DUNTULM CASTLE HOTEL
DUNTULM, TROTTERNISH, ISLE OF SKYE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT
AND WALKOVER SURVEY

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Summary

An archaeological desk-based assessment and walkover archaeological survey was carried out on 6 June 2014, on behalf of Firebird Resources and Rural Design Architects, at Duntulm Castle Hotel on the Trotternish peninsula on the Isle of Skye in advance of proposed development works. The work was undertaken to conduct a baseline survey of the upstanding buildings and any archaeological remains within the application area in order to inform a strategy of mitigation to the proposed developments. The fieldwork results have produced a record of archaeological structures and features within the site boundaries, which comprise the remains of a walled garden, stone dykes and enclosures, structures relating to the former Duntulm Steadings and Farm, and more ephemeral features of unknown function and origin. It is most likely that these sites relate to Post Medieval settlement remains, relating to activities focusing on Duntulm Steadings and the associated farm.

Evaluation and recording of the main building and steading complex was not undertaken during the walkover survey and must wait monitoring and watching briefs during the proposed site developments.

A strategy of mitigation is recommended below in order to safeguard the archaeological remains during the proposed developments, while recommendations are put forward outlining archaeological works to evaluate and record archaeological sites and features which may be impacted upon by the development scheme.

1. Introduction

1.1 A desk-based assessment and walkover archaeological survey was carried out at Duntulm Castle Hotel, Trotternish, Isle of Skye (NGR NG 4140 7420), on the 6 June 2014 (see Figure 1) by West Coast Archaeological Services. The survey was requested by Rural Design Architects on behalf of Firebird Resources, to conduct a baseline survey of the upstanding buildings and any archaeological remains within the application area to assess their survival, quality and significance, and to recommend a strategy of mitigation to safeguard any archaeological sites during the proposed developments. The Scottish Planning Policy 2010 describes how archaeology should be managed when considering planning decisions and determining conditions for developments that have an impact on the historic environment.

1.2 Documentary research and investigation of cartographic sources have provided background information to suggest that the main range of buildings identified on site relate to Duntulm Farm and no evidence could be found to suggest that the house was formerly a hunting lodge. The fieldwork results have produced a record of archaeological structures and features within the site boundaries, which comprise the remains of a walled garden, stone dykes and enclosures, structures relating to the former Duntulm Steadings and Farm. Additional features, most of which are ephemeral in mature, were also recorded, although their function and origin remain unknown. The settlement remains most likely relate to the post-medieval period, associated with activities focusing on the Duntulm Steadings, farm and later house.
2. Acknowledgements

2.1 We wish to thank Andrew Tait of Rural Design Architects and Firebird Resources for commissioning the desk-based assessment and archaeological fieldwork, Alison Beaton of the Portree Archive Centre and Maggie Macdonald of the Clan Donald Archives for their
assistance with the documentary research. Fieldwork was carried out by Steven Birch, while mapping is reproduced by permission of ProMap license #LIG1044.

3. Site Location

3.1 Duntulm Castle Hotel is located in the north of Skye on the Trotternish Peninsula and in the Parish of Kilmuir, to the southeast of Port Duntulm. The basalt outflows have created a varied and dynamic landscape setting for the hotel, the ground to the southeast rising in tiers towards Cnoc Roll (122m). To the northwest, the crenelated remains of Duntulm Castle surmount an outcrop of pillared, columnar basalt (an olivine dolerite sill complex), with Cnoc a’ Mhoid (a former Justice Seat) visible as a prominent mound on the skyline to the southwest. The dolerite sill encloses several layers of sedimentary rock which have undergone extreme metamorphism including limestone, shale and sandstone. Shale and mudstone strata of sedimentary origins also outcrop below the sill complex on which Duntulm Castle was built, and to the east around the bay of Cairidh Ghlumaig. Below the castle to the west is a substantial wave-cut platform, on which can be seen basalt columns that have eroded from the cliffs supporting the castle (Bell & Harris, 1986: 273). The views to seaward are indeed spectacular, with Tulm Island located within the bay at Port Duntulm and the Western Isles floating on the horizon beyond the Minch.

3.2 The nearest major settlement to Duntulm Castle Hotel today is Uig, a ferry port serving the Outer Hebrides that is located around 11km to the south. However, there are many archaeological sites distributed through the surrounding landscapes dating from the prehistoric and historic periods, some of which will have been contemporary with the use of the farm at Duntulm and the hotel.

3.3 The development area comprises mostly flat and gently sloping, grass-covered land, much of which has been subject to disturbance and modification in the past. Fields surrounding the area for development generally comprise grazing for sheep, while the small lochan of Loch Cleat to the east is now heavily overgrown with vegetation.

