

## CHAPTER 5

### The Conservation Strategy

#### Principal Conservation Objectives

5.1 Mr Drummond stated that, based upon the *Statement of Cultural Significance*, a series of principal conservation objectives were identified from which a conservation strategy, or plan, was developed. These were stated to be:

- To conserve the castle.
- To manage and protect the archaeological resource.
- To further research the archaeology of the site.
- To improve the interpretation of Tioram.
- To develop a role in Gaelic culture (cultural participation).
- To conserve the landscape.
- To improve visitor management.
- To continue with the current research programme.
- To involve the local community through an active and ongoing programme of consultation.

#### The Conservation Policy/Strategy

5.2 Mr Drummond stated that, the *Burra Charter* and good conservation practice generally require that a conservation strategy (or policy) should be developed following the completion of research and preparation of the *Statement of Cultural Significance*. In developing an appropriate conservation strategy the project team sought to:

- Define a management and ownership structure through which the conservation policy is capable of being implemented and which will provide for the long-term care of Tioram.
- State how the conservation of Tioram can be best achieved both in the long and short term.
- Identify the most appropriate way of caring for the fabric and setting of the place arising out of the *Statement of Cultural Significance* and other constraints.
- Identify a feasible use that is compatible with the retention of cultural significance.
- Include appropriate ways of making the cultural significance of Tioram understood, consistent with the retention of that significance.
- Include provisions for the control of physical intervention.
- Identify the provisions for public access to the castle and island.
- Set guidelines for future proposals.

5.3 It was not intended that *The Conservation Strategy* would include detailed information regarding proposed final design details, techniques, materials, layouts, and other specific technical data. In developing the strategy the project team was particularly sensitive to suggestions that the integrity of this process would be directed towards the justification of a pre-selected scheme, i.e. re-roofing and re-use of the castle in accordance with the applicant's preferred solution.

## Chapter 5: The Conservation Strategy (Anta)

### Cultural Significance and its Understanding

5.4 It was stated that careful consideration of Tioram's cultural significance had identified the 500 years during which the castle was inhabited as being of primary significance, and consideration was given as to how the works could reflect this. Consolidation and reconstruction would clearly afford the visitor a more complete understanding of the 17<sup>th</sup> century structure of the castle - of how rooms were laid out and used. It would be possible to experience the arrangements of the principal chambers of the castle, the individual rooms where Clanranald lived, slept, worked, and signed charters. The external appearance would be reinstated, and the castle seen as it was intended to have been.

5.5 In considering whether reconstruction would be appropriate, regard was had to the evidence for the 17<sup>th</sup> century form of the building. Survey work had provided a sound basis for understanding the development and form of the building itself, the use of apartments, the evidence for finishes. Whilst a few questions remained, these were in inaccessible areas such as the wallheads and it could be reasonably expected that the same level of evidence and understanding would become available as the project progressed. Timber internal partitions, which may have existed, have long disappeared. However, there was sufficient architectural and archaeological evidence to allow the reinstatement of the 17<sup>th</sup> century plan below attic level. There was no evidence of the internal finishes such as decoration other than the plaster base coats visible in several areas of Blocks 1, 3, and 4. These allowed us to say with certainty that the rooms were plastered at one time and the lack of, for example, timber dooks for timber panelling suggested that plaster remained the historic finish until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Evidence from other sources would allow the appropriate reinstatement of finishes to reinforce the visitor's interpretation of the castle.

5.6 In answer to questions, Mr Drummond stated that any uncertainty about the form the building took in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was largely due to lack of access. Regarding doubts attaching to the appearance of the north elevation of Block 3, it was stated that this is not a very public view. It was contended that areas of uncertainty cannot be viewed from outside the curtain wall.

5.7 Mr Drummond conceded that there is some uncertainty regarding the treatment of the kitchen (a floor missing and a doorway accessing a space above floor level), but argued that it is a secondary space and that adaptation would be acceptable under the Burra Charter. It was accepted that there is no documentary evidence for rooflights; and that the proposal represents adaptation. It was argued that they would not be visible.

5.8 It was stated that there is some evidence that the internal buildings were harled and conceded that harling leads to loss of evidence. There is no conclusive evidence as to the texture of harl at Castle Tioram. It was stated that the curtain wall bears the brunt of the weather and the present intention is to consolidate it. It would have the same appearance as HS's consolidation approach. Mr Drummond suggested that the curtain wall could be harled, but argued that this would lead to a loss of archaeological evidence.

