

## SKELBO CASTLE

Standing above the southern shore of Loch Fleet, the ruins of Skelbo Castle demonstrate clearly, and probably better than any other castle in the Northern Highlands, the different stages of castle development between the twelfth and the seventeenth centuries. Yet, until recently, this major castle has remained comparatively unnoticed, and without detailed record. Sadly, it has taken the partial collapse of the most recent, and in some ways the most significant of its buildings to attract more widespread attention. This small display shows some of the results of a detailed survey of Skelbo carried out by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Scotland, in 1983.

The earliest surviving remains are those of a motte, an earthen mound with artificially scarped flanks, and traces of an outer ditch. This is probably surmounted by a timber keep or tower, which was later replaced by a stone hall-tower of oblong plan, and at least two stories in height. The position, proportions and character of this building bear a likeness to that at Duffus, in Moray, with which there was a family connection. The castle precincts were also enclosed within a stout curtain-wall which, although repaired, and partly in ruins, still makes an impressive northern screen on the slope below the tower. It has to be admitted, however, that the area enclosed by the wall is a low-lying hollow with few obvious physical advantages except concealment and shelter. Built against the south-western stretch of the curtain-wall is a large two-storied building now fast falling to ruin, which has provided domestic accommodation on the first floor, possibly divided into two separate living units, and on the ground floor there is vaulted cellerage, including bye and workshop. Of a type rarely encountered in the Highlands, this building represents an important transitional phase between mediaeval and modern house design.

The first reference to the lands of Skelbo occurs in an early thirteenth century grant made (probably between 1203 and 1214) by Hugh Freskin, to his kinsman Gilbert de Moray, afterwards Bishop of Caithness. Hugh was the third generation of this family, and it is likely that the motte was put up well before 1200, and sometime after his family's establishment at Duffus. The dates of the hall-tower, and curtain-wall are not known, although Hugh's descendants, created Earls of Sutherland by King Alexander II "Had probably acquired the means to build extensively in stone and lime by, or about, 1300. The house probably belongs to a period about 1600, and was declared to be "Still habitable" in 1769.

All material is Crown Copyright, Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. The survey was carried out by Messrs. J.D. Keggie, A. J. Keith, I.G. Parker and G.P. Stell, and the display was arranged by Mr N.J. Stevenson.

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Points from the long history of Skelbo, which link it with the history of Scotland, England and Europe, as well as with the story of the Highlands and Sutherland.

1. The name of Skelbo shows that it was an important farmstead of the early Viking age, built around 850.
2. In 1211 Hugo Freskyn gave Skelbo to his kinsman, Gilbert of Moray, later to become St. Gilbert. He made it over to his brother Richard in 1223; Richard was probably killed in the Battle of Embo in 1245, when a band of pirates landed at Little Ferry.
3. In 1290 the Scottish and English Commissioners were at Skelbo, to meet the young Queen of Scotland, the Maid of Norway, who was to marry the heir to the throne of England. It was at Skelbo that they heard of her death in Orkney. This link to the history of both Scotland and England would justify the preservation of Skelbo as a National Monument.
4. Skelbo played a part in the tragic story of Montrose and his last campaign. When he landed in Caithness in 1650, his enemy the Earl of Sutherland installed garrisons in Dunrobin, Skelbo, Skibo and Dornoch. Montrose was defeated at Carbisdale soon after this, by the men of these garrisons.
5. The Sutherlands of Duffus acquired Skelbo in 1529; they gave it another claim as a National Monument. Alexander Duffus played a part in the rising of General Middleton and the Earl of Glencairn, on behalf of Charles II against Cromwell. In 1654, Middleton landed at Little Ferry, close to Skelbo, and stored a large amount of arms and ammunition in Skelbo Castle. The rising was planned in and around Dornoch, but failed in a defeat at Dalnaspidal. After the Restoration, Charles II made Alexander the First Lord Duffus, and Middleton became a Commissioner.
6. In the Jacobite Rising of 1715, the Third Lord Duffus supported the Old Pretender and as a result forfeited his lands. He left the country for Russia, where he became a Commander of the Tsar's forces in Moscow.
7. In 1746, shortly before Culloden, Skelbo was occupied by a Jacobite force under the Earl of Cromartie, who captured four Hanoverian ships full of arms, lying at Little Ferry, after the Earl of Sutherland had been put to flight. The Earl of Cromartie made Skelbo his headquarters while preparing for Culloden, but later moved to Dunrobin. His force set off for the battle, but was

intercepted by Sutherland militia, and prevented from reaching Culloden. This absence of Cromartie's men was thought to be decisive in the outcome of the battle.

8. Soon after Culloden, Lady Elizabeth Duffus had the care of the motherless daughter of the 16th Earl of Sutherland. She wrote a charming letter in 1747, giving him news of the child's progress, and affording us a glimpse of the domestic life inside the 16th/17th century house within the Castle walls.

9. By 1769 the mediaeval house was largely in ruins, but the house stood until recent times. Skelbo passed into the family of the Earls of Sutherland in 1787; the title of the Barony of Skelbo may still be held by the Countess of Sutherland.

## SKELBO CASTLE.

by Daniel Sutherland - Con Historian to the Plan Sutherland. (b. Netherlands).

A Northern Times Report of 1985 (April), drew attention to the possible demolition of Skelbo Castle, and also possibly Ardurick Castle and Gidderhouse, Assynt. We have already lost Helmsdale Castle to the motorway - now the site of a new bridge, and Golspie Tower, replaced by a farm, then pulled down and replaced by a bungalow.

Link between Duffus and Skelbo - both belonged to the Sutherlands of Skelbo. There is a similarity between the two, motte and bailey castles - ie hill with a wall (bailey)

Plan Sutherland began with Freskin, a 12<sup>th</sup> century Fleming - the name turns up in records of the son and grandson and father. Came in the time when William the Conqueror pushed across from Normandy and eventually reached the North of Scotland. The Sinclairs of Cathness stem from French origin in the same manner. Freskin lived when the Vikings had disappeared. Law and order became a problem when the Vikings left - leaving a power vacuum. The King of Scotland who was well established in the south, sent vessels north to fill the power vacuum and Freskin's great-grand son was given the Earldom of Sutherland.

12<sup>th</sup> century or beginning of 13 century, the Earldom began with William's heir in 1285 or Earl of Sutherland, at that time more a Moray than a Sutherland, when surnames were hardly ever used, everyone was known by their forenames. Earl of Sutherland become ..... of clan. Link between Moray and Dornoch. Cathedral in Elgin and Kirkwall, and almost the same time Dornoch Cathedral by Gilbert, a relative of Earl of Sutherland.

Sir Robert Gordon ..... Gilbert - later Saint Gilbert was first man in record to be laird of Skelbo. No great warfare. Earl of Sutherland at Dunrobin and Murray<sup>(?)</sup> at Skelbo. Several bishops of Dornoch with Murray connections. Native Pictish element subdued with Skelbo a good stronghold. Dunrobin. Poony Castle built about same time as Skelbo - Beginning (1235) of Earldom.

Skelbo - Murrays held it, then Kincaid family for a long time until sold it in 1529 when Freskin's descendants became laird of Skelbo. William Sutherland of Duffus (also brother of 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Sutherland. His offspring lived till 1767 in direct line when sold by Captain James Sutherland of Duffus (who had eleven illegitimate, and no legitimate children). Capt James died unmarried, and his many descendants held Bontongill or Castle of May and he was a very popular man with the ladies.

Skelbo, - one of most important events was ..... in intermediate history - King Edward I - 1290 - when Murrays still there. Edward I hoped by his marriage with Norway to bring peace to Scotland and to get the Norse element to fit in with the Scots - the Maid of Norway

2

soiled from Norway, the King sent his noblemen to Duffus Castle, whence they then crossed to Little Ferry by Skelbo Castle - when got .. had to meet Murray in ..... week they learned of Skelbo she had died - they went south, it took about a week, and reported to Edward I - nothing came of the alliance.

Skelbo Castle is not important in history, but was a real landmark. A lot of good things, and a lot of bad things - bloodshed - occurred.

1650, Monroes - travellers - sailed north to Caithness, shipped Dunbeath and plundered it, stopped near Skelbo, where the locals garrisoned the castle. Plundering and stealing. Munro's defeat at Carbisdale in 1650 - fled to Ardreck, captured by hand of Macleod - some say Macleod betrayed and some otherwise - taken to Edinburgh and executed. In 1650 also, something happened to the family of Duffus. King Charles II made land of Duffus peer - First Lord Duffus 1656 - last Lord Duffus the IV<sup>th</sup> at that title. Skelbo forfeited in 1715. Laird of Skelbo in 1715. Kenneth Sutherland of Duffus entered House of lords early 18<sup>th</sup> century - pretence in red kill - fled for his life because he was Steward here - contrary to Earl of Sutherland he was on the wrong side. After 1715, the Jacobites were defeated - lot of landed Scots lost their estates, and a lot of tenants were swept off the estates because they had followed their lord and Master - and so, there are many Sutherlands in the Netherlands, political refugees from one, or other, of the Jacobite risings. The Netherlands are full of Scots today due to this.

Kenneth, Lord of Duffus was born in Turickenham, London, left Duffus in 1715 for Caithness and married the daughter of the Governor of Gothenburg in Sweden. With, or without his wife and/or family he later fled to Russia and ended up Admiral of the Fleet of the Russians. He died 1774. His son Eric (Sealog?). Eric didn't take sides in the 1745/6 Rebellion, but played it safe. Side of King William - left a very dark shadow in parts of British Isles - His advisers made the wrong decision in 1745/6 Eric - Bonnie Prince Charlie landed in August 1745, marched down to Derby and back with his troops. 1746, April, Culloden defeated. At Dornoch the Jacobites were pretty well in control - had taken Skelbo, Kintredwell House, both. - damage done by Jacobites in 1746 in ~~Sutherland~~ Sutherland, and the Clearances - awful period - reorganisation of Sutherland's Estate damaged a great many people. Earl of Sutherland - castle sacked - went south in a fishing-boat - wife stayed in Tunnobin - Cromarty governed in Skelbo - eventually the Stewarts, after Culloden Jacobites withdrew and Skelbo Estate suffered a lot. Battle of Little Ferry.

Eric Sutherland of Duffus ..... eldest son Captain James 1787. Capt. James Sutherland was facing bankruptcy on account of Jacobite losses in Skelbo Estate. Alex McAslin (!!) the laird and ..... as Skelbo went back to Duchess Countess wife of .....

From 1808 to the 1940s Skelbo Castle part of Sutherland Estate - today owned by Skello Trust - Mr Michael Alexander, chairman of the Trust.

In a nutshell - areas of interest of line of Sutherlands - all <sup>detailed</sup> ~~later~~ by Crown Council accepted his(?) ideas re Skello Castle. 700 members living - Clan Sutherland Society - very historic medieval castle + 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century house

[He] wrote large number of ..... A.H.T. Scott : David Hale Society (?). Thanks to D.H. Society it has been politically possible to get this writing going. Skello comes - The Trust is not at all anxious to be told what to do with the land and buildings etc. Highland Regional Council, H.I.D.B. not ..... Lord Lieut. could not become a Nature Conservancy Council - had been already a Nature Reserve. Scottish Wild life Trust and ..... birds due to them. It came up from Edinburgh & ~~Scottish Development Dept~~ Royal Commission & Scottish Development Dept. dealing with ancient monuments and buildings - Scottish Tourist Board heavily involved - great interest in Skello and what was Sc Arch. & Historic Soc (Mrs Reid - Bonar Bridge) Mr Michael Alexander chairman

3 possibilities for the future of Skello - different implications and costs - most important to build partnership between all interests to set up a Trust for Skello - could draw from other trusts and have tax deduction - Charitable ..... Bods, Building Trust etc to do one of 3 possibilities:-

A/ - low cost - Preservation - keeping walls from falling down.

B/. Interpretation of Historic Interest - wild life and scenery - Educational possibilities for both locals and visitors.

C/. Put Roof back onto the ruined building - Kenneth barn in Turickentham - Highland houses in fullness - Hound etc ..... & Duffus crest - Hound and someone on horse back in real life a Sea Captain - 6 bullet holes in his body from French privateers National Portrait Gallery - came from Caithness in 1920's

Keep on top of motte. He, or son, held sashins - testament of conveying .... accompanied by clot of earth, a rock or flower - or 2 speckled oars (??)

1916-17 entire house roof on - but 1920's hippies camped there and removed flooring and roofing timbers by 1966 only a hole in roof

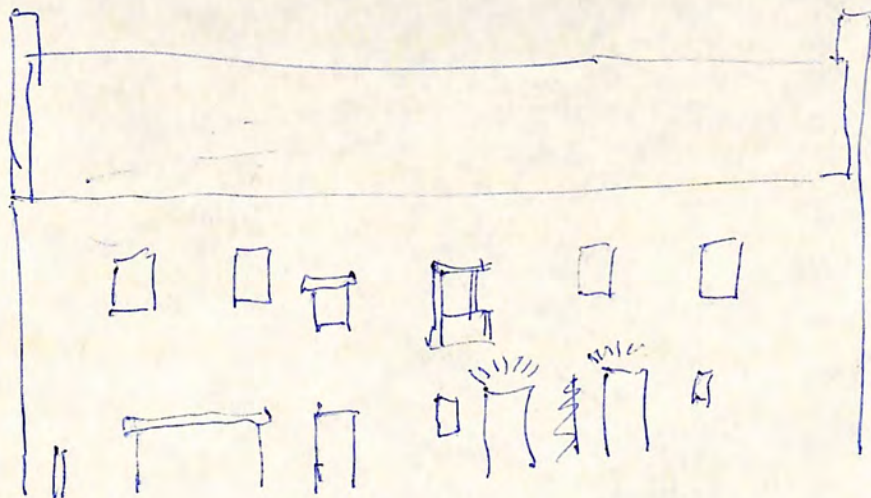
Bailey wall to rear of keep - outer wall at one time inner wall - outer walling stepped down back. Bentincks Beam 1920-22

House - part of Bailey wall - basement and ground floor - on hill. 1747 Lady of Duffus orphaned child - - - - ??

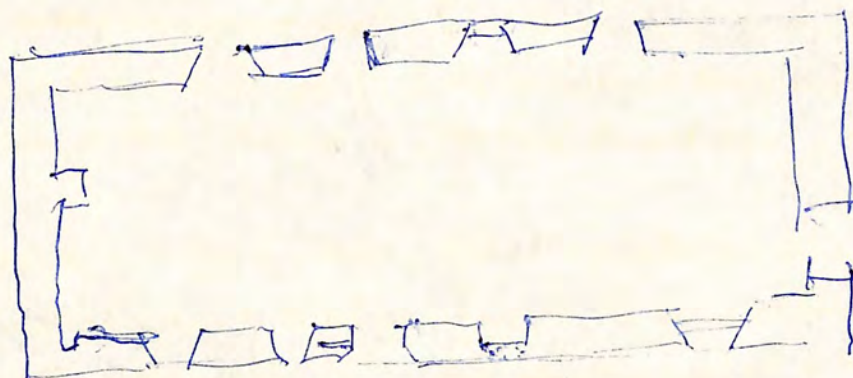
Hollow place or bowl - Skel - strath, the hollow place. Vikings and long boats in Fleet - well fortified strongholds. House more interesting historically - than medieval walls. Mill of Skello - local pair mulchers or millers fur to the mill

Duffus Castle shallow Loch ~~Spyrie~~ Spyrie (?). another motte and Bailey. Sea arm used to come right up to the castle.

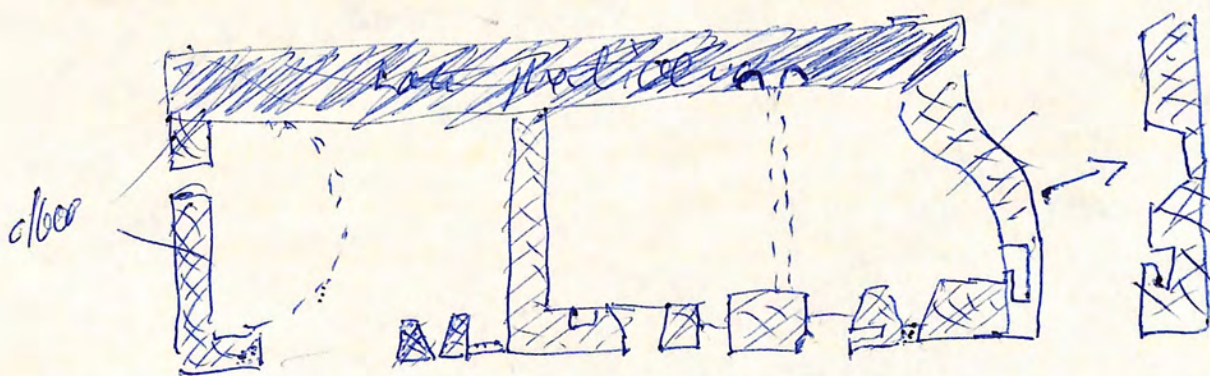




East Ellipse



First Floor Plan



Ground Plan.  
Sketch of 1600 Plan.

late medieval 1600 1700 19th C.



Deed William Mackay  
Dornoch 6

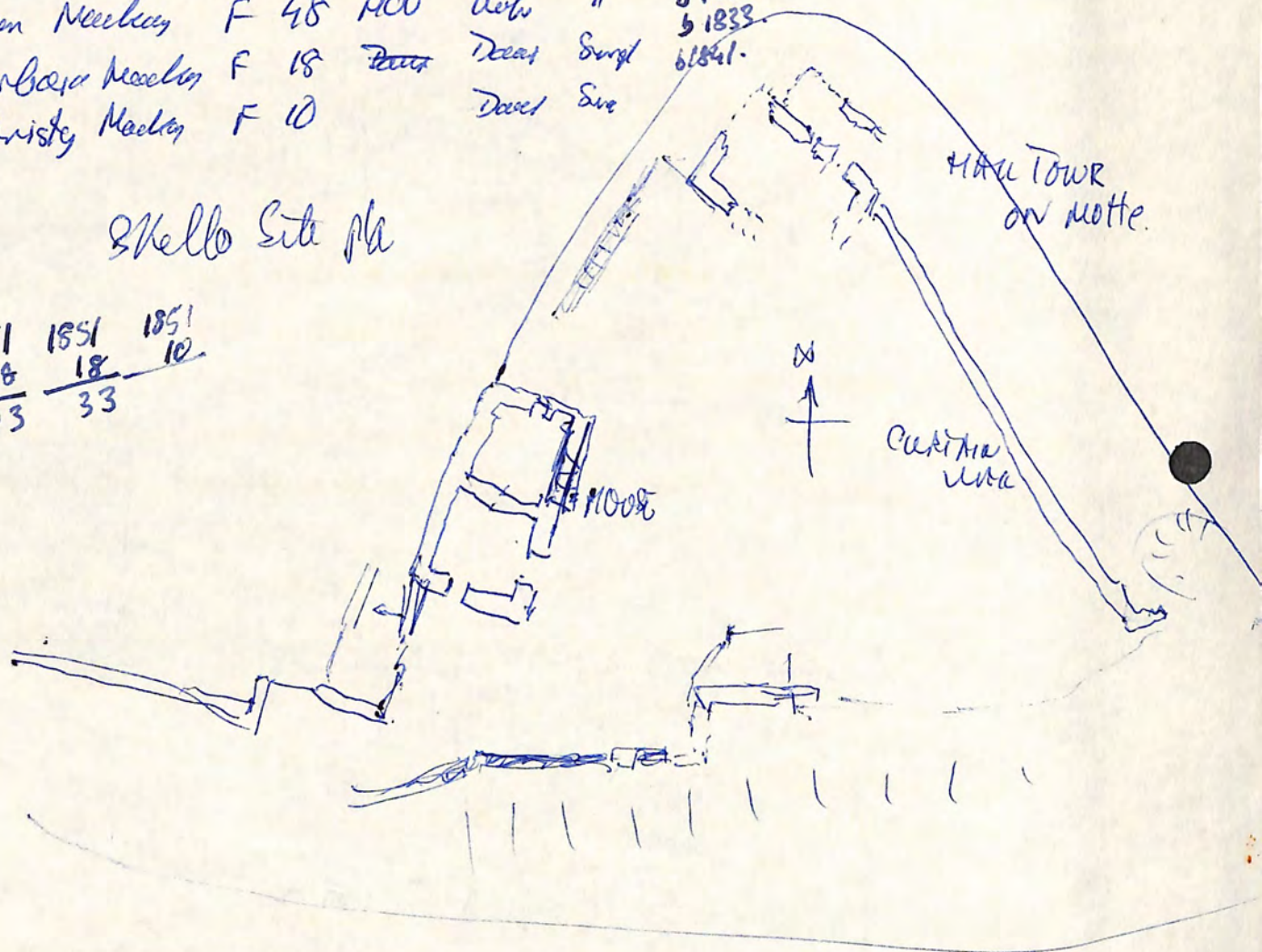
1851

THA Schen  
GAD

William Mackay	M	55	SKO	Head	Master	b1796.
John Mackay	F	48	MOO	Wife	"	b1803.
Barbara Mackay	F	18	<del>Deed</del>	Deed	Servant	b1833.
Christy Mackay	F	10		Deed	Servant	b1841.

