

2. The history and importance of 5 Bolgam Street

2.1. Introduction

5 Bolgam Street is included in the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest at Category B. This marks it as a being of regional significance. Its condition, ownership and lack of a viable use all mean however, that it is at considerable risk and this may be our last chance to save it. The local familiarity of this group of buildings has meant that it is not prized as an important part of Campbeltown's built heritage but taken for granted. Providing an accurate and objective assessment of the true significance of the complex is therefore considered a vital part of this Options Appraisal. For this reason, this section of this report is lengthy. If the building is to be saved, its standing needs a boost, people need to recognise how important it is. And if it is to be lost, then this may be the last opportunity to make a proper record of it and of its history.

Over the past 4 years SBPT have studied 5 Bolgam Street in some detail and a number of documentary sources have also been accessed. The aim of the historical and fabric analysis undertaken in this Options Appraisal was to draw together the previous studies, fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge of the history of 5 Bolgam Street and substantiate or challenge some assertions that had been made about the complex. SBPT have worked with AOC Archaeology to undertake a level 1 survey of 5 Bolgam Street and this has clarified some aspects of the buildings' development but has also raised additional questions and debates about the interpretation of the physical evidence. The AOC report is included at Appendix C and includes some consideration of the context of the complex and a series of historical map sections illustrating its development.

SBPT have undertaken further desk studies to build up a fuller picture of the history of the building using the following main sources. (A full list of references is contained at the end of this document, these references are marked in the text thus: ¹. Footnotes are also included where additional clarification of the text is required, these are marked thus: ^{iv}).

- The buildings themselves
- The Campbeltown Book, a ready and wide ranging source of information about the physical and social history of Campbeltown produced by the Kintyre Civic Society and published in 2003.
- The Argyll & Bute Council Archives and principally the Minute Books of the Burgh of Campbeltown.
- The Argyll Archives, accessed with the kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Argyll and principally rent books, feu charters and town plans relating to Campbeltown.
- The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments Scotland (RCAHMS).
- Scotland's People: www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk.
- Personal memories of residents of Campbeltown.

In analysing these various sources, it is difficult to be entirely methodical, that is to look first at the building then at the various documentary sources. But as far as possible this is what is attempted in the following summary.

2.2. National and local context

As a starting point, the listing description describes 5 Bolgam Street as “*late 18th century, possibly incorporating earlier fabric, remodelled in 1852-3*”, so it is safe to look at the 18th century to determine the national and local influences on the design and construction of this complex of buildings.

The 18th century was a time of rapid and radical change in Scotland, socially and politically. Architectural style was also transformed with the almost complete eradication of indigenous vernacular building and settlement patterns, to be replaced by the ‘*improved*’ architecture of the new social order. At the forefront of this improving zeal were the Dukes of Argyll who during the 17th and 18th centuries, swept away the clachans and bailteans of the Western Highlands and replaced them with neat farmsteads and towns and villages planned to a greater or lesser extent. Principal amongst these must be the development of ‘modern’ Inveraray, substantially completed in the period from 1771-76¹. Campbeltown seems to have evolved in a more organic way but still under the influence of the Argyll Estate and largely that of the 1st Duchess, later the Dowager Duchess Elizabeth Tollemarche who lived in the town from around 1705 until her death in 1735.

The natural harbour and good access to the west coast of Scotland, England, Ireland and beyond was exploited in particular by incoming lowland entrepreneurs who were *encouraged* by various means to move from lowland areas (and perhaps beyond). This ‘*plantation*’ was part of the move by the Crown and the supporting aristocratic families to pacify the Highlands and bring them to rule after the Union of the Crowns. Of the incoming families perhaps one of the most successful were the Flemings or Fleemings. The name originates in the Low Countries (Flemish to Fleeming) and may have come to Kintyre via Ayrshire and Renfrewshire, although it is possible that these were direct immigrants from the Continent. There were many families bearing this name who took on farm *tacks* or leases in Kintyre but in Campbeltown a family of merchants arose who had an influence on the town from at least the early 18th through to the first half of the 19th century¹. Campbeltown was full of merchants in the mid 18th century many of whom took shares in ships. Daniel Fleming is said in 1766 to have shares in 16 vessels². Through the investment of these merchants, the Burgh of Campbeltown took shape but of note is that the Duke of Argyll was throughout, the principal land owner, retaining the ground on which the merchants built and in many cases retaining the feu of the houses, which were directly rented out by the Estate.

ⁱ The Burgh Minute Books indicate that Archibald Fleming Joiner was one of the first Common Councillors of the Royal Burgh of Campbeltown, noted as attending its first meeting on 14 June 1700 immediately after the elevation of the Burgh of Barony to a Royal Burgh. Between 1729 and 1739, Archibald Fleming Senior, Archibald Fleming Junior, William Fleming, Daniel Fleming and John Fleming are included in the Minute books as Councillors with Archibald taking the role of Dean of Guild around 1741 and remaining a Baillie for some time afterwards. All are annotated ‘merchant’ at one or other time in the Minutes.

2.3. Architectural style

Following the restoration of the monarchy, from 1660, throughout Scotland, the architectural style employed reflected the new social and political order which was one of rigid hierarchy and the “*assertion of the cultural prestige of the landed classes, through continuing comparisons with the authority and stability of antiquity*”³. There was a definite break with the past with the introduction of European classicism founded on the Italian Renaissance. This was a strict classicism employing the formal language of the five orders to regulate architectural form rather than applying them merely as stylistic elements. As we move into the 18th century, architects like Bruce, Mylne and the Adams are consummate exponents of classical design and the style filters gradually down the social spectrum through style books and due to the increasing mobility of the population.

Thus the predominant architectural style of the first wave of agricultural *improvements* is a restrained, pared down classicism⁴. The regularity and uniformity of the three bay 18th century farm house refers directly to the proportioning systems governing much grander designs. And so it was in the new towns and Burghs of the Highlands. Thus in Inveraray we see the influence of the classicists most obviously in Robert Mylne’s Parish Church of 1795-1802 but also in the planning of the town and in the form of the Argyll Hotel and the shops and tenements that flank the main street. So it is not surprising that in Campbeltown too, classical architecture was used for the principal buildings. Thus the Town House by John Douglas in its original form incorporates “*hefty Gibbsian keystones, imposts, architraves and quoins*”¹ using classical architecture as a metaphor for civilisation and social order and the Bolgam Street façade of 5 Bolgam Street seems to employ the same classical style. Its symmetry about a central pend or vennel, hints at classical architecture while the emphasis on the first floor echoes the *piano nobilé* of Italian Renaissance buildings while perhaps alluding to the original functional organisation of the buildingⁱⁱ.

Hubert Fenwick speaking of merchant’s houses in east coast Burghs, comments that “*they frequently had forestairs to their living quarters, the lower space being reserved for stores*”⁶ and it is possible to see this functional division of space being employed in 5 Bolgam Street. But there is of course more to 5 Bolgam Street than a single building with 4 related structures ranged around the central courtyard. The south range is much plainer in style, a storey and a half in height, with accommodation in its roof story. Arranged symmetrically around a central door it has less pretence to grandeur but still refers in its proportioning to classical architectural style. If the whole complex was built at the same time or if the Fleemings acquired one part and built the remainder to perform as a single functional group then perhaps this rear range provided domestic accommodation with the business premises in the Bolgam Street building facing the sea and looking out over the new harbour.

