

Heritage Statement for Dunbeg House and the Proposed Works to the Shed Roof

Scheme: Replacing Shed Roof

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Proposal Reference: 100654149

1) Heritage Features:

Dunbeg House, including its gate piers and boundary walls, North Ballachulish is Category B listed since March 2007, LB50833.

Full details of the listing are given at

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/LB50833>.

The house was designed by Alexander Ross and Robert J Macbeth of Inverness in 1902. The principal architectural interest of the house lies in the references to the style of an alpine chalet in its design, and its location very close to the shores of Loch Leven. The house is built between two outcropping rock formations.

The chalet style is evident in the broad gables, deep eaves, and shallow pitched roofs (which are high off the ground as this is a three-storey house). One of the main architectural features is a wrap around balcony on the loch-facing south side of the house, which goes around one half of the east gable. This balcony is supported by pillars which appear to be of natural stone, but which are actually made of concrete fashioned to look like stone.

The oldest known photo of the house is this one from Canmore, which shows the end of the balcony on the east gable: <http://canmore.org.uk/collection/1062261>.

2) Description

The proposed works concern only the shed roof (see "Photos of the Shed and Dunbeg House" for an extensive picture gallery giving more detail and context).

The date of construction of the shed is not known. Most local residents we have spoken to have no recollection of the shed, as it is not a building of any significance in its own right and is tucked away behind trees. However, we found one nearby resident, age 80, who is well-known for her local knowledge, who believes that the shed was probably built at roughly the same time as Dunbeg House, and that it used to act as a garage for a horse-drawn carriage. The horses for the carriage would have been kept at stables which used to be opposite what is now Alltshellach Hotel, but was formerly the house of Bishop Alexander Chinnery Haldane, who built Dunbeg House for his son as a wedding gift.

We therefore believe that the shed, through dint of being constructed before 1 July 1948, and having always been in the same ownership as Dunbeg House, is curtilage listed.



3) Significance

The shed was built purely to provide a utility to the house, and we don't believe it has any heritage architectural features which are of interest or significance in their own right. In recent times the shed is used purely for storing maintenance equipment and acting as a workshop. It is tucked away behind bushes and trees and attracts little attention.

The shed is one of two outbuildings to Dunbeg House, the other having been constructed around 10 years ago, consisting of a double garage and a large living room, referred to as the Games Room (see site plan and Photo 11). Relative to Dunbeg House the shed is less prominent than the Games Room, which is taller and larger, and whose roof is matched to the style of the house (see Photo 9 for the relative positions of the three buildings).

Both Dunbeg House and the Games Room have natural stone slate roofs. The current clay tiles on the shed are an anomaly. Our roof contractor tells us that these clay tiles don't last longer than 25 years and that would have been put on the roof no more than 25-35 years ago (they probably should have been changed 10 years ago). They also believe that they may contain asbestos (and will take the appropriate precautions in dealing with and disposing of them). We believe it is highly likely that the shed would originally have had a natural stone slate roof.

4) Proposed Works

The proposed works to replace the current reddish clay roof tiles shown below, which are thickly covered with moss and rotting and replace them with natural stone slate to match the other buildings will make the shed more in keeping with Dunbeg House and the Games Room, as well as most other buildings nearby.



We believe it is appropriate to use new slate tiles, as are used on the Games Room and Bishop's Bay Cottage, rather than sourcing second hand Ballachulish slate tiles, as are used on Dunbeg House. The height of Dunbeg House means that from the ground, these tiles will be indistinguishable from those on Dunbeg House, and we don't believe that the utility nature of the shed and its negligible architectural significance justifies the additional time and expense required to source and fit second hand Ballachulish slate tiles.

5) Possible Impact

We don't believe there will be any negative impact from the proposed works on the heritage features of the Dunbeg House, for which it is listed and the shed is therefore curtilage listed.

6) Justification / Mitigation

The works are required urgently as the current roof is leaking and the timbers are rotting and infected with woodworm. Some timbers may need to be replaced, but this won't be known until the work is being done. If the work is not done in 2024, it is likely that the shed will deteriorate beyond a repairable state.