

Designation Report of Handling



HISTORIC
ENVIRONMENT
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Case information

Case ID	300061003
Name of Site	Dumbuck Hotel, Glasgow Road,
Postcode (if any)	G82 1EG
Local Authority	West Dunbartonshire Council
National Grid Reference	NS 41534 74504
Designation Type	Listed Building
Designation No. and category of listing (if any)	LB14403 Category B
Case Type	Removal
Received/Start Date	20/09/2022
Decision Date	24/10/2023

1. Decision

Previous Statutory Listing Address	Dumbuck Hotel	Previous category of listing	B
New Statutory Listing Address	N/A	New category of listing	N/A

Our assessment using the selection guidance shows that the building no longer meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest. The decision is to remove the listing.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

This building was listed at category B on 14/05/1971.

2.2 Development Proposals

www.historicenvironment.scot

Historic Environment Scotland, Longmore House,
Salisbury Place, Edinburgh, EH9 1SH

Historic Environment Scotland
Scottish Charity No. **SC045925**
VAT Number: **GB 221 8680 15**

The building is the subject of the following development proposals:

- Change of Use from hotel to form 6 flatted dwellings and associated alterations (Ref. No. DC21/314/FUL). Application validated on 03/02/2022 and the current status is “Pending Consideration”.
- Demolition of flat roof side extension and Retrospective Permission for the erection of extensions to existing building to form residential development of flatted dwellings and associated parking, open-space and boundary fencing (Ref. No. DC22/007/LBC) Application validated on 20/01/2022 and the current status is “Pending Consideration”.
- Alterations and single storey side and rear extensions to hotel to form additional rooms, manager accommodation and 4 holiday let units (Ref. No: DC21/210/LBC). Application received 03/08/2021 and the current status is ‘Application Received’.
- Part demolition and conversion of hotel to form 8 flatted dwellings. Erection of 4 single storey dwelling houses and the erection of security fence and gates (part retrospective) (Ref. No DC23/076/FUL). Application received 25/04/2023 and the current status is ‘Application Invalid On Receipt’.
- Partial demolition. Conversion of hotel to form 8 flats erection of 4 single storey dwelling houses and erection of security fence and gate (part retrospective) (Ref. No DC23/077/LBC). Application received 26/04/2023 and the current status is ‘Application Invalid On Receipt’.

Our decision is to remove the designation while there are advanced development proposals. We discuss this further in section 3.4 under Policy considerations.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

We received an application to remove the designation of Dumbuck Hotel on 20/09/2022.

When we receive a designation application we contact the planning authority and those directly affected by the proposal.

Designations applications are published on our portal and will be available to view during the lifetime of the case and until 3 months after the case is closed.

The applicant provided the following information and views in their application. We have summarised the key points here:

- There is no possibility of future reuse due to the current economic climate.
- The fabric of the property is now in a poor state and will worsen through time.
- The property has been extended and altered internally with many original features including the simple front porch having been removed.

As part of our research and data-gathering:

- We visited Dumbuck Hotel on 18/01/2023 and saw both the interior and the exterior of the building.
- We reviewed available archival information about the building.

3.2 Comments received during our evidence-gathering

We encourage people who have views or information on a case to get in touch with us at an early stage of our assessment. We welcome comments at an early stage to ensure that we have a full and inclusive understanding of the significance of a place, and to ensure that we are aware of all the circumstances of the case.

We received five written submissions between the time the case was validated until the formal consultation stage. We take into account in our assessment evidence or comments received where these are relevant to our decision-making. We have summarised below the key points we took from the submissions.

	Interested parties	Response
1	West Dunbartonshire Council	The council confirmed the planning context of the site. They noted their strong opposition to the removal of the listing. They noted the building is a good example of a late 18 th century/early 19 th century classical/Palladian mansion. Although modified, externally it largely retains its original appearance, symmetry and character, defined by the 2.5 storey central building with lower wings each side. It is a prominent and well-known landmark on the road into Dumbarton from the east, and an important cultural reference point within West Dunbartonshire. The building is valued by the local community.
2	Dumbarton East & Central Community Council	They noted their concern that if the building is delisted the Community Council will not be able to give feedback at Planning Committee.

