

Kellie Lodging, 23 High Street, Pittenweem, Fife: a reappraisal of its origins and history

R Anthony Lodge*

ABSTRACT

The widely held view that Kellie Lodging (23 High Street, Pittenweem) was built as a townhouse for the Earls of Kellie cannot be correct. The stability of burgage plots in this part of the street shows a reliable match with 16th-century archival data, allowing identification of the occupants of the house at the time it was built (c 1585). Drawings made by Reverend John Sime in 1829 reveal a close historical association between this house and its neighbour at 19–21 High Street, demolished soon after his survey. The occupants of both houses were burgesses, living at a time of acute tension in the town between members of the laird class and the merchants. The siting of the houses at the head of Water Wynd, leading directly to the mid-shore, reflects a shift in the town's focus from the defunct religious area in the Augustinian priory towards a trade-oriented zone around the harbour. Kellie Lodging was the first in the street to have a projecting stair-tower, built not just for display but also for protection in dangerous times. It was quickly followed (1590) by the building of 19–21 with its own stair-tower directly abutting that of Kellie Lodging. Sime's side-by-side plans of the two houses show the simple L-plan house of Kellie Lodging to be a less ambitious structure than 19–21, which had space to incorporate an inner courtyard to the rear. The street frontage symmetry of the two gables, with an unusual abutment of projecting stair-towers, can be read as a display of solidarity and resolution, as the merchants emerged as the dominant force in the burgh.

INTRODUCTION

Kellie Lodging is a late-16th-century L-plan townhouse situated at 23 High Street, Pittenweem, Fife (Illus 1). It was saved from demolition and restored by the National Trust for Scotland in 1968–71 and is now a Category A Listed Building (Watters & Glendinning 2006: 102–3). Its history, however, is imperfectly understood.

It is widely believed that Kellie Lodging was built at the end of the 16th century by the Oliphant family, who possessed Kellie Castle from 1360 to 1613:

Kelly Lodge, the town residence of the Earls of Kelly, is still distinguished by its 16th century turret and staircase. The projecting tower is older than the house. It is possible that the oldest part of Kellie [sic] Lodge was built by the Oliphants of Kellie and that additions were made by Sir Thomas Erskine who was created Earl of Kellie in 1619. (Canmore ID 34283)

This 'possibility' receives no evidential support in published descriptions of the house (MacGibbon & Ross 1887–92, vol 5: 41–2; Simpson & Stevenson 1981: 19; Gifford 1988: 351). The RCAHMS entry in the *Inventory of Fife* (RCAHMS 1933: 225) points to stylistic

* Emeritus Professor of French, University of St Andrews rall@st-andrews.ac.uk



ILLUS 1 Kellie Lodging before and after restoration. (Canmore ID 34283 © Courtesy of HES)

similarities with window mouldings in Kellie and Balcomie but makes no proprietorial link. A recent re-evaluation of the history of Kellie Castle makes no reference to an outpost in Pittenweem (Napier 2007). In fact, a disposition of 28 March 1724 makes it clear that the lairds of Kellie did not build the house but bought it from the Scots of Scotstarvit:

Disposition by David Scott of Scotstarvit in favour of Alexander, Earl of Kelly, of the fore house [23 High Street] between the tenement of George Smyth of Gibliston on the east [19–21 High Street], the minister's manse on the west [25 High Street], the common way on the south [High Street], and the back chamber on the north, and also of the back house or tenement adjacent thereto [29 High Street], in the burgh of Pittenweem. (NRS GD62/317)

The Erskines of Kellie retained Kellie Lodging for only a few decades, selling most of their property in the area to the Anstruthers

of Balcaskie in 1769 and Kellie Castle itself in 1829, but this would have been long enough to make the name stick in local folk memory. The first written attestations of the name appear only at the end of the 19th century (MacGibbon & Ross 1887–92, vol 5: 41; Millar 1895, vol 1: 422). However, none of this solves the problem of the house's origins, for the Scots of Scotstarvit cannot have built it either. Sir John Scot of Scotstarvit (1585–1670), first of the line, acquired property in the East Neuk of Fife shortly after he became Director of Chancery in 1611, which was some time after Kellie Lodging (or the older part of it) was built.

The origins and early history of the house are more complex than hitherto assumed. To answer some of the questions, we will first contextualise the building in its urban and social setting, before exploring its ownership history and presenting a brief structural comparison of the house with its now lost neighbour at 19–21 High Street.

SOURCES

THE PITTENWEEM CARTULARIES

The historiography of 16th-century Pittenweem possesses an exceptional resource in 465 original feu charters issued by the priors/commendators of Pittenweem Priory between 1532 and 1567. These are contained in two cartularies which have not, to date, been published or inventoried:

- (1) 1532–54, the *Registrum Cartarum de Pittenweem (Pitt Reg I)*
- (2) 1553–67, the *Registrum Cartarum et aliorum munimentorum terrarum Prioratus de Pettenwyme (Pitt Reg II)*.

The prime sources for property ownership in 16th-century Scotland are the charters published in the *Registers of the Great Seal (RMS)* and the

Register of the Privy Seal (RSS). These are, of course, indispensable, but they are mostly crown confirmations of but a fraction of lost originals. The Pittenweem cartularies contain sets of original charters and confirmations issued between 1532 and 1567 by the last prior, John Roule, and by the commendator, James Stewart. They record the alienation of almost all the priory's endowment and offer a unique source for people and places in Pittenweem and Anstruther Wester (Lodge 2019) and, indeed, further afield. In the absence of fixed street-names and house-numbers, the charters adopt the usual practice of identifying the relevant holding with reference to its neighbours on all four sides. The fact that they refer directly or indirectly to almost every piece of priory property, down to the tiniest plots of land, enables the location and identification of particular holdings by fitting them together with their neighbours, like pieces in a jigsaw. Table 1

TABLE 1
Occupants of the north side of Pittenweem High Street (1532–60)