As a final comment on the general arrangement of the complex, a series of buildings arranged around a small central courtyard does seem to be unusual particularly as the courtyard is very small and the access is limited. There are of course, other

ⁱⁱ But note, AOC Archaeology comment that the form of the window openings as seen today may not be original and its insertion as part of 19th century alterations may have obliterated smaller, original window openings⁵.

examples of ranges of buildings accessed from a central courtyard, vennel or pend such as Gardyne's Land in Dundee and Riddles Court in Edinburgh, but these tend to be on a much grander scale than 5 Bolgam Street. It may be that the designer of the complex was trying to emulate these grand properties or it may be that the courtyard is coincidentalⁱⁱⁱ. For instance, if the Bolgam Street building and south range had originally formed two separate properties, in two separate ownerships but were brought together under one feuhold, then the new owner might have linked them with the side wings to form an enclosed court and to improve their combined functionality. To date no comparable property has been identified by this team and further research in this area is required to place 5 Bolgam Street in its national context.

2.4. Documentary Evidence

In 1738 the Duke of Argyll awarded a feu covenant to a William Fleming, the original document is held in the Argyll Archives. It is not yet certain that this relates to the site of 5 Bolgam Street but a previous researcher has suggested that it might, by a sketch and annotation in the margin. The covenant written in Latin relates to a *Charter of Confirmation in Favour of William Fleeming dated 12 of August 1738* and refers to "*De toto integro tenements terra cum domibus*" or:

.... the whole and complete holdings of land with the houses built there or to be built before or behind.

The translation of the feu charter was undertaken for SBPT by Mr Edward Chitham.

The covenant describes the feued land by reference to its neighbours but also details its size and the rental^{iv}. Overall it appears that this feu relates to a large package of land with the sea as one of the boundaries. But the charter does specify a smaller plot^v which may be between *Bargam Street* and Main Street. This could be the land on which 5 Bolgam Street is built. To confirm this further research into ownership of feus in the town is needed and Mr Chitham suggests in particular that Burgh rental books might give this information^{vi}.

The first explicit indication of a building on the site of the complex now known as 5 Bolgam Street, is on a series of maps or town plans drawn by William Douglas in or around 1760. The copy held by the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments Scotland (RCHMS) is annotated as being "*copied from an earlier map*".

ⁱⁱⁱ NB, see also the Bay Horse Inn at Dysart which has a broadly similar layout although the courtyard is accessed from a side street through a gateway, this building dates from the end of the 16th century.

^{iv} Which includes a reference to poultry and fowl and 24 eggs as well as a sum expressed in Scottish pounds.

^v The feu comments that the length of the plot is 49 ells (Mr Chitham comments that an ell is equivalent to 49" in England).

^{vi} The Argyll Archives do indeed hold a series of rental books for Campbeltown but during our visit, none was found that covered this period. The Argyll Archives are currently being re-housed and it is quite possible that information will be available on this period at a later date.

This map shows a complex of buildings on the site of 5 Bolgam Street very similar in form to that standing today, the annotation 'Q' indicates that the feu is held by a man called John Fleming.

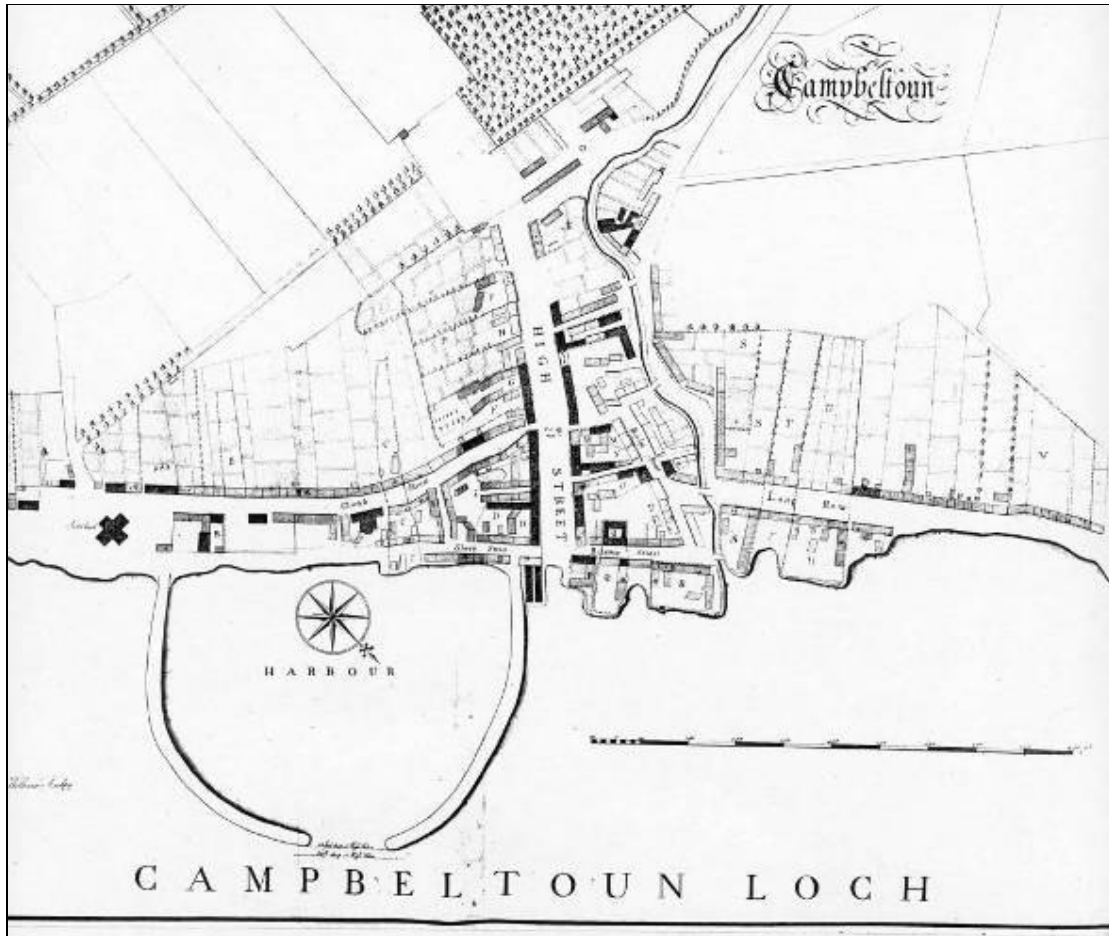


Figure 15: The central portion of the William Douglas map of 1760 held in the RCAHMS, dated 1760 and annotated "copied from an earlier plan". Bolgam Street can be seen just to the right of the harbour with 5 Bolgam Street site annotated with a 'Q'.

