Case information

Case ID	300016769
File Reference	AMH/883/2/1
Name of Site	Hempriggs House Lodge broch.

Local Authority	The Highland Council
National Grid Reference	ND 3511 4719
Designation No. (if any)	SM883
Case Type	Amendment

Received/Start Date	22/04/2015
Decision Date	10/11/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1938 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 **Hempriggs, broch 200m S of.**

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1938

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals affecting this monument.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The site was considered for amendment as part of North 2015 SEP and visited on 22 April 12015.

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
Hempriggs, broch 200m S of

1 Description

The monument is a broch, a complex stone-built substantial roundhouse, dating to the Iron Age (between 600 BC and AD 400). The broch is visible as a grass covered stony mound on top of a larger mounded feature containing associated archaeological remains. The broch is located on relatively flat coastal land adjacent to a water course and it stands at approximately 45m above sea level.

The broch mound is sub-circular in shape and it has an undulating surface indicating the position of buried structures and deposits beneath the surface. Records indicate that it was previously investigated and archaeological material was recovered. The extent of the monument has been modified by later land use and the encroachment of a dwelling.

The scheduled area is polygonal on plan, centred on the broch, 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 monument was first scheduled in 1938, but the documentation does not meet current standards; the present amendment 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 broch, visible as an uneven grass-covered mound sitting on a larger mounded feature. The mound has been disturbed by excavations noted by the Ordnance Survey and these revealed what was possibly the footings of the outer wall of the broch. Therefore, within the smaller, upper mound, evidence of broch walls are likely to survive as too are internal features such as intramural cells, scarcement ledges and stairs. The larger mound is likely to contain structures such as outbuildings or sections of a surrounding berm.

By analogy with other excavated brochs, the exterior of the broch and the surrounding mound are likely to contain deposits rich in occupation debris, artefacts and palaeoenvironmental evidence that can tell us about how people lived, their trade and exchange contacts, and their social status, as well as provide information about broch architecture and construction methods. The archaeological potential of the monument is demonstrated by the discovery of a secondary cist burial 1930s. It is further demonstrated by excavations at other Caithness brochs, such as Nybster

(scheduled monument reference SM569, Canmore ID9329), and by the publication of investigations at Howe on Orkney, where a broch mound was found to preserve rich buried deposits.

Brochs in Caithness are typically thought to date from the mid first millennium BC to the early part of the first millennium AD although there are few precise scientific dates and our understanding of their dating has traditionally been based on typological studies of artefacts recovered from broch sites. The potential presence of outerworks and outbuildings on the substantial mound at indicates this site may have had a complex development sequence. Scientific investigation would allow us to develop a better understanding of the chronology of the site, its date of origin, state of completeness, survival of outerworks and outbuildings or related structures, and any development sequence.

Broch towers are primarily seen as a specific specialised development of complex Atlantic roundhouses. They were large complex structures that could have accommodated either an extended family or a small community. While there would have been a social hierarchy within this community, the construction of these elaborate towers is often understood in terms of elite settlement. Other interpretations have stressed their likely role as fortified or defensive sites, possibly serving a community across a wider area. Brochs are complex structures likely to have had numerous purposes and a complex role in prehistoric society.

2.2 Contextual Characteristics

Brochs are a widespread class of monument across northern Scotland with notable concentrations in Caithness, Sutherland, Orkney, Shetland, the Western Isles and the northwest Highlands. This example is one of a larger local/regional group in Caithness, which tend to occupy land along or close to the coastline as well as along the main cross-country routeways. It follows the typical Caithness broch pattern of 'mound on mound', with the lower mound covering secondary structures and the higher mound representing the broch structure.

Location is a significant factor in understanding brochs and so too is intervisibility and relative position with other examples. There are a number of other brochs in the vicinity, again situated on the coastal strip. These include Cairn of Humster broch (scheduled monument reference SM533, Canmore ID 9639) 1.3km to the north-northwest and Thrumster Little broch (scheduled monument reference SM589, Canmore ID 8972) 1.8m to the southwest. There is good potential for comparative study on a local and national scale to better understand the function of such monuments, their interrelationship and the significance of their placing within the landscape, in particular in relation to our understanding of Iron Age social hierarchy, changing settlement patterns and systems of inheritance.

2.3 Associative Characteristics

There are no known associative characteristics which contribute to the site's cultural significance.

3 Purpose and implications of scheduling

Designation as a scheduled monument is the most appropriate mechanism to secure the preservation of this monument, and to ensure the recognition of its national importance.

4 Assessment of national importance

The monument is of national importance because it contributes to our understanding of the past, in particular of Iron Age society in Caithness and the function, use and development of brochs. broch mound The substantial broch mound and the records of early investigations and finds indicated that there is well-preserved structural elements and occupation deposits contained within the mound. The field character of the monument therefore survives to a marked degree. The broch adds to our understanding of settlement patterns and social structure during the Iron Age in Caithness and this potential is enhanced by the numerous brochs in the vicinity. The loss of the monument would significantly diminish our future ability to appreciate and understand the development, use and re-use of brochs, and the nature of Iron Age society, economy and social hierarchy in the north of Scotland.

5 References

Historic Environment Scotland http://www.canmore.org.uk reference number CANMORE ID 8957 (accessed on 27/06/2016).

The Highland Council HER reference is MHG2037 (accessed on 27/06/2016).

Feachem, R, 1963, *A guide to prehistoric Scotland*. London.

MacKie, E W, 2007, *The Roundhouses, Brochs and Wheelhouses of Atlantic Scotland c. 700 BC - AD 500: architecture and material culture. Part 2 The Mainland and the Western Islands*. *BAR*, vol 444. Oxford.

RCAHMS, 1911, *The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland. Third report and inventory of monuments and constructions in the county of Caithness*. London.