



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

ÀRAINNEACHD
EACHDRAIDHEIL
ALBA

Property in Care (PIC) ID:	PIC058
Designations:	Scheduled Monument (SM90061)
Taken into State care:	1932 (Guardianship)
Last Reviewed:	2020

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

CARNASSERIE CASTLE



We continually revise our Statements of Significance, so they may vary in length, format and level of detail. While every effort is made to keep them up to date, they should not be considered a definitive or final assessment of our properties.



© Historic Environment Scotland 2020

You may re-use this information (excluding logos and images) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated.

To view this licence, visit <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3> or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this document should be sent to us at:

Historic Environment Scotland
Longmore House
Salisbury Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1SH

+44 (0) 131 668 8600
www.historicenvironment.scot

You can download this publication from our website at
www.historicenvironment.scot

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

CARNASSERIE CASTLE

CONTENTS

1	SUMMARY	3
1.1	Introduction	3
1.2	Statement of significance	3
2	ASSESSMENT OF VALUES	6
2.1	Background	6
2.11	Location and Placename	6
2.12	Prehistoric and medieval landscape	7
2.13	Post medieval and later settlement - Carnasserie Beg	8
2.14	Phase 1: remains of an early (pre-Carswell) castle?	9
2.15	Phase 2: Bishop Carswell's castle	11
2.16	Phase 3: 17th century	13
2.17	Phase 4: A designed landscape and a property in care	13
2.2	Evidential values	14
2.21	Location and Setting	14
2.22	The Castle	15
2.23	Garden, castle outbuildings and Carnasserie Beg	16
2.24	Documentary Resources	18
2.25	Cartographic Evidence	18
2.3	Historical values	19
2.31	Association with the Carswell Family	19
2.32	Association with the Campbells of Auchinbreck	21
2.33	Association with the Campbells of Kilmartin	21
2.34	Association with the Malcolms of Poltalloch	22
2.35	Folklore	22
2.4	Architectural and artistic values	23
2.41	Design - a consciously archaising tower?	25
2.42	Renaissance ornament - context and possible sources	26
2.43	Defence or show?	28

2.44	Castle environs, ancillary structures and gardens	28
2.5	Landscape and aesthetic values	29
2.51	Geology	29
2.52	Prehistoric and early modern landscape	29
2.53	19th and 20th century landscape elements	29
2.6	Natural heritage values	31
2.7	Contemporary/use values	31
3	MAJOR GAPS IN UNDERSTANDING	33
4	ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES	34
5	KEYWORDS	34
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	34
	APPENDICES	
	Appendix 1: Timeline	37
	Appendices 2-4 available on request as separate documents	
	Appendix 2: The People and History of Carnasserie Castle	N/A
	Appendix 3: Detailed Architectural Description	N/A
	Appendix 4: Archaeological Overview	N/A

SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

Dating from the mid to late 16th century, Carnasserie Castle¹ stands upon the summit of a ridge at the upper end of Kilmartin Glen, near the modern road between Lochgilphead and Oban.

The castle was built as a residence for Bishop John Carswell, the first Protestant Bishop of the Isles, a close associate of the 5th Earl of Argyll who granted the lands and castle of Carnasserie to his chaplain in 1559. Although burned in 1685 by Royalist forces during the 9th Earl of Argyll's rebellion against James VII, Carnasserie Castle is nevertheless a well-preserved structure, with the walls of the east tower and domestic range surviving almost to their original height.

The site is (2019) free to access all year round and is unstaffed. It is accessed from a well-maintained car park adjacent to the A816 trunk road that runs between Lochgilphead and Oban, some 2.7km north of Kilmartin Village. The castle lies 1.6km up a relatively steep track from the car park which also contains information panels erected by the Dalriada Project. Alternatively, the castle can be accessed from a sign-posted footpath from Kilmartin Village, which links Carnasserie Castle to other monuments in Kilmartin Glen.

Today, Carnasserie Castle is primarily seen as a landscape feature, educational resource and visitor attraction. Kilmartin Museum's education team regularly use the site in its education programme, along with the other major sites in Kilmartin Glen. As an unstaffed property, precise annual visitor numbers are unknown, however it is estimated that more than 50,000 people visited the castle in 2018-2019.

1.2 Statement of Significance

Carnasserie Castle has many features and aspects which contribute to its importance. Perhaps its primary significance is ascribed to its association with the major 16th and 17th century figures of Bishop John Carswell and the Earls of Argyll, together with the way its fabric, design and form illustrate important aspects of the Scottish Renaissance, particularly in

¹¹ Various alternative spellings have historically been applied to the site, including Carnassarie, *Carnasre*, *Carnasarey* and Carnassery. Throughout this text, the spelling adopted is that defined in the 2014 Scheme of Delegation for Properties in Care (Carnasserie).

relation to Gaelic culture. It is also important as a site with significant prehistoric aspects and strong associations with later oral and literary traditions, and is now a landmark and visitor attraction. The following bullet points highlight some key aspects:

- Carnasserie is probably the most architecturally significant secular building in the west Highlands of the sixteenth century. Its use of Italianate classical forms in its ornament make it precocious not only in a regional but also in the national context. This is combined with an inscription, unique not only for being in the medium of Gaelic, but also carved using classical Gaelic script. Together they make Carnasserie the physical embodiment, literally carved in stone, of the legendary ability of the chiefs of Clan Campbell to straddle the cultural divide between the western Highlands and eastern Lowlands of Scotland from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.
- The castle is most associated with its builder, John Carswell (*Séon Carsuel*); an outstanding intellectual of his time, equally at home with traditional Gaelic learning and contemporary Renaissance humanism – again Carnasserie provides a physical demonstration of these twin themes. He is most famous as the translator of the *Book of Common Order (Foirm na n-urrnuidheadh)*, which in 1567 was the first book published in Gaelic. He therefore is a critical figure in the development of both literature and religion for the Gàidhealtachd Gaidhealtachd
- As well as Carswell, Carnasserie is intimately associated with the Earls of Argyll and the 5th Earl in particular. As Carswell's patron, the earl was the owner of the castle, even if Carswell was its builder and usual occupant. Therefore, the elaborate armorial, inscription and other details are likely to reflect the patron's interests and values.
- Carnasserie is also associated with the ill-fated rebellion of Archibald Campbell, 9th Earl of Argyll, who rose against the accession of James VII in 1685. It was held for the earl by the Campbells of Auchinbreck before being destroyed and burnt after a siege by a Royalist force commanded by the Marquis of Atholl. Its current state of ruination dates from this time, and good documentary evidence exists to illuminate the events and people involved.
- Close by Carnasserie Castle there is a cup-marked stone, possibly of Neolithic origin, which reflects the numerous other examples of prehistoric rock art in the Kilmartin Glen area, the concentration of which is unparalleled in Britain².

² For more information on prehistoric rock art in Kilmartin Glen and elsewhere in Scotland, see Scotland's Rock Art Project at: www.rockart.scot/

- The area around the castle also contain the ruins of an Iron Age walled enclosure, or dun, that dates between the 4th and 1st centuries BC and indicates the strategic importance of the site at an early date.
- The grounds of the castle also contain the remains of the majority of the settlement of Carnasserie Beg which was in existence from at least the 16th century. (See Figure 2 for how these relate to the area of the site in State care.) Archaeological research undertaken on this and other landscape features adds to the potential to understand Carnasserie in its wider social and economic context.
- The castle and surrounding land are incorporated into the extensive designed landscape created around the Malcolms of Poltalloch mansion at Callton Mor. Today, the site is very picturesque, offering relatively easy access and some amazing views.
- A number of documentary sources shed light on various aspects of Carnasserie from major historical events, to details of the social and economic life of the estate. This enables a variety of stories and perspectives to illustrate life at Carnasserie over time. Further detail is provided within Appendix 2: The People of Carnasserie.

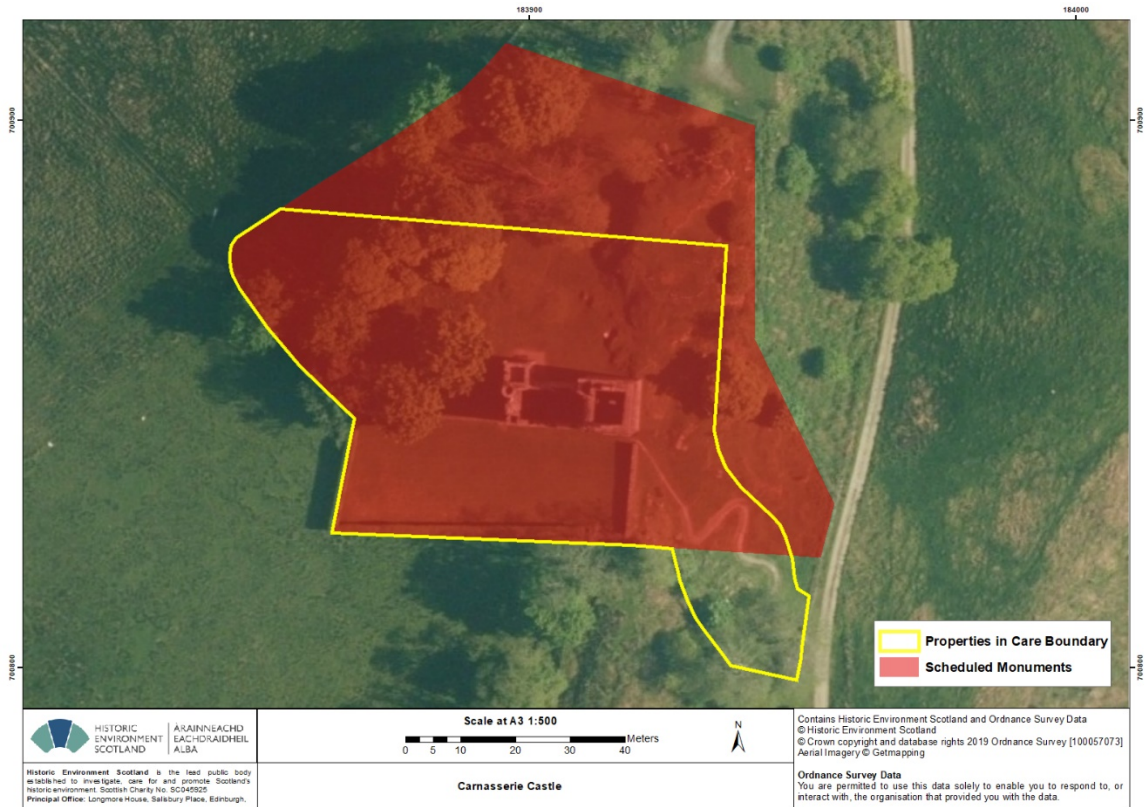


Figure 1: Carnasserie Castle: Scheduled area and Property in Care boundary, for illustrative purposes only.