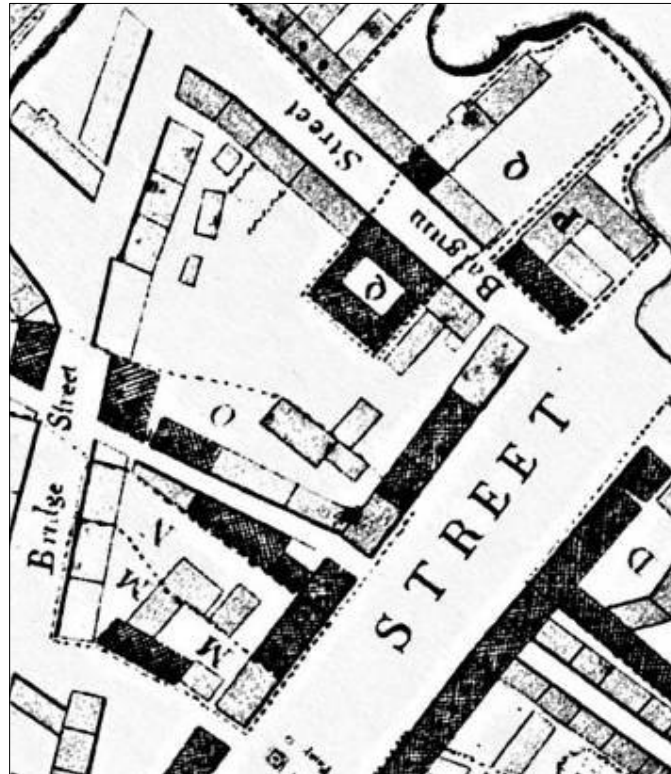


Figure 16: 5 Bolgam Street site from the map at Figure 15 above. *NB this section has been rotated to place north at the top of the map segment*

A similar map held in the Argyll Archives but tinted and including most of its key, provides further information about the buildings on the site. We can also see the extent of development since the *earlier plan* with the corner of Bolgam Street and the Main Street occupied by another three storey building (possibly the building that occupies that location today)?

Here we see the form of the building similar to the RCAHMS version of the map but with its west side wing truncated. But the key allows us to understand more about the building.

The blue tint indicates a slate roof while the buff tint buildings are thatched. The dots on the buildings indicate the number of stories. So we can see that there was a three storey, slate roofed building onto Bolgam Street with a 2, storey slate roofed building to its south, linked by side ranges. These are neither tinted nor bear any dots which may indicate that they were of single storey and of simple construction. How the upper floors of the principle ranges were accessed is a mystery. It might be fair to assume an external stair but none is shown on the plan. It is worth noting however, that the plan shows no other external stairs so this may be a simple stylistic choice by William Douglas. Numbered properties are rented out directly by the Argyll Estate, while properties without numbers indicate that a feu has been let.



Figure 17: The central portion of the William Douglas map dated 1760 from the Argyll Archives. These maps are closely related but the increase in detail on this version is striking.



Figure 18: 5 Bolgam Street from the Argyll Archives map, annotated as belonging to I or J Fleeming.

It is interesting that the Bolgam Street building appears to have been of three storeys. Looking at the map, this was not entirely unusual and of course we don't know the form of the third storey but as Fenwick comments that in Pittenweem, merchants were often found sitting in the top storey of their houses, ranged around the harbour watching the loading and unloading of their ships⁶.

The next map to show 5 Bolgam Street clearly is by George Langlands & Sons dated 1801.



Figure 19: Excerpt from map by George Langlands and Son of 1801, this copied from the Campbeltown Book ⁷ which characterises this map as 'Stylized' The location of 5 Bolgam Street is ringed in orange.

Here both side wings by the courtyard are shown in a truncated form, perhaps a stair to the first floor of the Bolgam Street building was contained within one of these?

The first specific reference found in the Burgh Minute books to this property is on 10 March 1841, when Baillee Greenlees moves that a committee be set up to investigate whether it would be "advantageous" for the Burgh to purchase the land of the late Mr Archibald Fleming (Merchant of London) "situated in the Bolgam Street"⁸ and how much this land might cost. A committee is duly set up and reports on 24 March 1841 that there is no reason not to buy the property, a later note provides confirmation that the Burgh can borrow the money needed. In a Feu Charter dated 12 August 1841 the property passes to the Burgh for the sum of £360 which is borrowed by the Burgh from the Clydesdale Bank.

This acquisition is confirmed by the next map evidence, a map of 1841 by John Waterston. A copy of this map and its attendant schedule are held in the Argyll Archives.



Figure 20: Excerpt from Waterston Town Map of 1841 contemporary with the purchase of 5 Bolgam Street by the Burgh of Campbeltown. 5 Bolgam Street is annotated 29. NB this section has been rotated to place north at the top of the map segment

The annotations 29 and 43 relates to the map schedule which indicates that these two parcels of land are owned by the Burgh of Campbeltown, confirming that this is the land they purchased from Archibald Fleming's estate. The form of 5 Bolgam Street seems to have remained more or less intact but no side wings are shown. Note also, the extent of building around the complex which is now more or less hemmed in on all sides.

In 1848, the Burgh Minutes report committee findings on the poor state of the buildings on their Bolgam Street property. The committee found "...the front and back ark in very bad state..."⁸ this is the first reference to the buildings by this name which persists in later minutes. It is not clear at this stage what the meaning of Ark (or Arc as it is sometimes spelt) is but descriptions of the buildings make it clear that this is the complex at 5 Bolgam Street. There is some debate as to whether the front Ark should be knocked down but in the end the Burgh Councillors decide to retain it, to evict the tenants and to refurbish the building for use as a public hall. This debate goes on for some time and it is not until 1851 that work gets underway. Throughout this period, the minute books make frequent reference to the buildings and to various plans and estimates for repairs and alterations to it which ultimately result in bills paid

to various tradesmen. These do not give us a full picture of the works undertaken but we can see that they were extensive, ultimately involving a wide range of trades:

- scaffold,
- lath and plaster work,
- joinery,
- mason work,
- picking and rough casting,
- plastering the “..front as to imitate ashlar...”⁸
- new rhones (gutters),
- painting,
- plumbing,
- and various furnishings and finishes,

Frustratingly, no plans or detailed specifications have been found so the exact extent and detail of the alterations cannot be confirmed.

In January 1852, the Burgh Council and the Sherriff come into conflict over the use of the Town Hall. Ultimately this lead to a decision that the *new hall*⁸ in Bolgam Street would be perfect for use by the Sherriff until a permanent courthouse and police office can be procured. The temporary accommodation will take up the whole of 5 Bolgam Street complex, described as follows in the minutes:

*“...the large hall in the Ark & the rooms below the same, the smaller hall in the Back Ark & the store below”.*⁸

An “*officer*” is to be appointed who will:

“occupy the premises in the lower part of the Back Ark when filled up...” he is to keep the place “...clean and in repair and to put on fires”⁸

And so it is that on 22 February 1853, the Ark finally completes its transformation to become the Burgh of Campbeltown Courthouse and Police Offices. And it is thus illustrated on the first Ordnance Survey of Campbeltown in 1868, produced by Captain White of the Corps of Royal Engineers.

