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KINROSS COUNTY HOUSE AND JAIL

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At the end of 2008 a previously unrecorded design drawing for the south and west elevations of Kinross County House and Jail appeared on the market. Previously, no drawings were thought to have survived for this little known Adam building. This paper establishes the background to the commission and the extent of Adam's original design. Light is thrown on John and Robert Adam's political ambitions and their leading role in lobbying the Crown for funding for the project. In mid-18th century Scotland, the tolbooth (increasingly known as the town or county house), unlike the English town hall, was still a multifunctional building. As the seat of county administration, the sheriff court and the jail, it was the principal public building in a county town and the focus of growing civic pride. It is probable that Robert's ability to support the Kinross project was a significant and previously unexamined factor in his election as the MP for Kinross-shire in 1768.

Designed in 1771, when Robert Adam (1728–92) was at the height of his reputation as a fashionable architect, Kinross County House (Fig.1) is one of his least known public buildings. Until recently, no drawings were known to have survived and other information regarding this commission was surprisingly slight. Consequently the extent of Robert's contribution was open to question, leading to the County House being overlooked by both John Swarbrick in *Robert Adam & His Brothers* (1915) and Arthur Bolton in *The Architecture of Robert & James Adam* (1922).¹ Alistair Rowan was the first to claim that the building's south bow was by Robert Adam

in *William Adam and Company* (1974)² and this limited view of Robert's contribution is repeated by David King in *The Complete Works of Robert and James Adam*.³ However, the recent emergence of the original design drawing (Fig. 2) and new research have established the true extent of this little known commission, whose origins are to be found in the electoral politics of Kinross-shire and the unrelenting ambition of the Adam brothers. John Adam (1721–92) of Maryburgh, the architect and eldest brother of Robert, James (1732–94) and William (1738–1822), was one of Kinross-shire's leading landowners and as such took an active role in the administration of the county as a commissioner of supply and a justice of the peace. Their father, William (1689–1748), the leading Scottish architect of his day, had acquired the Kinross-shire estate of Blair Crambeth (later renamed Blair Adam) and adjoining estates between 1731 and 1747. While William had regarded the estate primarily as an investment and chose to raise his large family in Edinburgh, John took up residence at Blair Adam after succeeding his father in 1748.

A staging post on the Great North Road from Edinburgh to Perth, the town of Kinross was untidily strung out along the high street, its meandering plan and vernacular buildings contrasting with the ordered classicism and formal gardens of Sir William Bruce's celebrated Kinross House nearby. Kinross-shire was Scotland's second smallest county, with a population in 1755 of only 5944. The county's economy was agricultural, while the town of Kinross was a centre of linen weaving and the cutlery trade. In mid-eighteenth century Scotland county



Fig. 1. Kinross County House and Jail: from the southwest, 2003. *Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.*



Fig. 2. Robert Adam, west and south elevations of Kinross County House and Jail, 1771.
National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh.

government was in the hands of the Sheriff-depute, the Commissioners of Supply, the Justices of the Peace and the county freeholders. The tolbooth (also known as the town house or county house) was where the freeholders held their head courts, the Justices of the Peace conducted their business, the Commissioners of Supply administered the revenue, and criminal and civil justice was dispensed in the sheriff court. Unlike in England, where prison accommodation was normally separate, the tolbooth also served as the county jail.⁴ As the centre of local government and justice for Kinross-shire, the County House would have been the focus of civic pride.

The old Tolbooth was probably built in the 17th century by the feudal barons of Kinross who were also the hereditary sheriffs of Kinross-shire, and maintained by them out of the profits of that office.⁵ In 1675, the estate and barony of Kinross along with the heritable sheriffship were sold by the Earl of Monton to Sir William Bruce (1630–1710), the architect. As the Tolbooth was later described as having been ‘mean and not well fitted for the purpose’⁶ it seems unlikely that Bruce was responsible for its construction as was claimed at the time. Following the abolition of heritable jurisdictions in 1747, when the office of sheriff was acquired by the Crown on payment of £2,000 sterling in compensation to the Bruce family,⁷ the building had been allowed to fall into serious disrepair. Kinross served as the head town of its shire, but, as a burgh of barony rather than a royal burgh, it lacked an elected council and had no statutory obligation to provide or maintain the local jail.⁸ By 1766 the ‘ruinous state’ of the Tolbooth, now more modishly referred to as the Town House, was so great as to endanger ‘the health of every person whose business requires his attendance therein’.⁹ An attempt to approach the local laird, James Bruce Carstairs (who had assumed the additional surname of Bruce in 1766 as the heir of entail to his mother’s Kinross estate)¹⁰ through his son (also named James Bruce Carstairs) for his assistance, had apparently failed. At a meeting on 25 November 1766 the JPs

