Case information

Case ID	300009797
File Reference	AMH/1750/2/1
Name of Site	Maiden Castle, motte and bailey

Local Authority	East Dunbartonshire
National Grid Reference	NS 64311 78483
Designation No. (if any)	SM 1750
Case Type	Amendment

Received/Start Date	16/05/2014
Decision Date	19/09/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1959 but an inadequate area was included. 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 **Maiden Castle, motte.**

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1959 but an inadequate area was included. The present amendment rectifies this.

2.2 Development Proposals

At the time of writing there were no known development proposals affecting this monument.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The site was considered for amendment as part of West 2014 project

The site was visited on 16/05/2014.

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 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

NA

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria
Maiden Castle, motte

1 Description

The monument comprises the earthwork remains of a castle likely to date from the 12th or 13th centuries AD. The monument is visible as a natural but altered knoll (the motte) surrounded on its north, west and south sides by earthworks. The monument is located on the lower slopes of the Campsie Fells at about 250m above sea level.

The summit of motte would have originally been roughly circular in plan but an adjacent water course has eroded the eastern portion of the monument. It stands up to 5m in height with a flat summit measuring 16m north-south by 10m transversely. The motte is positioned in the southern part of a roughly oval enclosure, measuring about 48m north-south by 25m transversely, within earth and stone banks surviving to a maximum height of 0.6m. To the north of the motte, several banks and mounds lie within the enclosure, the inner bank measuring up to 2.5m in height.

The scheduled area is irregular on plan and 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 existing water tank and pipe. The monument was last scheduled in 1959 but the documentation did not include an adequate area; the present scheduling 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 motte sited within a group of banks and ditches. It lies on the west bank of an unnamed burn and this has eroded the eastern third of the monument. Nevertheless, the greater part of the monument survives as upstanding features, giving a clear sense of the form of the monument.

The motte is the site of a medieval castle probably constructed mostly in timber on an 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. It lies within an enclosure that contains additional curving banks and ditches. The purpose of these interior earthworks is unclear and to have such mounds within the bailey (a fortified enclosure associated with a motte and containing subsidiary buildings) is very unusual. The mounds may be defensive features relating to access to the motte, or potentially they may represent an earlier phase of fortification which was

exploited when constructing the motte. The presence of these unusual features adds to the significance of this site.

The motte and surrounding banks would probably have been surmounted by timber defences and structures, evidence of which may survive as archaeological deposits. Some of the banks survive up to 2.5m in height and are likely to contain archaeological evidence of their construction. The ditches surrounding the motte and separating the banks are also likely to contain occupation debris and environmental remains associated with the occupation of the site, which helps us understand the daily life and economy of the occupants. There is also potential for scientific study that could allow dating of the various elements of the monument, clarifying when the site was first used and how long it was occupied for.

2.2 Contextual Characteristics

The monument is one of a number of mottes situated along the important Kelvin Valley. Balcastle motte (scheduled monument reference SM2584, Canmore ID 45883) is situated at the foot of the Kilsyth Hills about 5.8km to the east and Craigstone Wood, Castle Hill, motte E of (scheduled monument reference SM2572, Canmore ID 45884) near the valley floor about 1km to the east. When seen in the context of medieval mottes, this is one of around 300 examples in Scotland (after Simpson and Webster 1985) and should be seen in the context of elite Anglo-Norman settlement in areas of Scotland during the 12th century. This and other castle sites of this date have the capacity to provide an insight into the feudalisation of Scotland. Of particular interest is the potential to determine patterns of distribution, and duration and phases of use, as well as previous or subsequent functions and consequent changes in form. Such patterns can aid our understanding of large-scale social changes through time and geographical variation in social systems.

The monument is situated on the lower slopes of the Campsie Fells at about 250m above sea level and has good views along the valley of the Kelvin Valley. The strong natural defences of this knoll, along with good views along a major routeway, would have contributed to this location being chosen for the siting of a castle.

2.3 Associative Characteristics

N/A

3 Purpose and implications of scheduling

Although parts of the monument have been eroded by the nearby burn the monument survives in a good state of preservation. Scheduling continues to be seen as the most appropriate mechanism to secure the longer term future of this monument.

4 Assessment of national importance

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 reasonably well-preserved example of its class, with little sign of disturbance other than natural erosion from the nearby burn. Comparison with other excavated examples suggests that we can expect evidence for internal buildings and perimeter defences to survive. The complexity of the outer defences, which may indicate the reuse of an earlier fortified site, adds to the monument's importance. The monument's significance is also enhanced by its location 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.

5 References

Historic Environment Scotland http://www.canmore.org.uk reference number CANMORE ID 45177(accessed 30/03/2016).

RCAHMS 1963 The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Stirlingshire: an inventory of the ancient monuments, 2v Edinburgh 174, 183

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