

CHAPTER 9

Further Evidence in Support of the Application

9.1 On behalf of the applicant, Professor McKean stated that he would address three matters in relation to the proposals for Castle Tioram.

- the differing attitudes between countries on the continent and Scotland to the philosophical question of adapting a previously derelict building to a contemporary use.
- the nature of ‘authenticity’, the extent to which ‘restoration’ can be possible, and the values of adaptation.
- the merits of the proposal before the Inquiry.

The Cultural Significance of Buildings: A European Perspective

9.2 Buildings are works of rational and cultural creation. They embody not just the technical skills of the generations that erected them, but the social and cultural aspirations of those who had them built. Whatever one’s appreciation of the building in a ruinous condition, whatever one’s romantic response, the experience is not authentic to the building’s original intention. The cultural significance of a ruin is primarily that of a building whose life has stopped, and whose fabric - if it is to survive at all - is on an expensive life-support machine.

9.3 Scotland has a long record of architects adapting ancient buildings to contemporary uses - both well and badly. Each was according to the conservation practice of the time, and each accepted necessary change to make the building useful.

9.4 Cesare Brandi, considered by Jukka Jokilehto, in ‘A History of Architectural Conservation’ as one of the principal post-war theorists in this subject, wrote:

“Restoration should aim at the re-establishment of the potential unity of the work of art, so far as this is possible without committing an artistic or historical fake, and without cancelling any traces of the passage of the work of art in time”.

Prof Gianni Perbellini of Verona, contemplating the thin line between conservation, restoration, and adaptation to modern uses, has said:

“Our action should not ignore the needs of our time....”

9.5 It was stated that the implication of Section 7 of HS’s *Statement of Case* is that any adaptation of the fabric of Castle Tioram to a new use - particularly a dwelling house - would have a ‘material, permanent and adverse effect’ upon it. HS appears, therefore, to be taking a more conservative view than the rest of Europe. Furthermore, it alleges that both Tioram’s cultural significance and aesthetic value would be destroyed ‘or at least materially diminished’ by adaptation and reoccupation.

Cultural significance as a ruin

9.6 The nub is the contention that the cultural significance of Castle Tioram rests less in the building itself than in the act that made it a ruin - in its destruction by fire by the Clanranald of his time. The HS classification for Tioram appears to be discussed in *The Conservation of Architectural Ancient Monuments in Scotland* (paragraph 16.3) to

illuminate its category as a building whose cultural significance lies in the fact that it is in ruins providing 'sources of inspiration for poets and painters'. Yet Tioram differs substantially from Ardvreck. First, the latter is infinitely more ruined. Furthermore, it lays no claim to having been burnt as a political act. It was abandoned for a nearby house because it was anachronistic. Insofar as *The Conservation of Architectural Ancient Monuments in Scotland* may be interpreted in relation to Tioram, therefore, the matter may less be the commemoration of a (disputed) event than HS's fondness for ruins to remain ruins; a preference, however that is inconsistently enforced.

9.7 It was stated that, whereas the merits of how well physical adaptation is to be undertaken may be discussed objectively, HS's assessment of Tioram's cultural significance as lying in its state of ruin cannot be. In the light of its social, philosophical and economic implications, a policy of enforcing a 'ruins in the landscape approach' against adaptation and re-use requires much broader discussion than that held to date. Whereas HS is the body appointed to advise the Government on matters constructional and architectural (in respect of structures like Tioram), it is moving beyond that remit when claiming the right to make such judgements of broader cultural and social significance.

Restoration versus adaptation

9.8 HS's opposition to the proposals include the judgement that the introduction of services would be irreversibly damaging to the building and contradict its 'restoration'; that new work would conceal evidence of the past; that the current proposals 'do not produce a building which reflects any known historic form; and that they would be to Tioram's aesthetic detriment.

9.9 Dealing with the matter of work concealing past work, it was pointed out that there is clear evidence that that has always happened at Tioram as each stage of its development overlay an earlier stage. The belief that all phases of construction should be made manifest is, largely, a 19th century antiquarian approach - enjoyable for the archaeologist - but bears no relation to what can be learnt or may be inferred from the cultural intentions of earlier generations.

