



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
SCOTLAND

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

STIRLING CASTLE



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HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

STIRLING CASTLE

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Stirling Castle is a strongly fortified medieval and later royal castle occupying a volcanic outcrop which commands the upper Forth valley. Within the castle are three main enclosures: the outer defences (on the main line of approach); the main enclosure (at the summit of the rock) bounded in the south by the Forework and encircled by a defensive wall; and to the north of it is the Nether Bailey. The principal buildings for royal occupation form a square known as the Inner Close and are enclosed by the King's Old Building, the Great Hall, the Chapel Royal and the Palace. Access to the mainly 19th-century army buildings within the Nether Bailey is through the 14th-century North Gate.

Outer defences

The natural approach to the castle is along the gentle slope to the south-east, so it was along this side that the chief defences were concentrated. At the head of the slope is the Esplanade, formalised in 1809. The first line of castle defence is a massively constructed low-set artillery defence formed by a deep ditch with a straight wall rising upwards, pierced by a single gateway and flanked by a gun-battery at the north end. In their present form these date largely to 1708-14.

Incorporated into the outer defences is an earlier defence, constructed by the Italian engineer, Ubaldini, for Mary of Guise soon after 1554. This was a great bastion-like spur with a pyramidal reinforcement at the prow and with smaller spurs at each end. The west spur, which flanked the entrance, was larger and less regular; parts of it have been tentatively identified within the existing outworks and seem to have terminated originally against the face of the Prince's Tower. A short stretch of this wall still survives.

After 1708 the outworks were strengthened with an extension of the face of the Great Spur westward, across the neck of the rock with a single arched gateway, originally reached by way of a lifting bridge over a ditch. The ditch was protected by two vaulted caponiers, of which only the western one survives; the other was lost when the site was incorporated into a five court. The new section of wall south-west of the spur carried a 'covered way' for footsoldiers and is terminated in a sentry box, corbelled out at the south-west end. Behind the retained east face of the Spur, two-storeyed vaulted casemates were formed with a battery for three guns above, also terminated in a domed sentry box at the south-west. The main change to the French Spur at this time was the provision of two levels of two gun embrasures in the new wall across the mouth.

An outer or Guardroom Square was created by the completion of the inner line of defences which run from the outer wall, pierced by an arched gate

with the cipher of Queen Anne on the keystone, beyond which are the four double-height casemates of the Counterguard – now fronted with a modern extension used as the café. Then turning south-west in a dog-leg beyond the Overport Gate is a massive, unrelieved wall rising from a further dry ditch, backed by six single-storey casemates, and above it is a covered way for sentries terminating in a domed sentry box. To the south-west is the rebuilt west battery, flanking the southern wall of Guardroom Square. Thus surrounded by defences and with guns trained upon it from the batteries on the north-west and east sides, Guardroom Square formed a trap for anyone who penetrated so far. Within it now are 19th-century buildings including guardroom, stables and the strawstore of 1813, now the shop.

Forework

Built in the 1490s for James IV, the Forework is a curtained crosswall extending across the full width of the castle rock. It is massively constructed and is capped with a broadly crenellated parapet carried on a decorative double-corbelled cornice; it has a rectangular tower at each end, the Prince's Tower in the west and Elphinstone's Tower in the east. The central gatehouse has drum-towers flanking a three-opening pended entry, and beyond was a pair of semicircular towers placed symmetrically to either side of the gate (although little remains of either). In the 19th century they were known as Wallace's Tower (east) and College Tower (west). Elphinstone's Tower was reduced in height in 1689 to form an artillery platform and the gatehouse followed in the 18th century; crenellations were added to the truncated gate in the 19th century.

Outer Close

Within the Forework is the Outer Close, principally a service court, although dominated to the north and west by the Great Hall and the east façade of the Palace. Running to the east of the Hall is the road through the North Gate, around which are ancillary buildings including the Barrack Master's house. Immediately within the Forework is the early 19th-century three-bay, two-storeyed Fort Major's House running up to the Three-Gun Battery placed on the reduced stump of Elphinstone's Tower. Skirting the 15th-century curtain wall of the close between the tower and the North Gate, and beneath the 1689 Grand Battery, are the vaulted Great Kitchens, built to service James IV's new Great Hall; these were first excavated in 1921 and are now restored. The kitchen in the upper floor of the North Gate also served the Great Hall.

North Gate

The North Gate now connects the main part of the castle and the Nether Bailey. Traditionally known as the mint, it once formed an entrance to the castle. The outer part of the gate probably dates to 1381, being a work of Robert II. It has a dog-legged, vaulted passage leading to a pointed-arched gate, originally defended by a portcullis, with a postern in the western side of the passage and a small porter's lodge to the east. The original form of the superstructure is unknown; it was rebuilt as a kitchen in 1511–12, and the second floor was again altered in 1719.

Inner Close

The Inner Close houses the principal buildings of the castle, and it is here that we see the architectural aspirations of the Stewart dynasty in a series of structures intended to provide a magnificent expression of royal majesty. These great buildings include the Chapel Royal, King's Old Building, the Great Hall and the Palace. All are set out on the highest terrace of the castle rock around a courtyard or Inner Close, today surfaced with setts to suit its late military use; no doubt it once had gardens and walks.

Palace

The Palace is a highly enriched quadrangular structure that extends from the Inner Close to the Forework and abuts the Prince's Tower with imposing façades to the north, east and south sides, the west side, partly collapsed in the 17th century, containing at least a pair of rooms on the principal floor. The remainder of the *piano nobile* contains an almost symmetrical pair of royal lodgings, each now composed of an outer hall, a presence chamber or inner hall and a bedchamber that led to a number of small closets. The King's closets survive within a lean-to on the east side of the courtyard, while the Queen's (which are now missing) stretched back behind the Forework to the guardhouse. Her lodgings, on the south side of the Palace, also had the advantage of a walk at wall-walk level, accessed from her bedchamber and running along the Forework to the Prince's Tower. The rooms are grouped around three sides of a rectangular central courtyard known as the Lion's Den, with a gallery from the main entrance connecting the two suites on the west side; from a central doorway, a stair gave access to the courtyard. The principle rooms of the *piano nobile* were level with the upper side of the Inner Close, with a ground-floor entrance at the closest point to the King's Old Building (indeed the two may have been linked by a timber gallery) and the early chapel (truncated and at least partly reconstructed when the Palace was built). The King's presence chamber is connected via an 18th-century bridge to the Great Hall, presumably replacing an earlier bridge.

