

HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

FIELD MONUMENTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD



1 SITE CODE									
H	N	H	8	5	S	E	0	1	0

2 NGR		3 QUAL	
NH89385253	CE		

6 SITE NAME									
R	A	I	T	C	A	S	T	L	E

10 GENERIC TYPE									
CASTLE									

14 PERIOD/DATE					15 DATING METHOD				
EM					TYP				

18 SHAPE									

19 THREAT AND DATE									

4 DISTR:CT				5 PARISH					
NAIRN				NAIRN					

7 AREA STATUS		8 SITE STATUS				9 REGIONAL STATUS			
		SDD LISTED: 'A' SCHEDULED							

11 CONCORDANCE		12 FORM				13 DIMENSIONS			
OS: NH 85 SE 10		STANDING STRUCTURE				16.6m x 6.8m			
NMR									

16 RELATIONSHIP OF ELEMENTS				17 CONDITION					
				RUINED					

20 LAND USE					21 GEOLOGY				
SCRUB = AFFORESTATION									

22 SOILS					23 VEGETATION				

24 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE				25 RELIEF				26 ASPECT		27 ALTITUDE	
				MODERATE HILLSLOPE				NW = N = NNE		65 = 70m OD	

28 EXCAVATION (EXCAVATOR: DATE: EXTENT: QUALITY)											

29 BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR: DATE: TITLE: JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER: VOLUME: DETAIL)											
1 ORDNANCE SURVEY: 1906: "MAP 2 SIMPSON, WD: 1937: PROC SOC SNT SCOT: VOL 71: PP 98-111 + PLANS + ILLUSTRATIONS 3 SIMPSON, WD: 1958-9: PROC SOC ANT SCOT: VOL 92: PP 12-13 4 CRUDEN, SH: 1960: THE SCOTTISH CASTLE: : PP 97-99 5 H.M.B (SDD): 1985: BSAHI LIST: NAIRN 6 MACGIBBON + ROSS: 1887: CASTELLATED + DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURE OF SCOTLAND: VOL 1: OVER											

30 GROUND PLAN NO.						31 GROUND PHOTO NO.					
						AO(s) 66/58/5-8					

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	
								EY: 13 3 1987		MUCD: 25.3.87	

52 TEXT											
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"(NH 8939 5253) Rait Castle (LB) (In Ruins) (1)

"Rait Castle, a rare example of a small stone hallhouse of the early 14th century, was examined by Stewart Cruden and Prof Simpson in 1957" (2)

OVER

29 6 PP 558-561

7. SOC ANT SCOT:1978:ARCH SITES + MONS OF NAIRN DISTRICT:RCAHMS:PP 18:No 136

52. "The hall measures approximately 54 ft by 22ft and up to 36 ft in height, with walls nearly 6ft thick. A round tower projects from one corner and there is a garderobe tower which projects nearly 13ft on the west side and is 8ft wide."

"See continuation cards + enclosed articles for further text + illustrations"

RAIT CASTLE, NAIRNSHIRE.

There is no account of the origin of this interesting and almost unique building. It stands on a hillside about three miles south from the town of Nairn, and commands the level and fertile country between it and the Moray Firth. Tradition says that it belonged first to the Raits of that ilk, and afterwards to the Cornyns.

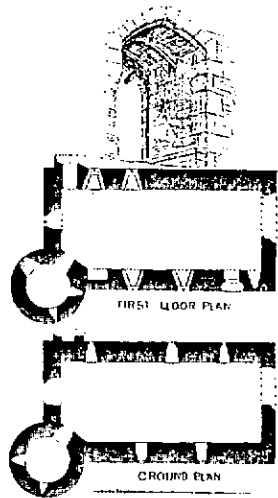


FIG. 474.—Rait Castle. Plans.

In plan (Fig. 474) this castle is a simple oblong, 64 feet by 33 feet over the walls, which are 5 feet 6 inches thick, with a round tower, 21 feet in diameter, at the south-west angle only. The only entrance to the castle seems to have been on the first floor near the east end of the south wall (Fig. 475). The doorway is still entire, and has portcullis grooves near the outside, with jambs for a wooden door within. The form of the arch is very unusual, and the workmanship is superior to that of ordinary castles. This doorway appears to have led directly into the hall, or there may have been a guard-room screened off at the east end, forming a passage to the hall. The hall is lighted with windows of a form and design very uncommon in Scotland. They are all

about 3 feet wide, have pointed arches, and are furnished with mullions and stone seats. The round tower enters off the hall, and contains a private room, which also has a mullioned window. The arch of all the windows has been filled with the simplest kind of tracery, formed by the mullion branching at the impost, with a pointed arch to either side. The ingoing of the windows is roofed over with a depressed arch, having two ribs in the depth (Fig. 474). There are no mouldings in the building to give an idea of its date; only plain splays are used. The ruins of a projecting garde-robe, somewhat like that at Tullyallan, remain at the north-west angle (Fig. 476).

The ground floor is lighted with several small square windows, varying from 12 inches to 18 inches in width. That nearest the north-east angle is a loop with a pointed arch. There is no fireplace on the ground floor, but the hall has a plain one. The building was no doubt three stories in height, but the walls of the top floor have now been removed.

