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Designation Consultation

This designation consultation is open for comment until 03/10/2025

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	300078466
Name of Site	Torball Farmhouse, outbuildings and structures, Dornoch
Postcode (if any)	IV25 3JE

Local Authority	Highland
National Grid Reference	NH 75328 98974
Designation Type	Listed Building
Designation No. and category of listing (if any)	N/A
Case Type	Designation

Received/Start Date	16/02/2025
Decision Date	Pending

1. Proposed decision

Proposed Statutory Listing Address	Tuathanas Tòrabol, Dòrnach, a' gabhail a-steach taigh-tuathanais, ùirlìos, taigh-deighe, stall, stàball agus lad muileann, gun gabhail a-steach bothan gu taobh an Iar làraich, muileann-sàbhaidh agus gach frith-thogalach eile / Torball Farm, Dornoch, including farmhouse, walled garden, icehouse, steading, stable and mill lade, excluding four-bay cottage to west of site, sawmill and all other outbuildings	Proposed category of listing	B
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Our assessment using the selection guidance shows that the buildings meet the criteria of special architectural or historic interest. The proposed decision is to list the buildings at category B.

Sections 2.2 and 3.3 below set out the development circumstances and how we have applied our policy in arriving at a proposal to list the buildings.

This consultation on listing aims to verify our understanding of significance, to gather any further information or evidence about this site, and to confirm the latest status of any development affecting this site. We will make a final decision following consultation.



2. Designation and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The first listing surveys for Sutherland were undertaken in the 1960s and the buildings were formally added to the lists in 1971. There followed a national area resurvey, and in 1984, all the buildings located in Dornoch Parish were considered for listing and the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest for that parish was updated.

We do not have information about any previous detailed assessment of these buildings for listing.

The site is subject to a Building Preservation Notice (BPN) served under Section 3 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Scotland) Act 1997 by The Highland Council on 13/06/2025. This means that the buildings on the site are temporarily listed for a period of 6 months from the service of the notice or until HES makes a decision on a listing.

2.2 Development Proposals

The farm complex is the subject of the following development proposals:

- Planning application for 'Demolition of house and erection of house' ((24/04987/FUL) of the application was refused on 30/05/2025).

An appeal has been lodged and is noted as valid (as at 01/09/2025)

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

We received a proposal to designate Torboll Farmhouse on 16/02/2025 from the Dornoch and District Community Council. (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 site
- The history of a person and/or an event associated with the site
- Information about alterations to the buildings
- Information about the construction of the building(s)
- Their views on special architectural and historic interest



- Information about current development proposals

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/buildings’ special architectural or historic interest. We visited Torboll Farm on 04/04/2025. We saw the exterior and interior of all buildings except the interior of the renovated cottage on the west side of the farm.

We provided the proposer, the owner’s agent and the planning authority with an initial view on 02/05/2025 that the farmhouse and other structures at this site met the criteria for listing but that we would not proceed to list while there were development proposals affecting part of the site that were at an advanced stage. This view was provided to help inform decision making about the building in the context of the active development proposals.

In further correspondence we explained to parties that the policy position would be different if a BPN was served. In this circumstance we may proceed to list.

The next stage in our review process was to complete a report and assessment explaining our view on special interest in further detail. While we were preparing our report, on 13/06/2025, The Highland Council served a BPN on this site. On 25/06/2025, we received a listing application and a copy of the BPN notification from The Highland Council. In their application the council informed us that they were of the view that the farmhouse and farm buildings were of special architectural or historic interest.

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 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

The policy that informs our decision-making is set out in Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (DPSG), <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>.



How we assess sites and places

We decide on a case-by-case basis whether we will take forward a designation assessment. Our policy states (DPSG, p.7):

“We will normally carry out a designation assessment unless we find that:

- the site or place is unlikely to meet the designation criteria;
- designation is considered unlikely to be the best mechanism for recognising and protecting the cultural significance of a site or place;
- a Certificate of Intention Not to List is in place.

“In some other circumstances, we may decide not to assess a site or place. This is usually because there are development proposals at an advanced stage.”

