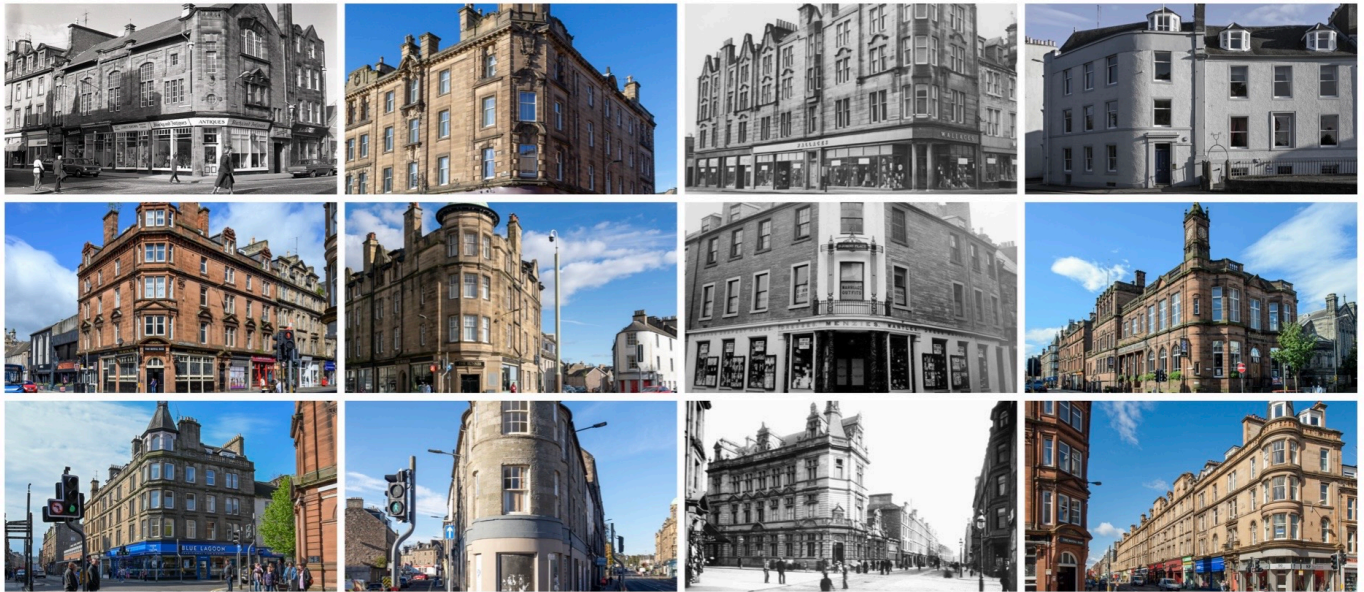


TURNING THE CORNER

PERTH'S CORNER BUILDINGS PAST AND PRESENT



Slide notes

Slide 1.

Cover

Slide 2.

Medieval Perth.

FPKA 21st May, 6.30pm, Finding Historic Perth. David Bowler.

Museum, 29 May - 6 September. Vennels: Perth's Little Streets.

Slide 3

John Wood's 1823 Map of Perth, showing fewer cross streets than now. Also, no Tay Street and the bottom of the High Street closed off by the Council House attached to the Tolbooth. The harbour was at the bottom of the High Street and after the bridge of 1617 was washed away in 1621, the only access from the east side of the Tay was by boat.

South Methven Street was laid out in 1791, with King Street laid out in 1803.

George Street was laid out in 1770-1771 to connect with Smeaton's Bridge

Princes Street laid out around 1770 with the southern section from 1801.

Kinnoull Street was laid out in 1823 but only went to Mill Street but later connected to Scott Street by 1895..

Scott Street was originally laid out in 1803, but by 1823 only goes to Canal Street. The remainder arrived in stages, Canal Street to South Street by 1877, South Street to High Street 1893-95 and was originally called New South Street.

St John Street was laid out 1801.

Tay Street 1870.

King Edward Street 1901-02.

Slide 4

Modern OS Map of central Perth showing much greater Road / street connectivity. The increased number of crossroads offered greater opportunity for significant corner buildings to occupy prime sites.

