

Scotia *Archaeology*

**REPORT
TO
TAYMOUTH CASTLE HOTEL LTD
AND
McKENZIE STRICKLAND ASSOCIATES**

**KENMORE HOTEL
REPORT OF
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
OF AREA 3
FEBRUARY 2012**

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INTRODUCTION

This document describes the results of an archaeological field evaluation undertaken in advance of proposed developments at the Kenmore Hotel, Kenmore, Perthshire. Perth & Kinross Council has granted planning consent for the construction of a total of 30 apartments, 24 hotel suites, four dwelling houses and other new facilities within and adjacent to the hotel (Planning Reference number 09/01162/FLM). This development will necessitate the demolition of existing suites, the refurbishment of several extant buildings and the construction of new buildings in green-field areas around the hotel. The field evaluation was carried out on 2 February 2012 by John Lewis of Scotia Archaeology for Taymouth Castle Hotel Ltd.

Two conditions were attached to the consent. A standing building survey would be undertaken of buildings ranged around a courtyard to the east of the hotel and archaeological field evaluations would be carried out within the green-field areas due for development. Three new areas have been earmarked for development:

Area 1, to the immediate east of the courtyard;

Area 2, to the immediate west of the hotel; and

Area 3, between an early 19th-century building known as the Boathouse and the bridge that spans the River Tay at the point where it debouches from Loch Tay.

The standing building survey and the evaluation of Area 3 were carried out in January/February 2012; investigations in Areas 2 and 3 are planned for a later date. A report of the survey will appear under separate cover.

The evaluation was carried out in the context of Scottish Planning Policy and Scottish Historic Environment Policy and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Scotia Archaeology. The WSI was approved by Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT), archaeological advisors to Perth & Kinross Council, before any fieldwork commenced. It was acknowledged that the results of the Area 3 evaluation could form the basis of a subsequent programme of excavation in which a larger area is investigated or the surviving record is preserved in situ.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The village of Kenmore is located at the east end of Loch Tay, some 10km west of Aberfeldy, Perthshire. It is a planned estate village built by the third Earl of Breadalbane from 1755, replacing the earlier village of Inchadnie, situated close to Taymouth Castle, 1.5km to the north-east. The bulk of the extant castle dates from 1806-10 but is thought to include part of the earlier Balloch Castle which was constructed in 1550 and extended by William Adam in circa 1733.

Kenmore Hotel is situated at the north-east corner of the village square and is reputed to be the oldest inn in Scotland, dating from circa 1572. However, the present hotel and courtyard buildings show no obvious indication of such an early date and it is thought more likely that the hotel and some of the courtyard buildings are contemporary with the planned village. It is

possible that an early inn was either absorbed into the extant hotel or demolished and replaced by it.

Known as the Breadalbane Arms in the 19th century, the hotel is a B-category listed building (Listed Building Number 12122) and is catalogued by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) as NN74NE 116. The main structure has three storeys and an attic to which a west wing of two storeys and attic was added in 1760-63. Further additions and alterations were implemented at later dates. Courtyard buildings to the east of the hotel were probably used to keep horses, carriages and associated equipment.

The Boathouse, which is due for refurbishment as part of the overall programme, dates from around 1840 and consists of a single-storey building with attic. It is a C-category listed building and is catalogued by RCAHMS as NN74NE 135.

THE EVALUATION

There are proposals to develop greenfield areas to the east, west and north-west of the hotel where it was thought possible that buried archaeology, ranging from prehistoric to post-medieval in date, might survive. As a consequence, evaluations were intended to determine whether such remains might survive in those three areas. The first area to be investigated is located to the north-west of the hotel, in Area 3, and forms the subject of this report.

Area 3 is defined on its south and west by a high boundary wall and extends as far as the Boathouse on its east side. The main area of development in Area 3 lies between the boundary wall and a tarmac road that leads off the A827, near the Tay bridge, to the rear of the hotel. In addition, the upgrading of a sewerage system to the north-west of the Boathouse means there will also be some disruption to the north of the road.

The general aim of the evaluation was to ensure that any archaeological remains surviving in Area 3 and which were threatened by the development were preserved, either in situ or by record. Its specific objectives were:

to establish the presence or absence of archaeological features and deposits within the development area;

to determine the character, extent, degree of survival and significance of those features and deposits by means of sample excavation; and

to establish the vulnerability of Area 3's archaeological record from the proposed development.

