

HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

FIELD MONUMENTS



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

4 DISTRICT ROSS & CROMARTY		5 PARISH TAIN		1 SITE CODE HNH 78 SE 006	
7 AREA STATUS		8 SITE STATUS SCHEDULED + LISTED A		2 NGR NH 78 00 82 12 CE	
11 CONCORDANCE OS NH 78 SE 6		12 FORM STANDING STRUCTURE		6 SITE NAME TOLBOOTH	
16 RELATIONSHIP OF ELEMENTS		13 DIMENSIONS		10 GENERIC TYPE TOWER HOUSE	
20 LAND USE LAND BUILT UPON		17 CONDITION COMPLETE		14 PERIOD/DATE 16th/17th C	
22 SOILS		21 GEOLOGY		15 DATING METHOD DOC	
24 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE		23 VEGETATION		16 SHAPE	
25 RELIEF GENTLE HILLSLOPE		26 ASPECT ENE		19 THREAT AND DATE	
27 ALTITUDE 20 = 25m OD					

28 EXCAVATION (EXCAVATOR: DATE: EXTENT: QUALITY)

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

- MACGIBBON & ROSS: 1892: CASTELLATED & DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE OF SCOTLAND: EDINBURGH: VOL. 5: pp99-101
- HBM (SDD): 1985: LIST OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS
- ORDNANCE SURVEY: 1906: 25" MAP
- BSAHI LIST: 7.3.1984: ROSS & CROMARTY
- CLOSE-BROOKS, J: 1986: EXPLORING SCOTLAND'S HERITAGE, THE HIGHLANDS: HMSO: p27

30 GROUND PLAN NO.

31 GROUND PHOTO NO.

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
AM: 30.5.1985

51 CHECK: DATE
DY 6.6.1985

52 TEXT

"The tolbooth of Tain is an admirable example of the municipal tower of the late 16th and early 17th century. It consists of a rectangular tower with a peaked roof, with four angle-turrets with conical roofs. The tower is now used as the entrance to the modern courthouse. Large window and door on the ground floor are recent insertions, and the parapet has been altered to receive the large dials of a clock. The bell of the tower was cast in Holland in (1)

"NH 78008212: As described above. No evidence was found regarding date of erection." (OSFI:WDJ:18.5.1963) (2)

"See plan HNH 78 SE 006". (3)

"Tain, Tower and Talbooth." (4)

for text and illustration"

Tain Tolbooth, Ross and Cromarty

Early 18th century.

NH 780821. In the High Street, in the centre of Tain. Key from District Council Offices, a few doors east.

(5)

This strong tower, solidly built in Tain stone, has a medieval appearance but was begun in 1706 and its upper works completed in 1733. It replaced an earlier Tolbooth of 1631 which had collapsed after a storm. The old Council House next to the tower has been replaced by a new Court House built in 1848-9 and designed by Thomas Brown in Scottish Baronial style with turrets and crenellations to match the roof of the Tolbooth. At this time the ground floor of the tower was altered to provide a main entrance to the new Court House, and a new door and window inserted. Outside the door stands the old mercat cross.

A stone turnpike stair within the tower leads to the upper floors. The top room with its stone vaulted roof, small door and tiny windows was used as a prison. Above this the stair leads out onto the roof, with a central turret housing a bell made in Holland in 1630 for the old Tolbooth, and four corner turrets. The present clock of 1877 with three faces replaces an earlier one made in Tain. The turrets have conical roofs made of stone blocks pierced by curious small windows, tiny imitations of dormers. Such stone belfry roofs seem to have been a local speciality. Three others are known, all on churches, a conical-roofed tower at Kilmuir Easter (NH 757731), a remarkable domed belfry at Tarbat Old Church, Portmahomack (NH 914840), and a splendid turreted belfry at Kirkhill near Beaully, Inverness District (NH 549457), dated 1722. All these are probably early 18th century, despite the Munro datestone of 1616 on the Kilmuir Easter tower.

Unusually for such early work the architect of the Tolbooth is known. He was Alexander Stronach, one of a family of masons (their surname is Gaelic for mason) who worked for Lord Tarbat round the Cromarty Firth.