Shello Site Plan

1851	1851	1851	1851
55	48	18	10
<hr/> 1796	<hr/> 1803	<hr/> 33	



3.

b. 1796 (55 yrs in 1851 Census)



# Skelbo Accounts

1756 ~ 1787



SKELBO      ACCOUNTS

1756 --- 1787

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The fortunes of the estate of Skelbo fell on evil times in the 18th century following upon the forfeiture of the estate when Kenneth Lord Duffus supported the Old Pretender. Lands were mortgaged and the Duffus family were deep in debt.

The Court of Session appointed James Maclean as factor for Skelbo for a period of thirteen years 1743 - 55 inclusive. Dugald Gilchrist of Ospisdale followed Maclean . In 1756 the money rent income was £1315-12-0 . Rents came from the Brae of Dalnamain , Wester Aberscross , Invershin , Achinduich and its pendicle Achimore. In connexion with the last three properties there was a wintering income. Pittentrail was let to Donald Sutherland and Invershin to Donald Ross.

The victual rent of a little more than 200 bolls at £7 per boll brought in £1404-16-3 . Expenses included stipends and schoolmasters' salaries for Dornoch , Creech , Rogart , and Golspie . There were also payments to the woodkeeper at Achinduich , dues for herrying hawks at Kinnauld , and passage dues at Ferryoons . In 1758 repairing the mill of Skelbo cost £96-17-2 . Another account was £12 for raising bulwarks against water at Dalnamain and there was inclosure expense of £54 at Auclea Padrick .

In 1760 John Sutherland's account of £126 was for building the office and garden dykes of the manse of Dornoch. The factor's salary was £120. In addition to the usual payments for stipends and teachers' salaries in 1761 there was a bill for manse repairs for Creech where Hugh Rose was minister.

A proportion of old Lady Duffus's jointure was paid in 1763 to Lieutenants John and Walter Gray . Alexander Mackenzie , W.S. in 1765 rendered an account for procedure against Rearquhar for surplus rents of Kinnauld and in 1768 Mackenzie was paid for defending the process concerned with the marches of Grubie.

The main item in 1769 was repairing the house of Skelbo. William Sutherland of Aberscross for his repair work got £131-4-11 sterling and Hugh Falconer for timber was paid £32-11-0 sterling. Another repair account was £5-3-0 as freight charge from Lovat to Skelbo. The total for the Skelbo house repair work was £2027 -7-0.

The year 1771 brought expenditure for repairs to the Kirk of Dornoch, the schoolhouse of Dornoch and the house of Skelbo. By 1774 there were schoolmasters' salaries to be paid for Evelick , Blarick , and Easter Aberscross/

2

Aberscross in addition to those for Dornoch , Rogart and Golspie.

The accounts for the following year 1775 noted that the vaguest lands of Meikle Torboll had been redeemed and sequestrated and brought in money and victual rents worth £434-9-4 . Tenants had also to pay fox dues and there was the repair of the cathedral of Dornoch repaid by the Exchequer £300-7-11 . Rebuilding the manses of Dornoch and Rogart were the main items of expense 1775.

For 1778 income included the rent of thirty six seats in the church of Rogart charged on the tenants and expenses were incurred in repairing the kirk and schoolhouse of Golspie. Improvements were made in 1780 at Knock Arthur and Altivuilt . Two years later 1782 the estate had to distribute 738 bolls seed victual because of the " uncommon failure " of that year's crop but this was recovered later from the tenants.

The rebuilding of the mansion house of Blairich in 1784 was paid by the tenant as additional rent. In 1785 the mill of Meikle Torboll had to be repaired . Arrears " considered as desperate " were listed in 1786: those named were - Charles Sutherland , William Innes and Donald Camp , all in Wester Aberscross ; Donald Ross , Invershin ; Christian McKay , Milntown ; John Grant , Easter Aberscross ; Robert Mackay , John Sutherland and James Sutherland of Pronsy , all in Knock Arthur; Alexander McKay , Moriness.

By Whit 1787 William Keith , accountant at Edinburgh , had made up the accounts and the scheme of division of the estate of Skelbo among the creditors of the deceased James and Kenneth , Lords Duffus . Keith was one of the family of Keith of Ravelston in the parish of Corstorphine now the western suburb of Edinburgh.

In the final settlement the Countess of Sutherland paid Alexander Mackenzie , the lawyer who purchased Skelbo for her , the sum of £21,400. The accounts of Skelbo estate 1743 - 1787 are one of the byways of Highland history.

But Skelbo Castle is a great landmark on the highway of Scottish history from its association with the Commissioners awaiting the arrival of the Maid of Norway to its occupation by the Earl of Cromarty and his Jacobite force.

To-day it is a sad ruin faced with the threat of demolition. Yet the spirit of the thin red line is stirring in the North and the Friends of Skelbo are petitioning the Secretary of State for Scotland for an agreement for Guardianship to ensure survival for Skelbo. May success smile upon the efforts of the Friends of Skelbo.

W.S. Cowper     Edinburgh     1937

The writer thanks the Keeper of the Records of Scotland , Register House , Edinburgh , for access to the Skelbo accounts.

has address for  
old A. Monuments



**HISTORIC BUILDINGS  
AND MONUMENTS**  
SCOTTISH DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Our Ref: AMJ/130/2/1

Hon Secretary  
Architectural Heritage Society  
of Scotland  
Highland Group  
The Old Manse  
Erroglie  
INVERNESS-SHIRE

20 Brandon St  
Edinburgh -  
EH3 5DX

18 April 1985

Dear Madam

**SKELBO CASTLE**

Thank you for writing last month to the Chief Inspector to intimate that you have learned that there is a possibility of works of demolition being carried out at Skelbo Castle. I presumed that you have advised the local planning authority. It would be helpful, especially to my colleagues in the Historic Buildings Division of the Directorate, to learn what details you have of the proposals.

Skelbo Castle is listed in the context of the house as a building of special architectural and historic interest. We agree the high importance of the Castle, but since it is already afforded one form of statutory protection we do not believe that adding another form of protection by scheduling it as an ancient monument of national importance would be helpful at this juncture. With the present constraints of finance and staffing that lie upon us, I am afraid that we should not be able to see our way to taking the building into direct care even if we had an offer of the building from the owner.

The best answer here would be the repair of the whole complex, the ruined parts being consolidated in their present state, the house either consolidated as it stands or possibly reinstated as a dwelling (though it must be said that it would not make a particularly convenient dwelling). Such a project, taking in also the sizeable costs of preliminary archaeological investigations needed and the professional fees for the architect who would have to be in charge of the works, would involve a very large financial commitment from most or all of which the owner would get no beneficial return; and by which most owners would be deterred even if there were a prospect of limited grant aid.

We do not know whether you have been in contact with the owner, and if so whether views have been exchanged on any possibility of even limited works. We should be interested to learn of any exchanges which might point to a way forward.

Yours faithfully

*R. M. Russell*

R M Russell



# SKELBO CASTLE DORNOCH SUTHERLAND

A meeting was convened by D.J.J. Sutherland, Clan Sutherland Society historian, on Wednesday, 2nd April 1986, jointly with the Skelbo Trust and Dornoch Heritage Society, to which representatives of many organisations concerned with the conservation of historic buildings and the countryside were invited in order to contribute their professional views about the future care of the Skelbo ruins.

The programme also included a tour of the Castle and Hall House, and a reception, by courtesy of Mr Michael Alexander, at Skelbo House, with the opportunity to see the Exhibit created by the Royal Commission on the Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings of Scotland, illustrating the physical condition of the Castle and Hall House when surveyed by them. A paper had been prepared, and circulated, by Mr Daniel Sutherland to which he spoke, reviewing the history of the buildings and their present condition, which has recently deteriorated. He outlined the various options available for the care of the structures so that they may be preserved for future generations. In the first instance urgent maintenance is needed; ultimately some form of reconstruction would be ideal.

The meeting was opened for discussion by Mr Alexander, who invited comment and advice. He hoped to be able to undertake short term measures repair the castle wall, but the house is in a poor state. It could be rebuilt to match its original appearance, either by an individual owner or by some public body, who could make it an educational centre, but the Estate would not wish to forego the privacy and peace of Skelbo House and Loch Fleet such as is enjoyed by many at the moment.

D.S. The Clan Sutherland feel an involvement insofar as the history of Skelbo is a part of the Clan history, and they will be glad to support any rescue operations, and raise public awareness. They have extensive obligations within the Clan Society and cannot undertake any further financial commitment.

J.B. The other local societies are all in the same position, but have a desire to see the buildings preserved.

*See also John Duncan*  
J.D. They are Listed Buildings, which implies that the owner is obliged to maintain them in no worse condition than they are when listed. If this is not done, the Planning Authority may step in and repair or maintain, and charge the owner accordingly. The purpose of listing buildings is to draw together as wide a range of interests as possible. The time may come when safety considerations can take over from Listed Buildings considerations. The Highland Regional Council have it in their power to direct demolition, in which case the landowner would be responsible for the cost.

S.D.D. If the landowner finds it impossible to maintain buildings, then a sale must be considered an alternative. It is improbable that any public fund-donating body would offer 100% (or anywhere near this) grant. Since the house if restored, could be used as a dwelling, there is every likelihood that a purchaser might be found who would restore it to an acceptably authentic appearance, but suitable for use as a residence. A stone by stone reconstruction would not be necessary - in fact modern materials could be used for strengthening internally, provided that the general appearance was in character.

I.B. Such a sale is best handled by the owner, since if publicly funded, a great many funding bodies might require to impose conditions, for instance, provision for public access. The owner can exercise the greatest power over what is done, and he should obtain advice as to how to achieve the desired results.

The opinion was expressed by several of those present that such renovation need not cost an exorbitant amount.

M.A. If the house was restored privately, it might restrict access to it which would preclude it as a Tourist attraction.

Mrs J.D. instanced the sale of a building of historic interest but in a delapidated condition, through advertising in the Sunday Times, which had



generated over 300 replies. From these several serious buyers had emerged and the final result was most satisfactory - an historic building restored in a pleasing manner and enjoyed by the owner as a dwelling. He was quite prepared to show interested people over it by arrangement.

Several people expressed their view that this seemed a most practical solution.

D.S. put the view that a restored house could ultimately form the basis of a Tourist centre or even a Field Studies Centre, with a self guided historical trail, which could form part of a Dornoch Heritage Trail, to help keep tourists in the area. It was felt that the Tourist Board, senior representatives of which had attended the morning session, but who were unable to be present in the afternoon, might be in a position to help with such a scheme, but certainly would not with the major structural costs. A Field Centre would be of interest to the societies concerned with Wildlife Conservation but these have very limited funds too.

Concern was expressed about the destructive power of Tourists, not least from erosion caused by peoples feet even on a prepared footpath.

S.R. suggested that, on the whole, holidaymakers have limited interest in historic sites. A good, safe Car Park had recently been made below the Castle walls. An excellent display board explained the wildlife to be seen on Loch Fleet. A similar, vandalproof, high quality display board to describe the Castles historical associations would probably satisfy the majority of tourists, who rarely abandoned their cars to move far afield, even for a short climb. This would preserve the privacy of both Skelbo House and the Hallhouse if in private occupation.

D.S. An Advisory Committee might assist Mr Alexander to explore the range of possibilities, and likely costs, if he would find this helpful.

Volunteers for such a Committee were not immediately forthcoming. Local people felt they had not the knowledge or time to offer. The Statutory Bodies might, if advising on the reconstruction, be overly biased, but would be glad to advise on specific aspects as and when invited. The sale of the house to one, concerned, person would seem to be the best solution. This person, with the Trustees, would then have the benefit of all the expertise.

M.A. asked if it was envisaged that such a sale would be to a private individual or to a philanthropic institution.

A.Mck.J. said that there was every likelihood of a private purchaser for the house being available, who would both treat the reconstruction sympathetically and allow genuinely interested people access. Further more the meeting was told that the National Trust, the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings, and the Period Property Gazette maintain lists of properties which may be circulated to people who genuinely wish to be given the opportunity of restoring an historic structure to ensure that history remains alive.

J.E. Funding would be required if an Advisory Committee were to be set up, and charitable status should be applied for in order that the Committee might be eligible for grants from philanthropic trusts.

D.S. The Clan Sutherland have so far borne much of the cost of research and organisation of this meeting, but this could not continue indefinitely.

M.A. The Trustees will be asked to come to a decision on the future policy, and meanwhile be asked to finance the immediate repairs, by estate staff, to prevent further decay, in particular to exclude sheep which are undermining the walls. Two men could achieve much, hopefully during the coming summer.

I.B. An approach can be made to the Historic Buildings Society, who have just done a survey of the buildings, for help towards maintenance, also the Royal Commission, Ancient Monuments Division.

A.R. Emphasized that the house, historically, is of far greater interest than the castle. This is because it is a Hall House of which there are only a very few other examples from the period, these being in the Borders. It could well be adapted for present day use as a dwelling. The display boards prepared by the Royal Commission, seen by those present, and to be available

for public viewing in Dornoch for the rest of the week, could be a valuable aid to publicity for selling the site; the reconstruction sketches would be of great interest. Copyright on the material is held by the Commission who undoubtedly would give permission for it to be used.

M.A. summarizing the discussion said he would report the options to the Trustees

- a. sell to a purchaser who will do what is required and desirable to restore the building (the house,
- b. restoration by the Trustees, referring back to those bodies who have expressed so much concern, to explore the prospects for financial assistance.
- c. the compromise, which is to maintain the fabric, and preventing further erosion, allowing public access by a safe route (which may of itself lead to further damage.)

He enquired whether labouring help might be forthcoming.

J.B. It is doubtful whether any would be available in the area. M.S.C. schemes planned for Dornoch area are already committed for a two year period, and there is a shortage of workers who qualify for such teams. Mr Alexander was asked if he would inform the convener of the meeting of the Trustees decision. If necessary a further meeting could take place in September, and / or a Skelbo Buildings Trust could be formed. This could give no financial help itself, but could ensure that every avenue of help, both financial and professional, could be approached.

Meanwhile notes of this meeting would be circulated.

Apologies are offered for any inaccuracies in reporting, or if comments have been attributed to the wrong person! (S.R.)

Participants	Initials	Representing
M. Alexander	M.A.	Skelbo Estate
Countess of Sutherland		Clan Sutherland
D.J.J. Sutherland	D.S.	"
Mrs N.K. Sutherland		"
Miss A. Riches	A.R.	Scottish Development Department
John Duncan	J.D.	Highland Region. Architect Planning Dept
John Gerrard		Scottish Civic Trust
A. McKay Johnson	A.McK.J.	Balliol College
Elliot Rudie		Sutherland Historical & Archaeol Soc:
Miss S. Read	S.R.	"
James Bell	J.B.	Sutherland District Council
		Dornoch Heritage Society
Terry Keating		Nature Conservancy Council
Kenneth Taylor		Scottish Wildlife Trust
Mrs J. Durham	Mrs J.D.	Heritage Society for Scotland
Ian Begg Architect	I.B.	"
- . Oliphant a.m. only		Scottish Tourist Board
Simon Bradford		"
Lennox Savage		Architectural Heritage Soc for Scotland.

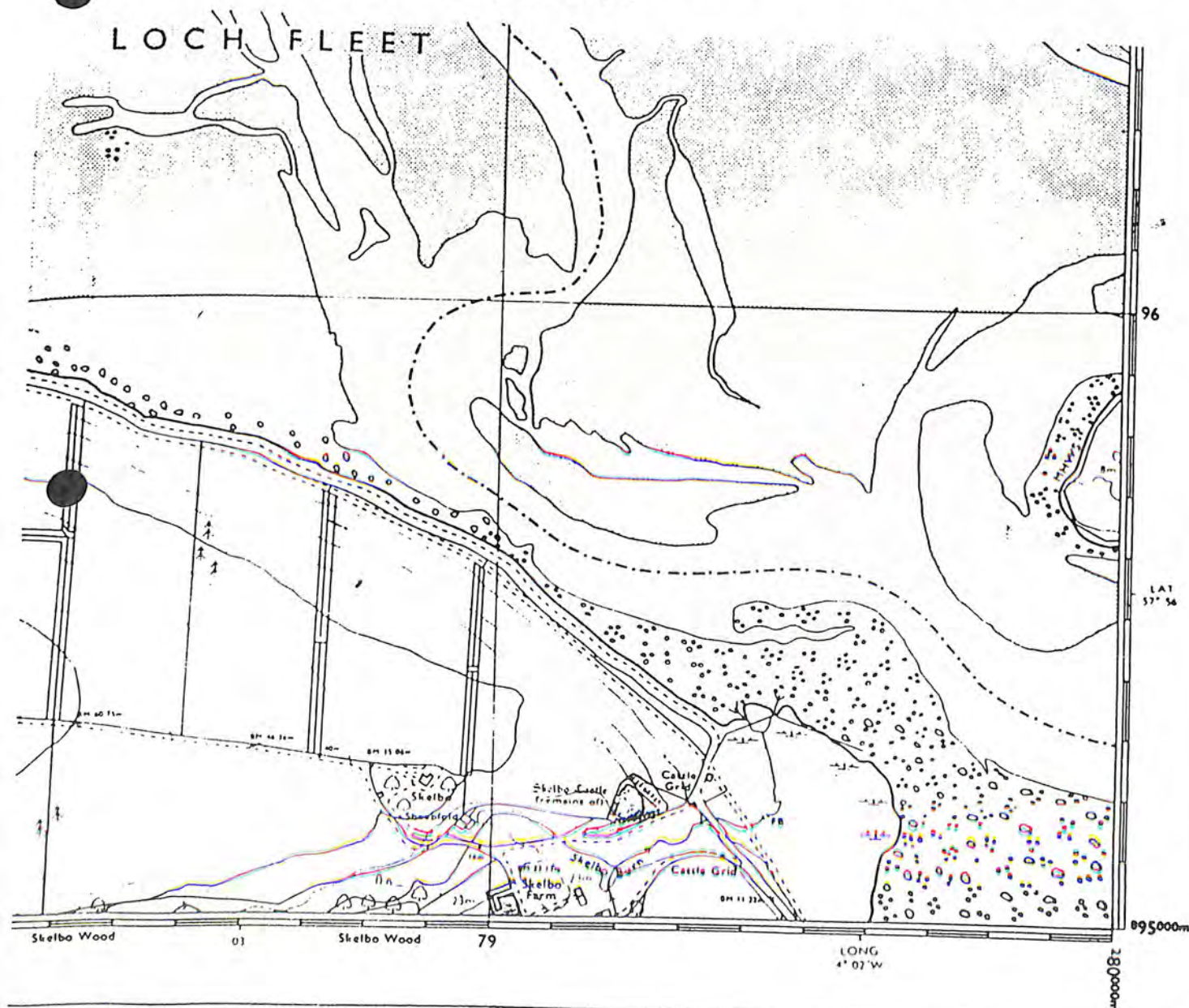


BUILDING SCOTLAND ACTS  
BUILDING AT SKELBO CASTLE, DORNOCH

OWNERS - Reps. of Sarah J. Alexander,  
per Grossman, Blook & Keith,  
Cross Lanes,  
London Road,  
Guildford,  
GU1 1T.

