

***Proposed Alterations  
Design and Conservation Statement  
Kinlochaline Castle Ardtornish Morvern Argyll***

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## 1. Introduction

Kinlochaline Castle (Category B listed) is situated on the summit of a rocky outcrop at the mouth of the River Aline at the head of Loch Aline in Morvern. It is reached from the A884 where, 2 miles north of the village of Lochaline, a road descends towards the River Aline (NGR: NM 6975 4763).

The original construction of the castle probably dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and it comprised a roughly square three storey tower house. It was substantially remodeled in the late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century, when vaulted cellars were added on the ground floor level and the original entrance to the ground floor was blocked up.

The early history of the castle is obscure but it is believed to have been the seat of the MacInnes clan. After the murder of the clan chief at nearby Ardtornish the castle or lands were given to Lachlan MacLean of Duart in 1390.

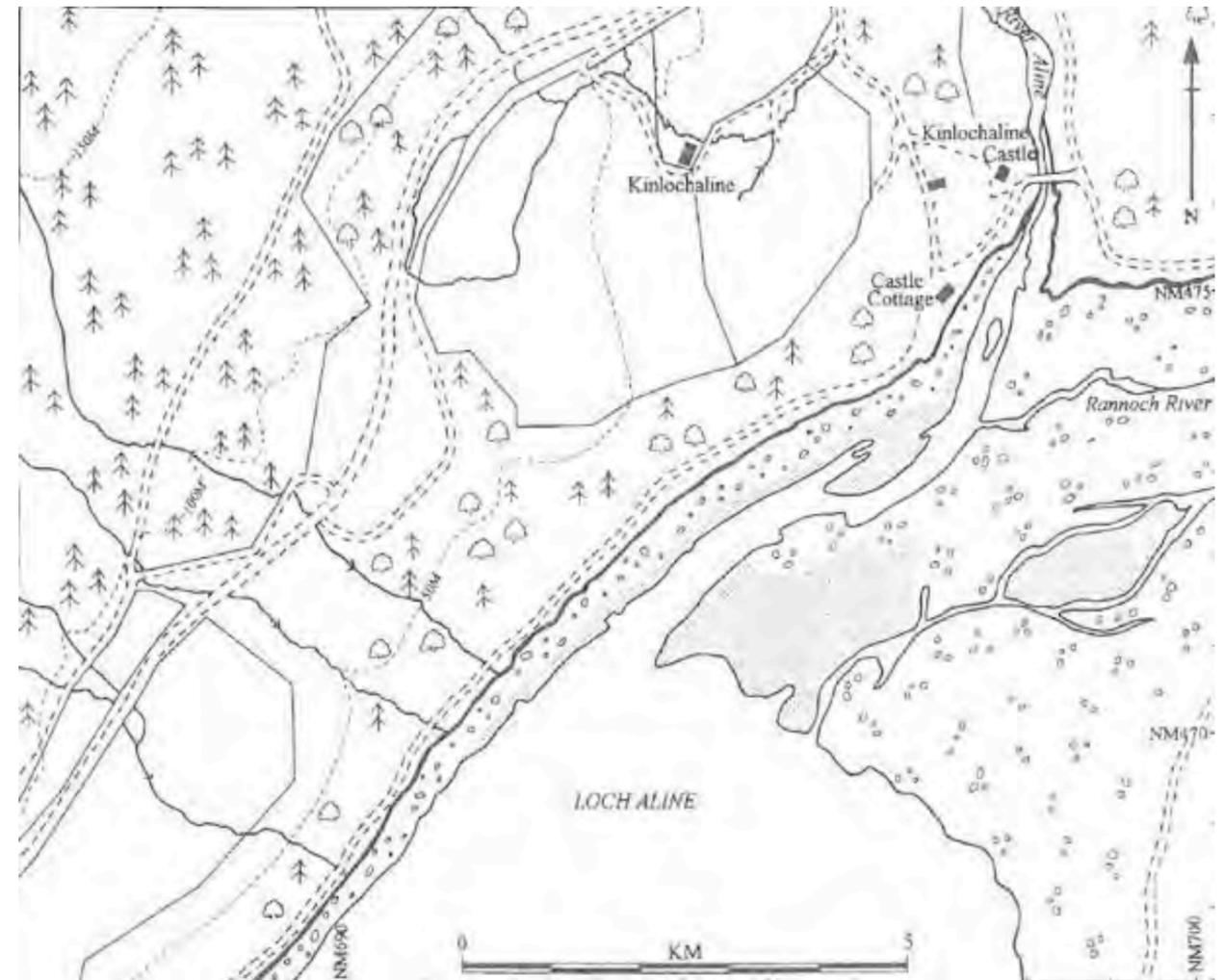
The castle was briefly occupied by Montrose's Irish Colonel "Colkitto" and his troops in 1664, who fired the castle when they left and it was subsequently sacked by Cromwell's forces. The castle remained strategically important and was attacked by the 9<sup>th</sup> Duke of Argyll in 1679. It was finally abandoned c.1690.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century it was in a state of extreme dilapidation and the ruins were extensively restored in 1890, for Mr T. V. Smith, the proprietor of the Ardtornish Estate.

The castle was renovated and altered again in 1998-9 to form a family home, with a kitchen on the first floor, stores and utility accommodation in the vaulted cellars at ground level, a living room on the second floor and bedrooms and sanitary accommodation in the new accommodation created on the third and fourth floors.

The existing large kitchen/dining room on the first floor level is lit by a slit window on the south elevation, two small windows on the west elevation and a single window on the north and east elevations. These are all set in deep window recesses and the levels of natural light are not adequate by contemporary standards.

The alterations for which Listed Building Consent is sought comprise the enlargement of two of these windows, which were rebuilt in the 1890's to slightly enhance the existing levels of natural lighting without compromising the character of the castle.



## 2. Kinlochaline Castle

### 2.1 Site Location

Kinlochaline Castle occupies a commanding position on a rocky knoll overlooking the mouth of the River Aline (NM285242) and overlooking Loch Aline to the south. The surrounding land forms part of the Ardtornish Estate.

### 2.2 History and Description of Kinlochaline Castle

The castle comprises a simple rectangular significantly altered five-storey tower house, probably originally dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It comprises of plain elevations now unified by the recent application of a traditional lime harl and lime wash. An external forestair leads to the entrance on the first floor with the adjoining guardroom now used as a toilet with pit prison below. A small stair descends to each of the cellar rooms at ground level. A turnpike stair leads to the main upper room and then to the parapet level where the two storey cap house with crow-stepped gables was built in 1999.