This building possesses several features which recall similar ones at Tullyallan and Morton Castles, which indeed are almost the only other buildings with which it has affinity.

The simple oblong shape, the door on the first floor with its portcullis, the character of the window recesses, and the small square windows of the basement, have all a certain similarity to the corresponding features of the above castles.

Like Tullyallan, this may have been a grange or mansion rather than a castle, although still to a certain extent provided with defensive works. The courtyard was surrounded with a wall on the east, north, and west-sides, while on the south side it was bounded by a perpendicular face of rock rising as high as the enclosing walls, and against which they abutted. Behind this the rocky hill slopes gradually upwards. The round tower was probably placed at the south-west angle of the building so as to defend the courtyard on this its weakest side. The north-east and north-west angles of the courtyard wall were strengthened with round towers, now in ruins.

The pointed, mullioned, and traceried windows are the most striking and exceptional features of the building. They probably indicate a date early in the fifteenth century. The castle is exceptional, and has more affinity with ecclesiastical than civil or military architecture.

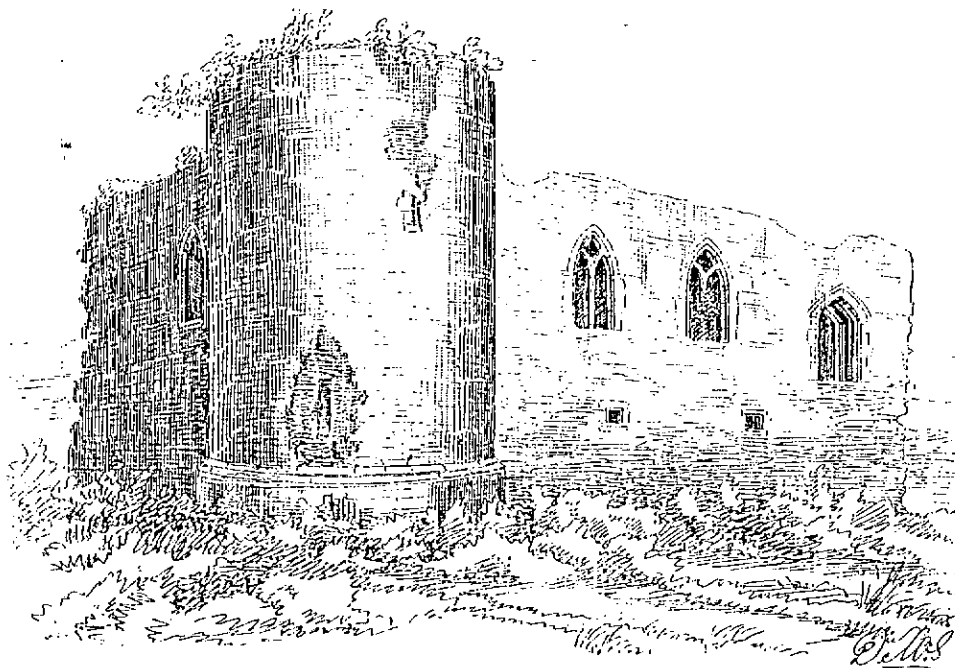


FIG. 475.—Rail Castle. View from the South-West.

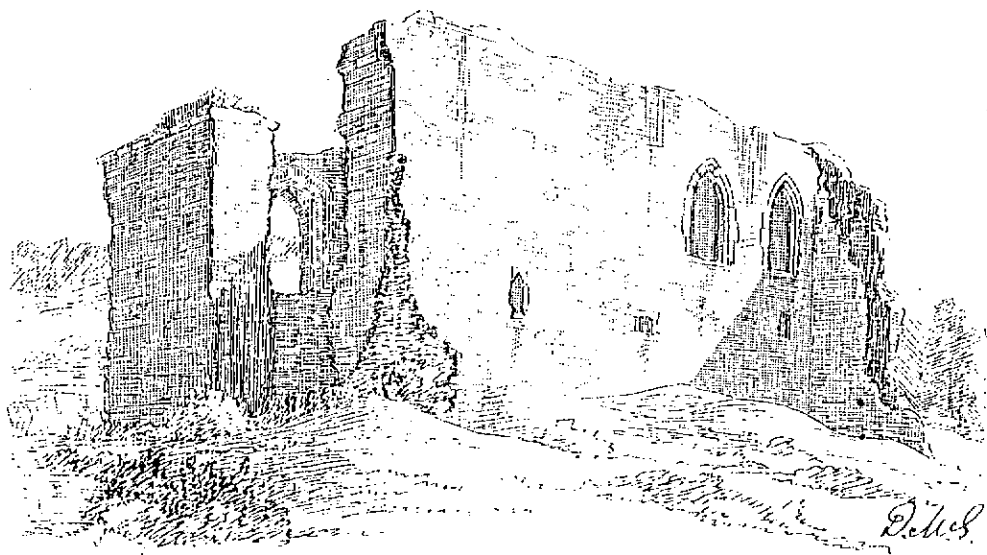


FIG. 476.—Rail Castle. View from the North-East.