

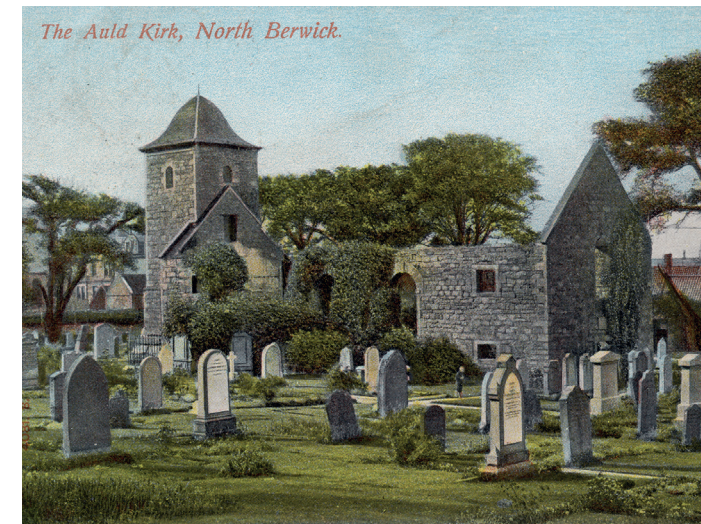


'I hope for better things'



The future for
St Andrew's Kirk Ports,
North Berwick





A future for our 'picturesque ruin'?

St Andrew's Kirk Ports is a **picturesque ruined church** in the very heart of North Berwick.

It sits in an **attractive graveyard** and is scheduled as a monument of **national importance**. And yet, today it is rather neglected and its condition is deteriorating. In 2011 the distinctive bell-shaped tower roof was removed for health and safety reasons, and the interior has since been fenced off.

The community is working to secure a future for this lovely and important church. As the inscription on its old bell says: *'I hope for better things'*.

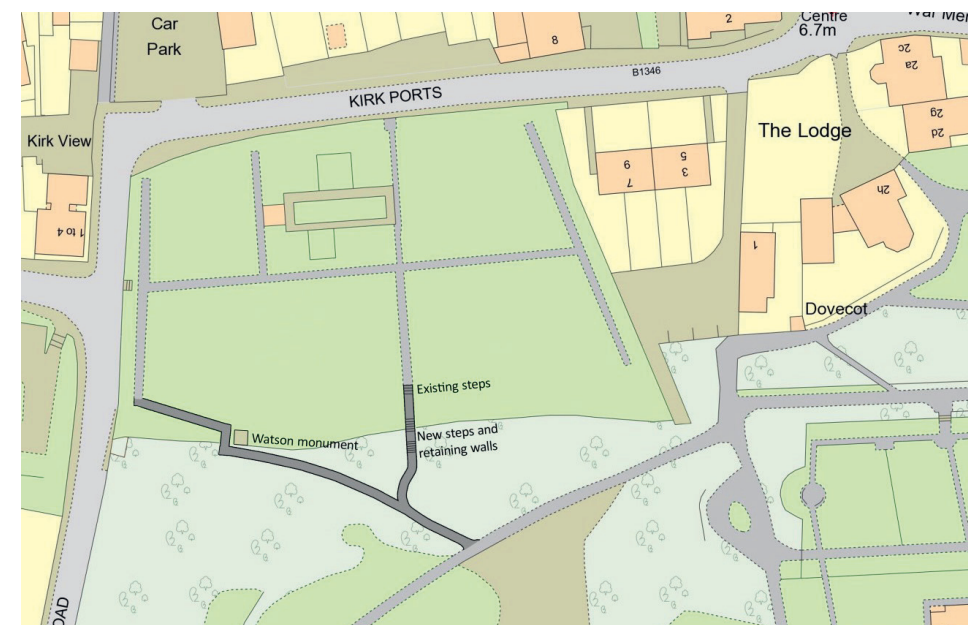




Aims of the project

The aims of the project are to:

- consolidate and conserve the kirk as a 'picturesque ruin';
- make it accessible for a range of community uses;
- develop the site as a heritage hub for visitors and the community;
- improve community access to the graveyard and, if possible, insert a new footpath linking Kirk Ports and the Lodge Grounds; and
- better integrate the kirk and graveyard into the townscape.





The story of the kirk

St Andrew's Kirk Ports was the second parish church of North Berwick. It was built to replace the medieval church by the harbour, which had been badly damaged by a storm in 1652. Sited at the back of the burgage plots on the south side of High Street, St Andrew's Kirk Ports opened for worship on 5 June 1664.

St Andrew's Kirk Ports is an important example of an early post-Reformation church. Originally it was a simple rectangular building, in keeping with the post-Reformation tradition. The pulpit stood centrally on the south wall. Gradually, prominent families made their mark. The Sutties of Balgone added an aisle on the south side in 1700 and Sir Hew Dalrymple

of North Berwick built his aisle on the north side in 1718. The tower with its ogee roof was added in 1770 – which meant the bell transferred from the medieval kirk could at last ring out again.

