**This designation consultation is open for comment until 10 December 2026**

## Give us your comments

Historic Environment Scotland consult with those who are directly affected by designation proposals – including owners, occupiers and tenants – and with the planning authority.

We also welcome comments from interested persons or groups.

When we consult about a designation case we will have carried out research and set this out in a **report of handling**. This report is an assessment produced for consultation and it sets out our view, including a proposed decision. The assessment is not intended to be a definitive account or description of the site or place. We consider the comments received before we take a final decision.

We consider comments and representations which are material to our decision-making, such as:

- Your understanding of the cultural significance of the site or place.
- Whether sites or places meet the criteria for designation.
- The purpose and implications of designating the site or place. We consider whether these are relevant to the case.
- Development proposals related to the site or place. Where there are development proposals, we consider whether to proceed with designation in line with our designation policy.
- The accuracy of our information.

You can find more guidance on providing comments and how we handle your information on our website.

Information on how we treat your personal data is available on our Privacy Notice.

## How to make a comment

Please send your comments to designationconsultations@hes.scot and provide us with the case reference. You can also make comments through our portal by clicking on the link ‘email your comments about this case’.

**If you are the owner, occupier or tenant or the planning authority please email us at: designations@hes.scot.**

If you are unable to email your comments please phone us on 0131 668 8914.

# Report of Handling
# Case information

| | |
|---|---|
| **Case ID** | 300087542 |
| **Name of Site** | Curling house, north of Wee Minnemoer, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae |
| **Postcode (if any)** | KA28 0HQ |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Local Authority** | North Ayrshire Council |
| **National Grid Reference** | NS 16788 56748 |
| **Designation Type** | Listed Building |
| **Designation No. and category of listing (if any)** | N/A |
| **Case Type** | Designation |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Received/Start Date** | 09/06/2026 |
| **Decision Date** | Pending |

## 1. Proposed decision

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Previous Statutory Listing Address | N/A | Previous category of listing | N/A |
| New Statutory Listing Address | Curling house, north of Wee Minnemoer, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae | New category of listing | C |

Our assessment using the selection guidance shows that the curling house meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest. The proposed decision is to list the building at category C.

## 2. Designation and Development Proposals

### 2.1 Designation Background

There is no known previous assessment of the curling house for listing.

### 2.2 Development Proposals

The building is the subject of the following development proposals:

- Erection of detached single storey dwelling house including demolition of existing single storey stone building (Ref. No: 26/00331/PP). The application for planning permission was validated on 14/05/2026 and was refused on 16/07/2026.

The appeal period for the above development proposal ended on 16/10/2026 and no further applications for planning permission have been submitted to North Ayrshire Council. As of 17/11/2026, our understanding is that there are no advanced development proposals relating to the site (see 3.3 Policy considerations).

## 3. Assessment

### 3.1 Assessment information

We received a request to designate the curling house on 09/06/2026. (Designations request forms are published on our portal and will be available to view during the lifetime of the case and until 3 months after the case is closed.)

The following information and views were provided:

- The history of the building/site
- The history of an event associated with the site
- Their views on special architectural and historic interest
- Information about current development proposals
- Proposed future use of the building/site

We informed the planning authority (North Ayrshire Council) that we had been asked to designate the curling house on 09/06/2026.

Our policy states that ‘our assessments may involve a site visit, and will aim to make use of the best available evidence.’ (See Designation Policy and Selection Guidance, p.7.) We decide on a case by case basis whether a site visit is required to inform our assessments.

In this case, we considered that a site visit was required to inform our assessment of the building’s special architectural or historic interest. We visited the curling house on 05/08/2026 and we saw the exterior and interior of the building.

Our assessment has not taken into account the current condition of the structure or the cost of maintaining or insuring them, financial issues, proposed future use, or whether the building is in its original use This is because these considerations are not material in our assessment of special architectural or historic interest. (See Policy considerations, section 3.3)

The planning authority is the main point of contact for applications for listed building consent. They will consider applications for change to listed buildings or their demolition in line with national and local policies.

### 3.2 Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

We have found that the curling house meets the criteria for listing.

We carried out an assessment using the selection guidance to decide whether the site or place is of special architectural or historic interest. See **Annex A**.

