



Designation Consultation

This designation consultation is open for comment until 07/01/2025

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.



Case information

Case ID	300060278
Name of Site	The Lappan farm buildings, Toremore, Dunbeath, Caithness
Postcode (if any)	KW6 6EH

Local Authority	Highland Council
National Grid Reference	NS 58401 66714
Designation Type	Listed Building
Designation No. and category of listing (if any)	N/A
Case Type	Designation

Received/Start Date	10/08/2022
Decision Date	Pending

1. Proposed decision

Previous Statutory Listing Address	N/A	Previous category of listing	N/A
New Statutory Listing Address	The Lappan, including farmhouse with kailyard, steading range (including byre, stables and threshing barn/granary), detached ancillary to rear of farmhouse, detached tailor's workshop to southwest, mill wheel, mill lade, and mill pond, and boundary walls, Toremore, Dunbeath	New category of listing	B

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

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The Lappan has not previously been assessed for listing.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

3. Assessment



3.1 Assessment information

We received a proposal to designate The Lappan, Toremore, Dunbeath, Caithness on 10/08/2022. (Designations applications 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 applicant provided the following information and views in their application:

- The history of the building/site
- Information about the construction of the buildings
- Their views on special architectural and historic interest
- Information about the condition of the building/site

We informed the planning authority at Highland Council about the proposal to remove the listing.

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 buildings’ special architectural or historic interest. We visited The Lappan farm buildings between 18/10/2022 - 20/10/2022.

We saw the exterior and interior of The Lappan farmhouse and steading. We saw the exterior of the former tailor’s workshop and a number of outbuildings and structures, including the mill wheel with lade. We have seen recent photographs of the interior of the outbuildings.

3.2 Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

We have found that the buildings meet the criteria for listing.

We carried out an assessment using the selection guidance to decide whether a 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>.

4. Consultation

4.1 Consultation information

Consultation period: 26 Nov 2024 to 07 Jan 2025.

We have consulted directly with the: owner and the planning authority.

The consultation report of handling is published on our portal 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>.

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 name

The Lappan farm buildings, Toremore, Dunbeath

2. Description and historical development

2.1 Description

A traditional farm complex predominantly dating from around the mid-19th century but containing some earlier fabric. The buildings are single-storey with rectangular plan-forms. They comprise a farmhouse with a detached steading range and outbuilding to the rear (northwest) that forms a U-plan courtyard. The roofs are pitched, and the walls are drystone rubble with some lime harl and pointing. The site contains various other ancillary features, including a kailyard, mill pond and lade. The complex has been vacant since the 1980s and is currently used by cattle (2024). It is located on the east coast of Caithness, on high farmland overlooking the Moray Firth, and is set back from the A9 road, approximately one mile north of the village of Dunbeath.

The **farmhouse** dates to around the mid-late 19th century. It is five-bays, with walls of coursed and squared rubble. The roof has Caithness stone slates in diminishing courses with coped skews. There are chimneystacks at each gable and one to the ridge. The windows are mostly 12-pane timber sash and case.

The interior was seen in 2022. The layout remains largely unaltered and comprises four linear rooms (kitchen, parlour, and two bedrooms), with two entrance lobbies and a central attic, accessed via a ladder. The kitchen has a solid dividing wall, the remaining walls are stud partitions. The internal decorative treatment largely dates from the late 19th to mid-20th century and retains a large number of traditional features, furniture and personal items. The walls are largely limewashed, except for the parlour which is timber-panelled, with remnants of wallpaper to some areas, including some historic newspapers. The kitchen ceiling is open to the rafters with remnants of a hanging canvas which may have formed a false ceiling. There is a range stove set into the west wall, flanked by storage niches, and a freestanding timber box-bed forms an entrance lobby to the kitchen, with one of the two surviving dressers. There are some timber fireplace surrounds with decorative iron inserts to the other rooms.