The north, east and south (to east of the Prince's Tower) Palace façades have alternating recessed and salient panels. In a reversal of what might normally be expected, the large, heavily barred rectangular windows are within the salient panels, below segmental tympana inscribed with J5, while the recessed sections house statues elevated on two-stage decorated balusters beneath multi-cusped arches. Above the arched recesses and in front of the parapet are smaller statues on balusters. Defining the base of the parapet is a deep cornice decorated with winged angel heads and spiralling ribbons, and there is a string-course with angel heads below the main windows. This virtuoso display of carving is the work of several hands; the windows on the *piano nobile* were changed possibly as early as 1679. In the late 17th century windows were cut through the parapet to provide light for the lodging on the upper floor. The main entrance into the Palace and the stair to the upper floor were rebuilt in 1700, soon after the Queen's closets were removed and a new entry stair to the Queen's bedchamber introduced at the south-east corner of the Palace.

As laid out, the upper floor expresses the room divisions introduced by the early 17th century (recorded in 1629 in accounts of redecoration by Valentine Jenkin). The main structural walls of the rooms, however, echo those of principal chambers on the *piano nobile* below. The roof has been raised and the original lighting dormers and gable windows replaced in the 17th century.

The basement consists of a series of vaults designed to provide a suitable platform for the main floor of the Palace. Because of the topography of the rock the vaults extend beneath the west, south and east ranges of the Palace, but not the north. The complexity of the arrangement of the vaults indicates the presence of earlier buildings immured within them, both at the west end and in the east of the Palace.

King's Old Building

Walter Merlioun began work on James IV's private lodging on the western cliff-side edge of the Inner Close in 1496. The principal (first) floor of the L-shaped building consisted of a hall, chambers, closets and a kitchen, all reached by way of a spiral stair in a square projection, topped by an octagonal caphouse. To the south of the stair was the kitchen with its façade on the same plane as the remainder of the KOB. The frontage is now, however, in line with the front of the stair tower and may be an 18th-century stone replacement of a timber gallery in this location. In the 19th century the building was altered as officers' quarters, and the north end was rebuilt and greatly altered by Billings after a fire in 1855. It now houses the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Museum.

Chapel Royal

The present Chapel Royal was built in 1594 for the baptism of Prince Henry, son of James VI and Queen Anna, and is built on a slightly different axis from the building previously on this site. (The earlier building must predate

the Great Hall, since it must have obscured the approach to it). The main façade of the present chapel is of ashlar, with a central doorway emphasised by a frontispiece designed as a classical triumphal arch, with paired columns flanking an arched doorway. To either side are three pairs of round-headed windows within round containing arches which have traces of applied cartouches. The ceiling is a modern replacement to the profile indicated on 18th-century drawings and outlined above the 1628/9 Valentine Jenkin *tromp l'oeil* painting fragments which were rediscovered in the 1930s and have been heavily restored since then. Jenkin's painting on the west gable incorporates a *tromp l'oeil* two-light arched window echoing the east window. Pressure to restore the chapel began in 1911 with the removal of the army schoolroom and dining hall; the final work of reroofing and redecorating the Chapel was completed in 1996.

Great Hall

The Great Hall was the most impressive and ambitious building of its type ever built in Scotland. It is a rectangular structure measuring 42m x 14m. The principal floor is elevated slightly above the original level of the Inner Close above a vaulted basement; towards its south end a symmetrical pair of projecting bay windows lights the east and west side of the dais, with ribs applied to the rear arches giving the appearance of rib-vaulting. The east bay is treated more richly than the west: its transoms are formed of intersecting arcs, and there is elaborate miniature tabernacle work. The main source of light is a series of paired rectangular windows set in the inner wall plane. It is entered through a door in the north end of the west wall, originally by a bridge over a ditch (now vaulted over). Internally there are five fireplaces and four spiral staircases, connecting the Hall to the service areas below, the wall-walk, the minstrels' gallery and trumpet loft. The whole is covered by a replica of the original hammerbeam roof, based on 18th-century drawings.

Nether Bailey

Following the contours of the rock, this enclosure is contained by a curtain wall of various dates, but it was probably enclosed at the latest in the 16th century. It contains three powder magazines built in 1810. In 1908 they were converted as transit stores and linked. At their north end an additional magazine was constructed for the Volunteer Corps in 1860; it remains unaltered.

Royal Gardens and King's and Queen's Knot Gardens

There were gardens in the valley to the south-west of the castle from the mid-15th century and probably much earlier, but little trace of these medieval gardens remains. The only visible garden elements are now

known as the King's and Queen's Knot Gardens. These probably formed the basis for a formal garden layout. Their date and interpretation remain uncertain.

CHARACTER OF THE MONUMENT

Historical overview

The rock has been fortified since at least the 12th century, and probably for long before that, in view of the defensive and strategic advantages of its location.

In the 7th and 8th centuries the rock may have been the Urbs Iudeu, where Penda of Mercia is said to have pursued Oswy of Bernicia in 654.

Hector Boece, writing in 1527, credited Kenneth MacAlpin with besieging the rock in 842.

The earliest certain record of a royal association with Stirling Castle is the dedication of a chapel within an existing castle by King Alexander I between 1105 and 1115.

During the 12th and 13th centuries it was a favourite royal lodging and functioned as one of the main centres of royal administration and finance.

In the 1140s David I founded an abbey at Cambuskenneth, in a loop of the River Forth. It had a relationship to the castle similar to Holyrood's association with Edinburgh Castle.

In 1174, Stirling was one of the castles surrendered by William I (the Lion) under the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Falaise.

Throughout the Wars of Independence Stirling was a hotly contested prize, changing hands several times. Edward I took it in 1296; it was recaptured by William Wallace and Andrew Murray in 1297, after the battle of Stirling Bridge; retaken again by the English in 1298, it was back in Scottish hands within a year.

In their successful siege of 1304, the English employed specially-made siege machines including the 'War Wolf'.

Control of Stirling Castle was a principal cause of the battle of Bannockburn in 1314; success on the field led Robert I to destroy part of it to avoid its use against him in the future. But by 1336 it was again in English hands and was only finally retaken in 1342.

For much of the 15th century the castle was a favoured residence. Robert Stewart, later Governor and Duke of Albany, used the castle frequently. It was perhaps he, as Keeper of the castle (from 1373), rather than the king, who undertook the strengthening of the castle, including the construction

of a forework and barbican and the North Gate between 1380 and 1410. In 1415 two new chambers were built in the castle, and the Chapel of St Michael was rebuilt (possibly beneath the present Chapel Royal). During his time as Governor of Scotland, ruling on behalf of first his brother and later his imprisoned nephew, Albany centred his vice-regal power on Stirling, and he died in his lodgings there in 1420.