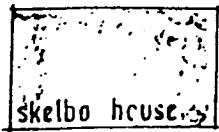
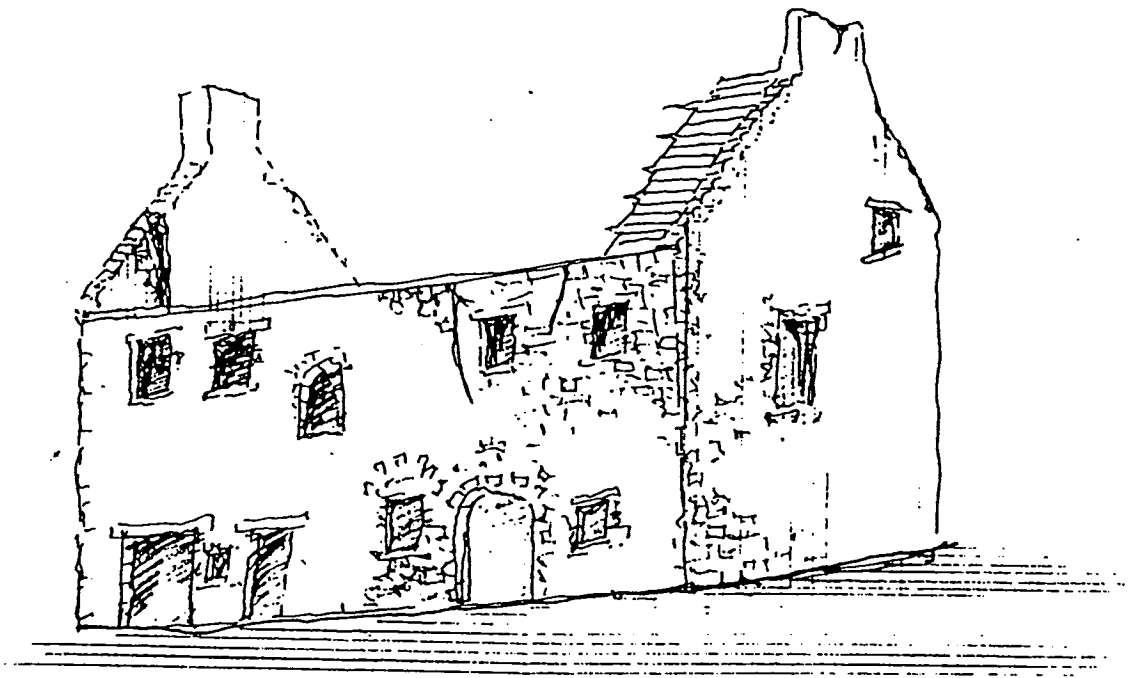
and Mr. Michael Alexander,  
48 Eaton Place,  
London S.W.1.

LOCATION - Situated about four miles North of Dornoch on the Dornoch/  
Cambusavie road. The castle sits about 300 yards from the  
road up a steepish slope.

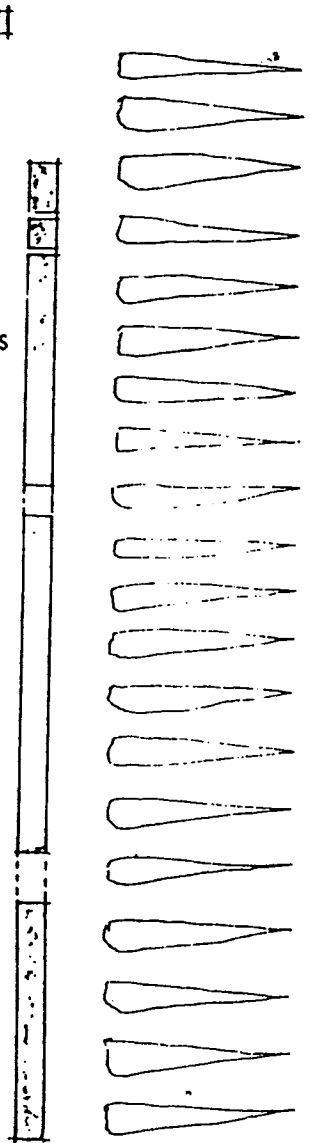


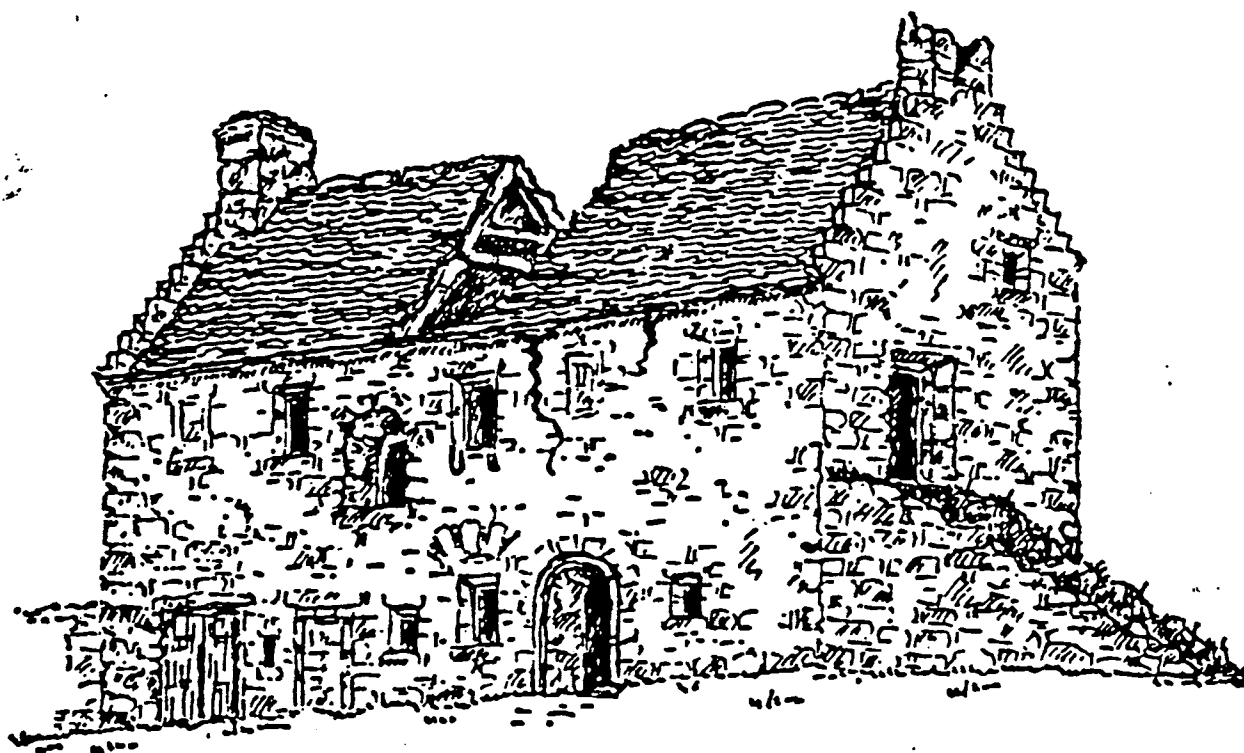


Skelbo Castle and House



skelbo castle walls





SKELBO CASTLE -

The gaunt and battered remains of the ancient and powerful stronghold of the Sutherlands, Lords of Duffus, stands on a defensive rocky site above the south shore of the tidal Looh Fleet, four miles north of Dornoch. There is however an early 17th century house still standing within the broken curtain-walling of the old castle, and although this is in a bad state of repair, the proprietor is at least considering restoration.

Dating from so much later than the rest of the castle - which may be of the 14th century - and on a lower level of the uneven site, this building would seem to have been a more or less new construction, erected against the old curtain-walling, rather than merely a wing added or altered. It is a lengthly oblong block of two storeys and a garret, lying approximately north and south, containing a range of vaulted cellars in the basement. The first floor now contains only the one large chamber, though it probably was subdivided originally, and the garret floor above has gone. There are signs that there may have been further building to the south. The masonry is of rough red sandstone rubble.

The building has obviously been greatly altered and adapted at various periods, most of the windows having been enlarged or built up, with new doorways opened. But certain original features remain. The arched doorway towards the north end still retains its slot for a massive door-bar. A relieving arch surmounts the window immediately to the south, and a small loophole window survives between the doors at the south end. The walling is topped by an eaves course, and the north-eastern skewputt is decorated by a carved mask. Internally, little of interest remains, but there has been a large arched fireplace in the north gable, presumably the kitchen.

The Sutherlands of Skelbo were a branch of the same family as the Earls of Sutherland, who likewise sprang from the famous Freskin de Moravia, founder of the Moray or Murray family. They seem to have gravitated north from Moray at an early date, no doubt marrying heiresses. The Skelbo line, however, in due course went back, or at least re-established contact with Moray, for they inherited the great lordship of Duffus in the 14th century. They seem to have continued to make Skelbo their main domicile, however - and a turbulent line they were. William Sutherland, Lord of Duffus, was killed by Clan Gunn, at Thurso in 1530, in a squabble over the Bishopric of Caithness, and his son and heir

contd.....

His son, Alexander, attacked and sacked the nearby town of Dornoch in 1567, and again in 1570. Oddly enough, we read that the next year, having put to death certain sureties who had surrendered to his ally the Earl of Caithness, he became overcome with remorse and pined away to his grave. The laird who succeeded in 1616 was rash enough to carry off the tiend-sheaves already paid to the young Earl of Sutherland, depositing them in his own barns at Skelbo, until forced by the Sheriff to disgorge. The part of the castle with which we are concerned seems to have been built by the son of this laird, created a peer by Charles the First.

#### Report on the State of the Buildings at Present -

##### Castle Walls -

The walls are constructed of approximately 1 metre thick solid masonry set in old mortar and in the main do not offer, at the moment, any great danger except in certain areas. The walls have been partially weakened in two or three areas due to the erosion of the footings by rabbits and sheep and this has caused holes varying from 2 metres to 3 metres long by up to 2 metres high with loose masonry above and to both sides. These holes will increase in due course and other sections of the walls which are also presently being undermined will eventually collapse, leaving the wall in a very dangerous state within a few years.

At the crest of the hill the curtain-wall had at one time passages built into it, so that the stonework instead of being a dense mass is honeycombed with openings and this area, due to the weaker construction, is very likely to collapse in the near future due to weathering and erosion.

Adjoining the above area is a freestanding mass of stonework which is unsupported and still remains standing, only due to its sheer weight, but again the weathering and erosion will eventually cause to collapse.

##### House -

The house is in a very bad state of repair throughout. The most dangerous area being the South gable which has a split the full height of the building, varying from 1 metre wide to nothing and this will cause at least one of the corners to collapse within a short time.

The roof has collapsed into the house leaving the stone barrel vaulted roof to two of the ground floor rooms exposed and this will cause the roof to collapse within a few years.

A number of stone lintols have weathered rather badly and it is doubtful if they are really still supporting the stonework above them.

##### General -

The house and walls are easily accessible to the general public and there is quite a danger from falling masonry at the present time and this will increase in the future.

The properties are listed buildings and whatever discussion is taken it will have to be in accordance with the Planning Authority's recommendations.



Possible Decisions -

The three options open for the making safe of these buildings are:-

1. Demolition of the walls and house to a height which will still allow the location of the walls to be seen by anybody interested.

This would involve a great deal of expensive remedial works to be carried out after the partial demolition, to ensure that the walls would not further collapse in a few years.

2. A protective fence to be erected around the site with no access permitted to the general public. This would be again an expensive solution and also a very obtrusive detract from the area.
3. Total demolition would be the cheapest and easiest way out of the problem, but would bring an outcry from the various bodies who want to preserve these historical buildings.

It would appear that very little funding could be found to preserve the buildings and a conflict of interest would arise if the buildings were to be totally demolished. I therefore feel that any decision reached by the Authority would take a while to be implemented and I would suggest that signs be erected initially to warn of the dangers to anybody entering the area.

BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

COMBINED STATUTORY AND DESCRIPTIVE LIST

SUTHERLAND DISTRICT

FIRST AMENDMENT

SCOTTISH DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND MONUMENTS DIRECTORATE  
HISTORIC BUILDINGS DIVISION  
25 DRUMSHEUGH GARDENS  
EDINBURGH

Hist. Building & Monument  
S.D.D.  
20 Brandon St  
Edinburgh

SCHEDULE

1. There shall be deleted from the said list:-
  - a. item number 10 - "Skelbo House by Skelbo Castle" - in Dornoch Parish
2. There shall be added to the said list:-
  - a. Item number 10 - "Skelbo Castle and House within Castle Enclosure" - in Dornoch Parish

# INFORMATION SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE STATUTORY LIST

This information has no legal significance, nor do errors or omissions nullify or otherwise affect statutory listing

## STATUTORY LIST

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
NAME OF BUILDING AND/OR ADDRESS	ITEM NO	DATE OF LISTING	DESCRIPTION	CAT	MAP REF	REFERENCE	NOTES
SKELBO STEADING	11.	20.12.79	Mid-later 19th century, large U-plan single storey and loft range enclosing 5-bay gabled range of cattle courts, presenting symmetrical 7-bay crowstepped gabled frontage to east. All rubble with tooled rubble dressings. Outer and centre ranges slightly higher; outer gables have ground floor doorway, flanking window and centre loft window with apex stacks. Wide round headed arched entrances, with double leaf doors, to centre 5 bays, each with centre loft vent; centre gabled with apex bellcote. Slate roofs.	B	NH 791 950	James Loch, <u>An Account of the Improvements of the Estates of Lord Stafford</u> (1820) pl.13. A Tenton and B Walker, <u>The Rural Architecture of Scotland</u> , 1981 pp 72, 109.	Probably incorporates some of 1812 steading planned during early 19th century improvements to Sutherland estates.



INFORMATION SUPPLEMENTARY TO THE STATUTORY LIST

STATUTORY LIST

This information has no legal significance, nor do errors or omissions nullify or otherwise affect statutory listing

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
NAME OF BUILDING AND/OR ADDRESS	ITEM NO	DATE OF LISTING	DESCRIPTION	CAT	MAP REF	REFERENCE	NOTES
SKELBO CASTLE AND HOUSE WITHIN CASTLE ENCLOSURE	10	5 6 85	Castle: ruins of 14th century keep on motte at NW angle of enclosure. Linking enclosure wall to later house at SW. House: late 16th century, altered early 18th century. 2-storey, south facing 5-bay house. Rubble with ashlar dressings. Ground Floor barrel vaulted longitudinally, possibly reusing part of an earlier structure within the castle complex. 1 flat-headed, 1 round-headed and one modern enlarged entrance in ground floor; irregular ground floor fenestration and 1 arrow slit/gun loop. 2 1st floor entrances leading originally to 2 self-contained upper units, set in roll mouldings, 1 in E gable approached by ramp, 1 partially blocked in S front. 1st floor windows asymmetrical, some now blocked. 3 1st floor windows to rear (N) elevation. Single small attic windows in each crow-stepped gable. Moulded eaves cornice. 2 carved mask skewputts survive (N of bearded man, S of woman with ruff). 1 end stack survives. Melness slate roof and stone ridge in poor condition.	B	NH 792 952	National Monuments Record of Scotland. Survey drawings.	This complex of buildings, while in poor condition, is listed because of both the historical and architectural interest. An investigation of the site by RCAHMS has revealed the possibility of the house originally being akin to Border bastle construction.

# THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND

*formerly The Scottish Georgian Society*

*Highland Group*



FOR THE STUDY AND PROTECTION OF SCOTTISH ARCHITECTURE

7 Leys Drive,  
INVERNESS.

10th May, 1985.

Michael Alexander, Esq.,  
48 Eaton Place,  
LONDON. SW1.

Dear Mr. Alexander,

We wish to express our great concern about the future of Skelbo Castle, which is of considerable historic importance not only to the people of Sutherland, but also to the whole of Scotland.

As you know, this listed building is in urgent need of repair because of its dangerous condition. We would urge you to give Skelbo the chance to have a historic future as well as a historic past by either instructing works of consolidation or by allowing a careful restoring purchaser to do so.

We would be most willing to put you in contact with several parties who might be interested in undertaking such work if you feel that you are unable to tackle the problem. Our deep desire is to see a happy outcome to Skelbo's present difficulties and we would like to offer you our help in resolving this matter as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

*Janet H Sutherland*

Janet H. Sutherland,  
(Hon. Chairman)

Similar letter to:

Representatives of Sarah J. Alexander,  
per Grossman, Block and Keith,  
Cross Lanes,  
London Road,  
GUILDFORD GU1 1T.

1

3.

BUILDING (SCOTLAND) ACTS 1959 AND 1970  
DANGEROUS BUILDINGS OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE  
SKELBO CASTLE, EDDERCHALDER OR CALDA HOUSE  
AND ARDVRECK CASTLE

There was submitted Memorandum dated 19 March, 1985, from the Master of Works, together with reports on the above three properties which are in a dangerous condition and visited by the general public and which are not subject to straightforward Demolition Order and with recommendations as to possible action. In speaking further to his Memorandum, the Master of Works advised the Committee to approach the Ancient Monuments section of Scottish Development Department to take over the maintenance of Skelbo and Ardvreck Castles, the house at Skelbo and Calda House in his opinion being beyond repair and both presented a serious threat to the general public.

Skelbo Castle and House

The Divisional Planning officer pointed out that Skelbo Castle was not a Listed Building and that he had written to the proprietor through Messrs. Arthur and Carmichael, Solicitors, Dornoch, pointing out the dangerous state of the property.

District Councillor J. K. Bell, although not a member of the Committee, was permitted to speak on behalf of the Dornoch Heritage Society and quoted from a book referring to Skelbo Castle in the 13th century and Skelbo House in the 17th century and both properties were held in high esteem by the Society and should be preserved at all costs.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the proprietors be asked to erect a protective fence round the site with an appropriate warning sign as to the danger to anybody entering the area and that an approach be made to the Ancient Monuments Section of Scottish Development Department for help or guidance.

Calda House and Ardvreck Castle

District Councillor I. M. MacAulay asked for the Castle to be acquired by the Authority by compulsory purchase as well as the house; the properties made safe and thereafter maintained by a Trust composed of local people, e.g. the Community Council. He appreciated that Calda House was perhaps beyond saving but that Ardvreck Castle should be preserved at all costs.

The Divisional Planning Officer stated that Calda House was not salvageable and was in an extremely dangerous condition and to preserve the Castle would be very expensive - the Regional Council having considered the matter of preservation of the Castle a number of years ago and were prohibited from doing so by astronomical costs but every effort should be made to preserve it due to its historical significance.

After discussion, it was agreed that the proprietor be asked to erect fencing and notices for Ardvreck Castle and Calda House, that a Section 13 Notice be served for Calda House, and that Regional Council be asked to serve Repairs Notice for Listed Building on the owner, consideration to be given to compulsory purchase by the Region. It was further agreed that a careful watch be kept to ensure that the building is not demolished following the service of any statutory notice on the proprietor.

PLANNING SECTION/....

