

Case information

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| Case ID | 300017733 | | |
| File Reference | HGH/B/TU/82 | | |
| Name of Site | Blairgowrie Printers, 5 and 7 Reform Street, Blairgowrie, PH10 6BD | | |
| Local Authority | Perth and Kinross | | |
| National Grid Reference | NO 17778 45145 | | |
| Designation No. (if any) | LB49477 | | |
| Designation Type | Listed Building | Current Category of Listing | B |
| Case Type | Removal | | |
| Received/Start Date | 22/01/2016 | | |
| Decision Date | 17/05/2016 | | |

1. Decision

In our current state of knowledge, Blairgowrie Printers continues to meet the criteria for listing. The statutory listing address and the listed building record has been amended. The category of listing has been retained at category B.

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| Previous Statutory Listing Address | 7 Reform Street, Blairgowrie Printers |
| Amended Statutory Listing Address | 5, 7 Reform Street (former Blairgowrie Printers), Blairgowrie |

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

This building was listed at category B on 04/09/2003.

The building is located within the Blairgowrie Conservation Area (designated 2005).

2.2 Development Proposals

The printworks, which contains historic printing presses, ceased operation in 2005.

Listed building consent (09/00040/LBC) was approved in 2009 for the purpose of removing the printing machinery to the National Museums of Scotland.

The removal did not take place and the proposal to remove the machinery has since lapsed.

A previous application to erect a garage at the rear of the premises was approved in 2004 (04/01781/FUL) and renewed in 2009 (09/01615/FUL).

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

Blairgowrie Printers was proposed for removal from the list.

The building was visited on 22/01/2016 and the exterior and interior was seen.

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. 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*

5, 7 Reform Street (former Blairgowrie Printers), Blairgowrie

1. Description

Purpose-built printing works erected in 1880. It is a single storey and attic, rectangular-plan building housing fixed printing and type-setting machinery dating from around 1893 to around 1960. The building is located near the centre of Blairgowrie and the gable end faces the street. It is constructed of rendered brick, lined as ashlar with stone cills. The window and door openings are rounded headed to the gable-ended street elevation.

The windows are 2-paned upper sashes over plate glass to the ground floor and plate glass glazing elsewhere in timber sash and case. The pitched roof is covered in grey slates and has long, continuous roof-lighting to both east and west roof pitches. There is a gablehead brick chimneystack with octagonal clay cans to the street elevation.

The interior was seen in 2016. The building is entered from the street elevation by two doorways, one in the centre leading to the offices, located to the front (north) of the plan, the other to the left leading directly into the full height, top lit printshop floor which occupies most of the centre of the ground floor and is flanked by galleried offices and paper storage to either end of the building. The earliest printing machine dates to around 1893 (Wharfedale of Otley, England). Other printing machines date to the 20th century and include the Heidelberg Automatic Platen and the Demi printers. Other printing equipment and typesetting materials are in situ (see below). There is a paper store and a boiler room (including a type foundry) to the rear (south) of the plan.

The printing machinery includes:

HANDSET TYPE CASES complete with various sizes of type and fonts for hand composition and type setting with setting stick. Various items for setting-up 'chase' (block for print to be held in machine) by placing type-face in a 'stone', gaps filled with 'furniture' which is locked with 'quoins'.

PROOF PRESS with hand operated roller.

INTERTYPE HOT METAL TYPESETTING MACHINES (American). 1920 machine (not in full working order) used for setting *Blairgowrie (Blairie) News*, set to one measure for single column 8-point news. 1951 (installed) machine for advertisements, with different size and length of type.

HEIDELBERG AUTOMATIC PLATEN PRINTING MACHINE (Beevers & Son Edinburgh) 1950. With plaque worded 'A century of Heidelberg Printing Machines 1850-1950'. Normal production of 2,500-3,000 per hour.

DEMY PRINTING MACHINE (Furnival & Co) September 1927. Flatbed printer. Small handfed cylinder printer replaced by MIEHLE printer.