When James I returned to Scotland from imprisonment in 1424, it was at Stirling that he executed Albany's son Murdoch for treason. After James I's death in 1437 his widow, Joan Beaufort, spent time in the castle, as did her children during the minority of James II.

Towards the middle of the 15th century the names of various apartments appear on record; amongst them is mention of the King's and Lords' chambers. The former had glazed windows, but the latter and those of the hall and the Queen's chamber had only cloth to cover the windows.

James II held a remarkable tournament at the castle in 1449, the year of his marriage to Mary of Guelders, a niece of the duke of Burgundy. At the tournament, two Burgundian knights and their squire pitched and defeated two Douglasses and Ross of Halket.

In 1452 the king invited the 8th Earl of Douglas on safe conduct to the castle in an attempt to find a diplomatic solution to the young earl acting against the royal interest. When Douglas proved obdurate the king stabbed him, while one courtier struck out his brains with a poleaxe and a number of others contributed wounds.

James III's reign was an active building period. He certainly constructed a 'White Tower' in the castle, repaired or rebuilt the Chapel; he also carried out extensive garden works and constructed a gun-house in the castle. The unhappiness of his reign and perhaps of his parents' marriage influenced the young Prince James, duke of Rothesay, to join the rising against his father in 1488. The conflict led to the battlefield of Sauchieburn, and after the king fell from his horse he was stabbed in a nearby mill. His body was taken to Cambuskenneth Abbey for burial alongside his queen. The new king felt deep remorse for his part in the affair, and shortly after the battle he returned to Stirling to make his confession in the Chapel Royal.

During the reign of James IV, Scotland became increasingly receptive to the classically inspired thinking that was spreading across Europe from Renaissance Italy. His own early education under Andrew Whitlaw and the Queen (who was herself a highly intelligent woman) may have contributed to this. It is surely no coincidence that James's court welcomed classically trained poets and thinkers. In a sense, the acceptance of John Damian, an Italian alchemist carrying out scientific experiments in the castle, was all part of this search for knowledge – even if he is now best remembered for attempting to fly to France from the castle walls in 1507. James's court was a lively, enquiring environment, welcoming tournaments, players and poets

as well as many foreign visitors. In 1503 he erected the chapel in the castle to a Chapel Royal and spent a great deal of time and effort creating a castle fit for a European monarch, building the splendid Forework, Great Hall and King's Old Building and creating a formal courtyard arrangement around the Inner Close.

The king's marriage to a sister of Henry VIII of England did not save him from conflict with his southern neighbour, leading to his death at Flodden in 1513 – within a month of which James V was crowned at Stirling. During his minority he was kept at Stirling, where his teacher, George Buchanan, wrote that he was 'educated in parsimony and when he came of age he entered empty Palaces stript of all their furniture'. He took up the cudgel of his father's work at Stirling in 1530: repairs were carried out to a 'litill hall', the 'dusty hall', the 'cros chamber' and the chamber of the Master of the Household (the first record of a member of the household having an allotted apartment). In January 1537 James married Madeleine de Valois, the daughter of Francis I.

After Madeleine's death, James married another French bride, Mary, daughter of Claud, Duke of Guise. As a celebration a contemporary account records that there 'wes mony new ingynis and devysis, alsweill of bigging of paleices, abilymentis, as of babanqueting and of minis behaviour, first begun and used in Scotland at thgis tyme, eftir the fassione quhilk thay had sene in France'.

The documentary record for the construction of the Palace is less complete than for its contemporary, Falkland. A small amount of work is recorded in the Treasurers' Accounts and the Masters of Works' accounts between 1529 and 1531, when £200 was spent refurbishing parts of the castle, including the royal lodgings. Minor works were recorded during most of the 1530s, but unfortunately no detailed Masters of Works' accounts for the building of the Palace survive. The arrival of Sir James Hamilton of Finnart to undertake work in May 1538 probably coincides with the commencement of the building programme. (This date is supported by the dendrochronology of the timbers within the Palace.) Hamilton played a leading part in the construction of the Palace, temporarily supplanting James Nicholson, who had been appointed master of work within the castle in early 1530, although it seems likely that his arrival post-dated the design of the Palace, which was probably completed by one of the king's French masons. Hamilton not only took over the construction, but may also have financed a large part of the construction costs from his own resources in exchange for favours from the king. After Hamilton's fall from grace and execution in 1540, work on the Palace continued under the direction of one Nicholson, with almost £1,500 being spent between July and December that year. There is evidence that Hamilton spent a considerable amount of time at Stirling and may have taken a close interest in (and possibly had some input into) the design, but the extent of his contribution remains uncertain. Perhaps significantly, the job passed to Robert Robertson in

1541, a master wright and carver; this may signify that the balance of work now lay in the fitting out of the interiors of the Palace.

Little is directly known of the craftsmen working at Stirling. In addition to Robertson, the French wright Andrew Maisoun appears in the record, and one John Drummond may also have been a wright during these years. A family history of the 17th century records that he 'wrought for King James the fyfth the fine timber work in the Castle of Stirline'. Stonemasons are more elusive; it is generally accepted on stylistic grounds that there must have been French craftsmen at work, and these may include Nicholas Roy, who was responsible for the best of the stone-carving at Falkland.

From the few inventories of the furnishings of James V and Mary of Guise, added to the evidence of the furnishings brought from France, it is possible to build up a picture of the quality of furnishings and fittings within the Palace. As with the building, they would undoubtedly have reflected the importance of the royal marriage.

In the years after James V's death, his widow used the Palace frequently. She attended in 1544 a convention of Parliament in the castle, and it was here that she took the young Mary immediately after James's death in 1542.

In 1543, Mary Queen of Scots was crowned in Stirling at the age of 10 months, although any real association with Stirling awaited her return to Scotland as a widow of the French king in 1561. At that point her personal rule began – and almost ended, since in that year she escaped death in a fire in Stirling Castle. Four years later she held a convention of her nobility to ratify her decision to marry Henry, lord Darnley. Their son was baptised in Stirling in 1566, and in the following year when Mary was visiting her son, who was nursed at Stirling, she described it as 'incommodious, because, the situation being damp and cold, he [James] was in danger of catching rheumatism'.

On the abdication of Mary in 1567, James VI was crowned in Stirling Parish Church (Church of the Holy Rude). Thereafter, much of his childhood was spent under the instruction of George Buchanan and Peter Young in the castle. The Countess of Mar became his nurse; indeed, she was the nearest to a mother that James had. Her sons and nephews studied with the young king in Stirling and became his lifelong associates. A condition survey of Stirling Castle was carried out in 1583 (see appendix 1, M of W Accounts, i, 310–1) which outlined problems in the castle, including the west range of the Palace (they were again noted in 1625 by William Wallace). In 1584 an inventory was made of the furnishings and munitions of the castle.