2

Item No. 10 on Planning Agenda



# Highland

Department of Planning  
John J. McMillan  
Divisional Planning Officer  
Sutherland Division

Highland Regional Council  
Divisional Planning Office  
District Council Offices  
The Meadows  
Dornoch

Telephone 0862 810495

Please ask for Mr McMillan

Our ref PL16 Skelbo Castle  
JJM/EAS

Extension No

Your ref

Date 15.4.1985

The Clerk to the Divisional Planning Committee,  
Council Offices,  
Main Street,  
Dornoch.

Dear Sir,

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) 1972 (Section 56)  
Building Preservation Notice-Skelbo Castle.

I would be obliged if the Divisional Planning Committee could be given an item, to discuss the above subject during the forthcoming meeting.

There is a division of opinion between S.D.D. Historic Buildings and Monuments Department and this office as to whether Skelbo Castle has the status of a Listed Building or not. S.D.D.'s opinion is, that the Castle being within the curtilage of Skelbo House, and in the same ownership, automatically has the protection of the listing applied to Skelbo House. My opinion is, that the Castle is 200M distant from the house, and does not fall within the category of outbuilding or specific feature described in S.D.D.'s memorandum, extract attached.

It should be noted that until 1984, the Castle was a Listed Building, but that the revised Combined Statutory and Descriptive List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest for Sutherland District, as at 7th March 1984 clearly excluded Skelbo Castle. In my opinion it is unlikely that the suggested extension of the Listing for Skelbo House to the Castle - some 200M distant would obtain in the event of a formal appeal situation.

In this situation, the S.D.D. should be required formally to categorise the status of the Castle, in order that the Planning Authority is clear in its approach towards any necessary safeguarding action.

It should also be noted that the description given to Skelbo House in the revised 1984 Descriptive List, mentions that the House is close to Skelbo Castle, a Scheduled Monument. It is now admitted by S.D.D. that the Castle is not a Scheduled Monument.

Yours faithfully,

Divisional Planning Officer.

such as shutters, pelmet boxes or curtain rods, panelling; ornamental plaster, wood and paintwork; original wall coverings; reliefs and statuary; fixed tapestries, tilework and mosaics; niches and pediments; floors where ancient or decoratively treated in wood, marble, mosaic etc; balusters, newel posts, and tread ends; and any fixed furniture, such as bank or bar counters, or other fixtures of good quality down to about 1930. Any subdivision of rooms, particularly in the principal apartments and staircases, may be regarded as affecting the character.

8. In the case of industrial buildings listed wholly or partly for the interest of their workings, elements likely to contribute "character" include all fixed machinery more than about 40 years old. In the case of cottages and smaller houses without designed finishes, and buildings listed largely for group value, "character" need not be regarded as being affected by minor internal alterations unless the building retains interesting features such as box beds etc in a good state of preservation. Alterations to plumbing will not require consent unless the fittings are of unique interest. Very particular consideration should be given to those houses of the mid 18th century and earlier which have retained their original interior work throughout, or any building which has particularly rich and consistent interior work. Lack of reference to such interior work in the descriptive lists should not be taken as evidence that none exists, or that it is of little importance. It has not been possible for the investigating staff to examine the interior of every building listed.

### **Curtilages**

9. These may be regarded as the area attached to and containing the structure and its outbuildings. The features here which contribute to the character of the building will include the actual ground, particularly if this is covered by any traditional or original form of paving; basement areas, steps and railings; gates and walls; any items within the curtilage such as sculpture, sundials, urns, fountains and other ornaments; and conservatories, greenhouses, garden houses, mews and ancillary buildings such as stables, coachhouses, laundries and brewhouses. These can in certain cases call for as much care in the consideration of applications for listed building consent as the main building itself. Old garden-walls can sometimes contain

features of unusual interest such as bee-boles and charter boles (a recess on the proprietor's side to show that ownership of the wall is not mutual), and, similarly, old outbuildings may contain dovecots and possess other interesting fittings. It is often the case that mews buildings, or old coachhouses and the like which are subject to listed building consent by virtue of falling within the curtilage of a listed building, pass into separate ownership from that building. Planning authorities should take care to ensure that the new owners of such buildings, who may be unaware of this listing, are told that it is listed building consent that is required if application is made for normal planning permission or a demolition warrant.

10. The Department's Historic Buildings Investigators will always be glad to give informal advice on any question relating to the "character" of listed buildings in general or on whether listed building consent is required in any particular case.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



## Appeal against Rates

Sir — I am writing regarding the new rates assessment for Scotland which I think is very unfair. I will not go into politics but point out that Scotland has been reassessed on two occasions more than England.

Next year, business permitting, I intend standing for the Regional Council. But by then it will be too late to do anything about this rate assessment, as you can appeal only now.

Our District Council do their best to keep our general rates low, but if in two years' time Central Government decides to lower the rates support grant our rates will rise by the sum the rates are per pound, multiplied by the sum of your assessment which could mean gigantic rises for us all. Therefore, I feel we should all appeal now.

Here is a copy of the letter of appeal I wrote to Dingwall and hope it will serve as a rough guideline for anyone else so minded:—

To: Highland Region  
Valuation Committee

Dear Mr Currie,  
I wish to appeal against the rateable value of my property number \_\_\_\_\_ (enter your number which is above your name and address on the form).

Yours sincerely  
(Name)

The address is:— HRVC, Rates Division Office, Ferry Road, Dingwall.

Please can I say once again for everyone to appeal. It's not this year you have to worry about but future years.

If I can be of any help to anyone, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me at this address — Mrs S M Board, Park House Hotel and Restaurant, Main Street, Golsple.

## Infiltration

Sir — I was dismayed to read, in your March 8th edition, the comments of Sutherland District Council about the new tourist officer.

I would like to know how an Englishman, presumably living in England, even heard of the job? Likewise the young couple, whose snow-bound plight was in our newspapers earlier, who were going to take up a fish-farm job in Scourie, from Lancashire!

Are jobs in Sutherland advertised in England? In view of Councillor MacAulay's figures for unemployment in the area, it seems more than odd.

One must conclude that the Clearances took away all the real men and women of Sutherland and only the descendants of the "Great White Sheep" remain. — Mrs Jean McGavin, Dun Donuill, Crinan, Argyll.

Mr Simon Bradford, who knows Sutherland well, was formerly employed in the planning department of Orkney Islands Council. — Editor.

## Save Skelbo Castle — a new Campaign?

Sir — Having read with interest and dismay the report of the meeting of Sutherland District Council (our report, Page 7) which appeared to confirm the rumours that have been circulating about the possible demolition of a part of the exceedingly historic Skelbo Castle site, I write to suggest that all those in Sutherland who are interested in the saving of this important ruin press for action to be taken to obtain the fullest possible consultations about the future of the buildings.

Parts of Skelbo are dangerous, but, in the interests of the area, it requires consolidation, not demolition, to wall, head or any other height. This form of action would produce a very dull result. Skelbo is a most important tourist attraction indeed, or properly handled, could become one, and Sutherland has very few of these. Ardvreck is the only castle on the West that merits the name at all, and is in much the same state as Skelbo.

I was informed when I approached the Historic Buildings Directorate, that the house within Skelbo Castle encircling wall (which is actually part of that wall), was listed B by the Historic Buildings Directorate, and this should ensure a considerable measure of protection and consultation; but I note from the Press reports that this appears not to be the case.

It is quite extraordinary that a site of this importance, containing buildings virtually unequalled in Sutherland should be without any statutory protection. In fact, it is scarcely believable and calls into doubt the processes by which such selection is made, and by whom.

While having the greatest sympathy for the owners of such sites, and fully realising that it is quite unfair that they should be expected to bear the burden and responsibility attached to them, I would like to suggest that all those concerned should press for rescheduling to be carried out immediately. This is within the power of the Ancient Monuments Directorate whose address is:

Historic Buildings & Ancient  
Monuments Directorate,  
11-14 Melville Street,  
Edinburgh.

Secondly, they could also ask for the question of Guardianship status to be considered. There appears to be some misapprehension here, for I have a photo-copy of the Historic Buildings Circular saying that Skelbo Castle site was item 4 on the Statutory List for Sutherland, but was dropped from that list on 7th March, 1984. I am not clear by whom. It does however, state, or appear to state, that the "house close to the ruins of Skelbo Castle a Scheduled Monument, is in poor condition. It has unusual skewputts," is still Listed B. There is absolutely no trace of this being withdrawn from the Statutory Lists in the March 1974 Directive, which states "Items dropped from Previous/Statutory and Descriptive Lists — No 4 Skelbo Castle."

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act was passed in 1979. Under Section I of this Act, the Secretary of State is required to maintain a Scheduled List of Monuments of National importance.

Skelbo ranks as a major monument and it is unthinkable it should fall outwith this category. Scheduling is simply to afford protection, and is designed for very little more than to ensure consultation, and give some small measure of protection. It is a

Statutory Process and therefore at this moment appropriate to Skelbo. Guardianship status is very much more complicated, and involves a Deed being executed between the owners, who retain the possession, and any titles belonging to the site, and the Ancient Monuments Directorate, whereby AM acquire the legal responsibilities, rights to maintain the buildings and ground, and rights of access.

Fortrose and Beaulieu come under this heading. As far as I know only Carnliath, the broch beside the road North of Dunrobin, bears the distinctive metal lettered plate denoting Guardianship in Sutherland. The Ancient Monuments Directorate is over-stretched and over-worked in every way, including financially. They look after places like Holyrood, Stirling Castle, and Castle Urquhart on Loch Ness amongst many others. Nevertheless, they recently acquired Doune Castle in Perthshire. Guardianship negotiations sometimes take years, and the sands of time are running out for Skelbo and Ardvreck.

Skelbo is exceedingly well documented. The family of De Moravia, to whom it belonged, also built Duffus Castle in Morayshire, and there are strong historical and architectural links between the two which became clear when the survey was carried out by the Royal Commission for the Recording of the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland, last year. This is available, together with plans, in the National Monuments Archive at 54 Melville Street, Edinburgh.

Most importantly, Duffus is in Guardianship — Skelbo is not. In many ways it might be fair to say Skelbo is the more interesting site.

So I would suggest to those of your readers who care about the fate of Skelbo and the future of this most historic site, that they approach their councillors, both Regional and District, and ask them to see whether it is not possible for some of these discussions to be set up. — Jane M S Durham, Chairman, Tain and Easter Ross Civic Trust; Council Member Scottish Vernacular Buildings Working Group; Retiring Chairman Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland (Highland Group); Scotsburn, Kildary.

## REITH & ANDERSON (Dingwall and Tain) LIMITED

### DINGWALL AUCTION MART

WEDNESDAY, 10th APRIL, at 11 a.m.

SPECIAL SALE of all Classes of Sheep. Entries include 50 Grey Face Ewe Hoggs from Pelaig. Also at 1 p.m. to be sold on behalf of Ross and Cromarty District Council:— 4 Marina Vans 'V' Reg.; 1 Sherpa Van 'V' Reg.; 1 Sherpa Van 'W' Reg. From other sellers:— 1 s.w.b. Landrover 'S' Reg., hard-top, MoT to August.

WEDNESDAY, 17th APRIL, at 10 a.m.

SECOND SPECIAL APRIL SALE of Store Cattle. Entries include 107 Sim. Cross Bullocks and Heifers and 44 Hereford Cross Bullocks and Heifers from Rosskeen Farms, 100 Sim. Cross Bullocks and Heifers from Fearn Farm; and in Ring No. 2 at 12 noon, sale of Breeding and Cast Cows, including 13 Cross Heifers in calf to S.H. or Hereford Bulls from Moor Farm. The dispersal of the Old Dam herd (F. Lenz, Esq.) of 4 Cross Cows with calves at foot. The dispersal of the Duncaston herd (Reps. of the late E. S. Clapham), of 6 Cross Cows with calves at foot.

### ROGART AUCTION MART

MONDAY, 8th APRIL, at 10.30 a.m.

SPRING SHOW and SALE of 120 Store Cattle. Also Breeding and Cast Cows, etc.

Tel. Dingwall 63252.

published April 5th 85

however, but was seized at Skibo Castle by the Sinclair Earl of Caithness, still a child, and forced to marry that earl's daughter, the profligate Lady Barbara Sinclair, twice his age, Caithness meantime taking up residence at Dunrobin. However, on attaining his majority he managed to divorce the lady, and married instead the Lady Jean Gordon, whom Bothwell had just divorced in order to marry Mary Queen of Scots. Their son was the 13th earl, whose son built the 17th-century extensions. He was much involved in the religious wars, opposed Montrose in his campaigns, and with 1,000 men arrived just too late to take part in the Battle of Dunbar against Cromwell. The 18th earl died young in 1766 leaving only a year-old daughter, the greatest landowner in Britain. She it was who later married the Marquis of Stafford, and they were created Duke and Duchess of Sutherland—the instigators of the notorious Sutherland Clearances.

Today, although still in the possession of a Countess of Sutherland in her own right, Dunrobin is used as a school.

### SKELBO CASTLE

The gaunt and battered remains of the ancient and powerful stronghold of the Sutherlands, Lords of Duffus, stands on a defensive rocky site above the south shore of the tidal Loch Fleet, four miles north of Dornoch. There is however an early 17th-century house still standing within the broken curtain-wall of the old castle, and although this is in a bad state of repair, ~~the proprietor is at least considering restoration.~~

Dating from so much later than the rest of the castle—which may be of the 14th century—and on a lower level of the uneven site, this building would seem to have been a more or less new construction, erected against the old curtain-wall, rather than merely a wing added or altered. It is a lengthy oblong block of two storeys and a garret, lying approximately north and south, containing a range of vaulted cellars in the basement. The first floor now contains only the one large chamber, though it probably was subdivided originally, and the garret floor above has gone. There are signs that there may have been further building to the south. The masonry is of rough red sandstone rubble.

The building has obviously been greatly altered and adapted at various periods, most of the windows having been enlarged or built up, with new doorways opened. But certain original features remain. The arched doorway towards the north end still retains

[176]



its slot for a massive door-bar. A relieving arch surmounts the window immediately to the south, and a small loophole window survives between the doors at the south end. The walling is topped by an eaves course, and the ~~north-eastern~~ skewputt is decorated by a carved mask. Internally, little of interest remains, but there has been a large arched fireplace in the north gable, presumably the kitchen.

The Sutherlands of Skelbo were a branch of the same family as the Earls of Sutherland, who likewise sprang from the famous Freskin de Moravia, founder of the Moray or Murray family. They seem to have gravitated north from Moray at an early date, no doubt marrying heiresses. The Skelbo line, however, in due course went back, or at least re-established contact with Moray, for they inherited the great lordship of Duffus in the 14th century. They seem to have continued to make Skelbo their main domicile, however—and a turbulent line they were. William Sutherland, Lord of Duffus, was killed by Clan Gunn, at Thurso, in 1530, in a squabble over the Bishopric of Caithness, and his son and heir was thrown into prison by the Privy Council for the scale of his reprisals. His son, Alexander, attacked and sacked the nearby town of Dornoch in 1567, and again in 1570. Oddly enough, we read that the next year, having put to death certain sureties who had surrendered to his ally the Earl of Caithness, he became overcome with remorse and pined away to his grave. The laird who succeeded in 1616 was rash enough to carry off the tiend-sheaves already paid to the young Earl of Sutherland, depositing them in his own barns at Skelbo, until forced by the Sheriff to disgorge. The part of the castle with which we are concerned seems to have been built by the son of this laird, created a peer by Charles the First.

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[177]

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# Threat to Skelbo Castle

Quarry House,  
Aberlady, East Lothian,  
April 23, 1985

Sir, — It has been reported to me that Skelbo Castle, five miles north of Dornoch, in East Sutherland, is under dire threat. Long a ruin, but a substantial one, it has recently suffered a collapse of one part of the walling, and certain authorities, considering it a danger, propose to take the easy course of either demolishing it entirely or reducing the walls to a mere metre high, to show where a once-historic building stood.

This, I feel strongly, would be a grave mistake, and a failure to protect part of our heritage for present and future generations. Skelbo could still be saved, either restored entirely to be a habitable house again — I have been involved in the restoration of many

much worse-decayed castles than this; or else taken into the guardianship of the Ancient Monuments Board and preserved as a "respectable ruin."

The far North-east of Scotland is not sufficiently well represented by historic sites and places to visit that the authorities should sacrifice such an example. At Skelbo, Edward Hammer of the Scots' commissioners were told of the death of the Maid of Norway, heiress to the Scots throne, in 1290, a disaster from which stemmed the Wars of Independence and all the efforts of Wallace and Bruce.

It was the seat of the powerful and turbulent family of the Sutherlands, Lords of Duffus, descended from the ancient line of de Moravia — who gave name to all the Murrays. These Sutherlands inherited Duffus, in Moray, in the four-

teenth century but seem to have continued to make Skelbo their main domicile, not this present building, which is an early seventeenth-century one, but the gaunt and battered ruins nearby.

They were a wild lot, one imprisoned by the Privy Council for reprisals on Clan Gunn — which must have been eyebrow-raising indeed, for the sixteenth-century Privy Council was not easily provoked by such peccadillos; one sacked the town of Dornoch in 1567, and again, for good measure in 1570; another allegedly pined away with remorse for having slaughtered sundry hostages committed to his keeping.

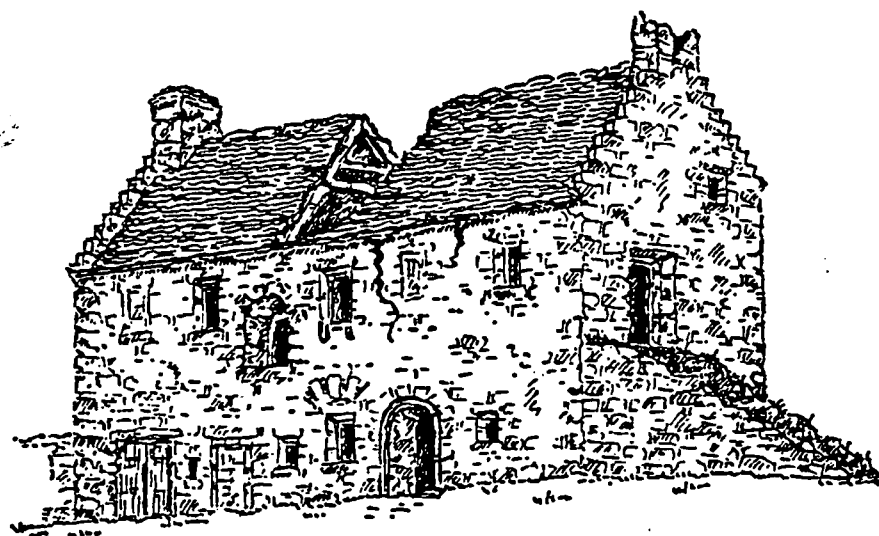
No doubt there were less dramatic representatives of the line, of whom by the nature of things we hear less, but Skelbo made its impact on the story of Scotland, and it certainly

ought not to become a victim of the demolisher.

Also in Sutherland, as it happens, there are two other ancient landmarks very much at risk, Ardvreck Castle, where the great Montrose was betrayed to his death, and Calda House nearby, erected in 1660 by Kenneth Mackenzie, 3rd Earl of Seaforth. Of the former only a broken part remains and is deteriorating, despite the efforts of local folk and others to involve the present owner in some sort of preservation; the latter only the gaunt shell of a former proud mansion.

To let these, particularly Ardvreck, disappear now, would be a sorry dereliction of responsibility. Scotland, if it is to have any worthy future, must cherish its past.

Nigel Tranter.



Many people are concerned that when their homes are "listed" for their historic or architectural interest, they will be prevented from making alterations, with a consequent loss in value or amenity.

Here Miss ANNE RICHES, Inspector of Historic Buildings for the Directorate of Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments in Edinburgh, who visited Golspie for a re-survey of listed buildings last week, explains here why revision of the Secretary of State's lists is necessary.

