

Historic Scotland Board Meeting 29 June 2007

APPLICATION FOR PROPERTY IN CARE CLEARANCE FOR WORKS TO STIRLING CASTLE PALACE SUBMITTED 1 APRIL 2007

1. PURPOSE

1.1. This paper advises Board members of an important and high-profile Property in Care clearance (PICC) application, and seeks the Board's views on the Inspectorate's assessment, conclusions and provisional view.

2. BACKGROUND: THE STATUTORY SITUATION

2.1. Under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, Stirling Castle is deemed to be a scheduled monument through having been included in the published list of ancient monuments at the time that the Act was passed; it was, however, formally scheduled in 1994. Although it was also listed at category A in 1965, under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, in cases of dual designation scheduled status takes precedence over listed status.

2.2. As a scheduled monument, it is an offence to carry out at it, without the prior written consent of Scottish Ministers (Scheduled Monument Consent) any works that would have the effect of demolishing, destroying, damaging, removing, repairing, altering or adding to the monument or to carry out any flooding or tipping on the monument. Consent for works at such a monument would therefore normally be obtained from Scottish Ministers under the terms of the 1979 Act.

2.3. As a royal residence, and subsequently as an army depot, however, Stirling Castle is in the ownership of the state. Its care was formally transferred from the War Office to the Office of Works (Historic Scotland's predecessor body), following a personal intervention by Edward VII in 1906. On that basis, as well as being a scheduled monument, it is therefore a property in care (PIC).

2.4. Although there is no statutory requirement for works at PICs to be subject to scheduled monument consent, paragraph 3.2.2 of *The care of historic buildings and ancient monuments by government departments in Scotland* states that:

Where these monuments are scheduled [government departments] are expected to comply with the principles of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Parallel procedures which mirror the statutory requirements of the Act on private owners apply to all government departments. These include a requirement to obtain Scheduled Monument Clearance [now generally referred to as Property in Care Clearance] from Historic Scotland in place of the statutory consent.

On that basis, Historic Scotland seeks PIC clearance as a matter of course for any proposed works to properties in its care. Under recently adopted procedures aimed at ensuring more transparent and robust processes for handling applications for clearance, they are dealt with in the first instance by the Inspectorate, though in cases of high significance the views of the Historic Scotland Board will also be sought. The intention behind these procedures is that the same rigour is applied to Historic Scotland's applications for works to properties in its own care

as would be applied to any third-party application. Board members may remember that the proposal for the new visitor reception facilities at Edinburgh Castle was the first case to be presented to them under the new procedures.

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.1. The Scottish Executive has published two National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPGs) which apply to the historic environment within the planning framework. NPPG 5 on Archaeology and Planning states in paragraph 17 that ‘scheduled ancient monuments are of national importance and it is particularly important that they are preserved in situ and within an appropriate setting’.

3.2. In addition to *The care of historic buildings and ancient monuments by government departments in Scotland*, referred to above at 2.4., other Scottish Executive guidance which is relevant in considering an application for Scheduled Monument Consent includes:

1. *Passed to the Future*, published by Historic Scotland in 2002, which sets out the Scottish Executive’s policy for the sustainable management of Scotland’s historic environment. On page 31 it is specified that any ‘... risk of potentially damaging actions should be minimised by following ... key precautionary principles’. It should also be noted that these include ensuring that ‘... any proposed change of use is necessary’, on the basis that ‘all scheduled monuments have a usefulness or value, in their contribution to “quality of life” as a resource for historical, architectural, artistic and scientific understanding, and an intrinsic value as evidence of the past development of our society’.

2. *The Stirling Charter*, published by Historic Scotland in 2000, which set out the agency’s over-arching approach to conservation, informed by the precedents of international conservation charters, including in particular the Venice Charter (1964) and the Burra Charter (1979). The Stirling Charter was recognised as forming part of national policy and guidance by Scottish Ministers, thus giving Scottish Executive recognition to the international conservation charters. In particular, Article 2 of the charter states that ‘there should be a general presumption in favour of preservation: no element of the built heritage should be lost without adequate and careful consideration of its significance and of all the means available to conserve it’.

