

HIGHLAND KIRKYARDS: Ross and Cromarty Pilot Proforma



1. Name of Kirkyard: St Ninian's Chapel, Nonakiln
From HER (Nonakiln Burial Ground-Highland Council)

2. National Grid Reference: NH 6621 7124

3. Civil Parish: Rosskeen

4. Description: Historic graveyard with two stone burial enclosures probably incorporating parts of the earlier medieval chapel. The site shows a distinct change in level to the surrounding landform and has many burial including those marked by flat slabs underfoot. The burial ground is enclosed on four sides and is roughly rectilinear, although with a curved boundary on the west side. The original church sat on the higher part of the ground with east-west orientation. The burial ground is not thought to be in current use, no recent burials.

5. Setting: Rural. Farmhouse to south (Nonakiln Mains) and working farm to south-west. Mature trees follow kirkyard boundary and the kirkyard contains Yew trees. Some of the trees to the south have recently been taken down. The site is on elevated ground with open views to the Cromarty firth.

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6. Designations and Significance: As a scheduled ancient monument this site is of national importance. It is clearly a medieval site with many earlier burials underfoot in the kirkyard. The two stone burial enclosures may contain fabric from the medieval church as their alignment would suggest.

Scheduled Ancient Monument

Listed Building

7. Elements:

Redundant Kirk/Chapel: What currently appear to be two separate structures in use as burial enclosures, are most likely to both be part of what was the original medieval chapel. The western structure houses the old west gable of the chapel which has an entrance way directly below a traceried window. Inside the structure the ground is very high, indicating internal medieval burials. Walls adjoin the west gable creating a tranquil burial enclosure. In direct east west alignment with the western gable stands the second stone walled burial enclosure. An iron entrance gate opens in the south elevation. The stonework of the eastern wall is similar to that of the western gable and could contain elements of the eastern gable of the medieval chapel. Masonry from the older structure may have been reused to form the walls of this burial enclosure. Containing memorials to the Aird family, this enclosure also has an internal raised ground level, further evidence that it is also part of the older chapel site.

Boundary Walls: The land inside the burial ground has risen so that the walls now act as retaining walls. The northern boundary wall parallels the straight road which it borders, so it may have been altered when the road was introduced. Otherwise the shape of the graveyard is roughly rectangular, although the western side which is not immediately adjacent to a road or field and therefore most likely to retain its original line, is curved.

Railings, Gates and Gateways: An unusually elaborate iron farm style gate forms the entrance from the north. It is set in two upright stone slabs with rounded tops.

Burial Enclosures: Other than the two walled structures, only one burial enclosure can be found in the small kirkyard. It has good, intact iron railings. The memorials are for Charlotte Munro and William Mackenzie and a date of 1873 is given. Yew trees border the enclosure.

8. Ownership of Kirkyard:

Highland Council

Private

Other

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9. Risk:

Both of the stone structures are covered with advanced vegetation. The western gable especially, but there is a danger of more structural instability if the vegetation is removed.

Otherwise the kirkyard itself is quite well maintained, but flat slabs are disappearing under grass and moss.

On YES NO

10. Ancillary Issues: **ACCESS:** There is no designated parking and the approach to the site goes close to a working farm. There are no paths on site and the ground is uneven with many stones hidden from view under the grass.

INTERPRETATION: There is no interpretation on site but this kirkyard is rich for interpretation.