



Case information

Case ID	300009163		
File Reference	HGH/B/BD/30		
Name of Site	The Court House, High Street. Peebles		
Local Authority	Scottish Borders Council		
National Grid Reference	NT25049 40406		
Designation No. (if any)	LB39185		
Designation Type	Listed Building	Current Category of Listing	B
Case Type	Amendment		
Received/Start Date	2014 (Former Scottish Court Houses Listing Review 2014-16)		
Decision Date	13/01/2017		

1. Decision

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

Previous Statutory Address	High Street, Sheriff Court House, Former County Hall
Amended Statutory Address	The Court House, including former jail and boundary wall to rear, High Street, Peebles

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

The Court House was listed at category B in 23/02/1971. It is within the Peebles Conservation Area.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

The Court House was considered for amendment as part of the Former Scottish Court Houses Listing Review 2014-16.

The building was visited on 22/09/2014. The exterior and parts of the interior of the building were 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 published in the Historic Environment Scotland policy statement June 2016, Annex 2, pp. 51-53.

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance/historic-environment-scotland-policy-statement/>

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Listing Criteria*

The Court House, including former jail and boundary wall to rear, High Street, Peebles

1. Description

The building was designed by Thomas Brown II and built 1844-48 with (mostly interior) alterations by Kinnear and Dick Peddie in 1892. It is a 2-storey (4 storey at rear) 3-bay, irregular-plan, former court house and jail in the Jacobean style. It is prominently positioned at the western head of the High Street on ground sloping down towards the river at the rear.

The building is of cream sandstone ashlar with chamfered reveals, hood moulds and a moulded string course between the ground and first floors. There is a parapet with shallow pilasters terminating in tall octagonal stacks with chamfered bases and heavy coping. The central (entrance) bay is gabled with a round-arched window in the gablehead. There are tripartite windows at the first floor. The gabled bay on the south elevation has an apex finial rising from a corbelled shaft over chamfered corners. There are Gothic windows in the re-entrant angle to the rear and the rear elevation is whinstone rubble. The windows are mostly a 12-pane glazing pattern in timber sash and case frames. The roof has grey slates.

Attached to the rear elevation are high rubble boundary walls with a rounded cope.

The interior was partially seen in 2014 and has a Jacobean plasterwork ceiling of the former court at first floor. The entrance vestibule has moulded surrounds to the inner doorway with round-arched glazed sections. There is a dentiled plasterwork ceiling in the adjoining room. At the centre of the building is an open well staircase with barley-twist bannisters and cupola. The former basement cells have segmental-arched ceilings and metal doors.

2. Assessment Against the Listing Criteria (HES Policy Statement, 2016) Annex 2, pp. 51-52

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 court house was designed and built in 1843-1845 by the architect to the Prison Board of Scotland, Thomas Brown II. It is on the steep sided Castlehill mound beside the Peebles Old Parish Church at the head of Peebles High Street where the River Tweed and Eddlestone Water meet. It is marked on the Town Plan of Peebles of

1856 as a county hall with a jail at the rear and airing yards. The surviving high boundary walls adjoining the rear elevation of the building enclose the former airing yards.

Internal and some external alterations were carried out by Edinburgh architects, Charles Kinnear and John More Dick Peddie in 1892 when the building became the sheriff court. The remodelling of the principal courtroom on the first floor and the ornamental plasterwork ceiling addition were also carried out at this time.

The development of the court house as a building type in Scotland follows the history of the Scottish legal system and wider government reforms. The majority of purpose-built court houses were constructed in the 19th century, however, prior to this time burgh judicial functions were commonly housed in a single building, such as the tolbooth or town hall. By the 19th century there was an increase in the separation of civic, administrative and penal functions into separate civic and institutional buildings, and the resultant surge of public building was promoted by new institutional bodies.

The Burgh Police (Scotland) Act of 1833 significantly altered local government in Scotland and marked the beginnings of democratically-elected councils. The period following this Act brought forward stricter financial control of Scottish burghs and few new or major alterations to court houses were carried out until the Sheriff Court Houses (Scotland) Act of 1860. The main exception in this period was the remodelling of prisons or cell accommodation, which following The Prisons Act of 1835 were subject to annual inspection. An 1839 Act transferred the supervision, management and cost of prisons to County Boards. The few court houses that were constructed between 1835 and 1860 typically had a small cell block range, such as Dingwall and Peebles. Cell blocks were also added to the court houses of Nairn, Inverness, Cromarty and Stonehaven (cell block has been demolished). Following the 1860 Act court houses generally had a solely legal purpose and did not incorporate a prison, other than temporary holding cells.

The former Peebles County Hall is a significant example of a public building in the neo-Jacobean style. It is a rare example of a mid 19th century court house built with a jail and represents a period of judicial and penal change in Scotland.

2.2 Architectural or Historic Interest

Interior

Courts of the mid-19th century tend to be highly decorated buildings in keeping with their high civic status. There are numerous elements of the 19th century interior surviving at the former Peebles court house. Later 20th century internal modifications, for its change to commercial use, have not had a significant impact on the overall character of the interior and the quality of surviving decorative features means that it continues to be readable as a mid-late 19th century public building. It retains its central stair with handrail and cupola and a fine Jacobean plasterwork ceiling of 1892 by Peddie and Kinnear, in the former courtroom. Earlier surviving features from 1844 include the sprung corbel round-arched windows and doorway within the

vestibule at ground floor. The survival of four vaulted basement cells adds to the interior interest.