The northern limit of Area 3 was difficult to define, much of the land beyond the tarmac road having been disturbed on earlier occasions although its maximum surface area can be said to be some 1,000m². PKHT specified that at least 6% of each evaluation area should be trenched which for Area 3 would be at least 60m². An indicative layout of four trenches was included in the WSI although the arrangement implemented during field evaluation differed slightly from the original plan (see attached drawing).

A total of six trenches were excavated, five of them on the grassy area which sloped down from the the south boundary wall towards the tarmac road and a sixth opened between the

road and the River Tay. It had been intended to open a trench close to the west wall of the Boathouse but it was clear that a large quantity of material had been removed from that area on an earlier occasion, probably during the construction of the building or landscaping associated with it.

Trench dimensions were as follows:

- Trench 1: 5.5m north/south by 2m wide
- Trench 2: 11.5m north/south by 2m wide
- Trench 3: 8.5m east/west by 2m wide
- Trench 4: 7.5m north/south by 2m wide
- Trench 5: 5.2m east/west by 2m wide
- Trench 6: 6.5m north/south by 2m wide.

The total area excavated was 89.4m², approximately 9% of Area 3, including those parts not due for development.

Topsoil and other modern deposits were removed using a toothless bucket attached to a 1.5-tonne mechanical excavator in order to minimise damage to any archaeological features or deposits that might survive below ground. Following the removal of modern materials, the trenches were shovel-scraped by hand to determine whether anything of significance had been uncovered.

Trenches 1-5

Trenches 1 to 5 were located on the grassy bank between the south boundary wall, the tarmac road and the Boathouse and centred on NN 77214 45481. The east end of this area had been landscaped to provide a level platform on which to construct the Boathouse during the 19th century and, as a consequence, was not trenched.

Topsoil of mid- to dark brown humic loam with gravel varied in depth from 0.2m to 0.35m, being generally deepest towards the north side of the site, presumably because of soil creep downhill. In most of the trenches it gave directly onto fluvio-glacial deposits of silt, gravel and pebbles, ranging in colour from grey to pale brown and orange. The only features uncovered in any of the trenches were of recent origin. A pit cutting the subsoil towards the south end of Trench 1 was filled with redeposited topsoil containing many sherds of white-glazed, hard-paste porcelain of 19th-century date. Similar material was retrieved throughout the topsoil in most of the trenches.

A band of rubble, including a small amount of lime mortar, ran across Trench 2, throughout Trench 3 and the south end of Trench 4. Removal of some of this material showed it to be simply a dump of waste lying directly on the undisturbed glacial materials and probably used to level declivities in it. A few sherds of 19th-century ceramics were retrieved from the soil between the stones, probably having percolated down from the topsoil. It was curious to note that much of the rubble consisted of good quality building stone, some of it quite large and clearly reusable. Most of the rubble uncovered in Trench 3 was left in situ.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was positioned roughly where an ancillary structure for a new septic tank is to be inserted. It was located some 13m north of the Boathouse, roughly midway between the building and the River Tay. Topsoil was barely 0.1m deep in this area and lay directly on fluvio-glacial gravel and pebbles with no features of significance being uncovered in the trench and no artefacts recovered from it.

CONCLUSIONS

No structures, features or deposits of archaeological significance were uncovered in any of the trenches. On the evidence retrieved from Trenches 1-5, it seems likely that the grassy bank to the west of the Boathouse had been landscaped at some point in the recent past, the consistency of the artefactual assemblage suggesting that the topsoil had been imported from a single source. The almost complete absence of topsoil in Trench 6 might point to that area being the source of the topsoil covering the bank although the evidence is anything but conclusive.

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

The photographs form part of the investigation archive and are not reproduced in hard copies of this report.

- 1 Trench 1, viewed from the north
- 2 Trench 1, viewed from the south, showing a partially excavated modern pit in the foreground, on the east side of the trench
- 3 Trench 2, viewed from the south
- 4 Trench 2, viewed from the north
- 5 Trench 3, viewed from the east
- 6 Trench 3, viewed from the west
- 7 Trench 4, viewed from the south
- 8 Trench 4, viewed from the north
- 9 Trench 5, viewed from the west
- 10 Trench 5, viewed from the east
- 11 Trench 6, viewed from the north
- 12 Trench 6, viewed from the south
- 13 View from the south, showing Trench 6 and the River Tay beyond
- 14-15 Views from the east, showing the main area of investigation
- 16-18 The main area of investigation, viewed from the west
- 19-20 The Boathouse with Trench 5 on the right, viewed from the north-west
- 21 The east end of the main area of investigation, showing the slope to the west of the Boathouse, viewed from the north