Case information

Case ID	300009765
File Reference	AMH/172/2/1
Name of Site	Auchnaha, standing stone & long cairn

Local Authority	Argyll And Bute		
National Grid Reference	NR 93295 81706		
Designation No. (if any)	SM172		
Designation Type	Scheduled monument	**Current Category of Listing**	N/A
Case Type	Amendment		

Received/Start Date	01/04/2014
Decision Date	02/03/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1935, but the documentation does not conform to current standard. 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 **Auchnaha, standing stone and long cairn 290m SE of**

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was scheduled in 1935. No previous amendments to the scheduling have taken place.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

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3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The monument was assessed for amendment as part of the S15 West 2014 scheduling project and visited on 22 May 2014.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

The monument was assessed for scheduling against the criteria for determining national importance and found to meet the criteria (see **Annex A)**.

The designation criteria are found in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), pp. 71-73. http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/shep-dec2011.pdf

3.3 Other considerations

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

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria*

SM172 Auchnaha, standing stone and long cairn 290m SE of.

1. Description

The monument is the remains of a chambered cairn dating from the Neolithic period (between 3800 and 2500 BC). It is visible as a group of upstanding stones surrounded by a slight bank that probably indicates the original extent of the cairn. Four large stones clearly form one polygonal burial chamber to the south and further stones to the north suggest a second chamber. The remains lie 245m above sea level on a prominent knoll that stands on the broad ridge separating Strathpeffer to the south and Strath Sgitheach to the north.

The monument is a chambered long cairn of a type known as a Clyde cairn. The four largest upstanding stones form a polygonal chamber oriented east-west. The chamber measures 3m long and was probably a similar width. The individual stones range from 0.8m to 1.5m in height, the tallest being to the northwest and having a pointed top. The entrance probably lies to the east, where three pairs of low, transverse slabs recorded in the past suggest a short passage and outer chamber. Two substantial stone slabs about 2m northwest of the first chamber suggest a second chamber built on a parallel axis, sited closer to the summit of the knoll. The subtle remains of a low bank or scarp surrounding the knoll suggest the original cairn measured about 23m in diameter.

The scheduled area is circular on plan, measuring 40m in diameter, centred on the pointed northwest stone of the south chamber, 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 1964, 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	• The monument is a chambered long cairn of a type known as a Clyde cairn, together with a single standing stone that may originally have formed part of the cairn. • The cairn is visible as an elongated, trapezoidal stone-built structure comprising a curving arrangement of orthostats defining a facade and courtyard; two stone-lined burial

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	compartments; and an overburden of cairn material. It is aligned northeast-southwest, facing uphill on a gently sloping hillside. The cairn has been disturbed in antiquity. • Its remains are visible over a length of over 20m, and it is about 19m across the façade at the northeast end, narrowing to about 13m wide at its southwest end. However, originally it was probably much larger: in 1794 it was reported to be about 40m long and 'of considerable breadth and amazing depth' (OSA xiv (1795), 257). • The larger of the two burial chambers measures approximately 8m by 3m and is accessed from the façade. It is thought to have been divided into three compartments. The second burial chamber towards the southwest end of the cairn is much smaller and only two of its lining slabs have been recorded. • A Latin cross is recorded as incised on top of the south face of the easternmost orthostat in the façade. • The standing stone is located approximately 23m southwest of the present southwest end of the cairn and stands c 1m high: it is probably associated with the cairn and has either been re-located or marks the end of the original extent of the long cairn. The Ordnance Survey (1972) suggested that the cairn originally measured about 43.5m in length and incorporated the standing stone at its southwest end. • The cairn and standing stone are located in a clearing within a mature coniferous plantation. Although its form is obscured by vegetation and wind-thrown trees, and despite the partial removal of its southwest end, the structural footprint of the cairn is likely to survive largely intact beneath the ground surface.
Archaeological, scientific, technological or other interest or research potential of the monument	• Although the cairn has been disturbed, its key architectural elements (façade and burial chambers) are largely intact. They have the potential to enhance our understanding of the dating, development, design and function of long cairns and the evolution of regional or local variations in form. • There is no record of investigation at this monument which suggests that buried archaeological evidence is highly likely to survive, including further structural features, artefacts and palaeoenvironmental evidence, and possibly human remains. This can inform our understanding of the chronology and development of the cairn, its longevity of use, and of the ritual and funerary activities that took place here. • The excavation of similar monuments in Argyll, for example at Kilmore (Canmore ID 22934) and Nether Largie South (Canmore ID 39460), has yielded high-quality grave goods, the remains of burial chambers, and human and animal skeletal material, as well as associated archaeological deposits from ritual and funerary activities in the immediate vicinity of the cairns, such as burnt material and pottery in the forecourt and entrance.
Apparent developmental sequence of monument (either long or short may provide insights of importance)	• There are no scientific dates for this monument, but excavations at similar sites have indicated that Clyde cairns are Neolithic in origin, dating mainly to the third millennium BC, and that they remained in use over several or many