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

4.1 The proposed development site is located in the historical parish of Kilmuir. Both the Old Statistical Account of Scotland of the 1790s and the New Statistical Account of Scotland of the 1830s for the parish of Kilmuir refers to the prehistoric remains in the parish: six so-called ‘Danish’ forts (Dun-Scuddeburgh, Liath, Bhannerain, Barplacaig, Tulm and Deirg). These references indicate an early understanding of the extensive prehistoric population which once occupied Skye. In general, there are many known and likely many yet unknown prehistoric sites spread across the north half of Trotternish peninsula.

4.2 The hotel at Duntulm and the former house and steadings that once formed Duntulm Farm, have always been overshadowed archaeologically by the remains of Duntulm Castle. Formerly the seat of the MacDonalds of Sleat, the castle potentially stands on the site of an earlier Iron Age dun. Martin (1934) names the potential predecessor to the castle Dun Dhaibhidh, or David’s Fort although no tangible evidence exists today to substantiate this tradition. It is also possible that the fort at this time formed a Norse stronghold at a time when the western seaboard of Scotland was ruled by the Kings of Norway (Miket & Roberts, 2007: 143).
54). The Treaty of Perth in 1266 ended Norse control in the area and thereafter the castle and lands of Trotternish frequently changed hands, sometimes held by the Lordship of the Isles and sometimes by the Earls of Ross. For much of this time, when the castle took the name of Duntulm, the MacLeod Clan acted as vassals for the Earls of Ross.

4.3 The rivalry between the Earls of Ross and the Lordship of the Isles continued unabated throughout the 13th and 14th centuries, while through the later middle ages the castle and its associated lands continued to be the subject of territorial feuding between the MacDonnals and the MacLeods. However, the 17th century brought a more settled era, Trotternish being finally settled in favour of the MacDonnals. Their return to north Skye was marked by an extensive rebuilding and enlargement of Duntulm Castle, in accordance with their charter of 1618. This required Sir Donald MacDonald (‘Donald Gorm Og’, the 9th Clan Chief) to make the castle his residence and, if it be derelict, ‘with all convenient diligence prepair materiallis and cause build ane civile and cornelie house’.

4.4 Throughout its history, Duntulm Castle was modified on several occasions and these changes in the architecture are described in some detail in Miket and Roberts’ publication. It is also clear however, that the castle was abandoned between 1577 and 1595, when it is recorded that, ‘Thair was ane castell in Trouerness callit Duncolem quhairof the wallis standis yet’. It is possible that the MacDonald chief had returned to his residence in Sleat (Dun Sgathaich or Dunscaith) at this time, and that the castle at Duntulm fell into some disrepair (idem: 56). Duntulm Castle was abandoned for the last time in 1732, when the MacDonald chief moved to a new residence just to the south, at Monkstadt. Thereafter, the empty shell of Duntulm was quarried to provide stone and timber for the new residence, the materials being transported by sea between 1732 and 1736. The house at Monkstadt was completed after lengthy delays in 1741.

4.5 Further tantalising glimpses of the history of the area can be seen through the eyes of a number of visitors to Duntulm including Martin Martin (Martin, 1695) and Thomas Pennant (Pennant, 1774). Pennant states that, ‘Duntulm Castle is a ruin, but it was inhabited as late as 1715. It was the original seat of the MacDonnals of Skie: nearit, a hill, called Cnock-an-Eirick, or, ‘the hill of pleas’: such eminences are frequent near the houses of all the great men, for on these, by the assistance of their friends, they determine all the differences between the people: the place was held sacred, and to the respect paid to the decisions delivered from the summit, may in some measure attributed the strict obedience of a fierce and military race to their chieftan’. Additional earthworks identified on the peninsula supporting the castle include ephemeral turf and stone-built structures, some of which may have been houses, workshops or ancillary structures, which may have been contemporary with Duntulm Castle.

4.6 Other known archaeological sites in the area surrounding the hotel include the former township of Duntulm, which is located around 0.5km to the east. The settlement included at least five buildings, two enclosures, field systems and a head-dyke (as depicted on the OS 1st Edition map sheet of 1878). The township of Erisco, which is located to the northwest of the hotel on the east shore of Duntulm Bay, is one of the best examples of a depopulated township in Skye. The settlement extends back to at least 1662, as shown on Bleau’s Atlas, but was deserted by 1875. The settlement comprised at least 8 houses along
DUNCAS 14: Duntulm Castle Hotel, Trotternish, Isle of Skye

with the associated byres, outbuildings, enclosures, field systems and the remains of rig and furrow cultivation.

4.7 We know that there was a farm at Duntulm during the latter stages of the 18th Century, but historical records are somewhat patchy and inconsistent for this period. The farm and the land at this time would have fallen under the estate of Lord Macdonald, who by this stage was in the transition of moving from his house at Monkstadt (which he moved to after abandoning Duntulm Castle), to his new and grand residence at Armadale in Sleat in the south of Skye.

