HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND | ÀRAINNEACHD EACHDRAIDHEIL ALBA

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

ELGIN CATHEDRAL

(INCLUDING BISHOP'S HOUSE, ELGIN; ELGIN, PANS PORT AND PRECINCT WALL)

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HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

ELGIN CATHEDRAL

CONTENTS

1 Summary

1.1 Introduction

Elgin Cathedral lies at the east end of the town of Elgin. It was the cathedral of the diocese of Moray, and seat of its bishop, from the early 13th century. It was a secular cathedral with a college famously attacked and burnt by Alexander Stewart, 'the Wolf of Badenoch', in 1390, it ceased to be a centre of religious devotion in the 1560s.

The property comprises the ruins of the cruciform church. Significant upstanding elements include the west front, one of the finest examples of medieval architectural in Scotland, the south transept, the south choir aisle , presbytery and east gable, and the octagonal chapter house. Elements of the chanonry, or cathedral precinct, also survive. These comprise the so-called 'Bishop's House' (or precentor's manse), to the west of the cathedral,and Panns Port the only surviving gateway into the precinct to the SE of the cathedral.

1.2 Statement of significance

Elgin Cathedral was the principal church of the diocese of Moray and one of the Scotland's most ambitious and beautiful medieval buildings.

The history of the cathedral is a reflection of the development of the diocese of Moray, and considerable research has been undertaken into its construction, funding and economic resources.

The cathedral's west facade and east gable are two of the great glories of Scottish medieval ecclesiastical architecture.

The associated 'Bishop's House', Panns Port and short section of adjoining precinct wall are a reminder that the cathedral was central to a greater complex of buildings which enabled the functioning of this institution.

The cathedral has an associated collection of architectural and sculptural fragments that is among the finest in Scotland. Remarkable for their preservation, these carved stones provide valuable information about the construction process, the elaboration of the cathedral and the skills of the craftsmen who carved them.

Although not originally from the cathedral site, he Pictish cross-slab displayed at the cathedral crossing is nationally significant in its own right, as an example of the artistry, society and material culture of the Picts. The cross-slab provides valuable evidence for early Christianity in the Elgin area.

The cathedral graveyard contains a fascinating collection of post-reformation gravestones and funerary monuments.

2 Assessment of Values

2.1 Background

Layout of Cathedral

At all stages of its history Elgin Cathedral was a cruciform structure. Its construction is generally divided into three phases; post-1224, ie its initial construction, post-1270, the rebuilding after a major fire and repair after 1390, the attack by the Wolf of Badenoch. At the east end of the church is the presbytery, the ceremonial area around the high altar. This is made up of four bays. Two shallow bays of the presbytery project from the main body of the church and terminate in the eastern facade. The other two bays are flanked by wide aisles which continue to the west, alongside the three bays which make up the choir. The division between the presbytery and choir was marked by massive responds (half piers). The eastern bay of each of the aisles was a chapel. The southern chapel was dedicated to Our Lady (the Virgin Mary) and the northern chapel to St Columba. The side entrances into the presbytery from the aisles were in the bay to the west of the chapels. On the north side of the north aisle is an octagonal chapter house which is covered by a vault carried on a central pier; the chapter house is separated from the aisle by a small rectangular antechamber. East of this is a small annex which may have been used as a sacristy.

Between the eastern limb and nave was the crossing, above which was a tower. Transepts projected to the north and south. On the east side of the crossing would have been a timber screen with a central doorway, which separated the canons' choir The nave was seven bays long, with a pair of towers flanking the western bay. There were double aisles on either side of the six bays of the nave, and a doorway in the western bay of each of the two outer aisles. The south door was covered by a porch. The western processional entrance to the cathedral was between the two towers. The towers are walled off from the central vessel and aisles, the only access into them being a single doorway in the east face of each tower.