2. ASSESSMENT OF VALUES

2.1 Background

This section provides some brief context for the castle and its environs with a longer description of the castle itself. Further information on the historic landscape and archaeological research undertaken is given in Appendix 4: Archaeological Overview.

2.11 Location and placename

Carnasserie Castle stands on a rocky ridge situated to the north west of Kilmartin parish and lies approximately 1.5kms north of Kilmartin village (centred NM 83900 00860, Figure 2). The site has commanding views to the east looking towards a narrow pass through Glennan towards Ford and Loch Awe and to the south overlooking Kilmartin Glen. From the ridge of the castle the ground drops to the east and south in a series of sheep and cattle grazed terraces to woodland overlooking the Kilmartin burn and the A816 road between Kilmartin and Oban. At the west the land rises to over 230m on Cnoc Creach and also rises at the north to the prominence of

Carn Ban. The topography of Carnasserie consists of south west-north east aligned ridges of mixed geology including limestone, schist and basalt.

Carnasserie lies at the junction of three important route ways into the Kilmartin Glen area. The first route lies to the east of the castle and runs between Kilmartin and the north. A second runs west from the castle towards Ormaig and the sea, with a third running east towards Ford and Loch Awe. The strategic importance of the location was no doubt appreciated by the castle builders and those of the earlier dun enclosure.

It has been suggested that the name Carnasserie is a combination of *carn*, possibly after the large prominent cairn, Carn Ban, which lies north of the castle and *airigh*, Gaelic for a shieling or settlement. Another suggestion is that it is a combination of *Càrn Asaraidh* meaning cairn at the path or route³.

2.12 Prehistoric and medieval landscape

Given its strategic location and its proximity to Kilmartin Glen, it is not surprising that the area around Carnasserie contains a plethora of prehistoric monuments. These include burial cists and cairns, standing stones and many rock art sites. Later iron age sites include several duns and a possible vitrified fort. There have been a number of finds of both Bronze and Iron Age date. There is ample evidence therefore of significant activity in the area over several millennia whether ritual, ceremonial or domestic in nature. The range of sites and studies undertaken are described more fully at Appendix 4: Archaeological Overview.

³ Again, note alternative historic spellings of Carnassarie, *Carnasre*, *Carnasarey* and Carnassery. Throughout this text, the spelling adopted is that defined in the 2014 Scheme of Delegation for Properties in Care (Carnasserie).

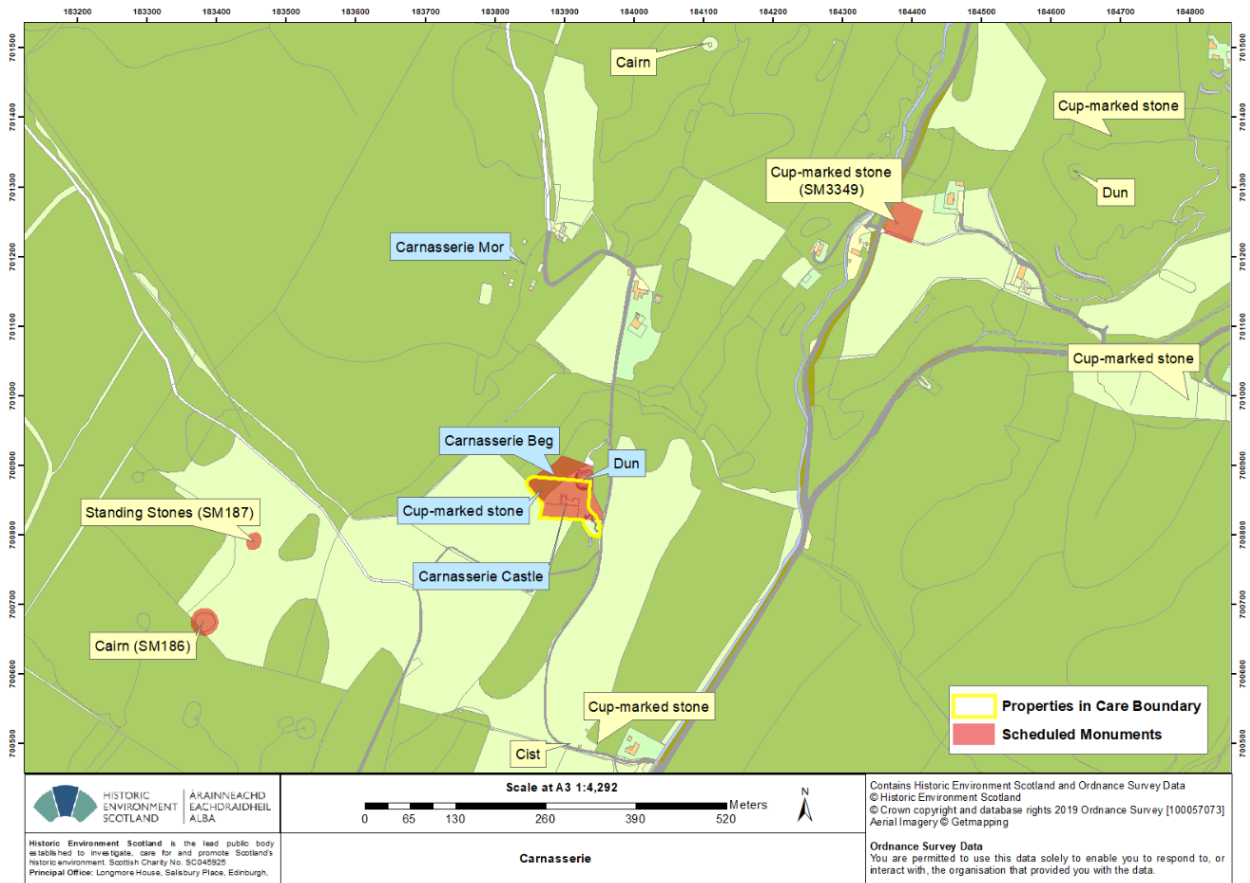


Figure 2: Selected sites in the vicinity of Carnasserie Castle. For illustrative purposes only.

2.13 Post medieval and later settlement – Carnasserie Beg

Lying approximately 30m north-north-west of the castle is the settlement of Carnasserie Beg⁴ and beyond this, approximately 300m to the north-north-west⁵, is the deserted township of Carnasserie Mor⁶. These townships would have had a close relationship to the castle housing tenants and producing goods and rents for Carswell and subsequent landlords. Recent research studies, including excavations, help build a picture of life in and around the castle. Further detail is given in Appendix 4: Archaeological Overview.

Carnasserie Castle has been comprehensively described in the usual surveys and sources⁷. In summary, the building comprises three main

⁴ Partially included within the PIC boundary

⁵ Beyond the PIC boundary

⁶ <https://canmore.org.uk/site/152204/carnassarie>

⁷ MacGibbon, D and Ross, T 1892 The castellated and domestic architecture of Scotland from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries, Vol.4, pp 316-21. Edinburgh; RCAHMS 1992 The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Argyll: An inventory of the monuments: Volume 7: Mid-Argyll and Cowal: Medieval and later

elements: a tower, a hall range and a principal entrance/ stair tower. The tower has four storeys over a vaulted basement⁸, with the adjacent hall range having two storeys over the basement. The ground level basements contain a kitchen, storage cellars and a cistern: above these lie the public and private rooms. Although it may look as if the castle is a multi-period amalgam of these three separate elements, the physical evidence suggests it was largely built as one single original scheme (i.e. tower and hall range together) albeit possibly including earlier fabric, and having some 17th century alterations.

The developmental sequence is outlined below, and further discussion of the design elements and ornaments of the castle is given at section 2.4 Architectural and artistic values.

2.14 Phase 1: remains of an early (pre-Carswell) castle?

The 1436 charter of John MacLachlan which is issued at '*Carnastre*' suggests this was a place of some importance at that date, although whether this refers to a castle or some other form of residence is unclear. Carnasserie is also mentioned in the grant of lands to Helen Hamilton, on her marriage to Archibald Campbell (future 4th Earl of Argyll) although there is no mention of a stronghold. Similarly, the sasines dating to 1530 and 1533, that mention John Campbell of Carnasserie, do not mention a castle at Carnasserie.

A document of 1559 in which John Carswell is granted the lands at Carnasserie along with custody of the castle, indicates its existence by this time, and the castle is again mentioned in documents of 1564, 1565 and 1570.

monuments. No. 115, 214-226. Edinburgh; Arneil Walker, F 2000 The Buildings of Scotland, Argyll and Bute.