5. Methodology

The overall aim of this archaeological evaluation was to identify and record the location, nature and extent of any archaeological remains within the area designated on the site plans for the development works centred on the Duntulm Castle Hotel. A desk-based assessment has focused on details relating to the farm, house and hotel at Duntulm, while also allowing the hotel to be placed within the wider settlement record. This approach has allowed us to assess the impact of the proposed developments on any identified archaeological remains and the infrastructure of the original house at Duntulm and to provide recommendations for a strategy of mitigation.

5.1 Desk-Based Assessment

5.1.1 A desk-based assessment was requested prior to commencement of the survey in order to assess the archaeological potential of the area based on previously recorded sites and any historical documentation.

5.1.2 Plans of the development area, as supplied by the client, were checked in detail against the Ordnance Survey 1:25000 Map, the Highland Council’s Historic Environment Record (HHER), the National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS), the Highland Council Archives and Historic Scotland’s records of scheduled monuments and listed buildings. Online aerial photographs were checked and the map collections of the National Library of Scotland (NLS) were studied. Other literary sources were also consulted.

5.2 Walkover Survey

5.2.1 The proposed development area, as supplied in plan form by the client (see Figure 1) was walked over and surveyed on 6 June 2014, during a period of fine and dry weather. Conditions on the ground for the survey were excellent, with good visibility and light levels. Access was gained to the interior of the hotel and an initial inspection was carried out. However, relatively recent modifications and numerous extensions to the hotel have masked the original fabric of the old house. Access was not gained to the steading to the rear of the hotel, which appears to be the oldest surviving building on the site, relating to Duntulm Farm. Therefore, suggested methods for recording the buildings are set out in Section 8 of this report.

5.2.2 Archaeological features within the grounds of the hotel were recorded individually using high-resolution digital photography and GPS technology on a Trimble GeoXR surveying unit with sub-metre accuracy.
Survey and recording methods from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) were employed and all work was conducted in strict adherence to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct.

6. Results

The following sections present the results of the desk-based assessment and walkover survey (see Figure 6).

6.1 Desk-Based Assessment

A desk-based assessment was carried out in advance of the walkover survey in order to assess the archaeological potential of the area and to locate any historical documentation about the known sites within the proposed development area.

6.1.1 Cartographic Sources

6.1.1.1 Mapping held at the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh was checked on-line (NLS 2014) and produced the following results.

6.1.1.2 First Edition OS Six-inch to the mile map (Inverness-shire - Isle of Skye), Survey date 1875-77; Publication date 1878 (Sheet IV & IVa)

The six-inch first edition map sheet shows what appears to be a large building (Duntulm House) located to the west of the walled garden, while additional buildings located within the development area include the steading and at least three additional structures. Two additional roofed buildings are located to the northeast of Duntulm House. A group of three small enclosures run northeast from the steading and walled garden and must have been used for stock management. The combined structures must have formed the farm and township of Duntulm, while a series of tracks connect the various buildings comprising the farm and house.

6.1.1.3 First Edition OS 25 inch to the mile map (Inverness Skye), Survey date 1875; Publication date 1878 (Sheet IV.5 Kilmuir)

The 25-inch first edition map shows significantly more detail relating to Duntulm House and the associated farm. The house is shown to the west of the walled garden and comprises by this time a main range aligned SW-NE with an attached porch and bay window on the northwest aspect. Two major extensions are shown attached to the southeast of the main range, of unequal length, with another small attachment (back porch of lean-to structure to the SE).

The main steading building is located to the northwest side of the walled garden and forms a part of this enclosure, and has a small extension to the southwest. Another building with attached annexe is located on the northeast wall of the garden enclosure, while two additional roofed structures are shown to the northwest of the main steading building; that to the southwest having a small annexe on the southwest side.
The three small stock enclosures are shown to the northeast of the steading and walled garden, while the two roofed structures are shown to the northeast of Duntulm House. A series of tracks connect the various buildings comprising the farm and house.

Figure 2 – First Edition 25 Inch Ordnance Survey map sheet of 1875 showing Duntulm

6.1.1.4 Second Edition OS Six-inch to the mile map (Inverness-shire - Isle of Skye), Publication date 1904; Date revised 1901 (Sheet IV & IVa)

The six-inch second edition OS map sheet shows a similar layout to the first edition, although one of the structures located to the northwest of the steading (the southwest building) appears unroofed. In addition to this, a new building is located within the third (northeast) of the three stock enclosures.

6.1.1.5 Second Edition OS 25 inch to the mile map (Inverness-shire, Isle of Skye), Publication date 1903; Date revised 1901 (Sheet 004.05 Kilmuir)

The 25-inch second edition map sheet shows Duntulm House to be unchanged in the ground plan to that shown in the first edition sheet, but the walled garden is shown devoid of any laid-out paths of internal features. Otherwise, the layout of additional farm and township buildings appears the same as the six-inch second edition map sheet, although there appears to be only one stock enclosure to the northeast of the house and steading, with the roofed structure to the northeast of this. A new, small structure aligned SW-NE with attached yard or enclosure is located to the ESE of the building located on the northeast side of the walled garden.
6.1.2 Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER)

A full search of the Highland Historic Environment Record (HHER) produced the following results relating to known archaeological sites within the survey areas.