Stages of Construction

The first cruciform plan as built after 1224. As first planned after the move from Spynie to Elgin in 1224, the east end of the cathedral was much shorter, comprising only three bays of what would later become the canon's choir. A short stretch of its north wall is all that survives of this earlier building. West of this was the crossing and the central tower, which was part of the original build. The aisleless transepts projected north. The nave may have been intended to be six bays long with a single aisle along each flank, that single aisle being of the same width as the inner aisle in the final arrangement. If this interpretation is correct, the aisle-less eastern limb was internally about half the length of the aisled section of the nave. The three western piers of each nave arcade and the western responds survived later rebuilding. The truncated stumps of the piers remain, though the responds survive complete as part of the fabric of the towers.

The closest parallel for this cruciform plan at a Scottish cathedral is to be seen at Dornoch. The cathedral of the diocese of Caithness was relocated to its present site at Dornoch in the time of Bishop Gilbert de Moravia (1222–1245)Gilbert was a kinsman of Bishop Andrew de Moravia, the builder of the first cathedral at Elgin. The scale of Dornoch Cathedral, however, was considerably less ambitious than that at Elgin, which is hardly surprising since the diocese was far less well endowed.

The two western towers may not have been part of the very first plan for the cathedral. The reason for suggesting this is that the base course that runs around the foot of their walls is different from that of the transepts, the only part of the first building from which outer walls have survived unchanged. However, the decision to add those towers must have been taken while work on the nave was still in progress. The decision to give the cathedral two western towers as well as a tower over the crossing is perhaps the clearest indication of the high aspirations of its bishops. The only other Scottish cathedrals known to have had three towers were at Aberdeen and Glasgow, where the full complement was eventually achieved only towards the end of the Middle Ages and thus much later than at Elgin. St Andrews and Kirkwall Cathedrals may have been intended to have a pair of western towers as well as a central tower at an early stage of their planning, though in neither case were the western towers built. Triplets of towers were built at the twelfth- and thirteenth century royal abbeys of Arbroath, Dunfermline, and Holyrood, and they were evidently planned at the abbeys of Kilwinning and Paisley Triplets of towers were always exceptional in Scotland, and those at Elgin must have expressed more clearly than anything else the importance attached to the cathedral of the diocese of Moray.

The south-eastern nave chapel was the next element to be added after the towers. No precisely comparable chapels are known to have been built at any other Scottish cathedrals, and its function and dedication are unknown. It was later absorbed into an added outer south nave aisle.

The works carried out after the fire of 1270 brought the cathedral almost to its final full extent. The eastern limb was doubled in length. A single wide aisle was added along each side of five of its bays, leaving the two eastern bays to project beyond the aisles so that it was possible to have windows on three sides of the high altar. The only part of the first eastern limb to have survived this rebuilding was its north wall, though that wall was extensively remodelled.

The octagonal chapter house with its vestibule was added on the north side of the eastern limb, possibly as a slight afterthought. The late-medieval rebuilding of the central tower, and the subsequent collapse of both the tower and its supporting piers, means we are uncertain of the full extent of post-1270 rebuilding in the crossing area. The western towers were heightened by an additional storey. The central part of the west front between the towers was partly reconstructed, but most remarkable of all was the addition of an outer aisle along each flank between the transepts and west towers, with a two-bay porch over the main entrance for the laity. The three-bay chapel on

the south side was incorporated into the outer aisle and the same width was adopted for the outer north aisle.

