

## Case information

<b>Case ID</b>	300017044		
<b>File Reference</b>	HGH/B/TC/218		
<b>Name of Site</b>	Perth Prison Edinburgh Road 'A' Block 18,19 South Square		
<b>Local Authority</b>	Perth and Kinross Council		
<b>National Grid Reference</b>	NO 11700 22447 and NO 11687 22401		
<b>Designation No. (if any)</b>	LB39326		
<b>Designation Type</b>	Listed Building	<b>Current Category of Listing</b>	B
<b>Case Type</b>	Amendment		
<b>Received/Start Date</b>	2014 [Scottish Prison Service Listing Review 2014-15]		
<b>Decision Date</b>	26/10/2015		

## 1. Decision

In our current state of knowledge, the Visitor Centre and Staff Club continue to meet the criteria for listing. The statutory listing address and the listed building record has been amended. The category of listing has changed from B to A.

<b>Statutory address</b>	Visitor Centre and Staff Club (former Guardrooms then Warder's Houses) HMP Perth, 3 Edinburgh Road, Perth
--------------------------	---

## 2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

### 2.1 Designation Background

The buildings at HMP Perth were listed on 26/08/1977. This part of Perth has not been resurveyed and no known comprehensive listing review of the buildings at HMP Perth has taken place since 1977, however the category of the Main Prison Block (now known as the Crescent Block, A and B Halls and the Tower Board Room) was changed from B to A on 6 July 1994.

### 2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals. A part of the boundary wall to the north of the site was being demolished (with listed building consent) at the time of the site visit.

### 3. Assessment

---

#### 3.1 Assessment information

HMP Perth was visited on 05/12/2014 as part of our partnership project with the Scottish Prison Service where we are carrying out a review of existing listed prisons. The review of HMP Perth is part of this project. Some interiors were seen.

#### 3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

An assessment against the Listing criteria was carried out. See **Annex A**.

*The designation criteria are found in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), pp. 71-85. <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/shep-dec2011.pdf>*

---

#### **Elizabeth McCrone**

Head of Designations  
Heritage Management  
Historic Environment Scotland

<b>Contact</b>	Elizabeth McCrone, Head of Designations Elizabeth.mccrone@scotland.gsi.gov.uk, 0131 668 8760
----------------	---

## ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Listing Criteria\*

Visitor Centre and Staff Club (former Guardrooms then Warder's Houses) HMP  
Perth, 3 Edinburgh Road, Perth

---

### 1. Description

---

Built in 1810-12 as part of Robert Reid's prisoner of war scheme as 'guardhouses', this pair of single storey buildings each comprises 9 bays with slightly advanced end bays and regularly spaced round-arched full height niches with square-headed window openings. They flank the entrance to HMP Perth. They are built of squared and coursed whinstone with cream ashlar dressings and quoins and there are overhanging bracketed eaves and slate piended roofs.

### 2. Assessment Against the Listing Criteria (SHEP, 2011) pp74-75

---

Criteria for determining whether a building is of 'special architectural or historic interest' for listing under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 [[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/9/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/9/contents)]

*To be listed, a building need not meet all the listing criteria. The criteria provide a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions.*

#### 2.1 Age and Rarity

The site of HMP Perth has its origins as *The Dépôt*, Scotland's principal place of internment for French prisoners of war. Designed by Robert Reid as a military prison in 1810-12, it was later chosen as the site for the General Prison for Scotland. Some buildings (of which Aultbea House, the Visitor Centre and Staff Club and the Tower Board Room survive today) were retained for its new use, but the prisoner of war barracks were demolished as they did not comply with new thinking about prison design. The General Prison for Scotland was designed by Thomas Brown and constructed in 1839-42. Later alterations and additions have been made, including the demolition of a number of buildings constructed by both Reid and Brown. The site has been redeveloped since the 1980s and continues in use as a prison, HMP Perth.

There have always been two distinct parts to the prison site and this continues today. Within the boundary wall there is a section fronting Edinburgh Road which has buildings related to the functioning of the prison (such as the Surgeon's House) and this is separated from the prison itself which is to the rear by a further wall with the Old Gatehouse at its centre.