9.10 It was contended that there appears to be a confusion in HS's *Statement of Case* between restoration and adaptation. If restoration is defined as 'work that justifies itself as being an exact replacement or continuation of the authentic whole', as suggested in HS's *Guide to International Conservation Charters*, it is impossible to restore what is no longer there and inadequately recorded, or, perhaps, what was never there. Hence the acceptance of new work, or adaptation, as part of the conservation process as in, for example, Article 17 of the *Burra Charter*, and Articles 5, 11 and 12 of the *Venice Charter*. Adaptation may be defined as 'modifying a place to suit proposed compatible uses' and represents the new work that is being proposed at Castle Tioram. In that context, it is absurd to reject the insertion of services as being 'inconsistent with an accurate reconstruction of the castle circa 1650, for that misunderstands the distinction between reconstruction (or restoration) and adaptation.

Merits of the Proposal

9.11 With regard to whether the proposal for Castle Tioram does not 'produce a building which reflects any known historic form', it was stated that it seems certain that Tioram is a well preserved example of the customary West Highland seat beginning, originally, with a curtain-wall following the contour of a rocky outcrop. Particular attention in the *Statement of Case* is drawn to the windows and a door transformed into a window. There are two matters here. First, in countless adaptations throughout Europe, adaptations have included the transformation of a building by doors being made into windows, and vice versa. It was contended that it lacks judgement to assume that such a change is, *ipso facto*, unacceptable. Moreover, many of the door and window surrounds (presumably a more easily worked sandstone than the local whinstone) have been robbed and replaced, by the Victorians, by their dense rubble and distorted apertures. It would be unnecessarily restrictive to assume that any adaptation should have to continue those forms, if reasonably comparable examples may be found as a model.

9.12 Likewise, the fine details of the design require refinement: the dormer window heads, for example, the quoins shown around windows (which would be concealed beneath harling), the crowsteps (which, in proportion, look larger in scale than those fossilised in the south-east gable of the hall block) and the copings. Given proper attention, appropriate exemplars, and continuing discussion, there is no reason why these should not be executed in perfect sympathy with the spirit of Tioram.

9.13 Given our current understanding of the building's history, the proposals to re-occupy were stated to be perfectly reasonable and in keeping with the building's spirit. Contemporary intrusions required as a consequence of Tioram's adaptation to use should be reversible but would be, according to the proposals, mostly invisible.

9.14 It was argued that the remit through scheduling given by statute to HS is to protect the monument. The implication of the *Statement of Case* is that protection means preservation in its current state at, presumably, an ever increasing cost to the owner. Most of the burgeoning charters emphasise that the most appropriate way of ensuring the continuity of a historic building - i.e. protecting it - is to find a use for it which can maintain it wind and watertight. Thereafter, they mostly focus upon the care and skill with which this work is undertaken.

9.15 The reliance of HS upon the various Conservation Charters - and indeed its own contribution to them - reflects a desire to codify everything, and an increasing unease with the exercise of judgement. True conservation, however, is not about words on paper. It is about making judgements that will support a building's future. Most of all however, HS does not in fact accept all phases of work as being equally valid, for, *a priori*, they are excluding the proposed present, and all future, phases of work. Perhaps they meant 'all previous' phases; but in that case, it would have to admit that whilst buildings have adapted and changed in the past, it wishes to prevent that from ever occurring again.

9.16 Professor McKean concluded that:

- There is a fundamental confusion in HS's case between restoration and adaptation. As a consequence, the synthesis of the proposed work to Tioram's conjectural state in the later 17th century is irrelevant.

