

DETERMINATION OF 'NATIONAL IMPORTANCE' FOR THE DESIGNATION OF MARINE HISTORIC ASSETS UNDER THE MARINE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010

Cultural Significance

1. The first step in considering whether an asset is of national importance is to identify and understand its cultural significance. The concept of 'cultural significance' will apply widely and to different degrees to all of Scotland's historic environment, and should not be confused with the establishment of 'national importance', which is a separate process. For an asset to be considered as being of national importance it must, first, have a particular cultural significance – artistic; archaeological; architectural; historic; traditional; aesthetic; scientific; social – for past, present or future generations. Such significance is inherent in the asset itself, its nature, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related assets and related objects.
2. Cultural significance of any asset, whether of international, national importance or more local significance, can be characterised by reference to one or more of the following; the characteristics are in three groups:

Intrinsic – those inherent in the asset;

Contextual – those relating to the asset's place in its wider physical environment or in the body of existing knowledge; and

Associative – more subjective assessments of the associations of the asset, including with current or past aesthetic preferences.

Intrinsic characteristics

- a. The condition in which the asset has survived. 'Condition' includes potential survival of archaeological evidence, and goes beyond the survival of marked field characteristics;
- b. the archaeological, architectural, historic, scientific, technological or other interest or research potential of the asset or any part of it;
- c. the original or subsequent functions of the asset and its parts;
- d. the apparent developmental sequence of the asset.

Contextual characteristics

- e. The present rarity or representativeness of all or any part of the asset, assessed against knowledge of the history and archaeology of Scotland, its seas, and their place in the wider world;
- f. the relationship of the asset to others of the same or related classes or period, or to features or other assets in the vicinity. This is particularly important where individual assets, themselves perhaps of limited immediate significance, form an important part of a widespread

but varied class. The diversity of the class should be a material consideration in making individual decisions;

g. the relationship of the asset and its parts with its wider physical environment and setting.

Associative characteristics

h. The historical, architectural, cultural and social influences that have affected the form and fabric of the asset, and vice versa;

i. the aesthetic attributes of the asset;

j. its significance in the national or international consciousness or to people who use or have used the asset, or descendants of such people; and

k. the associations the asset has with historical, traditional or artistic characters or events.

4. Understanding of cultural significance may change as a result of the continuing history of the asset, or in the light of new information, or changing ideas and values.

National Importance

5. The relationship of marine historic assets to the adjacent land can be complex and variable. Some elements may have been integral parts of adjacent landmasses, now inundated. In the case of wrecks or material associated with wrecks of vessels or aircraft, some have strong and far-reaching connections; others may have a transitory association but little or no original link to the places in which they have come to rest. The determination of national importance is to encompass consideration for such assets which may be important beyond Scotland.

6. The primary objectives of HMPA designation are to help preserve marine historic assets of national importance and to celebrate and communicate their heritage value so that everyone can appreciate these assets and act responsibly.

7. The purpose and implications of each designation are issues that require to be taken into consideration when assessing candidates for designation. Designation may not be the only, or the most appropriate, mechanism to secure the future of all assets, even those that may otherwise meet the criteria.

8. The particular significance needed to define the asset as of 'national' importance may be established in terms of one or more of the following:

a. its inherent capability or potential to make a significant addition to the understanding or appreciation of the past;

b. its retention of the structural, technical, decorative or other characteristics of its kind to a marked degree;

- c. its contribution, or the contribution of its class to the marine historic environment and/or the wider marine environment;
- d. the quality and extent of any documentation or association that adds to the understanding of the asset or its context;
- e. the diminution of the potential of a particular class or classes of asset to contribute to an understanding of the past, should it be lost or damaged; and
- f. its place in the national or international consciousness is a factor that may be considered in support of other factors.