therefore deputed two or three of their number to wait on Carstairs senior in person at Kinross House to seek his support for an application to the Court of Session, the Barons of Exchequer, the Lord Advocate or ‘other officers of the Crown, or to any other proper person’ to have the building ‘put in repair at the publick expence’. If no public aid was forthcoming, Carstairs was to be reminded that he would be expected to foot the bill for the repairs alongside the other gentlemen of the county. James Stewart, the sheriff-substitute of Kinross-shire, and Robert Burt reported to the next meeting on 16 December that they had called at Kinross House only to be told that Carstairs ‘was gone abroad to ride’. Stewart volunteered that he had, however, discussed the matter informally with Carstairs beforehand and that the latter had no objection to the JPs applying to the appropriate authorities. Convinced of the necessity of securing the local laird’s support for their case, the JPs directed the delegation to go back to Carstairs to persuade him to add his name to the petition, which was to be drafted by Sir Michael Malcolm of Lochore, bt., Robert Ranken and John Adam. The petition was duly presented at the next meeting on 27 January 1767, when Stewart and James Beatson were delegated to show it to Carstairs and report back.¹¹ Carstairs signed the petition (as James Bruce) which John Adam was charged with presenting to the Barons of Exchequer in Edinburgh. After commissioning a report on the fabric of the Town House from the Deputy Remembrancer, the Barons decided that the matter was outside their competence and advised John to address the petition to the Lords of the Treasury in London. At this point John handed over to his younger brother Robert in London.

Robert had been elected Member of Parliament for Kinross-shire on 5 April 1768. The county was twinned with Clackmannanshire, with each taking turns to be represented at alternate Parliaments. Scottish county elections, where voting was in the hands of a small number of substantial landowners, were frequently won by a combination of bribery,

alliances and the strength of family interest rather than concerns over national politics. John had been working from at least 1766 to create an Adam family interest with a view to either himself or one of his brothers standing for election. A seat in Parliament would enable the brothers to promote their commercial interests in London, where their firm of William Adam & Co was about to embark on what was to turn out to be their most ambitious speculative building scheme – the Adelphi. In 1766 John granted Robert a life-rent of the lands of Dowhill in order that he might qualify for enrolment as a freeholder.¹² By 1766 three rival interests had emerged: Captain William Bayne, who was a nephew of Sir John Bruce, Major General John Irwin, and the Adam brothers. As the representative of the Bruce interest, Bayne was initially in the strongest position. In order to further their own political ambitions and in spite of their longstanding friendship and a business partnership with Bayne, the brothers first opted for an alliance with Irwin, who commanded three votes in the county. In January 1766 John wrote to Irwin, then Governor of Gibraltar, proposing an alliance and suggesting that Robert should be the candidate, as Irwin also had the prospect of representing an English borough controlled by Lord George Sackville.¹³ Irwin's reply was, however, non-committal and the brothers began exploring other ways of promoting their interest. On 18 July 1766 James Ogilvy (c.1714–70), 6th Earl of Findlater (a close friend of the architect who, in 1767, was to commission designs from Robert and James for the decoration of Cullen House in Banffshire) wrote to his brother-in-law John Murray (1729–74), 3rd Duke of Atholl, recommending Robert to him as a man of exceptional taste and merit and soliciting the duke's support for the former's candidacy at Kinross. Robert was being encouraged to stand for Parliament by 'some people of the first consequence at London'. However, the sixteen voters who had declared their intentions were evenly split between Robert and Bayne, with Robert Ranken of Colden and William Mercer of Aldie

remaining undecided. Findlater, therefore, asked Atholl to use his influence with their mutual acquaintance Mercer, who had the ability to create a second vote on his estate, on Robert's behalf.¹⁴

Whatever the effect of Findlater's intervention, the Adams' interest went from strength to strength as they were joined by Sir Michael Malcolm and Ranken, and friends who had property in the county sought to qualify for registration as freeholders. When Bayne's position was momentarily weakened by the death of Bruce in May 1766, Robert renewed his correspondence with Irwin who finally agreed to join forces with the brothers against the 'common enemy'.¹⁵ There was an unexpected set-back at the freeholders' meeting at Michaelmas that year, when Irwin's two friends were prevented from enrolling as voters. As Irwin was still in Gibraltar, John Adam agreed to pay for what turned out to be a successful appeal from the Court of Session to the House of Lords, which overturned the freeholders' decision. Robert, therefore, had no reason to doubt Irwin's good faith in their understanding, but on the very morning of the freeholders' meeting on 13 October 1767 it became known to the brothers that Irwin had entered into secret negotiations with Bayne to secure support for his own election in exchange for the offer of a ship or suitable office. The General was eventually forced to admit that he had made a deal with Bayne, but denied offering any inducements. Thus exposed, Irwin's conduct gave rise to considerable offence among the other freeholders, leading Bayne to withdraw from the contest and transfer his interest to Robert. The latter was elected at the freeholders' meeting on 5 April 1768 with sixteen votes, with three going to Irwin and four abstentions.¹⁶ The defeated Irwin challenged Robert's election in the Court of Session in Edinburgh and the House of Commons, but his accusations of bribery and corruption against the brothers failed once the whole sorry story was revealed.

In spite of his professional commitments, Robert was diligent in attending the House of Commons

where he was a regular supporter of the government. As a Scottish MP, Robert would not have been unusual in regarding himself as much a representative of his family as of his constituency. Indeed, apart from lobbying in support of the Town House he does not seem to have been troubled by demands from his voters. He was to hold the seat until 1774, when it was Clackmannanshire's turn to be represented.¹⁷ Robert does not appear to have sought another seat, abandoning any political ambitions to concentrate on his architectural practice in the difficult years following the economic crisis of 1772. In 1776 he resigned his life-rent over Dowhill in order that the estate might be granted to his nephew William,¹⁸ who had recently been returned to Parliament for the pocket borough of Gatton in Surrey.

