

KINNESSWOOD

Village Appraisal and Conservation Area Status

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INTENTION

Kinnesswood is an important example of a village of traditional ferm-toun origin, with its existing core of 18th and 19th century buildings of vernacular character, and association with several important historic characters and industries. Its association with the poet Michael Bruce and the meteorologist Alexander Buchan are well recorded. The village industrial history is focused on the manufacture of parchment and vellum and, to provide power to the weaving industry, the establishment of the first gasworks in Scotland. The village lies at the foot of Bishops Hill within an Area of Great Landscape Value. It is the intention of the local Planning Authority to designate Kinnesswood as a Conservation Area, under Section 262 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1972, and Section 2(1) of the town and Country Amenities Act 1974, this being an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve.

The Kinross Area Local Plan 1994 proposed a Conservation Area Boundary which would form the basis of the finalised Conservation Area. Following more detailed evaluation of the village, the Planning Authority proposes to amend the boundary to include the historic fabric of the village on Main Street and the two steep narrow roads, the Cobbles and Back Dykes which traditionally served the croft houses and their rigs and led on upwards to the lime kilns and common grazings on the hillside, and after representations at the public meeting, a property and area of ground west of Back Dykes, and the access to the two roads from Bishops Hill.

The designation will strengthen the planning legislation in the whole area under conservation area control.

DEFINITION OF KINNESSWOOD CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

The accompanying map shows the area to be designated, defined by a solid black line. The area is identified by the following:

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Crofters and Weavers

Kinnesswood was a village of crofters and weavers in the 18th and 19th centuries; a ferm toun with the associated run-rig and commonty system of agriculture. A pre-enclosure map drawn by John Birrell in 1796 shows the division of the land around the village. Portmoak Moss was also divided between all the neighbouring villages and farms. The people were allocated headroom in the moss to cut peat for fire. Access to the Moss was via Peat Loan which is now part of Grahamstone Avenue

leading to Grahamstone Farm. Peat was cut from the heads and laid out to dry on the spreads. Peat was last cut in that way in the 1980s. In 1738 the village divided into east and west sections for an improved management system, with each using a different lane to access the lime kilns on the hillside; The Cobbles and Lime Road, now called Backdykes. By 1799 the run-rigs were organised into areas of separate ownership. Portmoak Moss Commonly was first divided in 1831. Unlike Scotlandwell, there are no remnants of the run-rig system although the structure of the land in howes and drums can be seen beyond the village on the side of Bishop Hill.

Ground floor loom shops opened onto The Cobbles and Main Street. The cottage industry began to decline from the 1880's onwards. During the 1830s Kinnesswood became the site of one of the earliest gas works in Scotland, built by John Birrell the village entrepreneur. Kinnesswood Gaslight Company was situated in a brick building which still stands in Pudden Wynd behind The Cobbles. Coal was brought from Kelty mines to produce the gas which was piped round the loomshops until the early years of this century. John Birrell also created the water system for the village and a pump on The Cobbles is a remnant of that system.

Parchment and Vellum

The manufacture of parchment and vellum for Register House in Edinburgh, from the 16th century until 1926, was an industry unique to Kinross-shire and prolific in Kinnesswood. The story of the industry is told in the Cottage Museum. The manufacture of parchment and vellum was an art probably developed by the monks of St Serf's Island on Loch Leven. In 1537 the industry was in the hands of Robert Thomson 'indweller of Kinnesswood' and by the late 17th century there were several manufacturers 'within the County of Kinross-shire'. During the 18th and 19th centuries until 1888, the industry was confined to the Birrell family in Kinnesswood and then for 20 years it was dominated by William 'Skin' More. A Mr Robertson was the last to make parchment and he lived in the house now called Leven View and the shed where he made parchment still stands beside the garage.

The parchment and vellum was used by the Register House and Chancery Offices in Edinburgh and the stamp office in Cupar. It was also supplied to local meal mills in the form of sieves and to army bands as drumheads. Excise duty was paid between 1711 and 1832 starting at 1d per vellum skin and ½d per parchment skin and rising to 3½d by 1808. Excise accounts reveal that in 1750 224 vellum skins and 1894 parchment skins were produced.

The museum has interesting documentation relating to the industry, including vellum and parchment excise returns from April/October 1792 and an Order of parchment from the Chancery Office in Edinburgh from 22 July 1799.