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- HS's own actions are inconsistent. The excuse for permitting extensive work at Stirling Great Hall - that its status as a national icon exempted it from the normal prohibitions - is tendentious. An argument in principle against the re-occupation of Castle Tioram has not been justified.
- The underlying assumption that history stopped for Castle Tioram in the early 18th century is a questionable social value judgement rather than a technical judgement based upon fabric.
- The social and economic implications of concluding that a building's cultural significance lies in its continued ruin requires wider input than resolution within the confines of HS.
- The broad proposals for adapting Castle Tioram respect the spirit and history of the building, and its status as a work of cultural creation of which they would be only the most recent in a long history of adaptations.
- The scheme requires refinement in the details, as reserved matters and subject to further consultation with HS and others.

9.17 In answer to questions, Professor McKean stated that:

- SAMs do not exist in such terms in Europe;
- The notion that history has stopped is unusual in Europe;
- The *Burra Charter* is one of the more useful pieces of guidance in assessing the cultural significance of a place;
- In principle it is desirable to be correct in the interpretation of buildings; and
- There are enough buildings to provide guidance for details where no physical or documentary evidence exists;
- Space cannot be understood instructively by those who are not expert;

9.18 **Mr Ellington stated that**, in the early 1970's, he restored Towie Barclay Castle in Aberdeenshire which is now the family home. Since the 1960's, a number of important Scottish castles and tower houses had been "restored" by private owners. The scale and complexity of these projects varied greatly as did the age, condition and architectural design of the individual buildings. Prior to their restoration, the majority of these structures were scheduled ancient monuments in a roofless, ruinous or highly dilapidated state. Most were steadily deteriorating, many were in a perilous condition, all were at risk and facing an uncertain future.

9.19 A key factor in enabling these restorations to take place was the encouragement and support provided by HS and its predecessors through the granting of scheduled monument and/or listed building consent and in many cases the funding assistance offered through the Historic Buildings Council (HBC). Of equal importance has been the valuable technical advice and guidance provided by its officials. When one compares the relatively modest outlay in providing grant support against the cost of taking buildings into state guardianship and maintaining them in perpetuity from the public purse, it is apparent that the taxpayer has received good value.

9.20 As well as saving many important individual monuments previously "at risk", these restorations had also provided a number of significant additional benefits including:

- An increase in public awareness, knowledge and understanding of Scotland's fortified architecture.

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- A renewed sense of confidence and a greater public appreciation of our cultural and architectural heritage.
- Growth in the number of craftsmen, architects and firms now involved in restoration activity with a resulting increase in the conservation skill base, especially in rural areas where the majority of these buildings are located.
- A strengthening and expansion of the tourist industry as all of these buildings are accessible to the visiting public.
- A valuable educational resource: the experience of visiting a restored castle or tower house which has been restored and is being lived in can often provide a far more rewarding experience for school children than a roofless ruin, which can be confusing and hard to understand.

9.21 It was stated that, given what has been achieved by private individual restorers and HS working together to provide a future for these buildings, it might have been assumed that a well-conceived, sensitively developed scheme for conserving a highly important castle at risk would have been looked upon favourably. The witness was greatly disheartened by the way in which the enlightened and supportive stance taken by HS in the past is so at odds with the approach adopted in relation to the present proposals for Castle Tioram and could confidently state he had never encountered proposals which so effectively address the conservation requirements of a major ruined castle at risk.

9.22 Amongst the key factors to be considered in assessing proposals for the restoration of ruined castles (either for consent or grant approval purposes) are the degree of compromise and conjecture involved in their realisation and the amount of unacceptable irreversible intervention to the building's historic fabric which would result from their implementation, not whether the intention is to return the structure to a dwelling or even whether the building is a roofless ruin and has been so for some time.

9.23 Consolidation as a ruin is frequently the most appropriate, or indeed only means of conserving monuments (particularly those which are very ruinous). Adopting a predetermined position on the suitability or otherwise of the restoration or repair of a ruined castle or for that matter any historic or architecturally important building, which might be the subject of a consent application, is at odds with the established practice of considering each case on its own merits and recognised conservation principles as defined in the Burra and Stirling Charters. This can only be determined once properly researched proposals have been received, assessed and thoroughly considered in relation to existing relevant legislation as well as the individual building's specific conservation requirements.

