



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

Property in Care (PIC) ID:	PIC054
Designations:	Scheduled Monument (SM1601)
Taken into State care:	1984 (Ownership)
Last Reviewed:	2005 (2025 update to include Empire connections)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

ARDOCH ROMAN CAMP, BLACKHILL



We continually revise our Statements of Significance, so they may vary in length, format and level of detail. While every effort is made to keep them up to date, they should not be considered a definitive or final assessment of our properties.



© Historic Environment Scotland 2025

You may re-use this information (excluding logos and images) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated.

To view this licence, visit <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3> or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this document should be sent to us at:

Historic Environment Scotland
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH

+44 (0) 131 668 8600
www.historicenvironment.scot

You can download this publication from our website at
www.historicenvironment.scot

Cover image: Bank and ditch of 25ha Fort, Black Hill Camp. © Historic Environment Scotland.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

ARDOCH ROMAN CAMP, BLACKHILL

Contents

BRIEF DESCRIPTION	2
CHARACTER OF THE MONUMENT	2
Historical overview	2
Archaeological overview	2
Artistic/architectural overview	2
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
KEY WORDS	4
BIBLIOGRAPHY	4

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The property at Ardoch, Blackhill, comprises the upstanding remains of parts of two Roman temporary camps of the early 3rd century AD.

The monuments at Blackhill are part of an important and extensive complex of Roman military sites centred around the impressively preserved earthwork remains of the fort at Ardoch.

CHARACTER OF THE MONUMENT

Historical overview

Sites probably constructed during the re-conquest of Scotland between AD208/9 - 212 by the Emperor Septimius Severus.

Roman conquests in Scotland abandoned by the Emperor Caracalla following the death of his father, Septimius Severus, in York on 4 February AD 211.

Located 0.5m north of the fort at Ardoch, camp was probably part of the same estate, in the ownership of the Stirlings of Ardoch in the 18th century. There appear to have been familial connections to Caribbean slavery. Sir William Stirling (d.1799) received profits generated by the labour of enslaved people. He was committed in the 1790s to preserving the fort at Ardoch, and there may have been some tangential impact on the Blackhill camp.¹

Brought into State ownership in 1984

Archaeological overview

1970 Aerial photographic survey and limited excavation by J.K. St Joseph.

1977 Excavation by W.S. Hanson to test date of construction of two camps.

The sites have been excavated by test trenches to analyse the construction sequence and have the potential to provide more evidence on the form and function of Roman temporary camps of the 3rd century AD.

Artistic/architectural overview

Two camps have been identified, one 130 acres, the other 63 acres. The 63 acre camp preceded the larger camp. On construction of the larger camp,

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

a section of the rampart of the 63 acre camp was slighted and the ditch backfilled in order to provide a road across the larger camp. This is the only location anywhere in the Roman Empire where such an arrangement can be seen.

There are traces of a stretch of rampart and ditch of the 130 acre camp parallel to the west boundary of the property. A short stretch of the rampart and ditch of the 63 acre camp survives to the north-west of the Comrie road junction. The rest of the site is visible only as cropmarks.

Both camps would have been rectangular in form enclosed by an earthwork rampart and v-shaped ditch. Access to the camp was provided by a form of entrance, known in Latin as *titulum*, which was a length of earth bank and ditch (the same length as the gap in the enclosing camp rampart) placed in front of the main entrance of the camp. The entrances were placed usually on all sides, but on the larger camp two sets of entrances have been placed on the longer east and west sides of the camp.

Roman temporary camps survive as upstanding monuments only in Britain. In Scotland the evidence for temporary camps can be directly related to the historical evidence of Roman military campaigns.

Social overview

Not yet assessed.

Spiritual overview

The site does not currently fulfil a spiritual role.

Aesthetic overview

The property is contained within a field of heather and bracken.

What are the major gaps in understanding of the property?

Precise date of duration of monument is unknown.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Key points

- Unique evidence of construction activity.

- Relatively well-preserved remains of temporary camps.
- Forms part of sites associated with last Roman invasion of Scotland.
- Part of important complex of Roman military sites of Ardoch.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES

Ardoch, Craigarnhall, Innerpeffray, Forteviot, Edenwood, Kinnell, Scone, Cardean, Balmakewan, Kair House

KEY WORDS

Roman; temporary camps; Septimus Severus; Ardoch

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mullen, S., Mackillop, A., and Driscoll, S. 2024 Surveying and Analysing Connections between Properties in Care and the British Empire, c. 1600-1997. (Edinburgh, Historic Environment Scotland). Available online: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=e192ea9f-0d7e-4745-b499-b0fb010a167a> (accessed: 17 December 2024)