Parchment was made from the skins of sheep or goats. The process was begun by a skinner and completed by a parchment maker. The Birrell family in Kinnesswood manufactured the parchment by first stripping the hide of wool and steeping it in the alkaline solution of a lime pit which loosened the hairs. It was then stretched on a wooden frame and scraped with a fleshing knife. The hide was then moistened with a rag, spread with chalk, scoured with pumice stone and dried under tension on the wooden frame tightened with wooden pegs. The parchment maker then pared the skin with a knife and polished it with a pumice stone. Vellum was made from the skin of suckling calves. It has a finer grain which made the writing surface whiter and smoother than parchment. It was made in the same way as parchment but it was not limed.

The Gentle Poet of Loch Leven

The 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Name Book describes Kinnesswood as "A small village near the north east shore of Loch Leven..." deriving " a slight fame from having been the birth place of Michael Bruce the Scottish Poet and author of many much admired and often printed pieces"

Michael Bruce was known as The Gentle Poet of Loch Leven. He was born on 17th March 1746 in his fathers cottage on The Cobbles. His father was a handloom weaver, an elder of the Secession and a man of great intelligence. The family lived in the upper flat of the cottage while the ground floor

flat housed the loom. Michael Bruce was an accomplished child, sent to school at the age of four with a Bible as his first class book, he mastered Latin and Greek by the age of fifteen. He herded cattle on Bishop Hill during summers, which inspired his Paraphrase 'Behold the Mountain of the Lord'. He wrote twelve paraphrases or 'Gospel Sonnets' together with 40 poems. In his ambition to become a minister he attended classes at Edinburgh on literature, philosophy, mathematics and classics. He undertook a teaching post at Gairney Bridge school and, despite being advised to give up teaching because of ill health, he went on to teach at Forrest Mill near Alloa. Unhappily describing the school and the surrounding countryside as 'unfertile wilds' and 'unpoetic ground' in his epic poem 'Loch Leven' he returned to Kinnesswood in 1767 with consumption. He died 5th July 1767 aged 21. The first edition of a collection of his poems was published in 1770. The cottage was purchased in 1868 by two admirers of Michael Bruce, Robert Burns Begg, Sheriff Clerk of Kinross and David Marshall, local antiquarian. In 1903 a Memorial Trust was constituted to raise funds to restore the cottage which was eventually opened to the public in 1906. The cottage was converted to a museum in 1979.

Alexander Buchan

Balbury Cottage on The Cobbles was the birth place of Alexander Buchan, the meteorologist, in 1829. He was instrumental in the creation of the Ben Nevis Observatory in 1883. Between 1875 and 1896 he worked on the oceanographical and meteorological data brought back by the historic Challenger expedition.

Architecture

The area covered by the proposed conservation area embraces all the listed buildings in the village. The listed buildings are concentrated in the central area of Main Street with several located on The Cobbles. The listed buildings are all of 18th century date.

The traditional buildings in Kinnesswood are primarily of late 18th and 19th century date with some buildings dating from the early 18th century. The built heritage may be recognised as buildings of solid, plain and functional character. There is a layer of detail intrinsic to the stonework but also a strong layer of applied, decorative detail and architectural style. The grouping and collective appearance of the buildings provides the townscape interest and street character of the village. In terms of architectural character the village can be divided into two areas: Main Street; and Back Dykes Road and The Cobbles.

The buildings on the east side of Main Street are laid out in terraces, with the buildings on the west side forming a more random detached layout. The buildings on Main Street are predominantly well proportioned, solid and of 2 storey height. Intrinsic detail is provided by a variety of stonework; random and squared rubble, ashlar and occasional Aberdeen Bond masonry. Tooled stonework, protruding cills and window surrounds, chamfered and bevelled edges to windows and corners, and stone skewes, add to the physical texture of the village. The applied detail is subtle and takes various forms such as finialed and ropemoulded skewputts, corniced eaves, carved name stone and thistle-shaped cast-iron finials. There is a variety of styles of dormer windows, bay windows and sash and case windows on Main Street and pedimented doors. The predominance of slate on the roofs of Main Street provides cohesion and enhances the architectural quality of the streetscape.

Douglas House provides an architectural focus on Main Street with ashlar string courses and classical pedimented door with moulded pillars. Arnotlea provides a detached focus of architectural quality. It is a 2-storey villa with a central pedimented door, flanked by bay windows with curved pediments. The building has protruding rafters and a hipped roof. The Hotel, with its dormers, rectangular bay windows, ashlar surrounds and cast iron finials, forms the focus of the approach to the village from the south.

Backdykes Road has a random, sporadic character of mixed architectural quality of 18th and 19th century date. Park House is a substantial Victorian house, one and a half storeys in height, with a slate roof and bay dormers and a moulded cornice on the tooled ashlar walls. The single storey cottages on Back Dykes Road are probably of 18th century origin and would originally have housed the weavers and parchment makers of the village. The Lindens, at the summit of Back Dykes Road, is a substantial Victorian villa so named because of a group of lindens planted there in 1906. Townhead Cottage is single storey with a tiled roof, stone skewes and random rubble walls.

