



Designation Consultation

This designation consultation is open for comment until 21/09/2021

Give us your comments

Historic Environment Scotland consult with those who are directly affected by designation proposals – including owners, occupiers and tenants – and with the planning authority.

We also welcome comments from interested persons or groups.

When we consult about a designation case we will have carried out research and set this out in a **report of handling**. This report is an assessment produced for consultation and it sets out our view, including a proposed decision. The assessment is not intended to be a definitive account or description of the site or place. We consider the comments received before we take a final decision.

We consider comments and representations which are material to our decision-making, such as:

- Your understanding of the cultural significance of the site or place.
- Whether sites or places meet the criteria for designation.
- The purpose and implications of designating the site or place. We consider whether these are relevant to the case.
- Development proposals related to the site or place. Where there are development proposals, we consider whether to proceed with designation in line with our designation policy.
- The accuracy of our information.

You can find more guidance on providing comments and how we handle your information on our [website](#).

Information on how we treat your personal data is available on our [Privacy Notice](#).

How to make a comment

Please send your comments to designationconsultations@hes.scot and provide us with the case reference. You can also make comments through our [portal](#) by clicking on the link 'email your comments about this case'.

If you are the owner, occupier or tenant or the planning authority please email us at: designations@hes.scot. If you are unable to email your comments please phone us on 0131 668 8914

Report of Handling Case information

Case ID	300049521
Name of Site	Alford Heritage Museum, 3 Mart Road, Alford
Postcode (if any)	AB33 8BZ

Local Authority	Aberdeenshire Council
National Grid Reference	NJ 57842 15783
Designation Type	Listed Building
Designation No. and category of listing (if any)	N/A
Case Type	Designation

Received/Start Date	19/02/2021
Decision Date	Pending

1. Proposed decision

Previous Statutory Listing Address	N/A	Previous category of listing	N/A
New Statutory Listing Address	Alford Heritage Museum (former Alford Auction Mart), 3 Mart Road, Alford (LB52588)	New category of listing	A

An assessment using the selection guidance shows that the building meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest. The decision is to list the building at category A.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

A proposal to list the Alford Heritage Museum was received on 19/02/2021. There is no known previous review of this building for listing.

2.2 Development Proposals

www.historicenvironment.scot

Historic Environment Scotland, Longmore House,
Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH

Historic Environment Scotland
Scottish Charity No. **SC045925**
VAT Number: **GB 221 8680 15**

There are no known development proposals.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

Alford Heritage Museum has not been visited. The present assessment is desk-based, using available information and has included reference to recent photographs.

3.2 Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

The building was found to meet the criteria for listing.

An assessment using the selection guidance to decide whether a site or place is of special architectural or historic interest was carried out. See **Annex A**.

The listing criteria and selection guidance for listed buildings are published in Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019), Annex 2, pp. 11-13, <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>.

4. Consultation

4.1 Consultation information

Consultation period: 31/08/2021 to 21/09/2021.

We have consulted with the owner and the planning authority.

The consultation report of handling is published on our portal for comment from interested parties.

Dara Parsons

Head of Designations
Heritage Directorate
Historic Environment Scotland

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ANNEX A

Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

1. Statutory address

Alford Heritage Museum (former Alford Auction Mart), 3 Mart Road, Alford

2. Description and historical development

2.1 Description

A former cattle auction mart of 1904–05 located in the village of Alford, comprising an arrangement of interlinked timber structures clad with beaded vertical timber boarding, and with pitched and lean-to roofs. The architects and builders were William Teunon & Son of Turriff. The building has operated as a local heritage museum since 1991.

The principal (road facing) elevation has a low, lean-to range with single-glazed timber sash and case windows. The main hall has a grey slate roof with top-lights and a central ornamental ridge vent. A small timber vestibule with a polycarbonate mono-pitch roof was added to the front of the building during the 1990s. There is a tall chimney to the south elevation. Three interlinked former cattle sheds or byres extend to the rear, with roofs covered with metal sheeting. The rainwater goods are mainly cast iron. There is a rear yard with access to an enclosed grass field to the west.