The early history of Kinlochaline Castle is obscure. It is believed to have been the seat of the MacInnes clan, the hereditary bowmen of the Lord of the Isles. In the fourteenth century, the murder of the leader of the clan at nearby Ardtornish, led to the lands being given to Lachlan MacLean of Duart in 1390 (NSA 1845, 180). Despite this record of the lands being under the control of the Macleans, there is a legend that the existing tower house was built in the fifteenth century for a female member of the MacInnes clan, a Lady Dubhchal. It is possible that the MacInnes clan might, have retained the site of the tower under the new MacLean overlords. The legend also suggests that she “paid her architect with a very extraordinary remuneration, “a quantity equal to the full of the castle, of butter”.

The castle was substantially remodeled in the late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century when the two cellar rooms were inserted into the ground floor, with the stairs from first floor. The upper section of the south wall appears to have been rebuilt at this time and the newel-stair inserted in the south-east corner.

Montrose’s Irish Colonel Colkitto and his troops occupied the tower in 1664 and afterwards set fire to it, an act, which he is said to have regretted (NSA 1845, 184). The castle was subsequently sacked by Cromwell.

Although Kinlochaline castle continued to play an important strategic role in the conflict between the Macleans and the Campbells during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century it was abandoned during the 1690’s.

In 1730, the castle and adjoining farm were purchased by Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope in order to provide a base for the operations of the company to which he had sub-let mining rights in Morvern. Repairs to the castle were planned but not executed because it was too uncomfortable.

By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the structure was extensively damaged with huge vertical gashes in the masonry of the east and west walls. This is clear from the painting by Horatio McCulloch dated 1855 and the photographs taken by Gertrude Sellar, daughter of the proprietor Octavius Smith, dating from c.1860s.

There appears to have been a considerable further deterioration in its condition during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and by 1889 the castle was in a very ruinous condition.



Figure 2 - Kinlochaline Castle by Horatio McCulloch 1855 Glasgow Museums

The castle was surveyed by MacGibbon and Ross during 1889 when MacGibbon noted that it was “... sadly mutilated, but it still retains the fine corbel-course of the parapet and angle turrets.” See Figure 12 below for drawing of view from south-west.



Figure 3 - FIG. 107.-Kinlochaline Castle, from South-West MacGibbon and Ross v.3 p 169)

The castle was restored around 1890 for Mr. Valentine Smith, the proprietor of Ardtornish estate, probably by the Inverness architect Alexander Ross, (Ross and Macbeth). The broken walls and parapets were rebuilt with much new stonework and a good deal of imagination. The stairs were renewed, and a new steeply pitched roof constructed, believed to match the original roof pitch. It was finished with corrugated iron sheets.

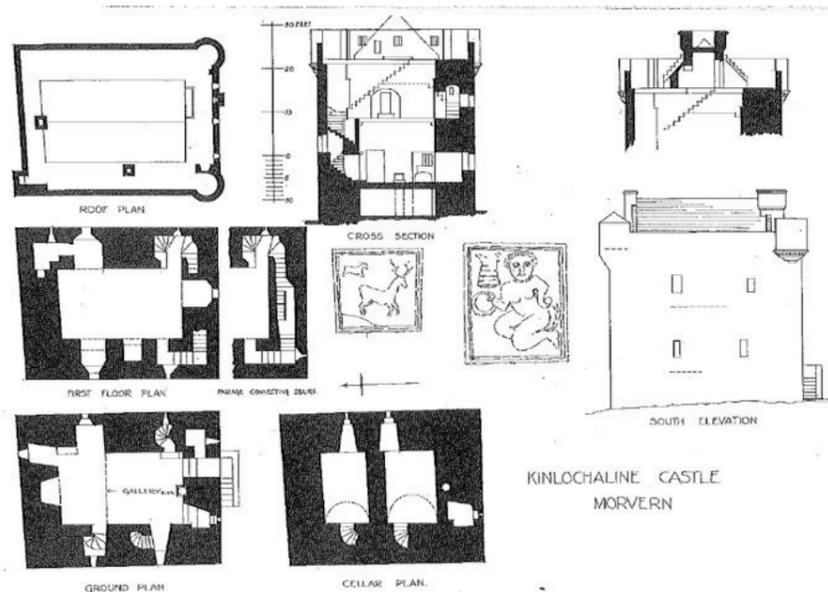


Figure 3a - Plans, sections and details (Ardtornish Estate Archive)

When Thomas Ross, architect (and partner of MacGibbon and Ross Architects) visited again in 1913 he wrote to Gerard Craig Sellar expressing his concerns about the design of the restoration. "Some of the details of the restoration have a questionable look. For instance the entrance door is far too wide. I doubt if it was lintelled; The inside arrises of all openings are square; this would never be; they would be moulded. Such lofty round arched fireplaces are I think unknown. The parapets would never finish on top with copes similar to field dykes."

The steep pitch of the gables and new roof were lowered during the 1920s to make the roof less obtrusive; perhaps in response to Ross's criticisms of the restoration work.

The castle was altered and restored again between 1998 -2000 to form a family home. The alterations included the removal of the roof and construction of two new floors of accommodation in a cap house above the parapet level. The decayed timber first floor structures in the east and west window recesses were removed and new structural floors inserted to the ground, first and second floor levels. New building services were installed throughout.

The iron bars in the larger window openings were removed and new reveals and checks were formed in the masonry to accommodate the new timber sash and case and metal window frames to the narrow slit window openings.

The complete tower and cap house was harled with traditional high calcium lime harl and then lime washed with traditional limewash.

The castle was built of fossiliferous limestone, mica schist and basalt rubble masonry. The limestone, which outcrops locally, rubble dates from the earliest phase(s) of construction and the mica schist and basalt have been extensively used in every period of construction and alteration, particularly in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century restoration. Most of the free stone dressings were robbed and the structural openings made good with rubble in the 19<sup>th</sup> century restoration.

The archaeological evaluation work, undertaken within the cellars and along the route of the proposed access road and drainage, undertaken in November 1997 and April 1998 prior to the restoration and alteration works did not identify any significant archaeological features.