3. *The Conservation of Architectural Ancient Monuments in Scotland - Guidance on Principles*, published by Historic Scotland in 2001. This provides guidance to owners and developers on the practice of Historic Scotland with regard to the appropriate treatment of ancient monuments. As a statement from the executive agency charged with the care of ancient monuments, it is relevant to the consideration of this application.

4. In 2006 Scottish Ministers began the process of producing a series of *Scottish Historic Environment Policy* documents (SHEPs). The documents in this series have the same authority as, and sit alongside, the Scottish Planning Policy series and other relevant ministerial policy documents. *Scottish Historic Environment Policy No.1, Scotland’s Historic Environment* (SHEP 1) was published in March 2007 and sets out a framework for the day-to-day work of organisations that have a role and interest in managing the historic environment, including Historic Scotland. It also formally supersedes the policy elements of the *Stirling Charter* and *Passed to the Future* although it should be noted that the majority of the policy provisions contained in those earlier documents have been incorporated into SHEP 1.

5 *Scottish Historic Environment Policy No.2, Scheduling: protecting Scotland's nationally important monuments* was published in 2006, following public consultation. This sets out Ministers' policy for scheduling together with the criteria for, and guidance on, the determination of 'National Importance' under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

5. More recently, a draft *Scottish Historic Environment Policy on Properties in the care of Scottish Ministers* has been put out to consultation. In that, it is stressed that 'Ministers seek to ensure that the properties in care are a showcase for Scotland, demonstrating exemplary practice in conservation, enhancing their understanding and improving the provisions of access and interpretation in a way that can stand comparison with the best in the world'. This SHEP will expand on and supersede the statement on 'the preservation of monuments in state care' that was adopted by the Ancient Monuments Board for Scotland, and published in its forty-first annual report for 1994.

4. THE INSPECTORATE'S PROCESS OF APPRAISAL

4.1. In considering applications for Scheduled Monument Consent or Properties in Care Clearance, guiding principles that are applied include:

1. Ancient monuments should be preserved in the state in which they have come down to us so far as possible, to ensure that the evidence for the periods that produced them, and that are embodied within them, is passed on to future generations with as little detraction as possible.
2. Any works undertaken at a monument should be the minimum that is required for the preservation of that monument. In each case it is necessary to establish that the works were necessary, that they were the minimum required in relation to the identified issue, and that the proposed works will employ appropriate techniques and materials in line with current internationally-accepted conservation practice.
3. All interventions should be, as far as possible, reversible, so that the monument can be taken back to the condition it was in prior to the works, without any loss of evidence, if this is required at any future stage.
4. All phases of the monument's history that have left evidence in the fabric should if possible be respected and retained as part of the story that the monument presents.

4.2. It is accepted, however, that there may be exceptional circumstances in which the principle of minimum necessary intervention may not be deemed the most appropriate approach for a particular monument. Three examples here may help to illustrate what form those exceptional circumstances might take:

1. *Public understanding and enjoyment of the monument.* There may be circumstances where the public understanding and enjoyment of a monument would be significantly enhanced by an intervention that does not relate to the condition of the monument. The reconstruction of the Great Hall at Stirling Castle, for example, involved major structural intervention. This was considered to be justified on the basis that the wider public benefit of the works to the monument significantly outweighed the case for leaving the monument in its form before the start of the works. When built in the years around

1500, the hall had been the most ambitious structure of its kind in Scotland, and it was never exceeded in scale or quality. But its adaptation as a barrack in about 1800, which involved the insertion of cross-walls and floors, had obscured most of its original character. Pressure for the reversal of those changes had been gathering force since the mid-nineteenth century, and the opportunity was taken to investigate the possibility of that course of action once the castle ceased to be a military depot in 1964. The process of restoration was completed in 1999. It should be stressed, however, that the decision to restore was only taken once it became clear that there was sufficiently strong evidence of the building's original form to justify doing so.

2. *Securing the long-term future of the monument.* In the case of structurally upstanding monuments, in certain circumstances a return to active use may be deemed the most viable way of ensuring their continued existence. In the case of the restoration of a considerable number of tower houses, for example, it has been accepted that re-roofing and adaptation for renewed residential usage may be achievable in a manner consistent with the long-term preservation of monument, and particularly where the alternative appears most likely to be loss of the building. In general, however, such a decision would only be taken where that monument was not of such unique individual significance that its restoration would involve a major detraction from the pool of available information.