6.1.2.1 There are two archaeological sites recorded within the development area and two of particular interest outside of the survey area:

**MHG5206 Cnoc a’ Mhoid Moot Hill NGR NG 4109 7421**

South of Duntulm castle is a natural oval mound about 3’ high with a very slight rampart or rim round the top; it is known as Cnoc a’ Mhoid, or Moot Hill, (RCAHMS 1928) and in company with two other knolls or cnocs is associated with the clan courts of the Macdonalds. RCAHMS 1928; S Gordon 1950; M E M Donaldson 1923

Moot Hill or Cnoc a’ Mhoid, a prominent hillock, largest of a group between the road and the castle is called the Hill of Justice (or its Gaelic equivalent). It is some 30’ high and is possibly the feature referred to by the RCAHMS as 3’ high, but this is not certain. However, none of these hillocks can be described as having ramparts although there are two small turf enclosures in the area.

Visit by OS (C F W) 26 April 1961

At NG 4109 7421, Cnoc a’ Mhoid, a natural knoll which shows no trace of artificial features. Visited by OS (I S S) 10 September 1971.

**MHG5215 Duntulm Castle Castle NGR NG 4098 7434**

Duntulm Castle, the later seat of the Macdonalds of Sleat, stands on a quadrangular site 50’ above the level of the sea, and has cliffs sinking steeply to the sea on three sides, while the fourth or landward approach slopes downward to da dry ditch cut through rock and earth. Midway a broad track crosses at nearly outside level, but this seems to have been formed in...
late times for convenience of approach. The depth of the ditch varies, but at some parts, where least worn down, is from 10'-15'.

The principal structure of 15th century date, about 82' in length and 30' in breadth, lies athwart the site fronting the ditch, and from the buildings screen walls return, closely following the cliff edge, and enclosure an area, irregular in shape, of about 800 square yards; the interior level of the enclosure is very irregular and there are indications of vaulted substructures, in places built against the outer wall, over nearly the whole of it. A small 17th century tower has been added to the main block, with which it communicated, and projects within the courtyard. Beyond the tower in the NW corner of the enclosure is a later house 34' in length and 15' in breadth within walls 2'2" thick. The walls of the entrence vary considerably in thickness. The NE angle of the enclosure is a projecting bastion circular on the lower part, the upper part being angular. The E angle of the main block is also an angular bastion. The building throughout is in the local basaltic rubble, some of which is much weather-worn. It is in a very bad condition and much of it has fallen within recent years (RCAHMS 1928).

Historical Note: The earliest reference to Duntulm is by Munro (M Martin 1934) in 1549 where it is noted as 'the castell of Donntwiline pertaining to Donald Gromsone'. Another reference to Duntulm, dated by Skene (1886-90) to the late 16th century, notes it as a ruin; in 1617 the Privy Council required Sir Donald Macdonald of Sleat to make it his seat and if the present buildings were not suitable to build or rebuild.

In or about 1732 Duntulm was abandoned in favour of Monkstadt House (NG36NE 7) the castle providing material for the rebuilding of that place. The traditional predecessor of this castle was Dun David, or Dun Dhaibhidh. RCAHMS refer to it thus: - "Dun David, now the site of the ruins of Duntulm Castle. Martin (1934) names a Dun David but does not specify it further". On his map Duntulm Castle and Dunvegan Castle are given their own names. W F Skene 1886-90; RCAHMS 1928; M Martin 1934; J Macintyre 1938; S Gordon 1950

MHG20605 Croft House No.5 Duntulm NGR NG 4111 7416

There is no description for this site on the Historic Environment Record.

MHG34164 House Upper Duntulm NGR NG 4140 7420

There is no description for this site on the Historic Environment Record.

6.1.3 Other Documentary Sources

6.1.3.1 Clan Donald Archives, Sleat, Skye

A search made in the Portree Archive Centre in Skye indicated that the lands at Duntulm passed from the ownership of the MacDonald of Sleat to Major William Fraser in 1855. Fraser, originally of Culbokie in the Black Isle, was notorious for his contribution to the Highland Clearances, during which tenants were evicted so the land could become available for large-scale sheep farming. He lived in a large house called Uig Lodge, which was washed away in a flood in 1877 shortly after the conclusion of the clearances.
A search of the archives of Clan Donald in Sleat produced some details to the farm at Duntulm, along with references to the house. However, the documents consulted failed to give any precise details relating to the construction date of the house and its original form. The following timeline shows passages from the main documents.