9.24 HS's opposition to the granting of SMC for the conservation and repair of Castle Tioram is all the more perplexing when it is recognised that the majority of recent castle restoration projects have gained consent, and in most cases HBC grant support, for proposals which do not even begin approaching the quality of those submitted for Castle Tioram.

9.25 Unlike the majority of previous castle restorations, the project is not seeking a grant from the HBC or financial support of any kind from the public purse. The project is being funded entirely by the owner. This is a highly significant factor given the severe pressure on the public resources currently available to support historic building conservation and repair projects in Scotland.

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9.26 While each individual case must be judged on its own merits, in approving consent for the restoration of so many other ruined scheduled monuments in need of conservation, an important precedent has been established which is relevant in considering the present proposals. All of the factors which contribute to making the case of Castle Tioram exceptional, such as the outstanding architectural and historic importance of the building and the pressing need for its conservation, the quality of the scheme being proposed and the many sustainable benefits it offers as well as the fact that the project requires no public funding, serve to support the wisdom of granting consent.

9.27 The proposed scheme would also deliver a number of important additional benefits including:

- A significant increase in the body of knowledge concerning not only Castle Tioram but also the collection of early western seaboard castles, of which it is an integral element.
- A highly useful template and model for the development of future initiatives to conserve and repair other major ruined castles in Scotland.
- A valuable tourism asset for the Highlands.
- A 'place of pilgrimage' for members of the Clan Ranald and McDonalds throughout the world.
- A powerful manifestation of how, as a nation, we value our culture and heritage. The conservation, repair and re-occupation of Castle Tioram would provide a clear articulation of the belief that the Highlands has a present and a future as well as a past. For HS to confuse conserving and protecting important elements of our built heritage with preserving and promoting the tired, limp and demeaning popular image of the Highlands is not only fundamentally unsound, it also represents a profound misunderstanding of the nature of cultural significance and takes no account of the views of the local community.
- Castle Tioram would provide an educational resource of immense value to the local and wider communities. Regardless of how well they are interpreted and presented, ruins can prove difficult to comprehend, especially for young people.

9.28 It was stated that the findings of the all-important preliminary research provided sound basis and a firm foundation for the development of all subsequent proposals for its conservation and repair. The cultural significance of Castle Tioram has been clearly identified and defined through research, investigations and consultations with the local community. The importance and value its cultural significance, as well as its implications to each and every aspect of the project have been thoroughly considered and responded to. The development of all the proposals is fully substantiated in the *Statement of Cultural Significance*. Central to the process of developing the project's proposals has been a recognition of the importance of acknowledging the totality of the history of the castle and the ways this has contributed to creating both its cultural significance and unique architectural qualities.

9.29 The over-arching importance which HS has chosen to place on one incident in the castle's 800 year history is stated to be in direct contradiction to the principal set out in *The Stirling Charter* (5.2) and at odds with the *Burra Charter*, Article 5. That the castle burned in 1715 is not in dispute. What cannot be substantiated by historic evidence is the

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attribution of this event to the last laird as a symbolic act of final abandonment of his ancestral home.

9.30 It was stated that the options for conserving a roofless ruin are inherently limited in comparison with those normally available for addressing the conservation needs of other more complete or less dilapidated buildings.

9.31 The principle set out in Article 5.6 of the *Stirling Charter* is of central importance when assessing options for the conservation of our built heritage. It cautions against adopting a predetermined position and embracing the dogma that all major ruined castles must remain ruins. A consolidated ruin requires continuing repair and maintenance without the resulting sustainable returns and benefits - cultural, financial and practical, often provided by a complete, functioning and lived-in building.

9.32 Sustainable development is an over-riding theme which lies at the heart of government policy (*NPPG 18*). Consolidation frequently fails to provide the degree of protection required to halt progressive deterioration and arrest structural problems. In our climate, a structure which was designed to be roofed is seldom satisfactorily conserved in a roofless state.

9.33 It was stated that transforming a derelict ruinous building into a 'consolidated ruin' can have a profound negative impact on its cultural significance. The combined effect of uniform pointing, the introduction of railings, walkways and safety constraints and other concessions to the visiting public, as well as the attempt to create visual order out of the inevitable chaos of ruination, can result in a building which bares scant resemblance to how it appeared at any time in its history.