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	generations. • There is some evidence for evolution in architectural form and for more than one phase of burial at Auchnaha. Archaeological investigation in the future could improve our understanding of when the cairn was built, how it developed and for how long it remained in use.
Original or subsequent functions of the monument and its parts	• The monument was a place of burial, ritual/ceremony and possibly commemoration. • As with other Clyde cairns, this example is likely to have seen adaption and re-use, such as the compartmentalisation of a chamber for separate burials and burial events. This re-use may have coincided with a remodelling of the entrance (Clyde cairns are normally northeast facing) with the addition of a curved façade of orthostats, creating a forecourt. An overburden of cairn material was probably added to form a unified structure (at least as seen from the outside). In this case a trapezoidal form, widening towards the northeast-facing forecourt, represents the final architectural form. • There are two further, unusual facets to this cairn. A standing stone lies beyond the southwest end of cairn, although this is thought to have been part of the cairn originally, or to be a later repositioning of one of the cairn's orthostats. Secondly, on one of the façade orthostats there is the carved inscription of a Latin cross. • The cairn is likely to have had a prominent place within a social group's territory and to have been a focal point in the landscape, possibly reinforcing social/ancestral ties to the land.
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	• Chambered cairns provide the primary material evidence for the Neolithic in this part of Scotland. • This is one of approximately 100 known examples of Clyde cairns, whose distribution is clustered in Argyll, Perthshire, Strathclyde and Galloway, with outliers in other parts of Scotland.
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)	• There is a notable cluster of ten of these long cairns around Loch Fyne, Cowal and the west side of Bute – other examples are Ardmarnock (Canmore ID 39909), 9km to the south, and Auchoish (Canmore ID 39561), almost directly opposite this monument but on the west side of Loch Fyne. The position of this cairn in relation to other prehistoric sites in this landscape merits future analysis – for example, a cluster of cairns of various types lies inland up to 2km to the south of Auchnaha.
Relationship of the monument and its parts with its wider landscape and setting	• The cairn is located on a gentle southwest facing slope at around 120m above sea level, overlooking upper Loch Fyne and Knapdale beyond. • Its orientation (facing northeast and aligned northeast-southwest) allows for the backdrop of Loch Fyne to form behind the façade and forecourt; Auchnaha and the cluster of cairns to its south are situated close to a landing place at Kilfinan Bay, which may be significant.
Associative	
Historical, cultural and social	• N/A

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influences that have affected the form and fabric of the monument, and vice versa	
Aesthetic attributes of the monument	• N/A
Significance in the national consciousness or to people who use or have used the monument, or descendants of such people	• N/A
Associations the monument has with historical, traditional or artistic characters or events	• 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	The monument is of national importance because it has the potential to make a significant addition to our understanding of the past, in particular the dating, construction and use of monumental burial structures, the nature of funerary practices, and the significance of chambered cairns in prehistoric society. Chambered cairns provide the primary material evidence for the Neolithic in this part of Scotland. This example provides evidence of adaption and re-use over what was probably a considerable period of time, adding to its significance. There is also high potential for the survival of significant buried archaeological evidence, including human remains, artefacts and palaeoenvironmental evidence, which can enhance our knowledge of wider prehistoric society and economy, how people lived, where they came from and who they had contact with. The loss of the monument would significantly diminish our ability to appreciate and understand how death and burial was conceptualised in Neolithic Scotland.
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

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