The Cobbles provides access to a variety of interesting buildings. The streetscape is fuller and more varied than on Back Dykes Road, with cottages and small villas connected by the steep winding lane. Tighnuit is situated near the summit of The Cobbles. It was built in the late 19th century for the local schoolmaster of the time, Simon Forrest. It was the last house in the village to be constructed in local stone from the hillside. The overall style of the two storey villa, with its plain bargeboarding, has slight overtones of Bryce, who is associated with the design of the washhouse at Scotlandwell. Millhouse Cottage is a converted mill of 3 storeys. The roof is slated, with stone skewes. There are several single storey cottages with pantile roofs, stone skewes, squared or coursed rubble or drydash, stone chimneys and a mixture of sash and case windows. A simple layer of detail is provided by moulded skewputts. Michael Bruce's Cottage Museum has a moulded skewputt on the front elevation and a finialed skewputt on the rear elevation.

The area of the Main Street around the garage, post office and entrance to The Cobbles would form the focus of an enhancement scheme for the village. Such a scheme would arrest decay and encourage the use of traditional materials and appropriated design within the village.

APPRAISAL

The appraisal indicates the visual impact which the built environment has on those who live in or visit the village. The proposed conservation area has several areas of distinctive character, in terms of townscape quality and environmental condition. The appraisal takes account of the townscape analysis and environment.

Kinnesswood is structured along Main Street which provides access to the steep, winding, narrow lanes The Cobbles and Back Dykes Road which run up the slope towards Bishop Hill. Kinnesswood was established on either side of one of the burns which run down towards the loch and then, as the village spread out along the line of the existing main street, lanes were formed following the line of the burn up the hill. Minor footpaths provide access at various locations to Bishop Hill. Several footpaths between houses provide links between The Cobbles and Back Dykes Road.

Kinnesswood is primarily residential with the commercial and public areas forming a secondary layer to the residential character, rather than being definable as distinct areas.

The residential character can be defined in two separate districts. The residential character of Main Street is public and urban in character whilst the residential areas situated on the lanes running up the hillside have a rural character with green spaces and gardens between buildings laid out in a more informal, organic arrangement. The Post Office and garage are situated centrally on Main Street and form a small district of retail and light industrial character.

Kinnesswood Farm forms a district of light industrial character at the north end of Main Street.

The sense of entrance from the south is strong with the straight section of road forming a vista which culminates at The Lomond Country Hotel. A high wall and hedge on the right screen modern housing which stretches up the hill. Beyond the entrance to Bruce Road the built line of Main Street comes forward with the gable ends of Rannoch and the building opposite marking the start of the historic village streetscape. Rannoch, Stewart Place and Lily Vale present solid, straight, stone facades to the

street. The variety of roof heights and Rannoch's protruding roof bays at first floor level provide pattern and detail. Opposite, the Lomond Country Hotel sits gable-end to the road. The road bends to the right, accentuated by the Hotel which stands prominently on the left.

The townscape vista opens past the Hotel, culminating at the Post Office. The buildings are one and one-and-a-half storey in height. The Cottage and Thistle Cottage protrude slightly in front of Gladstone Place forming a series of steps in the built line from the Post Office. On the left the gables are also stepped out following the line of the road and the built character is looser. Glimpses to Loch Leven and Bishop Hill are afforded between the buildings.

The terrace with the Post Office and Shalom provides a strong, uniform built line of two storey buildings. The open square opposite contains the garage. A strong terrace of houses faces the forecourt.

Opposite the garage the bus-stop is an untidy area where there is a gap in the line of buildings. The Cobbles lane runs between Douglas House and Stonebyres. Drummond Place stands opposite, restoring the built line of Main Street after the garage forecourt, with two storey buildings forming a terrace. The Cobbles and the lane adjacent offer views and glimpses to the houses higher up the lane and to Bishops Hill.

Beyond Lochleven View the streetscape becomes agricultural in character with the large sheds at Kinnesswood Farm fronting the road. Beyond the farm, modern houses on the left sit slightly below the road and opposite, a low wall and fence forms the boundary to a field in front of Park House. Sandstone gatepiers mark the central avenue. The area beyond the avenue has been infilled by modern housing which extends up the hillside behind Arnotlea.