Slide 5

“Don’t it always seem to go, that you don’t know what you’ve got till it’s gone”. Song lyric - which one? Joni Mitchell, Big Yellow Taxi, 1970. Sentiment was about the loss of the environment, but is equally relevant to the loss of the built environment.

Slide 6

37-43 Scott Street / 141 and 143 South Street. This is when it was the present. C listed. Designed by David Smart, 1897- 99 and constructed by Robert Brand & Son. Prominent red sandstone corner building on South Street which was the southern street of medieval Perth, inside the city walls. Home to the Royal Bar and other retail premises on the ground floor with housing above.

Slide 7

Fire. 14 June 2025 around 1.50am fire broke out on the upper floor, spreading to the roof. Occupants of the building and surrounding buildings were evacuated, there was one male fatality and a young girl and a man were taken to hospital. Fire fighters were injured by falling masonry, it took a while to extinguish the fire.

Slide 8

The aftermath. Streets closed, traffic re-routed, buildings evacuated. A cordon was put in place preventing occupants of adjacent buildings returning, even to get clothing and belongings. The Salutation Hotel acted as a rescue hub.

While the fire mostly effected the roof and upper floors, debris blocked the stairway making inspection difficult. The structural integrity of the building was considered to be compromised and demolition was ordered. PKC stepped in to organise this on the grounds of public safety. Business’s were forced to close and nearby flats remained unoccupiable, for a period.

Through routes were closed off causing major disruption. Business on the edge of the safety cordon lost trade through reduced footfall.

The only good news was the recovery of a small Chihuahua puppy called Vilo, which had been trapped in the wreckage for two weeks.

Slide 9

Demolition begins. Top down. Going, going.....

Slide 10

Almost gone. Gone. Now it is the past.

Slide 11

Planning proposal for cladding exposed gables and hoardings. Somewhat more sophisticated than the normal black polythene and timber battens! Suggests it may be sometime before anything is going to happen. Lots of owners, lots of insurers and nobody leading the project. A long term gaping wound in the City's fabric.

To take a project forward some entity with substantial resources, and credibility needs to lead the project. A lot will depend on how the Insurers payout - individuals or pooled. Is the site sold off to a developer as part of the settlement? Will there be any public involvement, a Design competition? Who might fund it.

This was a building of its time, constructed to different standards with many combustible materials, multiple owners and occupiers. There are many other buildings from this period, as we shall see. We hope this acts as a warning to what can happen and encourages owners to re-evaluate their precautions and take advice from the Fire Officer and Building Standards to avoid a similar occurrence in the future.

Slide 12

The present on the other three corners of the junction. Opposite, 46-50 Scott Street / 137 South Street, designed by James Smart, 1896-97. Plus two others.

Slide 13

Further west on the same thoroughfare on County Place, from 1828, on the site of the Brown Cow Inn, from which the current Hotel evolved. The curved corner Branch No 1 of Perth Co-operative Society, which opened in 1878, was later incorporated. The Hotel has variously been known as The County Place Inn, The New Row Inn and most recently The New County Hotel.

The New County Hotel also suffered a fire on 2 January 2023, with four fatalities, one a dog. The building didn't suffer the same degree of devastation, but pumping large amounts of water into it and then leaving it to fester for three and a half years isn't going to be doing it any good. Investigation into the cause of the fire is ongoing. Really? Apparently, the building's owner has passed away and his company has gone into

liquidation. Another leaderless project doesn't auger well for a return to meaningful purpose. Both past and present, but what of the future.

Slide 14

The other prominent buildings on the junction. York Corner (left) B'Listed, designed by George Penrose Kennedy Young in 1906-07. One of the most prominent and highly decorated corner buildings in Perth, according to the Listing Notice. Young mostly worked in The local area and was also responsible for a number of other major projects, Northern District School, the victim of fire the Saturday after Scott Street / South Street, now also demolished, General Accident's HQ of 1899 and the extension to the Moncreiffe Natural History Museum of 1895, among others. Right, 32-42 New Row / 29-39 County Place, Methven Buildings, also by GPK Young. Different style and materials.