5.9 Mr Drummond accepted that the international charters disapprove of conjectural works; that evidence for some of the conservation works is missing; that there is no contemporaneous documentation for these; but that in his experience further information would come to light as a result of further site investigation.

## Chapter 5: The Conservation Strategy (Anta)

5.10 Mr Drummond stated that consideration was given as to whether the significance of the building could instead be adequately understood and enhanced through interpretation. It was stated that the limited ability of even roofed but bare structures to enhance interpretation had been acknowledged by HS, for example at Edinburgh and Stirling Castles, where recreation had been carried out in order to allow the visitor a greater appreciation of the historic fabric.

5.11 The project team agreed with HS's view that a more complete structure generally resulted in a much enhanced understanding and interpretation of a historic site. However this had to be viewed against the broader range of tests.

“Reconstruction is appropriate only where a place is incomplete through damage or alteration and where it is necessary for its survival, or where it reveals the cultural significance of the place as a whole”. (*The Burra Charter*, Article 17)

The project team considered that such work could, in the case of Tioram, reveal such a significance and enhance understanding of the historical importance of the site but would have to be tested against the other factors identified.

### Developing the Conservation Strategy

5.12 It was stated that four technical options were identified for further assessment in the development of the appropriate conservation strategy:

- Option 1: Ongoing natural deterioration
- Option 2: Consolidation as an unroofed shell
- Option 3: Consolidation and incorporation of a glassed roofed superstructure
- Option 4: Consolidation and reconstruction.

Consolidation as an unroofed shell or ruin (i.e. option 2) is intended to represent a minimalist intervention in the existing fabric in order to temporarily stabilise and thereafter slow the rate of deterioration of the historic fabric. Works would primarily comprise removal of vegetation, archaeological mitigation works, structural consolidation of the masonry, the dismantling of loose material, grouting of voids, insertion of structural ties to arrest movement, rebuilding of collapses, rebuilding of wallheads complete with suitable water shedding layer, and repointing of masonry to shed water.

5.13 Consolidation as an unroofed shell would, however, only partly address the technical issues identified. In the medium to long term the problems arising from movement of water within joints, salt migration, and the freeze-thaw cycle would continue. Consolidation as a ruin can be an acceptable medium term solution in, for example, more permeable sandstone structures, especially in less exposed sites. It is not the most suitable way to exclude water in this instance.

5.14 Mr Drummond stated that Article 3 of *The Burra Charter* notes that conservation should involve the least possible intervention while *The Conservation of Architectural Ancient Monuments* notes that conservation should always be aimed at the lowest level of intervention that is consistent with achieving a monument's stability. He argued that consolidation as an unroofed shell or ruin was therefore typically proposed as the only appropriate solution, often on the basis of a fairly shallow understanding of the building or monument in question. HS's architects' reports envisage such a strategy, but underestimate or overlook key areas of work, in particular failing to address the

archaeological issues posed by aspects such as scaffolding of the site or the damage being caused by informal footpaths.

5.15 Mr Drummond did not dispute that consolidation as an unroofed shell or ruin would partly address the technical issues. It was argued however, that the amount of water entering an unroofed wall at wallhead level actually forms a relatively small proportion. Exposed wall faces represent a significantly greater area and, whilst repointing on the face would reduce absorption on the elevations, there would still be water entering the fabric. Due to the dense, impermeable stone at Tioram, this water would invariably concentrate in the joints and over time the cycle of mortar loss and core voiding would re-establish itself.

5.16 It was concluded that, whilst consolidation as a ruin can be an acceptable short to medium term conservation solution especially, for example, in more permeable sandstone structures in less exposed sites, it is not necessarily the most suitable way to exclude water and thus control the mechanisms of decay in this instance. HS acknowledged this problem, accepting that in order to address outstanding technical issues, conservation works would have to be cyclical in nature. This was confirmed by previous conservation works to the castle in 1864, 1880, 1926, and 1964. HS noted that such works would secure the fabric for only a number of decades.

5.17 Mr Drummond stated that wide-scale cyclical conservation of this nature poses two principle problems - loss and deterioration of original material, a finite resource, and the ongoing financial implications. Each repair cycle would introduce new material or fabric, compromising the historical authenticity and integrity of the building over an extended period.