The lists were drawn up between 1956 and 1967, when the whole idea of listing buildings was new and the importance of listing within the planning framework was still to be tested.

At the time interest was concentrated on country houses, churches and important urban groups such as the New Town of Edinburgh. It is difficult now, with the benefit of a vastly increased knowledge of our

building history and a much wider interest generally in heritage matters, to understand how limited, in practical terms, the state of knowledge was 30 years ago.

In the intervening time interest has broadened to encompass the smaller buildings which give so much character to our towns, villages and rural estates — the supporting cast if you like — also the growing interest in the social and economic history of Britain has introduced new types of buildings for consideration, most importantly industrial structures.

The lists are made in the first instance for the guidance of the local planning authority, in the case of Highland Region that is the Regional Council. They are part of the planning framework and have a clear statutory basis in Section 52 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act.

When seen in the context of the overall planning controls the lists are less formidable. Everyone, regardless of listing, is subject to certain planning constraints. The listing introduces more specialised controls, but even these have to be balanced against controls that already exist if for instance a building is within a conservation area.

An instant reaction to listing is often a fear that nothing can ever be altered again and that plans for a new kitchen or bathroom or some other improvement will be thwarted. Fortunately this is not the case. What listing does ensure is that

the architectural and historic value of a particular building can be considered when alterations, re-use or demolition are proposed.

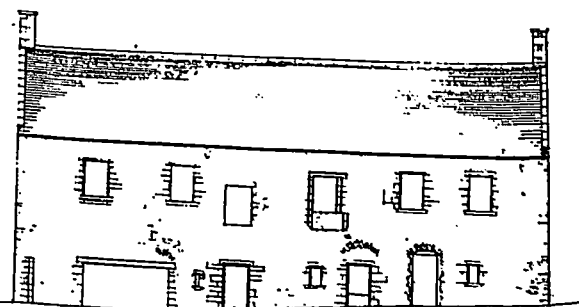
In the majority of cases owners are sympathetic to their buildings and propose alterations which are in keeping with or do not detract from their character. In some cases the expert advice available through the planning authority or the Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate can help to resolve specific difficulties.

Listed building consent is required for alterations affecting the character of a building or demolition and this is obtained through the local planning authority. In all cases the planning authority, if it proposes to grant listed building consent, must notify the Secretary of State. The Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate case-work inspectors, who have particular expertise in assessing proposals for historic buildings, may recommend that the decision be left to the planning authority; they may propose modifications or they may recommend that special circumstances require the application to be referred to the Secretary of State. It is always wise to contact the planning department to clarify specific proposals and discuss whether or not they require listed building consent.

Given these statutory controls, it is important that national

(Continued on Page 3)

# Preserving our Heritage



Elevation looking W.

Front view of what a reconstructed Skelbo House could look like.

## Our Old Files

### 75 YEARS AGO

(November 24, 1910)

The Golspie Literary Society had discussed a symposium of popular writers, with papers on Addison and Steele, Alexander Pope, Charles Lamb and Thomas De Quincey, by Misses K F Innes, C A Campbell, C B Grant and E S Mackay respectively.

Mr John Grant, Dornoch, sold 22 cattle from £7-10s to £12-10s at Dingwall. Cheviot ewes and wethers from Mr Sutherland, Kintredwell, had sold at between 21/3d and 22/9d.

A man from the heights of Rogart had been fined 10/- with 21/- expenses and an alternative of 10 days imprisonment for failing to send his son aged 5 years to school. The man had claimed that five of his eight children were attending Rogart school but the one mile to Rhilochan school was a long and unfenced road, dangerous in winter time.

### 50 YEARS AGO

(November 21, 1935)

Seven seats in Sutherland County Council were being contested in the forthcoming election. They were (new candidates listed second): Golspie Rural — J D Cameron, Kirkton; George Grant, Craigneath, Golspie. Loth — A M Ross, Grand Hotel, Brora; William Gordon Dudgeon, Crakaig, Kildonan South — A R Macleod, Dunrobin Street, Helmsdale; P J Mitchell, Viewmount, Helmsdale. Strath — John Mackay, Bighouse, Melvich; Alexander Campbell, Melvich.

Farr — George J Christie, Altnaharra Hotel; John Macdonald, Newlands and Donald O'Brien, Bettyhill. Tongue — John Mackenzie, The Hotel, Tongue; John William Irvine MD, Tongue. Laig — Hugh Davidson, Albion House; Angus MacNeill, Riverview House, Laig. Mr A G Macdonald of Drumbeg and Mr W Morley Hames of Durness had been returned unopposed.

Retired gamekeeper Stewart Warbeck of Dalreavoch, Rogart had died at Big Barns, Golspie.

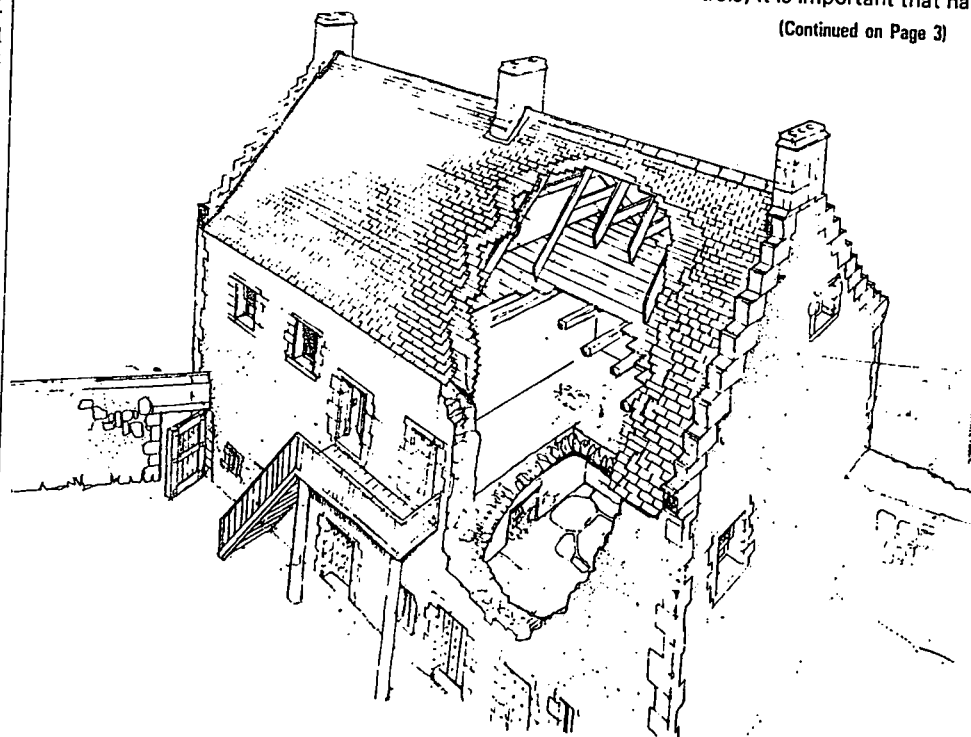
### 25 YEARS AGO

(November 18, 1960)

Reception of Independent Television was being restricted in the north because of difficulties with the vision link from Aberdeen, with the fringe service going as far as Berriedale in the north, Garve and Tomich in the west and Grantown on Spey and Rothes in the east.

Roads committee chairman Mr George McIver and Mr George Murray, the local councillor, had been asked to have another look at the uncontrolled railway level crossing at Broomfield, Rogart, to see what further action could be taken to lessen the risk of accidents.

Mr George Sinclair, a former Dornoch Academy pupil, had received two special prizes as leading Scottish Dairy student at Auchenchruive, Ayr. He was the son of Mr Jack Sinclair, who had been grieve at Cyderhall Farm, Dornoch, for 24 years.



This "exploded" view of the ruined medieval Skelbo House, on Loch Fleet, shows the potential for its renovation — if someone was prepared to spend a fortune on it. It rates a "B" listing, for its local and historic significance.



# HERITAGE PRESERVED

(Continued from Page 2)

standards for listing are adhered to. Inevitably there are some local variations; for instance, Pulteney-town in Wick is of modest architectural interest which might not attract attention in Edinburgh's New Town or the West End of Glasgow, but when seen in the local context, it is an unusual piece of planning with historic associations with the British Fisheries Society's activities.

In Ullapool, where the Society was also active, the planning lay-out can still be appreciated but the houses were either not built or have now been too altered to permit any real visual experience of the original conception.

Consistency is an ingredient lacking from the first lists which often reflected specific interests of the fieldwork inspectors. Today the scrutiny is much tighter. The fieldwork inspectors, who are all architectural historians, concentrate on substantial geographical areas in order that they can become familiar with building types and techniques, the work of local architects or estate factors. Their drafts are submitted to the inspector with the responsibility for maintaining standards across the country and, after editing, the Principal Inspector has to approve the list and the categories of listing. These categories are used to give some indication of merit. Buildings categorised as follows:—

## Category A

buildings of national or more than local importance, either architectural or historic or fine little-altered examples of some particular period or style.

## Category B

buildings of primarily local importance or major examples of some period or style which may have been somewhat altered.

## Category C

good buildings which may be considerably altered, other buildings which are fair examples of their period, or in some cases buildings of no great individual merit which group well with others in categories A or B.

Where there is particular value in a group of buildings this is indicated and the groups categorised. In this way personal prejudices and blind spots can be overcome.

What happens at the start of a resurvey? The lists are approached district by district and the first action is to contact the local planning authority to explain the purpose of the resurvey and to ask for any information which could assist or suggestions of sites the inspector might visit. Meanwhile the inspector acquires general background knowledge to the area from printed sources and maps. The inspector will then systematically visit every property in the area taking particular care to check those already listed to see whether they reach current criteria.

In towns and villages where it is not necessary to go on to private land, inspectors make their assessment from the street; where it is necessary to go on to private land permission is always sought and where necessary appointments made to visit interiors. The inspectors all carry a personal identity card and visiting cards.

We always go into public buildings and churches and the inspector has to use his architectural knowledge to decide whether to ask permission to see inside domestic, commercial or industrial buildings and we are grateful for the co-operation, interest and enthusiasm we frequently meet. The resurvey is essentially carried out by site visits, the inspectors using their specialised knowledge and familiarity with an area to assess buildings for listing. Wherever possible documentary work is undertaken but within the time allowed it is not possible to check sashes or title deeds for every property, and we are always grateful when additional historical information is sent to us.

It will be obvious that listing includes a very wide spectrum of

buildings. The only guidance from the act is "special architectural or historic interest." "Special" has a generous meaning. It does not refer simply to the obvious — country houses, churches or public buildings — but to those buildings which form the background to major architectural works. Consideration is given to ancillary buildings on country house estates, for instance at Dunrobin, the dovecot dairy, stables and walled garden together with monuments, to give some examples, are included.

Town planning can have an important part to play in the character of towns and villages for instance, Thurso where handsome houses in Jane Street are backed up by more modest dwellings as in Campbell Street with churches playing their part in the layout. This contrasts with the piecemeal growth around old St Peter's Church.

In other areas such as the prosperous farm land of Ross and Cromarty, dignified farmhouses and villas reflect agricultural and commercial wealth. Contrary to expectation the Highland Region reveals an interesting range of commercial and industrial buildings; for example woollen and grain mills, an example of the former Aldie in Easter Ross or the latter at Achingale and John O' Groats in Caithness; the development of the herring fishing industry is seen in the growth of Helmsdale, Lybster, Wick and the tortuous 300 steps to the diminutive landing stage at Whaligoe, while substantial icehouses as those at Helmsdale and Little Ferry indicate the importance of the salmon fishing industry.

Transport has always been a vital factor in the development of the Highland Region. This was recognised nationally by creation of the Commissioners for Highland Roads and Bridges with Thomas Telford, the renowned engineer, playing an essential role. This vast enterprise expanded the road network already developed by General Wade a century earlier. The single arched hump-back bridges of the earlier 18th century are in their way as valuable as the spectacular technical achievements of Telford's bridges such as Helmsdale, now too often taken for granted.

The arrival of the railways was the next important step in the development of the Highlands, linking the northern extremities with southern urban centres and introducing a new architectural dimension. The use of local materials has a powerful visual impact; for instance the use of slate either as varied as the dark grey from Ballachulish or deep shiny browns from Caithness; the techniques used with local materials give particular individuality to the pattern of building in any particular location. Besides local fabrics, innovative materials leave their mark, concrete being an obvious example seen to great advantage on the Ardnornish estate in Morvern.

Individual estates often have their own architectural hallmarks, none more so than the Sutherland Estate with sliding sashes in dormer windows, deep eaves, prominent gable skewputts (brackets at right angles to the gable); and the particular contribution of George Devey who became one of the leading country house architects of the late 19th century.

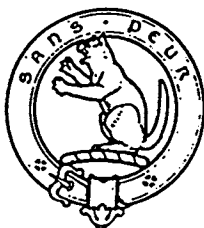
The new lists for the Highland Region, while larger than their predecessors, clarify former group listings which encompassed whole settlements and take account of vastly superior knowledge or architectural and social history.

All buildings of merit are included and correspond to the standards being used, not only in Scotland, but in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The first man to play an active part in recording Scotland's historic buildings, by the listing process, Ian Lindsay, instructed inspectors that an historic building need be neither old nor beautiful to play an important part in our built inheritance. That still stands, and inspectors today must question and consider everything they see.



# CLAN SUTHERLAND SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND

Chief The Rt. Hon. The Countess of Sutherland



DUNROBIN CASTLE  
GOLSPIE  
SUTHERLAND

Clan Historian  
Daniel J J Sutherland

CRAKON  
DIPTFORD  
DEVON TQ9 7NA

Tel 054882 379

## SKELBO CASTLE

### Summary

This paper for the Meeting at Skelbo, 2 April 1986, has been prepared as a contribution toward the discussion being initiated jointly between the Skelbo Trust, the Dornoch Heritage Society, and the Clan Sutherland. It outlines history and present condition of the site with the ruins. It suggests three possible options for the future, recognizing distinct potential for Education, Recreation and Tourism. It suggests the availability of funds and resources needed for the preparation and implementation of an appropriate management scheme. It suggests that a management advisory body would be needed to inquire more fully into the matter of Skelbo and to give advice to the Skelbo Trust as owners and to other interested bodies. It recommends that those present in the Meeting should be asked to consider the contents of this paper, including the motion that:

- (a) a Skelbo Advisory Committee be set up with representation from the Skelbo Trust and other genuinely interested bodies.
- (b) a remit be drafted by or on behalf of the Committee, stating the terms of reference for its advisory function; and that the remit be approved by the Skelbo Trust jointly with the Dornoch Heritage Society and the Clan Sutherland Society in Scotland.
- (c) an appeal be launched by the Committee as soon as possible and when its remit has been approved, aimed at raising funds urgently needed for (i) the Committee's own expenses or work; (ii) repairs to be carried out as soon as possible to the ruins; (iii) preparation of a feasibility study and appropriate proposals in the form of a management plan; (iv) implementation of appropriate proposals.

### History

In April 1985 the press reported damage to the ruins, alerting those who care for Scottish Heritage. Considerable interest has been expressed over the future of Skelbo since 1985. Numerous interested bodies have contributed advice and information in the press and privately. Among them the Dornoch Heritage Society and the Clan Sutherland who agreed with the Skelbo Trust that the present meeting offered an opportunity of at least discussion over Skelbo. The concern felt by the two societies was for reason of their close interest in local history and historical heritage. The Clan Sutherland was by its constitution interested in Skelbo, seat of the Sutherlands of Duffus.

There was general concern over Skelbo because both the ruins and public safety seemed at risk. One proposal was for demolition, another for a campaign aimed at some more imaginative action or rescue of the castle, an Ancient Monument and an Historic Building as well as a familiar landmark by Loch Fleet in the heart of the ancient Earldom of Sutherland. Bearing in mind the not inconsiderable loss of Scottish Heritage in the North this century, notably the demolition of Helmsdale Castle and the damage by fire and negligence of Golspie Tower, any further such damage or loss as was threatening Skelbo raised most serious questions over the safety of major historical sites and buildings in Sutherland.

However, if Skelbo were to be saved for future generations - and those who care have no doubt that Skelbo must be saved - common sense and economic realism demanded that no rescue was likely to succeed unless the Owners of Skelbo had strong support from the community as a whole as well as access to all available statutory sources of grants plus a sensible rescue strategy. The Dornoch Heritage Society and the Clan Sutherland have pledged their support at least to the present meeting and they and other bodies may be persuaded also to lend their further support in what can be expected to take considerable effort, ingenuity and time. Time is not on the side of those who care for Skelbo!

The Vikings named Skelbo centuries before its name appears in records. Skelbo and other lands in Sutherland were given to Gilbert of Moray by his kinsman Hugh c 1211. Both descended from Freskin, ancestor of the Murrays and the Sutherlands. In 1290 Skelbo was briefly involved in a matter of European history, the intended marriage that was to unite the royal houses of England and Norway. At Skelbo the commissioners of King Edward I sent North to welcome in Scotland the Maid of Norway learned here of her tragic death. In the 15th C Skelbo passed from the Murrays to the Kynnaird family.

Eventually in 1529 Skelbo was to return into the possession of the direct descendants of Freskin when it was sold by the Kynnairds to William Sutherland of Duffus. It remained in the Duffus family until it was sold in 1787 after two and a half centuries, but with an interruption of forfeiture owing to the Jacobite sympathies of the family in the 1715 uprising. The Sutherlands of Duffus descended from Nicholas Sutherland, the second son of Kenneth Sutherland of Sutherland, the fourth of the earls. Skelbo was made a barony in 1562 and in favour of yet another William Sutherland of Duffus, whose grandson, Sir Alexander Sutherland of Duffus was made a peer by King Charles II in 1650. This may be an explanation for the loyalty of the Duffus family to the House of Stuart in 1715. In the year 1650 Skelbo Castle was used as a garrison in case of an attack by the Marquis of Montrose, shortly before his defeat at the battle of Carbisdale and his subsequent capture, trial and execution.

Following the forfeiture of Skelbo after 1715, the laird of Duffus died in exile in Russia. His son Eric decided in 1745 to follow a neutral course, but Skelbo Castle was used by the Earl of Cromartie and his Jacobite troops. Two years later a letter written by Lady Duffus from Skelbo in 1747 suggests that the family then lived there. The connection between the Duffus family and Skelbo ended with Captain James when he sold the estate to Alexander Mackenzie in 1787. In 1808 it passed to the Countess of Sutherland under an entail of 1705 from the ancient Earldom of Sutherland. The barony of Skelbo was held from the Earls of Sutherland.

It seems that the house had been built perhaps in the 16th or 17th C on part



of the medieval castle, a structure believed to date from the 13th or 14th C, built as a motte and bailie stronghold, a tower or keep on a mound together with a walled forecourt. The original building was probably a timber structure later replaced by stonework. The castle occupied the site on a natural harbour with a ferry across the mouth of Loch Fleet, an intersection of navigation and inland traffic routes, hence a strategic position of control and defence.

Early this century the castle had been abandoned for some time when it was damaged and used as a source of fuel for an encampment of gypsies. Much of the roof and timber had disappeared when in April 1985 it was reported that walls had collapsed, owing perhaps to failure of a timber lintel in the basement doorway and generally decay, adverse conditions aggravated by severe weather, rain, frost and gale force wind. Rubble from the south gable and the adjacent east wall smashed through the ground floor and basement vault. It dislodged one of the sculpted heads now buried perhaps in the fallen rubble.

