

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

LOCHINDORB CASTLE: ACCESS AND INTERPRETATION

SPONSOR: Highland Regional Council, Dept of Libraries & Leisure Services

OBJECTIVES: To undertake essential consolidation work on the fabric of the castle of Lochindorb, and to create facilities, both on the castle island and the loch shore, to enable visitors to have access to the castle and interpretive information on its construction and history.

This project derives from an initiative by Lord Cawdor, owner of the castle, and is of a nature suitable for grant aid by the Countryside Commission for Scotland and supported by Highland Regional Council.

WORK PROGRAMME:

- A. Consolidation of parts of the castle walls, consisting principally of repointing and refacing of existing masonry, mostly at low levels. A minor element of branch-logging may also be involved.
- B. Construction of landing-places both on the island and on the loch shore to facilitate access by passengers arriving by boat.
- C. Construction of a parking area for visitors, and such pathway facilities as are necessary to link this with the shore landing-place.

STAFFING: One charge-hand and 8 part-time workers to be under the overall supervision of Lord Cawdor's stonemason (approved by Historic Buildings and Monuments).

DURATION: Due to the exposed nature of the site and its relatively high altitude, work would require to be confined to the summer months, ideally May-October. This proposal is therefore for a 6-month project only. It is considered that all the work detailed above could be completed within this time-scale.

MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT Cement, hand tools, protective clothing, site hut and cooking facilities, toilet facilities, quarry scalplings for paths, construction materials for landing places (type most suitable not yet identified). Transportation (minibus and boat). Much of this might be supplied outwith the project. Also approved safety facilities.

MAINTENANCE: Provision for maintenance of access and facilities have been or will be made.

COSTINGS:

Small tools (shovels, pointing trowels, cold chisels, hammers etc)	£
Cement & related materials	£
Shore landing-stage (estimate only)	£1,000
Island landing-stage (estimate only)	£1,000
Car parking area & pathways (estimate only)	£5,000
Site hut & necessary offices	£
Protective Clothing	£
Transport (Minibus)	£
Transport (Boat)	£

LOCHINDORB CASTLE: A PRELIMINARY REPORT.

Introduction.

The following paper is a response to the initiative put forward by Lord Cawdor in his privately-published report of 1983, and to subsequent discussions between Lord Cawdor and various departments of the Highland Regional Council.

In essence, the proposition put forward seeks to investigate the means by which:

- (a) The fabric of the Castle might best be consolidated and stabilised for its future safe preservation.
- (b) The methods by which the Castle might best be made accessible to, and interpreted by, the general public.
- (c) The facilities which might be developed in conjunction with access and interpretation, notably through the provision of parking and viewing facilities.

This report is divided into three areas of consideration, these being:

1. The fabric of the monument: consolidation and repair.
2. Access and interpretation.
3. Ancillary facilities.

Section 1: The Fabric of the Monument.

The castle consists of a complex of mortared masonry walls comprising a principal courtyard with internal buildings, and a secondary or outer courtyard containing the remains of a large hall. Each part will be considered in turn.

a. The Main Enclosure.

This consists of a high mortared stone wall enclosing a roughly trapezoidal area containing the remains of the domestic quarters of the castle. Four towers, discussed below, occupy the corners of the walls. In general terms, the walls are in good condition, due to the extreme hardness of the original lime mortar. While some minor infilling and repointing may be required at lower levels, these are in no imminent danger of collapse. The turf vegetation surmounting the walls seems adequate for their protection without expensive concrete wall-capping.

The Towers.

That at the NE corner stands almost to its original height and is generally in good condition. Any repair work should be very localised and confined to masonry found to be in immediate

danger of collapse. The other three towers are in rather more fragmentary condition. Some infilling, repointing, and capping of the walltops may be necessary to prevent water penetration, but these are generally sufficiently stable to keep such work to a minimum.

b. The Domestic Buildings.

These are in a poor state of preservation, but what survives is generally stable. Consolidation and support might prove necessary in a few selected places, particularly where walls butt against one another. Capping of the masonry here, as with the walls, should be unnecessary.

c. The Outer Courtyard Wall.