Slide 15

Further west on the same road. The former Waverley Hotel of 1887, A long standing guardian on the corner of Caledonian Road and York Place. Before the cattle market moved to the outskirts of Perth (before then moving to Stirling) this area of Perth thrived, particularly on Friday's, Market day and during the annual Perth Bull Sales which attracted international interest and visitors. The hotel was also famous for it's High Teas and as a wedding venue. The relocation of the Market lead to a decline and the building was eventually used as a Homeless hostel until 2011. The building became derelict and suffered a major fire in November 2015 and was subsequently demolished in 2017.

Slide 16

While the building's that has replaced the Waverley Hotel no doubt suits the needs on the owners, the adjacent Church congregation, it doesn't have the presence of the previous buildings nor does it continue the procession of gables further up and down York Place.

Slide 17

Diagonally opposite, in the past we had Perth Garage. An interesting confection. One of three identical semi-detached villas, of which one, 18-20 York Place, the home of John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir) remains. The building was obviously modified and extended to suit it's commercial purposes. It's replacement is much more utilitarian.

Slide 18

There had been many wooden bridges across the Tay via Stanners Island from the 12th century onwards, but these were regularly washed away by floods, A stone bridge from 1617 needed regular repair, but it was ultimately destroyed by flooding four years later. From 1621 until 1772 when Smeaton's bridge opened, there was no bridge over the Tay at Perth with all cross river travel being by boat, with the harbour being at the bottom of the High Street.

The Tolbooth was built in 1666 and incorporated the ground floor of the adjacent chapel of Our Lady, a scarce survivor of pre-Reformation days. The Council House was built in 1694-1696 at right angles to the Tolbooth across the bottom of High Street where those entering from the river used the weigh house and paid their tolls. The building also

contained the Court and Jail and Council Room for meetings and office accommodation for the Town Clerk and Chamberlain.

The Council House across High Street was demolished in 1839, with some of the functions transferring to the Tolbooth with others dispersed.

Slide 19

In the mid 1870's there was mounting pressure to improve the Police cells in the Tolbooth and the Council decided to replace it with a larger building to accommodate the full range of public functions. The old Tolbooth and medieval tower were demolished in around 1878 and by November of 1879 the new Municipal Buildings on High Street and Tay Street, design by local Architect Andrew Heiton Junior, were opened for business.

Laying the foundation stone for the new Council Chambers. Lots of top hats! Seems an odd time to be laying the foundation stone when part of the building is at First floor level.

Slide 20

But it wasn't long before disaster struck. The new building was gutted by fire on 23rd January 1895 with the loss of many civic treasures.

Slide 21

The building was not demolished but rebuilt and extended by Andrew Granger Heiton, nephew of Andrew Heiton Junior in 1895-96. The photograph shows decorations to celebrate the Coronation of King Edward's VII in 1902.

Slide 22

The Grade B Listed Building is still with us although disused since being declared surplus by Perth & Kinross Council in 2008. It had previously been intended to be converted into a boutique hotel with the building being sold to a developer for £1.00 with a further contribution from the Council of £1.9m on completion. However, the developer went into liquidation. A new developer, managed by two of the Directors of the previous Developer, was formed with the proposal amended to provide not a Hotel, but 74 Serviced Apartments under the same deal as previously offered. As one wag put it, "74 more Airbnb's!"

Slide 23

Further along Tay Street, on the corner of Canal Street was constructed The New Hall and Opera House in 1881 to the designs of John Young in the Scottish baronial style, with later extensions by JPK Young. In the left hand photo the building looks pristine, although the road looks unfinished. The right hand photograph is later. You can tell by the road signs and car

The building had mixed success as a performance venue and was taken over by Perth Baptist Church in 1891 and continued in use until the major fire in July 1984.

Slide 24

While most of the damage appears to be to the roof and upper floor, the decision was made to demolish the building removing a significant corner building long observed by those crossing either the Victoria or later Queen's Bridges from the eastern bank of the Tay.

Slide 25

The building that replaced it, Quayside Court, designed by Ian Burke Associates shows the difference in floor to ceiling heights between then and now in managing to get four floors of accommodation where before there was 2 and a half. While an attempt was made to replicated the corner tower of its predecessor, it's prominence is reduced.

