

Case information

Case ID	300009942
File Reference	AMH/899/2/1
Name of Site	Loch nan Carraigeon, chambered cairn & stone circle 3200m N of Aviemore

Local Authority	Highland Council		
National Grid Reference	NH 9078 1550		
Designation No. (if any)	SM899		
Designation Type	Scheduled Monument	Current Category of Listing	N/A
Case Type	Amendment		

Received/Start Date	25/02/2014
Decision Date	29/01/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1935, but an inadequate area was included to protect the full extent of archaeological remains. 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 **Loch Nan Carraigeon, cairns 40m S of.**

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1935; no subsequent amendment.

2.2 Development Proposals

N/A

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The site was visited on 06/05/2014.

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 found in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), pp. 71-85. <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/shep-dec2011.pdf>

3.3 Other considerations

N/A

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria*

Loch Nan Carraigan, cairns 40m S of

1. Description

The monument is a chambered cairn surrounded by the remains of a stone circle with a nearby smaller cairn, dating from the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age (fourth to third millennia BC). The chambered cairn is visible as a mound of stones up to 1.5m high with two monoliths on the ground to the southwest and west southwest and at least four hollows with exposed packing stones. The smaller cairn lies about 25m to the southeast of the main cairn and is visible as a heath-covered mound up to 1m high. The monument is located in heathland with sparse forest cover on the valley floor and sits 225m above sea level.

The main burial cairn is a Clava cairn, a type only found in the Inverness-shire area. These are circular chambered cairns, sometimes with a surrounding stone circle, named after a collection of cairns at Balnuaran of Clava near Inverness. The cairn is about 17m in overall diameter and has a complete outer kerb formed by a line of stones up to 1.2m high that is gently graded in height with the peak at the south southwest. A less complete inner kerb is also evident, formed by a line of stones approximately 7m in diameter now partially covered by stone debris. The area between the two kerbs is entirely in-filled with loose stones. The surrounding stone circle is visible as two fallen standing stones, one to the southwest measuring about 3m in length and the other to the west southwest measuring 2m in length. The adjacent hollows provide evidence for at least four other standing stones.

The scheduled area is irregular on plan and includes the remains described above and an area around them within which evidence relating to the monuments construction, use and abandonment is expected to survive, as shown in red on the accompanying map. The scheduling specifically excludes the post-and-wire fences to allow for maintenance. The monument was originally scheduled in 1935 but the documentation did not adequately cover all of the nationally important remains; the present amendment rectifies this.

2. Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria (SHEP, 2011) pp71-73**

* This assessment is based on our current state of knowledge. It will form the basis of any new or updated scheduled monument record.

** A monument may be found to meet the scheduling criteria but in some circumstances may not be added to the Schedule. The purpose and implications of scheduling are issues that require to be taken into account when assessing monuments for scheduling. Scheduling may not be the only, or the most appropriate mechanism, to secure the future of all sites, even those that may otherwise meet the criteria.

Cultural significance

Characteristic	Assessment
Intrinsic	
Condition in which monument survives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The monument is a burial cairn visible as an upstanding mound with clear outer and inner kerb lines which was