Overall in a good state of repair, but with some voiding at lower levels due to disintegration of the mortar, presumably by spray action from the loch. This damage is confined to the first 2 metres from the ground. While in fairly urgent need of repair on the outside face, scaffolding is not required. Stone for infilling the occasional voids is plentiful supply on the island. Some damage is accruing to the inner wall-face and the walltop from vegetation - from small shrubs in the wall face and from abrasion of overhanging branches in high wind conditions.

d. The 'Hall'.

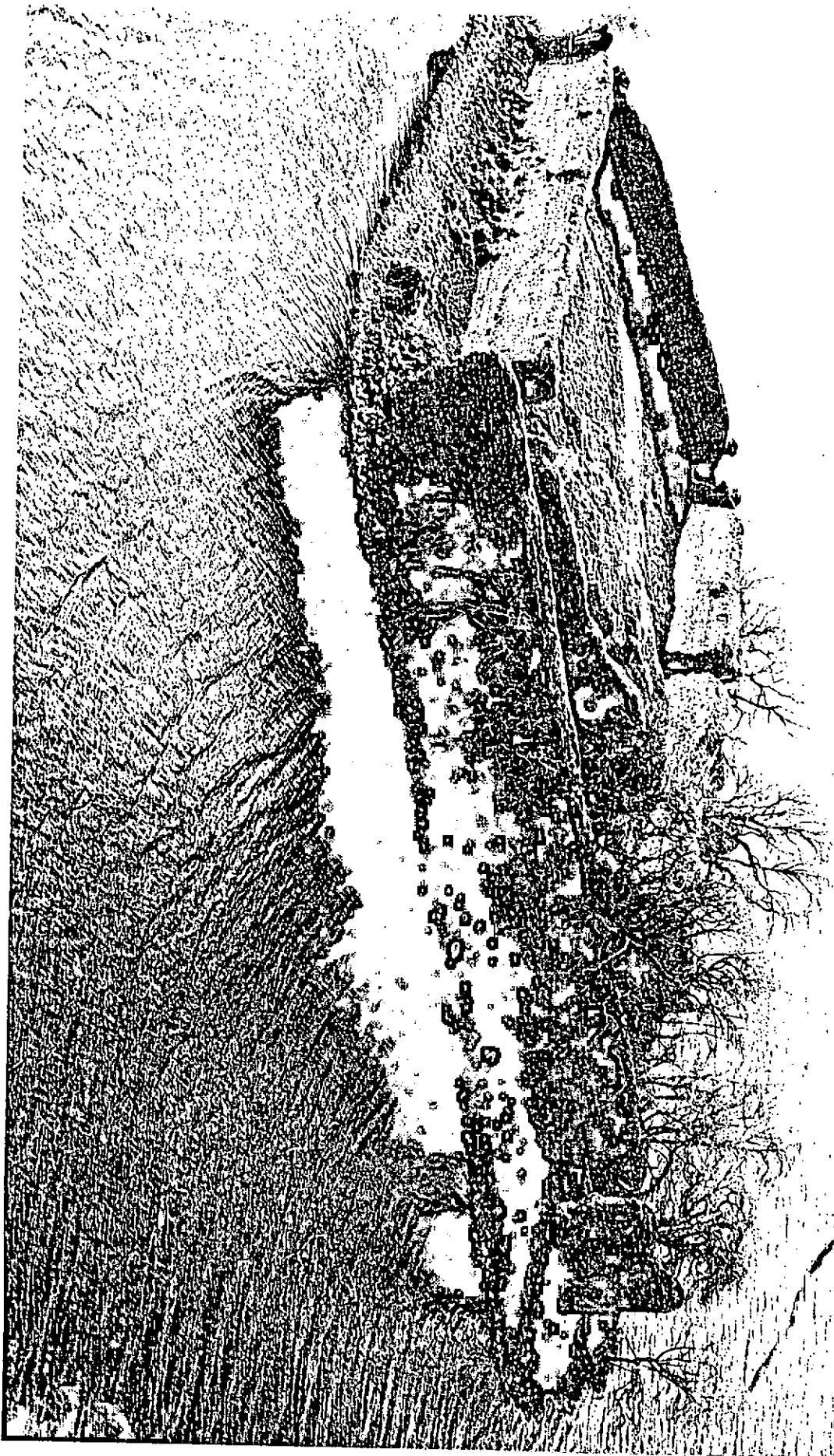
Almost totally ruinous except for its W wall, where most of a second-storey window survives, and its common wall with the inner courtyard. The W wall needs consolidation and the window blocking should be removed with the wall then capped at sill level. This would also enable more detail of the architecture to be visible.

