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Final comments please.

**ANTA ESTATES;**

**PLANNING APPLICATION  
FOR THE CONSERVATION OF  
CASTLE TIORAM, MOIDART.**

**PROJECT TEAM COMMENTS  
ON PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS  
OBJECTIONS  
AND CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

8 May 2000

Ref: FMcC/ANT004.0001

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## **1. Responses to lay objectors and supporters**

### **1.1 Those in favour**

No comment is made on the letters of support received by the Council, except to make the point that letters of support for any notable planning project are relatively rare.

Anta Estates has tasked the project team for the conservation of Castle Tioram to work with the community in deciding on the future of Castle Tioram, and it is believed that Anta's proposals for Castle Tioram are in fact widely supported locally.

### **1.2 Lay Objectors**

In the lay objectors' representations the following contentions are made. These are summarised and responded to as follows:

#### **1.2.1 That there is insufficient information, or inaccurate information about the structural stability or state of repair of the building.**

The building has been extensively examined by Messrs ARP Lorimer, the leading conservation architectural practice; by Ove Arup, the leading structural engineering consultants and GUARD, the archaeological research division of the University of Glasgow, and various other eminent experts. Their evidence on each and every point relating to the structural condition of the building is to be preferred against any general assertion that the information is inaccurate or insufficient. It is noteworthy that the project is founded on a careful assessment of the state of the building as it is.

A letter of comment from Messrs Ove Arup is annexed hereto for information.

#### **1.2.2 That the proposals will damage Eilean Tioram, on which important archaeological remains are present.**

The presence of previously unknown and potentially significant archaeological remains on the island has been identified and recorded as a result of this project. All project related archaeology will be undertaken in liaison with Historic Scotland and the Council's archaeological service, and in principle, remains which need not be disturbed will not be disturbed, unless sanction is given by those authorities. However, even the archaeology which is essential as a result of the conservation process, and which would be essential whenever work is done on the fabric of the castle, will, in the considered view of the project archaeologist, result in an important opportunity to widen knowledge and understanding of the castle and the island in an area and context presently poorly and inadequately understood.

#### **1.2.3 That the castle should be left as it is.**

Some representations say that the castle should remain as it is, with free access to visitors. These views may well proceed without full understanding of the circumstances which led to the compulsory closure of the castle; the presently dangerous and deteriorating state of the fabric of the building and

the overall scale of these problems and of the care with which the proposals to stabilise and repair the building through conservation have been reached.

Anta is committed to continued public access to Castle Tioram and Eilean Tioram. Anta's proposals will, once implemented, leave visitor access to Eilean Tioram completely unaffected and to some extent improved. Visitor understanding and interpretation will be very much enhanced. An approach to public access to the castle has been developed which is based on careful consideration and local consultation, and which is a balanced solution between the need to preserve the fragile context of the castle and the island in its setting, and to ensure that Castle Tioram continues to be accessible as an important monument, both in Moidart and nationally.

- 1.2.4 That it is not in the public interest that Castle Tioram be made into a private residence.

The ownership of Anta Estates means that the castle is currently privately owned, as it always has been. Anta Estates' proposals for the future of the castle include that the castle be restored and that some use as a residence by a designated Guardian or Curator be resumed *pro tem*. However, Anta Estates' role as owners is also in some respect that of trustee. The proposals of the present owners of the castle include a commitment to legal measures to secure community input into decisions about the future of Castle Tioram in Moidart in generations to come. Anta's ambitions for the castle fully recognises that as an historically significant building, it must always have a wider significance than that of a private residence. Anta's proposals are committed to support these aspects of Castle Tioram.

- 1.2.5 That Castle Tioram should be left to "crumble with dignity"

In those parts of the decision making process yet to come, there will be extensive discussion about whether the future for Castle Tioram. Anta Estates after research and consideration, believes that it is clear that it is not appropriate to leave Castle Tioram in a ruinous state. All options for the building were reviewed in preparing the Conservation Strategy, with the outcome that re-roofing was the best conservation solution.

Scotland is already amply provided with previously great buildings in a ruinous state, whether in private or public ownership. Persons wishing to consider the ruins of Scotland have an ample supply. Scotland's castles, however, also include a number of highly significant castles which have been conserved by being restored. In the final analysis, buildings such as Stirling Castle, Eilean Donan, Kisimul, Duart or Dunderave, all of which have required restoration will play a longer and more sustained role in the appreciation of Scotland's heritage than Scotland's ruined castles, as they continue to deteriorate.