The freeholders' head courts, where voters were enrolled, were held in the ruinous Town House and it is likely that Robert's ability to address this problem both as an MP and as an architect was a significant factor among those same landed gentry on whom the burden of repairs would likely fall should the petition fail. There can be no doubt that the 'skillfull Artist' who had estimated for the repair of the Town House was one or other of the brothers. Moreover, both of the JPs who assisted John in drafting the petition, Sir Michael Malcolm and Robert Ranken, had voted for Robert.¹⁹

By 22 June 1768 Robert had delivered the petition (Appendix 1) to the Treasury in London, requesting a grant of £321 1s. 1d. for the repair of the Town House. On 12 July 1768 the Treasury referred the matter to the Barons of Exchequer in Edinburgh for further investigation.²⁰ Having ordered a report from the Deputy Remembrancer, the Barons wrote back to the Treasury on 23 November, confirming that the building was indeed 'ruinous and unfit', that the estimate appeared to be reasonable, and supporting the argument of the petitioners that, as Kinross was not a royal burgh, the Crown was the only source of funding.²¹ Robert renewed his efforts in London, eventually appearing in 1770 before a full meeting of

the Treasury Board only to be told by Lord North (who combined the office of Prime Minister with that of Chancellor of the Exchequer) that the application was unprecedented, as 'every County in England built its own Shire house'.²² Before reaching a decision, North requested to know how the Town House and Jail was funded before the heritable sheriffship had been purchased by the Crown. When Robert communicated this to a county meeting on 6 September 1770 he was provided with a written statement that Kinross was only a market town, not a royal burgh, and therefore had no public fund to maintain a jail, that the Bruce family had built and supported the Town House through the sale of the offices of sheriff depute and clerk, and that the Crown had acquired the patronage of these offices in 1747.²³ Finally, and 'after very much Trouble and Solicitation' on Robert's part, the Treasury accepted the recommendations in the Barons' report of November 1768 at a meeting on 1 March 1771, and authorised the latter to prepare a warrant for the payment of £321 1s. 1d. from the Crown rents and casualties in Scotland.²⁴ The warrant was duly approved by the King on 3 July 1771, taking account of the 'many bad consequences that may arise to the Police of the said County of Kinross, if the Gaol thereof is allowed for want of proper and necessary repairs to go into ruin'.²⁵

Apparently unaware of the progress of their application, the JPs made preparations at a meeting on 19 June 1771 to set aside revenue for the 'reparation or building anew the Tolbooth of Kinross this Season'.²⁶ In fact, on 6 August 1771 arrangements were made by the Barons of Exchequer to pay the agreed sum to the original petitioners, or any four of them,²⁷ and on 9 August John lodged the money with Messrs. Andrew St Clair, banker, retaining the sum of £13 1s. 1d. to cover various fees and expenses incurred by Robert and himself. After reporting these developments to a meeting of the JPs on 20 August 1771, John informed them that Robert 'proposed to Decorate the South front at his own Expence'.²⁸

He then laid before the meeting ‘a Design made out by Mr Robert Adam the Member of parliament for the county for repairing the said County house and Gaol, which was unanimously approved of and ordered to be carried into Execution.’ James Flockhart, mason in Kinross, was appointed undertaker for the whole work, under the general supervision of John. The meeting resolved that a letter of thanks should be sent to Robert, in gratitude for his repeated and successful lobbying of the Treasury on their behalf, for his design and for his generosity in paying for the external decoration. While Robert had no experience of this type of civic building, John had a few years earlier designed the new town house at Inveraray, Argyll.²⁹ When in June 1772 John had to join his brothers in London to help with the crisis in the Adelphi project, the JPs authorised Flockhart to continue work on building the new ‘tolbooth’ in accordance with the ‘plan lodged in his hand’.³⁰

Flockhart’s final accounts ‘for the repairing or in a manner rebuilding’ the County House were not presented to the JPs by John until their meeting on 27 January 1776. The total cost (including the bell) amounted to £323 17s. 4½d. sterling, which was reduced to £308 12s. 11d. following the deduction of the £15 4s. 5d. paid by Robert for decorating the south front. In the meantime the sum of £308 lodged with Andrew Sinclair & Co, bankers in Edinburgh on 9 August 1771 had increased with interest to £314 3s. 1½d., resulting in a surplus of £5 10s. 2d. for the county.³¹ As Alistair Rowan has observed, Robert would never repeat this act of civic benevolence.³² No sooner had he made the offer to embellish the County House than the family’s finances were jeopardised by the financial crisis precipitated by the speculative Adelphi project in 1772. Indeed, by the time the account was settled in 1776, the family estate of Blair Adam had been mortgaged, works of art collected by the brothers in Italy had been sold, and the Adelphi disposed of by lottery in 1774.

Until recently, no drawings were known to have survived for this commission.³³ However, a drawing

(Fig. 2) matching the description of the above mentioned design appeared at auction in Edinburgh in February 2009³⁴ and was acquired by the National Archives of Scotland with the support of The Pilgrim Trust and the Friends of the National Libraries. Consigned for sale by a private collector, the provenance of the drawing remains unclear. However, in view of John’s close oversight of the commission, it may well have come from his family home at Blair Adam when the library and a number of portraits were sold by Sotheby’s in 1926.³⁵

As is common with Adam’s designs, this drawing is not signed by him; even signed drawings of this date are very unlikely to be in his own hand. As early as the mid- 1760s, Robert would routinely pass his design sketches to his team of highly-skilled draughtsmen to be worked up into fully-rendered presentation drawings. The copperplate titles, the scales, and the use of dense black for windows and carefully graded washes for shadows are all consistent with what Alistair Rowan has identified in *Robert Adam* (1988) as the contemporary Adam office practice.³⁶ The presence of detailed measurements on the design suggests that it may also have served as the contract drawing.