3	Three private individuals	Noted their objection to delisting. They all noted that the building is a landmark in the area and part of Dumbarton's heritage.
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3.3 Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

We carried out an assessment using the selection guidance to decide whether a site or place is of special architectural or historic interest. **See Annex A.**

We have found that the building no longer meets the criteria for listing.

The listing criteria and selection guidance for listed buildings are published in Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019), Annex 2, pp. 11-13, <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>.

3.4 Policy considerations

Our policy on development proposals is set out on pages 7-8 of the Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (DPSG), pp. 7-8. <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>. Our policy states:

“We consider the individual circumstances of each case. In deciding whether to designate a site or place or amend an existing designation while there are ongoing development proposals, we will consider:

- the implications of designation on development proposals;
- the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the site or place; and
- the extent to which plans have been developed for the site or place – where these are particularly advanced, we will not normally list or schedule.

The policy goes on to say that:

“Where it is highly likely that the site or place no longer meets the designation criteria, we may consider removing the designation to avoid unnecessary regulatory processes. We might do this even where there are unresolved development or enforcement issues.”

In this case, our view is that the building no longer meets the criteria for listing and therefore listing is no longer justified. For that reason, we have decided to remove the building from the list even though there are current discussions about development.

4. Consultation

4.1 Consultation information

We consulted on a proposal to remove the designation.

The original consultation period was from 15/06/2023 to 06/07/2023. The consultation was extended to 31 July 2023 at the request of the planning authority.

We have consulted directly with the owner(s)/occupier(s) and the planning authority.

The consultation report of handling was published on our portal for comment from interested parties.

4.2 Designation consultations

Comments we consider

We consider comments and representations which are material to our decision-making, such as:

- Your understanding of the cultural significance of the site or place and whether it meets the criteria for designation.
- The purpose and implications of designating the site or place. We consider whether these are relevant to the case.
- Development proposals related to the site or place. Where there are development proposals, we consider whether to proceed with designation in line with our designation policy.
- The accuracy of our information.

Comments we don't consider

We do not consider comments and representations on non-relevant/non-material issues, such as:

- Economic considerations
- Abusive or offensive remarks
- Whether you personally like, or do not like, a proposal

Our video about consultations explains how you can comment on our designations decisions, and what we can and can't take into account when considering your views. <https://youtu.be/ZlqU51tRA6g>.

4.3 Consultation summary

We received 94 written comments to the consultation, 93 from private individuals and one from West Dunbartonshire Council.

92 of the comments we received were objections against the proposed delisting of the Dumbuck Hotel. Two of the comments we received were in support of the removal of the designation.

A large number of the objection comments we received were based on a pro-forma statement which noted:

- *The building is a staple in our community. It is valued by many and holds a great deal of importance in the town. With knowledge that the owners plan to demolish the building if the listing is removed, I must object in the strongest terms.*
- *The building is historically important. It has been a part of our town for the best part of 200 years, to lose such an historically important building would be detrimental.*
- *The building is architecturally important. It is one of the best examples of 18th century/early 19th century classical/Palladian mansion. Whilst it might have been altered, the external of the building retains most of its original appearance.*
- *The owners plan to demolish the building. If the building is unlisted, the building will be taken down and the town will lose an important building.*
- *The owners say there is no possibility for future use because of economic climate, but listing decisions shouldn't be made on financial issues or proposed future uses.*

We have noted the comments received and our responses as required in the table below.

	Comment (Interested parties)	Response (HES)
1	<p>Objection with comments: West Dunbartonshire Council</p> <p>West Dunbartonshire Council submitted a response objecting to the delisting of Dumbuck Hotel. They also submitted a heritage statement on the building prepared on their behalf by Simpson and Brown architects. We have published the response and heritage statement on our portal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were a number of comments made about specific design features including that there is skill shown in the arrangement of the symmetrical south elevation with its side wings, that the tripartite windows at the first floor are an unusual arrangement and 	<p>We have taken all relevant comments on special interest into account in our assessment. The assessment of special architectural or historic interest is based on the selection guidance for listing. (DPSG, Annex 2, pp. 11-13.</p> <p>We have noted the comments made which relate to the architectural and historic interest of the building, the only factors we can take into account in our decision making and our assessment at Annex B.</p>