⁸ I.e. three floors and a parapet over the basement

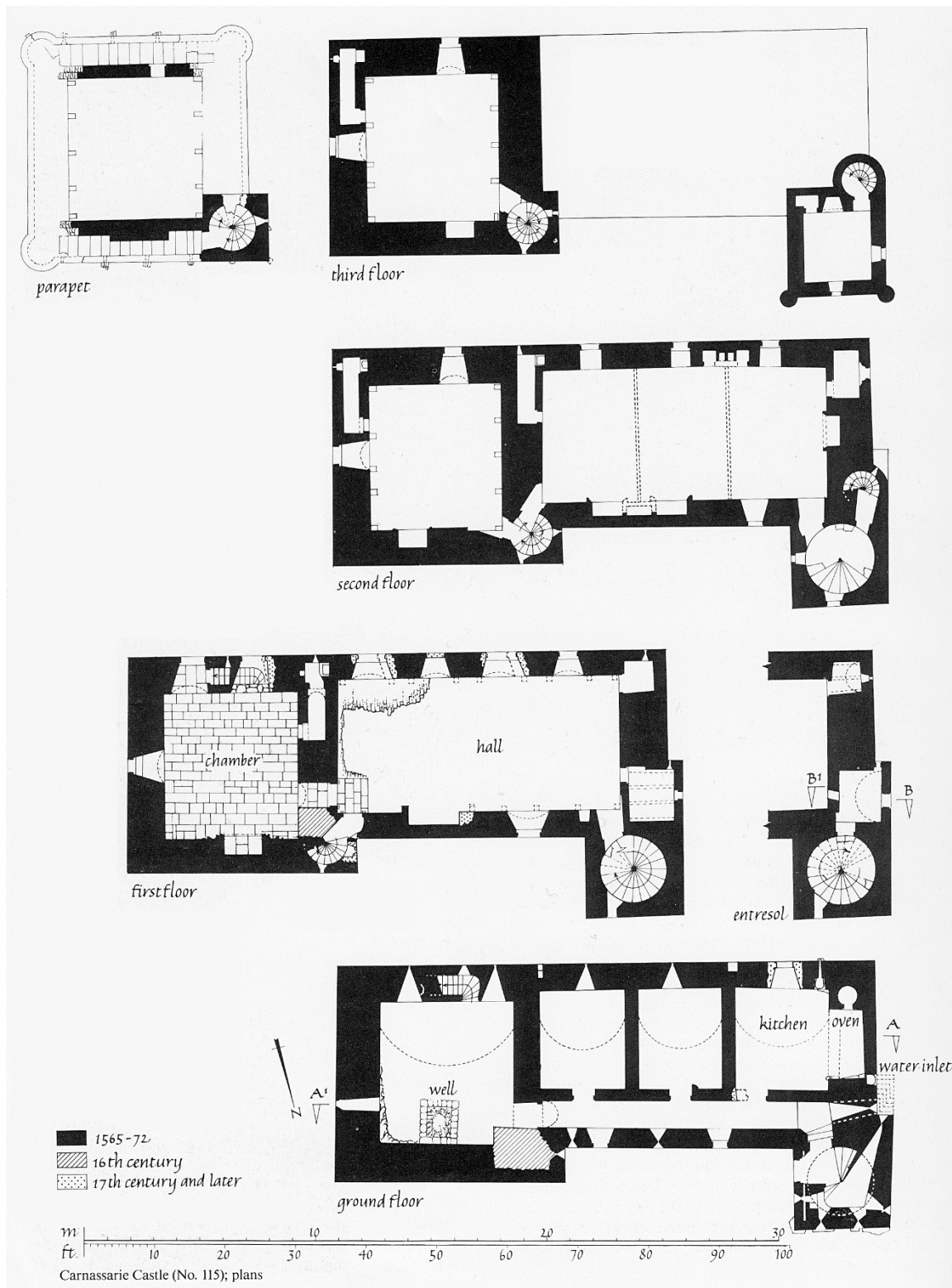


Figure 3: Floor plans. © Crown Copyright: HES.

The mention of a castle in the 1559 document may therefore indicate the presence of a castle structure before Carswell's main building programme,

perhaps linking back to the earlier charter evidence for Carnasserie as a significant place. There is some physical evidence that Carswell's structure incorporated earlier fabric. Earlier stonework appears incorporated in the north-east corner of the castle, and the 'double-keyhole' or 'dumb-bell' gun-loops along the south wall may be part of an earlier work⁹. Charles McKean also noted the thicker walls of the towers might point to these forming part of a pre-Carswell structure, but there seems little evidence in the external walls to support this.

An earlier castle might have occupied another site in the grounds, but if this was the case, it has not been identified.

A local tradition asserts that Carswell only built the east tower (the hall and west tower being added by the Auchinbreck family)¹⁰.



Figure 4: castle south facade in 1984. © Crown Copyright: HES.

2.15 Phase 2: Bishop Carswell's castle

The majority of the remains we see today are those of the castle built under the auspices of Bishop John Carswell, at some point after 1559. The

⁹ RCAHMS 1992, 215.

¹⁰ Dewar, (Rev.) J 1882 Bishop Carswell and His Times. *The Celtic Magazine*, Vol. 7, 352.

precise building date is not known for certain. However, what is known about Carswell's circumstances and access to finance for building a relatively ambitious castle suggest that such work could be most readily afforded after 1561 when he was appointed Superintendent of Argyll. After 1565 he also had access to the benefices of the Bishoprics of Argyll and the Isles.

Another potential clue to dating is the armorial panel that sits above the entrance door. This panel bears the motifs of Archibald Campbell, the 5th Earl of Argyll, with those of Scotland representing his wife Jean/Jane Stewart (whom he married in 1554), illegitimate daughter of James V and thus half-sister of Mary Queen of Scots. Their marriage was notoriously difficult and turbulent and even led to the Countess of Argyll being imprisoned several times on the orders of Argyll, on the grounds of adultery. The last serious reconciliation of the couple took place in 1563, this brokered in part by John Knox. As the marriage soon deteriorated after this time, it is possible that the inscription celebrates this reconciliation, or happier times earlier in the marriage. This may indicate the panel was carved not significantly later than 1563 and would be assumed to reflect the building date.

In terms of comparison with other castles and potential dating, Carnasserie relates most closely to Torwood Castle, Stirlingshire. Some of the detailing is so similar it is very likely the same masons worked on both projects. Again, Torwood's building date is not known for certain, but is thought to be around 1566; nor is it certain whether Torwood or Carnasserie was built first.

That Carswell was indeed the builder of Carnasserie, but that Argyll was the ultimate owner is elaborated in a document entitled '*Ane Descriptione of Certaine Parts of the Highlands of Scotland*', written c.1630. This states that '*There is a castle at Arskeodness called Carnasrie which was builded be Mr John Carswall Bishope of Argyll Lismore & of the Illands of the highlands of Scotland, and this Castle was builded be him to the Earle of Argyll*'.¹¹ Local tradition also asserts that Carswell as '*...High Bishop of Argyle...*' built '*...the Castle of Carnasary so as to compete with his superior Argyll himself. This castle is situated on a rising ground at the top of a strath called Strathmore, within less than a mile north from Kilmartin. When the Earle of Argyll saw it, he approved much of the elegance of its structure; but disapproved of its situation, which he considered as despicable as if erected on a dung-hill*'.¹²

¹¹ MacFarlane, W 1906-8 *Geographical Collections relating to Scotland made by Walter Macfarlane*. Scottish History Society, Vol. 2,148-9.

¹² Dewar, 347

2.16 Phase 3: 17th century

The Campbells of Auchinbreck were given custody of the castle in 1643. By 1660 it had passed to Sir Duncan Campbell of Auchinbreck and it is very likely that he was responsible for undertaking the alterations to the fabric of the castle; their completion perhaps indicated by the date-stone over the garden gateway which is inscribed with his and his wife's initials and the date 1681.

The main alterations to the building's fabric appear to have been designed to primarily increase the lighting into the hall and reception chamber, particularly along the south wall. Of the three high level windows lighting the hall, one is retained, and one is blocked, while the central window is superseded by a larger lower level window, which reuses the sill of an earlier window. The large embayment window was also converted into a door which may have allowed access into the garden via a wooden stair or gallery. Also on the eastern façade, an extra window has been added to the reception chamber, again requiring the lowering of the roof of the access stair to the chamber from the ground floor.

The alterations to the kitchen window and slight widening of one of the double keyhole gun-loops have also been previously ascribed to the alterations made by the Auchinbreck Campbells, and while this may be the case, these alterations could date to Carswell's time¹³.

The castle was blown up and set on fire in July 1685, during a siege of the Campbell stronghold by a contingent of troops under the Marquis of Atholl, who was sent into Argyll to suppress the rebellion of the Earl of Argyll. Thereafter the castle remained a ruin, becoming the property of the Campbells of Kilmartin in 1699.

2.17 Phase 4: A designed landscape and a property in care

The castle and surrounding estate, including the settlement of Carnasserie Beg, were purchased from the Duke of Argyll in 1829 by Neill Malcolm of Poltalloch. Under the Malcolms, Carnasserie Beg was cleared as a settlement and the castle became an integral part of the outer parkland of the designed landscape surrounding the Malcolms' new mansion at Callton Mor, completed in 1853. This involved the construction of the enclosure walls we see around the castle, and the planting of mixed woodland.

¹³ If a pre-Carswell Phase 1 is accepted, then alterations such as those to the kitchen window and slight widening of one of the double keyhole gun-loops might belong to Carswell's time rather than the Phase 3 of works.