Anta Estates believes Castle Tioram merits conservation through restoration to beneficial use, and that it deserves a much longer future in the history of Scotland than allowing it to conclude its days as a ruin. Anta Estates believes that to leave Castle Tioram in a ruined state is to fail to appreciate the significance of Castle Tioram in the local historical context. Eilean and Castle Tioram are equally significant to Scotland in their earliest origins; through the various construction phases; through the centuries of the local lordship system and the Castle's role in the economic and social fabric of

local society; and through the years of decline of lordship system in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In accordance with Burra Charter Principles, all of these aspects of the life and history of the castle and the island deserve to be investigated.

1.2.6 That the castle is being restored as a "private holiday house"

This is a pejorative suggestion which does not do justice to the proposals. Anta's proposals do not entail the insertion of a "private holiday house" or a "modern house" into the fabric of Castle Tioram.

1.2.7 That ownership of the castle is unclear

The Council will be aware that the personality of any applicant for planning permission is not a relevant planning consideration. That being said, Anta Estates recognises that the community, the planning authority and other authorities can be legitimately concerned to ensure that a significant monument is in safe hands. The constitution of Anta Estates; its intentions; and the manner in which the ownership of the castle will be governed in future are clearly explained in the supporting documentation. Anta Estates is the vehicle for a funding resource for Castle Tioram which has been endowed by private individuals who are personally committed to the conservation and restoration of Castle Tioram. In due course important aspects of the governance of the future of the castle are intended to be voluntarily alienated by Anta Estates to a locally constituted trust. For the avoidance of doubt, if there are any further concerns which the Council has about ownership issues, there remains the possibility that further information, even of a confidential nature can be given to the Council to assuage any fears the Council has about ownership. However, as a private project, Anta Estates does have the right to maintain the privacy of those providing resources to the project to an extent.

1.2.8 That Anta's proposals will cause damage to the fabric of the castle.

This has been fully explained in the supporting documentation for the application; The conservation project will be carried out according to best practice on conservation, architecture and archaeology, and to standards comparable to conservation decisions made by Historic Scotland and the National Trust on decisions within their ownership.

1.2.9 That the Clanranald Castle Tioram Trust is better placed to take over the building and maintain it properly

Those responsible for the future of Eilean and Castle Tioram will require to have access to substantial financial resources. Best professionally prepared estimates of the funding required merely to stabilise the building as existing range from £1.5m to £2m on what is known at present about the fabric of the building. The research and development work undertaken to date exceeds £250,000 alone, whilst the forthcoming emergency work over a very small part of the wall is estimated at £50,000 (plus fees and VAT). It is highlighted for the Council that the building requires major repair work in any circumstances, and much of the rebuilding work is imperative in any event.

There have been several demands on public and charitable resources available for this type of asset of recent years. It is not clear how the CCTT could guarantee the funding stream and the management capability which

Eilean and Castle Tioram must have. It is essential that this building be dealt with on the basis of a properly resourced project. Any alternative would be potentially disastrous for the building. Money has to be spent on adequate research and preparation; the building and structural work will be highly specialised and must go on for an extended period. All aspects of the project, architectural, contractual, archaeological will require careful, intensive and highly specialised management. The project must be throughout and the project must be resourced for that. The building is already damaged and decay accelerated through bad repair decisions in past years. Tioram has to be handled properly.

That Anta has been entrusted with resources to carry out the restoration of Castle Tioram should be seen as a fortunate circumstance. In this instance, private funding is being made available to restore an important heritage asset in a manner respecting the public interest. With all due respect to them, the Clanranald Castle Tioram Trust were unsuccessful in mustering the resources required at the time when the castle came on to the market. Again with respect to them, the Trust cannot realistically have access to the resources necessary to do any work on Castle Tioram. After consideration of the Anta Estates proposals, the Captain of Clanranald, who had previously been a member of the Clanranald Castle Tioram Trust took the view that Anta Estates' proposals were an acceptable way forward for the castle, and the Captain of Clanranald has written in these terms to the Council to support Anta Estates' proposals. It is submitted that it would be more productive for the Clanranald Castle Tioram Trust to support the proposals of Anta, including Anta's proposals to create a trust to play a role in the future of the castle.

