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Designations: Listed Building (LB48220)

Taken into State care: 1906 (Ownership)

Last reviewed: 2012

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

EDINBURGH CASTLE – QUEEN ANNE BUILDING



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

EDINBURGH CASTLE – QUEEN ANNE BUILDING

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The Queen Anne Building dominates the west side of Crown Square. It was built in 1708–13, during the reign of Queen Anne and in the immediate aftermath of the abortive 1708 Jacobite Rising, to house officers and gunners serving in the castle garrison; its southern part incorporated gun-ports, to complement another gun battery below and to its west. The barracks and adjacent battery were both designed by Captain Theodore Dury, military engineer, whose name lives on in that lower battery, named Dury's Battery. Quite when his barracks became known as the Queen Anne Barracks (and more recently the Queen Anne Building) is not known.

Dury's barracks was two storeys and an attic high, and ranged around a narrow central open courtyard. This somewhat unusual layout was probably dictated by the existence of an earlier gun battery along the west side of the site. At some later stage, the gun-ports in the south half were blocked up. In 1928–30, the entire building was gutted and converted into the Scottish National Naval and Military Museum, to complement the adjacent Scottish National War Memorial, opened in 1927. In 1998, after the Scottish United Services Museum vacated the building, work began on converting it to serve a variety of uses including education centre, café, and kitchen facility for the adjacent Great Hall. The opportunity was taken to carry out extensive archaeological excavations and a detailed standing building survey, which contributed immensely to our understanding of the development of this important site at the core of the castle.

CHARACTER OF THE MONUMENT

Historical Overview

c. 1400: A large multi-storey structure, extending the full length of what would later become the Queen Anne Building, is built to the west of what would become the castle's principal courtyard, now called Crown Square. The structure possibly comprises a lofty tower at the south end and a lower range extending to its north. Only the two lowest storeys survive (see statement for the Vaults).

Later 15th century: The large structure is substantially remodelled to convert it into stores, etc for the House of the Artillery, first recorded in 1498. This may have been Mons Meg's first home in the castle.

Early 16th century: Further alterations are carried out at the southern end to convert the structure into service accommodation (kitchens, stores, service access) for the new Great Hall, built immediately to its east in 1509–10.

1573: The artillery bombardment that brings the 18-month Lang Siege to an end causes great damage to the building(s) to the west of the Great Hall. Thereafter the upper parts, on the same level as Crown Square, are demolished and replaced by a crude gun battery, with guns facing south and west.

Later 17th century: The crude gun battery is upgraded, probably by Captain Slezer.

1708–13: Theodore Dury, military engineer, builds the present two-storey structure to accommodate officers and gunners serving in the castle garrison. The south end of the new barracks continues to serve as a battery, with four guns facing south and two facing west.

1719: Andrew Jelfe and Thomas Moore, Ordnance Office engineers, carry out a comprehensive survey of the castle, which includes the Queen Anne Building showing how the accommodation is arranged.

1754: Charles Tarrant's comprehensive survey of the castle for the Board of Ordnance shows how the accommodation in the Queen Anne Building has changed since 1719.

Later 18th century: The gun-ports at the south end of the barracks are blocked up.

1924: The north-east corner of the building is angled, as part of the works to convert the old North Barracks into the Scottish National War Memorial.

1928–30: The Queen Anne Building is almost entirely gutted and converted into the Scottish National Naval and Military Museum (opened 1933).

1939–45: The museum is closed for the duration of WWII.

1945: The museum reopens as the Scottish United Services Museum, to reflect also the contribution of the Royal Air Force.

1998: The museum relocates to the Ordnance Storehouses (as the National War Museum), and the Queen Anne Building is converted to a variety of functions including education centre, kitchen facility for functions in the Great Hall, prestigious meeting rooms, café and public toilets. Archaeological excavations and a detailed standing building survey are carried out.

Archaeological Overview

Archaeological excavations and detailed standing building recording were carried out in and adjacent to the Queen Anne Building between 1998 and 2003. These threw considerable new light on the development of this western side of Crown Square in the three centuries or so prior to the construction of the new barracks.

The most important discoveries related to the development of the site prior to 1708–13 (see below and the Statement for the Vaults). Regarding the Queen Anne Building itself, two of the four south-facing gun-ports were identified, measuring 1.35m square at their outer face, narrowing to a width of 0.8m on the inside. Other discoveries included the extension upwards from the Vaults of the stone service stair into the north-east corner of the building, which was subsequently closed off in the 1920s when the angled north-east corner was formed, as part of the works to create the adjacent Scottish National War Memorial. Finds consisted mostly of 18th-/19th-century tableware, and a scribbled note on the back of a pre-printed 'Army Form B.290, Absentee Report' reading: 'Dear Barrie, Please send me down a pint'!

