Case information

Case ID	300009817
File Reference	AMH/3898/2/1
Name of Site	Orbiston castle, Bothwell

Local Authority	North Lanarkshire		
National Grid Reference	NS 73253 57995		
Designation No. (if any)	SM3898		
Designation Type	Scheduled Monument.	**Current Category of Listing**	N/A
Case Type	Amendment		

Received/Start Date	01/10/2013
Decision Date	19/09/2016

1. Decision

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 **Orbiston House, tower house.**

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1976 but an inadequate area was included. The present rescheduling rectifies this.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals affect this monument.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The site was considered for amendment as part of the West 2014 project and was visited on 12 May 2014.

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 on the determination of national importance for scheduling.

The 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

Having considered the purpose and implications of designating, it has been concluded that scheduling is the most appropriate mechanism to protect the site. See Annex A of this document for further information of this assessment.

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria
Orbiston House, tower house

1. Description

The monument comprises the remains of a tower house and is visible as a wall standing two storeys high with the stub of a return. The tower was probably built in the 16th or early 17th century and was superseded by a house built further to the east in the late 18th century. The monument stands 40m above sea level on high ground at the neck of a loop in the South Calder Water.

The southwest wall of the tower house is 9m long and 1m thick and stands two storeys high with window openings at ground and first floor levels. It is built of red sandstone and its internal elevation preserves the partial remains of a stone barrel vault that covered the ground floor room. In the external elevation, roll-mouldings decorate the opening of a first floor window. The stub of the southeast wall extends some 2m and retains evidence of openings at ground and first floor levels. Archaeological investigations carried out in the 1970s demonstrate the survival or significant buried archaeological remains, including floors, artefacts and food waste.

The scheduled area is rectangular on plan, measuring 21m by 18m, 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 the metal fence. The monument was first scheduled in 1976 but the documents 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 the remains of a tower house – a type of structure which in the 16th century was often at the core of residential complexes built for the nobility and lairdly classes in Scotland. The southwest wall is built of red sandstone and stands two storeys high. Both interior and exterior elevations reveal surviving architectural details such as a stone vault at ground floor level and carved window reveals. The southern corner of the tower house survives and a stub of wall, retaining further evidence of openings, indicates the line of the southeast wall; the other two walls are not visible above ground. These other walls may have been robbed away, possibly to build the nearby 18th-century Orbiston House, now itself demolished. However, previous archaeological investigation indicates the survival of buried archaeological deposits, including floor surfaces, pottery and midden material.

The surviving structural and architectural features of this monument illustrate the architectural skill of tower-house building during the 15th-17th centuries AD. The roll-mouldings surrounding the windows indicate a probable construction date from the late 16th or very early 17th century. Some tower houses in the Clyde valley were incorporated into later mansions while others, like Orbiston, were abandoned.

There is high potential for the survival of buried archaeological deposits around the upstanding structure, including the buried remains of further buildings. This information would help to determine whether the plan of the tower house was a simple rectangle, or a more complicated structure, and what ancillary buildings stood in the immediate vicinity. The remains of the castle and associated buried archaeological deposits have the potential to provide information about the origins of the site, and the date, form and function of the buildings. There is potential for artefacts and ecofacts that can enhance understanding of the economy and diet of the occupants, as well as provide information about land use and environment.

2.2 Contextual Characteristics

Tower houses are a widespread but diverse class of monument across Scotland. They became a popular form of residence with the Scottish nobility and lairdly class from the 14th century perhaps influenced by the tower house at Edinburgh Castle built by David II. Tower houses continued to be the chosen architectural form for the residences of Scottish elites throughout the late medieval and early post-medieval periods. Tower houses provided a degree of security but were also a means of displaying wealth, social status and martial knowledge.

Orbiston stands on high ground at the neck of a loop in the South Calder Water. Important comparisons can be made with several other buildings along the Clyde Valley and its tributaries, for example Hallbar Tower (scheduled monument reference SM1148, listed building reference LB723, Canmore ID 46544) and Gilbertfield Castle (scheduled monument reference SM5270, Canmore ID 44861). Comparison with the other sites in the vicinity can inform understanding of the degree of variation between sites, the status of their owners, and the locational decisions made when siting towers.

2.3 Associative Characteristics

The site is depicted as ‘Orbestoun’ on Pont’s map of Glasgow and the county of Lanark which is dated 1596 and shows that it was a residence at this time. William Hamilton of Wishaw in his ‘Descriptions of the Sheriffdoms of Lanark and Renfrew’ states that ‘ *… Orbistoun, a little above where Calder falls into Clyde, belonging to William Hamilton of Orbistoun, whose grandfather Sir John, Justice Clerk and Lord of Session, did very much enlarge the house, planted great gardens and woods of barren timber, with large and pleasant enclosures.*’ This indicates that castle was developed in the second quarter of the 17th century by Sir John Hamilton of Orbiston (1604-1658) and that the house was significantly more extensive than the surviving remains of the tower house indicate.

3 Purpose and implications of scheduling

The field visit showed the site is relatively stable and in good condition. Designation as a scheduled monument is 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 in relation to tower houses and high status medieval residences in southern Scotland. Archaeological excavation has indicated that the upstanding structure is associated with important buried archaeological deposits, giving the monument potential to enhance knowledge of date, construction, maintenance, development and abandonment of tower houses. The structural remains and associated archaeological evidence can enhance our understanding of the daily life of the inhabitants, their society, economy, and trading contacts. The remains of the castle occupy a prominent position above a loop in the river and would have been an important part of the historic landscape. The loss of the monument would diminish our ability to understand the form, function, date and character of fortified houses in the Clyde Valley.

5 References

Historic Environment Scotland http://www.canmore.org.uk reference number CANMORE ID 45666 (accessed on 17/06/2016).

Maitland Club, 1831 'Descriptions of the Sheriffdoms of Lanark and Renfrew, compiled about M.DCC.X / by William Hamilton of Wishaw. With illustrative notes and appendices [by John Dillon and John Fullarton]'. National Library of Scotland http://digital.nls.uk/publications-by-scottish-clubs/pageturner.cfm?id=78835430 (accessed on 17/06/2016).

Mortimer, G, 1975, 'Bellshill, Orbiston Tower', *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*.

Pont, Timothy 1596 Glasgow and the county of Lanark (Pont 34) National Library of Scotland (http://maps.nls.uk/detail.cfm?id=297) (accessed on 17/06/2016).