The former Anti-Aircraft Operations Room (AAOR bunker) at Gairloch

Preliminary heritage report

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ANDREW PK WRIGHT
Chartered Architect & Heritage Consultant
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Chartered Architect & Heritage Consultant
16 Moy House Court
Forres, Moray IV36 2NZ
T 01309 676655
F 01309 676609
M 07740 859005
E andrewpkw@aol.com
1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

The lease of the site which the Gairloch Heritage Museum has occupied for many years is unlikely to be renewed, and the organisation is exploring the option of taking over the former AAOR (Anti-Aircraft Operations Room) bunker erected during the early years of the Cold War to serve its future needs. A feasibility study has been carried out in behalf of the Museum by David Somerville Architects which illustrates how the structure might be adapted to suit the brief.

With a view to developing this proposal and creating the case for funding the Gairloch Heritage Museum has appointed the Highland Buildings Preservation Trust to provide assistance, and this report has been commissioned as part of this exercise. Its purpose is to set out, in preliminary terms, the history of the site and how it may have changed over time, to evaluate its heritage significance and to consider any constraints on how the site may be developed in the future.

1.2 Structure of the report

The report looks at the background in which the structures of the Cold War were commissioned in Britain in the years following the Second World War, and the purpose for which the structure had been erected is examined. An evaluation follows of what has survived of past uses to which the structure has been put and how the structure has been adapted, and an outline conservation strategy for addressing the future needs of the site is suggested in the final section of the report.
It is set out as a heritage report which at this stage does not follow the rigid format of a conservation statement or a conservation plan for the site. Neither should it be considered a heritage impact assessment by which the outline proposals are evaluated in terms of the impact they may have on the heritage of the site. If there is a perceived need for commissioning reports of this nature to assist with the development of the scheme design, or to add to an understanding of the site and how it may be interpreted as an educational resource, more detailed studies can be commissioned at a later date.

1.3 Methodology

A site visit was undertaken on 30 August 2012, and the photographs appearing in this report relate to the date of this visit and were taken by the author of the report. While a photographic record has been made this was not exhaustive, and neither has any building recording been undertaken at this stage.

The site visit has been supplemented by preliminary archival research into the history of Cold War structures, some of it online for which the Subterranea Britannica website has proved particularly useful. Other information has been gleaned from a literature review. The sources of information are set out at the end of the report.

1.4 Location of the property and brief description

Known locally as the ‘old radar station’, the property is located at Auchtercairn, to the south of the road junction on the A832 coastal road where the heritage museum is located presently and from which it is within walking distance. It is presently in the ownership of the Highland Council and is in use as a roads and service depot for the area. Despite the robustness of the blast-proof reinforced concrete shell of its construction it has been altered on occasions for various uses, but it appears to have been used only sporadically until the late 1980s. There is an associated single storey building
adjacent to the roadside which is of orthodox military construction of the era. It is believed to be contemporary with the former AAOR structure which is set further back on the site. The structure is occupied by a public services utility company and does not form part of the current study.

1.5 Designations

The structure is not a listed building and there are no other designations in force at the present. At the request of the HBPT the structure has been placed on the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland (BARR) as it is known that the current usage of the main building will cease at some stage.

1.6 Orientation

For the purpose of this report the front elevation of the bunker facing Gairloch Bay is deemed to face west etc.
English Heritage summarised the lack of awareness of structures erected for the Cold War, and the risks they faced, when it first published the book on the subject 'Cold War: Building for Nuclear Confrontation' in 2003:

There can be no doubt that the Cold War was one of the defining events of the late 20th century. This book presents one aspect of the British experience of the Cold War – its physical remains. We hope it will lead to a wider appreciation of the monuments and to more analytical recording, both here and abroad, as well as to the conservation of representative sites and structures. The importance of the physical legacy is particularly striking since many official documents from the period are lost or remain classified, and the memories (themselves often surrounded by security considerations) of those who worked on the sites are beginning to fade.

2 Background

In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War Britain entered into a period of austerity measures, during which time it was obliged to prepare for the possibility of nuclear attack in the escalation of the rearmament programme accompanying the first phases of the Cold War. Although it had emerged on the winning side of a global conflict, the country’s financial reserves were left exhausted by the war effort and it was to suffer a further diminution of its status as a world power from the disassembling of substantial parts its empire.

