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## HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

# CASTLE CAMPBELL



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.



# CASTLE CAMPBELL

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## SYNOPSIS

Castle Campbell stands in lofty isolation on a narrow rocky spur at the head of Dollar Glen, 1 mile north of Dollar. The spur is cut off from the east, west and south by the ravines of the Burns of Care and Sorrow, whilst the Ochil Hills overlook it from the north. The castle has splendid views southward over the Forth valley.

The site may be of some antiquity but the present castle complex most probably dates from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Initially called Castle Gloom, it became the Lowland residence of the Campbell earls of Argyll around 1465 – whence the name Castle Campbell. It remained with that powerful noble family until the 9<sup>th</sup> earl relocated to **Argyll's Lodging, Stirling**, in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. Thereafter, the castle fell into ruin.

The Campbell earls substantially rebuilt the lofty tower house that dominates the complex, then added a once-splendid but now substantially ruined hall range across the courtyard c. 1500, before finally remodelling the east range and tower house around a century later. The terraced garden to the south probably dates to the 16<sup>th</sup> century also.

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## CHARACTER OF THE MONUMENT

### Historical Overview:

- **12/13<sup>th</sup> century** – a motte-castle is probably constructed on the site (the mound on which the later tower house is built looks artificial). At this date the land appears to be held by the bishops of Dunkeld, who continue as feudal superiors until the final abolition of bishops in the established Church of Scotland in 1698.
- **early 15<sup>th</sup> century** – a tower-house castle is built on and about the site of the motte. The builder may be John Stewart, lord of Lorn.
- **1463** – John Stewart is murdered in his chief residence, **Dunstaffnage Castle**, leaving no male heir and disputed title to his lands. Colin, 1<sup>st</sup> earl of Argyll, seizes his opportunity and, through his marriage to Isabel, Lord John's eldest daughter, by 1466 acquires all John Stewart's unentailed lands. John's brother and successor, Walter Stewart of Lorn, tries to reclaim them, and is excommunicated by Pope Paul II for allegedly destroying 'a certain manor with a tower of the place of Glowm situated in the territory of Dollar'. (Earl Colin just happens to be on official business at the papal court in 1465-6, and may well engineer the excommunication.) Earl Colin is probably responsible for repairing and remodelling the tower house.
- **1488-9** – Earl Colin becomes one of the ring-leaders of the revolt against James III. Following the king's death at the battle of Sauchieburn, Colin becomes the most powerful and influential politician in the minority government of James IV. He successfully petitions to have the name of Castle Gloom changed to Castle Campbell, evidence of his wish to raise the family's profile in the Lowlands, where they have hitherto had a low profile. Castle Campbell is

their chief Lowland residence, to complement their main seat in Argyll, Inveraray, beside Loch Fyne.

- **1492** - Earl Colin dies and is succeeded by his son, Archibald, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl, who builds a new hall block across the courtyard from the tower house. The impressive building bears a striking resemblance to the royal residence built by James IV in Stirling Castle, known today as the King's Old Building.
- **1513** – Earl Archibald is killed at the battle of Flodden.
- **1556** – John Knox resides at the castle for several days, at the invitation of Archibald, 4<sup>th</sup> earl, one of the first great noblemen to support the idea of a Protestant reformation. Whilst there, Knox preaches and instructs a large congregation, and before his departure writes *A Letter of Wholesome Council addressed to his Brethren in Scotland*, telling lairds and householders of their duty to see that their families, tenants and servants live a Christian life, including praying together every day and reading the Bible weekly. Following his stay, he leaves Scotland for Geneva.
- **1563** – Mary Queen of Scots resides at the castle to help celebrate the wedding of her kinsman, James Stewart, Lord Doune, to Margaret, sister of Archibald, 5<sup>th</sup> earl. The festivities include banquets and masques; one of these involves guests dressing up as shepherds and playing lutes. Two years later (1565) the 5<sup>th</sup> earl joins a rebellion against Queen Mary, and in the ensuing 'Chase-about Raid' Mary and Darnley receive the surrender of the castle.
- **1595** – an inventory of the castle's contents, made for Archibald, 7<sup>th</sup> earl, provides us with valuable information as to the layout of the accommodation and furnishings therein. The inventory confirms that the remodelled east range, including its unusual loggia and galleries, is completed by this date.
- **1641** – Archibald, 8<sup>th</sup> earl, is created 1<sup>st</sup> marquis of Argyll by Charles I. However, soon afterwards he becomes leader of the Covenanters, and Castle Campbell becomes a Covenanting stronghold. In 1645 the Royalist leader, James Graham, marquis of Montrose, lays waste to the land around the castle whilst marching westward to the battle of Kilsyth. The MacLeans, long at feud with the Campbells, try to capture the castle but fail.
- **1651** – Archibald places the Crown of Scotland on Charles II's head at the latter's coronation at Scone, but shortly after proclaims for Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector of Scotland. During the ensuing 'Cromwellian Interlude', the castle is garrisoned by English soldiers.
- **1654** – the castle is attacked by a Royalist force and badly damaged by fire. (Graphic evidence of this is found during excavations in the hall range in 1982, when heavily charred timber floors are discovered.)
- **1661** – shortly after the return of Charles II to the throne (1660), Archibald is executed for treason.
- **1663** – Archibald's son and heir, also Archibald, has his earldom, but not the marquissate, returned to him by Charles II. The 9<sup>th</sup> earl abandons Castle Campbell as his Lowland residence in favour of a town house in Stirling previously belonging to the 1<sup>st</sup> earl of Stirling, which he expands and remodels the property and renames **Argyll's Lodging**. Castle Campbell is left to fall into ruin.
- **1715** – John Campbell, 2<sup>nd</sup> duke of Argyll, garrisons the old castle with a small force during the '15 Jacobite Rising, but no action is recorded.