The **steading** range to the rear (northwest) comprises three outbuildings, built at different stages. The **byre** at the south end has a single door opening and the roof is covered with corrugated metal sheeting (1980s). The central section (**stable**) pre-dates the other buildings on site. It is three-bays with a roof of Caithness flagstones and a narrower footprint, which steps in at the rear. The **threshing barn/granary** at the north end dates to the early 20th century and has a corrugated iron roof, with a single door and window opening, and a high hayloft door at the east gable (suggesting there was originally a partial second floor for storing grain). There is a large iron water wheel on the north elevation, inscribed with 'B.B. CLYNE MILLWRIGHT WICK', dating from the late-19th or early 20th century.



Internally, each comprises a single room, connected by internal doorways, one of which has 'D.C.S Sinclair' and an illegible date is carved into the lintel. The walls are largely exposed rubble or limewash and the roof structures, which appear to be 20th century replacements, are exposed. There are moulded stone fireplaces in the stable and byre (all blocked). The byre has a cobbled floor with a drainage channel and four stalls constructed from upright Caithness slabs and stone feeding troughs. The stable has timber poles and horizontal dividers for up to five horses, with a timber and slate trough along the north wall. The granary contains a threshing machine and openings in the masonry where the water wheel would have connected.

There are **two other detached outbuildings**, both of which are roofless but complete to wallhead. The store/former dairy, between the house and the steading range, has a single opening on the southwest elevation. There are some aumbries (storage niches) set into the inner walls and possible cruck insets. The tailor's workshop at the far southwest boundary of the site has a window opening and a large entrance to the main elevation, with remnants of a chimneystack to the west gable. Internally there is a fireplace at the southwest end and a storage niche in the northwest wall. Remnants of another room/outbuilding adjoins the northeast gable.

The raised **mill lade** to the rear of the threshing barn is constructed from stone and connects to the **mill pond** to the northeast of the site, which survives in a partially ruinous and overgrown condition. There is a small **kailyard** (walled garden) adjoining the front elevation of the farmhouse and remnants of a narrow, closs (cobbled passageway) between the steading range and the former dairy/store. There are a number of smaller ancillary structures, adjoining the farm buildings, all of which are ruinous.

2.2 Historical development

Vernacular buildings of this type are difficult to date accurately because their form and construction tended to change little over long periods of time, and there are less likely to be historic records about these modest buildings.

There appears to have been a small settlement or communal farm on the site from at least the mid-18th century. Lappan is shown as a settlement on Roy's map of 1747-1755, and as a placename in Dorret's map of 1750 and Thomson's map of 1822 (spelled Lapan).

The Lappan is first shown in detail on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1871, published 1873), which shows the restructuring of land use and the dissection of communal farms into separate crofts/farms, brought about by the Improvement-period. The Improvement-period was a time of radical and change in farming practices that became widespread across Scotland from the late 18th to early 19th centuries, and saw the introduction of new farming technologies, land enclosure and the construction of many farmhouses and agricultural buildings. The Lappan is shown largely in its present form as a U-plan arrangement, with additional outbuildings to the west. The footprint of the buildings has remained relatively unaltered since this time, except for the later addition of the tailor's workshop and threshing barn.

The farmhouse appears to have been built around the mid-19th century in a single phase. It is unclear if it was originally thatched but evidence would suggest not (no thackstones on the chimneys and little difference in depth between the slate roof and the skew). The range to the rear is multi-phased – the stables, and possibly the byre, pre-date the farmhouse and



were in domestic use. This is evidenced by the fireplaces and the two windows to the front and a blocked window to the rear of the stable which has a wooden lintel. The stonework also indicates that the walls and roofs of this range were raised and partially rebuilt (to allow horses to enter), and the chimneys removed. The range was likely adapted when the present farmhouse was built around the mid-19th century, potentially when the landowner was carrying out improvements to the land. The ruinous outbuilding between the rear range and the cottage is thought to have been a dairy and the remnants of possible cruck inserts indicate that it was once thatched.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1905 (published 1906) shows that a porch was added to the front of the farmhouse around the late 19th century (since removed) and an enclosed garden (kailyard) added. The tailor's workshop had also been built by this time. This is supported by a photograph dating from around 1900-1905, which shows the cottage with a pitched roof porch, and the stable to the rear appears to have a thatched roof with a chimneystack at the northeast gable. The granary/threshing barn was built in the earlier 20th century and is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1969 (published 1970). By this date the outbuilding between the two ranges is ruinous and the tailor's workshop is shown as partially ruinous.