The king married Anna, daughter of the King of Denmark; their son Prince Henry was born in Stirling Castle in 1594, and the Chapel Royal was rebuilt for his baptism. The King's move to England in 1603 marked the end of the consistent use of Stirling Castle as a royal residence.

By that time all of the major buildings at Stirling were complete. Minor works are recorded during the 17th century. Repairs were carried out for James's 'hamecoming' in 1617 and again in 1625, when the roof of the king's cabinet was repaired. In 1628–29, areas of the castle were redecorated; these included painting by Valentine Jenkin in the royal lodgings, the upper floor of the Palace and the Chapel Royal. Little appears to have been done after the visit of Charles I in 1633, until his son was reported in a Parliamentary newsletter of 1650 after his father's execution as 'their declared King is at Sterling, where he hath a Statelie house', having been crowned king of Scotland.

This inevitably brought down the wrath of Cromwell's army upon Stirling, and in August General Monk ordered the town of Stirling to surrender and began to build artillery platforms to besiege the castle. After eight days the castle garrison surrendered.

In the 1670s the Masters of Works' accounts record major works at the castle, including the Palace being for the most part 'new roofed, floored, windowed with Casements and glass and plaistered'.

From the arrival of Monk's army in Scotland, it is unlikely that Stirling Castle was ever without a role as a military garrison until the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders marched out in 1964. The defences were strengthened soon after 1689. But there were divided loyalties across the nation and the threat of a French-supported rebellion as a result of the Act of Union in 1707 led to the major reconstruction of the outworks at Stirling by Captain Theodore Dury. The Earl of Mar, hereditary Keeper of the Castle, led the Jacobite forces during the 1715 Rising. Like so many conflicts before, the defining battle of the Rising, Sheriffmuir, was fought close to the castle. During the 1745 Rising the Young Pretender, Prince Charles Edward Stuart, tried abortively to take the castle. It is therefore hardly surprising that the majority of the alterations throughout that time were to strengthen the castle and to accommodate the army and Governor. Between 1699 and 1703 the Earl of Mar, Governor of the Castle, employed Tobias and Thomas Bauchop of Alloa to undertake alterations in the Palace. These may have included increasing the size of the windows and inserting new fireplaces and doors. They also constructed a new external entrance to the Palace, and a new stair to the upper floor in 1709–10. By 1719 the Palace contained, on the lowest floor, a stable, cellars and sultry. The King's Guard Hall had become a barrack room, and the Queen's apartments storerooms. The King's Old Building became officers' quarters and the Great Hall and Chapel were, in time, adapted for the army. Throughout the latter part of the 18th century and the ensuing two centuries, the army absorbed all areas of the castle as offices, barracks or storerooms.

In 1777 the 'Stirling Heads' (decorative ceiling roundels) were removed from the King's Presence Chamber, and the authorities decided the ceiling and walls should be stripped and the room converted to a barrack. In the

19th century Stirling Castle became the principal basic training ground for new recruits in Scotland; when the weather made it impossible to march out of doors, the passage through the basement vaults was used. In 1881 the castle became the depot of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

When Queen Victoria visited in 1849 she thought it grand, but preferred Edinburgh Castle. She was the first reigning monarch to set foot in the castle for 191 years.

Towards the end of the 19th century the importance of the architecture of the castle was beginning to be recognised, aided by Billings and McGibbon and Ross. The watershed came in 1906 when King Edward VII expressed his concern over the 'irrevocable damage' being done to the castle. Responsibility for the fabric of the castle was transferred to the Office of Works and work began to protect and preserve the castle. But it was not until the army finally marched out in 1964 that work could begin in earnest to regain some of the cultural significance of Scotland's finest Renaissance royal apartments.

The castle was extensively adapted after the Union of 1603 as a garrison, with particularly significant changes at the period of the 1689 Revolution and the wars with France circa 1800. The esplanade was laid out in the early 19th century. This use closely ties the castle to the maintenance and expansion of the British Empire, the British Army being an essential tool in those processes. The castle was in particular home to the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (prior to 1881, the 91st Argyll and 93rd Sutherland Highlanders), and houses the museum of that regiment. Both the 91st Argyll and 93rd Sutherland regiments had extensive garrisoning and campaigning histories in regions such as the Caribbean, North America, and what is now South Africa. The regiment's post-1881 history included involvement in several overtly Imperial campaigns such as the Second Boer War of 1899–1902 (commemorated on the castle esplanade).¹

Stirling Castle, as a royal castle, has always been cared for by the State; this duty now rests with Historic Environment Scotland. The army used the castle as one of their major bases in Scotland, from the end of the 17th century until 1965. Although the importance of the castle was recognised in 1906, when responsibility for the repair of the castle was given to the Office of Works, it was not until the army marched out that its presentational and conservation needs could become the focus of works. Since then, there have been major works programmes underway, and much of this work has been to remove the 19th- and 20th-century military interventions throughout the castle buildings.

¹ This topic is discussed more fully in [Surveying and Analysing Connections between Properties in Care and the British Empire, c.1600-1997](#)

Archaeological overview

Recorded archaeological assessment began in 1921, when the Grand Battery was excavated to reveal the great kitchens. But over the last decade excavation has begun to provide a clearer picture of the castle inherited by James IV.

The quality of the archaeological evidence within the castle has recently been illustrated by the work beneath the Chapel Royal, the Inner Close, within the old Army Kitchen and the Lion's Den. The buildings revealed demonstrate that many of the structures of the earlier castle on the higher parts of the rock were aligned diagonally to the present courtyard.

Beneath the Chapel Royal is a complex, possibly aisled, building in its final phase that may represent the chapel under construction in 1415 and repaired by James III.

The excavation of the Old Army Kitchen revealed a complex building which incorporated correctly oriented burials of the late 13th and 15th centuries. This building has since been tentatively identified as standing on the site of the chapel constructed in 1115 for Alexander I. Given the dating evidence from the burials it certainly dates back at least to the 13th century, and it may be the building described as the 'old church' in 1505, when it was altered. It was truncated when the Palace was built in 1530s, suggesting its importance had waned.

Limited excavations were undertaken in the Palace in the 1990s, including those to enable the re-use of the Army Kitchen and the repaving of the Lion's Den.

Upstanding building on the Palace has identified at least two earlier buildings absorbed into the 16th-century Palace.