In 1932 Sir Ian Malcolm of Poltalloch placed Carnasserie in State Guardianship along with several other important monuments on his estate, and Carnasserie Castle was scheduled in 1995. Under the Guardianship of the State, repairs were made to the castle fabric and some clearance was undertaken around the castle. New paths were installed leading up to the castle from the east, and a beech hedge was planted enclosing the south side of the castle grounds.



Figure 5: Aerial view of castle during excavation 2017. © HES.

2.2 Evidential values

The evidential values of Carnasserie Castle revolve around its capacity to reveal information by study and research. This includes the physical fabric of the place, the castle and other monuments; the wider landscape environs, some of which has been surveyed and studied; and the documentary sources and oral traditions that can help us understand the place.

2.21 Location and Setting

The strategic importance of Carnasserie's location – at the junction of three important route ways – is attested by the quantity and time-depth of the

archaeological landscape features in the vicinity. Many sites have been noted and surveyed, see Appendix 4: Archaeological Overview for more detail. The castle itself occurred relatively late in the long story of human interaction with the land around Kilmartin and Carnasserie, and the longevity of the site is evidence of this continuing strategic importance.

Within the grounds of the castle two features stand out: the first is a fragment of a slab bearing five cup-marks¹⁴, although it is unclear whether the stone is in situ or has been brought onto the site at a later date¹⁵. The second is the remains of a stone enclosure or dun¹⁶ that occupies a knoll some 20m north of the castle building¹⁷.

The dun enclosure is roughly oval on plan and measures 18m by 14m within a wall 1.6m to 2.2m wide. The wall is best preserved on the south where inner and outer faces stand about 0.4m high, while elsewhere, it is visible as a turf-covered scatter of stones. The entrance, about 0.6m wide, is in the south-west. No internal features are apparent. Radiocarbon dates returned from results of an excavation undertaken in 2017 suggest this structure was constructed and occupied between the 4th and 1st centuries BC.

2.22 The Castle



Figure 6: Gateway and castle from south-west

¹⁴ <https://canmore.org.uk/site/22849/carnasserie-castle>

¹⁵ Its current position is within the boundary of the property in care

¹⁶ <https://canmore.org.uk/site/22848/carnasserie-cottage>

¹⁷ Partially included within the property in care boundary

Although roofless since the late 17th century, and having lost its interiors and most partitions, the castle structure remains relatively complete. Both the eastern tower and western range are virtually complete, standing almost to wallhead level, while the stair tower is less complete. Crucially, much of the carved stonework survives in a relatively good state of preservation. This allows comparison to be made with other buildings, and some degree of research into possible sources. This is more fully discussed in section 2.4.

The phasing of the structure is relatively simple (as currently understood), so the alterations to the Carswell period castle are relatively minor.

The question of earlier fabric indicating a pre-Carswell structure (see 2.14 above) might be clarified through closer examination of the built fabric. In particular, masonry surrounding these gun-loops within the lower courses along the south wall (up to 10 quoins high), which appear to be of a slightly different masonry build to that above. This may be due to a change in raw materials during the course of a single build, but it may also indicate an earlier work. There is also some rearrangement to features at the western end of the building at first floor level where the present chimney now blocks what appears to have formerly been a door or cupboard, while a window has also been blocked. This would only be clarified through closer examination of this potential sequencing, perhaps with analysis of the mortar and materials used.

2.23 Garden, castle outbuildings and Carnasserie Beg

Lying immediately west of the castle are what appear to be the footings or remains of an 'L' shaped range with evidence suggestive of at least two apartments or buildings. The buildings lie between the two gates that give access to what may have been a formal garden. The presence of a formal garden is indicated on Roy's map of 1746¹⁸ and accessed by the remains of two gateways to the west of the castle, one of these bearing the initials S.D.C. and L.H.L. (relating to Sir Duncan Campbell and his first wife, Lady Henrietta Lindsay) along with the date 1681. Together these sites provide evidence of the wider functional context of the castle, which can be further interpreted by archaeological and documentary research.

Projecting stones on the southern side of the western gate also suggest the presence of a building on this side of the garden wall.

¹⁸ <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/roy/#zoom=15&lat=56.1457&lon=-5.4805&layers=roy-highlands>



Figure 7: Date stone above gateway. © Crown Copyright: HES.

The remains of a long range of buildings lie to the north-west of the castle and these likely represent the remains of Carnasserie Beg, which documentary records tell us existed from at least the 16th century. The remains of these buildings are represented by a series of low turf-covered banks forming the foundations of rectangular structures. The RCAHMS plan of the castle and surrounding ground depicts a long rectangular four-part structure. A recent inspection of these remains suggests the buildings to the north-west of the castle represent a single range of perhaps five rooms or apartments. Overall the range measures 39m and is up to 5m wide externally, and faces what may be a track, suggested by a hollow way at the east of the buildings. Beyond this range to the north-west are the possible footings of another structure backing on to a near vertical rock face, while lying outside the scheduled area are the footings of another structure.

Latterly, the castle and grounds were held by the Campbells of Kilmartin who sold the estate to the Malcolms of Poltalloch in 1829. The Malcolms eventually placed the castle and grounds in the Guardianship of the Office of Works in 1932. Photographs held by Historic Environment Scotland, and others on early postcards, show the castle in the late 19th and the early part of the 20th century. All show the castle with extensive ivy growth,

particularly on the south and east faces of the walls, this likely removed by the Ministry of Works. The wall of the formal garden also appears to have been modified, reducing it to what was likely considered original work.

2.24 Documentary Resources

There are various documents relating to Carnasserie and in particular to John Carswell and the various Campbell families who occupied the castle until its demise in 1685. The rebellion of the Earl of Argyll is fairly well documented as is the related incursion into Argyll by the Duke of Atholl to quell the rebellion in Argyll's heartland, which included the siege and destruction of the castle. The estate papers of the Malcolms of Poltalloch, housed in the Argyll and Bute Council Archives at Lochgilphead, contain journals that relate to work undertaken during their improvement of these acquired lands and the creation of designed landscape in and around their new mansion of Callton Mor. These documents and the events to which they relate are more fully outlined in Appendix 2: The People of Carnasserie.

2.25 Cartographic Evidence

Pont's manuscript map of the late sixteenth century¹⁹ depicts Carnasserie Castle and a settlement nearby with the name '*Carnasre beg*'. Pont appears to accurately depict the castle with its higher eastern tower and smaller western tower either side of the hall range.

In Roy's 1746 military map '*Castle Carnasarey*' (the actual castle has been smudged) is depicted attached to a formal garden, which is divided into quarters forming a traditional Scots garden²⁰. The map also depicts two settlements to the west of the castle with the names '*Largo*' and '*Sallachy*'; these however, appear to have been misnamed and the settlements depicted undoubtedly represent Carnasserie Beg and Carnasserie Mor. Carnasserie Beg is shown on John Johnson's map²¹ of the Kilmartin estate in 1825 as six roofed structures, the two southern most likely representing utilised castle outbuildings. The line of the track entering the site from the north-east can also be traced.

By the time of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1871-2, the castle is depicted alone surrounded by an enclosure and the area has been planted with mixed woodland²².

¹⁹ <https://maps.nls.uk/pont/view/?id=p15r90#zoom=3&lat=1153&lon=1008&layers=BT>

²⁰ <https://maps.nls.uk/geo/roy/#zoom=15&lat=56.1457&lon=-5.4805&layers=roy-highlands>

²¹ Argyll and Bute Archives, RHP31808

²² (Argyllshire Sheet CXXXVIII) <https://maps.nls.uk/view/74427424>

There is the intention (2019) for the entire structure to be recorded by terrestrial laser scanning as part of the HES Rae Project. This would provide an objective digital record which will underpin site management and any future conservation work and monitoring, as required.

2.3 Historical values

2.31 Association with the Carswell Family

Among Carnasserie's many significant historical associations, perhaps the most outstanding is the link to Bishop John Carswell, and through him to the development of reformed religion and literary culture in the Gàidhealtachd. The other key association is with the Campbell family: the Earl's of Argyll retained the property, with the Carswells (and later Auchinbreck Campbells) as custodians. This offers a practical demonstration of the relationship between great chief-aristocrats and their households and this is amplified by Carnasserie being the setting for episodes in Campbell family power struggles and in wider national religion and politics, e.g. the garrisoning of the castle as part of Argyll's rebellion against James VII.

John Carswell (Séon Carsuel) (c. 1522–1572), Bishop of the Isles, known in tradition as 'Carsualach Mór Chàrn-Àsaraidh' ('Big Carswell of Carnasserie'), was a powerful and influential figure in religion and culture in the years around the Reformation. He was an important figure in the Campbell of Argyll circle, being personal chaplain and possibly tutor to the 4th Earl and his sons in the 1550s, and educating the first of the 5th Earl's illegitimate sons²³. He was Treasurer of Lismore, the cathedral of the diocese of Argyll by 1550, Presbyterian Superintendent of Argyll from 1560 and first Protestant Bishop of the Isles from 1565 until his death in 1572. He is recorded as in declining health from 1570 until his death. Further detail on his life is given in Appendix 2: The People of Carnasserie. The following extract summarises some of his key achievements:

The most tangible proof of Carswell's reforming zeal, indeed his monument, is his Foirm na n-urrnuidheadh ('The form of the prayers'), a Gaelic translation of the Book of Common Order, whose printing was completed by Robert Lekprevik in Edinburgh on 24 April 1567. It has been described as 'a work of major literary and liturgical significance' (Kirk, 298) and as 'an astonishing achievement' (Meek, 55). Equipped with a dedicatory epistle to its patron, the earl of

²³ Dawson 2004, 80

Argyll, an epistle for the reader emphasizing the importance of the new technology of print and apologizing for any shortcomings in the translation, as well as a poem by Carswell himself wishing his volume well, Foirm na n-urrnuidheadh was the first printed book in Gaelic. Despite nods towards the Geneva original, it was based primarily upon the 1564 Scottish edition of the Book of Common Order. Foirm na n-urrnuidheadh, however, is far from being a literal translation: in his exuberant, highly decorated classical common Gaelic... Carswell, a giant physically as well as intellectually—his skeleton, unearthed towards the end of the nineteenth century, measured a full seven feet—possessed a fascinating scholarship mixing traditional Gaelic learning and contemporary Renaissance humanism. Although his far-sighted vision of religious printing transforming the Gaelic world was at least two centuries ahead of its time, he nevertheless created within five years an entirely new and durable lexicon for the worship and ministry of the protestant church. Carswell translated 'not just the Book of Common Order, but also the Reformation itself, into Gaelic terms' (Meek, 41).²⁴

Carnasserie Castle, with its use of Renaissance details and Gaelic inscription translates the above scholarly interests into an architectural context which is more fully discussed in 2.4 below. The castle's connection to Carswell is very strong and may well have been the setting for some of his translation works.