3. *The requirements of other legislation.* Account may have to be taken of the implications of other legislation. In this particular case PIC is conscious of the need to consider if ways can be found of providing disabled access to a display of the Stirling Heads and of life in the renaissance castle, which it is intended to locate on the upper floor of the Palace. In doing so they are taking account of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005.

5. THE DESIGN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PALACE AT STIRLING CASTLE

(see also Annex A)

5.1. Construction of the Palace almost certainly started in 1538. This can be established both on the basis of dendrochronological dating, and on the recorded fact that the chief royal master of works, Sir James Hamilton of Finnart, entered the castle in that year. A number of the details of the Palace suggest the initial design was prepared by one of the king's foreign masons, and more probably by one of those of French origin, among whom were the masons Nicholas Roy, John Roytell, Moses (or Mogin) Martin, and the carver Andrew Mansioun. The initial overall supervisory role, however, was evidently played by Sir James Hamilton of Finnart, an illegitimate son of the first earl of Arran of the Hamilton line, who was born some time around 1500, and who was executed for reasons which still remain uncertain in 1540. He had earlier been very closely involved in the royal building works at Linlithgow Palace and Blackness Castle from 1534.

5.2. The royal lodgings extend around three sides of a rectangular open courtyard, sometimes referred to as the Lion's Den. The lodgings were entered at the western end of the façade towards the Inner Close, where there may have been a porch that has since been replaced by a rather smaller structure. On account of the higher ground levels at the top of the Inner Close there was no basement below the Palace at this point, so that, rather unusually, the main floor of the building was entered directly at the level of the royal lodgings, with no need for a stair.

5.3. There were three main rooms in each lodging, which decreased in size as they became progressively more private and less generally accessible. The names of the rooms were to vary

over time, but it is likely the sequence was an outer hall, followed by a great or outer chamber (which might also be known as an inner hall) and then an inner chamber. The inner chambers inter-communicated with each other.

5.4. There were also small closets to each lodging, where the royal couple could enjoy the greatest seclusion. One of these in each case was perhaps a small study or cabinet, while another may possibly have contained a more comfortable bed than the state bed in the inner chamber. One closet would also have contained the royal close-stool and bath tub. The king's closets are in a small lean-to range along the east side of the Lion's Den, and are reached from his inner chamber; they also contain a small stair leading to the attic floor. Eighteenth-century plans indicate that the queen's closets were in a narrow range behind the Forework wall, running from the south-east corner of the Palace towards the gatehouse. From the southern end of the queen's closets there was also access to an elevated terrace, known as the Prince's Walk, behind the parapet of the wall walk, and running back to the Prince's Tower.

5.5. Connecting the outer halls of the two lodgings, and reached directly from the main entrance was a gallery; it had a doorway flanked by pairs of windows looking down into the Lion's Den. This quarter may have been reduced in width, possibly after a survey of 1583 revealed that the roof was collapsing, while another survey of 1625 reported that part of its foundations had fallen over the cliff. However, on the evidence of the way that a stump of earlier work seems to have been retained in modified form at the southern end of the quarter, it is possible that this side of the Palace was never finished, and this appears to be supported by the findings from recent archaeological investigations. On the opposite side of the Palace from the gallery, and leading off the king's outer chamber, a bridge over the road between the Outer and Inner Closes was constructed to give direct access to the dais of the Great Hall. The present bridge is a neo-Gothic structure, but traces of the earlier bridge can still be seen on both the Palace and the Hall.

5.6. The rooms in the attic storey, were probably initially allocated to officers of state. They were not intended to be visible from the outside of the Palace, being lit by dormer windows behind the parapet on at least some of the outer faces of the palace, as well as by windows looking down into the Lion's Den. One of the greatest physical changes to the Palace took place when an apartment was formed in the attic storey for the governor of the castle, the sixth Earl of Mar, in the years around 1700. A series of large windows was cut through the outer walls of the Palace to light it, while the wall-heads towards the courtyard were heightened and the windows were increased in number and enlarged. A little later, the original porch was replaced by a smaller structure, which was combined with a stair that afforded more imposing access to the governor's apartment; this was possibly designed by Tobias or Thomas Bauchop.