- 1.3 It is drawn to the Council's attention that none of the "lay" objectors have highlighted the alleged burning in 1715 as an event of such significance that permission should be refused.

## 2. Historic Scotland

2.1 The Council will be aware that Historic Scotland oppose Anta Estates' proposals for the conservation of Castle Tioram. It is appropriate to comment further on the present position between HS and Anta to the Council in response to the final paragraphs of HS letter to HC of 24 February 2000.

2.2 HS refers to certain of their previous correspondence with Anta Estates in relation to the application for Scheduled Monument Consent. For ease of handling, a further full set of the correspondence to date between Historic Scotland and Dundas & Wilson on behalf of Anta Estates, is annexed hereto commencing with the letter from Historic Scotland dated 30<sup>th</sup> April 1999 to ARP Lorimer intimating that the Secretary of State was minded to refuse Scheduled Monument Consent. The following points arising from this correspondence are drawn to the Councils' attention:

In addition to their formal response requesting a hearing, Anta Estates responded to the letter of 30<sup>th</sup> April 1999 in a detailed letter of the 26<sup>th</sup> May 1999. Various issues arising from Historic Scotland's reasons for recommending refusal of Scheduled Monument Consent were identified as requiring additional clarification, including aspects of the Historic Scotland position where there was potential for additional information from Anta Estates and the Project Team about the project methodology or the reasons for the technical decisions taken as to the content of the application which might resolve or reduce HS concerns. Anta asked HS for further specification of their criticisms of these aspects.

This letter was not responded to in substance until 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1999.

After consideration of this response, Anta's view was that Historic Scotland had still not clarified for Anta where further information might address Historic Scotland's view that they had identified deficiencies in the Anta application. This was communicated to HS in the letter on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1999.

This letter asked again that HS to define and provide further specification of the areas of difference between Historic Scotland and Anta Estates, and asked for a meeting.

At the time of writing no substantial response has been received from Historic Scotland.

2.3 On the contention that Anta's proposals for Castle Tioram constitute a building which does not reflect any known historic form:-

Anta has requested Historic Scotland to indicate specifically where Anta's reasoned methodology for the design choices which Anta has been able to make thus far is deficient and why. All decisions on the historic form of the building as the project develops will happen after full research, consultation and discussion including HS and the Council.

2.4 Deviation from known evidence of earlier buildings.

Strong exception is taken to this criticism and Historic Scotland has been asked to state to which elements of the proposals thus far developed this applies.

2.5 Historic Scotland's position regarding future works and maintenance.

Anta does not consider Historic Scotland's position is completely clear. On the one hand Historic Scotland have suggested that there is insufficient information about the future maintenance of the building, and on the other hand Historic Scotland has suggested that this falls outside their own remit.

Anta considers that Historic Scotland can and should concern themselves with the future of the building, and would welcome any discussion Historic Scotland wish to have over how the long term future of the monument can be secured in technical terms.

## 2.6 Information relating to services.

Anta continues to be frustrated about Historic Scotland's position here. Anta's experienced project team are confident that sufficient modern services can be placed in the building with minimal intervention to the historic fabric. Historic Scotland have themselves have carried out a number of significant projects in which such an approach has been satisfactorily undertaken, the most famous of which must be the restoration of the Great Hall at Stirling Castle. Again, Anta has emphasised that they remain open for further discussion on this point.

## 2.7 Summary

Anta's position is that these are all matters on which some specific progress could be made. Additional clarification of what Historic Scotland considers to be wrong about Anta's proposals could be discussed, and further technical clarification as to the decisions taken could be passed to Historic Scotland. Anta has effectively been asking for this discussion since 26<sup>th</sup> May 1999 and is nearing the position whereby our repeated requests for meetings with Historic Scotland have not been addressed for twelve months. Historic Scotland has been aware that a public local inquiry on the scheduled Monument consent process will occur, possibly later in the year 2000. Historic Scotland's non-engagement with this issue is difficult to understand. In the year which has passed, there has been every opportunity made available to Historic Scotland to further discuss Anta's proposals and to resolve, refine or clarify the points of difference on technical matters which exist between Anta and Historic Scotland.

Anta remains confident that the proposals as formulated thus far, in technical terms have been developed to the highest standards of conservation architecture, relying on the best of scholarship, expertise and experience.