As we considered that there was potential special interest, and because there are elements of the farm that are outwith the area of the planning application we decided to progress with an assessment of significance. Our aim is to provide a view on the buildings’ special architectural or historic interest to help inform decision-making.

Development proposals and designation

Our policy states (DPSG, pp. 7-8):

“The legislation that sets out what can be designated is brief. It allows us to designate regardless of other factors such as development proposals. However, in carrying out designation work, we will act in line with the Scottish Regulator’s Code of Practice. This code expects that the functions will be transparent, accountable, consistent, proportionate and targeted where needed.

“In practice, this means we will normally avoid intervening unnecessarily in the planning process or other regulatory processes where there are development proposals by adding a new designation.

“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.”

The farmhouse building is the subject of an application for demolition and redevelopment (see 2.2 Development Proposals). We consider that these are



development proposals which are at an advanced stage. In line with our policy, we would not normally list a building in these circumstances.

The exception to this practice is when a Building Preservation Notice (BPN) has been served. Our policy states (DPSG, p.8):

“In urgent cases, planning authorities may consider serving a BPN if it appears to them that a building is of special architectural or historic interest and is in danger of demolition or alteration which would affect its character. This a form of temporary listing. Once a BPN has been served we have six months to assess the building for listing. We may list a building in these circumstances even if there are development proposals at an advanced stage.”

The Highland Council served a BPN on this site on 13/06/2025, therefore the specific provision relating to BPNs in our policy applies in this case and we are consulting on a proposal to list.

How we list

Our policy states (DPSG, p.12):

“The extent to which a building or structure survives is a consideration when assessing it for listing. However, the present condition of the surviving fabric is not a factor when deciding whether it is of special architectural or historic interest.

“Factors such as financial issues, proposed future use, or a building no longer being in its original use will not be taken into account.”

4. Consultation

4.1 Consultation information

Consultation period: 12/09/2025 to 03/10/2025.

We have consulted directly with the owner(s) and the planning authority.

The consultation report of handling is published on our portal and on Citizen Space 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
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ANNEX A

Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

1. Building or site name

Tuathanas Tòrabol, Dòrnach, a' gabhail a-steach taigh-tuathanais, ùirlìos, taigh-deighe, stall, stàball agus lad muileann, gun gabhail a-steach bothan gu taobh an Iar làraich, muileann-sàbhaidh agus gach frith-thogalach eile / Torboll Farm, Dornoch, including farmhouse, walled garden, icehouse, steading, stable and mill lade, excluding four-bay cottage to west of site, sawmill and all other outbuildings

2. Description and historical development

2.1 Description

Torboll Farm is a traditional agricultural complex, with the main buildings dating primarily to the first half of the 19th century. There are also earlier structures remaining, possibly dating from 17th to 18th centuries, some parts of which may have been incorporated into the current buildings (see 2.2 Historical development).

The complex includes a two-storey, four-bay vernacular classical **farmhouse** on the eastern end of the site, while a smaller one and a half-storey, four-bay cottage is located on the western end, with a small ancillary building to the north. Around halfway between the two is a large single storey U-shaped **steading**, with a small single storey **stable** building to its east. To the south of the main farmhouse, on the lower river terrace, is a **walled garden**, with an **icehouse** adjoining the northeast corner, and a small shelter with a small, recessed alcove on the northwest corner. To the west of the walled garden are the ruins of a sawmill, with an adjacent **mill lade** running between the higher ground to the north, where the farm buildings are located, and the river to the south.

The buildings are almost entirely rubble built with pitched slate roofs, although a small timber lean-to extension has been added to the west end of the main farmhouse. The farm is located at the head of Loch Fleet, overlooking the confluence of the River Fleet and the Abhainn an t-Sratha Charnaig.