The interior retains its large presentation space with timber sale ring and tiered, semi-circular bench seating for around 200 people. The ring incorporates an auctioneers' rostrum, timber cattle gates accessing the rear sheds, and a water-balanced scale and weighbridge (1905) by Henry Pooley & Son Ltd, Birmingham. To the front of the building, a run of sales offices (now museum display rooms) flank both sides of a wide central corridor with top lights. The offices have full-height timber panelling. There is a masonry fireplace within the kitchen room to the south. The floors are poured concrete. The building including the sheds to the rear is used to display themed exhibits relating to the history of the area (2021).

2.2 Historical development

The Alford Auction Mart, 3 Mart Road, opened on 18 April 1905. The building is situated close to the railway station and a short distance to the west of the earlier Market Stance in the village.

The Vale of Alford and Upper Donside area of Aberdeenshire has been a significant centre of agriculture for hundreds of years. Previously, the sale of cattle at Alford took place every three weeks on the Market Stance (no longer extant) to the south of the Station Hotel.

The development of the village at Alford is closely tied to the arrival of the Vale of Alford Railway in 1859, with links to Aberdeen. The railway company initially built a station near Greystone Farm, where the Reid family were important cattle breeders and dealers (Buildings of Scotland, 2006) and a replacement station slightly to the east a few years later.

The construction of a purpose-built local auction mart (or market) for livestock was a relatively late development in view of the area's reputation for cattle farming. This part of Scotland is known for the early and successful breeding of the Aberdeen-Angus cattle breed, which is now among the most popular breeds worldwide.

The rectangular footprint of the Alford Auction Mart is shown on the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey map (surveyed, 1923). The 5th Edition (surveyed, 1957) shows cattle pen enclosures (no longer extant) partly covering the open area of ground to the west of the building.

The Mart was built for and operated by Aberdeen cattle salesmen Reith and Anderson. The company was the largest firm in Aberdeenshire by the early 20th century, operating 15 cattle marts across Aberdeenshire. The company merged with Central Mart (Aberdeen) to become Aberdeen and Northern Marts Limited in 1947.

The impact of livestock disease, changes in regulations, and the centralisation of livestock sales after the Second World War led to a gradual reduction in the number of smaller, rural livestock marts. The Alford Auction Mart closed in January 1986 after 80 years of almost continuous operation.

The site was sold to Gordon District Council (now part of Aberdeenshire Council) who leased the building to the Alford and Donside Heritage Association. The building opened as Alford Heritage Museum in March 1991. The interior of the building has been modified only slightly to accommodate its change of use. The building remains in operation as a local museum (2021).

3. Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

To be listed a building must be of 'special architectural or historic interest' as set out in the [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) \(Scotland\) Act 1997](#). To decide if a building is of special interest for listing we assess its cultural significance using selection guidance which has two main headings – architectural interest and historic interest (see Designation Policy and Selection Guidance, 2019, Annex 2, pp. 11-13).

The selection guidance provides a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions. The special architectural or historic interest of a building can be demonstrated in one or more of the following ways.

3.1 Architectural interest

The architectural interest of a building may include its design, designer, interior, plan form, materials, regional traditions, and setting and the extent to which these characteristics survive. These factors are grouped under two headings:

3.1.1 Design

The design of the Alford Auction Mart is typical of smaller-scale local marts of its period, with few decorative details. Collectively, the adjoining buildings demonstrate traditional timber auction mart construction. The beaded timber cladding and timber windows are part of its simple character and the ornamental timber roof vent adds visual interest.

Significantly, the building is little altered and largely complete in its plan form and design as originally constructed in 1904–5. Comprising a range of interlinked pitch-roof and lean-to timber structures, the design and in particular the plan form is led by the functional requirements for the presentation of cattle and the sale of other agricultural produce. On completion in 1905 the mart was described as one of the best equipped in Aberdeenshire, and, perhaps one of the best in the country with respect to its lighting (Press and Journal, 1905).