	<p>that the pilasters on the dormer windows are of interest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The building retains its design in terms of its layout and elevation, despite the loss of porch and later additions and alterations. • The fabric of the cornice and chimneys remain. • Mr McGee, a joiner is noted as having designed the building and this association between designer and builder is rare. • The Dumbuck Hotel makes a positive contribution to the streetscape and townscape. • It is an important landmark on arriving and leaving Dumbarton and is of significance to the sense of place of the area. • The building illustrates a typical, smaller country house of the early 19th century. • It is a rare and an early survival for Dunbartonshire. • It is associated with people and events of national importance including members of the Geils family and their connection to Tasmania and the <i>KOSMOID affair</i>. • The building provides a sense of place in reference to the Clyde Estuary. • It has seen many important life events and is of value to local community. • Delisting may lead to demolition of the building. • The building can be refurbished and returned to some of its former late Georgian appearance. 	<p>We have noted the information provided about the designer of the building as Mr McGee and have updated our assessment with this information. We do not consider that this information changes our view on the significance of the building's design.</p> <p>We have noted the information provided about historical associations with the Kosmoid scandal and the members of the Geils family and have updated our assessment to include this information. However, we do not consider these associations to be of national importance.</p> <p>The condition of the building and its proposed future use are not material factors in our decision making. See DPSG, Annex 2, Sections 14-15.</p>
2	<p>Objection with comments:</p> <p>92 responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many responses noted that the building is architecturally important, 	<p>We have taken all relevant comments on special architectural and historic interest into account in our assessment. The assessment</p>

	<p>stating that it is one of the best examples of an 18th century/early 19th century classical/Palladian mansion and whilst it altered, its exterior retains most of its original appearance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many responses noted that building is historically important to the town of Dumbarton. • A small number of respondents noted the historic importance of the link between the Dumbuck estate and the Kosmoid scandal. • A large number of responses noted personal and family memories of the building when in use as hotel (weddings, birthdays etc). • Many comments expressed concerns about the general loss of historic buildings in the Dumbarton area. • The majority of comments expressed concern about the future of the building and their expectation that it will be demolished. 	<p>of special architectural or historic interest is based on the selection guidance for listing.</p> <p>We have noted the information provided about the historical association of the house with the Kosmoid scandal and updated the Report of Handling to acknowledge this. However, we do not consider this association to be of national importance.</p> <p>The condition of the building and its proposed future use are not material factors in our decision making. See DPSG, Annex 2, Sections 14-15.</p>
4	<p>In favour of de-listing with comments</p> <p>2 responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The architectural merit is minimal. • Much of the rear area of the main building and the site is much altered and of little architectural value. It is difficult to see any architectural integrity remaining in the front facade. • This building has clear historical associations, but these may be insufficiently important within the region's history to base a listing on. • It would be cheaper demolishing the Dumbuck Hotel and building something new. • The listing status is considered a hindrance to redeveloping the building. 	<p>We have noted the comments made which relate to the architectural and historic interest of the building, the only factors we can take into account in our decision making. See DPSG, Annex 2, Sections 14-15.</p> <p>The condition of the building and its proposed future use are not material factors in our decision making. See DPSG, Annex 2, Sections 14-15.</p>

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ANNEX A

Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

1. Statutory address

Dumbuck Hotel

2. Description and historical development

2.1 Description

Earlier 19th century two-storey and attic U-plan former mansion house converted to a hotel in the early 20th century. The building is designed in a classical style and is rendered with ashlar dressing at openings and hipped slate roof. It was remodelled in the late 19th century and has various additions dating from the mid-20th century to early 21st century additions. It is located close to the Glasgow Road on the approach to Dumbarton from the east.

Southwest (principal) elevation: roughly symmetrical, five-bay, two-storey and attic central block. The ground floor features a large central pedimented roofed single storey reception hall addition and a similar pedimented addition at the east both dating from the later 20th century. There are four-light advanced bay windows flanking the central porch. At the first floor there are tripartite windows in the central bays and corniced and architraved, window surrounds at outer bays. The attic floor contains two bowed dormers with pilaster details. The central block is flanked on both sides by single-storey and attic wings.