The **farmhouse** is L-shaped in plan, with a small entrance vestibule in the right angle, and with its main façade facing east towards Loch Fleet. It was comprehensively reconstructed in the 1830s but based on estate map evidence has likely incorporated a substantial section of the earlier farmhouse (the eastern block). Later 19th century alterations to the west part of the house include a lean-to and some changes to the south facing windows (as bipartites). More recent renovations have been undertaken on the house in the early 21st century, including the removal and replacement of some of the windows, walls and floors, particularly within the



eastern half of the house. Despite this, a number of historic 19th century features remain in the interior, including the main turned timber staircase and several cast iron fireplaces with stone surrounds, along with some traditional timber-framed windows and timber-boarded doors. Externally, the building is harled and whitewashed, with cast-iron rainwater goods and clay chimney cans.

The **steading** is a large, U-shaped building, generally single storey with some attic spaces. A date stone marked 1836 is located in the southeast gable. There are multiple doorways and other openings located around the building, including at least seven cart entrances in the northern section, reflecting the scale of the Torboll Farm at the time. The eastern range of the steading is occupied by a byre and includes an historic threshing mill in the northwestern section of the building.

The **stable**, dating to the later 19th century or early 20th century (seen on the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey – surveyed 1904, published 1906), is a small rectangular building of mortared rubble construction, subdivided into two rooms internally. The interior of the building still contains the stable stalls, along with features such as hopper windows, drainage channels and feeding troughs, and externally the cast iron rainwater goods and louvred vents on the roof peak remain in situ.

The **walled garden** is of at least 18th century origin, with a rectilinear garden depicted on multiple maps as far back as William Roy's *Military Survey of Scotland* (1747-55), although estate maps from the early 19th century also demonstrate that the walled garden may have had an additional irregularly shaped section to the east at that time. It lies to the south of the main house, with a stone staircase leading between the higher and lower ground. The south, east and west walls are of battered drystone rubble construction, while the north wall is a retaining wall built of mortared rubble. The north wall is also significantly higher, seemingly acting as a 'ha-ha' when viewed from the farmhouse. The small structure in the northwest corner was accessible only from within the garden, and the small, recessed alcove in the north wall suggests this was a shelter for the users of the walled garden.

The **icehouse** is adjacent to the northeast corner of the walled garden. It is built into the bank behind the north retaining wall of the walled garden and is thus also likely to date to the 18th century or earlier. It is a mortared rubble-built structure, with a barrel-vaulted roof.

The **mill lade** is recorded on the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition (surveyed 1873-4, published 1879). It appears to start at a mill pond to the west of the cottage, running eastwards to the steading building on the higher ground. It then appears to turn southeast, seemingly passing underneath the steading before running down a stone-built channel on the steep slope to the former sawmill and beyond, before finally turning to the east once more and draining into the Abhainn an t-Sratha Charnaig.

Other buildings and structures include a **cottage**, which is T-shaped in plan, with four dormer windows in the roof. The precise date of the cottage is unclear, but on stylistic grounds that it was likely also built in the 1830s. Although the interior was not



seen, the cottage exterior has been fully renovated, with modern doors and windows, and it is likely that the interior is similarly renovated.

The **sawmill** dates to the later 19th century or early 20th century, being constructed sometime between the Ordnance Survey 1st and 2nd Editions (surveyed 1904, published 1906) mapping of the area. The remains of the walls are of drystone rubble construction and the layout indicates the building had at least two internal rooms.

To the north of the stable is a modern agricultural shed. The cottage, sawmill and other buildings and structures are not of special interest, and do not make a significant contribution to the overall interest of the site in their current form. They are not proposed for inclusion in the listing. (See 6. Legal exclusions.)

2.2 Historical development

The main buildings at Torboll Farm appear to date mainly to the 1830s, with “1836” inscribed on a date stone on the steading buildings and with an 1833 sketch plan (held by Sutherland Estates) of proposed renovations to the previous farmhouse that closely resemble the building as it exists today. The buildings are the hub of a farm that was created in 1813, resulting from the depopulation of several fermtouns along Srath Carnaig and the adjoining Srath Tollaidh and the consolidation of these areas into a single large sheep farm, which has a direct historical association with the infamous Sutherland Clearances of the first quarter of the 19th century. Morvich Lodge which is nearby was originally built in 1812 for Countess Sutherland and Marquis Stafford but by 1817 was leased to Patrick Sellar, possibly the most notorious individual of all those operating on behalf of the estate in the Sutherland Clearances and the only one who would stand trial for his involvement (see 3.1.2 Setting and 3.2.3 Association with people or events of national importance).