5.7. It is unlikely that the shell of the Palace was completed by the death of James V in 1542, since it would have been an astonishingly speedy piece of construction to build such a large and highly complex structure between 1538 and the king's death four years later. One pointer to the possibility that the work continued after his death is a small gablet built into a terrace wall to the south of the Prince's Tower, which has the crowned initials M.R., in reference either to James V's widow, Queen Mary of Guise, or to their daughter, Mary Queen of Scots. This gablet clearly came from a dormer window, and traditionally is said to have come from one of those on the Palace. A similar gablet, of which all trace has now been lost, is said to have had the date 1557. If tradition is correct in associating these gablets with the Palace, this suggests a rather less hurried campaign of completion than is often assumed. Beyond this, as has already been said, the particular way in which earlier work appears to have been retained at the south-west corner could suggest it never was completely finished.

5.8. On any assessment, the Palace in Stirling Castle must be regarded as one of a very small number of the most outstanding works of architecture to have come down to us from any period of Scotland's history. In reaching this assessment, account must be taken of the following points:

1. Along with the contemporary surviving work at Falkland Palace and the lost work at Holyrood Palace, it is one of the very earliest buildings to have been designed and built in Scotland in a consciously classical idiom.
2. Its main residential element is the earliest surviving example in Scotland of a conjoined pair of royal lodgings.
3. It was probably initially designed by one of the master masons that James V brought across to Scotland from France.
4. It incorporates an extraordinarily rich, and still only partly understood, iconographic programme of sculpture and carvings.
5. It tells us more than any other surviving building about courtly life in Scotland at the time of the renaissance, a period when there was a particularly close correspondence between the expression of the concept of royalty and the architectural setting designed for that expression.
6. It is remarkably well preserved.

6. THE APPLICATION

6.1. The present application should be understood within the context of the ongoing works carried out at the castle since it passed into the care of the Office of Works in 1906. More specifically, it should be understood within the context of the works aimed at reversing the more invasive interventions that were carried out on behalf of the army before 1964; in these latter works respect for – and reinstatement of – the historic character of the castle has been a guiding principle. The application has been accompanied by documentation of a high quality in support of the proposals.

6.2. The works covered by the current application include:

1. The conservation of the existing floor structures and provision of new load bearing steelwork to take new floors and fire protection.
2. The encapsulation and flooring of the residual asbestos fibres to the principal level solum.
3. The provision of fire compartmentation to current legislation standards.
4. The presentation of the royal lodgings.
5. The creation of a museum/gallery for the Stirling Heads, including a new fire escape stair and lift to provide full public access to the upper floors.

6. The upgrading of existing and installation of new, mechanical, electrical and water services.
7. Conservation and maintenance works to all areas of the Palace and Old Chapel as defined in the 2003 Condition Survey.

7. THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS ON THE MONUMENT

7.1. The Inspectorate's main concerns with the proposals as currently formulated relate to a number of those works that would have a physical impact on the building, and particularly to those that would have an irreversible impact. These relate mainly to items 4 and 5 in the list at 6.2., and include the following aspects:

1. Relocation of a number of doorway openings based on a combination of structural and documentary evidence.
2. Provision of quarry-glazed windows and shutters on the inner plane of the daylight opening of windows along the principal floor.
3. Insertion of steel framing to support the timbers of the upper floor, with ceilings over both lodgings inserted below them.
4. Installation of a lift within the West Gallery to provide disabled access to and from the upper floor.
5. Creation of an escape stair from the upper floor within the Prince's Tower to give emergency access to the Outer Close by way of the Prince's Walk.
6. The date at which the display of the lodgings is to be fixed and the impact this would have on the historic fabric.

7.2. In assessing the application, the Inspectorate accepts that, under the three possible categories of exceptional circumstances offered above at 4.2., the following points should be taken into account:

1. *Public understanding and enjoyment of the monument.* While the adaptation of the Palace for primarily military uses between 1603 and 1964 ensured the preservation of the shell of the building, the works that were carried out to adapt it for those uses could hardly have been expected to take account of the historic significance of the building, and many were to some degree destructive. Those works are, nevertheless, in the strictest sense a part of the monument's history and a case could be made for preserving them as a reflection of a long phase of the building's use. However, as one of the earliest and most significant surviving examples of paired royal lodgings, and as a unique illustration of renaissance courtly life, the weight of informed opinion is likely to be that the Palace deserves to be respected primarily as such. As a consequence there may be a need for reversing some of the changes made for military adaptation to allow the original planning and use to be made more apparent, if this can be done without unacceptable levels of intervention.
2. *Securing the long-term future of the monument.* While the masonry shell of the building is generally in a secure condition, the joists supporting the upper floor have been

recognised for many years as being in a dangerous state. Means have to be found of preserving the historic timbers in-situ, and it is likely that this will call for modern engineered solutions.