The armorial panel above the entrance at Carnasserie shows the impaled arms of 5th Earl and his wife (described at 2.15) and carries the inscription, in classical Gaelic script, 'DIA LE UA NDUIBH(N)E' ('God be with O'Duine')²⁵, paying homage to the 5th Earl by using the name of the traditional progenitor of the Campbell Clan. Carswell similarly acclaims the earl within his translated *Book of Common Order* which he dedicates to 'do Ghiolla Easbuig Ua nDuibhne', (to Archibald O'Duibhne). However, in the printed work the lettering is a Roman typeface, which then set the pattern for subsequent printed Scots Gaelic works²⁶. The book was the first to be published in Gaelic, aimed at both Scottish and Irish readership²⁷; Carswell's intention was probably to continue the project with a series of religious publications, though these never materialised²⁸.

²⁴ Stiùbhart 2004: Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, 'Carswell, John [Séon Carsuel]' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004 (<https://doi-org.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/4773>)

²⁵ Bannerman, J 1974 Two early post-Reformation inscriptions in Argyll. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquarians of Scotland*. Vol. 105, 307-312.

²⁶ Interestingly, for the first book printed in Ireland in Irish Gaelic, the *Abidil gaoidheilge & caiticiosma* (1571) a set of type using Irish letterforms was created which helped ensure the currency of the script into modern times.

²⁷ Stiùbhart 2004; MacGregor 2012, p. 143

²⁸ Stiùbhart 2004, op cit.

Bishop Carswell's influence was at a national level, but his descendants remained important at a more local level, known in Gaelic as '*Slioch an Easbuig*': 'The Descendants of the Bishop'. Carswell's brother Malcolm Carswell was named as '*captain of Craiginche*' in 1572. His daughter Christiane married Neil Campbell, who became the Bishop of Argyll and likely built Kilmartin Castle.

2.32 Association with the Campbells of Auchinbreck

The Auchinbreck Campbells were given custody of the castle and the lands of Carnasserie Beg in 1643. These were a powerful sept of Clan Campbell, claiming direct descent from Duncan, 1st Lord Campbell. The family seat was traditionally at their estate and castle of Auchinbreck on Loch Fyne, from which they took their title.

The Auchinbreck Campbells were often commissioned to provide leadership and training of troops used by the Earls of Argyll and it was in this role that the 2nd baronet commanded the Marquis (and 8th Earl) of Argyll's regiment in Ireland and in Scotland before being captured and executed by Alistair MacColla after the battle of Inverlochy in 1645. The next baronet, Dougald Campbell of Auchinbreck, died unmarried and, according to local lore, while attempting to put out a catastrophic fire at Auchinbreck castle shortly after the restoration in 1660. Dougald was succeeded by his nephew Duncan Campbell (4th Baronet) who in 1679 married Henrietta Lindsay, daughter of Alexander, Earl of Balcarres.

Duncan Campbell was described as 'being young and giddy' and was one of only a few Clan Campbell leaders who actively supported the 9th Earl of Argyll in his rebellion of 1685. After the rebellion failed, Auchinbreck fled to Holland and was later joined by Lady Henrietta. His estates were declared forfeit although he obtained a remission in 1687, returning to Scotland in 1688, eventually receiving rescindment of the sentence in 1690 after he had taken an active part in the Glorious Revolution. Despite this, Auchinbreck was financially ruined by the rebellion, with money spent on troops never recovered, the destruction of property, loss of goods and livestock, the deprivation of four years' rent and the expense of living abroad in exile. Auchinbreck held the office of Member of Parliament for Argyllshire between 1689 and 1698 but resigned his seat due to increasing ill health and becoming, rather ironically, a Roman Catholic.

2.33 Association with the Campbells of Kilmartin

The Campbells of Kilmartin, who acquired the castle, were descended from the Campbells of Inverawe. By 1674 they had obtained the lands of

Kilmartin from John Carswell's descendants; the first laird taking the title of Kilmartin was Alexander, who died c.1686. They obtained Carnasserie Beg along with the remains of the castle in 1699 from the indebted Auchinbreck Campbells. The family appeared to occupy Kilmartin Castle until the mid-18th century, when they built Largie House which became their main residence. The sale advertisement of the estate in 1825, included 'two fine old castles in disrepair' referring to Carnasserie and Kilmartin.

2.34 Association with the Malcolms of Poltalloch

The Malcolms of Poltalloch are a long-established Mid-Argyll family (originally MacCallums) who had principally made their fortunes in the 18th century, particularly under the auspices of Neill Malcolm. Much of their fortune derived from their plantations in Jamaica and trading in commodities such as sugar, rum, molasses, cotton and cattle. The plantation economy of course depended on the labour of enslaved people and the Malcolms "owned" a large enslaved workforce and benefitted substantially from government compensation after the emancipation of 1831²⁹. In Argyll much of the accrued profits from their successful commercial ventures was spent actively purchasing local estates, usually from indebted local landowners, these including the estate of Kilmartin which they purchased in 1829. The castle and the lands of Carnasserie Beg become part of the creation of a designed landscape that surrounded their new mansion at Callton Mor built 1849-53 and subsequently renamed Poltalloch.

2.35 Folklore

There are several local traditions associated with the castle.

For example, one local tradition asserts that Carswell replaced an earlier castle and as '*...High Bishop of Argyle...*' he built '*...the Castle of Carnasary so as to compete with his superior Argyll himself. This castle is situated on a rising ground at the top of a strath called Strathmore, within less than a mile north from Kilmartin. When the Earl of Argyll saw it, he approved much of the elegance of its structure; but disapproved of its situation, which he considered as despicable as if erected on a dung-hill.*

Another tradition states that Carswell only built the east tower (the hall and west tower were added by the Auchinbreck family) and that the wages of the masons were 4d a day with labourers receiving 1d a day³⁰.

²⁹ For more detail, see: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>

³⁰ Dewar, (Rev.) J 1882 Bishop Carswell and His Times. *The Celtic Magazine*, Vol. 7, 347, 352.

A further story connected to the castle tells how John Carswell's daughter Christiane had married Dugald MacConnochie (or Campbell) of Inverawe and had a son Archibald. When Dugald died, his brother John Dubh '*nan Creach*' attempted to murder Archibald, in order to obtain the family inheritance. The tale tells us that Archibald '*...was being fostered by the wife of a man of the name of MacPherson, residing at Crubaig, Bunaw. The uncle, a man of fierce and remorseless disposition, had resolved to do away with his nephew and secure the estate to himself. The foster-mother, being persuaded that such was his intention, fled with her charge to Carnassery*'. The story might be given some credence given that the castle in the late 16th century was held by Christiane's brother³¹.

Another local tradition tells us that Alisdair MacDonald, a commander of Royalist troops that invaded and ravaged Argyll between 1644 and 1647, had reason to avoid the area of Carnasserie as a prophecy had foretold he would prosper if he kept away from '*Muil Charnasarig*' (Carnasserie mill).³²

There is also a local story of why Carnasserie Castle was never repaired and why Kilmartin Castle was abandoned, which revolves around a prophecy that the wife of the laird of Kilmartin would only produce an heir if a new house was built on an indicated spot at Upper Largie, whereupon a new mansion house was built by the Kilmartin family³³.

2.4 Architectural and artistic values

It is difficult to think of a more architecturally significant secular building in the West Highlands in the sixteenth century than Carnasserie. While built by Bishop Carswell, he was only the keeper of what was, in reality, a castle for the chief of the Campbells and his spouse, a half-sister of Queen Mary; this helps account for its sophistication and richness.

Carnasserie incorporates the latest court-style classical decoration, characterised by the use of shafts and mouldings in the stonework which can be seen within other high-status buildings of the period such as **Linlithgow Palace**³⁴, Regent Morton's gateway in **Edinburgh Castle**, **Huntly Castle**, and **Mar's Wark** in Stirling³⁵.

³¹ Campbell, A. 1885 Records of Argyll, 129-130.

³² Carmichael, A 1883 to 1887 Field notebook of Alexander Carmichael, Coll-97/CW106/59.

³³ Wimberley, G 1894 memorials of Four Old Families: Campbell of Kilmartin, 36.

³⁴ Throughout the text, site names in **bold** are managed by Historic Environment Scotland and are publicly accessible. Access information can be found at:

www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/

³⁵McKechnie, A Court and Courtier Architecture, 1424-1660 pp 306, 308 in Oram, R and Stell, G 2005 Lordship and Architecture in Medieval and Renaissance Scotland.



Figure 8: Door and armorial panel. © Crown Copyright: HES.