However, Torboll (also known as Meikle Torboll prior to this expansion) itself is much older than the 19th century, with documentary records of the farm going back to the 1600s. These include both Gordon and Blaeu’s mapping of the area in the mid-17th century, Moll and Roy’s maps in the 18th century and Thomson’s maps of the early 19th century, along with the Ordnance Survey maps from the latter half of the 19th century onwards and a number of maps belonging to the Sutherland Estates.

Among the Sutherland Estate maps are two dating to 1829 that show a markedly different layout to the Torboll farm complex. The maps depict the main house having an H-shaped plan, with a U-shaped steading lying to the northeast of the house, while slightly to the west of the main house are two further small houses and an irregularly shaped walled garden lies to the south, although as noted above this seems to represent an additional garden area in addition to the earlier rectilinear section.

The Ordnance Survey Name Book for Sutherland (1871-75) describes Torboll as “...a large farm house with out standing offices Situated on the South side of ”Strath



Fleet" about one mile from the Mound Railway Station (west). It is two Storey high and the whole slated and in good repair." The farm is shown as Torroboll on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1873-4, published 1879). The main house, cottage, steading, walled garden and mill lade are all depicted, although the steading is shown E-shaped in plan, suggesting a central wing that was later removed.

By the time of the 2nd Edition mapping (surveyed 1904, published 1906) both the sawmill and stable have been added to the complex. In addition, the courtyard of the steading is by then shown as being entirely roofed. The Ordnance Survey 1:10560 map of the area (published 1960) shows the same layout as the 2nd Edition, however it is not clear when the survey for this mapping was done. The subsequent 1:2500 mapping (surveyed 1966, published 1967) shows a number of new buildings had been added and the sawmill removed. This is the layout that appears to have survived into the 21st century and can be seen on relatively recent aerial photography of the farm, although some of the buildings have been removed in recent years.

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

Torrboll farm is a large 19th century agricultural complex, stone-built and designed in a plain vernacular classical style typical of the early 19th century. The **farmhouse** is a substantial example of the type, reflecting the increased status and monetary value of the farm following its enlargement in 1813. Although some windows have been replaced, it retains its external design, including the prominent, symmetrical 4-bay main elevation facing east to Loch Fleet, along with some of its interior layout and features. A distinctive and unusual part of the plan includes a rendered rounded and low set corner porch accessing a notable curved, turned timber stair.



The **steading**, built around the same time as the house, has a typical U-plan courtyard layout that is common on 19th century farm steadings. This compact plan of barn, byres, stables and storage sheds arranged around a court was designed for efficiency, and several of the rooms can still be clearly identified by their surviving interior features, such as the byre and the threshing mill. As with the farmhouse, the reasonably large size of the steading building, along with features such as a high number of cart entrances, are indicative of the increased scale and status of the farm following its enlargement. Along the wall forming the north side of the courtyard traces of some of the known alterations can be seen, including the rooflines of both the central arm of the steading seen on the OS 1st Edition mapping, and the roof covering the whole courtyard seen on the OS 2nd Edition. It is likely that further evidence of the alterations to the steading over its life remain within the structure, and these could provide valuable information on how the design was altered to suit changing agricultural practices over time.

The remaining buildings of the farm, including the **stable, walled garden, icehouse** and **mill lade**, although altered or partially removed, are of typical design and construction but are also reflective of the high status of Torboll farm following significant periods of its expansion over the course of its existence.

3.1.2 Setting

Torboll is a large agricultural complex to the west of the modern A9 about halfway between Dornoch and Golspie. The farm occupies a prominent position overlooking the confluence of the River Fleet and the Abhainn an t-Sratha Charnaig, and the farmhouse in particular is a dominant building in the landscape, clearly visible from Loch Fleet and its shorelines to the east. It is also intervisible with The Mound (listed building LB7022), a large causeway and bridge built across Loch Fleet in 1814-16 by Thomas Telford, while visible to the north across Strath Fleet is Morvich Lodge (listed building LB7021). Morvich was originally built in 1812 for Countess Sutherland and Marquis Stafford but by 1817 was leased to Patrick Sellar, possibly the most notorious individual of all those operating on behalf of the estate in the Sutherland Clearances and the only one who would stand trial for his involvement (See 3.2.3 Association with people or events of national importance).