3. *The requirements of other legislation.* There is a clear need to give the fullest consideration to the possibility of providing disabled access to all parts of the building, and great efforts have been made by PIC to find ways of achieving this in the proposals for the Palace. There are also the requirements of fire and health and safety regulations that must be applied to any building that is open to the public.

8. THE INSPECTORATE'S RESPONSES TO PIC'S APPLICATION

8.1. Taking account of what has been said at 7.2., so far as the proposals outlined in 7.1. are concerned:

1. On the first point, it is accepted that the evidence for the relocation of the doorways under consideration is strong, and that the present locations of those doorways impairs the comprehensibility of the sixteenth-century royal lodgings. Subject to further detailed discussion, we are minded to accept their relocation.

2. On the second point, it is accepted that the replica windows will be installed in such a way that they can be removed without appreciable impact on the historic fabric, and that the 18th and 19th-century sash windows that are now a significant part both of the history and of the external appearance of the building will not be removed or modified.

3. On the third point, it is accepted that the joists of the upper floor are in an extremely precarious condition and that, if there is to be any question of continuing safe public access to either the royal lodgings or the upper floor of the Palace, alternative means of support will have to be provided for the joists if they are to be retained in place. Detailed analysis by engineers appears to have demonstrated that the least intrusive and disruptive means of providing this support will be by steel framing, concealed between the ceilings of the lodgings and the boards of the upper floor. Although this will entail some minor changes to the height of the rooms, and will in at least one case mean that the window rear-arches are slightly clipped, we consider that the advocated approach may indeed be the best one, though the Inspectorate will wish to seek reassurance that all of the implications for this course of action have been fully considered.

4. On the other two points, however, the Inspectorate continues to have major reservations. On point 4 at 7.1., while we appreciate that the physical impact of the lift will probably not be very great, and much of that impact will be on nineteenth-century timbers, we have concerns that it will be seriously visually intrusive. We have no specific concerns over the principle of the advocated approach that the West Gallery should be displayed as an 'archaeological' space, with the walls stripped to expose the evidence that has been found. Nevertheless, the Gallery is an important element of the planning of the paired lodgings within the palace, being directly accessible from both the main entrance and from the Lion's Den stair, and forming the principal communication between the two lodgings apart from the essentially private inter-connecting door between the two chambers. In such a location we feel that a lift would appear as a modern and alien intrusion that would negatively impact on perceptions of the building within an area that is central to the planning of the royal lodgings.

5. On point 5 at 7.1., the escape stair within the Prince's Tower, we consider that there would be undesirable impacts both on the historic fabric, and on the internal appearance of this highly significant part of the castle. The tower is the only structurally complete part of James IV's Forework, which was the most splendid frontispiece to any of the royal castles, and it was part of the work nearing conclusion in 1506. Recent investigations have shown that the second-floor chamber into which the proposed stair would have to descend was a room of considerable quality, having a fireplace of comparable type to those in the Great Hall. It has also recently been established that the principal joists to the floor above that chamber are part of the same early sixteenth-century campaign, with one having a certain felling date of 1505; they are thus probably the earliest major structural timbers to survive in the castle. One of these joists would have to be moved to allow construction of the stair - although retained within the tower - and would consequently lose a significant part of its value as primary evidence for the structural archaeology of the building.