e. The Island.

Abrasion by the branches of mature ash trees which occupy the north side of the island outside the walls and within the outer courtyard will require some lopping. Nevertheless, it is considered that the trees provide more protection than cause damage, and should be left where possible. Branches requiring removal have already been identified by John Knight, architect with Historic Buildings and Monuments. In places, fallen masonry make underfoot conditions difficult, and perhaps slightly dangerous in places.

DISCUSSION

The amount of consolidation work required is not as extensive as was first thought, being principally confined to the wall of the outer courtyard, with minor areas elsewhere. However, while this would ensure the stability of the fabric of the surviving masonry, it might not be adequate should unsupervised access be possible on the site. Further, the interpretation of much of the interior is difficult - particularly in summer with high vegetation - and together with underfoot conditions argues against uncontrolled public access.



from the South East

Costs of such consolidation work should not be enormously high, and might well be covered should the work be undertaken through the offices of the MSC Community Programme with financial contributions from Lord Cawdor which he has declared himself willing to provide. The need for scaffolding is minimal, and logistically, the transportation of such materials to the island as may be required should present little problem, particularly with the assistance of PLM Helicopters and the provision of a small boat.

Note, however, that all work, both in terms of materials and personnel will require the prior approval of Historic Buildings and Monuments. While they will freely provide advice, funding is unlikely to be forthcoming as their resources are committed elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

The consolidation and preservation of the fabric of the castle seems quite possible within the parameters outlined above. The opening of the island and castle to visitors, however, might incur extra precautions and is not here advised. Any public interpretation could be based on the nearby shore, and is further discussed below.

Section 2: Access and Interpretation.

The castle stands on an island some 300m from the shore, with the intervening channel estimated at around 12' in depth. If access is to be provided to the castle, 3 main methods have been suggested:

a. Causeway:

The long distance and depth of water would make a causeway prohibitively expensive, and also allows uncontrolled access to the monument. While the latter might be controlled by a short drawbridge along the length of the causeway, this would not reduce costs substantially. The castle itself would require on-site interpretation which tends to be obtrusive, expensive and subject to vandalism.

b. Pontoon.

This is unlikely to be any cheaper than a causeway, and the same disadvantages apply. In addition, the exposed character of the loch mean that in high wind conditions sizeable waves are generated, making such a construction unsafe for the public and liable to serious damage.

c. Ferry.

Should access to the island be considered desirable, this is most likely to provide the best solution. However, there are both advantages and disadvantages. The cost of a boat, and its maintenance and winter storage would be costly, including the provision of a salary for a boatman. While Lord Cawdor is willing to help in this regard, such a provision might well become a drain on funds in the future. Unless new jetty facilities and a boathouse are provided, an access agreement will require to be reached from the landowner of the adjacent

shore. However, with direct access by ferry, tours can be conducted, reducing greatly the threat of vandalism and accidental injury, and also reducing the need for obtrusive on-site interpretation.

DISCUSSION

In general terms, the site seems difficult to interpret - as a monument - and adequate interpretive panels on the site will be obtrusive unless tours are guided. Much of the romance of Lochindorb Castle lies in its position, and the stories which surround it. These can be dealt with adequately from the shore. Difficult underfoot conditions on parts of the island, and the perennial problems caused by vandalism and littering add to the disadvantages of access to the site itself. On balance, a shore-based interpretive and viewing facility is recommended here. This will not debar those intent on visiting the island from reaching it, as boats may be hired on the loch for the intrepid, and many people apparently reach the island with their own craft already.

