

11 September 2024

## **FYVIE CASTLE: PLANNING FOR HISTORY'S FUTURE**

Conservation charity the National Trust for Scotland has announced initiatives to determine and secure the future of Fyvie Castle and Estate, near Turriff, Aberdeenshire as a thriving heritage attraction.

The news comes on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the castle, which dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, being taken into the Trust's care.

The Trust has appointed Page\Park Architects to develop a masterplan for the castle and its 123 acres of landscaped grounds and gardens. This will inform future investment in conservation, storytelling, engagement and enhanced visitor facilities.

As a first step, the Trust has purchased the adjacent Old Home Farm building outright and is planning works to stabilise the structure which is in a dilapidated condition. This will protect this heritage building and support the completion of the masterplan. Adaptive re-use of the historic farm buildings may include an orientation and interpretation hub for the wider estate and cafe provision.

Iain Hawkins, the National Trust for Scotland's Regional Director for North East Scotland said:

"Fyvie is one of the most historic and eclectic properties in the National Trust for Scotland's portfolio.

"Since its beginnings in the 13<sup>th</sup> century it has served as a royal stronghold for William the Lion, Alexander II and Robert the Bruce and was, in succession, the seat of the prestigious Preston, Meldrum, Seton, Gordon and Leith dynasties. It was also a Royal nursery for a time for Prince Charles, later Charles I, and the site of a tumultuous civil war battle in 1644.

"Very few places are soaked in so much eventful history and the castle and estate deserve to be better recognised for the heritage this place represents. That is our motivation for setting in train a process that will raise its profile and fully realise its potential to welcome more visitors and offer them a uniquely rewarding experience."

Eilidh Henderson, Director of Page\Park Architects said:

"We're delighted to have been selected by the National Trust for Scotland to evolve the masterplan and conservation works to Fyvie Castle and estate. The appointment follows a competitive tender process attracting interest from across the UK.

"Fyvie Castle is considered one of the finest examples of Scottish Baronial architecture in the country; and is a must-see landmark in the collection of castles across the North East of Scotland. The project is intended to unlock all that the site has to offer, to ensure

its ongoing sustainability and success as a visitor attraction and heritage experience for people from all walks of life.

The appointment reinforces the commitment at Page\Park Architects to achieving transformational change in cultural settings, underpinned by careful conservation and creative thinking.

“We’ll be working alongside a skilled consultant team that includes Narro Associates, Harley Haddow, Adams Napier Partnership, Buro Happold and People Friendly Design.”

Iain Hawkins continued:

“We’re very happy indeed to appoint Page\Park architects to take forward this emerging major conservation project for Fyvie Castle and estate.

“We’re looking forward to working with both them and the other highly skilled contractors who will help us conserve this special place, enhance its stories and allow wider access for all to create a sustainable heritage experience for generations to come.

“Our optimism is bolstered by the very successful living history event which took place earlier this month to commemorate the 1644 Battle of Fyvie. Around 2,500 people travelled from far and wide to enjoy the sights and sounds of the occasion and to explore the natural beauty of the estate.

“This confirms that our decisions to invest in the Old Home Farm and the master planning process are the right ones.

“We’ve also begun engagement with the local and wider communities and the feedback so far has been extremely insightful and helpful: it will aid Page\Park to a significant degree in their thinking.

“Community engagement activities at Fyvie, supported in 2024 by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, have included an event for people with additional support needs and their carers, visits to the castle and grounds for community groups to take part in creative and wellbeing workshops, and health walks around the loch. These relationships with community groups, and public and other third sector organisations, will be key to the process going forward.

“We expect to have completed plans to share by the spring or early summer of 2025.”

**ENDS**

**Editor’s Notes:**

**Images:** <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/tmwSc9KAyf>

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## **Fyvie Castle, Garden and Estate**

2024 is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Fyvie Castle coming into the care of the National Trust for Scotland. The castle, gardens and grounds, including the picturesque Loch of Fyvie, were secured for the nation with support from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) amounting to £1.7m. In addition, NHMF provided a further £1.32m to be used for capital works and to establish an endowment. The NHMF grant was at that time the largest ever allocated to any organisation in Scotland.

King William 'The Lion' of Scotland is known to have been at Fyvie Castle with his Court in 1211/14, which also marks the period when stone structures began to replace earlier wooden buildings. After subsequent use by Scotland's monarchs, including Robert the Bruce, the castle and estate passed into the hands of the Preston Family (1390 – 1433; the oldest remaining part of the castle, the Preston Tower, was built circa 1400). Between 1596-1690, it was in the hands of the Setons (during this period, the castle briefly served as home for the infant Charles I and was at the centre of a civil war battle in 1644, later followed by Cromwellian occupation) and between 1733-1889 it was the property of the Gordon family. The castle's 'Leith period' came between 1889 and 1984 following its sale to wealthy steel magnate Alexander Forbes-Leith who was born locally but made his fortune in Illinois, USA, and who also added an extensive art collection to the property.

Each period is characterised by architectural additions and improvements made by succeeding occupants, making Fyvie Castle a repository of Scottish history written in stone.

Fyvie Castle lies off the A947, 8 miles south-east of Turriff and 25 miles north-west of Aberdeen.

## **About the National Trust for Scotland**

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work. For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit [www.nts.org.uk](http://www.nts.org.uk). The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.