

HIGHLAND KIRKYARDS: Ross and Cromarty Pilot Proforma



1. Name of Kirkyard: Nigg Parish Church, graveyard
From HER (Old Burial Ground, Nigg – Highland Council)

2. National Grid Reference: NH 8045 7169

3. Civil Parish: Nigg

4. Description: Rural, white harled church dating from the 17th century, surrounded by old graveyard. The church is not in ecclesiastical use, but is roofed, in good condition and open to visitors with leaflets and information panels inside.

The graveyard has many burials covered with flat slabs, there are also many table top stones and to the north of the church many small, short upright stones of the 18th century.

5. Setting: Rural, in the small village of Nigg. The site is surrounded by trees. The road skirts the southern boundary of the site, with a small car park in front of the gates. To the East is a bank leading down to a stream and woodland paths. The site also slopes steeply at the western edge of the graveyard.

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6. Designations and Significance: The church is A-listed, the highest category, which marks it out as being of national significance. The cross slab which is now housed inside the church is designated as a scheduled ancient monument.

This is a very old religious site. The Pictish cross slab dates from the eighth century and the first references to a church at Nigg are from 1265-6. In this respect all layers of time should be respected on this site.

Scheduled Ancient Monument

Listed Building

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7. Elements:

Redundant Kirk/Chapel: The redundant, T-plan, post-reformation church is roofed and in good condition. Although no longer in ecclesiastical use, it now houses the Pictish cross slab and information about the church and site history, and is open to visitors

The original rectangular church was built in 1626, was repaired in 1723-5 including the addition of the bellcote and in 1730 gained the northern aisle, and in 1779-84, a slate roof. (Gifford). It was altered in the 1860s by Andrew Maitland, (HER). The west gable is topped with a bellcote. Projecting from the east gable is an open, wooden, slate roofed porch with spear headed iron railings. Around the perimeter. Inside is a badly worn flat graveslab.

Boundary Walls: A chicken wire fence runs around the site. At the western side a stone wall is evident behind, and underneath, the fence. The wall is retaining as the ground inside the burial ground is higher than its surroundings which seems to form a natural boundary to the site. The insertion of the fence means that some gravestones lie outwith it, at the edge of the stone wall. There is a stone wall which runs from the gatepiers and curves out along the road at the south end of the site. The fence at this point is much further in from the road than the wall, and the fence is at the point of higher ground, indicating that the roadside wall is not an original boundary wall.

Railings, Gates and Gateways: The main entrance to the south of the church shows two large square ashlar gatepiers, the eastern one with loose joints with a modern metal gate. There is evidence of a previous iron gate.

Burial Enclosures: Immediately inside the main gate, joined to the east gatepier is a rubble built burial enclosure with ashlar quoins. The ground within the enclosure is raised and a step leads up from the entrance. The interior walls are harled and house wall monuments to past reverends: Alexander Macadam, d.1817 and Rev. Norman Donald Mackay, d.1948.

In the north-east corner of the site is a stugged ashlar square burial enclosure. Intriguingly a wooden shed structure has been inserted into the rear of the interior of the burial enclosure. Within this is an unreadable wall monument.

Wall Monuments: Adjacent to the burial enclosure in the north-east corner of the site is a more modern wall memorial. To Alexander Ross, d.1928 and family.

8. Ownership of Kirkyard:

Highland Council

Private

Other

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9. Risk: The graveyard and church are both well maintained and the church is cared for by the trust. However a recent incident at this site involving the removal of a historic iron gate and its replacement with a poor modern imitation, highlights the need for a proper understanding of not just the church structure, but all standing architecture, (e.g. boundary walls, mausolea, wall monuments, etc.). In addition, appropriate maintenance should not be confined to the church and keeping the graveyard tidy. It should be carried out on these structures too, so that they do not deteriorate and so that replacement is not necessary.

On No

10. Ancillary Issues:

ACCESS: There is a small car park in front of the main gate. A concrete ramp runs up to the step for wheelchair access. A gravel path leads up to the door of the church, but otherwise the graveyard contains no paths, although the grass is neat.

INTERPRETATION: At the entrance gate is a Pictish Trail information board, and opening times for the church. Within the graveyard another information board gives the history of the site. There are further information panels inside the church and leaflets available to buy. There is also a website: www.niggoldtrust.org.uk

COMMUNITY: The site has an active community group in the form of Nigg Old Trust who care for the church.