Artistic/Architectural overview

Many of the castle's first buildings were probably of earth and timber, although by 1287 Richard the Mason was recorded as working at the castle and by the 14th century the number of references to building in stone and lime increases. Traces of an early stone curtain wall were discovered on the highest part of the rock adjacent to the early chapel.

Stirling Castle demonstrates the development of fortified and domestic architecture from the 12th to 17th century: but culminating in the superb 16th-century Stewart royal lodgings around the Inner close, 'the apogee of the Castle as a royal Palace: building for the Stewart kings from the c15 to 1603'.

Most of the Stewart kings were architecturally active within the castle, but the most outstanding period of the castle's architectural history dates from

the reigns of James IV, V and VI. The result of this activity was an architectural complex conceived and executed on a more expansive scale and to a more splendid level of finish than at any other royal palace. Both individually and collectively these buildings are of paramount importance for our understanding of secular architecture in the later Middle Ages and earlier Renaissance in Scotland.

It is possible that the layout of all of the buildings around the Inner Close derives from a plan conceived by James IV. He certainly built the Forework, flanked by 4-storey towers, the King's Old Building and the Great Hall. In addition he generously endowed the Chapel Royal and it is likely that he would have continued to provide a new Queen's lodging and Chapel Royal – in the event, his death in the Battle of Flodden meant these were left to his son and grandson. The inspiration of James IV's architecture shows evidence of renewed architectural interchanges with England. The Great Hall was under construction at the time of the king's marriage to Margaret Tudor in 1503, and it is significant that the Hall's overall design is related to that of a number of English royal halls, in particular Eltham Palace, begun 20 years earlier. The Forework reminds us that Renaissance kings had a keen sense of history and the messages architecture could convey. The soaring towers and fantastic roofscape of the Forework may have made more than a passing reference to chivalry and to the Arthurian legend, in both of which James IV is known to have had an enthusiastic interest. The ultimate inspiration for the Forework and the gatehouse in particular is likely to have been the tower keeps of 14th-century France, an idea widely taken up across Europe. The imposing triplet gateways suggest influence from the Classical and Renaissance entrances of Italy; again it was used across Europe, for example at Bruges and in the Palace of Whitehall in London. The King's Old Building, however, has its parallels closer to home; there are striking similarities between this building and the Earl of Argyll's principal lodging at Castle Campbell.

The design of James V's Palace is remarkable in several respects. The most economical way for the architect to provide a new lodging at Stirling would have been to refurbish an existing building as James V did at Linlithgow and Falkland. Instead, he retained his father's lodging on the west side of the square and built a new pair of conjoined suites to the south on a cramped, steeply sloping site. The solution adopted to overcome these difficulties was to set the two lodgings on one level round three sides of the available site (incorporating elements of earlier buildings on the site). It is of outstanding interest as an example of Renaissance royal planning.

The inner court of the Palace was small and secluded and has little applied architectural elaboration, but externally there are two show fronts overlooking the approach and a third faces the Inner Close. It is in these frontages that the designer has turned the disparity of levels to his advantage by placing the principal entrance at the upper corner, where it

could give direct access to the royal apartments without steps. Elsewhere the undercrofts of varying height raise the *piano nobile* to a uniform level. Above, the low, inconspicuous second floor was probably intended to provide accommodation for the more important members of the household.

The north, south and east show façades of the Palace are divided into bays in which large iron-grilled windows alternate with shallow, cup-headed columns. Above, smaller columned figures perch on a cornice of winged cherubs or angels. The whole scheme may symbolise the four quarters of the heavens and the influence of the planetary deities. It is enriched by a display of carving, which is exuberant rather than fine, but the sources are a tantalisingly hybrid design that may never be fully understood. The eye of the observer is drawn first to the south wall, with its soldiers above and allegorical main figures. Then, having entered the Outer Close, the eye is drawn to the planetary powers of Saturn, Venus and Ganymede set between the King in the north and St Michael in the south. Passing beneath the king at the north-east corner of the Palace, a visitor must walk below a less frivolous collection of deities and allegorical figures. Research has been undertaken to better understand the iconography, the reports produced as a result will be published separately

Little of the internal architectural enrichment survives, except the fireplaces. The ceilings are recorded in the 18th century as oak throughout, with two decorated by carved heads. Thirty-eight carved oak roundels said to have been taken from the King's Presence Chamber in 1777 survive. These roundels are one of the clearest indicators of the classicism of the Palace: they appear to be inspired by French parallels, and in turn, by Classical Roman prototypes.

Architectural influences on the design of the Palace are largely Italian, English and French; some parallels with the detailing can be found in the buildings associated with Mary of Guise, Chateaudun, the home of her first husband and the town palace of her uncle at Nancy. In addition, the Renaissance home of her father at Joinville, built at the same time as Stirling, has a very grand principal storey set over a service basement and beneath an insignificant upper floor. The planning of the apartments also draws from Italian palaces, the Tower of London and Fontainebleau. Work is under way to set the palace into its European context, and the reports produced as a result will be available separately.

Military architecture dominates the approach to the entrance of Stirling Castle. In their own way the successive military engineers from the 16th century onwards demonstrated flair and finesse in providing the defences and outworks that formed efficient artillery defences to replace medieval walls. The response to the Jacobite Risings of the late 17th and 18th century ensured that the defences were kept repaired and renewed. Few of the military alterations within the castle were of exceptional quality; while the Fort Major's house is a pleasing design, most of the other army buildings

are utilitarian. Within the royal buildings the army alterations were less well received: the barracks gained a reputation as the worst in the British army.

Stirling Castle has for its entire history been set in a landscape shaped by its royal owners. The royal gardens and hunting parks surrounded the castle on all but the south slope and it is probably not an accident that the gardens were visible from the Queen's apartments and her walkway beside the Prince's Tower. The king and court used the surrounding landscape for hunting and tournaments, and the court tables were supplied from their gardens. References to the maintenance of the gardens begin in the 15th century and continue into the 17th century, when an English gardener was sent to the castle to provide 'platts and devices' for Charles I.

Social overview

Legends associate Stirling with King Arthur, and have even suggested it could be Camelot.

Stirling Castle dominates the city that grew up around its feet, and the local community is fiercely proud of its association with the castle. To this day, people living in the burgh get free access to visit.

The long association of the castle with the British army is maintained and interpreted in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Museum in the King's Old Building.

Stirling Castle is one of the most frequently visited monuments in Scotland. The potential for visitors is outlined in the Operational and Interpretation Plans.

Spiritual overview

Stirling Castle is known to have had at least one royal chapel from the 12th century, and for much of that time there were probably two. The very important spiritual dimension of court life was served by these buildings. The present Chapel Royal now has some of the trappings and associations of a church.