The listing criteria and selection guidance for listed buildings are published in Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019), Annex 2, pp. 11-13, https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy.

### 3.3 Policy considerations

Further information about how we list and about development proposals and designation is found in Designation Policy and Selection Guidance, pp. 7-8. https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy. Our policy states:

“We normally avoid intervening unnecessarily in the planning process or other regulatory processes where there are development proposals by adding a new designation. This may also extend to reviewing existing designations.

“We consider the individual circumstances of each case. In deciding whether to designate a site or place or amend an existing designation while there are ongoing development proposals, we will consider:

- the implications of designation on development proposals;
- the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the site or place; and
- the extent to which plans have been developed for the site or place – where these are particularly advanced, we will not normally list or schedule.

In this case, we decided to carry out a designation assessment using the selection guidance for listing. While there were active development proposals for the building when we received the request, this application for planning permission has since been refused by North Ayrshire Council on 16/07/2026 (26/00331/PP). The three-month appeal period for this decision lapsed on 16/10/2026 and we are not aware of any further development proposals.

*Our proposed decision*

Our view is that the building is of special architectural or historic Interest. Based on our current understanding of the status of the development proposals for this site, we are now proposing to list the building.

Further information about 'how we list' is found in Designation Policy and Selection Guidance, p. 12. https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy. Our policy states:

## 4. Consultation

### 4.1 Consultation information

Consultation period: 19/11/2026 to 10/12/2026.

We have consulted directly with the owner, the occupier and the planning authority.

The consultation report of handling is published on our portal Trove.Scot for comment from interested parties.

### 4.2 Designation consultations

*Comments we consider*

We will consider comments and representations which are material to our decision-making, such as:

- Your understanding of the cultural significance of the site or place and whether it meets the criteria for designation.
- The purpose and implications of designating the site or place. We consider whether these are relevant to the case.
- Development proposals related to the site or place. Where there are development proposals, we consider whether to proceed with designation in line with our designation policy.
- The accuracy of our information.

*Comments we don't consider*

We do not consider comments and representations on non-relevant/non-material issues, such as:

- Economic considerations
- Abusive or offensive remarks
- Whether you personally like, or do not like, a proposal

Our video about consultations explains how you can comment on our designations decisions, and what we can and can't take into account when considering your views. https://youtu.be/ZlqU51tRA6g.

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**Designations Service**
Heritage Directorate
Historic Environment Scotland

| | |
|---|---|
| **Contact** | designations@hes.scot, 0131 668 8914 |

# ANNEX A
# Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

## 1. Building or site name

**Curling house, north of Wee Minnemoer, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae**

## 2. Description and historical development

### 2.1 Description

Probably built around 1864 as a curling house for the Isle of Cumbrae curling club, the building is single-storey, four-bay, rectangular plan, constructed in snecked red sandstone rubble. It has a corrugated metal roof with a single chimneystack at the northwest gable and a curling stone at the southeast end of the roof ridge. The curling house is located facing Wee Minnemoer, a shallow natural loch (with an added plug/drain) that has historically been used as an outdoor curling pond. The site is set close to the road that leads north from the town of Millport towards Barbay Hill Trig Point.

The principal (southwest) elevation has an off-centre entrance with later yellow brick infill around the opening and an iron door added in the 1970s. There is one window opening to the left and two openings to the right of the door (all are blocked with breezeblocks). There are the remains of small iron hooks around the window openings, likely from previous external shutters. The rear and side elevations are blank and there is a lean-to wood store attached to the west elevation of red brick construction, probably added sometime in the later 20th century.

The interior of the curling house is comprised of a single room with whitewashed walls, a concrete floor and a stone fireplace at its northwestern end. On part of the northeast and southwest walls there are timber benches and shelves with numbered cupboards beneath for the storage of curling stones. The roof timbers are exposed.

### 2.2 Historical development

An article in the Glasgow Herald in January 1864 records that a curling club was established on the Isle of Cumbrae under the presidency of Mr John Wishart, builder (Glasgow Herald). While the article notes that this is the first association of this kind to be established on Cumbrae it states that the national game of curling had been played on the “Minie-more” (the curling pond to the south of the curling house) since “time immemorial” when the formation of ice allowed. This longer history of curling being played on Cumbrae is reflected in the inclusion of Millport (the main town on the island of Great Cumbrae) on the list of curling clubs that joined the The Grand

(later Royal) Caledonian Curling Club at its formation in 1838 (Kerr, "The History of Curling", pages 172-173).

