

Is the Satanist mecca Boleskine House being revived under a deliberately false name?



by Alex Thomson, Eastern Approaches

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Background

This week, the *Inverness Courier*, with the *Daily Mail* later piggybacking on the text and photograph (and omitting the reference to the originator of the news, the **Fresh Start Foundation**), reported concerns that **Boleskine House**, the old property of **Aleister Crowley** near the village of Foyers, could be turned into a Satanist ritual site as the result of a series of planning applications submitted to the local authority, **Highland Council**.

After many objections to the planning applications in question were submitted, Highland Council was asked why wording in numerous of them had been censored in the Council's publication of the objections. David Mudie, the Area Planning Manager (South) for the Council, explained this policy as follows on 30 October 2020 (*council official's spelling and grammar errors preserved in quotation below*), in

response to one objector's e-mail pointing out that dead men such as Crowley cannot be defamed and hence require no government protection from defamation:

While not defamatory to Alistair Crowley the association in this context and the claims that this application has anything to do with the practice of Satanism is salacious and quite possibly not be found in fact. How can you be certain that this is the intended use of the property? In any event it is not relevant to planning. To be clear, the Council does not publish material on its website, from whatever source, that has potential to be divisive and/or incite hatred between individuals, groups and/or communities.

Subsequent to that remarkable response, Highland Council has again been put on the defensive by a letter sent by another objector which draws attention to the apparently deliberately falsified Gaelic name for Boleskine House that was used in the applications in question. The pronunciation of the allegedly made-up name used in the application, *Baile Os-Ceann*, and of the toponymically attested historic Gaelic name for the location, *Both Fhleisginn*, can be heard in that sequence [here](#) so that it can be judged individually which of them sounds like the form underlying the English name that has been the only one in use for the house in the modern era, namely Boleskine (which has three syllables, rhymes with 'tin', and is stressed on the middle syllable, 'les').

Letter to Highland Council on apparent planning subterfuge

Dear Principal Solicitor (for the Head of Corporate Governance),

I am writing to you to raise a concern about several planning applications which have been submitted to the Highland Council. The references are:

- **Reinstatement of fire-damaged building, with some alterations; not including full internal fit-out**

Baile Os-Ceann, Foyers, Inverness IV2 6XT

Ref. No: 20/02817/LBC | Received: Wed 29 Jul 2020 | Validated: Fri 21 Aug 2020 | Status: Under Consideration

- **Reinstatement and alterations to fire damaged house; siting of 10 No holiday twin-units, reception, store, car parking; installation of sewage treatment plant**

Baile Os-Ceann, Foyers, Inverness IV2 6XT

Ref. No: 20/02471/FUL | Received: Fri 03 Jul 2020 | Validated: Fri 03 Jul 2020 | Status: Under Consideration

- **Repair and reinstatement works**

Baile Os-Ceann, Foyers, Inverness IV2 6XT

Ref. No: 20/01665/LBC | Received: Wed 29 Apr 2020 | Validated: Wed 29 Apr 2020 | Status: Decided

The location of Boleskine House

There is no such property with the name *Baile Os-Ceann* with a postcode of IV2 6XT. This can be easily checked on the [Royal Mail Address Finder](#) website. You will be aware of the government [regulation](#) which states in section 4.29: "Published notices should be clear, concise and fit for purpose".

Other documents submitted with these applications indicate that these applications refer to the land and ruins of Boleskine House. Boleskine House is a manor on the south side of Loch Ness, it is of historical interest and known locally, nationally and internationally, it has its own [Wikipedia page](#) and many books and articles have been written about it.

The use of the name *Baile Os-Ceann* in the Planning Portal means that any interested parties cannot access the plans unless they know that the name has been changed. Therefore, the publication on Highland Council's website is not "fit for purpose". Additionally, any publications in the printed press locally or in the [Edinburgh Gazette](#) are of no use and once again not "fit for purpose", because the public has no way of knowing that the name of Boleskine House has changed.

The name "Boleskine"

I find no evidence whatsoever that *Baile Os-Ceann* is or could possibly be the underlying Gaelic form of the place name Boleskine, for the following reasons, which can only be validly challenged if you can adduce evidence of having consulted actual authorities on Gaelic grammar and on the toponymic history of Inverness-shire:

1. Scotland's authoritative website for Gaelic placenames, the Scottish Parliament-hosted *Ainmean-Àite na h-Alba* (Placenames of Scotland), **states unequivocally** that the Gaelic name underlying Boleskine is *Both Fhleisginn*.
2. The document underpinning that website record is a **PDF dated 2003** which gives the entirely plausible etymology (*Taigh*) *Both Fhleisginn*, meaning probably “with the hut (house)” and hence “(house built) where there was a bothy made of a wattle of twigs”, with no suggestion of *Baile Os-Ceann* as a possible alternative.
3. The stress, vowels and pronunciation of *Both Fhleisginn* (*Taigh* can be omitted since it means “house”) exactly match the stress and pronunciation of the English-language name Boleskine (stress on second syllable), whereas the stress, vowels and pronunciation of *Baile Os-Ceann* are wildly wrong and those words would have been anglicised by cartographers as something like Ballaskane (stress on final syllable) if it genuinely had been a local oral Gaelic toponym.
4. The meaning of *Baile Os-Ceann* is not only incomplete (*os ceann*, which is actually mis-spelling for **os cionn**, means “above”; it is unknown in Scotland and extremely rare elsewhere for place names to include a word for “above” without the referent of *what* the location is above) but fundamentally ungrammatical, since *os ceann* together forms a Gaelic **preposition** that is never used without governing a referent.
5. The meaning of *Baile Os-Ceann* is utterly incongruent with the location in question (when was there ever a township **there?**), whereas the meaning of *Taigh Both Fhleisginn* is descriptively plausible (a house in a location where there was previously nothing more elaborate than a lodge made of twigs).
6. Had local people in Inverness-shire ever genuinely referred to the location in question as “the town above” or “high town”, then logic and the Gaelic language would have required the use of an adjective or adverb, and Gaelic has two or three that are found in such constructs, none of which is *os ceann*. There is *àrd*, *uasal* and most especially *uachdar*, each of which means some variant of “high”, “lofty” or “(a)top”; for instance, Helensburgh Upper railway station has been given the Gaelic name ***Baile Eilidh Àrd*** (very literally “Helen’s Burgh, Upper” or “The upper town of Helen”), also seen as ***Baile Eilidh Uarach*** or ***Baile Eilidh Uachdar*** (a more Irish Gaelic variant) but never incorporating *os ceann*. That is real-world evidence that actual Gaelic toponymists use the adjectives *àrd*, *uasal*, *uarach* or *uachdar* in apposition to the noun *baile* (being the noun used in the purported name *Baile Os-Ceann*) and not the preposition *os ceann*, which is so wrong as to be of the wrong part of speech altogether.

In closing, I politely request that the advertisements for these planning applications be republished so that the members of the public are given time to consider the

plans and make their deliberations in good time.

Yours

[Name supplied]

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