The approach from the north is weaker in terms of townscape. A wall on the left leads to Arnotlea, a substantial villa surrounded by trees. The vista ends at low modern bungalows and the road bends to the left with little positive streetscape. There are panoramic views across the Loch and up Bishop Hill.

Back Dykes Road is a steep, winding lane of rural character which climbs uphill past Park House and a random arrangement of small cottages. Grassy tracks lead past cottages to The Cobbles. There are significant views to Loch Leven and to Bishops Hill, which dominates the roofscape. The entrance to Back Dykes Road is now dominated by modern houses of significant size. As the lane ascends it becomes more enclosed with high stone walls and trees and, at the summit, a high grass bank conceals the modern houses located higher up the hill. Park House provides the main focus of architectural quality.

From the summit of The Cobbles the scenery opens out over the roofscape below to a panoramic view of Loch Leven. The Cobbles has an enclosed, rural character, emphasised by its steep, winding descent enclosed by a variety of hedges and walls. Gates and lanes provide access up to cottages and some fairly substantial houses which stand slightly above the lane.

Further down the lane, Cherrybank, Millstone Cottage and the Michael Bruce Cottage Museum form an enclosed space. The lane opens out again at the driveway to Burnside Cottage and the small walled garden of the Michael Bruce Cottage Museum, and continues down to Main Street with a more random arrangement of buildings, and modern infill on the right. The pedimented door at Roselea East on the opposite side of Main Street is the focus of the vista from The Cobbles. Douglas House is a strong architectural element at the entrance onto Main Street.

The character of The Cobbles can be defined as a steep, winding lane on the hillside, dominated by Bishop Hill. The organic layout of buildings huddled into the hillside develops a more structured layout on the descent. The architectural character is looser than Main Street and is small scale and rural in character, with several small villas providing architectural variety.

It is important to maintain the surviving open spaces between the properties situated on The Cobbles and Back Dykes Road. These are vital to the rural character of the lanes. There has been some unfortunate infill to date and it is important to avoid further urbanisation. Retention of the views out from the houses located on Main Street and the views to Loch Leven from Main Street itself is important. A policy against new development on the land to the west of the village would be desirable.

There is a strong streetscape in Kinnesswood with potential to enhance the central focus of the Post Office and Garage. Reversal of undesirable alterations and replacement materials with those of a traditional nature would provide the overall architectural quality with more detailed cohesion. Enhancement of the areas of scruffy landscape and signage would greatly improve the setting of the buildings.

POLICY

The Local Planning Authority will take all the steps necessary to preserve and enhance the area.

a) Buildings

Particular attention will be given to the external finish of all the properties in the area as they are restored or altered. ie slate roofs and pantile, wet-dash harl and a variety of stone finishes. A reversal of replacement windows to traditional sash and case and the removal of other out of character additions and alterations will be actively encouraged. Where sash and case windows exist, their retention will be encouraged.

In order to prevent further undesirable change and to bring under control minor alterations to buildings, powers may be sought under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992. Any new building will have to be of a high standard of design and in keeping with the architectural character of the area. Redundant buildings worthy of renovation and re-use will be noted and a solution sought. The setting of Arnotlea will be safeguarded within the conservation boundary against any surrounding development. The setting of the village adjacent to Bishop Hill and the views in and out should be protected from further development.

b) Street Furniture, Advertisements

Strict control of advertisement material will be enforced. All unnecessary detrimental material will be removed or replaced by a form in keeping with the character of the village. Kerbing, paving, boundary walling and fencing will be subject to careful scrutiny as will all types of street furniture such as lighting standards. Any informatory or directional sign will be carefully located and controlled as to size and appropriateness of design for the area.

c) Landscape and Trees

The landscape framework of Kinnesswood is vital to the character of the village. There are significant areas of hill and woodland framing the village which, although they do not form part of the proposed conservation area, are safeguarded by their location in Area of Great Landscape Value.

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1972, Section 59A, there will be strict control over any proposal to cut down, lop, top, or uproot trees or wilfully damage or destroy trees within the conservation area.

APPENDIX 1: LISTED BUILDINGS

Portmoak Parish: Kinnesswood

Item	Address	Cat
24	Former Registrar's House Main Street (Lilybank)	C(s)
25	Dunhoy, Main Street	C(s)
27	Hill Cottage to Post Office Main Street (Kinaskit, Shalom)	C(s)
29	Michael Bruce's Birthplace, The Cobbles	B
30	Burnside, The Cobbles	C(s)
32	Rowan Cottage, The Cobbles and Weavers Cottage, BackDykes	C(s)
45	Roselea East, Main Street	B
46	Weavers Croft (formerly Roselea West)	B
47	Loch Leven View, Main Street	C(s)