

SUMMARY OF THE CASE FOR HISTORIC SCOTLAND

CHAPTER 12

Background

12.1 **On behalf of HS, Mr Bridgland rehearsed** briefly the history of the castle until the visit by the government surveyor Paul Sandby in 1746 observing that, since Sandby's visit, Tioram has increasingly been appreciated as an attractive and evocative ruin.

12.2 Mr Bridgland stated that works of consolidation were carried out in the 1920s under the auspices of H.M. Office of Works. While the works were funded by the owner, James Wiseman MacDonald, the Office of Works instigated the repair proposals and carried them out on behalf of the owner.

12.3 In 1966, further consolidation works were carried out by the Ministry of Public Building and Works. This was paid for by the Ministry. Tioram's inclusion on the exclusive list of "Surveillance Monuments" list was stated to be a mark of the high regard in which Tioram is held. The Surveillance Scheme was abandoned after 10 years with a proposal made that five of the monuments, Tioram included, would be best cared for through Guardianship.

12.4 Before Castle Tioram was put on the open market in 1997, HS had expressed its reservations regarding reconstruction to the vendor's solicitors and its clear resistance was conveyed in the sales particulars.

12.5 Mr Bridgland stated that, when the castle came on the open market in 1997, HS prepared to place a bid for the monument. This was consistent with the long-held view that Castle Tioram was of sufficient importance to be taken into state care. It was decided, because the CCTT wished to pursue purchase, that HS would withdraw from bidding, it being inappropriate to bid public funds against a private body pursuing the same aims. In October 1997, HS was advised that it was the intention of the new owner to live in the property on completion of the works. In January 1998, HS met with the applicant and others and explained its concern regarding reconstruction of Castle Tioram. HS also indicated that an application for grant to consolidate, given the castle's importance, would have a good chance of succeeding.

12.6 With reference to the availability of funding it was stated that HS is subject to the priorities of Scottish Ministers. Accordingly, it cannot commit funds in advance but, bearing in mind previous commitments, HS would look positively at a request for assistance towards consolidation of the castle as a ruin. HS would, however, seek to operate in conjunction with a body such as a local Trust and with other funders. Were no such Trust to come forward, HS would be prepared to look positively at the option of taking the castle into state care.

Archaeology

12.7 Mr Bridgland stated that Castle Tioram and Eilean Tioram are a remarkable archaeological research resource. This potential is found in both the building and the

deposits and structures within the castle and on the surrounding island. As a site which may well have seen occupation for much of the last two millennia, Castle Tioram and Eilean Tioram have the potential to greatly expand our understanding of the Early Medieval and Medieval periods of Highland history. As a site which has seen remarkably little modern encroachment, Tioram is one of the most significant medieval archaeological sites in the West Highlands.

Aesthetics

12.8 Castle Tioram is one of the best preserved of the West Coast castles of enclosure, a group which includes Dunstaffnage, Duart and Mingarry. The basic form of irregular, polygonal curtain wall, protecting buildings round a courtyard is typical of these castles. They are not formally designed structures but have developed gradually and organically. Tioram is a particularly good example of this, with its variety of well preserved internal ranges, visible traces of earlier structures and a well preserved curtain wall.

12.9 The island and castle form part of a very attractive group of islands and headlands in the loch with views down the loch and out to sea. The coastal fringe of the NSA in which Castle Tioram sits is considered to be outstanding scenically. As a result Castle Tioram is one of the most spectacularly sited castles in Scotland. It is a particularly well preserved ruin. The almost featureless defensive exterior shields a complex interior which is revealed suddenly on passing through the close entrance. Enough remains of the building for the scale and character of the principle spaces to be understood instinctively. The spaces of the building exhibit great variety of character, ranging from the gloom of the cellar to the first floor hall of the older tower, from the fragmentary and enigmatic kitchen to the more lightly built and simple 17th Century range. Traces of earlier buildings in the courtyard speak of a depth of unrecorded history. The castle has an air of being untouched which contributes to a sensation that what one sees is truly authentic. As a spectacular, complex and, apparently, untouched ruin, Castle Tioram's inspirational, aesthetic qualities appeal to many, both locals and visitors.

Social Value

12.10 Mr Bridgland stated that the applicant's survey of people crossing the causeway, in comparison with other sites receiving similar daily totals, suggests that Castle Tioram receives in excess of 10,000 visitors a year. One might reasonably infer that these will be a combination of locals enjoying a pleasant walk and visitors who seek out this remarkable castle in a secluded part of the country. Castle Tioram plays a social function for these people as a recreational and, to a certain extent, educational resource. Its history and tranquillity are greatly appreciated by those who visit.

12.11 Tioram also has social value for many who rarely visit it at all. For the Clanranald is a potent symbol of the clan and indeed is probably the inspiration for the clan's crest. In HS's view it can be seen as a potent symbol of Moidart, the Highlands and indeed Scotland. It can be seen as a remarkable statement of the power of the lords of the Western Seaboard. Its use as a castle can be seen to mirror the rise and fall of a golden age of Gaelic Lordship. In its current state, it can be seen as a powerful monument to the strength of Jacobite feeling. Tioram currently has different powerful resonances for different people at different times.