Street no.	Tenant/occupier	Reference	Date
35	John Watson	<i>Pitt Reg I</i> : 31–2	8 Nov 1540
33	Thomas Scott of Pitgorno / Abbotshall	<i>Pitt Reg I</i> : 115, 107	c 1541
31	Andrew Cuik Andrew Auchinleck (Affleck)	<i>Pitt Reg I</i> : 63 <i>Pitt Reg II</i> : f 283	20 Nov 1540 26 Feb 1559
29	Thomas Watson John Watson William Stephenson	<i>Pitt Reg I</i> : 115 <i>Pitt Reg II</i> : ff 258–9 <i>RMS</i> : vi, 957	c 1541 31 Jan 1557 7 Sept 1599
25–27	William Abercrombie George Abercrombie	<i>Pitt Reg II</i> : ff 230–1 <i>Pitt Reg I</i> : 31–2	6–7 Mar 1536 8 Nov 1540
23	John Stephenson I John Stephenson II	<i>Pitt Reg I</i> : 31–2 <i>Pitt Reg II</i> : f 280v	8 Nov 1540 10 Sept 1558
19–21	John Taylor Walter Lyall Nicolas Strang	<i>Pitt Reg I</i> : 29, 107 <i>Pitt Reg I</i> : 323 <i>RMS</i> : v, 2318	7 Oct 1540 1554 1585
15–17	George Borthwick	<i>Pitt Reg I</i> : 31–2, 323	8 Nov 1540
11–13	Thomas Millar	<i>Pitt Reg I</i> : 67	3 Nov 1540
7–9	Andrew Steill / Alexander Millar	<i>Pitt Reg I</i> : 213	5 Jan 1548
1–5	George Richardson / Thomas Bowse	<i>Pitt Reg I</i> : 213	5 Jan 1548

lists the occupiers of the north side of the High Street, a generation before Kellie Lodging was built.

REVEREND JOHN SIME'S *MEMORABILIA*

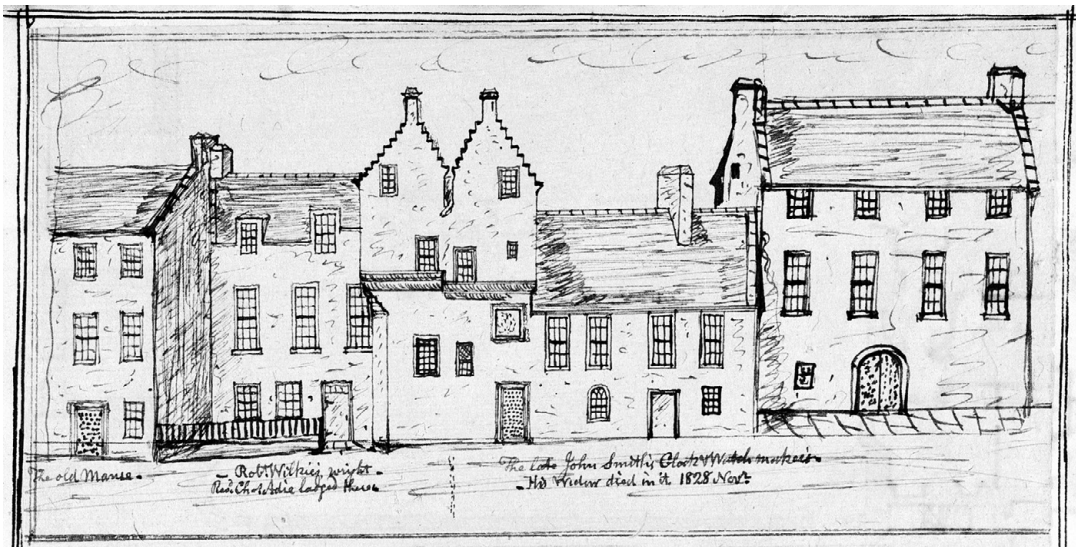
Remarkable ink sketch plans of Pittenweem Priory and adjacent streets, drawn by Reverend John Sime between 1827 and 1833, contain key pieces of evidence for the history of Kellie Lodging. John Sime (1790–1864) was a Church of Scotland minister who travelled the length and breadth of the country drawing plans and line drawings of medieval and early modern buildings. He spent most of his adult life at 3 Windmill Street, Edinburgh, but it may be through his mother's connections in Kilconquhar, Fife (Aiton 1830: 25) that he came to occupy the post of assistant to the Church of Scotland minister in Pittenweem (Charles Addie) between c 1827 and 1833 (Gordon 1868, vol 1: 127). This ministerial connection explains Sime's close familiarity with the town manifested in his plans and sketches. Illus 2 & 11 indicate that 'Rev. Charles Adie' was living in Kellie Lodging at the time when Sime was drawing his sketch and plan.

Sime subsequently became chaplain to Trinity College Hospital, Edinburgh (HES DP 131782; Colston 1896–7, vol 1: 128, 144–5; vol 2: 430) and, later on, 'Sabbath Morning Lecturer' in the Tron Kirk. The bulk of his *Memorabilia* are held in the HES archive, though some Sime material found its way to St Andrews University Library (MS 36267).

Three of Sime's Pittenweem plans relate to buildings within the monastic complex (HES SIM 1/73–75), one sets the priory within the broader urban context (HES SIM 1/72) and one provides a sketch of the south elevation of four houses on the north side of the High Street, including Kellie Lodging, with detailed side-by-side plans of this house and its neighbour at 19–21 High Street (HES SIM 1/72) (Illus 2).

The frontage sketch is accompanied by the inscription:

High Street of Pittenweem 1829. Insc. South Front of Old Twin Houses in the High Street of Pittenweem, Fifeshire – opposite head of the Water Wynd – The Eastern most one was removed in 1829 – Formerly belonged to the Gibleston Family and in front of it, Charles II was publicly entertained by the citizens in his progress thro' Fife AD 16[51]. See an account of



ILLUS 2 Houses at 17–35 High Street, Pittenweem. (Reverend John Sime, *Memorabilia*, Canmore SC 396633, HES SIM 1/73 © Courtesy of HES)

the Event in the first Statistical Accot of the Parish by the late Dr Nairn – John Sime, 1827.