The new Sherriff Court House designed by David Cousins was opened at the top of Castle Hill in 1871 and the business of the Burgh court moved from Bolgam Street. This is the conclusion of detailed research into the use of 5 Bolgam Street but it is known to have been retained through most of the 20th century by the Burgh. It was employed as a NAAFI dining room for sailors in WWII and as the Miners’ Welfare Club. It also served as the Civil Defence Hall and a general place of gathering and community activities from wedding receptions to pipe band practice.

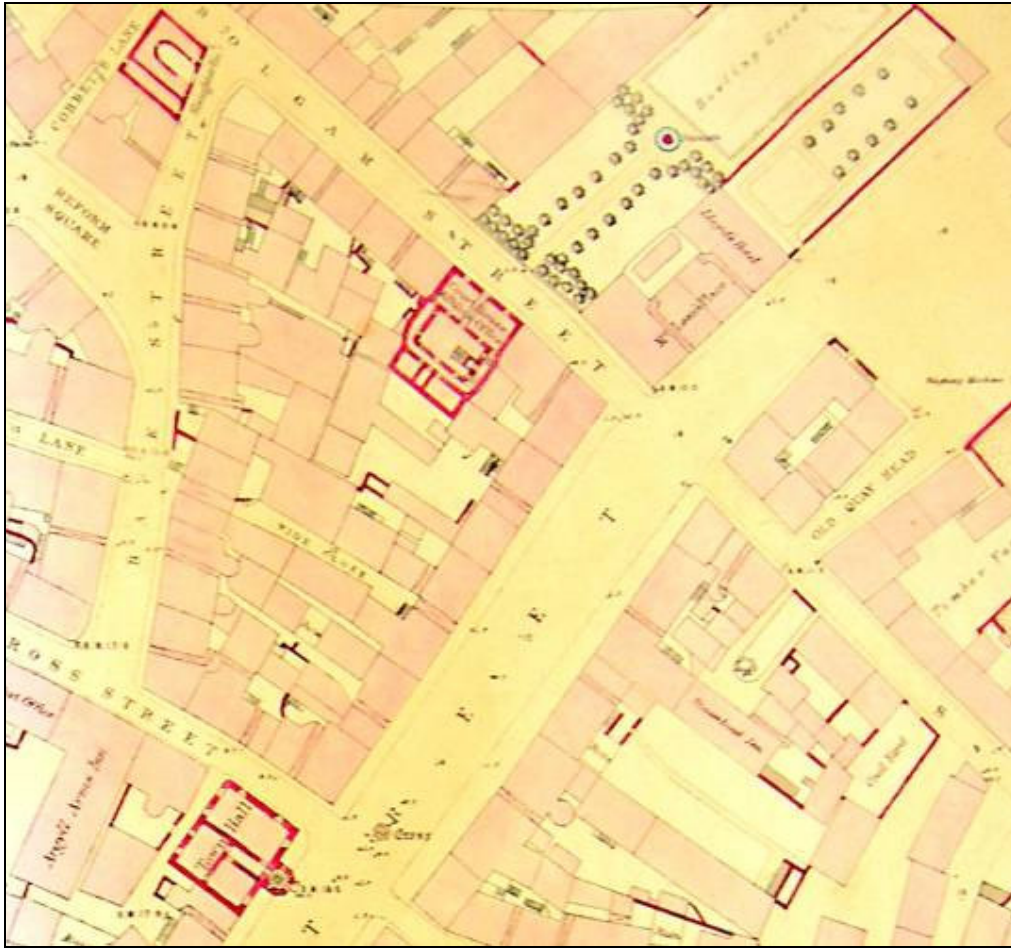


Figure 21: A section of the 1868 Ordnance Survey showing the Courthouse and Police Office on Bolgam Street, the rest of the former Fleming owned land to the north and the Town Hall to the bottom of the illustration.

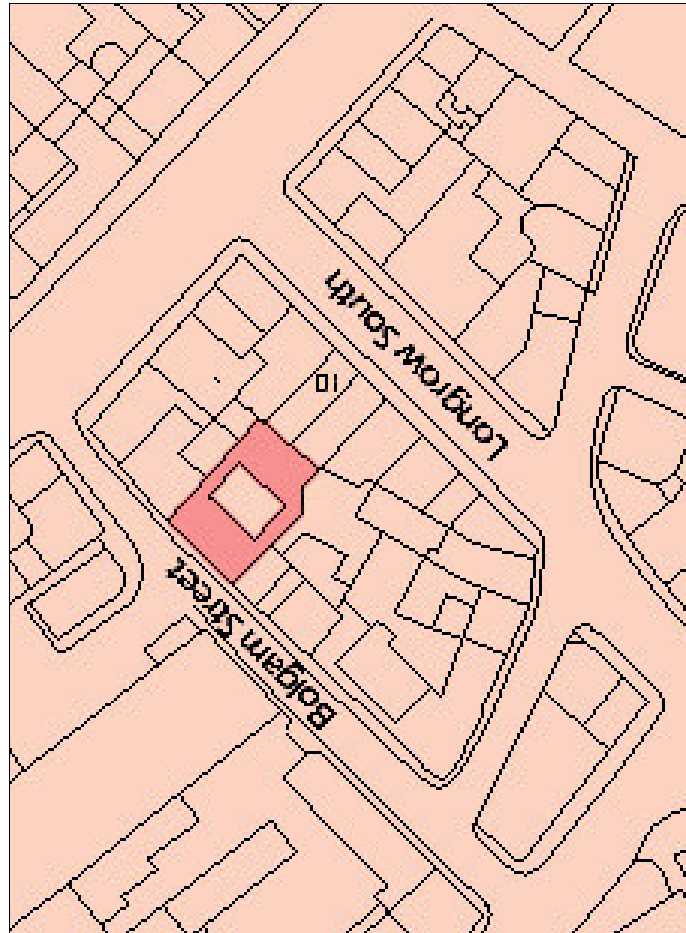


Figure 22: Section of the modern Ordnance Survey of Campbeltown

As the modern Ordnance Survey shows, the plan form of the complex today is very similar to that on the 1760 William Douglas map. The principal change for 5 Bolgam Street in the 20th century is the construction of Longrow South in 1908 to the south of the back range. Longrow South was lined with tall narrow buildings with shops on the ground floor and tenements above. Numbers 8, 10 and 12 were separated from 5 Bolgam Street south range by courtyards but in the 1920's the courtyard to number 10 was roofed over and at some stage the same has happened to numbers 8 and 12. 10 Longrow South was then owned or leased by the Tonieri family who ran the Locarno café. At this time, the Tonieris took on the lease of the ground floor of the south range and occupied it as a kitchen and back room for the Locarno.

As a result of this splitting of the use of the complex, when it was finally sold in 1992 it was as two lots which passed into two separate ownerships as has been described earlier in the report. Ironically, it was the poor state of the complex that led the Burgh (Common Good Fund) to decide to sell 5 Bolgam Street.



Figure 23: The Locarno Café looking north into the south range of the Old Courthouse

2.5. Evidence contained in the building fabric

The 2007 SBPT report on the Old Courthouse gives a full description of the evidence of original date and evolution contained within the fabric of 5 Bolgam Street⁹. This report has been updated by the AOC building recording and timber analysis⁵ and further inspection by SBPT. The following is a brief summary of the key points.