Its use of Italianate classical forms of ornament make Carnasserie precocious, not only in a regional but also in the national context. This is combined with an inscription, unique not only for being in the medium of Gaelic but also carved using classical Gaelic script³⁶. Together they make Carnasserie the physical embodiment, literally carved in stone, of the legendary ability of the chiefs of Clan Campbell to straddle the cultural divide between the western Highland and eastern Lowland cultures of Scotland from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries³⁷. The comparative context for Carnasserie and further discussion of its stylistic features is given below, while the importance of the Gaelic inscription is discussed at 2.3.

³⁶ Bannerman 1972-74

³⁷ MacGregor 2012

2.41 Design – a consciously archaising tower?

In understanding the messages that the design and form of Carnasserie was intended to convey, it has struck a number of historians that while the tower and hall ranges at first glance seem to indicate an older tower with later hall ranges “tacked-on”, the truth might be far different.

The castle comprises three main elements: a five-storey square tower³⁸, attached to a three-storey³⁹, longer hall range, to the west, slightly set back on the principal north front, and at the north west corner the principal entrance is contained within a four-storey projecting stair tower. The staircase from the door ascends to a ‘piano nobile’ containing the hall/dining room and the drawing/reception room while the western tower contains a horizontal suite of accommodation.

MacGibbon and Ross⁴⁰, compare its overall form to that of Melgund in Angus⁴¹, built in 1543, by David, Cardinal Beaton, for his mistress, Marion Ogilvy⁴². Charles McKean argued that, in both cases, the tower walls were slightly thicker than those of the hall ranges, and this meant that the towers preceded the latter⁴³. However, although there is apparent evidence of phasing on the south front at Carnasserie, it is horizontal, between the ground and upper floors, with no vertical masonry breaks between the tower and the hall.

RCAHMS also saw some signs of the incorporation of earlier work in the lower part of the north wall of the tower, but most historians agree that the evidence suggests that the masonry of the bulk of the tower, as at Melgund, is contemporary with that of the hall range⁴⁴. MacGibbon and Ross suggest that the combination of the tower and hall range in both cases is deliberate to give the impression of an older tower house extended with a more modern domestic range⁴⁵. It is interesting to note that both were built by senior clerics, with the tall tower perhaps being seen as a badge of status.

Glendinning, MacInnes and Mackechnie include Melgund within a larger group of sixteenth-century buildings combining tower and hall, including examples with round towers added to earlier ranges such as Huntly and

³⁸ I.e. a basement with three floors and a parapet above.

³⁹ I.e. a basement with two floors above.

⁴⁰ 1887-92, 4, pp. 316-321

⁴¹ MacGibbon and Ross 1887-92, 4, pp. 316-321

⁴² MacGibbon and Ross 1887-92, 4, pp. 311-316; Sanderson 1986, p. 143

⁴³ McKean 2001, pp. 37-38 and 130

⁴⁴ RCAHMS 1992, p. 215

⁴⁵ MacGibbon and Ross 1892, 4, pp. 311-312 and 319

Balvenie castles⁴⁶, but one could point that they are all following a similar archaizing trend seen in James V's palaces: at Holyrood, where James V built the apparently old-fashioned north-west tower from 1528 and then the abutting hall range to the south, and; at Falkland, where the gatehouse to the west, formerly thought from its appearance to be the work of his father, James IV (1488-1513), is taller than the adjoining chapel range, both built in the later 1530s and early 1540s⁴⁷.

Therefore, Carnasserie can be seen to sit within a group of high-status castellated mansions which seem to “play” with the notion of the “ancient keep” incorporating this as a conscious design feature within a modern mansion.

2.42 Renaissance ornament – context and possible sources

Even more than its overall form, the architectural ornaments both inside and outside display familiarity with Renaissance norms and parallels to work in the circle of the Scottish court. The too-little known dissertation of David Adams identifies a ‘Stirling Group’ linking Carnasserie with Torwood Castle, south of Stirling, and **Mar’s Wark** in Stirling⁴⁸. The upper panel of the two at Carnasserie (with balusters and shell-niche pediment), is so similar to the one at Torwood⁴⁹, dated to 1566⁵⁰ that they must be the work of the same mason⁵¹, while two of the masons’ marks identified at Torwood coincide with those at **Mar’s Wark**, dating from 1570-1572⁵². All three buildings share string courses with identical cavetto or cyma recta profiles, while the interior fireplaces and the door surrounds in the hall at Carnasserie have the same etiolated shafts found at **Mar’s Wark** and, elsewhere such as the Regent Morton gate at **Edinburgh Castle**.

While the above ornaments are universally accepted as deriving from classical models, they are at first sight far from the canonical classicism of contemporary Italy. However, Adams⁵³, who judges the Carnasserie examples the finest of the group, convincingly argues that they are taken

⁴⁶ Glendinning, MacInnes and Mackechnie 1996, pp. 24-26

⁴⁷ Campbell forthcoming 2020

⁴⁸ Adams 1977, pp. 15-23

⁴⁹ Torwood was built for Alexander Forrester, who was for a time the Provost of Stirling, which may help link it into the orbit of the court, Argyll and therefore Carnasserie. Its building date is assumed to be around 1566 as a fragment of a pediment with this date was found near the site in 1918 (<https://canmore.org.uk/site/47026/torwood-castle>).

⁵⁰ RCAHMS, 1963, 1, pp. 337-9 and 2, p. 664

⁵¹ Adams 1977, pp. 16-17

⁵² Adams 1977, p. 22

⁵³ Adams 1977, p. 10

from Serlio's woodcuts⁵⁴, the masons sometimes copying the profiles of cornices, etc., in more or less conventional ways, while at other times adapting them inventively. Particularly interesting are the mouldings below the tower parapet, which rather than conventional corbels, Adams⁵⁵ recognises as an entablature, with a simple cyma recta for the cornice, a band of dressed stone for the frieze, and a bold bead moulding for the architrave, all inspired by Serlio's profile of a Tuscan capital projected horizontally as a wall moulding.

A compartmented ceiling in part of **Kinneil House**, built between 1542 and 1554 for the Regent Arran is the earliest firm evidence of knowledge of Serlio's *Fourth Book* (first published 1537) in Scotland⁵⁶, while Adams plausibly identifies the principal source for the French Renaissance entrance to **St Andrews Castle**, dating from 1555, as Serlio's woodcut of the Arch of Constantine from his *Third Book* (first published 1540)⁵⁷. Thus, if Adams is right, then the influence of Serlio had reached the west Highlands within two decades of its first publication and within one of its earliest use in Scotland.

A final point needs addressing regarding the ornament: we see mouldings at Carnasserie cutting across each other, or 'interpenetrating' as Adams describes them⁵⁸, especially in the door surrounds. Such intersections are reminiscent of late Gothic moulding more especially in Germany than France, and it is possible that some of the masons who worked in the 'Stirling Group' of buildings were from that area. Certainly, we know that among those brought over by James V and Marie de Guise to work on Falkland Palace and Stirling was one 'Peter Dutchman', Dutch (= Deutsch) at the time referring as much to Germany as to the Netherlands⁵⁹.

In summary, the presence of the inscription, in conjunction with the type and quality of architectural decoration, make Carnasserie the pre-eminent secular building in the early modern Scottish *Gàidhealtachd* and one of the most innovative and interesting sixteenth-century castles in Scotland.

⁵⁴ Sebastiono Serlio (1475 - c1554) was a very influential Italian architect who worked in Italy and France, and whose illustrated treatises on classical architecture were highly influential and used as pattern books.

⁵⁵ Adams 1977, p. 17

⁵⁶ Bath 2010

⁵⁷ Adams 1977, pp. 11-12

⁵⁸ Adams 1977, p. 18

⁵⁹ Campbell forthcoming 2020

2.43 Defence or show?

It is also worth noting that while Carnasserie was primarily a comfortable and stylish house, it was not without defensive potential. It was considered worth garrisoning and defending in 1685 and was captured by negotiation/bribe rather than assault. As such, Carnasserie forms part of our evolving understanding of interplay of defence and show in this type of castellated house.

2.44 Castle environs, ancillary structures and gardens

It is highly likely that Carnasserie was surrounded by a designed and formalised landscape, with the usual range of ancillary structures that could be expected. Unfortunately, there is little evidence of how the ancillary structures or the grounds that would have accompanied the castle in Carswell's time may have looked.

The 17th century arrangement is a little clearer. A garden almost certainly existed by the time of the renovation of the castle by the Auchinbreck Campbells in the 1680s as suggested by the presence of the two gateways to the west of the castle, one which has datestone of 1681 is also engraved with the initials of Sir Duncan Campbell and his wife Lady Henrietta Lindsay. This date might also attest to the alterations to the southern façade of the hall range of the castle, which included the conversion of a window to a door that likely overlooked, and gave access to, the garden.

A 1694 testament by Duncan MacIndeor, a harpist to the Auchinbreck family mentions an '*Alex Lambie Gardiner to Auchinbreck*'. This document sheds some light on who may have composed part of Auchinbreck's household, and it is possible Alexander Lambie may have tended to the gardens prior to the castle's demise in 1685, while a legal disposition of 1699 mentions the presence of a garden and orchard at the castle.

Remnants of this garden must still have been apparent in the mid-18th century, as a formal layout south of the castle is depicted on Roy's map. By the time of the sale list in 1824 there is no mention of a garden or orchard, however John Johnsons map of 1825 does depict a large, walled enclosure to the south of the castle.

2.5 Landscape and aesthetic values



Figure 9: Dun from castle looking north-east

2.51 Geology

The site's bedrock belongs to the Tayvallich Volcanic Formation, comprised of quartzite, psammite, semipelite and metabasaltic rock⁶⁰.