Architectural/Artistic Overview

The Queen Anne Building was not the first building on the site. Archaeological excavation and standing building survey carried out between 1998 and 2003 found much new evidence relating to the previous use of the site, beginning in the later 14th or early 15th century and continuing up to the time the Queen Anne Building was constructed in 1708–13. Much of this activity is more pertinent to the Vaults below the Queen Anne Building, and is dealt with in more detail under that separate Statement. A brief summary is presented here.

Foundation phase: The origins of the site later occupied by the 1708–13 Queen Anne Building lie in a large structure(s), running the full length of the present building and built in the later 14th or earlier 15th century, as part of the major reconstruction of the castle initiated by David II after 1356. The building was extensively remodelled either side of 1500, firstly to serve as the royal gunhouse (a House of the Artillery is referred to in 1498), and then as service offices (eg kitchens, bakehouse, brewhouse and storage cellars) for the adjacent Great Hall, built in 1509–10. The vaulted undercrofts largely survive, but the nature of the superstructures (those on the same level as Crown Square) is largely a matter of conjecture. From historic views of the castle, it seems that these comprised a lofty tower at the southern end (probably housing the kitchens; a ‘court kitchen’ is mentioned in 1517) with a lower range to its north. Archaeological excavation has shown that both the Great Hall and House of the Artillery had lean-to pentices along their courtyard façades.

Development phase 1: These superstructures were subsequently badly damaged, most probably during the 1573 artillery bombardment that brought to an abrupt end the 18-month Lang Siege. They were demolished down to the level of Crown Square (only the cavernous undercrofts, now known as the Vaults, were retained) and the cleared site converted into a crude gun platform. This had a cobbled surface sloped down towards the west, probably to counter the recoil from the heavy cannon emplaced there. A north/south wall running more or less centrally up the entire length of the range probably screened the guns from Crown Square.

Development phase 2: During the later 17th century, very probably during Captain John Slezer’s time, the crude gun platform was converted into a more formal gun battery, with a stone parapet incorporating large square embrasures.

Development phase 3: A barracks (now called the Queen Anne Building) was constructed over the entire site in 1708–13, to a design by Captain Theodore Dury, engineer. The two-storey and attic building, ranged around a narrow central, open courtyard, housed apartments for the barrack master, master gunner, sergeant of the castle, schoolmaster and castle gunners (ground floor), and the major, captain, lieutenant and chaplain (upper floor), with store-rooms in the attics. The south end was fitted out with squared gun-ports, four facing south (two of which survive) and two facing west. The stone service stair under the east side of the new building was extended upwards to open in the north-east corner of the building.

The central courtyard is highly unusual, and does not conform to the pattern for double barracks evolved by the Board of Ordnance in the later 17th and early 18th

centuries. It may well have resulted from the retention of the earlier north/south wall.

At a subsequent date in the 18th century, the six gun-ports were made redundant and the south end of the building formed into more Army accommodation. Two gun-ports were blocked up, a third was made into a latrine and the remainder removed and replaced by windows.

Period of State care: In 1924 the stone stair rising up from the Vaults was blocked off and the angled north-east corner formed, as part of the work to create the adjacent National War Memorial (opened 1927). In 1928–30, under the direction of Office of Works architect J Wilson Paterson, the building was converted into the Scottish National Naval and Military Museum. Most of the upper floor was removed, large slappings were formed at both ends of the two long north/south ranges, and a new entrance formed from Crown Square.

After the museum vacated the building in 1998, Historic Scotland comprehensively refurbished it to serve a variety of functions. Some of the missing upper floor levels were reinstated (to house an education centre and visitor toilets), and a medieval door in the wall between the building and the Great Hall was reopened (to enable the newly installed kitchens in the south end, serving both the new café and functions in the Great Hall). Perhaps the most significant intervention was the glazing over of the central courtyard to create an interior space.

Social Overview

To be assessed.

Spiritual Overview

The Queen Anne Building has no observable spiritual association.

Aesthetic Overview

To be assessed.

What are the major gaps in understanding of the property?

Which regiments occupied the building during its two centuries as a barracks? A trawl through Army records may shed light on the building's use by the military.

Where precisely was the soldiers' mess in the building, as depicted by R G Hutchison in his 1882 painting? And who was Barrie, who brought down that pint?

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Key Points

The Queen Anne Building is one of the earliest barracks built by the Ordnance Office to survive pretty much intact externally. The 1928–30 gutting of the building internally, however, has severely compromised its integrity. To some extent this loss is compensated by the survival of two comprehensive surveys by the Board of Ordnance (1719 and 1754), giving details as to how the accommodation was arranged.

ADDENDA

Associated Properties

Some other early barracks: Bernera; Berwick-upon-Tweed; **Blackness Castle**; Inversnaid; **Kilchurn Castle**; Kiliwhimen, Fort Augustus; **Ruthven in Badenoch**; **Stirling Castle** (casemates)

Keywords

barracks; gun-port; gunners; officers; Theodore Dury; Scottish National Naval and Military Museum (Scottish United Services Museum)

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