As has been shown, the plan form of the complex has not changed radically since 1760 except for the inclusion, omission and changing form of the side wings. Evidence that the buildings we see today are substantially those that were there when William Douglas drew his plan is largely found in the stonework and the structural timber of the building but this evidence is not conclusive and views within the team producing this Options Appraisal vary. What is clearer perhaps is the architectural and structural style of some areas of the building which seems to date them more conclusively to the 1850's alterations.

Stonework

All elements of 5 Bolgam Street are constructed of coursed rubble with ashlar cut surrounds or margins to the windows and doors. To the Bolgam Street building, the south range and the ground floor of the east wing, these surrounds are of high quality, formed in granular sandstone, pink in colour and with very tight joints. The

surrounds to the Bolgam Street building show the remnants of droving^{vii} although this does not seem to be present elsewhere except possibly to the bottom of the door surround to the south range.

To the upper storey of the east wing the window surrounds are of a dirty yellow sandstone of much finer consistency which has weathered far less well than the granular pink stone. The surface of this stone also exhibits droving in some areas. This stone is further employed in all of the surrounds to doors and windows to the west wing and is also found in the polychromatic use of stone in the entrance porch which by general agreement can be dated to the 1850's alterations (see below). Based on the locations of the finer sandstone, it seems reasonable to argue that these elements are later additions (probably part of the 1850's work) with the pink surround areas being built *en piece* at an earlier date.

The walls generally are covered with a mixture of lime and cement harl and renders and so only limited glimpses of rubble work are available. There is however, a large area of the wall exposed to the centre of the rear elevation of the Bolgam Street building. What can be seen here is coursed rubble of very good quality and the fact that this wall is still standing with the loss of the timber safe lintel over the pend opening, is testament to this quality. There is no sign of disruption of this stonework around the windows. If (as AOC suggest in their report is possible) the windows to this building, including the round topped first floor windows, are replacements and part of the 1850's alterations, then it seems likely that there would be some sign of disruption or alteration to the stonework. It is hoped that further documentary evidence may be found giving more detail of these alterations and it is possible that if and when more harl is stripped back, evidence of earlier fenestration will be found. As AOC state in their report:

Then the dilemma arises as to whether they (the pink stone surrounds) formed part of the original build or were a later re-building of the openings as part of the mid-19th century Council conversion of the building. This is a difficult question to answer and – unless specific building works such as this are mentioned in the Council minutes, then it is possible that these relate to the original early-mid 18th century phase of build.⁵

The SBPT view is that the round topped windows do indeed date from the original phase of construction. This view is based on the evidence given above.

^{vii} Incidentally Maudlin⁴ comments thus: “The vast majority of houses in most areas of the Highlands feature margins, around 70 percent, but a very low number of houses do in the Western Isles and Argyll and Bute....”.

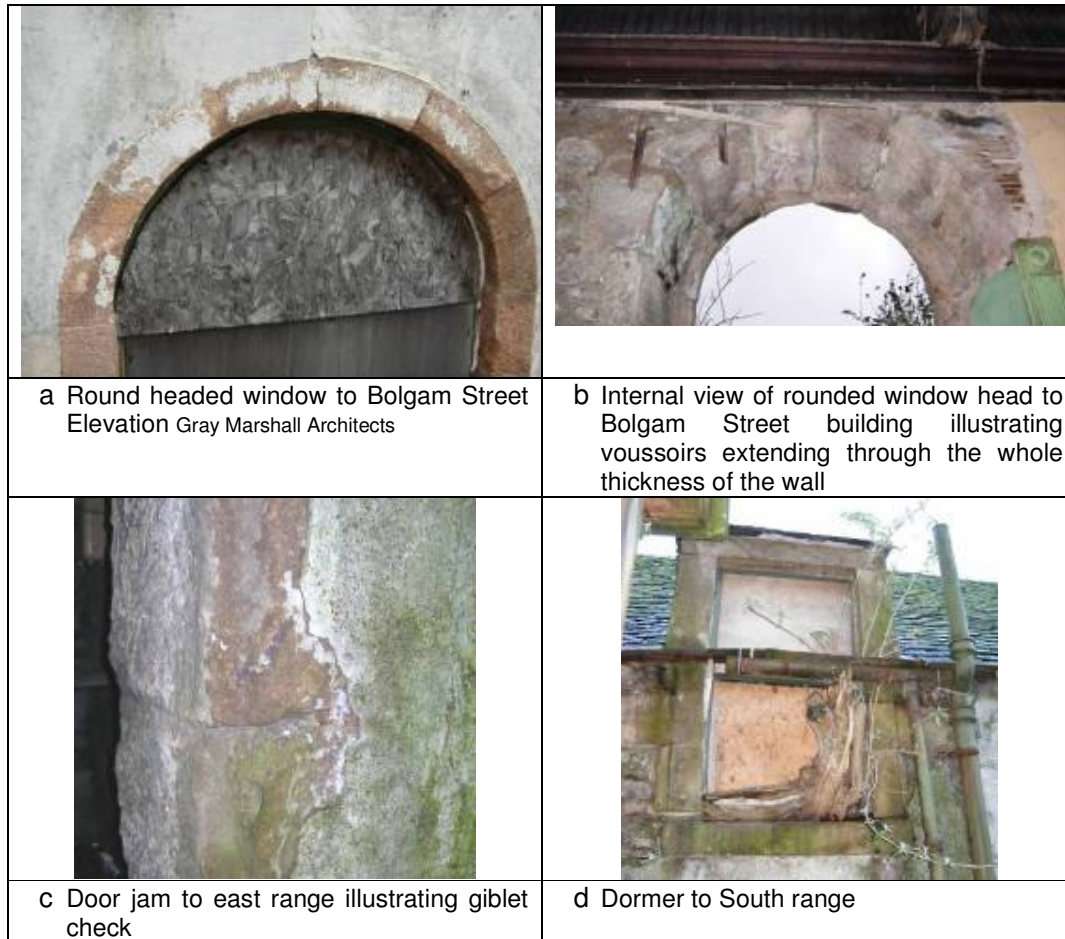


Figure 24: Examples of ashlar jointed, pink sand stone surrounds which appear across much of the complex

Looking at the rear (east) elevation of the east wing, there is evidence to suggest that this wall has been raised and internally the bonding of the east elevation with the Bolgam Street building and south range walls at first floor level is irregular. In addition, the first floor corridor tapers oddly at either end as it enters the north and south ranges, this taper only being expressed internally. The reason for this configuration is not clear.





		
<p>a View of junction of east elevation, east wing and east gable south range, note the line of the cope stones extending below the current head of the wall</p>	<p>b View of the east gable east wing showing horizontal phases of development</p>	
		
<p>c The junction of the east wing with the south range at first floor level illustrating the straight joint and lack of bonding of the stonework between the two</p>	<p>d View from south range looking north along the east range, first floor, note the taper to the end of the corridor.</p>	

Figure 25: Illustrations of east wing

The west wing is particularly puzzling. Today it has a significant dog-leg in its west elevation to allow it to meet with the corner of the gable of the south range. In 1760 and 1801 it appears to have been truncated. Looking again at the rubble work (exposed to the courtyard elevation by loss of harl) there may be evidence of alteration here also.



