

STIRLING BEFORE PYLONS

acting with

FRIENDS OF THE OCHILS

as a Relevant Person Group

for the purposes of the

STIRLING SESSION

of the public inquiry into
**Scottish and Southern Energy's proposals for the
Beauly to Denny 400KV Steel Tower Double Circuit
Overhead Electricity Transmission Line**

PRECOGNITION

Peter Pearson, MRTPI

Historic Buildings

HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Personal Background and Relevant Experience

My name is Peter Pearson and I am Secretary of Stirling Before Pylons.

I have been a Chartered Town Planner since 1980, and have over thirty years experience in the fields of Renewal and Regeneration.

I was a founding member of the Renewal Strategy Team of Leicester City Council, where I managed three local area offices for 7 years. This innovative area based, community strategy is still in operation 30 years later.

Since then I have been the Director/Senior Officer of three Housing Associations in Scotland for 17 years. I was the first Director of Lorne Area HA in Leith, in which time they received the UK Community Development Foundation Award for Partnership for 'a series of exciting and innovative changes in what was once said to be the worst street in Scotland'. This was followed by being founding Director of Wellhouse Housing Association in Easterhouse and managing the largest development programme in Glasgow at that time. Latterly, I worked for Rural Stirling HA and implemented their 'New Housing Partnership' programme in the pressured rural area.

Since 2003 I have been an independent Housing & Planning Consultant working with Universities, Local Authorities and RSL's.

I was invited to deliver the postgraduate and professional 'Sustainability and Development Course', which covers planning and the development process, for the Housing Policy and Practice Unit at the University of Stirling from 2003-2006. This year I presented the 'Renewal and Regeneration Course', which covers community engagement and social inclusion, on the same course and will do so again in 2008. In addition, I delivered the 'Sustainability and Community Development Course' to postgraduate and

professional students at the Department of Urban Studies at the University of Glasgow in 2005/06.

I also wrote a distance learning course on the 'Development Process' for the School of the Built Environment at Heriot-Watt University in 2005.

During my career I have had extensive experience of feasibility studies, option appraisals and business planning in relation to major regeneration programmes.

In a voluntary capacity I am a Committee Member and Chair of the Development Working Group at Rural Stirling Housing Association and Board Member and Treasurer of the Rural Housing Service. I am also a volunteer Advisor with Planning Aid for Scotland and member of the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations 'Planning System Advisory Group'.

In 2006 Scotland on Sunday included me in their 'Power 100' a review of the most powerful/influential people in Scotland, for my role in the Beauty to Denny Power Line Campaign. I have been a member of Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace or the John Muir Trust for over 30 years and am committed to sustainability and renewable energy.

INTRODUCTION

This precognition provides some detail of the importance of historical buildings in the sensitive Logie and scarp of the Ochils area of the line, together with the settings for Stirling Castle and the National Wallace Monument. It is intended to back up the historical precognitions of Elspeth King, Fiona Watson and Virginia Wills. It is not intended to cover all the historic buildings along the route in Stirling. In my view, that is the remit of

Stirling Council. I also make some comments on the methodology said to have been adopted by the applicants.

I will then look at the position of Historic Scotland in relation to this application and suggest that their original conclusions are ill founded, and that in any event new evidence which has arisen in the Inquiry should be considered by them afresh.

THE BUILDINGS

Others have dealt with the architectural and historical importance, and the setting of these important buildings. This statement looks at the associated buildings in more detail and identifies important aspects about them. References are taken from : 'The Buildings of Scotland – Stirling and Central Scotland' by John Gifford and Frank Arneil Walker (a Pevsner Architectural Guide) StBP/5/100 and 'Stirling and the Trossachs : An Illustrated Architectural Guide' by Charles McKean (StBP/5/101). The latter according to Dakers Fleming : President of the Stirling Society of Architects is 'an authoritative introduction to the architecture of the Stirling area'.

Stirling Castle

A Scheduled Ancient Monument and Listed Buildings with 10 Category 'A', a Category 'B' and a Category 'C' Listings.

