



Case information

Case ID	300009805
File Reference	AMH/3234/2/1
Name of Site	Fearnoch, chapel and enclosure 400m E of
Local Authority	Argyll & Bute
National Grid Reference	NS 0210 7645
Designation No.	SM3234
Case Type	Amendment

Received/Start Date	21/05/2014
Decision Date	10/11/2016

1. Decision

The monument was first scheduled in 1972 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 **Fearnoch, chapel, enclosure and holy well 400m E of**.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The monument was first scheduled in 1972.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals affecting this monument.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The site was visited on 21 May 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

Fearnoch, chapel, enclosure and holy well 400m E of

1 Description

The monument is the remains of a chapel site probably dating to the Early Christian period. The chapel is rectangular and survives as low turf-covered walls, surrounded by sub-rectangular enclosure. There is a break in the south wall of the enclosure from which a track leads to a well downslope. The monument is situated at about 120m above sea level on a small rise with views across the Kyles of Bute.

The chapel is rectangular measuring approximately 5m northeast by southwest by 3.5m transversely within low turf-covered walls, 1.2m thick. There is a gap in the southeast wall which is probably the entrance. The chapel is located within a sub-rectangular enclosure which measures approximately 15m northeast by southwest and 10m transversely. The enclosure survives as earth and stone walls and there is a break in the south wall from which a track leads to a well situated about 35m to the southwest. The well is stone-lined, measuring 7.2m by 3m.

The scheduled area is irregular on plan to include the remains of both the chapel and enclosure and the well described above and an area around in which evidence for the monuments construction, use and abandonment is expected to survive, as shown in red on the accompanying map. The monument was last scheduled in 1972 but the documentation did not meet modern standards; the present scheduling rectifies this.

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

2.1 Intrinsic Characteristics

The site is in good condition as a stable, low masonry ruin, with a stone lined well to the south. The site is identified as a chapel due to its general orientation (northeast to southwest), the plan of the building with a doorway in the southeast wall, the surrounding enclosure wall and the close proximity to a probable holy well. The site was known locally as an early chapel in the mid-19th century and the well is believed to have been called the 'chapel well' or the 'priest's well'. The site shares many similar characteristics to other early Christian chapel sites.

There are no obvious signs of previous excavation or major disturbance, although the well appears to have been altered in the 19th or 20th centuries and the upper masonry courses of the chapel appear later than the lower courses. The site therefore contains potential evidence for the development, design and construction

of the chapel and the surrounding enclosure, and for the relationship of those structures with the well.

The fabric of the chapel is likely to seal archaeological features and artefacts relating to its construction, and may include palaeoenvironmental evidence which can tell us something of the environment at the time of the chapel's construction and use. It is possible that graves remain in situ, either within the chapel or enclosure and this can help us understand more about burial practice at Early Christian ecclesiastical sites as well as demographic information.

2.2 Contextual Characteristics

Argyll is particularly rich in Early Christian ecclesiastical sites. In Cowal, there are nineteen recorded ecclesiastical sites which provide evidence for Christian burial and worship and these include ten chapels. The chapels are of similar drystone construction and dimensions with the majority surrounded by sub-rectangular enclosures and associated with wells or springs and in some cases carved stones. Some of these sites may potentially have a long (potentially prehistoric) sequence of occupation, as has been demonstrated at the nearby Ardnadam chapel site (scheduled monument reference SM3235, Canmore ID 40746).

This monument can be compared to the rest of the local group to help understand more of their origin and chronology and distribution in relation to settlement and religious catchments for local communities.

2.3 Associative Characteristics

At this time, there are no known associative characteristics which significantly 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

This monument is of national importance because of its inherent potential to make a significant addition to our understanding of Early Christian ecclesiastical sites in Scotland. The chapel, enclosure and holy well are reasonably well-preserved and there is potential to examine in detail their date and development sequence. We can reasonably expect archaeological deposits to be sealed below the structures and current ground surface. Within the enclosure there is the possibility of burials being present. The holy well may preserve artefactual evidence of the use of the site. It is possible that there may be a long (potentially prehistoric) sequence of occupation here, as has been demonstrated at the nearby Ardnadam chapel site. The loss of the

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monument would diminish our ability understand the origins, organisation and spread of Christianity in western Scotland if this monument were lost or damaged.

5 References

Historic Environment Scotland <http://www.canmore.org.uk> reference CANMORE ID 40456 and 40457 (accessed on 27/7/15).

West of Scotland Archaeology Service Record reference: WOSAS PIN 5034 and 5035.

RCAHMS, 1992. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Argyll: An inventory of the monuments: Volume 7: Mid-Argyll and Cowal: Medieval and later monuments, Edinburgh.