CONCLUSION

Interpretation should be shore-based, and work on the fabric of the buildings should be tailored accordingly.

Section 3: Ancillary Facilities.

These will consist of two items for provision:

- (a) Parking
- (b) Interpretation.

These are dealt with in turn.

- (a) Parking.

At present, visitors to the area stop and park either on the shore immediately opposite the castle, or on the poorly-surfaced parking area (with waste-bins supplied) some 150m to the south. Neither are totally suitable or adequate.

Dept of Libraries and Leisure Services
Capital expenditure Sub-Committee: 26.2.91

LOCHINDORB CASTLE, NAIRN DISTRICT.

1.1. This report is in response to a wish on the part of Councillor Graham to further work already carried out on the consolidation and repair of this important monument, undertaken in 1984-5 under the auspices of the MSC Community Programme. That so far completed comprises repair to the outer face of the east curtain wall, but is only a small percentage of work originally identified as necessary or desirable. The bulk of the funding came from MSC.

1.2. The Council has set aside £10,000 towards the project, and Lord Cawdor has expressed a keen desire to contribute. However, these contributions in total are wholly inadequate for the task identified.

1.3. Public sector funding sources are unlikely to radically alter this position, and it would be unrealistic to proceed without additional Private Sector funding. How this is raised, and other associated problems, are outlined below.

2.1. Clarification of Council policy is required on the desirability of projects of this kind, as Lochindorb is by no means the only worthy cause. However, as 'Heritage Monuments' are a prime attraction to the Tourism of the area, they should be seen as potential major resources.

2.2. Clarification is also required as to the Council Department best suited to deal with such projects. At present, small-scale works of this kind may be undertaken by several departments. It would be desirable to have funding ~~and resources rationalised and centralised~~ within a single department.

2.3. Should Council agree to such a policy, particularly where eventual ownership is deemed advantageous, then management works of this kind might be undertaken in house over a wide range of monuments of all periods - many of which would require very limited funding to maintain and present to the public.

2.4. A degree of funding, of which an element might be reclaimable through entrance charges, publications, etc., would be required from Council sources, while other funds might be sought elsewhere. The seeking of sponsorship requires time and particular skill, however, and might warrant a specialist member of staff being appointed to raise money from various sources. This could prove extremely beneficial, although some kind of Trust might be required to hold and distribute funds.

2.5. As additional funding is essential to further work at Lochindorb on any reasonable scale, it might be worth using a portion of the Council's £10,000 allocation towards a fund-raising effort for this particular site. Such an exercise would also provide a yardstick against which other, similar, projects might be measured.

2.6. The Archaeologist will undertake to seek advice from Historic Buildings and Monuments Scotland as a first stage.

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LOCHINDORB CASTLE

REPORT ON PROPOSED WORKS TO CONSOLIDATE THE FABRIC OF THE MONUMENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF PRESERVATION AND FUTURE SUPERVISED PUBLIC ACCESS

The Overall Programme

Lochindorb is an important Monument, both architecturally and historically, whose fabric is in urgent need of consolidation and repair to prevent further deterioration of the existing remains. The overall programme is intended, through a carefully staged series of operations, to undertake remedial work to arrest decay and consolidate the ruins with the eventual aim of allowing supervised public access.

The work will be undertaken by a Community Programme project under the auspices of the Manpower Services Commission. The project is sponsored by Highland Regional Council in response to an initiative from the Earl of Cawdor, owner of the site. Additional input, to the provision of facilities on the island and the adjacent shore for public access, will come from Highland Regional Council and the Countryside Commission for Scotland. All necessary agreements for access have been made with adjacent landowners.

Workforce and Supervision

This will comprise a team of 9 part-time general workers recruited locally under the immediate supervision of a Charge Hand who will, if possible, be a stonemason or experienced building worker. The work as a whole will be under the supervision of the retired Master Mason for Cawdor Estates, Mr John Innes.