9.34 Also, a consolidated ruin lacking harling and with its pointed internal walls where once there had been plaster, can easily mislead or misinform visitors regarding how the building once functioned and was lived in. The act of consolidation can be perceived as "placing a building in aspic" and "freezing it in time" thereby signalling the end of its history and as a consequence a lessening of its relevance to our present lives and culture.

9.35 As an educational and cultural resource, a consolidated ruin was stated to be of limited value in comparison to a building which has been sensitively conserved and repaired and is decorated and furnished in an appropriate manner.

9.36 It was contended that there is enough surviving evidence to indicate with some certainty how the building would have existed in the late 17th century. The amount of existing physical evidence to indicate a building's original and/or earlier design is an absolutely critical factor in determining whether a major programme of repair and restoration is appropriate or feasible. Castle Tioram is substantially more complete and a number of fundamental aspects of its earlier design/form more clearly revealed than many other ruined castles which have been successfully conserved, repaired and re-occupied as dwellings. Compromise, and there is very little (if any), has been kept to the absolute minimum - there is certainly none in any areas which affect the building's significance. HS's allegation that what is being proposed for Castle Tioram, "will result in the creation of a modern dwellinghouse in the walls of an ancient castle" displays a profound misunderstanding of what is being proposed.

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9.37 The over-arching principle of the “minimum degree of intervention appropriate” and the level of compromise and conjecture involved in realising a proposed scheme, as well as the amount of irreversible damage to its fabric which would result from its implementation, are amongst the key issues which must be considered when assessing proposals for the conservation and repair of major ruined buildings such as Tioram - not whether what is being proposed is “inconsistent” with an arbitrary or specific time in a building’s history.

9.38 The witness stated that he was in no doubt that what is being proposed represents a practical, achievable and sustainable solution for meeting its needs.

9.39 In answer to questions, Mr Ellington stated that the restoration of Tower Barclay predated the 1979 Act. He accepted that accuracy in the proposals was important; that inaccuracy could lead to rejection; and agreed that the more important the building, the less room there is for manoeuvre. He considered that the restoration of Argyll’s Lodging “looked appalling” and agreed that documentary evidence in support of Stirling Great Hall gave a foundation for accuracy. He considered that it was unreasonable for HS not to meet the applicant and to form a view without seeing the detail of the proposals. Details not backed by evidence could be resolved in due course.

9.40 **The Clanranald stated** that he was happy to support the application for SMC, and the objectives of Anta Estates, in his capacity as the current Clan Chief of Clanranald. He rehearsed the history of the Lordship of the Isles, the Macdonalds and Clanranald. He asserted that Clan Donald, united through out the world, is by far and away the finest of clan organisations as befits the mightiest of clans, and that over the last 40 years he has travelled the world, to be among his people both on his own initiative and at their invitation.

9.41 He stated that Castle Tioram has long been a symbol of the aspirations of the clansfolk throughout the world. It has become their spiritual home, or icon, perhaps, which embodies all that great history which is seen romantically positive through the mist of history. Over the decades he has held gatherings, simple concerts, had Mass said and arrived by sea in a variety of vessels. His one long-standing burning ambition has been to see Tioram restored. Both leaders and rank and file of the clan, in his direct experience, have unanimously expressed their desire that one day Castle Tioram will be restored and re-awakened.

9.42 The proposal for the provision and maintenance of a Clan Room as part of the reconstructed Tioram, is totally and unanimously championed by his clan and all Clan Donald. The clan world-wide would be happy that there would be somewhere that is part of them, which can be visited, romanticised about, and on occasion be hosted and gathered together at Castle Tioram where the achievements of their ancient and contemporary ancestors would be housed.