The fully-rendered drawing shows a five bay, three storey block with a bowed south elevation surmounted by a bellcot. The decoration is concentrated on the picturesque bow-end, where the upper floors’ three bays are articulated by giant Tuscan pilasters and surmounted by an architrave and frieze (Fig. 3). A deep cornice unites both the south and west façades. In the outer bays, there are blind windows at ground level, round-headed niches at the first floor, and square panels at the second; in the centre bay, a square ground floor window, a corniced first-floor window with projecting iron balcony and an inscribed panel above. Without the movement and variety provided by the picturesque bow-end and its external decoration, the building would have lacked any of the grandeur which Robert held to be essential in a public building.³⁷ In stark



Fig. 3. Kinross County House and Jail: south bow, c.2003.
Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.

contrast, the severely plain west elevation is relieved only by a heavily rusticated Gibbs doorway expressing the grimness of incarceration. In both façades his restrained designs, without the embellishment of swags or medallions, rely heavily on light and shadow for effect. Although only rarely used by Robert,³⁸ the Tuscan order, which was associated with masculine strength and simplicity, was a conventional choice for courthouses and prisons. Serlio had recommended the order for prisons and William Chambers had recently endorsed its use, ‘wherever magnificence is not required, and expense is to be avoided.’³⁹ Here, however, Robert achieved his customary elegance by employing

unconventionally thin Tuscan pilasters and enlivening the order’s normally plain frieze with rosettes. He was also to utilise a similarly ornamented Tuscan order in his later, unexecuted elevation for a new town house in Cullen, Aberdeenshire.⁴⁰ Yet, in a discourse addressed to his friend Lord Kames (1696–1782) a few years earlier, Robert had dismissed the Tuscan and Composite as ‘mungrel orders’, arguing that the ‘Doric Order can without great variation supply every purpose of the Tuscan’.⁴¹ Tolbooths often displayed the royal arms, the burgh’s arms, or, in the case of burghs of barony, the superior’s arms or initials, on a panel. Robert usurped this practice by recording instead his own contribution on the inscribed marble panel (Fig. 4) which he placed above the window in the central bay of the top floor:

THIS COUNTY HOUSE WAS
REPAIRED BY THE CROWN
A.D. 1771
ROBERT ADAM KNIGHT
OF THIS SHIRE DECORATED
THIS FRONT AT HIS OWN
EXPENSE

The status-conscious Robert would have been familiar with the inscriptions placed by imperial and papal builders on Rome’s monuments, public buildings and churches. His arch rival William Chambers had been knighted by the King of Sweden in 1770. By choosing to adopt the English term of ‘knight of the shire’ for a county MP rather than the Scottish equivalent of ‘commissioner’, Robert may have been anticipating a knighthood which never materialised. Such a blatant piece of self-advertisement did not, however, go down well with the inhabitants of a small Scottish town, or even, it appears, with his young nephew William Adam (1751–1839). We are fortunate that John explains the thinking behind the design in a letter written from



Fig. 4. Kinross County House and Jail, 2003: inscription. *Crown Copyright: RCAHMS.*

London to his son William, dated 10 November 1772, where he replies to criticisms made by the latter:

‘I see what you say about James Flockhart & the Town House of Kinross. I am sorry, if either the Inscription looks Ostentatious, or the Execution looks mean, But I am persuaded you must be mistaken. You see there are pilasters, with an Entablature over them, and there are Niches & panels, all which would have been plain if your uncle had not chose to be at the expence of them. The window in the Bow, has an Architrave round it, with a frieze & Cornish at top, And it is to have an Iron Balcony, like those here, over the Trusses. Now when all that is considered, I cannot imagine that it will look so very plain, as all of you represent it. I saw the Door to the prison last year. It is made a heave rusticated Door on purpose, as the Entrance to a prison should be gloomy, rather than light, and that makes me hope that your observations on the end, are no better formed. I am glad you think it a substantial piece of work, as that is the main point.’⁴²

Owing to its prominent position on the road north, the County House would have advertised Adam’s

accomplishments to travellers and local gentry alike. Not everyone, however, was impressed. In 1779 one local inhabitant cynically remarked to an English traveller that the building might easily have been completed for the sum awarded, without the beneficence of the architect and MP.⁴³ Two decades later, Joseph Farington was to echo Robert’s nephew in criticising the inscription, ‘When I consider the size of the building, and the decorations, I thought the record too pompous for the occasion. But it served to remind in what situation Mr Adam had been.’⁴⁴ Another traveller noted in 1804 that Kinross was a ‘mean shabby place. . . [with] not a single public edifice worthy of a moment’s observation’.⁴⁵

In spite of its modest scale, the County House gave Robert an opportunity to demonstrate his town-planning ideals by designing a dignified and elegant public building appropriate for the civic centre of a small Scottish burgh. Occupying a prominent corner site on the east side of the market place next to the