The present altar cloth was donated by the Stirling Guild of Embroiderers, who dedicated it to the children lost in the Dunblane massacre.

Aesthetic overview

Set high on the volcanic rock, Stirling Castle presents a varied series of images depending on light and angle of view, but from all angles there is no doubting the intrinsic strength of the location and the impressive architectural advantage that each successive designer has taken from the

position. The castle is one of the most picturesque buildings in Scotland. It is difficult to find an account of the castle or town that does not describe its magnificent setting.

Painters have chosen the castle as a subject since the famous 'view' in the *Scotichronicon* in the 15th Century. The later, more accurate, views begin with the work of John Slezer, a military engineer who first drew the castle in the 1670s. Soon afterwards a Dutch painter, Jan Vosterman, depicted the castle as the centre of a landscape painting in 1683. There are numerous romantic paintings of the castle executed in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, including those by Thomas Hearne, Paul Sandby RA (another military engineer) and Robert Billings.

Of the individual areas of the castle, the Forework and the main façades of the Palace are the most frequently drawn and painted. The aesthetic finesse of the Palace exterior makes it amongst the finest in the United Kingdom. Although only the upper portions are visible from a distance, the south front has a prominent part in the make-up of the forefront of the castle. The east front welcomes visitors into the Outer Close of the castle, with the King himself depicted at the point where a visitor must pass beneath to enter the Inner Close. The complex iconography of the decorative elements of the façades is intended to express a visual meaning to all comers, apparently following an iconographic theme associated with the planetary deities and the sun. Although the subtlety of this is lost on most modern eyes, contemporary visitors will have been very aware of its meanings.

The castle buildings have all lost their polychrome finishes (with the exception of the restored Great Hall). But there can be little doubt that the surfaces of most would be lime-washed and the statuary and moulded decoration on the façades of the Palace, Chapel Royal and Great Hall would be tintured and perhaps partially gilded. The army altered the windows in the buildings around the Inner Close and both the Palace and King's Old Building have additional windows inserted into their upper floors. These changes have altered the appearance of the Renaissance exteriors, but of equal impact visually has been the formal metalling of the courtyard surface. No views of the castle predate these changes. Beyond the Inner Close, army buildings predominate, adding to the variety of architectural styles represented. This is most evident in Guardroom Square, Nether Bailey and the Outer Close.

The architectural unity of the Palace façades has been altered by replacement windows on the principal floor and, more intrusive still, additional windows in the upper floor cut through the upper levels of decoration. The façades we see are, however, those that have been known for 300 years and are the subject of paintings and drawings. The modern aesthetic appreciates the patina of age on these exteriors and the authenticity and intricacy of the carved detail, even though the enrichment on the main façades was undoubtedly tintured and gilded and the walls

harled. The frontages are coherent, although not classically uniform, and the idiosyncrasies of the carving serve as a useful distraction from the replaced windows and disturbed cornice decoration.

The castle's internal spaces are a complex mixture of periods and finishes. The Great Hall has been returned to its presumed original form, which has a combination of replica and modern finishes. The Chapel Royal contains the heavily restored paintings of Valentine Jenkin set off by recessive modern finishes. The King's Old Building is used throughout as a museum and any sense of place is obscured. The Palace has seen the removal of the army period fittings on the principal floor, revealing the scale and form of the rooms. However, some of the very important Renaissance fittings are incomplete; for instance, the decoration on the fireplaces is worn, but remains aesthetically pleasing. The doors throughout the Palace display the patina of age, but, like the windows, are a mixture of 17th-century and later; most are not of the same date as the openings they fill.

The castle esplanade has found a new life as a car park. This has an impact on initial impressions of the castle.

Views out from the castle are justly famed, but the encroachment of roads and buildings within the Royal Park are having a cumulative impact.

What are the major gaps in understanding of the property?

- The early origins of the castle are not fully understood: were there structures before 1100?
- The form and scale of royal buildings predating the 16th century is unknown.
- Details of court life, particularly pre-1500, remain unclear.
- The full extent and form of the royal gardens is unknown.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Key points

Historical significance

Throughout its history (and indeed in legend), Stirling Castle has been linked with the reigning monarch of Scotland. Along with Edinburgh Castle it is now, and was contemporaneously, seen as an outstandingly important royal castle. Each successive royal dynasty invested in the castle, but it was the Stewart kings who left the greatest tangible evidence of their commitment to Stirling, both in the buildings and in the surrounding gardens and parkland.

Stirling was hotly fought over during the Wars of Independence against England which erupted in 1296.

Stirling had strong links with the European royal houses, including French, English and Danish, through marriages and alliances. Political alliances, often cemented by marriage agreements between members of the royal families, resulted in a constant flow of ambassadors and an exchange of ideas that enriched the Scottish court. Courtly life in Scotland reflected the ideals of the Court of Honour; the regulation of access to the king and complex rules of sumptuary ruled all aspects of the lives of the courtiers and their servants. This social complexity is reflected in the architecture of the castle and the Palace in particular, with its sequence of increasingly more private chambers through the royal apartments.

The Scottish court was made up of nobles and churchmen from across Scotland; attendance provided the chance to attain influence and power. The court remained peripatetic until 1603, moving between the royal palaces as the monarch chose or circumstances dictated. Stirling Castle was one of the favourite residences for many of the Court as it was surrounded by good hunting parks, and well-appointed with gardens and pleasure grounds as well as magnificent buildings. Most of the great families of Scotland had links with the Court and many built houses on the road up to the castle in order to be close to court (those of the Campbell Earls of Argyll and Erskine, Earls of Mar survive). The Albany Stewarts built their castle at Doune to provide privacy close to court.

The Erskine, Earls of Mar became hereditary keepers of the castle and the lodgings in the upper floor of the Palace are a tangible reminder of this association.

During the reign of James IV Scotland became increasingly receptive to the classically inspired humanist thinking that was spreading across Europe from Italy. This inspiration and association with the principles of the Renaissance movement had an impact on all aspects of court life and its importance was underlined in the teaching of the royal children at Stirling during the 16th century.

Stirling Castle was always protected by a garrison, but it was the entry of Cromwell's troops into the castle in August 1650 that saw the end of the castle as a royal lodging. From the end of that century the royal buildings began to be divided to provide accommodation for the ever-expanding British army.