There are two principal periods which are relevant to the interest of the surviving historic buildings at HMP Perth: the Napoleonic Wars and prison reform in Scotland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Napoleonic Wars (1803-15) where Britain and France were at war was the reason that the Perth Depôt for French prisoners of war was built. Large numbers of French prisoners were interned in the south of England but this was considered too great a risk for the security of the English ports and it was decided that a number of prisoners should be transferred to Scotland. Built to hold 7,000 men it was designed by Robert Reid (1774-1856; architect and surveyor to the King in Scotland from 1808-40) in 1810-12 as a military prison. The pair of former guardrooms and the former Surgeon's House (now Aultbea House) are the principal survivors on the site of the former prisoner of war complex.

The Perth Depôt was unique – it was the sole purpose-built site of this scale and type constructed in Scotland (the only other purpose-built site was at Valleyfield, near Penicuik and it comprised timber huts of which none survive). The buildings surviving from this period are therefore exceptionally rare and they tell us much about military architecture and design of the period.

Prisons as purpose-built structures did not come into being in the United Kingdom until the 1770s. Until this time, imprisonment as a punishment was not the norm. Prisoners were usually incarcerated for short periods of time before corporal or capital punishment was carried out or they were transported to America or Australia or, in the case of debtors, they paid their debts. In Scotland the local tolbooth often served as the place of temporary detainment and such prisons were run by the burgh. Conditions were usually woeful. All types of inmates would be held together, with no segregation, and usually in a single large room which was frequently overcrowded. Unruly prisoners could be sent to 'the pit', a dark hole in the ground. Where there were prisons, individual cells were rare.

John Howard (1726-90), one of the most well-known of the emerging prison reformers, visited Scotland and Ireland as part of his tours of prisons throughout the United Kingdom in the 1770s and 80s. As Cameron tells us in *Prisons and Punishment in Scotland* he visited Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Inverness, Nairn, Stirling and Jedburgh prisons in 1783 noting that they were, "old buildings, dirty and offensive, without courtyards and also generally without water" (p50). Howard was key in instigating nationwide reform efforts with the publication of his book '*The State of the Prisons in England and Wales*' (1777).

A number of new prisons were constructed in response to the calls of the reformers and also to cope with the huge numbers of French prisoners of war who were in the United Kingdom. Calton Jail in Edinburgh opened in 1791 to designs by Robert Adam and it was later extended by Archibald Elliot in 1817. Perth opened in 1812 to house prisoners of war, Cupar opened in 1814 (listed at category B), Inveraray opened around 1820 and Jedburgh in 1823 (both listed at category A). The buildings were generally designed by leading architects of the day, including Archibald Elliot and James Gillespie Graham. Plans and styles were variable, from castellated as at Calton and Jedburgh to classical as at Inveraray and Cupar.

Generally the prisons of the time followed a congregate system whereby prisoners were kept together unsegregated throughout the day and night. Howard and other reformers vehemently condemned this practice as producing moral contamination

and corruption. Howard advised that alongside implementing healthier practices of ventilation and the employment of paid gaolers that prisoners should be divided by classes and housed in separate yards. It was increasingly believed that different kinds of prisoners corrupted each other and hence that prisoners of different age, sex and type of crime should be kept apart. Howard and early investigators played a significant role in instigating reform by bringing to public attention the state of prisons throughout the country. Their recommendations regarding health, classification and inspection formed the basis for the reforms and legislation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and encouraged architectural design towards providing cellularly divided spaces to fight against the spread of physical and moral contamination within the prison environment.

On 17 August 1839 an *Act to Improve Prisons and Prison Discipline* was passed in Scotland to enshrine classification and separation as principles of prison discipline.

An earlier 1835 Act had set up Inspectors of Prisons in Great Britain and the 1839 Act transferred the control of prisons to County Boards which were established and took over local supervision and management of all prisons, except Perth, which was to be rebuilt as the national prison. Prison Acts of 1877 brought prisons under the authority of the Home Secretary which lasted until the Criminal Justice Act in 1948.