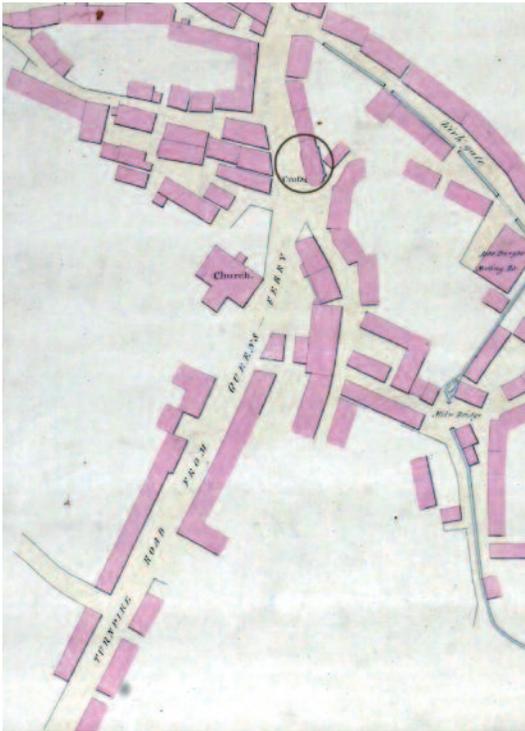


Fig. 5. John Bell, plan of Kinross, 1807:
detail marked to show County House.
Courtesy of Blackwood & Smith WS, Peebles.

market cross (Fig. 5), the bowed south front optimises the axial potential of the corner site by providing an architectural focus at the junction of the main road north from Edinburgh to Perth with a street leading east to the shore of Loch Leven. Alastair Rowan has drawn parallels between the ideals expressed in Kinross and the contemporary Adelphi project and Robert's unrealised proposals for the South Bridge in Edinburgh.⁴⁶ The modernity of Robert's design – its classicism declaring the principles of civic virtue and liberty embraced by the landed classes – would have stood in stark contrast to the traditional vernacular architecture of the slightly earlier parish church (1742–3), which then stood opposite.⁴⁷ Interestingly, the latter's steeple (erected 1751) also features a Gibbsian door and window.⁴⁸

The County House, which is still extant although with minor external alterations, appears to have been executed as proposed (Fig. 1). The south front was originally finished in droved ashlar while the west front was of broached work. The south east wall appears to be contemporary with the south and west fronts, but the rubble walls to the rear may be older. No plans survive for the interior, which has been much altered (Fig. 6). While we cannot, therefore, be sure how far Robert either adopted or changed the existing layout, the accommodation appears to have followed the traditional arrangement for a tolbooth. During a brief visit to the prison with Elizabeth Fry on 5 September 1818, Joseph Gurney observed that 'for criminals there are two miserable cells on the ground floor. One of them admits of the usual communication with the street; the other is a dungeon without either light or air, except for a grated hole in the door. . . There is no airing ground.'⁴⁹ On the ground floor there would originally have been offices for county business, the southern room of which once contained a fine set of drawers designed to fit the inner curve of the bow.⁵⁰ The County Hall was situated to the south on the first floor, with two ancillary rooms to the north. A staircase links the first to the second floor with its well proportioned court room, small debtors' room and possibly a small flat for the keeper. The court room appears to have been fitted out with a bookcase and a cupboard for court records within the thickness of the wall.⁵¹ A bell for announcing the curfew and other public events was a standard feature. Gurney noted that the small apartment for debtors was occupied by a man who continued in the jail 'by preference'. The door, contrary to usual practice, was left open. There was, however 'not a single criminal in the prison.'⁵² Indeed, the county jail appears to have been used only occasionally, to detain petty criminals such as vagrants for a day or two at a time.⁵³ Owing to its position on the road to Perth, the County House was also pressed into service for the overnight accommodation of

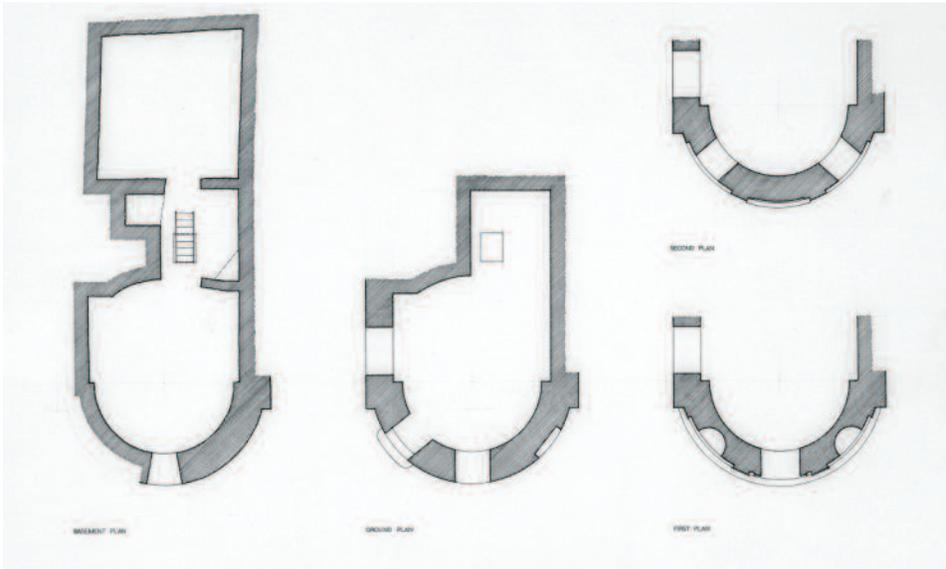


Fig. 6. Plans of south bow, 1992. © RCAHMS. Drawn by Steven Fowler. Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk.