Auction mart interior schemes tend to be simple and practical. Many of those that survive have been refurbished and the survival of historic fixtures is rare. The Alford Mart retains its timber auction ring, including a water-balanced bridge scale, which gave bidders an idea of the weight and value of cattle as they entered the ring.

The survival of the internal room plan adds to the design interest and authenticity of the building. Individual offices once occupied by seed and manure firms are distributed either side of the central hallway, and there are byres/sheds with intact timber cattle stalls to the rear.

William Teunon (c.1830-1909) and Sons were a family of master-carpenter architects from nearby Turriff. The company is known to have designed a small number of other buildings in the area including Reith and Anderson's timber auction mart at Turriff (1899, demolished) and a few domestic properties.

While the Alford Mart building is modest in its design, the special interest under this heading relates to the authenticity and completeness of the complex, which is little altered, and which still evidences its former function as an early 20th century commercial livestock market.

3.1.2 Setting

Mass expansion of the railway network between the 1840s and 60s saw auction markets established at many railheads, bringing rural parts of Scotland closer to the market.

As the local railways were extended throughout the region during the 1850s and 60s, market sites were constructed close to local railheads, where dealers and butchers could move quickly to the sale rings rather than travel to more distant, older market stances. From railhead sites like Alford and Maud, purchases could be sent straight to their destinations by rail rather than using local cattle drovers to take them by road.

The Alford Mart at 3 Mart Road is conveniently situated near to the former railway station. The line closed in the 1960s, but the associated station ticket office survives as part of the nearby Grampian Motor Museum complex. The Mart has a large area of open ground to the rear (west) initially used for additional cattle pens and display.

The mart is adjacent to some later housing development but generally, the setting of the building has not altered considerably since the early part of the 20th century. The open ground to the rear of the building and its proximity to the former railway station are important aspects of the setting, demonstrating how the building was used, and contribute to the special interest under this heading.

3.2 Historic interest

Historic interest is in such things as a building's age, rarity, social historical interest and associations with people or events that have had a significant impact on Scotland's cultural heritage. Historic interest is assessed under three headings:

3.2.1 Age and rarity

Late 19th and early 20th century livestock auction marts provide tangible evidence of cattle farming before the merging and consolidation of Scotland's cattle markets after the Second World War. Early (pre-1914) livestock auction marts that survive with their functional components largely intact are now exceptionally rare in Scotland. Examples that survive are likely to be of special interest in listing terms.

Many towns and villages in north-east Scotland had an agricultural auction mart by 1900. The Mart at Alford is a relatively late example. It is, however, the most complete example of timber construction known to survive largely in its original form in the country.

There are currently 44 livestock markets of pre-first world war origin recorded in the National Record of the Historic Environment in Scotland (www.canmore.org.uk). At least 26 of these have been largely or completely demolished.

The ten livestock auction mart buildings that are designated as listed buildings in Scotland are nearly all in the southern half of the country and survive in varying degrees of completeness. Six have a traditional octagonal-plan sale ring that readily identifies the buildings as livestock marts. Those at Reston (LB46648) and East Linton (LB48089) are stand-alone timber sale rings, while the example at Lanark (LB51565) is of detailed ashlar masonry construction.

Three listed livestock auction marts remain in operation (2021). All three are of brick construction. The earliest is the 1872 mart at Newton St Boswells in the Scottish Borders (LB51565). The 1890 Lockerbie Mart (LB37583) and the 1900 Castle Douglas Mart (LB22976) in Dumfries are more decorative in their design, making use of polychromatic (two-colour) brickwork. These three are all relatively complete with octagonal sale rings, offices and cattle sheds.

Of the small number of surviving pre-war livestock marts that are not currently listed in Scotland, the most complete is the former cattle market at Forfar (1879). Of sandstone masonry construction, its octagonal sale ring has an ornate pedimented entrance.

The former Alford Mart is significant for its location in north-east Scotland and is of special interest as a nearly complete example of a very rare pre-1914 livestock mart of timber construction in Scotland.

3.2.2 Social historical interest

Social historical interest is the way a building contributes to our understanding of how people lived in the past, and how our social and economic history is shown in a building and/or in its setting.

