



## Case information

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Case ID	300009949
File Reference	AMH/4993/2/1
Name of Site	Allanfearn, barrows 450m WNW of

Local Authority	Highland Council
National Grid Reference	NH 7132 4758
Designation No. (if any)	SM4993
Case Type	Amendment

Received/Start Date	27/05/2014
Decision Date	06/10/2016

## 1. Decision

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The monument was first scheduled in 1991 but the scheduled monument boundary did not reflect the apparent survival of nationally important archaeological remains visible on aerial photographs. The assessment against criteria demonstrates that the monument continues to be of national importance but the area designated should be reduced in size. The decision is to amend the entry in the schedule as **Allanfearn, barrows 300m WNW of**.

## 2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

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### 2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1991 and there has been no subsequent amendments.

### 2.2 Development Proposals

We are unaware of any development proposals.

## 3. Assessment

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### 3.1 Assessment information

The site was visited on 27/05/2014 as part of the S16 North scheduling project.

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Historic Environment Scotland, Longmore House,  
Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH

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VAT Number: **GB 221 8680 15**

### 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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#### Elizabeth McCrone

Head of Designations  
Heritage Management  
Historic Environment Scotland

<b>Contact</b>	Dr James Bruhn, Senior Designations Officer, 0131-668 0316, james.bruhn@gov.scot
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## **ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria**

### **Allanfearn, barrows 300m WNW of**

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## **1 Description**

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The monument is a group of early historic barrows probably dating to the first millennium AD. The barrows survive as buried features which have been revealed through cropmarks visible on oblique aerial photographs. The monument lies on a slight ridge 60m SE of the Moray Firth at around 5m OD.

At least three square and two circular barrows are clearly visible as cropmarks on oblique aerial photographs, and their presence has also been identified through geophysical survey. The barrows are approximately 5m to 7m in diameter surrounded by ditches approximately 1m wide. Dark internal features indicate at least one pit towards the centre of the barrows. The square barrows appear to have breaks at the corners of the ditches. Other less distinct cropmarks in the vicinity may represent the remains of further barrows or graves.

The scheduled area is rectangular on plan, measuring 100m NE-SW by 40m transversely, as shown in red on the accompanying map. It includes 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. The monument was first scheduled in 1991 but the designated area included an area where there is no evidence of the survival of nationally important remains: the present amendment rectifies this.

## **2 Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria (Historic Environment Scotland policy statement June 2016, Annex 1, pp. 48-50.)**

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### **2.1 Intrinsic Characteristics**

The monument comprises the remains of a barrow cemetery visible on aerial photographs and surviving as buried deposits below the ploughsoil. Cropmarks show that the barrows display some key characteristics of their class such as enclosing ditches, causeways and a central pit. Analogy with other similar sites in Inverness-shire suggests that the barrows will mark the locations of inhumation burials with the potential to contain archaeological deposits surviving in good condition. Although there is no scientific dating for this site, the form of the barrows suggests a date from the second half of the first millennium AD

The monument contains round and square barrows of varied size perhaps suggesting a long development sequence, though it is possible that they were created over a relatively short time interval. The variety of barrows gives the monument high potential to support future archaeological research. Surviving

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deposits can be expected to include the fills of the barrow ditches, which may preserve some slumped barrow material, central burial pits and human burials.

These remains can tell us about the development of burial practices in the later prehistoric and early historic periods. Deposits associated with the burials may support investigation of funerary practices and there is potential to study social status as reflected by differences in burial, if these survive.

## 2.2 Contextual Characteristics

Barrow cemeteries are mainly found in central and northern Scotland with focus in Perthshire, Aberdeenshire and the Highlands. However, they are a rare form of burial monument with only eighteen confirmed or possible examples recorded in Scotland. Many barrow cemeteries only survive as buried archaeological deposits visible through cropmark evidence. In this case, the barrows are well-defined and show clear central burial pits. This site therefore should be regarded as a good, representative example of a type of cemetery that clusters in Inverness-shire.

The significance of the monument is enhanced because it is part of a cluster of barrow cemeteries located around the Moray Firth. A second important cluster of round and square barrows lies 5.5km to the NE adjacent to Kerrowaird (SM6017). The concentration of barrow cemeteries in the Moray Firth area is notable and can be compared with the grouping of barrow cemeteries in Angus and East Yorkshire.

We know little about the structure of society and the beliefs behind the burial practices of the first millennium AD in Northern Scotland. This barrow cemetery has the potential to enhance and broaden our understanding of such burial practices. Comparison of this monument with others of this class elsewhere in Scotland can inform about regional identity, conversion and/or the political, social and cultural cohesion of society in Scotland in the first millennium AD. Excavation in the vicinity of the barrow cemetery has produced evidence of prehistoric burial and settlement from the Bronze Age and later, providing additional significant contextual information.

## 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 the monument, and ensure the recognition of its national importance.

## 4 Assessment of national importance

The monument is of national importance because it is a rare and distinctive example of a barrow cemetery of the first millennium AD. The barrows, surviving as buried archaeological remains, are visible through well-defined cropmarks on oblique aerial photographs and appear to preserve evidence of central pits. The cropmark evidence suggest two distinct barrow forms are present, giving potential to understand how funerary practices might change according to social status or over time. The importance of this site is enhanced by its position within a regional cluster of barrow cemeteries. Our understanding of late prehistoric and early historic funerary practice would be diminished if this monument were lost or damaged.

## 5 References

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Historic Environment Scotland <http://www.canmore.org.uk> reference number CANMORE ID 14211 (accessed on 11/8/2016).

The Highland Council Historic Environment Record Reference MHG4363 (accessed on 11/8/2016).

Bain and Cullen, S and I. (1996) Allanfearn (Inverness and Bona parish), multi-phase settlements', *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, 1996. Page 65.

Banks, I. (1993) Allanfearn (Inverness & Bona parish): square barrows', *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, 1993. Page 44.

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