Moving from left to right (west to east), ‘The old manse’ (25–27 High Street) lost its ecclesiastical function in 1835, when a new and more spacious manse was constructed elsewhere. Kellie Lodging (23 High Street) has the subscript ‘Robert Wilkie wright, rentholder larger house’. The neighbouring house (19–21 High Street) – inexplicably described by Sime as ‘the Eastern most one’ – has the subscript ‘Mr John Smith clock and watch maker. His widow died in 1828 Nov.’ (On the life and work of John Smith see Hudson 1985.) The house on the far right (15–17 High Street) is still upstanding, though with a heavily refurbished façade.

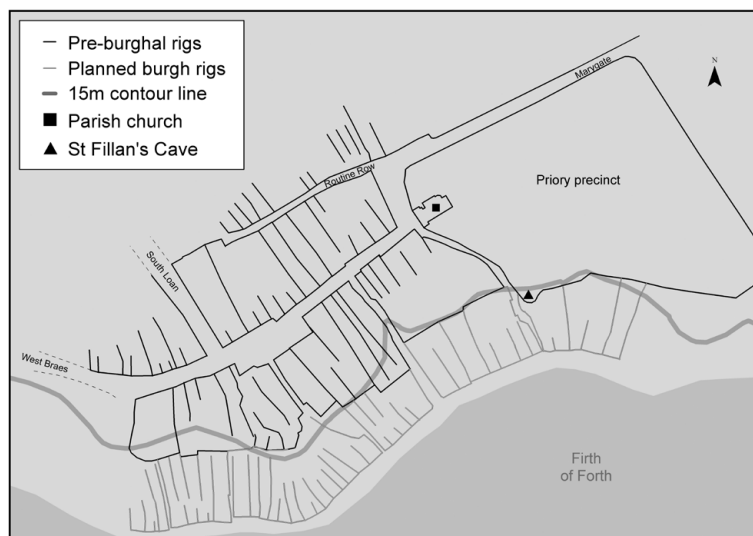
The surprising revelation of Illus 2 is the house at 19–21 High Street, which was pulled down shortly after Sime’s visit to Pittenweem, to be replaced in 1838 by the featureless structure extant today (Canmore ID 101048). Sime’s sketch and plan are almost the only traces left by this building in the historical record. The unusual juxtaposition of the projecting stair-towers at 23 and 19–21 led Sime to describe them as ‘old twin houses’. While this overstates the similarities, it points to a special relationship between the two

buildings and, we might suppose, between their original occupants. Tracing the origins of Kellie Lodging will involve the history of not one house but two.

THE URBAN SETTING

Pittenweem presents an interesting example of a medieval new town grafted on to a long-established older settlement (Illus 3). The town’s topography is dominated by the steep slopes and cliffs of a raised beach which follow the 15m contour line along the north coast of the Forth and through the burgh itself. The 16th-century charters systematically divide the burgh into the lower town ‘below the cliff’ (*subtus rupes*) and the upper town ‘above the cliff’ (*supra rupes / supra ripam*).

A fishing settlement has probably existed since time immemorial along the shore (*subtus rupes*) close to St Fillan’s Cave in Pittenweem. The toponym means the ‘estate of the cave’ (Taylor & Márkus 2006–12, vol 3: 400). At some time after 1143, when David I authorised the May priory to establish its *caput* manor in Pittenweem, a new town developed on the raised beach above the shore (*supra rupes*). The street

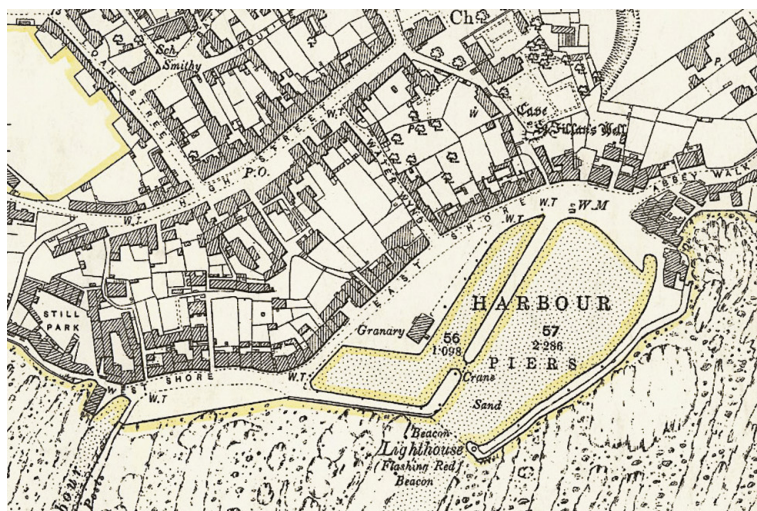


ILLUS 3 Presumed layout of the new town and the manorial enclosure. (Courtesy of Douglas Speirs, pers comm)

plan of the upper town is typical of the new towns which developed in medieval Scotland for purposes of trade (Illus 4). The axial main street stretches east/west from the monastic precinct at one end to the burgh enclosure at the other, with garden rigs extending in herringbone pattern northwards and southwards. Traces of the burgh

enclosure in the form of 3.5m-high garden walls survive on the south side of Routine Row (earlier *Rattoun Raw* and *North Row*) and on the west side of Brown's Close (parallel to South Loan).

Roy's map of 1747 shows the broad outlines of the town's topography, which had changed little since the 16th century (Illus 5).



ILLUS 4 The old town of Pittenweem showing the location of Kellie Lodging. (OS 25-inch 1893, Fifeshire XXII, 15. Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland)



ILLUS 5 Roy 1747, sheet 94d. (Roy Military Survey of Scotland © The British Library)

The ‘king’s highway’ (*via regia*) entered the High Street from the west via *Lydgate* (modern West Braes) and left the burgh towards the east via *Marygate* and the *East Port* (Illus 6). A spur from the middle of the High Street descended steeply along *Water Wynd* or *Wellstrand* to the harbour constructed after the burgh charter of 1541. A *strand* was a gutter carrying a constant flow of water from a well in the High Street to the shore (*DOST*).