Historic Scotland describes it in its factsheet as follows :

With its splendid decorative stonework and well preserved buildings is one of Scotland's grandest castles

The castle sits above two of the most famous battlefields in Scottish history, Stirling Bridge and Bannockburn

In 1991, the Stirling Castle Project Plan was conceived to enhance the castle as a visitor attraction, while continuing to conserve it as a monument of international importance

Part of the Project Plan was restoration of the Great Hall, returning it to the medieval design of 1503

The Palace is one of the best examples of Renaissance architecture in Europe and the royal residence that best represents the Stewart dynasty in Scotland

The Buildings of Scotland devotes 24 pages to Stirling Castle and McKean 9 pages. The latter drawing attention to the view from the Esplanade to the Wallace Monument and the Ochils with a photograph.

Wallace Monument : 'A' Listing

' J T Rothead 1859-69 : The National Wallace Monument stated the organisers will *embody an idea as old as the first formation of society – that the highest exercise of human virtue should be commemorated by the highest exercise of human art.* The monument to Wallace was erected by public subscription on the initiative of the Rev. Dr Charles Rogers. It consists of a 220 foot high tower rising from the courtyard, in the manner of an old Scots keep. The tower is a masterly exercise in perspective – tapering towards the top, the emphasis enhanced by the spiralling stone ropework which encases the projecting 246 step staircase, and the tiered stone crown. Corbelled above the main entrance is a fearsome bronze statue of Wallace by D W Stevenson. Each chamber in the tower is vaulted, and there is a collection of marble busts by Stevenson and a bronze by Pittendreich McGillvray. **One of the finest views in Scotland may be obtained from the top.**'
: McKean.

'It is seen for miles around, the craggy shaft over 60m high, more elevated on its hilltop site than Stirling castle itself.' : Buildings of Scotland : pages 623-625.

Logie and Environs

The following 9 Grade B Listed buildings are all within or around 200m of the proposed line at Logie. This concentration of buildings makes the area highly sensitive from an architectural perspective :

Logie Old Kirk : 'B' Listed

Listed as the 'Ruin of Old Church and Watch House'

'The oldest of Logie's ecclesiastical monuments is the romantic relic of the old church and graveyard on the right bank of the Logie Burn, rebuilt in 1684. An inscription removed from the old manse reads *this manse was builded at the expenses of the heritours of Logie and of Mr A L Douglas minister there AD 1698 – I and my house observe the Lord*'. : McKean.

'A crumbling chapel and an ancient graveyard at the foot of the Ochils. The wall is round to keep out the demons, a burn gurgles beside and there are some fine and very old stones going back to the 16th century'. Listed among the 14 Most Interesting Graveyards in Scotland by Scotland the Best : Peter Irvine, 2004. The RCAHMS Inventory records 'nearly a hundred stones bearing dates earlier than 1707' several carry armorial carving, trades symbols, mottoes and inscriptions beyond the normal initials and dates'. Buildings of Scotland has more details.

Logie Parish Church : 'B' Listed

'has an 1805 spire by William Stirling – a square, pedimented tower up to the wall head transformed above that into an octagonal belfry with round-headed windows. Above that, and separated from it by a cornice, rises an octagonal spire. The remainder of the church, McLuckie and Walter 1928, is an elegant whinstone box.' : McKean

More Details in Buildings of Scotland.

Garden or Warden Cottage : 'B' Listed

Opposite Logie Old Kirk and part of the Aithrey Estate,'a harled single storey row, probably early 19th C, with gabled dormers and a gabled porch with a triglyph entablature' : Buildings of Scotland.

East Lodge, Airthrey Castle 'B' Listed

'A two story battlemented octagon with hooded windows and a circular stair turret also battlemented. Formerly the gate-house to the castle : William Stirling 1809 ' : Buildings of Scotland

Logie Villa : 'B' Listed

'was the school, designed by William Stirling in the early 19th century, with hipped gables and Stirling's characteristic Tudor chimney stacks.' : McKean

Crossroads Cottages : 'B' Listed

Powis House : 'B' Listed

'On the ancient site of Powhouse this tall, almost square Georgian mansion is entered through a semi-circular Doric porch. Quions and dressed stone emphasise its windows and corners, a string course identifies the first floor on which are the best rooms, and there is an interesting courtyard range and sundial' : McKean

More detailed information will be presented by C. Kilgour as an individual witness on this and the following two listings.