WHARFEDALE PRINTING MACHINE (John Kelley & Co, Otley). Larger Flatbed printer also known as 'Large Demy', local newspaper 'The Blairie' printed on this, at 4,000 per week. Last used for election posters 2001.

NEWSPAPER FOLDER (T H Pullman & Son, Glasgow) 1934. Handfed machine last used 1978 (last edition of The Blairie).

ARAB ORIGINAL PRINTING MACHINE. Small handfed printer for production of small items eg tickets. Originally operated by treadle, now electrified.

VERTICAL MIEHLE PRINTING MACHINE (American) 1960. Upright printer for up to size A3 paper.

MANUAL GUILLOTINE with 30" blade.

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

The printworks was established in Blairgowrie in 1855 and moved to its current location in Reform Street in 1880. The building is evident on the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map (surveyed in 1899 and printed in 1900). The building was in continuous use as a printworks until 2005 when it ceased operating. While the building is currently disused, its contents are still in place (2016).

This building is one of only a very small number of small-scale printworks in Scotland and the survival of its machinery in situ is extremely rare. Blairgowrie Printers' building was built at a time of great advancement in technical advances in printing coinciding for example with Ottmar Mergenthaler's invention of the Linotype, typesetting compositor.

The first royal licence for printing in Scotland was granted by James IV in 1507. From this date printing spread gradually with a press established in St Andrews in 1552, Stirling in 1571, Aberdeen in 1622 and larger towns, such as Glasgow following in the 17th century. Printing techniques were first imported from France but as the industry was established in Scotland, there were important technical innovations in this country, such as the invention of stereotype by William Ged in the late 18th century and most notably the introduction of the rotary press by Thomas Nelson, of Thomas Nelson & Sons, Edinburgh in the 1850s, from which the mechanical process of newspaper printing was based. Another Scottish innovation was the early pioneering of mechanical typesetting by Alexander Neill Fraser of Neill

& Co, of Edinburgh, which predated the Monotype and Linotype systems. Printer-publishers which were based in Scotland, such as Bartholomew's, Blackie, Collins and Nelson also made a name for Scottish printing around the world (see www.500yearsofprinting.org).

It is in this context, from the second half of the 19th century until the mid-20th century, smaller printers and publishers thrived alongside the larger city-based printers and publishers of national newspapers. From the mid-19th century onwards leading Scottish newspapers began to be significant patrons of architecture. In 1859, grand premises for *The Dundee Advertiser*, shortly followed by the highly sophisticated headquarters building for *The Scotsman* in Edinburgh in 1860 which included a machine shop on the ground floor, a type foundry, a library, a composing room and a telegraphic link to London. Prosperity of the industry later in the 19th century led to new publishers' and printworks buildings and to the expansion of existing premises. Nearly every provincial town however small had at least one newspaper which were concerned primarily with local news and advertising. In smaller localities, newspaper owners also aspired to buildings of some pretension, such as *The Govan Press* (1888 – LB33341 listed category B) or the building for *The Oban Times* (1883 – LB38824 listed category B) – both premises are now converted to office use. Newspapers apart, publishing and printing tended to be in low rise buildings with simple front offices usually of 2 storeys with the single storey machine shop to the rear. Some exceptions include the larger printing houses such R & R Clarks in Brandon Street, Edinburgh of 1883 (LB28342, listed at category B with front offices only remaining) or W & A Johnston's Edina Works of 1878 also in Edinburgh (LB30271, listed at category B – now converted to flats) (see D. Walker, 'Business and Commercial Buildings' in *Scottish Life and Society: Scotland's Buildings*, pp 654-656).