East elevation: long single-storey and attic courtyard wing partly covered by advanced single storey range at south. This elevation has been extended and remodelled several times in the later 20th and 21st century. There is a three-storey flat roofed metal clad extension at centre of this elevation built in 2021/2022.

West elevation: long courtyard wing extending from single-storey and attic at southwest to two-storey at northeast. There is an advanced single storey rectangular extension at the southwest, a central arched pend with timber gate and later, early 21st century openings at ground floor of the northeast end of the range.

Northeast rear elevation: The end of the west range is two-storey with a single first floor window. The pitched roof single storey range at the end of the eastern range dates to the later 20th century and has a four-bay northern gable end. The courtyard has been infilled with a one storey flat roofed structure occupying the eastern section.

The windows are a mix of timber, in a variety of glazing patterns, and UPVC. The hipped slate roof covering the central block contains two symmetrical chimney stacks.

Interior was seen in 2023. The interior has been extensively remodelled in the second half of the 20th and early 21st century for hotel use with few early 19th century details remaining throughout the house and the outbuildings. The building retains a central curved stone staircase, decorative cast iron balusters and wooden handrail.

2.2 Historical development

The building was built as Dumbuck House, in the early 19th century (between 1814 and 1829) as a mansion for the Geils family.

In 1800 the lands of Dumbuck were the property of Sir Archibald Edmonstone as shown on the historic Plan of the lands of Dumbuck near Dumbarton the property of Sir Archibald Edmonstone: 1800 (National Record of Scotland, RHP3726). The Estate of Dumbuck was acquired in 1815 by General Thomas Geils (Hood, Old Dumbarton).

The Plan of the estate of Dumbuck dating to the early 19th century (National Records of Scotland, RHP20079) shows a group of four buildings in the location of the current building. The U-plan form of the mansion is first shown on the Plan of the Estate of Dumbuck, (National Records of Scotland, RHP20080) which dates between 1814-1829. On this map a circular structure is shown attached to the eastern wing which may have been a horse mill. There is also a small outbuilding at the rear to the north. There may have been an earlier farm building on this site as a horse mill would not be consistent with mansion of this date or type.

During a legal dispute in the 1860s, owner John Edward Geils of Dumbuck stated that Dumbuck House was built by a joiner named McGee in 1824 (Hood, *Old Dumbarton*, Geograph - The Dumbuck Hotel).

On the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map (Surveyed in 1860 and published in 1864) the U-plan structure of Dumbuck is clearly visible however the circular addition on the east wind is not shown. A long range of detached offices or stable buildings are now shown at the northwest and a lodge further north-west, past the railway line. The house is shown on this map with a large orchard with a walled garden extending northeast to the rear of the house.

By the time of the Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition map (Revised in 1896 and published in 1897) the farm offices north-west of the house had been remodelled into a L-shaped complex, the size of the orchard was also significantly reduced, and the walled garden removed.

The house was converted to a hotel in the early 20th century. The building is labelled Dumbuck Hotel on the plan of Dumbuck Estate Scheme for building sites dating 1912.

By the time of the Ordnance Survey Map NS4174SE (Surveyed/Revised: 1963, Published: 1964) the Hotel had been extended to the rear with the infilling of the west side of the inner courtyard.

At the time of the listing in 1971 the building was described as a cream-washed harled two storey hotel with one storey flanking wings and offices wings to the rear. The principal elevation was unbroken except for a simple columned porch which is shown in an undated picture within the book *Old Dumbarton* (image thought to date from around the mid-20th century). The profile of the main elevation has since been extensively altered around the end of the 20th century with the replacement of the porch with the advanced hexagonal vestibule and the addition of advanced four-light bay windows on either side of the porch. The breaking eaves dormer on the eastern wing was also added and a central window on the first floor above the porch has been infilled in the later 20th century.

Three large openings have been added to the ground floor of the west range in the early 21st century. A three-storey addition was added to the east elevation in 2021/2022.

3. Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

To be listed a building must be of ‘special architectural or historic interest’ as set out in the [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) \(Scotland\) Act 1997](#). To decide if a building is of special interest for listing we assess its cultural significance using selection guidance which has two main headings – architectural interest and historic interest (see Designation Policy and Selection Guidance, 2019, Annex 2, pp. 11-13).

The selection guidance provides a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions. The special architectural or historic interest of a building can be demonstrated in one or more of the following ways.

3.1 Architectural interest

The architectural interest of a building may include its design, designer, interior, plan form, materials, regional traditions, and setting and the extent to which these characteristics survive. These factors are grouped under two headings:

3.1.1 Design

The early 19th century design of the building consisted of a classical, symmetrical U-plan with the rear wings likely to have contained stabling and other functional

buildings relating to the running of the estate. The building is noted to have been designed and built by a joiner, Mr McGee. It is acknowledged that McGee was a builder of some skill and some of the classical features found in his design, such as the tripartite windows and pilaster details to the attic windows, are distinctive. It was still common in the early 19th century for estate houses to be built by a joiner or builder rather than a named architect.

The principal southwest elevation of the building retains some elements of its early 19th century classical style including the architraved windows at the first floor, the pilaster details to the attic dormers and the tripartite windows arrangement. Incremental alterations across the later 20th and early 21st century has however significantly affected its modest classical style and historic character. These alterations include the removal of the columned porch and the addition of the large central porch and the flanking four-light bay windows.

The exterior form and footprint of the building has been substantially altered in the later 20th century with a number of additions and alterations to the rear ranges. The former U-plan footprint has been obscured as the courtyard has been largely infilled. The traditional form of the building with its two storey and attic central block and lower single storey or single storey and attic side ranges has also been altered by the extension of these ranges with taller two and three storey additions.

Internally the building has been extensively remodelled, and the early 19th century plan form is largely lost. The entrance hall has been enlarged with the addition of the later porch and the side ranges do not retain any features of former agricultural or estate office use. The only parts of the 19th century decorative scheme retained are a central staircase with decorative cast iron balusters and some moulded timber windows panels and windows surrounds. These few remaining features are standard for houses of this date and their survival no longer forms part of a coherent early 19th century decorative scheme.

The building has been altered to such an extent that it has lost a significant amount of its early 19th century historic features, and this has affected its interest in listing terms.

3.1.2 Setting

In the earlier 19th century Dumbuck Hotel was the principal house of an estate with offices to the northwest, surrounded by agricultural land. By the time of the first edition Ordnance Survey Map (Surveyed 1860-61, published 1862) the house is shown set with a large orchard to the rear which is intersected by the Dumbarton Junction Railway Line. The immediate setting of the house has been altered since the later 19th century with the removal of the orchard and offices to the northwest. The building is now surrounded by warehouses.

In the wider setting, some of the farm buildings of Dumbuck Farm still exist west of the Milton Inn Hotel.

The building is prominently located on the main road approaching Dumbarton and in this respect its setting helps us to understand the function of the building from the 20th century as a hotel. The setting of the building and particularly its visibility from the road and in views to the hill and quarry to the northeast has been retained. The building is one of few historic structures on this approach to the town and in this respect makes a positive contribution to the streetscape.

3.2 Historic interest

Historic interest is in such things as a building's age, rarity, social historical interest and associations with people or events that have had a significant impact on Scotland's cultural heritage. Historic interest is assessed under three headings:

3.2.1 Age and rarity

Dating to the earlier 19th century, Dumbuck Hotel is not a rare survival for its building type and date. There are large numbers of earlier 19th century mansion houses designed in the classical style which survive across Scotland. Examples which survive substantially unaltered, and which display a significant degree of architectural detailing may be listed.

While elements of the earlier 19th century classical design of Dumbuck Hotel survive and can still be identified mainly to the principal elevations – such as its side wings and first floor window surrounds – overall the building has been significantly altered. The building has undergone incremental alterations and additions to the exterior over the later 20th to early 21st century and the loss of the 19th interior century plan form and decorative scheme. These changes have lessened the building's historic character and authenticity.

