

SCOTTISH DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENT  
CASTLE TIORAM: DORLIN: LOCHABER: HIGHLAND  
ARCHITECT'S REPORT: JOHN KNIGHT:  
INSPECTED 5 JULY 1983 AND 3 MAY 1992

1. GENERAL

Castle Tioram is a polygonal castle of "enceinte" situated on the island of the same name in Loch Moidart. The walls enclose a keep and a tower house with 3-storey domestic building constructed between them.

The entrance elevation faces north-east but will be taken as north for the purposes of this report.

2. EXTERIOR: CONDITION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

a. NORTH CURTAIN

Considerable areas of open joints occur. These should be tamped and pinned in cement/lime mortar maintaining the characteristic build of roughly squared blocks with flat pinning stones. Do not fill put-log holes or drainage outlets. Rake out any loose and crumbly point and renew in a gritty lime mortar. Consider re-opening blocked crenelles in battlement.

b. NORTH EAST CURTAIN

Elevation has been part cement slaistêr pointed. Several fractures are evident but none are serious except that to the right of the garderobe. This should be stitched by the removal of facework and the insertion of reinforced concrete bonders in the core of the wall at approximately 600mm centres, following which the facework should be reinstated as before but bonding stones should be placed across the fracture line. Carefully rake and point voids at wallhead and just below. Consolidate voids at base of wall tamping any loose stones and rock in cement mortar.

c. SOUTH EAST CURTAIN

A slight fracture occurs on the curved quoin with the NE elevation which should be monitored. Pin voids as above taking care not to block put-logs holes etc. It is important to retain evidence of earlier openings particularly the first-floor entrance with the surviving timber beam end in the right-hand socket. The retention of the substantial harled areas is also important.

d. SOUTH WEST CURTAIN

Rake, tamp and pin voids as above without blocking apertures, put-logs etc.

e. NORTH WEST CURTAIN

Slight fractures occur but are not serious. Heavy cement pointing has been carried out and the long term aim should be to remove this and repoint more sympathetically (see specification). Remove all creepers. Lime mortar point voids in tower house masonry removing vegetation. Carefully lime putty point open joints in dressed ashlar corbelling to bartisans ensuring shot-holes are not filled.

### 3. INTERIOR: CONDITIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### a. ENTRANCE

Pin voids in entrance arch particularly at springing line on west side. Tamp rear of rectangular void keeping stone recessed. Leave polygonal aperture in crown of arch at outer wall face. Protect surviving plaster.

#### b. NORTH AND NORTH EAST CURTAINS

Remove vegetation at base of north wall. Consolidate broken end <sup>of</sup> wall flanking doorway by rough-racking (see attached specification). Pin voids in eastern flank. Consolidate wall walk above door and at battlement level ensuring both are waterproof. Consolidate scarcement on east side.

#### c. NORTH WEST CURTAIN

Remove vegetation and roots from inner face of north west wall. Consolidate apertures by replacing lintel to lower doorway and building up on top (lintel should be dated) plus non ferrous metal hangers to secure outer stones. Upper breach will have to be secured by a profiled Delta metal or other non-ferrous bar with hangers to hold unsupported stone etc. Non-ferrous bars up to waist height should be placed across both apertures to prevent visitors falling on to the rocks below.

#### d. WEST WALL OF DWELLING HOUSE

Tamp and pin voids taking care not to fill or diminish put-log holes at second and third floor levels. Carefully retain harling fragments.

#### e. NORTH WALL OF DWELLING HOUSE

Support broken lintel to doorway by installing non ferrous bar cast to profile. Tamp and pin voids in staircase tower. A fracture occurs between the windows in the section of wall west of the staircase. A calibrated tell-tale should be positioned to monitor any movement before deciding on course of action. Much of the construction here looks relatively recent and a separation could be occurring between the two builds. Tamp and pin voids.

#### f. COURTYARD

Clear courtyard of all vegetation and consolidate remains of walling ensuring wallheads are waterproof. Floor of courtyard could be cleared of vegetation and finished with quarry scapings and quarry dust. This work should only be carried out under the supervision of an archaeologist acceptable to the Secretary of State.

#### g. INTERIOR OF EAST RANGE OF DWELLING HOUSE (Kitchen?)

Extensive and serious fracturing should be stitched by the insertion of RC bonders as above. Remove self sown tree from wallhead of west wall.

Consolidate torn end of kitchen fireplace arch by rough-racking. Point leading edges of surviving plaster fragments. Pin up burst vault in north garderobe using props and wedges to secure voissoirs until cement mortar is set. Generally consolidate this area, packing voids etc. The

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vaulted cellar below appeared sound but requires inspection with good artificial light. Lintels to window aperture have snapped and may require non-ferrous bar supports.

#### h. BAKE HOUSE AND PASSAGE

Pin voids in shallow vault and provide non-ferrous support to bakehouse doorway. Remove creeper in bakehouse and generally consolidate as above. Clear out well and provide non ferrous grating.

#### j. SOUTH RANGE INTERIOR

Stonework is generally sound but voids occur which should be consolidated as above. The staircase tower, robbed of the actual stairs, is also in reasonable repair. Remove rusting iron bar in west wall of range. Outer lintel may require non ferrous bar support. Remove creeper and self sown trees from wallhead. The fractures at the blocked stair are possibly the most serious in the castle probably caused by the hollowing out of the original curtain. These must be stitched as above retaining as much of the surrounding plaster as possible.

#### k. WALLHEADS

Access could not be gained to the wallheads of the dwelling without scaffolding. It is important that these are checked however and waterproofing ensured to prevent the percolation of water into the core of the walls. Visitors are tempted to climb however, and cautionary signs should warn them of the danger of doing so if formal access to say the battlements of the north wall cannot be provided.

JOHN KNIGHT

Historic Scotland Architect 1983

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