2.52 Prehistoric and early modern landscape

The importance of the Carnasserie area as part of the wider Kilmartin prehistoric landscape has been already discussed (2.12) along with the early modern settlements (2.13).

2.53 19th and 20th century landscape elements

Under the guardianship of the Malcolms of Poltalloch, the castle likely became part of a designed landscape of the lands that surrounded their new mansion of Callton Mor. The castle no doubt became a 'romantic' ruin and was visited by tours or parties of visitors to the estate. Certainly, the relatively well-preserved architectural features of the castle suggest some degree of protection from further denuding by robbing of material, and it may be that any debris or demolition material was cleared out of the castle

⁶⁰ BGS 2019

by Malcolm workmen, opening it to visitors. A report on the designed landscape of Kilmartin Glen⁶¹ categorises Carnasserie as belonging to the 'Outer parkland and zone of visual influence, defined by the visual watershed or ridge-lines in each direction. This contains land that has been planted with clumps, plantations and woods similar to those in the inner parks, which although they are more distant from the House (Callton Mor), are clearly part of a larger scheme'.



Figure 10: Ivy covered ruin c.1870. © Courtesy of HES (Mackenzie Album).

The immediate setting of the castle is particularly scenic, surrounded by mature woodland at the head of the Kilmartin Glen.

From Carnasserie Castle, visitors have good views down Kilmartin Glen on fine days, particularly from the parapet. The cairns of the linear cemetery⁶² and several standing stones are all visible.

⁶¹ Dingwall and McGowan 1996

⁶² Glebe Cairn lies 2km to the south-south-west

2.6 Natural heritage values

A visitor survey conducted at the castle (see below) outlined some natural history values such as the appreciation for natural events and for the linked annual cycles of change e.g. changes in weather and vegetation. Some visitors outlined concerns over the landscape surrounding the castle, which was based on decreasing amounts of farming, and increasing amounts of tree plantations.

At the point of writing, the site has no noted special natural heritage values, however, otters (*lutra lutra*) have been noted in the area in previous years. The castle has many features suitable for roosting bats, and the presence of mature trees suitable for roosts should also be noted. Further investigation would be required before carrying out any conservation or other works which could disturb bats.

The area in State care includes a mixture of Amenity Grassland and, to the west of the castle, Unimproved Neutral Grassland including species such as False Oat Grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Male Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*). Unimproved Neutral Grassland is considered to be one of the most threatened lowland habitat types in the country, surviving mostly as small, isolated meadows which have not been subject to any significant degree of agricultural improvement. This habitat has survived as a result of the protection it has as a historical site.

2.7 Contemporary/use values

Carnasserie Castle is primarily seen as a landscape feature, educational resource and visitor attraction. It is accessed from a well-maintained car park that lies adjacent to the A816 trunk road, a scenic coastal route some 2.7km north of Kilmartin Village. The castle lies 1.6km from the car park which also contains information panels erected by the Dalriada Project. Alternatively, the castle can be accessed from a sign-posted footpath from Kilmartin Village, which links Carnasserie Castle to other monuments in Kilmartin Glen.

The castle is highlighted within two popular guidebooks published by Kilmartin Museum (formerly Kilmartin House Museum), while the castle also appears in the architectural 'RIAS Guide' for Argyll⁶³.

⁶³ Butter, R 2000 Kilmartin, an Introduction and Guide; Webb, S 2012 In the Footsteps of Kings, a New Guide to Walks in and Around Kilmartin Glen; Arneil Walker, F 2000 The Buildings of Scotland, Argyll and Bute

As Carnasserie Castle is accessible to view all year round, the precise number of visitors is not known. However, the annual number of visitors in 2018-2019 is estimated to be over 57,000 for each of the Kilmartin Glen sites in the Care of Historic Environment Scotland (HES). Several tourist and visitor surveys have been conducted on the Kilmartin Glen area, these appearing as unpublished reports. While these deal with the wider Kilmartin Landscape, many of their findings about visitor numbers, visitor origins and their economic impact, are relevant to castle visitors⁶⁴.

In 2017 as part of a PhD thesis⁶⁵, a visitor survey was conducted at the castle from which various visitor experiences and values have been extracted, e.g.:

- Nature/Landscape/Seasonality: Visitors had an appreciation for natural events and for the linked annual cycles of change e.g. changes in weather and vegetation. They were able to state when they felt the site would look best or would be most atmospheric (both hypothetically and through experience of repeat visitation). They also valued the continuous use of land through time and their consequent connection to the past.
- Traditions/Memory-making: Individual and community use of the space allows for visitors to develop meaningful attachments to Carnasserie (particularly locals). The site becomes a backdrop for social interactions (e.g. Halloween, Easter Sunday, picnics, playing football). This links to the site being free of charge and accessible 24/7, as visitors are able to feel as if the place is their own.
- Imagination: Visitors valued using their imagination, feeling atmosphere was a mode of connecting to and 'sensing' the past. These imagined pasts were not always accurate, however that did not matter as it contributed to increased visitor value (e.g. romanticised vision of past, empathy over hardship of others).
- Access / Experience of space: Visitors enjoyed and valued being able to move around Carnasserie Castle and its grounds in a manner that suited them. The addition of new steps in the castle was acknowledged for increasing access throughout the castle. By being

⁶⁴ Kilmartin Glen Project 1996 Kilmartin Glen Visitor Survey. Unpublished Kilmartin House Museum Report; Kilmartin House Museum 1997 Kilmartin House Visitor Survey. Unpublished Kilmartin House Museum Report; Ballie, B, Bowkett, A M, Fiske, P and Nichols, M 2005 Report on the Kilmartin House Museum/Kilmartin Glen Survey. Unpublished Mphil Research, University of Cambridge; Burtenshaw, P 2008 Archaeology, Economics and Tourism: The economic use-value of archaeology with the case study of Kilmartin Glen and Kilmartin House Museum. Unpublished MA dissertation Institute of Archaeology UCL

⁶⁵ Mills, K 2018 Weather Affects: Evaluating its experiential impact on heritage visitors and conservation practice. Unpublished PhD Thesis: University of Manchester.

able to move around the castle and its grounds, visitors valued the multi-sensorial interactions, which did not just privilege vision.

- Architectural features/Patina/Ruination: The presence of these things provided visitors with tangible evidence of the past and also the passage of time, which fuelled their imagination. Visitors considered the ‘challenge’ of building these sites in ‘harder’ times with limited technology. Also, interacting with the different spaces of the castle and their features allowed visitors to conceive the ‘human-ness’ within this setting.

As such, Carnasserie Castle can be seen to have high social value. However, it should be noted, that the tourism generated by the archaeological monuments within the Glen, and their national and international importance is not necessarily seen as positive by everyone in the local community, since this presents certain challenges for farming, and restrictions related to other forms of land use.

3. MAJOR GAPS IN UNDERSTANDING

- Our understanding of the earlier history of the site is particularly limited, from the activity associated with the cup-marked stone, to the Iron Age enclosure, and the possibility of an earlier castle. Did the current castle incorporate any earlier remains?
- It would be desirable to better refine the chronology of construction of the castle, and the form and function of particular spaces e.g. what form did the associated gardens take? Where was Carswell’s suite? Is there any linkage between the layout of Carnasserie and other prelate/bishop castles/palaces?
- It would aid understanding to research more thoroughly the interior plan and disposition of rooms to try to interpret their usage. Allied to this, it may be possible to illuminate detail of internal furnishings, fixtures and fittings if inventories are found to exist for the site.
- Details of Bishop Carswell’s life and the relationship of the Carswell family to the Campbell family remain opaque, particularly the suggestion that the family are related to the Campbells of Corsewall. Further details on associated individuals are also lacking.
- Currently, little is known about Carnasserie castle as a setting for Carswell’s literary works, and whether this was indeed where his translations were completed.

- We do not understand the nature of any early settlement of Carnasserie Beg and its development vis-à-vis the castle.
- Further research on the 19th century landscape around the castle, including designed elements would be beneficial
- Our understanding and interpretation of the creation of an extensive designed landscape around their mansion of Callton Mor by the Malcolms of Poltalloch remains limited, as does the part they played in the preservation of the castle.
- More widely, little is known of the nature and extent of the clearance works undertaken by the Malcolms of Poltalloch and the Ministry of Works. A better understanding of the extent of Ministry interventions post clearance, in terms of repairs and consolidation works, would also be beneficial.

4. ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES

Kilmartin Castle (residence of Neil Campbell, Rector of Kilmartin and husband of Carswell's daughter); Kilmartin Graveyard (Neil and Christine Campbell's burial enclosure containing west highland grave slabs) Torwood Castle (Carswell probably hired the masons from Torwood); Ardchattan Priory (Bishop Carswell's burial place); Achnabreck, Ballygowan, Cairnbaan, Kilmichael Glassary (rock art sites in Kilmartin Glen).

5. KEYWORDS

Kilmartin; Landscape; Prehistoric; Cup-marked stone; Iron Age; Dun; 16th Century; Renaissance; Castle; Tower house; Gun-loop; Parapet; Chimney piece range; John Carswell; Bishop of the Isles; Reformation; Protestant; Book of Common Order; Earl of Argyll; 1685 Rebellion; Clan Campbell; Campbell of Auchinbreck; Atholl Raid; Deserted Settlement; Carnasserie Beg; Poltalloch Estate; Designed Landscape.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, D.G. 1977 *Scottish architectural decoration circa 1520-1620*, unpublished dissertation, University of Edinburgh,

Arneil Walker, F. 2000 *The Buildings of Scotland, Argyll and Bute*. China.

Bannerman, J. 1974 Two early post-Reformation inscriptions in Argyll. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquarians of Scotland*. Vol. 105, 307-312.