prisoners being sent south for trial at the High Court in Edinburgh, French prisoners of war on their way north to Perth Prison, and the quartering of troops and their baggage.⁵⁴

The County House remained in use until 1826, when it was replaced by Thomas Brown's simple classical County Buildings (1824–6) further north up the High Street. As early as 1810 the building had been reported as being once again in 'great need of repair';⁵⁵ with the exception of the roof, the internal woodwork had become ruinous, and while the masonry work was sound, the surrounds of groundfloor windows needed to be replaced.⁵⁶ By 1824 the internal wooden stair and floors had become so dangerous that the building required to be totally gutted and refitted.⁵⁷ Owing to the building's relatively small size and the awkward nature of the site, which hindered the necessary expansion, the Treasury eventually agreed to provide a grant for a spacious new building on a new site on 13 July 1824.⁵⁸ On 14 August 1826 the Adam building was sold by the heritors to William Pitcairn, a local

tobacconist, when it is described as 'that large house in Kinross of three storeys lately occupied as a Jail and Sheriff Court Room'.⁵⁹ A year later the building was conveyed to another William Pitcairn, solicitor in Edinburgh, who may have been responsible for the conversion of the ground floor into two shops, with domestic accommodation above. At the latter's request, an estimate was prepared by John Mackintosh, plasterer in Kinross, in February 1828 to plaster the lower flat or shops with mastic while at the same time proposing to create a '...Bas course of Arbroath stones about 14 inches deep and to project 2 inches and also to give it a Belt of 1 foot broad about 1 foot above the window lintels and to project about 1 ¾ inches this belt to be made of wood and plastered over with mastic and all the rest of the wall to be neatly plastered and jointed I find that it contains 54 yards and I do not think it can be done for less than 5/- per yard. . . as the walls are very course. . .'. The builder claimed that work would give the building a 'very different look', but that it would not look well unless the owner also agreed to make a

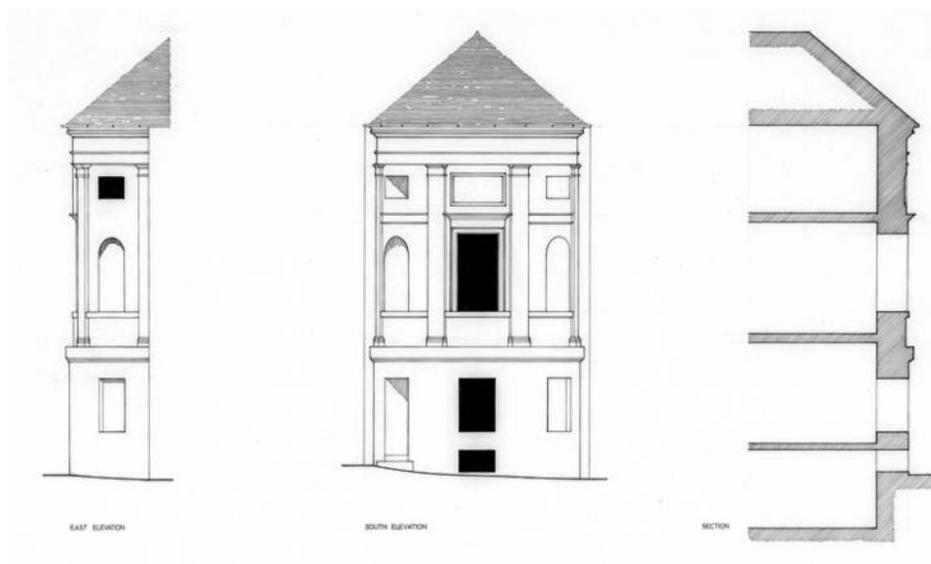


Fig. 7. Elevations and section of south bow, 1992. © RCAHMS.
 Drawn by Steven Fowler. Licensor www.rcahms.gov.uk.

drain 'along the Front to carry the water past and paire it above'.⁶⁰ According to Nick Haynes, the ground-floor pilastered shopfronts probably date from this time.⁶¹ One of the bow's ground floor bays was converted into a door (Fig. 7), windows were enlarged and the west front lost both of its original doors. The bellcot would have been removed soon after the building was de-commissioned. At some point a first and second floor window on the west front were also blocked up (Fig. 1). Together, these insensitive alterations compromised the elegant simplicity and vertical emphasis of the original design.

Today Robert's former County House still stands in the historic heart of Kinross, opposite the surviving tower of the parish church (demolished c.1832) and the now redundant town hall (1841). After many years as a grocer's shop, the ground floor of the bowed extension now sells personal computers, while a gift shop occupies the rear. The first and second floors are residential flats. In view of the very poor state of the internal woodwork reported 1824 it is unlikely that the interior now retains any significant

original features. The square panels flanking the inscription were replaced by windows sometime after 1979. Both the south and west fronts are painted white.

Ironically, in 2010 an estate agent's particulars for the first floor flat described the building as having been decorated by 'Robert Adam Knight'.⁶²

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Steve Connelly, Archivist, Perth & Kinross Council, Ian Gow, Charles McKean and David Brown for their assistance and encouragement. I should also like to thank Keith Adam, Esq. for permission to inspect and quote from the Adam family papers at Blair Adam.