Slide 26

Further up Canal Street on the corner of Scott Street stood two of the main buildings of Perth Cooperative society shown in 1914. Very elegant with it's canopy's and even a customer in a straw boater. Could have been on Paris Boulevard? The building was designed by Glasgow Architects William McLaren and Robert Mackay in 1904-06.

Slide 27

The building became the Society's warehouse and showrooms. On the evening of 8th November 1960 the building suffered what was described at the time as the "Town's most spectacular blaze in a generation" which obviously drew a large crowd, which looks to be very close to the blazing building. The surrounding flats and the public wash house in Charles street, behind the building, were evacuated with over 50 women doing their families washing, seen running out into the street clutching their bundles of wet washing.

There would certainly been plenty of underwear to be washed the next day, particularly from those close to the front of the crowd, when the corner tower collapsed into the street.

Slide 28

Despite the damage to the roof and upper floor, the building was not demolished, but repaired and refurbished in the style of the day. Which, while retaining the bulk of the building unfortunately does nothing for it's overall appearance.

It seems to be common that the top floor of replacement or repaired corner buildings are rather bland and share none of the exuberance of their predecessors.

Slide 29

Past and present on the other Canal Street / Scott Street corner. The top image is of the building dating from 1883 which was abutted by The Co-operative Hall on Canal Street of 1893. Neither suffered from the fire of 1960 on the opposite corner, but declined over the years as the Co-op operations were scaled back due to the rise of new supermarkets. The building was subsequently demolished and a new building, Servite House, was

constructed in its place. It is by no means a copy of its predecessor it is very respectful of its style, proportion and detailing.

Slide 30

Further south on Scott Street at the junction with Victoria Street, was constructed the St Leonard's Free Church in 1849 although the congregation moved to St Leonard's-in-the-fields in 1885. The building suffered a fire, but it was repaired and altered, becoming an indoor roller skating rink, BB Cinerama, one of Perth's earliest Cinemas and ultimately a bingo hall. It then fell into disrepair and was demolished to make way for new housing.

An apparently identical church was constructed in 1843 on the corner of Carpenter Street and Blackfriars Street, The Free Middle Church remained there until the new Middle Church opened on Tay Street in 1887. Demonstrating the versatility of the building type it also had other uses, including as a depot for Hydro Electric and as the Computer Centre for Perth & Kinross Council.

Slide 31

On the other side of the Victoria Street are two contrasting styles of housing. On the left, the more utilitarian St Johnstoun Buildings on the corner of Scott Street and Victoria Street dating from 1925 and on the right the rather more decorative corner of Victoria Street and Charles Street dating from 1903.

Slide 32

Another example of dereliction, this time on the corner of High Street and Caledonian Road. Moir's Building was erected by Baillie James Moir, a mason and builder in 1885 for his son Alexander a Licensed Grocer. The building had a number of occupants, including a Chain Saw Centre, prior to demolition in 1992, The tenements either side were retained with the corner being replaced by housing in 1993. While not a copy, it is respectful of the original in a modern way.

Slide 33

While there was an earlier eighteenth century Post Office on the corner of High Street and Watergate it moved to George Street / Charlotte Street in the late 18th century. However, by 1862 it was deemed too small, and the function was moved to High Street. The category B Listed Building remains in use today and has been a number of restaurants in the recent past.

Slide 34

This new building was constructed on the corner of High Street and Tay Street in 1862 but with expanding postal services, this building was soon also found to be too small. 200 workers were based there in 1894, some in sheds in the grounds. A new Post Office on a grander scale further up the High Street replaced it.

The building was then demolished and replaced by...

Slide 35

New offices for the General Accident Fire and Life Assurance Company designed by GPK Young, which moved from 44 Tay Street as business expanded. Another foundation stone laying. The building is also decorated for the Coronation of King Edward VII in 1902.

Slide 36

From that initial construction, the building expanded incrementally to take over the whole block as the company expanded worldwide. Further expansion of business saw the need for larger premises and a whole new complex designed by James Parr and Partners was built at Pitheavlis on the outskirts of Perth between 1979-83. The building was sold to Perth & Kinross District Council in 1983 after which it was converted and re-serviced for occupation by 1985. It remains as Perth & Kinross Council's HQ today.

