



Kirkcaldy
then and now

Kirkcaldy
High Street

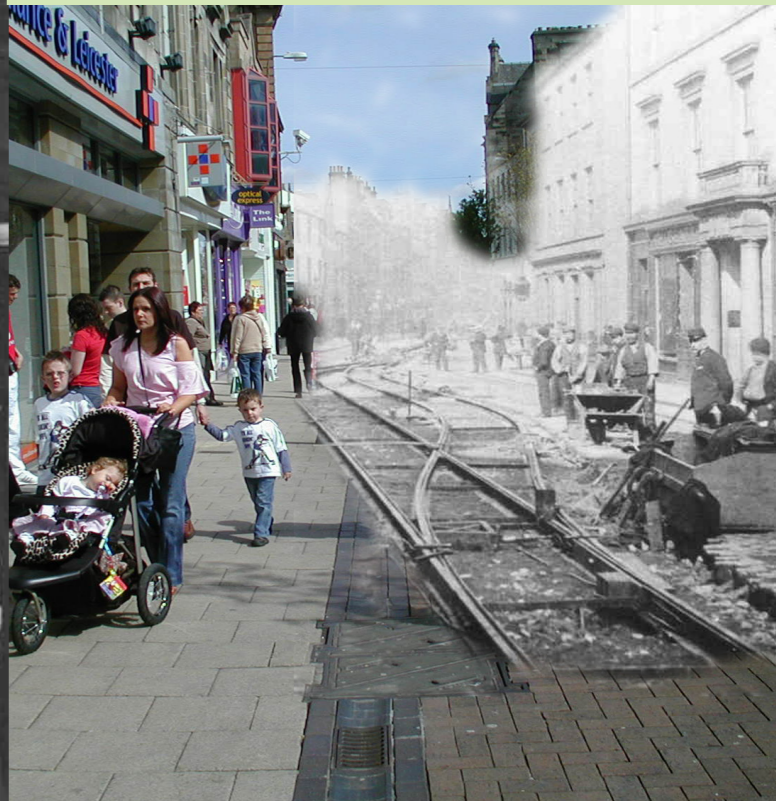
HERITAGE TRAIL

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Little remains of the medieval burgh of Kirkcaldy which existed in the early 14th century. However the town was an important port until economic collapse in the mid 17th century. A rare survivor from this period is the Merchant's House at the Port Brae end of the High Street, which is of national importance.

Rapid industrial growth occurred from the second half of the 18th century with growing trade exporting coal, salt and linen cloth and importing timber, flax and hemp. In 1831 Kirkcaldy was described as 'the most thriving town on the north coast of the Firth of Forth'. This is reflected in the many banks of this period in styles indicative of this prosperous new era. Kirkcaldy was a centre for the manufacture of linen and courser fabrics such as sail cloth, which later led on to floor cloths and linoleum. Michael Nairn opened his first factory in 1847 and by 1883 there were seven factories employing 1,300 people. Linen manufacture prospered in the 1860s with by 1867 eighteen factories employing 3,887 people. The resulting prosperity and rapid industrialisation saw the wealthier classes move to the suburbs leaving the town centre to decline to a slum area, leaving the buildings from this period largely intact until the redevelopment of the 1960s and 1970s.

Reflecting this, almost all of the buildings highlighted in this guide were built during the latter half of the 19th century, with a couple of examples from the first few years of the 20th century and one example is from the 1930s.



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 1938 KIRKCALDY OFFICIAL GUIDE

A journey through
 Kirkcaldy past and present



Beyond all dispute the best town in Fife



Statutory Listing	Special Architectural or Historic Interest
Category A	National or international importance.
Category B	Regional or more than local importance.
Category C(S)	Local importance.

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1 Whythouse Mansions
When completed in 1898 this Scottish Baronial style tenement was advertised as *'...the most magnificent improvement ever effected on the High Street.'* **Category B** listed. No 73 was occupied by Boots Cash Chemist in 1929.



2 Burtons
Opposite no.90 is the 1937 Art Deco Burtons department store. **Category B** listed. The first floor was the Plaza Ballroom and the second floor the Central Billiard Saloon.



3 Lloyds Bank
This classical palazzo style bank was erected in 1887 for The British Linen Bank. **Category B**

listed. In 1861 a building on this site was occupied by Jane Nisbet an eating house keeper.



4 Commercial Bank Buildings (148 -158)
The front of this early 19th century bank building was altered in 1874 to what you see today. To the

rear, no.152 was the bank house accessed through the pend, now the New Club. **Category B** listed. In 1864 a building on this site was occupied by R&J Herriot, grocer.

5 151 High Street
A classical style former Royal Bank of Scotland building erected in 1905.



Category B listed. In 1861 a building on this site was occupied by a Miss Helen Henderson, dressmaker.

6 162 High Street
Central Chambers (no.s 160-164) built in 1868 as business chambers and shops on ground level in an Italian Gothic style for JE Scott (Note the



'JES' monogrammed in the apex of the gothic window). It was formerly the George Hotel. **Category B** listed. No.162 was occupied in 1932 by Akmido Rikimaksu, ladies hairdresser.

7 180 High Street
An early 19th century renaissance style building in distinctive



red sandstone. **Category C(S)** listed. In 1930 it was occupied by Edward Sang & Sons, florist.

8 192 High Street
Built in 1893 for Barnet and Morton. (Note the pair of carved stone griffins and the crest with 'B&M' initials). **Category B** listed. In 1900 it was in use as house furnishers.



9 252 -262 High Street
No.254 is part of a 1904 red sandstone Renaissance style mixed shop, commercial and tenement building which originally included the former two thousand seat Kings Theatre. The theatre later became the Hippodrome (1930), the Opera



House (1937), the Regal and finally the ABC which closed in 2000. **Category B** listed. In 1862 a shop on this site was occupied by James Dick, candle maker.

10 No.277 High Street
Category B listed early 19th century tenement with later additions. In 1971 it was the Green Cockatoo Café.



11 No.291 High Street
Occupied in 1932 by Thomas Mackenzie, pork butcher. It forms part of an early 20th century classically detailed tenement. **Category C(S)** listed.



12 The Merchant's House, Law's Close, (339-343)
This building, one of the best preserved 16th century townhouses

in Scotland, is of national importance as reflected in its **Category A** listing. It is a rare survivor in High Street from this period. Now essentially in its 17th century form but incorporating earlier fabric. Originally the home of a rich merchant or shipowner with business chambers on the ground floor, in the 1670s extensive alterations were carried out to modernise it in response to changing fashions. However by the 1700s it was occupied by two families. Around



1800, it was divided into flats and ground floor shops. Between 1888 and 1940 it remained a tenement with a baker on part of the ground floor and in buildings to the rear. In 1986 most of the building was purchased by the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust and its restoration followed. It officially reopened in 2005.