

FARM ARCHITECTURE

Farm buildings are a vital part of the built heritage of Scotland. They reflect not only agricultural and technological developments but also contribute to our understanding of social and economic change. Steadings have responded to changes in agricultural movements and many are multi-period complexes as a result. Since the second World War mechanisation has put pressure on existing building fabric resulting in the redundancy of many farm buildings and in some cases complete demolition. This potential loss of information and rural character has been recognised, and a number of bodies have carried out surveys. In some cases, however, the steadings are so important that recording alone is not enough; protection of the fabric through listing is the best way to ensure that their particular interest is preserved and, that, where change is necessary, this change is managed. Historic Scotland has responsibility for the selection of such buildings to be listed, mindful of the historical significance of these buildings, and their vital contribution to the rural landscape.

HISTORY

Few surviving farm buildings date from earlier than 1750 when the first of the sweeping agricultural improvements were introduced: most date from the mid nineteenth century when an intensive wave of farm improvements altered the appearance of the steading throughout Scotland. They range in type from the formally planned home farms of large estates to more simple vernacular forms. There are many different building types but Dr John Shaw at the Scottish Agricultural Museum has usefully classified farm buildings according to four main functions.

1 *Housing of people and activities:* this includes not just the farmhouse but associated buildings such as gig-houses and dairies.

2 *Storage and processing of crops:* this category includes granary buildings, threshing barns, open horse walks, horse mills, engine houses, stack yards, sileage towers, corn drying kilns and more unusually windmills.

3 *Housing, feeding and raising of livestock:* livestock, principally cattle, was housed for varying periods in either byres, cattle courts or pens.

4 *Housing for land-working:* machinery was usually stored in the cart arches below a granary or in a separate open implement shed. This also includes stabling for the horses which

once hauled the machinery.

The illustrations show the variety and complexity of building types, reflecting regional, economic and architectural differences.

THE LISTING OF FARM BUILDINGS

The Secretary of State for Scotland is required to compile lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, a task executed on his behalf by Historic Scotland. At present, a comprehensive resurvey of the existing lists is underway. Farm buildings, as with other specialised building types, are well represented in the revised lists. The selection of buildings for inclusion is rigorous. The criteria for listing are applied with every effort to achieve consistency on resurvey. Assessment of suitability for listing includes factors such as date, architect, design, planning, technological interest and the regional and local significance. Survey work is augmented by historical research. The early Ordnance Survey maps are good sources and many first edition maps run to a scale of 25": 1 mile. The Scottish Record Office holds estate papers, entail records and the National Register of Archives listing papers held elsewhere, which can all be informative with regard to the date and development of farm buildings. In addition, there are a number of 'pattern book' publications of the early nineteenth century that are important in understanding farm buildings and particularly where listing is being considered. These include J C Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture* in its various editions from about 1833, and William J Gray's *Rural Architecture* (1832). Also some buildings were photographed at the time of building and others illustrated in contemporary journals. Some are dated, though it is not uncommon for a datestone to have been re-inserted in later buildings.

The listing process aims to protect well-preserved, architecturally and historically significant farm buildings, but gradual changes affecting the fabric in response to the development of farming would not rule out other good examples. The group value of the buildings is recognised and the survival of intact fixtures and fittings is important and might also make a building a suitable candidate for listing. To date Historic Scotland has listed approximately 1800 farms, mills or steading components, comprising just over 4% percent of the total stock of listed buildings.

All listed buildings are assigned one of three categories. A fuller description of these is given in the leaflet *Scotland's Listed Buildings: A Guide to their Protection* but in summary these categories are:

Category A: essentially buildings of national or international importance or fine examples of a particular period, style or building type.

Category B: buildings of regional or more than local importance or good examples of a particular period or style.

Category C(S): buildings of local importance or lesser examples of any period or style.

The main consequence of listing is that the owner must apply for listed building consent from the planning authority to alter, extend or demolish the property. Such applications are considered by the local authority, and in most cases referred to Historic Scotland. Listing does not prevent change; the aim is rather to preserve the character of the building, to manage change in order that the essential elements are still recognisable and understood. Most farmers are aware of the tradition and continuity of the land: the steadings and related buildings are part of this continuity and so deserve maintenance, care and respect. Historic Scotland recognises that farm buildings are part of a working and changing environment, and considers that the reconciliation of efficient farming practices with traditional farm buildings is possible. Modern farm buildings can often be accommodated successfully with older ranges with careful thought and planning, thereby maintaining the coherence of the buildings. There are many examples where this has been happily achieved but equally the appearance and understanding of a steading can be marred by ill-thought-out changes. Listing a farm steading aims to minimise the effects of any compromising alterations or additions to the older fabric.