Slide 37

In 1898 a new much grander Post Office dominated the corner of High Street and Scott Street, which it did until

Slide 38

But even that one did not last and in 1973 Operations were split with sorting office facilities moving to St Andrew's Street and customer services moving to South Street. Demolition began.

Slide 39

Site clearance in progress.

Slide 40

What replaced it was much more functional and lacked the grandeur and presence of its predecessor.

Slide 41

The opposite corners of the junction are both past and present. Different names but the buildings are still there.

Slide 42

Junction is completed by another David Smart designed B Listed building from 1900 (with another he also designed behind it at 6-12 Kinnoull Street, from 1895.) The materials and detailing are similar to the South Street / Scott Street building, especially the mixed window pediments and cornice detailing. Built for the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Slide 43

Behind the previous building which it preceded was constructed the Sandeman Public Library designed by Campbell Douglas and Morrison, dated 1898. Built as a result of a

bequest of Professor Archibald Sandeman of Queen's College, Cambridge who came from a Perth textile family. C Listed. Ceased to be a Library in 1994 and was used as offices following Local Government re-organisation in 1996, until 2000. Thereafter, it became a Public House.

Slide 44

The other buildings on the Mill street / Kinnoull Street junction.

TL. Sandeman as it is today, a pub.

TR, Perth Congregational Church. B Listed. Designed by Steel and Balfour, Glasgow 1897-99.

BL The remaining part of what was once a massive industrial complex for Pullars of Perth, Britain's first dry cleaners, constructed between 1864-65. B Listed. Converted to Offices for Perth & Kinross Council in 2000.

BR. 31-33 Kinnoull Street, Bordeaux House by McLaren & Mackay 1906-07, Listed C, as the HQ of the wine/spirits business of Matthew Gloag & Son. The building had a quarter acre basement cellar space.

Slide 45

Further along Kinnoull Street, originally built as The Alhambra Cinema which opened to the public in 1922. By 1956 it traded as The Gaumont before ending life as a cinema as The Odeon in 1980. Thereafter, it was a billiard hall and Nightclub before being destroyed by fire in 1993. Further along the street you can see Matthew Gloags whisky bond and bottling plant. Both site subsequently redeveloped for housing.

Slide 46

Top picture. Now a well known restaurant this B Listed building was originally constructed in 1820 as the Theatre Royal. It didn't do all that well, however a noted visit by Italian violinist Paganini is much remembered. He performed there in 1831, an occasion that has been described as "the greatest musical event in the history of Perth". Other concert memories may be available. Outbreaks of Cholera affected theatre attendances in the 1830's and the opening of the City Hall in 1845 lead to it's demise and eventual sale in 1860 when it was converted into a clothes store.

Bottom picture. Previously known as Atholl House, a single dwelling before being converted to flats. From 1914-22 this B Listed building housed the Army Pay Records Department and has also been offices for the Children's Panel.

Slide 47

Another corner building which succumbed to changing needs. Wallace's' department store on the corner of High Street and King Edward Street. It was quite unusual in that it also incorporated Perth Fire Station until that moved to Long Causeway in 1971. However shopping needs changed and more open retail areas became the norm.

Slide 48

Wallace's building was demolished along with the previous shopping centre as part of the large St John's Centre development. The corner became the home of Fraser's and then Debenham's as we see in the picture, but even that type of building succumbed to the changing retail landscape with online shopping compounded by COVID saw it's demise. New use required.

Slide 49

Further down King Edward Street on the corner of the previous shopping centre. Stood Valentine's Garage and Buildings, when such sales areas were part of the centre of town, from 1922. Closed in 1983. The building was replaced as part of the St John's Centre redevelopment and is now the location for the TSB Bank. Note the gap between the TSB and the remaining building. This is for vehicular access to the roof area as all the units in the St John's Centre are serviced from above.

Slide 50

The other King Edward's Street corner buildings. Details

TL. Designed by Menart & Jarvie in 1904 in the Baroque style. B Listed.

TR. Salvation Army Citadel and Hall. C Listed. Designed by John Hamilton, Glasgow 1904.

BL. From 1901-02. Bank of Scotland since 2003, had previous life in retail

BR. 22-26 KES. C Listed. Described as "Simple Renaissance 3 storey and attic corner building"

Slide 51

High Street / South Methven Street junction, past and present.