1803 Captain Martin, tenant of Duntulm, dies.

1804 Captain Martin’s widow gives up the tenancy at Duntulm in March.

1804 Comprisement made of the buildings at Duntulm on December 17th and shows that the house had 5 glass windows. There were three rooms downstairs; two with lofts above, plus an upper room, also with a loft, and a closet big enough for a bedstead. It is possible that what are described as lofts were not attics but were used as rooms, with combed ceilings. There was a separate kitchen and larder in another building. The number of rafters, given in couples, is also given for the farm buildings. (MEP 4545/2)

1804 Several offers are made for the tenancy at Duntulm, but none are acceptable to the estate administration (MEP 864, 882 and 891 – dated Feb, March and Nov 1804). The tenancy was eventually given to a Mr John Campbell, sometimes referred to in the correspondence as Captain Campbell (referred to as JC in the following notes). He is not to be confused with Captain John Campbell, who was the Chamberlain c 1798-1805 (their signatures and handwriting are different). There is no copy of the lease in the archives but appears to be for a period of 11 years - possibly from 1804; but possibly with entry only in 1805 as the comprisement was not made until December 1804.

1804 A barn at Duntulm is burnt down in June of this year. “One of the best houses on Duntulm, a Barn Built a considerable time ago but of good substantial materials was burnt to the ground lately. It would cost at least £100 to replace.

1805 Dispute between Mrs Martin, widow of the last tenant, and JC, as he wants her to leave the house she is living in at Duntulm as it is in an area that interferes with the way he wants to divide the farm (MEP 927)

1805 JC asks Captain MacDougall, the chamberlain at the time, for advice on the improvements he plans (stone dykes, drains and roads). Captain MacDougall suggests that the line of the public road is changed so that it does not go in front of the house (through the best field), but should be moved so it goes behind the house. (MEP 927)

1808 JC cannot afford the rent as cattle prices were down by about one third from what they were when tenancy and rent agreed in 1804. He has made considerable improvements on the farm. He mentions enclosures but does not mention a new dwelling house. (MEP 1130)

1809 Colonel Graham, the Chamberlain, writes to JC that Lord Macdonald is willing to add £50 to the ameliorations payable at the end of the lease, for improvements. These
improvements are not specified and a house is not mentioned, so it is most likely that this offer refers only to agricultural improvements (MEP 4570)

1810 Lord Macdonald orders that a small dwelling house be built (after JC has written to Mr MacPherson, the factor, in August, about the uncomfortable state of the house at Duntulm). JC cannot afford to build it himself even if granted ("liberal meliorations at the period of my removal"), so proposes to quarry the stone himself and bring in other supplies (MEP 4554/1 and 1331)

1810 Sept John Ferguson, superintendent of buildings for Lord MacDonald, draws up a specification for a house which would cost £280 or £235, if JC quarried the stone himself. (MEP 1295)

“Having, agreeable to your desire, considered the expense of building a Farm house at Duntulm, – The house to be 38 feet long over walls, 16 feet broad clear within walls and 9 feet high in the side walls. The ground floor to consist of two rooms 16 feet by 12 feet each with a closet off one of them under the stair. The garrets to consist of two rooms and a closet off the stair head.

It is my opinion it will cost two hundred and eighty pounds sterling. And if the materials are to be driven to the spot by Captain Campbell it will reduce the expense to two hundred and thirty five pounds allowing the stones and sand to be got middling convenient to the stance”.

1811 Under the terms suggested, the new house would add a further £22.10s to the rent which JC cannot afford. As a cheaper alternative he proposes to build an addition to the existing house. He will start work in June unless he hears to the contrary. (MEP1331).

1815 JC writes to both John Campbell WS and John MacPherson, Chamberlain, saying that he will have to quit Duntulm unless he is allowed to sublet part of the farm, as he cannot afford the rent. (MEP 1546)

1818 JC’s lease of Duntulm has expired and he is claiming ameliorations as allowed under letters of 17 & 26 Jan 1809 from the then Chamberlain Colonel Graham (see MEP4570). It will be necessary to get "enclosures and other improvements appraised" – there is no mention here of buildings, let alone a dwelling house. (MEP 1748)

1826 Duntulm farm advertised to let, although the advert does not mention a new house, while that for Scorrybreck mentions the "excellent House", lately repaired.

1827 Duntulm let to Martin Martin for 11 years. In the lease it is noted that "a dwelling House and Kitchen is required upon the said lands." Lord Macdonald agrees to "be at the expense of erecting such a dwelling House and Kitchen as may be thought requisite and necessary for the said farm...." In a handwritten note at the end of the lease Lord
Macdonald writes that he agrees to give £350 for building the house and kitchen. (MEP 4292/4)

1831 The house at Duntulm, which had not previously been insured, was insured for £90. To give an idea of comparable insurance cover, the schoolhouse at Kilmaluag had insurance cover for £80 while several of the mills in Skye were each insured for £100. The farmhouse (and presumably steadings etc. at Duntulm), were insured for £450 while the house at Gillen in Skye was insured for £220. This suggests that the property at Duntulm, including the new or refurbished house, was of a substantial size.