Powis House : Sundial 'B' Listed

Powis House Dovecot and Stables : 'B' Listed

'Late 18thC or early 19thC, a square court with a sharply domed octagonal doocot' Buildings of Scotland.

Now converted to a number of houses.

Airthrey Castle Designed Landscape

This Designed Landscape adjoins Logie and its boundary is about 200m from the proposed line. In addition it has a Standing Stone, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument near its eastern boundary.

Historic Scotland's categorisation states : 'A significant 18th and 19thC designed landscape notable for the beauty of the parkland and lake. A modern university campus has been created and integrated into the historic parkland.

Values :

Work of Art : Outstanding

Historical : Some

Horticultural : High

Architectural : High

Scenic : High

Nature Conservation : High ‘

It will be recalled that the applicants went to detailed lengths preparing a proposal to underground the powerline through this Designated Landscape.

Airthrey Castle : ‘B’ Listed

This was ‘designed by Robert Adam in heavily castellated style, for the Haldane family who never occupied it, is a most unusual building. All principal rooms are on the entrance floor laid out in Adam fashion in a sequence of differently shaped spaces.’ : McKean. More detail : Buildings of Scotland.

Applicants’ Analysis

The applicants have adopted a Top Down approach to the whole of their Environmental Analysis. This has been referred to by other witnesses at other sessions of the Inquiry in relation to landscape and I have referred to it in another precognition on route choice between the east and west of Stirling.

The approach to Listings is another example of where this approach fails. The applicants quite rightly give weight to Ancient Monuments and Category ‘ A’ Listed Buildings. However, at the Strategic Session, Mr Turnbull, acknowledged that the settings of Listed Buildings would trigger a

review of route selection, but only if they were Category A. The process fails to accord Category B buildings priority and takes no account of numbers of buildings concentrated in one locality such as Logie. Should 10 Category B Buildings equate to a Category A building ? Or fewer? Or more?

We suggest that this deserves explicit consideration, if only because the legislation¹ which governs planning for Listed Buildings and their settings requires it. The obligation in determining such an application is to ensure that the development “preserves or enhances” the Listed Building or its setting. It is our opinion that local circumstances, whether they are impacts on landscape, people, recreation or listed buildings should, when they are significant, have triggered a routing review. This does not appear to have been the case with the approach adopted in this locality, where all the above local factors apply. In terms of methodology we conclude that a Top Down and Bottom Up process has to be operated in tandem to reach a balanced decision in each location in relation to the significance of effects on Listed Buildings and their settings, especially when they are of such iconic importance as Stirling Castle and the National Wallace Monument.

Historic Scotland

Stirling Before Pylons were very surprised to find that Historic Scotland did not object to the proposals in the Stirling area, given the clear arguments brought to this Inquiry by our history witnesses and the decisions reached by SNH on landscape and hence on the settings of the iconic Stirling Castle and National Wallace Monument. To me, it is quite remarkable that Historic Scotland should be so relaxed about the manifest effect on these important buildings and monuments from the proposal. I hesitate to try to tell them their role, but two points seem worth making. Firstly, energy policy and the pylon line have nothing to do with Historic Scotland. Balancing the assumed

¹ Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1997, s. 59

benefits from the pylon line upgrade against the architectural and historic importance of important Listed Buildings is not what HS is required to do. The working out of that balance is for the decision maker, not HS.

Second, the Memorandum of Guidance, which is the bible of conservation which HS publish makes it absolutely plain that the settings of buildings and monuments are as entitled to protection from intrusive development as the buildings and monuments themselves.

Historic Scotland's consultation response seem to us to be, frankly, at odds with their purpose. I regret to write in this vein, since HS is normally staunch in defence of Scotland's heritage. The document known as "Passed to the Future" which sets out their Ministerial Policy and Guidance [<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/pasttofuture.pdf>] makes it clear that the job of Historic Scotland is confined to study of, and care for the historic environment in its many forms, and not to making difficult decisions about energy policy in the face of potentially significant effects on some of Scotland's most important national heritage assets.

