

DUNKELD AND THE NTS

The history of Dunkeld can be traced to the ninth century when it emerged as an important religious centre for the early Celtic Church. No building of this period survives, the present Cathedral dates from 1318. Partly destroyed during the Reformation (1560), the choir is, roofed and now serves as the parish church for regular Sunday worship. The rest of the cathedral is ruinous, but is preserved as an Ancient Monument in the care of Historic Scotland.

The domestic buildings of Dunkeld date largely from the 18th century, when most of the town was rebuilt (along an earlier street plan), following near total destruction during a battle against the forces of William and Mary in 1689.

Under the patronage of the Duke of Atholl, 18th century, Dunkeld became a commercial market town. From the mid 19th century Dunkeld declined in importance, being superseded by Birnam which was more conveniently situated for the railway.

By the 1940's the 18th century merchants houses in Cathedral Street had become severely neglected and there was a danger that the houses would be demolished and replaced by modern dwellings. In 1950, the National Trust launched an appeal to save Dunkeld's little houses. Over 15 years, the Trust worked in collaboration with Perth County Council to restore the houses which had been given to the trust by the Duke of Atholl. These houses formed the heart of Old Dunkeld, sited around the Cross and in Cathedral Street. Where gap sites existed (eg. No 17 Cathedral Street), new houses were designed in sympathy with the old; all had interiors designed to be functional for modern living. As the restorations were completed, the houses were let to local tenants, so bringing back life to the community. In all, 43 houses have been restored and the town is a bustling centre once more.

THE LITTLE HOUSES IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

The Little Houses Improvement Scheme (LHIS) was set up in 1960 (ie after works at Dunkeld had been begun) to promote the conservation of smaller buildings of merit and character. Neglected buildings are acquired by the Trust, restored to high standards and then sold on the open market. As well as direct restoration funded by the Trust, LHIS aims to encourage private individuals and regional authorities to restore in partnership with the Trust, and to do works to Trust specifications. LHIS properties are protected by a Conservation Agreement by which all future owners are bound to maintain the appearance and fabric of the building.

Fundamental to LHIS is the idea of **revolving funds**, by which profits from the sale of a restored property are re-invested to buy and restore another derelict property. The future of LHIS properties is secured by a Conservation Agreement which binds all subsequent owners to maintain and preserve the appearance of the houses.

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