There have been some changes to the setting of Torboll since its construction, most of which relate to infrastructure, such as the creation of the Far North railway along the north side of the River Fleet in the 1860s, the A9 and the A839 roads and the installation of an overhead power line past the north of the farm. The creation of The Mound also led to the flourishing of a new alder woodland on the previously tidal land below the farm, now protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Despite these changes, the overall character of the landscape setting remains much as it would have been at the time of construction of the farm, and the immediate setting includes the farm's arable fields as recorded on 1829 and 1832 estate maps of Torboll.

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 late-18th and early-19th century was a period of significant improvement in farming practices across Scotland as small-scale subsistence farming was replaced by larger, commercial farming practices. This radical change in farming, known as the Improvement or Agricultural Improvement period, saw innovations in land drainage, use of lime as a fertiliser, introduction of new crops and crop rotation, improved understanding of animal husbandry and increased length of farm tenancies. However, these advances often came at the expense of the existing residents of the area, and in the case of Torboll the farm's expansion came as part of the infamous Sutherland Clearances.

As a period of significant improvement in farming practices across Scotland, many farmhouses and associated agricultural buildings were constructed in this period. Improvement period farms often included the complete rebuilding of older steadings, which seems to have been the case with Torboll as historic maps indicate. These maps show a settlement has existed here since at least the mid-18th century and how an earlier steading was replaced and moved to a different location within the farm complex.

While farmhouses and steadings are not rare building types, those associated with the introduction of early and improving farming practice (from roughly the mid-18th to the mid-19th centuries), which demonstrate quality of design and construction, and which remain to a greater degree in their original form may have interest in listing terms. Torboll farm is part of a prolific building type, however the buildings are good quality, representative examples for their date and their early-19th century plan form, historic character and setting remain largely intact. In addition, the survival of 18th century farm structures such as the walled garden and icehouse, for which survival is rarer within Scotland, further increases the special historic interest of the site.

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.

Agriculture was, and continues to be, an important part of the economy of Scotland, and traditional agricultural buildings are an important historical record of Scotland's heritage. This is particularly pronounced in the overwhelmingly rural Scottish Highlands, where agriculture has been one of the area's major industries and an integral part of daily life in the region from prehistory through to the modern day. The Scottish Highlands are also representative of the nature of land ownership in early



modern Scotland, as large parts of the country came into the possession of a very small group of wealthy individuals. The survival of Torboll farm is thus an important link to the history of agriculture and land ownership in Scotland, particularly the tumultuous period of clearances and improvement that took place across the region in the 18th and 19th centuries.

3.2.3 Association with people or events of national importance

Torboll farm is directly connected with people and events which have had a significant impact on Scotland's cultural heritage. The farm is one of many agricultural holdings in northern Scotland that is directly linked to the Sutherland Clearances, the infamous period in the early 19th century where Lady Elizabeth Gower, heir to the Sutherland Estates, and her husband George Granville Leveson-Gower, the Marquis of Stafford (later the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland), sought to increase the revenues of their property in Sutherland. This took the form of forcibly and sometimes violently removing thousands of people from their land, many of whose families had lived in those places for generations, to make way for industrial scale sheep farming, which was seen as more profitable for the estate. The displaced people were to be sent to live on the coasts, where they were expected to farm small crofts a fraction of the size of their previous farms, and to take up work they were completely unfamiliar with such as fishing. In many cases, however, the displaced people chose to emigrate from Scotland entirely.

Torboll farm is a major example of how the Sutherland Clearances affected the landscape and its people in the early 19th century. The 1832 map of Torboll shows the extent of the farm, extending as far as Loch Buidhe, eight kilometres westward along Srath Carnaig, while also taking in Srath Tollaidh, a tributary of the Abhainn an t-Sratha Charnaig to the north, and extending three kilometres south to Loch Laoigh. Within the area are three other named settlements or farms, namely Little Torboll, Dalmain and Brae, all close to the Abhainn an t-Sratha Charnaig. These three places can still be seen on modern Ordnance Survey maps (although Dalmain has become Dalnamain) and remain the only settlements or houses in the valley.

