## Case information

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| **Case ID** | 300016707 |
| **File Reference** | AMH/447/2/1 |
| **Name of Site** | Dun Burn, cairn NNE of junction with Berriedale Water |

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| **Local Authority** | Highland Council | | |
| **National Grid Reference** | ND 1050 2502 | | |
| **Designation No. (if any)** | SM447 | | |
| **Designation Type** | Scheduled Monument | **Current Category of Listing** | N/A |
| **Case Type** | Amendment | | |

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| **Received/Start Date** | 29/04/2015 |
| **Decision Date** | 07/10/2016 |

## 1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1939 and 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 entry in the Schedule as Dun Burn, cairn 200m NE of An Dun Broch.

## 2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

### 2.1 Designation Background

Monument first scheduled in 1939; no subsequent amendment.

### 2.2 Development Proposals

N/A

## 3. Assessment

### 3.1 Assessment information

The site was visited on 29/04/2015.

### 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*
**Dun Burn, cairn 200m NE of An Dun Broch**

## 1. Description

The monument is a burial cairn thought to date from the Late Neolithic to Bronze Age (the fourth and third millennia BC). The monument is located on the summit of a spur on the W side of a valley above Berriedale Water, at around 110m above sea level.

The monument is located at the south of a ridge on moorland with open views, mainly across the Berriedale Water and is in close proximity to other prehistoric remains. The cairn survives as an almost circular mound of earth and stone measuring approximately 18.5m in diameter overall and standing up to 2.5m high. The summit of the cairn is quite level and has a slight depression, possibly indicating the collapse of a chamber. On the south west edge of the cairn three large stones protrude and indicate the remains of an outer kerb.

The scheduled area is circular on plan, measuring 40m in diameter, centred on the monument. The scheduling 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, as shown in red on the accompanying map. The monument was first scheduled in 1939, but the documentation did not meet 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.)

* 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 |
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| **Intrinsic** | |
| Condition in which monument survives | • The monument is a burial cairn (see description) visible as a mound.<br>• Overall the site survives in very good condition with no record of an excavation at the site.<br>• The depression on the summit could indicate the presence of one or more chambers. The remains of an outer kerb are visible as three adjacent stones which protrude from the mound on it south west edge. |

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| Archaeological, scientific, technological or other interest or research potential of the monument | • The cairn retains some structural integrity in its plan form, in the surviving stratigraphy and in its architectural elements. These elements can help us understand more about ritual and funerary practice, the architecture of prehistoric burial and the construction, use and abandonment of these monuments.<br>• There is still good potential for the survival of other archaeological deposits, including burial remains, artefacts such as pottery, and environmental remains such as charcoal or pollen, within, beneath and around the intact elements of the monument. These elements can help us understand more about ritual and funerary practice, and the significance of materials, technology and craft in a burial context. The relationship between the main cairn and the adjacent hut circles is also important. |
| Apparent developmental sequence of monument (either long or short may provide insights of importance) | • The cairn is thought to date from the late Neolithic to early Bronze Age (the fourth and third millennia BC).<br>• Remains of an outer kerb may indicate a developmental sequence with the cairn possibly being altered or enlarged.<br>• In close proximity are several substantial hut circles and related field system which may be related to the cairn.<br>• Scientific excavation of the site would allow 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 | • The original function of the monument was as a burial or funerary site. The site may also have had other ceremonial or ritual uses for the local community. |
| **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 | • There are at least nine confirmed and possible prehistoric burial cairns within a 10km radius of the monument including Berriedale Water cairn (SM422) around 675m to the north east. This monument is important as an upstanding and well preserved example.<br>• Burial cairns are found across Scotland and this monument is part of a larger prehistoric landscape with numerous features such as hut circles and field systems nearby. |

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| | • There may have been social, community or even family links between neighbouring burial cairns or they may indicate community catchments. This cairn has the potential to enhance and broaden our understanding of prehistoric burial practices. |
| 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 are numerous broadly contemporary monuments in the landscape surrounding the monument including hut circles, enclosure and field system located 700m to the north (SM3476). Another burial cairn (SM422) is only 675m to the north east. The close proximity of An Dun Broch cairn (SM518) 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.<br>• The monument is within a small group of cairns in the Berriedale and Langwell area and offers potential to study burial and ritual practices and draw comparisons with evidence from other cairns around the locality and Caithness. |
| Relationship of the monument and its parts with its wider landscape and setting | • The cairn sits on the west side of the valley, overlooking the Berriedale Water. It sits between the Dun Burn and Allt Ard-Achaidh burn which feed the Berriedale Water. There are open views across the adjacent landscape and beyond to the surrounding hills. The focus appears to be over the valley and river below. The monument may have been constructed taking account of the surrounding landscape and possible view-sheds as a prominent feature in the landscape. |
| **Associative** | |
| Historical, cultural and social influences that have affected the form and fabric of the monument, and vice versa | N/A |
| 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 |

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| Associations the monument has with historical, traditional or artistic characters or events | N/A |

**Assessment of national importance**

| Criteria | Assessment |
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| 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 of its potential to make a significant addition to knowledge and understanding of the past, particularly the design and construction of burial monuments, and the nature of belief systems and burial practices during the Bronze Age in Caithness. Ritual and funerary monuments are important for enhancing our understanding of Bronze Age society, its organisation, economy, religion and demography. The monument is in the vicinity of other prehistoric remains along Berriedale. The cairn survives to a significant degree, including detail such as the remains of an outer kerb, allowing us to interpret its form, function and position in the landscape. It retains high potential for the presence of buried archaeological remains, including burials, artefacts and palaeoenvironmental evidence. The loss of the monument would significantly diminish our future ability to appreciate and understand funerary practice, death and burial in prehistoric times, and the placing of such monuments within the landscape. |
| 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 8045 (accessed on 01/09/16).

Highland Council HER Reference: MHG 1078.