in the west of Scotland and the date, construction, use and development of medieval castles, as well as the 20th century re-use of such a prominent location. As an example of an early stone built castle, probably on a site used in the Iron Age or Early Historic period, this monument represents an important component of the wider medieval landscape. It would have been a highly prominent part of the contemporary landscape during its occupation and remains a significant feature of the town of Dunoon. Its importance is enhanced by its documented role in the Second War of Independence and its use as a late medieval royal residence and administrative centre. Its re-use for military structures associated with the First and Second World War Clyde defences adds to its significance. The loss or damage of the monument would diminish our ability to appreciate and understand the character and development of medieval fortifications, the nature of crown control and the structure and organisation of society and economy during this period.

5 References

Historic Environment Scotland <http://www.canmore.org.uk> reference number CANMORE ID 40729 (accessed on 16/02/2016).

The West of Scotland Archaeology Service Historic Environment Record reference is 5307.

Armitage, E S. (1912) *The early Norman castles of the British Isles*. London.

Dorman and Guy, J and J. (2010) *The coast artillery defences of the Firth of Clyde*.

Inglis, W. (1895) *Guide to Dunoon and places of interest*.

NSA. (1834-1845) *The new statistical account of Scotland by the ministers of the respective parishes under the superintendence of a committee of the society for the benefit of the sons and daughters of the clergy, 15v*. Edinburgh.

Neilson, G. (1898) Notes in Norman Scotland, *Scot Rev*, vol. 32, 232.

RCAHMS. (1992) *Argyll: An inventory of the monuments. Volume 7. Mid-Argyll and Cowal: Medieval and later monuments*. Edinburgh.