



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

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ALBA

Property in Care (PIC) ID:
Designations:
Taken into State care:
Last Reviewed:

PIC089
Scheduled Monument (SM90332)
1982 (Guardianship)
2005 (2025 update to include Empire
connections)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

KIRKHILL ROMAN SIGNAL STATION



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Cover image: General view of Kirkhill Roman watch-tower on the Gask Ridge. © Crown Copyright HES.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

KIRKHILL ROMAN SIGNAL STATION

Contents

BRIEF DESCRIPTION	2
CHARACTER OF THE MONUMENT	2
Historical overview	2
Archaeological overview	2
Artistic/Architectural overview	3
Social overview	3
Spiritual overview	3
Aesthetic overview	3
What are the major gaps in understanding of the property?	3
ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE	3
Key points	3
ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES	4
KEYWORDS	4

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The property at Kirkhill, near Auchterarder, is a Roman signal-station or watchtower of the late 1st century AD. It is situated 40m to the S of a Roman road. The monument forms part of a Roman military system, now termed the Gask Ridge frontier.

The Gask Ridge frontier is regarded as the earliest example from the Roman Empire of a frontier system of roads, forts and watchtowers/signal stations. It stretches over 37km from Glenbank, north of Dunblane, along the Gask Ridge, to Bertha on the Tay.

CHARACTER OF THE MONUMENT

Historical overview

Site probably constructed during the initial Roman invasion of Scotland in AD 79-80 by Gnaeus Julius Agricola, Governor of Britain (AD 77/8 – 83/4), during the reigns of the Emperors Vespasian (AD 69-79) and his sons Titus (AD 79-81) and Domitian (AD 81-96).

Gask Ridge sites abandoned c. AD 87/88 when the Roman Army withdrew from Scotland.

The site appears to have been owned by the Drummond family in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. James Drummond (1767-1851), of Tullibardine and Strathallan, Perth was a writer with the East India Company in Canton in 1786. He became 6th Viscount Strathallan in 1824. It is not clear if he used Empire-derived wealth in maintaining or conserving Kirkhill, but earlier viscounts appear to have invested in conserving Roman roads in the area.¹

Brought into Guardianship in 1980.

Archaeological overview

1900 Site excavated by D. Christison who established form and nature of monument.

1959 and 1967 Surveyed by Ordnance Survey.

1995 Site noted by RCAHMS.

¹ For more on this topic, see [Surveying and Analysing Connections between Properties in Care and the British Empire, c.1600-1997](#)

Forms part of study of Gask Ridge Roman Frontier by D.J. Woolliscroft from 1995 onwards.

This property has provided information, and has the potential to provide more, on the design, function and organisation of the Roman military in a frontier zone at the height of their empire.

Artistic/Architectural overview

The site is well-preserved as an earthwork monument comprising a circular ditch, 21m in diameter, over 3.66m wide and 1.2m deep, with an upcast bank, 0.70m high, ringing it. A possible entrance, over 1.4m wide, visible as a dip in the bank and lack of ditch, is located on the N side of the monument facing the Roman road. Within the area defended by the ditch there are traces of earthworks denoting the original tower.

The watchtower/signal-station originally consisted of a square tower built of timber, 2.9m square, known from the remains of four postholes found by the excavators, ringed by an internal earth rampart, a single ditch and upcast bank.

Social overview

Not fully assessed.

Spiritual overview

The site is not known to fulfil a spiritual role.

Aesthetic overview

Not assessed.

What are the major gaps in understanding of the property?

Precise date of construction and duration of monument is unknown.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Key points

One of the best preserved watch-towers on the Gask Ridge.

Regarded as component of earliest example of a Roman military frontier system from the imperial period.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES

Ardoch; Greenloaning; Blackhill Wood; Shielhill South; Shielhill North; Kaims Castle; Westerton; Strageath; Parkneuk; Raith; **Ardunie**; Roundlaw; **Muir O'Field**; Gask House; Witch Knowe; Moss Side; Midgate/Thorney Hill; Westmuir; Peel; West Mains of Huntingtower; Black Hill; Bertha.

KEYWORDS

Gask Ridge; Roman Frontier; Agricola.