Case information

Case ID	300016729
File Reference	AMH/501/2/1
Name of Site	Ulbster school standing stone, Ulbster.

Local Authority	The Highland Council		
National Grid Reference	ND 324 416		
Designation No. (if any)	SM501		
Designation Type	Scheduled Monument	**Current Category of Listing**	N/A
Case Type	Amendment		

Received/Start Date	28/04/2015
Decision Date	16/08/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1939 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 **Langstane, standing stone 40m S of**.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1939. There have been no previous amendments prior to this review.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals affecting this assessment.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The site was considered for amendment as part of North 2015 project and was visited on 28 April 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

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria*

Langstane, standing stone 40m S of

1. Description

The monument is a standing stone, a ritual or ceremonial monument, dating probably to the late Neolithic or Bronze Age (the late third or second millennium BC). Formed of Caithness flagstone, the lichen-covered stone stands approximately 2m high, 0.9m wide and 0.4m thick. It is of a relatively uniform shape with its top face sloping westwards. The monument is located immediately to the west of the playground wall of the former Ulbster School.

The scheduled area is a clipped circle on plan, measuring 10m in diameter, to include the remains described above and an area around them within which evidence relating to the monument's use and re-use is expected to survive, as shown in red on the accompanying map. The scheduled area extends up to but does not include the stone wall to the immediate east. The scheduling also excludes the above ground elements of all modern boundary features. The monument was first scheduled in 1939, but the documentation did 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 substantial, single, slab-sided, earthfast monolith. There is no evidence that it has been relocated and as such, there is potential for buried deposits to survive intact beneath the stone. In some excavated examples, such as at Carlinwell, Angus (scheduled monument reference SM4315, Canmore ID 32362) inhumations or cremation burials have been found placed around standing stones and this includes skeletal material as well as urns and grave goods. Despite the natural, vertical bedding of the rock and the substantial covering of lichen, the monument appears largely intact. Investigation using the latest techniques can help us to understand whether it had a ceremonial function as part of ritual or religious events.

2.2 Contextual Characteristics

Standing stones are a widespread class of monument across Scotland with notable concentrations in the Western and Northern Isles, Caithness, Aberdeenshire, Perthshire and Dumfries and Galloway. This standing stone is one of a local cluster of approximately 50 standing stones in Caithness. It is located close to the eastern Caithness coastline, to the south of a dense area of broadly contemporary

prehistoric monuments surrounding the Loch of Yarrows. The position of standing stones appears to have been deliberately chosen to take advantage of routeways, views and intervisibility with other monuments. There is potential to study this monument and its relationship to other such monuments in the landscape.

2.3 Associative Characteristics

Standing stones such as this often became important landscape markers later in history. They are known to be reused as waypoints, meeting places and rubbing stones. Sometimes such as here they are incorporated into stone dykes, fences and gate posts.

3 Purpose and implications of scheduling

Designation as a scheduled monument remains the most appropriate mechanism to secure the preservation of the monument, and ensure the recognition of its national importance.

4 Assessment of national importance

This monument is of national importance because it is a well-preserved and impressive example of a single prehistoric standing stone, a type of ceremonial monument dating to the Neolithic or Bronze Age. It is part of a wider landscape of broadly contemporary ceremonial and related monuments in Caithness. Overall, the monument can enhance our understanding of social and ceremonial activities in prehistoric times, and the beliefs of the people that built and used these sites.

References

Historic Environment Scotland http://www.canmore.org.uk reference number CANMORE ID 9024 (accessed on 05/05/2016).

Mercer, R J, 1985. Archaeological field survey in northern Scotland: volume III: 1982-3, University of Edinburgh, Department of Archaeology, Occasional Paper No. 11. Edinburgh.

RCAHMS, 1911. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland. Third report and inventory of monuments and constructions in the county of Caithness. London.