

Scotia Archaeology

REPORT
TO
TAYMOUTH CASTLE HOTEL LTD
AND
McKENZIE STRICKLAND ASSOCIATES

KENMORE HOTEL
STANDING BUILDING SURVEY
OF
COURTYARD BUILDINGS
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INTRODUCTION

This document describes the results of a standing building survey 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.

Two conditions were attached to the consent whereby a standing buildings 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 flows out of Loch Tay.

The standing building survey was undertaken in January 2012 and the evaluation of Area 3 in February 2012. A report, describing the results of the evaluation has been submitted under separate cover to the client and Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust (PKHT), archaeological advisors to the council.

Investigations in Areas 2 and 3 are planned for a later date.

The survey and evaluation were 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 PKHT before fieldwork commenced.

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 c1733.

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 c1572. However, the present hotel and courtyard buildings show no obvious indication of such an early date and it is 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 present building 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 two-storey and attic west wing 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 STANDING BUILDING SURVEY

The refurbishment of the three buildings surrounding the courtyard to the east of the Kenmore Hotel forms part of planning application 09/01162/FLM. The implementation of a standing building survey of those buildings was a condition of that application being granted. Access to the interiors of some of the buildings was restricted because of large quantities of materials lying within them although this did not hinder the survey unduly.

Of all the courtyard buildings, the coach house at the west end of the north range is the only one that appears to date from around 1755 when the model village was laid out, while others may well predate this event. In 1774 a seven-arch bridge was built over the River Tay where it emerges from Loch Tay. Its construction would have increased traffic through Kenmore, creating a demand for extra accommodation and stabling at the hotel. The north and east ranges appear to have been remodelled around this time to provide that stabling.

North range

This single-storey building, which measures approximately 16m by 6m internally, has a pitched, slated roof and probably sits on the footprint of an earlier building. It is a relatively modern, brick-built structure, three walls of which abut an earlier north wall of random rubble construction, 600mm wide, which is integral with the north gable of the east range. There is a distinct straight joint between the building's west wall and the double-arched coach house.

A 900mm-wide passage on the south side of the building is entered through a double door flanked by two windows and gives access to several storage areas at the west end of the building. Two separate storage areas are located at its east end where there is also direct access from the courtyard. The easternmost store has been extended into the north end of the east range. There are no other features of note in this building.

Coach house

The coach house abuts the west end of the north range although clearly it was built at a different time. It is a single storey building of random rubble construction with a hip-ended slate roof and two shallow, segmental arched openings for coaches with doors on each side. This building is not due for demolition or alteration.

East range

At some stage, this one and a half storey building, which measures approximately 16m by 6m internally, has been divided into three compartments. Although now used as a store, it was previously a stable with a hayloft at first-floor level. It probably predates the other courtyard buildings. Its random rubble construction, crudely formed openings and separate hip-ended,

pitched and slated roof, suggests that it may have formed part of an earlier farm steading, perhaps associated with the building that predated the extant north range. Its construction is extremely crude and differs markedly from the other courtyard buildings. For example, it has no dressed window or door jambs and the lintels, which are probably pit-sawn, were used as joists at first-floor level.

South compartment

The south compartment measures 7.6m long internally and is accessed from a door in the west wall which is flanked on its south side by a small open window, measuring 500mm wide and 900mm high with two vertical metal bars set into the sill and lintel at the re-entrant angle. To the north of the doorway are two windows, one 850mm wide and 1200mm high and now blocked, the other 600mm wide and 1000mm high which is open with three vertical metal bars set into the sill and lintel.

Above the external door at first-floor level is a hip-ended dormer with a fixed, nine-paned window, now blocked. The lower area below the window, between the wall-head and the loft floor level, is blocked, indicating this may have been an earlier access to the hayloft before conversion to the present window. The window may have been inserted to convert the south loft area into a bothy. There is no visible access to the hayloft, other than some internal bridging of the first-floor joists forming access hatches which are now blocked.

This south area has been used as a stable and is divided into four separate stalls. Four stall posts, each 150mm square, support a central beam measuring 200mm by 150mm which runs north/south across the building. The beam supports crude floor joists measuring typically 180mm by 150mm.

There are blocked doorways at the south end of the east wall and at the east end of the south gable, the latter probably closed up when a building, known locally as the Library, was built against it as part of the planned village. The first-floor joists lie between these doorways, suggesting that the access stair to the loft was in this area, external access being from the blocked opening in the south gable wall at ground level.