The plan of the longer eastern arm, with an aisled section terminating in a short aisle-less section, had a well-established history in the major churches of Scotland. The first Scottish cathedral to be laid out to such a plan was probably that of St Andrews, started by Arnold who was bishop between 1160 and 1162,, though it is likely that there was an earlier example of the type at Jedburgh Abbey, where the eastern limb was set out soon after the abbey's foundation in about 1138. Variants of the plan had also been employed in the late twelfth century for Arbroath and Dryburgh. Elgin's is the only chapter house at a Scottish cathedral known to have been of centralised polygonal form, though there is an earlier thirteenth-century example at the Augustinian abbey of Inchcolm, and another Augustinian example has been traced through excavation at Holyrood Abbey. The type must certainly be seen as having been inspired by prototypes in England, where there were about thirty chapter houses of centralised plan. The most unusual feature of the nave as remodelled after 1270 was the double nave aisles. In Elgin this arrangement is unique to Elgin. The only parallel for multiple aisles at a Scottish building of what might be called 'cathedral scale' was at St Giles' parish church in Edinburgh, which was eventually elevated to cathedral status in 1633, though there the final plan was a consequence of the late-medieval piecemeal addition of chapels rather than of a deliberate decision to double up the aisles to a unified design. Within Britain the only other cathedral at which the aisles were systematically doubled up was Chichester, almost certainly under the inspiration of Continental prototypes. Since it seems unlikely that Chichester was the source of the idea at Elgin, is it possible that the designers of the extensions at Elgin were also looking directly to Continental prototypes?

After the attack of 1390 major rebuilding was required and perhaps also after that of 1402. However, this was carried out within the framework of the existing ground plan, the only minor augmentation being the addition of the small annexe on the east side of the chapter house vestibule, which is likely to have been used as a sacristy.

2.2 Evidential values

There have been no extensive modern excavations within the cathedral. The cathedral was extensively cleared of rubble by John Shanks. By 1826 he is said to have 'removed about 2853 cubic yards of Rubbish from the Area and parts adjacent … consisting of large masses of grouted building stones and earth; separated the stones from the earth, and built them up in convenient places; and levelled the Area and other places, where necessary, with the earth.' This clearance work may have caused considerable damage to the buried architectural and archaeological evidence, although further clearance work in the 1920s and '30s demonstrated that much of the disturbance may have been limited to post-medieval overburden.

During the 1920s and '30s, the ground levels were lowered within the cathedral during masonry consolidation works. This clearance work was not

undertaken under modern archaeological conditions and there are only brief mentions of the work in official files. It is unlikely to have penetrated medieval floor levels, except where drainage was required.

In 1936, fragments of a fine rose window were found in the south choir aisle during work on the vaults. A damaged effigy of a 13th-century bishop was found in the west side of the chapter house.

Excavations at the ‘Bishop's House’ in the late 1980s revealed a little more of its layout. Excavations carried out further to the west in the 1970s revealed some evidence for the wider cathedral precinct.

In 2002 research was carried out into the construction and position of the rose window by Stuart Harrison. More recently, the carved stone collection has been extensively researched in association with a planned display project which includes investigations into paint traces on the stones.

Prof Richard Fawcett's 1996 volume on the architecture of the cathedral was revised in 2013 by Prof Fawcett and Prof Richard Oram. This includes historical research into the lives of the bishops of Moray, the structure and financing of the diocese and the role of the diocese of Moray in Scottish history.

Elgin Cathedral has the largest group of medieval memorials of any Scottish cathedral.

2.3 Historical values

From the time of its construction in the first half of the 13th century through to its demise at the Reformation of 1560, Elgin Cathedral dominated the flat and fertile Laich of Moray. It expresses the political power of the Bishops of Moray, many of whom are prominent in the historical record. Despite the many losses suffered by the building, it preserves a wealth of information about the liturgical life of the cathedral and its history.

The Pictish cross-slab, though not original to the cathedral site, is evidence of the spiritual patronage, beliefs and ideas of the early medieval church locally. There is no indication in Moray of how the early church was organised or functioned. Fragmentary sculptural remains from several sites suggest that they were important religious centres in the 8th/9th centuries, particularly Kinneddar It is likely that there were early episcopal centres at Mortlach and Rosemarkie.

It is likely that the seat of the north-eastern Bishopric was moved to Aberdeen as part of David I's reorganisation of the ecclesiastical structures of northern Scotland in an attempt to tighten his control over the region, which also resulted in the creation of the diocese of Moray. We know that there was a man holding the title of Bishop of Moray from the reign of King Alexander I (1107-1124), and that his name was Gregory (or Giric), as he occurs as a

witness to royal charters, but we have no evidence for where he may have had his cathedral.