The Lappan has been owned by the Sinclair family since the middle of the 19th century and was at times occupied by up to 12 family members. It was part of the Latheronwheel estate, owned by the Dunbars, and comprised 20 acres at the time of the 1851 census. The farm grew and prospered during the 19th century and comprised 60 acres by 1901 (Hiddleston 2008, in Simpson & Brown, 2018).

The Lappan has been unoccupied since the 1980s and the field and steading range is currently used by cattle (2024).

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 Lappan is a well-preserved example of a traditional farming complex. It reflects vernacular building traditions of the late 18th to early 20th centuries in its construction, plan form and use of materials, some of which are distinct to this particular part of Caithness.



The construction of the walls reflects the stone of the local area, which has a deeper profile when compared to the thin fissile flagstone that characterises other parts of Caithness and Orkney. The use of larger flags, such as the roof of the stable, the stall dividers in the byre and the lintels of the window and door openings, is typical of the parish where such large, flat stones were not common but were brought in for specific uses. The use of stone slates to the farmhouse and the large flagstone roof of the stable are highly distinctive of the Caithness and Orkney regions, but the method of construction of the stable roof is unique to Caithness.

The group demonstrates the evolution of croft/farm buildings in the 19th century where there was a separation of people from livestock and a growing permanence and prosperity for crofters. They have the appearance of an Improvement period farm complex, particularly the farmhouse, which is evidenced by the evenly spaced openings, the profile and treatment of the stonework, the end chimneystacks and the stone roof with masonry skewes.

The stable to the rear steading range, although altered, appears to be earlier in date and may have origins as a longhouse or byre house (common from the late-18th century, where there was little separation from animals and humans). Although altered and extended in the 19th and 20th centuries, it shows evidence of pre-improvement era construction methods. The walls are largely undressed stone, which is likely to have been gathered from the surrounding land or small nearby quarries. The thickness ensures they could support the weight of the roof, particularly if a flagstone covering was used underneath the former thatch. The walls have rougher rounded stones lower down and more squared stone to certain areas. This indicates partial rebuilding, likely as part of overall improvements, and they show evidence of having been raised, likely to enable horses to enter.

The plan form of the buildings is largely unaltered. The U-plan arrangement is characteristic of the region and gives a sense of enclosure and protection from the exposed hillside location. The narrow footprint is typical of the Highland region where timber was not readily available, as it reduced the distance that the roof supports needed to span. A number of ancillary features survive, including the remains of the mill lade, the kailyard and a closs (narrow passage) between the dairy/outbuilding and the steading. Later additions such as the tailor's workshop and the granary barn add to the special interest of the group as they show the growing prosperity and diversification of the farm around the turn of the 20th century.

The interiors of vernacular buildings were often simple. Many of them have been substantially altered or refurbished and the survival of historic fixtures, fittings and finishes is rare. The internal layout and a number of early fixtures and fittings survive in both the farmhouse and the steading range, which contribute to the traditional character of the Lappan complex. The interiors are of special interest for what they can tell us about how these buildings would have functioned.

The Lappan has been altered and adapted during the 19th and 20th centuries but it retains a significant amount of its overall traditional character and form. The changes and improvements at The Lappan are of interest. They show how the building has been altered to accommodate improvements in agriculture and living standards, as well as changes in the availability of materials and the development of construction techniques.

