

Case information

Case ID	300016780		
File Reference	AMH/1886/21		
Name of Site	Upper Suisgill, broch 90m NW of		
Local Authority	Highland Council		
National Grid Reference	NC 8875 2530		
Designation No. (if any)	SM1886		
Designation Type	Scheduled Monument	Current Category of Listing	N/A
Case Type	Amendment		
Received/Start Date	24/04/2015		
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 the scheduling criteria (Scottish Historic Environment Policy, Annex 1) demonstrates that the monument continues to be of national importance. The decision is to amend the entry in the Schedule as **Suisgill, broch 100m NNW of Corbuie**.

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 24/04/2015.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

An assessment against the Scheduling criteria was carried out on July 2015 (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

The existing 1938 legal documents are not adequate to support definition of the extent of the scheduled area. The existing scheduled area is not large enough to include all the known and potential archaeological remains of national importance.

Elizabeth McCrone

Head of Designations
Heritage Management
Historic Environment Scotland

Contact	Dr James Bruhn, Senior Designations Officer, 0131-668 0316, james.bruhn@hes.scot
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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria*

Suisgill, broch 100m NNW of Corbuie

1. Description

The monument is a broch, a complex stone-built substantial roundhouse, dating from the Iron Age (between 600BC and AD 400). It is visible as a substantial stony mound, with surviving walling and associated banks and ditches. The broch is located on an elevated position on the valley floor on the edge of a terrace overlooking a bend in the River Helmsdale. It lies around 90m above sea level.

The broch measures approximately 20m in diameter with the internal diameter approximately 12m. Traces of an entrance lie on the east southeast side of the broch with the remains of two possible intramural cells directly to the north northeast and south of the entrance. The broch wall stands up to 1m in height with sections of inner and outer faces visible. The broch and hillock are encircled by a ditch almost 9m broad and 2.5m deep. The monument is located in a prominent position on the valley floor.

The scheduled area is circular on plan, centred on the centre of the broch and 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 documentation did not meet current standards: 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 a stoney mound with particularly impressive associated outer-works.
Archaeological, scientific, technological or other interest or research potential of the monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The broch although disturbed retains high potential to support future archaeological research.Surviving features include; the broch foundations and lower course of the walls, the entrance passage, intramural cells, stairs, and hearths, and are likely to include water tanks and possibly a well. In addition,

	<p>there may be later structures within or around the abandoned broch tower or possibly an earlier structure under the broch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This example has outworks of an impressive scale comprising a bank and ditch surrounding the broch tower, and possibly a further bank and ditch to the east. • 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 outer-works around Suisgill indicate 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are at least four confirmed and possible brochs within a 5km radius of the monument including Carn Nam Buth (Canmore ID 6700) and Ach An Fhionnfhuraidh (Canmore ID 7170). This monument is important as an upstanding and well preserved example.

the monument occurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brochs are found across Scotland, with a focus on the north of Scotland including the islands, and this monument is part of a larger prehistoric landscape with numerous features such as hut circles and field systems nearby. 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.
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 vicinity of the monument including hut circles located 230m to the northeast and a burnt mound located 150m to the west. 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 Helmsdale area and offers potential to study their connections and draw comparisons with evidence from other brochs around the locality and Sutherland 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 north side of the valley, overlooking the River Helmsdale. There are open views across the adjacent landscape and beyond to the surrounding hills. The focus appears to be on a narrow section of 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"> Brochs are part of the Atlantic tradition of complex stone-built roundhouses, but the broch tower can be seen as the pinnacle of this tradition. It is a highly recognisable form of Iron Age architecture which is particular to Scotland, especially northern Scotland.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

artistic characters or events	
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Assessment of national importance

Criteria	Assessment
Its inherent capability or potential to make a significant addition to the understanding or appreciation of the past	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 very good example of a broch surviving in a landscape with other broadly contemporary monuments. Architectural features such as the entrance, intramural cell and wall facings are visible. The outer-works of the broch are impressive with a substantial bank and ditch. 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 north of Scotland and further afield.
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

Further information:

Historic Environment Scotland: <http://canmore.org.uk/> CANMORE ID 6639 (accessed on 14/10/15)

Local Authority HER/SMR Reference: MHG11376 (accessed on 14/10/15)