However, Roy's *Military Survey* shows at least five further fermtouns along Srath Carnaig, and the ruins of some of these, such as at Achtheaduaig, across the river from Dalmain, and Craighulisky (at the eastern end of Loch Buidhe) can still be seen. These settlements were seemingly cleared specifically for creating the extended Torboll farm in 1813. The newly extended farm was then leased to Captain Kenneth Mackay, whose family had previously owned the lands of Torboll before they were purchased by the Sutherland Estates in the late 18th century, and who had remained resident at Torboll in the interim.

Mackay's successor to the tenancy, Angus Leslie, was a former estate factor in Strathnaver, and it was during Leslie's tenure that the farm was renovated into the form that survives today. In both cases, the tenancies were partly a reward for their work on behalf of the Sutherland Estates, as both Mackay and Leslie were directly involved in conducting the evictions. Both are also identified as willing and violent



participants by Donald MacLeod (himself evicted with his family from Rosal in Strathnaver) in his letters to the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, later published as *Gloomy Memories*.

Torboll farm represents a tangible physical link to an infamous period of Sutherland's and Scotland's history, the Sutherland Clearances, a period that had a substantial impact on the landscape within which it lies and to the modern Scottish international diaspora.

4. Summary of assessment

Tuathanas Tòrabol / Torboll Farm, etc., meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest for the following reasons:

- The farmhouse and other buildings are all of good quality and are reflective of the increased status of the farm following its enlargement in the early 19th century, making Torboll a prominent example of a farm complex of this period.
- Torboll retains all of the key buildings created during the 1830s renovation of the farm, making it a good surviving example of a coherent group of Agricultural Improvement period farm buildings.
- Torboll retains visible remnants of the earlier farm located on the site, such as the walled garden and icehouse, and there is a strong likelihood of earlier fabric within the farmhouse itself.
- The buildings have been subject to incremental alterations and some later additions but much of their historic character and overall form is retained.
- The setting of the agricultural complex is little altered, and it retains its visual links to other contemporary buildings and structures in the surrounding area.
- It has an important link to the history of agriculture and land ownership in Scotland, particularly the tumultuous period of clearances and improvement that took place across the region in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- The farm is inherently linked to the Sutherland Clearances, an event in history that has had a significant impact on Scotland's cultural heritage.

In accordance with Section 1 (4A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 the following are excluded from the listing: the 4-bay cottage to the west of the site, the ruins of the sawmill to the south, and the additional outbuildings to the northeast of the steading.

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 buildings' level of importance is category B.

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

Taking into account the completeness of the historic group of buildings, including rare surviving structures such as the mill lade, and their direct association with a nationally significant event in the history of the Highlands and Scotland, category B is considered to be the most appropriate level of listing.

6. Legal exclusions

In accordance with Section 1 (4A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 the following are excluded from the listing: the 4-bay cottage to the west of the site, the ruins of the sawmill to the south, and the additional outbuildings to the northeast of the steading.

The 4-bay cottage has been fully renovated in the modern period and is not of special interest in listing terms. The sawmill and additional outbuildings are all later additions to the farm in the later 19th and 20th century, and are of simple, functional design. While these additions are evidence of the incremental development of the farm over time, they are not of special interest in listing terms and do not make an important contribution to the overall significance of the site.

7. Other Information

N/A

8. References

Trove: <https://www.trove.scot/> National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) ID: 101117 [Last accessed 26/06/2025]

Maps

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Highland Council Planning Portal, at <https://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/> [Last accessed 27/06/2025]

Ordnance Survey Name Book for Sutherland (1871-75) Sutherland Volume 9, OS1/33/9 p. 119. Available at <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/virtual-volumes/os-name-books-main> [Last accessed 27/06/2025]

9. Indicative Map

A map of the proposed listed building is attached separately.