APPENDIX

London, The National Archives, Treasury Board: Papers, T1/485.

(Verso) Freeholders, Justices of the Peace & others of the County of Kinross, representing that their Jail is out of repair – Rec.d June 22 1768.

(Recto) Unto The Right Hon.ble The Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury- The Humble Representation of the Freeholders, The Justices of Peace, and Commissioners of Supply of the County of Kinross.

Sheweth

That the Town House of Kinross, where the Sherriff Courts are held, and where the Freeholders, The Justices of Peace, & Commissioners of Supply meet, in Order to do the Necessary Business of the County, and which also serves for the County Jail, is totally in Disrepair, or altogether ruinous in the Roof, Floors, Doors & Windows, and consequently perfectly unfit for either of the purposes beforementioned.

That We consider the House as the property of the Crown, having been part & pertinent of the Heretable Jurisdiction purchased by the Crown; And as such We humbly conceive it should be put into Repair at the public Expence.

From an exact Estimate made up by a Skillfull Artist, We are assured these Repairs can be performed for the Sum of £321.1.1.

Therefore We most humbly intreat That your Lordships will be pleased to take this into your serious Consideration, and give such Orders about it as to your Lordships shall seem meet.

Rob.t Ranken	James Bruce
Lau Craigie	Ja: Stewart
John Adam	Ja: Beatson
	Robert Burt
	John Hutchison

NOTES

- 1 J. Swarbrick, *Robert Adam & His Brothers* (London, 1915); A. T. Bolton, *The Architecture of Robert and James Adam* (London, 1922).
- 2 A. Rowan, 'After the Adelphi: Forgotten Years in the Adam Brothers' Practice. Part I, William Adam and Company', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, CXXII (Sep. 1974), pp. 659–61 & 663–664.
- 3 D. King, *The Complete Works of Robert & James Adam*. (London, 1991), pp. 43–44.
- 4 For the history of civic buildings in Scotland, see Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (hereafter RCAHMS), *Tolbooths and Town-houses: Civic architecture in Scotland to 1833*. (TSO, 1996). Mid-eighteenth century Scottish local government is outlined in A. Murdoch, *The People Above. Politics and administration in mid-eighteenth century Scotland*. (Edinburgh, 1980), pp. 1–27.
- 5 RCAHMS, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
- 6 National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh (hereafter NAS), King's Remembrancer's Office, Reports, E307/24, p. 321.
- 7 NAS, Court of Session, CS4/8, Heritable Jurisdictions, Compensation claims, Abercrombie to Campbell.
- 8 A Scottish Act of 1597 required every burgh council to build and maintain a prison house.
- 9 Perth & Kinross Archives, Perth (hereafter PKA), JP21/2/1, Minutes of meetings of the JPs of Kinross-shire, 25 November 1766.
- 10 Kinross estate was to pass out of the hands of the Bruce family in 1777, when it was sold to George Graham.
- 11 PKA, JP21/2/1, Minutes of meeting of the JPs for Kinross-shire, 27th January 1767.
- 12 NAS, SIG1/5/83, Signature of resignation of lands in the barony of Dowhill in favour of Robert Adam in liferent and John Adam in fee, 1766.
- 13 NAS, Court of Session, CS214/206, General John Irwin against Robert Adam, Additional answers and condescence for Robert Adam, 1768, pp. 6–7.
- 14 Atholl Estates, NRAS234/Box 49/15/140, Letter from the Earl of Findlater, Cullen House, to the Duke of Atholl, 18 July 1766.
- 15 NAS, Court of Session, CS214/206, General John Irwin against Robert Adam, Additional answers and condescence for Robert Adam, 1768, p. 7.

