

AIKET CASTLE



DESIGN STATEMENT

4°37 west architects ltd | for Mr. A Gordon | March 2024

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AIKET CASTLE- INTRODUCTION

These works at Aiket Castle comprise alterations to previous planning and listed building consents and encompass: -

- The addition of two bays to the double garage to the North elevation (access from drive)
- The addition of small bays to the south elevation of the swimming pool aligning with the feature gable building line
- The enclosure of exposed balconies/ roof terraces at high level

The previous consents being: -

13/0179/PP	Extensions, alterations, and refurbishment of Aiket Castle
13/0180/LB	Alterations and Refurbishment of Aiket Castle
16/0776/PP	Revised proposals-alteration and extension to include private chapel and cloistered gallery link, roof room and lift
16/0778/LB	Revised proposals-alteration and extension to include private chapel and cloistered gallery link, roof room and lift
16/0885/LB	Repair and reinstatement of courtyard access arch and part of barmkin wall (partly retrospective)
16/0993/ AMPC	Discharge of Condition Nos 2 (External Finishes), 6 (Window Specification), 8 (Stained glass window details) and 10 (rainwater goods) of planning consent No 16/0776/PP
17/ 0247/PP	Erection of swimming pool annexe
17/0434/LB	Erection of swimming pool annexe
17/0433/AMPC	Discharge of Condition 2 (Written Scheme of Investigation) of Planning Consent No 17/0247/PP

HISTORY & DESCRIPTION OF AIKET CASTLE

Aiket Castle is located in open countryside approximately 2 miles southwest of the village of Dunlop in East Ayrshire. It is a category C(S) listed building, its form and role have changed over time to reflect the societal changes made manifest from its suggested construction as a defensive tower house c 1479 (HES , 2005) to its extensive reconstruction and restoration by Robert and Katrina Clow, who purchased the ruined shell in 1976 and reinterpreted the dwelling as a sixteenth century towerhouse, sensitively combining 15th and 16th century features, with Georgian window sizes to produce a coherent composition based largely on conjecture, which was awarded a Europa Nostra award in 1987.

The recent alterations and extensions summarized in the consents list have provided flexible contextual accommodation suited to a 21st century lifestyle, whilst referencing the aesthetics and craftsmanship of the past.

A charter for the land at Aiket was granted to Alexander Cunninghame in 1479 which probably marks the date of the building of Aiket Castle. The Aiket Cunninghames were descended from the Cunninghames of Bedlands (Baidland), who in turn were cadets of the Cunninghames of Glencairn. Given the location – elevated land on a river bend, it's likely that there was a fortified building in prior existence. The original castle was located in the two eastern bays of the reconstructed castle, and this demarcation is still visible on the south east elevation. These bays are the tallest part of the composition. There is no pictorial evidence as to Aiket's appearance prior to 18th Century, when it was modernized in a classical style; it was reduced to three stories- the top storey fortifications removed. A nepus gable was also installed to the north-western elevation, and the windows were enlarged. Remnants of earlier construction that remain are the vaulted ceiling to the ground floor dining room, parts of the ground floor walls, the fireplace jambs in the first floor drawing room are attributed to the 15th century in the extract of listing (see Appendix 1). The stone staircase to the first floor dates from the 17th century. The original main entrance prior to the 18th century remodeling was on the southeastern elevation, and the current doorway is modelled on one at Beddenheath Castle near Stepps which is of a similar timeframe and possibly by the same stonemasons.

In 1957, a fire caused significant damage, contributing to the later collapse of the north east gable taking with it the central vault to the entrance are

Following purchase of the ruin in 1976, Robert and Katrina Clow had to stabilize the structure- all walls above ground floor ceiling level, except for the south west gable and the western end of the south east elevation walls were taken down and rebuilt in cavity brickwork, maintaining the external and internal wall lines, and ingeniously utilizing the depth created in between to accommodate storage, sanitary and servicing provision, thus maximizing the accommodation and retaining the internal footprint of the building. Weaving together documentary evidence and emulating sixteenth century detailing, the resulting tower house is a sensitively executed reconstruction, belying its age and seeming authentic. Some aspects, whilst faithful to 16th century design have proven difficult to live with; within the original footprint, rooms are small, and circulation remains torturous.

Previously B listed, the relisting to category C(S) reflects the degree of new construction.

