Case information

Case ID	300009809
File Reference	AMH/3337/2/1
Name of Site	Kilbride Island,Chapel of Kilbride & associated structures

Local Authority	Argyll and Bute
National Grid Reference	NS 69 67
Designation No. (if any)	SM3337
Case Type	Amendment

Received/Start Date	21/05/2014
Decision Date	10/11/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1973 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 amend the entry in the Schedule as **Chapel of Kilbride, 240m SE of Kilbride Island**.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1973; 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 the West 2014 project and visited on 21/05/2014

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 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/

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

The 1974 scheduling included two polygons sited on the east and west islets of Kilbride Island, 240m NW of Kilbride chapel, as well as the chapel itself. While the chapel and adjacent structures remain of national importance and will remain scheduled, it is proposed not to include parts of Kilbride Island in the amended scheduled monument. A field visit in 2014 showed no visible archaeological remains on the east islet. On the west islet, a subcircular spread of rubble about 5m in diameter was noted. While it is possible that this might represent the site of a hermitage or retreat associated with the chapel to the south, there was no evidence for the date or form of any structure here. Our assessment is that, in the current state of our knowledge, there is insufficient information to show that remains on Kilbride Island are of national importance.

3.3 Other considerations

N/A

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria

Chapel of Kilbride, 240m SE of Kilbride Island

1 Description

The monument is the remains of a chapel probably dating to the Early Christian period (about AD 400 to 900). The chapel is orientated east to west and lies within a sub-circular enclosure. A possible grave-slab lies north of the chapel and a later enclosure with a building at the east end lies to the northeast. This chapel is situated on a headland bounded by cliffs to northwest and southwest on the east coast of Loch Fyne at about 15m above sea-level.

The chapel measures about 6m by 3.5m within walls of roughly squared boulders about 1m thick standing 0.5m high. The entrance is at the west end of the northwest wall. The surrounding enclosure measures approximately 29m east-west by 26m transversely within walls of random rubble approximately 2m thick and up to 2.5m high. Entrances pierce the wall to the north and west.

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 monument was last scheduled in 1973 but the documentation did not meet current standards; 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 the remains of a chapel and enclosure probably dating to the Early Christian period. The interior was described by Knight (1934) as being paved with flat stones. There is high potential to examine in detail the construction and form of the chapel, its date and development sequence and particularly its relationship with the surrounding enclosure which some researchers believe to be earlier than the chapel. It is possible that graves remain in situ, within the chapel or enclosure, with potential to enhance our knowledge of status and burial practice at Early Christian ecclesiastical sites. Soil conditions will influence the extent to which bone survives but there is the potential that burials can reveal evidence for health, diet, illness, cause of death, and perhaps the types of activities people undertook during life. It is expected that relatively complex archaeology will survive, perhaps including evidence for an earlier domestic settlement or ecclesiastical site.

The dating and chronology of Early Christian chapels in Cowal is not well understood but the form, fabric and dimensions of this chapel suggest that the church dates from the Early Christian period. The thick sub-circular enclosing wall has led some to suggest that it is not contemporary with the chapel but part of an earlier site adapted to ecclesiastical use. The primary function of the site would have been spiritual serving as the focus for religious life and worship for nearby communities. Later, the site was adapted for domestic use by incorporating an enclosure and building to the northeast. Scientific study could enhance understanding of the origin, date and development of this complex of structures.

2.2 Contextual Characteristics

Argyll is particularly rich in Early Christian ecclesiastical sites. In Cowal alone, there are 19 recorded ecclesiastical sites which provide evidence for Christian burial and worship, including 10 chapels. The chapels are of similar drystone construction and dimensions, although the majority are surrounded by sub-rectangular, rather than sub-circular enclosures. The majority are also associated with wells or springs.

This chapel is unusual in that it has a particularly thick, sub-circular enclosure wall. The monument can be usefully compared to the other chapel sites in Cowal to add to our understanding of their origin and chronology. Wider comparative and distribution studies of ecclesiastical sites can also increase our knowledge of the origin and spread of Christianity in Western Scotland. There is potential to examine the chapels in relation to early medieval settlement patterns. Such studies could enhance our understanding of the organisation of Early Christian worship.

This chapel is situated on a headland bounded by cliffs to northwest and southwest on the east coast of Loch Fyne at about 15m above sea-level. A natural bay can be accessed to the northwest.

2.3 Associative Characteristics

The form of the monument is likely to have been influenced by the traditions and practice of the early church as ideas spread from Iona in 7th and 8th centuries.

3 Purpose and implications of scheduling

Our visit showed the site is in a stable condition and well preserved. 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

This monument is of national importance because of its inherent potential to make a significant addition to our understanding of Early Christian ecclesiastical sites in

Scotland. The chapel and enclosure are in stable condition and there is potential to examine in detail the construction and form of the chapel, its date and development sequence and its relationship with the surrounding enclosure. The thick sub-circular enclosure wall is an important and unusual part of the monument and may be part of an earlier site, potentially demonstrating adaptation of a defended settlement to ecclesiastical use. The monument's significance is enhanced by the capacity to compare it with other ecclesiastical sites in Argyll and to relate the church to the medieval settlement pattern. The loss or damage of the monument would diminish our ability to understand the origins, organisation and spread of Christianity in western Scotland.

5 References

Historic Environment Scotland http://www.canmore.org.uk reference number CANMORE ID 153851 (accessed on 24/02/2016).

The West of Scotland Archaeology Service HER Reference is 5135 (accessed on 24/02/2016)

RCAHMS 1992 *The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Argyll: An inventory of the monuments: Volume 7: Mid-Argyll and Cowal: Medieval and later monuments*, 103-4.

Rennie, E B 1993 *Cowal: an historical guide*, Edinburgh, 61