1838 Martin Martin’s lease now ended. Duntulm let to Hector MacKenzie who agrees to keep the dwelling house and small cottage at Duntulm in "a tenantable state and condition" (MEP 4305/2)

1841 House at Duntulm was insured for £450 (this may include the steadings). Comparable figures are: Gillan and Scalpay keep the same level of cover as in 1831. Kilmuir Manse in Skye was insured for £300.

1851 A report by Mr Ballingal the factor, mentions that the house at Duntulm is in disrepair. The steading, while small, was in good order (MEP 3738)

As can be seen from these documents, it is not particularly clear as to when the main house is built. It is possible that this took place at some stage around 1830, as indicated by the substantial rise and level of the insurance relating to the properties at Duntulm. The insurance cover is quite high when compared with other major buildings in Skye at the time including the schoolhouse at Kilmaluag, Gillen, Scalpay and Kilmuir Manse. However, the Ordnance Survey Name Book entry of 1870 shows the following: This name applies to a farm stead ing situated a short distance to the east of Duntulm Castle. It is two storeys in height, slated, and in elegant repair and having numerous out offices attached, which are in the same good state of repair. On Captain Fraser’s property (the Duntulm authorities consulted for this entry included Mr. MacDougall, Mr. Munro and Alexander MacDonald – Estate Factor).

It is most unusual that the main house at Duntulm is not mentioned in this Ordnance Survey Name Book entry, as the 1875 map sheet certainly shows the house and steading.

6.1.3.2 Portree Archive Centre, Portree, Skye

Consultation of the records held within the Portree Archive Centre produced records relating to Duntulm after it passed into the hands of Major William Fraser in 1855. Only the most accessible records were viewed, but it is possible that additional records relating to Duntulm House and farm are held at the centre under Christie and Ferguson Solicitors records (1832 – 1952: see D123 files).

The Census Records for the Parish of Kilmuir in 1851 (County of Inverness-hire) does not show the number of rooms for Duntulm House, but the following people are present in the household:
John Mackinnon (farmer of 30 acres) employing five indoor servants and nine outdoor servants, his wife and one daughter

Employed staff includes five house servants, two farm labourers, 1 gardener and one boatman

The Census Records for 1861 show the house at Duntulm with fifteen rooms and the following people present in the household:

John Stewart (sheep farmer – formerly of Ensay, Harris), a widower with four children

Employed staff includes five sheep farmers daughters and sons, one shepherd’s wife, one nurse, one student nurse, one housemaid, one cook, two dairymaids, two ploughmen, one cow herd, two shepherd’s and one mason

The Census Records of 1871 shows the house at Duntulm with sixteen rooms and the following people present in the household:

John Stewart (sheep farmer), a widower of 46 years of age with four daughters and one son

Employed staff includes one house keeper, one housemaid, one laundry maid, one cook, one dairymaid, one domestic servant, two farm servants, one sheep herd and one cow herd

By the year 1881, the Census Records still shows John Stewart as the head farmer, with 200 acres of land, and employs twenty-four people. However, by 1891, the records show Catherine C. MacLeod (widow) as the head of the house and farm house, and as tenant. The Census Records of 1901 shows John MacDonald as the head sheep farmer.

The Portree Archive Centre also holds two sets of accurate architectural plans for the main house at Duntulm, from 1936 and 1955 (see Figures 4 and 5). The 1936 plans for Duntulm Lodge, for which there is no named client, shows what must have been the main layout of the ranges as shown on the Ordnance Survey 1875 map sheet. This shows a three storey building with the main range aligned SW-NE and with a porch and bay window in the NW aspect. Two ranges run NW-SE of the back of the main range, with that to the SW the longer of the two ranges. A larder is shown projecting off the shorter annexe to the SE.
Figure 4 – Architectural plans of 1936 for Duntulm Lodge
Figure 5 – Architectural Plans of 1955 for Duntulm Lodge Hotel
The ground floor plans show a porch, hall, drawing room, dining room, bedroom, kitchen, scullery, servant's hall and larder. A passage leading through the centre of the building provides access to the various rooms, while the stairs lead off the hall to the second floor. The second floor plan shows the stairs leading to the upper landing providing access to a box room and two large bedrooms. A short flight of steps descends to a long passage running through the building providing access to four additional bedrooms, a bathroom and separate W.C. A final flight of steps from the second floor landing provides access to the third floor.