## 2.8 Historic Scotland's Consultation Response to the Planning Application

Historic Scotland commented on Anta's planning application in their letter to the Council of 24<sup>th</sup> February 2000 which seeks to raise development plan based arguments that the planning application for the conservation of Castle Tioram should be refused.

The interpretation of the development plan is a matter for the planning authority. It is a well established principle that the development plan is not a "legal" document but a policy framework to direct planning evaluation and judgment should not be interpreted on a legalistic basis. Anta considers that the Lochaber Local Plan is generally supportive of the conservation of Castle Tioram.

The Anta proposals are rooted in the internationally recognised standards for conservation of important buildings, as reflected in the Burra Charter, taken as a whole. Historic Scotland's reference to the Charter is selective.



The project which is presented to the Council for planning approval is a conservation project, as reflected in the description of the proposals agreed between the Council's Planning Officers and Anta.

The Burra Charter at Article 1, paragraph 1.4 defines "conservation":-

"Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may according to circumstance include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these."

Anta's response on the point made by Historic Scotland is that the proposals for Eilean and Castle Tioram accord with the aspirations of the Council as expressed in the local plan policy 5.2.28. While the exchange of correspondence between Historic Scotland and Council Officers in December 1997 which seems to have taken place after the conclusion of the public consultation period is noted, it is submitted that the interpretation of the policy is a matter for the Committee; and to interpret the policy to restrain the proposals for Tioram solely to the meaning of the word "restoration" as defined in the Charter is more narrow than was intended in the original policy.

## **2.9 Support for Conservation through Use**

Historic Scotland continues to dismiss Anta's proposals on the basis that the proposals are for the reconstruction of a medieval castle as a modern house. It is certainly the case that living apartments with an adequate range of facilities for the resumed use of Castle Tioram as a residence will reflect the standards of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to a balanced and appropriate extent. However, the conservation strategy and accompanying proposals show that this can be done without any prejudice to the historic fabric. To suggest that what will then arise is a "modern house" is to take a pejorative view of the resulting work. Anta believes that re-roofing the building has been shown to be the best way to secure the future of the building, and that the best use of an historic building is the use to which it was originally put. This reflects national policy on historically significant buildings generally. The fabric of the living apartments of the building will reflect the original building as constructed for 17<sup>th</sup> century use, that is to say at the time when it was last in use as a residence. The reconstruction will be done in the finest tradition of today's conservation architecture and will, in a very real sense bring the Castle back to life.

Anta's proposals, informed by the historical and archaeological evidence about how the Castle was used as a building reflect the role of the building as having both a private and a public role to greater or lesser degrees through the whole of its history in Moidart. Anta believes that their proposals acknowledge, in an appropriate way given the sensitivity of the setting, that Castle's future role will reflect public and private aspects. Anta seeks to investigate, record and explain the past public role of the building and the island, while at the same time making provision for their future public role in the life of Moidart, the Highlands, and Scotland. The proposals are neither a pastiche of imagined past glories, nor a touristic fantasy, but will, if permitted, provide valuable information about the history of the island and castle, which will be available to enhance the visitors experience and the significance of them to the community.

It is submitted that Historic Scotland's response does not do justice to the potential which the project has in this regard.

## **2.9 The importance of the role of the Castle on the Island as a tourist asset**

It is unclear which aspects of Historic Scotland's statutory role is being represented to the Council in this remark.

Anta Estates is committed to continued public access to Eilean and Castle Tioram after conservation and to ensuring continued opportunity for public appreciation of the Castle and island. Anta's proposals for public access to the Castle itself have been developed with regard to local consultation and also local concerns to avoid Tioram as a "honey pot" destination, and also to strike a balance between any private use of the building, and its role as a heritage asset which people should continue to have access to and enjoy. Anta believes that its proposal achieve that balance.

Historic Scotland are obliged, by their business plans, rather than by their statutory function, to ensure that the nation's built heritage is presented to the public for their enjoyment and education. Anta believes that their proposals will successfully reflect these objectives and the result of the conservation project will include major advances in the material available for the understanding of the Castle by the public, now and in future years.

Anta is committed to improved interpretation facilities and continued public access.

#### **2.10 Impact on a scheduled ancient Monument**

The current position between Anta Estates and Historic Scotland as to the impact on the scheduled ancient monument is described in the earlier part of this submission.