SITE AND WIDER CONTEXT

The castle occupies a prominent and attractive setting on a meander of the Glazert Burn which flows through the 95 acres of gardens and grounds within which the castle is located. The gardens to the southeast are terraced, with hard landscaping and retaining wall adjacent to the building and soft landscaping falling to the burn below. To the west, soft landscaping falls to the burn, which is more deeply incised as it flows between the castle and the mill with the castle occupying a prominent position on a rock outcrop immediately above the burn. Across the burn from the castle is an attractive stone built former grain mill which has been restored. This building is served by mill lades and stone channels dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, some of which were partially renovated in 2003/04. This reflects a local wider agricultural architectural vernacular; surrounding farms are also listed though changed over time to accommodate changing agricultural practices and lifestyle changes

Aiket Castle, the adjoining wall, the Barmkin Wall (to the front of the castle and enclosing the courtyard), Aiket Mill, the former mill lades, and elliptical arched stone bridge over the Glazert River are listed, Category C (S). Relevant extracts from the list of buildings of architectural and historic interest relating to Aiket Castle and Mill are attached as Appendix 1

The rich history of Aiket Castle and the families who owned and fought over its lands is reflected in the inclusion of Aiket Castle and Aiket Castle Grain Mill in the Sites and Monuments Record for the West of Scotland. In other words, these buildings are considered to be of archaeological interest and this interest may be a material consideration in any planning applications affecting them.

In response to this, Rathmell Archaeology were previously appointed to undertake a desk based assessment and field based evaluation of the proposed development area in order to establish definitively the nature of any archaeological resource which may be affected by the proposals and to recommend how any resource discovered should be recorded or protected.

In summary, this concludes that the buildings have been extensively altered on many occasions over the last several hundred years. Any archaeological interest remaining would have been recovered during the last rebuilding in the mid 1970's and it is most unlikely that any significant interest remains.

PREVIOUSLY CONSENTED WORKS

The purchase of the property in 2011 by Mr. Gordon saw the accommodation upgraded to address the circulation, room sizes and lack of flexibility. Alterations and extensions now provide flexible accommodation for everyday domestic life and entertainment. In addition to the living and sleeping accommodation, a lift, a private chapel, a swimming pool and a double garage have been provided. The garage mitigates the potential for damage to the barmkin wall and archway at the castle itself, as the arched opening is narrow, limiting vehicular access.

Previous consented design statements highlight the design process from a limited invitation for design work to a process of manipulation of planes, heights, solid and void with an emphasis on

- Maintaining the ridge height of the tower house as the highest point in the composition- as the accommodation extends eastwards and northwards it decreases in height and marks the chronological development process.
- Referencing the tower house by using traditional architectural devices and detailing (such as bartizan tower, crow stepped gables, dressed stone to openings, variation in window sizes), deploying traditional materials and construction techniques, retaining traditional skills and unifying the whole.
- Differentiation of old and new via manipulation of solid and void ratios; the recent additions feature more glazed area as a response to the site, utilizing solar gain as a low carbon resource, promoting wellbeing and addressing building standards requirements.
- Minimizing interventions to the tower house itself
- Improving the inherent thermal inefficiencies by upgrading works to the cottage , increased thermal efficiency for new build areas, utilizing building orientation for solar gain, enabling the incorporation of renewable and low carbon energy systems

The accommodation previously consented comprises:

- 9 public rooms the five existing spaces in castle and cottage areas, plus the great hall lounge , family lounge, gallery and roof room on the third floor.
- 6 Bedrooms – 4 No. within the castle, as before; 1 No. within the cottage and 1 new bedroom in the extension wing on the 2nd floor.
- A private chapel, swimming pool and double garage

ADDITIONAL WORKS

This application relates to works re

- the formation of 2 no additional bays to the swimming pool annexe and changes to fenestration to northwestern elevation
- the addition of bays to the garage
- the enclosure of some roofed open terraces`

This application finalizes the works at Aiket Castle and is a consequence of assessing the building in use and addressing issues and shortfalls.