#### Present condition

Recently, before the damage occurred, a survey of Skelbo Castle was made by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (National Monuments Record). A walk on the site and inspection of the exhibition prepared by the Commission especially for the present meeting will show the extent of the damage. Information collected by the Commission can be used together with additional survey material as may be obtained for reconstruction and repair of the castle and within reasonable limits of authenticity. Both the medieval and the later walls are now in a critical condition of neglect and should be repaired as far as possible and necessary. Expert advice is needed to know whether or not any wall had to be demolished and if so, whether it could and should be reinstated. Experience with other historic buildings suggests that reconstruction of the house at Skelbo is not impossible, nor technically difficult, but expensive and a matter for a highly skilled historic buildings architect with experience in this kind of work. Equally skilled workmanship would be needed. Building materials would need to be obtained perhaps from specially selected sources.

The site is now inaccessible and fenced off as a precaution in case of further collapse. However, made safe, perhaps re-roofed and with proper access Skelbo Castle could be turned into an asset, an attraction to visitors, a resource rather than the present liability of decay and disuse. The history of the castle and land of Skelbo and of the inhabitants, if unfolded to the visitors, would add a new dimension of interest to the site with the ruins, the trees and the beautiful view from this raised ground of the landscape with the coast, the hills and Loch Fleet. The site and setting of Skelbo both are full of interest connected with the local history, human and natural life, the natural resources, the ecology and nature conservation, the fine scenery of an outstanding landscape.

History can be brought to life. There is a fascinating tale attached to Skelbo, the ruins, the whole setting with Loch Fleet, the anchorage, the drove road, the ferry and the girdel. It needs an historical interpreter to bring to life the tale of life as it was lived over the centuries, from the sagas of the Vikings into modern history. It needs a suitable place to interpret this history, to illustrate it with pictures and explain how and why it all happened. Another interesting story can be unfolded about the fishing grounds, the wildlife and the nature reserve (SSSI) of Loch Fleet. The interpretation of the local history and of the natural environment may be added to the preservation of Skelbo Castle and so add opportunity for day visits to a facility combining an experience of informal recreation with education.



In any region of outstanding value for Tourism this kind of facility can be expected to serve a growing demand, especially if it combined an opportunity for day visits with all-weather use such as could be created with a re-roofed historic house or even a temporary form of shelter. The facilities at Landmark, Carrbridge, Inverness, may serve as an example of what can be done to meet tourism demand for access to information, informal recreation with an educational content as well as picnics and refreshments. In East Sutherland there is growing demand for tourism as well as opportunity for the development of appropriate facilities needed to serve this demand. Owners and managers can take this opportunity to turn underused resources, including disused historic sites and buildings into full use and with a benefit of both statutory grants and an income from paying visitors. If this is but a modest income, at least it can make the difference between resource conservation and loss.

Skelbo is well accessible from both the regional traffic route A9 and from the town of Dornoch, already an important visitor centre in Sutherland. It is not difficult to see the connection between Skelbo, Dornoch and Dunrobin, in particular the way in which Skelbo may be seen as an attraction between major attractions in a region dependent for some of its income upon Tourism and the backing of the statutory authorities concerned with the whole of the resource and management side of the industry. Without such backing the owners of Scottish Heritage could not be expected to contribute as much as they do in helping to add to the major contribution of Scottish Tourism in the UK economy.

#### Future options

An evaluation of the present condition of Skelbo suggests certain options for the future summarized in the form of a table.

Management factors	1 Preservation	2 Interpretation	3 Restoration
1 Cost	Low	Medium	High
2 Income	Statutory Charitable	As '1' plus pay- ment by visitors	As '1' and '2' plus rent from house
3 Site use	Limited access	Public access	Full use
4 Education	Archaeology, his- tory	As '1' extended facilities	As '2' extended to setting
5 Recreation	Creative use of leisure, volunta- ry work	Day visits, in- formal outings, picnics, walks	As '2', all-weather use, display, re- freshments, sales
6 Tourism	Negligeable	Contribution	Time-sharing (?)
7 Services	Information, spe- cial access, par- king, litter, maintenance	As '1', extended with guided walk on site, seating, lavatories	As '2', extended to setting
8 Management	Charitable body	As '1'	As '1' (?)
9 Site work	Survey, excavat- ion, enclosure, tree felling (?), ground surface, stone work, sign- posting, notices	Reception, par- king, walks, other services	Reconstruction of house to full habi- table use, other restoration (?)
10 Public benefit	Considerable with open options	Raised level of interest	Full benefit
11 Employment	MSC (?) other (?)	Keeper and/or management team	As '2' extended
12 Other	Rescue work (1986-8)	Added viability (1988-90)	Consolidation (1990-?)

### Resources

Finance and additional resources of advice, technical expertise, skills and other voluntary (unpaid) work, both will be needed if the liability of Skelbo is to be turned into an asset of public benefit and with the necessary support from the Skelbo Trust. Such funds can be raised and the additional resources marshalled into voluntary action. The Owners cannot be expected to initiate any rescue action without adequate public support, nor can the Public be expected to fund any scheme unless there was a clear guarantee that it served the best public interest. It seemed conclusive therefore to suggest that the Owners of Skelbo and those who care for Scottish Heritage should consider if the two sides might enter into some arrangement for partnership, first to consider more fully the available options for Skelbo, second to launch an appeal for help.

A Skelbo Advisory Committee may be set up jointly between the Skelbo Trust and other interested statutory and voluntary bodies able and willing to help as far as available resources permit. A first step may be for the Committee to draft or commission a remit for approval jointly between the Trust and other members. With an agreed remit, the Committee would then be able to launch an appeal for funds needed to cover its own cost and the cost of rescue work urgently needed to avoid the risk of further damage to the walls and to carry out other site work if necessary. It is envisaged that a rescue operation might be carried out as soon as possible, perhaps in 1986-8. If fund-raising succeeded well the 'Preservation' option might then be followed by a next phase of 'Interpretation' and ideally by 'Restoration' of Skelbo Castle.

The recent re-roofing of St Andrew's Kirk, Golspie, made possible by a world-wide appeal, provides an example of what may be achieved for Skelbo. Alternatively, if one or more charitable sponsors could be found willing to help, it might be more expedient and less demanding in resources to collect the actual funds.

### Conclusion

It is hoped that this paper may serve its purpose at least in drawing attention to the historical interest attached to Skelbo Castle and its setting as well as the present condition of the site and ruins. The options for the future may be considered as merely an attempt to clarify a broad range of preliminary ideas. Those present in the meeting may wish to give some further thought to such ideas and contribute to our discussion with possible comments and questions. The recommendation attached to this paper was given in the Summary, that the Meeting consider the motion for a Skelbo Advisory Committee with a proper remit to give advice and to launch an appeal.

Daniel J J Sutherland

Devon, Easter 1986

SKELBO CASTLE - PRESS STATEMENT, FROM DANIEL SUTHERLAND AT SKELBO, 3 APRIL 1986

The meeting last Wednesday of the Skelbo Trust jointly with the Dornoch Heritage Society and the Clan Sutherland Society provided opportunity for constructive discussion <sup>over Skelbo Castle</sup> between the various interested bodies ~~at Skelbo~~. The site with the ruins by Loch Fleet on the Moray Firth is <sup>on the statutory</sup> listed as an Ancient Monument and a Historic Building. In April 1985 the sudden collapse of walls alerted the Owners and the Local Authority to the instability of the ruins and the need ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~preservation~~ preservation with public safety. Considerable concern was expressed in the press. This eventually led to the meeting chaired by Mr Michael Alexander for the Skelbo Trust and attended by both statutory and voluntary bodies. Represented in the meeting were the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, Clan Sutherland Society, Dornoch Heritage Society, Highland Regional Council, Nature Conservancy Council, Scottish Civic Trust, Scottish Development Department, Scottish Tourist Board, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Sutherland Archaeological and Historical Society, Sutherland District Council and others.

Those attending visited the site with the adjacent Nature Reserve of Loch Fleet (SSSI). At Skelbo House ~~there is~~ an exhibition prepared by the Royal Commission on the Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings of Scotland and a paper presented by ~~Mr~~ the Historian of the Clan Sutherland formed the background to a general discussion.

Skelbo and other lands appear in records of c 1211 when they belonged to Gilbert of Moray, founder of Dornoch Cathedral. In 1290 the envoys sent North by King Edward I heard at Skelbo of the death of the Maid of Norway <sup>(her bride)</sup> on her way to Scotland. <sup>with over two</sup> For ~~almost three~~ centuries Skelbo belonged to the Sutherlands of Duffus until sold in 1787. It <sup>was used in civil unrest</sup> ~~was used in civil unrest~~ in 1650 and in 1747. ~~SKELBO~~

The walls <sup>of the motte and bailie castle</sup> ~~date from the~~ middle ages ~~and~~ with later additions.

It was suggested that Skelbo was of considerable historic interest and with potential for historic preservation, interpretation and restoration. It was recognized that ~~SKELBO~~ if the necessary resources could be found, Skelbo might ~~well~~ ~~be~~ used again as a residence, ~~and~~ a facility for public access, ~~or both~~ to Education and Recreation, or both.

Full restoration was feasible and desirable, but expensive. However, the recent appeal for restoration of St Andrew's Kirk, Golspie was an example of succesful fund raising and as such applicable to Skelbo. The Inspector of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate explained the unique historic value of the castle, also the statutory protection afforded to listed sites. It was hoped that given the loss of Helmsdale Castle and Golspie Tower in recent years, Skelbo would ~~not be~~ be safeguarded.

Mr Alexander, speaking for the Skelbo Trust, said that consideration was being given to various options that might be open to the Trust and he thanked those present for their contribution of constructive advice and comment.

In the evening Mr Daniel Sutherland gave an illustrated talk on Skelbo to an audience invited by the Dornoch Heritage Society in the Council Chambers, Dornoch.

To: -  
David T. Polson, Esq.  
Divisional Planning Officer  
The Meadows  
Dornoch.

"TORRANNOY"

Dornoch,

Sutherland

IV25 3HR.

29<sup>th</sup> December, 1986

Application S.U. / 1986 / 320

Dear Sir,

It is with considerable dismay that I have heard of the proposals to partially demolish Skelbo Castle House, ~~and enclose the whole site within an expensive deer fence.~~

Skelbo Castle, and house, are listed properties, I understand, since 1971. Why has this property therefore been allowed to decay to the point of danger? That it is on private land, I am aware, so why has the owner not taken the necessary steps to have this listed property kept in repair? If private owners are unable to meet such expense I believe they are obliged to donate the listed building, and land, to the National Trust, or other public body interested in undertaking such responsibility — why has this not been done, long ago? Why has the inspectorate taken no action? Fifteen years have elapsed without any attempt to stay the decay of masonry, and the 1983 survey by the Royal Commission resulted in complete disinterest, other than the taking of photographs (which deteriorate faster than buildings) and making drawings, and absolutely no positive action.

Must the local authority come to be classified along with Glasgow as historical vandals? — and I would cite here, outstandingly, the Peel of Drummy.

To say there is no available money, in Scotland, for a national monument of such historic background, is a shibboleth in the face of the recent £4.5m preservation of a duke's dog-kennel in Hamilton. £4.5m would rebuild the whole of Skelbo, and leave a fund for maintenance into posterity — yet a delightful, valuable and historic building such as Skelbo must be pulled down — where is the proportion in the thing? If the monument had been in America quite a different approach would be taken.

Skelbo Castle demonstrates better than any other castle in the Northern Highlands the differing stages of castle-development between the twelfth and the seventeenth centuries. The most significant building architecturally, and historically, is the large medieval dwelling-house within the castle grounds, which is fast falling into ruin. The building is a double house, two-storied building with vaulted cellars at ground level, and probably the only such example anywhere in the Highlands.



Such a deeply historic, architecturally and socially important monument, is of irreplacable educational value for not only the whole Nation, but for tourists from abroad, as well as for the education of youth and adult alike within its own area. (2)

The tourist-attractive aspect, quite apart from the exceptional educational value of the site and buildings of Skelbo Castle, is of trade-promoting value to a County deeply so in need, and to a County hitherto much remiss in neglecting this aspect of its undeveloped and valuable assets — steeped as Skelbo is in the active history of Scotland from the Maid of Norway and the Inheritance of the Scottish Throne to the Jacobite Revivals of more modern times.

The South-west gable is dangerous, for the masonry is cracking vertically, and opening up, and action must be quick before the next couple of winters fasts fell it. The nature of restorative work, now, demanded here is extensive, I am aware, and the work of skilled masons in this specialist branch of building is required — but, stones can be marked and numbered, and taken down and stored in preservation pending funds for full restoration, and the glorious, centuries-old woodwork of the rafters demands retention, what is left of it, if it is sound, as I believe it is, and not wormed. The expense of all this would fall far short of that squandered on a Lancashire whippet kennel, even though dual in origin, and be of infinitely more value to the Nation from every aspect.

I wish to lodge formal protest against the action contemplated, and demand that something considerably more positive, active and constructive be undertaken in lieu, to restore a valuable historical monument safely to the viewing public. ~~(rather than the erection of an expensive boundary fence for a private estate at public expense) and forthwith, at that.~~

Scandalized at the proposed formal action

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully

John T. Robertson  
M.B., Ch.B., M.R.C.P.

Distinguished architect Nicholas Johnstone is to be invited to join a small action committee to preserve the ruins of historic Skelbo Castle on Loch Fleet.

He is to be invited by Mr Michael Alexander, Skelbo House, to join the small committee to set in action a plan which will make the area more attractive and safe for visitors. He is the trustee of the estate.

Mr Johnstone was involved in the extension of Mr Alexander's Skelbo House and has restored a number of historic buildings.

Others who may serve on the committee are Mr Michael Vickers, a retired London barrister whose home is now at Skelbo Castle Cottage; a representative of Cambusmore Estate; of Dornoch Heritage Association; a locally resident representative of the Clan Sutherland Society, and Mr Alexander himself.

Mr Alexander, on behalf of the trustees of Skelbo Castle, has put forward an application for limited demolition of the ruined mansion house following an order from Highland Regional Council to make the building safe.

In a memorandum which he has submitted to Mr David Polson, the divisional planning officer, he says: "The general plan has evolved since I became an interested party, and it is based on the property as a whole — the 12th Century castle, the 16th/17th Century, terested

## A Plan to save Skelbo Castle



sional advice that remedial work was impractical and that much of the building would have to come down before it could safely be built up."

Mr Alexander, author, soldier and survivor of the infamous German Oflag at Colditz Castle, has listed his plan for the ruins, which he hopes will commend itself to local authorities and others in-

operation of the Cambusmore Estate; making a path to a viewpoint over the loch.

4. Clearing out the forge and stable at ground level and making part available for a display which I would ask the Honorary Historian of the Clan Sutherland Society to organise.

5. To take further advice on the maintenance of the old castle walls. They seem intact at present

This shot of 17th Century Skelbo House, taken more than 50 years ago, dramatically shows the extent of recent weathering damage to the structure. The roof has now all but caved in, and the gable walls are seriously damaged.

This picture, taken by Miss Lyon of Ospisdale in the 1930s, is now a valued treasure of the Dornoch Heritage Society.

The proposal by Mr Michael

Although there are forecasts that there may be an upsurge in the fabrication of off-shore oil installations in the next two or three years, under no circumstances can a recovery of the high oil-related employment figures of the past in the Highlands be envisaged.

This pessimistic forecast comes in the latest Economic Review from the planning department of Highland Regional Council.

The partial recovery, after intense depression, for the next two or three years may bring Highland region employment in the oil sector back over 2000 for a time. However, competition will remain severe says the report, which is presented by Mr Richard Cameron director of planning.

As the partial recovery appears to depend on the real price of crude oil remaining considerably above its recent level of 15 dollars, it raises the subject of UK Government policy on this price. UK net exports of oil are around 40 per cent of production and are declining — by 1995 self sufficiency will be at an end.

More over, UK trade is mainly directed towards countries which are net importers of oil. Therefore it is difficult to see any strong justification for a UK attempt to push up oil prices.

On the other hand, reduction of the price would mean some loss of net income to Britain and would discourage the development of high cost non-OPEC sources, leaving the country firmly in con-

Although almost all commentators forecast that the conditions in the off-shore fabrication bracket will improve around the end of this decade — relative that is to the next two to three years.

This reflects, in part, the passing of the worst slow-down in oil platform orders, and in part additional platform orders related to gas development in the North Sea. "Thus if both Highland yards can survive until 1989, they should then last until 1996 at least. Oil companies are currently expressing concern that closures may leave the UK with insufficient yard capacity to cope with the expected recovery," the planners say.

The Nigg site, linked to the gas gathering proposal, remains available for development, and industry interest in it continues. Its prospects may be boosted by the discovery of further fields in the Moray Firth. Highland Region also has a small high technology oil-related sector like Osprey Electronics and Leidnitz Lann which has brighter prospects than the more conventional activities.

The region experienced unprecedented changes from 1971 to 1986 with the population increas-

people from outside the Highlands living in lodgings or work camps.

This stage of development, in the early to mid 1970s, was characterised by dislocation of several parts of the region through labour shortages, super-normal inflation of house prices and overloading of various facilities. However, greatly accelerated house building in the mid 1970s allowed the resident population to grow, reduced dependence on short-term migrant workers and eliminated the housing shortage and excess prices. Other facilities tended to adjust to increase demand later, and in some instances are still doing so, for example shopping and roads.

As a result of oil development, the Highland region has an increased population, more and better housing and infrastructure, and facilities which have been modernised and extended. It also has an expanded labour force which is seriously under employed (13,500 persons unemployed in June 1986 compared to 3100 in June 1971 on a similar basis).

Unemployment in the region is not simply a reflection of the UK problem, says the Economic Review, but is also due to the fact that North Sea oil was developed at a pace which could not be sustained. Rapid development was seen to be necessary in the UK interests, largely for balance of payment reasons. Highland region ob-

terests is inevitable. However, where the locality bears costs in the interest of the country, equity requires that locality be compensated.

"This requirement is not being met in respect of Highland Region today," says the report.

Despite a slight increase in population between 1983 (13,140) and 1985 (13,240) the underlying trend in Sutherland is for continued population decline.

The forecasts are that from a 1971 population of 13,635 the 1996 population figure will be 12,325 the lowest for several centuries.

Of a total of 6415 houses in Sutherland, 3415 are in private ownership and 1685 belong to the council, making a total of 5100.

Of that total, 1315 are regarded as non-effective stock, like vacant houses, second and holiday homes.

A total of 52 houses were built in Sutherland in the two years 1985/86. In that time, only 29 council houses were constructed, but housing associations were responsible for a total of 50.

In 1986 at least 2500 houses were on the market, based on the number of property clearance inquiries received by the regional council. This represented three per cent of the region's total housing stock.

The lowest rate of turnover in the region was from Sutherland District Council at five per cent from eight per cent of the region's

F R I E N D S   O F   S K E L B O   C A S T L E

To

Dornoch, 4 March 1987

Dear

PETITION FOR GUARDIANSHIP TO SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND

Given the precarious condition of the castle and the recent demolition proposal from the Owners, it was decided at a public meeting in Dornoch, 24 February 1987, that a Petition should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Scotland to ask for his intervention and for rescue action by means of an Agreement for Guardianship.

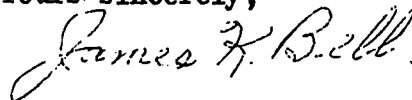
This form of management agreement would mean that the Owners would keep the landownership and the Nation would accept responsibility for the castle. The agreement would enable the Secretary of State to create facilities for public access and enjoyment, including any display of information about Scottish Heritage for the area centred on the castle.

Duffus Castle and St Peter's Kirk in Moray, both being closely related to Skelbo by ancient historical connections, are now in the care of the Nation by means of an Agreement for Guardianship. This means that the sites and the ruins are being kept to an exemplary standard of management and with good provisions for physical maintenance, safety, public access and information.

On behalf of all friends of Skelbo Castle, I write to invite your support for this Petition. The attached copy of the Petition will explain our case. It is hoped that you will add your signature on the back of this document and that perhaps you will collect as many signatures as possible from other friends of Skelbo and so help with this rescue action.