#### **2.11 Planning Policy**

NPPG5 is the general statement of national policy and requires to be taken into account after consideration of a proposal against the approved development plan. As stated in the planning submission, Anta Estates believes that their proposals can be supported by the development plan, and by NPPG5.

Anta's proposals are not in fact detrimental to the historic fabric of the scheduled monument, and await clarification from Historic Scotland as to in which respects they consider such damage to arise. Anta's proposals to re-roof the building are based on the conservation strategy and on advice that the building is best preserved through re-roofing and the conservation of the original fabric, and the resumption of use. Anta Estates believes that their proposals support the cultural significance of Castle Tioram.

#### **2.12 "The local and National policies on new housing in the countryside and development on the coast"**

##### **(a) Housing in the countryside**

The thrust of the emerging structure plan strategy is the support of existing settlements, and to that extent, isolated development in the countryside which constituted housing in the conventional sense would be inconsistent. It is not relevant to judge the proposals to conserve Castle Tioram as a residence on the same basis as mainstream "housing". In any event, were that to be considered a relevant aspect of the development plan, strong material considerations exist to support acceptability.

In any event, policy H3 supports housing in the countryside outside main settlements, where it supports communities experiencing difficulties in

maintaining population and services and believes that the conservation of Castle Tioram will ultimately sustain Moidart and Morven.

The proposals have been developed with careful regard to the environmental impact, and as the supporting documentation shows, no significant adverse effects will arise as a result of the application proposals.

**(b) Coastal Development**

Policy P99 of the 1990 Structure Plan seeks to conserve the special environmental qualities of characteristic Highland landscape including waterside land and scenic views across open water.

The supporting studies establish that the proposals will not detract from the landscape setting of Castle Tioram and are not environmentally damaging. The proposals will result in the conservation and a substantial extended life span for Castle Tioram which is an essential element of the landscape context and the sensitive coastal area in which it is located.

### **3. Responses to Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultees and Similar Bodies**

#### **3.1 Scottish Environmental Protection Agency**

It is noteworthy that the proposals for the servicing of the Castle at this sensitive location have been approved. SEPA have granted consent for the septic tank arrangements.

#### **3.2 Scottish Natural Heritage**

Scottish Natural Heritage views on the location and such planning aspects as fall within their responsibility should be contrasted with the views of Historic Scotland. SNH speak with approval of the potential for ongoing professional research to contribute to the interpretative material available for education and increasing people's understanding and enjoyment of Eilean and Castle Tioram. SNH constructive comments as to the project, with particular regard to its setting, are to be preferred to those of Historic Scotland, who are not primarily responsible for these issues.

#### **3.3 The Scottish Civic Trust**

The endorsement by the Scottish Civic Trust of the scholarship and expertise which has gone into these proposals is acknowledged.

The Trust expresses a preference that the Castle should remain as a ruin, and comments elsewhere in this document express Anta's views on this position. Similarly, the Trust's comments about the desirability of public ownership are responded to elsewhere in this document.

Anta believes that the transfer of the Castle into public ownership is not a realistic proposition, and that the public resources which would immediately be required to undertake the urgent repairs necessary to stabilise the Castle would absorb public funding which is better deployed elsewhere, particularly given that private funding is available immediately at the levels which Castle Tioram requires.

The Civic Trust goes on to make various comments about the quality of the proposals which endorse the design decisions which have been taken.

The Trust appears to believe that the structural loading of a roof will necessitate a greater amount of work than needs to be done if the structure was simply consolidated and left as a ruin. The careful reasoning behind the re-roofing as the best way forward for conservation is explained in the documentation submitted in support of the various applications. A letter from ARP Lorimer, drawing together the various key elements where work is essential; summarising the implications of this work; and thus showing that there is no major distinction to be made between a stabilised ruin, and a re-roofed building, in terms of the structural impact on the building is annexed.

The Trust mentions a debate which has ensued as to the accuracy of using sash and case windows for the project. Anta's project team expects that there will be a debate as to the correct form of windows for the building. Anta positively supports input from authorities such as the Civic Trust as to the best way forward, and highlights this debate as a good example of how important decisions about the historical basis for reconstruction will be taken. The correct form of windows will be finally chosen after all views have been taken, and as much consensus among the authorities reached as possible.

This issue is an example of one which is frequently encountered in restoration projects.