This changes the overall accommodation within the dwellinghouse to 9 reception rooms and 7 bedrooms

CHANGES TO POOL BUILDING

The addition of bays to the southeastern elevation of the pool – these provide WC, shower and multifunctional room which can be used for exercise, relaxing or hobbies, broadening the use of this building with a view to futureproofing the layout. These bays (4.1 x 2.6m and 6.2 x 2.6m) infill areas either side of the projecting gable; they provide a flush building line, whilst stepping down the scale at roof level. The oak frames are exposed per the feature gable window; the use of external timber linking to the gazebo feature on this elevation and the feature brastiche to the northwestern elevation refer back to medieval construction, which utilized timber extensively,

but of which little remains today .They are infilled with masonry at low level, finished with lime render, and glazed above, the fixed lights referencing the geometry of the fenestration to the adjacent chapel building. The low roofs break up the southeastern elevation, helping to reduce the scale of this building. The effect of this is minor to the overall elevation – the chapel link and gazebo effectively break the elevation into two perceived parts. It does bring a human scale to the termination of the building line.

Changes to fenestration to the north side of the pool; these were originally envisaged as “slot” windows, similar to ones to the rear of the cloister link. Whilst featuring on an elevational drawing of the whole northwestern façade, the building is not experienced as a continuous panorama, rather a series of linked spaces. The chapel effectively cuts the composition into two sides on this northwestern elevation; the pool has a more direct relationship with the chapel, with which it forms a small courtyard. The pool building was found to be dark, with glare experienced from the glazing to the southeastern elevation, Enlarging the windows provides sufficient ambient light levels to avoid the need for additional artificial lighting, and reduce glare, making this a sustainable solution to lighting issues. The fenestration pattern refers to the arched windows of the chapel adjacent. The effect of this change to the tower house is negligible- there is no direct relationship between the rear of the pool and the original building.

CHANGES TO GARAGE

The addition of bays to the double garage (1.4m x 4.9 metres each) – is necessary to accommodate the model of cars currently owned by Mr Gordon. The bays are located to the driveway side, with leaded roofs with parapets. The walls are finished in lime render with feature sandstone at openings, corners, skews and eaves. The garage forms the boundary for a courtyard of essentially single storey buildings- it is here that the scale breaks down, in contrast to the original building and four storey extension, continuing the large/ small contrast manifest in the original composition. The garages have neither a direct visual , nor physical relationship with the original towerhouse and their impact on it is negligible. They do however, remove vehicular traffic from the main entrance area, improving the setting and amenity.

CHANGES TO COVERED ROOF TERRACES

The enclosure of covered roof terraces- issues with terrace drainage in an ever more inclement climate coupled with low utilization prompted these to be enclosed. Ironically one of the reasons for the 18th Century remodelling of the original tower house was to improve its resistance to rain.

The small terraces adjacent to the original gable, and at the stair tower have been enclosed with leaded glazing above the battlements to reduce the solidity. The leaded lights a reference to an older fenestration style more in keeping with the heavy oak structure. The third floor link corridor is now internal, altering the access point to the roof room, which in conjunction with the southern terrace being similarly enclosed, has enabled this space to function as a bedroom with an en suite formed within part of the area which was formerly the terrace at the stair tower.

The enclosure of the large, covered roof terrace has been carried out per the smaller terraced areas, infilled with leaded windows to reduce the effect of enclosure. This has provided a flexible well-lit room, capable of fulfilling many functions. This is accessed from the extension, or from the brastiche on the floor below via an external timber stair.

The exposed timbers and internal stonework detailing these enclosed spaces enable continuation of an established aesthetic. The robust construction refers back to the original

tower house and provides flexibility for the future. The fenestration defines these areas as another layer in the history of the building, legible as a separate intervention, yet in materials and detailing reference the both the earlier works and an older aesthetic.

As two of the third floor terraces directly abut the towerhouse the setting is affected. The roofed terraces were established via previous consent. The enclosure of these subtly affects the perception of solid to void. For the rear link corridor, the effect is smaller as it is set back from the rear elevation line, and within the confines of the stepped gable. As the southeastern terrace sat atop the projecting feature bay it now has a different relationship. To address this impact, the fenestration has adopted a tripartite rhythm, and wood finish colour to relate to and become part of the main bay elevation, reinforcing its verticality and emphasizing the old/new junction. The roof ridge height was established via previous consent; the 1970s tower house ridge remains dominant.

The enclosure of the large roof terrace has been similarly detailed, maintaining the battlement wall detail to both interior and exterior to enable this alteration to be read as a separate intervention – continuity in the treatment of these formerly exposed spaces can be read as another layer in the chronological development of Aiket Castle.