Area of squared
stone, possible
added later?

Area of coursed
rubble similar to
Bolgam Street
building

Figure 26: West wing, courtyard elevation illustrating differences in the pattern of stonework across the wall. *NB it is a mute point whether there is evidence of alterations to the stonework around the window and door to the north end of the wall. Perhaps therefore, alterations on the Bolgam Street building would not be visible.*

The photograph of the courtyard elevation shows to the left (south) squared and neatly coursed, but quite coarsely laid stonework with regular pinnings and wide joints. To the right (north) the stonework is far more random but more carefully laid, with narrow joints very similar to that in the Bolgam Street building and south range.

Stones are far more roughly coursed, with pinnings taking up more of the surface area.



Figure 27: West elevation of west wing. There is evidence of horizontal layering of the stonework pattern extending up the wall face illustrating different phases of construction

The west elevation (forming the boundary with the courtyard to the rear of 7 Bolgam Street) is different again. Here the stones employed are much more like field stones, smaller in size and rounded. They are fairly randomly coursed to the lower section of the wall but more carefully placed higher up, more regularly coursed with rather more angular stones employed here. There are very few pinnings. The lower section of wall seems to have been harled at some time. In some areas, erosion has taken place, possibly indicating where roofs have *leaned to* in the past. The stonework at the south end of this elevation is heavily (harl) pointed with a cement mortar and its form is therefore unclear. Intriguingly, the pattern of the stonework at different levels is not that similar to that on the east elevation of the east wing and so no suggestion can be made as to whether these two walls and their alterations are contemporary.

Of further interest is a large area of brickwork infill to the inside of the south elevation of the south range at first floor. This would appear to date from the 1920's or 1930's and perhaps relates to the roofing over of the courtyard to 10 Longrow South.

Structural timber

AOC undertook a visual survey of all accessible, exposed timber in the complex. This excluded any inspection of the interiors of the side wings which were not accessible at the time of the survey.

The roof structure to the Bolgam Street building is expressed internally and is a thoroughly engineered rib and collar structure probably of pine of 4 bays, with three arch braced principle trusses. These comprise a pair of principle rafters made up of two parallel members bolted together (a flitch), trapping an arched brace. These are supported at the wall head by ovolo brackets, which presumably cantilever off the wall heads and are probably seated on a wall plate. A high collar ties the trusses, with three posts extending from its top up to the flitched rafters. The arched rib braces the whole truss, spanning the width of the room. The feet of the braces form the central section of brackets seated on the wall head. A ridge plate and three longitudinal purlins are visible spanning between the principle trusses. Vertical match boarding set on the plane of the wall, obscures the lower section of the roof pitch and junction of the trusses and the wall head. A moulded timber cornice runs through at wall head level forming the junction between the match boarding and lath and plaster wall linings.



Figure 28: The roof structure over the main hall

This boarding extends across the soffit of the roof. Stylistically and structurally, this roof seems certain to date from the 1850's. Of course, we have seen from the map

evidence that the original building on this site was of three storeys. There may be a shadow in the main hall, on the west gable at high level of a fire place in this third storey but this is not certain. In any case, the alterations to the Bolgam Street building were so extensive that they included the removal of the upper storey (although this may have been a roof storey only). We know that the building was in poor condition at this time and it may therefore have been a necessity to re-roof it. As it was to be converted to a public hall, the third floor became redundant while the dominating, exposed, modern roof structure was a desirable feature.

To the ground floor of the Bolgam Street building, where ceilings have partially or totally collapsed, the first floor structure is visible. As the AOC report identifies, the exposed timbers were all pine and mostly fast grown timber. Most was machine cut and regular but two examples one of a half and one of a quarter log were found, both with bark edge visible along their lengths. These bore crude notches which were redundant in their current position and it seems likely that they are old timbers re-used in the 1850's alterations. Quoting directly from the AOC report:

At some point in the 20th century the floor above these joists had been replaced; the original floorboards had been cut up and used as deadening between the joists, supported on laths nailed to the sides of the joists. The old floorboards were tongue-and-groove jointed and varied considerably in width, from 0.20 to 0.27 m.

AOC suggest that these floor boards date again from the 1850's on the basis of their size, the fact that they are tongue and grooved and the conversion method used.

To the south range, the roof has already been identified as being of interest and it was thought that it might be constructed in oak. The AOC survey revealed that it was in fact fast growing pine, with the exposed rafters being of 30 to 40 years of age.

The general form of the roof is illustrated in Figure 29 below. With 13 principal trusses spaced at about 3' centres, which are triangulated at the wall head, with interrupted tie beams and ashlar posts, resisting the outward thrust of the roof structure. Common rafters at about 1'-18" centres, between terminate somewhere above wall plate level (internal linings prevent an exact description). From the AOC report:

The rafters have been fashioned by sawing a log in half, then adze-dressing each half-log to a rectangular cross-section. Occasionally the sub-bark surface has survived as a thin strip down one edge. Where they are visible the sawmarks lie at right-angles to the edge of the timber and are somewhat irregular, lying roughly 7-8mm apart, suggesting that they were frame-sawn. A large adze, some 0.13m across was used to dress the timbers. All the joints in the roof structure have been secured using wooden pegs, roughly 16mm in diameter, and also fashioned from pine.

The sarking is visible in the roof space above the ceiling and around the central window in the north wall. The sarking is also pine and very regular in width, being between 0.24m and 0.25m in width. The sarking bears much

finer sawmarks than those observed on the beams; the sawmarks are roughly 2 mm wide, which suggests that they are the product of a sawmill. The sarking has been pegged in place with small pine pegs, roughly 3 mm across. To the west of the window the lower sarking boards appear to have been replaced at some point and narrower boards, fixed with galvanised nails have been used.

The roof slates were secured to the sarking boards by means of pegs through holes in the top of the slate.