- 16 PKA, CC2/1/6/1, Minutes of the freeholders of Kinross-shire, 5 April 1768, pp. 65–66.
- 17 E. Haden-Guest, 'Kinross-shire', in L. Namier & J. Brooke (eds.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754–1790*, (HMSO, 1964), I, p. 486, and 'Robert Adam', *ibid.*, II, 7–8. NAS, Court of Session, CS214/206, General John Irwin against Robert Adam, 1768; CS235/A/6/15, John Adam of Maryburgh against General John Irvine, 1768; and Robert Adam of Dowhill against Colonel James Masterton, 1768.
- 18 NAS, SIG1/6/40 Signature of resignation in favour of William Adam, 1776.
- 19 NAS, Court of Session, CS214/206, General John Irwin against Robert Adam, 1768. Additional answers and condescence for Robert Adam, Architect in London, 1768, p. 8.
- 20 The National Archives, London (hereafter TNA), Treasury T1/485, Report of the Barons of Exchequer for Scotland upon the representation of the freeholders etc of the county of Kinross, 23rd November 1768; NAS, E307/6, Exchequer reports, 10 March 1757 – 10 August 1769, p. 298.
- 21 NAS, E307/6, Exchequer reports, 23 November 1768, p. 299. TNA, T1/485, Treasury, Report of the Barons of Exchequer for Scotland upon the representation of the Freeholders etc of the county of Kinross, 23 November 1768.
- 22 PKA, JP21/2/1, Minutes of meetings of the JPs for Kinross-shire, 20 August 1771.
- 23 TNA, Treasury Board Papers, T1/485, 6 September 1770 and PKA, JP21/2/1, Minutes of meetings of the JPs for Kinross-shire, 20 August 1771.
- 24 TNA, Treasury Board: Minute Books, T29/40, 1 March 1771, pp. 67–68.
- 25 NAS, Treasury: Entry Books, North Britain, Out-Letter Book, RH2/4/472, pp. 305–306.
- 26 PKA, JP21/2/1, Minutes of meetings of the JPs for Kinross-shire, 19 June 1771.
- 27 NAS, E305/8, Exchequer Treasury minute book, 6 August 1771, p. 91.
- 28 PKA, JP21/2/1, Minutes of meetings of the JPs for Kinross-shire, 20 August 1771.
- 29 RCAHMS, *op. cit.*, p. 106.
- 30 PKA, JP21/2/1, Minutes of meetings of the JPs for Kinross-shire, 27 June 1772. John Adam attended the JPs' meeting on 30 May 1772 and does not re-appear until 20 August 1773. He attended meetings on 25 October 1773 and 7 January 1774, followed by another gap until the meeting on 29 April 1775. According to A. Rowan, *Vaulting Ambition*. (London: Sir John Soane's Museum, 2007), p. 24. John Adam was still in London in March 1773.
- 31 PKA, JP21/2/1, Minutes of meeting of the JPs for Kinross-shire, 27 January 1776.
- 32 Rowan., *op. cit.*, (1974), p. 661.
- 33 King, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
- 34 Lyon & Turnbull, London, *Rare books, manuscripts, maps and photographs*, 4 February 2009, p. 4.
- 35 K. Adam, 'Living with a legend'. *Journal of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland*, 4 (1993), pp. 8–9.
- 36 A. Rowan, *Robert Adam* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1988), pp. 17–18.
- 37 H.H. Reed, (ed.), *The works in architecture of Robert and James Adam*. (New York, 1980), pp. 1, 9.
- 38 Robert Adam's use of the orders is discussed by David King, *op. cit.*, pp. 2–7.
- 39 W. Chambers, *A treatise on the decorative part of civil architecture*. (London, 1768), p. 17.
- 40 RCAHMS, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
- 41 NAS, GD24/1/564, Papers of the Stirling Home Drummond Murray of Abercairny family, Letter from Robert Adam, London, to Lord Kames, Duns, 31 March 1763.
- 42 Adam family of Blair Adam, NRAS1454 Bundle 4/184/1, Letter from John Adam in London, to William Adam in Edinburgh, 10 November 1772.
- 43 G. Eland, (ed.), *Shardleoes papers of the 17th and 18th centuries*. (Oxford, 1947), p. 137, quoting a letter from William Drake, Edinburgh, to his father William Drake, dated 26 June 1779.
- 44 K. Garlick & A. Macintyre, A. (eds.), *Dairy of Joseph Farington*, V (New Haven & London, 1979), 26 September 1801, pp. 1635–1636.
- 45 Anon., *Gleanings of a wanderer in various parts of England, Scotland and Wales in the year 1804*. (London, 1805), p. 35.
- 46 A. Rowan, 'Kinross and Edinburgh: Some Ideas of Robert Adam on the Proper Improvement of Towns', in D. Mays (ed.), *The Architecture of Scottish Cities* (Scotland: East Linton, 1997), pp. 70–77.
- 47 Only the church tower remains today.
- 48 J. Gifford, *The Buildings of Scotland. Perth and Kinross*. (New Haven & London, 2007), p. 478.
- 49 J.J. Gurney, *Notes on a visit to some of the prisons in Scotland and the north of England, in the company of Elizabeth Fry*, (London, 1819), pp. 40–41;

- J.J. Gurney, *Memoirs of John Joseph Gurney: with selections from his journal* (2nd ed. Norwich, 1855), I, p. 136.
- 50 R. S. Eland, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-138.
- 51 R.S.Young, *About Kinross-shire and its folk.* (Perth, 1948), p. 41.
- 52 Gurney, *op. cit.*, (1819). pp. 40-41.
- 53 *House of Lords sessional papers 1801-33*, vol 220 (1826-27), 'An account of the number of commitments in Scotland in the years 1810, 1811, and 1812, and the years 1824, 1825 and 1826', p. 33. There were no commitments for trial in the years 1810-1812, 1824 & 1825, and only one in 1826.
- 54 NAS, King's Remembrancer's Office, Reports, E307/24, p. 316.
- 55 PKA, JP21/2/1, Minutes of meeting of the Commissioners of Supply for Kinross-shire, 30 April 1810.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 30 April 1811.
- 57 PKA, CC22/1/1/1, Minutes of meetings of the Commissioners of Supply for the county of Kinross, pp. 75-76.
- 58 NAS, King's Remembrancer's Office, Reports, E307/25, pp.16 & 17.
- 59 NAS, General Register of Sasines, Reversions etc. Third Series, RS3/1426, 14 August 1826, pp. 126-129.
- 60 NAS, Pitcairn family of Pitblae and Hilton, Kinross-shire, GD1/675/116, no 29, Copy letter from John Mackintosh to Mr Pitcairn, Kinross, 25 February 1828.
- 61 N. Haynes, *Perth & Kinross. An illustrated architectural guide.* (Rutland Press, 2000), p. 215.
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