There is a different rhythm and scale to the southeastern and northwestern elevations of this room, reflecting the differentiation set up in the previous elevations, whereby the manipulation of planes and scale differs between the principal southeastern elevation, and the more modulated northwestern elevation- the extension of the of the leaded roof to form a canopy over the stair access/ exit point continues this theme.

To the southeastern elevation the scale of the windows, seeks to minimize the effect of this intervention; the ground floor colonnade and first floor windows, via the scale and geometry, remain the focus of this part of the elevation.

These alterations improve the flexibility of the accommodation offered, an important consideration to enable such buildings to continue as valuable assets without significant further change. The changes within the extended accommodation enable the tower house itself to be preserved.

This is a legacy building and may be used partly for public use; the diversity of accommodation provided anticipates this.

CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING POLICY

These proposals are made in a time of flux. NPF4 has been introduced whilst the Local Development Plan (LDP2) process has not yet been finalized to incorporate the policies and impacts of NPF4- the current LDP dating from 2017 is still in operation. Contact was made with East Ayrshire Council Planning Department to ascertain the nature and level of information which may be required to be submitted in support of this application.

For this location changes made via LDP2 will have minimal effect; the Rural Diversification Area will become a Rural protection Area, however policy relative to Listed buildings ENV1, ENV4, ENV7, ENV 11 and HE1 guidance remains broadly similar. Together with OP1 there is an emphasis on the nature of change to enable buildings to be both conserved and used, both to remain in use and find new uses and for interventions to both respect the original and be legible. The impact of climate change will have far reaching effects both on our built and natural

heritage, and the setting of listed building gains importance as biodiversity, ecology and flood risk encompass as much the setting as the buildings themselves. The importance of managing such change is enshrined in policy with NPF4 and in guidance from specialist bodies such as Historic Environment Scotland (Managing Change series)

Per previous applications, the relationships between buildings, materials used and detailing deployed have sought to maintain and build upon a now established aesthetic. The 1970s tower house, C listed, remains dominant by both ridgeline and verticality; the recent works are a foil to its solidity and manipulation of scale.

Interventions, as previously detailed, are to address issues found during use and to provide flexibility and diversity of accommodation to provide for future adaptability, ensuring that buildings and setting are both sustainable and resilient to future change.

In planning terms, a wider context relates to biodiversity, ecology, flood risk and land use and character.

- Aiket Castle is sited outwith designated landscape character areas and protected sites; a wildlife corridor is defined west of Loanhead and Braehead farms, however the NBN Atlas logs no protected species close to Aiket. Bats range over East Ayrshire, however there are no empty buildings nor hollow trees near the castle to suggest that bats would be affected by the construction works. The Castle sits within a managed landscape which will be further developed to ensure biodiversity is both supported and promoted as the climate changes.
- Aiket castle is part of the East Ayrshire path network with a right of way across the grounds, encouraging public use, sustainable travel and promoting health and wellbeing. These rights are being respected and maintained.
- Whilst changes in weather patterns have increased the flood risk from medium to high in this area, the alterations sit outwith the flood area described on SEPA flood maps. Consultation with David MacPherson of Ayrshire Roads Alliance confirms that flooding is not considered an issue for the development works. The terrace retaining wall to the southeast also acts as a barrier to rising river levels. Consultation with SEPA re changes to flood risks maps has confirmed that there is little predicted difference in flood risk between now and 2080. (see Appendix 4)

SUMMARY

The proposals as submitted aspire to the following aims:

- to address issues with garages and covered roof terraces to ensure comprehensive solutions which are both fit for purpose, adaptable and sustainable.
- to maintain the established materials palette and craftsmanship evident in works to date
- to enable the existing four storey castle to remain the dominant entity.
to harness natural resources to enhance accommodation and reduce energy load (solar gain and greater natural lighting)
- the proposals will ensure a sustainable future for the building ensuring its continued use for many years to come.