Some of the medieval bishops of Moray have left behind rich records. There is less information on the earlier bishops, but from the 13th and 14th centuries there is considerable detail, as many of these men were deeply involved in the political life of the kingdom.

The cathedral was moved to Spynie after 1207. At this time Bishop Brice de Douglas instituted a new constitution based on the cathedral constitution of Lincoln. The site of the church at Spynie is close to the palace. The last upstanding remains fell in 1850. The cathedral was moved to its present location in 1224, and it is likely that it was built on a virgin site.

The *Scotichronicon,* a history of Scotland written in the 1440s, refers to a fire at Elgin Cathedral in 1270. Traces of fire damage in the choir may date from this time. Bishop Archibald and the chapter took the opportunity to rebuild on an elaborate scale. The fine tomb in the presbytery, built integrally with the new structure, was probably provided by Bishop Archibald for his own eventual use; it was he who probably ordered the new building campaign. His effigy was recovered during conservation work in the 1930s and retains evidence of painted decoration.

The appointment of Alexander Bur to the Bishopric in 1362, a loyal servant of the Crown, was in part intended to quell the influence of David II's nephew Robert Stewart in the region. Bur spent the early part of his Bishopric attempting to recover ecclesiastical rights in the region and so generate more income. This brought him into direct conflict with the Stewarts. Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan, used his vast authority to undermine rather than maintain law and order and Bur had no means of appeal since Alexander controlled the courts. In 1388, Alexander's brother and political rival Robert Earl of Fife took control of the Crown and Bur aligned himself with him. He forged a new protection agreement with the Earl of Inverness and for a time his position seemed to improve. In 17 June 1390 he and a band of 'wyld wykkyd helandmen' burnt the cathedral together with 18 residences of the canons and chaplains.

The rebuilding works which followed were protracted, and further hindered by an attack in 1402, this time led by Alexander MacDonald, a son of the Lord of the Isles. The precise sequence of rebuilding after 1390 is not clear. The protracted works to the eastern end were probably begun first but were perhaps not finally completed until the time of Bishop John of Winchester (1436-60), whose splendid tomb graces the south choir chapel. Reconstruction of the central tower, begun by Bishop John Innes, whose tomb recorded that he was an active builder, was completed by his successor, Bishop Henry of Lichton (1407-14). Bishop Columba of Dunbar (1422-35) reconstructed the west front and the last significant building work was the remodelling of the chapter house in the time of Bishop Andrew Stewart.

Elgin Cathedral never served as a parish church, and as such it did not survive the Reformation as well as it might have done. In 1567-8 the Privy Council ordered the removal of its lead roofing. The lead and cathedral bells were taken to Aberdeen, probably destined for the Netherlands, but the vessel transporting them was so overladen that it foundered in the harbour. The cathedral continued to be used for sporadic worship into the 1600s, but its fabric gradually deteriorated after the roof was lost.

In the late 1700s interest in medieval architecture began to grow, as did concern for the cathedral fabric. In the early 1800s measures began to be taken to stabilise the structure, most notably by John Shanks, a 'drouthy cobbler', who was appointed keeper of the cathedral and cleared much of the site. He is buried in the cathedral grounds.

Improvements were made to the cathedral's surroundings with the removal of houses in 1847-8 and the brewery to the east, a co-operative endeavour between the Office of Works and the Burgh Council. These were conscious efforts to improve the appearance of the site. Large scale programs of stabilisation began in the early 20th century, aimed at securing the cathedral's fragile masonry.