The Glasgow Herald article of January 1864 also states that, as well as the establishment of the Cumbrae Curling Club, "a public meeting was lately held to consider the propriety of adopting the late Improvement Act so that the roads and everything else might be made as perfect as possible". This suggests that the newly formed club were anticipating the need for improved access to the Minnemoer which may have been for ease of players accessing the site but also for the purpose of improvements to the curling pond and construction of a club house.

The curling house is not shown on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1856 but it is shown on the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1895, suggesting it was likely built sometime after 1864 following the curling club's formation.

A photograph (taken in around 1900) shows the building historically had multi-pane glazing (Flickr). The remains of iron hooks around the window openings indicate the curling house may have also had removable external timber shutters at one time. In the 1960s or 1970s the roof slates were replaced with corrugated metal sheeting (which have since been replaced), a metal door was also added and the window openings were blocked up.

The curling house is still occasionally used when weather conditions allow for outdoor curling on the loch.

## 3. Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

To be listed a building must be of 'special architectural or historic interest' as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. To decide if a building is of special interest for listing we assess its cultural significance using selection guidance which has two main headings – architectural interest and historic interest (see Designation Policy and Selection Guidance, 2019, Annex 2, pp. 11-13).

The selection guidance provides a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions. The special architectural or historic interest of a building can be demonstrated in one or more of the following ways.

### 3.1 Architectural interest

The architectural interest of a building may include its design, designer, interior, plan form, materials, regional traditions, and setting and the extent to which these characteristics survive. These factors are grouped under two headings:

#### 3.1.1 Design

The curling house is a notable surviving example of its building type that retains characteristic features of its function including a substantially unaltered 19th century interior with a fireplace and timber shelving for curling stones.

Curling houses were typically single room structures with minimal exterior or interior decoration. Examples built on country estates may be more elaborately designed, such as the stone faced example at Gosford House in Aberlady, East Lothian dating from the early 19th century (listed at category B, LB6536) and the timber example at Easter Balmoral in Aberdeenshire dating to around 1905 (listed at category C, LB51509). The simple, functional design of the curling house at Wee Minnemoer is representative of curling houses built for local curling clubs and reflects both its rural location and its functional and seasonal use.

Curling houses were commonly built of timber and so the use of stone construction at the curling house north of Wee Minnemoer is of interest. The construction stone is locally sourced red sandstone (Groome), very likely quarried from the site to the immediate north of the curling house (which is marked as a sandstone quarry on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1856).

There have been some alterations to the exterior, such as the removal of the windows and shutters and the replacement of the door and roof covering, however the building retains its 19th century form and character including its traditional footprint, roofline and its snecked red sandstone rubble construction.

The plan form of the curling house is typical for this building type. Its single interior room with a fireplace at one end would have been used by curlers in the winter months when curling could be played on the loch. The interior scheme is substantially unaltered since the 19th century and continues to demonstrate the building's sporting function. The interior includes a stone fireplace, built-in timber shelves and benches along the walls with cupboards underneath for storing the curling stones and related curling equipment such as brooms, crampets and the measures required for marking out the playing area on the ice. The inclusion of a fireplace is a characteristic feature of this building type. It made these curling houses into social spaces by warming players and allowing hot food and drinks to be consumed on site.

Curling huts and houses near natural ponds or lochs were frequently thatched with local reeds (Haynes, p.47). This may have been the case with the curling house at Wee Minnemoer prior to it being covered in slates and, later, corrugated metal sheeting. These bothies were quite often remotely positioned and therefore required shutters or iron bars over the windows for security (Haynes, p.47). The remains of iron hooks around some of the window openings suggest this curling house once had external shutters.

The curling house at Wee Minnemoer is a rare and authentic survival of its building type. It survives largely in its original form to its exterior and interior, albeit with some

later changes to the external fabric. Overall, the building's historic character has survived.

### 3.1.2 Setting

The rural setting of the curling house close to the northern edge of Wee Minnemoer is both scenic and integral to the building type. The historic relationship of the curling house with its curling pond immediately to the south can still be seen and is of significance as an indicator of function. The Barbay Hill Local Nature Conservation site borders the eastern boundary of the site (at the road), there are agricultural fields to the north and south and the Millport golf course is located further west.

