

Department of Libraries and Leisure Services
 Archaeology Service

LOCHINDORB SITE MEETING: 19th April, 1993

Introduction: Following the meeting held on 17.2.93 in the Upstairs Committee Room to discuss Lochindorb Castle, the Archaeologist was asked to arrange a site meeting with Historic Scotland to identify the consolidation needs and parameters for contracted work. Due to difficulties in gathering the various parties, this was not held until 19.4.93, both on site and at Lochindorb Lodge.

Present: Mr R Gourlay, Mr A Laing, and Mr B Walker and Dr J Small from Historic Scotland. Lord and Lady Cawdor also attended the meeting at the lodge.

Report:

Discussion was wide-ranging, but principally covered two main topics (1) the amount of work necessary to satisfy all parties, and (2) the eventual level of public access. Lord and Lady Cawdor, as owners of the castle, and Mr Laing, as owner of the adjacent land and access to the site, all wished access to be more or less as at present. That is, that there is no restriction along the public road, but that there should be no promoted access to the island. Boats are available for hire for those who seriously wish to visit from the lodge, and at most reasonable times during the summer. It was generally agreed that the because of the situation, the small access road, and the attitudes of landowners and local residents, the status quo should be retained, i.e., no promoted access. Some anxiety was expressed that the castle is advertised in Grantown and through Tourist Board literature as a visitor attraction.

The level of access was agreed to affect the need for consolidation. Without huge visitor numbers, much of the work required for complete consolidation and public safety can be ignored at present, and major structural problems - directly requiring action to preserve the remains as they are - would be the main priority. Bruce Walker of Historic Scotland agreed to visit the island for a day to evaluate these needs. In essence they are likely to include:- (a) underpinning all walls where lower courses have eroded away (partly done) by rough-racking, (b) to remove all turf from the wall-tops, sealing the wall-tops, and replacing the turf, (c) infilling of wall-faces where these have fallen away, and (d) consolidating the large overhang at the entrance to the inner courtyard from the outer. This last Bruce Walker considers would be best done by a professional contractor.

The exercise is estimated at present to require a minimum of 4-5 years on-site work during the short season available (at most May-September), and undertaken in pre-arranged stages.

The use of the Scottish Conservation Projects Trust (SCPT) was discussed. Bruce Walker expressed some doubts and reservations about their use, and stated this would only be as successful as the person in charge, and it might be more cost-effective to employ professional staff. Much discussion took place over transportation of materials to the island, with both boats and helicopter discussed. If large quantities, a helicopter would probably be cost-effective through Mr Laing.

Finally, some costs were thrown into discussion. These varied up to £2 million for complete consolidation, but these are not worth pursuing at this stage until Bruce Walker has visited (n.b. some new falls of stone have occurred since the last architect's report).

Dr Small said he would be happy to put the project forward to Historic Scotland for Grants to Owners - even over a phased operation - but HS could offer only up to 60% in total. The rest would require to come from the owner and other sources. An estimate would be needed for September 1993 for consideration for grant in 1994-5 financial year.

The discussion were rounded up as follows:

- (a) Bruce Walker to visit and assess imperative needs for consolidation work on the basis that there will be no formal public access, and report.
- (b) Costings to be investigated, phased, using SCPT or professional staff as considered most suitable. The latter would be necessary for the overhang area.
- (c) Submission, with costings (phased) to Historic Scotland for Grant to Owners by September 1993 if at all possible.
- (d) Funding sought from other sources to make up owner's 50% contribution.
- (e) If funds available, establish first phase in 1994 season, probably on wall-base infill.

R Gourlay agreed to act as liaison.