



Case information

Case ID	300009827
File Reference	AMH/90230/2/1
Name of Site	Newark Castle

Local Authority	Inverclyde
National Grid Reference	NS 32821 74509
Designation No. (if any)	SM90230
Case Type	Amendment

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

1. Decision

The monument is a property in the care of Scottish Ministers. The monument was first scheduled in 1921 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 **Newark Castle, Port Glasgow**.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

Newark Castle is a property in the care of Scottish Ministers and was first scheduled in 1921; no subsequent amendments.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

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

N/A

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria

Newark Castle, Port Glasgow

1 Description

The monument is the remains of Newark Castle. It is visible as a 15th century tower house and gatehouse linked by later 16th century ranges arranged around a central courtyard. The monument situated on the south bank of the River Clyde at about 5m above sea-level.

The scheduled area is irregular on plan to include the remains described above and an area around in which evidence for 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 all modern boundary walls and modern fences; the slipway; the above-ground elements of all signage and services; the top 300mm of all modern paths to allow for their maintenance.

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 15th century tower house and gatehouse linked by later 16th century ranges arranged around a central courtyard. Its purpose was as a dwelling that provided a degree of defence and which reflected the wealth and power of the owner. The monument is roofed and in excellent condition, retaining rare examples of original timber work. This includes the roof timbers in the north range, possibly of 17th century date, open latrines altered to accommodate close-stools and the remarkable survival of a bedchamber with many of its fixture and fittings still intact, including a door on its hinges, pinewood panelling and cupboards, one of which contains a fold-down bed. Analysis of the upstanding remains can enhance our knowledge of the chronology and development sequence of the castle, as well as the cultural and social influences that may have informed its development and architecture.

Archaeological excavation has revealed other remains associated with the 15th century tower house, including the line of barmkin wall along with traces of domestic and ancillary ranges. This indicates the potential for the survival of further well-preserved archaeological deposits. We can expect structural remains such as traces of the great hall and the earlier service blocks, pits and middens to survive, along with artefacts and ecofacts. Such remains enhance our knowledge of the layout and phasing of the castle but also enable us to better understand daily domestic life of the inhabitants and their society, economy, trading contacts, and religion.

The tower house, gatehouse and barmkin wall were all constructed in the late 15th century. Although no longer upstanding, a number of other buildings would also have belonged to this date such as the great hall, kitchen and bakehouses and stables. These were removed when the castles was remodelled in the 16th century. A north range and east wing were built between the gatehouse and tower, forming three sides of a courtyard. The exterior of the older buildings were re-fashioned in a Renaissance style to complement the new buildings, and the internal layout was re-organised. Services took up the lower levels of the new buildings and the laird's principle accommodation was moved from the tower house to the more spacious north range, which has a gallery on the upper floor.

2.2 Contextual Characteristics

Both tower houses and mansions are relatively common in Scotland. However, this is an excellent and well-preserved example that documents the transition from a defended medieval castle to a mansion house with greater emphasis on comfort and privacy. It includes early examples of architectural innovation within a Scottish context such as the use of scale-and-platt stairs and an upper gallery. The architectural development of the castle documents the economic and social changes following the Union of the Crowns of 1603 which allowed a greater degree of peace and prosperity for the land-owning class of Scotland.

The castle is sited on the south bank of the River Clyde good views across the river to Cardross on the north shore and east and west along the river. The location is significant as the river was readily navigable past this point during the medieval period and the castle could have had a role in controlling shipping and maximising opportunities for trade.

It is in an area with a concentration of defended settlements, castles and military forts of various dates, reflecting the importance of the Clyde as a waterway. Outposts of the Antonine Wall Roman line of defence overlook the River Clyde, for example Lurg Moor Roman fortlet and road (SM 1653) 3.5km to the west-southwest and Barochan Hill, fort (SM 3318) about 10km to the east-southeast. Across the water and about 7km upstream is Dumbarton Castle (SM 90107), a volcanic plug of basalt on which are the remains of an Iron Age/Early medieval fort, medieval castle and Georgian garrison. The site of Finlaystone Castle is located 3.75 km to the east southeast and the site of Easter Greenock Castle is 3.5 km to the west.

2.3 Associative Characteristics

Newark Castle was constructed in the around 1480 by George Maxwell, who inherited the barony of Finlaystone in 1478. James IV stayed at the castle in 1495 en route to campaigning in the Western Isles. The castle remained in the Maxwell family and owners include Sir Patrick Maxwell, a powerful landowner and friend of James VI, who was responsible for the remodelling in the 17th century. In 1668 George Maxwell sold land around the castle to the burgesses of Glasgow for the creation of a port which was to become Port Glasgow.

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Purpose and implications of scheduling

The field investigation concluded the site is in a stable condition and well-preserved. 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.

3 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 development of Scottish castles during the late-medieval and early-modern periods. The monument survives as a roofed structure, with rare and important original timber work. It is an excellent example of its type demonstrating the transition from a medieval castle to a mansion house. It documents through its architecture and layout the economic and social changes following the Union of the Crowns which allowed a greater degree of peace and prosperity for Scotland's land-owning class. Previous excavation has indicated high potential for the survival of important archaeological remains. The loss of the monument would greatly diminish our ability to understand the character, chronology and development of late-medieval and early-modern high-status dwellings in Scotland.

4 References

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