TL. St Paul's Church, Grade B Listed, the first new Church in Perth after the Reformation to designs by John Paterson, Edinburgh. Unusual octagonal church with tall steeple and pepper pot turrets. The building use ended in 1986. There were a number of plans for re-use but all fell through, and the building decayed. But as a significant landmark looking west up High Street it was decided to retain the bones of the structure and use as an outdoor performance space.

TR. Town and Country Bank, designed by D N Shaw 1889-90. Multifaceted corner building. B Listed.

BL. 16-18 Methven Street. Designed by Peter Roy Jackson in 1894. Prominent and well detailed red sandstone corner building with significant cupola. Ground floor has been a number of Banks over the years but more recent has housed restaurants. B Listed.

BR. Classical curved corner tenement, designed by Andrew Granger Heiton in 1903 for a Mr Henderson. A G Heiton took over his uncle, Andrew Heiton Junior's practice around 1891. C Listed.

Slide 52

Types of Corner. To fit the site.

Left and centre, The Coffin Building on Commercial Street. Right, corner of Bridge Lane and George Street

Slide 53

Sometimes it is the street pattern that dictates sites. The layout of South Street Port with Canal Crescent and Hospital Street dictates the sites available.

Slide 54

TL. Canal street Canal Crescent junction. (C Listed)

TR. Canal Crescent / King Street junction. (B Listed)

BL. Hospital Street / County Place junction. (B Listed)

BR. County Place / South Methven Street junction. (C Listed)

Slide 55

The other corner of South Methven Street / South Street as it was until 1900 and what replaced it. Category B Listed, designed by McLaren & Mackay in 1900-01. Ground floor designed as a public house and has had many publicans and names over the years.

Slide 56

The building as it is today. Currently The Silvery Tay.

Slide 57

South Street / Canal Crescent as it is today. 220 South Street / 17 Canal Crescent was designed by James Bow Dunn & James Leslie Findlay in 1903-04. Originally designed to have a public bar on the ground floor, the building has had many other uses including as a Bank, but has currently returned to its designed function. Category B Listed.

3 King Street / 32 Canal Crescent is from the late 18th century. Also B Listed.

Slide 58

Another site / built form that dictated the corner building. Atholl Street / Blackfriars Street and Atholl Crescent.

Category A Listed Atholl Crescent started construction in 1797. This B Listed corner building is from 1800 and has been home to The Royal Perth Golfing Society (founded in 1824, the first Royal Golfing Society) since 1876.

Slide 59

Corners Squared.

South Street / St John's Street. Late 1790's. (B Listed)

South Street / Watergate. Early 18th century public house and has been many since. (B Listed)

Slide 60

TL. South Street / Tay Street.

Fiscal's House. Designed by David Smart 1865-66, former Sheriff Clerk's and Procurator Fiscal's Office. Has also been a police Station, County Building's and offices of Tay River Purification Board. Now flats.

TR. Waterworks 1832 - 1965. Tay Street / Marshall Place.

Not original but added to provide more pumping capacity as Perth expanded. Originally designed by Adam Anderson. A Listed.

BL. High Street / George Street. Dating from 1774, B Listed.

BR. North Methven Street / Atholl Street. One of many Perth Co- operative Society Limited branches

Slide 61

TL. Atholl Street / Rose Terrace. B Listed, pre-1805

TR. Old High Street / Mill Wynd.

BL. South Street / Princes Street. Originally designed by David Rhind for the Commercial Bank of Scotland 1856-58 in the Florentine Palazzo style. B Listed. Recently a series of restaurants.

He also designed the Bank at 48-50 St John Street in 1846, also in the Italian Palazzo style. A Listed.

BR. Canal Street / Princes Street. C Listed, mid 18th century, believed to have been used as a Temperance Hall during the 19th century.

Slide 62

Corners Angled.

Dunkeld Road. Robertson's Buildings, Dunkeld Road. Pristine in the top picture, a bit grubbier in the bottom picture. The background is of interest. Major changes at St Ninian's Cathedral.