9.43 The Clanranald rehearsed his attempts, involving the previous owner, to re-acquire the castle for his family. He also had firm commitments of support towards a clan restoration. In 1997, he did all that he could to work with a group of locals, clansfolk, landowners in the area and institutions in an attempt to secure Castle Tioram into a sympathetic trust. As a result of these efforts and those of others, the CCTT was formed. It

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was successful in having sufficient funds pledged to make an offer in line with the suggested asking price but the bid did not succeed. He met with the current curator of the Castle Tioram project and the prime mover behind the aspirations of Anta Estates whose commitment to the castle and the community is widely recognised and approved of. He was only too happy to help the Anta team with advice on cultural and clan matters. He feels that the authorities, notably HS, have not fully grasped what has been achieved and published in the three short years since Anta acquired Tioram. In view of his direct experience of the stabilisation of Inverlochry Castle by HS, consolidation as a ruin of any building takes us nowhere. There can be no prospect of a solution to the structure of Castle Tioram, other than giving the property a roof and a use. The owners would provide space for a permanent Clan Room devoted to the Clanranald in which the clan would be able to present and record the hugely important information which the process of conservation will reveal. It will also form a resource for the retention and safeguarding of records and other items of information, and generally form a focus, a stopping off point, that will be greatly valued by the clan and its supporters in future years. The proposals had been acclaimed by clan members.

9.44 **Mr MacDonald**, a member of the School of Scottish Studies and as such one of the leading persons developing the education and development of Gaelic culture, stated that he was brought up in Glenuig when there was no road over to Acharacle or to Lochailort, the road opening in 1968. Through the course of time Mr MacDonald would hear enough about 'Caisteal Tioram' and the songs and the stories associated with it. This information was not passed on to him, however, until he was in his teens, any history of Castle Tioram or Clan Ranald coming from the older people in Glenuig in oral tradition rather than as any part of his schooling. There were, he is sure, many hundreds of Gaelic songs and lore from the area, a number of which would have had direct relevance to Castle Tioram. The great majority of that song and lore is now gone, a large collection of manuscripts of this nature being accidentally burned only about 50 years ago.

9.45 It was stated that Castle Tioram was and is an important part of *Dinnshenchas* where landscape and lore and place names are united in an inseparable manner in the psyche. The *Dinnshenchas* is what gives the Gaels the sense of place and identity. That is the cultural significance of the edifice. It has obvious emotional connotations because of the way in which Gaels connect with the past. They identify themselves in a vertical manner; as shown in the witness' *sloinneadh* or patronymic which is why the events of the '15 and the '45 are more immediate and relevant. The witness' appreciation of the castle is in the context of the lore of *dinnsenchas* and he therefore finds it very difficult to understand a few of the stances which have been adopted by those who oppose the redevelopment of the castle at a level which is consistent with the most advanced knowledge, techniques and scholarship in Scotland today.

9.46 It was stated that the witness does not believe that anyone in the local community thought of Castle Tioram in the romantic sense as portrayed by Walter Scott, or by Horatio MacCulloch as a prop for his wild visual fantasies.

9.47 For no other reason than the quest for knowledge of our history and culture, the development of Castle Tioram would be a wonderful opportunity for the children being educated in Moidart, to identify with a place and its historic past. The educational catalyst that this could engender in one or other of the disciplines involved in this unique project is too important to ignore.

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9.48 The witness questioned why anyone should put forward an argument which talks of giving the castle ‘a right to exist as a hugely significant ruin in a landscape’ It is significant in the sense that it stands as a metaphor for what has been happening in the Western Highlands and to Gaelic Culture over the last 400 years. It is also significant in that the same attitudes to the Western Highlands and its people and culture and landscape by outsiders and latterly, insiders, persist.

9.49 Mr MacDonald did not agree that the castle repairs should be hindered by such an organisation as HS both from the point of view of its own legacy and the argument that it is best left as a ruin. It should be developed under the conditions as set out by Anta Estates as well as for the benefit of the local community e.g. as a centre for social and cultural events and as a focal point for the whole of Moidart.

9.50 It was stated that there is nothing in the HS report to suggest that it had any intention of spending the kind of money which has already been spent by Anta, to save the castle from total ruin. The arguments put forward for restoration are so powerful, interesting and scholarly, that all schools in the region would greatly benefit from the rejuvenation of this landmark in our history. The existence of a roof and other facings would not detract from the beauty of the castle.

