

Case information

Case ID	300016499		
File Reference	HGH/B/Z/30		
Name of Site	Brae, Brae House with Pier and Outbuildings		
Local Authority	Shetland Islands Council		
National Grid Reference	HU 35826 67828		
Designation No. (if any)	LB5271		
Designation Type	Listed Building	Current Category of Listing	B
Case Type	Amendment		
Received/Start Date	18/07/2014		
Decision Date	13/11/2015		

1. Decision

In our current state of knowledge, Brae House continues to meet the criteria for listing. The statutory listing address and the listed building record have been amended.

Statutory address	Brae House, including Pier and Outbuildings, Brae, Delting, Shetland
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2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

Brae House was listed in 1991. Delting Parish, where this building is situated was resurveyed in 1997. Brae House was proposed for a listing review on 18 July 2014. There are no other known reviews of the listing.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

Brae House was proposed for a listing review on 18 July 2014. The interior and the exterior of the building were seen at a site visit on 27 August 2014.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

The building was found to meet the criteria for listing.

An assessment against the listing criteria was carried out and minor updates were made to this document following consultation. 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>

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Listing Criteria*

Brae House, including Pier and Outbuildings, Brae, Delting, Shetland

1. Description

Brae House was built circa 1800-1804 and extended circa 1850. It is a 2-storey and attic, 4-bay, gabled former merchant's house incorporating a shop to lower ground at right. It is situated on a shore site with an associated pier and various outbuildings.

The building is harled rubble, with smooth margins and there are two, circa 1890s gabled porches to the front with slated roofs and vertically boarded timber doors on each side. There is a 1940s lean-to brick extension at the rear.

The front of the building has 6- over 6-pane timber sash and case windows, with a larger window to the far right, indicating the former shop. There are two staircase windows at the rear, one with 4- over 4-pane timber sash and case with lying panes. There are small skylights to the roof and one small attic window to the south gable. There are Welsh slates and raised skews to the roof and there are gable ended and ridge chimneystacks.

The interior was seen in 2014. The room layout is largely unaltered from the 19th century with the former shop to the lower ground at right and a former mid 20th century post office situated within the lean-to extension at the rear. Much of the 19th century timber work has been retained and includes 4-panel doors, flooring and timber lining to one attic floor room. There is some moulded corning and there are two closed timber staircases. Some rooms have internal presses. There are a number of decorative fire surrounds and there is an iron range in the kitchen area and a stove in the shop. The shop retains many 19th century internal fittings including counter, shelves and drawers. There is a timber counter in the former post office.

There are a number of outbuildings and structures grouped around Brae House including a pier to the west comprising a rubble slipway and wall; a former single storey rubble store to the west; a rubble barn and byre range containing a stable and lamb house to the southeast; and a rubble former net loft store to the northwest.

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]

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

Until the 20th century, the main trading route for most goods to rural Shetland communities was by sea. This is in common with most rural, coastal communities across Scotland where road transport was limited. Brae House was built around 1800-1804 by the nearby Busta Estate as a trading post for the area and it continued to be owned by the estate until 1922. Information from the current owner notes that the estate factor, Gilbert Anderson, was in residence at the house in 1804 and by 1809, there was a shop incorporated into the rear of the house. The shop eventually was moved into the rubble store building at the front of the house around 1810.

As trade increased, more buildings were built around the property and by 1817, it is likely that these consisted of a pier, the shop, a barn/byre and a yard at the site. The barn/byre and yard were necessary as, in common with most other Shetland families, the family living at Brae House had to be as self-sufficient as possible.

The house was extended around 1850 to provide further living accommodation and a larger shop. The building which had housed the shop was refitted out as a pub. The original house was slightly modified internally at this time to provide a link on the first floor between one part of the house and the other.

There have been a number of families associated with the house and the second tenant was Christopher Sandison, who lived at the property from 1809-1815. The Sandisons left in 1815 and a Peter Hawick carried on the business until 1828. The Anderson family (from Busta Estate) then moved back in. The business continued to expand to meet the demand of local residents with fish and textiles playing a major part. A post office was installed in the house in the 1820s. By the 1840s, the business was being run by James Inkster, who was responsible for the expansion of the property.

The business continued to grow over the 19th and 20th centuries and a number of smaller timber stores were built around the property, including ones for wood, meal, salt, textile processing and storage of goods from a local steamer. Some of the stone foundations for these stores still survive, with modern stores above. The net loft was built in the 1890s.

After the first roads scheme in Shetland was introduced in 1849, the transport of goods by sea declined and by the mid 20th century, all goods arrived by road. The shop finally closed in 1981 and the post office closed in 1989. The house is now a private residence (2015).

From the late 18th century, landlords became less involved in trading and independent merchants began to dominate the trading economy of Shetland. They built houses for themselves in Lerwick, the main town, and some of these survive, including the 1760s Lochend House in Commercial Street, listed at category B. It is likely that the majority of 'merchants' houses in Lerwick were mostly built primarily as dwellings, rather than as functioning trading posts. By contrast, Brae House is comparable with other, rural buildings which combined both residential and trading functions and which continued this purpose into the late 20th century. It is an important survival of a building related to coastal trading and the survival of its associated pier and outbuildings enhance understanding of its former function. Other comparisons are discussed in more detail in the 'Architectural or Historic Interest' section below.