5.18 *BS 7913: 1998* advises a conservative approach of minimum intervention in order to conserve the historic fabric. The works described would temporarily arrest the deterioration cycle of the existing fabric, but would not satisfactorily provide for the long-term conservation of the original historic fabric. As such, it is clearly not the minimum necessary in this particular instance. The primary philosophical objection was stated to be what *BS7913: 1998* refers to as the presumption against restoration. This states that restoration can diminish the authenticity, historic, and aesthetic value of a building. However, it advises that there is a case for restoration or reconstruction where completing a void in an original design, where significant secondary work would not have to be destroyed, the design of the missing elements is known, or where there is a functional or constructional reason. It has been shown that reconstruction would enhance the interpretation and understanding of the building, and that there is a minimal impact on the landscape. The missing elements can be clearly ascertained from evidence and records. There is a clear constructional reason why these elements should be reinstated. The proposals were stated to comply with the British Standard.

5.19 *NPPG 18* states that sustainable development is an overarching theme which lies at the heart of government policy. Consolidation as a ruin would generate a fossilised artefact which would be generically comparable to Dunstaffnage. The building would have no purpose for its owners other than as a financial burden.

5.20 Mr Drummond argued that consolidation, reconstruction, and re-roofing (Option 4) sought to reintroduce the original mechanisms by which the building retained its

long-term integrity. Works would primarily relate to the reintroduction of the structural integrity of the fabric through duntaking, grouting, and rebuilding, the extent of which would be identical to that for consolidation as an unroofed shell or ruin. The consolidated walls would thereafter be used to support intermediate floors and a suitable timber structure with a slated roof over. The roof would shed rain away from the fabric, and thereby reduce the problems described regarding water penetration. The walls would be able to support the new fabric without further intervention, and the requirement for additional structural bracing required for consolidation as a ruin would be removed. By re-glazing window openings and heating the building, other technical issues are addressed. In particular, heating would maintain the thermal mass of the fabric, assisting in the migration of water away from the inner face and providing resistance to the frost-thaw cycle. It would also limit interstitial condensation problems. Inasmuch as the level of structural intervention in the original fabric is identical, this would be a superior technical means of conserving the fabric in the longer term.

5.21 Previous experience had shown that an unheated structure remains highly susceptible to water ingress and the consequent mechanisms of deterioration. With sandstone and limestone structures, problems can arise during initial drying out. In view of the dense masonry and its low porosity, the stone will not be prone to such problems at Tioram and whilst isolated sandstone elements may be subject to some greater risk, those most liable to damage are those likely to be unsound and requiring structural replacement anyway.

5.22 It was stated that the reconstruction and re-roofing of the castle offers a superior technical solution in the longer term by addressing the principal mechanism of decay, water ingress, at source. Re-roofing as a shell would be reconstruction under the *Burra Charter* which states that reconstruction is only appropriate where necessary for the survival of the building or site and that there must be sufficient evidence - conjectural reconstruction is not acceptable. It was contended that the reconstructed fabric would not form the majority of the building and there is such evidence at Tioram. The proposals would require no greater level of structural intervention and were stated to comply with the *Burra Charter*.

#### Developing the Archaeological Strategy

5.23 Mr Drummond stated that the principal threat to the archaeological resources within the castle during either solution is that implementation would cause damage to subsurface features and deposits. The main areas where such damage might occur are:

- around the walls, where scaffolding would be erected and there would be a need for consolidation works at currently buried areas;
- inside buildings, in the courtyard due to increased use during the works; and
- on access routes. This threat can be minimised by protecting surfaces during working, although even the strictest procedures can be inadvertently breached. This would be compounded by the need to carry out further works at regular intervals if Tioram is consolidated as a ruin.

5.24 An alternative solution would be the excavation of vulnerable areas, but such an approach is unlikely to adequately deal with the archaeology. Small-scale excavations do not reveal enough to be properly interpreted, so that the cumulative effect of a series of

limited excavations is to erode the archaeological resource without revealing meaningful findings. Two options exist:

- protect remains in-situ wherever possible, but still involving considerable disruption at the middens and around walls; or,
- a wider programme with the potential to provide an enhanced understanding of this important historic site at no cost to the public purse.

Either would be acceptable to the applicant.