### 2.3 Cartographic Record of Kinlochaline Castle



Figure 4 - William Roy's Map of Scotland, 1745-55



Figure 5 - Plan of the lands of Achranich, surveyed by Alexander Langlands 1815  
(Ardornish Estate Archive)



Figure 6 - OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition survey 1875 (surveyed 1872)

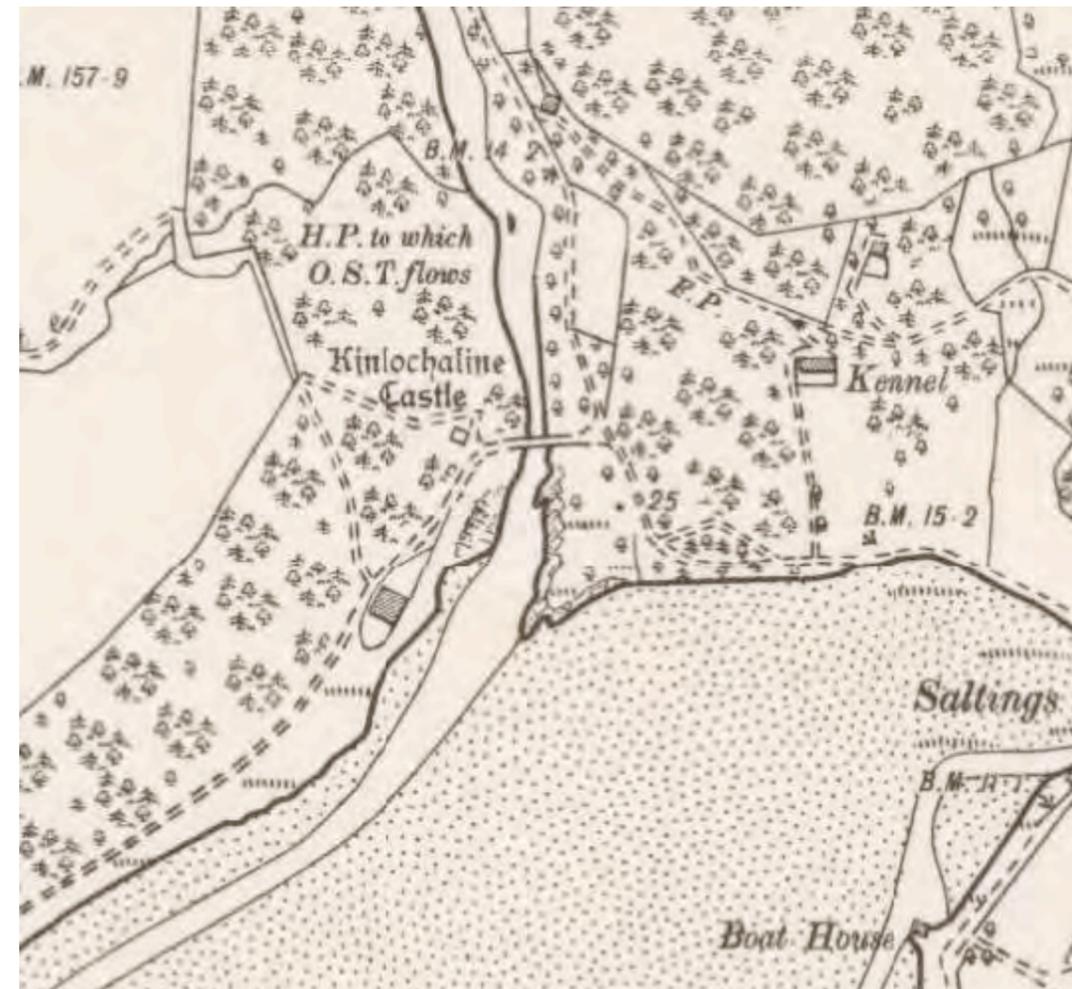


Figure 7 - OS 2<sup>nd</sup> edition survey 1900 (revised 1897)



Figure 8 - Google Maps 2015

## 2.4 Historic Photographs and Illustrations

The photographs presented in the following Sections 2.4 & 2.5 record the appearance and condition of the castle from c.1860s until the present day.



Figure 9 - Gertrude Smith c.1865 - 1875  
*The ruins of Kinlochaline Castle from the east showing the extensive breach in the east wall*



Figure 11 - Gertrude Smith c. 1865 - 1875  
*The ruins of Kinlochaline Castle from the south*



Figure 10 - Gertrude Smith c. 1865 - 1875  
*The ruins of Kinlochaline Castle from the south*



Figure 12 - Gertrude Smith c. 1865 - 1875  
*The ruins of Kinlochaline Castle from the south*



Figure 13 - FIG. 107.-Kinlochaline Castle, from South-West MacGibbon and Ross v.3 p 169) 1889.



Figure 15 - View from north, 1920s, Miss MEM Donaldson Collection Copyright Inverness Museum)

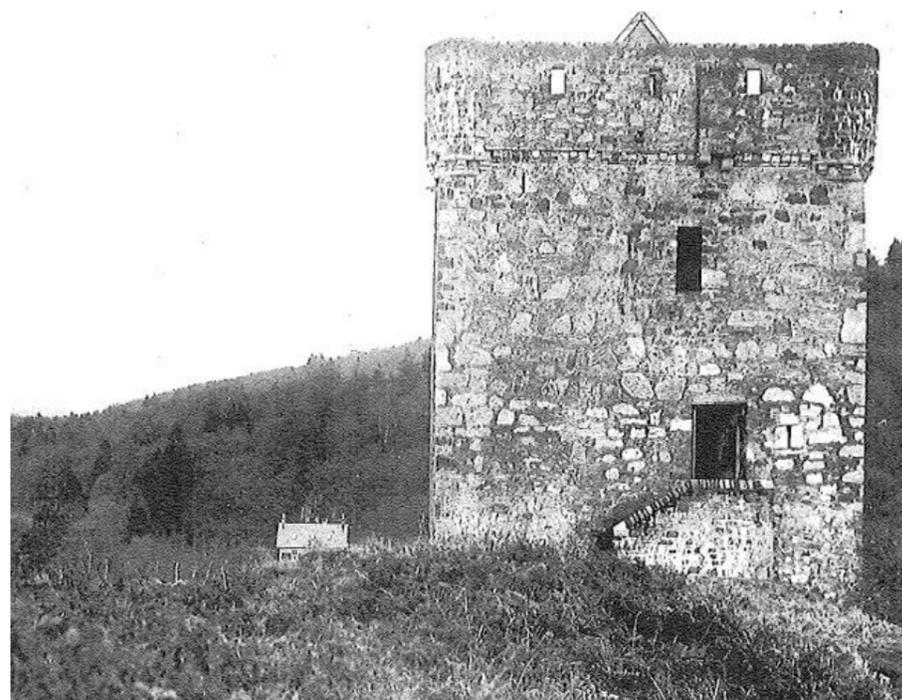


Figure 14 - View from south, 1920s, Miss MEM Donaldson Collection Copyright Inverness Museum)