- **1805** – the 6<sup>th</sup> duke sells the castle and lands to a neighbour, Mr Crawford Tait of Harvieston, ending the Campbells long association with the property. The ruined castle is increasingly regarded as an impressive feature in the landscape.
- **1874-5** – Sir James Orr of Harvieston carries out archaeological investigations and takes measures to ensure its preservation.
- **1948** – Mr Kerr of Harvieston entrusts the castle and Dollar Glen into the care of the National Trust for Scotland. In 1950 an agreement is reached whereby the Trust continues to maintain the glen whilst the state, through the Ministry of Works, cares for the castle.  
**1956** - the flat roof of the tower house (not historic) is replaced by a pitched, crow-step gabled roof with a gabled stair turret.

### Archaeological Overview:

#### The castle complex

The scale of the excavations carried out by Sir James Orr of Harvieston in 1874-5 is not known but the damage to the underlying archaeology as a result is likely to be small. Lead piping discovered was presented to the National Museum of Antiquities.

Shortly after the castle came into state care in 1950, the site was subject to clearance works by the Ministry of Works. These appear to have included the partial excavation and reconstruction of the terraced garden and the clearance of the courtyard down to the level of the underlying rock outcrop. Interventions elsewhere, associated with masonry conservation works (eg, the hall's main fireplace), appear to have been minimal.

In 1982 the first floor of the hall block was fully excavated by Eoin Cox for the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments. The extensive remains of heavily-charred floorboards and joists are found, evidence of the burning of the castle in 1654.

Although the archaeology of the castle has been compromised through a number of interventions (recorded and unrecorded), the property undoubtedly has much archaeological potential surviving. The clearance works cannot be taken as either having provided a definitive picture of the archaeology of the site or as having sterilised it. Some areas, such as the putative motte below and around the tower house, and the garden ground to the west, may never have been touched. The terraced garden, in particular, has the potential to inform our understanding of early gardening in Scotland.

#### The wider archaeological context

It is important to see Castle Campbell in its wider archaeological context. The castle may seem to sit somewhat remotely in the present landscape but in medieval times it lay close to a road between Stirling/Alloa and Perth. This passed the castle to its west and ran north through the Ochil Hills to Glendevon.

The hill land immediately around Castle Campbell is littered with archaeological features, including possible evidence for a deer park. The Ochil Landscape

Partnership (some 20 organisations with active interest in the Ochil Hills) is currently carrying out a project to assess this archaeological resource. In 2012 they excavated a site on a hill overlooking Castle Campbell from the west which they dated to the later medieval period, and are currently excavating the remains of a stone structure beside the road.

#### Architectural/Artistic Overview:

Castle Campbell is a multi-period building complex. It demonstrates well the transitional development of the medieval castle in Scotland - from motte to tower house to fully-formed courtyard castle.

The main elements comprise the following:

- (a) a probable motte-and-bailey castle (12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century);
- (b) a massive rectangular tower house, probably with a barmkin (courtyard) attached, all enclosed by a perimeter wall and entered through a defended gatehouse (early 15<sup>th</sup> century but subsequently much modified);
- (c) a detached hall block and east range (c.1500)
- (d) a substantially remodelled tower house and east range (c.1590).