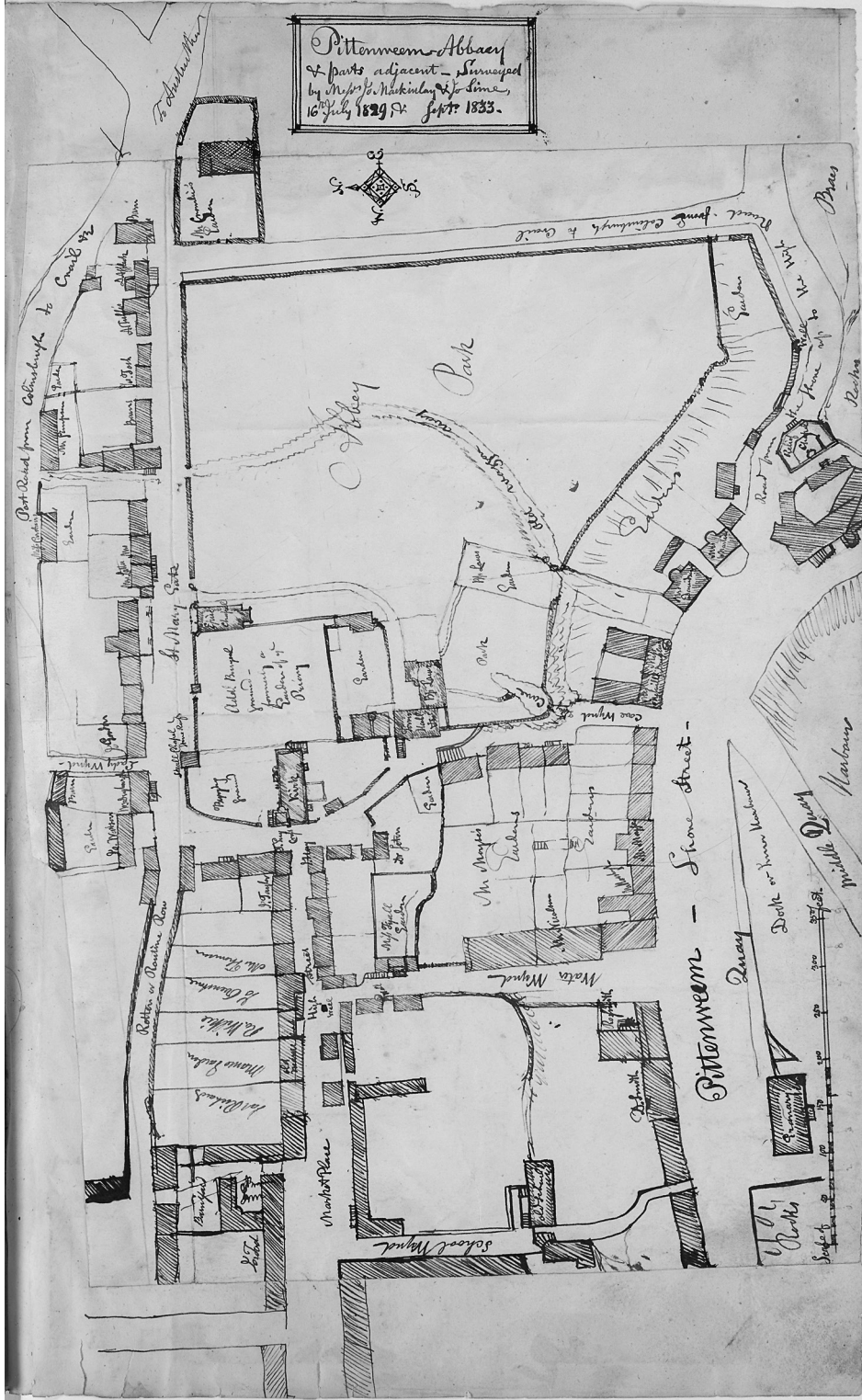
The earliest published plan of Pittenweem, that of the Great Reform Act 1832 (NLS 1832), offers only a schematic outline of the High Street. Of greater value is that produced by Reverend John Sime at exactly that time (Illus 7). This shows the High Street stretching from the parish church in the east to the Market Place and South Loan in the west. Development on the south side was impeded by an abrupt declivity in the terrain. The constructable area being limited, the

tenements consisted of small houses with long, steeply descending orchards and gardens. The north side offered a more favourable site for development, allowing the establishment of eight tenements, each with a house fronting directly on to the street and a garden extending back to Routine Row.

Illus 8 shows the boundaries of eight burgage plots on the north side of the street as surveyed by Sime in 1829, who added in the names of some of the current occupants. For ease of reference, we have inserted the modern house-numbers. Kellie Lodging occupies 23 High Street and its ‘twin’ to the east, nos 19–21. The buildings at 35 (which is modern in date) and 33 (which may originally have been a farm, Canmore ID 101008) stood outside the initial burgh enclosure. Illus 9 shows that the data in Sime closely matches that recorded in the OS six-inch surveyed in 1853.



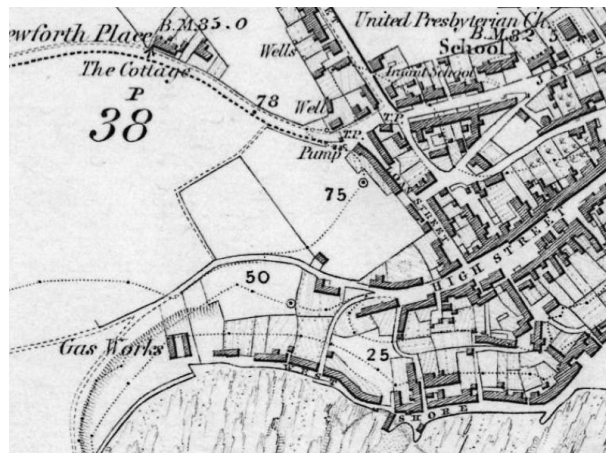
ILLUS 6 Aerial view of the High Street. (Crown copyright and database rights. OS 100023395 Aerial Photography copyright Getmapping)



ILLUS 7 Plan of Pittenweem Priory buildings in context. (Reverend John Sime, Memorabilia, Canmore DP 028598 © Courtesy of HES)



ILLUS 8 Tenements on the north side of the High Street. (Reverend John Sime, *Memorabilia*, Canmore DP 028598 © Courtesy of HES)



ILLUS 9 OS 6-inch, sheet 26 (surveyed 1853). (Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland)

Comparison of the 19th-century maps with data contained in the 16th-century charters, summarised in Table 1, attests the overall stability of the burgage plot boundaries across this period. The most significant disturbance affected plots at the east end of the High Street. In the 16th century the market stance, a wayside chapel and the entrance to the priory church all clustered round the articulation of Marygate, Kirkgate and the High Street. After the religious revolution of 1560, the focus of the town became more diffuse, tilting westwards along the High Street away from the monastic precinct. To relieve congestion, the market stance was removed to its present site in the High Street in 1659 (Cook 1867: 83).