APPENDIX 1 – EXTRACT OF LISTING

Listing - AIKET CASTLE WITH ADJOINING COTTAGE, BARMKIN WALL,

Summary

Category C

Date Added -03/03/2005

Local Authority -East Ayrshire

Planning Authority-East Ayrshire

Parish Dunlop

NGR NS 38788 48757

Coordinates 238788, 648757

Description

Late 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th century fragments; rebuilt from ruin Robert Clow, 1976-79. 3-storey and attic, 3-bay (end bay to W 3-storey), rectangular-plan tower house with crowstepped gables, pedimented doorpiece, gabled dormers, bartizan to W corner, round stair turret corbelled out from 1st floor to SE; open courtyard to NW enclosed by single storey and attic cottage to NE, and barmkin wall with arched entrance. Sandstone and whinstone rubble to 1st floor; Kennet brick above (see Notes); white harling; sandstone ashlar dressings. Raised ashlar window margins. Timber-boarded, studded door in roll-moulded, pedimented 18th century doorpiece to centre of NW elevation; fairly regular fenestration to bays.

Predominantly 12-pane glazing in timber sash and case windows. Coped, gablehead stacks. Crowstepped gables. Graded grey Forfar sandstone roofing stones.

INTERIOR: stone staircase rising from entrance hall. Circa 1600 vaulted kitchen with bread oven and 17th century arched fireplace; 15th century vaulted dining room (former store) to E of hall. 15th century roll-moulded jambs with semi-octagonal capitals to former Great Hall fireplace on 1st floor. 18th century sandstone chimneypieces to 1st floor sitting room and 2nd floor bedroom; 17th or 18th century moulded stonework to windows and elsewhere in various rooms.

MILL LADES AND FORMER AIKET CORN MILL: 18th and 19th century mill lades and associated stonework. Probably 18th century lade channels to W of mill; 19th century terracotta pipeline to W of mill; channels with stone edging adjacent to mill building. L-plan random rubble former corn mill. Renovated and modernised 2003-4.

BRIDGE: elliptical-arched bridge over Glazert Burn. Sandstone rubble with dressed sandstone arch and parapet coping.

APPENDIX 2- PHOTOGRAPHS OF PREVIOUSLY CONSENTED WORKS

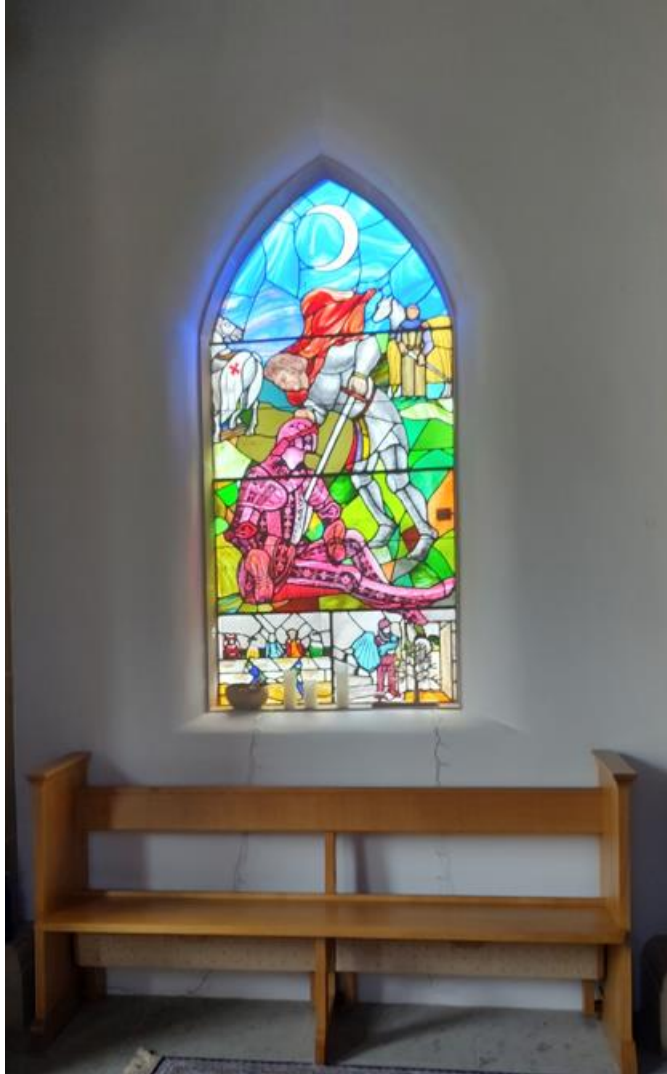


Figure 1– stained glass window in chapel



Figures 2-3 - internal stone corbel and vaulted cloister link.