Archaeological supervision, where necessary, will be by the Archaeologist for Highland Regional Council, Mr Robert Gourlay.

STAGE I, APRIL - SEPTEMBER 1987.

Stage I will be to consolidate and repair those areas in most need of urgent work as identified through discussion with Mr Gourlay, and the HBM (SDD) Inspector and Architect, Mr Coulter and Dr Fawcett. These are intended to be as follows:

NB: NO identified element in the programme will be begun unless it is certain to be completed with the Project period.

Element 1: Loose masonry at the junctions of Areas 7 and 8 (see attached plan).

A small area of corbelled stonework is in imminent danger of collapse in the upper part of the wall angle. This will be recorded in detail both by drawings and photographs; the facing stones numbered; and these removed prior to consolidation and replacement in accordance with the drawn/photographed record. The MORTAR MIX, as throughout, will be in accordance with the original mixture (details to be agreed with HBM's Architect). Aggregate for this will be obtained locally. Size as recommended.

Element 2: Both faces of the Outwork represented by Areas 2 and 2a (see plan).

Here the serious undermining of the walls will be cleared out, re-racked and consolidated. The repaired areas will be left rough-racked (not refaced) and left some 100mm back from the wall-face so that they are identifiable. Prior to this work beginning, the wall-top will be checked for loose material.

Secondly at Areas 2 and 2a, the major crack in the S angle of the wall will be marked with Avonguard gridded tell-tales to measure any movement. If the crack is widening, this will be dealt with

Element 2: (Contd)

in a subsequent phase.

Element 3: The outer face of the Outwork shown as Area 1 (see plan).

Here too, large voids exist at the base of the wall. After checking of the wall-head for loose material, these will be cleared out, refilled and rough-racked 100mm back from the wall-face as before. Mortar mix as discussed above.

Note: A short length of the wall-head may be affected by overhanging branches from the trees growing inside the Outer Court. These branches will be lopped, in advance, by forestry workers from Cawdor Estates.

Element 4: Avanguard gridded tell-tales will be installed to monitor any movement which exists in the wall below the blocked window opening at Area 3 (see plan). Subject to the results of this monitoring, this area will be dealt with in a subsequent phase.

Element 5: Small, localised pockets of consolidation in Areas 4 and 5 (see plan).

In order that NO element is begun which cannot be completed within this phase, these small areas of work have been identified as small-scale works which can be undertaken should Elements 1-4 above be completed within the duration of the 1987 project. These comprise small patches of basal voiding at the wall-face, which can be dealt with as above.

Note: Any further time which might remain will be taken up by work on the access point on the loch shore.

Element 6: Preparation of Landing Point (see plan)

The landing stage will be a floating jetty anchored to the island shore at this point. If ANY disturbance of the ground surface is necessary to install this, prior archaeological excavation of post sockets etc will be undertaken by Mr Gourlay. This is, however, unlikely to be necessary.

Element 7: (NOT WITHIN THE APPLICATION). Shore works.