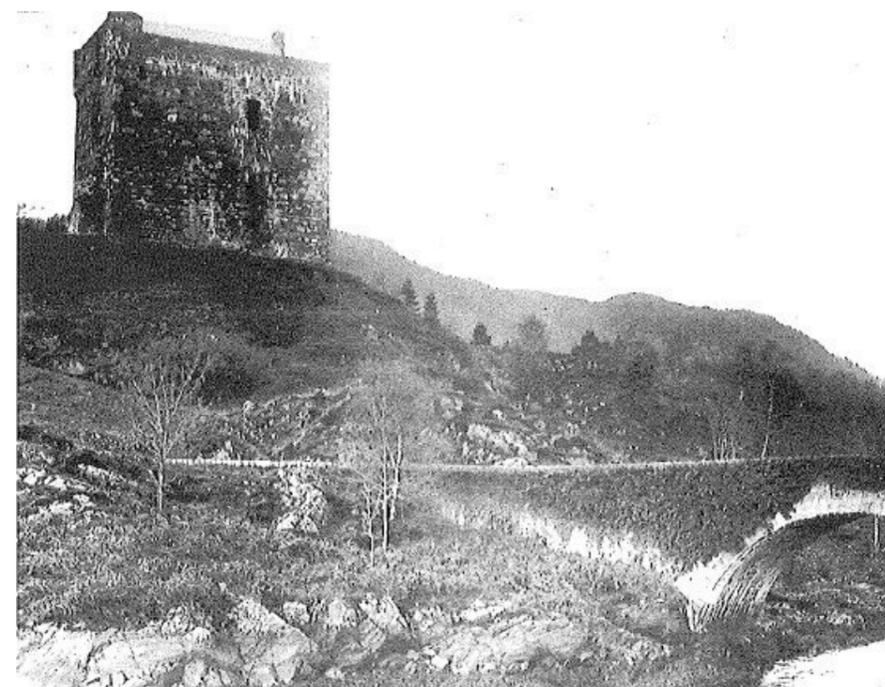


Figure 16 - General view of castle and Ivy Bridge, 1920s, Miss MEM Donaldson Collection Copyright Inverness Museum)



Figure 17 - General view of ivy clad castle (from the South) SC1175662 Copyright RCAHMS

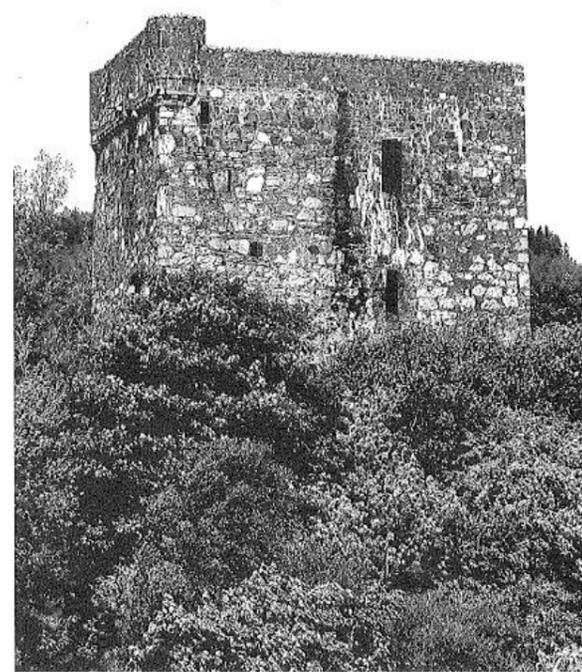


Figure 19 - General view from south east June 1974 Copyright RCAHMS



Figure 18 - General view from west June 1974 Copyright RCAHMS



Figure 20 - Kinlochaline Castle from the north west 1998 JRA

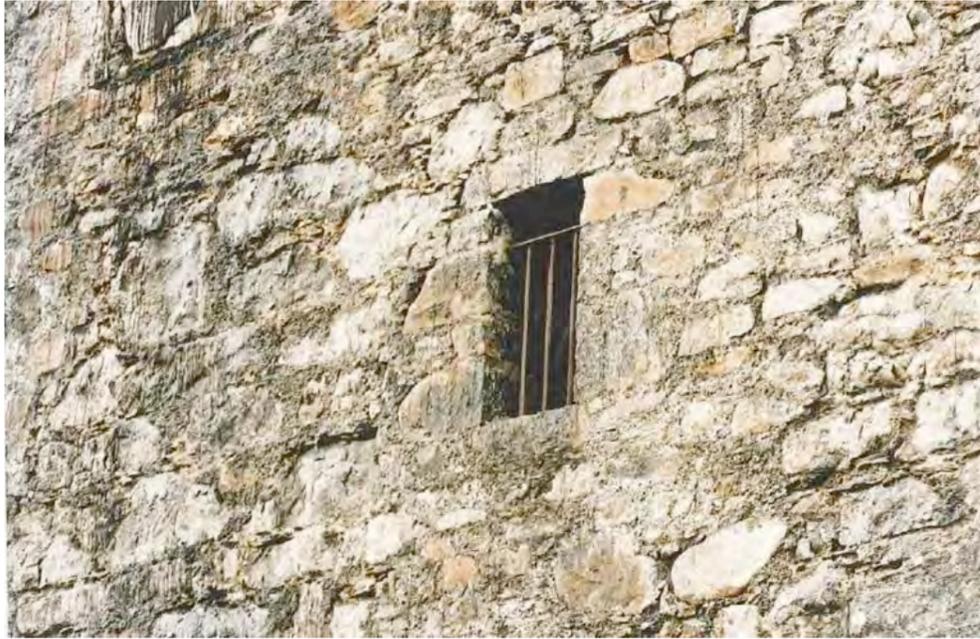


Figure 21 - Detail of window, prior to renovation and reuse as family dwelling 1998 JRA