The seeds of the Cold War can be traced to the 1930s and to the decade leading up to the outbreak of hostilities when a non-aggression pact had been signed between the Germany of the National Socialists and the Soviet Union. The Russians participated knowingly in the annexation of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania and when, in 1939, Poland was invaded by Germany from the west Stalin’s army marched into the country from the east. When the Nazis broke the pact by invading the borders of the Soviet Union in 1941, an uneasy alliance was forged between East and West to counter the threat of Fascism which had engulfed Central Europe. Poland was to signal the problems of the future in 1944 when Stalin unilaterally imposed a communist government upon the country against the wishes of the people, which resulted in the forces of the Polish Resistance fighting for a short while with the German army in a desperate attempt to restore democratic government. By the end of the War a large number of countries which had been ‘liberated’ from occupation by the Nazis in Eastern Europe were under the direct control of the Soviet Union. As Bob Clarke, author of Britain’s Cold War, has observed there was a touch of irony in the fact that Britain, having made considerable sacrifices to oppose Central Europe being dominated by a single power, was now faced with a problem of a similar magnitude as the Soviet Union exerted its grip in the post-war years.

The partitioning of Germany was agreed between the United States, the Soviet Union, France and Britain at Yalta on the Black Sea in February 1945. Barely a year had passed before Churchill was expressing in public a growing anxiety over the desire of the Russians to maintain control over the liberated states, when he stated ‘an iron curtain had descended across the Continent’. More than this, however, he was becoming increasingly alarmed by the withdrawal of American forces from Europe, scheduled to have been completed by 1947. The Americans agreed to provide financial support to those European countries withstanding the onslaught of communism, and this became known as the Marshall Plan. The tightening of the Soviet Union net led to governments in the West believing that further advancement into Europe was not only likely, but had to be contained. President Truman’s pledge to the beleaguered countries of Europe was ratified through the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) for the defence of Europe in 1949, which required all NATO signatories to come to the aid of other countries threatened by Soviet aggression. To counter these perceived
threats, as Nick Catford has observed in Cold War Bunkers ‘Britain became the most densely enbunkered nation in the world’.

The Cold War is generally considered to have begun in the late 1940s, coming to an end in 1989 when the wall dividing East Berlin from the West was dismantled in a final act of symbolic defiance. 1950 was a key year in the development of the Cold War. Britain strove to avoid confrontation at almost any cost, but the government recognised that the country would always be vulnerable from being placed on the front line of any conflict, with the risk rising sharply once Britain became an arsenal for the stockpiling of the non-nuclear components of American arms in this same year. The country was unavoidably entangled in a war of conflicting ideologies played out on a wider global stage – on the one hand, there was the capitalism of the West fuelled by the strength of the American economy with a commitment to the protection of democratic government, pitted against the harsh communist regimes of the countries of the Eastern Bloc controlled by the Soviet Union on the other. Fields of conflict were no longer confined to Europe, however, when Britain was drawn in 1950 into the Korean War. The British government believed that this was a prelude to Russian strikes on Western Europe, a concern made more real with the news that in the previous year the Russians had detonated their first nuclear fission device. The arms race was gathering pace, and it remained a characteristic of Britain’s involvement in the Cold War that the actions taken to protect the country from attack were driven in the main by a response to events taking place elsewhere.

With the escalation of the potential for renewed armed conflict, units which were disbanded at the end of the Second World War were resurrected, among them the Royal Observer Corps (ROC) in 1947 which was given the purpose of filling in the many gaps in the RAF’s post-war network coverage. The service had been stood down just four days after the declaration that the Second World War in Europe had ended, but already by the late autumn of 1946 the BBC was broadcasting an appeal for volunteers, with training to commence in April 1947. By the end of the following year 1,420 posts were being actively manned around the country, many of them using the infrastructure which had remained from the war years. However, the structures making up the observation posts were haphazard, and in some cases the wartime arrangements could not be perpetuated where, for instance, posts were mounted on rooftops of buildings of the urban landscape. Accordingly the distribution of the observation posts and their construction was rationalised, and by 1952 standardised prefabricated Orlit structures were appearing across the landscape. Coverage was relatively sparse throughout the Highlands when compared with other parts of the country. The ROC was not formally disbanded until 1991.