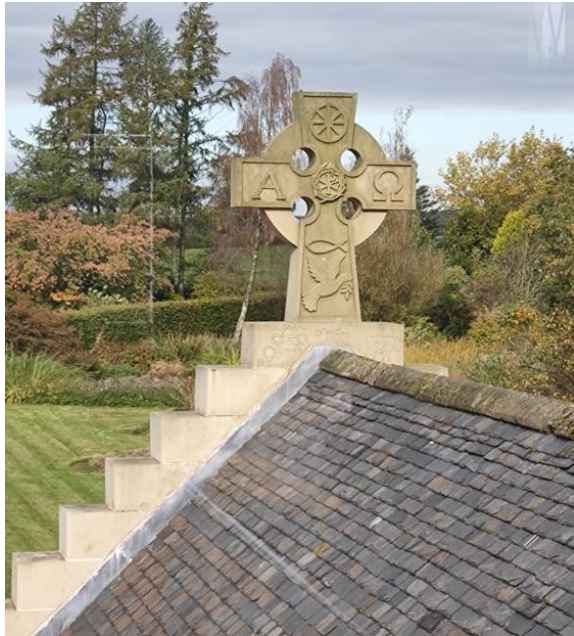
Figure 4 internal detailing continues aesthetic from original house



Figure 5 – traditional stone, render and leadwork – extension SE elevation first and second floors – the modulation of planes



Figure 6 looking southwest from northern chapel courtyard – manipulation of scale



Figures 7-8 west elevation of chapel – domestic scale relating to cottage wing and garage. Traditional skills



Figure 9-10 Pool building with exposed oak frame

APPENDIX 3- PHOTOS IN CONTEXT



Figure 11 – Aiket Castle northwestern elevation- the manipulation of scale and planes as a foil to the solidity of the reconstructed tower house- garage to foreground.



Figure12 – Aiket Castle northeastern elevation-garage bays, pool rear fenestration, enclosed roof terrace



Figure 13 – Aiket Castle part elevation to northwest ; enclosed roof terraces; multipurpose 2nd floor room to left, third floor link corridor abutting tower house gable.



Figure 14 – Aiket Castle northeastern elevation-existing/ new junction



Figure 15 – Aiket Castle southeastern part elevation – existing/ new junction , enclosed terraces at second and third floor



Figure 16 – Southeastern elevation of pool building. New bays reduce scale and refer to other timber structure



Figure 17 – southwest cottage elevation / north western castle elevation



Figure18 – southwest cottage elevation / north western castle elevation; enclosed third floor terrace



Figure 19 – looking to north east elevation from pool/ chapel courtyard -stepping down in scale, layering of planes and materials



Figure 20 – south eastern elevation – enclosed terrace at third floor



Figure 21– southeastern elevation from terrace looking towards southwest



Figure 22– southeastern elevation from terrace looking towards north east.



Figure 23– third floor southeastern enclosed terrace – looking out to north east



Figure245– third floor southeastern enclosed terrace – looking out to south west



Figure 25– internal timber detailing – enclosed terraces



Figure 26– internal timber detailing – enclosed terraces

APPENDIX 4- SEPA CONSULTATION

OFFICIAL - CONFIDENTIAL

-----Original Message-----

From: Ann West <ann@4-37westarchitects.co.uk>

Sent: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 1:51 PM

To: Contact <contact@sepa.org.uk>

Subject: Submission via SEPA Website

Extension and renovation work at Aiket Castle was carried out between 2014-2020. I am currently involved with an amendment to warrant and planning application for some alterations which included enclosing some of the high level roofed battlement terraces and small extensions to the garages and pool (small bays) In looking at the SEPA flood maps these show that there is little difference in the extent of medium likelihood flooding profiles for 0.5% chance between current levels and projected 2080 levels- can you confirm that this interpretation is correct? I look forward to hearing from you

Response received Thu 04/04/2024 13:56

fram@sepa.org.uk

Hello Ann,

Thank you for your email.

Based on the modelling methods used, we believe the map outputs at this location to be appropriate. The modelled levels for the 200-year present day and the 200-year future flood map have approximately 0.2m difference in water depth between them. In addition, the local topography is also likely influencing the extents. The riverbank at this location looks to be constraining the flood extents within the channel and making them appear similar. Considering the relatively steep banks and little difference in depth, it is reasonable to expect comparable map outputs at this location.

I hope this information is useful, please get back in touch if you have further questions.

Thanks,

Nyree

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