Plan form

The mid-19th century layout was modified towards the end of the 19th-century by Kinnear and Peddie with elements of the earlier mid-19th century plan surviving, particularly at the entrance lobby and central stairwell. The plan form of the building is not unusual, with the main courtroom located on the first floor, but it has been designed to maximise its sloping site with an outshot to the rear. The survival of the former cells and airing yards walls are also of interest.

Technological excellence or innovation, material or design quality

As key civic buildings, courts usually had a significant amount of decorative work on the exterior and the former Peebles court house is a fine example of mid 19th century court house, which is little altered externally. A number of mid-19th century court houses were built in a Tudor or Jacobean revivalist style with Peebles, first completed in 1845, being a good distinctive example with Jacobean hood mouldings and a strong sense of verticality, accentuated by the distinctive tall octagonal chimney stacks.

The building is an early example of the work of Thomas Brown II, shortly before he entered partnership with James Maitland Wardrop in 1849. Thomas Brown II (1806-circa 1872) began his architectural career in his father's firm. He probably worked in the office of William Burn prior to being appointed as architect to the Prison Board of Scotland in 1837 and setting up his own independent office in Edinburgh. As architect to the Prison Board of Scotland, Brown had extensive experience in designing county court houses and prisons, the design work of which Wardrop gradually took over. The design for Peebles shares similarities to Brown's designs for county court and jail buildings at Dingwall (LB24500) and Dornoch (LB24638) and his later buildings with partner James Maitland including Stornoway (LB41710). The practice were also highly successful at remodelling and designing country houses, with their work accomplished examples of the Franco-Baronial style and later pioneering examples of neo-Georgian. Their Franco-Baronial style was undoubtedly influenced from previously working in the office of David Bryce, and Wardrop became a serious rival to him.

The partnership of Edinburgh architects Charles George Hood Kinnear and John Dick Peddie (and later his talented son, John More Dick Peddie) existed between 1856 and 1878 and continued as a leading practice in Scotland up to the Second World War. Kinnear's earlier association with William Burn and David Bryce was a significant influence on the practice. The partnership was successful from the beginning with numerous commissions for high status public and commercial buildings, schools and churches across Scotland.

Setting

The court house is at the head of the High Street and therefore is a prominent civic building in the historic burgh town of Peebles. The design of the building has been tailored to its site and has distinctive streetscape presence, with its tall octagonal chimney stacks and mullioned windows. To the rear of the building are tall rubble walls enclosing a rectangular plan area, which is marked as airing yards on the Town

Plan of Peebles of 1856. The survival of these walls is of interest in aiding our understanding of the building.

Regional variations

There are no known regional variations.

2.3 Close Historical Associations

There are no known associations with a person or event of national importance at present (2016).

3. Working with the Principles of Listing (HES Policy Statement, 2016) Annex 2, pp. 53

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 a grouping of buildings*
- d. authenticity*

When working with the principles of listing the Court House has particular interest under a and d.

- a. The Court House is a distinctive mid 19th century civic building with fine stonework and a good quality level of decorative detailing to the exterior and interior.
- d. The building has been altered but retains a good proportion of its mid-19th century fabric. The survival of four vaulted basement cells and the former airing yard walls aid our understanding of the building's original function.

4. Summary of Assessment Against the Listing Criteria**

The former Peebles County Hall and Jail is a well-detailed example of a mid 19th century civic building in the neo- Jacobean style. It is a good example of the work of Thomas Brown II, architect for the Prison Board of Scotland and has high quality late 19th century alterations by Kinnear and Dick Peddie. Built at the head of the High Street it makes a significant contribution to the streetscape of this historic burgh town.

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: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/what-is-listing/>

Category B is for buildings of regional or more than local importance; or major examples of some particular period, style or building type, which may have been altered. In comparison with other 19th century court houses the architectural and historic interest of the former court house in Peebles is considered to be appropriately recognised at category B.

6. Other Information

The site was occupied during the Middle Ages by the castle of Peebles, known to have been in existence by 1152 and used as a Royal hunting lodge.

7. References

Canmore: <http://canmore.org.uk/> CANMORE ID 97202

Maps

Ordnance Survey (1856) Town Plan of Peebles - Sheet 5. Large scale Scottish town plans. 1:500. Southampton: Ordnance Survey

Printed Sources

Cruft K. (et al). (2006) *The Buildings of Scotland: Borders*. Newhaven and London: Yale University Press. p.621.

Groome F.H. (1896) *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland*. Volume. 2. p.159.

Strang C. A. (1994) *Borders and Berwick: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*. London: Rutland Press. p.232.

Online Sources

Dictionary of Scottish Architects. *Peebles Courthouse and Prison* at http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/building_full.php?id=200628 [accessed 02/09/2014].

Historic Scotland (2014) *Scottish Courts Preliminary Report* at <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/media/3337/scottish-courts-preliminary-report.pdf> [accessed 02/09/2014].

* 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 <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/what-is-listing/>