

## HIGHLAND KIRKYARDS: Ross and Cromarty Pilot Proforma



1. Name of Kirkyard: Londubh, graveyard  
From HER (Poolewe Old Burial Ground – Highland Council)

2. National Grid Reference: NG 8603 8096

3. Civil Parish: Gairloch

4. Description: Historic burial ground in west coast village of Poolewe with remains of redundant chapel. The burial ground is still in use and is circular in shape. The northern area appears to be the oldest part: the ground here is uneven, the chapel is situated here and there are flat slabs as well as uprights. To the south and east are the more recent graves – uprights, 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century and the ground here is flatter. All the stones face east. The burial ground contains a Pictish stone.

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5. Setting: In the village of Poolewe. There are fields to the east. The houses nearby are spaced out so it has a rural feel. From the road to the north of the site, the south end of Loch Ewe is visible. Trees line the inside of the boundary wall.

6. Designations and Significance: This site has many layers of history. The Pictish stone is unusual in being found on the west coast of Scotland, as one of only two found on the west coast mainland, compared to the majority which are found in northern and eastern Scotland.

Although an exact date is not known, the church site is pre-reformation. The church structure became redundant during the reformation and was rebuilt in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and may have been used by the Kernsary MacKenzies as a burial place.

There is a burial enclosure for Mairi Sawyer, her two husbands and one of her children. She built the present Inverewe house and carried on the work begun by her father, Osgood MacKenzie, on the famous Inverewe Gardens.

There are a range of gravestones, some older unmarked ones, flat slabs and uprights.

Scheduled as Inverewe Old Church, burial ground and symbol stone, Poolewe.

Scheduled Ancient Monument

Listed Building

### 7. Elements:

Redundant Kirk/Chapel: The remains of a redundant chapel lie at the north end of the burial ground. The structure has been converted to burial enclosures and been added to over the years. The north wall of the church structure is one long wall, the east gable stands partially and at the west gable only a low wall stands. There is a dividing wall which projects south from the north wall, possibly inserted later to make burial enclosures. The south wall retains some stones in parts, but it is difficult to tell exactly what is there and what the build sequence might be as much of the stonework is covered with vegetation. Burial enclosures have been built onto this structure. A lower coped wall extends north from the west gable and turns east to parallel the north wall of the chapel forming a burial enclosure which is open at the east end. To the north of this extends a ruined rubble walled burial enclosure with an iron gate which still stands despite the walls around it having crumbled. There is evidence of another wall to the east, now a pile of rubble which was possibly another burial enclosure. There is also an iron railed burial enclosure attached to the east gable of the church structure.

Boundary Walls: Rubble walls with coping stones which have collapsed in parts. The walls are roughly circular in shape. There are mature trees planted up against the boundary walls which are destabilising them.

Railings, Gates and Gateways: The main entrance to the site is in the northern boundary wall. Here two harled sections of the boundary wall angle inwards to two square, harled, flat topped gatepiers. There is a plain metal gate painted black. At the west end of this harled section of wall is an older gatepier, large and square with a pyramidal top, which joins the main wall. This was possibly the site of a previous entrance.

Burial Enclosures: In the north-west corner of the graveyard a burial enclosure has been constructed which goes beyond the line of the boundary wall and has its own entrance from outside the burial ground, (Also seen at St Maelrubha's, Gairloch). It is fronted by green iron railings with scroll detailing. The cross-

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shaped gravestones are for Mairi Sawyer, of Inverewe House and Gardens, and her family.

### 8. Ownership of Kirkyard:

Highland Council

Private

Other

9. Risk: The boundary wall has collapsed in one section and is missing stones in others. The trees which grow against the wall may cause more damage. The church structure is smothered by vegetation which is dangerous to the masonry as well as preventing as complete an understanding as possible. A closer examination of this structure could help define build sequence and help identify more precisely the church elements. The burial enclosures which have been added on to the church are in very bad condition.

On  No

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### 10. Ancillary Issues:

**ACCESS:** There is a car park adjacent to the site. Within the ground there are no paths and the ground is uneven around the redundant church and older graves, although the grass is well tended.

**INTERPRETATION:** There is an information board within the car park. This contains general information on the graveyard, and identifies key elements within it, i.e. the grave stones, the church, the Pictish stone, the font stone, the military graves and local people and famous families buried there. These elements are also marked on a simple plan of the site. This is a very useful tool and may be a good model for other sites to follow. It gives relevant information without impacting on the site.