2.4 Architectural and artistic values

Cathedral Church

The first church (early 13th century) was a cruciform building, with an aisled nave and aisle-less choir. It was considerably smaller than the cathedral in its final phase. It had a central tower, and early into the building campaign it was decided to build a pair of western towers. Of the major 13th century Scottish cathedrals, only Elgin had three towers built as part of the initial phase of construction, demonstrating the importance of the foundation and the ambitions of its Bishops. The west front was the frontpiece of the cathedral and so particularly impressive. The original facade, between the towers, does not survive, but it is likely that the processional entrance took up much of the space as it does now. A rose window, fragments of which were found packed into the vault above the south choir aisle, probably occupied the space above until the fire of 1390.

The south transept is the best preserved element of this initial campaign. Its design, with superimposed tiers of triplets of single-light windows, was a well-established theme. It had been a favoured treatment for the gable-wall elevations of the great eastern English cathedrals and abbeys from c.1100. It was re-invented by the Cistercians in northern England, which foreshadowed its adoption in the east gables of major Scottish churches from the second half of the 1100s.

The church was enlarged in the late 13th century, almost certainly as a result of the fire of 1270. The remodelled east end was doubled in length and increased in height. Aisles were added along the length of the choir, leaving

the two bays of the new presbytery projecting to the east, and the fine processional doorway through the west front was created. An octagonal chapter house was added to the north of the choir. Outer aisles were added along the full length of the nave, absorbing a three-bay chapel which had already been built on the south side. A porch was built against the west bay of the south aisle.

The extended east end provided a more magnificent setting for the daily services and cathedral rituals. As with the south transept, the new east gable recalls early 13th-century work found in churches in northern England; similar work to that at Elgin can be found at Whitby Abbey and Beverley Minster, both from the early 1200s. However, Elgin was not a mindless copying of work from south of the border, but a mature development of widespread architectural ideas that extended widely across both kingdoms.

The double aisles flanking the nave are very unusual features in major churches in the British Isles. The only other cathedral with this arrangement is Chichester, where the work, carried out in the later 1200s, was probably inspired by continental examples.

Despite considerable evidence of fire damage to the masonry, the work which took place after 1390 appears to have amounted to repair in the choir and presbytery. There is more extensive evidence of rebuilding in the choir aisles. Some of the vault bosses in the south choir aisle suggest a post 1390 date, implying that the vault was partly rebuilt at this time. The aisle windows are also of this date. Like much of the later work at Elgin, the windows were designed to be in-keeping with the extant architecture at the cathedral. The remodelled Elgin choir aisles had some influence on other churches in the north-east. These include St Duthuc's, Tain and Fortrose Cathedral's S nave chapel, which was ironically built for Euphemia, Countess of Ross, estranged wife of the Earl of Buchan.

According to an inscription on his tomb, Bishop John Innes (1407-14) started the rebuilding of the central tower. However, it partially collapsed again in 1506. Only Slezer's late 17th century illustrations survive as evidence of its appearance. Two of the four over-sized stone figures – one a bishop and the other a knight - that were placed in large niches high up on that central tower survive, and are on display in the south-east nave chapel. The nave appears to have required more extensive repairs than the eastern limb. The two lateral gables in the third and fourth bays from the east in the south chapel aisle appear to date from this rebuilding. It has been suggested that these gables, which would have given a striking saw-tooth effect to the roof-line of the outer aisle, may have been an idea imported from the Low Countries, at a time when relations with England were at an all-time low, and the flow of architectural ideas from there had all but ceased.

The only clearly late medieval features on the west front are the inner face of the west doorway and the window and gable above. The large vesica in the

tympanum above the doorway was presumably intended to hold a representation of the Holy Trinity, to whom the cathedral was dedicated.

Chapter House

The octagonal chapter house is a supreme expression of the corporate identity of the college of canons. Elgin was the only Scottish secular cathedral to have an octagonal chapter house , although the fashion, which was very much an English one, was followed at the Augustinian Abbeys of **Holyrood** and **Inchcolm**. The similarity with English chapter houses again demonstrates how close the interchange of architectural ideas was with England throughout the 13th century.