Other types of buildings are to be found within farm properties and these may be listed, or scheduled, separately. They include such as lime kilns, bridges, tower houses, mausolea and agricultural workers' housing.

CHANGE OF USE AND CONVERSION

In some cases the need for operational change outstrips the capacity of the steading and the farmer may choose to relocate, thus abandoning the buildings. New uses must be sought for listed farm buildings in order to ensure their survival. In general the best use for buildings is that for which they were designed, and failing that a closely related or compatible function. It may be best therefore to suggest alternative uses such as storage, riding stables or workshops. Such functions ensure survival without a great need for alteration. Drumkinnon Farm and Crossford Steading, a kennel and a workshop respectively, are both good examples of functionally compatible uses.

However, in some cases more radical change of use is inevitable. Domestic conversions are a common means of re-using redundant farm buildings but the change to residential function puts pressure on the fabric. The scale and requirements of domestic use may impose negative

changes, for instance the window ratio and roof-line, car-parking needs may affect the cobbled courts, and there may be pressures for the removal of non-functional elements such as kiln vents, dovecotes and forestairs. Listed Building Consent attempts to minimise the impact of such as these, by suggesting alternative solutions. Most of Historic Scotland's general guidelines on Listed Building Consent are contained in the *Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*. Several planning authorities have also produced separate planning guidelines regarding design for successful conversions. The Rural Buildings Conservation Initiative, working with Historic Scotland's Technical Conservation Research and Education section, is preparing a detailed Technical Advice Note with guidance on specific aspects of conversion, focusing initially on the Lothians but drawing out broad principles of wider application.

In general, conversions should respect the main elevations of the building and the former function and nature of the building should still be read in the landscape. An attempt should also be made to retain interesting internal features such as stable trevices, dado boarding and mill machinery. This means that substantial rebuilding, radical alteration or excessive extension will normally not be appropriate for listed farm buildings. Early contact with the planning authority is advised if conversion of a listed farm building is planned.

GRANT AID FOR REPAIR OF LISTED FARM BUILDINGS

The Secretary of State for Scotland, after consulting with the Historic Buildings Council, may award grants for the repair of buildings that are of outstanding architectural or historic interest. Any owner of a listed building may apply and selection is on the merit of the building. Competition for the Historic Buildings Repair Grant is extremely stiff and grant is directed towards buildings of the highest architectural and historic merit. The Repair Grant is not made available for routine maintenance or minor repair. Further information on the Historic Buildings Repair Grants Scheme can be obtained from *Guide for Grant Applicants* available from Historic Scotland.

Although the number of farm buildings that have received grant is small, there have been some interesting cases. Grant to the Category A listed Gowanbank Steading has allowed the conversion work to be of high quality maintaining the architectural uniqueness of the site. Letterfourie Granary, Drybridge, has also been rescued and repaired to a high standard following the award of grant. Formal estate farm buildings have received grant, for example, that at Hospitalfield. Most enquiries regarding Repair Grant in connection with agricultural properties have related to dovecots, indicating that the farming community is aware of their historical importance: Ravensby Dovecot, Angus, is one such example. While the number of farm buildings receiving this grant to date is not large, there is no reason why such buildings of sufficient merit should not compete with other building types for this source of funding.

Other grants may be available for the repair of listed or unlisted farm buildings. One source may

be the Local Authority Grant provision, another the Scottish Office's Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department's Countryside Premium Scheme. The latter offers payments for a range of management and capital options, notably the restoration of vernacular buildings.

A guide to available grants, the publication *Sources of Financial Help for Scotland's Historic Buildings*, is available from the Scottish Civic Trust. In the absence of grants, many farmers have maintained and repaired their steadings using local materials, carrying on the stading tradition, a practice that should be recognised and encouraged.

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS AND FARMS

As well as the lists of buildings, Historic Scotland also compiles on behalf of the Secretary of State a list of scheduled ancient monuments. Most of these lie on land which is farmed. In general, monuments are older and further from their original appearance, although there is some overlap, for example, limekilns or windmills are as likely to be scheduled as listed. Some scheduled monuments such as standing stones, hillforts or burial cairns, are obvious, but many, such as the remains of farmsteads and fields ranging in date from the first farmers five thousand years ago to those from the agricultural improvements of the nineteenth century, may be less obviously *ancient*. In some cases, scheduled monuments may not even be visible at ground level. A range of leaflets is available on Scheduled Monuments and Archaeology.

In summary, listed farm buildings enjoy the same legislative protection as other building types. Managing change so that the essential features of these buildings are retained means that the story of Scottish agricultural history can be read in the landscape and preserved for future generations to enjoy.