Case information

Case ID	300009798
File Reference	AMH/2251/2/1
Name of Site	Blantyre Priory

Local Authority	South Lanarkshire
National Grid Reference	NS 68605 59381
Designation No. (if any)	SM2251
Case Type	Amendment

Received/Start Date	15/05/2014
Decision Date	11/10/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1962 but the 1962 documentation does not conform to current standards. The assessment against the criteria demonstrates that the monument continues to be of national importance. The decision is to amend the entry in the schedule as **Blantyre Priory.**

The monument is also a category A-listed building. It is to be removed from the list to eliminate the dual designation.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

Blantyre Priory is scheduled monument SM2251. The entry in the schedule is dated 05/11/1962. This has not been amended.

Blantyre Priory is also a category B listed building (LB5160) and was listed on 12/01/1971. It is in Blantyre Parish.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals that would affect this assessment.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The site was visited on 15/05/2014.

The monument was also considered as part of the Dual Designation project. This is a nationwide project to review structures which are both listed as buildings of special architectural or historic interest and scheduled as monuments of national importance. Where appropriate the 'dual designation' of structures is being removed and they are being listed or scheduled depending on their individual circumstances. Removing dual designations will help to provide clarity for the future management of sites.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

An assessment of the cultural significance of the site has been carried out following the criteria set out in 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/.

Having assessed cultural significance, the site continues to meet the criteria for national importance as set out in the Policy Statement. Having considered the purpose and implications of designating, it has been concluded that scheduling is still the most appropriate mechanism to protect the site. Please see Annex A of this document for further information.

3.3 Other considerations

As part of the Dual Designation project, we have reviewed the structures at this site and concluded that scheduling is the most appropriate mechanism to secure the preservation of this structure as a monument of national importance. As a consequence the scheduling has been amended and Blantyre Priory has been removed from the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria
Blantyre Priory

1 Description

The monument is the remains of Blantyre Priory, a small monastery founded in the early 13th century. The priory is visible as a group of ruinous masonry structures and earthworks. Remains of the priory's main buildings lie at the eastern side of the site, on the edge of a cliff above the west bank of the River Clyde.

The visible building remains cover an area measuring about 30m north-south by 12m transversely. The building at the north end has been identified as the prior's house. To the south lies a small courtyard and remains of at least three other stone buildings. A larger courtyard or 'garth' is located on higher ground to the west of the buildings. Parts of a boundary wall of roughly hewn sandstone blocks are visible enclosing the site to the north, west and south. A ditch with outer bank lies beyond the west boundary wall, extending for approximately 27m. The monument overlooks the River Clyde and stands about 20m 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 post and wire fences.

2 Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria (Historic Environment Scotland policy statement June 2016, Annex 1, pp. 48-50.)

2.1 Intrinsic Characteristics

The priory buildings are sited along a cliff on the west bank of the River Clyde. MacGibbon and Ross (1896-7) identified the building at the north end of the cluster as the prior's house. It comprises ground floor rooms separated by a stair well that gave access to a first floor. In 2014, the walls stood about 1.5m high being best preserved on the north side. A small courtyard lies south of this building at the west end and to the east is the east wall of a second building with windows overlooking the Clyde. To the south of the courtyard, a fragment of the west wall of a third building has been recorded as containing a stone basin or 'stoup'; this led to the suggestion that it was the chapel, though MacGibbon and Ross (1896-7) suggest that the church is more likely to have stood to the south of the visible buildings. Remains of a fourth building with evidence for a vault lie at the southeast end of the cluster. The boundary wall stood about 4m high in 2014 on the north side; on the west and south sides it was no more than 0.5m high. Beyond the west wall, the ditch and bank are substantial features; in 2014 the bank was some 1.5m high measuring

from the base of the ditch. Although the upstanding remains are in ruinous condition, the monument appears to be in relatively stable condition, with high potential for buried archaeological remains to survive in good condition.

Study of both the upstanding structures and the buried remains has high potential to provide important information about the layout, development sequence and abandonment of the priory. There is particular potential for evidence about the position of the priory church, the relationship between the priory and the external ditch and bank, and any structural changes associated with the priory's later function as a private residence. More widely, the site has the potential to inform study of medieval monastic religious practice, society and economy.

Historical records suggest a development sequence, with the priory being founded in the first half of the 13th century and remaining in use until the Reformation in the later 16th century. The priory was secularised in 1599 and passed to the Stewarts who used the buildings as a private residence. Lady Blantyre and her daughters left the priory in 1606 leaving Lord Blantyre behind. It is not clear when the priory was finally abandoned. For most of its occupation, the monument served spiritual, social and economic functions. Later, when it became secularised, it served a domestic function.

2.2 Contextual Characteristics

Priories often conform to a relatively standardised layout. This example is of particular interest as the arrangement has been partially dictated by the distinctive topography of the site. The priory has made good use of the steep cliffs to the east and the north to add to the physical and symbolical demarcation of the priory from the outside world, while making the buildings imposing. However, the uneven ground has confined the priory buildings to a relatively small area of flat land along the cliff edge, with the garth being positioned on higher ground between the buildings and the boundary wall to the west.

Bothwell Castle (scheduled monument reference SM90038, Canmore ID 44889) is located on the opposite bank of the River Clyde and faced the priory, but was not held by the families who endowed the priory. Blantyre Priory was probably founded by Patrick, Earl of Dunbar and his wife and was occupied by monks of the Augustinian order. Both Blantyre Priory and Restenneth Priory in Angus (SM 90246, Canmore 33745) were cells of Jedburgh Abbey (SM 13126, Canmore ID 57020).

2.3 Associative Characteristics

Historical sources suggest the abbey was founded by Patrick, Earl of Dunbar and his wife in the first half of the 13th century and maintained as a cell of Jedburgh Abbey. The priory was secularised in 1599 and passed to the Stewarts who used the buildings as a private residence. Lady Blantyre and her daughters left the priory in 1606 leaving Lord Blantyre behind. It is not clear when the priory was finally abandoned.

The monument reflects medieval cultural preferences for the display of wealth and status through the patronage of monastic foundations. The form of the monument and its architectural details reflect medieval monastic spiritual devotion through worship, work and study.

3 Purpose and implications of scheduling

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 medieval monasteries, religious practice and the funding of monasteries by high status families. There is potential for relatively complex archaeology to survive which, along with analysis of the upstanding structures, can provide important information about the layout, development sequence and abandonment of the priory. In particular, there is potential to understand the position of the priory church, the relationship between the priory and the external bank and ditch and probable structural changes associated with the priory's later function as a private residence. The site is particularly important because this priory had a non-standard layout, showing how its builders responded to the opportunities and constraints of a cliff-top site. The loss of the monument would greatly diminish our ability to understand the character, chronology, adaptation and abandonment of one of Scotland's smaller monasteries.

5 References

Historic Environment Scotland: http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore.html CANMORE ID 44890 (accessed on 20.6.2016)

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Coventry, M 2001, The castles of Scotland, Musselburgh, 92

Cowan and Easson, I B and D E 1976, Medieval religious houses in Scotland: with an appendix on the houses in the Isle of Man, London, 74

MacGibbon and Ross, D and T 1896-7, 'The ecclesiastical architecture of Scotland from the earliest Christian times to the seventeenth century', 3v Edinburgh, 3, 470-2