The chapter house is linked to the main body of the cathedral by a small vestibule and was clearly built as part of the post 1270 operations. The interior of the chapter house was substantially remodelled in the later 15th century; the arms of Bishop Andrew Stewart (1482-1501) are emblazoned on the capital of the central pier supporting the vault. Seven of the eight walls were faced with new masonry, new smaller windows were inserted and the central pier and vault were rebuilt. The five seats covered by trifoliate arches, for use by the dean and other cathedral dignitaries, are also late 15th century.

Monuments

Elgin has the largest group of medieval memorials of any Scottish cathedral. Eighteen bishops were buried here, seven of which are in the choir. Many of the canopy tombs have been lost, but those which survive are befitting of the high ambitions of the leading churchmen of Moray.

Of particular note is the wall tomb of Bishop John of Winchester (died 1460) in the south choir chapel; the prelate is shown in his mass vestments, laid out on a tomb chest that has an arcaded front below an elaborate ogee arch. The tomb, like most others in the cathedral, would once have been finely painted, and traces of the angels that were shown surrounding him at death can still be seen on the undersides of the canopy. Other monumental tombs include the tomb chest and effigy of Alexander Gordon, 1st earl of Huntly (died 1470) (also in the south choir chapel) and, in the south choir aisle, the armoured effigy of William de la Hay, lord of Lochloy (died 1422).

Several memorials in the cathedral were intended to receive inset brasses. None of these have survived, although a rubbing of a brass which was thought to have come from the cathedral was published in 1906.

The Pictish cross-slab found in 1823 near St Giles' parish church now stands where the NE crossing pier once stood. It is of high artistic merit in its own right. Carved from grey granite containing large crystals of feldspar, its front has depictions of the four evangelists around the cross. The back is a single panel containing, at the top, a rectangular shape divided into three parts and ornamented by spirals; below this the double disc and Z-rod symbol; then

lower down the crescent and V-rod symbol; and at the bottom a hunting scene, including a rare depiction of the sport of falconry, a reflection of the Pictish élite's passion for blood sports.

The cathedral graveyard contains many interesting post medieval gravestones. These include examples of mortality symbolism. The trades of the men of Elgin are also depicted on the gravestones. The monument of John Geddes and Isobel McKean features the tools of the trade of a glover/leather-worker. These are a glove with a flared cuff and a pair of shears.

'Bishop's House'

To the NW a mid-16th century manse, probably belonging to the precentor, although it is commonly called the 'Bishop's House', stands in a fragmentary condition. This is the single surviving identifiable representative of a number of manses which once surrounded the cathedral and which would have accommodated the cathedral clergy, the canons, though two other occupied houses appear to have manses at their core. The L-plan, three-storey structure had a new wing added to the stair tower in the later 16th century. It is this later part that mostly survives today. The building has the usual vaulted kitchen and cellar at ground level with the hall on the first floor and private chambers above. The most striking features are the crow-stepped gables and the small oriel in the upper floor of the east front. The main building has an heraldic panel of Bishop Patrick Hepburn (1538-73) and a skewput bearing the date 1557.

Panns Port and precinct wall

Panns Portiais the only surviving gate of the several that gave access into the cathedral precinct. It was substantially altered in 1857 when the present battlements and gunholes were added. A fragment of the precinct wall also survives.

2.5 Landscape and aesthetic values

The medieval streetplan of Elgin has been somewhat lost in later development, and as such the cathedral is easily bypassed, but with relatively quiet roads on three sides of its square enclosure and the River Lossie to the west, it is tranquil spot. The dominance of the cathedral, and the castle on Ladyhill, over the townscape is best appreciated on John Wood's map of 1822.

Elgin Cathedral is a stunning building, even in its ruined state. . The houses which now surround it are generally low and do not really interrupt views of the site the east and west elevations offer some of the most striking and beautiful views of this most impressive example of Scottish medieval ecclesiastical architecture. The bridge over the Lossie to the NE is the only clearly modern development to compete with the cathedral, and as it on the opposite site of the site to the main access for visitors, it is not generally noted by them. There was a brewery to the east, which was demolished in 1912.

