

HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL



FIELD MONUMENTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

1 SITE CODE									
2 NGR		H N H6 6 S W 0 0 2		3 QUAL					
N H 6 3 1 9 6 3 8 1		C E							
6 SITE NAME									
C A S T L E C R A I G									
10 GENERIC TYPE									
CASTLE, TOWERHOUSE									
14 PERIOD/DATE					15 DATING METHOD				
MO/ 17TH C.					TYP				
18 SHAPE									
19 THREAT AND DATE									

4 DISTRICT			5 PARISH		
ROSS & CROMARTY			RESOLIS		
7 AREA STATUS		8 SITE STATUS		9 REGIONAL STATUS	
SSSI		SCHEDULED + 'A' LISTED			
11 CONCORDANCE		12 FORM		13 DIMENSIONS	
OS NH 66 SW 2		STANDING STRUCTURES			
16 RELATIONSHIP OF ELEMENTS		17 CONDITION		18 SHAPE	
		RUINED			
20 LAND USE				21 GEOLOGY	
ENCLOSED LAND = BACKSHORE					
22 SOILS				23 VEGETATION	
24 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE				25 RELIEF	
				TOP OF CLIFF	
26 ASPECT			27 ALTITUDE		
NNW			5 = 20m O.D.		

28 EXCAVATION (EXCAVATOR: DATE: EXTENT: QUALITY)

29 BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR: DATE: TITLE: JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER: VOLUME: DETAIL)

1. ORDNANCE SURVEY: 1959: 6" MAP
2. MACGIBBON & ROSS: 1889: CASTELLATED & DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE OF SCOTLAND: VOL. 3: pp465-7
3. ORDNANCE SURVEY: 1982: 1/10,000 MAP
4. HBM (SDD): 1985: LIST OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS
5. HBM (SDD): 1985: BSAHI LIST, ROSS & CROMARTY
6. TRANTER, N: 1970: THE FORTIFIED HOUSE IN SCOTLAND: CHAMBERS: VOL 5: pp152-154. OVER/
7. SOC. ANT. SCOT: 1979: ARCH. SITES & MONS. OF THE BLACK ISLE: R.C.A.H.M.S: p21, no128

30 GROUND PLAN NO.		31 GROUND PHOTO NO.	
		AO: 66:28/5&6 84/07/3/38	
32 SLIDES NO.		33 HR. AP. NO.	
34 NMR. AP. NO.		35 OTHER AP. NO. : SOURCE	
36 ARCHIVE AND LOCATION			
37 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY		38 SAMPLES	
39 PALYNOLOGY		40 NUMERICAL DATES: RANGE: LAB NO.	
41 SMALL FINDS			42 MUSEUM/LOCATION
43 OTHER			

44 NAME & ADDRESS OF OWNER		45 ATTITUDE OF OWNER	
46 NAME & ADDRESS OF TENANT		47 ATTITUDE OF TENANT	
48 ACCESS & RESTRICTIONS			

49 NAME & ADDRESS OF FINDER/RECORDER: DATE		50 RECORDER: DATE		51 CHECK: DATE	
		GS: 13.10.1986		20.30.10.1986	

52 TEXT

"NH 63196381 Castle Craig (LB)" (1)

"Castle Craig is a simple tower of the early 17th cent. It is said to have been erected by the Urquharts on the site of a residence of the Bishops of Ross." (2)

"The structure has extended further south than it does now, but that end is now completely ruined. The top of the cliff on which the castle stands has been fortified by a crenellated wall with round towers. (See plan on Illustration Card)."

"Castle Craig is as described above. The tower stands four storeys high, each with barrel vaults. The SW end is in ruins, and is marked by a large grass-covered stony mound, which extends from the extant SW face of the tower to the edge of the barmkin wall. The foundations of two walls were discovered at the SW end of the roofed portion revealing the existence

BOX 29. 8.