While most of the technology had been adapted from the final years of the Second World War, the speed at which new technology was introduced in the growing armaments race rendered many of the defence and early warning systems obsolete, in many cases almost as soon as the supporting
infrastructure had been completed. Initially the early warning system was dependent upon the development of wartime radar stations and systems which had been largely effective during the latter stages of the war. Due to a shortage of public funds the wartime infrastructure was effectively mothballed as the incoming Labour government, keen to introduce its new social programme, was reluctant to invest heavily in defence projects. The Berlin crisis brought about a change of thinking as the threat of air-raids loomed once more. The Rotor programme was set up in 1949, the technology founded upon the assumption that orthodox bombs and nuclear bombs would be delivered by slow-flying Russian piston-engined bombers. Defence against this mode of attack would be through anti-aircraft fire from gun emplacements, controlled by operations rooms for the sector.

The Rotor system was introduced to ensure blanket radar cover to what was termed a Main Defended Area (MDA) over a length of coastline which extended initially from Flamborough Head to Portland Bill. Thirty-six stations were established eventually with many of the sites consisting of bunkers deep within the ground with access gained through a guardhouse, a single storey structure looking not unlike a domestic bungalow positioned on the surface. The system was extended in a second phase, and this included the Scottish sector. A final phase included coverage of the Western approaches which included Northwest Scotland, but by this time the system had been rendered substantially obsolete from the gradual introduction of Type 80 radar, first introduced in 1954. The introduction of high speed bombers flying at high altitude in the mid-1950s spelt the final death knell of the anti-aircraft gun emplacements and of the associated operations rooms, all of which had been decommissioned by 1955. While a small minority of the total number of sites found new uses, the relative inflexibility of the structures which had been built to withstand bomb blast left a legacy of redundant structures which could not be readily demolished, or adapted even to new uses. As a consequence many have suffered damage from vandalism or have been fire-damaged, while some of the subterranean sites have become flooded with ground water. Few sites remain in anything close to their original state, but one of the best preserved of the operational Rotor sites is now a well-established visitor attraction at Anstruther in Fife, known as 'Scotland’s Secret Bunker'.

As the risks to the defence of the land escalated in the aftermath of the war, other organisations were resurrected as part of a coordinated approach to detection and protection. The Civil Defence Act of 1948 gave rise to the establishment of the Civil Defence Corps, manned by volunteers, based on the organisation set up during the war years which had proved itself to be effective as a morale-boosting and a rescue organisation. The Auxiliary Fire Service was also set up around the same time. The act gave powers to the Home Office to put measures in place for the protection of the public against attack from overseas. As the Cold War entered its second phase, with the stockpiling of the nuclear arsenal with long range missiles on both sides, it had become apparent that the population could no longer be defended and thoughts turned to civic administration. The incoming Conservative Government, elected in 1979, increased expenditure
on the defence budget and on civil defence for which the available funding was doubled. In 1986 the Civil Protection Act was passed which gave local authorities powers to use structures dedicated to civil defence at time of nuclear attack for more peaceable purposes, in recognition of the fact that the Cold War was entering the final phases with more conciliatory exchanges between the superpowers.

The bunker at Gairloch was constructed as an Anti-Aircraft Operations Room (AAOR) controlling the Loch Ewe sector within Group 3, which included four other Gun Defended Areas (GDAs) covering the whole of Britain. The AAOR at Gairloch was the most northerly of them, and the other five sites within the same group covered Glasgow and the Clyde, the Clyde Anchorage area at Inverkip, Forth and Rosyth, Belfast and Londonderry. The six AAORs within Group 3 were under the Group Commander of the Rotor site at Barnton on the western outskirts of Edinburgh. There were five groups and thirty-two GDAs in total (some sources give the total number of GDAs as thirty-three). GDAs would be concentrated on two major targets: industrial sites (especially defence establishments), and coastal areas which included the major ports. During the Second World War there had been almost 1,000 gun emplacement sites, and at the end of the war it was agreed to reduce these to 210 in number, with around half of the sites maintained. At the remainder the hardware was to be dismantled and stored for reinstatement should the need arise. Tensions rose around the time of the Korean War, when Britain’s air defences were strengthened considerably. As many as 684 positions were identified although it seems unlikely that all would have been fully operational. Most of the AAOR sites would have been operational by 1952, although there is little evidence that there had been much use made of the Gairloch bunker. As noted above, when Anti-Aircraft Command was disbanded in March 1955, the site would have been decommissioned after a short period of only three years at the most. As during the Second World War the anti-aircraft defences and AAORs were manned by Army personnel, and at Gairloch they were enlisted in the 78 Brigade. After the service was disbanded, responsibility for air defence and airborne early warning systems fell to the RAF.