THE SOCIAL SETTING

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BURGHE

Pittenweem achieved the status of burgh in barony in 1452 and that of royal burgh in 1541 (*Pitt Reg I*: 215–19, 327–8). Feu charters issued between 1532 and 1567 provide valuable social as well as physical information about the town at this time. A preliminary analysis reveals an urban settlement with upwards of 110 domestic feus, 60 in the lower town and 50 in the upper. A list of the trades and professions exercised in the burgh is contained in the royal charter of 1541 (*Pitt Reg I*: 217). Population density in the lower-town

population was relatively high, with the inhabitants employed mainly in fishing, maritime trade and coal and salt production. It was lower in the upper town, numerous inhabitants having agricultural interests around the town, in addition to the traditional rigs on the burgh lands.

Before the Reformation, the focus of the town was on the monastic precinct at the east end of the High Street. The High Street population was stratified roughly on 'three-estate' lines (Clergy – Lords – Commons). Houses at the east end, adjacent to the priory, were occupied by associates of the monastic community. Houses in the middle section overlooking Water Wynd were occupied by well-off merchants. Activity at the west end was dominated by a large tenement, probably a farm, owned by members of the laird class, the Scotts of Pitgorno (later of Abbotshall) (Finlay 2004), who had held the hereditary bailiery of Pittenweem since the 1530s.

The religious revolution of 1560 disrupted the traditional balance, leaving social structures in the town in flux for several decades. Moves by the lairds to fill the void created by the now defunct priory were checked by the growing influence of the burgesses. By the early 1580s Pittenweem was represented in the Convention of Royal Burghs and in parliament and was economically on a par with the much older burgh of Crail (Simpson & Stevenson 1981: 2; Lynch et al 1988: 268). Competition between lairds and burgesses culminated in a violent confrontation in the streets of Pittenweem known as the 'Affray of 1586'. This has particular significance here, since the builders of the 'old twin houses' are likely to have been personally involved.

THE 'AFFRAY OF 1586'

In the pre-Reformation barony of Pittenweem, judicial authority of the prior could be delegated to the 'hereditary bailie of barony'. The bailies of barony were local lords or magnates who administered justice and defended the rights of the baron in his jurisdiction (Dilworth 1995: 47).¹ After the Reformation, the lay commendators

were mostly absentees, triggering a *de facto* increase in the legal and judicial role of the hereditary bailie. In the 1580s, 20 years after the change of religion, the moribund institutions of the priory, represented locally by the heritable bailie, had yet to implement provisions in the 1541 charter which were a major concern of the burgesses: there was still no tolbooth, with a council chamber, weigh-house and strong-room, and the ecclesiastical arrangements, with no parish church or manse in the town, were thoroughly inadequate. Matters came to a head in the 'Affray of 1586' (Scott 1892).

On 6 January the heritable bailie, William Scott of Abbotshall, came in all pomp and ceremony to Pittenweem 'whair Court was usit to be halden',² but was met not by the accustomed deference, but by a thousand 'men of weir, straik of drum, sound of trumpet and banners displayit', who 'closit the toon' against him. This number is a hyperbole, but the assembled array of hostile townsfolk was sufficient to cause Scott to retreat. He returned three weeks later, with a force armed with 'long culverins', 'dags', 'hagbuttis' and 'pistolettis', recruited from the Fife gentry, led by Scott's uncle, Alexander Inglis of Tarvit. In the face of a superior force, the townsfolk melted away and their leader, Andrew Strang,³ was besieged in his house close to the harbour (*Pitt Reg II*: f 266), with the commendator himself 'assaiged [...] within the very Place of Pittenweem' (ie the priory). No lives were lost, but Pittenweem, as a royal burgh, was entitled to the king's protection. Retribution was sought from Scott of Abbotshall, Inglis of Tarvit and other lairds for breach of the peace. The grievances of the burgesses were rapidly redressed. In 1588 the priory was formally dissolved and building work began on a new parish church, integrated with a tolbooth steeple. In 1592 William Scott made over parts of the west range of the priory to serve as the burgh's tolbooth, grammar school and manse (Cook 1867: 14–15; *RPS* 1592/4/44; *RMS*: v, 2356). It was in the strife-ridden context of the 1580s that Kellie Lodging and its neighbour were erected.

OCCUPATION HISTORY

23 HIGH STREET

16th-century charters yield the following sequence of owners:

- 1536–54** John Stephenson I (*Pitt Reg II*: f 230). He owned several properties in Pittenweem (*Pitt Reg I*: 177, 258) and pieces of arable land (*Pitt Reg I*: 18, 63, 95, 111, 152, 168, 174). He died *c* 1554.
- 1554–92** John Stephenson II (*Pitt Reg II*: ff 204v, 280v). This name resurfaces in lists of ‘owners and occupiers’ in the north side of the High Street in 1585 (*RMS*: v, 2318n) and in 1592 (*RMS*: v, 2167n). The exact house is not specified.
- 1599** William Stephenson (*RMS*: vi, 957). He is described in the charter as a ship-owner and burgess (*nauclero burgensi*) and was in all probability the son of John Stephenson II.

Everything points to Kellie Lodging’s being built by a member of the Stephenson family, probably John Stephenson II, in the last quarter of the 16th century.