It is difficult to get an idea of the form and extent of the cathedral chanonry, as such much has been lost. As such the visual relationship between the surviving elements is particularly important.

The cathedral has been the town burial ground since the 16th century, and the site is covered in gravestones.

The views from the upper floors of the western tower, out over the town and the surrounding Laich of Moray, are very much appreciated by visitors. This is also the best place to appreciate the relationship between the cathedral, the town and the other surviving elements of the medieval plan.

2.6 Natural and heritage values

The site is primarily of importance for its bat roost and before any works take place SNH should be consulted. The grounds are mainly amenity grassland with little importance to wildlife.

2.7 Contemporary/use values

Today, Elgin Cathedral still maintains its identity as a church, not only because of its physical appearance but also because of the uses to which it is put. Wedding ceremonies are the strongest spiritual association.

In addition to wedding ceremonies, there have been carol concerts since 2007, attended by around 1000 people and led by several ministers. There are Easter services too. Also local churches, including house churches, have smaller services at the cathedral.

The graveyard is as well visited as the cathedral and people do visit the site specifically to look for their ancestors among the many fine gravestones and funerary monuments.

3 Major gaps in understanding

- The understanding of the historic and architectural context of the cathedral has been greatly enhanced by the recent publication by Prof Richard Oram and Prof Richard Fawcett of a monograph on the architecture and history of the cathedral and its clergy.
- The archaeological potential of the site remains uncertain but potentially very high.
- The historical reference to the destruction of the painted timber rood screen give some slight indication of the fixture and fitting of the cathedral. However, the nature of the internal decoration of the cathedral is an area of understanding where we remain largely ignorant.

4 Associated properties

(former cathedral churches of Moray) - Birnie; Kinneddar (site of); Spynie (site of).
(other Scottish medieval cathedrals) - **Aberdeen**; **Brechin**; Dornoch; **Dunblane**; **Dunkeld**; **Fortrose**; **Glasgow**; Kirkwall; Lismore; **St Andrews**; **Whithorn**

(other related sites locally) - **Spynie Palace**.

5 Keywords

chapter house, tower, tomb, graveyard, bishop, canon, gate, Moray

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Timeline

- c.1114/15 - A man named Giric or Gregory with the title of Bishop of Moray occurs as a witness to royal chartders
- 1128 - Giric witnesses David I's great charter to Dunfermline Abbey
- 1152 – William, David I's chaplain, is appointed bishop. Throughout the 12th century, there is no single cathedral church. The bishops moved between Kinneddar, Birnie and Spynie.
- 1207 - Bishop Brice of Douglas secures papal approval for the Church of the Holy Trinity at Spynie to become the fixed cathedral. It has a chapter of eight canons, with a constitution based on that at Lincoln Cathedral.
- 1224 - Bishop Andrew de Moravia/Murray secures papal approval to transfer the cathedral to Elgin, as Spynie was isolated, exposed and not convenient for trade. The new cathedral church, also dedicated to the Holy Trinity, is built on land approved by Alexander II.