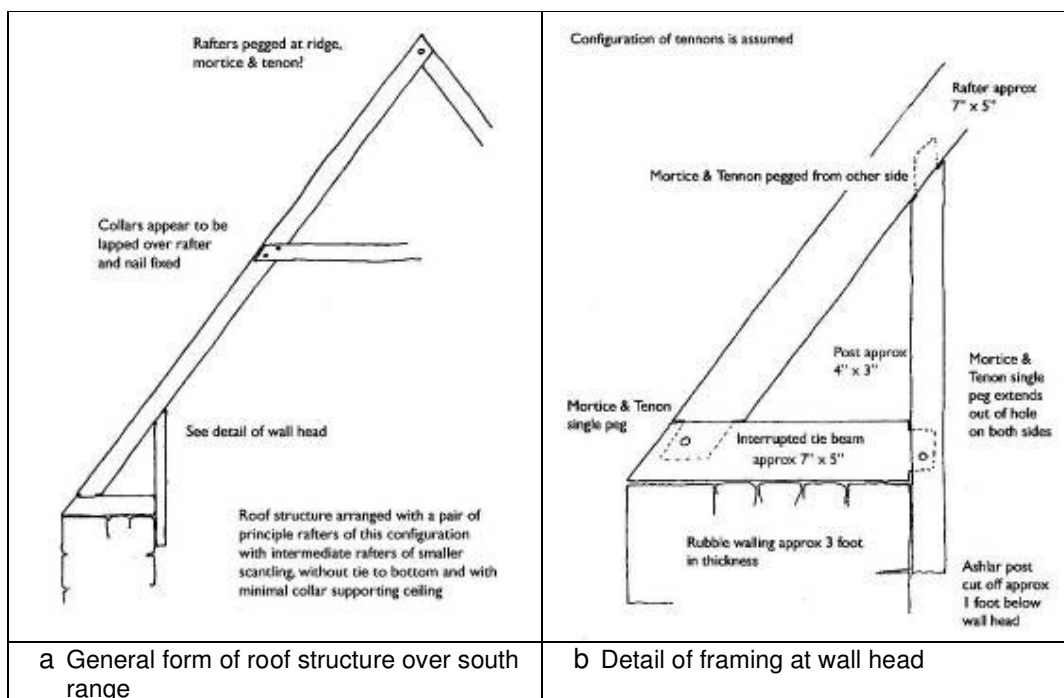


Figure 29: Sketch of general roof form and wall head detail to south range

The AOC report provides an interpretation of this roof structure based on their extensive surveys of roofs in the North-East of Scotland. This concentrates largely on the method of conversion used, that is sawing a log in half and adze-dressing the other three faces to provide a squared scantling. This has been seen in several high status buildings dating from the late 16th to early 17th century at which time vernacular buildings are employing cruder *squared* logs, adze dressed to shape in their roofs. Saw and adze shaped timber seems to become more common in vernacular buildings towards the end of the 18th century. As AOC say:

Thus, the woodworking technology used in the Old Courthouse is compatible with an 18th century date, and possibly later rather than earlier in the century.

This interpretation of the data however, does not seem take into account the form of the roof and characterises 5 Bolgam Street as a “vernacular” building. As Maudlin ⁴ explains, the onset of the *improvements* drove building technology on apace for those buildings that now occupied a new level in the social strata, neither vernacular nor high status - middle class building. It might be reasonable to place 5 Bolgam Street in this group rather than suggesting that it owes much to the indigenous vernacular building style that had evolved through time in the Western Highlands.

Ronald Brunskill ¹⁰ identifies this form of roof structure as an early one (17th to 18th century) and looking at cruck frames in relation to the interrupted tie beam / ashlar post roof form here, one can see how the former might have evolved into the latter. Brunskill suggests that the use of triangulation on the wall head in this way allowed for accommodation in a loft space not encumbered by a tie beam at low level ^{viii}. While Geoffrey Stell comments in his lecture to the 2002 Historic Scotland conference *Timber and the Built Environment* ¹¹:

An ubiquitous almost standard, feature of late medieval and early modern roofs of this type^{ix} is the triangulated ashlaring at the wall head”.

Discussions with Historic Scotland’s Technical Research Group suggest that this form of roof was more or less obsolete by 1700 at least in the Lowlands. Furthermore, the practice of peg fixing slates directly through the sarking also became rare during the 1700’s. Allowing for the remoteness of Campbeltown, it is fair to suggest that this archaic form may have persisted for some time. But it is worth noting that Campbeltown while highly peripheral today, was certainly less so in the 17th and 18th centuries when it was eminently accessible by sea and would have been exposed to influences from elsewhere in Scotland and more widely from England, Ireland, European countries and beyond.

5 Bolgam Street roof has no ridge board with each pair of rafters tied with a pegged half joint at the apex or ridge. This form of roof is known as a coupled roof and was common across England and at least the Lowlands of Scotland until the 19th century. Innocent ¹² comments that the close coupled roof may have originated in the Low Countries and have been imported to Wales by Flemish immigrants, perhaps it was in this way that the form came to Scotland also.

^{viii} Interestingly Brunskill details this type of roof with the ashlar post extending down and being tenoned into the floor structure. At the Old Courthouse, the ashlar posts terminate just below wall head level. It had been assumed in earlier SBPT reports that they had been cut back to accommodate 19th century finishes but the opinion of Anne Crone and others is that they would always have been in their current, truncated form.

^{ix} *This type* of roof as described by Stell is the *collar-rafter roof* such as that found in the south range.



Figure 30: Details of the south range roof

Alterations

The various later alterations to the complex are perhaps easier to identify. The 19th century alterations can, for the most part, be clearly seen although the fire surround to the main hall with its Doric columns, could either be a mid 18th century piece of classicism or a 19th century imitation of that earlier style. We know from the documentary evidence that at this time the front elevation was plastered "...as to imitate ashlar.." ⁸ and that lath and plaster work and joiner work was paid for. This would tie in with the overall 19th century feel to the interiors with moulded panelled doors predominating, and similar moulded panelled full shutters.

To the side ranges and south range, interiors are identifiable as being of the 1850's and all the windows to the complex appear to date from this period although some have been repaired with crude replacements for the original lambs tongue astragals. To the south range, first floor east end, is a decorative 19th century cast iron fire piece but elsewhere to the west of this range and to the ground floor west end of the Bolgam Street building, simpler and probably earlier stone surrounds survive.

The grand entrance to the Courtroom, the forestair and porch to the east wing is difficult to place stylistically but is generally thought to be a part of these 19th century updates also. This assumption is backed by the map evidence, no stair is shown on the 1841 Waterston map but the 1868 Ordnance Survey clearly shows the stair and porch. Earlier inspection of the east wing also showed that flights of stairs going to the south range and Bolgam Street building had been superimposed on an earlier floor structure.

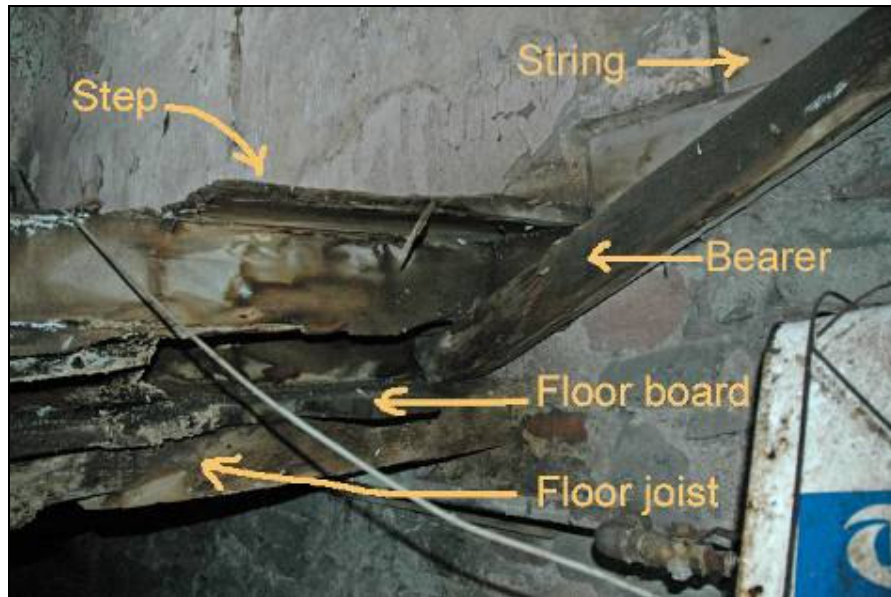


Figure 31: Remains of stairs to east wing, superimposed on top of original floor structure