Precisely when ownership of 23 High Street passed to the Scotstarvits is not yet known. In March 1611 Sir John Scot (1585–1670) secured the office of directory of chancery (*RPCS*: (Series 1) vol 9, 153) and, later in the same year, acquired from Alexander Inglis the estate of Tarvit (near Ceres, Fife), which included farms close to Pittenweem at Caiplie Overton (Thirdpart) and Easter Pitcorthie (*RMS*: vii, 588; Snoddy 1968: 10; Stephenson 2004). Inglis of Tarvit had been actively involved in the affairs of Pittenweem, but lists of the components of the Tarvit estate, drawn up in 1621 (*RPS* 1621/6/110) and 1630 (Snoddy 1968: 16–17), do not include a house in the town. All that is known for sure is that Kellie Lodging came into the possession of Sir John or one of his heirs at some time after 1611.

A hint that Sir John Scot of Scotstarvit possessed a house in Pittenweem comes in a well-known piece written in macaronic verse by his

brother-in-law and lifelong friend, William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585–1649). In his *Polemo-Middinia inter Vitarvam et Nebernam* (‘Battle of the Midden’), composed *c* 1627, Drummond gives a burlesque account of a fracas between Lady Scot of Scotstarvit (*Vitarva*) and Lady Cunningham of Barns (*Neberna*) over access rights across land close to Caiplie Overton and Easter Pitcorthie. It contains the following allusion to a house in Pittenweem:

Nymphae, quae colitis highissima monta Fifaea,
Seu vos Pittenwema tenent, seu Crelia crofta,
Sive Anstraea domus, ubi nat haddocus in undis ...
(Kastner 1913: 321)

Ye Nymphs, who inhabit the most high hills of Fife,
Whether you hold property in Pittenweem, the Croft
of Crail,
Or the house in Anstruther, where the haddock swims
in the waves ...
(Author’s translation)

Crelia crofta (*Croft of Crail*, modern *Kirkmay*) situated on the east outskirts of Crail belonged to Lady Cunningham (*Neberna*). *Anstraea domus* (*the house in Anstruther*, Dreel Castle) was owned by the lairds of Anstruther (nicknamed ‘Fisher Willie’). By elimination, the unspecified property in *Pittenwema* belonged to the second protagonist, Lady Scot of Tarvit (*Vitarva*).

Regardless of when the Scotstarvits acquired 23 High Street, the family is known to have participated actively in the life of Pittenweem, even after they sold the house to the Earl of Kellie in 1724 (Cook 1867: 143n; Rogers 1872: 21–4).

19–21 HIGH STREET

16th-century charters yield the following sequence of owners:

- 1541** William Taylor (*Pitt Reg I*: 2, 272, 281, 320b). His spouse, Alison Roule, is believed to have been one of Prior John Roule’s natural offspring.
- 1554** Walter Lyell (*Pitt Reg I*: 323–4). He owned several properties in Pittenweem and pieces

of arable land (*Pitt Reg I*: 37, 179, 246, 271, 320b) and was still occupying the house in 1558 (*Pitt Reg II*: f 280v).

1585 Nicholas Strang and his spouse Christine Carmichael received a charter for the house from the commendator William Stewart on 25 September 1585 (*RMS*: v, 2318).

A monogrammed round-top pediment bearing the initials NS and CC with the date 1590 survives in a rear wall of the extant building (Illus 10).

There seems little doubt about who built the now lost house at 19–21 High Street. The Strangs were one of the town's most influential dynasties: Peter Strang had been bailie of the burgh in the first half of the century, running a large salt-making concern in the lower town. Andrew Strang was 'besieged in his own house' during the Affray of 1586 (Scott 1892: 106, 112). Nicholas Strang himself served as the burgh's representative in parliament and in the Convention of Royal Burghs in the 1580s and 1590s.

His descendants retained 19–21 High Street until the mid-17th century (*Retours (Fife)*: 469, 749, 750, 751), when ownership passed to Robert Smyth (NRS RS31/17/382), who was town clerk in the 1650s (Wood 1887: 270). The house seems to have kept much of its earlier prestige, for it is here that Charles II was entertained during his progress through Fife, in 1651 (Nairne 1792: 376–7; Cook 1867: 69).

STRUCTURAL COMPARISON OF THE TWO HOUSES⁴

John Sime's sketch and horizontal plans (Illus 2 & 11) are key pieces of evidence in the histories of Kellie Lodging and its lost neighbour. While the quality and reliability of these drawings are unsurpassed, the caveat is that all the historic buildings shown are some way removed from their original form. The fact that the back house of Kellie Lodging has three storeys in contrast to the two at the Strang house results from alterations made in the 17th century (Canmore NO50SW 9 54833 02557). The insertion of a second front door, nullifying the defensive function of the stair-tower entrance, must have happened at the same time. Photographs taken before and after restoration are at Canmore <https://canmore.org.uk/site/34283/pittenweem-23-high-street-kellie-lodging>.

FRONT ELEVATION

The most striking feature of the front elevation of the 'twin houses' is the juxtaposition of two projecting stair-jambs. Symmetrical street-fronting gables are a common feature in early modern Scotland, for example, in Edinburgh (Canmore ID 52526) and Linlithgow (Canmore ID 214466), as are townhouses with stair-jambs protruding into the street (for example, in Aberdeen (Canmore ID 20176), Culross (Canmore ID 48023), and Inverkeithing (Canmore ID 51013).



ILLUS 10 Marriage lintel of Nicolas Strang and Christine Carmichael. (Photograph by R Anthony Lodge)

What is unusual in the case of Kellie Lodging, as shown in Sime's drawings, is the direct juxtaposition of its stair-tower with that of the adjacent house. The function of stair-towers was for defence as well as display. The juxtaposition of the stair-towers obscured the view from each cap-house along the street, but offered greater protection by covering one side of each tower, reinforcing both entrances.