We also think it is very unfortunate that Historic Scotland have chosen not to attend the Inquiry. It is our opinion that there has been evidence heard and developments that should lead them to reconsider their opinion. These are as follows :

Landscape and Visual Assessments

At the Strategic Session Highland Council led the objector's case in a review of the Landscape and Visual Assessment Methodology employed in the ES. They and SNH, joined by other objectors, were highly critical of the methodology and contended that it underestimated the impacts, particularly in small scale landscapes such as the Ochils. The witnesses for the

applicants admitted that they could not think of a single situation where undergrounding would be triggered – very much at odds with the Councils and SNH, not to mention those directly affected. In reaching their assessment of the implications Historic Scotland would appear to have uncritically relied on the methodology of the applicants. We expected better.

We consider that Historic Scotland should review its position in relation to the alternative opinions presented regarding landscape and visual assessments, and that they should have considered and commented upon the perceived advantages of undergrounding. That they have not done so seems to us to be nothing short of neglect of their most important public duty. Their letter in response to a request for reconsideration is patronising and, I regret to say, an insult to the intelligence of the objectors.

Undergrounding

The potential for undergrounding sections of the line has been a major issue at the Public Inquiry to date. In the ES the applicants gave a brief and dismissive assessment of undergrounding based on outdated technology. It was reasonable at that time for Historic Scotland to expect that undergrounding was not seen as a realistic option. That is no longer the case and the applicants have conceded that undergrounding is feasible. It is a major part of SNH and StBP's case and could negate the visual concerns identified by Historic Scotland, as well as bestow enormous benefit with the removal of the current line bisecting the Sheriffmuir battlefield site and impacting on the Wallace Monument and Stirling Castle.

We are aware of Historic Scotland's reservations about undergrounding and the potential for impact on archaeological remains. But recovery archaeology, the conservation of remains "as found" during construction, and the use of an Archaeological/Ecological Clerk of Works are all well tried expedients with which HS, and, we imagine, the developers will be most

familiar. It appears to us to be disingenuous to say, on the one hand, “We are content that the settings of the National Monument and the Castle and sundry other Category B buildings are subjected to significant adverse effects which neither preserve nor enhance them or their settings” and on the other to say “Do not place the line underground in case you disturb archaeology about which we know nothing, and which in any event we have not yet discovered.”

Undergrounding to the west of Stirling across the Carse seems unlikely to disturb many remains. This area was cleared of up to 4m of peat during the agricultural improvements 200 years ago. So although the route is very sensitive to an overhead line, we believe undergrounding should be less contentious. Indeed, it is the obvious solution. We consider that Historic Scotland owes it to the public which it serves to review its position on this very important issue.

SNH

At the time of writing its response Historic Scotland was obviously not aware of SNH's position, they being the Scottish Government's advisors on landscape and heritage issues. It was not until 12th June that SNH reached their position on the potential routes in Stirling. At that meeting their Board decided that an underground route throughout the area to the west of Stirling was their preferred solution. It is our opinion that this stance alone should now cause Historic Scotland to review its position.

Tourism

The applicants accept there will be impacts on tourism in the Stirling area and StBP are bringing further evidence on this to the Session from Mr James Fraser. Stirling Castle and the Wallace Monument are both major tourist destinations in Scotland and generate significant finance, including

for Historic Scotland. Again we feel these are issues that Historic Scotland should be concerned about and review the up to date information on the impacts.

There is widespread public concern particularly about the impacts of the proposal on the setting of the Wallace Monument best summarised by George Reid in his written objection when he stated :

'I cannot think of any other country which would permit such a blight so close to a landmark which symbolises the right of the people to be a nation'.

There are also anecdotal concerns about double standards by Historic Scotland, who have objected to minor works to house improvements in the locality, but not to this major application.

StBP would ask the Reporters to take the above points on board when they reach their decision on the powerline. Should Historic Scotland not review its position, then the limited basis on which they reached their decision should be a significant factor in the weight attributed to their views.

[END]