3.2.2 Social historical interest

Dumbuck Hotel has some social historical interest in its later use as a hotel from the early 20th to the early 21st century. The building is a well-known and valued resource for the local community. However, this reuse is not uncommon for this building type and is not exceptional in listing terms.

From the mid-18th century onwards, there was a gradual improvement in the condition of Scotland's roads and of the general travel infrastructure with the Caledonian and Dumbartonshire Junction Railway line opening around 1850. This meant that it was easier for people to travel, and different types of accommodation were required to cater for the growing number of tourists.

Dumbuck Hotel is set on Glasgow Road, the principal road to Dumbarton from the east. It is also located near the main road leading to Helensburgh and Loch Lomond.

The building is of some note as a roadside hotel in the Dumbartonshire area in the context of 20th century road-based tourism.

3.2.3 Association with people or events of national importance

There is no association with a person or event of national importance.

Dumbuck House had a long association with the Geils family who owned the Dumbuck estate from the late 18th century and built Dumbuck House. The association of houses of this scale with owners of status is not uncommon and the lives of particular members of the Geils family are well recorded. Colonel Andrew Geils (1773-1843) was a military officer who served as Commandant (acting Governor) of Van Diemen's Land (subsequently Tasmania) between 1812 and 1813. The history of the Geils family and colonialism in Tasmania is of some significance however, on balance, the association between this aspect of the Geils family history and the surviving fabric of Dumbuck House is not considered to be of national importance.

Dumbuck House and the former estate were associated with the early 20th century Kosmoid fraud. Dumbuck house was the headquarters of the Kosmoid company in 1906-08. (Herald Scotland) The Kosmoid business scandal involved the Glaswegian physician Alexander Shiels, an alchemist called Melville and many prominent Scottish industrialists. The Kosmoid company undertook an operation of conducting unconventional alchemy experiments aimed to transmute base metals into gold. The fraud caused a scandal which received significant press attention at the time and a book written on the topic was published in 1911 called 'The Gold Makers' by Nathaniel P McCoy. This historical event is of some interest to the history of Dumbarton and Scottish industry in the early 20th century however this event does not appear to have had a longer lasting impact on the national consciousness and is not considered to be of national importance.

4. Summary of assessment

Dumbuck Hotel has historical associations with the local area and in its later incarnation as a hotel holds important personal memories for the local community. The building has however been substantially altered to the extent that there has been a significant loss of historic character and authenticity.

Dumbuck Hotel no longer meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest for the following reasons:

- It has lost much of its historic character - While the principal elevation retains some elements of its modest, classical style, the rest of the building has been substantially altered both externally and internally.
- It does not demonstrate special design quality for its date and building type.

- It is not an early or rare example of a classical style mansion, which is a common building type

7. Other Information

Dumbuck House was purchased by the American power generation company Babcock & Wilcox in 1923 who used it for staff functions and also as a hotel until they moved out in 1936, when the building was refurbished and modernised.

8. References

Maps

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Ordnance Survey (Surveyed 1860-61, published 1862) Dunbartonshire XXII.6 (Old Kilpatrick) 25 inches to the mile. 1st Edition Ordnance Survey.

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National Records of Scotland, Plan of the estate of Dumbuck, the property of Colonel Andrew Geils, RHP20079.

National Records of Scotland, Plan of the Estate of Dumbuck, annotated to show crops, RHP20080.

Proposed Feuing Plan Estate of Dumbuck, 1875. (Ref to Old House of Colquhoun, Dumbuck Farm, Wallace's Cave, Rhymer's Cave, Dumbowie watch tower, Dumbuck House, High Mains, Gruggies Burn, Low Mains and Royalty Boundary) Boundary/Feu Maps Dumbarton & District, drawer twelve Dumbarton Library Ref. A12-13.

Dumbuck Estate Scheme for building sites, 1912. (Ref to tenements, villas etc surrounding Dumbuck Hotel) Boundary/Feu Maps Dumbarton & District, drawer twelve Dumbarton Library Ref. A12-8.

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The Herald Scotland, Alchemist of Kosmoid Hall at <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12324849.alchemist-of-kosmoid-hall/> [accessed 01/09/2023]