While once commonplace, the survival of local or regional printworks is now rare. Robert Smal's Printing Works in Innerleithen, which comprises a single-storey later 19th century workshop building located behind an early 19th century stone-built shopfront to the street, is still in operation and is presently a print museum operated by the National Trust for Scotland (LB51077, listed category C). Blairgowrie Printers, largely unaltered since it was constructed in 1880, is the only other known surviving printing building of this type in Scotland and is of particular interest for the survival of its ensemble of printing machinery dating from the 1890s through to the 1960s (see 'Description' above). In the context of buildings connected to printing, from large to small premises such as warehouse buildings or offices, only a small number survive and a smaller number are listed buildings (around 15 in Scotland). Blairgowrie Printers was built during the early expansion of the commercial development of printing in Scotland and is a representative of small industry and local life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

2.2 Architectural or Historic Interest

Interior

The interior is of special interest for the survival of its late 19th and early 20th century fixtures and fittings which were designed specifically for the purpose of commercial

printing and includes a surviving ensemble of mechanical typesetting and printing machinery. Another rare survival within the building is the small type foundry room which still includes its boiler.

Plan form

The layout of Blairgowrie Printers typifies the smaller, regional printworks premises of the 19th century and is largely unaltered with the trading counter and offices located to the front of the building, and as is usually seen, is laid over two floors with a large open printshop floor. In this relatively compact building, the case room (typesetting) is included in the same space as the printshop. Other facilities to support the printing are still located to the rear of the plan and include a boiler room (also used as a type foundry) and a paper store.

Technological excellence or innovation, material or design quality

Blairgowrie Printers is simply built using loadbearing brick outer walls and is typical of small industrial buildings for its date which usually consists of a low-rise workshop fronted by 2-storey offices (as seen here). The brick is rendered and lined to appear as ashlar to elevate the appearance of what is a simple industrial building. The gable-ended street frontage is also enhanced by the round-headed windows and doors.

Setting

The printworks building is located in Reform Street, in the commercial part of Blairgowrie, laid out in a grid-iron pattern following the introduction of industrialisation of textile milling in the late 18th century. Blairgowrie Station, opened in 1855, was located nearby until it closed in 1965. Reform Street still contains a mix of 19th and 20th century shops, tenements and church buildings.

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 Blairgowrie Printers has particular interest under a and d.

- a. The building is a rare surviving example of a regional printing works built during the early expansion of commercial printing in Scotland.
- d. The building is largely unaltered and retains a collection of historic printing machinery which is significant as it enhances our understanding of the building and the now historic practice of mechanical printing.

4. Summary of Assessment Against the Listing Criteria**

Blairgowrie Printers is a rare surviving example of a regional printing works built during early expansion of commercial printing in Scotland. The building is largely unaltered and retains a collection of historic printing machinery which is significant as it enhances our understanding of the building and the now historic practice of mechanical printing. Blairgowrie Printers was built during the early expansion of the commercial development of printing in Scotland and is a good representative of small industry and local life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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

In view of the building's rarity, B is considered appropriate category listing in recognition of its regional importance.

6. Other Information

The listed building record compiled in 2003 notes that the two 'Intertype' machines operate on the same principal of casting molten lead into 'slugs', a solid one-piece line of type which can be melted down and re-cast indefinitely. In 1978 the Sun Group took over the Blairgowrie Advertiser, along with other small printers such as that at Crieff, and centralised 'local' newspaper production at Blantyre. Blairgowrie Printers was taken over by private owners in 1980 and the business continued until 2005 with small runs of local orders. Memories of regular print runs include the production of 'Smedleys' labels for the local canning factory on the Miehle Machine, Town Council Association Rates Demand Notices and Co-Op Books, the latter being delivered in an iron wheelbarrow, an interesting exercise on a windy day.

7. References

Canmore: <http://canmore.org.uk/> CANMORE ID 256343

Maps

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1899, published 1900) 25 inches to the mile. 2nd Edition. Southampton: Ordnance Survey.

Printed Sources

Gifford, J. (2007) *The Buildings of Scotland: Perth and Kinross*. London: Yale University Press. p. 230.

Walker, D 'Business and Commercial Buildings' in Stell, G., Shaw, J. and Storrier, S. (2003) *Scottish Life and Society – Scotland's Buildings*. East Linton: Tuckwell Press. pp 654-656.

Online Sources

500 Years of Printing in Scotland 1508-2008
(<http://www.500yearsofprinting.org/printing.php>) [accessed on 26/01/2016]

* 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