The 1st Edition Ordnance survey map of 1856 shows Wee Minnemoer as a natural loch, but it was later widened and its edges straightened sometime in the later 19th century (as shown on the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1895). The close proximity of the curling house to the curling pond shows the ease of access players had between the playing surface and the shelter and storage the curling house could provide. Curling is also recorded as being played on the 'big' Minnemoer to the north, a short distance away, in 1895 when the ice was too rough on the Wee Minnemoer (The Scotsman).

The curling house is nestled low in the surrounding landscape but it is just visible from the road that leads northwards from Millport town centre to Barbay Hill Trig Point. The curling house and pond site can be quickly covered by vegetation and shrubbery, however the immediate and wider setting is largely unchanged from that which is shown on the 2nd Edition map of 1895.

The location of the curling house on an island, as opposed to the Scottish mainland, is also unusual and adds to the building's interest for listing. The Millport Club, located on the island of Great Cumbrae, was the only club not on the Scottish mainland that was listed as joining the RCCC at its formation in 1838. In the early 19th century, curling was mainly known as a Lowland sport and was particularly popular in Ayrshire where a large number of curling clubs had been established and joined the RCCC in 1838 (Kerr, p. 172). The proximity of the island of Great Cumbrae to the Ayrshire coast likely contributed to the development of curling on Cumbrae.

## 3.2 Historic interest

Historic interest is in such things as a building's age, rarity, social historical interest and associations with people or events that have had a significant impact on Scotland's cultural heritage. Historic interest is assessed under three headings:

### 3.2.1 Age and rarity

Curling's origins are disputed. Some claim the game started in Scotland, others that it was brought over from The Netherlands (Haynes, p.43). Regardless, the Little Ice

Age which lasted from the mid-16th century to the late-19th century brought reliable freezing conditions in the winter months and frozen ponds, lochs and rivers became the ideal surfaces for the game of curling.

An 1890 history of curling identified 42 clubs in existence in 1800 (Kerr, p.115) and at least 200 by 1850 (Haynes, p.44). The popularity of the sport in Scotland continued to increase over the 19th century to the point that almost every mainland parish had a curling pond by the end of the century. Over 2500 sites are recorded as having been used for curling at one time or another (Historical Curling Places).

Most curling houses of the 19th century were little more than basic timber huts and very few of these now survive. There are eight curling houses that are currently listed in Scotland (as of 2026). Of these, three of them are constructed in stone, four are built of timber and one is of brick construction. The earliest listed examples date from the early 19th century, such as the Thomson Tower, Duddingston, Edinburgh of 1823-4 (listed at category B, LB29469), with most dating from around the late 19th century. The most comparable example to the one at Wee Minnemoer on Cumbrae is Abdie curling house by Lindores Loch near Newburgh in Fife which is of a similar date and construction (listed at category B, LB52182).

The curling house at Wee Minnemoer, probably built after the curling club was formed in 1864, is a rare surviving example of its building type. It was built during a time of great development and rising popularity of the sport of curling during the 19th century and is now one of a small number of curling houses from this period to survive in Scotland. The decline in regular outdoor curling as our climate has changed over the past 100 years or so has seen these structures be repurposed or lost altogether. Curling houses do not survive in large numbers across Scotland. Most curling clubs have adapted to more reliable indoor conditions year-round.

### 3.2.2 Social historical interest

Social historical interest is the way a building contributes to our understanding of how people lived in the past, and how our social and economic history is shown in a building and/or in its setting.

The importance of the game of curling to Scotland's sporting history is second perhaps only to golf. Known as the 'Roarin' Game' after the sound the stones make on the ice, the earliest reference to the game of curling in print is in 1541 (Haynes, p.43; National Records of Scotland). The longest continuously operating curling club in Scotland is Kilsyth in North Lanarkshire, instituted in 1716. Curling was known to have been played by all ranks of society, but it was particularly popular with farmers, masons and others who whose work was disrupted by hard frost and freezing temperatures (Haynes, p 44).