	<p>surrounded by a stone circle. Another cairn lies to the southeast.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall the site survives in very good condition with no record of an excavation at the site.
Archaeological, scientific, technological or other interest or research potential of the monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cairn retains much structural integrity in its plan form, in the surviving stratigraphy and in its architectural elements. These elements inform us about ritual and funerary practice, the architecture of prehistoric burial and the construction, use and abandonment of these monuments. There is still good potential for the survival of other archaeological deposits, including burial remains, artefacts such as pottery, and environmental remains such as charcoal or pollen, within, beneath and around the intact elements of the monument. These elements can provide information about ritual and funerary practice, and the significance of materials, technology and craft in a burial context. The monument is also important for the potential of exploring the relationship between the main cairn and the adjacent smaller cairn. There is also good potential to explore the likely existence of a stone circle around the main cairn and its role within the overall site.
Apparent developmental sequence of monument (either long or short may provide insights of importance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main Clava type cairn dates from the late Neolithic to early Bronze Age (the fourth and third millennia BC) based on dating evidence from other Clava type cairn sites. The adjacent smaller cairn and remains of a stone circle around the main cairn may demonstrate probable site development or expansion. Scientific excavation of the site would allow us to develop a better understanding of the chronology of the site, including its date of origin, state of completeness and possible development sequence.
Original or subsequent functions of the monument and its parts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The original function of the monument was as a burial or funerary site. The site may also have had other ceremonial or ritual uses for the local community.
Contextual	
Present rarity or representativeness of all or any part of the monument, assessed against knowledge of the archaeology of Scotland and of the region in which the monument occurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This monument is important as an upstanding and unusually well preserved example with evidence of associated outlying cairn. Clava type cairns are unique to the central Highlands with many around Inverness, Loch Ness and Culloden. There are around 50 Clava type cairns and this monument is located on the southern end of their distribution. There may have been links between neighbouring burial cairns or they may indicate community catchments. This cairn has the potential to enhance and broaden our understanding of prehistoric burial practices.
Relationship of the monument to other monuments of the same or related classes or period, or to features or monuments in the vicinity. (Particularly important for monuments forming part of a widespread but varied class)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are numerous broadly contemporary monuments in the landscape surrounding the monument including a Clava type cairn around 1km north (RCAHMS NH91NW 3) and another one around 3km south in Aviemore (SM 889). There is potential to study these sites together to understand their functions within the local communities and possible chronological development in the area. The monument is within a small cluster of Clava type cairns in Strathspey on the southern extremity of their distribution area and offers potential to study burial and ritual practices

	and draw comparisons with evidence from the centre of Clava type cairn distribution around Inverness.
Relationship of the monument and its parts with its wider landscape and setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main cairn sits on a low hillock slightly above the adjacent loch and dominates the area to the southeast where the outlying cairn is located. There are potentially open views across the adjacent landscape and beyond to the surrounding mountain ranges and hills. The monument may have been constructed taking account of the surrounding landscape and possible view-sheds as a prominent feature in the landscape.
Associative	
Historical, cultural and social influences that have affected the form and fabric of the monument, and vice versa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Aesthetic attributes of the monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Significance in the national consciousness or to people who use or have used the monument, or descendants of such people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Associations the monument has with historical, traditional or artistic characters or events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

Assessment of national importance

Criteria	Assessment
Its inherent capability or potential to make a significant addition to the understanding or appreciation of the past	<p>The monument is of national importance because it has inherent potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of the past, in particular the design, construction and use of burial and ceremonial monuments of this date. It retains its field characteristics to a marked degree; the surviving structural form of the outer kerb of the cairn, evidence for the stone circle and the adjacent outlying cairn all contribute to its national importance. Loch Nan Carraigeon lies in the heart of Strathspey and the cairn with its stone circle and outlying cairn is an important surviving pre-historic monument within that landscape. This monument, together with other broadly contemporary sites in the vicinity, is a significant source of evidence for understanding landuse, settlement, social organisation and ritual within Strathspey in the pre-historic past. Clava type cairns are only situated in the Inverness-shire area which is a relatively small distribution area. The loss of the monument would significantly diminish our ability to appreciate and understand structures and practices associated with death and burial in prehistoric times.</p>
Its retention of the structural, decorative or field characteristics of its kind to a marked degree	
Its contribution, or the contribution of its class, to today's landscape and/or the historic landscape	
The quality and extent of any documentation or association that adds to the understanding of the monument or its context	
The diminution of the potential of a particular class or classes of monument to contribute to an understanding of the past, should the monument be lost or damaged	
Its place in the national consciousness [a factor that may be considered in support	

of other factors]	
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References

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland:
<http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore.html> CANMORE ID 15398.
