## Case information

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| **Case ID** | 300009954 |
| **File Reference** | AMJ/9270/1/1 |
| **Name of Site** | Tom Chaiseil, homestead |

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| **Local Authority** | Perth and Kinross |
| **National Grid Reference** | NN 7856 5801 |
| **Designation No. (if any)** | SM13575 |
| **Case Type** | Designation |

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| **Received/Start Date** | 08/05/2014 |
| **Decision Date** | 13/01/2017 |

## 1. Decision

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

### 2.1 Designation Background

The monument is currently undesignated.

### 2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

## 3. Assessment

### 3.1 Assessment information

The site was considered for designation as part of 2014 North project and visited on 08/05/2014

### 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

Tom Chaiseil, homestead

# 1 Description

The monument is a homestead, a large monumental roundhouse dating to the Iron Age (between 600 BC and AD 400). It is visible as a roughly circular enclosure measuring about 16m in diameter defined by an intermittent stone bank up to three metres in width. The bank's outer face is preserved around part of the circumference and has been incorporated into a modern wall on the southwest. The monument lies on the summit of a small hill, at about 170m above sea level.

The scheduled area is circular on plan, measuring 50m in diameter, to include the remains described above and an area around within which evidence relating to the monument's construction, use and abandonment is expected to survive as shown in red on the accompanying map.

# 2 Assessment Against the Scheduling Criteria

(Historic Environment Scotland policy statement June 2016, Annex 1, pp. 48-50.)

## 2.1 Intrinsic Characteristics

The monument consists of the remains of a homestead, a monumental roundhouse dating to the Iron Age (between 600 BC and AD 400). Although these structures have often been termed 'ring forts', they are now interpreted as large, domestic buildings. At Tom Chaiseil the outer wall has been disturbed and is now visible as a spread stone bank, but the plan of the homestead is readily appreciable. Excavations at comparable sites such as Black Spout demonstrate that architectural features such as intermural galleries, cells, and entrance passages may be preserved within the wall structure (Strachan 2013), and comparable sites also show evidence for internal features, such as the postholes of roof supports, hearths and other occupation evidence (Hingley 1997, Strachan 2013).

There is no record of an excavation or similar disturbance at the site and excavated examples of similar sites show that there is very likely to be surviving buried archaeological deposits, including occupation and abandonment debris, artefacts and environmental remains such as charcoal and pollen within, beneath and around the remains of the homestead. The buried archaeological deposits, artefacts and ecofacts would add to our understanding of settlement, land-use and environment during later prehistory. They can provide information about the economy, diet and social status of the occupants, the structure of contemporary society and economy as well as provide information about architecture, construction methods and the development of later prehistoric settlement.

Such homesteads are Iron Age in date and excavations elsewhere have demonstrated evidence for several phases of use and reuse (Hingley 1997). The monument at Tom Chaiseil may therefore have had an extended development sequence. Scientific study of the form and construction of the structure has the potential to clarify the date of the remains and the development sequence at this site, and to provide information about the design, construction and development of later prehistoric settlement.

### 2.2 Contextual Characteristics

The monument at Tom Chaiseil is part of a well-defined regional group of structures in northwest Perthshire, characterised by a generally circular form, massive construction and non-defensive locations. The monument at Tom Chaiseil is important as an upstanding example of this group, and adds to our understanding of the nature and character of this regional group. It forms part of a cluster of such monuments along the pass of Allt Kynachan and around Loch Tummel, including Tom Donn Nan Eun (Canmore ID 25083) about 890m south-southeast, Donanean (Canmore ID 25063) about 928m south-southeast, Tom an T'sasunnaich (Canmore ID 25051) about 525m north and Ceann na Coille (scheduled monument reference SM13576; Canmore ID 25685) about 2.25m west-northwest. These homesteads may have been positioned here to better control movement through this region and along the Allt Kynachan pass. There may have been links between neighbouring homesteads or they may indicate community catchments.

This monument enhances and broadens our understanding of the function of such monuments, their interrelationship, the significance of their placing within the landscape and relationship to agriculture and economy. This will enhance knowledge of Iron Age social hierarchy, changing settlement patterns and systems of inheritance. The monument increases our understanding of prehistoric society and community, and the development of a regionally distinctive group of monuments.

Homesteads in northwest Perthshire are often located in non-defensive locations, on hillslopes between the valley floor and upland pastures. The homestead at Tom Chaiseil is located on the summit of a small knoll on the hillside above Loch Tummel, overlooking the Allt Kynachan. The homestead may have been positioned here to increase the prominence of the monument and to better control agricultural land and movement through the area.

### 2.3 Associative Characteristics

Cultural and social factors are likely to have influenced the circular form and thick walls used in building this structure.

## 3 Purpose and implications of scheduling

Designation as a scheduled monument is an 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 it contributes to our understanding of Iron Age settlement in Scotland and in particular the construction, use and development of monumental homesteads in central Scotland. It is a good example of a homestead, a regionally distinctive class of monument with potential for the survival of archaeological deposits within, beneath and around the upstanding remains. The monument can significantly add to our understanding of large Iron Age domestic buildings, the development of a regionally distinctive group of buildings, their role in settlement hierarchy, agriculture and economy, as well as the position of settlements in the landscape. The monument's importance is enhanced by its association with a wider cluster of later prehistoric homesteads. The loss or damage of the monument would diminish our ability to appreciate and understand the character and development of Iron Age settlement in Perthshire, the placing of settlements in the landscape, as well as society and economy during this period.

## 5 References


Historic Environment Scotland http://www.canmore.org.uk reference number CANMORE ID 25044 (accessed on 17/05/2016).

Perth & Kinross Historic Environment Record ref MPK505.

Hingley, R. et al. (1997) The excavation of two later Iron Age fortified homesteads at Aldclune, Blair Atholl, Perth and Kinross, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. 127, 407-66.

McCarthy, J. (2012) Nine ringforts around Loch Tummel, Tay forest district: measured archaeological survey.

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Strachan, D. (2013) Excavations at the Black Spout, Pitlochry. Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust.

Taylor, D. B. (1990) Circular homesteads in north west Perthshire. Abertay Historical Society, Publication No. 29.

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