:1795:OLD STATISTICAL ACCOUNT:

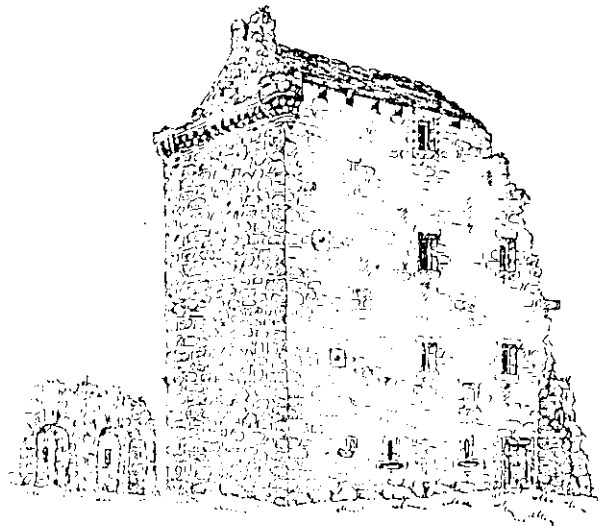
;vol xiv:p98

52. "of another range."
"Re-surveyed at 1/2500." (OSFI:RB:26.1.1966)
"NH 6319 6381, Castle Craig" (3)
"NH 631 638, Craig Castle, Tower" (4)
"Castle Craig" (5)
"See continuation card for text and illustration"

One might well wonder—in viewing this remotely-set, eagle's-nest of a stronghold, so difficult of access part-way down a cliff-side, on the south shore of the Cromarty Firth twelve miles north-east of Muir of Ord and ten miles across the spine of the Black Isle peninsula from the cathedral-town of Fortrose—what caused the Bishops of Ross to choose this as an episcopal residence. We must come to our own conclusions about that, but Castle Craig was indeed an embattled bishop's palace. Since it dates from the 16th and 17th centuries, of course, it represents reaction to a very unsettled period in Church history, and the Bishops may well have looked on it as a citadel against the tide of Reformation rather than as a convenient house.

The remains today are ruinous and partial, but they indicate what is left of a large courtyard-type castle, with curtain-walling and round flanking-towers. Not much of these remain, but most of the central keep still stands, although its western portion has collapsed. It has been a tall, 50-foot high, oblong tower of four main storeys and a garret within the parapet-walk, but it is interesting to note that this parapet, projected on an elaborate cable-moulding and dog-tooth corbelling, with open rounds at the ends, crowns only the east wall-head. Possibly there was a similar provision to the west, now fallen away, but the lateral sides of the tower have obviously never had parapets. The small crenellation-like apertures under the eaves possibly represent something like a covered-in defensive gallery at this level. The walls are of redstone coursed rubble, and fairly well supplied with gunloops and shot-holes. Curiously there are no windows in the west front.

There are two doorways, one in the south, or landward front at ground level, and one to the north, opening from the courtyard, both guarded by gunloops. All the main floors were vaulted, which is unusual. The stair rose in the south-west angle. The basement has had a large fireplace with a great flue in the east wall and a water-basin and duct to the north, indicating that this was the kitchen. The Hall would be on the first floor and sleeping accommodation higher, as always. Small vaulted chambers have been



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(6)

contrived on each floor, in the thickness of the east walling beside the kitchen flue. The upper floors unfortunately are now inaccessible.

Although Castle Craig was the residence of the bishops it is said to have been first erected by the Urquharts, Barons of Cromarty. The Bishops of Ross took a major part in Scots history, far outwith the bounds of their diocese, and episcopacy retained a tenacious hold on the area, with the bishops still in power there until 1638. Their final exodus was hardly up to standard, however. We read, in Spalding, that in March of that year schoolboys rushed into the cathedral as the service was starting, and taking all the prayerbooks, removed and burned them. The Bishop was much upset. 'He wes not longsum but schort at sermon, and thairefter haistellie gois to horsse and spak with the Bishop of Moray, syne with the Marques of Huntlie and privatey disgyssit he rode south to the King . . . ane very bussie man . . . and dost for feir of his lyf not returne to Scotland agane.'