Figure 22 - Detail of West elevation 1998 JRA  
clearly showing extent of 19<sup>th</sup> c. masonry infill and restoration using predominately schist rubble



Figure 23 - First floor (existing kitchen), general view of interior from south east  
AG/7543 June 1974 Copyright RCAHMS



Figure 24 - First floor (existing kitchen), general view of interior from north west June 1974  
Copyright RCAHMS

2.5 Existing Photographs



Figure 25 - East elevation from Ivy Bridge, c.2014 (JRA)



Figure 26 - South elevation, c.2014 (JRA)



Figure 27 - West elevation, c.2014 (JRA)



Figure 28 - Detail of existing windows on West elevation, c.2014 (JRA)



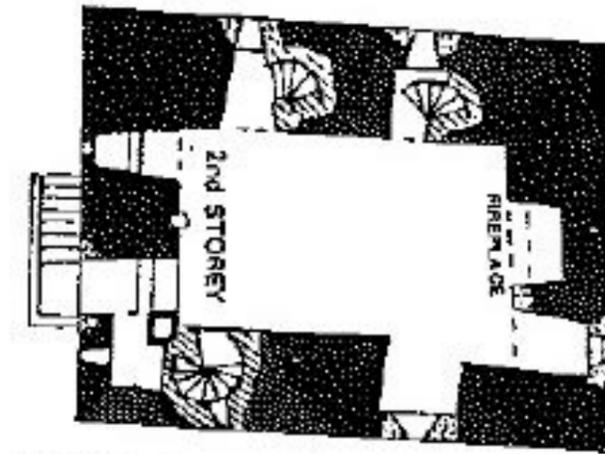
Figure 29 - Detail of existing windows on East elevation, c.2014 (JRA)



Figure 30 - Detail of eastern window embrasure in Kitchen, 2015 (JRA)



Figure 31 - Detail of western window recess and stair to basement cellars, 2015 (JRA)



Figures 32 & 33 - Plan and section showing the extent of masonry rebuilt during the 1890s restoration.

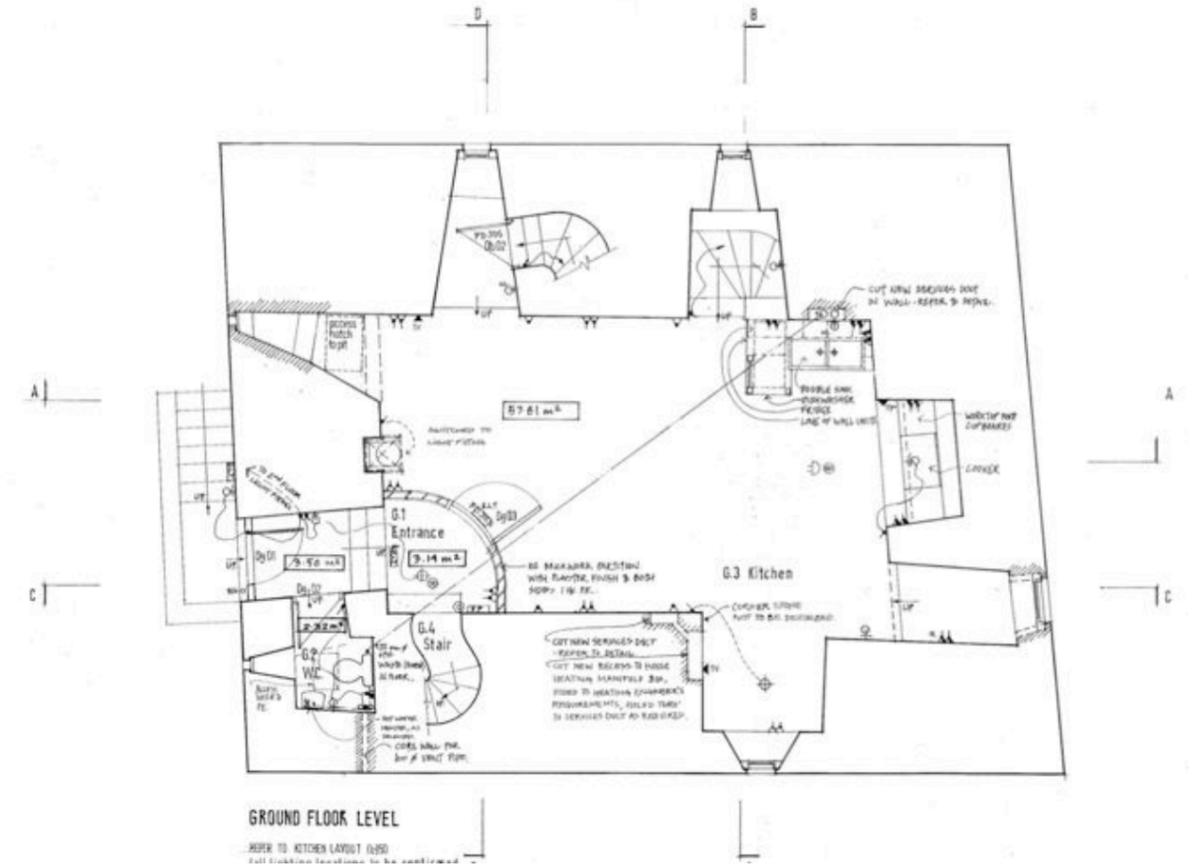
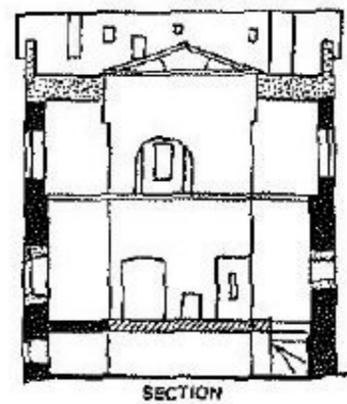