Bath, M. 2010 'Andrew Bairhum, Giovanni Ferrerio and the "Lighter Style of Painting"', *Journal of the Northern Renaissance*, 2, Available from: www.northernrenaissance.org/andrew-bairhum-giovanni-ferrerio-and-the-lighter-style-of-painting/

British Geological Survey (BGS), 2019. Onshore GeoIndex. Available from: <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/> [13 February 2019]

Campbell, I. forthcoming 2020 'Franco-Scottish architectural exchanges circa 1535-60', *Episteme*, forthcoming

Dawson, J. 1999 The Protestant Earl and Godly Gael: The Fifth Earl of Argyll [c. 1538-73] and the Scottish Reformation, in Wood, D 1999 (ed.) *Life and Thought in the Northern Church c1100-c1700: Essays in honour of Claire Cross*. *Studies in Church History Subsidia*, Vol. 12, 337-363

Dawson, J. 2004 *The Politics of Religion in the Age of Mary, Queen of Scots: The Earl of Argyll and the Struggle for Britain and Ireland*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Dingwall, C. and P McGowan 1996. *The Designed Landscapes of Kilmartin Glen: Carnassarie, Kilmartin and Poltalloch* (a report commissioned by Scottish Natural Heritage in association with the Kilmartin Glen Project).

Glendinning, M., MacInnes, R. and MacKechnie, A. 1996 *A History of Scottish from the Renaissance to the present day*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

MacGibbon, D. and Ross, T. 1892 *The castellated and domestic architecture of Scotland from the twelfth to the eighteenth centuries*, Vol.4, 316-21. Edinburgh.

MacGregor, M. 2012 'The Campbells: Lordship, Literature and Liminality', *Textual cultures: Texts, contexts, interpretation*, 7/1, pp. 121-57

MacInnes, A. I. 1998 'Scottish Gaeldom from clanship to commercial landlordism, c1600 - c 1850', in Foster, S., MacInnes A. & MacInnes, R. 1998 *Scottish Power Centres from the Early Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, 162-190. Cruithne Press, Glasgow.

MacInnes, J. 1976 John Carswell, *Notes and Queries of the Society of West Highland Historical Research*, Vol. 3-4.

MacKinnon, D. 1932 John Carswell, 1520-1572 Superintendent of Argyle and the Isles. *Scottish Church History Society*, 195-207.

McKean, C. 2001 *The Scottish Chateau*, Stroud, Tempus, 2001

MacLauchlan, T. (ed.) 1873 *The Book of Common Order*, xviii- xxvii. Edinburgh.

Matheson, A. 1965 Bishop Carswell, *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, Vol. 42,182-205.

Meek, D. E. and Kirk, J. 1975 John Carswell, Superintendent of Argyll: a reassessment. *Scottish Church History Society*.

RCAHMS 1963, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. *Stirlingshire*, 2 vols, Edinburgh, RCAHMS.

RCAHMS 1988 The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Argyll: an inventory of the monuments: Volume 6: Mid-Argyll and Cowal, prehistoric and early historic monuments, Edinburgh.

RCAHMS 1992 The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Argyll: An inventory of the monuments: Volume 7: Mid-Argyll and Cowal: Medieval and later monuments. No. 115, 214-226. Edinburgh.

Sanderson, M. 1986 *Cardinal of Scotland: David Beaton c. 1494-1546*, Edinburgh, John Donald, 2001

Stiùbhart 2004: Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, 'Carswell, John [Séon Carsuel]' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, Oxford University Press. Available from: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/4773>

Walker, F.A. 2000 *Argyll and Bute*, London, Penguin Books.

Wimberley, G. 1894 *Memorials of Four Old Families, viz.: Campbell of Kilmartin, Gordon of Lesmoir, Irvine of Drum, Wimberley of South Witham & Beechfield with pedigrees and a few illustrations*, Inverness.

Further Resources

Canmore ID: 22835
Site Number: NM80SW 2
NGR: NM 83908 00848

Historic Environment Scotland – Scottish Charity No. SC045925
Principal Office: Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh EH9 1SH

Scheduled Monument Description:

<http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/SM90061>

Artefacts from Carnasserie held in the National Museums Scotland collection can be searched via: www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/search-our-collections/

3D model of rock art panel: <https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/carnasserie-castle-kilmartin-c8a2e06ba8a44073bcd9abf2e861b6b6>

Detail on relevant archaeological surveys and excavations can be found at: www.kilmartin.org/learning/archaeological-research/archaeology/

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: TIMELINE

- 1436 Charter issued by John MacLachlan of Strathlachlan at ‘*Carnastre*’.
- 1529 Carnasserie is amongst the lands confirmed by royal charter to Helen Hamilton, the future wife of the 4th Earl of Argyll, as part of the marriage settlement.
- 1530 John Campbell of Carnasserie appears as a witness to a sasine issued by the 4th Earl of Argyll.
- 1540 John Carswell first appears on record in the matriculation roll at St Salvator’s College, St Andrews.
- 1544 John Carswell graduates from St Salvator’s College, St Andrews.
- 1545 Carswell signs and witnesses a series of documents written on behalf of the ‘*Commission from the Lord of the Isles of Scotland*’.
- 1549 John Carswell appears as witness to a marriage contract in Argyll.
- 1550 John Carswell is named as the treasurer of the Diocese of Lismore.

- 1553 John Carswell is named as Rector of Kilmartin Church.
- 1559 The 5th Earl of Argyll grants the eight merklands of the two 'Carnestris' to John Carswell, rector of Kilmartin Church and his private chaplain.
- 1560 The Reformation Parliament nominated and elected Carswell as the Superintendent of Argyll and the Isles.
- 1564 John Carswell accepts the gift of the Bishopric of the Isles and the Abbacy of Iona from Queen Mary, this transferred to him in 1565.
- 1565 Building work may have begun at Carnasserie, as John Carswell writes a letter to Colin Campbell of Glenorchy from 'Carnastre' in December.
- 1567 Carswell is elected as one of the Lords of Articles and formerly appointed Bishop of the Isles and the Abbot of Iona and publishes the first printed book in Gaelic, a translation of John Knox's liturgy, the *Book of Common Order*.
- 1568 Carswell appears as a signatory in what became known as '*The Bond of Nine Earls, Nine Bishops, Eighteen Lords, and others for the defence of the Queen's Majesty*'.
- 1569 Carswell is censored by the General Assembly for his support of Queen Mary and for accepting the Bishopric of the Isles, although he was never formally consecrated but continued to use the style of bishop.
- 1570 Carswell is reported to be '*werie seik*' and '*nocht weill at eiss*'.
- 1572 John Carswell dies, probably around 50 years of age.
- 1580 Colin the 6th Earl of Argyll issues a legal discharge from the castle.
- 1585 Archibald Carswell of Carnasserie, Bishop Carswell's son, appears on record again in 1587, and 1605.

- 1594 John Campbell of Ardkinglass is imprisoned and interrogated under threat of torture at Carnasserie, for the murder of John Campbell of Cawdor.
- 1606 Neil Campbell, son of Archibald, is named as being of Carnasserie in a document and again in 1633 and 1636.
- 1618 The '*2 merk land of Carnastrie beg*' appear in a sasine.
- 1643 The Marquis of Argyll gives the lands of Carnasserie and its castle to Dougald Campbell, heir apparent of Auchinbreck.
- 1645 '*Carnasaribeg*' is listed as '*pertaining to his majestie Fourscore eight punds seventeen shilling sex pennies*'
- 1647 Sir James Lamont, who switched sides from the Campbells in the Civil War, is held prisoner in the castle.
- 1681 Sir Duncan Campbell of Auchinbreck undertakes building alterations at Carnasserie, notably altering the south façade of the hall.
- 1685 Carnasserie is garrisoned by a Campbell force supporting the rebellion of the Earl of Argyll against James VII. '*Mr William Maclauchline parson of Kilmartin and Mr Archibald Campble, minister at Kilmichael in Glasserie*' are held prisoners in the castle. The castle was besieged by a Royalist force of the Marquis of Atholl, led by MacLean of Torloisk, and partly blown up after its surrender by some to the besieged troops.
- 1690 Sir Duncan Campbell of Auchinbreck petitioned for £20,000 Scots in compensation for the murder of his uncle during the siege, and the damage caused to Carnasserie, then still regarded as one of the finest houses in Argyll.
- 1699 Carnasserie Beg and the castle are sold by Sir Duncan Campbell of Auchinbreck to Alexander Campbell of Kilmartin; a branch of the Campbells of Inverawe.
- 1751 '*Carnasary beg*' is valued at '*Eight pounds five shillings and six pence (£8.5.6)*'

- 1825 The Kilmartin estate is put up for sale.
- 1829 Neill Malcolm of Poltalloch purchases the Kilmartin Estate including Carnasserie Castle and Carnasserie Beg from the Campbells of Kilmartin
- 1841 The census lists 29 individuals within seven households, of which six heads of households are cottars, or agricultural labourers, with none listed as tenants.
- 1842 Trees are planted around the castle and it becomes part of the designed landscape created by the Malcolms of Poltalloch.
- 1932 Sir Ian Malcolm of Poltalloch places Carnasserie in the Guardianship of the Office of Works along with several other important monuments on his estate.
- 1995 Carnasserie Castle is scheduled.
- 2017 Excavation work takes place in the grounds of the castle.

APPENDIX 2: THE PEOPLE AND HISTORY OF CARNASSERIE CASTLE

APPENDIX 3: DETAILED ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

APPENDIX 4: ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

APPENDICES 2-4 Available as separate documents on request from Historic Environment Scotland Cultural Resources Team.

Please contact: crtenquiries@hes.scot