The Lappan is of special architectural interest for its traditional design, authentic character, unaltered plan-form and surviving interior details. It has been lived and worked in the



traditional way until relatively recently and represents the development of a small croft into a self-sufficient working farm with ranges of buildings and ancillary features still surviving.

3.1.2 Setting

The Lappan is highly visible from the nearby A9 road and within the surrounding landscape. This is largely due to the absence of trees, which is a distinctive feature of rural Caithness. The landscape character surrounding The Lappan is of large open fields, once used for growing grain (primarily barley and oats) but now largely used for cattle grazing, has seen little change in the last century. Some large agricultural sheds are visible in the wider setting but these do not detract from the rural landscape character.

The Lappan is situated opposite the Laidhay Croft Museum (listing at category A, ref: LB7951), a conserved early-mid 19th century, traditional Caithness longhouse with a thatched roof. These are intervisible and form an important surviving group of traditional croft/farm buildings that reflect the vernacular traditions of this area of Scotland. It is also intervisible with other traditional stone cottages, which are largely unlisted. Collectively, these buildings contribute to the rural setting and historic character of this part of Caithness, and to the special interest of The Lappan.

The rural Highland location and setting of The Lappan provide valuable information about changes in settlement patterns and farming practices and make an important contribution to the traditional character of the building complex. The buildings survive largely in their 19th century forms. Both the immediate and wider historic setting, which includes the millpond, lade, field walls and tracks, have not altered significantly. Collectively, they form a cohesive group of functionally related buildings and structures that retain much of their historic character and contribute to our understanding of how the farm developed and functioned over time.

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

The Lappan is an important example of a vernacular farm complex, a once prolific building type across the Highlands, which in its substantially unaltered form, is now rare. Although extended and adapted to suit changes in farming practices and living standards, it continues to show regional traditional building methods and materials, and retains a significant proportion of its historic fabric, 19th century footprint and traditional character. The extent of surviving historic fabric, particularly to the interior, is very rare for a farm complex of this size and date.

Roofs of large flagstones were once an integral part of the Caithness landscape, but now they are becoming increasingly rare (Wright, 2008, p.13). The flagstone roof was added to the stable after the early 20th century, but it was built using traditional flagstone and its method of construction is unique to Caithness. It therefore contributes to the special interest of the buildings.



The retention and grouping of the farmhouse with its various ancillary structures is of special historic interest. Together they remain a well-preserved example of a traditional Highland farm complex, which has not been altered since the earlier 20th century.

The water-powered threshing mill is a particularly well-preserved example of its type, retaining its timber threshing machine, cast iron water wheel and partial remains of the stone lade and mill pond. Water mills were not particularly common in Caithness and its survival is rare for a farm of this scale. In 1977 it was noted that threshing mills were attached to most arable farms in the lowland parts of the Highlands and Islands but the machines themselves had largely disappeared (Hume, 1977, p. 26). The water mill is of further interest as its secondary use, of powering a water closet, is exceptionally rare (Hiddleston, 2008). The tailor's workshop is also unique feature of this particular farmstead. It demonstrates the prosperity of the farm and its survival is unusual and rare.

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 Lappan farm buildings show the effect of the radical improvements in land use and farming practices, known as the 'Improvement' or 'Agricultural Improvement' era. This period began in the early 18th century and became widespread across Scotland from the late 18th century to the early 19th century due to extensive reforms and industrialisation. The changes, which first centred around the Lowlands before spreading into the Highlands, saw land enclosed, the length of farm tenancies increased, small landholdings merged into larger farms, and the construction of many farmhouses and associated agricultural buildings. This move away from subsistence living resulted in dramatic changes and the farming landscape of the highlands of Scotland was comprehensively reorganised. The buildings at The Lappan can therefore be understood in the context of the agricultural history of Caithness, which was previously a remote and under-developed part of Scotland until the end of the 18th century.

