Case information

Case ID	300009799
File Reference	AMH/2539/2/1
Name of Site	High Blochairn, cairn 180m WSW of

Local Authority	East Dunbartonshire
National Grid Reference	NS 57901 75579
Designation No. (if any)	SM2539
Case Type	Amendment

Received/Start Date	12/05/2014
Decision Date	10/11/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1966 and an inadequate area was included.The assessment against criteria demonstrates that the monument continues to be of national importance and that the scheduled area should be expanded to include all nationally important remains at the site. The decision is to amend the entry in the Schedule as **High Blochairn, cairn 180m WSW of.**

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1966. An inadequate area was included. The present amendment rectifies this.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals currently affecting the monument.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

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

No other considerations.

Elizabeth McCrone
Head of Designations
Heritage Management
Historic Environment Scotland

Contact	Kyle Armstrong, Designations Officer Kyle.Armstrong@hes.scot, 0131 668 8740

ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria
High Blochairn, cairn 180m WSW of

1 Description

The monument is a burial cairn probably dating to the Bronze Age (between about 2000 BC and 800 BC). It is visible as a flat-topped, roughly circular grass-covered mound measuring approximately 16m in diameter and standing up to 1.75m high. The monument is situated on a rocky outcrop in an undulating field of rough grazing at approximately 120m above sea-level.

The scheduled area is circular on plan centred on the centre of the monument and measures 36m in diameter 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 above-ground elements of the post and wire fence.

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 cairn visible as a flat-topped, roughly circular grass-covered mound measuring about 16m in diameter and standing up to 1.75m high. The mound is slightly eroded in places but the monument still exhibits good field characteristics. This cairn is probably Bronze Age, dating to between about 2000 BC and 800 BC, though it is possible that the site has earlier origins as a place of ritual or burial. The cairn may have been used for multiple burials, over an extended period of time. It is likely to have been an important place for commemoration of many generations.

The monument retains much of its structure of cairn material and this is likely to contain one or more graves or cist settings and human skeletal remains in the form of cremations or inhumations. This monument therefore has the potential to help us understand more about burial practice and religious beliefs, the construction and use of burial monuments, and about society during the time that it was constructed and in use. There is also good potential for the survival of a wide range of other associated archaeological remains, including artefacts and ecofacts such as charcoal and pollen within, beneath and around the upstanding structure of the cairn. Such archaeological deposits have the potential to provide information about the date and detailed form of the monument and the ritual and funerary practices conducted, while any artefacts and ecofacts would enhance understanding of contemporary economy, land-use and environment.

2.2 Contextual Characteristics

There are around 40 recorded examples of this type of burial cairn in Dunbartonshire. Such burial monuments vary in form, location and size, and this example can be studied in comparison with others to enhance our knowledge of the burial traditions and beliefs associated with these monuments and the reasons behind their design and form. This example is sited in the near vicinity of a number of other prehistoric burial monuments. Other cairns are located approximately 114m to the west southwest (Canmore ID 44432), 300m and 360m to the east southeast (Canmore ID 44435 and 44436) and 490m to the north northwest (Canmore ID 44427). There is potential to study the cairn alongside these other sites to help us understand the significance and meaning of the placing of such monuments in the landscape.

Cairns are often placed in conspicuous locations within the landscape, at the edge of arable land and overlooking or inter-visible with other ritual monuments. This example is particularly notable for its prominent positioning on a rocky outcrop which is intervisible with other cairns. It is clearly visible on approach from the north, west and east but is concealed on approach from the south due to the undulation of the surrounding land. This cairn, together with the others in the vicinity, is likely to have had a prominent place within a social group's territory and may have been a focal point in the landscape, possibly reinforcing social/ancestral ties to the land.

2.3 Associative Characteristics

At this time, there are no known associative characteristics which significantly contribute to the site's cultural significance.

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

4 Assessment of national importance

The monument is of national importance because of its potential to make a significant addition to our knowledge and understanding of the past, particularly the design and construction of burial monuments, and the nature of belief systems and burial practices during the Bronze Age. Ritual and funerary monuments are often our main source of evidence for human activity during the Bronze Age in Scotland and they are particularly important for enhancing our understanding of Bronze Age society, its organisation, economy, beliefs and demography. This cairn is well-preserved, allowing us to interpret its original form and position in the landscape, and can be compared with a concentration of other cairns that survive in the vicinity. It also retains high potential for buried archaeological remains including burials, artefacts and palaeoenvironmental evidence.

References

Historic Environment Scotland http://www.canmore.org.uk reference number CANMORE ID 44433 (accessed on 8/9/2016).

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

RCAHMS 1982, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. The archaeological sites and monuments of Cumbernauld and Kilsyth District and Strathkelvin District, Strathclyde Region, The archaeological sites and monuments of Scotland series no 2. Revision Edinburgh.