8.2. The need for a lift and escape stair has been generated by the desire to display the Stirling Heads on the upper floor of the Palace, with the consequent wish to provide primary public access, disabled access, and a fire-escape route. We agree that the heads would be best displayed within the Palace, which was the building for which they were created. Our view, however, is that this should preferably not be done at the cost of the full proposed range of additional access and escape provisions. Here it should be borne in mind that, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requires no more than that 'reasonable adjustments' are made where possible. Historic Scotland's *Access to the built heritage*, published in 1996, stresses that 'it is imperative that the fabric of historic sites is respected in any improved access provision'. It is also stated that 'this should not mean that nothing can be done and imaginative solutions may be adopted that can assist access while protecting the fabric'; nevertheless, it is made clear that 'remedies to access problems may not always be possible at historic monuments'. Since the application was submitted, the Inspectorate has been advised that PIC has considered an alternative approach which involves having a display on the Stirling Heads and the renaissance castle in the Palace basement that could be geared specifically at the needs of disabled visitors, with the possibility of having one of the Stirling Heads also exhibited there. Since this would obviate the need for a lift in the West Gallery, the Inspectorate would see this as an acceptable way of dealing with the question of disabled access. (See annex B.)

8.3. The Inspectorate also has concerns about the date at which it is proposed to present the royal lodgings. We are aware that PIC would prefer that both royal lodgings should be displayed in what is believed to be their likely state in 1542, shortly before James V's death. We would support that view if we felt that it might be possible to present the two lodgings in a historically authentic state at that date; but there are several difficulties in doing so:

1. There must be major doubts that such a large and complex building could have been finished by 1542, when work had only started in earnest in 1538.
2. James V died at the end of 1542, and there was probably little need for a furnished king's lodging until James VI assumed personal rule no earlier than 1580. Although Mary of Guise and several regents stayed within the castle, it is unlikely that they occupied the king's lodging; indeed, it is by no means certain that they occupied either of the Palace lodgings rather than older lodgings within the castle.
3. There is no documentary evidence as to how the lodgings may have been furnished in 1542, if they were indeed furnishable by that date. While we are favourably impressed by

the research that has been carried out into the likely furnishing of a royal lodging in these years, no claim has been made that anything more is being offered than an informed suggestion of what could in theory have been provided at that time.

4. The first firm evidence for the furnishing of the lodgings is the inventory of 1585, and the sparseness of that indicates that, as might be expected, the lodgings would be only partly furnished when the king was not in residence, so that it is additionally unlikely that the king's lodging would have been fully furnished for many years after 1542, when there was no resident king over an extended period.

8.4. Taking account of all of these factors, the Inspectorate suggests that an acceptable way forward might involve:

1. The display of the queen's lodging as it could have been in the time of Mary of Guise, perhaps after she became Governor in 1554, rather than as in 1542 (though this would probably involve relatively few significant changes to the form of the decoration and furnishings from the proposals for 1542).

2. The display of the king's lodging at the same date, but leaving it largely empty, so as to avoid any impression that a king was in residence; this would mean showing it as structurally and decoratively complete, as it may indeed have been by 1554, but with little more than the state bed (which was essentially a fixture) in place.

3. While the Inspectorate understands PIC's wish to have a lift in the west gallery in order to provide disabled access, we continue to view it as involving an unacceptable level of physical and visual intrusion, and would prefer to see it removed from the application. We consider the alternative proposal of a small exhibition in the Palace basement that specifically caters for the needs of disabled visitors to be greatly preferable. (See annex B.)

4. The Inspectorate continues to believe that the stair in the Prince's Tower will have a detrimental physical impact on the fabric, and that it will also be visually intrusive. Nevertheless, it may be that, if assurance can be given that the physical impact will be kept to the minimum that can be achieved, this should be regarded as a price that has to be paid for achieving any form of safe access to and from the upper floor of the Palace.

9. THE INSPECTORATE'S PROVISIONAL VIEW

9.1. On this basis, the Inspectorate is minded to recommend that clearance is given for items 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7 of the works that have been applied for, and that are listed at 6.2. Clearance should be refused for items 4 and 5, however, pending the submission of a revised application that takes account of the points 1, 2 and 3 listed at 8.4.