As a rare surviving example of a little altered farm complex that is characteristic of Caithness, The Lappan is of special historic interest for its contribution to understanding life and society during the 19th and 20th centuries. The development of the site and the buildings reflects changing farming practices and land use patterns during the 18th and 19th centuries, and their design and materials forms important evidence for traditional methods of construction. The continued use of the buildings until relatively recently is rare and illustrates how farms of this scale could be diversified and adapted to accommodate modern living and farming practices.

3.2.3 Association with people or events of national importance

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

4. Summary of assessment

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



- It is a typical example of an Improvement-period farmhouse and steading complex in the Highland region, that is notable for the survival of much of its 19th century character and form.
- It continues to demonstrate a range of vernacular building techniques and materials characteristic of Caithness, some of which are unique to its specific locale.
- Neither its exterior nor its interior have been altered to any significant degree, and the later extensions and changes to the fabric have not affected the ability to convey its architectural and historic interest.
- It has retained the historic character of its rural landscape setting and forms part of a modest but coherent group of traditional agricultural buildings.
- It is not an early example of its building type. Traditional small scale agricultural complexes survive in large numbers across Scotland but the extent of its survival, particularly the interior and its grouping, is exceptionally rare.
- It has some social historical interest as an important part of Scotland's vernacular building and crofting history, with particular relevance to the Scottish Highlands.

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 Lappan's level of importance is category B.

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

Taking into account predominance of the building type, category B is considered to be the most appropriate level of listing.

6. Other Information

Historic photograph and additional information provided by owner.

7. References

Canmore: <http://canmore.org.uk/> CANMORE ID 89865

Maps

Dorret, J. (1750) A general map of Scotland and islands thereto belonging. North east section. National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1871, published 1873) Caithness XXXIX.6 (Latheron). 25 inches to the mile. 1st Edition. Southampton: Ordnance Survey.



Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1871, published 1873) Caithness XXXIX.10 (Latheron). 25 inches to the mile. 1st Edition. Southampton: Ordnance Survey.

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1905, published 1906) Caithness XXXIX.6 (Latheron). 25 inches to the mile. 2nd Edition. Southampton: Ordnance Survey.

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1905, published 1906) Caithness XXXIX.10 (Latheron). 25 inches to the mile. 2nd Edition. Southampton: Ordnance Survey.

Ordnance Survey (revised 1969, copyright 1970) National Grid Map ND1630-ND1730 – AA. 1:1,250 / 1:2,500. Southampton. Ordnance Survey.

Roy, W. (1747-1755) Roy Military Survey Strip 37 (Highlands): Caithness. National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Thomson, J. (1822) Thomson's Atlas of Scotland Plate 27: Caithness-shire. National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Printed Sources

Beaton, E. (1996) *Caithness: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*. The Rutland Press, p. 7.

Gifford, J. (1992) *Buildings of Scotland: Highland and Islands*. London: Penguin Books. p. 101.

Glendinning, M and Wade Martins, S. (2009) *Buildings of the Land: Scotland's Farms 1750-2000*. Edinburgh: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland.

Hume, J. (1977) *Industrial Archaeology Scotland Volume 2: The Highlands and Islands*. Macmillan of Canada. p. 26.

Naismith, R.J. (1989) *Buildings of the Scottish Countryside*. London: Gollancz Ltd. p. 200.

Sinclair, Sir John. *Old Statistical Account of Scotland of 1791-99*. Volume 20: Thurso, County of Caithness. p. 19.

Sinclair, Sir John. *New Statistical Account of Scotland of 1834-45*. Volume 20: Thurso, County of Caithness. p. 83

Wright, A. (2008) *Caithness Redundant Buildings Inventory*. The North Highland Initiative.

Other Information

Hiddleston, B. (May 2008) *The Lappan* (historical development and building survey). Provided by applicant.

Simpson & Brown (February 2018) *The Lappan Condition Survey*. Edinburgh: Simpson & Brown Architects. Provided by applicant.



8. Indicative Map

A map of the proposed listed building is attached separately.