Please return the signed Petition to Friends of Skelbo, c/o James Bell, Rhian, Evelix Road, Dornoch, Sutherland, IV25 3HR, before 7 April 1987.

Yours sincerely,



James K Bell

The Secretary of State for Scotland  
New St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh EH1 3SX

Dornoch, 4 March 1987

Sir,

#### SKELBO CASTLE, PETITION FOR GUARDIANSHIP

In the light of its ongoing deterioration and the current Planning Application (SU/1986/320) for demolition, we respectfully petition you to take the Castle, tower, fortalice, and Manor place of Skelbo into Guardianship by a joint agreement with the owners, in order that the site and ruins of the mediaeval castle and the 16th-17th century Manor house may be saved from further collapse, restored as far as possible and eventually made accessible to interested members of the public.

We present this petition with the deeply held conviction that Nigel Tranter was right when he said "Skelbo made its impact on the story of Scotland and it ought not to become the victim of the demolisher". Historical details are appended on a separate sheet.

Furthermore, we draw your attention to the 1983 report by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland which said: "The ruins of Skelbo Castle demonstrate clearly, and probably better than any other castle in the Northern Highlands, the different stages of castle development between the 12th and the 17th centuries".

We would point out that the whole Skelbo complex has buildings from the mediaeval period, the 16th-17th centuries, the early 19th century age of Telford and late Victorian. This combination is unique in the Highlands, and the 16th-17th century house within the castle walls is unique in its own right, both as regards its age and position and by the nature of the vaulting beneath the main house.

In 1630, Sir Robert Gordon listed the castles of East Sutherland, of which 13 have now disappeared. Of the remainder, Dunrobin and Skibo have been extensively altered in the 19th century, so that only Skelbo remains as an example of a medieval castle.

Skelbo is unique in combining the features of a thousand years of history and a setting of outstanding scenic beauty. It could be the mid-point on a heritage trail between the old Royal Burgh of Dornoch and Dunrobin Castle. Carefully managed, Skelbo could become a much-needed tourist resource.

We seek your assurance that everything possible will be done to safeguard Skelbo and to take urgently needed measures for repair and maintenance, as well as safety.

We would envisage an Agreement for Guardianship based upon a comprehensive management plan for preservation, access, and a tasteful interpretive display. This, as we see it, would entail that:

1. all walls should be made safe and sound as soon as possible to prevent further collapse. This may entail some rebuilding.
2. all work done should aim ultimately at full restoration, subject to competent, skilled, historical-architectural advice.
3. loose and fallen stone and especially sculpted stone should be preserved on site in a secure place until needed for restoration work.

All this is implied in the concept of Guardianship, which we most strongly urge you to adopt

## SKELBO, HISTORICAL NOTES

The long history of Skelbo in Sutherland and the North is linked with the history of Scotland, England and Europe. This is a brief summary.

1. The name of Skelbo shows that it was an important farmstead of the early Viking age, built around 850.
2. In 1211 Hugo Freskyn gave Skelbo to his kinsman, Gilbert of Moray, later to become St Gilbert. He made it over to his brother Richard in 1223; Richard was probably killed in the Battle of Embo in 1245, when a band of pirates landed at Little Ferry.
3. In 1290 the Scottish and English Commissioners were at Skelbo, to meet the young Queen of Scotland, the Maid of Norway, who was to marry the heir to the throne of England. It was at Skelbo that they heard of her death in Orkney. This link to the history of both Scotland and England would justify the preservation of Skelbo as a National Monument.
4. In the 15th century Skelbo passed by marriage from the clan Moray - the lineage of Hugo Freskyn - to the chief of Kynnaired, whose possession caused dispute with John, 8th Earl of Sutherland, Over-Lord of Skelbo. His spouse was killed near Skelbo.
5. In 1529 Skelbo passed from the Kynnaireds to the Sutherlands of Duffus, kinsmen of the Earls of Sutherland. Alexander Sutherland of Duffus was knighted by Charles I, before 1643. Lord Duffus accompanied Charles II returning from exile in the Netherlands to Scotland, 1650. That same year Skelbo was reinforced as a garrison of the Earl of Sutherland, whose army came from Skelbo and elsewhere to partake in the battle of Carbisdale which ended the fatal campaign of Montrose and its army marching south from Caithness. Montrose was captured in Sutherland and executed in Edinburgh.
6. In 1654 General Middleton stored army supplies in Skelbo Castle after his landing near the castle at Little Ferry. Lord Duffus, supporting Charles II, joined General Middleton and the Earl of Glencairn in the rising against Cromwell which was centred on Dornoch but defeated at Dalnaspidal. In the 17th century, Skelbo was frequently at the centre of feuding between the clansmen of Gordon and Sutherland.
7. In 1715 at Tain, Kenneth 3rd Lord Duffus with hundreds of Jacobites proclaimed King James VIII. After the defeat of the Jacobites Skelbo was forfeited. Lord Duffus fled through Caithness to Sweden. Seized in Hamburg and imprisoned in the Tower of London he was freed without trial in 1717 returning to exile. In Russia Lord Duffus served the Czar as a naval commander. He died in St Petersburg c 1734. His son Eric lived at Skelbo. A fine painting of the 3rd Lord Duffus, the exiled laird of Skelbo in Highland dress is kept in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh.
8. In 1746 the Earl of Cromarty and his Jacobite army occupied Skelbo Castle. They captured four Hanoverian ships with arms at Little Ferry and moved to Dunrobin where the Earl surrendered to the Earl of Sutherland's militia. This prevented them from partaking in the battle of Culloden which may have influenced the outcome.
9. In 1747 at Skelbo Lady Duffus wrote to the Earl of Sutherland about his motherless daughter. The child in her care was making good progress. This letter gives a vivid impression of domestic life at Skelbo Castle. In 1757 the laird of Duffus and Skelbo wrote to the Earl of Sutherland's factor about the condition of the Mansion House, the kiln and the girnell. The roof at the north end of the house was beyond repair. By 1769 the castle was ruinous. Skelbo was sold by the 4th Lord Duffus in 1787, to whom the forfeited title was restored by Parliament, 1826. The baronial title of Skelbo reverted to the Countess of Sutherland, 1804.

(From Sir William Fraser, 'The Sutherland Book', Edinburgh, 1884; and other sources).



The Secretary of State for Scotland,  
New St. Andrew's House,  
Edinburgh,  
EH1 3SX.

Sir,

Re Planning Application SU/1986/320

We, the undersigned, respectfully call upon you to intervene if necessary to ensure that the above-mentioned application is granted only on the terms recommended below:

1. All work done should be with a view to the ultimate restoration of the 16/17th century house.
2. An architect skilled in such work should be used to advise on how this work should be carried out.
3. The reduction in the height of the wall should be limited to what is strictly necessary for public safety.
4. The stonework should be carefully removed and deposited in a place of safety for future re-building, and a record made of this place of safety.
5. Measures should be taken to prevent this stone being used for other purposes.
6. Measures should be taken to prevent further structural collapse.
7. The necessary fence around the castle should allow controlled access to the site by means of a locked gate.
8. The "Castle, tower, fortalice and Manor place" as the whole complex is described in a document of 1804, should become a Scheduled Monument or, better still, be taken into Guardianship.

*marked 9*

We present this petition with the deeply held conviction that Nigel Tranter was right when he said "Skelbo made its impact on the story of Scotland and it ought not to become the victim of the demolisher". Historical details are appended on a separate sheet.

Finally, we draw your attention to the 1983 report by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland which said:

"The ruins of Skelbo Castle demonstrate clearly, and probably better than any other castle in the Northern Highlands, the different stages of castle development between the 12th and the 17th centuries".

We would point out that the whole Skelbo complex has buildings from the medieval period, the 16/17th century, the early 19th century age of Telford, and late Victorian. This combination is unique in the Highlands, and the 16/17th century house within the castle walls is unique in its own right, both as regards its age and position and by the nature of the vaulting beneath the main house.

In 1630, Sir Robert Gordon listed the castles of East Sutherland, of which 13 have now disappeared. Of the remainder, Dunrobin and Skibo have been extensively altered in the 19th century, so that only Skelbo remains as an example of a medieval castle.

*more emphasis here.*

We feel that it is vital to ensure that the ruins are preserved and that further decay is prevented.

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....

.....

The Secretary of State for Scotland  
New St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh EH1 3SX

3 March 1987

Sir,

SKELBO CASTLE, PETITION

We who sign below ask you with due respect to intervene in the <sup>matter</sup> ~~demolition~~ of Skelbo Castle in Sutherland. We beg you to enter into an Agreement for Guardianship jointly with the Owners of Skelbo, the site and ruins of the medieval castle and its 16th-17th century hall-house, now proposed for demolition in Planning Application "SU/1986/320". Indeed, we seek your support for rescue of our Scottish Heritage.

We reject the proposal for demolition as in conflict with rescue <sup>and a threat</sup> ~~to the castle~~ further loss and aggravation, the serious damage (1985) resulting from decades of decay and careless neglect. ~~We~~ <sup>we</sup> express disappointment over ~~the~~ lack of progress with rescue action since 1985, in particular with the implementation of positively, constructive proposals from experts who spoke with imagination and realism at Skelbo, <sup>in</sup> 1986. These were ~~the proposals for the castle~~ options of phasing rescue work such that the liability of dereliction could be turned into an asset of public interest <sup>gradually</sup> ~~with modern~~ <sup>revenue</sup> ~~resources~~.

"Skelbo made its impact on the story of Scotland and it ought not to become the victim of the demolisher" ! We share Nigel Tranter's view. We note also the expert opinion of the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland: "The ruins of Skelbo Castle demonstrate clearly - probably better than any other castle in the Northern Highlands - the different stages of castle development between the 12th and the 17th centuries." (1983). In Sutherland, Skelbo is now the sole example of a medieval castle, one of thirteen castles named by Gordon <sup>Robert</sup> (1630), ~~one that was not lost nor drastically altered in the 19th century such as Dunrobin and Skibo~~. Within the medieval baily wall, the hall-house (c 1700) is unique for its age, character and vaulting, and for its northerly position in this Country.

Named by Vikings, stronghold of Scottish kings and knights, hall-house of lairds, Skelbo is a unique element in our Scottish Heritage, a landmark in Sutherland combining the age and features of a millenium with the space and splendour of <sup>Highland</sup> ~~scenic~~ Highland landscape, outstanding for its natural beauty and interest, the Moray Firth coast, the hills, the sea-loch and wildlife (SSSI). Our plea to you is that Skelbo should now be rescued from oblivion, repaired, <sup>gradually</sup> ~~restored~~. It should be made accessible, its history made more visible. Those who care for Scottish Heritage, social and natural history, should be made welcome at Skelbo. Residents and visitors in the North should have an opportunity to visit Skelbo, to see this evocative place, to enjoy its beauty and interest, to experience its peace and quiet; and to understand the story of Skelbo.

We conclude that Skelbo is of such merit and worth that it deserves recognition as a <sup>historical site</sup> ~~landmark~~ of interest to all who live <sup>here</sup> ~~in~~ this Nation. Therefore we ask you by our petition to help safeguard the future of Skelbo. We seek your assurance that adequate, urgently needed measures are taken for safety, repair and maintenance as soon as possible. We recommend ~~that~~ (1) Agreement for Guardianship ~~should be made~~; (2) a comprehensive management plan should be prepared for preservation and access, public enjoyment, interpretation and information; (3) all work done should aim at ultimately full restoration and with competent, skilled historical-architectural advice; (4) all walls and fabric should be made safe, ~~stable~~ <sup>sound</sup>, and without risk of collapse or decay, immediately; (5) walls should be reinstated to full height, using fallen and loose stone by reference to available photographs, plans and records; and no material must be removed from site; (6) sculpted stone should be rescued and where possible reproduced to match authentic material; (7) the site should be adequately fenced and notices posted to guard against unlawful access or trespass.

## SKELBO, HISTORICAL NOTES

1. The long history of Skelbo in Sutherland and the North is linked with the history of Scotland, England and Europe. These notes give a brief summary.

2. The Norse name Skelbo refers to the link between Scotland and Scandinavia in the period of invasion and settlement in Sutherland and the North by Vikings, c 800.

3. In 1211 Hugh Freskin, Lord of Duffus in Moray, held Skelbo. His kinsman Gilbert, Bishop of Caithness (St Gilbert, founder of Dornoch Cathedral) held Skelbo for the service of one bowman to the King of Scotland. Richard, brother of Gilbert, held Skelbo in 1235 and he is believed to have died probably in the battle of Embo, 1245.

4. In 1290 at Skelbo, envoys heard of the death of Princess Margaret, heiress to the throne of Norway, bride to Prince Edward of England. The 'Maid of Norway', in Scottish chronicles, sailed from Norway to Scotland, but died in or near Orkney and was buried in Bergen. This event was a turning point in the history of three nations.

5. In the 15th century Skelbo passed by marriage from the clan Moray - the lineage of Hugh Freskin - to the chief of Kynnaird, whose possession caused dispute with John, 8th Earl of Sutherland, Over-Lord of Skelbo, whose spouse was killed near Skelbo.

6. In 1529 Skelbo passed from the Kynnairds to the Sutherlands of Duffus, kinsmen of the Earls of Sutherland. Alexander Sutherland of Duffus was knighted by Charles I, before 1643. Lord Duffus accompanied Charles II returning from exile in the Netherlands to Scotland, 1650. That same year Skelbo was reinforced as a garrison of the Earl of Sutherland, whose army came from Skelbo and elsewhere to partake in the battle of Carbisdale which ended the fatal campaign of Montrose and his army marching south from Caithness. Montrose was captured in Sutherland and executed in Edinburgh.

7. In 1654 General Middleton stored army supplies in Skelbo Castle after his landing near the castle at Little Ferry. Lord Duffus, supporting Charles II, joined General Middleton and the Earl of Glencairn in the rising against Cromwell which was centred on Dornoch but defeated at Dalnaspidal. In the 17th century, Skelbo was frequently at the centre of feuding between the clansmen of Gordon and Sutherland.

8. In 1715 at Tain, Kenneth 3rd Lord Duffus with hundreds of Jacobites proclaimed King James VIII. After the defeat of the Jacobites Skelbo was forfeited. Lord Duffus fled through Caithness to Sweden. Seized in Hamburg and imprisoned in the Tower of London he was freed without trial in 1717 returning to exile. In Russia Lord Duffus served the Czar as a naval commander. He died in St Petersburg c 1734. His son Eric lived at Skelbo. A fine painting of the 3rd Lord Duffus, the exiled laird of Skelbo in Highland dress is kept in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh.

9. In 1746 the Earl of Cromarty and his Jacobite army occupied Skelbo Castle. They captured four Hanoverian ships with arms at Little Ferry and moved to Dunrobin where the Earl surrendered to the Earl of Sutherland's militia. This prevented them from partaking in the battle of Culloden which may have influenced the outcome.

10. In 1747 at Skelbo Lady Duffus wrote to the Earl of Sutherland about his motherless daughter. The child in her care was making good progress. This letter gives a vivid impression of domestic life at Skelbo Castle. In 1757 the laird of Duffus and Skelbo wrote to the Earl of Sutherland's factor about the condition of the Mansion House, the kiln and the girnell. The roof at the north end of the house was beyond repair. By 1769 the castle was ruinous. Skelbo was sold by the 4th Lord Duffus in 1787, to whom the forfeited title was restored by Parliament, 1826. The baronial title of Skelbo reverted to the Countess of Sutherland, 1808. *1804 No document says 1804*

(From Sir William Fraser, 'The Sutherland Book', Edinburgh, 1884; and other sources).

Points from the long history of Skelbo, which link it with the history of Scotland, England and Europe, as well as with the story of the Highlands and Sutherland.

1. The name of Skelbo shows that it was an important farmstead of the early Viking age, built around 850.

2. In 1211 Hugo Freskyn gave Skelbo to his kinsman, Gilbert of Moray, later to become St. Gilbert. He made it over to his brother Richard in 1223; Richard was probably killed in the Battle of Embo in 1245, when a band of pirates landed at Little Ferry.

3. In 1290 the Scottish and English Commissioners were at Skelbo, to meet the young Queen of Scotland, the Maid of Norway, who was to marry the heir to the throne of England. It was at Skelbo that they heard of her death in Orkney. This link to the history of both Scotland and England would justify the preservation of Skelbo as a National Monument.

4. Skelbo played a part in the tragic story of Montrose and his last campaign. When he landed in Caithness in 1650, his enemy the Earl of Sutherland installed garrisons in Dunrobin, Skelbo, Skibo and Dornoch. Montrose was defeated at Carbisdale soon after this, by the men of these garrisons.

5. The Sutherlands of Duffus acquired Skelbo in 1529; they gave it another claim as a National Monument. Alexander Duffus played a part in the rising of General Middleton and the Earl of Glencairn, on behalf of Charles II against Cromwell. In 1654, Middleton landed at Little Ferry, close to Skelbo, and stored a large amount of arms and ammunition in Skelbo Castle. The rising was planned in and around Dornoch, but failed in a defeat at Dalnaspidal. After the Restoration, Charles II made Alexander the First Lord Duffus, and Middleton became a Commissioner.

6. In the Jacobite Rising of 1715, the Third Lord Duffus supported the Old Pretender and as a result forfeited his lands. He left the country for Russia, where he became a Commander of the Tsar's forces in Moscow.

7. In 1746, shortly before Culloden, Skelbo was occupied by a Jacobite force under the Earl of Cromartie, who captured four Hanoverian ships full of arms, lying at Little Ferry, after the Earl of Sutherland had been put to flight. The Earl of Cromartie made Skelbo his headquarters while preparing for Culloden, but later moved to Dunrobin. His force set off for the battle, but was

intercepted by Sutherland militia, and prevented from reaching Culloden. This absence of Cromartie's men was thought to be decisive in the outcome of the battle.

8. Soon after Culloden, Lady Elizabeth Duffus had the care of the motherless daughter of the 16th Earl of Sutherland. She wrote a charming letter in 1747, giving him news of the child's progress, and affording us a glimpse of the domestic life inside the 16th/17th century house within the Castle walls.

9. By 1769 the mediaeval house was largely in ruins, but the house stood until recent times. Skelbo passed into the family of the Earls of Sutherland in 1787; the title of the Barony of Skelbo may still be held by the Countess of Sutherland.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Page 9.

## No Fears for Skelbo

Sir — We act as Solicitors in Scotland to the trustees of the late Mrs S J Alexander who are the proprietors of Skelbo Castle. The trustees are extremely concerned to read recent reports that it is their intention to demolish much of the ruins of the mediaeval Castle and the nearby Manor House.

We are instructed to say that the planning application lodged on behalf of the Trustees is designed purely with a view to the long-term preservation of the building and only such demolition will be carried out as is absolutely essential for public safety and to preserve the residual structures and it is the trustees' intention that as much as possible of the Historic Building should be retained and conserved for future generations.

It would be appreciated if publicity could be given to this intention on the part of the Trustees to allay local fears. — Lindsays WS, Solicitors and Estate Agents, 11 Atholl Crescent, Edinburgh EH3 8HE.

**A number of wealthy people have shown interest in buying the ruins of ancient Skelbo Castle and its medieval manor house — if the title of Baron goes with the sale.**

This has emerged from correspondence between agents for the trustees of the late Mrs Sarah Alexander of Skelbo and the divisional planning officer for Sutherland.

In a recent letter to planning officer Mr David Polson, a representative of Finlayson Hughes wrote: "The Trust is prepared to consider the marketing of the house and castle and in fact are in receipt of a number of serious inquiries. A sale to one of these potential purchasers would be dependent on a Barony title being attached to the property and at present the Trust's solicitors are researching into this."