The Duddingston Curling Society (instituted 1795) in Edinburgh had a strong influence on furthering interest in the game during the early years of the nineteenth century and their rules of 1806 form the basis of the modern game. The Grand (later

Royal) Caledonian Curling Club was established in 1838, as a national governing body for the sport to regulate and promote curling.

By 1838 there were almost 200 curling clubs, mostly concentrated in Ayrshire, Dumfriesshire, Midlothian, Fife, Lanarkshire, Perthshire, Renfrewshire and Stirlingshire (Haynes, p.44). This increase in popularity was partly the result of the invention of shallow, level, artificial ponds by John Cairnie of Curling Hall in Largs whereby ponds were created from either flat paving stones or macadamised puddle clay which could freeze in one night of freezing temperatures (Haynes, p.44). John Cairnie became the first president of the Grand Caledonian Curling Club in 1838 which promoted the sport further by inaugurating Grand Matches and competitions and bonspiels (tournaments) between member clubs (Kerr, p.236-7).

The curling house north of Wee Minnemoer is of social historical significance for what it can tell us about the development of curling in Scotland in the mid to late 19th century and about the history of sport and leisure on the island of Great Cumbrae from the 19th century to the present day.

### 3.2.3 Association with people or events of national importance

There is no association with a person or event of national importance.

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## 4. Summary of assessment

The curling house meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest for the following reasons:

- Dating to around the late 1860s, the curling house is a rare and authentic survival of its building type.
- It survives largely in its original form to its exterior and interior, albeit with some later changes to the external fabric. Overall, the building's historic character has survived.
- It retains its historic interior scheme including benches, shelving and cupboards for the storing of curling stones.
- It retains its historic rural setting on the northern edge of the natural curling pond known as Wee Minnemoer.
- The location of the curling house on an island is unusual and its association with an early curling club established outside of the Scottish mainland adds to its interest.
- It has special social historical interest as it has a historic association with the sport of curling which adds to our understanding of Scotland's curling heritage, particularly during the 19th century heyday of outdoor curling.

## 5. Category of listing

Once a building is found to be of special architectural or historic interest, it is then classified under one of three categories (A, B or C) according to its relative importance. While the listing itself has legal weight and gives statutory protection, the categories have no legal status and are advisory. They affect how a building is managed in the planning system.

Category definitions are found at Annex 2 of Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019) https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy.

### 5.1 Level of importance

The curling house's level of importance is category C.

Buildings listed at category C are defined as 'buildings of special architectural or historic interest which are representative examples of a period, style or type.

Taking into account the later changes to the exterior of the building, category C is considered to be the most appropriate level of listing.

## 6. Other Information

The *Glasgow Herald* reports the formation of a curling club for the Isle of Cumbrae in January 1864. However, Kerr's book on the history of curling notes Millport was one of the 36 clubs represented at the meeting of curlers held in the Waterloo Hotel in Edinburgh on 26th May 1838 at the formation of the Grand (later the Royal) Caledonian Curling Club (Kerr, p.236-7). Whether the curling club was started in 1838 or 1864, the curling house itself was built sometime between 1856 and 1895 (as shown on historic mapping), likely around 1864 when the curling club was formed (or reformed).

## 7. References

### Maps

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1856, published 1857) Argyllshire and Buteshire CCXVI.10 (with extension CCXVI.11) Great Cumbray. 25 inches to the mile. 1st Edition. Southampton: Ordnance Survey.

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**Printed Sources**

Glasgow Herald (14 January 1864) Isle of Cumbrae, p.3.

Haynes, N. (2014) *Scotland's Sporting Buildings.* Edinburgh: Historic Scotland, pp.42-47.

Kerr, J. (1890) *History of Curling: Scotland's Ain Game and Fifty Years of the Royal Caledonian Curling Club*. Edinburgh: RCCC, pp. 115; 236-7.

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**Online Sources**

Flickr. North Ayrshire Council: Curling Competition on Cumbrae, at https://www.flickr.com/photos/nayesterdays/5552614941/in/album-72157622752939701 [accessed 14/10/2026].

Groome, F. H. (1882) Ordnance Gazetteer for Scotland. Great Cumbrae, at https://www.scottish-places.info/features/featurehistory1708.html [accessed 22/10/2026].

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## 8. Indicative Map

A map of the proposed listed building is attached separately.