Figure 34 - Proposed and 'as built' first floor plan, April 1998 JRA



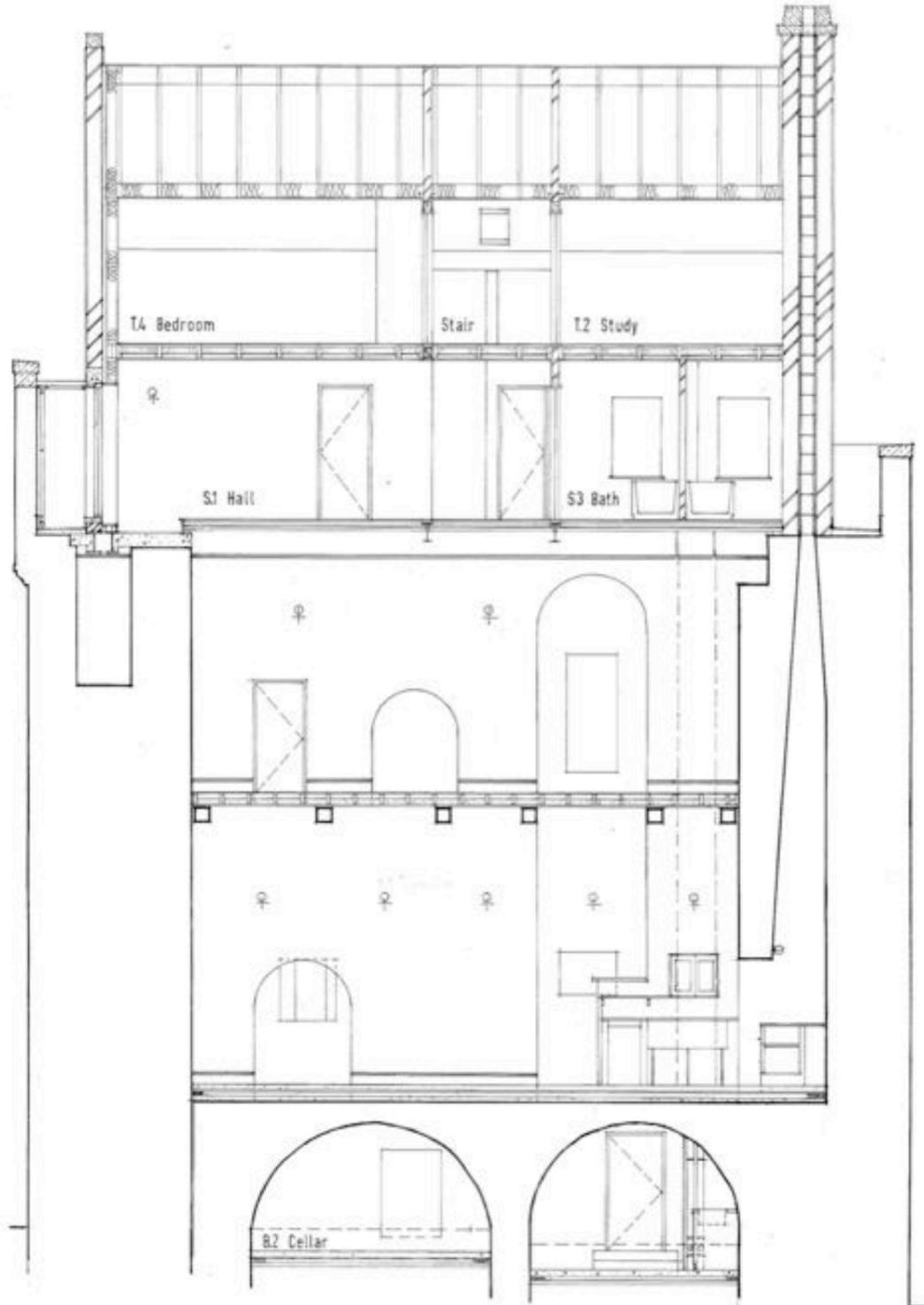


Figure 35 - Detail of existing windows on East elevation, c.2014 (JRA)