Slide 63

Top. Corner of Princes Street and Canal Street. A little Art Decoesque.
BL. Corner of St Catherine's Road / Long Causeway.
BR. Complex in Carpenter Street.

Slide 64

TL. King Edward Street / St John's Place
TS. Old High Street / Caledonian Road
BL. Milne Street / Market Street
BR. George Street / Bridge Lane.

Slide 65

Corners Curved.

TL. Long causeway/ Caledonian Road.
TR. Canal street / Speygate.
BL. St Catherine's Road.
BR. Glasgow Road / Glover Street

Slide 66

TL. Atholl Street / Melville Street. C Listed, early 19th century.
TR. St John Street / St John's Place. B Listed, early 19th century.
BL. Bridge Street / Main Street, Bridgend. C Listed, early 19th C
BR. St John's Place / Kirkgate. C Listed, early 19th century.

Slide 67

Projecting curves / Bow Windows

Top. George Street / Charlotte Street. Late 18th C. B Listed.
Bottom. Charlotte Street / Charlotte Place. 1860 in Neo Greek style.
B Listed.

Either end of a terrace

Slide 68

Corner Towers

TL. New Row / County Place.
TC. South Methven Street / High Street.
TR. South Street / St John Street.
BL. Kinnoull Street / Foundry Lane.
BC. Abbott Street /
BR. Croft Bank / Priory Place.

Slide 69

Would you believe it?

How a restrained small hotel morphed into.....

Slide 70

An ABC Production for Perth Civic Trust.

The end.

TURNING THE CORNER
PERTH'S CORNER BUILDINGS PAST AND PRESENT

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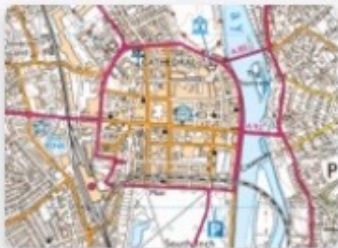
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"Don't it always seem to go,
you don't know what you've got till it's gone..."



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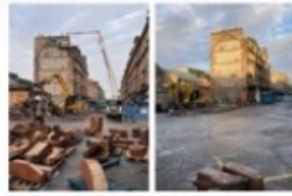
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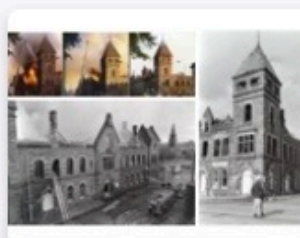
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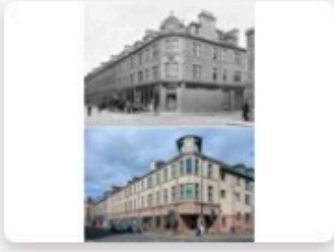
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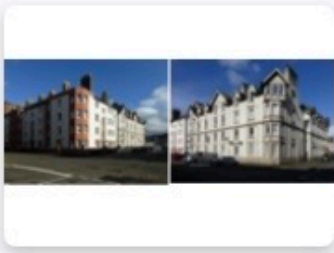
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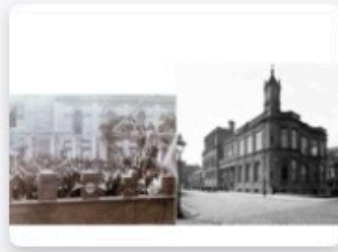
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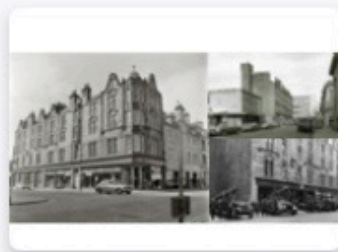
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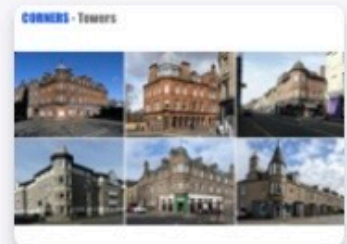
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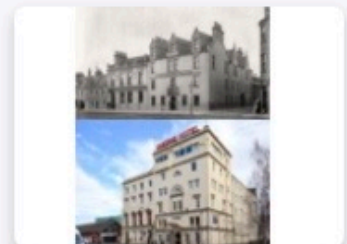
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