- 1226 Bishop Andrew issues a new constitution for hist chapter which increases the number of canons from 8 to 18, one of which was to be held by the bishop of Moray
- 1270 - the cathedral and chanonry suffer a catastrophic fire, necessitating a major rebuilding. The opportunity is taken to enlarge and enhance the building.
- 1362- Alexander Bur is elected to the see of Moray. A loyal servant of the Crown, he was chosen because he could potentially increase the influence of Kind David II in the region.
- 1390 - Alexander Stewart, earl of Buchan, Robert III's younger brother, burns Elgin, including its cathedral, the manses of the canons and the parish church of St Giles, Alexander, known to history as 'the Wolf of Badenoch', is said by the chronicler, Andrew of Wyntoun, to have employed 'wyld, wikkit, heland men' for the task . The cathedral's brief chronical records the event 'and what is more bitterly to be grieved, the noble and beautiful church of Moray, the wonder of the land and ornament of the realm, with all the books, charters and other goods of the land stored therein, were burned'.
- 1402 - The cathedral is attacked by Alexander MacDonald, son of the Lord of the Isles. This raid resulted in Alexander's excommunication and submission to the bishop three months after the raid
- 1414 - Bishop John of Innes is buried beside one of the NE tower pillar, which he is traditionally supposed to have rebuilt. The effigy of a kneeling bishop in the SE nave chapel is supposed to have come from his tomb.
- 1460 - Bishop John of Winchester is laid to rest in a fine tomb in the south choir chapel.
- 1501 - Bishop Andrew Stewart dies,. His arms can be seen on the central pier of the chapter house, which was altered during his episcopate.
- 1560 - the cathedral is abandoned for formal worship at the Reformation. Elgin had a parish church, St Giles, in the centre of the burgh. The post Reformation bishops of Moray adopted it as their church.
- 1567/8 - the Privy Council orders that the lead roofing be removed from the cathedral.
- 1573 - George Douglas becomes Moray's first non-Catholic bishop,
- c.1590 - Timothy Pont's map shows the cathedral still roofed.
- 1594 - mass is celebrated in the cathedral following the battle of Glenlivet, at which the Catholic earl of Huntly defeats a Government force.
- 1615 - Taylor, the Water Poet, describes the cathedral as ‘a faire and beautiful church with three steeples all yet standing, but the roofes, windows and many marble monuments and tombes … are all broken and defaced.’
- 1637 - the roof over the east end blows down in a storm.

- 1636 - the funeral of George Gordon, 1st marquis of Huntly takes place in the cathedral with much ceremony. The Gordons had taken the south choir chapel as their burial vault.
- 1638 - Bishop John Guthrie is removed following the abolition of episcopacy by the General Assembly in Glasgow.
- 1640 - Two local lairds, of Innes and Brodie, pull down and chop up for firewood the surviving rood screen.
- 1662 – The episcopacy is re-established following the return of King Charles II from exile. Rev Murdo Mackenzie, minister of Elgin, becomes bishop of Moray.
- 1671x76 - the chapter house is used as a meeting room by Elgin's Incorporated Trades (and again 1701x31).
- 1689 – The episcopacy is abolished and their revenues are transferred to the Crown
- 1711 - the central tower collapses on Easter Sunday, bringing down much of the adjacent masonry.
- 1809 - the town council repairs the perimeter wall around the graveyard.
- 1815 – A Mr Gillespie (possibly George Gillespie Graham, is engaged to carry out works on the cathedral.
- 1823 - a Pictish cross-slab, found near St Giles, is re-erected in the cathedral.
- 1824 - the Crown finances a new roof over the chapter house. The work is overseen by Robert Reid.
- 1824-6 - John Shanks, a shoemaker of Elgin removes 'about 2853 cubic yards of rubbish from the Area and parts adjacent'. Shanks is appointed Keeper and Watchman
- 1826 - Demolition of St. Giles Parish Church; memorials are re-erected in the chapter house
- 1841 - John Shanks dies and is buried in the cathedral graveyard.
- 1834 - Major consolidation and repair works begin in the cathedral under the direction of Robert Reid
- 1847/8 - old houses to the west of the cathedral are demolished and the boundary wall extended . The so-called 'Bishop's House' is saved from demolition and gifted to the Town Council.
- 1851 - Patrick Sellar is buried in the cathedral graveyard.
- 1857 - Panns Port is restored and embellished
- c.1912 - the brewery to the east of the cathedral is demolished
- 1938 - Panns Port and a stretch of cathedral precinct wall come into state care.
- 1954 - the 'Bishop's House' is taken into state care.
- 1972x89 - the window tracery in the chapter house is replaced, and its present roof constructed.