#### A Compatible Use of the Building

5.25 Mr Drummond stated that there is clear policy and charter agreement that using a building is the best way of ensuring its conservation. *NPPG 18* advises that the aim should be to find a new economic use that is viable over the long term with minimum impact upon the special architectural and historic interest of the building. *BS7913: 1988* similarly advises that ideally a building should be used, kept in good order, and maintained on a regular basis. Article 5 of the *Venice Charter* recommends that “the conservation of monuments is always facilitated by making use of them for some socially useful purpose” *The Illustrated Burra Charter* defines compatible use as “a use which involves no change to the culturally significant fabric, changes which are substantially reversible, or changes which require minimal impact”.

5.26 It was stated that the applicant’s preferred use is as domestic accommodation together with a public display area, access, and clan room. One of the principal problems is the impact which modern regulations, statutory requirements, and everyday requirements would have. At the majority of historic sites such changes can be accommodated. Assessment of the fabric at Tioram confirmed that the only classification of building which would not require alteration to the historic fabric or changes in reconstructed design elements was Group 1, Dwellings, where there would be no requirement for fire escapes or any of the other alterations which more onerous uses might require. It was argued that, in many ways, that is perhaps the closest equivalent today to that use for which the castle was designed and is consistent with the cultural significance of the site.

5.27 It was important in interpreting and considering any lordly dwelling such as Tioram to understand the use and arrangement of the principal public rooms – the hall, the outer chamber, and the inner chamber – and this is widely recognised by HS in the management of their own properties. The analysis of the historic fabric allowed the identification of these chambers at Tioram with considerable confidence, primarily comprising the first floor of Blocks 3 and 4. In using these apartments as the principal public spaces in a reconstructed building, the core areas of the castle, and thus its cultural significance, would be maintained.

5.28 Adaptation would be required for the insertion of bathrooms. By locating these within secondary apartments away from the core areas necessary for the understanding of the castle there would be no real impact on the cultural significance. Evidence of alterations and their successful integration within secondary areas of historic buildings can be seen at other important sites. Services within a largely domestic project would be minimal and low-tech. These are accommodated within almost all construction projects (new and old) with a very limited impact. At Tioram, surviving fabric is limited to the masonry and disruption would be limited to very small areas, selected to ensure that the

minimum is removed. There is no reason to believe that a sensitively designed installation, where the vast majority of the services are not apparent, would have any real impact on the significance of the historic fabric. It was concluded that the proposed use would require only minor changes and would not affect the building's significance. Accordingly, it would be compatible.

#### Public Access

5.29 The consultation carried out and the *Statement of Cultural Significance* indicated that, for most visitors, it is access to Loch Moidart and Eilean Tirim that is of principal importance. There would be no restriction on public access to Eilean Tirim. It was proposed to construct low-visibility footpaths which would prevent damage to archaeology. These would be solely for the purpose of allowing full continuing public access. The applicant had similarly undertaken to provide continuing access to the castle for visitors and the local community based upon the arrangements discussed with the council and the local community.

5.30 In answer to questions, Mr Drummond stated that there would be no public access to secondary apartments because these would not inform the public. Primary rooms were of greater interest. There had been no research into public interest in secondary apartments.

#### The Visual Impact

5.31 Mr Drummond stated that *The Statement of Cultural Significance* identified the aesthetic importance of Loch Moidart and Dorlin. Article 8 of the *Burra Charter* states that proposals should not adversely affect the setting of the place. Of the original masonry, only secondary elements such the skew heads and chimneys are missing. The visible new work would therefore be extremely limited – primarily the roofs themselves. There would be a minimal visual impact and no adverse impact.

5.32 It was also considered whether re-roofing might, in fact, enhance the view and reference was made to the 20<sup>th</sup> century reconstruction of Eilean Donnan from a far more ruinous condition than Tioram, which has created one of the most enduring and attractive images of a Scottish castle seen today; to Ballone Castle, transformed into a local landmark; and to Queensbury House which is being returned to its original design to act as the grand entrance for the new Scottish Parliament. Tioram was designed to be impressive, especially from the sea, a display of the power and wealth of the Clanranalds and it was argued that with sensitive, accurate reconstruction there is no reason to doubt that it can be once again. There would therefore be no adverse impact, a view which is shared by SNH.

5.33 In answer to questions, Mr Drummond stated that he had advised his client that there was no guarantee that the castle would be made into a house (the preferred option). That would be the outcome only if that represented the most appropriate conservation solution. While the Mission Statement aims to provide accommodation for a curator, it does not state that that accommodation would be provided in the castle. The preferred option had not determined the conservation strategy.