(a)

The motte-and-bailey castle is not proven, but the grassy, artificial-looking mound on which the tower house stands is highly suggestive of a motte, the mounded earthwork at the core of a timber castle (eg, **Carnwath**, **Druchtag**, **Peel Ring of Lumphanan**). There is also evidence of a filled-in ditch cutting off the promontory. This suggests that the castle has a longer history than is documented. The development from motte-castle to fully developed tower-house courtyard castle has parallels elsewhere (eg, **Huntly** and **Rowallan**).

(b)

The tower house had earlier been thought to date from after the recorded destruction of the tower at Castle Gloom in 1466. However, as with numerous other examples, the extent of the damage seems to have been exaggerated and the early 15<sup>th</sup>-century tower survived, albeit badly damaged. The details of the four-storey tower - its simple rectangular planning (13m x 9m), access at ground- and first-floor levels, masonry of roughly squared ashlar blocks, thick walls and few windows – suggests a date around 1400 (eg, **Crichton**). The building also shows signs of damage and rebuilding, most obviously in the first-floor hall, where the stonework in the east half looks to have suffered fire damage and the vault over the west half has clearly been rebuilt.

(c)

The hall block and east range represent a significant expansion of the castle accommodation. The hall block initially provided a great hall, withdrawing chamber and kitchen on the first floor above vaulted cellars. The hall was reached by two flanking spiral stair turrets projecting into the courtyard, both capped by octagonal superstructures; a timber gallery at first-floor level overlooking the courtyard linked the two turrets. The south wall of the large, centrally-placed hall had large windows, providing wonderful views over the Forth valley and suggesting that the terraced garden immediately to the south of the hall block was built

contemporaneously. The capacious hall rose to a high roof, but the adjacent ends to south and north were two storeys high and housed additional private chambers.

Whilst these general arrangements are paralleled at countless castles across Scotland (eg, **Balvaird**, **Crichton** and **Spynie**), the details are strikingly similar to the King's Old Building in **Stirling Castle**, a lodging built for the bachelor-king, James IV, and completed in 1496. It is highly likely that Castle Campbell's hall block was built by the 2<sup>nd</sup> earl, King James' chancellor, around the same time and by the same royal masons.

The east range is now largely as rebuilt c.1590 but retains evidence for earlier structures. These are likely to have been of pivotal importance (perhaps the 15<sup>th</sup>-century great hall and kitchen), but more than this one cannot say on present evidence.

(d)

The east range and upper floors of the tower house were substantially remodelled c.1590 (not 1600 as is usually stated; the 1595 inventory proves that). Internally, the top floor of the tower house and the ground-floor rooms in the east range were given stone vaulted ceilings with parallel ribs; the tower-house ceiling additionally has a pair of 'green man' masks from whose mouths oil lamps were suspended.

The east range was given a sophisticated 'make-over' on its courtyard elevation. Here the masonry is built of fine stone ashlar with narrow joints, and each of its three storeys is defined by a moulded string-course, with well-proportioned two-light windows. The upper two storeys provided covered galleries (the 'little galrie' and 'laiche [lower] galrie' of the inventory) overlooking the courtyard, providing fashionable access for the family between the tower house and hall range, whilst the ground floor had a two-bay loggia, or arcade, opening onto the courtyard. This is a most unusual feature to find in a Scottish castle (another even more splendid loggia survives intact at **Crichton**, whilst fragmentary remains of two others survive at **Huntly** and **St Andrews**), and hints at the classical influences then filtering into the country from Renaissance Europe.

#### Social Overview:

Castle Campbell is a significant visitor attraction in Clackmannanshire. People come from all over the world, including foreign students on organised parties through Scottish Universities. Visitors can either drive up from Dollar or take the more strenuous, but infinitely more dramatic and rewarding, walking route up Dollar Glen via the Burns of Care and Sorrow (names apparently the product of late Georgian Romanticism). Dollar Glen and Castle Campbell have become synonymous – 'two sides of the same coin'

Castle Campbell is also well-used by students from local and regional schools, including especially Dollar Academy.

Castle Campbell is proving a popular wedding venue.

The castle also has a 'natural interest' side to it, including bats who have taken up residence in the attic of the tower house.

### Spiritual Overview:

Historically, as a seat of the later medieval earls of Argyll, Castle Campbell would have had a chapel within, where the earl's family and household worshipped. Although the whereabouts of that chapel is not known (a contender is in the old east range), its former existence is attested by the 1595 Inventory which records in the wardrobe above the great hall *inter alia* 'ane fine cramoise velvet mess clayth brouderit wit gold' (a fine crimson velvet mass cloth bordered with gold).