In his report to the planning committee at Dornoch last week, in which he recommended that listed building consent to demolish dangerous masonry and the removal of the unstable roof of the manor house should be refused, Mr Polson says of the reluctance of the Trust to carry out remedial work: "The only positive element is an apparent willingness to market the house. However, this

is said to be dependent upon the Barony title being attached to the property, which is being researched. However, it seems likely that this is vested with the Countess of Sutherland, but indications are that, in this particular case, it may be possible to make the Skelbo Barony available. This would be a matter between the applicants and the Countess direct."

Mr Polson noted that a memorandum put forward by one of the trustees on his own behalf, Mr Michael Alexander, goes a significant way towards meeting some of the requirements of the planners. "Mr Alexander has responded in some detail to the points raised; although a trustee and the Trust's tenant, he is not the applicant."

Concern about the condition of Skelbo House was first expressed at a meeting of the planning and building control committee in March 1985. At that time it was resolved that due to the historic interest and listed status of the castle manor, the dangerous buildings procedure should not be evoked initially, but that both properties

should be suitably fenced and posted with warning signs.

The present application was largely a delayed response on the part of the trustees to fulfil their obligations on public safety under the Building (Scotland) Acts.

Finlayson Hughes, on behalf of the tenants pointed out: "The Trust is aware of the present dangerous condition of the house and in view of the interest it may attract from tourists etc (even although the house is on private land) the Trust is concerned that it meet its obligations for public safety."

"There is no desire to 'erase' Skelbo House from the landscape and the proposal submitted is for those works absolutely necessary to remove the immediate danger to the public."

Mr Alexander, in a covering letter from his London home to his nine-point detailed proposals for preserving the ruins, said: "Judging by the reaction of the objectors, most of whom were invited by myself to a conference at Skelbo to discuss the future of the ruins, they do not appreciate that there is no-one more concerned than myself and I find it distressing that positive action should be undermined by misunderstandings

## This Castle hath an Unsteady Seat

The Trustees of Skelbo Castle are anxious to allay fears that they plan to demolish the ruins on the shores of Loch Fleet. (See solicitors' letter, Page 9. Here, local planners debate the issue . . . .

promulgated by a third party."

In a later letter, in which he indicated that he was an historian himself and had published five historical biographies, Mr Alexander added: "I should perhaps make clear that I personally do not wish to compromise the site to the extent of having the bottom of my garden and the southern side of Loch Fleet turned into a tourist attraction beyond its true viability, but am only to anxious that it should as soon as possible be accessible to any interested party as a historical and architectural point of reference. Any prospect of reconstructing the manorial building should be considered. Should someone not also wish to reconstruct the castle walls? That, in my view, would be an interesting debating point."

Local regional representative Col Allan Gilmour said that it was a "complicated story", but there appeared to be a will to do something about the ruins.

Objections to the proposed further demolition had come from Mr Daniel J J Sutherland, Dornoch

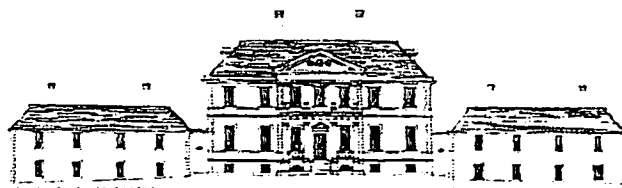
Heritage Society, Dr Struan Robertson, Mrs B Mackenzie, Dornoch Community Council and Mr Robert MacLennan MP.

In her letter Mrs Mackenzie of Lednabirichen had stated: "It would be an act of barbarism to permit any demolition or further deterioration, and pressure should be put on the trustees to preserve the inheritance in their care."

The planning committee decided to adopt their planning officer's suggestion that the trustees be invited to resubmit a detailed plan for the conservation, possible restoration and any plans to sell to a willing buyer within the next six weeks.

Said planning committee chairman Mr Francis Keith: "In the present circumstances, because this application is so vague, we have no other course but to refuse it. It is quite a complicated matter and I think we should give them until our next meeting in six weeks' time at least, if they are making progress."





## SCOTTISH HISTORIC BUILDINGS TRUST

Vennel Cottage  
Goose Green  
Gullane  
East Lothian EH31 2BA  
Gullane (0620) 842086

Robert MacLennan Esq MP  
House of Commons  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

18 December 1987

Dear Mr MacLennan

HALL HOUSE, SKELBO CASTLE

Thank you for your letter of 14 December.

I enclose copies of the plans prepared by Benjamin Tindall, the architect who was asked by the Trust for his comments on the application for partial demolition, and for advice on the feasibility of restoring the hall house. These are:

- a site plan showing the 16th century hall house in relation to the curtain wall of the castle and the remains of the 14th century keep;
- a sketch showing how the south gable wall of the hall house could be supported by scaffolding as a more appropriate alternative to demolition, pending reconstruction of the building;
- outline proposals for the reasonably authentic restoration of the building as an attractive and highly desirable house.

The Trust is not at present interested in acquiring the castle itself; it has several projects in hand which have more than fully committed its resources, and in any event it believes that a private restoring purchaser offers the best future for such a distinctive property. It is however willing to offer whatever advice and assistance it can, to the present and potential future owners.

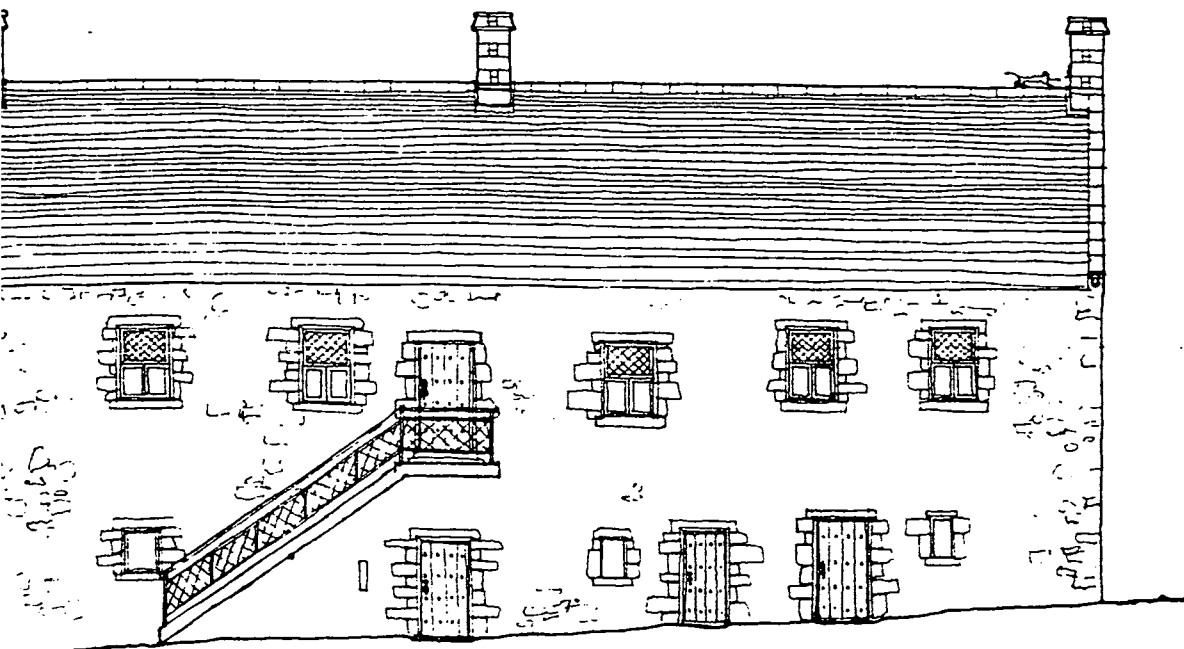
If all else failed, the Trust might be prepared to acquire the property as a holding operation, but that does not at present seem to be necessary. Michael Alexander has found a possible restoring purchaser; he (ie, Michael Alexander) has also seen Benjamin Tindall's drawings; and the Trust hopes that something like the scheme envisaged can soon be realised.

Yours sincerely

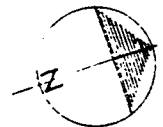
John A Clare  
Secretary

# NOTES:

THIS DRAWING IS BASED ON  
SURVEY INFORMATION PROVIDED  
BY THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON  
THE ANCIENT & HISTORICAL  
MONUMENTS OF SCOTLAND



WEST ELEVATION



BENJAMIN TINDALL  
ARCHITECTS

TRUNK'S CLOSE  
55 THE HIGH STREET  
EDINBURGH EH1 1SR

TELEPHONE 031-557 5555

Job: **SKELBO**

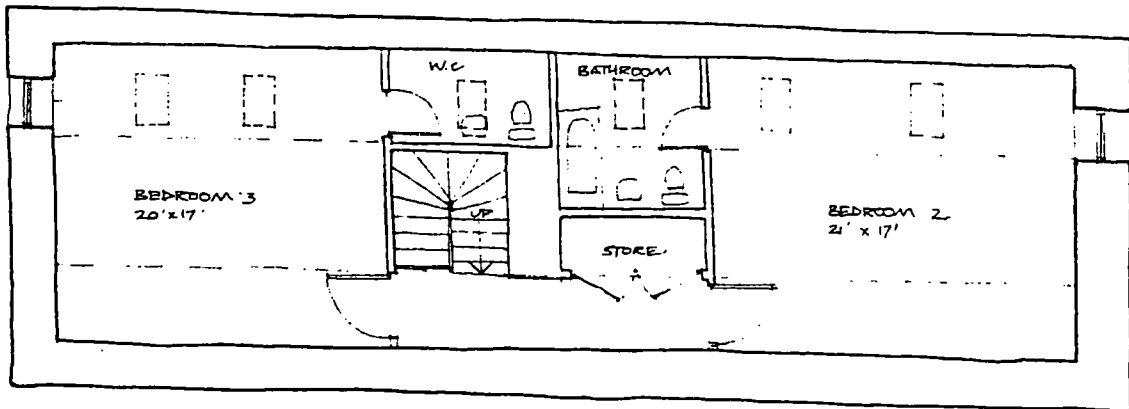
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BUILDINGS TRUST**

Title: **RESTORATION PROPOSAL**

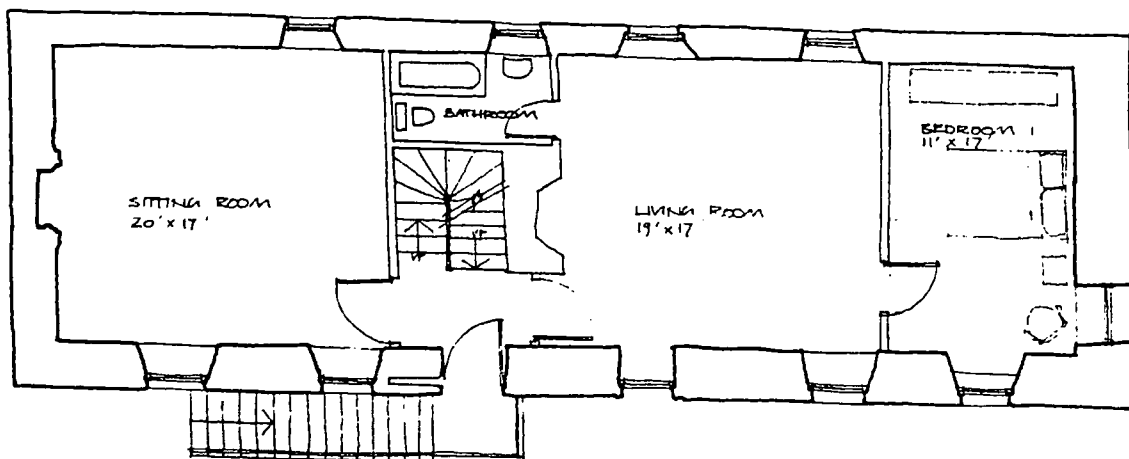
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Date: **DECEMBER 1987**

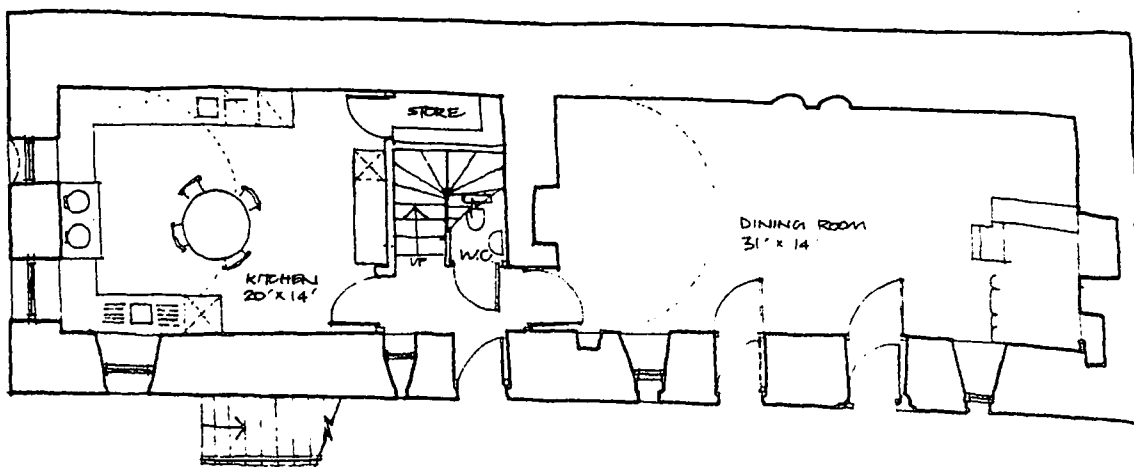
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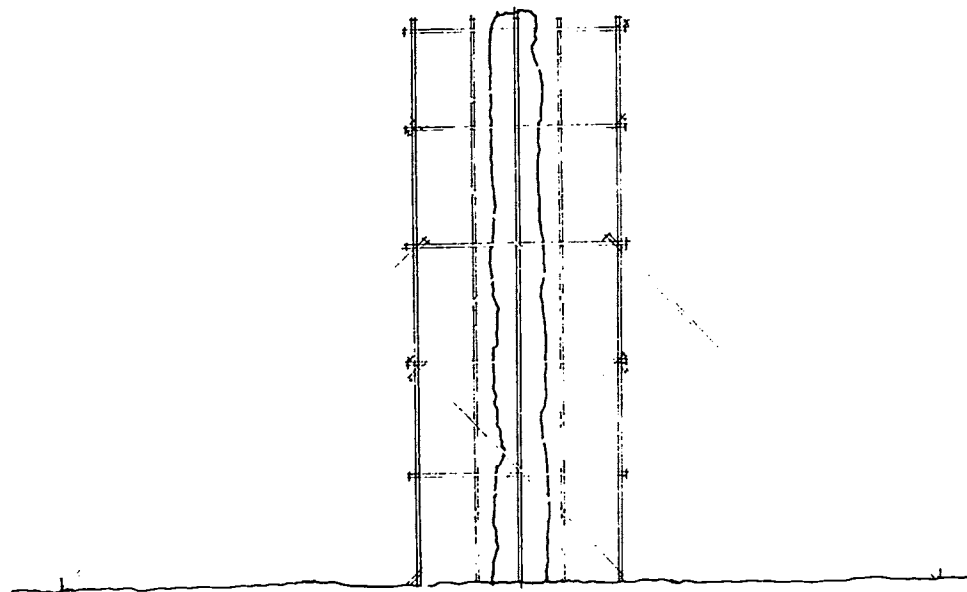
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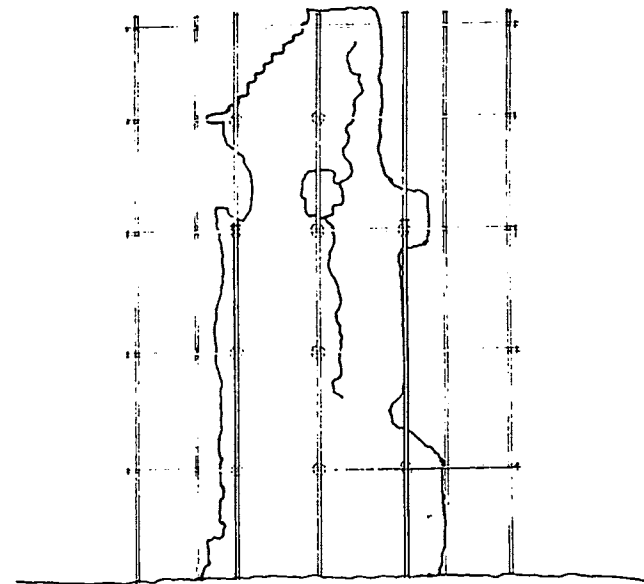
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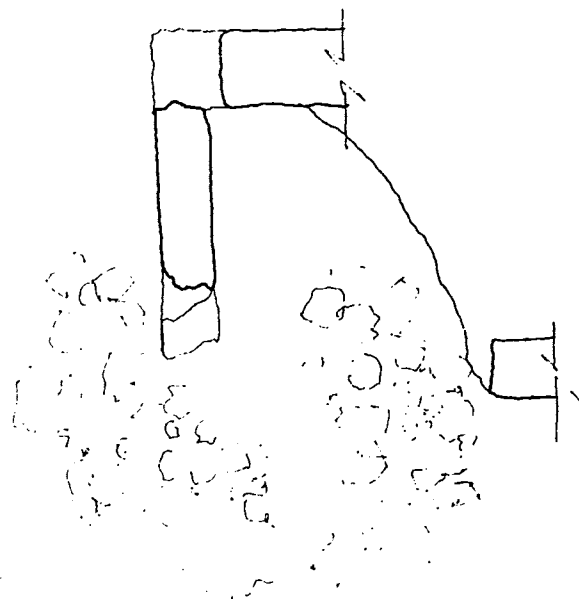
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



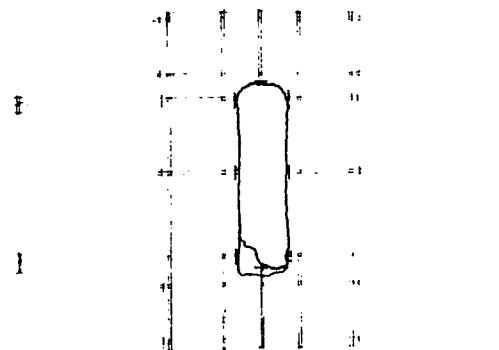
EAST/WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

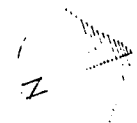


PLAN OF SOUTH GABLE AS EXISTING



PLAN OF PROPOSED SCAFFOLDING LAYOUT AT HIGHER LEVEL

1. THIS DRAWING IS FOR INDICATIVE PURPOSES ONLY & IS NOT TO BE USED AS A WORKING DRAWING.
2. ANY WORK MUST BE CARRIED OUT UNDER PROFESSIONAL ADVICE & SUPERVISION ON SITE.
3. SCAFFOLDING TO BE TO BS 5973 : 1982 "ACCESS & WORKING SCAFFOLDS" & SPECIAL SCAFFOLD STRUCTURE IN STEEL.
4. TUBES & FITTINGS TO BE TO BS 1139. TUBE TO BE SECOND-HAND STEEL. ALL FITTINGS TO BE IN EXCELLENT CONDITION.
5. SITE TO BE FENCED OFF.
6. ALL WORK TO BE TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE DIRECTOR OF BUILDING CONTROL.



SKELBO

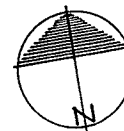
SCOTTISH HISTORIC BUILDINGS TRUST

TEMPORARY PROTECTION TO SOUTH GABLE

APPROX. 1:100

DECEMBER 1987

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BENJAMIN TINDALL  
ARCHITECTS

TRUNK'S CLOSE  
55 THE HIGH STREET  
EDINBURGH EH1 1SR

TELEPHONE 031-557 5555

job: SKELBO

Client: SCOTTISH HISTORIC  
BUILDINGS TRUST

Title: **SITE PLAN**

Scale: NOT TO SCALE

Date: DECEMBER 1987

Dwg. No.

# SITE PLAN