Central compartment

This area measures 8.3m by 5m internally and is accessed by a door in the west wall. To the north of the door is a window, originally a door and now blocked, which measures 750mm wide by 1100mm high.

The central support beam in the south compartment continues through this area, terminating at a post, 200mm by 100mm thick, against the north, brick-built cross wall. Protruding from the west wall, at the south end of the compartment, are the remains of a stall, terminating at a 150mm-square post. It was difficult to determine the original function of this feature because of the large quantity of debris in this area although it may have been a loose box.

North compartment

The north compartment is accessed through the east door of the north range. When the north range was built the north end of the present stable block was radically altered to incorporate it into the range. The original first-floor joists have been replaced although the central

supporting post remains in situ with the remains of a loose box stall abutting it. On the north gable wall are two slit windows, perhaps to provide ventilation for the hayloft. Again, access to this area was difficult.

South range

This is a later single-storey building measuring 14.2m by 6.6m externally, situated to the east of the south entrance to the courtyard. There is an extensive storage area within the roof space which is accessed by a timber fore-stair against the west gable although the stair is now too unsafe to allow entry to the loft. This building may have been used as a coach house or stable. It was built against a wall that once defined the planned village square and hence appears to post-date 1755.

The north, west and south walls of the building are of post and beam construction while the east gable is built of rubble masonry. The north side of the range is divided into four equal bays. The west gable is clad with weather board with a fixed, 12-pane window measuring 900mm wide and 1200mm high, providing light at ground-floor level at the north end of the west bay. A fore-stair gives access to the loft area through a door in the west gable.

The slated roof on the north elevation is supported on timber beams, 300mm square, carried on a central stone column, 600mm square, and two 300mm square timber columns dividing the building into four equal bays, separated by sliding doors. Internally there is very little of note other than cobbled floors in the westernmost bays, indicating that they may have been stables. The loft area is lit by two skylights.

DISCUSSION

The four buildings surrounding the courtyard are all of different age and construction. The east range and the original north range are the earliest and probably date from after 1572, perhaps being contemporary with the earliest known date of the inn. Although the east range has been used as a stable, the many alterations within it suggest that this building had a different function originally as perhaps did the north range. These buildings may have serviced the original coaching inn or formed part of an earlier farm steading. The coach house could be mid-18th-century in date and be associated with improved facilities during that period.

The south range appears to have been built after the planned village was constructed in 1755, probably to provide additional accommodation for coaches and, latterly, motor vehicles. The extant north range, apparently built over of an earlier structure, may have been a laundry for the hotel or possibly a bothy for gillies and fishermen.

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

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

- 1 The west elevation of the east range; viewed from the west
- 2 The north elevation of the south range; viewed from the north
- 3 The south elevation of the north range; viewed from the south
- 4 The interior of the south compartment of the east range; viewed from the north-west
- 5 The interior of the central compartment of the east range; viewed from the north-west
- 6 The brick-built north wall of the central compartment of the east range; viewed from the south-west
- 7 The secondary floor of the north compartment of the east range; viewed from the south-west
- 8 The west gable and fore-stair of the south range; viewed from the north-west
- 9 The interior partition and roof of the east compartment of the north range; viewed from the south-west
- 10 The partition wall in the north range; viewed from the south-west
- 11 The ceiling and partition wall in the south range; viewed from the north-west
- 12 The west elevation of the east range, showing the dormer at first-floor level; viewed from the west
- 13 General view of the courtyard; viewed from the west
- 14 The west gable of the south range showing the fore-stair and the east abutment of the courtyard entrance; viewed from the south-west
- 15 The east range and its junction with the north wall of the library; viewed from the north-west
- 16 General view of the courtyard from the west
- 17 The south range; viewed from the north-west
- 18 The north gable of the east range, showing its slit windows at the upper level; viewed from the north
- 19 The east range; viewed from the east
- 20 The junction of the north wall of the north range and the coach house, showing the straight joint between the two structures; viewed from the north-west
- 21 The coach house; viewed from the south
- 22 The junction of the north range and the coach house; viewed from the south-east
- 23 The Kenmore Hotel; viewed from the south
- 24 Detail of the post and rail construction in the south range; viewed from the west
- 25 Loose box with stall post in the east compartment of the north range; viewed from the west