The Civic Trust have concerns about the degree of public access, and Anta's approach has been fully explained in the application. Anta remains available for discussion. The Trust mentioned the potential of formal footpaths as potentially giving rise to a "institutionalisation" of the experience of visiting the island. Anta is not committed to any degree of formality in the footpath network. The proposals are to reach an appropriate solution for the island which will manage visitor access away from damaging the archaeological resource and the fabric of the island. Anta would support unobtrusive pathways. The final form should be reached in consultation with the Council.

The Civic Trust voices concerns about the impact of the construction period; this is dealt with elsewhere in this document, and Anta is content to minimise the exclusion of the public, in a manner which is consistent with the legal requirements for a construction site, and public safety.

The infrastructure implications of the proposals have been resolved, as the Council is aware.

### **3.4 The Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland**

The Commission's considered view is that the Council should consider Anta's proposals positively. They consider that the only alternative which should be considered is if the Council can be sure that the building will be guaranteed a viable future as a conserved ruin, with safe public access maintained and a management plan for the surroundings drawn up. The Commission approach their view on the basis that such funding would not be available.

The Commission speaks highly of the scholarship with which the proposals have been prepared.

The Commission recognises that the Castle should not be left alone, and that gradual deterioration would continue. The ill effects of this, such as danger to the public, are recognised by the Commission, together with the adverse effects of fencing and other measures to continue to exclude the public from the full enjoyment of the building. The Commission also recognises that future work will simply be more expensive than it is now, when the opportunity for the work to be done has arisen. It also acknowledges the likelihood of another right-minded and well-funded owner as being remote.

The Commission says that the owner of the Castle and Historic Scotland should co-operate to ensure the best possible future for it; this is a view which Anta Estates, for its part, fully endorses.

### **3.5 The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in Scotland**

There are two representations to the Council from SPABIS. The letter from Mr Young of 1 February 2000 seeks to cast aspersion on the *bona fides* of Anta Estates. Anta Estates standing is fully explained in the documentation, and if the Council requires additional information to satisfy itself as to the competency of Anta Estates to carry out the project, further enquiry, including those where the responses should

be confidential, can certainly be addressed. The ownership of the Castle is properly certified in the application.

SPABIS wrote again to the Council on 1 February in a separate letter. SPABIS have long made their position clear. They are committed to complete opposition to any intervention in ancient building. They are effectively anti-restoration extremists, and if their views were to generally prevail, Scotland would be the poorer of very many significant conserved buildings.

It is observed that Historic Scotland and the National Trust have undertaken many projects and interventions in buildings of their guardianship which would apparently not be approved by SPABIS.

It is suggested that these remarks represent an extreme, and very negative, view and Anta Estates believes that these views are neither representative of national policy, nor widely endorsed by the views of the wider community, or the local community.

The project team would also comment as follows in respect of the specific items raised:-

1. Good conservation, as defined in the internationally recognised Burra Charter and more recently BS7913 is based on a thorough understanding of the building or site to be conserved; only then should decisions about how best to proceed be made. To suggest that the proposals for Tioram are based on "volumes of words and selective quotations" is wholly inappropriate and ignores the comprehensive programme of expert research undertaken by Anta.

This has allowed the project team to identify re-roofing as the least possible physical intervention required for the long-term conservation of Tioram, and is the basis for the proposed technical strategy.

2. Conservation of any monument should take into consideration all aspects of their cultural significance without unwarranted emphasis on any one aspect. The historical research undertaken by Dr Murray and others have shown that the significance of Tioram is far wider than the alleged firing of some or all of the Castle (a legendary event over which there is real doubt on the evidence available). Through the conservation and reconstruction of the Castle visitors will have a significantly enhanced understanding of this significance.
3. The extensive research undertaken includes a survey and further invasive research by structural engineers Ove Arup, as well as the Structural Analysis undertaken as part of the development of the Conservation Strategy. Reference I made to Ove Arup's comments on this point annexed.

### 3.6 Acharacle Community Council

Anta Estates has taken sustained steps throughout the development of the proposals to ensure that the Community Council was fully informed as the project progressed, and hopes that they feel that they have been fully consulted by Anta.

Anta remains committed to consultation with and to making information available to the local community about its proposals.