Sections through the AAOR bunker at Frodsham, Cheshire, showing the standardised two-storey plan, here with the lower storey built into the ground (English Heritage)

AAORs were erected to a standardised two-storeyed plan with a double height operations room at the centre. There were two types, both with very similar plans with the only differences in the plans based on the arrangements for the access doors, depending on whether the type had the lower floor sunk into the ground, or whether erected as a two-storey above-ground structure, as at Gairloch. Where conditions permitted, there would always be a preference for the lower storey to be set into the ground within

AAOR Bunker Gairloch
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a basement to give enhanced protection against conventional bomb and nuclear blast. Each unit was estimated to have cost between £20,000 and £35,000 depending on whether the structure was mounted on the surface, or partially submerged. The purpose of the AAOR unit was to filter information arriving from the RAF centralised operations rooms to the individual gun sites, providing them with information on the nature of the threat, its direction and height.

Each of the units had a centralised viewing gallery with control cabins overlooking a plotting room. The remaining rooms were rest rooms with facilities for male and female Army officers and ranks, signals rooms, telephone rooms, mess rooms, and even a NAAFI. The whole self-contained community within the bunker was served by air conditioning and ventilation systems with generators and back-up batteries. It seems that no original War Office plans survive, and the layouts shown above are based on a typical unit at Frodsham which had been in, or close to, the original state as recorded by Cheshire County Council in conjunction with its use as a centre for civil emergencies. Gairloch AAOR had been the only example of a structure erected for this purpose in the Highland zone and within the whole of the Highland Council area. Wick, although more northerly, had been a Rotor site. There had been an associated ROC post at Gairloch, with a network of ROC posts situated at Aultbea, Ullapool, Kyle of Lochalsh (two posts), Portree, Uig (Skye) and Dunvegan.

In 1988 Highland Regional Council acquired the bunker at Raigmore, and following the 1986 Act it received a grant of £5,000,000 from the Home Office for its conversion to a Regional Emergency Centre. Hitherto the site had been a wartime RAF Group Sector Operations Centre, used by the Civil Defence Corps between 1958 and 1968. Alterations to the former AAOR at
Gairloch had been carried out at around the same time as the conversion of the Raigmore bunker to create a stand-by centre. In the communications room at Gairloch a handwritten notice has survived on the pinboard giving contact numbers at the Emergency Centre at Raigmore, and for a further stand-by centre at Dingwall. Nick Catford, when cataloguing the site for Subterranea Britannica, considered it possible that the bunker at Gairloch had also been used by the Civil Defence Corps at an earlier stage. Oral history sourced locally might be expected to throw light on the extent to which the site had been operational during the early phases of its existence, and also how it was regarded by those living within the community.

For many years the bunker has performed a valuable role for the coastal communities of Wester Ross as a roads depot, for which purpose the structure has been adapted. However, despite a number of changes having been made from when it was first built, the structure is still recognisable as a former AAOR bunker in conforming to the standardised design. It is in relatively good condition, no doubt a consequence of having been built above ground, whereas many of the structures with the lower storey submerged below ground level have been flooded out over the years where no new uses have been found for them. And also, despite the changes, it has historic significance as it is potentially one of only four structures of its type in Scotland, and for the fact alone that Gairloch had been selected as a strategic site in Britain’s Cold War. Of the AAORs surviving elsewhere in Scotland, that at East Kilbride is in use as a country house store, while the unit at Craigiehall has been adapted as a conference venue. The former AAOR at Inverkip, which had controlled the Clyde anchorage, has been extensively damaged by fire and is believed to be partially flooded. In the popular and beautiful West Coast setting of Gairloch the brutal, functional appearance of the bunker may lack grace, but it continues to provide a lasting reminder of the importance of the contribution of Britain’s remote coastal communities in the defence of the land during one of the defining moments in the history of the twentieth century.
A brief summary of some of the changes that have been effected during the life of the building is given in the next section of the report.
3  The evidence of the fabric

Since it was erected in the early 1950s the former AAOR bunker at Gairloch has seen a marked number of changes in its adaptation to later uses. While much of the layout of the original structure can still be recognised, apart from heavy mild steel blast-proof doors having survived within their frames to some of the ground floor rooms, there is relatively little else which has survived from the fitting out of the original structure. None of the original building services plant has survived, having been replaced during the 1980s; what has been installed seems to have been barely used at all. Apart from the blast-proof doorsets, already mentioned, the only evidence of original fittings and finishes can be found in the pile of lightweight flush doors painted a blue-green colour located at the corner of the store-room at first floor at the northwest corner of the building, and in the functional tubular balustrading found at the head of the stairs to the rear. The doors have been stripped of their ironmongery.