The effect of the 1835 and 1839 Acts was a new wave of prison building, with Thomas Brown II (1806-1872) appointed architect to the Prison Board of Scotland in 1837. Brown's prisons took on board the suggestions of the prison reformers and were built to reflect contemporary ideas of observation and control, with solitary rather than mass confinement in a hygienic environment and with an emphasis on rehabilitation.

His design for the General Prison at Perth was one of his first major prison commissions and one of the first prisons in Scotland to be built on the separation principle. Thomas Brown's scheme of 1839-42 for the General Prison for Scotland proposed four large cell blocks of 4 storeys radiating from a semi-circular viewing corridor. Two were built in 1839-42 and they linked with the crescent block described above. The planned further two were built around 1852-9 in response to overcrowding issues to the designs of Robert Matheson (now known as A and B Halls) and these were later extended in 1876. They run parallel to the crescent block. The two cell blocks built in 1839-42 to the east of the crescent block have since been demolished.

Although not designed by Brown, the two surviving cell blocks (A and B Halls) follow Brown's pioneering plan and are significant and rare survivals of their type. Other surviving buildings from Brown's scheme include the Crescent Block which links A and B Halls, his reworking of Reid's observation building to form the Governor's office, and the Old Gatehouse which appears to have been a more simple construction on Brown's plans and has been altered later to form a more substantial building.

The history of punishment and prisons has a fascination for the public and they are important barometers of our changing understanding of humanity. Very few purpose-

built 19<sup>th</sup> century prisons from the period after the reforming Acts in the 1830s survive. While there are earlier examples of prison buildings at Inveraray and Jedburgh, these both date from before the important Reform Acts, and were not specifically planned for the 'separate system' (although they were both later added to by Brown to take account of the new system).

## **2.2 Architectural or Historic Interest**

### ***Interior***

The Visitor Centre was seen and it has been comprehensively remodelled with no obvious notable 19<sup>th</sup> century features.

### ***Plan form***

See ***Technological Excellence or innovation, material or design quality*** below which is also relevant to this section.

While HMP Perth has been subject to change for over 200 years since it was first constructed, sufficient elements remain to give a strong sense of the plan form and consequent understanding of the site. The site occupies largely the same footprint as it did when first constructed in 1810-12.

The Visitor Centre and Staff Club are important gateway buildings which have stood on this principal road into Perth for over 200 years. Part of Robert Reid's design for the prisoner of war camp they were reused in Thomas Brown's prison plan. While the rectangular plan form is fairly standard, it is their placing at the entrance to the site which is of particular interest in planning terms. They signal that this is the entrance to a major site and they inform both our understanding of the planning of the prisoner of war camp and the later prison.

### ***Technological excellence or innovation, material or design quality***

See ***Plan form*** above where technological innovation and design quality is also discussed.

Thomas Brown was responsible for building around 12 purpose-built prisons and he added to, or reconstructed, around 9 other prisons during his tenure as architect to the Prison Board of Scotland. As a result of this he is the leading prison architect of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Scotland. Very few of Brown's purpose-built prisons survive and Perth is amongst the best-preserved examples.

The castellated style was popularised by the Adam brothers in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century prison architecture tended to be either classical (as at Inveraray) or castellated (as at Jedburgh). The castellated style, used at Perth, brought with it connotations of authority and a fortress-like appearance was intended to give comfort to the residents of the city that it was a secure place.

The Visitor Centre and Staff Club are constructed in a simple classical style, and are typical of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***Setting***

The site occupies largely the same boundary as it did when constructed as a prisoner of war camp in 1810-12. While there have been significant alterations to the site since its use as a prisoner of war camp and a prison, the historic buildings which

remain are clearly readable as institutional buildings. Many of the historic buildings are visible from Edinburgh Road, one of the principal routes into the city of Perth and for over 200 years the site has been an important landmark in the city. As noted above, the Visitor Centre and Staff Club are important gateway buildings that signal the entrance to a major site and they inform both our understanding of the planning of the prisoner of war camp and the later prison.