9.51 Mr MacDonald considered that money spent on the inquiry could pay for the dissemination of a great amount of our invaluable Scottish lore of oral history and song which is in danger of decaying at the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh. The material for Moidart could then return home and be made available to all who are interested and might even be housed at Castle Tioram.

9.52 **Mr Thornber stated** that his principal concern, since long before the 1997 sale, has been to ensure that this important historic site is conserved for future generations. Following the project closely since its inception, he has sought to bring the various parties together productively, and recently accepted HC’s offer to join the local liaison group. He has also been consulted by Anta’s project team regarding his research notes and collection of photographs, some of which were incorporated in the project documents.

9.53 Mr Thornber had always been aware when talking to people of the deep sense of pride in the building and its historic background, and a feeling that it had always been there and was likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. However, it was first and foremost Dorlin, Loch Moidart, and the beautiful surroundings which local people generally came to enjoy, when they visited Dorlin. He was concerned that by going on the open market the castle might fall into the hands of unsympathetic buyer who would have no real respect or understanding of its historical importance and who might either do nothing to its fabric or attempt to close off access to the island and the castle. A bid was lodged on behalf of CCTT, but was unsuccessful.

9.54 Tioram had been an ongoing point of discussion in the local community since 1997. In Mr Thornber’s direct experience, the overwhelming opinion was for the restoration and re-roofing of the castle. Only about 5% thought it should remain as it was concerned about access. From talking to a wide cross-section of the local community it was Mr Thornber’s opinion that the majority view is that:

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- Unless the present owner is allowed to restore Castle Tioram it will very quickly become a total ruin, and that the current access restriction to the inside of the building would become a permanent feature.
- In providing training skills in the rebuilding works and through apprenticeship schemes, there is renewed hope for long term future employment in these fields throughout the West Highlands and Islands where every job is vital.
- Castle Tioram is a significant asset to the area and should be afforded the best possible protection.
- Its fate should be dealt with in as dignified and proper a manner as possible.
- No amount of interpretative plaques and written words would convey the former importance of the place, or engender such a sense of the past as a roof over the building, lights in the window and smoke rising from the chimneys again, and above all having the opportunity of receiving hospitality from the owners table.

9.55 Mr Thornber was concerned that suggestions that the burning of the castle in 1715 is given so much weight. Setting aside the many inaccuracies in Father Charles MacDonald's work, it seemed that the real importance of Tioram was its role as the seat and residence of the Clanranalds. He applauded the standard of the work undertaken at Tioram to identify the best way forward. What was being proposed by the applicant in terms of public access to the island and the castle is more than adequate, given that the project is to be privately funded.

9.56 The proposals were the better of the two options available, the other being public ownership, of which he had experience. He described consolidation with full access as "a new proposition". The applicant's proposals were the most likely to succeed.

9.57 Mr Thornber expressed disappointment in HS's approach which seemed to misunderstand the community's views on Tioram and its support for the proposals, and criticised it for apparently maintaining a silence from Edinburgh as opposed to participating fully in community discussions and discussions with the applicant.

9.58 With the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Executive, there is renewed interest in the country's national and cultural identity. It is essential that the future of Castle and Eilean Tioram be assured and that it becomes, once again, one of the foremost buildings of its kind in Scotland. There are already a number of consolidated castle ruins in HC and the Highland area. No matter how well these are interpreted through booklets and boards they will always remain cold, damp, soulless ruins.

9.59 **Mr Thompson stated** that the Ardnamurchan Tourist Association (ATA) supports the application for SMC. Tourism is a critical component of the local economy, supporting the very small, fragile, local communities scattered throughout the peninsula by securing the livelihoods of many families and ensuring the viability of many essential services. Tourism in remote rural areas has suffered long term decline for 5 years, culminating in a major drop in 2000, and now exacerbated by the foot and mouth disease crisis in 2001.