St Andrew's Kirk Ports served the parish for 220 years, but by the 1870s it was considered rather cramped and cold. The final service in the church took place on 3 June 1883 and, a week later, the present parish church opened – St Andrew Blackadder on the High Street. In August 1883 the heritors agreed to 'allow the walls to stand in order to form a picturesque ruin'. They were ahead of their time: this is the preferred approach to the conservation of important monuments today.





Conservation

An Historic Building Survey (2011) and a Feasibility Study (2020) by conservation architects have informed this proposal. Broadly, the required conservation works comprise: consolidation of the main structure; and reinstatement of the bell-shaped tower roof.

Works to the main structure include:

- removing intrusive vegetation and repointing the walls;
- rebuilding loose masonry at the wall heads and repairing lintels;
- capping and waterproofing the wall-heads;
- and consolidating the surviving areas of plaster and render.

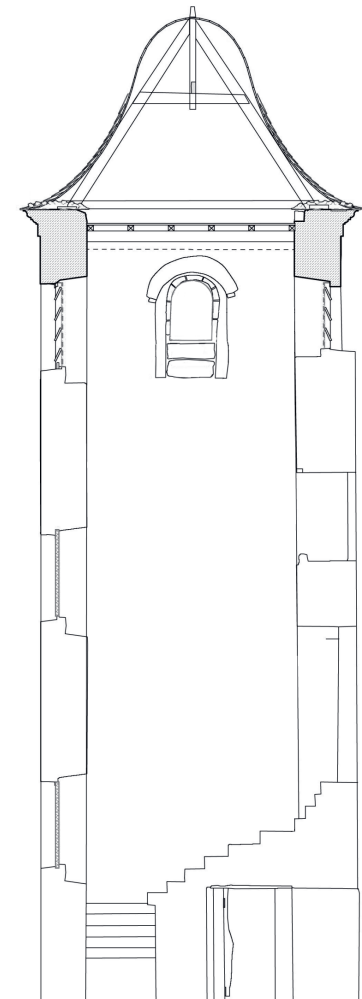
A paved floor will be installed within the

church to facilitate access and use of the conserved building.

The tower roof was carefully removed by East Lothian Council's masons in 2011 and is stored for re-use. Works to the tower include:

- removing the dead ivy and roots;
- replacing the timber lintels where necessary;
- fitting pigeon protection to the windows;
- and reinstating the tower roof using the original materials as far as possible.

It may even be possible to insert a stair and form a viewing point at the top of the tower.





Connections

- An **interpretation scheme** will be developed within the church and the graveyard. Additional information will link to a **town trail** and signpost other features of interest in the historic burgh. The intention is to develop the graveyard, heritage hub and town trail in stages once the kirk has been consolidated and re-opened.
- **The graveyard** is maintained by East Lothian Council and is in reasonable condition. As part of this project, we would like to see any unsafe gravestones re-erected and the **paths upgraded** to provide access for people of all abilities, with path lighting installed.
- Funds permitting, a **new access route through the graveyard** could link Kirk Ports to the Lodge Grounds. A gap would be created in the south boundary wall of the graveyard and a ramp and steps built. As well as encouraging people to visit the kirk, this would provide a safe new pedestrian route between the historic core of North Berwick and the southern parts of the town (including the schools) – thereby avoiding the narrow Law Road.



Community

Located in the heart of North Berwick, and easily accessible from both the High Street and the popular Lodge Grounds, St Andrew's Kirk Ports is the ideal site for visitors and the community to explore the heritage of the town. The plan is to create a **heritage hub**, signposting people to other features of interest as part of a town trail.

Once consolidated, there is good potential to use the kirk for a range of purposes and for the site as a whole to become a **vibrant community asset**. The kirk and graveyard could be used for:

- weddings, commemorations and spiritual activities;
- cultural events such as story-telling, readings and concerts;
- educational and family-friendly activities;
- and temporary art installations, such as nativity scenes or light shows.

The site lies immediately opposite a popular café, Steampunk, with its outdoor seating area, which offers possibilities for catered partnership events.

The St Andrew's Kirk Ports project seeks to give the site new life as part of the present-day townscape. The key to the project's **sustainability** is to integrate this nationally important heritage asset into the wider amenity and community of North Berwick.

What next?

The project will be undertaken in three main phases:

1. Consolidation of the kirk and reinstatement of the tower roof;
2. Works to the graveyard including making safe the gravestones, creating a new route connecting the graveyard to the Lodge Grounds, and improving the paths; and
3. Installation of new interpretation and development of the site as a heritage hub and for community use.

The project is estimated to cost in the region of £750,000.

The St Andrew's Kirk Ports project is being led by North Berwick Environment and Heritage Trust.

We are now fundraising, but we need your help.



How to help

You can help now by making a donation or by becoming part of our team.

Bank transfer details:

North Berwick Environment Trust

Sort code: 80-17-95
Account No.: 00216959
Your name

If you have skills in fundraising, buildings conservation, landscaping, marketing or interpretation, or would like to be involved in any other way, we would love to hear from you.

Contact us via E-mail and visit our website.

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**North Berwick Environment and Heritage Trust
Conserving. Enhancing. Enjoying.**

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