The combination of residential accommodation and shop is not unusual, particularly in rural communities, with the shops often being domestic in appearance, often with similar windows to a residential property. This is apparent at the house in Brae, where the only suggestion that a shop existed is the slightly larger window to the shop extension. The size of the property at Brae, however, is more unusual and suggests a degree of prosperity that was not always the case in more rural situations. The lack of much alteration here is also unusual, with little in the way of late 20th century expansion.

Before the advent of reliable road transport, the sea was the main trading route for coastal communities around Scotland and the combination of house, with associated pier and shop was not unusual in these communities. A number continue to survive, including at Greenbank on Yell (listed at category C), and various buildings at Stromness in Orkney. In comparison to these, Brae is one of the most complete, retaining not only the house and shop, but also associated buildings for storage, etc. These associated buildings give some insight into the development of the site, the breadth of the goods stored and traded and the overall status of the property.

Brae House is an important surviving example of a merchant's house that combined residential and commercial accommodation, a building which was typically found in coastal island communities. It dates predominantly to the early 1800s and has been little altered to its exterior or interior. The interest of the building derives partly from the lack of later alteration, the survival of much of its 19th century interior (discussed in more detail below) and in the survival of a number of associated structures including an early pier.

2.2 Architectural or Historic Interest

Interior

The room layout in the interior has been little altered since the 19th century and includes the former shop. The fittings in the shop are likely to be 19th century in date and include the counter, shelving, and drawers. Shop interiors of this date are an increasingly rare feature, as many shops update their fittings over time. The retention of the materials here give an insight into 19th century rural trading customs.

The house has also been apparently little altered and retains two closed timber staircases, and a largely former 19th century room layout. The retention of extensive 19th century timber detail is remarkable in this type of rural property as many other, similar buildings of this type in Shetland and other areas are either ruinous, or have been converted to modern accommodation, with the subsequent loss of some detail.

Plan form

The interior plan form and room layout is not unusual in a house of this status and date, where the main drawing room is on the first floor. The addition of a shop with an extra domestic storey is slightly more unusual as it is more common for a shop to be built as a single storey addition to a house. This can be seen at Greenbank in Yell (listed at category C).

The arrangement of the house, shop and surrounding associated buildings is also of interest. Two of the outbuildings are recent in date and most have been erected within the footprint of their 19th century predecessors. This means that the historic layout of a merchant's house and its accompanying buildings can still be seen,

informing a greater understanding of the history of settlement and trade in this part of Shetland. Although other trading properties retain their positions next to a pier, the amount of buildings here is unusual.

Technological excellence or innovation, material or design quality

In stylistic terms, the 3-bay, 2-storey house is typically plain and is similar to other 18th and early 19th century houses in Shetland, most especially that of Haa houses; the homes of lairds and merchants. Some examples include the Haa at Grobsness and the Ollaberry Haa, both listed at category B. The style is seen too in other coastal areas, such as 2 South End, Stromness in Orkney (category C) and at the Old Kyclerhea Inn, at the historic crossing point to Skye (listed at category B). The height between the tops of the upper storey windows and the roofline is higher than those of some other properties, but the general design is typical for this building type.

Setting

The building is located on the shore of Busta Voe, positioned at a strategic position for trade from the sea. Although the sea side setting has been retained, much of the inland landscape has been lost, as the town of Brae has developed and 20th century housing now largely surrounds Brae House on the north, east and south. Some of the land formerly associated with the house complex, and which had been farmed, has now been developed.

Regional variations

Whilst 2-storey, 3-bay houses (of the 18th and 19th centuries) are found in other areas of the Highlands and Islands, local observation has found that the height between the upper storey windows and the roof line may be particular to Shetland. More widely, it is common for the upper storey windows to be close to the roofline, rather than the considerable distance that is found here. A full study has not been carried out for the purposes of this assessment.

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 Brae House has particular interest under a and d.

a. The house is an unusual surviving example of an early 19th century merchant's house with shop premises, which retains a number of its associated buildings, including pier, barn and byre and former store.

d. The house has retained much of its 19th century fabric, including shop fittings and has little in the way of external alteration.

4. Summary of Assessment Against the Listing Criteria**

Brae House is an important surviving example of a merchant's house that combined residential and commercial accommodation, a building which was typically found in coastal island communities. It dates predominantly to the early 1800s and has been little altered to its exterior or interior. The interest of the building derives partly from the lack of later alteration, the survival of much of its 19th century interior and in the survival of a number of associated structures including an early pier.

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

The completeness of this early to mid-19th century house and its immediate setting informs our understanding of the history of trade in Shetland, and is therefore considered to be of regional importance. We consider that category B is the most appropriate category.

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 232119

Ordnance Survey (Surveyed 1878, Published 1881) Shetland, Sheet XXIX. 6 Inches to the Mile, 1st Edition. London: Ordnance Survey.

Finnie, M., (1990) *Shetland, An Illustrated Architectural Guide*. Edinburgh: Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland. p.62.

Lennie, L., (2010) *Scotland's Shops*. Edinburgh: Historic Scotland.

Further information courtesy of owner (2015).

Date of Assessment	01/09/2015
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* 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 Environment Scotland list a building' at www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/historicandlistedbuildings/whatwelist