Stirling sits within a battle-scarred landscape; it was a focus of successive conflicts, beginning with the legendary assaults of Penda of Mercia in 654 and Kenneth MacAlpin in 842. The campaigns of the Wars of Independence saw the castle itself besieged frequently and the focus of two of the most important set battles of the war, Stirling Bridge and Bannockburn. Later, the battles of Sauchieburn in 1488 and Sheriffmuir in 1715 were both fought

close by. Mary of Guise felt sufficient unease for Stirling during the Rough Wooing to instruct the strengthening of the defences – a pattern that emerged after each recurring Jacobite threat. The castle was physically altered to protect it from assault, but its martial role throughout Scottish history gives it a particular resonance for Scots.

Archaeological significance

The recent excavations at Stirling Castle have provided evidence of the medieval development of the castle. Excavations within the Great Hall, medieval kitchens, Chapel Royal, under the Inner Close, in the Lion's Den and on the Lady's Lookout have all demonstrated the richness of the archaeological deposits at Stirling, confirming the complex layering of medieval buildings on the site.

Excavations in the Old Army Kitchen have proved of greatest significance, identifying this as a chapel with three phases of activity, possibly beginning in the 12th century when Alexander founded a chapel. It was altered in the 14th or 15th century and was partly demolished to make way for the building of the Palace in 1538–40. But a further phase of chapel seems to have been completed at that time, falling out of use in the 17th century and becoming the army kitchen in the late 18th or early 19th century.

Architectural significance

At Stirling, in addition to the early medieval history, the buildings represent not only the most ambitious but also the most complete, surviving complex of structures built for the court of the Stewart dynasty.

The Stewart Palace in particular remains largely intact; the only significant permanent changes have been the loss of the Queen's closets, the replacement of windows and doors and the addition of 17th-century windows, divisions and fireplaces on the second floor. Stirling Castle as a whole is a symbol of the power and strength of the Scottish crown, and the royal buildings arranged around the Inner Close and within the Forework provide the most complete example of palatial architecture in Scotland. Both collectively and individually, these buildings are of paramount importance for our understanding of secular architecture in the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In addition, each of the buildings demonstrates evidence of the changing order of social spaces from the 16th to the 20th century.

From its inception Stirling Castle has been a defended site, chosen to utilise the strong natural defence on three sides, and the existing castle has the evidence of many periods of building within its walls and outer defences. The quality and longevity of these defences are defining characteristics of the castle.

Throughout the castle the masons' use of carved and moulded detail provides one of the most informative guides to dating and the inter-

relationship of the buildings, while the façades of the major buildings are a clear expression of changing architectural fashion through time.

The North Gate is all that now survives of a major building campaign by the early Stewarts, but from then onwards each successive generation actively updated the buildings in the castle. These earlier structures are known of from royal accounts, but little evidence of the architecture can be identified before James IV began his campaign in the 1490s. His buildings show a marked family resemblance, with the hallmarks of individual designers or masons used on more than one building. These structures, the Forework, King's Old Building and Great Hall, imply an overall concept to create a fitting modern royal residence in line with those of other European monarchs, making the best use of the topography of the site to create a regular courtyard arrangement. The total concept, however, remained unfinished until 1594, when the new Chapel Royal was completed.

The Palace utilises a very constrained site by creating an architectural illusion of considerable skill. None of the ranges are regularly shaped, and the designer had to incorporate at least two earlier buildings within his design. Since each façade was to be seen separately, their exact alignment to one another was not considered necessary, while in the only place where all four ranges of the Palace can be seen together, within the Lion's Den, the irregularities have been resolved to present a perfectly regular rectangle.

The building, a highly enriched quadrangular structure, presents the fine Renaissance frontages on its north, east and south sides (some of the earliest surviving in the United Kingdom).

The final royal building, the Chapel Royal, was quickly built. Its plan is simple and the external detail is not exuberant. The central doorway is emphasised by a frontispiece designed as a classical triumphal arch, with paired columns flanking an arched doorway. Flanking this are three pairs of round-headed windows within round, containing arches, a type ultimately inspired by those of Florentine quattrocento palazzi. Within these are faint traces of applied cartouches, the ciphers for which were repainted in 1628–29.

Quality and survival of interior details and fittings varies. The King's Old Building is now divided for use as a military museum, although it remains possible to detect the original layout of the principal floor. While the rebuilt northern section on the whole followed the plan of the original, with additions (including a second stair tower) it is less certain whether the internal arrangements were emulated. The internal architectural detailing reflects the 19th-century reworking of the building.

The Great Hall has several important original features, including fireplaces and stairs and the trumpeters' loft. Added to these, the interior has been returned to a single volume space, a magnificent hammerbeam roof has

replaced the army roof and a replacement minstrels' gallery has been inserted on the line of the original at the north end. The floor has been slightly raised to conserve the original; it and the walls have modern finishes. These coatings and hangings have restored some of the acoustic quality of the building. In a similar vein, the great kitchens, built to service the Great Hall, have been reconstructed and their original features, such as ovens and fireplaces, revealed.

The interior of the Chapel Royal is dominated by the heavily restored painted frieze with decoration extending upwards into the two gable walls. There is a *trompe l'oeil* window in the west gable and within the frieze are cartouches with the honours of Scotland and the royal cipher of Charles I – for whom it was painted by Valentine Jenkin. The remainder of the interior is modern, designed to complement or (in the case of the ceiling structure) to conserve the paintings.

The survival of the layout of the Palace and some elements of the decorative scheme set Stirling Castle apart from its contemporaries. It is an outstanding example of Renaissance royal planning, magnificently reflecting contemporary ideas on royal authority and increasingly sophisticated protocol of courtly life. It contains an almost symmetrical pair of royal lodgings, with the rooms carefully graded in scale from the larger outer halls, through progressively smaller spaces of the outer chambers and bedchambers, to the small closets. The most important elements are the remnants of the 16th-century details and fittings; these include the fireplace in all of the royal apartments. Some evidence for the form of the ceilings survives on the beams in all of the chambers except the west gallery. The detail of doors and window openings largely survive, although the doors and windows have all been replaced at various times between the 17th and the 20th century.

The King's Presence Chamber is recorded as having a coffered ceiling decorated with carved roundels, the Stirling Heads. Although removed in 1777, the ceiling was drawn by Jane Graham and published in 1817 in *Lacunar Strevlinense*. These heads are one of the clearest manifestations of this initial and short-lived phase of Scottish Renaissance art. The 38 carved medallions known to exist are of oak, but do not all necessarily belong to the same ceiling. It has often been suggested that the medallions represent the kings and queens of Scotland, but the subjects are much more varied than tradition suggests. Some of the figures wear 16th-century costume and have very distinctive facial features; they may portray contemporary members of the court. Others are clearly historical or mythical, while a third group includes biblical characters. Each of the medallions has a central figure, mostly head and shoulder busts, set within a carved wreath of foliage, fruits or geometric design. They are the product of several hands and are of variable quality of design and execution. It is possible that the three carvers were the Frenchman Andrew Maisoun, and two Scots, John Drummond and the master craftsman, Robert Robertson. The closest

parallel for the carved work in the ceiling can be seen on the exterior carvings on the Palace and those in the stone medallions on the façade of Falkland Palace. Research has been undertaken to better understand the iconography of the Stirling heads, the reports produced as a result will be published separately.