Malcolm Cooper
Chief Inspector
20 June 2007

ANNEX A: THE INSPECTORATE'S ASSESSMENT OF THE DESIGN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PALACE

1. The designer of the Stirling Palace faced a number of daunting difficulties, to which he responded with the greatest skill. The site sloped quite steeply down from west to east; there were already buildings on the site which were to be at least partly absorbed into the new work; it was necessary to align the building so that it abutted James IV's Forework on one side, and presented impressive faces both to the Outer Close immediately within the Forework and to the Inner Close on the rock summit. Nevertheless, the designer had the advantage that the range of accommodation required was relatively limited. Whereas at the palaces of Linlithgow, Holyrood and Falkland the design had to embrace the major spaces of great hall and chapel within the overall scheme, at Stirling both of those already existed as free-standing buildings elsewhere in the castle. The main requirement in the new Palace was essentially for a pair of conjoined lodgings for the king and his queen on the principal floor, though there were also to be some basement rooms below, as well as secondary lodgings in an attic storey.
2. The most striking feature of the Palace is the external façades. These display a fascinating blend of ideas, in which are to be seen some of the earliest examples of the impact of renaissance architecture anywhere in Britain. Towards the Inner Close and behind the Forework only the principal storey is given architectural expression, but towards the Outer Close the basement is seen as a full storey. The rich surface modelling of the Palace façades is remarkable for the way that they step backwards and forwards in a series of raised and recessed sections, with the rectangular windows in the raised rather than the recessed sections; those windows are capped by segmental tympana within relieving arches, in which I5 is carved, in reference to the king ('Iacobus 5'). The recessed sections are bridged at a higher level than the window heads by segmental arches decorated with dropped cusping, and within each of the arches is a statue on a richly-carved two-stage baluster shaft. Above those arches, in front of the parapet, are smaller statues on shafts.
3. The two main storeys are demarcated by a horizontal string course, with winged angel heads carved in its lower hollow. This horizontal line is echoed in a string course below the wall-head parapet, which also has winged angels. The parapet itself is crenellated, a form of wall-head treatment still often regarded as *de rigueur* on the highest status buildings, and which probably also echoed the wall-head treatment of the other buildings around the Inner Close.
4. There is nothing quite like the Stirling Palace façades elsewhere, although parallels can be found for some of the individual component details. The idea for the cusped arches and the baluster shafts, for example, probably came from France, where they are seen in different contexts in buildings of comparable grandeur, such as those parts of the royal palace of Blois built by Louis XII. The alternation of windows and statuary, and the complex upward and outward stepping of the façade may show a more distant awareness of what was happening first in parts of Italy and later in other areas of Europe. A growing number of architects were choosing to break free of what was regarded by some as the straitjacket of the strict classical rules of architecture by placing the standard elements in new relationships with each other, and there may be something of this in the Stirling Castle Palace. The rather busy alternation of windows and statuary recesses, in particular, was to have counterparts from Rome to Ancy-le Franc and Heidelberg, albeit always translated into the local architectural idiom.
5. Alongside such modern ideas, it is also conceivable that in the basic form of the Palace, with its massive rectangular shape, its strong pilaster-like projections at regular intervals, and its crenellated parapet, the designer was casting a backward glance at the keeps or donjons of earlier

royal castles in England and on the continent. Such buildings still carried great prestige, and were often carefully maintained as symbols of royal authority within many castles. It is therefore not impossible that, among his other aims, James wished to present something of this same impression at Stirling.

6. Much of the architectural richness of the Palace comes from the sculpture, which must have been the work of several craftsmen. Apart from the elaborate string courses already referred to, horizontally-projecting figures, some of which are portrayed with such realism that they could be representations of members of the court, support the main balusters. They are reflected in more grotesque images acting as corbels at the springings of the arches along the façades, and below the upper statuary, the latter also serving as water spouts. The greatest efforts were concentrated on the two tiers of statues. The statue at the north-east corner represented the king himself, while another portrays St Michael, to whom one of the castle's chapels was dedicated. Most others are now unidentifiable, though they include a hermaphroditic devil and some robustly buxom beauties. At the same time the interest in scholarship that was expected at the court of a renaissance monarch is displayed in the inclusion of some of the planetary deities, which were copied from engravings by Hans Burgkmair. It has been suggested that there is a predominant Sol (sun) theme throughout.

7. The interiors of the royal lodgings would have depended largely on costly hangings and furnishings for their effect. The main focus of each room is now a fireplace, with lintels carried on massive rounded or square shafts, and with capitals in which animals, birds and cherubs are grouped so as to reflect the basic form of Corinthian capitals. In the inner chambers the smaller-scale fireplaces were additionally enriched by panels of recessed carving on the shafts.

