Case information

Case ID	300017955
File Reference	AMJ/9335/1/1
Name of Site	Milton of Clava, chapel and standing stone 255m SSW of

Local Authority	Highland Council
National Grid Reference	NH 75220 43930
Designation No. (if any)	SM13652
Case Type	Amendment

Received/Start Date	2014
Decision Date	21/09/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1882 in the same designation as other remains at Clava. The scheduling was amended in 1923, but 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 designation to have three separate entries, with this monument added to the schedule of nationally important monuments as **Milton of Clava, chapel and standing stone 255m SSW of**.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1882 and amended in 1923. It currently forms part of SM90074.

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 North 2014 project and visited on 15/07/2014.

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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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria

Milton of Clava, chapel and standing stone 255m SSW of

1 Description

The monument is the remains of a chapel and enclosure, of probable early Christian or medieval date (600-1500AD), and a single standing stone which may represent the only remaining component of a Clava-type cairn, a form of burial monument constructed and in use during the Bronze Age (2500BC to 800BC). It is visible as the turf-covered stone footings of a chapel lying within a rectangular enclosure, both of which are aligned northeast-southwest. The single standing stone stands at the southeast corner of the chapel. The monument lies on a gravel terrace overlooking the floodplain of the River Nairn, about 110m above sea level.

The enclosure is rectangular in plan, measuring about 35m long by 16m wide within walls spread up to two metres wide and about 0.5m high. An entrance, defined by two recumbent stones, is visible at the southeast corner. The chapel and standing stone lie within the southwest section of the enclosure. The chapel measures about seven metres long by around 3.5m wide within turf-covered stone walls spread up to two metres in width, broken by a single entrance on the southeast side. The standing stone is around one metre high and stands at the southeast corner of the chapel.

The scheduled area is irregular on plan, 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 scheduled area extends up to, but excludes the surrounding post-and-wire fence and gate. The scheduling specifically excludes the above-ground elements of any modern fixtures within and around the monument. The monument was first scheduled in 1882 as part of a wider scheduling. The designation was amended in 1923, but the documentation does not conform to current standards; the present amendment rectifies this.

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

2.1 Intrinsic Characteristics

Both the chapel and enclosure are visible as low turf-covered stone footings, and overall the site survives in good condition with no record of an excavation or major disturbance at the site. Therefore there is good potential for the survival of archaeological deposits including structural remains, human burials, artefacts and environmental remains such as charcoal or pollen, within, beneath and around the upstanding remains of the chapel and enclosure. The archaeological deposits have the potential to provide information about the date of the monument, the construction

and form of the chapel, its date and development sequence and its relationship with the enclosure. It is possible that graves remain in situ within the chapel or enclosure, with potential to enhance our knowledge of status and burial practice at early Christian and medieval ecclesiastical sites. The chapel could date from as early as the 7th century AD, though excavation of medieval chapels elsewhere has shown that they were often re-modelled over a period of time.

Additional deposits associated with the earlier standing stone and potential Clava-type cairn may also survive including artefacts and ecofacts. These would enhance our understanding of the date and character of this monument, and of prehistoric burial and ritual practices and the contemporary economy and environment. Together, the chapel, enclosure, standing stone and related archaeological deposits offer high potential to study changes in belief and culture over an extended time period of some three millennia.

2.2 Contextual Characteristics

Although chapels are found widely across the Highlands, there are few confirmed early chapel sites in this region. Milton of Clava, therefore, represents a rare example of a probable early chapel. Only four further pre-reformation chapels can be identified within a 10km radius of the monument (St Columba's chapel; Canmore ID 14207. Dalcross; scheduled monument reference number SM5399, Canmore ID 14153. Little Urchany; Canmore ID 15015. St Barevan Church; scheduled monument reference number SM3116, Canmore ID 15068), though there is a general scatter of unconfirmed records of chapels in the region, suggesting that Milton of Clava was part of a network of chapels and burial grounds. The remains of this chapel and enclosure could enhance our understanding of the organisation and spread of Christianity in northern Britain and there is potential to compare it with other early Christian or medieval chapels in the north of Scotland.

The standing stone at Milton of Clava may represent the only remaining component of a Bronze Age Clava-type cairn. These cairns form a regional group of 50 or more stone-built monuments found around the Moray Firth, which combine a number of similar elements: a circular cairn with a platform on the outside, bounded by a ring of monoliths. The monument lies within a very significant local cluster of Clava-type cairns, which include Milton of Clava (scheduled monument reference number 13650; Canmore ID 14281) about 55m northeast, and Cludoich (scheduled monument reference number SM6091; Canmore ID14268) and Ballagan (scheduled monument reference number SM11900; Canmore ID 14276) about 75m and 195m southwest respectively. Together they form part of an extensive Bronze Age cemetery. The proximity of these monuments can give important insights into the Bronze Age landscape, the placing of such sites in the landscape and the development of this ceremonial landscape as a whole.

The construction of a chapel in such a location is significant. It indicates the deliberate siting of an early Christian chapel on the location of a prehistoric cairn and within a highly visible complex of prehistoric monuments. This may have entailed the destruction of a cairn. This site therefore has the potential to add to our understanding of early Christian beliefs and values, the location choices made when

siting early chapels and the continuing influence of prehistoric monuments and their locations within much later societies.

2.3 Associative Characteristics

There are no known significant associative characteristics which contribute to the site's cultural significance.

3 Purpose and implications of scheduling

The site visit showed the site is in a stable condition and well preserved. 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 has an inherent potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of the past, in particular of early chapel sites in the north of Scotland and further afield. There is high potential for the survival of archaeology that can make a significant contribution to our understanding of early church architecture and burial and to the development of belief and culture. The monument's importance is enhanced by its association with a complex of Bronze Age monuments and probable siting on the location of a Clava-type cairn. The loss of this monument would diminish our ability to appreciate and understand early chapels, the role they played in the adoption and spread of Christianity, and the influence of prehistoric monuments on the location of chapels and the development of belief and practice.

5 References

Historic Environment Scotland http://www.canmore.org.uk reference number CANMORE ID 14282 (accessed on 09/05/2016).

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