9.60 Key findings of a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis conducted in 1997 were:

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- the essential need to project the area to potential visitors while they are still at home;
- and the equally essential need to preserve the unspoiled, richly diverse environment, ensuring that the type of visitors who will value it are attracted and developed.

Mr Thompson agreed that the SWOT analysis had made no reference to Castle Tioram or any other historic site, other than Columba's cave.

9.61 Mr Thompson described the nature of local provision for tourists and the kind of visitors it attracts. Castle Tioram is seen as an important element in one of several especially scenic locations in Ardnamurchan, being valued primarily as a part of the whole environment. Access to the island, and retention of the whole feel of the immediate area are seen by the ATA as more important than access within the castle itself.

9.62 The ATA conducted an informal poll of local tourism operators when the castle came on to the market which rejected the possibility of turning the castle, or a structure in its immediate environs, into an interpretation or visitor centre, it being felt that the area's peace and beauty would be disturbed by such an enterprise. The crowds and the road's total unsuitability to high volume access would have devastated the location. Day trips from outwith the area would have brought minimal extra business to local operators other than the centre itself. A major concern was that any new owner, including any public body, might not have the funding to maintain the castle's structure and thus protect the local scene. The applicant is seen as having access to the funds and the commitment to secure the castle as an attractive visual asset in a relatively short space of time. A very real fear remains that should the project be stopped, the castle would simply be closed off behind unsightly protective fencing for a prolonged and indefinite period as has been the case at nearby Mingary and Old Inverlochy Castles.

9.63 A fuller, postal survey of members was undertaken in 2001 to establish the views of all members on whether the finally negotiated Planning Agreement (Section 75) with Anta Estates was acceptable to them. In a remarkably high level of response (75%), the arrangement reached with Anta Estates over access was agreed as being the most practical, certain and helpful way of preserving the overall environment while achieving sufficient access within the castle itself. The opening up of access during the shoulder months would help extend the season, the most acceptable way of expanding tourism in this fragile area.

9.64 It was stated that the ATA believes it can work constructively with Anta Estates to develop relevant and environmentally appropriate tourism projects; the promotion of the local scenery and atmosphere in general, and the historic and archaeological aspects of Tioram in particular; "shoulder month" access with other support material to encourage short breaks; and a possible annual festival of local history and culture, centred round Tioram and aimed specifically at absent members of the Clan Ranald.

9.65 **Mr MacGillivray stated** that he had lived all his life in Acharacle, is a fluent Gaelic speaker and is the proprietor of the local bus company, employing 10 full-time staff. He is a member of the Castle Tioram Local Liaison Group.

9.66 When the castle was put up for sale in 1997 he had reservations about the CCTT's proposals, and in particular its ability to raise the funds not just for the purchase but

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for the much more expensive conservation. He welcomed the idea of somebody purchasing it with a view to reroofing and bringing it back to life. However, as with many locally he felt it was essential that the local community have continued access to this important and historical place.

9.67 Participating in the local consultation, he was concerned that many of those who spoke were from outwith the area and did not take the views of the local community into account. He was asked to join the local liaison group advising the council on matters important to the community such as access.

9.68 Mr MacGillivray stated that such an important historic local landmark should not be allowed to fall into disrepair and lost. The interior of the castle has already been closed to the public because of its poor condition and the danger of falling masonry, and without work this will inevitably become worse as the outer walls will also deteriorate. Mr MacGillivray agreed with the views of the local tourist association and local liaison group that Tioram should not become a honeypot as this would destroy the peace and tranquillity which the local community enjoyed. Along with many people locally, he would like to see the castle as it had been when inhabited, to remind us of the grandeur of Clanranald and local Gaelic culture during its heyday rather than as a museum piece. He was therefore pleased that someone is prepared to spend the money and time required to provide this facility.

9.69 Mr MacGillivray welcomed the financial input which the project would have for the local community in both the short and long term. Never had Ardnamurchan had the promise of so much investment, with a guarantee that local firms would be involved, and the offer of a training scheme for valuable local trade apprenticeships. He was pleased at the number of days access which have been agreed, on the understanding that they are specifically included in the planning conditions.