The second set of plans dated 1955 are based on a survey by the Chief Architect and Surveyor for the Department of Agriculture for Scotland, who held the Kilmuir Estate at this time. The plans show several changes to the 1936 plans, as described above. This includes the installation of a pantry in the kitchen, the conversion of the ground floor bedroom to a private sitting room, conversion of the scullery to a cloakroom, and the conversion of the servant's hall to a private sitting room. Upstairs, there is no change to the layout on the second and third floors. The major change to the building however, is the addition of a new range to the house (on the northeast side), which connects to the main building via a passage at ground floor level. The ground floor plan includes a small boiler room, smoke room and two bedrooms, with a passage providing access to the stairwell. The upstairs landing provides access to a further three bedrooms, a W.C. and bathroom.

The Archive Centre in Portree also holds a small selection of post cards showing the hotel at Duntulm, the best of which show the following detail:

No. CD31 F199_028 ï Pre 1946 image looking northwest, showing main range without annexe to northeast, but lean-to located to the east. Stone wall shown running down the southwest side of the house, where the drive is located today. The walled garden (now overgrown) is shown and the steading building is still roofed. A stone building without a roof is shown to the southwest of the steading.

No.CD31 P199_029 ï View looking ENE over hotel, showing original range with porch and bay window to front, original dormers in roof space; with southwest end of steading showing beyond house (connected to main house by a drystone wall). A roofed building is shown to the NNE of the main house.

No.CD28 P208_145 ï View looking northwest showing the main range of the hotel (c.1950), with annexe attached to the NE, sloping-roofed lean-to to the E, and the flat-roofed addition to the SW.

No.CD28 P239-2-1 ï Shows the hotel from the west, complete with annexe attached to the NE and the steading showing beyond.

No.CD28 P239 -4 -1 ï View looking east showing the main range and annexe, with the roof of the steading just visible. The flat-roofed extension to the SW of the main range had not been built at this time.

6.2 Archaeological Survey Results

The results of the archaeological walkover survey were limited, with recorded features generally relating to walls and enclosures associated with the house and hotel (see 6.2.1 below). However, several degraded and ephemeral features were noted, the results for all of
which are shown below. Due to the level of modification to the main house and steading at Duntulm, including flat-roofed extensions and annexes, it proved almost impossible to record details relating to the original buildings. This also proved to be the case within the interior of the buildings.

6.2.1 Recorded Features

6.2.1.1 The individual features recorded in the grounds of Duntulm Castle Hotel are listed below and should be viewed in conjunction with Figure 6.

Site 1 A grass-covered mound, located 5 metres to the WNW of a stone ruin measures 6 metres E-W by 5 metres N-S and stands up to 0.6 metres high. Some stone is visible on the SW side of the mound, the feature possibly relating to the remains of a building.

Site 2 Very degraded remains of a possible stone dyke, with large stones to each side and ditch to the E (possible drainage ditch). Ditch measures 1.8 metres wide at the top and 0.7 metres wide at the base. This may form a part of the old farm complex.

Site 3 Drystone wall with cope stones set one course down from the top, measures 0.6 metres wide at base and 0.4 metres wide at the top, and stands up to 1.6 metres high. Forms part of an enclosure attached to ruined building. Entrance in SSW corner of the enclosure measures 2 metres wide.

Site 4 Aligned almost N-S and located 4.5 metres WNW of wall (Site 3), is a possible revetment wall up to one course of stone high. May be remains of path revetment, or may possibly relate to an earlier, very-degraded structure. The small paddock in which this feature lies contains undulating ground (humps and hollows), possibly relating to buried archaeological features.

Site 5 Located one metre to ESE wall of the steading and running alongside the ESE wall of this building, is a drystone-built revetting wall measuring up to 0.9 metres high. The wall appears to form the base of the original walled garden.

Site 6 The main wall forming the walled garden is drystone-built and measures 1 metre wide at the base and 0.8 metres wide at the top and generally survives up to 1.3 metres high. However, on the west side, the wall stands up to 1.75 metres high; adjacent to the current car park and to the SW of what appears to be the original entrance into the walled garden. The continuing wall on the NNE side has been removed. The walled garden has been cut through in two places (on the SSW and NNE sides) to provide and access track to the rear of the hotel and chalet accommodation.

Site 7 A drystone dyke enclosing a field is located to the south of the entrance to the hotel grounds and measures 0.8 metres wide at the base by 0.5 metres wide at the top, and survives up to 1.6 metres high. The coping stones at the top of the wall survive in some parts of the feature.

Site 8 The steading for the farm of Duntulm survives in remarkably good repair, although the building has been extensively modified internally. A flight of wooden steps, now in a serious state of repair, provide access to the loft space (these were not accessed during the site survey due to health and safety issues).
Site 9  The main lodge/hotel building complex at Duntulm comprises a main range including the footprint of the old house and additional annexes and modifications. The survey of this building should be undertaken during the development works, as structural details are exposed.