The Stirling Heads and the fireplaces were part of a decorative scheme that drew comment from visitors such as Mackay in 1725, when he wrote: 'In this Palace is one Apartment of Six Rooms of State, the noblest I ever saw in Europe, both for height, Length and Breadth: And for the Fitness of the Carv'd Work, in Wainscot and on the Ceiling, there's no Apartment in Windsor or Hampton Court that comes near it...and in the Roof of the Presence Chamber are carv'd the Heads of the Kings and Queens of Scotland.' This makes it clear that the quality of the other elements of the decoration matched the heads and the exterior decoration on the building.

Major repairs in the 17th century confused the arrangement of the west quarter of the Palace, after a partial collapse. But there remain windows lighting the gallery to the east (all reduced in size in the 17th century) and a door that may have served either a gallery overlooking, or timber forestair into, the Lion's Den. On the west wall there are a pair of blocked openings at principal level which led into the part of the range now lost. These doors do not have the heavy roll moulding used for all of the other doors on this level of the Palace. The simple chamfered arches could comfortably fit a 15th-century date; if so, the chambers that collapsed in the 17th century were substantially older than the remainder of the Palace. Where they fitted into the sequence of royal apartments remains to be discovered.

The original access to the upper floor of the Palace is unknown, but the present main stair dates to the early 18th century. However, the layout of the rooms has remained unchanged since it was drawn on a plan of 1719. Accounts of work in 1628-29 make it plain that many of the room divisions were inserted by that time. Some of the fireplaces and door surrounds (with bolection mouldings) date to the late 17th century. In its current form, the decoration and fittings reflect the 19th- and 20th-century uses of the chambers by the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

Most of the buildings constructed for the army have been periodically altered and have few original internal fittings.

The skills employed by craftsmen at Stirling Castle can be seen and studied. Evidence of the work of master masons or architects, joiners, plasterers, painters, military engineers and gardeners survives, and for some we know their name and origins. Walter Merlioun and John Yorkston worked for James IV, while on James V's Palace there were French masons and carvers, Mogin Martin, Nicholas Roy and John Roytell working alongside Sir James Hamilton of Finnart and John Drummond. Other skills can be traced, such as the painting work of Valentine Jenkin and the

garden design of William Watts. The later work of military engineers is also well attested.

Aesthetic significance

The castle's location atop a Dolerite outcrop scrapped into a 'crag and tail' by receding glaciers has left a spectacular location. This commanding hill overlooks the valley and beyond to the highlands. It is a picturesque masterpiece by any standards, dominating the approach for many miles around, presenting a varied series of images depending on vantage point, time of day and quality of light. Distant views of the castle emphasise its elevation above the valley; its narrow and strongly vertical silhouette gives it something of the appearance of a distant ship sailing along.

Views from the castle take full advantage of gardens laid out below the walls from at least the 15th century. Beyond them, the hunting park and royal estates stretched for a very considerable distance. The landscape served to provide both a practical and aesthetic setting for the castle. Views both in and out of the castle were important to the royal household and remain so. The visible, designed elements of the landscape may postdate the active use of the site by the court, but it is clear from records that the gardens were large in scale and important both for food and recreation, as well as for enhancing the views out from the Palace and King's Old Building.

The show façades of the principal royal buildings have lost their original exterior finishes. The Forework is greatly altered by the reduction of the Elphinstone Tower in 1689 and the gatehouse towers in 1811. Within the Forework, the King's Old Building is a complex mixture of periods and styles; the 18th- and 19th-century changes to the building are more invasive than those to the other buildings. Sections have been rebuilt and added to the medieval façade, leaving it difficult to interpret. The Chapel Royal has lost its finishes, though valuable traces of the applied decoration survive. While the Great Hall has had much of its elaboration replaced, it remains incomplete and is, in part, conjectural. The form of the statuary in the elaborate tabernacle niches was unknown and was therefore not replaced, while the roof-ridge heraldic finials were considered to be a defining feature of the structure, so were recreated (speculatively).

The north, south and east façades of the Palace are enriched by carving, the strongly emphasised realism and solid characterisation suggesting inspiration from the work of northern European artists emulating classical prototypes. The eye of the observer is drawn first to the south wall with its soldiers above and allegorical main figures. Then, once having entered the Outer Close, the eye is drawn to the planetary deities set between the King in the north and St Michael in the south. Passing beneath the king at the north-east corner of the Palace, a visitor must walk below a less frivolous collection of deities and allegorical figures.

The architectural unity of these façades is damaged by replacement windows on the principal floor and, more intrusive still, additional windows in the upper floor cut through the upper levels of decoration. The façades we see, however, are those that have been known for 300 years and are the subject of many paintings and drawings. The modern aesthetic appreciates the patina of age on these exteriors and the authenticity and intricacy of the carved detail, even though the enrichment on the main façades was undoubtedly tintured and gilded and the walls harled. The frontages are coherent, although not classically uniform, and the idiosyncrasies of the carving serve as a useful distraction from the replaced windows and disturbed cornice decoration.

The formal setting of the Inner Close courtyard, ranged around by the royal apartments, is now difficult to interpret as a special place, once the preserve of the court with formal paths and possibly gardens, secluded from the bustle of the remainder of the castle. Although it has lost some of that seclusion, it still forms the hub of the castle.

Social significance

Many Scots still closely associate the castle with the struggle to maintain independence from England, aided in recent years by the spurious 'Braveheart' factor. However, as one of the premier royal castles it is high in the affection of Scots and is valued as an important site to visit by both domestic and foreign tourists.

The long association of the castle with the British army is maintained and interpreted in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Museum in the King's Old Building.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES

Scottish Palaces: Falkland Palace; **Palace of Holyroodhouse; Linlithgow Palace; Edinburgh Castle**

English Palaces: Nonsuch; Hampton Court; Field of the Cloth of Gold; Tower of London

French Palaces, some associated with Mary of Guise: Nancy; Joinville; Chateaudun and Fontainebleau

KEYWORDS

Renaissance, Stewart, court, Great Hall, Chapel Royal, palace