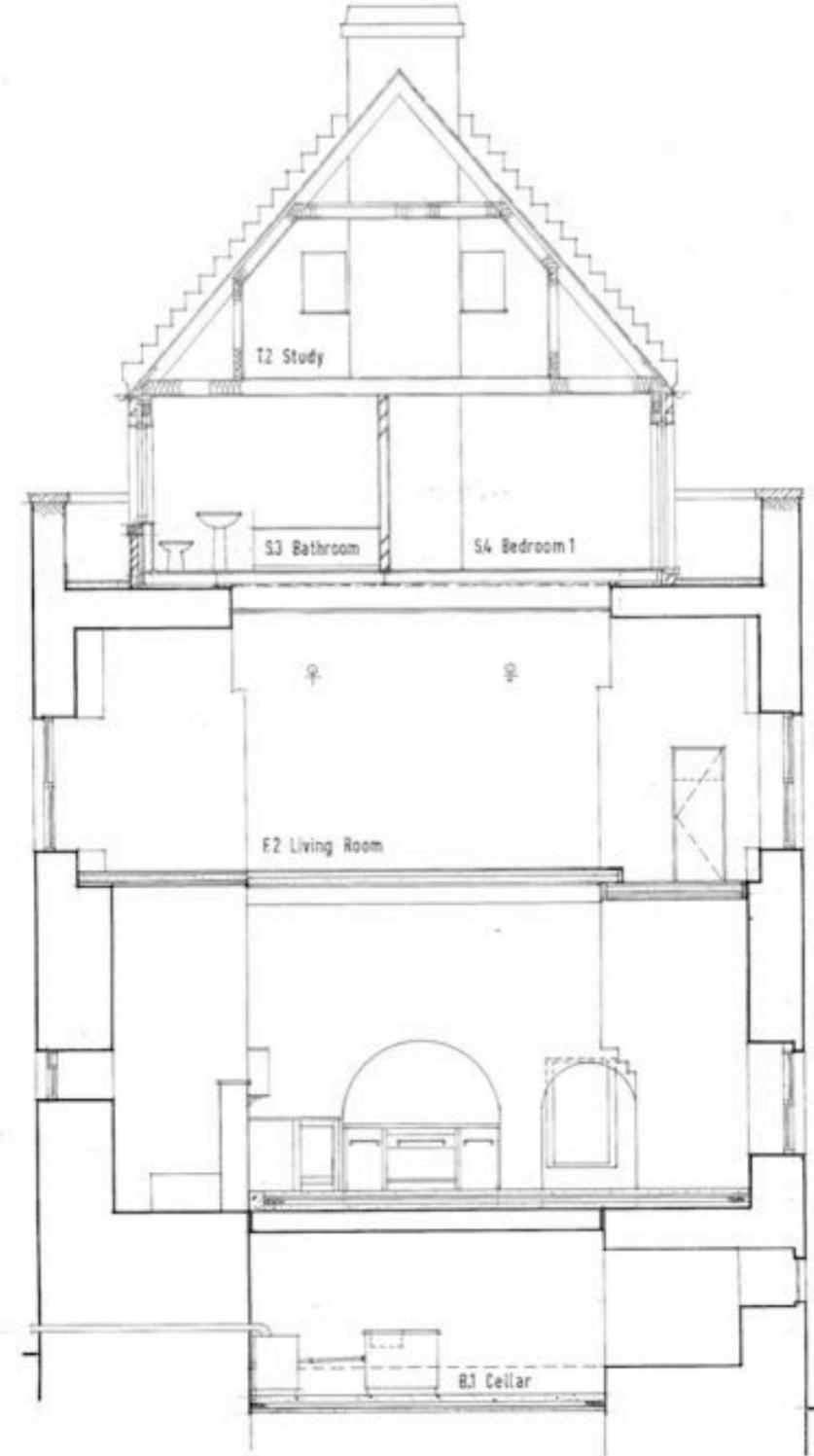


Figure 36 - Detail of existing windows on East elevation, c.2014 (JRA)

## 2.6 Chronology of Development of Kinlochaline Castle

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| 15 <sup>th</sup> C.                           | The castle was probably built during the 15 <sup>th</sup> century.   | 1906                                   | Valentine Smith died on 8 <sup>th</sup> August.  |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> or early 17 <sup>th</sup> C. | The castle was extensively remodeled including the construction of two vaulted cellars at ground level.  |  | Ardtornish estate inherited by Valentine's sister Gertrude Craig Sellar then aged 62.  |
| 1664  | In July the castle was captured by a detachment of men from the Royalist army led by Alasdair MacDonald newly arrived from Ireland. It was set on fire as they left.<br><br>It was subsequently sacked by Cromwell's forces.<br><br>The castle remained strategically important in the warfare between the MacLeans and Campbells during the last quarter of the 17 <sup>th</sup> century. | c.1920s<br><br>1930<br><br>1998 – 2000 | The gables of the roof was lowered to render it less obtrusive.<br><br>The Ardtornish estate, including the castle was bought by Owen and Emmeline Hugh Smith from the executors of Gerard Sellar's estate.<br><br>The castle was altered and restored to form a family home for the current owners, executive architects JRA (John Renshaw Architects). |
| c.1690s                                       | The castle was abandoned during the 1690s.   |  |  |
| 1730  | The castle was purchased by Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope with the adjoining farm as base for the operations of the company to which he had sub-let mining rights in Morvern.   |  |  |
| Mid 19 <sup>th</sup> C                        | The castle was in a state of extreme dilapidation.   |  |  |
| 1855  | The ruined castle was painted by <a href="#">Horatio McCulloch</a> .   |  |  |
| 1860  | Ardtornish Estate acquired by Octavius Smith from Sellar's trustees for £39,500.   |  |  |
| 1865-75                                       | The castle was photographed by Gertrude Smith, daughter of Octavius Smith.   |  |  |
| 1871  | The Ardtornish estate, including Kinlochaline castle was inherited by Valentine Smith.   |  |  |
| 1885  | The ruined castle was occupied for a brief time by Mairi Dhon'aill Bhain, (Mary Cameron).  |  |  |
| 1889  | The castle was surveyed by architects MacGibbon & Ross.  |  |  |
| c. 1890                                       | The castle was restored; the works including extensive rebuilding of masonry, the construction of new floors and the rebuilding of a roof structure, with pitch of 50° and finished with metal corrugated cladding. (E. Tweedie, Clerk of Works Ardtornish Estate, 1913).  |  |  |

### 3. Assessment and Statement of Cultural Significance

#### 3.1 General Analysis of the Character and Significance of the Castle

The site survey and research information available in the RCAHMS library, and the archives of the Ardtornish Estate and John Renshaw Architects (JRA), is presented in the preceding sections of this report. It is not a definitive assessment and is intended to inform the assessment of and design development of the proposed alterations to the fenestration.

Archaeological / Architectural: Some

Investigations undertaken prior to the 1998 renovations and restoration of the Castle uncovered few features of archaeological significance. Many of the surviving features of the castle date from the 1890's restoration which are not authentic to original medieval design: such as the entrance door, the box-macchicolation and the three square musketry-loops in the south parapet wall, and the window and door openings. The late 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations and renovations add a further layer of structure and architectural detail, which is very clearly modern: such as the cap house and the sash and case windows.

The masonry structure forming the two window openings on the east and west elevations date from the 1890's restoration and is neither authentic to the original medieval structure nor a significant examples of late Victorian castle restoration.

Scenic / Artistic: High

The scenic value of the castle, which is visible from the village of Lochaline and from the main road is of high significance. It is a very significant visual and historic element within outstanding natural and designed landscape of Ardtornish formed by Loch Aline, its enclosing hills and the dramatic knoll on which the castle stands.

Historical: High

Tradition suggests that the Castle was built for the clan MacInnes and the clan were chiefs of Kinlochaline and the Keepers of Kinlochaline Castle. The Castle and Morvern are held in esteem by the members of the Clan.

Social: High

The building is significant as a dwelling, which has been used as a family home since 1999.

Nature Conservation:

Not considered relevant to the current proposals.

#### Assessment of Significance

The structure has been subjected to considerable change since its construction in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Substantially remodeled c. 1600 and then damaged by fire and canon in the sackings of Colkitto, Cromwell and the Duke of Argyll in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was abandoned in the 1690's and the structure was left to decay and suffered partial structural collapse until it was 'imaginatively' restored in the 1890's. It was then left again as a picturesque ruin, cherished by children to play in until the 1990's when it was altered and renovated as a family home.

#### 4. Planning Policy

The building is Category B included in the list compiled by Scottish Ministers under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. This is intended to ensure the preservation of a building or its setting, or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it may possess. This includes controlling any alterations, extension, repair or demolition of such interest. A Category B listed building is defined as being a building of regional or more than local importance.

The structure has been significantly altered since it was listed on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1971 and is now a private dwelling and no longer a ruined castle.