Figure 6 – Plan of survey area showing sites mentioned in the text
6.2.2 The House and Steading

6.2.2.1 Due to the extensive modifications to Duntulm Hotel and Steading, it was not possible to record details relating to the original fabric of these buildings, as outlined above (see 6.2 above). Therefore, it is recommended that visual inspections are made in these two buildings during the proposed developments (see recommendations in section 8 below).

7. Discussion

7.1 From the desk-based sources consulted for Duntulm Castle Hotel and in particular the original house or lodge, it is difficult without further documentary research to fix an exact date for its construction. This is also true for the steading building located to the east of the house. The 1875 first edition Ordnance Survey map sheet certainly shows both the house and steading, and other ancillary buildings in contemporary use, comprising the farm of Duntulm.

7.2 The documents consulted for this desk based assessment, and in particular those held in the Clan Donald Archives in Skye, show the farm at Duntulm changing hands on a fairly regular basis through the first half of the 19th century. Many of the entries consulted indicate tenants complaining about the ‘uncomfortable state of the house’, to which Lord MacDonald orders that a ‘small dwelling house is built’ (1810). In 1827, Duntulm was let to Martin Martin for
11 years and within the lease it is noted that ‘A dwelling House and Kitchen is required upon the said lands.’ Lord Macdonald agrees to “be at the expense of erecting such a dwelling House and Kitchen as may be thought requisite and necessary for the said farm....” In a handwritten note at the end of the lease Lord Macdonald writes that he agrees to give £350 for building the house and kitchen.

Therefore, it appears that a new house is built at Duntulm, at some stage between 1827 and 1831. This is supported by a major increase in the insurance premium for the house (and possibly including the steading building) to £450. When the farm is re-let at Duntulm to Hector Mackenzie in 1838, he promises to keep the dwelling house and small cottage at Duntulm in ‘tenantable state and condition’, although by 1851, a report by Mr Ballingal (the estate factor), mentions that the house at Duntulm ‘is in disrepair’ and the steading, while small, was in good order.

The Census Records for 1851 certainly suggest that the house at Duntulm is in use, although possibly after the farm had been re-leased to John Mackinnon. The farmer, John Mackinnon, employed five indoor servants and nine outdoor servants, and lived with his wife and one daughter. Therefore, it is possible that such a house would be of a modest size, especially based on the number of servants employed for indoor employment.

By the time of the 1861 Census, we do have more substantial evidence for a good sized house, with a total of fifteen rooms. It is of course possible, that the house noted in the 1861 Census Records is already an amalgam of an original building with later additions. Only further detailed research will be able to confirm this interpretation. However, a detailed inspection of the building fabric during the proposed developments and modifications would also provide the opportunity to look at the phased development of the various structures.

Based on the documentary evidence consulted so far, it would appear that the house/lodge at Duntulm comprised one of the classic houses of the later Historic Period in the island of Skye. Combined with the steading and farm complex, and a fine walled garden, the house and its associated lands would have provided an important economic centre in the north of the island.

8. **Recommendations**

8.1 The Ordnance Survey map sheets consulted for this archaeological evaluation shows a number of buildings relating to the farm complex at Duntulm. This includes the main house range; the steading; structures located at each end of the steading building; a building located to the ESE of the steading, attached to the NE side of the garden wall; and two separate structures located to the NW of the steading. It appears from the walkover survey that these structures have been removed in the past, while the structure at the WSW corner of the steading has most likely been incorporated into later buildings. Therefore, any major invasive works in the area of these buildings should be subject to a watching brief, so that any buried archaeological features or deposits can be identified and recorded.

8.2 The steading building at Duntulm (Site 8) has already been extensively modified in the recent past to provide accommodation units. However, any invasive developments associated with this building may have impacts on the original structure. Therefore, a standing building
survey should be conducted after the structure is stripped back to reveal the original fabric, constructional details and the potential date of construction.

8.3 The main range of buildings (Site 9) comprising the hotel and associated annexes should also be subject to an archaeological survey after the structure has been stripped back to the original fabric. This will allow a detailed survey of the structure to be carried out and may provide evidence for the original date of construction of the building.

8.4 Any ground works proposed to the north and east of the steading building (Site 8) has the potential to reveal buried archaeological features or deposits relating to the farm complex at Duntulm. If works are planned in these areas, then an archaeological watching brief should be carried out.

8.5 The recommendations proposed above will allow sufficient data to be gathered relating to the farm complex at Duntulm, and will inform any mitigation and recording strategies to safeguard any identified archaeological features and deposits, and elements of the built heritage relating to the farm.

Plate 3 – The SE elevation of the steading building at Duntulm
9. References


10. Web-Based Sources

British Geological Survey Î http://www.bgs.ac.uk.

Gazetteer for Scotland Î http://www.scottish-places.info


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DUNCAS 14: Duntulm Castle Hotel, Trotternish, Isle of Skye

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