The orientation of the bunker is slightly challenging to explain, unless it has been determined by obscure military operational reasons. While the single storey structure at the front of the site follows logically the line of the road leading southwards out of Gairloch (and the shoreline of the bay), the bunker is at an unrelated skewed angle which sits uncomfortably with the surrounding structures. The explanation may lie simply in the fact that it follows the line of the stone boundary wall to the rear of the site which may have been built by the laird during the time of agricultural improvement on the estate in the first half of the nineteenth century. Much of the development that surrounds the bunker is recent, and so the structure must have stood isolated within the landscape when first erected. Being set back from the main road, despite its considerable bulk, it does not have an obvious presence. It becomes more visible when seen from a distance across the bay – for instance, from the road leading out towards Big Sand. The
Construction of the bunker – external walls, internal surfaces, ceilings, floors and roof – is of dense board-marked reinforced concrete to withstand bomb blast. Its location, overlooking Gairloch Bay, is stunning and has considerable potential.

It is known that the alterations to the fabric were undertaken by the Highland Regional Council in the 1980s. It has not been established if the conversion of the shell to the roads depot took place at the same time as the standby emergency operations room was established following the 1986 Act, but this seems probable. The original standby generators, air conditioning plant, ventilation systems and trunking, switchgear and control panels, and the water storage tanks would have been replaced in their entirety with modern equivalents as the original equipment would have been in excess of thirty-five years old by that time. A communications centre with telephone booths and associated administration space was inserted at ground floor at the southeast corner of the building, but despite the sheet of handwritten telephone numbers listing the other emergency centres...
(headed 'Exercise Highfort') there is no evidence of any handsets for the landlines within these spaces.

More radical changes to the fabric were undertaken to accommodate the roads depot. An external blast porch would have protected the original front door on the main elevation when originally built, and this was removed in to create a wider opening fitted with a high roller shutter door. The insertion of the door necessitated the removal of the intermediate floor in the front area of the building and the remains of the old wall surrounding the two storey operations room can still be seen suspended at high level. Although the original blast porch has been removed from the front of the building a similar one survives at the rear. Other alterations have necessitated the removal of blast-proof internal doors but some remain in situ. Substantial changes were made to accommodate a large open store on the upper storey of the bunker on the north side, to which access was created through a new wall opening served by an overhead lifting beam. A rest room together with a kitchen area, a shower room, lockers and changing space were inserted at first floor to the rear of the bunker where the old switchboard serving the operations room would have been originally, with suites of WCs positioned against the rear wall.

Other than where changes have been noted above, many of the circulation spaces, together with the rooms off them, have survived without major change other than from superficial redecoration and improvements carried out to building services and lighting. Where openings have been altered in the reinforced concrete walls, and the original openings infilled, concrete blockwork has been used; there is also the evidence of brickwork and dark grey gypsum plaster repairs to indicate where changes have occurred.

Externally the original bunker walls have been redecorated in a cream paint colour which only partially disguises the changes that have been made, which are mostly to accommodate replacement building services terminals.
The paint finish has weathered in recent years and has left a patchy appearance. There is evidence of 'concrete cancer' in some of the walls, and while this may have been occasioned by the removal of external structures such as the blast porch, revealing the ends of the reinforcement bars, in other areas the cover to the reinforcement appears not to have been adequate with the consequence that the reinforcement is rusting on the face of the wall. This is particularly noticeable where rock salt for treating roads has been stockpiled against the structure along the north side, which could cause long term corrosive effects. The most obvious change to the external fabric has been in the insertion of a light grey coloured low-pitched roof clad in metal sheeting, as the original flat roof finish (which could have been mastic asphalt) must have failed, or been close to failing. The roof has been damaged by gales, with sections of cladding having been peeled back.
along the south edge of the roof revealing the original finish. Adjoining sheets are weighted down by concrete blocks. Most probably as a consequence of this there appears to have been water penetration through the deck of the original roof, resulting in the growth of stalactites coinciding with the original shutter joints on the ceiling of the tank room at first floor, and the defect has caused general dampness to the internal finishes.