8. An even greater contribution to the appearance of the rooms was originally made by the ceilings of at least some of them. They were decorated by carved oak roundels containing heads or figures, which were taken down in 1777 because they were no longer safe. Thirty-eight of these survive in whole or in part, but there were originally more and they evidently formed part of a complex decorative scheme. An engraving of 1817 in the volume *Lacunar Strevelinense* shows them as set within a rectilinear grid of mouldings, though it is not clear if this view was based on firm evidence. It is possible that the ceilings would have been of different designs, and surviving ceilings of the period at the palaces of Falkland and Holyrood and at Kinneil House have ribs set out to a variety of more elaborate geometrical patterns.

9. Roundels of the Stirling Head type are an essentially classical form, looking back to the motif of the *imago clipeata* found on number of Roman tombs and monuments. They are to be seen in many European buildings of the renaissance, and also at Hampton Court in England. Similar roundels (although in stone rather than timber) were also being applied to the façades of the palace that was remodelled and enlarged for James V at Falkland from 1537. It could thus be significant that the wright Robert Robertson, who came to work at Stirling in 1541, had earlier worked at Falkland.

10. There is little doubt that several carvers were at work on carving the roundels. Among the craftsmen who could have been involved were the king's master-wright, John Drummond, who is specifically linked with the palace ceilings in a history of the Drummond family written in 1681. The king's French carver Andrew Mansioun has also been suggested as someone who worked on the ceilings, and this could explain the similarities with French examples of such roundels. Some of the roundels show the same skill in portraying character to be seen in the stone corbels along the outside of the Palace.

**ANNEX B:
PIC's PAPER ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES**

STIRLING CASTLE PALACE BLOCK – PICC SUBMISSION

OUTSTANDING ISSUES

**PROVISION OF LIFT
DDA REQUIREMENTS AND ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO PROVIDE ACCESS**

Background

1. Following a number of discussions and site inspections we have now reached agreement with the HS Inspectorate that the upper floor of the Palace is the only suitable location for the display and interpretation of the Stirling Heads. The HS Inspectorate remain concerned, however, over the visual implications of the proposed lift which is being provided to give access to disabled visitors.
2. Our application for PICC included the rationale behind our choice of location and type of lift and, whilst the Inspectorate agree that the chosen location for the lift is the only viable option, we understand from our discussions that they are minded to refuse permission for the lift.
3. We confirm that the proposed lift is of the smallest required size and that we have specified a type of lift that requires the minimum plant space. Its proposed location is in the least obtrusive corner of the Palace and its installation would be fully reversible. All of the archaeological excavation required for the installation of the lift has been completed and there will be no impact on the historic fabric other than the removal of some modern joists and the installation of fixings into masonry joints. We appreciate that it will have some visual intrusion, however, compared to the modern

stair that occupied this space prior to our investigations. We consider the proposal to be an acceptable modern intervention (see attached illustrations).

DDA requirements

4. In anticipation that the HS Inspectorate will refuse consent for the lift, we have looked at alternative ways in which we can provide access for those visitors unable to use the stairs and also comply with the DDA legislation.

Alternative

5. With the main exhibition of the Stirling Heads located in the upper floor of the Palace we consider that the alternative remote arrangements for those unable to use the stairs should also be housed in the Palace (there are, in any case, no other obvious locations available). Consequently, if the proposed lift does not gain consent we would use one of the accessible vaults below the Royal Lodgings in which to house a virtual tour of the Stirling Heads Gallery along with the story of the wood carver. Subject to our being able to create the correct security and environmental conditions (which may not be possible within the constraints and confines of the vaults) we would also display one of the original Stirling Heads. Were this not possible we would propose displaying one of the high quality oak reproduction heads that are currently being carved for the presentation of the Kings Lodgings.

Reproduction Heads

6. Full access will be available to the presented Royal Lodgings which will contain the full set of painted reproduction Heads displayed in their original location on the ceiling of the Kings Inner Hall. We will also pursue the possibility of using a stair lift/stair climber.

7. Whilst this is not, in the Client Team's or Project Team's view, the preferred solution, we consider that it is the best available given the Inspectorate's concerns over the visual intrusion of the proposed lift.

.CHRIS S WATKINS

Head of Major Projects

19 June 2007



West Gallery
mages 13.06.2007..