Highland Council planning policies relevant to the proposed development include: -

##### Policy 57 Natural, Built and Cultural Heritage

Development proposals will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that the development will not compromise the natural environment, amenity and heritage resource. Where there may be any significant adverse effects these must be clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance. It must also be shown that the development will support communities in fragile areas who are having difficulties in keeping their population and services.

Future developments should take account of the historic environment and should be of a design quality to enhance the historic environment bringing both economic and social benefits.

Further guidance considered included the policy relating to alterations to historic buildings in the Highland Council Historic Environment Strategy and the Scottish Planning Policy, Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) and associated guidance.

These are all intended to protect historic buildings from harmful development including extension and alteration, which may affect their special and historic interest.

## 5. Design Proposals

### 5.1 Design Brief

The client's requirements are to improve natural daylight within the existing kitchen and dining room on the first floor level.

### 5.2 Description and justification of detailed design proposals

Five small windows set within deep window embrasures currently light the existing kitchen and dining room. These include:-

- a small fixed leaded light 150 x 605mm on the south elevation;
- a double glazed sash and case window 470 x 930mm and a timber casement window 460 x 620mm on the west elevation;
- a double glazed sash and case window 700 x 1670mm on the north elevation; and
- a double glazed sash and case window 460 x 1375mm on the east elevation.

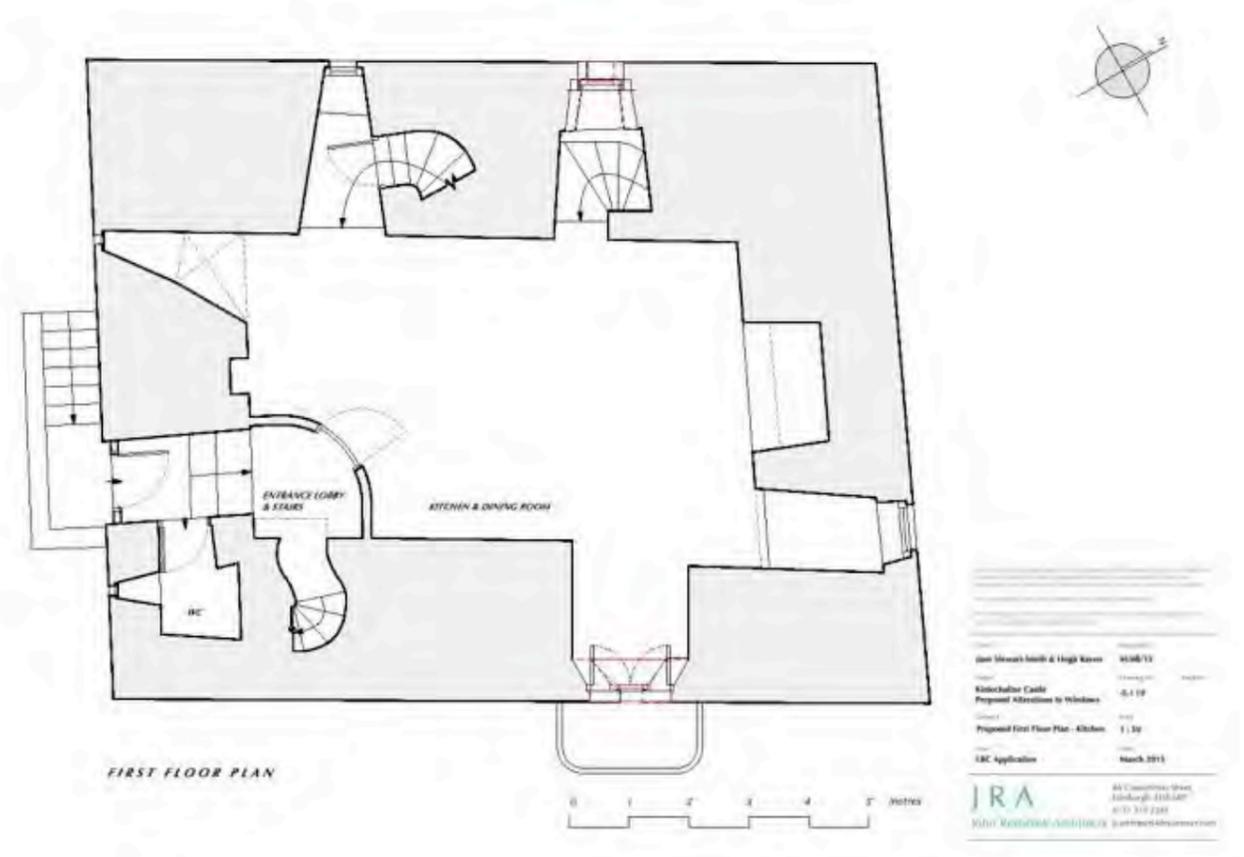
These provide a combined daylight opening area of 1.59 square metres. Ignoring the reduction in natural lighting levels caused by the depth of the walls, which vary between 2 – 2.5 m this represents only 1/36 of the floor area of the room. This is clearly significantly less than the Building Regulations requirement for 1/15<sup>th</sup> of the floor area of an apartment.

To alter the existing windows openings to provide this amount of natural light would clearly be inappropriate to the character of the building. However since the structure has already been significantly altered with 'such imagination' and some of the window and door openings have been increased in size. We believe that a small and proportionate increase to the dimensions of the two windows which were completely re-built during the 1890's restoration will not be detrimental to the character or significance of the building. And although the daylight area of the windows will remain significantly below the Building Regulation standard the slight increase will make a significant physical and psychological improvement. A generational change that will at least slightly reduce dependence on electric lighting whilst not changing any structural window openings to a degree that does not match the scale and detail of the existing window openings.

### 5.3 Proposed materials for the alterations

The proposed external materials will match the existing hydraulic lime harl and traditional lime wash. The proposed lintols will be of pre-stressed concrete. The internal wall finished will also be reinstated to match the existing late 20<sup>th</sup> century finishes.

The proposed balcony will be made from traditional wrought iron.



## 6. Conclusion

The alterations are proposed to make a small but significant improvement to the natural lighting of the first floor room of the castle, which is used as a kitchen and dining room.

The size and proportion of the proposed windows are similar to the scale and detail of some of the other window openings dating from the restoration and renovation of the castle and will not damage or remove any of the original medieval masonry. The existing windows to be replaced are of no cultural value.

The proposals are not harmful to the special, historic and aesthetic significance of the castle.

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