### 3.7 **Ardnamurchan Tourist Association**

The ATA provided valuable input to various aspects of the project during the development stage, and their views expressed have informed the proposals, notably the proposals on the arrangements for public access, and the absolute requirement for a sustainable approach to visitor management.

#### 4. **Comments on matters arising from post-application discussions**

4.1 The undernoted comments seek to summarise the project team position on the various points discussed with Mr Hepburn, Mr Duncan, Ms Low in our meeting of 3 April.

#### 4.2 **Extent of areas of requiring archaeological investigation**

The Council officers at present are concerned that the project objectives would entail archaeological investigation over a relatively large area of the island, and have reservations about the justification of such an approach. Clarification was given; in principle archaeology will be restricted only to those areas where disturbance is inevitable as a result of conservation work on the building and the island, and where this is the case, the extent of the archaeological excavation will be agreed with Historic Scotland and the Council. The project analyses identify, on what is currently known, the areas where such disturbance is inevitable, and argues for a "comprehensive" approach where that is so, rather than a less satisfactory "key-hole" approach to investigation. It is contended that much more can be gained from the destructive process where it is essential that such destruction takes place, on a comprehensive basis.

He annexed letter from ARP Lorimer about which work is effectively inevitable may be of some assistance.

Anta expects that the need for a previously agreed scheme of excavation involving consultation with the Council will be reflected in a condition of consent.

#### 4.3 **Archaeology and Pathways**

Ms Low expressed reservations about the extent of damage which is being caused by informal pathways on the island, and said that from her observations, she was unable to support the suggested approach to pathways without further material as to the extent of the damage which was being suffered.

Anta's investigations have covered an extensive period, and thus has included weather conditions where very substantial damage from visitor traffic was clear. This is recorded in the supporting documentation, and Anta continues to believe that appropriate direction of pedestrian traffic over the island in the post-restoration period is essential to protect archaeologically sensitive areas. Anta consider that such pathways, when installed, should be designed to be used by visitors to the island, in order to successfully protect sensitive areas. However, Anta remains quite open to suggestions that such paths should be unobtrusive, and is happy to accept a condition which makes them less obtrusive, or a planning condition which would defer the final extent, location and specification of any pathways which are installed to discussions with Historic Scotland and the Council. To support this, Anta has now submitted a further project brief for a period of monitoring of damage to archaeologically sensitive areas through traffic and bracken growth, which could be utilised as an information base for decisions about pathways. Again this study and the final pathway structure could be expressly reflected in a condition.

#### 4.4 **Cultural Significance**

Ms Low pointed out that the compilation of a statement of cultural significance should include a consultation exercise with members of the public, and mentioned that she had not seen such a study. It is confirmed that such a study had been undertaken and was in fact submitted to HS as part of the SMC application. While



the report had not been lodged as part of the planning application, it has now been passed to the Council. The results of the consultation were summarised in the Statement of Cultural Significance.

#### **4.5 Period and Extent of Closure of the Island during the Construction Period**

Mr Hepburn expressed concern that any interruption to public access to the island should be kept to the minimum. He noted in the documentation that complete closure of the island appeared to be indicated for years 1 to 3 of the construction period. ARP Lorimer explained that, at the end of the day, the safety of the public and their protection from site works was a legal requirement which was the responsibility of the design team, and that that element has to be respected. The project document includes the architect's realistic indication of the extent of the closure he expects will be essential. Anta is content to accept a planning condition providing for consultation with the Council as to the extent of closure, in order to work with the Council towards maximising public access having due regard to public safety during that process.

#### **4.6 Visitor Access**

Ms Low expressed concerns about the 24 day opening commitment. She asked if a few more days in summer could be made available. It was acknowledged by Council officers that it was fairly difficult to identify a model for this, and that the opening of the Castle for 24 days, and based on H.S. grant criteria was a relatively useful model.

Anta's Visitor Management Strategy was prepared with particular regard to the views of the local community and tourist industry. A balance between the use of the Castle as a private residence; the sensitivity of the location, its environment and archaeology; the sensitivity of the local infrastructure; and the potential of the Castle to be positively supportive to the local patterns of tourism and the tourist industry locally were all taken into account in arriving at the Visitor Management Strategy tabled.

Anta also mentioned the potential for of the viewing of the Castle from the sea and with the potential for some economic development benefit for legal boat trip businesses from this approach. Clearly, even while the Castle is under construction, that opportunity would still arise.