

## Case information

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<b>Case ID</b>	300016801
<b>File Reference</b>	AMJ/9298/1/1
<b>Name of Site</b>	Sarclet, fishing station 135m E of Brodie House

Local Authority	Highland Council		
National Grid Reference	ND 35029 43265		
Designation No. (if any)	SM 13643		
Designation Type	Scheduled Monument	Current Category of Listing	N/A
Case Type	Designation		

<b>Received/Start Date</b>	30/04/2015
<b>Decision Date</b>	13/01/2017

## 1. Decision

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The assessment against criteria demonstrates that the monument is of national importance. The decision is to add the monument to the schedule of nationally important monuments.

## 2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

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### 2.1 Designation Background

The monument is currently undesignated but recorded in Canmore and the Highland Council Historic Environment Record

### 2.2 Development Proposals

N/A

## 3. Assessment

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### 3.1 Assessment information

The site was visited on 30/04/2015.

### 3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

[www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot)

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

Historic Environment Scotland  
Scottish Charity No. SC045925  
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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

The monument is undesignated but does meet the scheduling criteria.

Designation as a scheduled monument offers an appropriate mechanism to secure the preservation of the monument.

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### Elizabeth McCrone

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## ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria\*

### Sarclet, fishing station 135m E of Brodie House

## 1. Description

The monument is a fishing station built for the herring trade between 1828 and 1844 by the Thrumster Estate. The herring station is located at sea level in a small, sheltered, steep-sided cove.

The herring station comprises a well-preserved two storey building, referred to as the curing house, measuring approximately 15.5m by 7m, standing to the wall-head. Adjacent is a near complete structure housing a fresh water spring with a neighbouring stone platform and related terrace. The original winch mechanism and capstan are sited on the stone platform at the head of the cove. A levelled and cut track leads down into the cove from the village above. The track continues along the west and south of the site, supported in places by a substantial dry-stone revetment up to fifteen courses in height, leading to the remains of a cambered slipway. There are traces of paved areas and the head of another slipway running across the width of the cove. All structures, slipways, paving and retaining walls are constructed from local rubble masonry with roughly worked dressing to the windows and doors.

The scheduled area is irregular in shape and includes the two storey building and adjacent structure with associated slipways, paved areas, retaining walls and a section of access track. The scheduled area extends to the Mean Low Water Springs mark, 1m either side of the access track, 1m to the west of the track as it passes the structures and the scheduled area follows the foot of the steep-slopes to the south of the site as depicted in red in the accompanying map.

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

\* 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
<b>Intrinsic</b>	
Condition in which monument survives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The monument is a fishing station (see Description) surviving as a complex of buildings with associated slipways, paved areas and retaining walls. There is a track related to the monument.</li><li>• Overall the site survives in very good condition, despite evidence of a landslip to the west that partly covers the track/platform, with no record of an excavation or redevelopment at the site.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site includes several standing buildings some of which partially survive to wall head height.</li> </ul>
Archaeological, scientific, technological or other interest or research potential of the monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fishing station retains much structural integrity and in the surviving stratigraphy and in its architectural elements. These elements can help us understand more about the 19th century fishing industry, the architecture of fishing stations and the construction, use and abandonment of these monuments.</li> <li>There is still good potential for the survival of other archaeological deposits related to the use of the site within, beneath and around the intact elements of the site. These elements can help us understand more about the fishing industry.</li> <li>The monument is also important for the potential of exploring the relationship between this fishing station and others in the vicinity.</li> <li>Original architectural and engineering plans survive in archives, and can assist any potential research and further our knowledge of the archaeological remains. The documents also depict works not completed or now lost such as the breakwater.</li> </ul>
Apparent developmental sequence of monument (either long or short may provide insights of importance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The location was the site of an earlier harbour and fishing station built circa 1810 by David Brodie of Hopeville. His attempt to establish a harbour at the site, located close to the salt pans in Sarclet, failed.</li> <li>The fishing station dates from 1828. The surviving remains were constructed in phases up until 1843. The site suffered storm damage on more than one occasion and required repair. Alterations were made alongside major repairs.</li> <li>In 1828, the planned proposal for a fishing station consisted of a simple breakwater pier sheltering the bay. In 1834, a plan was in place to expand the station to include a small breakwater to the north to increase shelter of the bay, a cooperage and curing house. By 1843, plans of the site show further improvements such as paved slipways and a mechanised capstan.</li> <li>Scientific excavation of the site would allow us to develop a better understanding of the chronology of the site and possible development sequence. There may be evidence of the first harbour from circa 1810.</li> </ul>
Original or subsequent functions of the monument and its parts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The original use of the site was as a fishing station with focus on the landing and processing of herring.</li> <li>The development of the fishing industry and the specific processes of the herring trade have directly influenced the form of the monument. Herring were landed soon after catching due to regulations regarding the sale for export and the site would completely process the fish – catching, landing, gutting, cleaning, salting/pickling and packaging in barrels ready for market. The buildings on site had specific functions to fulfil these tasks, including the curing house and cooperage.</li> </ul>
<b>Contextual</b>	
Present rarity or representativeness of all or	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The establishment of the fishing station at Sarclet was part of the 19th century herring boom which began in Caithness</li> </ul>