The porch is of ashlar cut polychromatic sand stone and could be said to be of a revivalist architectural style, neither really classical nor gothic. It has perhaps Jacobean allusions but overall can be said to be largely a statement of the importance of the building rather than an example of any particular architectural genre. It originally bore a coat of arms or cipher, probably the arms of the Burgh of Campbeltown but this has sadly been lost due to erosion of the soft sandstone from which it is made. A serpent wrapped around a stepped pyramid finial surmounts the porch pediment but the meaning of this has been lost. Perhaps it is a mark left by the designer mason of this work.

2.6. Summary

5 Bolgam Street was built at some time in the 18th century either as a complete complex of buildings around a central courtyard or perhaps as two buildings of different dates that became linked when they fell into one ownership. Whether the buildings on the site today date from the early 1700's or later in that century is still open to debate but in around 1760 there was a complex of similar form on this site. At that time the Bolgam Street building was a three storey structure with views (albeit interrupted) over the harbour and out to sea. Whether this building was a house or a business premises is not clear but it was owned by a family with close links to mercantile and in particular sea borne trade. Stylistically the Bolgam Street building (with or without current window patterns) could date from any time in the 18th century as could the south range.

Stonework and structural timber are consistent with this wide date range but if the 1738 feu charter does relate to this property, it seems reasonable to suggest that the Flemings would have developed the site early in their tenure, or that these buildings were already standing on the site. This would add weight to the argument that the buildings on the 1860 William Douglas maps are substantially those that are standing today.

If this is the case, then 5 Bolgam Street is a very rare survivor of the early days of the Royal Burgh of Campbeltown (elevated to that status only in 1700). It is a good if altered, example of the style of building that would have been fashionable then, a physical reminder of the relative wealth and pretensions of the merchant class of this small Burgh. That the Flemings were *planted* lowlanders or European immigrants seems certain and their presence in Campbeltown is a reminder of this early example of social engineering and more widely of the mass emigration of Flemish Huguenots escaping religious persecution by King Louis XIV of France.

That the Ark came into the ownership of the Burgh in 1841 seems certain and that thereafter it was used for various purposes, most notably as the Sherriff Court and Police Office is also a matter of fact. It is as AOC state:

...a very good example of a small 19th century urban courthouse and unusually is an adaptation of an earlier (domestic?) building. Most similar courthouses went out of use by the mid 20th century and have been since lost or heavily converted. The survival of the Campbeltown Courthouse in such a complete state is unusual and it should be regarded as being of considerable local significance.

The long association between the building and the community of Campbeltown, its ownership by the Burgh from 1841 to 1992, its use as the Miners' Welfare Hall and its place in the memories of people alive today all provide this building with a high level of social significance.

If the existing window pattern is original then this is a particularly ostentatious piece of classically inspired Burgh architecture. It is unusual in its plan form, ranged around a central courtyard and may contain within it an early 18th century roof structure. In any case, 5 Bolgam Street is a good example of *improved* Burgh

architecture. Whether this importance is regional or national is still to be determined but the building is certainly worthy of its B listed status and is probably at the higher end of the range that, that category covers.

Whether the full story of 5 Bolgam Street will ever be fully told remains to be seen but its retention as part of the wider story of Campbeltown's development and of the development of small Highland Burghs is essential. The loss of this building would represent a lamentable failure of our society's systems for preserving and protecting our built heritage.

2.7. Summary of significance

There is a range of guidance to assist in assessing the importance of a historic building or site and identifying its areas of cultural significance^x. Most historic sites are significant for a variety of reasons, and it is important to understand all of these values in order that informed, balanced decisions can be made. Based on the work of James Semple Kerr and the definition of cultural significance outlined in full in the Burra Charter (2004)¹³, we have considered five key areas of significance:

1. Historical and social value
2. Architectural value
3. Completeness
4. Age and rarity
5. Group value

When considering each of the above key areas of significance it is possible to assign a relative value ranging from exceptional, through high and medium, to low and eventually none. It should be noted that as this building was listed Category B in August 1980, an indication that its overall significance then was considered 'high'. The list description was updated in 2007 to take account of the discovery of the roof to the south (in the listing description the east) range, which is described as a '*rare and special survival to the region*'.

The previous sections have identified aspects of the building's history that fall within each of these key areas and the following is therefore a simple summary, drawing out the key aspects of significance.

1. Historical and social value

5 Bolgam Street dates from the early years of the Royal Burgh of Campbeltown and for much of its life the complex has served the community in one way or another. The survival of much of the 18th century fabric alongside the trappings of a 19th century courthouse is highly significant.

2. Architectural value

^x Australia ICOMOS 2004: *The Burra Charter*. Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific or social value for past, present or future generations. Its purpose is to help identify and assess the attributes which make a place of value to us and to our society. An understanding of this is therefore essential before any works are planned.

The buildings exhibit architectural style typical of the 18th century Burgh whilst they are unusually configured around a small courtyard. The alterations to provide a public hall and then a courthouse for the Burgh are typical of their age whilst the whole has an ostentatious grandeur which speaks of the confidence of its original builder and of the Burgh Council who took it on.

5 Bolgam Street makes an important contribution to the rhythm and grain of Bolgam Street. Flanked by later but very different shop and tenement properties, its immediate area and the wider Conservation Area would be substantially diminished if it was lost.

This may not be a definitive example of any particular architectural genre but this group of buildings has an architectural quality which its shabby state does no justice to. Its architectural value must be considered as high.

3. Completeness

5 Bolgam Street contains a large amount of original fabric alongside almost unaltered additions from the 19th century. It is quite possible that the plan form of the complex is as it was in 1760 and the documentary evidence of its development since, provides a very complete record of a building that is now at least 250 years old. The value of the completeness of the building must be placed as exceptional.

4. Age and rarity

If this is a group of buildings from the mid 18th century, then it is a rare survivor. That the trappings of the courthouse of a small Burgh should also be so complete, is certainly rare⁵. If the buildings do date in large part from before 1760, then they are the oldest known buildings in the town. Their age and rarity value must therefore be characterised as high to exceptional.

5. Group value

5 Bolgam Street is a group of buildings, the loss of any part of the group would diminish the whole. Each part of the group exhibits aspects of significance be it the early roof structure, the 19th century court room or the extravagant entrance stairs and porch. The group value of this complex must be identified as exceptional.

Overall then it is not unreasonable to identify 5 Bolgam Street as a building of at least high significance. How much its story has to tell us about the development of 18th century Burgh architecture and in consequence how important it is to the national built heritage record can only be answered by more study into comparative buildings across the small Burghs of Scotland.

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