A storage shed has been erected against the south wall of the bunker and is presently in a dilapidated state. Although still in use, also in a dilapidated state is the freestanding office building, constructed of a lightweight prefabricated portal frame. The structure has suffered from outward movement at the head of the walls, and from extensive dampness which has affected most of the internal finishes. The infill panels are of lightweight hollow clay blocks which have suffered extensive damage from frost.
4 Outline conservation strategy

The former AAOR bunker at Gairloch, a relic of the Cold War, is representative of a small number of structures built to an identical design in the early 1950s. Built as an uncompromisingly functional military structure to withstand bomb blast, but without having any regard to the sensitivity of its location, it has proved to be adaptable to accommodating change. The robustness and simplicity of the design should not be compromised by inappropriate extensions, and there should be a presumption in favour of removing later accretions in order to return the structure to the cubic form of the original blockhouse. In doing so there should be equally a presumption towards preserving the blast porch at the rear wall, together with the mild steel ladder leading to the roof of this lower structure, as they are authentic elements of the original structure. The secondary pitched roof should be removed to restore the original flat-roofed appearance and treatment of the wallheads should be carried out carefully to be the minimum necessary to prevent water penetration.

Further changes to the exterior of the bunker would seem possible, provided always they do not conflict with the requirements set out in the foregoing paragraph. Provided that the cubic form of the blockhouse is preserved, consideration should be given to introducing a distinctive new design element which rises above the flat roof to improve the appearance of the structure and to broadcast any new use for which the interior should be adapted. An intervention of this nature should be designed to make the site more visible, and consideration should be given to the appearance of the structure outside daylight hours to capitalise on the long views to be had from around Loch Gairloch looking in the direction of the site.

Right: the bomb blast porch to the rear of the bunker survives, with the original blast door
The uncomfortable relationship between the structure and the surrounding boundaries of the site should be eased through the acquisition of adjoining sites where possible, and through the introduction of judicious landscaping to improve the setting of the structure and its relationship with surrounding buildings. The historic boundary of the original stone dyke to the rear of the site should be preserved so far as is possible, accepting that it will need to be breached to provide access to the rising ground behind the site for this to be developed to its full potential. As part of improving the setting and visibility of the site the single storey structure adjacent to the public roadway, at the entrance to the site, should be demolished as this is considered to be of little significance. It should, nevertheless, be fully recorded prior to demolition.

The robustness of the surfaces and spaces of the interior of the structure are such that the purpose of the original structure can still be appreciated. Further changes would seem possible in order to secure a future use, or uses, for the site which are compatible with the structure and are sustainable in the longer term. The proposed use of the structure for a museum, and for the housing of museum and archives collections, seems highly appropriate and in this location it is difficult to imagine other potential uses other than for storage. One of the benefits of the bunker being converted to these proposed uses is that they would allow public access and create awareness as to the original purpose of the structure. For the preferred use as a museum the environmental performance of the shell of the building will be a critical factor in minimising fluctuations in temperature and humidity. As there is evidence of rising damp to some of the internal walls, and of a build-up of water from the hillside to the rear of the site, ground water will require to be managed carefully in the longer term. Conservation repairs should be undertaken to those areas of the external walls where the reinforcement has rusted.

Wherever it is possible to do so, what has survived of the original layout of the AAOR should be preserved, but this should not be at the expense of ensuring that the proposed use (or uses) is to be sustainable in the longer term. Accepting that change will be necessary, at least one set of blast doors, complete with the original frame and ironmongery, should be preserved in situ.

An oral history programme should be set up to establish as much information as possible about the history of the site and the relationship of the former AAOR with the local community. The programme might be extended to interviewing former members of the ROC. Feedback from the oral history programme should be used for the interpretation of the history of the structure, and its former purpose.

As the project develops there would be merit in investigating the current status of other known surviving AAOR bunkers in Scotland, and in due course encouragement may be given to considering whether individual sites merit listing as part of a thematic survey of Cold War structures. It is of relevance to this study to note that at the recommendation of English
Heritage the culture minister Ed Vaizey has listed two Thor missile bases from the early 1960s in Rutland and Northamptonshire Grade II and Grade II* respectively. Dr Simon Thurley had commented that the remaining sites of the Cold War ‘were fading from view faster than those of the world wars’ while the minister considered them ‘an important reminder of a point in history’ and that they ‘were often overlooked’ (source: RIBA Journal November 2012). There is a first rate opportunity at Gairloch to secure a sustainable future for this relatively uncommon but distinctive structure of which so few examples have survived in Scotland.
5 Source information

The following sources have been referred to in the preparation of this preliminary heritage report:

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Andrew PK Wright OBE BArch RIBA PPRIAS FRSA FSAScot

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