any part of the monument, assessed against knowledge of the archaeology of Scotland and of the region in which the monument occurs	<p>in the 1790s and which developed into a major export industry for Scotland and the United Kingdom. Due to the growth of the industry, there was huge pressure on space at Wick despite the building of Pulteneytown in 1806. This caused overspill into smaller settlements along the Caithness coast such as Dunbeath, Lybster and Helmsdale, and saw the establishment of purpose built stations such as Sarclet. Caithness reached its peak in the 1850s but its success encouraged other East Coast communities. By the late 19th century, the Scottish fishing industry, concentrating on herring, had become the largest in Europe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fishing stations were located along much of the Caithness coastline with the boom of the herring industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, very few survive in such a complete and unaltered form. Many other fishing stations were re-used and redeveloped.</li> <li>There are fishing stations at Whaligoe (B-listed, LB14070) approximately 4.5km southwest of the monument and the major harbour town of Wick lies approximately 7.5km to the north. This site at Sarclet is important as an upstanding and very well preserved example with surviving structures related to the use of the site including intact slipways and paved working areas.</li> <li>The original winch and capstan survives in-situ and are well preserved. These are rare surviving features.</li> <li>The low lying structure where a fresh water spring is collected in a stone lined basin and drained into the bay is an unusual feature.</li> </ul>
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"> <li>Sarclet was used as an overflow for Wick harbour and is historically documented as, unusually, offering free use for fishermen (no seasonal fees charged). This fishing station has the potential to enhance and broaden our understanding of the herring industry.</li> <li>The location of the monument was at a site of an earlier harbour and fishery making use of the salt pans in Sarclet.</li> </ul>
Relationship of the monument and its parts with its wider landscape and setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fishing station is located in a narrow, natural cove, is well sheltered and nestled at the foot of steeply sloping ground to all other sides. The monument is hidden from view when approaching from land until within close proximity or at the top of the slopes. The site would only be partly visible from the sea due to the narrow nature of the cove.</li> </ul>
<b>Associative</b>	
Historical, cultural and social influences that have affected the form and fabric of the monument, and vice versa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Original architectural and engineering plans are archived and the venture was partly funded by the Herring Fisheries Commission of the Fishery Board. The Commission may have influenced the design of the site in line with regulations or ideas related to efficiency and best practice in the fishery industry.</li> </ul>
Aesthetic attributes of the monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>
Significance in the national consciousness or to people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The herring fishing industry was a major source of employment in Caithness, and Scotland in general, in the</li> </ul>

who use or have used the monument, or descendants of such people	19th and early-20th century, with herring being a major export commodity at this time. Reports of up to 1200 boats operating in the Wick area during some fishing seasons is testament to the importance and scale of the industry.
Associations the monument has with historical, traditional or artistic characters or events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The site was built in phases by the Thrumster Estate between 1828 and 1844 and has a link with Wick harbour.</li> </ul>

### Assessment of national importance

Criteria	Assessment
Its inherent capability or potential to make a significant addition to the understanding or appreciation of the past	The monument is of national importance because it has an inherent potential to contribute to our understanding of the growth of the herring fishing industry in Caithness and Scotland during the 19th century. The herring fishery, which first developed in Caithness, was to grow into a major export industry for Scotland and by the late 19th century, the Scottish fishing industry was the largest in Europe. It is a well-preserved site, notable for the survival in excellent condition of a two storey building, adjacent structure housing a fresh water spring, in-situ winch and capstan and related slipways. Its significance is further enhanced by its location within close proximity of the sites of other fishing stations along the Caithness coast. The surviving historical records, in the form of plans and financial accounts, enhance our appreciation and understanding of this important site. The fishing station at Sarclet represents a key site for enhancing our knowledge of a resource which was often re-used and redeveloped or subject to abandonment followed by complete collapse and ruin due to marine erosion. As a little-altered example of a herring fishing station, the loss of this monument would impede our ability to understand the development and operation of the fishing industry, with emphasis on herring, in Caithness and across Scotland during the 19th century.
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

Historic Environment Scotland <http://www.canmore.org.uk> reference number CANMORE ID 8981 (accessed on 30/04/2015).

Highland Council HER reference MHG 1936.

Original plans and Fishery Board documents held by Scottish Fisheries Museum, Anstruther with remote access via Scran:

[www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot)

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[http://www.scran.ac.uk/database/results.php?searchdb=&scache=1abxl34iwj&no\\_results=16&sortby=relevance&view=grid&search\\_term=sarclet&scache=1abxl34iwj&offset=1](http://www.scran.ac.uk/database/results.php?searchdb=&scache=1abxl34iwj&no_results=16&sortby=relevance&view=grid&search_term=sarclet&scache=1abxl34iwj&offset=1) (originally accessed 11/05/2015)

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<http://www.scran.ac.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-000-572-332-C&scache=1abxl34iwj&searchdb=scan> (originally accessed 11/05/2015)

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Graham, A and Gordon, J (1987), 'Old Harbours in Northern and Western Scotland', Proc Soc Antiq Scot, 117, 265-352.