### ***Regional variations***

There are no known regional variations.

### **2.3 Close Historical Associations**

None known at present.

### **3. Working with the Principles of Listing** (SHEP 2011, p76)

---

In choosing buildings within the above broad headings particular attention is paid to:

- a. special value within building types*
- b. contribution to an architecturally or historically interesting group*
- c. the impact of vernacular buildings*
- d. authenticity*

When working with the principles of listing the Visitor Centre and Staff Club has particular interest under a, b and d.

- a. There is not a comparable early 19<sup>th</sup> century prisoner of war site in Scotland and the buildings surviving from this period are therefore exceptionally rare. In terms of prison architecture, very few historic prison buildings from the 19<sup>th</sup> century survive and fewer still exist which were built on the separation system. HMP Perth is also the oldest prison still in use.
- b. There is interest here both in the Reid buildings and Brown's buildings and how they were used together. The interest of each building is enhanced by the survival of others and the group value here is therefore very important in understanding the site and its two main 19<sup>th</sup> century phases of construction.
- d. While there have been significant alterations to the site from its origins in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the present day, the character of the historic buildings largely remains, in particular, the exterior of the cell blocks which unmistakeably evidence their function and purpose through their architectural treatment.

### **4. Summary of Assessment Against the Listing Criteria\*\***

---

The site of HMP Perth has its origins as *The Dépôt*, Scotland's principal place of internment for French prisoners of war. Designed by Robert Reid as a military fort in 1810-12, it was later chosen as the site for a General Prison for Scotland. The Visitor Centre and Staff Club are a pair of rare surviving guardroom buildings from Reid's Camp which were reused in Thomas Brown's reworking of the site to form the General Prison at Perth in the 1840s. The Dépôt was unique – it was the sole purpose-built site of this scale and type constructed in Scotland. Buildings surviving from this period are therefore exceptionally rare and they tell us much about military

architecture and design of the period. The position of these buildings on one of the principal routes into Perth gives them added streetscape interest.

In our current state of knowledge it continues to meet the criteria for listing.

## 5. Category of Listing

---

**Categories of listing are non-statutory and buildings are assigned a category (A, B or C) according** to their relative importance following the assessment against the criteria for listing.

Category definitions are found at: [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/heritage/historicandlistedbuildings/listing](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/heritage/historicandlistedbuildings/listing)

As an exceptionally rare survival from Reid's Prisoner of War Camp, this pair of buildings have significance beyond their external appearance as classical style gatehouse type buildings which may not have national significance when viewed in isolation. However, their place in history as part of the prisoner of war camp elevates their interest to that of national importance and therefore listing at category A, rather than the current category B listing.

## 6. Other Information

---

N/A

## 7. References

---

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland:  
<http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/canmore.html> CANMORE ID 244662

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1860, published 1863) Large scale town plan, Perth XCVIII.9.4. Scale 1:500. London: Ordnance Survey.  
<http://maps.nls.uk/townplans/perth.html> [accessed 12/02/2015]

Joy Cameron (1983) *Prisons and Punishment in Scotland* Edinburgh: Canongate

John Gifford (2007) *Perth and Kinross: The Buildings of Scotland* New Haven and London: Yale University Press p.605-608.

Dictionary of Scottish Architects. *Thomas Brown II* at  
[http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect\\_full.php?id=200146](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200146) [accessed 12/02/2015]

National Records of Scotland, Architectural Drawings of Perth Prison, RHP9270.

---

<b>Date of Assessment</b>	23/07/2015
---------------------------	------------

\* This assessment is based on our current state of knowledge and has been prepared for the purpose of consultation or to provide a view on the special interest of a building. This assessment is a consultation document and will form the basis of any

new or updated listed building record should the structure be listed. The content of this assessment may change to take into account further information received as a result of the consultation process.

\*\* A building may be found to meet the listing criteria but in some circumstances may not be added to the list. See 'When might Historic Scotland list a building' at [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/historicandlistedbuildings/whatwelist](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/historicandlistedbuildings/whatwelist)