Were Sime's 'twin houses' designed and built as a single project? Superficial examination of the stonework in the stair-tower of 23 rules this out. MacGibbon & Ross speculated that there had 'been some kind of bartizan at the east side' (MacGibbon & Ross 1887–92, vol 5: 42), but did not have the benefit of Sime's drawings. As the building appears today, chamfered corners are present on both the west and the east corners of the tower (left and right respectively in Illus 1), whereas in Sime's sketch of 1829 chamfering is visible only on the west corner, that on the east being obscured by harling and stonework on the tower of 19–21. The destruction of the Strang house brought back into view the original chamfering on the east side of Kellie Lodging. This shows two things. Firstly, Kellie Lodging was conceived initially as an independent building, a hypothesis supported by the double thickness of wall between the two houses (Illus 11). Secondly, the stair-tower on Kellie Lodging was built before that of 19–21, with Nicholas Strang designing his frontage to blend in with that of the Stephensons. The completion of the Strang house in 1590 gives the *terminus ad quem* for that of Kellie Lodging. An approximate *terminus a quo* is less easy to specify, but a date in the 1580s near the time of the Affray of 1586 would not be unrealistic.

An intriguing detail in Sime's sketch of the street frontage is the single round-headed window between the two entrances to the Strang house, closely resembling the round-headed doorway at 15–17 High Street (Illus 2, extreme right). Round-headed door- and window-arches were in vogue in ecclesiastical buildings in the 15th and early 16th centuries (Campbell 1995) and they abound in the surviving buildings of Pittenweem Priory (Lodge 2020: 182). This

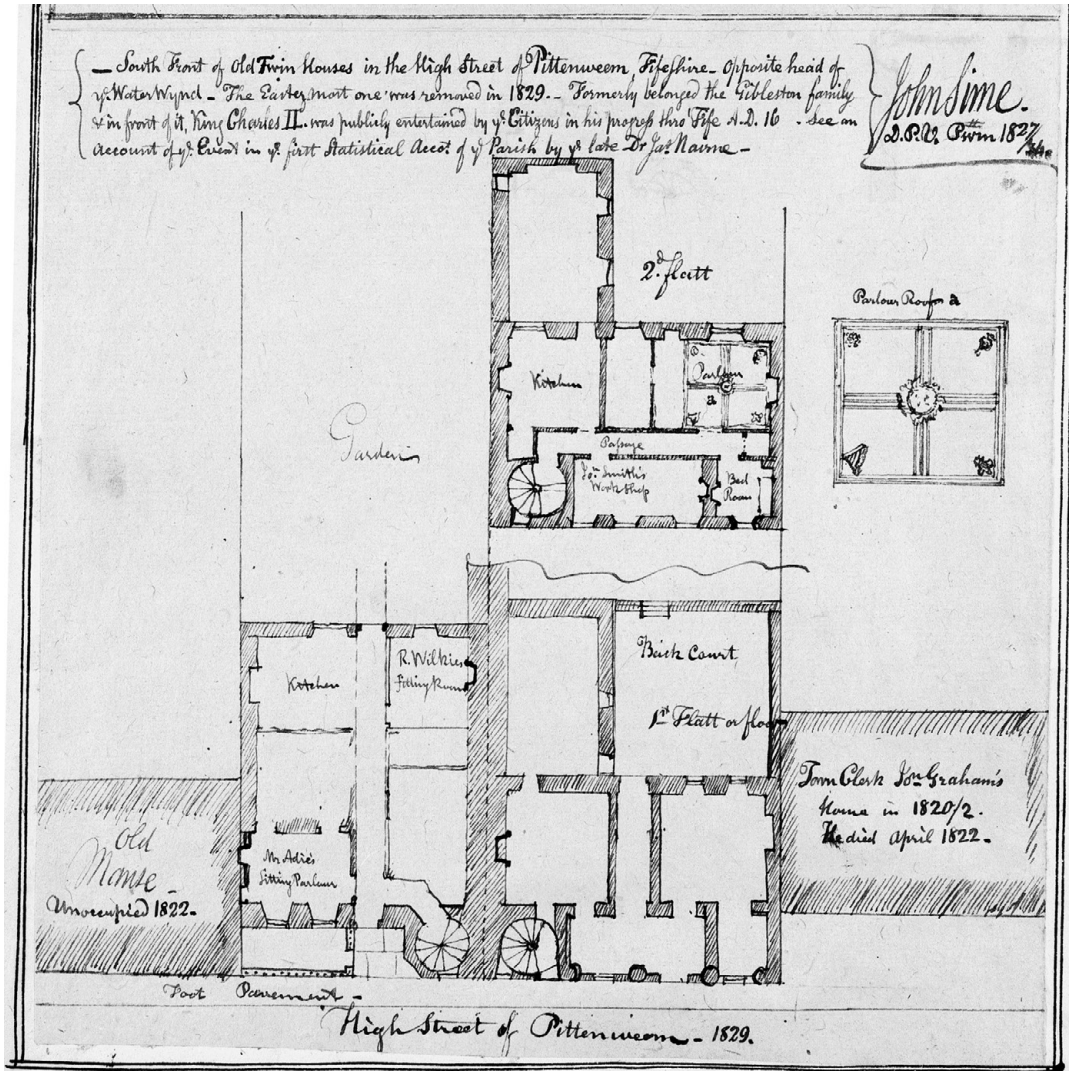
decorative feature is unusual, though not unknown, in 16th-century Scottish townhouses. Whereas arcades commonly had round-headed arches, doors and windows were more generally square or rectangular. Medieval stonework found in the garden of 15–17 High Street triggered the belief that this was the site of the priory hospital (Conolly 1869: 212; Gordon 1868, vol 1: 124; Simpson & Stevenson 1981: 12). This belief is probably incorrect, but stones from collapsed priory buildings are known to have been recycled into Pittenweem parish church (1588–92) and probably many more went to build local houses and walls. It is not impossible, therefore, that the round-headed window and doorway sketched by Sime in the High Street houses had earlier been removed *en bloc* from old priory buildings.

Stylistically, the street frontage of the 'old Twin houses' is designed to impress. Juxtaposition of the stair-towers signalled both the new-found strength of two burgess families and a bond of solidarity between them. The fact that Strang built his tower fractionally lower than that of the Stephensons may have been a mark of respect for neighbours who had occupied no. 23 for several decades before his ownership of 19–21. Strang did not fail to 'leave his mark', however, as witnessed by the square stone panel above the main entrance (Illus 2), which most likely housed the round-topped pediment bearing his initials and those of his spouse (Illus 10).