Thereafter, the castle's continuing close association with the Campbell earls made it a focus of events during the religious troubles of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (the Protestant Reformation) and 17<sup>th</sup> century (the Covenanting Wars). Arguably the single most important spiritual leader to visit was John Knox, architect of the Protestant Reformation, in 1556. The curious rock pillar at the south-west corner of the castle complex, 'John Knox's Pulpit', is traditionally associated with the spot where he preached to the assembled throng, though he is more likely to have done so within the hall or chapel.

Castle Campbell and Dollar Glen became popular with early tourists. The Burns of Care and Sorrow are apparently derived from later Georgian Romanticism, which also populated the Glen with fairies and the like. Similarly Kemp's Score, a deep fissure between the castle and 'John Knox's Pulpit', is said to have been cut by Kemp, a giant who stole the king's dinner but who was caught and killed here.

### Aesthetic Overview

Castle Campbell is spectacularly sited at the head of the beautifully-wooded Dollar Glen. Sight of the castle atop its rocky spur, as one climbs up the Glen and through its deep fissures formed by the Burns of Care and Sorrow, offers one of the best walks in Clackmannanshire.

Of equal quality are the spectacular views from the castle itself, southward back down the Glen and over the town of Dollar to the Forth valley beyond.

The castle complex nestles in, and is overshadowed by, the enveloping Ochil Hills, providing an intimacy on approaching it from the north contrasting with the feeling of openness experienced on the walk up through the Glen.

The grouping of the buildings, as viewed from within the courtyard, works exceedingly well, with the lofty closed-up tower house contrasting with the lower, more architecturally refined but ruined hall range, the two linked by an east range that provides yet another architectural experience, particularly its neat ashlar construction and attractive two-bay loggia.

### What are the major gaps in understanding of the property?

- Is the mound below the tower house part of an earlier motte-castle? An archaeological survey of the entire complex would doubtless cast new light on the history of the site prior to the coming of the Campbells in the mid-1400s.
- What was the original disposition of buildings, yards and gardens around the tower prior to the construction of the hall range c.1500? Here too archaeological survey could potentially add significantly to our understanding of the development of the complex.
- What accommodation was provided in the original east range prior to its remodelling in the later 1500s? The whereabouts of the first great hall and kitchen are unknown. Perhaps a full standing building survey of this much-altered east range, including within the steward's flat in the upper floors, would yield interesting results.
- What can be revealed through research of the wider landscape - its role as setting, economic resource and possible hunting ground for the castle and its occupants.
- What was the function, if any, of 'John Knox's Pulpit'? Perhaps we will never know.

### ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

#### Key Points

- Castle Campbell was the Lowland seat of the powerful Campbell earls of Argyll for two centuries.
- The building complex demonstrates the transitional development of the medieval castle in Scotland, from early motte to tower house to fully-formed courtyard castle of considerable comfort and sophistication.
- The hall range and the east range's loggia and galleries demonstrate the transmission of architectural and artistic ideas from Renaissance Europe to Scotland via the travelling and contacts of the upper strata of society.
- The castle is spectacularly located at the top of Dollar Glen with majestic views southward across the Forth valley.
- The potential of having both the castle and the wider glen landscape under the management of heritage organisations increases the opportunities for co-operative management and presentation of the castle and its wider setting.

### ADDENDA

#### Associated Properties

*(other relevant sites locally)* – Dollar Glen (NTS); Dollar Museum

*(other sites on Clackmannanshire's 'Tower Trail')* – Alloa Tower; **Clackmannan Tower**; Menstrie Castle; Sauchie Tower

*(other leading Campbell residences)* – **Argyll's Lodging, Stirling; Dunstaffnage Castle**; Innis Chonnell Castle (Argyll); Inveraray Castle (Argyll); **Kilchurn Castle**

*(other places intimately associated with the Campbells)* – Kilmun Collegiate Church (Campbell mausoleum)

*(some other early tower houses in the area)* – Alloa Tower; **Clackmannan Tower**; Drummond Castle; Glendevon Castle; Mugdock Castle; Rosyth Castle; Sauchie Tower

(some other notable late medieval hall ranges) – **Craigmillar Castle; Crichton Castle; Rowallan Castle; Spynie Palace**  
(other Scottish castles with loggia) – **Crichton; Huntly; St Andrews**

Keywords:

tower house; hall range; loggia; gallery; Campbells; John Knox; Covenanters

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