

Case information

Case ID	300016777
File Reference	AMH/1839/2/1
Name of Site	The Borg, broch 1600m N of Forsinain Bridge, Strath Halladale

Local Authority	Highland Council		
National Grid Reference	NC 8993 5095		
Designation No. (if any)	SM1839		
Designation Type	Scheduled Monument	Current Category of Listing	N/A
Case Type	Amendment		

Received/Start Date	30/04/2015
Decision Date	22/02/2016

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 **The Borg, broch, Strath Halladale**.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1938, and has not been amended since then.

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 S18 Highland scheduling project and visited on 15/05/2015.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

An assessment against the Scheduling 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*

The Borg, broch, Strath Halladale

1. Description

The monument is a broch, a complex stone-built substantial roundhouse, dating from the Iron Age (between 600BC and AD 400). The broch is visible as a substantial upstanding structure with surviving walling, entrance and intermural cells, crowning a large rocky knoll. The broch is located on an elevated position on the valley floor overlooking the River Halladale. It lies around 80m above sea level.

The broch measures approximately 20m in diameter with the internal diameter approximately 10m. The entrance lies on the east southeast side with the remains of an intramural cell directly off of the entrance. The broch wall stands up to 3m in height with sections of inner and outer faces visible. A stone defined enclosure is attached to the northeast side of the broch and is probably a later feature though it has been suggested that it could be contemporary with the broch.

The scheduled area is circular on plan measuring 80m 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 monument was first scheduled in 1938, but the designated area was not adequately defined: the present amendment rectifies this.

2. Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria (SHEP 2011, 71-73**)

* 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 well-preserved broch visible as an upstanding stone structure with associated outer-works.• Visible features include inner and outer wall faces, an intramural cell, and the entrance. By analogy with a number of excavated brochs there is potential for buried remains of additional intramural cells, hearths, water tanks and a well. In addition, there are later structures within and around the abandoned broch tower.• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The broch itself appears relatively undisturbed and the monument has very high potential to support future archaeological research.

monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By analogy with a number of excavated brochs, this broch and any associated structures will certainly 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.
Apparent developmental sequence of monument (either long or short may provide insights of importance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brochs in Sutherland and Caithness are typically thought to date from the mid first millennium BC through to the early part of the first millennium AD. There are few precise scientific dates for brochs and their dating has traditionally been based on typological studies of artefacts recovered from broch sites. The presence of external annex to the southeast approach to the broch, possible secondary walling within the broch (MacKie 2007) and the enclosure to the northeast of the broch indicates that this site is also likely to have had a complex development sequence. 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 any possible development sequence.
Original or subsequent functions of the monument and its parts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
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"> There are at least five other confirmed and possible brochs located along the river Halladale including Carn Liath (CANMORE ID 6833) and Upper Bighouse (CANMORE ID 6797). This monument is important as it is the most upstanding and well preserved example from the group. There may have been links between neighbouring brochs or they may indicate community catchments. This broch has the potential to enhance and broaden our understanding of prehistoric society and community within this location.
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 hut circles located 100m to the north northwest and a cairn located 250m to the west northwest. The close proximity of undesignated hut circles and field systems, is also notable. 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 group of brochs in the Strath Halladale area and offers potential to study their connections and draw comparisons with evidence from other brochs around the locality and northern Scotland in general.
Relationship of the monument and its parts with its wider landscape and setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The broch sits on the east side of Strath Halladale. There are open views across the adjacent landscape to the north and south. The focus appears to be on a narrow section of the Strath and it may have been positioned here to control movement through this area and the better agricultural land

	within the valley.
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>This monument is of national importance because it has an inherent potential to make a significant addition to our understanding of the past, in particular of Iron Age society in Sutherland and the function, use and development of brochs. This is a well-preserved example of a broch with identifiable architectural features including the entrance, at least one intramural cell and wall facings. The broch adds to our understanding of settlement patterns and social structure during the Iron Age in Strath Halladale and this potential is enhanced by the numerous broadly contemporary monuments 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.</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]	

References

CANMORE: <http://canmore.org.uk/> CANMORE ID 6813

Local Authority HER/SMR Reference: MHG9639

MacKie, E W (2007) *The Roundhouses, Brochs and Wheelhouses of Atlantic Scotland c.700 BC-AD 500: architecture and material culture, the Northern and Southern Mainland and the Western Islands*, BAR British series 444(II), 444(1), 2 V. Oxford: 647.

Mercer, R J (1980) *Archaeological field survey in northern Scotland, 1976-1979*, University of Edinburgh, Department of Archaeology, Occasional Paper No. 4. Edinburgh: 103.

RCAHMS (1911) *The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland. Second report and inventory of monuments and constructions in the county of Sutherland*. Edinburgh: 62, No. 186.

Young, A (1964) 'Brochs and duns', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot*, vol. 95, 1961-2: 185, No. 28.