INTERNAL LAYOUT

The Strangs probably had more money to spend on their house than the Stephensons and the 10% difference in plot width between the Strang house and Kellie Lodging allowed their builder to be a good deal more ambitious (Illus 11).

'The relative stability of plots, and especially of plot widths, placed strict limits on the breadths of the frontages of foreland buildings, given that there had also to be lateral space for an access path or "close"' (Stell & Tait 2016). Access to the High Street houses not being possible from the rear (Routine Row), all movement in and out was from the front. The builders of both houses enclosed the pathway from the street to the



ILLUS 11 Plans of nos 23 and 19–21 High Street. (Reverend John Sime *Memorabilia*, Canmore DP 028598, HES SIM 1/73 © Courtesy of HES)

garden within a central close, allowing the upper floors to span the full width of the plot. In Kellie Lodging, all access from the street had to pass through the single front door at the foot of the stair-tower. The Strang house had two external doors, one a ceremonial entrance, at the front of the stair-tower, giving access to the main house, and the other a sort of tradesman's entrance, leading to the central close and the back court.

‘For builders of greater ambition the forelands proved too physically constricted; the backlands, on the other hand, offered scope for aligning much larger dwellings linearly along the long axes of the plots and for their main frontages to face the closes, not the streets’ (Stell & Tait 2016). The builder of Kellie Lodging limited his structure to a simple rectangular box, with a stair-tower at the front, a ground-floor kitchen at the rear and no extension. The wider plot in

the Strang house permitted the incorporation of a back court overlooked on the west by a back house and on the south by the main reception room on the first floor of the fore house. A plaster ceiling in this room, depicting a harp, a thistle, a rose and a fleur-de-lis, representing the king's dominions of Scotland, Ireland, England and France, is likely to have been commissioned in connection with Charles II's visit to Pittenweem in February 1651.

CONCLUSION

The widely held view that Kellie Lodging (23 High Street, Pittenweem) was built as a townhouse for the Earls of Kellie cannot be correct. The stability of burgage plots in this part of the street has shown a reliable match with 16th-century archival data, allowing identification of the occupants of the house at the time it was built (c 1585). Drawings made by Reverend John Sime in 1829 have revealed a close historical connection between this house and its neighbour at 19–21 High Street, demolished soon after Sime's survey. The occupants of both houses were burgesses, living at a time of acute tension in the town between members of the laird class and the local merchants. The siting of the houses at the head of Water Wynd, leading directly to the mid-shore, reflects a shift in the focus of the town from the defunct religious area in the Augustinian priory towards a trade-oriented zone around the harbour. Kellie Lodging was the first in the street to have a projecting stair-tower, built not just for display but also for protection in dangerous times. It was quickly followed (1590) by the building of 19–21 with its own stair-tower directly abutting that of Kellie Lodging. Sime's side-by-side plans of the two houses have shown the simple L-plan house of Kellie Lodging to be a less ambitious structure than 19–21, which had space to incorporate an inner courtyard to the rear. The street frontage symmetry of the two gables, with an unusual abutment of projecting stair-towers, can be read as a display of resolution and solidarity, as the merchants emerged as the dominant force in the burgh.

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NOTES

- 1 They were quite distinct from the 'bailies of the burgh', instituted to serve as officers or magistrates charged with running the affairs of the town.
- 2 Pittenweem being the heid-burgh (capital) of the barony, it was here that the three heid-courts (principal sessions) were held, after Michaelmas, Christmas and Easter.
- 3 His family owned the earliest of Pittenweem's salt works and was one of the most influential in the burgh.
- 4 Two hard copy files related to the restoration of Kellie Lodging are held in the Head Office archives of the National Trust for Scotland: GB1873/02/13/02/16/04/08, plans and elevations (1969) and GB1873/02/13/02/16/04/09, photographs (January 1966 – June 1994). COVID restrictions have prevented us from accessing this material.

ABBREVIATIONS

DOST: Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue.

<https://www.dsl.ac.uk>. Accessed 31 March 2021.

Pitt Reg I: Registrum Cartarum de Pittenweem (St Andrews University Library Special Collections – see under Documentary sources)

Pitt Reg II: Registrum Cartarum et aliorum munimentorum terrarum Prioratus de Pettenwyme (NLS – see under Documentary sources)

Retours (Fife): Inquisitionum ad capellam domini regis retornatarum, vol 1. Ed. T Thomson. 1811–16. Edinburgh.

RPCS: Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum. Ed. J M Thomson et al. 1882–1914. Edinburgh: HM General Register House.

RPCS: Register of the Privy Council of Scotland, First Series, 14 vols. Ed. J H Burton. 1877–98. Edinburgh: HM General Register House.

RPS: Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707. Ed. K Brown. University of St Andrews. <http://www.rps.ac.uk/>. Accessed 11 May 2021. (See under Documentary sources)

RSS: Registrum Secreti Sigilli: The Register of the Privy Seal of Scotland, 7 vols. Ed. M Livingstone et al. 1908–66. Edinburgh.

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HES DP 131782 Merchant Company 1864, portrait in oil of Reverend John Sime.

HES SIM 1/72 Reverend John Sime, *Memorabilia*, Edinburgh, five ink sketch plans of Pittenweem Priory.

HES SIM 1/73–75 Reverend John Sime, sketch plans of Pittenweem Priory and surroundings.

NLS: National Library of Scotland

NLS 1832 Great Reform Act Plans and Reports, map 58. <https://maps.nls.uk/towns/reform/browse/2621>. Accessed 12 May 2021.

Pitt Reg II: Registrum Cartarum et aliorum munimentorum terrarum Prioratus de Pettenwyme, NLS adv. ms. 17.1.3, ff 198–295.

NRS: National Records of Scotland

NRS GD62/317 Disposition by David Scott of Scotstarvet in favour of Alexander, Earl of Kelly [...] 28 March 1724.

NRS RS31/17/382 Register of Sasines for the Shires of Fife and Kinross, 9 January 1649–15 February 1651.

RPS: Records of the Parliaments of Scotland

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