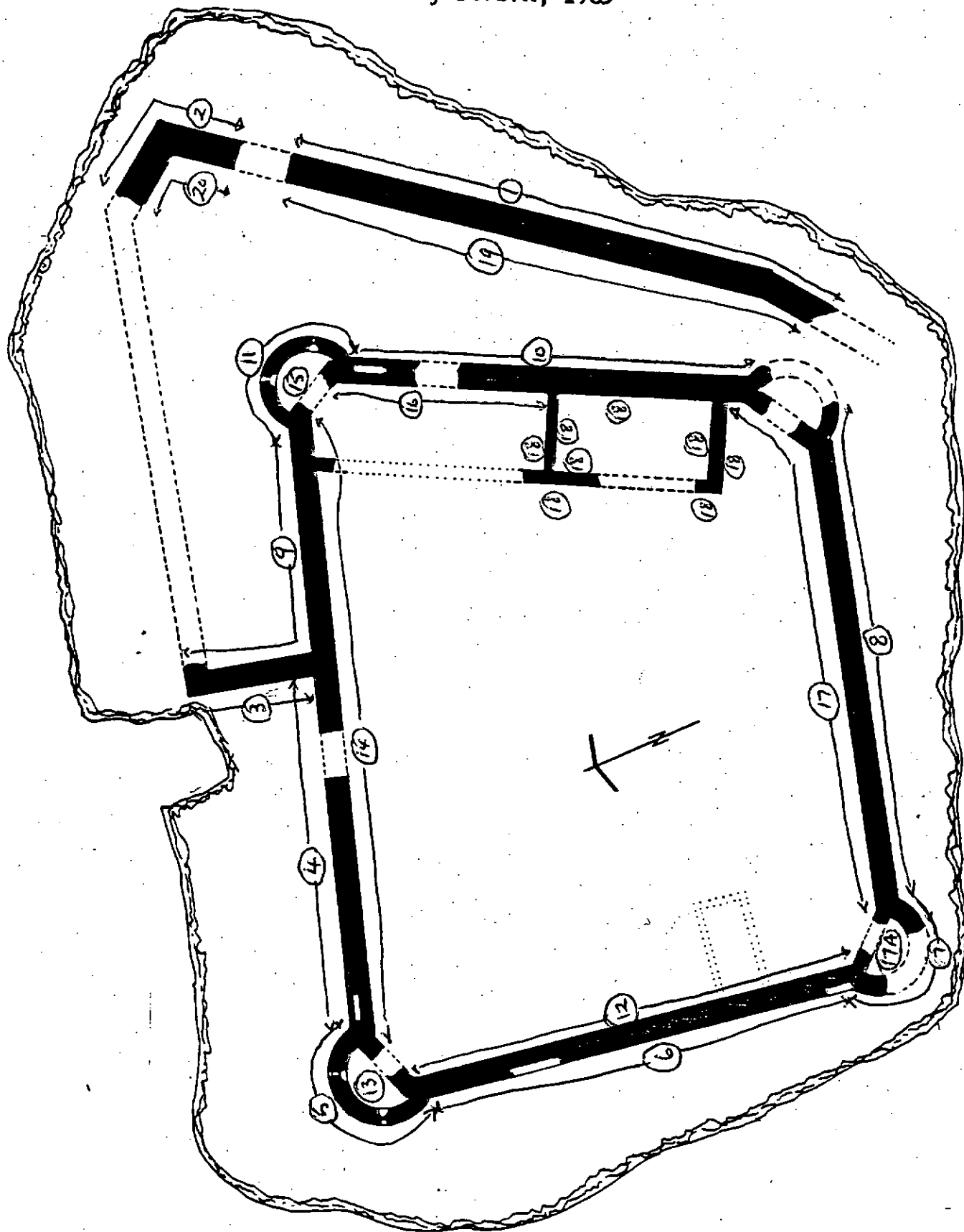
This will be undertaken at the commencement of the project in order to establish a Shore Base. It will be fenced and gated to prevent any public access during the Overall work programme.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

It is hoped that the bulk of the heavy equipment (Workshed; Scaffolding; Mortar materials etc) will be transported to the island by helicopter. All smaller items will be ferried across by boat. Storage will be entirely above ground (no excavation involved) within the Outer Ward. Toilet facilities for the workforce will be a chemical toilet. Disposal will be on the shore, not on the island. As vandalism is unlikely to be a problem, most equipment will be stored, securely locked, on the island.

FUNDING

The bulk of the funding will come from the Manpower Services Commission, comprising all wages (except Mr Innes the mason, who will be funded by Cawdor Estate). An allowance of £400 per person is available towards materials, equipment and protective clothing. Any shortfall in this will be made up from Highland Regional Council funds. Other costs may be offset by Cawdor Estates, and grant for the shore-based facilities is forthcoming from the Countryside Commission for Scotland.



JUNE 1983

— LOCHINDORB CASTLE. —