Technological and industrial advances in the later 19th century benefitted Scottish farmers considerably. Livestock fairs or trysts were replaced by auction marts that permitted more regular and orderly selling of livestock. Farmers passed the risk on sale from private bargains to auction markets and boosted trade and reputation through reports in the local media and further afield. Areas like Aberdeenshire switched from rearing to finishing livestock, developing trade with London markets that established the reputation for Scottish beef that persists to the present day (Farming and the Land, p268).

By the end of the 19th century, Aberdeenshire had become the most important area for breeding cattle for the southern market in the whole of Scotland. Buildings associated with this type of agricultural industry are an important part of the area's social history. The survival of the mart at Alford is of significant social historical interest for what it can tell us about agriculture and the farming community as well as the trade and display of agricultural stock in the early 20th century.

The auction marts were a hub of local agricultural society and an essential part of interaction between farmers and their peers. For many it was the most important regular social event away from the farm. It was through these meetings they shaped their views of politics, civil society and how to make farming pay (Farming and the Land, p.961).

The former mart is open to the public as a museum which aims to preserve the rural heritage of the north-east of Scotland, and of the Alford and Donside area in particular. The building is of special historic interest for its contribution to our understanding of agricultural life, economy and society in this part of Aberdeen during the 19th and 20th centuries. This is evidenced both in its ability to convey its intended function, and through re-use and adaptation as a local heritage museum.

3.2.3 Association with people or events of national importance

There is no known special interest in this category.

4. Summary of assessment

Alford Heritage Museum (former Alford Auction Mart) meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest for the following reasons:

- It is a largely complete and little altered example of an early 20th century livestock auction mart, retaining its design and plan-form interest with intact sale ring and adjoining offices and cattle byres.
- It retains key elements of its historic setting, including open ground to the rear and the nearby, former railway station, both of which contribute to an understanding of the building
- It is an exceptionally rare example of a largely intact livestock mart complex of timber construction in Scotland.
- It contributes to our understanding of agricultural life, economy and society in this part of Aberdeen during the 19th and 20th centuries.

5. Category of listing

Once a building is found to be of special architectural or historic interest, it is then classified under one of three categories (A, B or C) according to its relative importance. While the listing itself has legal weight and gives statutory protection, the categories have no legal status and are advisory. They affect how a building is managed in the planning system.

Category definitions are found at Annex 2 of Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019) <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>.

5.1 Level of importance

The Alford Heritage Museum (former Auction Mart) level of importance is category A.

Buildings listed at category A are defined as buildings of special architectural or historic interest which are outstanding examples of a particular period, style or type.

Taking into account its rarity and completeness as an example of its building type and date, category A is considered the most appropriate level of listing.

6. Other Information

N/A

7. References

Canmore: <http://canmore.org.uk/> CANMORE ID: 273976

Maps

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1868, published 1895) Elginshire X.8 (Dyke and Moy; Forres). 1st Edition. 25 inches to one mile. Southampton: Ordnance Survey.

Ordnance Survey (revised 1904, published 1905) Elginshire X.8 (Dyke and Moy; Forres). 2nd Edition. 25 inches to one mile. Southampton: Ordnance Survey.

Printed Sources

Aberdeen Press and Journal (19/04/1905) *The Cattle Trade in Alford – Opening of an Auction Mart*, p.3.

Fenton A, Ed. (2012) *Farming and the Land: Scottish Life and Society, Volume 2 - A Compendium of Scottish Ethnology*. Edinburgh: John Donald, pp.268, 273, 298, 448, 528, 961.

Sharples J, Walker D, Woodworth M. (2015) *Buildings of Scotland – Aberdeenshire: South and Aberdeen*. Yale University Press, p.316.

Shepherd, I A G. (2006) *Aberdeenshire, Donside and Strathbogie: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*. Edinburgh: RIAS, p.85.

Online Sources

Alford Heritage Museum - [Alford Heritage Museum – Preserving the history of Alford since 1991](#)

Other Information

N/A

8. Indicative Map

A map of the proposed listed building is attached separately.